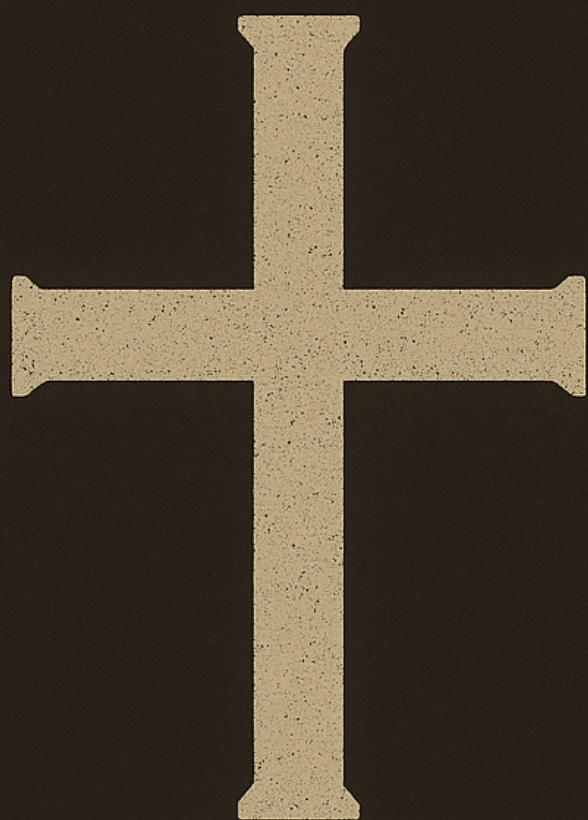


THE ANTICHRIST



FRIEDRICH
NIETZSCHE

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

The Antichrist
By Friedrich Nietzsche
(Abbé's Library)

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	2
<i>The Antichrist</i>	3

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

Preface

This book is for the very rare kind of person. It's possible that none of them are alive today. Perhaps they are among those who understand my "Zarathustra"; how could I ever compare myself to those who are just starting to understand?—I must wait for a time that hasn't yet arrived for me. Some people are meant to be understood only after their death.

The conditions under which someone truly understands me—and is able to understand me, I know them all too well. To endure my seriousness and passion, one must have intellectual integrity, almost to the point of being hard. One must be used to living in high places—and view the noisy chatter of politics and nationalism as beneath them. One must become indifferent; never asking whether the truth benefits or harms them. They must be inclined, out of strength, to ask questions that others avoid, to have the courage to explore the forbidden, to be destined for the maze. The experience of seven kinds of solitude. New ears for new music. New eyes for things that are far off. A new conscience for truths that have remained unheard until now. And the will to conserve their energy, their passion. Self-respect, self-love, absolute freedom of self.

Very well, then! Only people like this are my true readers, the ones meant to understand me: the others don't matter. The rest are just humanity. One must rise above humanity, in strength, in the nobility of the soul—in disdain.

The Antichrist

1

Let's look at each other directly. We are Hyperboreans—we know how distant we are. "Neither by land nor by water will you find the road to the Hyperboreans": even Pindar knew this about us in his time. Beyond the North, beyond the ice, beyond death—that's where our life, our happiness lies. We've found that happiness; we know the way, and we've learned it from thousands of years spent in the maze of life. Who else has discovered it?—The people of today?—"I don't know either the way out or the way in; I am just someone who doesn't know either the way out or the way in"—that's how today's people sigh....

This modernity is what made us sick—we became ill from lazy peace, cowardly compromise, the whole dirty virtue of today's 'yes' and 'no'. This tolerance and open-heartedness that "forgives" everything because it "understands" everything is like a hot wind to us. We'd rather live in the ice than among modern virtues and those warm southern winds! We were brave; we didn't spare ourselves or others, but it took us a long time to figure out where to focus our courage. We became grim; they called us fatalists. Our fate—it was the fullness, the intensity, the buildup of power. We longed for lightning and great deeds; we stayed far away from the happiness of the weak, from "resignation".... There was thunder in our air; nature, as we embodied it, became stormy—because we had yet to find our way. The formula for our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal....

2

What is good?—Anything that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in a person.

What is evil?—Anything that comes from weakness.

What is happiness?—The feeling that power is growing—that obstacles are being overcome.

Not contentment, but more power; not peace at any cost, but struggle; not virtue, but effectiveness (virtue in the Renaissance sense, *virtu*, virtue free from moral corruption).

The weak and the defective will perish: this is the first principle of our charity. And we should help them along the way.

What is more harmful than any vice?—Practical sympathy for the weak and the defective—Christianity....

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

3

The issue I'm addressing here isn't about what will replace mankind in the natural order (since man is an end in himself), but what kind of person should be raised, should be desired, as the most valuable, the most worthy of life, and the best guarantee for the future.

This more valuable type has appeared often enough in the past, but always by chance, as an exception, never as something deliberately created. Often, it has been the one most feared; up until now, it has almost been the ultimate terror—and from that fear, the opposite type has been desired, cultivated, and developed: the domesticated animal, the herd animal, the sickly brute-man—the Christian....

4

Mankind does not represent an evolution toward a better, stronger, or higher level, as "progress" is commonly understood. This concept of "progress" is simply a modern idea, which means it's a false one. The European of today, in terms of essential worth, is far below the European of the Renaissance; the process of evolution does not automatically lead to elevation, improvement, or strengthening.

True, in certain individual cases, in different parts of the world and under a variety of cultures, evolution has led to the emergence of a higher type; something that, compared to the masses of humanity, can be seen as a sort of superman. These fortunate instances of great success have always been possible, and may continue to be possible, perhaps for all of time. Even entire races, tribes, and nations may sometimes represent such lucky accidents.

5

We should not decorate or glorify Christianity: it has waged a war to the death against this higher type of person, it has condemned all the deepest instincts of this type, and it has created its concept of evil, and of the Evil One himself, from these instincts—the strong person as the typical outcast, the “rejected one among men.” Christianity has sided with all the weak, the inferior, the defective; it has made an ideal out of opposing all the self-preserving instincts of healthy life; it has even corrupted the faculties of those who are intellectually the most capable, by labeling the highest intellectual values as sinful, deceptive, and full of temptation. The most tragic example: the corruption of Pascal, who believed that his intellect had been destroyed by original sin, when in reality it was destroyed by Christianity!

6

It is a painful and tragic sight that unfolds before me: I have pulled back the curtain to reveal the decay of man. This word, in my mouth, is at least free from one suspicion: that it carries a moral judgment against humanity. I use it—and I want to stress this again—without any moral

meaning: and this is true to the extent that the decay I'm talking about is most obvious to me in those areas where there has been the most striving, until now, for "virtue" and "godliness." As you might guess, I understand decay in the sense of decadence: my argument is that all the values on which mankind now bases its highest aspirations are decadence-values.

I call an animal, a species, or an individual corrupt when it loses its instincts, when it chooses, when it prefers, what harms it. A history of the "higher feelings," the "ideals of humanity"—and I may need to write that history—would almost explain why man is so degenerate. Life itself seems to me like an instinct for growth, survival, the accumulation of strength, for power: whenever the will to power fails, disaster follows. My argument is that all the highest values of humanity have been emptied of this will—that the values of decadence, of nihilism, now prevail under the most sacred names.

7

Christianity is called the religion of pity. Pity goes against all the energizing emotions that increase the feeling of aliveness: it acts as a depressant. A person loses power when they feel pity. Through pity, the drain on strength caused by suffering is multiplied a thousand times. Suffering becomes contagious through pity; in certain situations, it may lead to a complete sacrifice of life and energy—far beyond what the cause actually warrants (like the death of the Nazarene). This is the first perspective; however, there's an even more important one. If we measure the effects of pity by the severity of the reactions it causes, its dangerous impact on life becomes much clearer. Pity disrupts the whole process of evolution, which follows the law of natural selection. It protects what should be destroyed; it sides with those who are condemned by life; by preserving the lives of the defective, it makes life itself seem dark and uncertain. Humanity has called pity a virtue (in every superior moral system, it's seen as a weakness); going even further, it has been called the greatest virtue, the source and foundation of all other virtues—but we must always remember that this comes from a nihilistic philosophy, one that denies life. Schopenhauer was right: pity denies life and makes life worthy of denial—pity is the tool of nihilism. Let me repeat: this depressing and contagious instinct opposes all instincts that promote the preservation and enhancement of life: in its role as the protector of the miserable, it is a major force in promoting decadence—pity encourages extinction.... Of course, we don't say "extinction": we say "the other world," or "God," or "true life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness.... This harmless-sounding language from the world of religious and ethical nonsense is much less innocent when we think about the tendency it hides beneath its lofty words: the tendency to destroy life. Schopenhauer was hostile to life—that's why he saw pity as a virtue. Aristotle, as everyone knows, saw pity as a sickly and dangerous state of mind, and he recommended an occasional purgative to cure it: he thought tragedy was that purgative. The instinct for life should push us to find a way to release any dangerous buildup of pity, like the one Schopenhauer had (and sadly, the one we see in all our modern literary decadence, from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoy to Wagner), so that it can burst and be released.... Nothing is

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

more unhealthy, in our already unhealthy modern world, than Christian pity. We must be the doctors here, we must show no mercy here, we must wield the knife here—this is our job, this is our kind of humanity, this is the sign of our philosophy, we Hyperboreans!

8

It's important to be clear about who we consider our enemies: theologians and anyone who has any theological influence—this is our entire philosophy. One must have directly faced this threat, or better yet, experienced it firsthand and nearly fallen to it, to understand that it should not be taken lightly (—the so-called free-thinking of our naturalists and physiologists seems like a joke to me—they have no passion about such matters; they haven't suffered—). This poisoning goes much deeper than most people realize: I find the arrogant attitude of the theologian among all those who see themselves as “idealists”—among all who, from a higher perspective, believe they have the right to rise above reality and view it with suspicion. The idealist, like the ecclesiastic, holds all sorts of lofty concepts in his hands (—and not just in his hands!); he throws them with kind contempt at “understanding,” “the senses,” “honor,” “good living,” “science”; he sees these things as beneath him, as harmful and seductive forces, on which “the soul” rises as a pure thing-in-itself—as if humility, chastity, poverty, in other words, holiness, hadn't already caused far more damage to life than all imaginable horrors and vices. The pure soul is a pure lie.... As long as the priest, that professional denier, slanderer, and poisoner of life, is accepted as a higher form of man, there can be no answer to the question, What is truth? Truth has already been turned upside down when the obvious advocate of emptiness is mistaken for its representative....

9

I am at war with this theological instinct: I see its influence everywhere. Anyone who has theological blood in their veins is deceitful and dishonorable in everything. The sad product of this condition is called faith: in other words, it's a way of closing one's eyes to oneself completely, to avoid confronting the unchangeable falsehood. People build concepts of morality, virtue, and holiness on this distorted view of everything; they base their good conscience on a faulty perception; they argue that no other kind of perception is valuable anymore once theirs has been sanctified with the names of “God,” “salvation,” and “eternity.” I find this theological instinct everywhere: it is the most widespread and hidden form of falsehood on earth. Whatever a theologian considers true must be false: that's almost a rule of truth. His deep instinct for self-preservation prevents truth from ever being honored in any way, or even being clearly stated. Wherever the influence of theologians is felt, there is a reversal of values, and the concepts of “true” and “false” switch places: whatever is most harmful to life is called “true,” and whatever lifts life, strengthens it, affirms it, justifies it, and makes it triumphant is called “false.” When theologians, working through the “consciences” of kings (or of entire populations), reach for power, there's never any doubt about the core issue: the will to bring about an end, the nihilistic will, is what drives that power....

10

Among Germans, I am immediately understood when I say that theological influence is the downfall of philosophy. The Protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself is its original sin. Definition of Protestantism: half-paralysis of Christianity—and of reason. One only needs to mention the “Tübingen School” to understand what German philosophy really is—a very clever form of theology. The Swabians are the best liars in Germany; they lie innocently.

Why all the celebration over Kant’s appearance in the learned world of Germany, three-quarters of which is made up of the sons of preachers and teachers—why does the German conviction still persist that Kant brought a positive change? The theological instinct of German scholars made them realize exactly what had become possible again.... A backdoor to the old ideal had opened; the concept of the “true world,” the concept of morality as the essence of the world—(the two most destructive errors ever to exist!)—were once again, thanks to subtle and crafty skepticism, if not demonstrable, then at least no longer refutable.... Reason, the prerogative of reason, does not go that far.

Out of reality, they had made “appearance”; an entirely false world, that of being, had been made into reality. The success of Kant is merely a theological success; he was, like Luther and Leibniz, just another obstacle to German integrity, which was already far from stable.

11

A word now against Kant as a moralist. A virtue must be our own creation; it must arise from our personal needs and self-preservation. In any other case, it becomes dangerous. What doesn’t belong to our life threatens it; a virtue rooted simply in respect for the concept of “virtue,” as Kant would have it, is harmful. “Virtue,” “duty,” “good for its own sake,” goodness based on impersonality or a notion of universal validity—these are all illusions, and they represent nothing but the decay, the final collapse of life, the Chinese spirit of Königsberg. On the contrary, the deepest laws of self-preservation and growth demand that every individual find their own virtue, their own categorical imperative. A nation falls apart when it confuses its duty with the general concept of duty. Nothing brings about a more complete and devastating disaster than any “impersonal” duty, any sacrifice before the Moloch of abstraction.

To think that no one has realized how Kant’s categorical imperative is dangerous to life! The theological instinct alone defended it! An action motivated by the instinct for life proves that it is the right action by the pleasure it brings. Yet that nihilist, with his gut full of Christian dogma, saw pleasure as an objection.

What destroys a person more quickly than to work, think, and feel without inner necessity, without any deep personal desire, without pleasure—simply as a mechanical follower of duty?

That's the recipe for decadence, and even for idiocy. Kant became an idiot. And such a man was Goethe's contemporary! This disastrous spinner of webs is still regarded as the German philosopher—still is today! I won't say what I really think about the Germans.... Didn't Kant see in the French Revolution the transformation of the state from an inorganic to an organic form? Didn't he ask whether there was any event that could be explained except by assuming a moral faculty in man, so that based on it, "the tendency of mankind toward the good" could be explained once and for all? Kant's answer: "That is revolution." Instinct failing in everything, instinct as a rebellion against nature, German decadence as philosophy—that is Kant!

12

I dismiss a few skeptics, the decent types in the history of philosophy: the rest have no concept of intellectual integrity. They act like women, all these great enthusiasts and prodigies—they treat "beautiful feelings" as arguments, the "heaving breast" as the bellows of divine inspiration, and conviction as the measure of truth. In the end, with "German" naivety, Kant tried to give a scientific veneer to this form of corruption, this lack of intellectual conscience, by calling it "practical reason." He intentionally created a kind of reasoning to use when it was convenient not to deal with reason—that is, when morality, when the sublime command of "thou shalt," was spoken. When one recalls that, among all peoples, the philosopher is just a development of the old priest type, this inheritance from the priest, this self-deception, stops being surprising. When a person feels they have a divine mission, say, to uplift, save, or liberate mankind—when they feel the divine spark in their heart and believe they are the voice of supernatural imperatives—when such a mission excites them, it's only natural that they would go beyond mere rational standards of judgment. They believe that they themselves are sanctified by this mission, that they are a type of higher being! What does a priest have to do with philosophy? He stands far above it!—And until now, the priest has ruled!—He has determined the meaning of "true" and "false"!

13

Let's not overlook this fact: that we, the free spirits, are already a "revaluation of all values," a clear declaration of war and victory against all the old concepts of "true" and "false." The most valuable insights are the last to be gained; the most valuable of all are those that define methods. All the methods, all the principles of today's scientific spirit, were targets for thousands of years of the deepest contempt; if a person leaned toward them, they were excluded from the company of "decent" people—they were seen as "enemies of God," as mockers of the truth, as "possessed." As a man of science, he belonged to the outcasts.

We've faced all the foolishness of mankind against us—their every idea of what the truth should be, of what serving the truth should mean—their every "thou shalt" was aimed at us. Our goals, our methods, our quiet, cautious, distrustful demeanor—all seemed to them utterly disreputable and contemptible. Looking back, one might even reasonably wonder if it wasn't an aesthetic

sense that kept people blind for so long: what they wanted from the truth was something visually striking, and from the scholars, a strong appeal to their senses. It was our modesty that stood out longest against their tastes.... How well they understood that, those self-righteous fools of God!

14

We have unlearned something. We've become more modest in every way. We no longer trace man back to the "spirit," to the "godhead"; we've placed him back among the animals. We see him as the strongest of the animals because he's the craftiest; one result of this is his intellectuality. On the other hand, we protect ourselves from any arrogance that might emerge here: the idea that man is the great second thought in the process of organic evolution. In truth, he is anything but the crown of creation: beside him stand many other animals, all at similar stages of development.... And even when we say that, we're exaggerating a bit, because man, relatively speaking, is the most botched and sickliest of all animals, and he has strayed the farthest from his instincts—but still, for all that, he remains the most interesting!

As for the lower animals, it was Descartes who first had the truly admirable courage to describe them as machines; all of our physiology is focused on proving the truth of this idea. Moreover, it's illogical to separate man, as Descartes did: what we know about man today is limited precisely by the extent to which we have also viewed him as a machine.

In the past, we gave man, as his inheritance from a higher order of beings, what was called "free will"; now we've even taken this will from him, because the term no longer describes anything we can understand. The old word "will" now refers only to a sort of result, an individual reaction, that follows inevitably from a series of partly conflicting and partly harmonious stimuli—the will no longer "acts" or "moves."

In the past, it was believed that man's consciousness, his "spirit," was proof of his high origin, his divinity. To perfect himself, he was advised, like a tortoise, to withdraw his senses, to avoid earthly things, to shed his mortal body—then only the important part of him, the "pure spirit," would remain. Again, we've thought this through better: to us, consciousness, or "the spirit," appears as a sign of the relative imperfection of the organism, as an experiment, a groping, a misunderstanding, an affliction that unnecessarily uses up nervous energy—we deny that anything can be done perfectly as long as it's done consciously. The "pure spirit" is pure stupidity: take away the nervous system and the senses, the so-called "mortal shell," and the rest is just miscalculation—that's all!

15

Under Christianity, neither morality nor religion has any connection to reality. It offers purely imaginary causes ("God," "soul," "ego," "spirit," "free will"—or even "unfree will"), and purely imaginary effects ("sin," "salvation," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sins"). There is

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

interaction between imaginary beings (“God,” “spirits,” “souls”); an imaginary natural history (anthropocentric; a complete denial of the concept of natural causes); an imaginary psychology (misunderstandings of the self, misinterpretations of general feelings—like the states of the autonomic nervous system, misrepresented through the religious-ethical nonsense language—“repentance,” “pangs of conscience,” “temptation by the devil,” “the presence of God”); an imaginary teleology (the “kingdom of God,” “the last judgment,” “eternal life”).

This entirely fictitious world, to its detriment, must be distinguished from the world of dreams; the latter at least reflects reality, whereas the former distorts, cheapens, and denies it. Once the concept of “nature” was set in opposition to “God,” the word “natural” inevitably took on the meaning of “abominable”—the entire fictitious world stems from a hatred of the natural (the real!), and is nothing more than evidence of deep discomfort in the face of reality.

This explains everything. Who would have any reason to live outside of reality? The person who suffers from it. But to suffer from reality, one must be a distorted reality. The dominance of pain over pleasure is the cause of this fictitious morality and religion: but this dominance also provides the formula for decadence....

16

A criticism of the Christian concept of God inevitably leads to the same conclusion. A nation that still believes in itself clings to its own god. In him, it honors the conditions that enable it to survive, its virtues—it projects its joy in itself, its sense of power, into a being to whom it can give thanks. He who is rich will give from his riches; a proud people need a god to whom they can make sacrifices.... Religion, within these limits, is a form of gratitude. A person is grateful for their own existence: to that end, they need a god.

Such a god must be capable of both doing good and causing harm; he must be able to act as either a friend or a foe—he is admired for the good he does as well as for the harm he causes. But the emasculation, against all nature, of such a god—making him a god of goodness alone—would be contrary to human instincts. Mankind needs an evil god just as much as a good god; it doesn’t owe its existence to mere tolerance and humanitarianism.

What would the value of a god be who knew nothing of anger, revenge, envy, scorn, cunning, violence? Who had perhaps never felt the rapturous passions of victory and destruction? No one would understand such a god: why would anyone want him?

True enough, when a nation is on the decline, when it senses its belief in its future, its hope for freedom slipping away, when it starts to see submission as a necessity and the virtues of submission as means of self-preservation, then it must revise its god. He then becomes a hypocrite, fearful and humble; he advises “peace of soul,” no more hatred, leniency, “love” for

friend and foe. He moralizes endlessly; he sneaks into every personal virtue; he becomes the god of every individual; he becomes a private citizen, a cosmopolitan.

Previously, he represented a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and power-hungry in the soul of a people; now he is simply the good god. The truth is, there is no alternative for gods: either they are the will to power—in which case they are national gods—or they are incapable of power—in which case they must be good....

17

Wherever the will to power begins to decline, in whatever form, there is always a corresponding physiological decline, a decadence. The divinity of this decadence, stripped of its masculine virtues and passions, inevitably transforms into a god of the physiologically degraded, of the weak. Of course, they don't call themselves weak; they call themselves "the good." No hints are needed to pinpoint the moments in history when the dualistic fiction of a good and evil god first became possible. The same instinct that drives the inferior to reduce their god to "goodness-in-itself" also drives them to strip all good qualities from the god of their superiors; they seek revenge on their masters by turning their god into a devil.

The good god, and the devil like him—both are the results of decadence. How can we tolerate the naivety of Christian theologians to the point where we accept their doctrine that the evolution of the concept of god—from the god of Israel, the god of a people, to the Christian god, the essence of all goodness—should be described as progress? Even Renan does this. As if Renan had any right to be naïve! The truth is right before our eyes. When everything that is necessary for life's ascent, when all that is strong, courageous, masterful, and proud, has been eliminated from the concept of god; when he has gradually sunk to the level of a crutch for the weary, a lifeline for the drowning; when he becomes the god of the poor, the sinner, the invalid par excellence, and the attribute of "savior" or "redeemer" becomes his essential divine trait—what does this transformation mean? What does this reduction of divinity imply?

To be sure, the "kingdom of God" has grown larger. Previously, he had only his own people, his "chosen" people. But since then, he has wandered like his people into foreign lands; he has given up settling down anywhere; finally, he feels at home everywhere, and has become the great cosmopolitan—now he has the "great majority" on his side, and half the earth. But this god of the "great majority," this democrat among gods, has not become a proud heathen god: on the contrary, he remains a Jew, a god in a corner, a god of all the dark, neglected places, of all the filthy quarters of the world! His earthly kingdom, now as always, is a kingdom of the underworld, a subterranean kingdom, a ghetto kingdom. And he himself is so pale, so weak, so decadent.... Even the palest of the pale are able to dominate him—those metaphysicians, those albinos of the intellect. They wove their webs around him for so long that eventually he was hypnotized, began to spin his own webs, and became another metaphysician. From then on, he resumed his old job of spinning the world out of his innermost being *sub specie Spinozae*;

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

thereafter, he grew ever thinner and paler—became the “ideal,” became “pure spirit,” became “the absolute,” became “the thing-in-itself.” The collapse of a god: he became a “thing-in-itself.”

18

The Christian idea of God—the god who is the patron of the sick, the god who spins webs, the god as a spirit—is one of the most corrupt ideas ever introduced into the world. It probably marks the lowest point in the decline of the god-concept. God became the contradiction of life. Instead of being its transformation and eternal affirmation, in him, war is waged against life, against nature, against the will to live! God becomes the symbol of every attack on the “here and now,” and for every lie about the “beyond”! In him, nothingness is worshipped, and the will to nothingness is made holy!

19

The fact that the strong races of northern Europe did not reject this Christian god reflects poorly on their ability for religion—and not much better on their taste. They should have been able to put an end to such a dying and exhausted product of decadence. A curse hangs over them because they were not up to the task; they made illness, decay, and contradiction part of their instincts—and since then, they’ve failed to create any new gods. Two thousand years have passed—and not a single new god! Instead, there still exists, and as if by some inherent right—as if he were the ultimate and greatest expression of the power to create gods, of the creator spirit in mankind—this pathetic god of Christian monotheism! This hybrid image of decay, conjured from emptiness, contradiction, and empty imagination, in which all the instincts of decadence, all the cowardice and weariness of the soul, find their justification!

20

In my criticism of Christianity, I certainly hope I do no injustice to a related religion with even more followers: I’m referring to Buddhism. Both are nihilistic religions—they are both religions of decadence—but they differ from each other in a very significant way. The critic of Christianity owes his ability to compare them to the scholars of India.

Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity—it is part of its living heritage that it can face problems objectively and calmly; it is the product of long centuries of philosophical speculation. The concept of “god” was already disposed of before it even emerged. Buddhism is the only truly positive religion in history, and this even applies to its epistemology (which is a strict form of phenomenism). It doesn’t speak of a “struggle with sin,” but, in accordance with reality, of the “struggle with suffering.” In contrast to Christianity, it puts behind it the self-deception found in moral concepts; it is, in my words, beyond good and evil.

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

The two physiological facts upon which Buddhism is based and to which it devotes its main focus are: first, an excessive sensitivity to sensation, which shows itself as a heightened sensitivity to pain, and second, an extraordinary spirituality, an excessive preoccupation with concepts and logical processes, under which the instinct of personality has been replaced by the notion of the "impersonal." (—Both of these states will be familiar to some of my readers, the objectivists, through experience, as they are to me.) These physiological states led to a depression, and Buddha tried to counter this with hygienic practices. He prescribed a life outdoors, a life of travel; moderation in eating and careful selection of foods; caution in the use of intoxicants; the same caution in arousing passions that foster a bilious temperament and heat the blood; and finally, no worries, either for oneself or others. He encourages ideas that lead to calm contentment or good cheer—he finds ways to combat ideas of a different sort. He understands goodness, the state of being good, as something that promotes health. Prayer is not included, nor is asceticism. There is no categorical imperative, nor any disciplines, even within the walls of a monastery (—it is always possible to leave). These would merely serve to increase the excessive sensitivity mentioned earlier.

For the same reason, he doesn't advocate any conflict with unbelievers; his teaching is most opposed to revenge, aversion, and resentment ("enmity never ends enmity": the central refrain of Buddhism...). In all of this, he was right, for it is precisely these passions, given his main therapeutic goal, that are unhealthy. The mental fatigue he observes, already clearly seen in too much "objectivity" (that is, the individual's loss of interest in themselves, the loss of balance and egoism), he counters by strong efforts to bring even spiritual concerns back to the ego. In Buddha's teaching, egoism is a duty. The "one thing needful," the question "how can you be freed from suffering," governs and determines the whole spiritual practice. (—Perhaps this will remind one of the Athenian who also declared war on pure "scientificity," namely Socrates, who also elevated egoism to the level of morality.)

21

The things essential to Buddhism are a very mild climate, customs of great gentleness and openness, and no militarism; moreover, it must start among the higher, better-educated classes. Cheerfulness, calm, and the absence of desire are the main goals, and they are achieved. Buddhism is not a religion in which perfection is just a goal to strive for: perfection is actually normal.

Under Christianity, the instincts of the subjugated and oppressed take center stage: it is only those at the bottom who seek salvation in it. Here, the main pastime, the favorite cure for boredom, is the discussion of sin, self-criticism, and the probing of conscience; here, the emotion produced by power (called "God") is inflated (through prayer); here, the highest good is considered unattainable, a gift, "grace."

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

Here, too, transparency is lacking; concealment and the darkened room are Christian. Here, the body is despised, and hygiene is condemned as sensual; the church even opposed cleanliness (—the first Christian decree after the expulsion of the Moors closed the public baths, of which there were 270 in Córdoba alone). Christian, too, is a certain cruelty toward oneself and others; hatred of unbelievers; the will to persecute.

Somber and unsettling ideas are at the forefront; the most esteemed states of mind, bearing the most respectable names, are epileptoid; the diet is so regulated that it breeds morbid symptoms and overstimulates the nerves. Christian, once again, is deadly enmity toward the rulers of the earth, the “aristocratic”—along with a sort of secret rivalry with them (—one resigns one’s “body” to them; one wants only one’s “soul”...).

And Christian is all hatred of the intellect, of pride, of courage, of freedom, of intellectual libertinism; Christian is all hatred of the senses, of joy in the senses, of joy in general....

22

When Christianity left its native soil, the lowest classes, the underworld of the ancient world, and began seeking power among barbarian peoples, it no longer had to deal with exhausted individuals, but with people still inwardly savage and capable of self-torture—in short, strong but flawed men. Here, unlike with the Buddhists, the cause of discontent with oneself, suffering through oneself, is not just a general sensitivity and susceptibility to pain, but, on the contrary, an excessive thirst for inflicting pain on others, a tendency to find subjective satisfaction in hostile actions and ideas.

Christianity had to adopt barbaric concepts and values in order to gain control over barbarians: for example, the sacrifices of the firstborn, the drinking of blood as a sacrament, the disdain for intellect and culture; torture in all its forms, whether physical or not; the entire pomp of the cult.

Buddhism is a religion for peoples in a more advanced state of development, for races that have become kind, gentle, and overly spiritualized (—Europe is not yet ready for it—): it is a call that leads them back to peace and cheerfulness, to a careful rationing of the spirit, to a certain hardening of the body. Christianity aims to dominate beasts of prey; its method is to make them ill—to make them weak is Christianity’s recipe for taming, for “civilizing.”

Buddhism is a religion for the waning, overworked stages of civilization. Christianity appears before civilization has even truly begun—and under certain conditions, it lays the very foundations of civilization.

23

Buddhism, I repeat, is a hundred times more austere, more honest, and more objective. It no longer has to justify its pain, its sensitivity to suffering, by interpreting these things in terms of

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

sin—it simply says, as it simply thinks, “I suffer.” However, to the barbarian, suffering itself is barely understandable: what he needs, first and foremost, is an explanation for why he suffers. (His instinct alone urges him to either deny his suffering completely or endure it silently.) Here, the word “devil” was a blessing: man had to have an all-powerful and terrible enemy—there was no shame in suffering at the hands of such an enemy.

At the heart of Christianity, there are several subtleties that belong to the East. First of all, it understands that it is of little consequence whether something is true or not, as long as it is believed to be true. Truth and faith: here we have two entirely distinct worlds of ideas, almost two diametrically opposite worlds—the road to one and the road to the other are miles apart. To understand this fact thoroughly—this is almost enough, in the East, to make one a sage. The Brahmins knew it, Plato knew it, and every student of esoteric philosophy knows it. For example, when a man derives pleasure from the notion that he has been saved from sin, it is not necessary for him to have actually sinned, but merely to feel sinful. But when faith is exalted above everything else, it follows that reason, knowledge, and patient inquiry must be discredited: the path to the truth becomes a forbidden one.

Hope, in its stronger forms, is a far more powerful stimulant to life than any form of realized joy could ever be. A man must be sustained in suffering by a hope so high that no conflict with reality can destroy it—so high, indeed, that no fulfillment can satisfy it: a hope that reaches beyond this world. (Precisely because of this power that hope has to make the suffering endure, the Greeks regarded it as the greatest evil, the most malignant of evils; it remained at the root of all evil.)

For love to be possible, God must become a person; for the lower instincts to participate, God must be young. To satisfy the desire of the woman, a beautiful saint must appear, and to satisfy the men's desire, there must be a virgin. These things are necessary if Christianity is to dominate a soil where some aphrodisiac or Adonis cult has already influenced the idea of what a cult should be. To insist on chastity greatly strengthens the intensity and subjectivity of the religious instinct—it makes the cult warmer, more enthusiastic, and more soulful.

Love is the state in which man sees things most definitely as they are not. The force of illusion is greatest here, as is the capacity for sweetening and transfiguring. When a man is in love, he endures more than at any other time; he submits to anything. The challenge was to create a religion that would allow one to love: by doing this, the worst that life has to offer is overcome—it's scarcely even noticed.

So much for the three Christian virtues: faith, hope, and charity: I call them the three Christian ingenuities. Buddhism is too far along in its development, too full of positivism, to be so clever in this way.

Here, I barely touch on the problem of the origin of Christianity. The first thing necessary to understand it is this: Christianity must be examined by looking at the soil from which it grew—it is not a reaction against Jewish instincts; it is their inevitable product; it is simply another step in the awe-inspiring logic of the Jews. In the words of the Savior, “salvation is of the Jews.” The second thing to keep in mind is this: the psychological type of the Galilean is still recognizable, but it was only in its most degenerate form (which is both maimed and burdened with foreign features) that it could serve as the way it has been used: as a type of the Savior of mankind.

The Jews are the most remarkable people in the history of the world because when they were confronted with the question of whether to be or not to be, they chose, with completely otherworldly deliberation, to be at any cost: this price involved radically falsifying all nature, all naturalness, all reality, both the inner and the outer world. They positioned themselves against all the conditions under which, until then, a people could live, or had even been allowed to live. Out of themselves, they developed an idea that stood directly opposed to natural conditions—one by one, they distorted religion, civilization, morality, history, and psychology until each became a contradiction of its natural meaning. We later encounter the same phenomenon, in a much more exaggerated form, but only as a copy: the Christian church, when placed next to the “people of God,” shows a complete lack of originality. For this reason, the Jews are the most fateful people in the history of the world: their influence has so distorted mankind’s reasoning in this matter that today, the Christian can embrace anti-Semitism without realizing that it is simply the final consequence of Judaism.

In my *Genealogy of Morals*, I provide the first psychological explanation of the concepts behind two opposing ideas: a noble morality and a resentment morality, the latter of which is merely a product of the denial of the former. The Judeo-Christian moral system belongs to the second category, and in every detail. In order to say “No” to everything representing the upward evolution of life—that is, to well-being, power, beauty, self-approval—the instincts of resentment, here turned into true genius, had to invent another world where accepting life was seen as the most evil and despicable thing imaginable. Psychologically, the Jews are a people gifted with immense vitality, so much so that when they found themselves facing impossible life conditions, they chose, voluntarily and with great talent for self-preservation, to embrace all the instincts that lead to decadence—not as if they were controlled by these instincts, but as if they saw in them a power by which “the world” could be defied.

The Jews are the opposite of decadents: they have simply been forced to appear in that way, and with an incredible degree of theatrical skill, they have managed to lead all decadent movements (—for example, Paul’s Christianity—), making them something stronger than any group that outright says Yes to life. For the kind of men who seek power under Judaism and Christianity—that is, the priestly class—decadence is simply a means to an end. These men have

a vested interest in making mankind sick and in confusing the values of “good” and “bad,” “true” and “false” in a way that is not only dangerous to life but also slanders it.

25

The history of Israel is invaluable as a typical example of an attempt to distort all natural values: I point to five facts that support this. Originally, especially during the time of the monarchy, Israel maintained the right approach to things, meaning the natural approach. Its Jahveh was an expression of its sense of power, its joy in itself, and its hopes for itself: the Jews looked to him for victory and salvation, and through him, they expected nature to provide whatever was necessary for their survival—above all, rain. Jahveh is the god of Israel, and therefore the god of justice: this is the logic of any race that has power in its hands and a clear conscience in using it. In the religious rituals of the Jews, both aspects of this self-approval are revealed. The nation is grateful for its great destiny that has allowed it to gain dominion; it is grateful for the regularity of the seasons and for the good fortune that blesses its herds and crops.

This view of things remained an ideal for a long time, even after it had been undermined by tragic blows: anarchy within and the Assyrian threat without. But the people still retained, as a projection of their highest aspirations, the vision of a king who was both a brave warrior and a just judge—a vision best exemplified by the typical prophet (i.e., critic and satirist of the moment), Isaiah.

But every hope remained unfulfilled. The old god could no longer do what he once did. He should have been abandoned. But what actually happened? Simply this: the conception of him was changed—the conception of him was distorted; this was the price that had to be paid to keep him. Jahveh, the god of “justice”—he no longer aligns with Israel, no longer visualizes the national egoism; he is now a god only conditionally.

The public perception of this god now becomes just a tool in the hands of clerical agitators, who interpret all happiness as a reward and all unhappiness as a punishment for obedience or disobedience to him, for “sin”: that most fraudulent of all interpretations, whereby a “moral order of the world” is established, and the fundamental concepts of “cause” and “effect” are turned upside down. Once natural causality is removed from the world by doctrines of reward and punishment, some form of unnatural causality becomes necessary: and all other forms of denying nature follow. A god who demands—in place of a god who helps, who gives counsel, who is at heart merely a name for every inspiring moment of courage and self-reliance.

Morality is no longer a reflection of the conditions that foster the sound life and development of the people; it is no longer the primary life instinct; instead, it has become abstract and opposed to life—a fundamental perversion of the imagination, an “evil eye” cast on all things. What is Jewish, what is Christian morality? Chance robbed of its innocence; unhappiness polluted with

the idea of “sin”; well-being represented as a danger, as a “temptation”; a physiological disorder created by the canker of conscience.

26

The concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified—but even here, Jewish priestcraft did not stop. The entire history of Israel ceased to hold any value: out with it! These priests performed the miracle of falsifying history, of which much of the Bible is the documentary evidence; with unparalleled contempt, and in defiance of all tradition and historical reality, they translated their people's past into religious terms, which means they turned it into an absurd mechanism of salvation, where all offenses against Jahveh were punished and all devotion to him was rewarded. We would consider this act of historical falsification far more shameful if centuries of exposure to ecclesiastical interpretations of history had not dulled our sense of integrity in historical matters. And the philosophers support the church: the lie about a “moral order of the world” runs through all of philosophy, even the most recent.

What is the meaning of a “moral order of the world”? That there is a thing called the will of God which, once and for all time, determines what man ought to do and what he ought not to do; that the worth of a people, or of an individual, is measured by the extent to which they obey this will of God; that the destinies of a people or an individual are controlled by this will of God, which rewards or punishes based on the degree of obedience.

In place of all that pitiable lie, reality has this to say: the priest, a parasitic form of man who can exist only at the expense of every sound view of life, takes the name of God in vain. He calls the state of society where he himself determines the value of all things “the kingdom of God”; he calls the means by which that state of affairs is achieved “the will of God”; with cold-blooded cynicism, he evaluates all peoples, all ages, and all individuals based on their submission or resistance to the power of the priestly order. You observe him at work: under the influence of the Jewish priesthood, the great age of Israel became an age of decline; the Exile, with its long series of misfortunes, was transformed into a punishment for that great age—during which priests had not yet come into existence. From the mighty and wholly free heroes of Israel's history, they fashioned, according to their shifting needs, either wretched bigots and hypocrites or entirely “godless” men. They reduced every significant event to the idiotic formula: “obedient or disobedient to God.”

They went even further: the “will of God” (in other words, the means necessary to preserve the power of the priests) had to be determined—and to do so, they needed a “revelation.” In plain language, a huge literary fraud had to be carried out, and “holy scriptures” had to be invented—and so, with great hierarchical ceremony, days of penance, and much lamentation over the long “sinful” days now passed, they were duly published. The “will of God,” it seems, had always stood firm; the problem was that mankind had neglected the “holy scriptures”... But the “will of God” had already been revealed to Moses. What happened? Simply this: the priest

had formulated, once and for all time and with the strictest precision, what tithes were to be paid to him, from the largest to the smallest (—not forgetting the most appetizing cuts of meat, for the priest is a great consumer of beefsteaks); in brief, he made it clear what he wanted, what “the will of God” was.

From this point on, things were arranged so that the priest became indispensable everywhere; at all the major life events, at birth, marriage, sickness, and death, not to mention at the “sacrifice” (which was simply mealtime), the holy parasite appeared and proceeded to distort it—what he called “sanctifying” it.

For this must be noted: that every natural habit, every natural institution (the state, the administration of justice, marriage, the care of the sick and the poor), everything demanded by the life-instinct, in short, everything that has value in itself, is reduced to utter worthlessness and even made the opposite of valuable by the parasitism of priests (or, if you prefer, by the “moral order of the world”). The fact requires a sanction—a power to grant values becomes necessary, and the only way it can create such values is by denying nature. The priest depreciates and desecrates nature: it is only at this price that he can exist at all.

Disobedience to God, which actually means disobedience to the priest, to “the law,” is now called “sin”; the means prescribed for “reconciliation with God” are, of course, the very means that most effectively bring one under the thumb of the priest; he alone can “save.”

Psychologically speaking, “sins” are essential to any society based on an ecclesiastical foundation; they are the only reliable tools of power; the priest thrives on sins; it is necessary for him that there be “sinning.” Prime axiom: “God forgives those who repent”—in plain language, those who submit to the priest.

27

Christianity arose from a soil so corrupt that everything natural, every natural value, and every reality was opposed by the deepest instincts of the ruling class—it grew as a kind of war against reality, and as such, it has never been surpassed. The “holy people,” who had adopted priestly values and priestly names for everything, and who, with terrifying logical consistency, had rejected everything earthly as “unholy,” “worldly,” “sinful”—this people put its instinct into a final formula that was logically self-destructive: as Christianity, it actually denied even the last form of reality, the “holy people,” the “chosen people,” Jewish reality itself.

The phenomenon is of the highest importance: the small insurrectionary movement that took the name of Jesus of Nazareth is simply the Jewish instinct revived—in other words, it is the priestly instinct brought to such a point that it could no longer endure the priest as a fact; it is the discovery of a state of existence even more fantastical than anything before it, a vision of life even more unreal than what was necessary for an ecclesiastical organization. Christianity actually denies the church....

I can't determine what the target of the insurrection led (whether rightly or wrongly) by Jesus could have been if it wasn't the Jewish church—"church" here used in exactly the same way it is today. It was an insurrection against the "good and just," against the "prophets of Israel," against the entire social hierarchy—not against corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, and formalism. It was a rejection of the "superior men," a Nay to everything that priests and theologians stood for.

But the hierarchy that was questioned, even if only for an instant, by this movement was the structure of pillars that, above all, was necessary to the safety of the Jewish people amidst the "waters"—it represented their last possibility of survival; it was the final remnant of their independent political existence. An attack on it was an attack on the most profound national instinct, the strongest national will to live, that has ever appeared on earth.

This saintly anarchist, who stirred the people of the abyss, the outcasts and "sinners," the Chandala of Judaism, to rise in revolt against the established order of things—and in language that, if the Gospels are to be believed, would get him sent to Siberia today—this man was certainly a political criminal, at least in so far as it was possible to be one in such an absurdly unpolitical community. This is what brought him to the cross: the proof is found in the inscription placed upon the cross. He died for his own sins—there is no evidence, despite how often it is asserted, that he died for the sins of others.

28

As to whether he himself was aware of this contradiction—whether, in fact, this was the only contradiction he was aware of—that's quite a different question. Here, for the first time, I address the problem of the psychology of the Savior. I must admit, to begin with, that very few books are as difficult for me to read as the Gospels. My difficulties are quite different from those that allowed the learned curiosity of the German mind to achieve one of its most unforgettable triumphs. It's been a long time since I, like all other young scholars, enjoyed, with all the wise effort of a meticulous philologist, the work of the incomparable Strauss. At that time, I was twenty years old: now, I am too serious for such things. What do I care for the contradictions of "tradition"? How can anyone call pious legends "traditions"? The histories of saints represent the most dubious variety of literature in existence; to study them with the scientific method, in the complete absence of supporting documents, seems to me to undermine the whole inquiry from the start—it's simply learned idleness....

29

What concerns me is the psychological type of the Savior. This type might be depicted in the Gospels, in whatever distorted form and however overloaded with external characters—that is, in spite of the Gospels; just as the figure of Francis of Assisi shows itself in his legends despite the legends themselves. It's not just a matter of truthful evidence about what he did, what he said,

and how he actually died; the question is whether his type is still understandable, whether it has been passed down to us.

All the attempts I know of to read the history of a “soul” in the Gospels seem to reveal only a lamentable psychological shallowness. M. Renan, that charlatan in psychology, has contributed two of the most inappropriate ideas to the task of explaining the type of Jesus: the concept of the genius and that of the hero (“héros”). But if there is anything fundamentally un-Christian, it is surely the concept of the hero. What the Gospels make instinctive is precisely the opposite of all heroic struggle, of all desire for conflict: the very incapacity for resistance is here transformed into something moral: (“resist not evil!”—perhaps the most profound sentence in the Gospels, perhaps the true key to them), namely, the blessedness of peace, of gentleness, the inability to have an enemy.

What is the meaning of “glad tidings”? The true life, eternal life, has been found—it is not merely promised, it is here, it is in you; it is the life that exists in love, free from all retreats and exclusions, from all distancing. Every one is a child of God—Jesus claims nothing for himself alone—each man, as a child of God, is the equal of every other man.

Imagine making Jesus a hero! And what a tremendous misunderstanding is found in the word “genius”! Our entire concept of the “spiritual,” the whole concept of our civilization, could have had no meaning in the world Jesus lived in. In the strict sense of the physiologist, a completely different word ought to be used here.... We all know that there is a morbid sensitivity of the tactile nerves, which causes those suffering from it to recoil from every touch and from any attempt to grasp a solid object. Brought to its logical conclusion, such a physiological state becomes an instinctive hatred of all reality, a flight into the “intangible,” into the “incomprehensible”; a distaste for all formulas, for all conceptions of time and space, for everything established—customs, institutions, the church—; a feeling of being at home in a world where no reality survives, a merely “inner” world, a “true” world, an “eternal” world... “The Kingdom of God is within you”....

30

The instinctive hatred of reality: the result of an extreme sensitivity to pain and irritation—so intense that merely being “touched” becomes unbearable, because every sensation is too profound.

The instinctive rejection of all aversion, all hostility, all boundaries and distances in feeling: the result of an extreme sensitivity to pain and irritation—so intense that it experiences all resistance, all compulsion to resist, as unbearable anguish (—in other words, as harmful, as forbidden by the instinct for self-preservation), and sees blessedness (joy) as possible only when it is no longer necessary to resist anyone or anything, no matter how evil or dangerous—love, as the only, as the ultimate possibility of life....

These are the two physiological realities upon and out of which the doctrine of salvation has emerged. I call them a sublime super-development of hedonism based on a thoroughly unhealthy foundation. What is most closely related to them, though with a large mix of Greek vitality and energy, is epicureanism, the salvation theory of paganism. Epicurus was a typical decadent: I was the first to recognize him.

The fear of pain, even of infinitely slight pain—the result of this can be nothing but a religion of love....

31

I have already given my answer to the problem. The prerequisite to it is the assumption that the type of the Savior has reached us only in a greatly distorted form. This distortion is highly probable: there are many reasons why a type like that would not be handed down in its pure form, complete and free of additions. The environment in which this strange figure lived must have left marks on him, and more were likely imprinted by the history and the destiny of the early Christian communities; indeed, they must have retrospectively embellished the type with traits that can only be understood as serving the purposes of war and propaganda.

That strange and sickly world into which the Gospels lead us—a world that seems like something out of a Russian novel, where the dregs of society, nervous disorders, and “childish” idiocy are prevalent—must, in any case, have coarsened the type: the first disciples, in particular, must have been forced to translate an existence that was visible only in symbols and incomprehensible terms into their own crude understanding, in order to grasp it at all. To them, the type could take on reality only after it had been reshaped in a familiar mold.... The prophet, the messiah, the future judge, the teacher of morals, the worker of miracles, John the Baptist—all of these merely presented opportunities for misunderstanding.

Finally, let us not underestimate the nature of all great, and especially all sectarian, veneration: it tends to erase from the venerated objects all their original traits and idiosyncrasies, often so painfully strange—it doesn't even see them. It is greatly regrettable that no Dostoyevsky lived near this most interesting decadent—I mean someone who would have sensed the poignant charm of such a combination of the sublime, the morbid, and the childish.

In the final analysis, the type, as a type of decadence, may have actually been particularly complex and contradictory: such a possibility should not be overlooked. However, the probabilities seem to be against it, for in that case, tradition would have been particularly accurate and objective, whereas we have reasons to assume the opposite. Meanwhile, there is a contradiction between the peaceful preacher of the mount, the seashore, and the fields, who appears like a new Buddha on a soil very unlike India's, and the aggressive fanatic, the mortal enemy of theologians and ecclesiastics, who is glorified by Renan's malice as “le grand maître en ironie.”

I have no doubt that much of this venom (and also wit) entered the concept of the Master only due to the heightened nature of Christian propaganda: we all know the unscrupulousness of sectarians when they aim to turn their leader into an apologia for themselves. When the early Christians needed a clever, contentious, combative, and maliciously subtle theologian to challenge other theologians, they created a “god” to meet that need, just as they inserted into his mouth, without hesitation, certain ideas that were necessary to them but were completely contrary to the Gospels—“the second coming,” “the last judgment,” all sorts of expectations and promises, popular at the time.

32

I can only repeat that I oppose all efforts to insert fanaticism into the figure of the Savior: the very word *impérieux* (imperious), used by Renan, is enough to invalidate this type. What the “glad tidings” tell us is simply that there are no more contradictions; the kingdom of heaven belongs to children; the faith expressed here is no longer a combative faith—it is already here, it has always been here, it is a sort of reborn childishness of the spirit. Physiologists, at least, are familiar with such delayed and incomplete puberty in the living organism, the result of degeneration. A faith like this is not furious, it does not denounce, it does not defend itself: it does not come with “the sword”—it does not realize that one day it will set man against man. It does not manifest itself through miracles, rewards, promises, or “scriptures”: it is itself, first and last, its own miracle, its own reward, its own promise, its own “kingdom of God.” This faith does not formulate itself—it simply lives, and so protects itself from formulas.

Of course, the accident of environment and educational background brings certain concepts to the forefront: in primitive Christianity, one finds only concepts of a Judaic-Semitic nature (—the idea of eating and drinking at the Last Supper belongs to this category—an idea which, like everything else Jewish, has been badly distorted by the church). But we must be careful not to see in all this anything more than symbolic language, semantics—an opportunity to speak in parables. It is only on the assumption that no work is to be taken literally that this anti-realist can speak at all. Had he been among Hindus, he would have used the concepts of Sankhya, and among the Chinese, the concepts of Lao-tse—and in neither case would it have mattered to him.

With a little freedom in the use of words, one could actually call Jesus a “free spirit”—he cares nothing for what is established: the word kills, whatever is established kills. The idea of “life” as an experience, as he alone conceives it, stands in opposition to his mind to every kind of word, formula, law, belief, and dogma. He speaks only of inner things: “life,” “truth,” or “light” is his term for the innermost—everything else, the whole of reality, all nature, even language, has meaning only as a sign, as allegory.

Here, it is crucial not to fall into error due to temptations from Christian, or rather ecclesiastical, prejudices: such symbolism par excellence stands outside all religion, all notions of worship, all history, all natural science, all worldly experience, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all

books, all art—his “wisdom” is precisely a pure ignorance of all these things. He has never heard of culture; he doesn’t need to wage war against it—he doesn’t even deny it.

The same can be said about the state, the entire bourgeois social order, labor, war—he has no reason to deny “the world,” because he knows nothing of the ecclesiastical concept of “the world.” Denial is precisely the thing that is impossible for him. Similarly, he lacks argumentative capacity, and has no belief that an article of faith, a “truth,” can be established through proofs—his proofs are inner “lights,” subjective sensations of happiness and self-approval, simple “proofs of power.” Such a doctrine cannot contradict: it doesn’t know that other doctrines exist, or can exist, and is entirely incapable of imagining anything opposed to it. If anything of the sort is encountered, it laments the “blindness” with sincere sympathy—because it alone has “light”—but it does not offer objections....

33

In the entire psychology of the “Gospels,” the concepts of guilt and punishment are absent, as is that of reward. “Sin,” which means anything that creates a distance between God and man, is abolished—this is precisely the “glad tidings.” Eternal bliss is not merely promised, nor is it tied to conditions: it is conceived as the only reality—what remains consists merely of signs useful in speaking about it.

The results of this perspective extend into a new way of life, the special evangelical way of life. It is not a “belief” that distinguishes the Christian; he is marked by a different mode of action; he acts differently. He offers no resistance, either in word or heart, to those who oppose him. He makes no distinction between strangers and countrymen, Jews and Gentiles (“neighbor,” of course, means fellow-believer, Jew). He is angry with no one, and he despises no one. He neither appeals to the courts of justice nor obeys their mandates (“Swear not at all”). He never, under any circumstances, divorces his wife, even when he has proof of her infidelity.

And beneath all of this is one principle; all of it arises from one instinct.

The life of the Savior was simply the embodiment of this way of life—and so was his death. He no longer needed any formula or ritual in his relationship with God—not even prayer. He had rejected the entire Jewish doctrine of repentance and atonement; he knew that it was only through a way of life that one could feel “divine,” “blessed,” “evangelical,” a “child of God.” It was not through “repentance,” not through “prayer and forgiveness,” that one came to God: only the Gospel way leads to God—it is itself “God!”

What the Gospels abolished was Judaism in the concepts of “sin,” “forgiveness of sin,” “faith,” “salvation through faith”—the whole ecclesiastical dogma of the Jews was denied by the “glad tidings.”

The deep instinct that guides the Christian in how to live so that he feels “in heaven” and “immortal,” despite many reasons to feel otherwise: this is the only psychological reality in “salvation.” A new way of life, not a new faith....

34

If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is this: that he regarded only subjective realities as true realities, as “truths”—he saw everything else, everything natural, temporal, spatial, and historical, merely as signs, as materials for parables. The concept of “the Son of God” does not refer to a concrete person in history, an isolated and definite individual, but an “eternal” fact, a psychological symbol freed from the concept of time. The same is true, and in the highest sense, for the God of this typical symbolist, for the “kingdom of God,” and for the “sonship of God.” Nothing could be more un-Christian than the crude ecclesiastical ideas of God as a person, of a “kingdom of God” to come, of a “kingdom of heaven” beyond, and of a “son of God” as the second person of the Trinity. All of this—if I may use the phrase—amounts to thrusting one’s fist into the eye (and what an eye!) of the Gospels: a disrespect for symbols that is nothing short of world-historical cynicism.

But it is still clear what is meant by the symbols “Father” and “Son”—though not, of course, to everyone: the word “Son” represents the entrance into the realization that there is a general transformation of all things (beatitude), and “Father” represents that feeling itself—the sensation of eternity and perfection.

I am embarrassed to remind you of what the church has made of this symbolism: has it not turned it into an Amphitryon story at the threshold of the Christian “faith”? And, for good measure, a dogma of the “immaculate conception”... And with that, it has robbed conception of its immaculateness.

The “kingdom of heaven” is a state of the heart—not something to come “beyond the world” or “after death.” The entire concept of natural death is absent from the Gospels: death is not a bridge, not a transition; it is absent because it belongs to a different, merely apparent world, one useful only as a symbol. The “hour of death” is not a Christian idea—“hours,” time, physical life, and its crises have no existence for the bearer of “glad tidings.” The “kingdom of God” is not something people are waiting for: it has no yesterday and no tomorrow, it is not going to come at a “millennium”—it is an experience of the heart, it is everywhere and nowhere.

35

This “bearer of glad tidings” died as he lived and taught—not to “save mankind,” but to show mankind how to live. It was a way of life that he left as his gift to humanity: his behavior before the judges, before the officers, before his accusers—his behavior on the cross. He does not resist;

he does not defend his rights; he makes no attempt to avoid the most extreme penalty—more, he invites it. And he prays, suffers, and loves with those, in those, who do him harm.

Not to defend oneself, not to show anger, not to place blame... On the contrary, to submit even to the Evil One—to love him...

36

We free spirits—we are the first to have the necessary prerequisite to understanding what nineteen centuries have misunderstood—that instinct and passion for integrity which makes war on the “holy lie” even more than on all other lies. Mankind was unimaginably far from our benevolent and cautious neutrality, from that discipline of the spirit which alone makes possible the solution of such strange and subtle things: what men always sought, with shameless egoism, was their own advantage in it; they created the church out of a denial of the Gospels.

Whoever sought signs of an ironic divinity's hand in the great drama of existence would find no small indication of it in the enormous question mark that is called Christianity. That mankind should be on its knees before the very opposite of what was the origin, the meaning, and the law of the Gospels—that in the concept of the “church,” the very things that the “bearer of glad tidings” considers beneath him and behind him should be proclaimed holy—it would be impossible to find a greater example of world-historical irony.

37

Our age is proud of its historical sense: how, then, could it delude itself into believing that the crude fable of the wonder-worker and Savior marked the beginnings of Christianity—and that everything spiritual and symbolic in it only came later? Quite the opposite, the whole history of Christianity—from the death on the cross onward—is the history of a progressively more clumsy misunderstanding of an original symbolism. With every spread of Christianity among larger and coarser masses, even less able to grasp the principles that gave birth to it, the need arose to make it more and more vulgar and barbaric—it absorbed the teachings and rituals of all the underground cults of the Roman Empire, and the absurdities created by all kinds of sickly reasoning.

It was Christianity's fate that its faith had to become as sickly, as low, and as vulgar as the needs were sickly, low, and vulgar to which it had to cater. A sickly barbarism eventually rises to power as the church—the church, that incarnation of deadly hostility to all honesty, to all loftiness of soul, to all discipline of the spirit, to all spontaneous and kindly humanity.

Christian values—noble values: it is only we, we free spirits, who have re-established this greatest of all antitheses in values!

I cannot, at this point, avoid a sigh. There are days when I am overtaken by a feeling darker than the deepest melancholy—contempt for man. Let me make no mistake about what I despise, whom I despise: it is the man of today, the man with whom I am unfortunately contemporaneous. The man of today—I am suffocated by his foul breath! Toward the past, like all who understand, I am full of tolerance, which means generous self-control: with gloomy caution, I pass through whole millennia of this madhouse of a world, call it “Christianity,” “Christian faith,” or the “Christian church,” as you like—I make sure not to hold mankind responsible for its madness.

But my feeling changes and breaks out uncontrollably the moment I enter modern times, our times. Our age knows better... What was once merely sickly now becomes indecent—it is indecent to be a Christian today. And here my disgust begins. I look around: not a word survives of what was once called “truth”; we can no longer bear to hear a priest speak it. Even a man who makes the most modest claim to integrity must know that a theologian, a priest, a pope today not only errs when he speaks, but actually lies—and that he can no longer escape blame for his lie through “innocence” or “ignorance.” The priest knows, as everyone knows, that there is no longer any “God,” or any “sinner,” or any “Savior”—that “free will” and the “moral order of the world” are lies—serious reflection, profound self-conquest of the spirit, allow no man to pretend that he doesn’t know this.

All the ideas of the church are now recognized for what they are—as the worst counterfeits in existence, invented to debase nature and all natural values; the priest himself is seen as he truly is—as the most dangerous form of parasite, the venomous spider of creation. We know, our conscience now knows—just what the real value of all those sinister inventions of the priest and church has been and what ends they have served, with their degradation of humanity into a state of self-pollution, the mere sight of which excites loathing—the concepts “the other world,” “the last judgment,” “the immortality of the soul,” the “soul” itself: they are all just instruments of torture, systems of cruelty, through which the priest becomes master and remains master.

Everyone knows this, but nevertheless, things remain as before. What has become of the last trace of decent feeling, of self-respect, when our statesmen, otherwise a non-conventional class of men and thoroughly anti-Christian in their actions, now call themselves Christians and approach the communion table? A prince at the head of his armies, magnificent as the expression of his people's egoism and arrogance—and yet acknowledging, without shame, that he is a Christian! Whom, then, does Christianity deny? What does it call “the world”? To be a soldier, to be a judge, to be a patriot; to defend oneself; to be careful of one’s honor; to desire one’s own advantage; to be proud... every act of everyday life, every instinct, every value that shows itself in an action, is now anti-Christian: what a monster of falsehood the modern man must be to still call himself a Christian, without shame!

I will go back a bit and tell you the true history of Christianity. The very word “Christianity” is a misunderstanding—at its core, there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross. The “Gospels” died on the cross. What, from that moment onward, was called the “Gospels” was the complete opposite of what he had lived: “bad tidings,” a Dysangelium. It is an error, bordering on nonsense, to see in “faith,” particularly faith in salvation through Christ, the defining characteristic of Christianity: only the Christian way of life, the life lived by the one who died on the cross, is Christian... To this day, such a life is still possible, and for certain people, even necessary: genuine, primitive Christianity will remain possible in all ages...

Not faith, but actions; above all, an avoidance of actions, a different state of being... States of consciousness, a kind of faith, the acceptance of anything as true— as every psychologist knows, the value of these things is completely irrelevant and second-rate compared to that of the instincts: strictly speaking, the entire concept of intellectual causality is false. To reduce being a Christian, the state of Christianity, to an acceptance of truth, to a mere phenomenon of consciousness, is to negate Christianity itself. In fact, there are no Christians. The “Christian”—the one who, for two thousand years, has been considered a Christian—is simply a psychological self-delusion. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that, despite all his “faith,” he has been ruled only by his instincts—and what instincts! In all ages—for instance, in the case of Luther—“faith” has merely been a cloak, a pretense, a curtain behind which the instincts have played their game—a shrewd blindness to the domination of certain instincts...

I have already called “faith” the particularly Christian form of shrewdness—people always talk about their “faith” and act according to their instincts... In the world of ideas of the Christian, there is nothing that even touches reality: on the contrary, one recognizes an instinctive hatred of reality as the driving force, the only driving force behind Christianity. What follows from this? That even here, in psychology, there is a radical error, which means a fundamental error, meaning one in substance. Take away one idea and replace it with a genuine reality—and Christianity collapses into nothingness! Viewed calmly, this strangest of all phenomena, a religion not only built on errors, but one that is inventive and ingenious only in crafting harmful errors, poisonous to life and to the heart—this remains a spectacle for the gods—for those gods who are also philosophers, and whom I have encountered, for example, in the famous dialogues at Naxos. When their disgust fades (—and ours!), they will be thankful for the spectacle offered by the Christians: perhaps because of this curious display alone, the wretched little planet called Earth deserves a glance from omnipotence, a show of divine interest...

Therefore, let us not underestimate the Christians: the Christian, false to the point of innocence, is far above the ape—in its application to Christians, a well-known theory of descent becomes nothing more than a matter of politeness...

The fate of the Gospels was determined by death—it hung on the “cross.”... It was only death, that unexpected and shameful death; it was only the cross, which was usually reserved for the lowest of society—it was only this appalling paradox that confronted the disciples with the real riddle: “Who was it? What was it?” The feeling of dismay, of profound insult and injury; the suspicion that such a death might disprove their cause; the terrible question, “Why just this way?”—this state of mind is all too easy to understand. Everything must be explained as necessary; everything must have meaning, a reason, the highest kind of reason; the love of a disciple excludes all chance. Only then did the chasm of doubt open wide: “Who killed him? Who was his true enemy?”—this question struck like a lightning bolt. Answer: dominant Judaism, its ruling class. From that moment, one found oneself in revolt against the established order and began to understand Jesus as being in revolt against the established order. Until then, this militant, nay-saying, active opposition in his character had been absent; what’s more, he had appeared to represent its opposite.

Obviously, the small community had not understood what was the most important thing of all: the example of how he died, the freedom from and superiority over every feeling of resentment—a clear sign of how little he was understood at all! All that Jesus could hope to accomplish by his death, in itself, was to offer the strongest possible proof, or example, of his teachings in the most public manner...

But his disciples were far from forgiving his death—though doing so would have aligned with the Gospels in the highest degree; and neither were they prepared to offer themselves, with gentle and serene calmness of heart, for a similar death... On the contrary, it was precisely the most un-Christian of emotions, revenge, that now consumed them. It seemed impossible that the cause should die with him: “recompense” and “judgment” became necessary (yet what could be less Christian than “recompense,” “punishment,” and “sitting in judgment!”). Once again, the popular belief in the coming of a messiah resurfaced; attention was focused on a historical moment: the “kingdom of God” is to come, with judgment upon his enemies...

But in all this, there was a complete misunderstanding: to imagine the “kingdom of God” as a final act, as a mere promise! The Gospels had actually been the incarnation, the fulfillment, the realization of this “kingdom of God.” It was only now that all the familiar contempt for and bitterness against the Pharisees and theologians began to appear in the character of the Master—he was thereby turned into a Pharisee and theologian himself! On the other hand, the savage veneration of these completely unbalanced souls could no longer bear the Gospel doctrine, taught by Jesus, of the equal right of all men to be children of God: their revenge took the form of elevating Jesus in an extravagant way, thus separating him from themselves—just as, in earlier times, the Jews, to get back at their enemies, distanced themselves from their God and

placed him on a great height. The One God and the Only Son of God: both were products of resentment.

41

And from that moment onward, an absurd problem presented itself: "How could God allow this!" To which the deranged reasoning of the small community formulated an answer that was terrifying in its absurdity: God gave his son as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. And with that, the Gospels came to an end! Sacrifice for sin, and in its most obnoxious and barbaric form: the sacrifice of the innocent for the sins of the guilty! What appalling paganism!—Jesus himself had abolished the very concept of "guilt," he denied that there was any gulf between God and man; he lived out this unity between God and man, and that was precisely his "glad tidings"...

And not as a mere privilege! From this point on, the image of the Savior was corrupted bit by bit, by the doctrine of judgment and the second coming, the doctrine of death as a sacrifice, the doctrine of the resurrection, by means of which the entire concept of "blessedness," the whole and only reality of the Gospels, was juggled away—in favor of a state of existence after death... St. Paul, with his rabbinical impudence that shows in everything he does, gave a logical form to this concept, this indecent idea, in this way: "If Christ did not rise from the dead, then all our faith is in vain!"

And immediately there sprang from the Gospels the most contemptible of all unfulfillable promises, the shameless doctrine of personal immortality... Paul even preached it as a reward...

42

One begins to see what truly ended with the death on the cross: a new and thoroughly original attempt to found a Buddhistic peace movement and establish happiness on earth—real, not merely promised. This remains—as I have already pointed out—the essential difference between the two religions of decadence: Buddhism promises nothing, but actually fulfills; Christianity promises everything, but fulfills nothing.

Right on the heels of the "glad tidings" came the worst imaginable: those of Paul. In Paul is embodied the exact opposite of the "bearer of glad tidings"; he represents the genius for hatred, the vision of hatred, the relentless logic of hatred. What, indeed, has this dysangelist not sacrificed to hatred! Above all, the Savior: he nailed him to his own cross. The life, the example, the teaching, the death of Christ, the meaning and the law of the entire Gospels—nothing was left of all of this after that counterfeiter of hatred reduced it to his own purposes. Surely not reality; surely not historical truth!

Once again, the priestly instinct of the Jew committed the same old master crime against history—he simply erased the yesterday and the day before yesterday of Christianity, and

invented his own history of Christian beginnings. Going further, he falsified the history of Israel to make it merely a prelude to his achievement: all the prophets, it now appeared, had referred to his “Savior.” Later on, the church even falsified the history of mankind to make it a prelude to Christianity.

The figure of the Savior, his teaching, his way of life, his death, the meaning of his death, even the consequences of his death—nothing was untouched, nothing remained even remotely connected with reality. Paul simply shifted the center of gravity of that entire life to a place behind this existence—in the lie of the “risen” Jesus. At the core, he had no use for the life of the Savior—what he needed was the death on the cross, and something more.

To see anything honest in a man like Paul, whose home was at the center of Stoic enlightenment, when he turns an hallucination into proof of the resurrection of the Savior, or even to believe his tale that he suffered from this hallucination himself—this would be true naiveté in a psychologist. Paul willed the end; therefore, he also willed the means. What he himself didn’t believe was swallowed readily enough by the idiots among whom he spread his teaching. What he wanted was power; in Paul, the priest once again reached for power—he had use only for such concepts, teachings, and symbols as served the purpose of tyrannizing over the masses and organizing mobs.

What was the only part of Christianity that Mohammed later borrowed? Paul’s invention, his device for establishing priestly tyranny and organizing the mob: the belief in the immortality of the soul—that is, the doctrine of “judgment”...

43

When the center of gravity of life is placed, not in life itself, but in “the beyond”—in nothingness—then one has completely taken away its center of gravity. The vast lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, all natural instinct—henceforth, everything in the instincts that is beneficial, that fosters life, and that safeguards the future becomes a cause for suspicion. So, to live in such a way that life no longer has any meaning: this is now the “meaning” of life...

Why be public-spirited? Why take any pride in descent and forefathers? Why work together, trust each other, or care about the common welfare, and try to serve it? ... Merely so many “temptations,” so many deviations from the “straight path.” —“One thing only is necessary”...

That every man, because he has an “immortal soul,” is as good as every other man; that in an infinite universe, the “salvation” of every individual may claim eternal importance; that insignificant bigots and the three-fourths insane may assume that the laws of nature are constantly suspended for their benefit—it is impossible to have too much contempt for such a magnification of every kind of selfishness to infinity, to insolence.

And yet Christianity owes its triumph precisely to this miserable flattery of personal vanity—it was this that lured all the flawed, the dissatisfied, the fallen on hard times, the whole refuse and scum of humanity to its side. The “salvation of the soul”—in plain English: “the world revolves around me.”

The poisonous doctrine, “equal rights for all,” has been propagated as a Christian principle: from the hidden corners of bad instincts, Christianity has waged a deadly war on all feelings of reverence and distance between man and man, which is to say, against the first prerequisite to every step upward, to every development of civilization—out of the resentment of the masses, it has forged its chief weapons against us, against everything noble, joyous, and high-spirited on earth, against our happiness on earth...

To allow “immortality” to every Peter and Paul was the greatest, most vicious outrage against noble humanity ever perpetrated. And let us not underestimate the fatal influence Christianity has had, even on politics! Nowadays no one has the courage for special rights, for the right of dominion, for feelings of honorable pride in himself and his equals—for the pathos of distance... Our politics is sick with this lack of courage!

The aristocratic attitude of mind has been undermined by the lie of the equality of souls; and if belief in the “privileges of the majority” continues to make revolutions—it is Christianity, let us not doubt, and Christian values, which turn every revolution into a carnival of blood and crime! Christianity is a revolt of all creatures that crawl on the ground against everything that is lofty: the gospel of the “lowly” lowers...

44

The Gospels are invaluable as evidence of the corruption that was already persistent within the early Christian community. What Paul, with the cynical logic of a rabbi, later developed to its conclusion was essentially a process of decay that began with the death of the Savior. These Gospels cannot be read too carefully; difficulties lurk behind every word. I confess—I hope it will not be held against me—that it is precisely for this reason that they offer immense pleasure to a psychologist—as the opposite of mere naïve corruption, as refinement par excellence, as an artistic triumph in psychological corruption. The Gospels, in fact, stand alone. The Bible as a whole cannot be compared to them. Here we are among Jews: this is the first thing to remember if we are not to lose the thread of the matter. This positive genius for creating a delusion of personal “holiness” unmatched anywhere else, either in books or by men; this elevation of fraud in word and attitude to the level of an art—all this is not an accident due to the chance talents of an individual, or to any violation of nature. The thing responsible is race. The whole of Judaism appears in Christianity as the art of concocting holy lies, and there, after many centuries of earnest Jewish training and the hard practice of Jewish technique, the business reaches its stage of mastery. The Christian, that ultimate form of lying, is the Jew all over again—he is threefold the Jew.

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

The underlying will to use only those concepts, symbols, and attitudes that fit into priestly practice, the instinctive rejection of every other way of thinking, and every other method of estimating values and utilities—this is not only tradition, it is inheritance: only as an inheritance can it operate with the force of nature. The whole of mankind, even the best minds of the best ages (with one exception, perhaps hardly human—), have allowed themselves to be deceived. The Gospels have been read as a book of innocence... surely no small indication of the high skill with which the trick has been done.

Of course, if we could actually see these astounding bigots and fake saints, even for an instant, the farce would come to an end—and it is precisely because I cannot read a word of theirs without seeing their posturing that I have made an end of them. I simply cannot endure the way they roll their eyes.

For the majority, fortunately enough, books are mere literature. Let us not be misled: they say “judge not,” and yet they condemn to hell whoever stands in their way. In letting God sit in judgment, they judge themselves; in glorifying God, they glorify themselves; in demanding that everyone display the virtues they themselves happen to have—or must have in order to stay on top—they assume the grand air of people fighting for virtue, of people engaged in a war for virtue to prevail. “We live, we die, we sacrifice ourselves for the good” (the “truth,” the “light,” the “kingdom of God”): in fact, they simply do what they cannot help doing. Forced, like hypocrites, to be sneaky, to hide in corners, to slink along in the shadows, they turn their necessity into a duty: it is on the grounds of duty that they justify their lives of humility, and that humility becomes merely one more proof of their piety. Ah, that humble, chaste, charitable brand of fraud! “Virtue itself shall bear witness for us.”

One can read the Gospels as books of moral seduction: these petty folks latch onto morality—they know the uses of morality! Morality is the best device for leading mankind by the nose! The fact is that the conscious conceit of the chosen here disguises itself as modesty: it is in this way that they, the “community,” the “good and just,” align themselves, once and for all, on one side, the side of “the truth”—and the rest of mankind, “the world,” on the other... In that, we observe the most dangerous form of megalomania that the earth has ever seen: small bigots and liars began to claim exclusive rights to the concepts of “God,” “the truth,” “the light,” “the spirit,” “love,” “wisdom,” and “life,” as if these things were synonyms of themselves, and by doing so, they sought to separate themselves from the “world”; little super-Jews, ripe for some sort of madhouse, turned values upside down to suit their notions, just as if the Christian were the meaning, the salt, the standard, and even the final judgment of all the rest...

The whole disaster was only made possible by the fact that there already existed in the world a similar megalomania, allied to this one in race, namely, the Jewish: once a chasm began to yawn between Jews and Judaeo-Christians, the latter had no choice but to employ the self-preservation tactics that the Jewish instinct had devised, even against the Jews themselves, whereas the Jews

had employed them only against non-Jews. The Christian is simply a Jew of the “reformed” confession.

45

I offer a few examples of the sort of things these petty people have got into their heads—what they have put into the mouth of the Master: the pure creed of “beautiful souls.”

“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city” (Mark vi, 11)—How evangelical!

“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mark ix, 42).—How evangelical!

“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire; Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark ix, 47).—It is not exactly the eye that is meant....

“Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” (Mark ix, 1).—Well lied, lion!

“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For...” (Note of a psychologist. Christian morality is refuted by its fors: its reasons are against it,—this makes it Christian.) Mark viii, 34.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matthew vii, 1)—What a notion of justice, of a “just” judge!

“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?” (Matthew v, 46)—Principle of “Christian love”: it insists upon being well paid in the end...

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew vi, 15).—Very compromising for the said “father.”

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew vi, 33).—All these things: namely, food, clothing, all the necessities of life. An error, to put it mildly.... A bit before this God appears as a tailor, at least in certain cases....

“Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” (Luke vi, 23.)—Impudent rabble! It compares itself to the prophets....

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (Paul, 1 Corinthians iii, 16.)—For that sort of thing one cannot have enough contempt....

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (Paul, 1 Corinthians vi, 2.)—Unfortunately, not merely the speech of a lunatic.... This frightful impostor then proceeds: “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?”

“Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.... Not many wise men after the flesh, not men mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” (Paul, 1 Corinthians i, 20ff.)—In order to understand this passage, a first-rate example of the psychology underlying every Chandala-morality, one should read the first part of my “Genealogy of Morals”: there, for the first time, the antagonism between a noble morality and a morality born of resentment and impotent vengefulness is exhibited. Paul was the greatest of all apostles of revenge...

46

What follows, then? One had better put on gloves before reading the New Testament. The presence of so much filth makes it very advisable. One would as little choose “early Christians” for companions as Polish Jews: not that one needs to find an objection to them... Neither has a pleasant smell.

I have searched the New Testament in vain for a single sympathetic touch; there is nothing there that is free, kindly, open-hearted, or upright. In it, humanity does not even make the first step upward—the instinct for cleanliness is lacking... Only evil instincts are present, and there is not even the courage of these evil instincts. It is all cowardice; it is all a shutting of the eyes, a self-deception. Every other book becomes clean once one has read the New Testament: for example, immediately after reading Paul, I took up with delight that most charming and wanton of scoffers, Petronius, of whom one may say what Domenico Boccaccio wrote of Caesar Borgia to the Duke of Parma: “è tutto festo”—immortally healthy, immortally cheerful, and sound...

These petty bigots make a capital miscalculation. They attack, but everything they attack is thereby distinguished. Whoever is attacked by an “early Christian” is surely not befouled... On the contrary, it is an honor to have an “early Christian” as an opponent. One cannot read the New Testament without acquiring admiration for whatever it abuses—not to speak of the “wisdom of this world,” which an impudent windbag tries to dispose of “by the foolishness of preaching.” Even the scribes and Pharisees are benefited by such opposition: they must certainly have been worth something to have been hated in such an indecent manner. Hypocrisy—as if this were a charge that the “early Christians” dared to make! After all, they were the privileged, and that was enough: the hatred of the Chandala needed no other excuse.

The “early Christian”—and also, I fear, the “last Christian,” whom I may perhaps live to see—is a rebel against all privilege by profound instinct—he lives and makes war forever for “equal rights.” Strictly speaking, he has no alternative. When a man proposes to represent, in his own person, the “chosen of God”—or to be a “temple of God,” or a “judge of the angels”—then every other criterion, whether based upon honesty, intellect, manliness, pride, beauty, or freedom of heart, becomes simply “worldly”—evil in itself.

Moral: every word that comes from the lips of an “early Christian” is a lie, and his every act is instinctively dishonest—all his values, all his aims are noxious, but whoever he hates, whatever he hates, has real value. The Christian, and particularly the Christian priest, is thus a criterion of values.

Must I add that, in the whole New Testament, there appears but a solitary figure worthy of honor? Pilate, the Roman viceroy. To regard a Jewish imbroglio seriously—that was quite beyond him. One Jew more or less—what did it matter? The noble scorn of a Roman, before whom the word “truth” was shamelessly mishandled, enriched the New Testament with the only saying that has any value—and that is at once its criticism and its destruction: “What is truth?”

47

What sets us apart is not that we are unable to find God, either in history, nature, or behind nature—but that we regard what has been honored as God, not as “divine,” but as pitiable, absurd, and harmful; not just a mistake, but a crime against life... We deny that God is God... If anyone were to show us this Christian God, we would be even less inclined to believe in him.

In a formula: the God that Paul created is the denial of God.

Such a religion as Christianity, which doesn't touch reality at any point and falls apart the moment reality asserts itself, must inevitably be the deadly enemy of the “wisdom of this world”—that is, of science—and it will label as good whatever methods serve to poison, slander, and undermine all intellectual discipline, clarity, and rigor in intellectual conscience, as well as all noble composure and freedom of thought. “Faith,” as an imperative, rejects science—in

practice, lying at any cost... Paul knew well that lying—that “faith”—was necessary; later, the church borrowed this from Paul.

The God that Paul invented for himself, a God who “reduced to absurdity” “the wisdom of this world” (especially the two great enemies of superstition, philology and medicine), is really just a sign of Paul’s firm intention to do the same thing himself: to give his own will the name of God. The Torah—that is essentially Jewish. Paul wants to eliminate the “wisdom of this world.” His enemies are the good philologists and physicians of the Alexandrian school—he wages war on them. In fact, no man can be a philologist or a physician without also being Antichrist. That is, as a philologist, a man sees behind the “holy books,” and as a physician, he sees behind the physiological degeneration of the typical Christian. The physician says “incurable”; the philologist says “fraud.”

48

Has anyone ever fully understood the famous story at the beginning of the Bible—the one where God is terrified of science? No one, in fact, has understood it. This priestly book par excellence begins, as is fitting, with the great internal conflict of the priest: he faces only one great danger; therefore, “God” faces only one great danger.

The old God, entirely “spirit,” wholly the high priest, completely perfect, is walking around his garden: he’s bored and trying to kill time. Even gods struggle in vain against boredom. What does he do? He creates man—man is entertaining... But then he realizes that man is also bored. God’s pity for the only form of distress that invades all paradises knows no bounds: so he immediately creates other animals. God’s first mistake: to man, these other animals weren’t entertaining—he sought dominion over them; he didn’t want to be an “animal” himself.

So God created woman. In doing so, he brought boredom to an end—and also many other things! Woman was God’s second mistake. “Woman, at bottom, is a serpent, Heva”—every priest knows that. “From woman comes every evil in the world”—every priest knows that too. Therefore, she is also to blame for science... It was through woman that man learned to taste the tree of knowledge. What happened? The old God was seized with mortal terror. Man himself had been his greatest mistake; he had created a rival to himself; science makes men godlike—it’s all over for priests and gods when man becomes scientific!

Moral: science is forbidden per se; it is the one thing forbidden. Science is the first of sins, the germ of all sins, the original sin. This is the essence of morality. “Thou shalt not know”: the rest follows from that.

However, God’s mortal terror didn’t stop him from being shrewd. How is one to protect oneself from science? For a long time, this was the capital problem. The answer: out of paradise with man! Happiness, leisure, foster thought—and all thoughts are bad thoughts! Man must not think.

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

And so the priest invents distress, death, the mortal dangers of childbirth, all sorts of misery, old age, decrepitude, above all, sickness—nothing but tactics to wage war against science! The troubles of man don't allow him to think...

Nevertheless—how terrible!—the structure of knowledge begins to tower above, invading heaven, overshadowing the gods—what is to be done? The old God invents war; he separates the peoples; he makes men destroy one another (priests have always needed war). War—among other things, is a great disruptor of science! Incredible! Knowledge, liberation from the priests, thrives in spite of war.

So the old God comes to his final resolution: “Man has become scientific—there is no helping it: he must be drowned!”

49

I have been understood. At the beginning of the Bible lies the entire psychology of the priest. The priest knows of only one great danger: that is science—the true understanding of cause and effect. But science flourishes, for the most part, only under favorable conditions—a person must have time, and their intellect must be overflowing, in order to “know.”... “Therefore, man must be made unhappy”—this has been, throughout all ages, the logic of the priest.

It is easy to see what, by this logic, was the first thing to enter the world: “sin.”... The concept of guilt and punishment, the whole “moral order of the world,” was established against science—against the liberation of man from priests.

Man must not look outward; he must look inward. He must not examine things carefully and critically, to understand them; he must not look at all; he must suffer... And he must suffer so much that he is always in need of the priest.

Away with physicians! What is needed is a Savior. The concepts of guilt and punishment, including the doctrines of “grace,” “salvation,” and “forgiveness”—lies through and through, and absolutely without psychological reality—were created to destroy man's sense of causality: they are an attack on the concept of cause and effect!

And not an attack with the fist, with the knife, with honesty in hate or love! On the contrary, one inspired by the most cowardly, the most crafty, the most dishonorable of instincts! An attack by priests! An attack by parasites! The vampirism of pale, subterranean leeches!

When the natural consequences of an act are no longer “natural,” but are seen as produced by ghostly creations of superstition—by “God,” by “spirits,” by “souls”—and are treated merely as “moral” consequences, as rewards, punishments, hints, or lessons, then the very foundation of knowledge is destroyed. At that point, the greatest crime against humanity has been committed.

I repeat, that sin, man's self-desecration par excellence, was invented to make science, culture, and the elevation and ennobling of man impossible; the priest rules through the invention of sin.

50

In this context, I can't fail to provide a psychology of "belief," for the benefit of the "believers." If there are still those today who do not understand how indecent it is to be "believing"—or how much it signals decadence, a broken will to live—then they will understand it soon enough. My voice reaches even those who are deaf.

It seems, unless I've been misinformed, that among Christians there's a kind of truth criterion called "proof by power." "Faith makes blessed; therefore, it is true." One could object right here that blessedness is not demonstrated; it's merely promised. It depends on "faith" as a condition—you will be blessed because you believe.

But what about the thing that the priest promises to the believer, the completely transcendental "beyond"—how is that to be demonstrated? The "proof by power" assumed here is nothing more than a belief that the effects promised by faith will inevitably appear. In other words: "I believe that faith leads to blessedness—therefore, it is true."

But that conclusion is absurd as a criterion of truth.

Let's be polite and admit that blessedness by faith might be demonstrated (not just hoped for, and not merely promised by the priest's dubious words). Even so, could blessedness—in other words, pleasure—ever be a proof of truth? So little is this true that, in fact, it's almost proof against truth when feelings of pleasure influence the answer to the question "What is true?" At the very least, it makes that "truth" highly suspicious.

The proof by "pleasure" is only a proof of "pleasure"—nothing more. Why should it be assumed that true judgments bring more pleasure than false ones, and that, in some preordained harmony, they necessarily lead to agreeable feelings? The experience of all disciplined and profound minds teaches the opposite. Man has had to struggle for every bit of truth, and had to pay for it with almost everything that the heart, human love, and trust hold dear. Greatness of soul is required for this pursuit: the service of truth is the hardest of all services.

So what is the meaning of integrity in intellectual matters? It means that a person must be strict with their own heart, must scorn "beautiful feelings," and must make every affirmation and denial a matter of conscience.

Faith makes blessed: therefore, it lies.

The fact that faith, under certain conditions, may lead to blessedness, but that this blessedness produced by an obsessive idea does not make the idea itself true, and the fact that faith doesn't move mountains but instead creates them where none existed before, is clearly demonstrated by a visit to a mental institution. Of course, not to a priest—because his instincts prompt him to lie, to claim that sickness is not sickness and that mental hospitals are not hospitals for the insane. Christianity depends on sickness, just as the Greek spirit needed an abundance of health. The true, underlying purpose of the entire Christian system of salvation is to make people ill. And doesn't the church itself set up a Catholic madhouse as the ultimate ideal? The whole earth as a madhouse?

The type of religious person the church desires is a typical decadent. When a religious crisis dominates a society, it's always marked by epidemics of nervous disorders. The "inner world" of the religious person is so similar to the "inner world" of those exhausted and overstretched that it's hard to tell them apart. The highest states of mind, held up by Christianity as the most valuable, are actually epileptoid in nature—the church has only granted holiness to lunatics or colossal frauds.

I once described the entire Christian system of penance and salvation (now most clearly studied in England) as a method of creating a circular madness in a population already predisposed to it, a population thoroughly unhealthy. Not everyone can be a Christian: one is not simply "converted" to Christianity—one must first be sick enough to accept it. As for us, who have the courage for health and disdain for weakness, we may well despise a religion that teaches misunderstanding of the body, that refuses to discard the superstition of the soul, that makes a virtue out of malnutrition, that combats health as an enemy, a temptation, a devil, and that convinces itself that it's possible to carry a "perfect soul" in a dying body. To this end, Christianity devised a new concept of "perfection," a pale, sickly, ecstatic state of being called "holiness"—which is really just a set of symptoms of a weakened, exhausted, and incurably diseased body.

Christianity, as a European movement, was from the beginning nothing more than a collective uprising of all sorts of outcast, discarded, and weak elements—who now, under the guise of Christianity, aspire to power. It doesn't represent the decay of a race; on the contrary, it represents a gathering of products of decadence from all sides, uniting and seeking each other out. Christianity was not a "national" religion nor was it based on race; it appealed to all varieties of men disinherited by life. It had allies everywhere. Christianity's core contains the resentment of the sick—it's instinctively against the healthy and against health. Everything that is strong, proud, gallant, and beautiful offends Christianity's sensibilities. Again, I remind you of Paul's priceless words: "And God hath chosen the weak things of the world, the foolish things of the

world, the base things of the world, and things which are despised.” This was the formula; in this sign, decadence triumphed.

God on the cross—will man ever grasp the terrifying inner meaning of this symbol? Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the cross, is divine. We all hang on the cross, therefore we are divine. We alone are divine. Christianity was thus a victory: it destroyed a nobler way of thinking. Christianity remains to this day humanity's greatest misfortune.

52

Christianity is fundamentally opposed to intellectual well-being; it thrives on sick reasoning, the only type it considers acceptable. It sides with everything that is nonsensical and curses the "intellect," the pride of a healthy mind. Since sickness is intrinsic to Christianity, it follows that the state of "faith" is a form of sickness as well. All direct, straightforward, and scientific paths to knowledge are condemned by the church as forbidden. Doubt is, from the start, a sin.

The complete lack of psychological cleanliness in the priest—visible with a simple glance—is a product of decadence. One can observe in hysterical women and rachitic children how regularly the distortion of instincts, the pleasure in lying for its own sake, and the inability to think or act clearly are symptoms of decadence. "Faith" means the will to avoid knowing what is true. The pietist, the priest, is a fraud because they are sick: their instinct demands that truth never be allowed its due rights.

"Whatever promotes illness is good; whatever comes from abundance, from strength, from power, is evil": this is the belief of the Christian. The impulse to lie—this is how I recognize every theologian. Another characteristic of the theologian is their incompetence in philology. By philology, I mean the general art of reading with insight—the ability to absorb facts without misinterpreting them, without losing caution, patience, and subtlety in the process. Philology as cautious interpretation: whether one is dealing with books, news reports, critical events, or even weather statistics—not to mention the "salvation of the soul."

The way a theologian, whether in Berlin or Rome, explains a "passage of Scripture," or an event like a national victory, by imposing the high light of the Psalms of David on it, is so audacious that it would make any philologist cringe. But what should be done when pietists and other such simpletons use the "finger of God" to transform their mundane, miserable existence into a miracle of "grace," "providence," or an "experience of salvation"? Any modest intellectual exercise—or even basic decency—should be enough to recognize the childishness and worthlessness of such misuse of divine power.

Even with our smallest piety, if we encountered a god who always cured us of a cold right when we needed it or got us into our carriage exactly when it started raining, we would find such a god so absurd that we would have to reject him—even if he existed. God as a domestic servant, as a

letter carrier, as a weather forecaster—ultimately, he's just a name for the most ridiculous form of chance. "Divine Providence," which every third person in "educated Germany" still believes in, is one of the strongest arguments against God. It's hard to think of a stronger one. And in any case, it's an argument against Germans!

53

It is far from true that martyrs support the truth of a cause; in fact, I am inclined to argue that no martyr has ever been associated with truth at all. The very tone in which a martyr proclaims what he believes to be true shows a lack of intellectual honesty and an ignorance of the problem of "truth," making it unnecessary to refute him. Truth isn't something one man possesses and another doesn't—at best, only simpletons or peasant-apostles like Luther can think of truth this way. The greater a man's intellectual conscience, the greater his humility and caution in this matter. To know a few truths and, with wisdom, to refrain from claiming knowledge beyond that is the hallmark of intellectual integrity.

"Truth," as understood by every prophet, sectarian, free-thinker, Socialist, and churchman, is simply a complete proof that they haven't even begun to develop the intellectual discipline necessary to uncover the smallest truth.

The deaths of martyrs, it can be said, have been tragic events in history; they have misled. The misguided idea that there must be something inherently true in a cause for which someone dies—or, as seen in early Christianity, for which people willingly sought death—has been a significant obstacle to objective inquiry and critical investigation. The martyrdom of these individuals has harmed the search for truth. Even today, the simple fact of persecution is often enough to lend credibility to even the most superficial sectarian belief.

But why? Does the worth of a cause change simply because someone sacrifices their life for it? An error that becomes honorable is just an error that has gained one more seductive appeal. Do you, theologians, think we will give you the chance to be martyred for your lies? The best way to deal with such a cause is to simply put it aside, and this is also the best way to deal with theologians.

This was the historical foolishness of all persecutors: by opposing a cause, they made it appear honorable and imbued it with the allure of martyrdom. Women still kneel before a lie simply because they've been told that someone died on the cross for it. But is the cross itself an argument for truth?

There is only one figure who has said what has been needed for thousands of years—Zarathustra.

They made signs in blood along the way they walked, and their foolishness led them to believe that truth is proven by blood.

But blood is the worst testimony to truth; it poisons even the purest teachings, turning them into madness and hatred in the heart.

When someone endures fire for their teaching, what does that prove? It's much more when one's teaching emerges from their own burning.

54

Don't be fooled: great minds are naturally skeptical. Zarathustra is skeptical. The strength and freedom that come from intellectual power, from an abundance of intellectual capacity, show up as skepticism. People with fixed beliefs don't matter when it comes to determining what is truly valuable or worthless. People with strong convictions are trapped. They can't see beyond their own beliefs, they can't see what lies beneath them. But someone who wants to talk about what is truly valuable must be able to look beyond their own narrow view and consider hundreds of other beliefs and perspectives.

A person who wants to achieve great things and who desires the means to get there must, by nature, be skeptical. Real freedom from conviction belongs to those who have the strength to think independently.

A great passion, which drives the existence of a skeptic, is the source of both their power and their enlightenment. This passion can be even more controlling than the person who holds it. It uses up the person's intellect, sometimes even allowing them to be unscrupulous, and in some cases, it doesn't even shy away from adopting beliefs temporarily. Beliefs can be useful tools: you can achieve a lot by holding onto a belief. But a grand passion uses these beliefs as tools, without being controlled by them—it knows it is in charge.

On the other hand, the need for faith, something unconditionally true, shows weakness. The person who believes in something, no matter what it is, is dependent. Such a person cannot create their own purpose or find meaning within themselves. They cannot truly belong to themselves; they are just a means to someone else's end—they must be used. Their instincts lead them to value selflessness, which is encouraged by all of their experiences, including their vanity. Faith is essentially about self-denial and self-alienation.

When you think about how the majority of people need outside rules to keep them in line and how control—or even slavery—is what makes weak-willed individuals, especially women, function well, it becomes clear why conviction and faith are needed. For someone with strong convictions, those beliefs are their foundation. To avoid seeing things in a broader perspective, to be narrow-minded, to follow a specific cause without question, and to be completely certain of their own views—these are all things a person with convictions must do. But at the same time, this mindset is the enemy of truth. The person with deep beliefs cannot answer the question of “What is true?” based on their own conscience—doing so would lead to their downfall. Their

limited vision turns them into a fanatic—people like Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, and Saint-Simon. These individuals, with their extreme views, are opposed to those with an emancipated, strong spirit. But the grand and dramatic way these sick minds present themselves has a strong influence on the masses—fanatics are eye-catching, and people tend to enjoy watching dramatic figures more than they enjoy rational discussion.

55

Let's go a step further in understanding the psychology of conviction, or "faith." It's been quite some time since I first raised the question of whether convictions are actually more dangerous to truth than lies. (See "Human, All-Too-Human," I, aphorism 483.) Now, I want to address the question directly: Is there any real difference between a lie and a conviction? The world believes there is, but then again, what doesn't the world believe! Every conviction has its history, its early stages, its period of uncertainty and error. It becomes a true conviction only after a long time of not being one, and even longer when it's barely one. What if a lie is just one of those early stages of a conviction? Sometimes, all it takes is a change in people: what was a lie for the father becomes a conviction for the son.

I consider it a lie to refuse to see what you actually see, or to refuse to see it as it really is. Whether the lie is spoken publicly or not makes no difference. The most common form of lying is when a person deceives themselves; deceiving others is relatively rare.

Now, refusing to see what you see, refusing to see things as they are, is almost the first requirement for anyone belonging to any party. A party member inevitably becomes a liar. For example, German historians are convinced that Rome was synonymous with despotism and that the Germanic peoples brought the spirit of liberty to the world. What's the difference between this conviction and a lie? Should we be surprised that all partisans, including the German historians, instinctively use moral language? Morality almost owes its survival to the fact that the party member needs it constantly. "This is our conviction: we proudly announce it to the world; we live and die by it—let us respect those who have convictions!" I've heard such sentiments from anti-Semites. But no, gentlemen! An anti-Semite doesn't become more respectable just because they lie by principle.

The priests, who are more skilled at these matters, and who understand the problem with the concept of a conviction (i.e., a falsehood that becomes a principle because it serves a purpose), have borrowed the clever tactic from the Jews of introducing terms like "God," "the will of God," and "the revelation of God" into the discussion. Kant, too, with his categorical imperative, was on the same path: this was his practical reason. There are matters about truth or falsity that are beyond human judgment; all the key questions, all the significant issues of value, lie beyond human reasoning. To understand the limits of reason—that alone is true philosophy.

Why did God reveal Himself to humanity? Would God have done anything unnecessary? Humans couldn't figure out what was good or evil on their own, so God revealed His will to them. Moral of the story: the priest doesn't lie—because questions of “true” or “false” have nothing to do with the matters the priest deals with. It's impossible to lie about these things. In order to lie about them, one would need to know what is true, but that's more than humanity can know. Therefore, the priest is simply the mouthpiece of God.

Such priestly reasoning isn't just Jewish or Christian; the right to lie and the clever use of "revelation" belongs to the general priestly type—whether in decadence or in ancient paganism (pagans are those who embrace life, and to whom "God" is a word signifying acquiescence to all things). The "law," "the will of God," "the holy book," and "inspiration" are just words for the conditions under which the priest gains and maintains power. These concepts underlie all priestly organizations and all systems of government that are based on priestly or priestly-philosophical power.

The "holy lie"—shared by Confucius, the Code of Manu, Mohammed, and the Christian church—is even present in Plato. “Truth is here” means, no matter where it is heard, that the priest is lying.

56

Ultimately, it comes down to this: what is the purpose of lying? My objection to Christianity is that it uses means that lead to bad ends. The “holy” goals it claims are not visible; only harmful results appear: poisoning, slander, the denial of life, disdain for the body, and the degradation of humanity through the concept of sin. That's why its means are also bad.

I feel differently when I read the *Code of Manu*, an infinitely more intellectual and superior work. It would be an insult to intelligence to compare it with the Bible. The reason is clear: the *Code of Manu* contains genuine philosophy, not just a vile mix of Jewish rabbinical superstition. It offers something meaningful even to the most discerning psychologists. And, importantly, it differs fundamentally from any Bible: it maintains the dominance of the nobles, philosophers, and warriors over the majority. It is filled with noble values, embracing life, and a triumphant feeling toward oneself and life. The entire work is bathed in the light of the sun.

The things that Christianity degrades—such as procreation, women, and marriage—are treated in the *Code of Manu* with seriousness, reverence, love, and confidence. How can anyone in good conscience give children or women a book that includes phrases like: “to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband; ... it is better to marry than to burn”? And how can one be a Christian if the origin of man is so tainted by the doctrine of the immaculate conception?

I know of no book where women are treated with as much delicacy and kindness as in the *Code of Manu*. The old sages and saints have a manner of treating women with gallantry that may be unsurpassed. As it says in one part: "The mouth of a woman, the breasts of a maiden, the prayer of a child, and the smoke of sacrifice are always pure." In another: "There is nothing purer than the light of the sun, the shadow cast by a cow, air, water, fire, and the breath of a maiden." Finally, perhaps this is also a holy lie: "All the orifices of the body above the navel are pure, and all below are impure. Only in the maiden is the whole body pure."

57

The contrast between Christianity and the *Code of Manu* becomes clear when we examine the ends sought by both. By highlighting the stark differences between these goals, the critic of Christianity must ultimately condemn it. A law book like the *Code of Manu* arises from the wisdom, experience, and ethical experiments of many generations. It consolidates these learnings and brings them to a definitive conclusion, no longer seeking to create new principles but to solidify those that have already proven successful. The creation of such a book implies the recognition that the means of establishing authority for a slowly developed truth differ from those used to prove it. A lawbook doesn't explain the reasons behind the laws; if it did, it would lose the imperative "you shall" that compels obedience.

At a certain point in the development of a people, the most insightful class—the nobles, philosophers, and warriors—determines that the time for experimentation has passed. The goal now is to reap the full benefits of previous trials, avoiding further testing and uncertainty. To achieve this, two walls are erected: one is revelation, the belief that the laws are divinely given, perfect and without history; the other is tradition, the belief that the laws have been unchanging for centuries and questioning them is a crime against one's ancestors. The authority of these laws is based on the assumption that they were given by God and followed by the forefathers.

The underlying goal of this system is to move people away from questioning what is right, based on practical experience, and toward the automatic obedience of laws that have been made unquestionable. This allows the instinct to become self-sustaining, a necessary condition for mastery and perfection in life. The *Code of Manu* sets the stage for achieving mastery and perfection by guiding people to embrace their roles, which are defined by nature rather than arbitrary laws. This is not the creation of Manu, but the law of nature itself. Society naturally divides into three types: intellectuals, warriors, and those in between—each with their own strengths and duties. The intellectuals are the highest caste, embodying beauty, happiness, and everything good on earth. Only the most intellectual can claim the right to beauty and goodness, as these qualities require strength.

The second caste consists of the law keepers, the warriors who protect and maintain order. They carry out the practical duties of governance while the intellectuals guide them. These two groups

work together to form the backbone of society, with the warriors supporting the intellectuals in enforcing their ideas.

The third caste is the majority, the mediocrity, which supports the structure of society. Mediocrity is essential for civilization, as it provides the stable foundation upon which higher achievements can be built. The ordinary laborers, craftsmen, farmers, and traders are necessary for the functioning of society. Mediocrity is not inherently bad; it is the foundation for excellence, and a high civilization depends on it. The exceptional men handle the mediocre with respect and care, as it is their duty to guide them.

The rabble of today that I despise most are the Socialists, who undermine the instincts and contentment of the working class. They sow envy and encourage resentment, teaching the working man to despise his lot. The real issue is not unequal rights, but the assertion of “equal” rights. Weakness, envy, and revenge are the root causes of what is wrong. The anarchist and the Christian share a common ancestry.

58

In the end, what is the purpose of lying? Christianity’s “holy” goals are not visible, and this is my objection to the methods it uses. The ends it seeks lead only to bad outcomes: destruction, calumny, a denial of life, a hatred for the body, and the degradation of man through the concept of sin. This is why the means employed by Christianity are also harmful.

In contrast, the *Code of Manu*—an intellectually superior and more refined work—does not have the same taint. The *Code of Manu* offers a genuine philosophy, whereas Christianity is a mix of superstition and outdated Jewish rabbinical ideas. Unlike Christianity, the *Code of Manu* teaches noble values, a respect for life, and an attitude of strength, acceptance, and confidence in life. Christianity, on the other hand, views human nature, procreation, women, and marriage in a vulgar and degrading manner. For example, the Christian notion that it is better to marry than to burn with desire is far removed from the dignified approach in the *Code of Manu*, which speaks of women with reverence.

The *Code of Manu* includes profound expressions about women, such as that their “mouths, the breasts of a maiden, the prayer of a child, and the smoke of sacrifice are always pure.” It teaches that nothing is purer than the sunlight, the shadow of a cow, and the breath of a maiden. These expressions reflect respect and honor, in stark contrast to the Christian view that pollutes the origin of man with the concept of immaculate conception.

When we compare Christianity with the *Code of Manu*, it becomes clear that the latter upholds a superior philosophy, one that promotes a natural order and recognizes different social roles, whereas Christianity, in its essence, seeks to destroy what supports life. The *Code of Manu* reflects the wisdom of ages, establishing social structures based on nature’s laws, while

Christianity brings about destruction. Christianity turned the Roman Empire, one of the greatest achievements in history, into a broken ruin.

Christianity, like anarchism, thrives on destruction. Both movements—Christianity and anarchism—are rooted in decadence. They are incapable of acts that build or create. They hate everything strong, enduring, and full of life. Christianity was the vampire of the Roman Empire, destroying its grandeur overnight. In fact, the Roman Empire, despite its eventual decline, had a strength that could withstand bad emperors, but it was powerless against Christianity. Christianity corrupted the hearts of men, turning their focus away from the monumental achievement of Roman culture and against the very virtues that had sustained it.

Christianity grew as a secretive and hypocritical movement, spreading its doctrines of guilt, punishment, and immortality. It was a religion that undermined the foundation of Roman civilization by appealing to a deep-seated hatred of life and worldly achievement. The movement started as a small sect and gradually gained strength through its subversive tactics. The apostle Paul, the greatest champion of this cause, was a master of using these ideas to turn the Roman world upside down. Christianity, under Paul's leadership, sought to destroy the Roman ideals and values and replace them with a doctrine of eternal salvation and punishment.

Paul understood the power of the idea of immortality to destroy the value of the world. He knew that by promoting the belief in an afterlife, he could render earthly existence meaningless and thus gain control over people's souls. He made use of the widespread belief in immortality and hell to drive a wedge between people and their world, creating a powerful movement capable of upending Roman society. Christianity is the ultimate form of nihilism, one that rejects life in favor of an afterlife.

The Christian and the nihilist share the same roots: both reject life as it is and instead seek to impose a different, unnatural order. The end result is the same—destruction of life, of culture, and of values.

59

The entire labor of the ancient world was in vain: I can't even find the words to describe the feelings such a massive injustice provokes in me. And considering that their work was merely preparatory—that they were laying the foundations for something to continue for thousands of years—this makes the entire meaning of antiquity meaningless! What was the purpose of the Greeks? What was the purpose of the Romans? They had already established all the essentials for a cultured society; the methods of science, the unity of disciplines, the natural sciences aligned with mathematics and mechanics, and the sense of fact—the most valuable of all the senses—had already been cultivated and passed down for centuries. Does anyone truly understand this? Everything necessary for the beginning of great work was already in place. And perhaps most importantly, the methods—those which are the hardest to develop and the longest

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

to overcome through habit—had been perfected. What we've now painfully regained for ourselves—thanks to remarkable self-discipline, though some Christian instincts still linger in our bodies—is the sharp eye for reality, careful action, patience, seriousness in small things, and intellectual integrity—all of which had been established and practiced for two thousand years! Moreover, there was also an exquisite and refined sense of tact and taste! It wasn't just intellectual grind, like "German" culture with its clumsy manners, but rather it was embodied in the very instincts—in short, it was reality.

And now, all of that is gone! In a single night, it became a mere memory! The Greeks! The Romans! Their noble instincts, taste, methodical inquiry, genius for organization and administration, their faith and drive to secure the future of humankind, their grand acceptance of everything that entered the Roman Empire and could be perceived by the senses—style that wasn't just art, but had become truth and life—all of it destroyed in a night. But not by a natural catastrophe, nor by the trampling of Teutons or other invading tribes! No, it was destroyed by crafty, sneaky, invisible, anemic vampires! It wasn't conquered—it was drained dry!

Hidden spite and petty envy took control! Everything weak, sickly, and poisoned with bad feelings, the entire ghetto-world of the soul, rose to the top. One only has to read any Christian agitator, such as St. Augustine, to understand and feel the vile nature of those who came to power. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the leaders of the Christian movement lacked intelligence. Oh, no, they were clever—clever to the point of holiness, these church fathers! What they lacked wasn't intelligence, but something much more basic: the natural ability to maintain decent, upright, clean instincts. To be honest, they weren't even men. If Islam despises Christianity, it has a thousandfold right to do so. At least Islam recognizes that it is dealing with men.

60

Christianity destroyed for us the entire legacy of ancient civilization, and later, it also destroyed the entire legacy of Islamic civilization. The magnificent culture of the Moors in Spain, which was much closer to us and appealed to our senses and tastes more than that of Rome and Greece, was trampled down (though I won't say by whose feet). Why? Because it was built on noble and manly instincts—it said yes to life, even to the refined luxury of Moorish life! The Crusaders, later on, waged war against something before which it would have been more fitting for them to kneel in the dust—a civilization that, compared to it, makes even our 19th-century civilization look poor and weak.

What they really wanted, of course, was plunder—the East was rich. Let's set aside our prejudices! The Crusades were nothing more than a higher form of piracy! The German nobility, which is fundamentally Viking in origin, was right at home there. The church knew all too well how to win the German nobility over. The German nobleman, always the "Swiss guard" of the church, always in service to the church's worst instincts—but well-paid for it.

Consider the fact that it was specifically the German swords, blood, and valor that allowed the church to carry out its war against everything noble on earth! This raises many painful questions. The German nobility stands outside the history of higher civilization, and the reason for that is clear. Christianity and alcohol—these are the two great means of corruption.

In essence, there should be no more difference between Islam and Christianity than there is between an Arab and a Jew. The decision has already been made; no one is free to choose anymore. Either a man is a Chandala (outcast) or he is not. “War to the knife with Rome! Peace and friendship with Islam!” This was the attitude and the act of that great free spirit, that genius among German emperors, Frederick II. What! Does a German have to be a genius, a free spirit, before he can feel decent? I can’t understand how a German could ever feel Christian.

61

At this point, it is necessary to bring up a painful memory that must be particularly difficult for Germans. The Germans have destroyed for Europe the last great achievement of civilization that Europe was ever going to have—the Renaissance. Is it finally understood, or will it ever be understood, what the Renaissance really was? It was the transvaluation of Christian values—an attempt, using all available resources, all instincts, and all the genius at their disposal, to bring about a triumph of opposing values, the more noble ones.

This was the one great conflict of the past; there has never been a more critical issue than the Renaissance—it’s my issue as well. There has never been an attack more fundamental, more direct, or more forcefully delivered against the heart of the enemy! To strike at the core, at the very seat of Christianity, and to replace it with more noble values—that is, to instill them into the instincts, into the deepest needs and desires of those at the top.

I envision a scene so full of celestial beauty, so rich in meaning, and paradoxically so incredibly profound, that it would make the gods laugh in immortal amusement: Caesar Borgia as pope! Do I make myself clear? This is the kind of triumph I yearn for today—through it, Christianity would have been swept away!

What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, with all the vengeful instincts of a failed priest, sparked a rebellion against the Renaissance in Rome. Instead of recognizing, with deep gratitude, the miracle that had taken place—the conquest of Christianity at its heart—he was provoked by the spectacle. A religious man thinks only of himself. Luther saw only the corruption of the papacy at a time when the opposite was becoming clear: the old corruption, the original sin, Christianity itself, no longer occupied the papal chair! Instead, there was life! There was the triumph of life! There was a grand affirmation of everything lofty, beautiful, and daring!

THE ANTICHRIST

ABBÉ'S LIBRARY

And yet Luther restored the church. He attacked it. The Renaissance—an event without meaning, a grand futility! Oh, these Germans, what they have cost us! Futility—that has always been the work of the Germans. The Reformation; Leibniz; Kant and so-called German philosophy; the war of “liberation”; the empire—each time a futile substitute for something that once existed, for something irretrievable.

These Germans, I confess, are my enemies. I despise their unclean concepts and values, their cowardice before every honest affirmation and negation. For nearly a thousand years, they’ve tangled and confused everything they’ve touched. They carry with them all the half-measures, the incomplete efforts, that Europe is sick of. They are also responsible for the most corrupt form of Christianity that exists, the most incurable and indestructible—Protestantism. If mankind ever fails to rid itself of Christianity, the Germans will be to blame.

62

This passage is a culmination of the critique against Christianity, where the speaker condemns the religion and the Christian church in the strongest possible terms. The judgment is harsh and unequivocal, with the speaker denouncing Christianity as a corrupt force that has undermined and distorted values, truth, and integrity.

The speaker claims that Christianity has caused harm by turning everything good into something corrupt: it has destroyed values, spread lies, and degraded the soul. The concept of sin, for instance, is attributed to the church’s introduction of the “worm of sin” into the world. The idea of “equality of souls before God” is criticized as a fraud that has spurred revolution and the disruption of the social order. Christianity is said to be built on hypocrisy, as it claims humanitarianism while perpetuating self-pollution, dishonesty, and contempt for goodness.

The speaker emphasizes that the church, through its parasitic practices, feeds on human distress and denies the reality of life, promoting ideals that are harmful and unhealthy. Christianity, symbolized by the cross, is viewed as a secretive and destructive force against beauty, intellect, kindness, and overall well-being.

The judgment is final and uncompromising: Christianity is called a curse and a blight on humanity, an “eternal blemish” that has tainted the human race. The speaker declares that the time should be reckoned not from the beginning of Christianity, but from its end—implying that the world should start anew with the transvaluation of all values.

This passage is a passionate, scathing attack on Christianity and its influence on history, calling for a radical reevaluation of values and the dismantling of the Christian legacy.