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## Symbolism and Worldview

James B. Jordan, Th.M.

The study of symbolism is seen by some as a curiosity, rather far removed from the central matters of life. According to them, anyone who spends time studying Biblical imagery and symbolism may well be getting into a "dangerous" area. Persons who engage in an "overly symbolic" **interpretation** of Scripture are to be regarded with suspicion. What matters is the study of **reality**; symbolism is secondary.

This attitude betrays the influence of the Greek view of the world. According to the Greeks — and actually all pagans — the world was not made by God. Rather, the world, or the raw material of the world, has always existed. This always-existing stuff just is, and so it is called "Being." This "Being" stuff is like a blank slate. It is silent and meaningless "raw material." It does not bear the impress of any Creator, and it does not joyfully shout His name (Psalm 98:4-9).

How did our present world come about, then? Well, the ancients believed that a designer or maker came along, often **called** a "**demiurge**." This **demiurge imposed** order on the primeval raw material. He *imposed* meaning, structure, and symbol on the neutral, **always-existing** world. Human beings, according to the pagan view, are like little **demiurges**: We go through life imposing meaning and structure and order on the world. Modern philosophy, especially after **Immanuel Kant**, has taken an even more radical view. The modern view is **that** there is no **demiurge**, and that the universe is really ultimately chaotic. Whatever order and meaning there is in the world has been imposed by human beings, and by **no** one else. We create our own worlds by generating our **own worldviews**. All meaning, all symbols, are man-made.<sup>1</sup>

Very often this approach to symbolism is brought over, unintentionally, into our view of the Bible. It is assumed that the symbolism of the Bible is ultimately arbitrary, not grounded in creation design. More liberal commentators assume that the men who wrote **the** Bible used the man-generated symbolism of their day to express their ideas. More conservative commentators assume that God just decided arbitrarily to use this or that item to symbolize this or that truth. Such an approach,

however, implicitly **denies** the doctrine of **creation**.<sup>2</sup> Symbolism is never arbitrary or secondary.

In the Western **world for several** centuries, men have assumed **that** the proper way to express truth is by means of **abstract**, philosophical language. Wherever we **find** imagery, parable, symbolism, or **typology**, we ought to translate such language into proper abstractions. This, however, is not how **God** chose to reveal Himself to us. To be sure, some parts of the Bible are written in abstract language, especially the epistles of **St. Paul**. Most of the Bible, however, is written in stories, histories, poems, symbols, parables, and the like. As far as God is **concerned**, this way of revealing truth is **equally** as important as abstract philosophizings.

Notice, **for instance**, the way in which our confessions of faith and catechisms are written. They are virtually devoid of imagery. Solomon wrote Proverbs to instruct youth, but for centuries Christians have used catechisms that consist basically of **definitions** of terms: What is **justification**; what is **prayer**; what is meant by the fourth **petition**; etc. The contrast of approaches is quite startling. It illustrates for us the problem we have in recovering the Biblical worldview.

### The Primacy of Symbolism

Symbolism, then, is not some secondary concern, some mere curiosity. In a **very** real sense, symbolism is

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more **important** than anything else **for** the life of **man**. The doctrine of creation means that **every** created item, and also the created **order as** a whole, reflects the character of God who **created it**. In other words, everything in the creation, **and the creation as a whole, points to God**. Everything is a sign or symbol of **God**.

And not only so. Just as everything in creation is a general symbol of **God**, so also man is the special symbol, for man and man alone is created as the very image of God (Genesis 1:26). Each individual human being, and the race as a whole (Genesis **1:27**), symbolizes God in a special way. What is this special way? Theologians **have debated the** issue, **and no one will** ever **fully** understand it (since to do so we should have to understand **fully the** nature of God whose symbol we are). All the **same**, this much can be said: **Man is the only symbol that is also a symbol-maker**. The first part of Genesis 1 is the context in which it is then said that man is **the image of God**. **God has been presented as** one who **determines**, creates, evaluates, names, **takes** counsel among Himself, etc. **These** things are what man uniquely **images**.

Symbols vary. This is ultimately **because**, as theologians would say, in the **opera ad extra** of **God**, one or the other of the Persons and/or attributes of God is always highlight. What does this mean, in **simpler** language? Well, the **opera ad extra are the works** that God does outside Himself. Some of these works are more particularly the work of the Father, some of the **Son**, and some of the Holy **Spirit**; though in every case all three Persons are active, because "all of God does all that God does." Also, some of these works more particularly show God's wrath, others His grace, others His forbearance, others His jealousy, and so **forth**; yet in a general way, all of God's attributes are present in each of His **actions**.<sup>4</sup>

In a general way, everything in creation points to all three Persons of God, and to **all** of God's attributes, if we could but see **it**. But in a special way, each item **particu-**

**larly discloses** one or another of His attributes and/or one or another of the Persons.

How are we going to read these symbols? By guesswork? Happily, we have the Bible to teach us how to read the world. The Bible lays out for us the primary symbol of God (man), and four classes of secondary symbols: animals, **plants**, stones (non-living things), and stars (heavenly bodies). The Bible also discusses angels, though whether angels should be regarded as, like man, special symbols (images) of **God**, is a matter of theological debate. Since each of **these signifies** God, it also **signifies** man, as well. The Bible teaches us how to interpret these symbols. Some symbols are verbal and some are non-verbal. Or better, some are relatively more verbal, and some are relatively more non-verbal. **With-**out words we can never understand anything, so that there must be at least some words to go along with non-verbal symbols. On the other hand, verbal symbols (such as what you are reading) **still** have shape and sound, and thus are not wholly verbal. We are used to thinking only of non-verbal signs as symbols; but we should realize that **all** language is symbolic, for words are signs that point to things or relations.

The power of symbols is the power of **worldview** presuppositions. It is the greatest power in the world. AU of language is symbolic, of course, but symbolism is not limited to words. Symbolism "creates" reality, not vice versa. This is another way of saying that essence precedes existence. God determined how things should be, and then they were. God determined to make man as His special symbol, and then the reality came into being. **Bavinck** puts it this way: "As the temple was made 'according to the pattern shown to Moses on the **mount**,' Hebrews **8:5**, even so every creature was first conceived and afterward (in time) **created**."<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, man is a symbol-generating creature. He is inevitably so. He cannot help being so. He generates good symbols or bad ones, but he is never symbol-free. Man's calling is to imitate God, on the **creaturely** level, by naming the animals as God named the world (genesis 1:5ff.; 2:19), and by extending dominion throughout the **world**. Notice that naming comes **first**. Man **first** symbolizes his intention, conceptually, and then puts it into **effect**. Symbols create reality, not vice versa. Or, more accurately, for God, symbols **create** reality; for man, symbols **structure** reality. Man does not create out of nothing; the image of God's creativity in man involves restructuring **pre-existent** reality.

God's actions are **creatively constructive**. He speaks, and it comes to pass. Thus, His symbols are copies only of His character and intentions. Man's actions, however, can only be **receptively reconstructive**. He is to learn God's symbols, and generate his own in terms of God's.

## The Geneva Review

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Thus, for man, reality reflects **God's** original symbols, so that man learns symbols in part from reality: but then, man restructures reality in terms of his own symbols (either righteously or sinfully). Always, God's symbols are primary; man's secondary.

The heart of the Biblical doctrine of salvation lies here. **Justification, sanctification,** and glorification are inseparable, but which has primacy? Justification. **First** God **redefines** us, **resymbolizing** us as righteous, and then He remakes us. Similarly, Paul in **Romans 6** says that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness, and then we will live that way. Symbols bring about reality, not vice versa.

**The primacy** of the symbolic is not the same thing as the Greek philosophical notion of the primacy of the intellect, for symbolism often does not operate at the conscious or rational level of the human psyche. Symbolism points us to the equal **ultimacy** of the rational and non-rational in man, and resists rationalistic attempts to shave away the mysterious. To put it another way, the **error** of intellectualism focuses on the verbal aspect of symbolism to the detriment of the non-verbal.'

### Three Special Symbols

As a copy of God, man is a symbol-making creature. It is always possible for man to seek to elevate his own symbols to the level of God's, or even replace God's with his own. This **sinful** tendency has cropped up over and over in the Church herself. To be clear on this, we have to isolate what God's own specially appointed symbols are. All things generally symbolize God, but He also has given three special symbols.

We are told in Scripture that everything is **confirmed** by the testimony of two or three **witnesses** (Deuteronomy 19: 15). There are, accordingly, three special symbols that God has given which reveal Him to His people. They are as follows: man himself (the image of God), the Word, and the Sacraments.

Satan has sought to pervert these symbols, and thus redirect the history of the world. He perverted the Word in his conversation with Eve. He perverted the sacramental images of the two trees, saying that there was no harm in/eating from the wrong tree. He **perverted** the revelation of God in man by bringing man into sin.

Grace restores these three special symbols. Grace gives us the Word of God. The Bible itself can be taken as a testimony of two witnesses, Old and New Testaments. Indeed, historically the Church has appointed two or three readings (Old Testament, Epistle, Gospel), which are read from two sides of the altar/table, to form the testimony of double witness. The Bible itself is one of the three special symbols.

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Grace **gives** us redeemed and restored men. The saved are **re-symbolized** as righteous and whole before God. Here again, we have two witnesses, the royal priesthood (believers) and the **servant** priesthood (elders).

Books have been written on the interrelationship of the three special symbols: Word, **Sacrament, Person.'** Here my point is simply this: **These** are the three special symbols God has set up. The restoration of the whole fabric of life takes place when these symbols are restored to power.

### Secondary Symbols

We have spoken of God's primary symbols as special and general. Here, speaking of secondary symbols, we refer to those made by man. Man generates special and general symbols, just as God **does**. Because of sin, however, man's symbols are often perverse.

#### God's Primary Symbols:

- **Special (Word, Sacrament, Humanity)**
- **General (the world)**

#### Man's Secondary Symbols:

- **Special (special words, special memorials, and special roles for men)**
- **General (all of life)**

Let's look at the three areas or zones of symbolism we have already described. *First of all, language.* Men generate special language symbols when they take oaths, which bind them to certain words. Examples of special man-made symbols are contracts, the U.S. Constitution, and Church confessions. (The subdivision of systematic theology that studies ecclesiastical confessions is called **Symbolics** or Symbolic Theology). Men also generate general language symbols all the time, as in conversation and writing.

*Second, non-verbal arrangements, or memorials.* Examples of special non-verbal symbols setup by men (analogous to God's sacraments) are liturgies (rites),

church architecture, the national **flag**, **national anthem** (music), and particular works of art by artists designed to express some particular point or **viewpoint**. At the same **time**, men are always making **non-verbal** arrangements that shape and define **their lives**, such **as** their **daily** routines of life (dance), the homes in which they live, their evening meals, and the like.

*Third, men themselves.* **Here** we are speaking of clothing. At the general level, **men** and women dress themselves to look attractive. At the special level is the uniform designed to identify a man with a special office or calling (physician, policeman, clergyman). These are ways in which men generate symbols around themselves, to give **definition** and direction to their **lives**.

We don't often think about these general symbols, such as conversation, dress, and the arrangement of furniture. Men do, however, take very seriously the special symbols they create. In modern rationalistic **Western** society, men do not understand the power of non-verbal symbols and of dress, with the result that they are **enslaved** by **them**.<sup>8</sup> They do, however, generally understand the power of words. Thus, they place great store by their confessions, constitutions, **manifestoes**, and the like. It's **all** right to do that, so long as these **man-**generated symbols do not become more important than the symbols authored by God. Sadly, that is what usually happens, however.

### The Reformation of Symbols

At this point it is clear that symbolism is intimately related to worldview. Our symbols create and reinforce our worldview. They pattern our thoughts and lives, often in ways we are not consciously aware. In order to be delivered **from enslavement to our modern worldview** grid, we must become familiar with the Biblical **worldview** grid. Learning to see and be patterned by Biblical symbols and habits will give us the perspective we need to evaluate our world, acquire wisdom, and begin to think how to reshape the world and make it more pleasing to God. Quite clearly, no society can be shaped on a Christian base without the restoration of symbols. We have to give new direction to our culture, and to do that we need to revive our symbols. People understand this instinctively, even if they do not understand it intellectually. Thus, we have movements in conservative Churches to go "back to the **confession**," and among political **conservatives** to go "back to the Constitution."

Such movements can be of help, but they can also do harm, and even become idolatrous. This is for two reasons. First of **all**, history never repeats itself. **Man-**generated symbols (i.e., the Westminster Confession of Faith, the **Belgic** Confession, or the U.S. Constitution)

have power over the minds of men for a season only. Because God has ordained that men will grow, whether they want to or not, men always outgrow their symbols. We can never outgrow God's symbols, but we do outgrow our own. To attempt to return to earlier symbols, without recasting them, is a rejection of maturity.

Moreover (still on point one), no living man can ever really **understand** the meaning of an old symbol. No living Presbyterian, no matter how strict and conservative, thinks like the men of the **Westminster** Assembly. And this is not just true in minor matters, but in major ones as well. The **Westminster** Confession expressed the Biblical faith in certain terms, in a certain way, against certain errors, at a certain time. It is one of the freest Church **confessions** ever written, and should be studied by every theologian. Our long-term goal, however, must be to produce a new **Confession** that will embrace the **greatness of the** older documents, and transcend **it**. Thus, such symbols as constitutions must be administered by living courts **from** generation to generation. As a result, the constitutions change, until they are no longer functional. The U.S. Constitution is an example. There came a time when the continual interpretation and application of the Constitution by living men gave way to perversion and ignoring of the Constitution. The Constitution no longer has the same **power in** the minds of men as it did when it was written, and it can never again have such **power**. It can, of course, continue to **function** as *the* foundation of our laws, provided we understand that it inevitably will be reinterpreted from generation to generation, though hopefully within Christian **parameters**.<sup>9</sup>

The second problem with trying to **revivify** old symbols is that such an attempt can become idolatrous, if it says that the mainspring of human society lies in man-made symbols, instead of *in God's symbols*. It is idolatrous to say that restoring the U.S. Constitution is more necessary to social renewal than restoring the sacraments. The key to social renewal, to cultural reformation, to Christian reclamation, then, is this: We must restore the primary special symbols: Word, Sacrament, Persons. That is because only the primary special **sym-****bols** transcend history, and thus only they can form the wellspring of historical progress.

### Conclusion

**Practically** speaking, does this mean to stop singing in church any hymn more than a hundred or so years old? Stop reciting the Apostles' Creed? Stop using the Westminster Confession (or whatever)? Not at all. The principle of growth means we have to move on, but it also means we cannot move on until we understand our heritage. To try to generate good church music out of the

meager vocabulary of American popular music is like trying to generate good theology out of the ideas heard on Christian radio and television. Christian theologians need to acquire familiarity with the whole of the Christian past, in constant contact with the **primary** special symbols, in order to move forward into new man-made theologies. Christian musicians must know **all** the music of the Christian past, in constant contact with the primary special symbols, in order to produce good contemporary Christian music.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, earlier man-generated symbols have great value to us, if we do not commit idolatry with them. The preacher must preach his man-generated sermons from the primary symbol (the Word) with an eye to the **man-generated** symbols of the past as well as the needs of the **present**. The **liturgist** must organize his man-generated expression of worship **from** the primary symbol (the sacraments) with an eye to **the man-generated** liturgies of the past as well as the needs of the present. The Christian must live his man-generated **life out** of the **example of** the primary Symbol (**Jesus Christ**), with an eye to the godly men of the past and present.

Moreover, at the general **level** we need a restoration of sight into God's created symbols. We need to learn again how to look at **trees**, stars, shrubs, grass, snakes, birds, flowers, emeralds, clothing, and all else — look at them with Bible eyes, not with the eyes of **Western** rationalism. When this has happened, Christians will once again take control of the arts and sciences, but not until then. General cultural renewal is impossible apart from recovering the symbolic **worldview** of the Bible.

Only then will we see renewal in the Church (the primary institution) and in society (secondarily). Judgment begins at the House of God. Restoration begins when men take His primary symbols seriously once again.

(Editor's Note: The preceding article is excerpted from the third chapter of **James B. Jordan's** newest book, *Through New Eyes*, published by **Woglemuth & Hyatt**, Brentwood, Tennessee, and is used by **permission** of the publisher. The Rev. **Jordan** is, of course, **familiar** to **all readers** of *The Geneva Review*. For a summary of the Contents of this important, seminal work, please see the book review **later** in this **newsletter**. Personally autographed copies of *Through New Eyes* are **available** from Geneva Ministries.)

#### End Notes

1. While **any** survey of the history of philosophy can be consulted for more information **on** this, for our purposes the best introduction is **Rousas J. Rushdoony**, *The One and the Many* (Tyler, TX: **Thoburn Press**, [197 1] 1978). On the subject of **symbolism**, **all modern** religious anthropological studies are **written** from the

standpoint that religio-symbolic worldview structures are **man-made**, either by particular men and traditions, or arising out of the **human collective unconscious** of one sort or another.

2. Covered in detail in Chapter 2 of *Through New Eyes*.
3. On the equal importance of both approaches, see the remarks of John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1987), especially pp. 207-212.
4. See the useful discussion in Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), p. 89.
5. Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, inns. William Hendricksen (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, [1918] 1977), p. 94.
6. See Bavinck's discussion of this, p. 92.
7. My own discussion is in Jordan, *The Sociology of the Church* (Tyler, TX: Geneva Ministries, 1986), pp. 3349.
8. Fascinating studies in the power of dress and symbol can be found in the works of Tom Wolfe, especially *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (1955), *The Pump House Gang* (1968), *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers* (1970), and *In Our Time* (1980).
9. In away what has happened with the U.S. Constitution, and with the Westminster Confession, is that their value as symbols has changed. Originally it was the content of these documents that was their primary value. The power of their contents has diminished over time, however. At the same time, with age they have become symbols in another sense, functioning like flags or banners, or security blankets. To put it another way, they have moved from being primarily verbal symbols to being to a considerable extent non-v-symbols. People are loyal to the Constitution, but most have little idea what it says.
10. Further thoughts along these lines can be found in James B. Jordan, "Church Music in Chaos," in Jordan, ed., *The Reconstruction of the Church. Christianity and Civilization* No. 4 (Tyler, TX: Geneva Ministries, 1985), pp. 241-265.

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## Restoring the Classical Christian Curriculum



### Grammars and Grammars - Part 2

Gary Hafer

In our consideration of the Quadrivium subject of grammar, let's next examine what some Christian **educators** consider to be staples of the curriculum: the 1828 edition of *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (in two volumes) and some historic grammar texts. Both categories are still being **used** by home **schoolers** and in **Christian** schools.

No doubt there is a false dichotomy created in the minds of some educators that pits the *relative* against *absolutes*. Certainly, *grammar* is relatively constructed, in the sense that it could have been constructed differently without any appreciable change in meaning. We could have called a *verb* by another name, or subsumed verb and subject in one lexical unit (word) as is possible in Greek; one system doesn't appear to be more "biblical" than another. But English did not develop such a system; English *changed* relative to the theological climate indirectly — that is true — but it **also changed** relative with the rise in literacy in the Western world.

Therefore, there are incredible problems incurred in Christians trying to freeze language in a time warp: that is, control change in a language to the point where it is a static concept. Christian educators romanticize past grammatical models — particularly from another **century** — without realizing the unwarranted assumptions which must be adhered to.

One of these problematic assumptions, and one more easily illustrated within the scope of this article, concerns the presuppositions underlying grammatical rules. Contrary to what is voiced within the Christian educational community today, the observance of grammatical **rules** (and the more the better) is not a prerequisite for good prose.

Perhaps the reader is shocked **at** this point; such is not the intention. Neither is the intention hereto discredit the study of grammatical conventions, but rather, to show how **arbitrary**, and finally, relativistic many of the more detailed ones are. They are not the concrete abso-

lutes many believe them to be.

Elaborate prescriptive **rules** for memorizing **grammatical** conventions have no place in the curriculum. Here, an inversely-proportional scheme is set up: **the** longer the **classifications**, the more arbitrary **the** **construction**; the more prescriptive the **rules**, the less descriptive they become (see diagram on p. 7). **Language**-grammar does not possess the axiomatic qualities akin to mathematics.

For instance, Mott Media has recently reissued Thomas **Harvey's** *English Grammar*, first published in 1878. In **the** introduction to the revised version, George Mott explains that this classic work has been revised for the modern student:

[There are] several comments from *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White . . . quoted herein to bring insight to **difficult language problems** (emphasis mine).

Indeed, a rule-laden grammar has difficulty conforming to the dynamics of real language, and not the convenient textbook substitutes. Witness the "authoritative" Strunk and White on *That* vs. *Which*:

**That, which.** *That* is the **defining** or restrictive pronoun, *which* the non-defining or non-restrictive . . . The careful writer . . . removes **the defining whiches** and by doing so improves his work. (p. 59)

Yet, according to this "rule," **Harvey** commits an error in his discussion of subordinate conjunctions:

The connective unites the clause *which it introduces to the word or phrase which it modifies* . . . (p. 172).

Would the casual reader have noticed the "**erroneous**" *which* instead of the "correct" *that*? I doubt it, and there is no reason to believe it "wrong."

What happens when grammarians create a **rule-laden** grammar? Here's what William **Corbett**, the distinguished nineteenth century grammarian, said of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the lexicographer, grammarian, scholar, and Christian:

When you see writers like Doctor Johnson . . . committing grammatical errors . . . you **cannot** fail to be convinced, that constant care and caution are necessary to prevent you from committing, not only similar, but much greater, errors.

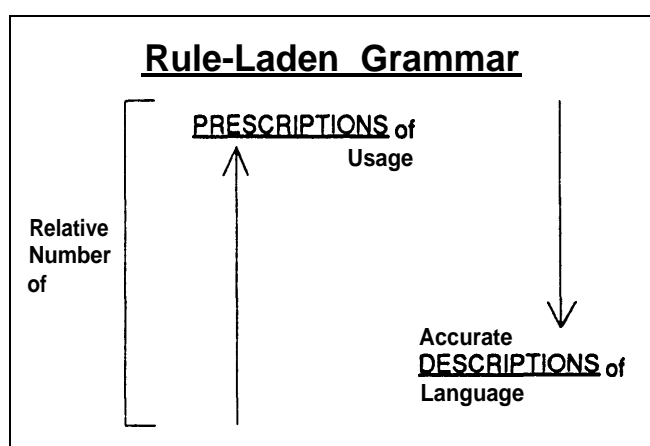
If the scholarly cannot obey their own rules, how is the student supposed to master them?

There are many examples of supposed rules and their **infractions**, but suffice to say that **language** usage is

not that exciting in syntactic and paragraph construction. The prevailing metaphor for grammar is **convention**, not rule, for it demonstrates that grammatical relations are adopted, not decreed.

The same criticism can be extended to lexicography. Many Christians still rely on the 1828 edition of Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language*, because its "definitions are Christian" and not subject to the change that modern linguists **inject** into language. This latter-day doctrine of humanism, we are told, is called "usage"; it insinuates that the way a culture uses words determines meaning.

It seems, though, that Webster did believe that usage determines how a language is used. First, he does provide contexts for his definitions: citing "real" sentences and how they are *used*. Secondly, he provides for change in language in his own system.



Webster **testifies** in his own correspondence that he hesitated to introduce his new plan for the division of syllables, for he feared that the public would not receive it or use it (i.e., usage determining acceptability). Indeed, Webster **believed** that no single individual can change a language — or freeze it — for he insisted that changes in the punctuation structure of grammar must depend on public opinion!

Language is always in flux, and while it must be **controlled**, it must not be frozen. In Shakespeare's day, the bard's name was spelled at least three different ways, at a time when, we are told, the language was at its height. Today, what is known as a comma splice in America is a perfectly accepted literary device in England; does that mean the English are more depraved than we?

Grammatical convention is just that, convention. There is no correlation, very often, between the rule and the actual occasion of the grammar-sentence in its written context. Students **learn** grammar from reading and correcting their own sentences within their own compositions, with grammar texts as a guide when there is

doubt. But the texts are **merely** referential, not composing prompts. Just because a rule appears in a grammar textbook of the eighteenth century doesn't **mean** it's accurate, still in vogue, a composing **model**, or "**Christian**."

Students need to learn how to **correct** their own work, through editing strategies, after the composition or written assignment is completed. There is a **definite** biblical view of grammar and **grammatology** — a system of written script — but that subject is a large, theological one, and beyond the scope of our discussion.

## BOOKS

*Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* by James B. Jordan, Th.M. (Brentwood, TN: Woglemuth & Hyatt Publishers, 1988). 320+ pp., trade paper, bibliography, index. Reviewed by Michael R. Gilstrap.

Milton wrote, "It is pleasant to see great works in their seminal state, pregnant with latent possibilities of excellence." His sentiment describes without exaggeration my own feelings after reading Jordan's latest book. *Through New Eyes* is unquestionably the freest book on **biblical worldview** that has been produced thus far. I fully realize that we live in a day when superlatives are lavished on the most mediocre products by overzealous promoters, and therefore, we have **all** grown **calloused** to such hype. But without fear of equivocation, I cannot but sing the praises of *Through New Eyes*. It is a veritable gold mine of profound biblical truths contained in a **well-written**, **well organized**, and highly readable package.

*Through New Eyes* is unique in the **Christian** marketplace in that Jordan deals with **Biblical** worldview in distinction from **Christian worldview**. To put it another way, *Through New Eyes* digs into the Bible and sets out the Bible's own worldview, explaining it in the Bible's own language. Thus, from cover to cover this is an exposition of worldview in the rich language of Biblical symbolism and **typology**.

Jordan states in the introduction that his purpose "is to get into the Bible and become as familiar as possible with the Bible's own worldview, language and thought forms." He goes on to state, "Our purpose is to learn to think the way people thought in Bible times, so that we see the world through new eyes — through Bible eyes" (p. 4). As I read through the book, I kept this purpose in mind [to see if he accomplishes his purpose. I am happy to report resoundingly that he does! After reading

*Through New Eyes*, you **will never again look at the Bible or the world in quite the same way.** To borrow a phrase from Tom Wolfe, Jordan really stretches the boundaries of your "worldview envelope."

Admittedly, this book is written (or should I say painted) with a very broad brush. To cover the sheer amount of ground covered this is a necessity. Even though every single point is not argued in detail, the overall system is set out so clearly and cogently that you will literally marvel at the vistas of new thought and perspective that open up to you as you read it. To echo Milton again, this work is literally "pregnant with possibilities of excellence."

The **first** three chapters are of an introductory nature. Chapter three, *Symbolism and Worldview*, is reproduced elsewhere in this newsletter. Part **II**, "The Features of the **World**," detail the fundamental furniture of the world: rocks, stars, plants, animals, men, angels. Part **III** (chs. 10-12) deals with world transformation. Building on God's five fold action found in both creation and recreation (taking, breaking down, distributing, judging, **resting/enjoyment**), Jordan develops a **worldview** of transformation with Man as the principal agent of **transformation**, and **the** new heavens and new earth as the goal. **Finally**, in Part IV, "The Movement of History," he sets out the succession of "worlds" as the Bible sets them out: the worlds of the Garden, of the Flood, of Moses, of the Temple, of the New World. He ends the book with a final chapter on the growth of the Kingdom in the Bible, **history**, and in the **future**.

In *Through New Eyes*, Jordan has brought together into one systematic whole the fruit of 20 years of labor and study in the **text**. That in itself is a remarkable **achievement**. He covers a panorama of biblical material unequaled in scope.

But more remarkable than that is the depth (and **height!**) readers are guided to in understanding and appreciating the Word of God. Although it has been said of **less** worthy books, if you have only one book to read in the next twelve months, I urge you to read this one. *Through New Eyes* is without equal.

**Marketing the Church** by George B. area. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988). 172 pp. **Reviewed by Michael R. Gilstrap.**

The local church is the most effective tool for evangelization and discipleship in the world. Yet most churches are reaching only a small percentage of their neighbors. George **Barna**, president of Barna Research Group, a marketing research company specializing on the Christian community, asked the obvious questions: "**Why?**" and "**What can& done about it?**"

His answers are contained in *Marketing the Church*,

the **book** I hope every pastor who sees this review will **read**. Driven by a profound desire to see the Great Commission fulfilled, Barna offers solidly biblical solutions to reaching the lost for Christ. This is not a book about "selling" Jesus; rather it is a book about communicating **the** greatest story ever told to a new generation.

**The Samaritan Strategy** by Colonel **V. Doner**. (Brentwood, TN: **Woglemuth & Hyatt Publishers**, 1988) 247 pages, bibliography, trade paper.

What went wrong with the Christian Right? Why did it fail to achieve its goals of remolding American in the image of an earlier time when Christians set our nation's agenda? Why has the Christian Right failed to achieve every one of its objectives?

Colonel **Doner**, founder of *Christian Voice* and a former national Christian Right leader, paints a painfully accurate picture of why the movement he helped to guide failed. *The Samaritan Strategy* is the **tale** of a life-long activist who took time to reassess both the theological foundations and the tactical assumptions he was basing his **life's** work on. It is a warning from the "**front lines**" of Christian political activism to newly recruited troops to watch out for all those land mines that decimated the **first** wave of Christian political activists.

Although the Christian Right became this generation's **first** major breakout from the **retreatist** mentality that has held the Church in bondage most of this century, unfortunately, Doner points out, the Christian Right suffered from the same flaws as the Church itself: Lack of vision and a profound misreading of the needs of our generation, lack of love and compassion, a misunderstanding of the relationship between service and leadership, and an inability to articulate a theology that demands rather than just suggests involvement.

*The Samaritan Strategy* not only chronicles these defects, but provides urgently needed answers as the author looks ahead to the '90s.

Doner points out that above all else, Christians must learn to serve their communities before they will earn the right to **lead** them. As Christians, service to our fellow man is not an option. If we are truly followers of Christ, we have no choice but to follow Christ's instructions at the end of his example of **the Good Samaritan**, "...go and do likewise."

For those who wish to see Christianity reclaim its power and its relevance, for those who wish to restore justice and righteousness, and to those who wish to follow Jesus in His Sermon on **the Mount**, this is a welcome book indeed. But for **those** who wish to build large churches **and** lucrative ministries by avoiding the "**hard sayings**" of Jesus, *The Samaritan Strategy* will not be **at all** popular.