

THE HEDGEHOG REVIEW

♪ Good Hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy
by Reginald Heber, 1826

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns
Around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name,
In earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

What's Right...

This hymn declares who God is and what he does.
We don't get lost in our feelings and experiences.

The proper focus of worship is to acclaim God.
Essentially this is done every time we say "Amen,"
which means "this is true."

For those Lutherans using the ELCA's new hymnal,
ELW, beware the change to the abstraction "sinfulness"
in the 3rd stanza. It destroys the poetic imagery.

LBW: "Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may
not see."

ELW: "Though the eye of sinfulness Thy glory may
not see."

This hymn is especially appropriate as an opening or
closing hymn.

Bad Hymn ♪

Gather Us In
by Marty Haugen

Here in this place the new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry
we are the old who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

ELW #532

What's Wrong...

Is this 3rd grade poetry or 4th grade poetry? The
phrases are wooden, trite, derivative.

It is also a "we-we-we" hymn. Almost every line
focuses on us – our fears, our dreamings; "we have
been sung," "we have been called to be light." We, we,
we – we are so engrossed in ourselves.

And the burden is on us, too. It's up to us to make
the Christian life happen. "We" are even supposed to be
"light to the whole human race."

What's Missing? Christ crucified, the Trinity, sin.
Like many contemporary hymns, this one could be
sung at a Unitarian-Universalist Assembly. There is
nothing much Christian about it.

To be sure, there are a few (fractured) Biblical
images in verses 3 and 4 – "the wine and the water"
and "the bread of new birth." What a mixed metaphor.
But all these images are found in Gnostic, Wiccan,
Unitarian, and New Age religion as well.