

are neglecting their studies and school; the merchants, that their clerks are unfitted for their daily duties; the churches, that their weaker members neglect the prayer-meeting and other means of grace. In addition to the waste of time and money and the probabilities of catching cold after being over heated, what effect have they upon the moral character? You can scarcely bring an argument against the race course or the public dance hall, but what can be applied with equal force to the skating-rink. Some may not be willing to admit this now, but the time is *not far distant*, when the above statement will be unquestioned. Here is a comingling of persons of both sexes and of all grades and with purposes corresponding; here are men and women too, struggling in the race to win the promised prize; here is the shouting, screaming, yelling and waving of hats to encourage those in the race, and the undisguised betting as to the results. And, at times, the sports of the evening close with (as one of our dailies termed it) a *grand dance* on the ice. And yet in the face of all this some professors ask "where is the harm of attending the rinks!"

AN article or two have been withheld from publication for the reason that the name of their authors are unknown to us. Let it be remembered that *no article* can appear in the columns of THE CHRISTIAN unless accompanied with the author's name and address. It need not appear in print, but it must be forwarded to the Editors.

WE are delighted to hear that Bro. Garrison is growing in favor with the brethren in Boston, and that his efforts are being crowned with success. The brethren there and elsewhere have long since realized that but little good could be done in Boston while compelled to meet in hired hall; but we understand that a building fund has been started under favorable auspices and that possibly in the near future we will have in Boston a meeting house of our own.

OUR obituary notices reveal to us the sad intelligence that Bro. Ossinger, one of the elders of the Church at Tiverton, has been called to mourn over the loss of his beloved partner in life. We sympathize with our brother in his deep affliction, and would remind him of that blessed promise—All things work together for *good* to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purposes.

BRO. F. D. POWELL, of Washington, D. C., writes to the *Christian Star*:—"To-day, March 10th, I baptized and received into the Vermont Avenue Church the Rev. J. H. El' Rey of Philadelphia. He was for sixteen years a clergyman of the Episcopal Church. He is a man of fine talents as a preacher and a devoted disciple of Christ.

WE have learned from a few of our subscribers that they have failed to receive regularly their papers. Enquiry at the office reveals the fact that they have been sent and must therefore have been lost on the way. If any of our readers are desirous of the missing numbers and will write us, we will try and supply them.

THE brethren and friends in Kempt have been showing their appreciation of Bro. Murray's labors in their midst by giving him a donation. We are pleased to hear this as it will greatly encourage him in his labor of love.

DURING the past month we have received several new subscribers, but we are anxiously waiting to hear from several of our readers as to what they are doing to aid us in raising the required number.

We learn that the revised version of the Old Testament is already printed in England, and will be issued immediately after Easter.

POSSIBLY we shall be able, in our next issue, to announce the place for holding our next annual.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

A WONDERFUL LAMP.

The one hundred and nineteenth psalm is a remarkable one, not only for its length (being the longest chapter in the Bible), but for other things also. Its great object is to show what a wonderful and excellent book the Bible is. Among other things it is compared to a *lamp*. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet." God has hung out this blessed lamp in a dark, dark sky, and its heavenly light shines calmly down on multitudes of poor, weary wanderers, who, without this welcome light to guide them, would be groping their way amidst all the horrors of midnight gloom and darkness. The Bible is a wonderful lamp—more wonderful even than the famous one of which we read in the Arabian story of Aladdin, which was said to possess the marvellous power of bringing to its possessor whatever he desired. Even were this true, it would be an unmitigated evil, as one of the worst things which could happen to any of us would be the ability to gratify our every wish, and to get whatever we wanted, without any regard to proper and legitimate exertion. The blessed thing about the Bible is that it promises only those things that are really good for us; and these it not only *promises*, but *secures* to us. Passing our many other excellent points in this lamp, we only stop now to notice one or two things about it.

It is wonderful for the *safety* which it affords. Persons who go into coal mines are exposed to many dangers. One of the chief of these arises from a peculiar kind of gas which is sometimes found there, and which explodes the very moment it comes in contact with the flame of a lamp or candle. Many lives have been lost in this way. Sir Humphrey Davy conferred a great boon on mankind by his invention of a safety-lamp, which greatly lessened the dangers of coal mining and saved many valuable lives. Now, this world is like a great coal mine, and all its inhabitants are like miners. The sins that abound here are like the dangerous gases found in the mines, and when they come in contact with our evil passions, violent explosions are produced. We need a safety-lamp to show us where the dangers lie and to point out how we may escape from them. The "Word" is the lamp which our heavenly Father has given us for this very purpose. If we carry it with us as we move about in this vast mine, and use it properly, it will afford us entire safety. It will warn us when danger is at hand, and help us to escape it. Those who use this lamp rightly are said to be "under the shadow of God's wings," and "in the hollow of his hand." What a position of safety is this! This was the position which David occupied when he said, "The Lord is my *light* and my *salvation*; whom then shall I fear?" He knew that an eye which never slumbers was watching over him, and that an arm which never wearies was outstretched for his defence. And this is as true of us as it was of David, provided we are walking by the light of this wonderful lamp.

AS THE CHRISTIAN is published under the auspices of the Mission Board, it might not be amiss to add that those who have experienced the benefits arising from a proper use of this wonderful lamp, should interest themselves in the work of making its good qualities known to those around them. Many around you, for whom Christ died, are "walking in the shadow of death." They are unconscious of their deadly peril. They need to be aroused to a sense of their danger. They need to be shown the pitfalls that lie in their path. They need to have the light of God's wonderful lamp shed along their pathway, that they may escape the snares of the fowler. May God give to the readers of this paper, grace, to make a right use

of this lamp themselves, and to do all they can to make it known to others. "While ye have the light, walk in the light, lest darkness come upon you." W. H. E.

Montreal, March, 1885.

"DID PAUL MAKE A MISTAKE?"

DEAR EDITORS.—In THE CHRISTIAN for March there appears an interesting article from Bro. R. W. Stevenson on the above subject, and, though I do not feel "more competent" to investigate the matter, still, with your permission, I will offer a few thoughts, not in the spirit of controversy, but by the way of inquiry.

Was the action of Paul in taking upon him the Nazarite vow a mistake? Bro. Stevenson has reached the conclusion "that the Apostle unwittingly made a mistake." I confess I am not ready to accept this, without more light. I have given the question some consideration since it appeared in our Sunday-school lesson, and have thought that instead of a mistake being made, the Apostle had acted wisely and in this action has given us all a beautiful lesson.

I will note some of my reasons for thinking he acted wisely. What he did on this occasion was done at the instance of the elders of the church at Jerusalem, with James at their head. They were on the spot, were well acquainted with all the circumstances, and were certainly competent to judge of the wisdom of such a course. To conclude that Paul's action was a mistake is to condemn the combined wisdom of the church at Jerusalem, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles. This is rather too much for my credulity. Again, it is thought that in taking this vow Paul acted contrary to his teaching; having taught that the law was done away. But will the circumstance justify this conclusion? I do not so read Paul's teaching. He certainly had taught that salvation was not by the law, but by the gospel. But does this mean that a Jewish Christian should not have the privilege of keeping certain customs of the law if he desired to do so? Was it a "streak of inconsistency" in Paul to "hasten if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost?" Acts, xx: 16. Was it not just as consistent to take a vow according to the law, as to attend a feast according to the same law? Or must we conclude that Paul, and James, and the elders at Jerusalem were blundering all along in this matter?

The question raised at the Council held at Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts xv, was not whether the Jewish Christian should cease to keep the law, but whether they should bind it on the Gentiles who had turned to God. The decision of this council, as advised by James, the same who advised Paul in the matter under consideration, was that the Gentiles should be free in this matter. And with this the teaching of Paul agrees when he says: "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith that works by love." Gal v: 6. Hence Paul was free to circumcise Timothy if he would, or to attend a Jewish feast, or even to take the Nazarite vow, so long as he was not looking to such things for his salvation, nor seeking to bind them upon any man. It was purely a matter of expediency by which he aimed to conciliate his brethren to whom his teaching had been misrepresented. But did it have the "desired effect" or was it a failure?

To decide this question we must try and learn the object they had in view. If it was to conciliate the unbelieving Jews, then it was a failure. But was this the object? From Acts xxi: 20, we learn that it was the Jews "which believe" in whose interest this vow was taken. And is there any evidence that it did not have the "desired effect" on them? Was it the brethren in Jerusalem who stirred up the people against Paul? Is there any evidence that they took any part in the riot that followed? For the credit of the Christians in Jerusalem I should hope not. On reading the history of the case we find that Paul had been in Jerusalem a week, nearly the