

them,—such as providing for their wants—defending them from enemies—delivering them out of danger and directing them in difficulty, it referred particularly to his peculiar love to them in owning them as his people and in making all things work together for their good. In our Lord's valedictory discourse as recorded by John in the xvi. chap. of his gospel, this presence is explained of the Holy Spirit. He assured his disciples, that "he would pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, for he dwelleth in you and shall be in you," "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. Judas said unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not to the world; Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." The promised presence of God, then, is not bodily, material, or visible; it is spiritual, felt and enjoyed in the soul. Yet it is not without its manifestations; the rich blessings it imparts tell where it is—the peace and joy—the comfort and encouragement—the support and succour, in a word all that distinguishes God's people from the men of the world, are pleasing evidences of his presence. "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God."

Wherever this spiritual presence is realized, the soul feels as if inspired and sees God, wise, good and glorious is all around; in the dew drop that sparkles in the morning sun and in the snowflake that falls so softly on the grave of autumn—in the gentle breeze and in the furious storm—in the clear blue sky and in the dark and lurid cloud—in the tiny flower and tender herb and stately tree—in the insect of the breeze, and bird upon the wing, and the ranger of the forest—in all he sees God revealed, as he never had before: nor are only things around thus seen differently; the Bible is like another book, its truths

are clearer, richer, holier, happier than before. The glory of God fills the soul, sanctifying every feeling and faculty. "A growing likeness to the Holy One manifests itself in his heart and life, and verifies the declaration of the Saviour, "I in them and they in me." What a blessing! God dwelling with man on earth in very deed. We cannot yet, until our work is done, ascend up to Heaven, to his holy habitation there, but he graciously condescends and comes down to dwell with us here, and if when an earthly prince visits the distant part of his dominion and there sojourns for a night, nothing is heard, but one loud, and united and enthusiastic burst of loyalty, shall God himself come down and dwell in our midst by his Spirit—*dwell*, I say, not pay a transient visit, but take up his abode with us, and the honor conferred be lost sight of and the blessing not highly prized.

II. THE CHURCH'S ESTIMATE OF GOD'S PRESENCE.

If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. This is not to be understood as a hypothetical statement, as if the speaker had any doubts on the subject, after God had promised, but rather as a very strong way of expressing the truth, that he regarded God's presence as absolutely necessary to success.

1. His presence, indeed, is regarded as necessary to the very vitality of the Church. In Eden he fashioned man from the dust of the earth, but until he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, he was not a living soul: the body may be gorgeously robed and decked with sparkling jewels, but these do not impart life; so a collection of people without the presence of God is not the Church; they may be numerous, united and wealthy, but unless God be in their midst, they cannot be regarded his people; his presence alone can impart life.

2. His presence is regarded as necessary to success in any undertaking. Moses would not take one step alone; he felt that God must go with him; and this has ever been regarded the true secret of success.

Except the Lord do build the house,

The builders lose their pain;

Except the Lord the city keep,

The watchmen watch in vain.

This is significantly acknowledged in the