

Several other important observations are necessary to mention. First, the introductory chapter is well-written and clear, but a corresponding conclusion is missing. Instead, a short epilogue abruptly ends the discussion (pp. 560-1). Second, while Frame uses mainly primary or secondary sources, it is surprising to find a long Wikipedia quotation when discussing open theism (pp. 448-9). He also lists in the general bibliography seven Wikipedia articles (p. 828), which one could wish that he would provide more credible sources.

Despite these minor flaws, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* is a useful introductory book for students in the field of theological studies. It offers an evaluation of different thinkers throughout history from a Reformed perspective. Of course, in order to achieve a broader historical and theological perspective, the student should consult other books, like the second edition of *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted), *Historical Theology* (Allister E. McGrath), or the three volumes *A History of Christian Thought* (Justo L. González).

Adrian Petre

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Delivered from the Elements of the World: Atonement, Justification, Mission, by Peter J. Leithart. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016. 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-8308-5126-3. Softcover, US\$30.00.

Peter J. Leithart, professor of theology at New Saint Andrews College (Moscow, ID) and president of Theopolis Institute (Birmingham, AL), is a creative and deep theologian. His passion for theology extends beyond the classroom into the virtual public square, where he is actively writing for www.firstthings.com. He authored and co-authored over 25 books, besides numerous articles published in various journals, both popular and academic.

Delivered from the Elements of the World is one of the latest books written by Leithart. It echoes his preoccupation with the topic of Christianity: the atonement. The fundamental premise underlying the argument is that religion cannot be separated from society or culture. Hence, an “atonement theology *must* be social theory” (p. 17). Still, atonement does not become social gospel. Instead, it transforms society actualizing

salvation through the community of the Spirit, namely, the church. Leithart clearly defines his terminology. He synthesizes the core of every religion as sacred space, purity/impurity exclusion rules, and sacred rites acted by priests. All these circumscribe the basic elements of every socio-religious community. It is precisely this typological community that the death and resurrection of Jesus revolutionizes. As a historical event, atonement extends beyond penal substitution into the sociopolitical human sphere.

The author builds a fourfold answer to the Anselmian question, *Cur Deus Homo?* The book is divided into four parts with three appendices. Each part explores the variegated semantics of salvation, and is preceded by a clear introduction. The first part (chs. 2-5) describes the “elements of the world” (*ta stoicheia tou kosmou*, Gal 4:3) both in Israel and her neighboring countries. The Judaic physics is characterized by two main elements: circumcision and Torah. These are divinely intended as an anti-flesh pedagogy. The flesh is referred in the Pauline sense of *sarx* and interpreted as the whole of human physical-social being. While circumcision deals with physical flesh, Torah addresses the invisible and social parts of *sarx*. But Torah cannot instill God’s justice within society.

The second part (chs. 6-7) presents the good news of God’s justice. Leithart defines justice as a broader concept than justification, addressing human socio-political dilemmas. Hence, when Jesus comes, he embodies Torah, and establishes the new order of the Spirit. Jesus lives *in* the flesh, but not *by* flesh. Jesus-Torah “aroused the fury of flesh”; consequently, he was killed because both Jews and Romans wanted to guard their “forms of stoicheic order against Jesus” (p. 152). But Jesus was neither afraid nor aggressive, the two basic manifestations of flesh. He showed faith and he became Faith *par excellence*.

The third part (chs. 8-9) explores the meaning of justification as both judgment and vindication. The author coins the binary term of “deliverdict” (p. 181). Hence, justification is not only a part of *ordo salutis* but also, “and most fundamentally, an event in the *historia salutis*” (p. 183). Christ’s death and resurrection has a profound impact not only on the past but also on the present. He came “to justify humanity from *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*” (p. 180). Therefore, justification frees people from the fleshly temporary institutions of circumcision and those instituted by Torah (sanctuary, purification rituals, animal sacrifices, and priesthood).

The fourth part (chs. 10-13) transforms the semantic of justification to a theology of mission by means of several contributions. Given the social character of justification, the social mission of the church is a natural part of atonement. The Holy Spirit becomes the new social mover. His role and functions are reflected in the new rituals of the Christian church: baptism and communion. The *ekklēsia* becomes the “society of the atonement,”

formed by the Spirit through baptism (p. 221), while the communion “effects what it signifies”: forgiveness and fellowship (p. 223). “By keeping in the ranks of the Spirit” (*stoichōmen*, Gal 5:25) the church accomplishes her mission in the field of the world (p. 230). This is described as comprising tribal cultures, borderlands, and “Galatianist” societies (Islam, secularism, and modern politics). The last chapter summarizes the entire book. Three appendices follow: dealing with the metaphysics of atonement (appendix one), the relation between nature, supernatural and justification (appendix two), and an extended discussion about the atonement as deliver-dict in Romans (appendix three).

Delivered from the Elements of the World is, above all, a very well-written book. The sources cited reveal a thoughtful and penetrating mind, that feels at home within the scholarship of various areas, using them to build his own argument. This broad knowledge does not hinder his commitment to Scripture, which is unveiled in various hermeneutical parts of his book. With a clear argumentative structure in mind, Leithart introduces every chapter with a short review of the previous discussion, and ends it with a concise summary. He uses an imagery that is both simple, vivid, and theologically profound (i.e., Jesus depicted as Yahweh stepping down from the ark to touch Israel, p. 136). His discussion about the flesh and its social consequences is outstanding. Conversely, the social transformation of society by the atonement deserves a close analysis of every Christian.

Written as a typological commentary on Galatians, the book takes the expression *ta stoicheia tou kosmou* as an organizing principle, representing the weakness of Torah. Jesus’s death and resurrection brought the era of the Spirit, which “comes to demolish Torah and to set up a new *nomos* where the requirements of Torah are actually fulfilled” (p. 194). This implies that there is a problem with Torah itself, not only with its usage (p. 191). The meaning of Torah becomes somewhat confusing. Torah is negatively equated with the flesh (p. 193) and *stoicheia* (p. 194) in some places. In others, Torah is presented in a more positive light (p. 202). It seems that the term is used as an equivalent for the law of God which clearly comprises moral principles foundational for individual and collective commandments (p. 93). But when discussion turns to the transformation of stoicheic order into a new one, Torah gets replaced by other spiritual commandments. This seems pointless in Galatians. Rather than being negative, Torah is used in a fleshly way that makes it inefficient. The Spirit so present in the New Testament, is not absent in the Old Testament.

Overall, the book is recommended for every serious scholar and should not be missing from the theological shelf. It is a source of fresh and challenging thoughts. The typological reading, with some cautions,

illuminates the relation between the Old and New Testaments. Its rich theological dialogue in the footnotes is profitable for the reader and expands his or her knowledge.

Adrian Petre

Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Holy Trinity: Holy People, The Theology of Christian Perfecting, by T. A. Noble, Didsbury Lecture Series. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013. 242 pp. ISBN 978-0-227-17413-5. Softcover, US\$30.00.

T. A. Noble is a British Nazarene (Holiness) theologian who currently teaches at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO (USA). A veteran theologian and well-respected member of the Wesleyan Theological Society, Noble exhibits skills not only in historical theology, but also in constructive systematic (dogmatic) theology. The contents of this work, originally presented in the "Didsbury Lecture Series," which is presented annually at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester (UK), has become "a well-established feature on the theological calendar in Britain" (Series Preface). For those unfamiliar with Wesleyan/Holiness scholarship, Noble has established himself as a much respected thinker. A person of engaging demeanor and smooth delivery (both in public presentation and published texts), Noble has produced a very readable review that commands a wider hearing.

The volume features nine chapters, plus a helpful "Bibliography." But its two distinguishing features are (1) Noble's ability to give succinct summaries of key moments in the history of soteriology from the long tradition of Christian thought (early church, medieval, Reformation, and on up from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries). And (2), as one might suspect, his forte also includes his interpretation of Wesley on the theme of sanctification/perfection and his influence on eighteenth and subsequent centuries of dialogue and debate over transforming grace, with special reference for the way of salvation has been prized by Bible-believing Protestants. His sympathetic review of, yet critical response to Wesley's teaching on perfection, is a must read for any student of soteriology, and especially for those who care deeply about issues which have swirled about the theses of transforming grace/perfection.

Thankfully, Noble has made a further contribution to this ongoing, often controversial theme. And this has to do with his very attempts to