

## Shorter Notices

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*When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible.* By Timothy Michael Law. New York: Oxford University, 2013. Pp. 216. \$24.95.

Reading Law's book is a bit like reading the biography of someone you once knew, but not well. It is full of information you never suspected was true.

For example, we take for granted that today's Hebrew Bible looks much as it did when first compiled, but the Septuagint shows that it looked rather different when it was first translated into Greek. One can even infer that in the ancient world there was no Bible as such, but only collections of sacred scrolls that varied from one Jewish community to another. The Septuagint itself probably came into existence in a somewhat piecemeal fashion, and not all at once, as the legend of 70 (or 72) inspired translators would have us believe.

Today's English translations of the OT are all based on the Hebrew text, but the Septuagint was the OT of early Christianity, and Church Fathers used quotations from the Greek to promote and prove doctrines that are not supported by the Hebrew. Indeed, NT authors cite the Greek and not the Hebrew to buttress claims about Christ and his fulfillment of prophecies. Some Fathers even considered the Septuagint to be the very words of God, whereas they regarded the Hebrew writings of the Jews to be less than inspired.

Jerome's translation of the OT from the Hebrew gave the West a Latin Bible that differed in important respects from the Greek Bible used in the East, and this exacerbated the mistrust that eventually led to the Great Schism. L.'s vivid re-creation of the Greco-Roman world into which the Septuagint was born and of the culture it helped shape is more than readable. It is fascinating.

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*Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition.* By Gary A. Anderson. New Haven: Yale University, 2013. Pp. 222. \$30.

Following his provocative study of the "sin as debt" metaphor (*Sin: A History*, 2009), Anderson turns to the credit (*zekut*) side of the column. This volume thus functions

like a sequel that advances A.'s research on themes already broached in the final section of his earlier work. As such, this second installment belongs to the burgeoning literature on almsgiving in antiquity. Similar to *Sin*, however, the book's theological contribution extends far beyond the limited focus of most monographs.

Learned, yet written in an accessible style, the book is organized into two parts of six chapters each: "Charity as an Expression of Faith in God" and "Charitable Deeds as Storable Commodities."

Part I stresses how, in the thought of early Judaism and Christianity, almsgiving was understood as an exchange of trust with God. Important in this connection is the wisdom tradition's critique of overinvestments in worldly treasures. The alternative to such an immanent mode of personal security is to become a true *creditor*—that is, a believer—by "making a loan to God," offering gifts to the poor, confident that the Lord "will repay in full" (see Prov 19:17).

Part II shifts to the idea of accumulating heavenly treasures on the basis of charitable faith. Purgatory and the transfer of merits come to the fore here as logical extensions of the *thesaurus* metaphor. Asking whether purgatory is a "retrievable notion," A. points to "the surprising interdependence of Jews and Catholics on this doctrine" (177). In this way, he reframes a controversial "doctrine," exposing its essentially biblical shape and inspiration. The book thus envisions a new engagement with the theology of good works.

In the end, if *Sin* was more groundbreaking, demanding a reconsideration of Anselm, Luther, and Gustaf Aulén, *Charity* vigorously presses the case and provokes new questions. A.'s "sacramental" view of almsgiving (6) and rehabilitation of charitable self-interest invite a major ecumenical discussion. The book's importance and wide appeal is eloquently signaled in the well-chosen testimonials of a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Jew on the dust jacket.

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*Reading Genesis 1–2: An Evangelical Conversation.* Edited by J. Daryl Charles. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013. Pp. xxi + 240. \$24.95.

The five main essays in this volume are the fruit of a symposium at Bryan Institute, Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 2011. Five scholars, Richard Averbeck, Todd Beall, C. John Collins, Tremper Longman III, and John Walton, "broadly representative of wider evangelicalism," interpret Genesis 1–2 and respond to one another. Victor Hamilton introduces the essays, and Kenneth J. Turner and Jud Davis of Bryan College provide concluding essays. All the main contributors take with utmost seriousness comparative material, especially Mesopotamian; all hold the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and, with the exception of Longman, the historical existence of Adam and Eve; none makes use of traditional Pentateuchal sources to resolve problems, and only one (Longman) uses genre in a sense recognizable by most modern scholars. Richard