

## THE NATURE OF THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES

### I. DEFINITIONS

#### A. *Habit*

To launch a discussion on the nature of the infused moral virtues it is necessary to define terms which will be used throughout. The first notion is habit. Habit is a species of quality. It is a quality difficult to change which disposes a subject well or badly either in regard to itself or in regard to its actions. A habit has the note of permanency in contrast to a disposition which is easily changeable. One who has studied Theology for years may be said to have a *disposition* to investigate certain interesting questions. Through repetition the disposition may become a habit.

Now habits are either entitative or operative. Entitative modify the being of the subject. One is said to have a habit of health. An operative habit however, does not modify the whole being as such, but one particular faculty of the being. A person is said to have the habit of justice in his business dealings. Another is said to have a habit of politeness in his daily contacts. And so on.<sup>1</sup>

A habit is something *had*. Moreover, it is something had by way of addition, of further determination and modification. . . . Because a man has a will, he has the *ability* to love; by the *habit* of charity that ability is *disposed* to love God and neighbor. There is in the notion of habit an element by which what is already perfected and determined in one sense is considered in its aptitude toward still *more* perfection and determination.<sup>2</sup>

As a way of being or of acting, habit is a quality. It gives further determination to a thing's nature or operation in a way that is either suitable to that nature or not. It always disposes, but either well or badly. As something *had*, it possesses a certain stability.

<sup>1</sup> I-II, q. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, E. F., Ryan, L. A., *Preface to Happiness*, pp. 118-9.

"Habit," says St. Thomas, "differs from potency in this, that by potency we have the power to do something, but by habit we are not only rendered *able* to do something, but *disposed* or *indisposed* to do what we have the power to do *well or badly*. By habit, therefore, there is not given or taken away from us the power to do something (*aliquid posse*)—but this we acquire by habit, that we do it well or badly."<sup>3</sup>

Habit, then, presupposes a potency, which it will further determine. The subject of habits must be in potentiality to being or to operation. Since our concern is operative habits, I shall concentrate upon the *subject* of operative habits. Habits can be developed in those parts or faculties, which are capable of being determined to act in a certain way. This means that there will be habits in the faculties of both soul and body. The soul is disposed to activity by its potencies or faculties. Operative habits will be in these faculties rather than in the soul itself. They will be found in the intellect, will, memory, imagination and all the other faculties of men. They will determine certain faculties to act constantly, easily, and pleasurably in a certain direction. They will become ready principles of action. That is why we say that habits are, as it were, a second nature.

It is common experience that good habits of various sort enable one to perfect himself in countless ways by producing a certain facility, and that bad habits impede an individual in the attainment of whatever type of perfection he may be seeking by the privation of their opposites. If facility be the most important characteristic of natural good habits, a sort of enslaving necessity is the chief mark of bad habits. Good habits increase our potentialities for good, whereas bad habits enchain the same powers.

#### B. *Virtue*

St. Thomas defines virtue as a good operative habit.<sup>4</sup> Virtue perfects some human power of man according to the mode of habit. Virtue is a permanent quality of some faculty of the soul enabling

<sup>3</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, IV, 77 (English Dominican translation; London, Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1929).

<sup>4</sup> I-II, q. 55, art. 3.

it to place good acts. It is the note of stability which differentiates virtue from the mere inclination or disposition to place good acts. St. Francis de Sales explains this distinction:

There are certain inclinations which are esteemed virtues and are not so, but favors and advantages of nature. How many there are who are naturally sober, mild, chaste and modest! Now all these seem to be virtues, and yet have no more the merit thereof than bad inclinations are blameworthy before we have given free and voluntary consent to such natural dispositions. . . . It is no virtue to be silent by nature, although it is a virtue to bridle one's tongue by reason. . . . Some think they have virtue who have only good inclinations. . . .<sup>5</sup>

Because St. Thomas' notion of virtue can be applied to both natural and supernatural virtues, it is preferable to the classical definition of St. Augustine, which applies only to infused virtues. Dropping the last clause from St. Augustine's definition, namely, "which God produces in us without us" gives us a definition of virtue equivalent to that of St. Thomas: "a good quality of the mind, by which we live rightly, and which cannot be put to evil use."<sup>6</sup>

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#### DIVISION OF VIRTUE

Usually the virtues are divided:

(a) by reason of their *object* into theological and moral. The theological virtues have God, as He is in Himself, as their immediate material and formal object. The moral virtues are concerned immediately with the means whereby we tend to God, and have as their immediate object some created good.

(b) by reason of *origin*, into acquired and infused. Acquired are formed by the repetition of natural acts, and infused are placed immediately in the soul by God.

(c) by reason of *end*, into natural and supernatural. *Natural* virtues tend to God as the Author of nature. These arise from nature

<sup>5</sup> *Love of God*, Bk. 11, ch. 8 (Mackay translation, Newman, 1942).

<sup>6</sup> *De Libero Arbitrio*, Bk. 2, ch. 19 (PL 32:1268): Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, et nemo male utitur, et quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur.

and dispose the faculties of the soul to exercise their con-natural operations with a certain constancy and facility. *Supernatural* virtues tend to God as the Author of Grace. Their power goes beyond the powers of human nature, as such, and enables the faculties of the soul to elicit acts which would be otherwise impossible.

(d) by reason of *subject*, into intellectual and appetitive. The intellectual reside in and perfect the intellect; the appetitive reside in and perfect the appetitive faculties. With the exception of faith and prudence, the other virtues which are the subject of our discussion are in the appetitive faculties.

*Virtue Is an Analogous Term*

One may possess an intellectual virtue, a perfecting power in some form of art, and yet not be morally good, and in this case it is said that he possesses virtue only in a restricted sense (*secundum quid*) and not in the popular sense of possessing a habit which tends to make him a good man. In general, when virtue is discussed, however, that type of virtue is meant which perfects the whole man with regard to his end, and this is the sense in which the word will be used henceforth in this discussion. Again, the acquired virtues, as such, do not perfect man with reference to his *de facto* supernatural end; and for this reason it is held that only the infused virtues fulfill completely the notion of virtue. They alone perfect the faculties of the soul in the effort to reach the supernatural goal of man. As I shall discuss later, it is the supernatural virtue of charity which gives to all the other virtues, both natural and supernatural, the species of perfect virtues.<sup>7</sup>

II. THE THOMISTIC ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF  
THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES

It should be noted that the very existence of the infused moral virtues is controverted by the followers of Duns Scotus. All theologians agree that the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity must be infused, since in no way can they be attained by acts of man's natural powers. But are the moral virtues also infused? Nothing is

<sup>7</sup> S. Thomas, IV *SENT.*, d. 14, qu. 2, a. 2, ad 4; I-II, 65, 2.

defined by the church. Still, in stating the Thomist position on this question, A. Michel finds both their arguments and the numbers of their followers so indicative of the mind of the Church that he terms their thesis "communissima."<sup>8</sup> All the Thomists, St. Bonaventure, and Suarez, and many of his followers, adhere to the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor.<sup>9</sup>

It is not to our purpose to give in detail the arguments from Sacred Scripture, St. Augustine, and statements of Popes Innocent III and Clement V, which seem to confirm the Thomistic position.<sup>10</sup> Suffice it to give what seems to be the best of St. Thomas' arguments for the *existence* of the infused moral virtues. Using the axiom that the order of means must correspond to the order of end, St. Thomas argues:

The effect is proportioned to its causes and principles. All the intellectual and moral virtues, which are acquired by our acts, proceed from natural principles, preexisting in us. In the place of these natural principles, the theological virtues are given to us by God by which we are ordained to the supernatural order. Whence, it is fitting that there should be other habits, divinely caused in us, which proportionately correspond to the theological virtues, as the intellectual and moral virtues are related to their natural principles.<sup>11</sup>

St. Thomas draws another similar argument from the scholastic dictum that God does not provide less in the supernatural order than He does in the natural order. In the natural order God has given us

<sup>8</sup> *DTC*, 15:2, col. 2779, "Vertu," Paris, 1950.

<sup>9</sup> I-II, q. 63, art. 3 (Thomas); *III Sent.*, *Dist.* 33, a. 1. qu. 1 (Bonaventura); *de Gratia*, BK. 6, ch. 9, n. 7 (Suarez).

<sup>10</sup> Gonet, John Baptist, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Paris, Vives, 1876, 4. 195-6, Disput. 4, art. 1.

<sup>11</sup> S.T., 1-2, 63, 3, c: Oportet effectus suis causis et principiis proportionatos: omnes autem virtutes tam intellectuales, quam morales, quae ex actibus nostris acquiruntur, procedit ex quibusdam naturalibus principiis in nobis praexistentibus; loco autem quorum naturalium principiorum conferuntur nobis a Deo virtutes theologicae quibus ordinamur ad finem supernaturalem; unde, oportet, quod his etiam virtutibus theologis proportionaliter respondeant alii habitus divinitus causati in nobis, qui sic habent ad virtutes theologicas sicut se habent virtutes morales et intellectuales ad principia naturalia virtutum.

a principle of life, the soul, and has attached to this principle permanent faculties of intellect and will, whereby we can place acts habitually toward a purely natural end. But it is not fitting that God should be less generous toward those whom He chooses to possess a supernatural end than He is toward those whom He destines for a purely natural end. He provides creatures with principles of self-activity, so as to enable them to move to their natural end. All the more reason, then, should He implant in the souls whom He draws to a supernatural goal certain permanent qualities, by which they may move smoothly and easily to their eternal goal.<sup>12</sup>

While it is true, moreover, that the infused virtues are designated by the same names as the natural virtues and are classified in the same manner, yet they are entirely distinct from their natural counterparts, for, although they have the same material objects as the natural, they differ in their formal objects. The formal object or motive of a natural virtue is made known by reason, while that of the supernatural virtues is made known by faith.

In short, God provides the soul in the state of sanctifying grace with corresponding permanent quasi faculties of operation which are as proportionate to man's supernatural end, as his natural faculties and habits are to his natural end.

These permanent quasi faculties should include the moral infused as well as the theological virtues; otherwise, God would seem to confer something to nature, which He has not conferred to our supernature, namely, proximate and immediate principles of operation relative to the use of created things.<sup>13</sup>

Such are the main arguments for the *common* opinion, which I shall use as a basis for discussion of the nature of the *infused* moral virtues. It is only fair, however, to outline without comment the opposing Scotist position.

#### A. *The Scotist Position*

Moral infused virtues are not needed either on the part of the end or on the part of the means. From the point of view of man's

<sup>12</sup> I-II, q. 110, art. 2; I-II, q. 62, art. 3, c.

<sup>13</sup> Coerver, Robert, *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues*, C.U.A., 1946, 8-9.

supernatural end the moral infused virtues are not necessary, because of the presence of charity in the soul. Charity orientates the *acquired* virtues to the end of charity and so renders superfluous the existence of infused moral virtues. Again, such virtues are not necessary by reason of mode or means. The theological virtue of faith communicates to the inferior virtues the mode and means of operating on the supernatural level. Coerver illustrates this position with an example.<sup>14</sup> Suppose a pagan possesses the acquired virtue of temperance in an eminent degree, for he has practiced this virtue for a long time. Finally, moved by God's grace, this man is baptized into the Church, and thereby receives sanctifying grace and the supernatural virtues and gifts.

What would happen to the acquired virtue of temperance? The Scotist would say that it would be revitalized and supernaturalized entirely by the infused theological virtues without any need of the infused moral virtue of temperance. Its supernatural mode of operation would come from the infused virtue of faith, and it would be directed to a supernatural end by infused charity. In the same way, all the natural virtues are supernaturalized by their conjunction with the infused theological virtues. Hence there is no necessity for the infused moral virtues.<sup>15</sup>

As was indicated already, the congruity of the infused moral virtues is urged, not merely for the purpose of ordinating our actions toward our supernatural end as an extrinsic cause, but in order that the faculties may perform intrinsically supernatural actions in the use of the MEANS to the end. While it is true that charity could order the acquired moral virtues to its end, they would remain, as it were, alien ministers of an inferior order. It is fitting that the virtues which charity informs to draw man to God should be of the same supernatural order as charity, and these virtues, like charity itself, should arise from supernatural grace.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Although there is no critical text of the works of Scotus available at the present moment, one may find Scotus' argument in the reliable *OPUS OXONIENSE: Opus Oxoniense*, Vives, Paris, 1894, Liber 3, Distinction 36, n. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Gonet, *op. cit.*, 4.195, Disputatio 4, art. 1.

### III. THE NATURE OF THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES

It seems that a valid approach to the nature of the infused moral virtues is found by instituting a twofold comparison, namely, their relationships to the theological and to the acquired moral virtues. First, the infused moral virtues are connected very closely with the theological virtues, especially charity, and this relationship shall be considered in the next section; then, the points of comparison between the infused moral and the acquired moral shall be studied in the following part.

#### A. *The Distinction Between the Theological and the Infused Moral:*

For the performance of actions on the supernatural level, three distinct principles are necessary:

- (1) principles ordinating the soul to its supernatural *end* directly, and these are the theological virtues.
- (2) principles ordinating the soul with regard to the *media* to its supernatural end, and these are the infused moral virtues.
- (3) principles moving the soul to follow the intimate guidance of the Holy Ghost, and these are the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup>

##### 1. *Distinct by Reason of Object*

Both the theological and the moral virtues are infused by God, but for different reasons. The theological are meant to attain the supernatural end itself, the God of Revelation, directly and immediately. Both the material and the formal objects of the theological virtues are given to us by Revelation, and they are attained only by faculties which have been elevated to the intrinsically supernatural level. Since God has destined us for a supernatural end, He must give us supernatural principles of activity, by which we may be inclined habitually toward that end. Rooted in the entitative habit of sanctifying grace, then, are the three operative habits of faith, hope, and charity. Faith attains unto God, as our supernatural end, and also unto a knowledge of supernatural mysteries necessary for salvation. Hope directs the will to seek God as our final happiness in spite of recognized weakness in ourselves and obstacles to this goal in

<sup>17</sup> Merkelbach, H., *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, I, 481.



worldly attractions. Charity inclines the will to seek the God of Revelation as all-lovable in Himself.<sup>18</sup> All three theological virtues attain their supernatural end directly and immediately; the infused moral virtues attain the same end indirectly and mediately.

It is a fact of experience that there is a difference between the willing of an end, and the choosing of the means to that end. The theological virtues are concerned with the *end*, and the infused moral are concerned directly and immediately with the *means* to the end, and only indirectly and mediately with the end itself. In Thomistic teaching, the argument for which I have set down already, the infused moral virtues are intrinsically supernatural *means*, supplying immediate and proximate principles of operation.<sup>19</sup> Since these virtues are concerned with directing all our human acts to our supernatural end, they are called *moral*. There are, therefore, as many infused moral virtues as there are diverse human acts; but they are reduced by the theologians to the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, corresponding to the four acquired virtues of the same names.

The infused cardinal virtues are *means* on the supernatural level to help man attain to his supernatural end. Taken in the general sense, with all their subjective and potential parts, these four virtues cover the range of human activity adequately. In the natural order prudence is based upon practical principles of reason known by synderesis; in the supernatural order infused prudence is based upon principles of Revelation known by faith. What synderesis and acquired prudence are in the natural order, faith and infused prudence are in the supernatural with this difference.

While superior to the other infused cardinal virtues, as their norm, infused prudence is, in turn, subordinate to charity, the form of all the other virtues.<sup>20</sup> In short, both natural and supernatural prudence, under charity, orientate the other cardinal virtues in their respective orders to their respective ends. By means of a beautiful

<sup>18</sup> I-II, q. 62, art. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange, R., *De Revelatione* (Ferrari, Rome, 1918) I, ch. c, art. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Gonet, *op. cit.*, Disput. 4, art. 1, 196.

comparison St. Francis de Sales concretized this abstract notion in his treatise on charity.<sup>21</sup>

The natural light of reason is like the river watering Paradise (Gen. 2:10), which was divided into four heads. These four streams are symbolic of the four regions of the soul.

Over what is called the practical understanding, i. e., the part of the intelligence which discerns the actions which we should do or avoid, natural reason spreads prudence, which inclines our minds wisely to judge of the evil which we are to avoid and drive away, and of the good which we are to do and pursue.

Over the will it makes justice stream, which is a constant and firm will to render to everyone his own. Over the concupiscible appetite it makes temperance flow, moderating the passions which are therein. Over the irascible appetite, or anger, it sends out fortitude, which stays or controls all the motions of anger.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note, in passing, that St. Francis views fortitude in its relationship to anger rather than in its relationship to fear, as most authors do. In either case, it is a question of a *special* virtue needed to control *strong* emotions.<sup>23</sup>

"Charity," continues St. Francis, "gives the understanding a celestial prudence, the will, a holy justice, the concupiscible appetite, a sacred temperance, and the irascible appetite, a devout fortitude, to the end that man's whole heart may tend to the supernatural honesty and felicity, which consist in union with God."<sup>24</sup>

Whether one divide the infused cardinal virtues from the point of view of the faculty in which they reside, or of the principle matter with which they treat, he is concerned with operative habits that enable man to use *created* goods in such a way as to move toward his supernatural goal of the beatific vision. Directly and immediately, then, the infused moral virtues are concerned with the means to the

<sup>21</sup> St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God*, Bk. 11, ch. 8 (Newman Press Edition, Westminster, 485-6).

<sup>22</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, 466-7, sect. 599. The same author explains some of the senses in which the term cardinal virtues has been used since the time of St. Ambrose.

<sup>24</sup> St. Francis de Sales, *op. cit.*, Bk. 11, ch. 8.

end, and the theological virtues are concerned with the end itself. The next point of difference between the theological and the infused moral virtues is found in the relationship which exists among the virtues within their own order; that is to say, the theological virtues are not so interrelated that the loss of one means the loss of all, but the infused moral are dependent upon charity for both their existence and growth.

## 2. *Distinct by Reason of Relationships Within Their Own Orders*

The virtues of faith and hope, as such, can exist without charity, as *de facto* they do exist in the soul of the sinner who clings to both virtues.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, without charity they are not *perfect virtues*, or *virtutes formatae*, because they are not directed toward man's ultimate end in an efficacious manner. To believe in God and in His Revelation will not bring a man to salvation unless faith is accompanied by supernatural good works performed by someone possessing charity. The same is true of hope when it is separated from charity. It is a virtue, but not a perfect virtue, because it does not by its own power advance a man nearer to his supernatural goal. It becomes a perfect virtue, however, when it is informed by charity. In the strict sense, then, concludes St. Thomas, faith and hope without charity are not *virtues*.<sup>26</sup>

By the strict sense in this reference St. Thomas means that faith and hope do not fulfill the concept of a perfect virtue, although they possess the essence of virtues. He develops the contrast between faith as an imperfect virtue, i. e., faith without charity, and faith as a perfect virtue, i. e., faith informed by charity, in a later passage. For the act of faith to be perfect two things are necessary: The first is that the intellect must tend infallibly toward its object, which is Divine Truth; and second, the will must be directed infallibly toward its ultimate end, on account of which it assents to the truth. Now both these qualities are found in the act of *fides formata*. Charity

<sup>25</sup> For faith this is *de fide definita*, Council of Trent, session 6, ch. 15 and canon 28; for hope it is theologically certain.

<sup>26</sup> I-II, q. 65, art. 4: "sine charitate, proprie loquendo, virtutes non sunt."

adds to the perfection which faith brings to the intellect the perfection of the *will* toward the goal set up by faith, namely, union with God.<sup>27</sup>

In brief, faith without charity gives a certain perfection to the intellect, but that perfection will not achieve the purpose for which it has been given by God unless it is informed by charity moving the will to seek the goal known by faith. As the relationship of charity toward the other supernatural virtues is developed, it will become clear that a *supernatural* virtue is considered perfect when it achieves the purpose for which it has been infused by God, namely, union with Himself, whereas a natural moral virtue is considered perfect when it achieves some limited and particular perfection of one or other moral activity within the framework of the whole man.

It is understood, of course, that charity cannot exist in a soul devoid of the virtues of faith and hope. In summary, then, it may be said that the theological virtues are connected only when faith and hope are informed by charity. Faith and hope can exist without charity, but none of the infused moral virtues can exist without charity. This relationship of charity to the infused moral virtues shall be considered in two questions:

- (1) Can the infused moral virtues exist without charity?
- (2) Can charity exist without the infused moral virtues?

(1) Can the infused moral virtues exist without charity? Before discussing this question, I should like to say a few words about the relationship of prudence to the other moral virtues in both the natural and supernatural orders. In the natural order prudence is the form of the other moral virtues, that is to say, it sets up the medium and regulates the practice of these in accordance with the dictates of right reason. While it is true that the medium of justice is objective, nevertheless, the practice of this virtue must not run contrary to the norms of prudence. A man bound to restitution, for example, must not fulfill this duty in such a way as to destroy his own reputation, and perhaps that of his family. He must follow the norms of prudence in the exercise of justice. The same truth applies with still greater force to the practice of temperance and fortitude, both of whose media are subjective. Obviously, prudence will enter more into the practice

<sup>27</sup> *S.T.*, II-II, q. 4, art. 5; I-II, q. 71, art. 4.

of these two virtues than it will into that of justice. In short, prudence directs the other moral virtues to the perfection of the whole man. It weighs the factors which enter into human actions; it makes a choice; it acts.

In the natural order prudence is preeminent. Not so in the supernatural hierarchy of virtues. Here charity is the extrinsic form of the other virtues, giving them efficacious direction to the end of charity, which is God in His Intimate Life. This does not mean, however, that infused prudence is rendered unnecessary:

The more deeply rooted the other virtues are in the soul, the greater the need for prudence. The faster the horse runs, the greater the danger of injury, even if he is running in the right direction. The horse needs a rider to guide him. And this is precisely the function which prudence serves in relation to the other virtues. In fact, the Fathers refer to it as *auriga virtutum*.<sup>28</sup>

Prudence, then, continues to hold a preeminent function of service to charity by subordinating the other infused moral virtues to its own norms. Infused prudence bears to the other infused cardinal virtues a relationship similar to that of natural prudence. The hierarchical order is: charity, infused prudence, other infused moral virtues.

St. Thomas proves that the infused moral virtues are dependent upon charity:

Now for prudence to proceed aright, it is much more necessary that man be well disposed towards his ultimate end, which is the effect of charity, than that he be well disposed toward other ends, which is the effect of moral virtue; just as in speculative matters right reason has greatest need of the first indemonstrable principle, that *contradictories cannot both be true at the same time*.

<sup>28</sup> Connery, John R., "Prudence and Morality," *Theological Studies*, 13 (Dec., 1952) 572. See also S.T., I-II, q. 58, art. 4; I-II, q. 57, art. 4 (definition of prudence); II-II, q. 47, art. 4 (prudence as not only an intellectual, but also a moral virtue). In the Thomistic system prudence plays a part in every virtuous act. It has many integrating factors, such as education, experience, memory of mistakes, and docility. St. Thomas calls it the greatest of the moral virtues: *Prudentia est maxima quia est moderatrix aliarum (virtutum)* *Quaestiones de virtutibus cardinalibus*, II, a. 3.

It is therefore evident that neither can infused prudence be without charity; nor, consequently, the other moral virtues, since they cannot be without prudence.<sup>29</sup>

As one considers the relationship of infused prudence to charity, it becomes clear that it is different from that of faith. Faith indicates in an obscure manner the object of our hope and charity; infused prudence moderates and directs the other infused moral virtues to the end of charity, which urges prudence to exercise the virtues under its direction, so that the soul may reach the object of its love.<sup>30</sup>

The threefold relationship of charity to faith and infused prudence is used by Cajetan in his argument against the Scotist position concerning the function of faith. The Scotists hold that the infused virtue of faith communicates a mode of supernatural operation to the acquired virtues. Cajetan answers that faith might grant a *remote* mode of operation, but not a *proximate* and immediate mode of supernatural operation. Faith sets up the supernatural end, but it makes use of infused prudence as a medium for the infused moral virtues, that is to say, it is infused prudence which furnishes the proximate medium for the exercise of the other infused moral virtues.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, just as in the natural order acquired prudence is the form of the acquired moral virtues, because it sets up an order toward a particular end in accordance with right reason; so in the supernatural order, charity is the form of the theological virtues, of prudence, and of all the other moral virtues, because it sets up a perfect order to the ultimate end of man. The precise meaning of charity as *form* will be considered later. The point made at present is that charity is the basis for the existence and growth of all the in-

<sup>29</sup> I-II, q. 65, art. 2: Ad rectam autem rationem prudentiae multo magis requiritur quod homo bene se habeat circa ultimum finem, quod fit per caritatem, quam circa alios fines, quod fit per virtutes morales; sicut ratio recta in speculativis maxime indiget primo principio indemonstrabili, quod est contradictoria non simul esse vers. Unde manifestum fit quod nec prudentia infusa protest esse sine charitate, nec aliae virtutes morales consequenter, quae sine prudentia esse non possunt. (Benziger Translation, 1.863).

<sup>30</sup> II-II, q. 73, art. 6, ad. 1.

<sup>31</sup> S. T., Cajetan, *Summa Sancti Thomae cum commentariis Thomae De Vio Cajetani*, I-II, q. 63, art. 3 (Lugduni, 1581).

fused moral virtues. Charity, in turn, is rooted in the life of sanctifying grace.<sup>32</sup>

As has been seen already, the infused moral virtues cannot exist without infused prudence, by which they are directed and regulated; and infused prudence is dependent upon charity. One cannot have perfect rectitude concerning the means to the end (infused prudence) unless one has perfect rectitude with regard to the end itself (charity). Only charity perfectly rectifies the appetite in its movement toward the supernatural end of man, toward which all the moral virtues must be orientated. Therefore, the infused moral virtues and prudence cannot exist without charity.

On the other hand, charity cannot exist without the infused moral virtues. Sanctifying grace and charity constitute one *remote* principle of supernatural operations. But he who has supernatural life ought to have *proximate* principles of operation, so as to perform supernatural acts. The infused moral virtues are such proximate principles. They give one the power of choosing the necessary means of reaching the supernatural end and of perfecting the different kinds of supernatural good works. This is the very argument advanced earlier for the existence of the infused moral virtues.<sup>33</sup> It is seen, then, that the infused moral virtues and charity are mutually interdependent as different potencies of the state of sanctifying grace. Charity, however, remains the queen of all virtues, moral and theological alike. This regal position of charity is described technically by calling charity the extrinsic form of all the other virtues, and this term will be given brief analysis.

a. Charity is the *extrinsic form* of all the other virtues.

The term extrinsic form means, not the intrinsic and essential form, by which the virtue is set off in its species, but an accidental and extrinsic one. Since charity perfects the other virtues by directing them to her own end, it is said to be their form. It gives them their ultimate perfection as actions meriting eternal life. As St. Thomas expresses the idea, that which gives to an act its ordination to an end gives to it a form, and charity gives to all the acts of all

<sup>32</sup> Gonet, *op. cit.*, Disput. V, art. 3 DB: 410, 800 ff.; St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God*, Bk. 11, ch. 8-9.

<sup>33</sup> I-II, q. 63, art. 3, c; I-II, q. 110, art. 2.

the other virtues their ordination to their ultimate end; hence, charity is the form of all the other virtues.<sup>34</sup> Without charity they would not be *perfect* virtues. Nevertheless, the acquired moral virtues can exist in the soul which does not possess charity. The person who commits a mortal sin still retains natural moral virtues, and, on the other hand, the person who is lacking in natural virtues can possess the state of grace, charity, and the infused moral virtues.<sup>35</sup>

Since later the relationship of charity to the natural virtues will be considered again, it suffices here to say that charity is an extrinsic form in the sense that she is the universal perfecting motive. She adds to the perfection of any virtue her own crowning perfection. A heart at friends with God transmutes all its actions into acts of love of God.

All the virtuous acts of a heart at friends with God are dedicated to God, for the heart which has given itself, how has it not given all that depends upon itself? He that gives the tree without reserve, gives he not also the leaves, flowers, and fruit? <sup>36</sup>

That charity is the extrinsic form of the other virtues is common teaching. What is controverted is the foundation of the relationship of dependence of the infused moral virtues upon charity. Four opinions are held on this point. Brevity demands that they be stated, and one chosen.

The first opinion is that the connection between charity and the infused moral virtues is of such a nature that once grace and charity are removed, these virtues could not be conserved even by the absolute power of God. The second view holds that the connection between charity and the infused moral virtues is extrinsic, a law established by God determining their connection. The third opinion claims that in the very nature of things charity and the infused

<sup>34</sup> II-II, q. 23, art. 8.

<sup>35</sup> I-II, q. 63, art. 2, ad 2; St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God*, Book 11, ch. 1.

<sup>36</sup> St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God*, Bk. 11, ch. 2, also *op. cit.* Bk. 11, ch. 10. That the virtues "should bear the name of formed fashioned and accomplished virtues, that depends upon charity . . ."



moral virtues depend upon grace, but there is not an essential relationship between sanctifying grace and faith and hope. There is not any need to explain the conservation of faith and hope in the soul of the man who has lost charity as coming from a divine privilege. Finally, the fourth opinion states that all the virtues, not excepting faith and hope, are by their very nature dependent upon grace. If faith and hope are conserved without charity the sanctifying grace, it is only because God has established it thus by extrinsic law.<sup>37</sup>

The principal argument for the fourth opinion, defended by Mazzella, is that grace is comparable to nature, and the infused virtues are properties emanating from super-nature. Another argument is from the fact of their connection in infusion and in development to the conclusion that in their disappearance they will also be connected, except for a special law of God.

Billot defends the third opinion by a double argument:

- (1) Faith and hope, considered in their essence, do not depend upon the other virtues. Daily experience suffices to show this.
- (2) Although faith and hope are presupposed for the act of charity, there is only an indirect relationship between these virtues and the acts of charity. Faith shows forth the object of love, but faith does not moderate the movement of love which carries us toward God.<sup>38</sup>

Billot points out that only in two ways is it impossible for one virtue to be conserved in its essence without the other—(a) because in its very notion it depends upon the other; and (b) because by its nature it flows out of the other virtue. But the relationships of faith and hope to the other infused virtues involve neither of these two conditions. Therefore, they can exist separately from these other virtues, but they cannot be in their perfect state without charity, as has been discussed already in the previous section. It seems that Billot has understood the statements of the Council of Trent in

<sup>37</sup> *DTC*, *op. cit.*, col. 2789; Mazzella, C., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Rome, 1934, n. 196-201. The first opinion is quoted by Suarez, but no author is given; the third opinion is defended in its substance by Billot; the fourth by Mazzella.

<sup>38</sup> Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Rome, 1905, 154-160.

its sixth session as forming a strong persuasion for the probability of his position.<sup>39</sup>

3. The theological virtues have no proper medium, whereas the infused moral have a medium similar to that of the acquired moral virtues.

Before applying to the question under discussion the notion of *medium* it is necessary to define and to distinguish the two types of media, *medium rei* and *medium rationis*. A *MEDIUM REI* is a measure determined by the very nature of the thing, so that it is always one, indivisible, and fixed, independently of place, time, or person. A *MEDIUM RATIONIS*, on the other hand, is not fixed by the nature of the thing, but is varied in accordance with the circumstances of time, place, and person. It is determined by equitable judgment of reason, and not imposed in a mathematical way by the demands of external reality. The medium of justice, for example, is a *medium rei*. If I owe you five dollars, I cannot change the nature of this medium by any amount of reasoning. If, on the other hand, I should take an alcoholic beverage, the amount I take will depend upon a prudent judgment of reason. What is moderate indulgence in alcoholic beverages for one person may be excess for another. The medium will vary from one person to another. Indeed for some individuals the *medium rationis* as far as alcohol is concerned may dictate that none be taken. In short, the *medium rationis* is a variable, and the *medium rei* is a constant.

Far from being a merely arbitrary judgment, the *medium rationis* is a prudent judgment which takes into consideration all the circumstances under which one must make a decision. From experience it is known that human passions vary from person to person, and so also will the *medium rationis* governing the exercise of the moral virtues which regulate the passions, namely, the virtues of fortitude and temperance. In both the natural and supernatural orders prudence sets up the *medium rationis* in these areas, so that all the acts of temperance and of fortitude may be directed toward the ends of

<sup>39</sup> *Concilium Tridentinum*, session 6, ch. 15, canon 28.

charity, and will not deviate from the *medium rationis*, either by defect or by excess.

It is then by an interpretation less exact that one considers virtue itself in its very essence to be a medium between two opposite vices. Such a notion can be correct in regard to those virtues which have a *medium rationis*. Temperance, for example, will lie midway between the excess of impurity and the defect of insensibility, and fortitude will find a happy medium between timidity and rashness. But one must not push this conception of the midpoint too far. There are certain virtues which are not found midway between two vices, such as commutative justice and magnanimity. As St. Thomas says of this latter virtue, it is something extreme (*extremum et maximum*) when considered in itself, although from its relationship to the circumstances which surround its practice, it may be said to be in accordance with the medium of right reason.<sup>40</sup>

This notion of medium is clarified by Gonet by a distinction. When the virtue itself lies midway between two vices, as temperance does, the virtue is said to constitute an *essential* medium between insensibility and impurity. But when the virtue itself tends to a lawful extreme, as in the cases of magnanimity, virginity, and poverty, then the medium is drawn from a consideration of the object of the virtue and the acts of the virtue, and this medium is called a *causal* medium.<sup>41</sup> The acts of magnanimity must be in accordance with the norms of prudence and charity to remain virtuous. Reason sets up the time and the proper place for such acts, and charity motivates them. If, on the other hand, the hilarity of intoxication is the circumstance of a man's generosity, it is no longer a virtue, but the vice of prodigality; again, if his sole motivation is to win votes for the coming election, his apparent generosity is a species of social bribe. The same principles hold for the virtues of virginity and poverty, which by their very nature tend toward legitimate extremes in accordance with counsels found in Divine Revelation.

<sup>40</sup> I-II, q. 64, art. 1, ad 2: Unde nihil prohibet in aliqua virtute esse extremum secundum unam circumstantiam, quod tamen est medium secundum alias circumstantias per conformitatem ad rationem, et sic est in magnificentia et magnanimitate.

<sup>41</sup> Gonet, *op. cit.*, Disputatio V, art. 1, sections 4-9.

But if these two virtues are motivated by some illicit superstition or by vain glory, they will be excesses; or if their acts are omitted when they ought to be placed, they will be defects. The religious, for example, who fails to take proper care of his clothes, fails against the virtue of poverty by defect. And so on. In short, whenever we say that all moral virtues consist in a medium, we mean a *causal* medium.

In regard to the application of the notion of medium to the virtue of justice, several points may be made. As already stated, the medium of justice is a *medium rei*. It is determined by the nature of the debt which is due to another, and not by the circumstances of personality variations, as in the case of temperance with its *medium rationis*. Still, the acts of justice involve to some extent a *medium rationis*; for, just like the acts of the other moral virtues, the acts of justice should be regulated by right reason. An individual could fulfill the obligation of restitution and satisfy the precept of justice, and yet fail to perform an act of justice because of the peculiar circumstances under which he paid the debt; for example, if his payment of the debt deprived his own children of things which they needed very badly at the moment while giving no great benefit to the creditor, or if his indiscretion caused him to lose his own reputation for honesty. From this it is clear that justice differs from the other virtues in possessing both a *medium rei* and a *medium rationis*.

The other point concerning justice is that its just mean is not midway between two vices. If I owe someone one hundred dollars, and I pay him one hundred fifty dollars, that is not excess; it is better called generosity. Again, the virtue of social justice has the common good for its object, consisting in group activity to effect necessary economic and social reforms in the community. It is difficult to see how social justice can have an excess, yet easy to understand how many actions would be defective when judged by its norms, as enunciated in the papal encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII.<sup>42</sup>

The theological virtues do not admit any medium from the point of view of their object, which is the God of Revelation. While one

<sup>42</sup> Ferree, William, *The Act of Social Justice*, 1943. This is a classical treatment of the nature of social justice. Read 91-134 on Pius XI.

may sin by defect, one cannot sin by excess concerning the object of the theological virtues. One cannot really believe in God, hope in God, or love God to excess. The measure of our love for God is to love Him without measure, says St. Bernard. Far from seeking a medium in the object, the theological virtues tend toward the summit. But from the viewpoint of the subject who practices the virtue, these virtues do admit of a medium, and of reprehensible excesses. In the language of St. Thomas, these virtues ought to be exercised according "to the measure of our condition."<sup>43</sup>

On the basis of this distinction the Angelic Doctor solves the problems which hope presents, standing as it does between the opposite sins of presumption and despair, as well as the problems concerning points of Divine Faith, which are found very often to lie midway between two heresies. While it is true that one cannot hope too much in God, he may expect from God a good which exceeds his condition, as, for example, to possess the special graces given to the Blessed Virgin Mary; or he may despair of obtaining the graces of repentance, for which he could hope in accordance with his condition. Similarly, faith is a medium between contrary heresies, not because of its relationship to Infinite Revealed Truth, which is its object, but simply because a true human judgment holds the middle position between contrary fallacies.<sup>44</sup>

At times, also, one may be required to refrain from the external act of supernatural charity because infused prudence dictates that the time is not opportune. Here infused prudence sets up a just medium for the external act of charity, not because of the object of charity, but because of the subject who should exercise the highest of the virtues in accordance with the norms of infused prudence. In conclusion, the notion of a medium applies only in a very analogical way to the theological virtues. It applies most completely to those virtues which regulate human passions, so that man may act in a human way; and, consequently, it is very important in all the species of temperance and fortitude.

The fact that the number of the theological virtues is determined and the number of the infused is indefinite is a point of no particular

<sup>43</sup> I-II, q. 64, art. 4: *secundum mensuram nostrae conditionis*.

<sup>44</sup> I-II, q. 64, art. 4; ad 3.

importance for the investigation of the infused moral virtues. From the comparison with the theological virtues one notes that the infused moral have this in common with the theological: Both types of virtue are infused directly by God, and both have the species of *perfect* virtue only when charity is their extrinsic form. They differ from each other as regards their immediate objects, the theological having God in His intimate life, and the infused moral, creatures, insofar as they lead the soul to God. Likewise, they differ from each other in their dependence upon charity. Faith and hope can exist without charity, but the infused moral virtues are inseparable from charity. Finally, they differ from each other because the theological have no proper medium, and the infused moral virtues usually do.

*B. Relationship to Acquired Moral Virtues*

While the comparison between the theological and infused moral virtues aids the mind to discern more clearly the nature of the infused moral, it seems that the additional comparative analysis of the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues will prove more fruitful to our purpose. First, it is necessary to understand how these two different types of virtues fulfill the notion of habit in the strict sense, and then to discern how both sets fulfill the notion of virtue, precisely as virtue.

1. Basic Difference between Acquired and Infused Moral Rests in Notion of Habit.

The acquired moral habits are habits in the strict sense, whereas the infused moral virtues are habits only in an analogous sense. Acquired moral virtues come by way of repetition of good acts; and the very repetition of such good acts produces facility in the performance of the same. This is not true of the infused moral virtues which are infused directly into the soul of God, and, hence, of themselves, do not produce any facility for their continued operation. The point of difference between the two kinds of virtues is so important that it will be well to consider in some detail the notion of facility.

In his treatment of facility in the moral virtues, Coerver defines

this quality as "a readiness or promptitude of action, a tendency to repeat the same action constantly, easily, and almost unconsciously. It is in this sense that we say a certain individual has 'facility in speech,' 'facility in writing,' and so on."<sup>45</sup>

The trained athlete, for example, performs his feats with an ease and smoothness that makes the action look easy. But whence comes this facility? Is it *purely* from nature, or does it come from the constant repetition of similar acts? Skilled habits of speech, sport, or music may be rooted in nature, but they are perfected by the repetition of similar acts. The same thing is true of acquired moral virtues, according to St. Thomas.<sup>46</sup> Facility comes primarily from practice and not from nature, although nature might confer more fitness toward one natural habit than toward another. Indeed, in cases where no native ability seemed to be present, habits have been formed by much repetition; and this tends to prove that natural habits spring more from the exercise of certain similar acts than from nature.

It is common experience to meet with difficulties in the formation of some habit, such as driving a car, learning to play golf, or reading a foreign language; but with practice it becomes easier, and with more practice, it becomes easy. Can it be said then that the acquired moral virtues confer the same sort of ease and readiness of action which is afforded by natural physical habits? Since the acquired moral virtues are habits in the strict sense, then they are governed by the same psychological laws. The practice of the acquired virtues will follow the principles of natural habits. By frequent repetition the acquired virtues dispose the person to perform their acts easily and readily. "Operations proceeding from habit are pleasurable, and they are used promptly, and exercised easily."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Coerver, Robert, *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues*, C.U.A. Press, 1946, 19.

<sup>46</sup> I-II, q. 63, art. 1, ad 3: "Virtutes in nobis sunt a natura secundum aptitudinem et inchoationem; praeter virtutes theologicas, quae sunt totaliter ab extrinseco."

<sup>47</sup> Aquinas, *De Veritate* (Frette-Mare, Paris, 1895) Dist. 20, 2c, T. 1, n. 493: "Operationes ex habitu procedentes delectabiles sunt, et in promptu habentur, et faciliter exercentur."

But there is one difference between the acquired moral virtues and natural physical habits. Because of the effects of original sin, one may encounter more difficulty in acquiring a moral virtue than in acquiring some natural physical habit more in agreement with man's natural dispositions. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties which often are found in the formation of habits of natural virtue, many practice these virtues to an eminent degree with readiness and ease. In short, it is readily observable that acquired virtues confer a certain facility of action. Can the same truth be affirmed of the infused moral virtues?

The theologians who affirm the existence of the infused moral virtues teach that these virtues dispose the faculties of the soul to a new and supernatural mode of operation. Technically, it is said that the infused virtues confer the "posse" of supernatural action. But besides the "posse" of supernatural action, do the infused moral virtues confer a facility of action as well? In line with our definition of facility, do the infused moral virtues, when once received, make it easy for the person to perform the acts of these virtues promptly and readily?

The theologians commonly assert that the infused moral virtues *per se* confer no facility of action in the sense defined. If the infused moral virtues confer a facility of action, there should be greater facility in those persons who have these virtues in a more intense degree than in those who either do not have them or who possess them in a less intense degree. Experience does not seem to confirm this. One meets individuals who are daily communicants and yet do not seem to possess the virtue of fortitude in any high degree; at least, it is not apparent in their very timid approach to daily problems. Granted, each time they receive an increase of sanctifying grace, they grow in sanctifying grace, charity, and all the other infused virtues, including the infused virtue of fortitude. But they may act like veritable neurasthenics when confronted with problems of ordinary difficulty in daily life, while others who do not possess such a fund of the infused virtues manifest the natural virtue of fortitude in a higher degree when faced with still greater problems. Examples can be multiplied to show that mere possession



of the infused moral virtues does not mean facility in the practice thereof.

A comparison between seminarians who have ready access to the sacraments, the most powerful means of increasing the infused moral virtues, and people in the world who lack such opportunity, tends to show that *practice* of virtue makes virtue itself much stronger. This observation seems to extend not only to the natural moral virtues, but also to their supernatural counterparts, and most particularly to the various forms of fortitude. If facility is present, it seems that it is due to the *per accidens* formation of the corresponding natural virtue.

Mazzella illustrates this position with an example of a man in the state of grace who performs heroic acts of virtue and gains supernatural merit for himself. This means an intensification in the degree of the infused moral virtues. Suppose now this same man falls into the state of mortal sin, and remains in this state for a long time. He practices vice so assiduously that he loses all his acquired virtues. By a miracle of grace he returns to confession and to the state of sanctifying grace. According to the doctrine of revival of merit, he recovers the same *degree* of grace and of the *infused virtues* which he had before his fall from grace. But, as experience testifies, he feels the same difficulty in practicing virtue after justification as he had suffered before he came back to confession. The psychological effects of sin are still tugging at him.<sup>48</sup> He possesses the infused virtues, to be sure, but he does not possess facility in their natural counterparts. The reformed alcoholic will attest that the possession of the infused virtue of temperance does not make the practice of the natural virtue of sobriety easy immediately after reform, or, for that matter, at any time later. And even if the practice of total temperance does become slightly easier with the years, one may question the source of this *limited* facility. Is it the direct result of the infused virtue of temperance, or of its natural counterpart, gradually formed by constant abstention?

Again, if the infused moral virtues gave one a greater facility

<sup>48</sup> Mazzella, Camillus, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Rome, 1934, Disp. I, art. 4, n. 61. For the doctrine of the revival of merit see Noldin, vol. 3, n. 225; *D.B.* 2193.

in action, then with every increase in sanctifying grace, one would acquire in equal measure a greater facility in the practice of *all* the moral virtues. Experience does not seem to bear this out. From these considerations Mazzella draws the conclusion that the infused moral virtues do not confer facility of action.<sup>49</sup>

To these arguments Coerver adds another argument based upon experience. Hardly can the infused moral virtues confer facility in action, because many individuals find themselves confessing the same venial sins week after week, month after month, with apparently no progress. They have increased in the infused moral virtues, but they have not increased in the ease with which they practice some of them.<sup>50</sup> In short, an experimental comparison of the effects of the acquired moral virtues with the infused virtues will indicate that the acquired moral virtues bestow upon the person a certain ease and readiness in repeating the acts of the virtue. The same cannot be said of the infused moral virtues.

Gregory of Valencia seems to deviate from this opinion, because he makes a distinction between the *kind* of facility conferred by the acquired and infused virtues. He seems to be the only theologian who attributes a strict facility of action to the infused moral virtues.<sup>51</sup>

While the theologians agree that the infused moral virtues do not confer facility in action, they are not in agreement as to whether the infused moral virtues confer *any kind of facility*. Some theologians answer this question by establishing a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility. By *intrinsic* facility they mean that the infused virtues produce a certain intrinsic strengthening of the faculties and the intrinsic inclination to acts of virtue. But these same theologians do not admit that the infused moral virtues confer *extrinsic* facility in the sense of actual ease and readiness in the extrinsic acts of virtue. They point out that extrinsic facility is produced only by the removal of impediments, and the discipline of the faculties through repeated acts of virtue; and, consequently, extrinsic

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 66.

<sup>50</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 24.

<sup>51</sup> De Valencia, G., *Commentariorum Theologicorum* (Typographia Adami, Ingolstadii, 1603) Tom. 2, Disp. 5, qu. 6, ad 4, quoted by Coerver, p. 25.

facility is achieved only through the acquired virtues. Already in Suarez this distinction is found.<sup>52</sup>

In his explanation of the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic facility, Suarez points out that intrinsic facility inclines the virtue in which it resides to place its act. The virtues are

as certain weights inclining their potencies to their acts. In this way they give intrinsic facility, as we have said concerning the theological virtues. But they do not give an extrinsic facility, because the contrary difficulties come either from natural ignorance, or inconsideration, or from concupiscence or the corruptibility of the body; these impediments are not removed by the infused virtues.<sup>53</sup>

This viewpoint of Suarez is accepted substantially by both the Salmanticenses and Gonet.<sup>54</sup> According to Mazzella, however, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility is useless, because it identifies intrinsic facility with the supernatural "posse" which the infused virtues confer upon the faculties for placing acts on the supernatural level. Since all the theologians admit that the infused virtues bestow "posse," then the use of the term *intrinsic facility* is but a new name for an old idea.<sup>55</sup>

It would seem, however, that there is a basis for the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility. The very fact that each increase in sanctifying grace, and consequent growth in the infused virtues, must strengthen the will to seek the good of virtue in a general way, means that the subject would receive some increase in his disposition towards *acts* of virtue as well. Perhaps the opposition

<sup>52</sup> Suarez, F., *Opera Omnia* (Apud Ludovicum Vives, Paris, 1858) Tom. 9, Bk. 6, ch. 9, n. 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Loc. cit.*: . . . Unde cum hae virtutes intrinsece insint suis potentiis, sunt veluti pondera quaedam ad suos actus inclinantia potentias. Hoc ergo modo dant intrinsecam facilitatem, sicut supra etiam de Theologicis virtutibus tetigimus. At vero extrinsecam facilitatem non praebent, quia contraria difficultas provenit aut ex naturali ignorantia vel inconsideratione, aut ex fomite concupiscentiae, vel corporis corruptibilitate; haec autem impedimenta per has virtutes non auferuntur.

<sup>54</sup> Salmanticenses, *Cursus Theologicus* (Palme, Paris, 1878), Tom. 6, Tract 12, qu. 63; Disp. 3, n. 5, ad 3; Gonet, *op. cit.*, IV, Disp. 1, qu. 4, ad 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* Disp. I, art. 4, n. 65.

of lower nature and various impediments may prevent this facility from becoming extrinsic, but it does not mean that it is non-existent. A virtue may have grown within the soul without the mind being aware of it, because the virtue may seem to be in practice just as difficult as ever. A person who is waging a successful battle against the recurrence of an impure habit may not be aware of any growth in the infused habit of chastity, but growth there has been just the same. And this growth is more than mere potency. It amounts to a positive inclination toward chastity that was not previously present but without the *added* quality of ease that is characteristic of *extrinsic* facility. As previously quoted from Suarez, the infused virtues are as weights which incline the potencies to their acts.<sup>56</sup>

While the infused moral virtues may be said to confer intrinsic facility, the work of the acquired moral virtues is necessary to render this facility extrinsic, and, as it were, operative. The acquired moral virtues remove impediments and overcome the resistance of the passions. Both orders of virtue are necessary. Without the practice of the acquired moral virtues, the intrinsic facility of the infused moral virtues remain imperceptible as far as practice goes.

The contribution of the acquired moral virtues to the infused moral virtues is to render the infused more operative and more secure. This point is developed further by Cardinal Billot, who goes to the heart of the problem with his analysis of the *nature* of the infused moral virtues. He teaches that the infused virtues are habits, not in an univocal, but in an analogous sense. They share in both the nature of potency and of habit. They are *potentiae*, because they enable man to act according to that superior nature of which he is made a partaker of grace. Before man receives the infused virtues, he can act supernaturally only by the transient motion of actual grace, but after the infusion of the virtues he has an operative and permanent faculty of placing supernatural acts. In this sense the infused virtues confer a *posse* of supernatural action. In addition, the infused virtues participate of the nature of *habits*, inasmuch as they are qualities modifying already existing potencies. From these premises Billot concludes that the *proximate* principle of a super-

<sup>56</sup> Cf. ftnte. 53.

natural act is not the infused virtue, but the natural faculty as informed by the infused virtue.<sup>57</sup>

On the question of facility Billot teaches that such is more than a simple *posse*; it is a positive inclination of the faculty to those things which pertain to the virtue. He explains how this inclination may take two diverse forms:

- (1) an adherence to the good, which is the object of virtue;
- (2) an inclination to the ACTS of the virtue.

These two inclinations are so distinct that the first can be had without the second, and the second is not always in proportion to the first. In short, facility can be directed toward the object itself, namely, virtue, or facility can be directed to the ACTS, which lead to that object.<sup>58</sup> Billot clarifies his meaning by an example.<sup>59</sup> Suppose two men were in poor health. One man has a very strong desire to be healthy, but he has an aversion for the medicines which are conducive to his well-being. The second man has no special desire to regain health, but at the same time he experiences no particular difficulty in taking medicines, because he has acquired a ready disposition in their use. From one point of view, the first man is better disposed than the second, because his very great desire for health will prompt him to take medicines in spite of his natural aversion toward them; but from another point of view the second man is better disposed, because he finds it easy to accept the means which lead to health.

From the application of this analogy we arrive at Billot's notions about facility. The infused moral virtues confer the first kind of facility, because they impart a strong inclination and tendency

<sup>57</sup> Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Gregoriana, Rome, 1921, Prolegomenon (I-II, QQ. 49-61, para. 2, nn. 1-2).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 2: Sed sciendum est inclinationem esse duplicem. Unam quam possumus dicere inhaesionis ad bonum quod est objectum virtutis. Alteram quam possumus appellare, proclivitas in exercitium actus illiusmet. Certe duo ibi sunt non solum formalitate et conceptu distincta, sed etiam inter se diversa, ut primum possit adesse absque secundo, et secundum non sit semper in proportione cum primo.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

toward a life of virtue in general. But they do not bestow the second kind of facility, because they do not destroy evil inclinations and they do not incline their recipient to the prompt and ready practice of virtue. Only by the *practice* of the acquired moral virtues are passions brought under control and a prompt and ready exercise of difficult duties achieved. Still, it cannot be denied that the infused moral virtues confer a special inclination to the good which is their object; and this inclination is facility in the broad sense, or intrinsic facility. It should be noted, however, that Billot himself does not use the terms intrinsic and extrinsic facility. Yet the writer feels that Billot's facility in the broad sense is equivalent to intrinsic facility.

Another approach to the probability of intrinsic facility is found in the following consideration. If the infused moral virtues did not confer any facility at all, then one would be forced to admit also that a person who lived continually in the state of grace would fall a victim to sin just as readily as the unregenerate man, presupposing both to have the same degree of acquired virtue and to be subject to the same temptation. Are we willing to hold that the regenerate man possesses no more facility for the practice of virtue than the unregenerate man, all other things being equal?

Two points stand out clearly in the discussion so far: (1) *Per se*, the infused moral virtues do not confer facility in the ordinary sense, i.e., a promptness and readiness to acts of virtue; and (2) the infused moral virtues do confer some sort of intrinsic facility, however imperceptible this may be. It may be that in some individual cases God does bestow facility of action along with the infused moral virtue; but in His ordinary Providence, which is our ordinary experience, He does not give by infusion what man can acquire by his own natural activity. It seems that human diligence plays an important role in the development of the life of virtue, and that facility in the practice of virtue will come only in proportion to personal striving. This raises the next question of the theologians: May not facility in action be attached *accidentally* to the infused moral virtues?

Suarez points to two possible sources to account for such facility: (1) By the repetition of supernatural acts of the infused virtues other habits are acquired: and (2) By the repetition of natural habits

of virtue which are elicited in regard to the same matter as infused habits, natural habits result.<sup>60</sup>

There is a clear distinction between these two kinds of acquired habits. The first type proceeds directly from repeated acts of the infused virtues, while the second type proceeds directly from repeated acts of natural virtue, which are connected with the infused virtues only inasmuch as both have the same material object. According to the first theory, an acquired habit of justice would result directly from repeated acts of the infused virtue of justice; according to the second theory, an acquired habit of justice would result from repeated acts of natural justice, and the acquired habit would be connected with the infused habit only insofar as it had the same material object. Both these possibilities must be investigated to arrive at some theory concerning the source of facility in the infused moral virtues.

Perhaps some light might be thrown on the discussion were we to consider first the following question: "Can the repetition of purely natural acts, elicited in regard to the same matter as that of the infused virtues, effect a natural habit which will in some measure facilitate the practice of the infused virtues?"<sup>61</sup> In the concrete, will the newly baptized pagan who has practiced the natural habit of temperance for purely natural motives find easier the practice of his infused habit of the same virtue *precisely* because he has acquired already the natural virtue?

Suarez comments on this question by affirming that such acquired habits do not aid *per se* in the placing of infused acts; still, they do aid *per accidens* by inclining the faculty to similar acts of the same general type, by removing impediments, by moderating the affections, and by excluding habits, which are repugnant to virtue.<sup>62</sup> Agreeing with Suarez, Ripalda makes the point that a will which easily and promptly exercises natural acts of love brings this same

<sup>60</sup> Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, IX, Liber 6, chap. 14, n. 1-2: Primo, quia per eosdem actus supernaturales et infusos, qui ab habitibus infusis, vel per divinum auxilium eliciuntur, alii habitus acquiruntur. Secundo, quia per alios actus naturales, qui circa easdem materias habituum infusorum fieri possunt . . . producuntur habitus talibus proportionati.

<sup>61</sup> Coerver, Robert F., *op. cit.*, 37.

<sup>62</sup> Suarez, *ibid.*, n. 24.

facility to operation in making supernatural acts of love.<sup>63</sup> Although elevated to the supernatural order, the faculty retains its natural dispositions and aptitudes; and, since in this case the will already has an aptitude for acts of love, this *facility* is retained in the supernatural order. Grace perfects but does not change nature, and the natural inclination to love is now directed toward a more exalted object.

Most theologians, moreover, seem to concede some communication of facility from the acquired to the infused virtues. Cajetan, Mazzella, and Billot all favor this view.<sup>64</sup> Reason and experience seem to confirm this view. The pagan, for example, who has practiced certain natural virtues over a long period of time will find the practice of the supernatural virtues which correspond to his acquired virtues to be easier; and it seems that this facility is a sort of transference from his previously acquired facility in the natural virtues. The greater the degree of natural virtue, the greater his facility in the practice of the infused virtues. On the other hand, the lesser the degree of natural virtue possessed, the more difficulty he will face in the practice of the infused virtues. From this it follows that the development of the acquired virtues is very conducive to facility in the practice of the infused moral virtues.

Of course, the natural virtues cannot positively dispose one to the positing of a supernatural act; and the infused virtues remain more noble than the natural virtues, as shall be explained later. Still, the acquired virtues contribute to the practice of the corresponding infused virtues a certain facility. This brings us to the next question: Do *repeated acts* of the infused virtues produce facility in the practice of the same virtues? Another way of expressing the same question would be to ask: Can the facility which is experienced in the infused virtues be *entirely* accounted for simply by having recourse to the concomitance of natural acts of the acquired virtues? Theologians like Suarez, John of St. Thomas, Billuart,

<sup>63</sup> Ripalda, J. M., *De Ente Supernaturali* (Vives, Paris, 1871), Tom. 2, Liber 3, Disp. 3, Sectio 4, n. 14: "Ita eadem potentia naturalis, potens facile in amorem naturalem ejus aequitatis, elevatur per habitum supernaturalem ad facilem amorem supernaturalem: . . .

<sup>64</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 38-9.



Ripalda, Mazzella, and Billot think that there is another kind of facility in the infused virtues which comes properly from the repetition of supernatural acts of these virtues.<sup>65</sup>

Let us take the case of a man who does not have the natural habit of temperance. Having made a good confession and received absolution, he begins to practice supernatural acts of infused temperance. He corresponds with the grace of God, and he repeats many such acts. Thereby he acquires facility of action; and this facility will increase with the multiplication of acts of the infused virtue of temperance. Hardly would this facility seem to proceed from the acquired habit of temperance, because this man never practiced natural acts of temperance, as such. Hence it would *seem* that facility in this case can be attributed solely to repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues placed after he had attained to the state of grace. Now a similar situation could be described in the case of another individual who was given over to the habit of impurity. He never had the natural virtue of continence; but he received the infused virtue of chastity when he came into the state of grace; and he repeated acts of the same virtue, thereby gaining facility.

Such a history could exist in regard to any of the moral virtues; and, therefore, it seems that some facility of action seems to arise from repeated acts of the infused virtues. On this point the theologians are in agreement. The problem, however, is to account for this facility, and in their explanations the theologians split up into five different groups. The real point of controversy seems to be whether or not supernatural acts of the infused virtues produce any natural acquired habits. If it can be shown that repeated acts of the infused virtues produce such a habit, then the problem is solved.

Medina holds that through repeated acts of the infused virtues, no acquired habits are acquired. But he gives no satisfactory explanation of the facility of the infused virtues. Suarez develops the same line of argumentation by distinguishing the objects of natural and supernatural habits. The objects of supernatural acts *are* super-

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-63.

natural; the objects of natural acts are natural; consequently, natural habits have no aptitude for supernatural objects.<sup>66</sup>

Gregory Valentia, De Lugo, Mazzella, and Pierse agree in large measure with the position of Suarez.<sup>67</sup> Mazzella draws upon several quotations from the works of St. Thomas to buttress his position: The source of facility in the infused virtues may be attributed partially to the grace of God, but it is to be attributed especially to the disposition of the subject whereby the impediments to virtue are removed. The constant exercise of the infused virtues serves to moderate the passions, to remove difficulties, and to expel prejudice and ignorance. This renders the subject prompt in the practice of the infused virtues.

But this facility will be supernatural *tantum secundum quid*, because it presupposes the existence of supernatural acts.<sup>68</sup> The supernatural acts achieve what natural acts *could* achieve, that is to say, the supernatural acts produce a certain bent or facility in the practice of virtue. This means that facility in the infused virtues comes *per se* from the grace of God; and *per accidens* from the repetition of acts of the infused virtues whereby obstacles are removed and a certain supernatural bent is established in the faculty.

As the school of Suarez and Mazzella denies that facility in the infused virtues comes from any acquired habit, the followers of Louis Molina affirm that repeated acts of the infused virtues generate a natural habit which is responsible for the facility which is experienced in the practice of the infused virtues.<sup>69</sup> Since Cardinal Billot is one of the most vigorous proponents of this opinion, it will be profitable to consider some of the arguments which he expounds in its favor and against the various other schools.

Repeated acts of the infused virtues produce acquired natural habits. This assertion is proven from universal experience, according to Billot. The Saints, for example, advanced in the practice of

<sup>66</sup> Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, IX, Bk. 6, ch. 14, n. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 48-51.

<sup>68</sup> Mazzella, *op. cit.*, n. 81. The passages to which Mazzella refers are found in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, Art. 10, ad 19 and *S.T.*, I-II, q. 51, art. 4, ad 3.

<sup>69</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 51-63.

the infused virtues, because they exercised the acts of the virtues constantly and strenuously. Again, it is known that certain Saints had a special facility in virtues upon which they concentrated in practice. There is no way of explaining this fact, unless one is willing to admit that by the repetition of acts of the infused virtues there is produced an acquired, natural habit whereby the passions are moderated, and the faculties are disciplined more and more in the practice of the infused virtues.<sup>70</sup>

In attacking the position of Suarez and Mazzella, namely, that facility in the infused virtues comes *per accidens* from the *moderation* of the passions and the *removal* of obstacles, Billot points out that such cannot be accomplished without at the same time producing a *positive inclination* to acts of virtue. To hold that repeated acts of the infused virtues effect the moderation of the passions and the removal of impediments to virtue is tantamount to the assertion that such repeated acts generate a positive *acquired* habit inclining the faculties to acts of infused virtues. Furthermore, Billot answers the difficulty of Suarez in regard to the manner in which acts of the infused virtues can produce an acquired natural habit by drawing a distinction between the *substance* of a supernatural act and its supernatural *mode* of operation.

The substance of the supernatural act entails all those functions which are common to any act, either natural or supernatural; considered in this way, the substance of a supernatural act, in itself, is indifferent to a natural or a supernatural determination. The supernatural mode of operation is that formality which orientates the act to its entitative supernatural perfection. This distinction between the substance and the mode of a supernatural act is found only in those acts whose objects are able to be attained both by the natural faculty in itself and by the natural faculty elevated to the

<sup>70</sup> Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Rome, Gregoriana, 1921), Generale Prolegomenon, Section 3, Commentary on I-II, q. 49-61. Videmus praeterea . . . eos (sanctos) semper habuisse specialem exercitii facilitatem in ea virtute in qua speciali quoque modo sese exercebant. Atqui hujus facti . . . nulla est sufficiens explicatio, nisi dicatur generari per frequentationem actuum virtutis infusae habitus acquisitus, quo naturalis potentia eidem infusae virtuti melius subjicitur. . . .

supernatural order by the infused virtues.<sup>71</sup> Since acts of the moral virtues can be either natural or supernatural, however, this distinction may be used.

Billot reasons from this position to the conclusion that the supernatural act *quoad substantiam* has the same reason of tendency to its object as a natural act which is elicited solely from the powers of nature. If, then, by the repetition of supernatural acts of the infused virtues the faculty is exercised along exactly the same lines as it would be exercised by natural acts, it follows that the natural faculty will be stamped by a propensity which inclines it to similar acts of virtue. This propensity is nothing else but the facility which flows from an acquired natural habit.<sup>72</sup>

It should be noted that Billot follows Molina in two points: (1) "In the production of a supernatural act, all those causes concur which produce a natural act."<sup>73</sup> (2) A natural act is virtually contained in every supernatural act of virtue.<sup>74</sup> The second point provokes the question: How is the natural act virtually contained in the supernatural act? Billot answers that an act can be virtually contained in another act according to the manner in which the perfections of animality are said to be contained in man, because in man, elevated to his superior condition, there is still contained univocally his formal nature of *animal rationale*. It is in this way that the natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act and tends toward the same object, even though the supernatural act is raised ontologically to a higher order, and is elicited from the power of a new nature, sanctifying grace.<sup>75</sup>

Natural acquired habits, then, can be generated by supernatural acts of the infused virtues, for the natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act of virtue. These acquired natural habits which are produced by supernatural acts follow all the rules for acquired habits produced by natural acts in regard to their increase,

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 3, *De Ratione Distinctionis Supernaturalium*, sect. 1.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 2, section 3.

<sup>73</sup> Molina *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, Qu. 14, art. 13, Disput. 38: Eo quod ad ipsorum productionem (actus supernaturales) concurrant causae omnes, qua producerent actus illos naturales.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Op. cit.*, n. 2, section 3, footnote 1.

diminution and corruption. They will be increased by an increase of the infused acts, and diminished by a decrease in the same. But they will not be destroyed by one contrary act. Although the infused virtues are lost by mortal sin, the acquired habits produced by acts of these virtues will remain in the soul, conferring their facility towards natural acts and also to supernatural acts, presupposing the help of actual grace.<sup>76</sup>

After examining the apparently adverse quotations from St. Thomas cited by Mazzella, Billot goes on to use St. Thomas to confirm his own position.<sup>77</sup> Why does St. Thomas affirm that the infused virtues do not afford pleasure *in the beginning*, unless he takes it for granted that delectation does follow later on as a result of repeated acts of the infused virtue? And how can this pleasure, or exercise of facility, follow from repeated acts, unless it comes as a result of an acquired habit whereby the faculty is disposed favorably to prompt and ready placing of acts of the infused virtues? These two questions should be pondered in considering the quotation from St. Thomas:

It is to be said that in the beginning the infused virtue does not always remove the inclination of the passions as does the acquired virtue, and, for this reason, the infused virtue does not proceed pleasantly in the beginning.<sup>78</sup>

In support of the position of Cardinal Billot, Merkelbach affirms that a natural act is virtually contained in every supernatural act of virtue, and that an acquired natural habit is generated by repeated acts of the infused virtues.<sup>79</sup>

Another opinion explaining the facility of the infused moral virtues is so similar to that of Billot that it shall be stated without much comment. Developed by John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Billuart, and

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 2, sect. 3.

<sup>77</sup> *Loc. cit.* Opponitur primo auctoritas St. Thomas.

<sup>78</sup> *Quaestiones Disputatae*. Art. 10, ad 15: Dicendum quod quia a principio virtus infusa non semper ita tollit sensum passionum sicut virtus acquisita, propter hoc a principio non ita delectabiliter operatur.

<sup>79</sup> Merkelbach, B., *Summa Theologiae Moralís* (Paris, Declée, 1938), I, n. 621.

Schiffini, this theory holds that repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate a natural acquired habit, not formally and directly, but *dispositively*, that is to say, the repetition of acts of the infused virtues dispose the potency toward acquiring a natural habit of the same virtues. Constant exercise of the infused virtues leaves its traces in the faculties, particularly in memory; and these impressions dispose the subject to the exercise of virtue.<sup>80</sup>

The above opinion, and that of Billot, must answer the objection of Suarez to the effect that if you grant the assertion that supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired habit, then you are forced by logic to the admission that supernatural habits could elicit natural acts; and this would be false.<sup>81</sup>

Billot answers that there is a difference between the mode in which acts flow from a habit, and the mode in which a habit is caused by repeated acts. It is conceded that from a supernatural habit there cannot flow directly any natural act. But if the act does not flow from the habit, then the act is not caused by the habit, but by the *faculty not using the habit*. This is entirely different from the manner in which a habit is produced by repeated acts. A habit is caused by repeated acts in the measure that the operative faculty receives the act and its impression. This is but an application of the general principle: *Quidquid recipitur, secundum modum recipientis recipitur*. It is the nature of wax to receive the impression of a seal, and this it does without regard to whether the instrument used to impress the seal is of gold, silver, or copper. Likewise, supernatural acts do not leave the impression of their supernaturality upon the faculty, because it is not the nature of the faculty to receive any supernatural disposition, unless according to its obediencial capacity, which can be reduced to act by God alone.<sup>82</sup>

It is according to the nature of the faculty to receive impressions according to its nature; and, since supernatural acts impress the faculty in the same way as natural acts, they dispose and facilitate the natural faculty toward repeated similar acts; and in this way

<sup>80</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 63-6.

<sup>81</sup> Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, IX, Bk. 6, ch. 14, n. 14.

<sup>82</sup> Billot, *op. cit.*, *Generale Prolegomenon*, I-II ae, qq. 49-61, n. 2, sect. 3, Obj. Tertio.

supernatural acts generate an acquired natural habit in the faculty.<sup>83</sup>

Billot explains also what the acquired habit contributes to the infused virtue. The proximate principle of a meritorious act is not only the infused virtue, but also the natural faculty, insofar as it was informed by the infused virtue. In the beginning of the supernatural act the infused virtue elevates the faculty *simpliciter*, for the faculty is not yet accustomed to the practice of virtue. But after repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues, the faculty becomes disciplined and ready for the practice of virtue by reason of its NATURALLY ACQUIRED HABIT OF FACILITY, so that now, not only the faculty, but the faculty along with its acquired *facility* is elevated to the supernatural order. Hence, the natural acquired habit does add something to supernatural acts, namely, a mode of facility.

To the objection that his system confuses the orders of nature and grace, Billot replies that some divorce the orders because of their fear of Pelagianism. In reality, nature is the fundament of grace. Billot refers to St. Thomas' dictum that certain persons are disposed "by a proper disposition of the body to chastity, meekness, and to other virtues of this kind."<sup>84</sup> From this allusion Billot formulates the challenging question: "If such natural dispositions of the body are helpful to us in the arduous way of the supernatural virtues, will not the inclinations acquired by the exercise of these virtues be of similar assistance to us?"<sup>85</sup>

After comparing the opinions of Suarez and Billot, the writer is inclined to favor the position of Billot. There is no need to have recourse to the supernatural when a satisfactory natural explanation can be found for some particular fact. Now the fact that a certain facility flows from repeated acts of the infused virtues is obvious; and it seems that such can be explained in a natural way: The repetition of the infused acts forms a natural acquired habit. If grace

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, sect. 3, Obj. Tertio.

<sup>84</sup> I-II, q. 51, art. 1, c: Sunt quidem enim dispositi ex propria corporis complexione ad castitatem, vel mansuetudinem, vel ad alia hujusmodi.

<sup>85</sup> *Op. cit.*, sec. 3, Obj. Secundo, in finem. Si ergo in ardua via supernaturalium tantum juvat, accedente gratia, indoles naturalis et ipsa corporis complexio, non juvaret acquisita per ipsissimarum virtutum exercitium inclinatio?

perfects nature, why should not an acquired habit be developed from repeated acts of the infused virtues? On the other hand, to attribute facility to the grace of God seems unnecessary, since a sufficient natural explanation can be worked out. In short, the infused moral virtues *per se* make supernatural acts possible, but they do not make these acts easy. "Ease and readiness in the performance of such acts will come only in direct proportion to the efforts which we expend in co-operating with the means provided by nature and grace."<sup>86</sup>

## 2. Other Differences between Acquired and Infused Virtues.

Once one has pondered the difference between the infused virtues and the natural virtues from the point of view of facility, other points of distinction are discerned at the same time. The natural virtues are perfected by repetition, whereas the infused moral are increased by each influx of sanctifying grace; the acquired are lost by non-use, or the acquisition of the contrary vice, while the infused moral are lost only by mortal sin. Of themselves, the natural virtues perfect man in the way of natural goodness and happiness; on the other hand, the supernatural virtues perfect man in the pursuit of his ultimate goal, the beatific vision of God. It should be noted, however, that the acts of the natural virtues can be directed by charity to the supernatural end.<sup>87</sup> Indeed the natural virtues will not be present in a perfect state without charity.<sup>88</sup>

Finally, the most obvious difference between the infused and the natural virtues is found in their very nature. The infused virtue is something supernatural, impossible to acquire by purely human effort, infused directly by God. The acquired virtue is something natural, *per se* acquired by repetition, and only *per accidens* infused by God. The infused virtue seeks a bonum which is presented by a human reason enlightened by faith and motivated by charity; the natural, or acquired, virtue seeks a bonum which is determined by the light of human reason alone. St. Thomas illustrates this distinction:

<sup>86</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 72.

<sup>87</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, 95.

<sup>88</sup> II-II, q. 23, art. 8; St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God*, Bk. 11, ch. 10.



Thus, the object of temperance is a good in respect of the pleasures connected with the concupiscence of touch. The formal aspect of this object is from reason which fixes the mean in these concupiscences; while the material element is something on the part of the concupiscences. Now it is evident that the mean that is appointed in such like concupiscences according to the rule of human reason is seen under a different aspect from the mean which is fixed according to the Divine rule. For instance, in the consumption of food, the mean fixed by human reason is that food should not harm the health of the body, nor hinder the use of reason; whereas, according to the Divine rule, it behooves man to *chastise his body and bring it into subjection* (1 Cor. 9:27) by abstinence in food, drink, and the like. It is therefore evident that infused and acquired temperance differ in species; and the same applies to the other virtues.<sup>89</sup>

By way of summary, then, the infused virtues differ from the acquired in the following respects. They differ in their formal objects and acts; and, therefore, they differ, not merely *quoad modum*, but also *quoad speciem*. They differ in their efficient causality. Again, the medium of reason illumined by faith is different from the medium of unaided reason. And, from the point of view of practice, most significantly they differ in the manner in which they fulfill the cognate notions of habit and facility.

#### IV. APPLICATION OF PREVIOUS DISCUSSION TO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

##### A. *Temperance*

It is meaningful that, despite the differences between the infused and the acquired virtues, St. Thomas always presents these virtues,

<sup>89</sup> I-II, q. 63, art 4: Sicut temperantiae objectum est bonum delectabile in concupiscentiis tactus; cuius quidem objecti formalis ratio est a ratione, quae instituit modum in his concupiscentiis; materiale autem est id quod est ex parte concupiscentiarum. Manifestum est autem quod alterius rationis est motus qui imponitur in huiusmodi concupiscentiis secundum regulam rationis humanae, et secundum regulam divinam: puta, in sumptione ciborum ratione humana modus statuitur ut non noceat valetudini corporis, nec impedit rationis actum; secundum autem regulam legis divinae requiritur quod "homo castiget corpus suum et in servitutem redigat" per abstinentiam cibi et potus, et aliorum huiusmodi. Unde manifestum est quod temperantia infusa et acquisita differunt specie; et eadem ratio est de aliis virtutibus.

"not as opposed, but as complementary to one another."<sup>90</sup> The above quotation from St. Thomas on the virtue of temperance bears out this truth. The motive proposed for natural temperance is the health of the body, while the incentive for the supernatural virtue is the fuller life of grace through the mortification of the body. The two motives complement one another, and they should be presented together to individuals who have difficulties practicing the various species of temperance, especially sobriety, and chastity.

The member of Alcoholics Anonymous, for example, who adds to the practice of the twelve points the frequent reception of the sacraments increases not only in the natural virtue of sobriety, but also in the supernatural virtues of temperance and charity. While he gains greater facility in the practice of certain forms of mortification conducive to sobriety, he deepens his motivation for the practice of infused temperance. Charity is the universal motive for all the virtues, and with each increase of sanctifying grace through the reception of the sacraments there is an increase of charity, and this growing charity makes him more desirous to remain sober and more diligent in the practice of the natural acts of sobriety. Considering the chronic failures of the past, it is not too much to say that, unless the infused virtues of charity and temperance are present in the soul of the reformed alcoholic, the dangers of relapse are great.

From the psychological point of view the life of grace and the infused virtues supplies in the soul of the A.A. member a powerful motivation for all the practices which help to keep the member free of his former enslavement. Grace complements nature.

In regard to the virtue of chastity, moreover, the question may be posed: What elements make chastity stronger? Is it the mere repetition of natural acts of modesty, and of emotional self-control? Or is it a dynamically growing motivation of supernatural charity? Granted that both factors are important, which is basic? The positive motivation of charity is more basic to the practice of chastity than the practice of various natural safeguards; indeed, charity is the best incentive for the repetition of acts of modesty, of moderation in the use of food and drink, and of the various other practices necessary for the preservation and growth of chastity.

<sup>90</sup> Coerver, *op. cit.*, 100.

A certain facility may be acquired in the practice of these auxiliary virtues, and it may render the practice of chastity itself facile. On the other hand, failure to practice the mortification of the senses and imagination usually renders the practice of chastity difficult. The infused virtue is endangered, because the individual fails to acquire facility in the practice of what may be termed natural preservatives of chastity.

Chastity grows, not so much with repetition of similar acts of restraint, as with supernatural acts of love of God. The point which Pius XII makes concerning supernatural virginity applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to all the species of chastity:

It is nothing else but love of Him that sweetly constrains the virgin to consecrate her body and soul entirely to her Divine Redeemer. . . . Certainly it is the love of Christ that urges a virgin to retire behind convent walls and remain there all her life, in order to contemplate and love the heavenly Spouse more easily and without hindrance; certainly it is the same love that strongly inspires her to spend her life and strength in works of mercy for the sake of her neighbor.<sup>91</sup>

Notice that the practice of such virginity is rendered more facile either by the contemplative life of the cloister or the apostolate of works of charity. Those practicing other forms of chastity can make it easier by similar works adaptable to their condition.

The infused virtue of chastity, however, differs from the other infused moral virtues as far as facility is concerned. A baptized child who has practiced supernatural justice constantly through his formative years will acquire an acquired habit of justice which will render the fulfillment of adult duties of justice easy. But can the same truth be affirmed of the child who has remained chaste through the latency period of life up to the time of adolescence? Can he be said to have acquired a natural habit of chastity which will render the practice of the supernatural virtue facile? Hardly. With the sexual instinct just awakening, his chastity is still untried; and, although by the practice of natural and supernatural virtues he keeps the rebellious movements of the flesh under control, he does not acquire facility in the practice of chastity in the same way that he

<sup>91</sup> *Holy Virginity*, March 25, 1954, NCWC translation, para. 18.

acquired facility in the practice of prudence or justice. At best, facility in the practice of chastity comes slowly.

It may be said that infused chastity is the supernatural counter-balance for the worst wound of original sin inflicted upon the sense of touch. It grows with the growth in charity and with the increase of sanctifying grace. As the motives for loving God take deeper root in the heart, so also do the motives for practicing chastity pervade the soul more deeply. Chastity grows, not so much from the repeated suppressions of the inordinate movements of the flesh, as from the endeepened determination of the will to prove the person's love for God. Chastity grows more in internal depth than in external facility. The movements of the flesh may remain strong; and that is why chastity may not become easier in the same sense as the practice of justice become easier.

Under the influx of charity chastity increases more in intrinsic facility than in extrinsic facility. To some extent, repeated acts of mortification of the senses and of the imagination render the practice of chastity easier, but not easy. To a greater extent, chastity draws strength from frequent acts of love of God. The extrinsic form of charity is most apparent in infused chastity. In short, *meditation* on the motives for chastity, joined to the practice of mortification, render the virtue doubly strong.

In stressing the supernatural character of chastity, care must be taken not to neglect all the natural means at our disposal for the avoidance of impurity. Growth in the spiritual life demands personal effort and application, demands the use of natural, as well as supernatural means for the mortification of the passions and the removal of difficulties. It must not be forgotten that the natural and the supernatural orders are complementary and essential to one another. While it is true that no natural act has any positive efficacy to lead us to salvation, unless it be vitalized by the supernatural, it is also true that no supernatural act can be done by us except through the operation of faculties which are in themselves natural.

Neither the acquired nor the infused virtues are complete in themselves; each needs the other in order to attain perfection. God could have attached *extrinsic* facility to the infused moral virtues; but *de facto* He does not, because He does not see fit to grant by

infusion that which man can acquire by his own proper activity.<sup>92</sup> He requires some co-operation from us. He expects us to acquire natural virtues that will be joined to His infused virtues. . . .

#### B. Education

If acquired habits are important for the *practice* of supernatural virtues, then it is of supreme importance that the child be trained in good natural habits from his earliest formative years both in home and school. Natural motives should be presented to the students as well as supernatural motives, provided the natural incentives remain subordinate to the supernatural. The aim must be to integrate the ideals of faith with those of reason and to present them to the child as a harmonious whole. The child must be taught that natural values are good, but they must be made to serve him on his way to his supernatural destiny. He must be shown that God expects him to practice the natural virtues if he wishes to make full use of the gifts and virtues which God has infused into his soul at Baptism.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

The infused moral virtues are supernatural entities, inasmuch as they are a participation in the life of sanctifying grace. Any effort to reduce them to natural categories demands the use of analogy. They are neither pure habits nor pure potencies, but they possess some of the characteristics of both, and so they are classified as qualities and operative habits. They are not habits in the univocal sense, because they do not give *extrinsic* facility in action. Yet they are not mere potencies, because they strengthen the will intrinsically and incline it to place acts of virtue, that is to say, they produce a certain *intrinsic* facility in the faculty.

Repeated acts of the infused moral virtues confer *extrinsic* facility by developing acquired habits. These acquired habits supplement the work of the infused virtues. Once the soul possesses the infused

<sup>92</sup> Billot, *op. cit.*, Prolegomenon (I-II ae, qq. 49-61), Pt. 2, n. 2: Deus enim per infusionis viam, praesertim regulariter et de lege ordinaria, non dat id quod homo per suam propriam activitatem natus est acquirere.

virtues, she should not allow them to remain dormant, but she should exercise them by repeated acts:

The infused virtue does not make a man virtuous but gives him the possibility of practicing virtue in the supernatural order; he has merely a new operative principle of supernatural activity in his soul. He must co-operate with Divine Grace and act in accordance with such infused principles or virtues in order to acquire solid virtue.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Parente, P., *The Ascetical Life* (Herder, St. Louis, 1944), 125.

## DIGEST OF THE DISCUSSION:

After a brief discussion on the place of social justice in the scheme of the virtues, it was generally conceded that it would be fruitless to attempt to pursue the question further because of the many divergent views on the subject.

*Father Augustine Hennessy, C.P.*, then raised the question of the subject of the virtues of temperance and fortitude. Are they formally in the will and only radically in the appetites? How, then, explain that the blessed in heaven do not have the virtue of temperance? Father Harvey agreed that these virtues would be in the passions terminatively.

*Father James Griffin, S.J.*, then widened the scope of the discussion by asking how the moral virtues perdure in heaven and why they should not go as do faith and hope. Father Harvey proposed discussion as to just what moral virtues remain in heaven. All agreed that the virtue of religion certainly remains. Others suggested virtues such as respect and affability as appropriate to the blessed.

In the quest for a norm to determine what virtues remain in glory, Father Hennessy proposed that the enrichment of the virtuous personality rather than the need for the particular virtue be the determining factor. He stressed the transcendental relation of the soul to the glorified body. The flesh of the saint would be modified according to the degree of charity attained. The moral virtues remain even in glory insofar as they are related to charity. Father Griffin, S.J., thought that compatibility with glory rather than the relation of the virtue to charity would be the norm. Father Gerald Kelly, S.J., also stressed the importance of the formality of the virtue itself as determining whether or not it remains in glory: Temperance, e.g., would not remain as being incompatible with the life of the blessed. Father Vollert, S.J., indicated the role of the moral virtues as pre-requisites of glory.

*Fater Schwinn, O.S.B.*, then raised the question of the possibility of performing an act of purely natural virtue by a supernatural agent possessing the infused moral virtues. Father Hennessy, C.P., thought that such a natural act would be possible and that it would be sinful. He suggested as an example the case of a

person who would practice sobriety not for a supernatural motive but rather through a merely natural disdain for the ugliness of drunkenness. This, he thought, would be a sinful intrusion of naturalism.

*Father Kelly* and *Father Vollert* objected strenuously to this view. Such a case, they thought, would involve no violation of a law or failure in an obligation. *Father Hennessy* replied that all our preaching against the mentality of the "good pagan" and all our efforts to exclude naturalism are based on this principle. *Father Kelly* pointed out that the solution to the question would depend on one's theory of the sinfulness of imperfections. Expressions such as "naturalism" or "worldliness" could refer, he said, either to real sins or to imperfections. *Father Hennessy* agreed that his view involved the sinful character of imperfections.

*Father Carney, O.S.F.S.*, referred to the teaching of *St. Francis of Sales* to the effect that a good act done by a supernatural agent for a less worthy motive, provided God be not absolutely excluded, merits grace but less grace than would be had if the motive were better. *Father Kelly* agreed that it would be difficult in practice to exclude a supernatural motive positively. He used the example of a person who would remain sober in order to receive a large inheritance promised on that condition—a good act certainly, however imperfectly motivated. *Father Harvey* remarked that in educational situations a less worthy motive will often prove more effective in attracting students to virtue.

Turning to the situation of a person in the state of mortal sin, *Father Griffin, S.J.*, stressed the ascetical importance of the possibility of making negatively dispositive acts toward conversion by reason of the facility remaining from the earlier state of virtue. Even after the loss of charity and the infused moral virtues, natural virtue and acquired facility can remain and can help those who have fallen into mortal sin to recover charity.

*Father Michael Griffin, O.C.D.*, wondered if there would be a *iustitia informis* analogous to the *fides informis* for a person in the state of mortal sin. *Father Harvey* felt that there was no need for such a virtue. *Father James Griffin, S.J.*, noted that charity is the extrinsic form of the infused moral virtues but not of faith and



hope. The causality of charity is both efficient and formal with regard to the infused moral virtues, but charity is not the efficient source of faith and hope. Hence there would be no possibility of infused moral virtues that would be *informes*.

In commenting on a point raised by Father Schwinn with regard to growth in the infused virtues by repetition of acts, Father Brophy, S.J., indicated that in addition to acquired facility, each good act increased the infused virtues by way of merit. The proportionate growth through merit in all the infused virtues was illustrated by Father Harvey who used the analogy of the proportionate growth of the human hand. This growth would differ from the increase of acquired facility which is had only in the virtue actually practiced.

The discussion then took a somewhat different turn, prompted by Father Kelly's observation that there is often a deplorable tendency among some writers to overstress the reception of the sacraments to the detriment of exhortations to practice virtue. The Christian life, he insisted, is a wonderful balance of supernatural helps and natural equipment. Reference was made to the illustration, cited by Father Harvey in his paper, of boarding school students who develop habits, e.g., of frequent Communion while at school but fail to continue in these habits later on. Father Kelly thought that terms such as "emotional maturity" were helpful in presenting the ideal of the practice of the moral virtues. The more traditional terminology seemed to his mind to lessen interest.

*Father Forrest Macken, C.P.*, returned to the example of those who easily abandoned apparently virtuous habits. He thought that such cases would not involve virtues at all but merely a series of repeated acts without the motivation necessary to constitute real virtue. Father Harvey concurred in stressing the need for motivation. This could be accomplished, he said, by the frequent renewal of intention. The renewal of charity would involve the renewal of motive for all the virtues.

On the question of motivation, Father Hennessy suggested that the material object of the virtues would itself undergo a change once the virtue is informed by charity. A priest social worker, e.g., would see the whole material object of social justice differently than a Communist doing the same work. The material object must thus be

seen as illumined by faith under the dynamic of charity. Father Kelly indicated that supernatural perceptions could come from the gifts and infused moral virtues themselves as well as from charity and faith. Father Coyle, C.S.S.R. remarked that even natural virtue has motivation or a *recta ratio*. Supernatural virtue adds faith to the *recta ratio* without destroying reason or eliminating its role. Father Brophy stressed the role of the gifts in rendering one *habilis* to the reception of actual graces.

*Father Harvey* then turned the discussion to the practical problem of motivation in its relation to acquired facility in the moral virtues. In the case of a young girl who acquires a certain facility in modesty but succumbs to unchastity at the first onslaught of temptation, *Father Harvey* thought that the lack of proper motivation might explain such an occurrence. *Father Griffin, O.C.D.* thought that the intensity of the one act as over against the earlier and less intense acts of modesty would be a factor. *Father John Fischer, C.P.*, thought that in such cases the motive is often faulty. Modesty may have been practiced but not for a supernatural motive. *Father Fischer* deplored the tendency to stress natural rather than supernatural motivation. The discussion came to an end with general agreement on the great importance of motivation for the development of the moral virtues.

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