

God wills it

by [Carol Zaleski](#) in the [April 29, 2015](#) issue

In Review



The Sacrament of the Present Moment

by Jean-Pierre de Caussade, translated by Kitty Muggeridge
HarperSanFrancisco

As an adult convert from a nonreligious background, I like to think I've reached journey's end—a room in the household of faith. Good, plain preaching, more than any particular book, sustains me at low points and high.

That said, there's one book I've found helpful when my spirits are troubled: *Abandonment to Divine Providence* (in Kitty Muggeridge's translation, *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*)—the 17th-century spiritual classic formerly attributed to Jean-Pierre de Caussade but now considered to be the unsigned work of a disciple of Madame Guyon. The book's appeal is its simple, lyrical repetition of a single idea: whatever happens is the will of God. Not a leaf falls without God's permission; no catastrophe falls outside of God's loving plan; and nothing is required of us other than to embrace the trials and trivialities each moment brings. Grace will take us where we need to go.

Quietism this may be, but it is not so distant from the teaching of Francis de Sales or, for that matter, C. S. Lewis. And since I am not likely to overdose on self-abandonment or overestimate the providence of my Creator, this beautiful heresy delivers just the overcorrection I need.