

**Psalm 77**

*Tate and Brady's Psalter (1696)*

Will God for ever cast us off;  
His love return no more?  
His promise, will it never give  
Its comfort as before?

Can His abundant love forget  
Its wonted aid to bring?  
Has He in wrath shut up and seal'd  
His mercy's healing spring?

I'll call to mind His works of old,  
The wonders of His might;  
On them my heart shall meditate,  
Them shall my tongue recite.

Thy people, Lord, long since have Thee  
A God of wonders found:  
Long since hast Thou Thy chosen seed  
With strong deliverance crown'd.

**ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ**

*In the Nick of Time*

**Most Interesting Reading of 2019**

*Kevin T. Bauder*

Every year I try to publish a list of the books that I found most interesting during the preceding twelve months. Usually these are books that I have just read for the first time. Occasionally they are books that I've found either so important or so interesting as to merit a second (or third) read.

This year my list is late. Partly that's because I had more important things to write about. Partly it's because other professors wanted to write for *In the Nick of Time*. Now that I'm getting around to compiling my list, I find that it's too long for a single article. So here's the first half. I'll publish the rest of the list next week.

**Anderson, Ryan T. *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*. New York: Encounter Books, 2018.**

The sexual revolution has now shifted toward transgenderism. Anderson's book is perhaps the best short introduction to both the history of this controversy and the issues it raises. The first chapters were quite discouraging, but Anderson addressed the questions in a calm and reasonable fashion. This is a book that will help you to understand the problem and the politics.

**Berenson, Alex. *Tell Your Children the Truth About Marijuana*. New York: Free Press, 2019.**

Over the past few years state after state has decriminalized or legalized cannabis. The same argument is made everywhere, i.e., that marijuana is a harmless drug that actually helps its users. Berenson, a journalist who once accepted this argument, challenges it sharply. He sets his facts in order and builds a formidable case that legalized cannabis introduces significant hazards. If you can only read one book about marijuana, read this one.

**Cain, Susan. *Quiet: The Power of Introverts*. New York: Crown, 2012.**

The world seems to be led by noisy and outgoing people. Susan Cain, however, argues that quiet people—introverts—bring unique virtues that must not be neglected. I'm glad to hear it.



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**Calvin, John.** *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Ed. by John T. McNeill; tr. by Ford Lewis Battles. Louisville, KY: WJKP, 1960.

Obviously the *Institutes* is a monumental work of theology. Until 2019 I had never read straight through the Battles translation. Compared to the Beveridge translation it's a breeze. For me, this kind of reading is not primarily about agreement or disagreement. It's about watching a first-rate theological mind at work.

**Campbell, James.** *The Ghost Mountain Boys*. New York: Crown/Random House, 2007.

During WWII my wife's father fought in New Guinea with the Red Arrow Division. He would never talk about his service, but his brothers told stories about his trek over the Owen Stanley Mountains and his participation in the Battle of Buna. This book tells the tale that we always wondered about, and it's a great (but not pretty) one. I wish that he were still here to thank—though after reading this account any thanks seems shallow by comparison.

**Chesterton, Gilbert Keith.** *All Things Considered*. New York: John Lane, 1909.

G. K. Chesterton is one of those authors who deserves his own directory on your hard drive. *All Things Considered* is a collection of occasional essays, written for newspaper publication, addressing issues of Chesterton's day. He did not consider these to be his best work, but his thought and wit are nevertheless fully on display. One should never allow a year to pass without reading at least one of Chesterton's books.

**Eaton, Michael.** *No Condemnation: A Theology of Assurance of Salvation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.

The author was an associate of R. T. Kendall, and both of those men are at least mildly popular with the "Free Grace" crowd. I really wanted to like this book. It started well, with the author posing a question peculiar to Calvinism: if believers are unconditionally elected, and if the reprobate can experience false faith, then how can professing believers have any confidence that their faith is genuine and they are among the elect? His answer begins plausibly but grows progressively worse as it develops. Eaton ends up suggesting that some believers may have to do a stint in Gehenna. Wow. But sometimes weird is interesting.

**Edsel, Robert M.** *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*. Nashville: Center Street, 2009.

I'd heard about the movie, which always impressed me as being something like *Hogan's Heroes*. The book, however, is serious history. It tells the story of a small cadre of Allied soldiers who raced against the Nazis to save the great

cultural treasures of Europe. It's a fascinating story that includes episodes of genuine heroism.

**Ellis, Joseph J.** *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Thomas Jefferson was an enigma in many ways. Ellis's book explores a variety of those ways, examining Jefferson's attitude toward France, his relationship with his family, his on-and-off-and-on friendship with John Adams, his activity in politics and government, and his slave-owner's objections to slavery. This is an illuminating volume that grants a glimpse into the complexities of Jefferson's character.

**Finney, Jack.** *Time and Again*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.

Time-travel romances are a dime a dozen, and that's about what most of them are worth. Finney's *Time and Again* is an exception. It combines a plausible premise with an interesting plot, fairly well-developed characters, a satisfying *denouement*, and most of all an atmosphere. I came away from this reading with the impression that I had experienced a bit of the ambience of New York during the Gilded Age.

That's the first half of my list, alphabetized by author. For the rest of the list, check next week's *In the Nick of Time*.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of 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.

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