

he feels that some other hand must be involved, since the vocabulary and mechanical style differ from the undisputed Paulines and because the unconscious speech mannerisms and "authorial fingerprint" are different. Also, he feels the theological and paranetic content is quite different from that of the Paulines. A few examples would have strengthened his argument. Still, Dunn feels that the similarity of names and styles between Philemon and Colossians suggests that if Paul was not the writer of Colossians, someone very close to Paul (like Timothy) must have been. At length he decides to leave the issue of authorship "fairly fluid," but interprets the letter with the assumption that it was the work of both Paul and Timothy, with Paul being the dominant influence. Given the many similarities of the letter to Ephesians, Dunn suggests that Colossians is among the "late(r)" Pauline letters (19).

In spite of a long tradition of interpreting the Colossians false teaching as a heresy that included elements of incipient Gnosticism as well as Jewish legalism, Dunn views it differently. He feels that it cannot be called a heresy, since there was not yet a well-defined Christian orthodoxy, whereupon he refers to it as "the syncretistic soup of religious philosophical ideas that cohered into the later Gnostic systems" (27). But, for Dunn, the primary ingredient in the Colossians belief system was simply Judaism, and he consistently refers to it as the Colossians philosophy.

A brief example of Dunn's exegesis is his interpretation of the wiping out of the *cheirographon tois dogmasin* ("handwriting of ordinances" KJV) in Col 2:14, not as bearing on the ceremonial law (a common Adventist view), but as the erasing of the record of sins, since it is a parallel to the previous phrase, "having forgiven us all our trespasses." But while interpreting *cheirographon* as referring to the moral law, he repeatedly asserts (correctly, I think) that "it is not the law which is thought of as thus destroyed, but rather its particular condemnation of transgressions" (166).

Since Dunn holds that the primary element in the Colossians philosophy was a narrow, covenant-marking Judaism that had no welcoming attitude toward Gentile converts, his warning about Sabbath insistence in 2:16 by persons diminishing Christ (v. 19), is understandable. The Sabbath in question is not simply ceremonial, but the Sabbath as a Jewish institution in all its "covenant distinctiveness" (175). It was somewhat disappointing to look in vain in Dunn's comments for some deductions about how Paul's instruction impinges upon Sabbath-keeping today.

Overall, it is a commentary characterized by careful exegesis of the Greek text, yet it is presented in language that is not beyond the grasp of the average minister. Even the footnotes are concise and not highly technical. In spite of the number and variety of NT commentaries now available, this recent series, and this volume in particular, make a valuable contribution.

Andrews University

WILLIAM RICHARDSON

Elwell, Walter A., and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. 416 pp., plus CD-ROM developed by Chris Miller and Phil Bassett. \$44.99.

Encountering the New Testament is the first volume published in Baker's new series of college-level textbooks called Encountering Biblical Studies. A

corresponding series, *Engaging Biblical Studies*, is also being prepared for graduate-level courses, along with a set of standard reference works, most of which are already available.

The authors, Walter Elwell and Robert Yarbrough, are well-known and well-respected scholars and authors. Elwell, a prolific editor as well, is the general editor of this series. Yarbrough is well-known for his translation of many German works.

The Publisher's Preface lists six guiding principles, five intellectual goals, and five attitudinal goals of the series. While these are too extensive to repeat here, I must note that they reflect a high degree of concern for both scholarship and practical application, which is commendable. Upon surveying the book, I find that they seem to have achieved their goals to a high degree.

The series is unabashedly conservative-evangelical in its approach to Scripture, highly suspicious of the work of higher criticism and its influence in biblical studies. Elwell declares in his Editor's Preface: "Encountering and Engaging Biblical Studies series are written from an evangelical point of view, in the firm conviction that the Scripture is absolutely true and never misleads us." This conviction may be seen in the methodology and conclusions of the authors throughout the book, as well as on the accompanying multimedia instructional CD-ROM developed by Chris Miller and Phil Bassett. Included among the goals of the series are to "substantiate the Christian faith," "to instill in students a love for the Scriptures," "to enhance their piety," and "to stimulate their love for God." I personally find this clear and unapologetic attitude refreshing and encouraging.

Despite the evangelical convictions of the authors, they do not sidestep the issues raised by critical scholarship. They are not intimidated by the arguments of the scholars; rather, they confront them head-on, challenging the skeptical conclusions of the last 250 years and offering well-reasoned alternative conclusions that are more in harmony with the claims of the text. Here is a NT introduction textbook the believer can feel rather comfortable with. Instead of being on the defensive, the student who holds to a high view of Scripture finds scholarly support for a position of faith in the reliability of the NT as an authentic witness to the events connected with the founding of the Christian church by Jesus and the apostles.

Besides its conservative approach to the study of the NT, this textbook has many other noteworthy features. One notices immediately that it is attractively laid-out and well-organized. There is only rarely a page that does not have a full-color picture, map, chart, and/or one or more colored boxes displaying special features. These features include primary source material, discussions of ethical and theological issues, and Focus Boxes which raise key issues and offer relevant applications. In addition, there is an outline and a set of objectives given at the beginning of each chapter, and at the end of each chapter, a summary; a list of key terms, people, and places; review questions; study questions; and a bibliography for further reading. A glossary is also included at the end of the book. Included with the textbook is the Student's Multimedia Interactive CD-ROM mentioned above. This is a very fine resource, adding substantially to the value of the book. It contains a vast amount of resource material to supplement the text, generally well-organized and attractive. While the video clips are short and not too useful, there is a good selection of representative pictures from around Israel and Jerusalem, in addition to the broad

scope of text encompassed on the disk. (I hope not all disks have a damaged picture file like mine, which prevented me from viewing past photo number five in the twelve-picture Mediterranean set.) There are some areas in which the CD could be improved. For example, it is not always clear when or where further clicking will bring up another item. One often has to move the cursor around to different objects or text portions looking for whether or not the cursor turns to a hand in order to know whether or not one has exhausted the possibilities on the screen. Some cue needs to be provided to indicate to the viewer when the interaction is complete and it is time to move to the next screen. There are places where the content could also be improved or corrected, but I will note here only one significant error that needs to be corrected. Under "The Middle East: History: The Rule of Herod's Descendants," Philip is shown ruling Galilee and Perea, while Antipas rules Iturea and Trachonitis. This should be reversed.

For those teachers interested in additional teaching aids, an Instructor's Resource Manual, with lecture outlines, master transparencies, media resources, tests, and suggestions is also available separately. A collection of primary source readings related to the NT, entitled *Readings from the First-Century World: Primary Sources for New Testament Study* is also available from the publisher as a complementary part of the series.

In summary, this is the best, most useful college textbook for introduction to the NT that I have seen. It covers all the essential areas of such a course with clarity, scholarship, and a pleasing visual appeal. It has about as many extra features as one could reasonably expect, with the compact disk as an added bonus. I highly recommend this text to all teachers and students who want to understand the NT while remaining confident of its inspired authority and power to transform the individual. Pastors and all Bible students will also benefit from this fine work.

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies
Silang, Cavite, Philippines

EDWIN REYNOLDS

Enns, Peter. *Poetry & Wisdom*. IBR Bibliographies, 3. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997. 171 pp. Paper, \$12.99.

In this bibliography by the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR), the three explicit editorial considerations which delimit Peter Enns' work are first, a commitment to present the five hundred or so most significant works in the fields of OT poetry and wisdom; second, the need to avoid irrelevance by a focus on those works which are of current significance; and third, the choice to work with English material—a five-percent limit being imposed on titles not translated into English (10). An author's Preface reiterates the sensible disclaimer against exhaustiveness, pointing the reader to standard bibliographic works such as *Religion Index One and Two*, and *OT Abstracts*.

The book is composed of two unequal parts, "Wisdom" (15-108; 484 entries), and "Poetry" (109-163; 300 entries). An opening chapter, which deals in general with the wisdom genre in ancient Israel, presents its titles under eight defined rubrics: Anthologies, Introductions, Origins and ANE Influence, Social Setting, Theology, Wisdom Influence Outside Wisdom Literature, Wisdom and