

And Toplady singing:

"Rock of ages left for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Servants of God come into the unity of the faith when they are expressing their heart's love to Him in singing praise. It is the expression, too, of the Church's hope for we sing of the better land. It is wonderful how many of the sweet hymns take our thoughts up to the heavenly home. We are basing our thoughts and desires upon the glorious home which the Lord has provided, and so we like to sing together the hymn "Over there." The Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Barclay Church, Edinburgh, whom Mr. Moody knows very well, tells that on one occasion he went to see a poor parishioner, who had a large family of children. She was endeavoring by her own industry to provide for them. He went there with rather a sad heart, because he knew she had to battle with poverty and difficulty. He looked in, for the door was open. She was sitting between two cradles, and a string tied between them enabled her to rock them together. She had her knitting in her hand and was singing:

"There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for me."

He said he never knew the meaning of those words until he heard the woman singing with a happy heart. Then is not praise the truest expression of the world's love to Christ? I see that people express their love in songs. It is in love songs that the language of the heart speaks out the world over. And shall we who have learned to love Christ not sing songs of praise to Him, and know that when we are singing His praises we are brought into the closest and most loving fellowship and communion with Him? Our hearts have burned within us while we have sung his praises at this meeting, and we all want the worshipful feeling which rises when we sing "Worthy is the Lamb that died for us." I want to add this: If we are to have the service of praise made more helpful we must have converted singers. But we want something more. We want consecrated singers. Some ladies and gentlemen who have fine voices and sing in drawing-rooms and general concerts will not sing in church choirs because there are some poor people in the choir, and they are afraid lest they should lose caste. We want the highest talent and culture in the Church of Christ, but it must be consecrated to the Lord. I want Christian people to sing God's praises in their families. Many of you had worship this morning without the singing of praise. The children would have sang if you had led them. If you cannot sing yourself, your children can. I have a boy who could raise a tune for a whole audience. All children have a little singing power, if we only knew how to bring it out. Let us go about singing God's praises; let us sing in our homes, and then we shall not find the service of song the cold, dry, formal service we often find it. I wish I could get my choir to become seated before I go on to the platform. I kneel down in my vestry the last thing. I am afraid the choir have another preparation. There is the flutration, the laughing and joking in the vestibule, and they often take their places without any sense of solemnity, without knowing how solemn is the duty they are about to perform. We should not allow any to lead us in the service of song who are not prepared to give their hearts to the Lord altogether.

MR. McGRANAHAN—The last speaker has gone to the centre of the matter. Paul put it in two words—

sing with the "spirit" and "understanding." We have commenced at the wrong end of the text in the Staves; I do not know how it is here. We have been working on the "understanding," trying to get music beautiful, grand and good. We are told by Him who knew all about it, that God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. In too many cases it is all art, and no heart; it is like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals before God. We must have Christ's spirit and His love. If we are to be channels through which His power shall come, we must be moved by His power. If we are not His children, we are out of place in the Church's choir. But some will say, "Then are we not to have good music in church?" "Yes, God must have the best." But we must make a distinction between a concert and worship in God's house. A concert is one thing, worship is another. A piece of sculpture may be a close likeness to the original, but it has not the living, moving spirit of the individual whom it represents. So music may be fine as art, and yet worthless as worship. So it seems to me, we must sing not only with the understanding, but with the spirit. Music must be kept in the background, and used to interpret, not to cover up.

MR. MOODY.—There is great power in singing. I do not know anything about music—don't know one note from another. I was in a train going east a short time ago, and a man came up to me and said I had been rather hard on his friends. I wanted to know how. "Well," he said, "I belong to those that believe in fine music." I said I didn't know I had said anything against such people. He said he thought I had said some pretty hard things against them in the city where I had just been preaching. He said, "I sing in a church where they have fine music; they have a good many rich men in the church, they are able to pay for good singing and they get it. They give four or five thousand dollars a year for the choir." Yes, I said, do you have a good audience in the church? "A grand audience on Sunday morning—a full house every morning." I just drew him on, and finally I said, "How many conversions have you had?" "Well," said he, "I am sorry you ask that question." He seemed a little flustered, and he finally owned up there had not been any conversions for a number of years. But they had good music. It was very fine. That is the kind of thing I protest against. It is, as one speaker has said, like an army fighting without bullets. They are filling the air with noise, but nothing is accomplished. I think that if the church would take that four or five thousand dollars and hire godly women to go among the poor, and sing these songs among them, they would do more good. Let them draw the musical talent out of the congregation. There are probably forty or fifty young women in this congregation who can sing and play the piano, and if they would get these into the choir and spend the money in supporting missionaries, they would do more good. It is a mistake to have the choir at the other end of the church from the pulpit. I am glad to see that you have the choir near the pulpit here. I think it would be a good thing if my brother, who first spoke, would have his choir in his vestry before service, and let him have prayer with them before service and go on the platform together. It would be better; his choir would be more in sympathy with him. I pity the preacher who has to choose hymns before the service and stick to them. If his choir is at the other end of the church he may want to make a change, but he cannot get to them. What is the use of a man praying