

Prologue

The General Administration, along with the Dehon Study Center (Centro Studi Dehoniani or CSD), is pleased to present the edited and unedited writings of [Leo Dehon](#) to the members of the Dehonian Family, researchers, and anyone interested in his person and thought. It took an immense effort to make this material computer-ready.

Citing a motion from the XXI General Chapter¹ will help provide a background for this effort. “*The XXI General Chapter, aware that a knowledge and circulation of our sources constitutes a great spiritual value, approves and recommends passage to the second stage of our plan [...] concerning the writings of Fr. Dehon as a means to permit immediate access to all to allow greater knowledge of his person.*”²

[Dehonian writings](#) seems a clear notion on first sight. It can mean, however, more than [published works](#) that are the more readily available. It can also mean Dehon’s correspondence, his circular letters, and a massive collection of unedited texts and occasional writings.

Hence, it is necessary to make very clear what is meant by *Dehonian writings* and provide the criteria used for this presentation. This has not been an easy task. “*Dehonian writings*” is understood to mean every text that expresses the thinking of the Founder. The CSD is aware that not every *signed* text of Dehon means the same as a *Dehonian writing* in the strict sense. Nonetheless, the CSD has determined that it would be most useful to consider the following as *Dehonian writings*: notes attached by him to form letters, petitions, permissions, lists of persons, lists of art works, plants, cities, monuments, and book titles without implying that these are *Dehonian writings* in the strict sense. They are, however, texts or memorials of his thought and life.

This is brought out more clearly in documents that affect him directly like diplomas, passports, financial reports, receipts, etc. and even more so in the side notes in books that belonged to Dehon, or in notes taken by those who heard him preach or give conferences. In the latter case, even though these are not *Dehonian writings* in the strict sense, they are undeniably testimonials of Dehonian thought, even though filtered through the note-taker.

¹ 2003. Motion 6, *Archives Dehoniennes*.

² “*Le XXI^e Chapitre Général, conscient que la connaissance et la diffusion de nos sources représentent une haute valeur spirituelle, approuve et recommande le passage à la deuxième phase du projet {...} concernant les écrits dehonien, comme moyen immédiat et accessible à tous pour faire connaître le Père Dehon {...}*”, *Documenta XIX, Capitulum Generale XXI, «Studia et Documenta», Romæ 2003, p. 660.*

- Six years after the motion passed, Fr. José Ornelas Carvalho reported to the XXII General Chapter the reasons for disassociation with one group and for setting up working relations with a group organized by the Centro Dehoniano of Bologna to scan texts published by Edizioni Dehoniane of Rome. The CSD was asked to supervise the work, compare it with original works of Fr. Dehon and correct misprints, scanning errors, and recover missing portions of any text. Between 2005 and 2014, the CSD also made digital copies of unedited texts, selecting and making available unsigned writings that were published chiefly in *Le Règne...*³ and other minor Dehonian writings of that era.⁴

- From 2013 on, the CSD had the approval of the General Administration to contract with the *Data Service Center* (DSC), a division of the Centro Dehoniano of Bologna, to make the texts web-ready along with a search engine capable of the following: reading the texts, consulting notes and biblical citations in various languages, actual views of filmed originals, etc. There is detailed technical information in the [User's guide](#).

- The initial editorial decision of the CSD to make a truly new edition of the writings in keeping with criteria defined by the *Dictionnaire d'orthographe et expression écrite*, written by André Jouette and published by Dictionnaires Robert, has led to greater readability and more uniform printing and spelling in the texts. At the same time, while requiring greater editorial involvement, it has led to debatable printing changes in the originals making them correspond to modern writing criteria but not those used by the author.

However any reader or researcher with access to the manuscripts will generally be able to access a photocopy of the Dehonian original in a digital version by using the text reader *Alfresco* employed by this web site.

A reference to editorial criteria adopted requires that they be synthesized.

- A **New edition** of the writings of the Founder has been provided to readers and researchers with two objectives in mind: readability, and to assist access to the text even for readers who do not know French. While doing their work the editors kept in mind the edition that served as a base for the computerized one; distinctions between the texts of the Founder and the edited version is always found between [].

³ These were published in 2013 in a digital reprinting done by the CSD.

⁴ *Règne du Sacré Cœur*, Bruxelles-Louvain 1901-1914; *Le Règne du Cœur de Jésus*, Brugelette (Hainaut-Belgique), 1922-1929; *Le Messager des Âmes du Purgatoire*, 1897-1900.

For each work comparable editorial criteria were applied. The reader/researcher can, however, find differences that are the result of the variety of people who had input on solving particular problems and thus allowing maximum textual readability.

Abbreviations were done away with except for those universally known.

The simple dash has been eliminated from the expressions *Sacré Coeur*, *Jésus Christ*, *Notre Seigneur*, but kept in others (Esprit-Saint, Saint-Esprit, Saint-Père, Saint-Office, Saint-Sépulchre, Saint-Siège, fête du Saint-Sacrement, Sainte-Chapelle, and in the names of feast days and churches {Saint-Pierre}, etc.);

The word *saint* is never abbreviated and use of upper and lower case letters is governed as follows: *Saint* (place, institution, feastday), but *saint* Bible, *saint* Book, *saint* shroud, *saint* Church, *saint* John, etc.

Père, and all ecclesiastical titles are written in full with an upper case first letter if followed by a proper name.

Sacré-Cœur stands for the Mother House of the Congregation at Saint-Quentin exclusively, while *Sacré Cœur* means the Heart of Christ. If referring to the *Congrégation*, the *Oeuvre*, the *Institut* of Fr. Dehon, these words begin with an upper case letter. AD stands for *Archives Dehoniennes*.

Upper case initials are important. The names of people have an upper case first letter; if they are adjectives or substantives that refer to things or individuals they have a lower case first letter.

Texts underlined by Fr. Dehon himself are put into *italics*; if the underline takes place within an already italicized text, they are returned to normal type face.

● Dehon's practice with citations, not merely from the bible, has suggested the following guide:

* citations from the bible use the abbreviations from the *Bible de Jérusalem* with Arabic numerals; any citations made by Dehon within his notes are given in *italics*; corrections and additions are found between [], (e.g., Lc 6 [4-7]). In the situation of a non-literal citation or a series of citations given in a text, a generic reference is given at the end of the paragraph to avoid repetitions: e.g. [cf. Mt 26,13 ff].

* texts of quoted authors are given in *italics* between “ “ unless the source is lacking; in this case the text is found between [] where, if it is possible, the exact title of the work imprecisely cited by Dehon is given.

* a **cf.** is added to a non-literal or “accommodated” citation made by Fr. Dehon within quotation marks; in this case, the *italic* print is not used. When a biblical text found within quotation marks is not identified by Fr. Dehon, the source is put within []. When Fr. Dehon quotes a church Father

without naming him, no effort was made to find him. When he gives an approximate title, where possible, the correct title is given between [].

* in some of his writings Fr. Dehon quotes biblical texts which are intermingled with his own comments or additions and giving only the author's name and the chapter; here we have abstained from using multiple **cf.**'s and only used general references; when there are several such citations in a single text or when they are quoted in discursive fashion (e.g., "in the fourth chapter, verse nine, the spouse speaks of tenderness..."), we have avoided weighing down the text with references, notes, and editorial precisions. When Dehon quotes the Bible in French and at the end or elsewhere adds the Latin, only the last is given a reference between [].

- References to works by others, if they contain abbreviations, are cited in full where possible. Fr. Dehon does not have a good command of titles and works of ecclesiastical Fathers and writers and authors in general. He sometimes uses Latin, sometimes French; this depends on the source he is using or the author he is using without recourse to the original; this explains why, within the same work, he quotes the same source in several different ways.

* The first time they appear, proper names are given in the way Fr. Dehon wrote them and then between [] they are given in the correct form of today or according to the original language. Names of Italian artists, when there is a significant difference between the two, are also reported between [].

- The works published in this edition repeat [quotations](#) according to the standard mode and fashion in use at the CSD.

- **Fr. Dehon's use of sources and method of citation.** In an article entitled "The Encyclical of May 15 on Social Matters"⁵ he writes: "in our résumé, we seek to be as brief as possible; we also seek to reproduce as much as possible the technical terms of the Encyclical to the extent that brevity allows." A note at the bottom of the page helps us understand his procedures: "quotation marks will reveal textual citations; however even in these passages we will omit a lot of words for the sake of brevity. We will use an ellipsis (...) when there is a significant omission, or sometimes as an intervention to advance the résumé more rapidly. Words put between parentheses in such passages are the words we have substituted for those of

⁵ Cf. *Le règne du Cœur de Jésus dans les âmes et dans les sociétés*, July 1891. Pp. 313-323.

the text, always for the sake of brevity. For the remainder, even in the passages which are not between quotation marks, we have often made use of Encyclical terminology intermingled with others.”

- Regarding the sources of works written by Fr. Dehon, one must be aware that “they consist of numerous borrowings, glimpses of frequent dependencies, revelations of limitations, quick and insufficiently managed position taking. . .”⁶ P. Airiau⁷ who made a careful analysis with regard to anti-Semitism, claims that Dehon quotes, plunders, plagiarizes, copies, paraphrases, lacks rigor in indicating his sources, and repeats the errors found in the sources he uses. G. Manzoni,⁸ in detailing authors and sources used in the “spiritual thinking” of Dehon recalls that Dehon had made use of entire pages from the works of others. During the course of computerizing his works, the CSD has identified various appropriations from the works of others according to the practice of the 19th century and early 1900s when authors’ rights were not yet rigorously protected. The reader/researcher will find more information in the forewords to certain works and in footnotes to the NQT.

- Finally, before concluding, we need to say that Dehon’s production was immense, yet less than what his biographers would have us believe. Dehon’s writings in “The Reign” are also found in the OSP, OSC, ADP, ASC, NQT, NHV, MLA...with some variations according to writing practice common not just to his time: “Fr. Dehon writes a lot, writes often, writes quickly [...] and reissues text he composed for other circumstances and adapts them and changes their nuance, and adds one or another detail”.⁹

Aware that the written work of Fr. Dehon reveals his personality more than anything else, an interior life of rare richness and a spirituality that has much to say to our times, let his writings be made available to all.

Centro Studi Dehoniani, Roma

⁶ A. Perroux, *Le Père Jean – Léon Dehon (1843 – 1925), Fondateur de la Congrégation des Prêtres du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus (Saint-Quentin): Le témoignage d’une vie*. Manuscript 2012. First Pat, II. The written work of Fr. Dehon...the written work, *Le témoignage d’une vie*...p. 37 (hereafter, A. Perroux, *Témoignage*...).

⁷ Cf. Y. Ledure, *Catholicisme social et question juive. Le cas Léon Dehon 1843 – 1925*, Paris 2009, pp. 111-126.

⁸ G. Manzoni, *Leone Dehon e il suo messaggio*, EDB 1989, p. 460.

⁹ A. Perroux. *Témoignage*..., “By way of conclusion: a written work, mostly a witness of a life...” p. 37.