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Review: The Seven Last Words of the Risen Christ

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In practicing the analytic method the student will follow the steps of observation, interpretation, and application. These three steps are similar to the methods used for synthetic study of the Bible. To illustrate the use of this method, Finzel utilizes passages from historical narratives, wisdom and poetic literature, and prophetic literature.

Finzel also presents the topical method of Bible study which traces a subject throughout the Scriptures. The goal of this method of study is to summarize the teaching of the Bible on biblical concepts, doctrines, personalities, or words.

In a useful section in an appendix, Finzel discusses the principles by which passages of Scripture are structured. Here he introduces such concepts as comparison, contrast, repetition, and eleven other methods which the biblical writers can use to develop and consolidate their ideas.

This is a thorough book with full explanation of the methods of inductive Bible study. Each of the many books being published on the subject of inductive Bible study seems to make corrections and improvements in its predecessors. An improvement in this book is its usage of different types of literature as a basis for doing synthetic, analytical, and topical study of Scripture.

The content of the book is too intimidating for a beginning study of the Scripture. The varieties of approaches to Scriptures would appear like an endless labyrinth to a novice. A book which is somewhat simpler and less meaty would be best to use in beginning a young Christian along his pilgrimage of Bible study. This book would find its best use as a reference tool for mature leaders of Bible study groups.

This book also needs to guide a beginning student to be more dependent on the insights of other interpreters. Finzel urges his readers to use such secondary sources as commentaries, but a beginning student might be tempted to feel that he has become an expert in handling most passages of Scripture after working through this book. Unless a beginning student recognizes his need to learn biblical interpretation from more skilled interpreters, he might feel that some of his naive and ungrounded conclusions are as valid as the more justifiable conclusions brought forth by interpreters skilled in unraveling the biblical text.

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The Seven Last Words of the Risen Christ, by Joe E. Trull. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985. Pp. 110. \$4.95 paper.

This compact and innovative treatment of seven of Christ's resurrection discourses comes from the pen of the Director of the Department of Christian Ethics at New Orleans Baptist Seminary. The material originated as a series of sermons Dr. Trull preached while pastor of First Baptist Church of El Paso, Texas (p. 10).

Trull is largely correct when he writes in the Preface, "For most Christians the Seven Last Words of Christ from the cross are as familiar as the Ten Commandments" (p. 9). Also, he is right in pointing out that the "real last words of Christ" came not at Calvary but "during his ten resurrection appearances" (p. 9).

Thus, the author is to be commended for venturing beyond the more familiar ground of Jesus' dying words to several somewhat lesser-known passages which "contain some of his more significant statements" (p. 9), as well as addressing the prevalent misnomer about Christ's "last words." Fortunately for the reader, these are not nearly all the reasons for which the writer and publisher should receive commendation.

It is worthy of note that chap. 4, "Locked Out by Doubt," dealing with the Apostle Thomas, from John 20:19-31, has already been published in vol. 3 of *Award Winning Sermons* (Nashville: Braodman, 1979). Even more noteworthy, from this reviewer's perspective, is that chap. 4 did not at all overshadow the other chapters. Comparable homiletical quality is seen consistently throughout the volume.

The chapters are arranged in historical sequence, beginning with "Turning Grief into Joy (to Mary Madgalene)," from John 20:1-18, and concluding with "Be My Witnesses (to all Christians)," from Acts 1:1-8. Each of the seven begins with a skeleton outline, including overviews of introduction and conclusion. The wording throughout is delightfully crisp, reading more like spoken sermons than purposefully written communication (which may well have been the intent of author and publisher for Baker's "Pulpit Library" series). Further, the volume is replete with good illustrations.

The Seven Last Words of the Risen Christ was a well-conceived series of sermons from a creative mind (see the words to his song "Mary Magdalene's Easter," pp. 11-12) before it became an exceedingly helpful book. As such, it should prove tremendously suggestive for pastors and teachers looking for further insight into and a creative approach to the Easter and postresurrection narratives.

The only caution light to be noted in Trull's occasional emphasis on a present-tense experience of the resurrected Savior (e.g., "a face-to-face experience with the living Lord Jesus Christ can be *your* Easter experience . . .," p. 23), which could be taken as neo-orthodox in perspective. Such wording, however, may be nothing more than the pastoral heart of an effective preacher seeking to address with relevance "our deepest struggles" (p. 9).

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The Timothy Principle, by Roy Robertson. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1986. Pp. 120. \$5.95 paper.

Author Roy Robertson has worked with the Navigators for over 40 years. He has opened Navigator work in seven Asian nations, and has served as