

and feel that they are freed from the condemnation which weighs upon them ; the Prophets are enraptured, and, with them, all the orders of the elect, all the souls adorned with sanctifying grace.

The sight of this touching presentation elicits from the holy patriarch such cries of admiration, that his language might seem rash, were it not addressed to Saints of such extraordinary virtue and of such rare worthiness ; he places the following address in the mouth of the high-priest Zacharias at the moment when he receives the Blessed Virgin from the hands of her parents : " Authors of our salvation, how shall I name you ! what shall I say of you ! I am in astonishment at the Fruit that ye offer me ; it is such that its purity invites God Himself to come and dwell within it. Never, indeed I was there, nor will there be soon again any whose beauty shines forth with such brilliancy. You have appeared as a double river flowing out of Paradise. You bring hither a Lamp more valuable than gold and precious stones, it lights up the whole world by the grace of its spotless virginity and by its rejoicing splendor.

" We contemplate you as two luminous orbs placed in the firmament ! Ye both drive away darkness, the shadows of the letter and of the law given amid storms, you obtain for us through your faith in Christ a happy transition to the new law of grace ; we look upon you as the two shining angles of the spiritual temple of the New Covenant, for in you has been enclosed the Altar sanctified to God and dedicated to the holiest of victims. May my speech not long remain beneath your merit ! O ye who devoted your care to raise this little Virgin, ye who appear to us as cherubim sheltering with mystical shadow the mercy-seat of the Pontiff and Saviour of the world.

" As pure gold overlaid of old the ark made by the hand of man, you have clothed the spiritual and divine Ark of the new alliance, that ark wherein reposed He who signed our pardon on the cross. Your joy is the