

# ST. THOMAS' THOUGHT ON GRATIA OPERANS

BERNARD LONERGAN, S.J.

COLLEGE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
Montreal, Canada

## III. HABITUAL GRACE AS OPERANS ET COOPERANS

“. . . si vero accipiatur gratia pro habituali dono, sic est duplex gratiae effectus, sicut et cuiuslibet alterius formae: quorum primus est esse, secundus est operatio; sicut caloris operatio est facere calidum et exterior calefactio; sic igitur habitualis gratia, in quantum animam sanat vel iustificat sive gratam Deo facit, dicitur gratia operans; in quantum vero est principium operis meritorii, quod ex libero arbitrio procedit, dicitur cooperans.”

(*Summa Theol.*, 1a 2ae q. 111 a. 2 c)

**T**O sketch the content and the implications of the above passage is the primary purpose of the present article. Incidentally attention will be drawn to the declining importance of habitual grace in St. Thomas' successive works, and this will prepare for an inquiry into his concept of actual grace as operative and cooperative.

Three main points are treated: 1. The general nature of the habit; 2. habitual grace as a *gratia sanans*; 3. the infusion of habitual grace as a premotion. Roughly these three correspond to the position of St. Thomas' *Sentences*, the development in the *De Veritate*, and the development which begins with the *Contra Gentiles* and is consummated in the *Summa Theologica*.<sup>1</sup>

1. THE GENERAL NATURE OF HABITS. In estimating human nature St. Thomas was a whole-hearted pessimist. With conviction he would repeat *numerus stultorum infinitus*. And, as one might expect, for this low opinion of man he had at hand a very imposing metaphysical argument.

*Agere sequitur esse*: perfection in the dynamic field of operation is radically one with perfection in the static order of being. But perfection in the order of being is measured by the proportion of potency and act: the more refined the potency and the greater its actuation, the more perfect the resultant. Now, since God alone is *actus purus* with potentiality at zero and act at infinity, it follows that God alone operates with absolute per-

<sup>1</sup>See our "General Movement of St. Thomas' Thought on Gratia Operans." [*Theol. Studies* 2 (1941) 307-324].

fection. Next stand the angels, existing beyond time and created in the full development of their natures; compounds of potency and act, for the most part they do what is right. But man is essentially a creature of time; at birth his higher powers are the spiritual counterpart of *materia prima*, and their indeterminate potentiality points at once in all directions; accordingly, since the good is ever unique and evil manifold, the odds always are that man will do what is wrong.<sup>2</sup>

With the human problem so clearly conceived, St. Thomas has at once its solution, a greater actuation of human potency. However, as we should expect, this greater actuation is effected differently in the *Sentences* and in later works. In the *Sentences* habitual grace alone is *gratia operans et cooperans*.<sup>3</sup> But in the *De Veritate*, the next systematic work, it is affirmed that no matter how perfect the habits one acquires or receives, there always remains the need of a divine operation which is a *gratia cooperans*.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Sentences*, then, the problem of remedying human deficiency is met by considering the alternatives of external intervention and internal change. Either the rule of rectitude, divine wisdom, intervenes whenever man is about to act; or else that rule somehow becomes the inherent form of the potency to be regulated. But the former solution is unsatisfactory: interference is always a species of violence, and though, no doubt, divine interference would make man's operation proper, it would leave man himself just as bad as he had been. On the other hand, if one examines the nature of habits and dispositions, one finds that they constitute precisely the type of internal change required: they make the external rule of right action the internal form of the faculty's operation. A disposition is such a form in its incipient stages, when it is not well established and may easily be lost. A habit is such a form brought to perfection and, as it were, grafted on nature. For habits cling to us as does nature; they give operation the spontaneity and the delight characteristic of natural action; they

<sup>2</sup>See 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 4m.

<sup>3</sup>2 d. 26 q. 1 a. 6 ad 2m.

<sup>4</sup>*De Ver.*, q. 27 a. 5 ad 3m.

make arts and skills as unimpeded and free as the use of one's own possessions. As Averroes said, *habitus est quo quis agit cum voluerit*; one has merely to want to, and the thing is done, if one has the habit.<sup>5</sup>

In the *De Veritate* the basic ideas and the cosmic scheme remain the same, but the human problem has a far profounder solution. God alone is fully proportionate to Goodness and Truth, and so only God is absolutely impeccable.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, impeccable operation is possible to man only when he is accorded the beatific vision, when God alone is the source and principle of his entire activity.<sup>7</sup> It follows that no habit or set of habits can make man's operation absolutely right,<sup>8</sup> for no habit or set of habits is equivalent to God Himself, who alone has the property of absolutely right action. Finally, since the condition of this life normally excludes the beatific vision, it is necessary to combine the alternatives of internal change and external intervention, to add divine motions to infused grace.

Now this modification of the initial position naturally brings another in its train, for once it has been shown that external intervention has to be added to internal change, it becomes desirable to eliminate intervention's implication of violence. Perhaps it was with this end in view that St. Thomas changed his theory of the gifts of the Holy Ghost;<sup>9</sup> at any rate the later theory presented in the *Summa Theologica* is a very adequate answer to the objection that external intervention is violent, or as we should say, unnatural. The moral virtues are of two kinds: those like prudence and justice which perfect the faculties in which they inhere; others like temperance and fortitude which render the lower faculties spontaneous in their subordination to higher faculties. Similarly habits are of two kinds: the virtues perfect the individual that possesses them, but the gifts of the Holy Ghost make connatural to the creature the external

<sup>5</sup> d. 23 q. 1 a. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *De Ver.* q. 24 a. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* a. 8; cp. a. 9.

<sup>8</sup> *De Ver.* q. 27 a. 5 ad 3m; cp. 1a 2ae q. 109.

<sup>9</sup> See de Guibert. *Les doublets de S. Thomas d'Aquin.* (Paris. 1926) pp. 101-125. For the views of earlier writers, cf. Lottin. "Les dons du Saint-Esprit chez les théologiens depuis Pierre Lombard jusqu'à saint Thomas d'Aquin." [*Rech. theol. anc. méd.* 1 (1929) 41-61.]

guidance and aid of the Spirit of truth and love.<sup>10</sup> Nor is there any difficulty in meeting the other objection advanced in the *Sentences*, that external intervention may improve human action but does not improve man himself. For the gifts of the Holy Ghost bring us into the region of pure supernaturality, a region that lies beyond the bounds of all created perfection. Just as beatitude is not human but divine and natural to God alone,<sup>11</sup> just as wisdom for us is not understanding but faith,<sup>12</sup> so the highest perfection of man cannot be immanent as are the virtues, but rather must link us dynamically with the sole source of absolute perfection.

Such appears to be the main line of development in the majestic sweep of St. Thomas' thought on the problem of perfecting man. It begins with an insistence on the immanent perfection of the virtues; it ends with a nuanced theory in which the transcendent perfection of God is communicated to man through the double channel of immanent virtues and transient motions. Certain points call for particular attention.

First, the two aspects of habitual grace, *operans et cooperans*, result from the principle that *actus* is at once perfection and a source of further perfection, that *agere sequitur esse*. Because every habit is a perfection, the actuation and determination of an indeterminate potency,<sup>13</sup> it will have its immediate effects in the field of formal causality and its ulterior consequences in the field of efficient causality. The accident, heat, is the ground both of the fire's being hot and of its heating other objects; in like manner grace or any other form is a principle of both *esse* and *operari*.<sup>14</sup>

Second, the term "proportion" takes on an increasing significance as the *actus* basing the proportion increases. Thus, God, the angels and men are all proportionate to the true and the

<sup>10</sup>1a 2ae q. 68 a. 3; cp. a. 2.

<sup>11</sup>See O'Mahony. *The Desire of God*. (Cork. 1929).

<sup>12</sup>St. Thomas's development on this point has been presented by R. P. Chenu. "La théologie comme science au XIIIe siècle." [*Arch. d'hist. litt. doct. M.A.* 2 (1927) 31-71].

<sup>13</sup>1a 2ae q. 49 a. 4.

<sup>14</sup>. . . si vero accipitur gratia pro habituali dono, sic est duplex gratiae effectus, sicut et cuiuslibet alterius formae: quorum primus est esse, secundus est operatio; sicut calor operatio est facere calidum et exterior calefactio. 1a 2ae q. 111 a. 2 c.

good, for all are rational beings. But in God this proportion is such that divine operation cannot be defective; in the angels it implies only that for the most part operation will not fail; while in man it gives a mere possibility with no guarantee of success, so that for the most part men do what is wrong. Nevertheless, give man the virtues and in place of the statistical law governing humanity one will have an approximation to the statistical law governing the angels. Man endowed with the virtues becomes an *agens perfectum* and, for the most part, does what is right; thus a will adorned with the virtue of justice performs just deeds with the spontaneity and the regularity with which fire moves upwards.<sup>15</sup>

Incidentally, one may note that this analogy of proportion resolves an apparent anomaly. In his later discussions of virtues in the will,<sup>16</sup> St. Thomas asserts that they are necessary to man because justice exceeds the proportion of men taken individually and charity exceeds their proportion taken specifically. Yet at the same time he affirms that to love God above all things, so far from exceeding the proportion of man's powers, is natural to him and to every other creature.<sup>17</sup> The obvious solution seems to be the analogy of "proportion": it is one thing to have an abstract admiration and approval for justice and the love of God; it is quite another uniformly to translate ideals and exalted principles into concrete living. The former results from rational nature as such; the latter presupposes the acquired and the infused virtues according as action is on the plane of the terrestrial or celestial polity.<sup>18</sup>

Third, it would be a grave misinterpretation to ascribe to St. Thomas the view that the supernatural virtues give merely the possibility of a type of action and do not make it spontaneous and connatural. His whole exposition is in terms of natural forms and natural inclinations: a virtue is a second nature, an actuation and determination of an indeterminate potency, and so *quasi quaedam forma per modum naturae tendens in unum*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 4m; cp. 1a q. 49 a. 3 ad 5m; 1a 2ae q. 113 a. 7 ad 4m.

<sup>16</sup>*De Virt. in Comm.* q. 1 a. 5; 1a 2ae q. 56 a. 6.

<sup>17</sup>1a 2ae q. 109 a. 3 c and ad 2m.

<sup>18</sup>This is the explanation St. Thomas offers in his *Commentary on Romans*, 7 lect 3.

<sup>19</sup>*De Virt. in Comm.* q. 1 a. 9 c.

However, there does remain the objection from experience that the infused virtues do not appear always to make right action prompt, easy, and agreeable. To this St. Thomas answered that neither acquired nor infused virtues totally eliminate the evil inclinations of passion; still both operate against such inclinations, though in different ways. Acquired virtues make evil tendencies less sensible; the more rarefied infused virtues may not have this effect at all, but what they do accomplish is to break sin's dominion over us. Nor is the persisting sensible difficulty contrary to the nature of a virtue, for, as even Aristotle acknowledged, the pleasure proper to virtuous action may be, at times, no more than the absence of regret.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the more radical answer to the objection would be that readiness, ease and pleasure are the signs, the external consequences, of the virtues; such secondary effects may be covered over by other factors. Intrinsically a virtue is a determinate actuation: as such it is always analogous to natural spontaneity, for a nature is nothing but a determinate actuation.

2. HABITUAL GRACE AS *Gratia Sanans*. The general nature of the habit as a determination raises the question: Do habits in the will limit the will's freedom? No doubt Averroes was right in asserting *habitus est quo quis agit cum voluerit*. No doubt St. Thomas agreed with him, not only in the *Sentences* but also in the *Summa*.<sup>21</sup> None the less, a habit is the determination of an indeterminate potency, and a habit in the will is a state of willingness, an incipient willing this and rejecting that.<sup>22</sup> Is there not something of a vicious circle in saying that we employ habits just as we will or please when our willingness and what pleases us is predetermined by our habits? Is there not something in the phrase, *qualis quisque est talis finis videtur ei?*<sup>23</sup>

This question in its theological form is in terms of *gratia sanans*, of the moral impotence of the sinner, of the liberation of human liberty by grace. In the early Augustinian tradition

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.* q. 1 a. 10 ad 14m and ad 15m.

<sup>21</sup>3 d. 23 q. 1 a. 1; 1a 2ae q. 50 a. 5 c.

<sup>22</sup>1a 2ae q. 49 a. 3.

<sup>23</sup>The phrase occurs as an objection in *Eth. Nic.* 3, 5; 114a 32. St. Thomas's discussion is in *Eth.* 3 lect 13.

this aspect of grace received the greatest prominence, as we have seen,<sup>24</sup> for the very good reason that the systematic elaboration of the idea of the supernatural had not as yet been attempted. It appears, however, that this excessive prominence was followed by a temporary eclipse when the idea of the supernatural was being worked out and applied. Thus one finds St. Albert taking at its face value Peter Lombard's well-intentioned distinction between *libertas a necessitate* and *libertas a peccato*. With the Lombard he affirms that man always enjoys *libertas a necessitate*. Unlike the Lombard he concludes that *non posse non peccare etiam damnabiliter* does not mean precisely what it says; for, he maintains, St. Augustine's *peccata habendi dura necessitas* does not mean that the sinner cannot avoid future sins without grace; it only means that the sinner cannot have his past sins forgiven without grace.<sup>25</sup>

St. Bonaventure had been of a contrary opinion,<sup>26</sup> but St. Thomas in his *Sentences* argues for his former master in the most downright fashion. There is no use saying that a sinner can avoid each separate sin but not all, for if he can avoid each, then he can avoid all. Nor is it any better to argue that he can avoid all for a time but not always, for resistance to sin makes one all the stronger against it. In short, freedom of choice pertains to human nature; sin does not destroy nature; therefore sin does not destroy freedom. The most that can be said is that because of sin it becomes difficult to avoid what once was avoided easily.<sup>27</sup>

In the *De Veritate*, however, one finds a very pertinent quotation from St. Augustine's *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*. The Pelagians admitted that grace was necessary for the forgiveness of past sins; what they wanted to maintain was that grace was not necessary for the avoidance of future sins. It was on this score that St. Augustine took them to task, citing the Our

<sup>24</sup>See our "Introduction to St. Thomas's Thought on Gratia Operans." [*Theol. Studies* 2 (1941) 289-307].

<sup>25</sup>*Summa de Creaturis* 2a q. 70 a. 5; *Comment. super Sentent.* 2 d. 25 a. 6. Both works belong to the period 1240-1250 according to Fr. Pelster in Herder's *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. The position is corrected by St. Albert in his *Summa Theologica* 2a q. 100 mem. 2-4, but this work is posterior to St. Thomas's death.

<sup>26</sup>2 d. 28 q. 2 a. 2; *Vivès* 3 296.

<sup>27</sup>2 d. 28 q. 1 a. 2; 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 4.

Father which asks not only *dimitte debita nostra* but also *ne nos inferas in tentationem*. Accordingly there is no use trying to make out that *non posse non peccare* merely means that grace is necessary for sins to be forgiven.<sup>28</sup>

To meet this datum, St. Thomas refines his theory of the relations between the habits and freedom. The irrevocable fixity in evil proper to the demons<sup>29</sup> is not possible to man in this life.<sup>30</sup> For passion is momentary; bad habits of one kind can be overcome by good habits of another; and as by reasoning man falls into error, so by more reasoning can he be brought back to truth. Even when error exists in matters of principle, it can be corrected, not indeed by deduction which presupposes true principles, but by collative thought and by the acquisition of the virtues which effect a right attitude toward principles.<sup>31</sup>

Still even in this life a relative fixity in evil results from sin. This is a necessary consequence of three truths: A. Explicit deliberation is not needed for an act to be free; B. explicit deliberation is necessary for the sinner to avoid further sin; C. it is impossible for a man to deliberate explicitly before every act, and so it is impossible for the sinner to avoid all sins. As the argument touches the very centre of the relations between habits of will and human freedom, it will be well to make each point quite plain.

First (A), explicit deliberation is not needed for an act to be free. For instance, one does not weigh the pros and cons of eating before each meal, yet one eats freely. The same is true with regard to the whole routine of our lives, for, in the main, human action is the outcome of habitual orientations of mind and will. Further, one finds the same domination of habits in sudden departures from routine, and for this reason Aristotle pointed out that a man's behaviour in an emergency is the best indication of his virtue. On the other hand, this vast and almost palpable absence of explicit reflection and debate does

<sup>28</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 12 ob. 22 (ser. 1).

<sup>29</sup>St. Thomas treats the fixity of the demons in evil many times: 4 d. 50 q. 2 a. 1; *De Ver.* q. 24 a. 10; C. *Gent.* 4. 95; la q. 64 a. 2; *De Malo* q. 16 a. 5.

<sup>30</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 11.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.* and ad 4m. Such thought we associate with Newman; St. Thomas gives Aristotle as his source.



not involve an equal absence of freedom in human living. Most actions of this type receive a real and full consent: for when there is antecedent willingness with respect to an end, means to the end have merely to present themselves and, unless some special consideration intervene, they will freely and, as it were, spontaneously be chosen. To cite the Latin:

. . . *repentina sunt secundum habitum. Nec hoc est intelligendum quod operatio secundum habitum virtutis possit esse omnino absque deliberatione, cum virtus sit habitus electivus; sed quia habenti habitum iam est in eius electione finis determinatus, unde quodcumque aliquid occurrit ut conveniens illi fini, statim eligitur, nisi ex aliqua attentiori et maiori deliberatione impediatur.*<sup>32</sup>

So much, then, for the first point: the antecedent willingness of the habit results in activity that is both spontaneous and free; the only brake on this spontaneity is explicit deliberation, a process of reasoning that constructs an alternative course of action.

It immediately follows (B) that anyone with a vicious habit will freely and, as it were, automatically sin as often as occasion arises unless, simultaneously with each occasion of sin, there also arises an explicit deliberation. But St. Thomas goes further than this. Even if the sinner has committed but a single sin and so has not acquired a vice, still from that one sin there remains in his will a spontaneous orientation, *vis et inclinatio*, to the transitory good that he has made his end. In other words the difference between dispositions and habits is not that the latter are more efficacious than the former: both are spontaneous orientations and, while they last, both are equally efficacious. The difference is that the habit is so rooted in one that its chances of survival are vastly greater; it is a disposition that has built itself a permanent home, that has reached out in all directions to eliminate all tendencies that would threaten its security. Accordingly a mere disposition in the will is no less an antecedent willingness than the established habit, and so even a single sin sets up an orientation that makes the sinner succumb to every further temptation unless he argues himself out of it.

But mortal sin, it may be objected, requires full advertence

<sup>32</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 12.

and full consent. That is true, but the point is this: a sinner can have both full advertence and full consent without having the measure of deliberation necessary to break down his spontaneous orientation. Full advertence is a realization that an act is sinful and against God; full consent is a real consent following full advertence. Certainly the sinner must have both of these if he is to commit another mortal sin. But suppose that he has both; does it follow that he has reflected sufficiently to argue himself out of sinning? Not at all. To know that an act is wrong and an offence against God is an efficacious motive to a will actuated by charity. But what moves the sinner is not an appeal to his pure love of God, for he does not love God. To touch his heart, the appeal must be directed to his self-love. To hold in check his appetites, considerations must be adduced that offer deterrents to egoism. Of course his heart always can be touched, for he has not the fixity in evil of the demons; deterrents can always be found, for what is against God is ultimately also against himself. But the present point is that the full advertence necessary for mortal sin neither touches his heart nor offers an efficacious deterrent, that a further and fuller advertence is required before the sinner can construct his resistance to further sin.

Third (C), habits are a human necessity. Man has to be spontaneously and antecedently in the right attitude, with the right orientation, for the excellent reason that it is quite impossible for man to be reasoning himself into the right attitude before each act. You may say that habits are needed merely to make action ready, easy, and agreeable. That is quite true. But it is also true that unless action is ready, easy, and agreeable, then for the most part it will not take place. Such was the statistical law established in the *Sentences*. But now St. Thomas advances from a mere statistical law to the limiting case in which sheer impossibility emerges. He had shown that the sinner stands in need of an extra measure of reflectiveness, a special advertence, if he is to avoid further sins. The question now is: Can a man endure the perpetual strain of such deliberateness? The answer is flatly negative. Deliberate vigilance can succeed for a time, but not for the whole time, nor even for a long time. If only

he puts his mind to it, the sinner can resist every temptation. But he cannot constantly be putting his mind to it. Therefore, it is inevitable that he will give free course to the spontaneous orientation, to the *vis et inclinatio*, of his will; once he has done so, temptation has only to recur and again he will sin, freely.<sup>33</sup>

Thus the Lombard's *non posse non peccare* is re-established; the vast sea of Augustinian thought, which flowed in the twelfth century but whose current was dammed while the speculative theorem of the supernatural was being elaborated and applied, now surges into the categories of the Thomist synthesis. Habitual grace, henceforth, is not only *elevans* but also *sanans*. Let us give a few illustrations.

An objection affirms, *cogenti cupiditati voluntas resistere non potest*.<sup>34</sup> Nothing could summarize more effectively the kernel of St. Thomas' account of moral impotence: self-love, *cupiditas*, makes sin connatural; it makes the avoidance of sin an impossible strain; it constitutes a servitude from which the only permanent liberation is the infusion of divine charity.<sup>35</sup> In similar fashion St. Thomas accepts and interprets St. Paul's *non*

<sup>33</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 12. Is he really free? At this period St. Thomas conceives freedom as non-coercion and so has no difficulty: see 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 2; *De Ver.* q. 23 a. 4; *De Pot.* q. 10 a. 2 ad 5m; *De Ver.* q. 22 a. 5 c; *ibid.* 4a 4m (ser. 1); *ibid.* 3a 3m (ser. 2); *De Ver.* q. 22 a. 8; *De Ver.* q. 24 a. 1 ad 20m; *De Ver.* q. 24 a. 10 5a 5m; *De Ver.* q. 24 a. 12 ad 10m (ser. 2); *De Pot.* q. 3 a. 7 ad 14m. Later in the *De Malo*, when the determinist views of Parisian Averroists were being ventilated, St. Thomas treats with extraordinary harshness the weak minds or frivolous wills that identify freedom with non-coercion. See *De Malo* q. 6 a. 1 corp. init.; also Lottin. "Liberté humaine et motion divine." [*Rech. theol. anc. med.* 7 (1935) 52-69, 156-173], and his earlier article, "La date de la question disputée 'De Malo' de S. Thomas d'Aquin." [*Rev. hist. eccl.* 24 (1928) 284-303].

To return to our initial question, it would seem that non-coercion was simply a mode of speech in St. Thomas's earlier works; it was common enough in his predecessors; and certainly it was not a true presupposition of his position, which rather is the law of psychological continuity formulated in *De Malo* q. 16 a. 5. On that interpretation the freedom of the sinner who cannot help sinning depends on the measure of his resistance to sin: if that resistance extends to the point where the physical strain reaches the peak of physical incapacity, then sin committed in that state is not formal but material; if the resistance does not produce physical incapacity, then it is the will that provides the ultimate determinant, and the culpability of the will in so doing would seem to be in some inverse proportion to the measure of physical debilitation. What more can be said? Certainly a glib distinction between *impotentia moralis* and *impotentia physica* throws no light on the issue.

<sup>34</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 12 ob. 12 (ser. 1).

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.* corp. ad fin.

*quod volo bonum hoc ago*,<sup>36</sup> St. Augustine's comparison of the sinner's will to a crooked leg that cannot but limp along,<sup>37</sup> St. Gregory's *peccatum quod per paenitentiam non deletur, mox suo pondere ad aliud trahit*,<sup>38</sup> the old "theologians' definition" of liberty *as quo bonum eligitur gratia assistente et malum gratia desistente*,<sup>39</sup> the *Glossa's* description of the liberation of human liberty,<sup>40</sup> and, of course, Peter Lombard's account of the state of fallen man.<sup>41</sup>

But not only is there a revival of the psychological theories of grace so prominent in twelfth century thought. There also is the coherent handling of what the twelfth century could and did assert but could not correlate with its other data. At the head of this list is the passage attributed to St. Jerome, *hominem semper peccare et non peccare posse*.<sup>42</sup> There follows a series of equivalent arguments from Holy Scripture, St. Augustine and human reason.<sup>43</sup> Finally, it is in this long discussion that St. Thomas comes to grips with the twofold function of habitual grace to be described with schematic brilliance in the *Prima Secundae*,<sup>44</sup> when he will hold in synthesis the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders, the difference between Adam's state and our own, and the necessity of divine motions supplementing infused habits.<sup>45</sup>

So much for the development in speculative theology. Implicit in it there is discerned, easily enough, a philosophic doctrine that dispositions and habits of will constitute a very real limitation on human freedom. The human will does not swing back to a perfect equilibrium of indifference with every tick of the clock; its past operations determine its present orientation; and though this orientation has not the absolute fixity of angels and demons, still it is characterized by the relative fixity

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 1 (ser. 1).

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 4 (ser. 1) ob. 2 (ser. 2).

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 5 (ser. 1).

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 14 (ser. 1).

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 3 (ser. 1).

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 21 (ser. 1).

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 1 (ser. 2).

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.* ob. 2-11 (ser. 2).

<sup>44</sup>1a 2ae q. 109.

<sup>45</sup>All these points are contained in *De Ver.* q. 27 a. 5 ad 3m.

of psychological continuity. It can be changed but such change always requires a cause.

The accurate formulation of this position, however much it is presupposed in the *De Veritate*,<sup>46</sup> I have not been able to find in any work earlier than the *De Malo*. There one may read of three possible meanings of the expression, volitional difference, *velle diversa*. The third, which alone concerns us, is as follows:

Tertia autem diversitas in quam liberum arbitrium potest, attenditur secundum differentiam mutationis; quae quidem non consistit in hoc quod aliquis diversa velit, nam et ipse Deus vult ut diversa fiant secundum quod convenit diversis temporibus et personis; sed mutatio liberi arbitrii consistit in hoc quod aliquis illud idem et pro eodem tempore non velit quod prius volebat, aut velit quod prius nolebat. Et haec diversitas non per se pertinet ad rationem liberi arbitrii sed accidit ei secundum conditionem naturae mutabilis: sicut non est de ratione visivae potentiae quod diversimode videat, sed hoc contingit quandoque propter diversam dispositionem videntis, cuius oculus quandoque est purus, quandoque autem turbatus. Et similiter etiam mutabilitas seu diversitas liberi arbitrii non est de ratione eius, sed accidit ei in quantum est in natura mutabili.

Mutatur enim in nobis liberum arbitrium ex causa intrinseca et ex causa extrinseca. Ex causa quidem intrinseca: vel propter rationem, puta cum quis aliquid prius nesciebat quod postea cognoscit; vel propter appetitum qui quandoque sic est dispositus per passionem vel habitum ut tendat in aliquid sicut in sibi conveniens, quod cessante passione vel habitu sibi conveniens non est. Ex causa vero extrinseca: puta cum Deus immutat voluntatem hominis per gratiam de malo in bonum, secundum illud Prov., 21, 1: *Cor regis est in manu Dei, et quocumque voluerit vertet illud.*<sup>47</sup>

The point is quite clear. *Per se* the will does not change and so the angels decide their eternal destiny by a single act. *Per accidens* the will does change, not because it is a will, nor because it is a free will, but because it is *in natura mutabili* and either new knowledge, a modification of passion or of habit, or divine grace intervenes.

It is perhaps worth noting that in the *De Veritate* St. Thomas had discussed the change of the will effected by grace. Q. 22,

<sup>46</sup>See the way St. Thomas argues that the will of the demons cannot change and that man's can change, *De Ver.* q. 24 a. 10 and 11.

<sup>47</sup>*De Malo* q. 16 a. 5.

a. 8 opens with two objections: the first is *Cor regis in manu Domini*; the second is a snippet from the *glossa Augustini* to the effect that God operates in the hearts of men inclining their wills as he pleases.<sup>48</sup> The account of this operation is as follows:

Cum igitur Deus voluntatem immutat, facit ut praecedenti inclinationi succedat alia inclinatio, et ita quod prima aufertur et secunda manet. Unde illud ad quod inducit voluntatem, non est contrarium inclinationi iam existenti, sed inclinationi quae prius inerat. . . .<sup>49</sup>

Immutat autem voluntatem dupliciter: uno modo movendo tantum: quando scilicet voluntatem movet ad aliquid volendum sine hoc quod aliquam formam imprimat voluntati, sicut sine appositione habitus quandoque facit ut homo velit hoc quod prius non volebat. Alio vero modo imprimendo aliquam formam in ipsam voluntatem; sicut enim ex ipsa natura, quam Deus voluntati dedit, inclinatur voluntas in aliquid volendum . . . ita ex aliquo superaddito, sicut est gratia vel virtus, inclinatur ulterius ad volendum aliquid aliud, ad quod prius non erat determinata naturali inclinatione. . . .<sup>50</sup>

If one may presume a similar field of concepts in *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 8 and *De Veritate*, q. 24, a. 7-12, the function of the habit as a *gratia sanans* becomes quite plain. On the one hand, the sinner is confined by the law of psychological continuity to a perpetual repetition of his sins. On the other, the infusion of grace constitutes a permanent change in the inclination or spontaneous orientation of the will: it plucks out the heart of stone that made the sinner a slave to sin; it implants a heart of flesh to initiate a new continuity in justice. Finally, just as a vicious habit is not needed to set up slavery to sin, for a mere disposition suffices, so also the infusion of habitual grace is not the sole means God has for the liberation of liberty, for not only by imprinting a permanent form but also by a simple motion does God change the will of man. However, this last point calls for a separate inquiry.

3. THE INFUSED HABIT AS A PREMOTION. In the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas employs an analogy from Aristotelian physics to correlate the three elements in the process of justification: the infusion of grace is *motio moventis*, the free acts of

<sup>48</sup>*De Ver.* q. 22 a. 8. In the *Prima Secundae* (q. 79 a. 1 ad 1m) one is told that this *glossa* is from St. Augustine's *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*.

<sup>49</sup>The passage continues on the theme of liberty as non-coercion, see above note 33.

<sup>50</sup>*De Ver.* q. 22 a. 8.

faith and repentance are *motus mobilis*, and the remission of sins is *perventio in finem* or *consummatio motus*.<sup>51</sup>

The same analogy had already been used in the discussion of the passions. Thus:

. . . agens autem naturale duplicem effectum inducit in patiens: nam primo quidem dat formam, secundo dat motum consequentem formam: sicut generans dat corpori gravitatem et motum consequentem ipsam; et ipsa generans, quae est principium motus ad locum connaturalem, propter connaturalitatem potest quodammodo dici amor naturalis. . . . Prima ergo immutatio appetitus ab appetibili vocatur amor, qui nihil est aliud quam complacentia appetibilis: et ex hac complacentia sequitur motus in appetibile, qui est desiderium: et ultimo quies quae est gaudium.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly:

. . . diversitas autem activi vel motivi, quantum ad virtutem movendi, potest accipi in passionibus animae secundum similitudinem agentium naturalium: omne enim movens trahit quodammodo ad se patiens, vel a se repellit. Trahendo quidem ad se trahit in ipso: nam primo quidem dat ei inclinationem vel aptitudinem ut in ipsum tendat: sicut cum corpus leve quod est sursum dat levitatem corpori generato, per quam habet inclinationem vel aptitudinem ad hoc quod sit sursum. Secundo si corpus generatum est extra locum proprium, dat ei moveri ad locum. Tertio dat ei quiescere in locum cum pervenerit: quia ex eadem causa aliquid quiescit in loco per quam movebatur ad locum. Et similiter intelligendum est de causa repulsionis. In motibus autem appetitivae partis. . . .<sup>53</sup>

The use of the same analogy in the discussion of justification is manifest, not merely from the terms *motio moventis*, *motus mobilis* and *perventio in finem*, but also from a number of other indications. In the article on *gratia operans* one reads:

. . . si vero accipiatur gratia pro habituali dono, sic est duplex gratiae effectus, sicut et *cuiuslibet alterius formae*: quorum primus est esse, secundus est operatio; sicut caloris operatio est facere calidum et exterior calefactio. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Again in the definition of justification:

. . . iustificatio passive accepta importat motum ad iustitiam sicut et calefactio motum ad calorem. . . .<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup>1a 2ae q. 113 a. 6.

<sup>53</sup>1a 2ae q. 23 a. 4.

<sup>55</sup>1a 2ae q. 113 a. 1.

<sup>52</sup>1a 2ae q. 26 a. 2.

<sup>54</sup>1a 2ae q. 111 a. 2.

And in describing the instantaneous character of the free acts in justification:

. . . in eodem instanti in quo forma acquiritur incipit res operari secundum formam: sicut ignis statim cum est generatus, movetur sursum; et si motus eius esset instantaneus, in eodem instanti completeretur: motus autem liberi arbitrii qui est velle non est successivus sed instantaneus; et ideo non oportet quod iustificatio impii sit successiva.<sup>56</sup>

Now there is no difficulty in understanding why St. Thomas should have turned to this analogy with physical theory when describing the transmutation effected at the instant of justification. As we have seen, there are two forms of psychological continuity in man, servitude to sin and the liberty of the sons of God. The instant of justification is the shift from one form to the other; it puts an end to servitude; it is the beginning and the foundation of the liberty of grace. To make it perfectly plain that St. Thomas did not fall into the error of so many minor theologians who deal in empty categories, let us transcribe a typical passage from the *Commentary on Romans*:

. . . alio modo dicitur aliquis esse sub lege quasi a lege coactus; et sic dicitur esse sub lege qui non voluntarie ex amore sed timore cogitur legem observare. Talis autem caret gratia, quae si adesset inclinaret voluntatem ad observantiam legis, ut ex amore moralia eius praecepta impletet. Sic igitur quamdiu aliquis sic est sub lege ut non impleat voluntarie legem, peccatum in eo dominatur, ex quo voluntas hominis inclinatur ut velit id quod est contrarium legi. . . . Hanc autem gratiam facientem homines libere legem implere, non conferebant legalia sacramenta, sed conferunt eam sacramenta Christi.<sup>57</sup>

Thus St. Thomas affirms that if an individual observes the law with regret and through fear then he is without grace, for grace inclines the will to love fulfilment of the law. Just as the sinner to avoid sin must be under a continuous and intolerable strain, so the justified enjoys the opposite spontaneity; if he is to sin, he must labour against his conscience.

Once this is understood, one readily grasps why the infusion of habitual grace is a premotion. It is a change from one spontaneity to another, a straightening out of man, placing his

<sup>56</sup>1a 2ae q. 113 a. 7 ad 4m.

<sup>57</sup>In Rom. 6 lect. 3. Cp. 1a 2ae q. 108 a. 1 ad 2m.



higher faculties in subordination to God and his lower faculties in subordination to reason.<sup>58</sup> When such a change is produced in adult consciousness,<sup>59</sup> it naturally gives rise to acts of free will, acts of faith and of repentance, that both acknowledge this change of attitude and result from it.

. . . Deus non sine nobis nos iustificat, quia per motum liberi arbitrii, dum iustificamur, Dei iustitiae consentimus; ille tamen motus non est causa gratiae sed effectus; unde tota operatio pertinet ad gratiam.<sup>60</sup>

Just as the generation of fire results in immediate burning, so the infusion of the virtues results in immediate acts of virtue.<sup>61</sup> For habitual grace is like any other form: it gives not only *esse* but also *operari*.<sup>62</sup>

One must not suppose, however, that St. Thomas always analyzed the instant of justification in the above manner. In the *De Veritate*, for example, obstinacy in sin is defined as an incapacity to cooperate with grace.<sup>63</sup> Now this is meaningless when it is fully grasped that grace is what gives the capacity to cooperate, that it plucks out the heart of stone, however black, that will not cooperate, and gives the heart of flesh that leaps to cooperation. What, then, was the course of St. Thomas's development on this point?

<sup>58</sup>1a 2ae q. 113 a. 1.

<sup>59</sup>St. Thomas excepts the *parvuli*, *furiosi*, and *amentes*: 1a 2ae q. 113 a. 3.

<sup>60</sup>1a 2ae q. 111 a. 2 ad 2m.

<sup>61</sup>1a 2ae q. 113 a. 7 ad 4m.

<sup>62</sup>2a 2ae q. 111 a. 2 c. Fr. del Prado in his *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* (3 vols. Friburgi. Helv. 1907) expresses the opinion that St. Thomas considered the will to be purely passive in the free acts elicited at the instant of justification. His argument seems to be that justification is an operative grace, which is not without foundation in 1a 2ae q. 111 a. 2 ob. 2a et ad 2m., and that when grace is operative then the will is *mota et non movens*, which is clearly stated in the *corpus*. I am inclined to disagree with this view, for St. Thomas's definition of habitual grace as cooperative is that it is a principle of free acts (*inquantum vero est principium operis meritorii, quod ex libero arbitrio procedit, dicitur cooperans*) while his definition of cooperative grace is *mens mota et movens* (*ibid. corp.*). Further, that the grace of justification is purely and simply operative is not St. Thomas's statement so much as that of the objicient, while St. Thomas does say that *gratia operans et cooperans est eadem gratia sed distinguitur secundum diversos effectus* (*ibid. ad 4m.*). Finally, St. Thomas's eagerness to agree with St. Augustine, an eagerness that is palpable to anyone reviewing the development of his thought on grace, would hardly lead him to interpret St. Augustine's *non te iustificabit sine te* by a passivity parallel to the passivity with which he interprets St. Augustine's *quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*. The basic problem of habitual grace as *operans et cooperans* was to find different meanings for these two texts. See below note 64.

<sup>63</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 11; cp. a. 10.

First, there exists a basic uniformity. At all times St. Thomas distinguished between God's infusion of the virtues and our consent to that infusion. The former is always operative: *quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*. The latter is always cooperative: *qui creavit te sine te, non iustificabit te sine te*.<sup>64</sup> Further, the act of consent is always causally dependent on the infusion of grace: for such acts are meritorious,<sup>65</sup> and without grace there is no merit. Finally, in the *Sentences* and the *De Veritate* the causal dependence of the act of consent appears to be solely with regard to the *forma meriti*; but in the *Summa* the dependence regards not only the *forma meriti* but also, as we have seen, the *motus liberi arbitrii* itself.

Thus in the *Sentences* there is the question: Do the free acts in justification precede the infusion of grace?<sup>66</sup> The answer is a series of distinctions. What is meant by precedence? If the reference is to a temporal order, the answer is negative, for the infusion of grace, the free acts, and the remission of sins are simultaneous. If the reference is to a causal order, then is it material or formal causality that is understood? For in material causality the free acts as dispositions precede; but in formal causality the free acts must follow.

In the *De Veritate* St. Thomas explicitly rejects his later seriation that places the free acts after the infusion of grace but prior to the remission of sins. The infusion of grace and the remission of sins admit no intermediate.<sup>67</sup> Thus the free acts must either precede both or follow both. But they cannot simply precede, for they cannot be meritorious before grace is infused. Nor can they simply follow, for they are dispositions

<sup>64</sup>*Apoc. Pet.* (Eth.) 7 and 11, (*Akbmim Fragment*), 9, 24.

<sup>66</sup>On these texts we have the following solutions:

. . . *Deus non iustificat nos sine nobis consentientibus. . . Iustificat tamen nos sine nobis virtutum causantibus* 2 d. 27 q. 2 ad 7m.

. . . *Deus virtutes in nobis operatur sine nobis virtutes causantibus, non tamen sine nobis consentientibus.* *De Ver.* q. 28 a. 3 ad 17m.

. . . *virtus infusa causatur in nobis a Deo sine nobis agentibus, non tamen sine nobis consentientibus; et sic est intelligendum quod dicitur, Quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur; quae vero per nos aguntur, Deus in nobis causat non sine nobis agentibus; ipse enim operatur in omni voluntate et natura* 1a 2ae q. 55 a. 4 ad 6m.

<sup>65</sup>1a 2ae q. 112 a. 2 ad 1m and *loc. par.*

<sup>66</sup>4 d. 17 q. 1 a. 4 qc 2.

<sup>67</sup>*De Ver.* q. 28 a. 8 c.

to the remission of sin.<sup>69</sup> It may be noted that this position in the *De Veritate* is all the more surprising in view of the fact that St. Thomas had already formulated his view that the infusion of grace involved a change in the inclination of the will.<sup>69</sup>

The root difficulty seems to have been the difficulty of systematizing Pelagian error, for only gradually does St. Thomas appear to have acquired clear and distinct concepts of its many aspects. In the *Sentences* Pelagianism seems to be simply the negation of the supernatural order.<sup>70</sup> In the *De Veritate*, as we have seen, the moral impotence of the sinner adds a new aspect: it is Pelagian to say that without grace man can avoid further sin.<sup>71</sup> But the first mention of Pelagianism in connection with the *initium iustificationis* and the *initium fidei* is not in the treatment of the preparation for justification in the *Sentences*<sup>72</sup> nor even in the *De Veritate*<sup>73</sup> but, to my knowledge, in the *Contra Gentiles*.<sup>74</sup> Since there one finds the prevenience of divine grace formulated in terms of *motio moventis praecedit motum mobilis*,<sup>75</sup> one need look no further for the origin of the *Summa's* series, in which the infusion of grace is *motio moventis*, the free acts are *motus mobilis*, and the remission of sin is *consummatio motus*.<sup>76</sup>

4. CONCLUSION. The foregoing study of St. Thomas' thought on habitual grace as operative and cooperative has drawn attention to the following points. First, there is a development with regard to the role of the virtues in perfecting man: in the *Sentences* when habitual grace alone is operative and cooperative, the habits alone are considered as means of human perfection; in the *De Veritate* when an actual grace is recognized as cooperative, it is affirmed that a creature cannot get along without divine aid and guidance no matter how per-

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.* et sol. (ser. 2).

<sup>69</sup>*De Ver.* q. 22 a. 8.

<sup>70</sup>See 2 d. 28 q. 1 a. 1-4; cp. *loc. par.*

<sup>71</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 12; cp. 2 d. 28 q. 1 a. 2.

<sup>72</sup>2 d. 28 q. 1 a. 4.

<sup>73</sup>*De Ver.* q. 24 a. 15.

<sup>74</sup>*C. Gent.* 3, 149, 152.

<sup>75</sup>*C. Gent.* 3, 149.

<sup>76</sup>1a 2ae q. 113 a. 6-8.

fect his virtues; in the *Summa* actual grace is operative as well as cooperative and the gifts of the Holy Ghost are defined in terms of connaturality to motion by an external principle. Second, there is development with regard to the necessity of virtues: in the *Sentences* this necessity is merely in terms of statistical law; in the *De Veritate* statistical law gives way to relative impossibility. Coincident with this development is a fuller grasp of the nature of Pelagianism and the transfusion of twelfth century Augustinian thought into the Thomist synthesis. Third, there is development with regard to the prevenient action of grace on free will: in the *Sentences* and the *De Veritate* the free acts that take place in justification are informed by the infused grace; in the *Contra Gentiles* the prevenience of grace is expressed in terms of *motio moventis* and *motus mobilis*; in the *Summa* this terminology is developed on the analogy of Aristotelian physics and the motion of free will as well as its information is attributed to the simultaneously infused habitual grace.

It would, perhaps, not be unreasonable to conclude that St. Thomas's concept of actual grace underwent a concomitant variation.

(To be continued)

