

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

In the Nick of Time

God of My Life, Look Gently Down

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

God of my life, look gently down,
Behold the pains I feel;
But I am dumb before thy throne,
Nor dare dispute thy will.

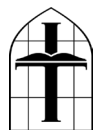
Diseases are thy servants, Lord,
They come at thy command;
I'll not attempt a murmur'ing word
Against thy chast'ning hand.

Yet I may plead with humble cries,
Remove thy sharp rebukes:
My strength consumes, my spirit dies,
Through thy repeated strokes.

Crush'd as a moth beneath thy hand,
We moulder to the dust;
Our feeble pow'rs can ne'er withstand,
And all our beauty's lost.

I'm but a stranger here below,
As all my fathers were;
May I be well prepar'd to go,
When I the summons hear!

But if my life be spar'd a while
Before my last remove,
Thy praise shall be my bus'ness still,
And I'll declare thy love.



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Most Interesting Reading of 2022

Kevin T. Bauder

About this time of year many writers will issue a “best books of the year” list. That’s not quite what I’m doing here. I’m not listing the most profound or most helpful reading I’ve done. Instead, I’m listing the twenty books that I found most interesting.

This list is based on my subjective perception. These books aren’t necessarily good because I found them interesting. A book can be instructive but annoying (for me, the classic example will always be Alan Beechik’s chirpy volume on *The Pre Tribulation Rapture*). Conversely, a book can be so bad that it becomes amusing (many defenses of King James Onlyism fit here). The fact that I found a book interesting is no guarantee that it is any good.

Furthermore, I find books interesting for a variety of reasons. Some are elegantly written. Some are highly instructive. Some provoke thought or introduce fresh but viable perspectives. Over the next two weeks, I shall list twenty books that I read during 2022 that most grabbed and held my attention. I’ll also include any caveats or disclaimers that may be necessary.

Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Minneola, NY: Dover Publications, repr. 2003.

I can’t say how many times I’ve read Bunyan’s fantastic allegory of the Christian life. It gets better every time. This work belongs on the list of classics that every Christian ought to read. Enough said.

Callahan, Steven. *Adrift: Seventy-six Days Lost at Sea*. New York: Harper, 2002.

The author was transiting the Atlantic in a sailing vessel he had built. He collided with something in a storm, severely damaging his craft. He lived on a little escape raft for over two months. The book is his story of survival and rescue. This account makes *Robinson Crusoe* look like a summer vacation.

Davis, Stephen T. and Erik T. Yang. *Christian Philosophical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.

Philosophical theology and philosophy of religion are overlapping disciplines. This book straddles the divide, providing a general survey of the

questions that philosophical theologians try to answer, of the methods that they employ to answer them, and of the principal answers that have been proposed. It is an introductory work, useful for the average seminary student or seminary-trained pastor.

Dorsett, Lyle. *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

In life and death Billy Sunday was a controversial figure. He is hailed as a great evangelist for the number of people who professed Christ during his campaigns, but he is also vilified as a manipulative money grubber who sold his Christian patrimony for momentary numerical gains. Dorsett deals seriously with both sides of Sunday's legacy. He is sympathetic to Sunday without overlooking his faults. He depicts Sunday as a man who genuinely loved the Lord but who could be distracted and who paid a heavy price both for his commitment and for the distractions.

English, E. Schuyler. *Ordained of the Lord*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1976.

Harry Ironside was once among the best-known preachers in America. He is now largely forgotten, perhaps acknowledged as the author of a series of devotional commentaries that still grace a few pastors' shelves. Schuyler English has written a biography of Ironside that does justice both to the man and to his ministry, telling of his conversion, his labors with the Salvation Army, and his eventual pastoring of Moody Church in Chicago.

Esolen, Anthony. *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Western Civilization*. Washington DC: Regnery, 2008.

Regnery publishes a series of Politically Incorrect Guides; conservatives would do well to acquaint themselves with them. In a day when Western Civilization is being attacked for racism, patriarchy, and exploitation, it's nice to see a competent rebuttal and defense. Esolen is a senior editor for *Touchstone* magazine (also good reading) and a Roman Catholic. His Catholicism does skew some elements of his interpretation, but those faults are easily overlooked. The book provides an overview of Western intellectual history that undermines the most common accusations.

Fraser, J. Cameron. *Developments in Biblical Counseling*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2015.

While all biblical (as opposed to "integrationist") counselors hold basic principles in common, they display a surprising amount of variation. Cameron Fraser traces the development of those differences. He begins with Jay Adams, the father of the biblical counseling movement. He follows the progress of thought within the second- and third-generation biblical counselors. He offers his own criticism of biblical counseling philosophy. He critiques it by comparing today's biblical counseling with the Puritans' approach. If there is a better survey or more thoughtful critique of the biblical counseling movement, I don't know what it would be.

Gleick, James. *Isaac Newton: Author of Genius and Chaos*. New York: Vintage/Random House, 2003.

Isaac Newton is best known as a mathematician and physicist. He developed calculus and discovered so many principles of natural cause and effect that "Newtonian physics" is still the way to designate the pre-quantum, pre-relativity understanding of the world. Gleick explores these areas but also investigates Newton's (not entirely orthodox) contributions to theology. The author does a good job of setting these intellectual pursuits against the backdrop of a very human individual.

Hazon, Yoram. *Conservatism: A Rediscovery*. Washington DC: Regnery, 2022.

Yoram Hazon is an orthodox Jew who came to conservative views while a student at Princeton University. In this book he sets forth a vision of conservatism that critiques William F. Buckley's "fusionism" of conservative ideas with moderate libertarianism. Hazon rebukes Russell Kirk for his unwillingness to distance himself from defenders of slavery. He also distances himself from Friedrich von Hayek for what Hazon views as a capitulation to Enlightenment liberal thought. Like T. S. Eliot, Hazon argues that conservatism is inseparable from religious commitment. This is a remarkable book. Though not perfect, it is probably the best discussion of conservative ideals to appear during the 2020s.

Kruger, Michael J. *The Question of Canon*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020.

Anything that Michael Kruger writes on the subject of canonicity is worth reading. In this volume he addresses the hypothesis that the New Testament canon was a late development, and that it was designed to buttress only one version of the many competing Christianities that preceded Nicea—the version that became known as orthodoxy. The book is highly readable but also good, responsible scholarship.

Last, Jonathan V. *What to Expect When No One's Expecting*. New York: Encounter, 2014.

I grew up in the era of Paul and Anne Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*. For years in public school we were shown charts that depicted the world's population exploding at such exponential rates as to render the planet uninhabitable in the near future. Jonathan Last, however, argues that the global population is nearing its peak, and that it has begun to decline in most places. He raises an equally alarming vision of world population decline, and he depicts the consequences of such a decline. If nothing else, this book makes an interesting counterpoint to the Malthusians.

