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FROM AQUINAS TO THE SPANISH SECOND SCHOLASTICISM: A SURVEY OF POLITICAL POSITIONS AS REGARDS THE INFIDELS

Abstract:

All along the scholasticism the theologians faced the problem of atheism among the infidels, that they thought to be found in the Jews and Arabs and later in its infinity of degrees comprised in the bosom of the newly conquered peoples from the overseas, mainly the Americas and the then so-called Eastern Indies.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, who only could have notice of his contemporary gentile people from the other monotheistic religions, namely the Jews and Muslims, largely recognised in them natural capacities to reach oneself domination, in order to use speculative sciences, the practical reason and the moral virtues (*Summa Theologica*). And while discussing the real range comprised in their virtual competences, he could shape these last in a minor work like *In omnes beati Pauli Apostoli epistolas commentaria ad Romanos*.

When we reach the age of the Iberian Second Scholasticism, the struggle to determine how to cope with the aborigines from the new territories of the Discoveries, dictated sometimes severe conclusions. Among them there are those according to which, as for Francisco Suárez in his treatise *De Fide, Spe et Charitate*, the Church would have legitimacy to employ force through the secular arm delegated in a prince of the Christianity if any native nation refused to be evangelized. Such an idea was partly based on Francisco de Vitoria who, following in his turn the own Aquinas' thought, preached something alike on the same subject in his *Relectio de Indis*.

On contrary, Luis de Molina (*De Iustitia et Iure*), like Bartolomé de las Casas and Father António Vieira reporting the situation on the lands of Mexico and Brazil, fought clearly for the defence by which the conquered peoples should convert in practical actions their claim to maintain a condition of independence and resistance against any foreign power.

However this disputation arose in its complexity some contradictions. Suárez admitted for instance that the same Christian sovereign could be thrown down from his throne by several reasons including some kinds of confessional deviation, like to adopt polytheism as the official religion of the State. In order to prevent this he even admitted to establish alliances with infidel rulers and recover so the former religion professed by the people under the undue rule of a mighty tyrant leader.

Here are several outstanding spirits, not all of them fully identifiable with the complex adventure of deal with the diverse other individual one and his atheistic disparities.

Keywords:

Saint Thomas Aquinas, Scholasticism, Francisco Suárez

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