

Saint Joseph, His Trial and Silence.



ACRED Scripture informs us that Mary remained three months in Hebron, which naturally leads us to suppose that she did not leave her cousin until after the birth of the Baptist, when in due course she would return to her home.

The disquietude of St Joseph is related very simply and in few words, but it is given for a definite purpose, and reveals the sublime elevation of character in him who was chosen to be the guardian of the Mother and her Divine Child, in such a way as to be witness to her Immaculate Conception. And not only are the fidelity and justice of St. Joseph's character displayed in the incident, but still more are the admirable qualifications of Our Lady for the duties she was called upon to fulfil in the world. Such, for example, would be her fidelity, her reserve, her patience, her self-possession, and the calm firmness which could not be diverted from her appointed path. The Incarnation was the secret of God which had been entrusted to her to keep inviolable under all circumstances ; and this in spite of dangers and misapprehensions—in spite, indeed, of the very Law of God itself and its fearful penalties. Her silence is sublime beyond words.

As for St. Joseph, his conduct is not less admirable. He is perplexed. On the one hand, his faith in the supernatural graces of his spouse forbid any suspicion of her purity, and the circumstances attending their espousals are marks of divine predestination too recent to be forgotten. But on the other hand, there is the Law and the Law is the Law of God. If however (in the words of St. Bernard), she were indeed the highly favored one of God, St. Joseph, deeming himself an unworthy sinner, said within himself that no longer ought he to be favored with the company of one whose marvelous dignity he greatly feared. Therefore, seeing himself to be without special direction from on High, he judged it best to take a reso-