

Being, Goodness and Truth

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INTRODUCTION

ALEX HALL

The *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* (PSMLM) collects original materials presented at sessions sponsored by the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics (SMLM). SMLM was founded in 2000 by Gyula Klima (Director), Joshua Hochschild, Jack Zupko and Jeffrey Brower, in order to recover the profound metaphysical insights of medieval thinkers for our own philosophical thought. The Society currently has over a hundred members on five continents. Alex Hall took up the position of Assistant Director and Secretary in 2011, with secretarial duties passing to Timothy Kearns in 2014. The Society's maiden publication appeared online in 2001 and the decade that followed saw the release of eight more online volumes. In 2011, PSMLM transitioned to print and republished volumes 1-8 as separately titled editions. Sharp-eyed readers of these volumes will note the replacement of our (lamentably copyrighted for commercial use) lions, who guarded the integrity of the body of an intellectual tradition thought to be dead, with the phoenixes that mark this print rebirth. Volumes 9 and 10 appeared in a dual print/online format. With Volume 11, PSMLM switched to print only. Friends of the lions will be happy to note that they remain at their post, protecting the first ten volumes of the PSMLM at <http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/SMLM/>, where interested readers can also keep up with SMLM activities and projects.

Being, Goodness and Truth (the sixteenth volume of the PSMLM) collects papers presented at SMLM-sponsored sessions in 2017. The papers take up various topics in the virtue-ethics tradition as it develops out of the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. The essays that make up Part I were read at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, where a SMLM panel discussed whether cultivated virtues exist in a Christian who has received grace and its attendant, infused virtues. Part II discusses whether and how values may be grounded in real essences (conceived as truth makers), presenting papers read at the SMLM satellite session of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, hosted by Baylor University and the University of Dallas. Volume 17 of the PSMLM

(forthcoming) presents a 2018, author-meets-critics workshop on Robert Pasnau's *After Certainty* (OUP 2017), sponsored by Sorbonne Université and the École Pratique des Hautes Études. Volume 18 (forthcoming) is on the thought of William of Ockham, including a 2017 author-meets-critics, panel on Magali Roques' *L'essentialisme de Guillaume d'Ockham*.

Part I: Acquired Virtues in the Christian? Revisiting the Question

The virtue ethics tradition that shapes the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas dates to the fourth-century BC works of Plato and Aristotle, who believe that knowledge of the good of a thing is tied to what it is, i.e. its essence.¹ A thing's essence determines its capacities and capacities dictate perfections relative to kinds. Humans are essentially rational, hence the human good lies in a well-lived rational life. Aristotle terms this good '*eudaimonia*', the definitive quality of a life well-lived, a product of education, character, virtue and chance.² Aquinas distinguishes between *eudaimonia* (Latin: '*felicitas*') and the perfect happiness ('*beatitudo*') of the blessed in the afterlife:³ "It is impossible for man in this life to be entirely happy (*totaliter esse felicem*)."⁴ Again, Aquinas suspects that Aristotle also thinks of our happiness as a relatively limited type:

Felicity in its perfect character cannot be present in men, but they may participate somewhat in it . . . in this life . . . This seems to have been Aristotle's view . . . where he asks whether misfortunes take away happiness, having shown that felicity consists in the works of virtue . . . He concludes that those men for whom such perfection in this life is possible are happy as men (*beatos ut homines*),⁵ as if they had not attained felicity absolutely, but merely in human fashion (SCG 3.48.9).

Beatitude, in turn, requires grace:

¹See *Republic* Books 1 and 4 and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE) Book 1, chap. 7 (cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) I.5.5; 76.1c).

²NE 1.8-9; 2.1.

³See Brian Davies, "Happiness," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, Edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford University Press, 2012), 227-37.

⁴*Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) 3.48.7.

⁵Here and elsewhere, Aquinas uses '*beatitudo*' and '*felicitas*' to refer to mere human happiness and beatitude, respectively. However, he generally intends the sense of the terms the other way around (see Davies, 231-32).

It is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness, even as he is directed to his connatural end, by means of his natural principles . . . Such like principles are called “theological virtues”: first, because their object is God, inasmuch as they direct us aright to God: secondly, because they are infused in us by God alone: thirdly, because these virtues are not made known to us, save by Divine revelation, contained in Holy Writ (ST I-II.62.1c).

Aquinas construes Aristotle as having set out the moral and intellectual virtues that characterize merely human happiness.⁶ The theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, on the other hand, direct us to our supernatural end, exceed our natural capacity and are infused by God along with grace. Also had by grace and in service to the same supernatural end, are infused moral and intellectual virtues, counterparts to the cultivated virtues (e.g. infused temperance).

Aquinas’s account raises the question as to whether the infused virtues somehow coexist alongside the acquired. Coexistence (or compatibilist) theorists contend that Christians in a state of grace possess both acquired and infused virtues; transformational (or incompatibilist) accounts deny this. A transformationalist, William C. Mattison III nevertheless recognizes in Chapter 1 that the coexistence thesis finds support in several considerations that would seem evident to Aquinas. First, the advent of infused virtues should not result in the loss of a good, here an acquired virtue. Again, by mortal sin, a Christian who falls from grace loses the infused virtues. But fallen Christians may yet exercise virtues cultivated prior to the reception of grace. Were these virtues there all along? Mattison

⁶Aristotelian psychology is hylomorphic, i.e. Aristotle conceives of human beings as matter-form composites (*De Anima* (DA) 2.1). The formal element is the soul. (An intellectual aspect of soul is separable from body and persists after death. Nevertheless, Aristotle leaves little or no room for personal immortality (see DA 3.5).) The soul has three broad classes of function: vegetative (autonomic), appetitive and rational (NE 1.7). The semi-rational, appetitive aspect cannot reason, but can be habituated by the rational element, unlike the autonomic (or vegetative) aspect responsible for things such as digestion and growth. Corresponding to the appetitive and rational elements of the soul are moral (or ethical) and intellectual virtues that optimize their respective functions (NE 1.13; 2.6; 6.1). Cutting across these two categories of virtue are the cardinal virtues: prudence (an intellectual virtue); and justice, fortitude and temperance (moral virtues). As prudence concerns how we ought to act, Aquinas states that “in some way (*quodammodo*)” it too is a moral virtue and concludes that the cardinal virtues may therefore be classed as moral virtues (ST I-II 61.1c). The moral virtues are reducible to the cardinal virtues as to their subject and formal principle (ST I-II 61.2, ad 3).

addresses these issues with a study of Aquinas on dead faith. By faith, the intellect qualified by charity assents to supernatural truths. Dead faith involves the same disposition, but as exercised by one who lacks charity.⁷ These habits are cospecific, distinguished as perfect and imperfect,⁸ i.e. in their end or mode of acting. Whereas living faith directs us to our supernatural end, dead faith does not. That is, living and dead faith differ only in mode, not species. Hence, the case of dead faith does not involve any habit that coexists with living faith, but the transformation of a living faith as regards its end or mode. So too, it may be that the gain or loss of infused virtues merely transforms a habit. There is neither the loss of a good habit in the infusion nor a puzzle over why earlier, acquired virtues persist (albeit in a different mode) absent grace.

In Chapter 2, Lloyd Newton takes issue with a transformationalist account that Mattison advances in an earlier work,⁹ where Mattison notes that an individual may be ordered to either merely human or supernatural happiness, but not both, since every human person has one last end.¹⁰ Because acquired and infused virtues direct us to either human or supernatural happiness (respectively), a Christian directed to supernatural happiness wouldn't have acquired virtues, which would, in effect, steer her the wrong way.¹¹ Newton objects that Aquinas recognizes multiple, essentially ordered last ends corresponding to various aspects of our nature as corporeal, living, sentient beings. Hence nothing prevents the coexistence of various acquired and infused virtues that are directed variously toward these various ends.

Despite their differences, coexistence and transformational readings generally agree that a Christian in a state of grace produces one, unified kind of moral action, i.e. does not sometimes cultivate acquired and at other times infused virtues. In Chapter 3, Angela Knobel challenges this consensus and argues that the early Aquinas held a coexistence thesis on which Christians possess two sets of virtues, e.g. acquired and infused temperance, that produce two different kinds of act, ordered to our natural and supernatural ends, respectively.

⁷*Scriptum Super Sententiis* III d. 23, q. 3; ST II-II 4.4-5, 5.2-3, 6.2, 7.1; *De Veritate* (DV) 14.5-7. See also James 2:19-20.

⁸DV 14.7; ST II-II 4.5, ad. 3.

⁹"Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues," *Theological Studies*, 72 (2011), 558-85.

¹⁰*Ibid.* p. 564 (cf. ST I-II.1.4-5).

¹¹Mattison, 565.

Part II: Being and Goodness: The Metaphysical Grounding of Value

In ST I.5.4, Aquinas defends the proposition that the good has the aspect (*ratio*) of the final cause. Thomas M. Osborne Jr. notes in Chapter 5 that Aquinas's account has given rise to several questions. Does the claim that the good has the *ratio* of the final cause entail that the two are in no way distinct? And if they are distinct, how so and what does it mean to say that the *ratio* of goodness and the final cause are the same? In an account criticized for its obscurity by Domingo Banez (1528-1604) and Francisco Zumel (d. 1607), Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469-1535) appears to argue that the good has the *ratio* of the final cause in two senses: (1) (*in signato*) as the good is the principle that renders the final cause final (i.e. good, and hence an end), and this whether or not the final cause is setting in motion some agent (hence God is good whether or not creatures exist to desire God); and (2) (*in exercito*) inasmuch as the good as good exercises final causality. Banez and Zumel, by contrast, think that the good is the *ratio* of the final cause only in *actu signato*, inasmuch as the *ratio* of the good can be understood apart from final causality (which they fear (2) cannot accommodate), simply as the principle by which an end is able to move the agent. In later thinkers such as Zumel's student Diego Alvarez (ca. 1550-1635) and the seventeenth-century Carmelites of Salamanca we see the emergence of a Thomistic synthesis that downplays the differences between (1) and (2) and is immune to the criticisms of Banez and Zumel.

In Chapter 6 Robert C. Koons takes up the Aristotelian theory of Formal Identity to which Aquinas subscribes. The Formal Identity Thesis maintains that understanding is a mental grasp of a thing's form or essence. The form that exists for our understanding (described as an intelligible species) is co-specific with the form that exists outside of the mind in some thing.¹² A corollary to this is the immateriality of the intellect, as physical composition would impede the potential to know all forms. Koons defends the Formal Identity Thesis based on our ability to grasp necessary truths, especially knowledge of value or the good, which is always of the particular good of a type based on its form. The question remains as to the nature of the connection between these forms and the human mind. Platonist accounts think of the forms as self-subsistent efficient causes of understanding. Koons rejects the Platonist thesis, as it either threatens the immanence of understanding or undermines the per se unity of the person into whose

¹²*De Anima* 3.4.

composition a universal substance (the form) enters. But Aristotelians struggle to explain how the same type of form can be both a qualitative act of understanding for the intellect and either a substantial or a non-qualitative accidental form in an instance of the species (as when we grasp something other than a quality of a thing). How can a qualitative form be of the same species as a non-qualitative or a substantial form? Koons suggests that the intelligible species is intrinsically a form of a non-qualitative sort whose informing of the mind produces an intellectual quality. This form is received differently in various instances, in the immaterial mind as a qualitative act, in matter as a substance or accident.

PART ONE:

***ACQUIRED VIRTUES IN THE CHRISTIAN?
REVISITING THE QUESTION***

REVISITING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INFUSED AND ACQUIRED CARDINAL VIRTUES: LESSONS FROM THOMAS AQUINAS ON DEAD FAITH

WILLIAM C. MATTISON III

Over the past decade there has arisen a lively discussion concerning the possibility of acquired cardinal virtues in the Christian.¹ Though this topic is referenced in the work of St. Thomas, and in the centuries since has been treated in varying degrees of detail, it may be the case that it is never been given as much focused and technical attention as it has in the past decade. As evidence of this I offer the recent outstanding volume of essays from the Thomistic Instituut in Utrecht, entitled *The Virtuous Life: Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Nature of Moral Virtues*. Roughly half the contributions,

¹For an article that takes on this question directly and surveys prior scholarship addressing it, see William Mattison III “Can Christians Possess the Acquired Virtues?” *Theological Studies* 72 (2011), 558-585. For scholarship in the past decade addressing this question directly, see: Angela Knobel, “Can Aquinas’s Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Life?” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 23 (2010): 381-96, “Two Theories of Christian Virtue,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010): 599-618, and “Relating Aquinas’ Acquired and Infused Virtues: Some Problematic Texts” *Nova et Vetera* 9.2 (2011): 411-431; David Decosimo, “More to Love: Ends, Ordering, and the Compatibility of Acquired and Infused Virtues,” 47-72 in *The Virtuous Life: Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Nature of Moral Virtues*, Harm Goris and Henk Schoot, editors (Leuven: Peeters, 2017) and *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014), 190-197; Andrew Pinsent “Who’s Afraid of the Infused Virtues? Dispositional Infusion, Human and Divine,” 73-96 in *The Virtuous Life*; and, Nicholas Austin, S.J., *Aquinas on Virtue: A Causal Reading* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017). Even more recently, three articles on this topic appeared in the *Journal of Moral Theology* 8.2 (2019). See William C. Mattison III, “Aquinas, Custom, and the Coexistence of Infused and Acquired Cardinal Virtues,” pp. 1-24; Angela Knobel, “Elevated Virtue?” pp. 25-29; and, Jean Porter, “Moral Virtues, Charity, and Grace: Why the Infused and Acquired Virtues Cannot Coexist,” pp. 40-66.

including those from all four keynote speakers, address this topic.² The purpose of this essay is to contribute to that debate by examining St. Thomas' writings on a topic that is rarely referenced – if at all – in recent scholarship on the possibility of acquired virtue in the Christian.³ The topic is dead faith.

It would help at the outset to offer a brief sketch of the recent debate on the possibility of acquired cardinal virtue in the Christian. All participants agree on the following. It is possible for people to possess virtues, variously called by St. Thomas “acquired” or “natural” or “political” or “social” virtues, which enable one to act in a manner oriented toward and indeed constitutive of natural human flourishing as one's last end.⁴ There are a host of such moral and intellectual virtues, but they are typified by the cardinal virtues, which for St. Thomas “cover” all natural virtue in a sense.⁵ Thus this debate

²*The Virtuous Life*, Harm Goris and Henk Schoot, editors (Leuven: Peeters, 2017). The keynotes are the essays by DeCosimo, Knobel, Mattison and Pinsent.

³Participants in this debate rely so heavily upon Thomas Aquinas' writing on virtue that it is reasonable to ask whether the question at hand is whether acquired cardinal virtues can exist in the Christian, or whether St. Thomas' work supports one position or the other. In other words, are we asking what is in reality the case, or what Thomas said in his *corpus*? The focus here is the former, but St. Thomas' work is relied upon heavily given that he offers the most robust account of graced virtue in the Christian tradition. As I argue in a forthcoming book (*Aquinas on Habit, Graced Virtue, and the Last End*), there is significant lack of clarity as well as possible development in what St. Thomas says on this topic throughout his *corpus*. However, as Jean Porter argues in her “Moral Virtue, Charity, and Grace: Why the Infused and Acquired Virtues Cannot Co-Exist,” forthcoming in the *Journal of Moral Theology*, one can identify a position most compatible with Thomas' work on grace and virtue, and indeed even more so a position that is incompatible with central commitments of his work on grace and virtue. Porter's title makes her stance clear.

⁴For more on these four terms as functional equivalents, and Thomas' various categorizations of virtue more broadly, see William Mattison, “Thomas' Categorizations of Virtue: Historical Background and Contemporary Significance,” *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 189-235.

⁵Thomas often distinguishes, on the basis of object, the theological virtues from the “moral and intellectual” virtues. Thus scholars commonly speak of the theological virtue vs. moral virtue distinction in Thomas, which is accurate. But since in Thomas' work “moral” virtue is at times distinguished from theological virtue, and at other times distinguished from intellectual virtue (e.g., I-II 58), “cardinal” virtue is used here in reference to both the moral and intellectual virtues that are distinguished from the theological virtues. In other words, it includes prudence. This terminological practice is not only adopted in certain contemporary scholarship [e.g., Michael Sherwin, “Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for

is not about the possibility of pagan virtue; all in this debate affirm its possibility.⁶ All participants also agree that through God's grace people are oriented toward supernatural happiness as last end, and God gives graced virtues to enable action oriented toward that end.⁷ Such virtues are infused. They include the theological virtues, which have God as their object.⁸ They also include the infused cardinal virtues, which incline people to act well with regard to the material activities common to both acquired and infused cardinal virtues, but in the case of infused virtues in a manner specified by reference to the supernatural end and the concomitant divine rule.⁹ All agree on this account of virtue thus far.

The question is whether or not a person, oriented toward supernatural happiness by God's grace, and who therefore possesses the theological and infused cardinal virtues, also possesses the acquired cardinal virtues. It is a yes or no question and thus there are two sides, though some recent work has helpfully identified significant differences within at least one of the sides.¹⁰ These sides go by various names. On the one hand there are a set of

the Thomistic Theory on the Infused Cardinal Virtues," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 29-52], but also employed by Thomas himself at times (e.g., I-II 61) due to his claim that the four cardinal virtues "cover," in a sense, all moral virtues (I-II 61,1 & 2).

⁶For a helpful entry into the topic, which is also part of a thread of scholarly debate on "pagan virtue," see Brian Shanley, O.P., "Aquinas on Pagan Virtue" *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 553-77. Shanley responds there to Bonnie Kent's "Moral Provincialism," *Religious Studies* 30 (1994): 269-85, which is itself a response to the work of Alasdair MacIntyre on virtue in Thomas and Augustine, esp. his *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988). Shanley in turn is responded to by Thomas Osborne, Jr., "The Augustinianism of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 279-305. Osborne is responded to by Angela McKay, "Prudence and Acquired Mortal Virtue," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 535-55, to which Osborne replies again in "Perfect and Imperfect Virtues," *The Thomist* 71 (2007):39-64. Knobel makes further contributions to the debate in both "Aquinas and the Pagan Virtues," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 51.3 (2011): 339-354 and "Ends and Virtues," *Journal of Moral Theology* 3.1 (2014): 105-117. For a recent monograph treatment of the question see David DeCosimo's *Ethic's as a Work of Charity*.

⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II 63,3. I use the term "Christian" as a stand in to refer to such a person in possession of virtues given through God's grace.

⁸Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II 62,1.

⁹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II 63,3 & 4. A complete account of the habits infused by God's grace would also include the gifts of the Holy Spirit. See *Summa Theologiae* I-II 68.

¹⁰For excellent treatments of the different ways that each position may be held, see Knobel, "Can the Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist," "Two Theories of

positions which claim that a Christian can indeed possess both acquired and infused cardinal virtues. This group of positions is coined “coexistence” (by Knobel), or “compatibilist” (by DeCosimo). I’ll use Knobel’s “coexistence” here. On the other side there are a set of positions which claim that a person with the infused virtues cannot possess the acquired cardinal virtues. This group of positions is called the “transformational” by Knobel, or “incompatibilist” by Decosimo. I’ll again use Knobel’s term, transformational. That name comes from the claim by this camp that should a person’s natural capacities be qualified by acquired cardinal virtues but then receive the grace of God and its concomitant qualities called infused virtues, say, at conversion, then the specification of the natural powers by those qualities called virtues would be “transformed” or re-qualified toward the supernatural end.¹¹

One commonly raised issue in this debate is how to explain the impact of the bestowal or arrival of infused virtue. All in this debate agree that people who live lives ordered toward supernatural happiness with God can cease to live toward that end. In the Catholic tradition this is called mortal sin. When this occurs, one no longer possesses the virtue of charity, which is friendship with God that orients all virtuous activity toward that supernatural end of friendship with God. One also ceases to possess infused moral virtues which are informed by charity. But presumably the person who had, say, infused temperance by which she lived while in friendship with God, will not immediately become a glutton, or unchaste. To this point all agree. The question then is how might we describe how such person exercises her natural abilities? Is she rightly said to possess the virtue temperance? If so it would of course be acquired temperance. Does that mean the acquired temperance was there all along, “underneath,” if you will, the infused temperance? This would be a claim in support of the coexistence position. Or would the loss of charity somehow engender the acquired temperance? It certainly would seem odd if a mortal sin were to cause the acquisition of a previously unpossessed virtue. A similar problem is raised when one receives charity and the infused cardinal virtues. If one had acquired, say, temperance before that reception of grace, does acquired temperance cease to exist? Does it remain, but idle? Does it remain active either in conjunction

Christian Virtue,” and especially “Relating Aquinas’ Acquired and Infused Virtues: Some Problematic Texts” all cited above. The differences in these arguments on either side are quite significant. However, in the end the question at hand is indeed a yes or no question.

¹¹For an example of this see Mattison, “Can Christians Possess the Acquired Virtues?” 560 & 584.

with infused virtue or on occasion deployed instead of infused virtue (perhaps even *by* infused virtue)?

A helpful resource on this question in Thomas' thought is the topic of dead faith. It has important similarities to the scenario just described. Dead faith is a sort of faith that is importantly lacking because one does not possess charity. It can be ascribed to people who had living faith but through mortal sin no longer possess charity. Such people may continue to affirm accurate things about who God is, and thus are said to have some sort of faith though without charity. The parallel to the above scenario where infused moral virtues are lost with charity should be obvious. But there is an important difference here. There is no such thing as acquired faith. So positing a persistent acquired virtue "underneath" the (now lost) infused faith is not an option. Nor is positing the acquisition of acquired faith after the loss of infused faith. The purpose of this essay is to explore what Thomas says about dead or lifeless faith and its relationship to living faith, in order to illuminate the dynamic of what happens when a person with an infused virtue loses it, and yet continues to perform acts of that virtue. I begin with a brief section explaining the role of charity in the virtue of faith, and then what it is that constitutes dead faith. Section two offers a glimpse at St. Thomas' narration of a debate among other thirteenth century figures as regards dead faith, a debate that is markedly similar to the contemporary debate over the relationship between acquired and infused cardinal virtues in the same person. Section Three presents Thomas' resolution of that debate. In the final section I explain why his resolution pertains directly to the contemporary debate and what his thought on lifeless faith contributes to contemporary scholarship on the possibility of acquired cardinal virtues in the Christian.

Living Faith and Dead Faith

The virtue of faith is a habit of acts of belief, belief in true claims about God. The sort of intellectual assent called "belief" is prompted not by the compelling nature of the claims themselves, since unlike with *scientiae* the truth of the matter at hand does not compel assent, in this case in part because it surpasses the natural capacity of the human intellect. Instead, an act of belief is an act of the intellect assenting to something as true, where the intellect is prompted by the will to such assent.¹² All this is true of acts of beliefs more generally. The virtue of faith concerns intellectual assent (to

¹²Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 2,1.

truths that surpass the capacity of unaided human intellect) about God, in a manner prompted by the will, in this case as the will is qualified by the theological virtue of charity. Faith is thus properly an act of the intellect, but with the intellect's act given its "form," to use Thomas' term, by the will as qualified by charity.¹³

What, then, is dead faith? The Scriptural basis for this is James 2:19-20, which speaks of dead faith without works, and of the faith of demons, both forms of faith that similarly lack charity even as they differ in other ways. Dead faith, sometimes translated lifeless and most exactly translated "unformed," is the disposition of the intellect to true affirmations about God that are nonetheless not prompted by charity since the one at hand does not possess charity.¹⁴ Since charity provides the "form" of faith, the habit is "unformed," or dead, or lifeless. Nonetheless it is still accurately called faith because it is a stable disposition to acts that are materially the same as acts of faith, such as affirmations that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or that Jesus Christ is God and man. Indeed Thomas claims lifeless faith is still rightly called a gift from God, since its affirmations are not possible for unaided human reason alone.¹⁵ Nonetheless it is not a virtue.¹⁶ This is an important point, especially for the final section's comparison of the transformation of acts of dead faith into living faith through the infusion of charity (or vice versa through its loss), on the one hand, with the transformation of acquired cardinal virtue into infused cardinal virtue through the infusion of charity, on the other hand. Dead faith is not a virtue despite the accuracy of its affirmations, because not only the end but also the object of faith is God. The intellect of a person with dead faith is not

¹³Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 4,2 & 3.

¹⁴Thomas' most extensive writings on dead faith can be found at: *Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. III d. 23, q. 3 (<http://www.corpusthomaticum.org/snp3023.html#10563>; portions of this are translated into English in *On Love and Charity: Readings from the "Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard,"* trans. Peter Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin O.S.B. & Joseph Bolin (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2008); *De veritate* XIV.5-7 (<https://dhsprory.org/thomas/QDdeVer14.htm>); *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 4,4; 4,5; 5,2; 5,3; 6,2 & 7,1; *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans* c. 1 l. 6 [#105-108 in Vol. 37 of *Latin / English Edition of the Works of Aquinas*, trans. F.R. Larcher, O.P (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012)].

¹⁵Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 6,1 (and also II-II 5,2 ad 2) and *Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. III d. 23, q. 3, a. 2.

¹⁶Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 4,5 and *Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. III d. 23, q. 3, a. 1, qa. 2.

being actualized to its fullest reach, to use Thomas' term for how a virtue qualifies a power. It is not moved to assent by the will qualified by charity. The intellect is otherwise moved, in the case of the person with dead faith likely by an enduring disposition akin to what Thomas calls *consuetudo* which we commonly call "habit" (in the non-rich sense of the term) and which is commonly translated "custom."¹⁷ Thus faith without charity (dead faith) is not a virtue because it is not moved by (or connected by) either of the principles of human action that enable the powers to attain their highest reach: human reason via prudence in the case of acquired (natural) virtues or grace via charity in the case of infused (supernatural) virtues.

In sum, Thomas's account of faith explains how its acts (of belief) are prompted by charity. His account of dead faith depicts how faith can exist without charity, and move a person to acts that are in some sense good and a gift from God despite the fact that they are not acts of virtue since they do not attain the highest reach of the power at hand. Having explained what both these types of faith look like and how they differ, we turn now to Thomas' explanation of what happens when a person moves from living faith to dead faith, or vice versa.

Thomas' Account of a Scholastic Debate

In *Summa Theologiae* II-II 4,4 Thomas asks whether or not lifeless faith can become living faith.¹⁸ He immediately explains the meaning of the question by contextualizing it in a debate among his predecessors. The first position he describes is held by William of Auxerre, and the second by Alexander of Hales. Though they oppose each other, Thomas shows that they hold a crucial common assumption, and Thomas' own view will conform to neither of these thinkers since he denies that underlying assumption. His narration of that debate is succinct and exact enough for our purposes to warrant quoting in full:

¹⁷For more on the ways that custom can generate stable activity, and yet importantly differs from habit, see William C. Mattison III, "Aquinas, Custom, and the Coexistence of Infused and Acquired Cardinal Virtues." As for the demons, the intellect is moved to assent, not by a will grasping the good, but by persuasive signs that nonetheless do not constitute the essence of what is seen. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II 5,2. Once again, the lifeless faith of demons differs from that of human persons.

¹⁸For parallel treatments see *De veritate* 14,7 and *Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. III d. 23 q. 3 a. 4 qa. 3 as well as a. 1 qa. 3.

Some¹⁹ have said that living and lifeless faith are distinct habits, but that when living faith comes, lifeless faith is done away, and that, in like manner, when a man sins mortally after having living faith, a new habit of lifeless faith is infused into him by God.²⁰ But it seems unfitting that grace should deprive man of a gift of God by coming to him, and that a gift of God should be infused into man, on account of mortal sin.

Consequently, others²¹ have said that living and lifeless faith are indeed distinct habits, but that, all the same, when living faith comes the habit of lifeless faith is not taken away, and that it remains together with the habit of living faith in the same subject. Yet again it seems unreasonable that the habit of lifeless faith should remain inactive in a person having living faith.

We must therefore hold differently that living and lifeless faith are the same habit.

Both camps in this debate hold that living and lifeless faith are distinct habits, a claim that Thomas denies. Explaining Thomas' denial bears directly on the debate in current scholarship.

Now of course in some important sense living and lifeless faith are indeed distinct habits. So in what way does Thomas mean they are not distinct? In this *Summa* text he claims that habits are differentiated by what they “directly pertain to.”²² And faith directly pertains to the intellect, and accurate beliefs about God. In other words, in both living and lifeless faith, the person assents by one's intellect to true claims about God. That activity, which in the *Sentences* he calls the “natural species” of faith, is the same for both.²³ Where they differ is in what he calls in the *Sentences* “moral

¹⁹The *Summa Theologiae* editor identifies this position with William of Auxerre as found at *Summa Aurea* III, iii, 15.

²⁰Recall that even lifeless faith is a gift from God since its acts exceed natural human capacities. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 6,1 (and also II-II 5,2 ad 2) and *Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. III d. 23, q. 3, a. 2

²¹The *Summa Theologiae* editor identifies this position with Alexander of Hales as found at *Summa Theologiae* iii, 64.

²²Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II 4,4 – *habitus diversificatur secundum illud quod per se ad habitum pertinent*.

²³Thomas uses natural species as distinct from moral species early in his career, but these terms are less precise and later abandoned. It should be noted that in mentioning natural species, Thomas is *not* saying there is a “natural virtue” (or acquired virtue) of faith. As noted below, Thomas eventually uses the term “object” for what he here calls natural species. That object is distinguished from the “mode of acting” in *De veritate* XIV.7. In *Summa Theologiae*, I-II 63,4 Thomas

species.” Finally, in *De veritate* Thomas claims there are two sorts of differentiation in habits, by object and in mode of acting. Habits are differentiated “in essence” by their objects, as seeing is a distinct material activity from hearing. As to their mode of acting, habits are not differentiated by essence but in their level of completeness or perfection, as when one sees more or less clearly.²⁴ Thomas concludes:

Living faith and lifeless faith do not have different objects, but only different ways of acting.... So, living faith and lifeless faith are not distinguished as two different habits, but as a perfect habit and an imperfect habit.²⁵

Thus they are indeed distinguished, but they are different in their end, or their mode of acting, or their level of perfection, as to the one activity to which they both directly pertain.

Thomas’ Solution to the Change from Living to Lifeless Faith, or Vice Versa

Having rejected the common assumption by William and Alexander that living and lifeless faith are distinct habits, Thomas can offer his own solution to the question of what occurs when living faith becomes lifeless, or vice versa. The answer is that word “becomes.” His *Sentences* treatment of the topic asks “whether lifeless [unformed] faith becomes living [formed] faith at the coming of charity” and he replies that it does. This is the same title of his *Summa Theologiae* treatment.²⁶ Though there is obviously change between living and lifeless faith, it is not one of addition or subtraction in the subject. It is a matter of one and the same “habit,”²⁷ in

distinguishes the “material element” of the virtue from its formal object, whereby a mean is specified according to some rule (e.g., human reason or Divine rule). In his *Summa Theologiae* treatment of dead faith he speaks of the acts of faith as good “generally” (*ex genere*; II-II 6,2, ad 2) and says living and lifeless faith do not differ by species (*non different specie*) but as perfect and imperfect (II-II 4,5 ad 3).

²⁴*De veritate* XIV.7.

²⁵*De veritate* XIV.7.

²⁶Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II 4,4.

²⁷Thomas consistently calls lifeless faith a “habit.” Properly speaking a habit is a disposition to a certain sort of activity whose stability is given by its formal element, be it the measure of human reason in the acquired virtues (as provided by prudence) or the measure of the Divine rule in the infused virtues (as provided by charity). Since lifeless faith is without charity, it lacks the connectivity provided by charity, and in the most proper sense is not rightly called a habit. Thomas does use the terms “habit” and “virtue” at times more broadly to refer to what more precisely are called

terms of the activity the habit directly pertains to, changing as to its (as Thomas describes variously) form, or mode, or level of perfection. This is why William was wrong to assume that lifeless faith is “cast away” at the arrival of charity, or arrives when living faith is lost. When charity arrives to one who believes with lifeless faith, it “confirms and perfects” that habit of lifeless faith and makes it living, rather than creating a habit anew as when charity arrives in a nonbeliever.²⁸ As Thomas says in *De veritate*, “formless faith stays when charity comes, and is itself formed. In this way only the formlessness is removed.”²⁹ Thomas’ consistent language is that lifeless faith is perfected and given a new form by charity (hence the term “transform” for this dynamic). Lifeless faith is not lost; only its lifelessness is.³⁰ It is perfected, or transformed such that the intellectual activity of affirming true things about God is now ordered toward the supernatural happiness of friendship with God. Conversely, when charity is lost and living faith becomes lifeless, there is also continuity but a change in form. We might even say faith in this case is “de-formed.” Though it may seem something is “gained” since lifeless faith entails true affirmations about God, in reality those affirmations were there in the habit (with the same essence) of living faith, yet now they are unformed or deformed since bereft of charity. The appearance of a gain in this change is illusory.

Thomas’ solution also explains why Alexander was wrong in affirming the coexistence of lifeless and living faith. There are not two habits of the same essence but different form residing in one person, perhaps with one idle or (though not mentioned by Alexander) with them working together in one action. In the case of faith Thomas says “formed and unformed faith do not differ in species.”³¹ He clarifies this with a claim that extends beyond faith when he says “it is not possible for two forms of one species to exist at the

dispositions. For this distinction see *Summa Theologiae* I-II 49,2 ad. 3. For an example of Thomas calling a “virtue” that which is not properly a virtue, see *On the Cardinal Virtues* pp. 241-277 in E.M. Atkins and Thomas Williams (eds.) *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), a. 2. For a recent in-depth inquiry to the definitions of habits and dispositions, and the relationship between them, see Andrew Whitmore, *Dispositions and Habits in the Work of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, The Catholic University of America Dissertation, 2018.

²⁸Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II 4,4 ad 3.

²⁹*De veritate* XIV.7.

³⁰*De veritate* XIV.7 ad. 4: “When life comes, it is not necessary for that which is dead to leave, but for death to leave. Hence, not formless faith but only the formlessness is removed through charity.”

³¹*Scriptum Super Sententiis* l. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 4 qa. 3.

same time [in the same subject], because forms are diversified in number by reason of diversity of matter or subject.”³² This is corroborated in *De veritate* where Thomas claims “Nor, again, can it be said [of living and lifeless faith] that both acts and habits are there together....”³³ Therefore there are not and cannot be in one person two separate habits for activity of the same essence or object.³⁴

Relevance for the Possibility of Acquired Cardinal Virtues in the Christian

Now that Thomas’ position on living faith, lifeless faith, and the relationship between them is clear, we turn to apply his thinking to the contemporary debate. First, let me note the reasons why this comparison is warranted. In both cases we have habits that are not charity yet are informed by charity (living faith on the one hand, infused cardinal virtues on the other hand). The habits retain continuity in their immediate activities (and hence in both cases are called faith, or cardinal virtues), yet these habits can be formed by charity. Thus in both cases the “essence,” or object, of the habit remains the same whether informed by charity or not. Nonetheless they do indeed differ as to the object of the will as end, which is provided by charity.³⁵ Thus their difference is not of essence, but in what Thomas variously calls their form, or mode of acting, as imperfect to perfect. Thomas uses the imperfect / perfect distinction consistently to refer to both lifeless faith / living faith on the one hand, and acquired cardinal virtue / infused cardinal virtue on the other hand.³⁶ For all these reasons Thomas’ thought on whether or not (imperfect) lifeless faith can coexist with living faith, and on what happens with lifeless faith when charity arrives or departs, is illuminative for the relationship between acquired and infused virtue.

The most important difference in the comparison is that whereas lifeless faith is not a virtue, all in the contemporary debate agree that the acquired cardinal virtues are indeed virtues. The reason for this difference is the difference in object between the cardinal virtues on the one hand, and the theological virtues on the other hand. The cardinal virtues concern activities

³²*Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 4 qa. 3.

³³*De veritate* XIV.7.

³⁴This claim provides the background for a crucial article in the debate over acquired and infused cardinal virtues, *Summa Theologiae* I-II 63,4.

³⁵Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II 4,3.

³⁶ For a particularly clear example of this with regard to the cardinal virtues, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II 65,1.

accessible to unaided reason. Thus they can be oriented toward natural human flourishing, with the measure of human reason, which would “form” such virtues. When this occurs they are true virtues. Of course, when charity is infused they are then measured by, i.e., given their form by, the Divine rule.³⁷ However, the theological virtues have God as their object. To be directed to God (in the sense that God is object of the theological virtues, not in the sense of natural knowledge of God through His effects) is beyond the capacity of unaided human reason and therefore a gift, even in the case of dead faith. What provides the form to theological virtues is charity. Since there is no natural faith (given its object), there is no other measure to provide form to faith. Hence it is unformed, and not a virtue. This explains why acquired cardinal virtues can be virtues and dead faith cannot, even while the acts of belief in dead faith are accurate and thus it is rightly called in some sense “gift.” Nevertheless, this not insignificant difference does not impinge upon the common dynamic of how in both cases a habit inclining toward acts of one material object is informed by charity. Indeed Thomas’ central point in describing this dynamic is that in such situations the new habit is the “same habit,” in the sense of object.

So what can we learn from this inquiry into lifeless and living faith about the acquired and infused cardinal virtues? First, certain proponents of the coexistence view have a legitimate concern that is very similar to that of William of Auxerre, who rightly claims it would be unfitting if the arrival of charity and living faith were to cast away lifeless faith, or even more if the departure of charity and living faith entailed the “gain” of lifeless faith. Coexistence proponents similarly think it unfitting if the arrival of charity and infused cardinal virtues were to cast off acquired cardinal virtues, since grace should not result in the loss of a good, and since there is such obvious continuity of action before and after conversion in the person who previously possessed acquired cardinal virtues. Coexistence proponents find it even more unfitting if the loss of charity and infused cardinal virtues entailed the “gain” of acquired cardinal virtues. Thomas’ solution to this regarding lifeless / living faith applies to acquired / infused cardinal virtues. When charity arrives the acquired cardinal virtues become infused cardinal virtues. There is continuity but change. They are perfected, given a new form (“transformed”) by charity.³⁸ These habits are the same in the activity

³⁷Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II 63,4.

³⁸This is how *Scriptum Super Sententiis* l. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 4 qa. 1 s.c. 1 is rightly interpreted: “The coming of grace does not take away acquired habits; therefore much less does it take away the infused habit of faith.” The whole point of this article (4) is describing the change from unformed to formed faith. Since both habits are

to which they directly pertain, their object.³⁹ The impact of Thomas' claim that both a lifeless and living faith, though importantly different, are in the sense of object the "same habit" is clear here. The same may be said of the infused and acquired cardinal virtues, which, though importantly different, are in the sense of object the "same habit." This is why, say, infused temperance and acquired temperance are both rightly called "temperance." Can both be said to exist together?⁴⁰

Thomas' argument against Alexander of Hales against the coexistence of lifeless and living faith in one person applies also to the coexistence of acquired and infused cardinal virtues. Just as Thomas claims "formed and unformed faith do not differ in species" [as in natural species, or object],⁴¹ nor do acquired and infused cardinal virtues. Thomas draws from this that it cannot be said of lifeless and living faith "that both acts and habits are there together." The same is true of acquired and infused cardinal virtues, for the same reason Thomas offers: "it is not possible for two forms of one species to exist at the same time [in the same subject], because forms are diversified in number by reason of diversity of matter or subject."⁴²

faith, one is not "taken away." But it is indeed in-formed, or transformed, such that lifelessness is no longer there even though faith remains. Similarly, with the acquired virtues, their lack of being informed by charity "is removed by charity," to apply Thomas' words on faith to cardinal virtue.

³⁹One might even go so far as to say that the infused virtues can perform the acts the acquired virtues perform, though now toward a different end. This is not an incidental difference, as seen in I-II 63,4. After all Thomas claims "formed faith can perform every act which formless faith performs" (*De veritate* XIV.7).

⁴⁰One recent attempt to explain the relationship between acquired and infused virtues in the Christian is to posit the ongoing presence of "virtual" acquired virtues with infused virtues. For an example of this, see W. Scott Cleveland and Brandon Dahm, "The Virtual Presence of Acquired Virtues in the Christian," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 93.1 (2019): 75-100. This scholarship is an excellent example of trying to account for both the formal differences of acquired and infused virtues, and also the seeming residual influence of prior habituation. In the end Cleveland and Dahm's virtually present acquired virtue is "no longer a full habit but now remains virtually in a less-than-habit disposition of a power" (96). This claim means that acquired virtues, *qua* habits, do not in fact coexist with infused virtues. Despite attempting to chart a middle course this essay appears to fall on what the authors call the "transformation" side of the debate. After all, supporters of the transformation view readily recognize that even contrary dispositions (not habits) are compatible with infused virtues, so surely residual dispositions from prior acquired virtue habituation may persist.

⁴¹*Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 4 qa. 3.

⁴²*Scriptum Super Sententiis* I. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 4 qa. 3.

THE VIRTUAL PRESENCE OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

LLOYD NEWTON

The question before us is whether, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, Christians can possess the acquired cardinal virtues.¹ Traditionally, most Thomists affirm that they can possess the acquired cardinal virtues, even though they also possess the infused cardinal virtues.² Yet not all Thomistic scholars agree. Contrary to the traditional reading, William Mattison has recently argued that since Christians have been infused with the cardinal virtues at baptism, they cannot also possess the acquired cardinal virtues.³ Mattison's claim is surprising, given that Thomists have traditionally taught otherwise and given that one passage in Aquinas' *Sentence Commentary* very clearly indicates that they can: "Infused virtue is together with acquired virtue, which is clear in the adult who, having acquired virtue, approaches baptism, since he does not receive less infused virtue than a child."⁴

¹Not only was the current session, hosted at the annual medieval conference at Kalamazoo, focused on this question, but Mattison's thesis was the subject of an entire conference hosted by the Thomas Institut in Utrecht in 2017.

²William C. Mattison III, "Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues," *Theological Studies*, 72 (2011), 558-85, p. 559. Although Mattison's article was published 7 years ago, he continues to maintain the view that a person with the infused virtues cannot possess the acquired cardinal virtues.

³Ibid.

⁴In III Sent d. 33 q. 1 a. 2 qc. 4 s.c. 2: '*Praeterea, duae formae ejusdem speciei non possunt esse in uno subjecto. Sed virtus infusa est simul cum virtute acquisita, ut patet in adulto qui habens virtutem acquisitam ad Baptismum accedit, qui non minus recipit de infusis quam puer. Ergo virtus acquisita et infusa differunt specie.*' Admittedly, this passage is in a '*sed contra*' argument immediately preceding Aquinas' resolution of the broader question. However, the fact that Aquinas does not raise issue with the argument is a strong indication that this is indeed his view. I will look at this text and the larger surrounding text from his *Sentence Commentary* in more detail in the second section of this paper.

So why does Mattison insist on the opposite position, viz., that Christians cannot possess the acquired cardinal virtues? Very simply, I think that he misreads a central passage in the *Summa Theologica*. Thus, in what follows, I propose to accomplish the following three goals. In the first section, I want to focus on the original article in which Mattison argues for the contrary position, showing that this particular article has a false premise in its reasoning. Mattison's argument in this article relies almost exclusively on the shorter, more summative texts on this topic found in Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* and not on the more extensive treatments of this issue in his *Commentary on the Sentences* or in his *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*. Thus, in the second section, I want to examine the relevant passages where Aquinas addresses this issue, both those found in the *Summa Theologica* as well as the pertinent passages found in his *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Disputed Questions on Virtue*.⁵ But even without a more detailed knowledge of the longer passages found in the latter two works, I think Mattison fundamentally misreads Aquinas because he fails to consider the broader, psychological and teleological framework within which Aquinas addresses these issues. Thus, in the third section of this article, I wish to sketch Thomas's understanding of human nature within its larger psychological and teleological framework. In doing so, I do not attempt to argue that Christians can possess both the acquired and infused cardinal virtues, since Aquinas clearly indicates that they can. Rather, my goal is to show how Aquinas' treatment of the virtues is part of a larger, more comprehensive view of the world, and thus how his treatment of the cardinal virtues must be interpreted by the larger framework of his other writings. Let us begin by considering Mattison's claim.

Section I

Mattison's recent article addressing this question consists of two main sections, in the first of which he develops two main arguments as to why Christians cannot possess the acquired cardinal virtues. Although he gives two distinct arguments, by his own admission, those arguments are interrelated. More importantly for this paper, the faulty premise in the first argument is the same for the second argument, and is reiterated several times

⁵These passages are not, to my knowledge translated into English anywhere. Thus, in an effort to move the debate to the next level and to aid the average reader, I am providing an English translation of four of the questions from his *Commentary on the Sentences* that address this issue as an appendix to this article.