

entertainments, if it exists at all. Occasionally there is the introduction of a sacred piece to give consecration to the rest of the programme. One famous incident was the figuring in the programme of a so-called Sunday concert of the well-known song "Has anybody here seen Kelly?" This would not ordinarily be classified as sacred. For the most part, too, the promoters of Sunday entertainments have not shown special zeal in bringing the sacred into prominence in their relations. The tendency is a feature to be reckoned with. The descent from sacred to secular is often swift. A leading London Hotel (Eng.) has abandoned, so the report says, the Sunday concert for a cabaret show. The company, also, to which the Sunday concert makes its appeal looks not for the sacred, and the disposition of the promoters is to pander to the constituency.

Sunday concerts have been conducted under a plea of benevolence. Experience warrants us in saying that the benevolence figures much more largely in the plea than in the fact, in the announcement more than in the result. That we are warranted in such conclusion is indicated by the fact that the public to whom this plea is made is rarely taken into the confidence of those who solicit their patronage and furnished with an exact statement of receipts and disbursements as is common on other days and in other relations. One promoter of Sunday entertainments is reported to have said, "We gave a little to charity at first, but we do not give anything now." If charity is to be promoted by entertainments, we are not so rushed for time that the entertainment cannot be given during the week.

This plea of benevolence as a justification for Sunday concerts concerns itself not merely with the gift of money but with the social well-being of youth. It is common to hear that this "meets the need of the young men who have nowhere to go on Sunday and nothing to do," and that it keeps them from going to worse places, or engaging in unworthy conduct. We would be inclined to pay better heed to this if those promoting Sunday concerts were known for the most part to be interested in promoting youth during the week. However, let credit be given where it is due, and if the Sunday concert accomplishes that, well and good. But are there not other agencies of a special

character at work to that end? Then, it may be asked, how far do Sunday concerts keep young people from better things? How far do they, though not held at the hour of public worship, enter into competition with the Church in securing the attendance of the young? To what degree do they take young people from home on the day when home life may and ought to be at its best? How far, too, do they tend to quench the desire for worship and interfere with the growth of that self-reliance in the young, so much to be desired, which enables them to find enjoyable occupation in the inspiring and ennobling companionship of good books, or in quiet fellowship with those wiser and better than themselves? Consider requires the earnest consideration of these issues.

If entertainment or amusement is the object of the concert, may we not say that its mission is superfluous. The week is so filled with it. Since during six days we have a surfeit let us on the seventh have none. Is there anything more surely needed in these times than a day of quiet, where jarring sounds shall cease, and a day of separation, when we can be alone, or have leisure, at least, for our leisure?

If the Sunday concert is benevolent in aim and purpose a higher necessity, if it comes upon the scene to "renew the parishing and care for the dying," is it not apparent that these high ends can be better promoted by existing institutions and agencies and that a new one makes the "fifth wheel to the coach?" What great things could be accomplished if we all,—the man of high degree and the low, the organization and the individual, the city and the state, the council and the government—placed will and strength, love and wisdom, on this great day of service, at the disposal of existing institutions, the Church, the Sunday School and the Home, which cherish this high aim and which God has so honored, not dabbling with the uncertain and that which experience has taught to be dangerous? Life would lose none of its brightness thereby, and its fruit would abound. Humanity would be enriched, and the Christian Sabbath become, as it is designed, the great medium of promoting human happiness and well being.—H.

Sunday Concerts

A GENERAL CONSIDERATION
SUPPLEMENTING

The Lord's Day Act and Sunday Concerts

"Just as we need holy places,—the closet, the oratory, the church, the temple,—places not in themselves holier than other places of daily resort for mirth or pleasure, but holy because set apart from a common to a specially sacred use, to foster reverence, to promote, by the law of association, the spirit of worship,—So, I say, do we need separated times, a sacred day, not holier in itself than other days, but holy because set apart from common to special and spiritual uses."

—Ainsbury

THE LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE
833 CONFEDERATION LIFE BLDG.
TORONTO

SUNDAY CONCERTS

They are here and they constitute a problem in our social life. What shall we do about them? Shall we applaud or condemn, encourage or oppose? Our duty is imperative upon all, namely, to treat the matter seriously and do some thinking for ourselves. It will not do us credit to allow others to do our thinking, or to do our speaking first and our thinking later, and this Sunday issue demands personal, early, earnest and honest thought. In judging the case the Sunday concert is to be considered as it is, not as it ought to be. It is the actual, not the ideal Sunday concert that we must deal with.

In form they are varied. The manager in a popular hotel finds it necessary to entertain his guests during the meal hours on Sunday by means of a paid orchestra, and in the evening hour to provide a regular concert. Then there is the concert which is conducted in public halls and theatres, sometimes under the auspices of an individual, more frequently under the direction of bands. The moving picture show has its place on the list, and a large place is occupied by bands playing under the direction of municipal councils, park boards, and city street railways in the public squares and in parks private and public.

Some one may say these concerts are not illegal. Better be sure. Close inspection might reveal the contrary. It is true that the law is concerned, not with the amusement in itself, but with the business of amusement. Nevertheless, one was prepared to state that the element of business does not enter into some of these; that a Street Railway Co. hires a band for a Sunday concert solely for the public good? In so far as the element of business intrudes, the Sunday concert is illegal. Waving this point, however, let us remember that the legal test is not the final one. The Lord's Day Act is not designed as a standard of conduct for the observance of the Lord's Day. Its function is defense, to protect the institution against the ruthless intruder who would rob us of liberty and quiet by pushing business on the Lord's Day. That is not the highest type of citizenship which boasts of nothing better than conformity to the law. That a man keeps out of prison is not the worthiest tribute to be paid him as a citizen.

This is patriotism in the negative. To what positive virtues can he lay claim? So Sabbath observance calls surely for very much more than compliance with what the Sunday law demands. The law guarantees or provides the day. It cannot, in the full positive sense, determine the character of our Sabbath. The fence makes the garden possible, but man makes the garden; the law provides a Sabbath, it is for each to fix its character.

Another verdict is, that there is no harm in them; they are not immoral. A declaration of this character is not the last word upon the subject. If only the immoral were to be excluded from Sunday, what would be the distinction between it and other days? There is a law of the fitness of things by which we must judge the Sunday conduct of the individual or the company, the one or the many. Sunday conduct should correspond somewhat to church conduct. In the one case we have a sacred building, at least a building devoted to sacred purposes. Though we may not be engaged in acts of worship throughout the whole time spent within the building, yet we always treat the place with respect. It is rare for any man to enter a church building at any time without removing his hat, a token of respect for the place and indicative of a spirit of reverence that marks the man. Our attitude towards the Day should be characterized by similar regard and like tokens of respect. Thus the respectful and reverent distinguish themselves from the vulgar. The forms of reverence are important and there is some significance in the fact that the Quakers, so it is said, always regard it as a sure sign of early apostasy when a brother changes hat or garb in slightest departure from the prescribed form.

If we do not make the day immoral we may make it secular. This is what we have done with other days. What about the national Thanksgiving? Is it not true that the religious recognition of it is largely abandoned? People do not assemble in their churches to give thanks to Almighty God for His goodness during the year, except in limited number. The day is one for paganism, for occasion, for holidaying and military maneuvers. So the Lord's Day, honored by our forefathers as a day for higher pursuits, is likely to succumb to this tide of secular influence and the holy day

become a holiday in which the secular alone shall have sway. Thus its high purpose would be defeated.

This transformation from sacred to secular will proceed apace if conducted under high auspices. The crowd respects a leader, and will accord him the greater homage according to his pre-eminence; and the same law of submission will prevail whether the leader be a social dignitary, a high priest of the church, a municipal council, a provincial or national government. Great significance attaches to the Sunday entertainment, according to the elevation of the leader or the influence of the public body under whose patronage it is given or under whose auspices it is conducted.

Again, popularity is not the final word. The chance of the multitude is not to be our guide in Sabbath observance. There is no question but that a Sunday concert would be attractive;—as a matter of fact it is, in the most of places where they have been held. If the promoters have complained of a lack, it is not lack of attendance. A swimming race, a baseball game, a moving picture show, a circus on Sunday, would in almost any part of the land gather the crowd. Would we, however, care to have these as features of our Sunday? Would they be proper? The presence of many at a Sunday concert is not an evidence of the need or the rightness of the entertainment or its fitness for the Lord's Day. It is only testimony of the people's desire. To preserve the Lord's Day we must have respect, not to what the people wish, but to what business needs, and if wish and need draw apart it surely is our duty to awaken desire, not only for the good and the better, but for the very best things on the Lord's Day. Must we not have respect for the object for which the day was given and the purpose of the Giver, and so regulate our desires in keeping with that will and that design that we shall safeguard our highest interests?

Regarding the actual Sunday concert in the light of positive claims, we note that it has been heralded as "sacred," and therefore properly having a place on Sunday. The distinction between sacred and secular is not formally drawn, but in the popular mind there exists a definite distinction to which respect should be paid. Applying therefore, this popular standard, the Sunday sacred concert is the rarest among Sunday