

See! Another Year Is Gone

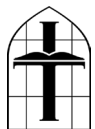
John Newton (1725–1807)

See! another year is gone!
Quickly have the seasons passed!
This we enter now upon
May to many prove our last.
Mercy hitherto has spared,
But have mercies been improved?
Let us ask, am I prepared
Should I be this year removed?

Some we now no longer see,
Who their mortal race have run;
Seemed as fair for life as we,
When the former year begun;
Some, but who God only knows,
Who are here assembled now,
Ere the present year shall close,
To the stroke of death must bow.

Life a field of battle is,
Thousands fall within our view;
And the next death-bolt that flies,
May be sent to me or you:
While we preach, and while we hear,
Help us, Lord, each one, to think,
Vast eternity is near,
I am standing on the brink.

If from guilt and sin set free,
By the knowledge of Thy grace;
Welcome, then, the call will be
To depart and see Thy face:
To Thy saints, while here below,
With new years, new mercies come;
But the happiest year they know
Is their last, which leads them home.



In the Nick of Time is published by Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

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January 2, 2026

ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

In the Nick of Time

Most Interesting Reading of 2025

Kevin T. Bauder

Each January I write about the most interesting books that I've read during the preceding twelve months. To enable this task, I keep a list of every book I've read during the year. I review the list to see which books struck me as most interesting—an admittedly subjective call.

For the past several years I've ended up with twenty or more volumes on my list of most interesting books. This year, however, I've listed only ten. The reason is not that I read fewer books than usual. In fact, I read more. But fewer of the books that I read sparked any real interest. Most of them turned out to be humdrum, even when they were necessary. Still, the following volumes are worth mentioning.

Barrett, Matthew. *Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021. 360 pp.

Appearing first on my list is the single most interesting book that I read during 2025. Matthew Barrett discusses the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity in view of a traditional understanding of God's attributes, and especially His simplicity. Two things make the book particularly commendable. First, it communicates at a popular level, no mean feat for a discussion of the Trinity. Second, Barrett emphasizes the biblical evidence upon which orthodox Trinitarianism builds. Every pastor and every student of the Bible should read this book.

Basham, Megan. *Shepherds for Sale: How Evangelical Leaders Traded the Truth for a Leftist Agenda.* New York: Broadside, 2024. 352 pp.

Shepherds for Sale is an indictment of multiple evangelical leaders, including some who are noted as conservative evangelicals. Basham's book was greeted with howls of dismay and accusations of unfairness, all of which prompted me to read it. While I can't vouch for every accusation that Basham makes, the presentation as a whole struck me as both fair and necessary. And interesting.

Burnett, Richard E. *Machen's Hope; The Transformation of a Modernist in the New Princeton*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024. 638 pp.

Decades ago, I wrote a dissertation about J. Gresham Machen's ecclesiology. I've tried to keep up with works on Machen since then. Burnett's volume may be the most important new treatment in twenty years or more. It is an intellectual biography, and it explores the developing ideas of the young Machen in more detail than any other work I've encountered. Given the length, this book probably isn't for everybody, but I found it gripping.

Gorsuch, Neil. *Over Ruled: The Human Toll of Too Much Law*. New York: Harper, 2024. 290 pp.

Written by a current associate justice of the Supreme Court, this book is an indictment of the regulatory state. Gorsuch argues that by allowing administrative agencies to create *de facto* laws, Congress has abandoned an important part of its responsibility. Since reading this book, I have been interested to see how Gorsuch and the court have been ruling on cases involving administrative law.

Hendershot, Heather. *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024. 272 pp.

Matzko, Paul. *The Radio Right: How a Band of Broadcasters Took On the Federal Government and Built the Modern Conservative Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 316 pp.

These two works examine the influence of right-wing broadcasters during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. My interest was that both of them discuss Carl McIntire, the most visible fundamentalist of that period. Taken together, these volumes leave the impression that there was a concentrated effort by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to stifle conservative free speech in America. What makes these books especially interesting is the fact that they are neither written nor published by conservative apologists.

Hoffman, Claire. *Sister, Sinner: The Miraculous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of Aimee Semple MacPherson*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2025. 471 pp.

"Sister Aimee" was the leading Christian celebrity of her day. Her supposed kidnapping and reappearance made front-page news. Claire Hoffman has written a biography that is responsible, carefully documented, and sympathetic. It provides a glimpse, not only into the life of a noted Pentecostal, but also into American Christianity during the Roaring Twenties.

Madison, James H. *The Ku Klux Klan in the Heartland*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020. 255 pp.

During the 1920s the Klan dominated the political landscape of Indiana. It was known less for racism and more for its pro-American and pro-Christian emphases. This volume helps the reader understand how the Klan climbed to power. It also explains how that power disintegrated so rapidly. The discussion, while critical, is thorough and fair.

Marcus, Eric. *Making Gay History: A Half Century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002. 500 pp.

This is an interesting book, but not a good one. Reading it is like looking into a mirror where the moral world is reversed. It is an oral history of the struggle for "gay rights." The presentation is fascinating. One value of the book is that it highlights the fractures among the various groups within the gay rights movement. This book is not for everybody, but I found it quite useful.

Sekulow, Jay. *Jerusalem: A Biblical and Historical Case*. New York: Center Street, 2025. 393 pp.

Here is a straightforward defense of Zionism and the state of Israel against contemporary pro-Palestinian sentiment. Sekulow aims to establish Israel's right to the territory that it now occupies, and he accomplishes that purpose. This is another book that every pastor should read. For that matter, every Christian would benefit from it.



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.
