

*Versicle for Christmas-day and its Octave.*

V. The Word was made Flesh, alleluia.

R. And dwelt amongst us, alleluia. *During the year the alleluia is omitted.*

*Versicle for the Epiphany and its Octave.*

V. Christ manifested himself to us alleluia.

R. Come, let us adore him, Alleluia.

Let us pray,

O Almighty and Eternal God, Lord of heaven and earth, who revealest thyself to little ones; grant, we beseech thee, that commemorating with due veneration, the sacred mysteries of the Infancy of Jesus, thy beloved Son, and faithfully following his blessed footsteps we may arrive to the kingdom of Heaven, promised to those who become as little children:—Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Extracts from the Private Letters of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray.*

45.

I think you ought entirely to abstain from your imaginary conversations. Though they may sometimes excite pious feelings, I believe the habit is bad for you. From these thoughts you are led on insensibly to others, which nourish your troubles, or flatter your taste: it is better to suppress them all. Not that it is so well to arrest them violently, which would be like an endeavour to stop a torrent; it is sufficient not voluntarily to employ yourself with them. When you observe imagination begin her work, then quietly turn towards God, without undertaking violent opposition to these speculations: let them drop by turning to some useful occupation. If it is the time of prayer, look upon these vain thoughts as dis-

tractions, and gently come back to God as soon as you perceive them: but do this without disturbance or scruples, without an interruption of peace. If, on the contrary, they come when you are busied about some outward employment, that will help to draw you from your reveries. It would even be better in the beginning, to go and find some person, or apply yourself to something difficult, by way of breaking the course of your thoughts, and this habit.

46.

You must really suppress this imaginary discourse: it is pure loss of time; it is a very dangerous occupation; it is a temptation of your own procuring. You are never obliged voluntarily to entertain it. Perhaps habit will still occasionally annoy you with these chimeras in despite of yourself; but you must not yield to it, but quietly bid them depart when you perceive them. The best means of self-defence is always to employ yourselves with prayer, and some exterior work, if prayer cannot arrest your excited imagination.

47.

I am sincerely sorry for the circumstance which prevented my seeing you. Meanwhile do you follow faithfully the light which God has given to assist you in annihilating the refinements and sensibility of your self-love. When we are completely resigned to the designs of God, we are content to be deprived of tasting the comforts of them. A privation, indeed, which thus humbles and disconcerts us, may be more useful than an abundance of sensible comforts.

Why may it not be useful to be deprived of my presence and weak counsels, since it is sometimes salutary to be deprived of the sensible presence and