

saying that our aim is to so secularise the Sabbath as to introduce labor, and abolish its distinctive character. This we emphatically deny, knowing full well that hard-working humanity needs a recurrent day of rest and recreation. In recognising this need, we by no means admit its divine origin; and we can demonstrate that its necessity was perceived by man long before the institution of the Mosaic Sabbath. But what we maintain is that it should be purely a day of recreation and rest, in the proper sense of the term; that is, that, instead of a man shutting himself up in a very often stuffy and ill-ventilated building, listening to the dreary platitudes of a drowsy parson, the hell-fire denunciations of a perspiring ranter, or indulging in the dyspeptic and over-fed slumbers of an untimely nap; he should refresh and rebuild the mental and physical frame by imbibing the pure air of heaven, or by some outdoor exercise, such as cricket, boating, tennis, or other healthful recreation. We sometimes give vent to a regretful sigh to think how probably the next generation, or at the most a few years hence, men and woman, boys and girls, will every 7th day enjoy the now almost unknown blessing of a true holiday,

How often the parrot cry is raised by the clergy that if we do away with Christianity we also abolish all morality and all check on crime. Surely it is but a poor compliment to humanity to suppose that men can only be kept from leading vicious lives by fear of future punishment or hope of reward. That faith and morals are not necessarily inseparable has been demonstrated over and over again, and also that faith has little or nothing to do with progress and civilisation. We opine that few Christians would hold out the hand of fellowship to Mormons, or deny that they are the followers of a most pernicious and damnable heresy; yet we have it on the very best authority—the authority of unfriendly reports—that crime is almost unknown amongst their own members; that but for the Gentiles, *i.e.*, Christians, in their midst, there would be no need for gaols or police; and that, scarcely with an exception, the Gentiles own all the drinking-bars, gambling saloons, and brothels! In having turned an arid, saline wilderness into a flourishing garden, their progress is demonstrated as a problem of Euclid. And yet there are Christians so devoid of humour as to deliberately preach in their midst the Gospel of conversion!

A recent return laid on the table of the House of Commons states that during the year 1883 forty-four poor wretches died of starvation in London alone! It is said that sermons can be preached from stones,—how much more from this ghastly statement? Think of it! ye well-fed, well-housed bishops, deans, and Christian clergy! What has your faith done, what is it doing, to allay the fearful misery and crime of pauper London? What avail is it to proclaim with trumpet-blast that your wealthy bible societies issue their millions of bibles, in hundreds of foreign tongues, when thousands are starving in your midst? A few generations hence the student of history will wonder at the strange anomaly of a faith spending its thousands of pounds, and sending its army of missionaries abroad to convey a doubtful benefit to the heathen, with such a field at its very doors! Jesus of Nazareth said—“Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” Take heart, poor, drunken, starved, and degraded wretches, for heaven knows you are poor enough, and great must be your reward hereafter!

Progress.

SUNDAY CONCERTS.

The question of charging admission to the Sunday Concerts in Auckland, having been raised by the authorities, the President of the Auckland Rationalistic Society (Mr. A. Campbell) writes as follows:—“There is very considerable taste for music in this city, suburbs, and throughout the provincial district generally. Evidence of this fact is found in the large trade in the sale of musical instruments and musical literature; in the excellent patronage given to opera in the city and to local concerts throughout the country; in the introduction of musical instruments into church assemblies, and the competition between churches as to which shall produce the best musical attractions. It is well known that many attend churches solely to listen to the music, and by this class the music without the service, rather than with the service, is preferred. The Choral Society have with great spirit and liberality for several years given once a year a free treat of this kind, and on Sundays; and on these occasions, though the Choral Hall had been twice as large, it would have been filled. So much for the capability of a large portion of the Auckland public to enjoy music without a religious service. Now for the payment of the music. We all know that a concert, whether on a Saturday or a Sunday, must be paid for by some party; and, although the members of the Choral Society can happily afford to be generous and give their concerts free, yet these concerts cost them much, and they might as well have made a charge; and on each occasion they could easily have had at least fifty pounds, which, if their Society did not require, could have been disposed of amongst our charitable institutions. The question how payment should be made by the entertained at a Sunday concert seems to be one in which no Government has any call to interfere, and may safely be left for the entertainers and the entertained to settle between themselves. There are two modes of payment—the fixed charge and the voluntary collection. The fixed charge has the merit of being business-like. It places the entertainer and the entertained on an equal and reciprocal footing. The entertained pay for certain music, the music is supplied, the engagement between the parties is completed, and they are quits. In the voluntary collection method, the entertainers do their part, and then adopt the role of the mendicant and beg from the entertained a charity to keep them alive until the next occasion they may entertain them, and again beg for such charity as the entertained may dole out. Of course, you have seen a street musician grinding his tune or singing his song, and seen also his boy amongst the crowd collecting a few coins. This is exactly the position which is tried to be forced upon the promoters of Sunday concerts. Now, we all know the inbred meanness of a large portion of our community—how unwilling they are to pay for anything they may get for nothing. We read every week the miserably small voluntary collections obtained at the Sunday evening Theatre services, and the same fact has leaked out with regard to Mr. Brown's services at the Opera House. With such people, who it appears can neither be coaxed nor shamed into paying, it is surely better to adopt the commercial system and make them pay for value received. It would be good teaching—practical teaching of manliness and honesty—if every church and Sunday assembly adopted fixed charges. I have learned that at St. Patrick's Cathedral this method is adopted, and I have not heard that it has been challenged by the police. Entertainments where a fixed charge is made are always more orderly than free entertainments. The beggarly crowd waiting to scramble for free crumbs are kept outside. Payment gives to the entertainment a value, and the man who is willing to pay has the sense to behave. The commotion caused by the concert of Messrs Hallifax and Dean would not have occurred had not Superintendent Thompson interfered and caused the fixed charge to be abandoned; him I do not blame, but those who