THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA
A BOOK FOR ALL AND NONE

By Friedrich Nietzsche

Translated By Thomas Common

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PG Editor's Note:

Archaic spelling and punctuation usages have not been changed from the original. In particular, quotations are often not closed for several paragraphs.

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FIRST PART. ZARATHUSTRA'S DISCOURSES.

ZARATHUSTRA'S PROLOGUE.

1.

When Zarathustra was thirty years old, he left his home and the lake of his home, and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and solitude, and for ten years did not weary of it. But at last his heart changed,—and rising one morning with the rosy dawn, he went before the sun, and spake thus unto it:

Thou great star! What would be thy happiness if thou hadst not those for whom thou shinest!

For ten years hast thou climbed hither unto my cave: thou wouldst have wearied of thy light and of the journey, had it not been for me, mine eagle, and my serpent.

But we awaited thee every morning, took from thee thine overflow and blessed thee for it.

Lo! I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that hath gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it.

I would fain bestow and distribute, until the wise have once more become joyous in their folly, and the poor happy in their riches.

Therefore must I descend into the deep: as thou doest in the evening, when thou goest behind the sea, and givest light also to the nether-world, thou exuberant star!

Like thee must I GO DOWN, as men say, to whom I shall descend.

Bless me, then, thou tranquil eye, that canst behold even the greatest happiness without envy!

Bless the cup that is about to overflow, that the water may flow golden out of it, and carry everywhere the reflection of thy bliss!

Lo! This cup is again going to empty itself, and Zarathustra is again going to be a man.

Thus began Zarathustra's down-going.

2.

Zarathustra went down the mountain alone, no one meeting him. When he entered the forest, however, there suddenly stood before him an old man, who had left his holy cot to seek roots. And thus spake the old man to Zarathustra:

“No stranger to me is this wanderer: many years ago passed he by. Zarathustra he was called; but he hath altered.

Then thou carriedst thine ashes into the mountains: wilt thou now carry thy fire into the valleys? Fearest thou not the incendiary’s doom?

Yea, I recognise Zarathustra. Pure is his eye, and no loathing lurketh about his mouth. Goeth he not along like a dancer?

Altered is Zarathustra; a child hath Zarathustra become; an awakened one is Zarathustra: what wilt thou do in the land of the sleepers?

As in the sea hast thou lived in solitude, and it hath borne thee up. Alas, wilt thou now go ashore? Alas, wilt thou again drag thy body thyself?”

Zarathustra answered: “I love mankind.”

“Why,” said the saint, “did I go into the forest and the desert? Was it not because I loved men far too well?

Now I love God: men, I do not love. Man is a thing too imperfect for me. Love to man would be fatal to me.”

Zarathustra answered: “What spake I of love! I am bringing gifts unto men.”

“Give them nothing,” said the saint. “Take rather part of their load, and carry it along with them—that will be most agreeable unto them: if only it be agreeable unto thee!

If, however, thou wilt give unto them, give them no more than an alms, and let them also beg for it!”

“No,” replied Zarathustra, “I give no alms. I am not poor enough for that.”

The saint laughed at Zarathustra, and spake thus: “Then see to it that they accept thy treasures! They are distrustful of anchorites, and do not believe that we come with gifts.

The fall of our footsteps ringeth too hollow through their streets. And just as at night, when they are in bed and hear a man abroad long before sunrise, so they ask themselves concerning us: Where goeth the thief?

Go not to men, but stay in the forest! Go rather to the animals! Why not be like me—a bear amongst bears, a bird amongst birds?”

“And what doeth the saint in the forest?” asked Zarathustra.

The saint answered: “I make hymns and sing them; and in making hymns I laugh and weep and mumble: thus do I praise God.

With singing, weeping, laughing, and mumbling do I praise the God who is my God. But what dost thou bring us as a gift?"

When Zarathustra had heard these words, he bowed to the saint and said: "What should I have to give thee! Let me rather hurry hence lest I take aught away from thee!"—And thus they parted from one another, the old man and Zarathustra, laughing like schoolboys.

When Zarathustra was alone, however, he said to his heart: "Could it be possible! This old saint in the forest hath not yet heard of it, that GOD IS DEAD!"

3.

When Zarathustra arrived at the nearest town which adjoineth the forest, he found many people assembled in the market-place; for it had been announced that a rope-dancer would give a performance. And Zarathustra spake thus unto the people:

I TEACH YOU THE SUPERMAN. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?

All beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves: and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?

What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame.

Ye have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once were ye apes, and even yet man is more of an ape than any of the apes.

Even the wisest among you is only a disharmony and hybrid of plant and phantom. But do I bid you become phantoms or plants?

Lo, I teach you the Superman!

The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman SHALL BE the meaning of the earth!

I conjure you, my brethren, REMAIN TRUE TO THE EARTH, and believe not those who speak unto you of superearthly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not.

Despisers of life are they, decaying ones and poisoned ones themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so away with them!

Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy; but God died, and therewith also those blasphemers. To blaspheme the earth is now the dreadfulest sin, and to rate the heart of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth!

Once the soul looked contemptuously on the body, and then that contempt was the supreme thing:—the soul wished the body meagre, ghastly, and famished. Thus it thought to escape from the body and the earth.

Oh, that soul was itself meagre, ghastly, and famished; and cruelty was the delight of that soul!

But ye, also, my brethren, tell me: What doth your body say about your soul? Is your soul not poverty and pollution and wretched self-complacency?

Verily, a polluted stream is man. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted stream without becoming impure.

Lo, I teach you the Superman: he is that sea; in him can your great contempt be submerged.

What is the greatest thing ye can experience? It is the hour of great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becometh loathsome unto you, and so also your reason and virtue.

The hour when ye say: “What good is my happiness! It is poverty and pollution and wretched self-complacency. But my happiness should justify existence itself!”

The hour when ye say: “What good is my reason! Doth it long for knowledge as the lion for his food? It is poverty and pollution and wretched self-complacency!”

The hour when ye say: “What good is my virtue! As yet it hath not made me passionate. How weary I am of my good and my bad! It is all poverty and pollution and wretched self-complacency!”

The hour when ye say: “What good is my justice! I do not see that I am fervour and fuel. The just, however, are fervour and fuel!”

The hour when ye say: “What good is my pity! Is not pity the cross on which he is nailed who loveth man? But my pity is not a crucifixion.”

Have ye ever spoken thus? Have ye ever cried thus? Ah! would that I had heard you crying thus!

It is not your sin—it is your self-satisfaction that crieth unto heaven; your very sparingness in sin crieth unto heaven!

Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the frenzy with which ye should be inoculated?

Lo, I teach you the Superman: he is that lightning, he is that frenzy!—

When Zarathustra had thus spoken, one of the people called out: “We have now heard enough of the rope-dancer; it is time now for us to see him!” And all the people laughed at Zarathustra. But the rope-dancer, who thought the words applied to him, began his performance.

4.

Zarathustra, however, looked at the people and wondered. Then he spake thus:

Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman—a rope over an abyss.

A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and halting.

What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what is lovable in man is that he is an OVER-GOING and a DOWN-GOING.

I love those that know not how to live except as down-goers, for they are the over-goers.

I love the great despisers, because they are the great adorers, and arrows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not first seek a reason beyond the stars for going down and being sacrifices, but sacrifice themselves to the earth, that the earth of the Superman may hereafter arrive.

I love him who liveth in order to know, and seeketh to know in order that the Superman may hereafter live. Thus seeketh he his own down-going.

I love him who laboureth and inventeth, that he may build the house for the Superman, and prepare for him earth, animal, and plant: for thus seeketh he his own down-going.

I love him who loveth his virtue: for virtue is the will to down-going, and an arrow of longing.

I love him who reserveth no share of spirit for himself, but wanteth to be wholly the spirit of his virtue: thus walketh he as spirit over the bridge.

I love him who maketh his virtue his inclination and destiny: thus, for the sake of his virtue, he is willing to live on, or live no more.

I love him who desireth not too many virtues. One virtue is more of a virtue than two, because it is more of a knot for one's destiny to cling to.

I love him whose soul is lavish, who wanteth no thanks and doth not give back: for he always bestoweth, and desireth not to keep for himself.

I love him who is ashamed when the dice fall in his favour, and who then asketh: "Am I a dishonest player?"—for he is willing to succumb.

I love him who scattereth golden words in advance of his deeds, and always doeth more than he promiseth: for he seeketh his own down-going.

I love him who justifieth the future ones, and redeemeth the past ones: for he is willing to succumb through the present ones.

I love him who chasteneth his God, because he loveth his God: for he must succumb through the wrath of his God.

I love him whose soul is deep even in the wounding, and may succumb through a small matter: thus goeth he willingly over the bridge.

I love him whose soul is so overfull that he forgetteth himself, and all things are in him: thus all things become his down-going.

I love him who is of a free spirit and a free heart: thus is his head only the bowels of his heart; his heart, however, causeth his down-going.

I love all who are like heavy drops falling one by one out of the dark cloud that lowereth over man: they herald the coming of the lightning, and succumb as heralds.

Lo, I am a herald of the lightning, and a heavy drop out of the cloud: the lightning, however, is the SUPERMAN.—

5.

When Zarathustra had spoken these words, he again looked at the people, and was silent. “There they stand,” said he to his heart; “there they laugh: they understand me not; I am not the mouth for these ears.

Must one first batter their ears, that they may learn to hear with their eyes? Must one clatter like kettledrums and penitential preachers? Or do they only believe the stammerer?

They have something whereof they are proud. What do they call it, that which maketh them proud? Culture, they call it; it distinguisheth them from the goatherds.

They dislike, therefore, to hear of ‘contempt’ of themselves. So I will appeal to their pride.

I will speak unto them of the most contemptible thing: that, however, is THE LAST MAN!”

And thus spake Zarathustra unto the people:

It is time for man to fix his goal. It is time for man to plant the germ of his highest hope.

Still is his soil rich enough for it. But that soil will one day be poor and exhausted, and no lofty tree will any longer be able to grow thereon.

Alas! there cometh the time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man—and the string of his bow will have unlearned to whizz!

I tell you: one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: ye have still chaos in you.

Alas! There cometh the time when man will no longer give birth to any star. Alas! There cometh the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself.

Lo! I show you THE LAST MAN.

“What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?”—so asketh the last man and blinketh.

The earth hath then become small, and on it there hoppeth the last man who maketh everything small. His species is ineradicable like that of the ground-flea; the last man liveth longest.

“We have discovered happiness”—say the last men, and blink thereby.

They have left the regions where it is hard to live; for they need warmth. One still loveth one’s neighbour and rubbeth against him; for one needeth warmth.

Turning ill and being distrustful, they consider sinful: they walk warily. He is a fool who still stumbleth over stones or men!

A little poison now and then: that maketh pleasant dreams. And much poison at last for a pleasant death.

One still worketh, for work is a pastime. But one is careful lest the pastime should hurt one.

One no longer becometh poor or rich; both are too burdensome. Who still wanteth to rule? Who still wanteth to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd, and one herd! Every one wanteth the same; every one is equal: he who hath other sentiments goeth voluntarily into the madhouse.

“Formerly all the world was insane,”—say the subtlest of them, and blink thereby.

They are clever and know all that hath happened: so there is no end to their raillery. People still fall out, but are soon reconciled—otherwise it spoileth their stomachs.

They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night, but they have a regard for health.

“We have discovered happiness,”—say the last men, and blink thereby.—

And here ended the first discourse of Zarathustra, which is also called “The Prologue”: for at this point the shouting and mirth of the multitude interrupted him. “Give us this last man, O Zarathustra,”—they called out—“make us into these last men! Then will we make thee a present of the Superman!” And all the people exulted and smacked their lips. Zarathustra, however, turned sad, and said to his heart:

“They understand me not: I am not the mouth for these ears.

Too long, perhaps, have I lived in the mountains; too much have I hearkened unto the brooks and trees: now do I speak unto them as unto the goatherds.

Calm is my soul, and clear, like the mountains in the morning. But they think me cold, and a mocker with terrible jests.

And now do they look at me and laugh: and while they laugh they hate me too. There is ice in their laughter.”

[…]

THIRD PART.

“Ye look aloft when ye long for exaltation, and I look downward because I am exalted.

“Who among you can at the same time laugh and be exalted?

“He who climbeth on the highest mountains, laugheth at all tragic plays and tragic realities.”

—ZARATHUSTRA, I., “Reading and Writing.”

[…]

LVI. OLD AND NEW TABLES.

1.

Here do I sit and wait, old broken tables around me and also new half-written tables. When cometh mine hour?

—The hour of my descent, of my down-going: for once more will I go unto men.

For that hour do I now wait: for first must the signs come unto me that it is MINE hour—namely, the laughing lion with the flock of doves.

Meanwhile do I talk to myself as one who hath time. No one telleth me anything new, so I tell myself mine own story.

2.

When I came unto men, then found I them resting on an old infatuation: all of them thought they had long known what was good and bad for men.

An old wearisome business seemed to them all discourse about virtue; and he who wished to sleep well spake of “good” and “bad” ere retiring to rest.

This somnolence did I disturb when I taught that NO ONE YET KNOWETH what is good and bad:—unless it be the creating one!

—It is he, however, who createth man's goal, and giveth to the earth its meaning and its future: he only EFFECTETH it THAT aught is good or bad.

And I bade them upset their old academic chairs, and wherever that old infatuation had sat; I bade them laugh at their great moralists, their saints, their poets, and their Saviours.

At their gloomy sages did I bid them laugh, and whoever had sat admonishing as a black scarecrow on the tree of life.

On their great grave-highway did I seat myself, and even beside the carrion and vultures—and I laughed at all their bygone and its mellow decaying glory.

Verily, like penitential preachers and fools did I cry wrath and shame on all their greatness and smallness. Oh, that their best is so very small! Oh, that their worst is so very small! Thus did I laugh.

Thus did my wise longing, born in the mountains, cry and laugh in me; a wild wisdom, verily!—my great pinion-rustling longing.

And oft did it carry me off and up and away and in the midst of laughter; then flew I quivering like an arrow with sun-intoxicated rapture:

—Out into distant futures, which no dream hath yet seen, into warmer souths than ever sculptor conceived,—where gods in their dancing are ashamed of all clothes:

(That I may speak in parables and halt and stammer like the poets: and verily I am ashamed that I have still to be a poet!)

Where all becoming seemed to me dancing of Gods, and wantoning of Gods, and the world unloosed and unbridled and fleeing back to itself:—

—As an eternal self-fleeing and re-seeking of one another of many Gods, as the blessed self-contradicting, recommuning, and refraternising with one another of many Gods:—

Where all time seemed to me a blessed mockery of moments, where necessity was freedom itself, which played happily with the goad of freedom:—

Where I also found again mine old devil and arch-enemy, the spirit of gravity, and all that it created: constraint, law, necessity and consequence and purpose and will and good and evil:—

For must there not be that which is danced OVER, danced beyond? Must there not, for the sake of the nimble, the nimblest,—be moles and clumsy dwarfs?—

3.

There was it also where I picked up from the path the word "Superman," and that man is something that must be surpassed.

—That man is a bridge and not a goal—rejoicing over his noontides and evenings, as advances to new rosy dawns:

—The Zarathustra word of the great noontide, and whatever else I have hung up over men like purple evening-afterglows.

Verily, also new stars did I make them see, along with new nights; and over cloud and day and night, did I spread out laughter like a gay-coloured canopy.

I taught them all MY poetisation and aspiration: to compose and collect into unity what is fragment in man, and riddle and fearful chance;—

—As composer, riddle-reader, and redeemer of chance, did I teach them to create the future, and all that HATH BEEN—to redeem by creating.

The past of man to redeem, and every "It was" to transform, until the Will saith: "But so did I will it! So shall I will it—"

—This did I call redemption; this alone taught I them to call redemption.—

Now do I await MY redemption—that I may go unto them for the last time.

For once more will I go unto men: AMONGST them will my sun set; in dying will I give them my choicest gift!

From the sun did I learn this, when it goeth down, the exuberant one: gold doth it then pour into the sea, out of inexhaustible riches,—

—So that the poorest fisherman roweth even with GOLDEN oars! For this did I once see, and did not tire of weeping in beholding it.—

Like the sun will also Zarathustra go down: now sitteth he here and waiteth, old broken tables around him, and also new tables—half-written.

4.

Behold, here is a new table; but where are my brethren who will carry it with me to the valley and into hearts of flesh?—

Thus demandeth my great love to the remotest ones: BE NOT CONSIDERATE OF THY NEIGHBOUR! Man is something that must be surpassed.

There are many divers ways and modes of surpassing: see THOU thereto! But only a buffoon thinketh: "man can also be OVERLEAPT."

Surpass thyself even in thy neighbour: and a right which thou canst seize upon, shalt thou not allow to be given thee!

What thou doest can no one do to thee again. Lo, there is no requital.

He who cannot command himself shall obey. And many a one CAN command himself, but still sorely lacketh self-obedience!

5.

Thus wisheth the type of noble souls: they desire to have nothing GRATUITOUSLY, least of all, life.

He who is of the populace wisheth to live gratuitously; we others, however, to whom life hath given itself—we are ever considering WHAT we can best give IN RETURN!

And verily, it is a noble dictum which saith: “What life promiseth US, that promise will WE keep—to life!”

One should not wish to enjoy where one doth not contribute to the enjoyment. And one should not WISH to enjoy!

For enjoyment and innocence are the most bashful things. Neither like to be sought for. One should HAVE them,—but one should rather SEEK for guilt and pain!—

6.

O my brethren, he who is a firstling is ever sacrificed. Now, however, are we firstlings!

We all bleed on secret sacrificial altars, we all burn and broil in honour of ancient idols.

Our best is still young: this exciteth old palates. Our flesh is tender, our skin is only lambs’ skin:—how could we not excite old idol-priests!

IN OURSELVES dwelleth he still, the old idol-priest, who broileth our best for his banquet. Ah, my brethren, how could firstlings fail to be sacrifices!

But so wisheth our type; and I love those who do not wish to preserve themselves, the down-going ones do I love with mine entire love: for they go beyond.—

7.

To be true—that CAN few be! And he who can, will not! Least of all, however, can the good be true.

Oh, those good ones! GOOD MEN NEVER SPEAK THE TRUTH. For the spirit, thus to be good, is a malady.

They yield, those good ones, they submit themselves; their heart repeateth, their soul obeyeth: HE, however, who obeyeth, DOTH NOT LISTEN TO HIMSELF!

All that is called evil by the good, must come together in order that one truth may be born. O my brethren, are ye also evil enough for THIS truth?

The daring venture, the prolonged distrust, the cruel Nay, the tedium, the cutting-into-the-quick—how seldom do THESE come together! Out of such seed, however—is truth produced!

BESIDE the bad conscience hath hitherto grown all KNOWLEDGE! Break up, break up, ye discerning ones, the old tables!

8.

When the water hath planks, when gangways and railings o'erspan the stream, verily, he is not believed who then saith: "All is in flux."

But even the simpletons contradict him. "What?" say the simpletons, "all in flux? Planks and railings are still OVER the stream!

"OVER the stream all is stable, all the values of things, the bridges and bearings, all 'good' and 'evil': these are all STABLE!"—

Cometh, however, the hard winter, the stream-tamer, then learn even the wittiest distrust, and verily, not only the simpletons then say: "Should not everything—STAND STILL?"

"Fundamentally standeth everything still"—that is an appropriate winter doctrine, good cheer for an unproductive period, a great comfort for winter-sleepers and fireside-loungers.

"Fundamentally standeth everything still"—: but CONTRARY thereto, preacheth the thawing wind!

The thawing wind, a bullock, which is no ploughing bullock—a furious bullock, a destroyer, which with angry horns breaketh the ice! The ice however—BREAKETH GANGWAYS!

O my brethren, is not everything AT PRESENT IN FLUX? Have not all railings and gangways fallen into the water? Who would still HOLD ON to "good" and "evil"?

"Woe to us! Hail to us! The thawing wind bloweth!"—Thus preach, my brethren, through all the streets!

9.

There is an old illusion—it is called good and evil. Around soothsayers and astrologers hath hitherto revolved the orbit of this illusion.

Once did one BELIEVE in soothsayers and astrologers; and THEREFORE did one believe, "Everything is fate: thou shalt, for thou must!"

Then again did one distrust all soothsayers and astrologers; and THEREFORE did one believe, "Everything is freedom: thou canst, for thou willest!"

O my brethren, concerning the stars and the future there hath hitherto been only illusion, and not knowledge; and THEREFORE concerning good and evil there hath hitherto been only illusion and not knowledge!

10.

“Thou shalt not rob! Thou shalt not slay!”—such precepts were once called holy; before them did one bow the knee and the head, and take off one’s shoes.

But I ask you: Where have there ever been better robbers and slayers in the world than such holy precepts?

Is there not even in all life—robbing and slaying? And for such precepts to be called holy, was not TRUTH itself thereby—slain?

—Or was it a sermon of death that called holy what contradicted and dissuaded from life?—O my brethren, break up, break up for me the old tables!

11.

It is my sympathy with all the past that I see it is abandoned,—

—Abandoned to the favour, the spirit and the madness of every generation that cometh, and reinterpreteth all that hath been as its bridge!

A great potentate might arise, an artful prodigy, who with approval and disapproval could strain and constrain all the past, until it became for him a bridge, a harbinger, a herald, and a cock-crowing.

This however is the other danger, and mine other sympathy:—he who is of the populace, his thoughts go back to his grandfather,—with his grandfather, however, doth time cease.

Thus is all the past abandoned: for it might some day happen for the populace to become master, and drown all time in shallow waters.

Therefore, O my brethren, a NEW NOBILITY is needed, which shall be the adversary of all populace and potentate rule, and shall inscribe anew the word “noble” on new tables.

For many noble ones are needed, and many kinds of noble ones, FOR A NEW NOBILITY! Or, as I once said in parable: “That is just divinity, that there are Gods, but no God!”

12.

O my brethren, I consecrate you and point you to a new nobility: ye shall become procreators and cultivators and sowers of the future;—

—Verily, not to a nobility which ye could purchase like traders with traders' gold; for little worth is all that hath its price.

Let it not be your honour henceforth whence ye come, but whither ye go! Your Will and your feet which seek to surpass you—let these be your new honour!

Verily, not that ye have served a prince—of what account are princes now!—nor that ye have become a bulwark to that which standeth, that it may stand more firmly.

Not that your family have become courtly at courts, and that ye have learned—gay-coloured, like the flamingo—to stand long hours in shallow pools:

(For ABILITY-to-stand is a merit in courtiers; and all courtiers believe that unto blessedness after death pertaineth—PERMISSION-to-sit!)

Nor even that a Spirit called Holy, led your forefathers into promised lands, which I do not praise: for where the worst of all trees grew—the cross,—in that land there is nothing to praise!—

—And verily, wherever this "Holy Spirit" led its knights, always in such campaigns did—goats and geese, and wryheads and guyheads run FOREMOST!—

O my brethren, not backward shall your nobility gaze, but OUTWARD! Exiles shall ye be from all fatherlands and forefather-lands!

Your CHILDREN'S LAND shall ye love: let this love be your new nobility,—the undiscovered in the remotest seas! For it do I bid your sails search and search!

Unto your children shall ye MAKE AMENDS for being the children of your fathers: all the past shall ye THUS redeem! This new table do I place over you!

[…]

FOURTH AND LAST PART.

Ah, where in the world have there been greater follies than with the pitiful? And what in the world hath caused more suffering than the follies of the pitiful?

Woe unto all loving ones who have not an elevation which is above their pity!

Thus spake the devil unto me, once on a time: “Even God hath his hell: it is his love for man.”

And lately did I hear him say these words: “God is dead: of his pity for man hath God died.”

—ZARATHUSTRA, II., “The Pitiful.”

[…]

LXVI. OUT OF SERVICE.

Not long, however, after Zarathustra had freed himself from the magician, he again saw a person sitting beside the path which he followed, namely a tall, black man, with a haggard, pale countenance: THIS MAN grieved him exceedingly. “Alas,” said he to his heart, “there sitteth disguised affliction; methinketh he is of the type of the priests: what do THEY want in my domain?

What! Hardly have I escaped from that magician, and must another necromancer again run across my path,—

—Some sorcerer with laying-on-of-hands, some sombre wonder-worker by the grace of God, some anointed world-maligner, whom, may the devil take!

But the devil is never at the place which would be his right place: he always cometh too late, that cursed dwarf and club-foot!”—

Thus cursed Zarathustra impatiently in his heart, and considered how with averted look he might slip past the black man. But behold, it came about otherwise. For at the same moment had the sitting one already perceived him; and not unlike one whom an unexpected happiness overtaketh, he sprang to his feet, and went straight towards Zarathustra.

“Whoever thou art, thou traveller,” said he, “help a strayed one, a seeker, an old man, who may here easily come to grief!

The world here is strange to me, and remote; wild beasts also did I hear howling; and he who could have given me protection—he is himself no more.

I was seeking the pious man, a saint and an anchorite, who, alone in his forest, had not yet heard of what all the world knoweth at present.”

“WHAT doth all the world know at present?” asked Zarathustra. “Perhaps that the old God no longer liveth, in whom all the world once believed?”

“Thou sayest it,” answered the old man sorrowfully. “And I served that old God until his last hour.

Now, however, am I out of service, without master, and yet not free; likewise am I no longer merry even for an hour, except it be in recollections.

Therefore did I ascend into these mountains, that I might finally have a festival for myself once more, as becometh an old pope and church-father: for know it, that I am the last pope!—a festival of pious recollections and divine services.

Now, however, is he himself dead, the most pious of men, the saint in the forest, who praised his God constantly with singing and mumbling.

He himself found I no longer when I found his cot—but two wolves found I therein, which howled on account of his death,—for all animals loved him. Then did I haste away.

Had I thus come in vain into these forests and mountains? Then did my heart determine that I should seek another, the most pious of all those who believe not in God—, my heart determined that I should seek Zarathustra!”

Thus spake the hoary man, and gazed with keen eyes at him who stood before him. Zarathustra however seized the hand of the old pope and regarded it a long while with admiration.

“Lo! thou venerable one,” said he then, “what a fine and long hand! That is the hand of one who hath ever dispensed blessings. Now, however, doth it hold fast him whom thou seekest, me, Zarathustra.

It is I, the ungodly Zarathustra, who saith: ‘Who is ungodlier than I, that I may enjoy his teaching?’”—

Thus spake Zarathustra, and penetrated with his glances the thoughts and arrear-thoughts of the old pope. At last the latter began:

“He who most loved and possessed him hath now also lost him most—:

—Lo, I myself am surely the most godless of us at present? But who could rejoice at that!”—

—“Thou servedst him to the last?” asked Zarathustra thoughtfully, after a deep silence, “thou knowest HOW he died? Is it true what they say, that sympathy choked him;

—That he saw how MAN hung on the cross, and could not endure it;—that his love to man became his hell, and at last his death?”—

The old pope however did not answer, but looked aside timidly, with a painful and gloomy expression.

“Let him go,” said Zarathustra, after prolonged meditation, still looking the old man straight in the eye.

“Let him go, he is gone. And though it honoureth thee that thou speakest only in praise of this dead one, yet thou knowest as well as I WHO he was, and that he went curious ways.”

“To speak before three eyes,” said the old pope cheerfully (he was blind of one eye), “in divine matters I am more enlightened than Zarathustra himself—and may well be so.

My love served him long years, my will followed all his will. A good servant, however, knoweth everything, and many a thing even which a master hideth from himself.

He was a hidden God, full of secrecy. Verily, he did not come by his son otherwise than by secret ways. At the door of his faith standeth adultery.

Whoever extolleth him as a God of love, doth not think highly enough of love itself. Did not that God want also to be judge? But the loving one loveth irrespective of reward and requital.

When he was young, that God out of the Orient, then was he harsh and revengeful, and built himself a hell for the delight of his favourites.

At last, however, he became old and soft and mellow and pitiful, more like a grandfather than a father, but most like a tottering old grandmother.

There did he sit shrivelled in his chimney-corner, fretting on account of his weak legs, world-weary, will-weary, and one day he suffocated of his all-too-great pity."—

"Thou old pope," said here Zarathustra interposing, "hast thou seen THAT with thine eyes? It could well have happened in that way: in that way, AND also otherwise. When Gods die they always die many kinds of death.

Well! At all events, one way or other—he is gone! He was counter to the taste of mine ears and eyes; worse than that I should not like to say against him.

I love everything that looketh bright and speaketh honestly. But he—thou knowest it, forsooth, thou old priest, there was something of thy type in him, the priest-type—he was equivocal.

He was also indistinct. How he raged at us, this wrath-snorter, because we understood him badly! But why did he not speak more clearly?

And if the fault lay in our ears, why did he give us ears that heard him badly? If there was dirt in our ears, well! who put it in them?

Too much miscarried with him, this potter who had not learned thoroughly! That he took revenge on his pots and creations, however, because they turned out badly—that was a sin against GOOD TASTE.

There is also good taste in piety: THIS at last said: 'Away with SUCH a God! Better to have no God, better to set up destiny on one's own account, better to be a fool, better to be God oneself!'"

—"What do I hear!" said then the old pope, with intent ears; "O Zarathustra, thou art more pious than thou believest, with such an unbelief! Some God in thee hath converted thee to thine ungodliness.

Is it not thy piety itself which no longer letteth thee believe in a God? And thine over-great honesty will yet lead thee even beyond good and evil!

Behold, what hath been reserved for thee? Thou hast eyes and hands and mouth, which have been predestined for blessing from eternity. One doth not bless with the hand alone.

Nigh unto thee, though thou professest to be the ungodliest one, I feel a hale and holy odour of long benedictions: I feel glad and grieved thereby.

Let me be thy guest, O Zarathustra, for a single night! Nowhere on earth shall I now feel better than with thee!"—

"Amen! So shall it be!" said Zarathustra, with great astonishment; "up thither leadeth the way, there lieth the cave of Zarathustra.

Gladly, forsooth, would I conduct thee thither myself, thou venerable one; for I love all pious men. But now a cry of distress calleth me hastily away from thee.

In my domain shall no one come to grief; my cave is a good haven. And best of all would I like to put every sorrowful one again on firm land and firm legs.

Who, however, could take THY melancholy off thy shoulders? For that I am too weak. Long, verily, should we have to wait until some one re-awoke thy God for thee.

For that old God liveth no more: he is indeed dead."—

Thus spake Zarathustra.

[…]

LXXIII. THE HIGHER MAN.

1.

When I came unto men for the first time, then did I commit the anchorite folly, the great folly: I appeared on the market-place.

And when I spake unto all, I spake unto none. In the evening, however, rope-dancers were my companions, and corpses; and I myself almost a corpse.

With the new morning, however, there came unto me a new truth: then did I learn to say: "Of what account to me are market-place and populace and populace-noise and long populace-ears!"

Ye higher men, learn THIS from me: On the market-place no one believeth in higher men. But if ye will speak there, very well! The populace, however, blinketh: "We are all equal."

"Ye higher men,"—so blinketh the populace—"there are no higher men, we are all equal; man is man, before God—we are all equal!"

Before God!—Now, however, this God hath died. Before the populace, however, we will not be equal. Ye higher men, away from the market-place!

2.

Before God!—Now however this God hath died! Ye higher men, this God was your greatest danger.

Only since he lay in the grave have ye again arisen. Now only cometh the great noontide, now only doth the higher man become—master!

Have ye understood this word, O my brethren? Ye are frightened: do your hearts turn giddy? Doth the abyss here yawn for you? Doth the hell-hound here yelp at you?

Well! Take heart! ye higher men! Now only travaileth the mountain of the human future. God hath died: now do WE desire—the Superman to live.

3.

The most careful ask to-day: “How is man to be maintained?” Zarathustra however asketh, as the first and only one: “How is man to be SURPASSED?”

The Superman, I have at heart; THAT is the first and only thing to me—and NOT man: not the neighbour, not the poorest, not the sorriest, not the best.—

O my brethren, what I can love in man is that he is an over-going and a down-going. And also in you there is much that maketh me love and hope.

In that ye have despised, ye higher men, that maketh me hope. For the great despisers are the great reverers.

In that ye have despaired, there is much to honour. For ye have not learned to submit yourselves, ye have not learned petty policy.

For to-day have the petty people become master: they all preach submission and humility and policy and diligence and consideration and the long et cetera of petty virtues.

Whatever is of the effeminate type, whatever originateth from the servile type, and especially the populace-mishmash:—THAT wisheth now to be master of all human destiny—O disgust! Disgust! Disgust!

THAT asketh and asketh and never tireth: “How is man to maintain himself best, longest, most pleasantly?” Thereby—are they the masters of to-day.

These masters of to-day—surpass them, O my brethren—these petty people: THEY are the Superman’s greatest danger!

Surpass, ye higher men, the petty virtues, the petty policy, the sand-grain considerateness, the ant-hill trumpery, the pitiable comfortableness, the “happiness of the greatest number”—!

And rather despair than submit yourselves. And verily, I love you, because ye know not to-day how to live, ye higher men! For thus do YE live—best!

4.

Have ye courage, O my brethren? Are ye stout-hearted? NOT the courage before witnesses, but anchorite and eagle courage, which not even a God any longer beholdeth?

Cold souls, mules, the blind and the drunken, I do not call stout-hearted. He hath heart who knoweth fear, but VANQUISHETH it; who seeth the abyss, but with PRIDE.

He who seeth the abyss, but with eagle's eyes,—he who with eagle's talons GRASPETH the abyss: he hath courage.—

5.

"Man is evil"—so said to me for consolation, all the wisest ones. Ah, if only it be still true to-day! For the evil is man's best force.

"Man must become better and eviler"—so do *I* teach. The evilest is necessary for the Superman's best.

It may have been well for the preacher of the petty people to suffer and be burdened by men's sin. I, however, rejoice in great sin as my great CONSOLATION.—

Such things, however, are not said for long ears. Every word, also, is not suited for every mouth. These are fine far-away things: at them sheep's claws shall not grasp!

6.

Ye higher men, think ye that I am here to put right what ye have put wrong?

Or that I wished henceforth to make snugger couches for you sufferers? Or show you restless, miswandering, misclimbing ones, new and easier footpaths?

Nay! Nay! Three times Nay! Always more, always better ones of your type shall succumb,—for ye shall always have it worse and harder. Thus only—

—Thus only groweth man aloft to the height where the lightning striketh and shattereth him: high enough for the lightning!

Towards the few, the long, the remote go forth my soul and my seeking: of what account to me are your many little, short miseries!

Ye do not yet suffer enough for me! For ye suffer from yourselves, ye have not yet suffered FROM MAN. Ye would lie if ye spake otherwise! None of you suffereth from what *I* have suffered.—

7.

It is not enough for me that the lightning no longer doeth harm. I do not wish to conduct it away: it shall learn—to work for ME.—

My wisdom hath accumulated long like a cloud, it becometh stiller and darker. So doeth all wisdom which shall one day bear LIGHTNINGS.—

Unto these men of to-day will I not be LIGHT, nor be called light. THEM—will I blind: lightning of my wisdom! put out their eyes!

8.

Do not will anything beyond your power: there is a bad falseness in those who will beyond their power.

Especially when they will great things! For they awaken distrust in great things, these subtle false-coiners and stage-players:—

—Until at last they are false towards themselves, squint-eyed, whited cankers, glossed over with strong words, parade virtues and brilliant false deeds.

Take good care there, ye higher men! For nothing is more precious to me, and rarer, than honesty.

Is this to-day not that of the populace? The populace however knoweth not what is great and what is small, what is straight and what is honest: it is innocently crooked, it ever lieth.

9.

Have a good distrust to-day ye, higher men, ye enheartened ones! Ye open-hearted ones! And keep your reasons secret! For this to-day is that of the populace.

What the populace once learned to believe without reasons, who could— refute it to them by means of reasons?

And on the market-place one convinceth with gestures. But reasons make the populace distrustful.

And when truth hath once triumphed there, then ask yourselves with good distrust: “What strong error hath fought for it?”

Be on your guard also against the learned! They hate you, because they are unproductive! They have cold, withered eyes before which every bird is unplumed.

Such persons vaunt about not lying: but inability to lie is still far from being love to truth. Be on your guard!

Freedom from fever is still far from being knowledge! Refrigerated spirits I do not believe in. He who cannot lie, doth not know what truth is.

10.

If ye would go up high, then use your own legs! Do not get yourselves CARRIED aloft; do not seat yourselves on other people’s backs and heads!

Thou hast mounted, however, on horseback? Thou now ridest briskly up to thy goal? Well, my friend! But thy lame foot is also with thee on horseback!

When thou reachest thy goal, when thou alightest from thy horse: precisely on thy HEIGHT, thou higher man,—then wilt thou stumble!

[End of Excerpt]