

**THE PRINCIPLES OF GRACE**  
**ACCORDING TO THOMAS AQUINAS**

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I hereby certify that the thesis I am submitting is my own original work, except where otherwise indicated. No proper part of this thesis has been submitted, or is currently being submitted, for any degree, diploma, certificate, or other qualification in this University or elsewhere.

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## Abstract

My thesis investigates Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of Grace. There are several aspects to this doctrine, and I am primarily interested in Aquinas' claim that God bestows a supernatural quality on some human beings—a quality called 'grace'. In the thesis I am concerned with two research questions: is the quality of grace necessary for justification and/or sanctification? And if it is, how does a person get it?

Discussion of Aquinas' doctrine of grace has been widespread in certain schools of Thomism, notably the Strict-Observance School (see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange), Augustinian Thomism (see the work of Henri de Lubac, particularly his *Mystere du Surnaturel*), and Transcendental Thomism (see Karl Rahner). One school of Thomism where discussion of grace is lacking is that of 'analytical Thomism' (Haldane, 2004). One could argue that analytical Thomism might come under another recent movement within theology: namely, analytic theology (Crisp and Rea, 2009). I adopt a methodology *roughly* characteristic of either analytical Thomism or analytic theology.

For Aquinas, the quality of grace is needed for the processes of both justification and sanctification. In my first chapter I get clear on the nature of this quality, engaging in a debate over whether it is created or uncreated. In the second chapter I look to the thought of Duns Scotus and William of Ockham to begin to address the question of

whether created grace is necessary for justification and acceptance to eternal life. I then look to the reformers, particularly Calvin, in whom we find a wholesale rejection of the need for created grace for justification. Noting the agreement of Aquinas and Calvin on the need for new dispositions for sanctification (what Aquinas simply calls 'grace'), I move on to the question of how a person gets created grace. I compare Aquinas and Calvin on the necessary and sufficient conditions for a bestowal of grace in the Eucharist. Finally, I seek to address the question of the plausibility of the claim that created grace is bestowed through material rites like the sacraments.

## Table of Contents

TITLE PAGE	1
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
ABSTRACT	5
INTRODUCTION	11
1 UNCREATED/CREATED GRACE IN AQUINAS	23
Introduction	23
Part 1	
Thomas on Grace	23
Habits	26
Participation	31
A Likeness of the Divine Nature	34
Justification	38
Justification and Free-will	43
Sanctification	46
Part 2	
Garrigou-Lagrange and the Medieval Context	48
Williams and Uncreated Grace: Two Arguments	50
Williams on Uncreated Grace: Critique	54
Karl Rahner and the Appeal to Analogy	57
Williams: an Attempt at Clarification	62

Part 3	
The Work of the Holy Spirit	67
Conclusion	69
2 ON THE NEED FOR CREATED GRACE	70
Introduction	70
Aquinas	71
Scotus	74
Ockham	79
Ockham on Ordained and Absolute Power	79
Ockham on the Necessity of Grace	84
Further Critique: Expanding on Adams	101
Conclusion	114
3 JOHN CALVIN	116
Introduction	116
Part 1	
Calvin on Justification	117
Calvin on the Cause of Justification	121
Sanctification	126
Part 2	
Section 1: ‘Initial Defence of Imputation’	128
Section 2: ‘Against Osiander Mixing Justification and Regeneration’	134
Section 3: ‘Osiander’s Doctrine Nullifies the Certainty of Salvation’	137

Section 4: 'Refutation of Scholastic Doctrines of Good Works as Effective for Justification'	139
Section 4a	143
Against Calvin: Aquinas on Justification by Faith	
Section 4b	146
Against Calvin: Reward for Works	
Part 3	
Deciphering the Nature of the Disagreement	149
Free Will	150
Free Will: Indecisive	153
Perseverance of the Saints: Decisive	156
Conclusion	162
4 NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS FOR GRACE THROUGH THE EUCHARIST	164
Introduction	164
Disagreement and Agreement	164
Aquinas	168
Calvin's Contention	175
A Faith-less Aquinas?	186
Baptism	187
Eucharist	193

Conclusion	195
5 THE PLAUSIBILITY QUESTION	196
Introduction	196
Context Part 1: Cuneo	196
Context Part 2: Divine Silence and Mediation	199
Grace through the Eucharist	203
Definition of 'Supernatural'	205
Supernatural End	210
Supernatural Powers	211
The Power to Avoid Committing Mortal Sin	213
The Power to Know Supernatural Truths	220
The Power to Merit Eternal Life	231
God's Bestowal of Grace	241
Grace through the Eucharist: Natural Reasons	242
Grace through the Eucharist: Revealed Reasons	247
Memorialism: an Objection to Revealed Reasons	250
Conclusion	256
CONCLUSION	257
BIBLIOGRAPHY	262

## Introduction

Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) is to the discipline of theology what Shakespeare is to English literature: an unrivalled figure whose output was enormous and whose influence is inescapable in the discipline today. In this thesis I focus upon Thomas' doctrine of grace. There are various 'schools' of Thomism, and in several of these we find extensive treatment of Aquinas' doctrine of grace.<sup>1</sup> I begin by explaining two recent movements within theology and philosophy: analytic theology and analytical Thomism. As I explain, both of these movements adopt a roughly similar methodology, and in both of them there is relatively little treatment of Aquinas' doctrine of grace. As such, my analytic treatment of Aquinas' doctrine of grace is an original contribution both to discussion of Thomas' treatment of grace, and to analytic discussions of Aquinas. After situating myself within the broad tradition shared by analytic theology and analytical Thomism, I then outline the structure of the thesis.

### Two Analytic Movements

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<sup>1</sup> The discussion of Aquinas' doctrine of grace in some quarters of modern Thomism has been vast. For example, see Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957); Rahner, K. 'Concerning the relationship between Nature and Grace,' Translated Ernst, C. in *Theological Investigations Volume 1* (London: Longman and Todd, 1965); De Lubac, H. *Le Mystere du Surnaturel* (Paris: Aubier, 1965); Long, S. *Natura Pura: on the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

I now outline two recent movements which contain little engagement with Aquinas' doctrine of grace.<sup>2</sup>

### *Analytic Theology*

The 'analytic theology' movement emerged as a result of the revival of the philosophy of religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>3</sup> In an attempt to get clear on what analytic theology is, we may listen to some of its leading figures. William Abraham describes analytic theology as 'systematic theology attuned to the skills, resources, and virtues of analytic philosophy.'<sup>4</sup> As Abraham states, analytic theology takes theological issues for its subject matter, but employs methods taken from the discipline of analytic philosophy. Oliver Crisp writes that work in analytic philosophy is characterised by 'a logical rigour, clarity, and parsimony of expression, coupled with attention to a certain cluster of philosophical problems.' Turning to analytic theology, Crisp writes that it 'will prize intellectual virtues like clarity, parsimony of expression, and argumentative rigour.'<sup>5</sup> Michael Rea characterises analytic approaches to philosophy in terms of their *style* and *ambition*. The latter are generally 'to

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<sup>2</sup> For an exception to the tendency, see Stump, E. 'Grace and Free Will' in *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> For more on the movement see: Wood, W. 'On the New Analytic Theology, or: The Road Less Travelled,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 77 (4), 941-960. Wolterstorff, N. 'How Philosophical Theology Became Possible within the Analytic Tradition of Philosophy' in Crisp, O. and Rea, M. *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> William J. Abraham, 'Systematic Theology as Analytic Theology' in Crisp, O. and Rea, M. (edited) *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 37.

<sup>5</sup> Crisp, O. 'On Analytic Theology' in *Analytic Theology*. 22.

identify the scope and limits of our powers to obtain knowledge of the world,' and 'to provide such true explanatory theories as we can in areas of inquiry (metaphysics, morals, and the like) that fall outside the scope of the natural sciences.'<sup>6</sup> Rea identifies the following as the core elements of the style of analytic philosophy:

P1. Write as if philosophical positions and conclusions can be adequately formulated in sentences that can be formalised and logically manipulated.

P2. Prioritize precision, clarity, and logical coherence.

P3. Avoid substantive (non-decorative) use of metaphor and other tropes whose semantic content outstrips their propositional content.

P4. Work as much as possible with well-understood primitive concepts, and concepts that can be analysed in terms of those.

P5. Treat conceptual analysis (insofar as possible) as a source of evidence.<sup>7</sup>

Given this description of the style of analytic philosophy, Rea then describes analytic theology:

Analytic theology is just the activity of approaching theological topics with the ambitions of an analytic philosopher and in a style that conforms to the prescriptions that are distinctive of analytic philosophical discourse. It will also involve, more or less, pursuing those topics in a way that engages the literature that is constitutive of the analytic tradition, employing some of the technical jargon from that tradition, and so on. But in the end, it is the style and ambitions that are most central.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Rea, M. 'Introduction' in *Analytic Theology*.

<sup>7</sup> Pp. 5-6. Tom McCall provides an explanation of this in his *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2015). 18 – 21.

<sup>8</sup> 'Introduction' in *Analytic Theology*. 7.

In Abraham, Crisp, and Rea, we find various roughly complementary descriptions of analytic theology: the subject matter is theological, and the method is analytic. Of course, a precise definition of what exactly counts as ‘analytic method’ is debateable, even given Rea’s reflective P1 – P5. Different pieces of analytic theology differ in method. For example, consider the following two extracts of analytic theology:

Such an argument is subject to Plantinga’s Principle. If all you’ve said is that  $P(A/K)$ ,  $P(B/A\&K)$ , and  $P(P/A\&B\&K)$  are high, say around .8 each, then, so far, all that follows from the probability calculus is that  $P(K)$  is greater than or equal to  $.8 \times .8 \times .8$ , a tad higher than .5. Though the conditional probabilities  $O(A/K)$ ,  $P(B/A\&K)$  are each high, the probabilities ‘dwindle’ when you multiply them through.<sup>9</sup>

While we cannot express the distinctive knowledge we gain in such an experience as a matter of knowing *that*, we can do something to re-present the experience itself in such a way that we can share it with others who were not part of it, so that the knowledge of persons garnered from the experience is also available to them. This is generally what we do when we tell a story. A story takes a real or imagined second-person experience and makes it available to a wider audience.<sup>10</sup>

Both of these extracts are taken from the *Analytic Theology* volume. Putting the content aside, we may note that the method of the two seems distinctively different. This is because analytic theologians differ over the extent to which they formalise the arguments they work with.

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<sup>9</sup> Crisp, T. ‘On Understanding Scripture as the Word of God’ in *Analytic Theology*. 191.

<sup>10</sup> Stump, E. ‘The Problem of Evil: Analytic Philosophy and Narrative’ in *Analytic Theology*. 258.

Whilst there are a variety of methods within analytic theology, I think that the focus on clarity of expression, and on the rigorous use of logic (symbolic or not) in argumentation are common to all analytic theologians.

### *Analytical Thomism*

Analytical Thomism is similar to analytic theology in the sense that it involves the use of analytic method. The difference is that analytical Thomism applies analytic method to the thought of Aquinas—both his philosophical and theological thought—whilst analytic theology applies analytic method to theological issues found in various thinkers and traditions.

The term ‘analytical Thomism’ is attributed to John Haldane.<sup>11</sup> Haldane is aware that there have been various groups of intellectuals who have sought to work with the thought of Aquinas. He writes:

In the sixteenth century, in what are now Spain, Portugal and Italy, a movement developed that sought to extend the doctrines of Aquinas in ways that would enable it to engage with a largely post-Christian rationalism. That project, or similar ones, have been re-established or begun throughout the last five centuries. Thus we have, in order, Aquinas himself; late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries’ Thomism; the ‘second’ Thomism of sixteenth-century Iberia; and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, European and North American neo-Thomism; the last of these in versions and styles varying from delicate exegesis of the thoughts of the

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<sup>11</sup> See Haldane, J. *Faithful Reason: essays Catholic and Philosophical* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

master to avowedly syncretist statements to the effect that Aquinas was a kind of neo-Kantian or a neo-Hegelian.<sup>12</sup>

Haldane holds that analytical Thomism is not concerned with trying to align Thomist thought with a particular set of doctrines, nor is it primarily focused on exegesis of Aquinas' work. Rather, it 'seeks to deploy the methods and ideas of twentieth-century philosophy—of the sort dominant within the English-speaking world—in connection with the broad framework of ideas introduced and developed by Aquinas.'<sup>13</sup> He associates analytical Thomism with the writings of thinkers like Anscombe, Donagan, Geach, Grisez, Kenny, and MacIntyre.

Haldane explains each of the words of the phrase 'analytical Thomism' in turn. Haldane takes the word 'Thomism' to mean the ideas and method of thought that derive from Aquinas but are not necessarily employed by him. He takes 'analytical' to refer to 'a range of related features' that have characterised Anglo-American philosophy since Russell and Moore's work at the turn of century. In light of this, he defines analytical Thomism as follows:

(It) involves bringing into mutual relationship of the styles and preoccupations of recent English-speaking philosophy and the concepts and concerns shared by St Thomas and his followers.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Haldane, J. 'Analytical Thomism: a prefatory note' *Monist* 1997, Vol.80(4), pp.485-486. 486.

<sup>13</sup> 'Analytical Thomism: a prefatory note.' 486.

<sup>14</sup> Haldane, J. 'Afterward. Analytical Thomism: How we got here, why it is worth remaining, and where we may go to next' in Paterson, C. (edited) *Analytical Thomism: traditions in dialogue* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

The similarities between analytic theology and analytical Thomism are clear. This thesis is a work in both: the method is analytic, in the sense that it emphasises clarity and the rigorous use of logic in argumentation, and the subject matter is Aquinas' doctrine of grace.<sup>15</sup>

## Thesis

### *Background*

Having described the two recent academic movements to which my work contributes, I now give a brief introduction to several key ideas in Aquinas' doctrine of grace in order to provide some context for the outline of the chapters of the thesis which follows.

Aquinas considers two theological senses of the word 'grace': first, grace sometimes signifies the eternal love of God towards those he predestines to salvation; second, grace signifies 'something bestowed on man by God'.<sup>16</sup> Thomas elaborates on this second sense, stating that grace is a supernatural quality. Grace is 'supernatural' in the sense that

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<sup>15</sup> It might be thought by some that 'analytic method' precludes the undertaking of extensive textual work. I disagree with this view. Indeed, much of the thesis is textual and historical in nature. This is so in order to get clear on the views held by the relevant thinkers.

<sup>16</sup> Aquinas, T. *Summa Theologiae: Latin text and English translation*, trans. Gilby, T. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). ST I-II q110 a1.

it is brought about immediately by God, rather than through the usual processes of secondary causation. It is also a 'quality', and here Aquinas draws heavily upon Aristotle. The category of quality is sub-divided into habits and dispositions, natural capabilities and incapacities, affective qualities and affections, and shape. Grace falls under the first of these—habits and dispositions. So grace is a supernatural quality—or more specifically, a supernatural habit or disposition—which God bestows on some persons. Aquinas thinks that the quality of grace is involved in two processes that the Christian tradition has broadly labeled 'justification' and 'sanctification'. Justification is the process through which a person is made acceptable to God for eternal life, whilst sanctification is the process through which a person is made holy.

### *Thesis Outline*

In the thesis I am concerned with two research questions: is the quality of grace necessary for the processes of justification and/or sanctification? And if it is, how does a person get it? I answer these questions through analysis of the work of Aquinas. In order to constructively engage with Aquinas' work I also draw upon other figures in the broader tradition of Christian thought: most notably, William of Ockham and John Calvin.

I begin the thesis by getting clear on the nature of the quality of grace. Chapter 1 has three parts. In the first part of the chapter I introduce several of the main aspects of Aquinas' doctrine of grace. In the second part, I explore a debate over whether grace in Aquinas is a created, or an uncreated, quality; that is, whether it is something other than

God or God himself. I engage with the work of A. N. Williams whose book *The Ground of Union* seeks to bridge the divide between the Eastern and Western churches on the issue of created grace by arguing that for Aquinas grace is an uncreated quality. I critique Williams, suggesting that her position is unclear. I then provide wider textual consideration of Aquinas' thought, paying particular attention to the relevant material in his *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. I conclude that in light of the problems with Williams' position, and the textual support for a view of grace as created, we should view grace in Aquinas as a created quality. In the third part of the chapter I briefly outline the relationship between created grace and the Holy Spirit.

For Aquinas, created grace is needed for both justification and sanctification. It might be thought, however, that God does not need any created thing to bring about his salvific plans for human persons. Thus, the question arises: to what extent is created grace necessary for a person to be justified and to merit eternal life?

I begin Chapter 2 by outlining Aquinas' view: that created grace is necessary for justification and acceptance to eternal life. Uncharacteristically, Aquinas spills little ink describing and defending this claim, so I turn to the thought of Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1287-1347) for extensive critical engagement with Aquinas' claim that created grace is necessary for a person to be justified and to merit eternal life.

In both thinkers we find a two-sided response, which depends upon a distinction between God's ordained power and his absolute power. Created grace is necessary for God to accept persons by his ordained power, but not by his absolute power.

I explain Scotus' position, which draws upon the distinction between absolute and ordained power, in order to situate the thought of William of Ockham who comes after Scotus and who appeals to the distinction more often and directly. Given Ockham's detailed treatment of the question, I turn to concentrate on his arguments. My engagement with Ockham is twofold: first, I show that several of his arguments are unsuccessful by providing original counter-arguments. Second, I build upon the work of Marilyn McCord Adams and I conclude that, whilst for Ockham, created grace may be necessary for justification, on one understanding of ordained power his thought suggests an openness to the claim that a meritorious act is not needed for acceptance to eternal life.

In Chapter 3 I turn to John Calvin. The reason for the move to Calvin is that in his thought we find a complete break from the medieval view that created grace is needed to justify a person. Thus, Calvin provides a platform from which to consider why we might reject Aquinas' view altogether. Calvin relies upon the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner for justification. The focus on Calvin also allows for critical comparison across theological traditions.

The chapter has three parts. In the first part I outline Calvin's 'externalist' view on this aspect of justification, highlighting the differences with Aquinas' 'internalist' view. I then show that whilst Aquinas and Calvin hold divergent views on the need for created grace for justification, they hold similar views on the need for new habits and dispositions for

sanctification, which is relevant for Chapter 4. In part 2 I assess two of Calvin's main reasons for rejecting a medieval (internalist) view on justification found within four sections of the *Institutes*: namely, the biblical confirmation of justification by imputation, and Calvin's own emphasis on salvation by faith and not by works. I argue that the biblical witness is compatible with Aquinas' view, and that an appeal to salvation by faith rather than works is also in keeping with Aquinas' position. In Part 3 I explain what I take to motivate the difference between Aquinas' and Calvin's views on justification. I consider two theological issues—the freedom of the will in salvation and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints—and I show that the latter explains the difference between the views of Aquinas and Calvin.

Having described a disagreement between Aquinas and Calvin on the need for created grace for justification, and having shown agreement on the need for new dispositions for sanctification, in Chapter 4 I address the question: how does a person get grace? I consider the grace-transporting vehicles known as the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, again in the works of Aquinas and Calvin, to allow for critical comparison across theological traditions. I outline Aquinas' and Calvin's views on the sacraments, and I argue that in some respects their views are not as dissimilar as some scholars assert. I begin the chapter by describing Calvin's disagreement with the medieval view of the sacraments. I then outline Aquinas' general view, setting out what he might think of as the necessary and sufficient conditions for receiving grace through the sacraments. Following this I consider what issues Calvin might have with these necessary and sufficient conditions.

Finally, I return to Aquinas to show that, in at least some respects, and contrary to some scholars, Calvin's criticism of Aquinas is misplaced.

In Chapter 5 I assess the plausibility of Aquinas' claim that persons get grace through the medium of the Eucharist. I first outline the academic context within which I hope to make a contribution. I then present an original argument, which I construct from the work of Aquinas, in defence of the claim that grace is bestowed through the Eucharist.

## Chapter 1: Uncreated/Created Grace in Aquinas

### Introduction

In the first part of this chapter I outline several important aspects of Aquinas' doctrine of grace, some of which will be critiqued throughout the thesis, and others of which I include to shed explanatory light on the doctrine. In the second part of the chapter I consider a debate over whether Aquinas thought grace to be a created or an uncreated quality. In doing so, I critique a major secondary treatment of the topic. In the third part of the chapter I briefly outline the relationship between grace and the Holy Spirit.

### Part 1

#### Thomas on Grace

In the *Summa Theologiae* we read of three human senses of the word grace.<sup>17</sup> First, grace is understood as a person's love. Aquinas considers the example of a king who looks with

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<sup>17</sup> ST IaIIae q110 a1. (Sed quantum ad primum est differentia attendenda circa gratiam Dei et gratiam hominis): quia enim bonum creaturae provenit ex voluntate divina, ideo ex dilectione Dei, qua vult creaturae bonum, profluit aliquod bonum in creatura. Voluntas autem hominis movetur ex bono praeexistente in rebus; et inde est quod dilectio hominis non causat totaliter rei bonitatem, sed praesupponit ipsam vel in parte vel in toto. Patet igitur quod quamlibet Dei dilectionem sequitur aliquod bonum in creatura causatum quandoque, non tamen dilectioni aeternae coaeternum. Et secundum huiusmodi boni differentiam differens consideratur dilectio Dei ad creaturam.

favor upon a soldier: the soldier is said to be 'in the good graces' of the king. Second, we view grace as 'any gift freely bestowed' (from the latin *gratis*, meaning 'for free'), as we might say 'I do you this act of grace.' Third, grace is understood as gratitude (from the latin *gratia*) for the gift that has been received. Aquinas thinks that of these three the second depends upon the first, since a person bestows a gift upon another person from the "love wherewith he receives him into his good 'graces'." Moreover, the third arises out of the second, as it is in response to a gift that a person shows gratitude. All three human senses of grace have theological import for Aquinas. I will investigate primarily the second of these senses of grace; grace as 'any gift freely bestowed.'

For Aquinas, the bestowal of grace upon a person is the result of a 'special love' of God (the first sense of grace), which is reserved for some rational creatures. Aquinas makes it clear that God's love for a creature is different from a person's love for a creature:

Since the creature's good springs from the Divine will, some good in the creature flows from God's love, whereby He wishes the good of the creature. On the other hand, the will of man is moved by the good pre-existing in things; and hence man's love does not wholly cause the good of the thing, but pre-supposes it either in part or wholly. Therefore it is clear that every love of God is followed at some time by a good caused in the creature, but not co-eternal with the eternal love. And according to this difference of good the love of God to the creature is looked at differently. One is a general love, by which 'he loves all things that are,' as Wisdom says (11:25); by this he bestows natural being on created things. The other is a special love, by which he draws the rational creature above its natural condition to have a part in the divine goodness. And it is by this love that he is said to love someone simply speaking; because by this love God simply speaking wills for the creature that eternal good which is himself.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> ST Iallae q110 a1.

For Aquinas, whilst human persons love that which is good, it is through loving that God makes created things good.

God's special love may be distinguished from his common love through which he loves all creatures and 'gives (them) their natural being.' In addressing the question of what gift (second sense of grace) it is that God bestows on humans, by his special love, Aquinas' response is twofold: first, God moves a person to know or will or do something. Second, God bestows a habitual gift upon a person.<sup>19</sup> With regards to the latter, where I concentrate in what follows, Aquinas notes that God provides for His creatures in order that they may acquire *natural* good by bestowing upon them 'certain forms and powers' which incline them towards natural acts. In addition to this, God provides for persons' *supernatural* good by infusing into creatures supernatural qualities through which they may 'be moved by Him sweetly and promptly to acquire eternal good.' For Aquinas, the gift of grace is a supernatural quality, given that a person might attain to a supernatural good.<sup>20</sup>

In stating that grace is a quality Aquinas is locating it within the Aristotelian metaphysical framework. The category of quality, under which grace falls, is further sub-divided into habits and dispositions, natural capabilities and incapacibilities, affective qualities and

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<sup>19</sup> ST Iallae q110 a2.

<sup>20</sup> ST Iallae q110 a2.

affections, and shape. It is the first of these—habits and dispositions—under which Aquinas locates grace. So grace is a supernatural quality—or more specifically, a supernatural habit or disposition—that God bestows on some persons.

Aquinas thinks that the quality of grace is an *accident*. He writes, ‘because grace is above human nature... it... is an accidental form of the soul.’<sup>21</sup> If a thing loses its substance it ceases to exist, but a thing can lose or gain an accident without ceasing to be the thing that it is. Grace is an accidental quality, thus a person can be a human being with or without grace. Indeed, Aquinas thinks that grace is ‘above nature.’<sup>22</sup>

The quality of grace must be distinguished from both the acquired virtues—which may be ‘acquired’ without the aid of grace—and the infused virtues. The latter are dependent on grace but are nevertheless distinct from it:

Even as the natural light of reason is something besides the acquired virtues, which are ordained to this natural light, so also the light of grace which is a participation of the Divine Nature *is something besides* the infused virtues which are derived from and are ordained to this light.<sup>23</sup>

## Habits

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<sup>21</sup> ST I-II q110 a2 reply to objection 2.

<sup>22</sup> ST I-II q110 a2 reply to objection 2.

<sup>23</sup> ST I-II q110 a3. Sicut igitur lumen naturale rationis est aliquid praeter virtutes acquisitas quae dicuntur in ordine ad ipsum lumen naturale, ita etiam ipsum lumen gratiae, quod est participatio divinae naturae, est aliquid praeter virtutes infusas, quae a lumine illo derivantur, et ad illud lumen ordinantur.

Grace is, for Aquinas, a habit. Bonnie Kent helps clarify what is meant by 'habit' by alluding to the difference between how the word was understood by the ancients and medievals, and how it may be understood today:

The Greek *hexis* was translated into Latin as *habitus* and thence into English as 'habit'. The English word tends to mislead insofar as habit can signify for English speakers any routine performance, however trivial or mechanical—tugging at one's necktie, for example, or wincing at the scream of a police siren. A *hexus* or *habitus*, on contrast, is a durable characteristic of the agent inclining to certain kinds of actions and emotional reactions, not the actions and reactions themselves.<sup>24</sup>

As Kent explains, Aquinas thinks of a habit as something possessed by a person which inclines him towards particular actions under particular conditions. An example of a habit is courage. A person who has courage is disposed to act courageously in fearful situations.

What is important for both Aristotle and Aquinas is that habits are, as Kent says, durable: habits are 'difficult to change.'<sup>25</sup> Aristotle writes:

A habit (*hexus*) differs from a condition in being *more stable and lasting longer*. Such are the branches of knowledge and the virtues... It is what are easily changed and quickly changing what we call conditions, e.g. hotness and chill and sickness and health and the like. For a man is in a certain condition by dint of these, yet he changes quickly from being hot to cold and from being healthy to being sick. Similarly with the rest of the conditions, unless indeed even one of these were eventually to become through length of time part of a man's nature and

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<sup>24</sup> Kent, B. *Virtues of the Will: the Transformation of Ethics in the Late 13<sup>th</sup> Century* (Washington D.C. : Catholic University of America Press, 2016). 117.

<sup>25</sup> ST Iallae q49 a1.

irremediable or exceedingly hard to change—and then one would perhaps call this a habit.<sup>26</sup>

Alongside being durable, Aristotle thinks that habits are acquired through ongoing and repetitive practice. The courageous person develops the habit of courage through practicing courageous actions in risky and frightful situations. Stanley Hauerwas explains that we might think of Aristotle's theory of virtue formation along the lines of how a person becomes proficient in a craft. Just as we learn a craft by repeated practice of making a particular object, hopefully becoming better the more time and energy we devote to the process, so too do we become virtuous by performing actions that are virtuous.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst there is some agreement between Aquinas and Aristotle on the nature of habits—that they are durable, for example—Aquinas departs from Aristotle's view on an important point: for Aquinas, whilst some habits are acquired through practice, as explained by Hauerwas above, this is not the case with all habits. Importantly, this is not the case with grace, for it is infused instantaneously in a person by God.<sup>28</sup> Kent writes:

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<sup>26</sup> *Virtues of the Will*. 117. Italics mine.

<sup>27</sup> Hauerwas, S. (online: <http://www.vhi.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/resources-folder/papers-files/Paper-hauerwas>). 3. Note that Hauerwas comments upon a dis-analogy with the example of craft: 'But the analogy with the crafts can be misleading because the relation between the actions that produce the habits that make us virtuous are constitutive of the habit in the way the product produced by the craftsman is not.' 3.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Pinsent offers natural metaphors to help explain this notion of infusion. See Pinsent, A. 'Who's Afraid of the Infused Virtues? Dispositional Infusion, Human and Divine,' in Goris, H. and Schoot, H. (edited) *The Virtuous Life: Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Nature of Moral Virtues* (Paris: Peeters, 2017).

When Thomas proceeds to argue that certain habits are infused in us by God, it becomes all the more evident that ancient philosophy has been left behind. Our second natures need not be generated naturally and gradually, through our own long practice.<sup>29</sup>

Another point of importance regarding habits is that whilst habits dispose a person towards certain actions they do not, according to Aquinas, *compel* a person to perform an action. Habits make it harder, but not impossible, for a virtuous person to sin and a reprobate to improve.<sup>30</sup> Aquinas writes:

One sinful act does not destroy a habit of acquired virtue... though man cannot avoid mortal sin without grace, so as never to sin mortally, yet he is not hindered from acquiring a habit of virtue, whereby he may abstain from evil in the majority of cases, and chiefly in matters most opposed to reason.<sup>31</sup>

For Aquinas, a person who has the habit of courage is disposed to act courageously in the majority of cases, but not necessarily in all cases. Indeed, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas explains that through grace God enables a person to act freely, not under compulsion:

One must bear in mind that the sons of God are driven not as slaves, but as free men. For, since he is free who is for his own sake, we do that freely which we do

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<sup>29</sup> *Virtues of the Will*. 117.

<sup>30</sup> *Virtues of the Will*. 119.

<sup>31</sup> ST I-II q63 a2 rep 2. Non autem per unum actum peccati corrumpitur habitus virtutis acquisitae: habitui enim non contrariatur directe actus, sed habitus. Et ideo licet sine gratia homo non possit peccatum mortale vitare, ita quod nunquam peccet mortaliter, non tamen impeditur quin possit habitum virtutis acquirere, per quam a malis operibus absteat ut in pluribus, et praecipue ab his quae sunt valde rationi contraria.

of our very selves. But this is what we do of our will, but what we do against our will we do not freely but as slaves: be the violence absolute, as when the whole principle is extrinsic, with the sufferer contributing nothing—for instance, a man is pushed into motion, or be the violence mixed with the voluntary—for instance, when one wishes to do or to suffer what is less contrary to his will to avoid what is more contrary to it. But the Holy Spirit so inclines us to act that He makes us act voluntarily, in that He makes us lovers of God.<sup>32</sup>

Aquinas thinks that a person does not act freely when something wholly external to the person forces him to act: for example, when he is pushed. Aquinas also thinks that a person does not act freely when ‘the violence (is) mixed with the voluntary.’ But when the Holy Spirit inclines a person, through grace, he acts voluntarily.<sup>33</sup>

In the case of a person who sins, whilst a person may, at some level, want to avoid sin, he is often driven towards sin because of the effect of original sin on his soul. In sinning, according to Aquinas, a person does not act freely. He writes:

The will, of course, is ordered to that which is truly good. But if, by reason of passion or of bad habit or disposition, a man be turned away from that which is truly good, he acts slavishly, in that he is diverted by some extraneous thing, if

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<sup>32</sup> Aquinas, T. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (online: <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm>). Bk4 Ch22 (5). Considerandum tamen est quod a spiritu sancto filii Dei aguntur non sicut servi, sed sicut liberi. Cum enim liber sit qui sui causa est, illud libere agimus quod ex nobis ipsis agimus. Hoc vero est quod ex voluntate agimus: quod autem agimus contra voluntatem, non libere, sed serviliter agimus; sive sit violentia absoluta, ut quando totum principium est extra, nihil conferente vim passo, puta cum aliquis vi impellitur ad motum; sive sit violentia voluntario mixta, ut cum aliquis vult facere vel pati quod minus est contrarium voluntati, ut evadat quod magis voluntati contrariatur. Spiritus autem sanctus sic nos ad agendum inclinatur ut nos voluntarie agere faciat, in quantum nos amatores Dei constituit.

<sup>33</sup> The view that the Holy Spirit moves the will directly, in the absence of created grace, is the view of Peter Lombard's. Aquinas thinks that the Holy Spirit *inclines* the will through grace.

consideration be given the will's natural order itself... Since the Holy Spirit inclines the will by love toward the true good, to which the will is naturally ordered, He removes both that servitude in which the slave of passion infected by sin acts against the order of the will, and that servitude in which, against the movement of his will, a man acts according to the law; its slave, so to say, not its friend.<sup>34</sup>

For Aquinas, God bestows a habit of grace upon a person which enables him to pursue that which is good. The person who pursues that which is good acts freely.

### Participation

Aquinas writes of grace as a *participation* of the Divine Nature, through a manner of likeness.<sup>35</sup> The main text within Aquinas' corpus explaining his understanding of participation is to be found in the second chapter of *De Hebdomadibus*:

For 'to participate' is, as it were, 'to grasp a part.' And, therefore, when something receives in a particular way that which belongs to another in a universal way, it is said 'to participate' in that, as human being is said to participate in animal because it does not possess the intelligible structure of animal according to its total commonality; and in the same way, Socrates participates in human. And similarly, too, a subject participates in accident, and matter in form, because a substantial form, or an accidental one, which is common by virtue of its own intelligible

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<sup>34</sup> SCG Bk4 Ch22 (6). Cum autem voluntas ordinetur in id quod est vere bonum, sive propter passionem sive propter malum habitum aut dispositionem homo ab eo quod est vere bonum avertatur, serviliter agit, in quantum a quodam extraneo inclinatur, si consideretur ipse ordo naturalis voluntatis. Sed si consideretur actus voluntatis ut inclinatae in apprensione bonum, libere agit cum sequitur passionem aut habitum corruptum; serviliter autem agit si, tali voluntate manente, propter timorem legis in contrarium positae, abstinet ab eo quod vult. Cum igitur spiritus sanctus per amorem voluntatem inclinet in verum bonum, in quod naturaliter ordinatur, tollit et servitutem qua, servus passionis et peccati effectus, contra ordinem voluntatis agit; et servitutem qua, contra motum suae voluntatis, secundum legem agit, quasi legis servus, non amicus.

<sup>35</sup> ST I-IIae q110 a4.

structure, is determined to this or that subject. And similarly, too, an effect is said 'to participate' in its own cause, and especially when it is not equal to the power of its own cause, as for example, if we should say that 'air participates in the light of the sun' because it does not receive that light with the brilliance it has in the sun.<sup>36</sup>

When Aquinas writes that a human being does not possess the 'intelligible structure' of 'animal' according to its total commonality I take Aquinas to mean that whilst a human is an animal, there are other ways of being an animal: a dog, a horse, etc. So 'human' does not exhaust the 'intelligible structure' of 'animal.'

John Rziha reduces Thomas' explanation of participation to the following three major types of participation:

- 1) A species participates in a genus and an individual participates in a species.
- 2) A substance participates in an accident and matter in form.
- 3) An effect participates in its cause.<sup>37</sup>

A species is defined by giving its genus and its differentia: the genus is the kind under which the species falls, and the differentia tells what characterises the species within that genus. For example, a human being (species) might be defined as an animal (genus) having the capacity to reason (the differentia). An individual human then falls within the human species.

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<sup>36</sup> Aquinas, T. *Expositio libri de hebdomadibus 2* (Leonine, 50:271).

<sup>37</sup> This three-fold interpretation is confirmed by John Wippel. See Wippel, J. *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

On the first type of participation John Wippel comments that ‘we are dealing with a less extended intelligibility which is said to share in a more universal or more extended intelligible content.’<sup>38</sup> To take the example of species and genus, whilst the species ‘human’ extends over all humans, the genus ‘animal’ extends not only over all humans but also over all non-human animals; thus, it has a more extended intelligible content. One notion (human) shares in another (animal) without exhausting it, thus we may describe it as a case of participation. On the second type of participation, Aquinas states that the relevant form ‘is common by virtue of its own intelligible structure,’ and Wippel takes this to mean that these forms can be shared in by any number of different subjects or instances of matter. For example, the accidental quality ‘redness’ may be had by many different objects. Aquinas then states that the form is ‘determined to this or that subject,’ on which Wippel comments:

It is only when a given accidental form or substantial form is actually received in its appropriate substantial subject or its appropriate matter that it is thereby limited and restricted to the same. Hence the receiving principle, whether matter or a substantial subject, may be said to participate in the received form.<sup>39</sup>

This kind of participation may, for Wippel, be described as ‘real or ontological,’ in contrast to the first kind, where one notion shares in another without exhausting it.

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<sup>38</sup> *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. 96.

<sup>39</sup> *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. 96.

Wippel dedicates a considerable section of *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* to the third kind of participation—the participation of an effect in a cause—as this is the kind of participation at work, according to Wippel, when Aquinas talks of the being of all creation participating in the being of God.

The question we are faced with is: what kind of participation are we dealing with when Aquinas writes of humans participating in the divine nature, ‘after the manner of a likeness’?<sup>40</sup> It is clear that we are not dealing with the first kind of participation—the participation of a species in a genus and an individual in a species—as grace cannot be described as a species, given the description of a species above. Thus, we must decide between the second and the third kinds. The second kind, which involves a substance participating in an accident and matter in form, does map onto what Aquinas says about grace being an accident. The human person (substance) participates in grace (the accident). Whilst the second kind of participation fits with what Aquinas says about grace, so too does the third kind: the participation of an effect in a cause. For it may be that, as grace is supernaturally caused by God, grace (the quality) itself participates in God as an effect participates in its cause. If this were the case there would be two levels of participation at work: the participation of grace, the created effect, in its cause (God), and the participation of the human person in an accident (grace).

#### A Likeness of the Divine Nature

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<sup>40</sup> ST Iallae q110 a4.

When considering what Thomas means by ‘likeness’ when he writes of a ‘participation in a likeness of the divine nature’ we need to consider a related term: ‘image’. As Gregory Doolan explains in his book *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes*, likeness implies that there is another that ‘shares in the similitude.’<sup>41</sup> For Thomas, according to Doolan, a likeness can exist in something in one of two ways: ‘either as in a principle or as in something that shares a likeness to a principle.’<sup>42</sup> In the latter case—where something shares in a likeness to a principle—we call the thing an ‘image.’ An image is called such because it is produced in imitation of something else. Thus, if we have two eggs, although both eggs bear a likeness to each other, neither are said to be an image of the other, for an egg, however much like and equal to another egg, is not called an image of the other egg, because it is not copied from it.<sup>43</sup>

Aquinas holds that persons are made in God’s image; that ‘in man there is some likeness to God, copied from God.’<sup>44</sup> In this case, the ‘likeness is not one of equality,’ for God ‘infinitely excels its copy.’<sup>45</sup> The image of God is in persons in three ways: first, there is the image of God imprinted on all persons, as those who ‘possess a natural appetite for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind,

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<sup>41</sup> Doolan, G. *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008). 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes*. 2.

<sup>43</sup> ST Ia q93.

<sup>44</sup> ST Ia q93.

<sup>45</sup> ST Ia q93 a1.

which is common to all men.<sup>46</sup> Second, there is the image which ‘consists in the conformity of grace,’ whereby persons ‘actually and habitually know and love God, though imperfectly.’ Thirdly, we find the image that consists in the likeness of glory, when persons ‘know and love God perfectly.’ The latter is reserved for the afterlife.

In light of this, Aquinas’ talk of participation in a ‘likeness of the divine nature’ through grace may be explained as follows: through grace, persons receive a further imprint of the image of God—a likeness of God—whereby they are not only rational creatures, but creatures who also imperfectly know and love God. As all human persons are like God inasmuch as they are rational beings, so too are humans participating in grace like God inasmuch as they know and love God, as God knows and loves himself. With this explanation in mind, consider the following from Aquinas:

Grace, as it is prior to virtue, has a subject prior to the powers of the soul, so that it is in the essence of the soul. For as man through his intellective power participates in the divine knowledge through the virtue of faith, and with respect to the power of the will participates in the divine love through the virtue of charity, so also in the nature of the soul does he participate in the divine nature, after the manner of likeness, through a certain regeneration or re-creation.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> ST Ia q93.

<sup>47</sup> ST IaIIae q110 a4. Unde relinquitur quod gratia, sicut est prius virtute, ita habeat subjectum prius potentiis animae; ita scilicet quod sit in essentia animae. Sicut enim per potentiam intellectivam homo participat cognitionem divinam per virtutem fidei, et secundum potentiam voluntatis amorem divinum per virtutem caritatis, ita etiam per naturam animae participat secundum quamdam similitudinem naturam divinam per quamdam regenerationem, sive recreationem.

In this passage we read that part of what it means to participate in a likeness of the Divine Nature involves knowing and loving God through the aid of the infused virtues of faith and love, which are affected by grace. This raises the question: does the soul's participation in a likeness of the Divine Nature result solely from the participation brought about by the infused virtues (caused by grace), or is there a participation of the soul prior to the virtues?

To answer this question we turn to Aquinas' *Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate*. In Question 27 he explains that, since natures have different ends, 'there are three prerequisites for obtaining any end among natural things.'<sup>48</sup> These are:

- a) A nature proportioned to that end.
- b) An inclination which is a natural appetite for that end.
- c) A movement toward the end.

Aquinas thinks that whilst persons do have natural ends, they also have supernatural ends. Persons are prepared by God for supernatural ends and such ends surpass the proportion of human nature. These supernatural ends are realised ultimately in the beatific vision.<sup>49</sup> This vision is not natural to persons, thus it is necessary that there be given to them 'not only something by which he can work toward that end or by which his appetite should be inclined to that end, but also something by which man's very nature

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<sup>48</sup> Aquinas, T. *Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate* (Online: <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/QDdeVer27.htm>) q27 a2.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 5 for more on this.

should be raised to a dignity which would make such an end suited to him.’ For this elevation of human nature ‘grace is given. But to incline his will to this end charity is given; and for carrying out the works by which that end is acquired, the other virtues are given.’<sup>50</sup>

Grace primarily affects the first of the three prerequisites for obtaining an end ((a)), by elevating human nature. Grace perfects the essence of the soul “inasmuch as it gives it a spiritual existence and makes it by a certain assimilation ‘a partaker of the divine nature,’ in the words of the second Epistle of St Peter.”<sup>51</sup> I take Aquinas’ talk of ‘a spiritual existence’ to refer to ‘a particular way of being, namely, being pleasing to God,’ which he elsewhere says is brought about by grace.<sup>52</sup>

How may we understand this state of being pleasing to God? As discussed, it is the state in which a person is directed not only to natural human ends, but also to the supernatural end of union with God. Moreover, this state is also one in which a person’s sins are forgiven. It is to the forgiveness of sins that we now turn.

### Justification

Aquinas thinks that grace is involved in two processes that the Christian tradition has labeled ‘justification’ and ‘sanctification’. I consider both in turn.

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<sup>50</sup> *De Veritate* q27 a2.

<sup>51</sup> *De Veritate* q27 a3.

<sup>52</sup> ST Iallae q110 a1 rep1.

### *Justification Defined*

Justification is the process through which a person is made righteous before God, as a justified person has moved from the status of sinner to the status of saint. Aquinas proposes two ways to understand justice. The first concerns legal justice. The second concerns a 'rectitude of order' in persons, whereby a person's reason is subject to God, and all that is inferior in a person is subject to his reason. Adam, the first man, was created in this latter state of justice, but those affected by original sin must be changed, by the remission of sins and the infusion of grace, from a state of injustice to a state of justice; this movement from the status of sinner to saint is called justification. Aquinas writes:

This justice may be in man in two ways: first, by simple generation, which is from privation to form; and thus justification may belong even to such as are not in sin, when they receive this justice from God, as Adam is said to have received original justice. Secondly, this justice may be brought about in man by a movement from one contrary to another, and thus justification implies a transmutation from the state of injustice to the aforesaid state of justice. And it is thus we are now speaking of the justification of the ungodly, according to the Apostle (Romans 4:5): 'But to him that worketh not, yet believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly,' etc.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> ST I-II q113 a1. Haec autem justitia in homine potest fieri dupliciter. Uno quidem modo per modum simplicis generationis, quae est ex privatione ad formam, et hoc modo justificatio posset competere etiam ei qui non esset in peccato, dum hujusmodi justitiam a Deo acciperet, sicut Adam dicitur accepisse originalem justitiam. Alio modo potest fieri hujusmodi justitia in homine secundum rationem motus qui est de contrario in contrarium, et secundum hoc justificatio importat transmutationem quamdam de statu injustitiae ad statum justitiae praedictae. Et hoc modo loquimur hic de justificatione impii, secundum illud Apostoli ad Rom., *Ei qui non operatur, credenti autem in eum qui justificat impium*, etc.

*How justification is achieved: a) the work of Christ*

For a sinner to be returned to a state of justice the problem of sin must be dealt with. For Aquinas, the cleansing of sins involves the removal of two things: first, the stain of sin, and second, the debt of punishment for sin.<sup>54</sup> Although Aquinas lists these two in this order, it may be better to reverse the order for ease of understanding. The cleansing of sin involves dealing with the debt of punishment for past sin and providing a means of avoiding future sin. With regards to the debt of punishment for past sin, Aquinas thinks that God could have simply willed to free humans from the debt of past sin, and in doing so God would not have acted against justice. Aquinas writes:

If (God) had willed to free man from sin without any satisfaction, He would not have acted against justice. For a judge, while preserving justice, cannot pardon fault without penalty, if he must visit fault committed against another—for instance, against another man, or against the State, or any Prince in higher authority. But God has no one higher than Himself, for He is the sovereign and common good of the whole universe. Consequently, if He forgive sin, which has the formality of fault in that it is committed against Himself, he wrongs no one: just as anyone else, overlooking a personal trespass, without satisfaction, acts mercifully and not unjustly.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> ST III q22 a3.

<sup>55</sup> ST III q46 a2 reply to objection 3. Nam si voluisset absque omni satisfactione hominem a peccato liberare, contra justitiam non fecisset. Ille enim iudex non potest salva justitia culpam sine poena dimittere, qui habet punire culpam in alium commissam, puta vel in alium hominem vel in totam rempublicam sive in superiorem principem. Sed Deus non habet aliquem superiorem, sed ipse est supremum et commune bonum totius universi. Et ideo si dimittat peccatum, quod habet rationem culpae, ex eo quod contra ipsum committitur, nulli facit injuriam: sicut quicumque homo remittit offensam in se commissam absque satisfactione, misericorditer et non injuste agit. This point has been noted by Stump, E. in 'Atonement' in Rea, M. edited. *Oxford Readings in Philosophical*

Whilst Aquinas thinks that God could have pardoned human wrongdoing without providing satisfaction for the debt of sin, God chose not to. Indeed, Aquinas thinks that the making of satisfaction for human sin through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is a more suitable way of dealing with sin than simply forgiving it. He states:

A thing is said to be necessary for a certain end in two ways. First, when the end cannot be without it; as food is necessary for the preservation of human life. Secondly, when the end is attained better and more conveniently, as a horse is necessary for a journey. In the first way it was not necessary that God should become incarnate for the restoration of human nature. For God with His omnipotent power could have restored human nature in many other ways. But in the second way it was necessary that God should become incarnate for the restoration of the human race.<sup>56</sup>

Regarding this making satisfaction for sin, which Aquinas thinks is a more fitting way of dealing with sin than simply forgiving it, Aquinas writes:

He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offence. But by suffering out of

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*Theology. Volume 1, Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). She claims that in simply forgiving human sin God 'wrongs no one, just as anyone who overlooks a trespass against himself acts mercifully and not unjustly.' 271.

<sup>56</sup> ST III q1 a2. Dicendum quod ad finem aliquem dicitur aliquid esse necessarium dupliciter: uno modo, sine quo aliquid esse non potest, sicut cibus est necessarius ad conservationem humanae vitae; alio modo, per quod melius et convenientius pervenitur ad finem, sicut equus necessarius est ad iter. Primo modo Deum incarnari non fuit necessarium ad reparationem humanae naturae; Deus enim per suam omnipotentem virtutem poterat humanam naturam multis aliis modis reparare. Secundo autem modo necessarium fuit Deum incarnari ad humanae naturae reparationem.

love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offence of the whole human race.<sup>57</sup>

Eleonore Stump explains that for Aquinas, to make satisfaction for human sin is to present to God a human life which is marked by three features: perfect humility, obedience, and charity. The life need be of enough value to God to make up for the offence caused by the sin of humanity: as Aquinas states, it must be something which the offended one 'loves equally or more than he detested the offence.' This is achieved through Christ, who voluntarily took upon himself death on a cross, moving from 'the exaltation of deity to the humiliation of crucifixion,' showing perfect humility. Although part of Christ did not want to be crucified, as displayed in Christ's words in the garden of gethsemane (Matthew 26: 36 – 46), he consented to suffer, and thus showed absolute obedience. Finally, because Christ's actions were driven by love for fallen humanity, he 'exhibits the most intense charity.' So, through the offering of an instance of human nature with 'the greatest possible' humility, obedience, and charity, Christ makes restitution to God for the sins of humanity.<sup>58</sup>

*How justification is achieved: b) the benefit of Christ's work transferred to the sinner through grace*

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<sup>57</sup> ST III q48 a2. Dicendum quod ille proprie satisfacit pro offensa qui exhibet offenso id quod aequae vel magis diligit quam oderit offensam. Christus autem ex charitate et obedientia patiendo majus aliquid Deo exhibuit quam exigeret recompensatio totius offensae humani generis.

<sup>58</sup> 'Atonement'. 277.

As stated, Aquinas thinks that God could have just forgiven human wrongdoing. However, God chose to make satisfaction for human sin through the work of Christ, and it is here that created grace comes into the salvific picture. Aquinas thinks that the benefit of the work of Christ is transferred to the rest of humanity through grace:

Grace was bestowed upon Christ, not only as an individual, but inasmuch as He is the Head of the Church, so that it might overflow into his members; and therefore Christ's works are referred to Himself and to His members in the same way as the works of any other man in a state of grace are referred to himself.<sup>59</sup>

As through sinning a person offends God, he is made at peace with God through God's love. The Divine act of love is 'eternal and unchangeable,' but the effect of God's love on us—created grace—is sometimes interrupted. It is grace that makes a person at peace with God, as it deals with the stain of sin and the debt of punishment for sin, and it returns right order to a person's nature. As Christ is the Head of the Church, Aquinas thinks that grace was bestowed on him that it might 'overflow into his members (of the church).'<sup>60</sup> Indeed it 'belongs to the nature of head' that grace should be bestowed on others through him.<sup>61</sup> Christ accomplished something meritorious on the cross, and his works are referred both to him and to the members of the church. Thus, those who receive grace are made pleasing to God in virtue of the work of Christ. Aquinas writes:

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<sup>59</sup> ST III q48 a1. Dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, Christo data est gratia non solum sicut singulari personae, sed in quantum est caput Ecclesiae, ut scilicet ab ipso redundaret ad membra; et ideo opera Christi hoc modo se habent tam ad se quam ad sua membra, sicut se habent opera alterius hominis in gratia constituti ad ipsum.

<sup>60</sup> ST III q48 a1.

<sup>61</sup> ST III q8 a5.

Christ's voluntary suffering was such a good act that, because of its being found in human nature, God was appeased for every offense of the human race with regard to those who are made one with the crucified Christ.<sup>62</sup>

### Justification and Free-will

We have already given brief consideration to the nature of a habit and how it allows a person to act freely. I now explain in more detail how the habit of grace contributes to a person being justified partly through an act of the free-will.

Aquinas explains the relationship between the will and grace through the analogy of a horse and its rider: 'grace is compared to the will as the mover to the moved, which is the same comparison as that of a horseman to the horse.'<sup>63</sup> Grace inclines the will towards meritorious acts.

Mark Wahlberg expresses the reason for the importance of infused grace in the catholic tradition:

The reason why... the Catholic tradition think(s) of grace in terms of 'infused habits' is their concern to preserve the freedom of the human subject... Infused habitual grace is... an intrinsic principle, through which God moves the will

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<sup>62</sup> ST III q49 a4. Et similiter tantum bonum fuit quod Christus voluntarie passus est, quod propter hoc bonum in natura humana inventum, Deus placatus est super omni offensa generis humani, quantum ad eos qui Christo passo conjunguntur secundum modum praemisum.

<sup>63</sup> ST Iallae q110 a4 rep to obj 1.

internally. Acts that are meritorious with respect to eternal life are hence the result of two agencies: the agency of human free will, and that of God moving the will.<sup>64</sup>

As Wahlberg explains, grace preserves the freedom of the human person in the process of salvation. For Aquinas, it is important that human persons are moved by God in a way that respects their natures. Although hot water can return of its own accord to its natural cold temperature, and a stone thrown in the air returns to the ground, this is not so with human nature because, unlike the water and the stone, the nature of a human person is damaged as a result of the fall.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the will is in need of help to be restored to a state of justice. Crucially, though, the will must play a part in its restoration to a state of justice. This is because Aquinas thinks that God ‘moves everything in *its own manner*’ and ‘it is man’s proper nature to have free will.’<sup>66</sup>

If a person is returned to a state of justice without contributing anything to the process then it suffers violence, as Michael Lawler explains:

The nature of the will demands that it cooperate in man’s justification, for justification is a perfection of the will and unless the will contributes something it would suffer violence, receiving a perfection from an agent outside itself, which is repugnant. The free will cannot be forced; *libertas a coactione* is essential to it.

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<sup>64</sup> See Wahlberg, M. ‘Merit and the Finnish Luther,’ *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, V16, No. 3, July 2014. 277.

<sup>65</sup> ST Iallae q109 a7. Note that Aquinas’ claim on the extent of the damage caused by the fall is different from that of later reformers like John Calvin. For the latter, human nature is totally depraved as a result of the fall. For Aquinas, human nature lacks the grace that kept it in a state of right order. Aquinas’ claim is a weaker one.

<sup>66</sup> ST Iallae q109 a3. Italics mine.

The will, then, must cooperate... This cooperation need not precede justification; it is enough if it accompanies it.

Can God, then, not change the will? Yes, he can change it, but he cannot force it, he cannot do it violence. To will something is to be inclined towards it. Force or violence is contrary to this inclination. When God changes the will, he simply takes away the inclination it had and replaces it with another, which is not to do violence to the will since it is now led to something which is not contrary, but according to its actual inclination. Just as if God were to change the inclination of gravity to an upward rather than a downward attraction, stones flying up rather than falling down would be no violation of gravity.<sup>67</sup>

For Aquinas, we might distinguish four aspects to the process of justification: the infusion of grace, the movement of the will towards God, the movement of the will away from sin, and the remission of sin.<sup>68</sup> This four-fold process happens instantaneously.<sup>69</sup> Two of these aspects are acts of the free-will:

In the justification of the ungodly there must be two acts of the free-will—one, whereby it tends to God's justice; the other whereby it hates sin.<sup>70</sup>

Aquinas is clear that it is the first aspect of justification—the infusion of grace—that moves the will away from sin and towards God.<sup>71</sup>

### Sanctification

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<sup>67</sup> Lawler, M. 'Grace and Free Will in Justification: a Textual Study in Aquinas,' *The Thomist*, Vol.35(4), October 1971. 603 – 604.

<sup>68</sup> See 'Grace and Free Will in Justification: a Textual Study in Aquinas.' 610.

<sup>69</sup> See ST Iallae q110 a7.

<sup>70</sup> ST Iallae q110 a5.

<sup>71</sup> See ST Iallae q110 a7.

Whilst created grace is involved in justification, it is also involved in sanctification, as a justified person is given Divine help to avoid future sin and to share in the life of God.

The aspect of sanctification that I consider is mostly that of the role of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, which bring about union between a person and God. Faith consists in believing in the truths of the Christian faith; hope consists in looking forward to eternal beatitude with God; and charity consists in the friendship of a person with God.

Aquinas thinks that the intellectual and some of the moral virtues are acquired by our actions and arise out of 'natural principles pre-existing in us.'<sup>72</sup> The theological virtues, however, are effected in persons through a bestowal of grace by God. We may consider the example of the theological virtue of faith, which is involved in both justification and sanctification. To demonstrate that faith involves created grace, consider that for Aquinas there is a twofold cause in a person's assent to faith. One cause is external, such as seeing a miracle or hearing a sermon. But this is not sufficient for faith, as some who see a miracle or hear a sermon believe, whilst others do not. Thus, there must also be an inward cause that 'moves man inwardly to assent to matters of faith.'<sup>73</sup> In Aquinas' later work he is aware that the Pelagians held that this inward cause is a person's free-will, thus it is within

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<sup>72</sup> IaIIae q63 a3. Whilst Aquinas thinks that some moral virtues are acquired he also thinks that some moral virtues are infused. The latter are infused alongside the gifts of the Holy Spirit and are actualized in the beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Spirit. See Chapter 1 in Pinsent, A. *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas' Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>73</sup> IIaeIIae q6 a1.

a person's power to assent or not to assent to the articles of faith, even if the 'consummation of faith' is from God. Aquinas rejects this view, for as in assenting to matters of faith a person is 'raised above his nature' he is in need of a supernatural principle 'moving him inwardly'; this movement is achieved by God through created grace.<sup>74</sup>

## **Part 2**

Having explained some of the main aspects of Aquinas' doctrine of grace, I now engage in a critique of a recent work on this doctrine by A. N. Williams. First, I explain how an influential modern Thomist—namely, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange—locates Aquinas' thought on grace within the medieval context. The reason for this is to make clear the way in which Garrigou-Lagrange views grace in Aquinas as *created*. I then outline Williams' reasons for thinking grace in Aquinas to be uncreated. I explain what I call the 'problem of composition', which arguably rules out the possibility that Williams understands 'uncreated grace' as 'God'. I then consider some unsuccessful responses to this problem: first, a consideration of composition in the incarnation, and second, a solution from the work of Karl Rahner. I conclude that Williams' account is unclear, and that in the absence of clarification of the account we may take grace in Aquinas to be created.

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<sup>74</sup> See Chapter 3 for further consideration of grace and freedom in the thought of Aquinas.

## Garrigou-Lagrange and the Medieval Context

If grace is an accidental, supernatural quality bestowed on at least some human persons by God, we may inquire as to the nature of this quality. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, in his commentary on Aquinas' treatise on grace, suggests that Thomas' position should be situated between two poles occupied by medieval contemporaries.<sup>75</sup> At one pole Garrigou-Lagrange places the Nominalists, such as Ockham, as well as Scotus. This camp maintained that grace, and meritorious works, are 'ontologically natural' and may be looked upon as a sort of bank note:

For as this note, of its nature, before being issued by the government, has no monetary value, but subsequently is equal to gold; so sanctifying grace intrinsically is a certain entity, lacking sufficient value to render man acceptable to God, but by the accession of an extrinsic disposition of God, or by the favor of God, without any intrinsic transformation, this entity receives a moral value, comparable to that of the bank note.<sup>76</sup>

A monetary note is not worth anything in virtue of being a piece of paper with marks on it. It is worth something because a government declares that it is worth something. So too with meritorious works: a work performed by a person is, by itself, not worthy of eternal life. However, if God declares that it is worthy of eternal life then it has such worth. Thus, Garrigou-Lagrange suggests that on this line of thinking a person can merit eternal life by a natural act if this act is accepted by God.

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<sup>75</sup> R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologica of St Thomas 1a2ae, q109 – 114* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1952). 124.

<sup>76</sup> *Grace: Commentary*. 124.

At the other pole we find 'immoderate realism' which, according to Garrigou-Lagrange, identifies grace with God dwelling in us. He suggests Peter Lombard as a primary representative of this camp: for Lombard, grace is simply the Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul.<sup>77</sup>

Thomas is to be found somewhere between these two poles, according to Garrigou-Lagrange. Against the Nominalists he holds that grace is indeed a *supernatural* quality, yet against Lombard he holds that grace is a *created* supernatural quality. This denial by Garrigou-Lagrange of agreement between Aquinas and Lombard on the created/uncreated nature of grace is not uncontroversial.

#### Williams and Uncreated Grace: Two Arguments

A.N. Williams' book *The Ground of Union*, which explores and compares the theme of deification in the work of Aquinas and Gregory Palamas, is a key example of a modern engagement with the debate over whether the quality of grace in Aquinas is created or uncreated.<sup>78</sup> She notes that 'one of the thorniest points of contention between East and West with respect to sanctification is the issue of created grace.'<sup>79</sup> Later I will critique

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<sup>77</sup> *Grace: Commentary*. 125.

<sup>78</sup> A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For a flavor of the debate see Mascall, E. L. 'Grace and Nature in East and West,' *Church Quarterly Review* 164(1963), S. 332-347.

<sup>79</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 87.

Williams, suggesting her account of grace is unclear. Presently, we note that Williams rejects the proposal put forward by Garrigou-Lagrange and others which states that Aquinas views grace as a created quality, as ‘some divine medicine called grace that is other or less than God.’<sup>80</sup> Rather, Williams views Thomas’ position as aligned with Lombard’s: ‘Grace is therefore not principally an entity distinct from God or an effect of God’s working in us but the fact of God’s indwelling, the name given to the sustenance that is God’s own being, shared that we might also be divine.’<sup>81</sup> Moreover, she states, ‘what grace is, most truly and fundamentally, is *gratia increata*, the Holy Spirit, God *ipse*.’<sup>82</sup> For Williams, ‘grace is divine being.’<sup>83</sup>

Williams has two lines of argument deployed to this conclusion. First, she points to the sparsity with which Aquinas uses the term *gratia creata*:

None appear in the treatise on grace itself, despite its elaborate taxonomy—*grace freely given, habitual, actual, operating, cooperating, prevenient grace*, to name only some of the terms Thomas uses. Even the comprehensive *Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas* mentions created grace only in passing and furnishes no references to the *Summa*.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 64.

<sup>81</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 84.

<sup>82</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 89.

<sup>83</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 84.

<sup>84</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 87.

Williams is aware that her points may suffer from ‘the usual weakness of an argument from absence.’<sup>85</sup> However, she contends that the burden of proof lies on those who assert the position that she sees as being lacking in the text.

Secondly, Williams’ suggests that the importance and usefulness of the uncreated/created distinction should not be in supposing a created grace which is ‘an entity distinct from God or an effect of God’s working in us,’ but rather as a semantic device that owes its existence to the consequences that Thomas’ Doctrine of Divine Simplicity (DDS) has on his doctrine of grace.<sup>86</sup> Thomas’ DDS states that God has no parts; He is simple. Not only does God lack the material parts of, say, a human body, but he lacks other distinctions found in humans: between essence (nature) and existence, form and matter, etc. The main point of import Williams derives from Thomas’ DDS is that human beings are incredibly different from God, as ‘a very deep ontological and conceptual divide appears’ between them.<sup>87</sup> Thus Williams states:

Thomas’ concern to preserve the integrity of being leads him to describe a single thing in two quite different ways, according to the nature of that into which it is incorporated... However we describe the creature’s participation in or union with God, we do not understand that divinization as violating the ontological boundary between creature and Creator. The life in which the creature shares is genuinely God’s life, but we do not live that life in precisely the way God lives it.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 87.

<sup>86</sup> For an explanation of Thomas Doctrine of Divine Simplicity see Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Ch. 4.

<sup>87</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 40.

<sup>88</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 54.

For Williams, the purpose of the uncreated/created distinction is not to suggest that there is a grace that is something other than God, but to express the *mode* in which God is present: in 'created grace,' God is present to His creatures in a way that respects their creaturely limitations. E. L. Mascall echoes this struggle felt by the scholastics as they attempted to do semantic justice to this ontological God-man gap: they 'insisted that there can be neither, on the one hand, a degradation of God nor, on the other, a destruction of the creature's creaturehood.'<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, for Williams, in the midst of this linguistic leg-work, grace is simply 'God's self-giving to the creature,' the 'gift of which is none other than the Spirit Himself.'<sup>90</sup> As John Cooper writes, grace is 'the seed and sap of Divine life as communicated and adapted to the created order.'<sup>91</sup>

As we have seen, Williams' strategy has been to point to the absence of textual support for the notion of *gratia creata* in Thomas, and to provide the conceptual context of DDS to suggest an interpretation of the uncreated/created distinction. However, Williams states:

Although Thomas does not equate grace and God, he does not use the term *grace* so as to distinguish it from the divine being itself, shared with creatures. So much is the implication of Aquinas' doctrine of grace; his explicit definitions of grace fall far short of such radicality.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Mascall, E. L. *Via Media: an essay in theological synthesis* (London: Longmans, 1956).

<sup>90</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 62.

<sup>91</sup> Cooper, J. *Naturally Human, Supernaturally God: Deification in Pre-Conciliar Catholicism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

<sup>92</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 84.

I take Williams' point to be that she is filling in the gaps of Aquinas' thought where he is silent. Williams suggests that his thought *points to* or implies an understanding of grace as uncreated—grace as equated with God—even though he does not explicitly state this. He discusses grace 'solely in terms of its effect on humanity,' yet these effects 'should not be taken as distinct from their origin.'<sup>93</sup>

Thus, for Williams, the combination of the lack of textual support for grace as created in Aquinas, and the alternative explanation offered by DDS, points to a view of grace as nothing other than God's presence in his creatures. She states that the burden of proof lies on those who assert the contrary view on grace: that it is created.

#### Williams on Uncreated Grace: Critique

Williams thinks that although Aquinas does not explicitly equate grace with God (divine being / Holy Spirit / etc.), this is the direction his thought tends towards. In what follows I argue that it is unclear what Williams means by suggesting that Aquinas views grace as uncreated, given the constraints of Thomas' thought.

Aquinas thinks grace is an accidental quality. Grace is 'above human nature': human beings can be human beings without the bestowal of grace, thus grace is not part of their nature. As I have stated, in reading Williams one might think she suggests that, for

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<sup>93</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 84.

Aquinas, grace is simply the uncreated God. However, if this were the case, her position would entail the view that God becomes accidentally present in a person as a quality (called 'grace'). This view is ruled out by Thomas' wider thought, and I label these restraints the 'problem of composition'. In his dealings with DDS in 1a q3, Aquinas asks whether God can enter into the composition of other things (article 8), and he answers negatively. He states, 'it is not possible that God enter into the composition of anything, either as a formal or a material principle.'<sup>94</sup> If a person is composed of substance and accidents, then any accident in a person is part of a composition of a human person.

This seems to rule out the possibility of God being joined to a person as an accidental quality. It might be objected that, in the incarnation, we find God entering into a composition with a human nature in the person of Christ, which runs contrary to Aquinas' view just stated. The doctrine of the incarnation states that Christ is one person with two natures: Divine and human. Aquinas appeals to the Council of Chalcedon:

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<sup>94</sup> Aquinas gives three reasons for this view. He writes: 'First, because God is the first efficient cause. Now the efficient cause is not identical numerically with the form of the thing caused; but only specifically: for man begets man. But primary matter can be neither numerically nor specifically identical with an efficient cause; for the former is merely potential, while the latter is actual. Secondly, because God is the first efficient cause, to act belongs to him primarily and essentially. But that which enters into composition with anything does not act primarily and essentially, but rather the composite so acts... Thirdly, because no part of a compound can be absolutely primal among beings—not even matter, nor form, though they are the primal parts of every compound.' ST I q3 a8.

We confess that in these latter times the only-begotten Son of God appeared in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation—the distinction of natures not having been taken away by the union.<sup>95</sup>

It would seem that if we take the person of Christ to be a composite of Divine and human natures, God *does* form a composite with another thing: namely, a human nature. Thus, God is a *part* of Christ, which seems to be denied by Aquinas' DDS.

Aquinas responds to this challenge by stating that the person of Christ may be viewed in two ways. First, 'as it is in itself, and thus it is altogether simple, even as the Nature of the Word.'<sup>96</sup> I take this to mean that Christ in himself is the second person of the Trinity, and is thus 'altogether simple' given DDS. Secondly, Aquinas states that the person of Christ may be viewed as follows:

In the aspect of person or hypostasis to which it belongs to subsist in a nature; and thus the Person of Christ subsists in two natures. Hence though there is one subsisting being in him, yet there are different aspects of subsistence, and hence he is said to be a composite person, insomuch as one being subsists in two.<sup>97</sup>

Whilst Christ is a composite person, he is not 'so called on account of parts, but by reason of number, even as that in which two things concur may be said to be composed of them.'

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<sup>95</sup> ST III q2 a1. Confitemur in novissimus diebus Filium Dei unigenitum inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter agnoscendum, nusquam sublata differentia naturarum propter unionem.

<sup>96</sup> ST III q2 a4.

<sup>97</sup> ST III q2 a4. Alio modo, secundum rationem personae vel hypostasis, ad quam pertinent subsistere in aliqua natura. Et secundum hoc persona Christi subsistit in duabus naturis. Unde, licet sit ibi unum subsistens, est tamen ibi alia et alia ratio subsistendi. Et sic dicitur persona composita in quantum unum duobus subsistit.

The thought here seems to be that whilst there are two natures in the person of Christ, these do not count as parts. If God were to become part of a fully literal composition it would require that there be some sort of potency in God which is realized in the thing composed. Such potency in God is denied by DDS. However, whilst strict composition is not possible, nevertheless there may be an *analogous* sense in which God is a composite in Christ: some of the entailments of composition are present, others are not.

An assessment of the plausibility of this idea of composition would involve further investigation into Aquinas' doctrine of the incarnation.<sup>98</sup> However, for my purposes, we can ignore the question of plausibility. The relevant question is whether Aquinas' acceptance of analogous composition in the incarnation might allow for an understanding of God's presence in persons as an accidental quality. It seems unlikely that Williams would seek to understand the presence of God in a human person in the same way as God is present in Christ, for such a suggestion would face numerous theological problems. However, one option is to appeal to *analogous* composition in the incarnation, and suggest that God's presence in persons also involves analogous composition, but of a *different kind* from the incarnation. This is suggested by Karl Rahner—20<sup>th</sup> Century German, Catholic theologian—who is viewed by many in the secondary literature as a Thomist, and to whom we now turn.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> For more on Aquinas' doctrine of the Incarnation see Cross, R. *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>99</sup> Rahner's philosophy dissertation *Geist in Welt* is an interpretation of Thomas Aquinas' epistemology influenced by the transcendental Thomism of Joseph Marechal and the existentialism of Martin Heidegger.

## Karl Rahner and the Appeal to Analogy

Karl Rahner attempts to establish a way in which God may be present in a person, alongside what seems to be an intention to avoid the problem of composition alluded to above. In his *Foundations of Christian Faith*, Rahner states that God's 'self-communication' does not involve God *saying something* about himself, but rather that this term signifies that 'God in his own most proper reality makes himself the innermost constitutive element of man.'<sup>100</sup> The act of accepting God's self-communication involves accepting something which remains 'really divine,' and which is not reduced to something created. The question for a Thomist is: how does God 'make himself the innermost constitutive element of man' yet avoid the problem of composition?

Karen Kilby states that for Rahner, in a sense, God *does* become the accidental form of a person.<sup>101</sup> However, God does this in a way that avoids the problem of composition.<sup>102</sup>

Rahner writes that God's self-communication must be understood as "*analogous to a*

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<sup>100</sup> Rahner, K. *Foundations of Christian Faith: an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978). 119. Rahner is here referring to God making himself present in human beings. That is, this is not a reference to the Incarnation. For consideration of how grace in human persons relates to the Incarnation in the thought of Rahner see Burke, P. *Reinterpreting Rahner: A Critical Study of his Major Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).

<sup>101</sup> Notice how this parallels Aquinas' idea that grace is an accidental quality of a person. Rahner does not use the language of God uniting himself as 'accidental form' of a person, rather this is Kilby's interpretation of Rahner, partly based on Rahner's proposal that God 'makes himself the innermost constitutive element of man.'

<sup>102</sup> Kilby, K. *Karl Rahner: Theology and Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004). Chapter 4.

causality in which the 'cause' becomes an intrinsic, constitutive principle of the effect itself," which involves a 'relationship of formal causality as distinguished from efficient causality.'<sup>103</sup> He writes:

We are also familiar with formal causality: a particular existent, a principle of being is a constitutive element in another subject by the fact that it communicates itself to this subject, and does not just cause something different from itself which is then an intrinsic, constitutive principle in that which experiences this efficient causality... In what we call grace and the immediate vision of God, God is really an intrinsic, constitutive principle of man as existing in the situation of salvation and fulfillment. As distinguished from the intrinsic, essentially constitutive causes which are found elsewhere in our experience, this intrinsic, formal causality is to be understood in such a way that the intrinsic, constitutive cause *retains in itself its essence absolutely intact and in absolute freedom*... The possibility of this self-communication is an absolute prerogative of God, since only the absolute being of God can... at the same time communicate himself in his own reality *without losing himself in this communication*.<sup>104</sup>

Kilby calls this divine self-communication a 'quasi-formal cause,' in which there is only 'an analogous relationship between the kind of thing the divine self-communication is and known instances of formal causality.' For in this one case alone 'the cause remains intact, free over against the thing caused, unentangled in the being of which it nevertheless becomes the (accidental) form.'<sup>105</sup>

In assessing Rahner, the question to be asked is: if Aquinas appeals to analogous composition in his account of the incarnation, might a Thomistic account also appeal to

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<sup>103</sup> *Foundations*. 121. Italics mine.

<sup>104</sup> *Foundations*. 121. Italics mine.

<sup>105</sup> *Karl Rahner*. 56.

analogous composition (and analogous causality) in understanding God's presence in humans persons? In answering this we must consider the idea that God as formal cause could become present in a person as an accidental form whilst remaining unentangled and free from her. What does it mean to be unentangled and free in this context? Neither Rahner nor Kilby elaborate on this. The emphasis on freedom may, I think, be explained by considering one of Aquinas' reasons for thinking that God cannot form a composite with something else.<sup>106</sup> For Aquinas, God is the first efficient cause, and thus 'to act belongs to him primarily and essentially.' Aquinas states:

But that which enters into composition with anything else does not act primarily and essentially, but rather the composite so acts; for the hand does not act, but the man by his hand; and fire warms by its heat. Hence God cannot be part of a compound.<sup>107</sup>

If God forms a composite with something else he is limited by the composite. If God forms a composite with a human person he becomes limited by what a human person can be and do. This restricts divine freedom. I take it that when Rahner says that God becomes 'an intrinsic, constitutive principle of man' without losing his freedom he means that God *does not* forfeit his freedom to the composite formed, rather he somehow retains it.

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<sup>106</sup> ST I q3 a8.

<sup>107</sup> ST I q3 a8. Quod autem venit in compositionem alicujus non est primo et per se agens, sed magis compositum, non enim manus agit sed homo per manum, et ignis calefacit per calorem. Unde Deus non potest esse pars alicujus compositi.

What about Kilby's emphasis on God remaining 'unentangled' with the person? Kilby's words are 'unentangled in the being of which it nevertheless is the (accidental) form.' I take this talk of entanglement to be of an *existential* nature. The thought seems to be that for Rahner, when God unites himself to a person as accidental form he does so without becoming *dependent* on the person for his existence. That is, God's existence remains unentangled from the existence of the person with whom he unites himself as accidental form.

At this point it is useful briefly to consider Aquinas' distinction between substance and accident. There are substances, and there are ways in which substances are, namely, accidents. Accidents are said to be beings in a derivative sense: they exist only insofar as they exist in a substance, and their being is the being of that substance. It is the substance that most truly exists, inasmuch as only substances have being in their own right, intrinsically.<sup>108</sup>

We have seen Rahner attempt to avoid sacrificing God's freedom and existential independence by appealing to an *analogous* form of causality. The question is, if Aquinas allows for analogous composition in the incarnation, might he also allow for it in Rahner's case of God-in-normal-persons? A reason to doubt Aquinas' approval of Rahner is that for Aquinas, the incarnation involves God being joined to a human nature as a substance,

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<sup>108</sup> See Pasnau and Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Chapter 3.

rather than as an accident to a substance. This has consequences for the questions of existential entanglement and freedom.

First, on the question of existential entanglement, we can see from the distinction between substance and accident that for Thomas, accidental forms are *thoroughly entangled* in the being they are forms of. The shape of the statue is dependent upon the statue for its existence. The redness of the apple is dependent upon the apple for its existence. By definition, an accident depends upon a substance for its existence, and God cannot so depend. Whereas in the incarnation, where God is present as a substance, an analogous account of composition does not seem ruled out *in principle*, as it seems to be in Rahner's case.

On the question of God retaining freedom as part of a composite, it is much more conceivable for that freedom to be had by a substance-in-a-composite, rather than an accident-in-a-composite. For in the incarnation, according to Aquinas, Christ exercises his freedom through his human nature, in a similar way to how I exercise my freedom through my hand.<sup>109</sup> The same cannot be said for an accident in a composite. Thus, it seems that whilst an analogous account of composition in the case of the incarnation—where God is present as a substance in a composite—is acceptable on Thomistic terms, an analogous account of composition (and formal causality)—where God is present in a person as an accidental form—runs into immediate difficulties.

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<sup>109</sup> ST III q2.

### Williams: an Attempt at Clarification

I have explained the problem of composition which rules out the possibility of God joining himself to a person as an accidental quality (like grace). Furthermore, I have shown how Rahner's appeal to an analogous form of composition (and causality) is also deeply problematic from a Thomistic perspective. In light of these considerations, it would be charitable to assume that Williams does not in fact equate God and the accidental quality of grace. We must then enquire as to what her understanding of uncreated grace amounts to.

Recall that Williams thinks the purpose of the created/uncreated distinction in Aquinas is to allude to the *mode* in which grace is present in the creature, and present in God. She initially uses this language in discussion of Aquinas on the beatitudes (1a q26 a3), a passage that 'reveals a pattern we will see again in the doctrine of grace.'<sup>110</sup> Here, according to Williams, Aquinas makes a distinction between 'the way a thing is said to

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<sup>110</sup> For example, Aquinas states: "The beatitude of an intellectual nature consists in an act of the intellect. In this we may consider two things, namely, the object of the act, which is the thing understood; and the act itself which is to understand. If, then, beatitude be considered on the side of the object, God is the only beatitude; for everyone is blessed from this sole fact, that he understands God, in accordance with the saying of Augustine (Confess. V, 4): 'Blessed is he that knoweth Thee, though he know nought else.' But as regards the act of understanding, beatitude is a created thing in beatified creatures; but in God, even in this way, it is an uncreated thing." ST I q26 a3.

exist in God and the way that same thing may exist in a creature receiving it as God's gift.'<sup>111</sup> She writes:

Thomas' concern to preserve the integrity of being leads him to describe a single thing in two quite different ways, according to the nature of that into which it is incorporated. The same beatitude—and it is crucial to grasp that Aquinas does not, by intention or in fact, posit two beatitudes—may be viewed as uncreated in God but created when it becomes part of the creature. Because there exist nonetheless not two beatitudes but one, the creature's beatitude is not some lesser form of what exists in God, but the creature's own experience, as creature and within the limitations of creaturely existence, of the divine. It is precisely the basic principle of deification that operates here: however we describe the creature's participation in or union with God, we do not understand that divinization as violating the ontological boundary between creature and Creator. The life in which the creature shares is genuinely God's life, but we do not live that life in precisely the way God lives it.<sup>112</sup>

Williams is clear that the term 'created beatitude, like its counterpart, created grace,' may be misunderstood if removed from the context of DDS. She holds that Aquinas must divide 'into distinct contexts what is in reality one,' and thus 'the created-uncreated distinction refers to the ontological divide between God and humanity rather than designating fundamental divisions of grace or beatitude.'<sup>113</sup>

Aside from Williams' comments on created beatitude, the other key passage for understanding this 'mode talk' is her note on created grace.<sup>114</sup> Williams considers Thomas

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<sup>111</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 54.

<sup>112</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 54.

<sup>113</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 55.

<sup>114</sup> I use 'mode talk' as a label for Williams' view (explained above) that the purpose of the uncreated/created distinction is not to suggest that there is a grace that is something

on the grace of Christ and the question of whether this grace is infinite. She thinks this passage is the prime reference to created grace in Aquinas, thus her dealings with it may be seen as an attempt to deal with an objection to her position. The original passage from Aquinas is as follows:

Christ has the fullness of grace. First, since he has grace in its highest degree, in the most perfect way it can be had. And this appears, first, from the nearness of Christ's soul to the cause of grace. For it was said above (Article 1) that the nearer a recipient is to the inflowing cause, the more it receives. And hence the soul of Christ, which is more closely united to God than all other rational creatures, receives the greatest outpouring of His grace. Secondly, in His relation to the effect. For the soul of Christ so received grace, that, in a manner, it is poured out from it upon others. And hence it behooved Him to have the greatest grace; as fire which is the cause of heat in other hot things, is of all things the hottest.<sup>115</sup>

Williams comments on this passage, stating that Aquinas answers the question of the infinite nature of grace from three perspectives. First, the grace of the hypostatic union is infinite, as the Person of God is infinite. The second grace—habitual grace—is considered from two angles: 'as a being and in its specific nature of grace.' The latter, 'taking the grace of Christ purely qua grace,' is infinite. But with regard to the former—

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other than God, but to express the *mode* in which God is present: in 'created grace', God is present to His creatures in a way that respects their creaturely limitations.

<sup>115</sup> ST III q7 a9. Utroque autem modo Christus habuit gratiae plenitudinem. Primo quidem, quia habuit eam in summo, secundum perfectissimum modum quo potest haberi. Et hoc quidem apparet primo, ex propinquitate animae Christi ad causam gratiae. Dictum est enim quod, quanto aliquod receptivum propinquius est causae influenti, abundantius recipit. Et ideo anima Christi, quae propinquius conjungitur Deo inter omnes creaturas racionales, recipit maximam influentiam gratiae ejus. Secundo, ex comparatione ejus ad effectum. Sic enim recipiebat anima Christi gratiam ut ex ea quodammodo transfunderetur in alios. Et ideo oportuit quod haberet maximam gratiam. Sicut ignis, qui est causa caloris in omnibus calidis, est maxime calidus.

‘considered not in its nature but as a being’—this is not infinite, for ‘grace conforms to the nature of its subject.’<sup>116</sup>

Williams then expands on what Aquinas’ passage on the grace of Christ might mean. She states that the assumption of Aquinas’ notion of created grace is that grace is an *anhypostatic*, as it ‘assumes the limitations of its subject when enhypostasized.’ If grace did not assume the limitations of its subject, it would do one of two things: either it would ‘impose its nature on the other... which would constitute not union but annihilation,’ or it would ‘change the nature of that hypostasis in the most fundamental way possible, so that what was once created (would) somehow become uncreated.’ According to Williams, both of these options cannot be on the table for Aquinas: the first, because God does not seek to annihilate persons in bestowing grace upon them; the second, because of Aquinas’ DDS and the need to preserve the Divine/human ontological gap. Thus, the purpose of the use of the term ‘created grace’ is to make clear that, in bestowing grace God does not annihilate the person’s nature, nor does he withdraw her creaturely status, rather he joins himself to her in a way that preserves her creaturely nature.

In light of these considerations we may ask: does Williams’ ‘mode talk’ throw light on her understanding of uncreated grace? As described, the purpose of the mode talk is to emphasise that in bestowing grace God does not destroy our nature nor does he remove the creature/Creator gap. The problem here is that Williams does not give an account of

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<sup>116</sup> *The Ground of Union*. 89.

how this works. If she were to provide an account, would it be an account in which God unites himself as a quality of a person without destroying his nature and removing the creature/Creator gap? Or would it be an account that suggests God *creates* something separate from himself—called grace—to bestow on human persons? The textual evidence in Williams suggests she would not support the latter option, yet the constraints of Thomas' thought give us reason to think she should not support the former either.

Williams has suggested that, given the two arguments put forward for her position, the 'burden of proof' is on those who hold grace in Thomas to be created. However, I suggest that given Williams' absence of an account of uncreated grace—how it can be 'uncreated' whilst not involving God's presence in a person as an accidental quality—the burden of proof is back on her, as a clearer account is required. I conclude that in the absence of a clearer account from Williams we may take grace in Aquinas to be a created quality.

### **Part 3**

In this part of the chapter I briefly outline the relationship between created grace and the work of the Holy Spirit.

#### **The Work of the Holy Spirit**

If grace is created and thus distinct from the Holy Spirit we may clarify what Aquinas thinks the relationship between created grace and the Holy Spirit is. In the first part of the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas states that the Holy Spirit begins to ‘exist newly’ in some persons, and this is by sanctifying grace. Whilst God is in all things ‘by his essence, power, and presence,’ as the cause is in the effect which ‘participate in His goodness,’ there is a special mode by which God is in some rational creatures. In this special mode, God is present ‘as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover.’ As the rational creature, through knowing and loving God, attains to God himself, God is said ‘not only to exist in the rational creature but also to dwell therein as in His own temple.’<sup>117</sup> For Aquinas, as we will consider in more detail in the chapters ahead, a person knows and loves God by grace through the theological virtues.

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas also writes on the relationship between created grace and the Holy Spirit.<sup>118</sup> He confirms the view I have stated above that grace is not the Holy Spirit. He states that some assert that the Holy Spirit is an ‘accidental perfection of the mind bestowed on us by God,’ which is participated in by us as ‘certain created accidents.’ But Aquinas rejects this, as the Holy Spirit is ‘nothing of this kind.’ Accidental forms have no proper operations, rather they are used by the will; the Holy Spirit, however, operates with the decision of God’s own will.

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<sup>117</sup> ST I q43 a3.

<sup>118</sup> SCG Bk4 Ch18.

Whilst the Holy Spirit is not identical with these accidental perfections of the mind, he is *the cause of* them, and it is by the 'effect of his power' that he fills the minds of persons.<sup>119</sup> The Holy Spirit is both the efficient and exemplar cause of all that is in us from God.<sup>120</sup> He is the efficient cause as the effect is produced by the divine operative power. He is the exemplar cause inasmuch as persons imitate God on account of that within them which is from God. The effects of the Holy Spirit—effects like grace—are not only brought about by God, but also 'maintained in being' by him. For Aquinas, 'nothing acts where it is not'; the agent and that acted upon must be simultaneously in act, and the same goes for the mover and the moved.<sup>121</sup> In light of this, where we find an effect of God we find that 'God himself is efficient.' As grace is from the Holy Spirit, for as long as grace is in a person the Holy Spirit must be in him as well.

### Conclusion

After having given a general introduction to some of the key elements of Aquinas' doctrine of grace, I have argued, against A. N. Williams, that the quality of grace is, for Aquinas, a created quality.

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<sup>119</sup> SCG Bk4 Ch18.

<sup>120</sup> SCG Bk4 Ch21.

<sup>121</sup> SCG Bk4 Ch21.

## Chapter 2

### On the Need for Created Grace

#### Introduction

In chapter 1 I argued that for Aquinas, the grace bestowed on some persons by God should be viewed as a created quality, as opposed to an uncreated quality. I also explained that Aquinas thinks that created grace is needed for the processes of justification and sanctification. In this chapter I explore in more detail the question: to what extent is created grace necessary for a person to be justified and to be accepted to eternal life?<sup>122</sup>

I begin by outlining Aquinas' view: that created grace is needed for justification and acceptance to eternal life. I then turn to the thought of Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) in whom we find a two-sided response to the question, which depends upon a distinction between God's ordained power and his absolute power: created grace is necessary for God to accept persons by his ordained power, but not by his absolute power.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> When addressing this question, I am asking whether created grace is necessary for a person to be justified and to merit eternal life in this life. That is, I am not investigating whether it is necessary in other possible worlds.

<sup>123</sup> Aquinas distinguishes between the soul and its powers. Grace is infused into the soul producing the virtues in the powers. Later thinkers denied this distinction, insisting that the soul, its intellect and will, are the same thing. Thus, whilst Aquinas distinguishes between grace in the soul and charity in the will (powers), this distinction was unnecessary for later thinkers. For Scotus and Ockham, the terms 'grace' and 'charity' are used for the same habit. I will use the term 'grace', so as to simplify the reading of the argument.

Whilst Scotus draws upon the above-mentioned distinction between absolute and ordained power, it is appealed to more often and directly by William of Ockham (c. 1287-1347). Thus, I turn to concentrate on Ockham's arguments, in order to engage critically with Aquinas' claims on this issue. My engagement with Ockham has two aspects to it: first, I show that several of his arguments are unsuccessful. Second, I note some *grace without freedom* cases: these are cases in which God justifies and/or accepts a person for eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act. Taking these cases into account, as well as an ambiguity in Ockham's thought regarding his understanding of ordained power, I build on the work of Marilyn McCord Adams and I conclude that, on one understanding of ordained power, Ockham's thought suggests that the performance of a meritorious act may not be necessary for acceptance to eternal life.

### Aquinas

In Chapter 1 we saw that, for Aquinas, grace is needed to justify the sinner before God. The person who has grace gains the benefit of Christ's work on the cross, and is thus made at peace with God. Aquinas asks whether grace is required for justification and he responds as follows:

By sinning a man offends God... Now an offence is remitted to anyone, only when the soul of the offender is at peace with the offended. Hence sin is remitted to us, when God is at peace with us, and this peace consists in the love whereby God loves us. Now God's love, considered on the part of the Divine act, is eternal and

unchangeable; whereas, as regards the effect it imprints on us, it is sometimes interrupted, inasmuch as we sometimes fall short of it and once more require it. Now the effect of the Divine love in us, which is taken away by sin, is grace, whereby a man is made worthy of eternal life, from which sin shuts him out. Hence *we could not conceive the remission of guilt, without the infusion of grace.*<sup>124</sup>

Aquinas considers an objection to this view that grace is needed for justification. The remission of guilt consists in ‘the Divine imputation,’ according to the objector, appealing to Psalm 31:2: ‘Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin.’ As the infusion of grace ‘puts something in our soul,’ which is not needed for imputation, therefore the infusion of grace is not required for the remission of sins. But Aquinas responds that God’s love towards the sinner involves not only the Divine will but also an effect on the person, so when God does not impute sin to a person ‘there is implied a certain effect in him to whom the sin is not imputed’; the effect is grace.<sup>125</sup>

Aquinas asks whether a person without grace can merit eternal life. His response is negative, for two reasons. First, a person must be ‘reconciled to God’ before he can merit eternal life. In order to be reconciled to God the person’s sins must be forgiven which, as

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<sup>124</sup> ST Iallae q113 a2. Italics mine. Dicendum quod homo peccando Deum offendit, sicut ex supra dictis patet. Offensa autem non remittitur alicui nisi per hoc quod animus offensi pacatur offendenti. Et ideo secundum hoc peccatum nobis remitti dicitur quod Deus nobis pacatur; quae quidem pax consistit in dilectione qua Deus diligit nos. Dilectio autem Dei, quantum est ex parte actus divini, est aeterna et immutabilis; sed quantum ad effectum quem nobis imprimit quandoque interrumpitur, prout scilicet ab ipso quandoque deficimus, et quandoque iterum recuperamus. Effectus autem divinae dilectionis in nobis, qui per peccatum tollitur, est gratia, qua homo fit dignus vita aeterna, a qua peccatum mortale excludit. Et ideo non posset intelligi remissio culpae, si non adesset infusion gratiae.

<sup>125</sup> ST Iallae q113 a2 Reply to Objection 2.

we have seen above, is brought about by a bestowal of created grace.<sup>126</sup> Second, because 'man's merit depends upon the Divine pre-ordination.' Aquinas thinks that God does not ordain an act to anything which exceeds its powers, as it is a 'law of Divine providence that nothing shall act beyond its powers.' Eternal life is, for Aquinas, 'a good exceeding the proportion of created nature,' since it exceeds a created nature's knowledge and desire, as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:9: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man.' As a meritorious act is beyond the powers of created nature, a superadded gift is needed, which is grace.<sup>127</sup>

Having established that grace is needed in order to merit eternal life, Aquinas asks whether a person in grace can merit eternal life condignly. Condign merit supposes equality of a service and that which is given in return. If condign merit is withheld from an actor there is a violation in justice and an obligation for the offender to make restitution. Congruous merit, on the other hand, claims a reward only on the grounds of equity, owing to the inadequacy of the service and the lack of intrinsic proportion between the service and the recompense. To withhold such merit is merely an offence against what is fitting or a matter of personal discrimination.

In response to the question Aquinas states that a meritorious act can be considered in two ways. First, as it is a free act, there can be no condignity because of the 'great

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<sup>126</sup> Aquinas notes that this reason does not apply for Adam, the first man, before he sinned, for in such a state he did not require grace to be reconciled to God.

<sup>127</sup> ST I-II q114 a2. This argument is explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

inequality' between the person performing the act and God. However, Aquinas thinks that there is congruity, for if a person does what he can then it seems congruous that 'God should reward him according to the excellence of his power.' Second, the meritorious act may be considered as it proceeds from the grace of the Holy Spirit, and in this sense eternal life is merited condignly, for the value of the merit depends upon the 'work of the Holy Ghost moving us to eternal life.' Aquinas appeals to John 4:14: '(it) shall become in him a fount of water springing up into life everlasting.' Viewed in this sense, the 'worth of the work depends upon the dignity of grace,' and as a person in grace is adopted as God's son, the inheritance of eternal life is due to him 'by right of adoption,' as we read in Romans 8:17: 'If sons, heirs also.'<sup>128</sup>

### Scotus

Having surveyed Aquinas' views on the necessity of grace for justification and to merit eternal life, we turn to Scotus. Scotus answers the question of the necessity of grace for justification and acceptance to eternal life by appealing to a distinction between what God can do by his absolute power and what he can do by his ordained power. As we will see, Aquinas also distinguishes between these two powers. However, Aquinas does not address the issue of the necessity of grace directly using this distinction, as Scotus does.

In the *Ordinatio*, a commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, Scotus states the following:

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<sup>128</sup> ST Iallae q114 a3.

I say that God could *of his absolute power* have very well accepted—with the special acceptance stated before—a nature capable of beatification that was existing in its pure natural state; and likewise, the act of it, for which it had a purely natural inclination, he could have accepted as meritorious. But he is not believed to have so disposed things that he should thus accept its pure nature or act, because to say that ‘an act from purely natural powers is meritorious’ comes close to the error of Pelagius. Therefore the more likely belief is that he accepts a nature and its act as meritorious on the basis of a supernatural habit.<sup>129</sup>

A pure natural state is a state that lacks the habit of created grace. For Scotus, there is a distinction to be made between God’s absolute power and God’s ordained power; this distinction will be explained below. As stated in the quotation above God could, by his absolute power, have accepted a person without grace, and an act which is not inclined by grace. However, as Scotus thinks that to hold this would equate to holding to Pelagianism, he states that it is more likely that God accepts only those who have created grace and who act inclined by grace.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1, distinction 11-25. Translated by Peter L. P. Simpson. See:<http://www.aristotelophile.com/Books/Translations/Scotus%20Ordinatio%201%20d.11-25.pdf>. *Ordinatio* 1 d17 q2 n160. Italics mine. The relevant sense of ‘meritorious’ will be explained below.

De secundo articulo dico quod Deus de potentia absoluta bene potuisset acceptare naturam beatificabilem—acceptatione speciali praedicta—existentem in puris naturalibus; et similiter, actum eius ad quem esset inclinatio mere naturalis, potuisset acceptare ut meritorium. Sed non creditur ita disposuisse quod naturam puram vel actum eius sic acceptet, quia ‘actum ex puris naturalibus esse meritorium’ appropinquat errori Pelagii. Ideo verisimilius creditur quod acceptet naturam, et actum eius tamquam meritorium, per habitum supernaturalem. Scotus, D. *Ordinatio* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

<sup>130</sup> In support of this, Scotus also says: ‘As far as this article is concerned, then, there is no necessity to posit a supernatural habit conferring grace when speaking of the necessity that regards God’s absolute power (especially since he could give beatitude without any preceding merit), although however this may be necessary when speaking of the necessity that regards God’s ordained power, which ordaining we pick up in Scripture and

Scotus thinks that there is a twofold division of divine acceptance. He writes:

Our nature is capable of beatification, is just, is habitually accepted—that is, that when it is not actually operating yet still the divine will is ordering it to eternal life as being worthy of so great a good, in accord with the disposition that it possesses habitually in itself. And it is because of this habitual acceptance of a nature capable of beatification even when it is not operating, and because of the actual acceptance of an act elicited by such a nature, that one must posit a supernatural habit whereby he who formally possesses it is accepted by God and whereby his elicited act is accepted as meritorious.<sup>131</sup>

We read here of a distinction between the *habitual acceptance* of a person who has grace but is not performing a meritorious act, and the *actual acceptance* of an act performed by a person inclined by grace.<sup>132</sup> God’s habitual acceptance is dependent upon the presence of the habit of grace in a person, whilst God’s actual acceptance is dependent upon a person’s performance of a meritorious act.<sup>133</sup> Whilst the former involves God’s acceptance of a person to eternal life, the latter involves God’s acceptance of an act as meritorious and thus worthy of the reward of a greater share of eternal life in the afterlife.

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from the sayings of the saints, where we have it that a sinner is not worthy of eternal life and that a just man is worthy.’ *Ordinatio* 1 d17 q1 n129.

<sup>131</sup> *Ordinatio* 1 d17 q1 n129. Et hoc modo credimus naturam nostram beatificabilem, iustam, esse habitualiter acceptam, -- hoc est quod quando non actualiter operatur, adhuc tamen voluntas divina eam ordinat ad vitam aeternam, tamquam dignam tanto bono, secundum dispositionem quam habet habitualiter in se. Et propter hanc acceptationem naturae beatificabilis habitualem etiam quando non operatur, et propter acceptationem actualem actus eliciti a tali natura, oportet ponere habitum unum supernaturalem, quo habens formaliter acceptetur a Deo et quo actus eius elicitus acceptetur tamquam meritorious.

<sup>132</sup> *Ordinatio* 1 d17 q1 n129.

<sup>133</sup> This raises the issue of what happens to those who receive grace (habitually accepted by God) but die before performing a meritorious act (are not actually accepted by God).

A meritorious act cannot be just *any* act, for a graced person is still capable of indifferent acts and venial sins, neither of which are meritorious. Rather, Scotus thinks that grace must incline a person towards 'definite (meritorious) acts.'<sup>134</sup>

The importance of this meritorious *act* is represented at the council of Trent:

If anyone says that the good works of the justified man are the gifts of God in such a way that they are not also the good merits of the justified man himself; or that by the *good works* he performs through the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ (of whom he is a living member), the justified man does not *truly merit* an increase of grace, *eternal life*, and... increase in glory: let him be anathema.<sup>135</sup>

The medievals distinguished between what is needed for justification and what is needed to merit a greater share of eternal life. Michael Root sheds light on this in his description of the medieval view of the relationship between justification, which is not merited, and eternal life, which is merited. The quality of grace justifies a person, whilst the performance of a meritorious act merits eternal life for a person:

The movement of the self into communion with God is not merited. Entrance into it (first grace and justification) is not merited... returning to it after a lapse (restoration) is not merited. *Within the movement of grace*, however, relations of

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<sup>134</sup> *Ordinatio* 1 d17 q1 n129. Italics mine.

<sup>135</sup> Denzinger, H. *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43<sup>rd</sup> Edition, ed. Peter Hunermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012). Italics mine.

merit can exist... 'Eternal life' here functions almost as a technical term for the *telos* of the movement of grace.<sup>136</sup>

In medieval theology the first grace which justifies a person is not merited, but as a result of the influence of this grace a person can perform meritorious works, making the person worthy of eternal life.

Scotus affirms the view that grace is needed in order to merit eternal life. The concept of merit is, for Scotus, connected to reward and has to do with justice. If I do a good act I justly deserve a reward for my action. Given the momentous ontological gap between God and humanity—between Creator and creature— there is no strict justice between the two. If I do a good act I cannot demand a reward from God for my action. Nevertheless, for Scotus, even though God is under no obligation to reward creatures for their works, he ordains things such that the person who performs a meritorious act deserves the reward of eternal life.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Root, M. 'Aquinas, Merit and Reformation Theology after the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,' *Modern Theology* 20 (2004), pp. 13-14.

<sup>137</sup> Note that Scotus' views on merit are different from the standard medieval account, as Richard Cross explains: 'Scotus has a distinction between condign and congruous merit as well, though it is in fact very different from the one just described. Central to it is the idea that the creature cannot refuse the reward offered as a result of condign merit; whereas he or she can refuse the reward offered as a result of congruous merit. So, as in Bonaventure, the notion of necessity does in some sense attach to condign merit, and not to congruous merit; but the necessity, as we shall see, is the result not of any lack of divine freedom, but of a lack of creaturely freedom. And Scotus never claims—unlike Bonaventure—that the necessity attaching to the reward of congruous merit is the result of any sort of obligation imposed on God, whether by himself, freely, or otherwise. Underlying this is Scotus' insistence that nothing outside God is sufficient for an external divine action. So Scotus rejects Bonaventure's way of drawing the distinction between condign and congruous merit. But he does not reject all the features of Bonaventure's

## Ockham

Having surveyed Scotus' views on the need for created grace for eternal life, noting the presence of the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power, and having explained Scotus' view on grace and the will, we turn to William of Ockham.<sup>138</sup>

Ockham seeks to address several questions which relate to the issue of the necessity of created grace for eternal life. I outline and critique his arguments in response to these questions, noting what I label *grace without freedom* cases, wherein a person receives created grace and is accepted for eternal life but does not perform a meritorious act. I then explain what I take to be a possible theological consequence of these *grace without freedom* cases.

### Ockham on Ordained and Absolute Power

Ockham responds to the question of the necessity of created grace for justification and acceptance to eternal life through an appeal to the distinction between what God can do

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account. Like, Bonaventure, he denies that there could ever be any equality between a human act and the reward assigned to it. But he presumably wants to claim—like Bonaventure—that there is a proportion between the human act and the divine reward.' Cross, R. *Duns Scotus* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1999). 105.

<sup>138</sup> For a brief historical sketch of the controversy surrounding Ockham's views see Etzkorn, G. J. *Walter Chatton and the controversy on the absolute necessity of grace* *Franciscan Studies*, 17, 1977, pp. 32-65).

by his absolute power and what he can do by his ordained power. It is important to detail Ockham's understanding of absolute and ordained power as it is crucial for the argument in the rest of the chapter. For Ockham:

Ordained power is the power to do something in accordance with the laws that have been ordained and instituted by God.

Absolute power is the power to do anything such that its being done does not involve a contradiction.<sup>139</sup>

Marilyn McCord Adams comments on an ambiguity in Ockham over his understanding of ordained power. It is not clear, according to Adams, whether Ockham holds to Aquinas' understanding of ordained power or to Scotus' understanding. Adams shows that for Aquinas, God's ordained power may be understood as follows:

A) x lies within the scope of God's ordained power if and only if God ordains or wills, all things considered, that He will do/make/produce x.<sup>140</sup>

Aquinas draws upon the distinction between God's ordained and absolute power to explain that although God has foreordained a 'completely determinate plan of action' for world history, and he brings this about by his ordained power on (A), God could have done

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<sup>139</sup> William of Ockham, *Quodlibetal Questions*, translated by Alfred Freddoso and Francis Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). 492.

<sup>140</sup> For Aquinas, see ST I q25 a5 reply 1. '... since power is understood as executing, but will as commanding and intellect and wisdom as directing, what is attributed to power considered in itself, God is said to have power over with respect to his absolute power. And everything in which the aspect of being can be saved is of this sort, as was said above (a.3). But what is attributed to the divine power insofar as the command of a just will executes it, God is said to be able to do with respect to His ordered power.'

otherwise by his absolute power. But given that God has foreordained this world, he *will not do otherwise* than what he has ordained, as Aquinas explains:

God can, with respect to His absolute power, do other things than He foreknew and foreordained that He would do. Nevertheless, it cannot be that He does anything that He did not foreknow and foreordain that He would do.<sup>141</sup>

Further, Adams explains that, for Aquinas, God's performing of miracles falls under his ordained power:

God's power to act outside the natural order which He has established among secondary causes does not necessarily fall under His absolute as opposed to His ordered power. For God does in fact perform some miracles and so both foreknew and foreordained that He would do so... Thus, God's ordered power is His power to do what accords with the completely determinate plan of action that He in fact foreordains.<sup>142</sup>

According to Adams, this Thomist understanding of ordained power is different from Scotus' understanding, which she describes as follows:

B) x lies within the scope of God's ordained power if and only if x accords with the right law that He has established.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> ST I q25 a5 reply 1.

<sup>142</sup> Adams, M. M. *William of Ockham* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987). 1189-1190.

<sup>143</sup> I deal with the ambiguity surrounding how a 'law' should be understood later in this chapter. For Scotus, see *Ordinatio* 1, d.44, q.1, n.3: '... In every agent that acts by intellect and will and is able to act in conformity with the right law and nevertheless does not necessarily act in conformity with the right law, ordered power must be distinguished from absolute power. The reason is that it can act in conformity with the right law, and then it acts according to its ordered power (for it is ordered insofar as it is a principle of carrying some things in conformity with the right law) and it can act outside that law or

Adams explains (B):

As such an agent's ordered power would seem to include his power to do not only what he does, but also to do legal things that he does not do. For example, it is legal for me to walk across the street now, but I choose to stay inside instead. An agent's absolute power, on the other hand, includes his power to do what is outside the law or contrary to it.<sup>144</sup>

For Scotus, it is possible for the lawgiver to change the laws in order to ensure that he acts legally:

It is within the lawgiver's power, in doing something contrary to L, to bring it about that he acts legally in accord with L', since whether L or L' is the established law depends on his free choice. In fact, Scotus has in mind the principle of Roman law according to which illegal action is impossible for the absolute ruler.<sup>145</sup>

As God can change the laws he has established, through an act of his absolute power, God's ordered power not only can but does change from time to time.<sup>146</sup>

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contrary to it, and in this there is absolute power that exceeds ordered power. Therefore, not only in God but in every free agent which can act according to the dictates of the right law and outside such a law or contrary to it—ordered and absolute power must be distinguished. Therefore, the jurists say that someone can do this *de facto*—i.e., with respect to absolute power—or *de jure*—i.e., with respect to power ordered according to the law.'

<sup>144</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1190.

<sup>145</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1192.

<sup>146</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1195.

Adams argues that whilst Aquinas and Scotus are agreed on their conceptions of God's absolute power—they are identical to Ockham's view outlined above—their conceptions of ordered power are 'neither logically nor extensionally equivalent.'<sup>147</sup>

Turning to Ockham, on God's ordered power, Adams states that 'whether or not Ockham really understood God's ordered power in terms of (B) instead of (A) is a more difficult matter.'<sup>148</sup> Adams engages in a lengthy critique of the attempt to harmonise (A) and (B) in Ockham's thought, concluding that unless he held to quite an unusual understanding of a divine law, which Adams thinks unlikely, Ockham would not have been warranted in regarding (A) and (B) as 'either logically or extensionally equivalent.' She concludes that perhaps Ockham just assumed that (A), endorsed by so many in the tradition, and (B), advanced by Scotus, were equivalent. Alternatively, Ockham may have 'inherited the difficulty from Scotus'—whose account also came up wanting for Adams—which Ockham may have been aware of yet unable to reconcile.<sup>149</sup>

I avoid an attempt at resolution of the ambiguity outlined by Adams. However, one point to note is that, in the context of Ockham's dealings with the question of the necessity of created grace for salvation, the language of his response is in keeping with (B), as we shall see.

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<sup>147</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1197. See 1197 for Adams' explanation of this point.

<sup>148</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1199.

<sup>149</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1207.

In summary, whilst Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham are agreed on their understanding of God's absolute power, it is unclear whether Ockham holds to Aquinas' (A) or Scotus' (B) understanding of God's ordained power. This consideration is important for what follows.

### Ockham on the Necessity of Grace

To begin:

Q1) Can a human being be saved without created grace?

A negative response to such a question would, Ockham supposes, run as follows:

Whoever is saved is dear to God. But no one can be dear to God without grace. Therefore, no one can be saved without grace.<sup>150</sup>

Ockham answers Q1 both positively and negatively. First, positively: 'a human being is able by the absolute power of God to be saved without created grace.' He deploys several arguments to this conclusion. First, he states that whatever God is able to do 'by the mediation of a secondary cause in the genus of efficient or final causality,' he is able to do immediately by himself.<sup>151</sup> Created grace, whether it is an effective cause (of eternal

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<sup>150</sup> *Quod.* 492.

<sup>151</sup> *Quod.* 492.

life) or a dispositive cause that disposes a person to eternal life, is an efficient or final secondary cause, so God is able to save someone without it.

The first premise of this argument is open to objection. Consider that God causes a person to react in awe to a beautiful sunset. The beauty of the sunset is the cause of the person's awe-struck reaction. Plausibly, God could cause an awe-struck reaction in someone without a beautiful sunset, or indeed without anything else causing it apart from himself. However, it is not clear that God could cause a person to react in awe *to a beautiful sunset* without the existence of the sunset. The existence of the effect (the reaction) is dependent upon the existence of another created thing (the sunset), thus God cannot cause this effect immediately without first causing the other created thing. If this is so, the major premise is false and the argument fails, as it seems that God is not able to do immediately by himself all that he is able to do through secondary causes.

Ockham may object to this: God can cause a person to have all the relevant physiological experiences associated with reacting in awe to a beautiful sunset without the existence of a beautiful sunset. Whilst we may grant this, would this equate to a person having an experience of reacting in awe to a beautiful sunset? At a physiological level it may do. But if the person later relates the events of her day to a friend over dinner, how will she describe the experience? Either she knows she did not see a beautiful sunset, or she is tricked into thinking she did see a beautiful sunset. If the former, then the experience she has is not the same as the experience of reacting in awe to a beautiful sunset, for there

was no sunset and if there had been a sunset her description of the experience to her friend would have been different. Alternatively, if she was tricked, and all other persons who might tell her otherwise were similarly tricked, then she may describe the experience of reacting in awe to a beautiful sunset to her friend over dinner. However, whilst she might have *seemed to* react in awe to a beautiful sunset, she did not actually react in awe *to a beautiful sunset*. There are crucial causal differences between the two cases. In the absence of a beautiful sunset she reacts to an illusion of a sunset. In the veridical case she reacts *to* a beautiful sunset. In the illusory case she does not.

Ockham may grant that God cannot bring it about that a person react in awe to a beautiful sunset in the absence of a sunset. He might respond that in the sunset case it is logically impossible that God bring about the reaction without the sunset. However, in the case of a person being saved without created grace he might contend that there is no logical contradiction involved.<sup>152</sup> If we grant this to Ockham, we are left with a *grace without freedom* case, where a person is saved in the absence of a free act of acceptance of God. I will return to this below.

Second argument: as an agent 'who is not determined to a set course and order of things' is able to act according to a different order, and as God is such an agent, God is able to give eternal life without grace to someone who does good works.

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<sup>152</sup> Ockham might adjust the first premise to the following: whatever God is able to do by the mediation of a secondary cause in the genus of efficient or final causality, he is able to do immediately by himself, unless doing so involves a contradiction.

Ockham's conclusion does not follow from his premises, for as I now argue, although God is an agent who can act according to a different order, this does not mean that he is an agent who can act according to *any* different order: his nature puts restrictions on the set of orders he can act according to.

I take the major premise to describe an agent who can 'choose to do whatever s/he wants.' Is God such an agent or are there restraints, moral or otherwise, upon what God can and cannot choose to do? We might think that, as God is good and just, there are certain things he would not choose to do. For example, we might think that a good and just God would not choose to torture a baby just for fun.

In order to address this question, we need to consider Ockham's wider thought of Divine commands. Ockham holds that God can cause the act of hating God 'as far as the sheer being in the act is concerned.' Ockham draws a distinction between the act of hating God, and the wickedness and evilness of the act. Given this distinction, God can cause a person to hate him without causing the wickedness associated with the act.<sup>153</sup> Ockham considers an objection to this view. He refers to Aristotle's view that 'there are certain acts which, as soon as named, have evilness and wickedness attached to them; and no act of this kind can be performed by God.' Given that the hatred of God is one such act, the objection

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<sup>153</sup> See Idziak, J. M. *Divine Command Morality: Historical and Contemporary Readings* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979). 55-57.

concludes that God could not cause such an act that has wickedness attached to it. Ockham responds to this arguing that acts like adultery and theft have wickedness attached to them because persons are ‘obligated by a divine command to perform the opposite act.’ But such acts can be performed by God without any accompanying evil. Further, such acts can be performed meritoriously by human persons if the acts ‘should come under a divine precept.’ As things stand, given that God commands us not to commit adultery and theft, etc., ‘it is not possible that anyone meritoriously or rightly engages in such acts.’

Given Ockham’s views on divine commands, can God choose to torture babies for fun? It is important to note that when Ockham writes of alternative divine commands—like the command to hate God—he is writing of a hypothetical. It may be the case that it would be right to hate God if God commanded it, but it may also be impossible that God command it. There is considerable scholarly consensus that Ockham regards God’s commands as stable across time.<sup>154</sup> Given this, although ‘good’ and ‘evil’ may, for

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<sup>154</sup> John Kilcullen engages in a lengthy exposition of various primary texts from Ockham, to the following conclusion: ‘Ockham holds that nothing ever happens by God’s absolute power and not by his ordinate power. But some historians point out that on Ockham’s account of this distinction, in contrast with the account given by Duns Scotus, God’s ordinate power is not restricted to *general* ordinances. God may have willed from eternity a kind of detailed schedule according to which moral laws will be suspended or even changed on various dates, just as (according to Christians) he did will that the religious law revealed to Moses should cease from the time of Christ; God doesn’t change his will, but it may be that he has always willed that at certain times the moral law will change. So we may find, tomorrow, or the day after, that murder, adultery, lying, etc., are not forbidden, and they may even be obligatory. It may never happen, but we can’t be sure it won’t. The moral future may not resemble the past. **Now Ockham himself never says anything like this.** Historians like to sensationalize Ockham’s thinking, to make

Ockham, have different content if God commands differently, I proceed under the assumption that God's commands are stable over time: God is good and just by nature, and that is not going to change.

If God is good and just we may assume that although God may be such that he can act according to a different order than he currently does, there are restraints upon what this order may be. Plausibly, if God is good and just he cannot act according to an order in which it is good to torture babies just for fun. Ockham assumes that God can act according to an order in which he can give eternal life without grace to someone who does good works. Ockham assumes too much, for his argument does not successfully conclude that, given the constraints of God's nature, he can act according to *this* order. Of course, it may be that God *can* act according to *this* order, but Ockham has not argued for this (in this argument). In the absence of said argument, the conclusion does not follow.

Third, if something can be given without being given as a reward for merit it can also be given, by God's absolute power, without created grace 'which serves as the principle of meriting'.<sup>155</sup> As a beatific act was given to Paul during his rapture, during which 'he saw

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him seem more exciting than he was. **The radical view sketched above is not expressed by Ockham.**' 1. Boldface mine. Kilcullen, J. 'Natural Law and Will in Ockham' in *History of Philosophy Yearbook*, Volume 1, of The Australasian Society for History of Philosophy, ed. Haakonssen, K and Thiel, U. (Canberra: 1993). See also McDonnell, K. 'Does William of Ockham Have a Theory of Natural Law?' *Franciscan Studies* 34 (1974), 383 – 392. Courtenay, W. J. *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990). 119 – 120. Clark, D. D. 'Ockham on Human and Divine Freedom' *Franciscan Studies* 38 (1978), 122 – 160.

<sup>155</sup> *Quod.* 493.

the essence of God' and this not as a reward for merit, God is able to give eternal life without created grace which is the principle of meriting.

The example Ockham provides, of Paul's beatific vision, is unconvincing. Some may doubt that Paul did see the divine essence on the road to Damascus, and instead hold that whilst Paul saw a vision it was not a vision of the divine essence. Alternatively, it may be that Paul did see the essence of God on the road to Damascus, but this was a temporary experience. The reward for grace-produced merit is *eternal* life. Thus, Paul's temporary experience is incomparable to the unending experience of the saints in heaven.

It might be objected that although Paul's experience was temporary—it lasted, say, five minutes—God could have let it last longer. If God could have let it last longer, then he could let it last forever. It seems plausible that God could have let a five-minute experience last ten minutes, or ten hours, or ten days, etc. However, the step from 'a long time' to 'forever' is a large one: the former remains temporary no matter how long it is, whilst the latter is permanent. The example of Paul does not provide evidence that God may give a person a permanent vision of himself without created grace.

Fourth:

A meritorious act is not more repugnant to a nature placed in a purely natural state than is a demeritorious act. But a will is able to elicit a demeritorious act on its own. Therefore, by God's absolute power a will placed in a purely natural state is able to elicit a meritorious act. The minor premise is obvious. The major premise is proved from the fact that wherever something does not exist at all, neither does

it exist there to a greater degree; for example, that which is not white is not more white (than anything). But a meritorious act is not at all repugnant to a nature placed in a purely natural state. Therefore, there is not a greater repugnance (on its part than there is on the part of a demeritorious act).<sup>156</sup>

A purely natural state is a state which lacks (supernatural) grace. Ockham seems to contend that in such a state a person is able to will both a demeritorious act and, by God's absolute power, a meritorious act.

Ockham follows Aquinas in thinking that an act is meritorious of eternal life if it is informed by created grace. However, for Ockham, this is only so by God's ordained power.<sup>157</sup> He contends that God can, by his absolute power, accept an act as worthy of eternal life which is not informed by grace. The issue with this is that it seems to fall prey to the charge of pelagianism: the heresy that holds that a person can merit eternal life through his natural powers.

Ockham's response to this charge is that his view does not commit the error of pelagianism as Pelagius held that created grace is not required for eternal life, rather an

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<sup>156</sup> *Quod.* 493. Praeterea non est maior repugnantia actus meritorii ad naturam in solis naturalibus constitutam quam actus demeritorii; sed voluntas potest ex se in actum demeritorium; igitur voluntas in solis naturalibus constituta potest per potentiam Dei absolutam in actum meritorium. Minor est manifesta. Maior probatur, quia ubi non est simpliciter, ibi non est magis, sicut quod non est album non est magis album; sed actus meritorii ad naturam in solis naturalibus constitutam non est aliqua repugnata; igitur non est maior repugnantia. Ockham, W. *Quodlibeta Septum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

<sup>157</sup> For commentary on the relevant primary texts see Leff, G. *William of Ockham* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975). 494.

act elicited in a natural state merits eternal life condignly.<sup>158</sup> With regards to meritorious works performed without grace, Ockham thinks that these acts may merit eternal life congruously. He claims that 'such (a meritorious) act is meritorious only through God's absolute power accepting it.'<sup>159</sup>

But this raises the question: if God has predestined the person to eternal life, why does he not bestow grace on him, enabling him to merit eternal life condignly? I return to this issue below.

Fifth, Ockham writes:

Nothing is meritorious except that which is within our power. But the grace in question is not within our power [to attain]. Therefore, an act is meritorious not mainly because of that grace but rather mainly because of the will that freely causes the act. Therefore, God could accept such an act, elicited by the will, in the absence of the grace in question.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Recall that condign merit supposes equality of the service and what is given in return. If condign merit is withheld from an actor there is a violation in justice and an obligation for the offender to make restitution. Congruous merit, on the other hand, claims a reward only on the grounds of equity, owing to the inadequacy of the service and the lack of intrinsic proportion between the service and the recompense. To withhold such merit is merely an offence against what is fitting or a matter of personal discrimination.

<sup>159</sup> *Quod. 493.*

<sup>160</sup> *Quod. 493.*

In a similar manner to the argument considered above, Ockham asserts that a natural act performed by a person without created grace could be meritorious. In this case such merit is congruous and thus, according to Ockham, it avoids the error of Pelagius. Again, this raises the same question, stated above, which I will return to.<sup>161</sup>

Although Ockham answers Q1 positively, he also answers negatively:

I claim that, *according to the laws now ordained by God*, no human being will ever be saved or be able to be saved without created grace... And I hold this because of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Saints.<sup>162</sup>

This leads to Ockham's final response to Q1, which distinguishes two senses of grace: first, grace is a quality of the soul, and second, grace is divine acceptance. If grace is taken in the first sense, a human being can be saved without grace through God's absolute power, but not if grace is taken in the second sense.

In summary, with regards to Q1, I have shown that there are problems with several of the arguments proposed by Ockham. Several of Ockham's arguments are successful, but these successful arguments depend upon *grace without freedom* cases, which I will return to below.

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<sup>161</sup> The question: If God has predestined the person to eternal life, why does he not bestow grace on him, enabling him to merit eternal life condignly?

<sup>162</sup> *Quod.* 493. Italics mine. Secundo dico quod numquam salvabitur homo nec salvari poterit, nec umquam eliciet vel elicere poterit actum meritorium secundum leges a Deo nunc ordinatas sine gratia creata. Et hoc teneo propter Scripturam Sacram et dicta Sanctorum.

Next question:

Q2) Does God of necessity accept an act elicited by one who has created grace?

Ockham's reference to an 'act' is to an act which is performed by a person inclined to do so by created grace. Ockham is aware that one reason to answer 'yes' to Q2 is that if something is itself acceptable, 'according to its essence,' then if this acceptable thing causes an act, that act is necessarily acceptable.<sup>163</sup> Given that created grace is by its nature acceptable to God, it might seem that God necessarily accepts acts performed by those who have grace. However, Ockham holds that whatever God does 'with respect to things outside himself' he does so contingently and not necessarily.

In replying to Q2 Ockham introduces another distinction:

Absolute necessity: found when something is necessary without qualification in such a way that it involves a contradiction for its opposite to be true.<sup>164</sup>

P is absolutely necessary = not-P involves/implies a contradiction.<sup>165</sup>

Conditional necessity: found when a conditional proposition P is (absolutely) necessary even though both the antecedent and the consequent are contingent when considered independently of P. Consider 'if Peter is predestined, then Peter will be saved'. The proposition may be necessary yet both the antecedent and the consequent are contingent when considered independently of P.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> *Quod.* 494.

<sup>164</sup> *Quod.* 495.

<sup>165</sup> Formulated by Brian Leftow.

<sup>166</sup> *Quod.* 495. Brackets mine.

P is conditionally necessary = not-P involves/implies a contradiction + antecedent and consequent of P are contingent when independent of P.

As may be expected, given Ockham's reply to Q1, Ockham has a positive and a negative response to Q2. Negatively, Ockham responds to Q2, stating that if we are speaking about *absolute necessity* then it is not the case that God necessarily accepts an act elicited out of created grace. For, by God's absolute power, he is able not to accept the act, for 'God does nothing of necessity with respect to things outside himself.'<sup>167</sup>

Ockham furthers what has been said with some novel arguments to persuade his reader. He holds that that which is able not to exist at all is able to lack eternal life, therefore 'that which God can will to reduce to nothingness is such that he is able not to accept it for eternal life.' God can, if he chooses, reduce a quality (like created grace) and/or its subject to nothingness, and thus not accept him (or his acts).

In a similar vein, Ockham states that given that God can conserve grace and a meritorious act in a person for 'many years without eternal life,' God can conserve him in this way forever, without accepting him for eternal life.<sup>168</sup>

Whilst Ockham thinks that it is not the case that, with regard to absolute necessity, God necessarily accepts an act elicited out of created grace, if we are speaking of *conditional*

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<sup>167</sup> *Quod.* 495.

<sup>168</sup> *Quod.* 495.

necessity Ockham holds that God of necessity accepts an act elicited out of grace. He states:

God has *ordained and established* through laws already handed down that such an act elicited in this way is to be accepted; therefore, God accepts such an act once it has been elicited.<sup>169</sup>

For Ockham, if 'God has ordained and established through laws already handed down that such an act elicited in this way is to be accepted' then 'God accepts such an act once it has been elicited.' This is conditionally necessary as if the antecedent, then the consequent, even if both the antecedent and consequent are contingent.

Both of Ockham's arguments regarding absolute necessity make modal claims about what God can do. Ockham thinks that as it does not involve a contradiction to give the reward of eternal life to a person who has not performed a meritorious act, God could have ordered such that this would happen. Whilst this may be logically possible, it is not the case that God will do this in the world we inhabit. For my purposes, this is not relevant, as I am investigating whether created grace is necessary for justification and acceptance to eternal life in the world we inhabit.

Next question:

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<sup>169</sup> *Quod.* 496. Italics mine.

Q3) Can God remit a sinner's guilt and punishment without an infusion of created grace?

It might be thought that every person is either pleasing to God or reprobated by him: the former is because of created grace, the latter because of sin. If this is the case then every person is either in grace or in sin. Thus, 'the expulsion of (sin) formally implies the infusion of (grace).' But a pattern emerges, as Ockham states that 'by his absolute power God can, if it so pleases him, remit all guilt, both original and actual, without an infusion of created grace.'<sup>170</sup> He states that as the removal of a sinner's guilt and punishment without an infusion of created grace does not involve a contradiction, therefore God is able to do it. Ockham's proof returns to his answer to Q1, for if God is able to save someone without infused grace then 'he is able to remit that person's guilt without any created grace.'<sup>171</sup> God can do the former, thus he is able to do the latter. The problems I raised regarding Ockham's response to Q1 carry over to this response to Q3.

Ockham's second argument runs as follows:

There seems to be no contradiction involved in God's being able to give a sinner the vision of his essence in the very instant in which he gives him grace. Nor, a fortiori, is there any contradiction involved in God's accepting him for eternal life in the very instant in which he is able to give him grace. And, consequently, in the instant in which he is able to give him grace, God can, if it so pleases him, remit his guilt without any created grace. For God is able to give one of these gifts

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<sup>170</sup> *Quod.* 500.

<sup>171</sup> *Quod.* 500.

without the other, and he is able to give the one prior to giving the other, as it pleases him.<sup>172</sup>

I take Ockham to mean that God can give a sinner a vision of himself and accept a sinner for eternal life both temporally and logically simultaneously to bestowing grace on him. This is so temporally because these are done 'at the same moment.' This is so logically because created grace must not be the cause of the sinner's vision and acceptance. Is it true that God can accept a sinner for eternal life both temporally and logically simultaneously to bestowing grace on him? For God to do so would deprive the creature of the opportunity to freely accept him through the performance of a grace-inclined meritorious act. Would God do this? This is another case of *grace without freedom*, which I will return to.

Third, it does not involve a contradiction for a sinner to 'exist in a purely natural state', thus God can bring this about. As one who exists in a purely natural state 'exists neither in grace nor in guilt' it does not involve a contradiction for a sinner's guilt to be remitted without an infusion of grace.

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<sup>172</sup> *Quod.* 501. Praeterea non videtur contradictio quin Deus potest dare alicui peccatori visionem suae essentiae in illo instanti in quo dat sibi gratiam; nec multo magis est aliqua contradictio quin in illo instanti in quo potest sibi dare gratiam, acceptet eum ad vitam aeternam; et per consequens in illo instanti in quo potest sibi dare gratiam potest Deus, si sibi placuerit, remittere culpam sine omni gratia creata. Potest enim unum de donis suis dare sine alio, et unum alteri praeponere sicut sibi placet.

This argument only gets Ockham so far. Whilst it may be the case that God can remit a person's guilt without grace, this falls short of accepting the person for eternal life. If acceptance for eternal life takes place as a result of remittance of sin and in the absence of a meritorious act we have another *grace without freedom* case. Moreover, the argument raises the concerns considered above regarding God's nature: would a just God just remit guilt? Plausibly, guilt needs to be dealt with. If a person is guilty of theft she needs to make amends: through apology and/or payment and/or time in jail. It does not seem just that she is simply let off the hook. Moreover, even if *it is* just that she is let off the hook, it seems that it would be better if she makes amends. We may expect God to do the better thing, thus we may expect God to want something to be done about the guilt rather than simply remit it.<sup>173</sup> However, Ockham may rebut this latter claim by stating that Christ paid the penalty for sin, and thus God can simply remit a sinner's guilt without grace because the offence has been dealt with on the cross. Even if we grant this, this is still a *grace without freedom* case.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh arguments run similarly to the third and thus count as *grace without freedom* cases.

Fourthly, according to Ockham grace is incompatible not only with guilt but also with a state of innocence; a state of innocence is a state in which a person has not sinned and is

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<sup>173</sup> Thanks to Brian Leftow for this point.

thus 'innocent'. As it does not involve a contradiction 'for a sinner to be returned to a state of innocence without grace,' God is able to remit his sin without infused grace.

Fifthly:

God's absolute power over every creature is no less efficacious than is an active created power with respect to its effect. But an active created power can through an alternation return itself to a pristine state; this is evident from the case of hot water, which returns itself to being cold. Therefore, without any contradiction God can return Adam after his sin to a pristine state of innocence and, as a result, he can remit his guilt without created grace. A relevant example: A king can remit all of his enemy's offenses and all of his guilt without giving him any gift; therefore, a fortiori God can do this.<sup>174</sup>

This argument states that as a created thing can be returned to a previous state without the bestowal of something external to it, so too can a person, by God's absolute power, be returned to a sinless state without the bestowal of created grace.

Another line of argument proposed by Ockham is as follows: given that God has instituted 'an eternal punishment to be inflicted on a sinner because of mortal sin without the

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<sup>174</sup> *Quod.* 501. Praeterea non minoris efficaciae est potentia Dei absoluta super quamcumque creaturam quam virtus activa creata respectu sui effectus; sed virtus activa creata per alterationem potest reducere se ad pristinum statum; patet de aqua calida quae reducit se ad frigiditatem; igitur sine omni contradictione potest Deus reducere Adam post peccatum ad pristinum statum innocentiae, et per consequens potest sibi remittere culpam sine gratia creata. Exemplum est ad hoc, nam rex potest inimico suo remittere omnem offensam sine omni dono sibi dato et omnem culpam potest sibi remittere; igitur multo magis potest Deus hoc facere.

infusion of any positive thing,' so too can he remit this punishment without the infusion of any positive thing, hence created grace is not required.

A final argument: as God can suspend the infliction of the punishment for sin until a time of his choosing without any infusion of grace, so too can he suspend the infliction of the punishment 'forever without infusing any grace,' thus remitting a person's guilt without an infusion of grace.<sup>175</sup> Ockham seems to assume that if God were to refrain from bestowing grace on a person and admitting him into Heaven forever this would not constitute punishment for sin. Plausibly, it would constitute a punishment of sorts.

Having answered negatively, Ockham gives his positive response:

I claim that, in accordance with the laws now *ordained* by God, God cannot remit either guilt or punishment without an infusion of grace, and this can be proved only through Sacred Scripture.<sup>176</sup>

In summary, with regards to Q3, I have shown that Ockham's first argument inherits the problems I posed to his response to Q1, and the rest of his arguments involve *grace without freedom* cases.

#### Further Critique: Expanding on Adams

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<sup>175</sup> *Quod.* 501.

<sup>176</sup> *Quod.* 502. Italics mine. Tertio dico quod secundum leges iam ordinatas a Deo non potest Deus remittere culpam nec poenam sine infusione gratiae, et hoc solum potest probari per Scripturam Sacram.

I have outlined and critiqued Ockham's arguments. I dismantled several of his arguments, and showed that the successful arguments left standing are those which involve *grace without freedom* cases.

I now consider Ockham's general approach to the questions (Q1 – Q3) which appeals to the distinction between God's ordained and absolute power. I build upon the work of Marilyn McCord Adams arguing that, on one understanding of Ockham on ordained power, his thought allows that God may accept a person for eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act (in *grace without freedom* cases) through an exercise of his absolute power. I show that this allows for the *possibility* of universalism in Ockham's thought.

Consider the two conceptions of God's ordained power mentioned earlier in the chapter:

A) x lies within the scope of God's ordained power if and only if God ordains or wills, all things considered, that He will do/make/produce x.

B) x lies within the scope of God's ordained power if and only if x accords with the right law that He has established.

It is clear that Ockham's responses to questions (1) – (3) depend upon the distinction between ordained and absolute power. Recall Adams' explanation of the ambiguity in Ockham on the question of whether he holds to (A) or (B). I have not attempted to resolve this difficulty, but it seems clear to me that if Ockham does understand God's ordained power as (A), when discussing the necessity of created grace for salvation we can say the

following: although it is possible that God might have accepted a person without grace by an act of his absolute power, *he will not accept* a person without grace now that he has ordained to accept only those with grace.

If, on the other hand, Ockham understands God's ordained power on (B), and if God has ordained that only those with created grace are accepted for eternal life, we might ask, by way of assessing Ockham's position, why he suggests that God might accept a person *without* created grace through an exercise of his absolute power?

Adams comments on Ockham's idea that laws like 'grace is not infused without the expulsion of guilt' admit of exceptions, offering three explanations. The first is that 'different rules applied to... earlier times,' citing the example of the angels, Christ, the virgin Mary, and the first man receiving grace. The second is that Ockham's reference to laws is simply to 'what *usually* happens,' as his considered opinion, as we will see below, is that 'the rules governing salvation are not general.' The third is that Ockham is 'giving up the idea that God always follows his own rules.'<sup>177</sup>

Regarding the first explanation, Adams comments that medieval theology did have different laws for the angels. For example, there was a 'general policy of infusing grace into angels before they had a chance to sin,' and Adams suggests this might have been extended to humans before the fall. Moreover, she rightly observes that Christ and the

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<sup>177</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1206.

Virgin Mary should be considered exceptions to the usual laws, for they are both exceptions to the law that 'post-lapsarian descendants of Adam are born guilty.'<sup>178</sup> Hence, these are different laws for *different cases*—for those not born into original sin—rather than different laws for *different times*.

As for the second explanation, Adams contrasts the views of Scotus and Ockham on the question of laws. Scotus held that 'laws must be general and *deal with all cases of a certain sort*.' For example, a king might decree that everyone who commits homicide must die. Or, God might ordain that everyone who commits the sin of final impenitence must be damned. These general laws are then applied to particular cases, and God's ordered power brings about the relevant judgment, acting 'in accord with the laws he has established.' According to Adams, Scotus thinks that these laws can change, as a lawgiver may 'establish one system of general laws at one time and another at a later time,' thus the scope of God's ordered power can and does change.<sup>179</sup>

Adams' second explanation states that, contrary to Scotus, Ockham thinks that God's laws do not apply to all cases of a certain sort, but rather the laws state what happens in *most cases* of a certain sort. But the possibility of an account of non-universal laws in Ockham still fails to make sense of his argument. If laws *are* universal, then a divine action contrary to such laws must be brought about by God's absolute power. If laws are *not* universal,

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<sup>178</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1206.

<sup>179</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1194.

then it may be in keeping for God to act contrary to such laws by his ordained power, for the laws only state what usually happens. But if God can act contrary to his laws by his ordained power it is not clear why Ockham needs to explain God's action in accepting a person without created grace as an act of his absolute power.

This brings us to Adams' third option, that Ockham is giving up the idea that God always follows his own rules. Consider the following, agreed upon by thirteenth and fourteenth century theologians:

- i) From eternity, God immutably predestined some persons to receive eternal life.<sup>180</sup>
- ii) This predestination is certain and unobstructable.<sup>181</sup>

Adams comments on the relation between (i) - (ii); the Scriptural position which states that God wills all persons to be saved; and the fact that, according to medieval theology, not all persons are saved. According to Adams, Ockham takes his lead from John Damascene and Peter Lombard in order to resolve this difficulty.<sup>182</sup> In John Damascene we find a distinction between the *antecedent* and *consequent* will of God. God's antecedent will is what God wants 'for human beings prima facie, before He takes into consideration what they do or do not will,' whilst his consequent will is 'what He wills efficaciously and all things considered.'<sup>183</sup> Scripture, and the doctrine of divine

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<sup>180</sup> See *William of Ockham*. 1299.

<sup>181</sup> See *William of Ockham*. 1299.

<sup>182</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1170.

<sup>183</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1171.

omnipotence, do not imply that nothing happens contrary to God's antecedent will, as 'God antecedently wills that everyone should be saved, but not everyone is saved.'<sup>184</sup>

However, these do imply that nothing happens contrary to God's consequent will, as

Ockham holds:

Nothing is done contrary to an omnipotent will that cannot be obstructed and that wills something efficaciously... the will of God is omnipotent and cannot be obstructed.<sup>185</sup>

I take (i) and (ii) to refer to God's consequent will.

As we have seen, in Ockham we find:

- iii) God has ordained laws such that no person will receive eternal life without created grace.

In light of (i) and (iii):

- iv) In predestining a person to eternal life, God determines to bestow created grace on her.

It might be objected that (i) and (iii) do not entail (iv). That is, it is possible that God predestine a person yet take exception to his own law in (iii). I consider possible reasons for a divine exception to the law expressed in (iii).

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<sup>184</sup> *William of Ockham*. 1173.

<sup>185</sup> See *William of Ockham*. 1173.

First, there is the *possibility of randomness* on the part of God. On this line, God has predestined a person to eternal life, but chooses not to bestow grace on her, contrary to the laws he has ordained, *for no reason whatsoever*. I think this implausible, for recall that the reason the medievals posit created grace is to preserve human freedom in the process of salvation. If God has set things up in a way that suggests he values human freedom, it seems very unlikely that God would, for no reason whatsoever, refrain from bestowing created grace upon a predestined person. However, given that we have no reason to think it *impossible* that God would do this, I rephrase (iv):

- iv) Plausibly, in predestining a person to eternal life, God determines to bestow created grace on her.<sup>186</sup>

Second, it may be that there are certain circumstances in which God chooses to withhold grace, in order to serve his purposes. For example, the Emperor Nero (37 – 68 AD) is reported to have persecuted Christians in Rome. Imagine that God used this persecution to drive certain Christians out of Rome to other areas, in order to spread the news of the gospel. The persecution may have served God's purposes, and *even if Nero was one of the elect*, God may have refrained from bestowing grace on him, as grace and the virtues might have caused Nero to refrain from persecuting. The same might be said about Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ. It is possible that Judas was one of the elect, but perhaps

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<sup>186</sup> Note that it is not the case that (iv) follows from (i) – (iii). Rather, in light of (i) – (iii), it is *plausible* that, in predestining a person to eternal life, God determines to bestow created grace on her.

God refrained from bestowing grace upon him as grace and the virtues may have caused Judas to be loyal to Jesus, which would have altered the redemption story.

It seems that, even in these circumstances, it is still possible for God to bestow grace on the person at a late stage: Nero could receive grace on his death-bed, and Judas could receive it whilst hanging from the rope during his suicide. If God has ordained that only those who have an infusion of grace receive eternal life, it seems that God could bestow this grace on the relevant people, even if it is at the very end of their lives. Of course, if Judas receives grace whilst hanging himself it will not affect much in his life, for his life is soon to be over. Nevertheless, this example does not require the contravening of the law that an infusion of grace is needed for salvation, and so it does not give us reason to think God would contravene the law in this case.

It might be objected that it is possible that, in order to serve God's purposes, Nero had to order one last persecution with *his very last dying breath*. Even here, however, God could still bestow grace, as there is plausibly a brief moment of time between a person's breath failing him and his body becoming fully dead. However, in such a circumstance there may not be any time for a meritorious act (a *grace without freedom* case); I will return to this point later.

Third, there is the possibility that God has ordained that grace may be bestowed *only under certain circumstances*. The obvious circumstance to consider here is that of

participation in the sacraments, and in particular, in baptism. Indeed, the medieval church taught that grace was first bestowed in baptism.<sup>187</sup> Richard Cross comments on Scotus' views on the role of the sacraments in the infusion of grace:

The occasionalist option... must be correct. Scotus thus argues that a sacrament is a non-causal 'necessitating condition.' It does not *cause* God's action—after all, it has no causal powers, intrinsic or instrumental, in virtue of which it could bring about a divine action. God has decided, however, that *whenever* a sacrament is received, he will give the appropriate supernatural gift. Indeed, this divine decision has been formalised in a covenant (*pactio*) made by God with the Church.<sup>188</sup>

This raises the issue of those who are circumstantially unable to be baptized. When Aquinas deals with baptism in the *Summa*, he is clear that salvation is offered to some of those who are unable to be baptized:

The sacrament of baptism may be wanting to anyone in reality but not in desire: for instance, when a man wishes to be baptized, but by some ill-chance he is forestalled by death before receiving baptism. And such a man can obtain salvation without being actually baptized, on account of his desire for baptism, which desire is the outcome of 'faith that worketh by charity,' whereby God, whose power is not tied to visible sacraments, *sanctifies man inwardly*. Hence Ambrose says of Valentinian, who died while yet a catechumen: 'I lost him whom I was to regenerate: but *he did not lose the grace he prayed for*.'<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> See Wood, R. *Ockham on the Virtues* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1997). 234.

<sup>188</sup> *Duns Scotus*. 137.

<sup>189</sup> ST III q68 a2. Italics mine. Alio modo potest sacramentum baptismi alicui deesse re, sed non voto: sicut cum aliquis baptizari desiderat, sed aliquo casu praevenitur morte antequam baptismum suscipiat. Talis autem sine baptismo actuali salutem consequi potest, propter desiderium baptismi, quod procedit ex *fide per dilectionem operante*, per quam Deus interius hominem sanctificat, cujus potentia sacramentis visibilibus non alligatur. Unde Ambrosius dicit de Valentiniano, qui catechumenus mortuus fuit, *Quem regeneraturus eram, amisi; veruntamen ille gratiam quam poposcit, non amisit*.

Thus, I take it that whilst God has established things such that grace is bestowed through baptism, he nevertheless predestines some who are circumstantially unable to be baptized, and upon these he bestows grace outside of the sacramental processes. The alternative view is that although God predestines some who are unable to be baptized, and although God does bestow grace on *some of those* who are unable to be baptized (as Aquinas says), he does not bestow grace on *all* those whom he has predestined and who are unable to be baptized. But this seems a problematic view given that God loves all predestined persons, grace produces good effects in persons, and God is able to bestow grace on all predestined persons. Thus, it seems problematic to think that God would bestow grace on only some of the predestined who are unable to be baptized, rather than all of them.

We must inquire as to whether, for Ockham, such a non-sacramental bestowal of grace involves an act of God's ordained power or his absolute power. For Aquinas, given that he holds to (A), the non-sacramental bestowal is clearly an act of God's ordained power. But for Ockham, it is less clear. If Ockham holds to (B), it may be that 'grace bestowal is confined to the sacraments,' or something to that effect, might qualify as an ordained law. But it is unclear why God would establish such a law, on Ockham's account, for if he did establish such a law he also foreknew he would need to overturn this law in the case of the many predestined people who do not have access to the sacraments. From our modern global perspective we are aware that there are billions of people who do not have

access to the sacraments. Granted, such knowledge was not available to the medieval thinkers, but no doubt they were aware that there are *a lot* of people who do not have access to the sacraments. If a law is to be potentially over-turned by the law-giver in *many* (billions of) instances, it does not reflect the handwriting of a supremely rational and all-knowing law-giver. Of course, it could be objected that the same could be said about the law that grace is needed for eternal life; why ordain *any* law if it is to be over-turned at some point by God's absolute power? But the cases are different: in the case of baptism, we know that the medievals held that God does bestow grace outside of baptism, and there is an obvious line of reasoning for this: not all predestined persons have access to baptism. But on the law that grace is needed for eternal life, given the view of the medievals (explained in Scotus above) that grace-bestowal upheld human free decision in the process of salvation, we are yet to come across examples of instances in which this law must be over-turned. An over-turning of the latter law would, according to the medievals, involve removing human freedom, whilst an over-turning of the law regarding baptism would not have this effect.

If it is not necessary to draw upon God's absolute power over-ruling his ordained power in the case of a non-sacramental bestowal of grace, how might we understand the distinction between sacramental and non-sacramental grace bestowal? For some medievals, including Aquinas, the sacraments are instrumental efficient causes of grace.<sup>190</sup> The sacraments work *ex opere operato*, which is to say that they are effective in

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<sup>190</sup> See ST III q60 a2.

bestowing grace irrespective of the attitudes of the priest. Hence, for those who seek grace, baptism and its sacramental cousins are reliable courses to pursue. But there are other ways to receive grace. In prayer and the reading of scripture, for example, grace may be bestowed, but on the medieval model these do not work in the same way as the sacraments; these non-sacramental modes of grace bestowal may be thought of as belonging to the *ex opere operantis* model, where the effectiveness of the mode is dependent not on the thing itself but upon its use.<sup>191</sup> It seems that distinguishing between sacramental and non-sacramental grace bestowal along these lines makes the most sense of Ockham's position.

Fourthly, there is the skeptical view, on which God chooses not to bestow created grace on a predestined person *for a reason unknown to us*. Given the epistemic limits of human persons, this option is hard to argue with, but I think the amendment I made to (iv) above goes some way to dealing with this.

Putting the fourth option on hold, accepting (iv) leads to:

v) Plausibly, God bestows created grace on those whom he has predestined for eternal life.

Given (ii), then:

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<sup>191</sup> Although the distinction between *ex opere operato* and *ex opere operantis* is rooted in the medieval period, it was standardized at Trent.

vi) Plausibly, the predestined receive grace.

It may be that although on (vi) the predestined receive grace, not all perform a meritorious act. For although created grace enables a person to freely perform a meritorious act, for Ockham, a person is also *free not to perform* such an act. If God has ordained things in such a way that he accepts only those for eternal life who have performed a meritorious act, it may be that, in some circumstances, God chooses to accept a person for eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act. It is these cases which I have referred to as *grace without freedom* cases. In these cases it may be that the person does not have the opportunity to perform such an act (the example of Nero above), or it may be that God decides that the person's eternal happiness in heaven is more important and/or more valuable than the person's free decision not to perform such meritorious acts.

If it is the case that a person's free decision for God is not absolutely necessary for acceptance to eternal life, and if it is the case that it is possible that God wills to bestow grace on all persons, this allows for the possibility that all persons will be accepted for eternal life. This equates to the possibility of universalism on Ockham's account, where 'universalism' is the view that God accepts all persons for eternal life. Ockham's views do not entail universalism, for it may be that God may not predestine all to eternal life. But

they allow for the *possibility* of universalism because the main obstacle to universalism—that is, human freedom—may be overcome by an act of God’s absolute power.

### Conclusion

I have provided reasons to doubt the truth of the premises and/or the validity of several of the arguments proposed by Ockham to the conclusion that grace is not necessary for justification and to merit eternal life. In a number of cases I have granted that Ockham’s arguments are successful, though these involve *grace without freedom* cases. I have then built upon the work of Adams, suggesting that if Ockham understands God’s ordained power on (A) then his point regarding the necessity of created grace for salvation is that although created grace might not have been necessary for salvation if God had ordained otherwise, it is necessary for salvation given that God has ordained that he will accept only those who have created grace. If this is the case, although God could have done otherwise, *he will not* do otherwise. Thus, on (A), created grace, and the performance of a meritorious act, are conditionally necessary for a person to be justified and accepted for eternal life. On-the-other hand, if Ockham understands God’s ordained power on (B) then either there are reasons unknown to us for the sake of which God might overrule his laws regarding the need for created grace by an act of his absolute power, and/or that God may, if he chooses—according to Ockham’s understanding of these concepts—accept a person in the absence of a meritorious act (a *grace without freedom* case). In the first case, where there are reasons unknown to us why God might overrule his law, it may

indeed be that created grace is not necessary for justification and eternal life. In the second case, whilst created grace may be necessary for justification, the performance of a meritorious act may not be necessary for acceptance to eternal life. Further scholarly pursuits may critically explore the possibility of a person's acceptance to eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act.

## Chapter 3

### John Calvin

#### Introduction

In Chapter 1 I argued that Aquinas posits a *created* quality of grace, and I explained that, for Aquinas, this quality is needed for both justification and sanctification. In Chapter 2 I considered the views of Duns Scotus and William of Ockham on the necessity of this created quality of grace for justification and to merit eternal life, arguing that for Ockham, either created grace and a meritorious act are necessary for acceptance to eternal life on one understanding of ordained power or that, on an alternate understanding of ordained power, plausibly God may, through an exercise of his absolute power, accept a person who has created grace in the absence of a free meritorious decision in favour of God.

I now turn to the thought of John Calvin, in whom we find a complete break from the medieval view that created grace is needed to justify a person. Calvin relies instead upon the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. This chapter has three parts. In the first part I outline Calvin's 'externalist' view on this aspect of justification, highlighting the differences with Aquinas' 'internalist' view. I then show that whilst Aquinas and Calvin hold divergent views on the need for created grace for justification, they hold similar views on the need for new habits and dispositions for sanctification, which is relevant for Chapter 4. In part 2 I consider two of Calvin's main reasons for rejecting a medieval

(internalist) view on justification found within four sections of the *Institutes*: namely, the biblical confirmation of justification by imputation, and his emphasis on salvation by faith and not by works. I argue that the biblical witness is compatible with Aquinas' view, and that an appeal to salvation by faith rather than works is also in keeping with Aquinas' position. In Part 3 I explain what I take to motivate the difference between Aquinas' and Calvin's views on justification. I consider two theological issues—the freedom of the will in salvation and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints—and I show that the latter explains the difference between the two views.

## **Part 1**

### **Calvin on Justification**

In his *Calvin at the Centre*, Paul Helm writes:

In the thought of the Christian Church there have, broadly, been two accounts of what secures such acceptance (justification). One is that acceptance is the infusion or acquisition of personal righteousness, involving a moral change in the one accepted and thus constituting one or the only ground of his acceptance by God, the internalist sense of justification. The other is that acceptance is essentially a change in status, the declaring of the one justified to be pardoned and righteous, the forensic or externalist sense of acceptance.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Helm, P. *Calvin at the Centre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). 215. Brackets mine.

Helm distinguishes between an *internalist* and *externalist* sense of justification. Elsewhere Helm lists Calvin, along with Martin Luther, amongst those who hold to the latter externalist account of justification due to their ‘commitment to the forensic nature of justification and the centrality of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.’<sup>193</sup> Aquinas, on the other hand, is an internalist.

Helm comments on the relationship between Calvin’s view and Augustine’s view on justification and I outline these comments as they help shed light upon Calvin’s view, as well as situate it in its historical context. Helm notes that Calvin is ‘strangely uncritical’ of Augustine’s view of justification; a view which is at least partly construed as an internalist account. This allegiance between Calvin and Augustine is, according to Helm, somewhat surprising, as he claims that Augustine’s internalist account of justification may have ‘helped to father the medieval abuses to which (Calvin) so vehemently objects’ as justification ‘came to involve the need continuously to acquire merit by personal actions, even if those actions included buying it.’<sup>194</sup> Helm provides several reasons to explain why Calvin hesitated in his criticism of Augustine, including Calvin’s need for allies amongst the church fathers to counter the doctrines of the medievals. Another notable reason,

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<sup>193</sup> *Calvin at the Centre*. 196. Note the change between Tyndale’s translation of Luke 1:28—‘Hayle, full of grace’—to the KJV translation (‘Hail, thou that art highly favoured’). Here we see a suggestion of a move from an internalist to externalist sense of justification. See: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/tyn/luke/1.html>.

<sup>194</sup> Helm considers some evidence which suggests that Augustine also holds to a forensic account of justification alongside the internalist account. *Calvin at the Centre*. 196. It is worth noting that Augustine, who fought vigorously against the influences of Pelagianism, would not have approved of an interpretation of his work which resulted in the practice of buying indulgences to acquire merit.

important for our purposes, is that for Calvin, justification does not stand alone. Rather, justification is 'one of two gifts,' the other of which is sanctification, which is 'precisely what Augustine understood as intrinsic to justification: subjective moral renewal.'<sup>195</sup>

Helm writes:

This coupling of justification and sanctification, and not their merging, and in particular the manner of this coupling, is not all there is to Calvin's view. The further crucial step is that he thinks of the two together, this set of twins, as the gift of Christ to his people, the fruit of their union, a union not, in its most fundamental sense, effected by the double gift, but resulting in it and enjoyed through it.<sup>196</sup>

Calvin sums up this *duplex gratia* of justification and sanctification: 'That being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.'<sup>197</sup>

Here we see Calvin using the metaphor of the sinner sitting before a gracious father, rather than before a judge, to illustrate what takes place in justification. The suggestion seems to be that whilst a judge would condemn the sinner because of his wrongdoing, a father would show mercy to him, as demonstrated in the parable of the prodigal son.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Calvin at the Centre. 197.

<sup>196</sup> Calvin at the Centre. 197.

<sup>197</sup> Calvin, J. *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960). 726. For more on this *duplex gratia* see Billings, J. *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: the activity of believers in union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). 15, 16, 107.

<sup>198</sup> Luke 15: 11-32.

Calvin also writes of a person being *clothed* in Christ's righteousness, through which he 'appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man.'<sup>199</sup> This metaphor emphasizes the sense in which justification is, for Calvin, an external matter, whereby something (that is, Christ's righteousness) comes between the sinner and God. This externalist notion is further expressed as a person must 'put on Christ' and be 'engrafted into his body' to have Christ's righteousness imputed to him.<sup>200</sup> He must 'smell sweetly with (Christ's) odor, and (his) vices must be covered and buried by his perfection.'<sup>201</sup> Whilst a person is covered in Christ's righteousness, he remains, as George Stroup comments, 'in and of (himself) never anything before God but (a) sinner.'<sup>202</sup>

Christ is also a 'mediator', reconciling God the Father to sinners; he is external to the sinner, but laboring on his behalf.<sup>203</sup> To continue the judicial metaphor, Christ's righteousness 'must appear in court on our behalf, and stand surety in judgment,' for 'it alone is perfect and can bear the sight of God.'<sup>204</sup> As Christ is sinless, he is able to stand before God without condemnation. Thus, the sinner who is covered by Christ's righteousness can stand before God blameless as well; his imperfections are 'not ascribed to (him) but are hidden as if buried that they may not come into God's judgment.'<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> *Institutes*. 727.

<sup>200</sup> *Institutes*. 737.

<sup>201</sup> *Institutes*. 754 .

<sup>202</sup> Stroup, G. *Calvin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009).

<sup>203</sup> *Institutes*. 779.

<sup>204</sup> *Institutes*. 779.

<sup>205</sup> *Institutes*. 779.

It is clear that Calvin's externalist account of justification, which claims that God imputes Christ's righteousness to the sinner thus making him holy, sits at odds with Aquinas' internalist account. For Aquinas, God bestows the quality of grace upon the sinner, justifying him, and thus there is no need for forensic justification.

### Calvin on the Cause of Justification

If, on Aquinas' model, God justifies a person by bestowing grace on him, how does this justification work on Calvin's model? That is, how is it that Christ's righteousness is imputed to persons, justifying them and making them acceptable to God? Calvin answers this by drawing upon Aristotle's four causes. For Aristotle, the *material* cause of a thing—let us consider a statue—is the 'stuff' out of which it is made; in this case, the marble out of which the statue is made. The *formal* cause is the form of the statue, which is first in the sculptor's mind and then in the statue. The *efficient* cause has to do with agency: in the statue's case, this refers to the sculptor who formed it. Lastly, the *final* cause is the end to which the statue is directed; most likely, the statue exists for the sake of the enjoyment of those beholding it.

Calvin applies the Aristotelian fourfold causal scheme to justification. With regards to salvation, Calvin holds that it is Christ who is the material cause, as it is through his obedience that he 'acquired righteousness for us.' I take 'material' to be used in a loose

sense here: it is the ‘material’ of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection out of which the salvation of the elect is produced. The instrumental or formal cause of salvation is faith, as ‘this benefit of righteousness is possessed by faith alone.’<sup>206</sup> The efficient cause of our salvation is the ‘mercy of the Heavenly Father and his freely given love toward us.’ Lastly, the final cause ‘consists both of the proof of divine justice and in the praise of God’s goodness.’<sup>207</sup>

We may enquire as to what Calvin means when he says that faith is the instrumental/formal cause of our salvation.<sup>208</sup> Calvin’s view of faith is a matter of considerable debate, but I think that there are several fairly uncontroversial points we can consider. First off, Alister McGrath helps us to understand what it does *not* mean to say that faith is the instrumental/formal cause of salvation:

A popular misunderstanding of the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith is that we are justified *because we believe*, that it is our decision to believe that brings about our justification. Here faith is understood as a human work, something which we do—and so we are justified on the basis of our works! This is actually the later doctrine, especially associated with seventeenth-century Arminianism, of ‘justification *propter fidem per Christum*,’ justification on account of faith through Christ. The Reformation doctrine affirms the activity of God and

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<sup>206</sup> Note Helm on Calvin’s merging of instrumental and formal cause: ‘Calvin seems to take a rather relaxed approach to these distinctions when he says that faith is the formal or instrumental cause. In the original Aristotelian scheme... the instrumental cause, the sculptor’s hammers and chisels, are for Aristotle one kind of means (the ‘tools’) of carrying out the plan. The use of ‘formal cause’ here may simply be a slip, for in Calvin’s theological scheme the formal cause must be the divine plan of redemption. For Aristotle tools such as surgical instruments are for the end of keeping fit but are to be distinguished from ‘works.’ Helm, P. *John Calvin’s Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). 401.

<sup>207</sup> *Institutes*. 784.

<sup>208</sup> These considerations will also be useful when considering the role of faith in the reception of grace through the Eucharist in Chapter 4.

the passivity of humanity in justification. Faith is not something human we do, but something divine that is wrought within us.<sup>209</sup>

As McGrath comments, faith for Calvin is not a meritorious work which a person performs. Rather faith is, for Calvin, brought about by the Holy Spirit, and the human person is a passive recipient.

Calvin asserts that faith is 'a knowledge of God's will toward us, perceived from his word' as there is a 'permanent relationship between faith and the Word.'<sup>210</sup> Whilst there is, no doubt, a propositional element to this knowledge derived from God's word, Calvin thinks that by this 'knowledge' we do not mean 'comprehension of the sort that is commonly concerned with those things which fall under human sense perception.'<sup>211</sup> He concludes that faith 'consists in assurance rather than comprehension.'<sup>212</sup> A person must 'not regard the promises of mercy that God offers as true only outside' himself, but he must make these promises his by 'inwardly embracing them.'<sup>213</sup> This faith which a person has in God is always 'weak and imperfect', and thus if a person relies on the strength of his faith to justify him 'it will effect this (his justification) only in part.'<sup>214</sup> Rather, faith of itself has no 'worth or price,' but it justifies a person as it brings him Christ, 'just as a pot crammed with money makes a man rich.'<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> McGrath, A. *Justification by Faith* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1990). 54.

<sup>210</sup> *Institutes*. 549.

<sup>211</sup> *Institutes*. 559.

<sup>212</sup> *Institutes*. 560.

<sup>213</sup> *Institutes*. 561.

<sup>214</sup> *Institutes*. 733.

<sup>215</sup> *Institutes*. 733.

In his book *Deviant Calvinism*, Oliver Crisp states that for most in the evangelical tradition, faith is an act that involves two components: 'The first is propositional content, that is, believing that such and such is the case. This we shall call the 'doxastic' component of faith. The second part is trust—what we might call the 'fiducial' component to faith.'<sup>216</sup> Similarly, in his consideration of a 'Calvinist' conception of faith, William Lad Sessions echoes Crisp's twofold account:

Even though the true object of faith is the person Jesus Christ, and although faith is definitely not identical with 'ideology' or assent to any set of doctrines about him, apprehension of Jesus Christ as the living Word of God *does involve apprehension of doctrines*, which are propositions believed to be true. The central set of doctrines concerns God's will toward us. It is not so much a structured set of propositions—'articles of faith'—as it is a single doctrine, the entire or at least the fundamental propositional content of the Christian gospel: God is for us; God is benevolent and beneficent toward us; God loves us; God is merciful to us. Even such a fundamental doctrine, however, is still secondary in faith. *Apprehension of God's mercy* goes far beyond assent to the proposition that God is merciful; such apprehension is an intimately personal realization and appreciation of the reality of God's mercy.<sup>217</sup>

Calvin thinks that there is a causal link between having propositional and/or fiducial faith, which is brought about in a person wholly by the work of the Holy Spirit, and being clothed with Christ's righteousness.

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<sup>216</sup> Crisp, O. *Deviant Calvinism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). 20.

<sup>217</sup> Sessions, W. L. *The Concept of Faith: a philosophical investigation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). 173. Italics mine.

For Calvin, it is through faith that a person calls ‘upon God as Father, by which we cross over from death into life, and by which Christ, eternal salvation and life, dwells in us.’<sup>218</sup> Through faith we ‘possess Christ’ and his righteousness is ‘applied to us.’<sup>219</sup> Indeed, the benefit of Christ’s ‘righteousness is possessed by faith alone.’<sup>220</sup> For sinners—for those ‘cursed under the law’—there ‘remains, in faith, one sole means of recovering salvation.’<sup>221</sup> Crucially for the reformers it is not through works that a person is saved, but rather a person ‘grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God’s sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man.’<sup>222</sup> When we say that God ‘justifies the impious person who has faith in Christ,’ what Calvin understands by this is that ‘men are freed by the benefit of faith from that condemnation which their impiety deserved.’<sup>223</sup>

When contrasting Calvin with Aquinas on what is needed for justification it is crucial to get clear on where the two differ. Recall that for Aquinas it is the infusion of the created quality of grace which justifies a person; he holds to what Helm calls an internalist account of justification. For Calvin, as we have seen, a person is justified when he is clothed with Christ’s righteousness through faith brought about by the working of the Holy Spirit. We have witnessed Calvin draw upon Aristotle’s model of the four causes to explain the

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<sup>218</sup> *Institutes*. 559.

<sup>219</sup> *Institutes*. 784.

<sup>220</sup> *Institutes*. 784.

<sup>221</sup> *Institutes*. 726.

<sup>222</sup> *Institutes*. 727.

<sup>223</sup> *Institutes*. 728.

causality involved in salvation. However, Calvin does not express this 'righteous clothing' in Aristotelian terms. Having said that, given the *externalist* nature of Calvin's account, it is unlikely that he would have sympathy for Aquinas' idea that a person is justified by an internal quality. It seems much more likely that, were Calvin to couch his 'righteous clothing' language in Aristotelian terms, he would say that being justified consists in bearing a new *relation* to God. This relation may be of a filial nature, as a person is adopted into God's family, or of a legal nature, as a person is declared righteous. I refer to Calvin's view in this relational language in what follows.

### Sanctification

Recall that for Calvin, God bestows a 'double grace' on the elect: not only does God establish a new relation with a person, whereby he is made righteous in God's sight, but God also begins the process of subjective moral renewal, as 'actual holiness of life, so to speak, is not separated from free imputation of righteousness.'<sup>224</sup> It is here in Calvin's dealings with sanctification that we see language suggestive of agreement with Aquinas on the need for new habits or dispositions in the process of sanctification.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> *Institutes*. 541.

<sup>225</sup> My claim is not that the habits and dispositions that Calvin thinks are involved in sanctification are identical to those that Aquinas thinks are involved. My claim is simply that both thinkers agree that new habits and dispositions, of some sort, are needed for the process of sanctification.

Calvin states that we 'require a transformation, not only in outward works, but in the soul itself' which involves getting 'a new heart' as God's spirit makes 'us fruitful to bring forth the buds of righteousness.'<sup>226</sup> This reference to a change of heart is, as we might expect, not a reference to a new bodily organ, but rather to a change in the sort of person one is. A person must 'put off (his) inborn disposition' towards sin, as difficult as that may be, as 'all the emotions of the flesh are hostility against God.'<sup>227</sup> He must 'put on the inclination to righteousness, judgment, and mercy.'<sup>228</sup> It is only as a soul 'puts off its old nature' that it will 'bring forth the fruits of works in harmony with its renewal.'<sup>229</sup> This putting on of new inclinations takes place as the 'Spirit of God so imbues our souls... with both new thoughts and feelings, that they can rightly be considered new.'<sup>230</sup> Calvin continues to emphasise the internal sense of sanctification as he states that 'nothing is achieved' in this process of subjective renewal 'unless we begin with the inner disposition of the heart.'<sup>231</sup> The 'lusts of our flesh' must be 'mortified' as our hearts are 'formed to obedience to the law.'<sup>232</sup>

The good a person produces as a result of being sanctified is nothing but 'the fruit of (God's) grace,' as without God he is stuck in 'darkness and perversity of heart.'<sup>233</sup> This

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<sup>226</sup> *Institutes*. 598, 540.

<sup>227</sup> *Institutes*. 600.

<sup>228</sup> *Institutes*. 600.

<sup>229</sup> *Institutes*. 598.

<sup>230</sup> *Institutes*. 600.

<sup>231</sup> *Institutes*. 610.

<sup>232</sup> *Institutes*. 776.

<sup>233</sup> *Institutes*. 541.

process is not instantaneous, in ‘one day or one year,’ rather ‘through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wipes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleanses them of guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples renewing all their minds to true purity that they may practice repentance throughout their lives and know that this warfare will end only at death.’<sup>234</sup>

## **Part 2**

Having pointed to broad agreement on the need for new habits and dispositions for the process of sanctification in both Aquinas and Calvin, I now consider four sections of Calvin’s *Institutes* in which I draw attention to several themes in Calvin relevant to our discussion. In particular, in these sections we find two of Calvin’s main reasons for rejecting a medieval view on justification: namely, the biblical confirmation of justification by imputation, and his emphasis on salvation by faith and not by works. I argue that the biblical witness is compatible with Aquinas’ view, and that an appeal to salvation by faith rather than works is also in keeping with Aquinas’ position.

### **Section 1: ‘Initial Defence of Imputation’**

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<sup>234</sup> *Institutes*. 601.

A person is justified, according to Calvin, if he is 'reckoned righteous' in God's sight, and accepted by God on account of this righteousness.<sup>235</sup> Calvin distinguishes between being justified by works, and being justified by faith. A person is justified by works if his life is holy and pure and this is the basis of God's accepting him, whereas a person is justified by faith if he 'grasps the righteousness of Christ' and appears before God 'clothed in it,' not as a sinner but as a righteous man.<sup>236</sup> This justification by faith involves the remission of a person's sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.<sup>237</sup>

Calvin attempts to prove his view on justification by an appeal to scripture. He considers Galatians 3:8:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.'

Paul states that the scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith. Having stated this, Calvin asks: 'what else may you understand but that God imputes righteousness by faith?' This is echoed in his commentary on Galatians where Calvin writes:

What he has said in a general manner is now applied expressly to the Gentiles; for the calling of the Gentiles was a new and extraordinary occurrence. Doubts existed as to the manner in which they should be called. Some thought that they were

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<sup>235</sup> *Institutes*. 726.

<sup>236</sup> *Institutes*. 727.

<sup>237</sup> *Institutes*. 727.

required 'to be circumcised to keep the law,' (Acts 15:24) and that otherwise they were shut out from having a share in the covenant. But Paul shows, on the other hand, that by faith they arrive at the blessing, and by faith they must be 'in grafted' (Romans 11:17, 24) into the family of Abraham. How does he prove this? Because it is said 'in thee shall all nations be blessed.' These words unquestionably recall that all must be blessed in the same manner as Abraham; for he is the model, nay, the rule, to be universally observed. Now, he obtained the blessing by faith, and in the same manner must it be obtained by all.<sup>238</sup>

Calvin makes it clear that it is by faith, and not by works of the law like circumcision, that the Gentiles are brought into the covenant relationship between God and his people.

Similarly, Calvin appeals to Romans 3:26:

He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

God is said to justify the sinner who has faith in Christ, in response to which Calvin asks: 'what can (Paul's) meaning be except that men are freed by the benefit of faith from that condemnation which their impiety deserved?' Later in the Romans passage Paul writes: 'Who will accuse God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who will condemn? It is Christ who died, yes, who rose again... and now intercedes for us.'<sup>239</sup> Calvin says it is as if Paul had said: 'Who will accuse those whom God has absolved? Who will condemn those whom

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<sup>238</sup> Calvin, J. *Commentary of Galatians* (online: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom41.html>). See section on Galatians 3.

<sup>239</sup> Rom. 8:33-34.

Christ defends with his protection?’<sup>240</sup> Calvin concludes his consideration of these passages as follows:

Therefore, ‘to justify’ means nothing else than to acquit of guilt him who was accused, as if his innocence were confirmed. Therefore, since God justifies us by the intercession of Christ, he absolves us not by the confirmation of our own innocence but by the imputation of righteousness, so that we who are not righteous in ourselves may be reckoned as such in Christ.<sup>241</sup>

The two issues mentioned at the beginning of this part of the chapter—God’s imputation of righteousness to a sinner, and justification by faith and not by works—are driven through by Calvin in these passages. On the first issue, regarding God’s imputation of righteousness to the sinner, it is difficult to see how these passages lend much weight to Calvin’s externalist view. Where the scriptures foretold that God would justify the Gentiles by faith (Galatians 3:8), Aquinas can hold that this is so, but that this justification involves the bestowal of the quality of created grace. The same can be said for the passages from Romans. Calvin states that ‘since God justifies us by the intercession of Christ, he absolves us... by the imputation of righteousness.’ Aquinas can agree that God justifies by the intercession of Christ, but that this process of justification also involves a bestowal of grace; Christ’s righteousness is bestowed as a consequence of a person

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<sup>240</sup> *Institutes*. 728.

<sup>241</sup> *Institutes*. 728. Iustificare ergo nil aliud est, quam eum qui reus agebatur, taquam approbata innocetia a reatu absolvere. Quum itaque nos Christi intercessione iustificet Deus, non propriae innocetiae approbatione, sed iustitiae imputatione nos absoluit : ut pro iustis in Christo conseamur, qui in nobis no fumus. Calvin, J. *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Geneuae, 1559).

receiving the quality of grace. On the second strand, these passages do state that God justifies persons 'by faith'; I will return to this issue below.

Calvin also appeals to Acts 13, where Paul says that through Christ forgiveness of sins is announced, and the person who believes in him is justified 'of all things from which the law of Moses could not justify him.'<sup>242</sup> Calvin thinks that the justification referred to in Acts 13 is understood as absolution, and it is separated from the works of the law. Such justification is 'the mere benefit' of Christ, and is achieved through faith. In his commentary on Acts 13 Calvin writes:

He is justified by Christ, who is freely loosed from the guilt and judgment of eternal death to which he was subject. This is the righteousness of faith, whilst that God counteth us just, by not imputing our sins. This only propriety of the word is sufficient to refute the cavils of the Papists, who hold that we are not justified by pardon or by free accepting, but by habit and infused righteousness. Therefore, let us not suffer them to rend in pieces unworthily and wickedly this text of Paul, when he saith that they are justified from all things, that we may be assured of remission of sins. And now we must know that the law of Moses is set against Christ, as the principal mean to obtain righteousness, if there had been any besides Christ.<sup>243</sup>

In this text we find Calvin explicitly criticizing the view held by Aquinas that justification comes as a result of the bestowal of a created habit. For Calvin, contrary to Aquinas, justification comes by an external pardon from God.

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<sup>242</sup> *Institutes*. 728.

<sup>243</sup> Calvin, J. *Commentary on Acts* (online: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom36.html>).

Calvin appeals to Luke 18:14, a passage which tells of a publican going 'down from the Temple justified' after an encounter with Christ. Here we see, according to Calvin, that the sinner did not achieve righteousness 'by any merit of works.'<sup>244</sup>

Calvin turns to Romans where we read:

So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness irrespective of works: 'Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin'.<sup>245</sup>

Here in Romans we see Paul referring to God 'reckoning' righteousness to a person. Calvin thinks that Paul includes this talk of 'reckoning' in the act of the forgiveness of sins; a person's sins are forgiven when God reckons him righteous.<sup>246</sup> This discussion of justification in Paul is, for Calvin, not just part of what we understand by 'justification' but the whole of it.<sup>247</sup>

Finally, Calvin appeals to II Corinthians 5:18-21:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For

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<sup>244</sup> *Institutes*. 728.

<sup>245</sup> Romans 4:6-7.

<sup>246</sup> *Institutes*. 729.

<sup>247</sup> *Institutes*. 729.

our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.<sup>248</sup>

Calvin takes Paul's talk of 'reconciliation' to be equivalent to talk of 'justification'. Crucially for Calvin, this passage states that God reconciles persons to himself 'not counting their trespasses against them.' Combining this with what Paul says later in Romans—that by 'the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous'<sup>249</sup>—Calvin thinks these passages can only mean that we are reckoned righteous before God 'in Christ and apart from ourselves.'<sup>250</sup>

In surveying these passages from Acts, Romans, and II Corinthians, whilst they may endorse justification by faith, which I consider below, it is not clear that they support Calvin's externalist view of justification through an emphasis on the imputation of righteousness to the sinner. To take the II Corinthians passage: Aquinas thinks that God reconciles persons to himself through Christ. God does this, for Aquinas, by bestowing the quality of grace on persons, thereby forgiving their sins and making them righteous before him. This seems in keeping with Paul's words that 'we might become the righteousness of God.' Whilst I do not claim that these passages necessarily support Aquinas' view, I contend contrary to Calvin that they are at least compatible with Aquinas' view.

## Section 2: 'Against Osiander Mixing Justification and Regeneration'

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<sup>248</sup> *Institutes*. 729.

<sup>249</sup> Romans 5:19.

<sup>250</sup> *Institutes*. 729.

Calvin attacks the views of an opponent called Osiander. When I state 'Osiander's view' I mean Osiander's view as interpreted by Calvin. In this section Calvin's criticism of an internalist view is that scripture clearly separates justification and sanctification, which he thinks runs contrary to an internalist view which holds that the grace that justifies a person also begins the process of sanctification.

Calvin contends that Osiander erroneously mixes forgiveness of sins with rebirth (sanctification). Osiander's view is not identical to Aquinas', but there are significant overlaps. Describing Osiander's view, Calvin states:

In this whole disputation the noun 'righteousness' and the verb 'to justify' are extended in two directions; so that to be justified is not only to be reconciled to God through free pardon but also to be made righteous, and righteousness is not a free imputation but the holiness and uprightness that the essence of God, dwelling in us, inspires.<sup>251</sup>

For Aquinas, in bestowing grace upon a person God not only justifies the person but also begins the process of making him righteous. In this sense, Aquinas is aligned with Osiander as presented above, although for Aquinas, these processes do not involve 'the essence of God, dwelling in us,' as they do for Osiander. That God not only pardons but sanctifies a person is insisted upon by Osiander, as he thinks that God does not leave a

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<sup>251</sup> *Institutes*. 731. Nam in hac tota disputatione nomen iustitiae & verbu iustificandi ad duas partes extedit, ut iustificari fit non solum reconciliari Deo gratuita venia, sed etiam iustos effici: ut iustitia fit non gratuita imputatio, sed sanctitas & integritas quam Dei effentia in nobis resides inspirat.

sinner as a sinner once he justifies him.<sup>252</sup> Of course, as we have seen above, on this point Calvin agrees with Aquinas: God, in bestowing a double grace, begins the process of sanctification upon justifying a person. But these processes are separate for Calvin. He appeals to an analogy: when we consider the brightness of the sun we associate it with the heat of the sun. Nevertheless, we do not say that the earth is warmed by the sun's light, or lighted by the sun's heat. The heat and light of the sun are deeply connected, but 'reason itself forbids us to transfer the peculiar qualities of the one to the other.'<sup>253</sup> Calvin thinks Osiander has, to stay with the analogy, confused the sun's light with its heat: he has confused the two kinds of grace, making them 'one and the same'.<sup>254</sup> This is not in keeping with scripture, thinks Calvin, appealing to 1 Corinthians 1:30:

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

Paul lists 'righteousness and sanctification' separately: Calvin thinks he 'clearly indicates that to be justified means something different from being made new creatures.'<sup>255</sup> Calvin writes:

(Paul) says that he is 'made unto righteousness,' by which he means that we are on his account acceptable to God, inasmuch as he expiated our sins by his death, and his obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. For as the righteousness of faith consist in remission of sins and a gracious acceptance, we obtain both

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<sup>252</sup> *Institutes*. 732.

<sup>253</sup> *Institutes*. 732.

<sup>254</sup> *Institutes*. 732.

<sup>255</sup> *Institutes*. 732.

through Christ... He calls him our 'sanctification,' by which he means, that we who are otherwise unholy by nature, are by his Spirit renewed unto holiness, that we may serve God. From this, also, we infer, that we cannot be justified freely through faith alone without at the same time living holily. For these fruits of grace are connected together, as it were, by an indissoluble tie, so that he who attempts to sever them does in a manner tear Christ in pieces. Let therefore the man who seeks to be justified through Christ, by God's unmerited goodness, consider that this cannot be attained without his taking him at the same time for *sanctification*, or, in other words, being renewed to innocence and purity of life. Those, however, that slander us, as if by preaching a free justification through faith we called men off from good works, are amply refuted from this passage, which intimates that faith apprehends in Christ regeneration equally with forgiveness of sins... Observe, on the other hand, that these two offices of Christ are conjoined in such a manner as to be, notwithstanding, distinguished from each other. What, therefore, Paul here expressly distinguishes, it is not allowable mistakenly to confound.<sup>256</sup>

It is not clear to me that Paul's listing of justification and sanctification separately lends support to Calvin's externalist view. Aquinas is content to write of justification separately from the theological virtues, the latter of which are involved in sanctification, without holding to an externalist view. Paul's linguistic separation of the two processes does not, to my mind, entail an ontological separation between the two processes, such that, as Calvin holds, justification is an external matter whilst sanctification is an internal matter.

### Section 3: 'Osiander's Doctrine Nullifies the Certainty of Salvation'

Calvin thinks that 'the traces of sin' still remain in a person after justification.<sup>257</sup> This being the case, a person's justification must be very different from his 'reformation into new

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<sup>256</sup> Calvin, J. *Commentary on Corinthians* (Online: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.html>).

<sup>257</sup> *Institutes*. 739.

life.’ Sanctification takes time, and thus a person who is in the process of sanctification is still liable to punishment for sin if it were not the case that the justified person appears ‘in heaven as if endowed with the purity of Christ.’ Calvin thinks that a rejection of his view, and an embrace of Osiander’s view, leads a person to doubt his salvation. He writes:

The doctrine of justification is perverted and utterly overthrown when doubt is thrust into men’s minds, when the assurance of salvation is shaken and the free and fearless calling upon God suffers hindrance—nay, when peace and tranquility with spiritual joy are not established... faith totters if it pays attention to works, since no one, even of the most holy, will find there anything on which to rely. <sup>258</sup>

Calvin then appeals to the testimony of Paul. In Romans 7, Paul writes of the depravity of his own nature: ‘Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?’<sup>259</sup> Yet later in Romans 8, Paul asks ‘who will make accusation against God’s elect?’<sup>260</sup> Paul states that he is convinced that nothing ‘will separate us from his love in Christ.’<sup>261</sup> Calvin highlights the contrast between these two chapters of Romans where Paul first despairs at the person he is, yet later confidently affirms that he is blameless before God. This ‘diversity’ is, Calvin suggests, a common feature of Christian believers who ‘groan under the burden of their iniquities’ yet show ‘victorious confidence’ when

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<sup>258</sup> *Institutes*. 739. Unde sequitur peruerti & funditus euerti iustificationis doctrinam ubi animis iniicitur dubitatio, concutitur fiducia salutis, libera & intrepida inuocatio remoram patitur : imo ubi non stabilitur quies & tranquillitas cum spirituali gaudio. Unde Paulus a repugnantibus arguit, haereditatem non esse ex Lege : quia hoc modo exinanita esset fides, quae si operum respectum habeat, labascit : quando nemo ex sanctissimis illic reperiet in quo confidat.

<sup>259</sup> Romans 7:24.

<sup>260</sup> Romans 8:33.

<sup>261</sup> Romans 8:38-39.

faced with the consequences of their sins.<sup>262</sup> Calvin sums up his criticism against Osiander regarding assurance of salvation (or lack thereof):

In short, whoever wraps up two kinds of righteousness in order that miserable souls may not repose wholly in God's mere mercy, crowns Christ in mockery with a wreath of thorns.<sup>263</sup>

This issue of the continued presence of sin in a person after justification is an important one to which I will return to in Part 3 of this chapter.

#### Section 4: 'Refutation of Scholastic Doctrines of Good Works as Effective for Justification'

Calvin insists that justification comes by faith alone. He insists upon this because he thinks a 'great number of mankind' think that justification comes by faith and works.<sup>264</sup> Calvin's move for destabilizing this error in the minds of his readers is to show that 'faith righteousness' and 'works righteousness' are contraries, hence 'when one is established the other has to be overthrown.' He quotes Philippians:

More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> *Institutes*. 740.

<sup>263</sup> *Institutes*. 743. Denique quisquis duplicem iustitiam inuoluit, ne quiescant miserae animae in mera & unica Dei misericordia, Christum implexis spinis per ludibrium coronat.

<sup>264</sup> *Institutes*. 744.

<sup>265</sup> Philippians 3:8-9.

For Calvin, this passage displays ‘a comparison of opposites,’ between Christ’s righteousness and a person’s own righteousness. Elsewhere, according to Calvin, Paul states that it was the downfall of the Jews that they clung to their own righteousness, rather than submitting to God’s righteousness. Paul writes: ‘For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God’s righteousness.’<sup>266</sup> Calvin understands this passage as follows: if, by establishing our own righteousness, we reject God’s righteousness, then ‘to attain the latter we must completely do away with the former.’<sup>267</sup> Moreover, Calvin appeals to the third chapter of Romans where Paul says that boasting is not excluded by the law but it is excluded by faith. He concludes:

From this it follows that so long as any particle of works righteousness remains some occasion for boasting remains with us. Now, if faith excludes all boasting, works righteousness can in no way be associated with faith righteousness.<sup>268</sup>

Calvin sets up another contrary: in Romans 4 Paul claims that a reward is given as a result of works out of debt, not out of grace. However, ‘righteousness according to grace is owed to faith.’ I take Calvin to mean that the righteousness that persons receive because of God’s grace towards them comes as a result of faith. As a consequence of this, Calvin

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<sup>266</sup> Romans 10:3.

<sup>267</sup> *Institutes*. 744.

<sup>268</sup> *Institutes*. 743. Unde sequitur, quatis per manet quatulacunque operu iustitia, manere nobis non-nullam gloriadi materiam. Iam si fides omnem gloriationem excludit, cum iustitia fidei sociari nullo pacto iustitia operum potest.

states that this righteousness does not come ‘from the merits of works.’ This should be enough, Calvin thinks, for any reader to say ‘farewell’ to those who write of righteousness as a product of both faith and works.<sup>269</sup>

Calvin is aware that the scholastics think that they have a ‘subtle answer’ to the problems he has raised regarding justification by faith *and* works.<sup>270</sup> Calvin writes:

They explain ‘works’ as meaning those which men not yet reborn do only according to the letter by the effort of their own free will, apart from Christ’s grace. But they deny that these refer to spiritual works. For, according to them, man is justified by both faith and works provided they are not his own works but the gifts of Christ and the fruit of regeneration.<sup>271</sup>

Calvin claims that the scholastics reject only those works which are not performed under the influence of grace, but he rejects this as a solution. Paul, according to Calvin, thinks that ‘all works are excluded, whatever title may grace them.’ He quotes the following in support of his view:

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’ But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, ‘Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.’<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> *Institutes*. 744.

<sup>270</sup> For consideration of who Calvin had in mind when he refers to the ‘scholastics’ see Chapter 3 of Muller, R. *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>271</sup> *Institutes*. 744. Nam opera exponunt, quae literaliter tantum & liberi arbitrii conatu extra Christi gratiam faciunt homines nondum regenerati. Id vero ad opera spiritualia spectare negant. Ita fecundum eos tam fide quam operibus iustificatur homo, modo ne sint propria ipsius opera, sed dona Christi & regenerationis fructus.

<sup>272</sup> Galatians 3:11-12.

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that 'the person who does these things will live by them'... because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>273</sup>

Calvin also opposes the scholastic solution by an appeal to the example of Abraham who was not righteous because of his works. These works were not just 'literal and outward appearance(s) of virtue or... the effort(s) of free will,' but given that Abraham was a spiritual man, this means that *all* his works, even those done in a spiritual manner, did not have 'sufficient merit' to justify him before God.<sup>274</sup>

The scriptural account of faith righteousness is summed up by Calvin as follows:

Turn aside from the contemplation of our own works and look solely upon God's mercy and Christ's perfection. Indeed, it presents this order of justification: to begin with, God deigns to embrace the sinner with his pure and freely given goodness, finding nothing in him except his miserable condition to prompt Him to mercy, since he sees man utterly void and bare of good works; and so seeks in himself to reason to benefit man. Then God touches the sinner with a sense of his goodness in order that he, despairing of his own works, may ground the whole of his salvation in God's mercy. This is the experience of faith through which the sinner comes into possession of his salvation when from the teaching of the gospel he acknowledges that he has been reconciled to God: that with Christ's righteousness interceding and forgiveness of sins accomplished he is justified. And although regenerated by the Spirit of God, he ponders the everlasting righteousness laid up for him not in the good works to which he inclines but in the sole righteousness of Christ.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Romans 10: 5, 9.

<sup>274</sup> *Institutes*. 744.

<sup>275</sup> *Institutes*. 746. Nempe ut ab intuitu operum nostrorum auersi, in Dei misericordiam ac Christi perfectionem tantum respiciamus. Siquidem hunc iustificationis ordinem docet, quod principio peccatorem hominem mera gratuitaque bonitate dignetur complecti Deus, nihil in ipso, quo ad misericordiam moueatur, reputans, nisi miseriam : quippe quem videt a bonis operibus prorsus nudum ac vacuum : a seipso causam petens cur illi

In this passage Calvin is clear that the initiative in justification lies with God, and any righteousness a person has is as a result of God's work in the person. Calvin thinks that this opposes an internalist view of justification. I now defend Aquinas against these criticisms.

#### Section 4a

##### Against Calvin: Aquinas on Justification by Faith

As we have seen, Calvin rails against the scholastics who he claims think that justification comes as a result of both faith and works. As far as this claim may be directed at Aquinas' mature work in the *Summa Theologiae*, it is false.<sup>276</sup>

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beneficiat, quod peccatorem ipsum bonitatis suae sensu afficiat, qui de propriis operibus diffusus, tota salutis suae summam in ipsius misericordiam reiciat. Hic est fidei sensus, per quem peccator in possessionem venit suae salutis, dum ex Euangelii doctrina agnoscit Deo se reconciliatum: quod intercedente Christi iustitia, impetrata peccatorum remissione, iustificatus sit: & quanquam Spiritu Dei regeneratus, non in bonis operibus, quibus incumbit, sed in sola Christi iustitia repositam sibi perpetuam iustitiam cogitat.

<sup>276</sup> Joseph Wawrykow reviews Henri Bouillard's *Conversion et grace chez S. Thomas d'Aquin*. Bouillard shows that there is an evolution in Aquinas' thought on grace through his works. Crucial to this evolution in thought were the years 1260-71 during which Thomas discovered certain theological works which dramatically altered his understanding of grace: namely, Augustine's *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* and *De Dono Perseverantiae*. The result of this discovery, according to Bouillard, is that in his later works Aquinas insists upon the prevenience of grace and on the divine initiation in conversion. This was due to Aquinas' thought that there was a similarity between the Pelagian ideas attacked by Augustine and his own description of conversion in terms of formal and material causality in his early works. In Aquinas' later works, any free acts which are involved in conversion are 'themselves caused by God's grace.' Wawrykow joins with other scholars in criticizing some aspects of Bouillard's articulation of Aquinas' thought on grace—particularly, his explanation of 'actual grace'—but he concludes that

Aquinas asks whether God alone is the cause of saving grace. Since a cause must be more powerful than its effect, and since grace 'surpasses every capability of created nature,' it is impossible that a creature might cause grace.<sup>277</sup>

Aquinas does think that there is human preparation for the first grace, and this consists in the 'good movement of the free-will.' But this act of the free will is an act moved by God, and hence any human preparation for the first grace is 'principally from God'.<sup>278</sup>

Aquinas writes:

Grace is taken in two ways: first, as a habitual gift of God. Secondly, as a help from God, who moves the soul to good. Now taking grace in the first sense, a certain preparation of grace is required for it, since a form can only be disposed in matter. But if we speak of grace as it signifies a help from God to move us to good, no preparation is required on man's part, that, as it were, anticipates the Divine help, but rather, every preparation in man must be by the help of God moving the soul to good. And thus even the good movement of the free will, whereby anyone is prepared for receiving the act of grace is an act of the free-will moved by God... Hence it is said that man's will is prepared by God and man's steps are guided by God.<sup>279</sup>

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Bouillard's theory of a development in Aquinas' thought, as outlined above, is correct. See Wawrykow, J. *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). 38 - 42.

<sup>277</sup> ST Iallae q112 a1.

<sup>278</sup> ST Iallae q112 a2.

<sup>279</sup> ST Iallae q112 a2. Dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, gratia dicitur dupliciter: quandoque quidem ipsum habituale donum Dei; quandoque autem auxilium Dei moventis animam ad bonum. Primo igitur modo accipiendo gratiam, praeexigitur ad gratiam aliqua gratiae praeparatio; quia nulla forma potest esse nisi in materia disposita. Sed si loquamur de gratia secundum quod significat auxilium Dei moventis ad bonum, sic nulla praeparatio requiritur ex parte hominis quasi praeveniens divinum auxilium; sed potius quaecumque praeparatio in homine esse potest, est ex auxilio Dei moventis animam ad bonum. Et secundum hoc ipse bonus motus liberi arbitrii, quo quis praeparatur ad donum gratiae suscipiendum, est actus liberi arbitrii moti a Deo... Et

Aquinas asks whether grace is given of necessity to those who prepare themselves for it. If the preparation is considered from the side of the human free-will then grace is not offered by necessity, as grace exceeds 'every preparation of human power.' However, if it be considered from the side of God who moves the will then grace is given of necessity, simply because God has ordained to bestow it upon the person. Aquinas appeals to John 6:45: 'Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to me.' He concludes that 'if God intends, while moving, that the one whose heart He moves should attain to grace, he will infallibly attain to it.'<sup>280</sup>

Considerations such as this lead to Aquinas' view that nobody can merit for himself the first grace. He writes:

The gift of grace may be considered in two ways: first in the nature of a gratuitous gift, and thus it is manifest that all merit is repugnant to grace, since as the Apostle says (Romans 11:6), 'if by grace, it is not now by works.' Secondly, it may be considered as regards the nature of the thing given, and thus, also, it cannot come under the merit of him who has not grace, both because it exceeds the proportion of nature, and because previous to grace man in the state of sin has an obstacle to his meriting grace, viz. sin... Hence it is manifest that no one can merit for himself the first grace.<sup>281</sup>

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secundum hoc dicitur *a Deo voluntas hominis praeparari, et a Domino gressus hominis dirigi.*

<sup>280</sup> ST Iallae q112 a3.

<sup>281</sup> ST Iallae q114 a5. Dicendum quod donum gratiae considerari potest dupliciter. Uno modo secundum rationem gratuiti doni; et sic manifestum est quod omne meritum repugnat gratiae, quia, ut ad *Rom.* Apostolus dicit, *si ex operibus, jam non ex gratia.* Alio modo potest considerari secundum naturam ipsius rei quae donatur; et sic etiam non potest cadere sub merito non habentis gratiam, tum quia excedit proportionem naturae, tum etiam quia ante gratiam in statu peccati homo habet impedimentum promerendi

As is clear from these considerations, Aquinas does not fall prey to the criticism that justification comes as a result of both faith and works. However, Aquinas does think that a meritorious work is needed in order *to merit eternal life*; it is to this issue that we now turn.

#### Section 4b

##### Against Calvin: Reward for Works

Whilst it is clear that Aquinas does not think that works play a role in a person's initial justification, he does think that works play a role in sanctification after the fact of initial justification. For Aquinas, as explained in Chapter 1, a justified person may merit an increase in grace and eternal life. We might then ask whether Calvin's problem with the scholastics is thus with the role of works in the process of *sanctification*?

In his recent work, *After Merit: John Calvin's Theology of Works and Rewards*, Charles Raith II seeks to explain Calvin's theology of works partly in light of his criticism of the scholastic notion of merit.<sup>282</sup> Raith is aware that Calvin does attribute heavenly rewards to earthly works, as Calvin writes:

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gratiam, scilicet ipsum peccatum... Unde manifestum est quod nullus potest sibi mereri primam gratiam.

<sup>282</sup> Raith, C. *After Merit: John Calvin's Theology of Works and Rewards* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

I do not accept the distinction made by learned and otherwise godly men that good works deserve the graces that are conferred upon us in this life, while everlasting salvation is the reward of faith alone. For the Lord almost always lodges in heaven the reward of toil and the crown of battle.<sup>283</sup>

Raith is clear that a crucial issue for Calvin is that whilst there are rewards for works, this is not a matter of justice. That is, a work performed by a Christian does not *deserve* a reward. Recall from Chapter 2 that a similar view is held by the medievals. Raith explains that for Calvin, all works performed, whether by a believer or an unbeliever, deserve 'rejection and condemnation' when judged by God's standards.<sup>284</sup> As long as a person remains a sinner in himself, his works are damn-worthy, and as those in the process of sanctification still remain sinners in themselves, for Calvin, their works are still damn-worthy.

Raith asks why, in light of the worthlessness of human actions, does God reward works for Calvin? Raith addresses this question by drawing a parallel between this question and 'a more foundational question': why does God consider a person just who is damn-worthy in himself? Calvin's answer, Raith explains, is simple: faith in Jesus Christ. For Calvin, a person is just not because of his good works, but because through faith God accepts him

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<sup>283</sup> *Institutes*. 792. Non enim a doctis alioqui ac piis viris positam distinctione recipio, meritoria esse bona opera earum quaenobis hac vita conferuntur gratiarum: solius fidei praemium esse aeterna salutem. Mercede enim laborum & certaminis coronam in caelo Dominus semper fere collocat.

Raith also alludes to seeming inconsistencies in Calvin's thought on works and reward. See *After Merit*. 133.

<sup>284</sup> *After Merit*. 134.

as if he were just, in light of the salvific work of Christ. In a similar manner, God accepts a person's works, as Calvin writes: 'Because God examines our works according to his tenderness, not his supreme right, he therefore accepts them *as if* they were perfectly pure.'<sup>285</sup> Raith writes:

The same holds true with regard to a believer's works. Believers obtain rewards not because of the goodness of their works or the intensity of their love; rather, they obtain rewards because by faith those works are forgiven and accepted as if reward-worthy. Although what is rewarded are the acts done out of love for God, the reason they are rewarded pertains to faith. By *believing* in Christ (not, I note, *loving* Christ), a person's works are forgiven of their sin and are considered pure before God... Through faith God does with works what he does with the worker: he pardons the sin and accepts them *as if* pure, *as if* just.<sup>286</sup>

As Raith explains, for Calvin, God accepts a person's works as good works in a manner similar to how he accepts a person as just. This acceptance is brought about by faith and is in virtue of the work of Christ. Although God does not reward works out of justice—for by God's standards such works do not deserve reward—God does reward them 'gratuitously.'<sup>287</sup>

Recall from Chapter 2 that Aquinas thinks that a meritorious act, when considered simply as a free act of a person, does not merit eternal life condignly, because of the inequality between the person and God. However, Aquinas does think that a meritorious act merits eternal life condignly when considered as an act produced by the working of the Holy

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<sup>285</sup> *Institutes*. 792.

<sup>286</sup> *After Merit*. 135.

<sup>287</sup> *After Merit*. 136.

Spirit.<sup>288</sup> The reward of eternal life is due not because of the worthiness of the actor or the action, but because of the work of God moving the person to act. For Aquinas *it is God* who makes an act worthy of reward, as opposed to the person. However, it is the case that, for Aquinas, human beings, under the influence of grace, are actively involved in the production of meritorious acts. This sits slightly at odds with Calvin for whom, as we have seen, human persons are not capable of acts which are good in themselves. However, in so far as Aquinas thinks that the meritorious nature of the act is wholly dependent upon the work of God in the believer, rather than the worthiness or goodness of the person performing the act, it seems that were Calvin to have a problem with Aquinas' view of the role of works in the process of sanctification his problem would be a mild one.

### **Part 3**

#### Deciphering the Nature of the Disagreement

I have argued that Aquinas' view on justification is compatible with Calvin's appeal to scripture, as well as his insistence on justification by faith. It is not possible, given the scope of this chapter, to decisively conclude which position—Aquinas' internalism or Calvin's externalism—is the most promising. The reason for this is that a conclusion on the question of whose position is most promising depends upon views held in another

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<sup>288</sup> Note that Aquinas thinks that a person may merit a greater or lesser reward in the afterlife. See ST I-II q114 a1, a2, and a3.

area of theological enquiry, as I will explain. In what follows, I consider two areas of theological enquiry: free will in salvation and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. I argue that the theological issue which should be decisive in determining between Aquinas' and Calvin's view is that of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. My claim is not that this doctrine was necessarily decisive for Aquinas and Calvin themselves in forming their view—it may or may not have been—but rather I suggest that it should be decisive for those who want to choose between the two views. Moreover, I argue that we should not think of this debate on justification as a debate between internalism and externalism, but rather that it is a debate between those who hold, like Calvin, that there must be *something*, in addition to sanctifying qualities, which justifies a person and which cannot be lost through sin, and those who hold that the same lose-able quality that justifies a person also sanctifies him.

### Free Will

As noted in Chapter 1, one of the reasons why Aquinas and other medievals affirmed the need for the quality of grace for justification is to preserve the freedom of the agent in the process of salvation. Calvin writes on free will as follows:

Few have defined what free will is, although it repeatedly occurs in the writings of all. Origen seems to have put forward a definition generally agreed upon among ecclesiastical writers when he said that it is a faculty of the reason to distinguish between good and evil, a faculty of the will to choose one or the other. Augustine

does not disagree with this when he teaches that it is a faculty of the reason and the will to choose good with the assistance of grace; evil, when grace is absent.<sup>289</sup>

This concern to protect the freedom of human agents in the process of salvation is not a concern Calvin shares, and this partly explains his disagreement with Aquinas. For Calvin, due to the Fall, the human will is damaged:

And, indeed, that common opinion which they have taken from Augustine pleases me: that the natural gifts were corrupted in man through sin, but that his supernatural gifts were stripped from him. For by the latter clause they understand the light of faith as well as righteousness, which would be sufficient to attain heavenly life and eternal bliss. Therefore, withdrawing from the Kingdom of God, he is at the same time deprived of spiritual gifts, with which he had been furnished for the hope of eternal salvation. From this it follows that he is so banished from the Kingdom of God that *all qualities belonging to the blessed life of the soul have been extinguished in him*, until he recovers them through the grace of regeneration. Among these are faith, love of God, charity toward neighbour, zeal for holiness and for righteousness. All these, since Christ restores them in us, are considered adventitious, and beyond nature: and for this reason we infer that they were taken away... And depravity of the will is all too well known... *the will, because it is inseparable from man's nature, did not perish, but was so bound to wicked desires that it cannot strive after the right*. This is, indeed, a complete definition, but one needing a fuller explanation.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> *Institutes*. 261. Liberu arbitrium quid esset, quum in omnium scriptis identidem occurrat, pauci definierut. Videtur tamen Origenes id de quo passim inter eos conueniebat, posuisse, quum dixit, Facultatem esse rationis ad bonum malumve discernendum: voluntatis ad vtrumuis eligendum. Nec ab eo variat Augustinus, quum docet facultatem esse rationis & voluntatis, qua bonum eligitur gratia assistente: malum, ea desistente.

<sup>290</sup> *Institutes*. 270. Italics mine. Ac illa quidem vulgaris sententia quam sumpserunt ex Augustino, mihi placet, naturalia dona fuisse corrupta in homine per peccatum, supernaturalibus autem exinanitum fuisse. Nam hoc posteriore membro intelligunt tam fidei lucem quam iustitiam, quae ad caelestem vitam aeternamque foelicitatem adipiscendam sufficerent. Ergo se abdicat a regno Dei, simul priuatus est spiritualibus donis, quibus in spem salutis aeternae instructus fuerat. Unde sequitur, ita exulare a regno Dei, ut quaecumque ad beatam animae vitam spectant, in eo extincta sint, donec per regenerationis gratiam ipsa recuperet. In his sunt, fides, amor Dei, charitas erga proximos, sanctitatis & iustitiae studium. Haec omnia quum nobis restituat Christus, aduentitia

I say that the will is effaced; not in so far as it is will, for in man's conversion what belongs to his primal nature remains entire. I also say that it is created anew; not meaning that the will now begins to exist, but that it is changed from an evil to a good will. I affirm that this is wholly God's doing.<sup>291</sup>

Oliver Crisp outlines Calvin's view on the freedom of the will in his book *Deviant Calvinism*.

Crisp argues that whilst it may be possible for a Calvinist to be a libertarian in terms of the issue of free will in some circumstances, there remain circumstances—namely, in the context of a person's salvation—in which a person does *not* have libertarian free will.

Commenting on *The Westminster Confession*, Crisp states:

Post-fall, humans are unable to 'will... any spiritual good accompanying salvation' and can do nothing to convert themselves. God has to act in order to regenerate the sinner. As the Confession makes clear elsewhere, no fallen human can contribute to his regeneration or to the preparation of himself for salvation. This is what the Confession takes 'being dead in your sins' to mean.<sup>292</sup>

Further, Crisp writes:

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censentur, & praeter naturam: ideoque fuisse abolita colligimus. Rursum sanitas mentis & cordis rectitudo simul fuerunt ablata. atque haec est naturalium donorum corruptio. Nam etsi aliquid intelligentiae & iudicii residuum manet una cum voluntate, neque tamen mentem integram & sanam dicemus, quae & debilis est, & multis tenebris immersa. & prauitas voluntatis plus satis nota est... Sic voluntas, quia inseparabilis est ab hominis natura, non perit: sed prauis cupiditatibus deuincta fuit, ut nihil rectum appetere queat. Haec quidem plena est definitio, sed quae pluribus explicanda est.

<sup>291</sup> *Institutes*. 297. Voluntatem dico aboleri, non quantenus est voluntas: quia in hominis conuersione integru manet quod primae est naturae: creari etiam nouam dico, non ut voluntas esse incipiat, sed ut vertatur ex mala in bonam. Hoc in folidum a Deo fieri affirmo.

<sup>292</sup> *Deviant Calvinism*. 74.

As is well known, the Reformed churches have a rather severe view about the extent and depth of the moral damage wrought by original sin. Suppose they are right about this. Then we might ask, are fallen human beings capable of freely choosing to be reconciled to God? Can fallen humans choose salvation or reject it? Do they have such options at some putative moment of choice? Here, the answer is negative. *Fallen human beings have no freedom to choose to be reconciled to God.* Possession of original sin places certain choices relevant to salvation beyond reach.<sup>293</sup>

I take this reformed view outlined by Crisp to be representative of Calvin's view. On this view, a person does not have the freedom to choose for or against God. Due to the effects of sin, a person is unable to choose God; hence for the reformers, God's saving grace must be 'irresistible' in the sense that it must be strong enough to overcome any possible resistance from a person. In light of this, we might propose that a dividing factor on the question of whether a quality or relation is needed for justification is whether persons have free will in the process of salvation: if they do, then Aquinas' appeal to a quality allows for this; if they do not have such freedom, then we may consider whether this lends support to Calvin's positing of a relation.

### Free Will: Indecisive

The question of the relationship between grace and freedom has been propelled into recent scholarly debate by Eleonore Stump.<sup>294</sup> Stump is aware that the relation of grace

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<sup>293</sup> *Deviant Calvinism*. 84. Italics mine.

<sup>294</sup> See 'Grace and Free Will' in Stump, E. *Aquinas* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003). For a response to Stump's view see Timpe, K. *Free Will in Philosophical Theology* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014). Chapter 4.4.

to free will in the thought of Aquinas is a longstanding theological conflict which has 'seemed to many to be irresolvable.' The admittedly immodest aim of the article is to suggest that it is possible to construct an account which holds compatibly both that the act of the will necessary for justification is produced by grace and that this act is free in a non-compatibilist sense. Whilst Stump thinks that the account she presents is Aquinas' view, she does not seek to argue this claim in the paper. Rather, she simply wishes to show that Aquinas' views may be interpreted in this manner, and that the view manages to reconcile grace and freedom without falling into pelagianism.

Stump's solution to the grace and free will dilemma depends largely upon the idea of *quiescence in the will*. According to Stump, Aquinas thinks that whilst the will can assent to something or reject it, it can also do nothing at all: it can 'just be turned off; it can be inactive or quiescent.'<sup>295</sup> Importantly, Stump states:

The will's motion is thus analogous to bodily motion, on Aquinas' views. I can walk east or walk west, but I can also simply cease walking east; and my ceasing to walk east is not by itself an instance of my walking west. Furthermore, I can move from walking east to ceasing to walk east without having to walk west in order to do so. Finally, my ceasing to walk east is not a special kind of walking; it is simply the absence of walking, an inactivity or quiescence in those particular bodily parts that function to produce walking.<sup>296</sup>

In light of this, with regards to grace in Aquinas, the will can do one of three things: it can accept grace, it can reject grace, or it can simply be quiescent or turned off. Stump claims

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<sup>295</sup> Aquinas. 394.

<sup>296</sup> Aquinas. 394.

that on Aquinas' view, when God gives saving grace to a person he is 'infusing that grace into a human will which has ceased to reject it but which has not accepted it.'<sup>297</sup> It is within the will's power to be quiescent or not, and thus a movement from rejection of grace to quiescence is a movement of the human willer herself, yet Stump thinks 'there is nothing Pelagian or even semi-Pelagian about this view.'<sup>298</sup> Pelagianism claims that the will is capable of a good act without the aid of grace, whereas Stump's claim is that a quiescent will is not a will which is doing good. A quiescent will is better than a will which rejects grace but, according to Stump, 'comparatives do not suppose positives. One thing can be better than another and yet not be good.'<sup>299</sup> Stump appeals to the following text from Aquinas in support of her view:

Although one may neither merit in advance nor call forth divine grace by a movement of his free choice, he is able to prevent himself from receiving this grace... And since this ability to impede or not to impede the reception of divine grace is within the scope of free choice, not undeservedly is responsibility for the fault imputed to him who offers an impediment to the reception of grace. In fact, as far as He is concerned, God is ready to give grace to all; "indeed He wills all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," as said in 1 Timothy (2:4). But those alone are deprived of grace who offer an obstacle within themselves to grace; just as, while the sun is shining on the world, the man who keeps his eyes closed is held responsible for his fault, if as a result some evil follows, even though he could not see unless he were provided in advance with light from the sun.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> *Aquinas*. 395.

<sup>298</sup> *Aquinas*. 401.

<sup>299</sup> *Aquinas*. 402.

<sup>300</sup> SCG Bk3 Ch 159. Ad huius dubitationis solutionem considerandum est quod, licet aliquis per motum liberi arbitrii divinam gratiam nec promereri nec advocari possit, potest tamen seipsum impedire ne eam recipet... Et cum hoc sit in potestate liberi arbitrii, impedire divinae gratiae receptionem vel non impedire, non immerito in culpam imputatur ei qui impedimentum praestat gratiae receptioni. Deus enim, quantum in se est, paratus est omnibus gratiam dare, vult enim omnes homines salvos fieri, et ad cognitionem veritatis venire, ut dicitur I ad Tim. 2-4: sed illi soli gratia privantur qui in

Stump's attempt to reconcile grace and free will has received critical attention. However, my purpose here is not to assess the possible merits of the account proposed, but rather to point out that, on Stump's account, it is not the quality of grace that enables freedom in salvation. Grace is infused *after* the will has become quiescent. Grace does not enable the will to become quiescent, but rather God responds to the quiescence by infusing grace. Such an account could be used similarly by the Calvinist as quickly as the Thomist, were the former to decide that freedom in salvation is a good thing. The story would run straight-forwardly as follows: if a person's will becomes quiescent towards God then God establishes a relation with her, making her righteous in his sight. Freedom is retained without the presence of the quality.

#### Perseverance of the Saints: Decisive

In Part 2 (Section 3) I explained that Calvin thinks that the fact of the continued presence of sin after initial justification throws those who hold to an internalist view into doubt with regards their salvation. As Aquinas holds that justification is based upon internal righteousness it can therefore be lost through sinning after justification. This possibility of the loss of salvation is a problem for Calvin due to his commitment to the doctrine of

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seipsis gratiae impedimentum praestant; sicut, sole mundum illuminate, in culpam imputatur ei qui oculos claudit, si ex hoc aliquod malum sequatur, licet videre non possit nisi lumine solis praeveniatur.

the perseverance of the saints. I now argue that the issue of the perseverance of the saints is decisive on the question of what is needed for justification.

Aquinas and Calvin agree that once a person is justified the person continues to sin. Calvin thinks that this claim is problematic for those, like the scholastics, who hold to an internalist view on justification. He admonishes us 'to always return to this axiom: the wrath of God rests upon all so long as they continue to be sinners... (God) cannot receive him into grace nor join him to himself unless he turns him from a sinner into a righteous man.'<sup>301</sup> As 'the traces of sin always remain in the righteous,' even after conversion, 'their justification must be very different from reformation into newness of life.'<sup>302</sup>

Calvin's point seems to be that even if a person has a quality which disposes him well towards God (a quality like created grace), he still has sinful dispositions which dispose him badly towards God. These sinful dispositions continue to incline a person to perform sinful acts, and for those acts he incurs God's wrath. Thus, what is needed for justification is not simply a quality, but a relation to God in virtue of which all sins are covered and hidden, for God 'does not justify in part but liberally'; that is, God makes the *whole* person clean in his sight.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> *Institutes*. 751.

<sup>302</sup> *Institutes*. 739.

<sup>303</sup> *Institutes*. 739.

Aquinas deals with this problem of continued sin after justification by distinguishing between mortal and venial sins. He writes of the ‘principle of the spiritual life,’ which is ‘the order to the last end’; the ‘last end’ being God.<sup>304</sup> There are two types of sin: one which destroys this principle of the spiritual life, another that does not. To explain this, Aquinas uses the example of an animal: ‘In an animal’s body, the frame may be so out of order that the vital principle is destroyed; this is the inordinateness of death; while, on the other hand, saving the vital principle, there may be disorder in the bodily humors; and then there is sickness.’<sup>305</sup>

The spiritual principle of a person is intact when he is ordered towards God. If this order is corrupted—if the ‘soul is so disordered by sin as to turn away from its last end’—it can only be repaired by the last end; by God.<sup>306</sup> This order is corrupted through mortal sins which lead to a loss of created grace, as mortal ‘sins turn man away from God.’<sup>307</sup> On-the-other hand, if there is ‘disorder in things referred to the end’ the principle of the spiritual life is preserved. Aquinas calls sins that cause such disorder ‘venial sins’; these do not involve the loss of created grace as they ‘neither destroy nor diminish the habit.’<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> ST I-II q87 a3.

<sup>305</sup> ST I-II q72 a5.

<sup>306</sup> ST I-II q72 a5.

<sup>307</sup> ST I-II q87 a3.

<sup>308</sup> ST I-II q89 a1.

If a person commits a mortal sin he loses created grace and must, moved by God, seek it again through repentance and participation in the sacraments.<sup>309</sup> As explained, venial sin does not entail a loss of grace, as the person who commits a venial sin still remains ordered towards God. Aquinas asks whether he who sins venially causes a stain on his soul. A stain 'denotes a loss of comeliness due to contact with something,' as can be seen in the physical world. For Aquinas, just as the body has a twofold comeliness involving the 'inward disposition' and the 'outward refulgence,' so too does the soul have a twofold comeliness: 'one habitual and, so to speak, intrinsic, the other actual like an outward flash of light.' Venial sin is a hindrance to actual comeliness, but not to habitual comeliness, as 'it neither destroys nor diminishes the habit of charity... but only hinders (the person's) acts.' A stain, however, 'denotes something permanent in the thing stained,' which involves a loss of habitual rather than of actual comeliness, as is the case with mortal sin.<sup>310</sup> Whilst venial sins do not leave a permanent stain on the soul, they do need to be dealt with, and this takes place in purgatory, as Aquinas writes:

It is sufficiently clear that there is a purgatory after this life. For if the debt of punishment is not paid in full after the stain of sin has been washed away by contrition, *not again are venial sins always removed when mortal sins are remitted*, and if justice demands that sin be set in order by due punishment, it follows that one who after contrition for his fault and after being absolved, dies before making due satisfaction, is punished after this life.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Recall from Chapter 1 that Aquinas distinguishes between God's grace that moves us to act and the gift of habitual grace. It is the former that moves a person to seek (habitual) grace again through confession and penance.

<sup>310</sup> ST I-II q89 a1.

<sup>311</sup> ST Appendixes I q1. Italics mine.

Furthermore:

It is therefore clear that this opinion is utterly reasonable: and consequently we must say with others that venial sin in one who dies in a state of grace, is remitted after this life by the fire of purgatory: because this punishment so far as it is voluntary, will have the power, by virtue of grace, to expiate all such guilt as is compatible with grace.<sup>312</sup>

Calvin has major problems with Aquinas' distinction between mortal and venial sin and its relevance for the doctrine of justification. On venial sin, Calvin is opposed to the idea of purgatory. He writes:

Since purgatory is constructed out of many blasphemies and is daily propped up with new ones, and since it incites to many grave offences, it is certainly not to be winked at. One could for a time perhaps in a way conceal the fact that it was devised apart from God's Word in curious and bold rashness; that men believed in it by some sort of 'revelations' forged by Satan's craft; and that some passages of Scripture were ignorantly distorted to confirm it. Still, the Lord does not allow man's effrontery so to break in upon the secret places of judgments; and he sternly forbade that men, to the neglect of his Word, should inquire after truth from the dead (Deut. 18:11). Neither does he allow his Word to be so irreligiously corrupted.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> ST Appendixes I q2.

<sup>313</sup> *Institutes*. 676. Sed quum ex multis blasphemiiis constructu sit Purgatorium, & nouis quotidie fulciatur, quum multas & graues offensiones suscitet: profecto conniuendum non est. Illud forte utcunque ad tempus dissimulari poterat, quod sine Dei verbo curiosa audacique temeritate ex cogitatum erat: quod de ipso creditu erat nescio quibus reuelationibus Satanae arte confictis: quod ad ipsius confirmationem aliquot Scripturae loci inscite detorti errant. Quanquam non fert Dominus humanam audaciam sic in abditos iudiciorum suorum recessus perrumpere: & seure prohibuit, neglecta voce sua, sciscitari a mortuis veritatem: nec verbum suum tam irreligiose contaminari permittit.

As demonstrated in this text, Calvin has little time for purgatory as a solution to the problem of venial sin. But Calvin also opposes the idea that some sins, like venial sins, are not damn-worthy. He states, 'all sin is a violation of the law, upon which God's judgment is pronounced without exception.'<sup>314</sup> Raith comments on Calvin's rejection of the mortal-venial sin distinction stating that, for Calvin, 'whether the sin be an actual act of a disordered desire, it deserves damnation.'<sup>315</sup>

If Calvin rejects the mortal-venial sin distinction he might insist that for those who hold to an internalist view of justification *all* sin, whether mortal or venial, should cause a loss of grace. But this is problematic for Calvin because of his commitment to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, also referred to as the doctrine of 'once saved always saved.' The logic behind this doctrine is as follows: as man is totally depraved and can contribute nothing positively towards his own salvation, God must unconditionally elect persons in order to save them, and move them to salvation in an irresistible manner. As a person need do nothing to be saved, he need do nothing to remain saved; salvation is the miraculous work of God. The only possibility of a person losing salvation is through an act of God, but Calvin denies that God 'un-elects' some of the elect. Commenting on 1 John 3:9, Calvin writes:

But here a question arises, whether the fear and love of God can be extinguished in anyone who has been regenerated by the Spirit of God? For that this cannot be, seems to be the import of the Apostle's words. They who think otherwise refer to the example of David, who for a time labored under such a beastly stupor, that

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<sup>314</sup> *Institutes*. 421 – 422.

<sup>315</sup> *After Merit*. 130.

not a spark of grace appeared in him. Moreover, in the fifty-first Psalm, he prays for the restoration of the Spirit. It hence follows that he was deprived of him. I, however, doubt not but that the seed, communicated when God regenerates his elect, as it is incorruptible, retains its virtue perpetually. I, indeed, grant that it may sometimes be stifled, as in the case of David; but still, when all religion seemed to be extinct in him, a live coal was hid under the ashes. Satan, indeed, labors to root out whatever is from God in the elect; but when the utmost is permitted in him, there ever remains a hidden root, which afterwards springs up. But John does not speak of one act, as they say, but of the continued course of life.<sup>316</sup>

For Calvin, although a person, like King David, may go through a period where he is not producing acts in keeping with a life of grace, such a person does not lose his salvation.

### Conclusion

In the section on sanctification above I showed that both Aquinas and Calvin agree broadly on the need for new qualities/dispositions for the transformative process of sanctification. For Aquinas, this is created grace, which can be lost through mortal sin. So too for Calvin: these dispositions can be lost. Crucially for Calvin, given his commitment

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<sup>316</sup> Calvin, J. *Commentary on 1 John* (online: [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/1\\_john/1.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/1_john/1.htm)).

The doctrine is affirmed in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*: 'They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved...This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth, also, the certainty and infallibility thereof.' *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Chap. XIX, Sect. 1. Available here: [http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf\\_with\\_proofs/](http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/)

to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, there must be *something* that justifies a person independent of the lose-able qualities involved in sanctification. That is, there must be something which remains in a person when he sins which justifies him, even though he loses good dispositions through sinning. Calvin holds that this 'something' is a new relation which covers over a person's sins. Once a person has this relation to God it cannot be lost: it guarantees salvation for the elected person. Although this 'something' is, for Calvin, a relation, it need not be a relation—it could be another quality which cannot be lost and which sits alongside the sanctifying qualities which can be lost through sin.

Those who wish to choose between Aquinas' and Calvin's views on what justifies a person must choose between holding that the quality that justifies a person also begins the process of sanctification (Aquinas), and so is liable to be lost in the process of sanctification, or that there is something in addition to the sanctifying quality which does the work of justifying a person and which cannot be lost through future sin / free decision; for Calvin this is a relation, but in fact it need not be a relation. The main reason to posit something in addition to the lose-able sanctifying quality is in order to affirm the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Therefore, those who want to choose between these two options should consider where their commitments lie regarding the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

## Chapter 4

### Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for Grace through the Sacraments

#### Introduction

In chapter 3 I explained that whilst Aquinas and Calvin disagree on what is needed for justification, there is some agreement between them on what is needed for sanctification: Aquinas writes of the need for created grace—more specifically, created dispositions—and Calvin also speaks of the need for new dispositions in the process of sanctification. In this chapter and the next I turn to the question of how persons get these new dispositions. In this chapter I outline Aquinas' and Calvin's views on the sacraments, and I argue that in some respects their views are not as dissimilar as is suggested by some scholars. I begin this chapter by considering Calvin's disagreement with the medieval view of the sacraments. I then outline Aquinas' general view, setting out what he might think of as the necessary and sufficient conditions for receiving grace through the sacraments. Following this I consider what Calvin's issue with these necessary and sufficient conditions might be. Finally, I return to Aquinas to show that, in at least some respects, and contrary to some scholars, Calvin's criticism of Aquinas is misplaced.

#### Disagreement and Agreement

In his *Institutes*, Calvin writes:

The schools of the Sophists have taught with remarkable agreement that the sacraments of the new law (those now used in the Christian church) justify and confer grace, provided we do not set up a barrier of mortal sin. How deadly and pestilential this notion is cannot be expressed—and the more so because for many centuries it has been a current claim in a good part of the world, to the great loss of the church. Of a certainty it is diabolical. For in promising a righteousness apart from faith, it hurls souls headlong into destruction. Secondly, because it draws the cause of righteousness from the sacraments, it binds mens' pitiable minds (of themselves more than enough inclined to earth) in this superstition, so that they repose in the appearance of a physical thing rather than in God himself.<sup>317</sup>

Calvin is clearly opposed to the medieval understanding of the sacraments, typified in the thought of Aquinas. First, Calvin is opposed to the view that the sacraments bestow grace as long as the recipient has not committed a mortal sin. Second, Calvin opposes the medieval view because he thinks it causes persons to trust in physical things rather than in God.

Despite some disagreement with the medievals, there are several areas in which Calvin is in agreement with regards to the sacraments, and it is useful to consider one such area in an endeavor to understand both his view and the medieval view.<sup>318</sup> Calvin states that the

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<sup>317</sup> *Institutes*. 1289. Magno enim consensu su sophisticae scholae tradiderunt, Sacramenta nouae Legis, hoc est quae nunc in usu sunt Christianae Ecclesiae, iustificare & conferre gratiam, modo non ponamus obicem peccati mortalis. Quae sententia, dici non potest quam sit exitialis & pestilens, eoque magis quod multis ante seculis magna Ecclesiae iactura, in bona orbis parte obtinuit. Plane certe diabolica est. nam dum iustitiam citra fidem pollicetur, animas in exitium praecipites agit: deinde quia iustitiae causam a Sacramentis ducit, miseris hominum mentes, in terram suapte sponte plus satis inclinatas, hac superstitione illigat, ut in spectaculo rei corporeae potius quam in Deo ipso acquiescant.

<sup>318</sup> Calvin thinks that there are only two legitimate sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist. When I refer to a sacrament in this chapter I am either referring to sacraments generally, or to baptism or the Eucharist.

development of pagan material rituals is proof that all religious persons require outward signs to express their inward religious conviction.<sup>319</sup> Calvin writes:

Now, from the definition that I have set forth we understand that a sacrament is never without a preceding promise but is joined to it as a sort of appendix, with the purpose of confirming and sealing the promise itself, and of making it more evident to us and in a sense ratifying it. But this means *God provides first for our ignorance and dullness, then for our weakness...* Here our merciful Lord, according to his infinite kindness, so tempers himself to our capacity that, *since we are creatures who always creep on the ground, cleave to the flesh, and, do not think about or even conceive of anything spiritual, he condescends to lead us to himself even by these early blessings.* For if we were incorporeal (as Chrysostom says), he would give us these very things naked and incorporeal. Now, because we have souls engrafted in bodies, he imparts spiritual things under visible ones. Not that the first set before us in the sacraments are bestowed with the natures of the things, but that they have been marked with this signification by God.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Calvin writes: 'There arose the initiations of the Gentiles into their own mysteries, and other degenerate rites, which, even though full of error and superstition, were still a proof that men could not go without such outward signs in a profession of religion.' *Institutes*. 1295.

<sup>320</sup> *Institutes*. 1278. Italics mine. Porro ex hac quam posuimus definitione intelligimus, nunquam sine praeunte promissione esse sacramentum, sed ei potius tanquam appendicem quandam adiungi, eo fine ut promissionem ipsam confirmet ac obsignet, nobisque testatorem, imo ratam quodam modo faciat: quo modo nostrae ignorantiae ac tarditati primum, deinde infirmitati opus esse Deus prouidet: neque tamen (proprie loquendo) tam ut sacrum suum sermonem firmet, quam ut nos in ipsius fide stabiliat. Siquide Dei veritas per se satis solida certa est: nec aliunde meliorem confirmationem quam a se ipsa accipere potest. Verum ut exigua est & imbecilla nostra fides, nisi undique fulciatur, ac modis omnibus sustentetur, statim concutitur, fluctuatur, vacillat, adeoque labascit. Atque ita quidem hic se captui nostro pro immensa sua indulgentia attemperat misericors Dominus, ut quando animalis sumus, qui humi semper adrepentes, & in carne haerentes, nihil spirituale cogitamus, ac ne concipimus quidem, elemetis etia istis terrenis nos ad se deducere non grauetur, atque in ipsa carne proponere bonorum spiritualium speculu. Nam si incorporei essemus (ut Chrysostomus ait) nuda & incorporae nobis haec ipsa daret. Nunc quia tales inditae sunt dotes naturis rerum quae in sacramentis nobis proferuntur: sed quia in hanc significationem a Deo signatae sunt.

McGrath confirms this view: 'A central theme to the Reformation emphasis upon the importance of the sacraments to an evangelical spirituality is that of *divine accommodation to human weakness*. The idea is especially associated with Calvin, who is usually regarded as its most lucid expositor. Calvin argues as follows. All good speakers

We find a similar though more developed thought in Aquinas, who agrees that persons need material rites to aid them in the path of salvation. He gives three reasons: first, human nature has that 'special property of arriving at this knowledge (of spiritual and intelligible realities) deductively through its experience of physical and sensible realities,' and as it is 'characteristic of divine providence that it provides for each being in a manner corresponding to its own particular way of functioning,' God makes 'use of certain physical and sensible signs' when bringing about a person's salvation.<sup>321</sup> Second, as 'by sinning he incurred an affection for physical things and so made himself subject to them... the remedy designed to heal man has to be applied to that part of his nature affected by the sickness.' Thus, God applies 'spiritual medicine' to a person through physical signs, for if he were to be 'confronted with spiritual realities pure and unalloyed' his mind would be incapable of accepting them. Third, persons are 'particularly prone to involve

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know and understand the limitations of their audiences. And they adapt their way of speaking accordingly. They modify their language to suit the needs and limitations of their listeners, avoiding difficult words and ideas where necessary and using more appropriate ways of speaking in their place. This 'principle of accommodation' also extends to the use of analogies and visual aids. Many people find ideas and concepts difficult to handle, forcing responsible public speakers to use stories and illustrations to make their point. So it is with God, Calvin argues. He accommodates himself to our limitations. He comes down to our level, using powerful images and ways of speaking which enable him to reveal himself to a wide range of individuals. No one is excluded from learning about God on account of their educational abilities. That God can use lowly ways of revealing himself does not reflect any weakness or shortcoming on his part; the necessity of adopting lowly ways reflects weakness on our part, which God graciously acknowledges and takes into account. God is able to deploy a wide range of resources in creating and sustaining faith—words, concepts, analogies, models, signs, and symbols. The sacraments are to be seen as an important element in this arsenal of resources.' McGrath, A. *Reformation Thought* (Oxford; Blackwell publishing inc., 1993). 162.

<sup>321</sup> ST III Q61 a1.

themselves with physical things,' and so in order to not make the spiritual life 'too hard' persons were given 'certain physical practices to observe in the sacraments.'<sup>322</sup>

### Aquinas

I now outline Aquinas' general view on the sacraments before explaining Calvin's problem with his view.

For Aquinas, the sacraments are necessary for salvation as they cause grace 'in some way'.<sup>323</sup> He is aware that there are those who 'assert that the sacraments are not the cause of grace in the sense of actually producing any effect, but rather that when the sacraments are applied God produces grace in the soul'. The example used by those who assert this 'divine assistance theory' is that of a person receiving, by order of a king, a hundred pounds by offering a leaden denarius. The money is given not because the denarius is the cause of the person receiving the money, but rather 'the effect is produced solely by the king's will.' But Aquinas objects to this view of the sacraments for on it the sacraments are no more than 'signs of grace,' whilst we 'have it on the authority of many of the saints that the sacraments of the New Law not merely signify but actually cause grace.'<sup>324</sup> Marilyn Adams comments on this:

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<sup>322</sup> ST III q61 a1.

<sup>323</sup> ST III q62 a1.

<sup>324</sup> ST III q62 a1.

Aquinas protests that the assistance theory turns even new-law sacraments into mere signs, because they do not really *do* anything either to introduce grace or to dispose the patient to receive it. So far as Aquinas can see, the Divine pact confers on the sacraments no aspect of causality, but leaves all of the real action of grace- or real-presence production to God.<sup>325</sup>

Aquinas favors an alternative view of the sacraments based on ‘the fact that there are two efficient causes’: principal and instrumental. In the case of the production of grace in the sacraments, God alone is the principal cause of grace, for ‘grace is nothing else than a certain shared similitude to the divine nature.’ The principal cause produces the effect ‘in virtue of its form, to which that effect is assimilated, as fire warms in virtue of its own heat.’ The sacraments, on the other hand, are the instrumental causes of grace, for they act ‘not in virtue of (their) own form, but solely in virtue of the impetus imparted to (them) by the principal agent.’ Grace has a likeness not to the instrument, but only to the principal cause, as ‘a bed does not resemble the axe which carves it but rather the design in the mind of the carpenter.’<sup>326</sup>

Aquinas is aware that there are those who deny that there is any power in the sacrament to produce the effect of that sacrament. However, he holds that there is a ‘divine power acting as a co-assistant to the sacrament and it is this that produces the sacramental effect.’ As the sacrament is an instrumental cause of grace it therefore contains a ‘certain kind of instrumental power’ designed to produce the sacramental effect. The instrument

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<sup>325</sup> Adams, M. M. *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). 56.

<sup>326</sup> ST III q62 a1.

produces its effect ‘only inasmuch as it is moved by the principal agent,’ whereas the latter produces the effect of itself.<sup>327</sup> Hence Aquinas thinks:

The power of the principal agent has of its nature a mode of existence which is permanent and complete, whereas the instrumental power has a being that passes from one thing into another, and is incomplete in the same way that motion is an imperfect act proceeding from the agent into the patient.<sup>328</sup>

As is plain to sight, not only are there physical elements involved in the sacraments, but there is also a minister who speaks and acts during the ceremony. For Aquinas, there are two types of agency at work in the sacraments: principal and instrumental. The principal agent is ‘God alone’ who works to produce the interior effect of the sacraments; to produce grace.<sup>329</sup> The minister, then, is the instrumental agent: he has ‘the same significance as an instrument’ in the sense that ‘the action of both (agents) is applied from without yet achieves the interior effect from the power of the principal agent.’ As the instrument works ‘by the power of the one who moves it’—in this case, the mover is God—the minister can be wicked and still act as an instrument, just as a doctor can use his body, which is the instrument of his soul, whether it is healthy or sickly.<sup>330</sup> Thus, the minister of the sacraments, along with the elements, are instrumental causes of grace, whilst God alone remains the principal cause.

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<sup>327</sup> ST III q62 a1.

<sup>328</sup> ST III q62 a4. Et ideo virtus principalis agentis habet permanens et completum esse in natura: virtus autem instrumentalis habet esse transiens ex uno in aliud et incompletum, sicut et motus est actus imperfectus ab agente in patiens.

<sup>329</sup> Aquinas does not hold that grace is the only effect of the sacraments, it is simply the only effect I am considering in the context of this chapter.

<sup>330</sup> ST III q64 a5.

We might wonder, if it is God alone who causes grace in the soul, why are ‘instruments’ needed? As we saw above, Aquinas gives three reasons to explain why God uses material rites to bestow grace. Whilst God can and does bestow grace directly on a person, he uses the instruments of the sacraments to aid the human person in his salvific path.

Aquinas asks whether the physical ‘stuff’ is needed for a sacrament to be effective, and he answers affirmatively. Since it is God who sanctifies ‘it is not for man to decide what things should be used for his sanctification.’ Rather, we should trust that the materials of the sacraments, determined by Divine institution, are used in the process of bringing about the sacramental effect.<sup>331</sup>

Not only is the physical stuff of the sacraments needed to produce the effect, but Aquinas also thinks that the words of the priest are required as well. He considers the sacraments in three ways, and for each ‘it is fitting for words to be added to the sensible sign.’ First, as the Word incarnate is the cause of sanctification, there is a certain conformity between the incarnation and the sacraments as the word is joined to the physical stuff, just as ‘in the mystery of the incarnation the Word of God is united to sensible flesh.’ Second, as Aquinas thinks persons are composed of soul and body, in the sacraments the body is touched through the sensible signs while the soul is touched ‘through faith in his words.’ Thirdly, Aquinas draws on Augustine who held that words are the principal signs used by

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<sup>331</sup> ST III q60 a5.

persons, and given that the sacraments are signs, 'in order to insure the perfection of sacramental signification it was necessary to determine the signification of the sensible things by means of certain words.'<sup>332</sup>

Although Aquinas thinks that the physical stuff and words of institution are needed to produce the sacramental effect, he also writes that 'before actual reception of (the) sacrament' a person can 'obtain salvation through the desire of receiving it,' and he writes about both baptism and the Eucharist in this regard. By partaking 'not actually but in desire' the 'end is possessed in desire and intention'.<sup>333</sup> When a person eats in order to sustain his body this food is 'changed into the substance of the person nourished' and is thus necessary for the continuation of life. But 'spiritual food changes man into itself,' and as one can be 'changed into Christ and be incorporated in Him by mental desire' the receiving of the sacrament is not needed for spiritual life in the same way that physical food is needed for physical life.<sup>334</sup> The sacraments have been ordained by God for the bestowal of grace, to aid human persons through physical signs, but God is not restrained by them, and he can bestow grace upon those who have not received the sacraments.

If grace can be received through the desire for the sacrament, without actual participation, this raises the issue of why persons should participate. Aquinas' response is that although grace is bestowed on the person who desires the sacraments, the person

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<sup>332</sup> ST III q60 a6.

<sup>333</sup> ST III q73 a3.

<sup>334</sup> ST III q73 a3 reply 2.

who participates gets 'a yet greater fullness of grace.' He appeals to the example of Cornelius, who received grace through his desire for baptism, but later, when baptized, he received a greater fullness of grace.<sup>335</sup>

It is possible for a person to partake of the sacraments without receiving grace, for 'it sometimes happens that a man is hindered from receiving the effect of this sacrament; and such receiving of this sacrament is an imperfect one.' Where there is no hindrance there is not only physical eating but also spiritual eating, whereby one is 'united with Christ through faith and charity.' Venial sins done in the past do not cause a hindrance to receiving grace in the sacraments, for 'it can come to pass that after many venial sins a man may approach devoutly to this sacrament and fully secure its effect.' Venial sins which are in the act of being committed do cause a hindrance, but only in part.<sup>336</sup> That is, they do not hinder a bestowal of grace, but a 'mind distracted through venial sins' does miss out on the refreshment of spiritual sweetness, which is another of the effects of the sacraments.<sup>337</sup>

Whilst venial sin does not prevent the bestowal of grace, mortal sin does.<sup>338</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, Aquinas thinks that a person who commits mortal sin destroys the spiritual principle of his life, which is his ordering to the last end of union with God. The recipient

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<sup>335</sup> ST III q69 a4 reply 2.

<sup>336</sup> For example, a person who participates in the Eucharist whilst experiencing hatred towards another person.

<sup>337</sup> ST III q79 a8.

<sup>338</sup> See Chapter 3 for a description of mortal and venial sin.

who is conscious of mortal sin is not ‘a proper recipient of the sacrament,’ and thus does not receive grace. This is because he is ‘not alive spiritually’—he is not directed towards final union with God—and as nourishment is confined to the living he ought not to eat of it. Moreover, the person who ‘retains an attachment to mortal sin’ cannot be united to Christ, which union is the effect of the sacrament. Whoever truly receives the sacrament ‘expresses thereby that he is made one with Christ,’ which is done by living faith ‘which no one has who is in mortal sin.’ It may be, however, that the person who is in mortal sin yet not conscious of this, and not attached to the sin, may still obtain grace if he approaches the sacrament ‘devoutly and reverently.’<sup>339</sup> The thought here may be that the person who desires union with God, yet who commits mortal sin, does not truly turn away from his last end of union with God, for his error was unconscious, and thus his spiritual life is not destroyed.

Having considered Aquinas’ view we are left with some sense of what Calvin objects to in the opening quotation, where he writes of the ‘deadly and pestilent’ notion that the sacraments ‘justify and confer grace, provided we do not set up a barrier of mortal sin.’

We might *provisionally* say that Aquinas holds that the necessary and jointly sufficient

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<sup>339</sup> ST III q79 a3. Whoever is conscious of mortal sin, has within him an obstacle to receiving the effect of this sacrament; since he is not a proper recipient of this sacrament, both because he is not alive spiritually, and so he ought not to eat the spiritual nourishment, since nourishment is confined to the living; and because he cannot be united with Christ, which is the effect of this sacrament, as long as he retains an attachment towards mortal sin.

conditions for God's bestowal and a person's subsequent reception of grace through the sacraments are as follows:

- i) The recipient is not conscious of having committed any mortal sin.
- ii) The proper elements are present.
- iii) The priest recites the correct words.
- iv) The sacrament is administered by the priest.
- v) God bestows grace.

### Calvin's Contention

We may safely assume, given the opening quotation, that Calvin would not agree with Aquinas that (i) – (v) make up the necessary and sufficient conditions for receiving grace through the sacraments. We might ask, then: how might Calvin adjust (i) – (v)? Calvin explains what a sacrament is:

We must consider what a sacrament is. It seems to me that a simple and proper definition would be to say that it is an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we in turn attest our piety toward him in the presence of the Lord and of his angels and before men. Here is another briefer definition: one may call it a testimony of divine grace towards us, confirmed by an outward sign, with mutual attestation of our piety toward him. Whichever of these definitions you may choose, it does not differ in meaning from that of Augustine, who teaches that a sacrament is 'a visible sign of a sacred thing,' or 'a visible form of an invisible grace,' but it better and more clearly explains the thing itself.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> *Institutes*. 1277. Principio animaduertere conuenit quid sit Sacramentum. Videtur autem mihi haec simplex & propria fore definitio, si dixerimus exter num esse symbolum, quo beneuolentiae erga nos suae promissiones conscientiae nostris Dominus obsignat, ad sustinendam fidei nostrae imbecillitatem: & nos vicissim pietatem erga eum nostram tam coram eo & Angelis quam apud homines testamur. Licet etiam maiore compedio aliter definire: ut vocetur diuinae in nos gratiae testimonium externo signo confirmatum, cum mutua nostrae erga ipsum pietatis testificatione. Utramlibet ex his definitionibus eligas,

Calvin is clear here, and elsewhere, that a sacrament has ‘the purpose of confirming and sealing the promise itself,’ where ‘the promise’ seems to refer to the promises regarding salvation found in the Bible.<sup>341</sup> Calvin goes on to correct himself, however, as he thinks that the Bible does not really need confirmation for it is ‘of itself firm and sure enough.’ Rather, because of human weakness the sacraments are needed to ‘establish us in faith in (God’s word).’ As we are creatures ‘who always creep on the ground,’ and who do not think about ‘spiritual things,’ God ‘condescends to lead us to himself even by these earthly blessings,’ as he ‘imparts spiritual things under visible ones.’<sup>342</sup> Alister McGrath sums up the various functions of the sacraments for Calvin:

In his discussion of the eucharist, Calvin distinguished three aspects of the spiritual truth which is presented and offered through the visible elements of bread and wine. The *signification or meaning* is the divine promises... The *substance or matter* of the eucharist concerns our reception of the body of Christ: God communicates to us what he has promised us... Finally, the *virtue or effect* of the eucharist is located in the *beneficia Christi*—the benefits won for the believer by Christ through his obedience. The believer participates by faith in all the benefits of Christ, such as redemption, righteousness and eternal life.<sup>343</sup>

McGrath here outlines the threefold function of the Eucharist for Calvin under the headings sign, substance, and benefit.

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ab illa Augustini, quae sacramentum esse tradit rei sacrae visibile signum, aut inuisibilis gratiae visibilem formam, sensu nihil differt: rem vero ipsam melius ac certius explicat.

<sup>341</sup> *Institutes*. 1278.

<sup>342</sup> *Institutes*. 1278.

<sup>343</sup> *Reformation Thought*. 185.

Contra Aquinas, on the issue of the nature of the substance (the elements) of the Eucharist, Calvin does not affirm the doctrine of transubstantiation: the substances of the bread and wine are not changed into the substances of the body and blood of Christ. Yet contra Zwingli, the Eucharist is not simply a symbol or reminder: Christ is metaphysically present during the Eucharist, but not as the substances being consumed in the bread and wine. Calvin writes:

In this Sacrament we have such full witness of all these things that we must certainly consider them as if Christ here present were himself set before our eyes and touched by our hands... And so as we previously stated, from the physical things set forth in the Sacrament we are led by a sort of analogy to spiritual things.<sup>344</sup>

What are these 'spiritual things' Calvin writes of (above)? Calvin has already referred to the 'invisible grace' spoken of by Augustine, and he states that 'God uses the instruments ordained by himself for the unfolding of his spiritual grace.'<sup>345</sup> Moreover, Calvin calls the sacraments 'testimonies of grace and salvation from the Lord.' They 'offer and set forth Christ to us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace.'<sup>346</sup> However, as we noted in Chapter 3, Calvin refers less to 'grace' than Aquinas does, preferring to talk of 'faith' or 'new dispositions'. Calvin writes:

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<sup>344</sup> *Institutes*. 1363. Horum omnium adeo solidam habemus testificationem in hoc sacramento, ut certo statuendum sit, vere nobis exhiberi non secus acsi Christus ipse praesens aspectui nostro obiiceretur, ac manibus atrectaretur... Id est quod antea admonuimus, a rebus corporis quae in sacramento proferuntur, quadam analogia nos ad spirituales deduci.

<sup>345</sup> *Institutes*. 1286.

<sup>346</sup> *Institutes*. 1296, 1292.

To this our answer would be in brief: the seals which are attached to government documents and other public acts are nothing taken by themselves, for they would be attached in vain if the parchment has nothing written on it. Yet, when added to the writing, they do not on that account fail to confirm and seal what is written.<sup>347</sup>

The sacraments, therefore, are exercises which make us more certain of the trustworthiness of God's Word.<sup>348</sup>

At least part of what the sacraments do then, for Calvin, is *strengthen faith*. Recall in Chapter 3 I followed Crisp in distinguishing between the doxastic and fiducial components of faith. We may say then that for Calvin the sacraments 'strengthen, nourish, confirm, and increase' both the doxastic and fiducial components of a person's faith.<sup>349</sup>

Calvin is keen to point out that there is not 'some secret force or other perpetually seated in' the sacraments, by which they 'are able to promote or confirm faith by themselves.' Rather, it is 'only when the Spirit, that inward teacher, comes to them, by whose power alone hearts are penetrated and affections moved and our souls opened for the sacraments to enter in.' If the Spirit is absent, the sacraments are hollow and affect no

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<sup>347</sup> *Institutes*. 1280. Quibus breuiter responsum sit, Sigilla, quae diplomatibus aliisque publicis actis appenduntur, per se accepta nihil sunt, utpote quae frustra appensa forent si membrana nihil haberet descriptum. Neque tamen ideo non confirmant atque obsignant quod scriptum est, dum scriptis adduntur.

<sup>348</sup> *Institutes*. 1281. Sacramenta igitur exercitia sunt quae certiolem verbi Dei fide nobis faciunt.

<sup>349</sup> *Institutes*. 1282. The terms 'doxastic' and 'fiducial' were explained in Chapter 3.

change in the recipient and the ministry is 'empty and trifling.' However, they are 'charged with great effect' when the Spirit is present.<sup>350</sup> Indeed, he writes:

Suppose it is true (something that ought at once to be clear among us) that what sight does in our eyes for seeing light, and what hearing does in our ears for perceiving a voice, are analogous to the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, which is to conceive, sustain, nourish, and establish faith. Then both of these things follow: the sacraments profit not a whit without the power of the Holy Spirit, and nothing prevents them from strengthening and enlarging faith in hearts already taught by that Schoolmaster. There is only one difference: that our ears and eyes have naturally received the faculty of hearing and seeing; but Christ does the same thing in our hearts by special grace beyond the measure of nature.<sup>351</sup>

Calvin is clear that whilst the sacraments confirm and increase faith, this is not because of some 'secret force or other perpetually seated in them.' Rather, they have been 'instituted by the Lord' to the end of strengthening faith.<sup>352</sup> The sacraments are instruments ordained by God for the 'unfolding of spiritual grace.'<sup>353</sup> The sacraments in themselves have no power, but God uses means and instruments 'which he himself sees to be expedient.'<sup>354</sup> He writes:

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<sup>350</sup> *Institutes*. 1284.

<sup>351</sup> *Institutes*. 1285. Atqui si verum est quod semel inter nos definitum esse conuenit, quod in oculis nostris visus efficit ad lucem conspiciendam, quod in auribus auditus ad percipiendam voces id esse in cordibus nostris Spiritus sancti opus, ad fidem & concipiendam, & sustinendam, & fouendam, & stabiliendam: utrunque per inde consequitur, Neque sacramenta huiusmodi proficere sine Spiritus sancti virtute, & nihil obstare quominus in cordibus iam ante a praeceptore illo edoctis, fidem & robustiorem & auctiorem reddant. Hoc tantum interest, quod audiendi videndique facultas naturaliter auribus & oculis indita est: Christus autem praeter naturae modum speciali gratia idem in animis nostris agit.

<sup>352</sup> *Institutes*. 1284.

<sup>353</sup> *Institutes*. 1286.

<sup>354</sup> *Institutes*. 1287.

(God) feeds our bodies through bread and other foods, he illumines the world through the sun, and he warms it through heat; yet neither bread, nor sun, nor fire, is anything save in so far as he distributes his blessings to us by these instruments. In like manner, he nourishes faith spiritually through the sacraments, whose one function is to set his promises before our eyes to be looked upon, indeed, to be guarantees of them to us.<sup>355</sup>

For Calvin, it is the Holy Spirit who strengthens faith. God has chosen to be present to persons, strengthening faith through the Holy Spirit, whenever they participate correctly in the sacraments. The latter have no power of themselves; they are simply the instruments God has chosen, displaying God's promise to sustain our souls, just as, for example, bread and wine sustain our bodies.

This brings us to one of the two objections mentioned by Calvin in the opening quotation: the medieval view 'draws the cause of righteousness from the sacraments, it binds men's pitiable minds in this superstition, so that they repose in the appearance of a physical thing rather than in God himself.'

As we noted, for Aquinas, it is simply not the case that the sacraments produce their effects without the working of God's spirit, for God is the principal agent without whom there would be no spiritual effect. Perhaps part of Calvin's target here is the medieval

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<sup>355</sup> *Institutes*. 1287. Ergo ut per panem caeteraque alimenta corpora nostra pascit: ut per solem, mundum illuminat: ut per ignem calefacit: nec tamen aut panis, aut sol, aut ignis aliquid sunt nisi quatenus sub iis instrumentis benedictiones suas nobis dispensat: ita spiritualiter per Sacramenta fidem alit, quorum unicum officium est, eius promissiones oculis nostris spectandas subiicere, imo nobis earum esse pignora.

doctrine of transubstantiation: Calvin may have been worried that persons would think too highly of the 'physical thing,' which *could* result from holding to the doctrine of transubstantiation, 'rather than in God himself.'<sup>356</sup> On the issue of the real presence in the Eucharist it is widely accepted that Calvin occupied a middle ground between the 'memorialism' of Zwingli and the much more catholic view of Martin Luther.<sup>357</sup> If this is what Calvin has in mind here I will not seek to address it, for it is both beyond the scope of this chapter, and it is not relevant to my primary concern which is the conditions for a bestowal of grace through the sacraments.

As we might expect, Calvin does not think that one must receive the sacraments in order to be saved. As 'justification is lodged in Christ alone,' and as it is 'communicated to us no less by the preaching of the gospel than by the seal of the sacrament,' a person can be justified through the preaching of the gospel without receiving the sacraments. Moreover, with Augustine, Calvin holds that there can be 'invisible sanctification' without a visible sign, as well as 'a visible sign' without true sanctification. As outlined above, Aquinas also holds that there can be grace bestowal without the sacraments, and as is clear from (i) – (v) there can be the reception of a sacrament without grace bestowal (if not all of the necessary and sufficient conditions are met).

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<sup>356</sup> For example, Roman Catholics reverence the host.

<sup>357</sup> See McDonnell, K. *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964). Chapter 6.

In the opening quotation Calvin also criticizes the medievals for ‘promising a righteousness apart from faith.’ Indeed he states that the effects of the sacraments are only brought about ‘when we receive in true faith what is offered there.’<sup>358</sup> Calvin writes:

As with wine or oil or some other liquid, no matter how much you pour out, it will flow away and disappear unless the mouth of the vessel to receive it is open; moreover, the vessel will be splashed over on the outside, but will still remain void and empty.<sup>359</sup>

B. A. Gerrish writes in a similar vein. He states that Calvin writes against the ‘Romanists,’ denying that the sacraments are endowed with a secret power and that they confer grace on anyone ‘who does not put the barrier of mortal sin in the way.’ For Calvin, according to Gerrish, a sacrament received without faith is ‘the most certain ruin of the church.’ Indeed, persons are wrong if they think that something additional is conferred upon them through the sacraments apart from what is ‘offered by the word and received by faith.’ Justification is through Christ, and it is ‘communicated to us no less by the preaching of the gospel than by the seal of the sacrament.’<sup>360</sup>

Gerrish emphasises Calvin’s insistence that the gift conferred through the sacraments must be received by faith. The sacraments and the word of God are intimately connected:

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<sup>358</sup> *Institutes*. 1291.

<sup>359</sup> *Institutes*. 1292. Non secus ac vinum, vel oleum, vel alius liquor quamlibet large infundas, effluet tamen ac peribit nisi aperto vasis ore: vas autem ipsum undique perfusum, inane nihilominus ac vacuum manebit.

<sup>360</sup> Gerrish, B. A. *Grace and Gratitude: the Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002). 107.

grace is conferred through both to those who receive it by faith. This view is, according to Gerrish, directed 'against the impersonalization of sacramental efficacy of medieval scholasticism.' The sacrament is 'not a magical formula empowered to consecrate the elements even if mumbled in Latin.' The sacramental word is a promise, and the end can be achieved 'without the sacramental seal.' It is not 'an incantation, but a promise,' and should be rightly understood as 'an appendage to the divine word or promise.' Gerrish concludes that for Calvin, the 'Eucharistic gift therefore benefits those only who *respond with the faith* that the proclamation itself generates.'<sup>361</sup>

This is also supported by John McDonnell who writes:

The sacraments are not causes in their own right, and for this reason Calvin distinguishes between the sign, which man dispenses, and the grace, which God dispenses. Though God does not institute vain signs, he does not so tie his grace to material creatures as to deprive himself of his freedom. Nor do the sacraments have that autonomous lordship over grace so that they dispense it even apart from the context of faith. Calvin's concern here, as so often, is pastoral as well as theological. The pastoral experience had shown that a pastoral practice divorced from the personalism of faith and given over to some objective dispenser of grace would fix the attention on something less than God himself and would lead to superstitious practices. Nor did the insistence that the sacraments conferred grace only when no impediment was placed through mortal sin, save the teaching from being diabolical. Quite the contrary. This only confirmed the suspicion that what *the Romans were teaching was mechanistic and divorced from the phenomenology of faith...* The mechanics of a sacramentalism separated from faith is no substitute for a true sacramental experience of God.<sup>362</sup>

A sacramental theology conceived in such ambitious terms cannot help but erect the sacraments into independent causes and independent ends in themselves,

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<sup>361</sup> *Grace and Gratitude*. 139. Italics mine.

<sup>362</sup> McDonnell, K. *John Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967). 115. Italics mine.

quite apart from the whole faith experience. The piety derived from this sacramental theology will place its confidence in the instruments rather than in him whose instruments they are.<sup>363</sup>

McDonnell confirms the view that for Calvin the sacraments do not simply confer grace on those who participate having not committed a mortal sin. God retains his freedom when choosing who to confer grace upon, according to McDonnell on Calvin, and we anticipate that God only responds to those who receive the sacraments in faith.

Calvin outlines his 'full definition of faith' as a 'firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us,' founded on the promises of God's Word, 'revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts' by the Holy Spirit.<sup>364</sup> Paul Helm comments on this definition, stating that it is evidence of Calvin's 'sustained polemic' against faith as 'mere assent'. Faith does have a propositional content, but it goes beyond this, for Calvin, 'involving trust, reliance upon God's promise, and hence reliance upon God.'<sup>365</sup> To use Crisp's terminology, faith must involve both propositional and fiducial elements.

We might take from this that Calvin held that, in order to receive grace, not only must the person who receives the sacrament assent to the articles of the Christian faith, but he must also *trust* in God's promises revealed in the Bible. More specifically, he must trust in God's promises relevant to his salvation: that he is justified by the life, death and

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<sup>363</sup> *John Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist*. 116.

<sup>364</sup> *Institutes*. 550.

<sup>365</sup> Helm, P. *Calvin: a Guide for the Perplexed* (London; T & T Clark, 2008). 14

resurrection of Christ, and that his salvation is brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit. Having said that, Gerrish points out that the initiative remains with God:

This... is not to be construed as though God, in Calvin's view, gives his grace only where he comes across someone who has faith. Nothing could be more totally foreign to Calvin's way of thinking than the notion that God, as he puts it, sits in a watchtower waiting to see how things will change to turn out. If the administration of a sacrament is met by faith, it can *only be a faith that God has already given and intends to confirm*—precisely by the sacrament itself. The issue, accordingly, concerns the finality, not the objectivity, of a sacrament: what it gives is not some mysterious power, but the increase of faith.<sup>366</sup>

Having outlined Calvin's insistence on a participant's need for faith in receiving the sacraments, Gerrish is clear that Calvin's understanding of sacramental efficacy 'is, to be sure, a different understanding of sacramental efficacy from the Roman Catholic view,' though he holds that it is not 'a collapse into subjectivity'.<sup>367</sup> I have granted that Calvin's view diverges from the medievals on the issue of transubstantiation. I now consider whether his view is significantly different from Aquinas' on the need for faith for a bestowal of grace through the sacraments, as is suggested by Gerrish and McDonnell.

### A Faith-less Aquinas?

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<sup>366</sup> *Grace and Gratitude*. 161. Italics mine.

<sup>367</sup> *Grace and Gratitude*. 161.

In *Aquinas and Calvin on Romans* Charles Raith argues that when it comes to the sacrament of baptism, it is not the case for Aquinas that baptism confers grace in the absence of faith. Raith writes:

In the 'Papist' view, the baptismal waters take on a power to save in a manner unrelated to the personal faith of the baptized... Does Calvin's critique of the 'Papists' find a target in Aquinas' position? In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas addresses the issue of whether faith is required on the part of the one baptized. Aquinas employs the distinction between baptism's 'character' and baptism's 'grace'. Aquinas grants that baptism still produces its character in the unbeliever while rejecting that the unbeliever receives grace. In other words, baptism does *not* in and of itself bring the one baptized into a state of grace. Faith is necessary for baptism to enable the sinner to have 'peace with God' (Romans 5:1). At the same time, Aquinas does not want to reduce the efficacy of baptism to the faith of the one baptized; rather, he believes that the waters themselves participate in the causal activity of God purifying the one baptized.<sup>368</sup>

Consider Marilyn Adams comments on Aquinas' view of the sacraments:

Medieval Christian theologians insist that new-law sacraments are *efficacious* signs: they bring about what they signify; they 'effect what they figure'. Either they *contain* grace the way a vessel contains water, or they *cause* grace to exist in pious and well-prepared souls, or both. The Eucharistic species *contain* the Body and Blood of Christ, which the performance of the rite makes to be really present *ex opere operato*. Medieval Christians stressed the causal efficacy of new-law sacraments over old, and as a way of reassuring the faithful. If sacraments *cause* spiritual benefits and/or real presence, then they *work* to guarantee that **suitably prepared participants** get what they need!<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Raith, C. *Aquinas and Calvin on Romans: God's Justification and our Participation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). 121.

<sup>369</sup> *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist*. 51. Bold mine.

The key question, then, is what Adams/Aquinas mean by 'suitably prepared'. Let us start with baptism.

### *Baptism*

When dealing with the question of whether faith is required on the part of the one being baptized, Aquinas responds that for the reception of grace, which is 'the ultimate effect of the sacrament', right faith is necessary. He appeals to Romans 3:22:

The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Aquinas thinks that just as children contract original sin through Adam, so too can they receive grace through Christ, so as 'to reign in eternal life.' In John 3:5 Christ states, 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' So, for Aquinas, if infants can receive grace that they may be accepted for eternal life, and if such acceptance requires baptism, then infants must be baptized. It is both necessary and fitting that infants are baptized: it is necessary that they might 'obtain salvation through Christ,' and it is fitting that children be baptized and so be 'reared from childhood in things pertaining to the Christian mode of life, that they may the more easily persevere therein.'<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> ST III Q68 a9.

The child who is baptized, as he is unable to believe himself, 'believe(s) through the Church's faith,' according to Aquinas:

The spiritual regeneration effected by Baptism is somewhat like carnal birth, in this respect, that as the child while in the mother's womb receives nourishment not independently, but through the nourishment of its mother, so also children before the use of reason, being as it were in the womb of their mother the church, receive salvation not by their own act, but by the act of the Church.<sup>371</sup>

When the parents of an infant bring a child for baptism it is not necessarily the faith of the parents which makes up for the lack of faith of the child, for the parents may be unbelievers, but rather the faith of the whole church, of the whole company of the saints and the faithful.<sup>372</sup> Once a person reaches 'the perfect age' Aquinas thinks that he can receive the sacrament of confirmation. At this age, a person is able to make a free choice with regard to salvation.

We might wonder whether Aquinas' view that the faith of the church suffices for the infant during baptism makes sense and would be acceptable to Calvin. Calvin also believes in infant baptism. Indeed, he believes that the covenant that God made with Abraham is

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<sup>371</sup> ST III Q68 a9 reply 1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod regeneratio spiritualis, quae fit per baptismum, quodammodo similis est nativitati carnali, quantum ad hoc quod, sicut pueri in maternis uteris constituti non per seipsos nutrimentum accipiunt, sed ex nutrimento matris sustentantur, ita etiam pueri non habentes usum rationis, quasi in utero matris Ecclesiae constituti, non per seipsos, sed per actum Ecclesiae salute suscipiunt.

<sup>372</sup> ST III Q 68 a9 reply 2.

‘no less in force today for Christians than it was of old for the Jewish people.’ As God commanded that Abraham and his descendants seal the covenant by circumcising their offspring, ‘what excuse will Christians give for not testifying and sealing it in their children today?’<sup>373</sup>

Calvin also appeals to Christ’s welcoming of children to himself in Matthew 19:13-15.

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’ And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Calvin asks if it is right for infants to be brought to Christ, why not also to be received into baptism?<sup>374</sup> Infants, according to Calvin, are not baptized in ‘nothing but water.’<sup>375</sup> Rather, there is a spiritual aspect to infant baptism, as goodness and grace is given not only to the ‘pious parent’ but also to his descendants.<sup>376</sup>

Calvin is aware of those who oppose infant baptism. Opponents claim that infants ‘because of their age are not yet able to understand the mystery signified in it, namely, spiritual regeneration.’<sup>377</sup> However, Calvin is adamant that ‘God’s truth everywhere

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<sup>373</sup> *Institutes*. 1329.

<sup>374</sup> *Institutes*. 1330.

<sup>375</sup> *Institutes*. 1336.

<sup>376</sup> *Institutes*. 1332.

<sup>377</sup> *Institutes*. 1339.

opposes these arguments.’ He states that if children are to be admitted to the kingdom of God, as Christ said they are, they must first be cleansed of sin, for ‘nothing polluted or defiled may enter’.<sup>378</sup> Such cleansing of original sin takes place through baptism.

A proof is found, according to Calvin, in the example of John the Baptist, who was ‘sanctified in his mother’s womb.’ If God can do this to John the Baptist he can do it to others, and thus we should ‘not attempt, then, to impose a law upon God to keep him from sanctifying whom he pleases.’<sup>379</sup> Whilst for adults who convert to Christianity it is the Word of God which is ‘the only seed of spiritual regeneration,’ Calvin denies that this is the case for all people of all ages; namely, for infants. The regeneration of infants is somewhat mysterious, as though it is easy for God it ‘is incomprehensible and wonderful to us.’<sup>380</sup>

Calvin does not ‘rashly affirm’ that infants have the same faith as adults, rather he prefers to leave this ‘undetermined’. In response to those who are unhappy with the nature of infantile faith being left undetermined he writes that he ‘would somewhat restrain the obtuse arrogance of those who at the top of their lungs confidently deny or assert whatever they please.’<sup>381</sup> Calvin contends from scripture that circumcision was a sign of repentance and a seal of the righteousness of faith. If this was so with circumcision, then

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<sup>378</sup> *Institutes*. 1340.

<sup>379</sup> *Institutes*. 1341.

<sup>380</sup> *Institutes*. 1341.

<sup>381</sup> *Institutes*. 1342.

Calvin thinks it should not seem absurd if infants participate in baptism, which is a 'sacrament of repentance and faith.'<sup>382</sup> Whilst refraining, in general, from comment upon how it is that infants can have faith, Calvin does sum up his views on faith and infant baptism by stating that infants are 'baptized into *future* repentance and faith, even though these have not yet been formed in them.' The 'seed' of both repentance and faith then lie within the baptized infant 'by the secret working of the Spirit.'<sup>383</sup>

Both Aquinas and Calvin face the difficult challenge of explaining how faith is involved in the baptism of an infant. Both thinkers affirm that faith is needed for the spiritual rebirth which is involved in baptism. Aquinas offers a theory of how this is so, whilst Calvin refrains from doing so.

As I have explained above, Aquinas holds that with regard to baptism, a person can have the desire to be baptized without in fact being baptized, as perhaps 'by some ill-chance he is forestalled by death before receiving Baptism.' This person may attain salvation 'on account of his desire for baptism,' and this desire is a result of 'faith that worketh charity.'<sup>384</sup> On Baptism generally, Aquinas writes:

By Baptism a man dies to the old life of sin, and begins a certain newness of life... Consequently, just as, according to Augustine, he who has the use of free-will must, in order to die to the old life, 'will to repent of his former life'; so must he, of his own will, *intend to lead a new life*, the beginning of which is precisely the

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<sup>382</sup> *Institutes*. 1343.

<sup>383</sup> *Institutes*. 1343. Italics mine.

<sup>384</sup> ST III q68 a2.

receiving of the sacrament. Therefore on the part of the one baptized, it is *necessary for him to have the will or intention* of receiving the sacrament.<sup>385</sup>

But *the faith of one*, indeed of the whole Church, *profits the child* through the operation of the Holy Ghost, Who unites the Church together, and communicates the goods of one member to another.<sup>386</sup>

Just as a child, when he is being baptized, *believes not by himself but by others*, so is he examined not by himself but through others, and these in answer *confess the Church's faith in the child's stead*, who is aggregated to this faith by the sacrament of faith. And the child acquires a good conscience in himself, not indeed as to the act, but as to the habit, by sanctifying grace.<sup>387</sup>

To my mind, this selection from Aquinas makes it clear that he thinks that faith—both propositional and fiducial aspects—is necessary for a bestowal of grace in Baptism. It may not be the faith of the individual being baptized, but faith is nevertheless required. This consideration of Adams and Aquinas confirms Raith's view that Aquinas does not hold that the sacrament of baptism confers grace in the absence of faith. However, it may be that, whilst Aquinas holds that faith is required during baptism, Calvin is still critical of his position as Aquinas does not claim that the faith of *the individual* being baptized is

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<sup>385</sup> ST III q68 a7. Italics mine. Dicendum quod per baptismum aliquis moritur veteri vitae peccati, et incipit quandam vitae novitatem... Et ideo, sicut ad hoc quod homo moriatur veteri vitae requiritur, secundum Augustinum, in habente usum liberi arbitrii, voluntas qua *eum veteris vitae poeniteat* ; ita requiritur voluntas qua intendat vitae novitatem, cujus principium est ipsa susceptio sacramenti. Et ideo ex parte baptizati requiritur voluntas, sive intentio, suscipiendi sacramentum.

<sup>386</sup> ST III q68 a9 reply 2. Italics mine. Fides autem unius, immo totius Ecclesiae, parvulo prodest per operationem Spiritus Sancti, qui unit Ecclesiam et bona unius alteri communicat.

<sup>387</sup> ST III q68 a9 reply 3. Italics mine. Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut puer, cum baptizatur, non per seipsum, sed per alios credit, ita non per seipsum, sed per alios interrogatur, et interrogati confitentur fidem Ecclesiae in persona pueri, qui huic fidei aggregatur per *fidei sacramentum*. Conscientiam autem bonam consequitur puer etiam in seipso, non quidem actu, sed habitu, per gratiam justificantem.

required. Whilst that is true of Aquinas' account of baptism, it is not true of his account of the Eucharist, to which I now turn.

### *The Eucharist*

Aquinas states that there are two ways to receive the Eucharist, namely, to receive the sacrament itself, and to receive its fruits. A person can eat sacramentally, by partaking of the physical stuff, and spiritually, by receiving the effect of the sacrament, whereby 'a man is spiritually united with Christ through faith and charity.'<sup>388</sup>

Aquinas considers whether a person who lacks the use of reason, who has 'never had the use of reason, and (has) remained so from birth,' should be given the Eucharist. He responds negatively, for such a person has never had 'any preceding devotion towards the sacrament.'<sup>389</sup> This suggests that at least the propositional aspect of faith is necessary for receiving grace through the Eucharist, as propositions have to do with a person's reasoning faculties. It is not clear why, for Aquinas, the faith of the church is sufficient for the baptism of an infant but not for the reception of the Eucharist by an adult lacking cognitive faculties.

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<sup>388</sup> ST III q73 a3.

<sup>389</sup> ST III q80 a9.

Aquinas also holds that when the angels ‘eat Christ spiritually’ they do so ‘not by faith, as we are united with Him here’; rather, the angels have ‘clear vision’ of Christ.<sup>390</sup> This suggests that, for Aquinas, faith is involved for the non-angelic persons who partake of the sacraments. Indeed, Aquinas states that a person eats sacramentally and spiritually ‘inasmuch as a man believes in Christ, while desiring to receive this sacrament.’<sup>391</sup>

Aquinas also states that before receiving a sacrament ‘the reality of the sacrament can be had through the very desire of receiving the sacrament.’<sup>392</sup> This is so with baptism, as explained, but so too is it the case with the Eucharist.<sup>393</sup> This talk of ‘desire’ for the Eucharist seems to me to be *at least similar* to the fiducial aspect of faith that Calvin thinks is necessary for the reception of grace. If I am hungry and I desire a piece of bread, I seem to trust that the bread will satisfy my hunger, as I believe the proposition that it will satisfy my hunger. By analogy, if I am a sinner and I desire grace through the sacraments, I seem to trust that God will help me in my sorry state through the workings of the sacrament. Thus, it seems that Aquinas thinks that faith is necessary both for a bestowal of grace through baptism and through the Eucharist. We might adjust Aquinas’ necessary and sufficient conditions for receiving grace through the sacraments as follows:

- i) The recipient is not conscious of having committed any mortal sin.

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<sup>390</sup> ST III q80 a2.

<sup>391</sup> ST III q80 a2.

<sup>392</sup> ST III q73 a3.

<sup>393</sup> Aquinas draws out some differences between the desire for Baptism and for the Eucharist, but the basic point is the same, that the reality of the sacrament can be had through the desire for it.

- ii) The proper elements are present.
- iii) The priest recites the correct words.
- iv) The sacrament is administered by the priest.
- v) God bestows grace.
- vi) The recipient is suitably prepared, approaching the sacrament with faith (in the case of infants, this faith is the faith of the church).

### Conclusion

I have outlined the main aspects of Aquinas' and Calvin's views on the bestowal of grace through the sacraments. Calvin takes issue with the medieval doctrine of transubstantiation; an objection I have avoided dealing with. But apart from this issue of transubstantiation, I have argued, building upon the work of Raith, that on the issue of the Eucharist, Calvin's objections to Aquinas' views can be met by Aquinas. Specifically, contrary to Gerrish and McDonnell, I have argued that it is not the case that for Aquinas the faith of the recipient is not a necessary condition for the reception of grace through the Eucharist.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Whilst Aquinas and Calvin do not have identical understandings of the nature of faith—for Aquinas, faith is an infused virtue, and for Calvin it is not—I have shown that for both thinkers faith involves both propositional and fiducial aspects and both of these aspects are required for reception of grace through the Eucharist.

## Chapter 5

### The Plausibility Question

#### Introduction

In Chapter 4 I outlined the accounts of Aquinas and Calvin on how grace is received through the Eucharist. In this chapter I assess the *plausibility* of Aquinas' claim that persons get grace through the medium of the Eucharist. I first outline the academic context within which I hope to make a contribution. I then present a Thomist argument in defence of the claim that grace is bestowed through the Eucharist.

#### Context Part 1: Cuneo

In the Introduction to the thesis I mapped out the relatively recent flourishing of work in analytic philosophy of religion and analytic theology. In his book, *Ritualised Faith*, Terence Cuneo makes some interesting observations about these sub-disciplines. He rightly asserts that contemporary philosophy of religion has been dominated by work in epistemology and metaphysics. In epistemology, philosophers have tackled objections to Christian faith that state that belief in God is irrational or unjustified or something else to that effect. In metaphysics, questions surrounding the understanding of God's attributes have been given extensive consideration. There has also been a plethora of work on the

problem of evil, drawing upon work in both epistemology (probability theory) and metaphysics (modality, etc.).

Cuneo values the work that has been done to date by philosophers of religion, but he also harbors worries. He is concerned that the field has been dominated by work on abstract questions and has little to say about a person's everyday religious life. Indeed, Cuneo contrasts the philosophy of religion with ethics, the latter of which deals both with abstract questions—like whether moral facts exist—and applied questions such as abortion or the morality of war. Cuneo's concern is not that contemporary philosophy of religion is 'entirely out of touch' with the everyday religious life, for he admits that some of the work of a thinker like Anselm sprung out of a life of prayer. Moreover, Cuneo acknowledges that there can be a 'trickle down' effect from the academy to communities of non-philosophers who may benefit from the rich resources now available in the university philosophical context. The worry then, for Cuneo, is not that philosophy of religion and the religious life do not intersect, but rather that when they do intersect they do so only at certain points, thus 'yielding a picture of the religious life that often looks to (Cuneo) oddly out of focus.'<sup>395</sup>

Cuneo emphasizes the need for analytic work on the teachings, ideals, practices, and responsibilities that are the concern of the religiously committed life:

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<sup>395</sup> Cuneo, T. *Ritualised Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). 5.

These would include interpretation of scripture and other important texts, broadly ascetic practices such as fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, the education of children and converts in the ways of a tradition, the creation and engagement with works of the arts such as hymns and icons, being involved in or advocating certain social or political movements and, most relevantly for my purposes, corporate worship.<sup>396</sup>

For Cuneo, whilst corporate worship 'lies at the heart of (many people's) religious commitment,' this topic is not addressed in the literature of the philosophy of religion.

Indeed, Cuneo states:

In fact, if the amount of time and ink dedicated to an issue is an indication of the degree to which that issue matters, such a person might well have the impression that, when it comes to religion, what matters is the defensibility of Molinism or the rational credibility of religious belief.<sup>397</sup>

Cuneo points to Nicholas Wolterstorff as an example of someone who has dealt with the topic of worship in the philosophy of religion. In a recent article on Christian liturgy Wolterstorff observes, in agreement with Cuneo, that the issue of knowing God liturgically has received little attention in the philosophical and theological literature. Wolterstorff then argues that a person can come to know God through participating in Christian liturgical enactments.

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<sup>396</sup> *Ritualised Faith*. 5.

<sup>397</sup> *Ritualised Faith*. 6.

Cuneo hopes that his work embarks where Wolterstorff left off and that it will further the work on religiously applied topics in the philosophy of religion in order to provide a more developed picture of the religious life.

### Context Part 2: Divine Silence and Mediation

An interesting area in which we are beginning to see analytic work on the topic of the religious life is that of responses to the problem of divine hiddenness. Mike Rea takes up the issue of Christian liturgy in response to the problem of divine hiddenness.<sup>398</sup> Rea states this problem as the claim that *if* God exists the following mutually inconsistent claims are true:

- P1. God has allowed himself to remain hidden from many people.
- P2. It would be bad for an omnipotent, omniscient God to remain hidden from anyone.
- P3. God, being perfectly good, cannot do anything that is bad.

In defence of P1 Rea cites the following two claims that are often appealed to in the literature on divine hiddenness:

INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE: For many people, the available a priori and empirical evidence in support of God's existence is inconclusive: one can be fully aware of it and at the same time rationally believe that God does not exist.

ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: Many people—believers and unbelievers alike—have never had an experience that seems to them to be a direct experience

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<sup>398</sup> This is also dealt with by Cuneo in Chapter 3 of *Ritualised Faith*.

or awareness of the love or presence of God; and those who do have such experiences have them rarely.

Whilst both of these claims are controversial Rea grants that, for the purpose of his essay, they are true and that they jointly imply that God is hidden. With regard to the second premise, Rea suggests that the problem with divine hiding is that it is incompatible with the following thesis:

**DIVINE CONCERN:** God strongly desires to promote the well-being of all of his rational creatures, both now and in the afterlife.

The reason for the incompatibility is that as, according to Rea, the theistic religions are agreed that belief in God is vital for our present and future well-being, in a world where God is hidden he is doing far less than he could do (given omnipotence and omniscience) to promote rational theistic belief and thus to promote the well-being of his creatures.

Rea acknowledges that a common response to this problem states that God remains hidden in order to promote certain goods. Moreover, Rea observes that in the literature the presumption is that these goods must benefit the sufferer.

**BENEFIT TO THE SUFFERER:** God is justified in allowing undeserved suffering to come to an individual X for the sake of greater goods only if among those greater goods are goods that benefit X.

Much of the literature on the problem of evil attempts to take BENEFIT TO THE SUFFERER into account and thus provide God-justifying goods for divine hiddenness which benefit

the person from whom God is hidden. However, Rea recommends a different approach.

The response he develops is one that is consistent with the following claim:

NO HUMAN GOOD: It is not the case that God permits INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE and ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE in order to secure human goods.

NO HUMAN GOOD rules out the claim that God remains hidden for the sake of a benefit to the sufferer. Rea's argument is that even if NO HUMAN GOOD is true, divine hiddenness does not cast doubt on DIVINE CONCERN. His argument has three central claims:

- a) That ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE and INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE are better thought of as constituting divine *silence* rather than divine *hiddenness*.
- b) That even if NO HUMAN GOOD is true, divine silence is compatible with DIVINE CONCERN so long as God has provided a way for rational creatures to find him and to experience his presence despite the silence.
- c) That there is some reason to think that Biblical narratives and liturgical acts are vehicles by which we might find and experience the presence of God.<sup>399</sup>

With regards to (a), Rea thinks that the difference in terminology—between 'hidden' and 'silent'—is important. He contends that if God hides he must have a reason for doing so. However, as I will explain, this need not be the case if God is merely silent. For Rea, INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE and ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE do not imply that God is deliberately concealing his existence from us. What they do imply, according to Rea, is that 'God hasn't made a special effort to ensure that most of his rational creatures detect

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<sup>399</sup> Rea, M. 'Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God' in Timpe, K. and Stump, E. (eds.) *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honour of Eleonore Stump* (New York: Routledge, 2009). 80.

(as such) whatever signs of his existence there might be or whatever messages he might be sending us.’<sup>400</sup>

Rea’s challenge is to show that divine silence does not cast doubt upon DIVINE CONCERN given NO HUMAN GOOD. He contends that it is hard to ascertain why it is that someone is ‘silent’ towards us unless we know the person very well. He writes:

A senior member of your department doesn’t greet you in the hallway. Is he offended by you? Does he think you’re beneath him? Is he depressed and having a bad day? Or is that *just him*, a little pre-occupied and not really noticing his surroundings? You’re on a day trip with a colleague from another country. You try a few times to strike up conversation, but it never takes off and shortly you find that over an hour has passed in total silence. Is your colleague disrespecting you? Is she playing a power game, trying to force you to carry the conversation or some such thing? Does she find you boring, or intimidating? Or is the silence an indication of nothing more or less than the fact that she is somewhat introverted and doesn’t happen to have a whole lot to say (to anyone) at the moment? Answering questions like this with reliability requires substantial information about what sort of person one is dealing with—about the person’s cultural background, about what sorts of social norms he or she is likely to recognize and respect, about his or her views about what various kinds of behavior (both verbal or not) communicate to others, about his or her general ‘style’ of interacting with other people, and so on. But if this is what it takes to interpret the behavior of an ordinary human person, imagine how difficult it must be to interpret the behavior of an invisible and transcendent *divine* person.<sup>401</sup>

Rea’s point here is that we cannot think that, on the basis of divine silence *in and of itself*, God lacks concern for human persons. Divine silence would only indicate a lack of concern for creatures if, according to Rea, we have good reason to think that God has provided

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<sup>400</sup> ‘Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God’. 83.

<sup>401</sup> ‘Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God’. 87.

'no way for us to find him or to experience his presence in the midst of his silence.'<sup>402</sup> Rea argues that this is not in fact the case.

On Rea's reading, the literature on divine hiddenness seems to take it for granted that DIVINE SELF-DISCLOSURE is true only if either INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE or ABSENCE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE is false. That is, the presence of God is available to all only if either there is conclusive empirical evidence for God's existence or many people have subjective experiences of God. However, Rea contends that this supposition ignores 'the possibility of *mediated* experiences of the presence of God through media that are themselves widely and readily accessible.'<sup>403</sup>

In assessing possible candidates for the sorts of things that might plausibly be thought to mediate experiences of God, Rea turns to the work of Eleonore Stump, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and Sarah Coakley. In Stump, Rea finds an account of the role that a biblical narrative can have in mediating experiences of God. He also endorses some of the work of Wolterstorff and Coakley, affirming the claim that the Christian liturgy may 'mediate the presence' of the events it commemorates.<sup>404</sup>

### Grace through the Eucharist

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<sup>402</sup> 'Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God'. 88.

<sup>403</sup> 'Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God'. 97.

<sup>404</sup> 'Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God'. 98.

In what follows I develop an argument that I hope will make an academic contribution in the following two ways: first, as a response to Cuneo, it will add a Thomist perspective to the little existing contemporary analytic material on the religious life. Second, it will support Rea's claim, alluded to less directly by Wolterstorff, Stump, and Coakley, that relationship with a silent God may be available through mediated means.

I assess the plausibility of the claim that God bestows created grace on some persons through the Eucharist. I consider the Eucharist,<sup>405</sup> rather than one of the other sacraments, for two reasons: first, it is considered a sacrament by both the reformers and the catholic tradition in which Aquinas stands, thus it has wider ecumenical relevance. Second, consideration of the Eucharist as opposed to baptism avoids the conflict between Aquinas and Calvin we assessed in Chapter 3.<sup>406</sup>

I propose the following argument:

1. Persons are created by God for a supernatural end.
2. Persons need supernatural powers to reach a supernatural end. (These powers are effected by grace).

For these reasons:

3. God bestows grace on some persons.
4. There are natural and revealed reasons to think that God has chosen the

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<sup>405</sup> Thanks to Andrew Pinsent for the suggestion that the Eucharist also goes to the heart of the meaning of grace, which constitutes another reason to consider it here. As discussed, grace is directed towards union with God. The Eucharist brings about said union, and also brings about a union of wills insofar as it involves sacrifice, both on the part of Christ and on the part of the recipient.

<sup>406</sup> Calvin rejects the view that created grace is needed for justification. Aquinas thinks such saving grace is bestowed through baptism, which Calvin denies. Hence, concentrating on the Eucharist avoids this disagreement.

sacrament of the Eucharist as a mode of grace-bestowal.

Therefore:

5. It is plausible to think that God bestows grace on some persons through the Eucharist.

I demonstrate that a Thomist should accept the premises and thus the conclusion. I also show that the premises may be accepted by some others in the Christian tradition.

I first get clear on the senses of 'supernatural' in Aquinas. Then, I motivate acceptance of the premises, assessing objections that I conclude are too weak to derail the argument.

### Definition of 'Supernatural'

I propose three not-necessarily-competing ways in which Aquinas uses the term 'supernatural':

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| SN1 | Supernatural is used to mean 'above nature'. <sup>407</sup> This may be applied to a person's 'supernatural end,' which for Aquinas is union with God: the end is 'supernatural' in the sense that it requires supernatural assistance to reach it. It may also be applied to things that assist persons towards this supernatural end, like grace and the theological virtues. |
| SN2 | Supernatural is used to mean 'caused immediately by God post-creation'. <sup>408</sup>  |
| SN3 | Supernatural is used to describe a type of being (like God).  |

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<sup>407</sup> From the latin *supernaturalis*: *supra* 'above' and *naturalis* 'natural'.

<sup>408</sup> By 'post-creation' I mean after God's initial act of creating the universe.

These three senses find support in the secondary and primary literature. Charles Stinson puts forward a 'causal theory' of the meaning of supernatural in support of my SN2.<sup>409</sup> On this theory "a thing is 'supernatural' if God brings it about in some special, immediate manner."<sup>410</sup> Stinson states that for Aquinas, the mental 'species'—the ideas and dream imagery—in the mind of a prophet like Jeremiah or a pagan like Pharaoh count as supernatural. Moreover, the virtues of faith, hope, and love are supernatural qualities infused into a person.<sup>411</sup>

Terence Nichols writes in a similar vein to Stinson.<sup>412</sup> Aside from the attribution of 'supernatural' to God (SN3), for Stinson, Roman Catholic theological usage of 'supernatural' means 'above the powers of nature (either physically, as with miracles, or human nature, as with grace)' (SN1). Nichols proceeds, in what he thinks is a Roman Catholic manner, to use 'supernatural' to refer to God or the Holy Spirit (SN3), and 'supernatural causality' to mean 'the Spirit acting as primary, efficient and productive cause so as to bring about a change in physical or human nature' (SN2). Nichols notes the distinction between supernatural causality and 'the causality with which God upholds and maintains all creatures in existence, which is usually spoken of as 'conservative' causality.'<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Stinson, C. 'The Finite Supernatural: theological perspectives,' *Religious Studies* (1973), Vol.9(3), pp. 325-337.

<sup>410</sup> 'The Finite Supernatural'. 329.

<sup>411</sup> 'The Finite Supernatural'. 330.

<sup>412</sup> Nichols, T. 'Miracles, the supernatural, and the problem of Extrinsicism.' *Gregorianum* 71(1), pp.23-41. 23.

<sup>413</sup> 'Miracles, the supernatural, and the problem of Extrinsicism'. 23.

In *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* Robert Bartlett begins with the thought of Peter Lombard in discussing 'supernatural'.<sup>414</sup> For Lombard, according to Bartlett, there are two types of causes: 'the causes that are in God and creatures... they were implanted by God at the creation... (and) the causes that are in God alone.'<sup>415</sup> Thus, we find in Lombard a 'central dualism' between 'the natural and what is beyond nature,' for some things 'are natural, follow their seminal reason, are part of the course of nature known to man; others are beyond nature, and their cause is in God alone' (SN1 and SN2).<sup>416</sup> According to Bartlett, in a similar vein to Lombard, Aquinas looks for definitions in terms of types of causes: 'some things are caused by the most unknown cause, God's direct power, others are part of the order of natural causes' (SN2).<sup>417</sup>

A common thread in all three of these writers is the view that 'supernatural' is at least partly linked to causality (SN2), summed up by Stinson who states that "a thing is 'supernatural' if God brings it about in some special, immediate manner." I now investigate what Stinson may mean by 'some special, immediate manner,' and consider whether this fits with Thomas' thought.

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<sup>414</sup> Bartlett, R. *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>415</sup> *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages*. 7.

<sup>416</sup> *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages*. 7.

<sup>417</sup> *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages*. 8.

For Aquinas, all existent things are ultimately caused by God. He states, 'it must be said that every being in any way existing is from God. For whatever is found in anything by participation, must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially.'<sup>418</sup> Given that for Aquinas 'all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation' in God's being, all beings are caused by God. Thus, not only is there the 'emanation of a particular being from a particular agent,' for example in childbirth, but also 'the emanation of all being from the universal cause, which is God; and this emanation we designate by the name of creation.'<sup>419</sup>

Not only has God created all that is, but Thomas holds that he guides all there is towards certain ends, 'for the type of the order of things towards their end... pre-exist(s) in the divine mind: and the type of things ordered towards an end is, properly speaking, providence.'<sup>420</sup> Providence involves two things for Aquinas, namely, the type of the order of things foreordained towards an end; and the execution of this order, which is called government.<sup>421</sup> God has 'in His intellect the types of everything, even the smallest,' so he assigns causes to certain effects, and gives them the power to produce those effects. In God's execution of his plan, there are 'certain intermediaries' which we may call secondary causes. God makes use of secondary causes for 'He governs things inferior by superior, not on account of any defect in His power, but by reason of the abundance of

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<sup>418</sup> ST I q44.

<sup>419</sup> ST I q45.

<sup>420</sup> ST I q22 a1.

<sup>421</sup> ST I q22 a3.

His goodness; so that the dignity of causality is imparted even to creatures.’ Thomas states, ‘while the effect depends first and principally on the first cause, it also depends in a secondary way on all the middle causes. Therefore, the first cause is the principal cause of the preservation of the effect which is to be referred to the middle causes in a secondary way.’<sup>422</sup>

In light of this, it seems we may accept Stinson’s proposal in support of SN2 for understanding a part of what is meant by ‘supernatural,’ if by ‘God brings it about in some special, immediate manner’ he means that God brings about without the use of secondary causes.

To further this exploration of the meaning of ‘supernatural’ in Aquinas consider his thoughts on miracles in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. He describes miracles as things which are ‘divinely accomplished’ though ‘apart from the generally established order in things.’ When we observe an effect and are ignorant of its cause we react with astonishment. At times, a cause may be known to some but not to others, and thus some are astonished whilst others who observe the same effect are not. Aquinas illustrates this with the example of an eclipse of the sun: some are amazed by this wonder, whilst the astronomer is not as he understands the cause which is unknown to others. But if a thing has a completely hidden cause it is ‘wondrous in an unqualified way,’ and this is what we label a miracle; that which is ‘itself filled with admirable wonder,’ not just in relation to one

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<sup>422</sup> ST I q104 a2.

person or another. The cause which is hidden from all persons is God, thus miracles are things done by 'divine power apart from the order generally followed in things.'<sup>423</sup>

Aquinas describes three degrees of miracles. First, there are 'those events in which something is done by God which nature never could do' (SN1 and SN2), an example of which is the parting of the Red Sea during the Israelites' flight from Egypt. Second, God does something which nature can do but 'not in this order' (SN2), for whilst it is natural for a person to see, it is not natural for a blind person to see. Third, God does what is usually done by the working of nature 'but without the operation of the principles of nature,' as when a person is healed of a fever 'which could be cured naturally' (SN2).<sup>424</sup>

### Supernatural End

Premise (1) states that persons are created for a supernatural end; that is, for Aquinas and much of the Christian tradition, persons are created to know and love God.<sup>425</sup> Aquinas states that 'God is the last end of man.'<sup>426</sup> Persons attain their last end by 'knowing and loving God.'<sup>427</sup> Immediately after referring to God as a person's last end Aquinas

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<sup>423</sup> SCG Bk3 Ch101. Italics mine.

<sup>424</sup> SCG Bk3 Ch101.

<sup>425</sup> Note that whilst human beings cannot *fully* enjoy this end until the afterlife, nevertheless the enjoyment begins in this life in the perfection of the life of grace.

<sup>426</sup> ST Iallae q3 a8. There is considerable scholarly debate over the interpretation of this article. See Feingold, L. *The Natural Desire to see God according to Saint Thomas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, Florida: Sapientia press of Ave Maria University, 2010).

<sup>427</sup> Note that it is possible to have a natural knowledge and love of God in an eternal state. See Pinsent, A. C. 'Limbo and the Children of *Faerie*,' *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 33,

addresses the question of human happiness.<sup>428</sup> He describes happiness as ‘the perfect good,’ and as ‘the last end’ upon reaching which ‘nothing remain(s) to be desired.’ Moreover, he equates happiness and God: ‘God alone constitutes man’s happiness.’ There is a distinction in this latter equation, however. God is a person’s last end, the ‘uncreated good,’ and thus a person’s happiness ‘in its cause or object... is something uncreated (God).’<sup>429</sup> But the attainment or enjoyment of this happiness is something created, existing in a person. This last end is supernatural both in the sense that the end *is* God (SN3) and that the end is above nature (SN1), as we shall see when considering premise (2) below.

### Supernatural Powers

Whilst premise (1) is, I think, fairly uncontroversial for Christian thinkers, premise (2) needs more explanation and motivation.

For Aquinas, human persons can have both a natural and a supernatural happiness. Natural happiness is ‘proportionate to human nature’ and is such that a person may obtain it by means of ‘natural principles.’ Supernatural happiness surpasses human

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No.3, pp. 293-310, July 2016. However, Aquinas thinks that human beings are created not only to have a natural knowledge and love of God but rather to have a supernatural knowledge and love, located in the life of grace and glory.

<sup>428</sup> ST Iallae q2.

<sup>429</sup> ST Iallae q2.

nature, and may be obtained 'by the power of God alone.'<sup>430</sup> As this happiness surpasses human nature a person's natural principles are not sufficient to direct him to this happiness, but rather some 'additional principles' must be received from God. These principles are called the 'theological virtues,' for three reasons: first, because the object of these virtues is God inasmuch as they 'direct us aright' to God. Second, the virtues are infused in us by God alone. And third, the virtues are not made known to us apart from divine revelation.<sup>431</sup>

Recall from Chapter 1 that, for Aquinas, the theological virtues are caused by grace. Moreover, grace is a supernatural quality. It is supernatural in the sense that it is above nature (SN1) and it is caused immediately by God (SN2).

It is non-controversial in the Christian tradition that a person's end is supernatural in the sense of SN3, but it is much less clear why it must be supernatural in the sense of SN1. Rondet comments on Aquinas' view that humans are essentially dependent upon God to reach their last end. Whilst every being has an end towards which it tends, and can attain this end through its natural powers, humans are an exception to this rule, as 'the end for which (they) have been created is absolutely out of proportion to (their) nature.' Thus, in order to attain God, persons need God's help, 'freely offered by God, freely accepted or refused by the creature.' Rondet asks why persons could not have been created with an

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<sup>430</sup> ST Iallae q62 a1.

<sup>431</sup> ST Iallae q62 a1.

‘interior virtue which would invincibly orient (them) towards (their) end?’ For Aquinas, according to Rondet, this would have been impossible, as the beatific vision could not have been natural to anyone but God himself.<sup>432</sup> But, for Aquinas, Rondet thinks this is a glorious thing, ‘since it is better to be destined for a sublime end, at the cost of receiving it from another, than to pursue all alone a miserable end.’<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> See ST I q12 a4. ‘It is impossible for any created intellect to see the essence of God by its own natural power. For knowledge is regulated according as the thing known is in the knower. But the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Hence the knowledge of every knower is ruled according to its own nature. If therefore the mode of anything’s being exceeds the mode of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of the object is above the nature of the knower. Now the mode of being of things is manifold. For some things have being only in this one individual matter; as all bodies. But others are subsisting natures, not residing in matter at all, which, however, are not their own existence, but receive it; and these are the incorporeal beings, called angels. But to God alone does it belong to be his own subsistent being. Therefore what exists only in individual matter we know naturally, forasmuch as our soul, whereby we know, is the form of certain matter. Now our soul possesses two cognitive powers; one in the act of a corporeal organ, which naturally knows things existing in individual matter; hence sense knows only the singular. But there is another kind of cognitive power in the soul, called the intellect; and this is not the act of any corporeal organ. Wherefore the intellect naturally knows natures which exist only in individual matter; not as they are in such individual matter, but according as they are abstracted therefrom by the considering act of the intellect; hence it follows that through the intellect we can understand these objects as universal; and this is beyond the power of the sense. Now the angelic intellect naturally knows natures that are not in matter; but this is beyond the power of the intellect of our soul in the state of its present life, united as it is to the body. It follows therefore that to know self-subsisting being is natural to the divine intellect alone; and this is beyond the natural power of any created intellect; for no creature is its own existence, forasmuch as its existence is participated. Therefore the created intellect cannot see the essence of God, unless God by his grace unites himself to the created intellect, as an object made intelligible to it.’

<sup>433</sup> Rondet, H. *The grace of Christ: a brief history of the theology of grace* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1967). 211 – 212.

In what follows I consider the subjects of the power to avoid committing mortal sin, the power to know supernatural truths, and the power to merit eternal life, to explain this dependence of persons upon God commented on by Rondet. In doing so, I motivate acceptance of premise (2). I think that all of the arguments I put forward are acceptable to Thomists. The first argument, regarding the power to avoid committing moral sin, should be acceptable to most within the Christian tradition. The second and third arguments, regarding the power to know supernatural truth and the power to merit eternal life, should be acceptable to some within the Christian tradition.

### The Power To Avoid Committing Mortal Sin

Consider this argument:

- 6) In order to avoid committing mortal sin over a long period of time a person's nature must be properly ordered.
- 7) Original sin causes a person's nature not to be properly ordered.
- 8) Only grace returns order to a nature disordered by original sin.  
Therefore,
- 9) For those born into original sin, grace is needed in order to avoid committing mortal sin over a long period of time.

Aquinas thinks that, pre-fall, human nature was ordered properly. This right ordering involved the reason being subject to God, the lower powers of the soul to reason, and the body to the soul. The subjection of the reason to God was the cause of the latter two subordinations, since 'while reason was subject to God, the lower powers remained subject

to reason.<sup>434</sup> This right-ordering was not ‘from nature,’ otherwise it would have remained after sin. This subjection of the reason to God was thus a ‘supernatural endowment of grace’<sup>435</sup> and is what Aquinas calls original justice.

Whilst the right-ordering of a person’s nature does not guarantee that the person will not commit a mortal sin—Adam and Eve’s natures were rightly ordered yet they sinned—it does mean that a person is able to avoid committing a mortal sin.<sup>436</sup>

Aquinas thinks that sin is an inordinate act.<sup>437</sup> A person sins when his will ‘lacks the direction of the rule of reason and of the Divine law’ and thus pursues an apparent good rather than the eternal good, which is God. What is needed to avoid mortal sin is for the reason to guide the will and the bodily passions.

The fall of Adam and Eve means that, for Aquinas, human persons are born into a state of original sin rather than a state of original justice. A state of original sin is one which lacks grace.<sup>438</sup> A result of a person lacking grace is that his nature is not properly ordered

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<sup>434</sup> ST 1a q95 a1

<sup>435</sup> ST 1a q95 a1.

<sup>436</sup> See ST 1a q109 a8 reply to obj 3.

<sup>437</sup> ST 1a q75 a1.

<sup>438</sup> There is considerable debate in the secondary literature as to the nature of the exact link between grace and original justice. What is clear, however, is that *there is a link* between the two; without grace there is no original justice. For an overview see Vollert, C. ‘Saint Thomas on Sanctifying Grace and Original Justice: a Comparative Study of a Recent Controversy,’ *Theological Studies*, V2, No. 3, Sept. 1941.

towards God, as original sin is 'an inordinate disposition, arising from the destruction of the harmony which was essential to original justice.'<sup>439</sup>

In such a state of original sin a person is unable to avoid committing mortal sin:

(In a state of original sin man) can avoid individual mortal sins, any one for a certain space of time, because he does not have to be committing acts of sin all the time. But *it is not possible for him to remain without mortal sin for long...* And this is because just as the lower instincts ought to be subject to the reason, so too the reason should be subject to God, and make him the end of its will. Now all human actions should be ruled by the end, just as the movements of lower instinct should be ruled by the judgment of reason. Just as then there cannot fail to be disordered movements of desire in the senses so long as this sense-desire is not wholly subject to reason, so too *many disorders arise in the acts of reason itself if man's reason is not stably submitted to God*. For when a man does not have his heart firmly established in God, in such a way that he does not wish to be separated from him for the sake of obtaining any good or avoiding any evil, many things arise to obtain or to avoid which man departs from God, rejecting his precepts, and so sins mortally.<sup>440</sup>

Premise (6) states that in order to avoid committing mortal sin *over a long period of time* a person's nature must be properly ordered. As we see in the passage above, Aquinas

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<sup>439</sup> ST Iallae q82 a1.

<sup>440</sup> ST Iallae q109 a8. Italics mine. (Homo) potest singula peccata mortalia vitare, et secundum aliquod tempus; quia non est necesse quod continuo peccet in actu. Sed quod diu maneat absque peccato mortali, esse non potest... Et hujus ratio est, quia, sicut rationi subdi debet inferior appetitus, ita etiam ratio subdi debet Deo, et in ipso constituere finem suae voluntatis. Per finem autem oportet quod regulentur omnes actus humani, sicut per rationis iudicium regulari debent motus inferioris appetitus. Sicut ergo inferiori appetitu non totaliter subjecto rationi, non potest esse quin contingant inordinati motus in appetitu sensitivo; ita etiam ratione hominis non existente subjecta Deo, consequens est ut contingant multae inordinationes in ipsis actibus rationis. Cum enim homo non habet cor suum firmatum in Deo, ut pro nullo bono consequendo vel malo vitando ab eo separari vellet, occurrunt multa propter quae consequenda vel vitanda homo recedit a Deo, contemnendo praecepta ipsius; et ita peccat mortaliter.

thinks that a person can avoid individual acts of mortal sin without grace. However, he cannot go 'for long' without committing a mortal sin, if not influenced by grace.

In order to avoid committing mortal sin over a long period of time, Aquinas thinks that grace is needed:

In the state of spoiled nature... man needs habitual grace to heal nature, so as wholly to refrain from sin. In our present life, this healing is brought about in the mind, although fleshly desires are not yet wholly renewed; so Paul, speaking in the person of man renewed, says, *With the mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh that law of sin*. In this state man can refrain from mortal sin, which is the affair of reason.<sup>441</sup>

In assessing the premises of this argument we note that there are various doctrines of original sin in the Christian tradition.<sup>442</sup> Different doctrines provide different explanations of what it is that is wrong with a person's nature when in a state of original sin. As explained, Aquinas writes of a person in a state of original sin as having a disordered nature. Whilst not all in the Christian tradition agree that original sin causes a person's nature to be disordered, the traditional and orthodox line is that original sin causes something to be wrong with a person's nature. What it means for 'something to be wrong

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<sup>441</sup> ST I-II q109 a8. In statu autem naturae corruptae indiget homo gratia habituali sanante naturam ad hoc quod omnino a peccato abstineat. Quae quidem sanatio primo fit in praesenti vita secundum mentem, appetitu carnali nondum totaliter reparato. Unde Apostolus, ad *Rom.*, in persona hominis reparati dicit, *Ego ipse mente servio legi Dei, carne autem legi peccati*. In quo quidem statu potest homo abstinere ab omni peccato mortali, quod in ratione consistit, ut supra habitum est.

<sup>442</sup> See Rondet, H. *Original Sin: the Patristic and Theological Background*, trans. Finegan, C. (Paris: Ecclesia Press, 1972). Wiley, T. *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Readings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002).

with a person's nature' may be spelt out differently by different thinkers; Aquinas offers one explanation. To include other explanations of original sin, we can reformulate the argument as follows:

- 10) In order to avoid committing mortal sin over a long period of time a person must not be in a state of original sin.
- 11) Only grace takes persons born into a state of original sin out of being in a state of original sin.  
Therefore,
- 12) For those born into original sin, grace is needed in order to avoid committing mortal sin over a long period of time.

Rejecting (10) amounts to being committed to the heresy of pelagianism. In response to the views of Pelagius, the Council of Carthage states:

Canon 111: That the grace of God not only gives remission of sins, but also affords aid that we sin no more.

Canon 113: That without the grace of God we can do no good thing.

It seemed good that whosoever should say that the grace of justification was given to us only that we might be able more readily by grace to perform what we were ordered to do through our free will; *as if though grace was not given, although not easily, yet nevertheless we could even without grace fulfil the divine commandments*, let him be anathema.<sup>443</sup>

Canon 114: That not only humble but also true is that voice of the Saints: 'If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.'

It also seemed good that as St. John the Apostle says, 'If we shall say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us,' whosoever thinks that this should be so understood as to mean that out of humility, we ought to say that we have sin, and not because it is really so, let him be anathema. For the Apostle goes on to add, 'But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity,' where it is sufficiently clear that this is said not only of humility but also truly. For the Apostle might have said, 'If we shall say we have no sin we shall extoll ourselves, and humility shall have no place in us'; but

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<sup>443</sup> Italics mine.

when he says, 'We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us' he sufficiently intimates that he who affirmed that he had no sin would speak not that which is true but that which is false.

Canon 115: That in the Lord's Prayer the Saints say for themselves: 'Forgive us our trespasses.'

It has seemed good that whoever should say that when in the Lord's prayer, the saints say, 'forgive us our trespasses,' they say this not for themselves, because they have no need of this petition, but for the rest who are sinners of the people; and that therefore no one of the saints can say, 'Forgive me my trespasses,' but 'Forgive us our trespasses'; so that the just man is understood to seek this for others rather than for himself; let him be anathema.<sup>444</sup>

Canon 111 does not explicitly state that persons need the aid of grace in order to 'sin no more,' for it could be that whilst persons can sin no more without grace, the latter provides help for those who struggle with the challenge: on such a view, grace makes it easier to avoid sin, but it is still possible to avoid sin without grace. However, it seems likely that implicit in the Canon is the view that without grace persons cannot avoid sin, especially when combined with Canon 113 which claims that persons need grace in order to fulfil the divine commandments. Further, Canon 114 and 115 state that all persons (I assume that Christ, the Virgin Mary, and those who are not yet capable of sin are not included) sin; if it is possible to avoid sin without grace, persons are not doing a good job of it.

The assumption in all four of these canons is that the persons are born into original sin, as is stated here:

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<sup>444</sup> Available online: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3816.htm>.

Canon 110: That infants are baptized for the remission of sins.

Likewise it seemed good that whosoever denies that infants newly from their mother's wombs should be baptized, or says that baptism is for remission of sins, *but that they derive from Adam no original sin*, which needs to be removed by the laver of regeneration, from whence the conclusion follows, that in them the form of baptism for the remission of sins, is to be understood as false and not true, let him be anathema.<sup>445</sup>

Thus, the Council of Carthage affirms premise (10): that in order to avoid committing mortal sin over a long period of time a person must not be in a state of original sin. And as a state of original sin is a state which lacks grace (see above), only grace can remove a person from this state (premise (11)). Therefore, the conclusion follows.

### The Power to Know Supernatural Truths

Aquinas asks whether persons can know (*cognoscere*) any truth without grace. He responds:

Now every form bestowed on created things by God has power for a determined act, which it can bring about in proportion to its own proper endowment; and beyond which it is powerless, except by a superadded form, as water can only heat when heated by the fire. And thus the human understanding has a form, viz. intelligible light, which of itself is sufficient for knowing certain intelligible things, viz. those we can come to know through the senses. Higher intelligible things the human intellect cannot know, *unless it be perfected by a stronger light*, viz. the light of faith or prophecy which is called "the light of grace," inasmuch as it is added to nature. Hence we must say that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs Divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act. But he does not need a new light added to this natural light, in order to know the truth in all things, *but only in some that surpass his natural knowledge*.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>446</sup> ST I-II q109 a1. Italics mine. Unaquaeque autem forma indita rebus creatis a Deo habet efficaciam respectu alicujus actus determinati, in quem potest secundum suam

Aquinas thinks that there are some truths which are beyond a person's natural comprehension. To know these truths, the light of grace is needed.

In his Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, Aquinas writes of a threefold knowledge (*cognitio*) of God. The first is that by which God is known 'only in his effects,' insofar as when someone knows something created he also has an implicit knowledge of the Creator. Second, there is knowledge of God 'considered in himself' but gained only 'through his effects.' This knowledge may be acquired through natural reason, for which only a natural light is needed. It was through this natural light that the ancient philosophers arrived at a knowledge of God. Third, God is known 'in himself and in those things that exceed all proportion to his effects.' For Aquinas, the natural light of reason is not sufficient to attain this latter knowledge, nor is this knowledge naturally implanted in persons, rather it is 'had through an infused light.'<sup>447</sup> Hence grace, which is above nature,

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proprietaem; ultra autem non potest nisi per aliquam formam superadditam, sicut aqua non potest calefacere nisi calefacta ab igne. Sic igitur intellectus humanus habet aliquam formam, scilicet ipsum intelligibile lumen quod est de se sufficiens ad quaedam intelligibilia cognoscenda, ad ea scilicet in quorum notitiam per sensibilia possumus devenire. Altiora vero intelligibilia intellectus humanus cognoscere non potest, nisi fortiori lumine perficiatur, sicut lumine fidei vel prophetiae, quod dicitur lumen gratiae, in quantum est naturae superadditum. Sic igitur dicendum est quod ad cognitionem cuiuscumque veri homo indiget auxilio divino, ut intellectus a Deo moveatur ad suum actum. Non autem indiget ad cognoscendam veritatem in omnibus nova illustratione superaddita naturali illustrationi, sed in quibusdam quae excedunt naturalem cognitionem.

<sup>447</sup> Aquinas, T. *On Love and Charity: readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008). Sententiarum 1 d17 q1 a1. Est autem triplex cognitio Dei. Una est qua cognoscitur in suis effectibus tantum, prout si in quantum cognoscit quis ens vel aliquid creatum, habet

is needed to bring about the theological virtue of faith, giving persons the power to know supernatural truth.

I now consider why it is that grace is needed to effect faith in order that persons may have the power to know supernatural truths.

### *What Aquinas Does Not Mean*

In an attempt to understand what Aquinas means by the claim that grace is needed to know supernatural truths, I rule out two options. First, although Aquinas thinks that there are some theological truths—like the truth that God is triune—that we cannot discover through natural reasoning, this is not what he means when he says that persons need grace in order to know supernatural truths. Some supernatural truths are not

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aliqualem cognitionem Dei creantis et creantis ipsum. Et haec inest omnibus hominibus naturaliter et a principio. Alia est quod Deus in se consideratur et tamen cognoscitur per effectus suos, prout quis ex cognitione effectum devenit in cognitionem ipsius Dei. Et haec, licet non statim, tamen per inquisitionem naturalis rationis haberi potest. Et sic philosophi et alii sapientes deveniunt, secundum quod possibile est pervenire, in cognitionem Dei. Tertia cognitio est secundum quod cognoscitur in se ipsum et in ea quae excedunt omnem proportionem effectuum. Et haec neque inest hominibus naturaliter, neque per inquisitionem naturalis rationis habetur, sed per lumen supernaturale infusum. Et secundum hanc triplicem cognitionem, sumitur triplex dilectio. Una est qua Deus diligitur in suis effectibus, prout in quantum diligo aliquam creaturam, dicor diligere Deum. Alia est qua ipse Deus diligitur ex suis effectibus, et haec habetur per inquisitionem, sicut si aliquis cognoscens Deum ex effectibus diligit eum. Alia est qua homo transcendit omnes effectus et omnem creaturam, et dirigit affectum suum in ipsum Deum, et diligit ipsam bonitatem Dei secundum quod est beatitudo nostra, ut habamus quandam societatem ad ipsum; et haec est omnino supra naturam et rationem naturalem. Unde ad diligendum hoc modo Deum requiritur aliquid supernaturale quod elevet affectum nostrum in ipsum Deum secundum seipsum diligendum.

discoverable by natural reason, and for these to be knowable by human persons, revelation is required. However, the issue is not how we *learn* of these supernatural truths—through revelation rather than natural reason—but how we can *know* them.

Second, Aquinas also thinks that we are not able to see *the essence* of God by our natural powers. He writes:

God cannot be seen in His essence by a mere human being, except he be separated from this mortal life. The reason is because, as was said above (Article 4), the mode of knowledge follows the mode of the nature of the knower. But our soul, as long as we live in this life, has its being in corporeal matter; hence, naturally it knows only what has a form in matter, or what can be known by such a form. Now it is evident that the Divine essence cannot be known through the nature of material things. For it was shown above (1:2:9) that the knowledge of God by means of any created similitude is not the vision of His essence. Hence it is impossible for the soul of man in this life to see the essence of God.<sup>448</sup>

Whilst Aquinas is clear that we cannot see the essence of God by our own natural powers, he is also clear that neither can we see the essence of God in this life; such a vision is reserved for the afterlife.<sup>449</sup> So, when we ask why it is that grace is needed in order to

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<sup>448</sup> ST I q12 a11. Dicendum quod ad homine puro Deus videri per essentiam non potest, nisi ab hac vita mortali separetur. Cujus ratio est quia, sicut supra dictum est, modus cognitionis sequitur modum naturae rei cognoscentis. Anima autem nostra, quamdiu in hac vita vivimus, habet esse in materia corporali; unde naturaliter non cognoscit aliqua, nisi quae habent formam in materia, vel quae per hujusmodi cognosci possunt. Manifestum est autem quod per naturas rerum materialium divina essentia cognosci non potest. Ostensum est enim supra, quod cognitio Dei per quamcumque similitudinem creatam non est visio essentiae ipsius. Unde impossibile est animae hominis secundum hanc vitam viventis essentiam Dei videre.

<sup>449</sup> An exception to this is that of rapture. See ST IIaIIae q175 a2.

know supernatural truths, it is not because we need it in order to see the Divine essence, for Aquinas thinks that grace is needed for faith during our earthly lives.

### *'To Believe'*

Aquinas distinguishes the act of believing by faith from other acts of the intellect. He thinks that 'to believe' is the internal act of faith,<sup>450</sup> and he asks whether to believe is to think with assent. Aquinas claims that 'to think' can be taken in three ways. First, it can be taken in a general way for 'any kind of consideration of the intellect,' and he quotes Augustine who states, 'by understanding I mean now the faculty whereby we understand when thinking.' This first sort of thinking is associated with science, when a person gains knowledge of a conclusion through its demonstration.

Second, 'to think' may be taken for the activity of the intellect which is 'accompanied by some kind of enquiry,' preceding the intellect's arrival at 'the stage of perfection that comes with the certitude of sight.' Importantly, when 'to think' is taken in this way the mind is in the process of deliberating, having not yet reached a conclusion on the truth of the matter. This sort of deliberation can be about universal notions, in which case it is intellectual in nature, or about 'particular matters,' in which case it is sensitive in nature, so the second sense of 'to think' is the activity of the deliberating intellect, and the third sense is the activity of the cogitative power.

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<sup>450</sup> The external act of faith is the act of confession of faith.

Aquinas thinks that the act of believing falls under the second way of taking 'to think.' Whilst some acts of the intellect involve firm assent (scientific knowledge), others lack this, having 'unformed thought devoid of firm assent.' A person who inclines to neither thinking a proposition true or false 'doubts,' according to Aquinas. A person may incline to thinking one side (true or false) more likely than another, on 'account of a slight motive,' in which case such a person 'suspects.' A person may also incline to one side (true or false) and yet be aware that the other side may be correct, in which case a person 'opines.' But Aquinas describes the person who believes as follows:

This act 'to believe,' clings firmly to one side, in which respect belief has something in common with science and understanding; yet its knowledge (*cognitio*) does not attain the perfection of clear sight, wherein it agrees with doubt, suspicion, and opinion. Hence it is proper to the believer to think with assent: so that the act of believing is distinguished from all the other acts of the intellect, which are about the true or the false.<sup>451</sup>

As Aquinas explains, the act of believing has something in common both with scientific knowledge and with doubt/suspicion/opinion.

### *The Will*

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<sup>451</sup> ST IIaellae q2 a1. Sed actus iste qui est credere habet firmam adhaesionem ad unam partem, in quo convenit credens cum sciente et intelligente; et tamen ejus cognitio non est perfecta per manifestam visionem, in quo convenit cum dubitante, suspicante et opinante. Et sic proprium est credentis ut cum assensu cogitet; et propter hoc distinguitur iste actus qui est credere ab omnibus actibus intellectus qui sunt circa verum vel falsum.

If believing involves the certainty of scientific knowledge ('firm assent'), yet unlike scientific knowledge it lacks the demonstration that convinces the intellect of the truth of the proposition, there must be something else which moves the intellect to assent. It is here that Aquinas thinks the will plays a role. He writes:

Sometimes, however, the intellect can be determined to one side of a contradictory proposition neither immediately through the definitions of the terms, as is the case with principles, nor yet in virtue of principles, as is the case with conclusions from a demonstration. And in this situation *our intellect is determined by the will, which chooses to assent to one side definitely and precisely* because of something which is enough to move the will, though not enough to move the intellect, namely, since it seems good or fitting to assent to this side. And this is the state of one who believes. This may happen when someone believes what another says because it seems fitting or useful to do so.<sup>452</sup>

For Aquinas, with regards to scientific knowledge, a person can gain firm knowledge of the truth or falsity of a proposition by considering the scientific demonstration. On the other hand, in cases of opinion, suspicion, or doubt, a person does not firmly decide on the truth or falsity of a proposition. But in the case of belief, for Aquinas, although the person's intellect is not firm in the knowledge of the truth or falsity of a proposition, the will moves the intellect to assent to the truth of the proposition because of something moving the will.

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<sup>452</sup> *De Veritate* q14 a1. Italics mine. Quandoque vero intellectus non potest determinari ad alteram partem contradictionis neque statim per ipsas definitiones terminorum, sicut in principiis, nec etiam virtute principiorum, sicut est in conclusionibus demonstrationis; determinatur autem per voluntatem, quae eligit assentire uni parti determinate et praecise propter aliquid, quod est sufficiens ad movendum voluntatem, non autem ad movendum intellectum, utpote quia videtur bonum vel conveniens huic parti assentire. Et ista est dispositio credentis, ut cum aliquis credit dictis alicuius hominis, quia videtur ei decens vel utile.

## *Certainty*

Before we consider what it is that moves the will in the act of believing, we may note that when Aquinas writes of believing in religious propositions he thinks that we should believe with firm assent: we can be *certain* of what we believe about central Christian dogmas. Whilst not everyone in the Christian tradition agrees that faith involves certainty, many do. Calvin, for example, includes certainty in his definition of faith: 'Faith is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us.'<sup>453</sup> He later explains this definition as follows: 'The certainty which (faith) requires must be full and decisive, as is usual in regard to matters ascertained and proved.'<sup>454</sup>

We find the importance of certainty in faith affirmed in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Protestant Confessional:

Q21: What is true faith?

- A. True faith is not only a *sure* knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word, but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

Q22: What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?

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<sup>453</sup> *Institutes*. 549.

<sup>454</sup> *Institutes*. 559 – 560.

A. All that is promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith teaches us in summary.<sup>455</sup>

So too does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirm the doctrine: 'Faith is certain. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very word of God who cannot lie.'<sup>456</sup>

### *Grace Moves the Will*

We turn to the question of what it is that moves the will in the act of believing. Aquinas provides an explanation of how the intellect and will work together in the act of believing:

The intellect is determined to something through the will, and the will does nothing except in so far as it is moved by its object, which is the good to be sought for and its end.<sup>457</sup>

For an act of belief, Aquinas thinks that two movements are needed: the will is moved by a good, and the intellect is moved by the will. Human persons have two final goods, natural and supernatural. A person's supernatural good is 'out of all proportion with man's nature because his natural powers are not enough to attain to it.' This supernatural

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<sup>455</sup> Available online: <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/confessions/heidelberg-catechism>.

<sup>456</sup> Available online: <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/PX.HTM>. 157.

<sup>457</sup> *De Veritate* q14 a2. Cum enim dispositio credentis, ut supra dictum est, talis sit, quod intellectus determinetur ad aliquid per voluntatem; voluntas autem nihil facit nisi secundum quod est mota per suum obiectum, quod est bonum appetibile, et finis.

good is eternal life with God, and it is this good that moves the will to assent to the articles of faith.

The issue is—and this is where grace comes in—that a thing can only be directed to an end if it has ‘a certain proportion to the end;’ it is from having a proportion to an end that the desire for the end arises. Aquinas explains this desire for an end:

This happens in so far as, in a certain sense, the end is made to exist inchoatively within (the desiring thing), because it desires nothing except in so far as it has some likeness of the end. This is why there is in human nature a certain initial participation of the good which is proportionate to that nature. For self-evident principles of demonstrations, which are seeds of the contemplation of wisdom, naturally preexist in that good, as do principles of natural law, which are seeds of the moral virtues.<sup>458</sup>

Here we read that there must be a ‘seed’ of what we desire in the thing desiring. It is because of this that Aquinas thinks that there must be ‘some initial participation’ of eternal life in human persons if they are to be ordained to eternal life as an end. We have this initial participation, Aquinas explains, through faith, brought about by grace. This faith ‘holds those things which are beyond our natural knowledge.’<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> *De Veritate* q14 a2. Et hoc est secundum quod aliqua finis inchoatio fit in ipso, quia nihil appetit bonum nisi in quantum habet aliquam illius boni similitudinem. Et inde est quod in ipsa natura humana est quaedam inchoatio ipsius boni quod est naturae proportionatum: praeexistunt enim naturaliter in ipso principia demonstrationum per se nota, quae sunt semina quaedam contemplationis sapientiae; et principia iuris naturalis quae sunt semina virtutum moralium.

<sup>459</sup> *De Veritate* q14 a2.

Aquinas not only thinks that belief requires a good that moves the will, but also, as we saw above, that the will moves the intellect to assent to a proposition. The will, which is moved by the good of eternal life, proposes 'as worthy of assent' something which is not evident to the natural intellect. Aquinas thinks that grace, 'by which eternal life begins in us,' moves the will which causes the intellect to assent to things (that is, articles of faith) that are not evident.

### *Aquinas' Argument*

Consider this formulation of Aquinas' argument that grace is needed in order to know (*cognoscere*) supernatural truths:

- 13) The internal act of faith is believing in supernatural truths with certainty.
- 14) The evidence for supernatural truths falls short of what is normally required for certainty.
- 15) Given (14), something other than the evidence must move a person to certainty.
- 16) Only grace can do the work of this something (from (15)).
- 17) Therefore, grace is required in order to know (*cognoscere*) supernatural truths.

Some will take issue with (13), but as I explained above, the view that faith involves certainty is widespread in the Christian tradition. Some will also take issue with (14), although I think that such thinkers are in the minority in the Christian tradition.

It may be objected regarding (16) that this 'something' need not be grace but may be God acting directly upon a person, moving her to belief in supernatural truths. But as we saw

in Chapter 1, the reason Aquinas and other medievals claim that a created habit is involved in the process of salvation is because it upholds the agency of the human person. If God acts directly on a person, causing her to believe, then God does violence to the person's will. However, if God bestows grace upon a person then, according to the medievals, there are two agents at work in believing: God, who moves the will through grace, and the human person. In this case, the will moves freely.

I do not have space to prove the claims that faith involves certainty, that the evidence for supernatural truths falls short of certainty, and that human persons have the sort of agency in the process of salvation described by the medievals. However, all three of these claims find widespread support in the Christian tradition, so some readers will find Aquinas' argument persuasive.

### The Power to Merit Eternal Life

Aquinas understands charity as 'the friendship of man for God.' Charity is based upon a communication between man and God, inasmuch as God 'communicates His happiness to us.'<sup>460</sup> Recall that Aquinas thinks that our supernatural end is twofold: there is 'the thing itself which we desire to attain,' and there is the attainment, possession, or enjoyment of the thing desired. In the first sense a person's last end is the uncreated good, namely, God, 'Who alone by His infinite goodness can perfectly satisfy man's will.'

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<sup>460</sup> ST IIaellae q23 a1.

In the second way, 'man's last end is something created, existing in him, and this is nothing else than the attainment or enjoyment of the last end.'<sup>461</sup> Thus, Aquinas says, happiness is something created.

Happiness consists in an act of the intellect, not an act of the will. The will moves a person towards the end, but 'the desire itself of the end is not the attainment of the end, but is a movement towards the end.'<sup>462</sup> Rectitude of the will is 'the right order of the will to the last end,' and is thus necessary for attaining the end. If a being were to 'possess the perfect good' without movement of the will, the perfect good would have to belong to it naturally. As this is the case for God alone, only God has Happiness without any previous operation. As Happiness 'surpasses any created nature,' all rational creatures must be moved towards happiness by the will. An angel may obtain such Happiness by *one* movement of a meritorious work, whilst persons 'obtain it by many movements of works which are called merits.'<sup>463</sup>

Aquinas' thought here is that in order to attain happiness a person must be directed to happiness through the will. This movement towards happiness involves meritorious works. For these works to be meritorious they must be influenced by grace, to avoid Pelagianism. Aquinas writes:

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<sup>461</sup> ST I-II q3 a1.

<sup>462</sup> ST I-II q3 a4.

<sup>463</sup> ST I-II q5 a7.

I answer that, man without sin may be looked at in two states, as was said above (q109, a2): the first, a state of perfect nature, in which Adam was before his sin; the second, a state of corrupt nature, in which we are before being restored by grace. Therefore, if we speak of man in the first state, there is only one reason why man cannot merit eternal life without grace, by his purely natural endowments, viz. because man's merit depends on the Divine pre-ordination. Now *no act of anything whatsoever is divinely ordained to anything exceeding the proportion of the powers which are the principles of its act*; for it is a law of Divine providence that nothing shall act beyond its powers. Now *everlasting life is a good exceeding the proportion of created nature*; since it exceeds its knowledge and desire, according to 1 Corinthians 2:9: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man." And hence it is that *no created nature is a sufficient principle of an act meritorious of eternal life*, unless there is added a supernatural gift, which we call grace. But if we speak of man existing in sin, a second reason is added to this, viz. the impediment of sin. For since sin is an offense against God, excluding us from eternal life, as is clear from what has been said above (71, 6; 113, 2), no one existing in a state of mortal sin can merit eternal life unless first he be reconciled to God, through his sin being forgiven, which is brought about by grace. For the sinner deserves not life, but death, according to Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death."<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>464</sup> ST Iallae q114 a2. Italics mine. Dicendum quod hominis sine gratia duplex status considerari potest, sicut supra dictum est. Unus quidem naturae integrae, qualis fuit in Adam ante peccatum; alius autem naturae corruptae, sicut est in nobis ante reparationem gratiae. Si ergo loquamur de homine quantum ad primum statum, sic una ratione non potest homo mereri absque gratia vitam aeternam per pura naturalia, quia scilicet meritum hominis dependet ex praeordinatione divinae. Actus autem cujuscumque rei non ordinatur divinitus ad aliquid excedens proportionem virtutis quae est principium actus: hoc enim est ex institutione divinae providentiae, ut nihil agat ultra suam virtutem. Vita autem aeterna est quoddam bonum excedens proportionem naturae creatae; quia etiam excedit cognitionem et desiderium ejus, secundum illud I ad Cor., *Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit*. Et inde est quod nulla natura creata est sufficiens principium actus meritorii vitae aeternae, nisi superaddatur aliquod supernaturale donum, quod gratia dicitur.

Si vero loquamur de homine sub peccato existente, additur cum hoc secunda ratio, propter impedimentum peccati. Cum enim peccatum sit quaedam Dei offensa excludens a vita aeterna, ut patet per supra dicta, nullus in statu peccati existens potest vitam aeternam mereri, nisi prius Deo reconcilietur dimisso peccato, quod fit per gratiam. Peccatori enim non debetur vita, sed mors, secundum illud Rom., *Stipendia peccati mors*.

Aquinas explains that eternal life is an end which is beyond the natural power of human beings to attain to. Persons are in need of grace in order to perform meritorious works to achieve it. Through grace humans have the power to merit eternal life.

Aquinas needs to show why the end of eternal life is beyond a human person's natural powers. His argument to this conclusion is based upon the following two propositions in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*:

P1: The divine substance cannot be seen intellectually by means of any created effect.

P2: The divine substance can only be seen by a created thing if the divine essence itself is the form whereby the intellect understands.

I now explain Aquinas' arguments for P1 and P2, and then I explain how P1 and P2 are used to demonstrate that the end of eternal life is beyond a human person's natural power.

*P1: The divine substance cannot be seen intellectually by means of any created species.*

I begin by explaining Aquinas' argument for P1 from his text, after which I formalise the argument.

Aquinas attempts to prove P1 in Chapter 49 of Book 3. He begins by distinguishing between three ways of knowing a cause through its effect. The first way is to use the

effect as a means of finding out that the cause exists and that it is of a certain sort. Aquinas thinks that this is done in science, where demonstration of the cause is provided through the effect. A second way is 'to see the cause in the effect itself,' through a reflection of the likeness of the cause in the effect. The example given by Aquinas is that of a man looking in a mirror: we see the man in the mirror 'by virtue of his likeness.' A third way involves the effect knowing the cause by the form which is the likeness of the cause in the effect. Aquinas gives the unusual example of a box: if a box had an intellect, it could know a likeness of the mind of the person who made it, as the form of the box proceeded from the form of the maker's mind.<sup>465</sup>

Crucially, for Aquinas, it is not possible to know in any of these three ways, from the effect, *what* the cause is, 'unless the effect be adequate to the cause, one in which the entire virtuality (*tota virtus*) of the cause is expressed.' I take Aquinas to mean that whilst some effects may bear a likeness to their cause, we can only know a cause fully if the effect bears the *full* likeness of the cause.

Aquinas considers the example of a separate substance which is not God: we might think of an angel. If Aquinas can show that an angel cannot see the divine essence through its own substance, then the same applies to human persons, as we have a lower nature than the angels (the reasoning will become clear below).

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<sup>465</sup> SCG Bk3 Ch49 (3).

Angels know God through their substances as a cause is known through its effect, in the second and third way: as one sees the likeness of God in another, and as one sees the likeness of God within itself. However, as no angel is 'an effect adequately representing the power of God,' it is impossible for an angel to see the divine essence by these ways of knowing (which equates to P1). The point is as above: as an angel is not 'adequate to its cause'—as a created being, it is not equal to God—it does not express the full likeness of what God is.

Aquinas provides further reasons to support P1. He states that the likeness of a cause found in an effect, through which a cause is understood, must be of an identical species to the cause. For example, the form of a house which exists in the mind of the architect must be of the same species as the form of the house which exists in matter. If the forms are the same, then a second person can know a likeness of the mind of the architect through the form of the house. But in the case of angels, their form is not of the same species as the divine nature. Indeed, an angel is 'not even in the same genus.' So an angel cannot see a likeness of the form of God in other angels or in itself.

Moreover, not only is God not in the same genus as an angel, but 'God's essence itself is unlimited' by a genus. When we understand something, according to Aquinas, we do so 'while representing it,' using words to signify the thing, and calling these words 'terms' and 'definitions.' However, we are unable to represent God in this way, for unlike created things, God does not belong to a 'definite genus.'

Finally, the divine substance 'is its own being,' while the being of created substance is 'other than its substance.' Aquinas thinks that this means that the essence of an angel is not 'an adequate medium' through which God's essence can be seen. Aquinas thinks that these reasons provide further support of P1.

In assessing Aquinas' arguments for P1, one point is in need of clarification. Aquinas states that in order to know the likeness of a cause in an effect the latter must be of an identical species to the cause. As God is not an identical species to created things, we cannot know his likeness in the effect. This seems to sit at odds with Aquinas' view that we do see a threefold likeness of God in created things, as explained in Chapter 1: the likeness of God in all human persons who possess a desire to know and understand God; the likeness of God in persons bestowed with grace who know and love God, though imperfectly; and the likeness of God in persons in glory who know and love God perfectly.<sup>466</sup> Setting aside the likeness had by those in glory, Aquinas thinks that created persons *do have* a likeness to God. I think, though, that the charitable way to deal with this seeming inconsistency is to say that, for Aquinas, created things may participate in a likeness of God in an *analogical* sense: for example, although creatures bestowed with grace know and love God, they do so imperfectly, so their 'knowing' and 'loving' must be understood in an

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<sup>466</sup> Note that whilst Aquinas' draws this threefold distinction, Catholic theology more generally has refrained from claiming that a human person in a natural state bears a likeness to God. Such a person is made in *the image* of God and comes to bear a likeness to God only if/when grace is bestowed upon him.

analogical sense to how God knows and loves himself. This appeal to analogy allows Aquinas to hold that God's likeness may be seen, in an analogical sense, to differing degrees in created things, but this falls short of seeing God in his essence.

Here is one parsing of Aquinas' argument for P1:

- 18) A likeness of a cause cannot be known (*cognoscere*) from an effect if the likeness of the cause in the effect is not of an identical species to the cause.
- 19) The likeness of the divine essence in all created effects is not of an identical species to the divine essence itself.  
From (18) and (19),
- 20) The likeness of the divine essence cannot be seen (known) intellectually by means of a created effect.  
Therefore,
- 21) P1: The divine essence cannot be seen (known) intellectually by means of any created effect.

Recall from Chapter 1 that a species is defined by giving its genus and its differentia: the genus is the kind under which the species falls, and the differentia tells what characterises the species within that genus. For example, a human being (species) might be defined as an animal (genus) having the capacity to reason (the differentia). An individual human then falls within the human species.

(18) seems intuitively plausible. If A is a different species to B, A is different to B: they are not identical. Therefore, in perceiving A I perceive something different to B. So, if the likeness of a cause in the effect (A) is a different species to the cause (B), in perceiving A I perceive something different to B. Given this, it seems plausible that if A and B are not of an identical species then I cannot fully know B from A (in the second or third ways of

knowing). This is ever more so the case with God who, on Aquinas account, is not even contained in a genus.

(19) depends upon Aquinas' claim that God is not in a genus. I do not have space to argue for this claim.<sup>467</sup> However, many in the Christian tradition will find the claim that God is not in a genus intuitively plausible.

*P2: The divine substance can only be seen by a created thing if the divine essence itself is the form whereby the intellect understands.*

Aquinas thinks that God may be seen in his essence:

Since it is impossible for a natural desire to be incapable of fulfilment, and since it would be so, if it were not possible to reach an understanding of divine substance such as all minds naturally desire, we must say that it is possible for the substance of God to be seen intellectually, both by separate intellectual substances and by our souls.<sup>468</sup>

Recall P1—that the divine substance cannot be seen intellectually by means of any created species—it follows that if the divine essence is to be seen it must be seen by

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<sup>467</sup> See SCG Bk1 q25. Aquinas, T. *Compendium of Theology*, trans. R. J. Regan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). 12 - 14.

<sup>468</sup> SCG Bk3 Part 1 Ch51 (1). Cum autem impossibile sit naturale desiderium esse inane, quod quidem esset si non esset possibile pervenire ad divinam substantiam intelligendam, quod naturaliter omnes mentes desiderant; necesse est dicere quod possibile sit substantiam Dei videri per intellectum, et a substantiis intellectualibus separatis, et ab animabus nostris.

means of an uncreated being. For Aquinas, the only 'uncreated being' is God. Thus, if a person sees the divine essence then God must be 'both what is seen and that whereby it is seen.'<sup>469</sup>

Aquinas explains how it can be so that God is what is seen and that whereby he is seen. A substance is either a form only, or a composite of matter and form. In the case of the latter, the form is limited to the matter, and so it cannot 'be the form of another being.' However, if a thing is a form only then it 'can be the form of another, provided its being is such that it could be participated in by that other being.' Whilst angels are pure forms, they cannot be participated in by human persons. As God's form can be the form of another being, Aquinas writes:

So, it is manifest that the divine essence may be related to the created intellect as an intelligible species by which it understands... an intelligible species, united with an intellect, does not make up a nature; rather, it perfects the intellect for the act of understanding, and this is not incompatible with the perfection of the divine essence.<sup>470</sup>

As the divine substance can be seen (in the afterlife) by some human persons, and as it cannot be seen by means of any created thing, then it must be seen by the divine essence

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<sup>469</sup> SCG Bk3 Part 1 Ch51 (2).

<sup>470</sup> SCG Bk3 Part 1 Ch51 (4). Manifestum est igitur quod essentia divina potest comparari ad intellectum creatum ut species intelligibilis qua intelligit: quod non contingit de essentia alicuius alterius substantiae separatae. Nec tamen potest esse forma alterius rei secundum esse naturale: sequeretur enim quod, simul cum alio iuncta, constitueret unam naturam; quod esse non potest, cum essentia divina in se perfecta sit in sui natura. Species autem intelligibilis, unita intellectui, non constituit aliquam naturam, sed perficit ipsum ad intelligendum: quod perfectioni divinae essentiae non repugnat.

itself (P2). If P1 and P2 are true, then a person cannot know God through the person's natural powers, but only by God himself becoming the form through which the person sees God's essence.

Aquinas thinks that the vision of the divine essence is reserved for some people in the afterlife. In this life, as explained above, we may perform meritorious acts which are directed towards achieving this end. As this end is above of our natural powers, as explained through P1 and P2, we are in need of grace in order to be raised towards it. Not all in the Christian tradition accept some of the assumptions at work in P1 and P2—for example, that God is not in a genus—and not all accept that we can merit eternal life. However, for those who do, we find reason to support premise (2): that persons need supernatural powers to reach a supernatural end, and that these powers are effected by grace.

To repeat, I think that a Thomist may accept premise (2) on the basis of *any* of the arguments regarding powers considered above: the power to avoid committing a mortal sin, the power to know supernatural truths, and the power to merit eternal life. I also think that the first argument, regarding the power to avoid committing moral sin, should be acceptable to most within the Christian tradition. The second and third arguments, regarding the power to know supernatural truths and the power to merit eternal life, should be acceptable to some within the Christian tradition.

## God's Bestowal of Grace

Premise (3) is clearly acceptable to Thomists, given the material covered in earlier chapters.<sup>471</sup> It may also be accepted by Roman Catholics, given that much of Roman Catholic doctrine stems from Aquinas' ideas.<sup>472</sup> And recall from Chapter 3 that Calvin also posits the need for new habits and dispositions formed in us by God in the process of sanctification.

Before engaging in a defence of premise (4) I anticipate an objection: even if there are some reasons to think that God has chosen the mode of the Eucharist to bestow grace, it makes *more* sense to think that God just 'zaps' people directly with grace. The reason for this objection is that if God can bestow grace directly without the mediation of a process like the Eucharist, he would do so, for simplicity's sake.

It seems right to suggest that God can bestow grace directly onto a human person without her participation in the Eucharist or another grace-bestowing practice. However, the argument that I have proposed works even if God sometimes zaps a person with grace.

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<sup>471</sup> As we have seen in Chapter 3, whilst Calvin may disagree on the necessity of created grace for justification, he is in agreement with Aquinas that it is needed for sanctification, so he may plausibly be taken to endorse premise (3).

<sup>472</sup> See the section on grace in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. For example: 'Sanctifying grace is an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. *Habitual* grace, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God's call, is distinguished from actual graces which refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification.' 2000.

The argument would not work if God always zaps a person with grace rather than bestowing it through an intermediary like the Eucharist. But given that participation in the Eucharist allows a person to *freely respond* to God through particular actions, and given that we have reason (from Chapter 1) to think that God values free will, it is plausible to think that God would not always zap a person with grace rather than bestow it through an intermediary.<sup>473</sup>

### Grace through the Eucharist: Natural Reasons

Aquinas gives three natural reasons in response to the question regarding the necessity of the sacraments. Whilst he suggests that these reasons make it *appropriate* that God bestow grace through the sacraments, I explain that these natural reasons do not show convincingly that God does so.

First, Aquinas holds that all the concepts we use are ultimately derived through the senses. He writes that as humans achieve knowledge of spiritual or intelligible realities ‘deductively through... experience of physical and sensible realities,’ God takes this way of functioning into account when choosing to bestow grace in an ‘appropriate’ manner. Second, as through sinning persons have ‘incurred an affection for physical things’ and so made themselves subject to such things, the remedy, brought in the form of grace, must

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<sup>473</sup> It may be that there are *some* Calvinists who deny the need for human freedom in the process of sanctification. For thinkers such as these, the ‘zapping’ objection may be a strong one.

be 'applied to that part of (a person's) nature affected by the sickness.' The thought here is that, as a result of sin, persons are more concerned with physical things, rather than spiritual realities, than they were pre-fall. For this reason it is 'appropriate' for God to bestow grace through physical signs like the sacraments. Indeed, Aquinas thinks that were a person to be confronted with spiritual realities 'pure and unalloyed' he would be 'incapable of accepting them' due to his absorption in physical things. Third, related to the second, as persons are 'particularly prone to involve (themselves) with physical things,' in order to avoid making the spiritual life too hard persons were given 'certain physical practices to observe in the sacraments.' These practices enable persons to 'exercise (their) powers in salutary ways.'<sup>474</sup>

It is important to clarify the sense in which Aquinas thinks that the sacraments are 'necessary' for salvation. He does not mean that God cannot and does not bestow grace outside of the sacraments. Recall that Aquinas thinks that some receive grace through the desire of the sacraments without actually receiving them.<sup>475</sup> Moreover, Aquinas thinks that some who have not heard of the gospel may be saved, which presumably involves a bestowal of grace.<sup>476</sup> And, of course, Aquinas thinks that there are other means of receiving grace: through prayer, reading of scripture, etc. So the sacraments are not, for Aquinas, *absolutely* necessary for salvation.

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<sup>474</sup> ST III q61 a1.

<sup>475</sup> See ST III q73 a3.

<sup>476</sup> See IIallae q2 a7.

Aquinas thinks that God has ordained it such that he bestows grace through the sacraments when they are received with the right disposition. He in part thinks this because of the three reasons outlined above. He also thinks it because of the testimony of scripture and tradition, citing Augustine and St Paul in support of the view. As God has ordained that grace is bestowed through the sacraments it is necessary for persons to participate in the sacraments to obtain grace. Here we find a *necessitas convenientiae*; a necessity of suitableness or appropriateness. To my mind, Aquinas' talk of the sacraments being 'necessary' for salvation is unhelpful: the sacraments are an *appropriate* means through which God bestows grace, but God could have done otherwise, and God does, in fact, bestow grace through means other than the sacraments.<sup>477</sup>

Aquinas' first reason outlined above depends upon his more general epistemological commitment that persons obtain knowledge of spiritual or intelligible realities deductively through experience of physical realities. It may be true that activities like prayer and the reading of scripture are more involved with immaterial ideas, whether thoughts in the mind or propositions expressed through writing, than with physical things like bread and wine.<sup>478</sup> But, for Aquinas, the concepts at work in both prayer and the reading of scripture have been derived from experience of physical things. Through participation in the sacraments the ideas are derived more directly from physical objects,

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<sup>477</sup> It may be that Aquinas is thinking of necessity along Aristotelian lines, where what is necessary happens always or for the most part. See Sachs, J. *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Santa Fe; Green Lion Press, 1999). Bk VI, 1026b 30.

<sup>478</sup> This may be less the case when, for example, icons are used during prayer.

whilst the concepts used during prayer and the reading of scripture have often been derived previously through sense experience. It may be that the presence of physical objects makes the understanding of spiritual realities *easier*, and we shall return to this point when we consider Aquinas' third reason.

Secondly, Aquinas thinks that because through sinning we have acquired an 'affection for physical things,' the remedy must be applied to that part of our nature affected by sin. The effect of sin is that our souls and bodies are in disharmony: no longer is the reason subject to God, the lower parts of the soul to the reason, and the body to the soul. Because of this disharmony we chase after physical things at the expense of spiritual things. The remedy is grace. Grace is immaterial, so the remedy is immaterial, although applied through physical instruments. It may be that because persons have an affection for physical things they find it *easier* to receive grace through the sacraments, which we shall consider below, but it is not clear that there is any metaphysical reason regarding our 'affection for physical things' to think that grace *must* be bestowed through the physical stuff of the sacraments.

Thirdly, the sacraments are 'necessary' in order to make the spiritual life easier for persons, due to their involvement with physical things. It is reasonable to think that the physical stuff used in the sacraments helps to convey the ideas underlying the ceremonies. In baptism, just as a person uses water to wash herself, so too God by his grace washes her of the uncleanness of her sins. But, of course, Aquinas does not always

use such physical signs when thinking about God. His work is full of engagement with concepts in the absence of physical signs to aid understanding. Indeed, Aquinas could pray to God for grace to cleanse him from sin without the need for physical stuff to help him understand the process. So, if he is content to engage in lengthy abstract reflection on the Divine nature, why does Aquinas insist on the need to make things easy with regard to the reception of grace? It may be that Aquinas is taking into account the situation of those uneducated in theology and philosophy. Physical signs can help lay people understand and engage in their spiritual lives. And for those like Aquinas who are well-educated, participation in the sacraments may express intellectual humility; an awareness that a person can benefit from a simple explanation of the workings of the spiritual life, and that a childlike participation in a simple ceremony may be in keeping with Christ's statement that 'the kingdom of heaven belongs to (children).'<sup>479</sup>

These natural reasons in support of the view that God bestows grace on some persons through the Eucharist only go so far. The reasons suggest that it is *appropriate* that God bestows grace in this way, to make it easier for the participants, but the reasons do not show convincingly that God does so. The reasons are helpful, but not decisive, so we must look to revealed reasons in order to give further support to premise (4).<sup>480</sup>

### Grace through the Eucharist: Revealed Reasons

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<sup>479</sup> Matthew 9:14.

<sup>480</sup> By way of reminder, premise (4) states that there are natural and revealed reasons to think that God has chosen the sacrament of the Eucharist as a mode of grace-bestowal.

Aquinas appeals to both Augustine and scripture. Augustine presents more natural reasons for the necessity of the sacraments although ultimately, I think it fair to say, Augustine, like Aquinas, is dependent upon the testimony of scripture for support for this view. Aquinas quotes St Paul saying, 'All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death' to demonstrate that although, for St Paul, the Passion of Christ is the sufficient cause of a person's salvation, the effect of this cause is 'applied to men through the sacraments.'<sup>481</sup>

There is no argument in the Christian tradition over whether the sacraments—at least the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist—are important and should be performed. There are many scriptural passages to support this claim.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> ST III q61 a1 rep3.

<sup>482</sup> For example: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.' Matthew 28:19. 'Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' Acts 2:38. "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'" Matthew 26:26-28. "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night on which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'" 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

Whilst the Christian tradition is agreed upon the need for the sacraments to be performed (at least for baptism and the Eucharist), the function of the sacraments is highly contested. For our purposes, all we need is confirmation of the view that grace is bestowed through the Eucharist. Consider the following passages from the Bible, the first of which is appealed to directly by Aquinas:

John 6:52: The bread which I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world.

John 6:58: He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.

John 6:53-56: So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will realise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

Aquinas thinks that Christ is referring to spiritual life in these passages, rather than physical life.<sup>483</sup> I take 'spiritual life' to mean the life of the human spirit, rather than the human body. The crucial question is: how do we get this spiritual life? Aquinas states that 'spiritual life is the effect of grace.'<sup>484</sup> For others aside from Aquinas in the Christian tradition who posit created grace, or who, like Calvin, posit new habits and dispositions in the process of sanctification, it seems acceptable that spiritual life is brought about by grace (or new habits and dispositions), in the absence of other contenders.

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<sup>483</sup> It is at least possible that Christ was referring to physical life at the resurrection of the dead: that is, those who eat of Christ will experience physical life in heaven. Even if that is the case, Aquinas still thinks that, due to sin, human persons are in need of grace in order to be acceptable for this resurrection life. So, if Christ is offering resurrected life as a result of 'eating of him' this will, in the process, involve receiving 'spiritual life' where spiritual life is effected by grace.

<sup>484</sup> ST III q79 a1.

Aquinas gives several reasons to explain why grace is bestowed through the sacraments. First, Aquinas states that Christ is contained in the sacrament. When Christ came into the world he 'visibly bestowed the life of grace upon the world.' Aquinas appeals to John 1:17: 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' So, by 'coming sacramentally into man,' Christ causes grace in the person who receives the sacrament. Second, Aquinas thinks that Christ's passion is 'represented by this sacrament,' by which he means that part of what we do when we partake of the sacrament is remember the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Aquinas quotes Matthew 26:28: 'This is my blood... which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins.' Third, the sacrament 'does for the spiritual life all that material food does for the bodily life, namely, by sustaining, giving increase, restoring, and giving delight.' Aquinas quotes John 6:56: 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my body is drink indeed.'<sup>485</sup> Aquinas then sums up these reasons concluding that 'since Christ and His Passion are the cause of grace, and since spiritual refreshment, and charity cannot be without grace, it is clear from all that has been set forth that this sacrament bestows grace.'<sup>486</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> ST III q79 a1.

<sup>486</sup> ST III q79 a1.

If spiritual life comes as a result of a person's participation in the Eucharist, as is also suggested by these passages from John, then 'grace is bestowed through this sacrament.'<sup>487</sup>

### Memorialism: an Objection to the Revealed Reasons

Some in the reformed tradition take the Eucharist to be an act of remembrance.<sup>488</sup> Christ says, 'do this in remembrance of me.'<sup>489</sup> According to Zwingli, whilst Christ is present in the Eucharist he is not present substantially, and the sacrament is not used instrumentally to communicate Christ. This is clearly at odds with the doctrine of transubstantiation, but does a 'memorial view' give us reason to doubt that grace is bestowed through the Eucharist? In so far as the memorial view holds that the bread and wine of the Eucharist is not the body and blood of Christ, this does not count against the view that grace is bestowed through the Eucharist, for grace may be bestowed irrespective of this. I assume

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<sup>487</sup> ST III q79 a1. We saw in Chapter 4 both that, for Calvin, it is faith that is strengthened through the Eucharist, and faith is effected by grace. Thus Calvinists, along with Thomists, may accept premise (4).

<sup>488</sup> See, for example, the thought of Huldrych Zwingli: 'That Christ who offered himself up once as a sacrifice, is a perpetual and valid payment for the sin of all believers; from this it follows that the mass is not a sacrifice, but a memorial of the sacrifice and a seal of the redemption which Christ has manifested to us... (The Article affirms) that (Christ's) death is a perfect sacrifice; that he, having been sacrificed once, cleanses all sins for all eternity... For Christ is such a perfect sacrifice that he—offered but once—fulfills for all eternity or perfects all those who believe in him—who are called the saints... that which is a testament, legacy or covenant and memorial, they have called a sacrament or offering.' Zwingli, H. *The Defence of the Reformed Faith*, trans. Furcha, E. J. (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 1984). Article 18.

<sup>489</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

that, for memorialists, even if the Eucharist is an act of remembrance, it is still the case that *something spiritual happens* to some persons when they participate in the Eucharist: faith is strengthened; love for God is increased; hope in the afterlife is renewed; all of which are affected by created grace (on Thomas' model). I submit that if these effects are supernatural effects, on SN1 and SN2, then the memorial view does not challenge the view that God bestows grace through the Eucharist.

It could be objected that although what happens during the Eucharist is spiritual, this is not a case of a person *receiving* but rather of a person *giving* to God. During the Eucharist, so the objection goes, a person gives thanks and praise to God for the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Whilst it seems reasonable to think that this act of thanksgiving is *part of* what takes place during the Eucharist, it does not rule out some persons also receiving during the process as well. The participant consumes the bread and the wine during the ceremony; the physical items are *received*. It is counter-intuitive to assert that although the received bread and wine are symbols of a spiritual reality there is, nevertheless, no spiritual *reception* taking place, but only a spiritual giving.

The memorialist may push the objection further: whilst it is the case that giving and receiving can both be part of the same ceremony, there is the question of the *purpose* of the ceremony. The memorialist may claim that although grace *may* be bestowed through the Eucharist, such a bestowal is not its primary purpose. The purpose of the ceremony is to remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross and to give thanks for it. Grace may or may

not be bestowed alongside this act of thanks. To make this objection credible the memorialist has to deal with the passages from John (above) where Christ *seems to* indicate that spiritual life is affected through the eating of his body and drinking of his blood;<sup>490</sup> a ceremony which the church eventually called the Eucharist. The memorialist will deny this interpretation of the passage. Rather, an interpretation such as the following may be proposed: when Christ talks of 'eating my flesh' and 'drinking my blood' what he really means is 'believe and trust in me' or 'have faith in me.' The eating and drinking are metaphors for spiritual acts.

A thorough response to this issue of biblical interpretation is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, one reason to question the memorialist interpretation is as follows: those who are familiar with the Christian tradition will read these passages from John and most likely think that Christ's reference to eating his flesh and drinking his blood is a reference to the familiar ceremony of the Eucharist, as the parallels are very obvious. In thinking this, said persons need not be committed to the doctrine of transubstantiation. They may think that Christ's reference to eating and drinking flesh and blood is a reference to the *symbolic* eating and drinking which takes place during the Eucharist, and they may reject the doctrine of transubstantiation for other theological and philosophical reasons, yet still think that, as the passages state, spiritual life is communicated through the sacrament. If the memorialist is to counter this plausible and straight-forward

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<sup>490</sup> As has been explained in the previous chapter, this bestowal of grace does not always take place. For example, if the person is conscious of having committed mortal sin it does not take place.

interpretation, proposing what I outlined above, she needs to argue that these texts are *not* referencing the ceremony of the Eucharist but rather that the language of 'eating my flesh' and 'drinking my blood' are *metaphors for spiritual acts* divorced from the Eucharist. But it is not clear why we might think that they are metaphorical in this sense. There *is* a ceremony in the Christian church which Christ's words may be seen as an obvious reference to. And during this ceremony, as we have seen in Chapter 4, faith in what Christ accomplished on the cross does indeed play a part, so the memorialist's insistence on the requirement of faith for spiritual life may be accommodated.

If, in these passages from John, Christ meant to communicate only that faith is needed for spiritual life then there are many metaphors he could have used for this purpose. For example, Christ could have said 'those who look to the cross will have life,' or 'those who ascend the hill (of Calvary) will have life,' or 'those who touch the nails that pierce me will have life,' etc. Instead, Christ used words that refer to a ceremony of the Christian church which, as the Biblical passages above show (from John and elsewhere), we have scriptural reason to think is important and should be performed. Either Christ's apparent reference to the Eucharist is a confusing coincidence for theologians, or we have reason to think that Christ *was* referring to the Eucharist in the passages from John.

The memorialist might concede: Christ was referring to the Eucharist in these passages, however, he was not claiming that a person would receive spiritual life through the Eucharist. Christ's claim, according to the memorialist, is that spiritual life is made

available by his sacrifice on the cross, and during the Eucharist a person remembers this sacrifice and gives thanks for the grace made available through it.

In response to the memorialist, it is indeed the case that for Aquinas, as we saw in Chapter 1, the grace we receive is made available through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. But, on at least some occasions, we *receive* this grace through a free process. And as was demonstrated from Aquinas' natural reasons above, it seems *appropriate* that God might bestow grace through a process like the sacraments. In light of these natural reasons, and the passages from John, the memorialist is left in a position whereby she must demonstrate why God would *not* bestow grace through the Eucharist in order to justify her reading of the Johannine passages in this direction.

One reason that a memorialist may propose to support her reading of the John passages is that, as the bestowal of grace is supposed to bring about friendship/union between persons and God, the Eucharist is a much too *impersonal* means for such a bestowal. During prayer a person *talks to* God. During the reading of scripture a person *hears* words spoken to her from God. Whilst walking in the mountains a person *sees* beauty which reflects the beauty of God. These are all suitable personal forms of grace-bestowal. But the Eucharist, and in particular the acts of eating and drinking, are not personal acts. They may help us remember and give thanks, but their function ends there.

But consider the giving of a rose to a loved one. In such a case the lover may not be present to the beloved, nor talk to her, nor touch her, but the physical item symbolizes his love for her. So too with the Eucharist: the physical items used during the ceremony symbolize the love of God for human persons. Such love that God sacrificed himself to redeem sinful humanity. Thus, I think the objection that the Eucharist is too impersonal a process to be used as a means of grace-bestowal fails.

A Thomist should accept premise (4), as may others in the Christian tradition.<sup>491</sup> A full defence of premise (4) against memorialism is beyond the scope of this chapter, but some readers may find the points I put to the memorialist persuasive.

### Conclusion

I have argued for the acceptance of the premises of the argument I proposed. Acceptance of all the premises depends upon acceptance of other assumptions.<sup>492</sup> Not everyone will accept these other assumptions. However, Thomists, and some others in the Christian tradition, will accept these other assumptions, and thus they may accept the conclusion of the argument: that it is plausible to think that God bestows grace on some persons through the Eucharist.

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<sup>491</sup> By way of reminder premise (4) states that there are natural and revealed reasons to think that God has chosen the sacrament of the Eucharist as a mode of grace-bestowal.

<sup>492</sup> For example, Aquinas' argument for the claim that grace is needed in order to know supernatural truths assumes that faith involves certainty.

## Conclusion

I have provided an analytic account of several aspects of Aquinas' doctrine of grace, focusing on the questions: is the quality of grace necessary for justification and/or sanctification? And if it is, how does a person get it? In doing so I have begun the task of addressing a gap in the scholarship: specifically, with regard to the lack of work on Aquinas' doctrine of grace within analytic theology and analytical Thomism. Whilst focusing on the thought of Aquinas I have also brought in several other thinkers to provide a critical alternative to Aquinas' position.

The thesis began with an overview of some central aspects of Thomas' doctrine of grace, with consideration of topics including habit, participation, likeness and image, justification, free-will, and sanctification. I then engaged in a critique of A. N. Williams' recent work, in which she claims that we may think of grace in Aquinas as something which is uncreated. I did this in order to get clear on the nature of grace, which was crucial for the remainder of the thesis. I challenged Williams' view, as to think of grace, an Aristotelian quality, as 'uncreated' raises what I called the problem of composition. The problem of composition states that, as Aquinas thinks that God is simple, God is unable to enter into composition with anything else. I considered some possible responses to this problem: namely, composition in the incarnation, and a solution from the work of Karl Rahner. I rejected both solutions and concluded that Williams' view is unclear and in need

of clarification. In the absence of such clarification, I contended that we should think of grace in Aquinas as a created quality.

Having clarified the issue over created grace, in Chapter 2 I progressed to deal directly with the question of the necessity of created grace for justification and to merit eternal life. I began by outlining Aquinas' view: that created grace is needed for justification and to merit acceptance to eternal life. In order to engage critically with Aquinas' view I turned to the thought of Duns Scotus and William of Ockham in whom we find a two-sided response to the question raised above, which depends upon a distinction between God's ordained power and his absolute power: created grace is necessary for God to accept persons by his ordained power, but not by his absolute power. My engagement with Ockham was twofold: first, I showed that several of his arguments for the conclusion that created grace is not absolutely necessary for justification and for meritorious acts are unsuccessful. Second, I noted some *grace without freedom* cases: these are cases in which God justifies and/or accepts a person for eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act. Taking these cases into account, as well as an ambiguity in Ockham's thought regarding his understanding of ordained power, I built on the work of Marilyn McCord Adams and I concluded that, on one understanding of ordained power, Ockham's thought suggests an indication of openness to the possibility of a person being accepted to eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act. Further work may critically explore the possibility of a person's acceptance to eternal life in the absence of a meritorious act.

Whilst Ockham left us wondering whether God would accept a person in the absence of

a grace-inclined meritorious act, in John Calvin we found a complete break from the medieval view that created grace is needed to justify a person. Calvin relies instead upon the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. I outlined Calvin's 'externalist' view on this aspect of justification, highlighting the differences with Aquinas' 'internalist' view. I then showed that, whilst Aquinas and Calvin hold divergent views on the need for created grace for justification, they hold similar views on the need for new habits and dispositions for sanctification, which was relevant for Chapter 4 where we considered how a person may get these new habits and dispositions in the thought of both thinkers. I then assessed two of Calvin's main reasons for rejecting a medieval (internalist) view on justification found within four sections of the *Institutes*. I argued that the biblical witness is compatible with Aquinas' view, and that an appeal to salvation by faith rather than works is also in keeping with Aquinas' position. Finally, I explained what I take to motivate the difference between Aquinas' and Calvin's views on justification. I considered two theological issues—the freedom of the will in salvation and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints—and I showed that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints explains the difference between the two views. For both Aquinas and Calvin, given that human persons are born into sin, there must be something which justifies them before God. I detected no reason why this 'something' must be a quality rather than a relation, or vice versa. But due to Calvin's commitment to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints this 'something' must not be able to be lost through sin, thus it must be distinct from the habits and dispositions that are involved in sanctification and which can be lost through sin. Whereas for Aquinas the same quality of grace which

justifies a person also begins the process of sanctification and can be lost through sin. Whilst something is needed to justify persons before God, this can be either a quality (Aquinas) or a relation (Calvin).

Having noted agreement in Aquinas and Calvin on the need for new dispositions in the process of sanctification, in Chapter 4 I turned to the question of how we get these new dispositions. I outlined Aquinas' and Calvin's views on the sacraments, and I argued that in some respects their views are not as dissimilar as is suggested by some scholars. I began the chapter by alluding to Calvin's disagreement with the medieval view of the sacraments. I then outlined Aquinas' general view, setting out what he might think of as the necessary and sufficient conditions for receiving grace through the sacraments. Following this I considered what Calvin's issue with these necessary and sufficient conditions might be. Finally, I returned to Aquinas to show that, in at least some respects, and contrary to some scholars, Calvin's criticism of Aquinas is misplaced.

I not only wanted to show how persons receive grace—through the sacraments, as explained in Chapter 4—but also to assess how plausible this answer is. Hence, in the final chapter I proposed my own argument, developed out of the thought of Aquinas, for the claim that it is plausible to think that some persons receive grace through the Eucharist. I showed how this argument adds to the scholarship in the following ways: first, as a response to Cuneo, it adds a Thomist perspective to the little existing contemporary analytic material on the religious life. Second, it supports Rea's claim, alluded to less directly by Wolterstorff, Stump, and Coakley, that relationship with a silent God may be

available through mediated means. I acknowledged that not all readers will hold the assumptions needed in order to accept the premises of the argument. However, I showed that the relevant assumptions are widespread in the Christian tradition, hence my argument should be persuasive to some readers from the tradition. Moreover, further work could be done in motivating acceptance of these assumptions.

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