

BACK TO WORK: ANSWERING TWO OBJECTIONS

Let us see how the joint work of Brother Hippolyte-Victor and Bishop Frutaz finally overcame the two main objections that had arisen.

Firstly, the doubts about Jean-Marie's relationship with his brother Féli which concerned the virtue of Faith: did he adhere to all his brother's positions or did he only share his beliefs about social issues, allowing Jean-Marie to still submit to the Pope's authority and the content of the encyclical *Mirari Vos*?

Secondly, the doubts concerning Prudence and Charity which centred on relations with certain members of the Congregation of St Peter. To summarise the Founder's position here is one of his many statements on this matter: "I consider an insult the doubts that some people seem to want to raise about our full, complete and unreserved submission to the two encyclicals of our Holy Father, Pope Gregory XVI. We will never accept alternative doctrines and teachings to those of the Holy Apostolic See."

Despite this unequivocal statement from the Founder, as soon as the New Observations were known, Father Antonelli, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, asked Bishop Frutaz, a member of the Historical Department, to look into the Cause of Fr. de la Mennais. Bishop Frutaz set to work in close collaboration with the new Postulator, Brother Hippolyte-Victor Géreux. There could be no better choice than him as new the Postulator, for he was the greatest connoisseur of Mennaisian literature. He *"had an unrivalled historical understanding, a concern for precision that left no detail untouched, a passion for the truth and a devotion to the Father that went back to the time when Brother Abel had invited him to collaborate in the latter's research on the Founder."* We have already seen that he had written four volumes of Mennaisian research in Jersey during his "captivity". Now he needed to respond to these persistent objections.

Brother Hippolyte set to work immediately. Bishop Frutaz: *"Starting with the rich documentation gathered during the Apostolic Process undertaken by the Ordinary (episcopal authority), which in the meantime he had enriched with numerous other documents thanks to extensive archival research, he was able to hand over to me, on February 5th, 1955, a useful collection of 18 large and small booklets in which he had gathered documents that related to the difficulties stated above and were opposed to the Cause. The importance of the documentation gathered here, and the tone in which certain elements were treated, dissuaded me from publishing this work immediately in its current state. I decided to re-work from scratch, all the material presented by this Brother, including the [additional] Summarium which I present today and which is the fruit of this difficult and tedious work begun in October 1946."*

"The work was near enough completed a few weeks before the death of Brother Hippolyte-Victor who was able to read the handwritten text of the last chapter on his bed of suffering before he died. I received considerable assistance from Brother Hubert-Marie, archivist of the Congregation, and from the new Postulator, Brother Gabriel-Henri Potier during the Brother's illness and then also after his death on 21st September, 1958." (Mgr Frutaz)

The historian went on to list a large number of archivists that he had consulted: at the Vatican, in France, in the Congregation and at the ecclesiastical and civil archives.

This work provided the foundation for the writing of the *"Summarium Additionnel"*.