

more capable they were of contributing by their influence to the conversion of others, the more necessary it was deemed to try them, and be assured of their constancy.¹

They instructed them thoroughly, so as to enable them to give a reason for their faith, and meet difficulties that might be raised; for it must not be supposed that the missionaries had only to contend with brutality and absurd prejudices in the Indians. Even if these people had not all the solidity of mind and good sense attributed to them by those who have had most intercourse with them, the experience of all times and countries shows that, as the weakest men find strength, in a pressing need, to defend themselves against an unjust aggressor, so the least penetrating minds never lack specious reasons for declining to yield when pressed to receive a doctrine against which all their passions revolt. Hence, I have heard old missionaries assert frequently that Indians had made to them all the objections raised by the most learned Greeks and Romans against the first apologists of Christianity.²

Three things especially tended to free the Hurons from their prejudices, and arm them against the seduction which had so long kept them in error. In the first place, they made solid reflections on the sanctity of the religion preached to them, and on the purity of its moral code. The missionaries were extremely surprised to hear them express themselves on these two points, as men who had overlooked none of the maxims and principles of Christianity, but saw clearly the connection between these principles and the consequences which their instructors deduced from them. In the second place, they soon conceived a high idea of these religious, and never wearied in admiring their ability, prudence, and the justness and force of their arguments. The great examples of virtue which they saw them practise, made still greater impres-

Why the baptism of some chiefs was deferred.

What renders this people more docile.

¹ Bressani, *Breve Relatione*, p. 69. ² Creuxius, *Historia Canadensis*, p. 230.