

that his empirical analysis hardly has a chance to stand on its own feet and tell its own story. One result of this is his overly pessimistic prognosis of the future of conservative religion in its confrontation with modernity.

Hunter disavows any intention to predict the future of evangelicalism, but his data lead him to conclude that the traditions are being eroded under pressures from both the left and the right and that the boundaries of orthodoxy are being blurred in the process of transmission. Evangelicals, and others who are concerned regarding the future of a society that has lost its basic consensus regarding values, find this study deeply disturbing. In fact, it simply cannot be ignored by any who are involved in the transmission of Christian belief and values to succeeding generations.

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Michaels, J. Ramsey. *1 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988. lxxv + 337 pp. \$24.95.

J. Ramsey Michaels has produced a significant commentary that will likely become the standard text on 1 Peter. The readers of *AUSS* are already familiar with other fine contributions in the Word Biblical Commentary series, so nothing needs to be said regarding format and arrangement.

Michaels, in taking a conservative, though cautious, approach with regard to authorship, considers that there are no solid grounds for setting aside the traditional view of Petrine authorship. He identifies 1 Peter as an "apocalyptic diaspora letter" and its recipients as Gentile Christians. His discussion of sources is standard, not really breaking any new ground. The discussion of the book's theology, though brief, is helpful, particularly in pointing out the similarity and distinctiveness of 1 Peter in relation to the rest of the NT.

Michaels breaks from current scholarly trends in his discussion of date and authorship. It is generally held that if a late date can be established, then Peter cannot be the author, since tradition holds that he was crucified under Nero. Michaels, however, points out that there is also a strong line of tradition which indicates that Peter lived much longer in Rome. He thus holds to the compatibility of a later date with Petrine authorship. While this position is not new (it dates back to William Ramsay), it provides an important contribution to the current discussion.

Michaels' presentation of the letter's structure is helpful for understanding its purpose and the development of the argument. The discussion, however, could have been improved by taking note of Peter's pattern of following paraenetic material with a theological motivation, usually centered around a Scripture quotation, though at times apparently based on a hymnic or liturgical fragment. Such arrangement can be detected in 1:15

after 1:13-14, 1:18-21 after 1:16-17, 1:24-25 after 1:22-23, 2:3 after 2:1-2, 2:6-10 after 2:4-5, 2:12b after 2:11-12a, 2:21-25 after 2:13-20, 3:10-12 after 3:1-7, 3:18-22 after 3:13-17, 4:17-19 after 4:12-16, and 5:5b after 5:1-5a.

The commentary proper provides a solid exegesis and discussion of the text which future work on 1 Peter will need to take into account. While there is insufficient space to make much comment on Michaels' treatment of the text, one passage in particular needs mentioning.

1 Pet 3:18-22 has remained a problem passage of particular difficulty for students of the NT. Even today, despite William Dalton's decisive thesis, one cannot truly point to any sort of scholarly consensus. For example, while many scholars follow Dalton in identifying the "spirits in prison" as fallen angels, Leonhard Goppelt's recent German commentary identifies them as the souls of the dead, while recent articles by Wayne Grudem and John Feinberg view them as contemporaries of Noah who perished in the flood.

Michaels does a good job of indicating the crucial issues for understanding the passage and in evaluating the various approaches to it. His discussion of the Greek text is helpful and insightful. But what is probably most interesting is that, while he follows Dalton's basic approach, he takes it one step further. He identifies the "spirits in prison," not with the fallen angels of I Enoch, but with their offspring, who are seen as the origin of the demonic powers or evil spirits. He further links *phulakē* with Rev 18:2 and understands it not as "prison" but as "refuge." While this interpretation is somewhat idiosyncratic, and its acceptance within the scholarly community remains to be seen, it is helpful in that both the relevance of the passage to the audience and its consonance with other NT teaching concerning "spirits" become more readily understandable.

Whether or not one agrees with all of Michaels' points, his commentary provides a significant contribution and is essential reading for any serious student of 1 Peter.

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Numbers, Ronald L., and Jonathan M. Butler, eds. *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987. xxiv + 235 pp. \$29.95.

The past few years have seen a spate of books featuring Millerism. David L. Rowe published *Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800-1850* in 1985, Michael Barkun's *Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-Over District of New York in the 1840's* was marketed in 1986, while 1987 saw the release of Ruth Alden Doan's *Miller Heresy, Millenarism, and American Culture*. One