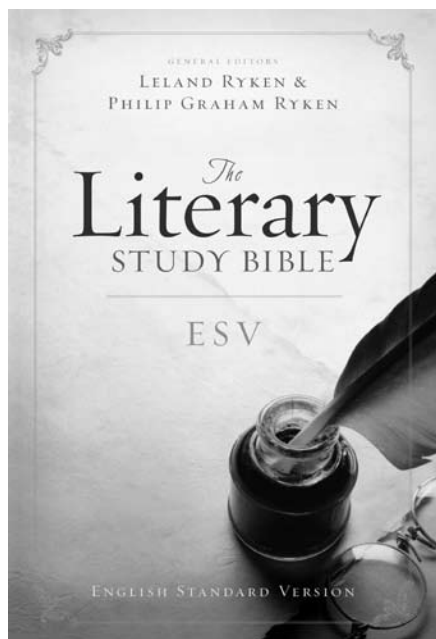


THE BOOK REPORT

SUMMER/
FALL 2007

NEW BOOK INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS UPDATE FROM CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES

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The ESV Literary Study Bible
HC, ISBN 978-1-58134-808-8, 2,016 pages, \$49.99

LELAND RYKEN, *Clyde S. Kilby professor of English at Wheaton College, has written and edited more than twenty-five books, including The Literature of the Bible, A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible, and Dictionary of Bible Imagery. He has been a leader of the Literary Approaches to the Bible interest group of the Evangelical Theological Society and earned his PhD in literature at the University of Oregon.*

PHILIP GRAHAM RYKEN, *senior minister at the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, has written more than twenty books, including Exodus and Jeremiah and Lamentations in the Preaching the Word commentary series. He also coauthored with his father, Leland Ryken, Ryken's Bible Handbook. He earned his MDiv at Westminster Theological Seminary and his DPhil at the University of Oxford.*

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): The ESV Literary Study Bible is a unique project. What were your goals as you worked on it?

LELAND RYKEN & PHILIP RYKEN (LR/PR): Ours is the only literary Bible currently on the scene, so a leading goal in our pioneering project was to chart new territory and do it well. The literary dimension of the Bible is a subject of neglect, and our hope from the beginning was to correct a serious omission. Additionally, we hoped that readers who use our notes would prove of practical benefit in their teaching and daily reading of the Bible, and that they would choose it as one of the first resources to use in understanding how a Bible passage works.

CBB: Who do you see using this Bible?

LR/PR: The intended audience is threefold: ordinary readers of the Bible who want to read the Bible for all it's worth; teachers of the Bible who want to be able to approach Bible passages in terms of the kind of writing they really are; and preachers and Bible scholars who know that the Bible is literary but who do not know what that means in practical terms.

CBB: So this is both a reader's Bible and a study Bible?

LR/PR: Yes. A study Bible combines the text of the Bible with interspersed commentary on the text and information about it. Our literary Bible has this in common with other study Bibles. But conventional study Bibles are reference books. Their very format, consisting of numerous and often lengthy footnotes, sets up continuous resistance to reading the text,

for the simple reason that one cannot read the biblical text and footnotes at the same time. By contrast, our literary Bible places the commentary in headnotes at the beginning of a given Bible passage, so that the lead-in functions as a roadmap that helps the actual reading of a passage instead of distracting from it. In that sense, our Bible is a reader's Bible—a Bible whose very format fosters reading the Bible by dividing the biblical text into readable units accompanied by a reader's guide to the units. The new daily reading chart at the back of this study Bible and the single-column format are additional aids for reading.

CBB: What features of this literary study Bible excite you most in their potential to enhance people's reading and teaching of Scripture?

LR/PR: The most obvious answer is that we are filling a need for which no other resource currently exists. In its external format, the Bible is a literary anthology, yet no study Bible and few commentaries do justice to the literary dimension of the Bible. Here at last is a resource that supplies literary commentary on the whole Bible. In addition to supplying tips for grasping the literary features of the Bible, our literary approach stresses the unity and design of Bible passages. Consequently, rather than focusing on individual verses as conventional study Bibles and commentaries tend to do, the *Literary Study Bible* is organized into reading portions that belong together as literary units. Additionally, we hope that the novelty of a literary study Bible will supply an element of freshness to readers and teachers of the Bible.

CBB: What does the English Standard Version translation bring to this Bible?

LR/PR: The ESV makes the venture possible because it preserves the actual words of the original texts. In preserving the actual words, it also preserves the literary qualities of the Bible, something that is compromised in dynamic equivalent translations. We do not believe that a genuine literary study Bible can be composed using dynamic equivalent translations because those translations remove so many of the literary features of the Bible.

“We are filling a need for which no other resource currently exists. In its external format, the Bible is a literary anthology, yet no study Bible and few commentaries do justice to the literary dimension of the Bible. Here at last is a resource that supplies literary commentary on the whole Bible.”

~ Leland Ryken and
Philip Graham Ryken

CBB: Why is such a Bible needed? What makes a literary study Bible different from other study Bibles?

LR/PR: The commentary in a conventional study Bible consists mainly of background information for biblical texts and theological interpretation. The commentary in a literary study Bible concentrates on questions of literary form as a prerequisite to understanding the ideas in the passage. This includes commentary on the genre, or literary type, of a passage, as well as other considerations of technique. Additionally, since literature is defined partly by the way in which it embodies recognizable human experience, literary commentary also has an eye on the universal human experience

found in a biblical passage, in contrast to the tendency of much biblical scholarship to seal off the Bible in its ancient context.

CBB: In essence, the literary approach could be called the necessary starting point for all other approaches to the Bible. Do you agree?

LR/PR: With any piece of writing, meaning is communicated through form, starting with words themselves but including much in addition. Since this is so, it is impossible to determine the meaning of an utterance—the *what* of a statement—without first interacting with the *how* (the form and technique). If the form of an utterance is literary in nature, as most of the Bible is, we cannot extract the meaning without first analyzing the form. For example, we know what a story communicates by first interacting with the actions, characters, and settings that comprise the story. We cannot grasp what a poem says without pondering its images and figures of speech. The priority of literary analysis is not a priority of importance but a priority in the sense of coming first and making other kinds of analysis possible.

CBB: How has a literary approach affected your personal reading and study of God’s Word? How has it deepened your appreciation for the richness of God’s Word?

LR/PR: For reasons already noted, paying attention to the literary dimension of the Bible has first of all allowed us to grasp the content of the Bible more accurately. A text needs to be approached in terms of the kind of writing it is, and only a literary approach meets that criterion for literary passages. Further, paying attention to the literary skill and artistry of biblical writers adds an artistic dimension to Bible reading, showing the beauty as well as the truth of the Bible. A literary approach also enhances our ability to see the element of universal human experience in the Bible, and it is unsurpassed in showing the unity of Bible passages. For people unaccustomed to assimilating the Bible in literary terms, a literary approach initially requires self-conscious effort, but soon this approach becomes “second nature,” so that even in devotional reading we just naturally start applying literary criteria to what we read.

“We do not believe that a genuine literary study Bible can be composed using dynamic equivalent translations because those translations remove so many of the literary features of the Bible.”

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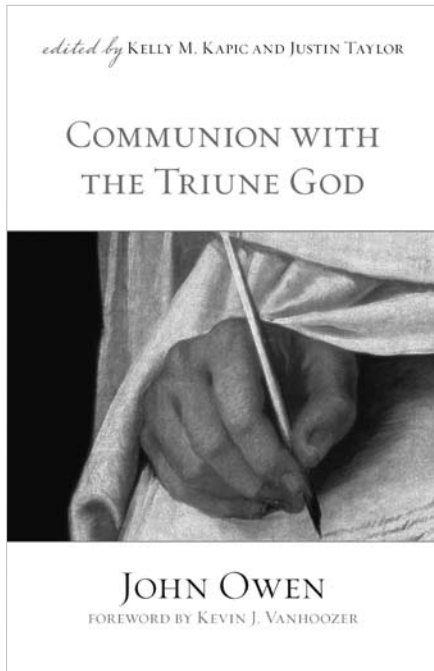
CBB: You’re not just coeditors of this Bible; you are father and son. What most interested you in partnering together?

PR: Father-son projects are always appealing to us; we work well together . . .

LR: Additionally, our respective disciplines of literary criticism on the one hand and preaching and theology on the other are complementary in the insights that they equip us to bring to the Bible. Also, we had already teamed up on *Ryken’s Bible Handbook*, so the prospect of applying the framework of that book to the whole Bible was immediately appealing to us.

CBB: How would you respond to those who worry that a literary study Bible might focus so much on the Bible as a literary work that it loses its authority as God’s inspired text?

LR/PR: A literary approach to the Bible begins where any other study of the Bible should begin—by affirming as true all that the Bible says about itself. This includes the statements of biblical writers about the inspiration of the Bible and its unique authority as God’s Word to the human race. The literary approach to the Bible is one approach among several, and as such it complements other valid approaches. The literary approach is no more susceptible to abuse than other approaches are, and it is always salutary to remind ourselves that many people have missed the point while taking historical, linguistic, and theological approaches to the Bible. Because of its divine authorship, the Bible is much more than another work of literature, but it is not less. The Bible is literature, and reading it well begins with recognizing the literary forms that God has used to reveal himself to humanity.



Communion with the Triune God

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-831-6, 416 pages, \$22.00

KELLY M. KAPIC is associate professor of biblical theology and theological studies at Covenant College in Georgia. Kapic has edited several of John Owen's early works for Crossway.

JUSTIN TAYLOR serves as Study Bible project director and associate publisher at Crossway. He also coedited *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things and Reclaiming the Center*.

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): Why do you think so few people have been aware of John Owen's writings in modern times?

KELLY KAPIC (KK): John Owen (1616–1683) is one of those writers who has been discovered afresh during different times in the past few centuries, although at no time has he been completely ignored. For example, in the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, on average a book of Owen's was (re)published every year, even though Owen himself had been dead since 1683. Scholars, pastors, and lay readers were discovering again the insights of this British theological giant, and consequently, his works were constantly in print throughout this period. During the first half of the twentieth century, though, for various reasons, Owen indeed seemed almost on the verge of being forgotten. But through a series of people (e.g., Lloyd-Jones, Packer) and events such as the reprinting of Owen's collected *Works*, people starting reading this Puritan again, and what

they discovered was surprisingly powerful. Consequently, the past fifty years has seen a remarkable renewal of interest in Owen, and the last twenty years in particular have set the stage for a full revival of Owen studies. While eighty years ago this certainly was not the case, now you can easily find excellent scholarly books on Owen's theology (e.g., Trueman, Ferguson, Rehnman), as well as numerous examples of leading pastors and devotional writers (e.g., Piper, Bridges) who have drawn from Owen as they seek to provide faithful direction to their audiences.

CBB: What strengths does Owen's thinking offer that could impact people today?

KK: I think the interest in Owen now is because he provides an incredible combination of theological depth and spiritual vitality. Often we find people who are brilliant students of the Scriptures, and other people who have amazing insight into human psychology and struggle. But for whatever reason, it is rare to find an individual with both of these gifts. Owen is such a person. His writings, which were often based on his sermons, have a freshness to them because he does not pit the "practical" against the "theological," but consistently combines them. I believe it is this creative combination in Owen that makes his writings so powerful, even though he died over three hundred years ago.

CBB: Give us some insight as to the origins of Owen's original work, *Communion with the Triune God*, that is featured in this book.

KK: *Communion with the Triune God* was first published in 1657, but the material in the book grew out of sermons preached some years earlier. Remembering that the original context was primarily pastoral and not an exercise in academic polemics helps explain the tone of much of the discourse. While it is clear that he modified, revised, and added various details to this work before it was published, the heart of the material points back to the pulpit. The volume that Justin Taylor and I edited on *Communion with the Triune God* is our attempt to get Owen's original writings into the hands of contemporary readers so that many more may benefit from Owen's theological and spiritual richness.

CBB: What approach did Owen take in his original book?

KK: Convinced that believers need to know their God in order to be faithful worshippers, Owen framed his approach to Christian spirituality in a Trinitarian manner; for only in the divine persons did Owen believe we can rightly know God. Owen's contribution lies not merely in what is said but in how and when he says it, for he was a master of theological creativity and expression. The very structure of this work—with his emphasis on the Three as the way to understand the One—makes even this book's design significant in the history of Western theology. We discover a work that is intentionally and consistently Trinitarian in structure and christocentric in emphasis.

“Owen arguably penned more about the person and work of the Holy Spirit than any other author before him in the history of Western theology! Thus, Owen's reflections on the Spirit are, by and large, incredibly balanced.”

~Kelly Kapic

CBB: Owen was a Puritan, yet people probably don't realize that he viewed himself as “a theologian of the Spirit.” How is this view reflected in the book?

KK: When people discover Owen, they are often surprised at how much he emphasizes the Holy Spirit, especially if their only exposure to the Puritans comes from well-worn stereotypes or caricatures. Owen arguably penned more about the person and work of the Holy Spirit than any other author before him in the history of Western theology! Thus, Owen's reflections on the Spirit are, by and large, incredibly balanced. Crucial to achieving this balance is that Owen found himself walking the line between the rationalists on the one hand and the “enthusiasts” on the other. One group seemed to deny the activity

of the personal Spirit, while the other group seemed unconcerned about making sure their experiences genuinely came from the Holy Spirit. Church life today is not all that different from that of the seventeenth century, and his creative and careful reflections on the Spirit remain wise counsel for us in our own day.

CBB: What, to Owen, is the difference between “union” and “communion”?

KK: I believe that the Puritan distinction between union and communion, which is an idea that Owen draws upon and develops, is incredibly important. Believers are united to Christ in God by the Spirit. This *union* is a unilateral action by God, in which those who were dead are made alive, those who lived in darkness begin to see the light, and those who were enslaved to sin are set free to be loved and to love. When one speaks of “union,” it must be clear that the human person is merely receptive, being the object of God’s gracious action. This is the state and condition of all true saints.

Communion with God, however, is distinct from union. Those who are united to Christ are called to respond to God’s loving embrace. While union with Christ is something that does not ebb and flow, one’s experience of communion with Christ can fluctuate. This is an important theological and experiential distinction, for it protects the biblical truth that we are saved by God’s radically free grace. Furthermore, this distinction also protects the biblical truth that the children of God have a relationship with their Lord, and that there are things they can do that either help or hinder it. While a saint’s consistency in prayer, corporate worship, and biblical meditation are not things that make God love a believer more or less, such activities tend to foster the beautiful experience of communion with God. Giving into temptations and neglecting devotion to God threaten the *communion*, but not the *union*. It is this union that encourages the believer to turn from sin and to the God who is quick to forgive, abounding in compassion, and faithful in his unending love.

Let there be no misunderstanding—for Owen, Christian obedience was of utmost importance, but it was always understood to flow out of this union, and never seen as the ground for it.

“While union with Christ is something that does not ebb and flow, one’s experience of communion with Christ can fluctuate. This is an important theological and experiential distinction, for it protects the biblical truth that we are saved by God’s radically free grace. Furthermore, this distinction also protects the biblical truth that the children of God have a relationship with their Lord, and that there are things they can do that either help or hinder it.”

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CBB: How much distinction does Owen make between communion with each member of the Trinity, and how would you summarize those distinctions?

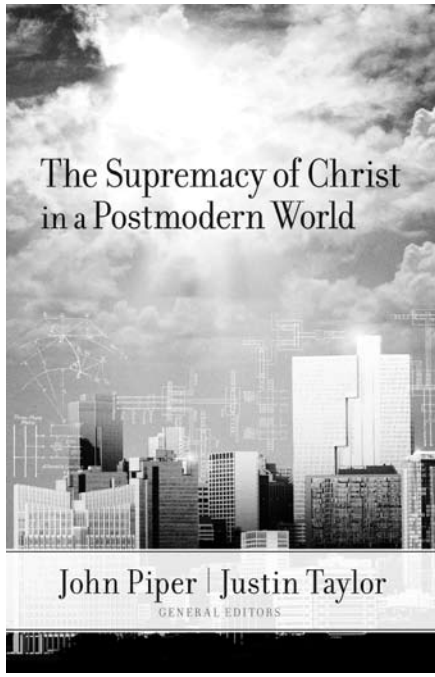
KK: According to Owen, the Bible is clear about two things: we worship one God, and that God is none other than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This means that if we are to worship God faithfully—as he is rather than as we imagine him to be—then we must worship him as Triune. Paul’s benediction from 2 Corinthians 13:14 provides a foundation which Owen then builds upon: “The *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the *love* of God, and the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” While it would be wrong to conclude that the Spirit is not gracious, or that the Son does not love, or that we don’t have fellowship with the Father, Owen seeks to demonstrate how this benediction highlights particular truths about the distinct divine persons. All our worship is directed to God himself, but there is no God other than the three divine persons—i.e., there is no God behind the gods. Therefore, to know and respond to God

means we must know and respond to the Father, Son, and Spirit.

The point is that a believer’s encounter with God is *always* an encounter with a divine person, not an abstraction. Building on Ephesians 2:18, Owen recognizes that when we approach the Father, we come through the Son and by the Spirit. Distinction does not obliterate divine unity, nor does divine unity undercut distinction. Rather, unity governs distinction, and distinction must inform conceptions of unity. We worship this one God, but to rightly worship him, we approach the persons, not an abstract force.

CBB: What are some of the additional riches readers can expect to find within these pages?

KK: This is probably my favorite volume that Owen wrote, and it has had the greatest impact on my own life. In particular, his discussions of the love of the Father, the humility and glory of the incarnate Son, and his open yet discerning approach to “test the spirits” have all been incredibly helpful in my own life and thought.



The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World
TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-922-1, 192 pages, \$14.99

JOHN PIPER is pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. His many books include *When I Don't Desire God*, *Don't Waste Your Life*, and *What Jesus Demands from the World*.

JUSTIN TAYLOR serves as Study Bible project director and associate publisher at Crossway. He also coedited *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things* and *Reclaiming the Center*.

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): Describe some of the ways that postmodernism has threatened our proclamations of the supremacy of Christ.

JUSTIN TAYLOR (JT): Postmodernism can serve as both an obstacle and an opportunity for the church. In some quarters, spiritual things are “back on the table” as legitimate options for consideration. At the same time, the one option not up for discussion is the exclusive nature of truth—namely, that if something is true, other things are false. So the issue isn't whether Christ can get a hearing in today's culture, or whether or not people are willing to talk about Christ or follow Christ or profess Christ. The issue is the *supremacy* of Christ. One of the dominant concerns of the church in the twenty-first century must be: how can we present Christ as he really is and persuade others to follow the Christ of history recorded in Scripture, rather than the weakened, made-in-our-own-image Christ

who only serves to validate our previously held beliefs?

CBB: Especially in a post-9/11 world, what are the major defining cultural realities with which the church—and individual Christians—must intentionally engage?

JT: In his chapter David Wells states that the two realities currently transforming our culture—both in and outside the church—are (1) the emergence of the postmodern ethos and the disintegration of the Enlightenment worldview, along with (2) the tidal wave of ethnic and religious diversity in the West through immigration, resulting in the expansion of older, non-Christian religions in America. The great challenge, as Wells sees it, is whether or not evangelical engagement on these issues will be able to distinguish itself from these forms of spirituality.

CBB: Wells goes on to say that postmodern belief is expressing itself in two primary ways. Briefly explain them.

JT: He sees it being expressed (1) as a form of “spirituality” that operates apart from institutions and claims not to be “religious,” and (2) through the language of meaninglessness, which collapses reality into the self. In his chapter Wells seeks to show how the supremacy of Christ comes to bear on both ideas.

CBB: Variations of the word “mission” are used throughout this book. How is the church itself now on a different kind of mission field, as Tim Keller addresses, and how has that mission field changed?

JT: A mission is that for which one is sent. We predominantly think of “missions” as being of the frontier variety, where one travels overseas to enter into and minister across another culture. But in recent years, there have been two significant developments: (1) the rise of immigration, resulting in ethnic and religious diversity in the US, such that in many ways the “mission field” has come to us; (2) the secularization of the US, especially in the major cities, which entails the loss of a shared religious language and culture. The result of all of this is that the church needs to work diligently to take confessional truth and

contextually translate it into a language that hearers can understand. I hasten to add that none of this means that the church should focus on “mission at home” rather than “mission abroad”—simply that both involve crossing cultures and both require our best efforts.

CBB: So this might be the most opportune time to see and proclaim Christ's supremacy?

JT: Yes. Truth often shines most brightly when it is explicitly contrasted against that which is false and defective. Ironically, it can sometimes be more difficult to share the glories of Christ when everyone in a community practices “cultural Christianity”—speaking the same language, doing the same things, sharing the same assumptions. But because of the shifts in Western culture, the church has a wonderful opportunity to stand and proclaim who Christ is and what he has done. Done rightly, the beauty of this truth will shine today in a unique way.

CBB: How does Voddie Baucham flesh out the supremacy of Christ in truth in this darkened postmodern world?

JT: Baucham first contrasts secular humanism with biblical theism, showing how they differ on the questions of God, man, truth, epistemology, and ethics. He then shows how each of them seeks to answer life's “ultimate questions” (Who am I? Why am I here? What's wrong with the world? How can what is wrong be made right?). In each of these he presents how Christ—in his person, his work, and his word—answers these questions and is supreme over all other would-be competitors.

CBB: John Piper and D. A. Carson both use John 17 as the basis for their chapters, but they do so in quite different ways. What can we learn from their analyses about how integral joy and love are to our goals as Christians in this culture?

JT: It'd simply be impossible to summarize here the richness of their expositions, but let me highlight just a couple of aspects of their contribution. Piper argues that one cannot truly enjoy or glorify God without rightly knowing him, and therefore healthy biblical doctrine should be embraced and cherished, not marginalized or minimized.

Carson spends most of his chapter unpacking Jesus' high priestly prayer, showing the loving way in which Christ prayed for our protection, unity, sanctity, joy, and eternal fellowship with God. Carson shows how all of this connects to Christian love, which is grounded in the God-head, in eternity, in Christ, and in the cross.

CBB: Brief us on Mark Driscoll's ideas for a two-handed approach to Christian ministry.

JT: In Driscoll's two-hands imagery, the closed hand holds unshakable, unchangeable truth—doctrines for which we must contend (like the sovereignty of God, the inerrancy and authority of God's Word, penal substitutionary atonement, the distinct roles of men and women, the reality of hell). In the open hand are practices and proposals that rest more lightly (the way we dress, talk, use technology, music, etc.).

CBB: Who will benefit most from his chapter?

JT: I think the people who will benefit most from Driscoll's approach are those who think that both hands need to look the same. Some envision two open hands, where everything is up for grabs. Others insist on two closed hands, where everything is of equal importance.

CBB: You have a special feature at the end of the book that brings it full circle. Why did you include interviews with the contributors?

JT: The book originally began as a conference, and I had the privilege of interviewing the speakers. The interview format sometimes allows us to peek "behind the curtain" a bit, exploring things that weren't covered in the main talk, or allowing us to cover an issue in greater depth.

CBB: What did you learn from the live interviews that left the greatest impression on you?

JT: Two answers especially stick in my mind. The first was Don Carson's answer about small-town pastors. I asked how small-town pastors can apply the concepts that had been spoken of, because I know that books like this can be somewhat discouraging for guys with smaller churches. No one knows their name outside their little flock; they aren't writing books or traveling the country. Sometimes it

seems like the church is exploding elsewhere but stagnant in their small town. Dr. Carson's father was a faithful pastor in the hard, lean years of Quebec, during a time that saw serious persecution of ministers. Dr. Carson's eyes welled up with tears and his voice cracked as he recounted his father's prayerful faithfulness in the midst of so much pain.

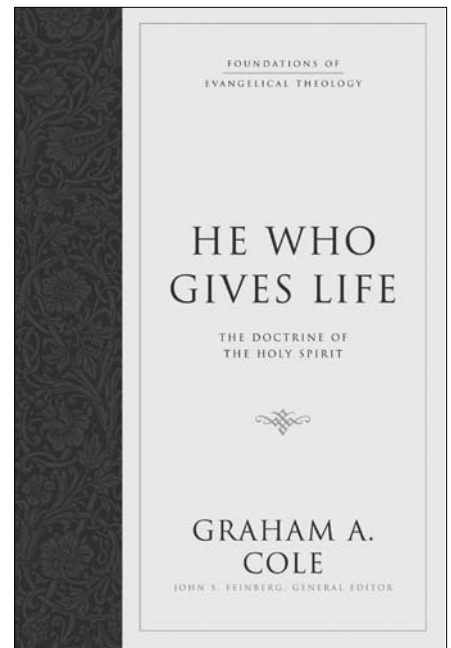
The second moving moment for me was to hear David Wells answer a question about how to be humble and authentic. Dr. Wells is so incredibly learned and articulate. Few people would imagine that he goes to Africa each year to help build orphanages for kids left behind by AIDS, and how interacting with the pastors in Africa has changed his concept of normalcy and gives him a different perspective on life. Those are the sort of personal insights into these men that tend not to come out in their talks or in their chapters.

CBB: How would you define the overall tone and perspective of this book? Should Christians be optimistic or cautious regarding the proclamation of the gospel today?

JT: At the end of the day, the tone of the book and our encouragement to readers is one of hope—not in the eloquence of our words but in the power of the gospel. No matter how bad things may seem or how confusing things may be, the church must have absolute confidence in the truth and supremacy of Jesus Christ. The gates of Hades will not prevail against Christ's church (Matt. 16:18); every knee *will* bow (Phil. 2:10); every tongue *will* confess (Phil. 2:11). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).

CBB: What's the greatest carry-away value of this book for readers?

JT: I hope one of the things that readers will take from the book is that there needs to be thoughtful, rigorous evangelical engagement with both the Word and the world—both Christ and culture—that seeks to forge an in-but-not-of, gospel-centered alternative between unbiblical withdrawal ("of" but not "in") and unbiblical assimilation ("of" and "in"). If we can partner to do that, we can continue to proclaim Christ's truth, beauty, and supremacy both to our neighbors and to the nations.



He Who Gives Life

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

(Foundations of Evangelical Theology)

HC, ISBN 978-1-58134-792-0, 320 pages, \$30.00

GRAHAM A. COLE is professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He has contributed to numerous theological journals and books as well as authored *Engaging with the Holy Spirit*

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): Why does the doctrine of the Holy Spirit attract controversy?

GRAHAM COLE (GC): The controversy comes when claims are made that prove divisive in the body of Christ. The classic example is second-blessing teaching. This is the idea that God has something beyond our regeneration by way of an event that moves the Christian from a lower to a higher plane of power or holiness or both. Such a doctrine stratifies believers into the haves and have nots. Another example is that of spiritual gifts. Are they all available today or have the more spectacular ones ceased? Churches have divided over such questions.

CBB: What have you found to be the most common misconceptions about the Spirit? How do you respond?

GC: One common misconception is that the Spirit is an "it" and not a person. Another is that Pentecost is in the first instance about pneumatology, when it is firstly about Christology. It is the risen and

enthroned Christ who pours out the Spirit of promise. The book of Acts is the book of the acts of the risen Christ by the Spirit.

Still another misconception is that having a spiritual gift (e.g., a tongue) reveals one's sanctity. Hardly! Just think of the Corinthians who had them all and were a pastoral challenge in the extreme.

CBB: Describe how you approached the challenge of writing about the Holy Spirit when, admittedly, Scripture doesn't present "the story of the Spirit."

GC: I approached the challenge with a real sense of diffidence. At the personal level, I realized I was writing about the Spirit in the invisible presence of the Spirit. At the academic level I was trying to chase the wind, to use Jesus' metaphor. Isaiah spoke of the God who hides himself. How very true of the Spirit!

CBB: Talk about the roles that both biblical theology and systematic theology play in this book.

GC: Biblical theology explores the canon of Scripture as it unfolds its story from Genesis to Revelation, and does so in the terms which Scripture itself supplies. It is a descriptive discipline. Systematic theology is a normative discipline. It asks of those same Scriptures what we ought to believe and how we ought to live, and does so following a logical order of topics. It seems to me that systematic theology ought to be informed by biblical theology in the way it uses biblical texts to establish doctrines. In practice, this means placing texts in their contexts in their literary units in their books in the canon in the light of the flow of redemptive history. This helps prevent arbitrary proof texting.

CBB: People need to balance the facts of doctrine and the personal nature of the triune God. What is required for them to do this?

GC: Evagrius Ponticus said that a theologian is one who prays. Unless the facts of doctrine become part of the way we address the triune God, then we remain in a world of interesting concepts only. My own Anglican tradition calls upon God with some aspect of his character, roles, or deeds on view. So, for example, I might pray, "Our Gracious God who looks

with pity on all who fear you, please . . ." I think that this is a wise way to pray, when we turn what we know of God into prayer and praise to God, if I may use J. I. Packer's language. Our prayers show how balanced we are.

CBB: Please comment on how "a theology of the Spirit" gets applied in the life of a church and in the life of an individual Christian.

GC: The brief answer both for the church and the individual is to follow Christ, and pneumatology will be applied to its life and his or her life. For this reason the Spirit has come to enable us to follow the Son.

"To use a Pauline expression, the Spirit is also the searcher of the depths of the Godhead and thus the key to our knowing God. I also speculate in the book—with debts to Augustine—that the Spirit as the bond of love in the Trinity is the reason the Godhead did not implode when the Son bore the sin of the world and the Father's face turned away from the Son as it were. The Spirit, I believe, played a key role in the atonement."

~ Graham Cole

CBB: You divide this book into four parts. Tell us a little about the purpose of each of those parts, and tell us why you ended the book as you did.

GC: The first part deals with the mystery of the Spirit in terms of the mystery of the triune God and the elusiveness of the Spirit.

In other words, I begin where Scripture does—with God—as true theology must. So this part of the book explores the person of the Spirit. The second part follows the biblical plotline with the Spirit's ministry as revelation and likewise follows the way Scripture unfolds its story with the Spirit's ministry as revealed in the New Testament. I did it this way because I did not want to lose the narrative drive of Scripture and with it the dynamism of a real God who has spoken and acted in real history in our real world. In other words, the second and third parts deal with the work of Spirit.

The final part draws the discussion together by thematizing the Spirit's divine selflessness in pointing away from himself to the Christ of Old Testament hope and that promise as realized in the New Testament. I ended the book as I did because it became clearer and clearer by book's end that we are rightly described as Christians and not Pneumians.

CBB: What do you view as the key ministries of the Spirit?

GC: As Augustine has taught us, "All the works of the Trinity are undivided." But the precise involvement of each of the persons of the Godhead differs in creation, revelation, and redemption. The Spirit, for example, is the one who has come to promote Christ and not himself. To use a Pauline expression, the Spirit is also the searcher of the depths of the Godhead and thus the key to our knowing God. I also speculate in the book—with debts to Augustine—that the Spirit as the bond of love in the Trinity is the reason the Godhead did not implode when the Son bore the sin of the world and the Father's face turned away from the Son as it were. The Spirit, I believe, played a key role in the atonement. Further, as Calvin rightly argued, the Spirit is the one who unites us to Christ, and outside of Christ there is no life, no hope, no future.

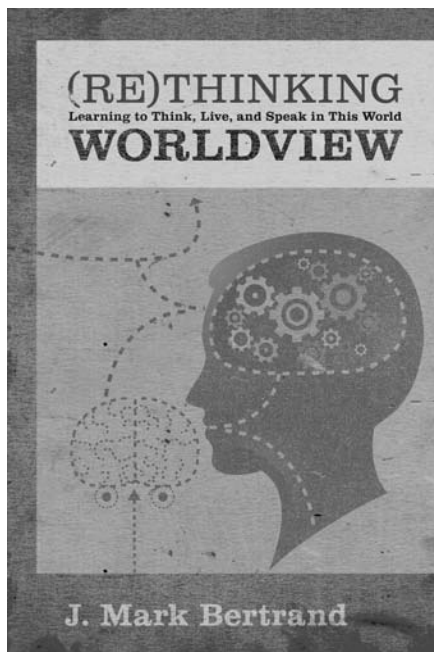
CBB: Briefly explain your understanding of the Old Testament perspective of the Spirit and how integral it was to this entire book.

GC: The Holy Spirit per se is not the chief actor in the Old Testament, neither is the Son per se. God is. I think Irenaeus was right to see a divine pedagogy at work from Genesis

to Revelation. (In fact, we owe to him the idea of Old Testament and New Testament.) God needed to teach his people about his oneness and the folly of idolatry before the threeness could safely be revealed. Thus, in the New Testament, both the Son and the Spirit come into view in a way that the Old Testament only hints at. However, once in view, the Old Testament is flooded with retrospective light, which in turn illuminates the New Testament upon rereading it. All very clever of God, really.

CBB: What remains the greatest mystery to you regarding the Spirit?

GC: The greatest mystery to me is the eternal role of the Spirit in the Trinity. So little of that has been revealed to us. Incidentally, there is a trend amongst some evangelicals at present to make much of the imitation of the inner life of the Trinity (*imitatio trinitatis*). However, the New Testament accent is clearly on the imitation of Christ (*imitatio Christi*), which fits perfectly with the Spirit's role of bearing witness to him.



Rethinking Worldview

Learning to Think, Live, and Speak in This World

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-934-4, 256 pages, \$16.99

J. MARK BERTRAND earned a BA in English from Union University and an MFA in creative writing from the University of Houston. In addition to teaching on the faculty of Worldview Academy, an academic summer camp for high school students, he is the fiction editor at Relief Journal.

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): Who is your target audience, and why is it so important to reach them with this book?

J. MARK BERTRAND (JMB): Several years ago, a former student of mine came back from college and informed me in no uncertain terms that what I'd taught him about Christian worldview thinking did not work in the real world. This surprised me, because what I had taught were things I had *learned* in the real world—but I decided to probe deeper. I found that in addition to instilling a sense of worldview confidence in this student, I had also managed to pass along an unhealthy dose of intellectual arrogance, as well as an emphasis on the life of the mind that overlooked the importance of wise living and passionate cultural engagement. The problem wasn't with what I'd taught, but with what I had left out. *Rethinking Worldview* redresses the balance. For readers who have never encountered worldview thinking before, it offers an introduction free of failure factors that tripped up my former student. For those already familiar with worldview

thinking—especially worldview “burn-outs” who doubt the value of the concept—the book examines the idea with fresh eyes, uncovering some unexpected benefits.

CBB: Given the popularity of worldview thinking, what's left to contribute to the conversation? Why do we need to rethink worldviews?

JMB: It is *because* worldview thinking is so popular that it needs to be re-examined. A cavalry charge, no matter how far it penetrates into the enemy line, cannot advance forever. At some point, the horsemen must stop and regroup if they intend to push forward effectively. Evangelicals are talking about worldviews, and that is a wonderful development, but if this talk does not reconnect with a fuller conception of what worldviews are and how they're formed, I am afraid the talk will lead to no action and will eventually die out. The worldview concept among Christians is in danger of becoming just another classroom cliché, another base to cover in the Sunday School manual. In reality, it is an exciting, energizing way to approach the Christian life.

CBB: What have your years of teaching Christian worldview to high school and college students taught you?

JMB: One thing is that students at this age are more sophisticated and perceptive than we give them credit for. Adults might come up to me after a lecture and complain that the material went over their heads—“Couldn't you have given us more practical application?”—but high school and college students seem to appreciate not being condescended to. They have grown up in a world where everything was dumbed down, supposedly for their benefit, but it turns out they didn't need it. On the other hand, I have learned that growing up in church and even memorizing lengthy passages of Scripture—two things I did early on—is no guarantee that a student actually understands the ideas of the Bible. Nothing is more frustrating than finding out that a young person who can quote line after line of a Pauline epistle cannot reproduce a single Pauline train of thought. It's as if, having peered through the text through a microscope for so long, he can no longer see the big picture. I want to instill a

passion for “big-picture Christianity” in my readers, to suggest how all the parts might fit together in such a way that changes things forever.

CBB: What do you anticipate will happen for readers who take the journey of this book seriously?

JMB: The best theology leads to doxology. My hope for *Rethinking Worldview* is not that it will create better thinkers, but that it will create better worshipers. One never knows how God will use the reading experience, but I hope that this book will convince Christians who are serious about the life of the mind not to neglect our calling to act and speak in the world. I hope it will encourage those with a critical bent to use that gift to make a positive contribution to the larger culture. I also hope it will point Christians engaged in the culture toward worldview and wisdom as sources for renewal and strength.

“Nothing is more frustrating than finding out that a young person who can quote line after line of a Pauline epistle cannot reproduce a single Pauline train of thought. It’s as if, having peered through the text through a microscope for so long, he can no longer see the big picture.”

~ J. Mark Bertrand

CBB: Talk briefly about the book’s special emphasis and the trajectory it follows.

JMB: *Rethinking Worldview* is divided into three sections—worldview, wisdom, and witness—reflecting my desire to tell the whole truth about worldview thinking. It is not enough to “think biblically.” We have to live biblically and speak biblically too. There was a time when I viewed worldview thinking as a sort of specialization, corresponding to the

“brainy” part of the faith, but now I see the Christian life as an all-or-nothing proposition. Worldview, wisdom, and witness are not three different topics, but three aspects of the same topic, organically linked. That topic, of course, is sanctification. How do we think, live, and speak as Christians in this world? *Rethinking Worldview* is my answer to this question.

CBB: Your definition of “witness” is broader than a lot of people’s. Explain.

JMB: Most people, it seems to me, adopt a narrow definition of the word. For them, “witness” means evangelism proper, and it might be stretched to include apologetics. Worldview thinking compels a broader conception of witness, though. I take it to mean any effort we make to “bear witness,” to speak Christian truth to the surrounding world. In the third section of the book, I look at evangelism and apologetics, but I also include a section on works of the imagination. After all, the average Christian has been much more profoundly influenced by non-Christian art and entertainment than he has by non-Christian evangelism and apologetics.

We have tended to neglect cultural contribution, though, because evangelicals are uneasy about the relationship between art and truth. The role of truth in evangelism or apologetics is fairly obvious. Both disciplines can be fairly summed up, in fact, as “telling the truth about Christ.” I think the same can be said of art. The evangelicals I speak with tend to agree with me about the influence of art and entertainment, and they concede that Christians should be more involved in such endeavors—not just as evangelism tools, but for their own sake. How to do it, though, still baffles them, so I hope this expanded concept of “witness” will shed some light.

CBB: When it comes to worldviews, people tend to accumulate plenty of baggage. Where does it come from?

JMB: We accumulate baggage because we are finite and fallen. Worldviews are formed as the result of external pressures. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, was not fully formulated in its current state until early teachers put forward doctrine that tended to compromise it. Having to sort out the baggage led the church

to articulate its position clearly. When some previously obscure point becomes a hot topic in the culture, we are compelled to work out our answer from a biblical standpoint. Over time, it begins to look like our creeds and confessions started as an abstract attempt to work out all the obscure implications of our faith, but the fact is, most of those fine points were once hotly disputed. As the world throws new challenges at us, we have to go back and answer them as best we can. Obviously, a process like this is going to result in some blind spots. Something similar happens on the personal level. Individuals sort through various influences, consciously and unconsciously, arriving at a view of the world that more or less fits—right up until it is tested!

CBB: What are the most common types of baggage?

JMB: Christian baggage can be divided into two types: the baggage of assimilation and the baggage of isolation. We pick up certain biases and values by virtue of living in the times we do, in the setting we do. Some of these correspond to Scripture; others don’t. In my experience, when Christians are asked to measure cultural assumptions with a biblical yardstick, they become fairly proficient in separating the good from the bad. But the baggage of isolation, the unbiblical assumptions we inherit from our church tradition or learn from the pulpit—that is much harder to weed out. Christians thinking in terms of worldview are often at odds with the surrounding culture, but they are also at odds with the evangelical subculture in some cases too. Surrendering the baggage in such cases is harder, but perhaps even more necessary.

CBB: Explain the “siege mentality” and why Christians don’t have to give into this.

JMB: When I ask fellow Christians how they are being treated in the larger culture, they talk about feelings of alienation. They are being pushed out of the public square, caricatured and ridiculed in the media, and made to feel like intolerant relics of an inconvenient past. They are, in effect, under siege. When people feel besieged, though, they often resort to desperate measures, justifying actions that are wholly inconsistent with their core principles. We tend to assume that thought

leads to action, and that if we get our starting assumptions correct, the right deeds will inevitably follow. But siege mentality shakes that up. People will violate their beliefs in order to “protect” their beliefs, as strange as that sounds.

I spoke earlier of overconfidence, but I think when it comes to siege mentality we see what happens when there is a lack of confidence. Ironically, these extremists are often seen as the most dedicated to the cause, even though their actions run counter to it. In reality, they seem to have very little confidence in the truth and power of the truth they claim to defend. Christians do not have to succumb to siege mentality for the simple reason that the battle is not theirs; it belongs to the Lord. In the book, I use examples from famous failed sieges to derive principles for successful—which is to say, loving and faithful—siege warfare.

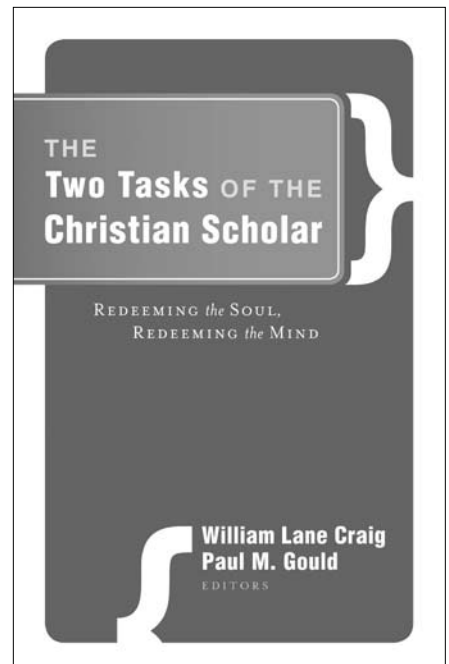
CBB: You talk about the “enigma” and “ironies” of unbelief. Why do you use these interesting terms?

JMB: Unbelief is typically seen as the default position, which means that faith is the enigma: Why do some people have this irrational need to believe in God? But I have heard some celebrated atheists talk about the moment they first realized there was no God, and these stories sounded an awful lot like conversion narratives. In each case, the atheist was a small child, and the fact that there was no God suddenly dawned on him. I’m sure this is not the case for everyone—but then, not every Christian comes to faith suddenly as a child, either. It happens often enough, I think, to justify a re-examination of the idea that unbelief is a rational, default position.

From the Christian standpoint, though, unbelief is a bit of an enigma, so in *Rethinking Worldview* I probe the mystery a little. Part of my objective is to help Christians overcome the idea that their critics are simply refusing to make an irrational leap in the absence of evidence. I also want to shed some light on why, given the power and saving intention of God, some people refuse to see what is right before them.

CBB: What do you see as the Christian’s greatest opportunity regarding worldview thinking?

JMB: Whenever a doctrine is tested, there is a tendency to reduce it until it’s the antithesis of the threat arrayed against it. For example, when Christians today think of the doctrine of creation, we tend to see it only as a counterweight to the theory of evolution. The truth is defended, but its fullness is forgotten. I do not want to see that happen with worldview thinking. If worldview thinking up to now has been seen as a resource for apologetics, I believe the greatest opportunity we have today is to rediscover it as a tool for sanctification. I would like to see churches, for example, reading *Rethinking Worldview* together, not so much as a way to sharpen their apologetic skills but as a means to following Christ in the fullest sense. Worldview thinking will change the way you look at worship, at the message of Scripture, at what it means to act justly and love mercy.



The Two Tasks of the Christian Scholar

Redeeming the Soul, Redeeming the Mind

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-939-9, 208 pages, \$18.99

WILLIAM LANE CRAIG is research professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California.

PAUL M. GOULD serves with Campus Leadership Ministries, the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): What are the two tasks of Christian scholars within secular academia, and where did the idea for this book come from?

PAUL GOULD (PG): On September 13, 1980, the great Lebanese ambassador and Christian statesman Charles Malik joined Billy Graham and 10,000 others for the dedication of the new Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. With passion and prophetic vision, Malik implored evangelical Christians in America to engage in two great tasks: “that of saving the soul and saving the mind.” The idea for the book actually grew out of a conference held during the summer of 2006 by Faculty Commons, the faculty ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ seeking to honor and renew Malik’s call to these two great tasks of redeeming the soul and mind. Through much interaction and lively debate among over four hundred Christian faculty at this conference, the idea of a book addressing the “two tasks” for our day and age within the university and culture at large emerged.

CBB: An important question throughout this book is: What does Christ think of the university? How would you respond at this point in time?

PG: This is an important and difficult question. Perhaps the safest answer is to say, “A great deal!” I would be wise to leave it at that—but alas, you asked, so here I go. For starters, like any other human institution, Christ sees the university as flawed due to the corruptive influence of sin. Just witness the rampant denial of truth and objectivity as well as the marginalization of or outright hostility toward Christianity. But surely, Christ would want to say more. It is well known that many universities in this country were founded by Christians for the training up of Christians to serve and advance the gospel. This fact points to the importance of the university—to us and to Christ—even though universities are no longer primarily seen as institutions that cultivate moral, intellectual, and spiritual virtue. Instead, universities have become more like trade schools, teaching students how to perform a certain function or role so they can get a particular job someday, entirely neglecting a person’s character. I think, too, that Christ is *grieved* over the university—and now I am really in deep—both because of Christians and non-Christians.

CBB: How do you believe Christian scholars are grieving him?

PG: It seems that many of us—and I speak of myself here as well—have wavered or lost the passion that once burned bright in us as young PhD students to view the university as a mission field. As a result, many (not all!), Christian professors are content to go silently about their work—teaching, engaging in research and scholarly publications—without ever thinking through how a Christian worldview might impact their scholarly work or life. Even more glaring is a neglect of a “missional” attitude: the university is an incredible mission field, and Christian professors need to see it as such.

CBB: What are some of the ways you believe Christ grieves for non-Christians within secular academia?

PG: The university is bent on “forming” its employees into its own image and vision of

greatness hence, many university professors have become fully formed in their character and convinced of their own self-sufficiency and lack of a need for a Savior. In my research I came across an interesting study that basically shows that the more prestigious the institution (read “the more one can take pride in his or her accomplishments and acclaim”), the less one is interested in spiritual things. I believe this grieves the heart of Christ, not only because it is for them, too, that he came to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10), but also because it is these very same professors who are the gatekeepers of thought in our culture—what is plausible to them will be taught as plausible to their students. Thus, we must engage the university, for as Malik implores in his speech (which is reprinted in the book), if we lose the university, we lose Western civilization. And, I would add, we lose the fertile ground in which the gospel message can be planted and nurtured and find ready hearts.

CBB: You say that Christians who teach at secular institutions are on the frontlines of the church, not just warriors in the battle for ideas. Explain the consequences of ideas for everyday Christians and the church in particular.

PG: Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, said that if he were to do it all over again, he would begin building his ministry by focusing on professors. And the reason, as Dr. Bright realized, is that university professors exhibit an incredible influence on society at large. There are something like 600,000 professors in this country. These professors represent the highest educated sector in our country, and they are all located centrally and mainly within one institution: the university. Furthermore, these 600,000 professors influence 16 million university students through their teaching (I have seen many lectures used as bully-pulpits). And the influence extends—by training our future high school and elementary teachers—to the over 80 million school-age children in our country. Add to that the fact that almost all business leaders, politicians, lawyers, and film producers come through the university, and we are in a position to see that the influence of this very small population is enormous. Hence, reach-

ing professors for Christ, or training and equipping Christian professors to live out a faithful witness within secular academia, has untold strategic importance for the kingdom. Further, ideas have consequences, and the university in general and professors in particular are the gatekeepers of ideas, influencing directly or indirectly all aspects of thought and life in our world. Malik understood that the heart cannot receive what the mind cannot entertain, and thus a key component in reaching our world for Christ must include helping people first imagine a world where Christianity is real. Christianity must be defended winsomely and rigorously outside the church, and the life of the mind must not be neglected inside the church, or Christianity will simply be seen as irrelevant.

“...if we lose the university, we lose Western civilization. And, I would add, we lose the fertile ground in which the gospel message can be planted and nurtured and find ready hearts.”

~Paul M. Gould

CBB: What do you hope this book will stimulate among not only those who are in the university but among thinking Christians everywhere?

PG: The common thread that unites this book is the call to an integrated life—where head and heart are united and flow into helping hands (or as I put it in the book, a ready pen or clarion voice for academics). The two tasks apply to all Christians everywhere, and thus the theme can be easily applied in other fields. I think that much of the discussion in the book is directly relevant to high school and elementary teachers in the public school system. Further, I was recently talking to a businessman friend of mine about the model of an integrated life that I unpack in the first chapter, and it dawned on me that this model could be easily applied to business or any

other vocation, simply by changing some of the particular details.

Historically, the mark of a viable person, and I would argue, a viable church or ministry, has always been one in which head, heart, and hands were integrated. This model of viability has become unraveled in our modern (and postmodern) times, and the result is that our culture has become compartmentalized: secular/sacred, private/public, work/play, and so on. But there is no biblical justification for such a compartmentalized life: Jesus is Lord of all, all of who I am and all of what I do. I think that this theme embodied in Malik's two tasks is incredibly important for the church today. While the primary audience for the book is Christian scholars, I hope that people who are not Christian scholars by vocation will pick up this book, read it, and then think through creative ways to live out the two tasks within the context of their own life and ministry.

CBB: What are the most important elements of the task of integration for the Christian scholar and how is this book a wake-up call to readers?

PG: In my introductory chapter, which sets the framework for the entire book, I tried to look at the fully integrated life from a couple of perspectives. First, I grounded the two tasks message (and the integrated life) within the metanarrative of Scripture (e.g., creation, fall, redemption, and renewal). It makes no sense to say to someone that your mind and soul need redeeming if there is no understanding of what the soul is and what we are being redeemed from. Secondly, I try to unpack in more concrete terms what a fully integrated life could look like for Christian scholars. While you'll have to read the book to see just exactly how I defined the fully integrated life, for now I'll just say that it attempts to capture both an inward focus (on the mind and soul of the Christian scholar) as well as an outward and upward focus (toward others and God). The subsequent chapters in the book, which are by various contributors, unpack one or more aspects of this fully integrated life and apply it to various aspects of the university or the unique challenges of being a university professor. Dr. Craig's and my hope is that this book will serve as a wake-up call to readers

toward a renewed vision of the good life, the necessity of entering into the battle, and the importance of being good stewards within the difficult halls of academia with all that God has graciously given us. Malik did not have in mind soft and tame Christian scholars within academia.

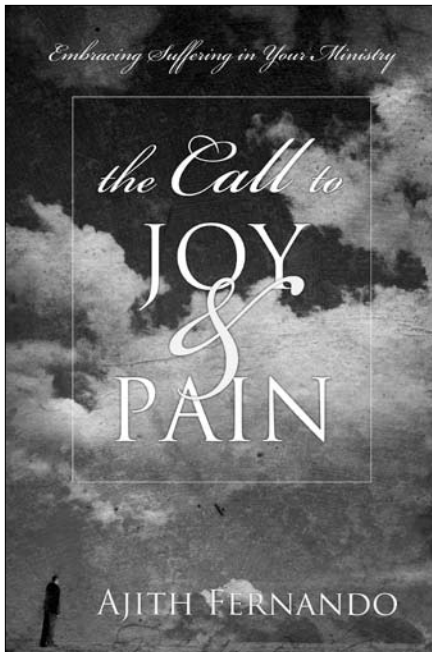
CBB: Give examples from the book of what kinds of efforts will be involved in "transforming the mind of the university" so that it is a place where Christian ideas are considered a legitimate option.

PG: In general, to see the university transformed will take boldness, wisdom, sensitivity to the spirit, a willingness to be used by God, a willingness to fail, and the constant reminder that one belongs to Christ, not the university. I love Walter Bradley's chapter because he shares with a humble heart practical ideas on how to reach out to colleagues and students with the message of the gospel. His thirty-five years of ministry at Texas A&M and now Baylor model for us a life of boldness and intentional outreach to the lost that is refreshing. Bob Kaita, the Princeton physicist, reminds us that we need to be sensitive to the spirit as we navigate how and when to share the message of Christ. Using the apostle Paul's message on Mar's Hill as a heuristic device, Kaita shares from his own life and various ministry outreach opportunities how he has learned to be sensitive to the Spirit in discerning the audience's needs and ability to "hear" the message of Christ. Bill Craig, in his concluding chapter, shares about how there has been a transformation within the discipline of philosophy over the past thirty years: faithful Christian philosophers have, by the grace of God and the winsomeness of their lives and scholarship, literally brought Christianity back into mainstream philosophical discourse—so much so that many of the best and brightest philosophers in academia today are Christians.

CBB: The book seems far more than just an intellectual pursuit. Would it be safe to say that your collective personal experiences as Christian scholars in secular institutions have uniquely drawn each of you to this topic?

PG: The university is a wonderful place. At its best, it challenges you to think and seek truth,

and become a better person in the process. Of course, in many places the university is not at its best. But it *could* be through the lives and presence of Christian scholars. This book is the outgrowth of the fact that all that is good, true, and beautiful comes from God. As Christian scholars, that fact draws us... no, forces us, to make connections, to ask the question: How does my life fit into the whole? This question has drawn and will continue to draw many to grapple with how to live out in any context the two tasks of redeeming the mind and redeeming the soul.



The Call to Joy and Pain

Embracing Suffering in Your Ministry

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-888-0, 192 pages, \$14.99

AJITH FERNANDO has been national director of Youth for Christ in war-torn Sri Lanka since 1976. He is active in a church ministering primarily to the urban poor. His ministry includes mentoring younger staff and counseling Christian workers. He is the author of eleven books published in thirteen languages.

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): This book's topic and title speak to what you call "one of the paradoxes of Christianity." Why not just write about joy or suffering separately?

AJITH FERNANDO (AF): I believe that because suffering is an essential part of life, it is joy that makes suffering bearable. One who wants joy but has not taken suffering into account is going to be disappointed, because one cannot continue in joy for too long without experiencing some suffering. It is as you look at both joy and suffering at the same time that you can be a truly happy person. The happiest people in the world are not those who do not have suffering, but those who are not afraid of suffering. I firmly believe that such happiness is one of the greatest treasures that we Christians enjoy.

CBB: Your ministry has included grassroots work with the poor and with drug addicts and counselors—all in the warring country of Sri Lanka. How has exposure to such human devastation influenced your perspective on both joy and suffering?

AF: I have seen people who are really happy while living in the midst of war and poverty. I have seen happy, poor Christians lose their joy when they become better off financially. I know many people who have left the tense situations of war and devastation in our land and gone abroad in search of greener pastures. And I have noticed that some of them are much less happy in the peaceful land of their adoption than they were in the war-torn nation of Sri Lanka. All this has convinced me that joy is not primarily dependent upon external circumstances. It has to do with our heart relationship with God.

CBB: Who or what has most shaped your desire to write this book?

AF: There are two things that made me desire to write this book. First, I have met and have ministered among many unhappy Christians. Most of them attribute their unhappiness to the pain they've experienced in life. I have longed to see these people happy with the joy of the Lord, and I have labored to do all I can to help them come to this experience of joy. Second, I have seen many people move away from their call because of suffering. By doing so, they have condemned themselves to a life without vocational fulfillment. And God's kingdom has missed out on some great work that they could have done in obedience to God's call. I want to help people to embrace the cross that comes with their call without running away from it.

CBB: You say that one of the weaknesses of the church and individual Christians is "the lack of a theology of suffering." What are the greatest dangers when we don't have such a theology, and how does it affect us?

AF: Paul was in the habit of sending all his unpleasant experiences through a theological grid in which suffering was a key feature. We see this especially in 2 Corinthians. When you have a theology of suffering, you can approach the suffering you face with the background of this theology. This way you can make sense of the suffering. And you can remain a happy person in the midst of it. If you do not have such a theology, you may be tempted to escape the narrow way of the cross to the wider path of disobedience or you may get disillusioned thinking that God has

forsaken you, even though you were faithful to him. Such disillusionment with God and discontentment with life can make us miserable people.

"Our fallen world has been subjected to frustration by God, in hope. Until the whole creation is redeemed we will face things that we least expect at the most inconvenient times."

~Ajith Fernando

CBB: Explain why you view the ability to live with frustration as one of the most critical qualifications for all Christian witnesses.

AF: I think our fast pace of life today has made it increasingly difficult for us to be patient. Road rage is the classic example of it. The possibility of doing things quickly has made it imperative that we do things quickly. So when we are held back by frustrating occurrences, we find it difficult to handle. This is why it is so important for us to develop a theology where there is a place for frustration, as Paul explains in Romans 8:20–21. Our fallen world has been subjected to frustration by God, in hope. Until the whole creation is redeemed we will face things that we least expect at the most inconvenient times. People get sick; it rains at a crucial time in an open-air program; people misunderstand our statements and a lot of pain results for us and for them; we make careless mistakes, and that ruins programs and examination results. We must learn to look at these as a normal part of life and also learn to recognize that it is okay to lament and groan, as the Bible amply demonstrates. This theology of groaning, of which the lament is a good expression, has been one of the most liberating discoveries I have made. Lament opens the door to God's comfort. And comfort drives away our bitterness. Of course, Christian patience is an active concept. We do not succumb to our problems with dumb

resignation or submissive acquiescence. We are braced by the belief that God is working for the good in this suffering, and we work hard and hopefully to realize that good.

CBB: You mentioned in the book wanting to help people develop an approach to life that “refuses to look upon suffering as a big deal.” How can this be possible? We inherently view suffering as being a very big deal!

AF: I am convinced that we must develop our spiritual muscles to the point of looking at suffering as something out of which God will do something wonderful, as is so often said in the Bible. This comes when we have the faith to take God at his word. Of course, we will lament, we will groan and mourn to God and his people. That is a necessary part of our pilgrimage from bewilderment to trust in God. But once we see things from God’s perspective, we will realize that suffering is not a big deal, that we can “count it all joy” (James 1:2). We must develop the discipline of following through with the process that will result in us being able to count our sufferings as “all joy.”

CBB: You talk a lot about commitment, and that makes sense when it comes to suffering, for we understand “perseverance” as a godly trait. But what does commitment have to do with joy?

AF: The greatest joys I have experienced in life, apart from those that have to do directly with my personal relationship with God, have been with others to whom I am committed and with whom I will stick, come what may. These are my family members, my church members, and my colleagues in Youth for Christ. We have had tough times together and come through them. We have been deeply hurt, but we haven’t broken our relationships because of the hurt. When you come through such experiences, your relationship is deeper and you become even more appreciative of the tie that binds us together. There is a certain joy that comes when you contemplate the fact that someone has a long-term commitment to you. Our throwaway culture, with its disposable relationships, can give rise to a generation of insecure people who have never known what it is to have people who will pay the price of commitment to them. I believe that this is one of the keys that will attract

postmoderns to Christ. But we must first get our act together! We must bring back commitment to the life of our church.

“We must learn to look at these as a normal part of life and also learn to recognize that it is okay to lament and groan, as the Bible amply demonstrates. This theology of groaning, of which the lament is a good expression, has been one of the most liberating discoveries I have made.”

~ Ajith Fernando

CBB: Briefly describe an “incarnational lifestyle” and tell us what difference it makes.

AF: In an “incarnational lifestyle” you get close to people. You spend time with them. You open your life to them. You impart to them as much as you can of what you know of God and his ways. You pray for them regularly and follow their challenges with your prayers. You are there for them when they are sick or discouraged or suffering from guilt over their sin. This may mean that you have to sacrifice some of your privacy. But the result is that people catch hold of your heartbeat. You can influence them deeply. And is not the lack of depth one of the major problems facing the church today?

CBB: What strikes you about Jesus as our model of this call to joy and suffering?

AF: I love to think about the amazing life of Jesus. You see intense seriousness, severe rebuking, light-hearted merry-making, comprehensive teaching, deep fellowship, and immense suffering. But all the time you catch the sense of his joy. His parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son illustrate this. I cannot get over the description that Jesus

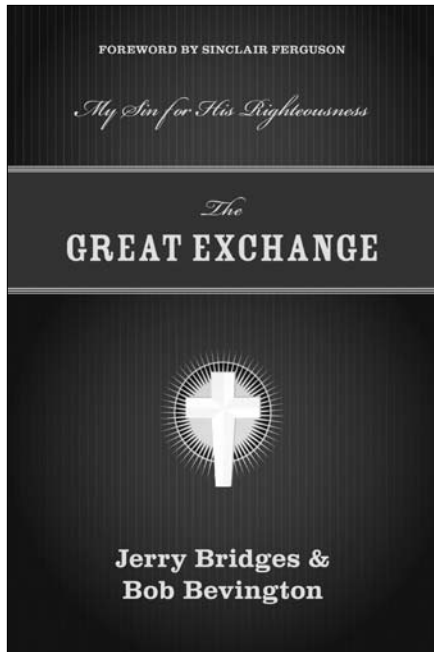
gave of the father (a rich, old man) running (something that was culturally inappropriate) and hugging his son and then preparing a feast where there was singing and dancing. Jesus must surely have been committed to joy if he portrayed the person who represented God doing such things. And then, we find that Jesus’ deepest statements about joy and peace at the Last Supper are made a short while before he was going to die. He talked about us having his joy, and our joy being full as a result (John 15:11)—just before he was going to experience the most excruciating pain and suffering that a human ever had to endure!

CBB: What is your hope for readers of this book?

AF: I want my readers to be helped to experience the joy of the Lord. I want to see them used by God and not missing God’s best for them because of suffering. I want them to see how suffering can make them stronger, more effective, and happier Christians. I simply want people who are serving God to enjoy doing so. I want them to persevere in the call they have from God without giving up or going elsewhere when the going gets tough.

CBB: What was the thinking behind putting this material into a devotional format?

AF: Sometimes when I feel dry or in particular need of an emotional and spiritual lift, I like to read something devotional that is rooted in Scripture and relevant to my life. I have been greatly blessed by reading slowly, and in short bites, the writings of people like John Piper, Robert Coleman, and Dennis Kinlaw, who are masters in the spiritual life. As this writing has helped me so much, I thought I would also try to follow that format. I thought a thirty-part format would be good in case someone wants to do this as part of their daily reading over a month.



The Great Exchange

My Sin for His Righteousness

TPB, ISBN 978-1-58134-927-6, 304 pages, \$15.99

JERRY BRIDGES, a former officer in the US Navy, serves with the collegiate ministry of *The Navigators*. Along with his speaking ministry, he has authored ten books and three devotional books.

ROBERT C. BEVINGTON graduated as a doctor of optometry and is passionate about the message of the cross. His writing skills and disciplines have led to his coauthoring ministry with Jerry Bridges.

CROSSWAY BOOKS & BIBLES (CBB): First things first: What is the Great Exchange, and how did you come up with this way of describing it?

JERRY BRIDGES (JB): The Great Exchange refers to the way Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death in the gospel works to benefit the sinners that are united to him by faith: their sin is charged to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is credited to them. In essence this is a transaction, an exchange, namely, our sin for his righteousness. This is the essential message of the entire Bible, but it can be seen in its most concise form in our key verse, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).

CBB: Why write a book on this subject, at this time in history?

BOB BEVINGTON (BB): Since the death of Christ is the central event in human history, anytime is a great time to write a book on the subject!

But many within today's church are following a dangerous trend away from the historical gospel of substitutionary atonement and imputed righteousness in favor of a fashionable brand of "new" Christianity that defines a genuine Christian as one who simply follows the example of Jesus. We would never object to robustly seeking Christlikeness. But this recent trend at times appears to neglect the central fact that we have a sin problem that can only be dealt with by the application of Christ's death on the cross. No one can truly think and speak and live like Christ unless their sin dilemma is first solved by faith in Christ in the Great Exchange, as Jerry described above. So our book aims to assist a resurgence of the centrality of the historic gospel as both the cornerstone and the all-encompassing proposition of today's Christian church.

CBB: You say "the gospel is like an infinitely precious diamond." How so?

JB: The value of the gospel is equal to the price paid by Christ to provide redemption to believing sinners. In releasing his grasp on equality with God, taking the form of a servant, and becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross, Christ paid an infinite price. Thus the gospel is infinitely precious. And like a diamond, the gospel has many facets that display its glory and brilliance. All these facets have one common essence in the stone itself. For example, Christ is our sinbearer, our wrathbearer, our cursebearer, our righteousness, our ransom, and our redemption. All these facets proclaim the same glorious message: Christ died for our sins.

CBB: What are some of the common questions you address in this book?

BB: What is meant by substitutionary atonement? What is the righteousness of Christ and how does it apply to believers? What is the nature of the believer's union with Christ? What are the differences between justification and sanctification? How does sanctification relate to Christ's death on the cross?

CBB: Who is your primary audience?

JB: Our book is written for a mainstream audience of believers. It is for those who seek a deeper understanding of the meaning of

Christ's life and death and how it applies to their lives.

"No one can truly think and speak and live like Christ unless their sin dilemma is first solved by faith in Christ in the Great Exchange.... So our book aims to assist a resurgence of the centrality of the historic gospel as both the cornerstone and the all-encompassing proposition of today's Christian church."

~ Bob Bevington

CBB: There are critics who claim that for God to send Jesus to die for our sins is a form of cosmic child abuse. How can it be just for God to punish his innocent Son for the sins of other people?

BB: Anyone who believes it was a form of cosmic child abuse must either believe God is evil or that the cross was metaphorical and not historical. But I see several reasons for substitutionary atonement to be truly just. First, it is just because the sovereign God, the creator of all things, including justice, says it is just. The clay doesn't argue with the potter. Second, it is clear that Jesus came to earth voluntarily, with full understanding and agreement with the Father about his mission. Thus, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). Third, the mechanism by which it is just for God to punish Christ instead of us is our union with Christ by faith. That is, God sees us as one with Christ; therefore, Christ's sinless life is justly credited to us as though we had lived it ourselves, and Christ's death for our sin has the same effect as if we had died on the cross ourselves to serve God's justice. Lastly, it is just because, on the third day, God raised Christ from the dead and

highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. In the gospel, in the end, justice is served on every conceivable level.

CBB: There is content in this book for Christians at various maturity levels. Give us a few examples.

JB: Those who have never undertaken an in-depth study of the gospel will find a fairly thorough treatment of the subject. It places Christ's death in the context of Old Testament prophecy and foreshadowing. It then covers all the key passages written by the apostles to explain the death of Christ for sin.

The more mature Christian may benefit from our description of what it means to be united to Christ in his death and life. They may gain a better understanding of the federal headship of Adam and Christ, the two representative men.

CBB: What personal experiences have taught you your need for the gospel?

BB: For me, I'd have to say it was my divorce. As I surveyed the damage resulting from my sin, the depths of my depravity came into clear and painful focus. By God's grace, Jerry was there to point me to the cross, and especially to the transferable, all-sufficient righteousness of Christ in the gospel. Surprisingly, since those days I have become increasingly desperate for the gospel as God continues to reveal to me equally hideous sins such as pride, seeking the approval of man, self-absorbency, and self-sufficiency.

“No other contemporary

book that I know of covers the topics of substitutionary atonement, the righteousness of Christ, and the believer's union with Christ quite like ours—within the context of the Old Testament and then in the same order of the books of the Bible from Acts through Revelation.”

~ Jerry Bridges

CBB: How is your book unique? What do you feel most sets it apart?

JB: No other contemporary book that I know of covers the topics of substitutionary atonement, the righteousness of Christ, and the believer's union with Christ quite like ours—within the context of the Old Testament and then in the same order of the books of the Bible from Acts through Revelation. As we unpack each passage, the reader's appreciation of the grace and truth of the gospel broadens and deepens, while any overlap between the passages serves to reinforce the message.

CBB: What do you consider to be “the best good news” for believers?

BB: That's easy. We get God himself. The gospel announces many aspects of good news, such as eternal life, freedom from guilt, and victory

over Satan. But the best good news of all is that in the gospel we are restored, favorably accepted, and reconciled to our infinitely holy God. Nothing could be better than that, because nothing can be better than God. He is more glorious, more satisfying, and more to be desired than any and all created things.

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