

Possibly, there were some "professors of religion" at the rink on that night, that stayed home on Lord's day evening, by reason of the cold: yes, but the coldness, evidently, was not of the atmosphere, but of the heart. Christian, just think of it; see what desire and determination will do. They will carry us over almost any obstacle. If the people were really in earnest, and carried out one-half of the promises made to the Lord, in the various prayer-meetings, do you think such a state of things would exist? Some may say: "Well, the above does not apply to me, for I neither live in St. John, nor was I at a rink that night. No, perhaps not; but does it, in any way, set forth your general conduct towards the cause of Christ which you have espoused?"

KNOWING that quite a number of our readers seldom see our religious papers, from the States, we clip from one of them a very interesting letter from Sister Garst. It will be remembered that Brother and Sister Garst are the associate missionaries with Bro. G. T. Smith and wife, so well known to many of us. We feel confident that our readers will rejoice to learn that success is attending the labors of these brethren, and that the light of the glorious Gospel is finding its way into the hearts of these benighted heathen.

BRO. P. D. NOWLAN, who is laboring under the directions of our Mission Board, has gone home for a few days, having been telegraphed of the sickness of his wife and child. We are in hopes that he soon will be able to return to his field of labor, from which he bears unmistakable evidence that his efforts are being highly appreciated.

SEASONABLE questions: How have I lived during the past year? Has it been the best year of my life? Is there as much need for me to make new resolutions for good, as to make a greater effort to carry out old ones?

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

THE JOY OF ANGELS.

"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—Luke xv. 10.

The Saviour here announces a fact which human reason or philosophy could never have discovered; that the first order of intelligences, who reside in heaven, are deeply interested in the conversion of one sinner. This important utterance of the Saviour is a reply and rebuke to the cavilling Pharisees—self-applauding, self-conceited men. In the 14th chapter, we read of his going into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread, how they watched him; their fault-finding, and the lessons he gave them in parables. In this chapter we have a different scene. Jesus had turned away from these self-righteous Pharisees, and continued His ministry among the poor, the outcasts, the publicans and sinners. He unstopped the ears of the deaf, poured light into the eyes of the blind, made the tongue that was dumb to sing with joy, and the lame man to leap as an hart. These miracles soon awakened the attention of the wondering multitude, and they gathered round the Great Physician,—“Then drew nigh unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” This awakened the envy and jealousy of the Pharisees, and they began to traduce His character, and hint that He was no better than He should be; that you might judge of Him by the company He kept. “This man,” say they, “receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” And, reader, let me ask, Where should the physician go, but among the sick? Jesus repelled their vile insinuations; and, to justify His conduct, uttered three parables:

The parables of “the lost sheep,” “the lost silver,” and “the lost son.” There is a unity of design running through these three parables: the owner of the property—the loss of the property—the joy of the neighbours when that which was lost is found.

The reasoning is clear and powerful, because it appeals to nature. Man's best worldly interests are represented by the property, his tenderest affections by the restoration of the lost son. It was natural for him to rejoice in both these cases, and natural too, for his friends to rejoice with him. So Jesus would say: I am seeking God's lost property; and if ye were the friends of God, as ye profess to be, ye would rejoice when the lost is found, for this even the angels in heaven do. This gives a wonderful addition of weight to the subject.

While the Pharisees were murmuring at the Great Physician, angels were taking up the joyful theme, and making heaven resound with songs of joy.

This lesson should place repentance in a new and deeply interesting light, and cause us to reflect:

1. Are we participants in that great joy over the conversion of sinners? And have we here a proof that we “are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new Covenant, etc.?” Or do we belong to that class, which the name Pharisees, designates better than any analysis the writer can give?

2. It should lead us to reflect on the value of one soul! Viewed as a mortal, how insignificant is man; his life is but as a vapour—a dream—a tale that is told. When he dies, he vanishes like a flake of snow, lost in the boundless white, or a leaf falling amidst the autumn foliage of a dense forest. When he dies, no blank is left in creation; the sun shines as bright as ever; the business of the world goes on, and like the sound of music dying away, he is soon forgotten. It would be well for us to take this humble view of ourselves as mortals. But there is a sense in which we view man; when human powers fail to estimate his worth; when we view him rising in the grandeur of his immortality. Think of the capabilities of one soul for pleasure. Collect into one bosom all the bliss enjoyed by every man on earth by the spirits of the just made perfect, by every angel in heaven, from the moment of creation to the sounding of the judgment trumpet. And then think of one sinner being converted, his soul entering Paradise; the union of that soul, with his resurrected and glorified body, its entering heaven; passing onward, onward; and there is a period coming, in the depth of eternity, when that one soul will have enjoyed a greater amount of bliss than the whole creation in the period named above. But, ah! reverse the thought, and what capabilities for woe. But, here let the curtain of mercy shut out the scene from imagination.

But, oh! gentle reader, if you have taken upon you the name of Jesus, and professed to be His disciple, reflect upon those words of His, and let them sink deep into your mind, impress your heart, and whatever your hand finds to do for the good of man, do quickly, for the night cometh when no man can work. Try to be impressed with the value of precious souls for which the Saviour shed His precious blood, and remember that “if ye are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.” Col. ii. 20. And, “quicken together with him,” Col. ii. 13. And, as He is now the mediator between God and man, and you a living member of the body of which Christ is the head, ought you not feel some pulsations from the Great Heart of Jesus vibrate in your heart? T. F. DWYER.

THE ANGELS.

NO. I.

There are some most inspiring and precious promises given to the Christian, to comfort the heart, to allure them to occupy high and noble positions on the heavenly road where they can travel with a firm step in the knowledge of God, and under the guidance of His word, in the light of its consoling promises, and at each step realizing they will all be sacredly kept. He not only says, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. i. 14), but by His holy apostle He says, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (1 Cor. x. 13.) True, it is most difficult to raise our minds to a realization of God's blessed promises in their fullest sense.

The word (angelos) means a messenger, a message bearer, a news carrier, but all news carriers are not angels, if so, they are bad angels. The word is only slightly anglicised from the Greek, and the above are the correct meanings, without doubt. The term applies to any kind of a messenger, of earth or heaven, good or bad. In the Bible, however, it usually means a messenger of great power and intelligence. The angel is brought to view first in (Gen. 16; 7) in the case of Hagar, as follows: “And the Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness by the fountain in the way to Shur.” The angel comes to Abraham, when about to slay his son Isaac, the hope of the promise, the offspring of his beloved wife, Sarah. The language is as follows, “And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham! Abraham! and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son from me.” (Gen. xxii. 11.) Abraham had manifested his faith by his works and had clearly demonstrated his fear or reverence for God. This event occurred 2133 years after the creation of man, and 1871 years before the coming of Christ.

It is to be observed here as well as elsewhere, that the angel, the messenger of God, appears in the form of man, as he did to Abraham in Mamre, where revelation says: “Three men stood by him,” when Isaac was promised by the messengers of God.

They were not called angels here, but they were none the less angels. We see that angels are termed spirits, “who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.” The same fact is brought out in the example of the Lord directing Philip the Evangelist, when, “The Angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert” (Acts viii. 26.) Again the same messenger is spoken of in the 20th verse as follows: “Then the spirit said unto (him) Philip, go near and join thyself to this chariot.” I have no doubt as to the identity of angels and spirits, and that they are called by the two names, and are the same beings. The history of the Jews is bound up by the deeds of the angels. It was an angel that protected Daniel, as seen when he says: “My God has sent his angel, and hath shut the lion's mouth, that they have not hurt me” (Dan. vi. 22). It was an angel that stood by the grave of Jesus, and rolled back the stone, though the women were troubled about how that work should be accomplished. To God's great men and prophets they talked and gave directions as to their lives and deeds. These prophets were enabled to predict with certainty the events of the future. The angels of God, the spirit of God, enabled them to do this, and it was called inspiration. It was an angel that trimmed the mighty chandeliers of God that followed the Israelites in the wilderness, as a light to their feet, and a lamp to their pathway. The angels punished the Egyptians and smote their first-born, but on friendly wings sped harmlessly by the sprinkled doors of his people. The angels protected the hosts of God's people across the Red Sea, and also smote their enemies. These are examples or types for us, to teach us how faithful God has been to His dear children in all ages, and under all circumstances.

CARROLL GUENT.