

FENELON'S LIFE, PERSONALITY, AND PHILOSOPHY
AS REVEALED IN HIS CORRESPONDENCE

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PREFACE

François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, a writer of the seventeenth century and precursor of the eighteenth, was the author of numerous documents, treatises, stories, fables, dialogues, and letters. However, the greater portion of his works were addressed to individuals; Fénelon did not write primarily for publication. It is said, in fact, that there have been few writers who were less men of letters than was Fénelon.¹ Despite this fact, Fénelon's writings are significant because they permit the reader to follow the personality of this author in its development throughout his life in the succession of events that touched him in his dreams, his successes, and his defeats. His life in which there were so many hopes, so much active eagerness for good, and so many crucifying trials was a real drama.²

The most complete edition of Fénelon's works is that edited by the Abbé Gosselin, from the seminary at Saint-Sulpice, and published between 1820 and 1850. It comprises thirty-five volumes.³ For this study, the twenty-eight volumes of the Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, published from 1830 to 1850, were used. The first twenty-seven volumes

¹Ely Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'Oeuvre (Paris: Hatier-Boivin, 1946), p. 99.

²François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Oeuvres choisies, ed. Albert Cherel (Paris: Librairie A. Hatier, 1923), introduction, p. vii. Hereafter, quotations from Oeuvres choisies will be referred to in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

³H. C. Barnard, Fénelon on Education (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), p. xliii. The writer of this thesis was unable to secure this collection of Fénelon's works.

were distributed in 1830 from Besançon, and a supplemental volume containing letters discovered after that date was published in Paris twenty years later. The writings of Fénelon have enjoyed such popularity through the years that there are many compilations of his most important writings as well as numerous editions of his individual works and collections of his letters. Some of these are included in the bibliography of this thesis.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the correspondence of Fénelon and through it to determine his biography, his personality, and his philosophy. This study aims to show that his letters were instruments intended to encourage spiritually, persuade, refute, or instruct. It will seek further to show the universality and timelessness of the ideas and ideals of Fénelon as expressed in his communications with friends and enemies, relatives and professional associates, and the highest political and religious leaders of his time. It will attempt to show that Fénelon was a man so involved in the life of his times that, through him, one is permitted to study not only a man but an age.

In this thesis there will be three divisions representing the three main periods of Fénelon's life: (1) youth and early career, (2) life at the court of Louis XIV, and (3) life at Cambrai. Within these chronological divisions will be presented: (1) biographical correspondence; (2) educational correspondence with special emphasis on letters written to the Duc de Bourgogne as well as letters to those who were officially concerned with the education of this heir to the French throne for whom Fénelon was tutor from 1689 until 1699 and in whom he

maintained a continued interest until the Duke's death in 1712; (3) literary correspondence dealing mainly with Fénelon's Lettre à l'Académie as well as personal and critical letters to friends and colleagues revealing his literary attitudes; (4) political correspondence showing Fénelon's knowledge of the affairs of state during the era in which he lived and showing his interest in improving the political situation of France by bringing about changes in the moral attitudes of those who held government positions, even the King himself; (5) religious correspondence which shows Fénelon's deep sincerity, selflessness, and complete devotion to God under all circumstances. This study proposes to show that this latter idea permeates almost all of Fénelon's letters, regardless of the original purpose for which they were written, and that these same letters tell the story of Fénelon's life, reveal the traits of his personality, and give evidence of the high ideals which he wished to maintain in his own life and encourage in the lives of others.

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CHAPTER I

FÉNELON'S YOUTH AND EARLY CAREER

Childhood. François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon was born in the medieval château of Fénelon near the little town of Sarlat in the southwestern French province of Périgord on August 6, 1651. His father, Pons de Salignac, had eleven children by a first marriage and three by a second, of which François was the second-born. Although he was frail, Fénelon seems to have enjoyed a pleasant childhood. He was much loved by his aging parents, who entrusted his formal education to a tutor.⁴

History records very little about the early life of Fénelon, but it is known that he spent the first twelve years of his life in his paternal château. The castle still exists with its great towers and its vast, formidable walls rising above the banks of the Dordogne River. Behind it are the hills which Fénelon celebrated in one of his few attempts at writing poetry. In 1681 he visited his uncle, the Evêque de Sarlat, who lived in the diocese in which Fénelon had been born. While there, Fénelon wrote to a friend:⁵

⁴L. Petit de Julleville, Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française des origines à 1900 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1913), V, 434.

⁵François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Œuvres complètes de Fénelon (Besançon: Chez Gauthier Frères, 1830; 28 volumes of which Vol. XXVIII has the imprint Paris: Librairie d'Adrien le Clere, 1850), XXI, 247-48. Hereafter, quotations from the Œuvres complètes de Fénelon will be referred to in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

Montagnes de qui l'audace
 Va porter jusques aux cieux
 Un front d'éternelle glace
 Soutien* du séjour des dieux;
 Dessus vos têtes chenues
 Je cueille au-dessus des nues
 Toutes les fleurs du printemps.
 A mes pieds, contre la terre,
 J'entends gronder le tonnerre
 Et tomber mille torrens.

Semblables aux monts de Thrace,
 Qu'un géant audacieux
 Sur les autres monts entasse
 Pour escalader les cieux,
 Vos sommets sont des campagnes
 Qui portent d'autres montagnes;

Doubtless the many happy hours which Fénelon spent with his brothers and sisters in this setting of fields covered with wild flowers, of mountains and streams, created in him an appreciation of nature and a love for his homeland, romantic tendencies which he maintained throughout his life and which are prevalent in many of his writings. In a letter written from Cambrai on August 2, 1704, to a nephew who was visiting in Périgord, Fénelon said:

Vos deux lettres du 15 et du 19 de ce mois, mon très-cher fanfan, m'ont appris que vous alliez à Fénelon.# J'en suis très-content. J'aime bien que vous goûtiez notre pauvre Ithaque, et que vous vous accoutumiez aux pénates gothiques de nos pères (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 315).

Fénelon came from a family of high nobility that could trace its lineage back to the tenth century. His pride in this fact was evident

*In the OEuvres complètes de Fénelon the spelling, accents, and punctuation of the seventeenth century have been preserved.

#It is thus that the name used to be written, with the two e's accented.

in the calm assurance and dignified bearing which he exhibited at all times.⁶ In 1694, in a letter to his brother who was seeking an honor reserved for the nobility, Fénelon mentioned the fact that their ancestors had included governors of provinces, chamberlains of the King, ambassadors to the principal courts of Europe, a knight of the Order of Saint-Esprit, and many representatives in the military service of France. According to Fénelon, his brother was, therefore, probably better qualified than most men to receive the recognition which he sought.⁷ Fénelon did not, on the other hand, expect honor without responsibility and moral obligation, as is evident in the advice which he gave his brother in his letter of August, 1695, which stated:

Je suis bien aise, mon cher frère, de vous donner de mes nouvelles, et de vous demander des vôtres. . . . Je souhaite que . . . Dieu vous conserve. Tâchez de faire en sorte que M. le maréchal de Villeroy et M. le duc du Maine aient assez bonne opinion de vous, pour vous rendre de bons offices dans les occasions. Cultivez-les sans les importuner. Appliquez-vous à observer de près toutes choses, et à entendre parler les gens qui sont les mieux instruits. Ne négligez rien pour mériter l'approbation des plus honnêtes gens, et de ceux qui ont la plus grande réputation dans le métier. Songez à quelque chose de plus solide et de plus important que la fortune de ce monde. Si vous servez Dieu fidèlement, il aura soin de vous, et ne vous manquera jamais (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 277).

Although the two letters cited above do not belong chronologically to this period of Fénelon's life, they are included here because they show

⁶George R. Havens, The Age of Ideas (New York: Free Press, 1955), p. 49.

⁷Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 435, citing Fénelon's Correspondance, édition Lebel (1820), II, 42.

his family pride and sense of responsibility which he manifested in every period of his life.

Fénelon's father, the Comte de la Mothe-Fénelon, had not followed the course of many nobles who had moved to Versailles in order to bask in the radiance of le Roi Soleil and to benefit from the promotions and pensions that life at court often brought. Because of the decline in the value of feudal taxes and the value of money itself, his family, like those of many of the provincial nobility, had become impoverished. Fénelon himself was described by one of his contemporaries as being a man of quality who had nothing.⁸ Fénelon's family correspondence shows that he had financial problems much of his life. He stated that he had hardly enough with which to support himself while he was tutor for the grandsons of Louis XIV, and it was necessary to make reductions in the numbers in his household from time to time. Thus, when Fénelon was honored in later years by being appointed the Archevêque de Cambrai, his family hailed the event not only as an honor but as an end to their financial distress.⁹ However, even in the most dire financial circumstances, Fénelon was faithful to charitable causes and obligations. His letter of 1694, just before his appointment to Cambrai, stated:¹⁰

⁸Ibid., citing Saint-Simon's Mémoires, édition Chéruel (1856), I, 176.

⁹Ibid., citing Fénelon's Correspondance, édition Lebel (1820), II, 45.

¹⁰François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Fénelon, ce méconnu, ed. Maria-Pia Chantreuil (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1961), cited on p. 30. Hereafter, quotations from Fénelon, ce méconnu will be referred to in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

Faites en sorte qu'on m'envoie tout l'argent qu'on pourra après avoir néanmoins pourvu aux aumônes pressées, car j'aimerais mieux, à la lettre, vivre de pain sec, que d'en laisser manquer jusqu'à l'extrémité les pauvres de mon bénéfice.

Even in later life, when money was no longer a problem for him, Fénelon still remembered most generously those in need.

Education. Fénelon's first education was simple, reasonable, and Christian, and his tutor was probably a man of letters (OEuvres choisies, p. 2). It was, no doubt, this tutor, that succeeded in giving him a more extensive acquaintance with Greek and Latin than is normally achieved at so early an age, who inspired in Fénelon his passion for antiquity.¹¹

Fénelon's father died when he was twelve years old. This date also marked Fénelon's entrance into the Collège de Cahors, which was directed by the Jesuits. Here he followed a course in the humanities and philosophy. It was while at Cahors that he began to write well in French and to develop a classic style which was considered supple and limpid.¹²

In 1666, Fénelon transferred from Cahors to the Collège de Plessis at Paris. He proved to be a very intelligent student in this school, and about this time, at the age of fifteen, he preached his first sermon, which was a great success (OEuvres spirituelles, p. 9).

¹¹L.-F. Bausset, Histoire de Fénelon (Paris: Chez Giguet et Michaud, 1809), I, 11.

¹²François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, OEuvres spirituelles, ed. François Varillon (Paris: Aubier, 1954), pp. 6-7. Hereafter, quotations from OEuvres spirituelles will be referred to in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

No doubt Fénelon was thinking of his own school days when he wrote a letter to his nephew from Cambrai on May 18, 1712, in which he said:

J'avoue que la physique de l'école a bien des termes dont les idées ne sont pas trop claires; mais si les qualités occultes ne sont que des noms, les configurations des corpuscules et leurs diverses situations ne sont souvent que des romans de philosophie. D'ailleurs Descartes a embrassé plusieurs principes insoutenables et dangereux. Enfin la philosophie de l'école mérite qu'on sache exactement tout ce qu'elle dit, quand même on ne voudroit pas la suivre: c'est un fondement nécessaire pour toutes les études qu'il faut que vous fassiez dans la suite. Je sais que les jeunes gens, qui entendent critiquer cette physique, sont fort tentés de la négliger; mais il faut résister à cette tentation, et ne se relâcher point dans cette étude: vous serez bien aise toute votre vie de vous y être appliqué; elle sera un instrument pour acquérir d'autres connoissances (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 287-88).

Fénelon's uncle in Paris took over the direction of the life of his scholarly nephew in 1668. The Marquis Antoine de Fénelon, a man of considerable influence, was not only a lieutenant-general in the armies of Louis XIV, but he was esteemed as a diplomat and a man of affairs. He also belonged to the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement which had as its goal the moral regeneration of France. This grave and pious marquis, whom Fénelon appreciated a great deal, arranged for his nephew to enter the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice which had been founded in Paris by the Marquis' friend and associate, Jean-Jacques Olier. At Saint-Sulpice, Fénelon became particularly attached to the director, Louis Tronson, for whom he developed a deep and lasting friendship. In an undated letter to his uncle written from the seminary, Fénelon declared with ingenuity and subtlety that someone now exceeded his uncle in his confidence. He wrote:

Je souhaiterais passionnément vous pouvoir dire ici quelque chose du détail de ce qui se passe entre M. Tronson et moi: mais certes, monsieur, je ne sais guère que vous en dire; car, quoique ma franchise et mon ouverture de coeur pour vous me semble très parfaite, je vous avoue néanmoins, sans craindre que vous en soyez jaloux, que je suis encore plus ouvert à l'égard de M. Tronson, et que je ne saurais qu'avec peine vous faire confidence de l'union dans laquelle je suis avec lui. Assurément, monsieur, si vous pouviez voir les entretiens que nous avons ensemble, et la simplicité avec laquelle je lui fais connaître mon coeur, et avec laquelle il me fait connaître Dieu, vous ne reconnaîtrez pas votre ouvrage, et vous verriez que Dieu a mis la main d'une manière sensible au dessein dont vous n'aviez encore jeté que les fondements (OEuvres spirituelles, p. 11).

Fénelon's sentiments were in harmony with the ideas taught at Saint-Sulpice. He described the seminary in a letter to Le Tellier, the confessor of Louis XIV, by saying that nothing more venerable and apostolic could be found. He further eulogized the director, Tronson, in a letter to Pope Clement XI in which he congratulated himself on having had Tronson as his instructor in the Word of Life and on having been formed for the ecclesiastical state under his personal care. Fénelon stated further that there was never any man superior to Tronson in love of discipline, in skill, prudence, piety, and insight into character.¹³

Fénelon showed a definite inclination toward an ecclesiastical career and even dreamed of becoming a missionary, not in Canada where one of his brothers had died during his term of service, but in the East, perhaps in classical or Biblical lands. In his letter to Bossuet, written on October 9, 1679, Fénelon expressed his interest in mission service as follows:

¹³Barnard, op. cit., p. ix.

Divers petits accidents ont toujours retardé jusqu'ici mon retour à Paris: mais enfin, Monseigneur, je pars, et peu s'en faut que je ne vole. A la vue de ce voyage, j'en médite un plus grand. La Grèce entière s'ouvre à moi; le Sultan effrayé recule; déjà le Péloponèse respire en liberté, et l'église de Corinthe va reflleurir: la voix de l'apôtre s'y fera encore entendre. Je me sens transporté dans ces beaux lieux et parmi ces ruines précieuses, pour y recueillir, avec les plus curieux monuments, l'esprit même de l'antiquité. Je cherche cet aréopage où saint Paul annonça aux sages du monde le Dieu inconnu. Mais le profane vient après le sacré, et je ne dédaigne pas de descendre au Pirée, où Socrate fait le plan de sa république. Je monte au double sommet du Parnasse, je cueille les lauriers de Delphes, et je goûte les delices de Tempé. Quand est-ce que le sang des Turcs se mêlera avec celui des Perses sur les plaines de Marathon, pour laisser la Grèce entière à la religion, à la philosophie et aux beaux-arts, qui la regardent comme leur patrie?

...

Je ne t'oublierai pas, ô île consacrée par les célestes visions du disciple bien-aimé! O heureuse Patmos, j'irai baiser sur la terre les pas de l'apôtre, et je croirai voir les cieux ouverts! . . . Je vois déjà le schisme qui tombe, l'Orient et l'Occident qui se réunissent, l'Asie qui soupire jusqu'aux bords de l'Euphrate, et qui voit renaître le jour après une si longue nuit; la terre sanctifiée par les pas du Sauveur et arrosée de son sang, délivrée de ses profanateurs et revêtue d'une nouvelle gloire. . . (Oeuvres choisies, pp. 3-4).

This wish, however, was never to come true.

Priesthood at Saint-Sulpice. It was while at Saint-Sulpice in 1674 or 1675 that Fénelon was ordained a priest. Probably through the influence of his uncle, the Evêque de Sarlat, he was chosen as a representative of the diocese of Bordeaux, in 1675, at the Assemblée générale du Clergé.¹⁴ Still Fénelon continued to serve in his parish at Saint-Sulpice where he gained the attention of the Archevêque de Paris; Bossuet, the future Evêque de Meaux; and other religious leaders.

¹⁴Bausset, op. cit., I, 47.

François Varillon, who wrote the introduction to one collection of Fénelon's writings, describes him at this point in his life as follows:

Tout au plus peut-on se représenter le jeune abbé de Fénelon . . . pieux, zélé, mais plus avide de perfection que de sainteté, je veux dire plus orienté vers un harmonieux équilibre de son être --dont il doit bien savoir qu'il est exceptionnellement doué--que vers Dieu intime à l'âme (Œuvres spirituelles, p. 13).

In the literary history of Petit de Julleville, the author states that one critic described Fénelon in his work at Saint-Sulpice as an opportunist who knocked on every door and passed from one religious sect to another as convenience dictated. Petit de Julleville, however, refutes this accusation in these words:¹⁵

La seule fonction qu'il occupe. . . , et qui lui a été confiée par le curé de la paroisse de Saint-Sulpice, consiste à expliquer l'Ecriture Sainte au peuple, le dimanche et les jours de fête. . . . Il y fit, en effet, son apprentissage de prêtre et de directeur. Il y prit le contact du peuple et y aiguisa sa charité.

The poor of the slums and the children in need of religious instruction were Fénelon's special care.

Assignment to the Nouvelles Catholiques. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that in 1678, Fénelon was given the appointment as superior of the Nouvelles Catholiques in Paris. He left Saint-Sulpice and lived with his uncle, the Marquis, in an apartment furnished by the King, while he served in this institution intended to instruct and confirm in the Catholic faith women recently separated from Protestantism. By

¹⁵Petit de Julleville, op. cit., pp. 437-38.

his ability, tact, and personal magnetism, Fénelon, who is described as a young priest with flashing eyes and winning expressive features, was successful in charming his feminine hearers in the twelve years during which he held this position.¹⁶ This experience was profitable in Fénelon's development because the necessity of learning to communicate his meaning to those who spoke a different spiritual language exercised him in the flexibility and power needed to discuss sympathetically matters of conscience with diverse men and women, which was a part of his charm when he began to associate with the court of Louis XIV.¹⁷

Mission to Aunis and Saintonge. The talents of Fénelon carried him in another direction when in December of 1685, just six weeks after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he was recommended by Bossuet, now the Evêque de Meaux, to be the director of a group whose mission was to convert the Protestants in the regions of Saintonge and Aunis, on the western coast of France. The Edict of Nantes had granted freedom of worship to the Protestants for eighty-seven years, but now the King was taking away this right and seemed determined to make France a nation of Catholics. The plan was to force conversions through the military efforts of the dragoons and then to send in missionaries to instruct the people. It was into the second part of this plan which

¹⁶Havens, op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁷François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Letters to Men and Women, ed. Derek Stanford (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957), introduction, p. 16.

Fénelon and his collaborators, including the Abbé de Langeron and the Abbé Fleury, fitted as they worked with the Huguenots of this coastal region.

Fénelon has been accused of being dominating and intolerant while engaged in this work of conversion; however, he had not been in agreement with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and he frequently spoke out against forced conversions. His ideas on this matter were expressed in his letter of July 22, 1684, written several months before he began his work with the Huguenots. Fénelon, writing to Maréchal de Noailles who was working zealously in the dragonnade movement, discussed the matter of those alien soldiers* and heretics, captured and sometimes wounded, with whom the Marshal dealt. Fénelon advised:

Il n'est point à propos, ce me semble, de tourmenter ni d'importuner les soldats étrangers et hérétiques pour les faire convertir: on n'y réussiroit pas. Tout au plus on les jetteroit dans l'hypocrisie, et ils déserteroient en foule. Il suffit de ne souffrir pas d'exercice public, suivant l'intention du roi. Quand quelque officier ou autre peut leur insinuer quelque mot, ou les mettre en chemin de vouloir s'instruire de bon gré, cela est excellent; mais point de gêne ni d'empressement indiscret. S'ils sont malades, on peut les faire visiter d'abord par quelque officier catholique qui les console, qui les fasse soulager, et qui insinue quelque bonne parole. Si cela ne sert de rien, et si la maladie augmente, on peut aller un peu plus loin; mais doucement et sans contrainte, pour leur montrer que l'ancienne Eglise est la meilleure, et que c'est celle qui vient des apôtres. Si le malade n'est pas capable d'entendre ces raisons, je crois qu'on doit se contenter de lui faire faire des actes de contrition, de foi et d'amour, ajoutant souvent: Mon Dieu, je me sou mets à tout ce que la vraie Eglise enseigne; je la reconnois pour ma mère, en quelque lieu qu'elle

*Probably English, Dutch, and German soldiers who were helping in the Protestant cause.

soit. Il faut, pour la sépulture, suivre la règle de l'évêque diocésain, et éviter l'éclat autant qu'on le peut sans avilir la religion (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 325).

Fénelon's correspondence after the mission had begun counteracts the accusation that the young priest was without feeling in dealing with non-Catholics. It shows that he opposed the forced conversions of the dragonnades, brought about through fear, and advocated the more real and lasting conversion effected by instruction and persuasion. In a letter written on February 26, 1686, to the Marquis de Seignelay, who was *Ministre de la Marine* and thus in charge of all affairs concerning the coasts of France, Fénelon reported on the progress of the work of his mission and expressed some of his sentiments. He wrote:

Nous avons laissé Marennes (city near Rochefort) aux Jésuites, qui commencent à grossir leur communauté, selon votre projet. Après plus de deux mois d'instruction sans relâche, nous avons cru devoir mettre en possession de ce lieu les ouvriers qui y seront fixés, et passer dans les autres de cette côte, dont les besoins ne sont pas moins pressants. . . . Avant de les quitter, j'ai tâché de faire deux choses: l'une, de faire espérer aux peuples beaucoup de douceur et de considération de la part de ces bons pères, dont j'ai relevé fortement la bonne vie et le savoir; l'autre, de persuader en même temps à ces pères, qu'ils doivent en toute occasion se rendre les intercesseurs et les conseils du peuple dans toutes les affaires qu'ils ont auprès des gens revêtus de l'autorité du Roi. N'importe que les gens qui ont l'autorité leur refusent ce qu'il ne sera pas à propos de leur accorder; mais enfin ils doivent parler le plus souvent qu'ils pourront, sans être indiscrets, pour attirer les grâces, et pour adoucir les punitions: c'est le moyen de les faire aimer, et de leur faire gagner la confiance de tout le pays; c'est ce qui déracinera le plus l'hérésie. . . (Œuvres choisies, pp. 113-14).

Fénelon was devout in his Catholic faith and believed firmly in the work that he was doing, but he showed that he had a humane understanding of the situation. He wrote further in this same letter concerning the procedures to be used in working with the Protestants:

. . . il s'agit bien moins du fond des controverses, que de l'habitude dans laquelle les peuples ont vieilli, de suivre extérieurement un certain culte, et de la confiance, qu'ils avaient en leurs ministres. Il faut transplanter insensiblement cette habitude et cette confiance chez les pasteurs catholiques: par là les esprits se changeront presque sans s'en apercevoir. . . . Si ces bons pères cultivent cela comme je l'espère, ils se rendront peu à peu maîtres des esprits. Ces peuples sont dans une violente agitation d'esprit; ils sentent une force dans notre religion, et une faiblesse dans la leur, qui les consterne. Leur conscience est toute bouleversée, et les plus raisonnables voient bien où tout cela va naturellement. . . . Une instruction douce et suivie, la chute de leurs espérances folles, et la douceur de vie qu'on leur donnera chez eux, dans un temps où l'on gardera exactement les côtes, achèvera de les calmer (OEuvres choisies, p. 114).

Fénelon continued his letter by pointing out that these Protestants were in a dire financial situation because their trade in salt, their only resource, was practically ruined. He thanked the Marquis de Seignelay for the wheat which had been sent for the people and said that the Protestants had been visibly touched by this act of benevolence (OEuvres choisies, p. 114-15).

Again Fénelon showed his preference for reason rather than force in the matter of the communion service for the people he was trying to convert. He mentioned that it was not enough to have large numbers going through this experience just because they were forced to do it. This, to him, was not an evidence that the task of conversion was complete. He recommended continued instruction and work with the people through conversation and through literature in order to persuade them to come forward and take communion with a true Catholic heart. When they had come of their own accord, this was the time to feel that progress was being made and to offer to them the symbols (OEuvres choisies, p. 115). Fénelon also requested literature for his work. He wrote:

J'oubliais de vous dire, monsieur, qu'il nous faudrait une très grand abondance de livres, surtout des Nouveaux-Testaments, et des traductions de la messe avec des explications: car on ne fait rien, si on n'ôte les livres hérétiques, et c'est mettre les gens au désespoir, que de les leur ôter, si on ne donne à mesure qu'on ôte (Ouvres choisies, pp. 115-16).

Fénelon had previously expressed this idea of persuasion through kindness on February 7 of the same year in his letter to the Marquis de Seignelay, which read in part:

On assure que les officiers nouveaux convertis font ici mollement leur devoir. . . . Pendant que nous employons la charité et la douceur des instructions, il est important, si je ne me trompe, que les gens qui ont l'autorité la soutiennent, pour faire mieux sentir aux peuples le bonheur d'être instruits doucement.

. . . Pourvu que ces bons commencements soient soutenus par des prédicateurs doux, et qui joignent au talent d'instruire celui de s'attirer la confiance des peuples, ils seront bientôt véritablement catholiques (cited in Fénelon, ce méconnu, pp. 41-42).

In his letter of March 8, 1686, to the same Marquis de Seignelay, Fénelon made special mention of the fact that firmness should be coupled with this kindness. He advised constant vigilance against Protestant deserters and went so far as to approve punishment for offenders. Yet, he still felt that the real solution to the whole problem revolved not around force but around well-trained teachers and the proper literature through which the Protestants could learn to love the Catholic faith and not resist it. He wrote:

Le naturel dure and indocile de ces peuples demande une autorité vigoureuse et toujours vigilante. . . . Il ne faut point leur faire de mal; mais ils ont besoin de sentir une main toujours levée pour leur en faire s'ils résistent. . . . Je ne doute point qu'on ne voit à Pâques un grand nombre de communions, peut-être même trop. . . . Il ne faut que des prédicateurs qui expliquent tous les dimanches le texte de l'Évangile avec une autorité douce et insinuante. Les jésuites commencent bien; mais le plus grand besoin est d'avoir des curés édifiants qui sachent instruire. Les peuples

nourris dans l'hérésie ne se gagnent que par la parole. Un curé qui saura expliquer l'Évangile affectueusement, et entrer dans la confiance des familles, fera toujours ce qu'il voudra. Sans cela, l'autorité pastorale, qui est la plus naturelle et la plus efficace, demeurera toujours avilie avec scandale. . . . Il faudrait aussi, monsieur, répandre des Nouveaux Testaments avec profusion; mais le caractère gros est nécessaire, ils ne sauraient lire dans les menus. Il ne faut pas espérer qu'ils achètent des livres catholiques; c'est beaucoup qu'ils lisent ceux qui ne coûtent rien. . . . Enfin, monsieur, si on joint toujours exactement à ces secours la vigilance des gardes pour empêcher les désertions, et la rigueur des peines contre les déserteurs, il ne restera plus que de faire trouver aux peuples autant de douceur à demeurer dans le royaume, que de péril à entreprendre d'en sortir (cited in Fénelon, ce méconnu, pp. 42-43).

In a letter to Bossuet, residing at Germiny, on the same date, March 8, 1686, Fénelon was apparently seeking an outlet to the frustrations created by his work when he wrote these lines:

Quoique je n'aie rien de nouveau à vous dire, monseigneur, je ne puis m'abstenir de l'honneur de vous écrire; c'est ma consolation en ce pays; il faut me permettre de la prendre. Nos convertis vont un peu mieux; mais le progrès est bien lent: ce n'est pas une petite affaire de changer les sentiments de tout un peuple. Quelle difficulté devaient trouver les apôtres pour changer la face de l'univers, pour renverser le sens humain, vaincre toutes les passions et établir une doctrine jusqu'alors inouïe. . . . Mais si cette expérience montre combien l'efficacité des discours des apôtres était un grand miracle, la faiblesse des Huguenots ne fait pas moins voir combien le (sic) force des martyrs était divine.

Les Huguenots mal convertis sont attachés à leur religion jusqu'au plus horrible excès d'opiniâtreté. . . . Il n'y a qu'à prier Dieu pour eux, et qu'à ne se rebuter point de les instruire (OEuvres choisies, p. 116).

He gave here not only a somewhat comprehensive report of his work, but expressed his desire to see Bossuet as he continued the same letter in a lighter tone. He said:

. . . S'il nous tient trop longtemps ici loin de vous, nous supprimerons encore l'Ave Maria; et peut-être irons-nous jusqu'à quelque grosse hérésie, pour obtenir une heureuse disgrâce qui nous ramène à Germiny; ce serait un coup de vent qui nous ferait faire un joli naufrage (cited in Fénelon, ce méconnu, p. 44).

Fénelon had been bold enough to omit the Ave Maria from the beginning of some of his sermons. He had felt justified in leaving out this part of the Catholic ritual to avoid offending the Huguenots by an over-emphasis on the worship of the Virgin Mary. When the Marquis de Seignelay heard of Fénelon's action, he asked for an explanation. In this letter to Bossuet, Fénelon referred to his reprimand, but he stated that he would repeat his offense if it would be a means of getting him moved to a location where he could see Bossuet (OEuvres choisies, p. 113). The letter shows the strong friendship which existed between Fénelon and Bossuet, a friendship which was to grow even stronger and then completely disintegrate.

Although conscientiously involved in religious duties at this period of his life, Fénelon often showed in his correspondence a wit and a touch of lightness and humanity that was a part of his charm. Petit de Julleville attributes Fénelon's facility, light style, good humor, that certain taste for pleasantries, and confidence in himself to the fact that the Abbé was a meridional.¹⁸ These same characteristics are shown in a letter to his cousin, Mme de Laval. Fénelon's uncle, the Evêque de Sarlat, had just resigned from the priory of Carennac in favor of his nephew, and Fénelon had gone to accept his new office. In writing on May 22, 1681, of the events which took place, he said:

Oui, madame, n'en doutez pas, si je suis un homme destiné à des entrées magnifiques. Vous savez celle qu'on m'a faite à Bellac dans votre gouvernement; je vais vous raconter celle dont on m'a

¹⁸Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 436.

honoré en ce lieu. . . . j'arrive au port de Carennac, et j'aperçois le quai bordé de tout le peuple en foule. Deux bateaux, pleins de l'élite des bourgeois, s'avancent, et en même temps je découvre que, par un stratagème galant, les troupes de ce lieu les plus aguerries s'étaient cachées dans un coin de la belle île que vous connaissez: de là elles vinrent en bon ordre de bataille me saluer, avec beaucoup de mousquetades. . . . Je passe la belle rivière de Dordogne, presque toute couverte des bateaux qui accompagnent le mien. Au bord m'attendent gravement tous les vénérables moines en corps; leur harangue est pleine d'éloges sublimes; ma réponse a quelque chose de grand et de doux. Cette foule immense se fend pour m'ouvrir un chemin; chacun a les yeux attentifs, pour lire dans les miens quelle sera sa destinée. . . . Cependant mille voix confuses font retentir des acclamations d'allégresse. . . . Me voilà à la porte déjà arrivé, et les consuls commencent leur harangue par la bouche de l'orateur royal. . . . Qui pourrait dire quelles furent les grâces de son discours? Il me compara au soleil: bientôt après je fus la lune; tous les astres les plus radieux eurent ensuite l'honneur de me ressembler; de là nous vîmes aux éléments et aux météores, et nous finîmes heureusement par le commencement du monde. Alors le soleil était déjà couché, et pour achever la comparaison de lui à moi, j'allai dans ma chambre pour me préparer à en faire de même (Œuvres choisies, pp. 10-11).

This spark of gaiety was to be shown frequently as Fénelon continued to write through the years.

Early writings. At this time Fénelon had begun to use his pen effectively in various religious and literary crusades. Although they were not published until after his death, it was about 1679 that he wrote his three Dialogues sur l'éloquence en général et celle de la chaire en particulier. In these dialogues Fénelon expressed practically the same ideas which he was to repeat in his Lettre à l'Académie¹⁹ more than thirty years later. He sought to replace the elaborate methods used by ministers and other speakers with a style that was more simple,

¹⁹cf. post, p. 75-76.

natural, and delicate in its fervency.²⁰ He published in 1688 a treatise against the Protestants entitled Traité du ministère des pasteurs, and he also composed numerous sermons which have been preserved.

It was also about this time that Fénelon responded to a request from Bossuet and wrote the Réfutation du système de Malebranche sur la nature et la grâce which was not published immediately, but it was important in that it demonstrated Fénelon's dialectic genius (Oeuvres spirituelles, p. 21). It is also important to note that this work was approved by Bossuet, thus showing the rapport between these two minds on an issue which involved the religious thinking of the time. Fénelon was for a time a brilliant disciple of this outstanding church leader, who was currently tutor to the son of Louis XIV.

²⁰Edward Dowden, A History of French Literature (New York : D. Appleton and Company, 1908), p. 233.

CHAPTER II

FÉNELON'S LIFE AT THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV

Introduction into the court circles. As Fénelon had pursued his education and his work in the church, he had acquired an ever-increasing circle of influential friends. Some of these were destined to be real factors in the events of his future. While a student at Plessis, he had met the future Cardinal de Noailles; at Saint-Sulpice he had met Tronson, the director, and Bossuet; in his work at Aunis and Saintonge he had been associated with the Abbé de Langeron and the Abbé Fleury. It was through his uncle, the Marquis,²¹ and Tronson that Fénelon was introduced into the court circle of Louis XIV. The Marquis and Tronson were acquainted with the Duc de Beauvilliers, the Duc de Chevreuse, and their wives, both of whom were daughters of Colbert. Association with these friends in turn led Fénelon into a friendship with Mme de Maintenon, the secret wife of the King.

Fénelon grew in favor with these members of the court and their small circle of men and women who had an interest in religion and in the welfare of their country. Frequently they would invite Fénelon to intimate supper gatherings at Versailles or in one of their pleasant country homes. At such times the topics of discussion were the matters so close to their hearts. Fénelon in this way became informed on the most important and even the most private affairs of state; and he, in turn, was

²¹cf. ante, p. 6.

ready to give spiritual inspiration and instruction as well as political advice to these willing ears. The ideas held by this group no doubt reached the ears of Louis XIV and affected his rule since both the Dukes and Mme de Maintenon were influential with the King.

Fénelon as a spiritual adviser. Fénelon's spiritual interest often took the form of letters in which he endeavored to encourage and inspire the recipients. An example of this is found in his letter of May 28, 1687, to the Duc de Chevreuse in which he wrote:

. . . Il y a toujours à craindre que ces grands mouvemens ne nous dérangent un peu. Mais, dans le fond, quand on se tient attaché à Jésus-Christ par la prière et par la fréquentation de ses mystères, l'agitation ne sert souvent qu'à nous affermir.

. . . Un pauvre dont les besoins sont continuels, et qui n'a ni force ni adresse pour y remédier de lui-même, n'a d'autre ressource que de prier continuellement, et de s'adresser à ceux qui peuvent remplir ses besoins. Faut-il donc s'étonner que Jésus-Christ et les apôtres nous ordonnent de prier continuellement et sans relâche? . . . C'est une excellent prière pour une âme engagée dans la cour, comme David, c'est-à-dire plongée dans le milieu des attraits du monde. O mon Dieu, vérité souveraine et souverainement aimable, détournez mes yeux de la vanité qui les environne de toutes parts; et parce que leur mobilité naturelle les fait tourner incessamment vers les objets qui se présentent et qui éclatent, fixez-les, ô mon Dieu, en vous présentant vous-même et vous faisant sentir avec cette force qui fait que les grands objets attirent uniquement notre attention et notre vue (Oeuvres spirituelles, pp. 298-300).

In another letter to the Duc de Chevreuse on July 14, 1690, Fénelon sought to console him in his afflictions and gave exhortations for a deeper Christian life. He wrote:

J'apprends, monsieur, que vous souffrez, et que Dieu vous met à une très rude épreuve par la longueur de vos maux. Si je me laissais aller à mon coeur, j'en serais véritablement affligé; mais je conçois que Dieu vous aime en vous frappant, et je suis persuadé que vos maux seront dans la suite de très grands biens. . . . Il veut que vous viviez, et que vous viviez à lui seul. Pour vous faire entrer dans cette vie, il vous fait passer par une langueur

accablante où vous mourrez à tout appui humain. Après vous avoir affligé, il vous consolera en bon père, lorsque l'affliction aura détaché et purifié votre coeur. Je le prie de vous donner une patience sans bornes dans des maux aussi longs et aussi douloureux que les vôtres (OEuvres choisies, pp. 158-59).

In other letters, Fénelon did not hesitate to recommend strict Christian discipline or to point out the faults of the one to whom the letter was addressed. Examples of these are found among his letters to Mme de Maintenon. In one letter, written in 1890, replying to her request that he discuss her short-comings, he made these statements:

. . . Vous n'avez jamais agi de suite avec moi, et je compte pour peu ce que les autres m'ont dit de vous. Mais n'importe; je vous dirai ce que je pense, et Dieu vous en fera faire l'usage qu'il lui plaira.

Vous êtes ingénue et naturelle . . . à l'égard de ceux pour qui vous avez du goût et de l'estime; mais trop froidement dès que ce goût vous manque. Quand vous êtes sèche, votre sécheresse va assez loin. Je m'imagine qu'il y a dans votre fond de la promptitude et de la lenteur. Ce qui vous blesse, vous blesse vivement.

. . . Vous tenez encore à l'estime des honnêtes gens, à l'approbation des gens de bien, au plaisir de soutenir votre prospérité avec modération; enfin à celui de paraître par votre coeur au-dessus de votre place.

.....

Vous êtes naturellement bonne, et disposée à la confiance, peut-être même un peu trop pour des gens de bien dont vous n'avez pas éprouvé assez à fond la prudence (OEuvres choisies, pp. 147-49).

Fénelon showed a further boldness and a remarkable courage in other letters to Mme de Maintenon in which he sought to advise her on matters of political policy and, through her, influence the actions of the King.

In one such letter he wrote:²²

²²Cited in Bausset, op. cit., I, 259.

Comme le roi se conduit bien moins par des maximes suivies, que par l'impression des gens qui l'environnent, et auxquels il confie son autorité, l'essentiel est de ne perdre aucune occasion pour l'obséder par des gens vertueux, qui agissent de concert avec vous, pour lui faire accomplir dans leur vraie étendue ses devoirs, dont il n'a aucune idée. . . . Le grand point est de l'assiéger, puisqu'il veut l'être, de le gouverner, puisqu'il veut être gouverné. Son salut consiste à être assiégé par des gens droits et sans intérêt. Vous devez donc mettre toute votre application à lui donner des vues de paix, et surtout de soulagement des peuples, de modération, d'équité, de défiance à l'égard des conseils durs et violents, d'horreur pour les actes d'autorité arbitraire, enfin, d'amour pour l'église, et d'application à lui chercher de saints pasteurs.

Fénelon's letter to the Duchesse de Noailles written about 1690 was another in which he pointed out the faults of the recipient and advised her concerning the type of behavior she should exhibit in court and at home. After complimenting her on her virtues, he continues:

Mais, avec tant de qualités, un seul défaut vous rend frivole. . . . Il faudroit penser sérieusement et de suite à devenir meilleure que vous n'êtes, et à vous corriger courageusement de vos défauts. La crainte de passer pour hypocrite ou pour foible dévote, ne doit point vous empêcher d'être une bonne chrétienne.

. . . Vous avez un air de légèreté et de vivacité que rien n'arrête. Il faut connoître à fond votre bon esprit et vos sentiments, pour se rassurer sur cette vivacité pleine de saillies. Riez tant qu'il vous plaira avec des gens sûrs et choisis, qui n'aient pas l'air de rire trop, et qui sachent ne rire qu'à propos. . . . Vous éludez l'avis le plus important par une plaisanterie, et vous défendez en riant des maximes fausses dont vous n'avez jamais été détrompée, parce que vous n'avez jamais écouté assez sérieusement, ni approfondi la vérité. Vous croyez en être quitte en disant que vous ne sauriez vous changer; et en effet, c'est la crainte de vous contraindre, qui fait que vous craignez de voir clair, et de prendre les choses plus sérieusement. . . . Il ne vous manque qu'un peu plus de réflexion sérieuse sur les grandes vérités, et un peu plus de courage contre votre goût (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 281-83).

In speaking of the conduct of the Duchess toward her family he remarked:

Votre famille ne vous est pas indifférente; elle ne peut se passer de la cour. Tous les projets de s'en passer, ne peuvent être que chimériques. Vous devez donc vous accommoder à ses goûts,

dans toutes les choses où vous le pourrez sans blesser la véritable bienséance (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 282).

In his letter to the Archevêque de Rouen, written on April 8, 1692, Fénelon reprimanded this clergyman for the elaborate plans which he had had drawn up by Mansard for two buildings to be constructed in his diocese. These structures were to be located at Rouen and Gaillon, cities on the Seine River. With much logic, Fénelon discussed the fact that all too often luxuries become necessities and that desires can overpower reason. He mentioned that it was unbecoming for an ecclesiastic to have a house finer than those of princes and ministers of the government. He felt that the Archbishop should not forget that ecclesiastical revenues come from the poor and that these same poor were his children who were dying of starvation and for whom the money which he was spending on houses could buy food. Fénelon wrote:

Espérez-vous que Dieu bénisse vos travaux, si vous commencez par un faste de bâtimens qui surpasse celui des princes et des ministres d'Etat qui on logé où vous êtes? Espérez-vous trouver dans ces pierres entassées la paix de votre coeur? Que deviendra la pauvreté de Jésus-Christ, si ceux qui doivent le représenter recherchent la magnificence? Voilà ce qui avilit le ministère, loin de le soutenir; voilà ce qui ôte l'autorité aux pasteurs. L'Evangile est dans leur bouche, et la gloire mondaine est dans leurs ouvrages (Oeuvres spirituelles, p. 319).

Fénelon closed with the exhortation that the Archbishop judge himself as he thought God would judge him and then be a right example of a true man of God.

There is no record of the address in the letter of July 2, 1689, but it contained advice on gambling among household servants and on operatic music. Fénelon wrote:

Je ne crois pas que vous deviez pousser à la dernière exactitude le règlement que vous avez fait sur les jeux de hasard. Il est dangereux de faire des règles qui ne soient pas observées. Pour accoutumer les domestiques à obéir fidèlement, il faut ne leur ordonner que les choses qu'on veut qui s'observent avec exactitude: autrement l'autorité se diminue. Pour la livrée, je crois qu'on peut lui recommander de ne jouer pas aux cartes, parce que ces gens-là s'échaufferoient trop au jeu. Il en arriveroit de trop grosses pertes, des querelles, et souvent des larcins domestiques, pour réparer les pertes du jeu. Mais pour leur adoucir cette sévérité, je voudrois leur fournir des dames, et d'autres petits jeux propres à les amuser. Par là ils seroient sans prétexte de chercher d'autres jeux; mais je voudrois qu'ils ne jouassent point d'argent. . . .

Pour les airs de l'opéra, c'est à vous à savoir l'impression qu'ils peuvent vous faire. . . . Supposé que ces airs ne vous fassent aucun mauvais effect, je croirois que vous pourriez en chanter, mais sans prononcer les paroles, qui sont d'elles-mêmes assez insipides, et qui ne doivent avoir rien d'agréable pour vous dans les sentimens où Dieu vous met. Il y a encore une autre règle à observer, qui est de ne chanter jamais ces airs en des lieux où vous puissiez être entendu par des gens qui croiront que votre exemple les autorise pour les chanter aussi, ou qui jugeront mal de la sincérité de votre piété, vous voyant plein de ces chansons profanes (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 90-91).

In all such counsels, Fénelon demonstrates piety and wisdom.²³

Letter to Louis XIV. One of Fénelon's greatest ambitions was to change the moral attitudes and the politics of the ruler of France. He wished the King to become truly pious and not to limit himself to outward show. It was to this end that Fénelon, about 1694, composed his letter to Louis XIV.²⁴ Conjecture has it that this letter was not actually meant for the King but that it was composed for the Duc de

²³Ibid.

²⁴François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Lettre à Louis XIV, ed. Henri Guillemin (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1961), note, p. 59. Hereafter, quotations from the Lettre à Louis XIV will be referred to in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

Beauvilliers and Mme de Maintenon who were in direct contact with the King and from whom Louis XIV accepted counsel. Through this letter, it is thought, Fénelon hoped to give them courage to point out to the King the faults existing in his reign and to encourage them to work with the King to effect the desired reforms.

Some critics believe that this letter was Fénelon's way of resolving his frustrations over the situation at court where he was involved in the controversy over Quietism. This controversy had cost Fénelon one of his best friends, Bossuet, and had caused the King to look with disfavor upon Fénelon, the defender of Mme Guyon (Lettre à Louis XIV, introduction by the editor, Henri Guilliman, pp. 8-10). There is no question, however, that this letter shows that Fénelon had a knowledge of the political conditions in France as he expresses his sincere desire to see the existing problems resolved according to Christian principles.

In the opening paragraph, Fénelon expressed his personal regard for the King and stated that he would suffer any misfortune to make the King become aware of the truths he needed to know. This same sentiment was also present in the closing paragraph, which reads:

La personne qui vous dit ces vérités, Sire, bien loin d'être contraire à vos intérêts, donnerait sa vie pour vous voir tel que Dieu vous veut, et elle ne cesse de prier pour vous (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 73).

In the letter, Fénelon went over point by point the weaknesses and errors to be found in the administration of Louis XIV. Fénelon stated that the King might think the accusations severe, especially since he

was accustomed to hearing only flattery at the court. He pursued this idea further when he stated:

Ils vous ont accoutumé à recevoir sans cesse des louanges outrées qui vont jusqu'à l'idolâtrie, et que vous auriez dû, pour votre honneur, rejeter avec indignation (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 62).

The ministers of Louis XIV had usurped power, had introduced a demoralizing luxury into the court, and were taxing the poor unmercifully to support this luxury. The people had lost confidence in the King, and many were rebelling except when kept quiet by bribes. The treasury was empty, but the King refused to recognize the true situation.

Political wars were responsible for heavy taxes as well as for the destruction of resources. There was little real farming, Fénelon pointed out, and trade and commerce were practically non-existent. He felt that the people should be receiving help from the government instead of having to suffer a further reduction of their already meager assets. He wrote:

La France entière n'est plus qu'un grand hôpital désolé et sans provision (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 66).

Fénelon accused the King of being responsible for all these problems.

Besides the interior problems, Fénelon cited lengthy wars with the neighbors of France. The twenty years of war with Holland had ruined the commercial strength built up by Richelieu. The King was described as being unmerciful with those he conquered. Fénelon said that treaties were signed "le couteau sur la gorge. . ." (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 62). He then accused the King of disregarding the terms of treaties once they were made and of searching old treaties to find loopholes that

would allow him to take the land of other nations. He cited especially the Treaty of Westphalia, which had been signed under Richelieu, in 1648, by Germany, Sweden, and France to end the Thirty Years' War (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 64). By 1694, France had no allies left--only enemies, whose one thought was to regain what they had lost to France. Many preferred to continue fighting rather than to accept the peace terms which were offered to them, and their only hope was to exhaust France through prolonged fighting.

Fénelon wrote frankly of the religious attitude of the King in these words:

Vous n'aimez point Dieu; vous ne le craignez même que d'une crainte d'esclave; c'est l'enfer, et non pas Dieu, que vous craignez. Votre religion ne consiste qu'en superstitions, en petites pratiques superficielles. . . . Vous êtes scrupuleux sur des bagatelles, et endurci sur des maux terribles. Vous n'aimez que votre gloire et votre commodité. Vous rapportez tout à vous, comme si vous étiez le Dieu de la terre, et que tout le reste n'eût été créé que pour vous être sacrifié. C'est au contraire, vous que Dieu n'a mis au monde que pour votre peuple (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 69).

Fénelon expressed the feeling that the King should be a father to his subjects just as God was the heavenly Father for his children on earth.

The Archevêque de Paris and the Confessor of the King were both criticized by Fénelon. He said that they were lax in their duties, jealous, and receivers of bribes. Instead of being a source of strength for the King, they were creating problems for him both at home and in Rome.

After listing these faults and making these accusations, Fénelon expressed the hope that the King would turn from his evil ways. He

mentioned that the Duc de Beauvilliers and Mme de Maintenon stood ready to advise the King in the process that would lead to reforms. He wrote:

Malheur, malheur à eux s'ils ne la (la vérité) disent pas, et malheur à vous si vous n'êtes pas digne de l'entendre! (Lettre à Louis XIV, p. 72)

He then listed the principal points of advice that these two should give the King in order to effect the needed reforms:

. . . ils doivent vous représenter qu'il faut vous humilier sous la puissante main de Dieu, si vous ne voulez qu'il vous humilie; qu'il faut demander la paix, et expier par cette honte toute la gloire dont vous avez fait votre idole; qu'il faut rejeter les conseils injustes des politiques flatteurs; qu'enfin il faut rendre au plus tôt à vos ennemis, pour sauver l'Etat, des conquêtes que vous ne pouvez d'ailleurs retenir sans injustice (Lettre à Louis XIV, pp. 72-73).

If Fénelon could have had his way, there would have been no wars for glory and no luxury, the two things that Louis XIV seemed to love the most.²⁵

Fénelon as an educator. It was at the request of the Duchesse de Beauvilliers that Fénelon wrote, in 1693, his Traité de l'éducation des filles, which is considered the best of his early works.²⁶ The Beauvilliers had eight daughters whom they wished to educate properly. They asked Fénelon to advise them in this matter. Since the daughters were of different ages, Fénelon chose not to handle each one individually but to generalize in his counsels. He completed a treatise concerning young ladies of lesser financial means than the daughters of the Beauvilliers

²⁵Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 463.

²⁶Bausset, op. cit., I, 65-66.

and for a public of mothers greater than one.²⁷ Fénelon's advice has been called "the point of departure for modern French pedagogy."²⁸ He advised that, in the education of a girl, her dignity must be maintained; her faults, such as vanity and ignorance, should be corrected early; and she should be strengthened by reason and self-government, not by imposed authority.²⁹ He preferred that she be taught basic courses, such as literature, history, Latin, etc., but cultural subjects such as music and some types of art and poetry were to be restricted since these were possible agents of nervous exaltation.³⁰ The object was to fit her for her mission in life as a good wife, mother, and household manager with a heart full of Christian virtue.³¹

Saint-Cyr, Mme de Maintenon's school for young ladies, had not been founded in 1684, at the time Fénelon wrote his Traité on education; but, when the school was put into operation, the founder leaned heavily on Fénelon's counsel in the program which she followed there.³²

²⁷Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 443.

²⁸William Albert Nitze and E. Preston Dargan, A History of French Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), p. 358.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 358-59.

³⁰Gustave Lanson, Histoire illustrée de la littérature française (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1951), p. 611.

³¹C. H. Conrad Wright, A History of French Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 403.

³²Michael de la Bedoyere, The Archbishop and the Lady (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1956), p. 80.

Due to the reputation which Fénelon had earned as an educator and the rapport which he had with influential members of the court, when the Duc de Beauvilliers was named gouverneur of the Duc de Bourgogne, grand-son of the King, on August 16, 1689, Fénelon was named the next day tutor for this heir to the throne of France (OEuvres choisies, pp. 207-08). The Abbé Fleury and Fénelon's nephew, the Abbé de Beaumont, became the assistant gouverneurs, and the Abbé de Langeron was chosen as reader. In 1690, the Duke's younger brother, the Duc d'Anjou, who eventually became Philip V of Spain, came under the care of this team; and three years later his youngest brother, the Duc de Berry, joined the group.³³

When Fénelon's appointment was announced, Bossuet was one of the first to congratulate him.³⁴ Bossuet had been a rather unsuccessful tutor to the Grand Dauphin, father of the Princes, partly, it is said, because of the lack of intelligence in the pupil and partly because of lack of tact in the teacher (OEuvres spirituelles, introduction, p. 24). Now Fénelon had acquired a position that would earn for him a status beyond that of his friend and one which was destined to earn Bossuet's jealousy. The attitude of others was expressed by Mme de Sévigné when she said that these choices were guided by the hand of God.³⁵ Only Tronson, the director of the seminary at Saint-Sulpice, who well knew the weaknesses of his former pupil, wrote warningly that this promotion

³³Barnard, op. cit., p. xix.

³⁴Bausset, op. cit., I, 133-34.

³⁵Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 450, citing Lettres de Mme de Sévigné, édition des Grands Ecrivains, IX, 170.

would open doors to earthly dignities, but a success handled indiscreetly could close the doors to heaven.³⁶

Fénelon, in his activities as royal tutor, was especially concerned with the Duc de Bourgogne through whom he hoped to establish a morally-oriented government in France. The task of preparing him for the duties of his royal office was obviously one of great responsibility. Furthermore, it was not an easy task. The Duke seems to have been a "mass of contradictions."³⁷ Havens describes him as being a "spoiled royal child, utterly willful and subject to wild tantrums of rage."³⁸ However, Fénelon worked patiently with the young Prince and gradually won his confidence and respect. The Prince, an apt pupil, was described by one of Fénelon's co-workers as having a memory so vast that it was no trouble for him to remember anything which he had learned (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 363).

At Versailles, the Duc de Beauvilliers had charge of the health needs and meals of the Duc de Bourgogne and his two brothers, and Fénelon was always careful to consider the physical when planning the mental work. He followed a schedule which allowed for a variety of activities including dancing, drawing, play, and serious study. There was vigorous exercise, such as walking, running, and horseback riding. Studies included Latin, taught by the direct method; some literature; and a limited amount of mathematics because the Duke was so adept in

³⁶ Bausset, op. cit., I, 136-40.

³⁷ Barnard, op. cit., p. xx.

³⁸ Havens, op. cit., p. 53.

this subject that Fénelon was afraid he would devote too much time to it. It was more important, he felt, for the Duke to study history, political science, and economics (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 352-64, passim).

Fénelon, wishing to give the Duke a well-rounded education, was careful to see that moral instruction was included in all phases of the program. He worked tirelessly to instill in his pupil those principles that would make him a good Christian king.³⁹

Since textbooks were practically non-existent at this time, Fénelon had some of the scholars of the day prepare material to be used in educating the Duke (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 360), but more often he did the writing himself. Some of his most readable works and those which have survived the longest were those written for this purpose.⁴⁰ He sought to entertain and, at the same time, to instruct. Therefore, in 1690, he wrote for the early years of his pupil the Fables, stories that were simple and clear but which contained definite moral lessons.⁴¹ Next came the Dialogues des morts, in 1692, with their mélange of democratic ideas, showing a heavy influence of antiquity.⁴²

³⁹Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 453.

⁴⁰Barnard, op. cit., p. xxxvii.

⁴¹Charles Rutherford Bagley, An Introduction to French Literature of the Seventeenth Century (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937), p. 479.

⁴²Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 455.

The general idea of this work was that the affairs of government should be subject to a moral code.⁴³ This same idea was again expressed in Télémaque, Fénelon's classic novel, written in 1693, through which he wished to show the young Prince by indirection the rewards of righteous living and good government.⁴⁴

It is said that through the years the pupil became entirely subject to the will of his teacher.⁴⁵ Some critics have felt that Fénelon was over-zealous in breaking the will of the Duke,⁴⁶ and there are those who question the success of his work,⁴⁷ but this education was considered a success by the King who rewarded Fénelon in 1695 by naming him Archevêque de Cambrai.⁴⁸ Fénelon was then forced to divide his time between his two duties, spending nine months at Cambrai and three at Versailles with the Prince.⁴⁹ This arrangement necessitated numerous letters and directives to those charged with the education of the Duke in Fénelon's absence.

⁴³Lanson, op. cit., p. 615

⁴⁴Morris Bishop, A Survey of French Literature, The Middle Ages to 1800 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), p. 246.

⁴⁵Wright, op. cit., p. 400.

⁴⁶François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Pages choisies des grands écrivains--Fénelon, ed. Moïse Cagnac, series, Lectures littéraires (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1911), introduction, p. x.

⁴⁷Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 454.

⁴⁸Pierre-Georges Castex and Paul Surer, Manuel des Etudes littéraires françaises (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1954), I, 411.

⁴⁹Bausset, op. cit., I, 312-13.

Letters written in 1695 and 1696 by Fénelon to the Abbé Fleury outlined the program of study for the Duc de Bourgogne.⁵⁰ In the first letter Fénelon suggested that the Duke continue with his compositions and translations. He listed the books that should be read with major emphasis on the Bible, books by Latin writers, and historical works. He appraised the latter group as to their interest for the pupil. Fénelon seemed very anxious to have a varied program and recommended precautions to prevent the Prince from becoming bored with the educational process. He frequently wrote such statements as the following:⁵¹

Ses thèmes sont tirés des Métamorphoses d'Ovide; le sujet est fort varié; il lui apprend beaucoup de mots et de tour latins; il le divertit; et comme les thèmes sont ce qu'il y a de plus épineux, il faut y mettre le plus d'amusements qu'il est possible.

.....

On peut aussi lire le matin, ces jours-là (les jours de fêtes), l'Histoire monastique d'orient et d'occident de M. Bulteau, en choisissant ce qui est le plus convenable, de même des vies de quelques saints particuliers; mais s'il s'en ennuyait, il faudrait varier.

.....

... Il faut lui accourcir un peu le temps de l'étude, et lui ménager quelque petite récompense.

On peut diversifier ce travail par un autre qu'il a commencé, qui est un abrégé de l'histoire romaine avec les dates des principaux faits à la marge. . . .

On peut aussi travailler avec lui, comme par divertissement, à faire diverses tables chronologiques, comme nous nous sommes divertis à faire des cartes particulières.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 183-90.

⁵¹Cited in ibid., pp. 184-86, passim.

In the letter of 1696, Fénelon recommended a similar program but suggested also the use of work of the Church and additional historical compilations. On the other subjects to be considered he wrote:⁵²

Pour les sciences, je ne donnerais aucun temps à la grammaire, ou du moins je lui en donnerais fort peu. Je me bornerais à expliquer ce que c'est qu'un nom, un pronom, un substantif, un adjectif et un relatif, un verbe substantif neutre, passif, actif et déponent. . . .

Pour la rhétorique, je n'en donnerais point de préceptes; il suffit de donner de bons modèles, et d'introduire par-là dans la pratique; à mesure qu'on fera des discours pour s'exercer, on pourra remarquer l'usage des principales figures, et le pouvoir qu'elles ont quand elles sont dans leur place.

Pour la logique, je la différerais encore de quelques mois.

.

Je ne dirais rien présentement sur la physique, qui est écueil.

There were also letters between the teacher and the pupil. The quality of their relationship can be judged by the letter from the Duke to Fénelon, written on October 3, 1696, from Fontainebleau, where the royal heir sometimes spent his vacations. It read:

Mon rhume va beaucoup mieux, ou plutôt est fini. J'ai commencé à sortir depuis deux jours. Nous avons eu jusque-là vilain temps, avec une pluie presque continuelle. Nous retournerons à Versailles après demain, où je reprendrai mon train ordinaire, car cette maladie m'avoit un peu dérangé. Quand je suis parti de Versailles, le serin sortoit de mue et recommençoit à chanter. J'ai achevé l'histoire de François I^{er}, et je suis au milieu du quatrième livre de Tacite. J'espère qu'il sera achevé dans trois semaines. Je souhaite de vous revoir bientôt en bonne santé. En attendant, soyez bien persuadé, je vous prie, de l'amitié que j'ai pour vous. N'oubliez pas de temps en temps de m'écrire: vos lettres me font toujours plaisir (Ouvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 3).

⁵² Cited in ibid., pp. 188-89.

This does not sound like the incorrigible child with whom Fénelon began his labors in 1689. It was, rather, the work of a sincere, devoted fourteen-year-old pupil in whom Fénelon had inspired love and respect.

Quietism. At the time Fénelon was appointed tutor of the Duc de Bourgogne, he was already a central figure in the court at Versailles. His spirit, his talents, the charm of his conversation, and the pleasant seduction of his manner had given him a comfortable position socially and spiritually among the most outstanding religious and political leaders of France.⁵³ Four years later he was elected to the Académie française. It seemed that life was being very kind to the self-confident, high-principled young priest. There was one person, however, that was to be his downfall.

In 1688 Fénelon had met Mme Jeanne-Marie Bouvière de la Mothe Guyon in the salon of the country home of the Duchesse de Béthune-Charost near Versailles. Mme Guyon had a history of questionable experiences revolving around a mystical religious movement known as Quietism.⁵⁴ Within one week this energetic young widow had so impressed Fénelon by her conviction, her ability to lose herself in prayer and meditation, and her devotion and unworldliness that he was inspired to accept her theories. His eagerness to enrich his own spiritual life made it possible for him to disregard her past and to overlook some of

⁵³Ibid., p. 252.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 267-78.

the mystical and hysterical aspects of Quietism which were so unacceptable to many of the church leaders of the day.⁵⁵

The ideals of Quietism were soon permeating the court of Louis XIV. Fénelon recommended to his intimate friends this doctrine of pure love which involved an unselfish love for God through a complete disregard of self and a willingness to yield to God's will at all times. Patience in all trials, exterior and interior, was the first sign of a complete renunciation of self.⁵⁶ Fénelon taught that prayer is the life of the soul and that true prayer consists of letting the soul be filled with a divine effusion.⁵⁷

From the day that Fénelon became a disciple of Quietism, there was a multitude of secret communications between him and Mme Guyon. Most of these letters are not included in the regular works of Fénelon because the principal interest of this correspondence centers in Mme Guyon and not in Fénelon. However, his complete devotion to the tenets of Quietism is clearly visible in his statements found there such as:⁵⁹

Je suis très persuadé que le pur amour, quand il a détruit toute propriété, fait éprouver des choses que le seul pur amour est capable d'entendre. Nul ne connaît les profondeurs de l'esprit

⁵⁵Havens, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵⁶François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Ecrits spirituels, pages choisies, ed. Bernard Dupiez (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1965), p. 13.

⁵⁷Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 466.

⁵⁸Maurice Masson, Fénelon et Mme Guyon (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1907), introduction, p. ix.

⁵⁹Cited in ibid., pp. 135-36, 213.

de Dieu, si ce n'est l'esprit de Dieu même. Celui qui est au-dessous de cet état n'en peut juger qu'imparfaitement et selon sa mesure bornée; c'est pourquoi je me tais et je me contente d'attendre ce qu'il plaira à Dieu de m'expliquer par l'onction.
 . . . Ce 11 mai 1689.

. . . L'état de pure foi demande bien qu'on ne cherche à rien voir, pour le chemin par où Dieu me conduit, mais il ne demande pas qu'on marche, sans savoir si c'est Dieu qui nous fait marcher; autrement ce ne serait plus foi en Dieu, mais foi en son propre égarement. . . . Ce 17 juillet 1689.

In other letters there is evidence of his complete submission to Mme Guyon as his spiritual director because he felt that she had been given enlightenment which qualified her for this role. He shows that he thought this when he wrote:⁶⁰

Je pense très souvent à vous, et je me trouve uni à vous de plus en plus, mais c'est une union générale et de pure foi. Je me trouve avec vous en celui qui est tout, et il me semble que nous y demeurerons toujours unis; je suis persuadé comme vous que Dieu se sert de vous pour me préparer ses dons. La pensée que j'ai de vous m'est toujours utile, car je ne vous vois jamais qu'en Dieu, et Dieu à travers de vous, sans m'arrêter à vous. . . .

Notre union est fixe et elle va toujours croissant dans ce temps même. Vous avez raison de dire que rien n'est si doux que ces unions, quoiqu'elles ne paraissent donner aucun sentiment distinct. . . . La confiance est pleine par la persuasion de votre droiture, de votre simplicité, de votre expérience et de vos lumières sur les choses intérieures, enfin du dessein de Dieu sur moi par vous. . . .
 Vendredi saint (8 avril) 1689.

Je suis de plus en plus uni à vous, Madame, en Notre-Seigneur, et j'aimerais mieux mille fois être anéanti que de retarder un seul instant le cours des grâces par le canal que Dieu a choisi. . . .
 Ce 31 août 1689.

⁶⁰ Cited in ibid., pp. 114-15, 271.

It should be clearly understood that this union of which Fénelon speaks so often was in no respect a sentimental, physical love. Actually he and Mme Guyon saw each other very rarely.⁶¹ Probably Fénelon best expressed their relationship when he wrote:⁶²

Mais je me contente d'être attentif à la lumière que Dieu me donne, et de lui parler fort simplement suivant son ouverture, et suivant ce qui me vient dans le moment où je lui parle. S'il vous est donné quelque chose là-dessus, mandez-le moi. Je ne lui parle jamais le premier sur cette matière. Je ne sens rien pour vous et je ne tiens à personne au monde autant qu'à vous. Ce 9 juin 1689.

There is no evidence that anything except the purest spiritual friendship existed between these two.⁶³

The principles of Quietism were introduced into the school at Saint-Cyr where Mme de Maintenon was allowing Fénelon to advise her on a program of education for the daughters of impoverished nobility. The wife of Louis XIV even introduced Mme Guyon herself into the school circle where she became a favorite. The doctrine spread at Saint-Cyr especially through Mme de la Maisonfort, cousin of Mme Guyon.⁶⁴ Mme de la Maisonfort sponsored some rather indiscreet religious activities at the girls' school where the doctrine of pure love, holy indifference, and abandon were almost the sole topics of conversation. Fénelon attempted to reform the conscience of the offender and tried to resolve

⁶¹Ibid., introduction, p. xxxix.

⁶²Cited in ibid., p. 162.

⁶³De la Bedoyere, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶⁴Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 466.

the differences that had developed between her and Mme de Maintenon. In November, 1693, he wrote a letter to the latter in which he discussed the situation. He closed by saying:

Il n'est pas question de Saint-Cyr qui n'est rien; il est question de Dieu, qui est tout, et qui ne se trouve point par cette hauteur et par cet entêtement (cited in Fénelon, ce méconnu, p. 53).

Upon reading some of the Quietist literature, the Evêque de Chartres became suspicious of the state of affairs at Saint-Cyr and began an investigation.⁶⁵ Mme de Maintenon turned away from Mme Guyon and lost some of her enthusiasm for Fénelon when he would not do the same.⁶⁶ Mme Guyon was called upon to defend her beliefs in a series of conferences held from July, 1694, until March, 1695, at Issy, the country house of Saint-Sulpice south of Paris, where Tronson was residing at that time.⁶⁷

Although Fénelon was not present at these investigations, he followed intently the proceedings which were conducted by Bossuet; by Noailles, the Evêque de Châlons; and by Tronson. From time to time he wrote letters and treatises to defend the doctrine in question. In a communication to Bossuet on July 28, 1694, Fénelon expressed his willingness to submit to the decision of the examiners thus:

Ne soyez point en peine de moi: je suis dans vos mains comme un petit enfant. . . . Je vous expose simplement, et sans y prendre part, ce que je crois avoir lu dans les ouvrages de plusieurs saints. C'est à vous à bien examiner le fait, et à me dire si je me trompe. . . . Dès que vous aurez parlé, tout sera effacé chez moi. Comptez, mon seigneur, qu'il ne s'agit que de la chose en elle-même, et nullement de moi (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 364).

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 467.

Again on December 12, 1694, he wrote to Bossuet as follows:

Je ne tiens qu'à une seule chose, qui est l'obéissance simple. Ma conscience est donc dans la vôtre. Si je manque, c'est vous qui me faites manquer, faute de m'avertir. C'est à vous à répondre de moi, si je suis un moment dans l'erreur. Je suis prêt à me taire, à me rétracter, à m'accuser et même à me retirer, si j'ai manqué à ce que je dois à l'Eglise. En un mot, réglez-moi tout ce que vous voudrez; et si vous ne me croyez pas, prenez-moi au mot pour m'embrasser (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 369).

Still he persisted in his refusal to abandon Mme Guyon and her precepts.

He wrote thus on February 26, 1695, to Tronson:

Pour la personne, on veut que je la condamne avec ses écrits. Quand l'Eglise fera là-dessus un formulaire, je serai le premier à le signer de mon sang, et à le faire signer. Hors de là, je ne puis ni ne dois le faire. J'ai vu de près des faits certains qui m'ont infiniment édifié: pourquoi veut-on que je la condamne sur d'autres faits que je n'ai point vus, qui ne concluent rien par eux-mêmes, et sans l'entendre pour savoir ce qu'elle y répondroit?

. . . Qu'importe que je ne croie Mme G. ni méchante ni folle, si d'ailleurs je l'abandonne par un profond silence, et je la laisse mourir en prison, sans me mêler jamais ni directement ni indirectement de tout ce qui a rapport à elle? On ne peut vouloir me pousser plus loin, qu'à cause qu'on croit qu'il y a quelque mystère dangereux dans ma répugnance à la condamner. Mais tout le mystère se réduit à ne vouloir point parler contre ma conscience, et à ne vouloir point insulter inutilement à une personne que j'ai révéérée comme une sainte, sur tout ce que j'en ai vu par moi-même. . . . Serois-je dans l'embarras où je suis, si j'avois eu le moindre respect humain? Pourquoi donc me demander ce qu'on exigeroit à peine d'un homme suspect d'imposture? (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 387-90)

The outcome was that Mme Guyon was censured as having said and written false and foolish things.⁶⁸ She accepted the censure. The matter seemed settled. On February 4, 1695, just before the final meeting at Issy, Fénelon had been appointed Archevêque de Cambrai. On July 10 of

⁶⁸De la Bedoyere, op. cit., p. 122.

the same year, he was consecrated at Saint-Cyr in the presence of Mme de Maintenon and the grandsons of Louis XIV. Bossuet was in charge of the service, and he was assisted by Noailles, the Evêque de Châlons, and by the Evêque d'Amiens.⁶⁹

However, the matter was not settled in the mind of Mme de Maintenon, who was still jealous of Mme Guyon and Fénelon. Much correspondence resulted in which Fénelon continued to defend the writer of the Quietist treatises. His attitude is shown in the letter of March 7, 1696, to Mme de Maintenon, which read in part:

Votre dernière lettre, qui devoit m'affliger sensiblement, madame, me remplit de consolation; elle me montre un fond de bonté, qui est la seule chose dont j'étois en peine. Si j'étois capable d'approuver une personne qui enseigne un nouvel évangile, j'aurois horreur de moi, plus que du diable: il faudroit me déposer et me brûler, bien loin de me supporter comme vous faites. Mais je puis fort innocemment me tromper sur une personne que je crois sainte, parce que je crois qu'elle n'a jamais eu intention d'enseigner ni d'écrire rien de contraire à la doctrine de l'Eglise catholique. Si je me trompe dans ce fait, mon erreur est très-innocente; . . . (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 391).

During this time Fénelon continued to keep up his prolific secret correspondence with Mme Guyon.

Bossuet, who seemed unable to reconcile himself to the fact that Fénelon and Mme Guyon were not being stopped in their spiritual endeavors, which he believed disastrous to the church and the world, also kept the controversy alive.⁷⁰ Through the efforts of Bossuet and Mme de Maintenon, new charges were made against Mme Guyon that effected her

⁶⁹Bausset, op. cit., I, 321.

⁷⁰De la Bedoyere, op. cit., p. 130.

arrest in 1695, during the month of December.⁷¹ Bossuet prepared accusations against her writings in a document entitled Instruction sur les états d'oraison. Before this manuscript could be published, Fénelon published his Maximes des Saints in defense of the writings of Mme Guyon. The secret war which had long existed between the two prelates was now openly declared.⁷² The two who were once such devoted friends with minds of one accord were now enemies.

More manuscripts, more documents, more letters followed. Finally Fénelon decided to submit the problem to the Pope. He conferred with his friends on this idea as is noted in his letter, written in April, 1697, to Tronson, which read:

Je vous envoie, monsieur, le projet de ma lettre pour le pape, et je vous prie de la montrer, si vous le jugez à propos, à M. l'évêque de Chartres; mais il faut exiger de lui un secret que je sais qu'il garde très-bien, dès qu'il le promet. . . . Je vais à Versailles, pour montrer au roi ma lettre pour le pape. Je reviendrai, dès que le roi aura approuvé qu'elle parte (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVI, 23).

After having received the King's approval, Fénelon sent to Rome his letter explaining the points of controversy between him and Bossuet.⁷³ Again there followed much correspondence between Rome and Fénelon, between Fénelon and his friends, between Fénelon and the King, between Fénelon and Bossuet (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVI, 23-560, passim,

⁷¹Bausset, op. cit., I, 336.

⁷²Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 467.

⁷³Bausset, op. cit., I, 404.

and all of XXVIII). One letter written to Bossuet contained this statement:⁷⁴

Le lecteur sans passion est étonné de ne trouver, dans un ouvrage fait contre un confrère soumis à l'église, aucune trace de cette modération qu'on avait louée dans vos écrits contre les ministres protestants. Pour moi, monseigneur, je ne sais si je me trompe, et ce n'est pas à moi à en juger, mais il me semble que mon coeur n'est point ému, que je ne désire que la paix, et que je suis avec un respect constant pour votre personne. . . .

Fénelon made every effort to defend his Maximes, and still at all times he appeared to be humble and he seemed to strive to keep an open mind.

Exile and final condemnation by Rome. Fénelon asked permission to go to Rome to plead his cause, but this permission was refused in a letter from the King written on August 1, 1697. In this same letter the King instructed Fénelon to go to Cambrai and ordered him not to leave his diocese.⁷⁵ Fénelon then sent one of his friends to Rome. It was this friend, the Abbé de Chanterac, who, through another series of letters, kept Fénelon informed on the proceedings and to whom Fénelon sent advice on arguments to be used in his defense (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 3-246, passim). Fénelon was judged, in the course of time, by ten consultants appointed by the Pope to advise him on the controversy.⁷⁶ Most energetic in working against Fénelon in Rome was Bossuet's nephew, an abbé, who used every trick, including bribery, to ruin the reputation of the accused and gain a decision in favor of his uncle.⁷⁷ It seemed for a time that the decision would be in favor of

⁷⁴Cited in ibid., I, 472-73.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 448.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 426-27.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 493.

Fénelon. However, the King, who had begun to fear the power that the Archbishop had gained in the court, allowed Bossuet to influence him against Fénelon. Also, the King was at this time involved in a semi-political battle with the Pope and wished to show his authority. Therefore, Louis XIV demanded that the Pope take a definite stand to settle this religious controversy--and that the decision be against Fénelon. On March 12, 1677, Innocent XII announced his condemnation of Fénelon's Maximes.⁷⁸

Fénelon had already been relieved of his post as tutor for the grandsons of the King in January, 1699, and the King had taken away his apartment at Versailles and his pension.⁷⁹ Most of Fénelon's friends had lost their positions at court,⁸⁰ and Fénelon himself had left Paris, never to return, and was residing in virtual exile at Cambrai. His brother arrived in Cambrai on March 25, 1677, with the news that Rome had condemned the Maximes. It was the day of Annunciation and the Archbishop had prepared a sermon on the solemnity of the day, but he quickly changed the topic of his message and discussed the perfect submission one should have for the authority of his superiors. News of Fénelon's condemnation had quickly become common knowledge in his diocese and the people understood the burden of his heart. His audience was moved to tears of tenderness, sadness, respect, and admiration.⁸¹

⁷⁸Ibid., II, 75-79.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 57-58.

⁸⁰Ibid., I, 498.

⁸¹Ibid., II, 86-87.

Fénelon acted quickly to take care of those matters which he considered his moral obligation, and he prepared a formal statement of submission and a letter to the Pope in which he vowed not to speak of his innocence nor of the insults which he had received. He also expressed his respect and devotion for his superior and proposed an official statement to show his acceptance of the Pope's decision.⁸² This statement was the subject of Fénelon's letter to the Abbé de Chanterac written on March 27, 1699, in which he said:

Avant que de recevoir votre lettre du 7, j'avois déjà appris par Paris, mon très-cher abbé, la nouvelle de la condamnation de mon livre. Je n'ai pas encore vu la bulle; mais je sais qu'elle est aussi fort contre moi que si M. de Meaux même l'avoit dressée. Il faut adorer Dieu, et se taire ou du moins ne plus parler qu'en un seul acte, où je montrerai, selon ma promesse, ma soumission pour mon supérieur. . . . J'espère que vous m'enverrez par le courrier prochain un exemplaire de la bulle qui est imprimée à Rome, et que vous y aurez joint les avis qu'on vous aura sans doute donnés sur la conduite que je dois tenir (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVII, 240).

After Fénelon drafted his statement and had it approved by the King, it was transmitted to the Pope through the Abbé de Chanterac. The officials at Rome were so impressed by Fénelon's attitude and so moved by the grace of his submission that all the cardinals voted that the Pope should send a reply to Fénelon.⁸³ After overcoming objections instigated by the Abbé Bossuet in Rome and by his uncle in Paris, the Pope's reply was prepared by one of his cardinals and dispatched to Fénelon. The Pope expressed his approval of Fénelon's attitude and conferred his

⁸²Ibid., p. 89.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 108-09.

blessing on the Archbishop.⁸⁴ At least the writer of the Maximes had not been branded a heretic.

In April, 1699, Télémaque, which had been written to instruct the Duc de Bourgogne in matters of government, was published by an indiscreet copyist without Fénelon's approval. The King, infuriated at this obvious criticism of his regime, was never able to forgive the writer. The scandal of Télémaque was the climax of Fénelon's disgrace.⁸⁵

Fénelon had passed through a bitter experience. No doubt the religious views for which he had been condemned were his strength in the succession of events that led up to and culminated in his condemnation. One thing is certain, he had met the challenge with humility, tact, and dignity.⁸⁶

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 113-14.

⁸⁵Castex and Surer, op. cit., p. 416.

⁸⁶Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 476.

CHAPTER III

FENELON'S LIFE AT CAMBRAI

Fénelon in his ecclesiastical home. A lesser man might have been crushed under the weight of the defeats that destiny had dealt Fénelon. Still he tried to reconcile himself to his fate and find some good in the situation. On August 26, 1697, he wrote the Duc de Beauvilliers concerning the burden of his heart. He mentioned the King who was responsible for his condemnation and exile. No trace of enmity was found in these words:

Je regardois même son zèle contre mon livre (les Maximes des Saints) comme un effect louable de sa religion, et de sa juste horreur pour tout ce qui lui paroît nouveauté. . . . Je consentirois à une perpétuelle disgrâce, pourvu que je susse que le roi, seroit entièrement selon le coeur de Dieu. . . . Pour moi, je suis en paix avec une souffrance presque continuelle. En faisant un éclat scandaleux, on ne me découragera point (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 4-5).

On September 1 of the same year he wrote again to the Duke stating:⁸⁷

Je travaille ici doucement et je ménage les esprits pour me mettre à portée de leur être utile; ils m'aiment assez, parce qu'ils me trouvent sans hauteur, tranquille et d'une conduite uniforme; ils ne m'ont trouvé ni rigoureux, ni intéressé, ni artificieux; ils se fient assez à moi. . . .

Once more he expressed his sentiments on the exile to Cambrai to the Duc de Beauvilliers when he wrote on November 30, 1699, as follows:

Je suis ici en paix et à portée s'il plaît à Dieu, d'y faire du bien. Je n'y ai d'épines que de la part de mes suffragants. . . . Je suis fâché, mon bon duc, de ne vous voir point, vous, la bonne duchesse, et quelques autres amis en très petit nombre. Pour le reste, je suis ravi d'en être loin; j'en chante le cantique de

⁸⁷Cited in Bausset, op. cit., II, 233.

délivrance, et rien ne me coûterait tant que de m'en rapprocher (Ouvres choisies, pp. 416-17).

Fénelon showed no regret at being denied a life at court. He was dedicated to Cambrai from the time he became Archbishop there; in fact, he had accepted this appointment only on the condition that he be allowed to remain at Cambrai at least nine months of each year. In his submission to the Pope and to the King, Fénelon's only worry was that his disfavor at court might hinder his work in his diocese.⁸⁸ In a mémoire written about 1710, he clearly expressed his feelings when some of his friends wished to secure permission for his return to Versailles. He stated that he had never sought a position at court; he was made to go there. He had been sent away, and he had lived at Cambrai for ten years with no favors from the court. He desired no change.⁸⁹ Cambrai, at first a place of exile, had become a place where Fénelon found peace.⁹⁰

Fénelon's ecclesiastical home, which had been rebuilt after a fire in 1697, was of majestic classic architecture with elaborate furnishings except for the rooms of the prelate, which were kept modest.⁹¹ Life in this palace was vividly described by the Abbé Ledieu, former secretary of Bossuet, who visited Cambrai in 1704, shortly after the death of Bossuet. Fénelon, always a noble in spirit, was pictured as being elegantly dressed, presiding with grace and refinement at the

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 233.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 195.

⁹⁰Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 493.

⁹¹Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'Ouvre, op. cit., p. 139.

abundant table although he ate very little himself, and observing at all times the sincere graces of hospitality.⁹²

Family correspondence. This hospitality was always extended to the numerous visitors from all stations in life who made Cambrai a sort of Mecca and came from all over the world to seek spiritual advice and share the knowledge of Fénelon.⁹³ Some of his friends, including the Abbé de Chanterac and the Abbé de Langeron, came to live in the palace, and there were always the numerous nephews and grandnephews whom the former teacher of the Duc de Bourgogne enjoyed having near him.⁹⁴ When any of his family was away from Cambrai, Fénelon wrote frequent letters giving family news, guidance, and spiritual direction. Such letters went to his nephews, "Fanfan," the Marquis de Fénelon; "Panta," the Abbé de Beaumont; and others for whom he had such nicknames as "Tonton," "le Follet," and "Put." In his letter of September 13, 1713, he showed his interest and concern for his relatives. He wrote:

On vous a envoyé ce matin, mon très-cher fanfan, un cheval comme vous l'avez désiré. Je souhaite que le bon état de votre jambe vous fasse partir sans retardement; mais ne faites rien par impatience: il faut laisser décider ces messieurs, sans les prévenir et observer toutes les précautions les plus exactes qu'ils auront marquées.

Il faudra m'apprendre, tout le plus tôt que vous pourrez, le jour précis où vous devrez arriver. Je manderai à Valincour, que j'y irai dîner ce jour-là, sans faire aucune mention de vous ni

⁹²Madame Duclaux (A. Mary F. Robinson), The French Ideal (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1911), pp. 202-04.

⁹³De la Bedoyere, op. cit., p. 240.

⁹⁴Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'Œuvre, op. cit., p. 140.

de votre marche. Vous y arriverez tout à coup, comme par surprise, et nous vous ramènerons coucher ici.

Il me tarde de recevoir ce soir de vos nouvelles, n'en ayant eu aucune hier. C'est de ma nièce, dont je suis en peine. Je voudrais qu'elle eût autant de santé que son follet bambin. Il mange, il court, il saute, il rit, il déclame toute la journée. Mille amitiés à cette chère malade. Tout à vous sans réserve. Embrassez pour moi le bon Put (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 306-07).

Another typical letter gave a report on Fénelon's health and included words of guidance for his nephew. Written on November 4, 1712, it read:

J'ai reçu ta lettre, mon fanfan. Mon rhume n'est plus rien; mais mon sommeil n'est pas coulant de source; il faut le laisser revonir; je ne fais presque rien. . . . En attendant, ne te dissipe ni ne te relâche; réserve les heures de nourriture de l'âme; unis-toi (à Dieu) comme tu me l'as promis. . . . Il faut craindre la vanité dans les fautes; souvent on les continue par la mauvaise honte de ne vouloir pas paraître les avouer, et s'en corriger. Voilà bien la morale; je ne veux point te fatiguer par mes sermons. Reviens, fanfan, dès que tu auras fait; je voudrais voir entrer fanfan par un côté, et Panta par l'autre (OEuvres choisies, p. 528).

Fénelon wrote to his nephew, the Abbé de Beaumont, on May 22, 1714. The Abbé, who resided at Cambrai, had gone to Bourbon to take thermal treatments for his health. Fénelon expressed his desire to see him thus:

Voilà les jeux d'enfans qui flattent mon imagination sous nos arbres. O que je vous souhaiterois à leur ombre! . . . Cette absence nous préparera la joie d'une réunion. Guérissez-vous, priez: soyez petit, souple dans la main de Dieu (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 311).

The letters to Fénelon from his nieces and nephews show that the feeling of respect and family concern was mutual.

Correspondence concerning war. After the War of Spanish Succession broke out in 1701, Cambrai found itself for many years affected by military maneuvers. The palace was often thrown open to the troops. Fénelon fed them, nursed their wounded, and gave spiritual counsel to all alike--

friend and enemy, Catholic and Protestant. Often as many as 150 would be fed at his table at one meal.⁹⁵

Carcassonne⁹⁶ writes that Fénelon by his benevolence gained the love of his enemies to the degree that some of their officers instructed their troops to reduce as much as possible the damage to the property of the Archbishop. With his harvest left intact, he was able to give charity to the poor of his diocese whose property had been confiscated. Cambrai was often full of fugitive farmers, shepherds, and country clergy ruined by the failure of penniless peasants to pay their tithe. His palace was often thronged with campers, and the courts and gardens were frequently turned into stable yards.⁹⁷

Still Fénelon had much time to meditate on the distress in France caused by the wars and he frequently wrote letters suggesting plans for peace. On December 14, 1709, he wrote to the Duc de Chevreuse, through whom he hoped his ideas would reach the proper military authorities, saying:

Pour la paix, je conviens qu'un préliminaire qui laisseroit toutes les grandes questions incertaines, seroit trop à craindre; mais on pourroit régler tous les articles considérables, en sorte que ce prétendu préliminaire décideroit à fond de presque tout, et qu'il ne laisseroit à régler dans un congrès que certains intérêts des alliés, sans qu'on pût, sous le prétexte de ces mêmes articles, revenir aux principaux, qui seroient finis. Il semble que les parties pourroient entrer dans cet expédient pour accélérer une suspension d'armes, supposé qu'elles fussent à peu près d'accord sur les points fondamentaux. Cependant il faudroit se préparer sans

⁹⁵Petit de Julleville, op. cit., 495.

⁹⁶Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'OEuvre, op. cit., p. 148.

⁹⁷Duclaux, op. cit., p. 201.

relâche à la guerre, comme si on n'espéroit nullement la paix. . . . Ce qui me fait le plus de peur, est de voir que rien en-deçà d'une ruine ne nous humilie et ne nous ramène au but (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 109-10).

In another letter on September 19, 1711, to the Duc de Chevreuse, he condemns the minister of war and the terrible situation in France. He ends this letter thus:

Ma conclusion est qu'il faut acheter la paix à quelque prix que ce puisse être. A quelque dure et honteuse condition que vous la fassiez, dès qu'elle sera faite, vous aurez mis en sûreté une puissance qui sera encore très-supérieure à chacune de toutes les autres de l'Europe. Finissez, et rétablissez-vous (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 234).

There are many other letters on his desires for peace and his ideas on how it can be achieved (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 114-15, 153-62, passim) as well as his mémoires on the military leaders and their campaigns (OEuvres choisies, pp. 523-27). Fénelon, however, showed his acceptance of life as it came, even in the matter of war, in his letter to the Duc de Bourgogne, written on May 4, 1710. After discussing church problems and the war situation, especially the prospect that the enemy might take Cambrai, Fénelon wrote as follows:

Il faut être abandonné, sans aide ni industrie, dans la main de la Providence: on n'est bien que dans cette situation-là (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 114).

Fénelon never failed to show his complete submission to God's will.

Correspondence with Destouches. Fénelon in his later years developed a very close friendship with Destouches, one of the soldiers whom he had befriended at Cambrai. He first met the Chevalier Destouches in 1711, when the latter was forty-three years of age. The Chevalier,

a soldier of distinction, was much admired by his colleagues for his bravery, zeal, and sincerity. Fénelon found in this friend many faults, such as over-indulgence in food, drink, and frivolities, which he constantly sought to correct, but he also found many mutual interests, especially a love for classical literature (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, introduction, vii). In his letters to Destouches, with whom he carried on a profuse correspondence, sometimes gay, sometimes moral, sometimes chatty, Fénelon often mentions the war. In the letter of August 17, 1711, Fénelon appeared weary of the war, of which he so much disapproved, as he wrote:

Pour moi, je veux quitter ces terres cruelles où la guerre ravage l'honneur de nos champs; je veux aller habiter quelque île écartée, où l'âge d'or soit conservé; il ne faut voir ni des maux qui excitent la compassion, ni des prospérités qui irritent l'envie (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 27).

On August 2, 1712, he again wrote to Destouches saying:

Je ne désire point un siège, car je suis un prêtre pacifique et ennemi de l'effusion du sang; mais je désire une occasion de vous embrasser. Venez donc voir vos bombes, et nous, par occasion. Votre santé m'alarme toujours; les fatigues de la guerre, et plus encore celles de la table sont terribles pour vous.

Je commencerois à goûter ici le repos et la liberté que je désirois. . . . Mais . . . le bruit des caissons nous étourdit nuit et jour. Je crains qu'avant de finir cette guerre on ne fasse casser bien des têtes; j'aurois grand regret à celles qui sont bien faites; le nombre n'en est pas fort grand (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 62-63).

In the letter of November 28, 1711, one topic mentioned was the speech of La Motte upon his reception into the French Academy. Fénelon, who did not especially admire the poetry of La Motte, wrote:

La harangue de M. de La Motte est fort belle; mais j'aime encore mieux ses odes (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 38).

In an earlier paragraph of this same letter, Fénelon discussed a question posed by Destouches as to why a person would get married. He wrote:

A quel propose demandez-vous pourquoi on se marie? Tout homme est Pâris qui ne peut souffrir son bonheur; le genre humain languit dans le repos et dans la liberté; il s'ennuie de se bien porter, et veut un peu de fièvre chaude. L'homme dont vous parlez étoit heureux par sa douceur et par les commodités de son état; mais ce qu'il trouve est très-avantageux dans le genre de bonheur que vous ne lui enviez pas. . . (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 37-38).

Fénelon then chided Destouches as he continued:

. . . ne serez-vous point Pâris à votre tour? O que vous seriez un plaisant objet avec une femme à votre côté, qui vous dominerait!
. . . J'en rirois bien (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 38).

On August 20, 1712, Fénelon wrote to Destouches concerning a letter which he had received from a military official. He gave a graphic description of the penmanship of the officer in these words:

Notre maréchal (de Villars) m'a écrit une belle lettre, que j'ai été sur le point de lui renvoyer, pour me la faire mettre au net par M. de Flauteral. Son écriture seroit à étudier pour en faire un chiffre. Il dicte éloquemment, mais il griffonne des caractères semblable aux hiéroglyphes de l'ancienne Egypte (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 65).

The letters of Fénelon to Destouches have been rated as among the most charming and the most interesting of his correspondence. They show Fénelon's amiable and winning qualities which command admiration, love, and respect. Whether expressing tender friendship, love of religion, love of country, or other sentiments, these letters, written with so much abandon and so much simplicity, are able to inspire the most noble feelings (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, introduction, ix).

Correspondence relating to spiritual guidance. During his exile at Cambrai, Fénelon was out of personal contact with many of his old

friends and many of his fellow-churchmen. He kept in touch through his correspondence, which today comprises several volumes of formal letters in which he discussed matters pertaining to the church and its duties as well as letters in which he sought to combat the enemies of religion, libertinism, and heresy.⁹⁸ He wrote much against the Jansenists. Other writings of this period include sermons and several additions to his Dialogues des morts. Sometime between 1706 and 1712, Fénelon composed his Traité de l'existence de Dieu in which his purpose was to prove the existence of God by citing the marvels of nature.⁹⁹

There are also volumes of less formal letters in which Fénelon gave spiritual counsel or expressed his religious sentiments to old friends, whose acquaintances dated from his days at court and even earlier, or to those who had come to respect him through his reputation and had written asking for advice. He based his replies on the Bible, on the classics, and on the writings of the church fathers to which he added his own experience in trying to live a Christian life in which there was a complete obedience to God and a complete renunciation of self.¹⁰⁰ Bausset¹⁰¹ says that there are few situations in life that are not discussed in the maxims and rules of conduct presented in the Lettres spirituelles of Fénelon. These simple letters, which he wrote

⁹⁸Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'Œuvre, op. cit., p. 115.

⁹⁹Lanson, op. cit., p. 615.

¹⁰⁰Fénelon, Œuvres spirituelles, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

¹⁰¹Bausset, op. cit., II, 290.

with confidence and abandon, for a particular person, and for the needs of the moment, constitute a course in religion and in behavior. Many of these letters have been compiled and translated into several languages to be used as inspirational reading.

Fénelon recommended both formal and personal prayers that are inspired by reading the Scriptures and by meditation. On April 15, 1700, he wrote thus to one who had asked his advice on prayer:

Pour l'oraison, faites-la non-seulement dans les temps réglés, mais encore au-delà, et dans les intervalles de vos occupations, autant que vous en aurez la facilité et l'attrait; Suivez la pente de votre coeur pour vous nourrir d'une présence amoureuse de Dieu, des personnes de la sainte Trinité et de l'humanité de Jésus-Christ. . . . Après leur avoir parlé de l'abondance du coeur, écoutez-les intérieurement, en faisant taire votre esprit délicat et inquiet. . . . La facilité avec laquelle vous faites oraison marque que Dieu vous aime beaucoup; car sans une grâce bien forte, votre naturel scrupuleux vous donneroit de grandes inquiétudes pendant que vous voudriez penser à Dieu (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 308-09).

In 1710, Fénelon wrote to a Carmelite nun, Sister Charlotte of Saint-Cyprien, thus:

Craignez votre esprit, et celui de ceux qui en ont; ne jugez de personne par là. Dieu, seul bon juge, en juge bien autrement; il ne s'accommode que des enfans et des petits pauvres d'esprit. Ne lisez rien par curiosité, ni pour former aucune décision dans votre tête sur aucune de vos lectures: lisez pour vous nourrir intérieurement dans un esprit de docilité et de dépendance sans réserve. Communiquez-vous peu, et ne le faites jamais que pour obéir à vos supérieurs. . . . Il faut s'oublier, pour retrancher les attentions de l'amour-propre, et non pour négliger la vigilance qui est essentielle au véritable amour de Dieu. . . . Les maux qu'on souffre ne sont-ils pas eux-mêmes des pénitences continuelles, que Dieu nous a choisies, et qu'il choisit infiniment mieux que nous ne les choisirions? Que voulons-nous, sinon l'abattement de la chair et la soumission de l'esprit à Dieu? (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 16-19, passim)

Fénelon's further advice to this nun concerned the proper spirit of prayer. He wrote:

La prière ôte l'enflure de coeur, que la science et la dispute donnent. Si les hommes vouloient prier avec amour et humilité, tous les coeurs seroient bientôt réunis; les nouveautés disparaîtroient, et l'Eglise seroit en paix (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 18).

He recommended the Holy Scriptures and listed religious works as proper material for reading and meditation. In prescribing rules for religious study and the good results to be gained by it, Fénelon wrote:

Les premiers jours, contentez-vous d'un quart d'heure à cette méditation, en cas que vous vous y trouviez sec et ennuyé; mais, si vous pouvez sans peine y nourrir votre coeur, allez jusqu'à la demi-heure, pourvu que votre tête n'en soit pas fatiguée. Généralement parlant, il vaut mieux en faire moins d'abord, et s'y accoutumer peu à peu.

Vous pourrez en faire de même un autre quart d'heure le soir, et vous verrez qu'avec le temps cet autre quart d'heure ira peu à peu jusqu'à la demi-heure entière. . . . Vous finirez par une disposition d'abandon à Dieu sur les choses considérées, et par des actions de grâces sur les bons mouvemens reçus.

Pour votre lecture spirituelle, qui doit être réglée, je crois que vous devez la faire tout au moins pendant un gros quart d'heure, mais fort lentement. Lisez toujours pour vous, c'est-à-dire ne vous contentez pas de croire et de goûter les vérités que vous lisez; mais appliquez-les à vos besoins. . . . Tâchez ainsi non-seulement de goûter pour le plaisir, mais de manger et de digérer le pain sacré pour votre nourriture. Il faut même le mâcher long-temps pour le bien digérer. . . . Quand la lecture se fait bien, elle devient insensiblement une demi-méditation. . . (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 54-55).

Fénelon placed much emphasis on the importance of waiting patiently with an open heart and mind after prayer so that God could speak to the one who had petitioned Him and reveal His will to him.

Some of Fénelon's advice took a more practical turn. In one letter he counseled on the matter of conduct toward servants. He said:

Parlez-leur, non-seulement pour leur donner vos ordres, mais encore pour trois autres choses: (1) pour entrer avec affection dans

leurs affaires; (2) pour les avertir de leurs défauts tranquillement; (3) pour leur dire ce qu'ils ont bien fait. . . . Il faut les encourager par une modeste, mais cordiale louange. Quelques défauts qu'ait un domestique, tant que vous le gardez à votre service, il faut le bien traiter. S'il est même d'un certain rang entre les autres, il faut que les autres voient que vous lui parlez avec considération: autrement vous le dégraderiez parmi les autres; vous le rendriez inutile dans sa fonction; vous lui donneriez des chagrins horribles, et il sortiroit peut-être enfin de chez vous, semant partout ses plaintes (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 276).

He then added that one should never owe anything to a servant, for in this way the master himself became the servant.

In the choice of friends, Fénelon thought one should search for Christian friends. He stated that one should be directed by God in this matter and that His will not ours should be done. He expressed himself thus in one of his Lettres spirituelles:

O qu'on est près les uns des autres, quand on est intimement réuni dans le sein de Dieu! O qu'on se parle bien, quand on n'a plus qu'une seule volonté et qu'une seule pensée en celui qui est toutes choses en tous! Voulez-vous donc trouver vos vrais amis? ne les cherchez qu'en celui qui fait les pures et éternelles amitiés. Voulez-vous leur parler et les écouter? demeurez en silence dans le sein de celui qui est la parole, la vie et l'âme de tous ceux qui disent la vérité et qui vivent véritablement. Vous trouverez en lui . . . tout ce qui n'est que très-imparfaitement dans les créatures en qui vous vous confiez (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 127).

He advised that love of God can give a mental repose and a detachment from the world as opposed to friendships which often divide the heart by exciting the senses and the imagination. One should spend less time with companions and reserve affection for God (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 135).

Fénelon considered suffering and illness a natural penitence. He felt that God sometimes weakens the body to strengthen the spirit and

that the afflicted should humbly and patiently pray that God would heal the soul as he was healing the body (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 100-01). There is a purpose, he explained, for the sadness that comes into the life of an individual. In another of his letters he wrote thus concerning this subject:

C'est parmi les douleurs que s'accomplit le grand mystère du christianisme, c'est-à-dire le crucifiement intérieur de l'homme. C'est là que se développe toute la vertu de la grâce, et que se fait son opération la plus intime, qui est celle qui nous apprend à nous arracher à nous-mêmes: sans cela, l'amour de Dieu n'est point en nous. Il faut sortir de nous-mêmes pour être capable de nous donner à Dieu. Afin que nous soyons contraints de sortir de nous-mêmes, il faut qu'une plaie profonde de notre coeur fasse que tout le créé se tourne pour nous en amertume (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 279).

Fénelon's letters of counsel constitute a series of consultations against the maladies of the soul.¹⁰²

Many of Fénelon's letters of instruction were directed to members of the nobility, such as the Comtesse de Gramont, whom Fénelon had met in Paris where she was serving in the court of Queen Marie-Thérèse. Until her death in 1708, Fénelon composed a series of letters giving her encouragement and advice (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXV, 284-343). Other letters were addressed to the Duc de Montfort, oldest son of the Duc de Chevreuse; the Duc de Chaulnes; and the Duchesse de Montemart, sister-in-law of the Duc de Beauvilliers and the Duc de Chevreuse. Another series of letters went to the Comtesse de Montberon, wife of the governor of Cambrai, whom he advised during the years after 1700, by

¹⁰²Petit de Julleville, op. cit., p. 490-91.

letter and in conferences, on a variety of subjects ranging from her spiritual faults to matters of dress (OEuvres choisies, pp. 424-52; Pages choisies, pp. 282-338, passim).

Educational correspondence. Fénelon's interest as an educator continued at Cambrai. Realizing the advantages of the right kind of moral education for the youth of his day and wishing to prepare workers for the Church, he founded a seminary at Cambrai based on the principles of Saint-Sulpice. Because of his reputation, he continued to receive a significant number of letters from earnest parents requesting counsel concerning the education of their children. His reply to one such request was directed, in 1714, to a mother concerning the education of her daughter (OEuvres choisies, pp. 583-91). This mother, a lady of quality, was uncertain as to whether or not she should place her only daughter in a convent for instruction. Fénelon told her that if she had several daughters, this might be a good idea, but since there was only one and since she was a Christian mother who loved God, he advised her to train her daughter at home. He explained:

Les yeux d'une mère sage, tendre et chrétienne découvrent sans doute ce que d'autres ne peuvent découvrir. Comme ces qualités sont très rares, le plus sûr parti pour les mères est de confier aux couvents le soin d'élever leurs filles, parce que souvent elles manquent des lumières nécessaires pour les instruire, ou, si elles les ont, elles ne les fortifient pas par l'exemple d'une conduite sérieuse et chrétienne, sans lequel les instructions les plus solides ne font aucune impression; car tout ce qu'une mère peut dire à sa fille est anéanti par ce que sa fille lui voit faire. Il n'en est pas de même de vous, madame. Vous ne songez qu'à servir Dieu; la religion est le premier de vos soins, et vous n'inspirerez à Mademoiselle votre fille que ce qu'elle vous verra pratiquer. . . (OEuvres choisies, p. 583).

Fénelon then evaluated convent schools and stated that poorly regulated convents often did more harm than good. He also spoke of the false ideas that could result from isolation in such an institution. He wrote:

Le monde n'éblouit jamais tant que quand on le voit de loin sans l'avoir jamais vu de près, et sans être prévenu contre sa séduction. . . . Une fille qui n'a été détachée du monde qu'à force de l'ignorer, et en qui la vertu n'a pas encore jeté de profondes racines, est bientôt tentée de croire qu'on lui a caché ce qu'il y a de plus merveilleux. . . . Rien n'est plus éblouissant que ce passage imprévu et que cet éclat auquel on n'a jamais été accoutumé. Il vaut beaucoup mieux qu'une fille s'accoutume peu à peu au monde auprès d'une mère pieuse et discrète, qui ne lui en montre que ce qu'il lui convient d'en voir, qui lui découvre les défauts dans les occasions, et qui lui donne l'exemple de n'en user qu'avec modération pour le seul besoin (OEuvres choisies, p. 584).

Fénelon concluded his discussion on this point by stating that he valued the education given in good convents, but he valued even more one that was given by a good mother.

Since this lady would most likely be involved in activities that would require her to be away from her child from time to time, Fénelon discussed next the matter of women who might be hired to keep the child.

He wrote:

Si vous la laissez à des femmes d'un esprit léger, mal réglé et indiscret, elles lui feront plus de mal en huit jours que vous ne pourriez lui faire de bien en plusieurs années. . . . Elle verra des jalousies, des inimitiés, des humeurs bizarres et incompatibles, et quelquefois des dévotions ou fausses ou superstitieuses et de travers, sans aucune correction des plus grossiers défauts. D'ailleurs, ces personnes d'un esprit servile ne manqueront pas de vouloir plaire à cette enfant par les complaisances et par les flatteries les plus dangereuses (OEuvres choisies, p. 585).

Fénelon felt that the education in even a poor convent would be superior to leaving the child with ignorant servants.

At this point Fénelon expressed his opinion on some of the traits of women in general. He described them thus:

Les femmes sont d'ordinaire encore plus passionnées pour la parure de l'esprit que pour celle du corps. Celles qui sont capables d'étude, et qui espèrent de se distinguer par là, ont encore plus d'empressement pour leurs livres que pour leurs ajustements. Elles cachent un peu leur science; mais elles ne la cachent qu'à demi, pour avoir le mérite de la modestie avec celui de la capacité. . . . Mais une femme curieuse et qui se pique de savoir beaucoup se flatte d'être un génie supérieur dans son sexe, elle se sait bon gré de mépriser les amusements et les vanités des autres femmes. . . . Elle ne peut d'ordinaire rien savoir qu'à demi; elle est plus éblouie qu'éclairée par ce qu'elle sait; . . . elle se passionne pour un parti contre un autre dans toutes les disputes qui la surpassent, même en matière de religion. De là vient que toutes les sectes naissantes ont eu tant de progrès par des femmes qui les ont insinuées et soutenues (OEuvres choisies, p. 586).

When he made this last statement, Fénelon could have been thinking of Jansenism which was supported by a number of high-born ladies at Port-Royal, or even the Quietism of Mme Guyon.¹⁰³

Moving to more concrete issues, Fénelon called for a reasonable simplicity. His advice continued in these words:

Il suffit qu'elle sache assez bien la religion pour la croire et pour la suivre exactement dans la pratique, sans se permettre jamais d'en raisonner. . . . Elle doit avoir horreur de lire les livres défendus, sans vouloir examiner ce qui les fait défendre. . . . Occupez-la d'un ouvrage de tapisserie qui sera utile dans votre maison et qui l'accoutumera à se passer du commerce dangereux du monde. . . . Tout est perdu, si elle s'entête du belle esprit et si elle se dégoûte des soins domestiques (OEuvres choisies, pp. 586-87).

To Fénelon a virtuous woman knew how to do needlework, stayed at home, kept quiet, believed and obeyed, and did not argue on matters of religion. He spoke against the vanity of women and advised against extremes in dress and in furniture. He spoke out against luxury which corrupts and offered an alternative in these words:

¹⁰³Barnard, op. cit., note, p. 139.

. . . accoutumez-la à considérer avec compassion les misères affreuses des pauvres, et à sentir combien il est indigne de l'humanité que certains hommes qui ont tout ne se donnent aucune borne dans l'usage du superflu, pendant qu'ils refusent cruellement le nécessaire aux autres (OEuvres choisies, p. 588).

Fénelon seemed never to miss an opportunity to condemn luxury. Here, too, he showed his constant concern for the poor.

In the matter of diversions for young girls, Fénelon advised against a severity that would turn them away from religion. He felt a young lady could be allowed innocent pleasures and that she should be given freedom little by little so that she could develop judgment. The most essential thing was never to tolerate any immodesty. A daughter should be taught to love and to enjoy God. She should learn to talk with God in prayer as if she were talking to a friend. He ended his letter with this statement:

Si vous mettez dans le coeur de Mademoiselle votre fille cette piété simple et nourrie par le fonds, elle fera de grands progrès (OEuvres choisies, p. 591).

In all of Fénelon's advice in this matter he showed himself to be of much the same opinion as when he had written his Traité sur l'éducation des filles about thirty years prior.¹⁰⁴

From Cambrai, Fénelon continued his interest in the education of the Duc de Bourgogne; however, the letters of this era to the Duc de Chevreuse and the Duc de Beauvilliers show a heavy emphasis on the moral and the spiritual rather than the mental aspects of the young Duke's instruction. Fénelon wrote to the latter on November 30, 1699, thus:

¹⁰⁴cf. ante, p. 28.

J'aime toujours M. le duc de Bourgogne, nonobstant ses défauts les plus choquants. Je vous conjure de ne vous relâcher jamais dans votre amitié pour lui; que ce soit une amitié crucifiante et de pure foi: c'est à vous à l'enfanter avec douleur, jusqu'à ce que Jésus-Christ soit formé en lui. Supportez-le sans le flatter; avertissez-le sans le fatiguer, et bornez-vous aux occasions et aux ouvertures de providence, auxquelles il faut être fidèle; dites-lui les vérités qu'on voudra que vous lui disiez, mais dites-les lui courtement, doucement, avec respect et avec tendresse. C'est une providence, que son coeur ne se tourne point vers ceux qui auraient tâché d'y trouver de quoi vous perdre. Qu'il ne vous échappe pas, au nom de Dieu. S'il faisait quelque grande faute, qu'il sente d'abord en vous un coeur ouvert, comme un port dans le naufrage (OEuvres choisies, p. 417).

Another letter, written to the Duc de Beauvilliers in 1711, said:

Je voudrois que le P. Martineau fît, dans des conversations avec le prince, un plan de la doctrine de l'Eglise sur la grâce, et une explication claire et précise de celle qui lui est opposée. Il est essentiel de bien poser ce fondement. . . .

Vous pourriez aussi faire expliquer au prince, par le P. Martineau, les autres endroits où le prince auroit besoin d'être mis au fait. En général, il est essentiel qu'il sache nettement cette matière, afin qu'il soit à l'épreuve de toute séduction et de toute surprise (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 238-39).

Fénelon was able to correspond with his former pupil, but all communications had to be through secret channels since the King had forbidden any contact between the two. In his letter of December 22, 1701, after four years of silence because of the Archbishop's exile, the Duc de Bourgogne wrote Fénelon as follows:

J'ai souffert bien des maux depuis; mais un des plus grands a été celui de ne pouvoir point vous témoigner ce que je sentoie pour vous pendant ce temps, et que mon amitié augmentoit par vos malheurs, au lieu d'en être refroidie. Je pense avec un vrai plaisir au temps où je pourrai vous revoir; mais je crains que ce temps ne soit encore bien loin. Il faut s'en remettre à la volonté de Dieu, de la miséricorde duquel je reçois toujours de nouvelles grâces. Je lui (Dieu) ai été plusieurs fois bien infidèle depuis que je ne vous ai vu; mais il m'a fait toujours la grâce de me rappeler à lui, et je n'ai, Dieu merci, point été sourd à sa voix. Depuis quelque temps il me paroît que je me soutiens mieux dans le chemin de la vertu.

Demandez-lui la grâce de me confirmer dans mes bonnes résolutions, et de ne pas permettre que je redeviensse son ennemi; mais de m'enseigner lui-même à suivre en tout sa sainte volonté. . . . Je ne vous dirai point ici combien je suis révolté moi-même contre tout ce qu'on a fait à votre égard; mais il faut se soumettre à la volonté de Dieu, et croire que tout cela est arrivé pour notre bien. . . (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 14-15).

Fénelon himself could not have expressed these ideas of submission to God's will more sincerely.

Correspondence concerning political ideas. In Fénelon's letters from Cambrai, he did not attempt to impose theological doctrines upon the Duke. He attempted to represent to a prince, already entered into active life, that the love of God is compatible with the duties of the State and that in this love one finds a true source of confidence and energy.¹⁰⁵ In his letter of January 17, 1702, he wished to reassure the Duke in his spiritual life and to show him how to come into a closer relationship with God, especially through prayer. He wrote:

Ne vous découragez point de vos foiblesses. Il y a une manière de les supporter sans les flatter, et de les corriger sans impatience. Dieu vous la fera trouver cette manière. . . .

Au nom de Dieu, que l'oraison nourrisse votre coeur, comme les repas nourrissent votre corps. . . . Faites cette oraison plus du coeur que de l'esprit, moins par raisonnement que par simple affection; peu de considérations arrangées, beaucoup de foi et d'amour.

Il faut lire aussi, mais des choses qui vous puissent recueillir, fortifier, et familiariser avec Dieu. . . . Ne craignez point de fréquenter les sacremens selon votre besoin et votre attrait. . . .

¹⁰⁵Ely Carcassonne, Etat présent des travaux sur Fénelon, Société des professeurs français en Amérique, Études françaises, Quarante et unième cahier (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1939), p. 66.

Ce qui me donne de merveilleuses expérances, c'est que je vois par votre lettre que vous sentez vos foiblesses, et que vous les reconnoissez humblement. . . . Craignez, mille fois plus que la mort, de tomber. Mais si vous tombiez malheureusement, hâtez-vous de retourner au père des miséricordes et au Dieu de toute consolation, qui vous tendra les bras; et ouvrez votre coeur blessé à ceux qui pourront vous guérir. Surtout soyez humble et petit. . . . Je donnerois mille vies comme une gotte d'eau, pour vous voir tel que Dieu vous veut (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 16-17).

In other letters, Fénelon urged the Duc de Bourgogne to imitate the virtues of his ancestor, the good king Saint Louis (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 23-25, 57).

Fénelon was also much concerned about the Duke's activities during the war in Flanders and the public criticism of his military ability and performance.¹⁰⁶ He told the Duke in several letters written during the month of September, 1708, that there were benefits to be gained in adversity. He wrote:

En vérité, monseigneur, il est bien plus important au vrai bien des princes et de leur peuples, que les princes acquièrent une telle expérience, que de les voir toujours victorieux. . . .

Le véritable honneur des princes ne dépend que de leur vertu. Ils ne peuvent être qu'admirés, s'ils se montrent bons, sages, courageux, patients. Leur adversité leur donne un lustre qui manque à la prospérité la plus éclatante. . . . La plus grande de toutes les victoires est celle d'une sagesse et d'un courage qui est victorieux de malheur même (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 56-57).

In a second letter Fénelon itemized the points on which the public was dissatisfied, including (1) that the prince confined his associations to only a few people, (2) that he was accepting advice from those lacking in experience, (3) that he did not assume authority as he should

¹⁰⁶Barnard, op. cit., p. xlii.

and did not reprimand those who needed it, (4) that he was indecisive, (5) that he wasted time with trifles, (6) that his deliberations were not secret enough, and (7) that he was uninformed on the position of the enemy and took no steps to acquire this information. Fénelon advised on each point as he named it and then summarized the situation in his last paragraph thus:

If faut néanmoins, monseigneur, vous dire que le public vous estime, vous respecte, attend de grands biens de vous, et sera ravi qu'on lui montre que vous n'avez aucun tort. Il croit seulement que vous avez une dévotion sombre, timide, scrupuleuse, et qui n'est pas assez proportionnée à votre place; que vous ne savez pas assez prendre une certaine autorité modérée, mais décisive, sans blesser la soumission inviolable que vous devez aux intentions du roi. . . . Mais, supposé même qu'ils soient tels qu'on les raconte, il n'y a qu'un seul usage que vous en deviez faire: c'est celui de voir humblement vos défauts, de ne vous en point décourager, et de recourir à Dieu avec confiance pour travailler à leur correction. . . . Qui est-ce qui est parfait à vingt-six ans pour le très-difficile métier de la guerre, quand on ne l'a jamais fait de suite? . . . Il faut vous faire tout à tous pour les gagner tous; aller tout droit à l'extirpation de vos principaux défauts par amour de Dieu, et par renoncement à l'amour propre; chercher au dehors le bien public, autant que vous le pourrez, et retrancher les scrupules sur des choses qui paroissent des minuties. . . . (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 67-68).

Fénelon came from a family of soldiers and understood the problems faced by the military. He found a place for both the military and the spiritual in his advice.¹⁰⁷ In this letter he reasons logically with the Duke as he discusses military and moral virtues.

Among the guests whom Fénelon entertained at Cambrai were a future cardinal, Le Père; the Maréchal de Munch, Quirini; the Archevêque-électeur de Cologne, Maximilien-Joseph of Bavaria; and the Chevalier de

¹⁰⁷De la Bedoyere, op. cit., p. 238.

Ramsey, a Scotchman whom Fénelon converted to Catholicism and who became an ardent disciple and a biographer of the Archevêque de Cambrai. Fénelon was also host to the pretender to the throne of England, James III, who came to Cambrai for moral and political advice.¹⁰⁸ The latter, who was in exile in France and who had served admirably in the French army, was the subject of Fénelon's letter to the Duc de Bourgogne on November 15, 1709. Fénelon expressed his high opinion of James III and cited his good qualities. In the letter were the following statements:

Il paroît sensé, doux, égal en tout. Il paroît entendre bien les vérités qu'on lui dit. On voit en lui le goût de la vertu, et des principes de religion sur lesquels il veut régler sa conduite. Il se possède, et il agit tranquillement comme un homme sans humeur, sans fantaisie, sans inégalité, sans imagination dominante. . . . Il se donne aux hommes par devoir, et est plein d'égards pour chacun d'eux. On ne le voit ni las de s'assujétir, ni impatient de se débarrasser pour être seul et tout à soi, ni distrait, ni renfermé en soi-même au milieu du public. . . . Il montre la gaîté douce et modérée d'un homme mûr. . . . En un mot, le roi d'Angleterre se prête et s'accommode aux hommes; il a une raison et une vertu toute d'usage; sa fermeté, son égalité, sa manière de se posséder et de ménager les autres, son sérieux doux et complaisant, sa gaîté, sans aucun jeu qui descende trop bas, préviennent tout le public en sa faveur (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 105-06).

Fénelon's observations set down in this letter take on an added meaning when it is noted that the virtues of James III listed here were some of the same qualities which Fénelon had cited in earlier letters as lacking in the Duc de Bourgogne.¹⁰⁹

Fénelon wrote two important works on government during his exile at Cambrai. Both were designed for the instruction of the Duc de

¹⁰⁸ Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'Œuvre, op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁰⁹ cf. ante, pp. 67-68.

Bourgogne. In the Examen de conscience sur les devoirs de la royauté, written about 1702, he attempted to instruct the Duke by a series of oratorical questions concerning the actions and mistakes of Louis XIV (Lettre à Louis XIV, note, p. 78). The Tables de Chaulnes, which were prepared by Fénelon and the Duc de Beauvilliers in meetings at Chaulnes in 1711, is a series of suggested political reforms for a future heir to the throne of France. These suggestions included a restriction of royal power by establishing a constitution which would give the people a voice in the government.¹¹⁰

Fénelon also had retained an interest in the brothers of the Duc de Bourgogne and followed their careers with interest. In his letter of October 10, 1701, he sent instructions to the Duc d'Anjou, then Philip V of Spain, through the Marquis de Louville, who was serving in the Spanish court. After instructing the Marquis on his own behavior at court, Fénelon discussed the evils of flattery and illustrated his point by citing an incident from Molière's comedy, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme.

He wrote:

Les malhonnêtes gens ne louent un prince que pour en tirer quelque bienfait. C'est l'ambition qui se joue de la vanité, et qui la flatte pour la mener à ses fins. C'est le tailleur qui appelle M. Jourdain monseigneur, pour lui attraper un écu (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 388).

Fénelon then described a kingdom that was well governed as follows:

Un royaume est bien gouverné, quand on travaille sans relâche, autant qu'on le peut, à ces choses: (1) à le peupler; (2) à faire

¹¹⁰Sir Paul Harvey and J. E. Heseltine, The Oxford Companion to French Literature (Oxford: Oxford at Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 270.

que tous les hommes travaillent selon leurs forces pour bien cultiver les terres; (3) à faire que tous les hommes soient bien nourris, pourvu qu'ils travaillent; (4) à ne souffrir ni fainéants ni vagabonds; (5) à récompenser le mérite; (6) à punir tous les désordres; (7) à tenir tous les corps et tous les particuliers, quelque puissans qu'ils soient, dans la subordination; (8) à modérer l'autorité royale en sa propre personne, de façon que le roi ne fasse rien par hauteur, par violence, par caprice ou par foiblesse, contre les lois; (9) à ne se livrer à aucun ministre ni favori. Il faut écouter les divers conseils, les comparer, les examiner sans prévention; mais il ne faut jamais se livrer aveuglément, en aucun genre à aucun homme: c'est le gâter, s'il est bon; c'est se trahir soi-même, s'il est mauvais.

Par cette conduite, un roi fait véritablement les fonctions de roi, c'est-à-dire, de père et de pasteur des peuples (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 388-89).

After elaborating on the points listed above, Fénelon closed his letter by telling the Marquis de Louville to relay these principles to the King of Spain at a time which he judged proper and convenient.

Death of the Duc de Bourgogne. Fénelon and the Duc de Bourgogne were able to see each other briefly a few times in Cambrai before the latter's premature death. These were always happy occasions for both of them, as revealed in their correspondence before and after these meetings (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 25, 31, 51). When the Duke died on February 16, 1712, there was some suspicion of poison,¹¹¹ but it is probable that death was caused by measles.¹¹² For Fénelon, it was a killing blow because the life and death of the Duc de Bourgogne

¹¹¹Paul Janet, Fénelon (fifth edition; Paris: Librairie Hachette, n.d.), p. 190.

¹¹²Duclaux, op. cit., p. 215.

were the life and death of Fénelon.¹¹³ The loss of the Duke brought to an end all the hopes which the Archbishop had had for a political reformation in France based on moral principles. He expressed his despair to the Duc de Chevreuse in his letter of February 26, 1712, which began:

Hélas, mon bon duc, Dieu nous a ôté toute notre espérance pour l'Eglise et pour l'Etat. Il a formé ce jeune prince; il l'a orné; il l'a préparé pour les plus grands biens: il l'a montré au monde, et aussitôt il l'a détruit. Je suis saisi d'horreur, et malade de saisissement sans maladie. En pleurant le prince mort qui me déchire le coeur, je suis alarmé pour les vivants. Ma tendresse m'alarme pour vous et pour le bon (Duc de Beauvilliers). De plus, je crains pour le Roi; sa conservation est infiniment importante (OEuvres choisies, p. 517).

Thus ended one of the most important phases of Fénelon's career.

The fate of the correspondence between Fénelon and the Duc de Bourgogne was revealed in a letter from Mme de Maintenon, written on March 15, 1712, to the Duc de Beauvilliers. She was returning to the Duke all of his correspondence found in the possessions of the deceased heir to the throne. In her accompanying letter she stated that she also had wished to send to him the communications from Fénelon to his former pupil, but the King had burned them. Mme de Maintenon regretted this because she said that no one had ever written anything so beautiful nor so good. She stated further that if the Duc de Bourgogne, whom they were mourning, had had any faults, it was not because he had lacked good counsel (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 258-59). It would appear that Mme de Maintenon had not lost the high regard that she once had held for Fénelon and his ideals.

¹¹³Bausset, op. cit., III, 293.

After the death of the Duc de Bourgogne, Fénelon made his last moves to reform the government of France. Realizing that the country was left to the fate of either an old man or a child, who would require a regent, Fénelon wrote many directives urging the formation of a Conseil de Régence. He directed the Duc de Beauvilliers and the Duc de Chevreuse to forget past experiences and to enlist the help of Mme de Maintenon in this plan through which he hoped to safeguard the future of France.¹¹⁴ When the plan for the Council did not seem to be materializing, Fénelon wrote, in 1713, a series of letters to the future regent, the Duc d'Orleans. This series, entitled Lettres sur divers sujets de religion et de métaphysique, was designed to convert the future regent and instruct him in the ideals to be observed in good government.¹¹⁵

Correspondence concerning literary criticism. From time to time Fénelon wrote letters expressing his literary opinions. Most famous of these and his last significant literary contribution before his death was his letter to the French Academy. This letter, written in 1714 and addressed to Dacier, perpetual secretary of the Academy, was composed after Fénelon, along with other members of the Academy, had been requested to express his opinions on what projects this group should undertake upon the completion of their current project, the dictionary. In his reply, which he edited and revised after he learned that the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 318-33, passim.

¹¹⁵ Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'OEuvre, op. cit., p. 143.

Academy wished to publish it, Fénelon took the opportunity to express his ideas on the French language, eloquence, poetry, the theater, history, and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns. Cahen describes the Lettre à l'Académie thus:¹¹⁶

. . . il y a des réflexions sublimes, délicates, sensées, exprimées d'un tour élégant, gracieux et très capable de plaire aux lecteurs en les instruisant. . . .

Fénelon included in the first part of his letter his praise for the Academy's work on the dictionary which he recognized would become obsolete through the years because a living language is always subject to change. He stated that the dictionary, nonetheless, would be a valuable reference for contemporary Frenchmen and for foreigners wishing to be able to speak French or read French literary works as well as a reference which posterity could use as a key to understand the works of the then current era, just as the Greek and Latin dictionaries give an understanding of the works of the ancients (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 3-5, passim).

As for future projects, Fénelon suggested that the first should be a grammar. Referring to the Greeks and Romans, he said that they had not, as had the French, left their language to be learned by oral usage alone. The French practice had created language variations peculiar to each section of their country. He recommended the plan of the Greeks

¹¹⁶ François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Lettre à l'Académie, ed. Albert Cahen (Paris: Librairie Hachette, n.d.), introduction, p. xi. Hereafter, quotations from Lettre à l'Académie will be referred to in parentheses in the body of the thesis.

and Romans who had set down rules of grammar by which their language could be studied and perfected through the years. He stated:

Le grand point est de mettre une personne le plus tôt qu'on peut dans l'application sensible des règles par un fréquent usage; ensuite cette personne prend plaisir à remarquer le détail des règles qu'elle a suivies d'abord sans y prendre garde (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 7-8).

If rules were established, he said, there would be less unwarranted grammatical changes, only those necessary to make the language more perfect (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 5-8, passim).

Fénelon advocated an enrichment of the French language in order that one might express himself more accurately. He suggested that the French borrow words from other languages. He reasoned:

Les Latins ont enrichi leur langue des termes étrangers qui manquaient chez eux. . . . J'entends dire que les Anglais ne se refusent aucun des mots qui leur sont commodes: ils les prennent partout où ils les trouvent chez leurs voisins. . . . Qu'importe qu'un mot soit né dans notre pays, ou qu'il nous vienne d'un pays étranger? . . . Notre langue n'est qu'un mélange de grec, et de latin et de tudesque, avec quelques restes confus du gaulois. Puisque nous ne vivons que sur ces emprunts, qui sont devenus notre fonds propre, pourquoi aurions-nous une mauvaise honte sur la liberté d'emprunter, par laquelle nous pouvons achever de nous enrichir? Prenons de tous côtés tout ce qu'il nous faut pour rendre notre langue plus claire, plus précise, plus courte et plus harmonieuse. . . (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 14-17, passim).

Fénelon envisioned the French language as acquiring an abundant vocabulary if there were more effort exerted to introduce into the language new and useful expressions (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 8-23, passim).

Fénelon pleaded for a simple, direct, unembellished type of rhetoric. He criticized young lawyers and ministers who often used eloquence to attract attention and to gain a reputation. The most esteemed lawyers, he said, are those who state clearly the facts and follow with precision the principles of law. The most sincere ministers

seek to glorify God rather than themselves in their speech, and they are more concerned with saving souls than with preaching lofty sermons. He recommended a sincere, honest presentation that possessed the qualities of unity and order. In summing up his convictions he wrote:

Je cherche un homme sérieux, qui me parle pour moi, et non pour lui; qui veuille mon salut, et non sa vaine gloire. L'homme digne d'être écouté est celui qui ne se sert de la parole que pour la pensée, et de la pensée que pour la vérité et la vertu. . . . Au contraire, le véritable orateur n'orne son discours que de vérités lumineuses, que de sentiments nobles, que d'expressions fortes et proportionnées à ce qu'il tâche d'inspirer. Il pense, il sent, et la parole suit (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 40, 43-44, passim).

Throughout this section Fénelon cited the superiority of the Greeks and the Romans in the matter of oratory (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 23-52, passim).

Fénelon advised that the project of poetry was as important as that of rhetoric. He explained:

La poésie est plus sérieuse et plus utile que le vulgaire ne le croit (Lettre à l'Académie, p. 52).

He mentioned the poetry of antiquity and the poetry of the Bible with admiration and regretted the fact that writing poetry in French involved problems, especially in the matter of rime and the inversion of phrases. This same criticism was made in Fénelon's letter to La Motte written on January 26, 1714. La Motte undertook the project of translating Homer's works into French. Fénelon disapproved of this project and, when the poet sent his completed copy to Fénelon, the latter wrote the following:

Ma remarque tombe sur notre versification, et nullement sur votre personne. C'est que les vers de nos odes, où les rimes sont entrelacées, ont une variété, une grâce et une harmonie que nos vers

héroïques ne peuvent égaler. Ceux-ci fatiguent l'oreille par leur uniformité. Le latin a une infinité d'inversions et de cadences. Au contraire, le français n'admet presque aucune inversion de phrase: il procède toujours méthodiquement par un nominatif, par un verb et par son régime. La rime gêne plus qu'elle n'orne les vers. . . . Il faut avouer que la sévérité de nos règles a rendu notre versification presque impossible (Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXI, 229).

Fénelon compared poetry to architecture and followed with the observation that a good poet possesses many of the same qualities which he admired in a good orator. He wrote:

Je demande un poète aimable, proportionné au commun des hommes, qui fasse tout pour eux, et rien pour lui (Lettre à l'Académie, p. 69).

Fénelon expressed here, also, the idea that good poetry is a painting in words (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 52-83, passim).

In the section on the theatre, the discussion is divided into two parts: tragedy and comedy. Using the works of Corneille and Racine as examples, Fénelon criticized the fact that French tragedy excited and glorified the baser passions, and he recommended Greek tragedy which he described as being devoid of profane love. As for comedy, Fénelon felt that it represented a more informal way of life and was able, therefore, to be presented in a less severe manner than tragedy (Lettre à l'Académie, p. 98). In discussing the virtues of the Greeks and Romans in the matter of comedy, Fénelon praised Molière as surpassing them despite the fact that he sometimes wrote badly and sometimes glorified vice and ridiculed virtue. Fénelon preferred Molière's prose to his poetry (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 83-109, passim).

Fénelon's final recommendation to the Academy concerned a history. While the other projects were necessities, this, he felt, would bring

honor to the Academy. Despite the fact that there are few good historians, he rated history as extremely important because by the study of history, the present generation could avoid the mistakes of the past and come to understand how a people can pass from one form of government to another. He described a good historian as being impartial, giving only the facts, and leaving the opinions to the reader. Fénelon made the point that a good history should be organized, clear, accurate, and simple, yet interesting and pleasing. He stated:

Dès que sa lecture est finie, il (le lecteur) regarde derrière lui, comme un voyageur curieux, qui, étant arrivé sur une montagne, se tourne, et prend plaisir à considérer de ce point de vue tout le chemin qu'il a suivi et tous les beaux endroits qu'il a traversés (Lettre à l'Académie, p. 117).

History should not be a dry recitation of facts and dates, which was the case with the products of the ancient historians (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 109-17, passim).

In his letter to the Duc de Beauvilliers, written about 1695, Fénelon had recommended that the Duc de Bourgogne study the life of Charlemagne. He then evaluated the work of the medieval historian who had written the account. He said in part:¹¹⁷

Je suis très persuadé que la vie de Charlemagne pourra beaucoup nous servir pour donner à monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne les sentiments et les maximes qu'il doit avoir. . . . Les beautés de cette histoire consistent dans la grandeur des évènements et dans le merveilleux caractère du prince. On n'en saurait trouver un ni plus aimable, ni plus propre à servir de modèle dans tous les siècles. . . . Les historiens originaux de cette vie ne savent ni raconter, ni choisir les faits, ni les lier ensemble, ni montrer l'enchaînement des affaires; de façon qu'ils ne nous ont laissé que

¹¹⁷Cited in Bausset, op. cit., I, 204-05, 207.

des faits vagues dépouillés de toutes les circonstances qui peuvent frapper et intéresser le lecteur, enfin entrecoupés et pleins d'une ennuyeuse uniformité. . . . A cela quel remède? On ne peut point suppléer ce qui manque, et il vaut mieux laisser une histoire dans toute sa sécheresse, que de l'égayer aux dépens de la vérité.

In this letter, Fénelon expressed some of the same ideas concerning historical records and historians which were repeated in his Lettre à l'Académie.

All through the letter to the Academy, Fénelon expressed his opinion that the Ancients were superior to the Moderns. He concluded his letter by presenting point by point his views on this Quarrel that was very much alive at that time in France. He by no means pictured the Ancients as perfect; in fact, he felt that they were handicapped by a lack of Christian knowledge and other experiences which gave an advantage to his contemporaries. His admonition was that the Moderns should study the Ancients and through this study hope to surpass them (Lettre à l'Académie, pp. 132-62, passim).

Death of Fénelon's friends. Fénelon had lost one by one many of those people who meant the most to him. He was struck with grief at the untimely death of the Duc de Bourgogne in 1712. Just two years before he had lost his friend, the Abbé de Langeron, who had followed him into exile and resided with him at Cambrai. Soon the Duc de Chevreuse and the Duc de Beauvilliers were to be taken. The letters which he wrote upon learning of the death of his friends were some of his most tender. When the Duc de Chevreuse died on December 26, 1712, Fénelon wrote to the Duc de Beauvilliers expressing the sentiment that friendships can be a source

of both happiness and sadness. Fénelon knew this by experience. He wrote:¹¹⁸

Les vrais amis font notre plus grande douleur et notre plus grande amertume. On serait tenté de désirer que tous les bons amis s'attendissent pour mourir ensemble le même jour.

He expressed this sentiment again in a letter to his nephew on April 17, 1713, in these words:¹¹⁹

Les bons amis sont une ressource dangereuse dans la vie; en les perdant on perd trop. Je crains la douceur de l'amitié. Oh! que nous serons heureux si nous sommes un jour tous ensemble au ciel devant Dieu, ne nous aimant que de son seul amour, ne nous réjouissant plus que de sa seule joie, et ne pouvant plus nous séparer les uns des autres.

His letter of sympathy to the widow of the Duc de Beauvilliers, written on November 16, 1714, read:

Ce que vous me faites espérer, madame, est une des plus grandes consolations que je puisse ressentir dans tout le reste de ma vie. En attendant, je prie Dieu tous les jours qu'il vous console. Il y a une consolation que notre coeur ne veut point, et c'est avec raison; elle est vaine et indigne de l'esprit de grâce. Mais il y a une autre consolation qui vient de Dieu seul. Il apaise la nature désolée; il fait sentir qu'on n'a rien perdu, et qu'on retrouve en lui tout ce qu'on semble perdre; il nous le rend présent par la foi et par l'amour; il nous montre que nous suivons de près ceux qui nous précèdent; il essuie nos larmes de sa propre main. . . . Ayez soin de votre santé; elle doit être bien altérée: vous avez horriblement souffert (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIII, 272-73).

It would not be long before Fénelon himself would join his friends in death.

¹¹⁸Ibid., III, 440.

¹¹⁹Ibid., II, 374-75.

Death of Fénelon. Fénelon's letters show that he passed many busy years with his official duties at Cambrai (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 118-227, passim). He applied the same zeal in the administration of his diocese that he did in giving Christian instruction to his inhabitants. On November 26, 1714, he wrote to his nephew, the Abbé de Beaumont, as follows:¹²⁰

J'ai de quoi me tuer par les confirmations innombrables et par les visites continuelles des paroisses de mon diocèse.

It is known that he made regular visits in his diocese even during the war, at which times he refused a military escort.¹²¹ It was on one of these journeys that he had an accident. He described his experience in a letter to Destouches written on November 22, 1714. Fénelon wrote:

Une assez longue absence a retardé les réponses que je vous dois. Il est vrai, cher homme, que j'ai été dans le plus grand danger de périr; je suis encore à comprendre comment je me suis sauvé; jamais on ne fut plus heureux en perdant trois chevaux. Tous mes gens me criaient: Tout est perdu, sauvez-vous! je ne les entendois point, les glaces étoient levées. Je lisois un livre, ayant mes lunettes sur le nez, mon crayon en main, et mes jambes dans un sac de peau d'ours; tel à peu près étoit Archimède quand il périt à la prise de Syracuse. La comparaison est vaine, mais l'accident étoit affreux. Je vais être poltron sur les ponts auprès des moulins. Vous remarquerez, s'il vous plaît, que la roue de moulin qui touchoit un des bords du pont sans garde-fou, commença tout à coup à tourner dans le moment où nous passions; un des chevaux du timon eut peur mal à propos, et nous jeta du côté où il avoit grand tort de se précipiter; en périssant il me sauva: car il arrêta le timon dans un trou du pont, qui empêcha ma chute (Œuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXVIII, 114).

Fénelon never fully recovered from this accident. On January 5, 1715, his grandnephew brought word to Paris that Fénelon was gravely ill with a fever. Within an hour the Duc d'Orleans dispatched his doctor, Chirac,

¹²⁰ Ibid., III, 433.

¹²¹ Ibid., II, 257-58.

to Fénelon's bedside. However, less than forty-eight hours later, Fénelon was dead.¹²²

On January 6, Fénelon had dictated a letter to P. Le Tellier, the Confessor of the King. This, his last bit of correspondence, read:

Je viens de recevoir l'extrême-onction: c'est dans cet état, mon révérend père, où je me prépare à aller paroître devant Dieu, que je vous supplie instamment de représenter au roi mes véritables sentimens. Je n'ai jamais eu que docilité pour l'Eglise, et qu'horreur des nouveautés qu'on m'a imputées. J'ai reçu la condamnation de mon livre avec la simplicité la plus absolue. Je n'ai jamais été un seul moment en ma vie sans avoir pour la personne du roi la plus vive reconnoissance et le zèle le plus ingénu, le plus profond respect et l'attachement le plus inviolable. Je prends la liberté de demander à sa majesté deux grâces, qui ne regardent ni ma personne ni aucun des miens. La première est qu'il ait la bonté de me donner un successeur pieux, régulier, bon et ferme contre le jansénisme, lequel est prodigieusement accrédité sur cette frontière. L'autre grâce est qu'il ait la bonté d'achever avec mon successeur ce qui n'a pu être achevé avec moi pour messieurs de Saint-Sulpice. Je dois à sa majesté le secours que je reçois d'eux. On ne peut rien voir de plus apostolique et de plus vénérable. Si sa majesté veut bien faire entendre à mon successeur qu'il vaut mieux qu'il conclue avec ces messieurs ce qui est déjà si avancé, la chose sera bientôt finie. Je souhaite à sa majesté une longue vie, dont l'Eglise aussi bien que l'état ont infiniment besoin. Si je puis aller voir Dieu, je lui demanderai souvent ces grâces. Vous savez, mon révérend père, avec quelle vénération je suis, etc. (OEuvres complètes de Fénelon, XXIV, 586-87).

Fénelon's dying wish was that his seminary at Cambrai might be put under the authority of the directors of the seminary at Saint-Sulpice.

Fénelon died with no great earthly fortune, but without debts.

The Abbé de Beaumont took care of his uncle's possessions and continued all of his alms and pensions until a new Archbishop was installed in the diocese of Cambrai.¹²³ Many of Fénelon's dreams were unrealized,

¹²²Albert Cherel, Fénelon ou la religion du pur amour (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1934), pp. 264-65.

¹²³Duclaux, op. cit., p. 229.

but he held no apparent malice for anyone--only hopes for a better future for his church and his country. His final prayer contained the words which had been the sentiment of his whole life--"Votre volonté soit faite et non la mienne."¹²³

¹²⁴Carcassonne, Fénelon, l'Homme et l'Œuvre, op. cit., p. 154.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The numerous letters of Fénelon can well be called his masterpiece. It is in his correspondence that Fénelon is best revealed: the priest at work in his diocese, the spiritual adviser, the reformer of government, the defender of religion. Fénelon loved his family, his friends, his king, but most of all he loved God. From the days of his youth in the seminary until the day before his death, he was writing letters which recorded each event of his life. These letters show his diverse interests and knowledge, his diverse character and talents. In them are expressed the variety of his sentiments: happiness and sadness, gaiety and solemnity, hope and regret. He shows joy in success; and he exhibits courage, but not despair, in adversity.

Fénelon's letters in every period of his life show that he enjoyed people, that he was hospitable, and that he was generous to the poor. He was just as interested in the people of Flanders in his later life as he had been in the people of Carennac as a young priest. Although he described his own nature as being so complex that he did not understand it himself, he possessed traits of personality which drew people to him. There were few who knew him who did not love him. In his letters he shows himself to be a man of courtly manners with a fervent desire to be affable, to be impartial, to be humble, and to be completely submissive to God's will. He never purposed to offend by writing harsh words, but this did not prevent him from writing frankly, be it to

his closest relative or to the King. His talent for pointing out an individual's faults, in kindness and sincerity, and his manner of persuasion often deepened rather than destroyed his relationship with his friends. In fact, he was frequently requested to write the personal criticisms which he formulated with honesty and veracity. Fénelon so endeared himself to his associates at court that, after his exile to Cambrai, when his piety seemed to become even more profound, his friends at Versailles would gather to talk of him and were willing to risk the disfavor of the King in order to communicate with him. Although they were written for individuals and for particular occasions, Fénelon's letters of moral direction remove all idea of time, place, or person; and he substitutes the feeling that importance exists only in one's relationship to God.

Fénelon's letters are a revelation of the times in which he lived, but they show also that he was ahead of his times in some of his philosophy. He had a sincere respect for the position of the monarch of France, and he believed that the King ruled by divine right. However, Fénelon favored a type of government in which the king would be held in check by a powerful aristocracy, and he believed that a king was made for his subjects and not the subjects for the king. In an age when flattery of monarchs was the rule, Fénelon never hesitated to attack the abuses which he witnessed in the reign of Louis XIV and to recommend reforms for the evils in this government. In his correspondence with the Duc de Bourgogne, Fénelon shows that his ideal was a Christian king who would eliminate the extravagance, pride, and ambition of the court.

Fénelon, a lover of books, was well-read, and he exhibited many general cultural interests. His love of nature, which is shown in many of his letters, has placed him in the beginnings of the Romantic movement in literature.¹²⁵ Through his letters of literary criticism, Fénelon shows his love of antiquity, and there are references, in many of his communications, to personalities and places celebrated in the Greek and Roman classics. Fénelon sought to inspire accuracy and simplicity in literary effort, with a strict adherence to good moral principles. In his own writing he used a style that has been admired by other critics.

Fénelon gained a reputation in the area of pedagogy as can be seen in the letters expressing his educational philosophy. In a time when there was much interest in establishing schools, Fénelon advocated a type of education that could be enjoyed and that would obtain the desired results through motivation, reason, and the demonstration of the utility of the things being taught. These ideas, first evident in his work of religious education with the Nouvelles Catholiques in Paris and with the Protestants at Aunis and Saintonge, were carried into the educational program for the grandsons of the King. Fénelon condemned imposed authority and approved rewards for work well done. In the seventeenth century, he recommended the technique of teaching a foreign language by the oral method. He also did much to develop textbooks for classroom use. His ideal was that all education should be moral as well

¹²⁵De la Bedoyere, op. cit., introduction, p. 10.

as mental. This is clearly shown in his letters to and concerning the Duc de Bourgogne as well as his letter to a lady of quality in which he discussed an appropriate education for her daughter. Much of Fénelon's educational advice was accepted by teachers of the eighteenth century, and some of it still remains valid.

Many volumes of Fénelon's correspondence deal with the formal expression of his religious philosophy. He fought hard and wrote forcefully in defense of his convictions, as is shown in the correspondence concerning the affair of Quietism, but he was quick to submit to the authority of the Church when condemned. He possessed a faith which prepared him to surrender his desires and his destiny to the will of the Church, which to him was the will of God. He expressed the belief that when one renounces self, all of life's experiences, good and bad, will unfold according to His purpose. Fénelon wished his life to be governed by this ideal, and he recommended it to others.

The philosophy expressed in Fénelon's correspondence places him in a transition period between centuries. His firm belief in God, his love for classical antiquity, and his pride in the nobility place him with his seventeenth-century contemporaries; but his philosophy of politics and education as well as his sentimentality and love of nature show that he also belongs to the eighteenth century. There is much freedom and charm in the style of Fénelon's letters, but more important are the messages found there. This charm and these messages make the study of Fénelon's correspondence an inspiring experience in any age.

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