

## BOOK REVIEWS

Victor Genke and Francis X. Gumerlock, eds., *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy: Texts Translated from Latin*. Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation 47, ed. Roland J. Teske. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010. Pp. 247. ISBN 978-0-87462-253-9.

This book is the first collection of Gottschalk's texts on predestination in English (11), and it also includes eleven other relevant texts by various authors on the same topic. The reason for reviewing it for *Augustinian Studies* is that Gottschalk "is said to have excerpted many testimonies from the works of the most blessed and learned father, Augustine, from which he tries to strengthen his sect" (Rabanus, *ep. ad Eberhardum*).

Genke's excellent Introduction begins with a brief list of Gottschalkian scholarship, starting with James Ussher (d. 1656) and ending with the new discoveries of texts and their publications in the mid-twentieth century. Then it focuses on Gottschalk's life and teaching on predestination. Genke's reconstruction of Gottschalk's life helps the reader understand that theological controversies are seldom about theology alone. Gottschalk was a child oblate, who wanted to free himself from his monastic vocation. Evidently, the wandering stubborn *sciolum* did not keep the oath of *stabilitas loci*. Instead, he had himself ordained (allegedly uncanonically) and undertook missionary journeys to the Balkans—both cases could have excused him from staying in his monastery. Apparently, the reports about his provocative, eccentric, at times even psychotic behavior were not just malicious gossip of his opponents. Gottschalk was indeed deeply convinced that "I am helped, inspired, animated, and armed by God" (*Confessio brevior*). (Genke actually compares him to the Russian *yurodivys* [43 n.227].) Obviously, all this led to conflicts with his monastic superiors, local bishops, and archbishops.

Genke is quite clear about the fact that no comprehensive account of Gottschalk's teaching on predestination can be given (54). The evidence is just too fragmentary and often the filling in of blanks comes from the unfriendly refutations of his works. Neither can we say precisely how Augustinian it was, because what exactly was Augustine's understanding of predestination is controversial. In addition, Genke wisely warns against anachronisms, which tend to invade the discussion due to the many later developments of the doctrine of predestination (*ibid.*). Following the age-old practice (cf. Hincmar, *Ep. ad Egilonem* and Amolo of Lyons, *Ep. ad Gothescalcum*), Genke summarizes Gottschalk's teaching on predestination in eight points "in an order that is purely casual, reflecting neither succession in Gottschalk's reasoning or a hierarchy of importance" (54–61).

On one hand, Gottschalk seems to identify foreknowledge and predestination (as *metalepsis*) (*Confessio proluxior* 7). He stretches Augustine's early, granting-too-much-to-the-free-will understanding of predestination (*ex. prop. Rm.* 60–61) to a negative *post praevisa demerita* (*De diversis* 4), and turns some pastoral utterances of the bishop of Hippo into dogmatic axioms (*Praed.* 6). Gottschalk asserts that, in God's "twofold" (*bifaria, gemina, bipartita, dupla*) predestination (*Confessio proluxior* 10), God acts "once, simultaneously, eternally, and immutably" (*Praed.* 3,1). That is, God's foreknowledge implies a necessity (*Confessio proluxior* 3). Gottschalk also offers an exclusive reading of "all" in 1 Tim. 2:4 as the elect, and contends that any other reading would "certainly deny God's grace in the elect and . . . God's omnipotence in the reprobate" (*Praed.* 9). He emphasizes that Christ's redemption is "for the elect only" (*Praed.* 6) and adds that baptism has only a limited effect on the reprobate (*Praed.* 5 [assuming that Judas was baptized]). Gottschalk is adamant that human post-lapsarian will is not capable of choosing the good (*Praed.* 10). He denounces the "erroneous opinions of Gennadius of Marseilles" and "the extremely pernicious dogma of the wretched Cassian" (*Responsum ad Rabanum Maurum* 4). (For an opponent's summary of Gottschalk's denounceable views, see Hincmar, *Epistola ad reclusos et simplices suae dioeceseos* [169–172]).

On the other hand, Gottschalk clearly demonstrates his awareness of the distinction between foreknowledge and predestination (*Confessio proluxior* 2 and 7) and between predestining someone to sin and predestining the punishment of sin (*Praed.* 1,7; *Confessio proluxior* 2). He cites both Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae* (*De diversis* 1) and the decisions of the Council of Orange (*Praed.* 1,9). He also affirms the existence of free will in humans as an anthropological reality (*De diversis* 3).

How to reconcile all this into a neat and coherent account "Gottschalk On Predestination" is anyone's guess. He may have changed his views, he may have affirmed certain positions after floggings, or he may simply have been inconsistent.

Genke states that a comparison between Gottschalk and Augustine "is beyond the scope of the present introduction" (61). He merely suggests that the respective starting points of reasoning may be different—Gottschalk starts from God's omnipotence and immutability, and Augustine from anthropology (*ibid.*). Well, Augustine's anthropology is always a *theological* anthropology and the notions of God's omnipotence and immutability are equally central for Augustine (e.g., *ciu.* XII,2).

Gottschalk's knowledge of the Scriptures and fathers was quite impressive. Sadly, at a Synod of Quierzy (849), he was compelled to burn his scriptural and patristic

florilegium (39). For patristic scholars, that's especially unfortunate, because even if his scriptural proof-texting is still partially available (e.g., *Praed.* 2), the collection of patristic proofs is lost for good. True, one can get some idea about this florilegium from the fragments of his other extant works (e.g., *Confessio prolixior* 7, "Testimonies of Augustine"). Altogether, in his extant works, Gottschalk quotes from more than twenty patristic and early medieval authors besides Augustine.

Many did not agree with Gottschalk's interpretation of the Scriptures already at his own time. One also wonders whether Gottschalk's desired effect of often arguing with the help of biblical quotes was that his opponents would become silent just as "frogs fall silent when it thunders" (*Praed.* 9). In fact, Gottschalk's sheer volume of Bible citing (e.g., *Praed.* 4) brings to mind Augustine's words to Maximinus, "If you want to set aside the point of dispute between us and recite the whole gospel . . . how much time will we need?" (*conl. Max.* 7).

No doubt, there is a lot of Augustine's theology in Gottschalk's deliberations—misinterpreted or not. There are as well a lot of quotations from Augustine. Various editions have identified quotations from the following treatises of the bishop of Hippo: *agon.*; *ciu.*; *c. Iul.*; *c. Iul. imp.*; *conf.*; *corrept.*; *c. Prisc.*; *en. Ps.*; *ench.*; *exp. Gal.*; *gr. et lib. arb.*; *lo. eu. tr.*; *lib. arb.*; *nupt. et conc.*; *pecc. mer.*; *perf. iust.*; *perseu.*; *retr.*; *spir. et litt.*; *trin.*; letters; sermons, and pseudo-Augustinian (Prosper's?) *Hypomnesticon*. In addition, there are possible references to *cons. Eu.*; *c. ep. Pel.*; *c. Max.*; *diu. qu.*; *f. et op.*; *nat. et gr.*; and *praed. sanct.*, and also to some unidentifiable quotations of Augustine (*Praed.* 5 and 10). It is not always clear whether Gottschalk had a first-hand knowledge of all these treatises or whether he made use of compilations, such as *Collectio Bedae presbiteri ex opusculis s. Augustini in epistulas Pauli Apostoli*, Florus of Lyons' *Expositio in epistolas beati Pauli ex operibus s. Augustini collecta* and *Augustini sententiae de praedestinatione et gratia*, Prosper of Aquitaine's *Epigrammata ex sententiis s. Augustini*, *Liber sententiarum ex operibus s. Augustini delibatarum*, and *Expositio Psalmorum*, and Eugippius's *Excerpta ex operibus s. Augustini*.

*Gottschalk & a Medieval Predestination Controversy* is a fascinating read and a very useful book in the classroom. Undoubtedly, it is a great contribution to studies in medieval theology as well as to the history of reception of Augustine.

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