

BOOK REVIEWS

Coleman, Robert E. *Songs of Heaven*. Old Tappan, N.J.: F. H. Revell Co., 1980. 159 pp. \$6.95.

The author is professor of evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary. With a strong emphasis on devotional study, Coleman plows fresh ground in an area of NT Scripture where most would not think treasures for devotional life and present-day applications can be discovered. This book explores the "songs heard around the throne" in the book of Revelation as expressing the depths of worship God desires for his people.

In this study of such hymns or parts thereof as Rev 4:8, 4:11, 5:9-10, 5:12, 5:13-14, 6:10, 7:10, 7:12, 11:15, 11:17-18, 12:10-12, 15:3-4, 19:1-4, and 19:6-7, the author provides an insightful and lucid supplement to average interpretations of the book of Revelation. Thus beginning in Rev 4 and continuing intermittently through chap. 19, these doxologies provide a celestial background to history that in the midst of the dissolution of human institutions speak about the unchanging and abiding reality of an eternal world in which God's unfailing purpose manifests itself. These hymns reveal the proper response of created beings to the manifestation of the glory of God. It is argued that these "songs of heaven" inform us of the essence of worship: God—his character, his attributes, his acts, his benefits, his pleasure. "It is in beholding His glory that the creature has its highest joy" (p. 17).

Coleman agrees that these hymns share characteristics of earliest liturgical hymns and does not preclude the possibility that John's visions may incorporate established patterns of worship in the early church, maintaining at the same time that John wrote what he saw. The hymns, in the author's view, are the primary unifying element in the narrative, "as the church militant on earth (1:1-3:22) moves through struggle and martyrdom (4:1-20:15) to become the church triumphant in heaven (21:1-22:17)" (p. 22). Whereas this division of the book of Revelation is open to question, the author emphasizes that his work is intended for meditative reading and reflection, not academic disputation. Yet, in view of the extensive research that is evident, one wonders why Coleman proposes that the threefold affirmation "holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God . . ." (Rev 4:8) "suggests the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, all of whom share equally in the divine attributes" (p. 33), when indeed the threefold repetition (cf. Isa 6:3) is a Semitic way of expressing the superlative.

All in all, this is a masterly exposition and application of hymns in the book of Revelation. The reader is drawn into praise and adoration, and

as the reader meditates upon these "songs of heaven" he joins the celebration in heaven.

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Gundry, Stanley N. *Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976. 252 pp. \$6.95.

In the book *Love Them In*, Gundry not only achieves his objective of drawing a good sketch of D. L. Moody's beliefs, but also, because of his systematic effort to place the evangelist within the streams of religious thought of his times, he provides an excellent survey of the main theological currents of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The author introduces the reader to the whole spectrum of "moodyanas" and points out some of the limitations of the material available. The book is clear and thought-provoking, and will be of great value to all who are interested in piety and theology in nineteenth-century America or in the problems of evangelism.

The keystone of Moody's theology focused around what he called "the three R's in the Bible: ruin by sin, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost" (p. 88), essentially the "practical" doctrines of Christianity that an evangelist is bound to emphasize. Besides those points, Gundry also considers Moody's ecclesiology, eschatology, and attitude toward modernism. Obviously, as Gundry recognizes, we are far from any systematic theology, and this is made so much the more evident that the evangelist seldom took time to spell out any point of theology beyond the sermonic level. That consideration should make us cautious about any dogmatic conclusion, since a theologian often sounds quite differently in the pulpit from the way he expresses himself in his study.

Gundry is eager to dispel certain misconceptions concerning Moody. For instance, he grapples with the evangelist's statement, "It makes no difference how you get a man to God, provided you get him there," and he defends his hero from having allowed the requirements of professional revivalism to determine his theology. This concern leads Gundry to dissociate Moody sharply from Charles G. Finney's "new measures," which systematically worked upon the listeners' wills. Gundry stresses Moody's rejection of emotionalism—"the anxious bench" (which he replaced by the inquiry room)—and of the appeal to the fear of hell fire. Rather, Moody relied upon the drawing power of the gripping account of God's love. Of special significance was Moody's premillennialism that put the emphasis on preaching the gospel rather than the postmillennialist determination to win souls in order to establish God's kingdom on earth.