

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

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The main objective of Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy is to expand the range, variety and quality of texts in the history of philosophy which are available in English. The series includes texts by familiar names (such as Descartes and Kant) and also by less well-known authors. Wherever possible, texts are published in complete and unabridged form, and translations are specially commissioned for the series. Each volume contains a critical introduction together with a guide to further reading and any necessary glossaries and textual apparatus. The volumes are designed for student use at undergraduate and postgraduate level and will be of interest not only to students of philosophy, but also to a wider audience of readers in the history of science, the history of theology and the history of ideas.

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The Gay Science

*With a Prelude in German Rhymes
and an Appendix of Songs*

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three sides, a kind of justice and contract; for in virtue of justice and a contract all these impulses can assert and maintain themselves in existence and each can finally feel it is in the right vis-à-vis all the others. Since only the ultimate reconciliation scenes and final accounts of this long process rise to consciousness, we suppose that *intelligere* must be something conciliatory, just, and good, something essentially opposed to the instincts, when in fact it is only a certain behaviour of the drives towards one another. For the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself; only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our mind's activity proceeds unconscious and unfelt; but I think these drives which here fight each other know very well how to make themselves felt by and how to hurt *each other*. This may well be the source of that great and sudden exhaustion that afflicts all thinkers (it is the exhaustion of the battlefield). Indeed, there may be many hidden instances for *heroism* in our warring depths, but certainly nothing divine, eternally resting in itself, as Spinoza supposed. Conscious thought, especially that of the philosopher, is the least vigorous and therefore also the relatively mildest and calmest type of thought; and thus precisely philosophers are most easily led astray about the nature of knowledge.

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One must learn to love. — This happens to us in music: first one must learn to hear a figure and melody at all, to detect and distinguish it, to isolate and delimit it as a life in itself; then one needs effort and good will to stand it despite its strangeness; patience with its appearance and expression, and kindheartedness about its oddity. Finally comes a moment when we are used to it; when we expect it; when we sense that we'd miss it if it were missing; and now it continues relentlessly to compel and enchant us until we have become its humble and enraptured lovers, who no longer want anything better from the world than it and it again. But this happens to us not only in music: it is in just this way that we have learned to love everything we now love. We are always rewarded in the end for our good will, our patience, our fair-mindedness and gentleness with what is strange, as it gradually casts off its veil and presents itself as a new and indescribable beauty. That is *its thanks* for our hospitality. Even he who loves himself will

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have learned it this way — there is no other way. Love, too, must be learned.

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Long live physics! — So, how many people know how to observe? And of these few, how many to observe themselves? 'Everyone is farthest from himself'²⁵ — every person who is expert at scrutinizing the inner life of others knows this to his own chagrin; and the saying, 'Know thyself', addressed to human beings by a god, is near to malicious.²⁶ That self-observation is in such a bad state, however, is most clearly confirmed by the way in which *nearly everyone* speaks of the nature of a moral act — that quick, willing, convinced, talkative manner, with its look, its smile, its obliging eagerness! People seem to be wanting to say to you, 'But my dear fellow, that is precisely *my* subject! You are directing your question to the person who is *competent* to answer it: there is, as it happens, nothing I am wiser about. So: when man judges "*that is right*" and infers "*hence it must come about!*" and then *does* what he thus has recognized to be right and described as necessary — then the nature of his act is *moral!*' But, my friend, you are speaking of three acts instead of one: even the judgement 'that is right', for example, is an act. Wouldn't it be possible for a person to make a judgement in a way that would be moral or immoral? *Why* do you take this and specifically this to be right? 'Because my conscience tells me so; conscience never speaks immorally, since it determines what is to count as moral!' But why do you *listen* to the words of your conscience? And what gives you the right to consider such a judgement true and infallible? For this belief — is there no conscience? Do you know nothing of an intellectual conscience? A conscience behind your 'conscience'? Your judgement; 'that is right' has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, '*how* did it emerge there?' and then also, '*what* is really impelling me to listen to it?' You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who heeds the command of his officer. Or like a woman who loves the one who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who fears the commander. Or like a fool who

²⁵ Reversal of common German expression 'Everyone is closest to himself'; cf. *Andria* IV.i.12 by the Roman comedy-writer Terence (second century BC).

²⁶ Motto inscribed over the entrance to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi

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obeys because he can think of no objection. In short, there are a hundred ways to listen to your conscience. But *that* you hear this or that judgement as the words of conscience, i.e. *that* you feel something to be right may have its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labelled *right* since your childhood; or in the fact that fulfilling your duties has so far brought you bread and honours – and you consider it right because it appears to you as *your own* 'condition of existence' (and that you have a *right* to existence seems irrefutable to you). For all that, the *firmness* of your moral judgement could be evidence of your personal wretchedness, of lack of a personality; your 'moral strength' might have its source in your stubbornness – or in your inability to envisage new ideals. And, briefly, had you reflected more subtly, observed better, and studied more, you would never continue to call this 'duty' of yours and this 'conscience' of yours duty and conscience. Your insight into *how such things as moral judgements could ever have come into existence* would spoil these emotional words for you, as other emotional words, for example, 'sin', 'salvation of the soul', and 'redemption' have been spoiled for you. And now don't bring up the categorical imperative, my friend! The term tickles my ear and makes me laugh despite your very serious presence. I am reminded of old Kant, who helped himself to (*erschlichen*) the 'thing in itself' – another very ridiculous thing! – and was punished for this when the 'categorical imperative' crept into (*beschlichen*) his heart and made him stray back to 'God', 'soul', 'freedom', 'immortality', like a fox who strays back into his cage. Yet it had been *his* strength and cleverness that had *broken open* the cage!²⁷ What? You admire the categorical imperative within you? This 'firmness' of your so-called moral judgement? This absoluteness of the feeling, 'here everyone must judge as I do'? Rather admire your *selfishness* here! And the blindness, pettiness, and simplicity of your selfishness! For it is selfish to consider one's own judgement a universal law, and this selfishness is blind, petty,

²⁷ In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) Kant argued that the great concepts of traditional speculation – God, the soul, freedom – did not designate objects about which it was even in principle possible for us to know anything. This seemed to spell the end of traditional metaphysics and theology. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), however, Kant seemed to argue that the morality required us to accept as 'postulates of pure practical reason' a number of principles such as the existence of God and the continuation of some form of life after death. This was thought by many to reintroduce the possibility of a version of the theology it had been the great glory of his earlier work to terminate. 'The categorical imperative' is Kant's fundamental principle of morality.

and simple because it shows that you haven't yet discovered yourself or created for yourself an ideal of your very own – for this could never be someone else's, let alone everyone's, everyone's! No one who judges, 'in this case everyone would have to act like this' has yet taken five steps towards self-knowledge. For he would then know that there neither are nor can be actions that are all the same; that every act ever performed was done in an altogether unique and unrepeatable way, and that this will be equally true of every future act; that all prescriptions of action (even the most inward and subtle rules of all moralities so far) relate only to their rough exterior; that these prescriptions may yield an appearance of sameness, *but only just an appearance*; that as one observes or recollects *any* action, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about 'good' and 'noble' and 'great' can never be *proven true* by our actions because every act is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good are certainly some of the most powerful levers in the machinery of our actions, but that in each case, the law of its mechanism is unprovable. Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and value judgements and to the *creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own*: let us stop brooding over the 'moral value of our actions'! Yes, my friends, it is time to feel nauseous about some people's moral chatter about others. Sitting in moral judgement should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present – that is, to the many, the great majority! We, however, want to *become who we are* – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves! To that end we must become the best students and discoverers of everything lawful and necessary in the world: we must become *physicists* in order to be creators in this sense – while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been built on *ignorance* of physics or in *contradiction* to it. So, long live physics! And even more long live what *compels* us to it – our honesty!

Nature's stinginess. – Why has nature been so miserly towards humans that it did not allow them to shine – one more brightly, the other less so, each according to his inner magnitude of light? Why are great human

How to understand our cheerfulness. – The greatest recent event – that ‘God is dead’; that the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable – is already starting to cast its first shadow over Europe. To those few at least whose eyes – or the *suspicion* in whose eyes is strong and subtle enough for this spectacle, some kind of sun seems to have set; some old deep trust turned into doubt: to them, our world must appear more autumnal, more mistrustful, stranger, ‘older’. But in the main one might say: for many people’s power of comprehension, the event is itself far too great, distant, and out of the way even for its tidings to be thought of as having arrived yet. Even less may one suppose many to know at all *what* this event really means – and, now that this faith has been undermined, how much must collapse because it was built on this faith, leaned on it, had grown into it – for example, our entire European morality. This long, dense succession of demolition, destruction, downfall, upheaval that now stands ahead: who would guess enough of it today to play the teacher and herald of this monstrous logic of horror, the prophet of deep darkness and an eclipse of the sun the like of which has probably never before existed on earth? Even we born guessers of riddles who are so to speak on a lookout at the top of the mountain, posted between today and tomorrow and stretched in the contradiction between today and tomorrow, we firstlings and premature births of the next century, to whom the shadows that must soon envelop Europe really *should* have become apparent by now – why is it that even we look forward to this darkening without any genuine involvement and above all without worry and fear for *ourselves*? Are we perhaps still not too influenced by the *most immediate consequences* of this event – and these immediate consequences, the consequences for *ourselves*, are the opposite of what one might expect – not at all sad and gloomy, but much more like a new and barely describable type of light, happiness, relief, amusement, encouragement, dawn . . . Indeed, at hearing the news that ‘the old god is dead’, we philosophers and ‘free spirits’ feel illuminated by a new dawn; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, forebodings, expectation – finally the horizon seems clear again, even if not bright; finally our ships may set out again, set out to face any danger; every daring of the lover of knowledge is allowed again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; maybe there has never been such an ‘open sea’.

In what way we, too, are still pious. — In science, convictions have no right to citizenship, as one says with good reason: only when they decide to step down to the modesty of a hypothesis, a tentative experimental standpoint, a regulative fiction,¹ may they be granted admission and even a certain value in the realm of knowledge — though always with the restriction that they remain under police supervision, under the police of mistrust. But doesn't this mean, on closer consideration, that a conviction is granted admission to science only when it ceases to be a conviction? Wouldn't the cultivation of the scientific spirit begin when one permitted oneself no more convictions? That is probably the case; only we need still ask: *in order that this cultivation begin*, must there not be some prior conviction — and indeed one so authoritative and unconditional that it sacrifices all other convictions to itself? We see that science, too, rests on a faith; there is simply no 'presuppositionless' science. The question whether *truth* is necessary must get an answer in advance, the answer 'yes', and moreover this answer must be so firm that it takes the form of the statement, the belief, the conviction: 'Nothing is more necessary than truth; and in relation to it, everything else has only secondary value.' This unconditional will to truth — what is it? Is it the will not to let oneself be deceived? Is it the will *not to deceive*? For the will to truth could be interpreted in this second way, too — if 'I do not want to deceive myself' is included as a special case under the generalization 'I do not want to deceive.' But why not deceive? But why not allow oneself to be deceived? Note that the reasons for the former lie in a completely different area from those for the latter: one does not want to let oneself be deceived because one assumes it is harmful, dangerous, disastrous to be deceived; in this sense science would be a long-range prudence, caution, utility, and to this one could justifiably object: How so? Is it really less harmful, dangerous, disastrous not to want to let oneself be deceived? What do you know in advance about the character of existence to be able to decide whether the greater advantage is on the side of the unconditionally distrustful or of the unconditionally trusting? But should both be necessary — a lot of trust *as well as* a lot of mistrust — then where might science get the

¹ See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 670, 799.

unconditional belief or conviction on which it rests, that truth is more important than anything else, than every other conviction? Precisely this conviction could never have originated if truth *and* untruth had constantly made it clear they were both useful, as they are. So, the faith in science, which after all undeniably exists, cannot owe its origin to such a calculus of utility; rather it must have originated *in spite of* the fact that the disutility and dangerousness of 'the will to truth' or 'truth at any price' is proved to it constantly. 'At any price': we understand this well enough once we have offered and slaughtered one faith after another on this altar! Consequently, 'will to truth' does *not* mean 'I do not want to let myself be deceived' but — there is no alternative — 'I will not deceive, not even myself'; *and with that we stand on moral ground.* For you have only to ask yourself carefully, 'Why do you not want to deceive?' especially if it should seem — and it does seem! — as if life aimed at semblance, i.e. error, deception, simulation, blinding, self-blinding, and when life on the largest scale has actually always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous *polytropoi*.² Charitably interpreted, such a resolve might perhaps be a quixotism, a slight, enthusiastic folly; but it could also be something worse, namely a principle that is hostile to life and destructive. 'Will to truth' — that could be a hidden will to death. Thus the question 'Why science?' leads back to the moral problem: *Why morality at all*, if life, nature, and history are 'immoral'? No doubt, those who are truthful in that audacious and ultimate sense which faith in science presupposes *thereby affirm another world* than that of life, nature, and history; and insofar as they affirm this 'other world', must they not by the same token deny its counterpart, this world, *our world*? . . . But you will have gathered what I am getting at, namely, that it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests — that even we knowers of today, we godless anti-metaphysicians, still take *our* fire, too, from the flame lit by the thousand-year old faith, the Christian faith which was also Plato's faith, that God is truth; that truth is divine . . . But what if this were to become more and more difficult to believe, if nothing more were to turn out to be divine except error, blindness, the lie — if God himself were to turn out to be our longest lie?

² 'sly, knowing all the tricks, devious'. Nietzsche uses the plural of this word which in the singular is used in the *Odyssey* (e.g. Book I, line 1) to describe Odysseus.

Morality as a problem. – The lack of personality always takes its revenge: a weakened, thin, extinguished personality, one that denies itself and its own existence, is no longer good for anything good – least of all for philosophy. ‘Selflessness’ has no value in heaven or on earth; all great problems demand *great love*, and only strong, round, secure minds who have a firm grip on themselves are capable of that. It makes the most telling difference whether a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an ‘impersonal’ one, meaning he is only able to touch and grasp them with the antennae of cold, curious thought. In the latter case nothing will come of it, that much can be promised; for even if great problems should let themselves be *grasped* by them, they would not allow frogs and weaklings to *hold on* to them; such has been their taste from time immemorial – a taste, incidentally, that they share with all doughty females. Why, then, have I never yet encountered anyone, not even in books, who approached morality in this personal way and who knew morality as a problem, and this problem as his own personal distress, torment, voluptuousness, and passion? It is clear that up to now, morality has been no problem at all but rather that on which, after all mistrust, discord, and contradiction, one could agree – the hallowed place of peace where thinkers took a rest from themselves, took a deep breath, and felt revived. I see no one who has ventured a *critique* of moral valuations; I miss even the slightest attempts of scientific curiosity, of the coddled, experimental imagination of psychologists and historians that easily anticipates a problem and seizes it in flight without knowing what it has caught. I have hardly detected a few meagre preliminary efforts to explore the *history of origins* of these feelings and valuations (which is something quite different from a critique and again different from a history of ethical systems): in one single case I did everything to encourage a sympathy and talent for this kind of history – in vain, as it seems to me today.³ These historians of morality (particularly, the Englishmen) do not amount to much: usually they themselves unsuspectingly stand under the command of a particular morality and,

³ Probably a reference to Dr Paul Rée (1849–1901), author of *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen* (1877) and *Die Entstehung des Gewissens* (1885). Nietzsche refers again to Rée in the Preface to ‘On the Genealogy of Morality’ (Cambridge, 1994).

without knowing it, serve as its shield-bearers and followers, for example, by sharing that popular superstition of Christian Europe which people keep repeating so naively to this day, that what is characteristic of morality is selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice, or sympathy (*Mitgefühl*) and compassion (*Mitleiden*). Their usual mistaken premise is that they affirm some consensus among peoples, at least among tame peoples, concerning certain moral principles, and then conclude that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me – or, conversely, they see that among different peoples moral valuations are *necessarily* different and infer from this that *no* morality is binding – both of which are equally childish. The mistake of the more subtle among them is that they uncover and criticize the possibly foolish opinions of a people about their morality, or of humanity about all human morality – opinions about its origin, its religious sanction, the myth of the free will and such things – and then think they have criticized the morality itself. But the value of the injunction ‘Thou Shalt’ is still fundamentally different from and independent of such opinions about it and the weeds of error that may have overgrown it – just as surely as the value of a medication for someone sick is totally independent of whether he thinks about medicine scientifically or the way an old woman thinks about it. A morality could even have grown *out of* an error, and the realization of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value. Thus no one until now has examined the *value* of that most famous of all medicines called morality; and for that, one must begin by *questioning* it for once. Well then! Precisely that is our task.

Our question mark. – But you do not understand this? Indeed, people will have trouble understanding us. We are searching for words, perhaps also for ears. Who are we anyway? If we simply called ourselves godless (to use an old expression), or unbelievers, or even immoralists, we would not think that these words came near to describing us: we are all three of them, at too advanced a stage for anyone to comprehend – for *you* to comprehend, my curious gentlemen – how it feels. No! No longer with the bitterness and passion of the one who has torn himself away and must turn his unbelief into another faith, a goal, a martyrdom! We

have become hard-boiled, cold, and tough in the realization that the way of the world is not at all divine – even by human standards it is not rational, merciful, or just. We know it: the world we live in is ungodly, immoral, ‘inhuman’; for far too long we have interpreted it falsely and mendaciously, though according to our wish and will for veneration, that is, according to a *need*. For man is a venerating animal! But he is also a mistrustful one; and that the world is *not* worth what we thought is about the most certain thing our mistrust has finally gotten hold of. The more mistrust, the more philosophy. We take care not to claim that the world is worth *less*; indeed, it would seem laughable to us today if man were to aim at inventing values that were supposed to *surpass* the value of the real world. That is exactly what we have turned away from, as from an extravagant aberration of human vanity and unreason that for long was not recognized as such. It found its final expression in modern pessimism, and an older and stronger expression in the teaching of Buddha; but also Christianity includes it, more doubtfully and ambiguously, to be sure, but not for that reason less seductively. The whole attitude of ‘man *against* the world’, of man as a ‘world-negating’ principle, of man as the measure of the value of things, as judge of the world who finally places existence itself on his scales and finds it too light – the monstrous stupidity of this attitude has finally dawned on us and we are sick of it; we laugh we soon as we encounter the juxtaposition of ‘man *and* world’, separated by the sublime presumptuousness of the little word ‘and!’ But by laughing, haven’t we simply taken contempt for man one step further? And thus also pessimism, the contempt for that existence which is knowable to *us*? Have we not exposed ourselves to the suspicion of an opposition – an opposition between the world in which until now we were at home with our veneration – and which may have made it possible for us to *endure* life – and another world *that we ourselves are*: a relentless, fundamental, deepest suspicion concerning ourselves that is steadily gaining more and worse control over us Europeans and that could easily confront coming generations with the terrible Either/Or: ‘Either abolish your veneration or – *yourselves!*’ The latter would be nihilism; but would not the former also be – nihilism? That is *our* question-mark.

Believers and their need to believe. – The extent to which one needs a *faith* in order to flourish, how much that is ‘firm’ and that one does not want shaken because one *clings* to it – that is a measure of the degree of one’s strength (or, to speak more clearly, one’s weakness). Christianity, it seems to me, is still needed by most people in old Europe even today; hence it still finds believers. For that is how man is: an article of faith could be refuted to him a thousand times; as long as he needed it, he would consider it ‘true’ again and again, in accordance with that famous ‘proof of strength’⁴ of which the Bible speaks. Metaphysics is still needed by some, but so is that impetuous *demand for certainty* that today discharges itself in scientific-positivistic form among great masses – the demand that ~~one wants by all means something to be firm~~ (while owing ^{fe) → b. h.} to the fervour of this demand one treats the demonstration of this certainty more lightly and negligently); this is still the demand for foothold, support – in short, the *instinct of weakness* that, to be sure, does not create sundry religions, forms of metaphysics, and convictions but does – preserve them. Indeed, around all these positivistic systems hover the fumes of a certain pessimistic gloom, something of a weariness, fatalism, disappointment, fear of new disappointment – or else self-dramatizing rage, a bad mood, the anarchism of exasperation and whatever other symptoms or masquerades there are of the feeling of weakness. Even the vehemence with which our cleverest contemporaries get lost in pitiful nooks and crevices such as patriotism (I refer to what the French call *chauvinisme*⁵ and the Germans ‘German’), or in petty aesthetic creeds such as French naturalism (which enhances and exposes only the part of nature that simultaneously disgusts and amazes – today one likes to call it *la vérité vraie*⁶ –), or in Petersburg-style nihilism⁷ (meaning *faith in unbelief* to the point of martyrdom), always indicates ^{zu w} primarily the *need* for faith, a foothold, backbone, support . . . Faith is

⁴ See 1 Corinthians 2:4. Originally this seems to have referred to the view that Christianity was true because it was possible effectively to cure illnesses and drive out demons by invoking the name of Jesus. By the eighteenth century (in Germany) the doctrine had been transformed into the view that Christianity was true because firm belief in Jesus gave the believer power in the form of an optimistic attitude towards life that would make it possible to cope effectively with adversity.

⁵ ‘jingoistic xenophobia’

⁶ ‘true truth’

⁷ see Turgenev (1818–83) *Fathers and Sons* (1862); Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*.

always most desired and most urgently needed where will is lacking; for will, as the affect of command, is the decisive mark of sovereignty and strength. That is, the less someone knows how to command, the more urgently does he desire someone who commands, who commands severely – a god, prince, the social order, doctor, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience. From this one might gather that both world religions, Buddhism and Christianity, may have owed their origin and especially their sudden spread to a tremendous *sickening of the will*. And that is actually what happened: both religions encountered a demand for a ‘Thou Shalt’ that, through a sickening of the will, had increased to an absurd level and bordered on desperation; both religions were teachers of fanaticism in times of a slackening of the will and thereby offered innumerable people support, a new possibility of willing, a delight in willing. For fanaticism is the only ‘strength of the will’ that even the weak and insecure can be brought to attain, as a type of hypnosis of the entire sensual-intellectual system to the benefit of the excessive nourishment (hypertrophy) of a single point of view and feeling which is now dominant – the Christian calls it his *faith*. Once a human being arrives at the basic conviction that he *must* be commanded, he becomes ‘a believer’; conversely, one could conceive of a delight and power of self-determination, a *freedom of the will*, in which the spirit takes leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, practised as it is in maintaining itself on light ropes and possibilities and dancing even beside abysses. Such a spirit would be the *free spirit* par excellence.

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On the origin of scholars. – In Europe the scholar grows out of all kinds of classes and social conditions like a plant that requires no particular kind of soil: thus he belongs, essentially and involuntarily, to the bearers of the democratic idea. But this origin betrays itself. Once one has somewhat trained one’s eye to recognize in a scholarly book, in a scientific treatise, the scholar’s intellectual *idiosyncrasy* – every scholar has one – and catch it in the act, one will almost always behind it come face to face with the scholar’s ‘prehistory’, his family, especially its occupations and crafts. Where the feeling, ‘This is now proven; I am done with it,’ is expressed, it is usually the ancestor in the blood and instincts of the scholar who from his standpoint approves of ‘the finished job’ – the

faith in a proof is only the symptom of what in a hard-working family for ages has been considered ‘good work’. An example: the sons of all types of clerks and office workers, whose main task was always to organize various different kinds of material, to compartmentalize and in general to schematize, when they become scholars, show a tendency to consider a problem practically solved when they have merely schematized it. There are philosophers who are basically just schematizers – for them, the formal aspect of their fathers’ occupation has become content. The talent for classifications, for tables of categories, reveals something: one pays the price for being the child of one’s parents. The son of a lawyer will also, as a researcher, have to be a lawyer; he primarily wants his cause to win; secondarily perhaps also for it to be right. The sons of Protestant ministers and schoolteachers one recognizes by the naive certainty with which, as scholars, they take their case already to have been proven when they have merely stated it heartily and warmly; they are thoroughly used to being *believed*, as that was part of their father’s craft. A Jew, on the other hand, in keeping with the characteristic occupations and the past of his people, is not at all used to being believed. Consider Jewish scholars in this light: they all have a high regard for logic, that is for *compelling* agreement by force of reasons; they know that with logic, they are bound to win even when faced with class and race prejudices, where people do not willingly believe them. For nothing is more democratic than logic: it knows no regard for persons and takes even the crooked nose for straight. (Incidentally, Europe owes the Jews no small thanks for making its people more logical, for *cleanlier* intellectual habits – none more so than the Germans, as a lamentably *dérisonnable*⁸ race that even today first needs to be given a good mental drubbing. Wherever Jews have gained influence, they have taught people to make finer distinctions, draw more rigorous conclusions, and to write more clearly and cleanly; their task was always ‘to make a people “listen to *raison*”’.)

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Once again, the origin of the scholars. – To wish to preserve oneself is a sign of distress, of a limitation of the truly basic life-instinct, which aims

⁸ ‘unreasonable’

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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Writings*

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itself, as having value only as a sign, a parable. — It is very important to be clear about this, however great the temptation of Christian (and, I should say, *ecclesiastical*) prejudice really is: this sort of symbolism *par excellence* is positioned outside all religion, all cult concepts, all history, all natural science, all experience of the world, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all books, all art — his 'knowing' is just *pure stupidity* concerning the fact *that* things like this exist. He does not know anything about *culture*, even in passing, he does not need to struggle against it, — he does not negate it. . . . The same is true about the *state*, about the whole civic order and society, about *work*, about war — he never had any reason to negate 'the world', the ecclesiastical concept of 'world' never occurred to him. . . . *Negation* is out of the question for him. — Dialectic is missing as well, there is no conception that a belief, a 'truth', could be grounded in reasons (— *his* proofs are inner 'lights', inner feelings of pleasure and self-affirmations, pure 'proofs of strength' —). A doctrine like this *cannot* contradict, it has no idea that there are, that there *could* be any other doctrines, it has no idea how even to form the thought of an opposing judgment. . . . If it comes across an opposing judgment, it will feel deeply sympathetic and grieve over this 'blindness' — since it sees the 'light' — but it would not offer any objections. . . .

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The concepts of guilt and punishment are completely missing from the psychology of the 'evangel'; so is the concept of reward. 'Sin', any distance between God and man: these are abolished, — *this is what the 'glad tidings' are all about*. Blessedness is not a promise, it has no strings attached: it is the *only* reality — everything else is just a symbol used to speak about it. . . .

This state projects itself into a new *practice*, the genuinely evangelical practice. Christians are not characterized by their 'faith': Christians act, they are characterized by a *different* way of acting. By the fact that they do not offer any resistance, in their words or in their heart, to people who are evil to them. By the fact that they do not make any distinction between foreigners and natives, between Jews and non-Jews ('the neighbour' is really the co-religionist, the Jew). By the fact that they do not get angry at anyone or belittle anyone. By the fact that they do not let themselves be seen in or involved with ('sworn in' to) courts of law. By the fact that

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they would not get a divorce under any circumstances, even when the wife has been proven unfaithful. — All of this is fundamentally a single proposition, all of this is the result of a single instinct —

The life of the redeemer was nothing other than *this* practice, — even his death was nothing else. . . . He no longer needed formulas, rites for interacting with God — or even prayer. He had settled his accounts with the whole Jewish doctrine of atonement and reconciliation; he knew how the *practice* of life is the only thing that can make you feel 'divine', 'blessed', 'evangelic', like a 'child of God' at all times. 'Atonement' and 'praying for forgiveness' are *not* the way to God: *only the evangelical practice* leads to God, in fact it *is* 'God' — What the evangel *did away with* was the Judaism of the concepts of 'sin', 'forgiveness of sin', 'faith', 'redemption through faith' — the whole Jewish *church doctrine* was rejected in the 'glad tidings'.

The profound instinct for how we must *live* to feel as if we are 'in heaven', to feel as if we are 'eternal', given that we do not feel *remotely* as if we are 'in heaven' when we behave in any other way: this, and this alone, is the psychological reality of 'redemption'. — A new way of life, *not* a new faith. . . .

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If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is that he accepted only *inner* realities as realities, as 'truths', — that he considered everything else, everything natural, temporal, spatial, historical to be just a sign, an excuse for a parable. The concept 'son of man' is not some concrete person belonging to history, someone individual or unique, but rather an 'eternal' facticity, a psychological symbol that has been redeemed from the concept of time. The same holds true again and in the highest sense for the *God* of this typical symbolist, for the 'kingdom of God', for the 'kingdom of heaven', and for the filial relation to God. Nothing is less Christian than the *ecclesiastical crudity* of God as a *person*, of a 'kingdom of God' that is *yet to come*, a 'kingdom of heaven' in the *beyond*, a 'son of God' as the *second person* in the Trinity. This is all (if you will excuse the expression) one big *fist* in the eye¹⁶ (and what an eye it is!) of the evangel; a *world-historical cynicism* in the derision of symbols. . . . But it

¹⁶ The German phrase 'fist in the eye' means a misfit, two things that do not go together well.

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is obvious – although probably not to everyone – what the signs ‘father’ and ‘son’ suggest: the word ‘son’ expresses the *entrance* into a feeling of the total transfiguration of all things (blessedness), and the word ‘father’ expresses *this feeling itself*, the feeling of eternity, of perfection. – I am ashamed to think what the church has made out of this symbolism: hasn’t it stuck an Amphitryon story¹⁷ on the threshold to the Christian ‘faith’? And a dogma of ‘immaculate conception’ into the bargain? . . . *But this just maculates the conception* – –

The ‘kingdom of heaven’ is a state of the heart – not something lying ‘above the earth’ or coming ‘after death’. The whole idea of a natural death is *missing* from the evangel: death is not a bridge, not a transition, it is absent because it belongs to an entirely different, merely apparent world that is useful only as a symbol. The ‘hour of death’ is *not* a Christian concept – ‘hours’, time, and the physical life with its crises just do not exist for the teacher of the ‘glad tidings’ . . . The ‘kingdom of God’ is not something that you wait for; it does not have a yesterday or a day after tomorrow, it will not arrive in a ‘thousand years’ – it is an experience of the heart; it is everywhere and it is nowhere . . .

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This bearer of ‘glad tidings’ died the way he lived, the way he *taught* – *not* ‘to redeem humanity’, but instead to demonstrate how people need to live. His bequest to humanity was a *practice*: his behaviour towards the judges, towards the henchmen, the way he acted in the face of his accusers and every type of slander and derision, – his conduct on the *cross*. He does not offer any resistance, he does not defend his rights, he does not make a single move to avert the worst, what is more, *he invites it* . . . And he begs, he suffers, he loves *with* those, *in* those people who did him evil . . . The whole evangel is contained in the words to the *thieves* on the cross. ‘That was a truly *divine* man, a “child of God”’, said the thief. ‘If this is how you feel’, the redeemer replied, ‘*then you are in paradise*, then you too are a child of God . . .’ *Not* to defend yourself, *not* to get angry, *not* to lay blame . . . But *not* to resist evil either, – to *love it* . . .

¹⁷ Amphitryon is a character in Greek myth whose virgin bride is seduced by Zeus.

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– We alone, we spirits *who have become free*, have the requisite presuppositions for understanding what nineteen centuries have misunderstood, – the honesty that has become instinct and passion, that wages war on the ‘holy lie’ above all other lies . . . People have been unspeakably far removed from our affectionate and cautious neutrality, from that discipline of spirit needed to figure out such strange, such delicate matters: with unabashed selfishness, people have always wanted only what was best for *themselves*, people have constructed the *church* out of the opposite of the evangel . . .

Anyone looking for signs that an ironic divinity is keeping his finger in the great game of the world will find them in the *enormous question mark* called Christianity. The fact that humanity knelt down before the opposite of the origin, the meaning, the *right* of the evangel, the fact that in the concept of ‘church’, humanity canonized the very thing the ‘bearer of glad tidings’ felt to be *beneath* him, *behind* him – you will not find a greater example of *world-historical irony* – –

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– Our age is proud of its historical sense: so how could it convince itself of this piece of nonsense, that Christianity began with this *crude fable of a miracle worker and redeemer*, – and that everything spiritual and symbolic developed only later on? To the contrary: the history of Christianity – starting, in fact, with the death on the cross – is the story of the progressively cruder misunderstanding of an *original* symbolism. Every time Christianity expanded to greater and cruder masses of people whose presuppositions were increasingly remote from the presupposition under which it arose, it became increasingly necessary to *vulgarize Christianity and make it barbaric*, – Christianity soaked up doctrines and rites from all the *subterranean* cults of the *imperium Romanum* and bits of nonsense from all kinds of sick reason. Christianity’s faith was fated to become as sick, base, and vulgar as the sick, base, and vulgar needs it catered to. *Sick barbarism* itself finally achieved power in the church, – the church, this form of deadly hostility to everything honest, to every *height* of the soul, to every discipline of spirit, to everything kind and candid in humanity. – Christian values – *noble* values: we alone, we spirits *who have become free*, have restored this opposition, the greatest opposition of values there is! – –

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I won't hold back a sigh at this point. There are days when I am haunted by a feeling that is blacker than the blackest melancholy – a *contempt for humanity*. And just to remove any doubts about *what* I despise, *who* I despise: people these days, the people I have been fated to call my contemporaries. People these days – I feel suffocated by their filthy breath . . . Like all researchers I have a lot of tolerance for the past, which is to say I exercise *generous* self-restraint: I go through the madhouse worlds of whole millennia, whether they are called 'Christianity', 'Christian faith', or the 'Christian church' with a sort of bleak caution, – I am careful not to hold humanity responsible for its mental illnesses. But my feelings suddenly change and erupt as soon as I come to more recent times, to *our* times. Our age *knows better* . . . What used to be just sickness is indecency today, – it is indecent to be a Christian these days. *And this is where my disgust begins*. – I look around: there are no words left for what used to be called 'truth', we cannot stand to hear priests even mention the word 'truth' any more. These days anyone with even the most modest claim to honesty *has* to know that every sentence pronounced by a theologian, a priest, a pope, is not only wrong, it is a *lie*, – and he is not free to lie out of 'innocence' or 'ignorance' any more. The priest knows as well as anyone that there is no 'God' any more, that there is no such thing as 'sin', or the 'redeemer', – that 'free will' and the 'moral world order' are *lies*: – the seriousness, the profound self-overcoming of spirit does not *allow* people *not* to know this any more . . . *All* church concepts are known for what they are, the most malicious counterfeits that exist to *devalue* nature and natural values; the priests themselves are known for what they are, the most dangerous type of parasite, the true poisonous spiders of life . . . We know, our *consciences* are conscious of it these days –, just what value those uncanny inventions of the priests and the church have, *how they were used* to reduce humanity to such a state of self-desecration that the sight of it fills you with disgust – the concepts 'beyond', 'Last Judgment', 'immortality of the soul', the 'soul' itself; these are instruments of torture, these are systems of cruelty that enable the priests to gain control, maintain control . . . Everyone knows this: *and yet everything goes on as before*. Where are the remnants of self-respect or any sense of decency when even our statesmen, who are generally very impartial and thoroughly anti-Christian in practice, still call themselves Christian and

take communion? . . . A young prince at the head of his regiments, whose magnificence is an expression of the selfishness and self-importance of his people, – he calls himself Christian without a *hint* of shame! . . . So *who* exactly does Christianity negate? What does it consider 'worldly'? The fact that people are soldiers, judges, patriots; that they defend themselves; that they defend their honour; that they do what is best for themselves; that they are *proud* . . . Every practice at every moment, every instinct, every value judgment that people *act* on is anti-Christian these days: what *miscarriages of duplicity* modern people are, that in spite of all this they are *not ashamed* to call themselves Christians! ---

– I will come back, I will tell the *true* history of Christianity. – Even the word 'Christianity' is a misunderstanding –, there was really only one Christian, and he died on the cross. The 'evangel' *died* on the cross. What was called 'evangel' after that was the opposite of what *he* had lived: a '*bad tidings*', a *dysangel*. It is false to the point of absurdity to think that Christians are characterized by their 'beliefs', like a belief in salvation through Christ: only the *practice* of Christianity is really Christian, *living* like the man who died on the cross . . . A life like this is *still* possible today, for *certain* people it is even necessary: true, original Christianity will always be possible . . . *Not* a believing but a doing, above all a *not-doing-much*, a different *being* . . . States of consciousness, any sort of belief, such as taking something to be true, are (as every psychologist knows) trivial matters of fifth-rate importance compared to the value of the instincts: to put it more rigorously, the whole idea of spiritual causation is false. To reduce Christianity, to reduce being Christian to a set of claims taken to be true, to a simple phenomenalism of consciousness, is to negate Christianity. *In fact, there have never been any Christians*. 'Christians', the people who have been called Christian for two thousand years, are just a psychological self-misunderstanding. Examined more closely and in *spite* of all 'belief', they have been governed *only* by instincts, – and *what instincts they are!* – In every age (with Luther, for instance), 'belief' has just been a cloak, a cover, a *curtain* behind which the instincts play their game –, a shrewd *blindness* about the dominance of *certain* instincts . . . 'Faith' – I have already called this the characteristic *shrewdness* of Christianity, – people have always talked about 'faith', they have always *acted* from instinct . . .

In the world of Christian representations, nothing that happens has any bearing on reality: on the contrary, we have recognized the instinct of hatred *against* every reality as the driving, the only driving element, at the root of Christianity. What follows from this? That even in *psychologism*, this is a radical error, which is to say it is the *substance*, which is to say it determines the essence. Throw out a *single* idea, put a single reality in its place – and the whole of Christianity would fade into nothing! – Seen from above, this strangest fact of all, a religion that has not only been determined by errors but has been creative to the point of genius *only* with those errors that damage and poison life and the heart – this religion is a *spectacle for the gods*, – for those deities, for example, who are also philosophers and who I met in those famous dialogues on Naxos.¹⁸ As soon as they (– and we!) get over any initial feelings of *disgust*, they become grateful for the spectacle of the Christian: perhaps the miserable little star called ‘earth’ merits a divine glance, divine regard, only because of *this* curiosity: . . . Let us not underestimate the Christian: the Christian, false to the point of *innocence*, is far above the apes, – with respect to Christians, a certain well-known theory of descent becomes a mere politeness . . .

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– The disastrous fate of the evangel was sealed with his death, – it hung on the ‘cross’ . . . It took this death, this unexpected, ignominious death, it took the cross, which was generally reserved for the rabble, – it took this horrible paradox to bring the disciples face to face with the true riddle: ‘*Who was that? What was that?*’ – The feeling of shock and profound offence, the suspicion that a death like this might *refute* their case, the terrible question mark ‘Why this, of all things?’ – this situation is only too easy to understand. Everything really *needed* to be necessary, sensible, rational, supremely rational here; a disciple’s love is not left to chance. Cracks only began to appear at this point: ‘*Who killed him? Who was his natural enemy?*’ – these questions jumped out like a bolt of lightning. Answer: the Jewish *rulers*, their upper class. At this point, people started to feel as if they were in revolt *against* the order, they started to understand Jesus as having been *in revolt against the order*. Before this, his image had

¹⁸ These dialogues are by Nietzsche himself, and were still unpublished when he wrote *The Anti-Christ*.

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not had any belligerent, no-saying, no-doing features at all; in fact, he was the opposite of all this. The small congregation had evidently *failed* to understand the main point, the exemplary character of dying in this way, the freedom, the superiority *over* every feeling of *ressentiment*: – a sign of how little they understood about him in general! Jesus could not have wanted anything more from his death itself than publicly to give his doctrine its strongest test, to *prove* it . . . But his disciples were far from being able to *forgive* this death, – which would have been evangelical in the highest sense; or even more, from *offering themselves up* for a similar death in the sweet and gentle calm of the heart . . . *Revenge* resurfaced, the most *unevangelical* feeling of all. It was impossible for this death to be the end of the matter: ‘retaliation’ was needed, ‘judgment’ (– and really, what could be less evangelical than ‘retaliation’, ‘punishment’, ‘passing judgment’!). Once again, the popular expectation of a messiah came to the fore; it was considered a historical moment: the ‘kingdom of God’ will come to judge its enemies . . . But this is a misunderstanding of everything: the ‘kingdom of God’ as a closing ceremony, as a promise! The evangel was precisely the existence, the fulfilment, the *actuality* of this ‘kingdom’. A death like this *was* this very ‘kingdom of God’ . . . Only at this point did people take all the contempt and bitterness against the Pharisees and theologians and put it into the master’s type, – and in doing so, *make* him into a Pharisee and theologian! On the other hand, the frenzied adoration of these unhinged souls could not tolerate Jesus’ evangelical teaching that everybody has an equal right to be a child of God; their revenge was to *elevate* Jesus in an extravagant manner, distancing him from themselves: just as the Jews once took revenge on their enemies by separating off their God and raising him up into the heights. The one God and the one son of God: both are products of *ressentiment* . . .

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– And from now on there is the ridiculous problem of ‘how *could* God have let this happen!’ The unbalanced reason of the small community found a horribly absurd answer: God gave his son to forgive sins, as a *sacrifice*. This brought the evangel to an end in one fell swoop. The *guilt sacrifice*, and in fact in its most revolting, barbaric form, the sacrifice of the *innocent* for the sins of the *guilty*! What gruesome paganism! – In fact, Jesus had done away with the very idea of ‘guilt’, – he denied that

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there was any gap between God and man, he *lived* this unity of God as man as his 'glad tidings' . . . And *not* as his privilege! – From now on, a number of different things started seeping into the type of the redeemer: the doctrines of judgment and return, the doctrine of death as a sacrifice, and the doctrine of the *resurrection*; and at this point the whole idea of 'blessedness', the solitary reality of the evangel, vanishes with a wave of the hand – and all for the sake of a state *after* death! . . . With the rabbinical impudence that characterizes everything about him, Paul put this interpretation, this *perversion* of an interpretation into a logical form: 'if Christ did not rise from the dead, then our faith is in vain'. – And in one fell swoop, the evangel becomes the most contemptible of all unfulfillable promises, the *outrageous* doctrine of personal immortality . . . Paul himself still taught it as a *reward*! . . .

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You can see just *what* came to an end with the death on the cross: a new, a completely original attempt at a Buddhistic peace movement, at an actual *happiness on earth*, not just a promissory one. And this – as I have already pointed out – is the fundamental difference between the two religions of decadence: Buddhism does not promise, it delivers, Christianity promises everything and *delivers nothing*. – On the heels of the 'glad tidings' came the *very worst ones of all*: Paul's. Paul epitomizes a type that is the antithesis of the 'bringer of glad tidings', the genius in hatred, in the vision of hatred, in the merciless logic of hatred. And *how much* this dysangelist sacrificed to hatred! Above all, the redeemer: he nailed him to his *own* cross. The life, example, teachings, death, meaning, and rights of the whole evangel – nothing was left after this hatred-inspired counterfeiter realized what he and he alone could use. *Not* reality, *not* the historical truth! . . . And once again, the Jew's priestly instinct perpetrated the same enormous crime against history, – he simply crossed out Christianity's yesterday, its day before yesterday, *he invented for himself a history of the first Christianity*. Even more, he falsified the history of Israel once again, to make it look like the prehistory of his *own* actions: all the prophets have talked about his 'redeemer' . . . Later, the church even falsified the history of humanity into the prehistory of Christianity . . . The type of the redeemer, the doctrine, the practice, the death, the meaning of his death, even the aftermath of his death – nothing was left untouched, nothing was left bearing

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any resemblance to reality. Paul simply shifted the emphasis of this whole being, putting it *behind* this being, – into the *lie* of Jesus' 'resurrection'. Basically, he had no use whatsoever for the life of the redeemer, – he needed the death on the cross *and* something else besides . . . To take this Paul (whose homeland was the centre of the Stoic enlightenment) at his word when he takes a hallucination and dresses it up as a *proof* that the redeemer *still* lives, or even to accept that he *had* this hallucination in the first place, would be a true *niaiserie*¹⁹ on the part of a psychologist: Paul wanted the end, and *consequently* he wanted the means to it as well . . . What he did not believe himself was believed by the idiots he threw *his* doctrines to. – What *he* needed was *power*; with Paul, the priests wanted to return to power, – he could only use ideas, doctrines, symbols that would tyrannize the masses and form the herds. – *What* was the only thing that Mohammed would later borrow from Christianity? Paul's invention, his method of priestly tyranny, of forming the herds, the belief in immortality – *which is to say the doctrine of the 'judgment'* . . .

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When the emphasis of life is put on the 'beyond' rather than on life itself – when it is put *on nothingness* –, then the emphasis has been completely removed from life. The enormous lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, everything natural in the instincts, – everything beneficial and life-enhancing in the instincts, everything that guarantees the future, now arouses mistrust. To live *in this way*, so that there is no *point* to life any more, *this* now becomes the 'meaning' of life . . . What is the point of public spirit, of being grateful for your lineage or for your ancestors, what is the point of working together, of confidence, of working towards any sort of common goal or even keeping one in mind? . . . These are all so many 'temptations', so many diversions from the 'proper path' – '*one thing is necessary*' . . . That as immortal souls, everyone is on the same level as everyone else, that in the commonality of all beings, the 'salvation' of *each* individual lays claim to an eternal significance, that the small-minded and the half-mad can think well of themselves, that the laws of nature are constantly *broken* for their sake – you cannot heap enough contempt on this, every type of selfishness increasing *shamelessly* to the point of

¹⁹ Gullibility.

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infinity. And yet Christianity owes its *victory* to *this* miserable flattery of personal vanity, — it is precisely the failures, the rebellion-prone, the badly developed, all the rejects and dejects of humanity, that Christianity has won over by these means. 'Salvation of the soul' — in plain language: 'the world revolves around *me*'. . . The poisonous doctrine 'equal rights for everyone' — Christianity disseminated this the most thoroughly; from out of the most secret corners of its bad instincts, Christianity has waged a deadly war on every feeling of respect and distance between people, which is to say the *presupposition* of every elevation, of every growth of culture, — it has used the *ressentiment* of the masses as its *main weapon* against *us*, against everything on earth that is noble, joyful, magnanimous, against our happiness on earth . . . Granting 'immortality' to every Tom, Dick, and Harry has been the most enormous and most vicious attempt to assassinate *noble* humanity. — And let us not underestimate the disaster that Christianity has brought even into politics! Nobody is courageous enough for special privileges these days, for the rights of the masters, for feelings of self-respect and respect among equals — for a *pathos of distance* . . .²⁰ Our politics is *sick* from this lack of courage! — The aristocraticism of mind has been undermined at its depths by the lie of the equality of souls; and when the belief in the 'privileges of the majority' creates (and it *will create*) revolutions, do not doubt for a minute that it is Christianity, that it is *Christian* value judgments these revolutions are translating into blood and crimes! Christianity is a rebellion of everything that crawls on the ground against everything that has *height*: the evangel of the 'lowly' *makes things lower* . . .

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— The Gospels are invaluable testimony to the already inescapable corruption *within* the first congregation. With the logical cynicism of a rabbi, Paul would later complete a process of decline that had already begun with the death of the redeemer. — You cannot read these Gospels carefully enough; every word is problematic. I have to confess — and please do not think badly of me for saying so — but this is what makes them a first-rate pleasure for a psychologist, — they are the *opposite* of naïve corruption, they are refinement *par excellence*, they are psychological corruption raised to

²⁰ The 'pathos of distance' was an important concept for Nietzsche: see, e.g., *BGE* 257 and *GM* 1.2.

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an art. The Gospels stand on their own. The Bible in general is without equal. We are among Jews: the *first* thing to note, so as not to lose the thread completely. The pretence at 'holiness' is conducted with a talent bordering on genius (no book or person has ever come close), this counterfeiting of words and gestures as an *art form* is not some one-off/accidental talent, some exception of nature. It is part of the *race*. As the art of the holy lie, Christianity brings to perfection the whole of Judaism, a Jewish preparatory exercise and technique developed over many hundreds of years with the greatest seriousness. The Christian, this *ultima ratio* of lies, is the Jew once again — or even *three* times again . . . — The fundamental will to use only those ideas, symbols, and attitudes that have been proven by the practice of the priests, the instinctual rejection of any *other* practice, any *other* perspective on what is valuable or useful — that is not only tradition, it is *endowment*: only as endowment would it act like nature. The whole of humanity, even the best minds of the best ages — (with a single exception, someone who is perhaps just inhuman —) have allowed themselves to be deceived. The Gospels were read as the *book of innocence* . . . which is no small indication of the ultimate artistry with which this piece of drama has been played out. — Of course: if we were to *see* all these bizarre fools and artificial saints even in passing, there would be an end to it, — and precisely because *I* cannot read a single word without seeing gestures, *I am putting an end to it* . . . I cannot stand a certain way they have of rolling their eyes upwards. — Luckily, the vast majority of people treat books only as *literature* — Do not be fooled: they say 'judge not!' but then they send to hell everything that gets in their way. By letting God be the judge, they themselves are the judge: by exalting God, they exalt themselves; by *demanding* the very virtues that they themselves have — more, that they *need* to have to stay on top —, they give themselves the exalted appearance of struggling for virtue, of fighting to master the virtues. 'We live, we die, we sacrifice ourselves *for goodness*' (— the 'truth', 'the light', the 'kingdom of God'): in point of fact, they are just doing what they cannot fail to do. They act like sycophants, sit in corners, and live shadowy lives in the shadows, and then they make this their *duty*: as a duty, their lives seem humble, and this humility is one more proof of piety . . . Oh, this humble, chaste, charitable type of duplicity! 'Virtue itself is our witness' . . . You can read these Gospels as books that use *morality* as a technique for seduction: morality gets taken over by these petty people, — they know all about morality! — Morality is the best way of *leading people around by the*

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