

O for the Wisdom from Above*James Montgomery (1771–1854)*

O for the wisdom from above,
 Pure, gentle, peaceable, and mild,
 The innocency of the dove,
 The meekness of a little child.
 Wise may we be to know the truth,
 Reveal'd in every Scripture page;
 Wise to salvation from our youth,
 And wiser grow from stage to stage.

Then if to riper years, we rise,
 And well the work of grace be wrought
 Within ourselves,—we shall be wise
 To teach in turn what we were taught.
 Yet still be learning, day by day,
 More of God's Word, God's way, God's will;
 His law, rejoicing to obey,
 Pleas'd His whole pleasure to fulfill,

Wise to win souls, if thus we're led,
 How blest will be our lot below,
 Blessings to share, and blessings shed
 On all with whom to heaven we go.
 So may we reach that home at length,
 And, clad in righteousness divine,
 Even as the sun, when in his strength,
 And as the stars, forever, shine.

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

I must have encountered more interesting books than usual during the past year. At any rate, I've never had to take more than two weeks' worth of *In the Nick of Time* to list them, but this year I do. As ever, I warn you that just because I found these books interesting does not mean that you will.

Kruger, Michael. *Bully Pulpit: Confronting the Problem of Spiritual Abuse in the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022.

In my experience, the typical book on spiritual abuse boils down to, "My friends and I wanted to live really carnal lives, but a pastor told us it was wrong, so we're mad." While spiritual abuse is less common than some pretend, it does happen, and it should never be tolerated. What we need is a responsible approach to diagnosing and treating it by someone who understands that pastoral duty sometimes involves wounding as well as healing. Kruger provides that approach. He is a seminary president with a pastor's heart who knows and understands the Scriptures, and who can apply them well. This may be the best book on spiritual abuse that I've ever read.

McIntire, Carl. *Author of Liberty*. Collingswood, NJ: Christian Beacon, 1946.

_____. *Rise of the Tyrant*. Collingswood, NJ: Christian Beacon, 1945.

When he published these two volumes, Carl McIntire was the most publicly recognizable fundamentalist in the world. Both books wrestle with the problems of political economy, seeking to provide a biblical and theological underpinning for a Christian response to the problem of free markets versus managed economies. While it is more biblically grounded, McIntire's approach comes close to that of the Austrian economists which, however, would not be widely known for another decade or so. Ironically, both these books appeared before Carl F. H. Henry's *Uneasy Conscience*, where he lambasted fundamentalists for their lack of social and political engagement. Henry certainly knew about McIntire's work. Perhaps he was simply unwilling to admit that a despised fundamentalist had beaten him to the punch.



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Pivek, Holly and R. Douglas Geivett. *Counterfeit Kingdom: The Dangers of New Revelation, New Prophets, and New Age Practices in the Church.* Nashville: B&H, 2022.

A couple of years back, a friend gave me three books on the New Apostolic Reformation, and I finally got around to reading them this year. While I disagree with Charismatic theology in all its forms, I've never gone out of my way to study its variations. Turns out that the NAR is one of the most obnoxious forms, seeking to reintroduce the offices of both prophet and apostle. If Pivek and Geivett are anywhere close to right (and I know Geivett, at least, to be a careful scholar), then the practices that these new prophets and apostles have brought with them are nothing short of bizarre. For an example, run an internet search for "grave sucking."

Poythress, Vern S. *The Mystery of the Trinity: A Trinitarian Approach to the Attributes of God.* Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2020.

Everything that Vern Poythress writes is a treat. His style is as clear as polished diamond, and he brings a truly charitable bearing to all his work. In *The Mystery of the Trinity* he asks whether the traditional doctrine of the Trinity is fully scriptural, or whether it might rely upon some extrabiblical philosophical categories that orthodox theologians have smuggled into their systems. His approach is not to debunk, but to examine. As one might guess, he relies heavily upon Van Tilian philosophical categories into his own perspective—but he knows he is doing it, and he sees it as biblically justified. This is a Big Book, but Poythress handles his topic well.

Ramaswamy, Vivek. *Woke: Inc.: Inside Corporate America's Social Justice Scam.* Nashville: Center Street, 2021.

Since I read this book, the author has entered and left the race for the American presidency. Because I had read it, I believed that his campaign made sense. Ramaswamy comes from the corporate world. He is a Person of Indian Origin and a Person of Color. He is a Hindu. None of this exactly positions him within the supposed White Christian Supremacism of the Republican Party. But he also has a keen sense of how unjust social justice can be. He is particularly concerned with the economic results that arise when businesses are more concerned with scoring points for their social consciences than they are with serving their customers. Ramaswamy has left the presidential race, but his book is still well worth a read.

Stroud, Nick. *The Vickers Viscount: The World's First Turboprop Airliner.* Barnsley, UK: Frontline, 2018.

I grew up flying on propliners. One of my earliest memories is of leaving the ground while sitting in the window seat of a Douglas DC-3. Over the years I flew on the Douglas DC-4 and DC-6, the Lockheed Constellation, and the Convair 340. Then the jets took over. Much of my childhood flying was on

the Vickers Viscount. This was a British design powered by four Rolls Royce turboprop engines. It was quieter and smoother than the piston-driven airliners, and it had big, round windows that allowed a magnificent view. Nobody else will care about this book, but for me it provided a mental journey to a time when flying was comfortable and airlines treated passengers like people instead of cattle.

Trueman, Carl R. *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022.

In 2020, Carl Trueman published *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, a Great Big Book of intellectual history and social criticism. It is a good book, but far too dense for the ordinary person to understand. Two years later he followed it up with the present volume, which covers much of the same territory but does it in a shorter and more simplified format. I'll put it bluntly: this is one of those books that every pastor and Christian teacher simply must read.

Yuan, Christopher. *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story.* New York: Multnomah, 2018.

Christopher Yuan's background was in drugs, gangs, and homosexuality. He came to Christ in prison, went on to seminary, and eventually became a professor at Moody Bible Institute. In this volume he sets discussions of marriage, singleness, homosexuality, and transgenderism within the context of a biblical theology of sex and gender. I now require this book for my course on Creation, Sex, and Gender. It's another of those books that every pastor should read.

And that's my book report for this year. Some of these books you'll like. Some of them, not so much. But if there are any other Viscount fans out there, drop me a note. We can reminisce together.



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.
