

**ФРИДРИХ
ВИЛЬГЕЛЬМ
НИЦШЕ**

THE DAWN OF DAY

Фридрих Ницше

The Dawn of Day

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Ницше Ф. В.

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Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

The Dawn of Day

Introduction

When Nietzsche called his book *The Dawn of Day*, he was far from giving it a merely fanciful title to attract the attention of that large section of the public which judges books by their titles rather than by their contents. *The Dawn of Day* represents, figuratively, the dawn of Nietzsche's own philosophy. Hitherto he had been considerably influenced in his outlook, if not in his actual thoughts, by Schopenhauer, Wagner, and perhaps also Comte. *Human, all-too-Human*, belongs to a period of transition. After his rupture with Bayreuth, Nietzsche is, in both parts of that work, trying to stand on his own legs, and to regain his spiritual freedom; he is feeling his way to his own philosophy. *The Dawn of Day*, written in 1881 under the invigorating influence of a Genoese spring, is the dawn of this new Nietzsche. "With this book I open my campaign against morality," he himself said later in his autobiography, the *Ecce Homo*.

Just as in the case of the books written in his prime — *The Joyful Wisdom*, *Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *The Genealogy of Morals*— we cannot fail to be impressed in this work by Nietzsche's deep psychological insight, the insight that showed him to be a powerful judge of men and things unequalled in the nineteenth or, perhaps, any other century. One example of this is seen in his searching analysis of the Apostle Paul (Aphorism 68), in which the soul of the "First Christian" is ruthlessly and realistically laid bare to us. Nietzsche's summing-up of the Founder of Christianity — for of course, as is now generally recognised, it was Paul, and not Christ, who founded the Christian Church — has not yet called forth those bitter attacks from theologians that might have been expected, though one reason for this apparent neglect is no doubt that the portrait is so true, and in these circumstances silence is certainly golden on the part of defenders of the faith, who are otherwise, as a rule, loquacious enough. Nor has the taunt in Aphorism 84 elicited an answer from the quarter whither it was directed; and the "free" (not to say dishonest) interpretation of the Bible by Christian scholars and theologians, which is still proceeding merrily, is now being turned to Nietzsche's own writings. For the philosopher's works are now being "explained away" by German theologians in a most naïve and daring fashion, and with an ability which has no doubt been acquired as the result of centuries of skilful interpretation of the Holy Writ.

Nor are professional theologians the only ones who have failed to answer Nietzsche; for in other than religious matters the majority of savants have not succeeded in plumbing his depths. There is, for example, the question of race. Ten years ago, twenty years after the publication of *The Dawn of Day*, Nietzsche's countrymen enthusiastically hailed a book which has recently been translated into English, Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. In this book the Teutons are said to be superior to all the other peoples in the world, the reason given being that they have kept their race pure. It is due to this purity of race that they have produced so many great men; for every "good" man in history is a Teuton, and every bad man something else. Considerable skill is exhibited by the author in filching from his opponents the Latins their best trump cards, and likewise *the* trump card, Jesus Christ, from the Jews; for Jesus Christ, according to Chamberlain's very plausible argument, was not a Jew but an Aryan, *i. e.* a member of that great family of which the Teutons are a branch.

What would Nietzsche have said to this legerdemain? He has constantly pointed out that the Teutons are so far from being a pure race that they have, on the contrary, done everything in their power to ruin even the idea of a pure race for ever. For the Teutons, through their Reformation and their Puritan revolt in England, and the philosophies developed by the democracies that necessarily followed, were the spiritual forbears of the French Revolution and of the Socialistic régime under

which we are beginning to suffer nowadays. Thus this noble race has left nothing undone to blot out the last remnant of race in Europe, and it even stands in the way of the creation of a new race. And with such a record in history the Germans write books, eulogising themselves as the salt of the earth, the people of peoples, the race of races, while in truth they are nothing else than *nouveaux-riches* endeavouring to draw up a decent pedigree for themselves. We know that honesty is not a prerequisite of such pedigrees, and that patriotism may be considered as a good excuse even for a wrong pedigree; but the race-pandemonium that followed the publication of Mr. Chamberlain's book in Germany was really a very unwise proceeding in view of the false and misleading document produced. What, it may be asked again, would Nietzsche have said if he had heard his countrymen screaming odes to their own glory as the “flower of Europe”? He would assuredly have dismissed their exalted pretensions with a good-natured smile; for his study of history had shown him that even slaves must have their saturnalia now and then. But as to his philosophical answer there can be no doubt; for in Aphorism [272](#) of *The Dawn of Day* there is a single sentence which completely refutes the view of modern racemongers like Chamberlain and his followers: “It is probable,” we read, “that there are no pure races, but only races which have become purified, and even these are extremely rare.” There are even stronger expressions to be met with in “Peoples and Countries” (Aphorism 20; see the *Genealogy of Morals*, p. 226): “What quagmires and mendacity must there be about if it is possible, in the modern European hotch-potch, to raise the question of ‘race!’” and again, in Aphorism 21: “Maxim – to associate with no man who takes any part in the mendacious race-swindle.”

A man like Nietzsche, who makes so little impression upon mankind in general, is certainly not, as some people have thought and openly said, a public danger, so the guardians of the State need not be uneasy. There is little danger of Nietzsche's revolutionising either the masses or the classes; for, as Goethe used to say, “Seulement celui qui ressemble le peuple, l'émeut.” Nietzsche's voice has as yet hardly been lifted in this country; and, until it is fully heard, both masses and classes will calmly proceed on their way to the extremes of democracy and anarchy, as they now appear to be doing. Anarchy, though, may be too strong a word; for there is some doubt whether, throughout Europe and America at all events, the people are not now too weak even for anarchy. A revolt is a sign of strength in a slave; but our modern slaves have no strength left.

In the meantime, however, it will have become clear that Nietzsche tried to stop this threatening degradation of the human race, that he endeavoured to supplant the morality of altruism – the cause of this degradation – by another, a super-Christian morality, and that he has succeeded in this aim, if not where the masses and the classes are concerned, at any rate in the case of that small minority of thinkers to which he really wished to appeal. And this minority is naturally grateful to the philosopher for having supplied them with a morality which enables them to be “good” without being fools – an unpleasant combination which, unfortunately, the Nazarene morality is seldom able to avoid. This Nazarene morality has doubtless its own merits, and its “good” and “evil” in many cases coincide with ours; but common sense and certain intellectual qualities are not too highly appreciated in the table of Christian values (see, for instance, 1 Cor. iii. 19), whence it will be observed that the enlightenment of a Christian is not always quite equal to his otherwise excellent intentions. We Nietzscheans, however, must show that patience to them which they always pretend to show to their opponents. Nietzsche himself, indeed, recommends this in Aphorism [103](#) of this book, an aphorism which is almost too well known to need repetition; for it likewise disproves the grotesque though widely circulated supposition that all kinds of immorality would be indulged in under the sway of the “Immoralistic” philosopher:

“I should not, of course, deny – unless I were a fool – that many actions which are called immoral should be avoided and resisted; and in the same way that many which are called moral should be performed and encouraged; but I hold that in both cases these actions should be performed from motives other than those which have prevailed up to the present time. We must learn anew in order that at last, perhaps very late in the day, we may be able to do something more: feel anew.”

In regard to the translation itself – which owes a good deal to many excellent suggestions made by Mr. Thomas Common – it adheres, as a rule, closely to the German text; and in only two or three instances has a slightly freer rendering been adopted in order to make the sense quite clear. There are one or two cases in which a punning or double meaning could not be adequately rendered in English: *e. g.* Aphorism [50](#), where the German word “Rausch” means both “intoxication” and also “elation” (*i. e.* the exalted feelings of the religious fanatic). Again, we have “Einleid,” “Einleidigkeit,” in Aphorism [63](#)– words which do not quite correspond to pity, compassion, or fellow-feeling, and which, indeed, are not yet known to German lexicographers. A literal translation, “one-feeling,” would be almost meaningless. What is actually signified is that both sufferer and sympathiser have nerves and feelings in common: an experience which Schopenhauer, as Nietzsche rightly points out, mistook for compassion or pity (“Mitleid”), and which lacked a word, even in German, until the later psychologist coined “Einleid.” Again, in Aphorism [554](#) we have a play upon the words “Vorschritt” (leading, guidance) and “Fortschritt” (progress).

All these, however, are trifling matters in comparison with the substance of the book, and they are of more interest to philologists than to psychologists. It is for psychologists that this book was written; and such minds, somewhat rare in our time, may read in it with much profit.

J. M. Kennedy.

London, *September* 1911.

Author's Preface

In this book we find a “subterrestrial” at work, digging, mining, undermining. You can see him, always provided that you have eyes for such deep work, – how he makes his way slowly, cautiously, gently but surely, without showing signs of the weariness that usually accompanies a long privation of light and air. He might even be called happy, despite his labours in the dark. Does it not seem as if some faith were leading him on, some solace recompensing him for his toil? Or that he himself desires a long period of darkness, an unintelligible, hidden, enigmatic something, knowing as he does that he will in time have his own morning, his own redemption, his own rosy dawn? – Yea, verily he will return: ask him not what he seeketh in the depths; for he himself will tell you, this apparent Trophonius and subterrestrial, whensoever he once again becomes man. One easily unlearns how to hold one's tongue when one has for so long been a mole, and all alone, like him. —

2

Indeed, my indulgent friends, I will tell you – here, in this late preface,¹ which might easily have become an obituary or a funeral oration – what I sought in the depths below: for I have come back, and – I have escaped. Think not that I will urge you to run the same perilous risk! or that I will urge you on even to the same solitude! For whoever proceeds on his own path meets nobody: this is the feature of one's “own path.” No one comes to help him in his task: he must face everything quite alone – danger, bad luck, wickedness, foul weather. He goes his own way; and, as is only right, meets with bitterness and occasional irritation because he pursues this “own way” of his: for instance, the knowledge that not even his friends can guess who he is and whither he is going, and that they ask themselves now and then: “Well? Is he really moving at all? Has he still ... a path before him?” – At that time I had undertaken something which could not have been done by everybody: I went down into the deepest depths; I tunnelled to the very bottom; I started to investigate and unearth an old *faith* which for thousands of years we philosophers used to build on as the safest of all foundations – which we built on again and again although every previous structure fell in: I began to undermine our *faith in morals*. But ye do not understand me? —

¹ The book was first published in 1881, the preface being added to the second edition, 1886. – Tr.

3

So far it is on Good and Evil that we have meditated least profoundly: this was always too dangerous a subject. Conscience, a good reputation, hell, and at times even the police, have not allowed and do not allow of impartiality; in the presence of morality, as before all authority, we *must* not even think, much less speak: here we must obey! Ever since the beginning of the world, no authority has permitted itself to be made the subject of criticism; and to criticise morals – to look upon morality as a problem, as problematic – what! was that not —*is* that not – immoral? – But morality has at its disposal not only every means of intimidation wherewith to keep itself free from critical hands and instruments of torture: its security lies rather in a certain art of enchantment, in which it is a past master – it knows how to “enrapture.” It can often paralyse the critical will with a single look, or even seduce it to itself: yea, there are even cases where morality can turn the critical will against itself; so that then, like the scorpion, it thrusts the sting into its own body. Morality has for ages been an expert in all kinds of devilry in the art of convincing: even at the present day there is no orator who would not turn to it for assistance (only hearken to our anarchists, for instance: how morally they speak when they would fain convince! In the end they even call themselves “the good and the just”). Morality has shown herself to be the greatest mistress of seduction ever since men began to discourse and persuade on earth – and, what concerns us philosophers even more, she is the veritable *Circe of philosophers*. For, to what is it due that, from Plato onwards, all the philosophic architects in Europe have built in vain? that everything which they themselves honestly believed to be *aere perennius* threatens to subside or is already laid in ruins? Oh, how wrong is the answer which, even in our own day, rolls glibly off the tongue when this question is asked: “Because they have all neglected the prerequisite, the examination of the foundation, a critique of all reason” – that fatal answer made by Kant, who has certainly not thereby attracted us modern philosophers to firmer and less treacherous ground! (and, one may ask apropos of this, was it not rather strange to demand that an instrument should criticise its own value and effectiveness? that the intellect itself should “recognise” its own worth, power, and limits? was it not even just a little ridiculous?) The right answer would rather have been, that all philosophers, including Kant himself were building under the seductive influence of morality – that they aimed at certainty and “truth” only in appearance; but that in reality their attention was directed towards “*majestic moral edifices*,” to use once more Kant's innocent mode of expression, who deems it his “less brilliant, but not undeserving” task and work “to level the ground and prepare a solid foundation for the erection of those majestic moral edifices” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, ii. 257). Alas! He did not succeed in his aim, quite the contrary – as we must acknowledge to-day. With this exalted aim, Kant was merely a true son of his century, which more than any other may justly be called the century of exaltation: and this he fortunately continued to be in respect to the more valuable side of this century (with that solid piece of sensuality, for example, which he introduced into his theory of knowledge). He, too, had been bitten by the moral tarantula, Rousseau; he, too, felt weighing on his soul that moral fanaticism of which another disciple of Rousseau's, Robespierre, felt and proclaimed himself to be the executor: *de fonder sur la terre l'empire de la sagesse, de la justice, et de la vertu*. (Speech of June 4th, 1794.) On the other hand, with such a French fanaticism in his heart, no one could have cultivated it in a less French, more deep, more thorough and more German manner – if the word German is still permissible in this sense – than Kant did: in order to make room for his “moral kingdom,” he found himself compelled to add to it an indemonstrable world, a logical “beyond” – that was why he required his critique of pure reason! In other words, *he would not have wanted it*, if he had not deemed one thing to be more important than all the others: to render his moral kingdom unassailable by – or, better still, invisible to, reason, – for he felt too strongly the vulnerability of a moral order of things in the face of reason. For, when confronted with nature and history, when confronted with the ingrained *immorality* of nature and history, Kant was, like all good

Germans from the earliest times, a pessimist: he believed in morality, not because it is demonstrated through nature and history, but despite its being steadily contradicted by them. To understand this “despite,” we should perhaps recall a somewhat similar trait in Luther, that other great pessimist, who once urged it upon his friends with true Lutheran audacity: “If we could conceive by reason alone how that God who shows so much wrath and malignity could be merciful and just, what use should we have for faith?” For, from the earliest times, nothing has ever made a deeper impression upon the German soul, nothing has ever “tempted” it more, than that deduction, the most dangerous of all, which for every true Latin is a sin against the intellect: *credo quia absurdum est*. – With it German logic enters for the first time into the history of Christian dogma; but even to-day, a thousand years later, we Germans of the present, late Germans in every way, catch the scent of truth, a *possibility* of truth, at the back of the famous fundamental principle of dialectics with which Hegel secured the victory of the German spirit over Europe – “contradiction moves the world; all things contradict themselves.” We are pessimists – even in logic.

4

But logical judgments are not the deepest and most fundamental to which the daring of our suspicion descends: the confidence in reason which is inseparable from the validity of these judgments, is, as confidence, a *moral* phenomenon ... perhaps German pessimism has yet to take its last step? Perhaps it has once more to draw up its “credo” opposite its “absurdum” in a terrible manner? And if this book is pessimistic even in regard to morals, even above the confidence in morals – should it not be a German book for that very reason? For, in fact, it represents a contradiction, and one which it does not fear: in it confidence in morals is retracted – but why? Out of *morality*! Or how shall we call that which takes place in it – in *us*? for our taste inclines to the employment of more modest phrases. But there is no doubt that to us likewise there speaketh a “thou shalt”; we likewise obey a strict law which is set above us – and this is the last cry of morals which is still audible to us, which we too must *live*: here, if anywhere, are we still *men of conscience*, because, to put the matter in plain words, we will not return to that which we look upon as decayed, outlived, and superseded, we will not return to something “unworthy of belief,” whether it be called God, virtue, truth, justice, love of one's neighbour, or what not; we will not permit ourselves to open up a lying path to old ideals; we are thoroughly and unalterably opposed to anything that would intercede and mingle with us; opposed to all forms of present-day faith and Christianity; opposed to the lukewarmness of all romanticism and fatherlandism; opposed also to the artistic sense of enjoyment and lack of principle which would fain make us worship where we no longer believe – for we are artists – opposed, in short, to all this European feminism (or idealism, if this term be thought preferable) which everlastingly “draws upward,” and which in consequence everlastingly “lowers” and “degrades.” Yet, being men of *this* conscience, we feel that we are related to that German uprightness and piety which dates back thousands of years, although we immoralists and atheists may be the late and uncertain offspring of these virtues – yea, we even consider ourselves, in a certain respect, as their heirs, the executors of their inmost will: a pessimistic will, as I have already pointed out, which is not afraid to deny itself, because it denies itself with *joy*! In us is consummated, if you desire a formula —*the autosuppression of morals*.

5

But, after all, why must we proclaim so loudly and with such intensity what we are, what we want, and what we do not want? Let us look at this more calmly and wisely; from a higher and more distant point of view. Let us proclaim it, as if among ourselves, in so low a tone that all the world fails to hear it and *us!* Above all, however, let us say it *slowly*... This preface comes late, but not too late: what, after all, do five or six years matter? Such a book, and such a problem, are in no hurry; besides, we are friends of the *lento*, I and my book. I have not been a philologist in vain – perhaps I am one yet: a teacher of slow reading. I even come to write slowly. At present it is not only my habit, but even my taste – a perverted taste, maybe – to write nothing but what will drive to despair every one who is “in a hurry.” For philology is that venerable art which exacts from its followers one thing above all – to step to one side, to leave themselves spare moments, to grow silent, to become slow – the leisurely art of the goldsmith applied to language: an art which must carry out slow, fine work, and attains nothing if not *lento*. For this very reason philology is now more desirable than ever before; for this very reason it is the highest attraction and incitement in an age of “work”: that is to say, of haste, of unseemly and immoderate hurry-scurry, which is intent upon “getting things done” at once, even every book, whether old or new. Philology itself, perhaps, will not “get things done” so hurriedly: it teaches how to read *well: i. e.* slowly, profoundly, attentively, prudently, with inner thoughts, with the mental doors ajar, with delicate fingers and eyes ... my patient friends, this book appeals only to perfect readers and philologists: *learn* to read me well!

Ruta, near Genoa,
Autumn, 1886.

Book I

1

Subsequent Judgment. – All things that endure for a long time are little by little so greatly permeated by reason that their origin in unreason becomes improbable. Does not almost every exact statement of an origin strike us as paradoxical and sacrilegious? Indeed, does not the true historian constantly contradict?

2

Prejudice of the Learned. – Savants are quite correct in maintaining the proposition that men in all ages believed that they *knew* what was good and evil, praiseworthy and blamable. But it is a prejudice of the learned to say *that we now know it better* than any other age.

3

A Time for Everything. – When man assigned a sex to all things, he did not believe that he was merely playing; but he thought, on the contrary, that he had acquired a profound insight: – it was only at a much later period, and then only partly, that he acknowledged the enormity of his error. In the same way, man has attributed a moral relationship to everything that exists, throwing the cloak of *ethical significance* over the world's shoulders. One day all that will be of just as much value, and no more, as the amount of belief existing to-day in the masculinity or femininity of the sun.²

² This refers, of course, to the different genders of the nouns in other languages. In German, for example, the sun is feminine, and in French masculine. – Tr.

4

Against the Fanciful Disharmony of the Spheres. – We must once more sweep out of the world all this *false* grandeur, for it is contrary to the justice that all things about us may claim. And for this reason we must not see or wish the world to be more disharmonic than it is!

5

Be Thankful! – The most important result of the past efforts of humanity is that we need no longer go about in continual fear of wild beasts, barbarians, gods, and our own dreams.

6

The Juggler and his Counterpart. – That which is wonderful in science is contrary to that which is wonderful in the art of the juggler. For the latter would wish to make us believe that we see a very simple causality, where, in reality, an exceedingly complex causality is in operation. Science, on the other hand, forces us to give up our belief in the simple causality exactly where everything looks so easily comprehensible and we are merely the victims of appearances. The simplest things are *very* “complicated” – we can never be sufficiently astonished at them!

7

Reconceiving Our Feeling of Space. – Is it real or imaginary things which have built up the greater proportion of man's happiness? It is certain, at all events, that the extent of the distance between the highest point of happiness and the lowest point of unhappiness has been established only with the help of imaginary things. As a consequence, *this* kind of a conception of space is always, under the influence of science, becoming smaller and smaller: in the same way as science has taught us, and is still teaching us, to look upon the earth as small – yea, to look upon the entire solar system as a mere point.

8

Transfiguration. – Perplexed sufferers, confused dreamers, the hysterically ecstatic – here we have the three classes into which Raphael divided mankind. We no longer consider the world in this light – and Raphael himself dare not do so: his own eyes would show him a new transfiguration.

9

Conception of the Morality of Custom. – In comparison with the mode of life which prevailed among men for thousands of years, we men of the present day are living in a very immoral age: the power of custom has been weakened to a remarkable degree, and the sense of morality is so refined and elevated that we might almost describe it as volatilised. That is why we late comers experience such difficulty in obtaining a fundamental conception of the origin of morality: and even if we do obtain it, our words of explanation stick in our throats, so coarse would they sound if we uttered them! or to so great an extent would they seem to be a slander upon morality! Thus, for example, the fundamental clause: morality is nothing else (and, above all, nothing more) than obedience to customs, of whatsoever nature they may be. But customs are simply the traditional way of acting and valuing. Where there is no tradition there is no morality; and the less life is governed by tradition, the narrower the circle of morality. The free man is immoral, because it is his *will* to depend upon himself and not upon tradition: in all the primitive states of humanity “evil” is equivalent to “individual,” “free,” “arbitrary,” “unaccustomed,” “unforeseen,” “incalculable.” In such primitive conditions, always measured by this standard, any action performed —*not* because tradition commands it, but for other reasons (*e. g.* on account of its individual utility), even for the same reasons as had been formerly established by custom – is termed immoral, and is felt to be so even by the very man who performs it, for it has not been done out of obedience to the tradition.

What is tradition? A higher authority, which is obeyed, not because it commands what is useful to us, but merely because it commands. And in what way can this feeling for tradition be distinguished from a general feeling of fear? It is the fear of a higher intelligence which commands, the fear of an incomprehensible power, of something that is more than personal – there is *superstition* in this fear. In primitive times the domain of morality included education and hygienics, marriage, medicine, agriculture, war, speech and silence, the relationship between man and man, and between man and the gods – morality required that a man should observe her prescriptions without thinking of *himself* as individual. Everything, therefore, was originally custom, and whoever wished to raise himself above it, had first of all to make himself a kind of lawgiver and medicine-man, a sort of demi-god – in other words, he had to create customs, a dangerous and fearful thing to do! – Who is the most moral man? On the one hand, he who most frequently obeys the law: *e. g.* he who, like the Brahmins, carries a consciousness of the law about with him wherever he may go, and introduces it into the smallest divisions of time, continually exercising his mind in finding opportunities for obeying the law. On the other hand, he who obeys the law in the most difficult cases. The most moral man is he who makes the greatest *sacrifices* to morality; but what are the greatest sacrifices? In answering this question several different kinds of morality will be developed: but the distinction between the morality of the *most frequent obedience* and the morality of the *most difficult obedience* is of the greatest importance. Let us not be deceived as to the motives of that moral law which requires, as an indication of morality, obedience to custom in the most difficult cases! Self-conquest is required, not by reason of its useful consequences for the individual; but that custom and tradition may appear to be dominant, in spite of all individual counter desires and advantages. The individual shall sacrifice himself – so demands the morality of custom.

On the other hand, those moralists who, like the followers of Socrates, recommend self-control and sobriety to the *individual* as his greatest possible advantage and the key to his greatest personal happiness, are *exceptions*– and if we ourselves do not think so, this is simply due to our having been brought up under their influence. They all take a new path, and thereby bring down upon themselves the utmost disapproval of all the representatives of the morality of custom. They sever their connection with the community, as immoralists, and are, in the fullest sense of the word, evil ones. In the same way, every Christian who “sought, above all things, his *own* salvation,”

must have seemed evil to a virtuous Roman of the old school. Wherever a community exists, and consequently also a morality of custom, the feeling prevails that any punishment for the violation of a custom is inflicted, above all, on the community: this punishment is a supernatural punishment, the manifestations and limits of which are so difficult to understand, and are investigated with such superstitious fear. The community can compel any one member of it to make good, either to an individual or to the community itself, any ill consequences which may have followed upon such a member's action. It can also call down a sort of vengeance upon the head of the individual by endeavouring to show that, as the result of his action, a storm of divine anger has burst over the community, – but, above all, it regards the guilt of the individual more particularly as *its own* guilt, and bears the punishment of the isolated individual as its own punishment – “Morals,” they bewail in their innermost heart, “morals have grown lax, if such deeds as these are possible.” And every individual action, every individual mode of thinking, causes dread. It is impossible to determine how much the more select, rare, and original minds must have suffered in the course of time by being considered as evil and dangerous, *yea, because they even looked upon themselves as such*. Under the dominating influence of the morality of custom, originality of every kind came to acquire a bad conscience; and even now the sky of the best minds seems to be more overcast by this thought than it need be.

10

Counter-motion between the Sense of Morality and the Sense of Causality. – As the sense of causality increases, so does the extent of the domain of morality decrease: for every time one has been able to grasp the necessary effects, and to conceive them as distinct from all incidentals and chance possibilities (*post hoc*), one has, at the same time, destroyed an enormous number of *imaginary causalities*, which had hitherto been believed in as the basis of morals – the real world is much smaller than the world of our imagination – and each time also one casts away a certain amount of one's anxiousness and coercion, and some of our reverence for the authority of custom is lost: morality in general undergoes a diminution. He who, on the other hand, wishes to increase it must know how to prevent results from becoming controllable.

11

Morals and Medicines of the People. – Every one is continuously occupied in bringing more or less influence to bear upon the morals which prevail in a community: most of the people bring forward example after example to show the *alleged relationship between cause and effect*, guilt and punishment, thus upholding it as well founded and adding to the belief in it. A few make new observations upon the actions and their consequences, drawing conclusions therefrom and laying down laws; a smaller number raise objections and allow belief in these things to become weakened. – But they are all alike in the crude and *unscientific* manner in which they set about their work: if it is a question of objections to a law, or examples or observations of it, or of its proof, confirmation, expression or refutation, we always find the material and method entirely valueless, as valueless as the material and form of all popular medicine. Popular medicines and popular morals are closely related, and should not be considered and valued, as is still customary, in so different a way: both are most dangerous and make-believe sciences.

12

Consequence as Adjuvant Cause. – Formerly the consequences of an action were considered, not as the result of that action, but a voluntary adjuvant —*i. e.* on the part of God. Can a greater confusion be imagined? Entirely different practices and means have to be brought into use for actions and effects!

13

Towards the New Education of Mankind. – Help us, all ye who are well-disposed and willing to assist, lend your aid in the endeavour to do away with that conception of punishment which has swept over the whole world! No weed more harmful than this! It is not only to the consequences of our actions that this conception has been applied – and how horrible and senseless it is to confuse cause and effect with cause and punishment! – but worse has followed: the pure accidentality of events has been robbed of its innocence by this execrable manner of interpreting conception of punishment. Yea, they have even pushed their folly to such extremes that they would have us look upon existence itself as a punishment – from which it would appear that the education of mankind had hitherto been confided to cranky gaolers and hangmen.

14

The Signification of Madness in the History of Morality. – If, despite that formidable pressure of the “morality of custom,” under which all human communities lived – thousands of years before our own era, and during our own era up to the present day (we ourselves are dwelling in the small world of exceptions, and, as it were, in an evil zone): – if, I say, in spite of all this, new and divergent ideas, valuations, and impulses have made their appearance time after time, this state of things has been brought about only with the assistance of a dreadful associate: it was insanity almost everywhere that paved the way for the new thought and cast off the spell of an old custom and superstition. Do ye understand why this had to be done through insanity? by something which is in both voice and appearance as horrifying and incalculable as the demoniac whims of wind and sea, and consequently calling for like dread and respect? by something bearing upon it the signs of entire lack of consciousness as clearly as the convulsions and foam of the epileptic, which appeared to typify the insane person as the mask and speaking-trumpet of some divine being? by something that inspired even the bearer of the new thought with awe and fear of himself, and that, suppressing all remorse, drove him on to become its prophet and martyr? – Well, in our own time, we continually hear the statement reiterated that genius is tinctured with madness instead of good sense. Men of earlier ages were far more inclined to believe that, wherever traces of insanity showed themselves, a certain proportion of genius and wisdom was likewise present – something “divine,” as they whispered to one another. More than this, they expressed their opinions on the point with sufficient emphasis. “All the greatest benefits of Greece have sprung from madness,” said Plato, setting on record the opinion of the entire ancient world. Let us take a step further: all those superior men, who felt themselves irresistibly urged on to throw off the yoke of some morality or other, had no other resource —*if they were not really mad*— than to feign madness, or actually to become insane. And this holds good for innovators in every department of life, and not only in religion and politics. Even the reformer of the poetic metre was forced to justify himself by means of madness. (Thus even down to gentler ages madness remained a kind of convention in poets, of which Solon, for instance, took advantage when urging the Athenians to reconquer Salamis.) – “How can one make one's self mad when one is not mad and dare not feign to be so?” Almost all the eminent men of antiquity have given themselves up to this dreadful mode of reasoning: a secret doctrine of artifices and dietetic jugglery grew up around this subject and was handed down from generation to generation, together with the feeling of the innocence, even sanctity, of such plans and meditations. The means of becoming a medicine-man among the Indians, a saint among Christians of the Middle Ages, an *angecok* among Greenlanders, a *Pagee* among Brazilians, are the same in essence: senseless fasting, continual abstention from sexual intercourse, isolation in a wilderness, ascending a mountain or a pillar, “sitting on an aged willow that looks out upon a lake,” and thinking of absolutely nothing but what may give rise to ecstasy or mental derangements.

Who would dare to glance at the desert of the bitterest and most superfluous agonies of spirit, in which probably the most productive men of all ages have pined away? Who could listen to the sighs of those lonely and troubled minds: “O ye heavenly powers, grant me madness! Madness, that I at length may believe in myself! Vouchsafe delirium and convulsions, sudden flashes of light and periods of darkness; frighten me with such shivering and feverishness as no mortal ever experienced before, with clanging noises and haunting spectres; let me growl and whine and creep about like a beast, if only I can come to believe in myself! I am devoured by doubt. I have slain the law, and I now dread the law as a living person dreads a corpse. If I am not *above* the law, I am the most abandoned of wretches. Whence cometh this new spirit that dwelleth within me but from you? Prove to me, then, that I am one of you – nothing but madness will prove it to me.” And only too often does such a fervour attain its object: at the very time when Christianity was giving the greatest proof of its

fertility in the production of saints and martyrs, believing that it was thus proving itself, Jerusalem contained large lunatic asylums for shipwrecked saints, for those whose last spark of good sense had been quenched by the floods of insanity.

15

The most Ancient Means of Solace. – First stage: In every misfortune or discomfort man sees something for which he must make somebody else suffer, no matter who – in this way he finds out the amount of power still remaining to him; and this consoles him. Second stage: In every misfortune or discomfort, man sees a punishment, *i. e.* an expiation of guilt and the means by which he may get rid of the malicious enchantment of a real or apparent wrong. When he perceives the *advantage* which misfortune bring with it, he believes he need no longer make another person suffer for it – he gives up this kind of satisfaction, because he now has another.

16

First Principle of Civilisation. – Among savage tribes there is a certain category of customs which appear to aim at nothing but custom. They therefore lay down strict, and, on the whole, superfluous regulations (*e. g.* the rules of the Kamchadales, which forbid snow to be scraped off the boots with a knife, coal to be stuck on the point of a knife, or a piece of iron to be put into the fire – and death to be the portion of every one who shall act contrariwise!) Yet these laws serve to keep people continually reminded of the custom, and the imperative necessity on their parts to conform to it: and all this in support of the great principle which stands at the beginning of all civilisation: any custom is better than none.

17

Goodness and Malignity. – At first men imposed their own personalities on Nature: everywhere they saw themselves and their like, *i. e.* their own evil and capricious temperaments, hidden, as it were, behind clouds, thunder-storms, wild beasts, trees, and plants: it was then that they declared Nature was evil. Afterwards there came a time, that of Rousseau, when they sought to distinguish themselves from Nature: they were so tired of each other that they wished to have separate little hiding-places where man and his misery could not penetrate: then they invented “nature is good.”

18

The Morality of Voluntary Suffering. – What is the highest enjoyment for men living in a state of war in a small community, the existence of which is continually threatened, and the morality of which is the strictest possible? *i. e.* for souls which are vigorous, vindictive, malicious, full of suspicion, ready to face the direst events, hardened by privation and morality? The enjoyment of cruelty: just as, in such souls and in such circumstances, it would be regarded as a virtue to be ingenious and insatiable in cruelty. Such a community would find its delight in performing cruel deeds, casting aside, for once, the gloom of constant anxiety and precaution. Cruelty is one of the most ancient enjoyments at their festivities. As a consequence it is believed that the gods likewise are pleased by the sight of cruelty and rejoice at it – and in this way the belief is spread that *voluntary suffering*, self-chosen martyrdom, has a high signification and value of its own. In the community custom gradually brings about a practice in conformity with this belief: henceforward people become more suspicious of all exuberant well-being, and more confident as they find themselves in a state of great pain; they think that the gods may be unfavourable to them on account of happiness, and favourable on account of pain – not compassionate! For compassion is looked upon with contempt, and unworthy of a strong and awe-inspiring soul – but agreeable to them, because the sight of human suffering put these gods into good humour and makes them feel powerful, and a cruel mind revels in the sensation of power. It was thus that the “most moral man” of the community was considered as such by virtue of his frequent suffering, privation, laborious existence, and cruel mortification – not, to repeat it again and again, as a means of discipline or self-control or a desire for individual happiness – but a virtue which renders the evil gods well-disposed towards the community, a virtue which continually wafts up to them the odour of an expiatory sacrifice. All those intellectual leaders of the nations who reached the point of being able to stir up the sluggish though prolific mire of their customs had to possess this factor of voluntary martyrdom as well as insanity in order to obtain belief – especially, and above all, as is always the case, belief in themselves! The more their minds followed new paths, and were consequently tormented by pricks of conscience, the more cruelly they battled against their own flesh, their own desires, and their own health – as if they were offering the gods a compensation in pleasure, lest these gods should wax wroth at the neglect of ancient customs and the setting up of new aims.

Let no one be too hasty in thinking that we have now entirely freed ourselves from such a logic of feeling! Let the most heroic souls among us question themselves on this very point. The least step forward in the domain of free thought and individual life has been achieved in all ages to the accompaniment of physical and intellectual tortures: and not only the mere step forward, no! but every form of movement and change has rendered necessary innumerable martyrs, throughout the entire course of thousands of years which sought their paths and laid down their foundation-stones, years, however, which we do not think of when we speak about “world-history,” that ridiculously small division of mankind's existence. And even in this so-called world-history, which in the main is merely a great deal of noise about the latest novelties, there is no more important theme than the old, old tragedy of the martyrs *who tried to move the mire*. Nothing has been more dearly bought than the minute portion of human reason and feeling of liberty upon which we now pride ourselves. But it is this very pride which makes it almost impossible for us to-day to be conscious of that enormous lapse of time, preceding the period of “world-history” when “morality of custom” held the field, and to consider this lapse of time as *the real and decisive epoch that established the character of mankind*: an epoch when suffering was considered as a virtue, cruelty as a virtue, hypocrisy as a virtue, revenge as a virtue, and the denial of the reason as a virtue, whereas, on the other hand, well-being was regarded as a danger, longing for knowledge as a danger, peace as a danger, compassion as a danger: an epoch when being pitied was looked upon as an insult, work as an insult, madness as a divine attribute, and every kind of change as immoral and pregnant with ruin! You imagine that all this has changed, and

that humanity must likewise have changed its character? Oh, ye poor psychologists, learn to know yourselves better!

19

Morality and Stupefaction. – Custom represents the experiences of men of earlier times in regard to what they considered as useful and harmful; but the *feeling of custom* (morality) does not relate to these feelings as such, but to the age, the sanctity, and the unquestioned authority of the custom. Hence this feeling hinders our acquiring new experiences and amending morals: *i. e.* morality is opposed to the formation of new and better morals: it stupefies.

20

Free-doers and Free-thinkers. – Compared with free-thinkers, free-doers are at a disadvantage, because it is evident that men suffer more from the consequences of actions than of thoughts. If we remember, however, that both seek their own satisfaction, and that free-thinkers have already found their satisfaction in reflection upon and utterance of forbidden things, there is no difference in the motives; but in respect of the consequences the issue will be decided against the free-thinker, provided that it be not judged from the most superficial and vulgar external appearance, *i. e.* not as every one would judge it. We must make up for a good deal of the calumny with which men have covered all those who have, by their actions, broken away from the authority of some custom – they are generally called criminals. Every one who has hitherto overthrown a law of established morality has always at first been considered as a *wicked man*: but when it was afterwards found impossible to re-establish the law, and people gradually became accustomed to the change, the epithet was changed by slow degrees. History deals almost exclusively with these *wicked men*, who later on came to be recognised as *good men*.

21

“Fulfilment of the Law.” – In cases where the observance of a moral precept has led to different consequence from that expected and promised, and does not bestow upon the moral man the happiness he had hoped for, but leads rather to misfortune and misery, the conscientious and timid man has always his excuse ready: “Something was lacking in the proper *carrying out* of the law.” If the worst comes to the worst, a deeply-suffering and down-trodden humanity will even decree: “It is impossible to carry out the precept faithfully: we are too weak and sinful, and, in the depths of our soul, incapable of morality: consequently we have no claim to happiness and success. Moral precepts and promises have been given for better beings than ourselves.”

22

Works and Faith. – Protestant teachers are still spreading the fundamental error that faith only is of consequence, and that works must follow naturally upon faith. This doctrine is certainly not true, but it is so seductive in appearance that it has succeeded in fascinating quite other intellects than that of Luther (*e. g.* the minds of Socrates and Plato): though the plain evidence and experience of our daily life prove the contrary. The most assured knowledge and faith cannot give us either the strength or the dexterity required for action, or the practice in that subtle and complicated mechanism which is a prerequisite for anything to be changed from an idea into action. Then, I say, let us first and foremost have works! and this means practice! practice! practice! The necessary faith will come later – be certain of that!

23

In what Respect we are most Subtle. – By the fact that, for thousands of years, *things* (nature, tools, property of all kinds) were thought to be alive and to possess souls, and able to hinder and interfere with the designs of man, the feeling of impotence among men has become greater and more frequent than it need have been: for one had to secure one's things like men and beasts, by means of force, compulsion, flattery, treaties, sacrifices – and it is here that we may find the origin of the greater number of superstitious customs, *i. e.* of an important, *perhaps paramount*, and nevertheless wasted and useless division of mankind's activity! – But since the feeling of impotence and fear was so strong, and for such a length of time in a state of constant stimulation, the feeling of *power* in man has been developed in so subtle a manner that, in this respect, he can compare favourably with the most delicately-adjusted balance. This feeling has become his strongest propensity: and the means he discovered for creating it form almost the entire history of culture.

24

The Proof of a Precept. – The worth or worthlessness of a recipe – that for baking bread, for example – is proved, generally speaking, by the result expected coming to pass or not, provided, of course, that the directions given have been carefully followed. The case is different, however, when we come to deal with moral precepts, for here the results cannot be ascertained, interpreted, and divined. These precepts, indeed, are based upon hypotheses of but little scientific value, the proof or refutation of which by means of results is impossible: – but in former ages, when all science was crude and primitive, and when a matter was *taken for granted* on the smallest evidence, then the worth or worthlessness of a moral recipe was determined as we now determine any other precept: by reference to the results. If the natives of Alaska believe in a command which says: “Thou shalt not throw a bone into the fire or give it to a dog,” this will be proved by the warning: “If thou dost thou wilt have no luck when hunting.” Yet, in one sense or another, it almost invariably happens that one has “no luck when hunting.” It is no easy matter to *refute* the worth of the precept in this way, the more so as it is the community, and not the individual, which is regarded as the bearer of the punishment; and, again, some occurrence is almost certain to happen which seems to prove the rule.

25

Customs and Beauty. – In justice to custom it must not be overlooked that, in the case of all those who conform to it whole-heartedly from the very start, the organs of attack and defence, both physical and intellectual, begin to waste away; *i. e.* these individuals gradually become more beautiful! For it is the exercise of these organs and their corresponding feelings that brings about ugliness and helps to preserve it. It is for this reason that the old baboon is uglier than the young one, and that the young female baboon most closely resembles man, and is hence the most handsome. – Let us draw from this our own conclusions as to the origin of female beauty!

26

Animals and Morals. – The rules insisted upon in polite society, such, for example, as the avoidance of everything ridiculous, fantastic, presumptuous; the suppression of one's virtues just as much as of one's most violent desires, the instant bringing of one's self down to the general level, submitting one's self to etiquette and self-depreciation: all this, generally speaking, is to be found, as a social morality, even in the lowest scale of the animal world – and it is only in this low scale that we see the innermost plan of all these amiable precautionary regulations: one wishes to escape from one's pursuers and to be aided in the search for plunder. Hence animals learn to control and to disguise themselves to such an extent that some of them can even adapt the colour of their bodies to that of their surroundings (by means of what is known as the “chromatic function”). Others can simulate death, or adopt the forms and colours of other animals, or of sand, leaves, moss, or fungi (known to English naturalists as “mimicry”).

It is in this way that an individual conceals himself behind the universality of the generic term “man” or “society,” or adapts and attaches himself to princes, castes, political parties, current opinions of the time, or his surroundings: and we may easily find the animal equivalent of all those subtle means of making ourselves happy, thankful, powerful, and fascinating. Even that sense of truth, which is at bottom merely the sense of security, is possessed by man in common with the animals: we do not wish to be deceived by others or by ourselves; we hear with some suspicion the promptings of our own passions, we control ourselves and remain on the watch against ourselves. Now, the animal does all this as well as man; and in the animal likewise self-control originates in the sense of reality (prudence). In the same way, the animal observes the effects it exercises on the imagination of other beasts: it thus learns to view itself from their position, to consider itself “objectively”; it has its own degree of self-knowledge. The animal judges the movements of its friends and foes, it learns their peculiarities by heart and acts accordingly: it gives up, once and for all, the struggle against individual animals of certain species, and it likewise recognises, in the approach of certain varieties, whether their intentions are agreeable and peaceful. The beginnings of justice, like those of wisdom – in short, everything which we know as the *Socratic virtues* – are of an *animal* nature: a consequence of those instincts which teach us to search for food and to avoid our enemies. If we remember that the higher man has merely raised and refined himself in the *quality* of his food and in the conception of what is contrary to his nature, it may not be going too far to describe the entire moral phenomenon as of an animal origin.

27

The Value of the Belief in Superhuman Passions. – The institution of marriage stubbornly upholds the belief that love, although a passion, is nevertheless capable of duration as such, yea, that lasting, lifelong love may be taken as a general rule. By means of the tenacity of a noble belief, in spite of such frequent and almost customary refutations – thereby becoming a *pia fraus*– marriage has elevated love to a higher rank. Every institution which has conceded to a passion the *belief in the duration of the latter*, and responsibility for this duration, in spite of the nature of the passion itself, has raised the passion to a higher level: and he who is thenceforth seized with such a passion does not, as formerly, think himself lowered in the estimation of others or brought into danger on that account, but on the contrary believes himself to be raised, both in the opinion of himself and of his equals. Let us recall institutions and customs which, out of the fiery devotion of a moment, have created eternal fidelity; out of the pleasure of anger, eternal vengeance; out of despair, eternal mourning; out of a single hasty word, eternal obligation. A great deal of hypocrisy and falsehood came into the world as the result of such transformations; but each time, too, at the cost of such disadvantages, a new and *superhuman* conception which elevates mankind.

28

State of Mind as Argument. – Whence arises within us a cheerful readiness for action? – such is the question which has greatly occupied the attention of men. The most ancient answer, and one which we still hear, is: God is the cause; in this way He gives us to understand that He approves of our actions. When, in former ages, people consulted the oracles, they did so that they might return home strengthened by this cheerful readiness; and every one answered the doubts which came to him, if alternative actions suggested themselves, by saying: “I shall do whatever brings about that feeling.” They did not decide, in other words, for what was most reasonable, but upon some plan the conception of which imbued the soul with courage and hope. A cheerful outlook was placed in the scales as an argument and proved to be heavier than reasonableness; for the state of mind was interpreted in a superstitious manner as the action of a god who promises success; and who, by this argument, lets his reason speak as the highest reasonableness. Now, let the consequences of such a prejudice be considered when shrewd men, thirsting for power, availed themselves of it – and still do so! “Bring about the right state of mind!” – in this way you can do without all arguments and overcome every objection!

29

Actors of Virtue and Sin. – Among the ancients who became celebrated for their virtue there were many, it would seem, *who acted to themselves*, especially the Greeks, who, being actors by nature, must have acted quite unconsciously, seeing no reason why they should not do so. In addition, every one was striving to outdo some one else's virtue with his own, so why should they not have made use of every artifice to show off their virtues, especially among themselves, if only for the sake of practice! Of what use was a virtue which one could not display, and which did not know how to display itself! – Christianity put an end to the career of these actors of virtue; instead it devised the disgusting ostentation and parading of sins: it brought into the world a state of *mendacious sinfulness* (even at the present day this is considered as *bon ton* among orthodox Christians).

30

Refined Cruelty as Virtue. – Here we have a morality which is based entirely upon our thirst for distinction – do not therefore entertain too high an opinion of it! Indeed, we may well ask what kind of an impulse it is, and what is its fundamental signification? It is sought, by our appearance, to grieve our neighbour, to arouse his envy, and to awaken his feelings of impotence and degradation; we endeavour to make him taste the bitterness of his fate by dropping a little of *our* honey on his tongue, and, while conferring this supposed benefit on him, looking sharply and triumphantly into his eyes.

Behold such a man, now become humble, and perfect in his humility – and seek those for whom, through his humility, he has for a long time been preparing a torture; for you are sure to find them! Here is another man who shows mercy towards animals, and is admired for doing so – but there are certain people on whom he wishes to vent his cruelty by this very means. Look at that great artist: the pleasure he enjoyed beforehand in conceiving the envy of the rivals he had outstripped, refused to let his powers lie dormant until he became a great man – how many bitter moments in the souls of other men has he asked for as payment for his own greatness! The nun's chastity: with what threatening eyes she looks into the faces of other women who live differently from her! what a vindictive joy shines in those eyes! The theme is short, and its variations, though they might well be innumerable, could not easily become tiresome – for it is still too paradoxical a novelty, and almost a painful one, to affirm that the morality of distinction is nothing, at bottom, but joy in refined cruelty. When I say “at bottom,” I mean here, every time in the first generation. For, when the habit of some distinguished action becomes *hereditary*, its root, so to speak, is not transmitted, but only its fruits (for only feelings, and not thoughts, can become hereditary): and, if we presuppose that this root is not reintroduced by education, in the second generation the joy in the cruelty is no longer felt: but only pleasure in the habit as such. *This* joy, however, is the first degree of the “good.”

31

Pride in Spirit. – The pride of man, which strives to oppose the theory of our own descent from animals and establishes a wide gulf between nature and man himself – this pride is founded upon a prejudice as to what the mind is; and this prejudice is relatively recent. In the long prehistorical period of humanity it was supposed that the mind was everywhere, and men did not look upon it as a particular characteristic of their own. Since, on the contrary, everything spiritual (including all impulses, maliciousness, and inclinations) was regarded as common property, and consequently accessible to everybody, primitive mankind was not ashamed of being descended from animals or trees (the noble races thought themselves honoured by such legends), and saw in the spiritual that which unites us with nature, and not that which severs us from her. Thus man was brought up in modesty – and this likewise was the result of a prejudice.

32

The Brake. – To suffer morally, and then to learn afterwards that this kind of suffering was founded upon an error, shocks us. For there is a unique consolation in acknowledging, by our suffering, a “deeper world of truth” than any other world, and we would much rather suffer and feel ourselves above reality by doing so (through the feeling that, in this way, we approach nearer to that “deeper world of truth”), than live without suffering and hence without this feeling of the sublime. Thus it is pride, and the habitual fashion of satisfying it, which opposes this new interpretation of morality. What power, then, must we bring into operation to get rid of this brake? Greater pride? A new pride?

33

The Contempt of Causes, Consequences, and Reality. – Those unfortunate occurrences which take place at times in the community, such as sudden storms, bad harvests, or plagues, lead members of the community to suspect that offences against custom have been committed, or that new customs must be invented to appease a new demoniac power and caprice. Suspicion and reasoning of this kind, however, evade an inquiry into the real and natural causes, and take the demoniac cause for granted. This is one source of the hereditary perversion of the human intellect; and the other one follows in its train, for, proceeding on the same principle, people paid much less attention to the real and natural consequences of an action than to the supernatural consequences (the so-called punishments and mercies of the Divinity). It is commanded, for instance, that certain baths are to be taken at certain times: and the baths are taken, not for the sake of cleanliness, but because the command has been made. We are not taught to avoid the real consequences of dirt, but merely the supposed displeasure of the gods because a bath has been omitted. Under the pressure of superstitious fear, people began to suspect that these ablutions were of much greater importance than they seemed; they ascribed inner and supplementary meanings to them, gradually lost their sense of and pleasure in reality, and finally reality is considered as valuable *only to the extent that it is a symbol*. Hence a man who is under the influence of the morality of custom comes to despise causes first of all, secondly consequences, and thirdly reality, and weaves all his higher feelings (reverence, sublimity, pride, gratitude, love) *into an imaginary world*: the so-called higher world. And even to-day we can see the consequences of this: wherever, and in whatever fashion, man's feelings are raised, that imaginary world is in evidence. It is sad to have to say it; but for the time being *all higher sentiments* must be looked upon with suspicion by the man of science, to so great an extent are they intermingled with illusion and extravagance. Not that they need necessarily be suspected *per se* and for ever; but there is no doubt that, of all the gradual *purifications* which await humanity, the purification of the higher feelings will be one of the slowest.

34

Moral Feelings and Conceptions. – It is clear that moral feelings are transmitted in such a way that children perceive in adults violent predilections and aversions for certain actions, and then, like born apes, imitate such likes and dislikes. Later on in life, when they are thoroughly permeated by these acquired and well-practised feelings, they think it a matter of propriety and decorum to provide a kind of justification for these predilections and aversions. These “justifications,” however, are in no way connected with the origin or the degree of the feeling: people simply accommodate themselves to the rule that, as rational beings, they must give reasons for their pros and cons, reasons which must be assignable and acceptable into the bargain. Up to this extent the history of the moral feelings is entirely different from the history of moral conceptions. The first-mentioned are powerful *before* the action, and the latter especially after it, in view of the necessity for making one's self clear in regard to them.

35

Feelings and their Descent from Judgments. – “Trust in your feelings!” But feelings comprise nothing final, original; feelings are based upon the judgments and valuations which are transmitted to us in the shape of feelings (inclinations, dislikes). The inspiration which springs from a feeling is the grandchild of a judgment – often an erroneous judgment! – and certainly not one's own judgment! Trusting in our feelings simply means obeying our grandfather and grandmother more than the gods within *ourselves*: our reason and experience.

36

A Foolish Piety, with *Arrière-pensées*. – What! the inventors of ancient civilisations, the first makers of tools and tape lines, the first builders of vehicles, ships, and houses, the first observers of the laws of the heavens and the multiplication tables – is it contended that they were entirely different from the inventors and observers of our own time, and superior to them? And that the first slow steps forward were of a value which has not been equalled by the discoveries we have made with all our travels and circumnavigations of the earth? It is the voice of prejudice that speaks thus, and argues in this way to depreciate the importance of the modern mind. And yet it is plain to be seen that, in former times, hazard was the greatest of all discoverers and observers and the benevolent prompter of these ingenious ancients, and that, in the case of the most insignificant invention now made, a greater intellect, discipline, and scientific imagination are required than formerly existed throughout long ages.

37

Wrong Conclusions From Usefulness. – When we have demonstrated the highest utility of a thing, we have nevertheless made no progress towards an explanation of its origin; in other words, we can never explain, by mere utility, the necessity of existence. But precisely the contrary opinion has been maintained up to the present time, even in the domain of the most exact science. In astronomy, for example, have we not heard it stated that the (supposed) usefulness of the system of satellites – (replacing the light which is diminished in intensity by the greater distance of the sun, in order that the inhabitants of the various celestial bodies should not want for light) – was the final object of this system and explained its origin? Which may remind us of the conclusions of Christopher Columbus The earth has been created for man, ergo, if there are countries, they must be inhabited. “Is it probable that the sun would throw his rays on nothing, and that the nocturnal vigils of the stars should be wasted upon untravelled seas and unpeopled countries?”

38

Impulses Transformed by Moral Judgments. – The same impulse, under the impression of the blame cast upon it by custom, develops into the painful feeling of cowardice, or else the pleasurable feeling of *humility*, in case a morality, like that of Christianity, has taken it to its heart and called it *good*. In other words, this instinct will fall under the influence of either a good conscience or a bad one! In itself, *like every instinct*, it does not possess either this or indeed any other moral character and name, or even a definite accompanying feeling of pleasure or displeasure; it does not acquire all these qualities as its second nature until it comes into contact with impulses which have already been baptized as good and evil, or has been recognised as the attribute of beings already weighed and valued by the people from a moral point of view. Thus the ancient conception of envy differed entirely from ours. Hesiod reckons it among the qualities of the *good*, benevolent Eris, and it was not considered as offensive to attribute some kind of envy even to the gods. This is easy to understand in a state of things inspired mainly by emulation, but emulation was looked upon as good, and valued accordingly.

The Greeks were likewise different from us in the value they set upon hope: they conceived it as blind and deceitful. Hesiod in one of his poems has made a strong reference to it – a reference so strong, indeed, that no modern commentator has quite understood it; for it runs contrary to the modern mind, which has learnt from Christianity to look upon hope as a virtue. Among the Greeks, on the other hand, the portal leading to a knowledge of the future seemed only partly closed, and, in innumerable instances, it was impressed upon them as a religious obligation to inquire into the future, in those cases where we remain satisfied with hope. It thus came about that the Greeks, thanks to their oracles and seers, held hope in small esteem, and even lowered it to the level of an evil and a danger.

The Jews, again, took a different view of anger from that held by us, and sanctified it: hence they have placed the sombre majesty of the wrathful man at an elevation so high that a European cannot conceive it. They moulded their wrathful and holy Jehovah after the images of their wrathful and holy prophets. Compared with them, all the Europeans who have exhibited the greatest wrath are, so to speak, only second-hand creatures.

39

The Prejudice concerning “Pure Spirit.” – Wherever the doctrine of *pure spirituality* has prevailed, its excesses have resulted in the destruction of the tone of the nerves: it taught that the body should be despised, neglected, or tormented, and that, on account of his impulses, man himself should be tortured and regarded with contempt. It gave rise to gloomy, strained, and downcast souls – who, besides, thought they knew the reason of their misery and how it might possibly be relieved! “It *must* be in the body! For it still *thrives* too well!” – such was their conclusion, whilst the fact was that the body, through its agonies, protested time after time against this never-ending mockery. Finally, a universal and chronic hyper-nervousness seized upon those virtuous representatives of the pure spirit: they learned to recognise joy only in the shape of ecstasies and other preliminary symptoms of insanity – and their system reached its climax when it came to look upon ecstasy as the highest aim of life, and as the standard by which all earthly things must be *condemned*.

40

Meditations upon Observances. – Numerous moral precepts, carelessly drawn from a single event, quickly became incomprehensible; it was as difficult a matter to deduce their intentions with any degree of certainty as it was to recognise the punishment which was to follow the breaking of the rule. Doubts were even held regarding the order of the ceremonies; but, while people guessed at random about such matters, the object of their investigations increased in importance, it was precisely the greatest absurdity of an observance that developed into a holy of holies. Let us not think too little of the energy wasted by man in this regard throughout thousands of years, and least of all of the effects of such *meditations upon observances*! Here we find ourselves on the wide training-ground of the intellect – not only do religions develop and continue to increase within its boundaries: but here also is the venerable, though dreadful, primeval world of science; here grow up the poet, the thinker, the physician, the lawgiver. The dread of the unintelligible, which, in an ambiguous fashion, demanded ceremonies from us, gradually assumed the charm of the intricate, and where man could not unravel he learnt to create.

41

To Determine the Value of the *Vita Contemplativa*. – Let us not forget, as men leading a contemplative life, what kind of evil and misfortunes have overtaken the men of the *vita activa* as the result of contemplation – in short, what sort of contra-account the *vita activa* has to offer us, if we exhibit too much boastfulness before it with respect to our good deeds. It would show us, in the first place, those so-called religious natures, who predominate among the lovers of contemplation and consequently represent their commonest type. They have at all times acted in such a manner as to render life difficult to practical men, and tried to make them disgusted with it, if possible: to darken the sky, to obliterate the sun, to cast suspicion upon joy, to depreciate hope, to paralyse the active hand – all this they knew how to do, just as, for miserable times and feelings, they had their consolations, alms, blessings, and benedictions. In the second place, it can show us the artists, a species of men leading the *vita contemplativa*, rarer than the religious element, but still often to be met with. As beings, these people are usually intolerable, capricious, jealous, violent, quarrelsome: this, however, must be deduced from the joyous and exalting effects of their works.

Thirdly, we have the philosophers, men who unite religious and artistic qualities, combined, however, with a third element, namely, dialectics and the love of controversy. They are the authors of evil in the same sense as the religious men and artists, in addition to which they have wearied many of their fellow-men with their passion for dialectics, though their number has always been very small. Fourthly, the thinkers and scientific workers. They but rarely strove after effects, and contented themselves with silently sticking to their own groove. Thus they brought about little envy and discomfort, and often, as objects of mockery and derision, they served, without wishing to do so, to make life easier for the men of the *vita activa*. Lastly, science ended by becoming of much advantage to all; and if, *on account of this utility*, many of the men who were destined for the *vita activa* are now slowly making their way along the road to science in the sweat of their brow, and not without brain-racking and maledictions, this is not the fault of the crowd of thinkers and scientific workers: it is “self-wrought pain.”³

³ M. Henri Albert points out that this refers to a line of Paul Gerhardt's well-known song: “Befiel du deine Wege.” Tr.

42

Origin of the *Vita Contemplativa*. – During barbarous ages, when pessimistic judgments held sway over men and the world, the individual, in the consciousness of his full power, always endeavoured to act in conformity with such judgments, that is to say, he put his ideas into action by means of hunting, robbery, surprise attacks, brutality, and murder: including the weaker forms of such acts, as far as they are tolerated within the community. When his strength declines, however, and he feels tired, ill, melancholy, or satiated – consequently becoming temporarily void of wishes or desires – he is a relatively better man, that is to say, less dangerous; and his pessimistic ideas will now discharge themselves only in words and reflections – upon his companions, for example, or his wife, his life, his gods, – his judgments will be *evil* ones. In this frame of mind he develops into a thinker and prophet, or he adds to his superstitions and invents new observances, or mocks his enemies. Whatever he may devise, however, all the productions of his brain will necessarily reflect his frame of mind, such as the increase of fear and weariness, and the lower value he attributes to action and enjoyment. The substance of these productions must correspond to the substance of these poetic, thoughtful, and priestly moods; the evil judgment must be supreme.

In later years, all those who acted continuously as this man did in those special circumstances —*i. e.* those who gave out pessimistic judgments, and lived a melancholy life, poor in action – were called poets, thinkers, priests, or “medicine-men.” The general body of men would have liked to disregard such people, because they were not active enough, and to turn them out of the community; but there was a certain risk in doing so: these inactive men had found out and were following the tracks of superstition and divine power, and no one doubted that they had unknown means of power at their disposal. This was the value which was set upon *the ancient race of contemplative natures*– despised as they were in just the same degree as they were not dreaded! In such a masked form, in such an ambiguous aspect, with an evil heart and often with a troubled head, did Contemplation make its first appearance on earth: both weak and terrible at the same time, despised in secret, and covered in public with every mark of superstitious veneration. Here, as always, we must say: *pudenda origo!*

43

How many Forces must now be united in a Thinker. – To rise superior to considerations of the senses, to raise one's self to abstract contemplations: this is what was formerly regarded as *elevation*; but now it is not practicable for us to share the same feelings. Luxuriating in the most shadowy images of words and things; playing with those invisible, inaudible, imperceptible beings, was considered as existence in another and *higher* world, a world that sprang from the deep contempt felt for the world which was perceptible to the senses, this seductive and wicked world of ours. “These *abstracta* no longer mislead us, but they may lead us” – with such words men soared aloft. It was not the *substance* of these intellectual sports, but the sports themselves, which was looked upon as “the higher thing” in the primeval ages of science. Hence we have Plato's admiration for dialectics, and his enthusiastic belief in the necessary relationship of dialectics to the good man who has risen superior to the considerations of his senses. It was not only knowledge that was discovered little by little, but also the different means of acquiring it, the conditions and operations which precede knowledge in man. And it always seemed as if the newly-discovered operation or the newly-experienced condition were not a means of acquiring knowledge, but was even the substance, goal, and sum-total of everything that was worth knowing. What does the thinker require? – imagination, inspiration, abstraction, spirituality, invention, presentiment, induction, dialectics, deduction, criticism, ability to collect materials, an impersonal mode of thinking, contemplation, comprehensiveness, and lastly, but not least, justice, and love for everything that exists – but each one of these means was at one time considered, in the history of the *vita contemplativa*, as a goal and final purpose, and they all secured for their inventors that perfect happiness which fills the human soul when its final purpose dawns upon it.

44

Origin and Meaning. – Why does this thought come into my mind again and again, always in more and more vivid colours? – that, in former times, investigators, in the course of their search for the origin of things, always thought that they found something which would be of the highest importance for all kinds of action and judgment: yea, that they even invariably postulated that the salvation of mankind depended upon *insight into the origin of things*– whereas now, on the other hand, the more we examine into origins, the less do they concern our interests: on the contrary, all the valuations and interestedness which we have placed upon things begin to lose their meaning, the more we retrogress where knowledge is concerned and approach the things themselves. *The origin becomes of less significance in proportion as we acquire insight into it*; whilst things nearest to ourselves, around and within us, gradually begin to manifest their wealth of colours, beauties, enigmas, and diversity of meaning, of which earlier humanity never dreamed. In former ages thinkers used to move furiously about, like wild animals in cages, steadily glaring at the bars which hemmed them in, and at times springing up against them in a vain endeavour to break through them: and happy indeed was he who could look through a gap to the outer world and could fancy that he saw something of what lay beyond and afar off.

45

A Tragic Termination to Knowledge. – Of all the means of exaltation, human sacrifices have at times done most to elevate man. And perhaps the one powerful thought – the idea of *self-sacrificing humanity*– might be made to prevail over every other aspiration, and thus to prove the victor over even the most victorious. But to whom should the sacrifice be made? We may already swear that, if ever the constellation of such an idea appeared on the horizon, the knowledge of truth would remain the single but enormous object with which a sacrifice of such a nature would be commensurate – because no sacrifice is too great for it. In the meantime the problem has never been expounded as to how far humanity, considered as a whole, could take steps to encourage the advancement of knowledge; and even less as to what thirst for knowledge could impel humanity to the point of sacrificing itself with the light of an anticipated wisdom in its eyes. When, perhaps, with a view to the advancement of knowledge, we are able to enter into communication with the inhabitants of other stars, and when, during thousands of years, wisdom will have been carried from star to star, the enthusiasm of knowledge may rise to such a dizzy height!

46

Doubt in Doubt. – “What a good pillow doubt is for a well-balanced head!” This saying of Montaigne always made Pascal angry, for nobody ever wanted a good pillow so much as he did. Whatever was the matter with him?

47

Words block up our Path. – Wherever primitive men put down a word, they thought they had made a discovery. How different the case really was! – they had come upon a problem, and, while they thought they had solved it, they had in reality placed an obstacle in the way of its solution. Now, with every new piece of knowledge, we stumble over petrified words and mummified conceptions, and would rather break a leg than a word in doing so.

48

“Know Thyself” is the Whole of Science. – Only when man shall have acquired a knowledge of all things will he be able to know himself. For things are but the boundaries of man.

49

The New Fundamental Feeling: our Final Corruptibility. – In former times people sought to show the feeling of man's greatness by pointing to his divine descent. This, however, has now become a forbidden path, for the ape stands at its entrance, and likewise other fearsome animals, showing their teeth in a knowing fashion, as if to say, No further this way! Hence people now try the opposite direction: the road along which humanity is proceeding shall stand as an indication of their greatness and their relationship to God. But alas! this, too, is useless! At the far end of this path stands the funeral urn of the last man and grave-digger (with the inscription, *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*). To whatever height mankind may have developed – and perhaps in the end it will not be so high as when they began! – there is as little prospect of their attaining to a higher order as there is for the ant and the earwig to enter into kinship with God and eternity at the end of their career on earth. What is to come will drag behind it that which has passed: why should any little star, or even any little species on that star, form an exception to that eternal drama? Away with such sentimentalities!

50

Belief in Inebriation. – Those men who have moments of sublime ecstasy, and who, on ordinary occasions, on account of the contrast and the excessive wearing away of their nervous forces, usually feel miserable and desolate, come to consider such moments as the true manifestation of their real selves, of their “ego,” and their misery and dejection, on the other hand, as the *effect of the* “non-ego”. This is why they think of their environment, the age in which they live, and the whole world in which they have their being, with feelings of vindictiveness. This intoxication appears to them as their true life, their actual ego; and everywhere else they see only those who strive to oppose and prevent this intoxication, whether of an intellectual, moral, religious, or artistic nature.

Humanity owes no small part of its evils to these fantastic enthusiasts; for they are the insatiable sowers of the weed of discontent with one's self and one's neighbour, of contempt for the world and the age, and, above all, of world-lassitude. An entire hell of criminals could not, perhaps, bring about such unfortunate and far-reaching consequences, such heavy and disquieting effects that corrupt earth and sky, as are brought about by that “noble” little community of unbridled, fantastic, half-mad people – of geniuses, too – who cannot control themselves, or experience any inward joy, until they have lost themselves completely: while, on the other hand, the criminal often gives a proof of his admirable self-control, sacrifice, and wisdom, and thus maintains these qualities in those who fear him. Through him life's sky may at times seem overcast and threatening, but the atmosphere ever remains brisk and vigorous. – Furthermore, these enthusiasts bring their entire strength to bear on the task of imbuing mankind with belief in inebriation as in life itself: a dreadful belief! As savages are now quickly corrupted and ruined by “fire-water,” so likewise has mankind in general been slowly though thoroughly corrupted by these spiritual “fire-waters” of intoxicating feelings and by those who keep alive the craving for them. It may yet be ruined thereby.

51

Such as we still are. – “Let us be indulgent to the great one-eyed!” said Stuart Mill, as if it were necessary to ask for indulgence when we are willing to believe and almost to worship them. I say: Let us be indulgent towards the two-eyed, both great and small; for, *such as we are now*, we shall never rise beyond indulgence!

52

Where are the New Physicians of the Soul? – It is the means of consolation which have stamped life with that fundamental melancholy character in which we now believe: the worst disease of mankind has arisen from the struggle against diseases, and apparent remedies have in the long run brought about worse conditions than those which it was intended to remove by their use. Men, in their ignorance, used to believe that the stupefying and intoxicating means, which appeared to act immediately, the so-called “consolations,” were the true healing powers: they even failed to observe that they had often to pay for their immediate relief by a general and profound deterioration in health, that the sick ones had to suffer from the after-effects of the intoxication, then from the absence of the intoxication, and, later on, from a feeling of disquietude, depression, nervous starts, and ill-health. Again, men whose illness had advanced to a certain extent never recovered from it – those physicians of the soul, universally believed in and worshipped as they were, took care of that.

It has been justly said of Schopenhauer that he was one who again took the sufferings of humanity seriously: where is the man who will at length take the antidotes against these sufferings seriously, and who will pillory the unheard-of quackery with which men, even up to our own age, and in the most sublime nomenclature, have been wont to treat the illnesses of their souls?

53

Abuse of the Conscientious Ones. – It is the conscientious, and not the unscrupulous, who have suffered so greatly from exhortations to penitence and the fear of hell, especially if they happened to be men of imagination. In other words, a gloom has been cast over the lives of those who had the greatest need of cheerfulness and agreeable images – not only for the sake of their own consolation and recovery from themselves, but that humanity itself might take delight in them and absorb a ray of their beauty. Alas, how much superfluous cruelty and torment have been brought about by those religions which invented sin! and by those men who, by means of such religions, desired to reach the highest enjoyment of their power!

54

Thoughts on Disease. – To soothe the imagination of the patient, in order that he may at least no longer keep on thinking about his illness, and thus suffer more from such thoughts than from the complaint itself, which has been the case hitherto – that, it seems to me, is something! and it is by no means a trifle! And now do ye understand our task?

55

The “Ways.” – So-called “short cuts” have always led humanity to run great risks: on hearing the “glad tidings” that a “short cut” had been found, they always left the straight path —*and lost their way*.

56

The Apostate of the Free Spirit. – Is there any one, then, who seriously dislikes pious people who hold formally to their belief? Do we not, on the contrary, regard them with silent esteem and pleasure, deeply regretting at the same time that these excellent people do not share our own feelings? But whence arises that sudden, profound, and unreasonable dislike for the man who, having at one time possessed freedom of spirit, finally becomes a “believer”? In thinking of him we involuntarily experience the sensation of having beheld some loathsome spectacle, which we must quickly efface from our recollection. Should we not turn our backs upon even the most venerated man if we entertained the least suspicion of him in this regard? Not, indeed, from a moral point of view, but because of sudden disgust and horror! Whence comes this sharpness of feeling? Perhaps we shall be given to understand that, at bottom, we are not quite certain of our own selves? Or that, early in life, we build round ourselves hedges of the most pointed contempt, in order that, when old age makes us weak and forgetful, we may not feel inclined to brush our own contempt away from us?

Now, speaking frankly, this suspicion is quite erroneous, and whoever forms it knows nothing of what agitates and determines the free spirit: how little, to him, does the *changing* of an opinion seem contemptible *per se*! On the contrary, how highly he prizes the *ability* to change an opinion as a rare and valuable distinction, especially if he can retain it far into old age! And his pride (not his pusillanimity) even reaches so high as to be able to pluck the fruits of the *spernere se sperni* and the *spernere se ipsum*: without his being troubled by the sensation of fear of vain and easy-going men. Furthermore, the doctrine of the innocence of all opinions appears to him to be as certain as the doctrine of the innocence of all actions: how could he act as judge and hangman before the apostate of intellectual liberty! On the contrary, the sight of such a person would disgust him as much as the sight of a nauseous illness disgusts the physician: the physical repulsion caused by everything spongy, soft, and suppurating momentarily overcomes reason and the desire to help. Hence our goodwill is overcome by the conception of the monstrous dishonesty which must have gained the upper hand in the apostate from the free spirit: by the conception of a general gnawing which is eating its way down even to the framework of the character.

57

Other Fears, other Safeties. – Christianity overspread life with a new and unlimited *insecurity*, thereby creating new safeties, enjoyments and recreations, and new valuations of all things. Our own century denies the existence of this insecurity, and does so with a good conscience, yet it clings to the old habit of Christian certainties, enjoyments, recreations, and valuations! – even in its noblest arts and philosophies. How feeble and worn out must all this now seem, how imperfect and clumsy, how arbitrarily fanatical, and, above all, how uncertain: now that its horrible contrast has been taken away – the ever-present fear of the Christian for his *eternal* salvation!

58

Christianity and the Emotions. – In Christianity we may see a great popular protest against philosophy: the reasoning of the sages of antiquity had withdrawn men from the influence of the emotions, but Christianity would fain give men their emotions back again. With this aim in view, it denies any moral value to virtue such as philosophers understood it – as a victory of the reason over the passions – generally condemns every kind of goodness, and calls upon the passions to manifest themselves in their full power and glory: as *love* of God, *fear* of God, fanatic *belief* in God, blind *hope* in God.

59

Error as a Cordial. – Let people say what they will, it is nevertheless certain that it was the aim of Christianity to deliver mankind from the yoke of moral engagements by indicating what it believed to be the *shortest way to perfection*: exactly in the same manner as a few philosophers thought they could dispense with tedious and laborious dialectics, and the collection of strictly-proved facts, and point out a royal road to truth. It was an error in both cases, but nevertheless a great cordial for those who were worn out and despairing in the wilderness.

60

All Spirit finally becomes Visible. – Christianity has assimilated the entire spirituality of an incalculable number of men who were by nature submissive, all those enthusiasts of humiliation and reverence, both refined and coarse. It has in this way freed itself from its own original rustic coarseness – of which we are vividly reminded when we look at the oldest image of St. Peter the Apostle – and has become a very intellectual religion, with thousands of wrinkles, *arrière-pensées*, and masks on its face. It has made European humanity more clever, and not only cunning from a theological standpoint. By the spirit which it has thus given to European humanity – in conjunction with the power of abnegation, and very often in conjunction with the profound conviction and loyalty of that abnegation – it has perhaps chiselled and shaped the most subtle individualities which have ever existed in human society: the individualities of the higher ranks of the Catholic clergy, especially when these priests have sprung from a noble family, and have brought to their work, from the very beginning, the innate grace of gesture, the dominating glance of the eye, and beautiful hands and feet. Here the human face acquires that spiritualisation brought about by the continual ebb and flow of two kinds of happiness (the feeling of power and the feeling of submission) after a carefully-planned manner of living has conquered the beast in man. Here an activity, which consists in blessing, forgiving sins, and representing the Almighty, ever keeps alive in the soul, *and even in the body*, the consciousness of a supreme mission; here we find that noble contempt concerning the perishable nature of the body, of well-being, and of happiness, peculiar to born soldiers: their *pride* lies in obedience, a distinctly aristocratic trait; their excuse and their idealism arise from the enormous impossibility of their task. The surpassing beauty and subtleties of these princes of the Church have always proved to the people the truth of the Church; a momentary brutalisation of the clergy (such as came about in Luther's time) always tended to encourage the contrary belief. And would it be maintained that this result of beauty and human subtlety, shown in harmony of figure, intellect, and task, would come to an end with religions? and that nothing higher could be obtained, or even conceived?

61

The Needful Sacrifice. – Those earnest, able, and just men of profound feelings, who are still Christians at heart, owe it to themselves to make one attempt to live for a certain space of time without Christianity! they owe it *to their faith* that they should thus for once take up their abode “in the wilderness” – if for no other reason than that of being able to pronounce on the question as to whether Christianity is needful. So far, however, they have confined themselves to their own narrow domain and insulted every one who happened to be outside of it: yea, they even become highly irritated when it is suggested to them that beyond this little domain of theirs lies the great world, and that Christianity is, after all, only a corner of it! No; your evidence on the question will be valueless until you have lived year after year without Christianity, and with the inmost desire to continue to exist without it: until, indeed, you have withdrawn far, far away from it. It is not when your nostalgia urges you back again, but when your judgment, based on a strict comparison, drives you back, that your homecoming has any significance! – Men of coming generations will deal in this manner with all the valuations of the past; they must be voluntarily *lived* over again, together with their contraries, in order that such men may finally acquire the right of shifting them.

62

On the Origin of Religions. – How can any one regard his own opinion of things as a revelation? This is the problem of the formation of religions: there has always been some man in whom this phenomenon was possible. A postulate is that such a man already believed in revelations. Suddenly, however, a new idea occurs to him one day, *his* idea; and the entire blessedness of a great personal hypothesis, which embraces all existence and the whole world, penetrates with such force into his conscience that he dare not think himself the creator of such blessedness, and he therefore attributes to his God the cause of this new idea and likewise the cause of the cause, believing it to be the revelation of his God. How could a man be the author of so great a happiness? ask his pessimistic doubts. But other levers are secretly at work: an opinion may be strengthened by one's self if it be considered as a revelation; and in this way all its hypothetic nature is removed; the matter is set beyond criticism and even beyond doubt: it is sanctified. It is true that, in this way, a man lowers himself to playing the rôle of “mouthpiece,” but his thought will end by being victorious as a divine thought – the feeling of finally gaining the victory conquers the feeling of degradation. There is also another feeling in the background: if a man raises his products above himself, and thus apparently detracts from his own worth, there nevertheless remains a kind of joyfulness, paternal love, and paternal pride, which compensates man – more than compensates man – for everything.

63

Hatred of One's Neighbour. – Supposing that we felt towards our neighbour as he does himself – Schopenhauer calls this compassion, though it would be more correct to call it auto-passion, fellow-feeling – we should be compelled to hate him, if, like Pascal, he thought himself hateful. And this was probably the general feeling of Pascal regarding mankind, and also that of ancient Christianity, which, under Nero, was “convicted” of *odium generis humani*, as Tacitus has recorded.

64

The Broken-Hearted Ones. – Christianity has the instinct of a hunter for finding out all those who may by hook or by crook be driven to despair – only a very small number of men can be brought to this despair. Christianity lies in wait for such as those, and pursues them. Pascal made an attempt to find out whether it was not possible, with the help of the very subtlest knowledge, to drive everybody into despair. He failed: to his second despair.

65

Brahminism and Christianity. – There are certain precepts for obtaining a consciousness of power: on the one hand, for those who already know how to control themselves, and who are therefore already quite used to the feeling of power; and, on the other hand, for those who cannot control themselves. Brahminism has given its care to the former type of man; Christianity to the latter.

66

The Faculty of Vision. – During the whole of the Middle Ages it was believed that the real distinguishing trait of higher men was the faculty of having visions – that is to say, of having a grave mental trouble. And, in fact, the rules of life of all the higher natures of the Middle Ages (the religiosi) were drawn up with the object of making man capable of vision! Little wonder, then, that the exaggerated esteem for these half-mad fanatics, so-called men of genius, has continued even to our own days. “They have seen things that others do not see” – no doubt! and this fact should inspire us with caution where they are concerned, and not with belief!

67

The Price of Believers. – He who sets such a value on being believed in has to promise heaven in recompense for this belief: and every one, even a thief on the Cross, must have suffered from a terrible doubt and experienced crucifixion in every form: otherwise he would not buy his followers so dearly.

68

The First Christian. – The whole world still believes in the literary career of the “Holy Ghost,” or is still influenced by the effects of this belief: when we look into our Bibles we do so for the purpose of “edifying ourselves,” to find a few words of comfort for our misery, be it great or small – in short, we read ourselves into it and out of it. But who – apart from a few learned men – know that it likewise records the history of one of the most ambitious and importunate souls that ever existed, of a mind full of superstition and cunning: the history of the Apostle Paul? Nevertheless, without this singular history, without the tribulations and passions of such a mind, and of such a soul, there would have been no Christian kingdom; we should have scarcely have even heard of a little Jewish sect, the founder of which died on the Cross. It is true that, if this history had been understood in time, if we had read, *really read*, the writings of St. Paul, not as the revelations of the “Holy Ghost,” but with honest and independent minds, oblivious of all our personal troubles – there were no such readers for fifteen centuries – it would have been all up with Christianity long ago: so searchingly do these writings of the Jewish Pascal lay bare the origins of Christianity, just as the French Pascal let us see its destiny and how it will ultimately perish. That the ship of Christianity threw overboard no inconsiderable part of its Jewish ballast, that it was able to sail into the waters of the heathen and actually did do so: this is due to the history of one single man, this apostle who was so greatly troubled in mind and so worthy of pity, but who was also very disagreeable to himself and to others.

This man suffered from a fixed idea, or rather a fixed question, an ever-present and ever-burning question: what was the *meaning* of the Jewish Law? and, more especially, *the fulfilment of this Law*? In his youth he had done his best to satisfy it, thirsting as he did for that highest distinction which the Jews could imagine – this people, which raised the imagination of moral loftiness to a greater elevation than any other people, and which alone succeeded in uniting the conception of a holy God with the idea of sin considered as an offence against this holiness. St. Paul became at once the fanatic defender and guard-of-honour of this God and His Law. Ceaselessly battling against and lying in wait for all transgressors of this Law and those who presumed to doubt it, he was pitiless and cruel towards all evil-doers, whom he would fain have punished in the most rigorous fashion possible.

Now, however, he was aware in his own person of the fact that such a man as himself – violent, sensual, melancholy, and malicious in his hatred —*could* not fulfil the Law; and furthermore, what seemed strangest of all to him, he saw that his boundless craving for power was continually provoked to break it, and that he could not help yielding to this impulse. Was it really “the flesh” which made him a trespasser time and again? Was it not rather, as it afterwards occurred to him, the Law itself, which continually showed itself to be impossible to fulfil, and seduced men into transgression with an irresistible charm? But at that time he had not thought of this means of escape. As he suggests here and there, he had many things on his conscience – hatred, murder, sorcery, idolatry, debauchery, drunkenness, and orgiastic revelry, – and to however great an extent he tried to soothe his conscience, and, even more, his desire for power, by the extreme fanaticism of his worship for and defence of the Law, there were times when the thought struck him: “It is all in vain! The anguish of the unfulfilled Law cannot be overcome.” Luther must have experienced similar feelings, when, in his cloister, he endeavoured to become the ideal man of his imagination; and, as Luther one day began to hate the ecclesiastical ideal, and the Pope, and the saints, and the whole clergy, with a hatred which was all the more deadly as he could not avow it even to himself, an analogous feeling took possession of St. Paul. The Law was the Cross on which he felt himself crucified. How he hated it! What a grudge he owed it! How he began to look round on all sides to find a means for its total annihilation, that he might no longer be obliged to fulfil it himself! And at last a liberating thought, together with a vision – which was only to be expected in the case of an epileptic like himself – flashed into his mind: to him, the stern upholder of the Law – who, in his innermost heart, was tired to death of it

– there appeared on the lonely path that Christ, with the divine effulgence on His countenance, and Paul heard the words: “Why persecutest thou Me?”

What actually took place, then, was this: his mind was suddenly enlightened, and he said to himself: “It is unreasonable to persecute this Jesus Christ! Here is my means of escape, here is my complete vengeance, here and nowhere else have I the destroyer of the Law in my hands!” The sufferer from anguished pride felt himself restored to health all at once, his moral despair disappeared in the air; for morality itself was blown away, annihilated – that is to say, *fulfilled*, there on the Cross! Up to that time that ignominious death had seemed to him to be the principal argument against the “Messiahship” proclaimed by the followers of the new doctrine: but what if it were necessary for doing away with the Law? The enormous consequences of this thought, of this solution of the enigma, danced before his eyes, and he at once became the happiest of men. The destiny of the Jews, yea, of all mankind, seemed to him to be intertwined with this instantaneous flash of enlightenment: he held the thought of thoughts, the key of keys, the light of lights; history would henceforth revolve round him! For from that time forward he would be the apostle of the *annihilation of the Law*! To be dead to sin – that meant to be dead to the Law also; to be in the flesh – that meant to be under the Law! To be one with Christ – that meant to have become, like Him, the destroyer of the Law; to be dead with Him – that meant likewise to be dead to the Law. Even if it were still possible to sin, it would not at any rate be possible to sin against the Law: “I am above the Law,” thinks Paul; adding, “If I were now to acknowledge the Law again and to submit to it, I should make Christ an accomplice in the sin”; for the Law was there for the purpose of producing sin and setting it in the foreground, as an emetic produces sickness. God could not have decided upon the death of Christ had it been possible to fulfil the Law without it; henceforth, not only are all sins expiated, but sin itself is abolished; henceforth the Law is dead; henceforth “the flesh” in which it dwelt is dead – or at all events dying, gradually wasting away. To live for a short time longer amid this decay! – this is the Christian's fate, until the time when, having become one with Christ, he arises with Him, sharing with Christ the divine glory, and becoming, like Christ, a “Son of God.” Then Paul's exaltation was at its height, and with it the importunity of his soul – the thought of union with Christ made him lose all shame, all submission, all constraint, and his ungovernable ambition was shown to be revelling in the expectation of divine glories.

Such was the first Christian, the inventor of Christianity! before him there were only a few Jewish sectaries.

69

Inimitable. – There is an enormous strain and distance between envy and friendship, between self-contempt and pride: the Greek lived in the former, the Christian in the latter.

70

The Use of a Coarse Intellect. – The Christian Church is an encyclopædia of primitive cults and views of the most varied origin; and is, in consequence, well adapted to missionary work: in former times she could – and still does – go wherever she would, and in doing so always found something resembling herself, to which she could assimilate herself and gradually substitute her own spirit for it. It is not to what is Christian in her usages, but to what is universally pagan in them, that we have to attribute the development of this universal religion. Her thoughts, which have their origin at once in the Judaic and in the Hellenic spirit, were able from the very beginning to raise themselves above the exclusiveness and subtleties of races and nations, as above prejudices. Although we may admire the power which makes even the most difficult things coalesce, we must nevertheless not overlook the contemptible qualities of this power – the astonishing coarseness and narrowness of the Church's intellect when it was in process of formation, a coarseness which permitted it to accommodate itself to any diet, and to digest contradictions like pebbles.

71

The Christian Vengeance against Rome. – Perhaps nothing is more fatiguing than the sight of a continual conqueror: for more than two hundred years the world had seen Rome overcoming one nation after another, the circle was closed, all future seemed to be at an end, everything was done with a view to its lasting for all time – yea, when the Empire built anything it was erected with a view to being *aere perennius*. We, who know only the “melancholy of ruins,” can scarcely understand that totally different *melancholy of eternal buildings*, from which men endeavoured to save themselves as best they could – with the light-hearted fancy of a Horace, for example. Others sought different consolations for the weariness which was closely akin to despair, against the deadening knowledge that from henceforth all progress of thought and heart would be hopeless, that the huge spider sat everywhere and mercilessly continued to drink all the blood within its reach, no matter where it might spring forth. This mute, century-old hatred of the wearied spectators against Rome, wherever Rome's domination extended, was at length vented in Christianity, which united Rome, “the world,” and “sin” into a single conception. The Christians took their revenge on Rome by proclaiming the immediate and sudden destruction of the world; by once more introducing a future – for Rome had been able to transform everything into the history of its *own* past and present – a future in which Rome was no longer the most important factor; and by dreaming of the last judgment – while the crucified Jew, as the symbol of salvation, was the greatest derision on the superb Roman prætors in the provinces; for now they seemed to be only the symbols of ruin and a “world” ready to perish.

The “Life after Death.” – Christianity found the idea of punishment in hell in the entire Roman Empire: for the numerous mystic cults have hatched this idea with particular satisfaction as being the most fecund egg of their power. Epicurus thought he could do nothing better for his followers than to tear this belief up by the roots: his triumph found its finest echo in the mouth of one of his disciples, the Roman Lucretius, a poet of a gloomy, though afterwards enlightened, temperament. Alas! his triumph had come too soon: Christianity took under its special protection this belief in subterranean horrors, which was already beginning to die away in the minds of men; and that was clever of it. For, without this audacious leap into the most complete paganism, how could it have proved itself victorious over the popularity of Mithras and Isis? In this way it managed to bring timorous folk over to its side – the most enthusiastic adherents of a new faith! The Jews, being a people which, like the Greeks, and even in a greater degree than the Greeks, loved and still love life, had not cultivated that idea to any great extent: the thought of final death as the punishment of the sinner, death without resurrection as an extreme menace: this was sufficient to impress these peculiar men, who did not wish to get rid of their bodies, but hoped, with their refined Egypticism, to preserve them for ever. (A Jewish martyr, about whom we may read in the Second Book of the Maccabees, would not think of giving up his intestines, which had been torn out: he wanted to have them at the resurrection: quite a Jewish characteristic!)

Thoughts of eternal damnation were far from the minds of the early Christians: they thought they were *delivered* from death, and awaited a transformation from day to day, but not death. (What a curious effect the first death must have produced on these expectant people! How many different feelings must have been mingled together – astonishment, exultation, doubt, shame, and passion! Verily, a subject worthy of a great artist!) St. Paul could say nothing better in praise of his Saviour than that he had opened the gates of immortality to everybody – he did not believe in the resurrection of those who had not been saved: more than this, by reason of his doctrine of the impossibility of carrying out the Law, and of death considered as a consequence of sin, he even suspected that, up to that time, no one had become immortal (or at all events only a very few, solely owing to special grace and not to any merits of their own): it was only in his time that immortality had begun to open its gates – and only a few of the elect would finally gain admittance, as the pride of the elect cannot help saying.

In other places, where the impulse towards life was not so strong as among the Jews and the Christian Jews, and where the prospect of immortality did not appear to be more valuable than the prospect of a final death, that pagan, yet not altogether un-Jewish addition of Hell became a very useful tool in the hands of the missionaries: then arose the new doctrine that even the sinners and the unsaved are immortal, the doctrine of eternal damnation, which was more powerful than the idea of a *final death*, which thereafter began to fade away. It was science alone which could overcome this idea, at the same time brushing aside all other ideas about death and an after-life. We are poorer in one particular: the “life after death” has no further interest for us! an indescribable blessing, which is as yet too recent to be considered as such throughout the world. And Epicurus is once more triumphant.

73

For the “Truth”! – “The truth of Christianity was attested by the virtuous lives of the Christians, their firmness in suffering, their unshakable belief and above all by the spread and increase of the faith in spite of all calamities.” – That's how you talk even now. The more's the pity. Learn, then, that all this proves nothing either in favour of truth or against it; that truth must be demonstrated differently from conscientiousness, and that the latter is in no respect whatever an argument in favour of the former.

74

A Christian *Arrière-pensée*. – Would not this have been a general reservation among Christians of the first century: “It is better to persuade ourselves into the belief that we are guilty rather than that we are innocent; for it is impossible to ascertain the disposition of so powerful a judge – but it is to be feared that he is looking out only for those who are conscious of guilt. Bearing in mind his great power, it is more likely that he will pardon a guilty person than admit that any one is innocent, in his presence.” This was the feeling of poor provincial folk in the presence of the Roman prætor: “He is too proud for us to dare to be innocent.” And may not this very sentiment have made its influence felt when the Christians endeavoured to picture to themselves the aspect of the Supreme Judge?

75

Neither European nor Noble. – There is something Oriental and feminine in Christianity, and this is shown in the thought, “Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth”; for women in the Orient consider castigations and the strict seclusion of their persons from the world as a sign of their husband's love, and complain if these signs of love cease.

76

If you think it Evil, you make it Evil. – The passions become evil and malignant when regarded with evil and malignant eyes. It is in this way that Christianity has succeeded in transforming Eros and Aphrodite – sublime powers, capable of idealisation – into hellish genii and phantom goblins, by means of the pangs which every sexual impulse was made to raise in the conscience of the believers. Is it not a dreadful thing to transform necessary and regular sensations into a source of inward misery, and thus arbitrarily to render interior misery necessary and regular *in the case of every man!* Furthermore, this misery remains secret with the result that it is all the more deeply rooted, for it is not all men who have the courage, which Shakespeare shows in his sonnets, of making public their Christian gloom on this point.

Must a feeling, then, always be called evil against which we are forced to struggle, which we must restrain even within certain limits, or, in given cases, banish entirely from our minds? Is it not the habit of vulgar souls always to call an *enemy* evil! and must we call Eros an enemy? The sexual feelings, like the feelings of pity and adoration, possess the particular characteristic that, in their case, one being gratifies another by the pleasure he enjoys – it is but rarely that we meet with such a benevolent arrangement in nature. And yet we calumniate and corrupt it all by our bad conscience! We connect the procreation of man with a bad conscience!

But the outcome of this diabolisation of Eros is a mere farce: the “demon” Eros becomes an object of greater interest to mankind than all the angels and saints put together, thanks to the mysterious Mumbo-Jumboism of the Church in all things erotic: it is due to the Church that love stories, even in our own time, have become the one common interest which appeals to all classes of people – with an exaggeration which would be incomprehensible to antiquity, and which will not fail to provoke roars of laughter in coming generations. All our poetising and thinking, from the highest to the lowest, is marked, and more than marked, by the exaggerated importance bestowed upon the love story as the principal item of our existence. Posterity may perhaps, on this account, come to the conclusion that its entire legacy of Christian culture is tainted with narrowness and insanity.

The Tortures of the Soul. – The whole world raises a shout of horror at the present day if one man presumes to torture the body of another: the indignation against such a being bursts forth almost spontaneously. Nay; we tremble even at the very thought of torture being inflicted on a man or an animal, and we undergo unspeakable misery when we hear of such an act having been accomplished. But the same feeling is experienced in a very much lesser degree and extent when it is a question of the tortures of the soul and the dreadfulness of their infliction. Christianity has introduced such tortures on an unprecedented scale, and still continues to preach this kind of martyrdom – yea, it even complains innocently of backsliding and indifference when it meets with a state of soul which is free from such agonies. From all this it now results that humanity, in the face of spiritual racks, tortures of the mind, and instruments of punishment, behaves even to-day with the same awesome patience and indecision which it exhibited in former times in the presence of the cruelties practised on the bodies of men or animals. Hell has certainly not remained merely an empty sound; and a new kind of pity has been devised to correspond to the newly-created fears of hell – a horrible and ponderous compassion, hitherto unknown; with people “irrevocably condemned to hell,” as, for example, the Stony Guest gave Don Juan to understand, and which, during the Christian era, should often have made the very stones weep.

Plutarch presents us with a gloomy picture of the state of mind of a superstitious man in pagan times: but this picture pales when compared with that of a Christian of the Middle Ages, who *supposes* that nothing can save him from “torments everlasting.” Dreadful omens appear to him: perhaps he sees a stork holding a snake in his beak and hesitating to swallow it. Or all nature suddenly becomes pale; or bright, fiery colours appear across the surface of the earth. Or the ghosts of his dead relations approach him, with features showing traces of dreadful sufferings. Or the dark walls of the room in which the man is sleeping are suddenly lighted up, and there, amidst a yellow flame, he perceives instruments of torture and a motley horde of snakes and devils. Christianity has surely turned this world of ours into a fearful habitation by raising the crucifix in all parts and thereby proclaiming the earth to be a place “where the just man is tortured to death!” And when the ardour of some great preacher for once disclosed to the public the secret sufferings of the individual, the agonies of the lonely souls, when, for example, Whitefield preached “like a dying man to the dying,” now bitterly weeping, now violently stamping his feet, speaking passionately, in abrupt and incisive tones, without fearing to turn the whole force of his attack upon any one individual present, excluding him from the assembly with excessive harshness – then indeed did it seem as if the earth were being transformed into a “field of evil.” The huge crowds were then seen to act as if seized with a sudden attack of madness: many were in fits of anguish; others lay unconscious and motionless; others, again, trembled or rent the air with their piercing shrieks. Everywhere there was a loud breathing, as of half-choked people who were gasping for the breath of life. “Indeed,” said an eye-witness once, “almost all the noises appeared to come from people who were dying in the bitterest agony.”

Let us never forget that it was Christianity which first turned the death-bed into a bed of agony, and that, by the scenes which took place there, and the terrifying sounds which were made possible there for the first time, it has poisoned the senses and the blood of innumerable witnesses and their children. Imagine the ordinary man who can never efface the recollection of words like these: “Oh, eternity! Would that I had no soul! Would that I had never been born! My soul is damned, damned; lost for ever! Six days ago you might have helped me. But now all is over. I belong to the devil, and with him I will go down to hell. Break, break, ye poor hearts of stone! Ye will not break? What more can be done for hearts of stone? I am damned that ye may be saved! There he is! Yea; there he is! Come, good devil! Come!”

78

Avenging Justice. – Misfortune and guilt: these two things have been put on one scale by Christianity; so that, when the misfortune which follows a fault is a serious one, this fault is always judged accordingly to be a very heinous one. But this was not the valuation of antiquity, and that is why Greek tragedy – in which misfortune and punishment are discussed at length, and yet in another sense – forms part of the great liberators of the mind to an extent which even the ancients themselves could not realise. They remained ingenuous enough not to set up an “adequate relation” between guilt and misfortune. The guilt of their tragic heroes is, indeed, the little pebble that makes them stumble, and on which account they sometimes happen to break an arm or knock out an eye. Upon this the feeling of antiquity made the comment, “Well, he should have gone his way with more caution and less pride.” It was reserved for Christianity, however, to say: “Here we have a great misfortune, and behind this great misfortune there must lie a great fault, an equally *serious fault*, though we cannot clearly see it! If, wretched man, you do not feel it, it is because your heart is hardened – and worse than this will happen to you!”

Besides this, antiquity could point to examples of real misfortunes, misfortunes that were pure and innocent; it was only with the advent of Christianity that all punishment became well-merited punishment: in addition to this it renders the imagination of the sufferer still more suffering, so that the victim, in the midst of his distress, is seized with the feeling that he has been morally reprovved and cast away. Poor humanity! The Greeks had a special word to stand for the feeling of indignation which was experienced at the misfortune of another: among Christian peoples this feeling was prohibited and was not permitted to develop; hence the reason why they have no name for this *more virile* brother of pity.

79

A Proposal. – If, according to the arguments of Pascal and Christianity, our ego is always hateful, how can we permit and suppose other people, whether God or men, to love it? It would be contrary to all good principles to let ourselves be loved when we know very well that we deserve nothing but hatred – not to speak of other repugnant feelings. “But this is the very Kingdom of Grace.” Then you look upon your love for your neighbour as a grace? Your pity as a grace? Well, then, if you can do all this, there is no reason why you should not go a step further: love yourselves through grace, and then you will no longer find your God necessary, and the entire drama of the Fall and Redemption of mankind will reach its last act in yourselves!

80

The Compassionate Christian. – A Christian's compassion in the presence of his neighbour's suffering has another side to it: viz. his profound suspicion of all the joy of his neighbour, of his neighbour's joy in everything that he wills and is able to do.

81

The Saint's Humanity. – A saint had fallen into the company of believers, and could no longer stand their continually expressed hatred for sin. At last he said to them: “God created all things, except sin: therefore it is no wonder that He does not like it. But man has created sin, and why, then, should he disown this only child of his merely because it is not regarded with a friendly eye by God, its grandfather? Is that human? Honour to whom honour is due – but one's heart and duty must speak, above all, in favour of the child – and only in the second place for the honour of the grandfather!”

82

The Theological Attack. – “You must arrange that with yourself; for your life is at stake!” – Luther it is who suddenly springs upon us with these words and imagines that we feel the knife at our throats. But we throw him off with the words of one higher and more considerate than he: “We need form no opinion in regard to this or that matter, and thus save our souls from trouble. For, by their very nature, the things themselves cannot compel us to express an opinion.”

83

Poor Humanity! – A single drop of blood too much or too little in the brain may render our life unspeakably miserable and difficult, and we may suffer more from this single drop of blood than Prometheus from his vulture. But the worst is when we do not know that this drop is causing our sufferings – and we think it is “the devil!” Or “sin!”

84

The Philology of Christianity. – How little Christianity cultivates the sense of honesty can be inferred from the character of the writings of its learned men. They set out their conjectures as audaciously as if they were dogmas, and are but seldom at a disadvantage in regard to the interpretation of Scripture. Their continual cry is: “I am right, for it is written” – and then follows an explanation so shameless and capricious that a philologist, when he hears it, must stand stock-still between anger and laughter, asking himself again and again: Is it possible? Is it honest? Is it even decent?

It is only those who never – or always – attend church that underestimate the dishonesty with which this subject is still dealt in Protestant pulpits; in what a clumsy fashion the preacher takes advantage of his security from interruption; how the Bible is pinched and squeezed; and how the people are made acquainted with every form of *the art of false reading*.

When all is said and done, however, what can be expected from the effects of a religion which, during the centuries when it was being firmly established, enacted that huge philological farce concerning the Old Testament? I refer to that attempt to tear the Old Testament from the hands of the Jews under the pretext that it contained only Christian doctrines and *belonged* to the Christians as the true people of Israel, while the Jews had merely arrogated it to themselves without authority. This was followed by a mania of would-be interpretation and falsification, which could not under any circumstances have been allied with a good conscience. However strongly Jewish savants protested, it was everywhere sedulously asserted that the Old Testament alluded everywhere to Christ, and nothing but Christ, more especially His Cross, and thus, wherever reference was made to wood, a rod, a ladder, a twig, a tree, a willow, or a staff, such a reference could not but be a prophecy relating to the wood of the Cross: even the setting-up of the Unicorn and the Brazen Serpent, even Moses stretching forth his hands in prayer – yea, the very spits on which the Easter lambs were roasted: all these were allusions to the Cross, and, as it were, preludes to it! Did any one who kept on asserting these things ever *believe* in them? Let it not be forgotten that the Church did not shrink from putting interpolations in the text of the Septuagint (*e. g.* Ps. xcvi. 10), in order that she might later on make use of these interpolated passages as Christian prophecies. They were engaged in a struggle, and thought of their foes rather than of honesty.

85

Subtlety in Penury. – Take care not to laugh at the mythology of the Greeks merely because it so little resembles your own profound metaphysics! You should admire a people who checked their quick intellect at this point, and for a long time afterwards had tact enough to avoid the danger of scholasticism and hair-splitting superstition.

86

The Christian Interpreters of the Body. – Whatever originates in the stomach, the intestines, the beating of the heart, the nerves, the bile, the seed – all those indispositions, debilities, irritations, and the whole contingency of that machine about which we know so little – a Christian like Pascal considers it all as a moral and religious phenomenon, asking himself whether God or the devil, good or evil, salvation or damnation, is the cause. Alas for the unfortunate interpreter! How he must distort and worry his system! How he must distort and worry himself in order to gain his point!

87

The Moral Miracle. – In the domain of morality, Christianity knows of nothing but the miracle; the sudden change in all valuations, the sudden renouncement of all habits, the sudden and irresistible predilection for new things and persons. Christianity looks upon this phenomenon as the work of God, and calls it the act of regeneration, thus giving it a unique and incomparable value. Everything else which is called morality, and which bears no relation to this miracle, becomes in consequence a matter of indifference to the Christian, and indeed, so far as it is a feeling of well-being and pride, an object of fear. The canon of virtue, of the fulfilled law, is established in the New Testament, but in such a way as to be the canon of *impossible virtue*: men who still aspire to moral perfections must come to understand, in the face of this canon, that they are further and further *removed* from their aim; they must *despair*

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