

THE GOOD NEWS.

JANUARY 15th, 1863.

THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

The world's week of prayer is now over, and we are glad to record that so far as we have learned, it has been more generally observed than on any previous occasion. Owing to the manifest blessing which has followed the exercise in some places in past seasons, the week of prayer has become popular.—Some men who formerly were so strait-laced by their own ideas of ecclesiastical forms, that they could not take part in the recommended gathering, have this year been constrained to join the throng of "God's remembrancers" who have been pleading for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on the world.

There is something wonderfully grand in the idea of Christians of every name, and in every land uniting in the same supplications to the throne of grace, at the same moment. It is the best illustration we have had on earth of the oneness of Christians, and the best emblem of the great family to be gathered at last into the house of many mansions in heaven. Like brothers and sisters interested in the family honour, they unite around their father's knee to speak to Him about what is dear unto them all.

We expect to hear of gracious answers.—We already know of partial revivals in connection with these meetings and hope to hear of additional instances.

THE LEPER.

MATTH. viii. 1-3.

Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil; and in his sermon on the mount, which He spake as one having authority, enunciating with clearness, the breadth and spirituality of the moral law for *our* guidance, he was at the same time giving the rule by which he himself demanded, to be judged.—Not like the Pharisees, who laid upon the people hard burdens and grievous to be borne, but which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers. He himself, set us

an example of keeping the law in all its force and rigorous requirement. And it was not long before he had an opportunity of putting his precepts into practice. In this respect He was the incomparable Teacher—while he spake as never man spake; He acted as never man acted. He had said, "Give to him that asketh of thee." And now when a great favor is asked of himself, he does not hesitate or scruple to grant it. He had said, "Do to others as ye would that men should do unto you;" and now when an opportunity is given to him, he does not shut up his bowels of compassion, but cheerfully put forth his divine power to heal. *There came a Leper*; what compassion in Jesus even to permit a leper to approach him. The Pharisee would have said stand back for I am holier than thou; do not come over to pollute me with your uncleanness. But Jesus did not rebuke him. No! He permitted him to approach, to kneel, to worship him. Who was this leper? One afflicted with that loathsome disease, the leprosy; that disease which no skill of man could cure, which made him ceremonially unclean; shut him out from society; which increased in virulence and loathsomeness till welcome death put an end to his lingering tortures.

How cheerless his condition! But his misery only nerves him to seek relief. He comes to Jesus; "Lord," he says, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." *Lord*, He has a perception of His divinity. He sees through the veil of His humanity. He believes in His living power to deliver him. *Jesus* put forth His hand and touched him. It was in former times in England superstitiously thought, that the touch of the king would cure certain skin diseases; King's evil, &c., and the kings of England used to appoint certain days on which those afflicted thus, might come or be brought that they might get the benefit of his touch. We can fancy with what shrinking sensitiveness the king would put forth his hand to the poor and afflicted objects of his favour; and we can also fancy, with what tender commiseration Jesus would put forth his loving hand to the poor leper at his feet. Alas! alas! How often would the scrofulous suppliants at the king's gate, return with all their sores unhealed.