

Space for Notes



Claude-Henri Saint-Simon
The New Christianity
Dialogues between a Conservative and an Innovator
(1825)

First Dialogue

1. The Conservative: Do you believe in God?

The Innovator: Yes, I believe in God.

The C.: Do YOU believe that the Christian religion has a divine origin?

The I.: Yes, I believe that.

C.: If the Christian religion is of divine origin, it is in no way subject to improvement; meanwhile, you, through your writings, are stirring up artists, industrialists and men of learning to want to perfect this religion: you thereby enter into a contradiction with yourself, since your opinion and your belief turn out to be in opposition to one another.

I.: The opposition between my opinion and my belief that you believe you have observed is only apparent; one must make a distinction between what God Himself said and what the clergy has said in His name. What God said is certainly not subject to improvement, but what the clergy has said in his name composes a science subject to improvement like any other human science. The theories of theology need to be renewed in certain epochs, just like those of physics, chemistry and physiology.

C.: What, then, is the part of religion that you consider divine? What is the part that you regard as human?

2. I: God said: *All men must behave as brothers towards one another; this sublime principle contains everything that is divine in the Christian religion.*

C.: What! You reduce everything divine in Christianity to one sole principle?

I: Of necessity God related everything to one sole principle. He necessarily deduced everything from the same principle; without this, His will concerning men would not have been systematic. It would be blasphemous to suppose that the Almighty had founded His religion on several principles.

Now, according to this principle, given by God to men for the governing of their conduct, they must organize their society in the way that would be the most advantageous for the greatest number of people. They must make it their goal in all their efforts, in all their activities, to ameliorate as promptly and as completely as possible the moral and physical existence of the most numerous class.

I say that the divine part of the Christian religion consists in this and in this alone.

C.: I admit that God gave only one principle to men; I grant that He commanded them to organize their society in such a way as to guarantee to the poorest class the promptest and most complete amelioration of their physical and moral existence. But I must point out to you that God left mankind with guides. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus Christ charged His apostles and their successors with the task of directing the conduct of men, indicating to them the ways in which they were to

apply this fundamental principle of divine morality, so as to make it easier for them to draw the most just consequences from it.

3. Do you recognize the Church as a divine institution?

I.: I believe that God Himself founded the Christian Church; I am filled with the deepest respect and the greatest admiration for the conduct of the Fathers of this Church.

These leaders of the primitive Church explicitly preached the unity of all peoples. They tried to get them to live at peace with one another; they proclaimed positively and most energetically to the rich and powerful that it was their first duty to employ all their resources in bringing about the promptest possible amelioration of the physical and moral existence of the poor.

These leaders of the primitive Church produced the best book that has ever been published, the *Primitive Catechism*, in which they divided the activities of men into two classes, the good and the bad--that is, into those activities that conform to the fundamental principle of divine morality, and those contrary to this principle.

C.: Tell me more about your idea, and tell me if you regard the Christian Church as infallible.

I.: In cases where the Church has for its leaders the men who are the most capable of guiding the forces of society in the direction of the divine purpose, I believe that the Church can then, without reservations, be considered infallible, and that society is acting wisely in allowing itself to be led by it.

I consider the Fathers of the Church to have been infallible for the epoch in which they lived, whereas the clergy today seems to me to be, of all the organized groups within society, the one that is committing the greatest errors, the errors that are the most harmful to society; the group whose conduct is the most diametrically opposed to the fundamental principle of divine morality.

4. C.: As you see it, then, the Christian religion is in a very bad state?

I.: Quite the contrary; never before has there been in existence such a great number of good Christians; but nowadays almost all of them belong to the class of laymen. Since the fifteenth century, the Christian religion has been losing its unity of action. Since that time, a Christian clergy has not existed. All the clergies that are seeking today to fasten their opinions, their morals, their rituals and their dogmas onto the moral principle that mankind received from God are heretical, since their opinions, their morals, their dogmas and their rituals are more or less opposed to divine morality; the most powerful clergy of all is also the one whose heresy is the greatest of all.

C.: What will become of the Christian religion if, as you believe, the men charged with the task of teaching it have become heretics?

I.: Christianity will become the sole, universal religion; the Asians and Africans will convert to it; the members of the European clergy will become good Christians, and will abandon the various heresies that they profess today. The true doctrine of Christianity, that is, the most general doctrine that can be derived from the fundamental principle of divine morality, will be produced, and the differences in religious opinions that exist right now will immediately come to an end.

The first Christian doctrine to appear in history gave society only a partial and quite incomplete organization. The rights of Caesar remained independent of the rights assigned to the Church. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; so goes the famous maxim that separated these two powers. The temporal power continued to base itself upon the law of the strongest, while the Church maintained that society should recognize as legitimate only those institutions that had the amelioration of the existence of the poorest class as their object.

5. The new Christian organization will derive its temporal as well as its spiritual institutions from the principle that all men must behave as brothers toward one another. It will direct all its institutions, whatever their nature, towards the advancement of the well-being of the poorest class.

C.: On what facts do you base this opinion? By what authority are you able to believe that a single moral principle will become the sole regulator of all human societies?

I.: The most general principle, the principle of divine morality, is the one that must become the sole moral principle; this is the consequence of its nature and origin.

The people of God, that people who received divine revelation before the appearance of Jesus, and who are the most widely spread out over the surface of the earth, have always felt that the Christian doctrine, founded by the Fathers of the Church, was incomplete. They have always maintained that a great era is yet to come, an era to which they have given the name messianic, in which the religious doctrine would be presented in all the universality of which it is capable; that it would govern equally the activities of the temporal and the spiritual powers, and that all the races of man would henceforth have only one single religion, one common organization.

At last I can see the new Christian doctrine clearly, and I am going to expound it. . . . I will begin by examining the different religions that exist today; I will compare their doctrines with the one that derives directly from the fundamental principle of divine morality.

On the Different Religions

6. The New Christianity will be made up of branches nearly like those that compose the various heretical associations existing in Europe and America today.

The New Christianity will have, as the heretical associations do, its morality, its rituals and its dogma; it will have its clergy, and there will be leaders among this clergy. But, in spite of this similarity of organization, the New Christianity will have been purged of all presently existing heresies; the New Christians will regard the moral doctrine as the most important element of their religion; they will look upon ritual and dogma only as accessories since it will be the principal aim of these to fix the attention of the faithful in all social classes upon morality.

The entire moral doctrine of the New Christianity will be rederived directly from this principle: All men must behave as brothers toward one another; and this principle, which belongs to primitive Christianity, will undergo a transfiguration, by which it will be presented as the principle that today must be the aim of all religious activity.

This regenerated principle will be presented in the following form: Religion must direct society toward the over-all goal of the most rapid possible amelioration of the condition of the poorest class.

The men who are to be the founders of the New Christianity and the leaders of the new Church, must be all those who are the most capable of contributing to the advancement of the well-being of the poorest class. The functions of the new clergy, basically, will be to teach the new Christian doctrine, which the leaders of the new Church will work unceasingly to bring to perfection.

7. We will now compare this conception of a religious institution with the religions that exist in Europe and America; by this comparison we will easily make it evident that all the religions that profess to be Christian today are only heresies. . . .

On the Catholic Religion

The Catholic Association, Apostolic and Roman, has the largest number of adherents of all the European and American religious associations; it still has several major advantages over all the other sects to which the inhabitants of these two continents are attached.

It was the immediate successor to the Christian association, and this gave it a certain veneer of orthodoxy.

Its clergy inherited a large part of the riches that the Christian clergy had acquired in its numerous victories during the fifteen centuries in which it struggled to replace the aristocracy of birth with the aristocracy of talents, and to establish the religious supremacy of peaceful over military men.

The leaders of the Catholic Church preserved the sovereignty of the city that has had unbroken domination of the world for more than twenty centuries, first by the force of arms, and then by the omnipotence of divine morality; and it is in the Vatican today that the Jesuits are assembling the means to dominate all mankind by an odious system of mystification and trickery.

8. The Catholic Association, Apostolic and Roman, is incontestably very powerful still, although it has eroded considerably since the pontificate of Leo X, who was its founder. But the strength that this association possesses is only a material strength, and it is able to maintain itself only by means of trickery. Spiritual strength, moral strength, Christian strength, the kind of strength that loyalty and sincerity provide, is missing from it entirely. In a word, the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion is nothing but a Christian heresy; it is only a degenerate portion of Christianity. . . .

Let us now examine how the Sacred College has been composed since the time of Leo X, founder of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church; let us examine the kind of learning that this College requires of those to whom it grants priesthood; let us see what moral and physical ameliorations the poor classes have undergone in the Ecclesiastical States, which are intended to stand as models to all other governments; and finally, let us examine the content of the teaching given by the Catholic clergy to the faithful of its communion.

I shall make my summing-up to the Pope . . . so that he may answer clearly and

without employing any mystical turns of phrase, four accusations that I am now going to level against the Catholic Church.

9. I accuse the Pope and his Church of heresy on the following count: The teaching that the Catholic clergy gives the laymen of its communion is vicious, and does not guide their conduct onto the path of Christianity.

The Christian religion proposes to its faithful as an earthly goal, the most rapid possible amelioration of the moral and physical existence of the poor. Jesus Christ promised eternal life to those who would work the most zealously for the advancement of the well-being of the most numerous class.

Go through the entire body of works written, with the approval of the Pope and his Sacred College, on the Catholic dogma; examine the whole body of prayers consecrated by the leaders of the Church, to be read by the faithful, whether laymen or ecclesiastics; and nowhere will you find the aim of the Christian religion clearly; spelled out. Ideas on morality are found in small number in the Christian writings, and they never form a body of doctrine. They are thinly scattered throughout an immense quantity of volumes that are made up, basically, of fastidious repetitions and a few mystical conceptions; conceptions that could in no way serve as a guide, and that are, on the contrary, of such a nature as to cause the principles of the sublime moral doctrine of the Christ to be lost from view.

It would be unjust to level the accusation of incoherence against the immense collection of Catholic prayers consecrated by the Pope. One can perceive that the selection of these prayers was guided by a systematic conception; one can recognize that the Sacred College has directed all the faithful toward a common goal. It is evident, however, that this goal is not the Christian one, but rather, the heretical one of persuading laymen that they are in no condition to guide themselves by their own lights, and that they must let themselves be guided by the clergy, *without the clergy necessarily being obliged to have a capacity superior to theirs.*

10. Every part of the ritual, as well as every principle of the Catholic dogma, clearly has it as its object to place laymen in a condition of the most absolute dependence upon the clergy.

I accuse the Pope and the Cardinal of being heretical on this second count:

I accuse them of not possessing the knowledge that would tender them capable of guiding their faithful onto the path of salvation;

I accuse them of giving a poor education to the seminarians, and of not demanding of those to whom they grant the priesthood the learning that they need to become worthy pastors, capable of properly tending the flocks that are to be confided to them.

The Roman clergy was orthodox until the accession of Leo X to the papal throne, because until that time it was superior to laymen in all the sciences whose progress contributed to the advancement of the well-being of the poorest class. Since that time, it has become heretical, because it has no longer cultivated anything but theology, and has allowed itself to be surpassed by laymen in the fine arts, in the exact sciences, and in all activities pertaining to industrial capacity.

I accuse the Pope of behaving as a heretic on this third count:

I accuse him of conduct as a ruler more contrary to the moral and physical interests of the indigent class among his temporal subjects than that of any laic prince toward the same class.

11. Travel through all of Europe, and you will see that the population of the Ecclesiastical States is the one that suffers the most vicious and anti-Christian administration of public needs.

Considerable stretches of the lands that constitute the domain of Saint Peter, which once produced abundant crops, have now become, through the negligence of the papal government, pestilential swamps. A great part of the territory that has not yet become swampy remains uncultivated. . . .

All branches of industry have become paralyzed. The poor are out of work, and would die of hunger if the ecclesiastical establishments, the government, in other words, did not feed them. The poor, since they are fed by charity, are ill-fed; thus, their existence is wretched in its physical aspect.

They are even more wretched in the moral aspect of their lives, because they live in idleness, which is the mother of all vices and of all the brigandage with which this unfortunate country is afflicted. . . .

I accuse the Pope and all those who are currently Cardinals, I accuse all the Popes and all the Cardinals who have ever lived since the fifteenth century, of being and of having been heretics on this fourth count:

I accuse them first of all of having consented to the formation of two institutions diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christianity: the Inquisition and the Jesuit order; I further accuse them of having accorded their protection to these two institutions almost without interruption since the aforementioned epoch....

12. On the Protestant Religion

The European mind took a great leap forward in the fifteenth century; great discoveries and rapid advances, always toward a positive utility, were effectuated in all directions, and these discoveries and advances were almost entirely due to the efforts of laymen. . . .

In this epoch, the court of Rome lost a great deal of the support that it had hitherto received from the class of plebeians against that of the patricians, and from the class of commoners against the nobles and the feudal power.

The Divine Founder of Christianity had advised His disciples to work without rest to raise up the lower classes of society, and to lessen the importance of those invested with the right of command and of making the law.

Until the fifteenth century, the Church had pursued this Christian ideal with reasonable consistency; all the Popes and almost all the Cardinals had arisen from the class of plebeians, and they often came from families engaged in the lowliest occupations.

With this policy, the clergy had, through its perseverance, tended to diminish the importance and influence of the aristocracy of birth, and elevate the aristocracy of talents in its place.

At the end of the fourteenth century, the character of the sacred college changed completely. It renounced the Christian ideal in order to adopt an entirely worldly policy. The spiritual power ceased to fight against the temporal power; it no longer identified itself with the lower classes of society, it no longer strove to make them important, it no longer sought to elevate the aristocracy of talents above that of birth. It conceived a plan of action whose object was to preserve the importance of the Church Militant and the riches it had acquired, to enable it to enjoy these riches and to suffer no longer, without at the same time having to perform any useful function in society.

13. In order to achieve this aim, the sacred college placed itself under the protection of the temporal power. . . .

In his diplomatic relations with Charles V, Leo X conducted himself in the capacity of a prince of the house of Medici, rather than in that of a Pope. The result was that the Papacy ceased to inspire the Emperor with apprehension, and so Charles V, no longer feeling himself restrained by the ecclesiastical power, which was alone capable of setting up a barrier to the ambitions of lay princes, conceived the project of establishing a universal monarchy for his own benefit, a project that was renewed by Louis XIV and by Bonaparte, whereas none of the lay princes of Europe, from the time of Charlemagne until the sixteenth century, had attempted to carry it out.

Such was the state of the only religion existing in Europe at the time when Luther began his insurrection against the court of Rome.

The works of this reformer naturally divide themselves into two categories: the first, critical, addressing itself to the papal religion; the second, constructive, having as its object the establishment of a religion distinct from the one presided over by the court of Rome.

The first part of Luther's work was susceptible to being fully realized, as indeed, it eventually was. Luther's critique of the court of Rome, rendered a major service to civilization; without it, papism would have completely subjected the human mind to superstitious ideas and caused morality to be totally lost from view. We owe it to Luther that a spiritual power which was no longer attuned to the condition of society was dissolved.

14. But Luther could not combat ultramontane doctrines without trying to reorganize the Christian religion himself. It is in this second part of his reform, the organic part of his work, that Luther has left his successors much to do: the Protestant religion, such as was conceived by Luther, is still only a Christian heresy. Certainly Luther was right in saying that the court of Rome had abandoned the ideal handed on by Jesus to His apostles; certainly he was right in proclaiming that the ritual and the dogma established by the Popes were no longer appropriate for directing the attention of the faithful to Christian morality, and that they were, on the contrary, of such a nature that they could be considered as only accessory to religion. But he was not right in concluding, on the basis of these two incontestable truths, that morality should be taught to the faithful of his own era in the same way that the Church Fathers had taught it to their contemporaries; nor was he right in concluding that ritual should therefore be stripped of all the charms with which the fine arts are capable of enriching.

15. I accuse the Lutherans of being heretics on this first count:

I accuse them of having adopted a moral doctrine most inferior to what could be

applied to Christians in the present state of their civilization.

Since European public opinion is favorable to Protestantism, whereas it is contrary to Catholicism, I must be severe in my demonstration of the Protestant heresy, and so I am obliged to deal with this question in a highly general way.

Jesus had charged His apostles and their successors with the mission of organizing mankind in the way most favorable to the amelioration of the condition of the poor. At the same time, He had recommended to His Church that they employ only gentleness, persuasion and demonstration to achieve their goal.

A great deal of time and varied effort were necessary to fulfill this task; therefore, one cannot be surprised if it has not yet been completed.

What aspect of this task was it Luther's lot to perform? How well did he acquit himself of it? These are the two matters that I must now examine. . . .

In the epoch when Jesus conferred upon His apostles the sublime mission of organizing mankind in the interest of the poorest class, civilization was still in its infancy.

16. Society was divided into two great classes: masters and slaves. The class of masters was divided into two castes: the patricians, who made the law and performed all the important functions, and the plebeians, who had to obey the law, even though they did not make it, and who generally performed only menial functions. Even the greatest philosophers of the time would not have been able to conceive of a social organization on any other basis. No form of moral system as yet existed, since nobody had yet found a way to reduce all the principles of this science to one single principle.

No form of religious system as yet existed, since all the public forms of belief paid homage to a multitude of gods, and these inspired men to a variety of sentiments, many of them even opposed to one another.

The human heart had not yet in any way given rise to philanthropic sentiments. The sentiment most widespread among generous spirits was patriotism, and this was extremely circumscribed, because of the small size of territories, and because of the lack of importance of the masses in the nations of antiquity. One nation alone, the Roman, dominated all the others, and governed them arbitrarily.

The dimensions of this planet were not yet known, so that it would not have been possible to conceive of a general plan of amelioration for the territorial property of mankind.

In a word, Christianity, its moral doctrine, its ritual and dogma, its partisans and ministers, had its beginning completely outside the social organization, as well as outside the usages and manners of society.

17. But by the time Luther brought about his reform, civilization had made great progress. Since the establishment of Christianity, society had changed its face completely; the social organization was founded on a new basis.

Slavery had been almost completely abolished. The patricians were no longer in exclusive possession of the right to make laws; they no longer performed all the important functions. The temporal power, blasphemous in its very essence, no

longer dominated the spiritual power, and the spiritual power was no longer directed by the patricians. The court of Rome had become the first court of Europe; since the establishment of the papacy, all the Popes and almost all the Cardinals had come from the class of plebeians; the aristocracy of talents was surpassing the aristocracy of wealth and privilege.

Society possessed a religious and moral system all in one, since the love of God and of one's neighbor gave a unitary character to the most generous sentiments of the faithful.

Christianity had become the basis of social organization. It had replaced the law of the strongest; the right of conquest was no longer considered the most legitimate of all rights.

America had been discovered; and mankind, aware of the full extent of its territorial possessions, was in a position to make a general plan of the work that had to be done to obtain the greatest possible benefit from this planet.

18. The peaceful arts had been developed, and had acquired precision at the same time; the fine arts had just been reborn; the sciences of observation had just begun to emerge, along with industry.

The philanthropic sentiment, the true basis of Christianity, had replaced patriotism in all generous hearts. If all men did not yet behave as brothers toward one another, at least they admitted that they had to regard themselves as all children of one father.

Had Luther's reform been complete, he would have produced and proclaimed the following doctrine; he would have said to the Pope and the Cardinals:

"Your predecessors have sufficiently perfected the theory of Christianity; they have sufficiently propagated this theory, and Europeans have become sufficiently imbued with it: now it is with the general application of this doctrine that you must concern yourselves. The true Christianity must render men happy on earth as well as in heaven.

"You should no longer focus the attention of the faithful upon abstract ideas; it is, rather, through an appropriate application of sensual ideas, by combining them in such a way as to obtain for men the highest possible degree of felicity during their earthly lives, that you would succeed in establishing Christianity, the general, universal, and unique religion.

"You must no longer confine yourselves to preaching to the faithful that the poor are the beloved children of God; you must also employ, openly and energetically, all the means and powers acquired by the Church Militant to the prompt amelioration of the moral and physical existence of the most numerous class. The preliminary and preparatory tasks of Christianity have been completed; the task you now have to carry out is much more satisfying than those of your predecessors. This task consists in establishing the general and definitive Christianity, in organizing all mankind in accordance with the fundamental principle of divine morality.

19. "To accomplish your task, you must set forth this principle as the basis and purpose of all social institutions.

"The apostles were forced to recognize the power of Caesar; they had to say, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,' because, being unable to dispose

of a force sufficient to fight against him, they had to avoid making themselves his enemy.

"But today, since the respective positions of the spiritual and temporal powers have been reversed, thanks to the achievements of the Church Militant, you must proclaim to Caesar's successors that Christianity will no longer acknowledge the right to command men, this right founded upon conquest, in other words, upon the law of the strongest. . . . "The most favorable situation for ameliorating the existence of the poorest class as rapidly as possible would be one in which a great quantity of works demanding a high degree of human intelligence are to be carried out. You are capable of creating such a situation; now that the dimensions of our planet are known, you should have the industrialists, the artists and the men of learning draw up a general plan of works that would make the territorial possessions of mankind as productive and as rewarding as possible in all respects.

"The enormous number of works that you could set up immediately, would contribute more to the amelioration of the lot of the poor class than the most abundant charities ever could; and by this means, the rich, far from impoverishing themselves with pecuniary sacrifices, would be increasing their own wealth at the same time that they were improving the lot of the poor...."

20. I accuse the Protestants of heresy on this second count: I accuse them of having adopted a poor ritual.

The more society is perfected morally and physically, the more its intellectual and manual efforts are subdivided; thus, in the ordinary course of life, the attention of men is fixed more and more upon objects of special interest, corresponding to the extent that the fine arts, science and industry progress.

The result of this is, that the more society progresses, the more its religious rituals have to be perfected; for the object of religious ritual is to draw the attention of men regularly assembling on their days of rest to the interests common to all members of society, to the general interests of mankind.

The reformer Luther, and, after his death, the ministers of the Reformed churches, should therefore have sought all means of making ritual as appropriate as possible to direct the attention of the faithful to the interests that they have in common.

They should have sought the best means and most favorable circumstances to develop completely before the eyes of the faithful the fundamental principle of the Christian religion: all men must behave as brothers toward one another, to familiarize their minds with this principle, and get them into the habit of applying it in all their social relations, so as to keep them from losing sight of it entirely in the ordinary course of their lives, no matter how specialized may be the objects of their day-to-day activities.

21. Now, in order to attract men's attention toward some idea, whatever it may be, in order to push them firmly in a certain direction, one must employ either of two general methods. Either you must inspire terror in them by showing them the terrible woes that would result if they were to pursue a line of conduct other than the one along which you were urging them, or you must lure them with the prospect of satisfactions that would necessarily result from efforts they made in the direction you were indicating.

In order to produce the most decisive and useful activity along either one of these

lines, you must combine all the means and resources that the fine arts have to offer.

The preacher who is called upon by circumstances to employ eloquence, which is foremost among the fine arts, must make his listeners tremble when he describes the dreadful lot that the man who has merited public disapproval finds in this life. He must actually show people the arm of God raised over the head of the man whose sentiments have not all been dominated by the ideal of philanthropy.

Or else he must develop the most generous and energetic sentiments in the souls of his listeners by making them feel with all their hearts the superiority of those satisfactions which are accompanied by public esteem over all other satisfactions.

The poets must supplement the efforts of the preachers; they must provide the religious service with poetic works that can be recited in chorus, so that all the faithful will be preachers in regard to one another.

22. The musicians must enrich the religious poetry with their accompaniments, and stamp it with a musical character that will penetrate deeply into the souls of the faithful.

The painters and sculptors should place within the temples works that will fasten the attention of Christians upon the most eminently Christian acts that men have performed in the past.

The architects should build the temples in such a way that, within their walls, preachers, poets and musicians, painters and sculptors, will readily be able to stir up feelings either of terror, or of hope and joy, in the souls of the faithful

These clearly are the bases that must be provided for ritual, and the means that must be employed to make ritual useful to society.

What did Luther do in this matter? He reduced the ritual of the Reformed church to mere preachment; he made all Christian sentiments as prosaic as possible; he banished all the ornaments of painting and sculpture from his temples; he suppressed music, and gave preference to religious edifices whose structures were the least significant and therefore the least appropriate to the task of favorably disposing the hearts of the faithful towards passions for the public good. ...

I now level against the Protestants a third accusation of heresy:

I accuse them of having adopted a poor set of dogmas.

23. . . Four major disadvantages have resulted from the excessive emphasis that the Protestants have placed upon the Bible:

1. This study has caused them to lose sight of positive ideas and contemporary problems; it has given them a taste for pointless inquiries, and a great penchant for metaphysics. In northern Germany in particular, which is the seat of Protestantism, vagueness of ideas and feelings dominates all the writings of the most noted philosophers and most popular novelists.
2. This study spices the imagination with reminders of various shameful vices that the advancement of civilization has caused to disappear, such as bestiality and incest of all imaginable sorts.

3. This study focuses the attention upon political desires contrary to the public good; it drives those who are governed to want to establish in society an utterly impracticable equality; it keeps Protestants from working for the formation of a political system in which the most capable men in the sciences of observation, in the fine arts, and in the industrial combinations would care for the general interest: a special system that would be the best humanity could achieve, since it is the one that would contribute the most directly and efficaciously to the moral and physical amelioration of the existence of the poor.

4. This study leads those engaged in it to regard it as the most important study of all. The result of this is the wide-spread formation of Biblical societies, which distribute millions of copies of the Bible to the public every year. . . .

24. I have had to criticize Protestantism with the greatest severity in order to make Protestants realize how incomplete Luther's reform was, and how inferior it is to the New Christianity; but, as I pointed out at the beginning of my examination of Luther's work, I am none the less aware of how profound, in spite of his numerous errors, was the service that he rendered society in the part of his reform devoted to criticism. Besides, my own critique was directed against that Protestantism that is regarded by Protestants as the definitive reform of Christianity; I had no intention of attacking Luther's polemical genius. When one considers the times in which he lived, the conditions under which he had to struggle, one feels that he did everything possible at the time to start a reform movement and persuade people to adopt it. By presenting moral doctrine, instead of ritual and dogma, as the aspect of Christianity that should command the attention of the faithful, even though the moral doctrine of Protestantism was not properly attuned to the understandings of modern civilization, Luther prepared the way for the new reform of the Christian religion. Nevertheless, one must not look upon the New Christianity as a perfection of Protestantism. The new formula under which I am presenting the original principle of Christianity is completely different in nature from any improvements that have hitherto been made in the Christian religion.

I will stop here. I think, sir conservative, that I have sufficiently expounded my ideas on the new Christian doctrine for you to be able, at least for the present, to make a preliminary judgment. Tell me whether or not you believe me imbued with the spirit of Christianity, and whether or not my efforts to rejuvenate this sublime religion are of a nature that will not alter its primitive purity.

25. The Conservative: I have followed your discourse with great attention. As you spoke, my own ideas became clearer, my doubts disappeared, and I felt my admiration for the Christian religion grow inside of me; my attachment to the religious system that has civilized Europe has in no way prevented me from understanding that it is possible to improve it still more, and you have won me over completely on this point. . . .

I find your conclusion to be legitimate and of the utmost importance. I regard myself, from this moment on, as a New Christian, and I unite my efforts with yours in the propagation of the New Christianity.

But, with that in mind, I have several observations to make on the general nature of your efforts. The new formula under which you represent the principle of Christianity includes your entire system of social organization, a system founded at once upon philosophical considerations from the sciences, the fine arts, industry, and the religious sentiment that is the most widespread in the civilized world, that of Christianity. Why, then, have you not presented this system, this object of all your

reflections, first and foremost from the religious point of view, from the point of view that is at once the most elevated and the most popular? Why have you addressed yourself to industrialists, scholars and artists, instead of going directly to the people with a religious message? Do you want people to say of you exactly what you say of Luther: "He has criticized well, but has formulated his doctrine poorly"?

The intellectual powers of man are really quite frail; it is by making them converge upon a single goal, by directing them all toward the same point, that a great effect is achieved and an important result obtained. Why do you begin by employing your powers in criticism, instead of starting right out and formulating a new doctrine? Why do you not attack the question of the New Christianity right from the outset? ...

26. What obstacles could such a doctrine encounter? Those who would find it to be in their interest to support it are infinitely more numerous than those whose interest would be in preventing it from being carried out. The partisans of this doctrine have nothing less than the principle of divine morality to stand on, whereas their adversaries have no weapons with which to oppose them but an accumulation of habits that come from an era of ignorance and barbarism, sustained by the principles of Jesuitic egoism. In short, I think that you should immediately begin propagating your new doctrine and preparing missions among all the civilized nations, in order to bring about its adoption.

The Innovator: The New Christians should develop the same character and follow the same procedures as the Christians of the Primitive Church; they should not employ any forces other than those of their intelligence in getting their doctrine adopted. It is solely by persuasion and demonstration that they should work for the conversion of Catholics and Protestants; by these means they will succeed in making those Christians who have been misguided by the Papal and Lutheran religions want to renounce the heresies with which these religions have become infected, and willingly adopt the New Christianity.

The New Christianity will, like primitive Christianity, be supported, advanced and protected by moral force and by the great power of public opinion; and, if the propagation of this religion should unfortunately occasion acts of violence or unjust condemnations, it would be the New Christians who would be the sufferers; for at no time whatsoever would anyone see them employing physical force against their adversaries. Never would they function as judges or executioners.

27. After I had found the way to rejuvenate Christianity by causing it to undergo a transfiguration in its fundamental principle, my first concern was, and had to be, to take all necessary precautions to see to it that the spread of this new doctrine would not incite the poor classes to acts of violence against the rich and against governments.

I had to address myself first to the rich and powerful, to see to it that they became favorably disposed toward the new doctrine, by making them realize that it was in no way contrary to their interests, since it clearly would be impossible to ameliorate the moral and physical existence of the poor classes by any other means than those that tend to advance the well-being of the rich classes.

I had to make artists, men of learning and the chiefs of industrial enterprises realize that their interests were essentially the same as those of the great masses of people; that they themselves belonged to the class of laborers at the same time that they were its natural leaders; that the approbation of the masses for the services these men rendered them was the sole recompense worthy of their glorious efforts. I had to

insist strongly upon this point, since it is of the greatest importance, and is the sole means of providing the nations with the sort of guides that truly deserve their confidence, guides capable of leading public opinion and enabling it to judge sanely what political measures are either favorable or contrary to the interests of the greatest number. Finally, I had to make Catholics and Protestants see exactly when it was that they had started down a false path, so as to facilitate the means of bringing them back onto the true one. I must insist upon this point, because the conversion of the Catholic and Protestant clergies would provide the New Christianity with great sources of strength. . . .

28. But it is not my aim merely to demonstrate the heresies of the Catholics and the Protestants; it will not suffice for me, in order to rejuvenate Christianity entirely, to make it triumph over all the existing religious philosophies. I must also establish its scientific superiority over all the doctrines of the philosophers who stood outside any organized religion. I must reserve the development of this idea for a later discourse; but meanwhile, I shall give you a synopsis of the whole of the work that I have in mind.

Mankind has never ceased to progress, but it has not always proceeded in the same way or employed the same methods for adding to its knowledge and perfecting its civilization. On the contrary, observation shows that it has proceeded, from the fifteenth century to the present, in a manner quite different from the one it followed from the establishment of Christianity until that time.

From the time Christianity was established until the fifteenth century, mankind was occupied mainly with the coordination of its generous sentiments, with the establishment of a single and universal principle, and with the founding of an institution that had as its goal the elevation of the aristocracy of talent over that of birth; so that it tended to cause all particular interests to submit to the general interest. during this entire period, all direct observations concerning private interests, particular facts and secondary principles, were neglected and decried by most thinkers, while the prevailing opinion on this point came to be that secondary principles had to be derived from general facts and from a universal principle. this opinion was based upon purely speculative notions, since the human intelligence has, in fact, no way of establishing generalizations so precise that it would be possible to derive from them, as direct consequences, all the particularities in existence.

It is to this important point that I have related all the observations I have presented in the course of this dialogue, in my examination of Catholicism and Protestantism.

29. Since the dissolution of the European spiritual power--the result of Luther's insurrection--since the fifteenth century, the human mind has repudiated the broad generalizations of the preceding era: it has turned to particularities and has occupied itself with the analysis of concrete facts and of the private interests of the different classes of society; it has striven to establish secondary principles that could serve as bases for the different branches of knowledge. During this second period, the opinion became established that the consideration of generalities, of general principles and the general interests of mankind, was nothing but a vague and metaphysical pursuit, incapable of contributing efficaciously to the progress of knowledge and the perfecting of civilization.

Thus, the human mind has followed, since the fifteenth century, a course opposite to the one it had followed up to that time; and certainly, the important and positive advances in all aspects of human activity that have resulted from this change

irrevocably demonstrate how greatly deceived were our ancestors in the Middle Ages, when they deemed the study of particular facts and secondary principles, and the analysis of private interests, to be of mediocre utility.

But it is equally true that great evil has ensued for society as a result of the state of abandon in which men have left all efforts relative to the study of general facts, principles and interests since the fifteenth century. this desertion has given rise to selfish sentiments, which have become dominant among all classes and all individuals. These sentiments have facilitated Caesar's recovery of a large part of the political power he had lost before the fifteenth century. To this selfishness we must attribute the political illness of our era, an illness that causes all those in our society who are usefully employed to suffer; an illness that enables the Kings to absorb for their personal use, and for the use of their soldiers and courtiers, a large part of the earnings of the poor; an illness that allows the royalty and aristocracy to preempt an enormous part of the honor and esteem that really belong to the men of learning, the artists and the chiefs of the industrial enterprises, in recognition of the services of direct and positive utility that they render the social body.

30. It is therefore most desirable that those labors that have for their object the perfecting of our knowledge relative to general facts, general principles and general interests be promptly resumed, and that they be protected henceforth by society just as carefully as those works which have the study of particular facts, secondary principles and private interests for their object....

I will end this first dialogue by telling you frankly what I think about the Christian revelation.

We are certainly quite superior to our predecessors in those sciences that have a positive and specialized utility; it is only since the fifteenth century, and, in particular, since the beginning of the last century, that we have made great advances in mathematics, physics, chemistry and physiology. But there is one science that is even more important for society than physical and mathematical knowledge: the science that constitutes society itself, that serves as its basis, moral science. now moral science has followed a line of development entirely opposite to that of the physical sciences and mathematics. its fundamental principle was brought forth more than eighteen hundred years ago, and, since that time, none of the inquiries, even those by men of the greatest genius, have been able to discover a principle superior in either generality or precision to the one that was then given by the Founder of Christianity. Moreover, when society lost sight of this principle, when men ceased looking upon it as a general guide for their conduct, they promptly fell back under the yoke of Caesar, that is, under the empire of brute force, which this principle had subordinated to intellectual force.

I ask you now if the Intelligence that produced the regulative principle of mankind eighteen hundred years ago, and which thereby had produced this principle fifteen centuries before we began making important advances in the physical and mathematical sciences--I ask you if this Intelligence does not clearly have superhuman power, and if there exists a greater proof of Christian revelation.

31. Yes, I believe Christianity to be a divine institution, and I am persuaded that God grants special protection to those who devote their efforts to causing all human institutions to be submitted to the fundamental principle of this sublime doctrine. I am convinced that I myself am performing a divine mission when I remind the Peoples and the Kings of the true spirit of Christianity. And, fully confident of the special and divine protection that is being given to my efforts, I therefore feel hardy

enough to make representations concerning their conduct to the Kings of Europe, who have formed a coalition, and have given this union the sacred name of *Holy Alliance*; I now address myself directly to them, and dare to say;

Princes,

What is the nature, what is the character, in the eyes of God and of Christians, of the power that you exercise?

What are the bases of the system of social organization that you are working to establish? What measures have you taken to ameliorate the moral and physical existence of the poor classes?

You call yourselves Christians, yet you continue to base your power upon physical force, so that you are still only the successors of Caesar, and you forget that true Christians propose, as the final outcome of their efforts, to annihilate completely the power of the sword, the power of Caesar, which, by its very nature is provisional.

Listen to the voice of God, which speaks to you through my lips; become good Christians once again, and stop looking upon armies, noblemen, heretical clergies and perverse judges as your principal sources of sustenance. United under the banner of Christianity, you will be able to accomplish all the duties that this banner imposes upon the powerful; remember that it commands them to employ all their forces in advancing as rapidly as possible the social well-being of the poor!