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## The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Human Intentionality: A Constructive Proposal

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## ABSTRACT

How does the Holy Spirit, by indwelling believers, guide them to act in ways that contribute to their spiritual progress? In this thesis, I will argue that, by indwelling believers, the Spirit redirects their intentionality towards their ultimate end in union with God, thus placing believers in the best possible position for acting in ways that contribute to that end. If the Spirit guides believers in the spiritual life on a day-to-day basis, then such guidance must connect with the actual processes by which humans generally act (especially intentions). Thus, by exploring the indwelling of the Spirit, grace, and human intentionality, we can come to a greater understanding of how the pieces fit together, how the Spirit guides believers after baptism. The project will synthesize the rich pneumatology of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* with insights from contemporary philosophy of intention in order to develop a constructive account of the Spirit's indwelling and its implications for the actions of believers.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit and Human Intentionality: A Constructive Proposal

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

In Theology

By

John R. Kern

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

How does the Holy Spirit, by indwelling believers, guide them to act in ways that contribute to their spiritual progress? In Scripture and throughout Christian tradition, one of the most important aspects of the Spirit's activity is that the Spirit indwells (is present in a special way to) believers upon baptism, and one of the purposes of this indwelling (though certainly not the only one) is that the Spirit might guide believers to live in ways that enable them to grow in their pursuit of union with God.<sup>1</sup> However, affirming that the Spirit acts in this way and providing an understanding (or even an account) of how the Spirit might accomplish this action are vastly different tasks.<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, I will assume that the former is true and I will explore the latter, an understanding of how the Spirit might guide believers in the way just described.

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1. For example, Paul says in Romans 8:14 (NRSV), "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God," and in 1 Corinthians, "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you," though Paul is of course referring to the indwelling in a communal way. In Christian tradition, a perfect example is Gregory Nazianzen who not only argues that the Spirit indwells believers (*Or.* 41:11) but that the Spirit's most important work is to deify believers or transform them for the purpose of union with God (*Or.* 31:28-29). Each of these texts can be found in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 7 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 326-27 and 383 (respectively).

2. After all, even the indwelling language itself is often ambiguous, and so part of the thesis will be spent in exploring what such an indwelling must mean in order for the Spirit to be able to guide believers towards union with God.

I will argue that, by indwelling believers, the Spirit redirects their intentionality towards their ultimate end in union with God, thus placing believers in the best possible position for acting in ways that contribute to that end.<sup>3</sup> If the Spirit guides believers in the spiritual life on a day-to-day basis, then such guidance must connect with the actual processes by which humans generally act (especially intentions). Thus, by exploring the indwelling of the Spirit, grace, and the processes of human action, we can come to a greater understanding of how the pieces fit together, how the Spirit guides believers after baptism.

### **Account of the Issue**

There has been a growing interest among contemporary theologians from all over the denominational divide (including Pentecostalism) in the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's involvement in various aspects of the lives of believers.<sup>4</sup> Out of this growing interest, there have been a number of refreshing areas that have received attention such as the Spirit's work in and through the physical/bodily practices of the Church such as baptism

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3. By intentionality and intentions, I mean the mental state that is relevant for human action. I am not referring to the meaning of the word in contemporary phenomenology, which is about "how every act of consciousness, every experience, is correlated with an object." For this quote and a further discussion of the two uses of the word, see Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.

4. For an explanation concerning this growing interest in pneumatology in contemporary theology, see Kenneth M. Loyer, *God's Love through the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Thomas Aquinas and John Wesley* (Washington, D.C: CUA Press, 2014), 196-202; Kevin W. Hector, "The Mediation of Christ's Normative Spirit: A Constructive Reading of Schleiermacher's Pneumatology," *Modern Theology* 24 (2008): 1-2.

and the Eucharist,<sup>5</sup> the Spirit's work in creation,<sup>6</sup> and the Spirit's involvement in the Church's pursuit of justice.<sup>7</sup> Although these works all affirm that the Spirit guides believers in various ways, there has not been sufficient attention on precisely how the Spirit, by indwelling individual believers, works in and through their action-related processes on a day-to-day basis to transform them gradually towards divine-likeness. Although the social dimension of the Holy Spirit's activity in the Church is important, it should not eclipse the way the Spirit is active in the lives of individual believers. However, such a specific line of inquiry has not been wholly ignored.

Two recent writers who explore this issue in a preliminary way are William Alston and Ray Yeo. In his essay "The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit," Alston investigates "just what role the Spirit plays in bringing about these changes within the person."<sup>8</sup> Alston argues that the Spirit enables believers to "share in the divine life." On his *sharing model* of the indwelling, "there is a literal merging or mutual interpenetration of the life of the individual and the divine life, a breaking down of the barriers that normally separate one life from another."<sup>9</sup> The Spirit actually shares its "attitudes, tendencies, and

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5. For this interest, see Eugene Rogers, *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 45-68; Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 274-301. There are also whole books on this issue such as Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); James J. Buckley and David S. Yeago, *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

6. See D. Lyle Dabney, "The Nature of the Spirit: Creation as a Premonition of God," in Michael Welker, ed., *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 71-86; Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 279-342.

7. *Ibid.*, 108-82, 228-79; Joerg Rieger, "Resistance Spirit: The Holy Spirit and Empire," in David H. Jensen, ed., *The Lord and Giver of Life: Perspectives on Constructive Pneumatology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 129-46.

8. See William Alston, "The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit," in *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 227.

9. *Ibid.*, 246.



values” such that they are as immediately present to the human person as that person’s own psychological states. With such sharing, God allows humans to be aware of God’s loving tendencies, enabling them to model their behavior and tendencies on God’s. Even though believers would be immediately aware of the Spirit’s tendencies, their own human tendencies would not transform immediately. Rather, it could be that God introduces to them “initially weak, isolated, and fragile tendencies” that require human response and initiative for them to build up their own “motivational system.”<sup>10</sup>

Although Alston provides a viable account of the Spirit’s indwelling, there are still a couple of problems with his account. First, it seems like God creates in humans initially weak tendencies and leaves humans on their own to live in such a way as to enable such tendencies to grow. Here Alston gives humans too large a role since his account does not make sense of the *continual* implications of the Spirit’s indwelling for believers. Conversely, such a position also does not take seriously enough the reality of sin that renders believers continually in need of the Spirit’s assistance to overcome sinful inclinations.

A second problem with Alston’s account is that his sense that God’s psychological states could be directly shared with believers betrays a misunderstanding of how vastly different God’s existence is from that of humans.<sup>11</sup> The Spirit’s psychological states exist in an inherently Trinitarian or, as Yeo describes, perichoretic structure. As a result, how could the psychological life of a being who eternally proceeds

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10. Ibid., 251.

11. Ray S. Yeo, “Towards a Model of Indwelling: A Conversation with Jonathan Edwards and William Alston,” *Journal of Analytic Theology* 2 (2014): 217-18.

from the Father and Son and who shares a common nature with them be shared with humans? Moreover, some mental states cannot be shared between two different agents such as those tied to conscious experience or “indexical representational content.”<sup>12</sup> For example, the idea “I am a divine person” could only be thought by God and could not be shared with a human since then it would not apply. Finally, if God is a truly simple being whose existence is the same as His essence, then it does not make sense to speak of mental states in the way we can of humans. It would contradict God’s simple nature to distinguish and separate various mental states in the divine mind so that they could be individually shared with humans. Consequently, as Yeo states, “it is difficult to see how the psychological, metaphysical, and ontological chasm between God and humanity can be crossed to allow for a direct and literal partial merging of psychological lives.”<sup>13</sup>

Yeo’s solution is to modify Alston’s account by 1) limiting the shared psychological states to ones that “do not entail conscious subjectivity and indexical representational content” and 2) including a Christological step so that what is shared with believers is the human psychological life of Jesus.<sup>14</sup> Thus, believers do not share the divine psychological life directly but only indirectly as it is “incarnated in the human psychological life of Christ.”<sup>15</sup> What is shared with humans is the loving disposition of Christ, which serves as the cause of sanctification in the believers. As in Jonathan Edwards, the sharing of this loving disposition entails both a “good seeing disposition,”

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12. Ibid., 217.

13. Ibid., 218.

14. Ibid., 224.

15. Ibid.

by which one perceives and appreciates the goodness and beauty of God, and a “motivational drive” to be unified with the object of one’s love, namely God.<sup>16</sup> Yeo calls this dual aspect of the loving disposition of Christ the unitive drive. Despite being a loving disposition, it is not equivalent to the theological virtue of love, but it is the drive that gradually gives rise to that virtue in the believer. Thus, the unitive drive is initially weak and is received gradually over time as one matures in the spiritual life.

One obvious problem with this account is that it seems like what really indwells believers is Christ’s human unitive drive rather than the Spirit. Yeo foresaw this problem and argued that we should distinguish the act of infusion from the content of what is infused. Thus, the Spirit infuses Christ’s unitive drive to the believer’s mind, but is not Himself infused since to say the Spirit is infused is to fall into the trap of Alston’s account, a direct sharing of the psychological content of the divine mind with believers. At the end of his account, then, the Spirit really does not indwell believers. Yeo must conclude in this way but only because he assumes that the indwelling must entail a sharing of divine psychological states with believers. Rather than rejecting Alston’s sharing theory altogether, he merely adapted it to avoid the initial problem. However, Yeo’s account runs into the opposite problem, namely that the unitive drive of Christ creates an unnecessary barrier between the Spirit and believers since the indwelling does not necessarily entail a psychological sharing of this sort. Separated by Christ’s human unitive drive, believers are only able to receive the crumbs that fall from the table of the triune life, but any viable account of the indwelling should be able to make sense of the Spirit himself indwelling believers without falling into Alston’s dilemma.

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16. *Ibid.*, 226-27

My proposal will seek to avoid both problems mentioned above by critically appropriating the pneumatology of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a medieval theologian, philosopher, and mystic. From Aquinas, we get an account of how the Spirit guides believers by indwelling them that avoids the philosophical problems plaguing Alston's account, especially his understanding of the direct sharing of divine psychological states with believers. For Aquinas, the Spirit, as the Love shared between Father and Son, truly indwells believers, and this indwelling of the Spirit has a necessary created effect (love or charity) on them, which makes possible their gradual participation in the divine nature while not requiring a direct sharing of the Spirit's own psychological states.<sup>17</sup> However, this created grace does not act as a barrier between the Spirit and believers as the unitive drive of Christ in Yeo's account. Rather, created grace is the necessary effect of the Spirit's cognitive contact with believers, which mediates the Spirit's influence over the believer.

This mediation is important because the Spirit enables believers to grow spiritually in a way that is proper to created existence, meaning through the believer's own action-related processes. Such mediation also means that the Spirit is not separated from the Father and Son. The Spirit eternally proceeds or spirates forth as Love, but is still able to indwell believers in this way. Furthermore, my account will show to an even greater extent than Alston and Yeo how the Spirit guides the actions of believers by articulating the resulting created effect of the indwelling and the corresponding types of grace (habitual and auxiliary grace) as redirecting the intentionality of believers towards

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17. See especially Marshall's analysis in Bruce D. Marshall, "Action and Person: Do Palamas and Aquinas Agree about the Spirit?" *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 39 (1995): 387-88. In Aquinas, see especially *ST. I*, 43, 3.

union with God. Humans already intend many ends that are not union with God, so such a redirection of believers' intentionality entails not only redirecting believers in a general way to intend union with God as their ultimate end through the theological virtues (habitual) but also producing in believers intentions for particular actions that contribute to that end (auxiliary)

By articulating the effect of the Spirit's indwelling as the redirection of believers' intentionality, I will grant the Spirit a fundamental role in the actions of believers while leaving open the possibility for human error at the beginning of the believer's gradual pursuit of union with God. If an intention is a combination of relevant beliefs and desires that serve some executive function over actions, then one must recognize that intending union with God and whatever actions contribute to that end does not ensure that believers will never sin but that such actions will appear more and more undesirable over time as one is more convinced of the truth of the Christian faith (faith), desires that end to a greater degree (hope), and comes to love God for God's own sake (love). By drawing on some of the contemporary literature on the philosophy of intention, I will bring the fruits of Aquinas's pneumatology into the spotlight while improving upon some of his outdated conceptions of human action for a truly constructive account of how the Spirit, by indwelling believers, guides them to act in ways that contribute to their ultimate end.

### **Contribution**

This thesis will make three scholarly contributions. First, it articulates the relationship between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the actions of believers, both of which are areas that have not received sufficient attention in contemporary pneumatology. Second, it will contribute to scholarship on Aquinas by developing an

account of how the various types of graces relate to Aquinas's discussions of the Spirit's unique identity within the Trinity. Third, it will bring the tools of contemporary philosophy of action into conversation with Aquinas's pneumatology, a conversation that will hopefully be fruitful for clarifying and developing Aquinas's thought in ways that draw attention to the constructive value (and some limitations) of his pneumatology.

### **Method**

I will utilize Aquinas's pneumatology and understanding of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit found in the *Summa Theologiae* and related literature in order to offer an account of the indwelling that does not fall into the problems of Alston's and Yeo's accounts.<sup>18</sup> The *Summa Theologiae* is the text I will focus on because it represents the highest point in the development of Aquinas's positions on both grace and on the Spirit's unique appropriation of divine love.<sup>19</sup> Rather than only recognizing the importance of habitual grace, Aquinas also developed a rich account of auxiliary grace that was a necessary addition to his Aristotelian account of formal causation in the theological virtues.

There are also a number of reasons Aquinas is so important for answering the pneumatological question that governs this thesis. First, while Aquinas wrote, he engaged a long tradition of theologians on issues involving the Holy Spirit and grace, so he had

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18. For my translations of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, I will use the Blackfriars translation, *Summa Theologiae*, 60 vols. (London and New York: Blackfriars, 1964-1976). From here on, I will cite the *Summa Theologiae* with the notation (ST, Part, Question, and Article) such as ST. Ia, Q. 36, A. 1. For my brief references to the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I will use *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 5 vols., trans. Anton C. Pegis, James F. Anderson, Vernon J. Bourke, and Charles J. O'Neil (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975). For this I will cite (SCG, book, chapter, and section).

19. See especially Joseph Wawrykow, "Grace," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 194.

the opportunity to develop their insights in ways they did not envision in their own intellectual context. For example, Aquinas clarified and developed Augustine's account of the different types of grace using the metaphysical tools of Aristotelian philosophy, especially when it came to articulating various forms of causality in grace.<sup>20</sup> Such metaphysical tools enabled Aquinas to articulate precisely how grace related to human freedom, making his account very fitting for analyzing the issue that I am exploring here.

Second, Aquinas overcame problems that plagued his contemporaries' discussions concerning the Holy Spirit and grace. For example, Peter Lombard argued that the "movement of dilection (love) is from the Holy Spirit without any mediating habit."<sup>21</sup> Such a position would remove human freedom from the process of salvation since the Spirit would simply have unmediated control of the human agent. Aquinas demonstrated the problems with this position, provided alternative understandings of the issues at hand, and showed how such a position was really a misreading of Augustine on the Spirit as love.<sup>22</sup> Aquinas is thus a fitting figure from Christian tradition for thinking through how the Holy Spirit, by indwelling believers, guides them to act in ways that contribute to their spiritual progress.

In using Aquinas for this constructive account, I will not try to fit Aquinas's pneumatology into a contemporary framework that is antithetical to Aquinas's arguments but will take seriously Aquinas's own reasoning on this issue and how the various pieces

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20. See L. Matthew Petillo, "The Theological Problem of Grace and Experience: A Lonerganian Perspective," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 586-602. Petillo provides an excellent discussion of how Aquinas developed Augustine's key themes concerning grace.

21. See Daria Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2015), 218-21. See also *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 23, A. 2.

22. See how Aquinas clarifies Augustine's account of the Spirit as Love in *ST. Ia*, Q. 37, A. 2.

of his account fit together. However, I will also critically evaluate what is fruitful in Aquinas as well as what I think ought to be revised. Aquinas helps us to understand the metaphysics of the indwelling and participation in the divine nature as well as the different types of graces, but his discussions could be enhanced with some contemporary understandings of human action. Thus, I will then also be in dialogue with the literature of Robert Audi, Michael Bratman, and Alfred Mele for my discussion of human intention and its relation to human action and agency. Ultimately, I will draw from Aquinas's treasury of pneumatological insight while also utilizing contemporary tools as they contribute to exploring the issue at hand.

### **Outline of Chapters**

This thesis will be structured in the following way. In chapter 2, I will show how Aquinas's account of how the Spirit guides believers by indwelling them overcomes the two problems raised against Alston and Yeo in this chapter. I will start by offering Aquinas's Trinitarian account of how the Spirit indwells believers and will proceed to show how his account of the Spirit's indwelling relates to his discussions concerning how the many types of graces relate to the actions of believers. Finally, I will show the specific ways in which the account developed in the previous two sections overcomes the difficulties raised against Alston and Yeo while also recognizing some areas in Aquinas's account that require clarification and constructive development.

In chapter 3, I will utilize some of the literature in the philosophy of intention in order to develop Aquinas's pneumatology in the ways outlined in chapter 2. I will first lay out an account that understands intentions as mental states, entailing relevant beliefs and desires, that trigger the relevant mechanisms that place persons in the best possible



position to perform some action. Then, I will synthesize the discussion of intention with the riches of Aquinas's understanding of the indwelling and the various types of grace (habitual and auxiliary) in order to develop a truly constructive account of how the Spirit guides believers to act by indwelling them. Finally, I will offer and respond to two possible objections to the account in order to gain even more understanding of how the account contributes to the issue of this thesis.

In chapter 4, I will conclude the argument, provide an important implication of the project for contemporary theology and Christianity more broadly, and offer some areas of future investigation that the project raises.

## CHAPTER II

### AQUINAS ON THE INDWELLING AND THE ACTIONS OF BELIEVERS

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I argue that Aquinas's account of how the Spirit guides the actions of believers by indwelling them articulates how cognitive contact between the Spirit and believers (as opposed to an indwelling of the human psychological states of Christ only) is possible without collapsing the important distinction between God's conscious psychological states and those of believers (as opposed to a direct sharing of divine psychological states). By distinguishing between uncreated and created grace, Aquinas can propose that the Spirit is able to indwell believers as the uncreated gift of divine Love given by God while also describing the resulting transformation in the believer as a created gift from the Spirit, rather than as a reception of the divine conscious states themselves. The following account will largely be drawn from the *Summa Theologiae* with some reference to the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

In the first section, I will articulate Aquinas's Trinitarian account of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit while paying special attention to the Spirit's unique identity within the triune life as Love and as Gift shared with believers. I will also explain Aquinas's distinction between uncreated and created grace and how that distinction functions in his account of the Spirit's indwelling. Second, I will show how Aquinas's conception of the indwelling connects with his understanding of grace and its effect on human action. The created effect of the Spirit's indwelling, namely habitual grace, entails

a whole network of graces that give humans the potential for supernatural action, enabling the Spirit to lead humans to act out of that potency. Third, I will evaluate the constructive merits of Aquinas's account of the indwelling in light of the problems raised against the two contemporary accounts discussed in the introduction. Although Aquinas's account of how the Spirit indwells believers itself has much constructive value for contemporary pneumatology, his understanding of how the various graces lead the believer toward supernatural action needs clarification and development for it to be a truly constructive account of how the Spirit guides believers' actions by indwelling them.

### **Trinitarian Pneumatology and the Indwelling**

Aquinas begins his account of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with his discussion of the Trinity since it is only due to the Spirit's unique relationship to the Father and Son that the Spirit is able to indwell believers and guide their actions. Moreover, since the economic and the immanent Trinity are one and the same, the logic of the Spirit's unique identity in eternal relation to the Father and Son entails also the possibility of the Spirit relating to believers in the economy of salvation.<sup>1</sup> For Aquinas, the Spirit and thus the Spirit's activity (indwelling) can only be distinguished from that of the Father and Son by way of origin or procession since any other distinction would nullify the real unity among the Trinitarian persons.<sup>2</sup> In order to demonstrate that the

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1. This Trinitarian axiom originates from Karl Rahner. See his treatment in *The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 21-23.

2. Aquinas comes to this conclusion in his reflections on the problems with Arianism and Sabellianism. Neither conceived of the possibility of processions in God as activities which remain within the agent. See Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 55-56. In Aquinas, see *ST. Ia, Q. 27, A. 4* and *ST. Ia, Q. 27, A. 5*. See also Gilles Emery, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 52-53.

Triune persons can maintain such ontological unity while being distinct in this way (i.e. by procession), Aquinas employs the psychological analogy by which he distinguishes between two mental acts that are immanent to the divine mind, namely intellect and will.

There are processions in God, not “as in corporeal realities, as a movement in space or as an action of a cause producing an external effect” but as a movement “issuing in the mind,” or as a mental act.<sup>3</sup> Each immanent mental act properly corresponds to either the Son or Spirit based on their unique procession from the Father.<sup>4</sup> For example, the act of the intellect corresponds to the second person of the Trinity, the Son, since the Word (*Logos* in John 1) spoken by God is an action that remains in the divine mind.<sup>5</sup> Such a procession is *unique* (and thus constitutes a unique person) and distinct from the procession of the Spirit because it is a generation from the Father of something that is a likeness to the one from whom He came. In this case, the divine word conceived by the divine intellect is a likeness to that very intellect just as a son is a likeness to his father.<sup>6</sup> Both analogies (Son/Father, Word/Intellect) are ways of articulating the procession that renders the second person of the Trinity distinct from the Father.

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3. *ST. Ia, Q. 27, A. 2.*

4. Admittedly, there is much controversy in contemporary Trinitarian theology in the classical Western employment of the psychological analogy for understanding the Trinity. In particular, a critical problem with the analogy is that it provides an oversimplified understanding of human mental acts. However, even if the analogy fails in this regard, this in itself does not show that the analogy fails as a tool for understanding the Trinitarian relations. The Spirit’s procession from the Father as the act of will and the Son’s procession as act of intellect may be true of the Trinity even if the psychological analogy fails as a way of thinking about the *imago dei* in humans, especially since such appropriations arise not only from the philosophical psychology of Thomas’s time but also from Scripture.

5. *ST. Ia, Q. 27, A. 2.*

6. *ST. Ia, Q. 34, A. 2.*

Alternatively, Aquinas conceives the Holy Spirit's immanent procession as God's Love for Godself that arises in the will.<sup>7</sup> Love is a fitting name for the Holy Spirit because for Aquinas the word spirit (breath, wind) naturally denotes impulse or movement. Moreover, it is the nature of love to "move and urge the will of the lover" (the person who loves) "towards the beloved" (the object of that person's love) since one desires to be with the object of one's love.<sup>8</sup> It is thus on the basis of the Spirit's nature as other-oriented movement that love can be the proper act of the will that makes the Spirit's procession unique in the divine life.<sup>9</sup> Such a movement of the will is a *procession* because the love or impulse that moves the lover towards the beloved is immanent to the mind, the primary condition for any movement to be a divine procession. Although the object of love is not immanent to the will in the same way that the object of the intellect (Word) is, love does create an imprint of the beloved in the lover through the impulse that draws the one who loves towards the object of his love.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the procession of the Son and the procession of the Spirit are not so different after all, at least in this respect.

However, if the Son or Word's relation to the Father (the eternal source of divinity) is that of Father/Son or the source of divinity/the generation of a likeness to that source, then the Spirit cannot merely be another Son. As it stands, there is no proper

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7. For excellent explanation of how love can properly be called an immanent procession, see Emery, *Trinitarian Theology*, 226.

8. *ST. Ia, Q. 36, A. 1.* Focus especially on Aquinas's *respondeo*.

9. *ST. Ia, Q. 36, A. 1.* See also Eleonore Stump's account of the philosophical psychology of love with which Aquinas operates. See Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), 90-107.

10. *ST. Ia, Q. 37, A. 1.* See also *SCG. 4, 19, 10.*

distinction between the Son's procession from the Father and the Spirit's procession from the Father. Aquinas's solution to this distinguishing-dilemma is to argue that the Spirit not only proceeds from the Father but also from the Son.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son. Although this decision is admittedly controversial in light of the Filioque controversy, Aquinas has good reasons for keeping this originally Augustinian understanding of the Spirit's procession.<sup>12</sup> First, as stated above, the Spirit's procession cannot really be distinct from the Son's procession unless the Spirit also proceeds from the Son because the only factor that can distinguish the Trinitarian persons is their procession.<sup>13</sup> Thus, if the Spirit cannot have the Father-Son relation but still must proceed from the Father, then the only other option is for the Spirit to proceed from both of them. Second, there can only be one factor distinguishing Son from Father, namely that one is the source of the triune life (Father) and the other is a generated likeness of that source (Son). However, if the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, then the Father is not only distinct from the Son in virtue of the Father-Son relation; the Father is also distinct due to the procession of the Spirit.<sup>14</sup> Thus, for Aquinas, the Spirit's procession from the Son and the Father is a necessary step to ensure the distinctiveness of the Spirit's identity in the triune life (as well as that of the Son).

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11. *ST. Ia, Q. 36, A. 2.*

12. For an excellent discussion of both the inherently theological and ecclesial issues involved in this longstanding debate, see A. Edward Sicienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3-15.

13. *ST. Ia, Q. 36, A. 2.*

14. See Levering's helpful discussion of Aquinas's reasoning here in Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 192-93.

Whatever one makes of the technicalities of Aquinas's account of the psychological analogy, my point here is to emphasize that the Spirit's unique appropriation of the divine love makes it fitting for the Spirit to indwell believers. Since the Spirit is the Love who proceeds from Father and Son, the Spirit is also the Love by whom the Father and Son love each other.<sup>15</sup> The Spirit is thus the unifying force in the Trinitarian life, the movement of the lover to the beloved, that draws Father and Son to each other with the result that Father and Son are both lover and beloved to each other.<sup>16</sup> Of course, this insight does not nullify the way that love is an essential quality of all three persons of the Trinity. However, although the three persons share an essential nature that is love, their mode of loving is distinct according to their distinct processions. The Father and Son's mode of loving is to eternally "spirate Love" or send forth the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup> They love each other by the Holy Spirit who proceeds from and to each person. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, loves not by spirating love but by proceeding or spirating as Love. Thus, love here is not only an essential quality applicable to all three persons but also a personal appropriated quality unique to the Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

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15. *ST. Ia, Q. 37, A. 1.* See especially the 3rd reply. For an extended discussion of the development of Aquinas's thinking on the mutual love of Father and Son through the Spirit, see Kenneth M. Loyer, *God's Love through the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Thomas Aquinas and John Wesley* (Washington, D.C: CUA Press, 2014), 103-40.

16. See Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics* 189-90.

17. See *ST. Ia, Q. 37, A. 2.* Aquinas's language here is literally "*spirare amorem*" – to spirate love. Aquinas further explains how the Father and Son, in spirating love, are the one principle (cause) of the Holy Spirit as the source from which the Spirit proceeds. However, this dual procession does not entail, as some Orthodox critique Aquinas as saying, making the Spirit subordinate to the Son, nor does it remove the Father's status as eternal source of divinity. First, the Spirit is not subordinate to the Son since these are eternal relations and not willed effects, i.e. the Son does not choose to send the Spirit while the Spirit obeys its master. Second, the Father is eternal source of both Son and the Spirit, so the Father's status as eternal source is not weakened by the Spirit's procession from the Son. Both critiques apply to a caricature of Aquinas's position and fail to take Aquinas's account of the Trinity seriously on its own terms. See also Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, 192-94.

18. *ST. Ia, Q. 37, A. I.*

The Spirit's unique identity as the Love shared between Father and Son and proceeding from each includes the possibility for the Spirit's unique relationship with believers.<sup>19</sup> In being the Love by whom Father and Son love each other and proceeding from both persons, the Spirit is also the Love by whom God loves human persons.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the Spirit's unique identity as the Love who proceeds in the Trinity renders the Spirit especially fitting to be given to creatures as a gift in a way the Father and Son are not. Regarding gifts, Aquinas says, "the basis of such gracious giving is love; the reason we give something to another spontaneously is that we will good to him. And so what we give first to anyone is the love itself with which we love him."<sup>21</sup> In seeking to give good gifts to believers, then, God first gives the love out of which such gifts are given. Since the Spirit personally is the Love by whom God loves Godself and by whom God loves humans, it is proper that the Spirit be given as the first gift to believers. Furthermore, just as it is fitting for the Spirit to be given or to proceed in God's immanent Triune life as Love, so it is fitting for the Spirit to be given to believers in the economic Trinity as the Love by whom believers also love God. There is thus a seamless unity between the Spirit's appropriated role in the triune life as love proceeding and the Spirit's distinct role as a gift to believers, namely to be given and to give himself as the first gift of Love through whom all other gifts are given.

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19. My point here is not that it was necessary that the Spirit relate to believers but only that the Spirit's unique identity held the possibility that the Spirit might relate to believers as one who is sent from the Father and Son.

20. *ST. Ia*, Q. 43, A. 5. See especially the 2nd reply.

21. *ST. Ia*, Q. 38, A. 1.



In describing this self-giving of the Spirit, Aquinas uses the classical language of *indwelling*. He states, “God is not merely in the intelligent creature, but dwells there as in his temple.”<sup>22</sup> Although such language of dwelling within one as if in a temple is helpful as a metaphorical description of the relationship between believers and the Spirit, the language is ambiguous on its own and leaves room for inappropriate interpretations of what such an indwelling of the Spirit entails.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, such language could imply a conflation of the Spirit’s self-giving with the incarnation of the Word. In this understanding, the Spirit’s indwelling would be a complete and unmediated union with humans with the result that believers become incarnate Holy Spirits who are fully conformed to the Spirit in the same way the human nature of the Word in Christ was fully conformed to the divine nature, a change that would remove human agency from the Christian life.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, such indwelling language could separate the Spirit from the Father and Son. Such a fallacy appears to befall certain contemporary pneumatologists who insist on understanding the Spirit as bodily, as dwelling within bodies, as if the Spirit were somehow separated from the Father and Son while being divided up and proportionately placed into various human bodies.<sup>25</sup> Such an understanding leads to the

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22. *ST. Ia, Q. 43, A. 3.*

23. Of course, such language cannot be discarded entirely since it is important both in Christian tradition and Scripture. Thus, my approach here will continue to use such language but in a way that will bring precision to what we mean when we use the word *indwelling*.

24. This is because in the incarnation there was no human agent who was not at the same time the second person of the Trinity. There was only one agent who was both divine and human. The indwelling, on the other hand, implies two agents, one who is divine and one who is human. To conflate the two would be to remove human agency and replace it with the Spirit.

25. Of course, no one would openly admit this conclusion, but it is unclear how various theologians who describe the Spirit as “seeking bodies” would articulate how the Spirit indwells believers in such a bodily way. They often leave this metaphysical issue aside while they explore the implications of

same problem as the previous attempt since there would still be an unmediated union between humans and the Spirit, but it would also disrupt the eternal relations within the triune life. Both of these erroneous conceptions of the indwelling over-literalize the indwelling language instead of utilizing that language as a helpful metaphor for explaining the Spirit's ontological self-giving or finding more precise language for discussing it.

Instead of over-literalizing the potentially dangerous language of indwelling and falling into these fallacies, Aquinas clarifies what it means for the Spirit to indwell believers by distinguishing between uncreated and created grace. The Spirit is the uncreated Love (*amor*) who proceeds from the Father and Son and is fully given as God's gift of Love to believers, and this full cognitive contact between the intelligible Spirit and the believer's intelligible soul imparts a created imprint of the Spirit onto the soul, namely the gift of love (*caritas*).<sup>26</sup> This created imprint is the transformation that the Spirit gradually brings about in the soul (and so throughout the believer's bodily existence) in order to draw the believer into the triune life in a way proper to a created being.

More particularly, the Love of God (Holy Spirit) gives himself to the soul in order to give the created gift of love so that the believer might in turn gradually love God by

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their bodily pneumatology. The issue is thus left open as to how the Spirit is able to proceed eternally from Father (and Son) while indwelling human bodies (in a literal way?). For examples of this trajectory in contemporary pneumatology, see Eugene Rogers, *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1-18; David H. Jensen, ed., *The Lord and Giver of Life: Perspectives on Constructive Pneumatology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 1-24 and 87-96.

26. The idea of love as something that the Spirit creates in us by indwelling us as the divine Love is common to the SCG. See *SCG*. 4, 23, 8-11. Aquinas says, "sed ad ipsius effectus, secundum quos in nobis habitat, qui in homine possunt augeri et minui." See also *ST*. Ia, Q. 43, A. 5., especially in the second reply.

participating in God's Love. Such created love entails a participation in that Love because the divine Love is infinite whereas humans are finite and can only participate in that divine love rather than being that Love essentially as the Spirit is.<sup>27</sup> This created imprint or capacity for participation in Love is also the means by which the Holy Spirit is present to the soul in the first place. As Marshall notes, "If God is to give us the highest gift, 'the eternal good of the creature, namely God himself,' then he must, it seems, give us the created means to receive him."<sup>28</sup> Thus, simultaneously, created grace is both the necessary transformative result of the Spirit's cognitive contact with the soul and the very means by which such contact is possible.<sup>29</sup>

Created grace should not be understood as something that separates the Spirit from humans; rather, created grace is the medium of the Spirit's full contact with the soul of the believer. To use Marshall's metaphors for the indwelling in Aquinas, created grace is less like mortar between bricks which separates one brick from another than like a signet ring in wax. As Marshall explains,

In order to come into contact with sealing wax, a signet ring has to make an impression upon the wax, giving the wax its own shape at every point. Unless the ring creates this impression, there is no contact with the wax, but only distance.

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27. ST. Ia, Q. 43, A. 5. See again the 2nd reply. Aquinas states, "Since the Holy Spirit is Love, the likening of the soul to the Holy Spirit occurs through the gift of charity and so the Holy Spirit's mission is accounted for by reason of charity."

28. See Bruce D. Marshall, "Ex Occidente Lux?: Aquinas and Eastern Orthodox Theology," *Modern Theology* 20.1 (2004): 29.

29. This understanding of created grace as both created effect of the Spirit's presence as well as the means by which the Spirit is present in believers was held in different ways by a number of figures such as Lonergan, Rahner, and Congar. See Robert Doran, "Sanctifying Grace, Charity, and the Divine Indwelling: A Key to the *Nexus Mysteriorum Fidei*." *Lonergan Workshop* 23 (2012): 167-69. For Congar's understanding, see Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. 2*, trans. David Smith (New York: Herder and Herder, 1983), 83.

The impressed form of the ring is necessary in order to eliminate this distance, and genuinely conform the wax to the ring.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, in the same way that the ring's contact with the wax makes a necessary imprint of itself in the wax, so the Spirit's ontological contact with the believer's soul leaves a necessary imprint or created transformative effect by which the Spirit is joined to the believer. Such an understanding entails that the Spirit's self-giving is logically prior to the created effect, though such priority need not be temporal since there is no time in which the Spirit indwells without the created effect.<sup>31</sup>

The distinction between uncreated and created grace entails a real presence of the Spirit to the soul, but this understanding of the language of indwelling does not conflate it with Christ's Incarnation. According to the Chalcedonian definition, Christ's Incarnation entails a union between the divine and human nature in a single person. The second person of the Trinity did not enter into a human person and take over his agency since Christ's human nature never existed except as unified with his divine nature. Although the language of indwelling can appear to be a direct union of the sort described here by the Chalcedonian definition, the uncreated/created distinction provides a way to avoid articulating the indwelling as another example of what Christ did in the Incarnation.<sup>32</sup>

Believers are not incarnated Holy Spirits, but human agents who are transformed by the

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30. See Marshall, "Ex Occidente," 29-30. See also Bruce D. Marshall, "Action and Person: Do Palamas and Aquinas Agree about the Spirit?" *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 39 (1995): 388-89.

31. See Daria Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2015), 65-66.

32. However, the indwelling is not disconnected from the incarnation. After all, the Spirit gradually draws believers into the triune life, which also means being gradually united to the Son. Such a gradual union means that whereas Christ's perfected human nature entailed the possibility of the perfection of believers, the Spirit's indwelling helps to make that an actuality.

Spirit through created grace, the very medium by which the Spirit is fully given to the believer while not conflating the distinction between human agents and God.

By providing precision to the language of indwelling, the uncreated/created distinction also manages to provide a way to understand the Spirit as indwelling the believer in this participatory/transformational way while also existing in eternal union with the Father and Son.<sup>33</sup> There is no separation between the Spirit and the Father and Son because the Spirit does not need to break away from the triune life in order to indwell humans. The Spirit gives the created gift of love by which He is able to truly indwell believers, but such an indwelling is not a spatial indwelling. The Spirit does not have to leave the triune life to *go someplace else*; rather, the Spirit spatially and temporally indwells only insofar as the transformation that the believer undergoes exists on a spatial and temporal plane.<sup>34</sup> Such a non-spatial contact with believers is not only important for the integrity of the triune life, but is also important for the believer's gradual progress towards that life. By both indwelling believers and existing in eternal union with the Father and Son, the Spirit enables believers, by the created gift of love, to enter into and indeed participate in the life of God that is itself bonded together by the Love of unity who is the Holy Spirit.

### **The Indwelling, Grace, and the Actions of Believers in Aquinas**

Out of this account of the Spirit's indwelling, Aquinas develops a distinctive understanding of how the Spirit, by indwelling believers, guides them to act in his treatment on grace in the *Secunda Pars*. Although the Spirit is rarely mentioned explicitly

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33. Any mention of the language of the Spirit's indwelling will be meant in this particular way through the rest of the project.

34. See especially the passage in the *SCG*. 4, 23, 11.

in this treatment of grace, the whole discussion presumes what has already been said in the Prima Pars concerning the Spirit's indwelling. As Torrell has argued, Thomas often called the Treatise on Grace the "grace of the Holy Spirit (*gratia Spiritus Sancti*)."<sup>35</sup> In fact, the treatment of how grace guides the actions of believers expands upon what Aquinas already said concerning both what created grace (the created means of participating in the Spirit) is and what it accomplishes in the spiritual life of believers.

Aquinas's clarification and development of the nature of this created grace centers on both habitual and auxiliary grace. Habitual grace serves as a new capacity or form for action that enables believers not only to act in accordance with human nature but also to participate in the divine nature.<sup>36</sup> Although all beings participate in God insofar as they exist with some nature and rely on God for their subsistence, no being on its own can act outside of its nature, whether human or otherwise. Since the intellect is the form or nature that makes someone human rather than something else, human nature then involves acting in accordance with the intellect or reason.<sup>37</sup> However, through habitual grace, the Spirit enables believers to act in ways that transcend what is reasonable for them to do. Such participation means that just as reason serves as the natural form for human action, habitual grace serves as a new form for human action that is supernatural (i.e., it is action that is oriented by God towards God's perfect divine nature, not just action that can be

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35. Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Volume 2: Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 115. In fact, Torrell explored numerous texts throughout Aquinas's corpus in order to demonstrate that the reason Thomas does not mention the Holy Spirit explicitly very often was that the Spirit was everywhere in Aquinas's writings. Every mention of grace related to the Holy Spirit's activity.

36. See John Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions: St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2009), 154. In Aquinas, see *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 110, A. 1.

37. See discussion in Spezzano, *Glory of God's Grace*, 139-41. The relevant text from Aquinas is *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 110, A. 1.

arrived at by simple practical reasoning or syllogism). Indeed, as a type of *habitus*, such grace is “a potency, a steady disposition to act in a certain way,” in this case, in a way that moves one toward and enables one to participate in God.<sup>38</sup>

A potential for supernatural action by itself, however, does not entail that the potential will be actualized. As Aquinas states, “we see in the natural world that for movement is required not only that intrinsic form which is the principle (capacity) of movement or action; there is also required the actual motion of the primary mover.”<sup>39</sup> Even though the Spirit, by indwelling believers, imparts the created gift of habitual grace that enables believers to perform actions that are supernatural, believers also need to be moved by the Spirit to perform actions that fit this new capacity since they only have this capacity imperfectly and are not in full possession of it like they are when it comes to their natural capacity to act in accordance with reason.<sup>40</sup> It is by this auxiliary (*auxilium*), or helping, grace that the Spirit actualizes the potency of believers and moves them to perform actions that help them grow towards the divine nature through participation. Ultimately, both types of grace are necessary for believers to reach their supernatural goal of eternal blessedness with God.

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38. See Joseph Wawrykow, “Grace,” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 194. Aquinas calls this type of influence of the Spirit over action *formal causality*.

39. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 109, A. 1.

40. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 68, A. 2. In one of his clearest discussions of the issue, Aquinas says, “On the other hand, that which has a nature, or form, or virtue imperfectly, cannot of itself work, unless it be moved by another. Thus the sun which possesses light perfectly, can shine by itself; whereas the moon which has the nature of light imperfectly, sheds only a borrowed light. Again, a physician, who knows the medical art perfectly, can work by himself; but his pupil, who is not yet fully instructed, cannot work by himself, but needs to receive instructions from him.”

Aquinas further divides habitual and auxiliary grace each into operative and cooperative categories, which help to further clarify metaphysically how the Spirit's indwelling connects with human action at the levels of capacity and act. When it comes to auxiliary grace, Aquinas distinguishes between the interior act of the will by which one wills a certain good or action (operative) and the exterior action in which one brings the willed action to material completion (cooperative).<sup>41</sup> Operative auxiliary grace corresponds to "this interior act of will in which the will behaves as moved by God as mover."<sup>42</sup> By *moved*, Aquinas means that God causes the believer to will a certain action, thus bringing the believer to the volitional position in which she is about to perform the action. By causing believers to will certain actions that are befitting of their divine end, God also cooperates in their actually doing the action. Since any external act is "ordained by the will, it follows that the operation involved in this act is attributed to the will. And since for this act too God helps us, both by confirming the will within so that it might achieve its act and by providing the means of action without," God is then behind the external action though indirectly and thus in a cooperative way.<sup>43</sup> God, then, moves humans through their own volitional processes in order that they might progress from merely having this supernatural capacity due to the Spirit's indwelling to then acting out of that capacity and performing actions that contribute to their continued spiritual growth.

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41. For an excellent treatment of these different aspects of habitual and actual grace, see Spezzano, *Glory of God's Grace*, 126-28; Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 270-72. See also Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 41-61, 134-37.

42. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 3, A. 2.

43. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 3, A. 2.



Habitual grace also contains operative and cooperative aspects that spring from Aquinas's metaphysics of form, namely *esse* (being) and *operari* (operation) respectively.<sup>44</sup> In its operative function, habitual grace “heals or justifies the soul and makes it pleasing to God,” in that the believer is saved from past sin and her volitional and cognitive faculties are healed from the residual effects of sin.<sup>45</sup> As the result of such volitional and cognitive healing, habitual grace also elevates believers to a new form of existence (*esse*), namely participation in the divine nature as was stated before. Habitual grace thus enables believers to participate in the divine nature by removing what separates the two (both past sins and residual volitional effects of sin) and raising humans to this divine plane of existence. In its cooperative function, habitual grace is the “principle of meritorious action, which proceeds from free choice.”<sup>46</sup> Meritorious action entails actions (*operari*) that are befitting of the new divine nature humans are given in that their origin is in the Spirit's activity, and they are able to merit eternal reward from God through such actions.<sup>47</sup> Habitual grace is the *principle* of meritorious action because it provides the possibility of such actions being accomplished by human free will. In terms of the metaphysics of form, this means that habitual grace provides both a new form of existence and the capacity to live out of that new existence.

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44. For a discussion of these different aspects of habitual grace, see Spezzano, *Glory of God's Grace*, 128. See also Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 44.

45. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 3, A. 2.

46. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 3, A. 2.

47. For a discussion of the relationship between grace and merit, see Joseph Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 166-83. Wawrykow gives a great deal of attention to the passages in the Summa concerning habitual grace and merit.

After all, auxiliary grace by itself cannot move an unwilling will to do the good since humans already seek ultimate happiness through a variety of means that are not directed towards God.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, without the healing of their nature brought about by habitual grace, humans would still suffer from their sinful dispositions that both prevent them from pursuing the goods that are natural to human nature and make impossible any sort of action that surpasses that nature.<sup>49</sup> As a result, God must dispose humans through habitual grace to be moved by the Holy Spirit's auxiliary grace in order that "they may be moved by him *sweetly and promptly* towards obtaining the eternal good."<sup>50</sup> Habitual grace is able to bring about this transformation because it is out of this contact that the Spirit is able to impart to believers the theological virtues, infused cardinal virtues, and gifts, which are infused supernatural inclinations that, in different ways, direct believers towards God as their ultimate end.

As supernatural inclinations, the theological virtues faith, hope, and love direct believers' actions towards union with God by disposing the intellect and will to move towards this divine end.<sup>51</sup> The human faculties need to be disposed towards God because on their own they can only operate on the basis of what the intellect deems a rational end worth pursuing. This distinction between the natural functioning of the faculties and their elevated supernatural function makes sense if we think through Aquinas's distinction between the theological virtues and the acquired cardinal virtues. The cardinal virtues are

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48. Aquinas lists as possible examples wealth, honor, power, glory, and pleasure among others. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 2, A. 1-8.

49. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 85, A. 1; *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 109, A. 3.

50. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 110, A. 2.

51. See discussion in Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 158; Rziha also provides the citation from *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 26, A. 3.

dispositions for actions that are guided by natural reason alone.<sup>52</sup> For example, temperance is a disposition towards self-control in all things. One is a temperate person if she does not do anything in extreme excess or deficiency.<sup>53</sup> However, although temperance leads to actions that are good and guided by reason, one can have self-control and not have faith in God or desire union with God.

When guided by these cardinal virtues, human intellect and will perform actions that are guided by reason. The intellect proposes a rational good to be pursued and considers the proper means for attaining the good while the will desires the good proposed by the intellect and commands the body to act.<sup>54</sup> However, performing actions in accord with reason does not mean that one's actions entail participating in the divine nature in a supernatural way, nor does it entail growth towards the likeness of Christ.<sup>55</sup> Human intellect and will, then, must be elevated through infused supernatural dispositions since one cannot attain these dispositions through repetitive actions alone like other virtues or habits. These supernatural dispositions must be infused directly by the Spirit as part of the created, habitual effect by which the Spirit indwells believers.

Such supernaturally infused dispositions each have their own role to play in directing the believer's faculties towards God. Faith elevates the believer's intellect to "receive certain supernatural principles, which are held by means of the Divine light:

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52. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 61, A. 2.

53. *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 141, A. 1.

54. For this insight, see especially Aquinas's discussion of prudence in *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 47, A. 3.

55. After all, for Aquinas, even before the Fall, humans could not pursue supernatural good. In his discussion of grace, Aquinas says, "In the state of intact nature...man could by his natural endowments will and perform the good which was proportionate to his own nature, which is to say the good of acquired virtue; but he could not will or perform the transcendent good, which is to say the good of infused virtue." See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 109, A. 2.

these are the articles of faith.”<sup>56</sup> The Spirit essentially moves the intellect to assent to these true propositions of faith by entering into the believer’s cognitive processes and disposing the intellect to trust in these truths. Moreover, the Spirit elevates the human will through both hope and love. Hope directs the human will towards actions that enable one to progress towards union with God as an end that is attainable with divine assistance.<sup>57</sup> Finally, love is the disposition by which the will is directed towards God by gradually binding humans and the Spirit into a spiritual union that “transforms the will for that end.”<sup>58</sup> Love is supreme over the other theological virtues, not only because it constitutes the believer’s unity with the Holy Spirit who is Love but also because love quickens and perfects the growth of faith and hope in the believer.<sup>59</sup>

Although love is the most important of the theological virtues, it is last in terms of temporal succession. Faith must come first because one can neither hope for nor love someone or something of which one is unaware. The intellect must know God through the articles of faith before the will can be moved towards this good which the intellect proposes, at least in Aquinas’s way of thinking about these faculties. Hope follows from faith because one “hopes to be able to obtain some good through someone” before “he looks on the man in whom he hopes as a good of his own.”<sup>60</sup> Finally, “for the very reason

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56. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 62, A. 3.

57. See *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 17, A. 6.

58. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 62, A. 3.

59. As we can see, although the theological virtues are not acquired as a result of our habitual actions, they can be increased by one’s living in light of elevated human nature. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 62, A. 4; *IIaIIae*, Q. 23, A. 8. It must also be recognized at this stage that the Eucharist also has an important role in increasing one’s loving disposition. I will say more about this in the next chapter.

60. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 62, A. 4. See also *IIaIIae*, Q. 17, A. 7. Here Aquinas says, “Hope is concerned with a future and difficult good, but one, nevertheless, that remains possible; so much so that the mere fact of hoping would be out of the question if the hoped-for good did not appear possible.”

that a man hopes in someone, he proceeds to love him.”<sup>61</sup> Since love comes last temporally, it then is able to increase and reinforce the other two virtues (as well as the other dispositions associated with habitual grace) out of the fact that one acquires stronger belief/trust and hope in someone when he or she loves that person. All three theological virtues that are infused into the soul by the habitual, created effect of the Spirit’s indwelling thus work together to direct both the intellect and will of the believer to perform actions that are befitting of the believer’s supernatural end and ultimately toward love, the highest form of the virtues as well as the most fundamental means of participation in the Holy Spirit.<sup>62</sup>

Although these theological virtues, especially charity, are meant to dispose believers to be moved by the promptings of the Holy Spirit in auxiliary grace, they are not sufficient on their own for ensuring that humans always act properly in light of their grace-filled nature. Charity directs the believer towards God as his ultimate end, but one must still be further disposed towards those ends that are in accord with that ultimate end.<sup>63</sup> Thus, in addition to charity, further moral virtues must be infused into the believer to direct the believer still more properly towards actions that aid one in growing towards the perfect humanity of Christ and participating in the divine nature. As Aquinas states, “all the moral virtues must needs be infused together with charity, since it is through them that man performs each different kind of good work.”<sup>64</sup> Along with charity, and

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61. *ST. IaIIae. Q. 62, A. 4.*

62. For a discussion of how the theological virtue of love is a participation in the Holy Spirit, see Spezzano, *Glory of God’s Grace*, 220-24.

63. For the relationship between the theological virtues and those dispositions that dispose one towards those proximate ends (the infused cardinal virtues), see Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 174-80.

64. *ST. IaIIae, Q. 65, A. 3.*

with it faith and hope, one also receives the infused virtues as well since charity is the “mother and root of all the virtues” and “the form of all of them.”<sup>65</sup> One can acquire these virtues in some limited way before baptism, but one needs the infused cardinal virtues in order that particular types of actions related to the different virtues might be directed towards God as their end rather than simply whatever end reason proposes.

Through the Spirit’s indwelling, believers are thus not only directed towards God in a *general* way through faith, hope, and love, but also by these infused moral dispositions that grant the believer greater conformity in *particular* ways to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Along the lines of this distinction between the general and the particular, Rziha makes a comparable distinction between merely formal conformity and material conformity to the divine will.<sup>66</sup> To see this distinction at work, Aquinas raises the example of one who seeks to give alms by stealing the money from other people.<sup>67</sup> Although the person had the right idea in seeking to give money to the poor, the way he went about trying to accomplish this end was deeply mistaken. The person was mistaken concerning what actions actually serve as proper means for attaining that proximate end (giving alms) while being in accord with the person’s ultimate end. One might say that the person’s heart was in the right place, but he was ignorant of what he was actually doing. He was in formal conformity to God’s will, but he was not in material conformity, meaning that in actuality he did not act in the best way towards attaining Christ-likeness. Alternatively, the infused versions of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude dispose

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65. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 62, A. 4. See also the discussion in Spezzano, *Glory of God’s Grace*, 238-39.

66. Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 175-78.

67. For this example in Aquinas, see *ST. IaIIae*. Q. 18, A. 7.

believers not only to be directed to God formally and generally but also materially by directing particular types of actions towards God.<sup>68</sup>

The infused virtues not only enable the will to be in greater conformity to whatever actions reason proposes as one's proper end, but through prudence the person becomes more properly disposed to selecting ends that are truly in conformity with the divine will.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the focus of the infused virtues is on disposing both will and intellect to be in greater conformity with one's divine end by selecting the correct goods that will bring one closer to that end. However, the infused cardinal virtues are limited in their scope because their goal is still the proper alignment of the will and intellect with reason even if they are directed towards God by the theological virtues (especially love). Moreover, they are still inclinations, meaning that they merely provide the potential for particular supernatural actions towards certain divinely oriented goods, but they do not in themselves ensure that the believer will perform such actions.

After all, the theological virtues and infused cardinal virtues flow out of habitual grace, which still requires the direct auxiliary movement of the Spirit to lead the believer to act out of his or her new supernatural inclinations by moving the will to choose actions befitting one's divine end. As Aquinas states,

But in matters directed to the supernatural end, to which man's reason moves him, according as it is, in a manner, and imperfectly, informed by the theological

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68. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 65, A. 1. Aquinas says, "the perfect moral virtue is a habit that inclines us to do a good deed well" not only to mean well but to actually do a good action in the proper way.

69. For a discussion of the cardinal virtues (including prudence) as they are elevated towards God, see *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 61, A. 5.

virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receive in addition the prompting or motion of the Holy Ghost.<sup>70</sup>

Consequently, in order for one to move ever more closely toward one's divine end, further gifts of the Spirit are necessary so that one might be "disposed so as to be amenable to the promptings of God."<sup>71</sup> The gifts of the Holy Spirit are dispositions just like the theological virtues and infused cardinal virtues, but their focus is on enabling believers to promptly and readily obey the *auxiliary* impulse of the Spirit on a consistent basis.

Like the other virtues, the gifts ultimately arise out of the theological virtue of love (*caritas*) since love is the most fundamental means by which the Spirit is in direct contact with the believer. In fact, with the infusion of love, one also has all the infused dispositions (virtues and gifts), which grant believers the potential for supernatural actions while not necessarily bringing such potential to actuality.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, as Stump notes, despite arising from the virtue of love, the gifts act as enzymes for the theological virtues, further anchoring such virtues in the intellect and will of the believer and constantly leading to actions that are befitting of his or her supernatural end.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, such gifts also facilitate the application of the infused cardinal virtues. In fact, for each infused cardinal virtue, there is at least one gift that anchors the virtue in the

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70. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 68, A. 2.

71. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 68, A. 1.

72. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 68, A. 5. Aquinas states, "Wherefore, just as the moral virtues are united together in prudence, so the gifts of the Holy Ghost are connected together in charity: so that whoever has charity has all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, none of which can one possess without charity."

73. See Eleonore Stump, "The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions," *Faith and Philosophy* 28 (2011): 35. I merely make reference to Stump to gain clarity on what exactly the gifts of the Holy Spirit do. I do not intend to affirm everything she argues in this article.



relevant faculties so that one will act out of that inclination as he or she is prompted by the Spirit.<sup>74</sup> The goal of the gifts is that the believer might live into all the infused inclinations he or she has and be completely attuned to the Spirit by responding properly and consistently to the Spirit in the bond of love that exists between the Spirit and the believer (the *Amor* with the participating *caritas*).

We see then that Aquinas offers an entire vision both for how the Spirit indwells believers and for how the indwelling guides believers towards actions that contribute to their proper end in union with God. The Spirit is the personal Love shared between Father and Son in the Triune life and as such is properly given to humans as God's Love for believers. As the result of this ontological self-giving in the indwelling, the Spirit imparts a necessary created effect in the soul of the believer that not only acts as the means by which such an indwelling or cognitive contact is possible, but is also a habitual effect since it elevates human nature to a higher plane of existence that is supernatural and disposes humans to act in accordance with it. Through the various types of infused virtues and the gifts, believers are inclined in manifold ways towards being easily led by the Holy Spirit's promptings for supernatural actions towards the divine end of human existence, the beatific vision.

### **A Constructive Account?**

Although I have explained Aquinas's account of how the Spirit guides the actions of believers by indwelling them, does the account overcome the constructive difficulties that plagued Alston's and Yeo's contemporary analytic accounts of the indwelling as

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74. For the virtues that concern reason, there are the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and counsel. For the virtues that concern the will, there are the gifts of fortitude, piety, and fear. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 68, A. 1.

discussed in the introduction? Alston problematically argues that the Spirit directly shares his own psychological states with believers in the indwelling. Moreover, an additional problem with Alston's account is that some mental states cannot be shared by different persons such as those tied to conscious experience or "indexical representational content."<sup>75</sup> Alternatively, Yeo's account of the Spirit's indwelling entails an indwelling of Christ's human psychological states rather than the Spirit Himself. Admittedly, the Christological worries that motivate his understanding of the indwelling are justified.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, although Yeo is worried about subordinating Christ in the indwelling, his account drifts into the opposite mistake, namely giving the Spirit a subsidiary role in the journey of the believer towards beatitude. He is no longer speaking about the indwelling of the Spirit but an indwelling that the Spirit merely helps along.

Aquinas is able to avoid the problems I raised against Alston's account because the psychological states that enable humans to participate in the divine life and move towards beatitude are specifically created for humans. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer, and this full cognitive contact between the Spirit and the believer leaves a necessary created imprint on the soul through which the entire network of habitual and auxiliary graces that lead the believer towards beatitude are infused into the soul. Through this created gift, the relevant volitional elements the believer receives are created by God but are entirely the believer's own rather than God's own psychological states. Consequently, God's simple and Trinitarian existence can still be radically

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75. See Ray S. Yeo, "Towards a Model of Indwelling: A Conversation with Jonathan Edwards and William Alston," *Journal of Analytic Theology* 2 (2014): 217.

76. It is justified because focusing too much on the indwelling can make it appear that Christ is out of the picture, but this is certainly not the case in Aquinas, even if here I have focused more on the Spirit than Christ.

different from the way humans exist, and this fact does not render the Spirit's indwelling impossible. It only means that the Holy Spirit indwells and guides the actions of believers in a way that Alston did not conceive.

In response to Yeo's account, Aquinas does not need to pose an intermediary Christological step in his account of the Spirit's indwelling. Since the Spirit indwells believers through the medium of created grace, there is no direct sharing of the divine nature such that believers become essentially additional members of the Trinity. Rather, humans experience the divine nature in a uniquely created way, indeed the only way created beings could participate in the divine nature. Thus, Aquinas is able to have his cake and eat it too; he is able to pose that the Spirit actually indwells the believer through created grace, while not necessarily implying that humans somehow become what God is, essentially. However, Aquinas's way of conceiving the indwelling need not imply removing Christ from the spiritual life as Yeo attests. It is only on account of the total union of the divine and human natures of Christ and the salvific effects of his passion that humans are able to participate in the divine nature in the first place. The Spirit indwells believers and imparts created grace as the direct result of that indwelling, but the created effect that is fulfilled in love (*caritas*) must be understood as the perfect love of Christ in whom the Spirit, who is the Love of Christ, also dwelled.<sup>77</sup> In this way, it is only because the Spirit indwelled Christ in his perfect human nature that the Spirit can also gradually draw us towards that same perfected human nature of Christ.

Where Yeo goes wrong is in assuming that, instead of the Holy Spirit, it is Christ's perfected human nature that indwells humans. What Yeo needs is a greater sense

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77. See Spezzano, *Glory of God's Grace*, 174-80.

of how his account is still an account of the *Spirit's* indwelling, something that Aquinas accomplishes through his metaphysical distinction between uncreated and created grace. Ironically, Yeo argues against the “Thomistic tradition” on the grounds that “the grace that is infused within the soul is ‘created grace’” or better yet *just* created grace.<sup>78</sup> He understands Edwards as a better alternative to Aquinas since Edwards “equates the love of God with the Holy Spirit and sees the person of the Spirit as that which is infused in the saints.”<sup>79</sup> However, Yeo would then not only argue against Edwards on this very point, but he would also put forward an understanding of the indwelling that entails a type of created effect (Christ’s human unitive drive) that comes between the Spirit and humans. Not only has Yeo mischaracterized Aquinas’s account entirely, he ends up rejecting his own critique of Aquinas’s position.

Where these two contemporary attempts have failed to develop a viable constructive account of the indwelling, Aquinas is able both to overcome their problems and at the same time connect the indwelling to the life of the Trinity, enabling humans to truly participate in God in a way especially fitting for human nature (i.e. through the created transformation enacted by the Spirit). As a result, Aquinas’s account of how the Spirit guides believers to act by indwelling them cannot merely be shoved aside as a relic from a time long ago but must be constructively engaged in contemporary pneumatology. However, having constructive value does not entail that the account as a whole can simply be lifted from its context and dropped into contemporary theology. With this in mind, there are some areas of Aquinas’s thought, especially concerning the connection

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78. See Yeo, “Towards a Model,” 213.

79. *Ibid.*

between the indwelling and the actions of believers, that require greater clarification and development.

One limitation of Aquinas's account is the lack of a fleshed out sense of the earliest spiritual development of the believer. Aquinas discusses many types of graces including the theological virtues, infused cardinal virtues, and the gifts, but there is not a clear articulation both of how these types of graces initially guide the believer when he or she has just converted (especially against the effects of residual sinful inclinations) and of how they grow over time in drawing the believer towards God. For example, upon baptism the theological virtues are infused into the soul, and Aquinas gives a temporal sequence for their acquisition (i.e. faith, then hope, and finally love). However, it isn't clear how the theological virtues initially change the believer's way of life after baptism.

In other words, what actually happens to the believer when the Spirit first indwells her? Does the believer come out loving God completely or do the theological virtues function in experience as initially weak inclinations upon baptism that grow over time? The problem becomes even more complicated when we throw into the mix the infused cardinal virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Should we understand all of these inclinations as being infused all at once when the Spirit indwells the believer or does the believer grow in the theological virtues first while the other virtues come later as one grows in the spiritual life? In other words, how do these inclinations actually work "on the ground" when the Spirit indwells and transforms human experience, and how do they develop as one performs more and more supernatural actions, guided by the Spirit?<sup>80</sup>

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80. This problem is very similar to the issue raised by Lonergan about the role of habitual grace. He states, "there does remain the objection from experience that the infused virtues do not appear always to make right action prompt, easy, or agreeable. He argues that Aquinas's position is that both sinful and

A second limitation is related to the first. The ambiguous nature of these infused inclinations is only compounded by Aquinas's metaphysics of form by which he articulates created habitual grace as a principle or form for supernatural action.<sup>81</sup> Aquinas extends this understanding of habitual grace to the theological virtues, the infused cardinal virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well. Such virtues or inclinations are not attained by repetitive actions but are infused into the soul through habitual grace as forms for supernatural actions. Since they are infused virtues which give believers the capacity to act supernaturally, believers cannot act out of such inclinations on their own. After all, the only one who could reduce a supernatural form to action is a supernatural being, namely the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Spirit's *auxilia* are also required so that humans act out of their new supernatural inclinations.

The problem with all of this is that it is not clear how these infused virtues are virtues at all. They are not acquired by human actions, nor do they *directly* help humans act (other than in providing the potential for such actions) since the auxiliary graces take care of the volitional elements of human action.<sup>82</sup> In the operative function of the infused virtues, they heal human nature,<sup>83</sup> but Aquinas does not give us a strong sense of what this healing process might entail and how it is different from the healing we might expect

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divine-like tendencies operate at the same time, but does not explain how that is the case or how the virtuous inclinations overcome sinful ones. See Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, 46.

81. Of course, Aquinas has good reasons for understanding habitual grace as the form for supernatural action. Since participating in the divine nature lies outside of what humans are able to do naturally (i.e. according to reason), only God could elevate human nature to participate in the life of God.

82. Of course, providing the capacity for supernatural actions is certainly an important role, and I by no means intend to make slight of that importance. It just seems like in order to be virtues, there must be some sort of volitional element that is not reducible to the divine *auxilia*.

83. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 109, A. 2.

humans to receive naturally from being guided by the Spirit's auxilia to act more and more virtuously over time. Admittedly, Aquinas's metaphysics of form as applied to habitual grace is necessary for the elevation of human nature to participate in God, but it also can overshadow the way the theological virtues become rooted in human experience (not only potentially but actually) by directing human volition towards God so that the believer can be guided by the Spirit to act.<sup>84</sup> There needs to be a greater sense of how these two aspects of habitual grace are related as well as how they connect to the Spirit's auxiliary grace.

Finally, Aquinas's account of how the Spirit guides the actions of believers by indwelling them needs to be clarified with contemporary understandings of human action. Aquinas only describes auxiliary grace as the Spirit moving the will to act, but it isn't clear what goes into this process, especially since the current literature in the philosophy of action often explains actions by the volitional mental states (beliefs, desires, intentions) that lead to them rather than by some executive act of will.<sup>85</sup> What is needed for Aquinas's account of the indwelling to become a truly contemporary account is a greater sense of how Aquinas's vast vision for the life guided by the Spirit touches upon the way human action actually works on the volitional level (including the various mental

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84. Another way of saying this might be that there seems to be implied (though not developed) a sense of development concerning how the infused virtues become actualized in the will. Humans cooperate with God in supernatural actions, but such actions also seem to increase or intensify the infused virtues in terms of their rootedness in the will. One might have infinite potential to become loving, but not yet be a loving person. Yet, it seems like over time one grows (actually, not only potentially) in becoming a loving person, rather than just one who performs loving actions. It is this sense of growth between doing some supernatural actions by the divine auxilia and becoming a more God-like person that I think needs greater articulation and development, though it is of course possible that Aquinas's account presumes such development.

85. For this language in Aquinas, see *SCG*. 4, 22, 6.

states that are necessary for actions) from baptism onward. It is to this constructive possibility that I now turn.



## CHAPTER III

### THE SPIRIT'S INDWELLING AND THE INTENTIONALITY OF BELIEVERS

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I argue that, by indwelling believers, the Spirit redirects the intentionality of believers towards union with God. By understanding intentions and how they lead to intentional actions, we can make greater sense not only of how habitual and auxiliary grace work together to draw believers towards God but also of the way in which the Spirit's guidance over the believer's life is a developmental process. Such redirection of intentionality begins with the Spirit redirecting human intention in general (habitual grace) towards union with God, but the Spirit gradually guides believers to intend more and more particular actions (auxiliary grace) that contribute to their spiritual progress. The chapter will synthesize the previous chapter's account of how the Spirit guides the actions of believers by indwelling them with insights from contemporary philosophy of intention.

My argument is not that this is the only way in which the Spirit enters into human action, nor am I offering a full theory of how the Spirit enters into human action. It simply explores one way to make sense of how the Spirit guides believers to act by indwelling them. First, I will offer an account that makes sense of intentions as mental states, entailing certain relevant beliefs and desires, that perform an executive function over actions. Such a function is observable in that when a person intends to do something, he or she usually does the intended action unless some incompatible belief or

desire gets in the way. Second, I will use this account of intention to articulate the function of habitual grace. Such grace redirects the intention of believers towards union with God generally, leading humans consistently to intend to move closer to that end. Third, I will explain how the Spirit causes particular intentions (and so guides believers to particular actions) through auxiliary grace. The Spirit illumines the believer to particular actions that will contribute to her moral progress (and to avoid actions that do not), and if the believer's desire to move towards God is stronger than competing desires, then she will intend that action. Fourth, I will answer two possible objections to the account developed in the earlier sections.

### **Intention and Intentional Action**

An intention is a mental state that is fundamental to human agency. In explaining an action, one would normally state that "I intended to bring about the intended state of affairs by acting in that way." Intuitively, such intending entails a certain commitment to bringing about the state of affairs that usually results in one acting in the intended way. However, intending not only seems to be associated with actions but to play some causal role in producing them. And if intentions play such an important causal role in human action generally, then it is important to gain a better understanding of what intentions are and how they work if we are to understand what role the redirection of the intentionality of believers by the Spirit might play in terms of their acting in ways that contribute to their ultimate end. After all, if the Spirit guides believers in the spiritual life, then the Spirit must be involved in their intentions to some degree. In this causal role, intentions also seem to be inextricably tied to the believer's beliefs and desires since one often explains why he or she did a certain thing by stating a certain belief or desire. As a result,

any viable account of intention must take seriously both of these aspects: 1) intentions are inextricably connected to an agent's beliefs and desires and 2) intentions have some causal role in producing actions.

We will thus proceed by first considering what intending entails before exploring what sort of causal role intentions have in producing intentional actions. Generally, there are two distinct types of intentions, namely proximal intentions and distal intentions. The difference between these categories comes down to how much time elapses and how many actions (and corresponding intentions) must take place between the initial intention and the intended state of affairs. In a proximal intention, there will be a small amount of time or no time elapsed between the intention to act in a certain way and the action itself by which a person intends to bring about a certain state of affairs.<sup>1</sup> For example, if I intend to bring about the state of affairs 'turn on the light,' by the action 'moving my finger against the light switch,' there would typically be little time that elapsed between my intention and my moving my hand.

Proximal intentions can also include examples in which many descriptors are possible at once for the same action. Anscombe uses the example of a serial killer who moves his arm, operates a pump, and replenishes the water supply (his job, but he does it with poisonous water) for a family with the intention of killing the inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> In this case, although one can describe the action in a variety of ways, the intended state of affairs and the action by which the man brought about that state of affairs happen all at

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1. For this definition of proximal intentions, see Alfred Mele, *Springs of Action: Understanding Intentional Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 144-45. Mele argues that the primary difference between the two types of intentions is time. Proximal intentions are intentions for the immediate future.

2. See G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000), 46-47.

once.<sup>3</sup> The person intends either now or very soon to perform the action. Thus, the intention, although complex, is still a proximal intention since very little time has elapsed between having the intention, doing the necessary action, and bringing about the state of affairs, and it only took one action to bring about the state of affairs.<sup>4</sup>

A distal intention, on the other hand, is an intention for a state of affairs in the future for which there may be many necessary actions and much elapsed time between the initial intending, the action or actions that will bring about the intended state of affairs, and the state of affairs itself.<sup>5</sup> For example, I might tell a friend that I intend to go to a theology conference in England in a year's time. Let's say that at the time I do not have enough money to go to the conference, and I will need to work overtime at my job each week in order to have enough money to be able to go. Time would elapse between my initial intention, each required action (and thus each required intention) for bringing about the state of affairs (such as working, saving, buying the plane ticket, traveling, etc.) and the state of affairs itself (going to the conference). Of course, the logic of distal intentions is that eventually such intentions will eventually become proximal intentions.<sup>6</sup> Although I now have a distal intention to go to the conference, eventually it will be time to go and I will be in position to say, "I now intend to go to the conference."

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3. This perspective on intentional action, where there can be many descriptors for a single action, is the coarse-grained view of actions. See Robert Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 2.

4. Of course, in such a scenario, it could be that the action was premeditated in which case the intention was a distal intention to do the action. However, in the moment of the action, the intention is proximal since it is for an action now rather than in the future.

5. See Mele, *Springs of Action*, 145.

6. See *Ibid.*

Despite the way in which distal and proximal intentions are distinct, they share what is fundamental to one intending a certain action, namely that the action have a certain connection to one's beliefs and desires. Robert Audi's account of intention is important for capturing this connection since it explains the relevant beliefs and desires as two conditions that are constitutive of a person P successfully saying that she intends to bring about a state of affairs S by Aing.<sup>7</sup> Audi's first necessary condition for having an intention is a belief in the probability that one will bring about that state of affairs by acting in some way.<sup>8</sup> When P intends to bring about S by action A, it seems at least initially plausible that one would have to believe that it is likely that she will bring about S by A. She does not have to know for certain that she will bring about S by A, but she must believe it likely or probable. Otherwise, she merely hopes for the state of affairs to come about as opposed to intending them. If I intend to go to the movies, but believe that it is unlikely that I will get there, then I only hope I will make it.<sup>9</sup> I might recognize that it is possible that I might go, but I would not be willing to bet my money on that state of affairs actually coming about.

Audi's distinction between merely hoping and intending S by Aing seems to make sense of the common usage of the word intend. When I say I intend to do something, there is an expectation that I will bring about S by Aing. I might go so far as to describe my belief as confidence in the likelihood that I will be able to bring it about: confidence not only in the possibility of me bringing about S by Aing but also of the probability that

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7. Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason*, 56-73.

8. *Ibid.*, 56-57.

9. *Ibid.*, 57.

I will do it. Going back to the theology conference example, I could not truthfully say that “I intend to go to the conference in a year” if I believed that there was no chance of my going due to financial reasons. I might hope to win the lottery or some distant relative might die and leave me a large sum of money, but I would still not be intending to go to the conference. I must be confident that I will be able to go in order to have an intention to bring it about. Of course many things might come up that would prevent me from going, but at that time, the belief that it is probable that I go is necessary for me to say I intend to go.<sup>10</sup>

Audi’s second condition for having an intention is a desire or want condition.<sup>11</sup> Unlike the belief condition, which is a more common assumption among philosophers of action, desire is more complicated since there are many instances in which I might intend to do something that I do not want to do such as taking out the trash in order to make my house clean, driving to the grocery store after work so I will have food, and doing my taxes to avoid prison/fines. Audi’s response to this complexity is to divide up the desires that are relevant for intention into intrinsic and extrinsic desires.<sup>12</sup> The former entails intending S for its own sake, and the latter entails intending S for the sake of acquiring some other good that one deems intrinsic. In my theology conference example, I might completely dislike my job, making overtime an undesirable task. In fact, intrinsically,

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10. This example has been of a complex intention. In simple intentions, belief in the likelihood of bringing about S will be even stronger since there will be less time between one’s doing the action and the intended state of affairs. Plus, in many examples of simple intentions, there is not even that much time between the intention and the completion of the action. In complex intentions, one might still believe in the likelihood in bringing about S, but the belief will not be as strong as it would be in a simple intention.

11. Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason*, 58. Here, I (and Audi) am thinking of desires and wants as synonymous mental states.

12. *Ibid.*, 59.

there might be any number of activities I would rather do than go to work. However, this work and pay may be considered an extrinsic desire since I desire it for fulfilling some intrinsic desire, namely going to the conference, which overrides the other intrinsic desires I have in this moment.

By desiring *S* (either intrinsically or extrinsically), Audi means something like Anscombe who argues that “the primitive sign of wanting (desiring) is *trying to get*” in which one knows that the object of desire is there, and there is a volitional movement towards it.<sup>13</sup> Anscombe does not mean that one must actually do the action for it to count as an intention-related desire; though it would be strange if one really desired something and did nothing to try to get it. “Trying to get” in terms of intending *S* by Audi means being disposed to “try to get.” It is a kind of motivation or “pro-attitude” to try to bring about *S* that would include examples in which I intend the action but do not desire to do it intrinsically. Such intention-relevant desire entails desiring to lose weight *with* the motivation to try rather than desiring to lose weight with no motivation to join or go to a gym. Simple “desiring” may appear completely disconnected to my actually doing the action, but if desiring entails a sort of trying-to-get disposition, then desiring to bring about *S* might be closer to doing the action than initially thought.

Once one has this belief/desire combination towards *S*, one can properly say that she intends to bring it about, but it is unclear how this intention alone is connected to bringing about the state of affairs. Put another way, what actually causes the action after one has intended to do it? Philosophers of action are divided on what actually causes an

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13. See Anscombe, *Intention*, 68-69.

intentional act.<sup>14</sup> Many philosophers, following Davidson, have argued that reasons explanations are causal explanations; the cause of the act is whatever reason a person gives for why they did the act (usually a combination of desires, beliefs, intentions, etc.).<sup>15</sup> There has been much controversy over this position since it is not clear that having an intention, belief, or desire necessarily produces actions. When I intend to do something, there is no guarantee that I will do the action since any number of things could happen to produce desires or beliefs that are incompatible with the desires or beliefs that are necessary for having the intention. Moreover, there are many examples of cases in which one has the necessary intention (including the necessary beliefs and desires) and performs the action that was initially intended though there is some other event that actually causes the action (so-called deviant causal chain scenarios).<sup>16</sup>

Alternatively, volitionalists argue that some executive act of willing causes the action after one has an intention to act in that way. After one intends to bring about a state of affairs and reasons about the best way to bring it about, one must then will to act. The difficulty with this perspective is that such an act of will is often understood as an

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14. For the variety of options, see Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason*, 1-31, and Kieran Setiya, "Intention," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intention/>. See also George Wilson and Samuel Shpall, "Action," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2012, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/action/>. These are general sources I consulted in order to get a couple of the mainstream options. A future paper will hopefully begin to explore this aspect of intention and action theory more deeply, but that would be too much to fit into the present thesis.

15. See Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes," reprinted in *Essays on Actions and Events* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3-20. For a discussion and response to Davidson's main argument, see Ernest Lepore and Brian P. McLaughlin, "Actions, Reasons, Causes, and Intentions," in *Actions and Events: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson*, ed. Lepore and McLaughlin (New York: Blackwell, 1985), 1-13.

16. For example, let's say "Betty intends to kill someone, but when she aims her gun a noise startles her, leading her finger to contract so that she shoots and kills the person, though not intentionally. In cases like this one, although she intends to kill someone, a deviant causal chain complicates the picture. This is a scenario from Gilbert Harman, "Practical Reasoning," *Review of Metaphysics* 29 (1976): 445.



action over which one has conscious control.<sup>17</sup> So, if one has an intention to A, that person must oversee the entire process by which the bodily mechanisms execute the intended action. Such willing is something added in addition to the relevant beliefs, desires, and intentions. Indeed, it is unclear in such accounts what role intentions actually play in performing corresponding intentional actions. In light of these difficulties, there is no consensus concerning the particular causal mechanisms that produce intentional actions when one has an intention to act in that way. However, just because we do not have all the causal factors accounted for does not mean that we cannot understand intentions as having an important causal role in producing intentional actions.<sup>18</sup>

One promising line of inquiry that seeks to carve out such a causal role of intentions is that proposed (in different ways) by Michael Bratman and Alfred Mele. Both writers understand intentions as executive states (in their role as conduct-controllers) that have a “characteristic inertia” towards one’s acting in the intended way.<sup>19</sup> When one intends to perform an action, this intention entails being *settled* on the action, meaning that one decides or plans to act in that way.<sup>20</sup> This distinguishes intention from mere passionate or emotional desiring in which one can desire to act in some way but decide

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17. For an example of this perspective, see Hugh J. McCann, “Volition and Basic Action,” *Philosophical Review* 83 (1974): 470. For a discussion of the faults of this view, see Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason*, 78. Another philosopher who shares this perspective is Jing Zhu, “Intention and Volition,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 34 (2004): 175-93.

18. For the sake of this project, I will remain agnostic about all the various causal mechanisms behind actions. There is not enough space for a significant treatment here, though this could certainly be an area for future work.

19. See Michael Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 22; and Mele, *Springs of Action*, 192. I group these two writers together because although there are some differences in their accounts of intention, they are in total agreement on the topics of relevance here.

20. See Mele, *Springs of Action*, 142-45.

against it later.<sup>21</sup> If the intention is proximal, then the intention will usually result in the execution of the action. In fact, Mele argues that acquiring an intention “triggers the appropriate actional mechanisms that lead to intentional actions.”<sup>22</sup> Similarly, when one acquires a distal intention for some future state of affairs, the intention will also trigger the relevant actional mechanisms so long as the intention survives until the relevant future time.

By arguing that intentions trigger the appropriate actional mechanisms, these writers do not come down on any single understanding of what all of those mechanisms are or how they then cause the action; rather, what they argue is that intentions play an important role in getting the processes started and in some ways motivating their successful completion, whether proximally or distally. In seeing intentions as having this executive function over human action, however, both Bratman and Mele argue against the desire-belief model of intention, which understands intentions as desire/belief complexes. In fact, they argue that ultimately intentions are distinctive mental states that do not require desires or beliefs at all. They might work in tandem with beliefs and desires, but such states cannot be understood as necessary conditions for having an intention as I argued above.

Against the desire condition of an intention, Mele raises the example of an agoraphobic woman whose fear of open spaces might be so strong that her desire to avoid traveling outweighs her desire to go to her son’s wedding.<sup>23</sup> However, she might still

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21. For a survey of the types of desire relevant to motivating actions, see Robert Audi, “Intending, Intentional Action, and Desire,” in Joel Marks, ed., *The Ways of Desire: New Essays in Philosophical Psychology on the Concept of Wanting* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1986), 21.

22. See Mele, *Springs of Action*, 180-81.

23. See *Ibid.*, 142; Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical*, 18-19.

intend to go to the wedding, and this intention might still lead to her going despite her paralyzing fear of open spaces. In this case, her predominant desire actually points in the opposite direction of what she intends or decides to do. Thus, the intention is disconnected from her desires. For Mele and Bratman, cases in which one desires to act in some way but ends up intending and thus deciding on another course of action point against making desire for an action a necessary condition for intending it.

Against the belief condition, the writers argue that requiring the belief that one will probably do a certain action is too rigorous a demand for one intending an action. If one wants to avoid smoking but believes from past experience that she probably will smoke but then succeeds in resisting this tendency, it seems like the person still intended to avoid smoking, rendering the belief requirement unnecessary to intending.<sup>24</sup> They also argue that even in addition to the desire condition, the belief that one will perform some action does not fulfill the executive/conduct-controlling function that makes intention distinctive and important for human actions. Bratman raises the example that he might desire to go to Tanner Library and may indeed believe that he will go because of this motivation. He asks, “could I nevertheless continue to be disposed to deliberate about whether to take the afternoon off?”<sup>25</sup> He questions whether he is really settled on this matter, and if he is not so settled, then he does not really intend to go to Tanner.

Despite their clarification and explanation of the executive function of intentions, both writers misunderstand the belief/desire model as developed by Robert Audi. When it comes to the desire condition, Bratman and Mele assume that the kind of desire that is

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24. This example is found in Mele, *Springs of Action*, 157-58.

25. See Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical*, 19.

relevant to intention on the desire/belief model is strictly a passion or emotional type of desire. However, as Audi has argued, there are many types of desires/wants, and these two types are not even the most relevant ways of desiring for intentions. Intending some end can include these desires, but even in cases when one decides to do something she does not want to do intrinsically, she still desires to do it extrinsically, for some other intrinsically desired end. By distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic desires, Audi effectively undermines Mele's separation between intentions and desires. Every instance of intention is also an instance of desire, whether intrinsic or extrinsic.

In a similar vein, the objection against the belief condition also misses some key distinctions that desire/belief theorists like Audi make. In the example of the woman with the smoking habit, Mele argues that she intends to avoid smoking despite believing that she might not be able to do it. However, there are two types of intentions that are being discussed, namely intending to A and intending to try to A. We could say that although the woman does not intend to A because of the belief requirement, she does intend to try to avoid smoking. Moreover, even if one does not accept this distinction, it is strange to say that one intends to do some action but will not do it or probably will not do it. Indeed, even in thinking about intention as "being settled," it seems like some belief requirement at the very least would be implied in this settledness. One does not always have to consciously think about this belief for one to have it; instead one can have a tacit belief such that when questioned whether she will A, she would answer in the affirmative.

The second objection to the belief condition is really an objection to the whole desire/belief account: that it cannot fulfill the executive role that intentions seem to play in human intentional action. As I have already noted, I think this executive function of

intentions is an important one since it helps bridge the gap between intentions and intentional action. However, is this executive function necessarily antithetical to the desire/belief model? I do not think so. Going back to my conference example from earlier, if I want to go to the conference (and there are no stronger antithetical desires) and I believe that I will go (or probably will go) to the conference, then it seems like the issue is settled for me unless either condition is undermined (either a competing desire or I stop believing that I will be able to go to the conference). Mele might respond that it is not settled if the intention can be so undermined, but even on Mele and Bratman's accounts, an intention or decision is revocable; one can reopen the case of whether to act in a certain way, so it seems like there is no real tension between the two accounts.

Ultimately, whether explaining a proximal or distal intention, there is no reason the two accounts cannot cohere for a more complete understanding that can capture both the nature and the function of intentions. We can understand intentions as necessarily entailing that one desires or wants to perform the action as well as believe that she will successfully complete the action. When one so intends a particular end or action, this intention will perform an executive role over our actions. In a proximal intention, it will trigger the action-related mechanisms to begin, and a distal intention will do the same so long as no antithetical desires or beliefs undermine it. Having an intention to act thus places a person in the best possible position for doing the act.

### **The Indwelling, Habitual Grace, and Intention**

The theological relevance of the previously discussed account is not that it brings together two opposing positions on the nature and function of intentions (though the account certainly tries to do this) but that it provides action-related concepts that are

helpful for articulating the influence of the Spirit's indwelling on the actions of believers. In fact, the account is able to help in this way while also cohering with Aquinas's account of the indwelling from chapter 2 and providing some ways for understanding both the interdependence of habitual and actual grace as well as how the believer gradually develops towards union with God. The point is not that Aquinas was employing such philosophical tools but that they are certainly compatible with what Aquinas describes concerning the indwelling of the Spirit and grace (both habitual and auxiliary).

In habitual grace, the Spirit's indwelling presence as the unitive Love, shared by Father and Son, leaves an imprint of that same love on the soul of the believer. Although this habitual gift is most aptly understood as created love, it also includes all of the other infused dispositions that guide the believer towards beatitude, including the theological virtues, the infused cardinal virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>26</sup> Such dispositions are infused all at once when the Spirit indwells believers, though they only give believers the potential or capacity for supernatural action.<sup>27</sup> Thus, we should not understand the infusion of these dispositions as immediately changing the volitional attunement of the believer towards beatitude, but these dispositions do enable the possibility for that radical transformation. After all, the capacity/potency for participation in the Love of God is a necessary component of humans achieving their ultimate end in union with the God who they love.

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26. See John Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions: St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2009), 154-56.

27. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 110, A. 2. Aquinas says, "All the more, then, does he infuse supernatural forms or qualities into those whom he moves towards obtaining an eternal, supernatural good, whereby they may be moved by him." Then, in the *Ad primum*, he says, "Grace in the sense of a quality is said to act on the soul not in the manner of an efficient cause but in the manner of a formal cause."

In addition to this important metaphysical role, however, habitual grace also has an actualized component through these infused virtues. Such virtues are not actualized by themselves since they are capacities for volitional transformation and do not entail that such transformation is realized. Alternatively, they are actualized insofar as the Spirit's auxiliary grace reduces such capacities to act, enabling them to become firmly rooted in the believer's nature such that it becomes more natural for the believer to act out of such dispositions with the Spirit's assistance.<sup>28</sup> To understand this rooted aspect of the infused virtues, one must understand the distinction between potency and the actualization of that potency. Upon baptism, one has all of the potencies for supernatural action (including the theological virtues), but such potencies have not yet become a part of the believer's nature. In other words, the believer has not yet become fully transformed; he or she has the capacity for divine-likeness, but has not yet become a divine-like person.

Thus, in addition to being merely potentially transformative habits, faith, hope, and love (and the other infused virtues) also become "operational habits," which direct humans towards their ultimate end in union with God.<sup>29</sup> It is comparable to a situation in which one needs to cross a long bridge to move from one location to another. One has the capacity to enter onto the bridge, but it is only when one begins to walk through the entrance that real progress is made in one's moving towards the other location. In this example, the theological virtues are like one's capacity to walk to the other side (after all, one can walk and the entrance is there), but one must actually walk (act out of such

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28. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 109, A. 1; *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 109, A. 9, Ad. 2.

29. This is at least the way Healy describes these supernatural dispositions in the *Summa Theologica*. See Nicholas M. Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 119.

dispositions) in order for spiritual progress to be made. In terms of our account of intention above, these theological virtues correspond to the two necessary conditions of having an intention with faith meeting the cognitive condition and hope and love meeting the desire condition. As a result, by the gradual actualization of the theological virtues, the Spirit redirects the intentionality of believers in a general way towards union with God.

Faith, being the first theological virtue to be actualized, can be conceived either as an act (before baptism) or as a gradually infused habit (resulting from the presence of habitual grace in the soul), both of which are caused by the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> As the Spirit's *act* upon humans before baptism, faith is the human assent to or belief in those propositions that God has revealed.<sup>31</sup> Such assent to the propositions of faith does not happen by human will alone.<sup>32</sup> Rather, as one reads Scripture, hears a sermon, or receives the content of divine revelation through some other medium, the Spirit works in and through the natural human cognitive/doxastic processes in order to cause one to believe that these relevant propositions are true.<sup>33</sup> Among these propositions, one believes that 1)

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30. See Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 158. For faith as an act, see *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 6, A. 2. For faith as a infused virtue, see *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 4, Art. 5. As an act, faith is an example of *auxiliary* grace, but the point is that even as an infused virtue, faith also has a continual *auxiliary* dimension.

31. For Aquinas, intellectual assent involves both an act of the intellect as well as the will. The will must command the intellect to assent to the proposition, a position that would probably not fit too easily with current externalist/reliabilist epistemologies.

32. This does not mean that the will is uninvolved in one's coming to faith. Indeed, one must at the very least be willing to assent to the propositions of faith. One certainly will not come to faith if one is totally closed off to it. See Bruce Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 210-11. We might call this a type of minimalistic openness to belief in the articles of faith. For a perspective along these lines, see Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 389-404. Stump argues that humans can become quiescent to the movement of the Holy Spirit, meaning they become neutral, neither closed off to saving faith nor in pursuit of it.

33. By this, I mean that Christians usually find themselves believing in the propositions of faith without having all the reasons in place. Instead, when they hear a sermon, read a text of Scripture, or speak with a friend, the Spirit enters into these cognitive processes to bring them to belief. This is my attempt to



union with God is the proper end of humanity, 2) “it is possible to attain eternal life (union with God), and 3) divine help has been prepared for us to this end,” all of which are necessary beliefs for intending union with God.<sup>34</sup> Having an intention requires that one believe that it is probable that one will bring about the state of affairs, and this is exactly what the Spirit causes humans to believe: that they can grow towards union with God with the Spirit’s assistance.

As a *habit*, faith properly disposes one to continue holding these Spirit-formed beliefs. Although the act of faith entails initially believing in the propositions of revelation, the Spirit’s infusion of the habit of faith goes a step further, ensuring that “the intellect should be in the way of truth at all times,” since the Spirit sustains those beliefs throughout one’s life.<sup>35</sup> The Spirit is able to sustain such knowledge of the spiritual life by shedding greater light on the propositions believed (thus enabling one to connect the propositions of revelation with other aspects of one’s life) and providing experiential evidence for their truth, further convincing the believer of their validity.<sup>36</sup> Both of these functions lead the believer to greater levels of spiritual understanding.

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make sense of Aquinas on this point while remaining true to contemporary externalist epistemology, which argues that one can have knowledge of something without having access to all the evidence for the relevant belief. For examples of this sort of understanding of the Spirit’s epistemic role, see Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 241-88; William Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 58-78.

34. See *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 17, A. 8. By divine help, I mean any number of ways in which the Spirit might be working in human action, especially ways we might describe as more providential in nature. The account of the Spirit’s role in human action is merely one proposal for understanding the Spirit’s entering into human action. It in no way pretends to be the only way. For these particular beliefs, see also *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 17, A. 7.

35. *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 4, A. 5.

36. What I call “shedding light” Aquinas calls the gift of understanding. See *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 9, A. 1. When it comes to providing evidence, such experiential evidence could be some sort of mystical encounter like that described by William Alston in *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 9-34, or a gradual growing awareness of God’s presence in one’s life such as that found in Sarah Coakley, “Dark Contemplation and Epistemic

Accordingly, such faith entails a process of epistemic growth in which the intellect is gradually elevated towards the beatific vision (perceiving God as God actually is) with the help of the theological virtues hope and love.<sup>37</sup> As we grow in our loving union with God through hope and love, we come to know and understand God and our relationship to God ever more deeply, just as a husband comes to know his wife more deeply as their bond of love grows in marriage. Such knowledge only becomes more firmly rooted as one experiences that person more and more. Thus, the Spirit not only causes one to believe that it is possible to reach union with God and have confidence that she will bring it about with the Spirit's assistance; the Spirit also seeks to further instill such faith throughout one's life, ensuring that she will continue to hold these intention-relevant beliefs.

After the Spirit causes and begins to sustain the beliefs that union with God is one's greatest good and that it is possible to reach this arduous good with the Spirit's assistance, the Spirit then begins to actualize the theological virtue of hope in the Christian.<sup>38</sup> For Aquinas, hope is the movement of one's desires towards an arduous good that is difficult but possible to obtain (in this case union with God made possible through the Spirit's assistance).<sup>39</sup> The Spirit actualizes this theological virtue by initially directing

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Transformation: The Analytic Theologian Re-Meets Theresa of Avila," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 304-5.

37. For understanding faith as a process of epistemic growth towards the beatific vision, see the discussion in Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, 159. See also *ST. Suppl. Q. 92, A. 1*. The Supplement is the part of the Summa compiled after Aquinas's death from his Commentary of the Sentences of Peter Lombard. His largest discussion of the beatific vision is found only in the Supplement.

38. *ST. IIaIIae, Q. 17, A. 7*.

39. *ST. IIaIIae, Q. 17, A 1*.

and *gradually* intensifying one's desire for eternal blessedness or union with God over and above one's sinful desires.<sup>40</sup> Humans naturally already desire blessedness or happiness in general, but they pursue this end by a variety of means that are actually antithetical to human flourishing.<sup>41</sup> As a result, the Spirit must direct the believer's natural desire for happiness towards union with God (humanity's proper supernatural end) through the virtue of faith. Faith specifies the goal towards which one ought to be moving in order to reach true happiness, but there are still many sinful desires that compete with this initial desire for union with God, preventing Christians from acting in accord with this desire.<sup>42</sup> The Spirit thus also gradually intensifies the believer's desire for God above and beyond these other desires, enabling humans to overcome them and act in ways that contribute towards their proper end.<sup>43</sup>

In recognizing this important connection between acting towards the arduous good of union with God and desire, I am pointing towards Anscombe's notion of desire as a "trying to get" disposition.<sup>44</sup> When one's desire has been intensified to try to reach union with God, she is motivated to try to reach it by whatever means are available.

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40. Although this understanding of the infusion of hope is not incompatible with Aquinas's account, what I am offering goes beyond what Aquinas says about how hope works. All Aquinas recognizes is that hope is the movement of one's desires towards some arduous good. See *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 17, A. 3.

41. See again the various examples in *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 2.

42. At least, this is my understanding of the sinful state of humanity.

43. In this way, my work is very similar to that of Lonergan. See Jeremy Wilkins, "Grace and Growth: Aquinas, Lonergan, and the Problematic of Habitual Grace," *Theological Studies* 72 (2011): 723-49. According to Wilkins, Lonergan makes sense of habitual grace's healing function as that of development of one's psychological states. My account makes sense of it in light of gradual intensification of action relevant desire. The difference appears to be in the philosophical resources we are using, though there is no incompatibility here.

44. See Anscombe, *Intention*, 68. Of course, the actual trying itself is facilitated by the Spirit's *auxiliary* grace since it is such grace that actualizes hope as a potency in the first place.

Though Christians will initially struggle with their competing desires, the Spirit gradually increases their desire for union with God as they continually try to move closer towards this end, and this intensification of desire towards God will in turn heal the human condition of competing sinful desires. Moreover, desire here is not merely a passion or emotional desire for union with God; it is a desire guided by what one decides is good for her. Indeed, there may be times in the struggle against one's sinful inclinations that a believer may desire to go back to one's former way of life. However, in light of Audi's distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic desires, the believer will remain steadfast in her pursuit of union with God in particular ways insofar as her desire for this end is intrinsic, and it ultimately overrides her competing desires.

The desire side of the Spirit's redirection of the intentionality of believers is only strengthened by the third theological virtue to be rooted in the will, namely love. As discussed in the previous chapter, love is best understood both as a participation in the Holy Spirit who is the Love shared by Father and Son and as the mother of all the virtues, which reinforces and strengthens them while at the same time being strengthened by them. Aquinas also describes love as "friendship with God arising from our sharing in eternal happiness."<sup>45</sup> However, although our loving God is initially motivated by our hope for this eternal happiness (i.e., the good we receive from God), love ultimately strengthens our hope and thus our desire for that blessed end. Aquinas argues that "the love of charity is of that which is already possessed: since the beloved is, in a manner, in

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45. See *ST. IIaIIae*, Q. 24, A. 2.

the lover, and, again, the lover is drawn by desire to union with the beloved”<sup>46</sup> Thus, as one grows in love for God, one’s desire to be unified with the object of one’s love increases more and more.

As a result, even if one’s love for God is initially weak (perhaps the person only loves God insofar as she loves the benefit of eternal life), over time the person begins to love God for God’s own sake, and this growing love increases one’s desire for union with God. Whereas hope provides the basic desire that is relevant to this intention, the Holy Spirit, through love, is able to further intensify this desire for union with God. In fact, it is only through the virtue of love that one’s desire to move closer towards union with God is able to overcome alternative sinful desires on a consistent basis because such desires are rooted in something superior, namely a participation in the Spirit’s love.

The most important way in which believers are able grow in the theological virtue of love is through the sacrament of the Eucharist since the Spirit gives to believers the benefits of Christ’s perfect love (the love of Christ’s passion) through their partaking of the bread and wine. Concerning this sacrament, Aquinas says, “the Eucharist is called ‘the sacrament of charity,’ which is the ‘bond of perfection,’ as it says in Col. 3:14.”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, since the love by which Christ loved all humanity in his passion is the Holy Spirit, the love (charity) the believer receives in the Eucharist is the very love that the Spirit bestows as an initially weak tendency by indwelling her. Thus, although the believer receives love by the Spirit’s indwelling her at baptism and begins to grow in love

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46. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 66, A. 6. For an excellent discussion of how Aquinas understands the way love increases our desire to be unified with the object of our love, see Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), 91-100.

47. *ST. IIIa*, Q. 73, A. 3, ad. 3. See also discussion in Daria Spezzano, *The Glory of God’s Grace: Deification According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2015), 317.

through loving acts, participating in the Eucharist increases one's love to such an extent that the believer's love "is furthermore aroused to act, according to 2 Cor 5:14: 'the charity of Christ urges us.'"<sup>48</sup> The Eucharist is thus indispensable for one's growth in love, which inevitably increases one's desire for union with God as well as one's faith in the possibility of that realization with the Spirit's assistance. Through these discussions of faith, hope, and love, we can see that the theological virtues are mutually enriching tendencies that, when they gradually become rooted in the believer, work together in drawing the believer towards God.

In accordance with their respective functions, faith, hope, and love redirect human intention generally towards union with God by forming a meta-intention. By meta-intention, I merely mean an intention for an eternal state of affairs that guides one's actions over the course of one's life.<sup>49</sup> The meta-intention for union with God is not merely a simple distal intention for something I want in the future like intending to go to a conference in a year, though intending the ultimate end of our existence is indeed a type of distal intention. Moreover, this meta-intention is not for something that one will accomplish on one's own if he or she merely acts in all the right ways. To the contrary, the fulfillment of this intention is largely God's prerogative.

Despite these complexities, however, thinking of the theological virtues as forming a meta-intention for union with God that directs one's life as if on a journey toward beatitude does make sense of the role they seem to play in the life guided by the

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48. *ST. IIIa, Q. 79, A. 1, ad. 2*; Spezzano, *Glory of God's Grace*, 320.

49. By articulating the theological virtues as a meta-intention, I am trying to make sense of how such virtues form what Lonergan called a "permanent change in the inclination or a spontaneous orientation of the will." See Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 55.

Spirit. When a believer initially becomes a Christian and receives the Holy Spirit, she intends union with God as the ultimate end/state of affairs for her entire life. She believes that this is her proper end and that she can achieve this end with the Spirit's assistance, and she desires that end to a great extent. Such an intention will also lead her to be conscious of her actions, whether they contribute to or detract from her ultimate end. However, it is also true about baptism that one does not become perfect as soon as one comes out of the water. Appropriately, then, the theological virtues become rooted in the believer as initially weak (though certainly not insignificant) tendencies that only develop over time, as one lives in accordance with the Spirit by growing in love.

Normally, when one has a distal intention, one immediately begins to conceive of various actions that are means toward that intended state of affairs in the future. Then, when it is time for one to fulfill those extrinsically desired actions, one's intention becomes proximal and thus triggers the action-related mechanisms. This process then repeats until the intended state of affairs that is intrinsic for the person is fulfilled. In the case of the believer's meta-intention for union with God, however, there are two difficulties that especially obstruct the fulfillment of this intention. First, sinful desires would problematize the fulfillment of such an intention for union with God, especially if one conceives the human condition as entailing competing desires.<sup>50</sup> In intending union with God, then, it is likely that one would have many conflicting desires that would get in the way of one's pursuit of union with God, not to mention the sinful dispositions one has

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50. A great example of this understanding of sin is in Ian McFarland, *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (West Sussex: Blackwell, 2010), 144-61. I shall merely take this as a given. I will not try to develop an account of how this condition arose or whether humans receive it at birth. I merely recognize, like McFarland's discussion of Maximus the Confessor, that humans mysteriously are drawn towards sin from the moment of their coming into existence.

formed over time as a result of those desires.<sup>51</sup> Second, there is the issue of ignorance about the proper means toward that end. Upon baptism, the believer does not know how to act in accordance with one's meta-intention in every given circumstance, nor does one regulate one's thoughts and actions constantly. Potentially, there could be states of affairs, desires and the like, that get in the way of one's growing towards union with God, especially since such a meta-intention is for some state of affairs in the eschatological future with no sense of when it will come about. With such difficulties of the human condition as givens, the Spirit must also guide the actions of believers in a more direct capacity, namely through auxiliary grace.<sup>52</sup>

### **Auxiliary Grace, Intentions, and Spiritual Development**

By means of the divine auxilia, the Spirit not only guides the actions of believers in a general way towards union with God (by actualizing the theological virtues as initially weak tendencies) but also guides believers to act in particular ways that contribute to their ultimate end. In its operative function, auxiliary grace is God's internal movement of the human will towards a particular action. God is the mover, and the will is ultimately passive towards God's movement, especially in a case in which the believer who "before had willed evil begins to will the good."<sup>53</sup> As a result of this direct operation of God on the will, moving it to will some particular action, God then cooperates in the

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51. In the words of Anscombe, one would be "trying to get" many different ends, some that are not in competition with union with God and some that are.

52. Of course, this is in addition to the way auxiliary grace is needed to move the capacity to act. What I am describing here is the volitional necessity of such grace. Humans do not start from a place of virtuous formation and then just add on the ability to participate in the Holy Spirit. Rather, humans start the spiritual journey as those formed within a world of sin. Thus, auxiliary grace is both a metaphysical and a volitional necessity.

53. *ST. IaIIae, Q. 3, A. 2.*



completion of the action since the action is external and is largely due to the prior movement of the will. God cooperates “by confirming the will within so that it might achieve its act and by providing the means of action without.”<sup>54</sup>

In both operative and cooperative capacities, auxiliary grace, being most directly connected to the internal mental states that produce actions, is easily articulated in terms of my account of intention. In auxiliary grace, there is both the internal movement of the will that God produces directly and the external activity that God produces indirectly. The internal, direct movement of the Spirit can easily be understood as a proximal intention to do some action or to bring about some state of affairs by acting in that way. God moves the will by producing within the mind an intention, including the relevant desires and beliefs, that performs an executive function over one’s action.

We could also understand the Spirit’s cooperative involvement in the actions of believers as just this executive function of the intention; when the Spirit produces in the believer’s mind an intention for some action, the Spirit cooperates in triggering the action-related mechanisms that work together to produce the intended action, thus placing the believer in the best possible position for acting in that way. The Spirit has no need to operate directly within those mechanisms because intentions will naturally trigger those mechanisms at the time of the intended action. And in cases of auxiliary distal intentions, such intentions will eventually become proximal intentions that trigger such mechanisms at the right time so long as no competing desires/beliefs undermine the intention.<sup>55</sup> Thus,

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54. *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 3, A. 2.

55. For this reason, my focus throughout will be on auxiliary proximal intentions since distal intentions are only future proximal intentions.

everything that Aquinas conceives auxiliary grace achieving for the believer can be understood as the Spirit's producing intentions for particular actions.

One important feature of these intentions is that they must cohere with one's meta-intention for union with God. In this way, the relationship between auxiliary proximal intentions and one's meta-intention caused by the Spirit's presence in the soul is not so different from the relationship between a distal intention and the sometimes numerous proximal intentions (means) that are necessary for realizing the intended state of affairs. In the conference example I raised earlier, my distal intention to go to the conference in a year also led me to intend a variety of actions that need to cohere with my distal intention in order not to undermine that intention. For example, I need to go to work each day (coherent proximal intentions) in order to raise enough money to be able to go to the conference. Similarly, in the case of the believer's meta-intention for union with God, there are many actions throughout her life that will either contribute to her moving closer towards her intended end or will keep her from the realization of her intention. A crucial part of what the Spirit does in auxiliary grace is guide the believer to intend actions that will contribute to her meta-intention and to avoid intending actions that do not cohere with that meta-intention.

The means by which the Spirit fulfills the desire condition of these auxiliary, proximal (or in some cases distal) intentions is fairly straightforward. As the Love of God indwelling the soul, the Spirit imparts the created habitual effect which functions not only as the mode of indwelling but also as the means by which the Spirit infuses the theological virtues hope and love into the believer. Such virtues, when initially actualized by auxiliary grace, redirect and begin to intensify one's desire for union with God.

Although one's desire for God is crucial for one's meta-intention for union with God, such desire is also connected and necessary for one's desiring particular ends that contribute to one's progress towards union with God. We can see this connection if we recall that although I do not necessarily desire to go to work, my desire for the intrinsic state of affairs, namely going to the conference, largely motivates me to work each day, rendering such desires extrinsic to my intrinsic goal.

Desire works in the same way when it comes to auxiliary intentions. As a result of my growing love for God (caused by the Spirit's contact with the soul), I desire union with God as an intrinsic good worth pursuing. Then upon discovering that such and such an action will contribute to that end, I will also desire to complete the action, though extrinsically. It may go against my selfish desires to do the action, but if my desire for union with God overrides such selfish desires, then I will intend (and will most likely complete) the relevant action. Whether I intend a particular action that contributes to my meta-intention is thus largely dependent on whether my desire for union with God extends to the desire to act in the particular way. Here, the cognitive condition of my intending the particular action carries even more weight in the intention than the desire condition since my desire for union with God will only extend to my desire to act in this particular way if I am convinced that such an action will contribute to my ultimate intention. If I am unconvinced that it will so contribute, then my desire will not reach out to the particular action, and I will not do it.

Concerning this cognitive dimension of the Spirit's auxiliary work (what we might call the illumining work of the Spirit) in producing intentions for particular actions, there can be any number of ways in which the Spirit can guide one to believe in the

moment that “*this* is what I now must do” and that “*this* will contribute to my intention to move closer towards union with God.” I do not intend here to be exhaustive in my explanations but only to explore how the Spirit might illumine believers in holding the beliefs relevant to intending a particular action. One way of thinking about the cognitive condition of having particular auxiliary intentions is that it arises in a similar way to how one comes to the beliefs relevant to one’s meta-intention.

In the theological virtue of faith, for example, the Spirit works in and through human cognitive/doxastic processes and practices in order to guide believers to believe the relevant things for intending union with God. The Spirit works in such processes and practices as one reads Scripture, hears a sermon, or learns from some other medium of divine revelation. I think the Spirit works in a similar way when it comes to guiding the believer to believe that such and such an action will contribute to one’s growing towards union with God. Indeed, the Spirit does not need to work in some fantastic way to guide humans to hold intention-relevant beliefs.<sup>56</sup> Rather, the Spirit only needs to work in and through the cognitive processes that humans already possess.<sup>57</sup> In particular, the Spirit might illumine the believer in and through both her perception of the situation to ensure the correct judgment and one’s memory in order to evoke the action-related information that is relevant to making a decision about how to act in the given circumstance.

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56. By fantastic, I mean the Spirit working in a way that goes above and beyond the cognitive processes humans already possess, whether one presupposes a spiritual faculty or set of faculties by which one comes to know the truths of revelation or some other means of coming to knowledge that goes above and beyond the natural cognitive faculties that humans possess.

57. Such an understanding of the Spirit’s activity is certainly not new. One theologian who understands this approach as within the spirit of Aquinas is Yves Congar. See especially *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. 2*, trans. David Smith (New York: Herder and Herder, 1983), 114-15; For a helpful analysis of this idea in Congar, see Elizabeth T. Gropp, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 96.

As an illustrative example of how the Spirit might work through perception and memory to bring one to believe that he or she ought to do a particular action, let us imagine a believer named Bobby. Bobby is a new convert to the Christian faith who has struggled with greed for many years. However, upon baptism, Bobby received the Holy Spirit, by whom he not only came to believe in the propositions of revelation in the first place by reading Scripture with the Spirit's guidance, learning from teachers, and participating in the liturgy but also by whom his desires for union with God have intensified. Bobby would now say that he intends throughout the rest of his life to move closer towards his ultimate end in union with God. However, as Bobby walks home from work one day, he sees ahead of him a homeless person sitting on the ground begging for enough money to get some food.

Bobby approaches the homeless person and the Spirit guides him towards the belief that the right thing to do in the situation is to give the person some money for a meal. On the one hand, the Spirit illumines or sheds light on the reality of the situation for Bobby: a person is in desperate need for money and Bobby has money that he can use for helping the homeless person. In addition to perceiving the situation correctly, however, Bobby must also receive guidance concerning what he must do in order for his action to cohere with his meta-intention for union with God. As a result, the Spirit brings to his remembrance a Scripture such as Matthew 25:35, where Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (NRSV). The belief that he should be generous with his possessions and should give to the poor, coupled with the correct perception of the situation, leads him to believe

that he ought to, indeed that he will, use some of his money to buy food for the homeless person.

Of course, the relevant content can come from any number of sources. The Spirit could have brought to Bobby's attention his memory of a sermon he heard from a minister or priest, some words from the previous Sunday's liturgy about taking care of the poor, or some experience in which someone showed him mercy and compassion when he was going through a difficult time. All of these sources of the relevant beliefs are legitimate, and the Spirit brings these beliefs to the attention of the believer at the appropriate time by working in and through his memory. After all, memory is a faculty that does not generate new information but preserves information one already believes or knows.<sup>58</sup> With the help of liturgy, Scripture, teachers, and spiritual guides, Bobby already knows what the Christian life entails, but he needs guidance from the Holy Spirit when it comes to deciding on the correct means that will contribute to the fulfillment of his meta-intention. The Spirit's work in and through Bobby's memories is thus an important part of leading him to the particular actions that will contribute to the fulfillment of Bobby's meta-intention for union with God.

In addition to working in Bobby's memory to bring certain truths to his attention, the Spirit must also help him to "see" or perceive the situation correctly. After all, without the Spirit's involvement, Bobby would probably have perceived the situation in light of his greed and the homeless person as a threat to his amassing more wealth. In such perception, desire thus plays a key role in motivating the correct diagnosis of a

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58. For this understanding of memory as a faculty which preserves knowledge, see Sven Bernecker, "Memory Knowledge," in Sven Bernecker and Duncan Pritchard, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 326-27; Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 66-67.

situation. If Bobby is primarily motivated by a desire for increasing his wealth, then he will be tempted to ignore the evidence that is right in front of him. Alternatively, if he has a strong desire for union with God, and if the Spirit brings to his immediate attention his memory of the Scripture mentioned above, then he will not be closed off to the reality of the situation and he will be able to make a correct judgment. Thus, both the right memories and a correct perception of the situation are important, though certainly not the only, ways in which the Spirit might guide someone like Bobby to believe that he ought to do a particular action at a certain time.

From the example above, it is clear that both the relevant beliefs and desires in intention-formation are mutually reinforcing mental states. One's desire both for union with God as one's ultimate end and for eventually loving God for God's own sake opens one up to the Spirit illuminating one to perceive a given situation correctly. Conversely, coming to believe that a particular action will contribute to the end that one desires will enable such meta-intentional desire to extend to the particular action, thus motivating one to act in that way. When one comes to believe that she should (and that she in fact will) perform the action, then she will intend the action as long as her desire for union with God extends to the present action, and no competing desire gets in the way. Such a proximal intention for a present action will trigger the action-related mechanisms that initiate and probably will motivate the completion of the action.

Although such an account of auxiliary proximal intentions shows how the Spirit produces in the believer the mental states necessary for having an intention to do a particular action, there is still the issue of sinful desires that persist even after one initially converts to Christianity. How can the believer intend and thus perform a particular action

the Spirit guides her to do when she desires to act in a way that is incompatible with that action? Admittedly, there are no easy answers here. At the beginning of the journey towards beatitude, competing desires are a serious problem that could get in the way of one's intending the right actions. However, even though the theological virtues by which one intends union with God begin as initially weak tendencies, they are still strong enough to redirect one's actions, generally speaking. Moreover, as one performs more Spirit-guided actions, it becomes easier to do those actions. Thus, at the beginning, the Spirit's illumining work in guiding one to do a particular action might be undermined by one's sinful desires to do the opposite. Bobby might initially struggle to perceive the homeless person correctly and might ignore the Spirit's promptings, but over time such promptings will lead him to intend the action more consistently. As he successfully acts as the result of the Spirit's redirecting of his intention, he is more easily led by the Spirit in future situations.

One aspect of the spiritual life that is indispensable to this gradual process of spiritual formation is the social context within which one is formed in the spiritual life. Far from being an unimportant appendage to a largely individualistic process, the life guided by the Spirit requires people who can help one grow in the fulfillment of her meta-intention as well as hold her accountable to the lifestyle that contributes to that end.<sup>59</sup> Such spiritual relationships are especially necessary when it comes to new converts who still struggle with their sinful desires. With people who can help provide

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59. I recognize how ironic it is that the discussion of the social dimension of spiritual formation receives only a small amount of space here. However, to include an extensive discussion of the social dimension would extend outside the parameters of the project. This would certainly be a valuable area of further exploration, seeing how my discussion of how the Spirit indwells specific believers would easily extend to the Spirit indwelling many believers, guiding all of them to work together in moving towards union with God.



safeguards against sinful behavior, even a believer whose intention-related tendencies for union with God are weak will be able to intend and perform actions that contribute to her ultimate end in an environment that is conducive to her successful growth.<sup>60</sup>

By understanding the Spirit's auxiliary grace as the production of proximal intentions for particular actions, we also can see Aquinas's vast vision for how the many infused dispositions gradually become rooted in the believer. As stated earlier in reference to the theological virtues, the infused cardinal virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are all infused into the believer as the result of the Spirit's indwelling. The indwelling of uncreated Love in the soul creates an imprint of that love in the believer that functions not only as that which mediates the indwelling of the Spirit but also as the created change that is necessary for humans to participate in the Holy Spirit who is Love. Such created grace grants believers the capacity for supernatural participatory action, though such grace does not itself actualize such potential. Rather, it is the work of the Spirit's auxiliary grace that makes such glorious potential a gradual actuality.

The infused virtues, then, are not like other virtues since they are infused by God and are not acquired by human effort alone. However, such infused virtues are like other virtues if we are referring to their being rooted in human nature. In that case, they are acquired by human actions, though such actions are those that are guided by the Spirit's auxiliary grace. They are supernaturally infused as well as supernaturally enacted

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60. Of course, such relationships can be abused. However, the alternative to pursuing the spiritual life in community (i.e., pursuing it in an individualistic way) is not sufficient for one overcoming one's own sinful desires. After all, sometimes the believer can be his or her own worst enemy when it comes to sinful desires because the possibility of self-deception would be very great indeed. However, there certainly would need to be safeguards in whatever form of spiritual community one is involved in to prevent any abuse of the vulnerable relationship of spiritual guidance. For a defense of the importance of guidance in spiritual formation, see Frederick D. Aquino, "Spiritual Formation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Epistemology of Theology* (forthcoming), ed. Frederick D. Aquino and William J. Abraham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

dispositions. Thus, if we are considering the actualization of the infused cardinal virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, then such actualization is a gradual process since one grows in these dispositions the more they are used. One becomes better at being guided by the Holy Spirit when it comes to intending particular actions since the sinful desires and dispositions gradually are replaced by the infused cardinal virtues, enabling the Spirit more easily to be able to produce in believers intentions for particular virtuous actions. Further, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are best understood in this light; they make even more immediate the connection between the Spirit's producing the intention and one's doing the intended action, so that the difference between the Spirit's intentions and the believer's intentions (and actions) begins to fade.<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, the spiritual life is a growing participation in the Holy Spirit, who appropriates God's loving nature to the believer. Since the Spirit indwells the believer inasmuch as she grows in the actualization of created grace, the believer's participatory actions and the gradually actualized dispositions bring the Spirit and the believer into an ever closer union since the very love that mediates this indwelling is the resulting imprint of God's Love Himself indwelling the believer. In fact, through this growing union between the believer and the Spirit, the believer participates in the life of the Trinity. Just as the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and Son as the love that binds each to the other, so the Spirit is also that Love by whom all believers are brought up into that same loving union of the Trinity, though by participation and not by nature. By redirecting the intention of believers generally towards their ultimate end and particularly towards

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61. That is, the difference fades as far as is possible without blurring the distinction between God and the believer. The goal is for the Spirit to work in and through one's human processes and practices to bring about transformation rather than take over the believer's agency. The believer just begins to intend the same things as she grows closer to the Spirit.

actions that contribute to that end, the Holy Spirit directs and sustains believers throughout their entire journey towards beatitude, though the believer's growth will never be complete in this life. Eschatologically, humans will be united with God no matter where they are on the journey, but the Spirit guides believers along as far as is possible in this life.

### **Possible Objections to the Account**

With this account of how the Spirit redirects the intentionality of believers towards union with God by indwelling them, there are two objections that might be raised against it at this point. Such objections will help us to further clarify and understand how the account fares against what might be common responses to it.<sup>62</sup> The first objection can be called the post-baptism sin objection, and it might be raised as follows. If a believer acts on a sinful desire after baptism, then one's meta-intention towards union with God is undermined since she desired some intrinsic end more than she desired union with God. This objection would imply that with one's meta-intention undermined, the Spirit would no longer indwell the believer. After all, the Spirit's indwelling infuses and begins to actualize the theological virtues in the believer, which redirect one's intention towards union with God, so it would seem to follow that the undermining of such an intention would also mean an undermining of the Spirit's indwelling.

In response to this objection, it is important to keep in mind that the issue is really about the connection between one's desire for a particular action and one's desire for union with God. If a believer desires and performs some particular action that does not

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<sup>62</sup> My intention here is not to set up a straw man argument. I merely try to think of possible objections that could be raised at this point of the account in order to provide greater clarity about what I mean and do not mean.

cohere with one's desire for union with God, then it initially seems like the person no longer intends to grow towards union with God but instead intends whatever state of affairs (maybe amassing great wealth) she is now pursuing through this particular action. In that case, one desires to bring about some sinful state of affairs more than one desires to grow in divine-likeness, so the meta-intention no longer governs the direction of one's activity.

Although there is nothing inherently wrong with the reasoning of this objection, it would only cover cases in which one intentionally acted against one's meta-intention, knowing full well at the time of the action that it opposed one's desire for union with God. Arguably, there are many cases of sinful behavior in which one does not have this conscious knowledge of the incoherence of the action. Such cases would serve to show that the cognitive condition for intending the particular action (or in this case intending to refrain from acting) is somehow disrupted such that one would be convinced in the moment that the action actually does cohere with one's meta-intention, thus enabling one both to intend to move towards union with God as well as to intend a particular sinful action despite its being sinful. We might call such cases instances of self-deception.

Self-deception is the phenomenon in which a person 1) unconsciously believes that she ought not to perform some action A, 2) desires to do A, and 3) as a result tells herself that she should do A.<sup>63</sup> Self-deception does not entail believing that she should do A because that would entail believing a contradiction; we cannot at the same time affirm that we should do A and that we should not do A. Thus, one tells herself that she should do the action. The true belief that she should not do A is unconscious in this type of case

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63. For this preliminary definition of self-deception, see Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason*, 211.

since she would agree that she should not do it if questioned, but she does not have conscious awareness of this belief (or she is not thinking about it at the time) because she wants to do the action. Alternatively, it could be the case that in self-deception she merely doesn't pay attention to evidence that might point against her false belief.<sup>64</sup> She might not pay attention to the relevant people, texts, etc. due to her motivation to do the action. Self-deception, in this particular way of articulating the phenomenon, is often an example of irrationality when it comes to action.

As an example of this phenomenon at work, let us say from our earlier example that Bobby's was a case of self-deception instead of an action caused by auxiliary grace. Bobby walks towards the homeless man, and his desire not to give his money away leads him to want to keep walking. If Bobby was questioned by a religious leader or friend, then he would certainly agree that he should give some money to the homeless man. However, in the moment, his desire to keep his money motivates him not to think about his true belief and instead to tell himself that passing by the man is not a big deal, maybe even that passing by the man coheres with his meta-intention for union with God. In that case, he still intends union with God, but he sins because he temporarily forgets his true belief or just ignores it as the result of his desire.

Cases of self-deception allow for the possibility that one might sin even after baptism without the added consequence that one's meta-intention is undermined by desiring some object more than one desires union with God. Self-deception is able to

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64. For this dimension of self-deception, see Alfred Mele, *Self-Deception Unmasked* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 25-27. See also Alfred Mele, "Self-Deception and Three Psychiatric Delusions: On Robert Audi's Transition from Self-Deception to Delusion," in *Rationality and the Good: Critical Essays on the Ethics and Epistemology of Robert Audi*, ed. Mark Timmons, John Greco, and Alfred R. Mele (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 163-66.

allow for this possibility because in it the cognitive condition for intending a particular action is confused in that one sees an action (or lack of action) as coherent with one's pursuit of union with God despite the actual incoherence of the two and the person's actual belief that the two are incoherent. In the beginning of the spiritual life, believers will certainly struggle with competing desires, but the point is that, in cases of self-deception, believers will not experience such desires as conflicting until they recall their true belief that they ought not do A and repent.

In fact, the very logic of repentance (and penance) entails that after one has performed a sinful action and is made aware that such Aing was sinful, she then feels guilty for Aing, repents (turn back) from Aing, and confesses her Aing to a spiritual guide/priest. One would not feel such contrition at performing a sinful action if she did not intend to pursue union with God *generally* and yet failed in this *particular* instance. Of course, this is not to ignore cases in which one actually does intend an action while being fully aware of its incoherence in relation to one's meta-intention for union with God. In that type of case, one's intention for union with God would be undermined, thus undermining the very actualization of the created effect by which the Spirit indwells believers. However, even in the case with which I raised the objection, one is still able to repent, reestablish one's relationship with God and continue in one's pursuit of union with God.<sup>65</sup>

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65. In fact, one could say that these two different types of cases are ultimately pointing to the distinction between mortal (*mortalia*) and venial (*venialia*) sin in Aquinas. See *ST. IaIIae*, Q. 88, A. 1. Aquinas describes venial sin as "sins which imply a disorder in things referred to the end, the order to the end itself being preserved," similar to my conception of sins resulting from self-deception. Mortal sins can be compared "with a disease, which is said to be mortal, through causing an irreparable defect consisting in the corruption of a principle," thus relating to sins committed intentionally with full knowledge of the incoherence between the action and one's ultimate intended end such that one then desires something more than union with God.

Despite there being a possibility for sinful action that does not undermine one's meta-intention, however, it must be kept in mind that self-deceptive sin is still sin and does not actually contribute to one's moral progress. There still needs to be some way to protect against even these instances or at least lessen the number of such instances. Prayer, in the many forms it takes, is the perfect antidote to self-deception when it comes to sin. In prayer, the believer turns her mind and attention to God, and so reduces the possibility for absent-mindedness that eventually turns into self-deception. Such prayer also opens up space for the Spirit to enable the believer to recall various pieces of content that will fulfill the cognitive condition of auxiliary intentions described earlier. Prayer thus functions in a two-fold way: protecting the believer from the dangers of self-deception (motivated by sinful desires) and creating the opportunity for the Spirit to produce the beliefs relevant for intending particular actions that contribute toward one's progress in the spiritual life.

The second objection that might be raised against the account is the free will objection, and it might be raised in the following way. If the Spirit produces within believers all that leads to virtuous actions, then it might seem to follow that such an understanding of grace removes free will entirely. After all, humans would not be able to do anything other than what the Spirit guided them (through their intending that end) to do. Of course, my articulation of this objection presumes a libertarian understanding of free will that requires at the very least that one have the ability to do otherwise than one chooses to do, but even those who do not require alternative possibilities might still ask how it is that the antecedent conditions of the Spirit's activity fit with an understanding of free will such that those very conditions do not undermine the free will. In response to the

second objection, I think the account is consistent with human free will in a variety of ways. If we conceive of free will as something like having the ability to do otherwise, then it initially seems like the account would undermine this free will. However, as we saw in answering the previous objection, believers still struggle with sin after baptism even though the Spirit indwells them at that time. Such struggle with sin would only make sense if believers had the ability to choose otherwise and ended up choosing actions that were actually harmful to one's spiritual progress. The eventual goal is that the believer reaches the point in which she has alternative possibilities for action, but such possibilities do not actually bear much weight in terms of what the person actually intends to do.

Although the account does allow for the existence of alternative possibilities, we might also question whether alternative possibilities are even necessary or important for free will. Not only are there cases in which one has the ability to do otherwise and yet still does not act freely (Frankfurt-style scenarios), but we might also question whether having the possibility to sin without grace really is freedom at all or just a different kind of bondage.<sup>66</sup> If we take the entire metaphysical background of human action seriously, then the prior context of sin would naturally lead us to affirm that the latter is true since humans, with the alternative possibilities both to sin and not to sin, would inevitably act out of selfish motivation rather than love.

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66. For an excellent discussion of Frankfurt style cases and how they undermine the alternative possibilities requirement, see Eleonore Stump, "Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will," in *Thomas Aquinas: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Brian Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 286-90.



Without union with God as their intended end, humans instead pursue various ends that are of a material nature, a pursuit that is only reinforced and motivated by this context of sin. As James Wetzel states concerning Augustine's position, "we are always oriented to act in particular ways and lack the power to change our fundamental orientations at will. We are incapable of acting without drawing upon a context of prior motivation."<sup>67</sup> However, in addition to taking seriously the context within which humans act (saturated in sin), we must also take seriously the ultimate end of human existence, namely union with God. The question comes down to this: is one truly free if she constantly acts in sinful ways that *prevent* her from moving towards her proper end as a human being? If this is free will, it is certainly not a model of free will that takes the spiritual life seriously.

Such reasons take care of the side of the objection concerning alternative possibilities, but they do not deal sufficiently with the final part of the objection concerning how the Spirit's indwelling actually affirms human free will. If we rule out alternative possibilities as sufficient for free will and affirm that only freedom to pursue the good is really freedom, then it seems like this leaves us with an understanding of freedom such that one is able to act in the ways in which one intends to act. If I go to the supermarket as the result of my intending to go, then this would be an instance of voluntary action or free will. I perform the action because I want to go and I firmly believe that I will go. Crucial to this conception of free will is that one performs an action as the result of one's own beliefs and desires.<sup>68</sup>

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67. See James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 198. Aquinas shares this same sort of posture towards the relationship between free will and sin. See the discussion in Congar, *I Believe*, 125-26.

The account of the Spirit's indwelling and influence on the actions of believers presented above would be compatible with this particular sense of free will. The Spirit redirects the intention of believers generally towards union with God by indwelling them, and causes particular intentions (combinations of desire and belief) that trigger the relevant actional mechanisms, placing believers in the best possible position either for acting in a way that contributes to this end or refraining from acting in a way that opposes this end.<sup>69</sup> The believer acts as the result of her own desires and beliefs and is thus enabled to pursue union with God, the very end that will truly enable her to fulfill her ultimate natural desire, namely the fulfillment or happiness. The Spirit does not indwell believers in order to transform them into spirit-robots but instead works in and through the believer's own natural processes to draw humans gradually into a supernatural form of existence. As a result, not only is the account articulated here compatible with the reality of sins committed post-baptism but also with the believer's free will.

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68. This account of freedom actually resembles Aquinas's own account, though with a different terminology and concepts concerning action theory. Aquinas argues that free will entails a proper connection between the intellect and will and the action that results from them. See Stump, 2002. For a more extended account, see also Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 277-306. Stump argues that Aquinas's position can best be understood as a type of Libertarianism, one that denies the necessity of alternative possibilities. I do not want to contest this notion here, though it seems compatible with some forms of compatibilism as well, depending on the how one uses those terms. Of course, providing a full-blown account of this issue lies outside the scope of this project. See also *ST. Ia*, 83, 4.

69. One might respond that if the Spirit intensifies our desires for something or works through our cognitive processes to lead us to believe certain propositions, then the Spirit is still essentially controlling us. However, it is unclear how such cases would be different than the way that advertisements or songs that utilize certain biological triggers influence desire. There are many instances of the manipulation of one's desires in which we would still say the person acted freely. The relevant factor here is not what led me to desire something (after all, how much conscious control do we have over our desires) but whether I am able to act out of my desire and beliefs.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

In what has preceded, I have sought to develop a constructive account of how the Holy Spirit guides the actions of believers on a day-to-day basis by indwelling them. I have argued that the Spirit, by indwelling believers, redirects their intentionality toward union with God, placing believers in the best possible position for performing actions that contribute to that end. The Spirit, as the Love shared between the Father and Son, gives himself and is given to believers upon baptism in order to enable them gradually to participate in the life of the Trinity. The Spirit enables believers to participate in the divine life by giving them the gift of created grace, which not only elevates humans to act in this way but also makes such an indwelling possible in the first place by mediating the cognitive contact between the Spirit and believers.

Through created grace, then, the Spirit redirects the intentionality of believers towards union with God in two ways. The Spirit redirects their intentionality in a general way (meta-intention) through the gradual enactment of the theological virtues, and the Spirit also produces, in believers, intentions for particular actions that contribute to the spiritual formation of the believer towards her intended end, namely union with God. In this way, I have sought to bring Aquinas's pneumatology into conversation with contemporary philosophy of intention in order to make greater sense both of the metaphysical and the volitional implications of the indwelling of the Spirit.

If the account of how the Spirit guides believers by indwelling them has succeeded, then it may have serious implications for how believers perceive and understand their day-to-day existence. In a society that has many seemingly secular realms that lack any religious sensibility, there are many aspects of the life of the believer that may not seem to have any sort of supernatural element.<sup>1</sup> It might seem as though the believer only experiences the divine through liturgy, icons, sacred texts, sacraments and the like. However, if this account of how the Spirit guides believers by indwelling them has succeeded, then all aspects of the believer's existence are infused with grace and the Spirit's presence. Even the mundane aspects of human existence like driving to the supermarket or doing one's taxes, are opportunities for one to be guided by the Spirit. In fact, we can speak of the indwelling not only in terms of the believer's participation in the sacraments (though these are crucial for initiating, sustaining, and intensifying that indwelling union) but also in terms of the day-to-day intentions and actions of the believer. This way of speaking about the indwelling is important because one might get the sense that she only comes into contact with God once a week (or possibly twice a year for some). However, when it comes to the indwelling of the Spirit, theologians must understand it both in terms of sacraments and in terms of the day-to-day lives of believers. As a result, this project could be conceived as an attempt to develop a pneumatology of the mundane, taking seriously the day-to-day guidance of the Spirit over the actions of believers.

Because I have emphasized this aspect of the indwelling of the Spirit and limited myself to the tools of philosophy of intention, there are many ways that this project can

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1. This is one of the meanings of the terms secular described in Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 2-5.

be further developed, and I hope to explore these areas in future work on this topic.

Despite the importance of thinking about the day-to-day guidance of the Spirit over the actions of believers, one important area that can develop my work here is to give a greater treatment of how the various sacraments relate to the day-to-day guidance of the Spirit. I have discussed baptism and the Eucharist to some degree in this project, but there is plenty of room to further investigate how these sacraments and others relate to what has been discussed here. How can we understand the connection between the Spirit's work in and through the sacraments and the Spirit's day-to-day guidance of believers?

Another important future line of investigation closely relates to this greater attention on the sacraments. When it comes to the Eucharist, especially, individual believers are joined together in a real way to Christ, becoming Christ's body in their participation in the sacrament. In this way, the indwelling of the Spirit has an inherently social dimension in that the Spirit not only indwells individual believers but also indwells entire churches (indeed the Church universal). With this social dimension in mind, a fruitful way to expand the present project would be to consider the Church as a social agent guided by the Spirit (Spirit-Ecclesiology) to accomplish tasks that only a group of people coordinating their gifts and abilities are able. Michael Bratman has recently written on the nature of social agency, and his work could fruitfully contribute to a Spirit-Ecclesiology of social agency guided by the Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Although I argued here that the Spirit redirects the intentions of believers towards union with God, this future project would attempt to show how the Spirit coordinates these intentions so that believers are able to

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2. See Michael Bratman, *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

act together to accomplish goals important to the pursuit of union with God and draw non-believers towards that pursuit as well.

In addition to expanding the present project in a social, ecclesial direction, there are many other tools that could help add philosophical depth and clarity to the understanding of the metaphysical and volitional dimensions of the indwelling explored here. For example, one possible area of investigation would be to utilize contemporary phenomenology of religion to explore whether the Spirit's indwelling is something that believer actually experience (is there some phenomenal content?), and if so, whether such experiences can be described. Necessary for this line of inquiry would be actual first-hand accounts of believers describing their baptisms and experiences of the presence of God in that moment, taking such experiences seriously rather than treating them as mere psychological events that have no objective basis outside of the mind.<sup>3</sup> Developing such an understanding would build on what I have done in this project since I have treated how the Spirit enters into the action-related processes of believers but have not explored what the believer experiences (consciously) while the Spirit indwells. Through these three areas of inquiry, I hope to expand my work in this project by drawing on the relevant tools insofar as they contribute to understanding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in fresh ways.

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3. Here, I am especially thinking of Robert Sokolowski's discussions of "theologies of disclosure" or Jean-Luc Marion's accounts of "saturated phenomenon." See Robert Sokolowski, *Eucharistic Presence: A Study of the Theology of Disclosure* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1994); Jean-Luc Marion, "The Saturated Phenomenon," in *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate*, ed. Dominique Janicaud (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 176-216.

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