

misfortune ! The Apostle has defied all things, present and future, to be able to ever separate him from you.* I dare not use the same language, because I feel my weakness and my inconstancy ; in order that you may entirely and forever possess it. In my hands, the heart which is so feeble, would be badly regulated ; I have lost it numberless times ; for it is losing it to separate from you, O Spirit of my God ! May it henceforth belong to you ! Wound it with one of those darts with which you have pierced the hearts of your saints ; burn it with one of those tongues of fire which you poured out on the Apostles ; inebriate it with that delicious wine, which the Spouse of the Canticles tasted in the cellar of the bridegroom. May I be all love for you alone, and may all false hope disappear at your presence, O eternal Love, who reignest with the Word, at the bosom of the Father, and who will not cease to reign for ever and ever !

FOURTH STATION.

TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

We do not sufficiently know the holy Mother of God. Perhaps we have some devotion towards her ; but, besides this, very little idea of her grandeur or merit. Methinks there are three things that ought to attach us to her, and inspire us with great confidence in her intercession. First—The happiness which she enjoyed of conversing with Jesus Christ for thirty years. Second—The silence which the Evangelists have observed on the most of her actions. Third—The sentiments contained in her admirable Canticle.

We sometimes wish to have lived at the time when Jesus Christ appeared in the world. We imagine that we

would have been amongst the number of his admirers and faithful disciples. Mary heard from his mouth, during thirty years, the words of life. What effects did not so intimate a union produce in this holy soul. To what degree of contemplation did she not arrive ! What knowledge did she not acquire of the mysteries of God ?

We are sometimes surprised that the Evangelists have related so little concerning this blessed creature. This is what constitutes her glory ; she lived in retreat, intent upon what she learned in the school of her Son. The saints are never more worthy of admiration than when few of their actions are recorded. It is a proof that they have led hidden lives, and concealed their virtues, which is the heroism of the saints. Mary excelled in this point ; she treasured up everything in her heart, according to the expression of the Evangelist. (Luke, ii. 19.) Men are unworthy to enter this sanctuary where the Divinity had formed with us such intimate union.

We have a hundred times recited the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin, but have not comprehended its hidden meaning. It is everything that faith, humility, and gratitude could produce in the most perfect degree. Let us for the future meditate upon it, and learn from the very lips of this Holy Mother of God what we ought to be.

O Sacred Virgin in whom the Word was made flesh, I implore your holy protection for the Church to which you have given Jesus Christ, for all those who do not know God the Saviour, the object of your tenderness ; for careless and indifferent Christians who have little knowledge of you because they know not Jesus Christ, or know him imperfectly ; in fine, for