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Causa Causarum*

(c) VASQUEZ

The doctrine of Gabriel Vasquez (1551-1604) on the transcendental good and final causality is to be found in his commentary on the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas.¹ We will examine first his doctrine of the good, with special regard to the question how far he too was influenced by the writings of Durandus.² From that we will turn to see his teaching on final causality.

Vasquez's doctrine of the good is to be found principally in his commentary on the *Prima Pars*, Disputation XXIII. We immediately notice that the first two chapters of this disputation are a presentation of Durandus's opinion of the good and a refutation of part of this opinion.

Unlike his contemporary Suarez, then, Vasquez did not attempt to adopt and interpret Durandus in accordance with his own mind, though he did accept part of Durandus's teaching. Like Suarez, however, he chose the doctrine of Hervaeus,³ without accepting it integrally, as a starting-point for the development of his own opinion.

Suarez, as we may remember, having set forth his own notion of the *ratio formalis* of the good, then considered, by way of replying to a difficulty, how it would apply to good considered either *in se* or relatively to another. Vasquez, on the other hand, opens his treatment with this division of the good and thence proceeds to formulate his opinion as to the nature of the transcendental good. In making this division of the good, Vasquez says:

Tribus igitur modis aliquid dicitur bonum, primo, in seipso, quatenus in se bonum est, et non alteri. Secundo dicitur bonum, quod alteri bonum est, cujus ratio in relatione congruentiae, et convenientiae cum alio posita videtur. Hoc vero genus boni adhuc duobus modis contingere potest. Aut enim est in naturalibus, sicut calor in debita proportionem, et sanitas respectu animalis; Aut est in moralibus, et sic actio moralis quae dicitur esse secundum rectam rationem aut conveniens naturae rationali, ut rationalis est, illi bona est.⁴

In considering the good, Vasquez reduces these three modes to the basic division of the good into *bonum alteri* and *bonum in se*. He first turns to the *bonum alteri* and there, in agreement with the opinion of Durandus, he places the *bonum alteri* in a relation of *convenientia* between beings. He says:

* The first part of this article has already appeared in the *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.IV, n.1.

¹ We have used the ANTWERP edition (Belleros) of 1621.

² I must call attention to a preposterous howler which I overlooked in the final correction of the proofs of the first part of this study (*Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.IV, n.1). The date of the PARIS edition (1508) referred to in note 2 on page 80 turned up in the main text and replaced the final date (1317) of DURANDUS's revised commentary on the *Sentences*.

³ Cf. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.IV, n.1, p.87.

⁴ In *Iam disp.* 23, c.4, p.110, n.8.

Hoc jacto fundamento nostra in hac re sententia in duobus consistit. Alterum est de bono relate et ad aliud; alterum est de bono absolute, et in se: priorem partem in hoc cap. explicabimus posteriorem vero in sequenti. Bonum igitur relate, et quod est alteri bonum in relatione convenientiae positum est, et in hoc veram existimo sententiam Durandi. An vero semper relatio illa sit rationis, vel realis, parum interest. In moralibus autem, tam bonitatem, quam malitiam in universum esse relationem rationis, probabo I. 2, c.71, art.6. Inter illa vero, quae dicuntur bona hoc modo, quaedam primarie bona sunt, quia ratione sui alteri conveniunt, ut sunt formae accidentariae subjecto inhaerentes: quaedam vero dicuntur secundarie bonae ab effectu, quia aliquid bonum in subjecto efficiunt; quo pacto una substantia alteri dicitur bona.¹

However, Vasquez does not maintain that this relation of *convenientia*, this *bonum alteri* is the transcendental good. Indeed, he denies it categorically: "Observandum tamen est, bonitatem hoc modo non esse passionem entis, ut cap.2. contra Durandum probatum est."²

It is, in reality, owing to a misconception of *convenientia ad aliud* that Vasquez removes the notion of *convenientia* and the consequent *rationes appetibilitatis et finis* from the proper nature of the transcendental good. He could not understand how this notion of *convenientia* between beings could fit in with the notion of good as a property of being. In this last he was quite correct, since the aforesaid *convenientia* would indeed be as limited as the species of beings themselves. We find this argument in his refutation of Durandus immediately following the one directed against Durandus's conception of the goodness of God. He says:

Secundo, aliis rebus hoc modo non convenire bonitatem, quae est passio entis sic ostenditur. Nulla est res quae non sit absolute, et simpliciter bona, quae si aliquae malae dicuntur non absolute, et simpliciter, sed quibusdam malae dicuntur: sicut venenum animantibus: paucissimae vero aut nullae omnibus aliis conveniunt, et bonae sunt: Res igitur creatae non dicuntur bonae simpliciter ex respectu convenientiae cum aliis, sed absolute, et secundum se ratione suae entitatis. Porro qua ratione res quibusdam sunt convenientes, et bonae, aliis sunt malae, et adversae: ac proinde bonum et ens absolute non reciprocarentur, aut non minus ens et malum, quam ens, et bonum, mutua consequentia invicem penderent: quod est absurdum...³

In the light of this it may seem paradoxical that Vasquez, in exposing his own notion of the *ratio formalis* of the good, preserves that essential note of opposition to evil and yet obviously makes it appear impossible that good should be a transcendental property of being. In setting forth this notion, he says: "Ratio igitur formalis bonitatis, quae convertitur cum ente, mea quidem sententia, est integritas, et perfectio rei in suo esse."⁴

Were it not for the word "integritas" here, one might accept this definition. We have seen that St. Thomas said in the *Prima Pars* that "unumquodque dicitur bonum, in quantum est perfectum."⁵ For a correct conception of the good, however, a correct conception of how the word "perfect" applies to the good is essential. From St. Thomas we have seen that the good implies not only the notion of perfect but also that of

¹ *Op. cit.*, disp.23, c.4, p.110, n.9.

² *Ibid.*, p.111, n.9.

³ *Ibid.*, c.2, p.110, n.5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, c.5, p.111, n.12.

⁵ Q.5, a.5, c.

perfective. As we shall see, John of St. Thomas when speaking of the good as perfect shows that the good acquires its transcendental character precisely by virtue of this aspect of perfectiveness.

We noted above that Suarez when he spoke of the perfect with respect to the good failed to make the proper distinctions. We saw that he considered the perfect only as identical with being.¹ Hence he did not include the notion of perfective.

Vasquez has done the very same thing here. The word "integritas" is a first indication of his mind. Within the next few lines he gives further evidence of his misconception of St. Thomas's most direct and explicit statement that "Bonum dicit rationem appetibilis." He says that by these words, St. Thomas "non intelligit denominationem relativam a potentia appetente, nec relationem convenientiae sed rationem perfecti, in qua fundatur praecipue, et ex qua provenit, ut res aliqua appetatur."²

Vasquez has arrived at this conclusion from the doctrine of St. Thomas on the distinction of *simpliciter* and *secundum quid* when applied to being and to good. The reader may recall that in making that distinction St. Thomas wanted to show in what way being and good while "idem secundum rem" were different "secundum rationem." To this end he pointed out how *simpliciter* and *secundum quid* when applied to good were said just as inversely as when applied to being.

The reason for this inversion we found to consist in the very difference between the formal notions of being and good. Thus it is because the good bespeaks the perfect which is appetible, and "per consequens dicit rationem ultimi," as St. Thomas puts it, that it is said *simpliciter* in virtue of that which is only *secundum quid* when we speak of being. As we noted above, when treating of this matter, St. Thomas's *ultimum* here has a very profound meaning and is to be understood in the line of causality as well as in that of being.³ Indeed, St. Thomas by his very words in this response shows that he understands by perfect not merely that to which nothing of being is lacking, but as perfective of the appetite. These words are the *pauca interiecta* which Vasquez has unfortunately omitted from his argument. But let us read it as he has written it:

Hanc sententiam [viz. his opinion of the formal ratio of the good as *integritas et perfectio rei in suo esse*] dissertis verbis tradit S. Thomas in hac quaest. nam in I. art. inquit bonum esse quod omnia appetunt: unumquodque vero appetitur secundum quod est perfectum, et in solut. I. inquit: Sed bonum dicit rationem perfecti. Et *pauca interiectis*: Unde quod est ultimo perfectum, dicitur bonum simpliciter, quod autem non habet ultimam perfectionem, quam debet habere, quamvis habeat aliquam perfectionem inquantum est actu, non dicitur perfectum simpliciter, nec bonum simpliciter, sed secundum quid.⁴

Whence he derives the conclusion which we quoted above and for the sake of completeness repeat here:

¹ Cf. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.IV, n.1, p.89.

² *Op. cit.*, disp.23, c.5, p.111, n.12.

³ Cf. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.IV, n.1, p.98.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, disp.23, c.5, p.111, n.12.

Quare cum in I. a. in fine subjungit: Bonum dicit rationem appetibilis, non intelligit denominationem relativam a potentia appetente nec relationem convenientiae, sed rationem perfecti, in qua fundatur praecipue, et ex qua provenit, ut res aliqua appetatur.¹

The *pauca interjecta* without which the proper nature of the good is entirely lost are the following: "Sed bonum dicit rationem perfecti, *quod est appetibile, et per consequens dicit rationem ultimi*. Unde id quod est ultimo perfectum. . ."²

St. Thomas, therefore, did not understand the good to bespeak the perfect solely in the line of being, but according as it is perfective of the appetite, appetible and consequently ultimate. It is true that the good as perfective in this way is founded on the perfect as being, but this latter is not, taken in itself, the *ratio formalis* of the good. We shall find this pointed out most clearly in the doctrine of John of St. Thomas.

In further confirmation of his doctrine Vasquez cites St. Thomas's articles 3 and 5 of the Question V where he treats the notion of the good. He says:

In artic. 3 et 5. idem omnino docet, et tandem in art. 5. colligit rationem boni, quae in perfectione posita est, constare modo, specie et ordine. Ex quibus licet modum varie videatur explicare idem S. Doctor in hanc quaest. art. 5. et 1. 2. quaest. 85. art. 4. et quaest. 21 de veritate; eodem tamen recidit, ut optime notat Cajetan. in praedicto art. 5. Quovis autem modo explicetur, saltem ex S. Thoma habemus, rationem boni ex modo, specie et ordine constari. atque ita idem esse bonitatem entis, et integritatem illius ex his omnibus perfectam.³

In article 5 cited above, St. Thomas means to prove "quod omne ens, inquantum est ens, est bonum." He does this as follows: "Omne enim ens, inquantum est ens, est in actu, et quodammodo perfectum; quia omnis actus perfectio quaedam est. *Perfectum vero habet rationem appetibilis et boni*, ut ex dictis patet (art.1). Unde sequitur omne ens, inquantum hujusmodi, bonum esse."⁴ It is most evident here that St. Thomas considers the perfect to be good in so far as it is appetible, and has *convenientia* with the appetite. It is thus that the good is distinguished from being, although the two are identical and coextensive *secundum rem*.

In article 5, where St. Thomas proves the *ratio boni* to consist in mode, species and order he concludes with the sentence we underlined above when we quoted this entire article. "Unde ratio boni, *secundum quod consistit in perfecto esse*, consistit etiam in modo, specie, et ordine." Thus it is only according as perfect is considered in the line of being that good, having the *ratio perfecti*, consists in mode, species and order.

Moreover, we must remember that to have mode, species and order is proper to the created good. St. Thomas notes this in his reply to an objection in the first article of Question VI, in the *Prima Pars*. He says: "...Habere modum, speciem et ordinem, pertinet ad rationem boni creati;

¹ *Op. cit.*, disp.23, c.5, p.111, n.12.

² ST. THOMAS, *Ia*, q.5, a.1, ad 1.

³ *Op. cit.*, disp.23, c.5, p.111, n.13.

⁴ *Ia*, q.5, a.3, c.

sed bonum in Deo est sicut in causa; unde ad eum pertinet imponere aliis modum, speciem et ordinem. Unde ista tria sunt in Deo sicut in causa."¹ The question which Vasquez raises as to the way in which St. Thomas defines mode in the various passages is beyond both the point involved and the scope of this paper.

Having misunderstood the notion of "perfect," Vasquez defined the proper nature of the transcendental good in a way which renders good and being identical *re et ratione*. He apparently evades this formal identity by a corollary which reduces good to a relation. But this destroys the transcendental character of the good. Yet it was precisely to retain this character that he had previously denied the doctrine of Durandus which made good a *relatio convenientiae* between beings. Vasquez's corollary reads:

Verum rogabit aliquis, utrum ratio bonitatis sit absoluta, an respectiva, vel ab utraque abstracta. Respondeo ex superiori doctrina bonitatem hoc modo esse relationem, non quidem convenientiae unius rei cum altera, ut putavit Durandus, sed integritatis ex pluribus. Conventus enim omnium absque defectu ad alicujus rei constitutionem relate significatur: haec autem relatio non est ad ipsam essentiam tanquam alicujus rei convenientis, sed est inter ea, quae ad integritatem conveniunt: ipsam quoque essentiam quodammodo respicit tanquam ex eis consummatam, et perfectam. Utrum autem haec relatio sit rationis tantum: an realis, non curo: certum tamen est, in rebus simplicibus esse solum rationis: nam conventus eorum, quae sola ratione distinguuntur, non potest esse realis, ut patet. Quare si haec bonitas esset relatio realis, in rebus tantum compositis esse posset.²

By means of this relation of reason as constitutive of the transcendental good in simple things, Vasquez was able to posit his transcendental goodness of God, which makes God good in Himself. He concludes the corollary by showing how this goodness is said of God.

Ceterum, ut finem imponam huic disputationi, id quod praecipue ad nostrum spectat institutum ex dictis inferamus, Deum videlicet esse bonum, immo summe bonum, hoc genere bonitatis, quae constituitur veluti passio entis. Est enim integer, et perfectus in suo esse, ut nihil ei deesse possit, sive ex iis, quae ad essentiam, sive ad personas, sive ad operationes et emanationes pertinet.³

We may note here that Vasquez holds this good, whose proper nature is a relation of integrity, either real or of reason, to be *veluti passio entis*. In what sense he considers it a property of being is indicated throughout his treatise by the frequent use of the word "reciprocal" in place of "convertible" in connection with being and good. That he follows Durandus's opinion of convertibility *non essentialiter sed denominative* is certain from his own explanation of the relevant passage in the first part of his disputation. It is evident, further, from the corollary to his explanation of how simple things are said to be good *in se*. Showing that they may be called good in so far as by our intellect we discern various perfections in such simple entities and then bind them together by the relation of reason of integrity, he adds: "Ex quibus etiam colligere licet, ens, et bonum non essentialiter reciprocari, sed denominative juxta notata in I cap."⁴

¹ Ad 1.

² *Op. cit.*, disp.23, c.7, p.113, n.20.

³ *Ibid.*, n.21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, c.6, p.113, n.19.

Vasquez rejects the relation of *convenientia* between beings as the *ratio formalis* of the transcendental good, yet he does not set it over and against the good in all respects. It constitutes, according to him, the notion of *bonum alteri*. In article 4 of Question V, St. Thomas had said: "...Cum bonum sit quod omnia appetunt; hoc autem habeat rationem finis; manifestum est quod bonum rationem finis importat."¹ Vasquez explains this as follows:

Conclusio affirmat, quae intelligenda est non de bono, quod in integritate rei positum est, sed de bono relate ad alterum, quod dicitur alicui convenientis: de quo genere boni praecedenti disputatione dictum est. Ceterum, ut ibi notavimus; haec ratio boni convenientis alteri, oritur ex bonitate ipsius rei, quae est ejus integritas, et perfectio et recipitur cum ente.²

We find Vasquez's doctrine of final causality in his commentary on the *Prima Secundae*. There he teaches that the proper nature of final cause is none other than the objective concept of goodness as *convenientia*. This objective concept moves the appetite by manifesting the *convenientia* between the external object and the appetite, and thus rendering the external thing appetible in the proper sense of the term. In other words, final causality is entirely a matter of intellection.

We noted the germ of this concept in the doctrine of Durandus who held that the first motion of the good is that whereby the practical intellect is moved to apprehend the relation of *convenientia*. For Durandus this seems to have been properly a motion of the intellect, the good acting as object. Vasquez goes farther, in that he confines the formal *ratio* of final cause to the intellect. But let us read Vasquez's doctrine in his own words:

His praemissis notationibus, nostra sententia, et natura ipsa, seu ratio formalis finis facile explicari potest. Dicimus igitur primum, ex illis tribus, quae ex parte finis reperiuntur, ut supra notatum est, illud esse objectivum, quod est bonum apprehensum, esse objectum ipsum formale voluntatis, sicut color est objectum formale visus, ac si cum Logicis diceremus, conceptus objectivus, in quem fertur voluntas est ratio formalis objecti. Deinde dicendum est, conceptum formalem, et denominationem illam cogniti in conceptu objectivo non pertinere ad rationem formalem objecti, sed esse conditionem objecti voluntatis, nisi quando finis est res supposito a nobis distincta, et habet rationem finis, et appetitus quatenus nobis coniungenda per cognitionem. Utraque pars nostrae sententiae facile probatur; prior quidem quia illud dicitur esse objectum formale voluntatis, in quod fertur voluntas affectu suo ratione ipsius: ita enim est ratio volendi, ut etiam sit volitum: hujusmodi autem est bonum objective existens in intellectu, ut manifestum est: ergo illud est formale objectum voluntatis concrete. Ratio vero formalis abstracte erit bonitas in eo apprehensa, nempe convenientia: quo circa esse reale finis quod est in rebus, aut erit, secundum se non movet, sed quatenus objective apparet in intellectu: cum tamen quaecunque causa efficiens, formalis, aut materialis solum causet secundum esse reale, quod habet extra animam. Ratio vero discriminis est, quia caeterae causae non causant medio sui desiderio, sed secundum quod sunt re ipsa talis, aut talis naturae: at vero finis causat medio sui desiderio, et nisi medio amore sui causare non potest, amor autem respicit ut proprium objectum rem objective existentem in intellectu, ergo ratio finis est id, quod obicitur voluntati media cognitione. Ex quo sit, ut interdum sicut inferius dicemus, finis sit res omnino conficta ab intellectu nullum habens esse adhuc futurum, sed tantum objective existens in intellectu.³

¹ Ia, q.5, a.4, c.

² Op. cit., q.5, a.4, in explicatione articuli, p.118.

³ In Iam I lae, disp.2, c.2, p.9.

For Vasquez, therefore, the *convenientia* apprehended in the objective concept seems to be the *ratio formalissima* of the final cause. In setting forth this opinion, he was trying to find a middle course between two schools of thought regarding the proper nature of the final cause. As he lists these two opinions, the first holds that the final cause moves by its real being and that consequently its apprehension is only a condition required for its exercise. The other opinion maintains that the intellectual apprehension of the final cause is its very *ratio causandi*.

Vasquez, it seems, tried to avoid both of these positions by making a distinction between the objective concept according as it is in the intellect and according as it is affected by the extrinsic denomination of "to be known." The objective concept existing in the intellect was for him the *ratio formalis* of the end; on the other hand, both the objective concept *qua* denominated as well as the formal concept—i.e. the means by which the thing is known and objectively represented in the intellect, were for him only the *conditio sine qua non* of finality; they take on the nature of end only when they are considered as *finis quo*.

Vasquez's whole theory of final causality owes its fallacy to his erroneous notion of the objective concept. What he thought it to be may be gathered from his own words in one of the *praenotationes* to the passage just quoted. He writes:

Deinde observandum est, ex parte finis, aut objecti voluntatis tria esse. Primum est, ratio ipsa, quae cognoscitur ut bona, objective existens in intellectu: veluti ratio sanitatis, ratio divitiarum, honoris, aut alterius boni, quod apprehenditur a nobis, tamquam nobis conveniens: et hoc possumus appellare conceptum objectivum rei, ut logici loquuntur.¹

This same notion of objective concept undoubtedly prompted Vasquez to follow Durandus in his doctrine of formal truth, a doctrine summed up by John of St. Thomas in the following words: "Ista veritas est in conceptu objectivo, ita quod ipsa conformitas inter rem objective attactam et seipsam ut est in re, dicitur veritas formalis,"² whereas in reality "conceptus . . . objectivus non est conceptus repraesentans, sed res concepta et objecta ipsi cognitioni."³ And he points out just how a distinction may be made in the objective concept between the "thing" known and that same thing considered as to the denomination it derives from the fact that it is "known." "Conceptus autem objectivus quantum ad rem est idem quod res ipsa in se: haec enim est quae objicitur et cognoscitur; quantum autem ad statum seu denominationem objectivi, hoc resultat in ipsa re, ex eo quod cognoscatur et concipiatur."⁴

If, therefore, the objective concept is considered on the part of the thing alone, it is identical with the thing in itself *in rerum natura*, and does

¹ *Op. cit.*, disp.2, c.2, p.9.

² *Curs. theol.*, T.II, disp.22, a.2, n.1 (ed. SOLESMES), p.604.

³ *Ibid.*, n.9, p.606.

⁴ *Ibid.*

not exist in the intellect. According to John of St. Thomas in this same treatise, moreover, the objective concept considered as including the denomination "known" supposes the formal concept.

Vasquez's notion of objective concept renders impossible a distinction like the one we have quoted from John of St. Thomas. For Vasquez the objective concept considered from the part of the thing alone is not identical with the thing in *natura rerum* but is a concept present in the intellect, and product of the formal concept. According to his theory, therefore, it seems impossible to divorce the denomination "known" from the objective concept.

Thus conceiving of final causality not only as dependent on intellection, but as identical with the apprehension of the *convenientia* of a being to the appetite of the being apprehending. Vasquez made final causality impossible for creatures below the intellectual level. That he himself saw this is evident from his words:

...Ideo agentia naturalia non dicuntur proprie movere seipsa in finem, eo quod non cognoscant, ac proinde non desiderent finem; sed latiori dumtaxat modo dicuntur moveri in finem, quia a causa prima intelligente finem, et terminum suarum actionum moventur...¹

By this doctrine Vasquez not only denied the very Aristotelian concept of nature which we referred to in our discussion of the Suarezian doctrine, but also left open the way for the accusation of anthropomorphism so often made by more modern critics of teleology.

In his *Cursus philosophicus* John of St. Thomas attacks the opinion that apprehension is the proper nature of final causality. His thesis concerning this matter is as follows: "Apprehensio non est ratio formalis finalizandi, sed conditio requisita ad finem pro ea parte, qua finis etiam est objectum, neque est conditio solum per modum applicationis, sed etiam per modum existentiae."² In support of this thesis he argues that apprehension is a necessary condition for anything being an object of the will, whether it be end or means. Hence, he concludes that apprehension, since it is common to both end and non-end, cannot be the *ratio formalis* of final causality. He applies this argument to both the formal and objective concepts and in this latter he evidently appears to take position directly against Vasquez. He says:

Quod non solum convincit cognitionem et conceptum formalem esse conditionem, et non rationem formalem, sed neque ipsam rationem conceptus objectivi *ut apprehensi et ut habentis esse intentionale*, quia hoc ipsum est commune omni appetibili et objecto volito, sive sit finis, sive non.³

As a further argument John states that apprehension is in the line of manifestation, in that it manifests the appetibility of the good. Then he shows that since the good as end is in the line of appetibility, while the apprehension is in an entirely different line, namely that of manifestation,

¹ *Op. cit.*, q.1, in notatione circa a.2, q.1.

² T.II, p.272b16.

³ *Ibid.*, p.273a1.

the two cannot be considered as one *ratio formalis*. Instead, appetibility is to be considered as presupposed to apprehension, which serves to make it manifest. Appetibility is of the *ratio formalis* of the good and of end, but apprehension is only a condition *sine qua non*.

In the case of creatures below the intellectual level, this requisite condition of apprehension is replaced by their very nature which is a "*ratio cujusdam artis, scilicet divinae*." Thus, although not possessing their own manifestative apprehension, they move nevertheless to a determined end, being responsive by reason of their very nature to the direct appetibility of that end.

Vasquez also misinterprets the meaning of the "metaphorical motion" of the end. He says:

Neque obstat, quod inter causas physicas finis etiam connumeratur: nam non omnis causa naturalis, effectus eodem modo causare debet: et de fine plane docuit Aristoteles primo lib. de generat. et corruptione c.7, textu 55. non movere physice, hoc est secundum esse reale suum, sed metaphorice: dicitur autem movere metaphorice, quia per sui desiderium tantum movet ut sequenti articulo dicemus, et ita solum est causa physici effectus media causa efficienti rationali, quae dicitur gratia finis operari per desiderium ipsius.¹

What the main fallacy is in this doctrine, and in what way it leaves open the door for anthropomorphism, we shall see shortly when considering the doctrine of John of St. Thomas about the causality of the end. Before turning to this, we will summarize briefly our view of the teaching of Vasquez.

Like Durandus, Vasquez misunderstood the nature of a property of being. Both interpreted the good as a relation, Vasquez adding that it could be a relation of reason as well as a real relation. Vasquez did see Durandus's error in making so specialized a thing as *convenientia* between beings a transcendental property of being. Yet he himself did not quite escape this misinterpretation of *convenientia*. Instead of seeing in it the proper nature of the transcendental good, he left it as something flowing from that proper nature, and identified it with the *ratio finis*. He formed in this way a new link in the process leading to the denial of final causality, inasmuch as he made end identical with *convenientia* between beings. His next misleading step was to define the proper nature of final causality as the objective concept manifestative of this *convenientia* between beings. Thereby he opened the way for the objection of anthropomorphism. The transcendental good itself was for him the relation (either of reason or real) of integrity in the very entity of being.

III. DOCTRINE OF JOHN OF ST. THOMAS

John of St. Thomas (1589-1644) in his *Cursus philosophicus* and *Cursus theologicus* re-stated with unusual profundity St. Thomas's doctrine

¹ *Op. cit.*, disp.2, c.2, p.9.

of the good and of final cause. Many of his theses and arguments stand in direct opposition to the concept of the good and final cause which we find in Vasquez and Suarez.

John of St. Thomas's doctrine of the transcendental good is contained in the *Cursus theologicus*, in the Disputation concerning Questions V and VI of the *Prima Pars*. There he investigates the good under two aspects: first, what as a *passio entis* it adds to being; and, secondly, what is its *ratio formalis*.

Regarding the first of these he points out that a property of being cannot add anything *really* distinct to being, since being is the most universal of all things, and therefore anything really distinct added to it would destroy the universality. Hence, a property of being must include, in its own reality, being itself, and not only whatever in some way it adds to being. To quote John's own words:

Quare formalis ratio boni, et aliarum passionum entis, non potest distingui ab ipsa entitate, sed est ipsamet entitas: non absolute, sed supponendo aliquam connotationem vel condicionem, qua supposita, et per ordinem ad illam, entitas ipsa est passio; sicut in Deo ipsamet essentia, ut explicat peculiarem aliquam condicionem, est attributum.¹

This idea of a *passio entis* implies a very fine distinction, a distinction alien to a mind clinging altogether to the usual concept of property or *passio*, as understood of the accidental properties attaching to certain non-transcendental natures. In these nature and property can be distinguished as substance and accident. To illustrate this, John of St. Thomas uses the example of risibility as a property of man.²

In contrasting the properties of being with the ordinary kinds of property, John of St. Thomas is laying the ground-work for his principal criticism of the errors of Durandus and Vasquez. How he answered these errors more specifically we shall see later when dealing with the erroneous conception of good as a relation.

Turning secondly to the formal notion of the good, John of St. Thomas writes: "Cum autem bonum sit formaliter oppositum malo et excludat illud, necesse est formalem rationem boni venari ex illa condicione seu formalitate, quae formalius est exclusiva mali: inde enim accipi debet constitutio boni."³

In the sequel, John points out that the proper nature of the good cannot formally consist "in aliquo absoluto superaddito enti; nec in aliqua relatione reali, vel rationis."⁴ Whereupon, he lays down in the following words what precisely this proper nature of the transcendental good is.

Dico secundo: Formalis ratio boni transcendentalis consistit in ipsa perfectione intrinseca et entitativa rei, quatenus fundat et connotat rationem perfectivi per modum appetibilis, et non solum per modum formae informantis et constituentis.

¹ *Curs. theol.*, T.I, p.519, n.7.

² *Ibid.*, p.524, n.22.

³ *Ibid.*, p.519, n.7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, n.8.

Et licet appetibilitas explicetur per relationem quamdam rationis ad appetitum, sicut scibile per relationem rationis ad scientiam: non tamen in ista relatione formaliter consistit ipsa ratio boni, sed in eo quod est fundamentum hujus relationis et ei praesupponitur, licet eam connotet aut fundet.¹

This conclusion is based on several texts from St. Thomas. One is that of the *Prima Pars*, Question XLVIII, article 5, wherein the Angelic Doctor says: "...[Bonum] in perfectione et actu consistit principaliter et per se"; another is that of Question V, article 5 of this same Part: "...Unumquodque dicitur bonum in quantum est perfectum: sic enim est appetibile." We saw this text above when summarizing the doctrine of St. Thomas, along with the principal text which John uses to support his doctrine, the text of Question XXI, article 1 of the *De Veritate*.

In his definition, John has been most careful not to confuse the two fundamental notions of the transcendental good, viz. its notion as a *passio entis*, and the notion of good as excluding evil. He named the latter as the genus in his definition, "perfectione intrinseca et entitativa rei." As he says, "quod perfectum sit, omnes intelligunt tamquam per se notum." The reason for this universal acknowledgment that the good is the perfect is that only the perfect rules out evil, since the perfect is that which has all the actuality due to it.

We saw above that Vasquez in setting forth his notion of the transcendental good used a similar argument to prove his position. We noted at the same time that while he placed the transcendental good in the perfection of the thing, he did not understand fully the signification of this word "perfectum" as applied to the good. Like Suarez, he overlooked that the good as perfect comprises something more than actuality and being.

In setting down the specific difference of his definition, John of St. Thomas distinguishes two notions of perfect. From this distinction we will be able to discern where Suarez and Vasquez were in error.

John points out that two types of perfection may be conceived: the constitutive and the perfective. Of these the former pertains to the genus of formal cause, for it constitutes and integrates the entity in itself. Perfective perfection, on the other hand, is of the genus of final cause, for it involves the appetible. It is that which perfects, not as constituting in actuality, but as drawing, attracting to itself as to an end. As John points out, this second sense is more proper of perfection than the first, for it is more proper of perfection to perfect than to constitute in integrity. "Perfectum perficere" is indeed an example of the fourth mode *dicendi per se*: "secundum quod haec praepositio *per* designat habitudinem causae efficientis, vel cuiuscunque alterius."² Since, therefore, the proper nature of the good consists in the perfect, as St. Thomas says, we may well conclude that it consists in the *perfectum per se* in all its actuality, rather than in the perfect considered as static, divorced from its own causality and constituting entity only.

¹ *Op. cit.*, T.I, pp.520-521, n.12.

² Cf. ST. THOMAS, *In I Post. Anal.*, lect.10, n.7.

In denominating good *perfectum per se* we must be careful to have always in mind that we are employing the fourth mode *dicendi per se*. Hence *perfectum per se* here is synonymous with *perfectum perfectivum alterius*. When one says *per se*, the mind tends to think of a thing as an absolute, enclosed in itself. *Per se* in the fourth mode, however, having the notion of *perfective* connotes another and this other in the case of the good is the appetite. Thus good, as *perfectum per se*, is *perfectum perfectivum appetitus per modum finis*.

In making this distinction of the perfect, and in setting forth the notion of the perfect as perfective, constituting the specific difference in his *ratio formalis* of the good, John of St. Thomas has clearly shown where Durandus, Suarez and Vasquez fell into error. It is indeed this notion of the good as perfective of the appetite which gives to it the character of a property of being. Considered simply as constitutive perfection, it has the necessary note of exclusion of evil, but it lacks that of property of being. In examining the doctrines of Durandus, Suarez and Vasquez, we did not find any of them including this note of perfectivity of the appetite in the proper nature of the good. As we saw, Durandus and Vasquez had a fundamentally erroneous notion of good as a property of being; Suarez, however, had the correct notion of property of being, and so, as we noted, he was driven into logical inconsistency in his final position.

The notion of *convenientia ad aliud* given as the proper nature of the transcendental good by Suarez cannot be referred to the perfect as perfective but only to the perfect as constitutive. As we have seen before, the *aliud* for him was another being; and his reason for placing in this notion the proper nature of the good lay in the fact that this *convenientia* seemed to add to the connotation of integrity and completeness which in his view attached to the perfect.

Constitutive perfection, however, as we have said, cannot be a *passio entis*. It is nothing other than being itself; it is actuality as constituting and integrating being. Perfective perfection does add something to being; it adds a certain respectus, a *convenientia* to another, which other in the case of the good is the intellectual appetite. As we saw in St. Thomas, it is necessary that this perfectivity, this *convenientia* have for its object the intellectual soul, since that soul "quodammodo est omnia."

Thus perfective perfection implies in being a certain connotation: it confers on being a certain orientation, which is the basis of the relation of reason by which we know being as good. "Perficiens," therefore, is the specific difference in the *ratio formalis* of the good. This *ratio formalis* may be simply summed up in two words, provided they are rightly understood: "perfectio perficiens." To stress this notion — that it is the perfect as perfective which makes the good a property of being —, we may well read the words of John of St. Thomas describing what is a *passio entis*.

Nec valet argumentum, quod passio debet distingui a re cujus est passio, et sic bonum ab ente. Jam enim dictum est, quod non est passio rigorose: sed solum ratione distincta, et secundum diversum conceptum exprimendi ens ut in se, vel ut perfectivum alicujus.¹

¹ *Op. cit.*, T.I, p.524.

From these words we must not infer that good can be considered a relation of reason. To be sure, it is *known* to us by a relation of reason which it founds, and may therefore be said "*ratione distincta [ab ente].*" To clarify the point again with the words of John of St. Thomas:

Non tamen potest formaliter in hac relatione consistere bonum, licet per illam a nobis explicetur: quia non potest realis bonitas constitui per id quod rationis est. Unde formale constitutum boni non potest distingui ab ente, sed entitative et in re coincidunt. Superaddit autem ad essentiam, non id quod formaliter est constitutum sui: sed id quod se habet ut condicio requisita ad hoc ut bonum exprimat distinctum conceptum quam ens absolute dictum: quod non exprimeret nisi conditionem illam superadderet.¹

Thus, although this relation of reason is not the *ratio formalis* of the good, it is very important for our knowing that *ratio formalis*. Why? Simply because of the abstract nature of the properties of being, in which "*radicale et formale coincidunt, et solum penes diversos conceptus seu habitudines distinguuntur: et secundum quod fundant istam diversitatem, dicitur unum radicaliter fundare alterum.*"²

Expressly combating the tendency to see the proper nature of the good in a relation, John of St. Thomas in the *Cursus theologicus* sets forth arguments to prove that neither a relation of reason, a predicamental relation, nor a transcendental relation can constitute the *ratio formalis* of the good. He argues first of all that it is obviously absurd to call the good a relation of reason, because it is a property of real being: if it were only a relation of reason it would not belong to being *in re*. He then proffers an equally evident proof that good cannot be a predicamental relation. As a property of being, good must be co-extensive with being. Predicamental relation, however, is only one of the ten divisions of being and so is not being universally considered. Thus, in so far as it is a good, it is rather a certain particular good and not the proper nature of the transcendental good. These first two arguments are directed against the positions of Durandus and Vasquez, the first asserting good to be a real relation of *convenientia* and the latter, asserting good to be a relation of integrity, either real or of reason. In his last argument John proves in the following words that good cannot be a transcendental relation:

Transcendentalis enim relatio qua aliquid ordinatur ad alterum, potius dicit rationem perfectibilis et tendentiae ad bonum et perfectum, quam ipsam formalem rationem boni; licet enim plura perficiantur aliquo respectu transcendentali, tamen non dicuntur formaliter bona quia sic respiciunt et perficiuntur, sed quia supposita tali relatione et perfectione terminant respectum appetitus ad se et redduntur appetibilia.³

This argument may be conceived as directed against the position of Suarez. Suarez, it is true, never uses the term "transcendental relation" when outlining his position. His *ratio convenientiae*, however, which the good adds to being and which, as he says, "*non est proprium relatio, sed solum connotat in alio talem naturam habentem naturalem inclinationem, capacitatem, vel conjunctionem cum tali perfectione,*" may be construed

¹ *Op. cit.*, T.I, p.523.

² *Ibid.*, p.524.

³ *Ibid.*, p.520.

as a transcendental relation. John of St. Thomas tells us in his *Logic* that a transcendental relation "non est forma adveniens subjecto seu rei absolutae, sed illi imbibita, connotans tamen aliquid extrinsecum, a quo pendet vel circa quod versatur, ut materia ad formam, caput ad capitatum, creatura ad Deum."¹

Since, therefore, Suarez's good seems to be a *ratio rei absolutae imbibita*, connoting something extrinsic, it may be looked upon as a transcendental relation. It does not, however, seem to have the notion of perfectible, and so one may doubt whether or not John's refutation applies to it.

In conclusion, we will turn to the *Cursus philosophicus* to see how John of St. Thomas placed the causality of the end. We shall be able to discern where Suarez and Vasquez erred in this as well as in their notions of the metaphorical motion of the end. His one conclusion reads: "Metaphorica motio, qua finis dicitur causare secundum veritatem, est primus amor finis ut passive pendens ab appetibili, non ut active elicitus a voluntate."² As he himself notes, this conclusion supposes one thing. It will be well to quote his own words in regard to this supposition:

Supponit, quod causalitas finis, licet metaphorice sit motio, vere tamen esse causalitatem realem, quia alias si totum, quod datur in causalitate finis, esset metaphoricum et nihil reale, finis non esset vera causa physica, cum tamen sit praecipua et prima causarum, imo per excellentiam est id, cujus causa seu cujus gratia cetera fiunt. Ergo si nullam veram causalitatem habet, vera causa non est.³

The cause best known to us is the efficient cause. Its causality consists in action: the action of the agent on the effect. For us, therefore, the idea of action, of motion, is invariably tied up with the idea of causality. Causality as such, nevertheless, consists rather in the influence exerted in the entity of a thing. This influence need not always be a motion in the proper sense.

It is probably because when we speak of causality we always look for motion that the causality of the end is also described in terms of motion. It is, indeed, called a metaphorical motion. But, seeing that metaphor removes the mind from the world of reality one may be tempted to look upon final causality itself as unreal. It is against this that John warns us in the above-quoted passage. Final causality, though only metaphorically motion, is real *influre in esse*.

In explaining the metaphorical motion proper to final causality, John of St. Thomas analyses the prime act of love. In this act two formalities are joined — that of the first effect of the final cause, and that of its causality. He formulates this doctrine succinctly as follows:

... In illa volitione sunt duo: Alterum, quod est causatum a fine, alterum, quod est ratio causandi. Neque est mirum, quod causalitas identificetur cum causato, quia etiam actio identificatur cum effectu. Id ergo, quod elicientiae seu actionis est in illa volitione, est causatum a fine, quod vero coaptationis et coniunctionis est cum appetibili seu ordinis ad ipsum, quo redditur ponderans in appetitu, ut inclinetur

¹ *Curs. phil.*, T.I, p.578b30.

² *Op. cit.*, T.II, p.278a23.

³ *Ibid.*, p.278a29-40.

ad se et ad alia, hoc dicitur attractio per modum causalitatis ad actum, ut explicatum est. Unde ista attractio et causalitas identice et realiter est ipse actus amoris, formaliter est ordo seu dependentia ipsius ab objecto appetibili proposito ut ponderante in voluntate.¹

Again he says: "Imo ipsemet amor finis ut elicited a voluntate est causatus a fine, ut autem passive pendens ab ipso pondere appetibilis causalitas finis est..."² Among the texts which he quotes from the Angelic Doctor, a most important one is taken from the *De Veritate*. It reads: "Sicut autem influere causae efficientis est agere; ita influere causae finalis est appeti et desiderari."³

Further explaining what he means by saying that the causality of the end is the act of love in so far as it is dependent passively on the very "weight" of the appetible, John follows St. Thomas in distinguishing a certain immutation in the act of love from the *complacentia* of this act. Between these two lies the bridge from final to efficient causality. The formality of final causality is the immutation of the appetite; that of efficient causality is the *complacentia*.

That immutation of the will which is the formality of final causality precedes the complacency, though both *in re* constitute the same action of the will. John of St. Thomas explains in the following words why this immutation must precede and what it is:

At vero finis non constituit speciem, sed movet agens ad exercitium actionis, et quia non potest exercere actionem nisi per aliquam inclinationem, quae generaliter dicitur appetitus, neque inclinatio potest tendere nisi ad aliquid certum, prius necesse est, quod reddatur inclinatio proportionata respectu illius termini in quem tendit. Et illa proportio seu immutatio reddit inclinationem quasi conjunctam ipsi appetibili. Et sic inclinatio ponderosa facta tendit in finem...⁴

This immutation is said to be to the first love of the will as a passion, because it is as it were breathed onto the will by the object. Thus also is it called a metaphorical motion. In this immutation there is no true *transitus*, and hence no true motion. There is only that attraction, that proportion, that connaturality whereby the end is said to move in an immobile way.

To summarize this conception of the causality of the end, we may say that the latter is really identical with the first motion of love of the will. In this love, however, we distinguish two formalities: the act of the will as an action elicited by the will, and this is called the first effect of the final cause; and the immutation of the will whereby it is inclined as by a weight, and this metaphorical motion we call final causality. In intellectual agents the act of the will is elicited by knowledge which gives intentional existence to the end; in natural agents lacking knowledge, this function is supplied by their nature itself, which is in its own way a participation of reason derived from the Prime Intellect.

¹ *Curs. phil.*, T.II, pp.282b45-283a18.

² *Ibid.*, p.279a5.

³ Q.22, a.2, c.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, T.II, p.279b1-14.

In comparing this doctrine with the one taught by Suarez, we may remember that he distinguished between *actus secundus* and *quasi actus primus* in final causation. *Actus secundus* he regarded as the very act of the will, *quasi actus primus* as the good. We noted above that his distinction of *quasi actus primus* and *actus secundus* did not seem to be in exact conformity with Thomistic doctrine. Prescinding from this, however, and taking account of his texts on the *actus secundus* of final causation, as already given,¹ one might conceive that he had the correct notion. He places this *actus secundus* in the action of the will not according as it is from the will but according as it is from the end.

He asserts, moreover,² that the two are identical *in re* and are distinct only *ratione*. In all this he may seem to be quite in agreement with the doctrine of John of St. Thomas. When, however, we come to understand his meaning more precisely, we find him widely at variance with that doctrine. When he speaks of final causality as the action of the will, considered as coming from the end, he means that the causality consists precisely in this action. Now, this action being a real action, the causality itself turns out to be a real motion. We learn this from his definition of metaphorical motion as a real motion, the motion of the final cause. It is called "metaphorical," he adds, so as to distinguish it from the motion of the efficient cause.³

Hence when Suarez speaks of identity *in re* between the causality and the effect of the end, he concurs with the opinion of John of St. Thomas. But when he goes on to say that, because the same action yet has two principles, it must follow that the "causality" and the "effect of the end" are distinct *ratione*, he is on his own. This conception, as we saw above,⁴ led Suarez to confuse final and efficient causality in the case of God. It is equally consonant with his doctrine of the finality of natural things which implies an identification of the action of God with that of the creature. Indeed, if real action flows from the final cause, even though it be conceived of as an attraction in contrast with the impulse of efficient cause, we cannot escape the confusion of efficient and final causality.

John of St. Thomas, as we saw, points out that the formalities of effect and causality are distinct *ratione*: one is the real action (efficient causality), the other is the metaphorical motion (the immutation of the will, its "being weighted" by the good). Unless we maintain that this influence of the final cause is a metaphorical motion, we shall not be able to distinguish it from efficient causality. Moreover, the real action in which effect and causality of the end are identified, does not depend equally upon efficient and final cause, but on the efficient as moved by the final.

Vasquez's error in this matter of the causality of the end, like his error on the notion of the good, is less subtle than that of Suarez. As we saw above, he places the *ratio formalis* of the end in the objective concept and

¹ Cf. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol. IV, n.1, p.100.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, p.101.

³ *Disput. Metaph.*, disp.23, sec.9, n.12.

⁴ *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol. IV, n.1, p.105.

hence requires active intellection as causality of the end. It would seem, however, that he sees in intellection the first motion of the end only. He defines this metaphorical motion as movement "per desiderium sui," as we have already seen. In so affirming these two motions, he has followed closely a doctrine first laid down by Durandus.¹

Vasquez's concept of the motion of the end "per desiderium sui" could be understood in the true sense, if he meant that "desiderium" to be understood in the passive sense, in agreement with those words of St. Thomas: "Influere causae finalis est appeti et desiderari."² However, as is evident from his following words, it was not in the passive but in the active motion of desire that he placed the proper causality of the end: Multo probabilior sententia est finem exercere munus, et officium propriae causae finalis, non quidem ad desiderium sui, sed solum per desiderium sui movendo ad voluntatem mediorum vel ad aliquod opus ordinatum ad sui ipsius consequutionem...³

Hence, for Vasquez, the motion of the end was twofold, that of intellection and that of desire. Having regard to his mistaken notion of objective concept we might excuse him from formally holding active intellection to be the motion of the end; yet his conception of the metaphorical motion of the end as desire, indeed as an active desire, suggests the opposite interpretation. For him, seemingly, "metaphorical" motion — as for Suarez — was not metaphorical but real.

* * *

Let us briefly sum up what we have been trying to make out. Our purpose has been to show that the rejection of final causality by modern thinkers was preceded by gradually deepening errors concerning the nature of the good amongst the Scholastics themselves. We chose Vasquez and Suarez, both commentators of St. Thomas, because of the influence they exerted at such a critical epoch: the epoch when Modern Philosophy broke away from Scholasticism altogether. We believe to have succeeded in showing that these authors did not derive their developments of the notion of good and final cause from St. Thomas. Rather, they were deeply influenced by Durandus's fashion of handling the problem. Now Durandus — who published his revised Commentary, anti-thomistic in parts, on the Sentences soon after St. Thomas's teaching had been declared (Sarragossa, 1309) the official doctrine of his Order — had never even claimed to be a disciple of the Angelic Doctor, nor generally been considered as such at all.

In the Doctor Resolutissimus' doctrine the *ratio formalis* of the transcendental good is a real relation of *convenientia* between beings. Durandus completely misunderstood the notion of a property of being. Because this real relation between beings is concomitant with every created being, it is, so he thought, a transcendental property. Whereas for St. Thomas

¹ Cf. *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol.IV, n.1, p.86.

² *De Ver.*, q.22, a.2, c.

³ *In Iam IIae*, disp.3, c.2, p.14.

the "aliud" in the expression "convenientia unius entis ad aliud" is none other than the intellectual soul, for Durandus the intellectual appetite has formally nothing to do with the transcendental good. It was, in particular, this error, adopted by certain later Scholastics, which led to a corruption of the concept of finality.

Suarez, as we saw, did in fact adopt the substance of Durandus's doctrine of the good. He did not accept the latter's notion of a property of being. Indeed he tried to reduce the particular relation between beings to a *ratio convenientiae*. But this remained a proportion between "beings" without further specification. As a consequence, the notions of "appetible" and "end" were no longer recognized as essential to the proper nature of the good. He was logical, too, in excluding motion for an end from natural things as considered in themselves.

Vasquez went one step further. He accepted Durandus's notion of a property of being. However, he converted the particular relation between beings into a relation of integrity. In so doing, Vasquez removed the relation of *convenientia* from the transcendental good, but without retrenching it from the notion of good altogether: he confined it to what is called *bonum alteri*, and identified it with *ratio finis*. Only in the special case of *bonum alteri*—the domain of final cause—did he conceive of a *convenientia* between beings. Then he restricted the *ratio formalissima* of end to the intellection of this *convenientia*.

To be sure, the times of Vasquez and Suarez were also a golden age of Thomism. Without the help of John of St. Thomas, we should be unable to throw critical light on the erroneous doctrines of the good which we have tried to expose. Yet it was the Scholasticism of Vasquez and Suarez which proved to be in tune with the times—definitely not that of John of St. Thomas and the Salmanticenses. More important, however, is the fact that for many a modern philosopher—from Descartes to Kant—the writings of Suarez in particular were considered as sufficiently representative of the *philosophia perennis*.

A more delicate task will be to show how the extreme positions we have criticized were allowed so much free rein by the omissions and neglect on the part of outstanding Thomists of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, who failed to examine Durandus's clearly stated interpretation of "convenientia unius ad aliud," and to lay bare its all too obvious possibilities—which were soon to be fully exploited.

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