

Let Those Who Doubt the Heavenly Source

John Bowring (1792–1872)

Let those who doubt the heavenly source
Of revelation's page divine,
Use as their weapons fraud and force—
No such unhallowed arms are mine.
I only wield its holy word—
Reason its shield, and truth its sword.

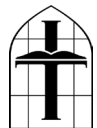
I doubt not—my religion stands
A beacon on the eternal rock—
Let malice throw her fiery brands;
Its sacred fane has stood the shock
Of ages—and shall tower sublime
Above the waves and winds of time.

Infinite wisdom formed the plan;
Infinite power supports the pile;
Infinite goodness poured on man
Its radiant light—its cheering smile.
Need they thy aid? Poor worm! Thy aid?
O mad presumption—vain parade!

Thou wilt not trust th'Almighty One
With His own thunders—thou wouldst throw
The bolts of Heaven! O senseless son
Of dust and darkness! Spider! Go,
And with thy cobweb bind the tide,
And the swift, dazzling comet guide.

Yes! Force has conquering reasons given,
And chains and tortures argue well—
And thou hast proved thy faith from Heaven,
By weapons thou hast brought from hell.
Yes! Thou hast made thy title good,
For thou hast signed the deed with blood.

Daring impostor! Sure that God
Whose advocate thou feign'st to be,
Will smite thee with that awful rod
Which thou wouldst seize—and pour on thee
The vial of that wrath, which thou
Wouldst empty on thy brother's brow.



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In the Nick of Time

Most Interesting Reading of 2024: Part One

Kevin T. Bauder

It's that time of year again. Other authors issue bibliographies of "best books" they've read. I put out a listing of reading that I personally found most interesting. This year, it happens that "interesting" also broadly corresponds to "good," though in some years, books can be interesting exactly because they are bad. But I promise, all the following are good, though in different ways. You may or may not find them interesting, but I did, and that's why they're here.

Adler, Mortimer J. *Six Great Ideas*. New York: Touchstone, 1981. 256pp.

The six ideas are divided into two sets. Truth, goodness, and beauty are ideas we judge by. Liberty, equality, and justice are ideas we act on. Adler compares and contrasts approaches to these ideas, helping his readers understand the issues surrounding them. Adler invariably stimulates his readers' thinking. He is one of those authors who deserves his own shelf in your library.

Anderson, Ryan T. *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom*. Washington: Regnery, 2015. 256pp.

Famous for authoring a conservative work that was banned by Amazon, Anderson is one of the most articulate conservative voices addressing gender issues today. In *Truth Overruled* he argues from natural law that the definition of marriage cannot be stretched to include two people of the same sex. The argument is both sound and accessible to readers with, say, a high-school education.

Blomberg, Craig L. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*. 3rd ed. Nashville: B&H, 2022. 720pp.

As Blomberg's subtitle implies, this work has two goals. One is to survey the contents of the four gospels, but the more important is to deal with introductory issues. These include the various issues related to the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith. Blomberg provides a good, accessible overview of the questions, combined with a competent, conservative response. Parts of the work are idiosyncratic, but this is overall a very helpful book.

Butterfield, Rosaria. *The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. 240pp.

Any book by Butterfield is worth reading. Her early books present a biblical perspective on homosexuality and lesbianism. This book deals more specifically with hospitality as a Christian duty. Butterfield talks about the what, the how, and the why. The result is that she sets a standard for hospitality that many readers will despair of ever being able to meet. Even so, the challenge is good and necessary.

Dubal, David. *The Essential Canon of Classical Music.* New York: North Point, 2003. 800pp.

I loved classical music from the first time I heard Tchaikovsky's *Overture Solennelle*, but only during seminary did I become a serious listener. I found that the field is so large as to bewilder an outsider. Eventually you start to find out what you like, and you look for more of it. Dubal's work is useful for middle-level listeners who have got their feet on the ground but who wonder where to go next. Dubal surveys the entire field by period and composer. He also includes a recommended discography.

Flew, Antony. *There Is A God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind.* New York: HarperOne, 2009. 258pp.

When I was being educated, the New Atheists had not yet captured public interest. During those years, Antony Flew was recognized as the ablest academic proponent of atheism. In this book, Flew tells how he became an atheist and why he eventually abandoned atheism for theism. The book includes Flew's criticism of the New Atheism. It also includes a dialogue about Jesus with N. T. Wright. One could wish that it included a clear profession of faith in Christ.

Frahm, Eckhart. *Assyria: The Rise and Fall of the World's First Empire.* New York: Basic, 2023. 528pp.

The Assyrian Empire intersects the history of divided Israel and Judah in dramatic ways. Ultimately, the Assyrians were responsible for the dismantling and captivity of the northern kingdom. Frahm, an Assyriologist who teaches at Yale, offers in this work an overview of Assyrian history. While he is sometimes critical of the biblical chronology, Frahm does much to explain the pressures that the kings of Israel and Judah (not to mention other nations) faced from Assyrian expansionism. He has good theories about how Assyria rose to power and why it fell.

Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity.* New York: NYU, 2003. 271pp.

One of my study projects involves a version of white supremacy known as Identity Christianity. Eventually, I hope to do some writing on the subject. Identity Christianity is a quasi-Christian movement, generally cultish (though some versions of it are Trinitarian), with its own theology. Not many people will find this kind of reading interesting, but it helped me fit together some of the players and ideas in the Identity Christian movement.

Grossman, Miriam. *Lost in Trans Nation: A Child Psychiatrist's Guide Out of the Madness.* New York: Skyhorse, 2018. 360pp.

This book is a deep dive into the influence that the Trans movement has exerted over the mental health profession. Grossman writes as an insider, a child psychiatrist who has dealt with gender issues for years. She is clearly outraged, however, by the current Trans ideology, which she believes is deeply harmful to children. She includes an account of how that movement uses professional and legal pressures to get doctors and parents to conform, and she also provides helpful strategies for dealing with authorities and children when those children announce that they are Trans. The discussion is long, and sometimes it is tedious, but every pastor should read this book.

This list is only the beginning. I'm working alphabetically and we are only through the letter G. Yes, there's more to come! Next week I'll be back with more of my "most interesting reading" of 2024.



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.
