

I Thirst, But Not as Once I Did*William Cowper (1731–1800)*

I thirst, but not as once I did,
 The vain delights of earth to share:
 Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
 That I should seek my pleasure there.

It was the sight of thy dear cross
 First wean'd my soul from earthly things;
 And taught me to esteem as dross
 The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

I want that grace that springs from thee,
 That quickens all things where it flows,
 And makes a wretched thorn, like me,
 Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.

Dear fountain of delight unknown!
 No longer sink below the brim;
 But overflow, and pour me down
 A living, and life-giving stream!

For sure, of all the plants that share
 The notice of thy Father's eye,
 None proves less grateful to his care,
 Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

*In the Nick of Time***Most Interesting Reading of 2018: Part One***Kevin T. Bauder*

Every now and then I try to provide a list of the books I've found most interesting during the preceding year. These are not necessarily the most useful books or the books that I think everybody ought to read. They are simply the titles that I found intriguing for one reason or another. Your mileage may vary.

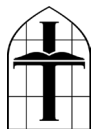
The list is too long to cover in a single issue of "In the Nick of Time." Here is the first part of the list. The second part will appear next week.

Stephen Braun, *Buzz: The Science and Lore of Alcohol and Caffeine* (Oxford).

As the title implies, this book deals with two elements. The first is the science of how both alcohol and caffeine affect the brain and body. The second is the "lore" of these two drugs, including legends, episodes, and the famous Letterman quote, "If it weren't for the caffeine, I'd have no identifiable personality whatsoever." Braun manages to reduce some fairly complex science to simple and understandable analogies. While he isn't even remotely interested in evangelical debates over the ethics of alcohol, his book provides useful information that should inform those debates.

Rosaria Butterfield, *Openness Unhindered* (Crown and Covenant).

In the first place, Butterfield writes beautifully and compassionately. In the second place, she knows what she's talking about. Butterfield was a tenured professor at Syracuse and a practicing lesbian when she came to Christ. Her first book, *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*, tells the story of her conversion. While this volume retains a personal touch, it also addresses some of the more difficult issues in the debate over sexual orientation and identity. It is not simply a thoughtful book or a book that wrestles with issues. Butterfield is the kind of writer who brings personal spiritual challenges to her readers.



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M. Stanton Evans, *Stalin's Secret Agents: The Subversion of Roosevelt's Government* (Threshold).

I grew up in an era when conservatives who hinted that there *might* just be some Communist influences in the government were roundly dismissed as paranoid “McCarthyites.” Now, along comes Evans, taking advantage of previously-unavailable documentation from the Depression and World War II. He demonstrates that the Roosevelt administration was fairly littered with Communist sympathizers and fellow-travelers who were willing to promote the interests of the USSR at the expense of the USA. This book belongs on the shelf right beside Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness*.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Cambridge).

One of my seminary professors used to say that *The Great Gatsby* was the Great American Novel. It certainly rates as one of them. The story is a fascinating glimpse into the America of the Roaring Twenties. It is also an intriguing exploration of wealth, status, pathos, and hubris. How did I make it through high school, four years of college, and more than ten years of graduate school without ever reading this book?

Tony Hillerman, *The Blessing Way, Navaho Police* 01 (Harper).

I like murder mysteries. I am fascinated by cultures not my own. I love the American Southwest. These interests come together in Hillerman’s stories about Navajo police officers Joe Leaphorn, Jim Chee, and Bernadette Manuelito. This is just the first in a series that is now being continued by Hillerman’s daughter, Anne. While I’m only listing the first book, they’re all worth reading for their studies of both character and culture. Yes, this is recreational reading, but it is also instructive reading.

Stephen L. James, *New Creation Eschatology and the Land* (Wipf and Stock).

It is rare that a book of theology is sufficiently interesting to make this list (and I read mostly theology). James’s book does, largely because of the thrust of his argument. He writes to a new generation of eschatologists who try to combine a form of amillennialism with an eternal destination for the blessed on the new earth. All forms of amillennialism deny that the “land” promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are fulfilled to national Israel. So James asks the logical question: If you have a new earth, and if the new earth is a *renewed* earth (rather than a completely new creation), then what happens to the land? It doesn’t just disappear, does it? You’ll have to read James to discover how he answers this question.

Michael Jecks, et al, *The Tainted Relic Medieval Murderers* 01 (Simon and Schuster).

Beginning with the Jerusalem of 1100 and ending on the banks of the modern-day Thames, this collection spins a series of yarns about a cursed fragment of the true cross. The stories were written by six British writers of murder mysteries. Did I mention that I like a good murder mystery?

Robert Jordan, *The Eye of the World, Wheel of Time* 01 (Tor).

Friends give you books. Good friends give you good books. A good friend gave me this book because he knew that I liked Tolkien, and he thought that Jordan’s *Wheel of Time* series was actually better than *The Lord of the Rings*. I don’t want to debate that point—but Jordan’s series is certainly longer, with a more fully-developed mythopoeic world. Each of Jordan’s books is more than half as long as the whole *Lord of the Rings*, and there are fourteen volumes altogether. If I can read one each year, I just might make it through the series before I die.

And that’s just under half my list. As you can see, I’m a fairly eclectic reader. That’s one of my weaknesses—a scholar has to keep much more focus in reading than I do. But I’m also a preacher, and a preacher has to know something about human nature and motivations, something about the world, and (perhaps most importantly) something about how to reach the imagination without manipulating the appetites. I allow all of those concerns to drive my reading. Stay tuned: there will be more next week.



This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
