

Even in discussing the crucifixion, Green points out the numerous motifs that connect it with events going all the way back to the birth narrative. Also helpful are Green's lucid explanations of various cultural customs and issues (Græco-Roman marriage customs, family relationships, and first-century table etiquette) which open up further insights into the meaning of the text. Combining these strengths with a very readable explanation of the text (discussions of all Greek words and concepts are found only in the footnotes) and thirty-eight pages of scriptural index (including every reference in Luke), along with a comprehensive subject index, make the material both readable and accessible for pastor or teacher.

If there is any shortfall to Green's commentary, it is only those deficiencies which are inherent in the nature of literary criticism itself. Historical difficulties, such as those surrounding the census in Luke 2:1-7, are seen as insignificant to the literary meaning of the text and are therefore not dealt with. Along this same line, problematic issues between Luke and the other Synoptic Gospels are also not mentioned.

Green's commentary would make an important addition to the library of any pastor or teacher who is interested in preaching or teaching from Luke's Gospel. His work is well written, thorough, and coherent. However, due to some of the weaknesses associated with literary criticism, one should also supplement Green's commentary with a more detailed work such as Bock's two-volume work (BECNT, 1994, 1996) which deals with both the historical and synoptic issues not covered by Green.

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Gulley, Norman. *Christ Is Coming! A Christ-centered Approach to Last-Day Events*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998. 585 pp. Paperback, \$30.00.

Norman Gulley is a much-loved professor of systematic theology at Southern Adventist University. This book is a polished version of class handouts for his popular "Last-Day Events" class, honed over several decades, and this constitutes both the strength and the weakness of the book. Those who know Gulley will hear his quiet English voice in every line, and his vibrant love of Christ buoys the book. Indeed, as the book's subtitle proclaims, the revelation of Jesus Christ is, for Gulley, the heart of eschatology, not the coming tribulation or the fate of Israel or the correct interpretation of seals, trumpets, and bowl plagues.

Christ Is Coming! is meant primarily for use as a college or seminary textbook, but other intelligent readers will also find the book interesting, and even theologians will find useful ideas. One strength of the book is that the chapters are self-contained. One may assign whatever seems appropriate in any order. Another strength is that the book provides discussion-provoking readings for many lectures a teacher might give (or might not have time to give), and the documentation points students to useful primary sources. Gulley is well-grounded in the major theologians and cites them regularly, and his citations are up to date. Because the chapters have been tested on students for years, they answer questions students are likely to raise. I, for one, enjoy the engaged, intimate, personal voice Gulley uses in his writing, and the book is fragrant with hope, faith, and confidence in Christ's imminent return.

Many teachers would not want to use this book as a text because while strongly biblical, it is also strongly Adventist and historicist (though Gulley's interpretations are sometimes his own). Dispensationalism is disproved, and belief

in an immortal soul, an ever-burning hell, purgatory, and worship on Sunday are presented, each in its own chapter, as Satan's attempts to turn people away from the clear teaching of God's Word. On the other hand, this also makes the book one which anyone interested in understanding Adventist eschatology should have on the shelf. Gulley's biases are clear, and though he often presents both sides of an issue, he also exhorts readers to make what he considers to be the appropriate decision. His aim is to convince and convict, not sow doubt.

Gulley divides the book into two parts: "Preparation for the Journey" and "The Journey." The first includes thirty-seven chapters, primarily on contemporary cultural and theological phenomena, which Gulley believes are being used to prepare the world for the last-day events to come. Thus, one will find chapters on postmodernism and process theology, on New Age ideas, spiritualism and the charismatic movement, ecumenism and Catholicism, theosophy, evolution, and dominion theology. Only the final eight chapters deal primarily with Revelation and speculation about the nature and order of last-day events.

Christ Is Coming! is likely to become the standard eschatology textbook in Adventist colleges, though if Gulley's hope, expressed in the title, is correct, it may not be used for long.

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ED CHRISTIAN

Harvey, John D. *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*. Evangelical Theological Society Study Series. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. 357 pp. Paperback, \$24.99.

John D. Harvey's *Listening to the Text* marks an auspicious beginning for the new Evangelical Theological Society Studies series edited by David W. Baker. The author undertakes an ambitious and groundbreaking project. Not only does he attempt to sharpen and develop our understanding of the NT's rhetorical environment, but goes beyond theory to practice by bringing his results to bear on a comprehensive treatment of Paul's undisputed letters (i.e. Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon).

The questions that guide his study relate to the potential effects of the semiliterate character of the first century environment on the writings of Paul. What oral elements, stylistic features, and patterns intended to enable the listener to hear aright, were current in Paul's day? Which elements did he use? What interpretive significance do they have?

Thus, Part 1 begins with a survey of recent scholarship in the related areas of oral theory, rhetorical criticism, and epistolary analysis in order to demonstrate the paucity of studies on Paul's letters with regard to oral theory. This is followed by an assessment of the aurally oriented character of the first-century audience. The first-century audience stood between illiteracy and a literacy that could be characterized as fundamentally oral; writing was often dictated, reading was done aloud, and oral intelligibility was the governing force in speeches. In other words, rhetorical features within written texts and written texts themselves were, respectively, codifications of oral techniques and a means to preserve orally shaped communication.