

Awake, My Soul*Thomas Ken (1637–1711)*

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
thy daily stage of duty run;
shake off dull sloth, and early rise
to pay thy morning sacrifice.

Lord, I my vows to Thee renew.
Disperse my sins as morning dew;
guard my first springs of thought and will,
and with Thyself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest, this day,
all I design or do or say,
that all my pow'rs, with all their might,
in Thy sole glory may unite.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Him all creatures here below;
praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Most Interesting Reading of 2018: Part Two***Kevin T. Bauder*

In last week's "In the Nick of Time" I began listing my most interesting reading from 2018. Here that list continues. Both submissions should be read together as a single list. Let me state that these are not necessarily the best books that I read (though some of them are). Nor am I suggesting these as titles that you should read. The listing will tell you mostly about me and what I find interesting, and I know that I'm odd. But perhaps we are odd in some of the same ways. If so, you might like to know about some of these books.

Louis L'Amour, *Sackett's Land*, Sacketts 01 (Bantam).

Who doesn't like a good western? That's what I thought I was getting into, but this book is mostly set in Elizabethan England and on the eastern seaboard of the American colonies. With this volume L'Amour launches a series that covers the history of an immigrant family down through the taming of the West. L'Amour's vision seems simplistic now: his themes revolve around individualism, hard work, integrity, family, and of course romance. I'd never read his work before, but I love his geographical descriptions.

Gerald R. McDermott, *Israel Matters* (Brazos).

Remember what I said about theological writing not being interesting? Here's an exception. McDermott is a covenant theologian. He does not like dispensationalism, especially in its more popular, uncritical, and Zionistic forms. At the same time, he has authored a book arguing for a future national Israel to which the promise of the Land will be fulfilled. Go figure.

Carl McIntire, *Author of Liberty* (Christian Beacon); *Rise of the Tyrant* (Christian Beacon).

Before Jerry Falwell there was Carl McIntire. McIntire was the most prominent public voice for fundamentalism through the 1960s and into the 1970s. He built his ministry around opposition to communism. By the late 1960s he had become something of a caricature. These two volumes, however, are among his earliest books, published around the end of the Second World War. He argues cogently that Christians must not see private property as a negotiable political question but as a defining moral and biblical issue.



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The social justice crowd in today's evangelical Left will dismiss these books as simplistic. My view is that while they are dated, they remain relevant. I think McIntire was right.

E. Theodore Mullen, Jr. *The Assembly of the Gods*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 24 (Scholars).

The discovery and translation of the Ugaritic tablets at Ras Shamra introduced a new era in Old Testament studies. For the first time scholars could compare in detail ancient Hebrew religious categories with those of their closest neighbors. Mullen traces the concept of a divine council in Ugaritic mythology. El, the chief God, ruled over lesser gods such as Baal, Yam, and Mut, who in turn ruled certain spheres of the world or underworld. Mullen believes that certain locutions in the Hebrew Scriptures mirror this phenomenon. This was a fascinating monograph.

Markku Ruotsila, *Fighting Fundamentalist* (Oxford); Gladys Titzch Rhoads and Nancy Titzch Anderson, *McIntire* (Xulon).

It is difficult to write a sympathetic biography of a figure who could behave as outrageously as McIntire—but Ruotsila succeeds, focusing mainly on McIntire's role as a shaper of Right-wing politics. It is equally difficult to write an even-handed biography of a man who has been a warm friend and spiritual leader—but Rhoads and Anderson succeed, focusing on McIntire's role as a pastor and fundamentalist leader. Reading these books side-by-side gives a wonderful glimpse into the character of Carl McIntire rather than the caricature that he has often been turned into. Incidentally, this may be the first time that a Xulon publication has made it onto one of my "most interesting" lists.

Oliver Sacks, *Seeing Voices* (Random House).

Neurologist Oliver Sacks is most famous for his books *Awakenings* and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. His interest in how the brain works is profound. Here he takes a journey into the land of the deaf, seeking to understand a culture that has been profoundly shaped by what hearing people would perceive as a disability. In the process he becomes an advocate for full acceptance and equal treatment of deaf people. I like books that help me understand the unfamiliar, and I like them even more when they help me to sympathize; this is such a book.

Peter Singer, *Ethics in the Real World* (Princeton).

Intellectually, Peter Singer is about as far from Christian orthodoxy as anyone can get. Perhaps that is part of the appeal: I think that we ought to know how the opposition thinks. There is more, however: Singer is a sharp thinker

and an engaging writer. This work is a collection of 82 short essays originally written for popular publications. He addresses all sorts of contemporary ethical issues, focusing mainly on animal rights and their relation to human rights. This was a glimpse into a mind whose conclusions differed radically from mine.

Rodney Stark, *God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades* (HarperOne).

It is fair to call Rodney Stark a revisionist historian. He is pro-West, pro-religion, and pro-Catholic. In *God's Battalions* he responds to the mainstream myth that the Crusades were unprovoked wars of bigotry, aggression, exploitation, and even colonialism. Instead, he sees these military episodes as justifiable responses to militaristic and even terroristic Muslim aggression. The argument is a bit uneven (for instance, when Stark deals with the motivations of the Fourth Crusade in sacking Constantinople). Even so, Stark raises a useful contrarian voice.

Ann and John Tusa, *The Nuremberg Trial* (Skyhorse).

The postwar generations accept the Nuremberg Trials as a landmark in the advance of civilization, but they almost did not happen at all. Strategic maneuvering between nations, squabbling between military and civilian interests, and political gamesmanship within the conquering nations almost doomed these trials. When they occurred, they offered less than some hoped but more than others wished. Even during the trials, decisions involved constant diplomacy between the participating nations. The Tusas offer an in-depth glimpse at the scheming, diplomacy, jurisprudence and humanitarianism that helped to make these trials what they were.



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.
