

GOD WITH US



THE observance by the Jews of the great Commandment of the Law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength," (Deut. 6.) a command given amidst thunder and lightning, and fire, and darkness, and the noise of the trumpet, must have been difficult. At least so it seems to us who live under the Law of love. And how imperfectly, as far as we can gather, it was observed. Here and there we find marvellous examples of fidelity to God's commands, zeal for his worship, resignation to His Will. But a personal love that absorbed the whole soul — where shall we look for this? Was it even possible? Even in the tenderest manifestations of His Providence there was nothing for the grateful heart to leap up to and embrace in its thankfulness. Afar off, "inhabiting light inaccessible," (I. Tim. 6.) He dwelt, where fear, indeed, and reverent worship could reach Him, but familiar love, hardly.

The hearts He had made for Himself longed for a God who could be seen and heard and touched, a God to whom they could draw near with their offerings of praise and thanksgiving, and above all, of propitiation. The widespread prevalence of idolatry testifies to the universality of this desire, and among the chosen people we hear such cries as: "Who will give Thee to me for my Brother?" (Cant. 8.) "Drop down dew, ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain the Just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour." (Isaias.) "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the Heavens and come down!" (Isaias 64.)

Four thousand years of that mysterious yearning for Him — and then He came. "Afterwards He was seen upon earth and conversed with men." (Baruch 3.)