

Grace, Infused Habits, and Christ's Humanity: A Comparison Between Thomas Aquinas and Francis Turretin¹

ROBERTO A. MARTINEZ

Roberto A. Martinez is one of the pastors of Iglesia Bautista Gracia y Verdad, a Hispanic Reformed Baptist congregation in Louisville, Kentucky, and serves with the Hispanic Program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He holds a Master of Divinity from Southern Seminary and is currently pursuing a PhD in Systematic Theology. His academic interests include Reformed Scholasticism, with particular attention to the theology of Francis Turretin. Roberto is married to Valentina, and together they have two young daughters.

The theology of infused habits in Francis Turretin exemplifies well the complexities of studying continuities and discontinuities in post-Reformation theology.² The Reformed Orthodox engaged critically with the medieval scholastic tradition that preceded them, maintaining the core commitments of the Protestant Reformation.³ This reality is clearly illustrated by Francis Turretin's interaction with Thomas Aquinas' theology of infused habits.⁴ Here, I propose a comparative analysis of Aquinas and Turretin, trying to understand how Turretin integrates scholastic elements into the Reformed system. My thesis is that Turretin appropriates the ontological and transformative dimensions of the Thomistic doctrine of infused habits yet reinterprets them within a covenantal and Reformed framework that restricts their function exclusively to the sphere of regeneration and sanctification, without compromising the doctrine of justification by faith (*sola fide*). Thus, the incorporation of infused habits is generally treated

as a soteriological reality—infused by the Spirit into the believer for the purposes of spiritual renewal. However, the case of Christ is unique in that he receives the infused habits of grace not for personal salvation, but as a transformative endowment intrinsically ordered to his mediatorial office. In this way, habitual grace in Christ preserves both the integrity of his true humanity and the orthodox contours of Chalcedonian Christology.

To prove my argument, the paper is divided into three sections. First, I examine the distinct ontological frameworks within which Aquinas and Turretin develop their respective doctrines of grace. Second, I analyze their conceptions of habitual grace, with special attention to its ontological nature, function, and relation to the doctrine of justification. Third, I compare how each theologian applies the notion of habitual grace to the human soul of Christ, highlighting both their doctrinal continuities and theological departures.

GRACE AND PARTICIPATION: TWO FORMS OF ONTOLOGY

This section aims to clarify the distinct theological frameworks in which Aquinas and Turretin develop their respective doctrines of grace. While Aquinas articulates grace within a metaphysical structure shaped by participation and the divine processions, Turretin appropriates similar categories within a covenantal framework, where metaphysical concepts like *habitus* and participation are subordinated to God's voluntary condescension and the economy of the covenant.⁵ Grasping these contextual distinctions will be essential for understanding Turretin's emphases and the modifications he proposes in his theology of infused habits.

Aquinas: Participative Trinitarian Ontology

Aquinas's concepts of grace, participation, and habits are deeply rooted in a Trinitarian speculative framework. The Dominican master elaborates on this by arguing that Gift is a proper name of the Holy Spirit.⁶ As such, the Spirit is, within the persons of the Trinity, "the Gift common to the Father and the Son, the Gift which the resurrection of Christ obtains for men."⁷ On this basis, Aquinas maintains that the Holy Spirit—given in the economy as Gift—is the principle through whom rational creatures are drawn into

participation in the divine life, through the mediation of created habits of grace.⁸

Commenting on John 4:10, Aquinas explains that the grace dispensed by the Spirit is twofold: not only are gifts communicated, but the Spirit himself, as their unfailing source, is also given to human beings.⁹ In other words, grace is never given apart from the Giver; the Holy Spirit himself is always present in the bestowal of grace.¹⁰ This dual donation—the Giver and the gift—forms the basis for Aquinas's fundamental distinction between *gratia increata* and *gratia create* (created grace and uncreated grace).¹¹ The uncreated Gift is the Holy Spirit himself, "a gift given gratuitously that is indeed uncreated."¹² Accordingly, any manifestation of grace in the human soul must be considered created, since "God alone is the cause of grace."¹³

Understanding this dual donation is central to Aquinas's theology of participation. In his *Commentary on Romans* (5:5), he argues that the Holy Spirit—the love proceeding from the Father and the Son—is given in such a way that the soul is transformed by participation in divine love.¹⁴ According to Emery, this means that "The uncreated Gift (the Holy Spirit himself) comes into hearts by producing there a created gift (charity as a participation in Love)."¹⁵ In other words, through the transforming power of *gratia creata*, human beings are disposed to receive the uncreated Gift in person.¹⁶

Francis Turretin: Covenantal Ontology

Compared to Aquinas's participatory metaphysics, Turretin develops his doctrine of grace within a federal framework marked by God's sovereign condescension and covenantal economy. Although, like Aquinas, he acknowledges a certain form of participation in God—"analogical, accidental and extrinsic"¹⁷—he explicitly places this participation within the federal structure of God's dealings with humanity and with evidently less emphasis on the speculative elements of Trinitarian theology.

The concept of grace, according to Turretin, cannot be separated from the concept of covenant. This federal relationship stands "at the very center of religion," since it consists in "the communion of God with man and [embraces] in its compass all the benefits of God towards man and his duties towards God."¹⁸ In this way, the gifts of grace that justify, restore, and

renew human beings flow from God's covenantal initiative to enter into communion with his creatures out of sheer mercy.¹⁹

Turretin follows the classic Reformed distinction between the covenant of nature (*foedus naturae*) and the covenant of grace (*foedus gratiae*).²⁰ The first covenant was established before the fall with God as Creator, promising eternal life to innocent man on condition of perfect obedience.²¹ This relationship was not a mere legal contract or a "religion of works" but a form of divine generosity.²² Unlike human covenants, which typically involve mutual participation and equality between parties, this covenant rests solely upon "the infinite condescension" of God, who freely "willed to enter into a covenant with his creatures" without any obligation.²³ Consequently, when this covenant was broken, humanity was left condemned, subject to death and divine judgment.

In response to this rupture, God freely instituted a second covenant: the covenant of grace. Turretin describes this saying that:

That first covenant having been broken by the fall of man, God might (if he had wished to *deal in strict justice* with our first parents) immediately after their sin have delivered men over to death ... But it *did not please him to use that supreme justice* ... rather moved with pity, he devised and instituted a remedy ... by *graciously* sanctioning a new covenant in Christ, in which we have the method not only of escaping from that misery, but also of attaining unto most perfect happiness.²⁴

This second covenant is therefore wholly a work of divine mercy. It is not merely an agreement, but the means by which God restores communion with those who rebelled against him.²⁵

Central to the covenant of grace is the doctrine of the Trinity. While the external works of the Godhead are inseparable (*opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*), they can be distinguished by order and by terms: the appropriation to each divine person according to their distinctive personal mode of subsistence or the *terminus* of the divine operation.²⁶ Based on this, Turretin argues that the Father institutes the plan of salvation, the Son fulfills the covenant as Mediator, and the Spirit applies its benefits to the elect:

God, the Father, concurs in it because he first instituted this method of communicating himself and gave his Son in virtue of that constitution ... God, the Son, both as the cause and foundation of the covenant through his own blood ... God, the Spirit, as the cause together with the Father and the Son, and the matter ... and the earnest of the heavenly inheritance.²⁷

The Father sends the Son as Mediator; the Son, by his obedience and death, removes the enmity between God and humanity; and the Spirit, as Turretin notes, heals and renews us from within, “sanctifying and converting us and by converting, reconciling us to God.”²⁸ Thus, all the blessings of salvation—including justification, the infusion of holy habits, and the renewal of the image of God—flow from this Trinitarian covenantal economy that dispenses God’s unmerited favor toward sinners.

In this context, one of the most significant differences between Aquinas and Turretin is in their use of the speculative elements of the Trinitarian theology. Although Turretin adopts several key Thomistic distinctions—including the modal distinction (*distinctio modalis*)²⁹—his reception of the psychological analogy is far more restrained. Whereas Aquinas builds his theology of grace upon the foundation of intellectual and volitional processions, Turretin explicitly rejects the legitimacy of deriving the Spirit’s name as “Love” and “Gift” from the divine will, due to the lack of sufficient Scriptural support.³⁰ He says such images “entangle rather than explain” the Trinitarian mystery and should not serve as doctrinal foundations.³¹ This position reflects a more sober and reserved ontology, one that avoids projecting human psychological acts onto the mystery of God³²—a move that, in turn, logically shapes the ontological framework he constructs for articulating his theology of grace.

Summary

In this section, I have tried to show that, even though Aquinas and Turretin share a common theological ground when speaking of grace, as a gift from God that is both unearned and transformative, they place that grace within different ontological frameworks. For Aquinas, grace is best understood as a form of participation in the uncreated Gift of the Spirit. Turretin, on the other hand, frames grace within a covenantal ontology. Although the Genevan Reformer does not entirely dismiss the idea of analogical

participation, he roots grace's function and distribution in God's sovereign willingness to bind himself by covenant. Seeing this contrast helps clarify how Turretin can use certain Thomistic ideas—especially the notion of infused habits—without detaching them from his covenantal focus.

THEOLOGY OF THE INFUSED HABITS

In the previous section, I showed how Turretin and Aquinas framed the doctrine of grace within two distinct contexts. In this section, I will examine how each author develops the doctrine of infused habits, with particular attention to how Reformed theology—as represented by Turretin—critically appropriates the Thomistic category of infused habits in its account of regeneration and sanctification, while firmly rejecting any role for these habits in justification.

Infused Habits in Thomas Aquinas

According to Cleveland, Aquinas was the first to connect Aristotle's understanding of habits and insert it into a Christian theological framework, particularly within his doctrine of participation.³³ Unlike the Aristotelian model, in which habits are acquired through the repetition of acts, Thomas teaches that certain habits—the supernatural ones—are infused directly by God to order man to his ultimate end.³⁴ For this reason, the Dominican master distinguishes between acquired and infused habits, emphasizing that the latter do not arise from nature. On the contrary, these supernatural habits dispose the soul to act according to grace, as with faith, hope, and charity.³⁵

For Aquinas, the natural powers of the human creature cannot by themselves attain the supernatural end of union with God. As he observes, “the gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature . . . it is nothing short of a partaking of the Divine Nature.”³⁶ For the creature to reach its ultimate perfection—supernatural beatitude—its nature must be elevated by a *donum superadditum*—a gratuitous gift that configures and perfects its nature without destroying it.³⁷ Consequently, as Aquinas put it, “the gift of grace is a kind of quality” infused into the soul—a permanent disposition enabling the subject to act according to the divine good.³⁸

Building on this foundation, Aquinas contends that habitual grace — the ontological root from which the infused virtues emerge³⁹ — is both necessary and transformative to attain beatitude in union with God. He explains that, in order to live a just life, human beings require divine assistance on two levels: (1) they need a habitual gift that heals corrupted nature and elevates it to perform meritorious acts that surpass its natural capacity; and (2) they need the operative grace by which God moves the soul to act.⁴⁰ Without these divine gifts, the soul remains incapable of avoiding sin.⁴¹ Habitual grace, then, does not belong to the state of pure nature but presupposes a gratuitous elevation of nature beyond its created capacity toward the formal participation in the divine life.⁴²

This gift is not to be understood as a purely external act, but as the true indwelling of the Spirit within the human soul. Aquinas develops this point in this way:

Sanctifying grace disposes the soul to possess the divine person; and this is signified when it is said that the Holy Spirit is given according to the gift of grace. Nevertheless the gift itself of grace is from the Holy Spirit; which is meant by the words, the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.⁴³

Here, as Emery points out, Aquinas says that “the saints are conformed or assimilated” in sanctifying grace, such that the persons of the Trinity “are sent into the human heart in their invisible mission.”⁴⁴ Yet Aquinas insists that this possession is impossible without a prior disposition in the soul that ontologically disposes it to receive the Divine Person — namely, habitual grace.⁴⁵ Therefore, *gratia creata* is not the Gift itself, but the necessary condition for the soul to receive the eternal Gift of the Holy Spirit. The coordination between *gratia creata* and *gratia increata* is essential to Aquinas’s theology of participation: the rational creature can possess the Spirit — the Gift himself — only if it has first been inwardly transformed by a habitual grace that configures it to God without any confusion between the divine and the human.⁴⁶

In sum, as Marteen Wisse observes, Aquinas decisively integrates the notion of infused habit into the Christian tradition, endowing the Aristotelian structure with theological content: the theological virtues are

gifts from God because they direct man toward him as his ultimate end, are infused solely by grace, and are known only through revelation.⁴⁷ Thus, while the infused habits refer to the particular virtues and gifts produced by grace, habitual grace designates the underlying supernatural habit by which the soul is ontologically elevated and disposed toward the vision of God.

Infused Habits in Francis Turretin

The Reformation did not completely discard the Thomistic category of infused habits. Although Martin Luther himself directly rejected this notion, many later Reformers — and especially the theologians of the seventeenth century — integrated the Thomistic distinction between acquired and infused habits into their theology of regeneration and sanctification.⁴⁸ As J. V. Fesko notes:

Reformed theologians committed to justification *sola fide* can set aside the role of infused habits as the legal ground for justification. But this still leaves significant insights and categories for the Reformed doctrine of sanctification. Infused habits provide a helpful metaphysical rubric to explain sanctification and a theological platform to discuss virtue ethics. God indeed speaks and raises people from the dead and justifies them by faith alone, but he also changes and sanctifies by infusing a new heart, or habit, into redeemed sinners. Reformed theologians of both the Reformation and Reformed Orthodox periods recognized these truths and constructively employed infused habits in their doctrines of sanctification.⁴⁹

Turretin stands firmly within this tradition: his theology of infused habits retains Aristotelian-Thomistic terminology but reinterprets it within a distinctly covenantal framework.

First, Turretin explicitly rejects the scholastic notion of a state of pure nature (*status puræ naturæ*), insisting that humanity was created from the beginning in original righteousness inherently integrated into the *imago Dei*.⁵⁰ According to the Catholic tradition, including Aquinas, this righteousness was viewed as a *donum superadditum*, bestowed in addition to “the native gifts and power of the entire man.”⁵¹ By contrast, Turretin and the Reformed orthodox maintain that original righteousness, though a gratuitous gift from God, was not super added to human nature, but

was “necessary to the perfection of innocent man.”⁵² Thus, Turretin argues, “he cannot be said to have been created in a state of pure nature who was adorned with this from the beginning.”⁵³ Accordingly, original righteousness is best understood as a connatural and gratuitous infused habit oriented toward the moral perfection of the soul, leaving no space for a hypothetical natural state devoid of grace.⁵⁴

This distinction is important because Turretin argues the Fall did not destroy the rational nature of humanity (its natural faculties). Still, it did remove the supernatural gifts God had conferred upon the soul—namely, righteousness and immortality.⁵⁵ While this loss does not affect the essence of the image of God, it does impair its proper form and function. Sin has left humanity with disordered faculties, incapable of producing holy acts apart from an inward renewal by grace: “although there always remains in it a natural power of understanding and willing, still the moral habit or disposition of judging and willing properly has so failed that it can no longer be moved to a right exercise of itself ... unless the faculty itself is first renovated.”⁵⁶ In this sense, such renewal cannot originate from fallen humanity but must come through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

By this, in second place, Turretin developed a precise Reformed soteriology integrating infused habits within the broader structure of his theology of effectual calling. Turretin distinguishes two aspects of spiritual transformation, one passive and another active:

Habitual or passive conversion takes place by the infusion of supernatural habits by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, actual or active conversion takes place by the exercise of these good habits by which the acts of faith and repentance are both given by God and elicited from man. Through the former, man is renovated and converted by God. Through the latter, man, renovated and converted by God, turns himself to God and performs acts. The former is more properly called regeneration because it is like a new birth by which the man is reformed after the image of his Creator. The latter, however, is called conversion because it includes the operation of the man himself. Now although in the order of time, they can scarcely be distinguished in adults (in whom the action of God converting man is never without the action of man turning himself to God), still in the order of nature and causality the habitual ought to precede the actual and the action of God the action of man.⁵⁷

The first—habitual conversion—corresponds to regeneration; the second—actual conversion—follows as the effect and exercise of the habits infused.⁵⁸

Understanding this twofold distinction is key to grasping Turretin's concept of habitual grace. Although he used the Thomistic categories, he more precisely grounded them within the *ordo salutis* characteristic of Reformed theology. He explains this, arguing that habitual grace is the formal principle (*principium formale*) that precedes all moral action. Therefore, for the soul to act spiritually, it must first be renewed by grace. The soul cannot elicit acts of understanding and willing that are truly spiritual unless it has been inwardly renewed "by a supernatural disposition and habits."⁵⁹ A infusing new, holy disposition must spiritually and morally elevate the soul before producing any spiritual fruit, because "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, unless from an evil it is first made a good tree."⁶⁰ This is why Turretin and the Reformed Orthodox describe regeneration as a sovereign and vivifying act of God:

Therefore this is the first degree of efficacious grace by which God regenerates the minds of the elect by a certain intimate and wonderful operation and creates them as it were anew by *infusing his vivifying Spirit*, who, gliding into the inmost recesses of the soul, reforms the mind itself, healing its depraved inclinations and prejudices, endues it with strength and elicits the formal principle to spiritual and saving acts ... Also, we obtain the new birth, from which acts of faith and love flow forth (1 Jn. 4:7; 5:1).⁶¹

Turretin sees this work as restoring faculties once lost through the Fall. The "new heart," the "new mind," the "seed of God"—all these biblical metaphors, for him, signify a real and enduring restoration in the soul's structure. These holy dispositions, implanted by the Spirit at regeneration, form the basis upon which the believer cooperates with grace, grows in virtue, and progressively conforms to Christ's image.⁶²

The main divergence between Aquinas and Turretin concerning infused habits lies in two elements. First, a key divergence between Aquinas and Turretin lies in the order of the Spirit's indwelling and the infusion of grace. For Aquinas, the soul must first be ontologically disposed by *gratia creata* in order to receive the Divine Person; habitual grace functions

as a created disposition that renders the soul “fit” for the presence of the uncreated Gift.⁶³ In other words, the Spirit indwells only where his created effect—habitual grace—has already prepared the soul. Turretin, however, inverts this causal order. Within his covenantal framework, the Spirit himself is the efficient cause of regeneration and the infusion of holy habits: he comes and brings with him that supernatural grace which renews and disposes the soul toward holiness.⁶⁴ Thus, whereas Aquinas conceives of habitual grace as *praeparatio ad inhabitationem Spiritus*, Turretin describes it as the immediate effect of the Spirit’s indwelling. This difference reflects not a rejection of participation per se, but a deeper divergence in how divine communion is mediated—Aquinas locating it within a metaphysical order of participation through created dispositions, while Turretin grounds it in the Spirit’s sovereign and immediate operation within a federal economy of grace.

Second, they differ in their soteriological function.⁶⁵ Aquinas argues that justification entails an ontological change in the soul by infusing a divine quality—sanctifying grace. This grace, understood as an infused habit, internally transforms the person and makes him inherently righteous.⁶⁶ In other words, the justified soul possesses an inherent righteousness that enables communion with God. This righteousness is not limited to an external declaration. Still, it requires an interior transformation through the infused gift, such that “there is no internal change in the external status of the believer.”⁶⁷

Turretin, on the other hand—together with Reformed orthodoxy and theologians like John Owen—firmly denies this.⁶⁸ While acknowledging infused habits as gifts of regeneration and sanctification, they play no role in justification.⁶⁹ This distinction between imputation and infusion lies at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. Roman Catholics argued that justification occurs by the infusion of a habit of grace specifically at baptism, which “makes the person inherently righteous, on which basis God judges him to be righteous.”⁷⁰ In contrast, the Reformers and their successors were clear “that justification is a forensic declaration of righteousness based solely upon the imputed righteousness of Christ to sinners.”⁷¹ Without this distinction, as Cleveland notes, the believer would be justified based on “something within himself.”⁷²

Turretin maintains the same emphasis. He says that in justification “The righteousness of Christ alone imputed to us is the foundation and meritorious cause upon which our absolute sentence rests ... for no other reason does God bestow the pardon of sin and the right to life.”⁷³ He rejects the Roman position as “a false hypothesis—as if justification consists in an infusion of righteousness,” arguing instead that “faith is the instrument ... receiving and applying Christ’s righteousness,” not the ground of justification itself.⁷⁴ Although justification and sanctification are inseparably joined, they remain “really distinct.”⁷⁵ As Turretin concludes, “these two benefits should be distinguished and never confounded ... yet they should never be torn asunder.”⁷⁶

Summary

In this section, I have attempted to demonstrate that Turretin critically retrieved Aquinas’s doctrine of infused habits. Turretin, like Aquinas, emphasizes that grace must ultimately be understood as a divine act of communication—something human beings cannot attain naturally. This emphasis was particularly useful in countering the errors of the Arminian and Socinian systems. However, the theological advance made by authors like Turretin and Owen lies in their insistence that this doctrine must remain within the boundaries of regeneration and sanctification, rejecting any use of these habits as a basis for justification. Understanding the distinction between the forensic imputation of Christ’s righteousness and the infused habits that renew the believer’s faculties was a way in which Reformed tradition preserved both the primacy of divine grace and the integrity of human transformation.

HABITUAL GRACE IN CHRIST’S HUMAN SOUL

In the previous section, I showed how Turretin and Aquinas share important points but exhibit significant differences, especially in their anthropology and soteriology. In this section, I will explore how each author develops the doctrine of infused habits as it applies specifically to the person of Christ, paying particular attention to how Turretin appropriates Thomistic theology in a critical way that remains consistent with Reformed theology.

Thomas Aquinas: The Fullness of Habitual Grace in Christ's Humanity

Aquinas's doctrine of habitual grace finds its fullest and most paradigmatic realization in the humanity of Christ. He is, following Legge's explanation, the primary locus of the Spirit's invisible mission of grace within redemptive history.⁷⁷ Grounded in the primacy of the Spirit's work in Christ, Aquinas makes his distinction between two kinds of grace in him: (1) the grace of union (*gratia unionis*)—the personal assumption of human nature by the Word—and (2) habitual grace (*gratia habitualis*)—a created, supernatural habit infused into Christ's soul, by which his human faculties are sanctified and perfectly ordered to God.⁷⁸

The grace of union is the gratuitous gift by which the human nature of Christ is personally united to the divine person of the Son—"the union of His soul with the Word of God."⁷⁹ This grace is not a habit or quality inhering in the soul, but a singular ontological relation constituted by the hypostatic union, whereby Christ's humanity is taken up into the personal existence of the divine Word while remaining fully human.⁸⁰ However, as Aquinas explains, while the grace of union establishes Christ's personal identity as the divine Son, it does not in itself perfect the operations of his human soul. For this, a second and distinct mode of grace is required—habitual grace.⁸¹

Consequently, in order to be perfected, Christ's soul must also receive "a union of operation ... and we call this grace."⁸² This union, which perfects the soul for beatific enjoyment, exceeds the capacity of any created nature and elevates Christ's humanity to its fullest perfection.⁸³ The purpose of this grace, Legge elaborates, is "to empower Christ as man by giving him the habitus that rightly prepares and enables his human nature for the actions that he will undertake,"⁸⁴ while at the same time safeguarding the orthodox distinction of Christ's two natures.⁸⁵

This union of operations is intimately connected with the beatific vision in Aquinas. He teaches that Christ's soul, personally united to the Word, was "perfected with a light participated from the divine nature," enabling it to behold God's essence from the very first instant of his conception.⁸⁶ By reason of the hypostatic union, Christ enjoys not only the uncreated beatitude of the Word but also, Aquinas insists, "It was necessary that in his human nature there should also be a created beatitude," which establishes his soul in the ultimate end proper to man.⁸⁷ This vision, though surpassing

the natural power of reason, remains connatural to the soul as made in the image of God; whereas “the uncreated knowledge is in every way above it.”⁸⁸

The immediate vision of God enjoyed by Christ’s human soul is possible only because “Christ as man receives the whole Spirit (*totum Spiritum*) and all the Spirit’s gifts.”⁸⁹ According to Aquinas, “the fullness of Christ is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from him, consubstantial with him in nature, in power and in majesty.”⁹⁰ In Legge’s words, Christ is “truly a man of the Spirit, the Word-made-flesh whose every gesture is anointed by the Spirit’s invisible unction,” for “as the Word cannot be without the Spirit whom he breathes forth, neither can the Word incarnate act without the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.”⁹¹

Unlike the rest of human beings, Christ had this grace from the very first instance of his Incarnation (Luke 1:35; John 10:36; 1:14), and his humanity was endowed with “the fullness of grace sanctifying His body and His soul.”⁹² In Christ, as in no one else (Joel 2:2), was “poured out the whole Spirit (*totum spiritum*)” just as it is written: “for God does not give the Spirit by measure (John 3:34); and the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him (Isa 11:2).”⁹³ Such plenitude, unique to the incarnate Son, grounds his role as the head of the Church, from whom the grace of the Spirit flows to all who are united to him, a reality described for Aquinas as *gratia capitis* (grace of headship).

According to Aquinas, Christ is constituted as the head of the Church precisely in virtue of his assumed human nature.⁹⁴ It is only because of the fullness of grace that is found in him — habitual grace in its highest degree — that Christ can be “the head of the mystical body,” the fountain from which grace flows to all intellectual creatures. In other words, through this grace of headship, Christ exercises the unique capacity to dispense grace “into others for the sake of salvation.”⁹⁵

In Aquinas’s theology, these two dimensions — the fullness of grace in Christ and how grace is communicated, although distinct, are closely related and deeply interconnected.⁹⁶ On the one hand, Christ, as man, possesses the most perfect “source of grace,” insofar as his humanity is entirely filled with the Spirit. On the other hand, this grace is not static; it is dispensed to others “through the instrumental actions of his humanity.”⁹⁷ Thus, Christ’s humanity functions both as the vessel that most fully contains the Spirit and as the

instrument by which grace is poured out into the Church; he is “a fount of living water, pouring forth salvation for the whole world.”⁹⁸

However, this capital grace, or grace of headship, is not limited to the categories of instrumentality and efficient causality; it also includes the principle of participation, since the body members “must be conformed to their head.”⁹⁹ For this, the Holy Spirit fulfills two central functions: he guides us to know our Principle—namely, to know Christ by faith—and he conforms us to that same Principle, “giving us a share in Christ’s sonship and holiness.”¹⁰⁰ As Legge explains:

The knowledge of the Son given by the Holy Spirit is a sanctifying knowledge that brings us to the Son, conforming us to Christ’s humanity (including his suffering, death, and resurrection), thus “transforming” and “assimilating” us to his filial divinity. In short, it belongs to the Holy Spirit to make us like his principle.¹⁰¹

Therefore, when we receive the Holy Spirit, we participate in the grace of Christ and are conformed to him in his human nature, which includes his sufferings, his path to Calvary, and his resurrection.¹⁰² All of this is made possible by the work of “the Holy Spirit, who, coming to us through the historical acts of his humanity, conforms us to Christ and gives us a share in his sonship, making us adopted sons and daughters of the Father.”¹⁰³ In other words, the grace of the Spirit in Christ’s soul is “a pattern for our sanctification and glorification, and then, when the Holy Spirit comes to us, he configures us to Christ our exemplar.”¹⁰⁴

Francis Turretin: Christ’s Plenitude of the Spirit as the Mediator of the Covenant

Habitual grace is central to Turretin’s understanding of Christ’s human operations. He, in formal continuity with the scholastic tradition, maintains the classical distinction between *gratia unionis* and *gratia habitualis*:

The effects of the hypostatical union are twofold: some refer to the human nature of Christ; others to the person subsisting in both natures. To the former are commonly ascribed both the grace of eminence (which is the dignity of human nature above all creatures, arising from the union of the same with the

divine nature, by which flesh is a property of the Son of God—which can be said of no other creature) and habitual graces (to wit, those remarkable gifts which the divine nature bestowed upon the human, which although the highest and most perfect in their own order, still order of created gifts; yet they were greater than any angels or saints both in the dignity of the subject and in the perfection of parts and of degrees). Hence it is said, “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (Jn. 3:34).¹⁰⁵

Turretin, avoiding any Christological confusion that would compromise the integrity of either nature, distinguishes between the effects upon Christ’s human nature and those that pertain to the person of the Son, who subsists in two natures. For this reason, the Genevan Reformer differentiates between two gifts bestowed upon human nature by virtue of the hypostatic union: the grace of eminence—the grace of union—and habitual grace. While the former signifies the unique dignity of Christ’s humanity by virtue of its personal union with the second person of the Trinity, the latter corresponds to the infused gifts or habits that perfect the faculties of Christ’s soul.¹⁰⁶ As in Aquinas, Turretin clarifies that although these gifts are “the highest and most perfect in their own order,” they nonetheless remain created gifts.¹⁰⁷

Turretin argues that habitual grace consists of “remarkable gifts ... bestowed” upon Christ’s human nature because Scripture says, “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”¹⁰⁸ In Christ, habitual grace is full and complete, as Scripture affirms that he was “full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14).¹⁰⁹ However, also in line with Aquinas, Turretin recognizes that these gifts are finite and that grace is “a created thing.” Therefore, the presence of grace in Christ must be understood relatively: (1) In comparison to others, the grace in Christ is far greater than that bestowed upon angels or human beings. Whereas creatures receive a “fullness of sufficiency” for their salvation, in Christ, there is a “fullness of abundance,” which enables him to communicate that grace to others (Jn. 1:16); (2) In terms of degrees, Christ receives all the degrees of grace that a creature can receive according to the law of God. In other words, everything that falls within the “created grace” category is found in him. Consequently, the grace in Christ is not merely a superior version of the grace that other saints receive but is unique in its universality and in the way it dwells in his incarnate divine person.¹¹⁰

Turretin adds a distinction in dialogue with scholastic theology: the grace in Christ is both extensive (in the variety of gifts) and intensive (in the degree of perfection). He affirms that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were bestowed upon the humanity of Christ in their highest fullness, both in extension and in intensity, so that they were “permanent and fixed,” not as a “transient or perishable movement,” but as habits that Christ exercised “as often and in whatever measure he pleased,” especially for his role as Mediator of the covenant.¹¹¹

Although it is evident that Turretin is retrieving Thomistic categories to speak of habitual grace in Christ, his argument does not rest on a blind appropriation of tradition, but rather on the revelation of Scripture, which bears witness to the presence of these gifts of the Spirit in Christ.¹¹² Therefore, Thomistic distinctions, in this sense, are useful only insofar as they remain faithful to Scripture and do not compromise other areas of Reformed Orthodoxy. For this reason, Turretin is willing to engage critically with the medieval scholastic tradition, including Aquinas, either by rejecting problematic elements of Thomism or by retrieving key concepts while reconfiguring them with greater precision within a covenantal ontology.

When treating the habitual grace in Christ's humanity, Turretin maintains that it must be understood in the context of Christ's state of humiliation and mediatorial obedience. Although Christ was sanctified from the moment of his conception by the work of the Holy Spirit — “From this miraculous conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost arises the absolute holiness of Christ and his exemption from all sin, both imputed and inherent”¹¹³ — he did not yet enjoy the fullness of beatitude proper to the glorified state.¹¹⁴ In contrast to Aquinas, who asserts that Christ received the beatific vision from the very first instant of his conception, Turretin frames habitual grace not as an immediate ontological participation in glory through the beatific vision, but rather as a bestowal of created perfections that equip Christ for his office as Mediator in his condition as *viator* (pilgrim).

Consequently, when Turretin develops his doctrine of Christ's knowledge, he directly opposes the scholastics who attributed three kinds of knowledge to Christ: beatific, infused, and acquired. The Reformed theologian denies the presence of the beatific vision during Christ's earthly life, reserving it for his exalted state. While Christ's soul was perfectly holy and endowed with infused grace, his knowledge was limited during his earthly life. He grew

in wisdom through experience (Luke 2:52).¹¹⁵ This distinction was key in Turretin's theology because Christ was *viator* and not yet *comprehensor* during his earthly ministry: "he could not at that time enjoy the benefit of an attainer in the most full happiness of human nature."¹¹⁶

Summary

In this final section, I have sought to present how Turretin applied the doctrine of infused habits to the person of Christ, arguing that he appropriated Thomistic categories critically and within a Reformed framework. Turretin affirms the presence of habitual grace in Christ's soul yet locates it within a covenantal structure, particularly concerning his mediatorial office in a state of humiliation. This critical retrieval of Thomistic categories allows Turretin to openly reject those elements that lack a clear biblical foundation or conflict with Reformed theology, such as the beatific vision or the notion of innate comprehensive knowledge. In this way, Turretin secures a vision of Christ's habitual grace that is both biblically grounded and dogmatically coherent, fully integrated within an ontology consistent with the federal structure of redemptive history.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Turretin, as an example of Reformed Orthodoxy, retrieved the ontological and transformative dimensions of the Thomistic doctrine of infused habits. Still, he reinterprets them within a covenantal ontology and a Reformed framework. Turretin, with the Reformed Orthodoxy, holds that these habits must be understood exclusively in regeneration and sanctification, leaving no room for a place in justification. Finally, as has been proved, when this doctrine is applied to the humanity of Christ, Turretin emphasizes that he receives habitual grace as a transformative gift, yet holds no to the beatific vision from the first instant or a perfection in his human knowledge. By contrast, the Genevan Reformer is clear that the ontological elements of the infused habits in Christ are particularly disposed to his role as the Mediator of the Covenant between God and humanity.

- ¹ Throughout this article, the following abbreviations of primary sources will be used: (1) *Summ.* (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*); (2) *On Truth* (Aquinas, *On the Truth*); (3) *Sent.* (Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences*); (4) *Comm. Rom.* (Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*); (5) *Comm. Eph.* (Aquinas, *Commentary on Ephesians*); (6) *Comm. John* (Aquinas, *Commentary on John*); (7) *Comm. Matt.* (Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew*); (8) *Inst.* (Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*); (9) *Works* (John Owen, *Works*).
- ² For treatise on the complexities of Reformed Orthodoxy, see Richard A Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 2nd edition, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). The Utrecht School of Reformed Theology has contribution to this subject, see, for example, Willem J. van Asselt et al., *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, Reformed Historical-Theological Studies (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011); Willem J. van Asselt and Eef Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001); H. J. Selderhuis, *A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy*, vol. 40, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden The Netherlands: Brill, 2013).
- ³ Muller explains that the period of High Orthodoxy (ca. 1640–1725) was defined as an era of great theological systematization that greatly advanced Reformed theology's codification. This period was also marked by better integration of tradition into the Reformed system, including contributions from Medieval scholasticism. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:31–32. Richard Muller put it in this way in *Ad fontes argumentorum*: "Reformed orthodoxy was, after all, a living movement reflective of its own contexts and not merely a carbon copy of the thought of the Reformers: but what we can declare, with some confidence, is that the developing tradition of Reformed theology in the seventeenth century paid close attention to its roots in the Reformation and was concerned as it encountered new adversaries and new problems." Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53.
- ⁴ Several works have been done in the field of infused habits in Reformed Theology, but these two have been particularly important for my understanding of Turretin's theology. Colin Robert McCulloch, "Sanctified by the Spirit: Applying John Owen's Concept of Spirit-Infused Habitual Grace to Divergent Models of Sanctification within the Biblical Counseling Movement" (SBTS, 2022), <https://hdl.handle.net/10392/6758>; Christopher Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen* (Ashgate, 2013).
- ⁵ J. V. Fesko, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Justification and Infused Habits in Reformed Soteriology," in *Aquinas Among the Protestants* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2017).
- ⁶ Aquinas, *Summ.* I. Q38. For a more extended treatment on the idea of the Holy Spirit as properly Gift, see Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 249–258.
- ⁷ Emery explains that the Holy Spirit is Gift from all eternity but is given in time to creatures. In this sense, Aquinas argues that it is fitting for the Holy Spirit to be given to creatures, since he is properly Gift in relation to the other persons of the Trinity eternally. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 249.
- ⁸ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*.
- ⁹ Aquinas, *Comm. John.* C4, L2, no. 577.
- ¹⁰ According to the Dominican master, "The word 'gift' imports an aptitude for being given...Thus, a divine person can 'be given,' and can be a 'gift.'" Aquinas, *Summ.* I. Q38, a.1.
- ¹¹ Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 253.
- ¹² Aquinas, *Sent.* II. D26. Q1. a.1.
- ¹³ Aquinas, *Summ.* I–II. Q112, a. 1.
- ¹⁴ Aquinas, *Comm. Rom.* CS. L1, no 392; Gilles Emery, "The Holy Spirit in Aquinas's Commentary on Romans," in *Reading Romans with St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 151;
- ¹⁵ Emery, "The Holy Spirit in Aquinas's Commentary on Romans," 151.
- ¹⁶ Emery, "The Holy Spirit in Aquinas's Commentary on Romans," 151. For Aquinas, "The holy Spirit assimilates to himself the human beings to whom he is given. To receive the charity by which God loves us is thus to participate in the personal property of the holy Spirit, that is to say, to participate in the person of the holy Spirit (just as becoming 'sons of God' is to participate in the personal property of the Son). By such participation in the holy Spirit, human beings 'are made lovers of God.'" Emery, "The Holy Spirit in Aquinas's Commentary on Romans," 151.
- ¹⁷ Turretin, *Inst.* 2:1. 10. IV.
- ¹⁸ Turretin, *Inst.* 2:12. 1. I.

- ¹⁹ As I mentioned earlier, J. V. Fesko argues that within Reformed theology there is an ontological component that explains the mystery of union with Christ and renewal by the Spirit, which infused habits help to clarify. For this reason, Fesko refers to this concept as covenantal ontology. J. V. Fesko, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Justification and Infused Habits in Reformed Soteriology," 261.
- ²⁰ When Turretin explains the nature of this covenant, he explicitly identifies it as a covenant of "works" because it "depended upon works or his proper obedience." *Inst.* 1:8. 3. V.
- ²¹ Turretin, *Inst.* 1:8. 3. V. According to Turretin, this covenant is called natural, legal, and of works because it is founded upon the nature of man, who possesses a law engraved within him and depends upon his works to fulfill it.
- ²² Mark J. Beach, *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace*, Reformed Historical Theology, v. 1 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 78. For an extensive treatment on the subject, see 78–147. For historical research on the reception of the Federal theology of Turretin, see 19–64.
- ²³ Turretin, *Inst.* 1:8. 3. I. God could have, as Turretin notes, "prescribed obedience to man (created by him) without any promise of reward." Nevertheless, to demonstrate his supreme goodness, "he (himself in need of nothing) willed to invite [humans] to a nearer communion with him." (Turretin, vol. 1. T8, Q3, II). Mark Beach comments on this, saying that the covenant is a concept "to which God accommodates himself, infinitely condescending to establish a relationship with humans, inclusive of promise of blessings and stipulate conditions." Beach, *Christ and the Covenant*, 89.
- ²⁴ Turretin, *Inst.* 2:12. 2. IV; emphasis mine.
- ²⁵ Turretin emphasizes that, unlike human covenants, the covenant of grace is unilateral: God fulfills both His part and ours, providing the blessings, duties, and conditions—all by upon "the mere grace of God and upon no disposition and merit of man." Turretin, *Inst.* 2:12. 1. III. Although this covenant involves two parties—God and humanity—and even requires "a mediator to reconcile the discordant parties", Turretin underscores that its fulfillment is unilateral: God himself undertakes to accomplish both sides of the agreement. This is what distinguishes the covenant of grace from all human covenants. As Turretin explains: "God performs here not only his own part, but also ours . . . Hence not only God's blessings fall under the promise, but also man's duty; not only the end, but also the means and conditions leading us to it." Turretin, *Inst.* 2:12. 1. XI. In this way, all the obligations of the covenant—including those that belong to us—are carried out by God himself.
- ²⁶ Turretin, *Inst.* 1:3. 27. XX.
- ²⁷ Turretin, *Inst.* 2:12. 2. VI.
- ²⁸ Turretin, *Inst.* 2:12. 2. XI.
- ²⁹ Turretin, *Inst.* 1:3. 27. III.
- ³⁰ Turretin, *Inst.* 1:3. 31. III.
- ³¹ Turretin, *Inst.* 1:3. 31. III.
- ³² Turretin, *Inst.* 1:3. 29. XXX; 1:3. 31. III.
- ³³ Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 77.
- ³⁴ Aquinas, *Summ.* I–II. Q51, a. 1; Q63, a. 3.
- ³⁵ Aquinas, *Summ.* I–II. Q63, a. 3.
- ³⁶ Aquinas, *Summ.* I–II. Q112, a. 1.
- ³⁷ Lawrence Feingold clarifies this distinction by pointing to *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 62, a. 1, where Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of beatitude: one proportionate to human nature, and another that transcends it. While the former is possible in principle, Aquinas insists that man is actually ordered to the latter in the current economy of salvation: "Reason, on the other hand, directs us to the common and natural end of acquired wisdom whose act is contemplation . . . but since the supernatural is given, the natural is ordered to the supernatural." Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, 2nd ed, Faith & Reason (Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2010), 232, 236–239.
- ³⁸ Aquinas, *Summ.* I–II. Q110, a. 1.
- ³⁹ Aquinas distinguishes between habitual grace and the infused habits that are derived from it. Habitual grace is a supernatural quality infused into the very essence of the soul, serving as the formal principle that elevates human nature toward participation in the divine nature. It is "a certain participation in the divine nature," configuring the soul to God in a permanent and stable way. *Summ.* I–II. Q112, a. 1; Q110, a. 1. From this ontological root flow, the infused virtues—such as faith, hope, and charity—which reside not in the essence of the soul but in its powers, particularly the intellect and the will. Aquinas explains that "the essence of the soul is the subject of grace," while "the powers of the soul are the subjects of the virtues."

These infused habits are not accidental additions but stable dispositions that enable the soul to perform meritorious and supernatural acts, corresponding to its elevated participation in God. Charity, for example, is the form of all the virtues and presupposes the presence of habitual grace as its ontological ground. Thus, while habitual grace pertains to the being of the soul, infused habits pertain to its operation, maintaining a metaphysical hierarchy that reflects Aquinas's theology of participation and the integral coordination of nature and grace. Aquinas, *Summ. I–II*. Q63, a. 1; Q110, a. 4; Q23, a. 8

40 Aquinas, *Summ. I–II*. Q109, a.9. Garrigou-Lagrange comments that in justification, habitual grace renews the soul, removes sin, and makes the believer a partaker of the divine nature. *Grace*, 112.

41 Aquinas, *Summ. I–II*. Q109, a. 8. Bernard Lonergan asserts that Aquinas has a pessimistic view of the natural state of human beings, so that, without God's intervention, human beings will always "do what is wrong." Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (Darton, Longman and Todd; Herder and Herder, 1941), 41.

42 Garrigou-Lagrange, *Grace*, 22; Aquinas, *Summ. I–II*. Q110, a.2. Feingold explains that grace is thus not a remedy for a defect, but the supernatural elevation of a nature that remains intact. This harmony between nature and grace underlies Aquinas's affirmation that the beatific end is not contrary to nature, but surpasses its proportion and must be received as a gift. Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, 239–240.

43 Aquinas, *Summ. I*. Q43, a. 3.

44 Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 372–373.

45 Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 253. Through this transformation, the soul is not only made pleasing to God but also disposed for the final vision of God (*visio beatifica*), what is only possible because of the fullness of grace. As Garrigou-Lagrange explains, "The end of sanctifying grace is also something real and physical, that is, the beatific vision. Therefore sanctifying grace itself, as a participation in the divine nature, is something real and physical, not something merely moral as an imitation of the divine ways," *Grace*, 131.

46 Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 253.

47 Maarten Wisse, "Habitūs Fidei: An Essay on the History of a Concept," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56 (2), 175–76.

48 J. V. Fesko, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Justification and Infused Habits in Reformed Soteriology," 253.

49 J. V. Fesko, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Justification and Infused Habits in Reformed Soteriology," 263.

50 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 9. V.

51 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 1. V; cf. Aquinas, *Summ. I–II*, Q109, a. 2; I. Q95, a. 1.

52 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 9. VI. Humanity—created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26), morally good and upright (Eccl. 7:29)—consisted essentially in original righteousness. John Owen, in a similar way, says that "the image of God in man consists naturally of a body and soul composed of innate faculties and supernaturally of an infused habit of grace to make him upright." McCulloch, "Sanctified by the Spirit," 126.

53 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 9. V.

54 While Turretin rejects this aspect of Thomistic theology, he has no difficulty appropriating Aristotelian-scholastic categories in his account of the soul. He distinguishes between the soul's substantial essence, its formal faculties (intellect and will), and the accidental gifts that perfect these faculties. As Leslie explains, "Turretin is typical amongst Reformed scholastics in defining the imago both in terms of the soul's natural essence and formal powers—whether its intellectual and volitional faculties, or its spiritual and intrinsically corruptible, immortal essence—and its concreated, accidental gifts, chiefly, its original righteousness. The Reformed scholastics saw no difficulty in following the Aristotelian paradigm of distinguishing the soul's essence, powers, and the various qualities and habits which were accidental to the soul's natural state. Echoing traditional scholasticism, then, they could in a restricted sense call these accidental qualities 'gifts' or 'graces' added to nature rather than flowing from it, provided they were held to have been naturally concreated with that essence," Andrew M. Leslie, "The Light of Grace: John Owen on the Authority of Scripture and Christian Faith" (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 165.

55 Turretin, *Inst.* 1:5. 10. XVI.

- 56 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XXIII. McCulloch, in his analysis of habitual grace in Owen, says “Sin caused the gracious habit to be lost, but the natural constitution remained, though it was corrupted by sin. Thus, Owen spoke of a relic of the image remaining after the fall, likely referring to the natural faculties of the soul which remain. However, his emphasis in discussing the image of God was on the gracious habit which was lost. As Leslie notes, this is likely due to Owen’s overall emphasis on the restoration of the image in Christ.” McCulloch, “Sanctified by the Spirit,” 127
- 57 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XIII. For a similar distinction see, Michael Allen, *Sanctification*, ed. Scott R. Swain and Michael Allen, *New Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017)
- 58 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XIII.
- 59 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XIII.
- 60 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XIII.
- 61 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XIII; emphasis mine. XIII. John Owen proposes something similar, see McCulloch, “Sanctified by the Spirit,” 123, 130. As Cleveland rightly observes in the case of Owen, this view proved instrumental in countering both Arminian and Socinian objections, for it upheld the priority of divine grace while preserving the moral integrity of the believer’s cooperation in sanctification. Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 82.
- 62 Turretin elaborates on this, saying that sanctification as “a change and renovation of the nature itself (corrupted by original sin) by which depraved qualities and habits are cast out and good ones infused so that the man desists from evil acts and strives for good.” Turretin, *Inst.* 2:17. 1. IV. John Owen’s theology provides a helpful Reformed parallel to Turretin’s account. Owen likewise speaks of sanctification as: “An immediate work of the Spirit of God on the souls of believers, purifying and cleansing of their natures from the pollution and uncleanness of sin, renewing in them the image of God, and thereby enabling them, from a spiritual and habitual principle of grace, to yield obedience unto God, according unto the tenor and terms of the new covenant, by virtue of the life and death of Jesus Christ.” Owen, *Works*, 3:386. Owen’s language of “habitual principle” underscores the same point: sanctification is not the result of human effort alone, but of a permanent supernatural disposition infused by God. As McCulloch notes, Owen emphasizes that sanctification “is a work whereby the Spirit progressively makes a man habitually holy in the whole frame of his soul, renewing the image of God in him.” McCulloch, “Sanctified by the Spirit,” 132.
- 63 Aquinas, *Summ.* Q110, a. 1; cf. Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 253.
- 64 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:15. 4. XIII.
- 65 Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 116–17.
- 66 Aquinas, *Summ.* 1-II. Q113, a. 2. Cleveland summarizes, Aquinas position arguing that for him, “justification only occurs through the infusion of a habit of grace, a divine quality, into the soul . . . it is by this infused quality that man obtains peace with God.” Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 119.
- 67 Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 118–119.
- 68 Owen directly criticizes Aquinas in this topic: “It is, therefore, to no purpose to handle the mysteries of the gospel as if Hilcot and Bricot, *Thomas* and Gabriel, with all the Sententiarists, Summists, and Quodlibetarians of the old Roman peripatetical school, were to be raked out of their graves to be our guides. Especially will they be of no use unto us in this doctrine of justification. For whereas they pertinaciously adhered unto the philosophy of Aristotle, who knew nothing of any righteousness but what is a habit inherent in ourselves, and the acts of it, they wrested the whole doctrine of justification unto a compliance wherewithal.” Owen, *Works*, 5:12.
- 69 Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 116–17.
- 70 McCulloch, “Sanctified by the Spirit,” 123.
- 71 McCulloch, “Sanctified by the Spirit,” 130. The Westminster Larger Catechism in the Question 77 reflects this precision: “Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued; the one doth equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.” Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession: The Confession of Faith, The Larger and Shorter Catechisms, The Directory for the Public Worship of God, with Associated Historical Documents* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2018), 241.
- 72 Cleveland, *Thomism in John Owen*, 118.
- 73 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:16. 2. VI.
- 74 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:16. 7. IV-V.
- 75 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:17. 1. IX.
- 76 Turretin, *Inst.* 2:17. 1. XV.

- 77 Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 132.
- 78 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 134. As Aquinas put it: "two kinds of fullness are understood to exist in Christ: one is of the divinity according to which Christ is the full God, another is of grace according to which he is called full of grace and truth (John 1:14), and the Apostle speaks about this fullness in Colossians 1:18; but of the first in Colossians 2:9. However, this second is derived from the first and the grace of the head is completed through it." Aquinas, *On Truth*. Q29, a. 5.
- 79 Aquinas, *Summ. III*. Q7, a. 1.
- 80 According to Aquinas, "The union of the human nature with the Divine Person ... is the grace of union." *Summa*. III. Q7, a. 1; see also *Comm. John*. C3, L6, no. 544; Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 134. For this reason, the grace of union is not acquired or merited without any prior merits, but it makes Christ the natural Son of God, not by participation, but by nature. Aquinas, *On Truth*. Q29, a. 2; See also *Comm. John*. C3, L6, no. 544; *Summ.* III. Q23, a. 4.
- Aquinas frames the relationship between the grace of union and habitual grace in terms of the order of the Trinitarian missions. The mission of the Son is prior, in the order of nature, to the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, just as in God the Spirit proceeds from the Son and love from wisdom. *Summ.* III. Q7, a. 13; Consequently, the grace of union is presupposed by habitual grace: "The presence of God in Christ is by the union of human nature with the Divine Person. Hence, the habitual grace of Christ is understood to follow this union, as light follows the sun." *Summ.* III. Q7, a. 13. See also Aquinas, *On Truth*. Q29, a. 3.
- 81 Aquinas explicitly affirms the necessity of habitual grace in Christ because his human soul still requires a created habit disposing of it to know and love God. The hypostatic union alone, he insists, is not sufficient for beatitude because "even God himself would be blessed if he did not know and love himself; for he would not take delight in himself, which is required for beatitude." Aquinas, *On Truth*. Q29, a. 1.
- 82 Aquinas, *On Truth*. Q29, a. 1; See also *Comm. John*. C17. L4, no. 2231. As Legge clarifies, like any rational creature, the soul of Christ requires habitual grace, needed to be "elevated as a human ... according to the way in which such a nature can participate in the divine life." For this, "Christ's humanity is drawn into the personal mode of existing of the divine Word while remaining fully and properly human." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 134–135
- 83 As Legge describes, this grace is "a really and formally distinct gift that is proportioned to his humanity, elevating it and divinizing it by participation." Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 135
- 84 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 132.
- 85 Aquinas explains that the orthodoxy of Chalcedon requires that Christ have habitual grace as man so as not to mix or conflate the divine and the human nature. *Summ.* III. Q7, a. 1; Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology*, 253.
- 86 Aquinas, *Summ.* III. Q7, a.3.
- 87 Aquinas, *Summ.* III. Q9, a. 2. Commenting on this, Legge asserts this should not be understood as a function of the hypostatic union itself, but rather of the fullness of created grace infused into his soul as its formal principle. For a deeper treatise on the beatific vision in Christ's humanity, see Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 173–178.
- 88 Aquinas, *Summ.* III. Q9, a.2.
- 89 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 173, 175.
- 90 Aquinas, *Comm. John*. C1. L10, no. 202.
- 91 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 134. Further, Legge explains, "Just as the Word is eternally the Word who breathes forth Love, so the Word in Christ's humanity breathes forth Love to that humanity, namely, the Holy Spirit himself with habitual grace and the gift of charity." 152.
- 92 Aquinas, *Summ.* III. Q34, a. 1. Legge argues that this grace in Christ is different from that of the rest of humanity not only because Christ possesses from the very first moment of his Incarnation the full plenitude of the Holy Spirit, receiving all created gift of grace uniquely and habitually, but also because he offers two additional reasons that are key to understanding Christ's salvific mission as the head of the Church. First, this plenitude gives him a kind of dominion over the gifts, allowing him to use them freely at all times, unlike the prophets or saints who receive them only at specific moments. Second, his grace is so perfect that it becomes the source from which all others receive both grace and the Holy Spirit. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 162–163.
- 93 Aquinas, *Comm. Matt.* C12, a.1, no. 1000.
- 94 Aquinas, *On Truth*, Q29, a. 4. Aquinas teaches that Christ's humanity, as the instrument leading humanity to the beatific vision, possesses that vision perfectly and eminently: "It was necessary that the vision of God should belong to Christ in an eminent way, for the cause must be more perfect than its effect." *Summ.* III. Q9, a.2.

-
- 95 Aquinas, *Comm. John. C1. L10*, no. 201–202; *On Truth. Q29*, a. 4.
- 96 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 219.
- 97 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 221.
- 98 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 221; see Aquinas, *Comm. John. C4. L1*, no. 561. Aquinas says: “The grace of Christ, which is called capital grace [...] is sufficient not merely for the salvation of some men, but for all the people of the entire world.” See also *Comm. John. C3. L6*, no. 544.
- 99 Aquinas. *Summ. III. Q49*, a. 3.
- 100 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 224. Aquinas holds that the knowledge and love imparted by the Holy Spirit draw believers into “participation in the very inner life of the Trinity,” such that creation and salvation follow, and are consummated according to the pattern of the eternal processions of the Son and the Spirit. Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 228–229.
- 101 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 227; cf. Aquinas, *Comm. John. C16. L3*, no. 2102.
- 102 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 222; It is important to clarify that this participation is not identical to Christ’s own but consists only in a “portion of his fullness; and this is according to the measure which God grants to each. Grace has been given to each of us according to the degree to which Christ gives it (Eph 4:7).” Aquinas, *Comm. John. C1. L10*, no. 202.
- 103 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 222; cf. Aquinas, *Summ. III. Q49*, a. 3.
- 104 Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 226.
- 105 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 8. I*.
- 106 By “dignity” or “ontological elevation,” I do not mean a change in the essence or properties of Christ’s human nature, but rather the unique honor and excellence that arise from its assumption into the person of the Son. The hypostatic union confers upon Christ’s humanity a singular status and relational dignity—belonging personally to the divine Son—without altering its created nature or essence.
- 107 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 8. II*.
- 108 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 8. I*.
- 109 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 12. II*. Although Turretin is not explicit regarding how habitual grace was present in Christ from the moment of his conception, this passage seems to suggest that the habitual grace from the Spirit was granted from the very first instant of Christ’s conception, as a result of his miraculous generation by the Holy Spirit. As he states: “From this miraculous conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost arises the absolute holiness of Christ and his exemption from all sin, both imputed and inherent.” *Inst. 2:13. 11. XV*.
- 110 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 12. III*.
- 111 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 12. IV*. Following Isaiah 11:2, he identifies the principal gifts as wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord, and critiques the scholastic addition of “piety” from the Vulgate as unnecessary. This fullness was not merely symbolic, but “a true and real communication” of the Spirit, whose presence in Christ is continuous and functional to His office as Mediator of the covenant.
- 112 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 12. II*.
- 113 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 11. XV*.
- 114 As Turretin writes, “Although the soul of Christ even from the beginning rejoiced in happiness ... still he had not as yet its fullness ... he should at length obtain it after his resurrection.” Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 12. VIII*.
- 115 Turretin argues that Christ has two kinds of knowledge: infused, received “by the grace of the Holy Spirit sanctifying his gifts (Isa 11:1–2),” and acquired, namely, “the actual knowledge which Christ gained both by ratiocination ... and by his own experience” (cf. Heb. 4:15; 5:8). Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 13. VIII*.
- 116 Turretin, *Inst. 2:13. 13. VII*.