

new representative, not of the *whole* human race, but of all who enter into that gracious covenant of which he is the mediator; and that his human nature being made up chiefly of the substance of the virgin, might be subject to the same conditions as other men, liable to sufferings, and capable of death. But though Immanuel was to be born of a virgin, she was an espoused virgin, that honor might thus be put on the married state, that the character of Mary might be free from injurious suspicions, and that the Holy child Jesus might have a natural and judicious protector.

Mary had asked no sign to confirm her faith; but the angel spontaneously gave her one. Behold thy cousin Elizabeth she also hath conceived a son, in her old age, and this is the 8th month with her that was called barren. Elizabeth was doubtless known to Mary, as having been childless during her youth and mature age; now at her advanced time of life, for her to have a child, must seem humanly speaking an impossibility. No doubt Mary was ignorant of her cousin's present condition, and when she should see her in the state indicated by the angel, this would be a fulfillment of the angel's words, and convince her, that he who could accomplish such an unlikely thing for Elizabeth, could accomplish the still more extraordinary thing for herself.

Mary not only believed the declarations of the angel; but submitted herself to the divine will,—“Behold the handmaid of the Lord”—i. e. I am at the Lord's Service. Let him do with me according to his good pleasure. Nay more, she expressed her desire; that it might be with her, as the angel said. “Be it with me according to thy word.” In Mary's conduct on this occasion, we have one of the most beautiful exhibitions of perfect faith. No doubt it was an object of great desire to Mary, as it was to every Hebrew woman, that she might be mother of the Messiah. But ob-

serve the delicate circumstances, in which she was placed. She was a virgin, but an espoused virgin, and as she knew that this Holy child must be conceived, before her marriage with Joseph was consummated, she must have foreseen that injurious suspicions would arise in his mind,” and that unless he believed her report, she might, according to law, be stoned to death as an adulteress. But none of these things moved her; she was still, and knew that Jehovah was God, who could bring forth her righteousness as the light, and her judgment as the noonday. Let us learn to imitate the faith of Mary, and when we are certain that any course is chalked out for us by providence, let us not fear a Lion in the path, and leave consequences to God.

As soon as it was convenient in this marvellous transaction, Mary set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth, regarding whose extraordinary conception the angel had informed her, and of which he had told her as a sign to establish her faith. It was probably at Hebron a city of the priests, situated in the Hill country of Judea, where Zachariah and Elizabeth lived, in the neighborhood of which Abraham had long resided, and where David was crowned king of Judah. Hither the virgin came from the remote town of Nazareth in Galilee, situated almost at the opposite extremity of the kingdom. And how would her faith be confirmed and her heart be rejoiced, when she found the statement made to her by the angel, regarding Elizabeth confirmed. And how would these holy and highly favored women rejoice, as they talked over their experience together. How transporting would be their joy, when they thought that the long promised deliverer of the human race was made manifest in the flesh, the seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the old serpent, to accomplish the redemption of the sinful children of men, and bring in everlasting