

# NEO-CHRISTIANITY

A paradigm shift for racialists through  
a presentation of Tom Holland's *Dominion*



César Tort (editor)

Cover:

An unforgettable, final scene  
in Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus*:  
the Appian Way, a Roman road used  
as a route for military supplies for  
its conquest of southern Italy and  
for improvements in communication.

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The following books  
have been written, edited,  
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*Hellstorm: The Death of Nazi  
Germany (by Tom Goodrich)*

*The Fair Race's Darkest Hour*

*Memories and Reflections  
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(by Savitri Devi)*

*Daybreak*

*On Exterminationism*

*Christianity's Criminal History  
(by Karlheinz Deschner)*

*On Beth's Cute Tits*

*Day of Wrath*

*Letter to mom Medusa*

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***¿Me Ayudarás?***

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(\*) This text is annotated by the Editor.



## Preface

This presentation of Thomas Holland's book *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* can only be contextualised as another element of a collection of my treasured books (see page 3) that provide a new worldview that we could summarise, in a nutshell, as my spiritual odyssey from Jesus to Hitler.

All my life, until Christmas 2018 when I was already sixty, I believed that Jesus of Nazareth existed. Throughout my early years I believed not only in his historicity but in his miracles. It was only in my twenties that I began to frantically read the liberal Christians who wrote about New Testament criticism. But even non-Christian scholars assumed that a human Jesus existed.

Dr Richard Carrier, author of *On the Historicity of Jesus: Why We Might Have Reason for Doubt*, is one of the leading exponents of the Christ myth theory or mythicism. He has even responded to what I used to consider the strongest argument for the existence of the historical Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Carrier's response struck me like a thunderbolt and I ceased to believe in Jesus' historicity.

Five years later, in mid-June 2023 I discovered the biblical scholar Richard Miller, author of *Resurrection and Reception in Early Christianity*. Like me, Miller was raised in a very Christian family. He has three master's degrees and a doctorate in New Testament studies, and his conclusions are similar to Carrier's. Since reading the latter's book, I mentioned on my website *The West's Darkest*

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<sup>1</sup> There are seven authentic epistles of Paul. In one of the oldest Paul speaks of the 'brother of the Lord.' Based on what Paul says in Galatians 1:19 historicists believe that this is the strongest argument for the historicity of Jesus. Before reading Carrier I was unaware that mythicists had pretty compelling answers to this argument. See e.g., 'Ehrman and James the Brother of the Lord' published on Richard Carrier's website on November 6, 2016.

*Hour* that I am impressed by what Carrier (and now Miller) say about Romulus: the Roman god par excellence. Some 1st-century writers (presumably Jews) took as their model for the gospels the legends of the resurrection of Romulus, the post-mortem appearances of Romulus and his ascension to heaven. When Miller made this discovery while reading a Loeb Classical Library bilingual book, he wept and lost his Christian faith as he confesses in a video that can be seen on YouTube: ‘Bible Scholar Dr Richard C. Miller Leaves Christianity.’ But what neither Carrier nor Miller wonder is why some 1st-century Jewish writers created the Gospel myth in the first place.

The opening article in this anthology, taken from a book by David Skrbina, offers a plausible answer: they did it to subvert the gentile world. As I said in *Daybreak*, right after the Romans destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem Mark used Rome’s foundation myth of Romulus to invert values. (In Mark’s gospel, Romulus’ material kingdom favouring the mighty has been transformed into a spiritual kingdom favouring the humble: an intentional transvaluation of the Roman Empire’s ceremony.) That’s why, once in charge, the Christians tried to erase any trace of the original story, the Romulus festivals, when they destroyed most of the Latin books from the 4th to the 6th century.

Most of the content of this book quotes Tom Holland’s *Dominion*. Unlike David Skrbina, Holland is unaware of the Jewish Question. However, referring to Hitler and Stalin’s willing executioners, Holland wrote: ‘The measure of how Christian we as a society remain is that mass murder precipitated by racism tends to be seen as vastly more abhorrent than mass murder precipitated by an ambition to usher in a classless paradise.’

This is fundamental to understanding our times, and explains why the tens of millions that the communists genocided in the last century do not raise much concern among Westerners, nor do they make films or documentaries to awaken the masses, or even university students, about this Holocaust perpetrated by Bolsheviks. By detecting this astronomical double standard when judging Hitler, we begin the historical odyssey: a detective work of two millennia in a quest to find the mental virus that originated not only the revolutionary message of the early Church, medieval and modern out-group altruism, but even the French and the Russian revolutions and the Woke monster of our times.

This book is addressed to whites who want to defend their lineage but for one reason or another are unable to revalue their Semitic values for Aryan values. The paradigm shift proposed here is simple: Christian morality *is* the primary cause of Aryan decline; *not*, as most white nationalists believe, Jewish subversion. White nationalists will never solve the Jewish problem because, unlike Himmler, they are still programmed *by* Judeo-Christian morality, and at least today's generation of racialsists wants to remain programmed by such standards.

It is paradoxical, but as long as they believe that the JQ is the primary cause of their decline they will never settle accounts with Jewry. Settling accounts involves transvaluing our Christian values for pre-Christian values because it is impossible to solve the Jewish problem using a framework of values that is itself utterly Judaic. Transvaluation means repudiating all of Western history from Constantine onwards, as well as having the spirit of Hitler as the new avatar to follow (instead of Jesus).

The emphasis in both my excerpts from David Skrbina's book and Tom Holland's book have been added by me (boldface).

*César Tort (Editor)*



The New Testament was authored by rabbis

(excerpts from *The Jesus Hoax*)<sup>2</sup>

by David Skrbina



## Chapter 1: setting the stage

There are about 2.1 billion Christians on Earth today, roughly 1/3 of the planet, making Christianity the #1 religion globally. The United States is strongly Christian; about 77% of Americans call themselves Christians.

But some historians and researchers have made a startling claim: that Jesus, the Son of God, never existed. They say that Jesus Christ was a pure myth. Is that even possible? Surely not, we reply. This most-influential founder of the most-influential religion of Christianity surely had to exist. And he surely had to be the miracle-working Son of God that is proclaimed in the Bible. How could it be otherwise? we ask. How could a venerable, two thousand-year-old religion, with billions of followers throughout history, be based on someone who never existed? Impossible! Or so we say.

If that were the case, if Jesus never existed, imagine the consequences: an entire religion, and the active beliefs of billions of people, all in vain. All of Christianity based on a myth, a fable, even—as I will argue—a lie. Why, that would be catastrophic...

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<sup>2</sup> **Editor's note:** David Skrbina, *The Jesus Hoax* (Detroit: Creative Fire Press, 2019).

Note that it's very important to distinguish between the two conceptions of Jesus. If someone asks, "Did Jesus exist?" we need to know if they mean (a) the divine, miracle-working, resurrected Son of God (sometimes called the *biblical* Jesus), or (b) the ordinary man and Jewish preacher who died a mortal death (sometimes called the historical Jesus). Christianity requires a biblical Jesus, but the skeptics argue either for simply an historical Jesus—which would mean the end of Christianity—or worse, no Jesus at all.

I will, however, accept the historical Jesus...

### *Another Jesus skeptic?*

So, why this book? Why do we need yet another Jesus skeptic?

To answer this question, let me give a brief overview of some of the prominent skeptics and their views. I will argue that their ideas, though on the right track, are woefully short of the truth. They lack the courage or the will to look hard at the evidence, and to envision a more likely conclusion: that **Jesus was a deliberately constructed myth, by a specific group of people, with a specific end in mind. None of the Christ mythicists or atheist writers have, to my knowledge, articulated the view that I defend here.**

But first a quick recap of the background and context for the idea of a mythological Jesus. The earliest modern critic was German scholar Hermann Reimarus, who published a multi-part work, *Fragments*, in the late 1770s.<sup>3</sup> Strikingly, his view is one of the closest to my own thesis of any skeptic. For Reimarus, Jesus was the militant leader of a group of Jewish rebels who were fighting against oppressive Roman rule. Eventually he got himself crucified. His followers then constructed a miraculous religion-story around Jesus, in order to carry on his cause. They lied about his miracles, and they stole his body from the grave so that they could claim a bodily resurrection. This is quite close to what I will call the 'Antagonism Thesis'—that a group of Jews constructed a false Jesus story, based on a real man, in order to undermine Roman rule. But

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<sup>3</sup> *Editor's note:* Actually, only after Reimarus' death, Gotthold Lessing published parts of Reimarus' work as *Fragments by an Anonymous Writer* in 1774–1778, giving rise to what is known as the beginning of critical research of the historical Jesus.



there is much more to the story, far beyond that which Reimarus himself was able to articulate.

**In the 1820s and 30s, Ferdinand Baur published a number of works that emphasized the conflict between the early Jewish-Christians—significantly, *all* the early Christians were Jews—and the somewhat later Gentile-Christians. This again is a key part of the story, but we need to know the details; we need to know why the conflict arose, and what were its ends.**

In 1835, David Strauss published the two-volume work *Das Leben Jesu*—"The Life of Jesus." He was the first to argue, correctly, that none of the gospel writers knew Jesus personally. He disavowed all claims of miracles, and argued that the Gospel of John was, in essence, an outright lie with no basis in reality.

German philosopher Bruno Bauer wrote a number of important books, including *Criticism of the Gospel History* (1841), *The Jewish Question* (1843), *Criticism of the Gospels* (1851), *Criticism of the Pauline Epistles* (1852), and *Christ and the Caesars* (1877). Bauer held that there was no historical Jesus and that the entire New Testament was a literary construction, utterly devoid of historical content. Shortly thereafter, James Frazer published *The Golden Bough* (1890), arguing for a connection between all religion—Christianity included—and ancient mythological concepts.

It was about at this time that another famous Christian skeptic emerged: Friedrich Nietzsche. In his books *Daybreak* (1881), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and *The Antichrist* (1888) he provides a potent critique of Christianity and Christian morality. Nietzsche always accepted the historical Jesus, and even had good things to say about him.<sup>4</sup> But he was devastating in his attack on

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<sup>4</sup> *Editor's note:* In one of his writings not intended for publication, Nietzsche dared to say things he dared not say in his books. I reproduce below an explosive fragment for the 19th-century mentality from the spring of 1888, which was not published in German until 1970:

Jesus is the *counterpart of a genius*: he is an *idiot*. You feel his inability to understand reality: he moves in circles around five or six terms, which he formerly heard and gradually understood, i.e., has understood them wrongly—he has them in his experience, his world, his truth—the rest is alien to him. He speaks words used by anyone—but he does not understand them like everyone; he only sees his five, six floating concepts. That the real mannish

Paul and the later writers of the New Testament. He viewed Christian morality as a lowly, life-denying form of slave morality, attributed not to Jesus but to the actions of Paul and the other Jewish followers. Along with Reimarus, Nietzsche provides the most inspiration for my own analysis.

Into the 20th century, we find such books as *The Christ Myth* (1909) and *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus* (1926), both by Arthur Drews, and *The Enigma of Jesus* (1923) by Paul-Louis Chouhoud. All these continued to attack the literal truth claimed of the Bible.

More recently, we have critics such as the historian George Wells and his book *Did Jesus Exist?* (1975). Here he assembles an impressive amount of evidence against an historical Jesus. Bart Ehrman has called Wells “the best-known mythicist of modern times,” though in later years Wells softened his stance somewhat; he accepted that there may have been an historical Jesus, although we know almost nothing about him. Wells died in 2017 at the age of 90. Similar arguments were offered by philosopher Michael Martin in his 1991 book, *The Case against Christianity*. Though a wide-ranging critique, he dedicated one chapter to the idea that Jesus never existed. Martin died in 2015.

Among living critics, we have such men as Thomas Thompson, who wrote *The Messiah Myth* (2005); he is agnostic about

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instincts—not just the sex, but also those of struggle, pride, heroism—never wake up at him; that he remained as backward and childish as the age of puberty, that belongs to a certain type of epileptic neuroses.

Jesus is unheroic in his deepest instincts: he never fights. He who looks something like a hero in him, as Renan, has vulgarized the type into the unrecognizable.

Take heed of his inability to comprehend something spiritual: the word for spirit is in his mouth misunderstanding! Not the faintest whiff of science, taste, mental discipline, logic has fanned this idiotic saint: as little as it has touched his life. — Nature? Laws of Nature?— No one has revealed to him that Nature exists. He knows only moral effects: a sign of the lowest and most absurd culture. This must be noted: Jesus is an *idiot* surrounded by a very clever people—only that his disciples were not that smart. Paul was absolutely not an idiot! From it depends on the history of Christianity.

an historical Jesus, but argues against historical truth in the Bible. By contrast, Earl Doherty (*The Jesus Puzzle*, 1999), Tom Harpur (*The Pagan Christ*, 2004), and Thomas Brodie (*Beyond the Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 2012) all deny that any such Jesus of Nazareth ever existed. Richard Carrier, in his book *On the Historicity of Jesus* (2014), finds it highly unlikely that any historical Jesus lived. Perhaps the most vociferous and prolific Jesus skeptic today is Robert Price, a man with two doctorates in theology and a deep knowledge of the Bible. Price's central points can be summarized as follows:

1) The miracle stories have no independent verification from unbiased contemporaries.

2) The characteristics of Jesus are all drawn from much older mythologies and other pagan sources.

3) The earliest documents, the letters of Paul, point to an esoteric, abstract, ethereal Jesus—a “mythic hero archetype”—not an actual man who died on a cross.

4) The later documents, the Gospels, turned the Jesus-concept into an actual man, a literal Son of God, who died and was risen...

**With the exception of Nietzsche, all of the above individuals exhibit a glaring weakness: they are loathe to criticize anyone. No one comes in for condemnation, no one is guilty, no one is to blame for anything.** For the earliest writers, I think this is due primarily to an insecurity about their ideas and a general lack of clarity about what likely occurred. For the more recent individuals, **it's probably attributable to an in-bred political correctness, to a weakness of moral backbone,** or to sheer self-interest. In recent years, academics in particular are highly reticent to affix blame on individuals, even those long-dead. This is somehow seen as a violation of academic neutrality or professional integrity. But when the facts line up against someone or some group, then we must be honest with ourselves. There are truly guilty parties all throughout history, and when we come upon them, they must be called out...

**For now I simply note that none of our brave critics, our Jesus mythicists, seem willing to pinpoint anyone: not Paul, not his Jewish colleagues, not the early Christian fathers—no one. A colossal story has been laid out about the Son of God come to Earth, performing miracles, and being risen from the dead, and yet—no one lied? Really? Can we believe that? Was it all just a big misunderstanding? Honest errors? No thinking person could accept this. Someone, somewhere in the past, constructed a gigantic lie**

and then passed it around the ancient world as a cosmic truth. The guilty parties need to be exposed. Only then can we truly understand this ancient religion, and begin to move forward.

## Chapter 2: just the facts

We are fairly confident that a people called “Israel” existed, thanks to the discovery of the Merneptah Stele—an engraved stone created around 1200 BC. It is the earliest known reference. The stele includes this line: “Israel is laid waste and his seed is not.” This sentence has some interesting implications that I will discuss later on.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, which date to the first century BC, contain fragments from every book of the Hebrew Old Testament (OT), and thus are our earliest proof that the complete document existed by that time. Whether it appeared any earlier is a matter of speculation. If we are to accept the tradition, then, the OT was written over a period of some 1200 years...

An overall picture thus comes into view: There was a Jewish people, called “Israel,” in the region of Palestine from at least the 1200s BC who engaged in a number of conflicts with the surrounding peoples, including the Egyptians. They recorded their own history in the books of the OT, but with substantial amounts of embellishment and speculation, such that many claims are unsubstantiated by modern research. And from the texts themselves, we know that this people viewed themselves as specifically chosen or blessed by their god, Yahweh or Jehovah, and that they saw all others as pagan non-believers, to be treated with contempt.

### *Enter the Roman Empire*

The Roman procurator Pontius Pilate, who governed Palestine from 26 to 36 AD, was known for his aggressive treatment of the Jews. But things grew even worse for them after his removal from power and the ascension of Emperor Caligula in Rome. Hayim Ben-Sasson writes, “The reign of Caligula (37-41 AD) witnessed the first open break between the Jews and the Empire... Relations deteriorated seriously during this time.”

Years later, Emperor Claudius issued his third edict, *Letter to the Alexandrians*, in which he accused those Jews of “fomenting a

general plague which infests the whole world.” This is a striking passage; it suggests that Jews all over the Middle East had succeeded in stirring up dangerous agitation toward the empire. It also marks the first occurrence in history of a “biological” epithet used against them. By the year 49, Claudius had to undertake yet another expulsion of Jews from Rome.

All this set the stage for the first major Jewish revolt, in the year 66. Also called the First Jewish-Roman War (there were three), this event was a major turning point in history. It eventually drew in some 75,000 Roman troops, who battled against perhaps 50,000 Jewish militants and thousands of other partisans. The war lasted for four years, ending in Roman victory and the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in the year 70. It remains in ruins to this day; only the western wall (“Wailing Wall”) still exists.

There would be two more Jewish wars: in 115-117 (the Kitos War), and in 132-135 (the Bar Kokhba Revolt). Thousands died in each, but both ended in Roman victory.

### *“We are among Jews”*

Returning specifically to Christianity, I must note a central fact of the entire religion: *The Bible is an entirely Jewish document.* Front to back, cover to cover, A to Z, Old Testament and New—the Bible is an entirely Jewish document. The morality, the theology, the social attitudes, the worldview... all thoroughly Jewish. The Old Testament obviously so; it was written by Jews, about Jews, and for Jews. The same holds with the New Testament, although with a slight twist: it was written by Jews, about Jews, *but for non-Jews.* This twist is crucial to the whole Jesus story.

So let’s look specifically at the New Testament. Regarding this most important document, Nietzsche put it well, I think: “The first thing to be remembered, if we do not wish to lose the scent here, is that we are among Jews.” That is, all the characters are Jews, and all the writers—as far as we can determine—were Jews.

### *Paul and the Gospels*

Born as Saul in Tarsus (modern-day Turkey) around the year 6 AD, Paul was a Pharisee, an elite, orthodox Jew, “a Hebrew born of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5). He also may have been a Zealot, advocating violent resistance to Rome. Speaking in Acts (22:3), Paul says “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia.” He continues: “I was a zealot for God...” (CJB, DLNT) or “I was zealous for God...”—

the translations vary. Elsewhere he says, “I was more of a zealot for the traditions handed down by my forefathers than most Jews my age...” (Gal 1:14). **There is a subtle difference between him saying “I was a zealot...” and “I was a Zealot...”**; the text is not clear, and interpretations differ. But it seems clear that he was an ardent Jewish nationalist opposed to Roman rule, as was the case with most elite Jews of the time. He changed his name from the Jewish ‘Saul’ to the Gentile ‘Paul’ (Acts 13:9) and began his work...

If Paul was dead by the year 70, then he just missed the destruction of the Temple that dealt a shattering blow to the Jewish community. But something else happened around that time, something equally significant: the appearance of the first Gospel, Mark. Why didn’t Paul cite the Gospels? The conclusion is obvious: *They did not yet exist*. And indeed, this is what modern scholarship confirms...

The other major problem with the Gospels is authorship. Formally they are anonymous. Mark is “the Gospel according to Mark.” It’s written in third-person grammar, like a textbook, rather than as the personal account of a specific man. The same is true of Matthew. Luke is different; it’s a first-person essay directed to a generic person, “Theophilus,” which simply means “beloved of God.” The fourth Gospel, John, returns to the third-person style of Mark and Matthew.

In any case, it’s almost certain that all the Gospel writers, whoever they were, were Jews. All four contain numerous references to the OT, something that would only be expected of elite and educated Jews. Matthew has the most references—something like 43 direct citations. Mark and Luke have about 20 each, John around 15. But if we include indirect references, parallel wording, and other allusions, the numbers double or triple.

**Matthew is clearly and heavily Jewish, the “most Jewish” of the Gospels. No scholars dispute this. Mark has been challenged by some writers, calling him, if not a Gentile, then “a heavily Hellenized” Jew—but still a Jew nonetheless. The confusion seems to arise because he was writing to and for Gentiles; this is an important fact, as I will explain. But it doesn’t change the Jewish authorship.**

Luke, though, is claimed by some to be a Gentile work. But this doesn’t hold up to critical analysis. First, Paul himself claims that the word of God was given to the Jews (Rom 3:2) and therefore the Gospel, as the word of God, must have been written

by a Jew. Second, the claim that ‘Luke’ is a Gentile name is irrelevant; other Jews, notably Paul, changed their names upon conversion to the cause. Third, Luke is never cited as a Gentile, and his alleged companion, Paul, is never condemned for fraternizing with such a Gentile. Luke furthermore had detailed knowledge of Jewish religious customs, as we see in (1:8-20); Gentiles would not know this. Finally, he claims intimate knowledge of the Virgin Mary, including what is “in her heart” (2:19)—something that a non-Jew would be unlikely to know.

But what about the final Gospel, **John**? This appears to be the most anti-Jewish—some would say, anti-Semitic—of the four. This could not possibly have been written by a Jew, true? Not quite. As James Dunn says, “John, in his own perspective at least, is still fighting a factional battle within Judaism rather than launching his arrows from without, still a Jew who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, Son of God, rather than an anti-semite”...

**Even if the Gospels underwent later modification by Gentiles, as Price and others suggest, this does not change their essentially Jewish nature.**

The remainder of the NT also seems very likely to have had Jewish authors. The lengthy Hebrews—which is claimed by some to have been written by Paul—is addressed to Jews and contains at least 36 direct references to the OT. James is addressed to “the twelve tribes in the Dispersion,” and so is 1 Peter. It’s clear that Gentiles would not be lecturing to Jews about God. The other short letters are ambiguous but contain nothing to indicate Gentile authorship.

At some point, of course, Gentiles did join the church and start writing about it. The earliest Church Fathers were probably Gentiles, including Clement of Rome (died ca. 100) and Ignatius of Antioch (d. 110). The same holds for the second generation of Fathers, which would include Quadratus (d. 129), Aristides of Athens (d. 135), Polycarp (d. 155), and Papias (d. 155). Certainly by the time of figures like Marcion, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen—in other words, mid-second century to mid-third century—we are dealing strictly with Gentiles...

To summarize this section: Paul now appears as a religious fanatic and ardent Jewish nationalist, willing to resort to violence and even kill non-Jews in order to drive out the Romans. (Later I will also affix to him the label master liar.) Paul knew nothing of the four Gospels, because they did not exist in his lifetime. The Gospel

writers themselves were all Jews, as likely were the anonymous authors of the remainder of the NT. The Gospels as documents were likely written between 70 (Mark) and the mid-90s (John). With this factual background in place, we can now examine precisely why the traditional Jesus story is not true. Then we will be one step closer to my central argument: namely, that since the biblical Jesus story is false, it was evidently constructed by Paul and his fellow Jews in order to sway the gullible Gentile masses to their side and away from Rome.

### **Chapter 3: why the Jesus story is false**

The point bears repeating. During Jesus' entire lifetime, from, say 3 BC to 30 AD, not one person—not a Christian, not a Jew, not a Roman, not a Greek—wrote *anything* about the miracles, what Jesus said, or what his followers did. *No one wrote anything*. It's as if nothing extraordinary happened at all... The Romans were excellent record-keepers; surely any such astonishing letters would have survived. And yet we have not one.

At the same time there lived a famous Jewish philosopher, Philo. He was born around 20 BC, and thus was an adult at the time of the Bethlehem star. He lived well past the crucifixion, dying about the year 50 AD. He would have been the ideal man to record everything about a Jewish miracleworker and savior. He wrote about 40 individual essays, which now fill seven volumes. Yet he says not one word about Jesus or the Christian movement.

It gets worse. For the next 20 years after the crucifixion, *we still have no evidence*. From the years 30 to 50 AD, not one thing has survived that documents Jesus or his miracles: not a letter, not a book, not an engraving, nothing. Nothing by Jews, nothing by Christians, nothing by Romans—nothing.

And yet, it's worse still. We know that, from the year 50, we have a few letters by Paul. These letters are finished when Paul dies around the year 70. Now, of course, his letters cannot count as evidence, because it is exactly his accounts of Jesus that we are trying to validate. Apart from Paul's letters, from the years 50 to 70, *we still have no evidence*. Nothing by other Christians, nothing by Jews, nothing by Romans—nothing.

And still it gets worse. The Gospels appeared between 70 and the mid-90s. But they, too, cannot count as evidence because it



is precisely these documents that need confirmation. Apart from the four Gospels, from 70 to the mid-90s, *we still have no evidence*.

In sum: for the entire period of the early Christian era—that is, from say 3 BC to the mid-90s AD—we have no corroborating evidence from anyone who was not party to the new religion. Not a shred of anything exists: documents, letters, stone carvings—nothing at all. It's hard to overstate the importance of this problem... Men such as Petronius, Seneca, Martial, and Quintillian all lived in the immediate aftermath of the crucifixion and would have been ideally situated to write about Jesus' extraordinary life. So too with Philo, the Jewish philosopher, as I noted above. And yet not one of these men wrote a single word about him.

### *The Roman perspective*

Josephus is important because he is the first non-Christian to confirm that a Christian movement existed, at least by the late first century AD. But what about the Romans?

Tacitus was born in the year 58 to an aristocratic family. Between 98 and 105 AD he wrote four books, including the highly important work *Histories*. As it happens, not one of them so much as mentions Jesus or the Christians. But his final work, *Annals*, which dates circa 115 AD, does include two sentences on them. In section 44 of Book 15 we read the following:

...a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace... a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

The passage is likely authentic but yet odd in that we have no other reference to Christians in Rome at the time of Nero. But this is not relevant here. What matters is the stunning fact that it took until the year 115—80 years after the crucifixion, nearly 120 years after the miracle birth—for the first Roman to document the Christians. And even then, he grants them all of two sentences.

A second Roman reference—and the third non-Christian<sup>5</sup>—comes from Pliny. Like Tacitus, Pliny was an educated and highly literate aristocrat. By the year 110, at around age 50, he had assumed the position of imperial governor of a province in the north of present-day Turkey. In a letter to Emperor Trajan, from about the same time as Tacitus' *Annals*, he writes an extended critique of the Christian movement. Over the course of about five paragraphs, Pliny explains his need to repress the Christians, including executing the non-citizens and shipping citizens to Rome for punishment. Christianity is described as a “depraved, excessive superstition,” and Pliny is worried that the “contagion of this superstition” is spreading. But still, he thinks it “possible to check and cure it.”

**Pliny's suggestions aside, what we find here is a fascinating account of a growing but troublesome new religion. The Romans were generally tolerant of other religions, and thus we must conclude that there was something uniquely problematic about this group. It may perhaps have been their Jewish origins, or the fact that they embodied particularly repellent values. We lack the details here to determine the cause of the enmity. But in any case, it seems clear that the early Christians were not simple apostles of love. Something else was going on with this group that the Romans found truly galling and, indeed, a kind of threat to the social or moral order.**

And yet, *something* happened. We know for certain that by the mid-90s or early 100s latest, Christians were becoming noticed and causing trouble for the empire. We are fairly sure that Paul lived and wrote between the mid- 30s and late-60s, and that the Gospels first appeared between 70 and 95.

#### **Chapter 4: one against all**

If the Jews are chosen by God, then everyone else is, of necessity, not chosen. If Jews are first class humans in the eyes of God, everyone else is second-class at best. And indeed, Jews do view themselves as distinct, special, and superior to others. As Exodus states, “We are distinct from all other people that are upon

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<sup>5</sup> **Editor's note:** Unlike what other scholars, like Richard Carrier, maintain, Skrbina was talking about one of the paragraphs in Josephus' book as legit; not as an interpolation.

the face of the earth” (33:16). Similarly, the Hebrew tribe is “a people dwelling alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations” (Numbers 23:9). Moses adds that “you shall rule over many nations” (15:6)... you shall eat the wealth of the nations” (61:5-6). Clearly, when other people began to encounter these ideas and the attitudes that derived from them, one would expect a backlash. And there was. Hence we find a consistent thread of opinions from non-Jewish observers, for centuries, who are repelled by such arrogance...

The earliest direct references come from Aristotle’s star pupil Theophrastus. He had a concern about one of their customs: “the Syrians, of whom the Jews (*Ioudaioi*) constitute a part, also now sacrifice live victims... They were the first to institute sacrifices both of other living beings and of themselves”. The Greeks, he added, would have “recoiled from the entire business.” The victims—animal and human—were not eaten, but burnt as “whole offerings” to their God, and were “quickly destroyed.” The philosopher was clearly repelled by this Jewish tradition.

Egyptian high priest Manetho (ca. 250 BC) tells of a group of “lepers and other polluted persons,” 80,000 in number, who were exiled from Egypt and found residence in Judea... When in power they treated the natives “impiously and savagely,” “setting towns and villages on fire, pillaging the temples and mutilating images of the gods without restraint,” and roasting the animals held sacred by the locals. This is a very different version than we read in the Jewish Bible...

The decline of the Seleucids coincided with Roman ascent. Rome was still technically a republic in the second century BC, but its power and influence were rapidly growing. Jews were attracted to the seat of power, and travelled to Rome in significant numbers. As before, they grew to be hated. By 139 BC, the Roman praetor Hispalus found it necessary to expel them from the city: “The same Hispalus banished the Jews from Rome, who were attempting to hand over their own rites to the Romans, and he cast down their private altars from public places”. In even this short passage, one senses a Roman Jewry who were disproportionately prominent, obtrusive, even ‘pushy.’

Perhaps in part because of this incident, and in light of the Maccabean revolt some 30 years earlier, the Seleucid king Antiochus VII Sidetes was advised in 134 BC to exterminate the

**Jews...** Apollonius Molon wrote the first book to explicitly confront the Hebrew tribe, *Against the Jews*.

The rhetoric is clearly heating up. In 63 BC, as we know, Roman general Pompey took Palestine. In the year 59 BC Cicero gave a speech, now titled *Pro Flacco*. The Jewish religion is “at variance with the glory of our empire, the dignity of our name, the customs of our ancestors.” That the gods stand opposed to this tribe “is shown by the fact that it has been conquered, let out for taxes, made a slave.”

Ten years later Diodorus Siculus wrote his *Historical Library*. Among other things, it again recounts the Exodus: “The refugees had occupied the territory round about Jerusalem, and having organized the nation of Jews had made their hatred of mankind into a tradition” (34, 1). **Here, though, it is Antiochus Epiphanes, not his successor Sidetes, that was urged “to wipe out completely the race of Jews, since they alone of all nations avoided dealings with any other people and looked upon all men as their enemies”.**

The great lyric poet Horace wrote his *Satires* in 35 BC, exploring Epicurean philosophy and the meaning of happiness. At one point, though, he makes a passing comment on the apparently notorious proselytizing ability of the Roman Jews—in particular their tenaciousness in winning over others. Horace is in the midst of attempting to persuade the reader of his point of view: “and if you do not wish to yield, then a great band of poets will come to my aid, and, just like the Jews, we will compel you to concede to our crowd” (I.4.143). Their power must have been legendary, or he would not have made such an allusion.

The last commentator of the pre-Christian era was Lysimachus. Writing circa 20 BC, he offers another variation on the Exodus story. The exiled ones, led by Moses, were instructed to “show goodwill to no man,” to offer “the worst advice” to others, and to overthrow any temples or sanctuaries they might come upon. Arriving in Judea, “they maltreated the population, and plundered and set fire to the local temples.” They then built a town called Hierosolyma (Jerusalem), and referred to themselves as Hierosolymites.

The charge of misanthropy, or hatred of mankind, is significant and merits further discussion, especially in light of the Christian story.

## *Romans of the Christian Era*

Emperor Tiberius expelled them in the year 19 AD. The expulsion did not succeed. Eleven years later, as we recall from chapter two, Sejanus found reason to oppose them again.

**Anti-Jewish actions continued. In 49, Claudius once again had to expel them.** In a fascinating line from Suetonius circa the year 120, we find mention of one ‘Chrestus’ (Latin: *Chresto*) as the leader of the rabble; this would be perhaps the fourth non-Jewish references to Jesus. “Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, [Claudius] expelled them from Rome”. **This is an important observation that, even at that late date, the Romans still identified Christianity with the Jews.**

Despite all this, the beleaguered tribe still earned no sympathy. The great philosopher Seneca commented on them in his work *On Superstition*, circa 60. He was appalled not only by their superstitious religious beliefs, but more pragmatically with their astonishing influence in Rome and around the known world, despite repeated pogroms and banishments. **Seneca adds: “The customs of this accursed race (*sceleratissima gens*) have gained such influence that they are now received throughout all the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors.”** Seneca is clearly indignant at their reach. Then came the historic Jewish revolt in Judea, during the years 66 to 70. **The Romans were surely gratified; to their mind, the Jews received their just deserts.**

In besieging Jerusalem, and consequently the mighty Jewish temple, Titus had the Jews trapped. There was thought of sparing the temple, but Titus opposed this option. For him, “the destruction of this temple was a prime necessity in order to wipe out more completely the religion of the Jews and the Christians.” These two religions, “although hostile to each other, nevertheless sprang from the same sources; the Christians had grown out of the Jews: if the root were destroyed, the stock would easily perish”. The passage closes by noting that 600,000 Jews were killed in the war.

The third and final Jewish uprising occurred just a few years later, in 132. The reasons for this were many, but two stand out: the construction of a Roman city on the ruins of Jerusalem, and Emperor Hadrian’s banning of circumcision: “At this time the Jews began war, because they were forbidden to practice genital mutilation (*mutilare genitalia*)”. Dio describes the conflict in detail. “Jews everywhere were showing signs of hostility to the Romans,

partly by secret and partly overt acts”. They were able to bribe others to join in the uprising: “many outside nations, too, were joining them through eagerness for gain, and the whole earth, one might almost say, was being stirred up over the matter.” For those today who argue that Jews were perennially the cause of wars, this would provide some early evidence. Hadrian sent one of his best generals, Severus, to put down the insurgency. Through a slow war of attrition, “he was able to crush, exhaust, and exterminate them. Very few of them in fact survived.”

Finally we have Celsus, a Greek philosopher who composed a text, *The True Word*, sometime around 178. The piece is striking as an extended and scathing critique of the increasingly prominent Christian sect.

### *Conclusions*

So what can we conclude from this brief overview of some 600 years of the ancient world? To say that the Jews were disliked is an understatement. The critiques come from all around the Mediterranean region, and from a wide variety of cultural perspectives. And they are uniformly negative. I note here that it’s not a case of ‘cherry-picking’ the worst comments and ignoring the good ones. The remarks are all negative; there simply are no positive opinions on the Jews or early Christians. A reasonable conclusion is that there is something about the Jewish culture that inspires disgust and hatred.

In any case, it’s clear that the Jews had few if any friends in the ancient world. Their religion instructed them to despise others (Gentiles), and others in turn despised them. But the originating source was the Jews themselves: their religion, their worldview, their values. They were willing to use and exploit non-Jews for their own ends. They were willing to kill, and to die.

This situation feeds directly into the circumstances of the Roman occupation and Paul’s reaction. The preceding analysis suggests that Paul was interested in nothing other than saving “Israel,” the Jewish people. We have seen a few textual clues indicating that he was willing even to commit murder in order to further his ends. Surely he hated the Romans with a vengeance, and yet he also could see the futility of confronting them directly.

## Chapter 5: Reconstructing the truth

To recap, I am reconstructing the likely sequence of events, based on a total picture and complete analysis of the situation.

Just as Paul's life was ending, war broke out and the great Temple was destroyed. We can only imagine the distress and outrage of the Jewish community. Their hatred of Rome must have reached atmospheric heights. If the Jews had any illusions about peaceful coexistence, those were crushed. Military responses were no longer an option. Perhaps Paul's 'psychological' ploy, the Jesus hoax, would work after all. But it would have to be taken to the next level.

Thus it was that Paul's surviving followers—perhaps Mark, Luke, John, and Matthew—decided to pick up the game. This band of "little ultra-Jews"<sup>6</sup> needed a more detailed story of Jesus' life; Paul's vague allusions to a real man would no longer suffice. Someone—"Mark"—thus decided to quote Jesus extensively and directly. Unlike Paul's letters, this "gospel" (Paul's word) would be intended for mass consumption. It had to be impressive—lots of miracles from their miracle-man. It would end up with 19 Jesus miracles wedged into the smallest of the four Gospels. And there were several other firsts. **Here we read, for the first time ever**, about the 12 apostles, Jesus as a carpenter, and **the concept of hell**. Here too Jesus makes a clever "prophecy" that the Jewish temple would be ruined (13:1-2)—an easy call to make, given that the temple was just actually destroyed! It seems that Mark's anger against his fellow Jews, however, got the better of him; for centuries afterward, Christians would blame the Jews for killing Christ, not realizing that the whole tale was a Jewish construction in the first place. Perhaps there's a kind of justice in that irony after all.

The Gospel of Mark evidently sufficed for some 15 years. It must have been effective at drawing in Gentiles and building a functioning church. But then perhaps things stalled a bit. Maybe the little Jewish band got impatient. Maybe they splintered over tactical issues. Whatever the reason, some time around the year 85, two of the group—"Luke" and "Matthew"—decided that they needed to

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<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* (sec 44). In German *kleine Superlativ Juden*.

write an even more detailed account of Jesus' life. But evidently the two couldn't agree on a single plan, so they worked apart, drawing from Mark's story while weaving in other new ideas they had jointly invented. Each man went off on his own, drafting his own new gospel.

The new documents had much more detail than Mark; in fact, both were nearly twice as long as their predecessor. They had to keep the same basic story line, of course, but each man added his own embellishments. What was new? The virgin birth in Bethlehem, for one, and the whole manger scene. These now appeared, for the first time ever, some 85 years after the alleged event. We scarcely need to ask how much truth is in them. (I note as an aside that Matthew included the bit about the star, whereas that was apparently an unimportant detail to Luke, since he omitted it completely.) Luke included a vignette about Jesus as a 12-year-old (2:41-51), something utterly lacking in the other three Gospels. The Sermon on the Mount appears for the first time, though Matthew has a much longer version than Luke. In the sermon we find a number of famous sayings, all of which were never seen before: "the meek shall inherit the earth" (Mt 5:5), "you are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14), turn the other cheek (Mt 5:39; Lk 6:29), love thy enemies (Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27), "cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24), "judge not" (Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37)—all now recorded, for the first time, some 50 years after they supposedly occurred.

Followers must now virtually abandon their families for the cause. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26). **These are remarkably cult-like dictates, but perhaps appropriate for the Jewish-led Christian movement.**

Then we have passages of outright militancy. In Matthew, Jesus says, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (10:34)—how very un-Christ-like! Luke has Jesus say, "I came to cast fire upon the earth... Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division" (12:49-51). Every man must do his part: "let him who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one" (Lk 22:36). Jesus becomes downright ruthless: "as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me" (Lk 19:27). All this is necessary because



“the devil” rules all the kingdoms of the world (Lk 4:5-6). But not to worry; if we all stick to the plan, and “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world,” then “the end will come” (Mt 24:14). And so, sometime around the year 85, two new Gospels were released into the world.

Once again, these apparently sufficed for a good decade or so. But then one more member of the cabal, “John,” breaks rank and moves in yet a different direction. He feels the need for an intellectual and esoteric Jesus story, and so constructs a gospel using abstract, almost philosophical terms and concepts. It ends up as mid-length essay, between the short Mark and the longer Matt/Luke. Miracles are still there, but they are now downplayed—just eight appear. We can imagine that John understood that his new, more intellectual audience would likely not be taken in by such nonsense...

“Saint” Paul and his Jewish cabal turn out to be blatant liars. In fact, the epic liars of all recorded history.

Recall my explanation above, regarding how Paul and the Gospel writers had two sets of enemies: the Romans and their fellow elite Jews. In fact, they had a third enemy: *the truth*. Paul and crew knew they were lying to the masses, but they didn’t care. The Gentiles were always treated by the Jews with contempt, as I showed in chapter four. They could be manipulated, harassed, assaulted, beaten, even killed, if it served Jewish ends. This was not a problem for them...

In the early 1500s Martin Luther—founder of the Lutheran church—wrote a rather infamous book titled *On the Jews and their Lies*. There he declared that “they have not acquired a perfect mastery of the art of lying; they lie so clumsily and ineptly that anyone who is just a little observant can easily detect it”—a statement that could well be a motto for the present work. I also note the striking irony of a man like Luther who was so opposed to Jewish lies, even as he himself fell for the greatest Jewish lie of all.

In 1798, the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant called the Jews “a nation of deceivers,” and in a later lecture he added that “the Jews are permitted by the Talmud to practice deceit”. In his final book, Arthur Schopenhauer made some extended observations on Judeo-Christianity. He wrote, “We see

from [Tacitus and Justinus] how much the Jews were at all times and by all nations loathed and despised.” This was due in large part, he says, to the fact that the Jewish people were considered *grosse Meister im Lügen*—“great master of lies”. Employing his usual blunt but elegant terminology, Nietzsche saw it in this way:

In Christianity all of Judaism, a several-century-old Jewish preparatory training and technique of the most serious kind, attains its ultimate mastery as the art of lying in a holy manner. The Christian, this ultima ratio of the lie, is the Jew once more—even *three times* a Jew.

Similar comments came from express anti-Semites. Hitler called the Jews “artful liars” and a “race of dialectical liars,” adding that “existence compels the Jew to lie, and to lie systematically”. And Joseph Goebbels, in his personal diary, wrote: “The Jew was also the first to introduce the lie into politics as a weapon... He can therefore be regarded not only as the carrier but even the inventor of the lie among human beings”.

Finally, a remark by Voltaire seems relevant here. The Jews, he said, “are, all of them, born with a raging fanaticism in their hearts... I would not be in the least bit surprised if these people would not someday become deadly to the human race”. If a Jewish lie were to spread throughout the Earth, eventually drawing in more than 2 billion people, becoming the enemy of truth and reason, and causing the deaths of millions of human beings via inquisitions, witch burnings, crusades, and other religious atrocities—well, that could be considered a mortal threat, I think.

**This, then, is my Antagonism Thesis: Paul and his cabal<sup>7</sup> deliberately lied to the masses, with no concern for their true well-being, simply to undermine Roman rule. This little group tempted innocent people with a promise of heaven, and frightened them with the threat of hell. This psychological ploy was part of a long-term plan to weaken and, in a sense, morally corrupt the masses by drawing them away from the potent and successful Greco-Roman worldview and more toward an oriental, Judaic view.**

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<sup>7</sup> I’ve been using cabal throughout the present text. It is, I think, precisely the right word. A cabal is “a small number of persons secretly united to bring about an overturn or usurpation, especially in public affairs.” That’s a perfect description of Paul and his band.

As we know, it took some time but the new Christian religion did spread, eventually permeating the Roman world. In the year 315, the emperor himself, Constantine, converted to Christianity. In 380, Emperor Theodosius declared it the official state religion.

## Chapter 6: taking stock, looking ahead

Let's take stock at this point by briefly recapping the central facts. The oldest existing Bible dates from the year 350; as we move backward in time from there, our confidence in the actual text diminishes significantly—some parts being much more uncertain than others. Expert consensus is that the four Gospels date to the years 70 to 95 AD, and Paul's letters to 50 to 70 AD. Paul, the Gospel authors, Jesus, Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and all twelve apostles were Jews. Many Jews had been in active and passive resistance to Rome from virtually the beginning of the takeover in 63 BC. Between the years zero and 93 AD we have absolutely no independent, corroborating evidence for such things as the Bethlehem star, any of Jesus' 36 miracles, any of the apostles' miracles, or any of the Christian-specific events depicted in the New Testament.

### *Critiquing antagonism*

My thesis addresses the question of motive, something that's utterly lacking in the other skeptics.<sup>8</sup> I have shown how the Jews had a deep hatred for the Gentile masses and the Romans in particular, and thus how individuals would have done anything—including lie, and including placing themselves at mortal risk—to benefit the Jewish people. The mythicists and other skeptics have no good account of a motive... The Antagonism Thesis is by far the most credible analysis. It best accounts for all the known facts, and identifies an actual and fact-based motive for the whole construction. All signs point to a Jesus hoax.

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<sup>8</sup> **Editor's note:** except for Eduardo Velasco, who in his webzine *Evropa Soberana* published 'Roma contra Judea; Judea contra Roma,' translated by us in *The Fair Race*. Apparently, Skrbina was unaware of this work in Spanish.

So, what's the counter reply to the Antagonism Thesis? The basic elements of it have been around for over a century. Obviously it had been considered before and apparently rejected, since none of the recent Jesus skeptics defend it. What would they say in reply, to challenge that thesis? In fact I have raised this question with a number of experts, precisely so that I could gauge the strength of the thesis. Let me mention their comments and then offer my responses.

*"It's not clear that all the Gospel authors, apart from Matthew, were Jews. John certainly was not."*

As I've replied earlier, the Gospel of Mark was written for a Gentile audience and thus takes on the superficial appearance of a Gentile work. There is a strong consensus that Mark himself was Jewish. The extensive OT references in all four Gospels argue strongly for Jewish authorship. There is no real evidence that Luke was a Gentile save his name, but as we know from Paul, it was not unheard of for Jews to change to Gentile names. The scattered anti-Jewish statements in all the Gospels—especially John—more reflect an internal Jewish battle over ideology than an external, Gentile attack. Paul is clearly and obviously Jewish.

*"You are making sweeping generalizations. Not all Jews opposed Rome, and not all NT writers and characters are necessarily Jewish."*

On the first point, of course, as I stated, many Jews acquiesced to Roman rule. Probably a large majority accepted it, even if begrudgingly. But the elite Jews were sure incensed, and there was certainly a substantial minority of Zealots and others violently opposed. My thesis doesn't require that all or even most Jews opposed Rome, only that a small band—Paul and friends—did so, and acted on that basis. Regarding the NT writers, that's addressed above. Regarding the characters in the story—Jesus, Mary, Joseph, et al—we can only go by the words written down, and the text is conclusive: all were Jews.

One knowledgeable colleague listed a number of specific problems for any such hoax theory:

- *Needs a motive.* Discussed above. The motive was revenge against Rome, and an attempt to undermine its support by confusing and corrupting the masses.

- *The depiction of Jesus as Messiah conflicts with Jewish expectations of the time.* Certainly, and that's why the majority of the Pharisees

opposed Paul's gang. Paul didn't concoct his hoax for the Jews; it was strictly for the 'benefit' of the gullible Gentiles<sup>9</sup>...

There is no reason that the militant Jews would have given up; rather, they changed direction. [S.G.W.] Brandon's best defense is that the last Gospel, John, does indeed drop all talk of revolution, as I noted previously. But that is better attributed to John's new, more intellectual audience than to any utter resignation on the part of the cabal. The main point, though, is that the apologists never quite get around to explaining how exactly the Zealot thesis has been "discredited." And they can't. They can point to Jesus saying "love thy neighbor" and "turn the other cheek," but that's about it.

Let me take a moment to respond to a number of questions that may arise at this point—some of which I've covered already, and some not.

*Question: "Okay, as a Christian I've read and absorbed your whole shocking message. What am I supposed to do about all this?"*

*Answer:* First, try to confirm as much of the evidence cited here as possible. *You have been swindled.* Tell them you want your money back. And your time. And your life—everything that you've invested, and lost, in the most famous hoax in history.

*Question: "What about all those pro-Roman, anti-war passages?: 'Render unto Caesar' (Mark 12:17), 'let every person be subject to the governing authorities' (Rom 13:1), 'pay your taxes', 'perish by the sword' (Mt 26:52), 'turn the other cheek' (Mt 5:39)—not to mention, 'love thy neighbor'! Don't these undermine your thesis?"*

*Answer:* This is the "peaceable Jesus" reply. We all know those famous lines, and they get repeated *ad nauseum*. My general reply is (a) the Jewish cabal was compelled to insert such lines for cover; too much explicit talk of rebellion was dangerous. Also (b) these relatively few lines are outnumbered by far more that imply rebellion and war—see my discussion in chapter five. And in any case, "rendering to Caesar" says nothing about not also working for his downfall. And sure, you may perish by the sword, but that's what happens in war. I particularly appreciate "love thy neighbor": Who, after all, was "the neighbor" if not the Jew?

*Question: "The Jews come off looking pretty bad here. Isn't all this terribly anti-Semitic?"*

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<sup>9</sup> Paul famously declared himself to be "Apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13, Gal 1:16).

*Answer:* People are overly sensitive these days, particularly about Jews, probably because we hear so much about them and anti-Semitism in the media... I see no good reason why Jews should continue to merit special sensitivity, especially in light of Israeli crimes in the middle East.

*Question:* “How could so many people be fooled for so long? It doesn’t seem possible.”

*Answer:* Actually there have been several famous examples in history when many people, even many smart people, have been fooled for a very long time. The Donation of Constantine was a fraudulent document in which Emperor Constantine allegedly gave his empire to the Catholic Church in 315 AD. In fact it was forged in the 700s and not exposed until 1440 by Lorenzo Valla.

Witches have been condemned and burned since at least 300 BC, and during the peak period in Europe—from 1450 to 1750—some 500,000 were killed. In all these cases, millions of people were fooled, deceived, or otherwise attached to false beliefs for centuries. It’s no surprise that millions could still be wrong.

### *Media, government, Hollywood*

All the Abrahamic religions worship the Jewish God; Muslims simply changed his name.

Governments everywhere want compliant populations. They want citizens who will respect authority without question, follow the laws, accept its power, and not be too inquisitive. They like people who simply have faith in government, and who more or less blindly trust them...

Colleges and universities are somewhat better, often having panels or speakers who challenge the Christian view. But the Antagonism Thesis is particularly difficult to discuss since it casts blame on Jews, and any negative talk about them risks ostracism or worse, even in our “liberal” and “free speech” universities.

What about our irreverent media and Hollywood filmmakers—those who are so willing to commit sacrilege against any social norm or moral standard? I suspect this has something to do with the extensive role played by Jewish Americans. It’s uncontroversial that Hollywood has been dominated by Jews for decades; a relatively recent article in the *LA Times* cites Jewish heads

of nearly every major Hollywood studio.<sup>10</sup> And it's not just the movie business. All the major media conglomerates have a heavy Jewish presence in top management. If they should decide that Jewish malevolence at the heart of the Christian story "looks bad," then they obviously won't bring it up at all—not in the news, not on TV, not in books...

*"It is also difficult to imagine why Christian writers would invent such a thoroughly Jewish savior in a time and place where there was strong suspicion of Judaism."*

**Actually, not difficult at all: the "Christian" writers were Jews who were trying to build an anti-Roman church based on a Jewish God and a Jewish savior.**

*Whither Christianity?*

**I rest my case.** By all accounts, and despite protests to the contrary, Christianity indeed seems to be a "cleverly devised myth" (2 Pet 1:16)—a lie, a hoax—foisted upon the innocent and gullible masses simply for the benefit of Israel and the Jews.

It's in the Gospel of John that we read one of the bluntest statements of truth, wherein Jesus says, "You [Gentiles] worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews" (4:22). We know what we are doing, say the Jews. **You Gentile Christians don't even know what you're worshipping—which in fact is us** and our God. But that's okay. Just leave everything to us; "salvation is of the Jews."

But it's Paul who's really the star of this show. Paul comes across as a masterly and artful liar—one of the all-time greats in world history, a man who can lie with impunity about the soul, the afterlife, God, everything. This unprincipled scoundrel, who admits to being "all things to all men," would do anything or say anything to win his "kingdom of God" here on Earth. His mournful cries of "I do not lie!" are revealed as nothing other than an inveterate liar caught in the act.

With his fabricated "Jesus" and his fabricated "afterlife," Paul drained all value from this world, the real world. It turned believers into weak and subservient sheep, ones whose lives are oriented around the manufactured sayings of a marginal rabbi and of prayer to Jehovah, the invisible God of the Jews.

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<sup>10</sup> "How Jewish is Hollywood?", by Joel Stein (Dec 19, 2008).

It took a few hundred years, but when enough people fell for the hoax, it helped to bring down the Roman Empire. And when people—lots of people—still believe it after two thousand years, it cannot but degrade society, weighing us down, blocking us from attaining that which we are capable of, that which was only hinted at in the greatness of Athens and Rome. And all for the salvation of the Jews.

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*Editor's Note:* In six posts, we published these excerpts from *The Jesus Hoax* on *The West's Darkest Hour* (October 3-8, 2022).



## Interim report: *Dominion*

*by the Editor*

Although the author is a liberal, *Dominion* demonstrates the main thesis of my website: Christian ethics governs today's secular West (a moral compass that, I would add, directs us to ethnosuicide). The dust cover of Holland's book contains these words: 'Today, the West is utterly saturated by Christian assumptions... Christianity is the principal reason why, today, we assume every human life to be of equal value.' True, but *Dominion*, a journey through Western history, is ultimately flawed. In the last two chapters Holland cherry-picked cultural milestones from 1916 to 1967 skipping how World War II was a vicious conflict perpetrated by Anglo-Americans who abhorred a pagan resurgence in Europe (the Croatian intellectual Tomislav Sunic writes about this in *Homo Americanus*).

Another matter that shows *Dominion* to be a cowardly book on vital matters is that living in London where the most beautiful specimens of Aryan women, called 'English roses,' still exist, Holland failed to mention in a special chapter how the British elites are exterminating this jewel of human evolution by promoting mixed marriages on ubiquitous billboards that I myself have seen in London. Given that the guiding premise of *Dominion* is that Christianity has made us colour-blind since the time of St Paul, who didn't want us to distinguish between 'Greek and Jew' (i.e. Aryan and Jew), to miss a golden opportunity to talk about how the secular version of Christianity destroys the author's own ethnicity is unforgivable. But that is natural: in an anti-white System the book of a true dissident—like Sunic's—wasn't elegantly published by a prestigious publisher as *Dominion* is.

On far less important issues, Holland has apparently not read Richard Carrier (Carrier's *On the Historicity of Jesus* was published

five years before *Dominion*). Like David Skrbina, Holland believes that Jesus existed, though he hastens to add that the only thing that can be known about him is that he was crucified by the Romans (before *Dominion*, Holland wrote a book about the last days of the Roman Republic that became a bestseller). Holland hasn't read either Karlheinz Deschner's ten volumes in German about Christianity's criminal history, and apparently didn't realise, when he was finishing *Dominion*, that his fellow countrywoman Catherine Nixey was publishing a book accusing Christianity of destroying the Greco-Roman world.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, in late 2019 a video was uploaded in YouTube in which Holland argued with another London scholar, A.C. Grayling. Holland came across as not only ignorant in that debate but emotionally sceptical of Grayling's findings—I would add Nixey's and Deschner's—that Judeo-Christians burned a huge number of books in their wars against the classical world.

But all this is trivial compared to the fact that *Dominion* starts from a premise that, in the right hands, could be used not only to save the English roses from future extinction, but also the rest of the Aryan population of the planet.

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<sup>11</sup> Catherine Nixey, *The Darkening Age: The Christian Destruction of the Classical World* (Macmillan Publishers, 2017).

How Christianity became Neo-Christianity  
(excerpts from *Dominion*)<sup>12</sup>



Thomas Holland

**First website entry: *Antiquity***

Something fundamental had indeed changed. ‘Patience in tribulation, offering the other cheek, praying for one’s enemies, loving those who hate us’: such were the Christian virtues as defined by Anselm. All derived from the recorded sayings of Jesus himself. No Christians, then, not even the most callous or unheeding, could ignore them without some measure of reproof from their consciences... God was closer to the weak than to the mighty, to the poor than to the rich. Any beggar, any criminal, might be Christ. ‘So the last will be first, and the first last.’ To the Roman aristocrats who, in the decades before the birth of Jesus, first began to colonise the Esquiline Hill with their marble fittings

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<sup>12</sup> **Editor’s note:** Tom Holland, *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* (Basic Books, 2019). In *The West’s Darkest Hour* I quoted, from October 2022 to March 2023, the excerpts I now publish from that book. As I did with David Skrbina’s book, I add ellipses between the unquoted passages.

and their flowers beds, such a sentiment would have seemed grotesque...

No ancient artist would have thought to honour a Caesar by representing him as Caravaggio represented Peter: tortured, humiliated, stripped almost bare. And yet, in the city of the Caesars, it was a man broken to such a fate who was honoured as the keeper of 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven'. The last had indeed become first...

In the Middle Ages, no civilisation in Eurasia was as congruent with a single dominant set of beliefs as was the Latin West with its own distinctive form of Christianity. Elsewhere, whether in the lands of Islam, or in India, or in China, there were various understandings of the divine, and numerous institutions that served to define them; but in Europe, in the lands that acknowledged the primacy of the pope, there was only the occasional community of Jews to disrupt the otherwise total monopoly of the Roman Church.

Well might the Roman Church have termed itself 'catholic': 'universal'. There was barely a rhythm of life that it did not define. From dawn to dusk, from midsummer to the depths of winter, from the hour of their birth to the very last drawing of their breath, the men and women of medieval Europe absorbed its assumptions into their bones. Even when, in the century before Caravaggio, Catholic Christendom began to fragment, and new forms of Christianity to emerge, the conviction of Europeans that their faith was universal remained deep-rooted. It inspired them in their exploration of continents undreamed of by their forefathers; in their conquest of those that they were able to seize, and reconsecrate as a Promised Land... Time itself has been Christianised.

How was it that a cult inspired by the execution of an obscure criminal in a long-vanished empire came to exercise such a transformative and enduring influence on the world? To attempt an answer to this question, as I do in this book, is not to write a history of Christianity. Rather than provide a panoramic survey of its evolution, I have sought instead to trace the currents of Christian influence that have spread most widely, and been most enduring into the present day. That is why—although I have written extensively about the Eastern and Orthodox Churches elsewhere, and find them themes of immense wonder and fascination—I have chosen not to trace their development beyond antiquity. My

ambition is hubristic enough as it is: to explore how we in the West came to be what we are, and to think the way that we do...

Today, at a time of seismic geopolitical realignment, when our values are proving to be not nearly as universal as some of us had assumed them to be, the need to recognise just how culturally contingent they are is more pressing than ever. To live in a Western country is to live in a society still utterly saturated by Christian concepts and assumptions. This is no less true for Jews or Muslims than it is for Catholics or Protestants. Two thousand years on from the birth of Christ, it does not require a belief that he rose from the dead to be stamped by the formidable—indeed the inescapable—influence of Christianity. Fail to appreciate this, and the risk is always of anachronism.

The West, increasingly empty though the pews may be, remains firmly moored to its Christian past. There are those who will rejoice at this proposition; and there are those who will be appalled by it. Christianity may be the most enduring and influential legacy of the ancient world, and its emergence the single most transformative development in Western history, but it is also the most challenging for a historian to write about.

...although I vaguely continued to believe in God, I found him infinitely less charismatic than the gods of the Greeks: Apollo, Athena, Dionysus. I liked the way that they did not lay down laws, or condemn other deities as demons; I liked their rock-star glamour. As a result, by the time I came to read Edward Gibbon and his great history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, I was more than ready to accept his interpretation of the triumph of Christianity: that it had ushered in an ‘age of superstition and credulity’. My childhood instinct to see the biblical God as the po-faced enemy of liberty and fun was rationalised. The defeat of paganism had ushered in the reign of Nobodaddy, and of all the various crusaders, inquisitors and black-hatted Puritans who had served as his acolytes. Colour and excitement had been drained from the world. ‘Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean,’ wrote the Victorian poet Algernon Charles Swinburne, echoing the apocryphal lament of Julian the Apostate, the last pagan emperor of Rome. ‘The world has grown grey from thy breath.’ Instinctively, I agreed.

Yet over the course of the past two decades, my perspective has changed. When I came to write my first works of history, I

chose as my themes the two periods that had always most stirred and moved me as a child: the Persian invasions of Greece and the last decades of the Roman Republic. The years that I spent writing these twin studies of the classical world, living intimately in the company of Leonidas and of Julius Caesar, of the hoplites who had died at Thermopylae and of the legionaries who had crossed the Rubicon, only confirmed me in my fascination: for Sparta and Rome, even when subjected to the minutest historical enquiry, retained their glamour as apex predators. They continued to stalk my imaginings as they had always done: like a great white shark, like a tiger, like a tyrannosaur. Yet giant carnivores, however wondrous, are by their nature terrifying.

The more years I spent immersed in the study of classical antiquity, so the more alien I increasingly found it. The values of Leonidas, whose people had practised a peculiarly murderous form of eugenics and trained their young to kill uppity *Untermenschen* by night, were nothing that I recognised as my own; nor were those of Caesar, who was reported to have killed a million Gauls, and enslaved a million more. It was not just the extremes of callousness that unsettled me, but the complete lack of any sense that the poor or the weak might have the slightest intrinsic value. **Why did I find this disturbing? Because, in my morals and ethics, I was not a Spartan or a Roman at all. That my belief in God had faded over the course of my teenage years did not mean that I had ceased to be Christian. For a millennium and more, the civilisation into which I had been born was Christendom. Assumptions that I had grown up with—about how a society should properly be organised, and the principles that it should uphold—were not bred of classical antiquity, still less of ‘human nature’, but very distinctively of that civilisation’s Christian past. So profound has been the impact of Christianity on the development of Western civilisation that it has come to be hidden from view. It is the incomplete revolutions which are remembered; the fate of those which triumph is to be taken for granted.**

The ambition of *Dominion* is to trace the course of what one Christian, writing in the third century AD, termed ‘the flood-tide of Christ’: how the belief that the Son of the one God of the Jews had been tortured to death on a cross came to be so enduringly and widely held that today most of us in the West are dulled to just how scandalous it originally was. **This book explores what it was that**

made Christianity so subversive and disruptive; how completely it came to saturate the mindset of Latin Christendom; and why, in a West that is often doubtful of religion's claims, so many of its instincts remain—for good and ill—thoroughly Christian. [pages 9-17]

## Second entry

Only the Jews, with their stiff-necked insistence that there existed just a single god, refused as a matter of principle to join in acknowledging the divinity of Augustus; and so perhaps it was no surprise, in the decades that followed the building to him of temples across Galatia, that the visitor there most subversive of his cult should have been a Jew. The Son of God proclaimed by Paul did not share his sovereignty with other deities. There were no other deities. 'For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live' (Romans 8.6).

Now, by touring cities across the entire span of the Roman world, Paul set himself to bringing them the news of a convulsive upheaval in the affairs of heaven and earth. Once, like a child under the protection of a tutor, the Jews had been graced with the guardianship of a divinely authored law; but now, with the coming of Christ, the need for such guardianship was past. No longer were the Jews alone 'the children of God' (Deuteronomy 14.1). The exclusive character of their covenant was abrogated. The venerable distinctions between them and everyone else—of which male circumcision had always been the pre-eminent symbol—were transcended. Jews and Greeks, Galatians and Scythians: all alike, so long as they opened themselves to belief in Jesus Christ, were henceforward God's holy people. This, so Paul informed his hosts, was the epochal message that Christ had charged him to proclaim to the limits of the world.

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28-9). Only the world turned upside down could ever have sanctioned such an unprecedented, such a revolutionary, announcement. If Paul did not stint, in a province adorned with monuments to Caesar, in hammering home the full horror and humiliation of Jesus' death,

then it was because, without the crucifixion, he would have had no gospel to proclaim. Christ, by making himself nothing, by taking on the very nature of a slave, had plumbed the depths to which only the lowest, the poorest, the most persecuted and abused of mortals were confined... To repudiate a city's gods was to repudiate as well the rhythms of its civic life. It was to imperil relations with family and friends. It was to show disrespect to Caesar himself.

**By urging his converts to consider themselves neither Galatian nor Jewish, but solely as the people of Christ, as citizens of heaven, he was urging them to adapt an identity that was as globalist as it was innovative. This, in an age that took for granted local loyalties and tended to look upon novelty with suspicion, was a bold strategy—but one for which Paul refused to apologise. If he was willing to grant the Law of Moses any authority at all, then it was only to insist that what God most truly wanted was a universal amity. 'The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself".' (Galatians 5.14) All you need is love.**

Paul wrote to a second church, preaching the redemption from old identities that lay at the heart of his message. Corinth, unlike Galatia, enjoyed an international reputation for glamour. As much as anywhere in Greece, then, Corinth was a melting pot. The descendants of Roman freedmen settled there by Julius Caesar mingled with Greek plutocrats; shipping magnates with cobblers; itinerant philosophers with Jewish scholars. Identity, in such a city, might easily lack deep roots. Unlike in Athens, where even Paul's greatest admirers found it hard to pretend that he had enjoyed much of an audience, in Corinth he had won a hearing. His stay in the city, where he had supported himself by working on awnings and tents, and sleeping among the tools of his trade, had garnered various converts. **The church that he had founded there—peopled by Jews and non-Jews, rich and poor, some with Roman names and some with Greek—served as a monument to his vision of a new people: citizens of heaven.**

Among a people who had always celebrated the *agon*, the contest to be the best, he announced that God had chosen the foolish to shame the wise, and the weak to shame the strong. In a world that took for granted the hierarchy of human chattels and their owners, he insisted that the distinctions between slave and free, now that Christ himself had suffered the death of a slave, were of no more account than those between Greek and Jew. 'For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's



freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave' (Corinthians 7.22). Like the great salesman that he was, he always made sure to pitch his message to his audience. 'I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some' (Corinthians 9.22). Despite this claim, and despite the convulsive transformation in his understanding of what it meant to be a Jew, in his instincts and prejudices he remained the product of his schooling...

That the law of the God of Israel might be read inscribed on the human heart, written there by his Spirit, was a notion that drew alike on the teachings of Pharisees and Stoics—and yet equally was foreign to them both. **Its impact was destined to render Paul's letters—the correspondence of a bum, without position or reputation in the affairs of the world—the most influential, the most transformative, the most revolutionary ever written.** Across the millennia, and in societies and continents unimagined by Paul himself, their impact would reverberate. **His was a conception of law that would come to suffuse an entire civilisation. He was indeed—just as he proclaimed himself to be—the herald of a new beginning.**

Paul was not the founder of the churches in Rome. Believers in Christ had appeared well before his own arrival there. Nevertheless, the letter that he had sent these *Hagioi* from Corinth, a lengthy statement of his beliefs that was designed as well to serve as an introduction to 'all in Rome who are loved by God' (Romans 1.7) was like nothing they had ever heard before. The most detailed of Paul's career, it promised to its recipients a dignity more revolutionary than even any of Nero's stunts. When the masses were invited by the emperor to his street parties, the summons was to enjoy a fleeting taste of the pleasures of a Caesar.

But Paul, in his letter to the Romans, had something altogether more startling to offer. 'The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children' (Romans 8.16). Here, baldly stated, was a status that Nero would never have thought to share. It was not given to householders filthy and stinking with the sweat of their own labours, the inhabitants at best of a mean apartment or workshop on the outskirts of the city, to lay claim to the title of a Caesar. And yet that, so Paul proclaimed, was indeed their prerogative. They had been adopted by a god.

To suffer as Christ had done, to be beaten, and degraded, and abused, was to share in his glory. Adoption by God, so Paul assured his Roman listeners, promised the redemption of their bodies. 'And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you' (Romans 8.11). **The revolutionary implications of this message, to those who heard it, could not help but raise pressing questions. In the cramped workshops that provided the *Hagioi* of Rome with their places of assembly, where they would meet to commemorate the arrest and suffering of Christ with a communal meal, men rubbed shoulders with women, citizens with slaves. If all were equally redeemed by Christ, if all were equally beloved of God, then what of the hierarchies on which the functioning of even the humblest Roman household depended?**

The master of a household was no more or less a son of God than his slaves. Everyone, then, should be joined together by a common love. Yet even as Paul urged this, he did not push the radicalism of his message to its logical conclusion. A slave might be loved by his master as a brother, and renowned for his holiness, and blessed with the gift of prophecy—but still remain a slave. Despite his scorn for the pretensions of the Caesars, Paul warned the churches of Rome not to offer open resistance to Nero. 'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established' (Romans 13.1).

If Roman power upheld the peace that enabled him to travel the world, then he would not jeopardise his mission by urging his converts to rebel against it. Too much was at stake. There was no time to weave the entire fabric of society anew. What mattered, in the brief window of opportunity that Paul had been granted, was to establish as many churches as possible—and thereby to prepare the world for the *parousia*. 'For the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (I Thessalonians 5.2). And increasingly, it seemed that the world's foundations were indeed starting to shake...

In AD 66, the smouldering resentments of the Jews in Judaea burst into open revolt. Roman vengeance, when it came, was terrible. Four years after the launch of the rebellion, Jerusalem was stormed by the legions. The wealth of the Temple was carted off to Rome, and the building itself burnt to the ground. 'Neither its antiquity, nor the extent of its treasures, nor the global range of

those who regarded it as theirs, nor the incomparable glory of its rites, proved sufficient to prevent its destruction' (Josephus *Jewish Wars* 6.442). God, whose support the rebels had been banking upon, had failed to save his people. Many Jews, cast into an abyss of misery and despair, abandoned their faith in him altogether. Others, rather than blame God, chose instead to blame themselves, arraigning themselves on a charge of disobedience, and turning with a renewed intensity to the study of their scriptures and their laws. Others yet—those who believed that Jesus was Christ, and whom the Roman authorities had increasingly begun to categorise as *Christiani*<sup>13</sup>—found in the ruin visited on God's Chosen People the echo of an even more dreadful spectacle: that of God's Son upon the gallows.

**The gospels written in the tense and terrible years that immediately preceded and followed the annihilation of Jerusalem were different [than Paul's letters—Ed.]. The kingdom of God was like a mustard seed;** it was like the world as seen through the eyes of a child; it was like yeast in dough. Again and again, in the stories that Jesus loved to tell, in his parables, the plot was as likely to be drawn from the world of the humble as it was from that of the wealthy or the wise: from the world of swineherds, servants, sowers.

### Third entry

Naturally, not sharing Marcion's contemptuous attitude towards Jewish scripture, Irenaeus made sure to reinstate it at the head of his own canon.<sup>14</sup> It was, so he declared, essential reading for all Christians: 'a field in which hidden treasure is revealed and explained by the cross of Christ'... Alongside Luke's gospel, he included John's, and the two others most widely accepted as

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<sup>13</sup> Tacitus explicitly states that those condemned by Nero were abusively referred to by the name of *Chrestiani*. Unsurprisingly, then, neither in Paul's letters nor in the Gospels does the word appear; but already, by AD 100 at the latest, Christians themselves seem to have begun to appropriate it.

<sup>14</sup> **Editor's note:** Ignatius (35-109 c.e.) was one of the church fathers. On page 114 Holland wrote, 'while travelling through Asia Minor on his way to Rome, Ignatius, a bishop from Syria, had proudly defined it as *katholikos*: "universal".'

authoritative: one attributed to Matthew, a tax-collector summoned by Jesus to follow him, and the second to Mark, the reputed founder of the church in Alexandria. Compared to these, so Irenaeus declared, all other accounts of Christ's life and teachings were but 'ropes woven out of sand'...

In 212, an edict was issued that would have warmed the old Stoic's heart. By its terms, all free men across the vast expanse of the empire were granted Roman citizenship. Its author, a thuggish Caesar by the name of Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus, was a living embodiment of the increasingly cosmopolitan character of the Roman world. The son of an African nobleman, he had been proclaimed emperor in Britain and was nicknamed *Caracalla*—'Hoodie'—after his fondness for Gallic fashions...

The interest that many Greeks took in Jewish teachings, and that many Jews took in philosophy, had always been circumscribed by the prescriptions of the Mosaic covenant. Christianity, though, provided a matrix in which the Jewish and the Greek were able to mingle as well as meet. No one demonstrated this to more fruitful effect than **Origen**. **A devotion to Christianity's inheritance from the Jews was manifest in all he wrote. Not only did he go to the effort of learning Hebrew from a Jewish teacher, but the Jewish people themselves he hailed as family: as the Church's 'little sister', or else 'the brother of the bride'. Marcion's sneer that orthodox Christians were Jew-lovers was not one that Origen would necessarily have disputed.** Certainly, he did more to embed the great body of Jewish scripture within the Christian canon, and to enshrine it as an 'Old Testament', than anyone before or since.

Jewish the great mansion of the Old Testament may have been; but the surest method for exploring it was Greek. 'Whatever men have rightly said, no matter who or where, is the property of us Christians.' That God had spoken to the Greeks as well as to the Jews was not a theory that originated with Origen. Just as Paul, in his correspondence, had approvingly cited the Stoic concept of conscience, so had many Christians since found in philosophy authentic glimmerings of the divine. Just as traditions of textual inquiry honed in Alexandria had helped Origen to elucidate the complexities of Jewish scripture, so did he use philosophy to shed light on an even more profound puzzle: the nature of God himself. No one, after Origen's labours in the service of his faith, would be able to charge that Christians appealed only to 'the ignorant, the

stupid, the unschooled'. The potency of this achievement, in a society that took for granted the value of education as an indicator of status, was immense.



Eusebius says in his *Ecclesiastical History* that, as a young man, Origen paid a physician to surgically castrate him: a claim which affected Origen's reputation for centuries, as demonstrated by these 15th-century depictions of Origen castrating himself. In his times started the nonsense that eventually received the name of 'theology' —*Ed.*

Origen had created a matrix for the propagation of philosophical concepts that would prove to have momentous reach. Far from damaging his reputation, his refusal to behave in the manner of a conventional philosopher ended up only enhancing his fame. Turning sixty, Origen could reflect with pride on a career so influential that even the mother of an emperor, intrigued by his celebrity, had once summoned him to instruct her in the nature of God. Such fame, though, was as likely to stoke hostility as admiration. The age was a treacherous one. The violence brought by Caracalla to the streets of Alexandria had been an ominous portent of even darker times ahead. In the decades that followed, sorrows had come not as single spies, but in battalions. Caracalla himself, murdered while relieving himself on campaign, had been just one of a succession of emperors slain in a blizzard of assassinations and civil wars...

The gods, it seemed, were angry. The correct *religiones* were manifestly being neglected. The fault, in the wake of Caracalla's mass grant of citizenship, lay not just in Rome, but in the empire as

a whole. Accordingly, early in 250, a formal decree was issued that everyone—with the sole exception of the Jews—offer up sacrifice to the gods. Disobedience was equated with treason; and the punishment for treason was death. For the first time, Christians found themselves confronted by legislation that directly obliged them to choose between their lives and their faith. Many chose to save their skins—but many did not. Among those arrested was Origen. Although put in chains and racked, he refused to recant. Spared execution, he was released after days of brutal treatment a broken man. He never recovered. A year or so later, the aged scholar was dead of the sufferings inflicted on him by his torturers.

In the summer of 313, Carthage was a city on edge. An ancient rival of Rome for the rule of the western Mediterranean, destroyed by the legions and then—just as Corinth had been—refounded as a Roman colony, its commanding position on the coastline across from Sicily had won for it an undisputed status as the capital of Africa. Like Rome and Alexandria, it had grown to become one of the great centres of Christianity... In 303, when an imperial edict was issued commanding Christians to hand over their books of scripture or face death, Africa had been at the forefront of resistance to the decree. The provincial authorities, determined to break the Church, had expanded on the edict by commanding that everyone make sacrifice to the gods.

A claimant to the rule of Rome named Constantine had marched on the city. There, on the banks of the river Tiber, beside the Milvian Bridge, he had won a decisive victory. His rival had drowned in the river. Constantine, entering the ancient capital, had done so with the head of his defeated enemy held aloft on a spear. Provincial officials from Africa, summoned to meet their new master, had dutifully admired the trophy. Shortly afterwards, as a token of Constantine's greatness, it had been dispatched to Carthage.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Editor's note:* Let us remember that the defeated Carthaginians, a Semitic people, had such a grudge against Rome that many had begun to take refuge in Judaism. But because of its universalist character, Judeo-Christianity represented a much better opportunity.

### *The Council of Nicaea*

The fusion of theology with Roman bureaucracy at its most controlling resulted in an innovation never before attempted: a declaration of belief that proclaimed itself universal. The sheer number of delegates, drawn from locations ranging from Mesopotamia to Britain, gave to their deliberations a weight that no single bishop or theologian could hope to rival. For the first time, orthodoxy possessed what even the genius of Origen had struggled to provide: a definition of the Christian god that could be used to measure heresy with precision.

Never before had a committee authored phrases so far-reaching in their impact [*the Nicæan Creed—Ed.*]. The long struggle of Christians to articulate the paradox that lay at the heart of their faith, to define how a man tortured to death on a cross could also have been divine, had at last attained an enduring resolution. A creed that still, many centuries after it was written, would continue to join otherwise divided churches, and give substance to the ideal of a single Christian people, had more than met Constantine's hopes for his council. Only a seasoned imperial administrator could possibly have pulled it off. A century after Caracalla's grant of citizenship to the entire Roman world, Constantine had hit upon a momentous discovery: that the surest way to join a people as one was to unite them not in common rituals, but in a common belief.

When Donatists stripped a Catholic bishop naked, hauled him to the top of a tower and flung him into a pile of excrement, or tied a necklace of dead dogs around the neck of another, or pulled out the tongue of a third, and cut off his right hand, they were behaving in a manner that might have appeared calculated to baffle the average Roman bureaucrat. Decades on from the deaths of both Caecilian and Donatus, the killings continued, the divisions widened, and the sense of moral certitude on both sides grew ever more entrenched... Constantine, by accepting Christ as his Lord, had imported directly into the heart of his empire a new, unpredictable and fissile source of power.<sup>16</sup> [Pages 123-136. The

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<sup>16</sup> **Editor's note:** What Constantine didn't suspect is that the Christians infected the converts with the highly intolerant virus of Judaism: a virus that would eventually infect the whole of Christendom.

following quotes are taken from the chapter ‘Charity: AD 362’ which refers to Emperor Julian, called ‘The Apostate’ by his enemies —*Ed.*]

#### Fourth entry

The shock of this cut Flavius Claudius Julianus to the quick. The nephew of Constantine, he had been raised a Christian, with eunuchs set over him to keep him constant in his faith. As a young man, though, he had repudiated Christianity—and then, after becoming emperor in 361, had committed himself to claiming back from it those who had ‘abandoned the ever-living gods for the corpse of the Jew’. A brilliant scholar, a dashing general, Julian was also a man as devout in his beliefs as any of those he dismissively termed ‘Galileans’. Cybele was a particular object of his devotions. It was she, he believed, who had rescued him from the darkness of his childhood beliefs. Unsurprisingly, then, heading eastwards to prepare for war with Persia, he had paused in his journey to make a diversion to Pessinus. What he found there appalled him. Even after he had made sacrifice, and honoured those who had stayed constant in their worship of the city’s gods, he could not help but dwell in mingled anger and despondency on the neglect shown Cybele. Clearly, the people of Pessinus were unworthy of her patronage. Leaving the Galatians behind, he did as Paul had done three centuries before: he wrote them a letter.

‘My orders are that a fifth be given to the poor who serve the priests, and that the remainder be distributed to travellers and to beggars.’ Julian, in committing himself to this programme of welfare, took for granted that Cybele would approve. Caring for the weak and unfortunate, so the emperor insisted, had always been a prime concern of the gods.<sup>17</sup>

The heroes of the *Iliad*, favourites of the gods, golden and predatory, had scorned the weak and downtrodden. So too, for all the honour that Julian paid them, had philosophers. The starving deserved no sympathy... The young emperor, sincere though he was in his hatred of ‘Galilean’ teachings, and in regretting their

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<sup>17</sup> **Editor’s note:** It would have been magnificent if in the classical world the Aryans, like the Jews, were only altruistic towards the Aryans, as would be the case in the Third Reich.



impact upon all that he held most dear, was blind to the irony of his plan for combating them: that it was itself irredeemably Christian. 'How apparent to everyone it is, and how shameful, that our own people lack support from us, when **no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans support not only their own poor, but ours as well.**' The wealthy, men who in previous generations might have boosted their status by endowing their cities with theatres, or temples, or bath-houses, had begun to find in the Church a new vent for their ambitions. This was why Julian, in a quixotic attempt to endow the worship of the ancient gods with a similar appeal, had installed a high priest over Galatia and urged his subordinates to practise poor relief. Christians did not merely inspire in Julian a profound contempt; they filled him with envy as well.

### *St Martin*

There was no human existence so wretched, none so despised or vulnerable, that it did not bear witness to the image of God. Divine love for the outcast and derelict demanded that mortals love them too... 'The bread in your board belongs to the hungry; the cloak in your wardrobe to the naked; the shoes you let rot to the barefoot; the money in your vaults to the destitute.' The days when a wealthy man had only to sponsor a self-aggrandising piece of architecture to be hailed a public benefactor were well and truly gone...

And if so, then Martin—judged by the venerable standards of the aristocracy in Gaul—represented a new and disconcerting breed of hero: a Christian one. Such was the very essence of his magnetism. He was admired by his followers not despite but because of his rejection of worldly norms. Rather than accept a donative from Julian, he had publicly demanded release from the army altogether. 'Until now it is you I have served; from this moment on I am a servant of Christ.' Whether indeed Martin had truly said this, his followers found it easy to believe that he had... By choosing to live as a beggar, he had won a fame greater than that of any other Christian in Gaul. The first monk in Gaul ever to become a bishop, he was a figure of rare authority: elevated to the heights precisely because he had not wanted to be. Here, for anyone bred to the snobbery that had always been a characteristic of Roman society, was shock enough.

Yet it was not only the spectacle of a smelly and shabbily dressed former soldier presiding as the most powerful man in Tours that had provoked a sense of a world turned upside down, of the last becoming first...



As a soldier, though, he did have his heavy military cloak; and so, taking out his sword, he cut it in two, and gave one half to the beggar. [pic above—Ed.] No other story about Martin would be more cherished; no other story more repeated. This was hardly surprising. The echo was of a parable told by Jesus himself. The setting, as recorded in Luke’s gospel.<sup>18</sup> [pages 137-149]

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<sup>18</sup> *Editor’s note:* No longer was Greco-Roman statuary, which so beautifully displayed the superb Aryan beauty, the benchmark for honouring the Aryan Gods. Now that the god of the Jews was in charge, it was necessary to admire their antithesis. In the final pages of the chapter, Holland informs us how the church reacted, thanks to the rationalisations of its African theologian, St Augustine, to reconcile the church’s love of riches with these Gospel passages. Yet Holland informs us that Clovis, the founder of the Merovingian dynasty, used to pray to St Martin: something which shows that even the most ruthless warlord was already bowing down to the figure of the new white hero, the so-called saint.

### Fifth entry

A soothsayer lay buried nearby who, according to Homer, had interpreted the will of Apollo to the Greeks, and instructed them, at a time when the archer god had been felling them with his plague-tipped arrows, how to appease his anger. Times, though, had changed. In 391, sacrifices had been banned on the orders of a Christian Caesar. Apollo's golden presence had been scoured from Italy. Paulinus, in his poetry, had repeatedly celebrated the god's banishment. Apollo's temples had been closed, his statues smashed, his altars destroyed. By 492, he no longer visited the dreams of those who slept on the slopes of Gargano... In 391, the endemic aptitude of the Alexandrian mob for rioting had turned on the Serapeum and levelled it; four decades later, the worship of Athena had been prohibited in the Parthenon.

By the end of the fifth century, it was only out in the wildest reaches of the countryside, where candles might still be lit besides springs or crossroads, and offerings to time-worn idols made, that there remained men and women who clung to 'the depraved customs of the past'. Bishops in their cities called such deplorables *pagani*: not merely 'country people', but 'bumpkins'. The name of 'pagan', though, had soon come to have a broader application. Increasingly, from the time of Julian onwards, it had been used to refer to all those—senators as well as serfs—who were neither Christians nor Jews. **It was a word that reduced the vast mass of those who did not worship the One God of Israel**, from atheist philosophers to peasants fingering grubby charms, to one vast and undifferentiated mass...

Certainly no Christian could imagine that it was enough merely to have closed down their temples. The forces of darkness were both cunning and resolute in their evil. That they lurked in predatory manner, waiting for Christians to fail in their duty to God, sniffing out every opportunity to seduce them into sin, was manifest from the teachings of Christ himself. His mission, so he had declared, was to 'drive out demons'...

Gregory, though, had no illusions as to the scale of Rome's decline. A city that at its peak had boasted over a million inhabitants

now held barely twenty thousand. Weeds clutched at columns erected by Augustus; silt buried pediments built to honour Constantine. The vast expanse of palaces, and triumphal arches, and race-tracks, and amphitheatres, constructed over the centuries to serve as the centre of the world, now stretched abandoned, a wilderness of ruins. Even the Senate was no more.

The rhythms of the city—its days, its weeks, its years—had been rendered Christian. The very word *religio* had altered its meaning: for it had come to signify the life of a monk or a nun. Gregory, when he summoned his congregation to repentance, did so as a man who had converted his palace on the Caelian into a monastery, who had lived there as a monk himself, pledged to poverty and chastity, a living, breathing embodiment of *religio*. The Roman people, hearing their new pope urge them to repentance, did not hesitate to obey him. Day after day, they walked the streets, raising prayers and chanting psalms. Eighty dropped dead of the plague as they went in procession...

The new Jerusalem and the lake of fire were sides of the same coin. For the earliest Christians, a tiny minority in a world seething with hostile pagans, this reflection had tended to provide reassurance. The dead, summoned from their graves, where for years, centuries, millennia they might have been mouldering, would face only two options. The resurrection of their physical bodies would ensure an eternity either of bliss or torment...

Monks who knelt for hours in sheeting rain, or laboured on empty stomachs at tasks properly suited to slaves, did so in the hope of transcending the limitations of the fallen world. The veil that separated the heavenly from the earthly seemed, to their admirers, almost parted by their efforts. 'Mortal men, so people believed, were living the lives of angels.' Nowhere else in the Christian West were saints quite as tough, quite as manifestly holy, as they were in Ireland.

That the island had been won for Christ was a miracle in itself. Roman rule had never reached its shores. Instead, sometime in the mid-fifth century, Christianity had been preached there by an escaped slave. Patrick, a young Briton kidnapped by pirates and sold across the Irish Sea, was revered by Irish Christians not just for having brought them to Christ, but for the template of holiness with which he had provided them. Whether working as a shepherd, or fleeing his master by ship, or returning to Ireland to spread the

word of God, angels had spoken to him, and guided him in all he did; nor had he hesitated, when justifying his mission, to invoke the imminence of the end of the world. A century on from Patrick's death, the monks and nuns of Ireland still bore his stamp. They owed no duty save to God, and to their 'father'—their 'abbot'. Monasteries, like the ringforts that dotted the country, were proudly independent.



Patrick depicted with shamrock  
in St. Benin's Church, Ireland.

An iron discipline served to maintain them. Only a rule that was 'strict, holy and constant, exalted, just and admirable' could bring men and women to the dimension of the heavenly. Monks were expected to be as proficient in the strange and book-learned language of Latin as at felling trees; as familiar with the few, ferociously cherished classics of Christian literature that had reached Ireland as toiling in a field. Like Patrick, they believed themselves to stand in the shadow of the end days; like Patrick, they saw exile from their families and their native land as the surest way to an utter dependence upon God. Not all headed for the gale-lashed isolation of a rock in the Atlantic. Some crossed the sea to Britain, and there preached the gospel to the kings of barbarous peoples who still set up idols and wallowed in paganism: the Picts, the Saxons, the Angles. Others, heading southwards, took ship for the land of the Franks. [pages 159-174]

## Sixth entry

The site of the [Jerusalem] Temple had been converted into a rubbish tip, a dumping-ground for dead pigs and shit; Jews themselves—except for one day a year, when a delegation was permitted to climb Mount Moria, there to lament and weep—were banned from Jerusalem; legal restrictions on their civic status grew ever more oppressive. It was forbidden them to serve in the army; to own Christian slaves; to build new synagogues. In exchange, Jews were granted the right to live according to their own traditions—but only so that they might then better serve the Christian people as a spectacle and a warning. Now, with his abrupt new shift of policy, Heraclius had denied them even that. So it was, in Carthage, that the emperor's policy was punctiliously applied. Any Jew who landed in the city risked arrest and forcible baptism. All he had to do was cry out in Hebrew when twisting an ankle, or perhaps expose himself at the baths, to risk denunciation.<sup>19</sup>

A new people, warriors who themselves claimed to be on an exodus, had seized the rule of Africa; and the Africans, for the first time in four hundred years, found themselves under the rule of masters who scorned the name of Christian...

Few, if any, who fought at Poitiers would have realised it, but at stake in the battle had been nothing less than the legacy of Saint Paul. 'For you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.' The Pope, when he quoted this line of scripture in a letter to Pepin, was not merely flattering the Franks, but acknowledging a brute reality. Increasingly, it was the empire ruled by the heirs of Charles Martel—the Carolingians—that defined for the papacy the very character of Christian rule. Paul

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<sup>19</sup> *Editor's note:* Having to see the dicks of a Jew to know that he is a kike only shows that, even since those times, Mediterranean miscegenation had already erased the emaciation line between Gentile and Jew. From the time when such miscegenation was consummated Rome was lost; Christianity only institutionalized that genetic reality. Holland then devotes several pages to the greatest calamity of that century: the irruption of Islam. We can already imagine the fate the Arabs would have faced before genetically pure, pagan Romans discovering both the scientific method and the industrial revolution.

I, unlike his predecessors, had failed to notify the emperor in Constantinople of his election. Instead, he had written to Pepin.

The Byzantines, struggling for survival as they were against relentless Muslim onslaughts, appeared to Christians in Rome—let alone in Francia or Northumbria—an ever more alien and distant people. Even more spectral were the lands that for centuries had constituted the great wellsprings of the Christian faith: Syria and Palestine, Egypt and Africa. The days when a man like Theodore might freely travel from Tarsus to Canterbury were over. The Mediterranean was now a Saracen sea. Its waters were perilous for Christians to sail. The world was cut in half. An age was at an end. [pages 180-198]

### Seventh entry: *Christendom*

As dawn broke, the camp on the banks of the river Boorne was already stirring. Boniface, its leader, was almost eighty, but as tireless as he had ever been. Forty years after his first journey to Frisia, he had returned there, in the hope of reaping from its lonely mudflats and marshes a great harvest of souls. Missionary work had long been his life. Born in Devon, in the Saxon kingdom of Wessex, he viewed the pagans across the northern sea as his kinsmen. In letters home he had regularly solicited prayers for their conversion. ‘Take pity upon them; for they themselves are saying: “We are of one blood and bone with you”.’ Now, after weeks of touring the scattered homesteads of Frisia, Boniface had summoned all those won for Christ to be confirmed in their baptismal vows. It promised him a day of joy.

The first boats arrived as sunlight was starting to pierce the early morning cloud. A mass of men, after clambering onto dry land, walked up from the river and approached the camp. Then, abruptly, the glint of swords. A charge. Screams. Boniface came out of his tent. Already it was too late. The pirates were in the camp. Desperately, Boniface’s attendants fought back. Not the old man himself, though. Christ, when he was arrested, had ordered Peter to put up his sword; and now Boniface, following his Lord’s example, commanded his followers to lay down their weapons. A tall man, he gathered his fellow priests around him, and urged them to be thankful for the hour of their release. Felled by a pirate’s sword, he

was cut to pieces. So violently did the blows rain down that twice a book he had in his hands was hacked through. Found long afterwards at the scene of his murder, it would be treasured ever after as a witness to his martyrdom...



Fulda Sacramentary, St Boniface baptising (top) and being martyred (bottom).

It was not the inheritance of Roman imperialism that inspired them, but the example of Patrick and Columbanus. To experience hardship was the very point. Fearsome stories were told of what missionaries might face. Woden, king of the demons worshipped by the Germans as gods, was darkly rumoured to demand a tithe of human lives.<sup>20</sup> In the Low Countries, prisoners were drowned beneath rising tides; in Saxony, hung from trees, and run through with spears. Runes were dyed in Christian blood. Or so it was reported. Such rumours, far from intimidating Anglo-Saxon monks, only confirmed them in their sense of purpose: to banish the rule of demons from lands that properly belonged to Christ. As vividly as anyone, they understood what it was to be born again.

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<sup>20</sup> *Editor's note:* Compare this demonised vision of Woden with the Wotan we see in the Wagnerian tetralogy; and remember that, for the Christians who destroyed statues of Apollo and other Greco-Roman gods, they too were 'demons'.



“The old has gone, the new has come!” The tone of revolution in Paul’s cry, the sense that an entire order had been judged and found wanting, still retained a freshness for men like Boniface in a way that it did not in more venerable reaches of the Christian world.

To banish the past, to overturn custom: here was a fearsome project, barely comprehensible to the peoples of other places, other times... Barely a decade after Boniface’s arrival in the Low Countries, missionaries had begun to calculate dates in the manner of Bede:<sup>21</sup> *anno Domini*, in the year of their Lord. The old order, which to pagans had seemed eternal, could now more firmly be put where it properly belonged: in the distant reaches of a Christian calendar. While the figure of Woden bestowed far too much prestige on kings ever to be erased altogether from their lineages, monks did not hesitate to demote him from his divine status and confine him to the remote beginnings of things. The rhythms of life and death, and of the cycle of the year, proved no less adaptable to the purposes of the Anglo-Saxon Church. So it was that *hel*, the pagan underworld, where all the dead were believed to dwell, became, in the writings of monks, the abode of the damned; and so it was too that Eostre, the festival of the spring, which Bede had speculated might derive from a goddess, gave its name to the holiest Christian feast-day of all. Hell and Easter: the garbing of the Church’s teachings in Anglo-Saxon robes did not signal a surrender to the pagan past, but rather its rout. Only because the gods had been toppled from their thrones, melted utterly by the light of Christ, or else banished to where monsters stalked, in fens or on lonely hills, could their allure safely be put to Christian ends. The victory of the new was adorned with the trophies of the old.

The willingness of Boniface to meet death rather than permit his attendants to draw their swords was not one that the Frankish authorities tended to share. Three days after his murder, a squad of Christian warriors tracked down the killers, cornered them and wiped them out. Their women and children were taken as slaves. [pages 201-207]

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<sup>21</sup> **Editor’s note:** Bede, who died in 735 c.e., was an English monk, author and scholar.

## **Eight entry**

In the summer of 772, fifty years after Boniface's felling of Thunor's oak, another tree—the greatest of all the Saxons' totems—was brought crashing down. Fearsome, phallic, and famed across Saxony, the Irminsul was believed by devotees of the ancient gods to uphold the heavens. But it did not. The skies remained in their place, even once the sanctuary had been demolished. Yet to the Saxons themselves, it might well have seemed as though the pillars of the world were crumbling.

Devastation on a scale never before visited on their lands was drawing near. The desecrator of the Irminsul was no missionary, but a king at the head of the most menacing war-machine in Europe. Charles, the younger son of Pepin, had ascended to the sole rule of the Franks only the previous December. Not since the vanished age of the Caesars had anyone in the West commanded such resources. Prodigious both in his energies and in his ambitions, he exerted a sway that was Roman in its scope. In 800, the pope set an official seal on the comparison in Rome itself: for there, on Christmas Day, he crowned the Frankish warlord, and hailed him as 'Augustus'. Then, having done so, he fell before Charles' feet. Such obeisance had for centuries been the due of only one man: the emperor in Constantinople. Now, though, the West had its own emperor once again. Charles, despite his reluctance to admit that he might owe anything to an Italian bishop, and his insistence that, had he only known what the pope was planning, he would never have permitted it, did not reject the title. King of the Franks and 'Christian Emperor', he would be remembered by later generations as Charles the Great: Charlemagne. Many were his conquests. During the four decades and more of his rule, he succeeded in annexing northern Italy, capturing Barcelona from the Arabs, and pushing deep into the Carpathian Basin. Yet of all Charlemagne's many wars, the bloodiest and most exhausting was the one he launched against the Saxons. There was more to the bloody rhythms of Frankish campaigning, however, than the goal merely of securing for the new

Israel a troubled flank. Charlemagne aimed as well at something altogether more novel: the winning of the Saxons for Christ.<sup>22</sup>



Pope Leo III crowning Charlemagne.

Only by washing away all that they had been, and erasing entirely their former existence, could they be brought to a proper submission. In 776, Charlemagne imposed a treaty on the Saxons that obliged them to accept baptism. Countless men, women and children were led into a river, there to become Christian. Nine years later, after the crushing of yet another rebellion, Charlemagne pronounced that ‘scorning to come to baptism’ would henceforward merit death. So too, he declared, would offering sacrifice to demons [*the Germanic Gods—Ed.*], or cremating a corpse, or eating meat during the forty days before Easter. Ruthlessly, determinedly, the very fabric of Saxon life was being torn apart. There would be no stitching it back together. Instead, dyed in gore, its ragged tatters were to lie for ever in the mud. As a programme

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<sup>22</sup> **Editor’s note:** Holland writes about what this warlord, who wanted to imitate King David, did in 782: **in a single day he beheaded 4,500 Saxon prisoners who refused to worship the god of the Jews.** Christianity was imposed by force upon the white race. The Aryan religions were destroyed by Constantine and his successors as well as by Charlemagne and his successors: the architects of the Dark Ages. St Paul was, in itself, harmless: it required imperial violence *by* Aryans to impose his subversive ideas on white peoples.

for bringing an entire pagan people to Christ, it was savage as none had ever been before. A bloody and imperious precedent had been set.

**Charlemagne**, declaring in 789 his ambition to see his subjects ‘apply themselves to a good life’, **cited as his model a king from the Old Testament: Josiah**, who had discovered in the Temple a copy of the law given to Moses. ‘For we read how the saintly Josiah, by visitation, correction and admonition, strove to recall the kingdom which God had given him to the worship of the true God.’ [pages 207-211]

### **Ninth entry**

From Scandinavia to central Europe, pagan warlords began to contemplate the same possibility: that the surest path to profiting from the Christian world might not be to tear it to pieces, but rather to be woven into its fabric. Sure enough, two decades after the great slaughter of his people beside the Lech, Géza, the king of the Hungarians, became a Christian. Reproached by a monk for continuing to offer sacrifice ‘to various false gods’, he cheerily acknowledged that hedging his bets ‘had brought him both wealth and great power’. Only a generation on, the commitment to Christ of his son, Waik, was altogether more full-blooded. The new king took the name Stephen; he built churches across the Hungarian countryside; he ordered that the head be shaved of anyone who dared to mock the rites performed within them; he had a rebellious pagan lord quartered, and the dismembered body parts nailed up in various prominent places. Great rewards were quick to flow from these godly measures. Stephen, the grandson of a pagan chieftain, was given as his queen the grand-niece of none other than Otto the Great. Otto’s own grandson, the reigning emperor, bestowed on him a replica of the Holy Spear. The pope sent him a crown. In time, after a long and prosperous reign, he would end up proclaimed a saint.

By 1038, the year of Stephen’s death, the leaders of the Latin Church could view the world with an intoxicating sense of possibility. It was not just the Hungarians who had been brought to Christ. So too had the Bohemians and the Poles, the Danes and the Norwegians. Ambitious chieftains, once they had been welcomed into the order of Christian royalty, were rarely tempted to renew the

worship of their ancestral gods. No pagan ritual could rival the anointing of a baptised king. The ruler who felt the stickiness of holy oil upon his skin, penetrating his pores, seeping deep into his soul, knew himself joined by the experience to David and Solomon, to Charlemagne and Otto. Who was Christ himself, if not the very greatest of kings? Over the course of the centuries, he 'had gained many realms and had triumphed over the mightiest rulers and had crushed through his power the necks of the proud and the sublime'. It was no shame for even the most peerless of kings, even the emperor himself, to acknowledge this. From east to west, from deepest forest to wildest ocean, from the banks of the Volga to the glaciers of Greenland, Christ had come to rule them all.

Yet there was a paradox. Even as kings bowed the knee to him, the hideousness of what he had undergone for humanity's sake, the pain and helplessness that he had endured at Golgotha, the agony of it all, was coming to obsess Christians as never before. The replica of the Holy Spear sent to Stephen served as a sombre reminder of Christ's suffering. Christ himself—unlike Otto—had never borne it into battle. It was holy because a Roman soldier, standing guard over his crucifixion, had jabbed it into his side. Blood and water had flowed out. Christ had hung from his gibbet, dead. Ever since, Christians had shrunk from representing their Saviour as a corpse. But now, a thousand years on, artists had begun to break that taboo. In Cologne, above the grave of the archbishop who had commissioned it, a great sculpture was erected, one that portrayed Christ slumped on the cross, his eyes closed, the life gone from his body. Others beheld a similar scene in their visions. [pages 218-220]

### **Tenth entry**

'The Pope is permitted to depose emperors.' This proposition, one of a number of theses on papal authority drawn up for Gregory's private use in March 1075, had shown him more than braced for the inevitable blow-back. No pope before had ever claimed such a licence; but neither, of course, had any pope dared to challenge imperial authority with such unapologetic directness. Gregory, by laying claim to the sole leadership of the Christian people, and trampling down long-standing royal prerogatives, was offending Henry IV grievously. Heir to a long line of emperors who

had never hesitated to depose troublesome popes, the young king acted with the self-assurance of a man supremely confident that both right and tradition were on his side. Early in 1076, when he summoned a conference of imperial bishops to the German city of Worms, the assembled clerics knew exactly what was expected of them. The election of Hildebrand, so they ruled, had been invalid. No sooner had this decision been reached than Henry's scribes were reaching for their quills. 'Let another sit upon Saint Peter's throne.' The message to Gregory in Rome could not have been blunter. 'Step down, step down!'

But Gregory also had a talent for bluntness. Brought the command to abdicate, he not only refused, but promptly raised the stakes. Speaking from the Lateran, he declared that Henry was 'bound with the chain of anathema' and excommunicated from the Church. His subjects were absolved of all their oaths of loyalty to him. Henry himself, as a tyrant and an enemy of God, was deposed. The impact of this pronouncement proved devastating. Henry's authority went into meltdown. Numerous of his princely vassals, hungry for the opportunity that his excommunication had given them, set to dismembering his kingdom. By the end of the year, Henry found himself cornered. To such straits was his authority reduced that he settled on a desperate gambit. Crossing the Alps in the dead of winter, he headed for Canossa, a castle in the northern Apennines where he knew that Gregory was staying. For three days, 'barefoot, and clad in wool', the heir of Constantine and Charlemagne stood shivering before the gates of the castle's innermost wall. Finally, ordering the gates unbarred, and summoning Henry into his presence, Gregory absolved the penitent with a kiss. 'The King of Rome, rather than being honoured as a universal monarch, had been treated instead as merely a human being—a creature moulded out of clay.'

The shock was seismic. That Henry had soon reneged on his promises, capturing Rome in 1084 and forcing his great enemy to flee the city, had done nothing to lessen the impact of Gregory's papacy on the mass of the Christian people. For the first time, public affairs in the Latin West had an audience that spanned every region, and every social class. 'What else is talked about even in the women's spinning-rooms and the artisans' workshops?'... The humiliation of Henry IV had made visible a great and awesome prize. The dream of Gregory and his fellow reformers—of a

Church rendered decisively distinct from the dimension of the earthly, from top to bottom, from palace to meanest village—no longer appeared a fantasy, but eminently realisable. A celibate clergy, once disentangled from the snares and meshes of the fallen world, would then be better fitted to serve the Christian people as a model of purity, and bring them to God.



Emperor Henry IV, a suppliant to Pope Gregory VII.

Nevertheless, deep though the roots of Gregory's *reformatio* lay in the soil of Christian teaching, the flower was indeed something new. The concept of the 'secular', first planted by Augustine, and tended by Columbanus, had attained a spectacular bloom. Gregory and his fellow reformers did not invent the distinction between *religio* and the *saeculum*, between the sacred and the profane; but they did render it something fundamental to the future of the West, 'for the first time and permanently'. A decisive moment...

It was no longer enough for Gregory and his fellow reformers that individual sinners, or even great monasteries, be consecrated to the dimension of *religio*. The entire sweep of the Christian world required an identical consecration. That sins should be washed away; the mighty put down from their seats; the entire world reordered in obedience to a conception of purity as militant as it was demanding: here was a manifesto that had resulted in a Caesar humbling himself before a pope. 'Any custom, no matter how venerable, no matter how commonplace, must yield utterly to truth—and, if it is contrary to truth, be abolished.' So Gregory had written. *Nova consilia*, he had called his teachings—'new counsels'. A model of *reformatio* had triumphed that, reverberating down the

centuries, would come to shake many a monarchy, and prompt many a visionary to dream that society might be born anew. The earthquake would reach very far, and the aftershocks be many. The Latin West had been given its primal taste of revolution. [pages 227-231]

### Eleventh entry

[Pope] Urban's speech had reverberated to miraculous effect. A great host of warriors drawn from across the Latin West had taken a familiar road. As pilgrims had been doing since the time of the millennium, they had journeyed across Hungary to Constantinople; and then from Constantinople to the Holy Land. Every attempt by the Saracens to halt them had been defeated. Finally, in the summer of 1099, the great army of warrior pilgrims had arrived before Jerusalem. On 15 July, they stormed its walls. The city was theirs. Then, once the slaughter was done, and they had dried their dripping swords, they headed for the tomb of Christ. There, in joy and disbelief, they offered up praises to God. Jerusalem—after centuries of Saracen rule—was Christian once again.



So extraordinary was the feat as to be barely believable—and the news redounded gloriously to the credit of the papacy. Urban himself died a fortnight after the city's capture, too soon for



news of the great victory that he had inspired to reach him; but the programme of reform to which he had devoted his life was much burnished by the winning of the Holy City. Emperors since the time of Charlemagne had fought wars of conquest beneath the banner of Christ; but none had ever sent an entire army on pilgrimage. Warriors present at the capture of Jerusalem reported having seen 'a beautiful person sitting atop a white horse'—and there were some prepared to wonder if it might not have been Christ himself. Whatever the truth of the mysterious horseman's identity, one thing was clear: the Holy City had been won, not in the name of any king or emperor, but in that of a much more universal cause.

But what name to give this cause? Back in the Latin West, the word starting to be used was one that, until the capture of Jerusalem, had barely been heard. The warrior pilgrims, so it came to be said, had fought under the banner of *Christianitas*: Christendom. Such a categorisation—divorced as it was from the dynasties of earthly kings and the holdings of feudal lords—was one well suited to the ambitions of the papacy. Who better to stand at the head of Christendom than the heir of Saint Peter? Less than a century after Henry III had deposed three popes in a single year, the Roman Church had carved out a role of leadership for itself so powerful that Henry's grandson, the son of Henry IV, was brought in 1122 to sue for peace. In that year, in Worms, where his father had once commanded Gregory VII to abdicate, Henry V agreed to a momentous concordat. By its terms, the fifty-year-old quarrel over the investiture of imperial bishops was finally brought to an end. Although ostensibly a compromise, time would demonstrate that victory was decisively the papacy's. Decisive too was the increasing acceptance of another key demand of the reformers: that the clergy distinguish themselves from the great mass of the Christian people—the *laicus*, or 'laity'—by embracing celibacy. By 1148, when yet another papal decree banning priests from having wives or concubines was promulgated, the response of many was to roll their eyes. 'Futile and ludicrous—for who does not know already that it is unlawful?'

Increasingly, then, the separation of church from state was an upheaval manifest across the whole of Christendom. Wherever a priest was called upon to minister to the laity, even in the humblest, the most isolated village, there the impact of *reformatio* could be felt. The establishment of the Roman Church as something more than

merely a first among equals, as 'the general forum of all clergy and all churches', gave clerics across the Latin West a common identity that they had not previously possessed. In the various kingdoms, fiefdoms and cities that constituted the great patchwork of Christendom, something unprecedented had come into being: an entire class that owed its loyalty, not to local lords, but to a hierarchy that exulted in being 'universal, and spread throughout the world'.

Emperors and kings, although they might try to take a stand against it, would repeatedly find themselves left bruised by the attempt. **Not since the age of Constantine and his heirs had any one man exercised an authority over so wide a sweep of Europe as did the bishop of the ancient capital of the world.** His open claim was to the 'rights of heavenly and earthly empire'; his legates travelled to barbarous lands and expected to be heard; his court, in an echo of the building where the Roman Senate had once met, was known as the 'Curia'. Yet the pope was no Caesar. His assertion of supremacy was not founded on force of arms, nor the rank of his ministers on their lineage or their wealth. The Church that had emerged from the Gregorian *reformatio* was instead an institution of a kind never before witnessed: one that had not merely come to think of itself as sovereign, but had willed itself into becoming so. **'The Pope,' Gregory VII had affirmed, 'may be judged by no one.'** All Christian people, even kings, even emperors, were subject to his rulings. The Curia provided Christendom with its final court of appeal. A supreme paradox: that the Church, by rending itself free of the secular, had itself become a state...

Much flowed from this formulation that earlier ages would have struggled to comprehend. Age-old presumptions were being decisively overturned: that custom was the ultimate authority; that the great were owed a different justice from the humble; that inequality was something natural, to be taken for granted. Clerks trained in Bologna were agents of revolution as well as of order. Legally constituted, university-trained, they constituted a new breed of professional. Gratian, by providing them with both a criterion and a sanction for weeding out objectionable customs, had transfigured the very understanding of law. No longer did it exist to uphold the differences in status that Roman jurists and Frankish kings alike had always taken for granted. Instead, its purpose was to provide equal justice to every individual, regardless of rank, or

wealth, or lineage—for every individual was equally a child of God...<sup>23</sup>

How, for instance, were the Christian people to square the rampant inequality between rich and poor with the insistence of numerous Church Fathers that ‘the use of all things should be common to all’? The problem was one that, for decades, demanded the attention of the most distinguished scholars in Bologna. **By 1200, half a century after the completion of the *Decretum*, a solution had finally been arrived at**—and it was one fertile with implications for the future. A starving pauper who stole from a rich man did so, according to a growing number of legal scholars, *iure naturali*—‘in accordance with natural law’. As such, they argued, he could not be reckoned guilty of a crime. Instead, he was merely taking what was properly owed him. It was the wealthy miser, not the starving thief, who was the object of divine disapproval. Any bishop confronted by such a case, so canon lawyers concluded, had a duty to ensure that the wealthy pay their due of alms. Charity, no longer voluntary, was being rendered a legal obligation.

**That the rich had a duty to give to the poor was, of course, a principle as old as Christianity itself. What no one had thought to argue before, though, was a matching principle: that the poor had an entitlement to the necessities of life. It was—in a formulation increasingly deployed by canon lawyers—a human ‘right’. Law, in the Latin West, had become an essential tool of its ongoing revolution.** [pages 233-239]

## Twelfth entry

The Lady Elizabeth had been born to greatness. Descended from a cousin of Stephen, Hungary’s first truly Christian king, she had been sent as a child to the court of Thuringia, in central Germany, and groomed there for marriage. At the age of fourteen, she had joined Louis, its twenty-year-old ruler, on the throne. The couple had been very happy. Elizabeth had borne her husband three children; Louis had gloried in his wife’s demonstrable closeness to God. Even when he was woken in the night by a maid

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<sup>23</sup> **Editor’s note:** Remember: for the Merovingian and Frankish kings it was not the same to kill a blond-haired, blue-eyed man as it was to kill a Mediterranean mudblood. But now all souls were equal in the eyes of God.

tugging on his foot, he had borne it patiently, knowing that the servant had mistaken him for his wife, whose custom it was to get up in the early hours to pray. Elizabeth's insistence on giving away her jewellery to the poor; her mopping up of mucus and saliva from the faces of the sick; her making of shrouds for paupers out of her finest linen veils: here were gestures that had prefigured her far more spectacular self-abasement in the wake of her husband's death. Her only regret was that it did not go far enough. 'If there were a life that was more despised, I would choose it.' When Count Paviam urged Elizabeth to abandon the rigours and humiliations of her existence in Marburg, and return with him to her father's court, she refused point blank...

Clerks in the service of the papal bureaucracy and scholars learned in canon law had long been toiling to strengthen the foundations of the Church's authority. They understood the awful responsibility that weighed upon their shoulders. Their task was to bring the Christian people to God. **'There is one Catholic Church of the faithful, and outside of it there is absolutely no salvation.'** So it had been formally declared during Elizabeth's childhood, in 1215, at the fourth of a series of councils convened at the Lateran. **To defy this canon, to reject the structures of authority** that served to uphold it, to disobey the clergy whose solemn prerogative it was to shepherd souls, **was to follow the path to hell.**

In 1206, a one-time playboy by the name of **Francis, a native of the Italian city of Assisi**, had spectacularly renounced his patrimony. Taking off his clothes, he had handed them over to his father. 'Moreover he did not even keep his drawers, but stripped himself naked before all the bystanders.' The local bishop, impressed rather than appalled by this display, had tenderly covered him with his own cloak, and sent him on his way with a blessing. Here, with this episode, had been set the pattern of Francis' career. His genius for taking Christ's teachings literally, for dramatising their paradoxes and complexities, for combining simplicity and profundity in a single memorable gesture, would never leave him.

**He served lepers; preached to birds; rescued lambs from butchers. Rare were those immune to his charisma. Admiration for his mission reached to the very summit of the Church. Innocent III, the pope who in 1215 had convened the Fourth Lateran Council,** was not a man easily impressed. Imperious, daring and brilliant, he gave way to no one, overthrowing emperors, excommunicating kings.

Unsurprisingly, then, when Francis, at the head of twelve ragged 'brothers', or 'friars', first arrived in Rome, Innocent had refused to see him.



St Francis' renunciation of worldly goods by Giotto.

The whiff of heresy, not to mention blasphemy, had seemed altogether too rank. Francis, though, unlike Waldes, never stinted in his respect for the Church, in his obedience to its authority. **Innocent's doubts were eased. Imaginative as well as domineering, he had come to see in Francis and his followers not a danger, but an opportunity.** Rather than treating them as his predecessors had treated the Waldensians, he ordained them a legally constituted order of the Church. 'Go, and the Lord be with you, brethren, and as He shall deign to inspire you, preach repentance to all.'

By 1217, less than a decade after this proclamation, a Franciscan mission had reached Germany. Elizabeth would grow up profoundly inspired by its example. By dressing in secret as a beggar, she had been paying tribute to Francis. Other demonstrations of her enthusiasm for his teachings were more public. In 1225, she provided the Franciscans with a base at the foot of the Wartburg, in the town of Eisenach. Three years later, following the death of her husband, she made her way there and formally renounced her ties to the world. Yet no matter how desperately she longed to do so, she did not then go begging from

door to door. Elizabeth had properly absorbed the lessons of Francis' example. She understood that to embrace poverty without obedience was to risk the fate of Waldes. [pages 247-252]

### Thirteenth entry

Anxieties in Paris were heightened by the discovery in 1210 of various heretics whose reading of Aristotle had led them to believe that there was no life after death. The reaction of the city's bishop was swift. Ten of the heretics were burned at the stake. Various commentaries on Aristotle were burned as well. Aristotle's own books on natural philosophy were formally proscribed. 'They are not to be read at Paris either publicly or in private.'<sup>24</sup>

But the ban failed to hold. In 1231, Gregory IX issued a decree that guaranteed the university effective independence from the interference of bishops, and by 1255 all of Aristotle's texts were back on the curriculum. The people best qualified to learn from them, it turned out, were not heretics, but inquisitors. The days of annihilating entire towns on the grounds that God would know his own were over.<sup>25</sup>

The responsibility for rooting out heresy had now been entrusted to friars. Taking the lead was an order that had been established by papal decree back in 1216, to provide the Church with a shock force of intellectuals. Its founder, a Spaniard by the name of Dominic, had toured where the good men were to be found, matching them in all their austerities, and harrying them in debate. In 1207, two years before the annihilation of Béziers, he had

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<sup>24</sup> **Editor's note:** The beginning of the Inquisition, the subject of pages 252-256 of *Dominion* belongs rather to the work of Karlheinz Deschner. Here I rather use Holland's book to show how Christianity reversed the values of the white man. One thing that is completely overlooked on the racial right is that it is impossible to heal after Christian infection unless whites repudiate the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. No wonder the medieval freethinkers who began to question this dogma ended up at the stake. No fear of hell, no Church power.

<sup>25</sup> **Editor's note:** The author refers to *Caedite eos: Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius!* ('Kill them: the Lord knows those that are his own!'), a phrase reportedly spoken by the commander of the Albigensian Crusade to eliminate Catharism in France.

met with a good man just north of the city, and argued publicly with him for over a week. To friars schooled in this tradition of militant preaching, Aristotle had come as a godsend.

The labour of reconciling Aristotle's philosophy with Christian doctrine did not come easily. Many contributed to it; but none more so than a Dominican called Thomas, a native of Aquino, a small town just south of Rome. The book he worked on between 1265 and his death in 1274, a great compendium of 'things pertaining to Christianity', was the most comprehensive attempt ever undertaken to synthesise faith with philosophy.

Thomas Aquinas himself died thinking that he had failed in his efforts, and that, before the radiant unknowability of God, everything he had written was the merest chaff; in Paris, two years after his death, various of his propositions were condemned by the city's bishop. It did not take long, though, for the sheer scale of his achievement to be recognised and gratefully acknowledged. In 1323, the seal was set on his reputation when the pope proclaimed him a saint. The result was to enshrine as a bedrock of Catholic theology the conviction that revelation might indeed co-exist with reason. A century after the banning in Paris of Aristotle's books on natural philosophy, no one had to worry that the study of them might risk heresy. [pages 265-267]

### **Fourteenth entry**

When workmen digging the foundations of a new house uncovered the statue, experts from across Siena flocked to admire the find. It did not take them long to identify the nude woman as Venus, the goddess of love. Buried and forgotten for centuries, she constituted a rare trophy for the city: an authentic masterpiece of ancient sculpture. Few people were better qualified to appreciate it than the Sieneese. Renowned across Italy and far beyond for the brilliance of their artists, they knew beauty when they saw it. Everyone agreed that it would be a scandal for such a prize to be hidden away. Instead, the statue was taken to the Campo, the city's great central piazza, and placed on top of a fountain. 'And she was paid great honour.' At once, everything began to go wrong. A financial crash was followed by a rout of the Sieneese army. Then, some five years after the discovery of the Venus, horror almost beyond comprehension brought devastation to the city.

A plague, arriving from the east, and spreading with such lethal virulence across the whole of Christendom that it came to be known simply as the Great Dying, reached Siena in May 1348.



Leaders in the new governing council, looking from the Palazzo Pubblico to the statue in the Campo outside, knew what to blame. ‘From the moment we found the statue, evils have been ceaseless.’ This paranoia was hardly surprising. Admiration for ancient sculpture could not outweigh the devastating evidence for divine anger. Almost eight hundred years before, during the pontificate of Gregory the Great, it was cries of repentance that had halted the plague. It was told how Saint Michael, standing above the Tiber, had held aloft a blazing sword—and then, accepting the Romans’ prayers, had sheathed it, and at once the plague had stopped. Now, overwhelmed by calamity, the Sienese scrabbled to show repentance.

On 7 November 1357, workmen pulled down the statue of Venus. Hauling it away from the piazza, they smashed it into pieces. Chunks of it were buried just beyond the border with Florence. The



insult offered by the honouring of Venus had been very great. Siena was the city of the Virgin... Those who had demanded the destruction of the Venus were right to see in its delectable and unapologetic nudity a challenge to everything that Mary represented.<sup>26</sup>

*Catherine of Siena*<sup>27</sup>

From childhood, she had made a sacrifice of her appetites. She fasted for days at a time; her diet, on those rare occasions when she did eat, would consist exclusively of raw herbs and the eucharist; she wore a chain tightly bound around her waist. Naturally, it was with sexual yearnings that the Devil most tempted her...

Not merely a virgin, she had been a bride. As a young girl pledging herself to Christ, she had defied her parents' plans to marry her by hacking off all her hair. She was, so she had told them, already betrothed. Their fury and consternation could not make her change her mind. Sure enough, in 1367, when she was twenty years old, and Siena was celebrating the end of carnival, her reward had arrived. In the small room in her parents' house where she would fast, and meditate, and pray, Christ had come to her. The Virgin and various saints, Paul and Dominic included, had served as witnesses. King David had played his harp. The wedding ring was

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<sup>26</sup> **Editor's note:** I have written about the differences between Wagner and Nietzsche, and how the latter distanced himself from his old friend when he realised that, despite rescuing Germanic paganism, Wagner was making concessions to Christian morality. The first opera I saw was *Tannhäuser*. I was very impressed that in the end the symbol of Mary triumphed over the symbol of Venus in Wagner's first masterpiece, which is loaded with sexual symbolism. I didn't expect to find such a message. Contra Wagner, if we don't understand Christianity as Nietzsche understood it (in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1st treatise, § 8, § 16 and *The Anti-Christ* § 24, § 58-59 and § 61-62), the white race will continue to die out until the end.

<sup>27</sup> **Editor's note:** She was a mystic, activist and writer who had a great influence on Italian literature. Canonised after her death, she is considered a Doctor of the Church by the Roman Catholic Church. By 1377, Catherine had become an antithesis of Venus: the most celebrated paradigm of chastity in Christendom.

Christ's own foreskin, removed when he had been circumcised as a child, and still wet with his holy blood.

Invisible though it was to others, Catherine had worn it from that moment on. [pages 278-282]

### **Fifteenth entry**

In Paris, as the great cathedral of Notre Dame was being built, the offer from a collective of prostitutes to pay for one of its windows, and dedicate it to the Virgin, had been rejected by a committee of the university's leading theologians. Two decades later, in 1213, one of the same scholars, following his appointment as papal legate, had ordered that all woman convicted of prostitution be expelled from the city—just as though they were lepers...

Yet always, lurking at the back of even the sternest preacher's mind, was the example of Christ himself. In John's gospel, it was recorded that a woman taken in adultery had been brought before him by the Pharisees. Looking to trap him, they had asked if, in accordance with the Law of Moses, she should be stoned. Jesus had responded by bending down and writing in the dust with his finger; but then, when the Pharisees persisted in questioning him, he had straightened up again. 'If any of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' The crowd, shamed by these words, had hesitated—and then melted away. Finally, only the woman had been left. 'Has no one condemned you?' Jesus had asked. 'No one, Sir,' she had answered. 'Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.'

Innocent III, that most formidable of heresy's foes, never forgot that his Saviour had kept company with the lowest of the low: tax-collectors and whores. Endowing a hospital in Rome, he specified that it offer a refuge to sex-workers from walking the streets. To marry one, he preached, was a work of the sublimest piety... Prostitutes themselves, perfectly aware of the example offered them by the Magdalene, veered between tearful displays of repentance and the conviction that God loved them just as much as any other sinner. Catherine, certainly, whenever she met with a sex-worker, would never fail to assure her of Christ's mercy. 'Turn to the Virgin. She will lead you straight into the presence of her son.' [pages 286-287]

## Sixteenth entry<sup>28</sup>

The most popular preachers were those who condemned the wealth of monasteries adorned with gold and sumptuous tapestries, and demanded a return to the stern simplicity of the early days of the Church. The Christian people, they warned, had taken a desperately wrong turn. The reforms of Gregory VII, far from serving to redeem the Church, had set it instead upon a path to corruption. The papacy, seduced by the temptations of earthly glory, had forgotten that the Gospels spoke most loudly to the poor, to the humble, to the suffering. ‘The cross of Jesus Christ and the name of the crucified Jesus are now brought into disrepute and made as it were alien and void among Christians.’ Only Antichrist could have wrought such a fateful, such a hellish abomination. And so it was, in the streets of Prague, that it had become a common thing to paint the pope as the beast foretold by Saint John, and to show him wearing the papal crown, but with the feet of a monstrous bird.

In the wake of Hus’ execution, denunciations of the papacy as Antichrist had begun to be made openly across Prague. Of

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<sup>28</sup> *Editor’s note:* One might think that the egalitarian mass psychoses of our time are a modern and postmodern phenomenon. But militant, even violent egalitarianism has ancient Christian roots. The term Hussites or Hussite Church refers to a reform and revolutionary movement that arose in Bohemia in the 15th century. The name comes from the Bohemian theologian Jan Hus, who had been burnt at the stake. The movement later joined the Reformation. A town was founded in 1420 by a group of the most radical wing of the Hussites, who gave it the biblical name of ‘Tabor’: the mountain where, according to the gospels, the transfiguration of Jesus took place. The members of this radical wing soon became known as Taborites and the word Tabor has come to mean in Czech ‘camp’. The radical Hussites established a communal society in Tabor in which private property didn’t exist and any religious hierarchy was rejected. The egalitarian experiment lasted only one year, for in 1421 a moderate Hussite faction overran the Taborite fiefdom. The town was rebuilt in the 16th century. In the chapter ‘Apocalypse, 1420: Tabor’ Holland writes the following.

Sigismund as well—for it was presumed that it was by his treachery that Hus had been delivered up to the flames.



Taborites taking Communion in the open air.

The Taborites were hardly the first Christians to believe themselves living in the shadow of Apocalypse. The novelty lay rather in the scale of the crisis that had prompted their imaginings: one in which all the traditional underpinnings of society, all the established frameworks of authority, appeared fatally compromised. Confronted by a church that was the swollen body of Antichrist, and an emperor guilty of the most blatant treachery, the Taborites had pledged themselves to revolution. But it was not enough merely to return to the ideals of the early church: to live equally as brothers and sisters; to share everything in common. The filth of the world beyond Tabor, where those who had not fled to the mountains still wallowed in corruption, had to be swept away too. Its entire order was rotten. ‘All kings, princes and prelates of the church will cease to be.’ This manifesto, against the backdrop of Sigismund’s determination to break the Hussites, and the papacy’s declaration of a crusade against them, was one calculated to steel the Taborites for the looming struggle. Yet it was not only emperors and popes whom they aspired to eliminate. All those who had rejected the summons to Tabor, to redeem themselves from the fallen world, were sinners. ‘Each of the faithful ought to wash his hands in the blood of Christ’s foes.’

Many Hussites, confronted by this unsparing refusal to turn the other cheek, were appalled. ‘Heresy and tyrannical cruelty,’ one

of them termed it. Others muttered darkly about a rebirth of Donatism. The summer of 1420, though, was no time for the moderates to be standing on their principles. The peril was too great. In May, at the head of a great army of crusaders summoned from across Christendom, Sigismund advanced on Prague. Ruin of the kind visited on Béziers two centuries earlier now directly threatened the city. Moderates and radicals alike accepted that they had no choice but to make common cause. The Taborites, leaving behind only a skeleton garrison, duly marched to the relief of Babylon. At their head rode a general of genius. Jan Žižka, one-eyed and sixty years old, was to prove the military saviour that the Albigensians had never found. That July, looking to break the besiegers' attempt to starve Prague into submission, he launched a surprise attack so devastating that Sigismund was left with no choice but to withdraw. Further victories quickly followed. Žižka proved irresistible. Not even the loss late in 1421 of his remaining eye to an arrow served to handicap him. Crusaders, imperial garrisons, rival Hussite factions: he routed them all. Innovative and brutal in equal measure, Žižka was the living embodiment of the Taborite revolution. Noblemen on their chargers he met with rings of armoured wagons, hauled from muddy farmyards and manned by peasants equipped with muskets; monks he would order burnt at the stake, or else personally club to death. Never once did the grim old man meet with defeat. By 1424, when he finally fell sick and died, all of Bohemia had been brought under Taborite rule...

Readying Prague for their Lord's arrival, they had systematically targeted symbols of privilege. Monasteries were levelled; the bushy moustaches much favoured by the Bohemian elite forcibly shaved off wherever they were spotted; the skull of a recently deceased king dug up and crowned with straw. As the months and then the years passed, however, and still Christ failed to appear, so the radicalism of the Taborites had begun to fade. They had elected a bishop; negotiated to secure a king; charged the most extreme in their ranks with heresy and expelled them from Tabor. Žižka, displaying a brusque lack of concern for legal process that no inquisitor would ever have contemplated emulating, had rounded up fifty of them and burnt the lot.<sup>29</sup> Well before the abrupt and

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<sup>29</sup> Only one man was spared, to provide an account of his sect's beliefs.

crushing defeat of the Taborites by a force of more moderate Hussites in 1434, the flame of their movement had been guttering. Christ had not returned. The world had not been purged of kings. Tabor had not, after all, been crowned the New Jerusalem. In 1436, when Hussite ambassadors—achieving a startling first for a supposedly heretical sect—succeeded in negotiating a concordat directly with the papacy, the Taborites had little choice but to accept it. There would be time enough, at the end of days, to defy the order of the world. But until it came, until Christ returned in glory, what option was there except to compromise? [pages 295-300]

### Seventeen entry

During the course of a voyage blighted by storms, hostile natives and a year spent marooned on Jamaica, Columbus' mission was confirmed for him directly by a voice from heaven. Speaking gently, it chided him for his despair, and hailed him as a new Moses. Just as the Promised Land had been granted to the Children of Israel, so had the New World been granted to Spain. Writing to Ferdinand and Isabella about this startling development, Columbus insisted reassuringly that it had all been prophesied by Joachim of Fiore. Not for nothing did his own name mean 'the dove', that emblem of the Holy Spirit. The news of Christ would be brought to the New World, and its treasure used to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem...

In 1519, more than a decade after Columbus' death, a Spanish adventurer named Hernán Cortés disembarked with five hundred men on the shore of an immense landmass that was already coming to be called America. Informed that there lay inland the capital of a great empire, Cortés took the staggeringly bold decision to head for it. He and his men were stupefied by what they found: a fantastical vision of lakes and towering temples, radiating 'flashes of light like quetzal plumes', immensely vaster than any city in Spain. Canals bustled with canoes; flowers hung over the waterways. Tenochtitlan, wealthy and beautiful, was a monument to the formidable prowess of the conquerors who had built it: the Mexica. Without sacrifice, so the Mexica believed, the gods would weaken, chaos descend, and the sun start to fade. Only chalchiuatl,

the ‘precious water’ pumped out by a still-beating heart, could serve to feed it.



Only blood, in the final reckoning, could prevent the universe from winding down. To the Spaniards, the spectacle of dried gore on the steps of Tenochtitlan’s pyramids, of skulls grinning out from racks, was literally hellish. Once Cortés, in a feat of unparalleled audacity and aggression, had succeeded in making himself the master of the great city, its temples were razed to the ground. So Charlemagne, smashing with his mailed horsemen through dripping forests, had trampled down the shrines of Woden and Thunor. The Mexica, who had neither horses nor steel, let alone cannon, found themselves as powerless as the Saxons had once been to withstand Christian arms.<sup>30</sup> [pages 304-305]

### **Eighteenth entry**

In 1516, any lingering hopes that Ferdinand might prove to be the last emperor were put to rest by his death. He had not led a great crusade to reconquer Jerusalem; Islam had not been destroyed. Nevertheless, the achievements of Ferdinand’s reign had been formidable. His grandson, Charles, succeeded to the rule of the most powerful kingdom in Christendom, and to a sway more authentically globe-spanning than that of the Caesars. Spaniards felt no sense of inferiority when they compared their swelling empire to Rome’s. Quite the contrary. From lands unknown to the ancients

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<sup>30</sup> **Editor’s note:** And precisely because Catholics profess a universalist religion, and all are equal in the eyes of their god, the first thing the Spaniards did in ancient Mexico was to mate with Amerindian women.

came news of feats that would have done credit to Alexander: the toppling against all the odds of mighty kingdoms; the winning of dazzling fortunes; men who had come from nowhere to live like kings.



Yet there lay over the brilliance of these achievements a pall of anxiety. No people in antiquity would ever have succeeded in winning an empire for themselves had they doubted their licence to slaughter and enslave the vanquished; but Christians could not so readily be innocent in their cruelty. When scholars in Europe sought to justify the Spanish conquest of the New World, they reached not for the Church Fathers, but for Aristotle. ‘As the Philosopher says, it is clear that some men are slaves by nature and others free by nature.’ Even in the Indies, though, there were Spaniards who worried whether this was truly so. ‘Tell me,’ a Dominican demanded of his fellow settlers, eight years before Cortés took the road to Tenochtitlan, ‘by what right or justice do you keep these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? On what authority have you waged a detestable war against these people, who dwelt quietly and peacefully in their own land?’<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> **Editor’s note:** This Dominican was Antonio de Montesinos, a Spanish missionary and friar. Together with the first community of Dominicans in the American continent, led by the vicar Fray Pedro de Córdoba, he distinguished himself in the defence of the Indians from the Spanish colonisers.



Most of the friar's congregation, too angered to reflect on his questions, contented themselves with issuing voluble complaints to the local governor, and agitating for his removal; but there were some colonists who did find their consciences pricked. Increasingly, adventurers in the New World had to reckon with condemnation of their exploits as cruelty, oppression, greed. Some, on occasion, might even come to this realisation themselves. The most dramatic example occurred in 1514, when a colonist in the West Indies had his life upended by a sudden, heart-stopping insight: that his enslavement of Indians was a mortal sin.

Like Paul on the road to Damascus, like Augustine in the garden, Bartolomé de Las Casas found himself born again. Freeing his slaves, he devoted himself from that moment on to defending the Indians from tyranny. Only the cause of bringing them to God, he argued, could possibly justify Spain's rule of the New World; and only by means of persuasion might they legitimately be brought to God. 'For they are our brothers, and Christ gave his life for them.' Las Casas, whether on one side of the Atlantic, pleading his case at the royal court, or on the other, in straw-thatched colonial settlements, never doubted that his convictions derived from the mainstream of Christian teaching. [pages 307-308]

### **Nineteenth entry**

Luther had come to believe that true *reformatio* would be impossible without consigning canons, papal decrees and Aquinas' philosophy to the flames. Then, in the wake of his meeting with the cardinal, he had come to an even more subversive conclusion... Now, travelling to the diet, Luther was greeted with matching displays of exuberance. Welcoming committees toasted him at the gates of city after city; crowds crammed into churches to hear him preach. As he entered Worms, thousands thronged the streets to catch a glimpse of the man of the hour.

The founding claim of the order promoted by Gregory VII, that the clergy were an order of men radically distinct from the laity, was a swindle and a blasphemy. 'A Christian man is a perfectly free lord of all, and subject to none.' So Luther had declared a month before his excommunication, in a pamphlet that he had pointedly sent to the pope. 'A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.' The ceremonies of the Church could not redeem

men and women from hell, for it was only God who possessed that power. A priest who laid claim to it by virtue of his celibacy was playing a confidence trick on both his congregation and himself. So lost were mortals to sin that nothing they did, no displays of charity, no mortifications of the flesh, no pilgrimages to gawp at relics, could possibly save them. Only divine love could do that. Salvation was not a reward. Salvation was a gift.<sup>32</sup> It was in the certitude of this that Luther, the day after his first appearance before Charles V, returned to the bishop's palace. Asked again if he would renounce his writings, he said that he would not. As dusk thickened, and torches were lit in the crowded hall, Luther fixed his glittering black eyes on his interrogator and boldly scorned all the pretensions of popes and councils. Instead, so he declared, he was bound only by the understanding of scripture that had been revealed to him by the Spirit. 'My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.'



Luther as an Augustinian friar.

Two days after listening to this bravura display of defiance, Charles V wrote a reply. Obedient to the example of his forebears, he vowed, he would always be a defender of the Catholic faith, 'the sacred rituals, decrees, ordinances and holy customs'. He therefore

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<sup>32</sup> *Editor's note:* Once more: the schizophrenogenic (i.e., it drives you mad) doctrine of salvation from eternal torture thanks to a Semitic god imposed on whites.

had no hesitation in confirming Luther's excommunication. Nevertheless, he was a man of his word. The promise of safe passage held. Luther was free to depart. He had three weeks to get back to Wittenberg. After that, he would be liable for 'liquidation'.

Luther, leaving Worms, did so as both a hero and an outlaw. The drama of it all, reported in pamphlets that flooded the empire, only compounded his celebrity. Then, halfway back to Wittenberg, another astonishing twist. Travelling in their wagon through Thuringia, Luther and his party were ambushed in a ravine. A posse of horsemen, pointing their crossbows at the travellers, abducted Luther and two of his companions. The fading hoofbeats left behind them nothing but dust. As to who might have taken Luther, and why, there was no clue. Months passed, and still no one seemed any the wiser. It was as though he had simply vanished into thin air. All the while, though, Luther was in the Wartburg. The castle belonged to Friedrich, whose men had brought him there for safe-keeping. Disguised as a knight, with two servant boys to attend him, but no one to argue with, no one to address, he was miserable. The devil nagged him with temptations. Once, when a strange dog came padding into his room, Luther—who loved dogs dearly—identified it as a demon and threw it out of his tower window.

He suffered terribly from constipation. 'Now I sit in pain like a woman in childbirth, ripped up, bloody.' He did not, as Saint Elizabeth had done when she lived in the castle, welcome suffering. He had come to understand that he could never be saved by good works. It was in the Wartburg that Luther abandoned forever the disciplines of his life as a monk. Instead, he wrote. Lonely in his eyrie, he could look down at the town of Eisenach, where Hilten had prophesied the coming of a great reformer, and believe himself—despite his isolation from the mighty convulsions that he himself had set in train—to be the man foretold...

Now, with his translation, Luther had given Germans everywhere the chance to do the same. All the structures and the traditions of the Roman Church, its hierarchies, and its canons, and its philosophy, had served merely to render scripture an entrapped and feeble thing, much as lime might prevent a bird from taking wing. By liberating it, Luther had set Christians everywhere free to experience it as he had experienced it: as the means to hear God's living voice. Opening their hearts to the Spirit, they would understand the true meaning of Christianity, just as he had come to

understand it. There would be no need for discipline, no need for authority. Antichrist would be routed. All the Christian people at long last would be as one.<sup>33</sup> [pages 317-321]

### Twentieth entry

Henry VIII—who, as king of England, lived in fuming resentment of the much greater prestige enjoyed by the emperor and the king of France—had been mightily pleased to have negotiated the title of Defender of the Faith for himself from Rome. It had not taken long, though, for relations between him and the papacy to take a spectacular turn for the worse. In 1527, depressed by a lack of sons and obsessed by a young noblewoman named Anne Boleyn, Henry convinced himself that God had cursed his marriage. As wilful as he was autocratic, he demanded an annulment. The pope refused. Not only was Henry's case one to make any respectable canon lawyer snort, but his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella—which meant in turn that she was the aunt of Charles V. Anxious though the pope might be to keep the English king on side, his prime concern was not to offend Christendom's most powerful monarch.

Henry, under normal circumstances, would have had little option but to admit defeat. The circumstances, though, were hardly normal. Henry had an alternative recourse to hand. He did not have to accept Luther's views on grace or scripture to relish the reformer's hostility to the pope. Opportunistic to the point of megalomania, the king seized his chance. In 1534, papal authority was formally repudiated by act of parliament. Henry was declared 'the only supreme head on Earth of the Church of England'.

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<sup>33</sup> **Editor's note:** Nietzsche blamed Luther and Germany for the darkness that would flood the post-Renaissance mind. According to Nietzsche, when visiting Rome Luther should have knelt in true grace, with tears in his eyes as he saw how Renaissance sculpture hinted at a coming transvaluation of all values (keep in mind what happened to the statue of Venus at the hands of superstitious Christians). But the Augustinian friar would do the opposite: he thrust into the Germanic soul not only the New Testament but now the holy book of the Jews (see William Pierce's critique of Luther in *The Fair Race*).

Anyone who disputed his right to this title was guilty of capital treason...



The shelter that the city could offer refugees was like streams of water to a panting deer. Charity lay at the heart of [John] Calvin's vision. Even a Jew, if he needed assistance, might be given it. 'Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.' The readiness of Geneva to offer succour to refugees was, for Calvin, a critical measure of his success. He never doubted that many Genevans profoundly resented the influx of impecunious foreigners into their city. But nor did he ever question his responsibility to educate them anew. The achievement of Geneva in hosting vast numbers of refugees was to prove a momentous one.<sup>34</sup> [pages 324-332]

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<sup>34</sup> **Editor's note:** Just as Catholics admitted baptised Jews into their kingdoms after the expulsion of the unconverted, the Protestant counterpart made the same mistake: all based on Christian piety ('Even a Jew, if he needed assistance, might be given it.'). The subsequent history of Europe speaks for itself: it wasn't the Jews who empowered themselves but pious Christians and, later, the French Jacobins.

### Twenty-first entry

On 9 November 1620, one day after the battle of the White Mountain, a ship named the *Mayflower* arrived off a thin spit of land in the northern reaches of the New World. Crammed into its holds were a hundred passengers who, in the words of one of them, had made the gruelling two-month voyage across the Atlantic because ‘they knew they were pilgrims’—and of these ‘pilgrims’, half had set out from Leiden. These voyagers, though, were not Dutch, but English. Leiden had been only a waypoint on a longer journey: one that had begun in an England that had come to seem to the pilgrims pestiferous with sin. First, in 1607, they had left their native land; then, sailing for the New World thirteen years later, they had turned their backs on Leiden as well. Not even the godly republic of the Dutch had been able to satisfy their yearning for purity, for a sense of harmony with the divine. The Pilgrims did not doubt the scale of the challenge they faced. They perfectly appreciated that the new England which it was their ambition to found would, if they were not on their mettle, succumb no less readily to sin than the old. **Yet it offered them a breathing space: a chance to consecrate themselves as a new Israel on virgin soil...**



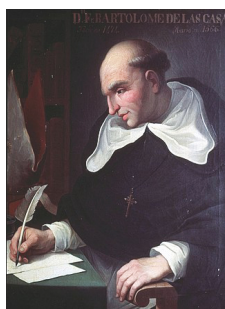
John Winthrop

Too much was at stake. It being the responsibility of elected magistrates to guide a colony along its path to godliness, only those who were visibly sanctified could possibly be allowed a vote. ‘The covenant between you and us,’ Winthrop told his electorate, ‘is the

oath you have taken of us, which is to this purpose, that we shall govern you and judge your causes by the rules of God's laws and our own, according to our best skill.' **The charge was a formidable one: to chastise and encourage God's people much as the prophets of ancient Israel had done, in the absolute assurance that their understanding of scripture was correct. No effort was spared in staying true to this mission. Sometimes it might be expressed in the most literal manner possible. In 1638, when settlers founded a colony at New Haven, they modelled it directly on the plan of an encampment that God had provided to Moses. [pages 340-343]**

### Twenty-second entry

The fall of Mexico to Christian arms had been followed by the subjugation of other fantastical lands: of Peru, of Brazil, and of islands named—in honour of Philip II—the Philippines. That God had ordained these conquests, and that Christians had not merely a right but a duty to prosecute them, remained, for many, a devout conviction. Idolatry, human sacrifice and all the other foul excrescences of paganism were still widely cited as justifications for Spain's globe-spanning empire. The venerable doctrine of Aristotle—that it was to the benefit of barbarians to be ruled by 'civilised and virtuous princes'—continued to be affirmed by theologians in Christian robes.



There was, though, an alternative way of interpreting Aristotle. In 1550, in a debate held in the Spanish city of Valladolid on whether or not the Indians were entitled to self-government, the aged Bartolomé de Las Casas had more than held his own. Who were the true barbarians, he had demanded: the Indians, a people 'gentle, patient and humble', or the Spanish conquerors, whose lust for gold and silver was no less ravaging than their cruelty? Pagan or

not, every human being had been made equally by God and endowed by him with the same spark of reason. To argue, as Las Casas' opponent had done, that the Indians were as inferior to the Spaniards as monkeys were to men was a blasphemy, plain and simple.

'All the peoples of the world are humans, and there is only one definition of all humans and of each one, that is that they are rational.' Every mortal—Christian or not—had rights that derived from God. *Derechos humanos*, Las Casas had termed them: 'human rights'. It was difficult for any Christians who accepted such a concept to believe themselves superior to pagans simply by virtue of being Christian. The vastness of the world, not to mention the seemingly infinite nature of the peoples who inhabited it, served missionaries both as an incentive and as an admonition.<sup>35</sup> [pages 346-347]

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<sup>35</sup> **Editor's note:** Bartolomé de Las Casas was my father's idol in the last decades of his life, to the extent that he composed *La Santa Furia*, a symphonic work accompanied by more than a hundred voices and a theatrical performance, which premiered in Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes on 23 February 2018. In *El Grial* I wrote a harsh review of my father's last symphonic work, who died before the premiere. Among his descendants, because of *La Santa Furia* some believe in the myth of Las Casas: one of the founders of the Black Legend. (Manuel Fernández Álvarez, a Spanish historian considered an authority in 15th and 16th century Spain, has defined the 'Black Legend' as a distortion of the history of a people to morally disqualify them, whose supremacy must be fought by all means. Based on this definition, I would add it is not uncommon in Mexico to adopt the Black Legend even on the part of self-flagellating white Mexicans of Spanish descent.)



### Twenty-third entry: *Modernitas*

**In England, where the self-identification of Puritans as the new Israel had fostered a boom in the study of Hebrew, this might on occasion shade almost into admiration. Even before Menasseh's arrival in London...**

The rabbi Menasseh ben Israel travelled from Amsterdam to London to beg that Jews be granted a legal right of residency in England... There were sectarians who claimed it a sin 'that the Jews were not allowed the open profession and exercise of their religion amongst us'. Some warned that God's anger was bound to fall on England unless repentance was shown for their expulsion. Others demanded their readmission so that they might the more easily be won for Christ, and thereby expedite the end of days. Cromwell, who convened an entire conference in Whitehall to debate Menasseh's request, was sympathetic to this perspective. Nevertheless, he failed to win formal backing for it. Accordingly—in typical fashion—he opted for compromise. Written permission for the Jews to settle in England was denied; but Cromwell did give Menasseh the private nod, and a pension of a hundred pounds...

The refusal of Cromwell to grant them a formal right of admission prompted missionaries to head for Amsterdam. The early signs were not promising. The Jews there seemed resolutely uninterested in the Quakers' message; the authorities were hostile; only one of the missionaries spoke Dutch. Nevertheless, it was not the Quaker way to despair. There was, so one of the missionaries reported, 'a spark in many of the Jews' bosoms, which in process of time may kindle to a burning flame'... A second pamphlet, *A Loving Salutation to the Seed of Abraham Among the Jews*, quickly followed. Anxious to get both tracts into Hebrew, the Quaker missionaries in Amsterdam were delighted to report back to Fell that they had successfully procured the services of a translator. This translator

was not only a skilled linguist; he had also been a pupil of none other than Menasseh himself.<sup>36</sup> [pages 372-374]

### Twenty-fourth entry

To be a Christian was to be a pilgrim. This conviction, widely shared by Protestants, did not imply any nostalgia for the dark days of popery, when monks had gulled the faithful into trekking vast distances to bow and scrape before bogus relics. Rather, it meant to journey through life in the hope that at its end the pilgrim would be met by shining angels, and dressed in raiment that shone like gold, and led into heaven, a city on a hill...

New World, though, was not New England. South of Boston and Plymouth, there was no lack of places where dissenters might settle without fear of harassment. The most visionary of all was a colony named Philadelphia: 'Brotherly Love'. William Penn, its founder, was a man of paradox. The son of one of Cromwell's admirals, he was simultaneously a dandy with close links to the royal court, and a Quaker who had repeatedly suffered imprisonment for his beliefs. Philadelphia, the capital of a huge tranche of territory granted Penn by royal charter, was designed to serve as 'a holy experiment': a city without stockades, at peace with the local Indians, in which all 'such as profess faith in Jesus Christ' might be permitted to hold office. Just as the godly colonies of New England had been founded to serve the whole world as models, so too was Philadelphia—but as a haven of tolerance. By the early eighteenth century, its streets were filled with Anabaptists as well as Quakers, and with Germans as well as English. There were Jews...

In the autumn of 1718, when a Quaker named Benjamin Lay sailed for the Caribbean with his wife, Sarah, he could do so confident that they would literally be among [the Religious Society of] Friends... One day, visiting a Quaker who lived some miles outside Bridgetown, Sarah Lay was shocked to find a naked African suspended outside his house. The man had just been savagely whipped. Blood, dripping from his twitching body, had formed a

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<sup>36</sup> *Editor's note:* This Jew was none other than Baruch Spinoza. **Protestant Christians were instrumental in reversing the ban on Jews. Soon after, they returned to England. The rest is history.**

puddle in the dust. Flies were swarming over his wounds. Like the more than seventy thousand other Africans on Barbados, the man was a slave. The Quaker, explaining to Sarah that he was a runaway, felt no need to apologise. As in the time of Gregory of Nyssa, so in the time of the Lays: slavery was regarded by the overwhelming majority of Christians as being—much like poverty, or war, or sickness—a brutal fact of life. That there was no slave nor free in Christ Jesus did not mean that the distinction itself was abolished. Europeans, who lived on a continent where the institution had largely vanished, rarely thought for that reason to condemn it out of hand.

Even Bartolomé de Las Casas, whose campaign to redeem the Indians from slavery had become the focus of his entire life, never doubted that servitude might be merited as punishment for certain crimes. In the Caribbean as in Spanish America, the need for workers who could be relied upon to toil in hot and sticky climates without dying of the tropical diseases to which European labourers were prone made the purchase of Africans seem an obvious recourse. No Christian should feel guilt. Abraham had owned slaves. Laws in the Pentateuch regulated their treatment. A letter written by Paul's followers, but attributed to Paul himself, urged them to obey their owners. 'Do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.' The punishment of a runaway, then, might well be viewed as God's work. Even Lay, despite not owning slaves himself, had been known to reach for a whip when other people's slaves stole from him. 'Sometimes I could catch them, and then I would give them Stripes.'

Lay, when he remembered bringing down the lash on a starving slave's back, did not reach for scriptural justifications. On the contrary, he felt only a crushing sense of self-abhorrence. His guilt was that of a man who had suddenly discovered himself to be in the city of Destruction. 'Oh my Heart has been pained within me many times, to see and hear; and now, now, now, it is so.' Las Casas, brought to a similar consciousness of his sin, had turned for guidance to the great inheritance of Catholic scholarship: to Cajetan, and Aquinas, and the compilers of canon law. Lay turned for guidance to the Spirit. When he and his wife, fearlessly confronting the slave-owners of Barbados, beseeched them to

‘examine your own Hearts’, it was with an inner certitude as to the ultimate meaning of Scripture.



Benjamin Lay, the four-foot hunchback who devoted his life to an ultimately successful campaign to persuade his fellow Quakers to condemn the slave trade.

The God that Lay could feel as enlightenment had bought his Chosen People out of slavery in Egypt; his son had washed feet, and suffered a death of humiliating agony, and redeemed all of humanity from servitude. To trade in slaves, to separate them from their children, to whip and rack and roast them, to starve them, to work them to death, to care nothing for the mixing into raw sugar of their ‘Limbs, Bowels and Excrements’, was not to be a Christian, but to be worse than the Devil himself. The more that the Lays, opening their home and their table to starving slaves, learned about slavery, the more furiously they denounced it—and the more unpopular they became. Forced to beat a retreat from Barbados in 1720, they were never to escape the shadow of its horrors. For the rest of their lives, their campaign to abolish slavery—quixotic though it seemed—was to be their pilgrims’ progress.

They were not the first abolitionists in the New World. Back in the 1670s, an Irish Quaker named William Edmundson had toured both Barbados and New England, campaigning to have Christianity taught to African slaves. Then, on 19 September 1676, writing to his fellow Friends in the Rhode Island settlement of Newport, he had been struck by a sudden thought. ‘And many of

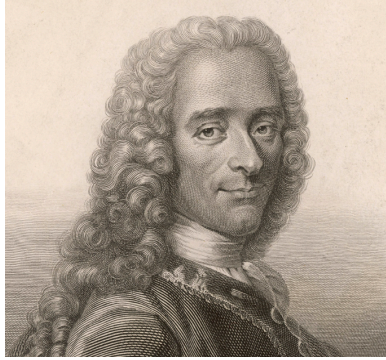
you count it unlawful to make slaves of the Indians, and if so, then why the Negroes?’

This again was to echo Las Casas. The great Spanish campaigner for human rights, in his anxiety to spare Indians enslavement, had for many decades backed the importation of Africans to do forced labour. This he had done under the impression that they were convicts, sold as punishment for their crimes. Then, late in life, he had discovered the terrible truth: that the Africans were unjustly enslaved, and no less the victims of Christian oppression than the Indians. The guilt felt by Las Casas, the revulsion and dread of damnation, had been sharpened by the sustenance that he knew he had provided to the argument of Aristotle: that certain races were suited to be slaves. **‘God has made of one blood all nations.’** When William Penn, writing in prison, cited this line of scripture, he had been making precisely the same case as Las Casas: that all of humanity had been created equally in God’s image; that to argue for a hierarchy of races was an offence against the very fundamentals of Christ’s teaching; that no peoples were fitted by the colour of their skins to serve as either masters or slaves. Naturally—since this was an argument that so self-evidently went with the grain of Christian tradition—it was capable of provoking some anxiety among the owners of African slaves. Just as opponents of the Dominican had cited Aristotle, so opponents of Quaker abolitionists might grope after obscure verses in the Old Testament.

Yet Lay’s campaign, for all that it drew on the example of the prophets, and for all that his admonitions against slavery were garlanded with biblical references, did indeed constitute something different. To target it for abolition was to endow society itself with the character of a pilgrim, bound upon a continuous journey, away from sinfulness towards the light... It was founded upon the conviction that had for centuries, in the lands of the Christian West, served as the great incubator of revolution: that society might be born again. ‘Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.’ Never once did Lay despair of these words of Jesus. Twenty years after he had gate-crashed the annual assembly of Philadelphia Friends, as he lay mortally sick in bed, he was brought news that a new assembly had voted to discipline any Quaker who traded in slaves. ‘I can now die in peace,’ he sighed in relief... Benjamin Lay had succeeded, by the time of his death in 1759, in making the

community in which he had lived just that little bit more like him—in making it just that little bit more progressive. [pages 379-386]

**Twenty-fifth entry**<sup>37</sup>



François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire)

‘He has his brethren from Beijing to Cayenne, and he reckons all the wise his brothers.’

Yet this, of course, was merely to proclaim another sect—and, what was more, one with some very familiar pretensions. The dream of a universal religion was nothing if not catholic. Ever since the time of Luther, attempts by Christians to repair the torn fabric of Christendom had served only to shred it further. The charges that Voltaire levelled against Christianity—that it was bigoted, that

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<sup>37</sup> **Editor’s note:** Why doesn’t my anti-Christian website pay homage to Voltaire or the French philosophers, so anti-Christian they were? The answer is devastatingly simple. They were all Neo-Christians. They all broke with church dogma, true: but not with the ethical code that underlies Christianity. ‘Secular Christianity,’ like that of the French Enlightenment, is even more dangerous than traditional Christianity since the atheist, the agnostic or the deist of other times believes he has emancipated himself when in reality he is as much an axiological slave to the religion of our ancestors as the most fanatic Calvinist. After a few pages in which Holland writes about the horrible torture and death inflicted on an innocent Frenchman for religious reasons, and how Voltaire reacted with pamphlets to this outrage perpetrated by Catholics, he quoted the most famous French philosopher.

it was superstitious, that its scriptures were rife with contradictions—were none of them original to him. All had been honed, over the course of two centuries and more, by pious Christians. Voltaire's God, like the Quakers', like the Collegiants', like Spinoza's, was a deity whose contempt for sectarian wrangling owed everything to sectarian wrangling. 'Superstition is to religion what astrology is to astronomy, that is the very foolish daughter of a wise and intelligent mother.' **Voltaire's dream of a brotherhood of man, even as it cast Christianity as something fractious, parochial, murderous, could not help but betray its Christian roots.** Just as Paul had proclaimed that there was neither Jew nor Greek in Christ Jesus, so—in a future blessed with full enlightenment—was there destined to be neither Jew nor Christian nor Muslim. Their every difference would be dissolved. **Humanity would be as one.**

'You are all sons of God.' Paul's epochal conviction that the world stood on the brink of a new dispensation, that the knowledge of it would be written on people's hearts, that old identities and divisions would melt and vanish away, had not released its hold on the *philosophes*. **Even those who pushed their quest for 'the light of reason' to overtly blasphemous extremes could not help but remain its heirs.**

In 1719—three years before the young Voltaire's arrival in the Dutch Republic, on his ever first trip abroad—a book had been printed there so monstrous that its 'mere title evoked fear'. *The Treatise of the Three Imposters*, although darkly rumoured to have had a clandestine existence since the age of Conrad of Marburg, had in reality been compiled by a coterie of Huguenots in The Hague. As indicated by its alternative title—*The Spirit of Spinoza*—it was a book very much of its time. Nevertheless, its solution to the rival understandings of religion that had led to the Huguenots' exile from France was one to put even the *Theological-Political Treatise* in the shade. Christ, far from being 'the voice of God', as Spinoza had argued, had been a charlatan: a sly seller of false dreams. His disciples had been imbeciles, his miracles trickery. There was no need for Christians to argue over scripture. The Bible was nothing but a spider's web of lies. Yet the authors of the *Treatise*, although they certainly aspired to heal the divisions between Protestants and Catholics by demonstrating that Christianity itself was nothing but a fraud, did not rest content with that ambition. They remained sufficiently Christian that they wished to bring light to the entire

world. Jews and Muslims too were dupes. Jesus ranked alongside Moses and Muhammad as one of three imposters. All religion was a hoax. Even Voltaire was shocked. No less committed than any priest to the truth of his own understanding of God, he viewed the blasphemies of the *Treatise* as blatant atheism, and quite as pernicious as superstition. Briefly taking a break from mocking Christians for their sectarian rivalries, he wrote a poem warning his readers not to trust the model of enlightenment being peddled by underground radicals. The *Treatise* itself was an imposture. Some sense of the divine was needed, or else society would fall apart. 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him'...

The standards by which he judged Christianity, and condemned it for its faults, were not universal. They were not shared by philosophers across the world. They were not common from Beijing to Cayenne. They were distinctively, peculiarly Christian... Atheist though he was, Diderot was too honest not to acknowledge the likeliest answer. 'If there were a Christ, I assure you that Voltaire would be saved.'

**The roots of Christianity stretched too deep, too thick, coiled too implacably around the foundations of everything that constituted the fabric of France, gripped too tightly its venerable and massive stonework, to be pulled up with any ease.** In a realm long hailed as the eldest daughter of the Church, the ambition of setting the world on a new order, of purging it of superstition, of redeeming it from tyranny, could hardly help but be shot through with Christian assumptions. **The dreams of the *philosophes* were both novel and not novel in the slightest.** [pages 392-395]

### Twenty-sixth entry<sup>38</sup>

It took effort to strip bare a basilica as vast as the one that housed Saint Martin. For a millennium and more after the great victory won by Charles Martel over the Saracens, it had continued

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<sup>38</sup> *Editor's note:* So far, I have only quoted a few paragraphs from each chapter of Holland's book. But the 'Woe to You Who Are Rich' section of the 'Enlightenment' chapter is so important that I will quote it in full. That section shows no more and no less how Christianity metamorphosed into Neo-Christianity: the mental virus that has been infecting the white man since the American Revolution and the French Revolution.



to thrive as a centre of pilgrimage. A succession of disasters—attacks by Vikings, fires—had repeatedly seen it rebuilt. So sprawling had the complex of buildings around the basilica grown that it had come to be known as Martinopolis. But revolutionaries, by their nature, relished a challenge. In the autumn of 1793, when bands of them armed with sledgehammers and pickaxes occupied the basilica, they set to work with gusto. There were statues of saints to topple, vestments to burn, tombs to smash. Lead had to be stripped from the roof, and bells removed from towers. ‘A sanctuary can do without a grille, but the defence of the Fatherland cannot do without pikes.’ So efficiently was Martinopolis stripped of its treasures that within only a few weeks it was bare. Even so—the state of crisis being what it was—the gaunt shell of the basilica could not be permitted to go to waste. West of Tours, in the Vendée, the Revolution was in peril. Bands of traitors, massed behind images of the Virgin, had risen in revolt. Patriots recruited to the cavalry, when they arrived in Tours, needed somewhere to keep their horses. The solution was obvious. The basilica of Saint Martin was converted into a stable.

Horse shit steaming in what had once been one of the holiest shrines in Christendom gave to Voltaire’s contempt for *l’infâme* a far more pungent expression than anything that might have been read in a salon. The ambition of France’s new rulers was to mould an entire ‘people of *philosophes*’. The old order had been weighed and found wanting. The monarchy itself had been abolished. The erstwhile king of France—who at his coronation had been anointed with oil brought from heaven for the baptism of Clovis, and girded with the sword of Charlemagne—had been executed as a common criminal. His decapitation, staged before a cheering crowd, had come courtesy of the guillotine, a machine of death specifically designed by its inventor to be as enlightened as it was egalitarian. Just as the king’s corpse, buried in a rough wooden coffin, had then been covered in quicklime, so had every division of rank in the country, every marker of aristocracy, been dissolved into a common citizenship. It was not enough, though, merely to set society on new foundations. The shadow of superstition reached everywhere. Time itself had to be recalibrated. That October, a new calendar was introduced. Sundays were swept away. So too was the practice of dating years from the incarnation of Christ.

Henceforward, in France, it was the proclamation of the Republic that would serve to divide the sweep of time.

Even with this innovation in place, there still remained much to be done. For fifteen centuries, priests had been leaving their grubby fingerprints on the way that the past was comprehended. All that time, they had been carrying ‘pride and barbarism in their feudal souls’. And before that? A grim warning of what might happen should the Revolution fail was to be found in the history of Greece and Rome. The radiance that lately had begun to dawn over Europe was not the continent’s first experience of enlightenment. The battle between reason and unreason, between civilisation and barbarism, between philosophy and religion, was one that had been fought in ancient times as well. ‘In the pagan world, a spirit of toleration and gentleness had ruled.’ It was this that the sinister triumph of Christianity had blotted out. Fanaticism had prevailed. Now, though, all the dreams of the *philosophes* were coming true. *L’infâme* was being crushed. **For the first time since the age of Constantine, Christianity was being targeted by a government for eradication.** Its baleful reign, banished on the blaze of revolution, stood revealed as a nightmare that for too long had been permitted to separate twin ages of progress: a middle age.

This was an understanding of the past that, precisely because so flattering to sensibilities across Europe, was destined to prove infinitely more enduring than the makeshift calendar of the Revolution. Nevertheless, just like many other hallmarks of the Enlightenment, it did not derive from the *philosophes*. The understanding of Europe’s history as a succession of three distinct ages had originally been popularised by the Reformation. To Protestants, it was Luther who had banished shadow from the world, and the early centuries of the Church, prior to its corruption by popery, that had constituted the primal age of light. By 1753, when the term ‘Middle Ages’ first appeared in English, Protestants had come to take for granted the existence of a distinct period of history: one that ran from the dying years of the Roman Empire to the Reformation. The revolutionaries, when they tore down the monastic buildings of Saint-Denis, when they expelled the monks from Cluny and left its buildings to collapse, when they reconsecrated Notre Dame as a ‘Temple of Reason’ and installed beneath its vaulting a singer dressed as Liberty, were paying unwitting tribute to an earlier period of upheaval. In Tours as well,

the desecration visited on the basilica was not the first such vandalism that it had suffered. Back in 1562, when armed conflict between Catholics and Protestants had erupted across France, a band of Huguenots had torched the shrine of Saint Martin and tossed the relics of the saint onto the fire. Only a single bone and a fragment of his skull had survived. It was hardly unsurprising, then, in the first throes of the Revolution, that many Catholics, in their bewilderment and disorientation, should initially have suspected that it was all a Protestant plot.

In truth, though, the origins of the great earthquake that had seen the heir of Clovis consigned to a pauper's grave extended much further back than the Reformation. 'Woe to you who are rich.' Christ's words might almost have been the manifesto of those who could afford only ragged trousers, and so were categorised as men 'without knee-breeches': *sans-culottes*. **They were certainly not the first to call for the poor to inherit the earth. So too had the radicals among the Pelagians, who had dreamed of a world in which every man and woman would be equal; so too had the Taborites, who had built a town on communist principles, and mockingly crowned the corpse of a king with straw; so too had the Diggers, who had denounced property as an offence against God.** Nor, in the ancient city of Tours, were the *sans-culottes* who ransacked the city's basilica the first to be outraged by the wealth of the Church, and by the palaces of its bishops. In Marmoutier, where Alcuin had once promoted scripture as the inheritance of all the Christian people, a monk in the twelfth century had drawn up a lineage for Martin that cast him as the heir of kings and emperors—and yet Martin had been no aristocrat. The silken landowners of Gaul, offended by the roughness of his manners and his dress, had detested him much as their heirs detested the militants of revolutionary France. **Like the radicals who had stripped bare his shrine, Martin had been a destroyer of idols, a scorner of privilege, a scourge of the mighty. Even amid all the splendours of Martinopolis, the most common depiction of the saint had shown him sharing his cloak with a beggar. Martin had been a *sans-culotte*.**

There were many Catholics, in the first flush of the Revolution, who had recognised this. Just as English radicals, in the wake of Charles I's defeat, had hailed Christ as the first Leveller, so were there enthusiasts for the Revolution who saluted him as 'the first *sans-culotte*'. Was not the liberty proclaimed by the Revolution the same as that proclaimed by Paul? 'You, my brothers, were called

to be free.’ This, in August 1789, had been the text at the funeral service for the men who, a month earlier, had perished while storming the Bastille, the great fortress in Paris that had provided the French monarchy with its most intimidating prison. Even the Jacobins, the Revolution’s dominant and most radical faction, had initially been welcoming to the clergy. For a while, indeed, priests were more disproportionately represented in their ranks than any other profession. As late as November 1791, the president elected by the Paris Jacobins had been a bishop. It seemed fitting, then, that their name should have derived from the Dominicans, whose former headquarters they had made their base. Certainly, to begin with, there had been little evidence to suggest that a revolution might precipitate an assault on religion.

And much from across the Atlantic to suggest the opposite. There, thirteen years before the storming of the Bastille, Britain’s colonies in North America had declared their independence. A British attempt to crush the revolution had failed. In France—where the monarchy’s financial backing of the rebels had ultimately contributed to its own collapse—the debt of the American revolution to the ideals of the *philosophes* appeared clear. There were many in the upper echelons of the infant republic who agreed. In 1783, six years before becoming their first president, the general who had led the colonists to independence hailed the United States of America as a monument to enlightenment. **‘The foundation of our Empire,’ George Washington had declared, ‘was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance and Superstition, but at an Epoch when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined than at any former period.’** This vaunt, however, had implied no contempt for Christianity. Quite the opposite. Far more than anything written by Spinoza or Voltaire, it was New England that had provided the American republic with its model of democracy, and Pennsylvania with its model of toleration. **That all men had been created equal**, and endowed with an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, **were not remotely self-evident truths. That most Americans believed they were owed less to philosophy than to the Bible: to the assurance given equally to Christians and Jews**, to Protestants and Catholics, to Calvinists and Quakers, that every human being was created in God’s image. The truest and ultimate seedbed of the American republic—no matter

what some of those who had composed its founding documents might have cared to think—was the book of Genesis.

**The genius of the authors of the United States constitution was to garb in the robes of the Enlightenment the radical Protestantism that was the prime religious inheritance of their fledgling nation.** When, in 1791, an amendment was adopted which forbade the government from preferring one Church over another, this was no more a repudiation of Christianity than Cromwell's enthusiasm for religious liberty had been. Hostility to imposing tests on Americans as a means of measuring their orthodoxy owed far more to the meeting houses of Philadelphia than to the salons of Paris. 'If Christian Preachers had continued to teach as Christ & his Apostles did, without Salaries, and as the Quakers now do, I imagine Tests would never have existed.' So wrote the polymath who, as renowned for his invention of the lightning rod as he was for his tireless role in the campaign for his country's independence, had come to be hailed as the 'first American'.



Benjamin Franklin served as a living harmonisation of New England and Pennsylvania. Born in Boston, he had run away as a young man to Philadelphia; a lifelong admirer of Puritan egalitarianism, he had published Benjamin Lay; a strong believer in divine providence, he had been shamed by the example of the Quakers into freeing his slaves. If, like the *philosophes* who much admired him as an embodiment of rugged colonial virtue, he dismissed as idle dogma anything that smacked of superstition, and doubted the divinity of Christ, then he was no less the heir of his country's Protestant traditions for that. Voltaire, meeting him in Paris, and asked to bless his grandson, had pronounced in English what he declared to be the only appropriate benediction: 'God and

liberty.’ Franklin, like the revolution for which he was such an effective spokesman, illustrated a truth pregnant with implications for the future: **that the surest way to promote Christian teachings as universal was to portray them as deriving from anything other than Christianity.**

**In France**, this was a lesson with many students. There, too, they spoke of rights. **The founding document** of the country’s revolution, the sonorously titled ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen’, had been issued barely a month after the fall of the Bastille. Part-written as it was by the American ambassador to France, it **drew heavily on the example of the United States.** The histories of the two countries, though, were very different. France was not a Protestant nation. There existed in the country a rival claimant to the language of human rights. These, so it was claimed by revolutionaries on both sides of the Atlantic, existed naturally within the fabric of things, and had always done so, transcending time and space. Yet this, of course, was quite as fantastical a belief as anything to be found in the Bible. **The evolution of the concept of human rights, mediated as it had been since the Reformation by Protestant jurists and *philosophes*, had come to obscure its original authors. It derived, not from ancient Greece or Rome, but from the period of history condemned by all right-thinking revolutionaries as a lost millennium, in which any hint of enlightenment had at once been snuffed out by monkish, book-burning fanatics. It was an inheritance from the canon lawyers of the Middle Ages.**

Nor had the Catholic Church—much diminished though it might be from its heyday—abandoned its claim to a universal sovereignty. This, to revolutionaries who insisted that ‘the principle of any sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation’, could hardly help but render it a roadblock. No source of legitimacy could possibly be permitted that distracted from that of the state. Accordingly, in 1791—even as legislators in the United States were agreeing that there should be ‘no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof’—the Church in France had been nationalised. The legacy of Gregory VII appeared decisively revoked. Only the obduracy of Catholics who refused to pledge their loyalty to the new order had necessitated the escalation of measures against Christianity itself. Even those among the revolutionary leadership who questioned the wisdom of attempting to eradicate religion from France never doubted that the

pretensions of the Catholic Church were insupportable. By 1793, priests were no longer welcome in the Jacobins. That anything of value might have sprung from the mulch of medieval superstition was a possibility too grotesque even to contemplate. Human rights owed nothing to the flux of Christian history. They were eternal and universal—and the Revolution was their guardian. ‘The Declaration of Rights is the Constitution of all peoples, all other laws being variable by nature, and subordinated to this one.’



**The Declaration of the Rights of Man portrayed as though delivered on tablets of stone from Mount Sinai.**

So declared Maximilien Robespierre, most formidable and implacable of the Jacobin leaders. Few men were more icily contemptuous of the claims on the future of the past. Long an opponent of the death penalty, he had worked fervently for the execution of the king; shocked by the vandalising of churches, he believed that virtue without terror was impotent. There could be no mercy shown the enemies of the Revolution. They bore the taint of leprosy. Only once they had been amputated, and their evil excised from the state, would the triumph of the people be assured. Only then would France be fully born again. Yet there hung over this a familiar irony. The ambition of eliminating hereditary crimes and absurdities, of purifying humanity, of bringing them from vice to virtue, was redolent not just of Luther, but of Gregory VII. The

vision of a universal sovereignty, one founded amid the humbling of kings and the marshalling of lawyers, stood recognisably in a line of descent from that of Europe's primal revolutionaries. So too their efforts to patrol dissidence. Voltaire, in his attempt to win a pardon for Calas, had compared the legal system in Toulouse to the crusade against the Albigensians. Three decades on, the mandate given to troops marching on the Vendée, issued by self-professed admirers of Voltaire, echoed the crusaders with a far more brutal precision. 'Kill them all. God knows his own.' Such was the order that the papal legate was reputed to have given before the walls of Béziers. 'Spear with your bayonets all the inhabitants you encounter along the way. I know there may be a few patriots in this region—it matters not, we must sacrifice all.' **So the general sent to pacify the Vendée in early 1794 instructed his troops. One-third of the population would end up dead: as many as a quarter of a million civilians.**

Meanwhile, back in the capital, the execution of those condemned as enemies of the people was painted by enthusiasts for revolutionary terror in recognisably scriptural colours. Good and evil locked in a climactic battle, the entire world at stake; the damned compelled to drink the wine of wrath; a new age replacing the old: here were the familiar contours of apocalypse. When, demonstrating that its justice might reach even into the grave, the revolutionary government ordered the exhumation of the royal necropolis at Saint-Denis, the dumping of royal corpses into lime pits was dubbed by those who had commissioned it the Last Judgement.

The Jacobins, though, were not Dominicans. It was precisely the Christian conviction that ultimate judgement was the prerogative of God, and that life for every sinner was a journey towards either heaven or hell, that was the object of their enlightened scorn. Even Robespierre, who believed in the eternity of the soul, did not on that count imagine that justice should be left to the chill and distant deity that he termed the Supreme Being. It was the responsibility of all who cherished virtue to work for its triumph in the here and now. The Republic had to be made pure. To imagine that a deity might ever perform this duty was the rankest superstition. **In the Gospels, it was foretold that those who had oppressed the poor would only receive their due at the end of days, when Christ would return in glory, and separate 'the people**



one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats'. But this would never happen. A people of *philosophes* could recognise it to be a fairy tale. So it was that the charge of sorting the goats from the sheep, and of delivering them to punishment, had been shouldered—selflessly, grimly, implacably—by the Jacobins.

This was why, in the Vendée, there was no attempt to do as the friars had done in the wake of the Albigensian crusade and apply to a diseased region a scalpel rather than a sword. **It was why as well, in Paris, the guillotine seemed never to take a break from its work.** As the spring of 1794 turned to summer, so its blade came to hiss ever more relentlessly, and the puddles of blood to spill ever more widely across the cobblestones. **It was not individuals who stood condemned, but entire classes.** Aristocrats, moderates, counter-revolutionaries of every stripe: all were enemies of the people.

To show them mercy was a crime. Indulgence was an atrocity; clemency parricide. Even when Robespierre, succumbing to the same kind of factional battle in which he had so often triumphed, was himself sent to the guillotine, his conviction that **'the French Revolution is the first that will have been founded on the rights of humanity'** did not fade. There needed no celestial court, no deity sat on his throne, to deliver justice. 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' So Christ, at the day of judgement, was destined to tell those who had failed to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick in prison. There was no requirement, in an age of enlightenment, to take such nonsense seriously. The only heaven was the heaven fashioned by revolutionaries on earth. Human rights needed no God to define them. Virtue was its own reward. [pages 395-405]

### Twenty-seventh entry

'The darkness of the middle ages exhibits some scenes not unworthy of our notice.' Condescension of this order, an amused acknowledgement that even amid the murk of the medieval past the odd flickering of light might on occasion be observed, was not unknown among the *philosophes*. To committed revolutionaries, however, compromise with barbarism was out of the question. The Middle Ages had been a breeding ground of superstition, and that was that. Unsurprisingly, then, there was much enthusiasm among

Jacobins for the customs and manners that had existed prior to the triumph of Christianity.



The role played by the early Church in the imaginings of the Reformation was played in the imaginings of the French Revolution by classical Greece and Rome. Festivals designed to celebrate the dawning of the new age drew their inspiration from antique temples and statuary; **the names of saints vanished from streets in Paris, to be replaced by those of Athenian philosophers**; revolutionary leaders modelled themselves obsessively on Cicero. Even when the **French Republic**, mimicking the sombre course of Roman history, succumbed to military dictatorship, the new regime continued to plunder the dressing-up box of classical antiquity. Its armies followed eagles to victories across Europe. **Its victories were commemorated in Paris on a colossal triumphal arch**. Its leader, a general of luminescent genius named Napoleon, affected the laurel wreath of a Caesar. The Church meanwhile—grudgingly tolerated by an emperor who had invited the pope to his coronation, but then refused to be crowned by him—functioned effectively as a department of state. Salt was rubbed into the wound when a saint named Napoleon was manufactured in honour of the emperor, and given his own public fête. Augustus would no doubt have approved.

Nevertheless, the notion that antiquity offered the present nothing save for models of virtue, nothing save for exemplars appropriate to an enlightened and progressive age, had limitations. In 1797, a book was published in Paris that provided a very

different perspective. Emphasis on the ‘toleration and gentleness’ of the ancients there was not... Over many hundreds of pages, the claim that empires in the remote past had regarded as perfectly legitimate customs that under the influence of Christianity had come to be regarded as crimes was rehearsed in painstaking detail.

‘The doctrine of loving one’s neighbour is a fantasy that we owe to Christianity and not to Nature.’ Yet even once Sade, set free by the Revolution, had found himself living under ‘the reign of philosophy’, in a republic committed to casting off the clammy hold of superstition, he had found that the pusillanimous doctrines of Jesus retained their grip. Specious talk of brotherhood was as common in revolutionary committee rooms as it had been in churches. In 1793—following his improbable election as president of a local committee in Paris—Sade had issued instructions to his fellow citizens that they should all paint slogans on their houses: ‘Unity, Indivisibility of the Republic, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity’.

Sade himself, though, was no more a Jacobin than he was a priest. The true division in society lay not between friends and enemies of the people, but between those who were naturally masters and those who were naturally slaves. Only when this was appreciated and acted upon would the taint of Christianity finally be eradicated, and humanity live as Nature prescribed. The inferior class of man, so a *philosophe* in *The New Justine* coolly observed, ‘is simply the species that stands next above the chimpanzee on the ladder; and the distance separating them is, if anything, less than that between him and the individual belonging to the superior caste.’

Yet if this was the kind of talk that would see Sade spend his final years consigned to a lunatic asylum, the icy pitilessness of his gaze was not insanity. More clearly than many enthusiasts for enlightenment cared to recognise, he could see that the existence of human rights was no more provable than the existence of God. In 1794, prompted by rebellion in Saint-Domingue, a French-ruled island in the West Indies, and by the necessary logic of the Declaration of Rights, the revolutionary government had proclaimed slavery abolished throughout France’s colonies; eight years later, in a desperate and ultimately futile attempt to prevent the blacks of Saint-Domingue from establishing their own republic, Napoleon reinstated it... Yet even amid the concert of the great powers there was evidence that it lived on as an ideal. That June, on

his return from preparatory negotiations in Paris, the British Foreign Secretary had been greeted by his fellow parliamentarians with a standing ovation. Among the terms of the treaty agreed by Lord Castlereagh had been one particularly startling stipulation: that Britain and France would join in a campaign to abolish the slave trade. This, to Benjamin Lay, would have been fantastical, an impossible dream...

Both in the United States and in Britain, dread that slavery ranked as a monstrous sin, for which not just individuals but entire nations were certain to be chastised by God, had come to grip vast swathes of the population. 'Can it be expected that He will suffer this great iniquity to go unpunished?' Such a question would, of course, have bewildered earlier generations of Christians. The passages in the Bible that appeared to sanction slavery remained. Plantation owners—both in the West Indies and in the southern United States—did not hesitate to quote them. But this had failed to stem the rising swell of protest. Indeed, it had left slave owners open to a new and discomfiting charge: that they were the enemies of progress. Already, by the time of the American Revolution, to be a Quaker was to be an abolitionist. The gifts of the Spirit, though, were not confined to Friends. They had come to be liberally dispensed wherever English-speaking Protestants were gathered. Large numbers of them, ranging from Baptists to Anglicans, had been graced with good news: *euangelion*. To be an Evangelical was to understand that the law of God was the law not only of justice, but of love. No one who had felt the chains of sin fall away could possibly doubt 'that slavery was ever detestable in the sight of God'. There was no time to lose. And so it was, in 1807, in the midst of a deadly struggle for survival against Napoleon, that the British parliament had passed the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade; and so it was, in 1814, that Lord Castlereagh, faced across the negotiating table by uncomprehending foreign princes, had found himself obliged to negotiate for the eradication of a business that other nations still took for granted. Amazing Grace indeed. **To Sade, of course, it all had been folly. There was no brotherhood of man; there was no duty owed the weak by the strong. Evangelicals, like Jacobins, were the dupes of their shared inheritance...**

On 8 February 1815, eight powers in Europe signed up to a momentous declaration. Slavery, it stated, was 'repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality'. The language of

evangelical Protestantism was fused with that of the French Revolution.



Marquis de Sade

Napoleon, slipping his place of exile three weeks after the declaration had been signed, and looking to rally international support for his return, had no hesitation in proclaiming his support for the declaration. That June, in the great battle outside Brussels that terminally ended his ambitions, both sides were agreed that slavery, as an institution, was an abomination. The twin traditions of Britain and France, of Benjamin Lay and Voltaire, of enthusiasts for the Spirit and enthusiasts for reason, had joined in amity even before the first cannon was fired at Waterloo. The irony was one that neither Protestants nor atheists cared to dwell upon: that an age of enlightenment and revolution had served to establish as international law a principle that derived from the depths of the Catholic past. Increasingly, it was in the language of human rights that Europe would proclaim its values to the world. [pages 407-412]

### Twenty-eighth entry

Friedrich Wilhelm had first travelled there in 1814. The highlight of the young crown prince's journey had been a visit to Cologne. The city—unlike Berlin, an upstart capital far removed from the traditional heartlands of Christendom—was an ancient one. Its foundations reached back to the time of Augustus. Its archbishop had been one of the seven electors. Its cathedral, begun in 1248 and abandoned in 1473, had for centuries been left with a crane on the massive stump of its southern tower. Friedrich Wilhelm, visiting the half-completed building, had been enraptured. He had pledged himself there and then to finishing it. Now, two years after his accession to the Prussian throne, he was ready to fulfil his vow. That summer, he ordered builders back to work. On 4 September he dedicated a new cornerstone. Then, in a

spontaneous and heartfelt address to the people of Cologne, he saluted their city. The cathedral, he declared, would rise as a monument to ‘the spirit of German unity’.

Startling evidence of this was to be found on the executive committee set up to supervise the project. Simon Oppenheim, a banker awarded a lifelong honorary membership of the board, was fabulously wealthy, highly cultured—and a Jew. Even within living memory his presence in Cologne would have been illegal. **For almost four hundred years, Jews had been banned from the devoutly Catholic city. Only in 1798, following its occupation by the French, and the abolition of its ancient privileges, had they been allowed to settle there again. Oppenheim’s father had moved to Cologne in 1799, two years before its official absorption into the French Republic. Since France’s revolutionary government, faithful to the Declaration of Rights, had granted full citizenship to its Jews,** the Oppenheims had been able to enjoy a civic equality with their Catholic neighbours. Not even a revision of this by Napoleon, who in 1808 had brought in a law expressly designed to discriminate against Jewish business interests, had dampened their sense of identification with Cologne—nor their ability to run a highly successful bank from the city. It helped as well that Prussia, by the time it came to annex the Rhineland, had already decreed that its Jewish subjects should rank as both ‘natives’ and ‘citizens’. That Napoleon’s discriminatory legislation remained on the statute book, and that the Prussian decree had continued to ban Jews from entering state employment, did nothing to diminish Oppenheim’s hopes for further progress. The cathedral was for him as a symbol not of the Christian past, but of a future in which Jews might be full and equal citizens of Germany. That was why he agreed to help fund it. Friedrich Wilhelm, rewarding him with a house call, certainly had no hesitation in saluting him as a patriot. **A Jew, it seemed, might indeed be a German.**

Except that the king, by visiting Oppenheim, was making a rather different point. To Friedrich Wilhelm, the status of Cologne Cathedral as an icon of the venerable Christian past was not some incidental detail, but utterly fundamental to his passion for seeing it finished. Half-convinced that the French Revolution had been a harbinger of the Apocalypse, he dreamed of restoring to monarchy the sacral quality that it had enjoyed back in the heyday of the Holy Roman Empire. That he himself was fat, balding and short-sighted

in the extreme did nothing to diminish his enthusiasm for posing as a latter-day Charlemagne. ‘Fatty Flounder’, as he was nicknamed, had even renovated a ruined medieval castle, and inaugurated it with a torchlit procession in fancy dress. Unsurprisingly, then, confronted by the challenge of integrating Jews into his plans for a shimmeringly Christian Prussia, he had groped after a solution that might as well have been conjured up from the Middle Ages. Only Christians, Friedrich Wilhelm argued, could be classed as Prussian. Jews should be organised into corporations. They would thereby be able to maintain their distinctive identity in an otherwise Christian realm. This was not at all what Oppenheim wished to hear. Shortly before the king’s arrival in Cologne, he had gone so far as to write an open protest. Others in the city rallied to the cause.

**The regional government pushed for full emancipation. ‘The strained relationship between Christians and Jews,’ thundered Cologne’s leading newspaper, ‘can be resolved only through unconditional equalisation of status.’** The result was deadlock. Friedrich Wilhelm—channelling the spirit of a mail-clad medieval emperor—refused to back down. Prussia, he insisted, was Christian through and through. Its monarchy, its laws, its values—all derived from Christianity. That being so, there could be no place for Jews in its administration. If they wished to become properly Prussian, then they had a simple recourse: conversion. All a Jew had to do to be considered for public office was to make ‘confession of Christianity in public acts’. This was why Friedrich Wilhelm had been willing to pay a social call on Oppenheim. What was a Jew prepared to fund a cathedral, after all, if not one close to finding Christ?



Simon Oppenheim

But the king had been deluding himself. Oppenheim had no intention of finding Christ. Instead, he and his family continued with their campaign. It was not long before Cologne, previously renowned as a bastion of chauvinism, was serving as a trailblazer for Jewish emancipation. In 1845, Napoleon's discriminatory legislation was definitively abolished. Time would see a sumptuous domed synagogue, designed by the architect responsible for the cathedral, and funded—inevitably—by the Oppenheims, rise up as one of the great landmarks of the city. Well before its construction, though, it was evident that Friedrich Wilhelm's dreams of resurrecting a medieval model of Christianity were doomed. In 1847, one particularly waspish theologian portrayed the king as a modern-day Julian the Apostate, chasing after a world forever gone. Then, as though to set the seal on this portrait, revolution returned to Europe. History seemed to be repeating itself.

In February 1848, a French king was deposed. By March, protests and uprisings were flaring across Germany. Slogans familiar from the time of Robespierre could be heard on the streets of Berlin. The Prussian queen briefly dreaded that only the guillotine was lacking. Although, in the event, the insurrectionary mood was pacified, and the tottering Prussian monarchy stabilised, concessions offered by Friedrich Wilhelm would prove enduring. His kingdom emerged from the great crisis of 1848 as—for the first time—a state with a written constitution. **The vast majority of its male inhabitants were now entitled to vote for a parliament. Among them, enrolled at last as equal citizens, were Prussia's Jews.** Friedrich Wilhelm, appalled by the threat to the divine order that he had always pledged himself to uphold, declared himself sick to the stomach. 'If I were not a Christian I would take my own life.'

Nevertheless, as the king might justifiably have pointed out, it was not Judaism that had been emancipated, but only those who practised it. Supporters of the Declaration of Rights had always been explicit on that score. The shackles of superstition were forged in synagogues no less than in churches. **'We must grant everything to Jews as individuals, but refuse to them everything as a nation!'** **This was the slogan with which, late in 1789,** proponents of Jewish emancipation in France had sought to reassure their fellow revolutionaries. 'They must form neither a political body nor an order in the state, they must be citizens individually.' And so it had come to pass. When the French Republic granted citizenship to



Jews, it had done so on the understanding that they abandon any sense of themselves as a people set apart. No recognition or protection had been offered to the Mosaic law. The identity of Jews as a distinct community was tolerated only to the degree that it did not interfere with ‘the common good’.

Here—garlanded with the high-flown rhetoric of the Enlightenment though it might be—was a programme for civic self-improvement that aimed at transforming the very essence of Judaism. Heraclius, a millennium and more previously, had attempted something very similar. The dream that Jewish distinctiveness might be subsumed into an identity that the whole world could share—one in which the laws given by God to mark the Jews out from other peoples would cease to matter—reached all the way back to Paul. Artists in the early years of the French Revolution, commissioned to depict the Declaration of Rights, had not hesitated to represent it as a new covenant, chiselled onto stone tablets and delivered from a blaze of light. Jews could either sign up to this radiant vision, or else be banished into storm-swept darkness. If this seemed to some Jews a very familiar kind of ultimatum, then that was because it was. That **the Declaration of Rights claimed an authority for itself more universal than that of Christianity only emphasised the degree to which, in the scale of its ambitions and the scope of its pretensions, it was profoundly Christian.** [pages 421-425]

### Twenty-ninth entry

The duty of a Christian nation, so Rawlinson’s colleague had advised him, was to work for the regeneration of less fortunate lands: to play a ‘noble part’. This, of course, was to cast his own country as the very model of civilisation, the standard by which all others might be judged: a conceit that came so naturally to imperial peoples that the Persians too, back in the time of Darius, had revelled in it. Yet the British, despite the certitude felt by many of them that their empire was a blessing bestowed on the world by heaven, could not entirely share in the swagger of the Great King. Pride in their dominion over palm and pine was accompanied by a certain nervousness. The sacrifice demanded by their God was a humble and a contrite heart. To rule foreign peoples—let alone to plunder them of their wealth, or to settle their lands, or to hook their cities on opium—was also, for a Christian people, never quite

to forget that their Saviour had lived as the slave, not the master, of a mighty empire. It was an official of that empire who had sentenced him to death; it was soldiers of that empire who had nailed him to a cross. Rome's dominion had long since passed away. The reign of Christ had not... In 1833, when the ban on the slave trade had been followed by the emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire, abolitionists had greeted their hour of victory in rapturously biblical terms. It was the rainbow seen by Noah over the floodwaters; it was the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; it was the breaking of the Risen Christ from his tomb. Britain, a country that for so long had been lost in the valley of the shadow of death, had emerged at last into light. Now, in atonement for her guilt, it was her responsibility to help all the world be born again.

Nonetheless, British abolitionists knew better than to trumpet their sense of Protestant mission too loudly. Slavery was widespread, after all, and one that had made many in Portugal, Spain and France exceedingly rich. A campaign against the practice could never hope to be truly international without the backing of Catholic powers. No matter that it was Britain's naval muscle that enabled slave-ships to be searched and their crews to be put on trial, the legal frameworks that licensed these procedures had to appear resolutely neutral. British jurists, conquering the deep suspicion of anything Spanish that was an inheritance from the age of Elizabeth I, brought themselves to praise the 'courage and noble principle' of Bartolomé Las Casas. The result was an entire apparatus of law—complete with treaties and international courts—that made a virtue out of merging both Protestant and Catholic traditions. In 1842, when an American diplomat **defined the slave trade as a 'crime against humanity'**, the term was one calculated to be acceptable to lawyers of all Christian denominations—and none. **Slavery, which only decades previously had been taken almost universally for granted, was now redefined as evidence of savagery and backwardness. To oppose it was to side with progress.** To support it was to stand condemned before the bar, not just of Christianity, but of every religion...

The owning of slaves was licensed by the Qur'an, by the example of Muhammad himself, and by the Sunna, that great corpus of Islamic traditions and practices. Who, then, were Christians to demand its abolition? But the British, to the growing bafflement of Muslim rulers, refused to leave the question alone.

Back in 1840, pressure on the Ottomans to eradicate the slave trade had been greeted in Constantinople, as the British ambassador in the city put it, ‘with extreme astonishment and a smile at the proposition of destroying an institution closely interwoven with the frame of society’. A decade later, when the sultan found himself confronted by a devastating combination of military and financial crises, British support came at a predictable price. In 1854, the Ottoman government was obliged to issue a decree prohibiting the slave trade across the Black Sea; three years later the African slave trade was banned. Also abolished was the *jizya*, the tax on Jews and Christians that reached back to the very beginnings of Islam, and was directly mandated by the Qur’an. Such measures, of course, risked considerable embarrassment to the sultan. Their effect was, after all, to reform the Sunna according to the standards of the thoroughly infidel British. To acknowledge that anything contrary to Islamic tradition had been forced on a Muslim ruler by Christians was clearly unthinkable; and so Ottoman reformers instead made sure to claim a sanction of their own. Circumstances, they argued, had changed since the time of the Prophet. Insidiously, among elite circles in the Islamic world, a novel understanding of legal proprieties was coming to be fostered: an understanding that derived ultimately not from Muhammad, nor from any Muslim jurist, but from Saint Paul...

In the United States, escalating tensions over the rights and wrongs of the institution had helped to precipitate, **in 1861, the secession of a confederacy of southern states**, and a terrible war with what remained of the Union. Naturally, for as long as Americans continued to slaughter one another in battle, there could be no definitive resolution of the issue. Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1863, the United States president, Abraham Lincoln, had issued a proclamation, declaring all slaves on Confederate territory to be free. Clearly, should the Unionists only emerge victorious from the civil war, then slavery was liable to be abolished across the country. It was in support of this eventuality that the mayor of Tunis sought to offer his encouragement. Aware that the Americans were unlikely to be swayed by citations from Islamic scripture, he concluded his letter by urging them to act instead out of ‘human mercy and compassion’.



Here, perhaps, lay the ultimate demonstration of just how effective the attempt by Protestant abolitionists to render their campaign universal had become. A cause that, only a century earlier, had been the preserve of a few crankish Quakers had come to spread far and wide like the rushing wildfire of the Spirit. It did not need missionaries to promote evangelical doctrines around the world. Lawyers and ambassadors might achieve it even more effectively: for they did it, in the main, by stealth. A crime against humanity was bound to have far more resonance beyond the limits of the Christian world than a crime against Christ. A crusade, it turned out, might be more effective for keeping the cross well out of sight...

The more the tide of global opinion turned against slavery, so the more the prestige of the nation that had first recanted it was inevitably burnished. **'England,' exclaimed a Persian prince in 1862, 'assumes to be the determined enemy of the slave trade, and has gone to an enormous expense to liberate the African races, to whom she is no way bound save by the tie of a common humanity.'** Yet already, even as he was expressing his wonderment at such selflessness, the British were busy capitalising on the prestige it had won them. In 1857, a treaty that committed the shah to suppressing the slave trade in the Persian Gulf had also served to consolidate Britain's influence over his country. Meanwhile, in the heart of Africa, missionaries were starting to venture where Europeans had never before thought to go. Reports they brought back, of the continuing depredations of Arab slavers, confirmed the view of many in Britain that slavery would never be wholly banished until

the entire continent had been won for civilisation. That this equated to their own rule was, of course, taken for granted. 'I will search for the lost and bring back the strays.' So God had declared in the Bible. 'I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy.' [pages 429-434]

### Thirtieth entry<sup>39</sup>

For centuries, in the Christian world, it had been the great project of natural philosophy to identify the laws that animated God's creation, and thereby to arrive at a closer understanding of God himself. Now, with *The Origin of Species*, a law had been formulated that—even as it unified the realm of life with that of time—seemed to have no need of God at all. Not merely a theory, it was itself a startling display of evolution. But was it right? By 1876, the most impressive evidence for Darwin's theory had been uncovered in what was fast proving to be the world's premier site for fossil beds: the American West. E.D. Cope was not the only palaeontologist to have made spectacular discoveries there...

Nervousness at the idea that humanity might have evolved from another species was not bred merely of a snobbery towards monkeys. Something much more was at stake. **To believe that God had become man and suffered the death of a slave was to believe that there might be strength in weakness, and victory in defeat.**

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<sup>39</sup> *Editor's note:* When my grandparents were children the science of *eugenics* applied to human beings, based on Darwin's findings, was flourishing on both sides of the Atlantic. It was drastically interrupted after the Second World War because after that war the West decided to do everything backwards from the way Hitler's Germany was doing it. The result has been *massive dysgenesis* throughout the West, especially as elites flooded their countries with millions of non-white migrants, many of whom have interbred with the natives. What Darwin, the subject of this chapter, said between the lines, Gobineau set out in a whole book. Joseph Arthur, Count de Gobineau (1816-1882) was the one who elaborated the theory of Aryan racial superiority in *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*. He is considered the father of racial demography. Count Gobineau's works were seminal to demonstrate that the race factor is central to the understanding of human history. But after the war, as with eugenics, his findings were dismissed for ideological reasons.

Darwin's theory, more radically than anything that previously had emerged from Christian civilisation, challenged that assumption. Weakness was nothing to be valued. Jesus, by commending the meek and the poor over those better suited to the great struggle for survival that was existence, had set *Homo sapiens* upon the downward path towards degeneration.

For eighteen long centuries, the Christian conviction that all human life was sacred had been underpinned by one doctrine more than any other: that man and woman were created in God's image. The divine was to be found as much in the pauper, the convict or the prostitute as it was in the gentleman with his private income and book-lined study. Darwin's house, despite its gardens, private wood and greenhouse filled with orchids, stood on the margins of an unprecedented agglomeration of brick and smoke. Beyond the fields where he would lovingly inspect the workings of worms there stretched what Rome had been in Augustus' day: the capital of the largest empire in the world. Just as Rome had once done, London sheltered disorienting extremes of privilege and squalor. The Britain of Darwin's day, though, could boast what no one in Augustus' Rome had ever thought to sponsor: campaigns to redeem the poor, the exploited, the diseased.



Darwin himself, the grandson of two prominent abolitionists, knew full well the impulse from which these sprang. The great cause of social reform was Christian through and through. 'We build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment.' And yet the verdict delivered by Darwin on these displays of philanthropy was a fretful one. Much as the Spartans had done, when they flung sickly babies down a ravine, he dreaded the consequences for the strong of permitting the weak to propagate themselves. **'No one who has**

**attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.'**

Here, for any Quaker, was a peculiarly distressing assertion. Cope knew the traditions to which he was heir. It was Quakers who had first lit the fire which, in the recent civil war, had come to consume the institution of American slavery; it was Quakers who, in America as in Britain, had taken the lead in campaigning for prison reform. Whatever they did for the least of their Saviour's brothers and sisters, they did for Christ himself. How, then, could this conviction possibly be squared with what Cope, in mingled scorn and dread, termed 'the Darwinian law of the "survival of the fittest"'? The question was one that had perturbed Darwin himself. He remained sufficiently a Christian to define any proposal to abandon the weak and the poor to their fate as 'evil'. The instincts that had fostered a concern for the disadvantaged must themselves, he noted, have been the product of natural selection. Presumably, then, they had to be reckoned to serve some evolutionary purpose. Yet Darwin hovered. **In private conversations he would confess that, because 'in our modern civilisation natural selection had no play', he feared for the future. Christian notions of charity—however much he might empathise with them personally—were misplaced. Only continue to give them free rein, and the peoples who clung to them were bound to degenerate.**

And this, were it to happen, would be to the detriment of the entire human race. Here, at any rate, Cope was in perfect accord with Darwin. He had taken the railroad across the vast expanses of the Great Plains, and he had sent telegrams from forts planted in the lands of the Sioux, and he had seen their hunting grounds littered for miles around with the bleached bones of bison, felled by the very latest in repeating rifles. He knew that Custer's defeat had been only a temporary aberration. The native tribes of America were doomed. The advance of the white race was inexorable. It was their manifest destiny. This was evident around the world. In Africa, where a variety of European powers were scheming to carve up the continent; in Australia, and New Zealand, and Hawaii, where there was no resisting the influx of white colonists; in Tasmania, where an entire native people had already been driven to extinction. 'The grade of their civilisation,' as Darwin put it, 'seems to be a most important element in the success of competing nations.'

How were these differences, between a white and a native American, between a European and a Tasmanian, most plausibly to be explained? The traditional response of a Christian would have been to assert that between two human beings of separate races there was no fundamental difference: both had equally been created in the image of God. To Darwin, however, his theory of natural selection suggested a rather different answer. As a young man, he had sailed the seas of the world, and he had noted how, ‘wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the aboriginal’. **His feelings of compassion** for native peoples, and his matching distaste for white settlers, **had not prevented him from arriving at a stark conclusion: that there had come to exist over the course of human existence a natural hierarchy of races...** The progress of Europeans had enabled them, generation by generation, to outstrip ‘the intellectual and social faculties’ of more savage peoples. Cope—despite his refusal to accept Darwin’s explanation for how and why this might have happened—conceded that he had a point. Clearly, in humanity as in any other species, the operations of evolution were perpetually at work. ‘We all admit the existence of higher and lower races,’ Cope acknowledged, ‘the latter being those which we now find to present greater or less approximation to the apes.’



So it was that an attempt by a devout Quaker to reconcile the workings of God with those of nature brought him to an understanding of humanity that would have appalled Benjamin Lay. Cope’s conviction that a species could will itself towards perfection enabled him to believe as well that different forms of the same species could co-exist. Whites, he argued, had elevated themselves to a new degree of consciousness. Other races had not. In 1877, a year after he had lain amid the fossil beds of Montana, oppressed by terrible dreams, Edward Drinker Cope formally resigned from the Society of Friends. [pages 439-444]



### Thirty-first entry

Capitalism, in Lenin's opinion, was doomed to collapse. The workers of the world—the 'proletariat'—were destined to inherit the earth. The abyss that yawned between 'the handful of arrogant millionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism' made the triumph of communism certain. For two weeks, Lenin and thirty-seven others had been in London to debate how this coming revolution in the affairs of the world might best be expedited—but that the laws of evolution made it inevitable none of them doubted. This was why, as though to a shrine, Lenin had led his fellow delegates to the museum. It was only a single stop, however. London had a second, an even holier shrine. The surest guide to the functioning of human society, and to the parabola of its future, had been provided not by Darwin, but by a second bearded thinker who, Job-like, had suffered from bereavement and boils. Every time Lenin came to London he would visit the great man's grave; 1905 was no exception. The moment the congress was over, Lenin had taken the delegates up to the cemetery in the north of the city where, twenty-two years earlier, their teacher, the man who—more than any other—had inspired them to attempt the transformation of the world, lay buried. Standing before the grave, the thirty-eight disciples paid their respects to Karl Marx. There had been only a dozen people at his funeral in 1883.<sup>40</sup>

None, though, had ever had any doubts as to his epochal significance. One of the mourners, speaking over the open grave, had made sure to spell it out. 'Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution as it applies to organic matter, so Marx discovered the law of evolution as it applies to human history'... Marx, the grandson

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<sup>40</sup> *Editor's note:* That is the year following the deaths of Darwin and Gobineau. What infected the world after the misnamed Age of Enlightenment wasn't racial studies; rather, millions of whites took as their new Messiah a bearded man. Darwin expected blacks to become extinct as white peoples took over their territories. It never occurred to him that Christian ethics would metastasise to such delusional levels that, in our century, it is whites who may become extinct.

of a rabbi and the son of a Lutheran convert, dismissed both Judaism and Christianity as ‘stages in the development of the human mind—different snake skins cast off by history, and man as the snake who cast them off’. An exile from the Rhineland, expelled from a succession of European capitals for mocking the religiosity of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, he had arrived in London with personal experience of the uses to which religion might be put by autocrats. Far from amplifying the voices of the suffering, it was a tool of oppression, employed to stifle and muzzle protest...

**‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.’** Here was a slogan with the clarity of a scientific formula. Except, of course, that it was no such thing. Its line of descent was evident to anyone familiar with the Acts of the Apostles. **‘Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to everyone as he had need.’** Repeatedly throughout Christian history, the communism practised by the earliest Church had served radicals as their inspiration. Marx, when he dismissed questions of morality and justice as epiphenomena, **was concealing the true germ of his revolt against capitalism behind jargon.** A beard, he had once joked, was something ‘without which no prophet can succeed’...

Marx’s interpretation of the world appeared fuelled by certainties that had no obvious source in his model of economics. They rose instead from profounder depths. Again and again, the magma flow of his indignation would force itself through the crust of his scientific-sounding prose. For a self-professed materialist, he was oddly prone to seeing the world as the Church Fathers had once done: as a battleground between cosmic forces of good and evil... The very words used by Marx to construct his model of class struggle—‘exploitation’, ‘enslavement’, ‘avarice’—owed less to the chill formulations of economists than to something far older: the claims to divine inspiration of the biblical prophets. If, as he insisted, he offered his followers a liberation from Christianity, then it was one that seemed eerily like a recalibration of it. Lenin and his fellow delegates, meeting in London that spring of 1905, would have been contemptuous of any such notion, of course. Religion—opium of the people that it was—would need, if the victory of the proletariat were properly to be secured, to be eradicated utterly. Oppression in all its forms had to be eliminated. The ends justified the means. Lenin’s commitment to this principle was absolute. Already, the single-mindedness with which he insisted on it had

precipitated schism in the ranks of Marx's followers. The congress held in London had been exclusively for those of them who defined themselves as Bolsheviks: the 'Majority'.



*Lenin in Razliv village* by Viktor Tsvetkov.

Communists who insisted, in opposition to Lenin, on working alongside liberals, on confessing qualms about violence, on worrying that Lenin's ambitions for a tightly organised, strictly disciplined party threatened dictatorship, were not truly communists at all—just a sect. Sternly, like the Donatists, the Bolsheviks dismissed any suggestion of compromising with the world as it was. **Eagerly, like the Taborites, they yearned to see the apocalypse arrive, to see paradise established on earth. Fiercely, like the Diggers, they dreamed of an order in which land once held by aristocrats and kings would become the property of the people, a common treasury. Lenin, who was reported to admire both the Anabaptists of Münster and Oliver Cromwell, was not entirely contemptuous of the past.** Proofs of what was to come were plentiful there. History, like an arrow, was proceeding on its implacable course. Capitalism was destined to collapse, and the paradise lost by humanity at the beginning of time to be restored. Those who doubted it had only to read the teachings and prophecies of their great teacher to be reassured.

The hour of salvation lay at hand. [pages 454-458]

### Thirty-second entry

‘Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction?—for even gods putrefy! God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.’ To read these words beside the Somme [*during WWI—Ed.*], amid a landscape turned to mud and ash, and littered with the mangled bodies of men, was to shiver before the possibility that there might not be, after all, any redemption in sacrifice. Nietzsche had written them back in 1882: the parable of a madman who one bright morning lit a lantern and ran to the marketplace, where no one among his listeners would believe his news that God had bled to death beneath their knives.

Little in Nietzsche’s upbringing seemed to have prefigured such blasphemy. The son of a Lutheran pastor, and named after Friedrich Wilhelm IV, his background had been one of pious provincialism. Precocious and brilliant, he had obtained a professorship when he was only twenty-four; but then, only a decade later, had resigned it to become a shabbily genteel bum. Finally, seeming to confirm the sense of a squandered career, he had suffered a terrible mental breakdown. For the last eleven years of his life, he had been confined to a succession of clinics.<sup>41</sup> Few, when he finally died in 1900, had read the books that, in an escalating frenzy of production, he had written before his collapse into madness. Posthumously, though, his fame had grown with startling rapidity. By 1914, when Otto Dix marched to war with his writings in his knapsack, Nietzsche’s name had emerged to become one of the most controversial in Europe. Condemned by many as the most dangerous thinker who had ever lived, others hailed him as a prophet. There were many who considered him both.

Nietzsche was not the first to have become a byword for atheism, of course. No one, though—not Spinoza, not Darwin, not Marx—had ever before dared to gaze quite so unblinkingly at what

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<sup>41</sup> **Editor’s note:** Actually, he was briefly institutionalised. Most of the years following the psychotic crisis of January 1889 (some biographers would date it on December 1888), Nietzsche spent his time at home with his mother, and later with his sister.

the murder of its god might mean for a civilisation. ‘When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one’s feet.’<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche’s loathing for those who imagined otherwise was intense. Philosophers he scorned as secret priests. Socialists, communists, democrats: all were equally deluded. ‘Naiveté: as if morality could survive when the *God* who sanctions it is missing!’ Enthusiasts for the Enlightenment, self-proclaimed rationalists who imagined that men and women possessed inherent rights, Nietzsche regarded with contempt. It was not from reason that their doctrine of human dignity derived, but rather from the very faith that they believed themselves—in their conceit—to have banished. Proclamations of rights were nothing but flotsam and jetsam left behind by the retreating tide of Christianity: bleached and stranded relics. God was dead—but in the great cave that once had been Christendom his shadow still fell, an immense and frightful shadow.<sup>43</sup>

For centuries, perhaps, it would linger. Christianity had reigned for two millennia. It could not easily be banished. Its myths would long endure. They were certainly no less mythical for casting themselves as secular. ‘Such phantoms as the dignity of man, the dignity of labour’: these were Christian through and through.<sup>44</sup>

Nietzsche did not mean this as a compliment. It was not just as frauds that he despised those who clung to Christian morality, even as their knives were dripping with the blood of God; he loathed them as well for believing in it. **Concern for the lowly and the suffering, far from serving the cause of justice, was a form of poison.** Nietzsche, more radically than many a theologian, had

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<sup>42</sup> *Editor’s note:* On my website I have been quoting the full quote, which includes a strong criticism of the English who subscribe to so-called secular humanism: ‘In England one must rehabilitate oneself after every little emancipation from theology by showing in a veritably awe-inspiring manner what a moral fanatic one is. That is the *penance* they pay there. —We others hold otherwise. When one gives up the Christian faith, one *pulls the right* to Christian morality out from under one’s feet.’

<sup>43</sup> *Editor’s note:* The title of this chapter is precisely ‘Shadow’.

<sup>44</sup> *Editor’s note:* The key to understanding the West’s darkest hour was provided to me by the sombre final pages of William Pierce’s history of the white race, *Who We Are*. History has an enormous inertia, and if we want to understand the present we must know that we are slaves to this inertia.

penetrated to the heart of everything that was most shocking about the Christian faith. 'To devise something which could even approach the seductive, intoxicating, anaesthetising, and corrupting power of that symbol of the "holy cross", that horrific paradox of the "crucified God", that mystery of an inconceivably ultimate, most extreme cruelty and self-crucifixion undertaken for the salvation of mankind?' **Like Paul, Nietzsche knew it to be a scandal. Unlike Paul, he found it repellent. The spectacle of Christ being tortured to death had been bait for the powerful. It had persuaded them—the strong and the healthy, the beautiful and the brave, the powerful and the self-assured—that it was their natural inferiors, the hungry and the humble, who deserved to inherit the earth.** <sup>45</sup>

'Helping and caring for others, being of use to others, constantly excites a sense of power.' Charity, in Christendom, had become a means to dominate. Yet Christianity, by taking the side of everything ill-constituted, and weak, and feeble, had made all of humanity sick. Its **ideals of compassion and equality before God were bred not of love, but of hatred: a hatred of the deepest and most sublime order, one that had transformed the very character of morality, a hatred the like of which had never before been seen on earth.**

This was the revolution that Paul—'that hate-obsessed false-coiner'—had set in motion. The weak had conquered the strong; the slaves had vanquished their masters. 'Ruined by cunning, secret, invisible, anaemic vampires! Not conquered—only sucked dry! Covert revengefulness, petty envy become master!' Nietzsche, when he mourned antiquity's beasts of prey, did so with the passion of a scholar who had devoted his life to the study of their civilisation... That Nietzsche himself was a short-sighted invalid prone to violent migraines had done nothing to inhibit his admiration for the aristocracies of antiquity, and their heedlessness towards the sick and the weak. **A society focused on the feeble was a society enfeebled itself. This it was that had rendered Christians such malevolent blood-suckers. If it was the taming of the Romans**

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<sup>45</sup> *Editor's note:* The fact that whites today are literally handing over their lands to prolific non-white migrants while inhibiting their own birth rates is the greatest self-betrayal and psychosis ever to occur in History: a phenomenon that must be pondered thoroughly until we understand what is going on.

that Nietzsche chiefly rued, then he regretted as well how they had battered onto other nations.



Otto Dix's life-size bust of Nietzsche. Holland himself took this photo.

Nietzsche himself, whose contempt for the Germans was exceeded only by his disdain for the English, had so little time for nationalism that he had renounced his Prussian citizenship when he was only twenty-four, and died stateless; and yet, for all that, he had always lamented the fate of his forebears. Once, before the coming of Boniface, the forests had sheltered Saxons who, in their ferocity and their hunger for everything that was richest and most intense in life, had been predators no less glorious than lions: 'blond beasts'. But then the missionaries had arrived. The blond beast had been tempted into a monastery. 'There he now lay, sick, wretched, malevolent toward himself; filled with hatred of the vital drives, filled with suspicion towards all that was still strong and happy. In short, a "Christian".'

### Thirty-third entry

‘Wherever you find them, beat up the Fascists!’

The name derived from the palmy days of ancient Rome. The fasces, a bundle of scourging rods, had served the guards appointed to elected magistrates as emblems of their authority. Not every magistrate in Roman history, though, had necessarily been elected. Times of crisis had demanded exceptional measures. Julius Caesar, following his defeat of Pompey, had been appointed dictator: an office that had permitted him to take sole control of the state. Each of his guards had carried on their shoulders, bundled up with the scourging rods, an axe. Nietzsche, predicting that a great convulsion was approaching, a repudiation of the pusillanimous Christian doctrines of equality and compassion, had foretold as well that those who led the revolution would ‘become devisers of emblems and phantoms in their enmity’. Time had proven him right. The fasces had become the badge of a brilliantly successful movement.

By 1930, Italy was ruled—as it had been two millennia previously—by a dictator. Benito Mussolini, an erstwhile socialist whose reading of Nietzsche had led him, by the end of the Great War, to dream of forming a new breed of man, an elite worthy of a fascist state, cast himself both as Caesar and as the face of a gleaming future. From the fusion of ancient and modern, melded by the white-hot genius of his leadership, there was to emerge a new Italy. Whether greeting the massed ranks of his followers with a Roman salute or piloting an aircraft, Mussolini posed in ways that consciously sought to erase the entire span of Christian history. Although, in a country as profoundly Catholic as Italy, he had little choice but to cede a measure of autonomy to the Church, his ultimate aim was to subordinate it utterly, to render it the handmaid of the fascist state. Mussolini’s more strident followers exulted nakedly in this goal. ‘Yes indeed, we are totalitarians! We want to be from morning to evening, without distracting thoughts.’

In Berlin too there were such men. The storm troopers of a movement that believed simultaneously in racism and in the subordination of all personal interests to a common good, they called themselves *Nationalsozialisten*: ‘National Socialists’. Their opponents, in mockery of their pretensions, called them Nazis. But



this only betrayed fear. The National Socialists courted the hatred of their foes. An enemy's loathing was something to be welcomed. It was the anvil on which a new Germany was to be forged. 'It is not compassion but courage and toughness that save life, because war is life's eternal disposition.' As in Italy, so in Germany, fascism worked to combine the glamour and the violence of antiquity with that of the modern world. There was no place in this vision of the future for the mewling feebleness of Christianity. **The blond beast was to be liberated from his monastery.** A new age had dawned. Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazis, was not, as Mussolini could claim to be, an intellectual; but he did not need to be.

Over the course of a life that had embraced living in a dosshouse, injury at the Somme, and imprisonment for an attempted putsch, he had come to feel himself summoned by a mysterious providence to transform the world. Patchily read in philosophy and science he might be, but of one thing he was viscerally certain: destiny was written in a people's blood. There was no universal morality. A Russian was not a German. Every nation was different, and **a people that refused to listen to the dictates of its soul was a people doomed to extinction.** 'All who are not of good race in this world,' Hitler warned, 'are chaff.'

**Once, in the happy days of their infancy, the German people had been at one with the forests in which they lived. They had existed as a tree might: not just as the sum of its branches, its twigs and its leaves, but as a living, organic whole. But then the soil from which the Nordic race were sprung had been polluted.** Their sap had been poisoned. Their limbs had been cut back. Only surgery could save them now. Hitler's policies, although rooted in a sense of race as something primordially ancient, were rooted as well in the clinical formulations of evolutionary theory. The measures that would restore purity to the German people were prescribed equally by ancient chronicles and by Darwinist textbooks. To eliminate those who stood in the way of fulfilling such a programme was not a crime, but a responsibility. 'Apes massacre all fringe elements as alien to their community.' Hitler did not hesitate to draw the logical conclusion. 'What is valid for monkeys must be all the more valid for humans.' Man was as subject to the struggle for life, and to the need to preserve the purity of his race, as any other species. To put this into practice was not cruelty. It was simply the way of the world...

In 1933, the year that Hitler was appointed chancellor, Protestant churches across Germany marked the annual celebration of the Reformation by singing Wessel's battle hymn. In Berlin Cathedral, a pastor shamelessly aped Goebbels. Wessel, he preached, had died just as Jesus had died. Then, just for good measure, he added that Hitler was 'a man sent by God'.<sup>46</sup> Yet Christians, if they thought this would curry favour with the Nazi leadership, let alone influence it, were deluding themselves. To parody Christianity was not to show it respect, but to cannibalise it. Out in the woods, eager young **National Socialists would burn copies of the Bible on great fires, and then—to prove how we despise all the cults of the world except the ideology of Hitler—sing the *Horst Wessel Lied*.** On the Rhine, in the amphitheatres of what had once been Roman cities, girls might gather by night to celebrate Wessel's birthday with dances and prayers to his spirit, 'to make them good bearers of children'.

Boniface, travelling across the Rhine twelve hundred years before, had witnessed very similar things. Dismay at the spectacle of pagan practices in a supposedly Christian land had led him to devote much of his life to combating them. Now, though, his heirs faced an even more grievous threat. Missionaries to Germany in the eighth century had been able to count on the support of the Frankish monarchy in their labours. No such backing was forthcoming from the Nazis. **Hitler, who in 1928 had loudly proclaimed his movement to be Christian, had come to regard Christianity with active hostility.** Its morality, its concern for the weak, he had always viewed as cowardly and shameful. Now that he was in power, he recognised in the claim of the Church to a sphere distinct from the state—that venerable inheritance from the Gregorian revolution—a direct challenge to the totalitarian mission of National Socialism. Although, like Mussolini, Hitler was willing to tread carefully at first—and even, in 1933, to sign a concordat

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<sup>46</sup> **Editor's note:** Horst Wessel (1907-1930) was a Berlin leader of the NSDAP's SA, killed by Communists and became a National Socialist martyr. A march he had written the lyrics to was renamed the *Horst Wessel Lied* and became the co-national anthem of NS Germany. After the war the lyrics and tune of his song were made illegal in Germany, his memorial vandalised and his gravestone and remains destroyed.

with the papacy—he had no intention of holding to it for long. Christian morality had resulted in any number of grotesque excrescences: alcoholics breeding promiscuously while upstanding national comrades struggled to put food on the table for their families; mental patients enjoying clean sheets while healthy children were obliged to sleep three or four to a bed; cripples having money and attention lavished on them that should properly be devoted to the fit. Idiocies such as these were precisely what National Socialism existed to terminate. **The churches had had their day. The new order, if it were to endure for a millennium, would require a new order of man. It would require *Übermenschen*.**



**By 1937, then, Hitler had begun to envisage the elimination of Christianity once and for all.** The objections of church leaders to the state's ongoing sterilisation of idiots and cripples infuriated him. His own preference—one that he fully intended to act upon in the event of war—was for euthanasia to be applied in a comprehensive manner. This, a policy that was sanctioned both by ancient example and by the most advanced scientific thinking, was something that the German people needed urgently to be brought to accept. Clearly, there was no prospect of them fulfilling their racial destiny while they were still cancerous with compassion. **Among the Schutzstaffel, the elite paramilitary organisation that served as the most efficient instrument of Hitler's will, the destruction of Christianity came to be regarded as a particular vocation.** Heinrich Himmler, the commander of the SS, plotted a fifty-year programme that he trusted would see the religion utterly erased. Otherwise, Christianity might once again prove the bane of the blond beast.

For the Germans to continue in their opposition to policies so transparently vital for their own racial health was insanity.

'Harping on and on that God died on the cross out of pity for the weak, the sick, and the sinners, they then demand that the genetically diseased be kept alive in the name of a doctrine of pity that goes against nature, and of a misconceived notion of humanity.' The strong, as science had conclusively demonstrated, had both a duty and an obligation to eliminate the weak. **Yet if Christianity—as Hitler had come to believe—was 'the heaviest blow that ever struck humanity', then it was not enough merely to eradicate it. A religion so pernicious that it had succeeded both in destroying the Roman Empire and in spawning Bolshevism could hardly have emerged from nowhere. What source of infection could possibly have bred such a plague? Clearly, there was no more pressing question for a National Socialist to answer. Whatever the bacillus, it needed to be identified fast, and—if the future of the German people were to be set on stable foundations, enduring enough to last for a thousand years—destroyed.** [pages 471-476]

#### **Thirty-fourth entry**<sup>47</sup>

In 1938, a German editor wishing to publish him had written to ask if he were of Jewish origin. 'I regret,' Tolkien had replied, 'that I appear to have *no* ancestors of that gifted people.' That the Nazis' racism lacked any scientific basis he took for granted; but his truest objection to it was as a Christian. Of course, steeped in the literature of the Middle Ages as he was, he knew full well the role played by his own Church in the stereotyping and persecution of the Jews. In his imaginings, however, he saw them not as the hook-nosed vampires of medieval calumny, but rather as 'a holy race of valiant men, the people of Israel the lawful children of God'. These lines, from an Anglo-Saxon poem on the crossing of the Red Sea, were precious to Tolkien, for he had translated them himself. There was in them the same sense of identification with Exodus as had inspired Bede. Moses, in the poem, was represented as a mighty king, 'a prince of men with a marching

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<sup>47</sup> **Editor's note:** The section 'In the Darkness Bind Them' of Holland's chapter 'Shadow' opens with a few pages describing the life and work of J.R.R. Tolkien and mentions the fascinating anecdote that, in the muddy trenches of the Somme in the First World War, soldiers Tolkien and Hitler were on opposite sides. Otto Dix, mentioned in a previous entry, was also on the side fighting against Tolkien.

company'. Tolkien, writing *The Lord of the Rings* even as the Nazis were expanding their empire from the Atlantic to Russia, draw freely on such poetry for his own epic. Central to the plot was the return of a king: an heir to a long-abandoned throne named Aragorn. If the armies of Mordor were satanic like those of Pharaoh, then Aragorn—emerging from exile to deliver his people from slavery—had more than a touch of Moses. As in Bede's monastery, so in Tolkien's study: a hero might be imagined as simultaneously Christian and Jewish. This was no isolated, donnish eccentricity. **Across Europe, the readiness of Christians to identify themselves with the Jews had become the measure of their response to the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history. Tolkien—ever the devout Catholic—was doing nothing that popes had not also done. In September 1938, the ailing Pius XI had declared himself spiritually a Jew.**

One year later, with Poland defeated and subjected by German forces to an unspeakably brutal occupation, his successor had issued his first public letter to the faithful. Pius XII, lamenting the ploughing of blood-drenched furrows with swords, pointedly cited Paul: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek.' Always, from the earliest days of the Church, this was a phrase that had particularly served to distinguish *Christianismos* from *Ioudaismos*, Christianity from Judaism. Between Christians, who celebrated the Church as the mother of all nations, and Jews, appalled at any prospect of having their distinctiveness melt away into the great mass of humanity, the dividing line had long been stark. But that was not how it seemed to the Nazis.



When Pius XII quoted Genesis to rebuke those who would forget that humanity had a common origin, and that all the peoples of the world had a duty of charity to one another, the response from Nazi theorists was vituperative. To them, it appeared self-evident that universal morality was a fraud perpetrated by Jews. ‘Can we still tolerate our children being obliged to learn that Jews and Negroes, just like Germans or Romans, are descended from Adam and Eve, simply because a Jewish myth says so?’ Not merely pernicious, **the doctrine that all were one in Christ ranked as an outrage against the fundamentals of science. For centuries, the Nordic race had been infected by it.** The consequence was a mutilation of what should properly have been left whole: a circumcision of the mind. ‘It is the Jew Paul who must be considered as the father of all this, as he, in a very significant way, established the principles of the destruction of a worldview based on blood.’

**Christians, confronted by a regime committed to the repudiation of the most fundamental tenets of their faith—the oneness of the human race, the obligation of care for the weak and the suffering—had a choice to make.** Did the Church, as a pastor named Dietrich Bonhoeffer had put it as early as 1933, have ‘an unconditional obligation towards the victims of any social order, even where those victims do not belong to the Christian community’—or did it not? Bonhoeffer’s own answer to that question would see him conspire against Hitler’s life, and end up being hanged in a concentration camp. **There were many other Christians too who passed the test. Some spoke out publicly. Others, more clandestinely, did what they could to shelter their Jewish neighbours, in cellars and attics, in the full awareness that to do so was to risk their own lives.** Church leaders, torn between speaking with the voice of prophecy against crimes almost beyond their comprehension and a dread that to do so might risk the very future of Christianity, walked an impossible tightrope. ‘They deplore the fact that the Pope does not speak,’ Pius had lamented privately in December 1942. ‘But the pope cannot speak. If he spoke, things would be worse.’

Perhaps, as his critics would later charge, he should have spoken anyway. But Pius understood the limits of his power. By pushing things too far he might risk such measures as he was able to take. Jews themselves understood this well enough. **In the pope’s**

**summer residence, five hundred were given shelter.** In Hungary, priests frantically issued baptismal certificates, knowing that they might be shot for doing so. In Romania, papal diplomats pressed the government not to deport their country's Jews—and the trains were duly halted by 'bad weather'. **Among the SS, the pope was derided as a rabbi.**<sup>48</sup>

Otto Dix, far from admiring the Nazis for turning the world on its head, was revolted by them. They in turn dismissed him as a degenerate. Sacked from his teaching post in Dresden, forbidden to exhibit his paintings, he had turned to the Bible as his surest source of inspiration. In 1939, he had painted the destruction of Sodom. Fire was shown consuming a city that was unmistakably Dresden. The image had proven prophetic. As the tide of war turned against Germany, so British and American planes had begun to visit ruin on the country's cities. In July 1943, in an operation code-named Gomorrah, a great sea of fire had engulfed much of Hamburg. Back in Britain, a bishop named George Bell—a close friend of Bonhoeffer's—spoke out in public protest. 'If it is permissible to drive inhabitants to desire peace by making them suffer, why not admit pillage, burning, torture, murder, violation?' The objection was brushed aside. There was no place, the bishop was sternly informed, in a war against an enemy as terrible as Hitler, for humanitarian or sentimental scruples. In February 1945, it was the turn of Dresden to burn. **The most beautiful city in Germany was reduced to ashes.** So too was much else. By the time the country was at last brought to unconditional surrender in May 1945, most of it lay in ruins. [pages 481-485]

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<sup>48</sup> **Editor's note:** Keep in mind that this happened before the Second Vatican Council. Catholic racialists are either ignorant or dishonest in facing the fact that the Christian mind was already infected before such a Council.

### Thirty-fifth entry<sup>49</sup>

Sunday, 25 June. In St John's Wood, one of London's most affluent neighbourhoods, churchgoers were heading to evensong. Not the world's most famous band, though. The Beatles were booked to play their largest-ever gig. For the first time, a programme featuring live sequences from different countries was to be broadcast simultaneously around the world—and the British Broadcasting Corporation, for its segment, had put up John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. The studios on Abbey Road were where, for the past five years, the Beatles had been recording the songs that had transformed popular music, and made them the most idolised young men on the planet. Now, before an audience of 350 million, they were recording their latest single. The song, with a chorus that anyone could sing, was joyously, catchily anthemic. Its message, written on cardboard placards in an assortment of languages, was intended to be readily accessible to a global village. Flowers, streamers and balloons all added to the sense of a party. John Lennon, alternately singing and chewing heavily on a wad of gum, offered the watching world a prescription with which neither Aquinas, nor Augustine, nor Saint Paul would have disagreed: 'all you need is love'.

God, after all, was love. This was what it said in the Bible. For two thousand years, men and women had been pondering this revelation. Love, and do as you will. Many were the Christians who, over the course of the centuries, had sought to put this precept of Augustine's into practice. For then, as a Hussite preacher had put it, 'Paradise will open to us, benevolence will be multiplied, and perfect love will abound.' But what if there were wolves? What then were the lambs to do? The Beatles themselves had grown up in a

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<sup>49</sup> *Editor's note:* The mention of Otto Dix above is fascinating. Despite the bust he had made of Nietzsche, his readings of the philosopher and his having fought on Hitler's side at the Somme, he suffered a psychogenic regression towards Tolkien's side. In the following decades, as we shall see in our excerpts of the final chapters of *Dominion*, Christian morality would exacerbate and triumph in the collective unconscious of every white man—especially atheists.



world scarred by war. Great stretches of Liverpool, their native city, had been levelled by German bombs. Their apprenticeship as a band had been in Hamburg, served in clubs manned by limbless ex-Nazis. Now, even as they sang their message of peace, the world again lay in the shadow of conflict.

Only three weeks before the broadcast from Abbey Road, war had broken out in the Holy Land. The blackened carcasses of Egyptian and Syrian planes littered landscapes once trodden by biblical patriarchs. Israel, the Jewish homeland promised by the British in 1917, and which had finally been founded in **1948**, had won in only six days a stunning victory over neighbours pledged to its annihilation. **Jerusalem, the city of David, was—for the first time since the age of the Caesars—under Jewish rule.** Yet this offered no resolution to the despair and misery of those displaced from what had previously been Palestine. Just the opposite. Across the world, like napalm in a Vietnamese jungle, hatreds seemed to be burning out of control. Most terrifying of all were the tensions between the world's two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States. **Victory over Hitler had brought Russian troops into the heart of Europe. Communist governments had been installed in ancient Christian capitals: Warsaw, Budapest, Prague.** An iron curtain now ran across the continent. Armed as both sides were with nuclear missiles, weapons so lethal that they had the potential to wipe out all of life on earth, the stakes were grown apocalyptic. Humanity had arrogated to itself what had always previously been viewed as a divine prerogative: the power to end the world.

How, then, could love possibly be enough? The Beatles—although roundly mocked for their message—were not alone in believing that it might be. A decade earlier, in the depths of the American South, a Baptist pastor named Martin Luther King had pondered what Christ had meant by urging his followers to love their enemies. 'Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, this command is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilisation. Yes, it is love that will save our world and our civilization, love even for enemies.' King had not claimed, as the Beatles would in 'All You Need Is Love', that it was easy. He spoke as a black man, to a black congregation, living in a society blighted by institutionalised oppression. **The civil war, although it had ended slavery, had not ended racism and segregation.**



In the spring of 1963, writing from jail, he had reflected on how Saint Paul had carried the gospel of freedom to where it was most needed, heedless of the risks. Summoning the white clergy to break their silence and to speak out against the injustices suffered by blacks, King had invoked the authority of Aquinas and of his own namesake, Martin Luther. Above all, though—answering the charge of extremism—he had appealed to the example of his Saviour. Laws that sanctioned the hatred and persecution of one race by another, he declared, were laws that Christ himself would have broken. ‘Was not Jesus an extremist for love?’

The campaign for civil rights gave to Christianity an overt centrality in American politics that it had not had since the decades before the Civil War. King, by stirring the slumbering conscience of white Christians, succeeded in setting his country on a transformative new path. To talk of love as Paul had talked of it, as a thing greater than prophecy, or knowledge, or faith, had once again become a revolutionary act. King’s dream, that the glory of the Lord would be revealed, and all flesh see it together, helped to animate a great yearning across America—in West Coast coffee shops as in Alabama churches, on verdant campuses as on picket lines, among attorneys as among refuse-workers—for justice to roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream. This was the same vision of progress that, in the eighteenth century, had inspired Quakers and Evangelicals to campaign for the abolition of slavery; but now, in the 1960s, the spark that had set it to flame with a renewed brilliance was the faith of African Americans...

That the Beatles agreed with King on the importance of love and had refused as a matter of principle to play for segregated audiences, did not mean that they were—as James Brown might have put it—‘holy’. Even though Lennon had first met McCartney at a church fête, all four had long since abandoned their childhood Christianity. It was, in the words of McCartney, a ‘goody-goody thing’: fine, perhaps, for a lonely woman wearing a face that she kept in a jar by the door, but not for a band that had conquered the world. Churches were stuffy, old-fashioned, boring—everything that the Beatles were not. In England, even the odd bishop had begun to suggest that the traditional Christian understanding of God was outmoded, and that the only rule was love.

In 1966, when Lennon claimed in a newspaper interview that the Beatles were ‘more popular than Jesus’, eyebrows were barely raised in his home country. Only four months later, after his comment had been reprinted in an American magazine, did the backlash hit. Pastors across the United States had long been suspicious of the Beatles. This was especially so in the South—the Bible Belt. Preachers there—unwittingly backing Lennon’s point—fretted that Beatlemania had become a form of idolatry; some even worried that it was all a communist plot. To many white evangelicals—shamed by the summons to repentance issued them by King, baffled by the sense of a moral fervour that had originated outside their own churches, and horrified by the spectacle of their daughters screaming and wetting themselves at the sight of four peculiar-looking Englishmen—the chance to trash Beatles records came as a blessed relief. Simultaneously, to racists unpersuaded by the justice of the civil rights movement, it provided an opportunity to rally the troops. The Ku Klux Klan leapt at the chance to cast themselves as the defender of Protestant values. Not content with burning records, they set to burning Beatles wigs. The band’s distinctive hairstyle—a shaggy mop top—seemed to clean-cut Klansmen a blasphemy in itself. ‘It’s hard for me to tell through the mopheads,’ one of them snarled, ‘whether they’re even white or black.’

None of which did much to alter Lennon’s views on Christianity. **The Beatles did not—as Martin Luther King had done—derive their understanding of love as the force that animated the universe from a close reading of scripture. Instead, they took it for granted. Cut loose from its theological moorings, the**

distinctively Christian understanding of love that had done so much to animate the civil rights movement began to float free over an ever more psychedelic landscape. The Beatles were not alone, that summer of 1967, in ‘turning funny’. Beads and bongos were everywhere. Evangelicals were appalled. To them, the emergence of long-haired freaks with flowers in their hair seemed sure confirmation of the satanic turn that the world was taking. Blissed-out talk of peace and love was pernicious sloganeering: just a cover for drugs and sex...

Then, the following April, Martin Luther King was shot dead. An entire era seemed to have been gunned down with him: one in which liberals and conservatives, black progressives and white evangelicals, had felt able—however inadequately—to feel joined by a shared sense of purpose. As news of King’s assassination flashed across America, cities began to burn: Chicago, Washington, Baltimore. Black militants, impatient even before King’s murder with his pacifism and talk of love, pushed for violent confrontation with the white establishment. Many openly derided Christianity as a slave religion. Other activists, following where King’s campaign against racism had led, demanded the righting of what they saw as no less grievous sins. **If it were wrong for blacks to be discriminated against, then why not women, or homosexuals?** Increasingly, to Americans disoriented by the moral whirligig of the age, Evangelicals promised solid ground. A place of refuge, though, might just as well be a place under siege. To many Evangelicals, feminism and the gay rights movement were an assault on Christianity itself. Equally, to many feminists and gay activists, Christianity appeared synonymous with everything that they were struggling against: injustice, and bigotry, and persecution. God, they were told, hates fags.

But did he? Conservatives, when they charged their opponents with breaking biblical commandments, had the heft of two thousand years of Christian tradition behind them; but so too, when they pressed for gender equality or gay rights, did liberals. Their immediate model and inspiration was, after all, a Baptist preacher. ‘There is no graded scale of essential worth,’ King had written a year before his assassination. ‘Every human being has etched in his personality the indelible stamp of the Creator. Every man must be respected because God loves him.’

Every woman too, a feminist might have added. Yet King's words, while certainly bearing witness to an instinctive strain of patriarchy within Christianity, bore witness as well to why, across the Western world, this was coming to seem a problem. **That every human being possessed an equal dignity was not remotely self-evident a truth. A Roman would have laughed at it. To campaign against discrimination on the grounds of gender or sexuality, however, was to depend on large numbers of people sharing in a common assumption: that everyone possessed an inherent worth.**

The origins of this principle—as Nietzsche had so contemptuously pointed out—lay not in the French Revolution, nor in the Declaration of Independence, nor in the Enlightenment, but in the Bible. Ambivalences that came to roil Western society in the 1970s had always been perfectly manifest in the letters of Paul. Writing to the Corinthians, the apostle had pronounced that man was the head of woman; writing to the Galatians, he had exulted that there was no man or woman in Christ. Balancing his stern condemnation of same-sex relationships had been his rapturous praise of love. Raised a Pharisee, learned in the Law of Moses, he had come to proclaim the primacy of conscience. The knowledge of what constituted a just society was written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on human hearts. **Love, and do as you will. It was—as the entire course of Christian history so vividly demonstrated—a formula for revolution.** ‘The wind blows wherever it pleases.’ That the times they were a-changin’ was a message Christ himself had taught. Again and again, Christians had found themselves touched by God’s spirit; again and again, they had found themselves brought by it into the light. Now, though, the Spirit had taken on a new form. No longer Christian, it had become a vibe. Not to get down with it was to be stranded on the wrong side of history. **The concept of progress, unyoked from the theology that had given it birth, had begun to leave Christianity trailing in its wake.**

The choice that faced churches—an agonisingly difficult one—was whether to sit in the dust, shaking their fists at it in impotent rage, or whether to run and scramble in a desperate attempt to catch up with it. Should women be allowed to become priests? **Should homosexuality be condemned as sodomy or praised as love?** Should the age-old Christian project of trammelling sexual appetites be maintained or eased? None of these questions were

easily answered. To those who took them seriously, they ensured endless and pained debate. To those who did not, they provided yet further evidence—if evidence were needed—that Christianity was on its way out. John Lennon had been right. ‘It will vanish and shrink. I needn’t argue about that; I know I’m right and I will be proved right.’

Yet atheists faced challenges of their own. Christians were not alone in struggling to square the rival demands of tradition and progress. Lennon, after walking out on his song-writing partnership with McCartney, celebrated his liberation with a song that listed Jesus alongside the Beatles as idols in which he no longer believed. Then, in October 1971, he released a new single: ‘Imagine’. The song offered Lennon’s prescription for global peace. Imagine there’s no heaven, he sang, no hell below us. Yet the lyrics were religious through and through. Dreaming of a better world, a brotherhood of man, was a venerable tradition in **Lennon’s neck of the woods. St George’s Hill, his home throughout the heyday of the Beatles, was where the Diggers had laboured three hundred years previously.** Rather than emulate Winstanley, however, Lennon had holed up inside a gated community, complete with a Rolls-Royce and swimming pool. ‘One wonders what they do with all their dough.’ So a pastor had mused back in 1966. The video of ‘Imagine’, in which Lennon was seen gliding around his recently purchased seventy-two-acre Berkshire estate, provided the answer. In its hypocrisy no less than in its dreams of a universal peace, Lennon’s atheism was recognisably bred of Christian marrow. A good preacher, however, was always able to take his flock with him. The spectacle of Lennon imagining a world without possessions while sitting in a huge mansion did nothing to put off his admirers. As Nietzsche spun furiously in his grave, ‘Imagine’ became the anthem of atheism.

A decade later, when Lennon was shot dead by a crazed fan, he was mourned not just as one half of the greatest song-writing partnership of the twentieth century, but as a martyr. Not everyone was convinced. ‘Now, since his death, he’s become Martin Luther Lennon.’ Paul McCartney had known Lennon too well ever to mistake him for a saint. His joke, though, was also a tribute to King: a man who had flown into the light of the dark black night. ‘Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for

others?’” McCartney, for all his dismissal of ‘goody goody stuff’, was not oblivious to the tug of an appeal like this.

In 1985, asked to help relieve a devastating famine in Ethiopia by taking part in the world’s largest-ever concert, he readily agreed. Live Aid, staged simultaneously in London and Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, was broadcast to billions. Musicians who had spent their careers variously bedding groupies and snorting coke off trays balanced on the heads of dwarves played sets in aid of the starving. As night fell over London, and the concert in Wembley stadium reached its climax, lights picked out McCartney at a piano. The number he sang, ‘Let It Be’, had been the last single to be released by the Beatles while they were still together. ‘When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me.’ Who was Mary? Perhaps, as McCartney himself claimed, his mother; but perhaps, as Lennon had darkly suspected, and many Catholics had come to believe, the Virgin. Whatever the truth, no one that night could hear him. His microphone had cut out. It was a performance perfectly appropriate to the paradoxes of the age. [pages 488-497]

### Thirty-sixth entry



Seven months before Live Aid, its organisers had recruited many of the biggest acts in Britain and Ireland to a super-group: Band Aid. ‘Do They Know It’s Christmas?’, a one-off charity record, succeeded in raising so much money for famine relief that it would end up the best-selling single in the history of the UK charts. For all the peroxide, all the cross-dressing, all the bags of cocaine smuggled into the recording studio, the project was one born of the Christian past. Reporting on the sheer scale of the suffering in Ethiopia, a BBC correspondent had described the scenes he was witnessing as ‘biblical’; stirred into action, the organisers of Band

Aid had embarked on a course of action that reached for its ultimate inspiration to the examples of Paul and Basil. That charity should be offered to the needy, and **that a stranger in a foreign land was no less a brother or sister than was a next-door neighbour, were principles that had always been fundamental to the Christian message. Concern for the victims of distant disasters—famines, earthquakes, floods—was disproportionately strong in what had once been Christendom.** The overwhelming concentration of international aid agencies there was no coincidence. Band Aid were hardly the first to ask whether Africans knew that it was Christmastime. In the nineteenth century, the same anxiety had weighed heavily on Evangelicals. Missionaries had duly hacked their way through uncharted jungles, campaigned against the slave trade, and laboured with all their might to bring the Dark Continent into the light of Christ. ‘A diffusive philanthropy is Christianity itself. It requires perpetual propagation to attest its genuineness.’ Such was the mission statement of the era’s most famous explorer, David Livingstone. Band Aid—in their ambition to do good, if not in their use of hair dye—were recognisably his heirs.

This was not, though, how their single was marketed. Anything that smacked of white people telling Africans what to do had become, by the 1980s, an embarrassment. Admiration even for a missionary such as Livingstone, whose crusade against the Arab slave trade had been unstintingly heroic, had come to pall. His efforts to map the continent—far from serving the interests of Africans, as he had trusted they would—had instead only opened up its interior to conquest and exploitation. A decade after his death from malaria in 1873, British adventurers had begun to expand deep into the heart of Africa.

Other European powers had embarked on a similar scramble. France had annexed much of north Africa, Belgium the Congo, Germany Namibia. By the outbreak of the First World War, almost the entire continent was under foreign rule. Only the Ethiopians had succeeded in maintaining their independence. Missionaries, struggling to continue with their great labour of conversion, had found themselves stymied by the brute nature of European power. How were Africans to believe talk of a god who cared for the oppressed and the poor when the whites, the very people who worshipped him, had seized their lands and plundered them for diamonds, and ivory, and rubber? A colonial hierarchy in



which blacks were deemed inferior had seemed a peculiar and bitter mockery of the missionaries' insistence that Christ had died for all of humanity. **By the 1950s, when the tide of imperialism in Africa had begun to ebb as fast it had originally flowed, it might have seemed that Christianity was doomed to retreat as well, with churches crumbling before the hunger of termites, and Bibles melting into mildewed pulp. But that—in the event—was not what had happened at all!**

The ending of apartheid and the election in 1994 of Mandela as South Africa's first black president was one of the great dramas of Christian history: a drama woven through with deliberate echoes of the Gospels... The same faith that had inspired Afrikaners to imagine themselves a chosen people was also, in the long run, what had doomed their supremacy.

The pattern was a familiar one. Repeatedly, whether crashing along the canals of Tenochtitlan, or settling the estuaries of Massachusetts, or trekking deep into the Transvaal, the confidence that had enabled Europeans to believe themselves superior to those they were displacing was derived from Christianity. Repeatedly, though, in the struggle to hold this arrogance to account, it was Christianity that had provided the colonised and the enslaved with their surest voice. The paradox was profound.

No other conquerors, carving out empires for themselves, had done so as the servants of a man tortured to death on the orders of a colonial official. No other conquerors, dismissing with contempt the gods of other peoples, had installed in their place an emblem of power so deeply ambivalent as to render problematic the very notion of power. No other conquerors, exporting an understanding of the divine peculiar to themselves, had so successfully persuaded peoples around the globe that it possessed a universal import. The collapse of apartheid had been merely the aftershock of a far more convulsive earthquake. In 1989, even as de Klerk was resolving to set Mandela free, the Soviet empire had imploded. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary: all had cast off the chains of foreign rule. East Germany, a rump hived off by the Soviets in the wake of the Second World War, had been absorbed into a reunified—and thoroughly capitalist—Germany. The Soviet Union itself had ceased to exist. Communism, weighed in the scales of history, had been found wanting... That the paradise on earth foretold by Marx had turned out instead to be closer to a hell only

emphasised the degree to which the true fulfilment of progress was to be found elsewhere. With the rout of communism, it appeared to many in the victorious West that it was their own political and social order that constituted the ultimate, the unimprovable form of government. Secularism; liberal democracy; the concept of human rights: these were fit for the whole world to embrace. The inheritance of the Enlightenment was for everyone: a possession for all of mankind. It was promoted by the West, not because it was Western, but because it was universal. **The entire world could enjoy its fruits. It was no more Christian than it was Hindu, or Confucian, or Muslim. There was neither Asian nor European. Humanity was embarked as one upon a common road. The end of history had arrived.** [pages 497-505]

### Thirty-seventh entry



‘Why do they hate us?’

The president of the United States, in his address to a joint session of Congress, knew that he was speaking for Americans across the country when he asked this question. Nine days earlier, on 11 September, an Islamic group named al-Qaeda had launched a series of devastating attacks against targets in New York and Washington. Planes had been hijacked and then crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Thousands had died. George W. Bush, answering his own question, had no doubt as to the motives of the terrorists. They hated America’s freedoms. Her freedom of religion, her freedom of speech. Yet these were not exclusively American. Rather, they were universal rights. They were as much the patrimony of Muslims as of Christians, of Afghans as of Americans. This was why the hatred felt for Bush and his country across much of the Islamic world was based on misunderstanding. ‘Like most Americans, I just can’t believe it

because I know how good we are.’ If American values were universal, shared by humans across the planet, regardless of creed or culture, then it stood to reason that Muslims shared them too. Bush, sitting in judgement on the terrorists who had attacked his country, condemned them not just for hijacking planes, but for hijacking Islam itself. ‘We respect the faith. We honor its traditions. Our enemy does not.’

It was in this spirit that the President, even as he ordered the American war machine to inflict a terrible vengeance on al-Qaeda, aimed to bring to the Muslim world freedoms that he believed in all devoutness to be no less Islamic than they were Western. First in Afghanistan, and then in Iraq, murderous tyrannies were overthrown. Arriving in Baghdad in April 2003, US forces pulled down statues of the deposed dictator. As they waited to be given sweets and flowers by a grateful people, they waited as well to deliver to Iraq the dues of freedom that Bush, a year earlier, had described as applying fully to the entire Islamic world. ‘When it comes to the common rights and needs of men and women, there is no clash of civilizations.’

Except that sweets and flowers were notable by their absence on the streets of Iraq. Instead, the Americans were greeted with mortar attacks, and car bombs, and improvised explosive devices. The country began to dissolve into anarchy. In Europe, where opposition to the invasion of Iraq had been loud and vocal, the insurgency was viewed with often ill-disguised satisfaction. Even before 9/11, there were many who had felt that ‘the United States had it coming’. By 2003, with US troops occupying two Muslim countries, the accusation that Afghanistan and Iraq were the victims of naked imperialism was becoming ever more insistent. What was all the President’s fine talk of freedom if not a smokescreen? As to what it might be hiding, the possibilities were multiple: oil, geopolitics, the interests of Israel. Yet Bush, although a hard-boiled businessman, was not just about the bottom line. He had never thought to hide his truest inspiration. Asked while still a candidate for the presidency to name his favourite thinker, he had answered unhesitatingly: ‘Christ, because he changed my heart.’ Here, unmistakably, was an Evangelical.

Bush, in his assumption that the concept of human rights was a universal one, was perfectly sincere. Just as the Evangelicals who fought to abolish the slave trade had done, he took for granted

that his own values—confirmed to him in his heart by the Spirit—were values fit for all the world. He no more intended to bring Iraq to Christianity than British Foreign Secretaries, back in the heyday of the Royal Navy's campaign against slavery, had aimed to convert the Ottoman Empire. His ambition instead was to awaken Muslims to the values within their own religion that would enable them to see everything they had in common with America. 'Islam, as practised by the vast majority of people, is a peaceful religion, a religion that respects others.' Bush, asked to describe his own faith, might well have couched it in similar terms. What bigger compliment, then, could he possibly have paid to Muslims?

But Iraqis did not have their hearts opened to the similarity of Islam to American values. Their country continued to burn. To Bush's critics, his talk of a war against evil appeared grotesquely misapplied. If anyone had done evil, then it was surely the leader of the world's greatest military power, a man who had used all the stupefying resources at his command to visit death and mayhem on the powerless. In 2004 alone, US forces in Iraq variously bombed a wedding party, flattened an entire city, and were photographed torturing prisoners.

**Most menacing of all was the United Nations. Established in the aftermath of the Second World War, its delegates had proclaimed a Universal Declaration of Human Rights.** To be a Muslim, though, was to know that humans did not have rights. There was no natural law in Islam. There were only laws authored by God. Muslim countries, by joining the United Nations, had signed up to a host of commitments that derived, not from the Qur'an or the Sunna, but from law codes devised in Christian countries: that there should be equality between men and women; equality between Muslims and non-Muslims; a ban on slavery; a ban on offensive warfare. Such doctrines, al-Maqdisi sternly ruled, had no place in Islam. To accept them was to become an apostate. Al-Zarqawi, released from prison in 1999, did not forget al-Maqdisi's warnings. **In 2003, launching his campaign in Iraq, he went for a soft and telling target. On 19 August, a car bomb blew up the United Nations headquarters in the country.** The UN's special representative was crushed to death in his office. Twenty-two others were also killed. Over a hundred were left maimed and wounded. **Shortly afterwards, the United Nations withdrew from Iraq.**

‘Ours is a war not against a religion, not against the Muslim faith.’ President Bush’s reassurance, offered before the invasion of Iraq, was not one that al-Zarqawi was remotely prepared to accept. What most people in the West meant by Islam and what scholars like al-Maqdisi meant by it were not at all the same thing. What to Bush appeared the markers of its compatibility with Western values appeared to al-Maqdisi a fast-metastasising cancer... To al-Maqdisi, the spectacle of Muslim governments legislating to uphold equality between men and women, or between Islam and other religions, was a monstrous blasphemy. The whole future of the world was at stake. God’s final revelation, the last chance that humanity had of redeeming itself from damnation, was directly threatened... His [al-Maqdisi’s] incineration by a US jet strike in 2006 did not serve to kill the hydra...

All that counted was the example of the Salaf. When al-Zarqawi’s disciples smashed the statues of pagan gods, they were following the example of Muhammad; when they proclaimed themselves the shock troops of a would-be global empire, they were following the example of the warriors who had humbled Heraclius; when they beheaded enemy combatants, and reintroduced the *jizya*, and took the women of defeated opponents as slaves, they were doing nothing that the first Muslims had not gloried in. The only road to an uncontaminated future was the road that led back to an unspoilt past. Nothing of the Evangelicals, who had erupted into the Muslim world with their gunboats and their talk of crimes against humanity, was to remain. [pages 505-512]

### Thirty-eight entry

Europeans had been able to take for granted the impregnability of their own continent. Mass migration was something that they brought to the lands of non-Europeans—not the other way round.

Since the end of the Second World War, however, that had changed. Attracted by higher living standards, large numbers of immigrants from non-European countries had come to settle in Western Europe. For decades, the pace and scale of immigration into Germany had been carefully regulated; but now it seemed that control was at risk of breaking down. Merkel, explaining the facts to a sobbing teenager, knew full well the crisis that, even as she spoke,

was building beyond Germany's frontiers. All that summer, thousands upon thousands of migrants and refugees from Muslim countries had been moving through the Balkans. The spectacle stirred deeply atavistic fears. In Hungary, there was talk of a new Ottoman invasion. Even in Western Europe, in lands that had never been conquered by Muslim armies, there were many who felt a sense of unease. Dread that all the East might be on the move reached back a long way. 'The plain was dark with their marching companies, and as far as eyes could strain in the mirk there sprouted, like a foul fungus growth, all about the beleaguered city great camps of tents, black or sombre red.' So Tolkien, writing in 1946, had described the siege of Minas Tirith, bulwark of the free lands of the West, by the armies of Sauron. The climax of *The Lord of the Rings* palpably echoed the momentous events of 955: the attack on Augsburg and the battle of the Lech... In 2003, a film of *The Lord of the Rings* had brought Aragorn's victory over the snarling hordes of Mordor to millions who had never heard of the battle of the Lech. Burnished and repackaged for the twenty-first century, Otto's defence of Christendom still possessed a spectral glamour.

Its legacy, though, that summer of 2014, was shaded by multiple ironies. Otto's mantle was taken up not by the chancellor of Germany, but by the prime minister of Hungary. Victor Orbán had until recently been a self-avowed atheist; but this did not prevent him from doubting—much as Otto might have done—whether unbaptised migrants could ever truly be integrated. 'This is an important question, because Europe and European culture have Christian roots.' That September, ordering police to remove refugees from trains and put up fences along Hungary's southern border, he warned that Europe's soul was at stake.

Merkel, as she tracked the migrant crisis, had come to an identical conclusion. Her response, however, was the opposite of Orbán's. Although pressed by ministers in her own ruling coalition to close Germany's borders, she refused. **Huge crowds of Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis began crossing into Bavaria. Soon, upwards of ten thousand a day were pouring in. Crowds gathered at railway stations to cheer them; football fans raised banners at matches to proclaim them welcome. The scenes, the chancellor declared, 'painted a picture of Germany which can make us proud of our country'...**



Himmler, a man whose loathing for Christianity had not prevented him from admiring the martial feats of Christian emperors, had hallowed Otto's father as the supreme model of Germanic heroism. It was darkly rumoured that he claimed to be the Saxon king's reincarnation. Hitler, although privately contemptuous of Himmler's more mystical leanings, had himself been obsessed by the Holy Lance. A relic of the crucifixion had been transmogrified into an emblem of Nazism. **Seventy years on from Hitler's suicide, in a country still committed to doing penance for his crimes, there had never been any prospect of Angela Merkel riding to fight a new battle of the Lech. The truly, the only Christian thing to do, faced by the floodtide of misery lapping at Europe's borders, was to abandon any lingering sense of the continent as Christendom and open it up to the wretched of the earth.**

Always, from the very beginnings of the Church, there had been tension between Christ's commandment to his followers that they should go into the world and preach the good news to all creation, and his **parable of the Good Samaritan**. **Merkel was familiar with both. Her father had been a pastor, her mother no less devout. Her childhood home had been a hostel for people with disabilities—people much like Reem Sahwil. 'The daily message was: Love your neighbour as yourself. Not just German people. God loves everybody.'** For two millennia, Christians had been doing their best to put these teachings into practice. Merkel, by providing refuge to the victims of war in the Middle East, was doing nothing that **Gregory of Nyssa, sixteen centuries previously, had not similarly done.** Offer charity, he had urged his congregants, for the spectacle of refugees living like animals was a reproach to every

Christian. ‘Their roof is the sky. For shelter they use porticos, alleys, and the deserted corners of the town. They hide in the cracks of walls like owls.’ Yet Merkel, when she sought to justify the opening of her country’s borders—a volte-face all the more dramatic for seeming so out of character—pointedly refused to frame it as a gesture of Christian charity...

**The West, over the duration of its global hegemony, had become skilled in the art of repackaging Christian concepts for non-Christian audiences.** A doctrine such as that of human rights was far likelier to be signed up to if its origins among the canon lawyers of medieval Europe could be kept concealed. The insistence of United Nations agencies on ‘the antiquity and broad acceptance of the conception of the rights of man’ was a necessary precondition for their claim to a global, rather than a merely Western, jurisdiction. **Secularism, in an identical manner, depended on the care with which it covered its tracks.** If it were to be embraced by Jews, or Muslims, or Hindus as a neutral holder of the ring between them and people of other faiths, then it could not afford to be seen as what it was: a concept that had little meaning outside of a Christian context. **In Europe, the secular had for so long been secularised that it was easy to forget its ultimate origins.** [pages 516-521]

### Thirty-ninth entry

On 5 October 2017, allegations about what Harvey Weinstein had been getting up to in his fourth-floor suite at the Peninsula broke in the *New York Times*. An actress meeting him there for what she had thought was a business breakfast had found the producer wearing nothing but his bespoke bathrobe. Perhaps, he had suggested, she could give him a massage? Or how about watching him shower? Two assistants who had met with Weinstein in his suite reported similar encounters.

Over the weeks and months that followed, further allegations were levelled against him: harassment, assault, rape. Among the more than eighty women going public with accusations was Uma Thurman, the actor who had played Mia Wallace in *Pulp Fiction* and become the movie’s pin-up. Meanwhile, where celebrity forged a path, many other women followed. A campaign that urged women to report incidents of harassment or assault under the hashtag **#MeToo** actively sought to give a voice to the most



marginalised and vulnerable of all: janitors, fruit-pickers, hotel housekeepers. Already that year, the summons to **a great moral awakening, a call for men everywhere to reflect on their sins, and repent** them, had been much in the air. On 21 January, a million women had marched through Washington, DC. Other, similar demonstrations had been held around the world. The previous day, a new president, Donald J. Trump, had been inaugurated in the American capital. He was, to the organisers of the women's marches, the very embodiment of toxic masculinity: a swaggering tycoon who had repeatedly been accused of sexual assault, who had bragged of grabbing 'pussy', and who, during the recently concluded presidential campaign, had paid hush money to a porn star. Rather than make the marches about Trump, however, the organisers had sought a loftier message: to sound a clarion call against injustice, and discrimination, and oppression wherever it might be found. 'Yes, it's about feminism. But it's about more than that. It's about basic equality for all people.'



Above, a graffiti in a neighbourhood with the words 'no harassment' in Arabic; below, the myth of Daphne and Apollo (remember: all Greco-Roman Gods were rapists).



The echo, of course, was of Martin Luther King. Repeatedly, in the protests against misogyny that swept America during the first year of Trump's presidency, the name and example of the great Baptist preacher were invoked. Yet Christianity, which for King had been the fount of everything he ever campaigned for, appeared to many who marched in 2017 part of the problem. Evangelicals had voted in large numbers for Trump. Roiled by issues that seemed to them not just unbiblical, but directly antithetical to God's purposes—abortion, gay marriage, transgender rights—they had held their noses and backed a man who, pussy-grabbing and porn stars notwithstanding, had unblushingly cast himself as the standard-bearer for Christian values. Unsurprisingly, then, hypocrisy had been added to bigotry on the charge sheet levelled against them by progressives.

America, it seemed to many feminists, risked becoming a misogynist theocracy. Three months after the Women's March, a television series made gripping drama out of this dread. *The Handmaid's Tale* was set in a country returned to a particularly nightmarish vision of seventeenth century New England. Adapted from a dystopian novel by the Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, it provided female protestors against Trump with a striking new visual language of protest. White bonnets and red cloaks were the uniform worn by 'handmaids': women whose ability to reproduce had rendered them, in a world crippled by widespread infertility, the objects of legalised rape. Licence for the practice was provided by an episode in the Bible. The parody of evangelicals was as dark as it was savage. *The Handmaid's Tale*—as all great dystopian fiction tends to be—was less prophecy than satire. The TV series cast Trump's America as a society rent in two: between conservatives and liberals; between reactionaries and progressives; between dark-souled televangelists and noble-hearted foes of patriarchy.

Yet the divisions satirised by *The Handmaid's Tale* were in truth very ancient. They derived ultimately, not from the specifics of American politics in the twenty-first century, but from the very womb of Christianity. Blessed be the fruit. There had always existed, in the hearts of the Christian people, a tension between the demands of tradition and the claims of progress, between the prerogatives of authority and the longing for reformation, between the letter and the spirit of the law. The twenty-first century marked, in that sense, no radical break with what had gone before. That the great battles in America's culture

war were being fought between Christians and those who had emancipated themselves from Christianity was a conceit that both sides had an interest in promoting. It was no less of a myth for that. In reality, Evangelicals and progressives were both recognisably bred of the same matrix. If opponents of abortion were the heirs of Macrina, who had toured the rubbish tips of Cappadocia looking for abandoned infants to rescue, then those who argued against them were likewise drawing on a deeply rooted Christian supposition: that every woman's body was her own, and to be respected as such by every man. Supporters of gay marriage were quite as influenced by the Church's enthusiasm for monogamous fidelity as those against it were by biblical condemnations of men who slept with men. **To install transgender toilets might indeed seem an affront to the Lord God, who had created male and female; but to refuse kindness to the persecuted was to offend against the most fundamental teachings of Christ.** In a country as saturated in Christian assumptions as the United States, there could be no escaping their influence—even for those who imagined that they had. **America's culture wars were less a war against Christianity than a civil war between Christian factions.**

In 1963, when Martin Luther King addressed hundreds of thousands of civil rights protestors assembled in Washington, he had aimed his speech at the country beyond the capital as well—at an America that was still an unapologetically Christian nation. By 2017, things were different. Among the four co-chairs of the Women's March was a Muslim. Marching through Washington were Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews. Huge numbers had no faith at all. Even the Christians among the organisers flinched from attempting to echo the prophetic voice of a Martin Luther King. Nevertheless, their manifesto was no less based in theological presumptions than that of the civil rights movement had been. Implicit in #MeToo was the same call to sexual continence that had reverberated throughout the Church's history. Protestors who marched in the red cloaks of handmaids were summoning men to exercise control over their lusts just as the Puritans had done. **Appetites that had been hailed by enthusiasts for sexual liberation as Dionysiac stood condemned once again as predatory and violent. The human body was not an object, not a commodity to be used by the rich and powerful as and when they pleased. Two thousand years of**

Christian sexual morality had resulted in men as well as women widely taking this for granted. Had it not, then #MeToo would have had no force.

The tracks of Christian theology, Nietzsche had complained, wound everywhere. In the early twenty-first century, they led—as they had done in earlier ages—in various and criss-crossing directions. They led towards TV stations on which televangelists preached the headship of men over women; and they led as well towards gender studies departments, in which Christianity was condemned for heteronormative marginalisation of LGBTQIA+. **Nietzsche had foretold it all. God might be dead, but his shadow, immense and dreadful, continued to flicker even as his corpse lay cold. Feminist academics were no less in thrall to it, no less its acolytes, than were the most fire-breathing preachers. God could not be eluded simply by refusing to believe in his existence. Any condemnation of Christianity as patriarchal and repressive derived from a framework of values that was itself utterly Christian.**

‘The measure of a man’s compassion for the lowly and the suffering comes to be the measure of the loftiness of his soul.’ It was this, the epochal lesson taught by Jesus’ death on the cross, that Nietzsche had always most despised about Christianity. **Two thousand years on, and the discovery made by Christ’s earliest followers—that to be a victim might be a source of power—could bring out millions onto the streets. Wealth and rank, in Trump’s America, were not the only indices of status. So too were their opposites. Against the priapic thrust of towers fitted with gold-plated lifts, the organisers of the Women’s March sought to invoke the authority of those who lay at the bottom of the pile. The last were to be first, and the first were to be last. Yet how to measure who ranked as the last and the first? As they had ever done, all the multiple intersections of power, all the various dimensions of stratification in society, served to marginalise some more than others. Woman marching to demand equality with men always had to remember—if they were wealthy, if they were educated, if they were white—that there were many among them whose oppression was greater by far than their own: ‘Black women, indigenous women, poor women, immigrant women, disabled women, Muslim women, lesbian, queer and trans women.’ The disadvantaged too might boast their own hierarchy.**

That it was the fate of rulers to be brought down from their thrones, and the humble to be lifted up, was a reflection that had

always prompted anxious Christians to **check their privilege**. It had inspired Paulinus to give away his wealth, and Francis to strip himself naked before the Bishop of Assisi, and Elizabeth of Hungary to toil in a hospital as a scullery maid. Similarly, a dread of damnation, a yearning to be gathered into the ranks of the elect, a desperation to be cleansed of original sin, had provided, from the very moment the Pilgrim Fathers set sail, the surest and most fertile seedbed for the ideals of the American people. **Repeatedly, over the course of their history, preachers had sought to awaken them to a sense of their guilt, and to offer them salvation. Now, in the twenty-first century, there were summons to a similar awakening.** When, in October 2017, the leaders of the Women's March organised a convention in Detroit, one panel in particular found itself having to turn away delegates. 'Confronting White Womanhood' offered white feminists the chance to acknowledge their own entitlement, to confess their sins and to be granted absolution. The opportunity was for the rich and the educated to have their eyes opened; to stare the reality of injustice in the face; truly to be awakened. Only through repentance was salvation to be obtained. The conveners, though, were not merely addressing the delegates in the conference hall. Their gaze, as the gaze of preachers in America had always been, was fixed on the world beyond. **Their summons was to sinners everywhere. Their ambition was to serve as a city on a hill.**

Christianity, it seemed, had no need of actual Christians for its assumptions still to flourish. Whether this was an illusion, or whether the power held by victims over their victimisers would survive the myth that had given it birth, only time would tell. As it was, the retreat of Christian belief did not seem to imply any necessary retreat of Christian values. Quite the contrary. Even in Europe—a continent with churches far emptier than those in the United States—the trace elements of Christianity continued to infuse people's morals and presumptions so utterly that many failed even to detect their presence. Like dust particles so fine as to be invisible to the naked eye, they were breathed in equally by everyone: believers, atheists, and those who never paused so much as to think about religion. **Had it been otherwise, then no one would ever have got woke.** [pages 528-533]

## Fortieth entry

I have sought, in writing this book, to be as objective as possible. Yet this, when dealing with a theme such as Christianity, is not to be neutral. To claim, as I most certainly do, that I have sought to evaluate fairly both the achievements and the crimes of Christian civilisation is not to stand outside its moral frameworks, but rather—as Nietzsche would have been quick to point out—to stand within them.

The people who, in his famous fable, continue to venerate the shadow of God are not just church-goers. All those in thrall to Christian morality—even those who may be proud to array themselves among God’s murderers—are included among their number. Inevitably, to attempt the tracing of Christianity’s impact on the world is to cover the rise and fall of empires, the actions of bishops and kings, the arguments of theologians, the course of revolutions, the planting of crosses around the world. It is, in particular, to focus on the doings of men. Yet that hardly tells the whole story. I have written much in this book about churches, and monasteries, and universities; but these were never where the mass of the Christian people were most influentially shaped. It was always in the home that children were likeliest to absorb the revolutionary teachings that, over the course of two thousand years, have come to be so taken for granted as almost to seem human nature.

‘There is nothing particular about man. He is but a part of this world.’ Today, in the West, there are many who would agree with Himmler that, for humanity to claim a special status for itself, to imagine itself as somehow superior to the rest of creation, is an unwarrantable conceit. *Homo sapiens* is just another species. To insist otherwise is to cling to the shattered fragments of religious belief.<sup>50</sup> Yet the implications of this view—which the Nazis, of course, claimed as their sanction for genocide—remain unsettling for many. Just as Nietzsche had foretold, freethinkers who mock the very idea of a god as a dead thing, a sky fairy, an imaginary friend, still piously hold to taboos and morals that derive from Christianity.

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<sup>50</sup> *Editor’s note:* What Savitri Devi calls anthropocentrism.



Gudrun Himmler with her father, Heinrich Himmler, in Berlin in 1938. 'Daddy has found it terribly difficult with the incredible amount of work,' she wrote in her diary in 1945. 'The Führer will not believe that the soldiers will no longer fight. Still, perhaps everything will turn out fine.'

In 2002, in Amsterdam, the World Humanist Congress affirmed 'the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others'. Yet this—despite humanists' stated ambition to provide 'an alternative to dogmatic religion'—was nothing if not itself a statement of belief. Himmler, at any rate, had understood what licence was opened up by the abandonment of Christianity. The humanist assumption that atheism and liberalism go together was just that: an assumption. Without the biblical story that God had created humanity in his own image to draw upon, the reverence of humanists for their own species risked seeming mawkish and shallow. What basis—other than mere sentimentality—was there to argue for it? Perhaps, as the humanist manifesto declared, through 'the application of the methods of science'. Yet this was barely any less of a myth than Genesis. As in the days of Darwin and Huxley, so in the twenty-first century, the ambition of agnostics to translate values 'into facts that can be scientifically understood' was a fantasy. It derived not from the viability of such a project, but from medieval theology. It was not

truth that science offered moralists, but a mirror. Racists identified it with racist values; liberals with liberal values. The primary dogma of humanism—‘that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others’—found no more corroboration in science than did the dogma of the Nazis that anyone not fit for life should be exterminated. The wellspring of humanist values lay not in reason, not in evidence-based thinking, but in history.

When, in an astonishing breakthrough, collagen was extracted recently from the remains of one tyrannosaur fossil, its amino acid sequences turned out to bear an unmistakable resemblance to those of a chicken. The more the evidence is studied, the hazier the dividing line between birds and dinosaurs has become. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, might be said of the dividing line between agnostics and Christians. On 16 July 2018, one of the world’s best-known scientists, a man as celebrated for his polemics against religion as for his writings on evolutionary biology, sat listening to the bells of an English cathedral. ‘So much nicer than the aggressive-sounding “Allahu Akhbar”,’ Richard Dawkins tweeted. ‘Or is that just my cultural upbringing?’ The question was a perfectly appropriate one for an admirer of Darwin to ponder. It is no surprise, since humans, just like any other biological organism, are products of evolution, that its workings should be evident in their assumptions, beliefs and cultures. A preference for church bells over the sound of Muslims praising God does not just emerge by magic. Dawkins—agnostic, secularist and humanist that he is—absolutely has the instincts of someone brought up in a Christian civilisation.

Today, as the flood tide of Western power and influence ebbs, the illusions of European and American liberals risk being left stranded. Much that they have sought to cast as universal stands exposed as never having been anything of the kind. Agnosticism—as Huxley, the man who coined the word, readily acknowledged—ranks as ‘that conviction of the supremacy of private judgment (indeed, of the impossibility of escaping it) which is the foundation of the Protestant Reformation’. Secularism owes its existence to the medieval papacy. Humanism derives ultimately from claims made in the Bible: that humans are made in God’s image; that his Son died equally for everyone; that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. Repeatedly, like a great earthquake,



Christianity has sent reverberations across the world. First there was the primal revolution: the revolution preached by Saint Paul. Then there came the aftershocks: the revolution in the eleventh century that set Latin Christendom upon its momentous course; the revolution commemorated as the Reformation; the revolution that killed God. All bore an identical stamp: the aspiration to enfold within its embrace every other possible way of seeing the world; the claim to a universalism that was culturally highly specific. That human beings have rights; that they are born equal; that they are owed sustenance, and shelter, and refuge from persecution: these were never self-evident truths.

The Nazis, certainly, knew as much—which is why, in today's demonology, they retain their starring role. Communist dictators may have been no less murderous than fascist ones; but they—because communism was the expression of a concern for the oppressed masses—rarely seem as diabolical to people today. The measure of how Christian we as a society remain is that mass murder precipitated by racism tends to be seen as vastly more abhorrent than mass murder precipitated by an ambition to usher in a classless paradise. Liberals may not believe in hell; but they still believe in evil. The fear of it puts them in its shade no less than it ever did Gregory the Great. Just as he lived in dread of Satan, so do we of Hitler's ghost. Behind the readiness to use 'fascist' as an insult there lurks a numbing fear: of what might happen should it cease to be taken as an insult. If secular humanism derives not from reason or from science, but from the distinctive course of Christianity's evolution—a course that, in the opinion of growing numbers in Europe and America, has left God dead—then how are its values anything more than the shadow of a corpse? What are the foundations of its morality, if not a myth?

A myth, though, is not a lie. At its most profound—as Tolkien, that devout Catholic, always argued—a myth can be true. To be a Christian is to believe that God became man and suffered a death as terrible as any mortal has ever suffered. This is why the cross, that ancient implement of torture, remains what it has always been: the fitting symbol of the Christian revolution. It is the audacity of it—the audacity of finding in a twisted and defeated corpse the glory of the creator of the universe—that serves to explain, more surely than anything else, the sheer strangeness of Christianity, and of the civilisation to which it gave birth. Today, the

power of this strangeness remains as alive as it has ever been. It is manifest in the great surge of conversions that has swept Africa and Asia over the past century; in the conviction of millions upon millions that the breath of the Spirit, like a living fire, still blows upon the world; and, in Europe and North America, in the assumptions of many more millions who would never think to describe themselves as Christian. All are heirs to the same revolution: a revolution that has, at its molten heart, the image of a god dead on a cross...

Crucifixion was not merely a punishment. It was a means to **achieving dominance**: a **dominance** felt as a dread in the guts of the subdued. Terror of power was the index of power. That was how it had always been, and always would be. It was the way of the world. For two thousand years, though, Christians have disputed this. Many of them, over the course of this time, have themselves become agents of terror. They have put the weak in their shadow; they have brought suffering, and persecution, and slavery in their wake. Yet the standards by which they stand condemned for this are themselves Christian; nor, even if churches across the West continue to empty, does it seem likely that these standards will quickly change. 'God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.' This is the myth that we in the West still persist in clinging to.

## The Appian Way

*by Editor*

Basically, Holland is saying that Christian morality is the seedbed that makes today's secular West what it is. I would add that, for contemporary racialists, the hardest pill to swallow is that their movement has failed *because* of Christianity. And it will continue to fail unless they become true apostates, not only apostates from Christian dogma but also of the axiological side of Christianity: the so-called secular side. (After all, 'secular' is just the tricky term St Augustine chose for his theological system, used even in our modern world, when in fact the 'secular' and the 'religious' have always been two sides of the same cultural coin.) Any racist movement was doomed from the start, is doomed and will be doomed to failure unless it is understood that Christianity, or more specifically Christian morality, has always been the Devil for the white man. This includes the morality of today's atheists whose worldview we here call Neo-Christian.

Only by telling us the story of the white race as it really happened in the Greco-Roman world (and here we can think of some essays from *The Fair Race*), together with elementary historical facts such as the non-existence of Jesus that Richard Carrier talks about, and how the New Testament was authored by Jews as David Skrbina believes, will it be possible to modify the collective unconscious of the white man—especially if we add to that a few pages from Karlheinz Deschner's *Criminal History of Christianity* and the history of the Holocaust committed by the Allies, so well described in Tom Goodrich's *Hellstorm*. The psychohistorical work of Holland, who has lost faith in traditional Christianity is also pivotal even if, as a typical British liberal he is our ideological enemy. But let's use him as a useful idiot...

Holland hit the nail on the head when he said that National Socialism has been the most radical movement since Constantine,

especially because it rebels against St Paul's idea that there is no difference between Jews and Greeks (transformed today in the religious belief that there is no difference between blacks and whites): the original mental virus that caused the inversion of values. Holland also points out that the National Socialists repudiated the very essence of the emblem of the Cross: that a crucified victim is more morally worthy than the crucifying Romans. This idea persists in our times during mass hysteria phenomena such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) riots of 2020 surrounding the death of George Floyd when countless whites, even outside the US, bent the knee before primitive Negroes!

Holland has said in several interviews that the central emblem of Western civilisation, Christ on the Cross (now downtrodden negroes on 'crosses') provides a moral framework for understanding the Woke phenomenon. Before reading *Dominion*, in 'On empowering carcass-eating birds' in my book *Daybreak* I had already said that empowering transgender people was a kind of neo-Franciscanism, in reference to St Francis of Assisi ('let's love and kiss the new leper'), and quoted the biblical passage that the last shall be first and the first last. Analogously, speaking about whites bending the knee after the BLM riots, Holland has said that this self-debasement ultimately goes back to the Gospel narrative of the Passion, 'to that very, very primal image of a man tortured to death by an oppressive state apparatus: Jesus on the cross.' Not only at the end of *Dominion* but in his lectures this London historian has also said that a thoroughgoing rejection of Christianity would allow us to return to the ways of the blond beast. (As axiological enemies of Holland, we would add that the first thing this beast would do will be to drive the millions non-whites out of their lands and punish the recalcitrant as the Romans did in the Appian Way.) In a home interview with a conservative Australian, Holland added:

The modern who has more profoundly and unsettlingly understood just how radical that idea is—how radical the idea that the Cross, of all things, should become the emblem of the new civilisation—, was a man who was not just an atheist but a radical hostile, anti-Christian atheist: Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche said: this is a repellent thing. Nietzsche identified with the power and the glory and the beauty of classical civilisation; and he thought that Christianity, notoriously, was a religion for slaves. And he saw in the

emblem of Christ nailed to the Cross a kind of disgusting subversion of the ideals of the classical world: a privileging of those who properly should be ground beneath the heels of the mighty. And he saw it as a kind of sickness that then, it kind of infected the blond beast as he called it: that the primordial figure of the warrior gets corrupted and turned into a monk, a monkish figure who is sick with poverty and sympathy for the poor and the oppressed...

Fascism, I think, was the most radical revolutionary movement that Europe has seen since the age of Constantine because unlike the French Revolution, unlike and the Russian Revolution, it doesn't even target institutional Christianity: it targets the moral-ethical fundamentals of Christianity. The French Revolution, the Russian Revolution are still preaching that idea that the victim should be raised up from the dust and that the oppressor should be humbled into the dust; it's still preaching the idea that the first should be last and the last should be first just as Christ has done.

The Nazis do not buy into that.

In the post-WWII world westerners culminated the inversion of healthy values that started with Constantine. They enshrined the privileges of the unprivileged and the universality of all human beings—Orc immigrants included—because they now live in the shadow of what enshrined the opposite: Hitlerism; and, given their Christian programming, that scares them. As Holland said at the end of another interview, 'to cling to the idea that, say, racism is the ultimate sin is still for deeply Christian reasons. It's possible to imagine a different world in which the strong are powerful and in which the world is divided into the civilised and the barbarians because that's what the Ancient World was like, and that's what the Nazis enshrined. It's perfectly possible. The fact that we regard them as abhorrent I think is testimony of how Christian we remain.'

What Angela Merkel did, opening the doors to two million refugees in her anti-Nazi Germany, is ultimately an extreme form of following the parable of the Good Samaritan. Always keep in mind that Jesus didn't exist but that some Jewish rabbis, the mythmakers, wrote the New Testament. No racist movement that fails to see this can succeed because *despite their rabid anti-Semitism racialsists continue to, ultimately, obey the Jews* who wrote the NT. They are Jew-

obeyers. They all live, atheists included, under the moral sky bequeathed to us by the mighty archetype of 'God on the Cross.' And outside racist forums, the attempt to make not only the dispossessed blacks but poor transexual people the first, and the healthy white man the last, is but the final metastasis of an inversion that began to take root in our collective unconscious as early as the 4th century of the Common Era.

For decades, in my soliloquies I have often said to myself: 'A fish cannot criticise water,' i.e. we live in a matrix. Without knowing it or recognising it, secular humanists have been swimming in Christian waters since what misleadingly they call the age of enlightenment (actually a 'Dark Enlightenment,' as some right-wing intellectuals have pointed out). Ultimately this whole issue of 'human rights' is nothing more than a transposition to the legal plane of the Pauline ideas that there is no difference between Jew and Greek, woman and man. In the Athenian democracy only the native males of Attica had the right to vote. Neither slaves nor women nor mudblood foreigners could do so. The assumption that we owe modern democracy to the Greeks is false: we owe it to Christian mandates. Furthermore, modern westerners commit what I call, again in my soliloquies, the psychological *fallacy of ontological extension*. They believe that all cultures share their humanitarian values when not even the ancient Greeks, the Romans or Norsemen did; let alone billions of contemporary Muslims, Chinese or Hindus. In Holland's words, 'the conceit of the West is that it has transcended Christianity to become purely universal; purely global, and therefore it can market itself in those terms. But its values, its assumptions, its ethics remain palpably bred of the marrow of Christianity.'

The term catholic derives from the Greek, *katholikos*. If we translate 'universal human rights' into the Greek of the first centuries of our era, we would be talking about 'catholic human rights' insofar as *catholic* means precisely *universal* in the sense of no longer making distinctions between Jew and Greek, woman and man, slave and free man: all are now equal in the eyes of a Semitic god. Human rights are catholic in this universal sense. Hitler targeted the idea there exists such a thing as universal human dignity, as well as the idea that the first should be last. From his viewpoint, our viewpoint, and I am talking to those who will read Savitri Devi's book or *Day of Wrath* and *On Exterminationism* (all

listed on page 3), there is no such a thing as rights. Only the moral duty to dispose of the obsolete versions of *Homo sapiens*. This is the ultimate repudiation of the Christian heritage, and the horror that most westerners feel at the figures of Hitler and Himmler is nothing other than their continued enslavement to the archetype of the Jew on the Cross which they are still unable to exorcize from their psyches, even if this symbolic 'Jew' now takes other forms.

If we see Christianity and the French Revolution's human rights as two sides of the same axiological coin, let us venture to say that the perfect symbol of our counter-revolution would be for thousands of blonde beasts starting to wear T-shirts emblazoned with Himmler's face while burning churches, crucifying all those who tried to destroy their race and wiping their asses with the remains of the pages of the now destroyed Bibles all over the West, but especially in the US. And the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, which symbolises the historic inauguration of Neo-Christianity, must be razed to the ground as well.



As Nietzsche said, *Umwertung aller Werte!*





## Law against Christianity<sup>51</sup>

by Friedrich Nietzsche

Given on the Day of Salvation, on the first day of the year one (30 September 1888, according to the false calculation of time).

*War to the death against vice: the vice is Christianity.*

*First article.*—Every type of anti-nature is a vice. The priest is the most vicious type of person: he *teaches* anti-nature. Priests are not to be reasoned with, they are to be locked up.

*Second article.*—Any participation in church services is an attack on public morality. One should be harsher with Protestants than with Catholics, harsher with liberal Protestants than with orthodox ones. The criminality of being Christian increases with your proximity to science. The criminal of criminals is consequently the *philosopher*.

*Third article.*—The execrable location where Christianity brooded over its basilisk eggs should be razed to the ground and, being the *depraved* spot on earth, it should be the horror of all posterity. Poisonous snakes should be bred on top of it.

*Fourth article.*—The preacher of chastity is a public incitement to anti-nature. Contempt for sexuality, making it unclean with the concept of ‘uncleanliness’, these are the real sins against the holy spirit of life.

*Fifth article.*—Eating at the same table as a priest ostracizes: you are excommunicated from honest society. The priest is *our* Chandala, —he should be ostracized, starved, driven into every type of desert.

*Sixth article.*—The ‘holy’ history should be called by the name it deserves, the *cursed* history; the words ‘God’, ‘saviour’,

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<sup>51</sup> Nietzsche’s ‘Law Against Christianity’ is a piece that has been eliminated from numerous editions of *The Anti-Christ: A Curse on Christianity*.

‘redeemer’, ‘saint’ should be used as terms of abuse, to signify criminals.

*Seventh article.*—The rest follows from this.