

8 Providence and Predestination

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Abstract

From a theological perspective, there are at least two kinds of benevolent, end-directed divine action: providence and predestination. Given that the goal of predestination is salvation, purportedly the ultimate goal of human life and divine direction in regard to that life, predestination and providence ought to share much in common from a theological perspective. But predestination has been and remains one of the most contentious issues in theology and has often been reduced to a divine and unilateral selection of human beings to heaven or hell, a kind of religious determinism or predeterminism. In this chapter, I argue that new research and images of the life of grace drawn from scriptural narratives imply the need for a broader and richer understanding of predestination that takes proper account of human responsiveness and providence, including the possibility of incomplete predestination and degrees of blessedness.

Introduction

Questions about the benevolent divine direction of the cosmos and human affairs are often discussed under the heading of *providence*, drawn from the Latin *providere*, meaning to ‘foresee, attend to’. But closely related questions are also discussed under the heading of *predestination*, drawn from the Latin *praedestinare*, meaning to ‘make firm beforehand’.¹

Although both words imply benevolent divine direction, the notion of providence is more broadly applicable and older than predestination. Providence appears explicitly in some texts of

revealed theology, such as Wisdom 14:3 and 17:2, and it is implied in many other texts, such as Genesis 8:22; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 37:1-40; 103:19; Daniel 4:35; and Romans 11:36. But providence is also discussed quite frequently in straightforwardly philosophical texts of the classical world, especially in the works of Plato, such as the *Laws*, and those of the Platonists, such as Proclus (d. 485 AD), one of the last classical philosophers.² In contrast to the Epicureans, Plato and the Platonists held that providence is real. They also wrestled with many of the consequences of this belief, such as questions about human freedom, the problem of evil, and divine knowledge and recompense for good and evil actions. In his *Summa theologiae*, drawing from the late Roman author Boethius,³ Thomas Aquinas describes providence in terms of the divine governance that disposes things for their good, either ordering things to their proper end, or ordering them as parts of wholes.⁴

By contrast, predestination is a term that originates exclusively in revealed theological sources, specifically the texts of the New Testament, as in the following example,

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.⁵

This passage refers to “those whom he foreknew he also predestined,” (“ὅτι οὖς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν”) and “those whom he predestined he also called” (“οὖς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν”). From this verb ‘predestine’ (προέγνω), which can also be translated as ‘foreordain’ or ‘predetermine,’ the noun ‘predestination’ can be formed, the sense of which is the ‘preordaining of God’s elect to salvation’ or ‘the fact of being so preordained’. Aquinas describes predestination as existing in the divine mind and involving the ordering of some persons towards eternal salvation.⁶

These brief descriptions serve to highlight some preliminary dissimilarities of providence and predestination. For example, providence is a broad term, applying to the created world as well as human persons and, as noted previously, it implies the notion of bringing things in general to their proper ends. Predestination, by contrast, has the more focused goal of one specific end, namely the salvation of created personal beings, which, in the case of human persons, is described in the text above as the glory of the adopted children of God, confirmed to the image of the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ.⁷

Predestination is nevertheless formally part of providence, insofar as providence is about directing created beings to their proper ends, and salvation is the proper end and ultimate good of human beings.⁸ Moreover, they are related in another way. If the God of providence and of predestination is one and the same, then the goal of predestination, namely the salvation of at least some human beings, is also plausibly the ultimate goal to which all broader providential action in creation ultimately flows. And according to the same theological tradition, whatever non-human beings exist when the full number of the predestined is complete, they will be beings that are appropriate for the resurrected human life of glory, as suggested by the scriptural reference to “new heavens and a new earth”.⁹ On this account, the salvation of predestined souls may be compared to the fulcrum or neck to which all the sands of broader providential action flow in a traditional hourglass or sand clock, with everything flowing to that point in the top chamber, and everything coming from that point in the bottom chamber.

These considerations suggest that investigations into providence should not overlook predestination as the possible nexus or fulcrum of providence. But such an investigation is hampered, first, by the fact that predestination is and remains an especially difficult and contentious concept, especially in regard to the role, if any, of the human will in the work of salvation. In addition, providence is normally understood in terms of process, namely something that unfolds over time from

the perspective of its recipients. By contrast, predestination, at least since the sixteenth century, has been discussed almost exclusively as a kind of pre-temporal or atemporal religious determinism or even predeterminism. As a consequence, despite their formal relationship, the studies of providence and predestination have tended to form surprisingly distinct worlds of discourse in works of philosophy and theology.

In this chapter, therefore, I investigate what may be learned by bringing these worlds together. Specifically, I examine two stories from the sources of revealed theology that focus on the goal of predestination, namely salvation, with narratives of an unfolding blend of human and divine action over time. In other words, I examine predestination by means of the kinds of narratives that are more usually associated with the study of providence, examining, in particular, what role the human will apparently plays in successful or unsuccessful outcomes of these dramas.

Finally, having clarified what is implied by these unfolding accounts of predestination, I address the question of what, if anything, might be contributed to successful outcomes by human action, specifically the kind of action that might be associated with *human* providence.

The First Story: The Spiritual Sense of Exodus

Consider the passage below from the First Letter to the Corinthians:

I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.¹⁰

This passage refers to the ancient narrative of the Book of Exodus, the story of Moses who encountered God on Mount Sinai and led the people of ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in a promised land after a journey of forty years in a wilderness. This story is of immense significance

to both Judaism and Christianity and has even been described as the most important book in the Bible,¹¹ given that it recounts the revelation of the name of God, the covenant between God and the people of Israel, with its associated practices and laws, including the Ten Commandments, and a journey to freedom that remains a foundational text of Jewish self-identity and a source of ongoing inspiration.

The text above from 1 Corinthians also shows that the early Christians read a second-order and spiritual meaning from this story. The crossing of the Red Sea, enabling the people to escape Pharaoh's army, is a *baptism*.¹² Moreover, the rock struck by Moses from which the people drank to relieve their thirst in the wilderness,¹³ and which rabbinical interpretation had described as journeying with the people through the wilderness, is here interpreted as *Christ*, from whose pierced side blood and water poured when he hung dead on the cross.¹⁴

Elsewhere in the New Testament, in Hebrews 3:2 – 4:11, there is also an important reference to the outcome of the story of Exodus, in the form of a warning,

For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end, while it is said, “Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? And with whom was he provoked forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they should never enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient?¹⁵

The text is clearly a warning to the readers not to rebel against God and have hardened hearts, like many of the Israelites who rebelled in the wilderness. These rebels, who briefly included even Moses,¹⁶ failed to reach God's place of rest for them, namely the promised land, which is, by implication, interpreted in the text above as representing the everlasting life of the kingdom of heaven.

From these and other texts, the broader story of Exodus not only has lessons for the Christian life, but in fact represents the whole of the Christian life in the manner of a supernaturally revealed narrative. The details were filled out as this interpretation matured in the early Church: a person starts in a state of slavery to sin (slavery in Egypt); is freed by baptism (crossing the sea); and lives out the new spiritual life in a world that is, on the whole, unsupportive (the wilderness). But the Christian is also sustained by the Eucharist (manna from heaven) and the Virgin Mary (the Ark of the Covenant)¹⁷, crossing the river of death (the Jordan) to the place of rest, namely heaven (the promised land).

Whatever else may be said, this spiritual interpretation of Exodus highlights at least the following. First, this account is oriented towards the goal of salvation, which confirms that it pertains to the kind of benevolent divine direction usually discussed under the category of predestination. Second, the events of Exodus take place over an extended period, including forty years for the journey itself, consistent with the notion of the process of salvation taking a whole lifetime. Third, the journey would be absolutely impossible and would never get started without divine initiative, power, and guidance. But Exodus is also a drama in which human choices apparently play a part. There are many who start the journey but rebel against God and die in the wilderness, failing to reach the promised land.

The Second Story: The Parable of the Sower

All of the parables of Jesus Christ focus in one way or another on human salvation. In many of these parables, a fruitful outcome to a human life is generally the result of a process or, in the case of the agricultural parables, a period of cultivation. One such example is the Parable of the Sower,¹⁸

A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were

scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.¹⁹

The basic scenario of this parable is about ground receiving seed, with ground identified as various states of human beings in this world, and seed as something given by God to generate a new kind of life. The narrative is consistent with the ground being the life of ordinary human nature, the grain-bearing plants being the new kind of life of the Christian, also called the *life of grace*, and the fruits being the states of interpersonal love or friendship with God that is a characteristic of those who are saved.²⁰ Whatever else may be said, this interpretation of the parable reveals at the least the following.

First, as in the case of the account of Exodus, this parable is clearly about salvation, which confirms that it pertains to what is usually discussed under the category of predestination. Second, this parable describes a process taking place over an extended period, given the time required for plants to grow and their various fates over time. Third, this growth would be absolutely impossible without the divine intervention of sowing the seed, but the drama is one in which the state of the ground, and hence human responsiveness, plays a role. There are unsuccessful as well as successful outcomes for ground that receives the same seed, and the failure to bear fruit, especially in the context of other texts,²¹ implies that the lives in these instances do not attain salvation. Conversely, there are degrees of spectacular fruitfulness, namely thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, implying the notion that salvation is not a uniform state but a category that covers many and diverse degrees of blessedness.

To expand a little on the meaning of these outcomes, the hard ground does not even accept the seed. I would interpret this impenetrable ground, using the terminology of Eleonore Stump, as a failure to be quiescent to grace, that is, to cease to resist grace.²² Some seed has growth limited by thin soil, implying a failure of the deeper transformation of one's life, giving rise to a superficial spiritual life that soon withers. Other seed is choked by weeds that represent competing and unfruitful

affections, cares, and responsibilities. Finally, the fact that there are degrees of fruitfulness hints at the notion that diverse ground, given the same seed, bears different quantities of fruit, implying also that one's choices within the life of grace generate diverse blessedness in the kingdom of heaven.

Implications of the Stories

Both the spiritual sense of Exodus and the Parable of the Sower are clearly about the attainment of the goal of predestination. As regards what contributes to the attainment of that goal, God initiates the salvific action in both stories and enables it to be completed. But in both cases, this attainment is described as unfolding over an extended period of time, either in the sense of a lifelong journey in the case of Exodus or the growth of a plant from seed to fruition in the case of the Parable of the Sower. Moreover, human choices also seem to be involved in the question of whether the journey is completed successfully, in the case of Exodus, and whether the gifts of God are accepted and produce their fruit in the case of the parable.

To grasp the deeper reason why a human response is indispensable, it is worth considering what, precisely, is meant by the salvation that is denoted metaphorically by the completion of a journey or the fruits of a plant. In both the Old and New Testament, this salvation is described in intimate interpersonal terms between a human person and the divinely revealed God, either as father to a child, or in terms of a covenant or spiritual marriage, or in terms of divine friendship, as in the following:

You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.²³

In this text, Jesus Christ refers to a transition to a state of friendship between him and those disciples that remained with him after the departure of Judas, on the final evening before his passion and death. This transition follows an earlier, formative period during which disciples were following and learning

from Jesus, but apparently were not yet true friends with him. Such a change is familiar in daily life, and was highlighted by Aristotle, namely that those who desire to become friends cannot immediately and automatically attain the good of friendship.²⁴ Friends need time and mutual familiarity based on experience to become aligned with one another and attain a mutual sense of union, and both persons in a relationship of friendship must make some free response to the other, a response that is frequently only properly recognised as genuine when it endures through periods of suffering.

The Book of Exodus also underlines the difference between friendship, requiring some mutual response, and goods that can be given unilaterally by God. At the start of the Book of Exodus, it is true that the focus of the people is on the practical matters of being rescued from slavery and reaching a new and good home, as in the following passage from Exodus 3:7-8,

Then the LORD said, “I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey...”

It is conceivable that being freed from slavery and placed in a bounteous land are goods that could be bestowed unilaterally by God regardless of the response of the people. Indeed, later in the story, in Exodus 33:3-4, the people are offered these goods by God but without the continuing presence of God,

“Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you in the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” When the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man put on his ornaments.

The mourning of the people in this text, however, suggests that obtaining the goods of the Promised Land, which God could unilaterally give them, will not bring them joy without the presence and relationship with God. But divine friendship, since it involves the consensus of two parties, is not

something that even God can bestow unilaterally. Moreover, in the narrative of Exodus, the many rebellions of the people inhibit this friendship and keep the people out of the promised land until they have spent forty years in the wilderness, during which time most of them have died.

Similar lessons apply to the Parable of Sower even though its elements are not, at first, so obviously about interpersonal interaction. But Jesus' explanation of the parable, along with the fact that friendship is something that is frequently spoken of as being *cultivated*, means that the parable harmonises well with understanding salvation in terms of the cultivation of friendship with God.²⁵ Moreover, as in the case of friendship in general, the parable strongly highlights the response of the recipient to the offer of divine friendship as playing a decisive role in whether this relationship is in fact fruitful. Nevertheless, if these parables are about predestination to salvation, with the most important element of this salvation being divine friendship with God, this interpretation gives rise to some challenges.

First, in these stories predestination seems to unfold over time, involving a tapestry of human and divine actions and interactions. In other words, as noted previously, predestination in these stories seems rather like how providence is often conceived to work. So why, then, is there a different word at all? One answer to this question can, I think, be understood in reference to the notion that the Christian life is meant to be a new kind of life, distinct from the life of nature. For example, if the crossing of the Red Sea symbolises baptism, which theology defines in terms of a second birth into the life of grace, then the unfolding of the story of Exodus is principally about the life of grace. Similarly, the drama of the Parable of the Sower is all about the sowing of a new life in the life of human nature (the ground), which cannot generate this new life of grace without a divine initiative (the sowing). Given that the life of grace is meant to be a new kind of life, it is not so surprising that there is a new word for end-directed action in the life of grace that is distinct from providence that applies to creation in general.

Second, the etymological roots of predestination encompass the notion of making firm beforehand, implying a sense of stability or firmness that is, in fact, lost by many of the characters represented in the spiritual reading of Exodus and the Parable of Sower. How then is it possible to reconcile the firmness implied by predestination with the failure to gain salvation in some cases? In response to this question, Aquinas in his account of the life of grace argues that this life does, in fact, tend to its end with certainty, so that anyone who has this life is assured of a good outcome regardless of any challenges whatsoever.²⁶ But Aquinas also acknowledges in the same article that some who have this hope fail to obtain happiness.²⁷ This failure is due to sin, which is a perverted act of free will that is the one and only way to extinguish the life of grace, and to cut off the virtues. And even in this case, it is possible to repent and obtain grace again by God's mercy, while one still has time.²⁸ On this account the life of grace does indeed have an infallible outcome, but that fact does not prevent someone committing grace-extinguishing serious sin, in effect committing spiritual suicide.

Third, how is the state of starting but not finishing well to be understood and described in relation to predestination? Some historical research shows that a category did in fact evolve in theology to describe this scenario, although it is completely overlooked in contemporary philosophical articles and only mentioned rarely in a few specialized works; this category is *inadequate* or *incomplete predestination*.²⁹ Such a category does not make much sense, of course, if one considers predestination merely in terms of a divine atemporal and unilateral decision, since it comes close to suggesting that God is self-contradictory, both willing and not willing salvation. But the notion of *incomplete predestination* can make sense in the context of an unfolding act in time, like the growth of a plant in the Parable of the Sower, in which human choices are freely permitted, by God, to thwart God's own will. For any of the seeds that take root and grow, the lesson of biology is that all the matter and operations of a plant are oriented towards fruitfulness, regardless of whether this fruitfulness is in fact attained. Applied to the life of grace, it makes sense to give a name to that directivity, specifically as a

kind of predestination towards salvation. The lesson of the parable, however, is that not all the plants actually succeed in producing fruit, in which case this predestination is incomplete or inadequate.

On this latter point, what is described by incomplete predestination was applied by John Henry Cardinal Newman to a somewhat overlooked case, namely Judas Iscariot, who enjoyed the privilege of grace for a time but still betrayed Jesus Christ to death. Citing Scripture, Newman describes Judas as going “to his own place,” that is to hell, but he adds,

Yet he [Judas] found it, not by the mere force of certain natural principles, working out their inevitable results – by some unfeeling fate, which sentences the wicked to hell – but by a Judge who surveys him from head to foot, who searches him through and through, to see if there is any ray of hope, any latent spark of faith; who pleads with him again and again, and at length abandoning him, mourns over him the while with the wounded affection of a friend rather than the severity of the Judge of the whole earth.³⁰

What Newman underlines here, of course, is the love of God and desire for salvation for each particular individual, even the most wretched, and even when God knows that the offer of mercy will be rejected.

What About Human Providence?

Within the context of this understanding of predestination, the human will does play some role, first in terms of ceasing to resist grace when it is offered, and second in terms of refraining from actions that would extinguish the implanted life of grace. The human will is crucial but remains secondary, like that of a gatekeeper unlocking the door of a house from the inside. But can the human will contribute anything more positive to the working out of salvation? If so, is there any sense in which *human* providence might contribute to attainment or form of the goal of divine providence?

A case could be made that there is no such role. After all, 1 Corinthians 2:9, which is often cited by Aquinas, states that, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.” In other words, unlike the flourishing of nature described in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, the flourishing associated with the attainment of the goal of predestination is beyond human conception or desire. On this account, all that is required to attain this goal is to refrain from rejecting the actions of divine providence, which renders the dispositions and faculties involved in human providence otherwise irrelevant. This approach of simple surrender to the divine will also seems consistent with an influential school of thought that has sometimes surfaced in the Christian tradition and which Eleonore Stump calls the “stern-minded attitude.”³¹ According to this approach, being aligned with the will of God, namely willing what God wills, should involve the elimination of all personal desires, without which there is very little scope for human providence.

On the other hand, there are other reasons for a cautiously positive response. First, although the stories of Exodus and the Parable of the Sower underline the absolute priority of the response to divine action, Scripture is not without instances in which human providential action in the work of salvation is mentioned and commended. One example is the Parable of the Talents in which the servants who trade and double their master’s money are invited to enter into their master’s joy when the master returns.³² Whatever precisely is meant by trading the master’s money, the metaphor strongly hints at a role for human foresight and planning with a view to attaining goals.

A second reason is that Christian tradition has not excluded the dispositions associated with providential action, notably the virtue of prudence, from the life of grace. Aquinas, for example, includes a very detailed and positive account of prudence and its associated gift, beatitude, and vices in his *Summa theologiae*.³³ The life of grace, according to Aquinas, is also one in which human beings are not simply moved like instruments but also move themselves.³⁴ Even if this relationship to God is

considered simply in terms of service, he argues that even servants, insofar as they are rational beings, can and should share in the exercise of prudence.³⁵ Moreover, even if the human will plays only a secondary role in this life of service, in the manner of a gatekeeper opening the door, experience confirms Aquinas' arguments that there is a need for prudence. Even secondary actions have to be guided by prudence, and one has to exercise this virtue in many ways in the spiritual life. One has to decide, for example, when to pray each day amid the particular circumstances of one's own life, as well as what to do when one's routine is interrupted by circumstance. One also has to exercise prudence by closing the door to what will detract from the spiritual life, like rejecting the seeds of the thorns in the Parable of the Sower.³⁶

A third reason can be drawn from the consideration of what, precisely, is meant by fruitfulness in the spiritual life. Although the life of grace encompasses the notion of service to God, another scripturally endorsed metaphor is being adopted as a child of God, a state in which one can properly call God 'Father'.³⁷ If even a servant can and should exercise prudence, as argued above, that is even more true of a child in a relationship of adoption by God. Children are not senseless instruments, but can and will play and create, as in the case of the creation of language in the pre-fallen state of Genesis 2:19-20, or the creation of artistic masterpieces in the life of grace, such as the *Basílica de la Sagrada Família* in Barcelona, or entire secondary worlds, as in J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*.³⁸ Such play and creativity, especially in its sophisticated forms, necessarily involves human providence. The exercise of this providence does not contribute directly to the attainment of salvation in an efficient sense, which is the work of grace. Nevertheless, it helps to shape the narrative of particular human lives that are oriented towards salvation and may therefore contribute to the form of the salvation of those lives.

Conclusion

Although predestination deals with the life of grace, a divine gift for salvation, it is within the general category of providence. Hence it can be insightful to study predestination by means of the kinds of narratives of divine and human action that are more usually seen as exemplifying providence.

These studies affirm many characteristics that are commonly associated with the term 'predestination'. First, a theme of these stories is that it is God's initiative alone that makes the life of grace possible and, once this life is begun, everything that happens in it by the divine will is directed towards its completion or fruitfulness. Moreover, there is a certainty about its outcome in at least the sense that, provided the recipient of grace does not relinquish the gift, no created being can directly prevent a fruitful conclusion of this life.

Nevertheless, the stories from Scripture also highlight that there are those who start the journey and fail to finish, or who start the life of grace and fail to be fruitful. What these instances signify is that the recipient of grace can and, in practice, often will reject grace through sin. Such individuals are not precluded from broader providential action that guides them to repentance and a restoration of grace, but it is possible for such failure to be permanent. This possibility brings to light a category that did develop in the Christian tradition but which is, in practice, often forgotten today, namely *inadequate* or *incomplete predestination*. Such a category of providence is predestination in a qualified sense, insofar as it is a life directed by God for a time to salvation, but it is also one that fails to attain this salvation due to some human choice that involves the abandonment of grace.

Finally, the diversity of fruitfulness, highlighted in the Parable of the Sower and the experience of human creativity in lives of grace, also hint at the notion that human choices, and indeed human providential action, can shape the type and degree of blessedness of a predestined life.

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Notes

¹ See "Providence, n." and "Predestination, n." *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed September 11, 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/153450;149818>.

² Proclus, *Ten Problems Concerning Providence*, trans. Jan Opsomer and Carlos G. Steel, Ancient Commentators on Aristotle (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012).

³ Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* IV.6; for a modern critical translation, see Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. by Douglas C. Langston, trans. by Richard H. Green, Norton Critical Editions (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), pp. 70–75.

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter, *ST*) I.22.1. In this chapter I make use of the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Thomas Aquinas, *The 'Summa Theologica' of St. Thomas Aquinas, Literally Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1911), because it has become standard and because there are not many places where I could improve on it significantly.

⁵ Romans 8:28-30. All translations in this chapter are taken from the Revised Standard Version, unless stated otherwise.

⁶ *ST* I.23.2, “Unde manifestum est quod praedestinatio est quaedam ratio ordinis aliquorum in salutem aeternam, in mente divina existens.”

⁷ I note in passing that Aquinas also applies the principle of predestination to angels as well as human persons. See, for example, *ST* I.23.1 ad 3.

⁸ *ST* I.23.1.

⁹ Revelation 21:1.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. Instead of ‘supernatural’ in this translation from the Revised Standard Version, I have substituted the term ‘spiritual’, a more literal translation of *pneumatikos*.

¹¹ Carol Meyers, *Exodus* (Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xv.

¹² Exodus 14:15-30.

¹³ Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:7-13.

¹⁴ John 19:34-36.

¹⁵ Hebrews 3:14-18.

¹⁶ An account of the disobedience of Moses is given in Deuteronomy 32:51-52.

¹⁷ For the interpretation of Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, see, for example, Brant James Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Messiah* (New York: Image, 2018).

¹⁸ A parable of Jesus that is found with preambles and explanations in Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; and Luke 8:1-15.

¹⁹ Matthew 13:3-8.

²⁰ On this account, the ‘life of nature’, namely the ground without the seed, can simply be treated as indicating whatever human life is like without this special divine action; Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* might be taken as a refined description of such a life. By contrast, the life of grace is described by Aquinas principally in the very different virtue ethics of *ST* I-II.55-70 and *ST* II-II.1-170. I have interpreted the underlying metaphor of these questions in interpersonal or specifically second-personal terms in Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas’s Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York/Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012). There is also a recent account of life in grace in chap. 7 of Eleonore Stump, *Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 197-232.

²¹ For example, Matthew 7:19; John 15:2.

²² Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 389-404. For recent work by Stump on this theme, see, in particular, chap. 4-7 of Stump, *Atonement*, 115-229.

²³ John 15:14-15.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.3.1156b25-29.

²⁵ See Matthew 13:18-23.

²⁶ *ST* II-II.18.4. For Aquinas’ account of the life of grace in general, see *ST* II-II.1-170.

²⁷ *ST* II-II.18.4 ad 3.

²⁸ *ST* II-II.18.4 ad 2.

²⁹ A search of the Philosophers Index on ‘predestination’ on August 24, 2019 yielded 167 results, but no results at all for ‘incomplete’ or ‘inadequate predestination’. A brief description of these terms can be found in Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James C. Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch (Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 2013), 242.

³⁰ John Henry Newman, “A Particular Providence as Revealed in the Gospel,” in John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 556-64.

³¹ Stump, *Atonement*, 183-6. Stump strongly rejects this “stern-minded attitude” in the remainder of this chapter, *ibid.*, 186-196.

³² Matthew 26:14-30; Luke 19:11-27.

³³ *ST* II-II.47-56.

³⁴ *ST* I-II.68.3 ad 2, “Ratio illa procedit de instrumento cuius non est agere, sed solum agi. Tale autem instrumentum non est homo; sed sic agitur a spiritu sancto, quod etiam agit, inquantum est liberi arbitrii. Unde indiget habitu.”

³⁵ *ST* II-II.47.12 ad 2.

³⁶ Articulations of such prudence can be found, for example, in the tradition of Judeo-Christian proverbs that are found throughout Scripture and especially in the Book of Proverbs. These proverbs provide heuristics to help identify what is truly good and images that strengthen the will to do good and avoid evil. See, for example, the following compilation from Scripture against each one of the traditional seven deadly sins: *Pride* – “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18); *Envy* – “Fret not yourself because of evildoers, and be not envious of the wicked; for the evil man has no future; the lamp of the wicked will be put out” (Proverbs 24:19-20); *Wrath* – “Good sense makes a man slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.” (Proverbs 15:1); *Sloth* – “Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise” (Proverbs 6:6); *Avarice* – “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money; nor he who loves wealth, with gain” (Ecclesiastes 5:10); *Gluttony* – “If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you be sated with it and vomit it” (Proverbs 25:16); *Lust* – “The body is not meant for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Corinthians 5:13).

³⁷ See, for example, Romans 8:16-17.

³⁸ I explore this theme in more detail in Andrew Pinsent, “God, Elvish, and Secondary Creation,” *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 11 (2019): 191-204, <https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.v11i2.2620>.