27. Jesus has been understood, or misunderstood, as the cause of a rebellion; and I fail to see against what this rebellion was directed, if it was not the Jewish church—"church" exactly in the sense in which we use the word today. It was a rebellion against "the good and the just," against "the saints of Israel," against the hierarchy of society—not against its corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, and formula: it was the disbelief in the "higher man," the No to all that was priest or theologian. But the hierarchy which was thus questioned, even though for just a moment, was the lake-dwelling on which alone the Jewish people could continue to exist amid the "water"—the hard-won last chance of survival, the residue of its independent political existence. An attack on this was an attack on the deepest instinct of a people, on the toughest life-will which has ever existed in any people on earth. That holy anarchist who summoned the people at the bottom, the outcasts and "sinners," the chandalas [the “untouchables”] within Judaism, to opposition against the dominant order—using language, if the Gospels were to be trusted, which would lead to Siberia today too—was a political criminal insofar as political criminals were possible at all in an absurdly unpolitical community. This brought him to the cross.... <...>

28. It is a completely different question whether any such opposition ever entered his consciousness—whether he was not merely experienced by others as representing this opposition. And it is only at this point that I touch on the problem of the psychology of the Redeemer.

<...>

29. What concerns me is the psychological type of the Redeemer. After all, this could be contained in the Gospels despite the Gospels, however mutilated or overloaded with alien features: as Francis of Assisi is preserved in his legends, despite his legends. Not the truth concerning what he did, what he said, how he really died; but the question whether his type can still be exhibited at all, whether it has been "transmitted."

<...> M. Renan... has introduced the two most inappropriate concepts possible into his explanation of the Jesus type: the concept of genius and the concept of the hero (heros). But if anything is unevangelical it is the concept of the hero. Just the opposite of all wrestling, of all feeling-oneself-in-a-struggle, has here become instinct: the incapacity for resistance becomes morality here ("resist not evil"—the most profound word of the Gospels, their key in a certain sense), blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in not being able to be an enemy. What are the "glad tidings"? True life, eternal life,
has been found—it is not promised, it is here, it is in you: as a living in love, in love without subtraction and exclusion, without regard for station. Everyone is the child of God—Jesus definitely presumes nothing for himself alone—and as a child of God everyone is equal to everyone. To make a hero of Jesus!

30. The instinctive exclusion of any antipathy, any hostility, any boundaries or divisions in man's feelings: the consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and excitement which experiences any resistance, even any compulsion to resist, as unendurable displeasure (that is, as harmful, as something against which the instinct of self-preservation warns us); and finds blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer offering any resistance to anybody, neither to evil nor to him who is evil—love as the only, as the last possible, way of life.

31. I have already given my answer to the problem. Its presupposition is that the Redeemer type is preserved for us only in extensive distortion. This distortion is very probable in any case; for several reasons, such a type could not remain pure, whole, free from accretions. He must show traces of the milieu in which he moved as a foreign figure; and even more of the history, the fate of the first Christian community, from which the type was enriched, retroactively, with features which are comprehensible only in terms of later polemics and propaganda purposes.

...in order to be able to understand anything of it [the type of Redeemer], the first disciples, in particular, first translated into their own crudity an existence which was wholly embedded in symbols and incomprehensibilities—for them the type did not exist until it had been reshaped in better-known forms. The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the moral teacher, the miracle man, John the Baptist—each another chance to misconstrue the type.

...there is a gaping contradiction between the sermonizer on the mount, lake, and meadow whose appearance seems like that of a Buddha on soil that is not at all Indian, and that fanatic of aggression, that mortal enemy of theologians and priests.... I myself have no doubt that the generous dose of gall... first flowed into the type of the Master from the excited state of Christian propaganda; after all, the unscrupulousness of all sectarians, when it comes to constructing their own apology out of their master, is only too well known. When the first community needed a judging, quarreling, angry, malignantly sophistical theologian, against theologians, it created its "God"
according to its needs—just as it put into his mouth, without any hesitation, those wholly unevangelical concepts which now it cannot do without: "the return," the "Last Judgment," every kind of temporal expectation and promise.

32. To repeat, I am opposed to any attempt to introduce the fanatic into the Redeemer type: the word *imperieux*, which Renan uses, is alone enough to annul the type. The "glad tidings" are precisely that there are no longer any opposites; the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children; the faith which finds expression here is not a faith attained through struggle—it is there, it has been there from the beginning... <...> Such a faith is not angry, does not reproach, does not resist: it does not bring "the sword"—it simply does not foresee how it might one day separate. It does not prove itself either by miracle or by reward and promise, least of all "by scripture": at every moment it is its own miracle, its own reward, its own proof, its own "kingdom of God." Nor does this faith formulate itself: it lives, it resists all formulas. Of course the accidents of environment, of language, of background determine a certain sphere of concepts: the earliest Christianity uses only Jewish-Semitic concepts (the eating and drinking at the Last Supper belong here, that concept which, like everything Jewish, has been misused so badly by the church). But one should beware of finding more than a sign language in this, a semeiology, an occasion for parables. For this anti-realist, that not a word is taken literally is precisely the presupposition of being able to speak at all. Among Indians he would have availed himself of Sankhya [Hindu philosophy] concepts; among the Chinese, of those of Lao-tse—without having felt any difference. Using the expression somewhat tolerantly, one could call Jesus a "free spirit"—he does not care for anything solid: the word kills, all that is solid kills. The concept, the experience of "life" in the only way he knows it, resists any kind of word, formula, law, faith, dogma. He speaks only of the innermost: "life" or "truth" or "light" is his word for the innermost—all the rest, the whole of reality, the whole of nature, language itself, has for him only the value of a sign, a simile.

Make no mistake at this point, however seductive the Christian, in other words, the ecclesiastical, prejudice may be: such a symbolist par excellence stands outside all religion, all cult concepts, all history, all natural science, all experience of the world, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all books, all art—his "knowledge" is pure foolishness precisely concerning the fact that such things exist. Culture is not known to him even by hearsay, he does not need to fight it—he does not negate it. The same applies to the state, to the whole civic order and society, to work, to war—he never had any reason to negate "the world"; the ecclesiastical concept of "world" never occurred to him. To negate is the very thing that is impossible for him. Dialectic is equally lacking; the very idea is lacking that a faith, a "truth," might be proved by reasons (his proofs are inner "lights," inner feelings of pleasure and self-affirmations, all of them "proofs of strength"). Such a doctrine is also incapable of contradicting: it
does not even comprehend that there are, that there can be, other doctrines; it cannot
even imagine a contradictory judgment. Where it encounters one, from innermost
sympathy it will mourn over "blindness"—for it sees the "light"—but it will offer no objection.

33. In the whole psychology of the "evangel" the concept of guilt and punishment is
lacking; also the concept of a reward. "Sin"—any distance separating God and man—is abolished: precisely this is the "glad tidings." Blessedness is not promised, it is not
tied to conditions: it is the only reality—the rest is a sign with which to speak of it.

The consequence of such a state projects itself into a new practice, the genuine
evangelical practice. It is not a "faith" that distinguishes the Christian: the Christian
acts, he is distinguished by acting differently: by not resisting, either in words or in his
heart, those who treat him ill; by making no distinction between foreigner and native,
between Jew and not-Jew ("the neighbor"—really the coreligionist, the Jew); by not
growing angry with anybody, by not despising anybody; by not permitting himself to
be seen or involved at courts of law ("not swearing"); by not divorcing his wife under
any circumstances, not even if his wife has been proved unfaithful. All of this, at
bottom one principle; all of this, consequences of one instinct.

The life of the Redeemer was nothing other than this practice—nor was his death
anything else. He no longer required any formulas, any rites for his intercourse with
God—not even prayer. He broke with the whole Jewish doctrine of repentance and
reconciliation; he knows that it is only in the practice of life that one feels "divine,"
blessed," "evangelical," at all times a "child of God." Not "repentance," not "prayer
for forgiveness," are the ways to God: only the evangelical practice leads to God,
indeed, it is "God"! What was disposed of with the evangel was the Judaism of the
concepts of "sin," "forgiveness of sin," "faith," "redemption through faith"—the whole
Jewish ecclesiastical doctrine was negated in the "glad tidings."

The deep instinct for how one must live, in order to feel oneself "in heaven," to feel
"eternal," while in all other behavior one decidedly does not feel oneself "in
heaven"—this alone is the psychological reality of "redemption." A new way of life,
not a new faith.

34. If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is that he accepted only
inner realities as realities, as "truths"—that he understood the rest, everything natural,
temporal, spatial, historical, only as signs, as occasions for parables. The concept of
"the son of man" is not a concrete person who belongs in history, something
individual and unique, but an "eternal" factuality, a psychological symbol redeemed
from the concept of time. The same applies once again, and in the highest sense, to the
God of this typical symbolist, to the "kingdom of God," to the "kingdom of heaven,"
to the "filiation of God." Nothing is more unchristian than the ecclesiastical crudities of God as person, of a "kingdom of God" which is to come, of a "kingdom of heaven" beyond, of a "son of God" as the second person in the Trinity. All this is—forgive the expression—like a fist in the eye—oh, in what an eye!—of the evangel—a world-historical cynicism in the derision of symbols. But what the signs "father" and "son" refer to is obvious—not to everyone, I admit: the word "son" expresses the entry into the overall feeling of the transfiguration of all things (blessedness), the word "father" expresses this feeling, itself, the feeling of eternity, the feeling of perfection. <...

The "kingdom of heaven" is a state of the heart—not something that is to come "above the earth" or "after death." The whole concept of natural death is lacking in the evangel: death is no bridge, no transition; it is lacking because it belongs to a wholly different, merely apparent world, useful only insofar as it furnishes signs. The "hour of death" is no Christian conception: "hour," time, physical life and its crises do not even exist for the teacher of the "glad tidings." The "kingdom of God" is nothing that one expects; it has no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it will not come in "a thousand years"—it is an experience of the heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere.

35. This "bringer of glad tidings" died as he had lived, as he had taught—not to "redeem men" but to show how one must live. This practice is his legacy to mankind: his behavior before the judges, before the catchpoles, before the accusers and all kinds of slander and scorn—his behavior on the cross. He does not resist, he does not defend his right, he takes no step which might ward off the worst; on the contrary, he provokes it. And he begs, he suffers, he loves with those, in those, who do him evil. Not to resist, not to be angry, not to hold responsible—but to resist not even the evil one—to love him.

<...

40. Evidently the small community did not understand the main point, the exemplary character of this kind of death, the freedom, the superiority over any feeling of ressentiment: a token of how little they understood him altogether! After all, Jesus could not intend anything with his death except to give publicly the strongest exhibition, the proof of his doctrine. <...> After all, the evangel had been precisely the presence, the fulfillment, the reality of this "kingdom." Just such a death was this very "kingdom of God." <...

42. It is plain what was finished with the death on the cross: a new, an entirely original basis for a Buddhistic peace movement, for an actual, not merely promised, happiness on earth. ...Buddhism does not promise but fulfills...