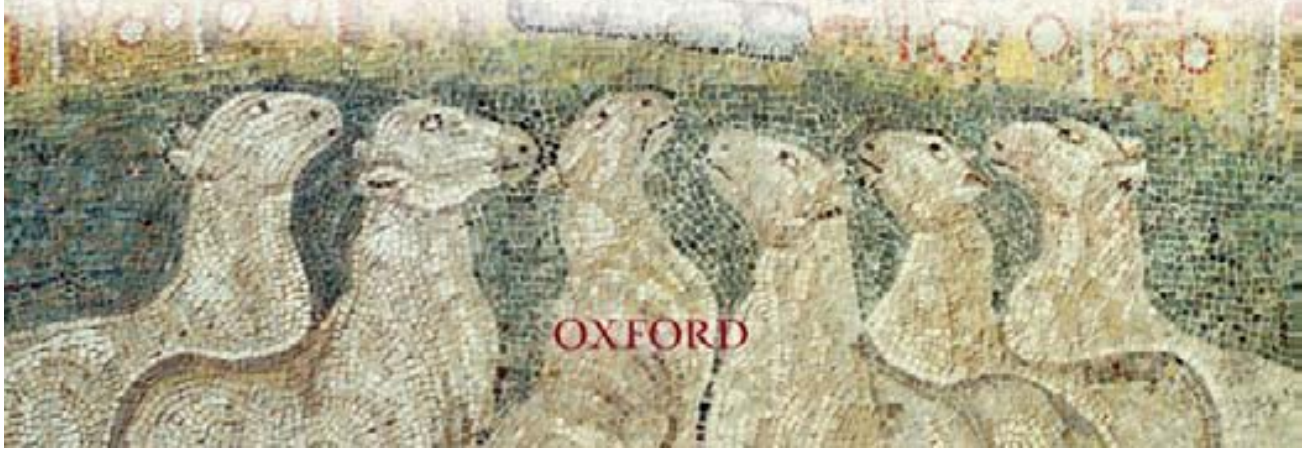
PREDESTINATION

Biblical and Theological Paths

MATTHEW LEVERING



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The truth you seek to fathom lies so deep in the abyss of the eternal law, it is cut off from every creature's sight. And tell the mortal world when you return what I told you, so that no man presume to try to reach a goal as high as this.

Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*

Mysticism keeps men sane. As long as you have mystery you have health; when you destroy mystery you create morbidity. The ordinary man has always been sane because the ordinary man has always been a mystic. . . . If he saw two truths that seemed to contradict each other, he would take the two truths and the contradiction along with them. His spiritual sight is stereoscopic, like his physical sight: he sees two different pictures at once and yet sees all the better for that.

G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*

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This book is dedicated to Jesus Christ, the Lord. His love is my hope. Like Zaccheus, I want to see his face. Zaccheus 'sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully' (Luke 19:3–6).

Introduction

PREDESTINATION ON TRIAL

In a recent ecumenical study, the Wesleyan theologian Edgardo Colón-Emeric observes that 'predestination cannot simply be treated as a historical artifact . . . but as an abiding structural element of a sound doctrine of Christian perfection'.[1] By contrast, the American religious historian Peter Thuesen speaks for the majority of contemporary theologians when he warns that predestinarian controversies undermine Christian appreciation for sacramental grace, lead to sterile rationalism, and arise from 'churchly traditions (or individual predilections) that have colored readings of the biblical text'.[2] Nor is Thuesen's view a new one: in *Paradise Lost*, John Milton depicts the demons in hell as conversing 'of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate, | Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute, | And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.'[3]

[1] Edgardo A. Colón-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 178.

[2] Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 217; cf. 27. Without holding out much hope for change, Thuesen expresses the wish that in theological reflection on the eternal destiny of human beings, 'compassion would triumph over dogmatism' (p. ix).

[3] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alistair Fowler, 2nd edn (New York: Longman, 1998), Book II, lines 557–61, p. 137. Later in the poem the Father tells the Son that rational creatures were created with freedom, and so they cannot 'justly accuse | Their maker, or their making, or their fate; | As if predestination overruled | Their will, disposed by absolute decree | Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed | Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew, | Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,/ Which had no less proved certain unforeknown. | So without least impulse or shadow of fate, | Or aught by me immutably foreseen, | They trespass, authors to themselves in all | Both what they judge and what they choose; for so | I formed them free, and free they must remain, | Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change | Their nature,

Does predestination belong to 'sound doctrine' or to 'wandering mazes'? Exemplifying why this question has proven so difficult over the centuries, St Paul states regarding the mystery of election:

> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (Rom. 9:21–4)

Paul employs the image of the two kinds of 'vessels' in order to emphasize that despite the wickedness of human beings who rebelled against God's love, a rebellion God 'endured with much patience', God has now gloriously fulfilled in Christ Jesus his covenantal promises of mercy and blessing not only for Jews but also for Gentiles. Paul's message is wonderfully good news for 'us whom he [God] has called', whom 'he has prepared beforehand for glory'. Nonetheless, Paul's potter/clay analogy raises a problem—one that is not Paul's alone, since he draws this image from Isaiah 29:16 and 45:9 (and see also Jer. 18:4–6). As John Rist asks, does God 'evaluate his own created image—for whom he offered his Son—in the same way as a potter a clay pot'?[4] Why should God deliberately create a personal, rational creature 'for menial use'?

It is important to note that the image functions in Paul, as in Isaiah and Jeremiah, to undermine rationalistic and prideful pretensions. Thus Paul concludes his discourse by observing not only that 'from

and revoke the high decree | Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained | Their freedom, they themselves ordained their fall' (Book III, lines 112–28, pp. 174–5). For discussion see Dennis R. Danielson, *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). See also the remark of C. S. Lewis, an eminent Milton scholar, in his *The Great Divorce: A Dream* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 141: 'For every attempt to see the shape of eternity except through the lens of Time destroys your knowledge of Freedom. Witness the doctrine of Predestination which shows (truly enough) that eternal reality is not waiting for a future in order to be real; but at the price of removing Freedom which is the deeper truth of the two.'

[4] John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 277; cf. Max Weber's scathing comments on predestination in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 1992), 104–5. On the value and limits of the artist/artefact analogy for God's relationship to humans, see C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 42–3.

him and through him and to him are all things' (Rom. 11:36) but also '[h]ow unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!' (Rom. 11:33) Yet is it true that God's wise 'judgments' remain 'unsearchable' even after the revelation of God's supreme love in Christ Jesus? Is not Christ Jesus 'always Yes' (2 Cor. 1:19), since 'all the promises of God find their Yes in him' (2 Cor. 1:20)? Has not God 'made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1:9–10)?

In his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (in the Latin translation of Rufinus), Origen suggests that Paul pastorally seeks to conceal the extent of God's mercy, so as to prevent people from committing further sins for which they would then have to undergo purification. Arguing that Paul sometimes speaks of 'many' when in fact he means 'all men', Origen holds that when Paul 'comes to the passages in which he has to speak about God's goodness, he expresses these things in a somewhat concealed and obscure way for the sake of certain lazy people'.[5]

Without reading Paul in this way, the Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart denies that God creates some 'for eternal bliss and others for eternal torment'.[6] Discussing Gregory of Nyssa's eschatology, Hart remarks that 'the entire weight of the infinite in which all things share, this infinite and infinitely various music, rests upon each instance, requires every voice. . . . Our only just and proper end is given to us all, as one.'[7] For Hart, the notion of hell as the everlasting

[5] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1–5*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), Book 5, ch. 1, 307; cf. Tom Greggs, 'Exclusivist or Universalist? Origen the "Wise Steward of the Word" (*CommRom*. V.1.7) and the Issue of Genre', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007): 315–27.

[6] David Bentley Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 30.

[7] David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 411; cf. p. 259: 'God's triumph is always already complete; it lies in his being the God he is in eternity, always infinitely "going forth" from and "possessing" himself. . . .The expressive beauty of creation conceals no chaotic depth, but only embraces intensities and complications of surface; and even the most tragic of circumstances points to no deep and abiding truth, but only to disorders and derangements of the surface, wounds to be healed.' Elsewhere, Hart suggests that God's call 'leaves open the possibility of the soul turning from God's love toward a correspondingly limitless dereliction': see Hart, 'Death, Final Judgment, and

divine punishment undergone by some of God's rational creatures quite simply reduces 'Christianity's larger claims regarding the justice, mercy, and love of God to nonsense', and he appeals instead to the purgatorial view of hell adopted by Gregory of Nyssa.[8] Olivier Clément similarly suggests that the future of Christianity depends upon stating 'unequivocally that our God is innocent, that God has not wanted and *does not want death*, that God does not even have the idea of evil'.[9]

Contemporary Orthodox theologians are not alone in their concerns about predestinarian doctrine, especially as regards salvation. Writing before his election as pope, Joseph Ratzinger warns against the view that 'it is already settled that those for whom it is planned will go to hell, and the others to heaven; it has been decided from all eternity'.[10] Hans Urs von Balthasar argues that Augustine's theology of predestination and reprobation turned 'the consistently positively conceived idea of predestination in scripture' into a 'dark and menacing' doctrine that

the Meaning of Life', in *Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 476–89, at 488.

[8] David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 154. Jaroslav Pelikan places Gregory of Nyssa's views in the context of the positions taken by the other two Cappadocian Fathers: 'the Cappadocians did not treat the question of *apocatastasis* uniformly. At one end of the spectrum, Gregory's brother Basil left no room for so audacious a vision, warning: "In the *aeon* to come there will be a just judgment of retribution [antapodosis]." He could, he said, "see no forgiveness left at all, in connection with any of [God's] commands, for those who have not been converted from their infidelity, unless one dares to think that some other position—one that contradicts such bare, clear, and absolute statements—accords with the meaning [of Scripture]." Gregory of Nazianzus, in contrast, took the middle road between Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.' See Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 325.

[9] Olivier Clément, *You Are Peter: An Orthodox Theologian's Reflection on the Exercise of Papal Primacy*, trans. M. S. Laird (French 1997; New York: New City Press, 2003), 102. Against the 'senile systematizations of an Augustine' (ibid.), Clément argues that the Cross overcomes 'Hell' and that God kenotically permits evil out of concern 'to allow the angel and the human being sufficient space for freedom' (ibid. 103). Cf. Madeleine L'Engle, *A Stone for a Pillow* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986), 221.

[10] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *God and the World: Believing and Living in Our Time: A Conversation with Peter Seewald*, trans. Henry Taylor (German 2000; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 58. For Ratzinger's view that Jesus does not teach the salvation of all rational creatures, see his *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein and Aidan Nichols, OP (German 1977; Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 215.

'brought untold suffering on mankind in the Middle Ages and the Reformation, even to the men of the Counter-Reformation'.[11] The Reformed theologian Hans Boersma cautions against the 'timeless, individual, and futuristic reading of election that has dominated much of Western theologizing'.[12] And the Anglican biblical scholar and bishop N. T. Wright, while strongly affirming God's 'sovereign purpose' and our dependence upon God's grace for salvation, cautions that Romans 8:29–30 'can easily degenerate, as the history of interpretation shows, into an abstract theory of personal predestination and salvation. God's purpose for those in Christ is precisely Christ-shaped.'[13]

These difficulties cannot be overcome by speaking simply about God's providence without touching upon predestination. In her *Providence Lost*, Genevieve Lloyd observes regarding providence that 'the contemporary collective mind . . . has outlived the conceptual configurations that once gave form to its contents and discontents'.[14] The Reformed theologian Scott Bader-Saye similarly remarks that even Christians 'find it more difficult to trust in God's providence than did those who lived in earlier times'.[15] To some degree, of course, these generalizations depend upon the social setting of the author. Lloyd's version of 'the contemporary collective mind' ignores, for example, the minds of many evangelical Christians. As Thuesen points out, the Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren's recent bestseller *The Purpose-Driven Life* 'dances around predestination without actually using the word and . . . takes as its fundamental premise that nothing in life (or death) is arbitrary'.[16] Yet it seems safe to say that many contemporary

[11] Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'Some Points of Eschatology', in *Explorations in Theology*, vol. I, *The Word Made Flesh*, trans. A. V. Littledale with Alexander Dru (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 255–77, at 266.

[12] Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 76.

[13] N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. X: *Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 393–770, at 602, cf. 637. Wright speculates that as an everlasting punishment, God will turn into non-rational animals those people who persist in freely rejecting God's love: see Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 175–83.

[14] Genevieve Lloyd, *Providence Lost* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 331.

[15] Scott Bader-Saye, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 75.

[16] Thuesen, *Predestination*, 12. For further discussion of Rick Warren's teachings, see ibid. 209–16. Thuesen rightly comments regarding a strong version of divine

Christians and non-Christians are quite far from the outlook of the Letter of James, which proclaims serenely that God 'gives to all men generously' (James 1:5) so that '[e]very good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change' (James 1:17).

Among the few contemporary advocates of the doctrine of predestination, the late Catholic theologian Herbert McCabe stands out. He finds that predestination is 'a delightful and joyful and liberating doctrine, all about the love of God and the glorious freedom of the sons of God'.[17] Predestination is simply God's eternal plan to free us from sin and, most importantly, to enable us to share in his Trinitarian life. It follows that Christ Jesus is the centre of predestination. This eternal plan does not mark out our actions before we do them, because God utterly transcends time. Predestination to glory would be needed even if there were no sin, because only God can share his very life with us.[18]

providence: 'Many people would rather believe that a wise God predetermines everything—even unpleasant things—than contemplate the alternative' (p. 12), if the alternative is a world with no guiding hand and thus most likely no ultimate purpose or meaning. Even so, many believers would agree with Rabbi Harold Kushner's view that 'the Holocaust represents too many deaths, too much evidence against the view that "God is in charge and He has His reasons"'. See Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Avon Books, 1981), 82.

[17] Herbert McCabe, OP, 'Predestination', in *God Still Matters*, ed. Brian Davies, OP (New York: Continuum, 2002), 182–6, at 183. Cf. Benedict Ashley, OP's concern that the use of the terms 'foreknowledge', 'predestination', and 'pre-motion' confused the debate between Molinists and Thomists because these terms 'seem to imply that God knows the free human act in time *prior* to its performance' (Ashley, *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 419). This view is reflected in Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), which criticizes Augustine as a determinist.

[18] By contrast, some scholars approach the doctrine of predestination primarily in light of human sinfulness. Thus Thuesen notes that 'the American religious debates that concern me here presuppose the deep influence of Augustinian anthropology—the idea that humans are sinful to the core and therefore deserve eternal damnation. Only within contexts where this notion of original sin is taken from granted does predestination become for its most ardent believers a doctrine of mercy. That is, if everyone's default destination is presumed to be hell, then the idea that God grants executive clemency to certain condemned people becomes a singular comfort. If, on the other hand, original sin is denied or at least tempered by the idea that all humans receive an initial gift of grace that enables the damaged will to turn freely to Christ, then the doctrine of God's unilateral choice to save some and to damn others seems arbitrary and even cruel' (Thuesen, *Predestination*, 5–6).

Even so, what about those who by their free choice fail to attain eternal life with God? As McCabe says, 'Jesus plainly thought that there were such people, or talked as if he did.'[19] Can rational creatures thwart God's predestination? McCabe argues that sinners freely 'reject the gift of God who is so deeply in love with us'.[20] This is clearly true, but predestination seems to involve something more: God eternally knows his plan for the salvation of some rational creatures in Christ and the Holy Spirit, and he eternally wills its accomplishment. Certainly God's 'will can be resisted', but this does not mean that 'God's ultimate design for his creatures can be thwarted'.[21] God would not be the God 'who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11) if his plan did not come to fruition.

If God permits some rational creatures to be ultimately lost, however, can predestination be upheld while also affirming that God's love from eternity for each and every rational creature is unrestricted and superabundant? As we will see, this question raises further questions involving all areas of theology. In particular, many treatments of predestination focus on the relationship of grace and freedom.[22] My focus will instead be on God's eternal plan, but since I examine this topic through a wide variety of historical sources, the chapters that follow run the gamut of theological concerns. My

[19] McCabe, 'Predestination', 185. [20] Ibid. 186.

[21] Hart, *The Doors of the Sea*, 63; see also Hart's 'Providence and Causality: On Divine Innocence', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 34–56, at 47–8.

[22] In addition to authors treated in the chapters that follow, see for example Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Francisco Marin-Sola, 'El sistema tomista sobre la moción divina', *Ciencia Tomista* 32 (1925): 5–52; Marin-Sola, 'Respuesta a algunas objeciones acerca del sistema tomista sobre la moción divina', *Ciencia Tomista* 33 (1926): 5–74; Lonergan, 'Nuevas observaciones acerca del sistema tomista sobre la moción divina', *Ciencia Tomista* 33 (1926): 321–97; M. John Farrelly, OSB, *Predestination, Grace and Free Will* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964). Marin-Sola focuses on the role of sufficient grace. Lonergan is especially concerned with 'premotion', the sense in which 'God applies all agents to their activity' (Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 91). In his critique of Bañez and Molina for misunderstanding divine transcendence, Lonergan grants that 'as universal cause, God cannot be frustrated' (ibid.). He recognizes that 'St Thomas affirmed divine transcendence: with equal infallibility, efficacy, irresistibility, God knows, wills, effects both the necessary and the contingent; nor does it make the slightest difference whether the contingent in question be present, past, or future relatively to us, for the question is of God, who is not in time' (p. 148). In this study, my primary interest is God's eternal plan of election (God as universal cause) rather than the question of how divine governance does not undermine free will.

central interest remains what Thuesen calls the 'tension . . . between predestination and the universal grace of the gospel'.[23] Without holding to universal salvation, can one affirm—as I do—both the efficacy of God's eternal election and God's creative and redemptive love for each and every rational creature?

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

If predestination were not in some way a biblical doctrine, one might be able to avoid the controversies that the term provokes by avoiding speaking about predestination. The argument of the first chapter, then, is that predestination is a biblical doctrine; the theological controversies arise from Scripture itself. To make this case, I draw heavily upon contemporary historical-critical scholarship regarding the Second Temple period and the theology of Paul. The varied currents of the Second Temple period provide the context for the New Testament's Christological reworking of the doctrine of divine election of Israel.

Chapter 2 argues that the Church Fathers develop insightful but almost inevitably one-sided approaches to the New Testament's teachings on predestination. The most influential positions come from Origen, Augustine, and John of Damascus. Origen emphasizes the Creator's unlimited love for each and every rational creature, and he assumes the predestination of all to salvation. Augustine insists that the New Testament teaches God's utterly gratuitous predestination from eternity of only some rational creatures. John of Damascus highlights the power of created free will to rebel against God's love, with corresponding limitations as regards God's eternal providence in bringing about the salvation of rational creatures. I suggest that each of these perspectives responds to certain aspects of the biblical witness while neglecting other important aspects. Because of the importance of divine eternity in controversies over predestination, I also examine Boethius's exposition of divine eternity and foreknowledge. Although Boethius does not treat predestination, his position lends support to Augustine's theology of predestination.

[23] Thuesen, *Predestination*, 151. Thuesen is here describing the Lutheran Formula of Concord (1577).

The third chapter argues that medieval theology, struggling with the biblical insights of Augustine and Damascene, eventually finds a way to uphold the strengths of both Fathers' approaches—but without resolving the tension between their approaches. The chapter examines the work of John Scottus Eriugena, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, and Catherine of Siena. Eriugena advances a position similar to that of John of Damascus, while Aquinas develops Augustine's position in a systematic manner. Ockham argues that predestination generally depends upon God's foreknowledge of good works, but he does not say how this can be squared with the biblical teaching about God's utterly gracious election. Catherine insists that God causes our goodness and permits some to rebel permanently, and that from eternity God loves each and every rational creature without any deficiency in God's love. Since her theology is unsystematic, Catherine can affirm these things on biblical grounds without trying to integrate them into one proposition. This theological modesty is salutary with respect to predestination.

The fourth chapter argues that the Reformation and early modern period focuses on trying to clarify the causal chain by which God communicates goodness to some and permits others to lack goodness. The result is that predestination becomes the central theological controversy of the early modern period. I explore the approaches of John Calvin, Luis de Molina, Francis de Sales, and G. W. Leibniz. With the support of some biblical texts, Calvin argues that God actively causes everything, a position that endangers God's innocence. Molina posits a 'middle knowledge' wherein God non-volitionally scans all possible causal chains so as to ensure that predestination takes into account what humans freely do. Reminiscent of Ockham's view, this solution solves some problems while causing others, particularly with regard to God's eternity. Francis de Sales combines insistence upon God's unlimited love of all rational creatures, with allowance of God's predestination of some rational creatures. His development of Catherine's insight, however, does not gain traction in the universities. Instead, the mechanistic approach of Leibniz further distances predestinarian doctrine from the God of love. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers react strongly against predestination.

The fifth chapter argues that twentieth-century efforts to distance Christianity from earlier predestinarian doctrine run into biblical and conceptual difficulties. The chapter examines the approaches of Sergius

Bulgakov, Karl Barth, Jacques Maritain, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Bulgakov rejects predestination and instead develops a sophiological theology of the necessary salvation of every rational creature. Denying that Satan (or any demon) is a personal being, Barth proposes that every human being is predestined or elected in Christ Jesus. Maritain holds that created freedom can overturn God's 'antecedent' will by a non-active 'nihilation' of the rule of reason; God's 'consequent' will for predestination follows upon human freedom. Balthasar considers the doctrine of predestination a false path, and he instead develops a Trinitarian dramatics to deal with the issues previously understood in terms of predestination.

In the sixteen figures treated in these chapters, we find five basic perspectives. A first perspective seeks to minimize God's involvement: John of Damascus, Eriugena, Ockham, and Molina affirm the everlasting loss of some rational creatures but explain this (in various ways) in terms of God's eternal foreknowledge of how particular human beings freely respond to grace. A second perspective insists upon God's transcendent priority: Augustine, Boethius, and Aquinas hold that nothing in the creature determines God's eternal election of the rational creature, and that God saves some rational creatures and permits the permanent free rebellion of others. (Hoping to combine these first two perspectives, Maritain adds that God's consequent will, which includes the permission of everlasting rebellion, follows upon the rational creature's autonomous nihilation or shattering of the movement of grace.) A third perspective more clearly implicates God in the evil that creatures do: Calvin argues that God causes the salvation of some by the grace of the Holy Spirit and causes the damnation of some by their freely chosen sins, and Leibniz goes further by holding that God needs the sins of some rational creatures in order to accomplish the salvation of other rational creatures. A fourth perspective, found in Catherine and Francis, highlights God's loving effort to save each and every rational creature, while accepting God's transcendent priority and his permission of the loss of some rational creatures. A fifth perspective tends towards or adopts universal salvation: Origen, Bulgakov, Barth, and Balthasar propose models of divine election that suggest, and in some instances require, the salvation of all rational creatures.

Given the desuetude into which the doctrine of predestination has fallen, these five chapters recall how and why Christians have

advocated doctrines of predestination, and point out the insights and pitfalls that have marked the career of this doctrine.[24] The sixth and final chapter seeks to reinvigorate theological discussion of predestination along the lines established by Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales. This final chapter is a largely biblical argument, indebted to Thomas Aquinas's theocentric metaphysics, for why we must say two things regarding divine predestination: God's eternal love for each and every rational creature has no deficiency or stinginess, and God from eternity predestines some to union with him and permits others to rebel permanently. These two affirmations must be held in balance, so that the logic of one does not overpower the other. Since our goodness is not our autonomous achievement but comes from God, maintaining this balance depends upon recognizing that the relationship of his superabundant love for all and his election of some cannot be plumbed by us.

At the end of his *Philosophy of History*, G. W. F. Hegel summarizes his theodicy: history is the process by which Spirit realizes itself, so that 'what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not "without God," but is essentially His Work'.[25] From within history, according to Hegel, Spirit is fully revealed. By contrast, Edgardo Colón-Emeric sounds a much more modest note: 'the question of predestination is not a logical problem to be overcome dialectically but a saving mystery to be approached apophatically.'[26] Far from

[24] See also Georg Kraus, *Vorherbestimmung. Traditionelle Prädestinationslehre im Licht gegenwärtiger Theologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1977). Kraus surveys Scripture, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, and Barth.

[25] Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), 457. Cf. Cyril O'Regan, 'Hegel, Theodicy and the Invisibility of Waste', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 75–108.

[26] Colón-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection*, 177. He goes on to quote Michał Paluch's remark, 'The *depth* of the mystery of predestination and its bearing for Christian faith are not found in the image of an *arbitrary* God who does not choose some persons for salvation. It is our freedom that can *freely* reject God. In other words: our difficulties with the mystery of predestination are not constituted by the problem of a limited divine love but by that of our limited understanding and by that of the limits of our own love. Predestination is the luminous mystery of a God who gives everything freely, who is always on our side in our effort to follow him' (Paluch, *La Profondeur de l'amour divin. Évolution de la doctrine de la predestination dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2004), 317, my translation; cited in Colón-Emeric, *Wesley, Aquinas, and Christian Perfection*, 178).

mastering God's plan, we must be configured in humility to the 'wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 2:7), which is 'Christ Jesus and him crucified' (1 Cor. 2:2). 'Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek"' (Ps. 27:7–8).

1

The Biblical Roots of the Doctrine of Predestination

The interest in predestination shown by Christian theologians through the centuries would not have surprised the New Testament authors. As Simon Gathercole points out, 'most early Jewish and Christian groups held, in varying degrees, that God foreordained the lives of all people and in some cases the existence of all things as well'.[1] Although Gathercole has the synoptic Gospels in view, the Apostle Paul is most often identified with theologies of predestination. Paul does not deny human freedom, but he insists upon the power of God working in and through our lives. Commenting on Philippians 2:12–13, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure', John Barclay remarks, 'On the one hand, his letters are full of statements which state or presuppose that human beings are capable and effective agents, responsible for their own actions. . . . On the other hand, he speaks as if God's agency is effective everywhere, even in cases where humans are said to work.'[2] As Barclay goes on to suggest, it is useful to examine Paul's Second Temple context before turning to debates in the later Church about Paul's meaning.

[1] Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 287.

[2] John M. G. Barclay, 'Introduction', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 1–2; see also in this volume Barclay, '"By the Grace of God I Am What I Am": Grace and Agency in Philo and Paul', 140–57, where Barclay argues for the priority of grace for Paul. For the combination of election and human choice in Paul and other Second Temple authors, see also the brief survey in Ben Witherington III, *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism and Wesleyanism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), 59–61.

This chapter examines recent scholarship on providence and predestination in various currents of Second Temple Judaism and undertakes a broad survey of the biblical witness, with particular attention to contemporary debate regarding whether Romans contains a doctrine of predestination. I suggest that later theological controversies over predestination arise from Scripture itself, rather than from overzealous theologians.

FROM JOSEPHUS TO PAUL

Commenting on the writings of Josephus (ad 37–100)—priest, Pharisee, military commander, Jewish apologist, and historian—N. T. Wright observes that 'Josephus attempted to explain that whatever happens, happens according to the divine will'.[3] Wright goes on to criticize this view, on the grounds that it does not sufficiently take into account election and covenant, through which God acts 'decisively within his creation, to eliminate evil from it and to restore order, justice and peace'.[4] For Wright, if everything happens according to God's will, then God's covenantal action in Israel cannot be as unique as it in fact is; 'providence' replaces God's historical agency with a more abstract, philosophical account of God's involvement in the world. Jews of the first century ad, Wright argues (with a critical eye towards the reconstruction of Judaism offered by E. P. Sanders), relied not upon an abstract 'providence' but upon God's free covenantal, historical agency in and through Israel.

On these grounds, Wright distrusts Josephus's contention that first-century Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes differed, among other things, about providence. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus states that for the Essenes, 'all things are best ascribed to God'.[5] Josephus presents the

[3] Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 251.

[4] Ibid. 251–2. Wright argues that for first-century Jews, 'Providence by itself is not enough to explain the way in which belief in one god, the creator, and recognition of the radical nature of evil, can be held together. The aspect of Jewish monotheism which attempts this task, and which Josephus significantly downplays, is the third vital element within this basic belief: election and the covenant' (p. 251).

[5] Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), Book 18, ch. 1, §5 (18), p. 477.

position of the Pharisees and the Sadducees on providence in his *The Wars of the Jews*: the Pharisees 'ascribe all to fate [or providence], and to God, and yet allow that to act what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of men, although fate does cooperate in every action', while the Sadducees reject the notion of providence and hold 'that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil'.[6] In accord with their doctrines of providence, the Essenes and Pharisees believe that humans receive rewards and punishments after death, whereas the Sadducees consider this life to be all there is.

While Wright affirms that first-century Jews believed that 'Israel's god, the creator, works in and through what may be called "natural events"',[7] he suggests that Josephus here turns Essenes, Pharisees, and Sadducees into 'Greek-styled philosophical schools' debating philosophical abstractions, whereas the real division between the three groups consisted in different understandings of God's historical agency.[8] Wright therefore aims 'to see through this disguise to the socio-political reality behind it'.[9] According to Wright, what Josephus seeks to hide from his Roman readers is the tumultuous political debate about how, or whether, Jews should prepare for God's liberation of Israel. Wright thus translates Josephus's language about providence into three theo-political positions regarding what to expect from the covenantal God:

> The Essenes proclaimed by their very mode of existence that, though they longed for the liberation of Israel, they were simply going to wait and allow Israel's god to bring it to pass in his own time. The Sadducees proclaimed by their very existence that they believed in seizing and maintaining political power for themselves . . . Reasoning in parallel, we may take it that the Pharisees' belief was as follows: Israel's god will act; but loyal Jews may well be required as the agents and instruments of that divine action. This fits completely with all the other evidence we

[6] Josephus, *The Wars of the Lord*, in *The Works of Josephus*, Book 2, ch. 8, §14 (162–5), p. 608.

[7] Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 250. He adds, 'Though there are "strong" biblical statements of divine involvement in everything that happens, good and bad alike (e.g. Isaiah 45.7; Amos 3.6), this is a difficult doctrine to maintain, and we find "softer" versions in the idea, for instance, that Israel's god uses and directs the actions of wicked persons within his own purposes (e.g. Isaiah 10.5–15)' (ibid. 251).

[8] Ibid. 200. See also the similar reading of Ken Penner, 'The Fate of Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* 13.171–3: Ancient Judean Philosophy in Context', *The Journal of Biblical Studies* 1 (2001) (electronic journal, www.journalofbiblicalstudies.org).

[9] Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 200.

> have studied, and indeed hints at the further debate within Pharisaism itself, with Hillel (and Gamaliel, as in Acts 5.33–9) inclining more in the direction of leaving the issue to Israel's god, and Shammai (and Saul of Tarsus) wanting to act as the means of that divine intervention.[10]

In Wright's view, Josephus's comments on providence belong to his effort to make first-century Judaism palatable to the Roman intelligentsia. As Wright puts it (indebted to Martin Hengel), 'Behind Josephus' unthreatening depiction of philosophical debate there stands the world of first-century political and revolutionary struggle.'[11]

Certainly first-century Jews did not envision a 'providence' which lacked, at its centre, God's personal action in and through Israel. Even so, could they have arrived at the philosophical disagreements sketched in a Greek-influenced manner by Josephus? John Barclay remarks in this regard that 'Josephus' comments on the differences of opinion among Jewish "philosophies" on fate and free will (*Ant.* 13.172–3; 18.12–18), while over-simplified, certainly encourage us to expect that the debates among Jews were both significant and complex'.[12] For his part, Francis Watson points out the tension in 4 Ezra (dated to the late first century ad[13]) between on the one hand 'Zion eschatology' or 'national eschatology', concerned with the restoration of Israel, and on the other 'a new concern with transcendent individual destiny as determined by the law'.[14] According to Watson, the figure of Ezra in 4 Ezra is concerned primarily with the latter. Ezra

[10] Ibid. 200–1.

[11] Ibid. 201. Wright cites Martin Hengel's *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod until 70 A.D.*, trans. David Smith (German 1961; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989).

[12] Barclay, 'Introduction', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, 4. See Gabriele Boccaccini, 'Inner-Jewish Debate on the Tension between Divine and Human Agency in Second Temple Judaism', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, 9–26.

[13] For the late first-century dating of 4 Ezra, see Michael E. Stone's introduction to 2 Esdras—a book which the Latin Vulgate, after the Council of Trent, included as a non-canonical appendix under the title 4 Esdras, and which contains the text of 4 Ezra—in *The HarperCollins Study Bible*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 1768–9. According to Stone, 4 Ezra was written for a Jewish audience, but had much more impact upon Christian communities.

[14] Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 484–5. See also Watson's earlier comment—quite close to Wright's concerns—that 'Josephus's tendency to clothe Jewish thought in Greek dress is evident throughout his depictions of the three (or four) Jewish "philosophies"' (ibid. 350).

recognizes to his great dismay that given the exacting tenets of the Law, God will save very few individuals, including few Jews. How could the Creator, who gives the Law out of love for Israel, elect so few for salvation?

Not the restoration of Zion, but the salvation of individual Jews, thus takes centre stage in Ezra's third vision or dialogue with the angel Uriel (2 Esdras 6:38–9:25).[15] Ezra takes the side of the multitude condemned to everlasting torment, and he suggests that it would have been better for the great majority of people had God never created them. At the least, says Ezra, God could have prevented Adam from sinning and bringing about the destruction of so many others. Ezra challenges the Lord: 'If then you will suddenly and quickly destroy what with so great labor was fashioned by your command, to what purpose was it made?' (2 Esdras 8:14). This is even more the case, Ezra points out, with the people of Israel.

Ezra recognizes that God's plan of election cannot be frustrated. Yet in 4 Ezra's view, as in the Pharisees' view (according to Josephus's description), humans have freedom in this life to rebel against God and thereby to go against God's original intention. The angel Uriel affirms that 'the Most High did not intend that anyone should be destroyed; but those who were created have themselves defiled the name of him who made them' (2 Esdras 8:59–60). From the mass of human beings who were defiled, God elects some, the choicest fruit of the vineyard. Watson rightly reads the third dialogue of 4 Ezra as 'a dramatic, tense confrontation between two theological positions which respectively assert the ultimacy of the divine justice or of the divine mercy, with no attempt at a resolution'.[16]

Watson also notes that Paul and the Qumran pesherist on Habakkuk 2:4 share basic convictions about divine predestination. Although Paul and the pesherist disagree about the value of Torah observance,

[15] See ibid. 486.

[16] Ibid. 503. With regard to Paul's letter to the Romans, Watson argues, 'By the end of Romans 11, however, Paul has reached a position that goes far beyond even Ezra in its absolutizing of the divine mercy: just as humankind is universally subject to sin, so too it is universally the object of God's mercy. Like the author of 4 Ezra, Paul can comprehend both opposing points of view, incorporating them into a single theological discourse—although without finally resolving the question how they are to be reconciled' (p. 504). On the relationship of 4 Ezra and Romans, see also Bruce W. Longenecker, *Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and Romans 11* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991). Watson disagrees with Longenecker's view that Uriel persuades Ezra.

nonetheless for both 'the eschatological conflict over scriptural interpretation is traced back to the mystery of the divine predestination, as attested in scripture (cf. Rom. 9.6–33)'.[17] In this light, Qumran's Sermon on the Two Spirits (1QS 3:13–4:24) merits attention. In his recent essay on 'Predestination and Free Will in the Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls', Philip Alexander points out that the Sermon on the Two Spirits approaches the topic of divine and human agency in a markedly propositional, philosophical manner.[18] Reading the Sermon in light of the other Qumran documents, Alexander finds throughout a 'strong predestinarianism'.[19] The Sermon begins by describing God as the provident source and sustainer of everything that exists. In the created universe, good and evil principles battle against each other, so that human beings must choose to live either according to the Spirit of Truth or the Spirit of Falsehood. God purifies with his Spirit of Truth the human beings whom he wills to save. Alexander comments, 'The choice in which Spirit to walk ultimately does not lie with man but with God (see esp. 4.22).'[20] God elects some to salvation and actively hands over others to damnation.

Alexander suggests that the author of the Sermon held that God does not everlastingly punish the damned, but instead annihilates them. In the two Spirits, he sees evidence of the influence, through the Persians, of the 'earlier, gathic stage of Iranian dualism'.[21] The Sermon is much more rigorously predestinarian than is later Rabbinic thought. Comparing the Sermon to the later Rabbinic teaching in *Pirqe'Avot* 3:16, '"all is foreseen (*safui*), but freedom of choice (*reshut*) is given; and the world is judged by grace (*tub*), yet all is according to the preponderance of one's deeds (*rob ha-ma'aseh*)"', he notes that the Sermon affirms

[17] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 125. See also Magen Broshi, 'Predestination in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls', in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 235–46.

[18] See Philip S. Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will in the Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls', in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 27–49, at 27. See also Armin Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination: Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran* (Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1995), 121–70; F. Nötscher, 'Schicksalsglaube in Qumran und Umwelt', *Biblische Zeitschrift* (neue Folge) 3 (1959): 205–34 and 4 (1960): 98–121.

[19] Alexander, 'Predestination and Free Will in the Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls', 49.

[20] Ibid. 31.

[21] Ibid. 34.

much more strictly God's causality of all things.[22] Indeed, as he goes on to point out, Qumran's view on God's predestination has significant affinities with that which Josephus ascribes to the Essenes.[23] Commenting on Damascus Document 2:2–13, which teaches that God causes the sin of those whom he hates, Alexander observes that 'God's causation of the damnation of the wicked is apparently formulated here in utterly uncompromising terms'.[24]

Many first-century Jews, then, recognized the primacy of divine agency. Once such divine agency is factored in—both as regards Israel's self-understanding and as regards the Christian witness to Jesus' Resurrection—then not only divine providence, but also a providential reading of the canonical Scriptures, becomes possible. Whereas the Bible otherwise appears to be simply a set of competing texts, an affirmation of providence allows for what Christopher Seitz calls a 'canonical portrayal that is providentially under his [God's] care'.[25] Seitz points out that the biblical canon 'has often been ignored as a broker of history'.[26] In seeking to identify the history behind the biblical texts, scholars have not sufficiently entertained the idea that the canon itself is a providentially governed interpretation of history.

When the Bible is viewed as a providential whole, what might we say about its witness to providence and predestination?[27] It would require a book in itself to detail the Old Testament's witness to providence and election, articulated in Deuteronomic covenantal theology and worked out by the prophets in the crucible of exile—a providence whose universal scope is confirmed in the lives of such

[22] Ibid. 37.

[23] See ibid. 42, where Alexander is discussing Song 5 of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. As he summarizes Song 5's teaching, 'Before he created the world, and set history in motion, God planned how it would be, and it will follow that plan to the letter.'

[24] Ibid. 43.

[25] Christopher R. Seitz, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 134, cf. 24, 46.

[26] Ibid. 197.

[27] For discussion see R. W. L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 100–1; Leo Scheffczyk, *Creation and Providence* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 3–46; Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 77–86. See also Ephraim Radner, 'Sublimity and Providence: The Spiritual Discipline of Figural Reading', *Ex Auditu* 18 (2002): 155–70.

figures as Tobit, Esther, Judith, Daniel, and (mysteriously) Job.[28] The Old Testament presents God as the Creator and Lord of history, who elects Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and who 'will be glorified in Israel' (Isaiah 45:23). Genesis proclaims that 'God created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1)[29] and suggests that God foreknows the events of history, including the slavery in Egypt of Abraham's descendents and their return to the promised land that will occur when the 'iniquity of the Amorites' is 'complete' (Gen. 15:16). God urges his people to repent of their sins and be saved: 'As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezek. 33:11). As Wisdom of Solomon says of God, '[Y]ou are merciful to all, for you can do all things, and you overlook men's sins, that they may repent. For you love all things that exist, and you loathe none of the things which you have made, for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. . . . You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord who love the living' (Wisd. 11:23–4, 26).[30]

God lays claim to the whole of history, not only of individuals and the nations but of the whole cosmos. Isaiah teaches that God is provident over all: 'Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord, who made all things, who stretched out the heavens alone, who spread out the earth—Who was with me?—who frustrates the omens of liars, and makes fools of diviners; who turns wise men back, and makes their knowledge foolish"' (Isaiah 44:24–5).[31] God creates all and knows all; God knows the future that is unknown even to 'diviners' and 'wise men'. As the psalmist says of God, his Creator: 'Your

[28] See also Francesca Aran Murphy's discussion of David and divine providence, in her 'Providence in 1 Samuel', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 57–74.

[29] For the distinction between 'material' and 'functional' creation (the latter being the meaning of the original author), see John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 38–46.

[30] See Leo J. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of the Wisdom Literature* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 312. See also, for suggestion of the Hellenistic influence, Pope Benedict XVI, 'Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections' (The Regensburg Lecture), in Appendix I to James V. Schall, SJ, *The Regensburg Lecture* (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2007), 130–48, at 136.

[31] On Isaiah 44:24–8, see Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 74.

eyes beheld my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them' (Ps. 139:16). This God restores Israel and Jerusalem, and he is also the one 'who says to the deep, "Be dry, I will dry up your rivers"; who says of Cyrus, "He is shepherd, and he shall fulfil all my purpose"' (Isaiah 44:27–8). His providence is all-encompassing. Even Job, who complains that God abandons the innocent sufferer, bears witness to the mystery of God's providence at the end of his sufferings, after God has spoken to him and he has 'seen' God. A repentant Job says to God, 'I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. . . . I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know' (Job 42:2–3).[32]

Covenantally elected by God to receive his Torah, Israel is the privileged object and agent of God's providence. Reassuring his people Israel, the Creator God tells them, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine' (Isaiah 43:1). God will preserve his people through all trials. God chooses his people as 'my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exod. 19:5–6).[33] Regarding the book of Genesis, Jon Levenson rightly underscores the 'prominent dimension . . . of God's mysteriously singling out one son from his brothers for a special destiny, to be reenacted in the experience of the ongoing community'.[34] As Levenson concludes, God's will to choose some, without choosing others, for a special relationship with God cannot be expunged from biblical faith: 'The divine Father is not an egalitarian.'[35] Yet

[32] See J. Gerald Janzen, *Job* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1985), 248–52.

[33] For historical-critical commentary, see Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Louisville, KY: The Westminster Press, 1974), 360–1, 366–7.

[34] Jon D. Levenson, 'Is Brueggemann Really a Pluralist?' *Harvard Theological Review* 93 (2000): 265–94, at 284. For Levenson's views see also his 'The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism', in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark G. Brett (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 143–69; Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Cf. Joel N. Lohr's excellent summary of Levenson's position in Lohr, *Chosen and Unchosen: Conceptions of Election in the Pentateuch and Jewish-Christian Interpretation* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 71–90.

[35] Levenson, 'Is Brueggemann Really a Pluralist?', at 284. See also Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 251. In his *Yet I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), Joel S. Kaminsky argues that the Hebrew Bible teaches that 'the righteous

God's covenantal election has the blessing of all nations in view, as already suggested by God's promise to Abraham that 'by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves' (Gen. 12:3).[36]

In teaching that Christ Jesus fulfils God's promises and covenants with Israel, the New Testament writings present providence and election as a Christocentric reality of mercy. As the prologue of the Gospel of John describes the mission of the incarnate Word, '[T]o all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God' (John 1:12–13). Because human adoption as 'children of God' comes about by the power of God, Jesus instructs his disciples, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide' (John 14:16). Only God can give us the 'eternal life' that consists in knowing the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit (John 17:3).

Human rebellion does not thwart this divine purpose, as Peter and John make clear in the Book of Acts. Praising God for the spread of the gospel, they recall that 'in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place' (Acts 4:27–8).[37] Just as the persecution of Jesus by both Gentiles and Jews could not negate God's saving will, so also the persecution faced by the apostles cannot obstruct the gospel's spread. In the Gospel of John, Jesus explains that his will (and his Father's) cannot

non-elect are not only not damned, but are also recipients of God's blessing' (p. 189) and urges that 'Paul's propensity to assimilate the non-believing Jew to the non-chosen sibling in the Genesis stories (Rom. 9:6–18; Gal. 4:21–5:1) and then to read such stories as endorsing the notion that the non-chosen sibling has been utterly rejected by God might be canonically tempered' (pp. 190–1). Kaminsky recognizes, however, that God's election of Israel bestows special blessings upon Israel, blessings not shared by the Amalekites, for example (even though persons outside Israel can share in God's love).

[36] For a contrary reading of Genesis 12:1–3, see Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, chapter 8. In his *Chosen and Unchosen*, Lohr focuses on the status of the unchosen, in particular how they might benefit from Israel's obedience to Torah; yet his conclusion—which does not treat the New Testament—is highly ambiguous as regards the electing God.

[37] On the language used here, see Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 208.

be frustrated: 'I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand' (John 10:28–9; cf. John 17:2 and 17:12). In a similar fashion Jesus affirms the priority of the divine action, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day' (John 6:44; cf. 6:65).[38]

God's gracious drawing of humans to communion with him in Christ and the Holy Spirit is cause for rejoicing. Such rejoicing finds its exemplar in St Paul: 'We know then that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren' (Rom. 8:28–9). Can God's gracious plan be frustrated? Certainly those who renounce their faith will be 'cut off' and those who renew their faith will be 'grafted in' (Rom. 11:22–3). Yet Paul indicates that God's gracious plan cannot ultimately be thwarted: 'And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us?' (Rom. 8:30–1).[39] God 'accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11). Paul's statements accord with the affirmation of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew regarding providence: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matt. 10:29–30).[40]

[38] See Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, rev. edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 328–9, especially n. 116. For a contrary view, see the line of thought running through Ben Witherington III's *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995). Witherington assumes that the doctrine of eternal predestination or election must be deterministic.

[39] For the view that Paul considers God's eternal plan to be frustratable, see M. John Farrelly, OSB, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964), 69–70.

[40] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., compare Matthew 10:29 to *Genesis Rabba*'s midrash on Genesis 33:18: 'Not even a bird is caught without the will of heaven; how much less the soul of a son of man.' See Davies and Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. II: *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 208. Arguing that Matthew 10:30 'is probably an interpolation made by the compiler of Q or by some trident of that source' (ibid.), Davies and Allison suggest that Matthew 10:29–31 was redacted so as to resolve—unsuccessfully in their view—the problems that 10:26–31 raise.

Jesus' assurance in the Gospel of Matthew follows directly after more disquieting words: 'do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matt. 10:28). Paul too is aware of a difficulty: not all Israel has accepted the Messiah, a failure that Paul finds to be in accord with Isaiah's prophecy. John's Gospel too suggests that God permits the loss of some. Jesus sharply distinguishes between Judas and the other eleven disciples: 'While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled' (John 17:12). One notes a similarity with Paul's suggestion that God creates 'vessels of wrath made for destruction' (Rom. 9:22).

Both the New and the Old Testaments affirm human freedom and responsibility. Jesus teaches in this regard, 'The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born' (Matt. 26:24).[41] The same note of human responsibility occurs in the Lord's response to Cain's anger over the scorning of his offering. The Lord emphasizes that Cain is free to do the good: '"Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it"' (Gen. 4:6–7).[42] Even so, human freedom does not negate the Lord's governance over history. With full confidence in the outcome, the Lord commands Abraham, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing' (Gen. 12:1–2). The Lord, not Abraham, will accomplish this. Yet the Lord also tests Abraham and requires that he exercise his freedom rightly (Gen. 22).[43]

Paul affirms that God 'works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose' (Rom. 8:28), and that God

[41] Davies and Allison observe that this 'verse has often been part of discussions regarding sovereignty and predestination' (Davies and Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. III, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 462, n. 54). On everlasting punishment according to Scripture, see Pierre Grelot, 'Le Retribution individuelle. Dossier biblique', *Revue Thomiste* 107 (2007)): 179–220.

[42] See Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, 92–101.

[43] See ibid., chapter 10: 'Genesis 22: Abraham—Model or Monster?'

'chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him' (Eph. 1:4). Without negating the participation of human freedom, God from eternity chooses or elects his people. As Paul observes, 'He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved' (Eph. 1:5–6).[44] One finds here a canonical continuation of the Old Testament, in which the reason for God's election is his love. As Moses says of the people of Israel, 'It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you' (Deut. 7:7; cf. Deut. 4:37, 1 Tim. 1:15–16).[45] The First Letter of John succinctly affirms, 'We love, because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19).[46]

PREDESTINATION IN ROMANS

As a test case I wish to explore Romans 8–11, in which many have found a particularly clear doctrine of predestination. In Romans 8:28–30, St Paul writes,

> We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

[44] Rudolph Schnackenburg comments on Ephesians 1:3–14, 'Election occurs with the aim that "we should be holy and blameless before him" (v. 4). The revelation of the mystery leads to the realisation in the fullness of time (v. 10a) of what God had already decided' (Schnackenburg, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991, 47). Schnackenburg goes on to say, 'Our election by God "before the foundation of the world" which is then explained in v. 5 as preordination (προορίσας) would still remain within the framework of Jewish ideas of predestination were it not for the reference to Christ. . . . The semantic field "election", "pre-recognition", "predestination", (divine) "intention" (πρόθεσις) is also to be found in Paul (cf. especially Rom. 8.28c–9; 9.11; 1 Cor. 2.7) but never connected with the thought that we are chosen and predestined "in Christ". In this statement, peculiar to Eph., what is under discussion is not simply our predestination in God's thought but rather our election in the pre-existent Christ' (p. 53).

[45] See Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob*, 102.

[46] Schnackenburg describes this as the 'prevenient love of God', noting that 'first' here has a comparative sense: see Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles*, trans. Reginald and Ilse Fuller (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 225.

> And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Paul emphasizes that God's work of predestining and calling 'according to his purpose' has glorification in view. God's merciful redemptive work cannot be thwarted: 'If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?' (Rom. 8:31–3). As Paul says, nothing can separate 'God's elect' from the work of justification and glorification that God is undertaking for 'those whom he predestined'. No created reality can thwart God's plan that is now being worked out in Christ for God's elect: 'For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:38–9).

In Romans 9, Paul seeks to show from within Israel's story that election depends solely upon God, and not upon any human factor, including physical descent from Abraham.[47] Commenting on 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated' (Mal. 1:2–3; Rom. 9:13), Paul writes, 'What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" [Exod. 33:19]. So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy' (Rom. 9:14–16). Does this mean that *all* humans are 'predestined' and 'called' so as to be 'justified' and 'glorified'? In this regard Ross Wagner observes, 'God's freedom to be merciful has, for Paul, another side: namely, God's freedom *not* to show mercy, but to turn human rebellion to his own purposes, as in the case of Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17).'[48] As the example of the exodus shows, God's 'purposes' are merciful: God's action accomplishes the

[47] For discussion, see J. Ross Wagner, *Herald of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 50–1.

[48] Wagner, *Herald of the Good News*, 53. See also William A. Ford, *God, Pharaoh, and Moses: Explaining the Lord's Actions in the Exodus Plague Narratives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Stephen L. Cook, *Conversations with Scripture: 2 Isaiah* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2008), 27–8. Both Ford and Cook argue that YHWH's actions seek to change human perspectives on reality from anthropocentric to theocentric, without denying human free will.

redemption of his people Israel, who proclaim to the world his saving 'name'.[49]

If God does not show mercy to Pharaoh, however, can Pharaoh be at fault for his rejection of God's mercy? Alluding to Isaiah 29:16/45:9 ('Shall the potter be regarded as the clay' / 'Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter!'), Paul affirms the justice of God: 'You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me thus?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?' (Rom. 9:19–21). This should not be read in an individualistic fashion. In Isaiah 29:16, the image of the potter and the clay stands as a prophetic warning to those in Israel who no longer trust God's wisdom and power.[50] The prophet Isaiah teaches that only a remnant of Israelites, whose trust in God does not waver, will be spared. A similar mistrust of God's wisdom and power comes under critique in Isaiah 45:9, where the image of the potter underscores the intimate relationship of the Creator God to his people Israel that characterizes what Wagner calls 'the language of election'.[51]

How does Paul's reference to those who are 'predestined' reflect the 'language of election'? Wagner notes that 'Paul is not engaged in speculation about God's power over creation in the abstract; rather, he is wrestling here, as throughout Romans, with God's particular relationship to Israel as their creator and with the paradox of Israel's continued resistance to God's purposes for them'.[52] But this emphasis on particularity also involves universal claims about God, including 'God's wisdom as creator' and God's 'sovereign freedom to form vessels for honor and vessels for dishonor alike'.[53] Are these universal claims in tension with God's particular relationship with his people

[49] On this point see N. T. Wright's commentary on Romans 9, in Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. X: *Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 393–770, at 634–44. Wright traces how Paul here retells Israel's story, from the patriarchs to the exodus to the exile (and the prophets' witness) to the return from exile in the Messiah Jesus.

[50] See Wagner, *Herald of the Good News*, 62.

[51] Ibid. 66. Wagner notes a parallel use of Isaiah's image of the potter and the clay in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 11.22.

[52] Wagner, *Herald of the Good News*, 71.

[53] Ibid.

Israel? Paul does not think so, because God's election of Israel is the election of 'the children of the promise' (Rom. 9:8), and this promise is now being gloriously fulfilled in Christ Jesus in 'the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles' (Rom. 9:23–4). As Isaiah foretold, 'For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return' (Isa. 10:22; cf. Rom. 9:27).

Without doubting God's wisdom or mercy, Paul highlights the difficulty that he feels. As Paul says, 'I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race' (Rom. 9:1–3). Why does Paul care so much for his fellow Jews, when at the same time he affirms strongly that God's will, rather than any human element (including physical descent from Abraham), determines election? He does so because of the role that the people of Israel possess in God's plan of mercy: 'They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever' (Rom. 9:4–5).

Paul emphasizes that God's people Israel, according to the flesh, retain their 'zeal for God' (Rom. 10:2) and have not been repudiated by God. In this sense they cannot be written off simply as 'vessels of wrath made for destruction'. Rather, as Paul says, 'God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew' (Rom. 11:2). Paul's words contain a tension, however. Recall that 'those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom. 8:29). Who, then, are God's 'people whom he foreknew', who have not been rejected by God? Paul suggests that these people are the 'remnant, chosen by grace' (Rom. 11:5), who like himself are Israelites who have faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul explains regarding the other Israelites according to the flesh for whom he prays so fervently, 'What then? Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened' (Rom. 11:7).[54]

[54] For further discussion see Pablo T. Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and the Gentiles: Pauline Ecclesiology in Romans 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

Even so, Paul cannot allow Israel according to the flesh to be scorned. While they are opponents of the gospel, nonetheless 'as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable' (Rom. 11:28–9). Similarly, the disobedience of the Israelites, like the disobedience of the Gentiles, will not be able to thwart God's merciful plan. Why does God allow their disobedience (or even 'harden' them)? The pattern has already been revealed in the 'hardening' that brought about the exodus.[55] As Paul says, 'God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all' (Rom. 11:32).

If God has established his plan so as to 'have mercy upon all', does this mean that there are no 'vessels of wrath' and that all will be saved? Has God 'predestined' everyone to the justice of 'God's elect'? This question calls for a broader dialogue with contemporary biblical scholars on Romans and predestination.

Predestination and 'Proorizein'

The Catholic exegete Brendan Byrne argues against associating Romans 8:29–30 with any later doctrine of the predestination of individuals in Christ. Translating 'proorizein' as 'preordain', Byrne remarks, 'The language of "election" and "preordination" here does not imply a doctrine of predestination in the classical sense of a divine fixing of individual human lives in a set direction towards salvation or damnation.'[56] What then does such language, found also in Qumran and elsewhere, mean? Byrne argues that Paul's discussion in Romans 8:29 applies 'the biblical privilege of election communally to the Christian community

[55] See Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, 639, 677. Wright suggests that Paul's words should be read in apocalyptic terms rather than in terms of philosophical theology: 'Paul is drawing on the Jewish tradition that runs like this: when God delays outstanding judgment, those who do not use this time of delay to repent and turn back to him will be hardened, so that their final judgment, when it comes, will be seen to be just. This apocalyptic context of "hardening" is vital; ignoring it leads interpreters either into abstract discussions of predestination and reprobation or into the idea of a temporal "hardening," which is then reversed. As the analogy with Pharaoh in 9:17–18 indicates, this "hardening" is not something that comes for a while, during which something else happens, and which is then removed. The "hardening," rather, is what happens during a temporary suspension of the judgment that would otherwise have fallen, to allow time for some to escape' (p. 677).

[56] Brendan Byrne, SJ, *Romans* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 272.

made up of Jews and Gentiles'.[57] The whole Church has been 'preordained' in the same sense in which Israel, whose Messiah Jesus is, received the 'privilege of election'; on this view the Church carries forward the privileges of Israel. Far from a doctrine of individual predestination, then, Paul's 'perspective is positive and inclusive, rather than exclusive, indicating God's will to bring all to the fullness of humanity. Whether or not some individuals fail to be included is not at issue.'[58]

If Byrne is correct, however, why does Paul go on to address potential criticisms of God's justice, and to speak of 'vessels of wrath made for destruction'? By 'vessels of wrath made for destruction', does he mean the 'part of Israel' on whom 'a hardening has come'? In this regard, consider how Paul understands his own history. He began as an opponent of the followers of Jesus: 'For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers' (Gal. 1:13–14). The God who 'foreknew' and 'predestined' those 'who are called according to his purpose' (Rom. 8:28–9), however, changed Paul's life: 'he who had set me apart before I was born . . . called me through his grace, [and] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles' (Gal. 1:15–16). Paul himself is acutely aware that he has been 'set apart' and 'called', whereas many of his fellow Jews seem not to have been 'called'.

It thus seems a great stretch to argue, as Byrne does, that for Paul '[w]hether or not some individuals fail to be included is not at issue'.[59] Paul holds that the difference between himself and his former Jewish friends and collaborators is rooted in God's calling Paul 'through his grace', and Paul has 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart' (Rom. 9:2) about those who have yet to be included. He also looks forward to the day of his fellow Jews' 'full inclusion' (Rom. 11:12), when 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:26) and God will have 'mercy upon all' (Rom. 11:32).

Is Paul advocating a universalist doctrine here? To Byrne, it seems more likely that Paul is speaking in language associated with the promise of the restoration of Israel. In Byrne's words, Paul anticipates

[57] Ibid. [58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid. See also the discussion in Steven C. Roy, *How Much Does God Foreknow? A Comprehensive Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 84–5.

the day 'when the full complement of Israel (*plērōma*) is finally restored'.[60] That this 'full complement' will not include every Jew is indicated by Paul's statement, 'Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them' (Rom. 11:14). Commenting upon Romans 11:32, 'For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all', Byrne explains his view of Pauline universalism:

> The 'all' (*tous pantas*) that appears twice in this sentence resumes the universalistic note that has run throughout the letter (1:16, 18; 2:9–11; 3:9, 19–20, 22–23; 4:11, 16; 5:12–21; 9:24–26; 10:11–12). As in the case of these other references, Paul does not have primarily in view all human beings taken in an individual sense; the sense is communal: 'all—that is, Jews as well as Gentiles'.[61]

I agree with this point, and yet this emphasis on the communal sense returns us to Paul's 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish' regarding some of his brethren.

Another Catholic exegete, Joseph Fitzmyer, argues that Paul intends to say that at different stages of salvation history God's mercy is manifested particularly in the Jews or in the Gentiles, but that God has in view '[u]niversal salvation', God's 'plan of salvation for all human beings'.[62] Perhaps for this reason, Fitzmyer does not share Byrne's hesitations about 'predestination'. He holds that the verb 'proorizein' signifies '"decide beforehand, predestine"', and he compares 'Pauline predestination' to Qumran's 1QS 3:15–16, which reads, 'From the God of knowledge comes all that is and will be; before they exist, he has established their entire plan, and when they come to be as is determined for them, it is according to his glorious design that they fulfill their task.'[63] The only distinction that Fitzmyer makes between Paul's understanding of predestination and Qumran's is that Paul holds that human beings, created in the image of God, are to be 'conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom. 8:29). For Fitzmyer, then, Paul's version of predestination is Christological and universal. By contrast, Byrne considers Paul's use of '*tous pantas*' to be

[60] Byrne, *Romans*, 338. [61] Ibid. 353.

[62] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 628–9.

[63] Ibid. 525.

'universalistic' in the sense of including Jews and Gentiles but not in the sense of 'universal salvation'.

Like Byrne, the Protestant exegete Douglas Moo rejects the view that Paul affirms universal salvation. Commenting on Romans 11:26, 'all Israel will be saved', Moo remarks, 'A few scholars have insisted that this [Paul's use of the word "all"] must indicate the salvation of every single Jew. But Paul writes "all Israel," not "every Israelite"—and the difference is an important one.'[64] Rather than having in view each individual Israelite, Paul is considering Israel corporately (Moo is unsure whether Paul means that salvation will come to 'all Israel' with respect to the Israel that exists over the generations, or whether Paul is referring to 'all Israel' with respect to the Israel that exists at the time when she receives salvation).[65]

How does Moo read 'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined' (Rom. 8:29)? He considers the possibility that Paul intends to suggest that God's foreknowledge of good human actions serves as the basis for God's 'predestination'. But he argues that Paul's use of 'foreknew' has instead to do with 'the divine initiative in the outworking of God's purpose'.[66] He also emphasizes that Paul is speaking here not of every human being but only of 'those who love' God (Rom. 8:28): 'it is only *some* individuals—those who, having been "foreknown," were also "predestined," "called," "justified," and "glorified"—who are the objects of this activity.'[67] Given this emphasis, Moo translates the verb 'proorizein' as 'pre-determine' or 'pre-destine'. Rather than adopting a double-predestination doctrine, however, Moo concludes that 'Paul thinks here of God's predestining us to future glory, that glory which Christ enjoys'.[68]

N. T. Wright's commentary also merits attention. Reading *proorizein* as 'foreordain' in the sense of 'God's plan from the start . . . to create a Christ-shaped family', N. T. Wright argues that God's whole people will be saved by the 'sheer mercy' of God's grace in Christ and the Holy Spirit—but not every single Jew or every single Gentile.[69] Wright's

[64] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 722, cf. 736.

[65] Cf. Joel S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

[66] Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 533.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid. 535.

[69] N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, 601, 694, cf. 687, 696.

presentation of God's gracious plan emphasizes the 'utter gift character' of our salvation.[70] Appealing to the non-competitiveness of divine and human action, he explains that the 'free initiative of God' and 'divine sovereignty' that undergird predestinarian thinking do not mean that Paul (or for that matter any of the New Testament authors) is 'a determinist, believing in a blind plan that determines everything, so that human freedom, responsibility, obedience, and love itself are after all a sham'.[71]

In Wright, as in Moo, we find the classical understanding of predestination: God's eternal plan to bring about the salvation of his people through his grace in Christ and the Holy Spirit, operating in and through our freedom.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the New Testament, reinterpreting and extending the Old Testament's doctrine of election, teaches a doctrine of predestination. God's election of 'the Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16) has Christ Jesus at its centre: God 'chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the

[70] See also Wright's 'Faith, Virtue, Justification, and the Journey to Freedom', in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 472–97, at 488.

[71] Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, 602. By contrast, Ben Witherington considers predestination to be necessarily deterministic, and he rules out election from eternity on the grounds that such a doctrine opposes Paul's emphasis on our free love for God. Translating 'proorizein' as 'destined beforehand', he denies that Paul is 'talking about a pretemporal election plan of God where the outcome is predetermined because of God's sovereign hand'. See Ben Witherington III (with Darlene Hyatt), *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 228. For similar readings of predestinarian texts, see also Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 234–5; Witherington, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 158, 270; Witherington, *The Problem with Evangelical Theology*, 62–86, 139, 254.

Beloved' (Eph. 1:4–6). God's election is not an aloof decree, but rather is the eternal plan of the historical missions of the Son and Spirit for building up the people of God. This plan, in God's providence, encompasses even 'the hairs of your head' (Matt. 10:30).

The revelation of God's merciful election of his people in Christ Jesus fills Paul with tremendous joy. Christ is 'the first-born among many brethren', all of whom are 'predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Rom. 8:29). Human sin does not defeat or frustrate God's salvific plan: nothing 'will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:39). But why then does Paul immediately add that he has 'unceasing anguish in my heart' (Rom. 9:2) because not all Jews have accepted Jesus as the Messiah? If, as the history of election shows, election 'depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy' (Rom. 9:16), why does God not seem to have this mercy towards every rational creature? How can the same Paul who rejoices that God 'did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all' (Rom. 8:32)—an unlimited love—turn around and add that some rational creatures are like 'vessels of wrath made for destruction' (Rom. 9:22)? Why does not God predestine all rational creatures in Christ Jesus, so that all are 'vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory' (Rom. 9:23)?[72] If 'God is love' (1 John 4:16), and if 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son' (John 3:16), then why does God allow the 'son of perdition' (John 17:12) to be lost?

In answer, I suggest throughout this book that Scripture presents its theological interpreters with the challenge of holding together two affirmations about God's eternal plan: God's eternal creative and redemptive love for his rational creatures has no deficiency, limitation, or stinginess; and yet from eternity God's plan of election

[72] Concerns of this kind lead Witherington to argue that Romans 8:28–30 must be 'about the perseverance of the saints, not about the election of some to be saints out of a mass of unredeemed humanity, the choice being determined purely on the basis of God's fiat. That latter notion makes a nonsense of the very concept which is said to be determining this whole matter, namely love—not only God's love for believers, but the believer's love for God. It is "those who love God" who are called according to purpose and whom God foreknew, and that purpose they must embrace freely and fully in love' (Witherington, *The Problem with Evangelical Theology*, 76). This solution, however, is too quick to resolve the tension in Romans.

allows some of his rational creatures freely to remain in their sins. Upholding both of these affirmations, without allowing one to trump the other (and thus accepting the 'unsearchable' and 'inscrutable' character of the mystery (Rom. 11:33)), is, I think, the measure of a proper doctrine of predestination.

2

The Patristic Period: Outlining the Problem

This chapter focuses upon four key figures from the patristic period: Origen, Augustine, Boethius, and John of Damascus. Since Boethius's position augments Augustine's, the three enduring positions are those of Origen, Augustine, and Damascene. Each provides a valuable insight regarding the New Testament's teaching on predestination, and yet their insights are in tension with each other. I suggest that Augustine/Boethius and Damascene (who seeks to adjust Origen's view) each affirms a truth that must characterize any doctrine of predestination: God's eternal election of some and permission of permanent free rebellion, on the one hand, and God's superabundant love for each and every rational creature, on the other. The task of predestinarian doctrine is to bring these two affirmations together without subordinating one to the other.

Origen holds that God's love is such that no rational creature will ultimately be excluded from salvation. Although in the fourth century Gregory of Nyssa adopts Origen's position, John of Damascus speaks for the early Church when he writes, 'One should note that the fall is to the angels just what death is to men. For, just as there is no repentance for men after their death, so is there none for the angels after their fall.'[1] For Augustine, the key is that God's work of salvation

[1] John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith*, in John of Damascus, *Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase, Jr (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1958), II.4, p. 210. See the canons against the Origenists, canon 9, in *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari from the Thirtieth Edition of Henry Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2002 (1955)), p. 85. See also Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Komische Liturgie*, 2nd edn (Einsiedeln: Johannesverlag, 1961). Balthasar values, even if he disagrees with, Brian E. Daley, SJ's 'Apokatastasis and "Honorable Silence"', in *Actes du Symposion sur Maxime le Confesseur* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982), 309–39. See Balthasar, *Dare We Hope 'That*

in us utterly excludes 'our boasting' (Rom. 3:27). Yet Augustine's position, too, encounters some trouble in the early Church. Thus the Council of Arles in the late fifth century rejects some positions that could seem to follow from Augustine's interpretation, for example 'that some have been condemned to death, others have been predestined to life'.[2] The Second Council of Orange in 529 affirms Augustine's insight into the absolute priority of God's grace while denying that 'some have been truly predestined to evil by divine power' and affirming that 'all the baptized with the help and cooperation of Christ can and ought to fulfill what pertains to the salvation of the soul, if they will labor faithfully'.[3]

Shortly before the Second Council of Orange, the theologian and philosopher Boethius—condemned to death by Theodoric the Ostrogoth—enquires into how a providential God could permit unjust suffering. Although Boethius does not take up the topic of predestination, his influential account of God's eternity and foreknowledge lends strong support to Augustine's position.

John of Damascus, indebted to Nemesios of Emesa and John Chrysostom, proposes that God foreknows everything but does not predestine everything. Damascene connects providence and predestination with determinism because he cannot envision how the eternal determination of God's active will would not compel the rational creature. Since God neither wills 'evil to be done nor does He force virtue', Damascene limits the scope of predestination (as opposed to foreknowledge) to those things which God both foreknows and directly commands.[4] Damascene thus maintains God's innocence but at the cost of undermining God's priority and of envisioning God as a competitive cause.

Since these approaches to Scripture's teaching reappear in different forms across the centuries, they deserve close examination. I argue that each position illumines important aspects of the biblical witness. However, Origen's position falters on the terrain of universal salvation, Augustine's (and Boethius's had he not stopped short) on the

All Men Be Saved'?, trans. David Kipp (German 1986; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 63 and 64 n. 38.

[2] Council of Arles, Letter of submission of Lucidus, the priest, in *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 65.

[3] Second Council of Orange, canon 25, in *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 81.

[4] John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith*, II.30, p. 263.

scope of God's love, and Damascene's on God's eternal wisdom and will. The history of the doctrine of predestination can be seen as a set of attempts to balance the diverse insights of these Fathers into the New Testament's teaching.

ORIGEN: THE PURIFICATION OF ALL

Especially through his masterwork *On First Principles* and his *Commentary on Romans*, Origen (185–254) informs all later discussions regarding providence and predestination. Admittedly, it is difficult to ascertain Origen's views with complete confidence. His *Commentary on Romans* is extant only in Rufinus's not always trustworthy Latin translation. While we possess some fragments of the Greek text of *On First Principles*, here too one generally has to rely upon Rufinus's translation.[5] Due to the controversies over Origenism in the Christian East, his manuscripts often do not survive in Greek.

In *On First Principles* Origen affirms that God's providence extends in some way to 'each individual thing',[6] although humans cannot understand how this is so until the afterlife, when God will fulfil our desire to know his whole plan. With respect to human beings at least, all things 'happen not by chance or accident, but by a reason so carefully thought out, and so high above us, that it does not overlook even the number of the hairs of our head, and that not of the saints only but probably of all men'.[7] As regards God's providence over non-rational things, Origen is unsure. He leaves undecided whether Jesus' remark about the 'two sparrows' (Matt. 10:29) should be taken figuratively or literally.

[5] Regarding the difficulty of piecing together Origen's views, see Henri de Lubac, SJ's introduction to Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), pp. vii–ix; Hans Urs von Balthasar's introduction to his *Origen: Spirit and Fire: A Thematic Anthology of His Writings*, trans. Robert J. Daly, SJ (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1984); Joseph T. Lienhard, SJ, Foreword to Thomas P. Scheck, *Origen and the History of Justification: The Legacy of Origen's Commentary on Romans* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), p. vii.

[6] Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973 (1936)), II.xi.5, p. 151.

[7] Ibid.

With similar modesty Origen states that he is 'speaking simply as men' in advancing his views on why God allows diversity in the world.[8] Why is one human being born of Abraham and Sarah, whereas another has cannibals for parents? Origen holds that God could not have created this diversity, because 'there was in him no cause that could give rise to variety and diversity'.[9] Instead, God 'created all his creatures equal and alike'.[10] God allows each rational creature 'by his own voluntary choice either to make progress through the imitation of God or to deteriorate through negligence', so that free will is 'the cause of diversity among rational creatures'.[11] Origen continues: 'God, however, who then felt it just to arrange his creation according to merit, gathered the diversities of minds into the harmony of a single world, so as to furnish, as it were, out of these diverse vessels or souls or minds, one house.'[12]

Origen stresses that God's ordering of the universe is perfectly just, arising not from arbitrariness on God's part but entirely from the free choice of creatures: 'For this reason the Creator will not appear to have been unjust when, according to the above principles, he placed everyone in a position proportionate to his merit; nor will the happiness or unhappiness of anyone's birth, or any condition whatever that may fall to his lot, be supposed to be due to chance.'[13] In this regard Origen cites Paul's discussion of Jacob and Esau in Romans 9:11–14,

[8] Ibid. II.ix.6, p. 134.

[9] Ibid. II.ix.6, p. 134. Tzamalikos argues that for Origen 'what was created in the providential creation was not any *individual* creature' (Tzamalikos, *Origen: Cosmology and Ontology of Time* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 80). In God's 'providential creation' God creates the 'one', whose being is incorporeal. The fall of the 'one' causes 'the destruction of the original unity' (ibid. 79) so that 'what comes forth is "multitude of number"' (ibid. 79)—i.e. the world of spatio-temporal individuals. Mark Julian Edwards denies that Origen holds a doctrine of the pre-existence of souls: see Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 89–97. For the standard view on Origen and the pre-existence of souls, see Henri Crouzel, *Origen: The Life and Thought of the First Great Theologian*, trans. A. S. Worrall (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 160. Augustine's position on this topic has likewise caused controversy. See Ronnie Rombs, *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul: Beyond O'Connell and His Critics* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 211.

[10] *On First Principles*, II.ix.6, p. 134.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid. 134–5. Origen points out that 'some beings who are of higher merit are ordained to suffer with the rest and to perform a duty to those below them, in order that by this means they themselves may become sharers in the endurance of the Creator' (ibid. 136).

and concludes that 'there is no unrighteousness in the fact that Jacob supplanted his brother even in the womb, provided we believe that by reason of his merits in some previous life Jacob had deserved to be loved by God to such an extent as to be worthy of being preferred to his brother'.[14] Origen similarly explains the diversity of the angels. He remarks that 'for antecedent causes a different position of service is prepared by the Creator for each one in proportion to the degree of his merit, which depends on the fact that each, in being created by God as a mind or rational spirit, has personally gained for himself . . . a greater or less share of merit'.[15]

What about retribution after death? Interpreting Jesus' warning that 'the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth' (Matt. 8:12), Origen suggests that the 'outer darkness' may be 'a description of those who through their immersion in the darkness of deep ignorance have become separated from every gleam of reason and intelligence'.[16] Origen appears to hold that rational creatures do not remain forever in this 'darkness of deep ignorance'. He reads Jesus' promise of 'eternal fire' (Matt. 25:41) as signifying the torments of conscience. The disordered soul endures the agonizing punishment of recalling 'every foul and disgraceful act and all unholy conduct'.[17] Fortunately for the soul, these torments operate medicinally by restoring the soul to unity. Origen states that 'when the soul, thus torn and rent asunder, has been tried by the application of fire, it is undoubtedly wrought into a condition of stronger inward connection and renewal'.[18]

On this view, Jesus' words about 'eternal fire' will come true in a certain sense. Nonetheless, the fire will not last eternally, because the

[14] Ibid. II.ix.7, p. 135. For an alternative view see Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, 105.

[15] *On First Principles*, II.ix.7, pp. 135–6. See also Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, trans. Barbara J. Bruce, ed. Cynthia White (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), Homily 23.3, p. 198.

[16] Ibid. II.x.3, p. 145. Edwards denies that this position implies that Origen thinks that 'human souls pass into animal bodies' (Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, 97). Cf. Plato's *Timaeus*, 42c, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 1171.

[17] *On First Principles*, II.x.4, p. 142.

[18] Ibid. II.x.5, p. 143. Tzamalikos argues that Origen's account of *apokatastasis* 'is asserted on account of reasons which are ontological, not historical or moral' (Tzamalikos, *Origen: Philosophy of History and Eschatology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 246–7). Edwards, somewhat implausibly, denies that Origen thought 'that Satan would be saved' (Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, 100).

fire comes from 'the physician of our souls' and burns away all disunity.[19] In the end, no division will remain: the perfected universe will image the one God, in whom, as Origen says, there is 'no cause that could give rise to variety and diversity'.[20] It should be emphasized that this restoration of unity comes about in Christ Jesus. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 15:28—'When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one'—Origen observes that Christ offers to the Father 'the perfect restoration of the entire creation . . . we are to understand this to involve the salvation of those subjected and the restoration of those that have been lost'.[21] In the consummation, all souls, including the stars and the angels, ascend to the unity from which they descended. All souls are 'gradually and by degrees, during the lapse of infinite and immeasurable ages', delivered from 'bondage to decay' (Rom. 8:21).[22] They become 'one spirit' (1 Cor. 6:17) with God so that God is 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28).[23]

In this condition, souls fulfil their thirst for truth. As Origen remarks, God did not give souls this thirst for it to remain unfulfilled, but rather gave it for the purpose of fulfilling it.[24] Given all the things that we have to learn, Origen envisions that the souls of the saints will first go to 'a lecture room or school for souls, in which they may be taught about all that they had seen on earth and may also receive some indications of what is to follow in the future'.[25] Afterwards souls will arrive at 'the heavenly places', and in due time, 'growing at each successive stage', will attain to divine knowledge.[26]

[19] *On First Principles*, II.x.6, p. 143. Likewise Origen interprets Jeremiah 25:15, about God's 'cup of the wine of wrath', as meaning that 'the fury of God's vengeance ministers to the purification of souls' (ibid. 144). He also cites texts from Isaiah, Malachi, Luke, Matthew, and 1 Corinthians. For Origen on Romans 9:22–3, see *On First Principles*, III.i.21–4, pp. 201–10.

[20] *On First Principles*, II, ix.6, p. 134.

[21] Ibid. III.v.7, p. 243. Origen goes on to make clear that how God's providence works in particular individuals and events is known to God alone: see ibid. III.v.8, p. 244.

[22] Ibid. III.vi.6, p. 251.

[23] See ibid. III.vi.6, p. 253 and elsewhere; Origen frequently cites these texts. See also Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, Homily 8.4–5, pp. 89–90.

[24] See *On First Principles*, II.xi.4, p. 150.

[25] Ibid. II.xi, 6, p. 152.

[26] Ibid. II.xi.7, p. 153.

In his discussion of Romans 8 in his *Commentary on Romans*, Origen argues that 'those who are foreknown by God are those upon whom God had placed his own love and affection because he knew what sort of persons they were'.[27] He emphasizes that God's foreknowledge does not cause persons to accept or reject God's love. Rather, our free will causes our salvation.[28] In this sense God does not foreknow or predestine wicked persons, because he knows that they will reject him. Origen states that St Paul's 'aim is to show that those who are foreknown by God are those upon whom God had placed his own love and affection because he knew what sort of persons they were'.[29] After all, if God predetermines salvation through foreknowledge and predestination, then how can God justly punish those who fail? Origen emphasizes that 'the cause of our salvation or destruction does not lie in the foreknowledge of God'.[30] What then is the cause? Our goodness causes God to place his love upon us, and to number us among the saved. Origen warns that any other interpretation involves 'opening a huge window to those who deny that it lies within man's power to be saved'.[31]

Likewise, he interprets Romans 9:18, 'So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills', not as being Paul's view, but as being the logical conclusion of the argument that Paul here seeks to refute—so that Paul means to say, 'This is what you are asserting . . . you who raise the objection that God finds fault and condemns men without reason'.[32] Referring the reader to his more detailed account in *On First Principles*, Origen emphasizes that God foreknows 'the affections and purpose of each

[27] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, Books 6–10, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2002), VII.viii.3, p. 89.

[28] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, VII.viii.6, p. 91. See also H. S. Benjamins, *Eingeordnete Freiheit. Freiheit und Vorsehung bei Origenes* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

[29] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, VII.viii.3, p. 89. For further discussion see Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 87.

[30] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, VII.viii.5, p. 90. Ben Witherington III defends Origen's interpretation, also adopted by John Chrysostom and Theodoret, of Romans 8:28 as 'called according to (our) choice'. See Witherington, *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism and Wesleyanism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), 74.

[31] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, VII.viii.2, p. 88.

[32] Ibid. VII.xvi.4, p. 115.

individual'[33] and, allowing for the freedom of all, uses their free actions to accomplish his salvific purposes. Those who freely purify their souls from sin become God's chosen vessels.[34]

Does God permit those who freely reject him to destroy themselves forever? In his commentary on Romans 11:26, 'all Israel will be saved', Origen states that 'whoever should spurn the purification of the Word of God and of evangelical doctrine reserves himself for sorrows and penal purifications, when the fire of Gehenna purifies with torments the one whom neither apostolic doctrine nor the evangelical word have purified'.[35] Origen assumes that this purification may take 'many ages', but he affirms its ultimate success on the grounds that God, in Christ, shows that he 'wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth'.[36] Emphasizing that Paul describes as 'a mystery' (Rom. 11:25) his teaching about the salvation of 'the full number of the Gentiles' and 'all Israel', Origen cautions his readers that 'the Apostle wanted the present passage to be held as a mystery in order that each of the faithful and perfect might silently conceal its meaning within themselves as the mystery of God and not publish these views indiscriminately to the imperfect and to the less receptive'.[37]

Origen finds in the incarnate Son of God the principle of the unity of God and all creation. Treating Romans 8:32, Origen affirms that 'God has made us precious by pouring out the precious blood of his own Son for us'.[38] In Romans 8:32, Paul asks rhetorically, 'He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?' What does it mean for us to receive 'all things' in Christ? Origen replies that if it is to mean what it says, then it must mean that 'equally with Christ we may possess everything whatsoever

[33] Ibid. VII.xvi.6, p. 116. In his *Origen and the History of Justification*, Thomas Scheck remarks that 'in a way that is similar to Augustine in his early efforts, both Origen and Pelagius explain predestination and election essentially as foreknowledge of merits' (p. 70). See also Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, 96–7.

[34] Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, VII.xix.2, p. 126.

[35] Ibid. VIII.xiii.12, p. 185.

[36] Ibid., quoting 1 Timothy 2:4. By contrast, commenting on Romans 8:28–30, Origen remarks that 'the apostle Judas was called but he was not justified' (VII.viii.2, p. 88), and he goes on to say that 'if "to foreknow" is taken in the sense we have stated above, i.e., "to receive in affection and to unite with oneself," it will be true that just as he has not predestined everyone, so has he not foreknown everyone' (VII.viii.7, p. 91).

[37] Ibid. VIII.xiii.12, p. 185.

[38] Ibid. VII.x.6, p. 94.

God has created, visible and invisible, hidden and manifest, temporal and eternal'.[39] If God will give us 'all things', furthermore, then all things must be given to Christ, and be subject to him. Christ is the heir, and we are co-heirs. The consummated creation is a perfect unity, where in Christ all creation rejoices together.

The key to Origen's position, then, is the rejection of any strong sense of an ultimate diversity of rational creatures. Origen emphasizes the unity of all rational creatures before God. He sees no reason to suppose that God's love would ever cease working upon the rational creature. Infinite love will not fail to unite all rational creatures to himself, and to do so through the freedom of rational creatures. If Origen's position is strong as regards its appreciation for the unity of God's creation and for the power and plenitude of divine love, however, it is weak with respect to its neglect of the repeated New Testament assertions that election or predestination has the divine call at its root and that God allows some rational creatures to rebel permanently against his love.

AUGUSTINE: THE ELECTION OF SOME

Although Augustine's position differs greatly from Origen's, like Origen he affirms that God 'directs the whole of his creation, while allowing to his creatures the freedom to initiate and accomplish activities which are their own'.[40] Augustine too has no doubt that God's good providence, his purpose in creating all things, is not frustrated. In this vein Augustine observes that 'in his providence

[39] Ibid. 95.

[40] Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1984), VII.30, p. 292. For discussion see John A. Maxfield, 'Divine Providence, History, and Progress in Saint Augustine's *City of God*', *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66 (2002): 339–60, especially 345–6. See also Carol Harrison's suggestion that 'we need to ask *why* divine grace is irresistible. Is it because it overrides, coerces, and controls the will, or is it—and we have already seen much evidence to suggest this in our consideration of Augustine's doctrine of will in the first half of this chapter—because it unfailingly, irresistibly, calls forth a response which corresponds with man's deepest desires and motivations, with his true identity and being as a creature of God, so that he is able to respond to it freely, wholeheartedly, and in the way grace intends?' (Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 112).

and omnipotence he [God] assigns to each his own gifts and knows how to turn to good account the good and the evil alike'.[41] Rejoicing in the providence that God shows in governing the natural order so that life can exist in an ordered universe, and not only life but intelligent life, Augustine praises God for bestowing on human nature 'organization, life, senses, and understanding'.[42] God's providence is blameless for the disordered condition in which we as humans find ourselves. Augustine states that 'the defect which darkens and weakens all those natural goods, so that there is a need for illumination and healing, is not derived from its blameless maker but from that original sin that was committed through free will'.[43] Following Romans 3:23, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God', Augustine holds that this rebellion so disorders human nature as to place all humans under the righteous punishment that Paul calls 'the wrath of God' (Rom. 5:9).[44]

For Augustine, then, predestination has to do with God's utterly gracious work of healing sinful creatures who were otherwise justly doomed to everlasting punishment, and elevating them to glorious union with God. Grace is the effect in rational creatures of God's eternal predestination.[45] Summarizing the good news of salvation, Augustine states, 'When we were overwhelmed by the load of our sins, when we had turned away from the contemplation of his light and been blinded by our love of darkness, that is, of wickedness, even then he did not abandon us. He sent to us his Word, who is his only Son, who was born and who suffered in the flesh which he assumed for our sake.'[46] Christ's sacrificial suffering, undertaken in supreme love, provides the providential path for the accomplishment of our

[41] *City of God*, XIV.27, p. 592; cf. XIV.26, p. 592.

[42] Augustine, *On Nature and Grace*, 3.3, in Augustine, *Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), p. 24. For Augustine on the beauty of creation, see Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 130–9. Augustine is working within a philosophical context that presumes God's existence and providence: see John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 260.

[43] Augustine, *On Nature and Grace*, 3.3, p. 24.

[44] See ibid. 3.4, p. 25. Augustine's 'egent gloriam Dei' is stronger than the RSV's 'fall short', but both translations convey the lack of God's presence.

[45] See Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 10.19, in Augustine, *Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, translation revised by Benjamin B. Warfield (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995 (1887)), 507.

[46] *City of God*, VII.31, p. 293.

union with God. As Augustine shows most fully in the *City of God*, Christ's path of humility is the providential path of salvation for humans, afflicted as we are by Adam and Eve's sin of pride.[47]

Augustine interprets Romans 8 in light of the need for proud human beings to learn humility so as truly to be able to love God above self.[48] If humility is the providential path of salvation, then to imagine that one's own efforts determine one's salvation is to fall again into sin. Relying on one's own efforts inverts the true relationship between God and creatures. God does not love us because we are worthy; rather, we are worthy because God loves us. Embracing the providential path of humility means receiving everything, including our good and meritorious actions, as God's gift.

In making this point in *On the Predestination of the Saints*, composed a year or two before his death, Augustine more than once quotes his fellow African St Cyprian of Carthage, who urges that 'we must boast in nothing, since nothing is our own'.[49] The same insight, Augustine suggests, can be found with particular clarity, and with biblical authority, in St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Ruling out the view that human beings are the cause of their inclusion in Christ, Paul emphasizes that 'God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God' (1 Cor. 1:28–9).

[47] See especially Brian E. Daley, SJ, 'A Humble Mediator: The Distinctive Elements of St Augustine's Christology', *Word and Spirit* 9 (1987): 100–17. For Augustine on the transmission of original sin, see Rist, *Augustine*, 317–20.

[48] For discussion see Donato Ogliari, 'The Role of Christ and of the Church in the Light of Augustine's Theory of Predestination', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 79 (2003): 347–64.

[49] Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 3.7, p. 500; 4.8, p. 502; cf. Cyprian, *Testimonies to Quirinus*, III.iv. Augustine wrote *On the Predestination of the Saints* for monks located in southern Gaul, a semi-Pelagian hotbed. For discussion see Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 471. Although in the first edition of his biography Peter Brown argues that Augustine's thought becomes increasingly dark over time, in the second edition Brown adjusts that assessment: see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 231, 445. On this point see especially Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135–56, 248–87. Rist contests the accuracy of Augustine's interpretation of Cyprian in his *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 298; for the opposite view see Mathijs Lamberigts, 'Augustine on Predestination: Some *Quaestiones Disputatae* Revisited', *Augustiniana* 54 (2004): 279–305, at 302.

Is not our assent to Christ, however, obviously determinative for our inclusion in Christ? And does not this assent arise from something inside us, which God's foreknowledge confirms? For Paul, followed by Augustine, the answer to both questions is no. Warning against crediting ourselves for our salvation—'"Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord"' (1 Cor. 1:31, paraphrasing Jer. 9:24)—Paul states unequivocally that God is the 'source of your life in Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. 1:30). Paul returns to this theme a little later when discussing the apostolic ministry: 'So let no one boast of men' (1 Cor. 3:21). God causes the life-giving growth that enables the seed of the gospel preaching to develop in the soul. Without this life-giving growth, which comes neither from the preacher nor from the auditor but only from God, the preaching of the gospel would have no effect. Paul concludes, 'So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth' (1 Cor. 3:7).

Why does God '[give] the growth' to one person but not to another? If the reason lies in God's will, then God's choice might seem arbitrary and unbefitting of the Creator. Why should a good Creator not help all his rational creatures, if he chooses to help some? Even if he helped some more than others, thereby preserving the beauty of diversity, could he not at least help everyone sufficiently to cause them to be united to him? Would not his superabundant goodness and love make this a fitting thing for him to do? For Augustine, however, this line of enquiry misses the central point. The greatest danger to humility, the greatest impetus to pride, consists in supposing that we are the ones who choose God or that God chooses us (in his foreknowledge) because of something worthy in us.[50] Such a supposition, in which love of self returns to the forefront, would immediately cause us to lose our bearings and miss the salutary path that God providentially arranges for us in Christ.[51]

[50] For Augustine on God's 'foreknowledge' (*praescientia*), see e.g. J. Wetzel, 'Predestination, Pelagianism, and Foreknowledge', in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49–58; Barry A. David, 'The Meaning and Usage of "Divine Foreknowledge" in Augustine's *De libero arbitrio* (*lib. arb.*) 3.2.14–4.41', *Augustinian Studies* 32 (2001): 117–55. Augustine reasons that God's foreknowledge of our merits is foreknowledge of his (unmerited) grace as the cause.

[51] Cyril O'Regan, in his *The Heterodox Hegel* (Buffalo, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), observes that 'the theodicy center in Augustine is no longer, as it is in Irenaeus, the incarnation and the salvific passion and death of Jesus Christ, but rather the eternal will of the divine which gratuitously elects some souls to salvation

As his central biblical referent in *On the Predestination of the Saints*, therefore, Augustine chooses 1 Corinthians 4:6–7, where Paul observes, 'I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?'[52] With the position of Pelagius in mind, Augustine begins by affirming that faith is God's gift. God's grace does not merely strengthen our act of faith, but causes it. Even Pelagius, he points out, repudiates the proposition that 'God's grace is given according to our merits'.[53] The grace of the Holy Spirit, in short, causes our merits rather than flows from our merits. It follows that as regards the act of faith and indeed all else, we must say with Paul that 'our sufficiency is from God' (2 Cor. 3:5) rather than from ourselves. Without this understanding of faith as God's gift, Augustine argues, we not only have grounds for boasting 'as if it were not a gift' (1 Cor. 4:7), but indeed we have put ourselves first and God second, thereby demonstrating our prideful reversal of the true order of being.[54]

Lest he seem to be ridiculing those who take away the gift-character of the act of faith, Augustine places himself among those he is criticizing. He notes that prior to the year 396, he too believed that our consent to the preaching of the gospel 'was our own doing, and came to us from ourselves'.[55] Indeed, in an early discussion of some propositions from Romans, Augustine argued that God's election of human beings depends on his foreknowledge of who would believe

out of the mass of perdition of corporate sinfulness and guilt' (pp. 319–20). Certainly God's eternal will is central for Augustine, but it is central precisely as the providential path of humility, revealed in Christ's salvific passion and death.

[52] For Augustine on 1 Timothy 2:4, see Lamberigts, 'Augustine on Predestination', 285–8; Ogliari, 'The Role of Christ and of the Church in the Light of Augustine's Theory of Predestination', 351.

[53] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 2.4, p. 499.

[54] Ibid. 2.6, p. 500.

[55] Ibid. 3.7, p. 500. See Augustine's interpretation of Romans 8:29 in his *Propositions from the Epistles to the Romans*, 55.4, in *Augustine on Romans*, ed. and trans. Paula Fredriksen Landes (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 29. For his change of mind see Augustine, *To Simplician—on Various Questions*, Book I, question 2 (on Romans 9:10–29), in Augustine, *Earlier Writings*, ed. and trans. J. H. S. Burleigh (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 385–406. For discussion that minimizes the discontinuity, see Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, especially 265–87.

God's Word. In other words, Augustine himself belonged to the company of those who make God's grace into a reward for human assent. In hindsight, Augustine finds that he had not taken seriously enough Paul's warning against all human boasting: 'What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?' (1 Cor. 4:7).

Even so, why should not divine 'mercy be bestowed upon the preceding merit of faith', as Augustine held prior to 396?[56] Again, he emphasizes that what is at stake is our sinful tendency towards pride. He asks, 'Do you not see that the sole purpose of the apostle is that man may be humbled, and God alone exalted?'[57] If Jesus' humility is the providential path for true human happiness, then we must stand before God in humility—and this cannot be on the basis of our own merit. Rather, our merit has to be gained in humility, as the fruit of his gifts. Since faith unites us with the humble Jesus, faith too must be a gift, or else faith would be grounds for pride. As Augustine points out, Paul's question, 'For who sees anything different in you?' (1 Cor. 4:7) would be answered by a 'puffed up' person as follows: '"My faith makes me to differ," or "My righteousness".'[58] Paul himself rebukes this proud response: 'What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?' (1 Cor. 4:7). Divine mercy thus cannot be bestowed on the basis of God's foreknowledge that the one receiving mercy will believe. If it were bestowed on this basis, faith would be not God's gift but rather our own work by which we merit God's merciful grace. We would then be entitled to boast about what differentiates us from others, rather than receiving this differentiation as God's free gift. But as it stands, since the act of faith is included among human works,

[56] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 3.7, p. 501.

[57] Ibid. 5.9, p. 502. Mathijs Lamberigts contrasts 'psychological' and 'metaphysical' levels of Augustine's teaching on predestination: see Lamberigts, 'Augustine on Predestination', 304–5. Responding to Georg Kraus's critical appraisal of Augustine on predestination (see Kraus, *Vorherbestimmung. Traditionelle Prädestinationslehre im Licht gegenwärtiger Theologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1977)), Lamberigts praises Augustine on the psychological level but finds that '[o]n a metaphysical level, a cogent reflection on God's almightiness led Augustine to a position in which freedom, love, grace and prayer while present are nevertheless underestimated' (p. 305). For similar criticism of Augustine on the grounds that irresistible grace leaves no real room for human freedom, see Josef Lössl, 'Augustine on Predestination: Consequences for the Reception', *Augustiniana* 52 (2002): 241–72.

[58] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 5.10, p. 503.

'if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace' (Rom. 11:6).

In *On the Predestination of the Saints* Augustine relies upon scriptural passages to make the point that natural powers alone cannot suffice for human beings to make the act of faith. From the Gospel of John, he quotes an interchange between Jesus and the crowd: 'Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent"' (John 6:28–9). If faith is, as Jesus says, 'the work of God', it is not something that we do by our own resources. God must accomplish it in us, through us. Similarly Augustine quotes Jesus' remark, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me' (John 6:44). As Augustine observes, those who are 'taught by God' and who 'learned from the Father' receive the gift of faith in Christ, which the Trinity teaches them interiorly.[59]

From Jesus' discourse in the Gospel of John and in the other gospels, it seems clear that God does not teach every rational creature faith. But why does he not? Augustine has a difficult time with this question, because he insists that the gift of grace 'is rejected by no hard heart, because it is given for the sake of first taking away the hardness of the heart'.[60] The transformative power of God's grace cannot be limited. If God's interior teaching is the only way humans can come to Christ, however, it would seem that the good God should teach everyone faith. What answer, then, can Augustine give?

Following Paul, Augustine responds that just as humans cannot boast of giving themselves faith, so neither can humans boast of understanding fully God's predestination. In both cases humility—trusting

[59] See ibid. 8.13, p. 504; 8.15, p. 506. On Christ's predestination and ours as members of his Body, see Ogliari, 'The Role of Christ and of the Church in the Light of Augustine's Theory of Predestination', 352–4. Ogliari identifies what he deems an 'insuperable tension' (p. 355): 'If predestination belongs to God's inscrutable and eternal decree, just what is the precise weight of Christ's redeeming role? Would not his mediation simply mean that it is "piloted" by God's predestination *ab aeternitate*?' (p. 354). For a similar criticism from a different angle (namely, a defence of Pelagius's theology), see Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 125–32.

[60] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 8.13, p. 505.

in God—is required. God deserves all praise for generously and graciously saving some, since human beings have cut themselves off from God by sin. Beyond praising what God does, Augustine can say no more, other than that God's 'judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out' (Rom. 11:33). He follows Paul in cautioning that humans should not, for lack of a full answer, reject God's wisdom and goodness: 'For it is better in this case for us to hear or to say, "O man, who are you that replies against God?" [Rom. 9:20] than to dare to speak as if we could know what He has chosen to be kept secret.'[61] Although Augustine cannot boast of knowing the rationale of God's plan, he does not thereby commit himself to an arbitrary God. As he says, God 'could not will anything unrighteous'.[62] In refusing to boast either with respect to righteousness or with respect to knowledge, the believer places himself or herself into the hands of the wise and good God whose actions are merciful and just.

If the biblical affirmation of the priority and causality of God's grace leads to a difficulty as regards why God does not save all, nonetheless it provides assurance that some will be saved. By contrast, the alternative position, namely that a purely human act of faith provides the basis for grace's activity in the believer, leaves open the possibility or even the likelihood that none could be saved, given the readily apparent pervasiveness of sin. Without divine assistance, the fallen human will could not support the intellect's assent to God in the act of faith. Just as Adam and Eve's trust in themselves led to death rather than to their becoming 'like God', so also those who trust

[61] Ibid. 8.16, p. 506. John Rist describes Augustine's position as 'his extraordinary and ultimately unintelligible limitation of the love of God' (Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 288). Rist summarizes the difficulty inherent in Augustine's position: Augustine on the one hand holds that God is omnipotent, just, and merciful, and 'that whatever God creates is created deliberately by his loving will, not merely by the logical necessity of his creative nature itself' (p. 265). Yet on the other hand, Augustine holds that God from eternity wills only some of his rational creatures to be elect: God's 'original intention was to intervene to save some and to allow the loss of others' (p. 270). This raises 'the possibility of God's love being restricted, despite his gift of his Son' (p. 271). Gene Fendt argues that Augustine's doctrine of predestination overreaches, despite Augustine's correct emphasis on grace, because of the logic of his debate against the Pelagians: see Fendt, 'Between a Pelagian Rock and a Hard Predestinarianism: The Currents of Controversy in *City of God* 11 and 12', *Journal of Religion* 81 (2001): 211–27. For a positive appraisal of Augustine's position, see Paul Rigby, 'The Role of God's "Inscrutable Judgments" in Augustine's Doctrine of Predestination', *Augustinian Studies* 33 (2002): 213–22.

[62] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 8.16, p. 506.

in human resources as the foundation of grace have chosen a radically untrustworthy foundation. In this regard Augustine remarks, 'I marvel that men would rather entrust themselves to their own weakness, than to the strength of God's promise.'[63]

Despite his marvelling, Augustine is of course aware that one major rationale for his opponents' position is the fear that God might not have included oneself or one's loved ones among the predestined. His reply to this objection emphasizes the foolishness of human boasting: 'But do you say, God's will concerning myself is to me uncertain? What then? Is your own will concerning yourself certain to you? and do you not fear—"Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" [1 Cor. 10:12]?'[64] Since human boasting is empty of power, it makes much more sense to boast in God. As Augustine puts it, 'Since, then, both are uncertain, why does not man commit his faith, hope, and love to the stronger will, rather than to the weaker?'[65] By holding to the efficacy of grace ('the stronger will'), furthermore, Augustine can account for the passages in Romans that affirm predestination. As an example Augustine gives the case of Jacob and Esau in Romans 9:11, 'though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she [Rebecca] was told, "The elder will serve the younger"'.[66] God's call (grace), rather than anything in Jacob, makes the difference.

Augustine concludes *On the Predestination of the Saints* by examining further biblical texts that support his position. As he has done throughout the treatise, he emphasizes that God calls or elects humans 'that they may believe', not because they will believe.[67] Commenting on Jesus' statement to his disciples, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you' (John 15:16), he points out that their election precedes their faith. God predestined them in the order of grace so that they would believe, rather than because they were going to believe. Otherwise Jesus could not have said, 'You did not choose me'; had Jesus chosen them because

[63] Ibid. 11.21, p. 508. [64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid. For concerns see Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 281; Francesca Aran Murphy, *God Is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 330.

[66] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 16.32, p. 513.

[67] Ibid. 17.34, p. 515. Augustine comments: 'I ask, who can hear the Lord saying, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," and can dare to say that men believe in order to be elected, when they are rather elected to believe' (ibid.).

they would believe, he would have done so on the basis of his foreknowledge that they chose him. The priority, in other words, belongs to God's grace, which brings about faith. Augustine also discusses at length Ephesians 1, where predestination similarly causes holiness rather than rewards foreseen holiness. More briefly he mentions Philippians 2:13, 'for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure'. His opponents suppose that when God predestines us and works in us, God does so because he foresees that our own faith will merit this further grace. Augustine, as we have seen, holds on the contrary that when God 'predestinated us, He foreknew His own work by which He makes us holy and immaculate'.[68] This divine work includes the gift of faith, as is also indicated by Paul's references to 'the word of God, which is at work in you believers' (1 Thess. 2:13) and to 'a door for the word' (Col. 4:3), as well as by texts from the Psalms, Proverbs, and elsewhere.[69]

The strength of Augustine's approach to predestination consists in its attention to the pattern of humility and pride and to the biblical testimony to faith being utterly God's gift, in light of our sinfulness and weakness. Augustine underscores God's saving power in our lives through the missions of the Son and Spirit. Acting from eternity, the Creator and Redeemer draws rational creatures to himself, so that we have no grounds for boasting. God's centrality confirms Paul's insistence that 'those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified' (Rom. 8:30). The weakness of Augustine's approach, however, consists in its rather severe limitation of God's eternal love for

[68] Ibid. 19.38, p. 517. Joseph Wawrykow comments regarding Augustine's late writings on grace, including *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 'What is innovative in these final writings is the insistence that in the case of the saved, predestination is toward eternal life (and not just to conversion) and a second operative grace, that of perseverance, must be given for the converted to continue successfully on the path to God as end' (Wawrykow, 'Grace', in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 209).

[69] *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 19.39, p. 517. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, emphasizes that Augustine also affirms that God asks nothing impossible; salvation is, in some sense, possible for every rational creature. For Garrigou-Lagrange, this point leads into the later Thomistic distinction between 'sufficient' and 'efficacious' grace. See Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, trans. Dom Bede Rose, OSB (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1998), 45–6, 234–9; Augustine, *On Nature and Grace*, 43.50, p. 60.

some rational creatures, which seems to ill accord with Christ Jesus' revelation of the intensity of God's love for human beings.

BOETHIUS: PROVIDENCE, FOREKNOWLEDGE, AND ETERNITY

Accused of treason by Theodoric the Ostrogoth, under whom he had served as consul in Rome, Boethius (480–524) composed *The Consolation of Philosophy* while in prison awaiting execution.[70] The book begins with an image of Boethius grieving in his bed. He begs to know how it has come to pass that 'whatever an evil man conceives can actually be done to the innocent'.[71] How could a provident God allow such a state of affairs? In poetic verse, he beseeches the orderer of nature to extend order to the human realm: 'Look on this wretched earth, whoever you are who bind the world with law! Of that great work far from the meanest part we men are buffeted by fortune's seas. Ruler, restrain their rushing waves and make the earth steady with that stability of law by which you rule the vastness of the heavens.'[72]

His interlocutor, Lady Philosophy, rejects the justice of his complaint. True philosophical virtue, she suggests, would not be dismayed by enduring persecution and the loss of worldly goods. She begins by underscoring the foundation for everything that follows: his belief that the universe at least, in its natural ordering, exhibits the providence of the Creator God. Once he has reaffirmed this point, she asks him towards what end God governs the universe. Under her prompting, he recalls that the end is God himself. Lady Philosophy then explains to him that he has foolishly staked his happiness on the ever-turning wheel of fortune, and thus has no right to complain if it

[70] For the historical context of Boethius's writings, see Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), especially 1–68.

[71] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester, in Boethius, *The Theological Tractates* and *The Consolation of Philosophy*, 2nd edn, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), I.iv, p. 153. His complaints accord with those of Cicero's Cotta, representative of the Academic school of philosophy: see Cicero, *De natura deorum*, trans. H. Rackham, in Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), Book III.

[72] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, I.v, p. 161.

turns.[73] He should recall that the goods of fortune, no matter how great, could never satisfy him. While he finds this point incontestable, and valuable so far as it goes, he replies to her that it does not heal his sense of profound injustice. Why should fortune be so ungoverned by God's law? Why does God permit any earthly felicity at all, if it is to be so painfully removed?

In response, Lady Philosophy notes that Boethius still enjoys many elements of worldly felicity. Given this fact, his present misery demonstrates simply that happiness cannot be found in goods external to the soul. As the soul's highest good, happiness cannot be a good that can be lost by bad fortune, since if such happiness could be lost then it would not be the highest good. Since the soul is immortal (a point that Boethius grants), happiness too must be found in an immortal, spiritual good. To drive home her point, Lady Philosophy surveys worldly wealth, power, and glory, and shows the ephemeral and unsatisfying character of each. She points out, in addition, that bad fortune teaches 'the fragility of mortal happiness', and thereby rescues people who have begun to cleave to the external goods of this world.[74] In the midst of bad fortune, likewise, we learn who our true friends are. In poetic verse, she argues that love, which binds true friends, is in fact '[w]hat binds all things to order, governing earth and sea and sky'.[75] Humans become true friends when they participate in 'the love that rules the stars'.[76] In friendship, in other words, Boethius can find the image of the natural world's order that had seemed lacking in the human realm.

To be perfect, happiness must contain all goods for which human beings seek. Otherwise there would remain a further desire for an absent good, and therefore perfect happiness would not yet have been attained. All the goods, therefore, must be sought as a unity, and nothing mortal or temporal could be this all-embracing unity. The earthly goods that we pursue may image the true good, but they cannot be this true good in which happiness resides. In a poetic prayer to God, Lady Philosophy now both identifies the true Good and beseeches its aid: 'O you who in perpetual order govern the

[73] Chadwick notes that 'Book ii is almost wholly Stoic in its inspiration, with many parallels in Seneca and in the *Consolation to Apollonius* among the works of Plutarch. Cicero's *Tusculans* are also much used' (Chadwick, *Boethius*, 228).

[74] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, II.viii, p. 225.

[75] Ibid. II.viii., p. 227.

[76] Ibid.

universe, Creator of heaven and earth, who bid time ever move, and resting still, grant motion to all else. . . . Grant, Father, to my mind to rise to your majestic seat, grant me to wander by the source of good, grant light to see, to fix the clear sight of my mind on you.'[77] This hymn, whose theology and cosmology largely follow that of Plato's *Timaeus*, reveals the true Good, who for creatures is the 'beginning, driver, leader, pathway, end'.[78]

Granted that the good God rules the universe, however, why does he not only permit horrendous evil, but also seemingly often allow it to go unpunished? Lady Philosophy replies that although it might appear that in God's 'most well arranged house . . . the worthless vessels were cherished while the precious ones were allowed to get filthy', in fact the opposite is the case.[79] God rewards the good with power and success, and he punishes the wicked. How so? She notes that to be powerful means to be able to attain what one seeks. Since all human beings seek happiness, it follows that only good persons are powerful, since only the good can attain happiness. The wicked are hindered in their pursuit of happiness by the fact that they cleave to particular goods, such as wealth, rather than understanding that particular goods are to be loved not in themselves but as ordered to the good of happiness, which is found in God. The virtues of good persons enable them to love God above creatures, and so to attain, as the reward of their actions, the true good towards which their natural inclinations order them. By contrast, the wicked are weak failures. Their wickedness means that they have lost their proper being, and far from being powerful, they can no longer do what they were created to do. Since evil is a lack of being, their wicked deeds themselves bear the mark of nothingness.[80] Furthermore, the wicked cannot thwart the reward of the good, since virtue bears in itself its own reward, namely the happiness of participation in God.

[77] Ibid. III.ix, pp. 273, 75. Chadwick notes, 'The justly famed poem *O qui perpetua* (iii. m. 9) which marks the literary and philosophical turning point of the *Consolation* has long been recognized to be intimately dependent for the detail of its ideas on passages not only in Plato's *Timaeus* but also in Proclus' *Timaeus* commentary' (Chadwick, *Boethius*, 129, cf. 234–5).

[78] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, III.x, p. 275.

[79] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, IV.i, p. 315.

[80] See ibid. IV.ii, p. 327. Lady Philosophy goes on to say, with Plato, that wickedness deprives the human being of full humanity: 'So he who having left goodness aside has ceased to be a man, since he cannot pass over into the divine state, turns into a beast' (IV.iii, p. 335). John Marenbon points out that Boethius in this section draws heavily on Plato's *Gorgias* (John Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 115, cf. 117; see also Chadwick, *Boethius*, 240–1).

These arguments persuade Boethius, but he points out that she has not yet addressed the problem of why God allows the wicked to persecute the good. Surely such persecution is not nothing? Why does God allow the wicked to do evil? Lady Philosophy replies that God gives the wicked free range for a very short period of time, especially in comparison to the eternal punishment that the wicked will suffer.[81] When Boethius raises a concern about eternal punishment, she shows that punishment makes the wicked more happy than they would otherwise be, on the grounds that their wretchedness is somewhat alleviated by the possession of a good, namely the good of just punishment.[82] Furthermore, wicked deeds are more harmful to the one who does them than to those who suffer from them. In the eyes of the world, she admits, this statement would appear baseless; but she observes that the soul of the one who commits evil deeds is diminished by them, whereas the souls of those who suffer from such deeds are not diminished, unless they themselves become wicked.

Boethius, however, again presses her to explain why God, the governor of the universe, allows 'prison, death and the other torments of the punishments of the law' to be so regularly meted out to the innocent rather than to the guilty.[83] In a well-governed city, the good would not be imprisoned and executed. If God is the governor of the city (the cosmos), why do the good endure what in justice is due solely to the wicked?

Lady Philosophy observes that in order to answer this question, she will have to explore the most difficult subjects: 'the singleness of providence, the course of fate, the suddenness of chance, the knowledge and predestination of God, and the freedom of the will'.[84] She defines providence as God's knowledge of his ordering of all things to their end. What the ancient philosophers called 'fate' unfolds God's providential plan in time and space. Fate 'binds the acts and fortunes of men in an unbreakable chain of causes'.[85] Nonetheless, creatures who are more like God possess freedom. Since God creates all

[81] See *The Consolation of Philosophy*, IV.iv, p. 341.
[82] See ibid. IV.iv, p. 345.
[83] Ibid. IV.v, p. 353.
[84] Ibid. IV.vi, p. 357.
[85] Ibid., p. 363. On 'fate' see Chadwick, *Boethius*, 242: 'The Neoplatonists from Plotinus onwards (*Enn.* iii, 3, 5, 14) distinguish between providence, which concerns the higher realm, and fate which is another name for the unalterable chain of cause and effect in this inferior and determined world.'

creatures to seek the good, God's ordering does not cause the fall of any free creature. Instead, God governs his free creatures so that even their bad fortune helps them, whether as a punishment or as a purification. For example, providence permits the good to endure affliction so that 'the virtues of their minds may be strengthened by the use and practice of patience'.[86] While aware that God's plan far exceeds her comprehension, she concludes that both bad and good fortune are good for those who love God.[87]

Lady Philosophy also explores free will, which rational creatures possess more fully according to the degree in which their wills are in accord with the divine will. Providence includes rational creatures' exercise of free will, so that God 'disposes all that is predestined to each according to his deserts'.[88] Nonetheless, Boethius rejects the view that God's foreknowledge means simply that 'since something is going to be, it cannot be hidden from divine providence'.[89] To suppose that God foreknows something because it is going to happen would be to turn the order between Creator and creatures 'upside-down'.[90] God, who is the causal 'fount of all things', is not 'more ancient than created things by some amount of time, but rather by his own simplicity of nature'.[91] In his eternal present, utterly transcending temporality, he sees all things at once rather than seeing them 'before' they happen. Thus God's eternal providence and foreknowledge do not obstruct human freedom.

[86] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, IV.vi, p. 367.

[87] As Marenbon notes, this conclusion indicates the development of Philosophy's argument over the course of the *Consolation*: 'In IV.7, Philosophy uses what she has now established to revisit the subject of fortune, discussed in Book II. What was seen then as an inexplicable, inconstant dealing out of prosperity and adversity is now seen to be the unfolding by fate of divine providence' (Marenbon, *Boethius*, 120).

[88] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, V.ii, p. 393.

[89] Ibid. V.iii, p. 395.

[90] Ibid., p. 397; see also V.vi, p. 433.

[91] *The Consolation of Philosophy*, V.iii, p. 399; V.vi, p. 425. Marenbon and Chadwick emphasize the influence of Iamblichus, Proclus, and Simplicius (Marenbon, *Boethius*, 134; Chadwick, *Boethius*, 129, 140, 246). For discussion of Boethius's view of divine eternity see Matthew L. Lamb, *Eternity, Time, and the Life of Wisdom* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 37–44; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 131–6; Marenbon, *Boethius*, 136–8; Harm J. M. J. Goris, *Free Creatures of an Eternal God: Thomas Aquinas on God's Infallible Foreknowledge and Irresistible Will* (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 233–4. For an eccentric reading of the last two chapters of *The Consolation of Philosophy*—arguing that Boethius intended these chapters to be a failure—see Joel C. Relihan, *The Prisoner's Philosophy: Life and Death in Boethius's Consolation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

Given the situation in which Boethius was writing, *The Consolation of Philosophy* naturally devotes most of its attention to accounting for the suffering of the just. Readers have long wished that Boethius had said more about God's providence in the context of God's eternity and foreknowledge. Even so, his relatively brief discussion of these topics at the end of his book has been highly influential. His distinction between providence and foreknowledge helps to articulate why God is not the cause of all things in the same way, just as his analysis of God's eternity takes care of certain difficulties regarding foreknowledge (as well as avoiding a temporal god). Affirming both God's eternal causality and the free failure of the wicked remains problematic, however. Boethius does not address this problem (or predestination for that matter), probably because topics pertaining to grace and glory do not pertain to Lady Philosophy.

JOHN OF DAMASCUS: HUMAN FREEDOM

In his *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, St John of Damascus (676–749) treats providence after his discussion of human free will in Book II, rather than in Book I, which treats God.[92] This placement shows Damascene's particular concern to account for human responsibility for sin. As we will see, his view of God's foreknowledge offers an alternative to that of Boethius, just as his view of predestination offers an alternative to those of both Origen and Augustine.

Damascene defines providence as the Creator God's will by which all things 'receive suitable guidance through to their end'.[93] Because God's will accords with his wisdom, all that is subject to providence happens 'in the best manner and that most befitting God, so that it

[92] As Andrew Louth observes regarding the placement of Damascene's discussion of providence, foreknowledge, and predestination, Damascene here follows 'his principal source for this section, Nemesios's *On Human Nature*, which is . . . an apologetic work that builds up to a defence of divine providence' (Louth, *St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 140). See also R. W. Sharples, 'Nemesius of Emesa and Some Theories of Divine Providence', *Vigiliae Christianae* 37 (1983): 141–56; Peter Bouteneff, 'The Two Wills of God: Providence in St John of Damascus,' *Studia Patristica* 42 (2006): 291–6.

[93] John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith*, II.29, p. 260. This definition comes from Nemesios: see Louth, *St John Damascene*, 140–1.

could not have happened in a better way'.[94] God's will cannot be frustrated, and the goodness of his will means that he provides for his creatures 'in the very best way'.[95] On this basis Damascene teaches that we should gratefully receive 'all the works of providence' as wise and good.[96]

Are all events, then, to be celebrated as 'works of providence', performed 'in the very best way'? Damascene answers no. He explains that the thoughts, actions, and events that arise from our free will 'do not belong to providence'.[97] In addition, among those events that belong to providence, he distinguishes between those that occur due to God's active providence, and those that occur solely by permission. God's active providence causes only events that are clearly good. By contrast God solely permits evil events, such as the suffering of the righteous, although God draws good out of evil. The suffering of the righteous falls under God's providence because it involves enduring the free acts of others, as opposed to acting freely upon others; and it falls under divine permissive providence because God actively wills only good.[98]

How should we understand Damascene's position that things which 'depend upon us do not belong to providence'?[99] He is certainly not denying the cooperation of God in every righteous free action: on the contrary, when we choose to do a good act, the good act requires for its accomplishment that God 'in accordance with His foreknowledge justly co-operates with those who in right conscience choose the good'.[100] While God does not providentially cause our good actions, in his foreknowledge he cooperates with us in accomplishing them. Why then does Damascene separate providence so strongly from

[94] *The Orthodox Faith*, II.29, p. 260. [95] Ibid. [96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid. 261. Louth rightly remarks, 'This would provide a potentially massive exception to the remit of divine providence, and it is not clear to me that it is an exception that could be carried through without effectively denying God's providential care over human affairs' (Louth, *St John Damascene*, 142).

[98] For discussion see Bouteneff, 'The Two Wills of God', 295–6. Given 'God's unyielding respect for the freely made choices of human beings', Bouteneff concludes, 'For John, providence can be called the secondary will of God, one which is brought to the service of his primary will. This latter is effectively God's essential will for universal salvation, while the secondary will permits things to happen which may seem quite contrary to that goal of salvation. They are "willed" nonetheless, in the full knowledge that they may become the very means of return and growth God-ward' (p. 296).

[99] John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith*, II.29, 261.

[100] Ibid. 262.

created free action? In addition to his concern to preserve our free will, he aims thereby to exonerate God's providence from complicity in our wicked actions.

In order for us to accomplish bad actions, however, God must abandon us. Damascene describes two kinds of abandonment. The first kind, like providential permission, has a particular good in view. In these cases God temporarily abandons the person, thereby allowing the person to accomplish the bad action. God does this either for the sinner's ultimate 'correction, salvation, and glory', or 'to give others an object for emulation and imitation', or for God's glory.[101] The second kind of abandonment also allows the accomplishment of the bad action, but it does so without any hope for redeeming the sinner. Because God can in no way be complicit with evil, he must sometimes utterly abandon the sinner. In such cases 'God has done everything for a man's salvation, yet the man of his own accord remains obdurate and uncured, or rather, incorrigible, and is then given over to absolute perdition, like Judas'.[102]

By means of this second kind of abandonment, Damascene explains how God permits the everlasting torment of unrepentant rational creatures in Hell. Why does God not preserve or convert every rational creature before it is too late? For Damascene, as we have seen, the answer is that providence does not govern free actions but only cooperates with human free choice so as to bring about good actions. In his cooperation with us, God seeks to cure and elevate us to union with him. Part of this curative process includes medicinally abandoning us when we choose to sin. Those who consistently resist the cures that God attempts through his cooperation and medicinal abandonment, however, become 'obdurate and uncured'. Such persons become irrevocably enslaved to sin. In accord with his foreknowledge, God justly and permanently abandons such sinners. Lest it seem that Damascene has explained too much, he immediately adds that 'the ways of God's providence are many', so that 'they can neither be explained in words nor grasped by the mind'.[103] Although we can affirm that some are lost, we cannot pin down conceptually how and why this occurs, beyond affirming God's absolute innocence.

Damascene emphasizes that 'for those who accept them with thanksgiving the attacks of adversity redound to salvation and definitely

[101] Ibid. 262. [102] Ibid. [103] Ibid.

become instruments of aid'.[104] Nor, simply speaking, does God will the everlasting loss of anyone. Thus Damascene urges the distinction between the antecedent and consequent will of God: 'One should also bear in mind that God antecedently wills all to be saved and to attain to His kingdom.'[105] God's antecedent will is more than a mere postulate. Rather, his antecedent will contains the very rationale of creation, namely, God's desire to share his goodness. God 'did not form us to be chastised'.[106]

Why then do some rational creatures end up being everlastingly chastised? Damascene explains that 'God foreknows all things but . . . He does not predestine them all'.[107] Specifically, the things that arise from the free will of rational creatures are foreknown but not predestined. God knows that both virtuous acts and sinful acts will happen, but he causes neither virtuous nor sinful acts. In Damascene's view, because predestination unites God's foreknowledge with the determinative command of his will, predestination would remove true freedom (and thus the merit of good acts) as well as implicate God in evil acts. For this reason, God solely preordains things that do not depend on free creatures, although he certainly 'wills antecedently and approves' our good actions, with which he cooperates so as to bring them to accomplishment.[108]

By sharing his goodness without in any way compelling his rational creatures to be good, God risks that his rational creatures will misuse the good gifts that they receive; indeed God foreknows that some will do so. Since 'in so far as He is good He provides' for all rational creatures,[109] he does not fail to provide for those who, by his permission and despite his

[104] Ibid. Damascene points out that 'God provides for all creation, and through all creation He does good and instructs, oftentimes using even the demons themselves for this purpose, as in the case of Job and in that of the swine' (p. 263).

[105] Ibid. 262.

[106] Ibid. 262–3. Louth comments, 'This seems to me a much more subtle doctrine than John's earlier exclusion from providence of what depends on us: rather, providence works through human beings for good, not overriding free will, but supporting its efforts towards the good' (Louth, *St John Damascene*, 143).

[107] *The Orthodox Faith*, II.30, p. 263. The Greek here is 'prognôsis' (foreknowledge) and 'proorismos' (predestination, predetermination). Regarding foreknowledge and predestination, John Rist observes, 'The two questions were originally distinct, coming from different historical worlds, and foreknowledge need not, of itself, entail predestination' (Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 269).

[108] *The Orthodox Faith*, II.29, p. 263.

[109] Ibid. 260.

many efforts to cure and instruct, harden themselves in evil. For such sinners, his consequent will provides the justice of punishment.[110] Thus he enables us to be as good as we can be, and fulfils his creative aim of sharing his goodness as much as possible. In this way God 'has already decided all things beforehand in accordance with His goodness and justice'.[111]

As 'the source and author of all good', God not only created human nature in grace and virtue, but also placed Adam and Eve 'in the paradise which was both of the mind and the senses' and gave them governance over the things of the earth.[112] God providently withheld the gift of incorruptibility from Adam and Eve prior to their being tested, so that they would not make a rash and irrevocable decision against God: 'For it was by reason of his incorruptibility that, after his fall by deliberate choice, the Devil became unrepentingly and immoveably rooted in evil.'[113] In both the devil's case and in that of human beings, 'made in the image of God rational, understanding, and free',[114] God gave everything necessary for salvation.

Damascene explains the fall in terms of human freedom. As already noted, good works require God's help: 'we are powerless either to will good or to do it' without God's cooperation.[115] This is so because virtuous acts are in accord with our nature, and God cooperates with our natural inclination. Our perseverance in virtue, however, 'depends on ourselves', even though God calls us to virtue and seeks to guide us in virtue.[116] To persevere in virtue means simply to follow our own rational nature. If we fall away from our natural inclination, the cause is not that God has withheld anything from us. Neither does the devil, in tempting us, compel our wills. We are entirely free in our decision to follow nature and be virtuous, or to distort our nature by following the path of privation.

[110] In his early *Dialogue against the Manichees*, Damascene explains that eternal punishment is not something added by God, but rather consists in the suffering intrinsic to a disordered will: see Louth, *St John Damascene*, 68–9.

[111] *The Orthodox Faith*, II.30, p. 264.

[112] II.30, pp. 264, 265.

[113] II.30, p. 265. For the same point in Damascene's *Dialogue against the Manichees*, see Louth, *St John Damascene*, 69. Louth observes that Damascene's 'doctrine of eternal punishment is essentially that of Maximos the Confessor' (ibid., n. 31).

[114] *The Orthodox Faith*, II.30, p. 264.

[115] II.30, p. 264. [116] Ibid.

Created to merit union with God, human freedom had to be put to the test in order to attain freely that for which it was made.[117] When God permitted the devil to test Adam and Eve, however, they rebelled against God. According to Damascene, God foresaw this future, and therefore planned for the cycle of birth and death by creating 'a female as a helpmate for him [Adam] of his own kind to aid him in the establishment of the race after the fall by succession through the process of begetting'.[118] Thus woman came to be through God's foreknowing of the fall. In other ways the fall greatly diminishes humans. Human freedom suffers from the fall's 'subordinating soul to body', so that now the pleasures of this world enslave humans, who sinfully cleave to matter rather than cleaving to God.[119] As a result of cleaving to material things, humans war with each other rather than warring with their true common enemy, the devil.

Yet, in allowing these things, God also foreknows and wills his own Incarnation. As Damascene says, through Christ's action 'the worship of demons has ceased. Creation has been sanctified with the divine blood. Altars and temples of idols have been overthrown. Knowledge of God has been implanted. The consubstantial Trinity, the uncreated Godhead is worshiped. . . . Virtue is practiced. Hope of resurrection has been granted.'[120] Without God's work in Christ, humans could not have escaped everlasting slavery to sin. Just as God pours out his gifts in creation, therefore, so also Damascene emphasizes that our salvation comes from God's gift in Christ. He rejoices over the accomplishment in us of God's providential plan: 'Well done, O Christ, O Wisdom and Power and Word of God, and God almighty! What should we resourceless people give Thee in return for all things? For all things are Thine and Thou askest nothing of us but that we be saved. Even this Thou hast given us, and by Thy ineffable goodness Thou art grateful to those who accept it.'[121] In Christ, God saves us without overwhelming our freedom. He thereby enables us to attain the fulfilment for which he created our freedom.

[117] Louth notes that in his *Dialogue against the Manichees*, Damascene argues that God created free creatures despite foreknowing their rebellion, because 'virtue is the greatest good, and is possible only for rational beings who are free and unconstrained' (Louth, *St John Damascene*, 69).

[118] *The Orthodox Faith*, II.30, p. 264. For the patristic context of this view, see Louth, *St John Damascene*, 143–4.

[119] II.30, p. 265. [120] IV.4, p. 338. [121] IV.4, p. 339.

By strictly separating God's foreknowledge from predestination, Damascene places at the forefront the freedom of rational creatures. In bringing about the good plan that he foreknows, God cooperates with our free choice. No good comes about that is not the fruit of God's cooperation. In this framework, the distinction between God's antecedent will and his consequent will plays a significant role, since God's consequent will includes his engagement with our freedom. Damascene's position, however, arguably suffers from a twofold weakness. First, his insistence that God only cooperates with humans seems contrary to Paul's teaching on grace, with deleterious consequences for God's power to save sinners. Second, given the restrictions that he places on God's providence and predestination, he fails to do justice to the fact that God's action is from eternity and puts in doubt whether God can indeed accomplish his good purposes.

CONCLUSION

In their interpretations of Scripture's teaching on predestination, Origen, Augustine/Boethius, and John of Damascus disagree about the ultimate diversity of rational creatures. Origen holds that God's infinite love cannot coexist with an eternal will to permit ultimate diversity among rational creatures, at least in any strong sense. He therefore interprets biblical references to predestination in a manner that allows for the salvation of all. Yet the New Testament consistently indicates that God does not save all rational creatures. Augustine and Boethius focus upon the radical priority of God. As Boethius puts it, 'how upside-down it is that it should be said that the cause of eternal foreknowledge is the occurrence of temporal things!'[122] By extending this point to predestination, however, Augustine has trouble with the extent of God's love: how is it that God's eternal plan for his causal sharing of goodness has in view rational creatures whose goodness is as severely crimped as Satan's? Damascene holds that rational creatures cannot frustrate God's eternal foreknowledge but

[122] *The Consolation of Philosophy* V.iii, p. 397 (the Latin reads, 'Iam vero quam praeposterum est ut aeternae praescientiae temporalium rerum eventus causa esse dicatur').

can frustrate God's antecedent will: in the cooperation between God's will and the creature's will, the creature can reject God. The difficulty for Damascene is God's gracious gifting from eternity, which causes the unmerited transformation that is the justification of the sinner. God's eternal knowledge of his gracious gifting is 'predestination'.

The strengths of the three approaches arise from their attention to different aspects of Scripture. Damascene's proposal that created freedom is the key to understanding God's consequent will—his permission of some rational creatures to rebel permanently against him—fits with numerous biblical passages. As God says to Cain: 'If you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it' (Gen. 4:7). Recall too God's words through the prophet Ezekiel: 'Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the Lord God; so turn, and live' (Ezek. 18:31–2). Jesus weeps as he draws near to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, because Jerusalem has not repented (Luke 19:41). In the same vein, Jesus prays for his crucifiers, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). Damascene underscores the truth that from eternity God has 'no pleasure in the death of any one', as Jesus' weeping reveals most clearly.

Augustine, too, has numerous biblical passages at his disposal. He emphasizes that the eternal God, Creator and Redeemer, is from eternity the cause of all created goodness, including the free goodness that God elicits in free creatures by his love. As the prophet Jeremiah prays, 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved' (Jer. 17:14). The Lord is the source of our healing and transformation. He chooses Israel, and he chooses those who have faith in Christ Jesus. Jesus' Pasch accomplishes in history what God ordains from eternity: Jesus' persecutors did 'whatever your [God's] hand and your plan had predestined to take place' (Acts 4:28). All humans have turned away from God, and none can save himself or herself (cf. Rom. 3, Isa. 59). Salvation comes from faith in Christ, and faith is God's 'free gift' (Rom. 5:15). The 'power of the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 15:13) unites us to Christ. We must 'rely not on ourselves but on the God who raises the dead' (2 Cor. 1:9). From eternity God pours out the blessings that create and transform our free will: God 'has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him' (Eph. 1:3–4). Augustine develops the truth that every good thing is radically God's gift, in which position Boethius fully concurs.

Origen sees this world and the life to come as a place of purification after the Fall. Again, this sense of purification comports with many biblical texts. God draws good out of evil; surely God will not leave us permanently, Origen reasons, in a state of punishment (no matter how just the punishment might be). Consider Joseph's assurance to his brothers, at the end of the book of Genesis, that God brings good through their sins: 'As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today' (Gen. 50:20). Similarly, mediators from Moses to Ezra confess Israel's sins and pray that God's wrath will be averted. Their trust in God's mercy is justified by God's faithful love for his people, whom he does not allow to perish. Jesus often portrays punishment as a purification rather than a permanent state. For example, urging us to reconcile with each other, Jesus says, 'Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny' (Matt. 5:25–6). Paul too speaks of a purgatorial fire at the day of judgement: 'If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire' (1 Cor. 3:14–15). Such a purgatorial, medicinal 'fire' corresponds with God's eternal mercy. Origen develops the truth that God's mercy is infinite.

Can these three approaches to the New Testament's teaching on predestination be combined, so that their strengths come together without their weaknesses? The early Church ruled out the solution of universal salvation (although this solution re-emerged especially in the twentieth century). The medieval reception of patristic teaching thus focused on the proposals of Augustine and John of Damascus. Damascene's denial that God's predestination causes the life of faith and charity in the saints, of course, cannot be squared with Augustine's insistence that predestination is the source of this life. Damascene's position seems to threaten the truth that God's gifting establishes our goodness, while Augustine's position seems to reduce the scope of God's love.

Rather than seeking to explain how God's love is not deficient in the damned, the best way forward is to highlight the strong points of the positions of Augustine and Damascene, without trying to resolve them into one. As we will see, this is the path taken by Catherine of Siena at the end of the medieval period.

3

The Medieval Period: Seeking a Balance

This chapter argues that medieval presentations of predestination, oscillating between Augustine and John of Damascus, find the right balance in the work of Catherine of Siena. She affirms that from eternity God lovingly seeks the salvation of every rational creature, that salvation is utterly God's gift, and that God permits some rational creatures to rebel freely and permanently against his love. Upholding the justice and love of the 'hidden judgments' by which God wills what he wills, she warns against presumptuous 'investigators' of these judgements.[1] By asserting the diverse affirmations without resolving their tension, she retains both God's unlimited love for each and every rational creature and God's transcendent gifting inclusive of his permission of some rational creatures to rebel freely and permanently against his love.

To say that Catherine attains the right balance, however, does not devalue the insights of John Scottus Eriugena, St Thomas Aquinas, and William of Ockham, whose views I also present in this chapter.[2] Asked by an influential bishop to defend Augustine's position against

[1] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, OP (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 285.

[2] For other medieval views, see e.g. Anselm's *De concordia* (*The Compatibility of God's Foreknowledge, Predestination, and Grace with Human Freedom*), in Anselm of Canterbury, *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and Gillian Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 435–74; Chris Schabel, 'Parisian Commentaries from Peter Auriol to Gregory of Rimini, and the Problem of Predestination', in *Mediavel Commentaries on the* Sentences *of Peter Lombard: Current Research*, ed. G. R. Evans, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 221–65; Paul Vignaux, *Justification et prédestination au XIV siècle. Duns Scot, Pierre d'Auriole, Guillaume d'Occam, Grégoire de Rimini* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1934); James L. Halverson, *Peter Aureol and the Re-emergence of Predestinarian Pluralism in Latin Theology, 1317–1344* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1993); M. John Farrelly, OSB, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964), 123–32.

Gottschalk's advocacy of double predestination, Eriugena goes further and repudiates Augustine's position entirely (without acknowledging that he is doing this). He instead develops a position much like Damascene's. In Thomas Aquinas's theology of predestination, we find Augustine's position set forth with metaphysical robustness and (as in Augustine) with Christ at the centre. Yet Aquinas's mature treatment of God's love in the *prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae* does not say enough to avoid seeming to limit too strictly God's eternal love for each and every rational creature. Aware of this difficulty, William of Ockham proposes an understanding of God's eternity that allows for God to base his predestination upon foreseen merits. The goal is to ensure that God's eternal love does not appear stingy, but this position runs into the biblical and theological difficulties noted by Augustine as regards the priority of God's grace.[3]

Unlike Eriugena or Ockham, Catherine embraces Augustine's and Aquinas's appreciation that everything good is radically God's gift. Recall the passage from 1 Corinthians that Augustine frequently cites: 'What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?' (1 Cor. 4:7). Predestination means that God rewards some rational creatures with eternal life. No one receives this reward 'as his due' (Rom. 4:4) rathen than as a gift. Catherine accepts that not all receive this gift, yet she also insists upon God's fiery love for each and every rational creature.

Our exploration of these medieval positions will prepare us for understanding and evaluating the explosive predestinarian controversies of the Reformation and early modern period. Just as the medieval discussion replicates and develops the insights found in the Fathers, so too the Reformation and early modern debates owe much to the medieval positions—and in each of these periods the interpretation of Scripture sets the terms for the arguments.

JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA

As already noted, John Scottus Eriugena (810–77) plays a key role in what Avital Wolhman calls 'the most animated debate of the ninth

[3] See also James Halverson, 'Franciscan Theology and Predestinarian Pluralism in Late-Medieval Thought', *Speculum* 70 (1995): 1–26.

century', the debate over double predestination begun by a Saxon monk named Gottschalk.[4] Gottschalk, who never recanted his view—for which he spent the rest of his life imprisoned in the monastery of Hautvillers—proposed in the late 840s that God predestines some humans to heaven and predestines others to hell. Although two local synods, the first under the guidance of Rabanus Maur, condemned this doctrine, its continuing influence led Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims in 851 to ask Eriugena to provide a full refutation of Gottschalk's position. Eriugena's resulting *Treatise on Divine Predestination* interprets numerous texts from Augustine, and criticizes Gottschalk's 'ignorance also of Greek writings in which the interpretation of predestination generates no mist of ambiguity'.[5] By gravely undermining Augustine's own account of predestination, however, Eriugena's treatise caused as many ecclesiastical problems as it solved, and a local synod at Valence in 855 condemned Eriugena's work along with Gottschalk's.[6]

Drawing from Augustine a definition of predestination as 'the preparation and arrangement before time began of all that God is going to do', Eriugena observes that predestination signifies God in his simplicity, rather than anything about the creature.[7] For this

[4] Avital Wohlman, 'Introduction to the English translation', in John Scottus Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, trans. Mary Brennan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), p. xxi. See also John Marenbon, 'John Scottus and Carolingian Theology: From the *De praedestinatione*, its Background and its Critics, to the *Periphyseon*', in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, ed. Margaret T. Gibson and Janet L. Nelson (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990), 303–25; in the same volume D. Ganz, 'The Debate on Predestination', 353–73; Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 27–34; Jean Devisse, *Hincmar: Archevêque de Reims 845–882*, vol. I (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1975).

[5] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 117. Willemien Otten observes that in his *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, unlike his later works, Eriugena does not draw upon the thought of the Greek Fathers, although he already shows himself to be knowledgeable in the Greek language: see Otten, 'The Texture of Tradition: The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology', in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. I: *From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 3–50, at 37–8. See also John Meyendorff, 'Remarks on Eastern Patristic Thought in John Scottus Eriugena', in *Eriugena: East and West*, ed. Bernard McGinn and Willemien Otten (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 51–68.

[6] Mary Brennan, 'Foreword' to John Scottus Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, p. x. See also Deidre Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.

[7] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 12. Otten points out that Eriugena's 'use of Augustine seems to have been guided more by his wish to contradict

reason, predestination cannot be 'a necessary cause which violently impels a rational being either to cleave to his God by holy living or wickedly to abandon his God'.[8] God creates human persons with free will, and predestination cannot overrule free will.[9] What predestination does is to restore, by the gift of grace, the power of the free will to choose the good. Sinners exercise their own free choice to do evil, and this misuse of God's good gift is in no way God's fault. Eriugena does not deny that the will's movement is both from itself and from God, but he carefully distinguishes the two movements. He notes that when God moves the will, God always moves it rightly. This movement is our natural inclination towards the good. In addition to this natural inclination, God bestowed upon us the gift of free choice. So that we may do good deeds unto salvation, God prepares and cooperates with our free will, but the 'principal root' of evil deeds is not God's will but ours.[10]

Both 'predestination' and 'foreknowledge' seem to imply some relationship of temporal priority between God and his creation, as if God were 'before' creatures on a temporal continuum. Since this is not the case, Eriugena holds that such words are applied to God metaphorically. It is in the simplicity of God's eternal mode, which cannot be comprehended by creatures, that God 'knew in advance and predestined what he would make'.[11] As Eriugena concludes, 'Surely we cannot rightly think of God—who alone is true essence, who made all things that are to the extent that they are—as possessing foreknowledge or predestination of those things which are not

Gottschalk's opinions than by his intent to provide a genuine interpretation of Augustine's view of predestination' (Otten, 'The Texture of Tradition', 36). By contrast, Robert Crouse argues that Eriugena's understanding of predestination accords with Augustine's, when read through the lens of Boethius's appreciation of divine simplicity: 'what one finds in Eriugena's treatise on predestination is a strikingly Boethian understanding of Augustine, thoroughly documented (as it never is in Boethius) in the texts of Augustine' (Crouse, 'Predestination, Human Freedom and the Augustinian Theology of History in Eriugena's *De divina praedestinatione*', in *History and Eschatology in John Scottus Eriugena and His Time*, 303–11, at 309; cf. 311). For a similar view of Eriugena's Augustinianism, see Goulven Madec, 'L'Augustinisme de Jean Scot dans le *De praedestinatione*', in *Jean Scot Érigene et l'histoire de la philosophie*, ed. R. Roques (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1977), 183–90.

[8] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 28.

[9] See ibid. 29, cf. 53, 72. For discussion see Carabine, *John Scottus Eriugena*, 11.

[10] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 56.

[11] Ibid. 63.

himself and have not come from him because they are nothing?'[12] God can know evil, sin, and punishment only by their contrary, being and goodness. Evil and sin belong to the realm of nothingness. They originate not in an efficient cause, but in a deficiency or privation within a created efficient cause. Since metaphysically 'absence and deficiency are completely non-existent', God, who is sheer existence, cannot foreknow or predestine them.[13]

Commenting on Romans 8:28–30 and Ephesians 1:3–11, Eriugena points out that Scripture describes predestination as applying solely to those whom God wills to bring to salvation. He then enquires into certain texts of Augustine, exploited by Gottschalk, that seem to apply predestination to the wicked. For example, Augustine remarks in *City of God*, 'What will God give to those whom he has predestined to life, if he has given all these [blessings of nature] to those predestined to death?'[14] In response Eriugena argues that for Augustine predestination means God's disposing 'by his foreknowledge the works which he was going to do'.[15] By 'predestined to death' Augustine means simply not predestined to eternal life. In other words, Augustine has in view permission rather than a distinct action.

As God's disposing by his foreknowledge of his good works, predestination relates to the elect, and '[n]o one is elected to punishment'.[16] In this regard Eriugena notes that Judas was neither predestined, nor called, nor justified, nor glorified (cf. Rom. 8:30). The fact that Judas was rejected and repudiated explains Augustine's technically improper use of the word 'predestined' as regards the wicked: 'predestined' here means repudiated or abandoned (in a non-active sense). Eriugena sets forth a number of texts from Augustine that confirm that predestination applies only to the righteous, not to the wicked. With Augustine, Eriugena accepts that there is a 'bipartite division of the entire rational creation into those who

[12] Ibid. 66.

[13] Ibid. 69. See Donald F. Duclow and Paul A. Dietrich, 'Hell and Damnation in Eriugena', in *History and Eschatology in John Scottus Eriugena and His Time*, ed. James McEvoy and Michael Dunne (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 347–66, at 348–9.

[14] Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1984), XXII, ch. 24, p. 1075; cited in Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 75.

[15] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 76.

[16] Ibid. 81.

are, certainly, in the number of the predestined and those who are outside the number of the predestined'.[17]

On these grounds, Eriugena is willing to grant a certain sense in which punishment can be included in predestination: 'God in no way predestined sinners for punishment, but . . . by their own deserts condign punishments have been predestined for them by him.'[18] Just as some people can be said to be 'predestined to death' because they have not been predestined, so also 'punishments' can be said to be predestined—as the contraries of good. God does not cause or predestine punishment (which he knows only through its opposite), but he can be said to predestine it in the sense that the lack of predestination leads to punishment or unhappiness. Eriugena observes that 'in the great heat of the eternal fire there should be no other punitive unhappiness than the absence of blessed happiness'.[19] He notes that 'the culpable perversity of his [man's] own will' does not uproot the natural inclination towards truth and happiness.[20] Given this natural inclination, the torment produced by the absence of happiness continually punishes sin. Eriugena thus absolves God from active punishment of the damned. When Augustine and others say that God punishes the wicked (or predestines this punishment), such statements mean that God justly abandons the wicked, no longer able to exercise free choice, to their rebellion against nature. Possessed of the natural inclination to know the truth and be happy, the wicked instead endure 'the darkness of eternal ignorance'.[21]

Arguing that in Latin translations of Scripture, the word translated as 'praedestinare' can also be translated 'praevidere' ('foresee') or 'praediffinire' ('predefine'), Eriugena suggests that Augustine in fact uses 'predestination' interchangeably with 'foresight'.[22] God foresees

[17] Ibid. 89. Eriugena is not a universalist: see Duclow and Dietrich, 'Hell and Damnation in Eriugena', 347–66.

[18] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 91.

[19] Ibid. 101. On the torments of hell according to the *Treatise on Divine Predestination* and the *Periphyseon*, see Duclow and Dietrich, 'Hell and Damnation in Eriugena', 355–60. See also Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena*, 32.

[20] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 103.

[21] Ibid. 108.

[22] Ibid. 118. Willemien Otten comments that 'it is because of their underlying divine identity that Eriugena proposes that *praedestinatio* and *praescientia* should be seen as mere alternate terms' (Otten, 'Eriugena's *Periphyseon*: A Carolingian Contribution to the Theological Tradition', in *Eriugena: East and West*, 80–1). In the same volume, John Meyendorff suggests that Eriugena's position on this point already

and predestines nothing that metaphysically is not. In this way Eriugena defends the plain sense of Ezekiel 33:11: 'As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.'[23] As Eriugena puts it, divine 'life did not make the death of life'.[24] Why then does God abandon the wicked? God does not abandon their nature, but he abandons their prideful will, which he has made to be free and unable to be compelled. Have the wicked thereby frustrated God's creative love? No, because he continues to sustain their nature in being, so that they cannot attain the absolute nothingness that they seek. Their natural being remains good, and so they continue to have a place within 'the supremely ordered beauty of the whole'.[25] They still seek happiness, and they are punished by being unable to attain the false happiness (in fact, nothingness) that they seek.

Eriugena suggests that so as to accomplish the perfection of the universe, God eternally predestines or predefines the exact number of those whom he will liberate from sin by grace and the exact number of those whom he will abandon. At the same time, however, Eriugena holds that God 'has predestined no one to destruction and prepared destruction for no one'.[26] But how can God both predestine or predefine the number of those he will abandon, and predestine no one to destruction? The answer again is that predestination 'is nothing other than divine foresight', and so God's abandonment consists simply in his foresight of the free choice of those who reject him.[27]

What God foresees depends upon the free choice of the creature, in response to the grace of the Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus, to follow or

indicates 'a positive stand to Neoplatonic monism', which he develops fully in the *Periphyseon* (Meyendorff, 'Remarks on Eastern Patristic Thought in John Scottus Eriugena', 55). On predestination in the *Periphyseon*, see Duclow and Dietrich, 'Hell and Damnation in Eriugena', 365–6.

[23] Cited in Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 119.

[24] Ibid. 120.

[25] Ibid. 121.

[26] Ibid. In his Epilogue, Eriugena explains, '[I]n you [God] I see that you predestined, that is, before time began, you defined with your immutable laws, a certain number of those who would perish in their own ungodliness, which ungodliness you never and nowhere predestined. Or to express it another way: you, O lord, have predestined, in your infallible and unalterable foreknowledge, the number of those who were to prepare both the punishment of their own ungodliness and their own ruin, in whom you were to punish not what you made [their natural inclination], but to abandon to punishment what you did not make [their free choice]' (ibid. 130).

[27] Ibid. 123.

not to follow God's law: 'Just as one and the same law establishing the state by the most equitable order brings life to those willing to live well, so it brings ruin to those who desire to lead an evil life.'[28] Even though the number to be abandoned is predefined, God's foresight does not cause the wickedness of those who freely choose to be wicked. Rather, as the divine foresight or foreknowledge, predestination can also be called the divine law, which (without itself ever changing) frees the good and crimps the wicked. Humans freely arrange themselves around the one divine law, rather than the divine law (predestination) having to arrange human beings.[29] God is his law; and this law neither causes nor compels anyone either to goodness or to wickedness, but instead provides the measure by which created freedom is freely either happy or unhappy.[30] As such, God's predestination (his law, his foresight, himself) is the happiness of those who are happy, without being the unhappiness of those who are unhappy: their bad free wills cause their unhappiness. The creative, rather than God, here stands at the forefront.

THOMAS AQUINAS

Just as Augustine differs from Damascene on predestination, so Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) differs from Eriugena. I have elsewhere examined predestination in Aquinas's *Commentary on Romans*, and so I focus here on his *Summa theologiae*, where Aquinas treats providence and predestination in the context of his theology of the one God.[31] Building upon the distinction between potentiality and actuality in finite beings, Aquinas argues that God can only be the Creator, truly distinct from creatures, if God is infinite actuality, 'I am who am' (Exod. 3:14).[32] Infinite actuality contains all perfections in a supremely simple mode, since all perfections are perfections of being and pure actuality cannot be composed of parts. Since God is perfect,

[28] Ibid. See M. Christiani, 'La Notion de loi dans le "De praedestinatione" de Jean Scot', in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, 277–88.

[29] See Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 124.

[30] Ibid. 130.

[31] See Matthew Levering, 'Aquinas on Romans 8: Predestination in Context', in *Reading Romans with St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, forthcoming).

[32] I, q. 2, a. 3, *sed contra*; cf. I, q. 3, a. 4.

God is supremely good. In creating, God manifests his supreme goodness by calling into existence finite modes of participating in his infinite being and goodness.[33] God's love is causal: his love for the things he creates consists in his will 'to communicate by likeness [his] own good to others as much as possible'.[34] Everything that God wills, he wills because of his goodness, which is convertible with his wisdom. As Aquinas states, 'God wills things apart from himself insofar as they are ordered to his own goodness as their end.'[35] God's will, as the transcendent universal cause of all beings, cannot be frustrated.

Enquiring as to whether God has immediate providence over everything, Aquinas cites a verse from the book of Job: 'Who gave him charge over the earth and who laid on him the whole world?' (Job 34:13).[36] Following Boethius, Aquinas holds that God is able to be provident because he utterly transcends time.[37] In the eternal 'present' of pure Act, God knows all creatures that he wills to come to be in time, and he knows the providential ordering by which he guides them towards their end or goal. His knowledge, joined to his will, 'is the cause of things'.[38] Aquinas observes that 'the causality of God, who is the first agent, extends to all being'.[39]

[33] See I, q. 6, a. 4. [34] I, q. 19, a. 2. [35] I, q. 19, a. 3.

[36] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 22, a. 3, *sed contra*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981). For Aquinas on Job, see Denis Chardonnens, *L'Homme sous le regard de la providence: Providence de Dieu et condition humaine selon l'*Exposition littérale sur le Livre de Job *de Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1997). See also Matthew Levering, 'Aquinas on Job: Providence and Presumption', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 7–33.

[37] I, q. 10, a. 1. See David B. Burrell, CSC, 'Distinguishing God from the World', in his *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 3–19, at 12–13; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 131–58; Harm J. M. J. Goris, *Free Creatures of an Eternal God: Thomas Aquinas on God's Infallible Foreknowledge and Irresistible Will* (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 34–52. For application to Christology see (in addition to Stump) Thomas G. Weinandy, OFM Cap., *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000); Weinandy, *Does God Change?* (Still River, MA: St Bede's Publications, 1985).

[38] I, q. 14, a. 8.

[39] I, q. 22, a. 2. Harm Goris argues that both Bañezian and Molinist accounts of God's eternal foreknowledge fail because they separate God's knowledge and will: see Goris, *Free Creatures of an Eternal God*, 79, cf. 81, 99. For a contemporary Bañezian view responding to concerns similar to those of Goris, see Thomas M. Osborne, Jr, 'Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion', *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 607–31. For discussion of God's causal knowledge see also Stump, *Aquinas*, 178–82; Brian Shanley, OP, 'Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal in Aquinas', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997): 197–224; Thomas M. Osborne, Jr,

In this light, Aquinas interprets the Father's creation of all things through the Word: 'He [the Word] was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made' (John 1:2–3). In knowing himself God knows all the finite modes in which his being can be participated.[40] Put in Trinitarian terms, in speaking his Word, God the Father speaks 'the operative idea of what God makes'.[41] God's knowledge thus includes the 'exemplar' of each existing thing, and God's knowledge also includes the reason for which he makes each thing, namely, to communicate 'some likeness of the divine perfection and goodness'.[42] God's providence is his knowledge of creatures as their exemplar and goal. As Aquinas states,

> In created things good is found not only as regards their substance, but also as regards their order towards an end and especially their last end, which, as was said above, is the divine goodness (Q. 21, A. 4). This good of order existing in things created, is itself created by God. Since, however, God is the cause of things by His intellect, and thus it behooves that the type [or idea] of every effect should pre-exist in Him, as is clear from what has gone before (Q. 19, A. 4), it is necessary that the type of the order of things towards their end should pre-exist in the divine mind: and the type of things ordered towards an end is, properly speaking, providence.[43]

Providence therefore includes all things. Because God makes 'all things through His goodness, so that the divine goodness might be

'Augustine and Aquinas on Foreknowledge through Causes', *Nova et Vetera* 6 (2008): 219–32.

[40] On Aquinas's metaphysics of participation, see Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon s. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Éditions Béatrice Nauwelaerts, 1961); John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2000), 94–131; Rudi A. te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1995). See the excellent summary and evaluation of these positions in John Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions: St Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 6–28.

[41] I, q. 34, a. 3.

[42] I, q. 44, a. 4; cf. I, q. 6, a. 4; I, q. 34, a. 3. For further discussion see Gregory T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), as well as David Burrell, CSC's review of this book in *Nova et Vetera* 7 (2009): 751–5.

[43] I, q. 22, a. 1; cf. ad 3.

represented in things', divine providence orders all things in diverse ways to God's goodness.[44]

On the basis of this understanding of providence, Aquinas affirms that God 'governs all the acts and movements that are to be found in each single creature';[45] otherwise God would not truly be the wise Creator, the giver and sustainer of all finite being. Aquinas explains that 'in every governor there must pre-exist the type of the order of those things that are to be done by those who are subject to his government'.[46] In so far as God knows all things 'as moving things to their due end', providence is the eternal law.[47] God gives 'divine law'—the Torah as fulfilled in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit—because 'man is ordained to an end of eternal happiness which is inproportionate to man's natural faculty'.[48]

Aquinas insists that although God's providence cannot be frustrated, rational creatures freely cause their own permanent failure and bear sole responsibility for it. God's transcendent causality makes possible, rather than impairs, the freedom of created causality.[49] With regard to divine causality, Aquinas distinguishes direct willing, indirect willing, and permission. God directly wills the good. He indirectly wills '[t]he evil of natural defect, or of punishment', because he 'wills the good to which such evils are attached', namely the good of justice or the good of preserving the natural order (through birth and

[44] Ibid., ad 3. See Stump, *Aquinas*, 456–60; Oliva Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe according to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 313–16.

[45] I-II, q. 93, a. 1. Joseph Wawrykow explains that for Aquinas 'God is able to move secondary causes infallibly to their action in a way congenial to their natures' (Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 154–5).

[46] I-II, q. 93, a. 1. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, '*Dieu conduit toutes choses vers leur fin*. Providence et gouvernement divin chez Thomas d'Aquin', in *Ende und Vollendung. Eschatologische Perspektiven im Mittelalter*, ed. J. A. Aertsen and M. Pickavé (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 561–94.

[47] I-II, q. 93, a. 1. Natural law is the participation of rational creatures in this eternal law. See Romanus Cessario, OP, *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 52–99; Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 29–112.

[48] I–II, q. 91, a. 4; cf. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 157. For discussion of Aquinas's analogous use of 'law' in the *Summa theologiae*, see Matthew Levering, *Biblical Natural Law: A Theocentric and Teleological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), chapter 4.

[49] See I, q. 22, a. 4; I, q. 105, aa. 4–5.

death).[50] Lastly, God permits, but never wills, moral evil. As Aquinas puts it, following Augustine, God 'neither wills evil to be done, nor wills it not to be done, but wills to permit evil to be done'.[51]

Does God then have no involvement in the free evil actions of rational creatures? Even though both the free rational creature and the transcendent God cause every created act,[52] God does not will the evil act's moral defect or disorder. Aquinas explains that 'God is cause of the act, in such a way, that nowise is He the cause of the defect accompanying the act, so that He is not the cause of the sin'.[53] What then does it mean for God to permit free rational creatures to sin? In permitting sinful acts, God non-actively allows the moral disorder within the acts, but he does so within 'the order of His wisdom and justice'.[54] Describing this permission, Aquinas observes that 'it happens that God does not give some the assistance, whereby they may avoid sin, which assistance were He to give, they would not sin'.[55] In this sense, God loves some rational creatures more than others, because to some he gives more goodness.[56] Although God does not give the good of eternal life to all rational creatures, he gives good to all and he does not cause the free failure of those who fail. Justice does not require that God either restrain individual rational creatures from freely sinning or transform individual rational creatures by the grace of the Holy Spirit.[57] Instead, God's providential communication of goodness accomplishes the perfection of the universe as a whole through the manifestation of degrees of created participation in divine goodness.[58]

[50] I, q. 19, a. 9.

[51] Ibid., ad 3. God's non-causal permission of evil from all eternity means that God has knowledge of all morally evil acts, which safeguards the truth that God's innocence and goodness can overcome evil as well as affirming that all loss comes from creatures, through the culpable misuse of their freedom. I am indebted here to Thomas Joseph White, OP.

[52] See I, q. 105, aa. 4–5.

[53] I–II, q. 79, a. 2, ad 2. For further discussion see W. Matthews Grant, 'Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself', *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 455–96; Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 155.

[54] I–II, q. 79, a. 1.

[55] Ibid.

[56] See I, q. 20, a. 4.

[57] See I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3. See also Anselm K. Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter between Aquinas and Recent Theologies* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 109–30.

[58] See I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3: 'it is necessary that God's goodness, which in itself is one and undivided, should be manifested in many ways in his creation; because creatures in themselves cannot attain to the simplicity of God. Thus it is that for the completion

In his wise providence, God predestines some rational creatures by ordering them to beatific communion with the Trinity. The predestination of some creatures arises not from their goodness, but from God's. It follows that 'why He chooses some for glory, and reprobates others, has no reason, except the divine will', although Aquinas also points out that the things that God wills about creatures 'are planned by divine wisdom', so that God's will is 'reasonable [*rationalis*]'.[59] Among the biblical warrants for his theology of predestination, Aquinas cites Ephesians 1, where Paul teaches that God 'chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world' (1:4) and 'destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved' (1:5–6). Aquinas also cites Romans 8:28, 'We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.'[60] Since God does not predestine every rational creature, it follows that God 'extends His providence over the just in a certain more excellent way than over the wicked; inasmuch as He prevents anything happening to them which would impede their final salvation'.[61] Put another way, God moves free rational creatures by his grace so as to enable them to attain an end that they could never have attained by their own natural capacities. Aquinas explains that 'if a thing cannot attain to something by the power of its nature, it must be directed thereto by another'.[62] Such divine

of the universe there are required different grades of being; some of which hold a high and some a low place in the universe. That this multitude of grades may be preserved in things, God allows some evils, lest many good things should never happen.' Aquinas also holds that '[e]vil does not operate towards the perfection and beauty of the universe, except accidentally' (I, q. 19, a. 9, ad 2). Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar's remark that 'those who see the richness and multiplicity of the created universe as belonging to the complete picture of the divine fullness, as Thomas Aquinas did, yet import into this kaleidoscopic fullness the opposition between good and evil, have failed to think this idea through' (Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. V: *The Last Act*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 503).

[59] I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3; I–II, q. 93, a. 4, ad 1. For further discussion see Michał Paluch, OP, 'Saint Augustin et saint Thomas: le *De praedestinatione sanctorum* dans l'oeuvre de Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 86 (2002): 641–7; Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 156–7.

[60] I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 4. [61] Ibid. [62] I, q. 23, a. 1.

direction to a supernatural end constitutes God's eternal plan of predestination.[63]

Interpreting 1 Timothy 2:4, which teaches that God 'desires all men to be saved', Aquinas draws upon John of Damascus's explanation that God's will, though one, can be divided into 'antecedent' and 'consequent' as regards rational creatures.[64] God's antecedent will, according to which he wills the salvation of all, is his will as the giver of being and salvation. God's consequent will has to do with rational creatures 'as they exist in themselves', and in this regard God justly wills the everlasting punishment of those who freely and permanently reject his saving work.[65] It should be noted that God's plan does not depend upon anything in the creature, since 'whatsoever is in man disposing him towards salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination; even the preparation for grace'.[66] To describe God's will as 'antecedent' and 'consequent' signifies that God is the cause of predestination but is not the cause of reprobation. The cause of reprobation is the rational creature's sin.[67]

[63] Lest the 'pre' in 'predestination' be misunderstood as implying temporality, Aquinas notes that '[e]ternity is nothing less than God Himself' (I, q. 10, a. 1). See also Joseph P. Wawrykow, 'Grace', in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 192–221, at 199–202, 207. Wawrykow notes that Aquinas's theology of grace, like Augustine's, shifts from affirming the priority of human action (in the *Commentary on the Sentences*) to affirming the priority of divine action (in the *Summa theologiae*).

[64] I, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1, referring to Damascene's *The Orthodox Faith*, Book II, ch. 29. See for further discussion of 'antecedent' and 'consequent' Michał Paluch, OP, *La profondeur de l'amour divin. Évolution de la doctrine de la predestination dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2004), 274–90. Paluch notes that this distinction is somewhat marginalized in Aquinas's mature work (with the shift occurring in *De veritate*, 23).

[65] I, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1.

[66] I, q. 23, a. 5.

[67] See I, q. 23, a. 3, ad 1–3. See Jean-Pierre Arfeuil, OP, 'Le Dessin sauveur de Dieu. La doctrine de la predestination selon saint Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue Thomiste* 74 (1974): 591–641, at 640–1. See also Paluch, *La Profondeur de l'amour divin*, 200–11. Comparing the *Summa theologiae* with Aquinas's *Commentary on the Sentences*, Paluch argues that the *Commentary on the Sentences* contains 'a conception of reprobation that is near to the conception *post praevisa demerita*' (p. 205), whereas 'the texts of the *Summa theologiae* suggest the 'simultaneity' of the divine decision and of the choice of the free will' (p. 206). Paluch terms this a doctrine of reprobation '*simul ac praevisa demerita*', which differs from both *post* and *ante praevisa demerita*. For the debate among twentieth-century Thomists see Paluch, *La Profondeur de l'amour divin*, 24–41, 60–2 (briefly treating the positions of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Jean-Hervé Nicolas,

The gratuitous character of the divine predestination of some rational creatures becomes clear when one attends to Jesus Christ, who is the exemplar and cause of the predestination of rational creatures. In his humanity, 'He was predestinated to be the natural Son of God', the exemplar of all who 'are predestinated to the adoption of sons, which is a participated likeness of natural sonship'.[68] Jesus' predestination, as in the case of those predestined to be adopted sons, is God's gift; even the hypostatic union is a grace.[69] Drawing upon Romans 8, Aquinas affirms that since the goal of the Incarnation was 'the fulfilling of predestination, i.e. of such as are preordained to the heavenly inheritance, which is bestowed only on sons', it was particularly 'fitting that by Him who is the natural Son, men should share this likeness of sonship by adoption'.[70]

In Jesus Christ, predestined from eternity, there is no lack of love. Through Christ's Cross, Aquinas observes, 'man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return'.[71] By praying for his crucifiers, Jesus shows 'the fullness of His love'.[72] By his supreme love and redemptive suffering, Jesus heals the wound of sin for all human beings; his Cross leaves no one out.[73] The unrestricted divine love that Jesus reveals in his Pasch is also revealed in his Incarnation. Aquinas explains that 'what belongs to the essence of goodness befits God. But it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others.'[74] Out of supreme goodness God shares

Jacques Maritain, and Harm Goris among others). See also Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, especially 5–19, 107–32.

[68] III, q. 24, a. 3. See Paluch, *La Profondeur de l'amour divin*, 235–45. Paluch notes that Aquinas's definition of predestination shifts from the *prima pars* ('ratio . . . transmissionis creaturae rationalis in finem vitae aeternae') to the *tertia pars* ('quaedam divina praeordinatio ab aeterno de his quae per gratiam Dei sunt fienda in tempore').

[69] On the grace of the hypostatic union, see III, q. 2, aa. 10–11; III, q. 24, aa. 1–2. See also Jean-Miguel Garrigues, 'The "Natural Grace" of Christ in St Thomas', in *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought*, trans. Robert Williams (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2009), 103–15.

[70] III, q. 3, a. 8. Jean-Pierre Torrell observes that for Aquinas, predestination involves configuration to Christ by the Holy Spirit: see Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. II: *Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 144–5. See also Luc-Thomas Somme, *Fils adoptifs de Dieu par Jésus Christ. La filiation divine par adoption dans la théologie de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1997), 88–9, 105–8.

[71] III, q. 46, a. 3.

[72] III, q. 47, a. 4, ad 1.

[73] See III, q. 1, a. 2; III, q. 48, aa. 2, 4; III, q. 49, a. 4.

[74] III, q. 1, a. 1.

himself with rational creatures by uniting a human nature (at the instant of its conception) to the divine nature in the Person of the Word. Christ not only restores human nature but also enables our 'full participation of the divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life'.[75] With the all-encompassing character of Christ's love in view, Aquinas quotes 1 John 2:2, 'he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world'.[76]

Yet Aquinas also points out that even though all humans at some time belong 'in potentiality' to the Mystical Body of Christ, not all humans will realize this potential. Christ died for all, but God does not predestine all humans to be united to him by his grace. There are 'men existing in the world, who are not predestined, who . . . on their departure from this world, wholly cease to be members of Christ, as being no longer in potentiality to be united to Christ'.[77] Such persons freely reject Christ's love. Christ 'offered what was sufficient for blotting out all sins', but not all sins were taken away due to 'men's fault, inasmuch as they do not adhere to Christ, according to John 3:19, "The light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light"'.[78] Even so, Aquinas reasons that since Christ's human will accords fully with his divine will, Christ does not pray for all persons in the same way; he prays in particular for those whom God from eternity has given him.[79]

How to affirm both that Christ Jesus gives his life in supreme charity for *all* humans and that, even as regards the difference between the elect and the damned, 'the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good'?[80] The problem is not why God gives unmerited supernatural gifts to some rather than to all, but rather why God's eternal plan for the communication of his goodness, a plan that manifests his infinite love and universal causality, includes rational creatures of whom it can rightly be said, 'It would have been better for that man if he had not been born' (Matt. 26:24). As we will see, this problem, which troubled Damascene and Eriugena, also troubles William of Ockham.

[75] III, q. 1, a. 2. [76] III, q. 8, a. 3, *sed contra*. [77] III, q. 8, a. 3.

[78] III, q. 1, a. 4; cf. III, q. 49, a. 1, ad 4 and 5. The classical Thomist commentators strongly underscore that all rational creatures receive grace sufficient unto salvation (though not efficacious grace).

[79] See III, q. 21, a. 4, especially ad 2. In this way Aquinas interprets Luke 23:34, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

[80] I, q. 20, a. 4.

WILLIAM OF OCKHAM

How does William of Ockham (1288–1347) understand God's causality, foreknowledge, and predestination?[81] Enquiring into whether God is the efficient cause of all things, Ockham argues that two kinds of realities exist: uncaused and caused. To be uncaused is to be uncreated, and thus eternal and divine.[82] It follows that everything that is not God is caused. But is everything caused by God? How could everything be caused by God if creatures are, as we know them to be, causal agents?

Ockham distinguishes two kinds of causes, mediate and immediate.[83] As an example of the former, he notes that in a certain sense Abraham is the father of Jacob, since Abraham is the father of Jacob's father. Is God then a mediate or an immediate cause of things? Ockham first avers that the answer cannot be demonstrated philosophically.[84] In order to hold that God is both the mediate and the immediate cause of all things, he therefore appeals to revelation as handed down in the Church (for example, John 1:3 and the Nicene Creed). He also offers three probable arguments. First, God must be the cause of all things, because otherwise something other than God would be uncreated, and there would be more than one God (Ockham addresses this issue elsewhere at some length, concluding that the unity of God cannot be strictly demonstrated philosophically, although the existence of more

[81] The best sustained treatment of these issues is Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, vol. II (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), especially chapters 27–31, pp. 1115–347.

[82] William of Ockham, *Quodlibeta* III, q. iii, *sed contra*, in Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. Philotheus Boehner, OFM, rev. Stephen F. Brown (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1989), 128. On the value of the *Quodlibeta* see Stephen F. Brown, 'Ockham and Final Causality', in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Wippel, 249–72.

[83] Ockham, *Quodlibeta* III, q. iii, in Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 128. See also Matthew Levering, 'Providence and Predestination in Al-Ghazali', *New Blackfriars* 92 (2011): 55–70 for many of the same concerns.

[84] For Ockham on philosophical demonstration and its limits, see John Lee Longeway, *Demonstration and Scientific Knowledge in William of Ockham* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 101–36. On Ockham's view of causality, see Adams, *William Ockham*, especially 741–98, which compares Ockham's view with Scotus's. See also Harry Klocker, SJ, *William of Ockham and the Divine Freedom*, 2nd edn (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1996), 17–33; Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), 54–70.

than one God would be illogical[85]). Second, every creature depends on its immediate cause (for example, a child on its parent), but every creature depends on God far more than it depends on any creature; therefore God must be the immediate cause of everything that exists, since relationships of causality are relationships of dependence. Third, God would least of all be the immediate cause of evil actions; yet it can be shown that God can be the immediate cause of such actions, 'since numerically the same act may be caused by one cause with guilt and by another cause without guilt', as when the cognitive powers and the will work together in a bad action, with only the will incurring guilt.[86]

As noted, Ockham holds that these three reasons are not demonstrative. Rather, by removing objections to God being the immediate cause of all things, they make this conclusion more probable. Ockham goes on to raise the objection that propositions, fictions, sins, and privations cannot be caused by God, because a lack of being is contained in the definition of these things. He begins with an example of a false proposition, 'Man is a donkey'. The proposition is possible, even if only as a proposition, because the terms are real. He argues here that all thoughts require God's causality, as do vocal and written words, because all these are entities (even if only the act of thinking) and therefore require God's gift of being. Privations likewise are either in thoughts or, as in the case of blindness, are deficiencies in an entity, in which case God must cause the entity to be. What about sins? Ockham responds that God's causality in our sinful acts cannot be a sin for God, because God obeys no law.[87] These logical

[85] Ockham, *Quodlibeta* I, q. i, in Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 125–6.

[86] Ockham, *Quodlibeta* III, q. iii, in Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 129.

[87] Against Peter Auriol's suggestion that created grace (rather than God) causes creatures to be loved by God, Ockham famously puts forward the view that God's *potentia absoluta* means that God *could* will to save a person even without infusing grace—in other words, that God could save a person without changing his or her hatred of God. See Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 127–9, which provides a helpful overview of the positions of Scotus, Peter Auriol, and Ockham, and which contextualizes their effort against Averroes and Avicenna 'to preserve God's transcendence by their doctrine of God's absolute power not bound by the creature's act' (p. 128). See also Rega Wood, 'Ockham's Repudiation of Pelagianism,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. Paul Vincent Spade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 350–73, at 355–6; Marilyn McCord Adams, 'William Ockham: Voluntarist or Naturalist?' in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John F. Wippel (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 219–47, at 243–5; Klocker, *William of Ockham and the Divine Freedom*, 10.

clarifications serve, Ockham thinks, to strengthen the persuasiveness of his view that God causes everything and is universally provident.

Ockham's argument for God's foreknowledge follows the pattern of his argument for God's causality. He first denies that philosophy can demonstrate God's foreknowledge of all future contingents. The philosopher, he says, must follow the logic of the dictum, 'That which is not true in itself cannot be known at that time when it is not true.'[88] In so far as something is a future contingent, in time it has not yet happened. Even from eternity, God cannot know (as a universal) a contingent thing that has not yet happened in time, precisely because it is contingent and therefore not universally true. Until it happens in time, its truth cannot be universally known. Ockham adds that this philosophical proof against God's foreknowledge does not apply to those contingent things which happen in a regular, foreseeable, unchangeable pattern (and thus does not apply, for example, to natural motions).

He then presents his case for affirming God's foreknowledge despite the philosophical difficulties. He proposes that God, in his essence, is an 'intuitive intellectual cognition' (*notitia intuitiva intellectiva*).[89] The human intellect, he points out, can intuitively reason from terms to contingent results. In human beings, such reasoning is weak and often errs. In God, however, it may be that intuitive cognition is perfect and clear, and thereby provides a full knowledge of all contingent things. In this way Ockham is able to argue for God's foreknowledge without appealing to God's causality of all contingent things by his will or to the participation of all things in the divine ideas. He notes that although many authoritative biblical and patristic texts support his position, he cannot prove philosophically that God

[88] Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. XXXVIII, q. unica, in Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 133. For discussion of Ockham on God's foreknowledge see Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 66–97. Zagzebski sums up Ockham's view: 'Ockham's solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge in his treatise *De Praedestinatione* is that propositions about God's knowledge of future contingents are themselves future contingent propositions' (p. 68). See also Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, trans. Marilyn McCord Adams and Norman Kretzmann (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983), 50, 52, 54–70. Ockham identifies the source for his dictum as Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, I.2, 71b26. In note 54 on p. 50, Adams and Kretzmann succinctly situate Ockham's position vis-à-vis that of Boethius, St Anselm, and St Thomas Aquinas; see also Adams, *William Ockham*, 1107–50.

[89] Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. XXXVIII, q. unica, in Ockham, *Philosophical Writings*, 135.

possesses such intuitive cognition. As an addendum, responding to 'certain members of the Faculty of Arts' who imagine that they can demonstrate God's foreknowledge, he remarks that it belongs to the definition of a contingent thing that it is possible for it to be otherwise.[90] If in any sense it is possible for it to be otherwise, then God's foreknowledge—no matter how perfect—cannot remove this possibility by knowing the contingent thing as a universal truth. Only when it occurs in time will God be able to know it in the mode of universal knowledge.

In his *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus*, Ockham describes John Duns Scotus's position on God's foreknowledge and causality. According to Scotus, says Ockham, 'the divine intellect, insofar as it is in some respect prior to the determination of the divine will, apprehends those complexes [complex propositions] as neutral with respect to itself, and then the divine will determines that one part is true for some instant, willing that the other part is false for that same instant'.[91] The divine intellect then knows immutably what the divine will determines. By introducing the determination of the divine will, turning a contingent fact into a universal truth, this position seems to remove the basis upon which Ockham denied that foreknowledge could be philosophically demonstrated.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Ockham opposes Scotus's position on foreknowledge and causality. He argues that if the divine will determines immutably what humans consider to be contingent, then real contingency, real human freedom, is denied. Humans would be no freer than the natural movements of the elements. As Ockham explains his objection to Scotus's view: 'For I ask whether or not the determination of a created will necessarily follows the determination of the divine will. If it does, then the will necessarily acts, just as fire does, and so merit and demerit are done away with.'[92] This conclusion Ockham finds

[90] Ibid. 134.

[91] Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, 48–9.

[92] Ibid. 49. For discussion see Adams, *William Ockham*, 1130–7; Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 123–6. For detailed discussion of Scotus's position, see Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Die Prädestinationslehre des Duns Skotus im Zusammenhang der scholastischen Lehrentwicklung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954); cf. Halverson's critical remarks regarding Pannenberg's reading of the earlier Franciscan tradition (Halverson, 'Franciscan Theology and Predestinarian Pluralism in Late-Medieval Thought', 3, n. 6). See also Dominik Perler, *Präedestination, Zeit und Kontingenz: philosophisch-historische Untersuchungen zu Wilhelm von Ockhams Tractatus de paredestinatione et de praescientia Dei*

unacceptable, and therefore he rejects Scotus's position and reaffirms his own view that philosophy cannot demonstrate God's foreknowledge. For Ockham, the key is that a free 'created will can oppose the determination' of God's will, and so 'the determination of the [created] will was not from eternity'.[93]

Like Eriugena, then, Ockham holds that the reason why one is saved cannot be the causality of God's eternal will, if God's will is understood in the sense of an efficient cause of an effect. Rather, the meaning of 'predestination' and 'reprobation', in so far as these words regard the divine will, consists in 'a natural inference from one proposition to another' that God makes.[94] Thus God can infer, in his intuitive foreknowledge, that one person will persevere; and on these grounds God rightly knows that this person '"will be predestinate"'.[95] Since the inference is in God, God is the 'cause' of the joining of the two propositions. In any other sense, however, there is no 'cause of predestination in the predestinate and of reprobation in the reprobate'.[96] From eternity, God does not will that some rational creatures move, by God's grace, to their end; rather God infers what rational creatures will do, and in that sense predestines (or reprobates) them. Ockham explains, 'For just as God is not a punisher before man is a sinner, so He is not a rewarder before man is justified by grace.'[97] If God left some out of his predestination, without

respectu futurorum contingentium (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1988); J. J. Macintosh, 'Aquinas and Ockham on Time, Predestination and the Unexpected Examination', *Franciscan Studies* 55 (1998): 181–220.

[93] Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, 49.

[94] Ibid. 53.

[95] Ibid. 77.

[96] Ibid. Rega Wood observes, 'Somewhat timidly—without daring to assert it—Ockham suggests that in some sense *foreseen* merit is prior to predestination to eternal life' (Wood, 'Ockham's Repudiation of Pelagianism', 362). As Wood adds, however, foreseen merit 'is prior in the order of explanation' (ibid. 362), not in a causal order. The question is whether Ockham's account of causality provides a sufficient alternative to 'the order of explanation'. Halverson argues that rather than supporting predestination based on foreseen merit, Ockham holds with Peter Auriol that 'God offers grace to all and a person's predestination depends on the response to grace' (Halverson, 'Franciscan Theology and Predestinarian Pluralism in Late-Medieval Thought', 17). See also Adams, *William Ockham*, 1299–347, which compares Ockham's position on predestination and reprobation with those of Aquinas, Scotus, and Henry of Ghent.

[97] Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, 77.

reference to their demerits, God would be, in some sense, punishing some of us before we even exist, let alone commit sin.

Does predestination (or reprobation) therefore depend upon the merits or demerits of each individual human being? Wishing to preserve the divine freedom, Ockham answers that God's will is not constrained in this way.[98] For example, in the case of baptized infants who die, the merits of their parents account for their predestination—and likewise the demerits of their parents account for the reprobation of unbaptized infants who die in original sin. Another case is that of angels, for whom a meritorious action does not seem to precede predestination, although Ockham is unsure whether the good angels did in fact merit beatitude. Ockham also makes an exception for the Blessed Virgin Mary. In general, however, Ockham's position is, as Marilyn McCord Adams and Norman Kretzmann say, that of 'predestination on the basis of foreseen free choices', even if these free choices never constrain God's predestining will.[99]

Does this position measure up to the New Testament's teachings? Although Ockham does not approach the topic biblically, his position means that God predestines humans in accord with their works, but also that God is not compelled to do so. As in Romans 4:4, all remains God's sheer gift. Yet at the same time this gift accords with God's foreknowledge of his rational creatures' choices. In this way Ockham seeks to have the best of both worlds. The question is whether God's eternal predestination in fact describes a joining together of two propositions based upon inference. Does not election mean more than this? Can Ockham's definition account for the transformative power of God's grace and for the fact that, as Jesus says, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide' (John 15:16)?

[98] For discussion see Klocker, *William of Ockham and the Divine Freedom*, 12.

[99] See Marilyn McCord Adams and Norman Kretzmann, 'Introduction' to Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*, 31; Adams makes the same point in concluding her discussion in her *William of Ockham*, 1347. See also Halverson, 'Franciscan Theology and Predestinarian Pluralism in Late-Medieval Thought', 17–19. Halverson argues that Ockham develops his position within 'his *pactum* scheme whereby God can, according to the distinction between his absolute and ordained power, determine himself to respond to human actions without those actions conditioning the divine will' (p. 19). See also G. Mensching, 'Das Ende und der Wille Gottes. Teleologie und Eschatologie bei Wilhelm von Ockham', in *Ende und Vollendung. Eschatologische Perspektiven im Mittelalter*, ed. J. A. Aertsen and M. Pickavé (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 465–77.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

The difficulties that we have identified in Eriugena, Aquinas, and Ockham lead us to Catherine of Siena (1347–80). In her *Dialogue*, which she dictated over the course of a year near the end of her life, Catherine portrays God as stating that 'no one can resist my power and strength'.[100] It is clear that God's plan is constrained by nothing: 'Could I not have given everyone everything? Of course.'[101] Instead, God works through the created freedom of his rational creatures. Yet created freedom cannot thwart God's plan, because 'no one can be taken away from me' and all belong to God either through justice or through mercy.[102] Creatures are not autonomous from God. Reminding Catherine of the divine name (Exod. 3:14), God observes, 'Know that no one can escape my hands, for I am who I am, whereas you have no being at all of yourselves. What being you have is my doing; I am the Creator of everything that has any share in being.'[103] Catherine's being, both as created and as graced, comes entirely from God. God remarks that every holy soul 'knows that all that she is and every gift she has is from me, not from herself, and to me she attributes all'.[104]

A fuller affirmation of the extent of God's transcendent causality could hardly be found. The source of union with God is not created freedom but God's grace. Speaking to Catherine, God affirms that

[100] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 287. See Cornelio Fabro, 'Libertà e grazia in S. Caterina', *Rivista di vita spirituale* 1 (1981): 79–99.

[101] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 311.

[102] Ibid. 56.

[103] Ibid. For Catherine, Giuliana Cavallini, OP observes, 'Creation as an act of love implies providence. It is hardly possible to imagine that God might leave his beloved creatures to chance without keeping an eye on their welfare' (Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena* (New York: Continuum, 1998, 26). Cavallini points out, 'The "Doctrine on Providence" is in fact so important that the *Dialogue* has sometimes been published under the title of *Book on Divine Providence*' (Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 33, n. 3). See also Carlo Antonio Prestipino, 'La provvidenza divina nel pensiero di S. Caterina da Siena', in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi cateriniani* (Rome: Curia Generalizia OR, 1981), 380–98; Alexandra Dominque Diriart, 'Dessin divin et providence chez sainte Catherine de Sienne', *Aletheia* 21 (2002): 51–78.

[104] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 40; see Diriart, 'Dessin divin et providence chez sainte Catherine de Sienne': 51–78, especially 57–61. Diriart, who devotes much attention to comparing Catherine's teaching with Aquinas's, describes Catherine as 'a true daughter of Dominic and of Thomas Aquinas' (p. 52).

grace 'gives life to your soul'.[105] If the soul has life, so as to be able freely to exercise charity, then the grace of the Holy Spirit has given this life. No soul can raise itself to salvation. As God says, every soul that attains the life of wisdom and charity 'knows that my grace has drawn her from darkness and carried her into the light of true knowledge'.[106] Grace changes the soul through baptism and a life of continual conversion.[107]

If no one can resist God's power and everything that is, including the life of charity, comes from God, how does Catherine explain sin? As would be expected, she holds that God permits all suffering, including that caused by sin, for a greater good, namely the furthering of 'the growth of grace and virtue in the soul'.[108] Why does God permit the harassment of souls by the devil, who could do nothing without God's permission? God does so 'not through hatred but through love, not so that you may be conquered but that you may conquer and come to perfect knowledge of yourself and of me, and to prove your virtue—for virtue can only be tested by its opposite'.[109] It is true that some souls reject God's grace and thereby follow the path of the devil. Such souls, God complains, 'have so scorned the graces I gave them and still give them! They go from bad to worse, from sin to sin, constantly repaying me with insults.'[110] Why then does God permit this situation? God can work good through evil. When humans sin against God and neighbour, just as when demons work wickedness, God converts the wickedness to a good end: 'But though they think they are so depriving my servants they are in fact strengthening them by proving their patience and courage and perseverance.'[111] Even the demons in Hell serve God by manifesting his justice.

Catherine affirms that after this life, humans are no longer able to repent. The period in which conversion is possible comes to an end when we die, and we receive the reward or the punishment of our choices. God tells Catherine that 'for the dead the time of earning is past. If they end in hatred, guilty of deadly sin, by divine justice they are forever bound by that chain of hatred and remain forever

[105] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 46. See Fabro, 'Libertà e grazia in S. Caterina', 83–9.
[106] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 36.
[107] Ibid. 52. [108] Ibid. 78. [109] Ibid. 88.
[110] Ibid. 53. [111] Ibid. 150.

obstinate in their evil.'[112] Why does God permit such devastating personal loss on the part of his free creature? In answer, God first emphasizes that 'I want nothing other than their sanctification. It is to this end, with great love, that I give and permit everything.'[113] But God also warns that, although he gives Catherine mystical insight into the meaning of some events, he does not share with humans his 'hidden judgments, which are made justly and out of love'.[114] Instead, he asks humans to trust in his love and to beg for his mercy upon themselves and others. He urges Catherine 'to beg and pressure me to be merciful to the world and to the mystic body of holy Church', because it is through such prayers that he seeks to exercise his mercy.[115] Catherine devotes herself to offering such prayers, at one point refusing to 'leave your presence till I see that you have been merciful to them'.[116]

Catherine emphasizes that from infinite love, God comes to the aid of each human being. God explains to Catherine 'how I extend my providence to every person in an endless variety of wonderful ways'.[117] Extolling these ways, Catherine praises God as an 'abyss of supreme eternal providence', a 'fiery abyss of charity', and a 'mad lover' who has 'fallen in love with what you have made'.[118] The love by which God cares for his creatures is so all-embracing that no limits can be given to it. God calls it '[m]y infinite providence'.[119] In the *Dialogue*, providence is simply another way of describing God's powerful love for each and every creature. This love expresses itself by providing for the salvation of rational creatures. As God informs

[112] Ibid. 82. God warns Catherine, 'The gate is broad that leads to eternal damnation', and God adds that 'even in this life they have a foretaste of hell. They are always suffering because they are wanting more than they can have' (p. 318). See also Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 60–1.

[113] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 285.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid. 159.

[116] Ibid. 49.

[117] Ibid. 307. See Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 30, 77–8.

[118] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 325–6. For discussion see e.g. Sister Mary Jeremiah, 'Catherinian Imagery of Consecration', *Communio* 17 (1990): 362–74; Mary Ann Fatula, OP, *Catherine of Siena's Way*, rev. edn (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990); Perry J. Cahall, 'Saint Catherine of Siena's Pedagogy of the Cross', *New Blackfriars* 87 (2006): 578–92.

[119] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 311.

Catherine, 'I always provide', although God's gifts can be misused by the wicked.[120]

Since God's providence is God himself, God encourages Catherine, 'Fall in love, daughter, with my providence!'[121] By providence, God cares for both the good and the wicked, because his providence inspires the good to work and pray for the salvation of the wicked: 'at the same time I procure the salvation of these wretches and increase my servants' virtue and the reward for their loving charity.'[122] In Christ, God reveals his providential care for the wicked through the charitable sufferings of the just. Worldly people, God says, cannot understand how God could permit 'the just perishing now at sea, now in fire, now mangled by beasts, now physically killed when their houses collapse on top of them'.[123] Only the faithful who in Christ know the wisdom of God's providence are able to remain patient, because they know that God's providence turns evil to good and thereby 'seasons everything'.[124] God reminds Catherine of 'how great was my Truth's providence in working his mysteries and all his deeds while he was in your company'.[125] Now that Christ has ascended, he providentially cares for us especially through the sacraments (above all the Eucharist), which unite us to Christ and fuel our acts of charity through the grace of the Holy Spirit.[126]

Catherine suggests that God does not allow his providence to undermine human freedom to resist his love. God affirms that 'I can and want to and will help whoever wants my help'.[127] When we reject his help, we imagine that providence has failed, when in fact God has simply permitted us to trust in our own resources. As God instructs Catherine, 'my providence will not fail those who truly hope in me, but it will fail those who hope not in me but in themselves'.[128] But how can providence fail, if providence describes God's plan for

[120] Ibid. 277. See Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 27, 147–8.
[121] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 298.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid. 283.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid. 309. See Cahall, 'Saint Catherine of Siena's Pedagogy of the Cross', 584; Fatula, *Catherine of Siena's Way*, 57.
[126] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 293. See Cahall, 'Saint Catherine of Siena's Pedagogy of the Cross', 583, 587–9.
[127] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 78. For discussion of how God helps the wicked, see Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 57, 59–60.
[128] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 280. See Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 29.

ordering all things to their end? Catherine recognizes that God's providence does not fail in the strict sense, because those who reject God's providential assistance still participate in his good ordering through the justice of punishment. What Catherine wishes to emphasize is how God's providence is an active force for good. God tells her, 'I repay every labor and fulfill holy desires whenever I find people knocking in truth and with light at the door of my mercy, so that they may not stray or falter in their hope in my providence.'[129] Given the difficulties that humans face, we often need reminding about the goodness of God's providence actively at work in the world. Catherine connects God's providence with his mercy: 'What mercy comes forth from your Godhead, eternal Father, to rule the whole world with your power!'[130] God's mercy, like his providence, is no abstraction but his personal presence in Christ Jesus and the sacraments.[131]

Regarding each human being, even those ordered to him only by the justice of punishment, God informs Catherine, 'They are mine; I created them, and I love them ineffably.'[132] The one thing that we cannot doubt is the triune God's ineffable love for each and every rational creature: nothing can separate us from God's love for us and from his will to do us good in the fullest sense. Explaining his care for creatures, God says, 'It is love that constrains me, because I loved you before you came to be. Without having been loved by you, I loved you unspeakably much.'[133] God knows and loves each and every rational creature 'unspeakably much' even 'before' the creature comes into existence, so that from eternity it is true of God that 'I do not want sinners to die but to be converted and live'.[134] The reference here is to Ezekiel 33:11, 'As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?' Even though the wicked cannot discern God's providence but instead see only disorder in the sufferings that

[129] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 286.
[130] Ibid. 71.
[131] Ibid. 72. See Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 92.
[132] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 57. Cavallini notes that for Catherine, 'Within the one way to the Father, which is Christ, each man or woman has his own path corresponding to a providential design' (Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 49).
[133] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 297.
[134] Ibid.

God permits so as to lead humans to salvation, God assures Catherine that '[t]here is no one, just or sinner, for whom I do not provide'.[135]

Speaking of those who fail to see God's providential ordering of the natural world, God affirms, 'No matter where they turn, spiritually and materially they will find nothing but my deep burning charity and the greatest, gentle, true, perfect providence.'[136] This marvellous praise of God's love shows that, for Catherine, God's permission of everlasting loss does not relativize or restrict God's 'deep burning charity' for each and every rational creature. At the same time, Catherine insists that 'no one can escape [God's] hands'.[137] God's gifting does not depend upon creatures, but rather creatures depend in every way upon God's gifting. As God tells Catherine, the holy soul 'knows that all that she is and every gift she has is from me [God], not from herself, and to me she attributes all'.[138]

Catherine clearly accepts Augustine's and Aquinas's emphasis on our radical dependence upon God's gifting, inclusive of his permission of permanent rebellion. She thereby accounts for 'the purpose of him [God] who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11) and ensures that 'no human being might boast in the presence of God' (1 Cor. 1:29). She also insists upon God's fiery love for each and every rational creature, so that her position also resonates with Damascene's and Ockham's effort to defend God's superabundant love for all rational creatures. In this regard she makes sense of the Lord's statement that 'I have no pleasure in the death of any one' (Ezek. 18:32) and Jesus' pleading from the Cross, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). If one tries to bring systematic clarity to her affirmations, one runs into trouble because it is not clear how she can hold what she holds about God's gracious causality and permission of permanent rebellion while at the same time holding what she holds about God's supreme love for all sinners. Her success consists in her ability to retain both affirmations despite the evident tension, and thus to bear witness to the full scope of the biblical teaching about predestination.

[135] Ibid. 281, cf. 289–90.

[136] Ibid. 290. For further discussion see Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 40–1.

[137] Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, 56.

[138] Ibid. 40. On providence as God's communication of goodness according to Aquinas and Catherine, see Diriart, 'Dessin divin et providence chez S. Catherine de Sienne', 59–60; cf. Cavallini, *Catherine of Siena*, 44.

CONCLUSION

We first observed that for Eriugena, predestination does not have to do with the realm of human freedom, but instead characterizes the natural order by which human free choices are inevitably measured and constricted. Eriugena aims to demonstrate that God is not responsible for the fate of the wicked, and that God has only a limited responsibility for the fate of the good, since predestination neither compels nor causes good or wicked actions. Human initiative, not divine initiative, is determinative. Ockham's view is less radical than Eriugena's, but Ockham arrives at the same basic conclusion that 'predestination' generally hinges on the free human actions, not on God's will. In this respect both theologians accord with the perspective of Damascene.

Aquinas takes the opposite position. While affirming that God does not cause human sin, Aquinas underscores biblical texts such as John 6:44, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him', and Matthew 10:29, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will.' For Aquinas, as for Augustine, God's predestination is causal. Thus neither Eriugena's nor Ockham's solutions are an option for Aquinas. He appeals to Damascene's distinction between antecedent and consequent will, but he does not spell out why God's consequent will is as it is: the only answer lies in God's will, although God's will is reasonable and loving. From eternity God wills to create a spectrum of finite participations in his goodness, and he brings about what he knows and wills.

Does it befit the eternal divine goodness, however, to be represented by the damned? This concern becomes more pressing in light of Aquinas's view that God could have led all creatures to union with him, because God does not need evil in order to accomplish good. We can see how God communicates his goodness to those whom he draws to himself, and certainly existence is always a good, but nonetheless God seems to communicate his goodness rather parsimoniously to those who are in his eternal plan 'the vessels of wrath made for destruction' (Rom. 9:22).

Exploring God's providential love as revealed by Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Catherine upholds the transcendent causality of the Trinitarian gifting. She also emphasizes God's active and powerful

love for each and every created person. As the transcendent cause of all goodness, God permits some permanently to resist his love. While expressing both aspects of the biblical testimony, Catherine does not attempt to explain the relationship of God's magnificent love for each rational creature to God's transcendent causality. Had she exercised more systematic rigour on this point, she would have encountered conceptual difficulties. The conceptual difficulties that she elided did not thereby go away.[139] The question of how to identify the people of God became increasingly pressing during the Reformation and early modern period, as did the challenges posed by Renaissance humanism's growing sense of human autonomy. It is no wonder, then, that predestination moves to the centre of theological controversy during this period, as Christian thinkers attempt to understand and defend God's eternal plan.

[139] Catherine's contemporary John Wyclif, for example, argues in an eccentric manner for a supralapsarian view of antecendent reprobation, and the Council of Constance condemns Wyclif's teaching that 'all things happen of absolute necessity'. As one would expect, later theologians from this period, among them John Capreolus (1380–1444), also strongly uphold the supralapsarian view of reprobation. See Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 131–2.

4

The Reformation and Early Modern Period: Causal Chains

This chapter treats four thinkers of the Reformation and early modern period: John Calvin, Luis de Molina, Francis de Sales, and G. W. Leibniz. Calvin's rejection of divine permission, Molina's notion of God's middle knowledge, de Sales's emphasis on God's love, and Leibniz's system of interlocking causes all take their bearings from the problem of how to understand God's causality. In very different ways, Calvin, Molina, and Leibniz move beyond the level of knowledge about God's wisdom and will claimed by the patristic and medieval theologians. Arguing that this search for added clarity causes problems, I highlight de Sales as one who—with lasting ecclesial influence but with much less impact on university discussions—retains the balance that we have seen in Catherine.

Before proceeding, some further historical background is in order. According to Heiko Oberman, the most influential theologian of the fifteenth century, Gabriel Biel (*c.*1415–95), holds 'a doctrine of absolute predestination *ante praevisa merita*' for the elect, and a doctrine of predestination according to foreseen merits for the reprobate.[1] By contrast to this Ockhamist view, Martin Luther and John Calvin reject foreseen merits and God's permissive will.[2] Yet the

[1] Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, 3rd edn (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 187. For discussion of Biel and Ockham, see ibid. 189.

[2] See Jacob Schmutz, 'Toute-puissance divine et loi permissive. Enquête sur un paradigme théologico-juridique oublié', in *Potentia Dei. L'onnipotenza divina nel pensiero dei secoli XVI e XVII*, ed. Guido Canziani, Miguel A. Granada, and Yves Charles Zarka (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2000), 215–36, at 226–7. Schmutz cites Luther's 1515/16 *Römerbrief* and his 1525 *De Servo arbitrio*. For discussion of Luther and Erasmus on predestination see M. John Farrelly, OSB, *Predestination, Grace, and Free*

doctrine of predestination on the basis of foreseen merits soon reappears. Among Calvinists the key figure is Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), who studied under Calvin's successor Theodore Beza and who argues that divine election is conditioned on the person's response of faith.[3]

Among Catholics the doctrine of foreseen merits takes centre stage with the second figure treated in this chapter, Luis de Molina. Molina's theory of God's 'middle knowledge', opposed most strongly by Teresa of Avila's spiritual director Domingo Bañez (1528–1604),[4] spawned a huge controversy involving Francisco Suárez, Robert Bellarmine, and many other eminent Catholic theologians. As Bellarmine remarks in an ascetical treatise written in 1614, after the worst of the controversy had passed: 'Although the arrangement of God's providence in governing human affairs is a great abyss, still the arrangement of eternal

Will (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964), 132–8. See also Bengt Hägglund, 'De providentia. Zur Gotteslehre im frühen Luthertum', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 83 (1986): 356–69; Klaus Schwarzwäller, *Theologia crucis. Luthers Lehre von Prädestination nach De servo arbitrio 1525* (Munich: Kaiser, 1970); Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 28, 150–3. The Augsburg Confession (1530), drafted by Philip Melanchthon, does not directly mention predestination.

[3] For discussion see Richard A. Muller, *God, Creation and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius: Sources and Directions of Scholastic Protestantism in the Era of Early Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991); Thuesen, *Predestination*, 37–43, 91–9, which also treats Anglican Arminians such as Lancelot Andrewes, William Laud, John Tillotson, and John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. See also Dewey G. Wallace, Jr's study of early Puritan/Anglican theologies of predestination: Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525–1695* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), especially 79–111, where he examines the Arminian controversies in the Church of England after the Reformed condemnation of Dutch Arminianism at the Synod of Dort (1618–19). Cf. James Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius*, trans. James and William Nichols, 3 vols (1825–75; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986).

[4] John Farrelly provides a helpful summary of the Bañezian view of predestination in his *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 5–17. For defences of the Bañezian view, see especially Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, *Predestination*, trans. Bede Rose, OSB (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1998); Steven A. Long, 'Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law', *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 557–605. For concerns regarding the implications of Bañezian premotion for the doctrine of permission and God's causality in reprobation, see Schmutz, 'Toute-puissance divine et loi permissive', 229–30; for similar concerns see the twentieth-century Thomistic authors cited in Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 17–19. More recently, David Bentley Hart has summarized the Bañezian view of predestination and premotion, which he criticizes strongly: see Hart, 'Providence and Causality: On Divine Innocence', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 34–56.

predestination and reprobation is an incomparably deeper abyss.'[5] In the late sixteenth century Pope Clement VIII commissioned a 'Congregatio de Auxiliis' to guide him in adjudicating the issue, but he died before issuing a judgement. In 1607 Pope Paul V declared the controversy off-limits, forbidding either side to censure the other, and so it has remained ever since.[6]

In this context, Francis de Sales's *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616) seeks to restore the centrality of God's all-encompassing love. In taking this approach he was not alone; his Preface mentions works by numerous contemporaries.[7] Yet his approach did not bear the fruit it might have done; instead, the seventeenth-century controversies over Jansenism and Quietism quickly overshadowed his position.[8] In

[5] Robert Bellarmine, SJ, *The Mind's Ascent to God by the Ladder of Created Things*, in Bellarmine, *Spiritual Writings*, trans. and ed. John Patrick Donnelly, SJ and Roland J. Teske, SJ (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 47–230, at Step Thirteen, chapter 5: 'On the Mystery of Predestination and Reprobation', 198. Bellarmine comments, 'Who shall find the answer to why God loved Jacob and hated Esau before they had done anything good or evil? This is what caused the Apostle to wonder in his Letter to the Romans; they were twin brothers, sons of the same father and mother, but God loved and predestined one and hated and reprobated the other (Rom. 9:10ff.). Nor should anyone say that God foresaw the future good works of one and the evil ones of the other; the Apostle anticipates this argument and says that this happened "in order that the selective purpose of God might stand" and adds the words given by Moses, "I have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I show pity on whom I show pity" (Rom. 9:11, 15; Exod. 33:19). . . . Christ could have looked upon Judas as he looked upon Peter and have given Judas the sort of efficacious grace which is not rejected by the hardest of hearts' (p. 199).

[6] For the influential 'congruism' of Suárez (1548–1617), see Paul Dumont, SJ, *Liberté humaine et concours divin d'après Suarez* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1936); Thomas Mullaney, OP, *Suarez on Human Freedom* (Baltimore: Carroll Press, 1950). For the papal intervention see Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 147–8; Bruce L. McCormack, 'The Actuality of God: Karl Barth in Conversation with Open Theism', in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 185–242, at 207–8. Farrelly discusses the position of the Council of Trent in *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 138–45.

[7] St Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. Henry Benedict Mackey, OSB (reprint; Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1997), preface, pp. 5–6. He names Louis of Granada, Diego Stella, Christopher Fonseca, Louis Richeome, John of Jesus Maria, Robert Bellarmine, Jean Pierre Camus, Laurence of Paris, and Teresa of Avila.

[8] On Jansenism, some of whose propositions were condemned by the Church in 1653 and 1690, see Leszek Kolakowski's polemical *God Owes Us Nothing: A Brief Remark on Pascal's Religion and on the Spirit of Jansenism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Sylvio Hermann De Franceschi, 'Le Jansénisme face à la tentation thomiste. Antoine Arnauld et le thomisme *de gratia* après les cinq articles de 1663', *Revue Thomiste* 109 (2009): 5–54; Jean-Pierre Arfeuil, OP, 'Le Dessein

the broader culture the far more influential approach was that of G. W. Leibniz, whose *Theodicy* (1710) proposes that God needs unrepentant sinners in order to bring about the best possible outcome for the whole. As Charles Taylor has shown, post-Enlightenment culture remains heavily indebted to the eighteenth-century Deist 'humanism of beneficent order' that draws upon Leibniz's account of providence as the harmonious arrangement of individual monads.[9]

This chapter advocates de Sales's viewpoint. Like Catherine, de Sales accepts the Augustinian insight into the priority of God's gifting, even while he foregrounds the all-encompassing and super-abundant character of God's love. He is willing to say two things about God's love—that God's creative and redemptive love for each and every rational creature has no deficiency or stinginess, and that God elects some rational creatures and permits others to rebel freely and permanently—without trying to grasp how these two affirmations cohere in the 'unsearchable' mystery of the divine wisdom and will (Rom. 11:33).

JOHN CALVIN

In Book I of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin (1509–64) warns against the scholastic distinction between 'doing'

sauveur de Dieu. La doctrine de la predestination selon saint Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue Thomiste* 74 (1974): 591–641, at 594–5. On Quietism see Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 319–24. After connecting Jansenism with some of the condemned positions of Michael Baius (1513–89), Farrelly comments that 'Jansen's main errors signaled out for condemnation so emphasized the efficacy of grace that they restricted God's universal will to save, the extent of his grace, and the freedom of man. . . . Correcting [Jansen's] interpretation of the Semi-pelagian heresy, the Church declared that they were not condemned for teaching that interior prevenient grace was such that man could resist or obey it. And finally it denied that it is Semi-pelagian to assert that Christ died for all men' (Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 148–9). As Farrelly points out, 'In its teaching against the Jansenists then, the Church made more explicit her doctrine of God's universal salvific will and of the freedom of the will to resist the prevenient grace of God' (ibid. 149).

[9] See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 268. See also Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 276–7.

and 'permitting' as regards God's will.[10] Certainly Calvin holds that God is absolutely good, wise, just, and innocent. But Calvin argues that it would be specious to ignore the fact that the God of the Bible wills and commands the blinding and hardening of humans who then commit the actions for which they are damned. Everything happens according to God's will, and God's will is always active. In order to avoid this plain teaching of the Bible, Calvin thinks, 'recourse is had to the evasion that this is done only by the permission, and not also by the will of God. He [God] himself, however, openly declaring that he *does* this, repudiates the evasion.'[11] God actively accomplishes in time his eternal decrees or judgements, rather than accomplishing some of them by permission. By working actively through free rational creatures, God puts his eternal decrees into effect. Every action, whether good or bad, is thus willed by God. As Calvin remarks, 'That men do nothing save at the secret instigation of God, and do not discuss and deliberate on anything but what he has previously decreed with

[10] For an overview see Heinz Otten, *Prädestination in Calvins theologischer Lehre* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1968). For discussion of Calvin's doctrine of providence and predestination outside his *Institutes*, see Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 102–16; Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 108–11. Although I limit my discussion to Calvin (and specifically to his *Institutes*), I agree with Richard Muller that Calvin is best read in light of the work of his Reformed contemporaries. See Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008). See also Martin Bucer, *Metaphrasis et Enarratio in Epistolam D. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos* (Basel: 1536), 409–13; Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci*, trans. and ed. Frank A. James III (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2003). For Vermigli's debt to the late medieval Augustinian Gregory of Rimini, see Frank A. James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination: The Augustinian Inheritance of an Italian Reformer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Without portraying God as actively willing the sins of the reprobate, Vermigli holds that God passes over some rational creatures rather than merely permitting their rejection of him. See also the Westminster Confession of Faith, V.4.

[11] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), Book I, ch. xviii, p. 199. This position has generated strong opposition, most recently by David Bentley Hart. See Hart, 'Providence and Causality: On Divine Innocence', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 34–56, at 36; Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 90. For appreciation of Calvin on God's sovereignty, see Katherine Sonderegger's 'The Doctrine of Providence' and John Webster's 'On the Theology of Providence' in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, 144–57 and 158–75, respectively.

himself, and brings to pass by his secret direction, is proved by numberless clear passages of Scripture.'[12] God commands Satan just as he commands the good angels; both serve as instruments for accomplishing God's decrees. If God makes the wicked, whom he hardens so as to damn, just as much his servants (in their fashion) as the righteous, then 'the fiction of bare permission is at an end'.[13]

Without knowing it, therefore, the wicked men who crucified Jesus were moved to their action by God's will, because God had decreed that salvation would come about in this manner: 'the disciples confess in solemn prayer that the wicked did nothing but what the hand and counsel of God had decreed.'[14] After giving a variety of biblical examples of God willing evil deeds so as to punish the wicked and bring about salvation, Calvin notes that by contrast the doctrine of permission makes God aloof from salvation history. The God construed by the doctrine of permission cannot truly be the active Lord of history. For Calvin, those who rely upon the doctrine of permission depict God 'as if he sat in a watch-tower waiting for fortuitous events, his judgments meanwhile depending on the will of man'.[15] This aloof, detached, passive God is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible, Calvin observes, acts within the minds of human beings not only to enlighten them, but also to blind them and to intoxicate them. God thereby compels the wicked to serve him.

Is God then guilty of doing what he himself forbids in the Decalogue? No. Calvin explains that we cannot understand the depths of God's will, and therefore his holy will appears divided to our weak minds. As Calvin puts it, 'He [God] makes no pretence of not willing what he wills, but while in himself the will is one and undivided, to us it appears manifold, because, from the feebleness of our intellect, we cannot comprehend

[12] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, ch. xviii, p. 199.

[13] Ibid. Calvin goes on to approve the following passage from Augustine's *In Psalmos* cxi.2: 'Great is the work of God, exquisite in all he wills! so that, in a manner wondrous and ineffable, that is not done without his will which is done contrary to it, because it could not be done if he did not permit; nor does he permit it unwillingly, but willingly; nor would he who is good permit evil to be done, were he not omnipotent to bring good out of evil' (Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, ch. xviii, p. 203).

[14] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, ch. xviii, p. 199.

[15] Ibid. 200. For discussion of Calvin's position in late of late-medieval understanding of God and the creature as concurring partial causes, see André de Muralt, 'La Causalité aristotélicienne et la structure de pensée scotiste', *Dialectica* 47 (1993): 121–41, at 137–9.

how, though after a different manner, he wills and wills not the very same thing.'[16] In other words, while we cannot say that God only permits what in fact he actively wills, we can say that God 'wills and wills not the very same thing'. Thus, in the same sin, the wicked person acts both according to God's will and against God's will. The wicked person acts according to God's will because, through the wicked deed, God accomplishes his will for the damnation of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous.

Does God then will the sin? Yes, in the sense that he wills this particular wicked act as part of his eternal plan for the salvation of the righteous and the damnation of the wicked.[17] Even if God in a sense does not will the sin, it remains the case that God *does* will the sin. But how can a good God will a sin, even for good purposes such as the punishment of the wicked? Calvin explains that this aspect must remain shrouded in mystery, and that we should not be ashamed to admit that we cannot unravel the seeming contradiction that God 'wills and wills not the very same thing'. The doctrine of permission unravels the seeming contradiction by contradicting Scripture and repudiating the living Lord of history. Thus the doctrine of permission cannot be the right path, and we should admit our inability to resolve the difficulty. Calvin observes that 'when we cannot comprehend how God can will that to be done which he forbids us to do, let us call to mind our imbecility, and remember that the light in which he dwells is not without cause termed inaccessible (1 Tim. vi. 16), because shrouded in darkness'.[18]

Is God innocent of the crimes that he wills the wicked to perform? Calvin emphatically rules out the notion that God commits the sins that he wills. In this regard he distinguishes God's will from God's precept. Even if God wills for the children of David to commit incest so as to punish David, God does not make committing incest a

[16] Ibid. 202. Richard A. Muller helpfully examines Calvin's use of the terms 'labyrinth' and 'abyss' to describe the divine decree in 'Beyond the Abyss and the Labyrinth: An *Ordo recte docendi*', in Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 79–98, at 84–6.

[17] For discussion see Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 93–4.

[18] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, ch. xviii, 203. Calvin goes on to quote approvingly Augustine (*In Psalmos* cxi.2) on God's permission, but by ruling out the nuance that Augustine obtains through the word 'permit', Calvin goes further than Augustine does.

precept of the Decalogue. On the contrary, God forbids incest. The wicked person violates God's precept against incest and merits damnation thereby. Yet, at the same time, it is also true that 'by means of the wicked God performs what he had secretly decreed'.[19] Although God does not do the wicked deed or even concur in the doing of the wicked deed, nonetheless one must affirm that 'by His righteous impulse man does what he ought not to do'.[20] We know that God's impelling man to sin must be righteous, because God does it. Calvin concludes this portion of his discussion by warning against the petulance of those who—in response to Calvin's teachings—'complain of the enunciation of truths, which, if they were not useful to be known, God never would have ordered his prophets and apostles to teach'.[21]

Having rejected the doctrine of God's permissive will in Book I of the *Institutes*, Calvin turns in Book III to the topic of predestination.[22] Against those who hold that God actively predestines some human beings to glory whereas God reprobates other human beings by not willing this good for them (thereby permitting them to fail, by their own free actions, to attain their true end), Calvin holds that God predestines some to glory and predestines others to damnation.[23] Responding once more to the doctrine of permission, Calvin points out that it seems unlikely 'that man brought death upon himself, merely by the permission, and not by the ordination of God; as if God had not determined what he wished the condition of the chief of his creatures to be'.[24] Yet regarding the reprobate, Calvin affirms that 'though their perdition depends on the predestination of God, the

[19] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, ch. xviii, p. 204. Calvin gives the example of 1 Kings 12:20 and Hosea 8:4 and 13:11.

[20] Ibid. 205. Helm speaks of 'a "willing permission" . . . that is causally sufficient for the occurrence of what is permitted' (Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 99, cf. 100–2).

[21] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, ch. xviii, p. 205.

[22] For the ordering of topics in the last edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, see Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 19, 23–34; Muller, 'The Placement of Predestination in Reformed Theology: Issue or Non-Issue?' *Calvin Theological Journal* 40 (2005): 184–210. See also Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 96.

[23] As Calvin says of predestination, 'To many this seems a perplexing subject, because they deem it most incongruous that of the great body of mankind some should be predestinated to salvation, and others to destruction' (Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxi, p. 202).

[24] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxiii, p. 232. Karl Barth argues that Calvin would have done better 'to speak loudly and forcefully about God's electing and rejecting but to maintain a strong and significant silence about the elect and the rejected' (Barth,

cause and matter of it is in themselves'.[25] Predestination's two aspects are asymmetrical, since the 'cause and matter' of election is not in the elect. In his predestination of the reprobate, God wills to withhold from them his free mercy, and thereby 'dooms [them] to destruction'.[26] As Calvin summarizes his position: 'Those, therefore, whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other cause but because he is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children.'[27]

The danger with the doctrine of permission is that it seems to question the goodness of the omnipotent God's eternal decree. In observing that predestination means 'the eternal decree of God, by which he determined within himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man', Calvin puts his finger on the difficulty: God's permission of everlasting rebellion cannot be disjoined from God's eternal will.[28] God fully knows and freely wills this order, which includes everlasting rebellion. Since God is free and all-powerful, he is not constrained to create this kind of order. God wills an order in which some are left out from union with God, and so this must be a good order, one that does not need the covering of the doctrine of permission. Calvin senses that the doctrine of permission originates in doubts about the justice of reprobation 'by the just but inscrutable judgment of God, to show forth his glory by their condemnation'.[29] Discussing Paul's interpretation of Malachi 1:2–3 (see Rom. 9:13), Calvin urges that the doctrine of double predestination in fact elucidates the scriptural doctrine of undeserved grace, God's bounty rather than harshness.[30]

In this regard Calvin pauses to address the view that God predestines according to foreseen merits. Against this view, Calvin quotes such biblical texts as John 15:16, 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you' and Exodus 33:19, 'I [the Lord] will be

The Theology of John Calvin, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (German 1922; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 276).

[25] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxiii, p. 232.

[26] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxi, p. 210. On the asymmetry see Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas*, 116.

[27] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxiii, p. 226.

[28] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxi, p. 206.

[29] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxiv, p. 253.

[30] See ibid., Book III, ch. xxi, p. 209. In this vein Muller emphasizes that for Calvin, 'Election is preeminently a demonstration of God's gracious will in Christ shown forth in calling, justification, and sanctification' (Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 25).

gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.' These texts entirely lose their force if one supposes predestination according to foreseen merits. Indeed, Calvin suggests, God's grace makes us 'fit to obtain immortal life'; without God's willing grace to us, there would be nothing that God could 'find in us to induce him to elect us'.[31] Commenting on Ephesians 1:4, '[H]e chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him', Calvin points out that St Paul did not say that because we were going to be holy God chose us 'before the foundation of the world'. Rather, God chose us so that we would be by his grace 'holy and blameless before him'. St Paul continues, 'He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved' (Eph. 1:5–6). As Calvin notes, Paul thereby emphasizes that the sole reason for this predestination 'in love' was 'the purpose of his will'. Not foreseen merit, but God's will to make us blessed guides predestination. By means of these words, says Calvin, Paul 'overturns all the grounds of election which men imagine to exist in themselves'.[32]

Calvin similarly considers Romans 9:11, where Paul describes God's election of Jacob over Esau, 'though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call'. He comments on this verse: 'Why should men attempt to darken these statements by assigning some place in election to past or future works? This is altogether to evade what the Apostle contends for—viz. that the distinction between the brothers is not founded on any ground of works, but on the mere calling of God.'[33] Calvin also criticizes Aquinas's position, on the grounds that Aquinas holds that God predestines to glory in accord with the merits that result from God's predestination to grace. Even this position seems to place too much emphasis on human works. Calvin argues on the contrary that predestination to grace depends upon predestination to glory, rather than in any way vice versa.

Furthermore, Calvin finds compelling evidence for his position in Romans 9:18–24. There Paul expostulates upon God's hardening of Pharaoh:

[31] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxii, p. 214.
[32] Ibid. [33] Ibid. 215.

> So then he [God] has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills. You will say to me then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?' But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me thus?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

Calvin notes that there is no doctrine of permission here. Rather, God, in the freedom of his omnipotence, has made some rational creatures 'for menial use' as 'vessels of wrath made for destruction'. The 'menial use' for which God employs these rational creatures is ultimately 'to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy'. Pointing out that God directly 'hardens the heart of whomever he wills', Calvin remarks, 'Paul does not, after the example of those whom I have mentioned, labour anxiously to defend God, by calling in the aid of falsehood; he only reminds us that it is unlawful for the creature to quarrel with its Creator.'[34] He interprets in the same way other texts that seem more open to the doctrine of permission, for example Matthew 15:13, where Jesus says, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.' For Calvin, Jesus here refers to God's eternal predestination of some rational creatures to destruction.[35]

Calvin also argues that those to whom predestination to destruction seems harsh must ultimately reject all diversity. As Calvin puts it, 'Will they allow the lower animals to expostulate with God, as if the inferiority of their condition were unjust? It is certainly not more equitable that men should enjoy the privilege which they have not acquired by merit, than that he should variously distribute favours as seems to him meet.'[36] If some human beings have been made for 'menial use', why is this more unacceptable than the fact that some creatures have been made dogs, oxen, or asses? Likewise, when one compares one's own humanity to the glorious human nature of Christ

[34] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxiii, p. 226.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxii, p. 213. Cf. Charles Partee, 'Calvin on Universal and Particular Providence', chapter 9 of his *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), 126–45.

Jesus, will one dare to complain that Jesus received so many graces that no one else has received? Without the doctrine of gratuitous election, Calvin makes clear, one finds oneself at odds with the entire history of salvation, culminating in Jesus as the King of the Jews. He remarks that 'if they are bent on depriving God of the free right of electing and reprobating, let them at the same time take away what has been given to Christ'.[37]

Just as Jesus manifested his possession of God's blessings to those who had eyes to see, so also Calvin affirms that the blessings that God gives the elect can be known by the elect. He advises believers to seek 'sure confirmation of election'.[38] In this way, he argues, the doctrine of double predestination becomes great good news to God's people. Christ underscores God's gratuitous election not to frighten his Church but rather 'to deliver us from all fear, and render us invincible amid our many dangers, snares, and mortal conflicts'.[39]

Much hinges, as Calvin recognizes, 'on a few passages of Scripture, in which God seems to deny that the wicked perish through his ordination, except in so far as they spontaneously bring death upon themselves in opposition to his warning'.[40] Among these passages, Calvin names Ezekiel 18:23, 'Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?'; 1 Timothy 2:4, '[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth'; Romans 11:32, 'For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all'; and Matthew 23:37, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!'

Interpreting Ezekiel 18:23, Calvin holds that it means that 'whenever they repent God is ready to pardon them. . . . The mercy of God,

[37] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxii, p. 213; Partee, 'Calvin on Universal and Particular Providence', 145.

[38] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxiv, p. 247.

[39] Ibid., Book III, ch. xxi, p. 203. Muller points out that 'in view of Calvin's emphasis on knowledge of God, reprobation does not appear the exact coordinate of election. It occurs apart from Christ and therefore apart from any mediated knowledge of God. If those men who remain in the mass of perdition inquire into themselves they can only know their own sin and infer its penalty of damnation. They cannot know of the decree of reprobation as a cause of their condition' (*Christ and the Decree*, 25).

[40] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, ch. xxiv, p. 254.

therefore, will be ever ready to meet the penitent.'[41] He adds that although the mercy of God is ever ready to meet the penitent, God does not will that the wicked be penitent and encounter that mercy. In this regard Calvin points to other passages that emphasize God's grace as required for repentance, such as Jeremiah 31:18, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned'.[42] Calvin applies similar principles to passages such as Matthew 23:37, where God expresses sadness over the rebellion of his people Israel. The question for Calvin is how God could really be sad, since God actively willed the rebellion of these same people, so as to accomplish his purposes and damn them to everlasting punishment. In answer, Calvin grants that God seems to have 'a double will', although God 'does not in himself will opposites'.[43]

Calvin's interpretation of these texts is troubling, however, even for those who appreciate Calvin's willingness to struggle with the complexity of biblical discourse on predestination. By putting the issue in its sharpest terms, Calvin helped to inspire an explosive theological controversy. As we will see, not only do positions similar to that of William of Ockham reappear, but also a variation of Catherine of Siena's position arises in the work of Francis de Sales.

LUIS DE MOLINA

Unlike Calvin, Luis de Molina (1535–1600) accepts the doctrine of divine permission. Although he thereby avoids many of Calvin's difficulties, he also confronts the difficulty that, as Calvin recognizes, underlies the doctrine of permission: namely, how could God will an order in which the everlasting punishment of rational creatures is permitted? In his *Concordia*, Molina seeks to resolve this difficulty by reflecting, more systematically than Ockham had done and with Aquinas's thought in view, on the nature of divine foreknowledge.[44]

[41] Ibid.

[42] Quoted by Calvin, ibid. 256.

[43] Ibid. 257. In everlasting life, 'it shall be given us to know how he mysteriously wills what now seems to be adverse to his will' (ibid.).

[44] The full title of Molina's *Concordia* is *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia*. The book first appeared in 1588, and in 1595 Molina issued a revised edition. The section on divine foreknowledge, Part IV, also appears (almost in full) in Molina's *Commentaria in*

Molina's proposal was famously contested by his contemporary Domingo Bañez, who disputed the cogency of 'middle knowledge' and argued that God's eternal will (active causally in all created action) accomplishes God's eternal plan of predestination.[45]

The *Concordia*'s first four parts (disputations 1–53) comment on Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* I, q. 14, a. 13. Regarding divine foreknowledge, Molina's key contribution consists in proposing that God foreknows in three ways things that have not yet occurred in time.[46] In the first way, God has a 'natural knowledge' by which he knows 'all the things to which the divine power extended either immediately or by the mediation of secondary causes, including not only the natures of individuals and the necessary states of affairs composed of them but also the contingent states of affairs'.[47] In other words, God knows every created mode by which, according to his power, his being could be participated. In knowing every created mode of participating his being, God knows by 'natural knowledge' every possible way that creatures might be. God's natural knowledge thus goes far beyond what actually exists, and comprises everything that could have existed, in any possible state of existence. By 'natural knowledge', however, God does not know exactly what will exist out of the myriad possibilities that he foreknows *could* exist.

The second way that God foreknows things is by his 'free knowledge'. The adjective 'free' differentiates this knowledge from 'natural' knowledge by adding the determination of God's will. Among the myriad possibilities that God knows *could* exist, God freely determines that one particular order exist in time. Molina is well aware

Primam Divi Thomae Partem, his commentary on the *prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*—indicating how indebted to Aquinas he thought himself to be. Part IV has appeared in English as Luis de Molina, SJ, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

[45] For a summary of Molina's views and Bañezian concerns, see Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 126–50; Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 19–28. For responses to Garrigou-Lagrange's objections to the Molinist position, see Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 109–20; Alfred J. Freddoso, Introduction to *On Divine Foreknowledge*, 64–75. See also Ulrich Lehner, ed., *Die scholastische Theologie im Zeitalter der Gnadenstreitigkeiten*, vol. I (Nordhausen: Bautz, 2007); Thuesen, *Predestination*, 139–42.

[46] Flint provides a helpful summary in *Divine Providence*, 41–6. See also Freddoso's Introduction to his translation of *On Divine Foreknowledge*, 1–81, especially his section 'The Theory of Middle Knowledge', 46–62.

[47] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §9, p. 168.

that God's eternity includes no 'before' or 'after', but he also recognizes an order of priority (which need not be temporal) between God's knowing and his willing. In a real sense, knowledge precedes will: if one does not know something, one cannot will it. Moreover, as regards creatures, God knows more than he wills; God does not will every possible created order, but instead freely chooses *this* created order. From eternity, he wills that this happen rather than that, even though in his natural knowledge he knows that both 'this' and 'that' are possible modes of created participation in his eternal being. In order to express this distinction between the full content of God's knowledge and the more limited determination of God's will regarding creatures, Molina argues that the act of the will imposes a non-temporal 'before' and 'after' in God's knowing of creatures. 'Before' the act of his will, God knows all possibilities; 'after' the free act of his will in determining which possibility will become actual in time, God no longer knows only what *might* happen in time. 'After' the determination of his will, he knows '*absolutely* and *determinately*, *without any condition or hypothesis*, which ones from among all the contingent states of affairs were in fact going to obtain and, likewise, which ones were not going to obtain'.[48]

Molina also points out that 'prior' to this act of will (in his 'natural knowledge'), God does not know which, among the various possibilities, he will determine to become actual in time. It follows that God, by his 'natural knowledge', does not foreknow what exactly will happen in time. God foreknows what will happen in time only in his 'free knowledge', after his will has freely made its determination.[49] In other words, because God's will is free as regards creatures, God

[48] Ibid. In this regard David Hart argues that Molina's and Bañez's position have an inner similarity: for both 'God elects this world out of an infinity of possibilities and thereby infallibly decrees what shall be. . . . On either side of the debate, theologians were attempting to remedy the ontological deficiency of their theory by way of an ontic supplement: either *praemotio physica* (a solution conceived from the perspective of act) or *scientia media* (a solution conceived from the perspective of potency)' (Hart, 'Providence and Causality', 44).

[49] Regarding eternal knowledge of temporal things that have not yet happened in time, Molina holds that divine knowledge in eternity takes into account the progression of contingent temporal causes, so that future things are not 'from eternity present to God outside their causes with their own existence' (Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 49, §18, p. 126). Molina fears that any other model destroys true created freedom of choice (see ibid., §17, p. 124). Steven C. Roy argues that Scripture reveals that God's foreknowledge is exhaustive: see Roy, *How Much Does God Foreknow? A Comprehensive Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

cannot foreknow in his 'natural knowledge' what he freely *chooses* as regards creatures ('free knowledge'). If God could foreknow the decision of his own will, then God's will would not be free, and indeed God's will would be reduced to his knowledge. If God's will were necessary in this way, then free creation would be mere necessary emanation.

In addition to the distinction between 'natural' and 'free' knowledge, Molina posits a third kind of knowledge in God. He argues that there must be a transitional knowledge, according to which God knows not merely every created mode in which his being can be participated ('natural knowledge'), but knows these created modes in the nexus of secondary causes that they require in order to come to be. Molina thus distinguishes between God's knowing every possible thing and God's knowing the various possible causal chains. The latter is God's 'middle knowledge', which presents to God's will the various possible chains of created causes. 'Middle knowledge' does not yet include the determination of the will (otherwise it would be 'free knowledge'). By 'middle knowledge' God knows all the particular things that would arise from each possible determination of the divine will, and so middle knowledge *anticipates* the role of the divine will. By contrast, 'natural knowledge' does not include the will at all. Both 'natural knowledge' and 'middle knowledge' are 'prior' to the will's determination ('free knowledge'); the divine will makes its determination on the basis of the options set out by 'middle knowledge'. In his 'middle knowledge', God apprehends precisely how 'free choice, on the hypothesis that it should be created in one or another order of things, would do the one thing rather than the other, even though it would indifferently be able to do either of them'.[50]

[50] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §10, p. 169. Molina's position has been explored in detail by contemporary philosophers, following the lead of Alvin Plantinga in *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974). See especially Eef Dekker, *Middle Knowledge* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); William Lane Craig, *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 127–51; Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). See also Brian Shanley, OP, 'Eternity and Duration in Aquinas', *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 525–48; Shanley, 'Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal in Aquinas', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997): 197–224, at 217. Among the many responses to the Molinist position, Shanley cites as particularly helpful Maurice de la Taille, SJ, 'Sur les diverse classifications de la science divine', *Recherches de science réligieuse* 13 (1923): 7–23, 535–42.

Regarding predestination, this threefold division of the divine knowledge of creatures makes possible the simultaneous affirmation of God's absolute ordering of all things from eternity—God's transcendent causality—and God's ordering of all things not merely on the basis of his will, but on the basis of his knowing what free created agents will do. In one sense, of course, God's knowledge has absolutely no role in determining who is predestined. This is so because God's 'free' knowledge 'is *in no way* a cause of things. For that knowledge comes *after* the free determination of God's will, a determination by which the *whole* notion of a cause and principle of immediate operation is satisfied on God's part.'[51] In this regard at least, God's determination of the scope of predestination depends upon his will.

When viewed from another angle, however, God's knowledge of creatures provides the basis for predestination. Molina specifies that as regards things that do not depend on created free choice, God's 'natural knowledge' and his free will suffice for providential ordering. But as regards things that involve created free choice, God employs his 'middle knowledge'. Through his middle knowledge, God knows how free creatures will act, and he knows this 'prior' to willing that a particular order of creatures exist in time. He freely chooses which order should exist on the basis of his 'middle knowledge' of how free created causality acts in that order.

Molina thus gives the central place in the doctrine of predestination not to God's causality but to God's knowledge of how created agents freely act in particular causal orderings. As Molina states, '[T]he fact that a being endowed with free choice would, were it placed in a given order of things and circumstances, turn itself toward one or the other part does not stem from God's foreknowledge; to the contrary, God foreknows it because the being endowed with free choice would freely do that very thing.'[52] God's will follows upon his 'middle knowledge' of what the free action of rational creatures would be given a particular ordering of natural gifts and graces, because God's middle knowledge enables him to choose from all possible options the one that he deems to be most fitting. As regards

[51] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §19, p. 179.

[52] Ibid., §10, p. 170. See Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 25–6; cf. Dominik Perler, 'Luis de Molina und Francisco Suarez' concursus-Theorie', in *Occasionalismus. Theorien der Kausalität im arabisch-islamischen und im europäischen Denken*, ed. Dominik Perler and Ulrich Rudolph (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 201–11.

the order of predestination that God freely wills on the basis of his 'middle knowledge', however, do God's foreseen gifts of grace have primacy or do the free creature's foreseen merits have primacy?

The answer is found in Molina's account of created freedom. In God's 'free knowledge', God knows with absolute certainty everything that will happen in time. God's free knowledge stems from his will 'to create such-and-such a faculty of free choice in such-and-such an order of things'.[53] By contrast, when God foreknows in his 'middle knowledge' that a free created agent would freely do a particular thing in particular circumstances, Molina emphasizes that God's foreknowledge of the free creature's action does not 'stem from God's willing that the thing in question be done by that being. Rather, it stems from the fact that the being would freely will to do that thing.'[54] For Molina, freedom, whether created or divine, requires the ability 'to choose the opposite part'.[55] While preserving God's transcendent causality, Molina seeks to ensure that divine foreknowledge and divine will do not take away the ability of free creatures 'to choose the opposite part'. This ability is factored into God's 'middle knowledge': it is the rational creature's causality that is determinative of the ordering. God exercises his own causality primarily in his act of freely determining which ordering should be created, not in causing what the free creature does in any particular ordering.

Molina emphasizes that God's foreknowledge does not cause a thing to be: '[I]t is because the thing will come to be from its causes that He knows that it is going to be.'[56] Rather than reflecting the priority of God's causality, the ordering that God predestines on the basis of his middle knowledge depends on 'when [created] free choice by its innate freedom indifferently chooses this or its opposite'.[57] Just as rational creatures choose freely from various options, so God in

[53] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §10, p. 170.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., §11, p. 171. For an excellent discussion of Molina's 'libertarianism' in dialogue with other views, see Flint, *Divine Providence*, 22–34. See also Vincent Aubin, '"Aussi libres que si la prescience n'existait pas": Molina et la science moyenne au secours de la liberté', in *Sur la science divine*, ed. Jean-Christophe Bardout and Olivier Boulnois (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 382–411.

[56] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §19, p. 179. For detailed discussion of this position see also Robert Joseph Matava, 'Divine Causality and Human Free Choice: Domingo Bañez and the Controversy *De Auxiliis*' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2010), especially chapters 2 and 3.

[57] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §20, p. 180.

creating chooses freely from various options. In defence of his view that created freedom explains why a particular rational creature is as it is (assuming God's will to create the entire order), Molina quotes Origen's commentary on Romans 8:30, where Origen says, 'It is not because God knows that something is going to be that that thing is going to be, but rather it is because it is going to be that it is known by God before it comes to be.'[58] Molina agrees with Origen that what is at stake is human freedom in determining one's own salvation or damnation. Judas could have been like Peter and John, but Judas freely chose not to be. Christ's divine foreknowledge was not the cause of Judas's free actions, but the result. Molina also quotes John of Damascus, who writes in his *Dialogue against the Manichees* that 'foreknowledge was not in the least a cause of the devil's becoming evil. For a physician, when he foresees a future illness, does not cause that illness. To the contrary, the real cause of the illness consists in a perverse and immoderate way of life.'[59]

Molina also cites St Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Book V, chapter 10, where Augustine denies that God's foreknowledge conflicts with human free will. Molina finds the same point in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* I, q. 14, a. 13. For Molina, the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human free will flows from 'the acumen and absolute perfection of His intellect, though with dependence on the fact that things were going to happen that way because of the faculty of choice itself'.[60] By contrast, in Augustine and Aquinas one finds an emphasis on the transcendent causality of God acting (by nature and by grace) in and through the human free will, and in Calvin this is even more the case because of his insistence on interpreting in terms of God's active will 'the vessels of wrath made for destruction' (Rom. 9:22).

In many ways, Molina's view is similar to that of Ockham and even of Damascene. The difference consists in his emphasis on God's foreknowledge of various possible causal chains (God's 'middle knowledge'). In directing attention to causal chains, Molina develops Calvin's concern to affirm the goodness of God's willing an entire causal order that includes everlasting rebellion. Calvin highlights the unity of the causal chain by not differentiating active and permissive will in God. Although Molina insists upon the autonomous role of created free choice in the causal chain, nonetheless Molina's more

[58] Quoted ibid., §22, p. 182.
[59] Quoted ibid., §23, p. 182.
[60] Ibid., §33, p. 189.

fundamental emphasis is on the causal chain itself as known by God in his 'middle knowledge'. This focus on the causal chain returns, as we will see, in Leibniz.

FRANCIS DE SALES

A decidedly different approach is taken by Francis de Sales (1567–1622), although he had some sympathy with the goal of the Molinists. Published less than a decade after Pope Paul V's decision to suspend the De Auxiliis controversy, de Sales's *Treatise on the Love of God* focuses on the active principle of predestination, namely, divine love.[61] Book I introduces his theme via an exploration of the affections and the will, including the distinction between 'love of benevolence' and 'love of cupidity'.[62] He affirms that we have a natural inclination to love God above all things, but that we cannot after original sin fulfil this inclination naturally. We require God to draw us to himself. Book II turns to creation and providence. In his simple act of will, grounded in the wisdom of the divine ideas, God creates an 'admirable difference of persons and of things, which succeed one another in seasons, in ages, and in times, each one in its order', expressing 'distinction and variety' rather than 'confusion and disorder'.[63] God creates a tremendous diversity of participated beings. As de Sales says, 'nothing at all has existence save by this sole most singular, most simple, and most eternal act'.[64]

De Sales employs King Solomon's reign as a biblical analogy for divine providence. Solomon planned a temple and a regular temple service; likewise he planned a royal palace and court, staffed both by officers of justice and by military officers. Having planned these

[61] When Francis was about twenty years old, he underwent a spiritual crisis over the issue of predestination. In their Introduction to Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal, *Letters of Spiritual Direction*, trans. Péronne Marie Thibert, VHM (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 19–20, Wendy M. Wright and Joseph F. Power, OSFS, describe this spiritual crisis and its results. See also Franz Wehrl, 'Der Brief des hl. Franz von Sales an P. Leonard Lessius über die Frage der Vorherbestimmung', in *Jahrbuch für salesianische Studien* 35 (2003): 100–7.

[62] Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book I, ch. xiii, p. 51.

[63] Ibid., Book II, ch. ii, p. 68.

[64] Ibid. 69.

projects for the wise ordering of his kingdom, he 'caused provision to be made of all things requisite to carry out and to accomplish their charges'.[65] His providential governance established peace and justice for the citizens of the kingdom. Analogously, 'God, having had an eternal and most perfect knowledge of the art of making the world for his glory, disposed before all things in his divine understanding all the principal parts of the universe which might render him honor.'[66] Just as Solomon planned a vibrant temple and palace, so God planned for the diversity of angels and humans; and just as Solomon provided the temple and palace with all that they needed in order to accomplish the purpose for which he built them, so also God 'provided and determined in his mind all the means requisite for men and angels to come to the end for which he had ordained them'.[67] As part of his providential ordering of rational creatures to their end, God orders non-rational creatures by what de Sales calls 'natural providence'. Divine providence oversees 'the concurrence of various causes' so that, despite what seem to be chance events, everything works towards 'the general good of the universe'.[68]

God governs rational creatures with 'supernatural providence'. Taking its bearings from the plan of the Incarnation, divine supernatural providence plans and rules the kingdom of God. Supernatural providence plans all other creatures with Christ in view. Nonetheless, God does not compel anyone to belong to his supernatural kingdom. Although God creates all his rational creatures in the grace of original justice, he bestows free will upon rational creatures and ensures that their original disposition (that is, the inclination to love) 'should not force the will but should leave it in its freedom'.[69] God foresees that some angels will freely and permanently rebel against love, with the result that God's grace will justly abandon these fallen angels. Likewise, God foresees that Adam and Eve will also rebel, but since their rebellion is imperfect (for they were tempted), God acts towards human beings with superabundant mercy in the redemptive love of his Son Christ Jesus. The result is that 'no man can ever complain as though the divine mercy were wanting to any one'.[70]

[65] Ibid., ch. iii, p. 70. [66] Ibid. 71. [67] Ibid. [68] Ibid. 72.

[69] Ibid., ch. iv, p. 75. On freedom, see Wright and Power, 'Introduction', 49.

[70] Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book II, ch. iv, p. 76. Wright and Power comment that de Sales recognizes that 'although this gifted freedom is real and expansive . . . the compassion and mercy of the divine life are prior to such freedom. God's love sustains, draws forth, and perfects all that is within the power of human

If God's supernatural providence is extraordinarily active and beneficial to us, why then do human beings suffer so much from disease and from uncontrolled passions? De Sales holds that while these sufferings reflect the justice of God's providence in punishing original and actual sin, nonetheless even in this regard God's active mercy is not absent. God turns our diseases and our sins into occasions of grace in which we discover our need for God. Once we recognize God's mercy in the midst of our sufferings, furthermore, we realize how God unites our sufferings to his Cross. Thanks to God's providential love, says de Sales, 'We come out, like Naaman, from the stream of salvation more pure and clean than if we had never been leprous.'[71]

De Sales describes the blessings that God's elect receive, beginning with the blessing of immaculate conception given to the Virgin Mary so that she might be 'the first of all the elect to enjoy *the delights of God's right hand* [Ps. 16:11]'.[72] Others too received God's salvific grace from their mother's womb, including John the Baptist and probably Jeremiah. Many others God permitted to commit sins, but with a special providential care that ensured their final perseverance in grace: among these are the Apostles, David, and Mary Magdalene. The whole human race (with the angels) receives the bountiful graces of supernatural providence. In his active providential love, God, the wise and good ruler of his kingdom, 'poured out over all human nature' what everyone should recognize as a 'most abundant sufficiency of grace'.[73]

Within this abundant sufficiency, diversity flourishes. De Sales notes that Christian regions possess greater means of salvation (for example, Scripture and the sacraments) than do non-Christian regions, and also that within Christian regions some towns are blessed with better pastors. He explains that God's goal for his kingdom is the beauty and harmony that diverse gifts produce, just as in the world the variety of plants and animals makes for beauty. Need we then be jealous of those persons who receive greater graces? De Sales warns

beings to do. And God's mercy is ultimately greater than the choices the human person may make' (Wright and Power, 'Introduction', 21). De Sales, however, makes clear that human persons can and do reject the divine mercy.

[71] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book II, ch. v, p. 78.
[72] Ibid., ch. vi, p. 79.
[73] Ibid., ch. vii, p. 81.

against such folly, on the grounds that God gives an abundant sufficiency to each human being. We do better to thank God for his freely bestowed gifts to us, rather than envying what God freely does for others.

Thus God plans and rules his kingdom as a wondrous city, comparable to a garden with many different kinds of flowers harmoniously arranged. Why then does God not save every human being? In order to enter into God's kingdom, de Sales replies, we need to love God above all things. The love that Jesus shows for us on the Cross is so powerful that he both enables us to love God and inspires us to do so. He inspires us by revealing 'how amorous the divine heart is of our love'.[74] Out of sheer love for us sinners, the Son of God comes to redeem us and unite us to himself. By suffering and dying for us, he reveals a love whose depths can never be plumbed. Furthermore, he urges upon us with the commandment of love for God, and by the grace of his Holy Spirit he heals and elevates us so that we can follow supernaturally our natural inclination to love God above all things. In these ways 'the divine goodness animates all souls and encourages all hearts to its love, none being excluded from its heat'.[75]

But if none are excluded, why then do some continue rebellious and alienated from love? De Sales emphasizes once more that the answer is not some lack in God's providential love. On the contrary, he augments, if possible, his earlier descriptions of how God's providential love actively reaches into every aspect of human life in order to lead us to salvation in his kingdom. He affirms that 'God does not only give us a simple sufficiency of means to love him, and in loving him to save ourselves, but also a rich, ample and magnificent sufficiency, and such as ought to be expected from so great a bounty as his'.[76] From Scripture he derives examples of this 'magnificent sufficiency': God knocks at our hearts, tries the bolt, cries out in the streets, begs for our conversion, underscores his supreme mercy, dies on the Cross for our sins—all because he 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4). Indeed, all 'the riches of God's goodness', an infinite treasury, are deployed

[74] Ibid., Book II, ch. viii, p. 84.

[75] Ibid. See Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 227.

[76] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book II, ch. viii, p. 85.

in order to convert each sinner.[77] As God reminds wayward Israel, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel!' (Jer. 31:3).[78]

De Sales compares human beings to the footless birds described by Aristotle, who require the wind to set them in motion, without which they die. We often separate ourselves from the 'wind' of the Holy Spirit and fall in mortal peril to the earth, but God's ever-active providence, despite our repeated abandonment of God, once more sends 'the favourable wind of his most holy inspirations, which, blowing upon our hearts with a gentle violence, seizes and moves them, raising our thoughts, and moving our affections into the air of divine love'.[79] In the same way de Sales compares us to the Apostle Peter, asleep in prison and awakened by God's angel. We find ourselves spiritually asleep, chained by sins, and the Holy Spirit shakes us awake. Since we cannot free ourselves, we depend entirely upon God's providential love: 'in this beginning of grace we do nothing but feel the touch which God gives, in us, as St. Bernard says, but without us.'[80]

Given our dependence upon God, can we repulse his providential love? De Sales quotes John 6:44, 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him', and he comments, 'For if the Father had not drawn us we had never come to the Son, our Saviour, nor consequently to salvation.'[81] How then do we have any choice in the matter? In some cases, de Sales grants, individual human beings do not have a choice to reject their fulfilment, because they find such powerful joy in the fulfilment that God gives them by the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. He remarks in this regard, 'I leave on one side those all-powerful vocations, and holily violent attractions. . . . We must give a particular rank to those privileged souls in regard of whom it pleased God to make not the mere outflowing, but the inundation—to exercise, if one may say so, not the simple liberality and effusion, but the prodigality and profusion of his love.'[82] Most people, however, can repel God's love, because God ordinarily loves us in a fashion that gently moves us, and he only occasionally enables us to feel the powerful outpouring of his blessings. He draws us to himself by delighting and attracting us, not by enslaving and necessitating us.

[77] Ibid. [78] Cited by de Sales, ibid., ch. ix, p. 86.
[79] Ibid. 87. [80] Ibid. 89. [81] Ibid. 86.
[82] Ibid., ch. xii, pp. 94–5.

De Sales explains that in this ordinary form, where we are moved but not radically overcome by God's love, 'Grace has power, not to force but to entice the heart; she has a holy violence not to violate our liberty but to make it full of love; she acts strongly, yet so sweetly that our will is not overwhelmed by so powerful and action'.[83]

It is true that we cannot prevent God from inspiring our hearts to conversion, which is the first movement of grace. Yet in order for the divine life to take hold in us, we must consent to, and cooperate with, the movement of the grace of the Holy Spirit. By retreating into love of self over love of God, we can withhold our consent and refuse to cooperate. De Sales observes that this withholding of consent certainly does not increase our freedom, as if we lost autonomy when we cooperated with God. Rather, our freedom is as fully engaged in cooperating with God, as it is in resisting God, 'although the consent to grace depends much more on grace than on the will, while the resistance to grace depends upon the will only'.[84]

How should we understand a resistance that 'depends upon the will only'? If consent 'depends much more on grace than on the will', is grace in some way lacking when the will does not consent? Both the will that consents and the will that resists are free; is the free choice of the will the sole difference between the will that consents and the will that resists? The will that consents cannot boast of its superiority to the will that resists, because our consent is more a work of grace than it is a work of our will (even though it is both). But if boasting is thus excluded, how to explain the will that resists? Why has the work of grace, the attraction of God's love, allowed the resistant will to act solely on its own?

To such questions, de Sales points out that '[w]e rob God of his right if we attribute to ourselves the glory of our salvation, but we dishonour his mercy if we say he failed us'.[85] De Sales holds closely to the Lord's teaching through the prophet Hosea (in the Vulgate translation of Hosea 13:9), 'Destruction is your own, O Israel: your help is only in me.'[86] God has not deprived the resistant will, whether human or angelic, of God's grace. Satan and those who follow his path

[83] Ibid. 96. Dupré comments, 'Francis never succeeded in bringing the relation between free will and grace to theoretical clarity' (Dupré, *Passage to Modernity*, 227).

[84] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book II, ch. xii, p. 96.

[85] Ibid., ch. x, p. 91.

[86] Ibid. See also ibid., Book IV, ch. v, p. 176.

of rebellion cannot blame God in any way for their free resistance. Addressing himself to Satan, de Sales strongly affirms that the one who resists cannot blame a lack of grace: 'God did not deprive thee of the operation of his love, but thou didst deprive his love of thy co-operation. God would never have rejected thee if thou hadst not rejected his love.'[87] De Sales goes on to praise God for never removing his active love, the grace of the Holy Spirit, from any rational creature who does not freely reject it.

As an example of this truth, de Sales recounts Augustine's discussion in *De civitate Dei* of the fall of the angels. Asking why some angels persevered in grace while others fell, Augustine answers that those who persevered did so by grace, whereas those who fell did so by their will alone. De Sales also comments on Aquinas's discussion of the hierarchy of grace among the angels: some of the angels who received the greatest gifts of grace fell, whereas some angels who had received much lesser gifts of grace persevered. In short, one cannot blame lack of grace for one's fall, while at the same time one cannot boast about one's will if one perseveres. God's active love is such that he seeks to make every rational creature a saint. Indeed, God wishes to give each one of us more and more grace; the Holy Spirit 'ceaselessly spreads its sacred inspirations, which ever increase and make us increase more and more in heavenly love'.[88]

Why then are we not all great saints? The answer, de Sales grants, is that God has not given us the grace that he gave to such great saints as St Francis of Assisi. Does God then withhold his grace, so that God ultimately is to blame for the difference between us and St Francis of Assisi? No. Rather, we have freely chosen not to cooperate with God's grace in the way that St Francis did; we have resisted receiving the graces that God would otherwise have bestowed upon us. As de Sales observes, there is no reason for our failure other than our free will.

At every step, therefore, de Sales refuses either to limit God's grace or to boast in the accomplishment of our free will. He insists both that God pours out abundant graces so as to make each and every rational creature a saint, and that these abundant graces do not achieve their aim in some rational creatures due to a rebellious exercise of free will. Even free consent to God's grace—a consent that amounts to not

[87] Ibid., Book II, ch. x, p. 91.

[88] Ibid., ch. xi, p. 93. See Michael Müller, *Frohe Gottesliebe: das religiös-sittliche Ideal des heiligen Franz von Sales* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1948).

resisting grace—depends upon the active inspiration of God's grace, so that 'if grace had not prevented and filled thy heart with its operation, never had thy heart had either power or will to co-operate'.[89] By affirming that God's love brings about all our blessings and that our free will is responsible for what we lack, de Sales confirms St Paul's remark, 'What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?' (1 Cor. 4:7).[90]

If God truly wills to save everyone, as de Sales affirms, why could not God meet every resistance with the grace to overcome such resistance (by interiorly moving the person's free will, as he does in enabling us freely to consent), so that ultimately all rational creatures would be saved? In answer, de Sales warns that allowing oneself to be drawn into these problems inevitably results in a reductive answer. In his view, one cannot account for the difference between saint and sinner solely in terms of free will, for the saint is made such by grace. Nor can one limit God's personal love for each and every rational creature, for the failure of the rational creature is due solely to the rational creature's resistance, not to any withholding of grace or any lack of power on the part of the all-loving God. Invoking the authority of the Council of Trent, he comments, 'As it would be an impious effrontery to attribute the works of holy love done by the Holy Ghost in and with us to the strength of our will, it would be a shameless impiety to lay the defect of love in ungrateful men, on the failure of heavenly assistance and grace.'[91] Rather than going down the path opened up by hypothetical questions, one should simply contemplate the reality that has been supremely revealed in Christ and through the Holy Spirit: God's unfathomable and extraordinary love for each of us.

How then should we understand God's permission of permanent moral defect on the part of some of his rational creatures, made in his image and covenantally loved by him? For de Sales, Romans 11:33–6

[89] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book IV, ch. vi, p. 180. If our non-resistance, however, were caused more by our will than by God's grace, we would have some grounds (however small) to boast. For this reason de Sales holds that 'if we have any love for God, his be the honour and glory, who did all in us, and without whom nothing were done' (ibid. 182). Cf. Andreas Schmidt, 'Tirez-moi, nous courrons nour deux: göttliche Gnade und menschliche Mitwirkung in der Theologie des hl. Franz de Sales', *Jahrbuch für salesianische Studien* 33 (2001): 7–79.

[90] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book IV, ch. vi, p. 179.

[91] Ibid., ch. v, p. 176. Cf. the Council of Trent, Decree on Justification, Canon 17, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. II: *Trent to Vatican II*, ed. Norman P. Tanner, SJ (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 680.

offers the best possible human answer to this question. This answer consists in the fact that, in de Sales's paraphrase, 'God does all things with great wisdom, knowledge and reason; yet so, that, as man has not entered into the divine counsels, whose judgments and designs are placed infinitely above our reach, we ought devoutly to adore his decrees as most just, without searching out their motives.'[92] Why does God, who so clearly reveals his love for us, conceal the reasons for his permission of eternal loss? De Sales answers that this conduces to our humility: we are not God, and we must allow divine love to possess a deeper wisdom than we can understand and explain. In this regard de Sales also cites a number of texts from Augustine, who warns repeatedly against enquiring into why God saves one person while God allows another person to fall into everlasting punishment.

It is clear from nature that divine providence permits diversity, and this diversity has an impact even in the supernatural sphere (for example, when of twin infants, one receives baptism while the other dies before baptism). Can we therefore propose that the reason that God saves some and permits others to fall into everlasting punishment is that God wills the beauty of diversity, which we find in the natural world as well? De Sales grants that this answer might be true, but he warns against employing it. The truth, he says, is that no human answer can handle the depths of this mystery. Only in heaven will God reveal to us why his plan unfolds as it does, and until we learn this from God, even our most ingenious explanations will fall flat.

De Sales briefly treats the explanation that Ockham and Molina offer, namely foreseen merits, but rather than discuss the recent controversy he explores this explanation as it appears in the writings of St Bonaventure. He points out that although Bonaventure identifies foreseen merits as a *possible* explanation for why God elects those whom he elects, Bonaventure denies that anyone can know whether this explanation, or any other congruous one, is in fact true.[93]

[92] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book IV, ch. vii, p. 184.

[93] See ibid. 185. Dupré observes that de Sales's understanding of grace at times 'appears to depend on Molina's questionable assumption of a divine foreknowledge in accordance with which God, in a second moment, grants grace' (Dupré, *Passage to Modernity*, 227–8). But as Dupré adds, de Sales 'is not committed to any branch of School theology and simply wants to assert that supernatural grace appeals to natural inclination. . . . Francis avoided becoming embroiled in School disputes, rightly feeling that those were in large part responsible for the spiritual poverty of theology' (ibid. 228).

According to Bonaventure (and de Sales), God does not explain this mystery to us, so as to preserve our humility. Drawing upon St Gregory of Nazianzus, de Sales adds that we generally cannot even understand why human agents do what they do, let alone why God does what he does. We see only portions of the divine work, and it should suffice for us to see in this work the divine mercy and justice.

With Romans 11:33–6 as his guide, de Sales observes that we know that God's wisdom is infinite and that God gives everything bountifully. In Christ Jesus and through his Spirit, God instructs us that '[h]is love towards us is an incomprehensible abyss, whence he has provided for us a rich sufficiency, or rather a rich abundance of means proper for our salvation; and sweetly to apply them he makes use of a sovereign wisdom, having by his infinite knowledge foreseen and known all that was requisite to that effect'.[94] To desire to know more than Christ reveals turns us away from the task at hand, which is to love God above all things, and to love each other as Christ loved us. Such love requires for fallen human beings constant exercise in humility. As de Sales concludes, 'Let us never permit our minds to flutter with curiosity about God's judgments, for, like little butterflies, we shall burn our wings, and perish in this sacred flame.'[95]

Although de Sales is certainly not without some Molinist leanings, his analogies for God's providential ordering lead him away from Molina's focus on causal chains. De Sales affirms the transcendent priority of God's grace without affirming that grace depends upon foreseen merits. Like Catherine, he focuses on God's all-encompassing love from eternity for each and every rational creature. It follows that with regard to God's providential ordering (including God's 'super-natural providence', predestination), de Sales is able to leave more room for mystery about God's eternal will—comprising as it does both super-abundant love for all and permission of some to rebel permanently. As a result, his position fails in terms of logical clarity, since God's transcendent causality and permission of permanent rebellion logically require strict limitations on God's eternal love for the damned. Like

[94] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book IV, ch. viii, p. 188. For the spirituality arising from this doctrine of God's loving providence—namely, abandonment to the will of God—see especially Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal, *Letters of Spiritual Direction*. See also Jean-Pierre de Caussade, SJ (1675–1751), *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, trans. John Beevers (New York: Doubleday, 1975).

[95] De Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book IV, ch. viii, p. 188.

Catherine's, however, his position crucially succeeds in affirming both aspects of the biblical witness.

Not surprisingly, de Sales is unable to stem the movement towards clarifying with more and more precision the causal chain by which God's predestined ordering comes to be. Leibniz takes up this task without Calvin's exegetical attentiveness or Molina's scholastic metaphysics, and the result is to locate modern predestinarian controversy even more firmly within debates about chains of causality.

G. W. LEIBNIZ

The eclectic Lutheran thinker Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) is best known for defending the claim—satirized by Voltaire's *Candide*—that 'among all possible plans of the universe there is one better than all the rest, and that God has not failed to choose it'.[96] For Leibniz, God has created a universal system in which all parts fit together to produce the greatest good. But if this universe is the best possible, why does it have so much misery, both temporal and everlasting? Leibniz suggests that the wicked are necessary for God's work of achieving the most possible good for his universe. In this vein, he remarks that 'when one considers that God, altogether good and wise, must have produced all the virtue, goodness, happiness whereof the best plan of the universe is capable, and that often an evil in some parts may serve the greater good of the whole, one readily concludes that God may have given room for unhappiness, and even permitted guilt, as he has done'.[97] Not only would such a God be blameless, Leibniz argues, but indeed only in this way can one justify the eternal decree of God to permit human sin and suffering. God permits such

[96] G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil*, ed. Austin Farrer, trans. E. M. Huggard (Chicago: Open Court, 1985), 268. Leibniz's book began as a response to Pierre Bayle's criticisms of his metaphysical doctrine of pre-established harmony: see Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 15–35. Leibniz's position adapts that of Nicolas Malebranche: see Nicholas Jolley, *Leibniz* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 158. See also Steven Nadler, 'Choosing a Theodicy: The Leibniz–Malebranche–Arnauld Connection', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55 (1994): 573–89; Nadler, *The Best of All Possible Worlds: A Story of Philosophers, God, and Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008), 115–39, 238–40.

[97] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 268.

things because he *needs* them in order to bring about the best possible universal outcome.

In arguing that God makes this kind of calculation, Leibniz distinguishes his position from that of Calvin's successor Theodore Beza (1519–1605), who (Leibniz reports) goes beyond even Calvin in teaching that 'God, wishing to manifest his mercy and his justice in accordance with reasons worthy of him, but unknown to us, chose the elect, and in consequence rejected the damned, prior to all thought of sin, even of Adam'.[98] Beza supposes that God then willed to permit sin and to bestow grace in Christ Jesus, so as the better to display his mercy for the elect and his justice for the damned. Leibniz denies that this position manifests God's mercy or justice. He points out that God 'would declare his mercy better in preventing misery, and he would declare his justice better in preventing guilt, in advancing virtue, and in recompensing it'.[99]

Leibniz also explores the views of the Catholic Molinists and Bañezians. The Molinists, he thinks, are right to affirm the foreknowledge of God, although there is no need to posit 'middle knowledge' in God. Like the Molinists, he holds that the divine intelligence knows 'an infinitude of possible worlds'.[100] Having foreseen all the possible ways in which free creatures would act in all circumstances, God determines upon one. For its part, the Bañezian view of predetermination from eternity is better, Leibniz argues, than the Molinist view that God foreknows only because the free creature will act in this way. Yet Leibniz defends predetermination without resorting to Bañezian premotion (which holds that God in his transcendent causality moves the free will). For Leibniz, the creature's activity can be known by God because of the place of the creature within the universal system of causes, with its general rules that govern how each cause acts upon the others. No eternal decree moving the created will is necessary, because free creatures, as causes, act in a regular and predictable manner. Such predictability no more negates human free will than does God's invariable willing of the good negate divine

[98] Ibid. 166. For an excellent discussion of Theodore Beza's view of predestination, see Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 79–96. On the impact of Leibniz's wide theological reading as a young man, which was focused on the issue of divine agency, see Maria Rosa Antognazza's *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46–7, 480–1.

[99] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 274.

[100] Ibid. 146.

freedom. It follows that the Bañezian appeal to premotion is unnecessary: 'we have no need to resort, in company with some new Thomists, to a new immediate predetermination by God, such as may cause the free creature to abandon his indifference, and to a decree of God for predetermining the creature, making it possible for God to know what the creature will do.'[101]

Similarly, because free creatures act predictably on the basis of their position within the causal nexus, no Molinist 'middle knowledge' is needed. In order to be able to foresee the connections between the interlocking causes, all God needs to do is to recognize that the creature is 'predetermined by its preceding state, which inclines it to one course more than to another'.[102] In Leibniz's view, the Molinist account of created freedom is too indeterministic. In order to preserve the real contingency of future events, the Molinists thought that they had to give created freedom absolute priority. Leibniz argues that this position led them into overemphasizing freedom of indifference, as if the free will did not already tend in determinate directions due to natural inclinations and the effect of other causes. Regarding the Molinists, Leibniz concludes, 'They will therefore never extricate themselves without acknowledging that there is a predetermination in the preceding state of the free creature, which inclines it to be determined.'[103] Without losing its freedom, the free creature belongs within a 'concatenation of causes linked together'.[104]

If God has willed the universal system of interlocking causes that achieves the best outcome, can God change anything in this world? Leibniz raises this question in order to clarify his position. The central point is that God wills a harmonious universal system, what Leibniz calls a 'Pre-established Harmony of all things among themselves'.[105] By 'all things' he means the entire range of causes, including miracles and prayers, so that there can be no opposition of grace and nature, or of God's causality with free created causality. All material things are in their proper places, just as all times relate to each other as they should. The 'sovereign wisdom of God' brings about this glorious

[101] Ibid. 149.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid. 150. See Jean-Pascal Anfray, 'God's Decrees and Middle Knowledge: Leibniz and the Jesuits', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76 (2002): 647–70.
[104] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 150.
[105] Ibid. 157.

harmony.[106] For this reason, God would not want to change anything in the universal system, although the events within this system still retain, in themselves, their contingent character: they are fated to happen, but only through contingent causes. The universal system even includes the rewards and punishments that God bestows upon us for good and bad actions, since everything belongs within the world order. We merit rewards if we do our duty to assist, in so far as we can understand it, the good outcome that God is accomplishing in history.[107]

In this system of interlocking causes, why should anyone be rewarded or (especially) punished? If a wicked cause is needed in order to further the good that God envisions, why should God punish that wicked cause for doing the task that God required of it? In this regard Leibniz distances himself from the 'mathematical necessity' to which the materialism of Hobbes and Spinoza leads.[108] He denies that free creatures act by mathematical necessity. Their free actions therefore merit reward and punishment, even if God knows that all actions contribute to his goal of the best possible outcome. At this stage, however, Leibniz interjects another question: why would everlasting punishment be good? Everlasting punishment, he argues, is based upon avenging justice, not upon improvement, example, or redress of the evil. Through avenging justice, disorder never triumphs, lacking anything to order it. Likewise order never finds itself without reward. Indeed, Leibniz proposes that God need not actually *do* anything further, since rewards are intrinsic to righteousness and punishments to wickedness: 'the damned ever bring upon themselves new pains through new sins', while 'the blessed ever bring upon themselves new

[106] Ibid. For discussion of how good and evil persons are interlocking causes according to Leibniz, see Jolley, *Leibniz*, 170–2.

[107] In Neiman's view, Leibniz anticipates modernity's 'faith in the future': 'What is modern in Leibniz's account is the conviction that the causal links between sin and suffering will become clearer with time, as will the ways in which, despite appearances to the contrary, God has ordered all those links for the best' (Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought*, 24, cf. 26, 29–31).

[108] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 160. Antognazza suggests that Leibniz's exchange with Antoine Arnauld, who warned against Leibniz's metaphysical 'necessitarianism', led Leibniz in the *Theodicy* to avoid discussing 'his conception of contingency hinging on the notion of infinite analysis' (Antognazza, *Leibniz*, 483). See also Nadler, *The Best of All Possible Worlds*, 208–13, emphasizing Arnauld's voluntarism, as well as 218–36 on Leibniz's complex engagement with Spinoza's metaphysical views. For Leibniz on Spinoza see also Genevieve Lloyd, *Providence Lost* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 240–1, 246, 248.

joys by new progress in goodness'.[109] Leibniz identifies this as the 'principle of the fitness of things', so that 'virtue and vice obtain their reward and their punishment in consequence of the natural sequence of things'.[110] The harmonious system of history is mirrored by the harmonious system of eternal life, neither of which requires anything from God beyond standard maintenance.

Leibniz takes thinkers such as Bañez and Calvin at their word with regard to their belief that 'God had *great and just reasons* for his election and the dispensation of his grace, although these reasons be unknown to us in detail'.[111] While one must affirm God's independence and creatures' dependence, it would be irrational and impious to suppose that God 'has made some happy and others unhappy without any cause, without choice, without reason'.[112] There must be some reason for God's will, or else God would be a mere arbitrary despot. What then is the reason why God allows such radical and everlasting disparity among his rational creatures?

Leibniz addresses this difficulty by first observing that 'God, as well as every wise and beneficent mind, is inclined towards all possible good'.[113] Since God thus has in view many created goods, God's 'antecedent will' is manifold; only its totality constitutes his 'complete and decretory' will.[114] Leibniz denies, however, that God causes anyone to sin or predestines damnation. He briefly explores the disputes among Infralapsarians and Supralapsarians regarding whether predestination takes place before or after God's permission of sin, and regarding whether predestination depends upon human faith. His answer is that on the basis of God's knowledge of all possible causal systems, God simultaneously makes all his decrees regarding creatures, since by choosing to create one sequence of causes God wills

[109] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 162.

[110] Ibid. As Neiman points out, for Bayle by contrast '[t]he torments of the damned, even without the doctrine of predestination, are the block on which reason stumbles. For however bad a sin may be, it has to be finite. An infinite amount of hellfire is therefore simply unjust' (Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought*, 19). See also Lloyd, *Providence Lost*, 251.

[111] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 165.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid. Jolley notes that 'Leibniz is not committed to saying that the happiness of minds is strictly at a maximum in our world; he can concede to Voltaire that there are possible worlds that contain less sin and suffering than does our world' (Jolley, *Leibniz*, 168).

[114] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 166.

everything related to it, from start to finish. But although Leibniz makes quick work of the Infralapsarian–Supralapsarian controversy, he recognizes the difficulty of understanding the everlasting disparity between human beings. Some of this disparity he finds to be merely apparent: thus he rejects the views that God condemns unbaptized infants and that God does not give grace to those who have never heard the Gospel or received the sacraments. He equally rejects the easy route of supposing that God's foreknowledge of good human natures (foreseen merits) determines which humans receive more grace. In his view 'this assumption seems remote from the principles of St. Paul, and even from those of Supreme Reason'.[115]

What then is the reason why God's 'complete and decretory' will permits such variance among human beings? Leibniz proposes that no general rule governs all God's choices regarding humans. Instead, he concludes that given the differences that naturally exist among human souls, 'those who meet with such [circumstances] as are more favorable to their nature will become more readily the least wicked, the most virtuous, the most happy; yet it will be always by aid of the influence of that inward grace which God unites with the circumstances'.[116] He then suggests a reason why this 'inward grace' does flow not from any general rule: in ordering his causes so as to achieve the optimal outcome for his creation, God cannot be bound by a universal rule, but rather God must do what is needed at each particular juncture in the causal chain. Sometimes a wicked cause may be needed, sometimes a good one. As Leibniz puts it, 'One may say that men are chosen and ranged not so much according to their excellence as according to their conformity with God's plan. Even so it may occur that a stone of lesser quality is made use of in a building or in a group because it proves to be the particular one for filling a certain gap.'[117]

Depending upon what the causal chain requires, God inserts good or bad 'stones' for the good of the whole edifice. In this way, not only good deeds, but also sins are needed by God for the accomplishment of his providential plan. As Leibniz recognizes, the analogy of an edifice cannot explain away all the difficulties, but he thinks that it

[115] Ibid. 180. [116] Ibid. 181.

[117] Ibid. Lloyd emphasizes Leibniz's indebtedness to the 'Stoic idea of the interconnections of all things within an ordered whole' (Lloyd, *Providence Lost*, 242, cf. 245, 247).

does allow us to perceive how God's permission of everlasting disparity need not derogate from God's supreme wisdom, justice, and goodness.[118]

Leibniz's position requires that all humans are equally 'chosen and precious' for the perfection of the universal edifice. Jesus may be the 'living stone' who is 'rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious' (1 Pet. 2:4), but Judas's role would seem to be equally 'chosen and precious' given his contribution to the best possible outcome for the edifice. The 'spiritual house' built of 'living stones' (1 Pet. 2:5) requires the contributions of unholy persons, who are as much part of the edifice as are those who are filled with charity. On this view, the 'body' of Christ (1 Cor. 12:20) includes those who have no share in the love of Christ; the loving 'head' has need of the hate-filled 'feet'. The causal chain turns the temple of God and the body of Christ into a universal system in which both Christ and Satan are to be found.

CONCLUSION

By means of reflection upon Scripture, Calvin invokes a God who mysteriously wills evil and who creates personal beings in his own image with the intention of destroying them in the course of using them for his purposes. Absent the distinction between God's non-active permission and God's active volition, God's will becomes both clearer and more troubling. Arguably, Calvin loses touch with the biblical affirmations that God 'tempts no one' (James 1:13) and 'desires all men to be saved' (1 Tim. 2:4). For his part, Molina seeks to ensure those who are damned cannot 'afterward blame God's

[118] Neiman comments that 'Hegel compared him [Leibniz] to a vendor in an open market: Leibniz's God can offer only what's available. We should not grumble if the produce isn't perfect but should be content when we know it's the best that can be had' (Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought*, 27, citing Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), vol. III, 341). As Lloyd remarks, 'Whereas divine justice was for Augustine the attribute under which God was concerned with the ordering of things, Leibniz's God seems driven by a desire more akin to the challenge of solving a mathematical challenge,' namely the effort to produce the greatest good (Lloyd, *Providence Lost*, 244).

foreknowledge and predestination'.[119] Although the damned should not be able to blame God's predestination, however, neither should the saved be able to boast that their responsive will is the decisive factor in distinguishing them from those who are damned. For Molina 'even after the positing of that free determination of the divine will by which God resolved to create this order . . . it is not the case that created free choice was going to do this rather than the opposite because God foreknew it, but, to the contrary, God foreknew it because free choice was going to do it by its innate freedom'.[120] This cannot be squared with Paul's argument that election 'depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy' (Rom. 9:16).

For Leibniz, the good for which God creates is merely the product of all the processes of the universe, rather than the radically gratuitous marriage of God and his creation in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21). In Leibniz's anthropomorphic account of God's foreknowledge, God seems more like a computer programmer than like infinite intelligence. Yet Leibniz is right to recognize that every action and event, however disordered, receives some role in the unfolding of God's wise and good plan—just as Calvin's attention to the full range of biblical texts and Molina's insistence on the responsibility of the rational creature for sin should characterize all theologies of predestination.

De Sales's position develops the twofold witness that emerged fruitfully in Catherine of Siena. Like Catherine, he accepts the key principles of Augustine and Aquinas, but to these principles he adds a refusal to limit God's love for sinners, even for those whom God does not elect. The tension in this position is undeniable, but I think that it best accords with what God reveals about his will in Scripture. Rather than taking up de Sales's position, however, twentieth-century theologians react instead to Calvin, Molina, and Leibniz. In this context, the position of Origen emerges as the favoured way of addressing the difficulties.

[119] Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 52, §39, p. 195.

[120] See ibid., *On Divine Foreknowledge*, disp. 51, §18, p. 157; see also disp. 49, §17, p. 124. For discussion see Alfred Freddoso, 'Introduction', 18, 24; Jacob Schmutz, 'La Doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (XIIIe–XVIIe siècles)', *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001): 217–64.

5

The Twentieth Century: God's Absolute Innocence

This chapter examines the positions of Sergius Bulgakov, Karl Barth, Jacques Maritain, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. All of these thinkers question their forebears' views on predestination and take up the challenge of resolving the tensions in predestinarian doctrine. Their defence of God's innocence, however, often comes at the cost of significant difficulties for Trinitarian theology, Christology, angelology and anthropology, and the theology of grace. These difficulties shed light on the real value of their forebears' views, especially the advantages of the position of Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales.

Charles Taylor has shown that an anthropocentric shift in the doctrine of providence—with the resulting dismissal of predestination (supernatural providence)—characterizes the great Enlightenment philosophers, who embrace Leibniz's optimism even while criticizing his theology.[1] As Neil Robertson remarks, 'The demand that arose in figures such as Voltaire, Diderot, and Helvetius was that this ought to be the best of all possible worlds. This principle, that for Leibniz was the possession of the Godhead, needed to become actively willed and realized in the world . . . through human self-consciousness and more generally through an enlightened culture.'[2] In this vein, Leibniz's

[1] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 222–4; cf. 290. On providence according to Alexander Pope's influential poem *Essay on Man* (1734) see Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 32–3. See also William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 111–78.

[2] Neil G. Robertson, 'The Doctrine of Creation and the Enlightenment', in *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought*, ed. Michael Treschow, Willemien Otten, and Walter Hannam (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 425–39, at 434. On

younger contemporary Baruch Spinoza (1632–77) deplores the fact that most people 'imagine God's power to be like the rule of some royal potentate'.[3] According to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), history as a whole suggests that 'man's destiny can be fulfilled here on earth'.[4] In proposing his Religion of Humanity, similarly, John Stuart Mill (1806–73) attacks faith in a God who not only could punish humans everlastingly but indeed 'could create countless generations of human beings with the certain foreknowledge that he was creating them for this fate'.[5]

Twentieth-century Christian thinkers naturally sought to respond strongly to these Enlightenment challenges. Thus for Bulgakov, the 'sophianicity' of the world ensures that all rational creatures eventually attain perfect union with divine Sophia. Barth argues that God elects all human beings in Jesus Christ and that demons, though not elect, have no personal existence. On the basis of the Paschal mystery, Balthasar suggests that the Son's alienation from the Father in the Spirit encompasses and goes beyond all possible finite contradictions, even though we cannot know in advance how precisely God will

Rousseau, Kant, Voltaire, and Alexander Pope, see Victor Gourevitch, 'Rousseau on Providence', *Review of Metaphysics* 53 (2000): 565–611. Gourevitch observes that 'Voltaire's *Poem* [on the Lisbon earthquake] had ended with the very faintest concession to hope. Rousseau's *Letter* ends with a paean to it' (p. 610).

[3] Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Samuel Shirley, 2nd edn (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2001), 71; cf. 72, 215. See also Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Samuel Shirley, ed. Seymour Feldman (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992), 31–62.

[4] Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', in Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 41–53, at 52–3. See also Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960). For background and discussion see Ulrich Lehner, *Kants Vorsehungskonzept auf dem Hintergrund der deutschen Schulphilosophie und –theologie* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Gordon E. Michalson, Jr, *Kant and the Problem of God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 100–22; Genevieve Lloyd, *Providence Lost* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 287–98, which emphasizes Kant's reworking of Rousseau and Leibniz. For a similar position to Kant's, see Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), 417. On Kant and Hegel, see especially Robertson, 'The Doctrine of Creation and the Enlightenment', 437–9; see also Lloyd, *Providence Lost*, 298–301.

[5] John Stuart Mill, *The Utility of Religion*, in Mill, *Three Essays on Religion* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), 112. For a much more mild presentation of the same view, see John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 83–4. For Mill, and presumably for Dewey as well, death annihilates the human person.

break down the barriers that individual rational creatures set up. Maritain seeks to find a loophole in the Bañezian causal chain.

Do these efforts to resolve predestinarian tensions succeed? Without denying the value of the attempts, I suggest in this chapter that the answer is no. As I argue in the book's concluding chapter, contemporary theologians should instead retrieve the twofold affirmation of Catherine and Francis.

SERGIUS BULGAKOV

In *The Bride of the Lamb*, Sergius Bulgakov (1871–1944) advances what he terms a 'sophianic' or 'sophiological' vision of reality.[6] Bulgakov is heavily indebted to Vladimir Solovyov's ideas of 'Divine-humanity' and 'Sophia'. 'Divine-humanity', which takes its bearings from the Incarnation, means the divinization of all human beings through a process of cooperation with God.[7] 'Sophia' is the *imago Dei*, the Body of Christ, and the heavenly Jerusalem. As Boris Jakim explains, 'Sophia is depicted as the eternal ideal proto-image of humanity (the image of God in man), as the world soul actively engaged in actualizing this prototypical

[6] Boris Jakim identifies *The Bride of the Lamb* as 'the greatest sophiological work ever written' and 'the crowning glory of Bulgakov's theology'. See Boris Jakim, 'Translator's Introduction', in Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. xiii. The Russian text includes significant material not found in the English version. In addition to excising three addenda, which appear instead in *Sergius Bulgakov: Apocatastasis and Transfiguration*, trans. Boris Jakim (New Haven: Variable Press, 1995), Jakim excises an excursus on Augustine and predestination, as well as further discussion of the doctrine of hell according to Scripture. Bulgakov is heavily indebted to Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, trans. Boris Jakim (Russian 1914; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). See Robert F. Slesinski, *Pavel Forensky: A Metaphysics of Love* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).

[7] See Vladimir Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, trans. Peter Zouboff, rev. and ed. Boris Jakim (Russian 1881; Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1995). For discussion of Solovyov, see Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 109–223, 291–3; Jonathan Sutton, *The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov: Towards a Reassessment* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988). See also Aidan Nichols, OP, 'Bulgakov and Sophiology', *Sobornost* 13 (1992): 17–31; Frederick Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy: Selected Aspects* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

image, and as the fully developed divine-human organism.'[8] Because 'Sophia' is actively in humans from the outset, there is never a human who is not divine-human; and the complete expression of 'Sophia' in the world is the heavenly Jerusalem, which must include all humans in order to manifest fully the world's glorified 'sophianicity' in the risen Christ.

Bulgakov's theology of providence (and his rejection of predestination) unfolds in light of this sophianic, universalist vision. Enquiring into the status of 'Origenism', including the doctrine of universal salvation or *apokatastasis*, he holds that the definitions against Origenism attributed to the fifth ecumenical council did not in fact 'originate in this council'.[9] These definitions, moreover, are theologically crimped, 'based on a juridical and penitentiary conception, according to which God's relation to the world is determined only by the principle of retribution, contrary to what the Lord Himself said: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17)'.[10] Even had Origen's views been condemned by the Council, Gregory of Nyssa's systematization of Origen 'has not been condemned and . . . is permitted by the Church'.[11]

With Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, Bulgakov refuses to accept the 'juridical and penitentiary' terms that would turn Christianity into a religion of fear rather than of love. As he points out, such terms suppose that Hell and death have triumphed, despite the promise of Hosea 13:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:55. In sophiological categories, the triumph of Hell would mean that '[t]he sophianicity of the world has encountered a limit to itself in the antisophianicity of hell, in which the outer darkness in the absence of God's light, the antisophia, reigns'.[12] In such eternal cosmic dualism, which undermines either

[8] Jakim, 'Translator's Introduction', p. xii. See Vladimir Solovyov, *Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov*, ed. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[9] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 482.

[10] Ibid. 482–3.

[11] Ibid. 495. For Bulgakov's knowledge of the Fathers on this topic, which he gained from M. F. Oksiiuk's *Eskhatologiia sv. Grigoriia Nisskogo* (Kiev: 1914) see Paul L. Gavrilyuk, 'Universal Salvation in the Eschatology of Sergius Bulgakov', *Journal of Theological Studies* 57 (2006): 110–32, at 113–25. Cf. Brian E. Daley, SJ, *The Hope of the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 324–6; J. Randall Sachs, SJ, 'Apocatastasis in Patristic Theology', *Theological Studies* 54 (1993): 617–40.

[12] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 483. For a critique of Bulgakov's theology as in certain ways pantheistic and Gnostic, see Vladimir Lossky, *Spor o Sofii: 'Dokladnaia*

God's wisdom or his omnipotence, God and anti-God forever remain opposed powers of the created universe. Created being should be suffused by God's wisdom; if it turns out that a portion of created being remains everlastingly opposed to God's wisdom, then God can no longer be considered the sole principle of created being.

What then do New Testament references to everlasting punishment mean? 'Everlasting', Bulgakov suggests, refers to the intensity of the punishment. As he says, 'Every person bears within himself the principle of gehennic burning, which is ignited by the power of the parousia of Christ in glory.'[13] The intensity of our suffering in being configured to divine love, from which we shrink away in sin, gives this suffering an 'everlasting' character. As evidence for such 'everlasting' intensity, occurring within time, Bulgakov points to Christ's suffering for all sins: in a limited period of time, Christ was able to experience 'the entire intensity of the suffering caused by being abandoned and rejected by God under the burden of the all-human sin that weighed upon Him'.[14] If Christ truly took on the weight of sin, then he experienced the full intensity of its punishment beyond what any mere human being could experience. Since he did so in time, we need not posit that 'everlasting' punishment requires unlimited duration.

Furthermore, Bulgakov argues that, metaphysically speaking, evil cannot be an eternal principle. Only good can be 'characterized by inexhaustibility and infinity', because only good manifests the unceasing ascent into 'the ocean of divine knowledge'.[15] Evil has no such fecundity, but instead aims at nothingness. Since the nothingness of evil cannot be coeternal with good, God will not permit evil to compete everlastingly with good. Following Gregory of Nyssa, Bulgakov states that 'evil does not have the creative power of eternity and therefore cannot extend into infinity'.[16] Similarly, created being has no 'freedom' that can set itself up as an everlasting principle opposed to divine being. Created being inclines towards its source. As Bulgakov explains, 'However paradoxical this may seem, the state of hell includes

Zapiska' prot. S. Bulgakova i smysl Ukaza Moskovskoi Patriarkhii (Paris: 1936), discussed in Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 287–9, 388–90. Lossky's views were shared by Georges Florovsky, John Meyendorff, and others.

[13] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 484. See Gavrilyuk, 'Universal Salvation in the Eschatology of Sergius Bulgakov', 122–3.

[14] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 485.

[15] Ibid. 486.

[16] Ibid.; cf. 490.

not only the torments of love because of unlove, because of the impotence of love, but it also includes a creative activity of love.'[17] Created spirit does not lose its inclination towards being and goodness. The intensity of torment, as lived out by created spirit, expiates sins and reveals more and more fully the image of God. This 'sophianization of man even in the depths of hell' increases until human beings embrace the divine foundation of their being, and therefore become what they are in their divine 'proto-image'.[18]

Although a strong counter-tradition to Origen's and Gregory of Nyssa's views persists in the East,[19] the 'everlasting' intensity of suffering 'before the face of God' should therefore be understood in a purgative sense. Bulgakov comments that 'having come to know himself in his sophianic *form*, the glorified human being will thereby also come to know himself in his own *deformity*, will be horrified by himself'.[20] Hell consists in the burning away of this deformity, and the restoration of the true *imago Dei*, by the vision of God. In this purgation, those in Hell receive the aid of the entire Church: 'The existence of hell is surrounded not by the cold of an egotistical indifference but by the radiant cloud of the caring love of saved humankind, that is, of the Church which abides for ages of ages in its sobornost as one, holy, and universal.'[21] The Church yearns to be herself in her completeness, which can only come about when Hell has been burned away and all rational creatures are united in Heaven (which only then enters into its fullness). Only then will God have had 'mercy upon all' (Rom. 11:32) and be 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28). Only then shall 'every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:11).[22]

[17] Ibid. 492.

[18] Ibid. 493; cf. 498, 500.

[19] Cf. ibid. 380. Bulgakov remarks that even though the Church's eschatological doctrine (among Orthodox as among other Christians) has generally included the doctrine of Hell—with the exception of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory's 'tacit and open followers'—nonetheless 'it would be erroneous to maintain that the dogmatic doctrine expounded in the [Orthodox] scholastic manuals represents the authoritative and obligatory dogmas of the Church, and to demand subordination to them as such' (ibid.). For discussion of Bulgakov on doctrinal development, as opposed to the 'Neopatristic school' of twentieth-century Orthodox theology, see Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 373–403.

[20] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 487.

[21] Ibid. 488.

[22] See ibid. 498.

In short, unless one is prepared to accept the defeat (or corruption) of the good in a cosmic dualism, 'Only deification is capable of justifying creation. It is the only theodicy.'[23] But what about the fallen angels, Satan and the demons? Do they too belong, in the end, to the spotless Bride of the Lamb? Commenting on a variety of texts, including John 12:31, Matthew 25:41, and Revelation 20:10, Bulgakov considers that after their expulsion from this world, which constitutes a 'separation from creation', 'The fallen spirits remain in a state of yawning ontological emptiness and darkness, as if in an airless space'.[24] Yet they are not thereby annihilated; they retain being. In living out created freedom to its very limits, the demons cannot help but discover that it has no content other than rebellion against God. In the depths of radical autonomy (which is nothing on its own) they discover, in other words, only God—but they discover this from the position of radical lack. Although Bulgakov observes that '[i]t is impossible for human experience to measure the ages of torments of hell necessary to exhaust satanical selfhood and malice', nonetheless even Satan has a basis for conversion in the fact that he retains created being, 'the energy of reality, which cannot be supplanted or annihilated by the selfhood's arbitrariness'.[25] Once Satan begins to emerge from his illusion of radical self-sufficiency, the pull of divine being (love) will not let go. Satan and the demons will be redeemed, but only after enduring an 'infinite' separation and purification.

This universalism animates Bulgakov's theology of providence. The presence of Wisdom, Sophia, is a providential presence: God's creative action is one with his providential action, since in creating he also orders all creatures to the end of perfect union with him—an ordering that is never extrinsic to their being and freedom. As Creator and Provider, God 'lives a joint life with it, however imprecise the expression "the joint life of the Creator and creation" may be'.[26] Bulgakov combines this position with insistence upon the transcendence of God, yet not a transcendence that denies creation's yearning for its source 'by the divine power implanted in it'.[27] This divine power is 'Sophia', but in her created form as the 'world soul': 'The creaturely Sophia is God's extra-divine life and being, that is, His life and being in creation.'[28]

[23] Ibid. 501. [24] Ibid. 504. [25] Ibid. 510.
[26] Ibid. 194. [27] Ibid. 195. [28] Ibid. 195, 197.

What about the world's apparent state of corruption and lack of progress? In the world God seeks to reveal his love. The notion that the universe should be a perfect machine or mechanism overlooks the fecundity and risk of love. Bulgakov explains, 'The natural world, in its own being, left to its sophianic instinct, contains an inexhaustible abundance of creative energies and vital principles; but it is subject to chaos, to manifested multiplicity.'[29] Not only can freedom be misused, as in the case of fallen rational creatures, but also the profusion of creative activity produces earthquakes, poisonous plants, predators, dangerous bacteria, and so forth. Yet the world is not merely one world out of many possible ones that God could have chosen: rather, the world *fully* expresses the divine Sophia. Therefore it is in fact 'the only and perfect world', but it is the process of becoming what it is ('sophianization'). Bulgakov notes that 'it faces the task of becoming itself, of actualizing its perfection in the creaturely Sophia on the basis of creaturely freedom'.[30]

For Bulgakov, the image of God in humans is 'an energy of God-likeness and God-likening', the 'creaturely Sophia' that reflects the divine Sophia, a copy of the 'Proto-image'.[31] Thus the human 'task is to actualize this sophianicity', to become what we are—a process that takes place both now and in eternal life, in a never-ending ascent.[32] Salvation in the incarnate Son through the Spirit is not extrinsic to human nature. Rather, deification, 'ongoing Divine-humanity', fulfils the very principles of human nature.[33] Divine providence actively works to guide humans from image (creaturely Sophia) to the proto-Image (divine Sophia).

In this light, Bulgakov offers an extended critique of Augustinianism and, in particular, Thomism. The problem with Augustine's anthropology, according to Bulgakov, is that he lacks an appreciation for the ontological dynamism of the image of God. Instead, he turns freedom into a 'subjective-psychological state', and therefore finds himself stuck in determinism when he turns to ontology. Ontologically speaking, God causes everything, and human causality fits in only as an afterthought. Humans are at best 'instruments, if

[29] Ibid. 198. [30] Ibid. [31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid. See Valliere's discussion of Bulgakov's *The Philosophy of Economy* (*Filosofiia khoziaistva* (Moscow: izdatel'stvo 'Put', 1912)): Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 253–78. See also Rowan Williams, ed., *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999).

[33] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 204.

not puppets, of providence'.[34] Yet Augustine's interest in 'subjective-psychological' experience enables him to appreciate, despite himself, the interior dynamism of human persons that makes them more than instruments of providence.

Bulgakov contends that Thomism sees everything in terms of its ontological causes, and thereby fails radically to understand human persons. Following Aristotle, Aquinas emphasizes that '[t]he whole world is permeated with the causal connection, which goes back to the prime mover and the first cause, to God. The mechanism of causal connection expresses the interrelationship of God and the world.'[35] Bulgakov briefly summarizes physical premotion, God's omnipresent causality, and the efforts of Thomists to account for created freedom. In his view, 'The hidden contradiction of Thomism (as well as of Augustinianism) consists in the fact that a purely *modal* concept of freedom, as a special form of causality, is raised to an ontological value, which enters into a *concursus* with the divine causality.'[36] Once one accounts for everything in terms of (efficient) causality, in other words, it becomes impossible fully to appreciate the relationship of creatures to God: primary and secondary causality does not suffice to delineate personal relationships.

Regarding the post-Thomistic discussions in the West, Bulgakov is particularly interested in Molina, because through 'middle knowledge' (and a particular understanding of *concursus*) Molina attempts to reinsert personal freedom into the causal framework. Yet Molinism, like Bañezian Thomism (represented for Bulgakov by his contemporary Garrigou-Lagrange), fails to escape the mistake of interpreting personal reality in terms of Aristotelian causality. Therefore, says Bulgakov, Molina and Bañez 'converge in what is essential: They both consider freedom as a special form of causality, alongside the first causality of God; they both recognize these *two* forms of causality; and they both attempt to combine and arrange those forms'.[37] Personal freedom has no real place. Bulgakov finds as well that God's transcendence cannot be secured in this model, since God becomes part of the world's 'causal logic' (and thereby the world too lacks its own integrity).[38] Attempting to understand creation and providence through Aristotelian causality thus leads 'to the "dead end" in which Catholic theology now finds itself' and, indeed, to '[t]he tragic failure of Western theology'.[39] Bulgakov's

[34] Ibid. 205. [35] Ibid. [36] Ibid. 207.
[37] Ibid. 211. [38] Ibid. 212. [39] Ibid. 212, 221.

rejection of Catholic theology in its Augustinian and especially Thomistic forms is absolute: 'In the face of this fundamental misunderstanding there can be no question of any partial corrections or of the advantages of Thomism over Molinism and Calvinism, or vice versa. One must "leave the city," reject this whole insuperable aporia, which follows from the very *statement* of the problem.'[40]

For this reason, Bulgakov rejects the entire post-Augustine discussion of 'predestination', including the discussion of predestination in scholastic Orthodox confessions of faith.[41] Predestination depends upon the idea of 'the continuity of a causal, self-contained series'.[42] This causal series has God as its author, and the result is not only determinism (because secondary causes are fundamentally passive), but also the transformation of God into a cause among causes. From this perspective, Bulgakov discusses Augustine's doctrine of God's active predestination and passive reprobation: God's power creates some rational creatures whom God does not draw to himself, and who therefore 'are condemned to perdition by reason of sinful impotence'.[43] God's will determines all, since God saves by grace whomever he wills to save. As Bulgakov says, 'To the question, What explains this election of some and the reprobation of others? Augustine responded that he did not know, referring to the unfathomability of the ways of God.'[44] But in Bulgakov's view the doctrine of passive permission poorly, and hypocritically, conceals the fact that God wills not to save some rational creatures. This inevitable conclusion appears in Gottschalk's theology of double predestination in the eleventh century, and later in Calvin's doctrine that God wills the sins for which he punishes the wicked.[45] Regarding Aquinas, Bulgakov comments, 'The basic distinction between Augustinianism and Thomism in this question consists in the fact that the former develops this doctrine in the soteriological aspect as a doctrine of grace, while the latter develops it more as a philosophical doctrine of causal

[40] Ibid. 221.

[41] On this point see ibid. 218–19: Orthodox teaching generally accepted predestination by foreseen merits.

[42] Ibid. 213.

[43] Ibid. 214.

[44] Ibid.

[45] See ibid. 215, 217. Calvin, notes Bulgakov, makes 'the Gospel approach the Koran' (p. 217).

determinism.'[46] God's love causes everything, including, therefore, the everlasting distinction between loved and (fundamentally) unloved persons—even though Aquinas tries, like Augustine, to hold on to a doctrine of permission and created free will.

What solution does Bulgakov propose? God is not a cause among causes, but rather is the Creator. It follows that 'God's creative act is not the mechanical causation through Himself of the world's being, but His going out of Himself in creation through the positing of the world as the creaturely Sophia'.[47] The framework of causality must be replaced sophiologically with '*co-imagedness*, since the creature contains the living *image* of the Creator and is correlated with Him'.[48] By contemplating the proto-Image in the image, divine Sophia in creaturely Sophia, we can develop a more personal understanding of the relationship between the Creator and his creation. Rather than thinking of reality in terms of a causal chain, Bulgakov proposes to explore creation and providence in terms of 'ongoing sophianization', the (free) communion of the (human) world with its Proto-image.

In their freedom, humans 'absorb grace' and thereby receive the power to become who they are in God, namely 'to become a god-man in Christ's Divine-humanity by the power of the Holy Spirit'.[49] God does not 'pre'-destine divinization, because God is not in time (and therefore 'pre' has no meaning). Instead, the will of God for creation, which God sees 'in its eternal unity in one supratemporal act', is worked out relationally and kenotically in time.[50] Bulgakov states, 'Voluntarily, by His kenosis of Creator and Provider, He suspends His omnipotence [and omniscience] before the person.'[51] But God does not, of course, render humans autonomous. Instead God instils the creaturely Sophia, which, in its

[46] Ibid. 215.

[47] Ibid. 222. Bulgakov in this regard agrees with Kant's critique. See also Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 304–5.

[48] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 221. See also 247, where Bulgakov explains the concept of 'synergism'.

[49] Ibid. 225.

[50] Ibid. 227. Bulgakov goes on to distinguish sharply between God's eternal knowing (God in himself) and his kenotic knowing as Creator (God for us).

[51] Ibid. 226, cf. 230. For discussion see Paul L. Gavrilyuk, 'The Kenotic Theology of Sergius Bulgakov', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (2005): 251–69; Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 331–2.

unity with the divine Sophia, draws free self-determining creatures further into 'sophianicity'. Only in this sense, according to which creaturely creativity inclines towards Divine-humanity, are creatures' actions 'sophianically determined precisely in eternity, in the Divine Sophia'.[52] Bulgakov remarks that 'the sophianicity of the world is precisely its determined condition, its law', and he notes that this point is what Aquinas was seeking, confusedly, to express by means of God's motion in creatures.[53] As Bulgakov concludes, 'Divine providence is therefore a dialogue of God's wisdom and omnipotence with free creaturely life'—a 'synergistic' dialogue of freedoms, yet one whose outcome is already present in its beginning: sophianization, Divine-humanity.[54]

Bulgakov's neglect of formal and final causality in Aquinas shows that what he has in view is above all the early modern period and its emphasis on causal chains. Bulgakov's account of 'sophianicity' inscribes into the world an equally determinate causal dynamism. The ultimate deification of every rational creature can be confidently stipulated from the outset. Were this not so, then God could be defeated by losing his status as the sole principle of created being. In other words, although Bulgakov rejects 'predestination', it seems that what he really rejects is a notion of predestination unto salvation that does not include all rational creatures. Once one grants that the dynamisms inscribed by God in created freedom assure the deification even of Satan, Bulgakov's objections to predestination fall away, since the 'pre' does not denote temporality.

Yet Bulgakov has little warrant for his assertion that all rational creatures will be saved. Although Paul teaches that God will 'be everything to every one' (1 Cor. 15:28), Paul also warns that Christians must examine ourselves 'so that we may not be condemned along with the world' (1 Cor. 11:32). Paul requires that a member of the Corinthian Church be excommunicated 'for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1 Cor. 5:5). When Jesus warns that 'whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven' (Matt. 10:33), he seems to have everlasting punishment in view.

[52] Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, 227.
[53] Ibid. 228. [54] Ibid. 233.

KARL BARTH

The theology of Karl Barth (1886–1968) takes as its foundation the eternal election of Jesus Christ. Barth observes, 'this one true man Jesus Christ has taken the place of us men, of many, in all the authority and omnipotence and competence of the one true God, in order to act in our name and therefore validly and effectively for us in all matters of reconciliation with God'.[55] All humans merit condemnation, and Jesus takes the place of all by enduring this condemnation. Jesus represents us 'without any co-operation on our part', and his Paschal mystery 'commands us to understand our history as a history of redemption and not of perdition'.[56] In Jesus Christ God 'has made an end, a radical end, of the world which contradicts and opposes Him'.[57] In this way God has condemned us and made an end of us. In raising Jesus from the dead, however, he has revealed that judgement and death are not 'final and absolute' for us.[58] This 'sovereign act of God'[59] reveals that God accepts the obedience that Jesus offered on our behalf, for our sins.

[55] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. IV: *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, part 1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (German 1953; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 230. See also Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns from the sixth edn (German 1928; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), especially Barth's commentary on Romans 8:28–30 on 321–5 (which is consistent with *Church Dogmatics* IV/1). Given Barth's lifelong dialogue with Schleiermacher, it is worth noting that Schleiermacher, like Barth, seeks to agree with Calvin on election while disagreeing with Calvin on damnation: see Matthias Gockel, 'New Perspectives on an Old Debate: Friedrich Schleiermacher's Essay on Election', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004): 301–18. For the development of Barth's doctrine of election, which becomes increasingly Christocentric, see Suzanne McDonald, 'Barth's "Other" Doctrine of Election in the *Church Dogmatics*', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007): 134–47.

[56] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, 230, cf. 232. For the relationship of election to Trinitarian theology in Barth, see John Webster, 'The Holiness and Love of God', in Webster, *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics II* (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), 109–30; George Hunsinger, 'Election and the Trinity: Twenty-Five Theses on the Theology of Karl Barth', *Modern Theology* 24 (2008): 179–98. Hunsinger is responding to Bruce L. McCormack, 'Seek God Where He May Be Found: A Response to Edwin Chr. van Driel', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 60 (2007): 62–79. See also Kevin W. Hector, 'God's Triunity and Self-determination: A Conversation with Karl Barth, Bruce McCormack and Paul Molnar', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7 (2005): 246–61; Aaron T. Smith, 'God's Self-Specification: His Being Is His Electing', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62 (2009): 1–25.

[57] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, 294.

[58] Ibid. 297.

[59] Ibid. 300.

We remain free to disobey, even though Christ dies and rises again for all: 'Not all hear this word. Not all are obedient to him. But it comes to all, it is relevant to all, it is said for all and to all, it is said clearly and acceptably enough for all.'[60] God's final word, like his first, to creation is 'Yes'.[61]

Regarding the situation of the sinner, Barth explains that '[i]t is not that he has first to acknowledge himself rejected by God, then to break through if possible to a discovery and appropriation of his election, calling and redemption. He is rejected, not in his own person, but in that of the one beloved and obedient Son of God.'[62] Jesus Christ is the rejected one, and his Resurrection reveals that the one whom God rejects is also the one whom God elects (God's 'No' is enclosed within his definitive 'Yes').[63] Indeed, if Jesus Christ is 'His Elect from all eternity, then in the true rejection and suffering which He has borne as our substitute and Representative we stand before our own election, calling and redemption'.[64] The 'we' here is all sinners. Just as we cannot credit ourselves for our own election, so also neither can we, by our 'unwillingness to repent',[65] imagine that our rejection negates God's election of us in Jesus Christ. Jesus undergoes the condemnation of those unwilling to repent; he bears the entire force of God's 'No' for us. We are rejected in him, and we are elected in him.

But are we not free to reject God? We are, and we do so as sinners. Even so, in the plan of God, which escapes our comprehension or control, our sinful actions are not the last word. Rather, God has condemned our sinful acts in Jesus Christ, who now lives risen and triumphant. In giving 'his Yes to the Son whom He elected and loved from all eternity', God gives 'His Yes to the human people whom from all eternity He has also elected and loved in His Son'.[66] God's Yes, not

[60] Ibid. 317. For discussion of this point see Bruce L. McCormack, 'Grace and Being: The Role of God's Gracious Election in Karl Barth's Theological Ontology', in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 92–110, at 107.

[61] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, 347.

[62] Ibid. 350.

[63] See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. Edward T. Oakes, SJ (German 1951; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 230–1.

[64] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, 350.

[65] Ibid. 258.

[66] Ibid. 356.

our rebellion, is sovereign. As Barth says regarding God's Yes, 'He has spoken and speaks and will speak it in His Son; and on earth with the same sovereignty in which He is God in heaven. To that extent it is also spoken to us, without involving or leaving the way open for any possible objections or doubts or questions.'[67] Despite our sinful efforts, we cannot determine our own ground before God; rather, God, in Jesus Christ, determines our ground. We therefore have no room for pride or boasting in our election.

At the same time, Barth sees clearly that 'the world . . . does not confess Jesus Christ because it obviously does not acknowledge and recognise Him. [The believer] is surrounded by men who seem to know nothing of what has taken place and been revealed for them too in Him.'[68] How can human beings who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ find themselves included in God's Yes (even if also in his No)? Barth replies that once one knows in faith that God in Jesus Christ has judged and forgiven one's sins, one cannot conceive of God's Yes being weak. Rather, if God has judged and elected me in Christ, then why would God not do the same for all others? Faith requires, and consists in, an 'absolutely positive answer to the question of the reality and existence of the man justified by God, to the question who and where this man is'.[69] Otherwise faith risks becoming another 'form of self-justification', as if the believer merited to be distinguished from other human sinners.[70] Faith receives what Jesus Christ has done and

[67] Ibid. 356–7. See Hunsinger, 'Hellfire and Damnation: Four Ancient and Modern Views', in *Disruptive Grace*, 226–49. Hunsinger argues that '[a]lthough Karl Barth is often labeled a "universalist," he is best understood as standing in the tradition of holy silence. . . . Like Origen, he finds it hard to see how God will not fully triumph in grace at the end. But like Augustine, he has a chastened sense that human sin is profoundly inscrutable. Like Origen more than Augustine, he does not find a fully clear picture emerging from Scripture. But like Augustine more than Origen, his final concern as a theologian is not so much to respect the compromised "freedom" of fallen humanity, but rather to respect above all the sovereign freedom of divine grace' (p. 243). For the opposite view, criticizing Barth for going too far towards *apokatastasis*, Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 243. See also Colin Gunton, 'Salvation', in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 143–58.

[68] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, 779. See Caroline Schröder, '"I See Something You Don't See": Karl Barth's Doctrine of Providence', in *For the Sake of the World: Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 115–35, especially 134–5.

[69] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1, 614.

[70] Ibid. 617. Barth affirms, 'The pardon of God directed to him [the believer] is valid and effective for him, but not grounded in him. It has no basis at all in him. It is only heard and accepted and received by him, as the present and gift of God' (p. 575).

dares not limit it in any way. It is pride to suppose that we can separate ourselves from God's sovereignty in Jesus Christ: 'The No of God is never without the Yes which follows it. . . . The man who can hold aloof from the promise has not heard the repudiation.'[71] Election does not extend to Satan and the demons, because Barth holds that they are not fallen angels but rather are the powers of nothingness, of untruth.[72]

Regarding providence, Barth emphasizes the danger of chaining the doctrine to a God whose identity is unknown and whose will seems arbitrary.[73] The Father eternally elects the Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of all creatures and accomplishes this royal will in human history through Jesus Christ's Paschal mystery and 'the work of the Holy Spirit awakening to faith and obedience'.[74] Rather than using the word 'predestination', Barth prefers to use the phrase 'the election of grace' and to ground it in the Father's election of his Son Jesus Christ. Election requires that 'it is absolutely the will of God alone which is executed in all creaturely activity and creaturely occurrence'.[75] But Barth recognizes that unless election is rooted in the narrative of Revelation, God becomes merely 'a supreme being endowed with absolute, unconditioned and irresistible power', so that God's will and work 'denote the unconditional and irresistible execution of this purpose over against and in and on the activity of the creature'.[76] Free creatures would rightly rebel against such a God.

[71] Ibid. 594. See Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 245.

[72] See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III: *The Doctrine of Creation*, part 3, trans. G. W. Bromiley and R. J. Ehrlich (German 1950; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960), 531. See also his section in III/3 on 'The Reality of Nothingness', as well as Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 232.

[73] On the distinction between predestination/election (doctrine of God) and providence (doctrine of creation) in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, see Schröder, '"I See Something You Don't See"', 116–18, 127–9.

[74] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 117. On the work of the Holy Spirit according to Barth, see George Hunsinger, 'The Mediator of Communion: Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit', in *Disruptive Grace*, 148–85; Eberhard Busch, *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. Darrell L. Guder and Judith J. Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 219–41; Webster, 'The Holiness and Love of God', 128–30. For a nicely contextualized and succinct presentation of Barth's Trinitarian theology, see Samuel M. Powell, *The Trinity in German Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 216–26, 246–8.

[75] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 115. See also 186 and elsewhere.

[76] Ibid. 113, cf. 141–2. See especially Bruce L. McCormack, 'The Actuality of God: Karl Barth in Conversation with Open Theism', in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI:

For Barth, Thomas Aquinas and Protestant scholasticism sadly neglected the 'covenant of grace', but at least they did not reduce God to a mere cause among causes, as if God were included within the created causal chain. As Barth explains it, God's governance gives the creature 'space and opportunity for its own work',[77] so that the creature possesses a certain autonomy. Even so, God's governance (his electing love) cannot be thwarted: 'When God works, His operation is almighty in relation to that of the creature. It is an operation which is absolutely above the power of the creature. The majesty in which He accompanies the activity of the creature and co-operates with it is quite unconditional both in general and in particular.'[78] Barth repeatedly notes that if one compromises 'the irreversibility of the order of precedence in divine and creaturely activity', one negates God's transcendence as Creator and Lord.[79] Thus, although Barth has efficient causality in view and does not treat divine formal and final causality, he concludes that the Protestant scholastic 'experiment with Aristotle and Thomas did not turn out so badly as it might have done'.[80]

Even so, it did not turn out as well as it should have, because Protestant scholastics placed philosophical doctrines before theological (salvation-historical) ones, thereby repeating the error that the Reformation had sought to overcome. Barth seeks to rectify this error in two ways. First, he underscores the divine love. God's supremacy means simply that God, who 'alone is and remains eternal love', works in and cooperates with creatures so as to exhibit and enact in creation 'the supremacy of His love'.[81] God's love 'overflows' in his

Baker Academic, 2008), 185–242, at 224–5; see also John Webster, 'Creation and Reconciliation', in Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 59–98; Kathryn Tanner, 'Creation and Providence', in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 111–26.

[77] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 91.

[78] Ibid. 107. He goes on to say, 'As God co-operates with the activity of the creature, His own activity precedes, accompanies and follows that activity, and nothing can be done except the will of God' (p. 113). For discussion of God's activity and human freedom, see George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 206–24; Busch, *The Great Passion*, 106–27; Tanner, 'Creation and Providence', 122–5.

[79] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 111, cf. 112–16. Barth strongly critiques Molinist proposals; cf. McCormack, 'The Actuality of God', 238–40.

[80] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 107. For Barth on 'cause', see McCormack, 'The Actuality of God', 225–9.

[81] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 110, 111.

free acts of creating, preserving, and accompanying creatures.[82] His all-powerful love does not dominate or constrict the creature, but rather ensures that the creature reaches its goal, union with God in love. The sovereignty of God, the King of Israel (Jesus Christ), over all of history is not a harsh sovereignty to be feared or a mechanistic sovereignty seeking creation's best possible product. Instead, the King of Israel orders all things so that they find their true fulfilment in him, in love. As Barth states, 'The glory of God is in His being as the One who loves eternally. The greatness of His glory is in the fact that His love is actualised. And it is actualised in the fact that He does not abandon the creature to itself; that He does not direct it to other ends, but to Himself as the one end.'[83] What might otherwise be a domineering rule is in truth the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Second, Barth seeks to overcome the loss of the 'biblical centre' by arguing against the view that God has created some rational creatures for eternal damnation. Aware that some theologians defend the divine predestination to (or permission of) eternal damnation on the grounds that God wills the common good of the whole rather than the fulfilment of each creature, Barth comments that although creation and grace have created a community of creatures, nonetheless '"[t]his body" is not a collective whole in which the totality is everything and the individual nothing. How sadly we should misunderstand this body if we did not perceive that in both the good and the evil the whole has only the form of particular individuals, and that individuals are always this whole before God.'[84] God loves each individual as though he or she were the whole; God never sacrifices or leaves out an individual so as to achieve the end of the whole. Human persons are not mere means, some of which God allows to be discarded (even through their own sins) in the process of achieving the common good of the universe. Each individual, Barth affirms, both belongs to the kingdom of God as a member, and 'receives its own kingdom'; the good of each individual and the good of the whole community cannot be set in opposition to one another.[85]

[82] Ibid. 110.

[83] Ibid. 187. For discussion see Busch, *The Great Passion*, 188–9, 191.

[84] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 190. See Tanner, 'Creation and Providence', 114, 119.

[85] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 191. See Michael Allen, 'Theological Politics and the Davidic Monarchy: Three Examples of Theological Exegesis', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 30 (2008): 137–62, at 138–43.

Could creation be the work 'of a will which is finally wrathful even in its grace', so as to abandon at least some creatures?[86] Barth answers that God's wrath could indeed have been the ultimate word for creatures, but that God has freely willed otherwise in eternally electing Jesus Christ. God himself stepped into the breach and bore the wrath due to sinful creatures. As Barth states, 'from all eternity—that is, in the eternal counsel of His grace as it is effective and revealed in Jesus Christ—His merciful will was to take up the cause of the creature against the non-existent, not from the safe height of a supreme world-governor, but in the closest possible proximity', the Incarnation.[87] Jesus' Paschal mystery enables God to speak simultaneously his absolute 'No', negating the nothingness of sin, and his absolute 'Yes' by which he saves and restores all creation. In no way, then, should creation or any part of it be understood 'as a creation of the wrath of God'.[88] Instead, as Barth puts it, 'The creature exists as the mercy of God operative in Jesus Christ is effective towards it, and in order that the glory of the beloved Son of God may be manifest in it.'[89] This is God's providence and predestination put in theological, salvation-historical terms.

Given God's eternal election of creatures, Barth affirms God's eternal preservation of creatures rather than holding that preservation is 'a series of acts of creation'.[90] Similarly, Barth grounds in Revelation his account of God's motion in creatures. He observes in this regard that 'the operation of God is His moving of all creatures by the force and wisdom and goodness which are His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of His Word'.[91] God's motion in creatures is a 'fatherly operation', not the operation of an alien or domineering god.[92] This operation reveals itself historically as the work of the King of Israel, the 'I am' who rules both Israel and the entire world, and who comes into the world in Bethlehem.[93] The history of salvation reveals what it means for God to govern the world paternally and providentially.

In light of God's covenant of grace, even such things that seem to tell against providence, such as the shortness of our lives, find meaning. Life's brevity, Barth suggests, reveals both our freedom and our

[86] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/3, 78. [87] Ibid. 79. [88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.; see also 430–1. [90] Ibid. 69; see also 86–7. [91] Ibid. 142.
[92] Ibid. God cares for us as Father 'through the activity of His Word and Spirit' (ibid.).
[93] See ibid. 175–81.

dependence. Given the seriousness of each moment of time, 'We are not merely the pawn in a secondary theatre of action, but the responsible person on the spot at the very heart of things, the one who decides what creation is to become.'[94] Each free action of our lives has eternal significance and consequences for ourselves and for others. On the other hand, our free actions direct us towards death and a seeming loss of freedom. We find that we must depend for freedom upon a living Source of freedom. In this way we come to see 'the hand of His in which we are held'.[95]

In short, faced with the Reformation and early modern positions on predestination, Barth moves in Catherine's and Francis's direction, by emphasizing God's love while affirming God's sovereignty. In Barth, however, the tension that marks Catherine's and Francis's position—namely, that God permits some rational creatures to rebel freely and permanently against his love—is hardly present. In Jesus Christ God condemns us all (reprobation) and elects us all (predestination). God's 'No' to all of us is his 'Yes' to all of us, and this 'Yes' will not be defeated by our rebellion. Despite the crucial strengths of his position, Barth explains too much, not least in his effort to deny that Satan and the other demons are personal beings.

JACQUES MARITAIN

Accepting as normative the Catholic Church's teaching that some rational creatures are everlastingly lost, Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) seeks to show that God, in his eternal will for his creation, is utterly innocent as regards this loss. The fault lies not with any deficiency in God's superabundant love, but solely with the risk that free creatures will stubbornly choose against their own true good. In *Existence and the Existent*, Maritain argues that for Aquinas

> the emergence of a free and evil act resolves into two moments—distinct, not according to the priority of time, but according to an ontological priority. At a first moment there is in the will, by the fact of its very liberty, an absence or a nihilation which is not yet a *privation* or an evil, but a mere lacuna: the existent *does not* consider the norm of

[94] Ibid. 234. [95] Ibid. 235.

> the *thou shouldst* upon which the ruling of the act depends. At the second moment the will produces its free act affected by the privation of its due ruling and wounded with the nothingness which results from this lack of consideration.[96]

Sin occurs only in the second moment, but the first moment opens space for the sin. As 'a mere nothingness of consideration', a non-consideration of the norm, the first moment is not an act of the will, and so it cannot be a sin.[97] Maritain explains that 'of itself, it is not a duty for the will to consider the rule; that duty arises only at the moment of action, of production of being, at which time the will begets the free decision in which *it makes* its choice'.[98]

Why then pay so much attention to the first moment, in which consideration of the norm is not even a duty? Maritain argues that in the first moment, which is 'purely and simply the liberty of the created existent',[99] one finds the beginning and even the 'first cause' (not in an 'efficient' or 'active' sense) of the free evil act. Put succinctly, the will does nothing by not considering the rule, but this non-consideration stands as 'the matrix of the *privation* itself by which the free act (in which there is metaphysical good in so far as there is being) is morally deformed or purely and simply evil'.[100] To do good, the will must choose to consider the norm, and for that choice the will requires the movement of the divine first cause. By contrast, to do evil, the will simply need not consider

[96] Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent: An Essay on Christian Existentialism*, trans. Lewis Galantiere and Gerald B. Phelan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1957), 97. For positive assessments of Maritain's proposal, see Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil*, trans. Michael Barry (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1963); Jean-Pierre Arfeuil, OP, 'Le Dessein sauveur de Dieu. La doctrine de la predestination selon saint Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue Thomiste* 74 (1974): 591–641; Michał Paluch, O.P., *La Profondeur de l'amour divin: La predestination dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2004), 33–6, 314–17; John Saward, 'The Grace of Christ in His Principal Members: St Thomas Aquinas on the Pastoral Epistles', in *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy, OFM Cap., Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2005), 197–221, at 200–9. See also Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP's appreciative remarks in his Préface to Paluch's book, 9–16 at 15–16. For a recent critique see Steven A. Long, 'Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law', *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 557–605. For historical background see Michael Torre, 'Francisco Marín-Sola, O.P., and the Origin of Jacques Maritain's Doctrine on God's Permission of Evil', *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 55–94; Brian Shanley, OP, *The Thomist Tradition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002).

[97] Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, 97.

[98] Ibid. [99] Ibid. 98. [100] Ibid. 99.

the norm, and this 'not-acting and not-willing' does not require the divine first cause.[101]

The result is not only that the human free will (in its non-action), without God's causal participation, becomes the 'first cause' of evil actions, but also that human free will becomes determinative for the efficacy of divine grace. The actions of divine grace are 'shatterable' in so far as they enter into the first moment described above. Through our non-consideration, our non-active 'nihilation', we can thwart the movement of divine grace so that it does not fructify in us. In this way, entrenched evil arises *not* due to our sinfulness combined with God's non-action (God's not giving us the grace that overcomes our entrenched evil), but rather due solely to our sinfulness. God's grace comes up against our non-active nihilation: the movements of grace are 'rendered sterile *if* the free existent which receives them takes the first initiative of evading them, of not-acting and not-considering, or nihilating under their touch'.[102] Since this nihilation is not an act, it involves God in no way, not even as an ontological cause of created movement.

What effect, however, does a 'shatterable' divine action produce in the soul? Given the Creator–creature relationship, how can a divine motion not infallibly produce its intended effect? M.-M. Labourdette raised this criticism of Maritain's position after *Existence and the Existent* had been submitted to the publisher, and in response Maritain added a hurriedly prepared footnote to the published text.[103] Because this footnote introduced further confusion, however, Maritain carefully reformulates it in his *God and the Permission of Evil*.[104] Here he argues that a shatterable divine motion does indeed infallibly produce its effect, but this effect is 'a *movement* or a *tendency*' towards the motion's final object, namely a morally good act of choice. Both the motion and the effect are shattered if the person nihilates the

[101] Ibid. For discussion see W. Matthews Grant, 'Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself', *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 455–96, at 460–77. Grant defends the philosophical accuracy of Aquinas's insight, underscored by Maritain, that 'the defect in the act of sin' can be accounted for 'in terms of the sinner's *not-doing*' (p. 477). This position holds whether or not 'it is possible to make a sinful choice at the same instant one considers the rule against it' (p. 476).

[102] Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, 100.

[103] Ibid. 104–5, n. 9.

[104] Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Co., 1966), 56–8.

divine motion by the non-action of not considering the rule of reason. This is so because non-consideration of the rule of reason shatters the tendency towards a good act of choice. As Maritain states, 'if the shatterable motion *is not shattered*, it gives way *of itself*, as the flower to the fruit, to an unshatterable motion under which the good act will be infallibly and freely produced'.[105] If the divine motion is shattered by nihilation, on the other hand, then both the motion and its effect disappear, and all that remains is 'a simple pre-motion to all that there is of the ontological in the act of election [choice]—sinful—which is going to be accomplished'.[106]

Maritain thereby offers a solution to the problem of how rational creatures can resist God's grace. Since God 'activates all things, each according to its mode', created freedom must possess a fallible mode.[107] As Maritain observes regarding the fallibility of created freedom: 'in accordance with the natural order of things, before the

[105] Ibid. 57.

[106] Ibid. 58. On divine motion and human agency, see Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). For a Bañezian critique see Thomas M. Osborne, Jr, 'Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion', *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 607–31. See also Osborne's 'Augustine and Aquinas on Foreknowledge through Causes', *Nova et Vetera* 6 (2008): 219–32. On premotion, see most recently the Ph.D. dissertation (University of St Andrews, 2010) of Robert Joseph Matava, 'Divine Causality and Human Free Choice: Domingo Bañez and the Controversy *De Auxiliis*', which offers detailed chapters on Bañez on premotion, Bañez's critique of Molina, Molina's critique of Bañez, and Lonergan's critique of both. According to Matava, Lonergan's position fails by allowing that a set of created antecedents to choice necessitates the choice. Indebted to Lonergan, Matava holds that God, in a transcendent and impenetrable manner, directly creates human free choices as free: 'my free choosing and nothing short of that is exactly what God brings about in creating my free choosing' (p. 214).

[107] Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, 100. See also David Bentley Hart's metaphysical reflections in his 'Providence and Causality: On Divine Innocence', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 34–56. The key question is what is the relationship of finite actuality to transcendent Act. Hart argues: 'To say that this [finite] freedom is not causally predetermined by God does not imply that it is somehow "absolute" or that it occupies a region independent of God's power (as one strain of neo-Bañezian apologetics contends). It is in his power to create such autonomy that God's omnipotence is most abundantly revealed; for everything therein comes from him: the real being of agent, act and potency, the primordial movement of the soul towards the good, the natural law inscribed in the creature's intellect and will, the sustained permission of finite autonomy; even the indetermination of the creature's freedom is an utterly dependent and unmerited participation in

unshatterable divine activation, by which the will to good of created Liberty infallibly produces its effect in the created will, the divine activations received by the free existent must first be *shatterable* activations.'[108] They are shatterable not through human action, but through human non-action, non-consideration. Since the human 'shattering' of divine grace comes about through a non-action, and since in any case the 'first moment' never involves an action, neither the shattering nor the fructification of divine grace means that created action precedes or determines divine action. Maritain states that 'from the moment we understand that the *non-nihilating*, which

the mystery of God's infinite freedom' (p. 45). If 'the real being of the agent' and all 'act and potency' come from God, then the question is what sort of 'finite autonomy' Hart intends to describe. He takes a twofold approach: first, '[w]hat God gives in creation is the entire actuality of the world, in all of its secondary causes; and, as those causes possess actual being, they are able to impart actuality to potentialities proportionate to their powers' (p. 41); second, God's 'donation of being is so utterly beyond any species of causality we can conceive that the very word "cause" has only the most remotely analogous value in regard to it' (p. 40). Hart holds that 'it is no more contradictory to say that God can create—out of the infinite wellspring of his own freedom—dependent freedoms that he does not determine, than it is to say that he can create—out of the infinite wellspring of his being—dependent beings that are genuinely somehow other than God. In neither case, however, is it possible to describe the "mechanism" by which he does this. This aporia is simply inseparable from the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*—which, no matter how we may attempt to translate it into causal terms we can understand, remains forever impenetrable' (p. 45). See also Brian J. Shanley, OP, 'Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 72 (1998): 99–122. Shanley argues that whereas Aquinas simply asserts that God's *motio* does not determine the free *motio* of the rational creature, 'The proponents of *praemotio physica* try to fill in the gaps by drawing the rigorous metaphysical consequences of the normal workings of efficient causation' (p. 115). Shanley goes on to explain: 'As coined in the heat of scholastic debate, the pleonastic term is meant to signal the metaphysical priority and reality of God's causation in a real efficient fashion (as opposed to a mere moral or final causation); in this general sense it is unobjectionable and clearly in line with Aquinas's position. But insofar as the attendant causal apparatus purports to define in great detail the mechanism whereby God moves the will . . . it compromises both the transcendence of God's causation and the self-determining power of the will' (pp. 115–16; cf. 120). For Shanley, 'Aquinas's silence about how it all works is not an oversight or a failure of nerve, but rather an acknowledgement of the limitations of human thought in the face of divine transcendence' (p. 116; cf. 121).

[108] Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, 100. Maritain adds, 'I do not deny (but this lies outside the purely metaphysical considerations within which I intend to remain) that God can, if He so wills, transport a created existent at one stroke to the performing of a good free act by an unshatterable or infallibly efficacious activation or motion' (ibid. 104–5). As an example, he mentions God's conversion of St Paul (112, n. 13). For further explication of this possibility see *God and the Permission of Evil*, 59–62.

conditions the fructification of the shatterable impetus in unshatterable impetus, does absolutely not imply the slightest contribution made by the creature to the divine motion—from this moment we have beyond question exorcised every shadow of Molinism'.[109] Prior to its reception in the 'first moment', the divine motion is God's antecedent will, by which God 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4). After its reception in the 'first moment' (non-active consideration or non-consideration of the rule), the divine motion—now either shattered or unshatterable—is God's consequent will, in which is included the permission for sin.[110]

In short, Maritain makes clear that predestination flows from God's antecedent will as confirmed, in God's definitive consequent will, by the non-nihilating of the rational creature. Maritain explains,

> The created existents which, according to the conception put forth by us, are ordained in all eternity to eternal life, *ante praevisa merita*, by the primordial or 'antecedent' will confirmed by the definitive or 'consequent' will (from the moment they did *not* take the initiative of nihilating at the critical juncture) were by the definitive or 'consequent' will *inscribed in the book of life before the world was created*.[111]

By not nihilating, the rational creature allows the movement of grace to permeate its being. Does the creature's nihilating depend upon God's permissive will? No, because God's will is not involved in a non-action, since this non-action is not created being but rather is simply nothing. By nihilating, rational creatures are thus the (non-active)

[109] Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, 106, n. 9; cf. 108, n. 10.

[110] Ibid. 111. I should note that Maritain uses different language to describe terms traditionally employed by Aquinas and/or by later Thomists: 'I am aware that the ultimate end of free existents being in fact a supernatural end, the vision of God Himself, I should write "salvation" where I have written attainment of the supratemporal end, "predestination" where I have written ordainment to the final good confirmed by the definitive will, "antecedent will and consequent will" where I have written primordial will and definitive will, "sufficient grace and efficacious grace" where I have written shatterable impetus and unshatterable impetus' (ibid.).

[111] Ibid. 112, n. 13. For an approach informed by Maritain's, see Thomas Joseph White, OP's section on Journet in White's 'Von Balthasar and Journet on the Universal Possibility of Salvation and the Twofold Will of God', *Nova et Vetera* 4 (2006): 633–65, especially 634, 643–4. See also L.-M. Antoniotti, OP, 'La Volonté divine antécédente et conséquente selon saint Jean Damascène et saint Thomas d'Aquin', *Revue Thomiste* 65 (1965): 52–77, cited by White. For White's critique of Balthasar's position, see 'Von Balthasar and Journet on the Universal Possibility of Salvation and the Twofold Will of God', 657–9.

'first cause' of their own failure; the failure cannot be traced back to God's withholding of his gifts. Likewise, the actions of rational creatures do not cause their predestination by grace (*pace* Molinism), since not-nihilating is not an action. The movement of grace remains the sole active principle in the conversion of the creature.

Maritain thus affirms Romans 8:30, where St Paul says of God that 'those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified'. With Bulgakov and Barth, however, he seeks to avoid proclaiming a God whose love does not seem truly personal as regards each and every rational creature. Maritain does not think that the traditional Thomistic approach to predestination, modelled by Bañez and (among Maritain's contemporaries) Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, avoids this error. Explaining his concerns about the Bañezian portrait of predestination, Maritain notes that it risks arguing the following:

> It is God who, before every actual failure of the creature as first cause of evil, permitted all the sins and the crimes committed in human history, which thus took place in conformity with what He, of His own free will, had infallibly pre-conceived and prepared; and one managed at the same time, by a system of appropriate conceptual distinctions, to have the whole responsibility of these sins and of these crimes fall on the sinner, and to exonerate God, who was not sorry to wash His hands in the basin which His zealous servants thus presented to him.[112]

The helpfulness of Maritain's solution depends in part upon the cogency of his claim that 'nihilating' is not an action and therefore belongs solely to the creature, who in this way can freely 'shatter' divine grace without requiring to be moved by the divine motion as first cause of all created actuality. Defending his position against the criticisms of Jean-Hervé Nicolas,[113] Maritain explains, 'The initiative not to consider the rule is, each time the sin of which it is the cause is a

[112] Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, 18.

[113] Nicolas's lengthy 'La Permission du péché', criticizing Maritain's position, appeared over three issues of *Revue Thomiste* 60 (1960). Three decades later Nicolas published a further article, 'La Volonté salvifique de Dieu contrariée par le péché', *Revue Thomiste* 92 (1992): 177–96. Nicolas abandons the Thomistic doctrine of God's antecedent permissive decree because he fears that it implies a deficiency in God's love for some of his rational creatures, but even so Nicolas remains unsatisfied with Maritain's proposal. For discussion see Emery, 'The Question of Evil and the Mystery of God in Charles Journet', in Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 237–62, at 259.

deliberate sin, a *cessation* of considering the rule—not by an *act*, to be sure, but by a free mere nihilation, a *mera negatio*, a voluntary mere slipping into non-being, non-acting.'[114] The rational creature thus possesses full responsibility for its failure, which cannot be blamed on any lack in the divine gifting. The structure of human action provides a moment of autonomy in which the creature non-actively plays the role of first cause as regards sin. As Maritain emphasizes in *Existence and the Existent*, the rational creature 'has no need of God, it is truly alone, for the purpose of freely nihilating, of taking the free first initiative of this absence (or "nothingness") of consideration. . . . "For without Me, you can do nothing" [John 15:5]; which is to say, "Without Me you can make that thing which is nothing"'.[115]

Maritain adds that God could, of course, ensure that the rational creature does not nihilate God's grace. While noting that such special effusions of God's gracious action lie outside the properly metaphysical considerations with which he has to deal, Maritain states, 'I do not deny . . . that God can, if He so wills, transport a created existent at one stroke to the performing of a good free act by an unshatterable or infallibly efficacious activation or motion.'[116] Otherwise, one would be denying God's power to save anyone, along with his power to preserve specially chosen rational creatures, such as the holy humanity of Jesus Christ or the immaculate Virgin Mary, entirely from any taint of sin. When God wishes, God can ensure that rational creatures do not nihilate: 'This is a question of His free predilections and of the price paid for souls in the communion of saints.'[117] Regarding God's 'free predilections' in special cases, Maritain affirms that because God's gifts are gratuitous, God is not unjust in giving more grace to one than to another, and so God 'can use, when He pleases, exceptional ways which exceed the ordinary governance required by nature—for example, by

[114] Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, 45. This position is trenchantly critiqued in Long, 'Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law', 581–90; see also Grant, 'Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself', 480: 'A necessary condition of the shatterable motion's fructifying into the good act is the creature's not not-considering the rule. But to not not-consider the rule is simply to consider it. And to consider the rule is an action, an action whose necessary and sufficient condition is God's causing the act of consideration.'

[115] Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, 99.

[116] Ibid. 104–5. Recall that Ockham had to address a similar problem, although from different metaphysical presuppositions.

[117] Ibid. 105.

giving at one stroke to some among them (I think of Paul on the road to Damascus) an unshatterable impetus to conversion'.[118]

Thus the mystery of divine permission of created resistance (unto damnation) remains fully in force even given Maritain's account of the creature's absolute autonomy in nihilating. As he puts it, 'How far His own wisdom binds His power, and how far the rule decided by His love binds its impulse to effusion, is the mystery of mysteries.'[119] Although the creature determines its own destiny as regards God's gift of salvation (by nihilating or not nihilating),[120] nonetheless behind this order is God's unfathomable permission, according to which 'the rule decided by His love binds its impulse to effusion' or in special cases does not so bind.

Even were Maritain right that not considering the rule of reason is entirely describable as a non-action, therefore, he could not avoid the basic dilemma as regards predestination (absent universalism). Namely, if God can move the created will in an infallibly efficacious manner, and if God's antecedent will truly is the salvation of all, then why does God *not* ensure that all are saved by means of infallibly efficacious outpourings of grace? The tension between God's superabundant love for all and his permission of some to rebel permanently against his love remains, thereby further exposing the impossibility of finding a solution within causal-chain logic.

HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88) draws inspiration from Charles Péguy, who 'begins with the fact that every individual human being is indispensable to eternal bliss itself. All enjoy solidarity in salvation: hence no individual can be damned; thus Péguy's central figure is his (fictional) Joan of Arc, who surrenders herself to damnation and fire for the salvation of all.'[121] Since angels too, as rational creatures,

[118] Ibid. 111–12, n. 13.

[119] Ibid. 105–6.

[120] As Maritain sums up his position, 'The free existents who miss their ultimate end do so only because they have willed to miss it and have freely evaded that which was ordained by the primordial will' (ibid. 111).

[121] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, vol. IV: *The Action*, trans. Graham Harrison (German 1980; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 418. For concerns

participate in the human drama, every angel, including the fallen angels, would arguably be likewise 'indispensable'. Yet Balthasar does not repudiate the possibility that 'a sinner might so identify himself with his No to God that trinitarian love would be unable to loosen the resultant snarl, with the result that the fiery torrent of eternal love that flows around and through him would remain a torrent of eternal wrath'.[122] Whereas Bulgakov's sophianic ontology makes the eventual return of all rational creatures to union with God inevitable, Balthasar explicitly cautions against 'the kind of *apokatastasis* that subsumes the Christian's wrestling with God and God's wrestling with him in an overall philosophical perspective (in the manner of Plotinus or Hegel), according to which the world proceeds from the divine and subsequently returns to it'.[123] Such an answer, he argues, neglects the theological datum of resistance to God's love, a resistance that intensifies into an 'anti-Christian aversion' in reaction to the revelation of Jesus Christ.[124] Balthasar speaks of 'a titanic rejection

regarding Balthasar on the Cross and Trinity, see Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 120–32. On Péguy see especially John Saward, *The Way of the Lamb: The Spirit of Childhood and the End of the Age* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), 59–96. Balthasar denies that his theological positions strictly require the salvation of all: see *Theo-Drama*, vol. V: *The Last Act*, trans. Graham Harrison (German 1983; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 321.

[122] Balthasar, *The Action*, 350. While denying that Balthasar's theology of Christ and the Trinity strictly requires universal salvation, Nicholas J. Healy III grants that for Balthasar, 'The loss of a portion of humanity, although a real possibility, would be an unspeakable tragedy for God. Against various positions in the history of theology that set limits on hope because of a false notion of limited predestination, Balthasar situates the true form of hope within the universal mission of Christ. It is precisely Christ's mission to return to the Father with *all* that has been given to him by the Father (cf. John 6:39)' (Healy, *The Eschatology of Hans Urs von Balthasar: Being as Communion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 215–16, cf. 205). This 'all' is 'the whole creation' (p. 216), which includes all angels. For a position similar to Healy's see Francesca Aran Murphy, *God Is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 329–32. For the position that Balthasar's formulations make *apokatastasis* logically necessary, see White, 'Von Balthasar and Journet on the Universal Possibility of Salvation and the Twofold Will of God', 639, n. 13. See also Healy's 'Creation, Predestination and Divine Providence', in *The Providence of God*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler, 208–28, where Healy argues that, according to Scripture, 'predestination is universal' (p. 225): 'Christ died for all and all are predestined in Christ. . . . The New Testament teaches us that God may permit some to damn themselves, but this is not what God desires. What He desires is the salvation of all' (p. 226).

[123] Balthasar, *The Action*, 11.

[124] Ibid., cf. 435, 442.

on man's part: he resists being embraced by this very mystery of the Cross'.[125]

How does God seek to overcome this resistance? He does so not by power but by love. Kenotically, the Son identifies himself completely with sinners. He therefore 'dies through being estranged from the Father, "made to be sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). . . . the Son underwent death *in and through* each individual sin that makes up the totality of the world's evil, insofar as the holy God cursed (and so banished) in him everything hostile to the Divinity'.[126] On the Cross the Son bears sin in the deepest possible sense: the Father unloads his entire wrath against sin upon him, and the Son experiences the full consequences of resistance to God's grace. The relationship of the Father and the Son does not rupture, but instead exhibits a new dimension. Balthasar explains that '[o]n the Cross, the constant relationship between them has assumed the modality of "forsakenness" by the Father and hence of irremediable "lostness" on the part of the Son; as a result, the Son experiences the loss of a horizon of meaning and being such as no ordinary creature can either possess or lose'.[127]

In this way, the Son locates 'lostness' within the Trinitarian life, and transforms such 'lostness': 'in the Cross the contradiction of sin, its lie, and its un-logic are taken into the logic of the love of the Trinity. Not, however, in order to find a place there, but in all truth to

[125] Balthasar, *The Action*, 11. See also *The Last Act*, 285; as well as *Theo-Drama*, vol. II: *The Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (German 1976; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 316. For discussion see Aidan Nichols, OP, *No Bloodless Myth: A Guide Through Balthasar's Dramatics* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 168–71.

[126] Balthasar, *The Action*, 496.

[127] Ibid. On the Cross, 'the Son is forsaken by the Father and no longer understands either this forsakenness or the Father—a state that endures until Easter' (Balthasar, *Theo-Logic*, vol. II: *Truth of God*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (German 1985; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 347). The Son 'goes through hell' as 'the dead 'sin-bearer' of all sins' (*Truth of God*, 348). Cf. Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, trans. Aidan Nichols, OP (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993). For discussion see Alyssa Lyra Pitstick, *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 117–48. Pitstick notes that for Balthasar 'the wrath of the Father is both a "pulling away" from the disgraced Son, and a "pushing away" of Him, i.e., it is punitive both privatively (the Father's withdrawal in rejection of sin in the Person of the Son and the consequent deprivation of the *visio Dei*) and positively (the "crushing" infliction of wrath and the *visio mortis* as just punishment). The Son is abandoned, "crushed," and afflicted by the *visio mortis*; His horror is made complete by His knowledge that it is the All-Holy Father who thus rejects Him' (Pitstick, *Light in Darkness*, 140).

be "damned [*katakrinein*] in the flesh [of the Son]" (Rom. 8:3).'[128] This damnation of the Son makes an end of each and every sin. But how to describe the Son's experience of bearing sin to the end? Balthasar states, 'It is as if the truth itself, and thus the Logos himself, were destroyed, as if he had lost himself; the truth seems to splinter into infinite fragments, whereas in reality all sin and negation is gathered into the unity of the Cross.'[129]

The condemnation of the Son, in which the Son undergoes a God-forsakenness far greater than can be experienced by any creature, thus reveals an intra-Trinitarian kenosis that involves 'such an incomprehensible and unique "separation" of God from himself that it *includes* and grounds every other separation—be it never so dark and bitter'.[130] In the economic manifestation of Christ's abandonment on the Cross, Balthasar discerns that 'the Son's eternal, holy distance from the Father, in the Spirit, forms the basis on which the unholy distance of the world's sin can be transposed into it, can be transcended and overcome by it'.[131] Finite, sinful distance from God is here encompassed and purified within the kenotic distance between the Trinitarian Persons. As Balthasar suggests, following Adrienne von Speyr, 'hell is a trinitarian event'.[132] The Father reveals to the Son, in the Holy Spirit, 'the mystery that the greatest proximity lies hidden in what seems to be the greatest distance'.[133] In the 'ultimate darkness' of hell, the Son discovers 'the most intimate way to the Father'.[134] Far from cutting off persons

[128] Balthasar, *Truth of God*, 325–6. See Rowan Williams, 'Balthasar and the Trinity', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. Edward T. Oakes, SJ, and David Moss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 37–50.

[129] Balthasar, *Truth of God*, 326.

[130] Balthasar, *The Action*, 325. Against this view, Thomas Joseph White, OP, points out that 'Christ was incapable of the lovelessness of sin and spiritual death. He could not experience the "hell of damnation" in what most essentially characterizes that state': see White, 'On the Universal Possibility of Salvation', *Pro Ecclesia* 17 (2008): 269–80, at 280. See also Pitstick, *Light in Darkness*, 236–8.

[131] Balthasar, *The Action*, 362. For further discussion see Steffen Lösel, 'Murder in the Cathedral: Hans Urs von Balthasar's New Dramatization of the Doctrine of the Trinity', *Pro Ecclesia* 5 (1996): 427–39.

[132] Balthasar, *Truth of God*, 352. Balthasar's explanation of this point appears in his important section 'Hell and the Trinity', which treats Adrienne von Speyr's appropriation of Luther (pp. 345–61). Balthasar concludes that the triune God overcomes every contradiction (p. 359).

[133] Ibid. 353.

[134] Ibid. 352, 353. See Edward T. Oakes, SJ, *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 247; Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, 211–17.

from God's presence, then, hell places persons inescapably at the heart of the Trinity. Put Christologically, 'anyone who tries to choose complete forsakenness—in order to prove himself absolute vis-à-vis God—finds himself confronted by the figure of someone even "more absolutely" forsaken than himself'.[135]

Balthasar recognizes the urgency of the question, 'Can God really suffer the loss of even the least of the sheep in his fold?'[136] Like Bulgakov, Balthasar notes that a positive answer to this question produces a God whose love seems radically deficient:

> Consider, for example, the thought that God will fulfill his designs even with the reality of an eternal hell that glorifies his justice, though not his love. Or that he continues to love eternally even those he has condemned and that precisely this constitutes their torture. Or that he indeed loves them, but has no pity on them, and that he will not even allow the blessed in heaven to have such pity. Or the opinion of Thomas Aquinas, who held that those in heaven essentially could not experience pity any more, for pity implies participation in the pain of the one in distress, and this would diminish heaven's bliss. Let us cast aside what leads to such dead-ends and limit ourselves to the truth that we all stand under God's absolute judgment.[137]

Yet even while affirming that 'Easter is the victory of the triune God over every contradiction', Balthasar wishes to preserve an 'unclosed lacuna' so as not to end up positing the Son's overcoming of all contradiction in hell as one more Leibnizian link in a necessary causal chain leading to the best possible outcome.[138] By reading the Trinity and the Cross together, Balthasar hopes to achieve a 'double exposition of heaven and hell' that 'shatters in the same stroke every human speculation' as regards the ultimate synthesis.[139] It is enough to know

[135] Balthasar, *The Last Act*, 312. Following von Speyr, Balthasar affirms that 'God is the prototype of the communion of saints, abolishing the limits of those who limit themselves' (*The Last Act*, 314).

[136] Balthasar, *Dare We Hope 'That All Men Be Saved'?*, trans. David Kipp and Lothar Krauth (German 1986; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 252.

[137] Ibid. 253. See Nichols's *No Bloodless Myth*, 214–15. See also Henri de Lubac, SJ, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), 182–3.

[138] Balthasar, *Truth of God*, 359.

[139] Ibid. 364. Balthasar has Hegel particularly in view (as well as Nietzsche's response to Hegel). See also for these themes Aidan Nichols, OP, *Say It Is Pentecost: A Guide Through Balthasar's Logic* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2001).

that on the Cross, Jesus Christ has united 'the absolutely divine and the absolutely anti-divine, not in the mad gesture of a titanic superman, but in the unassuming simplicity of his obedience'.[140] The Son obediently undergoes the Father's judgement of 'the contradiction of the anti-divine', and in this experience of judgement the Son overcomes this contradiction through the Spirit. The Son and the Spirit lead the Church eucharistically into this Truth: 'It is as if the revelation of the Father and his love were only now beginning.'[141]

Turning to the action of finite creatures, Balthasar deems that in a sense all rational creatures have been elected by God, by being 'admitted to the sphere of the transcendent Logos'.[142] Rationality itself constitutes an 'election' to proclaim the Logos to others—and ultimately to proclaim the incarnate Logos who manifests 'absolute Goodness and Beauty'.[143] On the other hand, this magnificent 'election' goes hand in hand with human finitude and contingency, what Balthasar calls the 'tragedy of individual human existence'.[144] In Jesus Christ, God has entered into this tragic dimension of human individuality. God is thus both '*in* and *above* the world struggle': infinite and finite freedom come together in Jesus Christ.[145] Since Christ is the head of the Church, humans participate in the relationship of infinite and finite freedom that Christ reveals.[146] As such, humans cannot obtain an 'absolute knowledge' of the whole, which remains a mystery 'rooted and resting on the Father's eternal decision'.[147]

Through Christology, Balthasar argues, the importance of sociality (plurality) for freedom emerges, as opposed to philosophical emphasis on the one. Finite freedom cannot remain alone, but must live out

[140] Balthasar, *Truth of God*, 364.

[141] Ibid. 365. See Nicholas J. Healy III and David L. Schindler, 'For the Life of the World: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Church as Eucharist', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 51–63. See also D. C. Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth: A Philosophical Investigation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004).

[142] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 31.

[143] Ibid. 33; cf. Bulgakov's doctrine of sophianicity.

[144] Ibid. 41.

[145] Ibid. 62.

[146] Ibid. 84. Balthasar goes on to say, 'The fact that the world is in God means that when men, with their finite freedom, stray from the path, the Son has to go to the most extreme form of self-surrender—Eucharist, Cross, the descent to hell. Thus the trinitarian mystery translates into a cosmic mystery, both in terms of an event here and now and as an ever-expanding history' (p. 88).

[147] Ibid. 89.

its distinct vocation in communion with others. The autonomy or self-determining power of finite freedom thus operates within God's providence, which ensures that 'all man's error takes place within the realm of divine love'.[148] Balthasar shows in this regard how Origen interprets biblical texts that seem to imply predestination in terms of God's providential care in guiding each and every human being to salvation. Gregory of Nyssa likewise adopts this reading of providence, while adding to it the 'purely philosophical (Plotinian) idea that reflects on the finitude of evil but the infinity of man's longing for the good'.[149] By different but complementary paths, Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa arrive 'at finite freedom's complete dependence on . . . and indebtedness to infinite freedom'.[150] Especially in Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Aquinas, Balthasar finds the insight that absent infinite freedom, finite freedom cannot fulfil its thirst, which goes beyond the finite.[151]

In this context Balthasar identifies the baleful influence of 'the doctrine of (double) predestination'.[152] This doctrine gains force with Augustine and continues to cast 'its shadow over the west' right through the Counter-Reformation. The doctrine of predestination fundamentally distorts how the West encounters the doctrine of finite and infinite freedom. As Balthasar explains,

> Here an ultimate basis for the alternative outcomes of human existence—eternal salvation or eternal perdition—is sought in the unfathomable abyss of divine freedom; so much so that, in spite of all exhortation,

[148] Ibid. 217.

[149] Ibid. 221–2. For some cautions regarding Balthasar's reading of the Fathers, see Brian E. Daley, SJ, 'Balthasar's Reading of the Church Fathers', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 187–206.

[150] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 235. For discussion see Nichols's chapters on 'The Two Freedoms' and 'Dramatic Anthropology' in Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, 61–92. See also Francesca Murphy on the relationship of Balthasar's metaphysics to Aristotle's: Murphy, *God Is Not a Story*, 285.

[151] Here Balthasar relies upon Henri de Lubac, SJ's work on the natural desire for the vision of God. For recent discussion see e.g. Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, 2nd edn (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010); John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005); Reinhard Hütter, '*Desiderium Naturale Visionis Dei—Est autem duplex hominis beatitudo sive felicitas*: Some Observations about Lawrence Feingold's and John Milbank's Recent Interventions in the Debate over the Natural Desire to See God', *Nova et Vetera* 5 (2007): 81–131.

[152] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 250.

> man's efforts slacken and fail as he loses all courage in the face of the mystery. For it is not a question (as before) of how finite freedom can develop within an infinite freedom: this infinite freedom, which is necessarily the final arbiter, now threatens to swallow up finite freedom.[153]

By contrast, the New Testament speaks of predestination solely in terms of the Gospel. By exploring providence and predestination through the lens of the two freedoms, Balthasar aims to restore the original emphasis on salvation. As the embodiment of God's faithfulness to his promises, the obedience of Jesus Christ fulfils God's covenant with Israel: 'Jesus is both God's Yes to the world and also, together with the world ('with us'), the world's answering Yes (Amen) to God.'[154] Only in light of God's faithfulness to humankind, a faithfulness that enables us to be faithful in Christ, can we understand his providence and election (predestination).

Does this covenant restrict infinite freedom, so that God must limit his own freedom in order to allow for finite freedom? Balthasar answers that 'God's infinite freedom in the Covenant rests upon his faithfulness to his own nature', a faithfulness that, as eternal self-giving love, anchors and fulfils finite freedom.[155] Christ reveals that the world's freedom does not reduce to the vanity of vanities about which Qoheleth teaches, the vanity to which sin has subjected the world. In this light finite freedom recovers its original goodness and no longer finds itself in tension with infinite freedom. In Christ, infinite freedom shows itself faithful and trustworthy in its dealings with finite freedom.

Whereas speculation about predestination undermines this conviction of faithfulness, Christ reveals 'the sole Will of infinite freedom, which is as such a Will of wisdom and salvation'.[156] Has infinite freedom thereby been domesticated, as if it were simply another finite

[153] Ibid. See Oakes, *Pattern of Redemption*, 227: 'For it will be Balthasar's point that the pastoral crux of either lassitude-and-pride or anxiety-and-despair in regard to the doctrine of predestination has come from allowing the tension between finite and infinite freedom to be debated on its own terms rather than *in view of its ultimate resolution in Christ*.'

[154] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 252–3; cf. 2 Cor. 1:19–20. For analysis see Kevin Mongrain, *The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar: An Irenaean Retrieval* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 88–9, 94.

[155] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 253.

[156] Ibid. 254.

freedom that creatures can manipulate? The answer is 'No', because God gives everything. Finite freedom remains 'willed and affirmed in its finitude down to the last detail'.[157] God has revealed his 'Yes' to finite freedom in Christ, but finite freedom cannot thereby set out on its own, as if it could do without this 'Yes'.

In response to the Gospel of Christ, however, finite freedom in history intensifies its 'No', its claim to self-sufficiency.[158] Can infinite freedom encompass and overcome finite rebellion? In the self-surrender that characterizes the divine Persons, Balthasar finds his answer: 'If there is to be absolute freedom, it follows that, in what takes place between the divine "hypostases", there must be *areas of infinite freedom* that are *already there* and do not allow everything to be compressed into an airless unity and identity.'[159] By means of this spatial imagery, Balthasar seeks to evoke the infinite freedom of the divine Persons vis-à-vis each other. As he remarks, 'Something like infinite "duration" and infinite "space" must be attributed to the acts of reciprocal love so that the life of *communion*, of fellowship, can develop.'[160]

Do such spatio-temporal conceptions befit analogous discourse about God, who is simple spirit? Balthasar argues that they must, if the Persons are to be distinct in a truly personal manner. As regards the spatial analogy, each Person must, in his personal act within the Trinity, operate from an area of infinite freedom that is proper to him rather than shared with the other Persons. As regards the temporal analogy, although Balthasar grants that 'all temporal notions of "before" and "after" must be kept at a distance', he insists that in the relationship among the three 'areas of infinite freedom' there must be a reality analogous to time: otherwise the Persons would lack perfections of personal existence, namely 'the joys of expectation, of hope and fulfillment, the joys of giving and receiving and the even deeper joys of finding oneself in the other and of being constantly

[157] Ibid.

[158] As Murphy comments, 'Von Balthasar took a glum view of the survival of a sacramental sense of nature in a technologized world' (Murphy, *God Is Not a Story*, 311).

[159] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 257. See also Ben Quash, 'The Theo-Drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 143–57, at 151–2.

[160] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 257.

over-fulfilled by him'.[161] Only in this way could the Persons enjoy their distinct Godhood in 'mutual acknowledgment and adoration', as well as 'reciprocal petition'.[162]

Given these spatio-temporal analogies for the intra-Trinitarian life, one can see the basis for the Son's Godforsakenness, his infinite encompassing of all finite alienation. The actions of Father, Son, and Spirit in human history reveal (and are grounded by) the actions of tripersonal infinite freedom in itself. As Balthasar says, the Persons' eternal acts of giving away all that they are involve 'no end to being surprised and overwhelmed by what is essentially immeasurable'.[163] The Father thus can reveal something 'new' to the Son in the Son's act of infinite obedience. The spatial analogy similarly allows Balthasar to propose that '[t]he hypostatic modes of being constitute the greatest imaginable opposition one to another (and thus no one of them can overtake any other), in order that they can mutually interpenetrate in the most intimate manner conceivable'.[164] Likewise the Son's Godforsakenness in history, which accomplishes salvation in a manner that could not have been predicted, expresses the freedom of his eternal mission: 'No one can predict . . . how the Son will "use" the one and only divine freedom in order to invent ideas and acts of love.'[165] The Father, Son, and Spirit each eternally possess the freedom 'to do surprising and astounding things' within the inner life of God.[166]

Because infinite freedom contains no 'stagnation of life, boredom, satiety and surfeit', and because 'God himself is always greater than himself on the basis of his triune freedom', God's engagement with finite freedom cannot follow narrow or restrictive rules.[167] Nor need

[161] Ibid. In describing Balthasar's 'claim that *between* the divine Persons lie great oceans of infinite freedom', Nichols observes that this claim is 'the most doctrinally sensitive areas of his theology (with the possible exception of his eschatology). . . . Here, then, we have the root of Balthasar's controversial Trinitarian theologoumenon that while the divine nature may be unchangeable the manner of the interrelationships of the divine Persons is not' (Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, 72–3). Or as Ben Quash puts it more critically: 'The question is that of *analogy*—offered by von Balthasar as the saving alternative to Hegel's assumption of *identity* between humanity and God, and yet risking the serious undercutting of its effectiveness whenever the field of relations it displays becomes too finalized and too incautious a middle ground for depicting their interaction' (Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 164).

[162] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 257, 258.

[163] Ibid. 258. [164] Ibid. [165] Ibid. [166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid. 259. He adds, 'The triune God is neither indiscreet nor—on the contrary—prudish' (ibid.).

finite freedom fear being stultified or oppressed by infinite freedom, since infinite freedom means a joyous and fruitful self-surrender. But, in order to provide room within infinite freedom for the overcoming of finite freedom's resistance and alienation, has Balthasar made infinite freedom as knowable as finite freedom? In the name of freedom, has Balthasar exceeded the necessary cautions of apophatic discourse and divine naming? He affirms that the mystery of God remains intact: the interpersonal self-surrender of infinite freedom allows 'us a glimpse of its own profound abysses, but, in doing so, the more it reveals itself as freedom, the more evident its mysterious nature becomes'.[168] How then can Balthasar say so much about the inner divine life? The answer is Revelation, through which God's 'negative incomprehensibility turns into a positive one. For it is far more incomprehensible that the Eternal God, in his freedom, should set forth to come to us, caring for us by means of his Incarnation, Cross and Eucharist and opening up to us his own realm of freedom so that, in it, we can attain the fulfillment of our own freedom.'[169]

For Balthasar, we must keep in balance two aspects, God's 'incomprehensible sovereignty' and his 'unlimited trinitarian communication of the inner-divine love'.[170] God is ever-greater, but he is ever-greater as the freedom of love. At one and the same time, he requires finite freedom's responsible obedience and shows that everything is a gift of love. Thus finite freedom need not fear infinite freedom, as happens in the 'shadow' of the doctrine of predestination. Rather, finite freedom finds its place in the gifting and surrendering of the divine Persons.[171] Finite freedom is created in the Word, who 'is the world's pattern and hence its goal'.[172] Thus the Father gives the world 'to the Son, since the Father wishes to sum up all things in heaven and earth in the Son, as head (Eph. 1:10)'.[173] For his part, the Son in obedience gives the world back to the Father in a state of perfect fulfilment (1 Cor. 15:24–8). Father and Son together give the world to the Spirit. The incarnate Son thereby stands as '"the concrete analogia entis"', because in him the relationship of

[168] Ibid. [169] Ibid. 260. [170] Ibid.

[171] Balthasar comments, 'The infinite distance between the world and God is grounded in the other, prototypical distance between God and God' (ibid. 266).

[172] Ibid. 261. [173] Ibid. 262.

infinite freedom and finite freedom—the (eucharistic) fulfilment of finite freedom—takes place.[174]

Providentially, God 'is always at work and continually liberates his creatures for freedom'.[175] As the giver of being, he is always present in creation, whose finite being (and in rational creatures freedom) points to him. Since rational creatures seek to possess their finite freedom on their own without surrendering it in return, God reveals his providential plan: 'infinite freedom will follow wayward man into utter alienation.'[176] God thus not only is present, but personally and providentially 'accompanies' all human beings.[177] This plan is known to God from eternity, and so it 'includes God's "answer" to every word that may possibly be uttered by finite freedom', namely the answer of the slain Lamb.[178] As a Trinitarian and soteriological plan, God's providence does not negate finite freedom, but rather opens up finite freedom—but always within the eternal plan or 'idea' of the slain Lamb, so that 'depending on how the creature moves, it will encounter a different constellation of the same infinite idea'.[179] In this way, by constant recourse to the Son, Balthasar aims to get beyond the debates about divine foreknowledge and predestination. As he puts it, 'in the Son's Cross God has enfolded and undergirded the most extreme courses the creature can take'.[180] The older debates imagined a static God, an eternal knowledge and love, whereas 'the Son's obedient self-surrender' reveals that God's love (like his knowledge) 'is the most permanent and, from the world's standpoint, the most moving reality there is. As such it is best suited to accompany man along his earthly course.'[181]

What about God's grace? Balthasar again appeals to the incarnate Son as the revelation of God's idea for the world, as 'the logic of the God who manifests himself' and which therefore transcends the limits of any rationalistic system of propositions.[182] In this divine

[174] Ibid. 267.
[175] Ibid. 273. For discussion see Christopher W. Steck, SJ, *The Ethical Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 87–92.
[176] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 275.
[177] Ibid. 277. See Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, 75–6.
[178] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 277.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid. 278.
[181] Ibid. 280. See Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, 72–3.
[182] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 281.

logic, God's grace reveals itself in the structure of the Cross, whose vertical beam includes 'at its top . . . the Son's eternal readiness to obey the Father', and 'at its lowest point . . . his obedience even in forsakenness'.[183] The horizontal beam, Christ's obedient self-surrender, is the pattern for graced human life. Both 'beams' belong to God's free outpouring by which God gives creatures being in the Son and liberates fallen creatures in accord with the Christological pattern and goal of the world. Thus in Romans 8:28–30, says Balthasar, we see how providence 'is progressive assimilation to the Son'.[184] In this way providence is both particular and universal; it regards at the same time the individual believer and the Body of Christ. Our participation in providence 'begins when, addressed as "thou", I hearken to the One who thus addresses me'.[185] This participation is ultimately Christological because 'I only appreciate fully that God is my "highest good" when I learn (in the Son) that I am a "good" to him, affirmed by him; this is what guarantees my being and my freedom'.[186] In God's plan (the Son), known in the Spirit by the grace of covenantal faith, each person is such a 'good', 'affirmed from and by eternity'.[187] God 'has a particular will for each finite subject', a will that is revealed in the Son in whom 'all things were created' (Col. 1:15).[188]

In short, Balthasar appeals to the analogy of imaginative drama in order to accentuate freedom's power of surprise and to avoid any claim to mechanistic knowledge of the outcome. At the same time, he insists that the distance between the Father and the Son far exceeds even the alienation of finite damnation. In the slain Lamb, God reveals that his love accompanies and overcomes every finite contradiction. Although we do not know how God will transform the rejection of his love, we know that God's love, in its ever-surprising depths, cannot rest content with the everlasting torment of some of his rational creatures. If this is not an 'epic', then it is very close. Furthermore, by analogously applying privations (and not solely

[183] Ibid. For further reflection, see Raymond Gawronski, SJ, *Word and Silence: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Spiritual Encounter between East and West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 140.

[184] Balthasar, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, 283.

[185] Ibid. 286.

[186] Ibid. 287.

[187] Ibid.; regarding faith and covenantal grace, see also p. 300.

[188] Ibid. 302. On the 'theological person', see Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, 107–8.

perfections of being) to the Trinity, Balthasar strains both the doctrine of analogy and the biblical revelation of the Trinity to the breaking point. The spatio-temporal analogies by which Balthasar fills out the inner life of the Trinity are inadequate to their subject matter, and they can even frighten. If the Son undergoes in the inner life of the Trinity an alienation infinitely more bitter than hell—if hell is a Trinitarian event—can we truly desire to be 'heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ' and to share in 'the glory that is to be revealed to us' (Rom. 8:17–18)?

CONCLUSION

In the approaches studied in this chapter, the common thread is an urgent insistence upon God's superabundant love and absolute innocence. Bulgakov highlights God's creation of all rational creatures in his own image; Barth and Balthasar focus upon Christ's Cross as the revelation of the length to which God goes to save sinners; Maritain underscores God's real desire for 'all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4). This emphasis on God's love for each and every rational creature accords with the emphasis of Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales.

A difficulty that Bulgakov's position encounters is that the Gospels repeatedly present Jesus as warning that some will be lost. Why should Jesus obscure his true meaning on such a crucial point, one that might even (as Bulgakov suggests) make the difference between a despotic deity and the true God of love? Since Bulgakov advocates the predestination (although he rejects the term) of all rational creatures due to the inexorable created dynamism of the image of God, the loss of even one rational creature would collapse his synthesis. Similarly, Barth's emphasis that no rational creature can reject the 'Yes' of God in Jesus Christ, who undergoes for us God's 'No', exceeds the biblical witness. Barth's portrait of the demons as impersonal does not correspond to that of Jesus and the Evangelists. Absent the salvation of all rational creatures, Barth too would need to adjust significantly his doctrine of election/predestination.[189]

[189] For an interpretation in this direction, see Oliver Crisp, 'On Barth's Denial of Universalism', *Themelios* 29 (2003): 18–29.

Regarding Maritain's metaphysical solution, nihilating consists in a non-advertence to the rule of reason. Does not this lack of advertence, from which follows the freely willed defect, require God's permission? If so, is God as 'first cause' entirely out of the picture, as Maritain supposes? As Steven Long puts it, 'One grants that the creature is defectible, but any actual defection presupposes the divine permission, since nothing pertinent to being in any way can occur unless it is at least permitted by God.'[190] Divine permission is not an act moving the creature to sin, but instead it is a mere permission of the privation that the rational creature freely brings upon himself or herself. Balthasar's position likewise raises difficulties, primarily as regards his deductions about the intra-Trinitarian life vis-à-vis created freedom. His use of spatial and temporal imagery and his inclusion of privations in analogous discourse about God strain his ability to speak of the eternal, simple God. The alienation (infinitely more bitter than finite damnation) that he ascribes to the Son's relation to the Father imports horror into the divine life.

How then to proceed in contemporary theology? It seems to me that the difficulties in predestinarian doctrine that were evident already during the Second Temple period—and that only intensified during the centuries that followed—require re-examining the witness of the New Testament with an eye to the insights and pitfalls found in the theological tradition. The concluding chapter offers a contemporary theology of predestination, grounded in biblical revelation, that takes inspiration particularly from Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales.

[190] Long, 'Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law', 583.

6

Two Affirmations

Praising God as 'infinite innocence that wills to the last the glorification of the creature', David Hart remarks that providence 'is the way in which God, to whom all time is present, permits and fully "accounts for" and "answers" acts that he does not directly determine, but that also cannot determine him'.[1] Affirming that God knows from eternity all the good and evil acts of rational creatures, Hart states that 'God both wills the ultimate good of all things and accomplishes that good'.[2] Yet what if God accomplishes the 'ultimate good of all

[1] David Bentley Hart, 'Providence and Causality: On Divine Innocence', in *The Providence of God: Deus Habet Consilium*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Philip G. Ziegler (London: T. & T. Clark, 2009), 34–56, at 42–3, 47. Comparing our 'natural will' or rational inclination towards the good with our 'gnomic will' or free choice, he states that 'whatever we do, the desire of our natural will for God will be consummated; it will return to God, whether the gnomic will consents or not, and will be glorified with that glory the Son shares with the Father from eternity. And, if the gnomic will within us has not surrendered to its natural supernatural end, our own glorified nature becomes hell to us, that holy thing we cannot touch. Rejection of God becomes estrangement from ourselves, the Kingdom of God within us becomes our exile, and the transfiguring glory of God within us—through our refusal to submit to love—becomes the unnatural experience of reprobation' (p. 47; at this juncture Hart cites Maximus the Confessor, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 59, PG 90:609A-B, which he regards as favouring universal salvation).

[2] Hart, 'Providence and Causality', 47. Hart explains further: 'This entire issue, of course, becomes far less involved if one does not presume real differentiations within God's intention towards his creatures. For, surely, scripture is quite explicit on this point: God positively "wills" the salvation of "all human beings" (1 Tim. 2.4). That is, he does not merely generically desire that salvation, or formally allow it as a logical possibility, or will it antecedently but not consequently, or (most ridiculous of all) enable it "sufficiently" but not "efficaciously". If God were really to supply saving grace sufficient for all, but to refuse to supply most persons with the necessary natural means of attaining that grace, it would mean that God does not will the salvation of all. If God's will to save is truly universal, as the epistle proclaims, one simply cannot start from the assumption that God causes some to rise while willingly permitting others to

things', but does not accomplish the salvation of all rational creatures (such as Satan)? How can we hear all that God teaches in revelation, without crimping God's love or distorting the biblical drama?

This final chapter returns to the witness of Scripture (Chapter 1), illumined by the theological and philosophical paths that we have canvassed (Chapters 2–5).[3] As promised, I take inspiration from Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales, who teach that God's all-encompassing love for each and every rational creature must be affirmed together with God's transcendent providence and permission of permanent rebellion. Until the eschaton, these two affirmations cannot be resolved into one.

This chapter begins by exploring the foundations of the doctrine of predestination, especially God's transcendence. I then argue that the centre of the biblical doctrine of predestination is Christ Jesus, who manifests God's inexhaustible love for sinners and God's supreme goodness—and who also makes clear that God permits the permanent rebellion of some rational creatures. I conclude that the doctrine of predestination, understood through a twofold affirmation, is best appropriated doxologically.

'IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING'

Transcendence and Immanence

Consider Jesus' words in Matthew 10:29–30: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.' God's will can possess such an encompassing scope only because God

fall; even if one dreads the spectre of universalism, one can at most affirm that God causes all to rise, and permits all to fall, and imparts to all—out of his own abyssal freedom—the ability to consent to or to resist the grace he extends while providentially ordering all things according to his universal will to salvation. Or, rather, perhaps one should say that God causes all to rise, but the nature of that cause necessarily involves a permission of the will' (p. 46; this latter way of putting it corresponds to Maritain's approach).

[3] For further historical-critical background to the biblical texts cited in this chapter, see Chapter 1.

transcends the order of finite beings, as 'I am who am' (Exod. 3:14).[4] If God were another creature, God could not 'number' or eternally foreknows the fate of every human hair.[5] The same distinction between the eternal God and finite beings is required by the Letter of James: 'Every good endowment and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation of shadow due to change' (James 1:17).[6] We encounter this most perfect gift in the Eucharistic liturgy, where as Jesus says, 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day' (John 6:54; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:23–6).

God's providence therefore does not consist in cold decrees from on high. God's unlikeness to us carries with it no aloof deficiency, but rather it allows for God's providential plenitude and presence. God is infinitely greater than our conceptions of him, but we can still speak analogously of God because perfections of being carry no intrinsic limitations.[7] Even an infinite chain of contingent beings must participate in a source of being that is not itself another contingent being. As Augustine puts it, 'you [God] raised me up to make me see that what I saw is Being, and that I who saw am not yet Being. And you gave a shock to the weakness of my sight by the strong

[4] The Hebrew verb here, however, does not have to be present tense, and the Hebrew text does not include the pronoun 'I' (leaving it implied by the verb). For these reasons, emphasizing the historical dimension of God's earlier self-naming to Moses—'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' (Exodus 3:6)—many scholars translate Exodus 3:14 as 'I am who I am' or 'I will be who I will be'. But it remains the case that conceptually to differentiate God from creatures would be impossible if God were another kind of being. Such transcendence of the genus 'being' is thinkable only if God is pure act of being, sheer to be, rather than a being. For theological discussion of God as infinite unchanging act see Thomas G. Weinandy, OFM Cap., *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000); Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[5] Richard Dawkins imagines that the doctrine of providence means that God would have to be like an extraordinary supercomputer, but in fact providence requires that God be nothing like a supercomputer. See Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 149.

[6] See William F. Brosend II, *James and Jude* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 46; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 197.

[7] Beginning with Hume and Kant, however, modern philosophers have argued that we cannot speak of anything beyond our empirical experience. The problem with this position is apparent even in the simple observation that being is not non-being. Being is neither a purely contingent matter of fact (Hume) nor an a priori category of reason (Kant); to say that something 'is' is a metaphysical claim.

radiance of your rays, and I trembled with love and awe.'[8] Or as Paul urges the Athenians, God 'is not far from each one of us, for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring"' (Acts 17:27–8).[9]

Taking up the canonical biblical narrative, we find that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not limited in his knowledge by the temporal progression of time. Prior to Sarah's pregnancy, God assures Abraham that 'I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you' (Gen. 17:5–6). Intrinsic to Abraham's communion with God is the transcendent certitude of God's promise. Similarly, the lesson that Abraham learns on Mount Moriah, where he nearly sacrifices Isaac, is a providential one: 'The Lord will provide' (Gen. 22:14).[10] While Jacob and Esau are in the womb, God communicates the course of their history to Rebekah: 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger' (Gen. 25:23). As God continues to instruct Jacob's descendents, he warns them against conflating him with any creature, whether earthly or in the heavens (Deut. 4:15–19). The psalmist affirms that God's transcendent foreknowledge is such that 'in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them' (Ps. 139:16). Even while proclaiming God's intimacy with the people of Israel in the Temple, Solomon affirms God's transcendence: 'Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!' (1 Kgs 8:27).

[8] St Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), VII.x.16, p. 123. For contemporary metaphysical explorations, see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Infinite Being* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2000); W. Norris Clarke, SJ, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

[9] For competing interpretations of this passage, see Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 315–16, 319; C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33–41. For discussion see my 'God and Greek Philosophy in Contemporary Biblical Scholarship', *Journal of Theological Interpretation*, 4 (2010): 169–85.

[10] See Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 208.

Jesus announces that '[t]he time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1:15). For the time to be 'fulfilled', there must be one who transcends time and who providentially orders all time. By forgiving sins, calming the storm, healing the sick, and raising the dead (Mark 2:7, 4:39, 5:34, 5:41), Jesus shows that he is the providential orderer of creation as well as the one who inaugurates the kingdom by dying and rising again (Mark 8:31).[11] He speaks of himself in manner that testifies to his pre-existence and to the providential path of self-giving love: 'For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). He foretells the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (Mark 13:2); he affirms that his arrest signals that the scriptures (the Old Testament) are being fulfilled (Mark 14:49); he foretells Peter's betrayal (Mark 14:72).[12] In all these ways, he reveals himself to be the incarnate Son, sent into the world by the Father to enact God's providence in and through Israel.

When Nathanael identifies Jesus as 'the Son of God' and 'the King of Israel' (John 1:49), Jesus reveals himself to be the fulfilment of Jacob's dream of a ladder joining heaven and earth: 'you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man' (John 1:51; cf. Gen. 28:12). Jesus accomplishes the meaning of God's covenantal promise to Abraham (John 8:56). Likewise, on the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus shows his two disciples how to read the Torah and the prophets so as to understand that the scriptures are about Jesus (Luke 24:27).

Predestined in Christ Jesus

Paul describes 'the fullness of time' as bringing to completion God's providential plan 'to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1:10). Describing the Church as Christ's 'body, the fullness of him who fills all in all' (Eph. 1:23), Paul presents Jesus, in his human nature, as preordained or predestined from eternity. Those who are saved in Jesus are likewise predestined or

[11] See Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. a Religious of CSMV (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1993).

[12] For historical-critical understanding of these texts, see Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (London: A. & C. Black, 1991), 226, 304–5.

elect in him from eternity.[13] Paul states, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him' (Eph. 1:3–4). Those who have given their lives for the Gospel need not fear, for their 'names are in the book of life' (Phil. 4:3).

Peter calls upon believers to be holy (1 Pet. 1:15–16), a holiness made possible by 'the precious blood of Christ', who 'was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake' (1 Pet. 1:19–20). Peter makes clear that the words of the Lord through the prophets are now fulfilled in the predestined Christ: 'It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven' (1 Pet. 1:12).[14] As Ephesians puts it, God 'destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved' (Eph. 1:5).

If we are 'destined' or 'chosen', then, we are so only 'in Christ'. From 'before the foundation of the world',[15] God predestined Christ (in his created human nature) and all those who share in the salvation won by Christ. Why is Christ so central? Without Christ crucified and risen, as Paul says, 'you are still in your sins' (1 Cor. 15:17). Christ's Cross is the path of life because he reverses Adam and Eve's deadly pride. Paul explains that Christ Jesus, 'though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself

[13] See Blessed Columba Marmion, OSB, *Christ, the Life of the Soul*, trans. Alan Bancroft (Bethesda, MD: Zaccheus Press, 2005 [1920]), 3–36, where Marmion treats 'The Divine Plan of Our Adoptive Predestination in Jesus Christ'.

[14] For historical-critical discussion see Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, vol. II: *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1–2 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 91, 107–8.

[15] Hart points out that 'the world to which the human identity of Christ naturally belongs is one uniquely and eternally fitted to that revelation. Creation is not simply a multifarious demonstration of God's power and goodness, which might equally well be expressed by some other contingent cosmic order, but is the event within God's Logos of beings uniquely—and appropriately—called to union with him' (Hart, 'Providence and Causality', 44–5).

and became obedient unto death' (Phil. 2:6–8). The serpent's promise that '[y]ou will not die' and that 'your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God' (Gen. 3:4–5) persuades Adam and Eve to distrust God and put their trust in themselves by disobeying God's commandment regarding 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (Gen. 2:17). Christ's obedience in love, his humility, is the opposite of this primal sin, which gravely wounded humanity in its relationship to God.[16]

A Christological doctrine of predestination relies upon the Holy Spirit's mission in Christ's humanity and in ours. Christ is 'full of grace and truth' (John 1:17). He is the one who gives the Holy Spirit. As he tells the Samaritan woman at the well, 'Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life' (John 4:13–14).[17] John the Baptist tells his followers that the Messiah—Jesus—'will baptize you with the Holy Spirit' (Mark 1:8).[18] Jesus' humanity was formed in the womb of his mother by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18), and Jesus, after undergoing baptism from John the Baptist, 'saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him [Jesus]' (Matt. 3:16). The risen Jesus breathes forth his Spirit upon his disciples (John 20:22) so as to spread the forgiveness of sins throughout the world.[19]

As the bearer and source (with the Father) of the Holy Spirit, Jesus has 'power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you [the Father] have given him' (John 17:2). From eternity the Father orders rational creatures to eternal communion with him in the Son through the Spirit. We cannot give ourselves the Trinitarian life, but instead we depend upon being in the Son so as to receive his Spirit. Jesus emphasizes that '[y]ou did not choose me, but I chose you and

[16] For historical-critical and theological analysis see Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[17] See Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 139–45.

[18] See Mary Healy, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 33–4.

[19] For further discussion see Marianne Meye Thompson's excellent 'The Breath of Life: John 20:22–3 Once More', in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*, ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 69–78.

appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide' (John 15:16). Jesus knows that Judas will betray him: 'I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen; it is that the scripture may be fulfilled' (John 13:18–19). Jesus and the Father know Judas as 'the son of perdition' (John 17:12).[20]

It is the Father who, as Paul remarks, 'has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins' (Col. 1:13–14). This kingdom is the fruit of God's eternal election of us in the Son. Paul continues with regard to the Son: 'all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent' (Col. 1:16–18).[21] Similarly, Paul reminds the Romans that their condition in Christ is entirely God's 'free gift' (Rom. 5:15): boasting is absolutely excluded. God has so arranged his providential plan of salvation that 'no human being might boast in the presence of God' (1 Cor. 1:29). We are made children of God not because we are first good, but because God is.[22]

Although the mystery unfolds in time and fully engages the freedom of rational creatures, divine election transcends time and is not

[20] See Raymond E. Brown, SS, *The Gospel According to John (xiii–xxi)* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 760. Francis Moloney denies that Judas is necessarily lost: see Francis J. Moloney, SDB, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 468. Ben Witherington III argues that Judas' choice shows that Jesus' (and God's) choice is not determinative: see Witherington, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 270.

[21] See Marianne Meye Thompson, *Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 27–32.

[22] For recent historical-critical discussion of justification, see on the one side Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004) and Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); and on the other side Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009); N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009); Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). Authors on both 'sides' differ among one another, of course. For the approach of E. P. Sanders, who originated much of this discussion through his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), see most recently his 'Did Paul's Theology Develop?' in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 325–50.

thwarted by creatures. We have already seen this point in the Gospel of John. In Acts, Peter and John observe that God permitted the crucifixion of Jesus, so that what happened to Jesus was what 'your hand and your plan had predestined to take place' (Acts 4:28). Paul states that Christ and his Body are 'the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints' (Col. 1:26). As the Letter to the Ephesians puts the same point, God has revealed 'in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1:9–10). Paul teaches that God foreknows, predestines, calls, justifies, and glorifies his children, who are 'God's elect' (Rom. 8:33) and who therefore cannot be separated 'from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:39). In Christ's image, the fallen human 'image of God' (Gen. 1:27) is healed and elevated, so that we participate in the very 'image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15), the one who 'reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power' (Heb. 1:3).[23]

The Letter to the Hebrews sees a supreme fittingness in this providential path, whose centre is the humility and self-giving love of Christ crucified. We are predestined by God in Christ because 'it was fitting that he [God], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering' (Heb. 2:10). Since human rebellion from God occurs in the body, God sends his Son in the flesh so that God might conquer sin and death from within the human condition. By suffering for our sins, the sinless Christ shows himself to be the fulfilment of all prior priesthood, both Aaron's and, even more, Melchizedek's.[24] Christ thereby reveals the providential ordering of God's covenants with Israel. Christ also shows us that our sufferings do not negate God's providential governance: rather, we are called to turn from our this-worldly idolatries and to look 'to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set

[23] On the image of God and its perfection see my *Jewish–Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom: Engagements with the Theology of David Novak* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 63–91.

[24] For discussion see Richard Bauckham, 'The Divinity of Jesus in the Letter to the Hebrews', in his *Jesus and the God of Israel:* God Crucified *and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 233–53.

before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God' (Heb. 12:2).

Paul emphasizes that our sufferings 'make us rely not on ourselves but on the God who raises the dead' (2 Cor. 1:9). We are able to gain eternal fruit from our sufferings not due to our own strength, but because God has 'given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee' (2 Cor. 1:22). As Paul says, 'For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too' (2 Cor. 1:5).[25] As in the Book of Revelation, it is the slain Lamb who gives comfort. He alone opens 'the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne' (Rev. 5:7). In bringing history to its providential fulfilment, he brings salvation to 'those who are written in the Lamb's book of life' (Rev. 21:27). In this way God 'accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11), so that election in Christ Jesus 'is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them' (Eph. 2:10). Through the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit, God the Father leads his people into eternal life.

'WHY WILL YOU DIE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL?'

The Prodigal Father

What about rational creatures' evil actions? We have already noted James's teaching that 'God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one' (James 1:13). Wisdom of Solomon likewise attests that God is 'kind and true, patient, and ruling all things in mercy' (Wisd. 15:1), and God teaches through Ezekiel that 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezek. 33:11).[26] The Lord emphasizes

[25] See Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, 118–21.

[26] For a Lutheran reading see Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48* (St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 975–6.

human freedom in urging Cain not to sin against Abel: 'Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it' (Gen. 4:7). Calvin contrasts such passages with others that seem to implicate God in actively doing evil to rational creatures, such as Exodus 7:3–4 where God says, 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.' Indeed, Paul tells the Thessalonians with regard to 'those who are to perish' (2 Thess. 2:10) that 'God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false' (2 Thess. 2:11)—although Paul emphasizes that those who are to perish do so not because of God's punishing them, but 'because they refused to love the truth and so be saved' (2 Thess. 2:10).[27]

Jesus guides us in interpreting such passages. He urges us to imitate God, who, far from causing the downfall of sinners, loves them and serves them. As he puts it, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and unjust' (Matt. 5:44–5). Indeed, Jesus makes clear that such all-encompassing love constitutes what it means for God to be perfect. After teaching his hearers to love their enemies, he exhorts them, 'You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. 5:48). Any crimped account of God's love for each and every rational creature deviates from the perfection that Jesus teaches. God's gifting is such that 'every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened' (Luke 11:10). As Jesus asks rhetorically, 'What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent. . . . If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

[27] See Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying in and Falling Away* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 15–20, 86–8. See also *Summa theologiae* I, q. 23, a. 3, where Aquinas comments, 'Reprobation differs in its causality from predestination. This latter is the cause both of what is expected in the future life by the predestined—namely, glory—and of what is received in this life—namely, grace. Reprobation, however, is not the cause of what is in the present—namely, sin; but it is the cause of abandonment by God. It is the cause, however, of what is assigned in the future—namely, eternal punishment. But guilt proceeds from the free-will of the person who is reprobated and deserted by grace. In this way the word of the prophet is true—namely, *Destruction is thy own, O Israel* [Hos. 13:9]' (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981)).

how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' (Luke 11:11, 13).

Far from being a Father who is deficient in love towards some of his rational creatures, God is the prodigal Father, always working to bless.[28] He runs towards his wayward son: 'while he [the son] was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him' (Luke 15:20). God works powerfully for the good of his rational creatures; each 'sheep' matters to him (Matthew 18:12). To be good is to pour forth good gifts, and God is infinitely good. Jesus says to a man who does not know who Jesus is: 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone' (Mark 10:18). God alone is the 'good' and 'perfect' giver. As Paul urges the Romans, 'If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died' (Rom. 14:15). On the Cross, Jesus dies in supreme love for all humans. He prays on the Cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). All sinners should rejoice in what Jesus has done for all of us: 'God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us' (Rom. 5:8). As the evangelist John puts it, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him' (John 3:16–17).

God's Permission of Evil

Thomas Aquinas affirms that 'God cannot be directly the cause of sin', because 'every sin is a departure from the order which is to God as the end: whereas God inclines and turns all things to Himself as to their last end'.[29] But does God's permission of rebellion make him to be *indirectly* the cause of sin? Aquinas answers no; God is not even indirectly the cause of sin. Yet Aquinas grants that 'it happens that

[28] For further biblical discussion see Gerald O'Collins, SJ's chapter on 'The Universal Benevolence of God' in his *Salvation for All: God's Other Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 176–98. By means of biblical exegesis, O'Collins defends not universal salvation but 'the universal scope of God's offer of salvation' (p. vi).

[29] I–II, q. 79, a. 1.

God does not give some the assistance, whereby they may avoid sin, which assistance were He to give, they would not sin'.[30] By not giving this gracious assistance, does not God indirectly cause the sin?

Aquinas offers the analogy of a ship's pilot. The action of the ship's pilot pertains solely to guiding the ship to port. If the ship wrecks because of a storm, the ship's pilot does not cause the wreck, either directly or indirectly. God of course could ensure that no storm occurred. The purpose of the analogy, however, is to make clear that God's providential act aims solely at the good. Why, however, does God cause some goodness but not maximal goodness in creatures? Like the pilot, God sees the goal of the journey. What he does is ordered to his creation (the ship) attaining the goal. Aquinas comments that God 'does all this according to the order of His wisdom and justice, since He himself is Wisdom and Justice'.[31] The order of God's wisdom and justice is the order of his love.

Aquinas also compares God to a master and rational creatures to a servant. He notes that if the servant does not obey the master's commandments, the master is not the cause of the servant's disobedience.[32] Yet is not God 'the cause of every action, in so far as it is an action'?[33] Even if so, rational creatures need not act in an 'ordered' fashion: rational creatures can introduce moral disorder, which inscribes a deficiency or lack of perfection in the action. God is not the cause of the defect (which itself is a lack of being). Here Aquinas compares God to the leg's power of motion, and the disorder introduced by the rational creature to a crooked ordering of the bones. God causes the motion but not the corruption of form within the motion, 'even as the defect of limping is reduced to a crooked leg as its cause, but not to the motive power, which nevertheless causes whatever there is of movement in the limping'.[34]

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid. For discussion of the analogy of the ship's pilot, see W. Matthews Grant, 'Aquinas on How God Causes the Act of Sin without Causing Sin Itself', *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 455–96, at 489–90.

[32] I–II, q. 79, a. 1, ad 3.

[33] I–II, q. 79, a. 2.

[34] Ibid. David Burrell argues that given Aquinas's understanding of divine eternity, the notions of predestination and foreknowledge are incoherent, because they inevitably import temporality into God. Although this view overstates the case, I agree with Burrell's remark, regarding al-Ghazali's mystical embrace of God's transcendent agency, that 'certain domains quite outstrip human conceptualizing' (Burrell, *Faith*

As analogies, the good pilot, the good master, and the good motive power of the leg should not be expected to solve without remainder the problem of why God is not to blame for the disorder that he does not directly cause but might have prevented (permission). But by using examples of agents working for a particular end, Aquinas tries to help us understand how God, in accomplishing the good for which he works, does not accomplish every possible good. What God might have done is not the issue; we must focus on what God actually does, his communication of his goodness.[35] According to Aquinas, God is 'the most perfectly liberal giver'.[36] It follows that God does not cause 'storms'; God simply permits them.[37] Does God permit them because he needs them in order to achieve his ends? On the contrary, Aquinas insists that '[e]vil does not operate towards the perfection and beauty of the universe, except accidentally' in so far as God redirects evil towards the good.[38]

Although following Augustine he observes that God draws good out of evil (such as the patience of martyrs) and that God's goodness is fittingly manifested by 'different grades of being', Aquinas affirms that in the final analysis only God knows why God permits permanent rebellion.[39] Beyond attesting to God's wisdom and goodness,

and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 166; cf. 110). One can say with the psalmist, 'Even before a word is on my tongue, lo, O Lord, you know it altogether. You beset me behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it' (Ps. 139:4–6). See also Yves Congar, OP, '*Praedeterminare* et *praedeterminatio* chez saint Thomas', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 23 (1934): 363–71.

[35] Cf. I, q. 14, a. 8; I, q. 19, a. 6.

[36] I, q. 44, a. 4, ad 1. In the *Timaeus* Plato similarly remarks about the creator, 'He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be.' See Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 29e, p. 1162.

[37] Regarding divine permission, Aquinas considers the objection that 'God does not will that evil should not exist; otherwise, since various evils do exist, God's will would not always be fulfilled. Therefore God wills that evil should exist' (I, q. 19, a. 9, obj. 3). In response, Aquinas states that 'God therefore neither wills evil to be done, nor wills it not to be done, but wills to permit evil to be done' (ad 3). Here one must carefully distinguish between willing evil to be done and willing to permit evil to be done: the danger is conflating these two formulations, as if both were acts of will as regards evil, the mistake that Aquinas is seeking to avoid.

[38] I, q. 19, a. 9, ad 2; cf. a. 9, ad 1.

[39] I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3. Aquinas cites Romans 9:22–3 and 2 Timothy 2:20. Cf. David B. Burrell, CSC, *Deconstructing Theodicy: Why Job Has Nothing to Say to the Puzzle of Suffering* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008).

supremely revealed in Christ Jesus, we cannot deduce why God does what he does and no other. Above all, I would add, we cannot treat God's permission of permanent rebellion as though it manifested the crimped nature of God's love towards some rational creatures, nor can we minimize the severity of the damned's corruption.[40] The central aim of the doctrine of permission is to affirm God's love: as befits infinite Love, God wills only good to his rational creatures.

In the midst of his innocent suffering, Job questions God's goodness and begs God to stop harming him: 'Are not the days of my life few? Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep darkness, the land of gloom and chaos, where light is as darkness' (Job 10:20–1). God replies to Job by identifying himself as the one who bounds the sea of chaos (Job 38:8–11). In response to God's work of creation, 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!' (Job 38:7). God not only overcomes chaos in creation, but also God alone can be depended upon for salvation. Notwithstanding the proud power of creatures, God alone is the giver of all being and goodness: 'Who has given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine' (Job 41:11). In his response to Job, therefore, God asks Job, 'Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be justified? Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?' (Job 40:9–10).

This is not arbitrary power, but rather a power so great that we cannot compass its wisdom and goodness, although we can see the fruits of God's gifting. Responding to God, Job confesses that the power which he imagined to be arbitrary was instead beyond all telling.[41] He says to God, 'I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. . . .I had heard

[40] When this point is not upheld, debates over antecedent reprobation and sufficient grace fall predictably into a false choice, in which either the radical priority of God's gifting (so that our freedom to rebel does not frustrate God's eternal plan) or the superabundance of God's love for each and every rational creature has to be logically denied. See for example M. John Farrelly, OSB, *Predestination, Grace and Free Will* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964), 150.

[41] See Gerald Janzen's comments on Job 40:1–2, in Janzen's *Job* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1985), 242.

of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes' (Job 42:3, 5–6).

Are All Rational Creatures Predestined?

Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales, who rightly underscore God's superabundant love for each and every rational creature, accept as a datum of faith that some are lost. More recently, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that some angels by their free choice 'radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign' (§ 392) and explains that '[i]t is the *irrevocable* character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels' sin unforgivable' (§ 393). With respect to everlasting punishment for humans, the *Catechism* observes, 'To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice' (§ 1033). Has any human ever chosen against God at the moment of death? The *Catechism* does not say, but it seems likely.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus describes his coming in glory to judge all human beings. As he portrays the scene, he will sit on a 'glorious throne' and 'all the nations' will be gathered before him (Matt. 25:31–2). He will judge persons in accord with whether they performed works of mercy. To those who have failed to love, he will say, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matt. 25:41). The result will be a twofold outcome for humans. As Jesus concludes, 'And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life' (Matt. 25:46).

Perhaps all will be righteous (in Christ) and thus none will go away 'into eternal punishment'? In a parable earlier in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks of 'the outer darkness' where 'men will weep and gnash their teeth', and Jesus warns that 'many are called, but few are chosen' (Matt. 22:13–14). Jesus repeats his warning about a place where 'men will weep and gnash their teeth' in Matthew 24:51. Jesus exhorts his followers to forgive others, because if they become unforgiving people, they will not be able to receive the Father's forgiveness (Matt. 6:14–15). Jesus urges us to avoid sin so as to avoid going 'to hell, to the unquenchable fire' (Mark 8:44). Hell, according to Jesus, is 'where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched' (Mark 8:48). Jesus promises, however, that 'the elect' will not be led

astray (Mark 13:22). Jesus teaches that depending on their faith and love, some will live everlastingly while others will perish: 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?' (Luke 9:23–5). Jesus differentiates his followers from 'the world', which hates Jesus and his Father (John 15).

Representative of those who hate Jesus, Judas is 'the son of perdition' (John 17:12), and Jesus says that '[i]t would have been better for that man if he had not been born' (Matt. 26:24). In a parable in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus suggests that not all will receive salvation. Explaining this parable to his disciples, he states, 'The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word which is sown in them' (Mark 4:15). As Paul rather starkly puts it, 'those who do not know God' and 'those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus . . . shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might' (2 Thess. 1:8–9). Paul goes on to say that all will 'be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness' (2 Thess. 2:11).[42]

Jesus teaches that Satan, along with the demons, strives against God.[43] He assures his followers that his power exceeds Satan's: 'The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread

[42] For an emphasis on election in 2 Thessalonians, see Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 15–20, indebted to I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983) as well as to Marshall's *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1975). See also Ben Witherington III's response to Gundry Volf and Marshall, in which he highlights human free choice against what he perceives to be determinism: Witherington, *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism and Wesleyanism* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), 62–73. Appealing to Romans 11:22, John Farrelly argues that 'St Paul does not defend the power of God by any theory of antecedently infallibly efficacious decrees and grace where it concerns the salvation of the individual' (Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 69).

[43] For further discussion see Carl Braaten's 'Powers in Conflict: Christ and the Devil', in *Sin, Death, and the Devil*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 94–107.

upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy"' (Luke 10:17–19). During his earthly ministry, Jesus finds himself in constant conflict with the demons. Even so, some accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan or 'Beelzebul' (Mark 3:22). Jesus replies that if he were casting out demons by Satan's power, then the devil's house would be divided and would collapse. As Jesus says, Satan does not fight Satan; rather, Jesus, who does the work of God, conquers Satan (Mark 3:23–7; cf. Mark 2:7). At the end of time, according to the vision of the seer of the Book of Revelation, 'the devil who had deceived them [the saints] was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever' (Rev. 20:10). The Book of Revelation warns that 'as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death' (Rev. 21:8; cf. Gal. 5:19–21 and elsewhere).[44]

If these teachings concealed a deeper truth that all rational creatures are to be saved, then these teachings would be misleading indeed—so misleading as to be not merely esoteric, but profoundly distortive of the truth about God and humans, the very truth that Christ comes to reveal. Recall Jesus' prayer for his disciples: 'I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one . . . Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth' (John 17:15,17). Included in this prayer is the implication that some rational creatures—pre-eminently 'the evil one', Satan—are not among the saved.

If some rational creatures are lost, however, Aquinas's teaching that 'God's love is the cause of goodness in things' and 'no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another' cannot suffice by itself. Its enduring truth, as I have argued throughout this book, consists in its affirmation of God's eternal act of creation, his all-encompassing providence, and his power to save.[45] As Jeremiah puts it, 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved' (Jer. 17:14). No matter how

[44] See Ben Witherington III, *Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 245, 256–7; Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 141–53. Gundry Volf argues that for Paul, God's election guarantees the salvation of true Christians, whereas unrepentant sin reveals the damnable unbelief of false Christians (and other unbelievers).

[45] As Gerald Schlabach comments with regard to Augustine's *Confessions*: 'Augustine's Platonic ascents always failed, except perhaps for one. The most

true it is that (as the Lord says through the prophet Isaiah) 'your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God' (Isa. 59:2), nonetheless it is even truer that 'the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save' (Isa. 59:1). To say with Aquinas that 'in all things God works intimately'[46] is to insist with Paul upon the immanence of God, without whose working we could neither exist nor attain salvation: 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure' (Phil. 2:12–13). Affirming God's transcendent action, Paul in the midst of his own suffering exalts 'the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 1:8–10). Quoting Numbers 16:5 and Isaiah 26:13, Paul concludes, 'God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity"' (2 Tim. 2:19).

Aquinas's account of the transcendent causality of God's love must be augmented by a second affirmation, however, because it cannot sufficiently express the reality of God's superabundant love for those who are not predestined, notwithstanding the love conveyed in the gift of existence. From eternity God knows 'all the ways in which His own perfection can be shared by others'.[47] If from eternity God creates some rational creatures who are by their free choice 'vessels of wrath made for destruction' (Rom. 9:22), does God superabundantly love these persons like a Father who, in every way, knows 'how to give good gifts' (Luke 11:13) to his children? Why should not God from eternity at least ensure that no rational creature permanently embraces sin and its corresponding punishment, so that of no rational creature could it be said that '[i]t would have been better for that man if he had not been born' (Matt. 26:24)? At stake is 'the moral

successful ascent, which he shared with his mother in Ostia, was a gift not of their own devising; its lesson was that no creature could claim to have made itself, but that everything from initial creation through final invitation to "enter into the joy of your Lord" was God's gift and God's doing.' See Schlabach, *For the Joy Set before Us: Augustine and Self-Denying Love* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 32.

[46] I, q. 105, a. 5; cf. I, q. 83, a. 1.

[47] I, q. 14, a. 6; cf. q. 14, aa. 9 and 11. See also Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 131–58.

nature of God, as revealed in his acts towards those he creates'.[48] Indeed, God 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4) and God has 'perfect patience' (1 Tim. 1:16) with sinners.

Throughout the centuries, as we have seen, theologians have attempted to find a solution to these issues. Origen and Bulgakov solve the problem by positing universal salvation, inspired by such biblical texts as Romans 11:32, 'For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all'. In their view, aeons of purification will eventually lead the created image of God to everlasting union with the Creator. This position requires the salvation of the devil and assumes that earthly life is only the beginning of our free choices. But if this were the case, why did Christ Jesus bother to suffer and die for us? Why not simply allow the intrinsic dynamic of human purification to follow its course? Karl Barth's solution, rooted in the election of all humans in Christ and in the denial that demons have personal existence, also leads towards universal salvation. Jesus certainly died for all, but the New Testament does not teach that all humans are elect or that the demons are not personal beings. Balthasar considers Christ's Cross to be analogous to an infinite distance between the Father and the Son in the Trinity, with the result that in distinct ways the three divine Persons (analogously, in an ever-greater fashion) experience alienation, death, faith, surprise, hope, hell, and so forth. This portrait moves in a different metaphysical direction from that of 'predestination', but it oversteps the bounds of analogous discourse and goes far beyond biblical revelation.[49]

Other thinkers, such as Damascene, Eriugena, Ockham, Molina, and Maritain, solve the problem by in various ways reducing the scope of God's providence and predestination. These solutions aim to explain the difference between the elect and the non-elect. Ultimately, they explain the difference not in terms of God's will, but in terms of ours. They correctly emphasize that our free rebellion is not caused or willed by God. But in so doing, they arrive at solutions that explain

[48] Hart, 'Providence and Causality', 48.

[49] See e.g. Ben Quash, *Theology and the Drama of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 164; Bernhard Blankenhorn, OP, 'Balthasar's Method of Divine Naming', *Nova et Vetera* 1 (2003): 245–67; Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 120–32; Paul D. Janz, 'Divine Causality and the Nature of Theological Questioning', *Modern Theology* 23 (2007): 317–48, especially his critique of Jüngel and Barth on 342–3.

eternal election as flowing from something we do (or in Maritain's case do by not doing) rather than as flowing from God's transcendent action and permission. These solutions do not give sufficient scope to God's eternal providence and election.

Calvin solves the problem by, as it were, seizing the nettle. Supposing that divine permission reduces to God's active will, so that active and permissive will are both instances of divine willing, he argues that God wills our free sins. This solution, though not without some biblical support, undermines the innocence of God. Augustine and Aquinas (aided by Boethius) rightly insist that everything good is divine gift, but they run into trouble with regard to whether God, from eternity, loves each and every rational creature with a prodigal, superabundant love. In their favour, as we have seen, Paul arrives at the same difficulty and argues that God 'has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction' (Rom. 9:22). The key is that 'the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:39) has no deficiency and is not crimped in any way. For his part, Leibniz solves the problem by arguing that God wills to obtain the most possible good out of the cosmos, in which case God needs sins. This would mean that the cosmos mechanistically orders God's providence rather than God's providence ordering the cosmos.

One might argue that the question of how to balance God's superabundant love with his providence and permission of permanent rebellion is an illegitimate one, so that one should simply say that God brings about salvation of those who are saved and that those who are not saved are responsible for their own loss. This is true as far as it goes, but it raises the question of whether God fails to accomplish his eternal plan, his creative and redemptive purposes. This question can indeed be suppressed, but only with difficulty and not for long, because it arises every time one contemplates God's love and saving power.

TWO DOXOLOGICAL AFFIRMATIONS

Rather than arguing that the question itself is illegitimate, I have suggested with Catherine of Siena and Francis de Sales that every attempt to resolve the question in favour of one affirmation or the other exceeds the bounds proper to theological reflection. The

question must be left unresolved, as I think Paul (like Job) ultimately does: 'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!' (Rom. 11:33). To leave the question unresolved does not mean taking no position. On the contrary, it means to affirm as strongly as possible two realities: God's active and superabundant love for each and every rational creature, and God's all-encompassing providence and permission of permanent rebellion. Catherine and Francis insist upon God's superabundant love by emphasizing how actively God seeks to save each and every person. Catherine and Francis also make clear that every good thing is radically God's gift.[50]

It bears repeating that as the order of God's gracious gifting, predestination does not negate created freedom but instead works in and through it. From eternity, God freely elects rational creatures and draws them to union with himself. This election or predestination describes God's plan for the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit, revealed in Israel and above all in Christ Jesus. By healing and elevating us, the missions of the Son and Spirit accomplish our salvation.[51] Predestination does not cause damnation, nor is predestination a pre-determination as if

[50] Although his focus is largely on God's premotion and God's antecedent permission of sin (against Molinism), Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, also proposes two affirmations, without resolving them into one: 'The scope of this book from beginning to end is the reconciliation of the two principles of divine predilection and possible salvation for all. On the one hand, "no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." On the other hand, God never commands what is impossible,' and so God ensures that salvation is truly possible for all (Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, trans. Dom Bede Rose, OSB (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1998), p. viii). Garrigou-Lagrange concludes, 'The intimate reconciliation of these two principles is beyond our power of perception. Before our admission to the beatific vision, this would be impossible for any created intellect, either angelic or human. But we must attach equal importance to both principles. They counteract each other' (ibid.). For concerns regarding Garrigou-Lagrange's Bañezian theology of reprobation, however, see M.-J. Nicolas, OP, 'Simples réflexions sur la doctrine thomiste de la grace', *Revue Thomiste* 58 (1958): 649 and J.-H. Nicolas, OP, 'La Volonté salvifique de Dieu contrariée par le péché', *Revue Thomiste* 92 (1992): 177–96. See also the Reformed New Testament scholar D. A. Carson's *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000). Carson argues that Scripture presents God's love in five distinct ways (including God's superabundant love of all and his special election of some), and he holds that each way must be embraced on its own terms: 'if you absolutize any one of these ways in which the Bible speaks of the love of God, you will generate a false system that squeezes out other important things the Bible says, thus finally distorting your vision of God' (p. 75).

[51] See Gilles Emery, OP, 'Missions invisibles et missions visibles: le Christ et son Esprit', *Revue Thomiste* 106 (2006): 51–99.

God were in time. Rational creatures freely sin against the goodness of God and receive the punishment of their rebellion. Infinitely more loving than any human lover, God is in no way deficient and God works actively to cure us of our sinful disorder. God predestines (and causes) only what is good. God draws good from evil, including the eschatological good that is beyond our ken. As Hart states, 'in his eternal presence to all of time, God never ceases to exercise his providential care or to make all free acts the occasions of the greater good he intends in creating'.[52]

From eternity God superabundantly loves each and every rational creature, and this provident God, from whose infinite love all created goodness arises, permits the permanent free rebellion of some rational creatures. With Pope Benedict XVI, we must affirm that 'God loves each one of us with an infinite love and therefore desires salvation for us all'.[53] If God's causal love possesses no deficiency, however, can we really avoid ending up in controversy over sufficient grace and antecedent reprobation? We must remind ourselves once again of two irreducible truths about the eternal Trinity: he is Love and his eternal gifting is the source of every created good. Rather than weakening either of these claims or supposing that they are ultimately irreconciliable, we must acknowledge them both, recognizing that God's judgements are 'unsearchable' (Rom. 11:33) and 'our knowledge is imperfect' until the eschaton (1 Cor. 13:9; cf. 1 Cor. 8:2–3).[54]

[52] Hart, 'Providence and Causality', 45. Taking as his own the viewpoint of the Elder Zosima in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (Zosima's teachings are modelled on those of St Isaac the Syrian), Hart remarks, 'To see the world as it should be seen, and so to see the true glory of God reflected in it, requires the cultivation of charity, of an eye rendered limpid by love.' See Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 44; cf. Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 240, discussing Jean-Luc Marion's *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For a similar view see Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, trans. Boris Jakim (Russian 1914; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 234, 254. See also Nicholas J. Healy III, 'Inclusion in Christ: Background to a Christian Doctrine of Providence', *Communio* 29 (2002): 469–89.

[53] Pope Benedict XVI, *The Fathers of the Church: From St Clement of Rome to St Augustine of Hippo*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, SJ (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 86, citing John Chrysostom's *On Providence*.

[54] It is worth noting that the affirmation of God's superabundant love for each and every rational creature does not require universalism; it requires only that in the eschaton we will see that no deficiency or lack in God's love for each and every rational creature is the explanation for God's election only of some. Furthermore,

C. S. Lewis provides a model here: he affirms that God takes 'endless trouble' for each and every one of us in God's 'labour to make us lovable', and he equally affirms that 'God's love, far from being caused by goodness in the object, causes all the goodness which the object has, loving it first into existence and then into real, though derivative, lovability' and that God permits some to fail.[55] Lewis does not attempt to reconcile these two affirmations in his contemplation of 'the abyss of a Divine act of pure giving—the election of man, from nonentity, to be the beloved of God'.[56]

The time is ripe for retrieving Catherine's and Francis's perspective, rooted in Aquinas's theocentric theology. Their attention is focused on the gifting God who 'created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1) and who created the marvellous profusion of creatures culminating in the creation of humans 'in our image, after our likeness' (Gen. 1:26). This God rejoices in 'everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good' (Gen. 1:31). This God comes to the aid of Adam's loneliness, and clothes Adam and Eve's nakedness. The God of love seeks to restrain Cain and hears Abel's innocent blood 'crying to me from the ground' (Gen. 4:10). He refuses to allow wickedness and pride to run unchecked. He calls Noah to the ark and identifies the beauty of the rainbow as a sign of 'the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth' (Gen. 9:16). He calls Abram and prepares him to be 'a blessing' to all nations (Gen. 12:2). He makes covenant with Abraham and rewards his faith. He gives Sarah a child; he redeems Isaac; he reveals to Jacob the 'ladder' between heaven and earth; he watches over Joseph in Egypt; he appears to Moses and reveals his own name, 'I am' (Exod. 3:14); he leads the people of Israel out from Egyptian slavery, and calls them to be holy. At Sinai he reveals the Law to Moses, whom he knows 'face to face' (Deut. 34:10). He makes himself present in the ark and the cloud, the tabernacle and the Temple. Without countenancing injustice or idolatry, he withstands the murmuring of Israel, their rejection of his kingship. To the house of David he promises an everlasting kingdom. He sends the prophets to recall

although in this life we cannot logically resolve the two affirmations into one, there is only an apparent contradiction since we cannot apprehend the fullness of God's love prior to the eschaton.

[55] C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 42, 48, 50.

[56] Ibid. 51.

the people to holiness and to prepare the people for the Day of the Lord, on which 'the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his elders he will manifest his glory' (Isa. 24:23). He leads the people back from Babylonian exile, and establishes them anew in Torah observance and Temple worship, despite the efforts by pagan rulers to compel them to abandon their distinctiveness.

The God of love sends his angel to instruct Joseph that the Virgin Mary 'will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins' (Matt. 1:21). He rides into Jerusalem and weeps over it. He dies for our sins and rises again as the firstfruits of the new creation. He chooses us in Christ 'before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him' (Eph. 1:4). God's glorious appearing will not negate what God has already revealed about his transcendent providence, permission of permanent rebellion, and saving love in Christ and the Spirit. But the vision of God will show forth his wisdom, goodness, and gifting in a manner far exceeding what we can now imagine: 'Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is' (1 John 3:2; cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).[57] 'Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is seemly. The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds' (Ps. 146:1–3).

[57] As Aquinas observes in commenting on Romans 9:20, we 'should not examine the reason for God's judgments with the intention of comprehending them', certainly not because they are irrational, but because 'they exceed human reason: "Seek not the things that are too high for thee" (Sir 3:22); "He that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory" (Pr 25:27)' (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher, OP, ed. Jeremy Holmes, unpublished translation available at *www.aquinas.avemaria.edu*, § 789). Or as Dante puts it: 'Predestination! Oh, how deeply hid your roots are from the vision of all those who cannot see the Primal Cause entire!' (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, vol. III: *Paradise*, trans. Mark Musa (New York: Penguin, 1986), Canto XX, 130–2, p. 240). None of the beatified souls in Paradise can answer the Pilgrim's question regarding predestination, not 'even heaven's most illumined soul, that Seraph who sees God with keenest eye' (Dante, *Paradise*, Canto XXI, 91–3, p. 250). See also Peter S. Hawkins, 'Dante, St Paul, and the Letter to the Romans', in *Medieval Readings of Romans*, ed. William S. Campbell, Peter S. Hawkins, and Brenda Deen Schildgen (New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), 115–31, especially 128–31.

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