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No. 92

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THE QUALITY OF FACILITY IN
THE MORAL VIRTUES

BY THE
Reverend Robert Florent Coerver, C.M., S.T.L.

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Sacred
Theology of the Catholic University of America in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology

This dissertation was conducted under the direc-
tion of Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D.,
as major professor, and was approved by Rev.
Joseph L. Lilly, C.M., S.T.D., S.S.L., and Rev.
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INTRODUCTION

* *Whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever lovable, whatever of good refute, if there be any virtue, if anything worthy of praise, think of these things.*"¹

In these words, Saint Paul commends to us the subject of the virtues as most worthy of our thoughts. And rightly so, for according to the teachings of spiritual writers, the contemplation of virtue is the first advance to spiritual knowledge; and the practice of the virtues forms the steps whereby the soul ascends to God. According to the theological teaching of St. Thomas, the virtues inhere in the potencies of the soul and are the quasi faculties of spiritual operation.² This being true, it is evident that the infused virtues constitute a very important cog in the spiritual mechanism, since they are the means whereby sanctifying grace is operative. To take an illustration from the natural order, just as the soul does not operate immediately, but only mediately, through its faculties of intellect and will, so also, sanctifying grace acts through its quasi faculties, the infused virtues and gifts. In either case, a normal and healthy function of the faculties is necessary for the complete and adequate well-being of the principle. By this illustration, the importance of the infused virtues and gifts is more readily understood.

¹ *Philippians, 4:8.* De cetero fratres, quaecumque sunt vera, quaecumque pudica, quaecumque justa, quaecumque sancta, quaecumque amabilia, quaecumque bonae famae, siqua virtus, siqua laus disciplinae, haec cogitate.

² Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Sunmta Theologica.* (Ex Typographie Forzani, Rome, 1894). I-IIae, q. 56, art. 1., c. "Dicendum quod virtutem pertinere ad potentiam animae, ex tribus potest esse manifestum: primo quidem ex ipsa ratione virtutis, quae importat perfectionem potentiae; perfectio autem est in eo, cuius est perfectio: secundo ex eo quod est habitus operativus: . . . omnis autem operatio est ab anima per aliquam potentiam; tertio ex hoc quod disponit ad optimum: optimum autem est finis, qui vel est operatio rei, vel aliquid consecutum per operationem a potentia egredientem, unde virtus humana est in potentia animae sicut in subjecto."

St. Paul urges us "to think of these things."³ Yet to the average person the idea of virtue is so vague that it is incapable of being the object of clear contemplation. Treating the subject of virtue, the Dominican theologian, Father Farrell, says: "Probably there is no part of our human equipment that has been more thoroughly misunderstood and more viciously maligned."⁴ And later on, speaking of the attitude of Catholics toward virtue, the same author adds: "Virtue is looked upon as something to be taken cautiously, in small doses and in careful correlation to the individual temperament."⁵ Why should such an attitude as this exist even among Catholics? Perhaps it is due to insufficient instruction, faulty education, or a variety of other reasons. But regardless of what the cause may be, the fact remains that this is a challenge to Catholic moral theologians. After all, moral theology is a science which directs man's human activity toward God, his supernatural, ultimate End. How can this be done without sufficient emphasis on the infused virtues, the quasi-faculties of supernatural operation?

Certainly, there is no insinuation made here to the effect that the teaching of Catholic moral theology as a whole is inadequate or insufficient in regard to the virtues. This charge might well be urged against particular theologians, but it cannot be applied to the general teaching of theology. Again, there is no attempt made here to lay all the blame for the present-day ignorance of virtue at the door of the moral theologians. However, it does seem that there is need in current moral theology for a more complete treatment of the virtues. Some of the modern texts have fairly extensive treatises on the virtues, but there is no denying that others are woefully deficient. Writers and preachers are criticized sometimes on the score that their work is too negative, that they constantly tear down but never build up. Some theologians are open to criticism on more or less the same score in so far as they emphasize the negative part of morality, sin, to the neglect of the positive part, the virtues.

³ *Philippians*, 4:8.

⁴ Farrell, W., *A Companion to the Summa* (Sheed and Ward, New York, 1939), II, 177.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 178.

In an article in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, the need for more positive theology on the virtues has been pointed out in these words:

The virtues are considered as sort of an appendix to moral theology rather than its essential framework. . . . We do not go to God merely by avoiding sin. The moral life is not something negative. There is also a positive aspect which must be taken into consideration. It might be conceded that by avoiding sin, we escape hell, but surely no theologian would want to say that that is all there is to heaven. Yet many people look upon it just that way.⁶

Pertinent to this point, Merkelbach, in his learned treatise on moral theology, says the following:

Modern authors of manuals (moral theology) are wont to treat very little of the virtues, because their entire occupation is in distinguishing, numbering, and measuring sins, so that someone has rightly remarked, their theology is nothing more than a listing or a summary of sins. And if this is true of particular virtues, it is much more true of the virtues in general.⁷

Perhaps the theologians at fault excuse themselves on the grounds that the virtues are treated in detail in ascetical theology. But this is hardly justifiable, since moral theology must set down the norms and guiding principles for ascetical theology. Be that as it may, the fact remains that there is room for expansion of the moral theology on the virtues. We cannot say that the treatment of the theological virtues is neglected, but most of the treatises on the moral virtues and the virtues in general still leave much to be desired, especially in regard to the interrelation of

⁶ O'Brien, James, "The Priest and Modern Moral Theology," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 48 (1938), 33.

⁷ Merkelbach, B., *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1938), Vol. I, Pars I, Q. I, n. 558, note 1. "De virtutibus non multa soient haberi moderni auctores manualium, qui toto sunt in distinguendis, numerandis, mensurandis peccatis, ita ut recte dixit aliquis, quod eorum theologia moralis jam nil sit nisi elenchus seu codex peccatorum. Et si id verum sit de virtutibus specialibus, multo magis verificatur de virtutibus in genere."

the acquired and infused moral virtues. For example, we can cite the following topics: the relationship of the acquired and infused moral virtues, the meaning of facility in the virtues, which of the virtues confer facility. These topics, to mention a few, are not discussed at any length and, in some aspects, not even touched upon by the great majority of moral theologians. It is with this thought in mind that the author has chosen the subject of this thesis.

It is to be noted, however, that in this present work the author does not attempt a solution for all of the problems with regard to the moral virtues. The point of this thesis is directed at only one of these problems, namely, the question of facility. Needless to say, this requires that something be said of the interrelation of the acquired and infused virtues, but, for the most part, the scope of this work is limited to the topic of facility in the virtues. Under this heading, we shall attempt to establish the fact that some small degree of facility is conferred by the infused moral virtues, and that this facility can be increased by the practice of the acquired virtues. In this connection, we shall demonstrate the importance of the acquired virtues in their relation to the infused moral virtues. On the historical side, we shall trace the development of the teaching on facility from the time of the pagan philosophers, through the Fathers of the Church, and into the Scholastic period. After this, we shall summarize the opinions of modern theologians in regard to this same question.

Finally, in the conclusion, we shall present some practical corollaries of the doctrine on facility applied to the moral life of the individual, and also incorporate some suggestions for the use of confessors, preachers, and instructors in catechetics. In short, by this work we hope to contribute something positive toward the unquestionable need for a more extensive theological treatment of the virtues.

CHAPTER I

I

GENERAL NOTION AND DIVISION OF THE VIRTUES

Article I. The General Meaning and Notion of Virtue

According to its etymological meaning, the Latin word *virtus* is derived from the words *vir* and *intus*, and signifies the inward **force** or energy of man. Lactantius says, "Man (*vir*) is so named, because there is more force *{vis}* in him than there is in woman, and hence the word virtue *{virtus}* receives its name." ¹ The Greek words ἀρετή² and δύναμι³ are used in much the same sense as the Latin word, *virtus*; and in Sacred Scripture these words invariably signify *interior vigor, power, or force of soul*. Thus, in its widest acceptance, the term *virtue* signifies a certain forcefulness or strength of action, a vigorous use of our natural potencies. This demands strength of will, and it is in this sense that Saint Augustine remarks that "all virtues are in the will." ⁴

¹Lactantius, *De Opificio Dei*, Chap. 12 (*PL* 7:57): "Vir itaque nominatus est, quod major in eo vis est, quam in foemina; et hinc virtus nomen accepit" N.B. This work of Lactantius, *De Opificio Dei*, is not contained in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (CSEL)* published by the Academy of Science in Vienna. This work is not yet complete, but because it affords a more critical text than Migne, we shall quote it whenever this is possible as well as give reference to Migne.

²The Greek word, ἀρετή, is used to signify *power* or *strength*. Thus, in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, 1:3, we read, καλέσαντο ἡμὰ διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆ, "qui vocavit nos propria gloria et virtute." More commonly, however, this word is used to signify *moral goodness*, as in *Wisdom*, 4:1 and 5:13, and *Philippians*, 4:8, εἶ τι ἀρετῆ καὶ εἶ τι ἐπαινο ταῦτα λογισσοῦε, "siqua virtus, siqua laus disciplinae, haec cogitate."

³The word, δύναμι, signifies strength, ability, power. In the following Scriptural passages it is used in this sense. *Luke*, 1:17, *Acts*, 4:7, *I Cor.* 4:20, *II Cor.* 1:8, ὑπὲρ δύνάμιν, supra virtutem, beyond our power.

⁴Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, L. 2, C. 19 (*PL* 32:1268): "In eo (voluntate) sunt etiam virtutes omnes, quibus mali uti nemo potest."

All men are logically forced to recognize and to admire the virtues understood in the broad sense of *vigor of soul* and *strength of character*. Even the skeptics and unbelievers, who disown the term "virtue" in theory, are compelled to admit its excellence in practice. As one modern author notes:

The world which has made trial (of the virtues) reintroduces them by new names. It still admires pluck in hunting field or battle plain; what used to be called fortitude. It praises judgment in its sportsmen and explorers; what used to be known as prudence. The world does not speak much of temperance; but it still believes in self control. And it has to admire fair play: Even its gamblers feel the necessity of a "square deal". . . Thus they may expel virtue or morality by one door; it returns by another. As long as human nature endures, it will need virtues, call them by any new or old name.⁵

So far, we have considered virtue according to its widest meaning. However, we are concerned here with a more specialized meaning of virtue, namely, the signification that it has in Catholic Theology.

The classic theological definition of virtue is given by Saint Augustine, "Virtue is a good quality of the mind by which we live rightly and which cannot be put to an evil use, which God produces in us without our cooperation."⁶ Saint Thomas adopted this definition from Augustine but suggested a twofold change in its content. First, he proposes that in the place of "quality" the term "habit" should be substituted, since habit designates the more proximate genus of virtue. He adds also that the last phrase must be dropped if the definition intends to include the acquired as well as the infused virtues.⁷ Examining this defini-

sPierce, *Virtues and Vices* (Browne and Nolan, Dublin, 1935), Preface, pps. ix-x.

⁸Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Bk. 2, Chap. 19. (*PL* 32:1268): "Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur et nemo male utitur et quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur." This definition is gathered from several other places in St Augustine's writings besides the citation already given. Cf. *Contra Julianum*, Chap. 3, n. 15-20 (*PL* 44:743-748), *super Psal. lxxviii. con. 26* (*PL* 37:1577).

⁷Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Ex Typographia Farzani: Rome, 1894), I-IIae, q. 55, art 4, a

tion, we see that virtue is a habit, in other words, a permanent quality which perfects the potencies of the soul toward placing good acts. It is obvious, therefore, that one or two isolated acts do not necessarily indicate the presence of a virtue. Thus, a man cannot be said to possess the virtue of honesty if he is truthful only on occasions, for virtue supposes a fixed and constant manner of action. This is the distinction between the wide and strict usage of the term *virtue*. As previously noted, a single act can possess the particular kind of moral goodness that specifies a good habit and in a wide use of the term, we sometimes hear individual acts referred to as "acts of virtue." However, in its strict sense, *virtue* deals only with habits. St. Thomas has summed up the entire essence of virtue in his brief but complete definition: "Virtue is a good operative habit." §

ARTICLE II. THE DIVISION OF THE VIRTUES

The virtues are divided into different categories. The fourfold division which we list here is taken from Tanquerey,⁹ and is common to most theologians. He divides the virtues as follows: (1) By reason of the subject, into theological and moral. The theological virtues have God, as He is in Himself or as the Author of grace, 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. (2) By reason of origin, into acquired and infused. Acquired, which are formed by the repetition of natural acts; infused, which are immediately placed into the soul by Almighty God. (3) By reason of end, into natural and supernatural. Natural virtues are those which tend toward God as the Author of nature. These arise from the powers of nature and dispose the faculties of the soul to exercise their connatural operations. The supernatural virtues tend toward God as the

§ Aquinas, *op. cit.*, I-IIae, q. 55, art. 3, c. "Unde virtus humana, quae est habitus operativus, est bonus habitus et boni operativus."

⁹ Tanquerey, A., *Synopsis Theologiae Moralis* (Desclee: Paris, 1936), II, Art. II, n. 579. Some theologians give more extensive, others, less extensive divisions of virtue, but this division given by Tanquerey seems to be adequate.

Author of grace and surpass all the exigencies and powers of nature. These are infused into the soul by God so that the potencies of the soul are enabled to elicit acts of a supernatural nature. (4) By reason of subject, into intellectual and appetitive. Intellectual reside in and perfect the intellect; appetitive reside in and perfect the appetitive faculties.

This is a general classification of the virtues, yet it is fairly complete. For our purpose, we ask that the reader keep especially in mind the moral virtues, since the subject matter of this treatise concerns itself almost exclusively with these virtues. The moral virtues are classified under the four general heads of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, called the cardinal virtues, and they regulate the entire moral life of man. The divisions of the acquired and infused virtues should also be carefully noted, for these terms will reappear constantly throughout the present work. It is to be noted, moreover, that the moral virtues can be either acquired or infused, natural or supernatural, depending on their principle, their mode of acquisition, and their object. We shall develop this point at length within the next few pages.

It is quite obvious that natural and acquired moral virtues exist in this life. We know from our own experience that there are even some persons having no specific religious or supernatural belief who habitually practice one or several of the moral virtues. If we were to question such persons as to why they practice these virtues, we would discover that their motives are entirely natural. Reason tells them that this is the right way to act, that this is the decent thing to do. Such moral virtues as these are both natural and acquired. They are natural because they proceed from the powers of nature; they are acquired because they are obtained by a repetition of similar acts. We know that the moral virtues were practiced to a very high degree of perfection by some of the pagan philosophers purely from a standpoint of natural reason.¹⁰ This same thing is true of many persons of our

¹⁰Xenophon, for instance, draws the following picture of his master, Socrates, "No one ever heard or saw anything wrong in Socrates; so pious was he that he never did anything without consulting the gods; so just that he never injured anyone in the least; so master of himself that he never preferred pleasure to goodness; so sensible that he never erred in his choice

own time who lead good lives and practice moral virtue according to the natural light of reason. We say of such persons that they are "naturally virtuous." However, man is not left to natural aids alone in the matter of virtue. Through the goodness of God, supernatural and infused virtues have been granted to man which supplement and perfect the natural and acquired virtues.

ARTICLE III. THE CONTROVERSY REGARDING THE INFUSION OF
THE MORAL VIRTUES

We know by divine revelation that man is destined, not to a purely natural end, but to a supernatural end, namely, the beatific vision of God.¹¹ It is evident that man cannot attain his supernatural end by the use of natural means, for in this case, there would be no proportion of means to end. For this reason, God confers supernatural and infused virtues on man in order that he may attain his supernatural, ultimate end. The question arises, how many of the virtues are infused? All theologians agree that the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity must be infused, since they can in no way be attained by acts of man's natural powers. But what of the moral virtues? Are they also infused? Nothing is defined by the Church. Saint Thomas and his followers answer in the affirmative; Scotus and his adherents answer in the negative.¹² As to which of these opinions is more correct, we are inclined to believe that the better arguments, though not definitive, are on the side of the Thomists. Since this question of the infusion of the moral virtues has considerable bearing on our topic, we shall discuss the matter at some length. Later on, we intend to discuss the question of

between what was better and what was worse. In a word, he was of all men the best and the happiest." Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, I, 1. Cf. Turner, *History of Philosophy* (Ginn and Company: Boston, 1903), 78. This account while undoubtedly exaggerated, is an indication of the naturally virtuous life led by Socrates.

¹¹ *Cor.* 13:12. "Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte: tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum."

¹² The opinions of both the Thomists and the Scotists are discussed at some length in the following pages.

facility in the infused moral virtues. We must first establish the fact that such virtues are actually infused.

There are no texts in Sacred Scripture which prove conclusively that the moral virtues are infused.¹³ However, there are certain texts in both the Old and the New Testament where the infusion of the moral virtues seems to be indicated. Thus, in the following text from the Book of Wisdom, the infusion of the moral virtues is insinuated: "For she (Eternal Wisdom) teaches temperance and prudence and justice and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life."¹⁴ Again, the words of St. Peter are used: "For indeed His Divine power has granted us all things pertaining to life and piety."¹⁵ Theologians reason that the infusion of the moral virtues would be included among those things "pertaining to life and piety." Such arguments as these, however, are indirect and inconclusive. It is, therefore, to the teachings of tradition and reason that we must look for our proofs, and both of these sources seem to favor the Thomistic opinion. There are several quotations cited from the Fathers of the Church in proof of our doctrine. Perhaps the best of these is the testimony of Saint Augustine in his homily on the First Epistle of St. John, where he says the following :

He that praises God with his tongue cannot be doing this always; he that by his life and conduct praises God, can be doing it always. Works of mercy, affections of charity, sanctity of piety, incorruptness of chastity, modesty of sobriety, these things are to be kept in practice always: whether we are in public or at home,

¹³ Suarez censures, as frivolous, the opinion of Medina that the existence of the infused moral virtues is sufficiently proven from Sacred Scripture. "Quod autem Medina dicit, ex sola Scriptura sufficienter probari de fide dari aliquas virtutes morales infusas, valde frivolum est; nam testimonia quae adducit nullius sunt momenti, ut late ostendunt alii recentiores scriptores in illum locum." Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. IX, Bk. VI, Chap. 9, n. 14. (Apud Ludovicum Vives, Paris, 1858.)

¹⁴ *Wisdom*, 8:7. "Sobrietatem et prudentiam docet (Sapientia Aeterna) et justitiam et virtutem, quibus utilius nihil est in vita hominibus."

¹⁵ *I Peter* 1:3. "Quomodo omnia nobis divinae virtutis suae, quae ad vitam, et pietatem donata sunt"

whether before men or in private, whether speaking or keeping silent, whether occupied with something or free from occupation, these things are always to be kept, because all the virtues I have mentioned are within. But who is sufficient to name them all? There is as it were the Army of an Emperor seated within your mind. For as the Emperor does by his army what he will, so the Lord Jesus Christ, once beginning to dwell in our inner man, uses these virtues as His ministers.¹⁶

These expressive words of St. Augustine offer an argument of considerable weight for the doctrine of the infusion of the moral virtues.

Again, the infusion of the moral virtues is certainly indicated in the official teaching of the Church. Thus, Pope Innocent III seems to take it for granted that "Faith, charity, and other virtues" are infused with the baptism of adults. The only question that he raises is whether these same virtues are infused at the baptism of infants.¹⁷ Pope Clement *N* seemed to regard the Thomistic opinion as more probable in his day judging from his declaration at the Council of Vienne.¹⁸ Furthermore, the

¹⁶Augustine, *In Epist. Joan.*, Tract 8, 1. (*PL* 35:2035, 2036.) "Qui Deum laudat lingua non semper potest: qui moribus Deum laudat, semper potest. Opera misericordiae, affectus charitatis, sanctitas pietatis, incorruptio castitatis, modestia sobrietatis, semper haec tenenda sunt: sive cum in publico sumus, sive cum in domo, sive cum ante homines, sive cum in cubiculo, sive loquendo, sive tacentes, sive aliquid agentes, sive vacantes; semper haec tenenda sunt; quia intus sunt omnes istae virtutes quas nominavi. Quis sufficit omnes nominare? Quasi exercitus est imperatoris, qui sedet intus in mente tua. Quomodo enim imperator per exercitum suum agit quomodo placet; sic Dominus Jesus Christus incipiens habitare in interiore homine nostro, id est in menta per fidem, utitur istis virtutibus quasi ministris suis."

¹⁷Innocent III, *Majores Ecclesiae Causas* (*DBU*, 410). "Quod opposentes inducunt, fidem aut caritatem aliasque virtutes parvulis, utpote non consentientibus, non infundi, a plerisque non conceditur absolute . . . , aliis asserentibus, per virtutem baptismi parvulis quidem culpam remitti, sed gratiam non conferri; nonnullis vero dicentibus, et dimitti peccatum, et virtutes infundi, habentibus illas quoad habitum, non quoad usum, donec perveniant ad aetatem adultam."

¹⁸Clement V, Ex Const. *De Summa Trinitate et fide catholica* (*DBU*, 483). "Verum quia quantum ad effectum baptismi in parvulis reperiuntur

Catechism of the Council of Trent affirms that "a most notable company of all the virtues are poured into the soul along with the infusion of grace."¹⁸ Obviously the moral virtues were intended to be included in this group, for the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity taken by themselves hardly form "a most notable company of all the virtues." These statements, although not definitive, are certainly indicative of the mind of the Church in this matter.

The best proof for the Thomistic argument seems to be based on the appeal to reason. St. Thomas in his argument makes use of the philosophical axiom that the "order of means must correspond to the order of end," and he states the argument in these words:

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 pre-existing 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.²⁰

doctores quidam theologi opiniones contrarias habuisse, quibusdam ex ipsis dicentibus, per virtutem baptismi parvulis quidam culpam remitti, sed gratiam non conferri, aliis e contra asserentibus, quod et culpa iisdem in baptismo remittitur, et virtutes ac informans gratia infunduntur quoad habitum, etsi non pro illo tempore quoad usum: Nos autem attendentes generalem efficaciam mortis Christi, quae per baptismum applicatur pariter omnibus baptizatis, opinionem secundam, quae dicit, tam parvulis quam adultis conferri in baptismo informantem gratiam et virtutes, tamquam probabiliorem, et dictis Sanctorum et doctorum modernorum theologiae magis consonam et concordem, sacro approbante Concilio duximus eligendam."

¹⁸ *Catechismus Concilii Tridentini*, Pars 2, De Sac. Bap. C. 2., q. 50. "Hinc (gratiae sacntificanti) autem additur nobilissimus omnium virtutum comitatus, quae in animam cum gratia divinitus infunduntur."

²⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, q. 63, art. 3, c. "Oportet effectus suis causis et principiis proportionates: omnes autem virtutes tam intellectuales, quam morales, quae ex nostris actibus acquiruntur, procedunt ex quibusdam naturalibus principiis in nobis praexistentibus; loco autem quorum naturalium principiorum conferuntur nobis a Deo virtutes theo-

In other words, just as man in the natural order is habitually well-ordinated not only toward his ultimate end by natural principles, but also toward the means to that end by the acquired moral virtues ; so also in the supernatural order, man should not only be habitually well disposed toward his supernatural ultimate end by means of the theological virtues, but also well disposed habitually toward the means to this supernatural end by the infused moral virtues.

Another argument, closely allied to the one already given, is based on the Scholastic axiom that " God does not provide less in the supernatural order than He does in the natural order." 21 In the natural order, God has given us a principle of life, the soul, and has attached to this principle permanent faculties of intellect and will whereby we can habitually place acts toward a purely natural end. And so if God is no less generous in the supernatural order, we should have corresponding permanent quasi faculties of operation toward our supernatural 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 super-nature, namely, proximate and immediate principles of operation relative to the use of created things.

The whole difficulty between the Thomists and Scotists seems to center about the question of whether or not acts of the supernatural order require an immediate and proximate habitual supernatural principle of operation. The Thomists affirm that such a principle of operation is necessary, at least ordinarily, if the acts are to be considered as intrinsically and entirely supernatural. The Scotists, on the other hand, seem to be inclined to the opinion that a remote supernatural principle can sufficiently

logicae, quibus ordinamur ad finem supernaturalem ; unde oportet, quod his etiam virtutibus theologicis proportionaliter respondeant alii habitus divinitus causati in nobis, qui sic se habent ad virtutes theologicas, sicut se habent virtutes morales, et intellectuales ad principia naturalia virtutum."

21 St. Thomas notes that just as nature is not deficient in supplying necessary things, neither is grace deficient in providing those things which are necessary for our supernatural ultimate end. Cf. *Summa*, I-IIae, q. 62, art. 3, c., also q. 63, art. 3, c.

ordinate and determine our actions toward their supernatural end. Since we have already investigated some of the proofs for the Thomistic assertion, we shall now discuss the opinion of the Scotists.

It is unfortunate that there is no critical edition of the works of Scotus. We understand that such a work is in preparation at the present time. However, from the texts of the works of Scotus which are available, there seems to be no doubt concerning his denial of the infused moral virtues. We quote from the *Opus Oxoniense* of Scotus, one of his few works which appears to be of certain authenticity.²² Again, we use the Parisian Edition of this work, which is supposedly the best available text. In this work, treating the question of whether or not the moral virtues are infused, Scotus says the following:

Although many things have been said concerning the infusion of the moral virtues, namely, that they seem to be necessary on account of the mode, the means and the end, nevertheless, every end which they cannot have by reason of their own species, is sufficiently determined by the inclination of charity; the mode and the means are determined by infused faith; therefore there seems to be no necessity of positing infused moral virtues, but acquired virtues only suffice in those persons who have the acquired virtues or are able to have them, nor need they be posited in those persons who are unable to acquire them on account of a defect of free will, because there is no greater reason that these latter should have them than the former.²³

²² Cf. Balic, *Les Commentaries de Jean Duns Scot* (Louvain, 1927). Also, Simonis, "De Vita et Operibus Joanis Duns Scoti," *Antonianum*, 1928, III, 151.

²³ Scotus, Joannes Duns, *Opus Oxoniense* (Apud Ludovicum Vives; Paris, 1894), Lib. III, Dist 36, n. 28. "Licet de istis virtutibus moralibus multa dicantur, scilicet quod videntur necessariae propter modum, medium et finem, quia tamen omnis finis, quem non possunt habere ex specie sua, determinatur sufficienter ex inclinatione charitatis; modus autem et medium determinantur per fidem infusam; ideo non videtur necessitas ponendi virtutes morales infusas, sed acquisitas tantum in his, qui habent eas acquisitas, vel habere possunt; nec etiam in aliis, qui scilicet non possunt eas acquirere propter defectum usus liberi arbitrii, quia non est major ratio, quare isti debeant habere, et non illi."

In this passage, Scotus certainly seems to deny the infusion of the moral virtues. Furthermore, he states the reason for this denial, namely, that there is no need for such virtues since the performance of good acts centred about creatures and directed to supernatural ends is achieved by the acquired virtues informed by the infused virtues of faith and charity. In short, the assertion of infused moral virtues, according to Scotus, seems to be a multiplication of virtues without necessity.

The Franciscan commentators have supported Scotus in this assertion, notably De Montefortino and Frassen. In his scholarly commentary on the works of Scotus, De Montefortino²⁴ treats the topic of the moral virtues in a particular question where he denies that the moral virtues are infused. As his principal argument, he quotes the argument of Scotus which we have just cited.²⁵ Frassen, another Franciscan commentator, neither denies nor affirms that the moral virtues are infused. He grants that they can be infused by the liberality of God, but not in the same sense as the theological virtues, because the theological virtues are infused *per se* and necessarily while the moral virtues would be infused only *per accidens* inasmuch as they can be acquired by human labor and industry.²⁶ Frassen adds that the moral virtues would be infused not merely for the purpose of ordinating man's actions toward their supernatural end, but also toward their natural end, as for instance, when man elicits moral actions from a motive of public peace or human honesty.²⁷ In short,

²⁴ De Montefortino, H., *Ven. Joannis Duns Scoti Summa Theologica* (Ex Typographia Sallustiana, Rome, 1902).

²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, Quaest. 63, art. 3, c.

²⁶ Frassen, C., *Scotus Academicus* (Ex Typographia Sallustiana, Rome, 1901), Tom. VII, Sect 2, q. 2, n. 3. "Quod etsi morales virtutes humano studio comparentur, nihilominus etiam divinitus possunt infundi, quomodo et theologicae, cum hoc tamen discrimine, quod virtutes theologicae infundantur per se et necessario, quia nullius naturae viribus, nulloque hominum labore ac studio possunt obtineri: morales autem dicuntur infundi dumtaxat per accidens quia licet ex hominum industria, et exercitatione comparari queant, tamen citra omne hominis studium divinitus possunt ex summa Dei liberalitate in animam infundi."

²⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 3. "Non quidem ea solum ratione, qua ordinantur ad finem supematuralem, puta cum illae virtutes (infusae morales) hominem ordinant ad operandum ex motivo charitatis et propter gloriam Dei, sed etiam cum

although Frassen does admit the possibility of the infused moral virtues, he seems to minimize their importance, and he agrees substantially with Scotus in asserting that acts of the moral virtues are ordained to their supernatural end by infused faith and charity and not by infused moral principles.²⁸ It is to be noted that by infused moral virtues, Frassen means those which are called *infusae per accidens*, i.e., virtues which are intrinsically natural.

Minges, a more recent and perhaps a more authoritative commentator on Scotus, likewise affirms Scotus's denial of the infused moral virtues. In his commentary on the citation from Scotus already referred to, Minges has this to say :

It is far from the mind of Scotus to deny to the faithful, here on earth or in heaven, any grace and gifts which are necessary or useful. However, he thinks it is not necessary to place besides the theological virtues which are properly infused, and virtues which are acquired by the supernatural help of God, although not properly infused, other gifts and virtues formally infused which would be lost by mortal sin formally opposed to them, since Scripture does not seem to demand it, and plurality of objects should not be induced without some intrinsic or extrinsic need.²⁸

Minges, however, is not as direct as De Montefortino. Nowhere in his entire commentary does he ever openly assert that Scotus referuntur ad finem naturalem; puta cum eliciunt suos actus ex motivo pacis publicae, et propter honestatem humanam."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, "Enimvero, si virtutes morales quatenus infusae, per hoc distinguerentur a seipsis, quatenus acquisitae, sequeretur neminem per virtutem moralem acquisitam elicere posse actum studiosum in ordine supematuralem et ex motivo charitatis, quod est aperte falsum."

²⁹ Minges, P., *Joannis Duns Scoti Doctrina Philosophica et Theologica* (Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi, 1930), Vol. II, Chap. 8, ¶. 25. "Scotus ergo longe abest, fidelibus in via vel in patria ulla gratias vel dona necessaria vel utilia denegare; tantummodo putat non necesse esse, praeter virtutes theologicas proprie infusas et virtutes adjuvante auxilio Dei etiam supernaturali! acquisitas, etsi non proprie infusas, statuere alia dona et virtutes formaliter infusas et eo ipso per peccatum formaliter oppositum perendas, cum Scriptura id non postulat, et sine necessitate exteriori vel interiore non sit ponenda pluralitas."

denied the infusion of the moral virtues except insofar as this may be implied in the passage which we have just cited. However, he does seem to indicate this fact by his terminology, as for instance, when he defines the moral virtues as acquired and the theological virtues as infused.³⁰ However, it is interesting to note that in his own manual, *Compendium Theologiae Dogmaticae Generalis*, Mingès teaches that the moral virtues are infused. In the Second Volume of this work, speaking of the virtues and gifts which are infused into the soul along with sanctifying grace, Mingès lists the following :

The moral virtues, or those whose object is not God Himself immediately, but some created moral good desired from supernatural motives. All these virtues are comprehended in the four cardinal virtues, namely, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Theologians derive the infusion of these virtues from certain places in revelation . . . especially in Psalm 118.³¹

This could indicate either that Mingès himself does not follow the opinion of Scotus or that he changed his opinion and adopted it at some later date, since his manual of theology was an earlier publication than his commentary on the works of Scotus.³²

Be that as it may, let us examine the principal argument of the Scotists in support of their contention that the moral virtues are not infused, namely, that there is no need for them. In the words of Scotus,³³ these virtues are needed neither on the part of the end, nor on the part of the mode or means. They are not needed by reason of supernatural end, because this is suf-

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Sectio Tertia, η. 15.

³¹ Mingès, P., *Compendium Theologiae Dogmaticae Generalis* (Joseph Kostel and Frederick Pustet, Ratisbonae, 1903), Vol. II, Chap. 2, η. 15. "Virtutes morales seu illae, quarum objectum est non immediate Deus Ipse, sed aliquod bonum creatum morale ex motivis supematuralibus appetendum. Omnes hae virtutes comprehenduntur in quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus, scilicet, prudentia, justitia, temperantia fortitudine. Quarum infusionem derivant theologi ex locis revelationis praesertim in Ps. 118."

³² The Second Edition of Mingès's *Compendium of Dogmatic Theology* was published in 1903. His commentary on the works of Scotus was not published until 1930.

³³ Cf. *Opus Oxoniense*, Lib. III, Dist. 36, n. 28.

ficiently taken care of by the presence of infused charity in the soul, which is capable of ordinating the acquired virtues to their ultimate end. Neither are the infused moral virtues necessary by reason of mode or means, for the theological virtue of faith communicates to the inferior virtues the mode and means of operating in the supernatural order. We shall attempt to demonstrate this point by an example. Let us suppose that a pagan possesses the acquired virtue of temperance in an eminent degree, having practiced this virtue from purely natural motives over a long period of years. At length, moved by the grace of God, this man is converted and baptized thereby receiving sanctifying grace along with the virtues and gifts. What is to be said of his acquired virtue of temperance? According to the opinion of Scotus, this acquired virtue would be enlivened 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 ordained to a supernatural end by infused charity. In this way, all of the acquired virtues are supernaturalized by their conjunction with the infused theological virtues, so that there is no necessity for the infused moral virtues.

At first sight, this theory seems plausible enough; however, it presents several difficulties. We grant that the presence of the infused theological virtues in the soul can, as an extrinsic cause, ordinate certain of our intrinsically natural actions toward their supernatural, ultimate end. But this does not entirely solve the present problem. 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 that end. In other words, the theological virtues are conferred upon us to perfect our faculties for the performance of actions in direct reference to the *means* to this end. While we grant that the theological virtues, especially charity, can supernaturalize the appetites intrinsically regarding our supernatural *end*, we deny that they could also intrinsically supernaturalize these appetites regarding the *means* to end. This is the function of the infused moral virtues.

The argument of the Scotists seems to be based on the assumption that the will, by the mere fact that it tends toward the end, tends necessarily toward the means to the end.⁴ Hence, the infused theological virtues, by the fact that they tend toward our supernatural end, tend also toward the means to that end, and for this reason they are able to supply all the functions which are attributed to the infused moral virtues. But in trying to prove too much, this argument really proves nothing at all. In the first place, the assumption upon which their argument is based is not strictly true. It is very possible for a man to will an end and later by a subsequent act reject the means to that end on account of the difficulties and hardships involved in its prosecution. Arguments from theology, philosophy, and experience, all attest to the fact that there is a difference between the willing of an end and the choosing of the means to that end. Therefore, since the particular objects of end and means remain distinct, the Scotists do not seem to be justified in associating the objects of the theological and moral virtues. Both virtues have different functions in the soul, and they are infused by God for different reasons, the theological virtues to attain the supernatural end directly and immediately; the infused moral virtues to attain the same end indirectly and mediately.

In respect to the other assertion of the Scotists, that the infused virtue of faith communicates a mode of supernatural operation to the acquired virtues, once more we must make a distinction. We grant that faith might supply a remote mode of operation, but not a proximate and immediate mode of supernatural operation. In reference to this point, we quote the words of Cardinal Cajetan:

For just as in the acquired virtues, synderesis places a medium of acting by means of prudence, and the appetitive moral virtues execute that medium; so in the infused virtues, faith gives the ultimate end and places a medium for the infused moral virtues through infused prudence. Faith, therefore, does not give a medium unless re-

³⁴ This argument is not explicitly developed by the Scotists. However, it seems to be contained implicitly in the general argument of Scotus against the infusion of the moral virtues. Cf. *Opus Oxoniense*, Lib. III, Dist. 36, n. 28.

motely, while infused prudence gives the proximate medium. It is fitting, however, that the works of God should be perfect, and therefore that He give these principles as proximate and primary.⁸⁵

Again, if the Scotistic assertion that acts of the natural virtues are directed to God only by infused charity is true, it follows that such acts would be only extrinsically and *quoad modum* supernatural. This follows logically, for such acts would remain intrinsically natural and would have only an extrinsic ordination to their supernatural end by means of infused charity. Garrigou-Lagrange develops this point at length in his division of supernatural actions *quoad substantiam* and *quoad modum*.³⁶ According to Garrigou-Lagrange, an act of natural virtue ordained to the supernatural and by reason of charity is only extrinsically and *quoad modum* supernatural,³⁷ and this same opinion is taught by other theologians.³⁸ Thus, in the system of Scotists, acts of the moral virtues would receive only an extrinsic ordination to their supernatural end, whereas it is fitting that these acts should be intrinsically supernaturalized. This can be effected only by the infusion of the moral virtues, since these virtues supply immediate and proximate supernatural principles of operation.

* Cajetan, *Summa Sancti Thomae, cum commentariis Thomae De Vio Cajetani* (Lugduni, 1581), I-IIae, q. 63, art. 3. "Nam sicut in virtutibus acquisitis synderesis non ponit medium nisi mediante prudentia, et morales appetitivae medium illud exsequuntur: ita in infusis fides finem ultimum firmans et largiens, mediante prudentia infusa medium moralibus infusis imponit, et illas oportet medium illud habitare. Fides ergo medium non dat nisi remote, prudentia autem infusa proxime. Oportet autem Dei opera perfecta esse, et ut prima et proxima habeantur principia."

³⁶ Garrigou-Lagrange, R., *De Revelatione* (Ferrari: Rome, 1918), I, Cap. VI, Art. 2. Divisio Supernaturalitatis.

³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, Sect. B. "In secundo categoria scilicet, in *supernaturale quoad modum ex parte finis extrinseci*, est aliquid essentialiter naturale supernaturaliter ordinatum ad finem supernaturalem, ut e.g. actus virtutis naturalis ordinatus a charitate ad vitam aeternam."

³⁸ Cf. Sylvius, *Commentarium in I-IIae* (Ex typographia Balleoniana, Venetiis, 1726), Tom. II, q. 63, art. 3, ad 1. Also, John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, De Gratia, Disp. XX, art. 1, n. 4.

This seems to answer the main objection of the Scotists against the infusion of the moral virtues. However, there is another popular argument against the Thomistic opinion which is based upon the apparent absurdity which follows from its conclusions. This argument can be stated as follows. If the moral virtues are infused with sanctifying grace, contrary habits of virtue and vice would exist in the same subject simultaneously. For instance, a man having depraved habits of vice, including intemperance and injustice, now becomes justified and receives sanctifying grace and the infused moral virtues. Such an individual would have the habit of virtue and the habit of vice at the same time and in respect to the same object, which is not admissible according to the principle of contradiction. The best answer to this difficulty is to distinguish between the infused and the acquired virtues. The acquired virtues are habits in a strict, univocal and predicamental sense, whereas the infused virtues are not; they are habits only in an analogous sense. Mazzella³⁹ answers the objection in this way, saying that an acquired vice is directly contrary only to the corresponding acquired virtue, not to the corresponding infused virtue. For this reason, the infused virtue does not formally remove the acquired tendency to place acts of the opposite vice. Other Thomistic theologians maintain that in this case, the acquired vice ceases to be a habit and remains in the soul only as a disposition.⁴⁰ We shall treat this objection more thoroughly in a subsequent article. It is sufficient to say here that since the acquired and infused virtues are not habits in identically the same way, it is not admissible to institute a strict parity between them. If this could be done, the same difficulty would present itself in regard to the theological virtues in the case where an individual having an acquired habit

³⁹ Mazzella, C., *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Ex Typographia Polyglotta, Rome, 1884), Disp. I, Art. 3, n. 1. "Unde sicut Concilium Tridentinum dicit in justificatis relinqui fomitem ad agonem, ita nos dicere possumus, in justificatis relinqui habitus pravos, si eos antea acquisiverunt, vel saltem fomitem relinqui sine temperamento virtutis acquisitae, ut pugnando cum Dei gratia contra vitia mereantur, et ut iustitiae infusio sit ipsis occulta."

⁴⁰ Cf. Sylvius, F., *Commentarium in I-IIae*, Tom. II, q. 63, art. 3, n. 2.

of uncharitableness would become justified and receive the infused virtue of charity.

In summarizing the controversy regarding the infusion of the moral virtues, we can only conclude that authority, though not definitive, seems to be on the side of the Thomists; and their opinion is the common teaching of theologians. The arguments from Scripture, Tradition, and reason seem to substantiate the claim that there are infused moral virtues; and in deference to the Scotists, we cannot see how any one of these sources offers sufficient warrant for their conclusion. We have not attempted to give anything approaching an exhaustive treatment of this question. Our only purpose was to discuss the matter with sufficient thoroughness to arrive at a workable conclusion, namely, that there are infused moral virtues accompanying sanctifying grace. From this point on, therefore, we shall consider the moral virtues as certainly infused.

ARTICLE IV. Facility in the Acquired Moral Virtues

Since there are both acquired and infused moral virtues, it is evident that the moral virtues can exist in the soul under a two-fold aspect. The virtue of justice, for example, can exist in the soul as an acquired habit formed by the repetition of natural acts; it can also exist there as an infused habit directly implanted by the goodness of Almighty God. The same is true of all the other moral virtues. Quite logically, then, the next step is the differentiation of the infused and acquired moral virtues. Noldin states this distinction quite generically in the following words:

The acquired and infused virtues are similar in this respect that they are both habits by which we are disposed toward good acts; they differ, however, both by reason of origin and effect.⁴¹

The first part concerning their agreement is quite clear, namely, that they are both habits or qualities modifying the faculties of

⁴¹ Noldin, H.-Schmitt, A., *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (Fdiciani Rauch, Oeniponte-Lusiae, 1940), Vol. I, Lib. V, Q. 1, n. 258, c. "Virtutes acquisitae et infusae in eo conveniunt, quod sint habitus, quibus ad bene operandum disponimur; differunt tamen tum origine tum effectu."

the soul. The fact that they are both good operative habits ordinates them toward the placing of good acts. In regard to their differences, we know that they differ by reason of origin because according to their definition the acquired virtues are formed by the repetition of good acts, while the infused virtues come directly from God and are conferred with sanctifying grace. Just as they differ by reason of origin, so also do they differ also by reason of effect. The effects of an acquired virtue are intrinsically natural acts; the effects of an infused virtue are intrinsically supernatural acts. However, we are concerned with another distinction in regard to the effects of these virtues, the question of facility. Can the acquired and infused moral virtues be differentiated by reason of the amount of facility which they confer, or is exactly the same degree of facility conferred by both virtues? This topic is not treated very thoroughly in most manuals of moral theology, despite the fact that it does have certain practical and important consequences.

Perhaps it would be well to explain what is meant by facility. This term has various significations as shall be seen presently. However, for the present, let us consider facility according to its most common usage. In this sense, facility means nothing more than 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. Thus the trained athlete, the skilled musician, the expert linguist, all of these professionals exercise difficult tasks with an ease and smoothness that makes one remark that "*they* make these things seem easy." Whence does this ease and facility arise? Is it from nature or from the constant repetition of similar acts?

Sometimes we hear it said that a man is a "born actor" or a "born orator" implying that this facility is entirely from nature. Such statements are not strictly true. The habits adapted to these activities are rooted in nature, but they are not perfected there, they are perfected by the repetition of similar acts.⁴² Facility,

⁴² St Thomas affirms this same thing to be true of the acquired virtues, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, q. 63, art 1, c. "Virtutes in nobis sunt a natura

then, comes primarily from practice and not from nature, although nature in itself might confer more aptitude toward one habit than toward another. Even in those cases where nature has not bestowed any special inclination toward a particular habit, we know that facility can still be acquired by oft repeated acts. This certainly seems to prove that facility is more from the exercise of certain similar acts than from nature. If we consider the beginnings of a habit, especially one that is opposed to our natural inclination, we know that it is accompanied by many difficulties. The initial acts performed are hesitant and awkward. But by the constant repetition of acts, these motions become more coordinated and perfect, until finally after a long period of time the action is performed freely and easily. This is true of most natural habits such as learning to play golf, driving a car, learning to study. In some cases facility will come more readily depending on natural aptitude and the frequency with which the acts are repeated. However, as a general rule, facility is achieved only after long and constant practice of the habit. The notion of facility is well stated in the following words :

The best way then to conceive a habit is to suppose that a track has been formed by frequent acts. A pathway has been beaten through a hitherto trackless region. A furrow has been formed along which the movement will almost invariably tend to flow in the future ; it is the line of least resistance ; for impediments have been removed.⁴³

The first question is whether or not the acquired moral virtues confer the same facility, the same ease and readiness of action, which is afforded by natural physical habits. The answer is in the affirmative. As has been seen, the acquired virtues are habits in the strict sense, and as such they are governed by the psychological rules of habit. Thus, the practice of the acquired virtues will follow the principles of natural habits, and the more frequently and the more perfectly their acts are exercised, the easier they become, until finally, the subject is disposed toward a constant

secundum aptitudinem, et inchoationem ; non autem secundum perfectionem ; praeter virtutes theologicas, quae sunt totaliter ab extrinseco."

⁴³ Pierson, G., *op. cit.*, 27.

manner of action and exercises acts of the acquired virtues easily and readily. St. Thomas gives testimony to this fact, for in speaking of the acquired virtues, he says the following: "Operations proceeding from habit are pleasurable, and they are used promptly and exercised easily."⁴⁴ However, there is one difference between the acquired moral virtues and natural physical habits. Because of the ever-present opposition that is encountered from concupiscence, the acquisition of the moral virtues is more difficult than the attainment of certain other natural habits which will encounter less resistance from the forces of nature. Yet despite this fact, we know that the moral virtues can be and actually are acquired to an eminent degree, and that in many cases they are practiced with readiness and ease. From all this, it is evident that the acquired moral virtues confer a facility of action, a fact which is admitted by all psychologists, theologians, and by anyone who has even slightly observed human nature.

The most striking examples of facility in these virtues are to be found in the lives of the saints. By repeated acts, concentrated effort, and the assistance of actual graces, they so conformed their lives to goodness that they actually make the practice of virtue seem easy and effortless. In this way, we can easily see the great bearing that habits have on our moral lives. Man is said to be a "bundle of habits," to be "what his habits are," and these truths are certainly verified in experience. If habits are so important in educational and cultural training for the acquisition of facility along professional lines, certainly they are no less important in religious training for the acquisition of facility in the practice of virtue. The importance of the acquired virtues, therefore, should be stressed in our Catholic training. If it is not, we are neglecting a strong psychological factor in the development of virtue. In regard to this point, one modern theologian says :

It is indeed most incongruous when one who has had the advantages of a Catholic training show's himself to

«Aquinas, *De Veritate* (cura Frette-Mare, Paris, 1895), Dist XX, 2 c., T. 1, n. 493. "Operationes ex habitu procedentes delectabiles sunt, et in promptu habentur, et faciliter exercentur."

be inferior in the practice of some natural virtue, such as courtesy, truthfulness, or temperances, to one who has little or no religious belief.⁴⁵

This incongruity can result from insufficient emphasis on the necessity of the acquired moral virtues. For since they confer a facility of action, these virtues contribute much to the practice and perfection of virtue.

ARTICLE V. FACILITY IN THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES

Having established the fact that the acquired moral virtues confer a facility and promptitude of action, the next question to be determined is whether or not this same truth can be affirmed of the infused moral virtues. All theologians who admit the infusion of the moral virtues affirm that these virtues ordinate the natural faculty to a new and supernatural mode of operation. This is what the theologians mean by saying that the infused virtues confer the "*posse*" of supernatural action. The question that concerns us here is this: Besides the "*posse*" of supernatural action, do the infused moral virtues confer a facility of action as well, a "*posse facilius*."

We have already defined facility according to our present use as a certain readiness or promptitude of action whereby acts are placed constantly and easily. Applied to the infused moral virtues, this would mean that once these virtues were infused, their acts would flow readily and easily. This does not seem to be confirmed by experience, and for this reason the theologians commonly assert that the infused moral virtues *per se* confer no facility of action in the sense defined. Their case is well drawn up by Mazzella⁴⁶ in his treatment of infused moral virtues. If the infused moral virtues, he asserts, confer a facility of action, there should be a greater facility in those persons who have these virtues in a more intense degree, than in those who either do

⁴⁵ Connell, F., "The Natural Virtues," *Journal of Religious Instruction*, II (October, 1940), 120.

⁴⁶ Cf. Mazzella, *op. cit.*, Disp. I, art 4, n. 61. In this passage, Mazzella refutes the opinion of Gregory Valentia, who affirms that the infused moral virtues do confer a facility of action.

not have them or who possess them in a less intense degree. But this does not seem to be confirmed by experience. The author then goes on to illustrate the truth of his assertion by three concrete cases. The first case concerns a person who lives in the state of sanctifying grace but is tepid and careless in the practice of virtue. He receives the sacraments frequently and places acts of virtue occasionally, even though remissly. In such an individual, all of the infused virtues are increased both *ex opere operato* by the reception of the sacraments, and *ex opere operantis* by his own acts of virtue. Nevertheless, he experiences no greater facility in the practice of virtue after a time than he did in the beginning.

Mazzella's second illustration also deals with a man in the state of sanctifying grace who performs heroic acts of virtue, gains supernatural merit for himself, and intensifies the infused virtues within his soul. Suddenly he lapses into mortal sin and remains in this state for a long time, neglecting all exercise of virtue and practicing all kinds of vice, until at last he has entirely lost his acquired virtues. Then moved by the grace of God, he goes to confession and (according to the doctrine of the revival of merit), recovers the same degree of grace and the infused virtues that he had accumulated before his fall. Nevertheless, as experience testifies, he feels the same difficulty in practicing virtue after justification as he did before its acquisition. The third and final case concerns the increase of the infused virtues in the soul. It is true that by an act of one infused virtue, sanctifying grace and all of the infused virtues are increased. Therefore, a man who practices acts of justice should experience a greater facility not only in the virtue of justice, but also in the virtue of temperance and all the other infused virtues. This is not true, as is proven by experience. Thus, Mazzella concludes that the infused moral virtues do not confer a facility of action.⁴⁷ His arguments are substantial and their probative force cannot be disputed since they are so well grounded in experience. Besides, a confirmation of these arguments seems to be found in the case of the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 66. "Utriusque sententiae momenta exhibuimus (utrum virtutes infusae conferant facilitatem) ; nobis tamen verior apparet sententia negans."

recidivist in venial sin. If the infused moral virtues confer a facility of action, why is it that there are so many persons who confess the same venial sins week after week, month after month, without making any apparent progress in the practice of virtue? Certainly such persons cannot be said to receive a facility of action through the increase of the infused moral virtues.

Sacred Scripture does not throw any light upon this question, though there are certain passages in Scripture which seem to indicate proof of the assertion that the infused moral virtues do not confer a facility of action. St. Paul, for instance, in the *Epistle to the Romans*, describes the difficulty of practicing virtue in these words:

For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwells, because to wish is within my powers, but I do not find the strength to do what is good. For I do not the good that I wish, but the evil that I do not wish, that I perform.⁴⁸

Such texts from Sacred Scripture, however, are of a general nature, and offer no substantial evidence for our point. The same thing is true of Tradition. We might mention, however, that St. Augustine seems to attest the fact that the infused moral virtues do not remove the obstacles remaining from former vicious habits. In his *Confessions*, even after his conversion, he describes in some detail the struggle that took place within his soul as a result of the remembrances and inclinations of his former habits.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ St Paul, *Romans* 8:18, 19. "Scio enim quia non habitat in me, hoc est in carne mea, bonum. Nam velle adjacet mihi: perficere autem bonum, non invenio. Non enim quod volo bonum, hoc facio; sed quod nolo malum, hoc ago." This text cannot be urged too strongly as a proof for our assertion since there is a controversy among Scripture Scholars as to whether St. Paul refers to regenerate or unregenerate man in this passage. Cf. Prat, F., *Theology of St. Paul* (Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, London, 1938), I, 228-229.

⁴⁹ Augustine, *Confessiones*, Lie X, Cap. XXX (PA 32:796) (*CSEL* 33:257). "Sed adhuc vivunt in memoria mea, de qua multa locutus sum, talium rerum imagines, quas ibi consuetudo mea fixit, et occurrantur mihi vigilantique carentes viribus, in somnis autem non solum usque ad delectationem sed etiam usque ad consensionem factumque simillimum. Et tantum valet imaginis illius illusio in anima mea et in carne mea, ut dormienti

But the best proof for our thesis is to be found in the arguments from experience such as were given above. All we need do is compare the effects of the infused and acquired moral virtues, and it is obvious that the acquired virtues confer a tendency to repeat their acts easily and readily, something which cannot be affirmed of the infused moral virtues.

Among the theologians, only one, Gregory De Valentia, dissents from this opinion. In his *Commentariorum Theologiarum*, Gregory states his views as follows :

It is absolutely false that all things being equal, a justified man is not more prompt to the practice of virtue than anyone else. However it must be admitted that the promptitude which the acquired virtues bestow is perceived more clearly in a certain sense on account of the past exercise of good acts by which the contrary passions are subdued and, as it were, crushed. Nevertheless, the infused virtues too so perfect the appetite that they bestow upon it a certain new and special faculty for resisting the passions and for eliciting proper actions toward our ultimate end, according to that of Malachy, 3: 18, "Be converted, and you shall see the difference between the just and the wicked."⁶⁰

As far as can be determined, Gregory is the only theologian who ever attributed a strict facility of action to the infused virtues, and as we can see from his statement, he makes a distinction between the kind of facility conferred by the acquired and infused virtues.⁵⁰

falsa visa persuadeant quod vigilantibus vera non possunt. Ubi est tunc ratio, quae talibus suggestionibus resistit vigilans et, si res ipsae ingerantur, incensus manet?"

⁵⁰ De Valentia, G., *Commentariorum Theologiarum* (Typographia Adami, Ingolstadii, 1603), Tom. II, Disp. V, q. 6, resp. ad 4 um. "Falsum est absolute, quod justificatus aliquis, non sit promptior ad virtutum studium, quam alius, ceteris paribus. Quamquam fatendum est, promptitudinem, quam praestant virtutes acquisitae, magis quodammodo sentiri, propter praeteritum exercitium bonorum actuum, quibus contrariae passionibus edomantur, et quasi comprimuntur. Caeterum infusae quoque virtutes ita appetitum perficiunt, ut praesent illi peculiarem quandam et novam facultatem ad resistendum passionibus, et eliciendos actiones rectas propter ultimum finem, juxta illud (*Malae. III: 18*) 'Convertimini, et videbitis, quid sit inter justum et impium.' "

Gregory's opinion is at variance with the common teaching of theologians, and in criticism of his views we can say that he exaggerates the effects of the infused virtues. All theologians who admit the infusion of the moral virtues, as previously stated, likewise admit that they confer a new faculty or "posse" toward placing acts in the supernatural order. If this is what Valentia refers to as the "new and special faculty," then he is in agreement with the common teaching of theologians. But obviously he means more than this, since he goes on to say that this new faculty is for "resisting the passions."

If the infused virtues did bring with them such a faculty, then they would confer a facility of action because they would remove impediments which is one of the principal functions of facility. However, this opinion does not seem to have a solid basis in fact. For if the infused virtues do confer a faculty for "resisting the passions," this is not apparent in the soul, otherwise how could the case of the recidivist in venial sin be sufficiently explained, to say nothing of the hardship and difficulty of practicing virtue even after conversion? In brief, Gregory's statement seems to be entirely gratuitous, and the arguments already cited in proof of the fact that the infused virtues do not confer a facility of action are sufficient refutation to his assertion.

So far, we have seen that the theologians do not admit a strict facility of action in the infused moral virtues. The next question is whether or not the infused moral virtues can be said to confer any facility at all. Some theologians answer this question by establishing a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility. They assert that the infused moral virtues do confer intrinsic facility, which consists in the intrinsic strengthening of the faculties and the intrinsic inclination to acts of virtue. But they deny that the infused moral virtues confer extrinsic facility, which consists in the actual ease and readiness of extrinsic acts of virtue. Since extrinsic facility is effected only by the removal of extrinsic impediments and the discipline of the faculties through repeated acts of virtue, they maintain that this facility is conferred only by the acquired and not the infused moral virtues.

Suarez is the first theologian to make use of this distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility with regard to the virtues, and

he, in turn, seems to have borrowed the general notion from the teaching of St. Thomas. This same idea is expressed by St. Thomas in his treatise *De Veritate*, and we quote as follows :

Something is said to be easy (*facile*) in a two-fold manner; in one way by the removal of impediments, in another way by the placing of assistance, for a habit inclines a potency to act.⁵¹

From these words of St. Thomas, Suarez formulated his own distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility as applied to the infused virtues. In his explanation of this distinction, Suarez says the following:

Facility . . . can be distinguished into two kinds ; one is intrinsic which is *per se* in each faculty in respect to the act to which it is inclined. The other is by the removal of impediments which occur *per accidens*. These virtues (infused moral) confer the first kind of facility, inasmuch as they give an intrinsic facility of operating to the act, to which they are connaturally inclined as to their end, and their ultimate end. Hence since these (virtues) are intrinsically in their faculties, they are as certain weights inclining the 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 of the corruptibility of the body; these impediments are not removed by the infused virtues.⁵²

⁵¹ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, Quaest. XXIV, art. 4, ad 1. "Aliquid dicitur esse facile dupliciter: uno modo propter remotionem impedimenti; alio modo propter appositionem adiutorii. Facilitas igitur pertinens ad habitum est per adiutorii appositionem : nam habitus inclinat potentiam ad actum."

⁵² Suarez, F., *Opera Omnia* (Apud Ludovicum Vives, Paris, 1858), Torn. IX, Bk. VI, Cap. 9, n. 9. "Duplex enim facilitas vel difficultas (ut supra tetigi) distingui potest: una est intrinseca, quae per se inest cuicumque facultati respectu actus ad quem inclinatur; alia est per ablationem impedimentorum quae per accidens occurrunt. Hae igitur virtutes priorem dant facilitatem, eo ipso quod intrinsecam conferunt operandi facultatem ad actus ad quos connaturaliter inclinantur tanquam ad finem suum, et ultimum actum. Unde cum hae virtutes intrinsece insint suis potentiis, sunt veluti

This same distinction is made by the Salmanticenses, and their idea agrees substantially with that of Suarez. They define intrinsic and extrinsic facility as follows :

Intrinsic, which consists in this that the elicitive principle of the act be sufficiently proportioned and complete in respect to its act ; extrinsic facility which comes from the removal of impediments or indispositions Which impede or render difficult the exercise of operation even when the aforesaid principle exists, perfect and complete.⁵³

Gonet⁵⁴ quotes verbatim the opinion of the Salmanticenses in regard to intrinsic and extrinsic facility. We shall examine these opinions briefly to see if there is any basis for such a distinction. Since they all teach substantially the same opinion, we can bracket together the teaching of Suarez, the Salmanticenses, and Gonet, and give a critical estimate of their doctrine.

Mazzella ⁵⁵ seems to think that the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility is useless because, in his opinion, it identifies intrinsic facility with the supernatural " posse " which the infused virtues confer to the faculties for placing acts of the supernatural order. Understood in this sense, all theologians, who admit that the infused moral virtues confer a " posse " of supernatural action, would also admit with Suarez and the Salmanticenses that

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."

⁵³ Salmanticenses, *Cursus Theologicus* (Apud Victorem Palme, Paris, 1878), Tom. VI, Tr. 12, q. 63, Disp. 3, n. 5, ad 3. "Aliam per se et intrinsecam, quae consistit in eo quod principium elicitivum talis actus sit sufficienter proportionatum ac completum respectu illius: aliam extrinsecam, quae provenit ex remotione impedimentorum, aut indispositionum, quae, etiam existente perfecto et completo praedicto principio, impediunt vel reddunt difficile exercitium operationis."

³⁴ Gonet, J. B., *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae* (Ludovicum Vives, Paris, 1876), Vol. IV, Disp. 1, q. 4, ad 3um.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, Disp. I, art 4, η. 65.

they confer an intrinsic facility. Therefore, according to Mazzella, this distinction is useless, and in reality solves nothing. It simply gives a new name to an old idea.

However, we are inclined to disagree with Mazzella's understanding of intrinsic facility. We believe that Suarez, and the Salmanticenses intended to include not only the "posse" of supernatural action, but also some general notion of facility, in their idea of intrinsic facility. Contrary to Mazzella's opinion, we are inclined to believe that there is a basis for the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility. Inasmuch as the infused moral virtues strengthen the potency and incline the will to good, they intrinsically dispose the subject toward acts of virtue. Intrinsically and *in se*, the individual who possesses the infused moral virtues can be said to possess a facility for virtuous acts despite the fact that due to the opposition of nature and the presence of impediments, this facility cannot be exercised extrinsically. Perhaps we can best illustrate our meaning by an example. Let us suppose that a certain man is blessed with a fine voice and has an excellent talent for singing, but never uses this ability because he is of a very shy and bashful nature. It cannot be denied that he possesses a certain intrinsic ability and facility for singing, despite the fact that he never uses his talent extrinsically due to his impediment of shyness and self-consciousness. The same thing seems to be true of the man who possesses the infused moral virtues. It cannot be denied that he has a certain intrinsic ability and facility for virtuous acts, although in the exercise of virtue he may not be conscious of this facility due to extrinsic impediments. Such intrinsic facility is more than a simple potency, since it is a positive inclination and ability. This idea seems to be expressed by Suarez, in his words that the "infused virtues are as weights inclining the potencies to their acts."⁵⁶ The Salmanticenses express this same idea by saying that the infused moral virtues give not only the "posse" of supernatural action, but also communicate a certain facility to acts of virtue as well.⁵⁷ This is the interpretation that is applied

⁵⁶ *Loc. cit.*, n. 9. "Unde hae virtutes . . . sunt veluti pondera quaedam ad suos actus inclinantia potentias."

⁵⁷ *Loc. cit.*, n. 24. "Si vero inquiras, an virtus infusa non solum det

to the teaching of Suarez and the Salmanticenses by certain other theologians,⁵⁸ and we shall see this idea more fully developed in the teaching of Cardinal Billot.

The infused moral virtues, therefore, can be said to confer intrinsic facility. But this facility can become extrinsically operative only in conjunction with the work of the acquired moral virtues, for it is the task of the latter virtues to remove impediments and to overcome the resistance of the passions and the lower nature. By this fact, there is illustrated the importance of exercising both the acquired and infused moral virtues. Without the practice of the acquired moral virtues, the intrinsic facility afforded by the infused virtues must remain intrinsic and imperceptible as far as practice is concerned. But with the practice of the acquired moral virtues, the infused virtues become more operative, so that both intrinsic and extrinsic facility assist in the practice of virtue. This seems to be the teaching of Garrigou la Grange, for in speaking of acquired and infused prudence, he says the following :

Of itself (infused prudence) confers an intrinsic facility to judge well practically concerning the affairs of the Christian life, and its exercise is extrinsically facilitated by acquired prudence which is exercised at the same time.⁶⁰

potentiae praedictam facilitatem complendo ipsam, quod praestat in genere causae formalis, sed etiam efficienter eam communicet actibus? Respondendum est affirmative juxta dicta de virtutibus acquisitis disp. 1, n. 81."

⁵⁸ Cf. Aertnys, J.-Damen, C., *Theologia Moralis* (Typis M. Alberts. Galopiae, 1918), Vol. I, Tract V, Cap. 1, n. 279, 3. "Judicium de alicujus virtute non est sumendum ex externa facilitate opera virtutum elicendi. Potest enim aliquis vel ex vehementia passionum naturali, vel ex habitus vitiosis antea acquisitis, magnam experiri difficultatem in operibus virtutis et nihilominus eminentem gradum virtutis habere, uti in pluribus sanctis videre est. Imo, difficultas vincenda intensitatem virtutis arguit." Cf. Van Noort, *De Gratia Christi* (Pauli Brand, Hilversum in Hollandia, 1934), Cap. II, art. 3, n. 165-167. Also Schiffrini, *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Herder, Friburg, 1904), Disp. I, Sect. 1, n. 6.

⁶⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, R., *Les Trois Ages de la Vie Intérieure* (Les Editions Du Cerf, Paris, 1938), Vol. II, Chap. VIII, p. 109. "Elle nous donne par elle-même une facilité intrinsèque pour bien juger pratiquement

There is another theory in regard to the question of facility in the infused moral virtues which cannot be overlooked, namely, the opinion of Cardinal Billot.⁶⁰ Billot agrees substantially with the opinion of Suarez and the Salnanticenses, but his treatment of the subject is more clear and more complete. The infused virtues, according to Billot, are habits not in an univocal but in an analogous sense. Furthermore, these virtues participate both of the nature of potency and habit. They partake of the nature of potency because they enable man to act according to that superior nature of which he is made a partaker by 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 theologians say that the infused virtues confer a "posse" of supernatural action. The infused virtues also participate of the nature of habits, for they are qualities which modify already existing potencies. Thus, the proximate principle of a supernatural act is not the infused virtue, but the natural faculty as informed by the infused virtue.⁶¹ These notions having been clarified, Billot goes on to discuss the topic of facility.

If by facility is understood the "posse" which the infused virtues confer, then it must be said that the infused virtues confer facility. However, facility means more than simply a "posse"; it is a positive inclination of the faculty to those things which are of virtue. He continues in these words:

But this inclination (facility) is of two kinds. One which we can call the inhesion to the good which is the object of virtue. The other which we can call an inclination to the acts of virtue. These two inclinations are distinct not only by formality and concept, but they are so diverse that the first can be had without the sec-60

des choses de la vie chrétienne, et son exercice est extrinsequement facilité par la prudence acquise qui s'exerce en meme temps."

⁶⁰ Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis* (In Universitate Gregoriana, Rome, 1921), Prolegomenon (I-IIae, QQ. 49-61), pars 2, n. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, n. 2. "Quare proximum supematuralis actus principium non tam virtus infusa est, quam potentia naturalis prout infusa virtute informata."

ond, and the second is not always in proportion to the first.⁶²

In other words, facility can be directed toward the object itself, virtue, or toward the acts to that object. Billot goes on to illustrate his meaning by an example. He considers the case of two men in poor health. One man has a very strong desire to be healthy, but he has no inclination to take medicine because of an aversion and dislike that he has for it. The second man, on the contrary, has no special desire for health, but he experiences no difficulty in taking medicines because of an acquired and ready disposition toward their use. In one respect, the first individual is better disposed than the second, because his intense desire for health will prompt him to take medicine despite the repugnance that he feels toward it; in another respect, the condition of the second man is better, because of his promptitude toward using the means of acquiring health.⁶³

If we apply this analogy to the matter of the infused and acquired virtues, we arrive at Billot's notions of facility. According to him, the infused moral virtues do confer the first kind of facility which is nothing more than a strong inclination and tendency toward virtue and goodness. However, they do not confer the second kind of facility, for they do not destroy evil inclinations, restrain the passions, or incline to the prompt and ready practice of virtue. All of these functions are achieved only by the practice of the acquired moral virtues. However, since it cannot be denied that the infused moral virtues confer a special inclination to good which is their object, they do confer a facility in the broad sense. This facility might not be apparent, it might not be manifest enough to come under the observation of experience, yet it can be called facility in a broad sense of the term. This opinion of Billot's seems to be a development of the in-

⁶² *Ibid.*, Sed sciendum est inclinationem (facilitatem) 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.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, n. 2.

trinsic and extrinsic facility expressed by Suarez and the Salmanticenses, for the conclusions of both teachings are practically identical. However, Billot does not refer to their teachings, neither does he use the terms intrinsic and extrinsic facility.

In concluding this chapter, we shall attempt to summarize the teachings of the theologians in regard to the question of facility. The one conclusion regarding which practically all theologians seem to agree is that *ger sc* the infused moral virtues do not confer facility in the ordinary sense, namely, a promptness and readiness to acts of virtue. The proof of this fact is to be found in experience. Gregory of Valentia⁶⁴ is the only dissenter from this opinion, and even he is not too positive in his assertion of the contrary doctrine. Can the infused moral virtues be said to confer any facility at all? Understood in the sense of intrinsic facility, an intrinsic inclination and inherence to good, the infused moral virtues can be said to confer facility. For if this notion of facility is not admitted, then one would be forced to the conclusion that a person having the infused virtues would fall a victim of sin just as readily as the unregenerate man, supposing both to have the same degree of acquired virtue and to be subject to the same temptation. We are inclined to believe that the infused moral virtues would produce some inclination to good, some manner of facility for the regenerate man which the unregenerate man would not possess. We cannot appeal to authority other than the opinions which we have cited in this work. Besides the authors already quoted, this also seems to be the opinion of the theologian, Marc, who expresses his opinion in the following words:

Therefore the infused virtues give the faculty of exercising supernatural acts, along with a certain intrinsic facility which is scarcely perceptible.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ De Valentia, G., *Op. cit.*, ut supra. This opinion has already been quoted and discussed on p. 25 of this chapter.

⁶⁵ Marc, C., *Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae* (Ex Typographia Della Pace, Philippi Cuggiani, Rome, 1902), Vol. I, Tract V, art. 2. n. 412 in finem. "Ergo, virtus infusa tribuit ipsam facultatem efficiendi actus supernaturales, cum quadam facilitate intrinseca vix perceptibili."

This also seems to be the opinion of Doctor Parente, for in his recent work, *The Ascetical Life*, he says:

By means of such infused principles (infused virtues), supernatural acts are made possible, but it does not always follow that they are made easy, although the inclination to the good that they involve removes some of the difficulty.^{ee}

In conclusion, one fact is obvious, the infused moral virtues do not confer the same ease and promptitude toward acts of virtue as do the acquired virtues. They do not make acts of virtue easy, in the commonly accepted sense of the term. God could and perhaps sometimes does attach facility of action to the infused moral virtues, but according to his ordinary Providence, He does not give by infusion what man can acquire by his own natural activity. Human industry, therefore, plays an important part in the development of virtue, and facility in the practice of virtue will come only in direct proportion to our own efforts. This is the practical conclusion to be drawn from this chapter.

^{ee} Parente, P., *The Ascetical Life* (B. Herder: St. Louis, 1944), 125.

CHAPTER II

FACILITY IN THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES

Article I. Facility in the Infused Moral Virtues by the Repetition of Natural Acts of the Acquired Virtues

In the preceding chapter, we stated that the infused moral virtues conferred a "posse" of supernatural action and, most probably, some general motion of facility. However, we also asserted that these virtues, unlike the acquired moral virtues, confer no facility of action immediately and *per se*. The next question to be determined is whether or not there can be any facility of action accidentally attached to the infused virtues. This question is raised by theologians, because from observation and experience it seems that there is a certain facility developed by the practice of the infused virtues. Molina implies this in reference to the virtue of faith, remarking that a heretic, who loses supernatural faith by denying one revealed truth, still retains natural faith in regard to the remaining articles of faith.¹ Such natural faith could not be the infused habit because it is now lost. Therefore it must be an acquired habit developed by previous acts of the infused virtue. This same argument can also be applied to the other infused virtues both theological and moral, because after these virtues are lost, there still remain in many cases distinct tendencies toward their objects as a result of acts performed when the infused virtues were present in the soul.

¹ Molina, L., *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii* (P. Lethielleux, Paris, 1876), Question XIV, Disputation VII, Tertio. "Qui cum pertinacia errat circa unum articulum fidei, amittit fidem supernaturalem, qua reliquos omnes credebat, neque deinceps elicit actum supernaturalem fidei, sed naturalem circa reliquos articulos, in quibus non errat: cum ergo experientia constet haereticos, amissa fide, assentiri reliquis rebus quae sunt de fide, tamquam Dei revelationibus."

From all this, it is obvious that there can be a certain facility developed by the practice of virtuous acts in one possessing the infused virtues. The problem presents itself in explaining the source of this facility. How do we account for it? Whence does it arise? In our response to these questions, we shall center our attention as much as possible on the point of facility in the infused moral virtues, but of necessity, much of what we say will be applicable to the theological virtues as well.

In seeking the cause of facility in the infused virtues, Suarez, the first of the great theologians to treat this question thoroughly, mentions the possibility that it might come from either or both of the following sources, (1) that by repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues, other habits are acquired, (2) that by the repetition of natural acts of virtue, which are elicited in regard to the same matter as infused habits, natural habits result.² Between these two kinds of acquired habits, there is a clear distinction. The first type of acquired habit proceeds directly from repeated acts of the infused virtues, while the second type proceeds from repeated acts of natural virtue, connected with the infused virtues only in as much as they both have the same object. Thus, in the first theory, an acquired habit of prudence would result directly from repeated acts of the infused virtue of prudence; in the second theory, an acquired habit of prudence would result from repeated acts of natural prudence, and this acquired habit would be connected with the infused virtue only in so far as it has the same object. Suarez mentions these two modes of acquiring facility as possible solutions to explain the ease found in the practice of virtue by those possessing the infused virtues. We shall discuss both these possibilities, as well as the opinions of other theologians, in an attempt to arrive at the source of facility in the infused virtues.

First, we shall consider acquired habits resulting from natural acts and attempt to determine whether or not they contribute to

² Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. IX, Liber VI, Chap. XIV, 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 actibus proportionati.

the facility of the infused moral virtues. We can phrase our question as follows: Can the repetition of purely natural acts, elicited in regard to the same manner as that of the infused virtues, effect a natural habit which will in some measure facilitate the practice of the infused virtues? To take a concrete illustration, let us consider the case of a pagan who has acquired a habit of temperance from purely natural motives. At length, he is converted, baptized, and receives the infused moral virtues. The question is, will his natural habit of temperance bring any measure of facility to the practice of his newly acquired supernatural habit of temperance? Again, let us consider the case of a man in the state of sanctifying grace who places at one time purely natural acts of temperance, and at another time, supernatural acts of temperance. There is no doubt that his natural acts of temperance can be extrinsically supernaturalized by the virtue of charity, and thus his supernatural merit is increased. However, the question is, will the repetition of such natural acts lend any facility to the placing of supernatural acts of temperance? Some theologians who have written on this point concede that there is a connection between the supernatural infused and the natural or acquired virtues whereby a certain facility is communicated from the latter to the former. Suarez, commenting on this point, says that although such acquired habits do not aid *per se* in the placing of infused acts, nevertheless they can be of assistance by inclining the faculty to similar acts of the same generic substance. Moreover, as Suarez goes on to say, acquired habits aid to the placing of infused acts negatively, by removing impediments, by moderating the affections, and by excluding habits which are repugnant to virtue.³

Ripalda agrees with Suarez in affirming that acquired habits can be of assistance to the faculty in performing supernatural

³ *Ibid.*, n. 24. "Quod vero juvent, postquam sunt acquisiti, facile potest ostendi, quia licet non juvent per se influendo in actus infusos, nihilominus juvare possunt inclinando ad similes actus in substantia generica. Item possunt juvare, ut apprehensio vel cogitatio de tali re facilius sit et suavior, ac denique juvare possunt tollendo impedimenta, moderando aliquos affectus, vel habitus aliquo modo repugnantes excludendo."

acts of virtue.⁴ According to Ripalda, acquired habits aid the faculty toward placing supernatural acts of virtue since they remove obstacles which would otherwise impede the placing of such acts. By way of example, he points out that a will which easily and promptly exercises natural acts of love brings this same facility to bear in eliciting supernatural acts of love. The reason for this is clear, namely, that in its elevation to the supernatural order, the faculty retains its natural dispositions and aptitudes, and since in this case the faculty already has an aptitude for acts of love, this facility is retained in the supernatural order. This certainly seems to be logical enough, and in conformity with the principle that "grace perfects but does not change nature."

Not all of the theologians are as explicit as Ripalda in this affirmation, but they all seem to concede some communication of facility from the acquired to the infused virtues. Thus, Cajetan takes this fact for granted in his commentary on the virtues,[®] as do most of the other theologians. Among the more recent authors, C. Mazzella can certainly be cited in favor of this opinion since he follows the same line of thought as Suarez.[§] He is not too explicit as to the exact manner in which this facility is con-

⁴Ripalda, J. M., *De Ente Supernaturali*. (Apud Ludovicum Vives; Paris, 1871.) Tom. H, Uber III, Disp. III, Sectio IV.

⁵*Ibid.*, n. 14. "Ita eadem potentia naturalis, potens facile in amorem naturalem ejus acquiritatis, elevatur per habitum supematuralem ad facilem amorem supematuralem; nam non minus elevabilis est potentia simpliciter potens, quam facile potens."

• Cajetan, Thomas De Vio, *Summa Sancti Thomae* (Patavii, Ex typographic Seminarii, 1697), I-IIae, Quaest. 63, art. 3.

† Medina, B., *Expositio in Primam Secundae Angelici Doctoris D. Thomae Aquinatis* (Venice, Apud Petrum Mariam Bertanum, 1602), Quaest. LI, art. 4, ad secundum. "Non potest, quod aliquis diu et multo tempore se exerceat in aliqua virtute infusa, quin habeat multas operationes naturaliter bonas, quibus comparat habitum acquisitum, qui manet amisso infuso, sicut patet in eo, qui credit propter motiva divina et humana." Cf. etiam, Sylvius, *Commentarii in Totam Primam Secundae S. Thomae Aquinatis* (Venetiis, Ex Typographia Balleoniana, 1726), Quaest. LI, art. 4. John of St. Thomas. *Cursus Theologicus* (Paris, Ludovicus Vives, 1885). Tom. VI Quaestio LXII, Disputatio VI, Art VII.

§ Cf. Mazzella, C., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Disputatio I, Art. V, Sectio I, n. 73.

ferred on the infused virtues, but it is obvious that he does grant some form of communication? Cardinal Billot can also be listed as favoring this opinion as is evident from his treatment of the virtues. This is especially evidenced by his commentary on the Second Chapter of the *Canticle of Canticles*, verse 11, "For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, Howers have appeared in our land, now is the time of pruning." According to his figurative interpretation of this passage, the winter and rain signify the sins and vices which precede justification. The flowers which appear are the infused virtues which accompany justification. However, since the deordinate passions and affections are not formally corrected by these infused virtues, the time of pruning signifies that we must work to cultivate and acquire good habits, so that the infused virtues may be made less difficult of operation.¹⁰ Thus, he illustrates the influence of the acquired on the infused virtues.

The fact that some measure of facility is afforded to the infused virtues by the concomitant acquired virtues seems evident not only from the teaching of theologians but from reason and experience as well. Thus, in the case of a pagan who has practiced certain of the natural virtues over a long period of time, it seems obvious that after his conversion, the operation of the corresponding supernatural and infused virtues will be rendered more easy by his previously acquired facility in natural virtue. The same thing is equivalently true of a man in the state of sanctifying grace and the infused virtues. The greater the degree of acquired virtue he possesses, and the more that he uses all the natural means of acquiring virtue which are at his command, so much the more easy will he find the practice of the infused virtues. On the contrary, all things being equal, the lesser degree

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 73. "Quatenus per alios actus naturales, qui circa easdem materias habituum infusorum fieri possunt, producuntur habitus talibus actibus proportionati . . . talis habitus nullo modo acquiritur per efficientiam habitus infusi, aut per se, aut per actus suos, sed per exercitium aliorum actuum, qui per accidens et successive, ac diversis temporibus contingit misceri, seu interponi cum actibus infusis."

¹⁰ Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis*. Prolegomenon (I-II Qq. 49-61), n. II, s. 1.

of acquired virtue that is possessed, the more difficult will be the practice of the infused virtues.

The implications from the foregoing truth are obvious, namely, that the development of the acquired virtues is important for producing aids toward facility in the practice of the infused moral virtues. It must be emphasized here that we are speaking only of a negative disposition, since the natural cannot help or dispose positively toward a supernatural act. In this way, a person would make a serious mistake in depending totally on the infused virtues without at the same time using all the natural means at his disposal for acquiring virtue. The place of the infused virtues is most important, and considered in themselves, they are obviously more noble than the acquired virtues, yet on this account we cannot minimize the position of these latter virtues. For as Wafffelaert notes, the acquired virtues are useful both to the sinner and to the just man in attaining their supernatural end.¹¹ Again, since our Divine Saviour and the Saints possessed the natural virtues in an eminent degree, it would not only be foolish on our part, but dangerous as well, to neglect these important means of sanctification. This is especially true in the light of what has just been seen, that these virtues contribute a certain facility of action to the infused virtues enabling us to place acts of these virtues readily and easily.

Article II. Facility in the Infused Moral Virtues by the Repetition of Supernatural Acts of the Infused Virtues

After establishing the fact that repeated acts of the acquired virtues contribute facility to the placing of acts of the infused virtues, the next question to be determined is whether or not this same truth can be affirmed of repeated acts of the infused virtues. As we have seen, Suarez states as a possibility that by the repetition of supernatural acts of the infused virtues, habits might be produced which would result in facility in the practice

¹¹ Wafffelaert, G. J., *De Prudentia, Fortitudine et Temperantia* (Bruges, Vandenberghe-Denaux, 1889), p. 10. "Ex his jam concludere licet ejusmodi virtutes acquisitas, neque peccatori neque justo inutiles, etiam in ordine ad finem supematuralem."

of these virtues? We shall investigate this possibility, attempting to determine, first of all, whether or not any habits are actually produced from repeated acts of the infused virtues, and if so, exactly how much they contribute to the facility of the infused virtues.

It is to be noted that most theologians teach that besides the facility which comes from repeated natural acts of the acquired virtues, there is another facility in the infused virtues which comes properly from the repetition of supernatural acts of these virtues. This opinion is taught by Suarez,¹³ Vasquez,¹⁴ Francis Sylvius,¹⁵ John of St. Thomas,¹⁶ Billuart,¹⁷ Ripalda,¹⁸ Mazzella,¹⁸ Billot,²⁰ and other theologians. The reason for teaching this opinion is very clear, namely, that the facility which is experienced in the infused virtues cannot be entirely accounted for simply by having recourse to the concomitance of natural acts of the acquired virtues. As an instance of this, let us consider the case of a man who does not have any natural habit of temperance. Let us suppose that he goes to confession, repents of his past, and begins to practice supernatural acts of infused temperance. Who will say that after many such repeated acts there is not acquired a facility of action? Obviously, facility would be present after a time, and this facility would increase with the multiplication of acts of the infused virtues. Yet this facility would not seem to come from natural acts of the acquired

¹³ *Op. cit.*, Vol. IX, Liber VI, Cap. XIV, n. 1-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 7.

¹⁵ Vasquez, Gabriele P., *Commentariorum ac Disputationum in Primam Secundae Sancti Thomae* (Lugduni, Sumptibus Jacob Cardon, 1681), Tom. I, Disp. 77 Cap. X, n. 48.

¹⁶ Sylvius, Francis, *Commentarii in Totam Primam Secundae S. Thomae Aquinatis* (Venetiis, Ex Typographia Balieoniana, 1726), Tom. II, Quaest. LI, art. 4, conclusion 3.

¹⁷ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus* (Paris, Ludovicos Vives, 1885), Tom. VI, Quaest. LXII, Disputatio XVI, Art. VII, n. 38.

¹⁸ Billuart, F.C.R., *Summa Sancti Thomae* (Editio Nova, Paris, Letouzey et Ane), Tom. II, *Tractatus de Passionibus et Virtutibus*, Dissertatio II, Art III, Resp. ad Obj. 3.

¹⁹ Ripalda, *op. cit.*, Disputatio LUI, n. 3.

²⁰ *Op. cit.*, Disputatio I, Art. V, n. 75.

²¹ *Ob. cit.*, Prolegomenon (I-II, qq. 49-61), n. II, s. 2.

virtues, for this man never practiced natural acts of temperance as such. Hence the facility can be attributed solely to repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues placed after he attained the state of grace. Exactly the same situation can exist in regard to any of the other moral virtues. Therefore, theologians admit that facility of action seems to be generated in some way from repeated acts of the infused virtues. Again, the question arises, how account for this facility? Here we shall consider the various opinions of theologians in explanation of this problem.

First Opinion. According to Mazzella,²¹ there are certain Thomistic theologians (whom he does not mention by name), who teach that facility in the infused virtues is a result of the interior increase and intensification of these same virtues. Hence, with an increase of sanctifying grace, the infused virtues are intrinsically increased, and this intensification of the virtues, in turn, results in facility. This opinion is rejected by Mazzella²² and Billot²³ and seems to lack any fundament of truth. As we have already said, it is not the function of the infused moral virtues to confer *per se* and immediately any facility of action. Therefore, we can argue that what an infused virtue cannot produce *per se*, it can hardly produce by becoming more intense. **Another** and a better argument against this theory is that an increase of one of the infused virtues automatically effects a proportionate increase in all of the infused virtues. Hence, by the practice of one of the moral virtues, a stronger facility of action should be felt in all of the virtues alike. Experience teaches this to be absolutely false, for a man who places repeated acts of the infused virtue of justice does not thereby feel a greater facility of action in the virtue of temperance. Therefore, this opinion is rightly rejected by practically all theologians.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, n. 76. "Etenim primo aliqui, inter quos Thomistae nonnulli, tenent eam facilitatem oriri ex habitibus per se infusis intensioribus factis per actus." It is difficult to say exactly what theologians did hold this opinion. Mazzella does not mention them by name, and the author, in his research, was unable to find any theologians in favor of this theory. Obviously, this opinion could not have been very wide-spread.

²² *Ibid.*, n. 76.

²³ *Op. cit.*, Prolegomenon (I-II, Qq. 40-61), η. II, s. 3.

Second Opinion. Another theory for explaining the facility in the infused moral virtues was taught by Hurtado De Mendoza²⁴ and some more recent theologians. They state that the repetition of supernatural acts *quoad substantiam* produces a supernatural acquired habit, and this acquired habit is the source of facility in the infused virtues. Supernatural acts, they argue, are not less efficacious than natural acts, but the repetition of natural acts produces an acquired natural habit, therefore the repetition of supernatural acts produces an acquired supernatural habit.²⁵ This second opinion is likewise rejected by Suarez,²⁶ Ripalda,²⁷ Mazzella,²⁸ and most theologians.

The obvious reason for discarding this opinion is the common teaching of theologians that supernatural habits can be produced by God alone from the obediencial potency of the soul. For this reason, theologians teach that supernatural habits can only be infused, not acquired. But even granted for the sake of argument that such supernatural habits were acquired, the question arises, what would happen to these habits when the state of grace is lost? Either they would remain in the soul or they would not. If they remained, then the subject would have the habitual facility of performing supernatural actions without having the habitual *posse* of placing such actions. This is an obvious absurdity. Again, if these habits were lost with mortal sin, another difficulty would arise inasmuch as acquired habits are not totally lost by one contrary act. Moreover, experience shows that a person can retain, even after he sins, facility in virtue previously acquired by the exercise of supernatural acts.

Ripalda²⁹ gives the best refutation of this theory, stating that the followers of this opinion are not justified in asserting a strict parity between natural and supernatural acts, and in taking it

²⁴ Ripalda who was the disciple of Hurtado de Mendoza, is the authority for this assertion. Since the author could not avail himself of Hurtado's original work, he had to content himself with this testimony. Cfr. Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, Tom. II, Disp. LII, Sect. 1.

²⁵ Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, Tom. II, Disp. LII, Sect. 1.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, Vol. IX, Liber, VI, Chap. XIV, n. 3.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, Sectio II, n. 7-8.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, Disp. I, Art. V, n. 77.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, Disp. LII, Sect. III, n. 10-11.

for granted that since natural acts produce acquired natural habits, supernatural acts produce acquired supernatural habits. Ripalda goes on to show that because one thing is more perfect than another according to a certain mode, this does not necessarily mean that it includes in itself all the activities of the less perfect form. For example, fire is able to reproduce itself because it is according to its nature to do so. Yet, the sun, which is a more perfect form than fire, cannot reproduce itself, because to do so is not according to its nature. So also, concludes Ripalda, natural acts produce natural habits, but supernatural acts do not directly produce supernatural habits, for this is not according to their nature.³⁰ Furthermore, as we shall see presently, the facility of the infused virtues can be satisfactorily explained by natural habits without having recourse to supernatural acquired habits.

Article III. The Opinion of Medina, Sylvius, Suarez, and Mazzella Regarding Facility in the Infused Moral Virtues

Next, we come to the real subject of controversy, namely, whether or not supernatural acts of the infused virtues produce any natural acquired habits. As we have already seen, practically all of the theologians admit that there is a facility of action which results from repeated acts of the infused virtues. The two opinions which we have just investigated do not account for this facility, so now we shall discuss the next possibility, whether or not repeated acts of the infused virtues produce a natural acquired habit. If it can be established that such a habit is formed, then the problem is solved, and the facility of the infused virtues is to be attributed to the formation of an acquired natural habit. If, on the other hand, this line of reasoning is rejected, then another explanation must be found for the facility in the practice of the infused virtues.

The opinion of theologians is divided on this point, some affirming, others denying that an acquired natural habit is generated by the practice of the infused virtues. The controversy on this issue began shortly after the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, and has continued down to the present day. St. Thomas treated

³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 10.

this question both in the *Summa Theologica* and in the *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, but it is very difficult to determine his exact teaching on this point. As a result, the controversialists on both sides of this issue appeal to the authority of Saint Thomas, interpreting his words in the light of their own opinions. We shall discuss this controversy at some length, and attempt to give some critical estimate as to which opinion is more correct.

Third Opinion. The followers of this opinion maintain that, through repeated acts of the infused virtues, no acquired habit is produced, either natural or supernatural. Medina, the Dominican commentator, was one of the first theologians to formulate this opinion. In his *Commentary on the Prima Secundae* of St. Thomas,³¹ Medina discusses this question. He admits that there is a facility in the practice of the infused virtues, but he denies that this facility is the result of an acquired habit, since it is impossible to conceive of supernatural acts producing an acquired natural habit. For habits, according to Medina, are always of the same species as the acts from which they proceed, and for this reason, supernatural acts cannot give rise to acquired natural habits.³² In turn, however, Medina does not give any satisfactory explanation for the facility of the infused virtues. He simply states that the facility which remains in the potency after the infused virtues are lost, is not to be attributed to the fact that the person *has* an acquired habit, but to the fact that he *had* an infused habit, whose facility still remains in the potency.³³ Medina does not explicitly state that the facility of the infused virtues is supernatural, but this inference is clearly contained in his other teachings.

³¹ Medina, B., *Expositio in Primam Secundae Angelici Doctoris D. Thomae Aquinatis* (Venice, Apud Petrum Mariam Bertanum, 1602), Quaest. LI, art. 4.

³² *Ibid.*, Quaest. LI, art. 4, ad primum. "Nam actus similes producant habitum ejusdem speciei, ut asserit Aristotelis, . . . actus enim temperantiae non producant habitum justitiae, ergo actus virtutum infusarum non producant habitum acquisitum alterius speciei."

³³ *Ibid.*, Quaest. LI, art. 4, ad tertium. "Dicendum est quod iste invenit se promptum et facilem ad credendum et amandum, non quia *habet* habitum acquisitum sed quia *habuit* virtutem infusam praecedentem, ex cujus exercitatione praecedente manent passiones moderatae et difficultates superatae."

Francis Sylvius³⁴ agrees with the opinion of Medina that no natural habit is generated by repeated acts of the infused virtues. If such an acquired habit were generated, says Sylvius,³⁵ it would incline the faculty either to natural or to supernatural acts. However, it could not incline the faculty to supernatural acts, for supernatural acts are beyond the capacity of an acquired habit; neither could it incline the faculty to natural acts, for the habit was not acquired by natural acts, and habits incline only to acts of the same species as the acts from which they were formed. Hence, from repeated acts of the infused virtues, there is generated no habit at all.

As for the source of facility in the infused virtues, Sylvius goes on to explain that it could come from (1) concomitant natural habits generated by naturally good acts which the person performed in addition to his supernatural acts, (2) the fact that the passions are moderated and difficulties overcome by the practice of the infused virtues, (3) that although repeated acts of the infused virtues do not generate a habit, properly so called, nevertheless they could so strengthen and confirm a preexisting natural habit that a certain amount of facility and promptitude would be afforded to the faculty towards the practice of the infused virtues.³⁶ This is the explanation given by Sylvius for the presence of facility in the exercise of the infused moral

³⁴ Sylvius, Francis, *Commentarii in Totam Primam Secundae S. Thomae Aquinatis* (Venetiis, ex Typographia Balleoniana, 1726), Tom. II, Quaest. LI, art 4, conclusio 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Quaest LI, art. 4, conclusio 3. ° Confirmatur: Si generaretur aliquis (habitus acquisitus); vel ille inclinat ad actus supematurales; vel ad naturales. Non ad supematurales, cum habitus acquisitus non inclinat ad eliciendos actus superantes suum facultatem. Non enim ad naturales, quia habitus solum inclinat ad actus similes illis, a quibus fuit causatus: non est autem causatus ex actibus naturalibus.”

³⁶ *Ibid.*, “Id (facilitas) accidere; vel quia praeter actus virtutis infusae exercuit alias moraliter bonas, ex quibus quidam habitus fit acquisitus: vel quia ex virtutis infusae exercitio passiones manent moderatae et difficultates superatae; vel denique quia licet ex actibus virtutis infusae non fuerit generatus proprie dictus habitus, eo ipso tamen, quo per eas corroboratus et confirmatus fuit habitus praeeexistens, potentia, in qua est talis corroboratio et confirmatio, facta est propensior et promptior ad similiter operandum.”

virtues. Sylvius lists Cajetan as favoring this opinion,³⁷ but in reality, Cajetan does not treat this problem very thoroughly. It is true that he affirms that acts proceeding from an infused habit do not cause any other habit but confirm a pre-existing habit³⁸ but in saying this, he simply restates the words of St. Thomas³⁹ without commenting on them. Besides Cajetan, Granadus and Conrad are also mentioned by Sylvius as favoring the present opinion.⁴⁰

After Sylvius, the next and perhaps greatest proponent of this opinion was Suarez.⁴¹ Suarez follows the opinion of his predecessors in affirming that there is a facility in the practice of the infused virtues, but like them, he denies that this facility is caused by an acquired habit. What then is the source of this facility? According to Suarez, this facility comes *per se* from the grace of God, which either physically increases the effective power of the infused habit or contributes a greater suavity in performing the acts of virtue. *Per accidens*, this facility comes from the repetition of acts of the infused virtues whereby impediments are removed and the faculties are better disposed to acts of virtue.⁴² Above all, this facility is not to be attributed to an acquired habit, neither is it to be regarded as something intrinsic

³⁷ *Ibid.*, conclusio 3, in finem.

³⁸ Cajetan, Thomas De Vio, *Summa Sancti Thomae* (Patavii, Ex Typographia Seminarii, 1698), *Commentarium in Primae Secundae*, Quaest. LI, art. 4. "Actus procedentes ex habitu infuso non causant aliquem habitum, sed confirmant praexistentem."

³⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Rome, Ex Typographia Forzani, 1894), I-IIae, Quaest. LI, art. 4, resp. ad tertium. "Dicendum, quod actus qui producuntur ex habitu infuso, non causant aliquem habitum, sed confirmant habitum praexistentem."

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, conclusio 3, in finem.

⁴¹ Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. IX, Liber VI, Chap. XIV.

⁴² *Ibid.*, n. 7. "Unde facilitas quae in exercendis actibus infusis invenitur, per se quidem provenire potest ex gratia Dei, vel physice augente virtutem effectivam habitus, vel moraliter dante majorem suavitatem, aut illustrationem, vel affectionem majorem in operando. Per accidens autem potest ex consuetudine provenire, quatenus per illam vel tolluntur impedimenta aliqua, vel naturales potentiae, aut organa ministrantia his actibus, usu ipso melius disponuntur."

and absolute in the act as distinct from the substance of the act.⁴³

To substantiate his assertion that repeated acts of the infused virtues do not generate an acquired habit, Suarez gives essentially the same arguments as his predecessors. Acts produce only those habits which tend to the same material and formal objects as the acts themselves. But supernatural acts cannot produce an acquired habit tending to their own proper material and formal objects. Therefore, supernatural acts produce no acquired habits at all. He proves the minor of this assertion by stating that supernatural acts cannot produce supernatural acquired habits because such habits can be produced by God alone from the obediencial potency of the soul. Again, supernatural acts cannot produce natural acquired habits because such natural habits would not tend to the same material and formal objects as the supernatural acts. For the object of supernatural acts is supernatural, while the object of a natural habit is only natural, and natural habits have no aptitude for supernatural objects. This reasoning is obvious, says Suarez, for supernatural acts can no more produce an acquired natural habit than natural acts could give rise to a supernatural habit.⁴⁴

Gregory Valentia follows the same opinion as Suarez and uses much the same line of argumentation.⁴⁵ De Lugo can also be cited as favoring this opinion, although he does not treat this question very thoroughly in his theology.⁴⁶ After discussing the problem of how to account for the facility in the infused virtues,

⁴³ *Ibid.* "Probatur primo, quia illa facilitas, ut dixi non est in actu aliquo intrinsecum, absolutum, et distinctum a substantia actus."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* "Tertio, quia habitus qui acquiritur circa actus naturales inclinatur ad actus ejusdem rationis cum his a quibus genitus est, et ad idem objectum sub eadem ratione formali; in praesenti autem habitus acquisitus non potest inclinari ad idem objectum sub eadem ratione formali, quia illud objectum supernaturaliter est, ut libro superiori vidimus; neque etiam potest talis habitus, ad actus infusos inclinari, tum quia naturalis qualitas non habet naturam appetitum ad supernaturalia; tum etiam quia naturalis inclinatio habitus ad actum fundatur in virtute activa naturali talis actus; hanc autem virtutem non habet habitus acquisitus circa actus infusos, ut ostensum est"

⁴⁵ Valentia, Gregory, *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Vol. II, Disp. IV, Quaest. III, p. 4.

⁴⁶ De Lugo, J., *Disputationes Scholasticae et Morales* (Paris, Apud Ludovicum Vives, 1868), Vol. I, Disp. IX, Section 4.

De Lugo states that he cannot agree with the opinion of those theologians who maintain that this facility is the result of an acquired habit. For just as natural acts cannot produce a supernatural habit, supernatural acts cannot produce a natural habit. He does not mention the opinion of Suarez that this facility is to be attributed to the grace of God, but he does affirm that this facility is supernatural. It is not simply and rigorously supernatural, but it is said to be supernatural *secundum quid*, inasmuch as the supernatural character of the facility comes not from itself but from the supernatural acts whence it proceeds. The facility in the practice of the infused virtues, according to De Lugo, is said to be supernatural by participation, or in other words, dispositively and *secundum quid* supernatural.⁴⁷

Camillus Mazzella likewise maintains the foregoing opinion, and besides using the basic arguments already given, he cites two passages from Saint Thomas in proof of the contention that supernatural acts do not generate any acquired habits. The first quotation is taken from the treatise, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, where St. Thomas says the following:

It is to be said that acts of the infused virtues do not cause any habit, but through these acts pre-existing habits are increased, just as neither from acts of the acquired virtues is another habit generated, otherwise habits would be multiplied *in infinitum*.³

The other passage is taken from the *Summa Theologica*, and is almost identical with the passage just cited :

Acts which are produced by an infused habit do not cause another habit, but confirm a pre-existing habit,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 79. "Aliunde ergo dicendum est ex iis, quae insinuavi in superioribus, et alibi latius explicui ex actibus fidei, et aliis actibus supernaturalibus, relinqui in nobis species, quibus earum actuum recordemur, quae species non sint simpliciter et rigorose supernaturales, sed solum praesuppositivae et secundum quid, id est, tales quae non possunt fieri, nisi posito tali actu supernaturali."

⁴⁸ Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, Art. 10, ad 19. "Dicendum, quod actus virtutis infusae non causant aliquem habitum, sed per eos augetur praexistens: quia nec ex actibus virtutis acquisitae aliquis habitus generatur; alias multiplicarentur habitus in infinitum."

just as medicaments used by a healthy man do not cause health but rather confirm the habit of health already existing in the subject.

After listing these arguments from St. Thomas along with the arguments of Suarez, Mazzella goes on to explain the source of facility in the infused virtues. He agrees with Suarez that this facility is to be attributed partially to the grace of God, but he says that it is especially to be attributed to the disposition of the subject whereby the impediments to virtue are removed. He explains this statement by saying that the constant exercise of the infused virtues serves to moderate the passions, remove difficulties, and so expel prejudice and ignorance that the subject is prompt to the practice of the infused virtues. Mazzella agrees with De Lugo in saying that this facility would be supernatural *secundum quid* inasmuch as it presupposes the existence of supernatural acts.⁴⁸

Not many current authors have written on this topic. However, in a recent theological publication entitled *Virtues and Vices* the author, Father Pierse, agrees with the opinion of Suarez and Mazzella. In treating the subject of facility in the infused virtues, Father Pierse has the following to say :

Repeated acts coming from the infused virtues or capacities will remove the vicious turn in the organism and cause a favourable disposition of parts which will give even a facility for action. The supernatural acts will do what purely natural acts could do in giving an acquired virtue, in the sense of creating a bent or facility for some good action. This also explains how a person, who has long practiced Christian virtue, falls for a

⁴⁸ Aquinas, St., *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, Quaest. LI, art. 4, Resp. ad tertium. "Dicendum, quod actus qui producuntur ex habitu infuso non causant aliquem habitum; sed confirmant habitum praexistentem, sicut medicinalia adhibita homini sano per naturam non causant aliquam sanitatem, sed sanitatem prius habitam corroborant."

⁵⁰ Cf. *op. cit.*, n. 81. "Tales ergo sunt species relictæ ab actibus supernaturalibus, et memoria, qua illorum recordamur: nempe supernaturalæ solum præsuppositive quatenus ad sui existentiam præsupponunt necessario aliquid supernaturalæ, sed tamen debitæ naturæ intellectuali ex suppositione, quod sint in nobis actus supernaturalæ."

short time, returns to grace, will speedily acquire the old facility in the exercise of certain virtues. The favourable bent in the power of the organism continues subconsciously through a short lapse.⁵¹

As to whether this facility is natural or supernatural, this same author adds the following :

The facility of the infused virtues is only supernatural *quoad modum*, in the manner of production; it is like sight given miraculously to the blind; it could come from nature but it did not. . . . From this treatment there follows the important conclusion that the acts of virtue of a just man are not in part natural and in part supernatural, but entirely supernatural in substance.⁵²

r Thus, Father Pierse agrees substantially with the foregoing opinion in asserting that the facility attached to the infused virtues is supernatural in origin, and not from an acquired natural habit.

We can summarize the teaching of this third opinion in the following manner. The proponents of this opinion admit that there can be a facility of action joined to the infused virtues, but they deny that it comes from an acquired habit either natural or supernatural. They explain this facility by saying that it comes *per se* from the grace of God, *per accidens* from the repetition of acts of the infused virtues whereby obstacles are removed and a certain supernatural bent or facility is established in the faculty. Finally, they assert that this facility is not strictly and rigorously supernatural, but only supernatural *secundum quid* inasmuch as the supernatural character is not so much to be attributed to the facility in itself as to the acts from which it proceeds.

Article IV. The Opinion of Molina, Ripalda, Billot, and Merkelbach Regarding Facility in the Infused Virtues

Fourth Opinion. There are other theologians who teach that there is an entirely natural explanation for the facility in the in-

⁵¹ Pierse, G., *Virtues and Vices* (Browne and Nolan, 1935), Chap. V, Part II, p. 39.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

fused virtues. According to their opinion, there is a natural acquired habit generated by repeated acts of the infused virtues, and this natural habit is responsible for the facility which is experienced in the practice of the infused virtues. As far as can be determined, the author of this opinion is the Jesuit theologian, Louis Molina. Before the time of Molina, Scotus had opened the way for this teaching by affirming that supernatural acts were *quoad substantiam* natural, thereby admitting the possibility of acquired natural habits from supernatural acts.⁵³ However, Scotus did not develop this latter point, and it is more or less inferred from his general teaching.⁵⁴ We have already indicated Molina's doctrine at the beginning of this chapter. However, we shall explain his ideas here more in detail.

In speaking of the infused theological virtues, Molina states that these virtues are produced in the soul by God alone, and cannot be attained by any natural acts. However, he goes on to say that the supernatural acts of infused faith, hope and charity virtually (*eminenter*) include natural acts of these same virtues, since in their production there concur all those causes which would produce natural acts.⁵⁵ Therefore, in the course of time, supernatural acts of the infused virtues will give rise to natural acquired habits of virtue. What does he mean by saying that "in the production of a supernatural act, all those causes concur which would produce a natural act" ?⁵⁷ Apparently, he means by this that the mechanics are the same in the production of both super-

set Scotus, J. Duns, *Opus Oxoniense* (Editio Nova, juxta editionem Waddingi, Paris, Apud Ludovicum Vives, 1894), Liber V, Disp. 26.

⁵⁴ Suarez, for instance, attributes this opinion to Scotus. Cfr. Suarez, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, Liber VI, Chap. XIV, n. 4. "Nam licet Scotus et Gabriel expresse non dicant illos habitus acquiri per actus virtutum infusarum, satis id indicant, praesertim cum in fundamento illo quod tales actus (supernaturales) sint in substantia naturales conveniant."

⁵³ Molina, L., *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, Quaest. XIV, Art. XIII, Disputatio XXXVIII.

⁵⁶*Ibid.* "Quia tamen actus illi (supernaturales) eminenter continent naturales actus fidei, spei, et caritatis, eo quod ad ipsorum productionem concurrant causae omnes, quae producerent actus illos naturales."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* "Eo quod ad ipsorum productionem (actus supernaturales) concurrant causae omnes, quae producerent actus illos naturales."

natural and natural acts, that we go through the same motions and use the same faculties of intellect and will as much in the one act as in the other, the only difference being that the faculty which before was operative through purely natural powers is not endowed with power of the supernatural order. Following upon this is his conclusion that a natural act is virtually contained in a supernatural act, and that in time, supernatural acts of the infused virtues will produce natural acquired habits of virtue.

A variation of this same opinion was taught by Vasquez,⁵⁸ although it is difficult to determine from his writings whether he actually held this opinion or simply mentioned it as a possibility. According to his teaching, Vasquez maintains that, through the repetition of acts supernatural *quoad substantiam*, there are acquired habits natural *quoad substantiam*, which natural habits cooperate in the production of supernatural acts. For while such natural habits would not concur to the substance of the supernatural act in the sense of supplying the *posse*, nevertheless, they would contribute to the substance of the act in a certain way by supplying a facility of action.⁵⁹

Ripalda ⁶⁰ likewise affirms that supernatural acts of the infused virtues produce natural acquired habits. No one can doubt, says Ripalda, that the repetition of supernatural acts of the infused virtues produces a facility of action. But facility of action can come only from an acquired habit, as is evident from the very nature of facility. Hence, since facility is present in acts of the infused virtues, it must be attributed to an acquired habit. Furthermore, since this acquired habit cannot be supernatural, because only God can produce supernatural habits in us, it must be natural.⁶¹ To Ripalda, this seems to be the only possible solution to the problem, for the fact is obvious that the infused virtues

⁵⁸ Cf. Vasquez, P. Gabriel, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum in Primam Secundae Sancti Thomae* (Lugduni, Sumptibus Jacob Cardon, 1681). Tom. I, Disp. 77, Chap. 10, ¶. 48. "Dicendum esset dari habitum ad facile operandum actus infusus, distinctum ab habitu infuso, et alterius naturae acquisitum per actus infusus ad facilius utendum ipso habitu infuso."

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 47-48.

⁶⁰ *De Ente Supematurali*, Tom. II, Liber III, Disp. LIII.

Cf. *Ibid.*, ¶. 1.

confer a facility of action, and the only satisfactory explanation for this facility is an acquired natural habit. In this connection, Ripalda takes occasion to refute the opinion of Medina, Suarez and other theologians who teach that this facility is a result of the moderation of the passions, the overcoming of difficulties, and the removal of impediments. How can they affirm this, demands Ripalda, without at the same time affirming that these things are possible only by the formation of an acquired habit?⁶² In support of his contention, Ripalda invokes the authority of St. Thomas, quoting from the treatise *De Veritate*, where the following statement is made :

It is to be said that from these repeated acts there is not generated any habit distinct from the habit by which these acts are elicited ; but either a habit of the same kind is increased, just as from acts of infused charity there is generated another habit of charity, or a pre-existing habit is increased, as in one who already has an acquired habit of temperance, by new acts this habit is increased.⁶³

In this passage, says Ripalda, St. Thomas affirms that supernatural acts of infused charity generate another habit of charity, namely, an acquired habit of charity. But such an acquired habit could **only** be natural, since St. Thomas teaches elsewhere that supernatural habits can come only from God by infusion.⁶⁴ Therefore, we have it on the authority of St. Thomas that supernatural acts of the infused virtues produce an acquired natural habit.⁶⁵

⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 3. "Nam si eo casu major facilitas, et habilitas potentiae potest reduci in remotionem impediendum, nimirum quia prioribus actibus moderatae sunt passionibus, et superatae difficultates retardantes animum ab agendo eos actus, ut arbitratur Medina, sane eodem modo potest reduci facilitas potentiae ad actus naturales acquisita in remotionem impediendum, quin argumentum sit statuendi habitus acquisitos naturales."

⁶³ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, Quaest 17, art. 1, ad quartum. "Dicendum, quod ex his actibus (repetitis) non generatur habitus alterius modi ab illo habitu ex quo actus eliciuntur, sed vel aliquis habitus ejusdem rationis, sicut ex actibus infusae charitatis generatur aliquis habitus dilectionis; vel praexistens augmentatur, sicut in eo qui habet habitum temperantiae acquisitum ex actibus, ipse habitus augmentatur."

⁶⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, Quaest. LI, art. 4.

⁶⁵ Cf. Ripalda, *op. cit.*, n. 3, in finem.

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So far, we have listed Molina, Vasquez and Ripalda in favor of this fourth opinion. However, one of the most recent and perhaps most vigorous proponents of this system is Cardinal Billot.⁶⁶ According to Billot, the assertion that repeated acts of the infused virtues produce acquired natural habits, is a fact proven by constant and universal experience. The Saints, for instance, always progressed and advanced in the practice of the infused virtues as a result of frequent and strenuous exercise of their acts. Furthermore, we know that certain Saints had a special facility in the practice of those virtues in which they most assiduously exercised themselves. However, there is no sufficient explanation for this fact unless it is admitted that by the repetition of acts of the infused virtues, there is produced an acquired natural habit whereby the passions are moderated, and the faculty is more and more disciplined to the practice of the infused virtues.⁶⁷

Billot attacks the assertion of Suarez and Mazzella that the facility of the infused virtues comes *per se* from the grace of God and *per accidens* from the moderation of the passions and the removal of obstacles. Such an explanation, says Billot, is obviously unsatisfactory. First of all, since this facility is something intrinsic, inhering in the faculty, it cannot be sufficiently explained by any extrinsic means such as grace.⁶⁸ Therefore, the explanation that this facility comes *per se* from the grace of God is unsound and unsatisfactory. Secondly, according to Billot, the acts of the infused virtues cannot moderate the passions and destroy the tendency to the opposite vice without at the same time producing a positive inclination to acts of virtue. There-

⁶⁶ Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Rome, In Universitate Gregoriana, 1921), Generale Prolegomenon (I-IIae, Qq. 49-61), Section 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, "Videmus praeterea (quod maxime notandum est), eos (sanctos) semper habuisse specialem exercitii facilitatem in ea speciali virtute in qua speciali quoque modo sese exercebant. Atqui hujus facti, quod vim obtinet legis cujusdam uniformis et numquam deficientis, nulla est sufficiens explicatio, nisi dicatur generari per frequentationem actuum virtutis infusae habitus acquisitus, quo naturalis potentia eidem infusae virtuti melius subiicitur, et semper magis magisque disciplinatur ad prompte operandum secundam ipsam."

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

fore, to say that repeated acts of the infused virtues effect the moderation of the passions and the removal of impediments to virtue, is the same as to say that repeated acts of the infused virtues generate a positive acquired habit which inclines the potency to acts of the infused virtues. Here, Billot attacks Suarez and Mazzella on the score of inconsistency. For they affirm that repeated acts of the infused virtues moderate the passions and remove the obstacles to virtue, but at the same time they deny that there is acquired any habit of facility. According to Billot, such a position is extremely inconsistent. He illustrates his point by an example of a seal on wax. The seal, in making its imprint on wax, does not only destroy the previous figure of the wax, but at the same time it positively produces its own image. In this example, you could not affirm that the seal had destroyed the previous figure of the wax without at the same time affirming that the seal had also imparted its own image. So also in the infused virtues, concludes Billot, the adversaries cannot affirm that the passions are moderated and difficulties are overcome without at the same time admitting that a habit is acquired which disposes to acts of virtue.⁶⁹

Billot goes on to show the absurdities which would follow from the opposite opinion. If it is true, as the adversaries affirm, that no acquired habit is produced by repeated acts of the infused virtues, then it would be to the detriment of man constantly to perform works of the infused virtues, since he would never be able to acquire that promptitude and delectability which follow from the acquired habit of virtue and its concomitant facility.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* * Quo semel posito jam nunc considera quod vis efficiens actuum virtutis nusquam se extendit ad destructionem inclinationis vitiosae contrariae, nisi per hoc ipsum quod inducit positivam proclivitatem ad id quod est consentaneum virtuti; . . . Unde materialiter loquendo, idem est si dicas quod repetitio actuum virtutis infusae destruit impedimenta ad virtutis exercitium, aut quod generat habitum conferentem positivam inclinationem propensivam in illud. Primum enim facere nequit nisi mediante secundo, et valde inconsequenter loqui videntur adversarii, dum primum adstruunt et alterum negant”

To Ibid. “Sequeretur enim fore in detrimentum hominis si semper secundum infusas virtutes opera virtutum exerceret Probatur consequentia,

This is the joy and pleasure of virtue which St. Paul has reference to in his *Epistle to the Hebrews*:

Now all discipline seems for the present to be a matter not for joy but for grief; but afterwards it yields the most peaceful fruit of justice to those who have been exercised by it.⁷¹

Again, St. Paul emphasizes the same truth when he tells Timothy: "Train thyself in godliness."⁷² According to the context of this passage, St. Paul is speaking of bodily training, and he urges Timothy to acquire that same training in virtue which is acquired in the body by constant corporal exercise. Once more, St. Paul speaks of the facility and enjoyment to be found in the practice of virtue in his *Epistle to the Hebrews*, where he says:

But solid food is for the more mature, for those who by practice have their faculties trained to discern good and evil.⁷³

How, inquires Billot, can these texts be reconciled with the opinion that there is no positive propensity, no habit acquired in the practice of the infused virtues?⁷⁴

As we have seen in the previous article, the main objection of Suarez and Mazzella to the production of an acquired habit from repeated acts of the infused virtues is based on the fact that the formal objects of natural and supernatural acts are diverse. They argue that it would be repugnant for acts to produce a habit which would not tend to the same formal and material objects as the acts from which it proceeds. Billot answers this objection by admonishing his adversaries that they should not obscure those things which are clear by adding obscurities, rather they should try to clarify those things which are obscure by means of illumination. What is more clear, exclaims Billot, than quia numquam acquirere posset ad quod per se pendet ab assuetudine; promptitudinem dico et delectabilitatem in operando bonum . . . /

⁷¹ *Hebrews*, 12:11-12.

⁷² *Tim.*, 4:7.

⁷³ *Hebrews*, 5:14.

⁷⁴ Billot, *op. cit.*, Section 3.

the fact that repeated acts of the infused virtues cause an acquired habit of facility? On the other hand, what is more obscure than the assertion of the adversaries that the formal object of the supernatural act is diverse in species from the formal object of the natural act? If they cannot reconcile the evident fact of facility with their opinion regarding the formal objects of acts, why do they not accept the proven fact of facility and abandon their teaching in regard to formal objects? In this way, says Billot, they would not adduce obscurity to something which is already clear.

However, the real answer to the difficulty of Suarez and Mazzella in regard to formal objects, is to be found in a distinction between the substance of the supernatural act and its supernatural mode of operation. Billot goes on to explain that the substance of the supernatural act entails all those functions which are common to any act either natural or supernatural, and 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, however, is that formality which ordines the act to its entitative supernatural perfection. This distinction between the substance and the mode of a supernatural act is not found indiscriminately in all supernatural acts, but only in those acts whose objects are able to be attained both by the natural faculty *in se* and by the natural faculty elevated to the supernatural order by the infused virtues.⁷³ Since we are **dealing with such** acts in the present case, namely acts of the moral virtues which can be either natural or supernatural, we can lawfully make use of this distinction. This being established, Billot goes on to say that the supernatural act *quoad substantiam* has the same reason of tendency to its object as a natural act elicited solely from the powers of nature. Here, we have a solution to the present problem. If through the repetition of supernatural acts of the infused virtues, the faculty is exercised along⁷⁵

⁷³ *Ibid.*, n. III, *De Ratione Distinctionis Supernaturalium*, section 1. "Itaque haec distinctio inter substantiam et modum non in omnibus actibus supernaturalibus indiscriminatim reperitur, sed in illis duntaxat quorum objecta duplici ratione attingi possunt, videlicet tam per potentiam elevatam quam per non elevatam."

exactly the same line as it would be exercised by natural acts, it follows that the natural faculty will be stamped by a propensity inclining it to similar acts of virtue. This propensity is nothing more than the facility which flows from an acquired natural habit.⁷⁶

It is in this way that Billot is in perfect agreement with the two assertions of Molina, (1) that "in the production of a supernatural act, all those causes concur which produce a natural act,"⁷⁷ (2) that a natural act is virtually contained in every supernatural act of virtue.⁷⁸ In order to understand more clearly exactly how the natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act, Billot gives this further explanation.⁷⁹ An act can be virtually contained in another act in two ways. First, in the sense in which the perfections of creatures are said to be virtually contained in God, namely, that they are not contained in God according to the same univocal sense as they are in creatures, but according to a certain analogical and transcendent mode. It is not according to this first sense that the natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act, for here the acts generate a habit having the same formal tendency toward the object, thereby retaining the univocal predication. Secondly, 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 retained 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 ontologically elevated to a higher order,

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, η. II, section 3. "Atqui hinc sumetur optima explicatio praesentis doctrinae, quia si per repetitos actus supernaturales potentia naturalis exercetur in eadem omnino linea ac exerceretur per naturales, necesse sane est ut juxta principia certissima superius declarata cap. I, eadem quoque pre-pensiva inclinatione sigilletur ad facile et prompte exsequenda opera virtutum."

⁷⁷ Molina, *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, Quaest. XIV, Art. XIII, Disputatio XXXVIII. "Eo quod ad ipsorum productionem (actus supernaturales) concurrant causae omnes, quae producerent actus illos naturales."

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Billot, *op. cit.*, η. II, section 3, footnote 1.

and elicited from the power of a new nature, sanctifying grace.

This explains how natural acquired habits can be generated by supernatural acts of the infused virtues, for the natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act of virtue. Furthermore, these acquired natural habits produced from supernatural acts follow all of the rules for acquired habits produced by natural acts, especially as regards their increase, diminution, and corruption. Thus, they will be increased by an increase of the infused acts and diminished by a lessening of these acts. Again, these natural acquired habits will not be destroyed by one contrary act. Hence, even though the infused virtues are lost by mortal sin, the acquired habits produced by the acts of these virtues will remain in the soul conferring their facility toward natural acts and also to supernatural acts, supposing the help of actual grace.⁸⁰

Is this opinion contrary to the doctrine of St. Thomas? Billot does not seem to think so. But what of the quotations from St. Thomas used by Mazzella⁸¹ in proof of the opposite assertion? Billot examines and explains these quotations. The first citation from St. Thomas used by Mazzella is as follows :

It is to be said that acts of the infused virtues do not cause any habit, but through these acts pre-existing habits are increased, just as neither from the acts of the acquired virtues is any other habit generated, otherwise habits would be multiplied *in infinitum*.⁶²

Billot places this text in its context and shows that St. Thomas is here discussing whether or not acts of the infused virtues produce habits of the same order and species. Therefore, we can interpret the response of St. Thomas in the following manner: Just as from acts of the acquired virtues there is not generated any other acquired habit, so also neither from acts of the infused virtues are generated other infused virtues of the same

⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, η, II, section 3.

⁸¹ Mazzella, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Disp. I, Art. V, n. 78.

⁸² Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, Art. 10, ad 19. "Dicendum, quod actus virtutis infusae non causant aliquem habitum, sed per eos augetur praexistens: quia nec ex actibus virtutis acquisitae aliquis generatur alias multiplicarentur habitus in infinitum."

species and order. Judging from the context, says Billot, this seems to be the more obvious sense of the response, and hence this text cannot be used against the assertion that repeated acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired habit.⁸³

The other text cited by Mazzella is similar to the one already given:

Acts which are produced by an infused habit do not cause another habit but confirm a pre-existing habit, just as medicaments used by a healthy man do not cause health, but merely confirm the habit of health already existing in the subject.⁸⁴

Once more, Billot insists that this text must be considered in its context, and this being done, Billot makes a twofold observation. First, St. Thomas speaks here not only of habits infused *per se*, but of habits infused *per accidens*, as well, namely, those habits which can be acquired by our own natural acts but which *de facto* are miraculously infused into the soul by God for some special reason above the order of nature. Second, the difficulty which St. Thomas sought to answer in this third question from which the quotation is taken, is the impossibility of there being two habits of the same species, distinct only in number, existing in the same subject. Keeping these facts in mind, says Billot, it is easier to determine the sense of the question.

In his response, St. Thomas asserts that it does not follow from the infusion of the virtues that there are two forms of the same species existing in the same subject simultaneously. If by the infused virtue here is understood a virtue infused *per accidens*, it is true that by the acts of these virtues no other habits would be formed, for the virtues infused *per accidens* are of the same species as the acquired habits and differ from them only by reason of their miraculous origin in the soul. Thus by the exercise of

⁸³ *Op. cit.*, η, II, section 3, *Opponitur primo auctoritas S. Thomae*.

⁸⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, Quaest. LI, art. 4, Resp. ad Tertium. "Dicendum, quod actus qui producuntur ex habitu infuso non causant aliquem habitum: sed confirmant habitum praexistentem, sicut medicinalia adhibita homini sano per naturam non causant aliquam sanitatem, sed sanitatem prius habitam corroborant."

these habits no other acquired habits would be produced, but a pre-existing habit would be confirmed. On the other hand, if by the infused habit here is meant a habit infused *per se*, it is true that these habits do not produce other habits of the same species as themselves, namely, infused habits. However, St. Thomas does not exclude the formation of an acquired habit from an infused habit, for although it would have a similar tendency to its object, nevertheless, it would not be of the same species, for the one habit is infused and the other is acquired.

After showing that these passages from St. Thomas do not disprove his doctrine, Billot, in turn, cites a text from St. Thomas which seems to give positive confirmation to his teaching. This passage is as follows :

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.⁸⁵

Why, inquires Billot, 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 virtues ? And how can this pleasure of exercise of facility follow from repeated acts, unless it comes as a result of an acquired habit whereby the faculty is favorably disposed toward promptly and readily placing acts of the infused virtues?⁸⁶

In support of the conclusions of Cardinal Billot, we have corroborative statements from Merkelbach to the effect 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.⁸⁷ Thus, Merkelbach agrees with Billot

⁸⁵ Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, Art. 10, ad 15. "Dicens, quod quia a principio virtus infusa non semper ita tollit sensum passionum sicut virtus acquisita, propter hoc a principio non ita delectabiliter operatur."

⁸⁶ Cf. *op. cit.*, π. II, section 3. *Opponitur primo auctoritas S. Thomae.*

⁸⁷ Cf. Merkelbach, B. H., *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (Paris, Desdée De Brouwer et Soc. 1938). Vol. I. *De Habitibus et Virtutibus in Genere, Tertia*

in maintaining that the facility of the infused virtues is a result of an acquired natural habit, and like Billot, Merkelbach appeals to the authority of St. Thomas as a proof of this assertion.^{88*}

ARTICLE V. THE OPINION OF JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, GONET,
BILLUART AND SCHIFFINI REGARDING FACILITY
IN THE INFUSED VIRTUES

Fifth Opinion. Another theory explaining the facility of the infused moral virtues has been advocated by John of St. Thomas and Gonet.⁸⁸ His theory is very similar to the ideas expressed by Molina, Ripalda, and Billot, but the two opinions are not strictly identical. According to the teaching of John of St. Thomas, it cannot be denied that acquired habits are generated by repeated acts of the infused virtues. Thus, a person who constantly exercises and repeats acts of the infused virtues, will, after a time, acquire a natural habit which will facilitate the practice of the infused virtues.⁸⁰ This acquired habit which

Pars, Quaest. Secunda, n. 621, n. 2. "Actus supematurales dum tendunt ad finem seu bonum et objectum supernaturale, simul tendunt sub aliquo respectu ad finem naturalem et bonum naturale rationi conveniens, tum quia exercentur simul facultates naturales, tum quia actus et bonum supernaturalia eminenter continent et includunt actum naturalem et bonitatem naturalem; sic autem possunt producere habitus naturales ejusdem speciei ac illud objectum ut est naturale et conforme rationi, et per hoc vincere et remove obstackula huic actui et objecto opposita, eodem modo ac de virtute acquisita dictum est."

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 621, n. 2 in finem.

⁸⁸ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus* (Paris, Ludovicus Vives, 1885), Tom. VI, Quaest. LXII, Art. VII, Disputatio XVI, n. 38-39. John of St. Thomas seems to be the first to mention this opinion. Gonet later adopted this teaching in his writings. Cfr. Gonet, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Vol. IV, Disp. IV, art. 4, n. 25.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 38. "Licet enim dubitari non possit, quod circa materiam virtutum infusarum etiam theologiarum potest generari habitus aliquis acquisitus, qui diverso motivo, et sub diversa ratione formali versetur circa illam materiam, et ad illum habitum generandum facilitari possit animus ex frequentatione actuum infusorum, quatenus si illa materia est magis frequentata, et sic facilius poterit etiam tractari ex alio simili motivo, sicut circa materiam, quam saepius demonstrando tractamus, possumus etiam probabilius rationibus adjuvare, et facilius acquiri poterit talis habitus probabilis."

is formed is not to be attributed *formally* to the repetition of acts of the infused virtues, but as it were *dispositively*, inasmuch as the habit is begotten from repetition with respect to the same matter, under a natural motive.⁹¹ This acquired natural habit which results dispositively from repeated acts of the infused virtues is responsible for the facility which is experienced in the practice of the infused virtues.

Billuart⁹² is a faithful adherent to the opinion of John of St. Thomas. In explaining the facility of the infused moral virtues, Billuart uses exactly the same terminology as his predecessor, affirming that supernatural acts generate an acquired natural habit not formally, but dispositively, since he who repeats acts of the infused virtues is gradually disposed to place acts of these same virtues from a natural acquired habit.⁹³

In more recent times, the Jesuit theologian, Schiffini, can also be listed as favoring this opinion.⁹⁴ Schiffini states that repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired habit not directly, but morally or meritoriously.^{95*} He explains this by saying "that by the sustained and fervent exercise of acts of the infused virtues, the habit is so established in the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, n. 39. "Et sic intelligi potest D. Thomas cum in illo loco ex quaestione XVII de veritate dicit: 'Per actus virtutum infusarum gigni habitum,' id est, non formaliter per illos actus, sed quasi dispositivè, quatenus ex frequentatione circa talem materiam originari potest, et facilitari, quod etiam sub alio motivo possit circa eandem operari."

⁹² Cf. Billuart, F. C. R., *Summa Sancti Thomae* (Editio Nova, Paris, Letouzey et Ané), Vol. II, *Tractatus de Passionibus et Virtutibus*, Disertatio II, Article 3.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, Art 3, resp ad abj. 3. "Potest tamen dici quod (actus supematurales) generent habitum alterum inferioris ordinis non quidem formaliter sed dispositivè, quia hoc ipso quo quis iterat actus virtutum infusarum, disponitur et facilitatur ut circa eandem materiam operetur ex motivo naturali, sicque transeundo de uno motivo in aliud, generatur virtus acquisita circa eandem materiam."

⁹⁴ Cf. Schiffini, Sancto, *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Friburgi Brigoviae, Herder, Typography Editoris Pontificii, 1904), Disputatio I, Section VI.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 39, Objectio II. "Siquidem vero, ut ostensum est, ad tale augmentum (facilitatis) actus non cooperantur nisi moraliter, in modum impetrationis vel meritii, consimili ratione intrinseca illa facilitas, sive pronitas potentiae ad actum."

soul that it is, as it were, converted into nature.”⁹⁸ He goes on to say that the constant exercise of the infused virtues “leaves many of its vestiges in the faculty, for example, in the memory, and these vestiges, in turn, facilitate the exercise of virtue.”⁹⁷ In this way, the constant exercise of supernatural acts can be said to concur actively and physically to the beginnings of an acquired habit.⁹⁸

Neither John of St. Thomas, nor his followers, Billuart and Schiffini, discuss the question of whether or not a natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act of virtue. Hence it is impossible to determine their exact stand on that point. However, it is quite obvious that their teaching coincides rather closely with that conclusion, and for this reason their system can be associated with the foregoing opinion of Molina, Ripalda, Billot, and Merkelbach. On the other hand, since the mode of acquiring the natural habit seems to be distinct in each system, the two opinions cannot be strictly identified.

Article VI. Conclusion and Critical Estimate of the
Various Opinions Regarding Facility in the
Infused Virtues

We have listed five opinions of theologians in explanation of the facility which is found in the practice of the infused virtues. These five opinions are as follows:

- (1) Facility follows as a result of the interior increase and intensification of the infused virtues.
- (2) Repeated supernatural acts *quoad substantiam* produce a supernatural acquired habit, and this supernatural acquired habit is the source of facility in the infused virtues. (Hurtado.)
- (3) Repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues give rise to no acquired habits, either natural or supernatural. The

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, n. 39. “Quando longo et ferventi piorum actum exercitio, virtutes infusae ita in anima obfirmatur, ut quasi in naturam converti videantur.”

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, “Nam imprimis tale exercitium relinquit in potentia complura sui quasi vestigia, exempli gratia, memoriam sui, species bene ordinatus; quae quidem vestigia multam faciunt hoc ipsum exercitium.”

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, “Jam vero hac maxime ratione, frequentatio actuum active et physice concurrat ad genesis habitum acquiritorum.”

facility of the infused virtues is to be attributed *per se* to the grace of God, and *per accidens* to the repetition of acts of the infused virtues whereby the passions are moderated and impediments removed. (Medina, Sylvius, Suarez, and C. Mazzella.)

(4) Repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired natural habit, since a natural act is virtually contained in every supernatural act of virtue. This acquired natural habit is the source of facility in the infused virtues. (Molina, Ripalda, Billot and Merkelbach.)

(5) Repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate a natural acquired habit, not directly but dispositively, in as much as repeated acts of the infused virtues dispose the potency toward acquiring a natural habit of the same virtues. (John of St. Thomas, Billuart, Schiffini.)

There remains the task of evaluating and giving a critical estimate of these different opinions. As we have already seen, the first and second opinions are commonly rejected by theologians as contrary to both reason and experience. The first opinion, namely, that facility is a result of the increase and intensification of the infused virtues, is obviously false, for we know that all the infused virtues increase simultaneously in the same proportion and yet an increase in the facility of one of the infused virtues does not effect an increase in the facility of the other infused virtues. The second opinion, which places the source of facility in an acquired supernatural habit, is likewise false, for theologians commonly teach that supernatural habits cannot be acquired but are infused by God. Hence, both of these opinions are to be rejected as unsatisfactory.

As we have already seen in the previous article, the fourth and fifth opinions, though not identical, are remarkably similar in content. This similarity is so striking that we feel these two opinions can be grouped together, and the same critical estimate applied to both, making exceptions for their accidental differences. Both opinions maintain that by repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues, an acquired natural habit is generated; both opinions agree that the facility of the infused virtues is to be attributed to this acquired habit. They differ only accidentally, inasmuch as the fourth opinion attributes the origin of the

Facility in the Infused Moral Virtues

acquired habit to the fact that a natural act is virtually contained in every supernatural act of virtue, while the fifth opinion attributes the origin of the acquired habit to the close interrelation of natural and supernatural acts.

Since the fourth and fifth theories can be bracketed together, the field is narrowed down to two opinions of theologians. The third opinion, on the one hand, maintains that no acquired habit results from repeated acts of the infused virtues, and the facility of the infused virtues must be attributed *per se* to the grace of God, and *per accidens* to the repetition of supernatural acts, whereby the passions are moderated and impediments are removed. The fourth and fifth opinions, on the other hand, maintain that an acquired habit is formed from repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues, and the facility of the infused virtues is to be ascribed to this acquired natural habit. We have already given the principal arguments for both of these systems, so that here, we shall simply give a brief résumé of their teachings, attempting to determine which is the more correct.

Suarez, the chief proponent of the view that no acquired habit is formed from repeated acts of the infused virtues, lists three arguments defending his own opinion and attacking the position of his adversaries. We shall submit these arguments here, along with a refutation by Cardinal Billot, and after this, we shall give our own critical estimate of the two theories.

The first argument of Suarez insists that there is no basis for the assertion that supernatural acts of the infused virtues virtually contain natural acts of virtue. It is one thing for an act to be more perfect than another; it is another thing to assert that because it is more perfect, it virtually contains the inferior act.⁸⁸ In the present case, while the first assertion is true, the second assertion is false; neither does it follow from the first statement, nor can it be proven.

This objection, we believe, has been sufficiently answered by

⁸⁹ Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. IX, Book VI, Chap. 14, n. 14. "Sine fundamento enim dicitur actum fidei infusae eminenter continere actum fidei acquisitae. Aliud est enim esse eminentiorem. id est, perfectioris speciei et naturae, aliud eminenter continere illum, et licet primum sit verum, secundum falsum est, nec ex promo sequitur, neque aliunde ostendi potest."

Billot in the previous article where we treated his theory explaining the manner in which a supernatural act virtually contains a natural act of virtue. It is to be recalled that he distinguished between the substance of the supernatural act and its supernatural mode, and demonstrated how the natural act is virtually contained in the supernatural act just as the perfections of animality are virtually contained in the notion of man. In each case, there is retained the univocal predication.

The second objection of Suarez is based on the absurdities which follow from the position of his adversaries. If you grant their assertion that supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired habit, then you would be logically forced to the admission that supernatural habits could elicit natural acts, which is obviously false.¹⁰⁰

Billot answers that no such absurdity follows from his system. Furthermore, he denies that a strict parity can be instituted between the mode in which acts are caused by a habit, and the mode in which a habit is caused by repeated acts.^{101*} For an act is caused by a habit inasmuch as it proceeds from the faculty formally determined by the habit to a special mode of operation. Whence it is conceded that from a supernatural habit there cannot be produced any natural act. For either the act flows from the habit or it does not. If the act flows from a supernatural habit, then the act must necessarily be supernatural. 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, continues Billot, is entirely different from the manner in which a habit is produced by repeated acts.¹¹² For a habit is caused by repeated acts insofar as the operative faculty receives

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 14. "Alias dicere quis posset etiam habitum infusum fidei posse elicere actum fidei naturalis, quia eminenter continet illum. Cur enim haec continentia eminentialis magis tribuetur actui quam habitui? Consequens autem est falsum, alias fides divina eliceret actum de se fallibilem, quid repugnat perfectioni ejus."

¹⁰¹ Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Generale Prolegomenon (I-IIae, Qq. 49-61), η, II, section 3, Obj. Tertio. "Respondeo negando antecedens quoad paritatem quam adstruit inter modum quo actus causatur ab habitu, et quo habitus causatur ab actu repetito."

^{m2} *Ibid.*, section 3, Obj. Tertio.

the act and its impression. The general principle is that the passive agent receives the impression of the active element according to its own nature, neither more nor less. *Quidquid recipitur, secundum modum recipientis recipitur.* Billot illustrates his meaning by an example. It is the nature of wax to receive the impression of a seal, and this it does, regardless of whether or not the instrument used to imprint the seal was gold, silver, copper, or lead. By its very nature, the wax receives the imprint of the seal, but it does not record whether or not this seal was made by a gold, silver, copper or leaden instrument, for this the wax is unable to do according to its nature. So also in the present case, supernatural acts do not leave the impression of their supernaturality upon the faculty, for it is not the nature of the faculty to receive any supernatural disposition, unless according to its obediential potency which can be reduced to act by God alone. However, 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 repeating similar acts, and in this way supernatural acts generate an acquired natural habit in the faculty.¹⁰³

The third objection of Suarez is based on the fact that the adversaries confuse the orders of nature and grace in asserting that supernatural acts generate a natural acquired habit. And even if such a natural habit was formed, says Suarez, it would not be able to contribute anything to the supernatural object of the acts, for the acquired habit is natural and the acts are supernatural.¹⁰⁴

Billot responds to this objection with a distinction. He concedes that a natural habit can contribute nothing to a super-

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, section 3, Obj. Tertio. "Verumtamen, quia iidem illi actus supernaturales eundem habent modum tendendi in objectum, quem habuissent remota supernaturalitate, ideo eodem quoque modo sigillant facultatem ac quilibet naturales actus, relinquendo in ea propensionem ad actus similes tendentiae, ac per hoc, eodem modo generant habitum entitative naturalem."

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 15. "Nulla est ergo talis continentia eminentialis neque oportet confundere ordines actuum et habituum gratiae et naturae; condistinguuntur enim inter se tanquam species particulares diversorum ordinum, non tanquam cause universalis, et effectus particularis et aequivocus."

natural object *per se* and *ratione sui*; he denies that such a habit contributes nothing to the supernatural object when it is elevated to the supernatural order by the infused virtues.¹⁰⁵ He explains his distinction by saying that the proximate principle of a meritorious act is not only the infused virtue, but also the natural faculty insofar as it is informed by the infused virtue. In the beginning of the supernatural act, says Billot, 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 virtues¹⁰⁶ the faculty becomes disciplined and prompt to 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. In this way, the natural acquired habit does add something to supernatural acts, namely, a mode of facility.

In answer to the other objection, that his system confuses the orders of nature and grace, Billot states that certain theologians seem inclined to divorce entirely the orders of nature and grace, fearing the error of Pelagianism, whereas, in reality, there are no grounds for such a fear. As if, says Billot, nature is not the necessary fundament of grace! As if a good habit of nature confers nothing to the operations of grace! St. Thomas affirms that certain persons are disposed “by a proper disposition of **the body** to chastity, meekness, and to other virtues of this **kind.**”¹⁰⁷ 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?¹⁰⁸

As to which opinion is more correct, the opinion of Suarez or

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, sectio 3, Obj. Secundo. “Nihil naturale juvat ad finem vitae aeternae, per se et ratione sui, concedo. Etiam ut elevatum per donum gratiae, nego.”

¹⁰⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, Quaest LI, Art. 1, c. “Sunt quidam enim dispositi ex propria corporis complexione ad castitatem, vel mansuetudinem, vel ad alia hujusmodi.”

¹⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, section 3, Obj. Secundo, in finem. “Si ergo in ardua via virtutum supernaturalium tantum juvat, accedente gratia, indoles naturalis et ipsa corporis complexio, non juvaret acquisita per ipsissimarum virtutum exercitatio?”

the opinion of Billot, we are inclined to agree with the conclusions of Cardinal Billot and his associates in maintaining that repeated acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired natural habit which is responsible for the facility of the infused virtues. The fact is quite obvious, as theologians admit, that a certain facility does follow from repeated acts of the infused virtues. This facility can be accounted for either in a natural or a supernatural manner, and from the general principles of theology, we cannot have recourse to the supernatural when there is a satisfactory natural explanation at hand for some particular fact. To our way of thinking, there is such a natural explanation to be had for the facility experienced in the practice of the infused virtues, namely, that by the repetition of these acts there is formed a natural acquired habit. Certainly, this opinion does not detract in any way from the importance of grace, neither does it entirely exclude grace from the development of this facility. It simply states that this facility is more properly attributed to nature than to grace. Catholic theology teaches that the principles of nature and grace are not opposed, that "grace does not violate but perfects nature." This being true, then why should an acquired habit not be developed from repeated acts of the infused virtues? On the other hand, if such were not the case, we would be inclined to believe that grace did violate nature in not permitting the connatural acquisition of facility in the practice of the infused virtues. Moreover, we are inclined to agree with the opinion that a natural act is virtually contained in every supernatural act of virtue, since this seems to us a reasonable solution of the difficulty. The proponents of this view, notably Cardinal Billot, present a strong case for this opinion, and the arguments of the opposition do not seem to weaken their case to any appreciable extent. For these reasons, we believe the opinion of Billot and his associates to be the more satisfactory and the more consistent explanation of facility in the infused virtues.

On the contrary, the conclusions of the opposite opinion seem to be inconsistent and unsatisfactory. In their theory, facility is attributed, at one time, to the grace of God; at another time, to the moderation of the passions and the removal of difficulties. In attributing facility to the grace of God, we believe that they

adduce a supernatural cause for a fact which already has a sufficient natural explanation. In attributing facility to the moderation of the passions and the removal of difficulties, we are inclined to believe that they implicitly admit our conclusion, namely, that these things can only come about as a result of an acquired natural habit.

The conclusions to be drawn from this present treatment seem obvious, namely, that it is possible to acquire facility in the infused moral virtues, supposing of course that we make use of the means provided by nature and grace. The infused moral virtues *per se* make supernatural acts possible, 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 cooperating with the means provided by nature and grace. This truth is well stated in the following words :

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 cooperate with divine grace and act in accordance with such infused principles or virtues in order to acquire solid virtue. The infused virtues are like the "talents"⁷⁰⁸ which the nobleman of the parable gave his servants, saying, "Trade till I come."⁷⁰⁹ The servant who kept his "talent" idle is called a "wicked servant," and is punished for his inactivity. Operative principles of a supernatural order were infused in our souls that they might be put to work and produce supernatural acts.¹¹⁰

25:14 ff.; *Luke*, 19:12 ff.

¹⁰⁹ *Luke*, 19:13.

¹¹⁰ Parente, P., *The Ascetical Life* (B. Herder, St. Louis, 1944), pp. 125-126.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTION OF FACILITY IN THE VIRTUES

ARTICLE I. FACILITY AS A QUALITY OF VIRTUE ACCORDING TO THE PAGAN PHILOSOPHERS (460-322 B. C.)

Prior to the great philosophical systems of the Greeks, we find very little mention of virtue. The Greek philosophers, however, arrived at a theory of natural virtue which is practically identical with our own.

Socrates (460-399 B. C.) seems to have been the first to form a system of ethics and give an analysis of the virtues. Since Socrates himself committed none of his doctrines to writing, we are indebted to his disciple, Plato, for our knowledge of his teachings. It is in the *Dialogues*, especially the *Dialogues with Meno and Euthydemus*, that Plato discusses the Socratic theory of virtue. The ultimate object of human existence, according to Socrates, is happiness, and the means to happiness is virtue.¹ Virtue, in turn, is wisdom, and there is no virtue apart from wisdom.² Therefore, it follows necessarily that any individual who is wise and intelligent will be virtuous. Also if wisdom is the only virtue, then ignorance, the lack of knowledge, is the only vice. We might mention two more corollaries from the doctrine of Socrates, namely, since wisdom is virtue, true happiness cannot be found in the pleasures of this world. Again, if

¹ Plato, *Dialogue with Euthydemus* (L.C.L., IV, p. 415. Trans. by W. M. Lamb, 1924) : "We are all eager to be happy, and we are found to become so by not only using things but using them aright"

² Plato, *Dialogue with Meno* (L.C.L., IV, p. 331), Trans. by W. M. Lamb, 1924) : "Then if virtue is something that is in the soul, and must needs be profitable, it ought to be wisdom, seeing that all the properties of the soul are in themselves neither profitable nor harmful, but are made either one or the other by the addition of wisdom or folly; and hence, by this argument, virtue being profitable must be a sort of wisdom."

wisdom is the only virtue, then the virtues are not really distinct from one another, for they are all identified with wisdom.

In general, we can say that these notions of Socrates are very imperfect, and in some instances, obviously fallacious. To say, for instance, that only wisdom is virtue, and that intellectual training alone suffices for virtuous living is a fallacy that many of our modern educators have only too well imitated. Experience has proven that discipline of the will must accompany intellectual training in order to effect true virtue, for knowledge, of itself, cannot constitute moral goodness. This would be the equivalent of saying that a man becomes a good swimmer by learning the speculative principles of moving in the water, or that an individual becomes a good aviator by reading a handbook of flying instructions. However, regardless of what may be said against the Socratic theory of virtue, one thing must be said in its favor, namely, it was a beginning, it was a basis and a starting point from which other philosophers and scholars went on to build the system of natural virtue as we know it today.

Plato (427-347 b. c.), the illustrious disciple of Socrates, added much to the teaching of his master on the subject of virtue. Plato declares that the *Summum Bonum* consists in the perfect imitation of God, the highest good, an imitation which cannot be fully realized in this life.³⁴ Plato departs from the teaching of Socrates that wisdom is the only virtue, and makes place for other virtues such as justice, temperance, and fortitude. In fact, it is in the *Republic* of Plato that we find the first enumeration of the cardinal virtues. Although Plato states that man should aim at

³ Plato, *Laws*, Bk. IV (L.C.L. IX, pp. 295-296, Trans. by R. G. Bury, 1926): "What conduct, then, is dear to God and in his steps? . . . In our eyes God will be the 'measure of all things' in the highest degree—a degree much higher than is any man they talk of. He then, that is to become dear to such a one must needs become, so far as he possibly can, of a like character; and according to the present argument, he amongst us who is temperate is dear to God, since he is like him, while he that is not temperate is unlike and at enmity, as is also he who is unjust, and so likewise with the rest, by parity of reason."

⁴ Plato, *Republic*, Bk. IV (L.C.L. I, p. 347, Trans. by Paul Shorey, 1930): "I think our city, if it has been rightly founded, is good in the full sense of the word . . . Clearly, then, it will be wise, brave, sober and just"

being virtuous, he gives no satisfactory explanation of how this is to be accomplished except to suggest that it is the function of the State to train its citizens in virtue.]

Plato's notion of virtue, although an improvement on the Socratic theory, is none the less very imperfect, for one thing, Plato does not consider the virtues as habits. In fact, it is difficult to determine from his writings whether or not he realized that the virtues were habits. There is only one isolated passage in his writings where he seems to infer this truth. In this same passage, Plato indicates that we can acquire facility in the virtues by the repetition of their acts. Thus, in the Fourth Book of the *Republic*, he says :

Healthful things surely engender health and diseaseful disease. Then does not doing just acts engender justice, and unjust injustice?⁵

This text is one of the first statements of the important principle that repeated acts lead to good habits. However, Plato did not evolve the possibilities of this theory. It remained for his renowned disciple, Aristotle, to develop this teaching into one of the most important single factors in philosophy and education. As Professor Jowett remarks in the Introduction to his translation of the *Republic*:

We may observe how nearly Plato approaches the famous Aristotelian thesis that "good actions produce good habits." The words "as healthy practices produce health, so just practices produce justice" have a sound very like the *Nicomachean Ethics*. But we note also that an incidental remark in Plato has become a far reaching prin-

⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. IV (L.C.L. I, p. 331, Trans. by Paul Shorey, 1930) : "The State, if it once starts well, proceeds as it were in a cycle of growth. I mean that a sound nurture and education if kept up creates good natures in the state, and sound natures in turn receiving an education of this sort develop into better men than their predecessors both for other purposes and for the production of offspring as among animals also."

^e *Ibid.*, Bk. IV (L.C.L., p. 419, Trans. by Paul Shorey, 1930) :
τά μὲν ὑγιεινὰ ἐμποιοῖ, τὰ δὲ νοσώδη νοσόν. Ναί, οὐκ οὐν καὶ τὸ μὲν δίκαια
πράττειν δικαιοσύνην ἐμποιοῖ, τὸ δ' ἀδίκαια ἀδικίαν.

ciple in Aristotle, and an inseparable part of the great ethical system.⁷

It is therefore in the works of Aristotle that we find the complete and nearly perfect statement of natural virtue.

Unlike Plato, who began with ideas as the basis of observation, Aristotle (384-322 B. c.) chose rather to take the facts of experience as his starting point; thus, he analyzed more accurately, and sought to trace truths to their highest and ultimate causes. Aristotle agreed with his predecessors in affirming that the supreme good of man is happiness. But he disagreed with them on the means of attaining happiness. According to his way of thinking, happiness is that form of good which is peculiar to man, the good which is proper to a rational being. Since reason is man's greatest prerogative, it should be the aim of man's existence to live in conformity with reason, to live a life of virtue.⁸ Virtue, in turn, is not a feeling, but rather a fixed quality or habit of the mind⁹ and since virtue pertains both to the intellect and the will, there are both intellectual and moral virtues.¹⁰ Furthermore, both the intellectual and moral virtues follow a middle path between excess and defect, in the same way that an expert in any art avoids extremes and seeks and adopts the mean. Regarding this point, Aristotle says:

TJowett, B., *The Works of Plato*, Translated into English with Analysis and Introductions (Tudor Publishing Company, New York), Analysis, p. 90.

⁷Aristotle, *Eth. Nie.*, I, vii, 14 (L.C.L., p. 33, Trans. by H. Rackham 1926): "If we declare that the function of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with the rational principle . . . if then all this be so, the Good of man proves to be the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with the excellence of virtue, or if there be several human excellences of virtues, in conformity with the best and the most perfect among them."

• *Ibid.*, II, VI, 15 (L.C.L., p. 95, Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926): "Virtue then is a settled disposition of the mind as regards the choice of actions and feelings."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, xiii, 20 (L.C.L., p. 67, Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926): "Now virtue is also differentiated in correspondence with the division of the soul (intellectual and appetitive). Some forms of virtue are called intellectual virtues, others moral virtues."

If then, as we say, good craftsmen look to the mean as they work, and if virtue, like nature, is more perfect and better than any form of art, it follows that virtue aims at hitting the mean.¹¹

Whence does virtue arise? The intellectual virtues, according to Aristotle, are a result of observation and instruction, while the moral virtues are acquired as a result of practice.¹² Virtues, therefore, cannot be called endowments of nature, for nature gives only the capacity to receive them and this capacity must be brought to maturity by habit. Aristotle explains his meaning in the following words :

Moreover, the faculties given us by nature are bestowed on us first in a potential form ; we develop their exercise afterwards. This is clearly so with our senses: we did not acquire the faculty of sight or hearing by repeatedly seeing or listening, but the other way about—because we had the senses we began to use them, we did not get them by using them. The virtues on the other hand we acquire by first having actually practised them, just as we do the arts. We learn an art or craft by doing the things that we shall have to do when we have learned it: for instance, men become builders by building houses, harpers by playing on a harp. Similarly we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.¹³

¹¹ *Ibid.* - II, VII, VI, 9 (L.C.L., p. 93, Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926) :

σι δὴ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ τεχνίται, ὡ λέγομεν, προ τοῦτο βλέποντε ἐργάζονται, ἢ δ' ἀρετὴ πάση τέχνῃ ἀκριβέστερα καὶ ἀμείνων ἐστίν. ὡ σπερ καὶ ἡ φύσι τοῦ μέσου ἀν εἶη σταχιστικὴ.

¹² *Ibid.*, II, I, 1 (L.C.L., p. 71, Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926): "Virtue being, as we have seen, of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction, and therefore requires experience and time, whereas moral or ethical virtue is the product of habit"

¹³ *Ibid.*, II, I, 4 (L.C.L., p. 71-73, Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926) :

ἐπι, ὅσα μὲν φύσει ἡμῖν παραγίνεταί, τὰ δυνάμει τοῦτων πρότερον κομίζομεθα, ὕστερον δὲ τὰ ἐνεργείᾳ ἀποδίδομεν (ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν αἰσθητικῶν δήλον. οὐ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ πολλάκι ἰδεῖν ἢ πολλάκι ἀκοῦσαι τὰ ἀσθητῶν ἐλάδομεν, ἀλλ' ἀνάπαλιν ἔχοντε ἐχρήσαμεθα ὅταν χρῆσάμενοι ἐσχομενί. τὰ δ' ἀρετὰ λαμβάνομεν ἐνεργήσαντε πρότερον ὡσπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν ἂν γὰρ δεῖ μαθόντα ποιεῖν, τὰτα ποιούντε μὲν ἀναπαύομεν, ὅλον οἰκοδομοῦντε οἰκοδομοῖ. γίνονται καὶ κίναριζοντε κίναρισταί. ὁντω δὲ καὶ

Here, we find definitely stated the important principle that “the repetition of acts leads to a habit.” And according to Aristotle, virtues and vices have their origin in repeated acts. Just as we become proficient in the arts by practice, so also, it is the repetition of acts good or bad that makes us virtuous or vicious. Following this, Aristotle draws the following conclusion :

It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme importance.¹⁴

This is the underlying principle of Aristotle’s ethics throughout that man determines himself to be what he is by his habits. If a man wishes to be good and virtuous, he must exercise himself to the utmost, for “a virtuous life involves serious purpose, and does not consist in amusement.”¹⁵

Although Aristotle makes no specific mention of facility in the practice of virtue, it is obvious from his writings that such facility results from the constant repetition of virtuous acts. This is especially evidenced by his words :

Men become builders by building houses, harpers by playing on a harp. Similarly we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.¹⁶

This Aristotelian principle that “good actions produce good habits” was later adopted as the basis of Christian Ethics, and

τὰ μὲν δίκαια πράττοντες δίκαιοι γινόμενα, τὰ δὲ σώφρονα σώφρονες . τὰ δ’ ἀνδρεία ἀνδρείοι.

Ibid., II, I, 8 (L.C.L., p. 75, Trans, by H. Rackham, 1926) :

οὐ μικρόν οὖν διαφέρει το οὕτω ἡ οὕτω εὐβύ ἐκ νέων ἐδίξεσιταί, ἀλλὰ παμπλοῦδ μάλλον δὲ τὰ παν.

is *Ibid.*, X, VI, 6 (L.C.L., p. 611, Trans, by H. Rackham, 1926) :

δοκεῖ δ’ ὁ εὐδαιμων βίω κατ’ ἀρετὴν εἶναι· αὐτὸ δὲ μετὰ σπουδῆς , ὄλλ’ οὐκ ἐν παιδία.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II, I, 4 (L.C.L., p. 73, Trans, by H. Rackham, 1926) :

οικοδομοῦντες οἰκοδόμοι γίνονται καὶ κιθαρίζοντες κιθαρισταὶ οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὰ μὲν δίκαια πράττοντες δίκαιοι γινόμενα, τὰ δὲ σώφρονα σώφρονες , τὰ δ’ ἀνδρεία ἀνδρείοι.

is still retained in theology in connection with the acquisition of the natural virtues. Indeed, it would be difficult to evaluate the debt that Catholic thought owes to Aristotelian philosophy.

ARTICLE II. FACILITY AS A QUALITY OF VIRTUE ACCORDING TO THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS. (TIME OF CHRIST—300 A. D.)

With the coming of Christ, and the statement of His divine teachings, the supernatural aspect of virtue was emphasized. It was dearly taught that the function of virtue is to conduct man to a supernatural end, the beatific vision of God.¹⁷ Hence, virtue itself must become supernatural. This process did not imply the destruction of natural virtue, but rather, its perfection. Just as grace perfects nature but does not destroy it, so also, supernatural virtue perfected natural virtue without destroying it. Hence, we find no texts in the teaching of Our Lord where natural virtue is condemned as something evil. Christ did not condemn natural virtue as bad, He simply proclaimed supernatural virtue to be immeasurably better and more perfect.

Again, we find no statements of Our Lord to the effect that human effort and exertion no longer have place in His system. Our actions are elevated to a supernatural plane, true; but still they must be exercised through natural means, and Christ did not exclude the use of natural means in the acquisition of virtue. He told His Apostles: "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation."¹⁸ Prayer is certainly a supernatural means, but the "watching" implies that we are to use our senses and our natural faculties to the end of avoiding the occasions of sin. The natural virtues are still retained, but they must become supernaturalized, to natural goodness must be added supernatural goodness:

You therefore, are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.¹⁹

Christ enjoined the practice of virtue on His followers when He said:

¹⁷ Cf. 7 *Corinthians*, 13:12.

¹⁸ *Matt.*, 26:41.

5:46-48.

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.²⁰

How close is this description of the Christian life to the life of natural virtue which Aristotle described as "a life of serious purpose, not a life of amusement."²¹ All of the effort and energy used to acquire natural virtue is still prescribed in the Christian life, but it is now of a higher order and tending to a sublime End beyond the vision and range of natural man. Even our Divine Saviour, enriched as He was with the most sublime supernatural perfections, also possessed in His human soul the natural virtues in an eminent degree.²² Accordingly, those who profess to be His followers must cultivate the natural as well as the supernatural virtues.

The idea of virtue as outlined in the writings of St. Paul clearly shows that it is obtained not only by grace and infusion, but by effort and exertion as well:

But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest after preaching to others I myself should be rejected.²³

And in the *First Epistle to Timothy*, St. Paul compares the virtues with bodily training as he tells Timothy: "Train thyself in godliness."²⁴ These texts and similar passages in the writings of St. Paul seem to confirm our previously stated thesis that the supernatural virtues do not entirely supplant the natural virtues. The question might arise, how do natural virtues remain in the supernatural system? The answer is that the natural virtues remain as physical determinations of the faculties to a certain

Matt., 16:24.

²¹ Aristotle, *op. cit.*, X (L.C.L., p. 611, Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926): οΓτο; δέ μετά σπουδῆς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν παιδίᾳ.

²² St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, III, Quaest. VII, Art. II, c. "Unde cum gratia Christi fuerit perfectissima, consequens est, quod ex ipsa processerint virtutes ad perficiendum singulas potentias animae quantum ad omnes animae actus; et ita Christus habuit omnes virtutes." Cfr. Satolli, *Summa Theologica* (Rome, A. Befani, 1888), Vol. 5, *De Incarnatione*, Pars Prima, Quaest. VII, n. 4.

²³ *7 Corinthians*, 9:27.

1 Timothy, 4:8. γύμναζε δέ σεαυτὸν πρό ευσέβειαν.

course of action, in other words, they remain as habits in the soul. However, as regards intrinsically ordinating our actions toward their supernatural ultimate End, there is no need for them, for this can be effected by supernatural virtue alone. Nevertheless, the natural virtues are important inasmuch as they complement the supernatural virtues, and are responsible for the ease and facility with which we practice these virtues. For although acquired habits have nothing positive to do with the power of attaining to a supernatural end, they have a great deal to do with the ease of attaining to it.

In the early documents of the Church, the *Didaché*,²⁵ the Letter of Barnabas,²⁶ Pope Clement's letter to the Corinthians,²⁷ the letters of Ignatius²⁸ and Polycarp,²⁹ and the Shepherd of Hermas,³⁰ there is very little mention of moral virtue. The theological virtues were, for the most part, stressed by these early Christian writers. This is especially true of St. Polycarp's letter to the Philippians.³¹ In general, the character of these works is doctrinal and hortatory. There are occasional references and exhortations to good works, but no specific treatment of the moral virtues.

Even the Greek Apologists, who were the real founders of a progressive theology, did not treat the philosophical nature of the virtues. There are some mentions of virtue in their works, notably in Theophilus of Antioch,³² Clement of Alexandria,³³ and Origen,³⁴

25 Cf. *The Didaché (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)*, (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Doctrina Duodecim Apostolorum*, Tübingen, 1887).

28 Cf. *The (Spurious) Letter of Barnabas* (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Die Apostolischen Vater*, Tübingen, 1906, 2 auflage, p. 29).

27 Cf. Pope Clement, *Letter to the Corinthians* (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Ibid.*, p. 33).

28 Cf. St. Ignatius, *Letters* (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Ibid.*, pp. 80-108).

29 Cf. St. Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Ibid.*, pp. 109 ff.).

30 Cf. *The Shepherd of Hermas* (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Ibid.*, pp. 144 ff.).

« Cf. St. Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* (Ed. by F. X. Funk, *Ibid.*, p. 110).

32 Cf. Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolyicum* (PG 6).

33 Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Pedagogus* (PG 8:250 ff.).

34 Cf. Origen, *Libellus De Oratione* (PG 11:415 ff.).

but for the most part, their considerations of virtue are of a general nature and only incidental to their apologetic writings. Perhaps the best treatment of virtue, in these early apologetic writings, is to be found in the *Pedagogus* of Clement of Alexandria. In this work, Christ is represented as the Divine Teacher, instructing His pupils, all Christians, in the way of virtue and sanctity.³⁵

Among the Latin Apologists of this same period, Tertullian³⁶ has some excellent writings on the subject of Christian virtue, but mostly from an apologetic point of view. The same thing is true of his disciple, St. Cyprian.³⁷ Cyprian proves that each Christian is, under grace, capable of making progress in virtue and likening himself to the image of Our Lord.³⁸ However, he does not treat the virtues as habits, nor does he give any detailed analysis of them.

Article III. The Progressive Patristic Period (300-500 a. d.)

The characteristic of this period is the introduction of natural virtue into the Patristic writings, also the insistence on the part of human energy and effort in the acquisition of the virtues. Among the Greek Fathers, we find the following statement in the works of Macarius of Egypt:

He who forces and compels himself to the practice of prayer, as I have said; cannot likewise develop in himself humility, charity, meekness, and the order of the other virtues, unless he forces himself to it by violence.³⁹

In the works of the three Cappadocians, St. Basil,⁴⁰ St. Gregory

³⁵ Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Pedagogus* (PG 8:2S0 ff.).

³⁶ Cf. Tertullian, *Apologeticum* (PL 1-2).

³⁷ St. Cyprian, *Liber De Bono Patientiae* (PL 4:622 ff.).

³⁸ St. Cyprian, *De Zelo et Livore* (PL 4:648): “Imaginem autem coelestem portare non possumus, nisi in eo quod esse jam coepimus, Christi similitudinam praebeamus.”

³⁹ Macarius, *Liber de Libertate Mentis* (PG 34:951) “Qui ad orationem duntaxat vi se adhibita cogit, uti prius exposui; praeterea vero ad humilitatem, ad charitatem, ad mansuetudinem, aliarumque virtutum ordinem in se accersendum non elaborat, nec se in id violentia adigit.”

⁴⁰ St Basil, *De Humilitate* (PG 31.3:526 ff.), etiam *Homilia Quod Mundanis Adhaerendum Non Sit* (PG 31,3:539 ff.).

of Nazianus,⁴¹ and St. Gregory of Nyssa,⁴² we also find mention of the personal initiative which must be put forth in the attainment of virtue. This is especially verified in the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa.⁴³ St. John Chrysostom likewise emphasizes the importance of using to the fullest one's own energy, one's natural gifts of mind and body toward the attainment of Christian virtue.⁴⁴

This emphasis on human effort in the acquisition of virtue is even more clearly stressed by the Latin bathers. Lactantius⁴⁵ testifies to the fact that "virtue cannot be attained without the greatest difficulty and labor on our part." Regarding facility in the practice of virtue, Lactantius says:

Virtue consists in the knowledge of God, and everything seems difficult so long as you are unacquainted with Him; when you know Him, everything becomes easy.⁴⁶⁴⁷

St. Ambrose, in his treatise *De Abraham Libri Duo* vividly describes the difficulties and hardships of the Christian life. St. Jerome gives the following testimony to the importance of hard work and natural effort which attends the prosecution of virtue. In one of his letters to Paulina, he says:

I am anxious that in you there should be nothing mediocre: everything supreme, everything perfect, is

41 Cf. St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio II, Apologetica* (PG 35:407) etiam *Oratio IP, Contra Julianum* (PG 35:531 ff.).

42 Cf. St. Gregory Nyssa, *De Professione Christiana* (PG 46:238 ff.).

43 St. Gregory Nyssa, *De Perfecta Christiana Forma* (PG 46:263). "Quocirca, nisi prius caro mortificatur membris, quae sunt super terram, quibus obsequimur appetitui, per hostiam viventem sacrificetur, beneplacens et perfecti Dei voluntas sine impedimento non potest in vita credentium observari."

44 Cf. St. John Chrysostom, *Homilia XX In Actum Apostolorum*, Chap. IX, v. 10 (P.G. 60, 14:158).

45 Lactantius, *De Pero Cultu*, Chap. VII (PL 5:659). "Quoniam ad bonum, quod summum atque sublime est, nisi cum summa difficultate ac labore non potest proveniri."

46 Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum*, VI, 23. (CSEL 19:571:7 f.)

"Nam quia virtus in Dei agnitione consistit, omnia gravia sunt, dum ignores, ubi cognoveris, facilia" (Ed. by Brant and Laubann). (Cfr. PL 6:721.)

47 Cf. St. Ambrose, *De Abraham Libri Duo*, Lib. 1 (PL 6:659 ff.).

what I desire. Gird your loins. Nothing is achieved without great effort.⁴⁸

In the writings of St. Augustine, we find the most complete of all the early treatises on virtue. Augustine defines virtue as “a good quality of the mind by which we live rightly, and which cannot be put to an evil use, which God produces in us without our co-operation.”⁴⁹ As it stands, this definition includes only the infused virtues, and it is true that these virtues were emphasized by St. Augustine. However, elsewhere in his writings, he includes the acquired as well as the infused virtues under a broader definition of virtue, “conduct in accordance with right reason.”⁵⁰

According to Augustine, the supreme good of man consists in the eternal contemplation of God, and here on earth it is man's duty so to act that he may attain the happiness which is reserved for him beyond the grave. The path of duty is clearly marked out by the divine law.⁵¹ The destiny of the human soul and the law of God, therefore, are the determinants of moral good. In order to fulfill the law of God, man must practice virtue. Virtue does not imply apathy; the emotions are not to be destroyed or eradicated, but to be kept under control and restrained within the limits prescribed by the law of God. The law of God is the law of love.⁵² Man should love God above all things; he should love himself with a rational love seeking what is best for himself in the

⁴⁸ St Jerome, *Epistola ad Paulinam*, n. 58 (PL 22:586): “Nihil in te mediocre esse contentus sum; totum summum, totum perfectum desidero, Accingere, quaeso te, accingere, Nihil sine magno labore vita dedit mortalibus.”

⁴⁹ St Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Lib. 2, Chap. 19 (PL 32:1268). “Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur et nemo male utitur et quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur.” Cfr. *Contra Julianum*, Chap. 3, n. 15-20 (PL 44:743-748), etiam *Super Psal. 118*, cone. 26, ante med. (PL 37:1577).

⁵⁰ St Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 9. (CSEL 40,2:21): “Hi motus, hi adfectus de amore boni et de sancta caritate venientes, si vitia vocanda sunt, sinamus, ut ea, quae vere vitia sunt, virtutes vocentur. Sed cum rectam rationem sequantur istae adfectiones, quando ubi oportet adhibentur, quis eas tunc morbos seu vitiosas passiones audeat dicere?” (Cfr. PL 41:416).

⁵¹ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Lib. 1, Chap. 6 (PL 32:1228).

⁵² Cf. St. Augustine, *In Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* (PL 35:2031): “Deus Dilectio est”

light of his eternal destiny; he should also love his fellow men and desire what is best for them. Charity, which is love, is the foundation of all the virtues?⁵³ Even from this sketchy outline of his doctrine, it is possible to glean some idea of the vastness of Augustine's thought. His writings reveal a thorough knowledge of the virtues, and it is little wonder that his ideas exerted such a powerful influence on succeeding theological thought. In concluding this study of the Latin Fathers, we might mention the works of St. Leo the Great.⁵⁴ His sermons, especially, contain excellent material on the virtues and are filled with frequent exhortations to practice natural privations and mortifications as a means to virtue.

In summary of the writings of the Early Fathers, we can say that, with the exception of Lactantius, there are no explicit statements regarding facility in the practice of the virtues. However, inasmuch as they emphasize the importance of personal effort and initiative in the performance of good works, the Fathers seem to indicate implicitly that some measure of facility in virtue can be obtained in this way.

ARTICLE IV. THE LATE PATRISTIC AND EARLY MEDIAEVAL PERIOD (500-1100 a. d.)

The early Medieval Period is *often* regarded as unproductive of theologians and theological thought of any importance. While it is true that this period suffers by comparison with the ages which immediately precede and follow it, there is no basis for the assertion that it is entirely unfruitful of any contribution to theological development. The causes which made this period less productive of scholarship, were to a large extent negative; the absence of civil peace, the failure of many to see the union between revelation and philosophy, the fewness of new heresies demanding a clearer explanation of doctrine. However, even in this period, there were exceptional minds which originated new

⁵³ Cf. St. Augustine, *In Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* (PL 35:2033), "Dilige et quod vis fac: sive taceas, dilectione taceas: sive clames, dilectione clames: sive emendas, dilectione emendas: sive parcas, dilectione parcas: radix sit intus dilectionis, non potest de ista radice nisi bonum existere."

⁵⁴ Cf. St. Leo the Great, *Homiliae* (PL 54:142 ff.).

theological thought. The most important contribution of this period is the first systematic treatment of virtue and vice.

The first work worthy of mention in the Mediaeval Period is the *Theologia Mystica* of Dionysius the Pseudo-Aereopagite,⁵³ which was written at the close of the fifth century. The author of this work is unknown. He is referred to as Pseudo-Aereopagite, because for some time, this work was erroneously attributed to Dionysius the Aereopagite. The *Theologia Mystica* contains many references to virtue, including an accurate analysis of the theological and moral virtues. However, it does not concern itself much with the nature of the virtues or give anything approaching a scientific treatment of the virtues.

Perhaps the most important Eastern writer of the Medieval Period from the standpoint of our subject is St. John Climacus (ca. 525-605). His work, *Scala Paradisi*, from which the Saint receives his epithet of Climacus,⁵⁶ is one of the first complete treatises on the virtues. The author gives prominent place to the virtues, and traces the progress of a Christian from his first advance in virtue to the summit of perfection. The initial step toward a virtuous life, according to Climacus, is the renunciation of the world. After this, we must set ourselves to the task of mortifying our body with great labor and care, denying ourselves all those things which before were occasions of sin in our lives. The practice of virtue is difficult in the beginning but with constant exertion and effort, it is made easy. For after the initial hardships of virtue, there comes to us a certain ease and joy in the performance of good works. Regarding this point, Climacus says :

When we first abandon the profane life we enter with enormous bitterness and struggle of soul into the arduous path of virtue. But after we have gone a little way, we complete the rest of the journey almost without trouble. For when our mortal feeling of the body is absorbed and subdued by the alacrity of the soul, we exercise virtue with eagerness, yearning and joy, as if we were afire with a heavenly flame.⁵⁷

⁵³ Cf. Dionysius, *Theologia Mystica* (PG 3:1017-18).

⁵⁶ St. John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi* (PG 88:631 ff.).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 9 (PG 88:639): "In abdicatae profanae vitae exordio ingenti

It is difficult to determine from this passage whether Climacus **attributes** facility to the grace of God or to the constant repetition of virtuous acts. It is obvious, however, from other passages in his writings that he attaches considerable importance to acquired **habits** of virtue. Thus, commenting on the words of a certain Abbot, Isaias, Climacus says :

Sometimes he speaks of violence, as when he says, "A monk is an assiduous violence to nature." He wishes to say that when a way of acting is fixed and implanted in nature, as is commonly said, and then is changed, it is a violence to convert these inveterate habits and to transfer to another way of life, whence Christ has said, "The kingdom of heaven bears violence."⁵⁸

Despite the emphasis that he places on acquired habits and personal effort, Climacus avoids the tendency of certain Eastern writers to over-emphasize and exaggerate ascetic methods. According to the doctrine of Climacus, virtue is always to be found "in a middle path between excess and defect."⁵⁹ He concludes his work by showing the effects of virtue. "Heaven has for its ornament, the stars ; virtue has for its ornament, tranquillity and **peace.**"⁶⁰

This work of Climacus deserves to be called the first scientific

cum animi acerbitate et labore arduam virtutis viam ingredimur. Sed aliquantulum progressi, sine molestia fere, quod reliquum est itineris conficimus. Quando mortalis noster corporis sensus per animi alacritatem absorptus et subactus est, virtutem cum studio, desiderio et gaudio, tanquam coelesti flamma succensi, exercemus."

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, I, 16 (PG 88:647) : "Passim nominat violentiam ut quando dicit: Monachus est assidua naturae violentia. Vult ergo dicere, quod consuetudine per habitum infixam, et in naturam, ut vulgo dicitur, mutata et versa, violentia sit inveteratos mores mutare, et in aliam vivendi rationem transferre : unde Christus dicit : Regnum coelorum vim patitur."

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, II, 20 (PG 88:654) : "Abjicere bona facile est: comparare autem difficile; duas enim satellites vitium habet, quibus graviter virtutem hinc et inde oppugnat : Hinc per excessum urgens, inde per defectum ; virtus autem in medio consistens adversus alterutrum (vicissim adversus utrumque), hostium semper cogitur depugnare."

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, XXIX, 445 (PG 88:1147) : "Firmamentum quidem pro ornatu habet stellas : animi vero tranquillitas virtutes."

treatise on the virtues. The treatment of the virtues in his writings is both clear and concise, and it is interesting to note that in certain passages of his writings there is a certain similarity to Aristotelian thought. The main theme of Climacus seems to be that "we should work as if everything depended on our own efforts, and pray as if everything depended on God." For it is not enough to love God, we must give expression to that love in the labors and mortifications which accompany the acquisition of virtue.⁶¹ In summary, the *Scala Paradisi* of St. John Climacus is the most satisfactory expression of the earlier writers on the subject of virtue. It is the forerunner of the more specific and specialized treatises of the Scholastic theologians.

The other Eastern writers of this period, with the possible exception of St. John Damascene, do not approach the clarity or thoroughness of John Climacus. In his brief but comprehensive work, *De Virtute et Vitio*, St. John Damascene (ca. 676-754) states that since man is composed of two elements, body and soul, it follows that his virtues and vices will correspond to this two-fold division.⁶² In precise and orderly style, the author goes on to enumerate the virtues, stating whether they belong more properly to the body or to the soul. His classification of the virtues is quite comprehensive, including the theological and moral virtues, with the latter virtues being listed at some length. Perhaps the most striking feature of Damascene's work is his order and division. As was the case with John Climacus, one detects a certain similarity to Aristotelian method in John Damascene. Among the lesser known authors who wrote on the subject of virtue were Sophronius and St. Maximus. In his homilies,⁶³ Sophronius treats the subject of virtue and vice but not at any length. The work of St. Maximus, *Liber Asceticus*, is a treatise on mystical theology which describes the dialogue between an elderly monk and a young postulant whom he is instructing in the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, V, 137 (PG 88:790): "Charitas ergo Deum expellit negligentiam."

⁶² Cf. St. John Damascene, *De Virtute et Vitio*, 509, V (PG 95:86): "Animadvertendum est, hominem, cum ex duabus constat, anima scilicet et corpore, duplices quoque sensus habere, eorumque duplices esse facultates . . . Hinc earum virtutes et vitia duplicita."

⁶³ Cf. Sophronius, *Homilia* (PG 87, 3:3147).

way of virtue. The author's doctrine can be summed up in the statement that there are three requisites for a virtuous life, love, mortification, and prayer.⁶⁴ The entire treatise is a development of these three means of perfection.

The topic of virtue was also discussed by the Latin Fathers of the Medieval Period. Nicetas⁶⁵ and Caesarius of Arles⁶⁶ although they do not give a detailed treatment of the virtues, do mention this subject throughout their writings. Boethius (480-526), who is principally noted for his translation and explanation of Aristotle's treatises on logic, gives scant mention to the virtues in his famous work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. He does describe the work of virtue and states the Aristotelian idea that the virtues constitute a middle path between excess and defect, but this is the entire extent of his treatment.⁶⁷ He concludes his work with an exhortation to detest vice and practice virtue.⁶⁸ There are many treatises on the virtues to be found among the works of the Great Pope and Doctor of the Church, St. Gregory the Great, especially in his moral writings. In keeping with his passion for allegorizing Sacred Scripture, Gregory describes virtue by many figures of speech. For example, in his work *Regula Pastoralis*, Gregory compares the acquisition of virtue to a ship ascending the current of a river.⁶⁹ Just as the ship must either make its way against the current, or in turn, be forced backward by it, so also, the soul must either advance against the current of the passions or else be swept away by them.

Among the more scientific treatises on the virtues are the works

⁶⁴ Cf. St. Maximus, *Liber Asceticus*, 19, D (PG 90:926): "Fieri non potest ut animus perfecto Deo vacet, nisi tres istas virtutes paraverit; nempe dilectionem, abstinentiam (seu jejunium) et orationem."

⁶⁵ Cf. Nicetas, *De Ratione Fidei* (PL 52:847-853).

⁶⁶ Cf. Caesar of Aries, *Regula ad Monachos* (PL 67:1097).

⁶⁷ Cf. Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, IV, VII (PL 63:825): "Firmis medium viribus occupatae."

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, V, VI (PL 63-862); "Aversamini igitur vitia, colite virtutes, ad rectas spes animum sublevate, humiles preces in excelsa porrigite."

⁶⁹ Cf. St. Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*, XXXIV (PL 77:118): "In hoc quippe mundo humana anima quasi mare navis est contra icturo fluminis condescends: uno in loco nequaquam permittitur, quia adima relabitur, nisi ad summa conetur."

of St. Isidore of Seville (560-636) and Alcuin (735-804). St. Isidore's considerations of virtue, found in his work *Libri Sententiarum*, are brief and to the point. The author concerns himself principally with the origin of virtue, and under this heading he seems to indicate the Aristotelian doctrine that the virtues are caused by repeated acts.⁷⁰ According to St. Isidore, the attainment of facility in the practice of virtue does not follow immediately upon entrance into the virtuous life. Rather, it is a gradual process which begins and develops slowly with the repetition of virtuous acts. We begin the practice of virtue in small things, and little by little we are led to those virtues of a higher and more important order. To illustrate this point, St. Isidore uses the following analogy. The hardened sinner did not begin his evil career by committing great crimes, instead he began with small faults, and these small failings in turn, being unchecked, gradually and imperceptibly led to great sins. If we substitute virtue for vice in the foregoing description, says St. Isidore, we have an accurate account of the development of facility in the virtues.⁷¹ In the *Libri Sententiarum*, both the theological and moral virtues are discussed, and a clear picture is presented of the opposition between virtue and vice.⁷² In conclusion, the work of St. Isidore of Seville is one of the most advanced presentations of virtue among the Latin Fathers. It is excelled only by the treatise of Alcuin.

The scientific treatises on virtue, begun in the East by John Climacus and John Damascene, find their counterpart and perhaps even their perfection in the writings of Alcuin. In the works of this author, we discover a tract on the virtues which is very-similar both in content and method to the modern treatments of

⁷⁰ St. Isidore of Seville, *Sententiarum*, Lib. II, XXXIII (PL 83:635): "Sic vitio vitium gignitur, sicut virtus virtute concipitur."

⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, Lib. II, XXXVI (PL 83:637): "Quemadmodum ad virtutem tendentes culmen, non a summis inchoant, sed a modicis, ut sensim ad altiora pertingant, ita et qui dilabuntur ad vitia, non statim a magnis criminibus incipiunt, sed a modicis assuescunt, et sic in maximo prouunt. Sicut paulatim homo a minimis vitiis in maximis proruit, ita a modicis virtutibus gradatim ad ea quae sunt excelsa contendit."

⁷² Cf. *Ibid.*, Lib. III, XXXVI, XXXVII (PL 83:637-638).

moral theology. Alcuin defines virtue as a habit,⁷³ enumerates and defines both the theological and the moral virtues.⁷⁴ Besides the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, Alcuin lists many other moral virtues which flow from the cardinal virtues as from a source. His treatise is lengthy and detailed, and complete in almost every respect. However, he does not mention facility, and does not express the idea that the virtues confer facility only in so far as this truth is contained in his statement that virtue is a habit.

With the exception of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the western writers who succeeded Alcuin are all relatively unimportant to our topic. Among these writers, we can list Paschasius Radbertus, Hincmar of Rheims, John Scotus Erigena, and Pope Leo IX. Paschasius Radbertus⁷⁵ is the author of an admirable and scholarly work on the theological virtues. Hincmar of Rheims and Pope Leo IX⁷⁷ have contributed popular, rather than scientific essays on the virtues. This is especially true of the work, *De Conflictu*, written by Leo IX. Written in the form of dialogue, this work represents virtue and vice conversing with one another, and in this way there is illustrated the contrast between the virtuous and vicious way of life.⁷⁸ The works of both Pope Leo and Hincmar are definitely inferior to the writings of Alcuin.

John Scotus Erigena (ca. 810-875) can be singled out for his original work in adapting philosophical to theological thought. However, he went to excess in borrowing his ideas from the Neo-Platonist school of philosophy, and some of their teachings led him into doctrinal errors which were later condemned by a decree of the Third Council of Valence in the year 855.⁷⁹ His principal error was centered around the idea of a "universe system," the

⁷³ Cf. Alcuin, *Liber De Virtutibus et Vitiis*, XXXV (PL 101:637): "Virtus est animi habitus, natura decus, vitae ratio, morum pietas, cultus divinitatis, honor hominis, aeternae beatitudinis meritum."

⁷⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, XXXV (PL 101:637). Cfr. (PL 101:615, 616).

⁷⁵ Cf. Paschasius Radbertus, *De Fide, Spe et Caritate* (PL 120:1387 ff.).

⁷⁶ Cf. Hincmar, *De Cavendis Vitiis et Virtutibus Exercendis* (PL 125: 857-930).

⁷⁷ Cf. Leo IX, *De Conflictu Vitorum et Vitium* (PL 143:559-578).

⁷⁸ Cf. *ibid.* (PL 143:559 ff.).

⁷⁹ Cf. *Cone. Valentinum* (DBU 320 ff.).

procession of all creatures from God and the return of all creatures to God.⁸⁰ This theory led Erigena into several excesses, for instance, even the condemned souls will ultimately reach a natural paradise. His considerations of the virtues are linked up with his "world system" idea, hence they are not important enough for specific analysis.

The writers toward the close of this Period include Lanfranc, St. Peter Damian, and St. Bernard of Clairvaux. In the work of Lanfranc, *De Celandra Confessione*,⁸¹ there is only passing mention given to the topic of virtue. St. Peter Damian wrote many tracts on the individual virtues which are dispersed throughout his writings.⁸² Of these writers, the most important to our subject is St. Bernard (1090-1153) since he offers striking testimony to the importance of acquired habits and to the facility which is afforded in the performance of virtuous actions. In his work, *De Consideratione*, speaking of the force of habit, St. Bernard says:

What is there that habit does not turn about? What is not hardened by constant practice? What does not give place to use? What bitterness is so loathed that custom will not change into sweetness? Hear what the just man laments concerning this fact, "The things which before my soul would not touch, now through anguish are my meats" (Job IV, 7). What at first you think unbearable, you will become accustomed to in time, and you will not judge it to be very grave; later it will even feel light, later still you will not feel it at all; yet later and it will become pleasant.⁸³

⁸⁰ Cf. *De Pita et Praeceptis J. Scoti* (PL 122:49-50): "Ait igitur Bruckerus, omnem Scoti philosophiam huc redire: Omnia quaecumque sunt, non radicaliter modo et virtualiter, sed et essentialiter in Deo contineri, atque adeo omnia ex Deo ab aeterno progressa esse et fluxisse, inque varias classes inferiorum et superiorum, deteriorum meliorumque entium distincta tandem in fontem originemque suam (id est Deum) reditura esse."

⁸¹ Cf. Lanfranc, *De Celandra Confessione* (PL 150:625-632).

⁸² Cf. St. Peter Damian, *Opuscula Varia* (PL 145:19 ff.).

⁸³ St. Bernard, *De Consideratione*, Lib. I, c. 2, n. 2 (PL 182:729-730): "Quid non invertat consuetudo? Quid non assiduitate duretur? Quid non usui cedat? Quantis quod prae amaritudine prius exhorrebant, usu ipso male in dulce conversum est? Audi justum quid lamentetur super hujuscemodi: *Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc prae angustia cibi mei sunt.* (Job VI, 7.) Primum tibi importabile videbitur aliquid; processu temporis,

This is a very clear and apt description of the facility which accompanies the constant and persevering practice of virtue. As we shall see later on, these words of St. Bernard were used by the Scholastic theologians in proof of their doctrine that it is possible to achieve facility in the practice of virtue.

Article V. The Early Scholastic Period (1150-1350)

This period is rightly called "the golden age of theological literature," for it was during this time that theological thought and expression reached its maturity. The scholars of this age neither despised nor neglected the works of their predecessors, but going beyond the limits which circumstances set to their speculation, the Scholastics carried their inquiry into new fields of theological thought and development. There were many circumstances favoring theological progress at this particular time, the period was completely peaceful, and Christian ideals dominated everywhere. The time had come for Christian thought to put forth its best efforts.

An additional factor which gave great impetus to the Scholastic development was the introduction of the works of Aristotle. Prior to the thirteenth century, the Christian scholars of the West were for long ignorant of Aristotle's original works, with the exception of the *Organon* (treatises on logic) which had been translated into Latin by Boethius.⁸⁴ In the East, on the other hand, several commentaries on Aristotle's writings had been published,⁸⁵ but it is doubtful whether or not Christian philosophers and theologians were familiar with them. St. John Damascene seems to be one of the first Christian scholars to incorporate Aristotelian philosophy in his writings,⁸⁶ and it is interesting to note that he had applied Aristotelian methods to Catholic theology over a century before

si assuescas, judicabis non ideo grave: paulo post et leve senties; paulo post nec senties; paulo post etiam delectabit"

⁸⁴Cf. Maritain, J., *An Introduction to Philosophy* (Trans. by E. I. Watkin, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1930), p. 96.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁸⁶ The work referred to here is the *Dialectica* of St. John Damascene. Cf. Rénaux, *De Dialectica Sancti Joannis Damasceni* (Paris, 1863).

the first Arabic translations of Aristotle had made their appearance in the West.

However, it was only at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when all of Aristotle's physical, metaphysical, and ethical treatises were translated into Latin, that Aristotle became part of the library of the Western Schoolmen.⁷⁷ The first translations of Aristotle's works were made from the Arabic and were not too satisfactory. The Arabian commentaries, appended to the text, perverted the true meaning of Aristotle, and made his work yield material for a new rationalism and pantheism especially hostile to Christian faith and theism. For this reason, the Provincial Council of Sens, which met at Paris in the year 1210, prohibited both the public and private teaching of Aristotle's physical and metaphysical writings.⁸⁸ In 1215, this decree was confirmed in the statute imposed on the University of Paris by the papal legate, Robert de Courçon. This statute likewise forbade the use of Aristotle's writings in public lectures or private teachings.⁸⁸ However, it must be clearly understood that these condemnations were directed primarily, not at Aristotle, but at his commentators.⁹⁰ Later on, when Aristotle was disengaged from the Arabic commentaries, and translations were made directly from his Greek text, it became apparent that Aristotelianism and Scholasticism were by no means hostile to each other. From the time of Alexander of Hales onward, Aristotelian philosophy was made the basis of a rational expression of dogma; Aristotle became for the Schoolmen what Plato had been for the Fathers—"precursor Christi in naturalibus."⁹¹

⁷⁷ Cf. Maritain, J., *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁸⁸ Challet, "Aristotélisme de La Scholastique," *Dictionnaire De Théologie Catholique* (publié sous la direction de A. Vacant et de E. Mangenst, Letouzey, Paris 1903). I: 1882. *Nec libri Aristotelis de naturali philosophia nec commenta legantur Parisi publice vel secreto, et hoc sub poena excommunicationis inhibemus.*

⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 2:1883.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, "Ajoutons que ce decret, en mentionnant a la fois les livres de de *naturali philosophia* et leurs *commenta*, vise clairement les versions derivees de l'arabe; car elles étaient les seules qui fussent accompagnées de commentaries."

⁹¹ Turner, W., *History of Philosophy* (Ginn and Co., Boston, 1903), Chap. XXXVI, p. 321.

The first great work of the Scholastic period was Peter Lombard's *Sententiarum Libri Quattuor*. This work, owing to its brevity and solidity, was used for a textbook of theology until it was superseded by the more thorough and detailed *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. The treatment of virtue in Peter Lombard (ca. 1100-1160) is very brief, and deals almost exclusively with the theological virtues. However, we must remember that this work was composed before the renaissance of Aristotle's writings, hence we can overlook the fact that it does not contain the detailed analysis of the moral virtues which is found in some of the later writings. Peter Lombard adopts Augustine's definition of virtue, "a good quality of the mind, by which we live rightly, which cannot be put to an evil use, which God produces in us without any cooperation."⁸² The author goes on to explain the meaning of virtue, gives a treatise on the theological virtues and establishes the connection between the virtues. The entire treatment is very brief and covers no more than one or two pages in the text. In order to gain some idea of the tremendous influence of Aristotle's contribution to Scholasticism, it is interesting to compare this treatise of Peter Lombard with the later work of Thomas Aquinas. In the former work, we find no mention of habits, no detailed treatment of the moral virtues, no division of natural and supernatural virtues. In St. Thomas, all of these topics are developed at length, largely as a result of the Aristotelian influence.

Alexander of Hales (ca. 1185-1245) is the next important theologian of the Scholastic period, and the first Schoolman to write his *Summa* after the complete translation of Aristotle's works. His *Summa Theologica* is a compact, orderly arrangement of theological questions, arranged in similar form to the *Videtur Quod Non Sed Contra Ad Primum* system which was to

⁸² St. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Lib. 2, Chap. 19 (*PL* 32:1268): "Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur et nemo male utitur et quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur." Cfr. *Contra Julianum*, Chap. 3, n. 15-20 (*PL* 44:743-748), etiam *Super Psal. 118*, conc. 26, ante med. (*PL* 37:1577).

⁸³ Cf. Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum Libri Quattuor* (Ad Claras Aquas, Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1916), Lib. II, Dist. XXVII, Chap.

be popularized later in the writings of St. Thomas. The work of Hales is fairly complete, but it is remarkably strange that it contains no specific tract on the virtues. As a result, his teaching on this subject must be gleaned from the general treatment which he accords the virtues elsewhere in his works. Thus, his most detailed mention of the virtues is to be found in the tract on Creation, where the author discusses the question of whether or not all of the virtues were infused in our first parents at the time of creation.⁹⁴ Even in this section, there is little mention of the moral virtues, and in regard to the theological virtues, the author seems to treat them as *gratiae gratis datae*, to be distinguished from the *gratia gratum faciens*, sanctifying grace. In this, of course, he differs from the opinion of his successors, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure.

A more complete discussion of the virtues is to be found in the works of St. Albert the Great (1193-1280). He lists various definitions of the virtues from Augustine, Aristotle, Cicero, and Anselm, concluding that the most satisfactory definition is that of Augustine, since it best describes the office of virtue.⁹⁵ Both the theological and the moral virtues are listed by the author, who observes that the theological virtues are infused by God, while the moral virtues are acquired by habit. The question of infused moral virtues is not discussed.⁹⁵ In general, the treatise of St. Albert is not too detailed, and it does not compare with the works of his contemporaries, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas. In the writings of Alexander of Hales and St. Albert, we begin to notice for the first time frequent references to the works of Aristotle.

With the writings of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, there is achieved a definite development of the theology on the virtues. As was remarked in the previous article, the groundwork of this development was laid in the Medieval authors, Alcuin, John Climacus, and John Damascene. On this groundwork, St.

⁹⁴ Cf. Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica* (Ad Claras Aquas [Quarracchi] Florentinae, Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1930), Tom. II, Quaest III, Tit. II, Chap. III, art. 1.

⁹⁵ Cf. Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia* (Ludovicus Vives, Paris, 1895), Vol. 33, in II P. Summa Theol., Tract. XVI, Quaest. 103, membrum 1.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, membrum 2.

Thomas and St. Bonaventure built the theological structure of the virtues. In the writings of St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), we discover a full length treatise on the virtues written in orderly and concise Scholastic form. The nature of virtue is accurately analysed, and the theological and moral virtues are treated in logical order. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Bonaventure devotes adequate space to a treatment of the moral virtues.⁹⁷ In successive articles, he discusses their necessity, their distinction from the theological virtues and from one another, and finally, their origin. Under this last heading, St. Bonaventure considers the question of whether the moral virtues are infused or acquired by repeated acts. He answers this question by stating that we must consider the moral virtues under a twofold aspect. On this point, Bonaventure says:

For a proper understanding of this problem it must be noted, that the cardinal virtues are called virtues in one sense, because they incline the faculty to placing moral actions; they are called virtues in another sense not only because they incline the faculty to moral actions, but because they elevate the faculty to placing meritorious actions. Inasmuch as the cardinal virtues are called virtues because they elevate the faculty, they do not have their origin from repeated acts, but rather from a divine gift; not from nature but from grace.⁹⁸

In this statement, St. Bonaventure harmonizes the Aristotelian doctrine of natural virtue with the Scholastic doctrine of supernatural virtue. Aristotelian philosophy was correct in its assertion that the moral virtues are natural and acquired; Scholastic theology is also correct in its assertion that the moral virtues are supernatural and infused. For under different aspects, the moral

⁹⁷ Cf. St. Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia* (Ad Claras Aquas [Quarracchi], Ex typographia collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1887), Vol. II, Dist. XXXIII.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Dist. XXXIII, Quaest. V: "Ad praedictorum intelligentiam est notandum, quod virtutes cardinales uno modo dicuntur virtutes, quia habilitant ad opera moralia, alio modo dicuntur virtutes non solum, quia habilitant ad huiusmodi opera, sed etiam, quia elevat ad opera meritoria. Secundum autem quod virtutes cardinales dicuntur virtutes, quia potentiam elevat; sic non habent ortum ab assuefactione, sed a divino munere; non a natura sed a gratia."

virtues are both acquired and infused. St. Bonaventure's doctrine on facility in the practice of the moral virtues takes this fact into account. The moral virtues, says St. Bonaventure,⁹⁹ are implanted in us by nature only insofar as there is a certain rectitude in us whereby we are capable of placing good and virtuous actions. This natural potency is increased and activated by means of both nature and grace. Inasmuch as they are acquired, we can increase the moral virtues in ourselves by repeated acts of virtue and human effort. In proof of this assertion, Bonaventure quotes the words of St. Bernard that "there is nothing so difficult which is not rendered easy by practice."¹⁰⁰ At the same time, in addition to our natural efforts, there is present the grace of God assisting and complementing human endeavor in the attainment of virtue.¹⁰¹ Bonaventure illustrates his point by means of an example.¹⁰² A horse, he says, is endowed by nature with a certain aptitude for walking and running. This natural aptitude can be developed and perfected both by constant practice and by the direction of a skilled rider; both are equally important. So also, in regard to the moral virtues. We have received from nature a certain aptitude for performing virtuous actions. This capacity must be developed and perfected both by our own natural effort and by the aid of supernatural grace. Hence, according to St. Bonaventure, neither human effort alone, nor grace alone, is responsible for the facility in the practice of virtue, but rather both of these factors taken together. Indeed, this is a very clear and forceful statement **of the** parts played by nature and grace in the work of the soul's salvation. The style employed by St. Bonaventure is simple, clear, and precise, and the characteristic of his writing is the simplicity and clarity with which he expresses deep and profound thoughts. His contribution to the doctrinal development of facility in virtue

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, Dist 33, Quaest. V: "A natura, inquam, sunt radicaliter, quia plantatam habemus in nostra natura rectitudinem, per quam apti sumus, licet imperfecte, ad opera virtutis et honestatis."

¹⁰⁰ St Bonaventure, *Ibid.*, Quaest. V: "Quod nihil est adeo difficile, quod consuetudo non reddat facile." Cfr. St Bernard, *De Consideratione*, Lib. I, c. 2, n. 2 (*PL* 182:729-730).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Quaest. V: "Nec solum ex assuefactione ducitur illa habilitas semiplena ad complementum, sed etiam per gratiae adiutorium."

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Quaest. V, Exemplum.

is important, especially his original exposition of the cooperation **between nature** and grace in effecting progress in virtue.

Despite the work of St. Bonaventure, it remained for his brilliant friend and contemporary, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) to epitomize the entire field of theological thought which had preceded him. St. Thomas was well fitted for this task. He had a vast knowledge of both Platonist and Aristotelian philosophy, he was well acquainted with the works of the fathers, especially St. Augustine, and added to this, he had the works of the Medieval writers and those of his immediate predecessors before him. But **even** more important than all of these things was the personal equipment of Thomas Aquinas, for he possessed a brilliant mind and a remarkable synthetic power which stamped him as a great philosopher and theologian. In the light of all this, it is little wonder that his *Summa Theologica* was the greatest single contribution to Christian theology. In St. Augustine, we find the Christianized idealism of Plato; in St. Thomas, we have Augustine's teachings plus the practical contributions of Aristotle, or as someone has remarked, "In Aquinas, Aristotle reappears, but it is Aristotle read in the light of Augustine." 103

The tract on the virtues in the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas is both philosophically and theologically complete. 104 It is preceded by a lengthy analysis of habit, which serves as an excellent background and introduction to the virtues. Aquinas discusses the origin, nature and effects of habit, preliminary notions which are of paramount importance for a thorough understanding of virtue. Habit, according to Aquinas, is a quality proper to intelligent beings. It is acquired by the repetition of similar acts, and increases with an addition of its acts, and is lost by the cessation of its act. Throughout his entire treatise on habits, Aquinas draws heavily from the teaching of Aristotle, and the majority of his responses include quotations from the works of the Philosopher? 105

103 Alexander, A. B. D., "Seven Virtues (or Gifts of the Spirit)." *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Ed. by J. Hastings, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), Vol. XI, p. 431.

104 Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, QQs. 55-68.

105 *Ibid.*, I-IIae, Qqs. 49-55.

St. Thomas borrows his definition of virtue from St. Augustine, “a good quality of the mind, by which we live rightly, and which cannot be put to an evil use, which God works in us without our cooperation.”¹⁰⁶ As a result of the Aristotelian influence, however, Aquinas suggests a threefold change in this definition. First, the proximate genus, habit, should be substituted for the more generic term, quality. Second, as it stands, this definition includes only the infused virtues. If it is to cover the acquired as well as the infused virtues, the last phrase must be dropped. Third, this definition restricts virtue to the mind whereas in reality, it can also qualify the sensuous appetites.¹⁰⁷ Aquinas divides the virtues into intellectual and moral, acquired and infused. Both the theological and the moral virtues are infused, but only the moral virtues are acquired as well as infused.¹⁰⁸ The infused virtues differ from the acquired virtues by reason of their mode of acquisition, their formal object, and the end toward which they are ordained.¹⁰⁹ But despite these differences, both the infused and the acquired virtues are concerned with the task of perfecting man’s nature, and Aquinas always presents these virtues not as opposed, but as complementary to one another.¹¹⁰ The acquired virtues are activated by purely natural motives, while the infused virtues reinforce these natural incentives with supernatural considerations. Thus, the motive proposed by the natural virtues for the avoidance of intemperance is the health of the body, while according to the supernatural virtues this motive would be obedience to the law of God which demands that we chastise our body.¹¹¹

Regarding his doctrine of facility in the practice of virtue, St. Thomas certainly agrees with Bonaventure in maintaining that facility is effected in the acquired virtues by the repetition of virtu-

¹⁰⁶ Cf. St Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Lib. 2, Chap. 19 (*PL* 32:1268). Cfr. *Contra Julianum*, Chap. 3, n. 15-20 (*PL* 44:743-748) etiam *Super Psal.* 118, conc. 26, ante med. (*PL* 37:1577).

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, Quaest. 55, art. 4, c.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, I-IIae, Quaest. 63, art. 3, c.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I-IIae, Quaest. 63, art. 4, c.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, art 4, c.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, art. 4, c. ante med.

ous acts.¹¹² However, going beyond the speculation of his contemporaries and his predecessors, Aquinas also discusses the question of whether or not facility is conferred by the infused virtues. In this connection, he points out a twofold facility in the virtues.

Something is said to be easy in a twofold manner; in one way by the removal of impediments ; in another way by the placing of assistance.¹¹³

This quotation from Aquinas, later used as the basis for a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic facility, is the first mention of a dual concept of facility. Corresponding to this distinction, St. Thomas indicates elsewhere in his writings that the infused virtues do confer facility in the second sense of the foregoing distinction. He says :

The facility of performing works of the (infused) virtues can come from two sources, namely from a preceding habit, and infused virtue does not confer this facility at once in its beginning. Again, facility can arise from a strong inhesion to the object of virtue, and this kind of facility is found in the infused virtue.¹¹⁴

From this quotation it seems obvious that St. Thomas favors a certain limited and restricted facility in the infused virtues. However, he does not expatiate his views on this subject. Much the same thing is to be said on the opinion of St. Thomas as to whether or not repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues generate an acquired habit. Later authors use many quotations

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Quaest. 63, art. 2, c.

¹¹³ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, Quaest. 24, art. 4. "Aliquid dicitur esse facile dupliciter: uno modo propter remotionem impedimenti; alio modo propter appositionem adjuvantii."

¹¹⁴ Aquinas, *Commentum in Quatuor Libri Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi* (Parma, Petrus Fiaccadori, 1858), Vol. II, in IV, Quaest. II, art. 2, ad 5. "Facilitas operandi opera virtutum (infusarum) potest esse ex duobus, scilicet ex consuetudine praecedente, et hanc facilitatem non tribuit virtus infusa statim in suo principio. Et iterum ex forti inhaesione ad objectum virtutis, et hanc est invenire et in virtute infusa statim in sui principio (Dist. 14)."

from Aquinas¹¹⁵ in substantiation of their own theories concerning this question. In our judgment nothing conclusive is proven by such quotations, for Aquinas himself did not discuss this question with sufficient thoroughness to arrive at any certain conclusion. Although St. Thomas did not settle these problems, at least, he did propose them and thereby opened the way for further theological discussion and development. In conclusion, we shall not attempt an evaluation of St. Thomas's contribution to theology, for this is almost an impossible task. Perhaps his most notable achievements in his tract on the virtues are his original thought and his fruitful application of Aristotelian philosophy to Scholastic theology.

The last important writer in the Scholastic Period was John Duns Scotus (1274-1308). Gifted with a brilliant analytical mind, Scotus made important distinctions which clarified and explained some of the disputed points in the writings of his predecessors. As regards his teaching on the virtues, Scotus differed with both Thomas and Bonaventure in denying the infusion of the moral virtues. According to the teaching of Scotus, the acquired moral virtues under the influence of faith and charity are sufficiently capable of ordinating our moral actions toward their supernatural end.¹¹⁶ Since we have already discussed this question at some length in the First Chapter of this present work, as well as supplied the direct quotations from the works of Scotus, there is no need for detailed investigation here. It is sufficient to note that this opinion of Scotus was espoused in the

¹¹⁵ We have listed most of these quotations in the Second Chapter of this present work. Cf. Mazzella, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Disp. I, Art. 5, n. 78. Also, Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, Tom. II, Disp. 53, sect. 3, Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, Prolegomenon, sect. 3, p. 56.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense*, Lib. III, Dist. 36, n. 28. "Licet de istis virtutibus moralibus multa dicantur, scilicet quod videntur necessariae propter modum, medium et finem, quia tamen omnis finis, quem non possunt habere ex specie sua, determinatur sufficienter ex inclinatione charitatis; modus autem et medium determinantur per fidem infusam: ideo non videtur necessitas ponendi virtutes morales infusas, sed acquisitas tantum in his, qui habent eas acquisitas, vel habere possunt; nec etiam in aliis, qui scilicet non possunt eas acquirere propter defectum usus liberi arbitrii, quia non est major ratio, quare isti debeant habere, et non illi."

writings of Henry of Ghent, Durandus of St. Pourçain, and many of the Nominalists. In turn, a long controversy arose out of this question. As we shall see presently, this controversy was to afford a further development regarding the acquired and infused moral virtues as well as the facility conferred by them.

With the death of Scotus (1308) the early Scholastic Period draws to a close, and the decline of Scholasticism is already under way. This decline, which lasted approximately from the years 1350-1500, was brought about by causes both internal and external. Among these causes, we can list the unsettled conditions of the times, the decay of the great Universities, and even more to the point, a relaxation of the spirit of serious study. The loss of the Scholastic spirit is perhaps best portrayed in the following characterization which one author has made of Durandus of St. Pourçain :

His treatment of the most serious problems is marked by superficiality. He seemingly took no pains to make himself acquainted with the doctrines which he criticised, and his own solution of many a problem stops short of the point where the real problem begins. Simplicity, even at the expense of thoroughness, seems to have been his motto.¹¹⁷

ARTICLE VI. THE POST SCHOLASTIC PROGRESSIVE PERIOD (ca. 1500-1700)

As a result of the Protestant Revolt (1517), Catholic scholars were aroused from their lethargy, and under the leadership of the Council of Trent and the Counter Reformation, a progressive period was inaugurated in theological development. With regard to the virtues, progress took up where it had left off with the decline of Scholasticism, namely, with the controversy over the infusion of the moral virtues. Ever since the time of Pope Innocent III and the publication of his letter *Majores Ecclesiae Causas*, in 1201,¹¹⁸ there had been discussion concerning the in-

¹¹⁷ Turner, W., *History of Philosophy*, 403.

¹¹⁸ Epistola *Majores Ecclesiae Causas* (DBU 410) : " Absit enim, ut universi parvuli pereant, quorum quotidie tanta multitudo moritur, quin et ipsis misericors Deus, qui neminem vult perire, aliquod remedium pro-

fusion of the moral virtues. In this letter, Pope Innocent seemed to indicate that besides faith and charity, there were other virtues infused into the soul at the time of baptism. Again in 1311, this same topic came up for discussion at the Council of Vienne, and Pope Clement V confirmed the teaching of Innocent III,¹¹⁹ but the question was still not definitely settled. Both St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure had taught that the moral virtues were infused, and this seems to have been the prevalent opinion among theologians at the time it was called into question by Scotus.

With the reopening of a progressive period in theology, the Commentators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began to expound and defend the doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas. In regard to his teaching on the infusion of the moral virtues, the commentators stood firmly behind Aquinas and they set themselves to the task of refuting the arguments of the opposite opinion. In this, they faced a delicate problem for they were confronted with difficulties which were not easily soluble. In reality, the Thomistic doctrine was under a twofold attack by the adversaries, for not only was the infusion of the moral virtues challenged but the very nature of the infused moral virtues as habits was also called into question. There were many arguments adduced against the doctrine of infused moral virtues but the most prominent and oft repeated objections were centered about the fact that these supposed infused moral virtues did not confer any facility in the practice of virtue. Substantially, these arguments ran as follows. If the infused moral virtues are conferred at the time of baptism, they would be more perfect

curaverit ad salutem . . . Quod opposites inducunt, fidem aut caritatem aliasque virtutes parvulis, utpote non consentientibus, non infundi, a plerisque non conceditur absolute . . . , aliis asserentibus, per virtutem baptismi parvulis quidem culpam remitti, sed gratiam non conferri; nonnullis vero dicentibus, et dimitti peccatum et virtutes infundi, habentibus illas quoad habitum, non quoad usum, donec perveniant ad aetatem adultam."

De Summa Trinitate Et Fide Catholica (DBU 483): "Nos attendentes autem generalem efficaciam mortis Christi, quae per baptismum applicatur pariter omnibus baptizatis, opinionem secundam, quae dicit tam parvulis quam adultis conferri in baptismo informantem gratiam et virtutes, tanquam probabiliorem, et dictis Sanctorum et doctorum modernorum theologiae magis consonam et concordem, sacro approbante Concilio duximus eligendam."

than the acquired virtues or at least equally perfect. But neither of these statements can be affirmed, for if they were true it would follow that a baptized child, when he attained the use of reason, would feel in himself greater facility than if he had the acquired moral virtues or at least equal facility. But this is entirely contrary to experience. Again, to say that an infused habit confers no facility is the same as to say that it is not a habit at all.¹²⁰ Thus, the theologians who undertook the defense of Thomistic doctrine were confronted with two problems. First, they had to defend and maintain the teaching that the moral virtues were infused habits, and second, they had to reconcile this fact with the objection that as habits they conferred no facility in the practice of virtue.

John Capreolus (ca. 1380-1444) was the first of the great Thomistic commentators, and perhaps the most outstanding theologian in the Period of Scholastic decline. Despite the fact that he belongs to the preceding period according to chronological order, according to logical order he belongs more properly with the later commentators, and hence we have listed him with the latter group. In his scholarly work, *Defensiones Theologiae*, Capreolus devotes much space to a refutation of the arguments of Scotus and Durandus,¹²¹ and it is in this work that we find the clearest exposé of their arguments. In answer to their objections regarding facility, Capreolus states that a strict parity cannot be instituted between acquired and infused habits since they differ according to their nature. He goes on to say that the infused moral virtues do not confer facility immediately upon their reception, for this would require a miracle of God's grace. However, he asserts that these virtues do confer facility in the

¹²⁰ These arguments are listed most frequently by the Commentators as representative of the objections of the adversaries. Capreolus attributes these arguments to Durandus. Cf. Capreolus, *Defensiones Theologiae*, Liber III, Dist. XXXIII, Quaest. I, art. 2, contra tertiam conclusionem, secundo. Cfr. Sylvius, *Commentarium in I-IIae* Quaest. 63, art. 3, Conclusion IV, Resp. ad 3.

¹²¹ Capreolus, J., *Defensiones Theologiae*, Liber III, Dist. XXXIII, Quaest. I, art. 2, contra Tertiam conclusionem, secundo. (*Defensiones Theologiae*, Turonibus, Alfred Cattier, 1904.)

course of time, in conjunction with the work of the acquired virtues.¹²²

Since we have already discussed the doctrine of the other Thomistic commentators at some length in the two preceding chapters, here we shall only review their opinions briefly. Cajetan,¹²³ Bartholomew Medina,¹²⁴ Sylvius,¹²⁵ John of St. Thomas,¹²⁶ and Ripalda,¹²⁷ agreed with the assertion of Capreolus¹²⁸ that no strict parity can be instituted between the acquired and the infused moral virtues. The acquired virtues by their very nature remove impediments and moderate the passions, while the infused virtues do not. Suarez,¹²⁹ Gonet,¹³⁰ and the Salmanticenses,¹³¹ on the other hand, resorted to a distinction of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* facility. The infused virtues, they said, do not confer *extrinsic* facility, which consists in the strengthening of the potency and its inclination to good. Gregory of Valentia¹³² even asserted that the infused moral virtues conferred a certain measure of extrinsic facility, inasmuch as he taught that the infused virtues conferred a certain new faculty for resisting the passions.

At the same time, another controversy arose among the commentators on the question of whether or not supernatural acts of the infused virtues generated an acquired habit. This con-

¹²² *Ibid.*, Liber III, Quaest. I, art 2, contra Tertiam conclusionem, secundo.

¹²³ Cajetan, *Commentarium in I-IIae*, Quaest. 63, art. 3.

¹²⁴ Medina, *Expositio in Primam Secundae S. Thomae*, Vol. II, Quaest. 63, art 3.

¹²⁵ Sylvius, *Commentarium in I-IIae*, Quaest. 63, art. 3, conclusion IV. Resp. ad 3.

¹²⁶ John of St Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tom. VI, Quaest LXII, art. VII, n. 31.

¹²⁷ Ripalda, *De Ente Supematurali*, Tom. III, Disp. 118, n. 12.

¹²⁸ Cf. Capreolus, *op. cit.*, Liber III, Dist. XXXIII, Quaest. I, art. 2, contra tertiam conclusionem, secundo, in finem.

¹²⁹ Cf. Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, Tom. IX, Lib. VI, Chap. 9, n. 9 circa med.

¹³⁰ Cf. Gonet, *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Vol. IV, Disp. I, Quaest. 4, ad 3.

¹³¹ Cf. Salmanticenses, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tom. VI, Tract 12, Quaest. 63, Disp. 3, n. 5, ad 3.

¹³² Cf. Gregory Valentia, *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Tom. II, Disp. V, Quaest. 6, resp. ad 4.

troversty was precipitated chiefly by certain passages in the writings of St. Thomas,¹³³ and perhaps also by the assertion of Capreolus that the infused moral virtues conferred facility in conjunction with the work of the acquired virtues.¹³⁴ At any rate, the discussion was opened by Louis Molina,¹³⁵ and before long all of the commentators had joined in the dispute. Cajetan,¹³⁶ Medina,¹³⁷ Gregory Valentia,¹³⁸ Suarez,¹³⁹ Sylvius,¹⁴⁰ and De Lugo¹⁴¹ upheld the negative side of this question, maintaining that supernatural acts of the infused virtues do not give rise to any habits either natural or supernatural. On the other side, the Jesuit theologians Molina,¹⁴² Azor and Coninck,¹⁴³ Vasquez,¹⁴⁴ and Ripalda¹⁴⁵ supported the contrary opinion that supernatural acts of the infused virtues do give rise to natural

133 Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-IIae, Quaest. 51, art. 4, ad 3. "Dicendum quod actus qui produueuntur ex habitu infuso, non causant aliquem habitum, sed confirmant habitum praeexistentem, sicut medicinalia adhibita homini sano per naturam non causant aliquam sanitatem, sed sanitatem prius habitam corroborant." Also, *De Veritate*, Quaest. 17, art. 1, ad 4.

134 Cf. Capreolus, *op. cit.*, Liber III, Dist. XXXIII, Quaest. I, art. 2, contra tertiam conclusionem, secundo, in finem.

135 Cf. Molina, *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, Dist. 38.

136 Cf. Cajetan, *Commentarium in I-IIae*, Quaest. 51, art. 4, ad 3.

137 Cf. Medina, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Quaest. 51, art. 4, ad 3.

138 Cf. Gregory Valentia, *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Tom. II, Disp. 4, Quaest. III, Punctum Quartum in finem.

139 Cf. Suarez, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, Lib. VI, Chap. 14, n. 7.

140 Cf. Sylvius, *Commentarium in I-IIae*, Quaest. 51, art. 4, conclusion 3.

141 Cf. De Lugo, *Disputationes Scholasticae*, Vol. IX, Sect. 4, n. 79.

142 Cf. Molina, *op. cit.*, Disp. 38.

143 Suarez lists Azor as in favor of this opinion. Cf. Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, Vol. IX, Lib. VI, Chap. 14, n. 8-9. Ripalda mentions Azor and Coninck as both favoring this opinion. Cf. Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, Lib. III, Disp. 53, n. 2. Since the original writings of these theologians were not available, we were forced to accept the testimony of these secondary sources for their opinions.

144 Cf. Vasquez, *Commentarium in I-IIae*, Disp. 77, Chap. 10, n. 48. It is difficult to determine whether or not Vasquez really maintains this opinion. He does mention this opinion, and expresses a certain amount of admiration for it, but he still seems to have some misgivings.

145 Cf. Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, Liber III, Disp. 53, n. 3.

acquired habits. John of St. Thomas¹⁴⁶ and Gonet¹⁴⁷ also supported this latter opinion with the reservation that such acquired habits are formed only dispositively, not formally, by supernatural acts of the infused virtues.

To summarize the work of the Commentators, we can say that their principal work was the defense of the infused moral virtues. In this task, they developed many new ideas regarding facility and clarified the notions of both the infused and the acquired moral virtues.

ARTICLE VII. THE MODERN PERIOD (ca. 1700-1943)

Vincent Contenson (1641-1674) can be listed as one of the first theologians of the Modern Period. His theology consists in an attempt to get away from the strict reasoning of Scholasticism and, while retaining the accuracy and solidity of its method, add practical observations and illustrations. This aim is well indicated in the title of his work, *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*. Contenson minimizes the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility.¹⁴⁸ Practically, he recognizes only extrinsic facility, and this, he affirms, is not conferred by the infused moral virtues. At the same time, Contenson seems to indicate some communication from the acquired to the infused virtues, for he insists that real facility in virtue cannot be attained without diligent application to the acquired virtues.¹⁴⁹ After justification, the regenerate man feels the same difficulty in the practice of virtue as he did before justification, and this will always be true unless by hard work and constant effort, he sets himself to the task of acquiring virtue. For, remarks Contenson, in vain will the sinner hope for coelestial facility to be infused into his soul, when he himself takes no steps toward abandoning vice and practicing virtue.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ John of St Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tom. VI, Disp. XVI, art. 7, n. 38.

¹⁴⁷ Gonet *Clypeus Theologiae Thomisticae*, Vol. IV, Disp. IV, art. 4, n. 25.

¹⁴⁸ Contenson, V., *Theologia Mentis et Cordis*, Lib. VII, Disp. I, Chap. 11 (Paris, Vives, 1875).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Chap. 11.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Chap. 11, in finem.

Billuart (1685-1757) is one of the last in the long line of Thomistic commentators. His *Summa Theologica* contains a clear and detailed commentary on Thomistic doctrine. In disagreement with Contenson, Billuart maintains the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility¹⁵¹ and asserts that the infused moral virtues do *confer* intrinsic facility. As for the other disputed question as to whether or not acquired habits are produced by repeated supernatural acts of the infused virtues, Billuart responds in the affirmative, agreeing with the opinion of John of St. Thomas and Gonet that such acquired habits are formed dispositively by the repetition of supernatural acts.¹⁵² From the time of Billuart onward in the Modern Period, the topic of facility receives less attention among the theologians. The reasons for this are not too clear, but in part at least, this change must be attributed to the development in theological presentation which occurred at this time. In place of the vast commentaries, modern textbooks and handbooks of theology began to make their appearance. In many of these new works, the tract on the virtues was limited to a consideration of the theological virtues, leaving little or no space for a treatment of the moral virtues and the virtues in general. However, there were many exceptions to this rule.

The theological writings of Dominic Viva (1648-1726), though not too important, might be mentioned here. Viva has a lengthy treatise on the virtues in his work, *Cursus Theologicus*, despite the fact that he makes no mention of the question of facility. He seems to maintain that an acquired habit is produced by repeated supernatural acts of virtue, but this is only an inference, not a direct statement, from his writings.¹⁵³ Much the same thing can be said of the writings of the Dominican theologian, John Patuzzi (1700-1769).¹⁵⁴ Although he makes no

¹⁵¹ Billuart, *Summa Theologica*, Tom. II, Dissertatio 2, art. 3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, art. 3.

¹⁵³ Viva, D., *Cursus Theologicus* (Patavii, Ex Typographia Seminarii, 1726), Pars V, Disp. I, Quaest. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Patuzzi, J., *Theologia Moralis* (Milan, Fredericum Agnelium, 1791), Tom. II, Tract. III, Dissertatio II, Chap. I, n. 3. De Origine Moralium Virtutum.

specific mention of facility in his treatment of the virtues, there are indications that facility can be acquired in the practice of the infused virtues.¹⁵⁵ However, like his predecessor, Viva, Patuzzi is not explicit on this point. Gatterer, in his work *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, teaches that the acquired moral virtues alone confer facility.¹⁵⁶ He rejects the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility. Pouget, on the other hand, in his *Institutiones Catholicae*, defines an infused virtue as a “facility,” but he gives no further explanation of his use of this term.¹⁵⁷

Gustavus Lahousse, the Jesuit theologian, has written an interesting and complete study of the virtues in his work, *Tractatus De Virtutibus Infusis*.¹⁵⁸ Lahousse especially goes into detail regarding the question of whether or not an acquired habit is produced by supernatural acts. Although he does not commit himself to any definite opinion, it is quite obvious that Lahousse admits facility in the practice of the infused moral virtues, and attributes this facility to the production of an acquired natural habit.¹⁵⁹ Pesch, another Jesuit theologian, is definite in his assertion that the infused moral virtues confer facility as a result of acquired natural habits.¹⁶⁰ Pesch also maintains the Suarezian distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility, asserting that the infused moral virtues confer intrinsic facility by their very nature.¹⁶¹ Also worthy of mention is the interesting discussion on facility written by Father Bernard Tepe.¹⁶² Tepe links the matter of facility with actual grace, and attempts to reconcile the opinions of Suarez, Gregory of Valentia, and Ripalda according

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Dissertatio II, Chap. I, n. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Gatterer, H., *Compendium Theologiae Moralis* (Brixiae, Merani, 1889), Pars I, Chap. IV, n. 48, s. 2. Etiam, n. 51, s. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Pouget, *Institutiones Catholicae* (Avenione, Seguin, 1837), Tom. IV, Pars II, Section II, Chap. I, De Virtutibus.

¹⁵⁸ Lahousse, G., *Tractatus De Virtutibus Theologicis* (Brugis, Carolus Bejaert, 1900).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Chap. I, Thesis IIa, section B.

¹⁶⁰ Pesch, C., *Praelectiones Dogmaticae* (Friburg, Herder, 1908), Tom. VIII, Section I, n. 14.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, n. 15.

¹⁶² Tepe, B., *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* (Paris, P. Lethielleux, 1898), Vol. II, Tract IV, Prop. 33.

to his new theory. He does succeed in establishing certain points of similarity in their teachings, but we cannot say that he is entirely successful in his avowed intention of reconciling their doctrines. Much the same differences remain after his reconciliation as were present beforehand, and it is evident that their opinions are too widely separated to be brought together in one statement. However, the comparison of opinions and the accompanying discussion is instructive and interesting.

Without doubt, the two most important contributions to the modern theology on the virtues have been made by the two Jesuit Cardinals, Camillus Mazzella (1833-1900) and Louis Billot (1846-1931). Mazzella's work¹⁶³ is largely a compilation and comparison of opinions. However, there is also a certain amount of original thought and expression. Billot's work,¹⁶⁴ on the other hand, is almost entirely original. He seldom quotes the opinions of other theologians, with the exception of St. Thomas. His writing is clear and forceful and stamps its author as a creative thinker and theologian. These two theologians form an added contrast in their divergence of opinions. Mazzella rejects the doctrine of intrinsic and extrinsic facility considering it to be a useless distinction,¹⁶⁵ and Billot, on the contrary, retains and defends this distinction.¹⁶⁶ Again, Mazzella rejects the teaching that supernatural acts generate acquired natural habits,¹⁶⁷ while Billot defends this opinion vigorously.¹⁶⁸

The current manuals of theology, for the most part, do not devote much attention to the question of facility in the moral virtues. Merkelbach,¹⁶⁹ Lehmkuhl,¹⁷⁰ Aertnys-Damen,¹⁷¹ Marc,¹¹²

¹⁶³ Mazzella, C., *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Rome, Ex. Typographia Polyglotta, 1884).

¹⁶⁴ Billot, L., *De Virtutibus Infusis* (Rome, In Universitate Gregoriana, 1921).

¹⁶⁵ *Op. cit.*, Disp. I, art. 4, n. 65.

¹⁶⁶ Billot, *op. cit.*, Prolegomenon (Qq. 49-61), Sect. 2, n. 2, p. 33.

¹⁶⁷ Mazzella, *op. cit.*, Disp. I, art. V, n. 78-81.

¹⁶⁸ Billot, *op. cit.*, Prolegomenon, sect. 3, pp. 49-50.

¹⁶⁹ Merkelbach, *Summa Theologiae Moralís* (Paris, Desdee de Brower, 1938), Tertia Pars, Quaest. Prima, n. 620.

¹⁷⁰ Lehmkuhl, *Theologia Moralís* (Friburg, Herder, 1902), Vol. I, Sect. II, Divisio II, art. 1.

Hervé,¹⁷¹ Preummer,¹⁷⁴ Van Noort,¹⁷⁵ and Tanquerey can be pointed out as exceptions to this general rule. Merkelbach, in particular, can be singled out for the complete and thorough treatment that he gives to this question. Besides explaining and maintaining the doctrine of intrinsic and extrinsic facility,¹⁷⁷ Merkelbach is one of the few modern theologians who discusses the question of whether or not supernatural acts generate acquired natural habits. On this point, he agrees with the opinion of Molina¹⁷⁸ and Billot¹⁷⁹ that every supernatural act of virtue virtually contains a natural act of virtue, and in this way acquired natural habits are produced by supernatural acts of the infused virtues.¹⁸⁰ Lehmkuhl's treatment, although not as detailed as that of Merkelbach, has some very practical observations on the importance of the acquired virtues. The part of human nature in the work of salvation, according to Lehmkuhl,¹⁸¹ is to place no obstacles in the way of God's grace, and the best way to accomplish this is by the practice of the acquired virtues. In this way, we moderate our passions, acquire facility in doing virtuous acts, and enable grace and the infused virtues to complete their work more effectively in our souls.

Among many of the modern theologians, there is a tendency to discard the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility. These theologians consider extrinsic facility as the only facility, and

¹⁷¹ Aertnys-Damen, *Theologia Moralis* (Galopiae, M. Alberts, 1918), Lib. I, Tract V, Art. 3, n. 278-279.

¹⁷² Marc, *Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae* (Rome, Philip Cuggani, 1902), Pars Prima, Vol. I, Tract. V, Art. II, n. 384.

¹⁷³ Hervé, *Manuale Theologiae Dogmaticae* (Paris, Berche et Pagis, 1935), Vol. III, De Virtutibus Theologicis, n. 248, C, b, c.

¹⁷⁴ Pruemmer, *Manuale Theologiae Moralis* (Fribtirg, Herder, 1914), Vol. I, Tract. VI, Chap. 3, n. 473, n. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Van Noort, *De Gratia Christi* (Hilversum in Hollandia, Paul Brand, 1934), C. II, art. 3, n. 1, n. 167.

¹⁷⁶ Tanquerey, *Synopsis Theologiae Moralis* (Paris, Desclée, 1936), Tom. II, De Virtutibus in Communi, Art. IV, sect. 2, n. 597.

¹⁷⁷ Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, Tertia Pars, Quaest. Prima, n. 620.

¹⁷⁸ Molina, *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, Dist. 38.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Billot, *op. cit.*, Prolegomenon, Sect. 3, pp. 49-50, ff.

¹⁸⁰ Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, Tertia Pars, Quaestio Prima, η. 621.

¹⁸¹ Lehmkuhl, *Theologia Moralis*, Vol. I, Sect. II, Divisio II, art. I.

this, they say, is conferred exclusively by the acquired moral virtues. The infused moral virtues confer the supernatural *posse* or faculty of performing supernatural acts, but no facility. Hurter,¹⁸² Hermann,¹⁸³ Bucceroni,¹⁸⁴ Vermeersch,¹⁸⁵ Lehmkuhl,¹⁸⁸ Pruemmer,¹⁸⁷ Noldin,¹⁸⁸ and Davis,¹⁸⁹ all state the doctrine on facility in this way. On the other hand, some theologians still retain the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic facility. Besides Merkelbach, Marc,¹⁹⁰ Aetnys-Damen,¹⁹¹ Hervé,¹⁹² Tanquerey,¹⁹³ Van Noort,¹⁹⁴ and MacGuinness¹⁹⁵ can be listed in this group. With the exception of Merkelbach¹⁹⁶ and Herve,¹⁹⁷ few of the modern theologians devote much space to the interrelation of the acquired and infused moral virtues and to the question of whether or not facility is possible in the infused moral virtues by the acquisition of natural habits. Perhaps as a result of Cardinal Billot's convincing defense of this theory, the theology manuals of the future will give more study to it.

182 Hurter, *Theologiae Dogmaticae* (Oeniponte, Academica Wagneriana, 1889), Vol. III, Tract. VIII, art. 3.

183 Hermann, R. P., *Institutiones Theologiae Dogmaticae* (Rome, Phillip Cuggani, 1897), Vol. II, Tract. VII, Art. I, sect. 3.

184 Bucceroni, *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis* (Rome, Ex Typographia Pontificia, 1914), Vol. I, Sect. VI, De Virtutibus.

185 Vermeersch, *Theologiae Moralis* (Brugis, Firme Beyaert, 1926), Vol. I, Tract. V, Tit. VI, n. 511.

186 Lehmkuhl, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Sect. II, Divisio II, art. I.

187 Pruemmer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Tract. VI, Chap. 3, art. I, n. 473.

188 Noldin, *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (Oeniponte, Lipsiae, Feliciani Rauch, 1940), Vol. I, Lib. I, Art. II, n. 31.

189 Davis, H., *Moral and Pastoral Theology* (London, Sheed and Ward, 1941), Vol. I, Treatise V, Chap. I, p. 253, n. 2.

190 Marc, *Institutiones Morales Alphonsianae*, Vol. I, Tract. V, Chap. II, art. II, n. 412, n. 2.

191 Aertnys-Damen, *op. cit.*, Lib. I, Tract. V, Art. 3, n. 278-279.

192 Hervé, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, n. 248, C, c.

193 Tanquerey, *op. cit.*, Tom. II, De Virtutibus in Comuni, Art. IV, sect. 2, n. 597.

194 Van Noort, *op. cit.*, C. II, Art. 3, η. I, n. 167.

195 MacGuinness. I., *Commentarii Theologici* (Paris, Lethielleux, 1911), Vol. II, De Virtutibus Infusis, Quaest. I, N. 4.

196 Merkelbach, *op. cit.*, Tertia Pars, Quaestio Prima, η. 621.

197 Hervé, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, De Virtutibus Theologicis, n. 248, c. c.

Hervé^{198*} and Van Noort,¹⁹⁰ have already incorporated many of Billot's ideas in the most recent editions of their texts.

Most authors treat the subject of the virtues in their writings, but many of them make no mention of the question of facility in virtue. Although this is not a complete survey, a partial list of these authors follows: Bonacina,²⁰⁰ Busenbaum,²⁰¹ Tournely,²⁰² Collet,²⁰³ Lacroix,²⁰⁴ Laymann,²⁰⁵ Haine,²⁰⁶ Sporer,²⁰⁷ Elbel,²⁰⁸ Scavini,²⁰⁹ D'Annibale,²¹⁰ Ferrerres,²¹¹ Bonal,²¹² Kenrick,²¹³ Perrone,²¹⁴ Konings,²¹⁵ Genicot,²¹⁶ Ballerini-Palmieri,²¹⁷ Sabetti-Barret,²¹⁸ Zubizarreta.²¹⁹

198 Hervé, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, C, c.

is» Van Noort, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, n. 167.

200 Cf. Bonacina, M., *Operum de Morali Theologia*, Venice, 1687.

201 Cf. Busenbaum, H., *Medulla Theologiae Moralis*, Tornaci, 1848.

202 Cf. Tournely, H., *Praelectiones Theologicae*, Venice, 1731.

203 Cf. Collet, P., *Institutiones Theologicae*, Paris, 1757.

204 Cf. Lacroix, C., *Theologiae Moralis* (Ravennae, 1757).

205 Cf. Laymann, P., *Theologia Moralis* (Venice, 1718).

206 Cf. Haine, A. J., *Theologiae Moralis Elementa* (Louvain, 1900).

207 Cf. Sporer, P., *Theologia Moralis super Decalogum*, Venice, 1731.

208 Cf. Elbel, B., *Theologia Moralis*, Paderbornae, 1892.

209 Cf. Scavini, P., *Theologia Moralis Universa*, Milan, 1880.

210 Cf. D'Annibale, J., *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Rome, 1908.

211 Cf. Ferrerres, J. B., *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, Rome, 1910.

212 Bonal, A., *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, Tolosae, 1893.

213 Kenrick, F. P., *Theologia Moralis* (Baltimore, 1866).

214 Perrone, J., *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, Paris, 1866.

215 Konings, A., *Theologia Moralis*, New York, 1882.

216 Genicot, E., *Theologiae Moralis Institutiones*, Louvain, 1898.

217 Ballerini, A.-Palmieri, D., *Opus Theologicum Morale*, Prati, 1889-1893.

218 Sabetti, A.-Barret, T., *Theologiae Moralis*, New York, 1939.

219 Zubizarreta, V., *Theologia Dogmatico-Scholastica*, Bilbao, 1937.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Article I. General Conclusions to be Drawn From the Doctrine of Facility in the Practice of the Moral Virtues

In the foregoing chapters, we have attempted to classify and explain the theological principles regarding the question of facility in the practice of the moral virtues. There remains the task of drawing certain conclusions and practical applications from these principles. We can summarize our general conclusions as follows:

(1) All theologians concede that the *acquired moral virtues* confer extrinsic facility, i.e., the moderation of the passions, the removal of extrinsic impediments, and the actual ease and readiness toward placing acts of virtue.

(2) It is the opinion of the vast majority of theologians that the supernatural moral virtues are infused into the soul at the time of justification.

(3) Practically all theologians agree that *per se* these infused moral virtues do not confer extrinsic facility in the sense as already explained of the acquired moral virtues.

(4) However, we are inclined to agree with the opinion of those theologians who maintain that *per se* the infused moral virtues do confer a certain measure of *intrinsic facility* inasmuch as they tend to strengthen the will and incline it intrinsically to acts of virtue.

¹ Gregory of Valentia seems to be the only exception to this rule. His opinion is not too certain, but he seems to indicate that the infused moral virtues confer a certain measure of extrinsic facility. (Cf. Gregory Valentia. *Commentariorum Theologicorum*, Vol. If, Disp. V, Quaest. 6, resp. ad 4.)

² Suarez, Gonet, the Salmanticenses, Billuart, Pesch, Billot, Marc, Aertnys-Damen, Merkelbach, Van Noort, and MacGuinness all maintain this distinction. Citations from their writings, in proof of this point, are listed in the third chapter of this work.

(5) Moreover, we are inclined to agree with the opinion of those theologians³ who maintain that *per accidens* the infused **moral** virtues confer extrinsic facility as a result of the natural acquired habits which are generated by repeated acts of the infused virtues.

Perhaps a few words of explanation are necessary with regard to these last two conclusions. We have said that as a result of the infusion of the moral virtues, the will is intrinsically strengthened and inclined to placing acts of virtue. This inclination of the faculty constitutes a certain *intrinsic* facility. However, this facility of itself does not moderate the passions, remove former habits of vice, nor render the practice of virtue easy and effortless. These effects can only be achieved as a result of acquired habits, for acquired habits alone produce *extrinsic* facility. In other words, the acquisition of facility in the practice of the infused moral virtues follows the same general rules for acquiring proficiency at any other occupation. The fact that a man owns an automobile does not constitute him a good driver, nor the fact that an individual possesses a slide rule does not thereby make him adept at the use of that instrument, despite a strong intrinsic inclination of the will toward this end (*intrinsic* facility). Real proficiency (*extrinsic facility*) in any art or occupation results from acquired habits which, in turn, are a result of steady and constant practice. The same thing is true of the infused moral virtues. The fact that we possess the infused moral virtues is no guarantee that we are able to use them easily and promptly, for this can come only with practice, with the development of acquired habits of virtue.

To take another illustration from the fields of natural endeavor, let us suppose that a person seriously resolves to become a good musician. The intrinsic inclination and tendency of his will is not, of itself, sufficient to accomplish this objective. Besides this, other pleasures and diversions must be set aside, long hours must

³ Molina, Vasquez, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Ripalda, Billuart, Pesch, Schiffini, Billot and Merkelbach. With the exception of Schiffini, citations from all of these authors are to be found in the third chapter. The quotation from Schiffini's writings is found in the second chapter, listed under the fifth opinion.

be spent in practice, technique must be improved and corrected, until at last, the individual achieves success in his art. The person who sets out to attain perfection and facility in the practice of virtue must act in much the same way. The intrinsic desire and motion toward virtue (intrinsic facility) is not sufficient, of itself, to attain this end. Along with this, there must go hand in hand the mortification of the senses, the exterior practice of virtue, constant corrections and improvements, until finally, the practice of virtue becomes a second nature (extrinsic facility). Moreover, no one who wanted to become a good musician would simply ask God for that gift. He would realize that much depended on his own work and effort, and on the use of the natural means at his disposal. The same thing is true of the practice of virtue. We cannot simply pray to God to grant us facility in the practice of virtue without at the same time taking into consideration the element of personal effort and application. For this reason, a person who possesses the infused moral virtues, but neglects all natural means of avoiding temptation and sin, will soon discover that the infused moral virtues are of little or no help to him. But this is his own fault. He cannot expect a miracle of God's grace to preserve him from sin, when he does nothing to remove the causes from which sin proceeds.

ARTICLE II. THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL HABITS IN ACQUIRING FACILITY IN VIRTUE

As we have already seen, extrinsic facility in the practice of the infused virtues results from natural acquired habits. It is true that the assistance of these habits, relative to advance in supernatural perfection, is entirely negative, yet none the less it is very practical. For by the formation of acquired virtues the passions are moderated, extrinsic difficulties are overcome and the exercise of the infused virtues is made easy. Oftentimes there is a tendency to disregard the importance of human energy and effort in the attainment of virtue, and to play down the assistance of natural means to virtue. It is true that the most serious evil which can menace anyone in this life is to have the natural swamp the supernatural. This is a danger that is very difficult to avoid, it is almost inescapable, for the natural

descends on our soul like a deluge and often proves too much for weak human nature. But suppose we survive this peril, and set our course in the supernatural way. Does the soul then steer undeviatingly on? Unfortunately no! Having rebounded from one exaggeration, we can race into a contrary one. Like the pendulum, we can swing from one extreme to the other, precisely as if the whole idea was to keep away from the center point, the golden mean. And what is the opposite extreme to which we can swing when we have freed our souls from the natural and set up supernatural objectives?

It is to neglect the natural. We proceed to act as if the only thing that matters is to have faith, to pray, to perform religious duties, to avoid sin; so far so good; for these things are basic. But with this foundation laid, will any sort of superstructure satisfy? Do we need give no thought, bestow no pains that the children of the world would give to their employments? We behave as if religion were not only an excuse but a justification for all such defects. We are disposed to act as if the natural and the supernatural were two roads running side by side, say one a railway and the other a highway. If we are going by one, we mentally separate ourselves from the other. Occasionally we may glance at it, but it has nothing to do with us.

This definitely is the wrong way to view the soul's journey through life. The natural and the supernatural are not alternative routes when, necessarily, we have to depart from one when taking the other. A more exact image is the case of the body and soul. These two are, so to speak, fused; each one acts with the concurrence of the other. So also, the natural and the supernatural orders are complementary and essential to each other. We must work supernaturally, but we have to work through nature, that is, through our natural faculties. We must depend on the supernatural, but at the same time, we cannot neglect the natural. Our scheme of life must take in both at the same time, not separately like the person who may travel today by rail and tomorrow by the parallel highway. No natural act has any positive efficacy toward our eternal destiny unless it be livened by the supernatural; and no supernatural act can

be performed by us other than through the operation of faculties that in themselves are natural.*

In the light of all this, the matter of the acquired virtues begins to take on some importance. Just as nature and grace are mutually complementary, so also are the acquired and the infused moral virtues. Neither the one nor the other is complete of itself, each needs its complement in order to attain true perfection. In the infusion of the supernatural moral virtues, the passions are not moderated, extrinsic difficulties are not removed, nor is the practice of virtue made easy and effortless. Why did God not attach these effects to the infused moral virtues? Because, as Cardinal Billot says,⁵ God does ordinarily not see fit to grant by infusion that which man can acquire by his own proper activity. This would make matters too easy for man, for it would eliminate the element of human effort and energy and constitute the attainment of salvation all God's work and none of our own work. A good teacher is not one who does all the work for the pupils, but rather one who leads the pupils to develop their own powers of observation and reasoning through practice. Similarly, Almighty God does not do all the work for us in the infusion of the moral virtues. He requires some co-operation from human nature on the part of adults. The human element that enters the attainment of virtue is the constant use of our own faculties, the uniting of natural efforts with supernatural grace, the addition of the acquired to the infused moral virtues. This is the only way that we can attain facility and readiness in the practice of the virtues, the only means of reaching the perfection of virtue.

My aim in all of this is not to naturalize virtue, but rather to supernaturalize the natural element of virtue. In this matter, there are two extremes to be avoided. On the one hand, we must not fall into the error of Pelagianism which maintains that human

* Cf. Mitchell, F. S., "Weigh the Thought that in Man's Heart doth flow," *Maria Legionis Quarterly*, IV, 5 (June, 1944), 8.

⑤ Cf. Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusio*, Prolegomenon (I-II, Qq. 49-61), Part II, 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."

effort and natural means are sufficient of themselves to place supernatural acts and to merit the Beatific Vision of God. This doctrine is obviously false, for it places the entire stress on natural effort and neglects altogether the importance and necessity of supernatural grace. On the other hand, the opposite extreme of Quietism must be likewise avoided. According to this heresy, man's part in sanctification is to remain entirely passive, for the virtues themselves are passive and not active. This doctrine of passivity is entirely opposed to Scripture and Tradition, where a Christian is urgently exhorted to work out his salvation by cooperating with the grace of God which is offered to all.⁶ We must steer a course midway between these two extremes, utilizing to the fullest the aids of both grace and nature, the infused and the acquired virtues.

ARTICLE III. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE ON
FACILITY IN VIRTUE AS APPLIED TO PREACHING

The foregoing remarks should be familiar commonplaces to the priest and theologian. He is well aware of the respective importance of both grace and nature, the infused and the acquired **virtues**. But oftentimes there is a tendency among less educated lay Catholics to divorce the natural from the supernatural and make of them two distinct paths. The ordinary Catholic, from the time of early youth, is taught the importance of supernatural means of salvation. This is as it should be. However, there is also the danger that this might lead the less discerning among the laity into the error that virtue, sanctity, and religion are wholly in the supernatural order and entirely outside the scope of natural endeavor.

Preaching is the best opportunity for mass instruction of the laity, and for this reason, it might be well to instruct the faithful in sermons regarding the importance that human effort and exertion play in attaining facility in the practice of virtue. There are many examples and analogies that can be used to illustrate this point. For instance, we could show the important role that

⁶ Cf. Parente, P., "Quietism," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, CIX, 1 (January, 1944), 28.

natural effort plays in human success, and then go on to draw an analogy, showing that it occupies a less important but none the less practical position in our spiritual success. All things being equal, the harder a man works, the more devotion that he gives to his business, the more sacrifices that he makes for his business, the more successful business man he becomes,—this is evident from experience. This analogy could be extended to show that achievement and progress in virtue work much the same way.

Another idea along the same line would be to make use of illustrations from the lives of the Saints. The laity often view the Saints as a class apart, as individuals who were so holy and devout that they seldom, if ever, experienced the trials and temptations of other human beings. Perhaps it would be well to demonstrate in our sermons that the Saints were “not born but made,” that they faced much the same trials, dangers, and temptations as any other human beings. The principal difference between the Saints and ourselves is that they worked harder at acquiring virtue, placed fewer obstacles in the way of God’s grace, and united more human effort to divine grace, until finally they achieved their great sanctity. There are many examples that could be used to illustrate this point. It is true that, in many cases, the Saints enjoyed special privileges and graces of Almighty God, but nevertheless, they always added natural effort and energy to the supernatural aids of grace.

By these methods, it is possible that we could bring the practice of virtue out of the speculative order and into the practical everyday life of the laity. We could explain to them that if they are not making progress in virtue they cannot blame God, they must lay the fault at their own door. It is not the grace of God or supernatural helps which are wanting, but rather the lack of human cooperation which hinders progress in virtue. No one can seriously wish to be virtuous and at the same time neglect the practice of virtue, any more than a man can wish to become a good golfer and yet never go near a golf course. “He who wills the end, wills the means.” If virtue is seriously and efficaciously willed, then we must acquaint ourselves with the means of attaining virtue and begin to use them. Grace and

prayer are both powerful means of advancing in virtue, but human exertion and application are also necessary. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows in the flesh, from the flesh also he will reap corruption. But he who sows in the Spirit, he will reap life everlasting.”⁷ “Faith too, unless it has good works, is dead in itself.”⁸

ARTICLE IV. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE ON
FACILITY IN VIRTUE AS APPLIED TO THE CONFESSORIAL

Another opportunity of directing the faithful is afforded the priest in the Sacrament of Penance. Indeed, the confessional is often the only opportunity for individual advice and guidance that is available to the laity. Here, the sincere penitent comes and confesses his sins to the priest, seeking absolution for past sins and remedies against future sins. The priest, in turn, must exercise the office of physician. He must determine the nature of the malady and, as clearly as he can, decide its causes and remedies. He cannot do this properly by a hasty diagnosis, nor can he do it successfully by recommending the same remedies to all patients. The diagnosis, first of all, must be accurate, for if it is not, then suitable corrective measures cannot be applied. In determining the cause of sin, the confessor should remember that this can often be attributed to a lack of human diligence on the part of the penitent in applying and using natural precautions. If this is the case, the confessor must warn the penitent that sincere contrition demands the use of natural prudence and natural means in avoiding the occasions of sin in the future.

Again, in the case of a recidivist, how will the confessor know whether or not the penitent is worthy of absolution unless he questions him in regard to the use that he is making of the natural means in avoiding temptation and sin? Theologians state that a penitent must be denied absolution when he is living in concubinage and will not take the natural means of removing

⁷ *Galatians*, 6:7-9.

⁸ *James*, 2:17.

himself from his occasion of sin.⁸ If it is true that the use of natural means is of assistance in this case, there is no reason why these same means cannot be used effectively in regard to other sins and occasions of sin. No one can voluntarily place himself in the proximate occasion of sin, without a sufficient reason, and expect the grace of God to preserve him from moral disaster. This would be the equivalent of a man throwing himself off the roof of a tall building and expecting God's protection from physical harm.

The use of prudent and natural means is a simple and a negative remedy, nevertheless along with the aid of grace, it can go a long way toward helping the penitent avoid temptation and sin. The use of prayers, the Sacraments, and other supernatural means, are certainly to be urged on the penitents for these are the most effective remedies against sin. However, the habitual sinner cannot ordinarily expect grace to perform a miracle of change in his life. He must realize that the avoidance of temptation and sin will also necessitate the use of natural prudence and diligence. As Lindworsky has pointed out :

Deeply rooted passion may die at one blow⁹, when a great ideal is suddenly revealed and removes a man into a world in which the alluring language of the past is ineffective. Such instantaneous changes are reported in the lives of the saints, with a definitive loss of relish for forbidden pleasures. . . . It won't do, however, to hope for such sudden conversions in ordinary circumstances. The average man must shake off the fetters of bad habits in the course of a systematic fight, and he will succeed if he exhibits even a small degree of serious will.¹⁰

The advancement of natural means as a remedy against sin and temptation will obviously depend on the judgment of the confessor and the nature of the confession. In suggesting the use of natural means, we did not intend that they should be

⁹ Cf. Noldin, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Vol. I, De Sexto Praecepto, Quaest. III, n. 16, sect. a.

¹⁰ Lindworsky, J., *The Training of the H7il!* (Trans, by Arpad Steiner and Edward Fitzpatrick), (Bruce: Milwaukee, 1929), p. 179.

applied to every penitent, much less did we intend that they should be substituted for the use of supernatural means such as prayer and the Sacraments. Our only intention was to point out that the prescription of natural means might prove helpful in certain cases. In the matter of habits, for instance, the confessor could offer such practical suggestions as the following, centering attention on one fault, attacking the principal fault first, winning out on the first test, making resolutions over a short period of time. These principles might not be effective in all cases but, at least, they are concrete suggestions and they give the penitent something definite to work at in overcoming his habit of sin. By the application of suitable and practical remedies of both the natural and supernatural variety, confession might become not only a source of consolation but also a source of progress for many of the laity who are sincerely and earnestly striving for spiritual advancement.

ARTICLE V. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE ON FACILITY IN VIRTUE AS APPLIED TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There is an adage to the effect that "Youth is the time to learn," and it is an observation confirmed by experience that unless traits and habits of character are acquired in youth, it is unlikely that they will appear in later life. In the lives of the Saints, for instance, it is the exception rather than the rule that sanctity is achieved late in life. All thinking men recognize the importance of habit formation in early youth. The remark of the pagan philosopher, Aristotle, well illustrates this point:

It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme, importance.¹¹

Since the training and education of youth is of such great importance, perhaps it would be well to examine the practical applications that the principles on acquired habits exercise in this field.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Eth. Nie.*, II (L.C.L., Trans. by H. Rackham, 1926), p. 75.

All education is based on habit. One does not learn the multiplication table at a glance; he commits it to memory only by hammering away at it day by day.¹² Whether it be the habit of memory, the habit of perception, or the very habit of learning itself, there must always be some habit associated with education. Since the matter of habit is so important in character training, it follows necessarily that Catholic education, which undertakes the task of instructing both intellectually and morally, cannot neglect this powerful influence for good.

One obvious danger in our system of religious education is to stress the intellectual and speculative factor of learning to the neglect of the more important moral factor, the actual training in good. The speculative side of the Catholic religion, her beliefs and dogmas, must be taught, the catechism must be learned and certain definitions must be memorized, but not to the exclusion of moral training. The fact that a pupil knows his religion is no guarantee that he is applying its principles in his daily life, yet this is the purpose that Catholic Education recognizes as its primary object. As Father Felix Kirsch well notes:

We all know enough to get to Heaven, but only those who put that knowledge into practice through good habits, shall ever get there. To be happy both here and hereafter we must make sure that our habits are our friends.¹³

Again, there is the possibility that natural motives and means might be rejected as useless in religious training. This would be a serious mistake. While it is true that Catholic education directs man's activity toward a supernatural end and therefore must make use of supernatural means, it is likewise true, as we have already seen, that natural motives and means are a practical, though negative, help in the exercise of supernatural virtue. Natural motives can never replace supernatural motives, but it might prove useful to use them as subordinate to spiritual motives.

How can moral training be achieved in Catholic Education?

¹² Cf. Barrett, J. F., *This Creature Man* (Bruce, Milwaukee, 1936), p. 79.

¹³ Kirsch, F., *Essentials in the Teaching of Religion* (Kennedy and Sons: New York, 1939), p. 6.

The best answer to this question would seem to be by the proper motivation and sufficient stress on the importance of acquired habits. This truth is well expressed by the eminent psychologist Rudolph Allers, in the following words:

The great business of training (in the natural virtues) . . . is to lay before the child the best and noblest possible ideal; secondly, to get that ideal stamped into his mind in the concrete form of sound principles; thirdly, so firmly to establish the habit of acting according to those principles that it will last for the rest of the life.¹⁴

Besides the use of natural motives, the Catholic teacher has a wealth of supernatural motives and means that can be used to stimulate pupils to the acquisition of virtuous habits. If secular education, despite its narrow limits and confines, can produce individuals who practice the acquired virtues to a high degree of perfection, certainly Catholic education, with its additional aids and helps, should produce practical Catholics who are adept at the practice of both the infused and the acquired virtues. This can only be accomplished by sufficient emphasis on habit formation in our Catholic training.

Article VI. Summary

As a corollary of our doctrine that the infused moral virtues confer extrinsic facility by developing through their acts acquired habits, we have attempted to demonstrate the importance of these acquired habits in supplementing the work of grace and the infused virtues. Another practical point to be noted in this regard is that we should strive equally to practice all of the acquired virtues. Some persons have inherent tendencies toward certain forms of goodness, and as a result, they will find the practice of particular virtues easy and almost natural. Over and above this, they should attempt to secure for themselves the practice of these moral virtues which are contrary to the inclinations of their disposition. It is true that we can possess one natural virtue without possessing them all, but only in an†4

¹⁴ Allers, R., *Psychology of Character* (Sheed and Ward, New York, 1938), p. 190.

imperfect degree, for the perfection of one virtue would demand the perfection of the others since they are all linked together by the virtue of prudence.¹⁵ It is extremely incongruous that an individual should exhibit remarkable charitableness and kindness, and yet show no restraint in the matter of temper. Reason should dictate that our strongest efforts should be exerted to acquire those virtues which we find lacking in ourselves. The scholars, the business men, the professionals of the world constantly study to improve themselves and to discover new fields of endeavor for their talents. The energetic Christian should apply this same zeal to the practice of virtue. For the Christian ideal, as proposed by Our Lord, was not perfection in one or several of the virtues but in all of them. "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."¹⁶

In conclusion, we can summarize our doctrine in the following statement. Since the infused moral virtues confer extrinsic facility in conjunction with the work of the acquired virtues, it follows that once we possess the infused virtues in our soul, we should not allow them to lie dormant but we should exercise them by repeated acts. These operative principles of a supernatural order were infused in our souls that they may be put to work and produce supernatural acts.¹⁷ The repetition of these supernatural acts produces acquired habits, and these acquired habits, in turn, lead to ease and facility in the practice of virtue.

¹⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 65, art. 1, c. in finem.
¹⁶ *Matt.*, 5:48.

¹⁷ Cf. Parente, P., *The Ascetical Life* (B. Herder: St. Louis, 1944), p. 126.

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