



The Mind on Fire: An Anthology of the Writings of Blaise Pascal (Classics of Faith and Devotion)

Blaise Pascal

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"The Mind on Fire" is predominantly a modern translation and editing of Blaise Pascal's "Pensees" along with a few other short works and a sampling of his letters. It is quite user-friendly and a good place to start when reading Pascal. Devotional reading, according to editor James Houston, is an important but neglected way of getting to know God. In today's microwave society, time-saving devices have not given us more time for contemplation but license to fill our days with even more activities. One cannot, however, get to know God in a hurry. It is in the spirit of contemplation that Multnomah offers its Classics of Faith and Devotion series. Blaise Pascal (1623-62) is perhaps best known for pithy sayings drawn from his works. For instance, Pascal declared, "Atheists should say things that are perfectly clear. Yet it is not perfectly clear that the soul is only matter." Elsewhere he writes, "Faith is a sounder guide than reason. Reason can go only so far, but faith has no limits." In 1654, at the age of 31, Pascal had what has been called an "ecstatic experience." He described it simply as "fire." He considered this his true point of conversion. Pascal's career as a Christian apologist and philosopher was short, but his influence continues. He has been considered by many "the greatest of French prose writers." And today, though separated by time, space, and language, Pascal remains eminently quotable.

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