

## 7

Christianity is called the religion of *pity*.—Pity stands in opposition to all the tonic passions that augment the energy of the feeling of aliveness: it is a depressant. A man loses power when he pities. Through pity that drain upon strength which suffering works is multiplied a thousandfold. Suffering is made contagious by pity; under certain circumstances it may lead to a total sacrifice of life and living energy—a loss out of all proportion to the magnitude of the cause (the case of the death of the Nazarene). This is the first view of it; there is, however, a still more important one. If one measures the effects of pity by the gravity of the reactions it sets up, its character as a menace to life appears in a much clearer light. Pity thwarts the whole law of evolution, which is the law of natural selection. It preserves whatever is ripe for destruction; it fights on the side of those disinherited and condemned by life; by maintaining life in so many of the botched of all kinds, it gives life itself a gloomy and dubious aspect. Mankind has ventured to call pity a virtue (—in every *superior* moral system it appears as a weakness—); going still further, it has been called *the* virtue, the source and foundation of all other virtues—but let us always bear in mind that this was from the standpoint of a philosophy that was nihilistic, and upon whose shield *the denial of life* was inscribed. Schopenhauer was right in this: that by means of pity life is denied, and made *worthy of denial*—pity is the technic of nihilism. Let me repeat: this depressing and contagious instinct stands against all those instincts which work for the preservation and enhancement of life: in the

role of *protector* of the miserable, it is a prime agent in the promotion of *decadence*—pity persuades to extinction. . . . Of course, one doesn't say "extinction": one says "the other world," or "God," or "the *true* life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness. . . . This innocent rhetoric, from the realm of religious-ethical balderdash, appears a *good deal less innocent* when one reflects upon the tendency that it conceals beneath sublime words: the tendency to *destroy life*. Schopenhauer was hostile to life: that is why pity appeared to him as a virtue. . . . Aristotle, as every one knows, saw in pity a sickly and dangerous state of mind, the remedy for which was an occasional purgative: he regarded tragedy as that purgative. The instinct of life should prompt us to seek some means of puncturing any such pathological and dangerous accumulation of pity as that appearing in Schopenhauer's case (and also, alack, in that of our whole literary decadence, from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoy to Wagner), that it may burst and be discharged. . . . Nothing is more unhealthy, amid all our unhealthy modernism, than Christian pity. To be the doctors *here*, to be unmerciful *here*, to wield the knife *here*—all this is *our* business, all this is our sort of humanity, by this sign we are philosophers, we Hyperboreans!—

## 8

It is necessary to say just *whom* we regard as our antagonists: theologians and all who have any theological blood in their veins—this is our whole philosophy. . . . One must have faced that menace at close hand, better still, one must have had experience of it directly and almost succumbed to it, to realize that it is not to be taken lightly (—the alleged free-thinking of our naturalists and physiologists seems to me to be a joke—they have no passion about such things; they have not suffered—). This poisoning goes a great deal further than most people think: I find the arrogant habit of the theologian among all who regard themselves as "idealists"—among all who, by virtue of a higher point of departure, claim a right to rise above reality, and to look upon it with suspicion. . . . The idealist, like the ecclesiastic, carries all sorts of lofty concepts in his hand (and not only in his hand!); he launches them with benevolent contempt against "understanding," "the senses," "honor," "good living," "science"; he sees such things as *beneath*

him, as pernicious and seductive forces, on which "the soul" soars as a pure thing-in-itself—as if humility, chastity, poverty, in a word, *holiness*, had not already done much more damage to life than all imaginable horrors and vices. . . . The pure soul is a pure lie. . . . So long as the priest, that *professional* denier, calumniator and poisoner of life, is accepted as a *higher* variety of man, there can be no answer to the question, What is truth? Truth has already been stood on its head when the obvious attorney of mere emptiness is mistaken for its representative. . . .

## 9

Upon this theological instinct I make war: I find the tracks of it everywhere. Whoever has theological blood in his veins is shifty and dishonorable in all things. The pathetic thing that grows out of this condition is called *faith*: in other words, closing one's eyes upon one's self once for all, to avoid suffering the sight of incurable falsehood. People erect a concept of morality, of virtue, of holiness upon this false view of all things; they ground good conscience upon faulty vision; they argue that no *other* sort of vision has value any more, once they have made theirs sacrosanct with the names of "God," "salvation" and "eternity." I unearth this theological instinct in all directions: it is the most widespread and the most *subterranean* form of falsehood to be found on earth. Whatever a theologian regards as true *must* be false: there you have almost a criterion of truth. His profound instinct of self-preservation stands against truth ever coming into honor in any way, or even getting stated. Wherever the influence of theologians is felt there is a transvaluation of values, and the concepts "true" and "false" are forced to change places: whatever is most damaging to life is there called "true," and whatever exalts it, intensifies it, approves it, justifies it and makes it triumphant is there called "false." . . . When theologians, working through the "consciences" of princes (or of peoples), stretch out their hands for power, there is never any doubt as to the fundamental issue: the will to make an end, the *nihilistic* will exerts that power. . . .

We have unlearned something. We have become more modest in every way. We no longer derive man from the "spirit," from the "godhead"; we have dropped him back among the beasts. We regard him as the strongest of the beasts because he is the craftiest; one of the results thereof is his intellectuality. On the other hand, we guard ourselves against a conceit which would assert itself even here: that man is the great second thought in the process of organic evolution. He is, in truth, 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 say a bit too much, for man, relatively speaking, is the most botched of all the animals and the sickliest, and he has wandered the most dangerously from his instincts—though for all that, to be sure, he remains the most *interesting!* As regards the lower animals, it was Descartes who first had the really admirable daring to describe them as *machina*; the whole of our physiology is directed toward proving the truth of this doctrine. Moreover, it is illogical to set man apart, as Descartes did: what we know of man today is limited precisely by the extent to which we have regarded him, too, as a machine. Formerly we accorded to man, as his inheritance from some higher order of beings, what was called "free will"; now we have taken even this will from him, for the term no longer describes anything that we can understand. The old word "will" now connotes only a sort of result, an individual reaction, that follows inevitably upon a series of partly discordant and partly harmonious stimuli—the will no longer "acts," or "moves." . . . Formerly it was thought that man's consciousness, his "spirit," offered evidence of his high origin, his divinity. That he might be *perfected*, he was advised, tortoise-like, to draw his senses in, to have no traffic with earthly things, to shuffle off his mortal coil—then only the important part of him, the "pure spirit," would remain. Here again we have thought out the thing better: to us consciousness, or "the spirit," appears as a symptom of a relative imperfection of the organism, as an experiment, a groping, a misunderstanding, as an affliction which uses up nervous force unnecessarily—we deny that anything can be done perfectly so

long as it is done consciously. The "pure spirit" is a piece of pure stupidity: take away the nervous system and the senses, the so-called "mortal shell," and *the rest is miscalculation*—that is all! . . .

Under Christianity neither morality nor religion has any point of contact with actuality. It offers purely imaginary causes ("God," "soul," "ego," "spirit," "free will"—or even "unfree"), and purely imaginary effects ("sin," "salvation," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sins"). Intercourse between imaginary *beings* ("God," "spirits," "souls"); an imaginary *natural history* (anthropocentric; a total denial of the concept of natural causes); an imaginary *psychology* (misunderstandings of self, misinterpretations of agreeable or disagreeable general feelings—for example, of the states of the *nervus sympathicus* with the help of the sign-language of religio-ethical balderdash—, "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 purely *fictitious world*, greatly to its disadvantage, is to be differentiated from the world of dreams; the latter at least reflects reality, whereas the former falsifies it, cheapens it and denies it. Once the concept of "nature" had been opposed to the concept of "God," the word "natural" necessarily took on the meaning of "abominable"—the whole of that fictitious world has its sources in hatred of the natural (—the real!—), and is no more than evidence of a profound uneasiness in the presence of reality. . . . *This explains everything.* Who alone has any reason for living his way out of reality? The man who suffers under it. But to suffer from reality one must be a *botched* reality. . . . The preponderance of pains over pleasures is the cause of this fictitious morality and religion: but such a preponderance also supplies the formula for *decadence*. . . .

A criticism of the *Christian concept of God* leads inevitably to the same conclusion.—A nation that still believes in itself holds fast to its own god. In him it does honor to the conditions which enable

it to survive, to its virtues—it projects its joy in itself, its feeling of power, into a being to whom one may offer thanks. He who is rich will give of his riches; a proud people need a god to whom they can make *sacrifices*. . . . Religion, within these limits, is a form of gratitude. A man is grateful for his own existence: to that end he needs a god.—Such a god must be able to work both benefits and injuries; he must be able to play either friend or foe—he is wondered at for the good he does as well as for the evil he does. But the castration, against all nature, of such a god, making him a god of goodness alone, would be contrary to human inclination. Mankind has just as much need for an evil god as for a good god; it doesn't have to thank mere tolerance and humanitarianism for its own existence. . . . What would be the value of a god who knew nothing of anger, revenge, envy, scorn, cunning, violence? who had perhaps never experienced the rapturous [ardors] of victory and of destruction? No one would understand such a god: why should any one want him?—True enough, when a nation is on the downward path, when it feels its belief in its own future, its hope of freedom slipping from it, when it begins to see submission as a first necessity and the virtues of submission as measures of self-preservation, then it must overhaul its god. He then becomes a hypocrite, timorous and demure; he counsels “peace of soul,” hate-no-more, leniency, “love” of friend and foe. He moralizes endlessly; he creeps into every private virtue; he becomes the god of every man; he becomes a private citizen, a cosmopolitan. . . . Formerly he represented a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and thirsty for power in the soul of a people; now he is simply *the good god*. . . . The truth is that there is no other alternative for gods: *either* they are the will to power—in which case they are national gods—*or* incapacity for power—in which case they have to be good. . . .

## 17

Wherever the will to power begins to decline, in whatever form, there is always an accompanying decline physiologically, a *decadence*. The divinity of this decadence, shorn of its masculine virtues and passions, is converted perforce into a god of the physiologically degraded, of the weak. Of course, they do not *call*

themselves the weak; they call themselves “the good.” . . . No hint is needed to indicate the moments in history at which the dualistic fiction of a good and an evil god first became possible. The same instinct which prompts the inferior to reduce their own god to “goodness-in-itself” also prompts them to eliminate all good qualities from the god of their superiors; they make revenge on their masters by making a *devil* of the latter's god.—The good god, and the devil like him—both are abortions of *decadence*.—How can we be so tolerant of the naivete of Christian theologians as to join in 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, is to be described as *progress*?—But even Renan<sup>1</sup> does this. As if Renan had a right to be naive! The contrary actually stares one in the face. When everything necessary to *ascending* life; when all that is strong, courageous, masterful and proud has been eliminated from the concept of a god; when he has sunk step by step to the level of a staff for the weary, a sheet-anchor for the drowning; when he becomes the poor man's god, the sinner's god, the invalid's god *par excellence*, and the attribute of “savior” or “redeemer” remains as the one essential attribute of divinity—just *what* is the significance of such a metamorphosis? what does such a *reduction* of the godhead imply?—To be sure, the “kingdom of God” has thus grown larger. Formerly he had only his own people, his “chosen” people. But since then he has gone wandering, like his people themselves, into foreign parts; he has given up settling down quietly anywhere; finally he has come to feel at home everywhere, and is the great cosmopolitan—until 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, he remains a god in a corner, a god of all the dark nooks and crevices, of all the noisesome 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 master him—messieurs the metaphysicians, those albinos

1. Ernst Renan (1823–1892), author of the influential *Life of Jesus*.

of the intellect. They spun their webs around him for so long that finally he was hypnotized, and began to spin himself, and became another metaphysician. Thereafter he resumed once more his old business of spinning the world out of his inmost being *sub specie Spinozæ*; thereafter he became 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 concept of a god—the god as the patron of the sick, the god as a spinner of cobwebs, the god as a spirit—is one of the most corrupt concepts that has ever been set up in the world: it probably touches low-water mark in the ebbing evolution of the god-type. God degenerated into the *contradiction of life*. Instead of being its transfiguration and eternal Yea! In him war is declared on life, on nature, on the will to live! God becomes the formula for every slander upon the “here and now,” and for every lie about the “beyond.” In him nothingness is deified, and the will to nothingness is made holy! . . .

## 19

The fact that the strong races of northern Europe did not repudiate this Christian god does little credit to their gift for religion—and not much more to their taste. They ought to have been able to make an end of such a moribund and worn-out product of the decadence. A curse lies upon them because they were not equal to it; they made illness, decrepitude and contradiction a part of their instincts—and since then they have not managed to *create* any more gods. Two thousand years have come and gone—and not a single new god! Instead, there still exists, and as if by some intrinsic right—as if he were the *ultimatum* and *maximum* of the power to create gods, of the *creator spiritus* in mankind—this pitiful god of Christian monotonism! This hybrid image of decay, conjured up out of emptiness, contradiction and vain imagining, in which all the instincts of *decadence*, all the cowardices and wearinesses of the soul find their sanction!

## 25

The history of Israel is invaluable as a typical history of an attempt to *denaturalize* all natural values: I point to five facts which bear this out. Originally, and above all in the time of the monarchy, Israel maintained the *right* attitude of things, which is to say, the natural attitude. Its Jahveh was an expression of its consciousness of power, its joy in itself, its hopes for itself: to him the Jews looked for victory and salvation and through him they expected nature to give them whatever was necessary to their existence—above all, rain. Jahveh is the god of Israel, and *consequently* the god of justice: this is the logic of every race that has power in its hands and a good conscience in the use of it. In the religious ceremonial of the Jews, both aspects of this self-approval stand revealed. The nation is grateful for the high destiny that has enabled it to obtain dominion; it is grateful for the benign procession of the seasons, and for the good fortune attending its herds and its crops.—This view of things remained an ideal for a long while, even after it had been robbed of validity by tragic blows: anarchy within and the Assyrian without. But the people still retained, as a projection of their highest yearnings, that vision of a king who was at once a gallant warrior and an upright judge—a vision best visualized in the typical prophet (i.e., critic and satirist of the moment), Isaiah.—But every hope remained unfulfilled. The old god no longer *could* do what he used to do. He ought to have been abandoned. But what actually happened? Simply this: the conception of him was *changed*—the conception of him was *denaturalized*; this was the price that had to be paid for keeping him.—Jahveh, the god of “justice”—he is in accord with Israel *no more*, he no longer visualizes the national egoism; he is now a god only conditionally. . . . The public notion of this god now becomes merely a weapon 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 imaginable interpretations, whereby a “moral order of the world” is set up, and the fundamental concepts, “cause” and “effect,” are stood on their heads. Once natural causation has been swept out of the world by doctrines of reward and punishment some sort of

unnatural causation becomes necessary: and all other varieties of the denial of nature follow it. A god who *demands*—in place of a god who helps, who gives counsel, who is at bottom merely a name for every happy inspiration of courage and self-reliance. . . . *Morality* is no longer a reflection of the conditions which make for the sound life and development of the people; it is no longer the primary life-instinct; instead it has become abstract and in opposition to life—a fundamental perversion of the fancy, an “evil eye” 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 produced by the canker worm of conscience. . . .

## 26

The concept of god falsified; the concept of morality falsified;—but even here Jewish priestcraft did not stop. The whole history of Israel ceased to be of any value: out with it!—These priests accomplished that miracle of falsification, of which a great part of the Bible is the documentary evidence, with a degree of contempt unparalleled; and in the face of all tradition and all historical reality, they translated the past of their people into *religious* terms, which is to say, they converted it into an idiotic mechanism of salvation, whereby all offenses against Jahveh were punished and all devotion to him was rewarded. We would regard this act of historical falsification as something far more shameful if familiarity with the *ecclesiastical* interpretation of history for thousands of years had not blunted our inclinations for uprightness *in historicis*. And the philosophers support the church: the *lie* about a “moral order of the world” runs through the whole of philosophy, even the newest. 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 thereof, is to be measured by the extent to which they or he obey this will of God; that the destinies of a people or of an individual are *controlled* by this will of God, which rewards or punishes according to the degree of obedience manifested.—In

place of all that pitiable lie, *reality* has this to say: the *priest*, a parasitical variety of man who can exist only at the cost of every sound view of life, takes the name of God in vain: he calls that state of human society in which he himself determines the value of all things “the kingdom of God”; he calls the means whereby that state of affairs is attained “the will of God”; with cold-blooded cynicism he estimates all peoples, all ages and all individuals by the extent of their subservience or opposition to the power of the priestly order. One observes him at work: under the hand 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. Out of the powerful and *wholly free* heroes of Israel’s history, they fashioned, according to their changing needs, either wretched bigots and hypocrites or men entirely “godless.” They reduced every great event to the idiotic formula: “obedient or disobedient to God.” They went a step further: the “will of God” (in other words some means necessary for preserving the power of the priests) had to be *determined*—and to this end they had to have a “revelation.” In plain English, a gigantic literary fraud had to be perpetrated, and “holy scriptures” had to be concocted—and so, with the utmost hierarchical pomp, and days of penance and much lamentation over the long days of “sin” now ended, they were duly published. The “will of God,” it appears, had long stood like a rock; the trouble 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 meticulousness, 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 let it be known just what he wanted, what “the will of God” was. . . . From this time forward things were so arranged that the priest became *indispensable everywhere*; at all the great natural events of life, at birth, at marriage, in sickness, at death, not to say at the “*sacrifice*” (that is, at meal times), the holy parasite put in his appearance, and proceeded to *denaturalize* it—in his own phrase, to “sanctify” it. . . . For this should be noted: that every natural habit, every natural institution (the state, the administration of justice, marriage, the care of the sick and of the poor),

everything demanded by the life-instinct, in short, everything that has any value in itself, is reduced to absolute worthlessness and even made the *reverse* of valuable by the parasitism of priests (or, if you choose, 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 to the priest, to “the law,” now gets the name of “sin”; the means prescribed for “reconciliation with God” are, of course, precisely the means which bring one most effectively under the thumb of the priest; he alone can “save.” . . . Psychologically considered, “sins” are indispensable to every society organized on an ecclesiastical basis; they are the only reliable weapons of power; the priest *lives* upon sins; it is necessary to him that there be “sinning.” . . . Prime axiom: “God forgiveth him that repenteth”—in plain English, *him that submitteth to the priest.*

Do not let yourself be deceived: great intellects are skeptical. Zarathustra is a skeptic. The strength, the *freedom* which proceed from intellectual power, from a superabundance of intellectual power, *manifest* themselves as scepticism. Men of fixed convictions do not count when it comes to determining what is fundamental in values and lack of values. Men of convictions are prisoners. They do not see far enough, they do not see what is *below* them: whereas a man who would talk to any purpose about value and non-value must be able to see five hundred convictions *beneath* him—and *behind* him. . . . A mind that aspires to great things, and that wills the means thereto, is necessarily sceptical. Freedom from any sort of conviction *belongs* to strength, and to an independent point of view. . . . That grand passion which is at once the foundation and the power of a sceptic’s existence, and is both more enlightened and more despotic than he is himself, drafts the whole of his intellect into its service; it makes him unscrupulous; it gives him courage to employ unholy means; under certain circumstances it does not *begrudge* him even convictions. Conviction as a means: one may achieve a good deal by means of a conviction. A grand passion makes use of and uses up convictions; it does not yield to them—it knows itself to be sovereign.—On the contrary, the need of faith, of something unconditioned by year or nay, of Carlylism,<sup>1</sup> if I may be allowed the word, is a need of *weakness*. The man of faith, the “believer” of any sort, is necessarily a dependent man—such a man cannot posit *himself* as a goal, nor can he find goals within himself. The “believer” does not belong to himself; he can only be a means to an end; he must be *used up*; he needs some one to use him up. His instinct gives the highest honors to an ethic of self-effacement; he is prompted to embrace it by everything: his prudence, his experience, his vanity. Every sort of faith is in itself an evidence of self-effacement, of self-estrangement. . . . When one reflects how necessary it is to the great majority that there be regulations to restrain them from without and hold them fast, and to what extent

1. Refers to Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), the influential and progressive Scottish author/historian.

control, or, in a higher sense, *slavery*, is the one and only condition which makes for the well-being of the weak-willed man, and especially woman, then one at once understands conviction and "faith." To the man with convictions they are his backbone. To *avoid* seeing many things, to be impartial about nothing, to be a party man through and through, to estimate all values strictly and infallibly—these are conditions necessary to the existence of such a man. But by the same token they are *antagonists* of the truthful man—of the truth. . . . The believer is not free to answer the question, "true" or "not true," according to the dictates of his own conscience: integrity on *this* point would work his instant downfall. The pathological limitations of his vision turn the man of convictions into a fanatic—Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Simon—these types stand in opposition to the strong, *emancipated* spirit. But the grandiose attitudes of these *sick* intellects, these intellectual epileptics, are of influence upon the great masses—fanatics are picturesque, and mankind prefers observing poses to listening to *reasons*. . . .

## 55

—One step further in the psychology of conviction, of "faith." It is now a good while since I first proposed for consideration the question whether convictions are not even more dangerous enemies to truth than lies. (*Human, All-Too-Human*, I, aphorism 483)<sup>1</sup> This time I desire to put the question definitely: is there any actual difference between a lie and a conviction?—All the world believes that there is; but what is not believed by all the world!—Every conviction has its history, its primitive forms, its stage of tentativeness and error: it *becomes* a conviction only after having been, for a long time, *not* one, and then, for an even longer time, hardly one. What if falsehood be also one of these embryonic forms of conviction?—Sometimes all that is needed is a change in persons: what was a lie in the father becomes a conviction in the son.—I call it lying to refuse to see what one sees, or to refuse to see it *as* it is: whether the lie be uttered before witnesses or not

1. The aphorism, which is headed "The Enemies of Truth," makes the direct statement: "Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies."

before witnesses is of no consequence. The most common sort of lie is that by which a man deceives himself: the deception of others is a relatively rare offense.—Now, this will *not* to see what one sees, this will *not* to see it as it is, is almost the first requisite for all who belong to a party of whatever sort: the party man becomes inevitably a liar. For example, the German historians are convinced that Rome was synonymous with despotism and that the Germanic peoples brought the spirit of liberty into the world: what is the difference between this conviction and a lie? Is it to be wondered at that all partisans, including the German historians, instinctively roll the fine phrases of morality upon their tongues—that morality almost owes its very *survival* to the fact that the party man of every sort has need of it every moment?—"This is *our* conviction: we publish it to the whole world; we live and die for it—let us respect all who have convictions!"—I have actually heard such sentiments from the mouths of anti-Semites. On the contrary, gentlemen! An anti-Semite surely does not become more respectable because he lies on principle. . . . The priests, who have more finesse in such matters, and who well understand the objection that lies against the notion of a conviction, which is to say, of a falsehood that becomes a matter of principle *because* it serves a purpose, have borrowed from the Jews the shrewd device of sneaking in the concepts "God," "the will of God" and "the revelation of God" at this place. Kant, too, with his categorical imperative, was on the same road: this was his *practical* reason.<sup>1</sup> There are questions regarding the truth or untruth of which it is *not* for man to decide; all the capital questions, all the capital problems of valuation, are beyond human reason. . . . To know the limits of reason—that alone is genuine philosophy. . . . Why did God make a revelation to man? Would God have done anything superfluous? Man *could* not find out for himself what was good and what was evil, so God taught him His will. . . . Moral: the priest does *not* lie—the question, "true" or "untrue," has nothing to do with such things as the priest discusses; it is impossible to lie about these things. In order to lie here it would be necessary to know *what* is true. But this is more than man *can* know; therefore, the priest is simply the mouthpiece of God.

1. A reference, of course, to Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Critique of Practical Reason).



—Such a priestly syllogism is by no means merely Jewish and Christian; the right to lie and the *shrewd dodge* of “revelation” belong to the general priestly type—to the priest of the decadence as well as to the priest of pagan times. (—Pagans are all those who say yes to life, and to whom “God” is a word signifying acquiescence in all things.)—The “law,” the “will of God,” the “holy book,” and “inspiration”—all these things are merely words for the conditions *under* which the priest comes to power and *with* which he maintains his power—these concepts are to be found at the bottom of all priestly organizations, and of all priestly or priestly-philosophical schemes of governments. The “holy lie”—common alike to Confucius, to the Code of Manu, to Mohammed and to the Christian church—is not even wanting in Plato. “Truth is here”: this means, no matter where it is heard, *the priest lies*. . . .

## 56

—In the last analysis it comes to this: what is the *end* of lying? The fact that, in Christianity, “holy” ends are not visible is *my* objection to the means it employs. Only *bad* ends appear: the poisoning, the calumny, the denial of life, the despising of the body, the degradation and self-contamination of man by the concept of sin—*therefore*, its means are also bad.—I have a contrary feeling when I read the Code of Manu, an incomparably more intellectual and superior work, which it would be a sin against the *intellect* to so much as *name* in the same breath with the Bible. It is easy to see why: there is a genuine philosophy behind it, *in* it, not merely an evil-smelling mess of Jewish rabbinism and superstition—it gives even the most fastidious psychologist something to sink his teeth into. And, *not* to forget what is most important, it differs fundamentally from every kind of Bible: by means of it the *nobles*, the philosophers and the warriors keep the whip-hand over the majority; it is full of noble valuations, it shows a feeling of perfection, an acceptance of life, and triumphant feeling toward self and life—the *sun* shines upon the whole book.—All the things on which Christianity vents its fathomless vulgarity—for example, procreation, women and marriage—are here handled earnestly, with reverence, and with love and confidence. How can anyone really put into the hands of children and ladies a book which

contains such vile things as this: “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”? [I Corinthians vii, 2, 9] And is it *possible* to be a Christian so long as the origin of man is Christianized, which is to say, *befouled*, by the doctrine of the immaculate conception? . . . I know of no book in which so many delicate and kindly things are said of women as in the Code of Manu; these old grey-beards and saints have a way of being gallant to women that it would be impossible, perhaps, to surpass. “The mouth of a woman,” it says in one place, “the breasts of a maiden, the prayer of a child and the smoke of sacrifice are always pure.” In another place: “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, in still another place—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.”