

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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The Reconstructionist Road to Rome

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The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction, James B. Jordan. Tyler, Texas: Geneva Ministries, 1986. xiv + 336, indexes, \$9.95.

This book is a collection of fourteen essays: 1. Reconstructing the Church: A Conservative Ecumenical Agenda; 2. The Sociology of the Church: A Systematic Approach; 3. The Sociology of the Church: A Biblico-Historical Approach; 4. The Three Faces of Protestantism; 5. Conversion; 6. The Effective Church Splitter's Guide; 7. Propositions on Pentecostalism; 8. Christian Zionism and Messianic Judaism; 9. Should Churches Incorporate? 10. How Biblical is Protestant Worship? 11. God's Hospitality and Holistic Evangelism; 12. Triumphalistic Investiture; 13. A Liturgy of Malediction; 14. A Liturgy of Healing. Some of the essays were previously published.

Influences on Jordan's Thought

Jordan includes an eight page Preface that furnishes us with some insight into the influences on his thought. His family was variously Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, and Moravian; he attended a Roman Catholic elementary school and was shaped by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart; he was confirmed in a Lutheran church; later he was influenced by Campus Crusade, the Navigators, Francis Schaeffer, C. S. Lewis, Billy Graham, Cornelius Van Til, and Reformed and Westminster

Theological Seminaries. Jordan holds two degrees from Westminster Seminary, the M.A.R. and the Th. M., where he studied under another Master of Theology, John M. Frame. Frame has described him as "one of the most interesting and able students I ever taught at Westminster Theological Seminary.... Jim is one of these 'Theonomists' or 'Christian Reconstructionists' who believes that these mysterious biblical laws are still binding, even upon New Testament believers." Jordan has been a prolific writer for the Reconstructionist movement, producing several books, scores of essays, and functioning as a pastor of the Reconstructionist church in Tyler, Texas. He was editor of *Christianity and Civilization*, and his essays are currently published by Gary North's Institute for Christian Economics.

Jordan discloses that "My intellectual formation as a presuppositionalist has been due to the writings of Cornelius Van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony, and also to various classes I was privileged to take under Greg Bahnsen at Reformed Theological Seminary and John M. Frame at Westminster Theological Seminary.... Norman Shepherd of Westminster Seminary tremendously reoriented my thinking about the covenant and the sacraments" (xi). (Norman Shepherd was removed from the Seminary's faculty for his views regarding justification by faith.)

Jordan also thanks Vern Poythress (a Van Tilian and member of the Westminster faculty), Ray

Sutton (a Van Tilian Reconstructionist and president of the Philadelphia Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church), Lewis Bulkeley (then an elder of the Reconstructionist church in Tyler, Texas), Geddes MacGregor (neo-orthodox), Louis Boyer (Roman Catholic charismatic), Alexander Schmemmann (Russian Orthodox), Gary North (a Van Tilian Recon), Michael Gilstrap (a Van Tilian Recon), Craig Bulkeley, Robert Dwelle, and David Chilton (a Van Tilian Recon). Jordan says that he is relying on "two schools of thought": "Vantillian presuppositionalism and Christian Reconstructionism" (1).

Fallacious Arguments

Jordan wastes no time launching an attack on Christianity. Apparently because he could quote no greater, he quotes himself saying, " 'to discuss religion only in terms of ideas or doctrine is to reduce religion to an ideology.' A true presuppositionalist will not fall into the trap of the 'primacy of the intellect and doctrine...' " (x). Notice the words "only," "primacy" "reduce," and "ideology."

The word "primacy" implies that there is something secondary; the word "only" implies that there is nothing else. By sliding from one idea to the other, Jordan hopes to get those who agree with his first sentence to swallow his second as well, with no argument presented. He is trying to smuggle in his anti-intellectual, anti-doctrinal view of Christianity, right at the start of the book. As his book later shows, he seems obsessed with destroying the notion of the primacy of the intellect.

To clarify the argument, no Christian discusses Christianity "only in terms of ideas or doctrine," but Christianity definitely teaches the primacy of doctrine: "He who keeps my doctrine will not see death ever" (*John* 8:51); "he who believes in me has everlasting life" (*John* 6:47); "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed" (*1 Timothy* 4:6); "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ

has both the Father and the Son" (2 *John* 9). What makes Christianity different from other philosophies and theologies, different from Buddhism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Neo-orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and existentialism, is its doctrine. Any other differences, such as the behavior of Christians, are products of that doctrine.

We Must Listen to Rome

Jordan continues to prepare us from what is to come later in his book: "[W]e must be open to the values in other Christian traditions – even Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions" (11, Jordan's emphasis).

It may come as a surprise to some readers, but several members of the Reconstructionist church in Tyler, Texas, the church with which Gary North, Ray Sutton, James Jordan, David Chilton, and other Recon writers have long been associated, left that church and joined the Roman Catholic church. Other Recons across the country have also joined the Roman church. One reason for such defections is that their theology – their doctrine, especially the doctrine of the church, represented by this book, is quasi-Romanist.

Excommunication

One of the measures of Jordan's fascination with Rome is the importance that he places on excommunication. Thus he argues that Christ could associate with sinful people ("publicans, harlots, and sinners") because they were not excommunicated; "How could Jesus, the spotless Son of God, associate with such evil people? Simple: They were (a) members of the visible church.... They were (b) not excommunicated from that visible church. They were (c) willing to listen to what he had to say.... Notice that Jesus *ate and drank* with them. It requires a clever bit of nominalism to miss the sacramental implications of this" (15, Jordan's emphasis).

This is an incredible statement. Jesus did not fraternize with publicans, harlots, and sinners because they were church members, and ostracize non-church members. He ate and drank with them

because they were sinners. They were not church members in good standing. Neither was the woman at the well, who not only drank with him but also gave him water to drink. It was precisely *because* these people were outcasts and sinners, not church members that the Pharisees were so indignant when Jesus ate and drank with them. They were outcasts, dregs of society, not upstanding church members like the Pharisees. Jesus explains this to the Pharisees when he commands them: "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (*Matthew* 9:13).

In his eagerness to inflate the importance and power of the organized church, Jordan has twisted the meaning of Christ's fellowship with sinners. Jesus' followers, at least those who were "church members," were routinely thrown out of the synagogue. It was a matter of policy for the religious leaders to excommunicate Christians. Jesus himself was murdered by church members in good standing--the religious leaders.

Imagining a sacramental or ritual meaning in Jesus' ordinary eating and drinking is an example of Jordan's overheated imagination. He apparently wants to turn every meal (and, one supposes, every shower) into a sacrament. Indeed, much of what he writes in this book is based on his imagination and is unsupported speculation. He apparently wants to revive not only the State-Church, but also the speculative theology of the Dark Ages, which he calls the "Christian centuries."

Of course, he tries to frighten critics by using an argument from intimidation: "It requires a clever bit of nominalism to miss the sacramental implications of this." Well, if this be nominalism, let us make the most of it. Christ's eating and drinking with sinners was no more a sacrament than his eating and drinking with Joseph and Mary and his brothers. Like Rome, Jordan wants to multiply sacraments. He writes: "The sacramental system in the Roman Catholic church is hardly perfect, but the way Protestants have come to handle the crises and 'conversions' of life has not proven adequate either. It should be on our agenda to give serious consideration to reforming our teaching and practice

in this area" (161). Jordan does not even entertain the possibility that Scripture alone should determine the number of sacraments. Later on he repudiates the regulative principle of worship.

Episcopalians, Elites, and Dominion

Jordan has a fondness for the Episcopalian church as well. The Reconstructionist church in Tyler is now affiliated with the Reformed Episcopal Church, after earlier affiliations with Presbyterian and other Episcopal organizations.

Jordan believes that the Episcopalian have exercised more "social dominion" than the Baptists or Presbyterians. The Episcopal Church teaches, says Jordan, "the primacy of the institutional church" (16). "The Episcopalian identify, promote, protect, and prosper their best men. They provide large salaries, good homes, secure retirements. For their scholar bishops, they provide domestic servants and secretaries..." (16). Presbyterians and Baptists don't do this, and that is why Cornelius Van Til's writings are not in "polished English style," even though he was the "most brilliant" of the "best thinkers" (17).

Jordan is an elitist: "We can contrast this [Baptist and Presbyterian practice of starving scholars] with the armies of scholars maintained by Rome, and the small cadre maintained in Episcopalian circles. The difference is marked, and points to the fundamental difference between these two groups. The catholic party (Roman and Anglican) is frankly elitist. It strives to convert and control the elite in society, and it arms its best men for that task, giving them time for reflection and writing. The evangelical party (Presbyterian and Baptist, especially the latter) is infected largely with the heresy of democracy, and believes (wrongly) that the conversion of society comes with the conversion of the masses" (17; see page 19 for more about the heresy of democracy).

Democracy is a heresy, says Jordan, which has "infected" (it seems to be a disease as well) Presbyterians and Baptists. He scorns misguided evangelicals, who, unlike the enlightened

Romanists, believe that the conversion of society means the conversion of the masses. Doesn't Jordan realize that the proposition is tautological? Just who is society, unless it is the "masses"? Apparently Jordan has another notion of "society" in mind. He also seems to want to restrict the meaning of the word "church" to the elite as well.

Christ thought that the conversion of society meant the conversion of the masses. "The fields are white for harvest." That is why he spent so much time with the common people, rather than with the church leaders. Christ was loved by the people, hated by the elite, and commanded that his gospel be preached to every creature, not just to the elite. Jordan, unlike Christ, is exercising a preferential option for the elite.

In recent years Recons have spent much time and energy denying that they are elitists who wish to impose their views from the top down. But Jordan disagrees: "Americans (evangelicals) like to believe the myth that society is transformed from the 'bottom up' and not from the 'top down' " (17). Jordan appeals directly to the power of kings: "Good kings produced a good nation; bad kings a bad nation. The order is always seen from the top down..." (17).

Church Organization

Lest anyone think that his elitist views on society have nothing to do with the church, Jordan continues: "There are rulers and governors – a hierarchy – in the church" (18). There are rulers and governors, of course, in the Catholic churches, but not in the Christian church. There is no hierarchy in the Christian church. There are elected leaders, called elders and deacons. The church on Earth is a republic, not a monarchy or an aristocracy. Christ and the apostles explicitly condemned the exercise of dominion in church and state. That is something the Gentiles – the unbelievers – do. Christians do not act that way.

Jordan denounces the "modern Presbyterians" who reject the "Episcopalian notion of the bishop as a separate office" (19). Apparently Jordan does not realize that rejection of hierarchy is not a modern

innovation at all; it is in fact, the meaning of Presbyterianism. It is not the "modern Presbyterians" who are infected with the heresy of democracy, but James Jordan who is infected with the heresy of dominion. Hear his most awful accusation: "they ["modern Presbyterians"] really *do not want dominion*" (19). Since Christ commanded us not to have dominion over men, Jordan's condemnation is really praise. Attempting to curse, he praises us.

After berating Presbyterians for a while, Jordan belittles the "masses": "The production of literature aimed at the masses has its place, of course; but it does not affect the transformation of society. It is a legitimate ministry, but it will not change the world" (20). One wonders if this applies to Bibles.

The spread of Christianity in the first three centuries after Christ changed the world. That transformation – that turning the world upside down, as Luke reports – was accomplished largely by ordinary men and women: those whom Jordan contemptuously calls the masses. It was not done by kings. They did their best to stop it. A thousand years later the Reformers once again turned the world upside down – despite the best efforts of kings, popes, and other wicked spirits in high places – by publishing, writing, and preaching in the vernacular, the language of the common people. Had Luther's *Theses* never been translated from the Latin, had they remained in the language of the elite, there would have been no Reformation, and Luther would have been snuffed out like so many other Christian victims of the Catholic church.

The problem, Jordan tells us, is that the masses are too stupid: "It has never been possible to reduce hard, intellectual, elitist theology to the level of the common man" (20). It is more likely that the people, at least the elect, are too smart to swallow the paradoxical, anti-intellectual, elitist theology of Jordan and his ilk.

Tradition

Another strength of Episcopalianism, says Jordan, is tradition: "[T]he English church never *reacted* against the Medieval tradition, and sought to

conserve the best that was there. All the Reformers were experts in the early church, and also in the Medieval theologians. After a century, however, the other Reformed groups had begun to ignore the Fathers and the Medievals. [This would be about the time of the Westminster Assembly.] The myth arose that the Medieval church was wholly evil from A.D. 606 on. *The great advances of the Christian centuries were overlooked. The real accomplishments of the Papal See were rejected*" (20-21, emphasis mine). Jordan does not condescend to tell us common folk what these great advances and accomplishments were. Perhaps the suppression of the Bible? Perhaps the Inquisition? Notice that Jordan calls the Dark Ages "the Christian centuries." He, like so many other elitists, longs for the medieval glory of chivalry, serfdom, and superstition.

The Primacy of the Visible Church

Another strength or Episcopalism is that "the Episcopal churches have put the visible church in the first place, before theology and before personalities.... [T]hey permit various theologies to exist under the common umbrella of the institutional church.... The Episcopal churches bind their people to the church and to the traditions by the careful and plenary use of profound symbol and beautiful ritual" (21).

Jordan espouses the ideology of the ecumenical movement, putting the organization, the organized church, first and theology second. This clearly indicates the preference Recons have for power (dominion) over truth. This agenda – one church, many theologies – is anti-Christian. God prefers theological truth to organization and ritual:

"Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom [Israel]; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah [Israel]: 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?' says the Lord. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before me, who has required this from your hand, to trample

my courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to me. The new moons, the sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they are a trouble to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out of our hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.' "

God grants primacy, not to the visible church, but to his doctrine. His idea of unity is unity of mind, of doctrine, of theology, not unity of organization: "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (*1 Corinthians* 1:10; see also *1 Corinthians* 13:11; *Philippians* 1:27; *1 Peter* 3:8, etc.). God wants one theology in many churches; Jordan wants many theologies within one church. Jordan, a Van Tilian, does not get the relationship between the one and the many straight.

But the Episcopal church is not perfect. Its weakness is that "it does not excommunicate anyone," Jordan says. The Roman church, however, has solved that problem: "the answer to this problem is seen *only* in the Roman Catholic church.... [T]here is no reticence about disciplining apostates" (22, my emphasis). The Roman church has always been eager to silence its opposition. They were the original dominion theologians. And it is *only* the Roman Church that has solved the problem of disobedient members, Jordan says.

A little later in the book (page 71), Jordan asks whether a liberal Episcopal church is a true church: "They still have officers. The sacraments are still rightly administered (far more so than in Reformed churches, since *Christ is made visible weekly* [emphasis added]). The Word is still sung in the liturgy and in the psalms, and read in appointed readings, even if the sermons are heretical. On the basis of what we have seen, such a church should be counted and treated as part of the church of Jesus

Christ." The same goes for the Roman Catholic Church: "We should be quite clear on this. Regardless of what they might sometimes have said, the Reformers continued to recognize that the Roman Catholic Church was in some sense part of the true church" (74). This was their view, he says, "regardless of what they might sometimes have said:" (Later in the book Jordan writes: "the Roman Church is still pervaded by superstition and heresy.... Roman Catholicism today presents its people with a choice between bleeding statues and revolutionary Marxism.... Yes, the Roman Church has a powerful witness, but it is a witness that is 10% gospel and 90% error" [133-134]).

Church Intimidation

Moreover, Jordan thunders, an individual cannot simply leave a church: "If an individual leaves a local church, without transferring, then he has apostatized from the church. He is no longer part of the church of Christ" (74). Jordan stops short of saying the former church member is going to Hell, but he wants the reader to draw that conclusion. He clearly means: Outside the (visible) church there is no salvation. But with most churches today, there is no salvation *inside* the visible church. A high churchman like Jordan, lusting for dominion over men, cannot permit the masses, the common people, simply to leave a church. They must be scared into staying, even if the church is a liberal Episcopal or the Roman Catholic Church itself. "Intimidation," Jordan believes, "is a good thing. People should be intimidated by the church [that is, the clergy]" (276).

Jordan tells us that laymen, common men, cannot challenge church leaders: "It is not the place of non-officers to provoke such confrontations [about heresy and false doctrine]. The layman (or, general officer) should approach a special officer [of the church] whom he trusts, and ask him to provoke the confrontation. If there are no special officers who care enough to fight for orthodoxy, then the general officer should quietly and peaceably transfer to another church. God never blesses insurrection, even if the cause is just" (72n.)

Worship

On page 26, under the subhead "Worship," Jordan returns to his attack on truth: After asserting that truth is "more than a mere intellectual ideology" [notice the pejorative use of "mere" and "ideology" again], Jordan informs us that truth is a "dialogue" between man and God. Moreover, because it is "more" than intellectual, truth takes many forms: "The Word is read to us, taught to us, preached to us, made visible to us in the Supper, sprinkled upon us in baptism, embodied to us in the lifestyle of Godly men and women."

This may be acceptable poetry, since there seem to be no standards for poetry these days, but it is not Christian theology. Truth is not a dialogue; it is a divine monologue. Truth is always and only intellectual, always and only propositional. Jordan has embraced the superstitious notions of the Gentiles, along with their views of the church.

In worship, according to Jordan, we engage in "the triple act of sacrifice." Please notice the word "sacrifice." The first act is confession – why this is a sacrifice Jordan does not say. Why worship consists of sacrifices, he does not say. He is enthralled by the rites and rituals – the sacrifices – of the Old Testament.

This fixation on the sacrificial system of the Old Testament is the result of the Recons' belief in the "abiding validity of the law in exhaustive detail." If the details of the law are still valid, then it is immaterial what *Hebrews* or *Romans* or *Galatians* say on the matter. The Recons' peculiar view of the law logically compels them to regard the Old Testament as if Christ had never come and the New Testament had never been written. It will not be too long (if it has not happened already) before the Recons realize that during the Dark Ages (what Jordan calls the "Christian centuries") attempts were made to reinstitute Old Testament laws in detail. When that happens their followers will be regaled with books about how wonderful the Dark Ages were.

The second act of sacrifice, Jordan says, is the Offertory (this is the only act that Jordan

capitalizes, perhaps indicating its importance to him). The reading of Scripture and the sermon "is all designed to lead us to the second act of sacrifice: the Offertory.... Thus the offering plates are brought down front to the minister, who holds them up before God ('heave offering') and gives them to Him" (27). In this second act of sacrifice, notice that the offering plates are elevated, and the Scripture and sermon are only preliminaries to the offering. At least Jordan is consistent with the rest of his theology when he puts money before truth. Jordan defends not only the elevation of the collection plates, but of the bread and wine as well: "[C]learly there is nothing wrong, then, with lifting up the collection plates, and the bread and wine...toward Heaven during the offertory prayer.... Lifting up the offering and the elements is thoroughly evangelical, Biblical, and Reformed" (269). He says that he does not lift them to be worshipped, but to offer them to God.

The third act of sacrifice is the "Eucharist." At the end of the service, the people are "ordered" (Jordan's word) to leave. The mention of the Eucharist gets Jordan's mind on eating: "Worship is a dance.... The Greek notions of the primacy of internal feeling, or the primacy of the intellect, have nothing to do with Scripture. In fact, if anything, the Scriptures give us the *primacy of eating*" (31). He quotes Alexander Schmemmann quoting the German materialist Feuerbach: "He [man] is indeed 'that which he eats...'" (31). One can think only of Paul's condemnation of those "whose god is their belly." Jordan writes, "By eat, we mean *eat*: a good chewable hunk of bread and a good-sized glass of real shalom-inducing wine" (230).

"At the climax of worship," Jordan pontificates, "is the Lord's Supper. Jesus did not say, 'Understand this in memory of Me.' What He actually said was '*Do this as a memorial of Me.*' The doing takes precedence over any theory of what is being done.... [I]n terms of the sacrament, doing is more important [than knowing]" (31-32).

This, of course, is anti-Christian nonsense. If we truly had no theory, if eating bread and drinking wine were more important than knowing theology, the Supper, and the church, would be pointless. It

was the church at Corinth, one supposes, that came closest to practicing Jordan's primacy of eating and doing. That is why Paul read them the riot act. He told them to eat at home and to stop getting drunk. He also explained the meaning of the Supper to them – again.

"Doing" is so important to Jordan that he calls for worship to be characterized by "singing, falling down, kneeling, dancing, clapping, processions, and so forth. The recovery of all these things for worship... must be our eventual goal" (32).

Jordan continues to misrepresent the Lord's Supper: "As we noted above, the inauguration of the Lord's Supper preceded its interpretation. Jesus did not at that point give an explanation of it. He just said to do it" (33). Jesus' explanation may be found in Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:14-22.

Jordan is driven to this bizarre position because he wishes to deny the primacy of the intellect. Perhaps a few words from Peter will suffice as an answer: "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us...." Peter says all things we need come through knowledge. One factor that distinguishes Christianity from religions is its emphasis on understanding, on knowledge, and on doctrine. False religions appeal to the feelings, to the will, to the emotions, to sinful desires, to aesthetics. Christianity appeals to the mind. And it is that appeal that Jordan wants to deny. He seeks an "emotionally satisfying worship service" (229).

Jordan attacks Protestantism: "[W]hen the church falls into teaching without doing, as in Protestantism," it falls into perverted practices: "extreme negative sabbatarianism," "the altar call ritual," "Pentecostalism," and "extreme negative views of worship that reject all kinds of worship actions commanded in the Bible (such as kneeling, dancing, processions, etc.)" (34).

Jordan's Fascination with the Miraculous

Pentecostalism appears, he says, because "the weekly *miracle of Christ's special presence* is not maintained" (emphasis added) (34). He obviously regards the Lord's Supper not just as a memorial but as both a miracle and a sacrifice, a miracle and sacrifice that are performed weekly by the priest: "The sacrament, as a memorial, is also a continuing miracle. The fascination with the miraculous that has crippled the American churches since the days of the Great Awakening can only be overcome when the Lord's Supper is once again part of the center of our worship.... As a miraculous memorial, the sacrament has a real influence. It is never neutral.... The sacrament works positively in response to faith, but it also works negatively in response to faithlessness. In this sense, we must say that the sacrament does indeed work *ex opere operato*" (40).

How presenting a weekly miracle will end the fascination with the miraculous, Jordan does not explain. It certainly has not ended it in the Roman Church, which has been in the miracle-mongering business for centuries. No church has ever promoted "miracles" as assiduously as the Roman Church. Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson, Robert Tilton, and the whole Pentecostal and charismatic movements are tyros and novices compared to Rome. It would seem that a weekly miracle only panders to and encourages interest in the miraculous. Moreover, why does Jordan object to interest in the miraculous if he wants miracles to be performed weekly? Finally, Jordan has taken another step away from the Reformation and back to the Dark Ages by saying that the sacraments work magically, *ex opere operato*.

Speculative Theology

Jordan resumes his attack on the intellect and truth: "Because the pluriform revelation in Word and Sacrament is a reflex of the triunity of God, it will always ultimately evade our attempts to explain it rationally" (40). It is a standard ploy of theologians who do not know what they are talking about to use big words and say that doctrine X cannot be explained rationally. That is designed to relieve them of responsibility for talking nonsense. It also allows them to impugn the intelligence of the

masses who do not understand their sesquipedalian nonsense.

Much of Jordan's book is pious speculation unsullied by vulgar and common truth. After all, if one has given up on logic and rationality, all that is left is speculation. For example, under the heading, "Church Rulers," Jordan writes: "That [Divine] council is seen initially in *Genesis* 1:26, and had then only three members. Had Adam persevered, he and Eve would have been the next two" (42). Or take this example of his speculative theology: "For their own good, Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden. Just as the Lord's Supper causes the faithless to become sick and die, so the Tree of Life would have caused Adam to die had he eaten of it. Thus, for his own good Adam was prevented from eating the sacrament" (106).

God contradicts Jordan: Adam would not have died, he would have lived forever: "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' – therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden..." (*Genesis* 3:22-23). Jordan is determined to have his own theology, no matter what the Bible says.

"The Woman Question"

Discussing the role of women in the church, Jordan gives a convoluted explanation of 1 Corinthians 14 in which only men may speak at certain church meetings, and women may speak at others. A few pages later, he returns to "The Woman Question" and tells us that a woman may prophesy, speak for her husband, be a judge, make judgments in the church, instruct men, be a priestess, be a teacher, be a magistrate, and be a deacon (44-49).

A Liturgy of Hate

For special occasions, Jordan recommends cursing as part of the worship service. "It is the church," he bellows, "that binds and looses on Earth" (280). "She is only to bind on Earth what she knows has been bound in Heaven," and that is easily discerned.

Here are some excerpts from the liturgy Jordan's Reconstructionist church has used:

"Presiding Elder. 'Tonight we bring before you the names of _____, who have attacked the church of Jesus Christ. We ask you to join with us in praying that God will pour out His wrath upon them, and upon all in alliance with them in this sinful act....

(Praying) "Almighty and Most terrible God, Judge of all men living and dead, we bring before You _____ (here name the persons being cursed), who have brought an attack upon the integrity of Your holy government on the Earth. We as Your anointed office-bearers now ask that You place Your especial curse upon these people, and upon all in alliance with them. We ask You to pour out the fire of Your wrath upon them, and destroy them, that Your church may be left in peace...' " (281-282).

What heinous persecution provoked this vitriol? It seems that a former teacher at the church's school had filed for unemployment benefits (280-281). Well, add another chapter to Foxe's *Martyrs*. One wonders what Jordan would recommend were the church actually to be persecuted. In any event, one need only contrast his suggested liturgy with the instructions Peter gives us about rulers in *1 Peter* 2:13-23.

A Liturgy of Healing

Jordan includes an essay by this title in the book. The gist of it is this: "God generally wants His people able, strong, and healthy. He has instituted the rite of unction..." (290). Jordan also believes in haunted houses (252). Presumably he would favor the rite of exorcism as well.

Clothing and Clerical Costumes

In an essay entitled "Triumphalistic Investiture," Jordan longs for the days when clothing marked one's station in life: "[T]he industrial revolution, coupled with democratic notions of society, have completely separated us from all human traditions in this area. Nowadays, men dress in 'business

suits' regardless of their profession; earlier, this was not so. In traditional societies, clothing gave a visible indication of the status of a person.... Democracy has impoverished us to the extent that this is no longer so" (264). Jordan is very concerned with status.

Speaking of the distinctive clothing of the priests in the Old Testament, he tells us that "there is no reason to presume any change in principle here" (264). He argues at length for the reintroduction of clerical costumes, "since Rome is no longer a problem" (275). "Practically speaking," he writes, "we should be careful not to introduce too much, but bring the people along. In the area of vestments, a simple white alb or surplice (the white robe of the Bible) and a colored stole (the strip of cloth that represents the 'easy yoke' of Christ's service, the colors variable with the liturgical season) should be sufficient. But we should not be afraid to think about more glorious apparel at some later time" (277).

Justification Not by Faith Alone

Jordan apparently believes in salvation by works. He writes: "Paul goes on to speak [in *Romans* 2] of Gentiles who did not have the law, but who did the things contained in the law. The plain implication here is that such Gentiles were saved (by their *faithful* obedience)" (107).

The Four Spiritual Laws

In his essay on conversion, Jordan defends the "Four Spiritual Laws." He defends telling everyone that God has a wonderful plan for his life. He also defends telling all men that God loves them and Christ died for them. "God does offer salvation to all men, covenantally speaking" (158).

Glossolalia (A Gift), Irrationalism (Another Gift), the Regulative Principle (Bad), and the Real Presence (Good)

Jordan writes: "Glossolalia, modern tongues-speaking, is not a foreign language, but a natural reflex or capacity of the human body, like weeping, laughter, or hysteria.... [G]lossolalia is a God-given gift to man, which can be used for good, but which also can be abused. Like any other human action, the practice of glossolalia should be directed as a thank offering to God. The use of glossolalia in prayer is no more problematic in principle than the use of laughter or weeping in prayer.... The modern Pentecostal movement is an irrationalistic reaction against an overly rationalistic culture and church. The Reformation produced an overly rationalistic church.... The failure to maintain the Real Presence in the sacraments, and to keep the Eucharist at the center of weekly worship, also served to de-mystify and overly intellectualize Christian experience.... The catechisms produced in Reformed churches to train youth concern the definitions of doctrinal terms, and bear no resemblance to the whole-life orientation of that Biblical catechism, the book of Proverbs. ... Irrationalism can also be used for good or for ill.... We need to repudiate the historic Protestant stoic and intellectualistic interpretations of worship (the regulative principle), and reintroduce cultivated musical and artistic beauty in worship.... We need to reintroduce the mystery of the Eucharist as Christ's real Presence in our midst, as the center of special worship, weekly, with our children not excluded..." (171-174).

Church and State

Jordan asserts a medieval view of the church's prerogatives: "Once upon a time [Jordan should begin all his essays with this phrase], it was understood that the sacramental body of the church was the primary form of 'incorporation' on the Earth, and that all other corporations were secondary in comparison to the church" (189-190).

The church, according to Jordan, is even prior to the family: "The church performed marriages, maintained marriage certificates and birth records, granted divorces, etc., thus showing that the corporation of the family is an extension of the life of Christ and the Blessed Trinity in the world" (190). The church is prior to the state as well: "The church ordained kings, showing that the corporation

of the state is an extension of the work of Christ in the world.... Let the state come to the church and request incorporation!" (190).

He continues: "No church should heed a summons to appear before the court of the state. Church officers may and should appear as a courtesy, by 'special appearance,' but not as if the church herself is on trial.... The church, her laws, her ordinances, her decrees, her property, etc., are simply not under the inspection of the state.... To be sure, when they have a gun to your head, you give them your wallet. If the state refuses to honor the principle of jurisdiction and threatens to close down a given local church, she may choose to pay a bribe to state officials.... This has been the tactic of the Roman Catholic Church for centuries. She maintains lawyers and gives outward compliance to all laws, pretending deceptively to be under the rule of the state.... We as Protestants (Reformed Catholics) may well take our cue from this" (192).

Man

Jordan's worldview includes a non-Christian view of man: "[T]he Bible teaches neither a bipartite nor a tripartite view of man.... Man is a spirit in bodily form, not a spirit housed in a body. It is Greek philosophy that teaches that man is a soul or spirit housed in a body.... [P]agan man assumes that there is some immortal soul living inside his body, which soul or spirit is his true self, and this soul will go on living in some other place after the physical body dies..." (222-223).

Does this last sentence sound familiar? It should. What Jordan calls "Greek philosophy" and "pagan" is the teaching of Scripture. Paul, for example, refers to our bodies as tents and houses (2 *Corinthians* 5:1, 4). Christ tells us not to be afraid of him who can destroy the body but not the soul. Peter refers to his body as a tent (2 *Peter* 1:14). Paul says to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 *Corinthians* 5:6, 8).

Jordan uses his peculiar view of man to launch another attack on the intellect and on preaching: "Under the influence of Greek thought, Christianity began to hold that man is divided into various parts

or faculties, and that the most important of these parts is the intellect. This notion is called the doctrine of the primacy of the intellect." From this statement and Jordan's repeated denunciation of the primacy of the intellect, one can only conclude that Jordan does not think that the most important part of man is his intellect. One wonders what it is.

He continues: "Because the brain was regarded as the most important part of man, the most important work of the church was to communicate intellectual information to that brain." Here Jordan lapses into behaviorism, confusing the intellect, the mind, with the brain. One should expect this of a person who thinks that "man is a spirit in bodily form." To such a person, it would seem plausible that the brain is the bodily form of the mind, and Jordan's mistake is easily understandable. Jordan betrays his preference for the physical on page 237, where, speaking of the Lord's Supper, he writes, "The invitation is to a real meal, one at which Christ is present as Host. Real food, physical food, is to be eaten" (237).

Preaching

According to Jordan, the pernicious result of the primacy of the intellect for the church has been the "primacy of preaching" rather than "the primacy of the Word." The primacy of preaching leads to the primacy of the preacher. Jordan wants the Word "experienced," "made visible," "sung," "prayed," "obeyed and implemented" (224). Once again Jordan plays the trick of sliding from "primacy" to "only." This writer knows of no church that preaches but refuses to sing, or pray, or celebrate the Lord's Supper. That does not stop Jordan, however. He launches into an extended attack on the primacy of the preacher. His entire diatribe may be answered by referring to Jesus' command to teach and make disciples of every creature, and Paul's rhetorical question, How will they hear without a preacher? The problem with contemporary churches is not the primacy of the preacher, but the fact that there is only one preacher per church. Such was not the case in the apostolic churches.

Conclusion

I shall conclude simply by saying that Christian Reconstructionist Jim Jordan has written a book telling us that Protestantism is bad and Romanism is good. Many Recons have acted on that information and joined the Roman Church. Reconstructionism, as exemplified in this book, has a heretical view of the church.