

lute perfection is unattainable, and foibles are the concomitants of men. He became captivated with the visionary and enthusiastic tenets of Madame de Guyon, whose spiritual ideas he supported, in the conferences held at Issy to condemn them; and in a book entitled, *An explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*. His religious principles were now questioned; he was publicly accused of maintaining the extravagant notions of Quietism, and the cause was carried to Rome, to be decided by the Pope, by whom the book was condemned.

To enter into a detail of this theological dispute would be highly interesting. It may be sufficient to remark, that the opinions of Fenelon, however enthusiastic and extravagant, were the effusions of a pure heart and warm imagination, as is strikingly evidenced in the present little manual, containing his *Reflections for every Day in the Month*, which is said to be the last of his works.

His mystic opinions, however, were not the sole cause of his disgrace; the education which he gave to the Duke of Burgundy was an indirect disapprobation to the conduct of Louis XIV.; and that haughty monarch thought he saw in the *Adventures of Telemachus* his own despotism and ambition censured.

It has been justly remarked, that the heresy of the archbishop of Cambay might be attributed more to his politics than to his theology. Fenelon endured the persecution, as became him, with firmness and resolution. He neither complained of the virulent abuses of his enemies, nor of the cabals employed to disgrace him; he neither descended to invective nor altercation. When Bossuet called him a heretic, and blasphemer, he mildly replied, "Why do you load me with abuse instead of argument? Is it because you call my arguments abuse?" All the services of Fenelon were forgotten; he received an order to retire to Cambay; his friends were exiled; and his relations were deprived of their employments.

Madam de Sillery, while recounting her own distresses, says, "It is known that, in the case of Fenelon and the Duke of Burgundy, the preceptor and the pupil were forbidden to write to each other, and correspond in secret. We must hate the man who could enjoin such a command; but Fenelon is not without blame, for having authorized the disobedience of his pupil. For the rest, when I consider that Fenelon was hated and disgracefully dismissed for the atrocious crime of writing the *Adventures of Telemachus* for his pupil; when I recollect that Louis the Great, after reading this work, exclaimed, 'I knew M. de Cambay possessed a weak mind, but I never before suspected him of having a corrupt heart; I feel the fullest conviction that I have no right to complain.'"

The duke of Burgundy always considered his venerable preceptor as a father and a friend. In the height of an abominable persecution, when it was dangerous to mention the name of Fenelon at court, his amiable pupil wrote thus: "At last, my dear archbishop, I find an opportunity of breaking the silence which I

have been constrained to keep during four years. I have since suffered many evils; but one of the greatest has been, my not being able to prove to you what I felt on your account during this interval: and how greatly my friendship has increased instead of being lessened by your misfortunes. I look forward with delight to the time when I shall be able to see you; but I fear this time is still very distant. I was greatly shocked at the treatment which you have met with, but we must submit to the divine will, and believe that whatever happens is for the best. —Versailles, Dec. 22, 1710."

Fenelon passed the last sixteen years of his life at his diocess, performing not only the usual functions of his episcopal office, but exercising the duties of an ordinary priest. Many of the letters which he wrote at this time were published after his death, and show a perfect knowledge of the windings and turnings of the human heart, a pure and unaffected piety, and great mildness toward the defects of others. At Cambay was a seminary for the instruction of persons in his diocess designed for holy orders. He frequently assisted at the examinations, and himself questioned each candidate before he ordained him. He explained to the students, every week, the principles of religion; exhorted them to lay before him any difficulties or objections which occurred to them; listened to them with patience, and answered them with candour and mildness. Ramsay, his disciple and biographer, who was frequently present at these conferences, says he does not know which to admire most, his extreme condescension, or the sublimity of his discourses. He preached frequently, during his visitations; and always adapted his discourses to the capacity of his hearers. That voice which had charmed the court of Louis XIV.; that genius which had enlightened Europe, spoke to peasants and mechanics; and no style was foreign to him in his endeavours to improve mankind.

He often walked alone in the environs of Cambay; entered frequently the cottages of the poor, conversed with them in the most familiar manner, partook of their coarse fare, and soothed and assisted them in their difficulties and afflictions. Long after his death, the chairs on which he sat were regarded with veneration.

The saying of a man of letters, on viewing the destruction of his library by fire, that "he should have gained little from his books if he knew not how to bear the loss of them," has been justly admired. Fenelon, who lost his library by a similar accident, expressed himself, if not so exaltedly, at least not less affectingly: "God be praised," said he, "that it was not the cottage of some poor family!"

In one of his rambles, observing a peasant in great distress, he demanded the cause. "Alas!" said the peasant, "I am driven from my cottage, and the enemy hath taken away my cow; ah, sir! I shall never possess another!" Fenelon instantly departed under the protection of his passport, after much trouble found the cow, and brought her to the peasant.