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AN HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

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AN HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
the Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts in Theology

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"Not only does God protect and govern all things by his providence, but He also, by an internal power, impels to motion and action whatever moves and acts, and this in such a manner that, although He excludes not, He yet precedes the agency of secondary causes."

Catechism of the Council of Trent, Article One

"The truth that God is at work in all the actions of his creatures is inseparable from faith in God the Creator. God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes: "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." Far from diminishing the creature's dignity, this truth enhances it. Drawn from nothingness by God's power, wisdom, and goodness, it can do nothing if it is cut off from its origin, for "without a Creator, the creature vanishes." Still less can a creature attain its ultimate end without the help of God's grace."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 308[1]

Introduction

For many Catholics predestination is a bad word. To them it signifies an oppressive doctrine derived from Reformation theology and lurking in the shadows of the Christian theological tradition, which denies human freedom and makes God into a sovereign sadist. Polls would likely reveal that along with many moral teachings, some Catholics would 'strongly disagree' with the doctrine of predestination. It is rarely if ever preached in homilies or taught in Catholic schools, and only explicitly appears once in the current edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.[2] Yet as we will see, the mystery of predestination is a Catholic dogma, distinct from the Reformed doctrine; a truth revealed by God and as such is proposed by the Church to the faithful with the obligation of believing it. Why then is there this conspicuous lacuna?

Part of the issue could be the inscrutable nature of mysteries, predestination being one of the most sublime, in that it treats of the very eternal decrees of God in his providential ordering

[1] Steven A. Long, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 4, No.3 (2006): 577.

[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 600 (John Salza, *The Mystery of Predestination: According to Scripture, the Church, and St. Thomas Aquinas* (Charlotte: Tan Books, 2010), ix, no. 1): "To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of "predestination," he includes in it each person's free response to his grace."

of the universe, and specifically, of rational creatures. Yet this is certainly not the case. For, one does not have to wait too long in any theological conversation before speaking of the central Christian mystery of the Trinity, and yet this mystery is not met with the same consternation as predestination when introduced.[3] In addition, any cursory survey of the development of Christian doctrine will show that it has ever been the object of faith, prayerful study, and philosophical speculation, from the very beginnings of the Church to the modern era. Not because of aimless human curiosity, but because it is a datum of revelation. Indeed, predestination is a truth which is revealed by God the Father that Christians are:

> *destined*…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. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.[4]

And this, the Father wants to communicate:

> For he has 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 fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.[5]

The other reason may be the unintended effects of teaching/preaching a doctrine that can be easily misrepresented. Though St. Augustine wrote about the necessity of preaching on the subject, he did warn against a kind of offence one could cause among the audience, and advised prudence when speaking about predestination. The effect should not be slothfulness, but glory given to God.[6]

It is our conviction that the reason the doctrine of predestination is largely avoided in Catholic circles/institutions is two-fold. First, it is not understood in its proper historical context

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[3] Salza, *The Mystery of Predestination*, ix, no. 1.
[4] Ephesians 1:5-8.
[5] Ephesians 1:9-10.
[6] St. Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. John A. Mourant (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 327.

as a Catholic doctrine, derived from the sources of revelation and explicated by virtually all of the great theologians of the Church. Instead, it is often seen in some Catholic circles as an anomaly of Reformed theology. Secondly, that there are two underlying theological errors which distort the doctrine itself: 1. That God is just one agent (albeit the most powerful one) among many in the universe. 2. That human liberty requires a radical autonomy, even from the very causal ground on which it stands. If one's theological landscape does not include a proper understanding of divine providence and the creature's dependence on God for every free act, whether natural or supernatural, then God's predestination becomes an obstacle to freedom and an arbiter of mercy for some, and strict justice for most.

Thus, the task of this paper will be to 1. Provide an historical survey of the development of the Catholic doctrine of predestination to uncover its presence in the Tradition, and 2. Present the theological content of the doctrine with an emphasis on the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, which we believe to be a faithful *theocentric* account according to Sacred Scripture and Tradition, arguing against the noted theological errors about the nature of God and free will.[7] For St. Thomas never tires of asserting God's primacy and yet upholds man's dignity. For him, all glory given to creatures is glory that redounds to God.

To accomplish the stated task, this paper will be divided into three chapters. In the first, we present an historical overview of the development of the doctrine to the 13th century to properly contextualize it within the Catholic Tradition. All of the principle elements of a doctrine of predestination are shown to be biblical, both in the Old and New Testaments, not only implicitly, but explicitly so. Then we consider the contribution that the Greek and Latin Fathers made concerning God's foreknowledge and man's free will. They stressed the capacity of man to

[7] Understanding that there are many commentarial traditions stemming from Thomas' work, and different schools of Thomism, this paper follows the Neo-Scholastic school associated with Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964).

respond to or reject God's grace, and thus it is shown that those who are lost are lost on account of their demerits. This is followed by Augustine's pivotal treatment of our doctrine in light of the Pelagian controversies, which sets the stage for all subsequent theological investigation on predestination by stressing the total gratuitousness of God's grace in the life of the predestined. Next we consider the medieval theologians prior to St. Thomas who generally adopted St. Augustine's principles, yet attempting to reconcile the two great aspects of the mystery: that God wills all men to be saved, yet the mystery of predestination signifies that only certain ones are actually saved. Finally, the historical overview closes with a summary of the magisterial statements of the Church affirming the reality of predestination as early as the 5th century. In an attempt to make clearer the true Catholic doctrine as it was developed and formalized, heretical figures and their propositions and the relevant Church Councils are chronologically included throughout.

Chapter two is an extended exposition of the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. This chapter covers the principle claims of Thomas as found in his commentaries on Sacred Scripture and primarily in the *Summa Theologiae* on predestination, the nature of free will, and his treatment of grace. In terms of predestination proper, we follow Thomas as he defines it, enumerates its causes, and treats reprobation in relationship to it. In the section on free will, emphasis is placed on the natural order and causality, which properly contextualizes the following section on grace. The section on grace includes a consideration of the necessity of grace, the cause of grace, and the effects of grace, which reveals the primacy and gratuitousness of God's activity in the order of predestination. Lastly, in order to further clarify the providential relationship between God and man, which further clarifies the doctrine of predestination, we will conclude with a brief examination of Thomas' teaching on prayer.

Finally, the third chapter is the result of the historical survey and the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. To begin to dispel the above note errors we will argue for the Thomistic account in light of its emphasis on the primacy of God's providence.

Chapter 1: Historical Overview to the 13th Century

A. Predestination in Sacred Scripture

The aim of this first chapter will be to show that predestination is a biblical doctrine. In addition, an attempt will be made to begin to describe the nature of this teaching according to Sacred Scripture. To accomplish this it will be necessary to make a division between the Old and New Testaments, providing by passages from both the context for the classical Pauline texts. After enumerating the scriptural elements of predestination in the OT and NT, there will be a synopsis of the traditional interpretation of explicit passages concerning predestination in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Old Testament

Although the explicit evidence for a doctrine of predestination is primarily found in the New Testament writings, it would be insufficient to present the relevant pericopes without reference to the theological context of the Old Testament; the reason being the presupposition here applied, that the Bible is a providential whole in itself, which must be interpreted as such.[8] In fact, St. Paul saw God's dealings with the Israelites as a type of how in later times he would bring Christians into a relationship of divine filiation with its consummation in eternal life.[9] Thus all of the themes present in our topic are represented (at least in germ) in the OT. For, the OT

[8] For Catholic teaching on Sacred Scripture and its interpretation, and specifically on the inspiration and unity of Scripture, see the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*; and the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*; and for a good exposition of the principles set forth in the latter see Peter S. Williamson's *Catholic Principles for Interpreting Scripture*.
[9] See 1 Cor. 10: 1-11; M. John Farrelly O.S.B., *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1964), 39.

contains a rich notion of God's foreknowledge, providential ordering, and governance of creation under which the NT notion of predestination falls.[10]

In terms of divine foreknowledge one might look to Isaiah 46:9-10, "I am God, there is no other; I am God, there is none like me. At the beginning I foretell the outcome; in advance, things not yet done. I say that my plan shall stand, I accomplish my every purpose," or Psalm 139:16, which is sung from the perspective of man: "Your eyes have seen my actions; in your book they are all written; my days were limited before one of them existed." Again, in Daniel 13:42 Susanna cries out loud: "O eternal God, you know what is hidden and are aware of all things before they come to be."[11]

The Book of Wisdom also gives us statements of God's providential knowledge and, to a further point, governance when the divine Wisdom is said to reach "from end to end mightily and governs all things well," (Wis. 8:1) and that "she knows the things of old, and infers those yet to come…signs and wonders she knows in advance and the outcome of times and ages (Wis. 8:8). The most striking statements of God as origin and governor of creatures come in the Lord's Speech of the 38th chapter of Job. In response to Job's questioning over his suffering as a just man the Lord asks those fearfully silencing questions: "Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its size; do you know? Who stretched out the measuring line for it? Into what were its pedestals sunk, and who laid the cornerstone, while the morning stars sang in chorus and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens; can you put into effect their plan on the earth?" (Job 38:4-7, 33)

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[10] The terms listed here are to be taken in a general sense without signifying any technically precise definitions. More precise descriptions of predestination, providence, divine foreknowledge, free will, grace, merit, predilection, and election will be offered in chapter 2 through the teaching of St. Thomas.

[11] These citations were found in John CowBurn, *Free Will, Predestination and Determinism* (Marquette University Press: Milwaukee, 2008), 124.

In addition to the statements in the OT that reveal God's general providential care over the entire created order, and his special providence with regard to rational creatures, there is also the central theme of the covenantal relationship between the Lord and the Israelites as the chosen people, endowed with a special status and capacity for union with God. Indeed, they are the elect of God as a people freed from slavery in Egypt through direct divine intervention, and chosen as the people through which God will disclose himself to the nations. Within the context of this covenantal relationship, God reveals that he has chosen, from his eternity, certain persons to be in intimate relationship with him, and thus they have life.[12]

Further evidence of God's favor comes from references to what is called the 'book of life.' (Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:29; Dn 12:1) In Exodus, Moses pleads with God to save the sinful Israelites by instead removing him from "the book that you have written" (Paul makes a similar plea in Romans 9:3). The Lord responds: "Him only who has sinned against me will I strike out of my book." Thus we have a first impression of an eternal knowledge and plan in the mind of God, to choose and bring certain individuals into divine friendship: the living; and conversely the possibility of being removed from it by their own actions: those who would be blotted out.[13] This latter possibility is expressed again by the psalmist who prays "May they be erased from the book of the living, and not be recorded with the just!" This last consideration emphasizes the free

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[12] God forms his people Israel: Deut 28:10; Ex 19:6; Isa 2:2-4; Jer 31:31-34; Heb 10:16; Ezek 36; Isa 49:5-6; 53:11; why God chose the Israelites viz., he first loved them: Deut 4:37; 7:8; 10:15; why God continued to favor them viz., his love for them: Isa 43:1-7; Hos 2; Ex 4:22; Ex 19:16-25. All citations found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 62-64, 218-219.

[13] The *Interpreter's Bible* argues on this passage that, "The book in the O.T. is the list of those who live on earth (Isa. 4:3; Mal. 3:16; Ps. 69:28). Sinners die young; the righteous live out the full span of life." George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible: The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible*, vol. 1 (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), 1070. And again on Ps. 69:28, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, i.e., out of the divine register in which the names of the living are kept and from which those appointed for death are erased." Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. IV, 366. Thus this exposition reveals the temporal nature of this 'book of life', as understood by the Israelites, and it as a *type* of the reality of the 'book of life' as taught by Jesus Christ and the New Testament writers, the transition point in scriptural revelation being the passage in Daniel.

actions of man and the mystery of loss, themes which constitute another important part of the doctrine on predestination.

Finally, there is the passage from Daniel: "At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found *written in the book*. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace. But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament." (Dn 12:1-3 emphasis added)

The reality of the book of life *in the OT* reaches its full revelatory stature in light of this apocalyptic pericope, taken together with the texts revealing God's providential ordering. As we saw above, God's foreknowledge of all the created events of man is total, from beginning to end. In addition, he moves all things temporally through his governing power. God has elected certain men both corporately and individually to be intimate friends, those who are written in the book of life; and these will "have life everlasting" and will "shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament." As the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* states: "This passage [Daniel 12:1-3] is remarkable as the earliest clear enunciation of belief in the resurrection of the dead."[14]

New Testament

It is in the New Testament that we find the fullest scriptural revelation of the reality of providence and predestination as disclosed to us in Jesus Christ, and also the most explicit statements on predestination found in St. Paul's epistles. Though Jesus gives us the *evangelium* of salvation for all members of the human race, and though "God our savior…wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:3-4), it is the case that many enter

[14] Louis F. Hartman, C.SS.R, "Daniel," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1990), 419.

through the wide gate and easy way that leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13). Jesus also says, "Then he will say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"[15] Thus we have presented to us two camps: the elect, and the reprobate. It is the former group that predestination properly speaks of, and it is this group that Jesus speaks of several times; thus he teaches predestination when he says to his followers that the Son of Man will "place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" (Mt 25:34) and when he tells the disciples to "Rejoice rather in this, that your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:20; cf. Jn 10:29).[16] In regard to these texts we have a clear indication that the elect have been *prepared* for, i.e., they were known eternally in the divine mind as inheritors of eternal life in the kingdom, and 'written in' or known as inhabitants of heaven. Referring to the elect with the same parabolic imagery as in Mt 25: 34, Jesus states: "my sheep hear my voice; I know them, they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Fathers hand. The Father and I are one" (Jn. 10:27-30). The reality of predestination is also presented in Acts 13:48 in a description of the Gentile reaction to Paul's preaching: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

In the context of salvation through Jesus Christ, St. Paul gives us explicit statements about the reality of predestination. The scriptural *locus classicus* for a doctrine of predestination in many theological systems is Rom. 8:28-30, "those whom he foreknew he also predestined to

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[15] Matthew 25:41 (Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc, 1974), 245).

[16] These texts were found in E. Loveley, "Predestination (In The Bible)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 713.

be conformed to the image of his Son…," and Rom. 9:6-24, "when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 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 was told, "The elder will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."[17] In addition, in Ephesians Paul speaks of the blessings of the Father bestowed on the Christian community in Christ "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world" and that the Father "destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will."[18] These passages emphasize the divine intention and primacy of God's will in the causal order of predestination.

Other passages from the NT letters emphasize the divine desire for all to be saved, such as 1 Timothy 2:4: "God our Savior…desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," and 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." In other passages emphasis is placed on the role of free will in co-operation with grace in the effects of predestination such as the call, justification, merit, and glorification of man: 1 Corinthians 15:10 says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me," and 2 Corinthians 6:1, "Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain." Also, St. Paul urges the Philippians to "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."[19]

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[17] Romans 9:11-13.
[18] Ephesians 1:4-5.
[19] Philippians 2:12.

Traditional Interpretation of Romans

Because of the status of Romans as the explicit scriptural presentation of our doctrine, it will be necessary to give the traditional interpretation of the passages in question. In Romans 8:28-30 tradition understands St. Paul to be presenting the climax of his argument to the Christians in Rome that because their salvation is from God, none can challenge it.[20] Indeed, Paul states that "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose," and verses 29 and 30 are proofs of this. For those whom God foreknows and predestines are called, justified, and glorified by him. Thus St. Paul gives us a theological teaching on the course of Christian life from the eternal plan (foreknowledge and predestination to be conformed to the image of his Son), to the temporal realization of that plan (call and justification), and its term (glorification). This process is assured to the elect because "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."[21]

It must be noted that along with showing how Paul gave the Christians of Rome a reason for hope and assurance, some argue that the Greek Fathers interpreted this passage to mean that God predestines man according to man's 'purpose' and thus his foreseen merits.[22] Yet the Greek

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[20] D.E.H Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 93.

[21] Romans 8:38-39. To be sure, this is not a description of the heretical position of John Calvin that (according to the Council of Trent) one "is assuredly in the number of the predestined, as if it were true that he who is justified either cannot sin any more, or if he shall have sinned, that he ought to promise himself an assured reformation." The Council rather states that "except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God has chosen for Himself." Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma,* trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2010), 805.

[22] Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 56: "The Greek Fathers interpreted this purpose as man's and not God's purpose. Thus they taught that God called man according to his good intentions which God foreknew antecedent to man's predestination"; F. Prat, and John L. Stoddard, *The Theology of Saint Paul* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1927), 443: "All of them make predestination depend upon prescience, in the sense that God predestines to grace and to faith all those, and only those, whose response to the divine call or to the grace of vocation he foresees. All of them understand by the predestination, of which Paul speaks in this place, predestination

exegesis must be contextualized within the controversy of the time to properly understand this position, and how it does not interfere with the general purpose and theological import of the passage. As Fernand Prat states, "the exaggerated care of some Greek Fathers to safeguard free will and their excessive fear of Gnostic fatalism formerly made them prefer the second interpretation (that the 'purpose' referred to in the passage is of man and not God).[23] In addition, others have argued that because the Greek Fathers had to confront fatalism, they were concerned with the order of execution alone. That is, in the exegesis of the relevant pericopes they believed Paul to be speaking of predestination and man *after* the use of his liberty, in the order of execution/effects of the divine plan; this in contrast to St. Augustine who takes the question to the order of intention, or *before* man's use of liberty. Thus the Greek Fathers were not denying the primary need for grace but asserting the free will of man, both of which play a causal role. It seems then that the Fathers were closer to agreement than most concede, and as Prat says more precisely, "They differ as exegetes, not as theologians."[24] St. Cyril of Alexandria comments on Romans 8:28 that one can consider both God and man as cause in some sense:

> To be called according to God's purpose is to be called according to the will. But is this the will of the one who calls or the will of those who are called? Naturally, every impulse which leads to righteousness comes from God the Father. Christ himself once said: No one can come to me unless the Father draws him. Nevertheless it is not wrong to say that some are called according to God's purpose and according to their own intentions as well.[25]

St. John Chrysostom similarly states:

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to the efficacious grace of the vocation; that is to say, to the call not only offered by God, but accepted by man; and all of them apparently understand by the glorification mentioned later, that glorification which takes place in this life through the sanctifying grace which renders us "conformable to the image of the Son of God.""

[23] Prat and Stoddard, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 242. For texts of the Eastern Fathers on Rom. 8:28-30 see Prat and Stoddard, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 443-8.

[24] Prat and Stoddard, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 249.

[25] Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VI Romans* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 234.

> Paul talks about being called according to his purpose in order to show that the calling itself is not enough…The calling was not forced on anyone, nor was it compulsory. Everyone was called, but not everyone obeyed the call.[26]

Then there are the Latin Fathers and current exegetes who interpret the 'purpose' stated by Paul as God's plan of redemption. This reading is supported by the other uses of the same word in the Pauline corpus, for example 2 Tim. 1:9: "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." As Prat argues, purpose here "designates in St. Paul *an eternal act of the consequent and absolute divine will referring to a particular benefit; for example, to an efficacious call*."[27]

Who then are called according to God's purpose? Who are predestined? The answer to this question for many follows from the interpretation of what St. Paul means by foreknowledge. Again, the Greek Fathers read this foreknowledge as speculative, and that predestination follows God's understanding of man's future free response. The Latin Fathers before Augustine emphasized the foreknowledge of merit, yet understood that the causal role of the human will was not primary, this because of their developed understanding of predestination to glory and the distinction made between the latter and predestination to faith and grace.[28] St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, emphatically states that man's merit is not the cause of predestination. According to Thomas' commentary, St. Paul presents foreknowledge and predestination as the two aspects of the advancement of the elect. These for Thomas are both eternal yet differ in notion. Foreknowledge signifies only the knowledge of future things, while predestination suggests causality in regard to the future things. In regard to the order between the two, it is here that Thomas argues that Paul is saying that predestination is caused not by foreknowledge of good

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[26] Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VI Romans*, 234.
[27] Prat and Stoddard, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 435.
[28] Prat and Stoddard, *The Theology of St. Paul*, 449. See the following section on the Latin Fathers in this paper.

merit, but that the good merit (signified by conformity *to the image of his Son*) is the "terminus or effect" of predestination. He states:

> This interpretation would be reasonable [that merit is the cause of predestination], if predestination were restricted to eternal life which is bestowed for merits. But under predestination falls every salutary benefit prepared for man from all eternity by God; hence all the benefits he confers on us in time he prepared for us from all eternity. Hence, to claim that some merit on our part is presupposed, the foreknowledge of which is the reason for predestination, is nothing less than to claim that grace is given because of our merits, and that the source of our good works is from us and their consummation from God.[29]

Here Thomas is careful to avoid the error of Semi-Pelagianism and confirms the teaching of St. Augustine and the Second Council of Orange (529) that faith is an effect of predestination, and thus from God.

A modern exegetical argument similarly points to the primacy of God's grace in this passage. It has been justly maintained that the verb 'foreknew' used by Paul (which comes from the Greek *proginosko*) refers to predilection. Thus we must eliminate the interpretation that Paul is saying that God's foreknowledge of faith or merit is the cause of predestination, for foreknowledge of faith does not obviate the biblical theme of divine election. The modern exegete John Murray puts it this way, "the only biblical answer is that the faith which God foresees is the faith he himself creates (cf. Jn 3:3-8; 6:44, 45, 65; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29; II Pet 1:2)."[30] In addition, Joseph Fitzmyer indicates that usage of the word *proginosko* reflects the OT use of *yada* (Gen 18:19), which means to "know with affection" even prior to man's love for God and prior to God's purely speculative knowledge of the saint. This leads one to posit that

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[29] Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Fabian Larcher (unpublished: Edited by Jeremy Holmes with the support of the Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal). PDF available online, <http://nvjournal.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=62>, 345, Lecture 6, n. 703.
[30] John Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 316.

Paul is speaking here more about the "foreloved" than he is speaking simply about his knowledge of all future things coming to pass.[31]

Thus we have the traditional notion of predestination based on Romans 8: God's foreknowledge/predilection and ordering of the elect before time to glorification by means of call and justification. This includes the secondary cause of man's free will.

Romans 9 contains the other great passage on predestination. In the context of an explanation as to why the chosen Israelites rejected the only gospel of salvation, St. Paul vindicates God's justice and faithfulness in his dealings with the Jews by suggesting that it is not simply by birthright that one is heir to the promise: "For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" because "it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants." Paul then gives the motive of God's election of individuals both within the nation of Israel and to the Gentiles, "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." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.""[32]

Thus we see again the scriptural principle of predilection. As John Salza argues, St. Paul could have just as easily replaced the terms 'loved' and 'hated' in this passage with 'predestined' and 'reprobated' such that the reason why Jacob is predestined has to do with God's creative love, that he is loved more by God.[33] As St. Thomas says, "For since God's love is the cause of

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[31] Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 317; Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: Romans* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 525.
[32] Romans 9:6-13.
[33] Salza, *The Mystery of Predestination*, 21. His justification for this argument is the passage from Hebrews 12: 16-17: "that no one be immoral or irreligious like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears."

goodness in things…no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another."[34]

In addition, St. Paul is clear that the merits or works of man are not the motive for predestination, but God's call and mercy. He goes on to say,

> Is their injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy. For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills.[35]

Once again the scriptural evidence points to God's gratuitous love as the primary cause of election (though never denying the free will of man) and the mystery of his favor and distribution of grace as beyond the comprehension of man: *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei! Quam inconprehensibilia sunt iudicia eius et investigabiles viae eius!*[36]

Predestination in Sacred Scripture Conclusion

To sum up the scriptural evidence describing the nature of predestination it will first be helpful to follow Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. In his book *Predestination*, he cites three "indisputable things" that scripture says concerning the *gratuitousness* of predestination to eternal life. First, God has chosen certain persons that constitute the predestined.[37] Second, this election is efficacious so that the elect will infallibly obtain heaven.[38] Third, God's election is before the consideration of foreseen merits.[39] All of this leads to the classical Augustinian definition that

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[34] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Prima Pars, Q. 1-64*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Provence (Scotts Valley: NovaAntiqua, 2008), I, q. 20, a. 3.
[35] Romans 9: 14-18.
[36] St. Augustine's reading of the passages from Romans will be addressed below.
[37] Matt. 20:16; 24:31: Luke 12:32; Romans 8:33; Eph. 1:4.
[38] John 10:27 f.; cf. Matt. 24:24; John 6:39; Romans 8:30.
[39] Luke 12:32; John 15:16; Romans 11:5; Eph. 1:4; Romans 8: 29. Footnotes 24-27 biblical citations were found in Rev. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Predestination*, trans. Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B., D.D. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), 6-7.

"Predestination is the foreknowledge and preparedness on God's part to bestow the favors by which all those are saved who are to be saved."[40] In addition, it is important to keep the other great scriptural message of God's eternal plan of predestination in tension with the above consideration of the election of some, that is, that God's redemptive plan includes the desire for all men to be saved, and yet even though some are lost, there is no limitation or deficiency in his eternal love for all rational creatures. These two scriptural affirmations must be held together without one overcoming the other to maintain a true doctrine of predestination.[41]

B. Church Fathers

Now we consider the contribution that the Fathers of the Eastern and Western Church have made to our doctrine. This section will be comprised of a chronological list first of the Greek Fathers and then the Latin Fathers. The content of their teaching will mostly be presented in lengthy quotes to give the reader a direct impression of their propositions. In their faithful transmission of the truth of predestination, the Fathers stressed the primacy of God's grace in the performance of good acts, the capacity of man to freely respond to or reject God's grace, and that the reason for the loss of some is the foreknowledge of demerits.

1. Greek Fathers

St. Justin Martyr (100-165)

In St. Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* we find two statements which give his teaching on the cause of the reprobation of some men. In the *Dialogue*, Justin is attempting to defend Christianity against Judaism, and specifically trying to convince Trypho (a Jewish refugee in Ephesus, possibly fictitious) of the divinity of Christ and the manifold implications of

[40] St. Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 14 (Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 7).
[41] Matthew Levering, *Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 34-35.

Jesus being the Messiah. One such implication is the acceptance of the Gentiles as co-heirs of the covenantal promises of the God of Israel, and the loss of the children of the kingdom after the Jewish rejection of the Messiah. He explains Matt. 8:11-12 "They will come from the east and from the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom will be put into the darkness outside" saying, "Besides, I have already shown that they who were foreknown as future sinners, whether men or angels, do become so, not through God's fault, but each through his own fault."[42] Thus Justin shows that the cause of the loss of the Jews is not caused by God, but by individual sin.

Following this Justin anticipates Trypho's rebuttal that there was a kind of fatalist necessity that Christ be crucified, and that the Jews could not be at fault by saying:

> Although God wanted men and angels to follow His will, He nevertheless was pleased to create them with free will to practice virtue, with the faculty of reasoning in order to know Him who created them…and with a law that they should be judged by Him, if they do anything contrary to sound reason…And, if the word of God predicts that some men and angels will assuredly be punished, it is because God foreknew that they would be incorrigibly sinful, not, however, because God created them so.[43]

It seems then that Justin teaches that the reason that some are given to sin is by their own fault, and that the reason for their punishment (or reprobation) is found in their free will. It is reprobation after/with the consideration of personal demerits. Thus in relation to divine foreknowledge, St. Justin teaches that God can foresee the free acts of man without infrustrable decrees.[44]

St. Irenaeus (115-142-200)

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[42] St. Justin Martyr, *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr, The Fathers of the Church* (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), 364 (William G. Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God* (Front Royal: Christendom Press, 1997), 259). Unless noted all subsequent quotations from the Greek/Latin Fathers were found in William Most's work, but other translations were used. Fr. Most's synopses were also consulted for my summaries.
[43] St. Justin Martyr, *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, 364 (Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 259).
[44] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 526.

> If, therefore, in the present time also, God, knowing the number of those who will not believe, since He foreknows all things, has given them over to unbelief, and turned away His face from men of this stamp, leaving them in the darkness which they have themselves chosen for themselves, what is there wonderful if He did also at that time give over to their unbelief, Pharaoh, who never would have believed, along with those who were with him?[45]

Here we have St. Irenaeus' argument against the Marcionites who claimed that God causes sin. This they teach as revealed in Exodus 9:35 when God hardens Pharaoh's heart. He sees no distinction between the cause of Pharaoh's unbelief and that of contemporary heretics viz., the disposition and will of the rational creature. Indeed, God foreknows all things, including those who will not believe, and thus He gives them over to their *chosen* unbelief. In the previous paragraph, Irenaeus uses an analogy that those who have weak eyes consequently are unable to see the light given by the sun. So too those who chose to disbelieve are deprived of the light of God otherwise illuminating their minds through faith. Those who are given over to disbelief are given over precisely because they by their own choice placed an impediment between themselves and God.

Here again we have a teaching concerning reprobation that has its cause in the disposition of man and not God. In addition, it is important to note that there is no mention here of predestination properly considered. St. Irenaeus is not in any way saying that man merits predestination. Implicit here again is that God can foresee the future demerits of man without an infrustrable decree.

Clement of Alexandria (d.215)

[45] St. Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 4.29.2. Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103429.htm>.

In chapter 18 of the *Stromata* (the appellation given to Clement, the *Stromatist*, indicates it was his great work[46]), Clement argues that "there is no unrighteousness with God" in the face of three difficult Pauline passages that seem to suggest that God causes unbelief, viz. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the learning of the learned I will set aside," and "has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" and "But to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."[47]

These three taken together appear to suggest that God calls some who will believe and blinds others in the foolishness of the world. As to the first, Clement argues by way of analogy that the wisdom of the world is like a lamp in the sunlight…completely overtaken by the latter and making it appear to be dark. The philosophies of the Greeks seem to be dark in relationship to the wisdom of God. Thus those who follow them after encountering the wisdom of God follow them foolishly.

The second passage for Clement is simply rendered in an unfitting way. One could either render it as "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world" or "*God has not* made foolish the wisdom of the world." Thus "the cause of their hardness of heart may not appear to have proceeded from God, "making foolish the wisdom of the world."[48]

The third passage, Clement argues, speaks of those who are called understood as those who obeyed the call, yet does not rule out that all are called. As he describes it:

> *All* having been therefore called, those who are willing to obey have been named "called." For there is no unrighteousness with God. Those of either race who have believed, are "a peculiar people." And in the Acts of the Apostles you will find this, word for word, "Those then who received his word were baptized;" but those who would not obey kept themselves aloof. To these the

[46] Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata," in *Translations of the Writings of the* Fathers, vol. 4, trans. Rev. William Wilson, M.A. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1880), 12.
[47] 1 Cor. 19 ff.
[48] Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata," 1.18, 411.

> prophecy says, "If ye be willing and hear me, ye shall eat the good things of the land;" proving that choice or refusal depends on ourselves.[49]

Thus again we have another Greek Father who locates the cause of unbelief in the disposition of the rational creature who choses and refuses the divine call. In his words "those who would not obey kept themselves aloof."

In terms of divine foreknowledge he states: "For God knows all things, not only the things that exist, but also the things that will be, and how each one will be; and foreseeing individual movements, 'He surveys all things and hears all things,' seeing the soul bare within; and through eternity He has the thought of each thing individually. And what is true of theatres and of the parts of each object in looking in, around, and at all together, is true also of God [i.e., of God's vision]. For in one look He sees all things together and each thing individually."[50] It seems that Clement is describing the speculative foreknowledge of God without discussing divine knowledge as causal.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386)

St. Cyril states: "For it is not of necessity but of choice that we come into such holy sonship; nor was it by nature that the traitor Judas was the son of the devil and perdition,"[51] and in reference to St. Paul's conversion, "But the adoption is voluntary…For not before faith, but by faith, they were deemed worthy, of their own choice, to be made sons of God."[52]

Now, teaching that sonship of the devil and of God is not a matter of "nature," Cyril is here specifically rejecting the claim that God gives two different natures among men which determine their adoption as sons of the devil or sons of God. He (like the Fathers listed above)

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[49] Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata," 1.18, 411 (emphasis added).
[50] Clement of Alexandria, "Stomata," 6.17, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 528.
[51] St. Cyril, "Catechesis," in *The Fathers of the Church: The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, vol. 1, trans. Leo P. McCauley, S.J. and Anthongy A. Stephenson (Washington, D.C.:The Catholic University of America Press, 1969), 7.12, 177.
[52] St. Cyril, "Catechesis," 7.12, 177.

affirmed that there is a condition or a kind of cooperation on the part of man that is requisite for either outcome. For the words "choice" and "voluntary" rule out any doctrine that posits a kind of necessity on the individual that interrupts freedom.

Concerning divine foreknowledge he states: "Just as those who are about to make a military campaign scrutinize the ages and bodies of the soldiers, so also the Lord, enlisting souls, considers their free choices; and if He finds a hidden hypocrisy, He rejects the man as unfit for the true service; but if He finds [him] worthy, He readily gives him grace."[53] This foreknowledge seems to suggest that God sees created good that is so of its own power, but he is merely trying to show that the condition of reprobation is found in man. Thus he also teaches that God foresees without infrustrable decrees.[54]

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 325-389)

It will be helpful to include a longer set of direct quotations from St. Gregory to see his teaching on the matter. In his *Oratio 37 On the Gospel Text "When Jesus Had Finished these Words"* (Mat 19:1-12), Gregory gives us his views on Christian marriage and in this context his understanding of predestination and reprobation. In light of the Gospel text, that not all can accept Jesus' teaching on divorce, marriage, and virginity, only those to whom it is given (Mt. 19:11), he explains the nature of this gift in terms of grace and freedom in the life of faith:

> When you hear this, 'It is given,' do not understand it in a heretical fashion, and bring in differences of nature, the earthly and the spiritual and the mixed. For there are people so evilly disposed as to think that some men are of an utterly ruined nature, [this sounds much like St. Cyril of Jerusalem] and some of a nature which is saved, and that others are of such a disposition as their will may lead them to, either to the better, or to the worse.[55]

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[53] St. Cyril, "Catechesis," 1.2, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 529.
[54] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 530.
[55] The following four quotations: St. Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oratio 37," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, trans. Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co.,

> When you hear 'To whom it is given,' add: And it is given to those who are called and to those who incline that way. For when you hear, 'Not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,' (Romans 9:16) I counsel you to think the same. For since there are some who are so proud of their successes that they attribute all to themselves and nothing to Him that made them and gave them wisdom and supplied them with good; such are taught by this word *that even to wish well needs help from God; or rather that even to choose what is right is divine and a gift of the mercy of God. For it is necessary both that we should be our own masters and also that our salvation should be of God*. This is why He [St. Paul in Romans 9:16] says not of him that wills; that is, not of him that wills only, nor of him that runs only, but also of God that shows mercy. Next; since to will also is from God, he has attributed the whole to God with reason.
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> [To reiterate, in reference to Christ's words to the mother of the sons of Zebedee] They shall drink the cup; but to sit on My right hand and on My left— it is not Mine, He says, to give this, but to whom it has been given," (Mt. 20:23) Gregory says: "Is then the ruling mind nothing? Nothing the labour? Nothing the reasoning? Nothing the philosophy? Nothing the fasting? Nothing the vigils, the sleeping on the ground, the shedding floods of tears? Is it for nothing of these, but in accordance with some election by lot, that a Jeremias is sanctified, and others are estranged from the womb?
>
> I fear lest some monstrous reasoning may come in, as of the soul having lived elsewhere, and then having been bound to this body, and that it is from that other life that some receive the gift of prophecy, and others are condemned, namely, those who lived badly. But since such a conception is too absurd, and contrary to the traditions of the Church (others if they like may play with such doctrines, but it is unsafe for us to play with them); we must in this place to add to the words: To whom it has been given, this, who are worthy; who have not only received this character from the Father, but have given it to themselves.

With Gregory we have a more thorough explication of the doctrine of predestination and reprobation whereby God is given the primary agency in man's sanctification, indeed even in his desire to wish well and to make a right choice, yet he emphatically states that the ruling mind, the disposition of the individual plays a role in determining which state one end up in. The tension is thus presented here as God's mercy and gift as the instigating force of faith and sanctification, but also the capacity for the individual to reject this.

1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310237.htm>. Punctuation of biblical quotes and emphasis added.

Like Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory is arguing against a tendency to see two different natures given by God which necessitate the effect of either predestination or reprobation. Again, like the other Fathers, he affirms God's sovereign ordering of gifts, and also man's choice to reject those gifts.

St. Gregory of Nyssa (d.386)

> 'The Father raises the dead and gives them life, and the Son gives life to whom He will.'—We do not conclude from this that some are cast out from the lifegiving will; but since we have heard and we believe that all things of the Father belong to the Son, we obviously also see the will of the Father, as one of all these, in the Son. If then the Father's will [attitude] is in the Son, and the Father, as the Apostle says, 'wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' it is plain that He who has everything that is the Father's, and has the whole Father in Him along with other good things of the Father, has fully also the salvific will. Since then He does not lack the perfect will, it is altogether clear that those whom the Father wants to give life to, He too gives life to, not being lesser in a will that loves men, as Apollinarius says that He wants to give life to some, not to all. For not because of the Lord's will are some saved but others are lost: for then the cause of their ruin would come from that will. But by the choice of those who receive the word, it happens that some are saved or lost.[56]

Here we find an example of a Father highlighting the teaching from Sacred Scripture that God wills all men to be saved, even if other passages seem to suggest that God acting as the Son wills only some. The reason is that the will of the Father is the same as the will of the Son, and so because the Son has everything that is the Father's, he also shares his universal salvific will. St. Gregory clearly states that the reason some are saved or lost is from the "choice of those who receive the word." Thus God in willing all to be saved does not will eternal loss, but only positively reprobates after the consideration of demerit.

St. John of Chrysostom (c.347-407)

[56] St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus Apollinarium, Antirrheticus*, 29, quoted in Most, *Grace Predestination and the Salvific Will of God*, 267.

In commenting on the passage from Romans "all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God," Chrysostom asks, "Now if all have sinned, how come some to be saved, and some to perish?" His answer is that "it is because all were not minded to come to Him, since for His part all were saved for all were called."[57] In other words, from God's point of view all are called and thus all are capable of salvation, yet certain men out of some obstacle of the mind do not answer God's call.

In addition, Chrysostom commenting on Ephesians 1:4-5, "as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ…," explains that God's predestination of us comes not from any good works of ours, but of love, and then adds the qualification, "yet not of love alone, but of our virtue also. For in truth were it the result of love alone, it would follow that all must be saved; whereas again were it the result of our virtue alone, then were His coming needless, and the whole dispensation."[58] Thus Chrysostom presents two elements in predestination that in some sense act together as cause: God's disposition of elective love and our response. For if the latter alone was the determining principle then the Incarnation would be needless, but were it only God's love that determined the result, all would be saved.

Chrysostom continues: "However, it is the result neither of His love alone, nor yet of our virtue, but of both. He hath chosen us, saith the Apostle; and He that chooseth, knoweth what it is that He chooseth…Wherefore then is it that He so loveth us, whence hath He such affection? It is of His goodness alone. For grace itself is the fruit of goodness. And for this cause, he saith, hath He predestinated us to the adoption of children."[59] These last lines show that even though

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[57] John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1841), 289.
[58] John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom,*105-106.
[59] John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom,* 105-6.

the difference occurs in man as to whether he is lost, if one is saved it is because of God's goodness, and because he has been predestined by God to the adoption of children. Thus Chrysostom places the condition in man yet clearly shows that it is not one which merits predestination or that it is within our natural powers to obtain salvation.

St. Cyril of Alexandria (d.444)

> It is not unnatural that some make a ready excuse for their lack of faith, being caught in their ignorance, and saying: 'If they are called whom He foreknew according to the purpose and previous choice, this is nothing to those who have not yet believed. For we have not been called nor predestined.' To them we say that He who made the marriage feast for His Son sent His servants to gather those who were called, but they did not will to come. After them, those who were called according to a special purpose came in…Therefore, then, obviously, no obstacle lies in the way of those who want to come. For foreknowledge hurts no one at all nor does it help anyone…we find our Lord Jesus Christ saying clearly: 'Come to me all who labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.' Behold, He calls all to Himself. So no one would not have a share in the grace of the call. For in saying "all," He sends away absolutely no one. [Scripture] says: Having foreseen far in advance of what sort they would be, He predestined them to share in the future goods, so that through faith in Him they might enjoy justification.[60]

St. Cyril holds that all must be called by God to the marriage feast, and indeed all are called, without any obstacle to those who want to come. Following Romans 8:29 Cyril shows that God in his foreknowledge predestines and justifies the elect. The problem for those who lack faith is not that God is withholding his invitation of grace, but that he has foreseen that some would not will to come, and this disposition is the reason for their loss. He argued this against the fatalist tendency of the Gnostics.

St. John Damascene (676-754-787)

> It is necessary to know that the choice of things to be done is in our power, but that the accomplishment of good things [is] from the cooperation of God, justly cooperating, according to His foreknowledge, with those who in right conscience choose good, but [that the accomplishment] of evil things is from the desertion by God, again according to His foreknowledge, justly deserting

[60] St. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Epistolam ad Romanos*, 8.30, quoted in Most, *Grace Predestination and the Salvific Will of God*, 270.

> [the wicked man]. There are two kinds of desertion. For there is a dispensatory and instructional desertion, and there is a total, reprobating desertion. The dispensatory and instructional desertion is for the emendation and salvation and glory of the one who suffers it…But the total desertion happens when, after God has done everything to save, the man remains unreformed and not cured, or rather, incurable, as a result of his own resolve. Then he is given over to complete destruction, like Judas…It is necessary to know that God antecedently wills all to be saved and to reach His kingdom. For He did not make us to punish, but to share in His goodness, because He is good. But He wills that sinners be punished, because He is just. Now the first [will] is called antecedent will, and will of good pleasure [and] it is from Him. But the second [will is called] consequent will and a giving way [and it comes] from our fault…It is necessary to know that virtue is given by God to our nature, and that He is the beginning and cause of all good, and that without His cooperation and help it is impossible for us to will and do good. But it is in our power either to remain in virtue and to follow God who calls us to it, or to depart from virtue…[61]

St. John Damascene is known as the great defender of human freedom. As we see in the text above, he emphasizes that "the choice of things to be done is in our power," and again, "…it is in our power either to remain in virtue and to follow God who calls us to it, or to depart from virtue…"

In addition, he also defended the justice of God. St. Thomas will later use John Damascene's distinction between God's *antecedent* and *consequent* will when speaking of God's will as always fulfilled.[62] As to the present discussion, the Damascene states that God is "the beginning and cause of all good, and that without His cooperation and help it is impossible for us to will and do good." Thus we cannot merit predestination or its effects according to our nature. On the other hand, as the other Fathers held, we are deserted by God according to our own resolve in rejecting the divine aid. This falls under what John Damascene calls God's consequent will, which is a kind of "giving away" by God resulting "from our fault."

John seems to be saying that we do have a cooperative role in the growth of virtue and salvation yet does not specify what this role is, only that without God it comes to not. Also, that

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[61] St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 2.29, quoted in Most, *Grace Predestination and the Salvific Will of God*, 272.
[62] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1um.

God antecedently wills all to be saved and to reach his kingdom. Again, John Damascene with the other Fathers understands the destiny of reprobation to be in the hands of man (God is not the cause of sin even though the cause of punishment of sin), and yet he goes further saying that this is according to God's consequent will, not according to his antecedent; thus showing that even though God wills all men to be saved antecedently, it is not outside of his causal activity that men are lost (consequently).

2. Latin Fathers

Cyprian (d. 258)

"We must boast in nothing since nothing is our own."[63]

St. Augustine uses this quote from St. Cyprian to support his view of that God is the primary author of our perseverance.

St. Jerome (340-420)

> If…the patience of God hardened Pharaoh, and for a long time put off the punishment of Israel, so that He more justly condemned those whom He had endured so long a time, God's patience and infinite clemency is not to be blamed, but the hardness of those who abused the goodness of God to their own destruction. Moreover, the heat of the sun is one and according to the kind of thing that lies beneath it, it liquefies some, hardens others, loosens some, constricts others. For wax is melted, but mud is hardened: and yet, the nature of the heat [that each receives] is the same. So it is with the goodness and clemency of God: it hardens the vessels of wrath, that are fit for destruction; but it does not save the vessels of mercy in a blind way, and without a true judgment, but in accordance with preceding causes; for some did not accept the Son of God; but others of their own accord willed to receive Him. Now these vessels of mercy are not only the people of the gentiles, but also those of the Jews who willed to believe, and one people was made up of those who believe. From this it is plain, that it is not nations [as such] that are chosen, but the wills of men…[64]

In interpreting the difficult passage concerning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Romans, St. Jerome shows that God offers one thing to all: patience goodness and infinite

[63] St. Cyprian, *Ad quirinum* 3.4, quoted in St. Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 48-49.
[64] St. Jerome, *Epistola* 120.10, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 274.

clemency; the abuse of which is the cause of the destruction of some. His analogy of the sun's heat is helpful in seeing that the disposition of the object under the sun determines how that heat will be received. So it is with God's goodness and clemency, which if met with a wrathful and destructive individual, will harden them. Though St. Jerome speaks of the role of man in the faithful response to God's goodness as in some sense causal, he does not elaborate the precise nature of this role. Thus St. Jerome teaches the reason for the loss of some being the willful disposition of man.

St. Ambrose (340-397)

At first glance it may seem that St. Ambrose is teaching that man can merit predestination when saying, "The Apostle says: 'Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined.' For He did not predestine before He foreknew, but He predestined the rewards of those whose merits He foreknew."[65] Yet in the context of this interpretation one sees that he is simply teaching that predestination is after the consideration of merits, and not because of merits; "for St. Ambrose could mean merely that human merits are a *condition*, which God freely wills to consider, not a *cause*. And even in this condition, all that is positively good is, he would no doubt hold, from God."[66] Thus St. Ambrose stands in the tradition of the Greek Fathers saying that "our heart is not within our own power, nor our thoughts."[67]

St. Hilary (d. 368)

> 'Blessed is he whom you have chosen and taken up, so that he may dwell in your tabernacles.' All flesh, indeed, will come, that is, we are gathered together from the whole human race; but blessed he who is chosen. For according to the Gospel, many are called but few are chosen. The chosen ones, moreover, are marked by the nuptial garment, and are splendid in the pure and fresh body of the new birth. So the choice is not a matter of haphazard judgment; but the distinction is made on the basis of a choice of merit. Blessed then is he whom

[65] St. Ambrose, *De fide* 5.6.83, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 275.
[66] St. Ambrose, *De fide* 5.6.83, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 276.
[67] St. Ambrose, *De fuga caeculi*, 1.1, quoted in St. Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 19, 48.

> God has chosen: blessed for this reason, because he is worthy of being chosen. Now it is good for us to know for what this blessed one is chosen. He is chosen for that which follows: 'He will dwell in your tabernacles.' The rest of the heavenly dwelling is the perfection of all goods. The Lord testifies that there are many mansions in the heavens: but He asks the Father, that the Apostles may remain where He Himself also is…[68]

St. Hilary holds with the other Fathers that the reason for the decision of who is reprobated or not rests in the disposition of man, for he says that "the choice is not a matter of haphazard judgment; but the distinction is made on the basis of a choice of merit. Blessed then is he whom God has chosen: blessed for this reason, because he is worthy of being chosen."[69] Again, the merit here referred is to be thought of as a condition, not a strict cause of election. Like St. Ambrose, St. Hilary would contend that God is the primary cause of goodness and merit in man.

Church Fathers Conclusion

To sum up the Fathers' teaching on predestination we might begin by saying that most historians place the Eastern Fathers in juxtaposition with St. Augustine. This tells us that it is safe to take the Greek Fathers as a unit that has little internal variation. We also find that the teaching of the Latin Fathers before Augustine very much resembles that of the East. So what can be said of this tradition before Augustine? Donato Olgiari states:

> Rather than looking for a solution to the problem of salvation in the sphere of divine decrees, the Greek and Latin theologians did not hesitate to express their conviction that the election or non-election of men is subordinated to God's foreknowledge with regard to either their meritorious act of faith, or their demerit. In other words, for both the Greek and Latin theologians, divine foreknowledge constituted the *Grundlage* of God's predestination, the key to interpret it, and the way to explain the scriptural evidences that speak of both life and death, salvation and damnation in relation to God's agency as well as man's.[70]

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[68] St. Hilary, *In Psalmum* 64.5, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 277.
[69] St. Hilary, *In Psalmum* 64.5, quoted in Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 278.
[70] Donato Ogliari, *Gratia Et Certamen: The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the so-Called Semipelagians* (Leuven: University Press, 2003), 309.

Thus one might say that to preserve human freedom in the face of deterministic forces, the Greek and Latin Fathers found in God's foreknowledge the freedom for man to reject God's gifts, and thus the demerits which are deserving of reprobation. In assigning the reason for reprobation in man's demerits, the Fathers primarily taught a divine foreknowledge of acts without infrustrable decrees. In terms of merit, it is clear that the Fathers understood that man in some way is rewarded for good deeds, even if all the good that he does comes from the hand of God. Yet none of the Fathers treated merit exclusively and directly in a treatise, so their notion of merit as an effect of grace and what the nature of its relationship is to salvation is ambiguous.

Moreover, the Greek Fathers emphasized the order of *execution* of God's eternal decree and his universal desire to save, as opposed to God's plan itself. This point bears some description. Some interpret the Fathers to be teaching predestination from the perspective of the *order of execution*, or in a *concrete* way so as to exhort Christians to good works and defend against the spiritual apathy that may result from the deterministic tendencies of Gnosticism. The later scholastic theologians applied this distinction between the *order of intention* and the *order of execution* to the Greek Fathers' doctrine of predestination. The former is a consideration whereby the end is conceived antecedently to the means, and the end is logically prior. By this order, the emphasis is placed on the eternal decree of God whereby he wills glory for the elect and then the means (the grace of call and justification) to obtain it. This is the method St. Augustine will take up more explicitly in response to the heresies concerning grace. The latter is a consideration of the inverse order whereby the means concretely precede the end, and are naturally prior to the end. It is a consideration of the historical sequence of predestination. By this order, the emphasis is placed on the merits which *precede* glory, and thus eternal life is the reward of meritorious acts. It is a different vantage point whereby the Greek Fathers are said to

have stressed the importance of human free will in meriting glory. When the Fathers did not emphasize the order of intention one can safely posit (because the opposite would impose a contradiction in the Fathers) that it was presupposed in their exhortations.

C. St. Augustine (354-430)

"Grant what you command, and command what you will." -Conf. X, 60.

It is difficult to express just how influential St. Augustine has been on the development of Christian theology. It is especially true concerning the doctrine of grace and predestination. In fact, Christian thinkers who disagree on the nature of our topic often cite Augustine as an appeal to authority. As we will see, the Scholastic theologians, including St. Thomas Aquinas, the Reformers, and the Tridentine theologians all appealed to the Doctor of Grace's interpretation of the relevant New Testament texts to formulate their descriptions. What is of fundamental importance to Augustine is the gratuitous nature of God's gift of predestination; both in the preparation of grace and perseverance to life eternal. This section is an overview of Augustine's teaching in the context of the error of Pelagianism, the development of his views, and his definitive position. Lastly, we will treat of the II Council of Orange, which according to official Church teaching affirms St. Augustine's understanding of predestination.

Driving much of what St. Augustine taught on predestination was his refutation of the Pelagian heresy[71] and the objections of the monks of Hadrumetum in Africa, and the Massilians of the monastic settlements in Southern Gaul at the beginning of the 5th century, the last two groups of which are now known by the blanket term Semi-Pelagians.[72] It is these errors that

[71] Condemned in the canons of the Council of Carthage in 418: *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 101-105; and the Council of Ephesus in 431: *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 126-127.
[72] Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 5-20. Ogliari gives a nice historical introduction to the development of the heresies and the names associated with them to the effect that Semi-Pelagianism is too broad and controversial a name to

force Augustine to insist on the sheer gratuitousness of God's grace as taught by St. Paul in Sacred Scripture, both to come to faith, and to persevere unto life.

Pelagianism

The Pelagian error (whether that of Pelagius himself or some variation/expression proceeding from it by followers of this heresy[73]) amounts to an exalted understanding of freedom of the will as having the natural capacity to obtain faith, good works of virtue, and eternal life. He held that man's natural goodness with all of its faculties and possibilities constitutes God's first grace to man, a kind of natural grace that is bestowed in the creative act which is signified by our being made in the image and likeness of God. Thus, if anyone holds that human nature does not have the natural capacity for the good, then they disparage God's grace. Indeed, Pelagianism had a fundamentally optimistic view of the natural faculties of man even after the effects of the Fall. In this system, the divine grace, or helps are merely external aids which are given to facilitate the will in doing what it already has the ability to do. The Mosaic Law and the Law of Jesus Christ are external aids that assist man's ontological goodness in identifying God's will and following it. Even baptism is just an external help that saves men from their past sinful acts which are accidental to man's nature, and not a sacrament of regeneration on the substantial level.[74]

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cover the various expressions of this system of thought. The term Semi-Pelagianism came about in response to Molina's (b.1535-d.1600) system of grace and was only then applied to the earlier doctrine of the theologians in Africa and southern Gaul between in the 5th and 6th centuries. In his appraisal it would be better to distinguish Pelagius from Pelagianism and the former two from the monks of Hadrumetum and the Massilians.

[73] Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 230: "Modern scholars have become increasingly sensitive, and rightly so, about the over-simplification which considers Pelagius the "eponymous founder" of both an ascetic movement and a heresy. In point of fact, Pelagianism involved various persons at different times and at different levels, and such persons—like Rufinus the Syrian, Caelestius and Julian of Aeclanum—often held more definite views than Pelagius himself. As pointed out, whereas Pelagius' chief concern, based on an optimistic notion of free choice and human nature, was with Christian practice, "the others took a more speculative interest in the consequences and the preconditions of free choice, making of Pelagianism "a symbiosis of these two distinct sets of concerns.""

[74] Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 231-235. This description follows the one found in Ogliari.

Thus, following the two distorted views of human freedom and divine grace, the Pelagian theological system arrived at a number of problematic conclusions: Adam's sin was only personal and thus it would be unjust for God to punish the rest of mankind for it; death is a natural necessity and not a punishment for sin; all are born without sin so infant baptism is useless because they would immediately go to heaven if they die; Christ's Redemption is merely an help, that is, we learn from his good example to live virtuous and holy lives; prayer for the conversion of others is useless since it cannot help them to save their souls.[75] "Pelagianism…denied the supernatural order, explained away the mystery of predestination, and made God only a spectator in the drama of human salvation."[76]

Development of Doctrine in Augustine

It is in the *De diversis quaestionibus ad simplicianum* (396/97) that Augustine's thinking on sovereign grace, and his concept of predestination included, undergoes a definitive change from his earlier view on the relationship between God's foreknowledge, election and man's response. The change occurs in Augustine's interpretation of Rom 9, 10-29, concerning the election of Jacob and the rejection of Esau. *Ad simplicianum* 1, 2, 5 adopts a predestinarian view drawing a clear line between *vocatio* and *electio*, to demonstrate that they are not exactly the same. Election is only for those who are called "efficaciously". "It is the hidden equity on God's part which is now brought into the limelight and which replaces the earlier appeal to the "most hidden merits of the souls (*animarum occultissima merita*)"[77] as found in Augustine's commentary on Romans. The difference is no longer about those who believe like Jacob, and

[75] Paraphrased from: S. J. McKenna, "Pelagius and Pelagianism," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 58.
[76] S. J. McKenna, "Pelagius and Pelagianism," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 58. Other treatments of the heresy: Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 230-242; Richard H. Bulzacchelli, *Judged by the Law of Freedom* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2006), 25-35; Eugene TeSelle, "Pelagius, Pelagianism," in New Catholic Encyclopedia (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America, 1967), 633; Allan Fritzgerald and John C. Cavadini, *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999).
[77] Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 316.

those who do not like Esau, but about the way God relates to human beings, and whether he calls them efficaciously (*congruenter)* or not. Thus the path towards the concept of the *massa peccatorum*, as the just background of God's choosing some and rejecting others, is laid. He shifts the point of difference from the level of knowledge, *praescientia*, to that of effective intentionality *propositum*, and predestination acquires an "absolute" and "exclusive" character. Indeed, "salvation rests solely upon God's eternal and timeless decrees."[78] A further distinction is made between *electio* and *praedestinatio*, until then equivalent in Augustine's writings, the one being purely intentional, the other having a historical dimension. One might say that Augustine moved exclusively to the order of intention with an emphasis on the cause of predestination lying entirely in God himself. Augustine's insights about grace and predestination did not change in essence in the subsequent years, except in emphasis as a response to the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian controversies.[79]

In classic Augustinian rhetorical flare, St. Augustine describes a particular group of Massilians (brought to his attention by Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary of Africa) as dangerously adhering to the thought of Virgil who wrote, "Each man has hope in himself," and then warns them saying, "and thus [they] incur that which is declared not poetically but prophetically, "Cursed be the man who places his hope in man.""[80] In his *De praedestinatione sanctorum* (429), Augustine further describes their error (which is actually closer to Augustine than Pelagian, for they held much of what Augustine held in matters of grace but disagreed with his teaching on predestination) in this way: "…I must reply to those who contend that the divine testimonies which we have cited regarding this matter mean this: that we may know that *we have*

[78] Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 317.
[79] Ogliari, *Gratia et Cartamen*, 314-318. This paragraph is a paraphrasing of Ogliari's presentation.
[80] Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, 2, 218; Jeremiah 17:5.

faith itself from ourselves, but its increase is from God, as if faith were not given to us by him but was only increased in us by him, in virtue of the merit by which it began from us."[81]

Though a similar position was earlier held by St. Augustine to emphasize free will against the Gnostic/Manichaean heresies[82], he abandoned it in light of closer examination of the Pauline epistles and adopted his famous emphasis on the total gratuitousness of grace, even its necessity for man to first come to faith. Thus, Augustine's task in response to the Massilian position as found in the *De praedestinatione sanctorum* (429) and the *De dono praeseverantiae* (429) was "to show that the faith by which we are Christians is a gift of God,"[83] and that "the perseverance by which we persevere in Christ to the end is a gift of God. And by "the end" I mean the time at which this life is finished, during which alone there is the peril of falling."[84] It is his teaching on predestination which he sees as a guarantor of the nature of grace as presented in Sacred Scripture. As Mathijs Lamberigts writes "Augustine's intention in writing these works was to establish in the preaching of predestination an impenetrable bulwark for the defense of God's grace against the teaching on meritorious deeds proposed by Pelagius's followers (persev. 21.54)."[85]

Augustine's Definitive Teaching

Having given the context for Augustine's mature doctrine of predestination we can now present his positive teaching. To begin, it must be noted that Augustine taught that God orders all things in his divine Providence, even rational creatures to whom he has given freedom and the

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[81] Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," 2 (3), 219. Emphasis added.
[82] Mathijs Lamberigts, "Predestination," in *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 678. He cites Augustine's Commentary of the letter to the Romans (*Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos*, 47-48). Augustine also describes his change of position in *De praed. Sanct*., 3.7-8.
[83] Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," 2 (3), 219.
[84] Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 1, 271.
[85] Lamberigts, "Predestination," 678.

power of self-direction. God's providence extends to all things and his purpose in creation is not thwarted. Even man's disobedience is made good in God's plan, the latter of which is blameless in relation to our disordered condition. He states: "In the beginning man's nature was created without any fault and without any sin; however, this human nature in which we are all born from Adam now requires a physician, because it is not healthy", yet "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."[86] The doctrine that follows from this is referred to as the *massa damnata* (or the *massa perditionis* or *massa peccati*).[87] Augustine teaches according to St. Paul that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that all are in a state of original sin which is justly deserving of everlasting punishment. Thus God's predestination "which has the good for its object," is a gratuitous "preparation of grace, and grace in turn is the effect of that predestination"[88] which leads to eternal life in union with God.

He thus defines predestination as "the foreknowledge and the preparation of God's favors, by which those who are delivered are most certainly delivered."[89] It must first be noted that Augustine does not mean by "foreknowledge" God's foreknowledge of merit or future choices of individuals, but of the gifts given to the elect by God in order that they actually be saved. Augustine finds the origin of this understanding in St. Paul who continually checks man's pride by emphasizing God's unique causal role in our salvation.[90]

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[86] Augustine, "On Nature and Grace," in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, 3.3, 24, quoted in Levering, *Predestination*, 45.
[87] Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, 1.2.16, 1.2.17.
[88] Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," 10.19, 241.
[89] Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 14, 303. *Haec est praedestinatio sanctorum, nihil aliud: praescientia scilicet, et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur.*
[90] 1 Cor. 1:31; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Cor. 3:21; 1 Cor 3:7.

A problem then arises from the notion that God chooses some in Christ, and that he gives growth in faith to some and not others. What is the reason God chooses this man and not the other? The answer (as suggested above) is hidden in the equity of God's will. The point to be taken from his teaching is that the most dangerous path man walks is the one of pride, which views divine election as something coming from us choosing God, or from God's foreknowledge of our future merits. Augustine urges us to resist this tendency of human nature by fixing our hearts in gratitude on God who so lavishly bestows grace through Jesus Christ. "Thus, when the Apostle says, "Not of works, that no man may glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works," he speaks of grace, but when he says what follows, "which God has prepared that we should walk in them," he speaks of predestination."[91]

In *De praedestinatione sanctorum* Augustine uses 1 Corinthians 4:6-7 as his central passage to argue that faith is of God, and also St. Cyprian who said, "we must take glory in nothing, since nothing is our own."[92] Indeed, Augustine is fighting the heretical teaching that we come to faith by our own power. Again, he maintains that faith is a gift, and even he was previously in error on this point (much to his own dismay) after taking more seriously the emphatic position of St. Paul: "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?"[93] Augustine also cites John 6:44 as evidence of the truth that natural powers are not sufficient for the act of faith. Jesus says "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Again, God does not teach every rational creature faith: Jesus seems to say as much in the Gospels. So if it is a requirement that God move us to faith, then doesn't it seem that God should

[91] Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," 10.19, 241.
[92] Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum*, 3.4.
[93] 1 Cor. 4:6-7.

move all to faith? Augustine struggles with this question yet concludes that even though grace "is rejected by no hard heart, because it is given for the sake of first taking away the hardness of heart" and thus is not given to all, God's predestination is beyond our full comprehension and we must be cautious of our own pride and lack of trust when pursuing this mystery. What is called for is humility and trust in the face of predestination and say with St. Paul that God's "judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out."[94] In fact, St. Augustine tells us that the preaching of predestination is salutary for the curbing of human pride.[95] Even with the apparent difficulty of why God does not save all, there is assurance in this doctrine that some will be saved.

Conclusion on St. Augustine

Matthew Levering gives a concise summary of Augustine's doctrine:

> 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 his approach, however, consists in its rather severe limitation of God's eternal love for some rational creatures, which seems to ill accord with Christ Jesus' revelation of the intensity of God's love for human beings.[96]

St. Augustine then leaves us with a great tension. The two biblical affirmations of divine love as revealed in Christ and yet the perdition of some presents a difficulty with regard to God's will to save all. The subsequent history of the problem will consist of extreme interpretations/emphases of one affirmation over the other.

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[94] Romans 11:33 (Levering, *Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths*, 50-51).
[95] Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 14.36.
[96] Levering, *Predestination*, 53-54.

II Council of Orange (529)

The Second Council of Orange (529) is considered to be one of the most important councils of the sixth century. It was a provincial synod held in southern Gaul with the Archbishop Caesarius of Arles presiding. The main error which the canons sought to reject and offer true teaching for was Semi-Pelagianism. This council, though a particular one, must be held with greater certainty (indeed "the canons of this council have the force of a solemn definition"[97]) because of the confirmation of Pope Boniface II (530-532) in a letter written to Caesarius of Arles.[98] As to its teaching, the epilogue states unequivocally that "we not only *do not* believe that some have been truly predestined to evil by divine power, but also with every execration we pronounce anathema upon those, if there are [any such], who wish to believe so great an evil."[99] And also that "God's bounty" and nothing pertaining to our human nature, is the cause of the faith both before we are converted and initiated into Christ, and the ability to perform salutary acts afterwards which lead to heaven. Thus Orange II gives us the *De Fide* rejection of positive reprobation *ante praevisa demerita*, yet does not say anything about negative reprobation. As Ludwig Ott formulates it, "God, by an Eternal Resolve of His Will, predestines certain men, on account of their foreseen sins, to eternal rejection."[100] Also, that again God is the primary cause of the effects of predestination.

The canons on grace (the effect of predestination) teach that prayer, justification, the beginning and increase of faith, the desire for baptism, humility, obedience, to believe, will, desire, strive, labor, pray, keep watch, study, beg, seek, knock for entrance, and all of these in the manner we ought to perform them are by the grace of God. The canon cites St. Paul to prove

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[97] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 39.
[98] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 200a. The letter is entitled *Per filium nostrum*, January 25, 531.
[99] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 200. Emphasis added.
[100] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 245.

this: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7); and: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). In addition, the council teaches that "The free will of man was made so weak and unsteady through the sin of the first man that, after the Fall, no one could love God as was required, or believe in God, or perform good works for God unless the grace of divine mercy anticipated him. Therefore, we believe that the renowned faith which was given to the just Abel…and to that vast number of the saints of old, was given through the grace of God and not through natural goodness."[101] Thus we see that according to these canons of the council St. Augustine's doctrine prevailed.

D. Medieval Theologians Prior to St. Thomas

Next we consider the 9th century controversies over predestination and theologians prior to St. Thomas. This period is marked by an oscillation between extreme interpretations of St. Augustine and St. John Damascene, and then moving into a period starting with St. Anselm, when theologians presented St. Augustine's principles as the norm on the subject. In addition, the Scholastic theologians sought to reconcile the account of Augustine with John Damascene by using the latter's distinction of God's antecedent and consequent will. The precedent set by the Fathers and Augustine again resurfaces: depending on what starting point a theology of predestination begins will determine the description that results. If one starts with the order of execution (Garrigou-Lagrange calls it a consideration from the moral point of view, in its relation to God's goodness and men's sins), like Damascene, then the description will be concerned with human freedom and the capacity to resist grace as the condition of reprobation, showing that God justly punishes the wicked. God wills that all be saved in his goodness, but

[101] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 199.

punishes in his justice. Yet if one begins with the order of intention, as Augustine does, then the description will be concerned with God's omnipotence, the efficacy of his grace, and predilection. Thus it seems that the Scholastic theologians sought to affirm both aspects by combining them in a way that neither was excluded.[102]

The structure of this section will be to first treat of the 9th century controversy over predestination as represented by the figures Gottschalk and John Scottus Eriugena, and the two Church councils that responded to their errors. Secondly, there is the bulk of the chapter covering the teaching of the great Scholastic theologians St. Anselm, Peter Lombard, and St. Bonaventure on predestination. Thirdly, there will be a brief summary of the Church's magisterial statements.

Gottschalk (c. 804-822)

The great predestination controversy of the 9th century that terminated in two councils began with this rebellious Benedictine monk from Saxony. Gottschalk had a famously tumultuous relationship with his superiors, which led him on a path of resistance and counter resistance. The ultimate reason for his imprisonment and censure was his teaching on predestination, which he thought was true to both Sacred Scripture and St. Augustine.

The extant writings of Gottschalk only give us a sketch of his teaching on predestination and so some caution must be applied when deriving his thought on the matter.[103] Victor Genke notes eight points of doctrine that can be detected when examining his writings.[104] First, as he often asserted, Gottschalk taught that predestination signifies two things: God's predestination of

[102] This synopsis of the period follows Levering, *Predestination*, 68-69; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 57-58.
[103] For translations of Gottschalk's writings and an account of the controversy see: Victor Genke, *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010). Gottschalk's works include *Shorter Confession, Longer Confession, Confession of Faith at Mainz, Treatise on Predestination, Another Treatise on Predestination*.
[104] Genke, *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 54-63.

the elect to eternal life, and the reprobate to eternal death. He states: "The omnipotent and immutable God has gratuitously foreknown and predestined the holy angels and elect human beings to eternal life, and…he equally predestined the Devil himself, the head of all the demons, with all of his apostate angels and also with all reprobate human beings, namely, his members, to rightly eternal death."[105] It is this position that Gottschalk was accused of being in error on according to the local synod of Quiersy (853); what might be called a doctrine of double predestination. However, it must be noted that Gottschalk's position based on the extant records could be interpreted in an orthodox sense, for he understood The Second Council of Orange (529) to be saying that a reprobation to evil, i.e., the evil of sin, trespass, or crime is heretical, not the reprobation to eternal death as a just punishment for sin committed.[106]

Gottschalk also taught that reprobation to eternal death is on the basis of God's foreknowledge of their evil merits; that God does not will to save all (anathema of Quiersy); humankind is divided into two groups, the elect and the reprobate, the former of which cannot be lost to reprobation; Christ only redeemed the elect (anathema of Quiersy), after the Fall humans can only do evil and it is only God's grace that enables them to do good; baptism is not effective for salvation of the reprobate because it only liberates from past sins; and the Eucharist is also of no avail for the reprobate that receive it.

Council of Quiersy (853): (Against Gottschalk and the Predestinarians)[107]

Four chapters (*Capitula*) of the council drawn up by Hincmar (806-882) Archbishop of Reims asserted against Gottschalk that while there is a predestination (*one* predestination) of

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[105] Genke, *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 55; Gottschalk, *Shorter Confession*.
[106] Genke, *Gottschalk and a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, Gottschalk wrote: "What was briefly also said in the Canons of Orange, that is, by Saint Caesarius and his fellow bishops, assembled in the city of Orange, namely, 'Let whoever says that God predestined human beings to evil be anathema,' should be understood as 'to the evil of sin, trespass, and crime,' not as 'to the vile of torment, torture, and punishment', as the truth holds (On Predestination, 1.9).
[107] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 316-19.

some to salvation, and consequently, the foreknowledge of the doom of others to everlasting punishment, God wills all men to be saved, and that the redemption wrought in Christ is universal. It is stated in Quiersy that the "Omnipotent God wishes all men without exception to be saved [1 Tim. 2:4] although not all will be saved. However, that certain ones are saved, is the gift of the one who saves; that certain ones perish, however, is the deserved punishment of those who perish."[108] Chapter 4 goes on to say that "there is, has been, or will be no man, for whom He [Christ Jesus our Lord] has not suffered." In addition, the council emphasizes the reality of free will (preceded and aided by grace) as having the capacity to act for the good, and the reality of free will "abandoned by grace" for evil. This council did not prevail without criticism and in a short period of time those opposed to the language therein convened at Valence presenting 6 canons that used Augustinian language to teach the orthodox doctrine of predestination (specifically against John Scotus Eriugena's treatise).

John Scotus Eriugena (810-877)

Eriugena was thrust into the heated controversy of the ninth century when he was asked by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims in 851 to write a treatise on predestination refuting Gottschalk's teachings.[109] In the process of refuting Gottschalk (which seems to have been his primary concern), Eriugena misinterpreted Augustine's writings to the point of receiving condemnation in the local synod of Valence (855) along with Gottschalk. He was censured for an over-emphasis on human free will and a reduction of predestination to God's foreknowledge. His account of predestination in Augustine is argued by some to be colored by his interest in

[108] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 318.
[109] Johannes Scotus Erigena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

Boethius's understanding of divine simplicity.[110] For Eriugena, predestination cannot overrule human free will which is created by God and thus there is "no necessary cause which violently impels a rational being either to cleave to his God by holy living or wickedly to abandon his God."[111] Moreover, in His simplicity, God only knows evil, which is a privation or deficiency, by its contrary: being and goodness. Thus, God only predestines and foreknows in the simple eternal that which has being and goodness, and so against Gottschalk, he concludes that there is no predestination to evil and thus only one predestination.

Even the punishment of the wicked for Eriugena is passively caused by God. He states: "God in no way predestined sinners for punishment, but…by their own deserts condign punishments have been predestined for them by him."[112] Again, the fact that some choose sin and persevere in sin is not from the movement of God, and they are subsequently punished by a contrary state of not being predestined. The punishment of hell for Eriugena is unhappiness, which is the result of the rational creature's free rejection of his natural God-given inclination for the good as being. Thus God has no active causal role in punishment, for it is the self-willed state of deficiency that brings us to hell, what Eriugena calls "the darkness of eternal ignorance."[113]

Supposing that Augustine used the words 'predestination' and 'foresight' interchangeably, Eriugena asserted that God foresees and predestines nothing that is not. He does not will death. God only abandons the evil will of men not their good nature as being. Rather, he sustains them in his creative love by willing their existence albeit unto eternal self-willed

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[110] Levering, *Predestination*, 71; Robert 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*, ed. James McEvoy and Michael Dunne (Leuven: Leuven University Press), 303-11.
[111] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 28.
[112] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 91.
[113] Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, 108.

unhappiness…a state that does not permit the lost to attain the nothingness they seek. In the end Eriugena defines predestination as "nothing other than divine foresight" and so God only abandons those whom freely reject him. As Matthew Levering sums up his doctrine, "Humans freely arrange themselves around the one divine law, rather than the divine law (predestination) having to arrange human beings…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."[114]

Valence (855): (Against John Scotus)

After the first canon, which establishes the teaching of the bishops of Valence to be within "the maternal womb of the Church" following Sacred Scripture and the holy doctors preceding them (namely Cyprian, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine), the council condemns the teaching of John Scotus. The teaching on predestination expressed in Valence is in more Augustinian terms than what their counterparts at Quiersy used. Unlike Quiersy, this council spoke of a double foreknowledge and predestination against John Scotus: "faithfully we confess the predestination of the elect to life, and the predestination of the impious to death; in the election, moreover, of those who are to be saved, the mercy of God precedes the merited good. In the condemnation, however, of those who are to be lost, the evil which they have deserved precedes the just judgment of God."[115] Again, another canon states: "that the wicked

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[114] Levering, *Predestination*, 75. The section on Eriugena follows Levering's treatment.

[115] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 322. As to the implications of the Council of Valence on Fr. Most's reading of Romans 8-9 John Salza states in his book, *The Mystery of Predestination*, 31: "Notwithstanding Fr. Most's assertions, the Council of Valence authentically teaches that Romans 9 *is about individual predestination and election!* After citing Romans 9:21 (about the potter's power over the clay) and Romans 9:22 (about the vessels of mercy and wrath), the council offers its interpretation of those verses…In short, Fr. Most's interpretation of Romans 8-9 is expressly rejected by the Council of Valence as well as the constant teaching tradition of the Church espoused by Sts. Augustine and Thomas."

have known that through their own malice they would do evil deeds, and that through His justice they would be condemned by eternal punishment."[116] Yet, even though the council affirms a predestination of punishment followed by the just judgment of God according to demerit, it explicitly repeats the teaching of the Synod of Orange by emphatically stating that God does not predestine to evil, and that those who hold this position "we say anathema to them".[117] This council stressed the fulfillment of God's eternal and unchanging designs along with assigning the cause of reprobation to human free will.

St. Anselm (d.1109)

St. Anselm gives his doctrine of predestination in his treatise *De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis non gratiae Dei cum libero arbitrio.* It is the second question in the treatise (*De concordia praedestinationis cum libero arbitrio*) that we find the distillation of his thought on the matter. Many of his explanations will later be repeated by the Scholastics. The first chapter establishes the problem of reconciling God's predestination and free choice. For predestination signifies a pre-ordination or establishment of something to happen in the future. It seems though that when God pre-ordains he does so in a way that things come about of necessity. He states: "If then he predestines the good and evil acts that we do, no room is left for the action of a free choice but all occur of necessity."[118] In addition, to admit of the necessity of good acts allows for free choice only in evil acts, and vice versa, which seems absurd. Thus St. Anselm brings us to a consideration of how predestination can be attributed to both, and yet not in opposition to human freedom. In chapter II he writes:

> …God's predestination attaches not only to our good actions but, it is possible to say, to our evil ones in the sense that it is by permitting the latter that God is

[116] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 321; canon 2.
[117] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 321; canon 2.
[118] St. Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 449; *De concordia* 2, I.

> said to be the cause of evils which he does not actually cause…He is, however, more precisely said to foreknow and predestine their good works because in their case he causes both that they exist and that they are good, whereas in the case of the evil ones he is only the cause that they simply exist and not that they are evil.[119]

Though it is more precise to say that God predestines the good works, it must be maintained that God predestines (in a passive sense of permitting the existence of) evil acts, yet they are evil from the free choice of man rather than the pre-ordination of God.

In the third chapter Anselm returns to the question at hand and concludes that predestination does not exclude free choice and that the latter is not opposed to the former. For if God's foreknowledge and predestination do not conflict with each other, and foreknowledge in God is in no way opposed to free choice, then God's predestination is also not opposed to the free operation of the will in man. "For God neither foreknows nor predestines that anyone shall be just out of any necessity.[120] For those who do not preserve their uprightness by their own free choice lose it. Therefore, although things foreknown and predestined are bound to happen, still it is equally true that some things foreknown and predestined do not happen by the type of necessity which precedes and causes something."[121] Anselm's distinction of necessity is important for understanding his solution. Boethius describes the two types of necessity in this way:

> For there are two kinds of necessity; one simple [also referred to as 'absolute' or 'necessity of consequent'], as for example the fact that it is necessary that all men are mortal; and one conditional [also referred to as 'hypothetical' or 'necessity of consquence'], as for example, if you know someone is walking, it is necessary that he is walking. For that which a man knows cannot be other

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[119] St. Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, 450; *De concordia* 2, II.

[120] Anselm is referring here to an antecedent/absolute necessity, which is "a necessity which precedes, being the cause for an actuality's existence." St. Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, 346; *Why God Became Man*, Book II.17.

[121] St. Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, 451; *De concordia* 2, III. This type of necessity is called a necessity of consequent/ or hypothetical necessity, being caused by an actuality. It is a "non-effectual necessity". But it must be noted that "no necessity is antecedent to his [God's] will." St. Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, Book II. 17, 346-347.

> than as it is known; but this conditional necessity does not imply simple necessity, because it does not exist in virtue of its own nature, but in virtue of a condition which is added. No necessity forces the man to walk who is making his way of his own free will, although it is necessary that he walks when he takes a step.[122]

Thus Anselm says that the necessity of predestination is a conditional one, which includes the free choice of man. And so Anselm makes clear the primacy of God's causal role in regard to salutary actions yet also the co-operation of man's will according to our nature having free choice as instrumental (secondary) cause. The "will employs its own power," and is left by God "to its own devices," yet "it still causes nothing which God does not also cause by his grace in the case of good deeds. In the case of evil ones, however, the evil is not due to any fault of God, but to the same free choice."[123] Anselm finds his answer in the consideration of foreknowledge. God foresees the voluntary acts of the future and at the same time preserves their free character and thus can predestine a person to perform them. If considered from the perspective of free will as cause, it is possible that the effects of predestination will or will not be realized temporally; yet from the perspective of God's foreknowledge and predestination as cause, the acts will be performed of a necessity of consequence. That is, God knows all things presently as they are happening in a timeless now, and thus they must of hypothetical necessity of consequence happen as he knows and predestines. Thus, St. Anselm's contribution to our question is an attempt to reconcile the patrimony of Sts. Augustine and the Eastern Fathers by presenting two great principles of Tradition: God's primary authorship of salutary acts yet coming entirely from us as true causes, and that the reason for the loss of some is to be found in the will of man.[124]

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[122] Boethius, *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Victor Watts (London: Penguin Books, 1999), Bk. V, prose 6, 135.
[123] St. Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works, 451; De concordia 2*, III.
[124] The principles mentioned were found and paraphrased from Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 59-61.

Peter Lombard (1100-1160)

Peter Lombard follows St. Augustine on our topic of predestination and reprobation, and his importance derives from the fact that his *Sentences* is the work which theologians commented on most frequently for the subsequent four centuries. He states quoting Augustine:

> Predestination is a preparation for grace, which cannot be without (God's) foreknowledge. But (God's) foreknowledge can be without predestination. Indeed by predestination God foreknows those, which He Himself was going to make, but God also foreknew (those) which He was not going to make, that is all evils. He predestined those whom He elected, but the rest He reproved, that is, He foreknew that they (were) going to sin unto eternal death.[125]

Peter teaches then that God is the active cause of predestination in individuals. He predestines those whom he elects, and reproves those whom he did not choose, allowing their hardness of heart and sin, and then justly punishing them. He similarly states:

> Since predestination is a preparation for grace, that is, a divine election, *by which He elects those whom He willed before the constitution of the world*, as the Apostle says; reprobation, conversely, is to be understood as the foreknowledge of the iniquity of certain ones and the preparation for the damnation of the same… the one of which *He foreknows* and *does not prepare*, that is (their) iniquity, the other *He foreknows* and *prepares*, namely, (their) eternal punishment.[126]

Peter also maintains that as an active cause, God's predestination is simply efficacious such that the elect cannot be lost. So what does he say about the cause of this eternal preparation? Is it the case that man's merits contribute to predestination? Peter says:

> But if we seek what merits *obduration* and *mercy*, we find what merits obduration, but we do not find what merits mercy, because there is nothing meriting mercy—lest grace be emptied out—if it is not granted freely, but is rendered according to merits. And so *He has mercy* according to the grace, which is given freely; but *He hardens against* (the good) according to the judgment, which is rendered according to merits. Wherefore it is given to be understood, that just as God's reprobation is a '*not wishing to have mercy*', so

[125] Peter Lombard, *The First Book of the Sentences*, trans. Br. Alexis Bugnolo according to the Quaracchi Edition of 1882 (Franciscan Archive, 2006), I, Sent., d. XL, 1. < http://www.franciscan-archive.org/index2.html> (1 April 2013).
[126] Peter Lombard, I, Sent., d. XL, 2.

> God's obduration is a '*not having mercy*', so that nothing is imposed by Him, by which a man is worse, but there is only not paid out that which is better.[127]

Here we see, like the other Scholastics that follow Augustine, the total gratuitousness of God's grace such that it precedes and accompanies merit. Mercy is the effect of grace. As it concerns obduration and reprobation Peter Lombard teaches according to Augustine that God withholds mercy. Though he explicitly shows that man is not made worse by God's imposition, there is a "not wishing to have mercy" on the part of God in reprobation and a "not having mercy" on the part of obduration. Thus before God's foreknowledge of man's sins stands God's eternal plan which in some way effects reprobation as it does predestination.

St. Bonaventure (1221-1274)[128]

In his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, St. Bonaventure treats the doctrine of predestination in distinctions XL, *On Predestination and reprobation as much as regards their active cause*, and XLI, *On the passive causality or meritorious cause of predestination and reprobation*. Starting with predestination as regards the active cause, Bonaventure makes a distinction between the "principle signified" and the "connoted." The former is the Divine Essence and the latter is a creature, namely, the grace, glory, and person to be saved. These two are ordered in a relationship of "antecession" whereby the principle

[127] Peter Lombard, I Sent., d. XLI, 1. (Augustine, *Ad Simplicanius*).

[128] Because Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, and St. Albert the Great essentially taught the same on this matter, I have chosen to present Bonaventure's treatment in his *Commentary on the Sentences* as representative of the three. As Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 114-115 states: "In their teaching on this matter Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, and St. Albert the Great saw in God's foreknowledge of man's merits a *reason*, though not a cause, of predestination…They differed from Peter the Lombard in teaching that, though there is not a *cause* in the acts of man for the eternal decree, there is a *fittingness* in these acts which God takes into account in ordaining one to glory and the other to damnation…Accepting predestination as absolute, these theologians taught that God's foreknowledge of man's merits precedes and influences it."

signified is antecedent to the thing connoted. And because the principle signified is eternal, predestination is something eternal.[129]

In addition, Bonaventure argues that predestination is primarily in the divine will.[130] Though it involves the knowledge and power of God, predestination as effecting grace and glory is properly caused by the will. To support his argument he refers to the three ways St. Augustine defines predestination according to divine knowledge, power, and will.[131] Thus we see that St. Bonaventure follows St. Augustine in constructing the elements of his definition. Later on he writes that "*to predestine*" is to 'preordain one of two unto an end', and this indeed suits God properly…For predestination connotes three (things), namely, *the one preordained*, and this is a man; and *the reckoning of the preordaining*, and this is grace; and *the reckoning of the end*, and this is glory: and in this manner there are three, namely, the "*what*", and the "*through what*", and the "*toward what*".[132]

In the second article, after identifying predestination as composing of a causal relationship between God and the rational creature, Bonaventure treats of the apparent necessity of predestination in opposition to free will and the rational creature's role in salvation. In answer

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[129] St. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Four Books of the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, trans. Br. Alexis Bugnolo according to the Quaracchi Edition of 1882 with notes by the Quaracchi Editors (Franciscan Archive, 2006), I, Sent., d. XL, a. 1, q. 1. < http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/I-Sent.html>.

[130] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XL, a. 1, q. 2, scholion no. 2 (Quaracchi) "All Catholic doctors teach, that in predestination there is included both an act of the Divine Intellect, and an act of the Will; but among the same there is a controversy regarding what is more principally signified in it. St. Thomas (Summa., I, q. 23, a. 1 and 4) teaches, according to his own principles, that formally it consists in an act of the (Divine) Intellect as *commanding*, which supposes an end willed and the means chosen."

[131] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d.XL, a. 1, q. 2. "It must be said, that since "predestination" signifies the Divine Essence as the cause of grace and glory, and this according to the ordained distribution of grace and glory, as much as it concerns itself, it does not only convey a knowledge, but also a will and a power. But since the causality of grace and glory is attributed properly to the (Divine) Will as effecting, but to the (Divine) Knowledge as disposing, and to the (Divine) Power as executing; for that reason, even if predestination conveys those three, yet it is more principally in the genus of the will. And for that reason predestination is defined by (St.) Augustine through those three: first through that which respects *power*, in the book On Faith to Peter: « Predestination is the preparation for a gratuitous donation »; second through that which respects *knowledge*, in the book On the Good of Perseverance: « Predestination is the foreknowledge of God's benefices »; third through that which respects *will* and most properly, in the book On the Predestination of the Saints: « Predestination », he says there, « is a proposal to have mercy »."

[132] St. Bonaventure, I Sent. d. XL, a. 3, q. 2.

to this problem he supposes St. Anselm's distinction between an absolute necessity (a necessity of the consequent) and a hypothetical necessity (a necessity of the consequence).[133] He notes that predestination refers both to foreknowledge and causality, and that from both there is no absolute necessity with respect to free will or salvation. For predestination *includes* the merits from free will. As cause predestination does not posit an effect without the contingent cause: the free will. Thus the whole cause includes a necessary/universal cause and a variable/particular one. And when this is the case, the effect, which depends on the contingent cause, is contingent, being more proximate to the variable than the universal cause. "The reason is, because an effect is more assimilated to a particular cause than to a universal one."[134] Thus predestination is necessary according to consequence from the perspective of the Divine Will, but contingent according to the nature of man. And again, like foreknowledge, predestination implies the hypothetical necessity of knowledge of the predestined, and not the absolute necessity that is in opposition to contingent things.

Because God "transcends all temporal change and abides in the immediacy of His presence," his knowledge "embraces all the infinite recesses of past and future and views them in the immediacy of its knowing as though they are happening in the present."[135] Thus, his knowing of future contingents only makes them necessary in the sense that if he knows they are happening, they must be happening. Yet this does not take away the voluntary acts of man. For this foreknowledge includes free will and its cooperation; and just as predestination (as cause) does not impose necessity of consequent, neither does foreknowledge.

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[133] St. Anselm, *Why God became Man*, Bk. II, ch. 17; and his *On the Concord of God's Foreknowledge and Free Will*, q. 1, ch. 3; see also Boethius, *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, Bk. V, prose 3 and 6.
[134] St. Bonaventure, I. Sent., d. XL, art. 2, q. 1, note 1.
[135] Boethius, *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, Bk. V, prose 6.

In like manner, Bonaventure explains the certainty of predestination from both the perspective of God foreordaining and on the part of the thing coming forth. He states:

> If we speak of the certitude on the part of the thing, since this is said against contingency, in this manner I say, that there is no greater certitude in the number of the elect, than there is in the number of other future contingents because the outcome of our salvation and damnation depends out of our liberty. But if we speak of the certitude on the part of *God precognizing*, in this manner the outcome of salvation is certain with the certitude of *infallibility*, because the Divine Foreknowledge does not fail, and for that reason it always comes forth, as He has foreknown.[136]

St. Bonaventure then goes on to answer the questions regarding election, and thus gives us his view of the order and differences between election and predestination. It is in this question that we find a very similar presentation in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas, for Bonaventure states that according to the will of God the elect are chosen in preference to others only after a prior *affectum dilectionis.* God first wills the good of salvation (dilection), then wills the good to some in preference to others (election), and lastly, orders and directs the elect to the end of eternal life (predestination). This election he says, refers both to God's antecedent will to save all, and to his consequent will, presenting the principle of predilection, viz., that one is not better than the other unless loved more by God.[137]

Following St. Augustine, the Seraphic Doctor does not attribute the cause of predestination to foreseen merits strictly speaking. In the order of predestination there is the divine type, and then the effects.[138] As to the former, the divine and eternal design, God is the efficient cause of predestination, for that which is eternal cannot be merited. As to the effect called *glorification* (and the contrary effect of punishment), the merits of the elect are the

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[136] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent., d.XL, art. 2, q. 2.
[137] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d.XL, art. 3, q. 1, 2; St. Thomas, *Summa*, I, q. 23, art. 4; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 64.
[138] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent., d. XLI, art. 1, q. 1. "To understand this it must be noted, that in predestination three (things) are understood: the first is an *eternal proposal*; the second is *a temporal 'being made pleasing'* [temporalis gratificatio]; but the third (is) an *eternal glorification*. Similarly in reprobation three (things) are understood, namely an *eternal proposal*, and a *temporal obduration*, and an *eternal damnation*"

cause.[139] But what about the *justification* of the elect? Or the contrary hardness of heart/*obduration* of the reprobate? Are these to be assigned a meritorious cause? St. Bonaventure treats this question by applying the different kinds of merit:

> *Obduration* simply falls under demerit or under an evil merit, but *'being made pleasing'* [justification] falls simply neither under merit, nor simply outside of it. For there is the merit of *the fitting*, of *the worthy* and of *the completely worthy*. The merit of *the fitting* [meritum congrui] is, when a sinner does what is *in himself* and *on behalf of himself*. The merit of *the worthy* [meritum digni], when a just man does something *for another*. The merit of *the completely worthy* [meritum condigni], when the just man works *on behalf of himself*, because grace is ordained for this on account of the one completely worthy [ex condigno]; but to merit grace for another is not entirely *on account of the one completely worthy*, because the sinner (for whom he merits) is unworthy of every good, nor is it only *on account of the fitting* [ex congruo], because the just man is worthy to be heard out. Therefore '*being made pleasing*' can fall under the merit of *the fitting* in regard to him being made pleasing, and under the merit of *the worthy* as much as regards another holy man, (and) under the merit of *the completely worthy* as much as regards neither, and this, properly speaking, is merit.[140]

So even though one can merit justification *ex congruo* and not *ex condigno*, the reason why one is better than another (as previously stated) is the love of God and God's actual grace. Thus, why does God chose to love some more than others according to Bonaventure? For it would seem that if the elect were loved more simply according to God's will then the divine universal will to save all is in question. "Likewise, if there were no other reason than (His) Will, therefore when God proposes to damn (someone) by reproving (him), if He would will to damn someone without any reason but (His) Will alone, therefore He seems (to be) most cruel, and that He has made men for punishment."[141]

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[139] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent., d. XLI, art. 1, q. 1: "As much as regards the *first* and *last* it must be similarly judged: for the last ones, namely *the punishment* and *the glory* simply fall under merit; but the first, namely the eternal proposal, by the very (fact) that it is eternal, it cannot have a meriting. However as much as regards *the middle one*, which is *'being made pleasing'* and *obduration*, it must be judged differently."
[140] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XLI, art. 1, q. 1.
[141] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XLI, art. 1, q. 2.

Unlike the previous question, this one deals directly with the 'Divine proposal' element of predestination. Bonaventure seeks to affirm God's sovereign will and the gratuitous nature of his gifts of grace, but also his justice, fairness, and goodness connected to his antecedent will to save all men. He first states that according to relationship of the willed to the divine will, there is no meritorious cause or reason for election/reprobation. Yet he says that there are reasons of congruity or fittingness according to the thing willed/connoted, objecting the position of some that it is sufficient to respond that God wills some to be elected over others simply because it pleases him, and that because God is the Cause of causes and the Reason for reasons that his reason is right by virtue of the rectitude of the divine will.

Bonaventure urges those who hold this position to beware of assigning to God a manifest reason that "derogates His Will" by not attending to the hidden and wonderful aspect of God's design. In *general*, God's reason is certain: he elects some to manifest his mercy and reprobates others to manifest his justice. Yet in *particular*, "For what reason does He want to justify one rather than another, with the two demonstrated (to be) similar? Because there can be many reasons of congruency, for that reason there is no certitude on *the part of the thing*. And for that reason since our cognition depends from the certitude of the thing, no one can find a certain reason, unless he has certain (signs) through revelation of that for which there are doubts."[142] Thus even though he differs from St. Thomas on this point (who states that the reason God chooses some for glory and reprobates others has only the reason of the divine will) by affirming many reasons of congruency on the part of the thing willed, Bonaventure still maintains the

[142] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XLI, art. 1, q. 2.

principle of predilection and states that to narrow the reason for predestination to future merits of the elect is dangerous.[143]

Conclusion of Medieval Theologians Before St. Thomas

What emerged from the 9th century controversy over predestination was again the Church's insistence that God wills that all men without exception to be saved. In addition, that the redemption wrought in Christ is universal. As it concerns those who are lost, God is not formally the author of the evil acts of men, but justly condemns after the consideration of demerits. Whether Gottschalk actually taught it or not, there is at this point a rejection of "double predestination," which states that some men are eternally damned without consideration of their demerits.

After the 9th century controversy had long been over, St. Anselm again attempted to describe the mystery of predestination. Following St. Augustine, he teaches God's primary authorship of salutary acts yet coming entirely from us as true (secondary) causes, that is, he affirms that God's foreknowledge/predestination is primary, yet in no way interferes with our free will. Thus we see in Anselm an advancement concerning our doctrine. Presenting the emphases of the Eastern Fathers and St. Augustine, Anselm shows that God's predestination does not result in human acts that occur out of an absolute necessity. Instead, he says that God predestines according to a conditional necessity, which includes the free will of man. And thus he attempts to reconcile

[143] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XLI, dub. 1. "In this part are the doubts about (Master Peter's) text and first concerning this which Master (Peter) says: *However certain (authors) have opined, that God had elected Jacob for this reason, because He foreknew that (he was) going to be such* etc…It seems that this position is not an opinion, but a manifest heresy, because he who posits this, posits, that grace is to be given to a man not freely, but by God on account of merits; and that is the worst error, namely, the error of Pelagius…I respond: It must be said, that the "*for this reason*" can mean *a meritorious cause* and/or *a reckoning of congruity*. If it means a meritorious cause, thus, though at first sight it does not mean an error, yet an error follows after it. But if it means a *reckoning of congruity*, thus it does not mean an error; but yet it does have a certain temerity, because it strives to render an account of God's hidden depth; and for that reason it was worthy of retraction in each manner."

predestination and human liberty by a consideration of divine foreknowledge and a two-fold description of necessity.

Peter Lombard, like the other Scholastics that follow Augustine, teaches the total gratuitousness of God's grace such that it precedes and accompanies merit. Mercy is the effect of grace. As it concerns obduration and reprobation Peter Lombard teaches according to Augustine that God withholds mercy. Though he states that man is not made worse by God's imposition, there is a "not wishing to have mercy" on the part of God in reprobation and a "not having mercy" on the part of obduration. Thus before God's foreknowledge of man's sins stands God's eternal plan which in some way permissively effects reprobation as it does predestination. This may be referred to as a non-election, or negative reprobation.

St. Bonaventure states that according to the will of God the elect are chosen in preference to others only after a prior *affectum dilectionis.* God first wills the good of salvation, then wills the good to some in preference to others, and lastly, orders and directs the elect to the end of eternal life (predestination). This election he says, refers both to God's antecedent will to save all, and to his consequent will, representing the principle of predilection, viz., that one is not better than the other unless loved more by God.

According to Bonaventure (along with Peter Lombard), in *general*, God's reason to choose some as the elect over others is certain: he elects some to manifest his mercy and reprobates others to manifest his justice. Yet he differs from Peter Lombard when he says that in *particular*, there are *reasons* of fittingness or congruency that he justifies one rather than another, with the two demonstrated (to be) similar. Although this is not to assign a cause of the eternal decree of predestination in the elect, there can be many reasons of congruency, and for that reason there is no certitude on *the part of the thing*. And for that reason since our cognition depends from the

certitude of the thing, no one can find a certain reason, unless he has certain (signs) through revelation of that for which there are doubts."[144] Thus even though he differs from the Lombard on this point (and as we will see also St. Thomas, who states that the reason God chooses some for glory and reprobates others has only the reason of the divine will) by affirming many reasons of congruency on the part of the thing willed, Bonaventure still maintains the principle of predilection and states that to assign the reason for predestination to future merits of the elect is Pelagian and therefore dangerous.

E. Magisterial Statements

The doctrine of predestination has been proposed by the Magisterium of the Church as having been divinely revealed both in general and particular counsels. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) presupposes the doctrine in a few chapters and in the canons on justification.[145] Though these texts do not give us the explicit positive teaching, they do so implicitly, by way of condemnation of erroneous positions such as rash presumption of predestination, and positive reprobation before the consideration of demerits. In light of Trent's doctrinal definitions and statements from the particular Councils of Quiersy (853) and Valence (855), Ludwig Ott presents the *De Fide* teaching as follows: "God, by His Eternal Resolve of Will, has predetermined certain men to eternal blessedness."[146]

It is stated in Quiersy that the "Omnipotent God wishes all men without exception to be saved [1 Tim. 2:4] although not all will be saved. However, that certain ones are saved, is the gift of the one who saves; that certain ones perish, however, is the deserved punishment of those who

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[144] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XLI, art. 1, q. 2.
[145] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 805, 814-816 (defending free will against protestant heresy), 825, 827.
[146] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 242.

perish."[147] In addition, that Christ died for all men because he has assumed human nature.[148] Similarly stated in the Valance text is "faithfully we confess the predestination of the elect to life, and the predestination of the impious to death; in the election, moreover, of those who are to be saved, the mercy of God precedes the merited good. In the condemnation, however, of those who are to be lost, the evil which they have deserved precedes the just judgment of God."[149] The combination of the two statements gives us the conclusion that predestination concerns God's preceding mercy and the gratuitous nature of the distribution of grace to life and glory *ante praevisa merita*. In terms of reprobation, they make a distinction between the two orders. For God does not will eternal loss but only positively reprobates *post praevisa demerita*.

In addition to the two above mentioned particular councils, the Second Council of Orange (529) must be included, yet held with greater certainty (indeed "the canons of this council have the force of a solemn definition"[150]) because of the confirmation of Pope Boniface II (530-532) in a letter written to Caesarius of Arles.[151] The epilogue states unequivocally that "we not only *do not* believe that some have been truly predestined to evil by divine power, but also with every execration we pronounce anathema upon those, if there are [any such], who wish to believe so great an evil."[152] And also that "God's bounty" and nothing pertaining to our human nature, is the cause of the faith both before we are converted and initiated into Christ, and the ability to perform salutary acts afterwards which lead to heaven. Thus Orange gives us the *De Fide* rejection of positive reprobation *ante praevisa demerita*, yet does not say anything about negative reprobation. As Ott puts it, "God, by an Eternal Resolve of His Will, predestines certain

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[147] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 318.
[148] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 319.
[149] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 322.
[150] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 39.
[151] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 200a. The letter is entitled *Per filium nostrum*, January 25, 531.
[152] Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God*, 200. Emphasis added.

men, on account of their foreseen sins, to eternal rejection."[153] Also, that again God is the primary cause of the effects of predestination.

The Council of Trent taught that God gives men a truly sufficient grace that yet remains inefficacious when it states:

> If anyone shall say that man's free will moved and aroused by God does not cooperate by assenting to God who rouses and calls, whereby it disposes and prepares itself to obtain the grace of justification, and that it cannot dissent, if it wishes, but that like something inanimate it does nothing at all and is merely in a passive state: let him be anathema.[154]

Trent also affirms the universal nature of the redemption offered. As the Council's decree on justification states, Jesus Christ has been sent to redeem the Jews and the gentiles, that "all men might receive the adoption of sons" by the propitiation of Christ's blood "not for our sins only, *but also for those of the whole world* [1 John 2:2]."[155] However, though "Christ died for all [2 Cor. 5:15], not all receive the benefits of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is communicated (chap. 3)"[156] Also, Trent insists against the Reformers that the human will remains free under the influence of efficacious grace, which is not irresistible. Lastly, Trent explicitly speaks of predestination when it condemns a rash presumption that one claims to know for certain that they are numbered among the predestined.[157]

Finally, in regard to general council documents, we have the contemporary statement from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in *Lumen Gentium*, "All the elect, before time began, the Father "foreknew and predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rm 8:29) He planned to assemble in the holy

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[153] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 245.
[154] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 814.
[155] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 794.
[156] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 795.
[157] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 805, 825, 826.

Church all those who would believe in Christ."[158] The dogmatic constitution presents a vision of the Church that includes the Father's eternal predestination of the elect in the Son from the foundation of the world, to be adopted sons, and to re-establish all things in Him through the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion of Chapter 1: Historical Overview to the 13th Century

In the first chapter we have highlighted the major historical and theological developments of predestination up to the time of St. Thomas Aquinas. Looking first at Sacred Scripture, we provided the biblical data revealing the principle elements of our doctrine. The Old Testament contains a rich notion of God's *foreknowledge, general and special providence*, and *governance* (Isaiah 46:9-10; Psalm 139:16; Daniel 13:42; Wis. 8:1; Wis. 8:8). In addition, God's dealings with the Israelites reveals his *predilection* whereby he chooses some to be in intimate relationship (Deut 4:37; 7:8; 10:15). There are references to the *Book of Life*, which metaphorically refers to God's foreknowledge of those whom he has eternally predestined for life. In the OT this was first understood as a temporal blessing of long life and only gradually understood as a resurrection of the dead unto life everlasting.

The New Testament gives us the fullest revelatory data on predestination, especially in St. Paul's letters. There are those passages which show the reality of predestination and emphasize the divine intention and primacy of God's will in the causal order of predestination (Mt 25: 34; Lk 10:20; Jn. 10:27-30; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8: 28-30; Rom. 9: 6-24; Ephesians 1:4-5). Others emphasize the *divine desire for all to be saved*, and that God's eternal love for rational creatures has no limit or deficiency (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim 2:4). Still others present the role of *free*

[158] *Lumen Gentium* 2.

will in co-operation with *grace* in the effects of predestination such as the *call, justification, merit, and glorification* of man (1 Cor 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Philippians 2:12). We also saw that certain persons are chosen by God that constitute the predestined (Matt. 20:16; 24:31: Luke 12:32; Romans 8:33; Eph. 1:4), and that their *election is efficacious* and thus they will infallibly obtain heaven (John 10:27 f.; cf. Matt. 24:24; John 6:39; Romans 8:30). Lastly, that God's predestination is *ante praevisa merita* (Luke 12:32; John 15:16; Romans 11:5; Eph. 1:4; Romans 8:29). As St. Paul states, "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…so it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy."[159]

Therefore, taken as a whole, Sacred Scripture gives us the overwhelming notion of God's primacy in the order of creation and redemption. Predestination in this context becomes revelatory of God, a properly *theocentric* reality. There is no doubt that man is the object of this eternal plan, and Scripture exhorts us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Yet what emerges from our study is the *initiative* and *aid* of God at every point of the Christian life; the result is that we glory in God, and whatever we accomplish in the supernatural life redounds to him. The other overwhelming notion is the nature of God's initiative and aid in Christ. In other words, what it means for God to will the salvation of all men. This *Christocentric* content of predestination is found in the Romans passage: "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."[160]

Then in our study of the Fathers, we saw the Greeks anxious to defend the *free-will* of the human person and the justice of God in the face of the deterministic tendencies of Gnosticism.

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[159] Romans 9:11-16.
[160] Romans 8:29.

This was a result of the biblical affirmation (and thus tension) that the good actions of free men can be reduced to God as primary Cause. As St. John Chrysostom states: "What do you have which you have not received but is the effect of your personal power? Absolutely nothing."[161] St. Cyril of Alexandria: "Therefore every inclination which carries us to justice comes from God the Father."[162] St. John Damascene: "God himself is the beginning and cause of all good."[163] Thus even though the Eastern Fathers teach a gratuitous predestination to glory, they had to defend the ability of man to reject God's grace and be the determining factor in reprobation. Also, St. John Damascene gives us the important distinction between God's *antecedent* and *consequent* will when addressing the problem of the efficacy of said will. On his account, God wills salvation for all antecedently and according to his good pleasure, but also wills consequently and simply that which actually takes place, for example, the punishment of the sinner.

As we saw, it is helpful to follow some who interpret the Greek and Latin Fathers to be teaching predestination from the perspective of the *order of execution*, or in a *concrete* way so as to exhort Christians to good works and defend against the spiritual apathy that may result from the deterministic tendencies of Gnosticism. For in the historical sequence of predestination, it is the case that man's actions merit in some sense glorification, even though preceded and accompanied by divine grace.

It is with St. Augustine that we found a watershed moment in the history and theology of our doctrine. Driving much of what St. Augustine taught on predestination was his refutation of the Pelagian heresy via St. Paul. The Pelagian error amounts to an exalted understanding of

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[161] St. John Chrysostom, *In epistolam primam ad Corinthios, homilia* 12.2 (MG 61.98), quoted in Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 74.
[162] St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Explanatio in epistolam ad Romanos*, 8:28 (MG 74.828), quoted in Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 74.
[163] St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, 2.30 (MG 94.972), quoted in Farrelly, *Predestination, Grace, and Free Will*, 74.

freedom of the will as having the natural capacity to obtain faith, good works of virtue, and eternal life. In contrast to this, St. Augustine taught the doctrine of *massa damnata* (or the *massa perditionis* or *massa peccati*). He teaches according to St. Paul that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, that all are in a state of original sin which is justly deserving of everlasting punishment. Man is unable in this state to will and do supernatural good. Thus God's predestination "which has the good for its object," is "the foreknowledge and the preparation of God's favors, by which those who are delivered are most certainly delivered,"[164] that is, the foreknowledge of God's favors as the primary cause of predestination, not the merits of man. Augustine insists on the sheer gratuitousness of God's grace as taught by St. Paul in Sacred Scripture, both to come to faith, and to persevere unto life. His influence on the subsequent accounts of predestination as a principle authority is lasting.

The medieval study began with two heretical extremes represented by Gottshalk (double predestination) and John Scottus Eriugena (predestination reduced to passive divine foreknowledge/exaltation of human free will over and above God's special providential ordering). We saw that the magisterial statements that responded to these errors affirmed God's universal will to save and that Christ died for all, even though not all are saved. In addition, there is the condemnation of a positive reprobation without the consideration of man's demerits.

After the 9th century debate there is a period of calm concerning the doctrine. It is again picked up by the Father of Scholasticism: St. Anselm. We saw that in many ways the Scholastics affirmed St. Augustine's teaching, yet sought in their descriptions a reason (not a cause) for why God elects some and not others. Anselm advanced the development of Catholic teaching by seeking to reconcile the two great Patristic contributions: on the one hand,

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[164] St. Augustine, "On the Gift of Perseverance," 14, 303. *Haec est praedestinatio sanctorum, nihil aliud: praescientia scilicet, et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur.*

presupposing St. Augustine's emphasis on predilection and the utter gratuitousness of God's grace and predestination. On the other, that even though God permissively wills evil acts, man is their author. He attempts to reconcile predestination and human liberty by a consideration of two types of necessity. Peter Lombard, like the other Scholastics that follow Augustine, teaches the total gratuitousness of God's grace such that it precedes and accompanies merit, and also teaches according to Augustine that God withholds mercy. Though he explicitly shows that man is not made worse by God's will, there is a "not wishing to have mercy" on the part of God in reprobation and a "not having mercy" on the part of obduration. Thus before God's foreknowledge of man's sins stands God's eternal plan which in some way effects reprobation as it does predestination.

St. Bonaventure states that according to the will of God the elect are chosen in preference to others only after a prior *affectum dilectionis.* According to Bonaventure, in *general*, God's reason to choose some as the elect over others is certain: he elects some to manifest his mercy and reprobates others to manifest his justice. Yet in *particular*, "there can be many *reasons* of congruency, for that reason there is no certitude on *the part of the thing*. And for that reason since our cognition depends from the certitude of the thing, no one can find a certain reason, unless he has certain (signs) through revelation of that for which there are doubts."[165] Thus even though he differs from Peter Lombard and St. Thomas on this point by affirming many reasons of congruency on the part of the thing willed, Bonaventure still maintains the principle of predilection and states that to narrow the reason for predestination to future merits of the elect is erroneous.

Lastly, we saw that in light of Trent's doctrinal definitions and statements from the particular Councils of Quiersy (Denz 853) and Valence (Denz 855) that the *De Fide* Catholic

[165] St. Bonaventure, I, Sent. d. XLI, art. 1, q. 2.

teaching is that "God, by His Eternal Resolve of Will, has predetermined certain men to eternal blessedness."[166] (Denz 316, 320-322) In addition, there are eight conclusions that can be taken from various magisterial statements: 1. God predestines no one to evil (Denz 200, 827). 2. God wills the salvation of all men (Denz 318). 3. Christ died for all men (Denz 318, 319). 4. There is a truly sufficient grace and yet remains inefficacious (Denz 797, 814, 1295f). 5. The grace of conversion is offered to sinners (Denz 794, 797). 6. Those who do not convert refuse the grace of conversion. God permits this but is not the cause of it (Denz 816, 827). 7. The human will remains free under the influence of efficacious grace, which is not irresistible (Denz 797, 814, 815, 1093). 8. "That no one, so long as he lives in this mortal state, ought so far to presume concerning the secret mystery of divine predestination, as to decide for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestined."[167]

[166] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 242.
[167] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 805.

Chapter 2: St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas' importance in this paper derives from his faithful account of the classical theocentric description of predestination in the Catholic theological tradition. To be sure, Thomas' teaching (even given its lucidity) is not the last word on the mystery of predestination. But for the purposes of this paper it does much to correct the most commonly held view of God's action vis-à-vis human freedom. As Hubert McCabe describes it, "God, it is thought, has endowed man with independence from him, so that a person may choose freely whether to serve God or love God. This, it is thought, accounts for the possibility of moral evil, and indeed of moral good."[168] McCabe identifies this position as "a false and idolatrous picture of God."[169] As we shall see, Thomas' placement of predestination within his theology of the one God gives us a proper picture of our dependent, yet dignified free relationship to God's creative operation in nature and in grace.

A. The Doctrine of Predestination: Principle Claims

Following the hierarchical pattern of argument in the *Summa Theologiae*, one must begin any exposition of a particular question therein with a consideration of what Aquinas deemed the highest authority in matters theological: revelation. It is safe to say that Thomas' teaching on predestination is guided throughout by St. Paul's treatment of the same topic, and in the end, determines the conclusions drawn by the Angelic Doctor. Thus, this section will begin with a brief look at St. Thomas' commentary on a few passages of St. Paul, followed by the main body,

[168] Hubert McCabe, *God Matters* (London: Cassell Publishers, 1987), 11 (John Dool, "Predestination, Freedom, and the Logic of Love," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, Volume 11, No. 3, Summer (2008), 108).
[169] McCabe, *God Matters*, 11.

which will be an exposition of the doctrine of predestination as found in St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*.[170]

St. Thomas' Commentaries on Sacred Scripture

In his commentary on Ephesians, the holy Doctor comes to three notable points that inform his articles in the *Summa*. The first is that according to Ephesians 1: 5: "He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will," St. Thomas comments, "What the Apostle says, therefore, about his predestinating us unto the adoption of children can refer to the imperfect assimilation to the Son of God possessed in this life through grace. But it is more probable that it refers to the perfect assimilation to the Son of God which will exist in the fatherland."[171] Thus St. Thomas sees in St. Paul a causal relationship between grace and glory in predestination. Moreover, that predestination properly signifies a complete reality of a life of grace and a life of glory.

Secondly, in reference to Ephesians 1:4, that "*He chose us*, I say, not because we were holy—we had not yet come into existence—but that we should be holy in virtues and unspotted by vices."[172] Thirdly, according to Ephesians 1: 5 he again stresses the placement of predestination in the will of God: "Divine predestination is neither necessitated on God's part nor due to those who are predestined; it is rather *according to the purpose of his will*."[173]

In his treatment of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and specifically Romans 8: 29-30, St. Thomas gives a basic exposition on predestination, which can be summarized as follows: Predestination exists in the mind of God from all eternity, but also is distinct from

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[170] As Garrigou-Lagrange notes in his *Predestination*, though St. Thomas discusses this question elsewhere, the *Summa* presents his most mature and definitive treatment of this topic. For parallel discussions in St. Thomas: *Com. On Sent*., I, d. XL, XLI; *Contra Gentiles*, Bk. III, chap. 164; *De verit*., q. 6.
[171] Thomas Aquinas, *Com. On Ephesians* 1:5, Lecture 1.
[172] *Com. on Ephesians*, 1:4, Lecture 1.
[173] *Com. on Ephesians*, 1:5, Lecture 1.

foreknowledge in that it implies causality in regard to the execution. He again states that the reason for predestination is not the foreknowledge of merit, but God's eternal preparation of the effects of predestination. For God predestines and thus calls; and in the calling, justifying, and glorification of the saint, predestination begins to be carried out and is consummated under the direction of God as primary cause. In a word, "St. Thomas holds, therefore, that according to this text of St. Paul…everything that directs the predestined to eternal salvation is the effect of predestination."[174]

Predestination in the *Summa Theologiae*

With a glimpse into the Scriptural origins on this matter, and St. Thomas' exegesis thereof, we may proceed with a direct treatment of first five articles proposed in the 23rd Question of the *Summa Theologiae*.[175] In the first article, St. Thomas asks whether men are predestined by God; and in the *Sed contra* simply answers with nothing but a quote from St. Paul: "Whom He predestined, them He also called."[176] We immediately are faced with the authority of Scripture stressing not only the reality of predestination—but also with the particular text and its context—the effect of the eternal decree of God. In the body of the article we come to see this in the explanation of how predestination is a part of providence, and thus that in regard to rational creatures "it is fitting that God should predestine men."[177]

Now this fittingness is directly related to God's providence, which directs all things to their end. St. Thomas continues with a distinction between an end, which is beyond the capacity of created nature, viz., eternal life consisting of the Beatific Vision, and an end which is proper

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[174] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 93: This text from Lagrange was heavily relied upon for the location and structuring of pertinent commentary on Scripture passages, and for what follows, his exposition of Question 23 of the *Summa*. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Com. On Romans* 8: 29-30, Lecture 6, 340-349.
[175] Though there are 8 articles, it suffices for the purposes of this essay to treat of the first five, which give the bulk of St. Thomas' thought on the matter.
[176] Rom. 8:30.
[177] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 1.

to the natural capacity of a created being. The former is reached only by the agency of another because of its intrinsic inability to exceed the limits of its own nature, and thus for a rational creature to attain beatitude requires God's operation. After establishing predestination as being a part of providence, and making a distinction of ends, St. Thomas is thus able to define predestination as the type of the direction of a rational creature towards the end of life eternal.

An interesting point worth noting is made in the *Reply to Objection 4*. St. Thomas argues that it is not fitting for everyone to know by revelation who the predestined are, for those who were not predestined would despair, while those who were predestined would become negligent in their certainty. This is a good example of the anticipation of St. Thomas' thought for later heresies and his habit of orthodox thought in light of Scripture.[178]

In the second article, another element is added to our definition of predestination clarifying the causal role of God in his possession of the "type," and in its execution. Though the latter does exist in the predestined, but only passively and in the threefold effect of call, justification, and glorification of the individual, predestination as a part of providence is properly in God. For providence exists as a type/plan in the divine mind, which is executed in God's governing of the created order. Thus St. Thomas gives the refined definition that "predestination is a kind of type of the ordering of some persons towards eternal salvation, *existing in the divine mind*."[179]

The third article treats of that subjectively disturbing alternative which so decisively manifests the justice of God: reprobation. St. Thomas appeals to Sacred Scripture in his *Sed contra* in defense of the reality of reprobation: "I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau."[180] In

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[178] Council of Trent: *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 805, 825; Phil. 2: 12.
[179] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 2. *Unde manifestum est quod praedestinatio est quaedam ratio ordinis aliquorum in salutem aeternam, in mente divina existens*.
[180] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 3; Malachi 1:2,3.

the *Respondeo* he explains that God reprobates some men because it fits within the providential order "to permit certain defects in those things which are subject to providence…Thus, as predestination is a part of providence, in regard to those ordained to eternal salvation, so reprobation is a part of providence in regard to those who turn aside from that end."[181] It appears then that God permissively wills, that is, he allows persons to "fall into and remain in sin (negative reprobation), and for this defection it inflicts upon them the penalty of damnation (positive reprobation)."[182]

This article in one extreme distinguishes orthodox Catholic teaching from the errors both within the Church's fold and outside of it;[183] and the point of departure is clearly articulated by St. Thomas in the *Reply to Objection 2*. Those who err on the side of Predestinarianism, i.e., the Reformation doctrine of John Calvin, conflate the causality of predestination and reprobation. For Calvin, God positively and unconditionally reprobates some men, that is, he wills from eternity that some men are positively damned without reference to their future demerits.[184] And as already noted above, the correct understanding of God's role in reprobation is partly that of a permissive will, and only in reference to future demerits does he positively reprobate. It is worth quoting Thomas' reply for clarity and precision of language:

> 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

[181] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 3.
[182] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 86.
[183] It is part of misguided popular Catholic theology to deny the dogma of predestination and reprobation in order to exalt the free will of man, and as an attempt to distance oneself from the traditional Calvinist position of absolute reprobation. Though it is often times manifest in the laity as material heresy and specifically functional Pelagianism, it is nonetheless erroneous and scandalous. It is this reality that has motivated this essayist to a study of St. Thomas' doctrine on predestination as representative of one orthodox school on this subject.
[184] In so far as one may summarize a system which is subject to large variations in exposition, and to many nuances, the traditional Calvinist position on reprobation is here presented from Ott's, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 245. For a complete exposition of the Calvinist position on Predestination see Loraine Boettner's, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957).

> 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.[185]

St. Thomas strongly affirmed both predestination and free will, and as we shall see, the exercise of man's free will takes nothing away from the universal will of God to save all.

The fourth article answers the question *Whether the predestined are chosen by God*? This question (which is answered affirmatively) speaks to the heart of the problem of reconciling God's will to save all, and his election of only some. *Objection 3* raises this concern by arguing that, "election implies some discrimination. Now God "wills all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4). Therefore, predestination which ordains men towards eternal salvation, is without election."[186] In response, St. Thomas answers that God does indeed will all men to be saved by His antecedent will, which is to will relatively; and thus not by His consequent will, which is to will simply.[187] This distinction is made clear by considering an earlier article in the *Summa Theologiae*. In it, St. Thomas argues that God's will is always fulfilled. The apparent problem of the loss of some men to sin and damnation is rectified by the fact that, in that very end, those who fall into sin and remain in sin unto damnation, never fall out of God's universal order in fulfilling his consequent will of justice. For, to will consequently is to will truly and simply, and for God this is always efficacious. As St. Thomas explains it, "The will is directed to things as they are in themselves, and in themselves they exist under particular qualifications. Hence we will a thing simply, inasmuch as we will it when all particular circumstances are considered; and

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[185] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 3, ad 2um; *Sent*. I. 40. 4.2. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 244: Definition of technical terms for reprobation: *positive reprobation*=has as its object condemnation to the eternal punishment of hell; *negative reprobation*=has for its object exclusion from the Beatific Vision; *conditioned reprobation*=dependent on the prevision of future demerits; *unconditioned reprobation*=independent of the prevision of future demerits.
[186] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 4.
[187] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 4, ad 3um.

this is what is meant by willing consequently…Thus it is clear that whatever God simply wills, takes place."[188]

In contrast, antecedent will concerns what is good in itself regardless of the circumstances, not to a thing as it actually is. This will is not efficacious in the sense that the good, "whether natural or supernatural, easy or difficult to acquire, is realized only with its accompanying circumstances…Thus God wills antecedently that all men should be saved, although, in view of a greater good, of which he alone is the judge, he permits that some commit sin and are lost."[189]

In the body of the article St. Thomas shows that election is a part of predestination, as predestination is a part of providence, and that providence is also prudence. These relationships can be reduced to the notion of providence as prudence being the "plan existing in the intellect directing the ordering of some things towards an end."[190] Now in the order of reason, to direct something to an end requires the will to choose the end, and thus, predestination presupposes that God wills the salvation of some. In this willing God loves (in that he wishes the good of salvation) and elects (in that he chooses this good for some and not for others). However, in God election comes after love because for God to will salvation in someone, that is to love him, is to cause that salvation in him, which is to elect him. This in reverse of man who does not cause the good in someone by loving them, but first elects someone, and then loves them because of the good already present in them. Thus for St. Thomas in the order of reason, God loves, then elects, and then predestines. We have seen this principle of predilection already in our discussion of the traditional interpretation of the Pauline texts concerning predestination. As Thomas articulates it in a previous question of the *Summa*, "since God's love is the cause of goodness in things…no

[188] *Summa theol*., I, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1um.
[189] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 74-75.
[190] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 4.

one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another."[191] On the part of the act of the will, God's love is the same for all. For his will is one and simple, and thus unchanging. But on the part of the good itself that God wills there are some whom he wills a greater good, and thus loves them more than others. Thomas quotes Augustine who says, "God loves all things that He has made, and amongst them rational creatures more, and of these especially those who are members of His only-begotten Son Himself."[192]

We come then to the *Article 5* of *Question 23*: *Whether the foreknowledge of merits is the cause of Predestination?* According to Garrigou-Lagrange, this article summarizes and systematizes what St. Thomas taught in his commentary on the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, viz., the sheer gratuity of God's predestination. In the main objection, we find a concern over answering the question negatively, for it would seem that God is unjust in choosing some men over others *ante praevisa merita*, when all are equal in nature and in our present state of original sin. St. Thomas responds with the authority of St. Paul: "Not by works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."[193] Now because by saving some God has predestined them to glory, it therefore follows that he does so *ante praevisa merita*; that God's knowledge of merits is not the cause of predestination.

St. Thomas then goes on to explain this answer by enumerating and rebutting three errors with regard to foreseen merits as the cause of predestination. The first, held by Origen, was that on account of the preexistence of souls before earthly life, that God predestined men because of the foreseen merit of said souls. The second, which is Pelagian, suggests that pre-existing merits in this life are the reason and cause of predestination. For according to this heresy, man is the cause of first grace and thus God gives glory based on the initiative of man. To both these errors

[191] *Summa theol*., I, q. 20, a. 3.
[192] *Summa theol*., I, q. 20, a. 3.
[193] Tit. 3:5.

St. Thomas uses St. Paul to refute.[194] As to the third opinion, that merits following justification are the reason of predestination in that God has foreknowledge of how one would make good use of the grace given, St. Thomas appeals to a principle of causality: "The providence of God produces effects through the operation of secondary causes."[195] This principle shows that there is no distinction between what comes from man's free will and the effect of predestination. For, "in the life of the predestined neither the good use of free will nor of grace can be given as the reason for predestination, for they are its effects. Why so? The reason is because we cannot distinguish between what is produced by the secondary cause and what is produced by the first cause; these are two total causes, not co-ordinated but subordinated."[196]

This leads to a conclusion that distinguishes a twofold way of seeing this causal process. First, taking the effect of predestination in 'particular,' one can say that the effect of predestination, namely, the pre-ordaining effect of grace, causes the pre-ordaining of merit, and that merit causes glory; this simply because subsequent effects are the reason of previous effects as final causes, and that the previous effects are meritorious causes of the subsequent.

Conversely, taking the effect of predestination in 'general,' one must say that man has no part as cause, because whatever makes man fit for salvation is included in the effect of predestination, which originates in God: "convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted."[197] Therefore according to Garrigou-Lagrange, St. Thomas holds that "everything in man which directs him to salvation, even the free determination of the salutary act, is the effect of the divine causality and of predestination;" thus, the sheer gratuitousness of predestination according to the Angelic Doctor. It must be emphasized as John Dool does in his article

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[194] Rom. 9:11, 12; 2 Cor. 3:5.
[195] *Summa theol*., I, q. 22, a. 3.
[196] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 99.
[197] Lamentations 5:21.

Predestination, Freedom, and the Logic of Love, "that there is no contradiction between human freedom and divine governance. These represent two distinct levels or modes of causation that are not and cannot be in competition."[198]

In *Reply to Objection 3*, St. Thomas directly answers the question of God's justice in predestination. It is in the goodness of God that we must find the reason that some are predestined while others are reprobated. Accordingly, because the purpose of the created order is to represent God's unity of goodness in multiplicity, it is the case that there are degrees of being and things in higher and lower places. "That this multiformity of grades may be preserved in things, God allows some evils, lest many good things should never happen…Let us consider the whole of the human race, as we consider the whole universe."[199] God's mercy is manifest in the predestined, while his justice is manifest in the punishment of the reprobate.

Though this is the reason God elects some and rejects others, the question still remains, why these and not those? The answer is simply that "there is no reason, except the divine will."[200] St. Thomas citing St. Augustine, pays due respect to the mystery of this election hidden within God, "Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err."[201] Yet this is not an injustice on the part of God, for predestination is gratuitous in nature, and the notion of justice does not require God to love all equally according to the gifts given (think of the Blessed Virgin Mary). "Far from being arbitrary, of course, the divine will is perfect goodness and therefore at one with the divine wisdom. In locating the mystery of predestination in the divine will, Aquinas does not invoke an ominous hidden God but rather insists simply that the cause of God's drawing certain rational creatures to beatific union with

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[198] Dool, "Predestination, Freedom, and the Logic of Love," 109.
[199] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3.
[200] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3.
[201] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3.

him cannot be found in creatures (as if God rewarded creatures for foreknown meritorious acts)."[202] Lagrange puts it this way, "God does not take away what is due to anyone, for He never commands what is impossible; on the contrary, however, by reason of His love He makes it really possible for all to observe His commandments, and He even grants out of His goodness more than strict justice would demand; for He often raises men many a time from the grave of sin, when He could leave them therein."[203]

Summary of St. Thomas' Doctrine

To summarize St. Thomas' doctrine on predestination, it will be helpful to present his views in a formula. It may be said that St. Thomas taught a *complete predestination* to grace and glory that is *absolute*, and thus *ante praevisa merita*. This view emphasizes God's universal causality. And in terms of his teaching on reprobation, St. Thomas holds a *negative reprobation* as it concerns sin, and a *conditioned positive reprobation* as it concerns damnation. [204] Fr. Lagrange, in a far less technical way summarizes St. Thomas' doctrine:

> St. Thomas, better than any of his predecessors, has set forth clearly the principles underlying the true extreme and apparently contradictory aspects of this great mystery…On the one hand, we have the shining light of the two principles enunciated by him, one of which declares against predestinarianism, God's infinite justice, that He never commands what is impossible and makes it possible for all to be saved. The other principle, directed against Pelagianism, declares the free intervention of Gods' mercy, that one thing would not be better than another unless it were loved more by God. But just as these two principles, viewed separately, are certain and clear, so is their reconciliation an impenetrable obscurity.[205]

Such is the twofold discourse that characterizes biblical revelation on predestination, and such is

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[202] Matthew Levering, "Biblical Thomism and the Doctrine of Providence," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Volume 83, Issue 3 (2009): 339, 344.
[203] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 103.
[204] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 243-244. He also gives definitions of technical terms: *incomplete* predestination=to grace only (*praedestinatio ad gratiam tantum*); *complete* predestination=to grace and glory; predestination to glory only (*praedestinatio ad gloriam tantum*); conditioned/hypothetical predestination= with the consideration of merits (*post praevisa merita*); absolute/unconditioned predestination=without the consideration of merits (*ante praevisa merita*).
[205] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 104.

the adherence of St. Thomas to revelation on the matter. "For such things as spring from God's will, and beyond the creature's due, can be made known to us only through being revealed in the Sacred Scripture in which the Divine Will is made known to us."[206] Though the divine causality suggests a radical dependence on the part of human action, it must be understood that this relationship is one of a dignified intimacy born of love. In light of St. Thomas' doctrine on predestination, we must reject the modern tendency in us to reduce God to just another agent in the universe that our freedom competes with. We must see him as he is, "as the mystery of love that lies behind the being of all that is."[207]

B. St. Thomas' Doctrine on Free-Will

Some anxious to assert human freedom and self-determination are weary of the notion of providence which extends even to the voluntary acts of man. The idea of free-will so prevalent in the modern mind equates freedom with causal autonomy even in its relationship to the Creator. As we shall see, St. Thomas teaches that free-will is indeed a reality, yet that this capacity of the rational creature is only possible because of God's immanent causal activity. In a word, "we are not free *in spite of* God, but *because of* God."[208]

The background to this doctrine is Thomas' understanding of primary and secondary causality, which is the relationship between God (the primary cause) and his creatures (secondary cause). As the primary cause of all things God is operative in every creature, yet as St. Thomas puts it in the *Summa Theologiae*, "there are certain intermediaries of God's providence; for He governs things inferior by superior, not on account of any defect in His power, but by reason of the abundance of His goodness; so that the dignity of causality is

[206] *Summa theol*., III, q. 1, a. 3.
[207] Dool, "Predestination, Freedom, and the Logic of Love," 108.
[208] Brian Davies, *The Thought ofThomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 175.

imparted even to creatures."[209] Thus we must take from this teaching that secondary causes are true causes, but derive their capacity to bring about effects from God. Furthermore, "not only is every motion from God as from the First Mover, but all formal perfection is from Him as from the First Act."[210]

So what is the nature of this relationship in terms of human free will? St. Thomas enumerates three ways that God works in us on the natural level in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. God does so as an end, for we will the good because God is the Supreme Good, and any operation of the will for the real good is a participation in him. Also, we act by virtue of God as the First Agent, because the First Agent moves the second to act, and because God is the First Mover, he moves all to act. Lastly, God also gives us our form and holds it in being, and so he is intimately working in us as we exercise our will in operation. God is thus the cause of action in every agent.[211] At this point it is again important to note that this causal relationship in no way damages man's free-will.[212]

One can better understand this relationship between providence and free-will in St. Thomas by further considering his concept of *motus* (motion) or as the subsequent controversialists (e.g. Domenico Bañez) called it *praemotio physica* (physical premotion). This *motus* or *praemotio physica* is the causal influence that God has over all created causes, and specifically for our discussion, the voluntary acts of man. As mentioned above, God is the cause of all causes in three ways. It is the second—that as First Cause God moves all operative powers

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[209] *Summa theol*. I. q. 22, a. 3; also, I. q. 19, a. 5, ad 2um; I. q. 19, a. 8.
[210] *Summa theol*, I-II, q. 109, a. 1; I, q. 105, a. 5.
[211] *Summa theol*, I, q. 105, a. 5.
[212] St. Thomas affirms this in I-II, q. 10, a. 4: "As Dionysius says (Div. Nom. Iv) "it belongs to Divine providence, not to destroy but to preserve the nature of things." Wherefore it moves all things in accordance with their conditions; so that from necessary causes through the Divine motion, effects follow of necessity; but from contingent causes, effects follow contingently. Since therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it, that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally."

such as the will—that *motus* refers to. As argued in the *Prima Pars*, God is simple.[213] This entitative attribute tells us that if God's essence is his existence[214], then his causal power is immanent, and that he undergoes no change in the relationship to the created cause. What does pass is the effect of his power which is the *motus* here considered. Man on the other hand is finite and composite, and is composed of existence and essence. If this be the case, then man's acts are not the same as his nature, and require an extrinsic cause to actualize the potentiality of his will. This extrinsic cause is the *motus* of God, which is the "creature's passage to action."[215] With this in mind one can see that God's causal role is not obtrusive to human freedom but the ground for acting freely at all.[216]

Attentive to Thomas' method and content in the *Summa Theologiae*, it is important to note that the doctrine of man's free-will is revealed in Sacred Scripture: "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel." (Ecclesiastisus 15:14) But the nature of this freedom is a truth of the natural order explicated by Thomas in the body of the articles in the *Prima pars* and *Prima secundae*. He notes the common sense observation that we engage in activities which can only have meaning if we are free: counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, and rewards and punishments. These activities (indeed the content of moral philosophy) would all be useless if man could not choose for himself a course of action among many.[217] He then goes on to show that there are things which act without judgment (those which lack knowledge like rocks), and those which act from judgment, but not a free judgment (those which judge according to natural instinct such as brute animals). The distinction between these

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[213] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 3.
[214] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 3, a. 4.
[215] T.C. O'Brien, "Premotion," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, 742. The presentation of premotion here follows that of the article in the NCE.
[216] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 2, ad 1.
[217] *Summa theol*., I. q. 83, a. 1; *De potentia dei*. 6; *De malo* 6.

lower creatures and man is that man judges from reason inasmuch as his intellect presents various objects to his will, none of which he is necessarily inclined to, but retains the power to follow opposite courses of action not being determined to one only. Concisely put, the will "is indifferently disposed to different things, no necessity results, and freedom abides."[218]

St. Thomas goes on to show that free will is an appetitive power that has as its proper act choice: "For we say that we have a free will because we can take one thing while refusing another; and this is to choose."[219] It is an appetitive power because choice has as its proper object the means to the end, namely the good of utility, and this good is the object of the appetite. And because choice is the act of the free will, the free will is an appetitive power. For example, the will simply considered desires a good end, such as the desire for happiness. The free will (which is an aspect of the same will power) acts to choose the good and useful means to attain happiness. Yet we must not stop here, for the only reason we can choose something is because our intellect provides options. So how exactly does the intellect come into play? St. Thomas, following Aristotle, shows that choice proceeds from two things, the intellect and the will. The former judges one thing to be preferred to another through counsel, and the latter accepts (gives consent to) that judgment of counsel. Even though both powers are involved, it is the will that finally chooses the good object, and thus choice and free will have to do with the appetite. As Aristotle calls it, choice/will is an intellectual appetite, not an appetitive intellect. (Ethic. vi, 2) Just as the intellect and reason are different aspects of the same power with different acts (apprehension and reasoning), so the will and free will are different aspects of the same power with different acts (willing and choosing).

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[218] Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, trans. Richard Regan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.
[219] *Summa theol.*, I. q. 83, a. 3.

Having established that voluntary acts are peculiar to man in question six of the *Prima secundae*, St. Thomas explores these acts of the will as regards the end and the means, and the role that the will plays in relation to the intellect. He shows that there are three acts of the will which correspond with the end: volition, enjoyment, and intention. In regard to volition, St. Thomas teaches that the will is hardwired to wish the good. As we said above the will is an intellectual appetite, and as such it has an inclination for something. Since everything, insofar as it has being is a good the inclination of the will is for some good. As Aristotle states: "the good is that which all desire." (Ethic. i., 1) Now because the will apprehends the good through a form, it is the case that the will desires the apprehended good, which could be a real good or an apparent one. Thus our free will is not able to choose evil qua evil; it only does so as an apparent good, or in other words, under the aspect of the good.[220]

Volition can be further understood by considering that which moves the will, and the manner in which it is moved. This consideration lies at the heart of Thomas' understanding of God's providence in relation to man's free will. For he will go on to say that not only does the will move itself to act, but that it is impossible for man to act without God as the exterior principle of the will.

First, as to that which moves the will, one must recognize that the will moves all powers to act (as opposed to the determination of the act) by reason of the end which is the will's object.[221] In other words, because the end of every other power is a particular good, the fact that

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[220] Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, 6: "Because good is the object of the will, we can conclude that the will wills things only under the aspect of good. But because many and different kinds of things are included in the aspect of good, we cannot conclude from the necessity to will things under the aspect of good that the will is necessarily moved to this or that."

[221] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 9, a. 1: "Now good in general, which has the nature of an end, is the object of the will. Consequently, in this respect, the will moves the other powers of the soul to their acts, for we make use of the other powers when we will. For the end and perfection of every other power, is included under the object of the will as some particular good: and always the art or power to which the universal end belongs, moves to their acts the arts or powers to which belong the particular ends included in the universal end."

the will's object is the universal good reveals that the will makes use of these other powers to that end. Thus the will is the efficient cause of all the powers in the exercise of their acts. We must then also recognize that the will moves itself to act "insofar as through willing the end it reduces itself to the act of willing the means."[222]

Yet, as to the determination of the act, the will is internally moved by the intellect as a formal cause, that is, the intellect presents the object to the will. In addition, the will can be moved by the sensitive appetite which may dispose one to apprehend the object in a certain way, as when someone overcome with anger might see an end as good that would be seen as bad when calm. So if the will is internally moved by itself, by the intellect, and by the sensitive appetite, is there some external cause that moves it? While it is clear that the object as an exterior principle moves the will, it is more difficult to understand how the will is first moved to the exercise of its act without there being an infinite regression of the will moving itself. This brings Thomas to a consideration of God's causal relationship to the will.

St. Thomas first shows that Sacred Scripture confirms that God moves the will as exterior principle: "It is God Who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish" (Phil 2:13). He then goes on to argue[223] that only the cause of a things nature can cause a *natural* movement in that thing. It follows then that the voluntary movement of the will can only be caused by an exterior principle that is also the cause of the will, namely, God. Thomas gives two reasons for this: 1. The will is a power of the rational soul and as such is caused by God alone by creation. 2. The will is ordained to the universal good which is God himself, and every other good is a participation in this universal good as a particular. And a particular cause does not give a universal inclination. Thomas summarizes this relationship nicely in his reply to objection 3:

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[222] *Summa theol*., I-II, q. 9, a. 4.
[223] *Summa theol*., I-II, q. 9. 6.

> God moves man's will, as the Universal Mover, to the universal object of the will, which is good. And without this universal motion, man cannot will anything. But man determines himself by his reason to will this or that, which is true or apparent good. Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the willing of something determinate, which is good; as in the case of those whom He moves by grace.[224]

Again, this relationship does not involve a movement of necessity which strips man of free will:

> Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it, that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally.[225]

Concerning the acts of the will in regard to the means, St. Thomas identifies three: to choose (attached to choice is counsel/deliberation), to consent, and to use. We have already established that choice is the proper act of the will and that it is such because we can take one thing rather than another. But why does man have the power to choose, or not to choose? In other words, why are our choices not necessitated with regard to the means? Our power of reason is the source of this freedom, for the will can choose whatever the reason can present as good. The reason can counsel the will "to will" or "not to will", and also it can counsel the will with regard to particular goods. Our reasoning faculty allows us to consider multiple means to the end in deliberation. For our reason considers particulars under the aspect of good and of lacking good. Happiness is the only thing willed of necessity as an end. And because choice is of the means which are particular goods, we are able to consent and choose from them freely, based on the judgment of deliberation.

Conclusion of St. Thomas' Doctrine of Free Will

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[224] *Summa theol*., a. 6.

[225] *Summa theol*., q. 10, a. 4; *On Evil*, 6: "And God indeed inevitably moves the will because of the efficacy of his causal power, which cannot fail. But because the nature of the will so moved is indifferently disposed to different things, no necessity results, and freedom abides. Just so, God's providence works infallibly in every kind of thing, although effects result contingently from contingent causes, insofar as God moves every kind of thing proportionally, each in its own way…The will when moved by God contributes something, since the will itself acts even though God moves it. And so the will's movement, although from an external source as the first source, is nevertheless not coerced."

Thomas teaches that free-will is indeed a reality, yet that this capacity of the rational creature is only possible because of God's immanent causal activity. As First Cause, God moves all operative powers including the created will. The will is indifferently disposed to different things, and this is the basis for the freedom of man. Yet we must again see that the very nature of freedom presupposes God's providential ordering. Even though the will is able to choose between objects, it is the case that it necessarily wills the good as end. Our free will is not able to choose evil qua evil; it only does so as an apparent good, or in other words, under the aspect of the good.

Freedom, then, is about secondary causality. We have been gifted a unique position in the manifestation of the divine plan: the capacity to exercise God's will as free intermediate causes. As John Dool expresses it, "The greatest dignity among created things belongs to human creatures, who possess a unique degree of freedom and can act as free, secondary causes. They can participate in God's causal activity in a unique way."[226] Rather than an obstacle to freedom, God's operation provides the very possibility for it. With this in view, one can start to see why God's eternal plan of predestination is not deterministic, but effected according to the free nature bestowed upon man.

So what is the nature of God's movement in the order of grace? For sometimes God moves some to will some determinate good in the supernatural order. Now that we have given an exposition of the natural relationship between God's operation and man's, it will be necessary to treat of grace as the effect of predestination.

C. The Doctrine of Grace in the Summa Theologiae

[226] Dool, "Predestination, Freedom, and the Logic of Love," 107.

"For since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." -ST, I, q. 20, a. 3.

The particular task of this section will be to treat of those questions in the treatise on grace in the *Summa* that have bearing on St. Thomas' theory of predestination.

St. Thomas begins his treatise on grace by providing the overall structure of the topic, and typical of his method in the *Summa*, briefly contextualizes it within the greater corpus. He states: "We must now consider the exterior principle of human acts, i.e., God, in so far as, through grace, we are helped by Him to do right." In this opening line is implied the whole structure of content in the *Prima Secundae*. For at once we have a thoroughly theological metaphysics of the human act. Following Theo Kobusch's discussion of this topic in the book *The Ethics of Aquinas*, we read that "Like the physicist, who contemplates natural things as mobile, and does not pose the question about their being as such, so also the "moralist" (that is, ethically engaged reason as such) does not ask about what good and evil are in general. Only the metaphysician asks about that."[227] And so we see St. Thomas likewise in the *Prima Secundae*, embarking not on a practical study of ethics, but one speculative in character inquiring into the essential and accidental causes of the human act.

Moreover, we see that the treatise on grace crowns the *Prima Secundae*, which addresses the internal and external principles of the human act. The internal principles consist of free-will, habits, virtues, etc., the external consisting of the various kinds of law given by God culminating in the bestowal of grace as the principle of true freedom. Thus like Thomas' treatment of natural things with God as their external principle, so in his metaphysical treatment of the act, God emerges as its external principle as mover of the will through grace. Kobusch summarizes the treatise's context hailing its metaphysical grounding:

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[227] Theo Kobusch, "Grace," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stepthen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 208.

> The doctrine of grace (as well as the doctrine of law) is the philosophical theology that belongs to the metaphysics of act. Symptomatically, even in the treatise on grace, God is designated as the "first mover" in relation to human will, thereby making a central concept of traditional philosophical theology relevant to the teaching on grace. The doctrine of grace is thus not an accidental addition to the doctrine of act, but substantially necessary for the metaphysician of morals or anyone wishing to trace human action to its root.[228]

We must note the theological thread running through the entire work. As stated in the beginning of the *Prima Secundae*, God is the principle and end of human operation, and at the close, God is the principle of grace, which is necessary for the attainment of man's last end, which is supernatural.

In relation to Thomas' doctrine on predestination, the treatise on grace describes the beginning effects of God's providential ordering of some to eternal salvation. In other words, grace is the cause of the temporal realization of the effects of predestination, viz., call, justification, and merit. "Grace does not come into the definition of predestination, as something belonging to its essence, but inasmuch as predestination implies a relation to grace, as of cause to effect, and of act to its object."[229] It may be helpful to recall St. Paul's ordering in Romans 8:30 to see where St. Thomas derived this relationship: "And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified." As we shall see in the exposition, grace pertains to call, justification, and merit as the principle cause of all. And in light of its location within the theory of predestination, it must be emphatically stated at the start that St. Thomas' doctrine of grace must be distinguished from the one that is most commonly adopted. For Thomas, grace is not the help we receive from God that we may act entirely on our own. Human freedom is not a 'zone of causality' carved out by man. On the contrary, the Angelic Doctor teaches that all of our actions (both natural and salutary) are caused by God, and yet without detriment to our internal freedom. "His line is that grace is

[228] Kobusch, *Grace*, 209.
[229] *Summa theol.*, I, q. 23, a. 2.

wholly the work of God,"[230] for as it is said in John 15:5, "for apart from me you can do nothing."

The Necessity of Grace

St. Thomas begins his treatise on grace with a consideration of divine motion in regard to man's knowledge of truth. Standing behind this first article (and the entire question on the necessity of grace) is the principle attested to both in Scripture and in natural theology, that "not only is every motion from God as from the First Mover, but all formal perfection is from Him as from the First Act."[231] Thus the discussion of grace is first situated within the more fundamental concept of divine motion, which allows us to see in the order of nature our reliance upon God's causal activity as distinguished from grace. Indeed, regarding the knowledge of any truth, "man needs Divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act. But he does not need a new light added to his natural light, in order to know the truth in all things, but only in some that surpass his natural knowledge."[232] The question then arises: If man can come to the truth by the natural light of reason, can his will also desire or accomplish any good without grace?

An important distinction must be made at the outset to answer this question: man's nature can be considered in its prelapsarian state of integrity, and in its present state of corruption after sin. Given the principle of divine movement stated above, it is already clear that in both states man is in need of God's initiative to will and do any good, as he is the First Mover and principle of formal perfection. St. Thomas says that in the primitive state, man was able to wish and do good according to his natural powers, as in the exercise of acquired virtue. As to the necessity of grace, man in this state needed grace only for doing or wishing *supernatural* good. In the corrupt state however, man is unable by his own powers to live according to his nature and thus

[230] Davies, *The Thought ofThomas Aquinas*, 266.
[231] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 1; I, q. 105, a. 5.
[232] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 1.

experiences sin and its effects. In this state he is in need of grace for two reasons: for the healing of his nature and for performing meritorious works of supernatural virtue.

Yet St. Thomas makes the point that human nature as a result of the fall is not completely incapable of performing good works on the natural level. He states: "Yet because human nature is not altogether corrupted by sin, so as to be shorn of every natural good, even in the state of corrupted nature it can, by virtue of its natural endowments, work some particular good, as to build dwellings, plant vineyards, and the like."[233] These latter examples must be seen in light of man acting for a natural end that is good, along with the due circumstances. Also, let us recall that Thomas' view of the intellect is optimistic in its ability to know the truth after the Fall. This distinctly optimistic Catholic view of man's post-lapsarian state will be defended against the heresies of Wyclif, John Hus, Baius, Luther, and Quesnel at the Council of Trent,[234] which state that we are utterly depraved and only nominally have free will.

In I-II, q. 109 a. 3-6, St. Thomas continues to show the necessity of grace for fallen man in doing good. We learn that by his natural powers (in the state of integrity) man could love God above himself,[235] but that in the state of corrupt nature, grace is required for even the love of God as his end. Distinct from the infused theological virtue of charity, this love is natural to man "for nature loves God above all things inasmuch as He is the beginning and the end of natural good; whereas charity loves Him, as He is the object of beatitude, and inasmuch as man has a spiritual fellowship with God."[236] Yet in our fallen state, left to our own appetite, the will seeks first and foremost its "private good" in disorder, thus the need for God's grace to heal our nature.

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[233] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 2.
[234] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 814, 815, 817, 819, 835.
[235] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 3. Thomas shows here that because man was in the state of perfect nature he could love God above all things as this love is natural to man and all irrational creatures. "Now it is manifest that the good of the part is for the good of the whole; hence everything, by its natural appetite and love, loves its own proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe, which is God."
[236] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 3, ad. 1.

In regard to the commandments of the Law, that is, the Decalogue, there are two ways in which man in his corrupt nature is unable to fulfill them: in their substance, and the mode of acting. The former is simply the works of the Law such as acts of virtue, the latter, that the works be done with the motive of charity. St. Thomas teaches that in neither state is man without grace able to fulfill the commandments in the second sense. As to fulfilling them in substance, only in the state of integrity can man naturally fulfill the commandments of the Law.

In addition, man cannot merit everlasting life without grace. This reality is put forward by St. Thomas in a very straightforward argument that relies upon the principle that "acts conducing to an end must be proportioned to the end." He further explains, "and hence we see in natural things, that nothing can by its operation bring about an effect which exceeds its active force, but only such as is proportionate to its power."[237] And so in regard to everlasting life, man is unable according to the acts proper to his nature to attain eternal beatitude. In other words, the end of everlasting life exceeds the proportion of our nature. Thus, the acts of a higher force are required for attainment of this end. Grace is the gift given by the extrinsic principle that is God, for us to perform meritorious acts. Following the conclusion of this argument, one must address the obtainment of grace. Is it by our activity that we can prepare for the reception of grace? Or is the preparation of grace also the result of divine movement?

Typical of St. Thomas' method, the *Sed contra* of I-II, q. 109 a. 6 uses the authority of Sacred Scripture to answer: "No man can come to Me except the Father, Who hath sent Me, draw him." (Jn 6:44) But if man could prepare himself, Thomas argues, then he would not need to be drawn by God. Therefore man cannot prepare himself for grace without the aid of grace. In the *Respondeo*, Thomas makes a distinction between the preparation of the will for good to "operate rightly and to enjoy God", and the preparation of the will for the gift of habitual grace

[237] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 5.

itself. The former cannot happen without the gift of habitual grace, and the latter cannot happen without a "gratuitous gift of God." This gratuitous gift is different from another gift of habitual grace, because to posit such a causal chain of infinite habituation would be an absurdity. Yet a gratuitous gift, or to use the later developed term 'actual grace' describes a transient assistance of God in order to obtain habitual grace.

The theological support for this claim is an argument according to the nature of proportionate ends. As Garrigou-Lagrange explains it in his exposition:

> Since every agent acts on account of a proportionate end, the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends, and the disposition toward a supernatural end cannot be produced except by God, the supernatural agent. But man prepares himself for grace according as he disposes himself for it as for a proximate supernatural end, and according as he turns to God as to his final supernatural end. Therefore man cannot prepare himself for grace except by the supernatural help of God, moving him.[238]

Thomas uses the analogy of a soldier's spirit being moved by the leader of the army to seek victory, and being moved by the motion of some commander to follow the standard of a regiment. In opposition to Thomas' statement in Reply 2 that "when a man is said to do what is in him to do, this is said to be in his power according as he is moved by God" Luis de Molina (b.1535-d.1600) will later say "God always confers the helps of prevenient grace on him who strives with natural powers to accomplish what in him lies."[239]

The question thus turns (I-II, q. 109, a. 7; 8) to whether man has the ability to rise from and avoid sin. It is here that St. Thomas enumerates the triple loss of sin as *stain*, which is the forfeiting of the luster of grace, *corruption of natural good*, which consists in man's will not being subject to God, leading to an alienation from self and others, and *debt of punishment*,

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[238] Rev. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace* (New York: Herder Book Co., 1952), 78.

[239] Lagrange, *Grace*, 82. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange shows that Molina's theory avoids semi-pelagianism by positing a covenant entered into between God and Christ the Redeemer as the principle of the bestowal of grace. Man naturally prepares himself negatively only, by not raising obstacles, and actual grace then will be conferred infallibly. Lack of evidence in scripture and in the Tradition make this position problematic.

which leaves man deserving everlasting damnation. Now because all three of these losses refer to effects that only God can restore, grace is required in order that man may rise from sin, "both as regards a habitual gift, and as regards the internal motion of God."[240]

In terms of avoiding sin, in the state of corrupt nature, man needs grace. A very strong statement from St. Augustine is cited in support of this claim: "Whoever denies that we ought to say the prayer 'Lead us not into temptation'…ought without doubt to be removed beyond all hearing, and to be anathematized by the tongues of all."[241] St. Thomas comes to two major conclusions in the body of the article. First, that fallen man needs grace to be healed in order to avoid mortal sin, but that even with grace, he cannot avoid all venial sin. The reason for this is that grace heals the mind that it may be subject to God as the end of the will. And thus mortal sin, which is the cause of spiritual death consisting in a disordered relationship to God as end, can be vanquished.[242] As to venial sin, man's lower appetites remain unruly on account of the effects of sin. And though the just man can resist each movement of the sensual appetite in theory, he cannot resist them all, and thus he sins venially.[243] Secondly, that before the grace of justification, though he can for a time, man ultimately cannot avoid mortal sin. The reason for this is that just as fallen man sins venially on account of the lower appetites not being subject to

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[240] *Summa theol*., I-II, q. 109, a. 7.
[241] *Summa theol*., I-II, q. 109, a. 8, *Sed contra*.
[242] *Summa theol*., I-II, q. 74, a. 4. "Just as a disorder which destroys the principle of the body's life causes the body's death, so too a disorder which destroys the principle of the spiritual life, viz. the last end, causes spiritual death, which is mortal sin. *Now it belongs to the reason alone, and not to the sensuality, to order anything to the end: and disorder in respect of the end can only belong to the power whose function it is to order others to the end. Wherefore mortal sin cannot be in the sensuality, but only in the reason*."
[243] *Summa theol*., I-II, q. 74, a. 4. "Augustine says: "The inordinate movement of concupiscence, which is the sin of the sensuality, can even be in those who are in a state of grace," in whom, however, mortal sin is not to be found. *Therefore the inordinate movement of the sensuality is not a mortal sin*. I-II, q. 74, a. 3, ad 2. "The continual corruption of the sensuality is to be understood as referring to the *fomes*, which is never completely destroyed in this life, since, though the stain of original sin passes, its effect remains. However, this corruption of the *fomes* does not hinder man from using his rational will to check individual inordinate movements, if he be presentient to them, for instance by turning his thoughts to other things. Yet while he is turning his thoughts to something else, an inordinate movement may arise about this also…Consequently, a man cannot avoid all such movements, on account of the aforesaid corruption: but it is enough, for the conditions of a voluntary sin, that he be able to avoid each single one."

reason, so does he eventually sin mortally on account of his reason not being subject to God; as Gregory says "a sin not at once taken away by repentance, by its weight drags us down to other sins."[244]

The last two articles of q. 109 treat of the necessity of grace for the just to perform salutary acts and to persevere. The pattern becomes clear at this point, St. Thomas again affirms that to perform righteous acts with supernatural value, the man with habitual grace needs yet another divine movement; this because the salutary act ordered to a supernatural end cannot be performed without an agent proportionate to that end, and the condition of human nature requires it. Concupiscence and ignorance leaves man unable to control his lower appetites and also unable to know what is good for him. Thus "we must be guided and guarded by God, Who knows and can do all things. For which reason also it is becoming in those who have been born again as sons of God, to say: "Lead us not into temptation," and "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven."[245]

In article 10, *Whether the man possessed of grace needs the help of grace in order to persevere?* St. Thomas enumerates three ways of understanding perseverance. For the purposes of this essay consideration of the third way, viz. perseverance as "abiding in good to the end of life" will suffice. Even if one is given the grace of intention to persevere, and also the perseverance to act virtuously throughout life, he may not be given the gift of final perseverance. Thus actual grace is required both for good acts of supernatural value, as stated above, and to die in the state of grace.

The necessity of grace seems to arise out of two general principles. The first being the metaphysical reality of God's causal relationship to his creatures (First Mover, Final Cause, and

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[244] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 8.
[245] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 9.

Efficient Cause of our form), and the second being the order of man's nature as it relates to his supernatural end; the latter requiring a consideration of the state of integrity and the state of corruption. In both states grace is necessary for any action with supernatural value.

The Cause of Grace

Having treated of the necessity and end of grace, we will now consider St. Thomas' question concerning the cause of grace. In the first article, Thomas identifies God as its efficient cause owing to the fact that the effect of grace is beyond any created nature. For it is beyond the species of the creature to participate in the divine nature, which is an effect more powerful than the creature could produce as a cause. And an effect cannot be more powerful than its cause. Thus God is the only agent that can efficiently produce grace.

As to man's disposition for the reception of habitual grace[246], St. Thomas argues that a certain preparation of man is required, because "a form can only be in disposed matter."[247] Yet how does man prepare himself to receive? As we have seen, it is by an operative actual grace. This article echoes q. 109, a. 6, again stating that this preparation is of man's free-will, yet primarily "an act of the free-will *moved by God*."[248] To help clarify this statement it will be worth quoting Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange on the Molinist position juxtaposed to the Thomist position on cooperative and operative actual grace:

> For Molina, Suarez, and their disciples, operative actual grace urges only by moral, and not by physical, impulsion, and leads only to indeliberate acts, but never of itself alone to free choice or consent. But cooperative actual grace, according to Molina, produces, by moral impulsion, a free choice, with simultaneous concurrence, in such a way that man is determined by himself

[246] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 110, a. 2: Thomas' explanation of what habitual grace is in essence: "man is helped by God's gratuitous will, inasmuch as a habitual gift is infused by God into the soul." *Ad 1*: "[habitual] grace, as a quality, is said to act upon the soul not after the manner of an efficient cause, but after the manner of a formal cause, as whiteness makes a thing white, and justice, just." Thus habitual grace is an accident of quality inhering in the soul, signifying a formal change.
[247] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 2.
[248] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 2.

> alone. Thus man and God seem to be rather two causes acting coordinately, like two men rowing a boat, than two causes of which one is subordinate, acting under the impulsion of the superior cause. For Thomists, on the other hand, operative actual grace does not merely urge by moral impulsion, but operates physically as well…Cooperative actual grace, moreover, is also a physical impulsion under which man, by virtue of a previous act of willing the end, moves himself to will the means to the end.[249]

And so we might begin to see the two sides of preparation for grace. One is on the side of the Mover, viz. God (which corresponds to operating grace), and the other is on the side of the moved and mover, viz. the free-will (which corresponds to cooperating grace). For St. Thomas, considered from the vantage point of the free-will, habitual grace is not necessarily given if man is prepared. For the gift of grace exceeds anything within human power to prepare for. But from the view point of God the Mover, if He intends that the actual grace given should result in the preparation and reception of habitual grace, it will necessarily, that is to say, infallibly occur; this because God's will cannot fail. Here he quotes Augustine from his *De dono perseverantiae* 14, "by God's good gifts whoever is liberated, is most certainly liberated." We must at this point then say that if habitual grace is not given, it is because man rejects it. St. Thomas says as much in his reply to Objection 2: "The first cause of the defect of grace is on our part; but the first cause of the bestowal of grace is on God's according to Hos. 13:9: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me."[250]

St. Thomas then asks whether or not grace is greater in one than in another? At first, one might without reflection respond that grace comes to us by divine love, and because God loves all, that he bestows grace on all equally. But it is evident that some are given gifts that exceed those of others. If one considers the Blessed Virgin Mary and the extraordinary gifts she received, it becomes clear that there is a diversity of distribution. Outside of the perfect fullness of grace, which Mary enjoys, it is also evident in various communities within the Church that

[249] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*,163-164.
[250] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 3, ad 2.

some are given greater gifts than others. Thus we must look to the cause of this diversity not in the free-will, which ultimately relies upon the divine help to prepare for grace, but to God as the primary reason for said diversity. Thus grace can be greater as it pertains to the degree in which the person participates in it, but as to its end, which is God there is no greater or less grace. The explanation St. Thomas gives for the diversity of gifts in subjects is "that the beauty and perfection of the Church may result from these various degrees; even as He instituted the various conditions of things, that the universe might be perfect."[251]

Lastly, as to the cause of grace, I-II, q. 112, a. 5 asks whether man can know that he has grace. St. Thomas presents a tripartite division of knowing, viz. by revelation (with certainty), through knowledge of first principles and demonstration, and conjecturally by signs. Of the first, man may know that he possesses grace by a private divine revelation. Of the second, by experimental knowledge, St. Thomas argues that man can in no way come to the certainty that he has grace. The reason for this is that God is the principle of grace and also its object. That being the case, we recognize that no one can come to a conclusion without the knowledge of its principle, and that because we do not have the knowledge of God as he is in his essence, we are unable to know the presence of grace which proceeds from him. As St. Thomas says in his commentary on Job, "Job shows the immense profundity of divine wisdom: first, indeed, since God provides His benefits to His subjects so profoundly and subtly that it is incomprehensible even to those who receive them, and this is the point of saying *If He comes to me, I will not see [Him]; if He goes away, I will not understand Him.*"[252]

It seems that the only ordinary way that we can have knowledge of the presence of grace in us is by the third way, namely, conjecturally by signs, and thus imperfectly. St. Thomas gives

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[251] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 112, a. 4. See also, I, q. 47, a. 1; 2.
[252] Thomas Aquinas, *The Literal Exposition on Job*, trans. Anthony Damico (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 173.

the examples of delight in God, despising worldly things, and not being conscious of any mortal sins, as signs of the presence of grace. These signs correspond to the signs that one may be predestined to eternal life, yet it is a doctrine of the faith that "no one moreover, so long as he lives in this mortal state, ought so far to presume concerning the secret mystery of divine predestination, as to decide for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestined [can. 15 Council of Trent]."[253] In this uncertainty then, we are called in hope to continually pray with the psalmist: "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant."[254]

The Effects of Grace

In his last major division of the treatise, St. Thomas treats of the twofold effects of grace. The first is the justification of the ungodly, which corresponds to operative grace. The second, being merit, is the effect of cooperative grace. The question on merit is the point of difficulty in any legitimate theory of grace and predestination. Do the merits of man somehow cause predestination? If so, in what way?

As to the justification of the ungodly, it will be enough to note that God brings man to justification according to his nature. Thus because it is proper to man's nature to have free-will, God moves us according to our reason and free-will to accept the gift of justifying grace. Moreover, that this first turning towards God, which leads to justification, consists in a movement of faith. For natural knowledge can only bring us to a knowledge that God is, but not that he is the object of beatitude and the cause of justification. The latter can only come through faith, infused in us along with the grace of justification. On the negative side of this movement

[253] *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 805. "…as if it were true that he who is justified either cannot sin any more [can. 23], or if he shall have sinned, that he ought to promise himself an assured reformation. For except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God has chosen for Himself [can. 16]."
[254] Ps. 18:13.

of grace is the rejection of sin. In justification, man's mind is moved from a state of sin to a state of justice. Thus one must both desire a right relationship with God along with an interior integrity where the lower faculties are subject to reason, and also the detestation of sin as a life left behind. Faith is indeed required for justification, but according to St. Thomas, there is also the need for one to hate sin.

Merit

We will now turn to the question on merit. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange divides this question into two sections. The first (I-II, q. 114, a. 1-4) concerns what merit is, how it is divided, and what conditions are needed for it. The second (a. 5-10) treats of what is included under merit, or, what man can merit in the life of grace. In the *Sed contra* of article 1, St. Thomas gives us a basic definition of merit as a good work which constitutes a right to a reward. In Jer. 31:16 it is said, "there is a reward for thy work," leading Thomas to conclude that if merit signifies the reason for a gift due to good works, then it seems that man can merit from God. His argument shows that this merit is not based in a strict equality of justice between man and God, but of a relative character, like a son from his father. More so between man and God, because there is an infinite inequality due to the fact that everything that we have comes from God. Thus we merit on account of the power given to us to freely perform supernaturally good works through operative grace. As St. Thomas articulates it, "man's merit with God only exists on the presupposition of the Divine ordination, so that man obtains from God, as a reward of his operation, what God gave him the power of operation for"[255] (this 'divine ordination' seems to be referring to predestination, and thus merit is a temporal effect of the divine type leading some to eternal salvation).

[255] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 1.

At this point, and in anticipation of later articles, it is helpful to differentiate between merit as it is defined in the language of strict justice (*meritum de condigno*), and merit as based in friendship, that is, as derived from another in friendship (*meritum de congruo*). The former signifies that which is due as a reward for good work, based on an equality of parties. Thus Christ as the Word in his equality with the Father properly merits *de condigno*. His act of charity contains an infinite value that surpasses the totality of all the saints, superabundantly offering merit and satisfaction, indeed as the source of both. Merit *de congruo* on the other hand, is derived from a right due to friendship with God presupposing the state of grace; though in a broader sense, merit *de congruo* requires only a disposition for the reception of grace, which finds its source not in an already established friendship, but the sheer mercy of God.[256]

Thus it becomes apparent that man needs grace to merit eternal life; both in the state of integrity, and in the state of corrupt nature. In the state of integrity, the only reason man needs grace to merit eternal life is due to the fact that acts sufficient to this supernatural end exceed the powers proper to his nature. As to man in corrupt nature, a second reason shows forth the need for grace in this respect, namely, the effects of sin (stain, corruption of natural good, and debt of punishment) leave man cut off from God leading to death. Thus grace is needed to reconcile us to God before we can act meritoriously.

This leads Thomas to ask whether a man in grace can merit eternal life condignly. According to a preliminary distinction we might answer yes and no. If we consider man's meritorious work as it comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can say that man does indeed merit eternal life condignly. This because the worth or value of the work is derived from the Holy Spirit's agency in bringing us to eternal life, which gives the work a value of equal proportion to the reward, since God is the final cause of our beatitude. But if we take man's

[256] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 367-369.

meritorious work as flows from his free-will, we must say that it does not merit eternal life condignly because of the unfathomable inequality that exist between man and God. However, it must be affirmed that "there is congruity, on account of an equality of proportion: for it would seem congruous that, if a man does what he can, God should reward him according to the excellence of his power."[257] Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange (referencing an interpretation of John of St. Thomas) explains that this congruity is not in contradiction with what was said in I-II, q. 109, a. 1 and 6, namely, that man is unable to prepare for grace according to his natural powers.[258]

After consideration of what merit is, its division, and what conditions are necessary for it, St. Thomas addresses what in addition to eternal life can be merited by man's natural works. As to first grace, taken as a gratuitous gift, or in respect to the nature of the gift (*de congruo* or *de condigno*), "all merit is repugnant to grace."[259] In other words, man's natural works cannot merit gratuitous grace because as we saw earlier, grace exceeds the proportion of nature. Moreover, in the state of mortal sin man cannot merit what merits justification, viz. first grace.

In article six, we find a beautiful map of the mediatory roles in the life of grace. For man in the state of justice can merit first grace for another. Referring again to the two part division of merit, the last statement must be qualified by saying that he merits for others *de congruo*, not condignly. The only person that can merit salvation for man in the strict sense of justice is Christ, as he not only is moved to everlasting life through grace, but also as Head of the Church

[257] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 3.
[258] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 374. "He affirms that merely natural works, which do not proceed from either sanctifying or actual grace, are not meritorious of eternal life by merit *de congruo* in the strict sense but only in the broad sense; not strictly because they are of an inferior order and have no proportion to glory, but broadly, that is, out of the bounty of God…There is here a proportion of workers, not of works."
[259] *Summa theol.*, I-II, q. 114, a. 5.

and the cause of salvation, brings others to beatitude. So the just man can merit the first grace for another only by virtue of a congruous desire based in friendship with God.[260]

In the final four articles of the treatise on grace, St. Thomas shows that restoration after sin and perseverance do not fall under the category of merit, yet that an increase in grace and charity can be merited. As to the increase in charity it will be helpful to cite Joseph Wawrykow's exposition:

> The middle ground of the life of grace is a growth in grace and the theological virtues, by which these theological habits become more firmly rooted in their possessor and the possessor becomes more apt for the vision of God. Hence, Thomas concludes, the motion of grace, which provides by our acts for the merit of eternal life (aa. 2 and 3) also extends to the growth in grace and charity by which we are readied for the ultimate vision of God.[261]

As to the former, Thomas is really asking whether a man can merit *future* restoration if he falls. One might think that Thomas is speaking about first grace, but since he already covered this question in article five, it is evident that the question concerns one in the state of grace. To this he answers that it is impossible for a man in the state of grace to merit restoration for after a future fall either condignly or congruously. "The first grace, whether first absolutely in the life of the sinner or first relatively (that is, in relation to a sin after the initial reception of grace), will always be a gift of God, not merited in any way by its recipient."[262] Thus one who is alienated from God in mortal sin cannot merit restoration condignly. As to congruous merit, as in the previous article on meriting for another, one can do so only if there is no impediment of sin. Likewise in the case of meriting restoration for oneself, there is an impediment for meriting

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[260] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 388. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange presents the argument in a helpful and concise way: "Merit *de congruo* properly speaking is based on the right of friendship. But between the just man and God there exists the friendship of charity. Therefore it is properly fitting that God should fulfill the desire and prayer of the just man for the salvation of another, as long as there is no impediment of excessive obstinacy on the part of that other; and this merit *de congruo* is higher in proportion to the degree of charity which the just man possesses. It reaches its climax in the Blessed Virgin Mary."

[261] Joseph P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: Merit in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 224.

[262] Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action*, 220.

congruously, namely, the sin which has caused the fall of the person from grace. In addition, final perseverance cannot be merited, for it is simply a free gift of God ordaining some to their end in beatitude. Like the gift of conversion, this final push to the effect of glory comes from God.

Joseph Wawrykow gives an effective summary of the treatise on grace:

> In the attempt to sum up this doctrine of grace briefly we can do no better than continue the contrast with nature. The smallest degree of grace is infinitely more precious than all the beauty, order and riches of nature, indeed than all of nature thrown together; it is a gift above nature, a gift belonging to the supernatural, exceeding by its very essence the whole of the natural order. Consequently it is a gift that can come only from God.[263]

D. St. Thomas on Prayer

Prayer is a good example of God's operation in relation to man's freedom in the order of grace. Thus it will be helpful to see what St. Thomas says about the usefulness of prayer to better describe the doctrine of predestination.

In question 83, article 2, St. Thomas asks whether it is becoming to pray. This question specifically seeks to identify why prayer is useful by examining the nature of God and his special providence (guidance and care) over human affairs. Do we actually change God when we petition him for things? Is he analogous to an infinite cash machine in the sky that dispenses whatever spiritual and temporal goods we ask for whenever we ask for them? Or is he as the Deists say, a Creator but not involved in human affairs? Or does Divine providence or some external force determine all human activity leaving us without effect in what happens in our lives? If the nature of God and his Providence determines the usefulness of prayer, then one must ask whether Divine providence is such that prayer is becoming.

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[263] Walter Farrell, *A Companion to the Summa: Volume II—The Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938), 432.

Again, typical of the structure in the *Summa* St. Thomas first gives an answer from authority. In the *Sed contra* he cites a Gospel passage from Luke: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1) Thus it is clear that we must pray by the command of our Lord, and accordingly, that it is useful in some sense. St. Thomas then gives the explanation of this answer in the main body of the article. The answer comes in three parts: First, he names three errors of the ancients concerning prayer. Second, he considers Divine providence in order to shed light on the use of prayer. Third, he applies the principles of Divine providence to show why prayer is becoming.

First, the three errors of the ancients concerning prayer Thomas cites as: 1. Human affairs are not ruled by Divine providence, 2. All things happen of necessity, 3. Things are ruled by Divine providence, not of necessity, but God's mind is changeable. Now the first two errors obviously construe prayer as totally useless. Firstly, if there is no God, or a God that is uninvolved in our lives, then prayer would be an exercise in futility and no different than thinking nice thoughts or well-wishing. Secondly, if God does rule by Divine providence, but in a deterministic way which destroys human freedom, then prayer is useless because man would act of necessity, and would be unable to deliberately ask God to obtain things. Moreover, the same is true if our lives and actions are determined by the laws of physics or that we are the necessary effect of a cause. The third error however shows prayer to be useful, but in a way that makes the unchangeable God changeable. If we pray in a certain way, or worship in a certain way, this view of Providence suggests that we can change the will of God; that even if we petition God for something that is contrary to his will, we will receive it according to the quality of the prayer. At this point Thomas disposes of these opinions and mentions that he had

previously disproved them in the *Prima pars*. Thus they cannot stand as arguments against prayer.

Thomas then moves into the second part of his answer by making a case for the utility of prayer under a proper understanding of Divine providence. He states that prayer is useful but that it must be understood as "neither to impose necessity on human affairs subject to Divine providence, nor to imply changeableness on the part of the Divine disposition."[264] In other words, God does not determine human actions necessarily, yet neither does He undergo change when we pray.

Rather the Angelic Doctor teaches that Divine providence not only arranges what effects will take place, but also arranges the causes of these effects and the relationship between them. Among these arranged causes are the actions of man. Thus man does certain actions not to bring about change in God, but to bring about certain effects willed by God. Taking St. Thomas' cue, Brian Davies explains by way of natural analogy, "the fact that God changelessly exists and works in everything does not mean that rain does not make things wet or that food does not nourish. By the same token…the fact that God changelessly exists and works in everything does not mean that my prayer cannot be the cause of something coming about by virtue of God's will."[265] Plainly said, God set it up that creatures would also cause effects which fall under his providence. As the CCC states:

> God is the sovereign master of his plan. But to carry it out he also makes use of his creatures' cooperation. This use is not a sign of weakness, but rather a token of almighty God's greatness and goodness. For God grants his creatures not only their existence, but also the dignity of acting on their own, of being causes and principles of each other, and thus of cooperating in the accomplishment of his plan.[266]

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[264] *Summa theol* ., II-II, Q. 83.2, Resp.
[265] Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 184.
[266] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 306.

St. Thomas then applies the principles of Divine providence to prayer saying "we pray, not that we may change the Divine disposition, but that we may impetrate [to obtain by asking] that which God has disposed to be fulfilled by our prayers, in other words 'that by asking, men may deserve to receive what Almighty God from eternity has disposed to give.'"[267] Thus Thomas presents the essential component of prayer as petition. He states this elsewhere: "Prayer is an act of the reason, bringing the will's desire into relationship with him who is our superior, not subject to our control, namely God. So, Damascene's definition, 'Prayer is a petition made to God for things that are fitting,' displays the essential nature of prayer with the utmost accuracy."[268] This beautiful end to the answer shows that the dignity of secondary causality is extended even to our deliberate prayers which can contribute to the fulfillment of God's will. Thus it is indeed becoming for us to pray as rational creatures endowed with this ability to participate in the bestowal of God's gifts.

The answer is further clarified in the objections and the replies. As the first objection truthfully points out, God knows all things including what we need even before we ask; so why ask at all? The second argues that petitionary prayer which seeks to bend the mind of the one prayed to is unfitting when addressed to the unchangeable God. The third objection contends that it is more appropriate to generosity to give to those who do not ask, and thus prayer would work against the supremely generous God who gives many things regardless of our prayers. According to these objections it seems both counter and superfluous to pray.

However we do not pray to inform God of our needs and desires as the first objection suggests, but to constantly remind ourselves of our reliance upon him, and that he can in fact help us. Moreover, our motive for praying is not to bend God's mind, but to obtain what God

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[267] *Summa theol* ., II-II, Q. 83.2, Resp.
[268] Thomas Aquinas, *Sent*. 4, 15. 4. 1, quoted in Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 184.

has foreordained according to his plan. Lastly, God gives many things even without asking, but gives certain things through prayer to give us confidence in Divine help, and for us to see God properly as the Author of all our goods. Thus one might further conclude from St. Thomas that prayer is becoming for us both because it glorifies God in recognizing and submitting to his providential ordering of creation, and because by it we are true causes (albeit secondary) of our goodness.

Conclusions of Chapter 2: St. Thomas Aquinas

It is important to see that Thomas' account of predestination in the *Summa* is contextualized within his treatise on the one God. Presupposed is the doctrine of simplicity, which states that there is no composition in God. Since God is pure Act with no potency, he is the First Cause and universal Mover of every creature, including rational creatures. Now God is supremely perfect and thus supremely good. In creating, God wills that his goodness be communicated through finite representations. These finite representations have as their exemplary cause the divine ideas, and efficient cause, the divine ideas joined to the divine will. Thus God providentially orders each creature to participate in his goodness as their end. As Thomas states:

> …all the good that is in created things has been created by God…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 (I, 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 of every effect should pre-exist in Him…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.[269]

[269] *Summa theol*., I, 22, a. 1.

Predestination then is fittingly described by Thomas as a special providence: a kind of plan existing in the divine mind of the ordering of certain persons towards eternal salvation.

Technically speaking, St. Thomas taught a *complete predestination* to grace and glory that is *absolute*, and thus *ante praevisa merita*. This view emphasizes God's universal causality. And in terms of his teaching on reprobation, St. Thomas holds a *negative reprobation* as it concerns sin, and a *conditioned positive reprobation* as it concerns damnation. [270] As we have seen, this universal causality and gratuitous predestination does not signify that man has no free will in the order of grace. As a true cause, man is responsible for his actions. But it cannot be emphasized enough that it is beyond the natural limits of man to be the cause of grace/predestination as it is a supernatural reality requiring a supernatural cause. Moreover, we must recall that there is more to our need for grace than just the limits of our nature. St. Thomas says that in the primitive state, man was able to wish and do good according to his natural powers, as in the exercise of acquired virtue. As to the necessity of grace, man in this state needed grace only for doing or wishing *supernatural* good. In the corrupt state however, man is unable by his own powers to live according to his nature and thus experiences sin and its effects. In this state he is in need of grace for two reasons: for the healing of his nature and for performing meritorious works of supernatural virtue.

Thus in the fallen state man needs grace to love God above all things as end (a natural love distinguished from the theological virtue of Charity), to fulfill the commandments (in substance and with the right motive of Charity)**,** to merit everlasting life, to prepare himself for grace (this is called *actual grace* to prepare for *habitual grace*)**,** to rise from sin (3-fold effects of sin are *stain*, *corruption of natural good*, and *debt of punishment*, and these losses can only be restored by grace)**,** to avoid sin (fallen man needs grace to be healed in order to avoid mortal sin,

[270] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 243-244.

but that even with grace, he cannot avoid all venial sin)**,** after receiving grace to do good and avoid sin (St. Thomas again affirms that to perform righteous acts with supernatural value, the man with habitual grace needs yet another Divine movement; this because the salutary act ordered to a supernatural end cannot be performed without an agent proportionate to that end, and the condition of human nature requires it), and after receiving grace to persevere (even if one is given the grace of intention to persevere, and also the perseverance to act virtuously throughout life, he may not be given the gift of final perseverance. Thus actual grace is required both for good acts of supernatural value, as stated above, and to die in the state of grace).

Thus the preparation for faith, faith itself, justification, merit, perseverance, and glory are all anticipated by and obtained through grace. In a word, the primacy is God's in the order of grace, for without Him we can do nothing. Even prayer is a gift that follows the divine ordination, which manifests the will of God as an intermediary cause. We do not pray to change the divine will, or to inform God of our needs, but to obtain by asking the good gifts which he has freely bestowed from all eternity.

It is important to note that the Thomistic emphasis on the primacy of grace has tended to give the impression that human freedom plays almost no role in one's destiny. This vulnerability became the object of criticism in subsequent debates, culminating in the *Congregatio de auxiliis*, a papal commission established in November 1597(-1607), by Pope Clement VIII, to settle a theological dispute between the Dominicans and the Jesuits on the relation between grace and free-will.[271] Luis De Molina (1535-1600), a Jesuit priest, writer, and university teacher, became the center of the *De auxiliis* controversy because of his views on predestination, grace, and free will found in his *Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia*, or just the *Concordia* (1595). Molina set out to

[271] See T. Ryan, "Congregatio De Auxiliis," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 168.

propose a new and alternative view the principles of which he mused could have prevented the Pelagian heresy and the Reformed errors concerning free will.[272] It is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into an analysis of the debate, but it should be noted that the Thomistic and Molinist views on predestination, grace, and free will are two orthodox yet distinct theories.[273]

St. Thomas' great contribution was two-fold. 1. He was a faithful commentator of the Tradition, presenting the classical theistic account of predestination via Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and St. Augustine, and magisterial teaching. He thus avoids the errors of predestinarianism and Pelagiansim, the former denying the universal will to save, and the latter, denying the principle of predilection, which affirms that no one is greater than another unless it is loved more by God. 2. By contextualizing the doctrine within his theology of the one God, and insisting on the intimate causal relationship between divine operation and human freedom, he avoids the error of viewing God as an obstacle to freedom.

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[272] Luis de Molina, *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione*, q. 23, a. 4-5, disp. I, membr. Ult., Paris ed. 1876, pp. 548, quoted in Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 128: "In our humble opinion we declare that the whole question of reconciling the freedom of the will with divine grace, foreknowledge, and predestination, which we have taught throughout article thirteen of question fourteen, and in article six of question nineteen, and throughout question twenty-two, rests upon the following principles…and if these principles had always been given and explained, perhaps neither the Pelagian heresy would have sprung up, nor would the Lutherans have dared so impudently to deny the freedom of our will…, nor would so many of the faithful have been disturbed in their mind because of Augustine's opinion."

[273] Molina gives four principles in the Concordia that underlie his theory of predestination: 1) the divine concurrence, or his views on efficacious grace; 2) final perseverance; 3) Foreknowledge, or *scientia media*; 4) the disposition and circumstances of the predestined. It is the third, the *scientia media*, which has received the most attention from a Thomistic perspective because of an apparent theological error concerning the simplicity of God. In addition, Molina's view of grace suggests that the condition upon which sufficient grace becomes efficacious rests solely in the free consent of the created will, which seemingly contradicts the primacy of God's initiative in the order of grace. Thus, while the Thomistic school associated with Domenico Bañez, the Spanish Dominican theologian and spiritual director of St. Theresa of Avila emphasized the Primacy of God's motion in the order of grace, the Molinist school emphasized the free will of man. For an account of Molina's theory and the Thomist/Molinst debate see Luis de Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of the Concordia*, trans. with introduction by Alfred Freddoso (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Levering, *Predestination*, 110-117; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 128-136; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 163-164; John A. Hardon, *History and Theology of Grace: The Catholic Teaching on Divine Grace* (Ypsilanti: Veritas Press, 2002) 271; Bulzacchelli, *Judged By the Law of Freedom*, 42; Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 243; Steven A. Long, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 4, No.3 (2006) .

Chapter 3: Conclusions

Although this historical and theological survey has by no means been exhaustive, it is however instructive of the context in which the doctrine of predestination has arisen and the general parameters of Catholic teaching on the subject. Our primary concern was to faithfully present the doctrine in the context of God's utter distinctness as the *Creator* and *Redeemer*. In other words, predestination is properly about God; about the Lover whose love is causative. It reveals to us in the most direct and personal way his Providence over all creation. Thus, this study has been especially attentive to the principle claims of St. Thomas Aquinas as explicated in chapter 2, which we believe to be the most lucid *theocentric* account according to Sacred Scripture and Tradition.[274] To conclude, it will be helpful to highlight the most important distinctive features of Aquinas' position, and briefly explain why we think they are satisfying. Following Garrigou-Lagrange, we see that Thomas effectively affirmed two great biblical principles relating to the doctrine of predestination which cannot be separated without negative theological consequences: 1. The principle of predilection (which refutes the error of pelagianism by asserting God's causal primacy with regard to predestination and grace) 2. That God is infinitely just, implying the integrity of human freedom and that God never commands what is impossible (this refuting the error of predestinarianism). While the two are approachable

[274] "Students are to learn to penetrate more intimately the mysteries of salvation, especially with St. Thomas as a teacher." *Code of Canon Law* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), 252.3; *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, Ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. " Optatam Totius" (Northport: Costello Publishing, 2007), 16, 376. "Theology, which is concerned with the interpretation of dogmas, also found in St. Thomas by far the richest of all commentators; for nobody ever more profoundly penetrated or expounded with greater subtlety all the august mysteries, as, for example…the obscurity of eternal predestination." Pope Pius XI, *Studiorem Ducem* (1923), No 19 (Salza, *The Mystery of Predestination*, 5).

separately, their reconciliation is the impenetrable mystery that continues to evade the grasp of human thought.

St. Thomas emphatically states that the prevision of merit is not the cause of predestination, and that "there is no reason, except the divine will,"[275] which is perfect goodness in union with divine wisdom, and therefore just. Thomas repeats Augustine saying, "Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err."[276] Thus Thomas taught an unconditioned predestination to glory alone *ante praevisa merita*. According to him, the principle of predilection grounds the theory of predestination. Predilection states that "no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another."[277] Because God's will is the cause of goodness in things,[278] it follows that one cannot receive greater gifts of grace without God willing this greater good. While the act of the divine will is one and unchanging, and thus God loves all equally, it is the case that there are varying degrees of goodness willed. St. Thomas' theological argument for predilection is in response to the question of whether God chooses the elect:

> Predestination…is a part of providence. Now providence as also prudence, is the plan existing in the intellect directing the ordering of some things towards an end…But nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists. Whence the predestination of some to eternal salvation presupposes, in the order of reason, that God wills their salvation; and to this belong both election and love: love, inasmuch as He wills them this particular good of eternal salvation; since to love is to wish well to anyone…election, inasmuch as He wills this good to some in preference to others; since He reprobates some.[279]

[275] *Summa theol*. I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3.
[276] St. Augustine, Tract. xxvi. *In Joan* (*Summa Theol*. I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3).
[277] *Summa theol*. I, q. 20, a. 3.
[278] *Summa theol*. I, q. 19, a. 4; I, q. 20, a. 2.
[279] *Summa theol.* I, q. 23, a. 4.

Unlike us, God first loves (as the cause of goodness in creatures) then elects (based on the good he has caused), then predestines. As we have seen the whole covenantal structure of the Old Testament presupposes this divine loving and electing. As Garrigou-Lagrange argues:

> The Old and New Testaments make use of most varying expressions to tell us that without exception all good comes from God, from God's love: that there is no good which God by His love has not efficaciously willed: that everything which God wills effectively comes to pass: that no evil, either physical or moral, happens and happens in this particular place rather than that without God's permission.[280]

Lagrange points out that St. Paul himself formulates this principle when he says: "for who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive?"[281] And so, according to Sacred Scripture and theological conclusion we must accept that the cause of predestination is found in the goodness of God. It will be worth quoting St. Thomas at length when he argues against the proposition: "God does not prepare unequal things for men by predestinating and reprobating, unless through the foreknowledge of their merits and demerits:"[282]

> The reason for the predestination, and reprobation of others, must be sought for in the goodness of God. Thus He is said to have made all things through His goodness, so that the divine goodness might be represented in things. Now 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 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 multiformity of grades may be preserved in things, God allows some evils, lest many good things should never happen…Let us then consider the whole of the human race, as we consider the whole universe. God wills to manifest His goodness in men; in respect to those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, as sparing them; and in respect of others, whom he reprobates, by means of His justice, in punishing them. This is the reason why God elects some and rejects others.[283]

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[280] Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 196. He cites these passages from Scripture as evidence: Psalm 134:6; Isaiah 26:12; Esther 13:11, 14:12, 15:11; Proverbs 21:1; Eccli. 33:13; Ezechial 36:27; Philippians 2:13; I Corinthians 4:7; II Corinthians 3:5

[281] I Corinthians 4:7 (Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 197).

[282] *Summa theol*. I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3.

[283] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 5, ad 3um.

The last part of St. Thomas' description, and the statements from the Council of Valence above, are important in defining reprobation in a Catholic sense by making a clear distinction. God's will in reprobation is permissive as regards sin, of which man is formally the cause. God provides only for the material aspect of sin. And he only positively reprobates men. Unlike the Reformers, and specifically John Calvin, the Church has never taught that God positively reprobates men to the eternal punishment of hell *antecedent to the consideration of demerits*. This would contradict the great biblical affirmation that God wills the salvation of all men,[284] the free will of man, and the very redemption offered by Christ. We also can recall the litany of Eastern Fathers that cited the cause of sin to be the free will of man, and that the sin is justly deserving of the punishment willed by God. As St. John Damascene said,

> The total desertion happens when, after God has done everything to save, the man remains unreformed and not cured, or rather, incurable, as a result of his own resolve. Then he is given over to complete destruction, like Judas…For He did not make us to punish, but to share in His goodness, because He is good. But He wills that sinners be punished, because he is just.[285]

It will be worth another look at St. Thomas' description of the cause of reprobation:

> 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.[286]

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[284] 1 Timothy 2:4.

[285] St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 2.29, quoted in Most, *Grace Predestination and the Salvific Will of God*, 272.

[286] *Summa theol*., I, q. 23, a. 3, ad 2um; *Sent*. I. 40. 4.2. Thomism holds that "First of all it is clear that the *positive reprobation* of angels and men presupposes that *their demerits were foreseen*; for God can will to inflict the penalty of damnation only for failure in doing one's duty…" But "The motive for *negative reprobation*, taken absolutely or in a general way, *is not the foreseen demerits of the reprobates*; for this negative reprobation is nothing else but the divine permission of these demerits, and therefore it logically precedes instead of following the foreseeing of them. Without this divine permission, these demerits would not happen in time, and from all eternity they would remain unforeseen." Garrigou-Lagrange, *Predestination*, 206. Emphasis added.

Given this description, we must keep in mind that God's universal will of salvation is not just an empty statement, but sincere. As we have seen in chapter 1, the Scholastic theologians following St. John Damascene explain how God's will of salvation is truly for all by distinguishing between the antecedent and consequent will. The former is directed to what is good in itself regardless of the circumstances, thus God wills antecedently that all men are saved. However, as to the actual circumstances, God wills subsequently that some are damned on account of the divine permission that they fall into and remain in sin. He gives truly sufficient graces to all with the real possibility of following his commandments. Also, adopting a Christocentric emphasis, we must see in Jesus Christ the definitive desire of God: the salvation of all through divine kenosis. An emphasis on the election of Christ as the interpretive key in our doctrine shows that even though God is transcendent and mysterious, that his revelation in Christ is indicative of the profound love of God for humanity.

Thomas' teaching is sensitive to upholding the primary causality of God, which concerns premotion in the natural order, and grace in the supernatural order. As we said at the outset, an anthropomorphic understanding of God leads to an account of predestination that places God within the order of created causes, and exalts human freedom as determinative of the divine resolve. Refuting this is of utmost importance to the Thomistic system especially in response to Molinism. In any theological speculation the doctrine of divine simplicity[287] must be the measure by which one proceeds, and what the Thomist fears is that those who deny the principle of predilection "must allow for a moment at which God *takes his hands off* the creature and allows

[287] This doctrine states that there is no composition in God. For our purposes, Thomists defend the truth that God is pure Act with no potency and thus is the First Cause and universal Mover of every act of the created free will. As Garrigou-Lagrange argues: "God's knowledge cannot be determined by anything which is extrinsic to Him, and which would not be caused by Him. But such is the scientia media, which depends on the determination of the free conditioned future; for this determination does not come from God but from the human liberty, granted that it is placed in such particular circumstances…Thus God would be dependent on another, would be passive in His knowledge, and would be no longer pure Act. The dilemma is unsolvable: Either God is the first determining Being, or else He is determined by another; there is no other alternative." Garrigou-Lagrange, *The One God*, 465-466.

the creature to exercise power to actualize a possibility *without God's causal activity*."[288] As Steven A. Long puts it, "If one denies that the human will receives not only its being, but also its natural motion and application to action from God, one makes of the will a *demiurgically unmoved first mover*."[289] A system which places human volition outside of divine causality introduces passivity in God.

In the introduction of this paper it is said that there are two underlying theological errors concerning the doctrine of predestination prevalent in our day: that God is just another inhabitant of the universe, and that human freedom requires radical independence from God. Concomitant to these errors is the conviction that predestination is a Reformed doctrine that should be avoided as an anomalous development in the Christian theological tradition. As to this last point, even in this modest historical and theological survey, it is shown that the doctrine is an object of faith in Catholic teaching, and the object of continual theological investigation in the Catholic tradition. In other words, resting on the shoulders of Catholic Tradition, there is not only evidence that predestination should be studied, but preached, taught, and believed.

As to the notion that God is an obstacle to our freedom—that human freedom requires independence from God especially in terms of predestination—it can only be repeated that this is simply not the Christian understanding of the providential relationship between Creator and creature. Again, the *Catechism* says that "far from diminishing the creature's dignity, this truth enhances it. Drawn from nothingness by God's power, wisdom, and goodness, it can do nothing

[288] Bulzacchelli, *Judged By the Law of Freedom*, 42.
[289] Long, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," 599.

if it is cut off from its origin, for "without a Creator, the creature vanishes." Still less can a creature attain its ultimate end without the help of God's grace."[290]

As we have seen in this study, according to the theological content of predestination the mandate to preach, teach, and believe this doctrine is not an oppressive one. It does not suggest that the faithful ought to gloomily speculate over their final destiny in a deterministic way. Rather, the doctrine provides for us a meditation on the God of the universe, which by his knowledge and will creates, sustains, and orders all things through, in, and for his love. Predestination then, is the eternal knowledge and love of God for human beings as they are created, sustained, healed, and ordered to a *supernatural* end. Even prior to sin and death, grace was required for man to share in the divine life. Thus in light of predestination, the sheer gratuitousness of God's self-diffusive love is on display.

That God offers sufficient grace to all in Christ in a sincere desire for all to participate in the Trinitarian life, and the freedom to co-operate with grace, is revelatory of a divine Lover and the dignity imparted to the human race. All fear and anxiety is impotent before the reality of God's gratuitous goodness. Predestination becomes "a delightful and joyful and liberating doctrine, all about the love of God and the glorious freedom of the sons of God."[291] Moreover, the eternal plan ought not to be understood as an impersonal force ordering destinies: Jesus Christ, predestined to be the Son of God by nature, reveals that we are "predestined to the adoption of sons, which is a participated likeness of natural sonship."[292] In other words, this

[290] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 308.
[291] Herbert McCabe, OP, 'Predestination", in *God Still Matters*, ed. Brian Davies, OP (New York: Continuum, 2002), 183 (Levering, *Predestination*, 6).
[292] *Summa theol*., III, q. 24, a. 3.

doctrine says of God that not only is he transcendent Creator, but, immanent Redeemer. Through the Spirit and in Christ we are able to call God "Abba! Father!"[293]

[293] Romans 8:15.

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