

Blest Are the Pure in Heart*John Keble (1792–1866)*

Blest are the pure in heart,
for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode.

The Lord, who left the heavens
our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with men,
their pattern and their King;

Still to the lowly soul
he doth himself impart,
and for his dwelling and his throne
chooseth the pure in heart.

Lord, we thy presence seek;
may ours this blessing be;
give us a pure and lowly heart,
a temple meet for thee.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Most Interesting Reading of 2023, Part Two***Kevin T. Bauder*

Other people issue lists of the best books they've read or of the books that they want to recommend. I compile a list of the books I found most interesting. They are interesting for a variety of reasons, and one of those reasons may be that they are conspicuously bad. Hey, I'm not suggesting you read these books. For whatever reason they held my attention, but they may not hold yours. Or they just might.

Gagnon, Robert. *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics.* Nashville: Abingdon, 2010.

I previously noted that I teach a course on creation, sex, and gender. In that course I deal with the 2SLGBTQIA+ conglomeration (yes, you read that correctly, and I'll betcha didn't know about the latest additions to that text string, eh?). Robert Gagnon's book on *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* is presently the most comprehensive response to those who insist that Scripture can be read in an accepting and affirming way. I re-read this work periodically, and it was one of the interesting books I read this year.

GINNA, Peter. *What Editors Do: The Art, Craft, & Business of Book Editing.* Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2017.

Having never received formal instruction in writing, I try to make books about writing a staple of my reading diet. The University of Chicago publishes a whole series of related guides for writers, and Ginna's book is one of that series. The book discusses the many levels and varieties of editing. He describes the road that a book must travel to reach publication, and he explains what editors do at each stage of that journey. He also discusses the advantages and challenges of freelance editing and of self-publishing.

GREYLAND, Moira. *The Last Closet: The Dark Side of Avalon.* Kouvola, Finland: Castalia House, 2017.

I hesitate even to mention this book. It is in many respects a good book, but it is a book that deals with a very bad thing, and it pulls no verbal punches in exposing the thing that it deals with. Moira Greyland was the daughter of celebrated author Marion Zimmer Bradley and famed numismatist Walter



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Breen, both of whom were leaders within gay paganism. The book describes what it was like growing up in their household with all its perversions and abuses. The message of the book is that pedophilia and abuse are hardwired into sexual perversion, including homosexuality. I do NOT recommend this book for most people, but it provides a bracing slap for anyone who thinks that the LGBTQIA+ agenda is harmless. As a counter to the prevailing narrative of acceptance and affirmation, I found Greyland's story riveting.

Grunenberg, Antonia. *Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger: History of a Love. Studies in Continental Thought.* Translated by Peg Birmingham et al. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017.

Martin Heidegger was probably the most influential philosopher of the 20th Century. He was also a Nazi. One of his students—and his lovers—was Hannah Arendt, who was born into a Prussian Jewish family. Arendt would later go on to write whole books condemning the kind of totalitarianism that she witnessed in National Socialism. Yet after the war, somehow Heidegger and Arendt were able to rebuild their friendship, in spite of the fact that she had been forced to flee Hitler's Germany. Grunenberg explores their mutual intellectual influence and the recovery of their friendship. File this book under *Philosophy*.

Herriot, James. *All Creatures Great and Small.* New York: Saint Martin's, 1972.

All Creatures is the first in a series of more-or-less autobiographical books from an English veterinarian who practiced during the mid-20th Century. I've known of the work since it was first published in the 1970s, but I never got around to reading any of it until this year. It is bucolic, gentle, good-humored, and homey. Spending time with this book was just fun. It left me wanting to read the rest of the series.

Hummel, Daniel G. *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism: How the Evangelical Battle Over End Times Shaped a Nation.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023.

The Central Seminary faculty read this book together, then discussed it during our annual in-service meeting. While we could quibble with some details, we give full credit to Hummel for his masterful knowledge of the history and varieties of dispensationalism. We particularly appreciate his discussion of the differences between scholarly and popular dispensationalism, as well as his noting the difficulties that scholars encounter in trying to articulate a responsible dispensationalism while the popularizers are making so much noise. Hummel has given us a valuable contribution to the discipline.

Koestler, Arthur. *The Thirteenth Tribe.* San Pedro, CA: GSG & Associates, 1976.

The thesis of Koestler's book is that modern Jews—especially Ashkenazi or Eastern European Jews—are not descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Instead, they are the offspring of a Japethic kingdom, the Khazars, who flourished in Asia during the Middle Ages. Koestler posits that the entire tribe of Khazars converted to Judaism as a religion, but that their bloodline remains non-Semitic. Notably, Koestler's work has become popular in certain Anglo-Israelite and White Supremacist circles. These types find in Koestler a basis for denying the Abrahamic blessing to modern Jewish people. Of course, Koestler wrote before DNA sequencing was a thing. DNA analysis has provided no convincing support for his theory.

A thing is about to occur that has never happened before. My list of “most interesting books” is going to have to spill over into a third week. I express my apologies if this isn't your cup of tea. On the other hand, if your tastes are odd in the same ways that mine are, you may find that the remaining list will be useful.



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.
