



# Mark McGee



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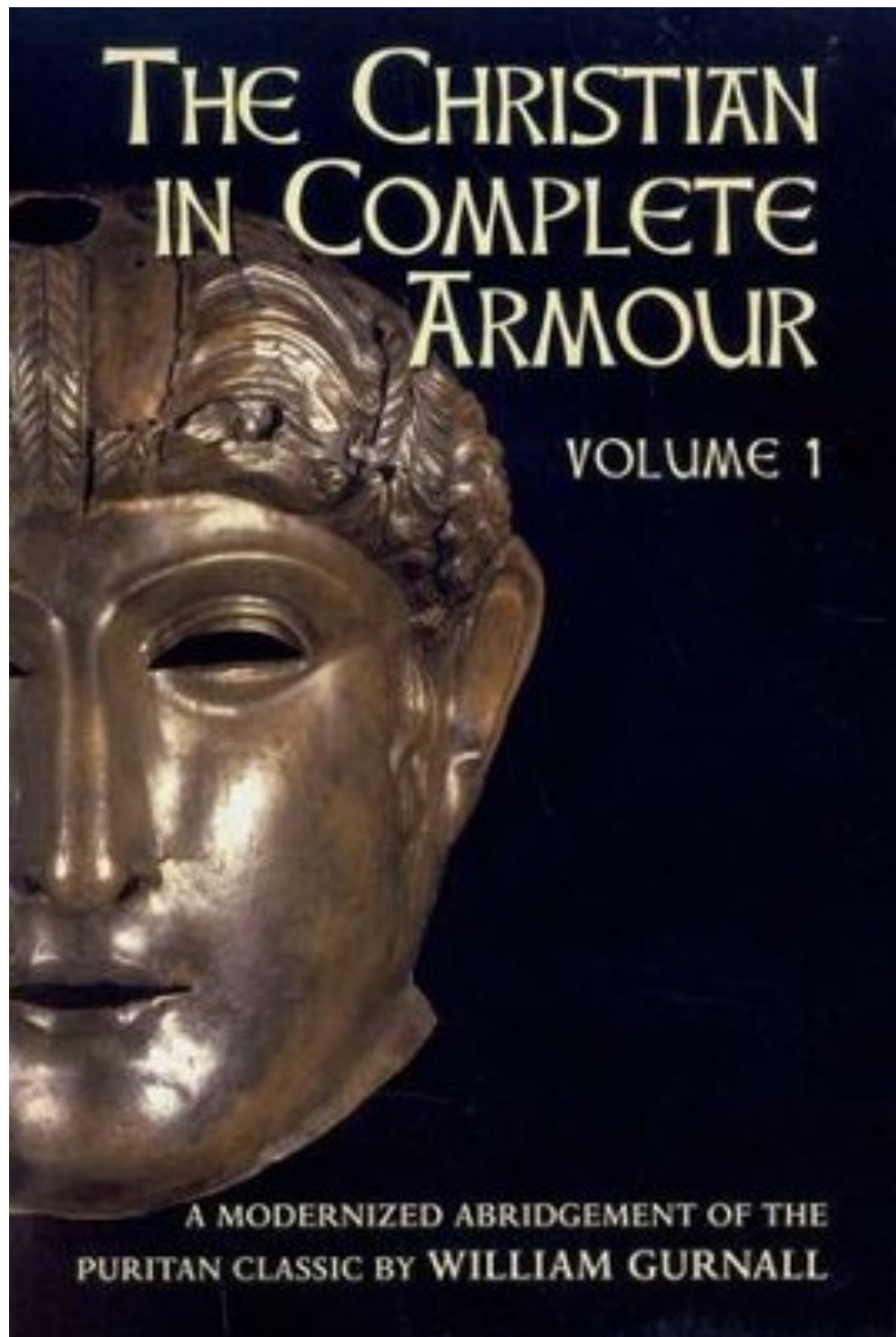
# Introduction

I began recommending Christian books to students decades ago for the purpose of helping them know about some of the better resources available to them. Many of the books were about Bible study, theology, discipleship, Church history and apologetics. The response was almost always positive, so I decided to review books online to help even more students know about books that would both inform and challenge. Most of the books I review are new or of recent origin.

Book Review Volume VIII is the eighth in a series about books on the primary subject of “Apologetics” on [FaithandSelfDefense.com](http://FaithandSelfDefense.com). Another series you may find helpful is *A Reading Plan For Christian Apologists*, also on [FaithandSelfDefense.com](http://FaithandSelfDefense.com).

Our hope is that you will find books you can add to your Christian library — books that will become your friends and allies as you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.





*The Christian in Complete Armour* was published by Banner of Truth Trust in 1986. William Gurnall (1616–1679) wrote a massive theological work looking deeply into Spiritual Warfare between Christians and Satan. Gurnall published the 1,240 page work in 1662.

The original title was *The Christian In Complete Armour; A Treatise Of the Saints' War against the Devil*. Gurnall was Pastor of the Church of Christ in Lavenham, Suffolk, England.

This is, in my opinion, the best and most thorough treatise on the subject of Spiritual Warfare that I've ever read. I highly recommend that every Christian purchase a copy of **Volume I** (\$9.99 Kindle, \$12.00 Paperback) to get started or invest in the **three-volume set** for \$26.00 (Paperback). You will not be disappointed. I think you very well may read through the volume(s) every year as an important reminder of the battle we all face every day with the enemy.

This amazing book is available from Banner of Truth as a complete **unabridged edition** (\$43.20 Paperback) and in three modernized abridged volumes.



# Unabridged Edition Description

Here is the publisher's description of the unabridged edition.

Gurnall's *Christian in Complete Armour*, certainly one of the greatest of all the Puritan's practical writings, has been many times republished, but the best edition remains that of 1864, with an Introduction by J.C. Ryle. It is this unabridged edition which is now reprinted.

This *Complete Armour* is beyond all others a preacher's book: I should think that more discourses have been suggested by it than by any other uninspired volume. I have often resorted to it when my own fire has been burning low, and I have seldom failed to find a glowing coal upon Gurnall's hearth. John Newton said that if he might read only one book beside the Bible, he would choose *The Christian in Complete Armour*, and Richard Cecil was of much the same opinion.

# Endorsements

*'If I might read only one book beside the Bible, I would choose The Christian in Complete Armour.'* — JOHN NEWTON

*'Gurnall's work is peerless and priceless; every line is full of wisdom; every sentence is suggestive. The whole book has been preached over scores of times, and is, in our judgment, the best thought-breeder in all our library.'* — C.H. SPURGEON

*'You will often find in a line and a half some great truth, put so concisely, and yet so fully, that you really marvel how so much thought could be got into so few words.'*  
— J.C. RYLE

# Volume I

(308 pages)

The **first volume** contains the following chapters:

## Chapter I – The Saint’s Call to Arms

1. The Christian’s Call to Courage
2. The Christian’s Call to Service
3. An Admonition to ‘Be Strong In The Lord’
4. An Admonition to Appropriate ‘The Power Of His Might’

## Chapter II – First Consideration: The Saint’s Armour

1. The Christian Must Be Armed
2. Why The Christian Must Be Armed

## Chapter III – Second Consideration: The Nature of the War and the Character of the Enemy

1. The Nature Of The War
2. The Character Of The Enemy

## Chapter IV: Third Consideration: A Second Exhortation to be Armed

1. The Exhortation And The Implication
2. Reasons For The Exhortation

## Chapter V: Fourth Consideration: The Position to be Maintained in the Fight

1. Stand – Do Not Flee Or Yield
2. Stand In Your Own Place – Do Not Usurp Another's
3. Stand – Do Not Sleep

## Volume II

(398 pages)

The **second volume** contains the following chapters:

Chapter VI: Fifth Consideration: The Christian's Spiritual Girdle

1. Truth Of Doctrine As A Girdle For The Mind
2. Truth Of Heart Or Sincerity As A Girdle For The Will

Chapter VII: Sixth Consideration: The Christian's Breastplate

1. Why Every Christian Should Keep On His Breastplate
2. How The Christian Expresses The Power Of Holiness
3. Guidance For The Christian Who Desires Holiness

## Chapter VIII: Seventh Consideration: The Christian's Spiritual Shoe

1. What Is Meant By The Gospel
2. What Is Meant By Peace
3. The Preparation Of The Gospel Of Peace

## Volume III

(319 pages)

The **third volume** contains the following chapters:

Chapter IX: Eighth Consideration: The Christian's Spiritual Shield

1. The Pre-Eminence Of Faith Above Other Graces
2. A Powerful Argument To Quench Fiery Darts Of The Wicked

Chapter X: Ninth Consideration: The Christian Helmet

1. The Helmet Of Salvation – What It Is
2. The Use Of The Helmet
3. Applications Of The Doctrine Of The Christian Helmet

## Chapter XI: Tenth Consideration: The Christian's Sword

1. The Weapon Itself
2. Why 'The Word Of God' Is Called 'The Sword Of The Spirit'
3. How To Use The Sword Of The Word



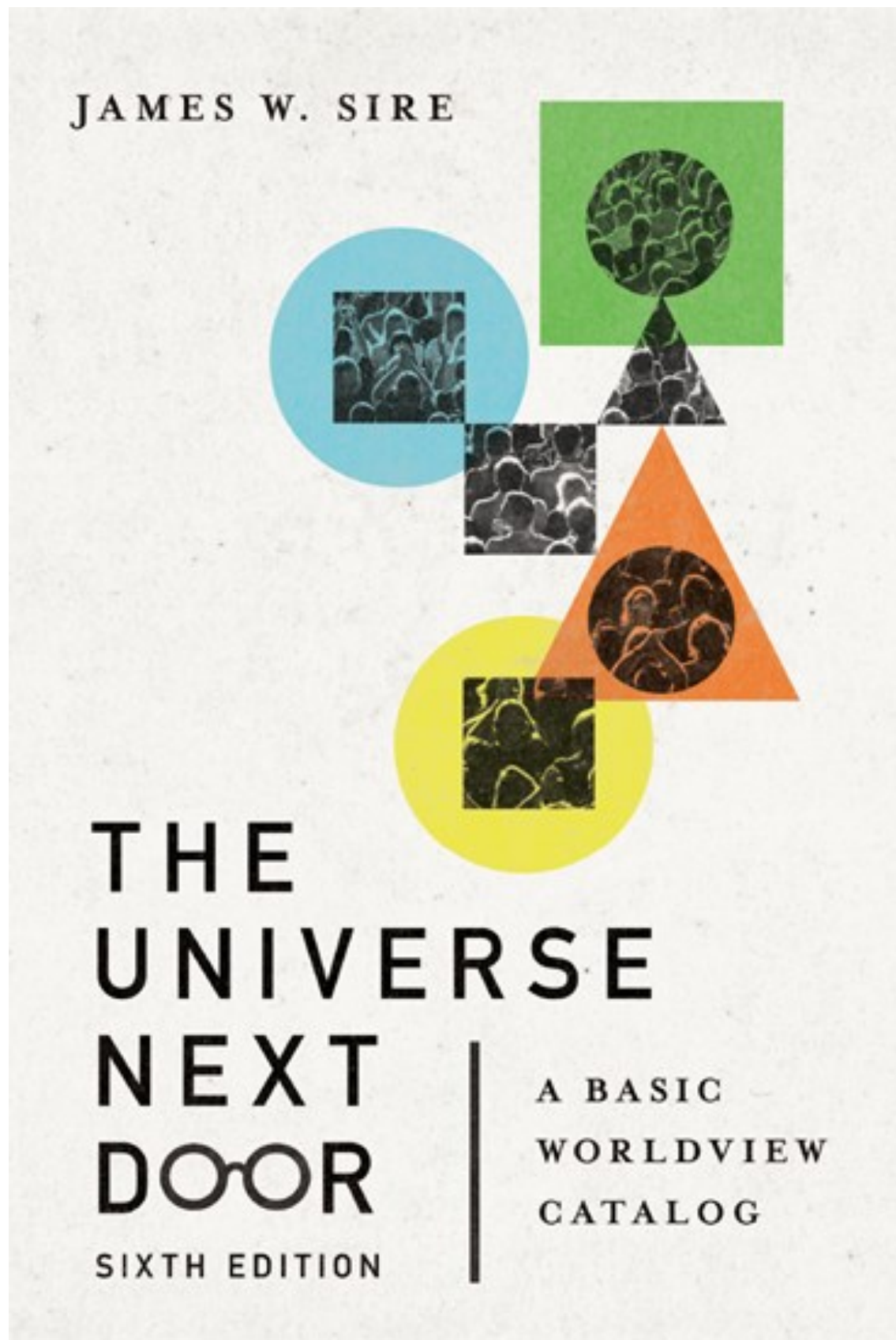
I would like to reiterate the importance of *The Christian In Complete Armour*. We have a mighty enemy, but an even greater God. Christians are buffeted about continually by the enemy whether we realize it or not. That's why the Apostle Paul tells us to, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Nowhere does Paul tell Christians to take the armor off, even for a little while. He tells us to "take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." When is that "evil day?"

- It is a day when joy deserts us
- It is a day when past sins are remembered
- The day of affliction is a day when present sin is revealed
- It is the day Satan comes to tempt
- It is the day of trouble

*The soul is a castle which we are each one to keep for God. We have been warned that Satan will lay siege to it. The time when he intends to come with all his powers of darkness is that 'evil day.' Now in order to be found true to our trust, we must plan for our defense and equip ourselves for a vigorous resistance. We cannot, without shameful, ingratitude to our God, waste those aids He provides for that evil day. William Gurnall, The Christian In Complete Armour, Volume I*

I highly recommend you invest in Volume I at a minimum. When you do, I believe you will purchase the entire set. It is necessary to every Christian to understand the battle we are in with Satan and his evil forces.





**The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog** is now available in a Sixth Edition (IVP Academic, 2020). Even though the first edition was published in 1976, many Christians are not familiar with this fine book.

The author is James Sire, a well-known Christian apologist and lecturer who passed away several years ago (1933-2018). He authored more than 20 books in addition to being a senior editor for InterVarsity Press.

*The Universe Next Door* is one of the better-known Christian apologetics books of the last 45 years. First written in 1976, it has gone through five update editions (1988, 1997, 2004, 2009, 2020). Each edition has added important information to the original book. Whether you have or have never read the book, I highly recommend the 6th Edition.

Sire wrote this about the reason for writing the first edition of the book:

*“I first wrote the book for Christian students in the mid-1970s; it was designed to help them identify why they often felt so ‘out of it’ when their professors assumed the truth of ideas they deemed odd or even false. I wanted these students to know the outlines of a ‘merely’ Christian worldview, how it provided the foundation for much of the modern Western world’s understanding of reality, and what the differences were between the Christian worldview and the various worldviews that either stemmed from Christianity by variation and decay, or encountered Christianity at its very intellectual roots.” PAGE XIII*

I was a college student in the mid-1960s and turned toward atheism through the efforts of an atheist professor who relentlessly attacked Christianity in his classroom. I can certainly understand why Sire wrote the first edition of his book ten years later.

College professors are still attacking Christianity today, so it's a good time to remind students and their parents of the importance of understanding worldviews and how to respond to them as Christians. I also recommend *The Universe Next Door* for teachers, pastors and youth workers in churches and youth-related ministries. Add it to your library and consider giving it to friends and family. You might also use it as a study guide for small groups in your church.

# Contents

1. A World of Difference: *Introduction*
2. A Universe Charged with the Grandeur of God: *Christian Theism*
3. The Clockwork Universe: *Deism*
4. The Silence of Finite Space: *Naturalism*
5. Zero Point: *Nihilism*
6. Beyond Nihilism: *Existentialism*
7. Journey to the East: *Eastern Pantheistic Monism*
8. A Separate Universe: *The New Age—Spirituality Without Religion*
9. The Vanish Horizon: *Postmodernism*
10. A View from the Middle East: *Islamic Theism*
11. The Examined Life: *A Life Worth Living*
12. Building a Christian Worldview for the Twenty-First Century: *A Work in Progress*



# Publisher Notes

**“For more than forty years, *The Universe Next Door* has set the standard for a clear, readable introduction to worldviews.** Using his widely influential model of eight basic worldview questions, James Sire examines prominent worldviews that have shaped the Western world:

- theism
- deism
- naturalism
- Marxism
- nihilism
- existentialism
- Eastern monism
- New Age philosophy
- postmodernism
- Islam

Intertwined with this analysis, he presents an overview of intellectual history giving insight into the current state of Western thought and culture. Critiquing each worldview within its own frame of reference and in comparison to others, Sire encourages readers to wrestle with life's biggest questions and examine the core beliefs and commitments on which they are building their lives.

The sixth edition, updated by Sire's longtime editor Jim Hoover, features new explanatory sidebars, helpful charts comparing worldviews and illustrating their historical flow, and a chapter on challenges to a Christian worldview in the twenty-first century. New discussion questions will help readers reflect more deeply on the ideas in each chapter.

*The Universe Next Door* has been translated into over a dozen languages and has been used as a text at over one hundred colleges and universities in courses ranging from apologetics and world religions to history and English literature. In a world of ever-increasing

diversity, *The Universe Next Door* offers a unique resource for understanding the variety of worldviews that claim the allegiance of mind and heart.”

# Reviews

*“Each new edition of James Sire’s classic text on worldviews, *The Universe Next Door*, only adds to the comprehensiveness and adaptability to classroom instruction as well as individual and group studies. This sixth edition is no exception. It contains a new commentary on the most contemporary challenges to Christian knowledge and faith. There is also an excellent new chart of worldviews as they relate to prime reality, external reality, human beings, after death, knowledge, morality, history, and core commitments. James Sire’s work on worldviews was the product of a lifetime of fascination, study, and articulation of the major differences between our basic understandings and commitments across cultures, religions, and time. It was essential to whetting my own interest in and understanding of the importance of comprehending worldviews. It is an essential text for every Christian’s library.”* MARY POPLIN, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AT CLAREMONT

GRADUATE UNIVERSITY, AUTHOR OF *IS REALITY SECULAR?*

*“Over two generations of evangelicals have been nurtured by James Sire’s magisterial *The Universe Next Door*. It is rightly considered a Christian classic. And for two reasons, this new incarnation of Sire’s work is especially important. For one, it has a number of new features—including clarifying sidebars, charts, study questions, and a new chapter tackling recent challenges to a Christian worldview—that make its content clear, updated, and easy to use as a text. For another, as Western culture moves further and further away from the memory of a Christian worldview, it becomes increasingly important that Christians know how to navigate the realm of worldviews and think worldviewishly as Christians. This new edition of *The Universe Next Door* is for such a time as this.”* J. P. MORELAND, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT TALBOT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, BIOLA UNIVERSITY, AND COAUTHOR OF

## PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

*“This book is tremendous. I have taught it many times and even made videos on it. . . . It contains much helpful bibliography, and the new chapter encourages us to keep thinking in the spirit of worldview.”* DAVID NAUGLE, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

*“It’s an honor to recommend this new edition of James Sire’s classic, The Universe Next Door. Though it is a reference book on different worldviews, it is filled with readable prose. Sire draws from leading thinkers from non-Christian worldviews to give us a fair survey and assessment. Anyone serious about understanding the views of the people next door will benefit from The Universe Next Door.”* ABDU MURRAY, SPEAKER, AUTHOR, AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF RAVI ZACHARIAS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

*“When I first encountered James Sire’s The Universe Next Door (fourth edition) in 2006, it introduced me to a new vocabulary of faith and philosophy. His work became formative and transformative for me as a pastor and graduate student; it remains so for me as an academic philosopher and professor. This newly updated sixth edition contains helpful additions (chapter reflection questions, expanded sidebars, tables and charts in the appendix, and a new short concluding chapter) while not compromising the fundamental soundness of the previous editions. An excellent and worthy successor!”* TAWA ANDERSON, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT OKLAHOMA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY PRAISE FOR PREVIOUS EDITIONS

*“To think intelligently today is to think worldviewishly, to come to terms with the mosaic of meaning systems which make up modern thinking. This book is a clear introduction and invaluable guide.”* OS GUINNESS, AUTHOR OF CARPE DIEM REDEEMED

*“If you are looking for an introductory exposition of prominent worldviews, I know of no better book.”*

*NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF, AUTHOR OF RELIGION IN THE UNIVERSITY*

*“The most readable presentation of alternative systems that I have ever seen.”* RUSS BUSH,  
*AUTHOR OF A HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY*

*“A most magnificently useful book.”* E. M. BLAIKLOCK,  
*AUTHOR OF BLAIKLOCK’S HANDBOOK TO THE BIBLE*

*“Read as a whole it traces a convincing history of the evolution of worldviews (particularly in the West), as well as providing a robust defence of the enduring validity of the Christian faith. . . . An excellent introduction.”* ALAN KERRY, *FAITH THOUGHT*,  
*OCTOBER 2010*



*“For more than thirty years, The Universe Next Door has set the standard for a clear, readable introduction to worldviews. Sire offers additional student-friendly features to his concise, easily understood introductions to theism, deism, naturalism, Marxism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern monism, New Age philosophy, and postmodernism.”* PAUL J. CAIN, LITURGY, HYMNODY, AND PULPIT QUARTERLY BOOK REVIEW, AUGUST 2010

*“For anyone concerned to understand the culture in which we are called to work and witness, which ought to be all of us, this is still an indispensable resource.”* DAVID MCKAY, THE COVENANTER WITNESS, JUNE 2010

The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog Sixth Edition (IVP Academic, 2020, 312 pages)

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