

with trumpets." This act never failed all through the history of Israel. They sang in captivity, they sang on their return. Our Lord at the institution of the Supper sang, the apostles, even in Roman dungeons in the stocks, sang. The host of God all along has been a singing host, coming to the heavenly Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. A redeemed people could not do otherwise. They must sing—they worship in singing. Their hearts like a growing rose-bud burst into the beauty and fragrance of song. They cannot help but sing. They sing alone in the privacies of life and they sing in the public offices of devotion and worship. Singing is a necessity. Well then, since singing is of such an essential nature in a godly life, what provision should be made for it in public worship? Certainly it ought to hold a foremost place. In it the people audibly express themselves. In it, they pour out, like the singing bird, their hearts before the Lord. In it they worship. And this they cannot do by proxy. It is best that they should do it for themselves. To place an arrest on congregational singing is to deprive the people of a sacred enjoyment, and also of an act of high import. In song the whole nature is called forth into activity. The soul is stirred, the heart is moved, the memory is quickened, the entire man is prepared for the preaching of the Word. Good congregational singing gives warmth to a people and lifts them to a higher emotional plane. It shakes them loose from the spiritually enervating conditions in which they moved just before, and brings them into touch with the Divine. In the olden time it was when the people praised God and gave thanks that the glory of God appeared. It is when the heart is attuned to sing heartily in worship that the opening heavens around us shine with beams of sacred bliss. To-day there is a tendency to a practice greatly to be deplored, viz., that of leaving the singing to the choir or to a quartette. Both are bad, and exceedingly destructive of congregational worship. The very entrance of either should be resisted strongly.

If the people do not sing aloud they should be invited and even urged to do so. In the United States quartette choirs have killed out congregational singing, and in doing that have deadened the spirit of worship. Not long ago we heard a minister say in his prayer after the quartette choir had sung several times and the people had sat looking on "Accept O Lord these services of praise that we have rendered." That was hardly true.

There are many unanswerable reasons against allowing either a choir or a quartette to deprive the people of the joy of the service of song in the House of the Lord. The first is that it is a performance for æsthetic and not spiritual effect. Nothing in the worship should be permitted that does not edify. To hear the cultured voices rising and falling and intertwining—without the words being recognizable is simply tantalizing. And it is the voice culture that is exhibited usually and not the message of truth that is delivered. A solo, such as "One Sweetly solemn Thought" sung by a clear distinct voice, may minister grace unto the hearers. It is a sermon in song. And this should be cultivated for occasional use in all our congregations. The second reason is, it deadens a congregation. It deprives them of their part in worship. They sit and listen, and alas, too often to that that has nothing in it for them. It simply takes the

heart out of the majority of the congregation. The Sabbath Worship is for all the people and not a few musically cultured people. It is for the whole congregation. The third reason is, it is too expensive. What is required to maintain a quartette choir would keep too missionaries in the Home Mission Field. If the money can be raised—and it is often a burden to do so, let it go for Home Missions. The fourth reason is, it hinders many of the young people from singing in the choir where their distinctive talents might be employed to the Glory of God. The ruling idea in the Church to day is, "To every man his work," and by relegating to a quartette choir that that might employ twenty or thirty young people, we are closing out a fine field of service from an exceedingly interesting part of our congregations.

Mr. Moody's method may be noticed. He has half an hour singing to prepare the people to take in the message. By song he breaks the current of their thoughts setting world-ward and turns the current God-ward, and brings them into sympathy with the truth of God. There is in this practice a perceptible advantage. All large and successful congregations make much of singing, and that the singing of all the people. Whatever else is done let us never lessen the part the congregation take in praising God unitedly.

Attention. We ask special attention to the communication from the Rev. R. P. MacKay, in another column. The scheme proposed cannot fail to accomplish much good, both to the Societies and to the cause of Missions.

Church Population in the U.S. Some interesting statistics have been brought to light in regard to the Churches in the United States in the census report now being printed. It embraces more than 800 pages, and contains colored maps illustrating the extent of the various organized religious bodies in the respective States. A study of it shows 143 distinct denominations, besides independent churches and miscellaneous congregations. The most cheering fact is found in the large number of communicants reported, the total being 20,612,500. These belong to 165,177 organizations or congregations. There are 142,521 edifices, with sittings for 43,564,863 persons. The church property used exclusively for purposes of worship is valued at \$679,630,139. There are 111,036 regular ministers, not including lay preachers. As to membership, the leading denominations rank as follows:—Catholic, 6,250,000; Methodist, 4,600,000; Baptist, 3,725,000; Presbyterians, 1,280,332; Lutheran, 1,230,000; Protestant Episcopal, 540,000. Among the more surprising results are the statements that "out of a total of 130,000 Jewish communicants the Reformed exceed the Orthodox by 15,000. There are 13,500 Russian Orthodox, 100 Greek Orthodox and 10,850 Greek Catholics." It is still more surprising that the Salvation Army has only 8,742 members enrolled, and the Christian Scientists, who talk so loudly and boastingly, have just 18 less than that number. Neither does the order of "Ethical Culture" make much showing, numbering only 1,064, and the latest of religious enlighteners, the Altruists, can report but 25 followers. The Theosophical Society does a little better, having an aggregate of 695. It is also stated that "in number of communities and value of church property New York leads and Pennsylvania follows. But in number of organizations and church edifices Pennsylvania is first and Ohio second. The increase in the value of church property since 1870 has been \$325,146,558, or nearly ninety-two per cent., while the number of churches has increased forty two per cent.; the increase in the number of organizations is one hundred and twenty-six per cent."