

## Summary of and notes on the Antichrist by Friedrich Nietzsche

The Antichrist (German: Der Antichrist) is a book by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, originally published in 1895. Although it was written in 1888, its controversial content made Franz Overbeck and Heinrich Köselitz delay its publication, along with *Ecce Homo*.

The reference to the Antichrist is not intended to refer to the biblical Antichrist but is rather an attack on the "slave morality" and apathy of Western Christianity. Nietzsche's basic claim is that Christianity (as he saw it in the West) is a poisoner of western culture and perversion of the words of and practice of Jesus. In this light, the provocative title is mainly expressing Nietzsche's animus toward Christianity, as such. In this book, Nietzsche is very critical of institutionalized religion and its priest class, from which he himself was descended. The majority of the book is a systematic, logical and detailed attack upon the interpretations of Christ's words by St. Paul and those who followed him.

It can therefore be argued that it does a disservice to the English-speaking reader to translate the title as The Antichrist at all. As has been said the German title *Der Antichrist* is open to two interpretations ('Antichrist'/'Anti-Christian') but the English *The Antichrist* is not, and thus the question becomes: does that title reflect Nietzsche's use of the German word in the text? In fact, Nietzsche employs the word Antichrist at only one point, and there its sense is clearly 'Anti-Christian.' He uses its plural Antichristen once also, and again the meaning is 'anti-Christians.' In fact, at no point in the text does Nietzsche use any form of the German word Christ other than to mean 'Christian.' On this approach, a reader would be better readied for book's content were its title rendered "The Anti-Christian", which more accurately identifies the author's chosen foe. After all, even to acknowledge the existence of an Antichrist, let alone to portray oneself as one, presupposes the existence of a Christ, of a Messiah. Nietzsche recognized no such entity. His argument was entirely with those who would attempt to make a Christ, a Messiah, out of Jesus of Nazareth, which is to say, with "Christians."

On the other hand, Walter Kaufmann considers *The Antichrist* the more appropriate way to render the German, in spite of its ambiguity: the "translation of the title as 'The Antichristian' ... overlooks that Nietzsche plainly means to be as provocative as possible."

This book was written shortly before Nietzsche's nervous breakdown. However, as one scholar noted, "the Antichrist is unrelievedly vituperative, and would indeed sound insane were it not informed in its polemic by a structure of analysis and a theory of morality and religion worked out elsewhere ... ."

Nietzsche claimed in the Foreword to have written the book for a very limited readership. In order to understand the book, he asserted that the reader "... must be honest in intellectual matters to the point of hardness to so much as endure my seriousness, my passion." The reader should be above politics and nationalism. Also, the usefulness or harmfulness of truth should not be a concern. Characteristics such as "Strength which prefers questions for which no one today is sufficiently daring; courage for the forbidden" are also needed. He disdained all other readers.

In §1, Nietzsche expressed his dissatisfaction with modernity. He disliked the contemporary "lazy peace," "cowardly compromise," "tolerance" and "resignation." This

related to Schopenhauer's claim that knowledge of the inner nature of the world and life results in "... perfect resignation, which is the innermost spirit of Christianity ... ."

Nietzsche introduced his concept of will to power in §2. He defined the concepts of good, bad and happiness in relation to the will to power. "What is good? — All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. What is bad? — All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? — The feeling that power increases — that a resistance is overcome." Nietzsche's words were provocative and shocking in passages such as: "The weak and ill-constituted shall perish: first principle of our philanthropy. And one shall help them to do so. What is more harmful than any vice? — Active sympathy for the ill-constituted and weak — Christianity ... ." This is an example of Nietzsche's reaction against Schopenhauer, who had based all morality on compassion. Nietzsche, on the contrary, praised "... virtue free of moralic acid."

Nietzsche went on to say that mankind, out of fear, has bred a weak, sick type of human. He blamed Christianity for demonizing strong, higher humans. Pascal, he claimed, was an intellectually strong man who was depraved by Christianity's teaching of original sin.

Mankind, according to Nietzsche, is corrupt and its highest values are depraved. He asserted that "... all the values in which mankind at present summarizes its highest desiderata are decadence values." Mankind is depraved because it has lost its instincts and prefers what is harmful to it. "I consider life itself instinct for growth, for durability, for accumulation of forces, for power: where the will to power is lacking there is decline." Depravity results because "... nihilistic values dominate under the holiest names."

Christianity, as a religion of peace, is despised by Nietzsche. According to Nietzsche's account, pity has a depressive effect, loss of vitality and strength, and is harmful to life. It also preserves that which should naturally be destroyed. For a noble morality, pity is a weakness, but for Christianity, it is a virtue. In Schopenhauer's philosophy, which Nietzsche sees as the most nihilistic and opposed to life, pity is the highest virtue of all. But, for Nietzsche, pity "... multiplies misery and conserves all that is miserable, and is thus a prime instrument of the advancement of decadence: pity persuades men to nothingness! Of course, one does not say 'nothingness.' One says 'the Beyond' or 'God' or 'true life' or 'Nirvana,' 'salvation,' 'redemption,' 'blessedness.' ... Schopenhauer was hostile to life: therefore pity became a virtue for him." The moderns Leo Tolstoy and Richard Wagner adopted Schopenhauer's viewpoint. Aristotle, who lived in 384-322 BC, on the other hand, recognized the unhealthiness of pity and prescribed tragedy as a purgative. "In our whole unhealthy modernity there is nothing more unhealthy than Christian pity."

Theology and philosophy, practiced by priests and idealists, are antithetical to reality and actuality. They are supposed to represent a high, pure and superior spirit that is above and has "...benevolent contempt for the 'understanding', the 'senses', 'honours', 'good living' and 'science'..." But, to Nietzsche, "Pure spirit is pure lie" and he called the priest a "... denier, slanderer, and poisoner of life ..." who is a "... conscious advocate of nothingness and negation ..." and who stands truth upside down on its head. Theologians were placed by Nietzsche in the same class as priests. He defined the faith that they fostered as "...closing one's eyes with respect to oneself once and for all, so as not to suffer from the sight of incurable falsity."

Seeing falsely is then valued as the highest morality. This reversal of values is considered, by Nietzsche, to be harmful to life. When the theologians seek political power, "...the will to the end, the nihilistic will wants power." In his native Germany, philosophy is corrupt because it is theological, according to Nietzsche. Kant supported theological ideals by his discussions of the concepts of "true world" and "morality as the essence of the world." Kant's skeptical procedure was to show that these concepts could not be refuted, even though they could not be proved. Nietzsche was especially critical of Kant's Categorical imperative because it was not the result of a personal necessity and choice. Its origin from concepts and logic was decadent because it was not a product of life, growth, self-preservation, and pleasure. Kant's practical reason was an attempt to give scientific legitimacy to his lack of intellectual conscience. "... he invented a special kind of reason for cases in which one need not bother about reason — that is, when morality, when the sublime command 'thou shalt,' makes itself heard." Kant's self-deceptive fraudulence is a result of the influence of priestly theology on his philosophy.

Nietzsche considered a free spirit to be the embodiment of a transvaluation of all values. Prior to Nietzsche's time, he claimed, the scientific method of searching for truth and knowledge was met with scorn and derision. A quiet, cautious, modest manner was seen with contempt. Our present modesty compels us to recognize man's derivation from animals, not divinities. Also, we know that man is not superior to other animals. By reducing man to a mere machine, devoid of free will, we have learned much about his physiology. Will is now known to be a necessary reaction to a stimulus. Consciousness and spirit derive from instinct.

Nietzsche claimed that the Christian religion and its morality are based on imaginary fictions. However, "... this entire fictional world has its roots in hatred of the natural (actuality!)." Such hatred results from Christianity's decadence, which is reflected by the Christian conception of God. If Christians were naturally strong and confident, they would have a God who is destructive as well as good. A God who counsels love of enemy, as well as of friend, is a God of a people who feel themselves as perishing and without hope. Weak, decadent, and sick people, whose will to power has declined, will give themselves a God who is purely good, according to Nietzsche. They will then attribute evil and devilry to their masters' God. Metaphysicians have eliminated the attributes of virile (männlichen) virtues, such as strength, bravery, and pride, from the concept of God. As a result, it deteriorated into an insubstantial ideal, pure spirit, Absolute, or thing in itself. Nietzsche opposed the Christian concept of God because it "... degenerated into the contradiction of life, instead of being life's transfiguration and eternal 'Yes!'" The Christian God is a "... declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live!" This God is a "... formula for every slander against 'this world,' for every lie about the 'beyond!'" Recalling Schopenhauer's description of the denial of the will to live and the subsequent empty nothingness, Nietzsche proclaimed that the Christian God is "... the sanctification of the will to nothingness!"

Nietzsche criticized the "strong races of northern Europe" for accepting the Christian God and not creating a new god of their own. "Almost two thousand years — and not a single new god!" He maintained that the traditional Christian God of "monotono-theism"

(Monotono–Theismus) supports "... all the instincts of decadence, all cowardices and weariness of the soul ... ."

Although he considered both Christianity and Buddhism to be nihilistic, decadent religions, Nietzsche did consider Buddhism more realistic because it posed objective problems and did not use the concept of God. In all religious history, Nietzsche believed, Buddhism was the only positivistic religion because it struggles against actual suffering, which is experienced as fact or illusion (the concept of Maya) in various Buddhist traditions. Christianity, by contrast, struggles against sin, while suggesting that suffering can have a redemptive quality.

Nietzsche claimed that Buddhism is "beyond good and evil" because it has developed past the "...self–deception of moral concepts... ." Buddha created the religion in order to assist individuals in ridding themselves of the suffering of life. "The supreme goal is cheerfulness, stillness, absence of desire, and this goal is achieved." Buddhism had its roots in higher and also learned classes of people, whereas Christianity was the religion of the lowest classes, Nietzsche wrote. He also believed Christianity had conquered barbarians by making them sick. Buddhism objectively claims "I suffer". Christianity, on the other hand, interprets suffering as related to sin. Buddhism is too positivistic and truthful, according to Nietzsche, to have advocated the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity. He called these virtues the three Christian shrewdnesses. Faith and belief are opposed to reason, knowledge, and inquiry, he believed. Hope, to him, in the Beyond sustains the unhappy multitudes.

Jewish, and subsequently, to a greater degree, Christian, priests survived and attained power by siding with decadents, Nietzsche claimed. They turned against the natural world. Their resentment against those who were well–constituted led them to "... invent another world from which that life–affirmation would appear evil ... ." In order to survive, the Jewish priests made use of the decadents and their large population. The Jews were not decadents, themselves. According to Nietzsche, they have "...the toughest national will to life which has ever existed on earth." However, they pretended to be decadents so they could "... place themselves at the head of all decadence movements (as the Christianity of Pau) so as to make of them something stronger than any party that affirms life."

Five stages of denaturalizing values:

1. Israel's Yahweh "...was the expression of their consciousness of power, of their delight in themselves, their hopes of themselves." Because he was their God, they considered him to be the God of justice. The Jews affirmed themselves, realized their own power, and had a good conscience. Even after internal anarchy and Assyrian invasions weakened Israel, it retained its worship of God as a king who is both soldier and judge.
2. Concept of God is falsified. Yahweh became a demanding god of justice who is "... no longer at one with Israel or an expression of national self-confidence...."
3. Concept of morality is falsified. Morality is no longer an expression of life and growth. Instead, morality opposes life by presenting well–being as a dangerous temptation. Priestly agitators "... interpret all good fortune as a reward, all misfortune as punishment for disobedience of God, for 'sin,' ... ."

4. History of Israel is falsified. The great epoch becomes an epoch of decay. The Exile is an "... eternal punishment for the great epoch — an epoch in which the priest was as yet nothing." The past is translated into religious terms. It was a record of guilt, punishment, piety, and reward in relation to Yahweh. A moral world order is established which assigns value to actions that obey the will of God (and which claims that this general will, ie, the right way of life for everyone, is eternal and unchanging). Priests teach that "... the ruling power of the will of God, expressed as punishment and reward according to the degree of obedience, is demonstrated in the destiny of a nation, of an individual... ."

5. God's will is revealed in the holy scripture. The sacred book formulates the will of God and specifies what is to be given to the priests. Priests become parasites. "... [A]ll things of life are so ordered that the priest is everywhere indispensable; at all the natural events of life, at birth, marriage, sickness, death. Not to speak of 'sacrifice' (meal-times)... ." Natural values become utterly valueless. The priest sanctifies and bestows all value. Disobedience of God (the priest) is 'sin.' Subjection to God (the priest) is redemption. Priests use 'sin' to gain and hold power.

The Jewish church opposed and negated nature, reality, and the world as being sinful and unholy. Christianity then negated the Jewish church and its holy, chosen people, according to Nietzsche. "... [T]he little rebellious movement which is baptized with the name Jesus of Nazareth represents the Jewish instinct once more—in other words, the priestly instinct which can no longer stand the priest as a reality, the invention of an even more abstract form of existence, an even more unreal vision of the world ... ." The Jewish church and the Jewish nation received this rebellion as a threat to its existence. "That holy anarchist who roused up the people at the bottom, the outcasts and 'sinners,' the Chandalas within Judaism, to opposition against the dominant order ... was a political criminal ... . That is what brought him to the cross ... where he died for his own guilt."

Nietzsche criticized Ernest Renan's attribution of the concepts genius and hero to Jesus. Nietzsche thought that the word idiot best described Jesus. According to Walter Kaufmann, he might have been referring to the naïve protagonist of Dostoyevsky's book *The Idiot*. With an antipathy toward the material world, Jesus was "...at home in a world undisturbed by reality of any kind, a merely 'inner' world, a 'real' world, an 'eternal' world... . 'The kingdom of God is within you'... ."

According to Nietzsche, the redeemer type is determined by a morbid intolerance of pain. Extreme sensitivity results in avoidance of the world. Also, any feeling of resistance to the world is experienced as pain. Even evil is therefore not resisted. "The fear of pain, even of the infinitely small in pain, — cannot end otherwise than in a religion of love... ." Jesus was a distorted version of the redeemer type. The first disciples, in their Gospels, described him as having Old Testament characteristics such as prophet, Messiah, miracle-worker, moral preacher, etc. Dostoyevsky could have revealed his sickliness and childishness. According to Jesus, "...the kingdom of heaven belongs to 'children'... ." Everyone has an equal right to become a child of God. His spirituality is infantile, a result of delayed puberty.

Jesus does not resist or contend with the world because he doesn't recognize the importance of the world. His life is its own kingdom of God at every moment. Early

Christians used Semitic concepts to express his teaching, but his anti-realism could just as easily have been a characteristic of Taoism or Hinduism.

Nietzsche asserted that the psychological reality of redemption was "...[a] new way of life, not a new faith." It is "...[t]he deep instinct for how one must live, in order to feel oneself 'in heaven'... ." The Christian is known by his acts. He offers no resistance to evil, He has no anger and wants no revenge. Blessedness is not promised on conditions, as in Judaism. The Gospel's glad tidings are that there is no distinction between God and man. There is no Judaic concern for sin, prayers, rituals, forgiveness, repentance, guilt, punishment, or faith. "[E]vangelic practice alone leads to God, it is God!" "[I]t is only in the practice of life that one feels 'divine,' 'blessed,' 'evangelical,' at all times a 'child of God.'" There were two worlds for the teacher of the Gospel's glad tidings. The real, true world is an inner experience of the heart in which all things are blessedly transfigured (*Verklärung*), eternalized, and perfected. The apparent world, however, is only a collection of psychological symbols, signs, and metaphors. These symbols are expressed in terms of space, time, history, and nature. Examples of these mere symbols are the concepts of "God as a person", "the son of man", "the hour of death", and "the kingdom of heaven". Jesus did not want to redeem anyone. He wanted to show how to live. His legacy was his bearing and behavior. He did not resist evildoers. He loved evildoers. Nietzsche has Jesus tell the thief on the cross that he is in Paradise now if he recognizes the divinity of Jesus' comportment.

Nietzsche saw a world-historical irony in the way that the Christian Church developed in antithetical opposition to the Evangel and the Gospel of early Christianity. The fable of Christ as miracle-worker and redeemer is not the origin of Christianity. Christianity's history is a "...progressively cruder misunderstanding of an original symbolism...": the death on the cross. Christianity became more diseased, base, morbid, vulgar, low, barbaric and crude. "As the Church, this morbid barbarism itself finally assumes power — the Church, that form of mortal hostility to all integrity, to all loftiness of soul, to discipline of spirit, to all open-hearted and benevolent humanity. — Christian values — noble values... ." Nietzsche expressed contempt for his contemporaries because they mendaciously called themselves Christians but did not act like true Christians. Modern people act with worldly egoism, pride, and will to power in opposition to Christianity's denial of the world. Nietzsche considered this falseness to be indecent. Unlike past ages, his contemporaries knew that sham and unnatural concepts such as "God", "moral world-order", "sinner", "Redeemer", "free will", "beyond", "Last Judgment", and "immortal soul" are consciously employed in order to provide power to the church and its priests.

"[T]here was only one Christian, and he died on the cross." "...[O]nly Christian practice, a life such as he lived who died on the cross, is Christian." Thereafter, the opposite kind of life was called Christian. Belief in redemption through Christ is not originally Christian. Genuine, original, primitive Christianity is not a faith. It is state of being that consists of "...a doing, above all a not-doing of many things... ." Jesus' wanted his death on the cross to be an example of how a person can be free from resentment, revenge, and rebellion. The disciples, however, wanted revenge against the Jewish ruling class and high priests who had delivered him to Pilate. They elevated Jesus into being the Messiah and Son of God and promised future judgment and punishment in the kingdom of God. This was in

opposition to Jesus' doctrine that everyone could be a child of God and experience Heaven in their present lives by acting in a gentle, loving manner.

The apostles claimed that Jesus' death was a sacrifice of an innocent man for the sins of the guilty. But "...Jesus had done away with the concept of 'guilt' itself — he had denied any chasm between God and man, he lived this unity of God and man as his 'glad tidings'... ." In order to claim that there is life after death, the apostles ignored Jesus' example of blessed living. Paul made immortality the main point in 1 Corinthians 15:17 when he said "...if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." "Paul himself even taught personal immortality as a reward." Paul used the promise of life after death as a way to seize tyrannical power over the masses of lower-class people. This changed Christianity from a peace movement that achieves actual happiness into a religion whose final judgment offers possible resurrection and eternal life.

Paul falsified the history of Christianity, the history of Israel, and the history of mankind by making them all seem to be a preparation for the crucifixion. "The great lie of personal immortality destroys all rationality, all natural in the instincts—all that is healthy, all that is life—promoting, all that guarantees a future now arouses mistrust." The meaning of life is that there is no meaning to present life. One lives for life in the beyond. By offering immortal life after death to everyone, Christianity appealed to everyone's egoism. The laws of nature would be broken for the salvation of everyone. "...[I]t is to this pitiable flattery of personal vanity that Christianity owes its victory — it is with this that it has persuaded over to its side everything ill—constituted, rebellious—minded, under—privileged, all the scum and refuse of mankind." This influenced politics and led to revolutions against aristocracies. Nietzsche claimed that Paul's pretense of holiness and his use of priestly concepts were typically Jewish. Christianity separated itself from Judaism as though it was the chosen religion, "...as if only the 'Christian' were the meaning, the salt, the measure and also the Last Judgment of all the rest." Christianity then divided itself from the world by appropriating "...the concepts 'God,' 'truth,' 'light,' 'spirit,' 'love,' 'wisdom,' 'life' as if these were synonyms of themselves... ." According to Nietzsche, "In Christianity, as the art of holy lying, the whole of Judaism...attains its ultimate perfection." "The Christian is only a Jew of a 'more liberal' persuasion."

Nietzsche asserted that the Christian "...is a rebel in his lowest instincts against everything privileged — he always lives and struggles for 'equal rights' ... . If one wants to be, in one's own person, 'chosen of God' ...then every other principle of selection, for example on the basis of integrity, manliness and pride, beauty and liberality of heart, is simply 'world' — evil as such.."

The Christian God is harmful and a crime against life. "The God that Paul created is a negation of God." Christianity, in its opposition to reality, is "...mortally hostile to the 'wisdom of this world,' which means science." "Paul understood the need for the lie, for 'faith'... ." Nietzsche claimed that Paul willed to ruin the 'wisdom of this world' and, in Jewish fashion, Paul gave the name of "God" and Torah to his own will. In the Old Testament, Genesis 3:5, God's, and therefore the priests', hellish anxiety regarding science has been chronicled, according to Nietzsche. Man tasted knowledge and "...there is an end to priests and gods if man becomes scientific!" Priests used the concepts of "sin", "guilt", and "punishment" to oppose knowledge, science, and the concepts of cause and effect.

Sinful, suffering humans believe in supernatural agents. Such sinners are dependent on their priests for salvation, redemption, and forgiveness. "...[T]he priest rules through the invention of sin."

Belief is "...a sign of decadence, of a broken will to live... ." The Christian "proof of strength" is "Belief makes blessed: thus it is true." But blessedness is something that the priest promises for the future. It, itself, is an object of belief. Also, blessedness, or pleasure, cannot be a proof of truth. "[W]hen on earth was it established that true judgments give more enjoyment than false ones... ?" It could be said, "Belief makes blessed: thus it is lies."

Nietzsche alleged that "...one is not 'converted ' to Christianity — one must be sufficiently sick for it." The decadent and sick types of people came to power through Christianity. From everywhere, the aggregate of the sick accumulated in Christianity and outnumbered the healthy. "The majority became master; the democratism of the Christian instincts conquered... ." The meaning of the God on the Cross is that "...[e]verything that suffers, everything that hangs on the Cross, is divine... ." "Because sickness belongs to the essence of Christianity, the typical Christian condition, 'belief,' has to be a form of sickness. Every straightforward, honest, scientific road to knowledge has to be repudiated by the Church as a forbidden road. Even doubt is a sin." Knowledge requires caution, intellectual moderation, discipline, and self-overcoming. But Christianity uses sick reasoning, such as martyrdom, to try to prove its truth. Christians think that "...there must be something to a cause for which someone is willing to die." In response, Nietzsche quoted a passage from his earlier work: "And if someone goes through fire for his doctrine — what does that prove?" "[T]he need for belief, for some unconditional Yes and No,...is a need born of weakness."

Lying, or not wanting to see as one sees, is a trait of those who are devoted to a party or faction. Lying is utilized by all priests, whether pagan, Jewish, or Christian. "...[T]he right to lie and the shrewdness of a 'revelation' (Offenbarung) pertains to the priestly type...The 'Law,' the 'will of God,' the 'sacred book,' 'inspiration' — all merely words for the conditions under which the priest comes to power, by which he maintains his power... ." Christianity's lies are not holy. They serve ...bad ends: the poisoning, slandering, denying of life, contempt for the body, the denigration and self-violation of man through the concept of sin... ." Unlike the Jewish/Christian Bible, the Hindu Law-Book of Manu lies for a good purpose. "...[I]t is the means by which the noble orders, the philosophers and warriors, keep the mob under control... ." It affirms life, well-being, and happiness. The purpose of the Christian Holy Lie is bad because it "...is born of weakness, of envy, of revenge." Christianity lied about guilt, punishment, and immortality in order to destroy Imperial Rome, an organization that was designed to promote life. Paul realized that "...with the symbol 'God on the Cross' one could sum up everything down-trodden, everything in secret revolt, the entire heritage of anarchist agitation in the Roman empire, into a tremendous power." His vision on the road to Damascus was "... that to deprive 'the world' of value he needed the belief in immortality, that the concept 'Hell' will master even Rome — that with the 'Beyond' one kills life ... Nihilist and Christian (Nihilist und Christ): they rhyme, and do not merely rhyme ... ."

Christianity deprived us of the benefits of Greek and Roman cultures. Over two thousand years ago, the Greeks and the Romans had discovered the scientific method. They

possessed "...the methodical research, the genius of organization and administration, the faith in, the will to, man's future, the great Yes to all things... ." But it was "...ruined by cunning, stealthy, invisible, anemic vampires.... Hidden vengefulness, petty envy became master... ."

Why did Christianity trample down the culture of Islam? "...[B]ecause Islam was noble, because it owed its origin to manly instincts, because it said Yes to life even in the rare and exquisite treasures of Moorish life!" The Crusades were "higher piracy." "For in itself there should be no choice in the matter when faced with Islam and Christianity, as little as there should when faced with an Arab and a Jew. The decision is given in advance; no one is free to choose here. One either is Chandala or one is not. War to the knife with Rome! Peace and friendship with Islam!". "...I can't grasp how a German could ever have felt Christian."

The European Renaissance of Greek and Roman values was "[t]he revaluation of Christian values, the attempt, undertaken with every means, with every instinct, with all genius, to bring about the victory of opposing values, of noble values." But Martin Luther thought that the Pope was corrupt. Actually, the papacy was rid of corrupt Christianity. "...Christianity [julian] no longer sat on the Papal throne! Life sat there instead! The triumph of life! The great Yes to all lofty, beautiful, daring things! ... ." Luther's Reformation spoiled this by restoring the church.

Christianity "...turned every value into a disvalue, every truth into a lie... it created distress in order to eternalize itself." It has "...contempt for every good and honest instinct..., and its Beyond is its will to negate every reality... ." Nietzsche believed that Christianity is a conspiracy "...against health, beauty, whatever has turned out well, courage, intellect, goodness of the soul, against life itself." He considered Christianity to be a curse and a corruption. In accordance with his revaluation of all values, Nietzsche suggested that time be calculated from the date of this book, instead of from the date of Christ's birth. Year One would begin, then, on September 30, 1888.

Nietzsche did not demur of Jesus, saying he was the "only one true Christian". He presented a Christ whose own inner life consisted of "blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in the inability for enmity." There is much criticism by Nietzsche of the organized institution of Christianity and its class of priests. Christ's evangelism consisted of the good news that the kingdom of God is within you. "What are the 'glad tidings'? True life, eternal life is found—it is not promised, it is here, it is within you: as life lived in love...." "'Sin', every kind of distancing relationship between God and man, is abolished - precisely this is the 'glad tidings'." "The 'glad tidings' are precisely that there are no more opposites...." Nietzsche does however explicitly consider Jesus as a mortal, and furthermore as ultimately misguided, the antithesis of a true hero, whom he posits with his concept of a Dionysian hero.

§ 29 contains three words that were suppressed by Nietzsche's sister in 1895. The words are: "the word idiot (das Wort Idiot)." H L Mencken's English translation does not contain these words. However, in 1931, the words were reinstated by Josef Hofmiller. The English translations of Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale contain them. According to Kaufmann, Nietzsche was referring to Dostoevsky's book *The Idiot* and its naïve protagonist.

In §35, Nietzsche wanted to convey the idea that, to Christ, Heaven is a subjective state of mind. In order to accomplish this goal, Nietzsche parodied a passage from the New Testament, which the Nietzsche-Archiv, headed by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, decided to suppress so that there would be no doubt as to the strict correctness of Nietzsche's use of the Bible. According to Nietzsche, one of the thieves, who was also being crucified, said, "This was truly a divine man, a child of God!" Nietzsche had Christ reply, "If you feel this, you are in Paradise, you are a child of God." In the Bible, only Luke related a dialogue between Christ and the thief in which the thief said, "This man has done nothing wrong" to which, Christ replied, "Today I tell you, you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 39-43) Nietzsche had the thief speaking the words that the centurion later spoke in Luke 23: 47, Matthew 27: 54, and Mark 15: 39. In these passages, Christ was called the Son of God by the soldier. The Nietzsche Archives' suppression was lifted in later editions and now appears exactly as Nietzsche wrote.

In § 38, there is a reference to a young prince who professes to be a Christian but acts in a very worldly manner. The passage about this "junger Fürst, an der Spitze seiner Regimenter" [young prince at the head of his regiments] was suppressed in order to avoid comparison to Wilhelm II.

Nietzsche, in 62, criticized the reckoning of time from Christ's birth (anno Domini). "...one calculates time from the unlucky day on which this fatality arose --- from the first day of Christianity!" This passage was judged by Franz Overbeck and Heinrich Köselitz to be unworthy of publication.

Nietzsche's "Decree against Christianity" was also suppressed. This consists of seven propositions:

1. First proposition: Every type of anti-nature is depraved (eg, Original sin)
2. Second proposition: Participation in religion is an assassination attempt on public morality (eg, Just war theory)
3. Third proposition: Sacred (earthly) things which Christianity has deified should be eradicated (eg, Sacred sites and rituals )
4. Fourth proposition: The Christian teaching on chastity is a public instigation to anti-nature (eg, Christian modesty)
5. Fifth proposition: The Christian priest is a chandala — he should be ostracized, starved for preferring discourse and declining food at a banquet (eg, the sacrifice of fasting)
6. Sixth proposition: This is the transvaluation of values in which the divine becomes criminal, etc.
7. Seventh proposition: Christianity (as religion rather than as a philosophy) is the ultimate evil.