

THE GOOD NEWS.

NOVEMBER 1st 1863.

THE WORD MADE FLESH.

Many, if not all of the world's events, will unquestionably afford subjects of discussion and conversation to the angels. But the appearance of the Prince Royal of heaven in human garb, created a sensation there which will never be witnessed again. How could it be otherwise? Prophet after prophet had told the story of His advent, and then gone up to wait the event, which with rapture they had seen drawing nigh. But who can describe the scene in heaven that morning when he started on his enterprise? He doffed his crown, laid aside his sceptre, and stepped down from that throne which he had occupied from eternity. There was a solemn pause in heaven. The angels stood amazed. But when it was announced that the fulness of time had arrived, and that the Son of God was about to descend to earth, both saints and angels strung their harps, and sang aloud of wondrous love, while he and his chosen escort passed through their long, shining ranks. The battlements of heaven are lined with eager spectators to behold his glorious descent, through the intervening fields of space. But how does he appear upon earth? He has not come in the full vigour of manhood, nor to be born of a princess mother, and to be surrounded by the plaudits of the great, but he comes in infantile weakness, the son of poverty. We would have expected that his advent would have moved universal nature—that the stars would have shone with unwonted lustre when the bright and the morning star came out of Jacob—that the sun would have lent his beams to encircle the brow of the Sun of Righteousness, and that the little hills would have skipped like rams around the Rock of Ages. Who would have been surprised had it been recorded that the flowers had sprung up in his pathway, to bear witness to the plant of Renown, the Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly of the Valley—that the trees had sent forth their green boughs to the rivers, in honour of the Righteous Branch—

that the lions had come up from their desert lairs, and gambolled before the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and that the birds had hovered around his head, making the air vocal with song? We would at least have expected, that when He who is higher than the kings of the earth, condescended to set foot upon our globe, that unto him the gathering of the people would have been, and that earth's nobles and princes and sovereigns would have sent in their tribute, and cast themselves and their crowns at his feet, their hearts exclaiming, "Thou only art worthy, to receive honour, and glory, dominion and praise." But his coming was not thus honoured; with the exception of the angels, who acted well their part, he came unnoticed. And man may well feel ashamed of the reception he met with. Jesus came to Bethlehem, and there was no room for him in the dwellings of the rich, no, not even in the inn. There was room in Bethlehem's inn for pageantry, and wealth, and pride, but none for Nazarene humility. But "let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this great thing which has come to pass." Seven cities contended for the birth-place of Homer, but a greater than Homer is here. All the fulness of the Godhead is centred in that new-born babe. That "holy thing" is the Son that was to be given and the Child that was to be born. No wonder that angels have come to his birth, and are singing of his glory in exultant strains on the common that surrounds the town. The pious shepherds hear them, and in they go to Bethlehem breathless with the news, and their glad homage to the new-born king of the Jews. They find him nestling, not in the lap of wealth, but in the stable of the caravansera, as the angels had said, reposing in a manger among the camels, while his mother, a stranger from Nazareth, watches nigh. But O! is not the thought too vast to be grasped! The mighty God who had lived throughout all the infinite past, amid the splendours of eternity, becoming a feeble and defenceless infant, to be denied a cradle in an inn! The shepherds look and wonder, for they never expected that the seed-royal of David—the seed-royal of heaven—would come thus. The Messiah they looked for was to come in unmistakeable