

Henry, Carl F. H. *Gods of this Age or God of the Ages?* Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994. 323 pp. \$15.95.

Gods of this Age or God of the Ages? is actually a compilation of Henry's various articles and addresses—twenty-four in all—published or delivered between 1980 and 1990. Their selection has been meaningfully executed and so is the catchy title which fittingly canopies them all.

Reading *Gods of this Age or God of the Ages?* conjures up a picture of Henry holding a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. On the one hand, the newspaper reports the society's crises: ecological disasters, suicide, alcoholism and drug abuse, mass murders and genocide, AIDS, and satanic cults, to name a few. On the other hand, the Bible seems to point out that if nothing is done, all this will sooner or later end up in a "civilizational carnage" (3-4, 14-17, 30-34). "Night-fall [for Western culture] may be close at hand" (6, 284). It is heading straight for divine judgment (176, 203, 320). "A death warrant hangs over modernity" (10).

What could be the cause as well as the remedy for these evils besieging America and Western civilization? The book is essentially an attempt to answer this serious question which, in Henry's view, is due to the bartering of worldviews. It is the case of the disavowing of biblical theism for scientific naturalism and secular humanism (14). This diagnosis inevitably leads Henry to a comprehensive criticism of naturalism and secular humanism, which he considers as the center of Western culture and the covert metaphysics of liberal learning. Humanism is the "omnipresent enemy" of America and is already having a "strangle hold" on its people (25, 47-48, 192). The disavowal of God [by these two isms] as ultimate authority leads to the disavowal of objective absolutes, revealed truths, scriptural imperatives, and fixed principles, which further leads to subjectivism, relativism, and the acceptance of Oriental religions with their pantheistic outlook and subsequent low view of sin (48, 222, 311, 320, 445). These are the "gods" that Western society is worshipping in place of the God of the ages it used to worship decades ago.

What is the remedy? As Henry sees it, there is only one: Biblical (or evangelical) theism (14-15, 183, 279). These menacing gods must be replaced by the principles of biblical theism on all fronts—education, law, politics, economics, philosophy, sciences, literature and the arts. And for this he calls upon the "believing church," that is, evangelical Christianity, to take up the mission because it is the "only real bastion" of hope for Western society (6, 99, 161, 165-168, 177, 183-184, 192). "The time is now and the race is now" (43).

The book is a moving witness to Henry's main theme, evident in the majority of his writings: the indispensability of biblical theism for the well-being of Western society and the evangelical's onus in helping put the God of the Bible back into Western society. Formerly, Henry had also issued other books bearing a similar message: *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1948), *A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration* (1971), *The Christian Mindset in a Secular Society* (1984), and *Twilight of a Great Civilization* (1988). However, this one under review is by far more intense and lengthier.

Gods of this Age or God of the Ages? also impresses the reader with the universality of the Christian gospel and its principles. It is precisely in this context that Henry devotes several pages to describing theology's task, which serves as an

antidote for armchair-and-ivory-tower-theologians (245-249, 251-254). Most importantly, the book exposes the mortal dangers of naturalism and secular humanism. It can be likened to a smoke detector that emits a shrill sound, bidding us to act because an engulfing "fire" is surrounding the "building" of Western culture.

The book, however, leaves the reader with some unanswered issues: (1) How is one to balance between theonomism (or Christian Reconstructionism) and secularism? If Henry had his wish, how is his state different from a Hindu or Muslim state? (2) In view of his convictions that moral directions and political power are inseparable (73), how would a Henry-minded ruling party, representing the majority, resist the temptation to directly or indirectly enforce its ideology on minorities that happen to hold to a radically different ideology? It is one thing to lavishly promise religious freedom (181-182, 189, 192, 235), and quite another thing to restrain the logical ramifications and operations of one's presuppositions on account of the religious freedom of another. (3) If Oriental religions are looked upon as evidence of man's revolt against God (222), why is it that Henry fails to mention the apparently high morality evident in the lands as well as in the ethical teachings of the Oriental religions (e.g., *Ahimsa* or nonviolence of the Hindus)? (4) Isn't there a need for balancing his crusade for biblical theism with a crusade for Christ-like living? This is not to suggest that Henry has altogether ignored it (e.g., ch. 22), but he has hardly raised the issue to the level and intensity of biblical theism and its ramifications.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that the book needs a little more careful editing. For instance, on page 263, there is "meeting" instead of "meaning." But this is not hard to figure out. However, what does "... he 'birth'" ... mean? (264). Surely both word and grammar must be in trouble, here! "Evangelism theism" (268) should be "evangelical theism." "'Rest' of truth" (280) should be "'test' of truth." "Word," for the Greek *cosmos* (285), should be "world." "Three Self patriotic movement" (286) betrays a careless handling of the story of contemporary Chinese Christianity. The name consists of all four words and is written: "Three-Self Patriotic Movement." And what about the title of the book itself? Should it be "gods of this Age or ... God of the Ages?" (front cover), or "Gods of this Age or God of the Ages?" (header), or "Gods of this age or god of the ages?" (the verso of the title page). In this last instance, would it not be more appropriate to use an upper-case "G" for "'God' of the ages?" He surely deserves it!

Spicer Memorial College
Pune, India

BOXTER KHARBTENG

Hess, Richard S., and David Toshio Tsumura, eds. *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood—Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*. Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, vol. 4. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994. 480 pp. + xvi. \$34.50.

Editors Hess (Glasgow Bible College) and Tsumura (Japan Bible Seminary) introduce Gen 1-11 and then by their writing and choice of articles lead the reader on a guided tour of key parts in these chapters. After three introductory essays—two by Hess (one original and one a reprint) and one by Tsumura (original)—25 other essays by 23 different authors are presented. All 25 are reprints