



# Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths

*By Matthew Levering*

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## **Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths** By Matthew Levering

Predestination has been the subject of perennial controversy among Christians, although in recent years theologians have shied away from it as a divisive and unifying topic. In this book Matthew Levering argues that Christian theological reflection needs to continue to return to the topic of predestination, for two reasons:

Firstly, predestinarian doctrine is taught in the New Testament. Reflecting the importance of the topic in many strands of Second Temple Judaism, the New Testament authors teach predestination in a manner that explains why Christian theologians continually recur to this topic.

Secondly, the doctrine of predestination provides a way for Christian theologians to reflect upon two fundamental affirmations of biblical revelation. The first is God's love, without any deficiency or crimp, for each and every rational creature; the second is that God from eternity brings about the purpose for which he created us, and that he permits some rational creatures freely and permanently to rebel against his love. When theologians reflect on these two key biblical affirmations, they generally try to unite them in a logical synthesis. Instead, Levering argues, it is necessary to allow for the truth of each side of the mystery, without trying to blend the two affirmations into one.

Levering pairs his discussion of Scripture with ecumenically oriented discussion of the doctrine of predestination in through the ages through the figures of Origen, Augustine, Boethius, John of Damascus, Eriugena, Aquinas, Ockham, Catherine of Siena, Calvin, Molina, Francis de Sales, Leibniz, Bulgakov, Barth, Maritain, and Balthasar. He concludes with a constructive chapter regarding the future of the doctrine.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

Predestination is a welcome contribution to the current debates over predestination and it amply displays biblical, theological and historical clarity and competence. I strongly recommend the book and encourage readers to request it for their institutions' libraries \* Randal Rauser, *Scottish Journal of Theology* \* Levering's book should deservedly become a helpful resource for theological students as they begin to engage with issues of grace and election in the Western theological tradition. \* John C. McDowell, *Colloquium* \* Levering's text is valuable as an encyclopedia of predestination, beautifully balancing discussion of primary sources with current secondary literature. \* Jeffrey A. Vogel, *Journal of Theological Studies* \* Matthew Levering, a young Roman Catholic scholar from the States, has added to his growing list of publications this wise and scholarly book on a theological theme which continues to be important. The book is well organised, very clearly written (the author explaining complex ideas in accessible ways), and has a clear line of argument which runs from its introduction to its conclusion. It's a nicely produced volume too. \* Robert Ellis, *Regent's Reviews* \* a fresh and insightful work on a challenging theological topic. \* Todd Billings, *Theology* \*

### **About the Author**

Matthew Levering is Professor of Theology at the University of Dayton. He previously taught for nine years at Ave Maria University, and in 2006-2007 he was the Myser Fellow at the Center for Ethics and Culture at the University of Notre Dame. With Reinhard Huetter, he is co-editor of the theological and philosophical quarterly *Nova et Vetera*. The author of over twenty books, including ten monographs, he is Chair of the Board of the Academy of Catholic Theology. Since 2004 he has been a member of Evangelicals and Catholics Together. With Hans Boersma, he is co-director of the Center for Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue. He currently co-edits book series for the University of Notre Dame Press, Catholic University of America Press, Sapientia Press, and Brazos Press. His main interest is the intersection of theology, philosophy, and biblical exegesis in the formation and communication of Christian dogmatic, moral, and sacramental theology.

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