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**THE DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE AUGUSTINIAN
PRINCIPLE ‘GOD PERMITS THE EVIL FOR THE GOOD’
(ENCHIRIDION, CH. 3) AND THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR THE
HISTORY OF SALVATION***

EXAMPLES OF THOMAS AQUINAS AND BONAVENTURE

St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure inherited the very same doctrine of evil, which was a *bonum commune* in the middle of the thirteenth century. According to it, evil is not a cause of good but only an opportunity (*occasio*) for it¹; moral evil (*malum culpae*) is not wanted by God but only permitted², and this kind of evil does not add anything to the perfection of the universe on the level of its essence but only by accident (*accidentaliter*, not *substantialiter*)³. Nevertheless, even if the main stream of the doctrine concerning evil is the same in both Thomas and

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¹ Bonaventure, *In I Sent*, d. 46, a. un., q. 3, resp. in *Opera omnia*, ed. studio et cura PP. Collegii s. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi, 1882-1902, vol. I, p. 826a; Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent*, d. 46, q. 1, a. 2, corp., in *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* (Livres I-II), P. MANDONNET (ed.), Paris 1929, vol. I, p. 1053, *STh* II-II, 38, 1, ad 2. The other texts used of Thomas Aquinas have been taken from the edition of the Leonine Commission: *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis doctoris angelici Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII. P.M. edita*, cura et studio fratrum praedicatorum, Rome-Paris 1882ss., 38 vol. with the exception of the biblical commentaries quoted in the Marietti edition with its numbers in the brackets.

² Bonaventure, *In I Sent*, d. 47, a. un., q.2, arg 2 (fund.), p. 842 a, *In I Sent*, d. 47, a. un., q.3, resp., p. 844; Thomas, *In I Sent*, d. 47, q. 1, a. 2, corp., p. 1068, *STh* I, 22, 2, ad 2.

³ Bonaventure, *In I Sent*, d. 46, a.un., q. 6, resp., p. 833; Thomas, *In I Sent*, d. 46, q. 1, a. 3, corp., p. 1056, *STh* I, 19,9, ad 2; I, 48, 1, ad 4.

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Bonaventure, there is a slight difference, which has its consequences for the understanding of the History of Salvation⁴.

The understanding of God's acceptance of evil for the sake of good follows two main approaches in medieval theodicy⁵. The first approach finds its source in Pseudo-Dionisius. Expressed in its simplest form, it says that God wants evil, which is understood as a lack of perfection, to bring the universe to perfection, that is to say, to give the beautiful good of variety to the whole universe⁶. This is so because the variety of beings manifesting the divine perfection is possible only thanks to different levels of perfection – and imperfection - in beings. This type of reasoning is expressed in the terms of the part and the whole: an imperfection of a part is needed for the perfection of the created whole. I will not directly deal with this type of theodicy in this paper.

The second type of theodicy is connected with St. Augustine. The Bishop of Hippo holds in the *Handbook on Faith, Hope and Love (Enchiridion)* that «the Omnipotent God.... would not allow any evil in his works, unless in his omnipotence and goodness, as the Supreme Good, he is able to bring forth good out of evil»⁷. On the textual basis of this

⁴ There are two books on Salvation History of the concerned authors to be mentioned here: J. RATZINGER, *Die Geschichtstheologie des Heiligen Bonaventura*, München 1959; M. SECKLER, *Das Heil in der Geschichte. Geschichtstheologisches Denken bei Thomas von Aquin*, München 1964. A general panorama of the problems related more directly to this paper may be found in W. HÜBENER, «'Malum auget decorem in universo'. Die kosmologische Integration des Bösen in der Hochscholastik», in A. ZIMMERMANN (ed.), *Die Mächte des Guten und Bösen. Vorstellungen im XII. und XIII. Jahrhundert über ihr Wirken in der Heilsgeschichte*, Berlin-New York 1977, p. 1-26 (Miscellanea mediaevalia, 11).

⁵ Cfr. R. SCHENK, OP, *Die Gnade vollendeter Endlichkeit. Zur transzendental-theologischer Auslegung der thomanischen Anthropologie*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1989, p. 286-442 (Freiburger theologische Studien, 135).

⁶ «...et erit malum ad omnis completionem conferens et toti non imperfectum esse per se ipsum largiens.» IV, 20, *Dionysiaca: recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués à Denys l'Aréopagite*, Paris-Bruges 1937, I vol., p. 242-243 (translated by J. SARRAZIN); «...Sed et factis malis benigne Providentia utitur ad ipsorum aut aliorum aut propriam aut communem utilitatem.» IV, 20, *ibid.*, p. 311.

⁷ «Neque enim Deus...cum summe bonus sit, ullo modo sineret mali aliquid esse in operibus suis nisi usque adeo esset omnipotens et bonus ut bene faceret et de malo.» Augustine, *Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate*, E. EVANS (ed.), Turnhout 1969, p. 49-114 (CCSL, 46), c. 3, no. 11, p. 53. The English translation is taken from Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*, A.C. OUTLER (trans.), London 1955 (The Library of Christian Classics, 7), p. 342. The same work contains also another text which will be often quoted by medieval authors and which goes in the direction of Dionisian type of

famous statement quoted by Peter Lombard, the medieval writers will develop a group of adages (*adagia*) repeated in the context of evil. Quite often without any reference to Augustine, the theologians of the thirteenth century will repeat: «God permits evil, because he is able to bring forth good out of it» (*Deus ideo permittit mala fieri, quia potest ex eis elicere bona*)⁸; «out of evil God brings forth good» (*ex malis Deus elicit bona*)⁹; «God brings forth some good out of every evil» (*Deus...ex quolibet enim malo elicit aliquod bonum*)¹⁰; or «God permits evil because he can bring forth good out of evil» (*Deus mala permittit... quia novit de malis bona elicere*)¹¹. The list of such formulae could be longer. It is important to note that these formulations do not refer directly to the good of the whole universe.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOMAS AND BONAVENTURE

Even if a great part of the applications of the Augustinian principle is similar in the texts of both Bonaventure and Thomas¹², there is a point of

reasoning: «In qua etiam illud quod malum dicitur, bene ordinatum et loco suo positum, eminentius commendat bona, ut magis placeant et laudabiliora sint dum comparatur malis.» *Ibid.* Also compare: c. 23, no. 96, p. 100, c. 26, no. 100, p. 103. The idea of the beauty of order, which is owed to evil, appears also in Augustine's texts, see for example *De civitate Dei* XI, 6, «Bibliothèque Augustinienne, 35», p. 50; XI, 18, p. 86; XI, 28, p. 122; XII, 4-5, p. 158-162. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libros distinctae*, ed. tertia ad fidem codicum antiquiorum restituta, Ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae Ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata ³1971, ³1981 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4-5), t. I, d. 46, c. 4, p. 317.

⁸ F. ex. Thomas *De Veritate* 5,4, obj. 5.

⁹ F. ex. Bonaventure, *In III Sent.*, d. 28, a. un., q. 2, ad 4, p. 626 a, Thomas *In I Sent.*, d. 46, prol., *In II Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3, p. 748.

¹⁰ *STh* II-II, 78, 4, corp.

¹¹ F. ex. Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 32 a. 3, q. 2, ad 1, p. 773 b.

¹² The quotation from the text of the *Enchiridion* - see note 7 (sometimes with some textual variants) - appears in Thomas *STh* I, 2, 3, ad 1; *STh* I, 22, 2, ad 2, *STh* I-II, 79, 4, obj. 4; *De Potentia* 3,6, ad 4; *Ad Rom* 8, 28, l. 6 (no. 696), *Ad I Cor* 11, 19, l. 4 (no. 628).

The *adagia* are also numerous. Some of them mention Augustine or the *Enchiridion*, or both: Thomas; *In II Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3, obj. et ad 4; *STh* I, 48, 2, ad 3; *STh* II-II, 78, 4, corp.; *Ad Rom* 9, 11, l. 2 (no. 879); but there are some of them without any mention of Augustine or the *Enchiridion*: Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 17, dub. V, p. 429 b; *In II Sent.*, d. 23, a. 1, q. 2, resp., p. 532 b; *In II Sent.*, d. 32 a. 3, q. 2, ad 1, p. 773 b; *In III Sent.*, d. 20, dub. 4, p. 433 b; *In III Sent.*, d. 28, a. un., q. 2, ad 4, p. 626 a; Thomas *STh* II-II, 10, 11, corp.; *STh* II-II, 74, 4, ad 3; *De Veritate* 5,4, obj. 5 and 9; *De Malo* 13, 4, ad 6.

Another text from the same chapter of the *Enchiridion* is quoted from time to time: «malum...bene ordinatum et loco suo positum, eminentius commendat bona, ut magis

difference, which should be stressed. For Bonaventure, it is much easier to say that good brought forth out of evil is ‘greater’ than the good which was lost. Speaking of the sin of man in Paradise, for example, he says: «from that evil God could and knew how to bring forth much greater good» (*ex illo malo... poterat Deus et sciebat multo maius bonum elicere*)¹³. Similarly, in the question concerning the permission for evil in the *Commentary on the Sentences* one of the arguments on which he builds his reasoning reads: «evil often gives an opportunity for the greater good which would not occur unless preceded by evil and that manifests itself in the passion of Christ» (*malum frequenter est occasio maioris boni quod non fieret, nisi malum praecessisset, ut patet in passione Christi*)¹⁴.

Thomas before his late period – I will return to it at the end of this paper – says only once in the *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* that «God always brings forth the greater good out of evil» (*Deus ex malo semper majus bonum elicit*). However, firstly, in so saying he just undertakes the formulation of the objection; secondly, he quickly adds that this good does not necessarily concern the person in whom evil was permitted by God, but it may be considered as ‘greater’ thanks to a comparison to the whole universe (*majus bonum elicit non tamen illi de necessitate in quo malum esse permittit, sed in comparatione ad universum*)¹⁵. In other words, he attempts to reduce the Augustinian principle to the theodicy of Pseudo-Dionysius.

One could say that the difference in the use of the Augustinian principle by the two authors is rather slight; both Thomas and Bonaventure do speak of the ‘greater’ good brought forth out of evil, even if Thomas attempts to interpret it straightaway. Yet, a short look at a broader context suffices to notice that this tiny textual difference of confidence in the formula ‘God permits evil for the greater good’ holds a profound

placeant et laudabiliora sint dum comparatur malis», Bonaventure *In I Sent*, d. 46, a. un., q. 5, obj. (fund.) 2, p. 830 a; Thomas, *STh* I, 19, 9, obj. 2. There is also another text in the *Enchiridion* on the same subject (c. 27, nr 8, p. 64) quoted by Bonaventure, *In II Sent*, d. 23, a. 1, q. 2, ad 3, p. 533 b: «Melius iudicavit Deus de malis bona facere, quam mala nulla permittere» (in the original text instead of *bona* there is *bene* and after *mala nulla* there is *esse*); *Sermo* II: «De regno Dei descripto in parabolis evangelicis», nr 45, vol. V, 552a.

¹³ Bonaventure, *In II Sent*, d. 17, dub. V, p. 429 b.

¹⁴ Bonaventure, *In I Sent*, d. 47, a. un, q. 3, obj. 3 (fund.), p. 844 a.

¹⁵ Thomas, *In II Sent*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3, ad 4.

discrepancy in the understanding of the History of Salvation. We have here the tip of an iceberg... Both authors have their important theological reasons to be – or not – convinced by the idea of a ‘greater’ good brought forth out of evil.

THE CONTEXT OF THE DIFFERENCE

Let us start with Bonaventure’s point of view.

For Bonaventure, as for St. Thomas, a sin may be only an opportunity for good but never its cause. But, at the same time, the Franciscan master points out that there are certain crucial facts of our history which would not have occurred without the opportunity given by the preceding sin. The supreme example of that is obviously the redemption of humankind. Without the history of sin and reparation, the universe would have its integrity (*esset universum completum*). But if we asked whether the universe was more beautiful before the Fall than it is now we are to answer that it is more beautiful now. Why is this?

The reason for this is that the divine power which brings forth good out of evil is more powerful than evil. Because of that, good brought forth out of evil has more value than the good destroyed by evil. That is why the universe has more value now than it had before the Fall. The universe before the Fall may be compared to the universe after the Fall as *excedentia ad excessa*: «what is to exceed to what has already exceeded». Something similar to that is to be found in the comparison of two faces: one without any flaw to another with a scar. A scar well placed adorns the face.

To support this doctrine, Bonaventure evokes the famous liturgical motif from the Easter Vigil: «O happy fault» (*o felix culpa*) and he illustrates his doctrine with one more beautiful example: our universe is like a broken cup which has been put together with some gold or silver. It is much more valuable now than it was before the accident. It is not so because of the breaking, but because of the precious substance with which it was possible to put it together¹⁶.

¹⁶ «Multa enim bona Deus fecit et facta sunt, quae non essent facta, nisi peccatum praestitisset occasionem, sicut illa quae gesta sunt in nostra reparatione. Tamen sine his omnibus esset universum completum.

Si vero quaeritur, utrum tunc esset pulchrius, quam nunc sit, responderi potest, quod se habent sicut excedentia et excessa: sicut duae facies, in quarum una nulla est macula, in

Thomas leads us in a different direction. There is the evil without which the universe would not be perfect. It concerns the evil understood in a cosmological way: the corruption of the elements permits the mixture resulting in the variety of forms more perfect than the world without such a diversity. (Here, we touch once more upon the Dionisian theodicy). But there is the evil without which the universe would be more perfect. It happens when the perfections that are taken away are greater than those that are added. This is the case of the moral evil (*malum culpae*). It takes away from a person the good of grace and glory, adding to another person the good of comparison or some perfection without which this person could reach the ultimate perfection: for example, without patience gained in persecution one can achieve eternal life. Because of that, if nobody had sinned, all humankind would be better¹⁷.

This clear option expressed in the *Scriptum* is confirmed in the *De Veritate*. Thomas attempts to hold open the possibility of another way of perfecting the world, if man had not sinned. If man had not sinned, Christ would be the Head of the Church only in His Divine nature; after the Fall it is necessary that he be the Head of the Church also in His human nature¹⁸. Thomas carefully avoids judging our universe as better in comparison to the universe before the Fall. To express it with the example of Bonaventure:

altera est cicatrix aliqua bene sita, quae videtur faciem venustare. Et si ultra procedas: quis decor magis excedit? potest dici sine praeiudicio, quod decor, qui nunc est. Et ratio huius est, quia vis divina, eliciens bonum ex malo, praepotens est malo; et ideo bonum, quod inde elicit, praevalet bono, quod malum corrumpit. Et ideo plus valet universum nunc, quam valuisset tunc; in quo nunc modo commendatur sapientia Creatoris. Unde Gregorius in benedictione caerei Paschalis: 'O felix culpa, quae talem meruit habere Redemptorem'. Et exemplum est de scypho sano, qui frangitur et religatur filo argenteo vel aureo, quia melior est post quam ante, non ratione fractionis, sed ratione religationis.» *In I Sent*, d. 46, a. un., q. 6, resp., p. 833 b.

¹⁷ «...aliqua mala sunt quae, si non essent, universum esset imperfectius; illa scilicet ad quae consequitur major perfectio quam illud quod privatur; sicut est corruptio elementorum, ad quam sequitur mixtio, et formae mixtorum nobiliores formis elementorum. Quaedam vero mala sunt quae, si non essent, universum perfectius esset; illa scilicet quibus majores perfectiones privantur quam in alio acquirantur, sicut praecipue est in malis culpae, quae ab uno privant gratiam et gloriam, et alteri conferunt bonum comparationis, vel aliquam rationem perfectionis, qua etiam non habita, posset perfectio ultima haberi; sicut sine patientiae actu in persecutionibus illatis potest aliquis ad vitam aeternam pervenire. Unde si nullus homo peccasset, universum genus humanum melius foret.» *In I Sent*, d. 46, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6, p. 1057.

¹⁸ «Supposita illa opinione, quod Christus non fuisset incarnatus, si homo non peccasset; Christus ante peccatum fuisset caput Ecclesiae secundum divinam naturam

instead of saying that the cup broken and put together is better than the cup, which has not been broken, we have rather to admit a possibility that a cup, which has not been broken, could have been embellished in a different way, reaching at least the same perfection as it now has....

TWO APPROACHES TO THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

Obviously, these two opinions are not irreconcilable. The cup could have been embellished in a much more perfect way if it had not been broken, and yet it is much more valuable now than it was then. One can claim that if man had not sinned, the world would have been accomplished in a much more perfect way admitting at the same time that our world is much more valuable now than it was before the Fall. Nevertheless, even if these two opinions are not irreconcilable, they cannot be reduced one to another. They show two possible approaches to the History of Salvation, based on the same metaphysics of good and evil but differing because of their position in relation to time.

Bonaventure represents in the quoted text an attitude towards the History of Salvation, which I propose to call 'mystical'. A mystic attempts to embrace the whole history in one grasp. He places himself above the history or, in other words, *post factum*. He meditates on history as already accomplished: the broken cup has already been put together. Christ has already answered the sin of Adam. This example is not chosen by chance; in this fundamental Christian story of Redemption – emphasized by St. Paul and undertaken in a very consistent way by St. Augustine - we find a crucial pattern for the understanding of evil and God's answer to it. That is why Bonaventure does not hesitate to speak of a greater good brought forth out of evil.

On the other hand, we have the approach of Thomas, at least during the first part of his scholarly activity. I propose to call it 'dramatic'. He does not propose placing ourselves above the history or in a sort of *post factum*. We are in a dramatic middle of Salvation History: the cup - although already broken and put together - may be broken again. We have to accept the frightening responsibility of our freedom. That is why

solum; sed post peccatum oportet quod sit Ecclesiae caput etiam secundum humanam.» *De Veritate* 29, 4, ad 3.

Aquinas would not easily admit that the good brought forth out of evil is 'greater' than that which was destroyed. That is one of the most important reasons why he holds open the possibility of a world brought to its fulfillment in a more perfect way than it has been in actual fact.

Each of these two models of reading the History of Salvation has its advantages and disadvantages. The first one gives us an extraordinary source of hope but at the same time it carries the risk of trivializing evil. Evil may become one day – that is certainly not the thought of Bonaventure – a 'necessary' means to reach a 'greater' good. The other one, on the contrary, avoids this risk very well; evil is not necessary to fulfil God's plans, it is understood as a result of human freedom. But this other model has another weakness; moral evil is left outside of our rationalization, it is not, if I may say so, absolutely retrievable for our comprehension of history. What is more, this 'dramatic' attitude to the History of Salvation cannot explain, in a fully convincing manner, the oneness of the Divine plan.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THOMAS AQUINAS?

Now let us come back for a moment to Thomas for a text. As I said, during the first part of his scholarly career, Thomas was quite reluctant to accept the idea of the greater good brought forth out of evil. He had many times an opportunity to treat the subject of evil evoking the principle that God brings forth the greater good out of evil, but it is only in the *Tertia Pars*, that is approximately in the years 1272-73, that he wrote:

...there is no reason why human nature should not have been raised to something greater after sin. For God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom; hence it is written (Rm 5,20): «Where sin abounded, grace did more abound. Hence, too, in the blessing of the Paschal candle, we say:» O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer!¹⁹.

¹⁹ *STh* III, 1, 3, ad 3: «Nihil autem prohibet ad aliquod maius humanam naturam productam esse post peccatum: Deus enim permittit mala fieri ut inde aliquid melius eliciat. Unde dicitur Rom. 5, 20: 'Ubi abundavit iniquitas, superabundavit et gratia'. Unde et in benedictione Cerei Paschalis dicitur: 'O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem'». The English translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, *The «Summa theologica»*, London ²1913, v. 15, p. 13. Compare as well a late text just before the *Tertia Pars*: *STh* II-II, 10, 11, corp.: «Deus autem, quamvis sit omnipotens et summe bonus, permittit tamen aliqua mala fieri in universo, quae prohibere posset, ne, eis sublatis, maiora bona tollerentur, vel etiam peiora mala sequerentur».

Let us notice the caution with which Aquinas treats the whole thing: *nihil autem prohibet* – «there is no reason why... should not have been», literally: «it is not forbidden» – as if he weighed his words.

Let us also note the authorities that Aquinas quotes.

O felix culpa from the Easter Vigil is used here by him. Yet, this reference is very rare in his writings. He quotes it only once more in the *Scriptum* in the question concerning the convenience of the Incarnation – where it is traditionally evoked²⁰.

It is instructive as well to note the second authority: the quotation from the Romans «Where sin abounded, grace did more abound» (Rm 5,20). This one does not belong to his favorite quotations, either. According to the *Index thomisticus* Thomas uses this biblical text 10 times in his whole work²¹. Three times in the *Scriptum* and among them once in the very same text concerning the convenience of the Incarnation with the *felix culpa* and twice in the objections. Seven other occurrences are to be found in the late work of Thomas: in the *Corpus Paulinum*, the *Prima Secundae*, the *Secunda Secundae* and the *Tertia Pars*. In the *Commentary on the Romans*, Thomas explains his reasons for the reluctance towards this quotation; one could understand the teaching of the Apostles as if we were to do evil so that good might result from it; that would be true if human deception could order God's grace and truth²².

²⁰ Let us also note, by the way, that at that time Thomas attempts to avoid the dangerous comparative of a 'greater good' speaking of 'the best good' brought forth out of sin: «sicut dicit Apostolus, Rom V, 20: ubi abundavit delictum, superabundavit et gratia. Unde non est inconveniens ut aliquod bonum Deus ex peccato eliciat quod sine peccato non fuisset, ut patet in multis virtutibus, ut in patientia, poenitentia et hujusmodi. Et ita etiam ex peccato hominis hoc optimum bonum Deus potuit elicere, ut Filius Dei incarnaretur. Propter quod dicit Gregorius: 'O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem'». *In III Sent*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5.

²¹ *In II Sent*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, obj. 1; *In III Sent*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5; *In III Sent*, d. 31, q. 1, a. 4, qu. 2, obj. 2; *STh* I-II, 106, 3, corp. ; *STh* III, 1, a. 3, ad 3; *STh* III, 89, 2, obj. 3; *Ad Rom* 3, 8, l. 1 (no. 269); *Ad Rom* 5, 20, l. 5 (no. 466); *Ad Rom* 6, 1, l. 1 (no. 469); *Ad I Tim* 1, 14, l. 3 (no. 36).

²² Sometimes Thomas uses Rm 5, 20 to support his reasoning: *In III Sent*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5; *STh* III, 1, a. 3, ad 3; *STh* I-II, 106, 3, corp. But in the majority of cases he adds some details and interprets the biblical text: *In III Sent*, d. 31, q. 1, a. 4, qu. 2, ad 2: «Apostolus loquitur de gratia redemptionis quae superabundavit ad delictum primi hominis, et non loquitur universaliter». Another explanation *STh* III, 89, 2, ad 3: «Est autem superabundans gratia quantum ad ipsam gratiae rationem: quia magis gratis

We see that in the *Tertia Pars* Thomas speaks of the greater good brought forth out of evil but at the same time he weighs his words, he recalls two authorities which are seldom evoked in his works and, what is most important, he does not use the Augustinian adage in the line of the Dionisian theodicy but he speaks of the human nature – not the whole universe - that was raised to «something greater after sin»²³. We have to admit at the end of this paper that this text has a rather unexpected orientation which seems to correspond better to the Bonaventurian ('mystical' – if you accept my vocabulary) theology of Salvation History than to the texts of Thomas himself, from the first part of his career.

Is it really a sign of a change in Aquinas's thinking? It depends partly on how we understand the human nature raised to «something greater». If it should be understood as a simple *pars pro toto*, i.e. as only a kind of equivalent for the whole universe, Thomas would have reduced the Augustinian principle to the Dionisian theodicy like in the text from the *Scriptum* quoted above. The special position of human beings in Christian theology could partly justify such an interpretation. Yet, if we understand the human nature as a nature of some particular group of beings in the created whole, Thomas is moving carefully outside the Dionisian theodicy in his late work.

beneficium remissionis magis peccatori confertur. Quamvis quandoque abundanter peccantes abundanter dolent: et sic abundantiorum habitum gratiae et virtutum consequuntur, sicut patet in Magdalena». A similar idea in the *Commentary on the Romans*, *Ad Rom 5, 20*, l. 5 (no. 466). *Ad Rom 3, 8*, l. 1 (no. 269): «Quia enim praedicabant quod per abundantiam peccatorum, secundum illud infra V, v. 20: "Ubi abundavit delictum, superabundavit et gratia", blasphemabant Apostolos, quasi dicerent quod homines deberent facere mala ut consequerentur bona, quod sequeretur si mendacium hominis directe commendaret Dei gratiam et veritatem. Hoc est quod dicit non faciamus mala, peccando scilicet, et mendacium docendo, ut veniant bona, scilicet ut Dei veritas et iustitia commendetur...». See also *Ad Rom 6, 1*, l. 1 (no. 469).

²³ To be precise I have to add that the first meaning of this text written in the christological context concerns Christ's individual human nature. But it has its obvious consequences for the human nature such as it is. See Ch. JOURNET, *L'Église du Verbe incarné. II. Sa structure interne et son unité catholique*, Paris 1951, p. 146-147. However, let us note that J.-M. GARRIGUES, is contesting this interpretation. He would restrain the meaning of this text only to the individual nature of Christ trying to avoid the suggestion that the human nature would have been elevated to the more perfect finality after the Fall that it had before. See «Le dessein bienveillant de notre adoption et la prédestination du Christ», in *Alétheia* 11 (1997) 123-140, p. 133-134. The discussion of *STh* III, 1, 3, ad 3 in both texts merits particular attention and shows the importance of the quoted text.

If we want to verify the hypothesis of evolution in the *Tertia Pars*, we are to check some historical points. Did Aquinas's commenting on the *Corpus Paulinum* influence his understanding of the History of Salvation? Did his growing fascination for Augustine change it in any way? Here I see some important questions which, to my knowledge, remain insufficiently answered and could be raised in any future research on Thomas's position concerning the History of Salvation.

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