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Book Reviews

The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available. We begin this section with “**Book Reviews**”, organized according to the four divisions of theology.

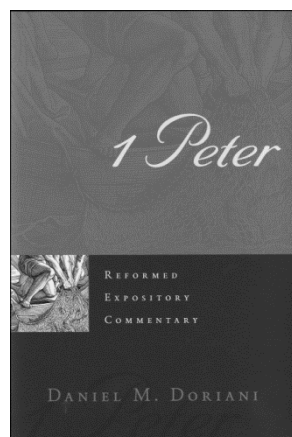
Biblical Theology

1 Peter. Daniel M. Doriani. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014, 264 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-5963-8469-9

I was pleased not only to discover a commentary on 1 Peter by a Bible interpreter of the caliber of Dan Doriani but also to be introduced to the Reformed Expository Commentary series, which I now consider to be among my list of “must have” commentaries.

The first contributions to the Reformed Expository Commentary series came out in 2005, and now at the end of 2015, there are fourteen New Testament and seven Old Testament commentaries. The series editors are Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken, with Ian M. Duguid as editor for the Old Testament and Daniel M. Doriani for the New. These commentaries are not intended to be exegetical but expository, providing “integrated expositions of whole passages of Scripture” (p. xi). Reading the series introduction (pp. xi-xiii) inspires great confidence that each will be a commentary of excellent quality in terms of scholarship, doctrinal soundness, usefulness to pastors and other preachers and teachers, and of enduring relevance to all Christians seeking truly instructive devotional studies of God’s word.

Indeed, Dan Doriani’s commentary on 1 Peter is no exception. One is immediately struck by the refreshingly crisp chapter titles, which serve as



headings for each coherent passage. Even within chapters, the headings and sub-headings make it easy for the reader to navigate the ideas and themes of each passage. Since the commentary is geared towards a preaching series, introductory matters are dealt with as the need arises in the exposition of the text. Each chapter begins with an attention-grabbing discussion that quickly demonstrates the relevance of the passage. For example, the fundamental question of the source of a person's identity is powerfully used to introduce, and indeed conclude, the exposition of 1 Peter 2:4-10 (pp. 64-65, 73-75).

The author then explains how the passage fits within the literary context in relation to the preceding passage, the development of themes introduced in the opening verses (1 Pet 1:1-12), and what follows later in the letter. The author consistently uses well-chosen cross-references, mainly to the New Testament (see Index of Scripture, p. 241-254), to place the passages in their canonical contexts or to expound a biblical understanding of a theological concept such as holiness (p. 41) or regeneration (p. 56). When necessary, the cultural and socio-historical context of Peter and his addressees is also considered. For example, the slavery that is the background of 1 Peter 2:18-25 is distinguished from both ordinary laborers or employees and slaves of more recent times (pp. 92-94).

After considering the contexts, the author systematically explains the teaching of each passage according to the logic of its argument. When necessary, Greek grammar is discussed as simply as possible; for example, the present passive imperative in 1 Peter 1:14 (p. 40), the indicative-imperative pattern (p. 51-52), the perfect participle in 1 Peter 1:22 (p. 56), and the middle voice reflexive in 1 Peter 2:18 (p. 97). Similarly, some Greek words are explained in order to clarify their precise meaning; for example, "rid yourselves" in 1 Peter 2:1 (p. 59).

Theologically, the author is astute and careful to balance one biblical truth with another equally biblical truth. For example, the fact that Christians are to imitate Jesus in His response to suffering does not negate the fact that Jesus' suffering is unique as an atoning and substitutionary sacrifice (p. 102-103). In this case, he also does not balk at defending a biblical doctrine that is being criticized in some contemporary "Christian" circles (p. 104). Likewise, though he is sensitive to the stigma often attached to the word "submit" (p. 86), the author reveals his firm stance on Scripture when he says of the command that wives be subject to their husbands (1 Pet 3:1),

It *is* controversial, yet we will not read Peter accurately if we let contemporary gender debates become our lens for interpretation. It is better to acknowledge our preferences and let Scripture test them (1 Thess. 5:21), since God's Word is infallible and we are not. (p. 112)

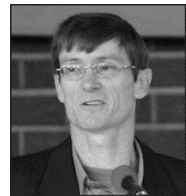
Along with clear explanation, the pages of this commentary are full of colourful historical, every day, and imaginary illustrations that actually *illustrate* the point of the text or show up its relevance for real situations that

Christians will encounter in today's world. For example: hope motivates a student (p. 39); an ingrained pattern enslaves a tennis player (p. 49); the gospel is not the first step surpassed, but "the hub of the wheel" (p. 55); Bertrand Russell's dark despair stands in stark contrast to the fact that the Christian has no need to despair because "the word of the Lord stands forever" (p. 58); "everyone has walked through a door and felt, like a punch to the belly, 'These are not my people, and I don't belong here'" (p. 76); we complain the moment the temperature in a building escapes "our notion of the comfort range" (p. 81); and casting all our anxieties on God is like throwing "a bag of gym clothes into a car" or hoisting "a saddle onto a horse" (pp.229-230).

Finally, each chapter includes application that is well informed of current social, political, cultural, and moral issues that the text of 1 Peter challenges Christians to address intentionally in their individual lives, in the local church community, and in society. The author speaks with the experience of a pastor (p. 102) and a father (p. 51). For example, he shows how we are to evaluate our own culture as "strangers in this fallen world" (p. 48); how we are to stay in line with the gospel (pp. 55-56); and how we are to resist the devil (pp. 231-232).

All in all, this is a commentary that is solid, but not heavy. It is refreshing for the scholar, encouraging for the pastor, and helpful to the Christian reader.

Reviewed by Dr. Greg Phillips, a Zimbabwean who is the acting dean and a lecturer/facilitator at Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

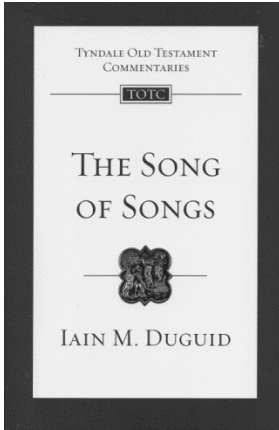


***The Song of Songs: An Introduction and Commentary.* Iain M. Duguid. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 19, gen. ed. David G. Firth. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 160 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4286-5**

Since their release in the 1960s, the Tyndale Commentary Series has been praised for its accessibility and concise treatment of the Scriptures. Iain Duguid's commentary on the Song of Songs is the most recent release in this series, which continues to reflect these marks. The book is also part of a wider project of new volumes to replace the original commentaries.

The book is laid out into four parts: introduction, analysis, translation, and commentary. In the introduction, Duguid addresses the questions of authorship, date, method of interpretation, theological themes, and unity. He argues that Solomonic authorship is unnecessary and even unlikely (p. 24). He leaves the question of authorship and date open, although he suggests that it was most likely written after the exile (p. 23).

The Song of Songs has been variously interpreted since its reception into the canon of Scripture. Duguid spends time discussing the natural, allegorical, and typological approaches to the interpretation of the book. Duguid points out that the key question to ask is not whether it is appropriate to have



a book about sex and marriage in the Bible or whether such imagery with propriety be used about God. Rather, the question is whether the central relationship is intended to be a typological picture of Christ and His church (Ps. 45; Heb. 1:8-9) or whether the song should be interpreted against the backdrop of wisdom literature (Prov. 5:18-20) (p. 34). In the end, Duguid argues, “the Song of Songs is best understood as a wisdom piece about two idealized people, a man and a woman, whose exclusive and committed love is deep but, like all loves in this fallen world, far from perfect” (p. 36).

This is not to suggest that the book does not speak about God. It does point us to Christ and the gospel, but it does so in ways different from typology (p. 35). Through this idealized picture of human love, it reveals how far short we fall of this perfection as humans and lovers. But our broken human relationships also tell us something our broken relationship with God. There is a connection between human love and divine love (p. 49). Since the poem is about desire, Duguid writes, “The Song challenges all of us as failed lovers and points us to the perfect Lover, who has loved us and given himself for us” (p. 51). Duguid believes that this approach frees the interpreter from trying to find spiritual significance in every poetic detail of the text and yet provides much for reflection as the reader consider the metaphor of the church as the bride of Christ in Scripture (p. 49).

The reader will appreciate the new format that shapes the commentary section of the book. Each passage unit is divided into three segments (Context, Comment, Meaning). The final section seeks to explain the message of the passage and to highlight its key theological themes, which made for a more enjoyable read.

As a commentary, this would be a helpful book for pastors. Not only is it accessible, the sections summarizing the meaning of the passage will prove to be fruitful for personal application and sermon preparation.

Iain Duguid is Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies at Grove City College. He also serves as pastor of Christ ARP.

Peter Aiken serves as pastor in the Free Church of Scotland in Charlottetown, PEI. He is married to Michelle and they have four children.



***Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.* Andrew E. Hill. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, gen. ed. David G. Firth. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012, 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-8308-4282-7**

Each carpenter has his or her tried and tested tools present at every project. Since their original publication in the 1960s, the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (TOTC) series has been a tried and tested tool for Bible students. Hence, students will gladly receive the new, revised TOTC series, which have finally all been released.

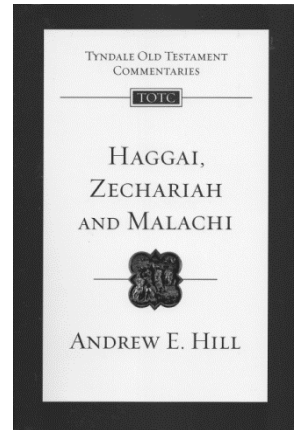
Joyce G. Baldwin wrote the original commentary on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi in this series, which was published in 1981. The new commentary on these Minor Prophets is by Andrew E. Hill of Wheaton College. I am not familiar with Baldwin's work, but from reviews I have read, Hill's work is more scholarly, which accounts for its increased length. However, let no Bible student think Hill's work is not accessible. Despite its scholarship it is very helpful to preachers and teachers.

In reading this work I found it extremely helpful in four ways, and somewhat weak in two ways. I begin with the book's helpfulness.

First, this commentary will help Bible students in their exegesis of the text. Hill interacts with the Hebrew text in a precise, yet accessible way. He particularly shows how other translations interpret Hebrew verb tenses and other matters of syntax. Something else I found extremely helpful was his "special attention to intertextual relationships [between the three prophets] ... since each of the prophets often appeal [sic] to the messages of their earlier counterparts" (p. 14). Hill does an excellent job showing that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi "have some inherent relationship by way of theme(s) and message" (p. 14). Hill's intertextual lists for each prophecy are also helpful. The detailed chiasmic structure of Zechariah is excellent, and Hill's pointers on the literary style of these books will help the exegete. Last of all, his verses-by-verse, section-by-section commentary gets to the point of what the text is saying.

Secondly, this commentary will help Bible students grasp the general history behind these books. As in the older editions of the TOTC, the new releases are clear and concise in dealing with the historical background. This is true of Hill's work too; only his commentary has the added feature of extra historical material in the "General Introduction". Here I was fascinated with his discussion of the Minor Prophets as understood in Jewish tradition.

Thirdly, this commentary will help Bible students theologically. In his "General Introduction", Hill describes the six theological subjects the student



will encounter throughout the commentary. One, God's person is revealed. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi repeatedly use the divine name, the LORD Almighty, which emphasizes His sovereignty specifically over nations, creation, His people, and faithfulness to His Word. Two, Second Temple is a central focus of these three books. Since the backdrop of these prophecies is the return of the Jewish exiles, the prophets' concern is that the people return to worshipping God. Hence, Haggai seeks to stir the people to rebuild the walls, Zechariah calls the people to repent in their hearts, and Malachi tells the people to renew their faith. Three, the eschatological truth of the Day of the Lord fastens these books together. As Hill employs the analogy of faith, he shows that the Day of the Lord and the New Covenant age are unified. In the Day of Messiah, the Davidic kingship will be restored (Haggai), God the Holy Spirit will be poured out (Zechariah), and a day of purification (Malachi). Four, a clear theology of the Holy Spirit is found here. This stands to reason since the Day of the Lord is also the age of the Holy Spirit. Five, a detailed theology of repentance is present here. Six, a theology of justice and mercy is found in these books too.

Fourthly, this commentary will help Bible students ecclesiastically. That is, it will help teachers and preachers in the church. I think it helps teachers and preachers in two ways. One, the good outlines and the clear, to-the-point exegesis facilitate the pastor or teacher in their work. Two, Hill seeks to apply the text to the Christian life. He does this in the commentary through the "Message" portions in the introductions to the books, and he ends his major expositional segments with a paragraph entitled "Meaning", in which he gives practical theological application to human life. Some are longer and more specific than others, yet each of these "Meaning" sections can give application ideas to the church teacher or preacher.

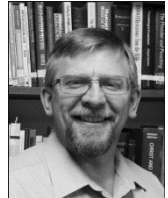
Though Hill's commentary is a worthy tool in Bible study, it does have two weaknesses. First, its Christology should be stronger. Hill views Haggai 2:6-9 as non-messianic. On this section, Hengstenberg's *Christology of the Old Testament* and J. Alec Moyter's commentary on Haggai are better. Hill in his "Meaning" section does intimate that the glory of God's Temple is fully realized in Messiah Jesus, but his analogy of faith is not robust here. Furthermore, on Haggai 2:23 Hill is quick to point out that there are no Christological implications. Hill's Christological interpretation fares better in his exegesis of Zechariah and Malachi. He recognizes that both these books are filled with messianic prophecies and typology, and there are times, especially in Zachariah 12 and Malachi 3, where Hill explains the messianic interpretation. Nevertheless, generally his Christological interpretation is weak.

Secondly, as a result of the weak Christology, Hill's work is not as theologically robust as it should be. He writes in his preface that, "We read the Bible as theology (the *revelation* of God and his redemptive plan for humanity), history (the *record* of God's dealings with humanity, and especially Israel) and literature (the *story* of God and human experience)" (p. 12). Hill excels in showing the history and story of the era in redemptive history, but he

is not as vibrant in explaining the record of God's salvation in Christ. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are part of God's revelation of His redemptive-historical purposes which culminate in Christ. Hill does not bring this out in a vivid way.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, I recommend this commentary to pastors and teachers. It is an excellent companion to E.W. Hengstenberg and J. Alec Moyter's commentaries mentioned above.

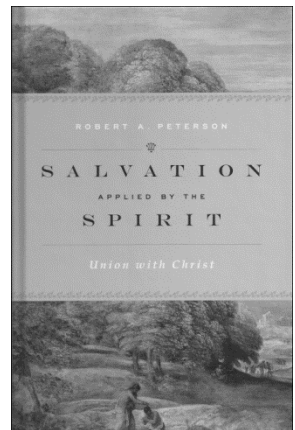
Reviewed by Henry Bartsch, minister of Trinity Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Chatham Ontario. He graduated from Haddington House School of Theology in 2003.



***Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ.* Robert A. Peterson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 462 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-3257-3**

Robert A. Peterson (Ph.D. Drew University) is professor of systematic theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including *The Glory of God* and *The Deity of Christ*.

Peterson's book came into my hands as I was searching for a recent work regarding "Union with Christ". My search is over as the author has not only done his Bible study, but he has referenced numerous sources in his eleven page bibliography set out at the end of this excellent book. This is a very important doctrine which is seldom mentioned from the pulpits of the church today. Not only is the bibliography adequate, so are the general and Scripture indices. The three take up thirty-three pages at the back of this readable Christ-centred book by Mr. Peterson.



This volume is the second in what will be a three-part series. The first volume, already published, is *Salvation Accomplished by the Son: The Work of Christ*. The projected third volume, *Salvation Planned by the Father: Election in Christ*, has not yet been published.

This book's focus is on the narrower sense of union with Christ encompassing the application of redemption. There is a broad sense encompassing election, Christ's saving work, and final salvation, and the work of the Holy Spirit, a much neglected topic of study by Christians.

The book has two main parts: Union with Christ in Scripture and Union with Christ in Theology. The author divides part one into five sections. (A) Chapters 1-3 outline the foundations for union with Christ in the Old Testa-

ment, Synoptic Gospels, and the book of Acts. (B) Chapter 4 considers union with Christ in the Gospel of John. (C) Chapters 5-14 consider union with Christ in the Pauline Epistles. (D) Chapters 15 and 16 are given to summarizing findings from the ten chapters dealing with Paul's letters. And (E) chapters 17-20 consider union with Christ in Hebrews, 1-2 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation.

It is only after we are urged to study union with Christ in Scripture that we are led to part two, Union with Christ in Theology.

Part 2, Union with Christ in Theology, consists of eight chapters:

A : Chapter 21 – The Biblical story (union and eternity past, union and creation, union and the fall, union and the Incarnation, union and Christ's work, union and the New Creation)

B: Chapter 22 – The personality and deity of The Holy Spirit

C: Chapter 23 – The work of the Holy Spirit

D: Chapter 24 – The most important work of the Holy Spirit

E: Chapter 25 – The Christ to Whom we are united.

F: Chapter 26 – Union with Christ in the Church.

G: Chapter 27 – Union with Christ in the Sacraments.

H: Chapter 28 – Union with Christ in the Christian Life.

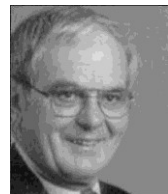
The author does not define union with Christ until the final chapter and very wisely so. Union with Christ is a mystery in the New Testament sense of what has been hidden with God in His eternal purposes but now finally has been revealed in Christ, particularly in His death and resurrection, and is appropriated by faith. Certainly in its full dimensions this mystery is beyond the believers complete comprehension (Eph. 3:18-19; Col. 1:26-27). Nevertheless, we know or can know much about this union because Scripture says so much about it.

Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation. That is why the author rightly devotes a complete chapter to the most important work of the Holy Spirit in the realm of salvation, union with Christ, for people who lack the Spirit do not belong to Christ.

It is very fitting that the final chapter in the book is entitled "Union with Christ in the Christian Life". This chapter focuses on aspects of the meaning of union with Christ: identity in Christ, belonging to Christ, and suffering and glory.

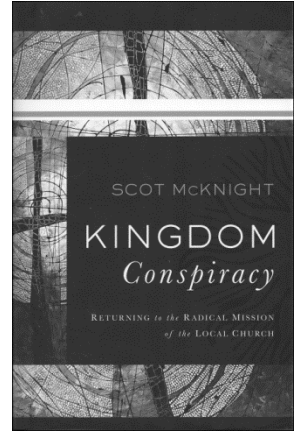
In summary, this is an excellent book on a most important subject. It should be and could be read by every Christian and by anyone seeking to be saved from a world that is without God and without hope outside of union with Christ as applied by the Holy Spirit.

Reviewed by Loyde Bruce, a ministering elder in the Eastern Charge, Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island and married to Gloria.



***Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church.* Scot McKnight. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2014, 289 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-58743-360-3**

The language of this book very much reflects the culture and discussions of North America. This is not an opening criticism but a contextual comment. When the first two chapters are entitled, “Skinny Jeans Kingdom” and “Pleated Pants Kingdom”, one does need to know something about the North American context. (By the way, “Pants” here is trousers.) These two chapters develop a caricature which one will see followed throughout the book. Basically, “skinny jeans” folks see the kingdom of God as social justice whereas “pleated pants” Christians see it as personal redemption. McKnight correctly sees that there is something just not right about these two viewpoints. His goal is to return to Scripture and see just what does the Bible mean by the kingdom of God or heaven?



Thus the chapters which follow develop key aspects of the biblical theology of the kingdom of God. McKnight is not afraid to challenge stereotypes that we have all likely heard and been taught to a point where they have almost reached an orthodox creed of sorts about the kingdom of heaven. He is friendly towards George Ladd and yet also disagrees with him. Likewise, he will not endorse all that D. A. Carson may assert about the terminology of Son of God and Son of Man (pp.128-130). Many of us have imbibed the basics of the kingdom of God/heaven found in summary form by George Ladd in his article in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.¹ McKnight does not disagree with everything here but does clearly assert that “the kingdom is the church and the church is the kingdom” (p. 206) in contradistinction with many who assert that the kingdom is not the church. This really is the heart of what McKnight develops in this book and is very concisely stated up front in the book’s subtitle, “Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church”. Also the title of chapter 6 makes this abundantly clear, “No Kingdom outside the Church”.

The author’s final chapter, number 12, presents his “Kingdom Theses” (pp. 205-208). It is tempting to go right to these and read them to know what he is arguing. The problem is that these are concise theses, and one really needs to read the previous chapters to really see the depth of reflection upon

¹ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven”, in ed. Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 607-611.

each thesis. The theses are however most helpful, and I trust that this section alone will make the book very valuable as a resources for all future discussion about the kingdom. The author has fifteen theses about the kingdom. I personally found myself persuaded by the majority of these. There were one or two that I was not convinced by. These concern his Constantinian formulation. I personally think there is much more complexity about this than is being offered here.

There was one quotation which I really appreciated and want to include here: “Anyone who calls what they are doing ‘kingdom work’ but does not present Jesus Christ to others or summon others to surrender themselves to King Jesus as Lord and Savior is simply not doing kingdom mission or kingdom work. They are probably doing good work and doing social justice, but until Jesus is known, it is not kingdom mission” (p. 142). I have witnessed in the developing world much “kingdom mission” but cannot find the summons to Christ being included. McKnight asserts something very important here to be heeded.

The author is one of North America’s most prolific writers in New Testament studies. This book is written with wonderful imagination and creativity and contemporary relevance. Though it will sit more with the North American context, it should also receive a global read as the subject is relevant for all Christians and will help all of us to think more clearly about the kingdom even if in the end we may disagree with some of the theses.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock