Contempt for Humanity?

The danger of allowing ourselves to be driven to contempt for humanity is very real. We know very well that we have no right to let this happen and that it would lead us into the most unfruitful relation to human beings. The following thoughts may protect us against this temptation: through contempt for humanity we fall victim precisely to our opponents’ chief errors. Whoever despises another human being will never be able to make anything of him. Nothing of what we despise in another is itself foreign to us. How often do we expect more of the other than what we ourselves are willing to accomplish. Why is it that we have hitherto thought with so little sobriety about the tempt-ability and frailty of human beings? We must learn to regard human beings less in terms of what they do and neglect to do and more in terms of what they suffer. The only fruitful relation to human beings—particularly to the weak among them—is love, that is, the will to enter into and to keep community with them. God did not hold human beings in contempt but became human for their sake.

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