No. 29.

On the Omnipresence of God.
Jeremiah xxiv. 23. - "Art thou God at hand, amidst the land, and not a God afar off?"

This is the tremendous question of the Covenant, addressed to those faithless professors, who had deceived the people of God, deceiving them with impunity. They had pretended to speak in the name of the Lord by the authority of Jehovah; they had falsely promised peace to the wicked, would have lulled the children of Israel into forgetfulness of their God; persuaded them that in the midst of their desolation, they might despise Him, who had watched over their fathers, and was now visiting their sins with this desolation. They had prophesied the descent had been on their help. Before these false and guilty men go away, the terribles of His majesty, after denouncing the indignation of His justice upon those who thus dared to deal with the authority of Heaven, He bids them remember...
that they might not hope to conceal their
artifices from his inspection. Great against
man, but the omnipresence, when they wish-
ed to deceive; if no darkness was sufficient
to secure them from that of time or space, then
the universe, no place remote enough to be
beyond the reach of Him, he is present in ev-
ey portion of every world. "Am I not
beside thee? Can any hide himself in secre-
ty places, that I should not see him? Do I not fill
heaven and earth with the end?"

The Being whom we worship, He is an ever-
present Being, unconfined in existence, as his
might is boundless, as his wisdom infinite. It
is a great truth wh, the Bible has taught us,
that God is everywhere present; that nothing
is too great, nothing too minute, for his inspec-
tion; that amidst the countless systems of
he has taught to move through the regions
of space, not a being exists in which the Almighty
does not manifest the majesty of his presence.
It is one single, compounded, infinite mind, spread
are the Universe. - How sublime is this truth!
How should we venerate a religion, oh places it
in the forefront of all of them. Did away. Would we
know the superiority of our religion in this subject
are all that man can teach? Look for a moment
the history of confused notions into the theories of
gods and goddesses of the deities of their deities;
and these were matter, these were wars. If we could
examine them, we might see, among the thousand deities, the
imagination of man, has created. Some were committed
the care of the winds, to another the storms,
the waves. - This was the god of battle, that
was the god of healing. - Every city had its favor-
its protector, every river its presiding deity
consequently, the mind was distracted by the mult-
itudinous objects of its worship, gave its home the
innumerable of affectation. Turn now from this
confusion to the instructions of the Bible, and
on every page is presented to your adoration the
infinite Being, whose agency is felt, whose
existence is known, who has no partner in the
throne of the Universe. - The pure and spotless
of our religion, notwithstanding our coldness on.
...sensibility, are so often brought before our minds, that we are scarcely aware from how much darkness, grossness, and deepness we have escaped. We scarcely reflect how long since all have been our conceptions of the Deity, had not the lovelessness and majesty thereof been brought home in the light of revelation.

Let us in the first place consider to some proper notion of the omnipresence of God. If we think of some of the consequences or results from the deep, practical belief of this doctrine.

1. What do we understand, when we speak of the omnipresence of God? A distinction is usually made between the divine omnipresence and the divine omniscience. The former signifies the existence in every part of space whatsoever, without limits of bounds; if the idea of it is formed from the manner in which we conceive the presence of external objects, i.e., when they fill any portion of space so as to exclude all the bodies from the same space, if we thus brought before us in a tangible form, so as not to the senses a distinct subject of sensation. But this notion is one, with the least it would be more artificial; it is difficult to apply to the existence of the Deity, than would be desirable, if the idea is to exact a mighty influence on our principles and lives.

We may perhaps best conceive of the omnipresence of God in the following manner: "We know by consciousness the existence of our own minds; we know by their operations, that they are in our bodies, as they are not in others. The same individual principle, the vital principle within us extends the exercise of its faculties to all parts of the system; it animates, to that system it is confined. The manner in which we perceive objects without sensation is quite different. When its own body the mind acts immediately; but upon other bodies it cannot only by the intercession of its members. Now our bodies, therefore, our souls are peculiarly present. But it is easy to rise higher, i.e., suppose, that other principles may have a larger sphere of conception, a wider range over matter, and at the same time have a higher perfection in both, i.e., they may have a more thorough knowledge of the systems which they inhabit, a more absolute dominion over them.

And why should we stop here? We may rise still higher: our minds may be a conception of the divine omnipresence, in that sense at least, as may be most easily grasped, and brought home to us..."
mean, one may conceive of it in this manner, that the Deity has an unlimited, comprehensive knowledge of the whole universe, of each part of it, so that he exercises an absolute, uncontrolled power over all. This unlimited knowledge & this uncontrolled power constitute his omnipresence, that is, the constitute his omnipresent agency & influence. Do we presume to ask, how can one mind comprehend, or not be vast, if foresee our government be immense? Thus, it takes the powers of man to conceive of it. If angels tremble while they gaze, well may we adore where we cannot know. But there is no inconstancy in supposing the existence of this all-pervading influence. Explain, if you can, the mighty works of your own mind; exhibit every year, or it perceives at once the different impressions made in distant parts of the body, and moves its members by a mere determination of the mind, as does the lightning's flash. Explain the mystery of that power, and lift your arm whenever you will to lift it; if you have done this — when you have unravelled these wonders of every day, then may your inquires be the infinite, the eternal mind. Look at the vast expanse of time; there is a spot, where you find not the footsteps of the power, renewing every where a consistent uniform design.

...
I hope we all feel it... Let us then proceed in the blessed place to speak of some of its practical influences.

The truth that God is omnipresent, affords an ever-exhaustible source of consolation, joy, and hope. It was this inspiring thought, that moved the heart, and quickened the stream of the great poet of Israel, when he said, "Lo, there have been the dwelling places of thy people to all generations." Through whatsoever city we may pass, in whatever world through the immensity of space, where habitations may be assigned, it is not for us to know; but this we know—wherever we are or shall be, there the Father of all spirits is present with us. Strange countries there may be, strange worlds—but no strange God. Call to mind, for a moment, the scenes of happiness you have passed in the company of those to whom you have looked up with esteem or affection. Think how you have forgotten your sorrows, while you listened to their consolations, how you have dispelled the injuries of the foremothers of the world, while they have promised their assistance, given you the welcome of their sympathy. How you have gone forth with a spirit more firmly brace to walk fearlessly on in the path of duty or trial, because you have been animated by their advice and strengthened by the communion of their feelings. Now, if your trust has not been impaired by such satisfaction, remember that every hour of your life is spent in the presence of the Spirit. And if you can in truth call this thy friend, the brotherhood of God, to have human friendship to be compared to the brotherhood of this unspeakable, fleshless presence? When you have felt that you felt, if you think of your earthly friends, your thoughts, what must one make you happy are in the mansions of the Lord. But there is One Friend, whose devotion is boundless, to everlasting; that Friend is ever with you. In his presence sends forth no complaint, that does not reach heaven; griefs, sorrows, not in silence, without the re-echo of his eye. When we feelingly is habitually can order God as every where present, earth seems to exist one great temple, consecrated to being, unalterable, can we move on this holy ground without finding the monuments on which are inscribed the records of his mercy, the proofs of his wisdom. Like the temple of Solomon, it is not the profusion of ornament with splendid of decorum, but the inward beauty, which makes it sacred. The walls... To the devout mind, the presence of God permeates the most common objects, the most ordinary events. With his
he, prompt to the exclamation: "God is here!" everything rejoices around him. Suppose this omnipresent agent to be once absent, the beauties of nature, the thick shades of darkness settle on the diaries of the universe. The presence of the Deity, like the rising sun, spreads over the world the brightness of day, it unfolds the grandeur and beauty of every prospect; but when that luminacy has withdrawn, his grandeur, all around, affects an unsurpassed solemnity, and the void of the earth, its magnificence, its scenery, are faded and lost. But it is not merely in the external world, that the presence of God is seen and enjoy'd; it is felt in the most awful hours, as in the events of life, in all those various scenes of human existence. If our heart, faith has given us the cup of blessings, so cxceedingly precious, the consciousness of enjoyment, has as the felicity, in this bounty, is increased by the reflection, that he who hath bless'd us is ever with us, that mean never Sep. from his presence, that we always dwell in the shadow of his protection. The bounty comes not on us without the benefactor. If on the other hand, calamity comes to end upon us as a store of suffering, the smile that once gladdened us, is exchanged for the gloomy countenance of anxiety and the tear of distress:—tell me, where is the consolation like that,
that in whatever scenes we may be called to act, &
though whatever changes we may be summoned to
pass, these faithful servants of the Most High can
have no change or unhappiness, because He is one with
them, who will be with them in death. He will be with them the
2. If G. is everywhere present, He is present as the
witness of moral conduct. It is the declaration of
Confucius—"the eyes of the Lord are in every place be
holding the evil & the good."—"There is no darkness a
shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can
hide themselves."—There is no stronger incentive to
purity of holiness, than a sincere, deep settled faith
of His presence, & no check on the more mighty pow
es to overrule bad passions as to calm the heaving
of the tumult of irrepressible desires. Most men, if
am persuaded, would not, could not, be so wicked
as they are, if they in earnest believed & really felt
that at the very moment when they plunge back
into sin, they are standing in the presence of
that Being, at whose tremendous bar they must soon
appear to answer for what they have thought, what
they have done. Is it in human, too more irrational
have no false witness to fear, & vice no eloquent de
vocate to trust to for support—In the company of a
man whose character has made him an object of res
onc to his fellow beings, & preserves not only feelin
have not been awe'd into generation, that holy
would appear unhandable, & unfitted with divine?
And are we not astonished, any fi. to the wonder that
tribute of reverence, & the refusal to the omnipotent
Creator, to tremble before man, & refuse to any
hears security before God?—But it has no refuge to
settle in this life. You may drag deep to hide your
shyness, so deep, perhaps, that the eye of man's
the penetration of clay cannot reach you. You may
wash darkness around your foul designs; & hide all
one to human scrutiny. But remember there is
an Omnipresent Witness, who hears every syllable
that is uttered, in the dark consultation, & watches
every beating of the heart, under the thick veil of
its concealments. Remembering this, will you duct
dread to offer to the eye of infinite purity, quieter
than chastened thoughts of hallowed desires? On
the other hand, virtue, though unneeded & unman
ed by the world, will never escape the notice of
the applause of the Divine Judge. There is no
aid, but painful, open face to principle, & no
man, but he who makes it, can estimate;—but He
sees the struggle within of those the full value
of every effort; we shall they pass on without the rec
onpence. "When modesty conceals from the full view
the bounty of benevolence bestows; when delirious lee
from the object it relieves the mind that administers
relief, the generous secret is known to Heaven; to
Reader it shall one day be proclaimed & explained.

Yet full of encouragement is this thought—that
God is ever watching over the growth of our virtue, that
unseen by man, is that the smile of his approbation
is upon every good resolution & every breath of
holiness, though the world knows not of the inner
spirits & aspirations, whose mighty power is going si-
fent through our bodies, without our notice or
knowledge. It is to that false shame, it makes
the body of some princes so destructive & their virtue so
horribly weak, than the realised sense of the Divine
presence? Perhaps there is no more painful sense of
sin, than the fear of reproach of ridicule, the
shame of being laughed at or censured by our fellow
men. Many a virtuous principle, many a good
actor has fallen before this cowardly, contemptible
pit. Now if at any time we feel disposed to yield
the devolution of those, who would laugh at lighter
is out of our own productions & holy principles, let us
remember that God is with us. Then we can devise
the consideration of their threats. What though the world
shrieks at human affairs, while we know that the All
mighty is on our side, & that he is godly & merciful—but
when the contest?—Nothing of man alike shall
have vent with him into the grave? Isaiah xix. 27.

And faith of his presence is written, but defence, and of
adamant around the every heart of man.

3. If God is everywhere present, He is everywhere
to be worshipped & adored. His presence is not
confined to the temple in which we meet. He dwells in
every house, in every heart. He hears every prayer, from
whichever spot it may ascend, & listens to every orati-
tion, however secret; it may be cherished. It is
much to be lamented that our devotional feelings
are so local & restricted in their operations. We do not
too easily content ourselves with an intermittent commu-
nication, as an irregular remembrance of the Almighty
spirit in our mind, or image confined to points of time & space,
to the hour of worship, or the hours of prayer. But
the true metaphor of the own present, commands
every spot on which he stands as holy, as the ground
where Moses trembled, as consecrated as the tem-
pile on which Solomon reigned. Where there is a holy
feeling heart, there is an altar to Jehovah, where
ere there is a point of the Almighty's hand. Here we
may present the tribute of praise. It is true there
may be peculiar manifestations of the divine power,
 Bayern in some parts of creation more than in others.

The heavens are called the throne of the habitation
sky, because there the splendor of His Majesty
shines most illustriously—& under the finish de-
sensation particular places were made peculiarly holy & consecrated by uncommon displays of the Divine presence. — Yet God was then, now, everywhere: circumstances of a local nature have vanished in the pure light of the religion of Jesus, for He has taught us that whereas man maketh God a object of trust, whenever they call on Him with believing hearts, fearing Him & working righteousness, then they will be accepted. It is our duty to cultivate that purity which finds its objects of contemplation everywhere around us. — Not that religion is local & periodic, but when the time & occasion doth bring it forth, cease not to be revived till the same time & the same opportunity shall return. — Our piety should conform to the flow of devotion when we go forth amidst the wonders of creation as well as when we tread the courts of the sanctuary. — If we do cherish this spirit, we shall reach its end in peace of mind & cheerfulness of heart. It will relieve solitude & worth ambition; it will be the light of all round him with the light, inspired by the pure presence of Jehovah, never alone, like the patriarch, he wills with God; the shadows of ordinances will flee away from his heart. — If other friends he must often say, 'well, fee other connections he must frequently doff the darling tie; — but of this most near & valuable, his most faithful & mighty friend, he has never for a moment, to lament the absence.' — If then, we value peace & love & happiness, let us now fly, wherever we find, aright of His power & wisdom, & then, only, we shall worship him every where.

We have thus far considered the connection of God, some of the practical consequences growing from this doctrine. — If you really believe that the Eternal Jehovah is present with you every moment, yet do not feel the weight of the eternal truth, I am afraid that no exhortation can make you feel it. — Will you go in fear & woe as in a course of sin, while this truth stands you in the face? — If the Supreme Being were to speak men, would not his voice to any man in his case of guilt proclaim his awful presence, would not that man pause in amazement, tremble in adoration? — Who would then dare to go on? — And yet the voice of nature, of conscience, of the Holy Scriptures is as really the voice of God, as if it came down in the thunders of heaven; — is the voice tells us that the one will on high be our Judge, & now we see the omnipresent, omnipotent, Inspector of every thought of our hearts, & every action of our lives. Shall we then despise this voice & pass on heedless of this warning? No; let us feel that we cannot go from the sight of the Arm of flesh, or free from his presence. — If we
ascend up into heaven, G. is there—if we make our bed in the grave, behold G. is there—if we take the wings of the morning, G. is the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall his hand lead us, His right hand hold us. 

While we travel the journey of life, who is it that we build in our hearts a lasting monument to the Almighty? G. is inscribed upon it. 

In the name of the mother of Solomon, give to the angel in the wilderness, "thus God narrow me." 

Jul. 1819.
Others who looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heavens, we desire to come to thee with the impression, that there eye is ever upon us, and that thou art acquainted with all our ways. May we feel that whereas we are with thee, whereas we go, we are still surrounded by thee that at all times we dwell in thy presence. That every thought of our hearts is under thine inspection. There is no creature that is not marked in thy sight, and all things are made do to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. We pray O God, that the conviction of this solemn truth may make us vigilant, grave, earnest minded, that it may give us consolation, support in our trials and dangers, that may fill us at all times with the spirit of devotion, adoration, and love. Then at the omnipresent God of the universe, we are the subjects of thy government, therefore would we humble ourselves before thee, and fear to cherish any propensity which would war against thy affairs, for these only thine are the hearts of all the children of men.
At home, June 12th, 1819 - afternoon.
At Medford, Aug. 18th, 1819 - afternoon.
--- Mrs. Peirce's, Aug. 24th, 1819 - forenoon.
--- Mrs. Walker's, Sept. 26th, 1819 - afternoon.
At home, Stony Mt., Sept. 16th, 1824 - afternoon.