

once of those virtues, which form the nuptial robe, the richest and most worthy of you: *In vestitu deaurato circumdata varietate.* Psalm xlv. 10. Come, accomplish in her the prodigy expected for so many ages, this mystery incomprehensible to the angels themselves, which will unite her to you by indissoluble bonds, and give her a title and right to which no creature could ever pretend. What, my sisters, shall we be e say? How form an idea of the favours which Mary received? The Spirit of God visited her. Is that saying enough? Had he not visited others before her? How many holy souls had tasted the sweetness of his divine caresses, and were inebriated with the chaste delights of a loving union with him! Mary from her infancy was familiarized with all these graces; she had continually the most intimate commerce with the Spirit of God; her days had passed in the delights and languours of love; sleep did not interrupt her union with her beloved: and whilst her senses slumbered, her heart watched to him; *Ego dormio et cor mecum vigilat.* Cant. v. 2. Did nothing more occur at this moment announced by the angel, when the divine Majesty Invested her on all sides, and the virtue of the Most High overshadowed her: *Virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi.* Luke i. 35; when the Holy Spirit, who had always resided in her, and had so long bestowed his gifts upon her, came in a new and extraordinary manner, and formed within her this fruit of benediction, which is sanctity itself, and will be called the son of the most High? Ah! if this same spirit, descending on the apostles, changed them into new men, if it raised them above nature, taught them all science, and made them, by the power which they received, like unto gods on earth, what did it operate in Mary? With what light, what unction, what supernatural strength was she filled, when it came, not as a tongue of fire, but as a torrent of divine flames, to burn and consume all that was human in her: to renew her already perfect being, and consecrate and divinize her womb by making her conceive a God! Ah! if such were the favours greeted to simple servants, what must have been the presents made to the spouse! What purity! what beauty did not the immortal spouse bestow on the heart to which he vouchsafed to attach himself by a union so intimate and so new! I must cease, because I feel language fails me to express my thoughts, and even my thoughts are far beneath the wonders of which I speak.

Let us pass to the third relation in which this glorious virgin is united to the divinity: Mary is not only daughter and spouse, she is also Mother her most incommunicable title, and the consummation of her glory. For, though she was the daughter of the Father by a special adoption, and the

spouse of the Holy Spirit in an ineffable manner, yet, in a less rigorous sense, but truly, we give the title of children of God to all the faithful, and that of spouses to all virgins; the holy Scripture employs this language. But who, except Mary, has ever been called the mother of God? Who, besides her, has conceived in her womb, and brought forth, and nourished with her milk the Son of the Eternal? O wonder, which confounds our reason, and deranges the natural order of our ideas! O dignity, to which nothing can be compared! What! He who gives being to all creatures, and receives nothing from them, has received life itself from Mary! He, who by one word made all things to exist, has been produced according to his human being, and according to the flesh, by this daughter of Juda. He has been nourished with her substance, who gives nourishment and increase to every thing that breathes. He has been carried in her arms, who supports the universe in his hands! The sovereign Master of all things has been the submissive, obedient, and respectful Son of this virgin. *Et erat subditus.* Luke xi. 51. No, we may seek in vain for any greatness, except that of God, which can be put in competition with that of Mary. St. Paul, wishing to make the Hebrews understand how much Jesus Christ was elevated above the celestial hierarchy, exclaimed: To whom amongst the angels has God the Father said: 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?' Heb. i. 5. With a slight change cannot I apply these words to my subject, and exclaim in my turn: To which of those sublime intelligences has God the Son ever said: 'Thou art my mother, this day hast thou begotten me?' Now, this is what he will eternally repeat to Mary, and what will place her at an immense distance above all the powers and principalities of heaven. But to return to her heart: what impressions, what influences of grace did it not receive during the nine months the incarnate word passed in her womb? What fire was not there enkindled by this Son, inclosed so long a time, without letting one ray escape externally?—What emotions did not this heart experience, when the blessed mother held in her arms the divine infant, and pressed him to her bosom! With what sanctity was not this heart filled during the thirty years of uninterrupted commerce between the Son and the mother! In fine, what must have been this heart; whose sentiments correspond to the sublimity of its union with three divine Persons, and were all worthy of the daughter, the spouse, and mother of a God?

#### THIRD POINT.

This last part of my subject is the most interest-