GOD AND THE REASON FOR EVIL IN THE WORLD

(The efficient cause of evil)[1]

I. THE REALITY OF EVIL IN THE WORLD

ALTHOUGH nothing is clearer than the reality of evil in the world, we shall nevertheless set it forth summarily, so that we may see what classes of evils we can distinguish and of which we must give an explanation.

There is physical evil in irrational beings. In inorganic beings one observes constant corruptions through combination with others, and incessant changes of state, of figure, and of the modes befitting them, which are privations and therefore physical evils. In the vegetable world we see that innumerable seeds fail to attain their end and their proper development for want of the means thereto and through the invasion of stronger agents; trees of excellent nature grow stunted and beset by vast colonies of symbiotic parasites; regions of flourishing vegetation are laid waste by terrible earthquakes, by devouring fires, by persistent droughts. Still more terrible is the spectacle of evil in the animal kingdom. Animals fight one another ferociously in order to devour one another; some are endowed with weapons harmful and deadly to others, such as birds of prey, carnivorous animals, and those that feed on the warm blood of other animals, which they cruelly oppress; and those that have venomous glands and syringes for injecting venom into others. But attention must chiefly be paid to the bitter pains they suffer from diseases, from wounds, from want of food, and this without any fault on their part and without any usefulness, purpose, or advantage of their own.

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[1] Pens., 8 (1952), 291-311; MASSON, Mal., DTC, 1681-1685; SERTILLANGES, *Providence*, DTC, 1017; S. AUGUSTINUS, *De moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et de moribus manichaeorum*: PL., 32. *Idem, Enchiridion*, c. 14: PL., 40. Idem, *De civit. Dei*, l. 12, cc. 3, 9, 11: PL., 41. Idem, *De libero arbitrio*, l. 3; DOUAIS, S*t. Augustin et le manicheisme de son temps*; R. JOLIVET, *Le problème du mal d'après St. Augustin* (Paris, 1936, 2nd ed.); S. THOMAS AQUINAS, 2 d. 34, 35; I, q. 49; 3 C. G. [so in the original: 3GG], cc. 7-12, 71; *De malo* (QQ. DD.); *Comp. Theol.*, cc. 115, 118, 142; SUÁREZ, *DM.*, 11; BONNIOT, *Le Problème du mal* (Paris, 1888); X. MOISANT, *L'expérience en Métaphysique*, l. 4; GISQUIÈRE, *Deus Dominus* (1950, II), 73-84; DE PARVILLEZ, *Études* (20 fevr. 129 [so in the original; read 1929, as in note 4]), 496; ZIGON, *EphThLov* (1931), 19-24; RAST, *Welt u. Gott*, Herder, Freib. Br., 1952, pp. 188-203; TH. DEMAN, *Le mal et Dieu*, Paris, 1943; LOUIS LAVELLE, *Le mal et la souffrance*, 1948.

In rational beings physical evil likewise exists in terrifying proportions. No one is able to enumerate the famines, the epidemics that have caused so many deaths and so many ailments, the oppressions of the powerful, the wars in which there are so many deaths and painful wounds more dreadful than death itself, and treatment as cruel as that inflicted in the concentration camps and in forced labor.

But in rational creatures there is another evil worse than all physical evils, namely the evil of fault, which overturns the whole purpose of their life. If we look at the paths of each man in particular, they are lamentable. From the moment the use of reason dawns, man finds himself assailed by a thousand dangers of sin; the passions of pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, and sloth induce him to evil; examples drag him along powerfully, occasions make sin easy for him, riches and bad company seduce him, poverty debases him and inspires in him reprehensible schemes; and in the midst of such assaults, who can resist for long? If we look at man′s social and political activity, crimes are beyond number and measure. There are societies whose purpose is to teach men to deny God and all religion; they exploit minors, they abuse men as though they were machines manufactured for their own utility; they cause wars in which every divine and human right is violated and in which murders, acts of lasciviousness, thefts, blasphemies, and drunkenness are without number; concentration camps are established in which all religion and all humane treatment are banished. Who can count the deluge of iniquities that stain the world and disfigure the work of God? And along with the misery of sin men bear their deserts: men do not live satisfied with themselves, but have unspeakable bitternesses and live with a fear of the hereafter, often not well defined, which clouds their apparent peace and their passing enjoyments.

Besides these evils there is another which, though lesser than sin, causes a more dreadful terror, namely the evil of eternal perdition. This is an evil that serves precisely neither for one′s own amendment nor for the correction of others, since, once the world has ended, the damned will go on suffering; it is a pure evil, an intolerable evil, in which no room is given for a salutary repentance, in which there is no shadow of hope or of consolation, and in which regard is had solely to the pure vengeance of the overturned order, which with the coldness of mathematical proportion inexorably demands reparation.

II. THE PROBLEM

In the presence of so undeniable a fact, the mind asks itself, with immense curiosity and with certain hints of rebelliousness, what the reason is for so much evil in the world.

And we do not ask what the particular designs of divine Providence are in permitting so many evils, or what goods it draws from each of them, or what historical development humanity will have under the permission of so many

evils. This problem is unfathomable, and the attempt to scrutinize it is of a signal rashness.

How hidden the Lord's designs are in the permission of evils is weighed by Sacred Scripture in very emphatic words. Saint Paul tells us: "O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei! Quam inconprehensibilia sunt iudicia eius et investigabiles viae eius! Quis enim cognovit sensum Domini? Aut quis consiliarius eius fuit?" (Rom. 11, 33-36). Isaiah abounds in the same sentiment: "Non enim cogitationes meae cogitationes vestrae, neque viae vestrae, viae meae, dicit Dominus, quia sicut exaltantur Caeli a Terra, sic exaltatae sunt viae meae a viis vestris, et cogitationes meae a cogitationibus vestris" (Is. 55, 8-9). In Psalm 35 (v. 7) we read: "Iustitia tua sicut montes Dei, iudicia tua abyssus multa"; and in Psalm 72, the psalmist, seeing the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortunes of the good, says: "Existimabam ut cognoscerem hoc: labor est ante me"; this mystery we shall know in Heaven: "donec intrem in sanctuarium Dei" (v. 17); meanwhile what befits us is to be right with God, to place our hope in Him, and to praise Him for His glory: "mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est, ponere in Deo meo spem meam, ut annuntiem omnes praedicationes eius" (v. 28).

We do not attempt, even remotely, to lift the veil of this secret, which is now hidden from us and which in the possession of beatitude will be manifested to us, in order to justify the designs of God and to glorify the ways of His providence.

Passing over, then, these curiosities, which are none of our concern, we shall enter upon ground which, although very difficult, is not outside the field of philosophical speculation, provided this be carried on with humility and moderation.

We ask for the reason for evil in the world, which amounts to investigating its causes, above all its ultimate cause. The question, then, is what the efficient cause of evil is, and what the final cause is, and what the reason is that explains how God could, without detriment to His holiness and His goodness, permit sin and choose this order of things in which there was to be so much evil, and why in fact He chose it; whence it results that four problems are enclosed within the total problem of evil.

It goes without saying that in investigating these difficult questions we are not attempting to come to God's defense, as though He had a difficult case and were on the point of losing it; we already know that God is infinitely holy and good; consequently, a priori we can say that everything He has done is very well done. Moreover we have most manifest proofs of His goodness: He desires the salvation of all, and this with such sincerity that He gives the means necessary for it, and even superabundant means, as is seen in the mission of His Divine Son, in the establishment of the Church and the Sacraments, and in the abundance of graces He continually gives to all. We are attempting only to render intelligible to ourselves all the problems we have proposed, and this with humility and modesty.

The solution of the problem is so difficult that[1] authors have given the most diverse answers, not always acceptable, and they often proceed without having before them a well-defined set of questions that would oblige them to distinguish the various aspects of the matter. For this reason, before proceeding to our own solution, we shall set forth and criticize the general and confused solutions that some authors have given, which we believe will prepare the way for understanding the solution we deem the true one.

III. CRITIQUE OF SOME SOLUTIONS

The first solution is the Stoic one, of which Aulus Gellius speaks: evil does not exist, it is pure illusion. SAINT AUGUSTINE makes mention of it and rejects it by the mere mention. Leibniz himself inclines to this solution: for although things taken in particular seem to be subject to some evil, they are nevertheless a good for the universe. And even SAINT AUGUSTINE himself, in certain literary comparisons, seems to say the same. For he affirms that the parts subject to evil displease us and seem evil to us because we do not grasp the complexity of the whole; if we did grasp it, we should see how these parts that displease us accord well with others that we do not now see, and so they would neither displease us nor seem evil to us[2]. But the reality of

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[1] Saint Augustine felt the difficulty of the problem with unspeakable torment: "*Unde igitur mihi male velle et bene nolle. Quis in me hoc posuit et inseruit mihi plantarium amaritudinis cum totus fierem a dulcissimo Deo meo? Ubi ergo malum? Et unde et qua irrepsit? Quae radix eius et quod semen eius? Unde et malum? An unde fecit ea, materies aliqua mala erat, et formavit atque ordinavit eam, sed reliquit aliquid in illa quod in bonum non converteret? Cur et hoc?*" (Confess., l. 7, c. 5, n. 7; ML., 32, 735-736.) And afterwards he describes the torments he felt in these questions: "*Quae illa tormenta parturientis cordis mei! Qui gemitus! Deus meus! Et ibi erant aures tuae, nesciente me... Tu sciebas quae patiebar et nullus hominum.*" (Confess., l. 7, c. 7, n. 2; ML., 32, 739.)

[2] Saint Augustine did not always speak in the same manner, although he always inclines to say that God permits evil for the greater good of the universe. a) On one occasion he goes so far as to say that God loves evil (perhaps physical evil): "*Certe et mala dixisti ordine contineri, et ipsum ordinem manare a summo Deo atque ab eo diligi. Ex quo sequitur ut et mala sint a summo Deo, et mala Deus diligat.*" (De ordine, l. 1, c. 7, n. 17; ML., 32, 986.) b) And he even insinuates that evil almost disappears by being a good for the universe: "*Sicut pictura cum colore nigro loco suo posita, ita universitas rerum, si quis possit intueri, etiam cum peccatoribus, pulchra est, quamvis per seipsos consideratos sua deformitas turpet.*" (De civit. Dei, l. 11, c. 23.) If the evil parts displease us and we reprove them, it is because we do not know the whole of the world and the other parts with which they have proportion and harmony: "*Qui totum inspicere non potest, tamquam deformitate partis offenditur, quoniam cui congruat et quo referatur ignorat*" (De civit. Dei, l. 16, c. 8; ML., 41, 486). "*Cuius ordinis decus propterea nos non delectat, quoniam parti eius, pro conditione nostrae mortalitatis inexti... cui particulae, quae nos offendunt, satis apte mecenterque conveniunt, sentire non possumus*" (De civit. Dei, l. 12, c. 4; ML., 41, 352) [the Latin of this last citation is corrupt in the source]. c) But he also said that evil was not necessary for the beauty of the universe: "*Non ipsa peccata vel ipsam miseriam perfectioni*

evil bites too deeply into our own flesh and into our own self for it to be possible to deny or attenuate the bitterness of its sting with the childish consolation that our evil, combined with other parts of the universe, is a good of the whole.

Similar to the Stoic solution is the pantheist one. All the evils we witness are but stages in the evolution of absolute being, and therefore cannot be called evils, because they are stages toward reaching a better condition. Moral evil does not exist, since for it liberty would be required, and liberty has no place in the pantheist system.

The second solution is atheistic or dualistic. KANT says that he seriously doubted the existence of God upon learning of the earthquake that destroyed the city of Lisbon. LOTZE and WINDELBAND believed that the existence of God was incompossible with the existence of evil. BRUNNSCHVICG [so in the original; i.e., Léon Brunschvicg], contemplating the incessant struggle of some animal races against others, blasphemed and said that if there is a God who is the artificer of the world, He must be an artificer after the manner of Nero. AUGUST MESSER, in the name of many others, says: "In this way the problem of evil entered with all its weight into the sphere of my reflections and wrecked my faith in God." (Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen, R. S. Schmidt, Leipzig, 1922, ap. Ras [so in the original; elsewhere cited as RAST], Welt u. Gott, p. 189.) WINDELBAND says: "What philosophy cannot disguise is the existence of evil... We are in the presence of one of those cases in which we can demonstrate with complete certainty and simplicity the impossibility of giving a solution to a problem that we

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universitatis esse necessaria, sed animas in quantum animae sunt quae si velint, peccant. Si peccaverint, miserae sunt. Cum autem, non peccantibus adest beatitudo, perfecta est universitas; cum vero peccantibus adest miseria, nihilominus perfecta est universitas" (De libero arbitrio, l. 3, c. 9, n. 26). d) At times he speaks so cautiously that he does not say that God permitted evil for the greater good of the universe, but that God permitted evil by His lofty judgments, knowing and willing to draw goods from it; not in order to draw goods, but knowing that He could and would draw goods. Asked why God left liberty to man, knowing that he was going to sin, he says: "*Hoc eorum potestati maluit non auferre, ATQUE ITA et quantum mali eorum superbia et quantum boni sua gratia valeret, ostendere*" (De civit. Dei, l. 14, c. 27; ML., 41, 436). "*Quem* (*Adam*) *similiter cum praevaricationis legis Dei, per Dei desertionem, peccaturum esse praesciret, nec illi ademit liberi arbitrii potestatem, SIMUL PRAEVIDENS quid boni de malo eius esset ipse facturus*" (De civit. Dei, l. 22, c. 1; ML., 41, 752). e) In any case, the condition (and I do not say the purpose) for permitting sin is, for Saint Augustine, the drawing of certain excellent goods from it: "*Neque enim Deus omnipotens... cum summe bonus sit, ullo modo sineret mali aliquid esse in operibus suis, nisi usque adeo esset omnipotens et bonus, ut bene faceret de malo*" (Enchirid., c. II; ML., 40, 236). f) But we must not disguise the fact that the note which most frequently resounds in Saint Augustine's writings is that it is better to permit evils in order to draw goods from them than to impede all evil, in the physical order as well as in the moral: "*Potentius et melius esse iudicans etiam de malis bene facere, quam mala esse non sinere*" (De civit. Dei, l. 22, 1).

nevertheless cannot evade: the problem of evil is the squaring of the circle in the religious order." (Präludien II, Tübingen, 1919, 315.) And a pious writer such as DE PARVILLEZ, S.I., writes in Études[1]: "The problem of evil is the most painful point in the relations between God and ourselves."

The atheistic solution discards itself, and has been mentioned only so that the difficulties raised by the problem of evil may be noticed.

God exists and is one and infinitely holy. If He has chosen this plan, it is well chosen, and it falls to us only to submit to His unfathomable judgments and to endeavor in some way to render intelligible to ourselves what can be understood in this matter with due humility.

Without going so far as to deny the existence of God, others have thought it necessary to establish two supreme and independent principles, one good and the other evil, as the origin of good and of evil respectively.

This system is somewhat mitigated among the Gnostics, for they said that the origin of evil is matter, which is the divine substance brought to the lowest degree of degradation.

PLATO too placed the origin of evil in matter, but this matter is not emanated; it is simply independent of God.

The critique of this theory is well known. There cannot be a supreme principle that is pure evil, because evil is privation and cannot subsist in itself but only in a real subject, which will be good. Moreover, the uncreated being [so in the original: el ser creado, "the created being"; the argument requires increado] is one and utterly simple and immutable, whence it is concluded that there can be no uncreated matter, nor any matter that is a segregated and degraded emanation of the very substance of God.

The third solution is that of the fall of the first man. God's original plan was not this one. God created the first man in a state of innocence and elevation, exempt from all the evils of this life and of the life to come, and willed that all his descendants should be as he was: we should at present enjoy this happiness had Adam not sinned. But by sinning he plunged himself and all his descendants into the abyss of evils we now have: man is the guilty one, and God is immune from all accusation.

This solution states much truth in what it affirms, but it does not give us the ultimate explanation we are seeking; rather, the problem remains entire. How could God, without any dishonor to Himself, choose an order of things in which He foresaw that the first man would fall? And why did He bind the fate of all humanity to his conduct? And why, in establishing that connection between Adam and his descendants, did He choose an order in which there would be so many evils and not another order in which the evils would be fewer? How in all this are the divine holiness and goodness safeguarded? The solution of the fall answers none of these questions, and so it is not an answer apt to resolve the problem of the why of evil in the world.

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[1] *Études* (20 febr. 1929), 496.

The fourth solution we might call the aesthetic one. God chose this plan, in which there was to be so much evil, so many iniquities, and so much eternal ruin, for the greater good of the Universe. By this purpose it is explained how God could choose this plan without detriment to His holiness and His goodness, and why in fact He chose it: God always chooses what is best, and the best is a Universe in which there are sins, on account of the goods they bring with them, such as repentance, martyrdom, the redemption through Christ, and the manifestation of vindictive justice.

This aesthetic solution is held not only by LEIBNIZ[1] but also by FR. RUIZ DE MONTOYA[2], and by many scholastic authors, Molinists as well as Thomists[3]; and this manner of speaking is so deeply rooted that it is spontaneously adopted even by those doctors who, upon reflection, refute the opinion[4]. This solution does not satisfy us, and we are not alone in rejecting it[5].

Before entering upon a discussion of it, it is well to note how ambiguous its principal assertion is, in which they say that God has chosen to permit sin for the greater good of the Universe. What do they understand by the greater good of the Universe? Do they claim that with sin there is given the best of all possible universes, at least taken as a whole, as ABELARD, RUIZ DE MONTOYA, LEIBNIZ, and many others held? Do they claim that, at least, given these present substances which God in fact created, the disposition of the Universe in which there would be sins is the best of all possible dispositions, as ROZWADOWSKI holds? They can reasonably say none of this[6].

But leaving aside this ambiguity and not requiring them to determine what they understand by the greater good of the Universe, we must distinguish two aspects in this aesthetic solution: the first is the purpose they assign to the permission of sin, and the second is the sense in which the permission ordered to that purpose is to be taken.

The purpose they assign to the permission of sin is the greater good of the Universe, which consists, at least in part, in there being penance for sins, fortitude of martyrs, redemption of iniquities through Christ, and the manifestation of divine justice. They do not see that in this way they make God an accomplice in the sins of men. For he who on his own initiative desires an end that essentially presupposes sin virtually and implicitly wills sin; and since, according to them, God on His own initiative intends penance,

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[1] *Pens.*, 8 (1952), 293.

[2] *De providentia*, d. 2, s. 4.

[3] Caiet. [so in the original: *Caeit.*] in I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2. Cf. Saint Augustine in the preceding note.

[4] SUÁREZ, *De incarnat.*, d. 5, s. 5, n. 17.

[5] VÁZQUEZ, in I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2, comm. m., 27.

[6] *Pens.*, 8 (1952), 294, 302.

which essentially presupposes sin, it follows that God intends that sins be committed in the world.

If we consider in what the permission of sin, ordered to the aforesaid purposes, consists, we shall come to the same conclusion, namely, that they make God an accomplice in and author of sin. God, according to them, must order the permission of sin so that there may be penance for sins and redemption of them through Christ; and He orders it to those ends inasmuch as it is apt to obtain those ends; but the permission of sin is not apt to obtain those ends except inasmuch as it is bound up with sin; therefore God wills the permission of sin inasmuch as it is bound up with sin, and that is to will sin. These two difficulties we shall consider more closely when we criticize some similar doctrines of the scholastics.

IV. THE SOLUTION THAT SEEMS TO US TRUE

The problem of the reason for evil in the world is exceedingly complicated. We shall have advanced a great deal if we determine well the sense of the problem and if we carefully distinguish the manifold set of questions that the total problem encloses, for thus there will be hope of giving it an adequate solution.

We already pointed out above that the total problem of the reason for evil in the world contains within itself four others, namely: first, what its efficient cause is; second, what its final cause is; third, what the intrinsic and formal reason is that makes intelligible to us how God could licitly choose this plan of the world in which such horrendous evils were to be; fourth, what the reason is that makes intelligible to us why God in fact chose this plan rather than any other in which there would be no moral evils at all, or at least fewer evils in quantity and in quality.

§ 1. THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF EVIL

A. The efficient cause of physical evil in irrational beings is God inasmuch as He concurs with second causes. God intended to create a Universe that is not static, like one a man might make in a model, but a dynamic Universe in which each of its beings would act according to its nature and consequently produce new forms, new states, and combinations opposed to the requirements of the beings thus modified; and in this precisely physical evil consists. It is true that the second causes are what produce the said physical evils; but these are also rightly attributed to God, because He gave to second causes the special character whence such determinate evils necessarily flow, and moreover He concurs with them.

That it may be understood how every physical evil can be attributed to God as to a true cause, let us divide all physical evils into three classes.

Some evils consist in unsuitable forms caused in the patient by an agent of perfect power, and in this way fire causes burns in a plant and sharp pains

in an animal; these evils, it is evident, proceed from God as from a true cause, together with the second cause.

The second class of physical evils consists in actions that proceed from a perfect cause but have been impeded by the action of another natural agent, as when a perfect generative power produces a monster because another natural cause interposes itself in its action and impedes it. This evil too proceeds from God, since it proceeds from the action of two causes that are perfect in their order and indicates no defect or privation in either of them.

The third class of physical evils consists in actions that proceed from a defective cause, such as the lameness that proceeds from a badly formed leg and the poor digestion that proceeds from a weak stomach. These evils too must be attributed to God, because defective causes have such a defect only through some action of perfect causes acting according to their character. It must be noted, however, that these actions proceed from created causes as from causes that have in themselves imperfection or undue privation, whereas from God they proceed as from a perfect cause that positively concurs in producing the imperfection of the defective cause. God, certainly, does not produce the privation directly, because a privation cannot be brought about directly; but He does determine the defective action in what is positive in it, although, as has been said, not as a defective cause but as a perfect cause.

And in this attribution of evils to God there is a great difference between physical evils and moral evils. Moral evils are never attributed to God, because although He made the will that sins, that will is nevertheless not determined to sin; it has every means for not sinning, and therefore, if it sins, this is not owing to God's determination or causality but only to its own determination, as we shall explain further on.

But God does not cause all these evils as a per se cause, but per accidens. God does not will these evils as ends, but solely as means or occasions for obtaining excellent goods, such as the hierarchy of causes and effects in the Universe; besides which, evil consists in privation, and privation is never brought about directly but indirectly, as something adhering to the positive effect that is produced. [The in-text markers for notes[1],[2], and[3] are absent from the source as transmitted; the notes themselves stand at the foot of these pages and are given in their numbered place in the list below.]

In this manner of God's proceeding there is nothing irrational or reprehensible, because the subordination of causes and effects among

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[1] SUÁREZ, opusc. I, *De auxiliis*, l. 2, c. 3, n. 4; c. 5, n. 14; and he refutes those who hold the contrary: *De praedestinat.*, l. 3, c. 8, nn. 12, 13. The contrary to Suárez is held by Ruiz de Montoya, *De voluntate Dei*, d. 26, s. 3, n. 8; et *De providentia*, d. 13, s. 2, n. 9.

[2] SUÁREZ, opusc. I, l. 2, cc. 2, 4.

[3] SUÁREZ, DM., 11, s. 3, n. 23.

themselves, and of all beings to the Creator, is preserved[1]. The world, with all these evils, is still a mirror in which the divine perfections are reflected.

B. The cause of physical evil in rational beings is likewise God, inasmuch as He gives to natural causes their ordination to produce determinate effects and inasmuch as He physically concurs with them. Man, as a corporeal being, is subject to the fabric of this material universe and is subject to the same influences and the same agents as other bodies; and from this it follows that, when energetic causes stronger than he invade him, they will oppress him and cause him countless afflictions, privations, and illnesses, in which evil consists.

But God is the cause of these evils not per se, because He does not will them for their own sake, but is a cause per accidens, because He wills them only as means or occasions for drawing forth most excellent goods. In this way He preserves the hierarchy of physical causes and effects and, moreover, looks to the dignity of the human person, ordering these evils so that the human person may exercise the virtues, increase merits for eternal life, and thus prepare for himself a most happy future.

In this manner of God's proceeding there is likewise nothing irrational or reprehensible, since the hierarchical subordination of irrational beings among themselves, of these in relation to man, and of all in relation to the Creator, is preserved.

When man's physical evils proceed from his own sins or from those of others, then God only permits those evils; but once they occur against His antecedent will, He wills that man suffer them for his spiritual good, in which likewise there is no disorder whatever on God's part.

Those who complain of physical evils have a certain materialist tendency; they think that the whole reason for their existence is reduced to this life, and for that reason they judge physical evil to be the loss of their entire reason for being. But those who believe that this life is like a very brief road ordered to the attainment of an ineffable dominion of riches and well-being, and this within very few days, do not complain so much of temporal evils, dreadful as these truly are, but regard them as a most rich mine of merits and praise the Lord for having given them so easy a means of rising to the true riches and the true honors.

C. The efficient cause of the evil of eternal punishment is God alone, who is the only being powerful enough to inflict so great a torment. But God does not will this evil as an end, because no appetitive tendency tends to evil as to its term, but wills it solely as a means or occasion[2] for demonstrating His

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[1] SUÁREZ, DM., 11, s. 3, nn. 21-24.

[2] SUÁREZ: God wills the evil of punishment *not per se, but per accidens*. "*Malum... poenae* DIRECTE *vult Deus; non tamen* EX *se illud vult, sed ex ratione iustitiae*" (De praedestinat., l. 5, c. 4, n. 2); He does not will it as an end but as a means, which is the same as willing it *per accidens*. In the *Metaphysics* he had said that God wills punishment

infinite holiness, which does not compromise with wickedness. Nor does He inflict this evil by a primary providence and on His own initiative, but as it were compelled by the sinner. Sin of itself merits the eternal punishment of hell, as we suppose to be demonstrated from revelation; and the divine holiness requires that God take this maxim as the norm of His conduct: if anyone sins and dies in the obstinacy of his sin, God is in some manner compelled by the sinner to punish him eternally. For His part, God sincerely wills the salvation of all, and to this end gives to all the necessary and abundant means. If in spite of this the sinner voluntarily and freely sins and is obstinate in his sin, he voluntarily and knowingly casts himself into his own ruin and can accuse no one but himself. Thus the efficient cause of the punishment is God; but the meritorious cause is solely the creature when it sins against God's antecedent will.

D. Let us come now to the most tremendous evil, because it disturbs the whole reason for man's existence and the whole subordination of the creature to the Creator: this is the evil of fault: sin.

a) The cause of sin is the rational creature alone. It is the cause of sin because, having in its hands every means for practicing virtue and avoiding vice, it determined most freely to sin and not to obey. And the rational creature can reach such a degree of perversion that it wills moral evil, not only for the delight that the positive element of sin brings with it, as in lust and theft, but also for the sake of the malice itself, though not willing it as an end, as is evident, but as a means for wreaking its vengeance upon the Creator in hell.

b) God is not the cause of sin. It is true that God permits sin, and this not with an inert permission of letting things happen, but with an active permission, by which He offers the general and indifferent concurrence to the creature so that the latter may freely act according to its character; and when the time comes, He causes together with the rational creature the very positive action contrary to the law of God and to right reason. God, then,

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per se only in the sense of *directe*, not as an end but as a means: "*Malum autem poenae, non solum quoad permissionem, sed etiam quoad effectionem, potest* PER SE *ac recte intendi* PROPTER *honestum finem... Et hoc modo malum ut tale est, potest habere finalem causam (extrinsecam); atque ita Deus intendit mala poenae, quorum est auctor.*" When GISQUIÈRE (*Deus Dominus*, II, p. 80) says that Suárez affirms that God wills the evil of punishment *for its own sake*, and not for an end distinct from the punishment, he attributes to him something opposed to Suárez's own words; it is not enough to point out that Suárez said that God wills the evil of punishment *per se*; one must attend to the sense that Suárez himself gives to *per se* in that place; the words cited already indicate it sufficiently, but they are further clarified by others quite close by: "*Nam si sit agens liberum, potest* DIRECTE AC PER SE *intendere malum alterius* PROPTER *alium finem, ut supra dicebamus de malo poenae, quod Deus* DIRECTE *intendit, supposito malo culpae*" (DM, 11, 3, 11): this is the same as affirming that God wills the evil of punishment *directly, yet not for its own sake, but for an end* distinct from the punishment itself.

intervenes in the sinful action in two ways: by physically concurring in the action, and by not impeding it, although He could so easily have done so. Nevertheless we say that God is not the cause of sin, neither directly in the positive action He performs, nor indirectly in not impeding the evil that He could so easily have impeded.

c) *And, first of all, God is not the efficient cause of sin directly, through the positive concurrence He lends to the sinful action.*

When the sin is one of mere omission, God does not concur in it efficiently, since there is no positive effect that can be efficiently produced.

When the sin is one of commission, we can distinguish in it two aspects, namely: the positive action inasmuch as it issues from God, and that same action inasmuch as it issues from the creature. The action inasmuch as it issues from the creature is sin, because it is the creature that determines its specification and its morally evil exercise, whereas it ought to and can avoid it. But that same sinful action, inasmuch as it issues from God, is not sin.

The difficulty of making this assertion intelligible is truly great for our understanding. For at once the following difficulty presents itself to the mind: he who advertently and freely performs an action with which moral malice is bound up virtually wills the sin and the malice. And this is precisely the reason why the creature is guilty of and responsible for the malice of sin. The creature, in sinning, does not efficiently produce the malice nor will it directly, but performs a prohibited positive action in circumstances in which the malice is inseparable from that positive action, and for that reason it is responsible for the malice of the act. But the action, inasmuch as it issues from God in the circumstances in which He concurs with the creature, is necessarily bound up with the malice, through the creature's advertence and through the liberty with which the creature acts; therefore the sinful action, inasmuch as it issues from God, is sin as well, just as the action of the creature itself is.

Many are the answers and explanations that have been given among the scholastics to resolve this obscure objection, which is an indication of the difficulty of the matter[1]. A priori we know that there is a solution, since the infinite holiness of God is certain to us; and our task now will be to find it, if we can.

The first explanation is that of DURANDUS and AUREOLUS; moved by the present difficulty, they denied simultaneous concurrence. God created free causes, and they alone are what determine their own action; and since the one responsible for the action is the one who determines it, only the creature is the cause of its action, not God. This explanation is the most radical and the simplest of all, but it is not the best founded. Every positive reality is made immediately by God, and therefore the sinful action that the creature performs also proceeds immediately from God.

[1] Ap. VÁZQUEZ, 1-2, d. 129, n. 3.

The second solution is that of CAJETAN. He maintains that the whole moral malice of sin consists in something positive, but that sin, taken as a whole, denotes not only that which is positive but also the privation that necessarily follows upon that positive element. God, then, is not the direct cause of sin, because although He produces all that positive element, which is the moral malice, He nevertheless does not produce that privation which necessarily follows upon it (ap. Vázquez, 1-2, d. 129, n. 15).

This second explanation is utterly deficient. If the whole moral malice consists in something positive, God produces it directly and consequently is the cause of sin. It is true that He does not produce the privation that necessarily follows upon the positive act contrary to law and to moral rectitude; but neither does the creature produce that privation, because privations have no direct cause, and yet the creature is the cause of sin; therefore in the same way God would be the cause of sin. Moreover, we here pass over the discussion of the unacceptable opinion that malice consists in something positive.

The third explanation says that God is not responsible, because in concurring with the creature He acts according to the rules of right reason, which dictate that the first cause must concur in every positive action, whereas the creature is responsible because it acts against the laws of God and right reason.

It is true, as we shall see, that the sinful action, inasmuch as it proceeds from God, is not against the rules of right reason; but this explanation does not make that evident: for if God performs an action with which malice is necessarily bound up, it seems that He implicitly and virtually wills the malice. This difficulty must be resolved, and the present theory does not resolve it.

The fourth explanation says that when there are two causes concurring simultaneously in one action, the defect must be attributed only to the defectible cause, not to the perfect cause; in sin there is something positive and something defective; the defective element must be attributed only to the creature, which is defectible, not to God, who is a perfect cause. God concurs, v. c. [verbi causa], with the lame man in the action of walking: what is positive in the walking must be attributed to God and to the forces of the organism; what is defective in the walking must be attributed solely to the badly formed leg.

This solution does not satisfy. He who wills and performs an action inseparably bound up with malice also wills the malice; but according to this explanation God wills and performs the positive action of sin, therefore He also implicitly wills the malice bound up with it. And in the same way, he who wills and determines and performs the action of walking with a lame leg wills, though per accidens, and implicitly determines, the existence of the defect in the walking; therefore, according to this example, God would will the malice, which cannot be said, because God does not will malice, not even per accidens.

The fifth solution says that God is not responsible for sin, because He performs the positive action of sin with the intention of obtaining good ends, such as penance, humility, and the manifestation of punitive justice, and not with the intention of violating the law of God, as the sinner does.

In this solution an abominable immorality is attributed to God: that the end justifies the means. It is granted that the action is absolutely inseparable from the malice and therefore intrinsically evil; and it is not licit to do evil that good may come, as sound reason and the divine word declare[1].

The commonly received solution teaches that God determines the sinful action neither as regards specification nor as regards exercise, nor is He bound to impede it; consequently God is not the cause of sin, despite the positive concurrence by which He produces every positive action that the creature performs[2]. We shall explain this solution somewhat, which is also our own.

God does not determine the sinner's action either as regards specification or as regards exercise: He does not bring it about that the action bear upon such a morally evil object, or that it be performed in such circumstances of place, time, and advertence.

Indeed, God offers the general and indifferent concurrence for everything the creature can do in those circumstances, with the intent that the created cause be a complete and free cause (which it could not be without such an offer of concurrence) and that it freely do the good; and when the case arises He concurs in the creature's action, not precisely inasmuch as it is an action determined to such a morally evil object and in such circumstances, but inasmuch as it is an actuation of the contingent and complete cause according to its character; and the actuation under that respect includes no sin at all, but is wholly good and desirable[3].

On the other hand, the creature alone is what determines that such a particular action upon such an object should exist, and that it should exist at such a time and in such circumstances of advertence and unimpeded liberty. For that cause determines the action which, in the sign prior to its production, is free and master to perform it or not to perform it; and this cause is the creature alone. God, by His most free decree, is already bound to act according to the character of the creature.

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[1] VÁZQUEZ, *ib.*, nn. 4-21.

[2] S. THOMAS, 1-2, q. 79, aa. 1, 2; *De malo*, q. 1, a. 3; SUÁREZ, opusc. I, *De auxiliis*, l. 2, c. 3, nn. 17-20; VÁZQUEZ, 1-2, d. 129, nn. 24-25; CANO, *De locis*, l. 2, c. 4; et *De Sacramentis*, p. 4, post quintam conclus.; SOTO, *De natura et gratia*, l. 1, c. 18; RUIZ DE MONTOYA, *De voluntate Dei*, d. 26, s. 7; d. 50, s. 3, nn. 4, 6.

[3] According to Suárez, God takes complacency in the action by which sin is committed, inasmuch as it proceeds from His omnipotence, because as such it is not sin but a good and prudent action; but it displeases Him, and He disapproves and prohibits it, inasmuch as it issues from the creature, who determines it in a morally evil way as regards species and exercise (Opusc., I, l. 2, c. 5, n. 20).

From what has been said we shall be able to understand how God is not the direct cause of sin. For he is the direct cause of sin who determines the positive action of sin as regards specification toward such a morally evil object, and as regards exercise, and at such a time, and in such circumstances in which the malice is inseparable from the action by reason of advertence to the rule of morals and by reason of liberty. But all this accrues to the sinful action inasmuch as it proceeds from the creature and not inasmuch as it proceeds from God.

With this an answer has been given to the most serious difficulty proposed at the outset. It was said that everyone who freely and advertently performs an action indissolubly united to moral malice implicitly and virtually wills that malice; but God advertently and freely performs the positive action of sin, which is indissolubly united to moral malice; therefore God implicitly wills moral malice.

To this we have answered that moral malice is bound up with the advertent and free action of the creature, which action, being determined to a particular and morally evil object, is intrinsically evil; but the malice is not bound up with the action which, inasmuch as it issues from the agent [i.e., from God, as the following clause indicates], is not determined to a particular morally evil object, but tends only to the actuation of a contingent and complete cause according to its character; and this is the manner in which the creature's sinful action proceeds from God.

This solution can be misunderstood, and for that reason we must insist upon it. God produces the whole positive entity of sin, without there remaining any positive aspect that God does not produce. But the tendency of the action, inasmuch as it proceeds from God, does not wholly coincide with the tendency of that same action inasmuch as it proceeds from the creature. Inasmuch as it proceeds from God, it tends to actuate a contingent, complete, and free cause, which is a praiseworthy thing and corresponds very well to the office of first cause that God must exercise; but inasmuch as it proceeds from the creature, it tends determinately to such a morally evil object, and in such circumstances in which the malice is inseparable from the act: the action of God and of the creature is the same, but it receives different denominations according to the cause from which it proceeds: from God it receives the denomination of being the actuation of a contingent and free cause, and from the creature it receives the denomination of being an action against the divine commandments and against right reason.

Nor is it thereby said that the creature performs any action before God begins it or independently of God. And we have an example that will illustrate this doctrine.

The habit of charity is united to the free will as a necessary cause. The will cannot perform any act belonging to charity without the habit acting simultaneously; but the determination of the act as regards exercise and specification depends solely on the will. Which does not mean that the will performs anything without the habit or before the habit, but only that in the

sign prior to the action the will alone was indifferent as regards exercise and specification, and the habit, as a necessary cause, must act in conformity with the determination of the will. In a similar way, here God applies His omnipotence after the manner of a necessary cause in order to act according to the character of the creature; this supposed, in the sign prior to the action the creature alone is free and determines the action; God, as a cause applied after the manner of a necessary cause, acts in conformity with the determination of the creature [so in the original: de la meara, evidently a misprint for de la creatura]: which does not mean that the creature performs anything before God or without God, but only that it is the creature which, in the sign prior to the action, is free to act or not to act and to specify its action thus or thus.

The action thus determined by the creature is sinful, because it tends directly to an object that the law of God prohibits, and consequently has malice inseparably annexed to it. But the action, inasmuch as it issues from God, is not determined to such an object and exercise and specification, but only to being the actuation of a contingent, complete, and free cause, which is no sin at all nor prohibited on any title. God produces the whole action of the creature, but He does not produce it by specifying it or determining it to evil and to morally evil circumstances, but by tending to the actuation of a contingent and free cause: the creature alone is what determines the action as regards specification and as regards exercise, because in the sign prior to the action it alone is free to act or not to act, and God, by His most free decree, is already determined to do whatever the creature may do. God had determined to join His omnipotence to the creature in order to perform everything the creature might perform in determinate circumstances; and since by middle knowledge He saw that the creature, with that offered concurrence, would perform a determinate act, His general decree is for that reason objectively determined by the creature, that is, by the truth of the futurible, which appears in middle knowledge.

Against this doctrine nothing can be objected but the well-known difficulty against middle knowledge. The object of middle knowledge is constituted before God knows that object, which is the futurible. And since in the futurible there is contained an action that God performs together with the creature, it follows that middle knowledge presupposes that some divine action takes place without His knowing it.

We must not disguise the obscurity of this difficulty, which has led some to say that here there is a great mystery. But if it is not resolved, there is in it not a great mystery but a great contradiction: God would be an intelligent and free being, and yet an action is presupposed as proceeding from Him without consciousness of what He is doing.

The answer, however, exists. The object of middle knowledge pre-exists, according to the signs of reason, before God knows it; but that object which precedes the knowledge must be rightly understood and rightly formulated. The object of middle knowledge is not to be formulated thus: “If the general

and indifferent concurrence were offered to the creature for everything it can do in determinate circumstances, what would it do with the concurrence of God, who would be acting unconsciously together with the creature?" On that supposition the object of middle knowledge is absurd and chimerical, and supposes that God gives a concurrence without being conscious of what He is doing. The object of middle knowledge must be formulated in the following manner: "If the concurrence were consciously offered by God to the creature for performing everything it might perform in determinate circumstances, what would God and the creature consciously do?" In this formula everything takes place under the divine light and consciousness.

God knows that object, because it is a truth. For in fact, if God were to apply His omnipotence after the manner of a necessary cause in order to perform together with the creature everything the latter might perform in determinate circumstances, the creature would freely perform some action while God consciously concurred; and this is what God knows. We sincerely believe that the difficulty is fully dissolved.

There remains only the wonder as to how God knows these futuribles, since it is impossible that He know them in any cause. An acceptable theory says that He knows them in themselves, once it is supposed that the act by which He knows them first knows the divine essence, and thus the act is already specified and determined by the divine essence to know everything knowable: the object will thus be a mere term of the divine knowledge, not a determinant or a specifier of it.

It remains demonstrated, then, that God is not the direct cause of sin, although He positively concurs in the whole action of the creature. Nevertheless, in some improper manner it can be said that God is a cause of sin remotely and per accidens. He is a remote cause because God gives the creature all the energies and all the means of doing what it wills, although He does not give it the determination to such a determinate action; and he who produces a force or active power can be called the remote cause of the effects that that power produces. But He is a cause per accidens, because the effects of the creature and of the energies given to the creature do not emanate necessarily or determinately from it; rather, with those same energies the creature could have done good. In a similar way, the father who begot a son who afterwards commits horrendous crimes is a remote and per accidens cause of such crimes, but is in no way a per se cause, because those crimes of the son are not determined by the nature the father begot but by the son's evil will, which could without difficulty have been other than it was. And this way of being a cause is to be a cause in an improper and unreal manner[1].

[1] God is the cause of sin *remote et per accidens*: Vázquez, 1-2, d. 129, n. 4.

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d) *It is established that God is not the direct cause of sin by the action He posits in concurring in the sinful action. Let us see whether He is at least an indirect cause, inasmuch as He does not impede the sinful action which He could so easily impede, either by withdrawing His concurrence or by placing the creature in those circumstances in which He foresaw that it would freely do good.*

And the reason for doubting is the following. A person is an indirect cause of, and truly responsible for, another's evil action when, being able and bound to impede it, he does not do so; but God could and ought to have impeded the creature's sin. For it seems evident that every ruler is bound to impede the evil of a subordinate of his when he foresees it and can easily impede it; and every father of a family is bound to impede the evil of his children when he foresees it and can easily impede it. And God is a supreme ruler and a father of a family with respect to the whole human race, one who most clearly foresees all the evils of sin and of hell into which His subordinates and His children can fall, and who can most easily impede them, according to Saint Augustine[1]; therefore He is bound to impede them; and if He does not impede them, He is the indirect cause of them.

It is not true that everyone who foresees an evil and can impede it is bound in fact to impede it. That obligation does not exist except when there is a precept from a legitimate superior to impede the evil another does, or when the dictates of right reason require it, as in the present case would be the dictate of one's own perfectibility or the requirements of the various divine attributes. And none of these titles imposes upon God the obligation of impeding the evil He foresees and can impede.

God has no precept to impede the sin of His creatures, because He has no superior whatever.

Nor is He subject to the dictate of His own perfectibility, by virtue of which a person must perfect himself by his own acts. God is infinitely perfect and consequently cannot be perfected by any of His effects.

It will be said that if God were to perform an evil action, such as lying, He would fall into a most grave imperfection; therefore in the same way, in producing some good effect He acquires some perfection and is consequently subject to the law of His own perfectibility. But the disparity is immense. The intrinsically evil action is opposed to the divine holiness, and if He performed it, it would be an indication that He is not infinitely holy. But the good external work, on the one hand, is opposed to none of His attributes, as is evident, and, on the other, can add no perfection to Him, since of Himself He is infinitely holy, independently of every other external work.

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[1] "*Quis enim auderet credere aut dicere, ut neque angelus neque homo caderet, in Dei potestate non fuisse?*" (De civit. Dei, 14, c. 27).

Nor is God bound in fact to impede sins by the rational requirements of any of His attributes, as we can make evident by running through the principal ones.

Justice does not oblige Him, because God owes nothing to anyone. The ruler possesses a most eminent dignity, which he has received under the onerous title of procuring the common good with all his strength. The father of a family has received a most worthy power, namely that of governing the family and of legitimately bringing new men into the world; but he has received that dignity and power under the onerous title of caring for the family, of procuring its good, and of warding off all the evils he reasonably can. God too is the creator of the universe and supreme legislator and the ruler of all creatures, rational and irrational. But this office He has received from no one, nor has He taken it under an onerous title, because He is absolutely subject to no one; rather, all things are essentially subject to His dominion, and rational creatures in particular owe Him entire submission and gratitude and must serve Him under the conditions He may appoint for them. [The syntax of the source is faulty here: y en especial de las creaturas racionales le deben entera sumisión... y deben servirla; read y en especial las creaturas racionales... deben servirle.] Consequently God does not have the obligations of justice that the public ruler or the father of a family has: the requirements of reason are not the same in God and in creatures.

God has the right to create men and to require of them the reasonable service He deems fitting. To demand that God not adopt this plan because perhaps some one of His rational creatures may become insubordinate and fall into lamentable misfortunes is to restrict God's liberty and to make Him fail to carry out His plans for fear of rebels and criminals. In the face of the rebelliousness of the wicked, God cannot renounce His rights to create freely whomever He may will and to impose upon them the obligations His infinite holiness demands; rather, He must make them feel their own folly, since they were unwilling to profit from the fatherly gentleness with which He supplied them with the means necessary for their salvation. He who would put God on a level with the public ruler and with the father of a family forgets the essential analogy that obtains between God and creatures, and wishes at all costs to introduce univocity between them, which is a species of atheism or of pantheism.

Nor does His infinite holiness oblige Him to impede sin. Holiness obliges God to prohibit sin and to prescribe virtue, and to this end to give just laws and to sanction them in a manner capable of moving every rational being; but all this God does abundantly, even though He does not in fact impede sins. If man is bound to impede in others the sins he reasonably can, it is because he has a precept from God and because the dictates of his own perfectibility require it, as does the fact that all are equals and brothers, destined for one and the same society and for the participation of the same goods, which entails their looking out for one another as far as they reasonably can.

Nor does His wisdom oblige Him in fact to impede sin. Wisdom requires that God assign to man an end worthy of man and of God and that He give him the means necessary to attain it; but this God already does superabundantly, even though He does not in fact impede sin: God constantly assists man with His illuminations and inspirations, gives him the examples of His most holy Son, stimulates him with rewards and with punishments, and gives him the remedies of His sacraments. If man sins when he could refrain from sinning, God's wisdom suffers no injury.

But would not God be obliged by His goodness and by charity toward His creature to impede the unspeakable evil of sin, the root and cause of eternal damnation and of the greatest disorder that can be conceived?

Neither do the requirements of this divine attribute oblige God in fact to impede sin. God would act against goodness and charity in not impeding sin and eternal ruin if the creature, by itself and with the means it has received from God, could not manage to avoid it. But this hypothesis is not verified. God has given the creature all the necessary and abundant means for serving God and being saved; if, in spite of this, it sins and is lost, it cannot complain of any lack of goodness in God, but only of its own folly and malice.

Would he fail in goodness and charity who let a person die of hunger, when he has supplied that person with abundant food and placed it within reach, if she will not eat? Would he fail in charity and goodness who did not draw out of the chasm an individual to whom he has supplied ladders and ropes and sufficient instructions for making use of them, if that person will not come out of it? Would he fail in charity and goodness who let a person die of cold, nakedness, and exposure, to whom he has given abundant money to buy clothing and a house, and copious instructions for making use of that money, if he will not use those means? Such conduct would not be against charity or against goodness in the benefactor, but an indication of consummate malice in the one who will not avail himself of the means given him and who moreover complains of his benefactor. Now this is God's conduct toward the wretched man who entangles himself in sins and is finally damned.

It is true that God could preserve all from sin and from hell, either by denying His concurrence for sinning or by placing them in the circumstances in which He foresaw that they would freely do good; but this is to acknowledge the infinite riches and inexhaustible power of God, and it is not a count of accusation against God's goodness or charity, since God has communicated infinite goods to the one who is lost, and he has been lost only because he willed it.

We now know the efficient cause of evil. God is the cause of physical evil and of the evil of eternal punishment, although He does not will it per se but per accidens, not as an end but as a means; and the evil of eternal punishment He wills only as in a certain manner compelled by the creature. But of moral evil, or the evil of fault, God is the cause neither per se nor per accidens, neither directly through His concurrence nor indirectly through not having

impeded it. The creature alone is the cause of sin. Further on we shall examine the divine permission of sin and investigate with what end He permitted it, why He could licitly permit it, and why in fact He permitted it.

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GOD AND THE REASON FOR EVIL IN THE WORLD[1]

§ 2. THE FINAL CAUSE OF EVIL

THE total problem concerning the reason for evil in the world contains four partial problems, namely: what the efficient cause is, what the final cause is, what the formal reason is on account of which God could, without detriment to His holiness and His goodness, choose a plan in which there was to be so much evil, and what, finally, the reason is for which He in fact chose it. We have already explained above the efficient cause of evil. Now we shall consider its final cause. The solution of this problem is very important for clarifying the matter that occupies us; for if God seeks sin or the permission of sin as a means for obtaining some end, it seems that God is the reason for evil in the world, contrary to what we demonstrated above.

And we are not at present concerned with the final cause of natural evil or of the evil of punishment; this problem offers no difficulty, and it was already sufficiently resolved in treating of the efficient cause[2]. [So in the original: *ya quedó suficientemente resuelto el tratar de la causa eficiente*; read *al tratar*.] What concerns us above all is the final cause of sin. And we must investigate the final cause of two very distinct things, which it is not well to confuse: one is the final cause of sin, and the other is the final cause of the permission of sin, which permission God alone makes, without finding pretext or occasion on the part of the creature. To what end does sin exist in the world? To what end did God permit sin in the world?

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And beginning with the final cause of sin, it must be said that sin has no *intrinsic* purpose to be obtained through its natural action or through its own being, since sin contains a privation and a disorder, and privation and disorder do not bear upon a purpose but are rather a lack or a privation of purpose. But can it be ordered to some *extrinsic* end by the mere will of the one who does it or permits it?

The creature can give sin an *extrinsic* purpose by desiring it, whether for the utility it brings or for its delight, as in lust and theft. And the creature can

[1] *Pens.*, 1953, p. 5 ff.

[2] *Pens.*, 1953, p. 15.

even will the malice itself, which formally constitutes sin, as a means, *v. c.* [*verbi causa*], in order to take vengeance upon God in hell[1].

But can God Himself order sin to some purpose *extrinsic* to sin itself?

We say that God cannot order sin to any good end preconceived prior to the foresight of sin as absolutely future. Otherwise God would propose to Himself, independently of the absolute foresight of sin, a good end, such as would be the humility of a saint, penance, his strengthening in the faith. And afterwards, according to our manner of conceiving, God would have to procure diligently that some sin be committed, as a means or occasion for obtaining the proposed end. This would be a most manifest immorality. It would be to practice the maxim condemned by Saint Paul and by right reason, that evils are done or procured in order that goods may come (*Rom.*, 3, 8).

God can order sin to a good end only after He has foreseen sin as absolutely future and as committed against His antecedent will. And then God can order it to some good end as a *mere occasion* and not as a means *apt* for any good, because sin of itself brings good to no one. It is an evil so pernicious that of itself it brings only evils[2]. It can bring no good to the one who commits it, because it degrades him and often causes his eternal ruin. Nor does it bring any good to the corporeal world, because it is nothing corporeal but merely spiritual. Nor does it bring goods to men who are wayfarers, because it rather scandalizes them or brings them other harms. It brings no goods to the blessed, whom it displeases and who heartily reprove it. Nor to God, because it offends Him and takes from Him the essential subordination that is due to Him.

The goods that are caused on the occasion of sin are due solely to the goodness and liberality of God and to His hidden disposition. If a salutary penance is given to the sinner, and by this he attains a deeply rooted humility, this is not due to the merits of having sinned, but solely to the goodness of God, who had compassion on the one who sinned. If, on the contrary, God leaves others in their sin until the hour of death, and by this they are lost forever, He draws by His lofty judgments the good of manifesting His justice and His incorruptible holiness.

That it may be understood how there can be things done against the antecedent will of God without God's being thereby overcome, we shall set forth the order of the divine willing in the economy of the permission of sin, according to our manner of conceiving.

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[1] Malum ergo culpae formaliter et ut tale est... non solum finalem causam non requirit, verum etiam recte et ordinate illam habere non potest...; inordinata autem voluntas potest intendere hoc malum, imo et malitiam ipsam, saltem ut medium, et sub aliqua apparenti et falsa ratione boni, v. g. ad vindictam de aliquo sumendam. SUÁREZ, DM., 11, 3, 5.

[2] S. THOMAS, 1 d. 46, q. 1, aa. 2, 3; I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; et q. 48, a. 2, ad 2; 3 C.G., cc. 21, 94.

God, in a *first sign*, knows everything that rational creatures would do in all possible circumstances, and everything He could do according to the various actions of creatures. In the *second sign* God offers creatures the general and indifferent concurrence for everything they can do in the determinate circumstances in which He places them, and this to the end that the creature may be constituted as a complete cause in first act, and that it may unimpededly do the good it ought to do, without His thereby taking from it the faculty of resisting. In the *third sign* God decrees not to give it the efficacious graces with which it would in fact avoid sin, and without which He foresees that sin will in fact not be avoided. In the *fourth sign* God foresees absolutely that the creature will sin in such and such a manner. In the *fifth sign* God decrees to make use of that sin as an occasion for drawing forth excellent goods. And I do not say for drawing forth greater goods, but excellent goods, because it is not necessary that God always draw from sin goods greater than the goods destroyed by sin. (*Pens.*, 1952, pp. 307-309.)

In this ordering of signs there appears, in the fourth sign, the divine foreknowledge of the sin that God willed should not be committed. But He is not thereby overcome, because the will by which God wills that evil not be done is not always absolute, but is antecedent and encloses, in a certain manner, some condition: God wills that the creature do good, without taking from it the physical power of resisting. And if it does in fact resist, the creature departs from the primary providence, by which God demands obedience, and falls under the secondary providence, by which it must repent of the evil done or must suffer the avenging of the disorder committed.

From what has been said it is understood how it is impossible for God to order sin *itself* to a good end preconceived by Him independently of the absolute foresight of some sin; He can order it to a good end only once sin has been foreseen as absolutely future and as committed against His antecedent will[1].

* * *

Let us come now to the *permission of sin*. Can God order the permission of sin to some good end preconceived on His own initiative and independently of the absolute foresight of sin? And the reason for doubting is that, if such an ordering is affirmed, it seems that God intends sin, and thus

[1] It is frequently said that God punishes one sin with another sin, as though God took sin or the permission of sin as a means for punishing another sin. But by this is signified only that God diminishes His graces, which nevertheless remain most sufficient for avoiding every sin. By this God foresees that the creature will fall into new sins; and when these newly committed sins bring temporal harms, God takes these as a means for punishing the previous sin. As is evident, God chooses neither sin nor the permission of sin as a means to anything; He only makes use of sin and of the damages caused by sin as occasions for attaining excellent goods. Cf. VÁZQUEZ, 1-2, d. 129, n. 31.

we shall have to designate God as the reason and the cause of the existence of sin in the world. If, on the contrary, we say that God does not order the permission of sin to any end, it seems that God would be acting irrationally, foolishly, without any rational justification.

To resolve this grave problem we must determine well what is understood by the permission of sin and by the ordering of the permission to some end.

Calvin explained the permission of sin by saying that God predefines and physically predetermines the act of sin as regards the positive element it encloses, without there remaining to the creature any liberty to do it or not to do it; the creature, however, is responsible for the sin, because it performs it voluntarily, spontaneously, and without external coercion, and with evil intention; but God is not responsible for the sin, because He neither wills the privation and the disorder that are in the evil act, nor does He perform it with an evil intention, but with the sublime intention of His greater glory; God permits sin, He does not intend it. (Cf. C. Calvetti, *RivFilNeos*, 4, 1952, pp. 316-320.)

It is at once evident that God cannot will the permission of sin in this sense. The creature would not sin, because it would lack liberty to act or not to act, according to Calvin himself; to say that even in this case the creature would be responsible for its deed is an incoherence. Consequently, if Calvin still wishes that in the creature's deed there be sin and malice, it would all be God's, not the creature's; and it would not be possible to excuse God by the good intention, because in this case He would do some evil in order that goods might come.

The *Bañezian* solution explains the permission of sin by saying that God, on His own initiative, predefines and decrees by an absolute decree that such a person perform such a sinful action as regards the positive element in it, and that, when the opportune time has come, in order to carry the predefinition into effect, He physically and irresistibly predetermines the creature to the predefined action, and this in such circumstances of object and of advertence that the malice will be metaphysically inseparable from the positive act. The creature is responsible for the evil action, because it acts freely, since God, in predetermining it to the morally evil action, also gives it the mode of liberty; and moreover the creature acts with an evil intention. God is not responsible for the sin, because He does not produce the malice and because He acts with a good intention, which is the greater good of the universe and the manifestation of His attributes; for this reason it must be said that God does not intend sin but only permits it.

Permission understood in this sense God likewise cannot will or order to any good end preconceived on His own initiative. God would predefine and predetermine to the positive act of sin in those circumstances in which the malice is absolutely inseparable from the positive act, and thus God would virtually will sin. To say that in those circumstances God permits sin and does not intend it is inadmissible. A thing is permitted when that thing is not willed

and when it is possible to impede it. But God wills that the positive act of sin be done, and this by a positive and absolute decree made on His own initiative: therefore He does not permit it but intends it. Nor can God impede the malice in the circumstances in which He predetermines to the act; for the act, in the circumstances of object and of advertence in which God predetermines it, is absolutely inseparable from the malice. It would have to be said, then, that God not only permits the act and the malice, but intends both: the positive act explicitly, and the malice virtually and implicitly[1].

* * *

There is another, *third manner* of understanding the permission of sin, namely that of the Molinist system. The understanding of it presupposes a clear knowledge of the economy of the divine willing with respect to foreknowledge, to the permission itself, and to the remedy of sin once committed. And although we have already set it forth above, it is of such importance for the present question that we shall be permitted to set it down here again, in order to avoid troublesome cross-references.

In this economy of the divine willing we can distinguish five signs. In the *first sign* God knows everything that rational creatures would do in all possible circumstances, and everything He could do according to the various actions of creatures. In the *second sign* God offers creatures the general and indifferent concurrence for everything they can do in the determinate circumstances in which He places them, and this to the end that the creature may be constituted as a complete cause in first act, that it may unimpededly do the good it ought to do, without His thereby taking from it the physical faculty of resisting. In the *third sign* God decrees not to give the efficacious graces with which He foresees that sin would be avoided and without which He foresees that it will not be avoided. In the *fourth sign* God foresees sin as absolutely future, not by force of the denial of the efficacious graces, but by the malice of the creature, which could have done good with the fully sufficient graces it has. In the *fifth sign* God decrees to make use of that sin as an occasion for drawing forth excellent goods.

Of all these signs, the permission of sin consists only in the third and in the fourth [so in the original; the two elements then specified correspond rather to the second and third signs as just enumerated], that is, in the offering of the general and indifferent concurrence for everything the creature can do in those circumstances by the divine power, and in the denial of the efficacious graces with which sin would be avoided and without which He

[1] Such is the refutation SUÁREZ makes of this opinion in *Opusc.*, I, l. 2, c. 2, n. 28, and c. 5, n. 5. RUIZ DE MONTOYA says something similar to BAÑEZ in affirming that God predefines the permission of sin, *De provid.*, d. 11, s. 2, n. 2, and this with such circumstances that it can be foreseen *a priori* and infallibly that the individual will fall, d. 12, s. 7, n. 2.

foresees that it will not be avoided. Thus the permission of sin consists in two things, one positive and the other negative: the positive consists in the offering of the concurrence, and the negative in the denial of the efficacious graces[1]. And one might even say that, the other signs being presupposed, the permission consists formally in the denial of the efficacious graces with which He foresees that sin would be avoided, and without which He foresees that it will not be avoided.

To permit sin is not the same as to give the *possibility* of sinning, taken apart from the very act of sinning. When a person obeys the law of God, God granted him an unimpeded possibility of sinning, since He offered him the indifferent concurrence for everything, but He did not permit sin in him; rather He impeded it by His efficacious graces. When a person sins, He gave him not only the *possibility* of sinning but moreover permitted the sin in him; for He gave him the concurrence for everything, in the circumstances in which He foresaw that he would abuse it, and He did not will to add the efficacious graces with which He foresaw that he would avoid the sin.

Thus the permission connotes the *connection* of the aids granted with the action of sinning, not by virtue of the permission, but by the malice of the creature, which, having graces fully sufficient for obeying, would not obey.

From what has been set forth it is clearly seen that God can permit sin without detriment to His holiness and His goodness, as we shall explain more fully later. God gives the general concurrence so that the creature may be constituted as a complete cause in proximate first act; and in denying the efficacious graces He does injury to no one, since with the fully sufficient graces the creature has, it can do good; and if with them it were going to do good, as it unimpededly can, God would have foreseen that they were efficacious, and God would have rejoiced at so happy an outcome of the sufficient graces.

But the problem is not whether God can permit sin, which is evident. The question is whether God can *order* the permission of sin to an end preconceived on His own initiative and prior to the absolute foresight of sin.

Since in the permission of sin we have distinguished two elements, positive and negative, we must say that God *does order* to a preconceived end the positive element, which is the offering of the indifferent concurrence for everything. This indifferent concurrence God offers to the creature so that the latter may be constituted as a complete and free cause in proximate first act, and so that it may do the good it ought and avoid the evil forbidden it, without His thereby taking from it the physical faculty of resisting. The ends here assigned are most praiseworthy, and the means is the absolutely necessary one, namely the concurrence, which of itself encloses no connection with sin, neither extrinsically nor intrinsically; and such an

[1] SUÁREZ, *De praedestinatione*, l. 5, c. 7, nn. 12, 13.

ordering of the concurrence occurs even in those cases in which there is no permission of sin but rather its avoidance.

But can the same be said as regards the *negative* part? Can God order the denial of the efficacious graces to an end preconceived on His own initiative? If God could do this, the following would occur: God, before absolutely foreseeing any sin of the creature, would propose to Himself a good end, *v. c.*, the humility of a person, penance, strengthening in faith, in chastity, or in some other virtue. And afterwards, according to our manner of conceiving, He would carefully choose, as a means for obtaining that end, the permission of sin, that is, the denial of the efficacious graces with which sin would be avoided and without which it will not be avoided.

Can God order the permission of sin to an end preconceived on His own initiative, taking the permission in the manner stated?

* * *

There are two opinions in this matter. The first affirms that God can make such an ordering and that in fact He makes it. Those who hold this view are those who admit formal prefinitions, and among them Fathers Ruiz de Montoya and Suárez stand out. [The source alternates between *prefiniciones* and *predefiniciones*, ″prefinitions″ and ″predefinitions″; the alternation is retained below.] There is, however, some difference between them. Ruiz de Montoya says that God can order the permission of sin to good ends, even though these essentially presuppose sin; and thus God can, on His own initiative, will the penance of someone and the redemption of sins[1].

Fr. Suárez says, on the contrary, that God cannot intend on His own initiative those good ends that presuppose sin, such as redemption or penance; these He can intend only after foreseeing sin as absolutely future and after the permission of sin[2]. But he affirms that God can will on His own initiative a good end that presupposes no sin, and afterwards, in order to obtain that end, He chooses as a means the permission of a particular sin, *v. c.*, of lust, of apostasy, of treachery[3].

They make many applications of this doctrine. Fr. Ruiz de Montoya says that God chooses the permission of sin so that penance and redemption may take place; Fr. Suárez says that God chooses the permission of sin as a means

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[1] RUIZ DE MONTOYA asks: *Utrum ex intentione bonorum quae colligit occasione peccati, Deus voluerit permittere peccatum*, *De provid.*, d. 12, s. 2, n. 9. And he answers affirmatively, saying that this thesis is common to all the scholastics and to the Fathers, *ibid.*, nn. 10, 11, and he adduces as adversaries only Vázquez and one or two others. But we shall see how the Fathers are to be understood in Vázquez's sense and not in Ruiz de Montoya's. RUIZ DE MONTOYA teaches the same doctrine again in *De voluntate Dei*, d. 26, s. 3, n. 8.

[2] SUÁREZ, *De praedestinatione*, l. 3, c. 8, nn. 12, 13, 19.

[3] SUÁREZ, *ibid.*, n. 14.

so that there may take place the humility of a saint, strengthening in faith or in another virtue, the exaltation of Joseph in Egypt[1], and even negative reprobation[2].

The reasons on which they rest are principally three. The first is that such a doctrine is found contained in the Sacred Scriptures and in the sayings of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers. The second is that, if God did not order the permission of sin to an end preconceived on His own initiative, He would be doing something irrationally and foolishly. The third is that God would not on that account virtually will sin; the connection that the permission would have with sin would be due to the foreknowledge with which God gives the aids, and consequently to the creature, but it would not be willed or intended by God[3].

The second opinion says that God can order the permission of sin to an end preconceived on His own initiative if it is a question of the positive part of the permission, which is the offering of the general and indifferent concurrence; the end to which He orders it, as we have said many times, is to constitute the creature as a complete and free cause in proximate first act, and that it may do good in an unimpeded and free manner. But this part is not yet what is characteristic of the permission, and it occurs even in those in whom sin is not permitted. But this opinion adds that God cannot order the permission of sin in its negative part to an end preconceived on His own initiative; God cannot propose to Himself as an end that a creature be humble, or be exalted in Egypt like Joseph, and afterwards seek, as a means for obtaining that end, the denial of the efficacious graces with which sin would be avoided and without which it will not be avoided.

Such is the thinking of those who do not admit formal predefinitions, as is, among others, Fr. Vázquez[4].

* * *

This is also our opinion[5]. And the reason that moves us is that, if God were to order the permission of sin in the manner stated to a preconceived

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[1] Thus SUÁREZ, *Opusc.*, I, l. 2, c. 5, n. 15; *De praedestinatione*, l. 1, c. 13, nn. 11, 12.

[2] SUÁREZ, *De praedestinatione*, l. 5, c. 5, n. 5; et c. 7, nn. 13, 14.

[3] RUIZ DE MONTOYA, *De provid.*, d. 12, s. 2, n. 14.

[4] VÁZQUEZ, *In* 1, d. 93, nn. 8-17.

[5] It is well known that Suárez is abandoned even by his most devoted followers in the questions *de praedestinatione ante praevisa merita*, *de praefinitionibus formalibus*, and in the choice of the permission of sin as a means to good ends. These are matters of no importance for the Suarezian philosophical synthesis, as Suárez himself confesses in saying, for example, that formal prefinitions are not necessary for any effect of divine providence, and that he chooses them only on account of certain locutions of Scripture and of the Fathers, and on account of certain congruences that seem to insinuate them. Cf. *Opusc.*, I, l. 2, c. 7, nn. 4-10; c. 16, nn. 3-15; l. 3, c. 17, nn. 6, 7; *De gratia*, l. 5, c. 50, n. 25.

end, God would virtually and implicitly will sin. According to the contrary hypothesis, God, on His own initiative and before foreseeing sin as absolutely future, would propose to Himself to obtain a good end, such as, for example, the humility of a person or the exaltation of Joseph in Egypt. And afterwards, according to our manner of conceiving, He would choose, in order to obtain that end, the permission of sin, *v. c.*, of lust or of treachery; and that sin of lust or of treachery having been committed, God would give the efficacious grace of penance; or, Joseph having been treacherously sold to the Midianites, God would efficaciously see to ordering things in such a way that Joseph should be exalted in Egypt. And in this permission God would choose as a means not only the offering of the general concurrence for everything, but would also choose not to give the efficacious graces with which sin would be avoided. And God would have to choose this permission as *apt* for obtaining the end; and since it is not apt for obtaining the end inasmuch as it is separated from sin, but inasmuch as it is *bound up with sin*, it follows that God chooses the permission of sin inasmuch as it is bound up with sin, and that is precisely to will sin virtually and implicitly. If God were to choose, in order to obtain the end, only the *possibility* of sin, separated from sin, then He would be choosing, in order to obtain the end, not the permission of sin but on the contrary the non-permission of sin. And then they would have to establish the thesis that God orders to good ends not the permission of sin but the non-permission, which is quite acceptable, but is opposed to what they maintain. [The source is corrupt here: *debieran establecer la tesis de que Dios ordena la no permisión del pecado para fines buenos, sino la no permisión*; read *que Dios no ordena la permisión del pecado para fines buenos, sino la no permisión*.]

Fr. Vázquez sets forth this reason with even greater vigor, if that be possible[1]. He who chooses the means to an end chooses not only the remote means, which of itself does not yet lead to the end, but chooses above all the *proximate means*, which stands immediately next to the end; and further, the remote means is desired only inasmuch as the more proximate means has previously been chosen, because what is posterior in execution is prior in intention, as is well known. But if the permission of sin is taken as a means to some virtue, as for attaining humility, or chastity, or strengthening in faith, it can only be a remote means, because of itself it does not proximately assist any virtue or salvation; it will be only a remote means, inasmuch as on the occasion of the permitted sin penance will be done and most resolute purposes of the contrary virtue will be formed; therefore, if the permission of sin is desired as a means to humility or chastity, prior to it the penance and correction of the penitent must have been desired. Now, penance and correction presuppose sin; therefore he who desires penance and correction virtually and implicitly desires that there be sins. If, then, God were to order the permission of sin to a good end preconceived beforehand on His own

[1] *In* 1, q. 93, c. 3, nn. 8-17. [The reference is given as *d.* 93 in notes 12 and 19.]

initiative, God would be an accomplice in sin; and since this cannot be admitted, neither can it be admitted that God orders the permission of sin to any good end chosen by a primary will and on His own initiative.

They say that the connection of the permission of sin with sin itself is due to the divine foreknowledge, not to the divine will. God, in permitting sin, gives the general and indifferent concurrence for everything, and moreover denies the efficacious graces by which sin would be avoided, knowing infallibly that the sin will be committed; but *that connection* God does not will; rather He forbids and detests it, though He does not take away the physical power of resisting. The creature alone wills that connection, not God.

This is the answer that Ruiz de Montoya and Suárez must give in order not to make God the author of sin. But in reality, even without wishing it, they make God an accomplice in sin. God, on His own initiative, wills a good end, and in order to obtain it He carefully chooses the permission of a particular sin, that is, the denial of the efficacious graces by which sin would be avoided. This *denial* of efficacious graces He chooses inasmuch as it is *apt* for obtaining the end; and it is not apt inasmuch as it is *separated from sin*, because that is not permission of sin but non-permission; it is apt only inasmuch as it is *bound up with sin*; therefore God wills the permission inasmuch as it is united with sin, and that is virtually to will sin.

* * *

This reason will be better understood if we attend to the applications that the said authors make of their doctrine[1].

First application. Fr. Ruiz de Montoya says that God chooses on His own initiative good ends that essentially presuppose sin, such as penance or the redemption of sins, and that in order to obtain those ends God chooses as a means the permission of sin. But this application makes God an accomplice in sin, whether one considers the end itself or the permission ordered as a means to that end.

If we consider the end itself, God is made an accomplice in sin. He who desires an end desires what is essentially necessary for it; but in order that there be penance or redemption of sins it is essentially necessary that there be sins; therefore God would desire that there be sins[2].

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[1] SUÁREZ, *De praedestinatione*, l. 3, c. 8, n. 18; RUIZ DE MONTOYA, *De provid.*, d. 12, s. 2, n. 14.

[2] Thus SUÁREZ: Primo, nam ista bona quae necessario requirunt mala culpae, non sunt per se et ex se absolute amabilia; imo ut talia sunt, censentur esse bona secundum quid, et ideo non vult illa Deus ex se, seu voluntate antecedenti, sed solum supposita ex parte hominis necessitate. Sicut sapiens medicus non vult absolute applicare medicinam, donec infirmitas illam requirat. Secundo, ac practice, quod talis voluntas esset virtualis voluntas peccati, ut in superioribus declaravi, et nunc patet ex differentia quae moraliter cernitur quando supponitur vel non supponitur peccatum. Nam

If we look at the means, which is the permission of sin and the denial of the efficacious graces by which sin would be avoided, we arrive at the same conclusion. God wills that means inasmuch as it is apt for obtaining penance and redemption; but it is not apt for obtaining penance and redemption except inasmuch as it is bound up with sin; therefore God wills the permission of sin inasmuch as it is bound up with sin, and that is precisely to will that there be sins[1].

Second application. Fr. Suárez says that God proposes to Himself as an end negative reprobation, that is, the not granting of predestination to glory to certain individuals[2], and that afterwards God, in order to obtain the end of

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postquam peccatum est seu futurum praescitur, velle paenitentiam eius, tantum est velle destructionem eius: at voluntas destructionis peccati nullo modo est virtualis voluntas peccati, sed potius est odium eius. Quando autem peccatum non supponitur, voluntas paenitentiae non est tantum voluntas destructionis peccati, sed etiam positionis eius, quia non potest destrui nisi quod est; et ideo si non supponitur esse, in illa voluntate includitur et intenditur quod prius sit, ut possit destrui. *De praedestinatione*, l. 3, c. 8, n. 13.

[1] Did Suárez always remain in the doctrine that God could not prefine, before the foresight of sin, good ends that presuppose sin, such as penance or redemption? Some doubt it, on account of the manner in which he explains the motive of the Incarnation. Suárez says that God, before foreseeing sin as absolutely future, decreed to become incarnate in the most worthy manner possible. But by middle knowledge He knew, at the same time, that if Adam were created and the fall were permitted in him, the most worthy manner of coming would be to redeem sins. Consequently, the decree to come in the most worthy manner was equivalent to willing to come in order to redeem from sin, which end necessarily presupposes sin, since without sin redemption is not possible (*De incarnatione*, d. 5, s. 5, nn. 7, 17).

But there is no foundation whatever, not even apparent, for saying that Suárez did not remain constant in his doctrine. In the very place objected he says innumerable times that the Incarnation could not be prefined precisely in order to redeem from sin, but only posteriorly to the absolute foresight of sin (*De incarnatione*, d. 5, s. 3, nn. 2, 3, 6, 7, 11). The decree to come in the most worthy manner could have been verified even if there had been no sin at all, and that most worthy manner would then have been to come in impassible flesh, in order to be the visible end of all creation, to teach certain useful doctrines, and to give certain examples of excellent virtues. If the said decree has a connection with the permission of sin and with sin, it is by reason of foreknowledge, not by reason of intention (*Ibid.*, nn. 16, 17). Thus Suárez never affirms that God can prefine, before foreseeing future sin, good ends that necessarily presuppose sin.

[2] SUÁREZ affirms that there is a negative reprobation by which God, before foreseeing demerits, not only denies the efficacious graces but denies to certain individuals predestination to glory: *De praedestinatione*, l. 5, c. 4, nn. 4-8; and afterwards he affirms that the permission of final sin is an effect of this negative reprobation, *ibid.*, c. 7, nn. 13-15; which means that negative reprobation is taken as the end, and that as a means for attaining that end the permission of sin is taken. It is clear that Suárez affirms that God, by this ordering of the permission, does not will sin itself; rather He detests and forbids it, *ibid.*, nn. 13, 14: He only permits it.

non-predestination, chooses as a means the permission of sin and of obstinacy therein. But here too God appears as an accomplice in sin. God must will the permission of sin inasmuch as it is apt for obtaining that end; but it is not apt for the end of negative reprobation inasmuch as it is the *mere possibility of sinning*, separated from sin, because that is not permission of sin but non-permission; therefore He wills it inasmuch as it is bound up with sin, and that is precisely to will sin virtually and implicitly.

Third application. Relying, as they believe, upon SAINT PAUL[1], they say that God can, on His own initiative and antecedently to the absolute foresight of sin, propose to Himself as an end to show the predestined the preference He has for them in relation to the non-predestined. And afterwards He chooses as a means for obtaining this end the permission of sin and of obstinacy in it until death on the part of many, who by that very fact will not be predestined. Here too the previous refutation holds. God cannot will the permission of sin and of obstinacy in it until death except inasmuch as it is apt for obtaining the end of manifesting the preference of the predestined over the non-predestined; but the permission is not apt for obtaining that end inasmuch as it is separated from sin and from obstinacy, but inasmuch as it is bound up with sin and with obstinacy, for otherwise all would be predestined and there would be no preferences; therefore God wills the permission inasmuch as it is bound up with sin and obstinacy, and that is virtually to will sin and obstinacy in it.

The interpretation of the testimony adduced from Saint Paul appears to be the same as that of the other similar testimonies. God foresees the final sin of the non-predestined, and afterwards makes use of this occasion to show the predestined how great has been the preference He has had for them in comparison with the non-predestined[2].

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Let us come now to the reasons on which Ruiz de Montoya and Suárez rest their opinion.

The *first reason* is that the Sacred Scriptures, the Fathers, and the ecclesiastical writers constantly say that God orders the permission of sin to good ends preestablished by Himself: therefore the denial of this doctrine is contrary to Scripture and to the Fathers. Fr. Suárez summarizes the doctrine

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[1] Deus... sustinuit in multa patientia vasa irae apta in interitum ut ostenderet divitias gloriae in vasa misericordiae quae praeparavit in gloriam: God bore with much longanimity the vessels of wrath fitted for perdition, in order to manifest the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy which He beforehand prepared unto glory. *Rom.*, 9, 22-23. See the commentary of VÁZQUEZ, in 1, d. 93, n. 15; and d. 95, n. 51 ff.

[2] Another application of this doctrine is that God predestines many to glory *ante praevisa merita*; and in order to obtain that end He chooses as a means the permission of sin: *De praedestinat.*, l. 3, c. 8.

of the Fathers well in brief compass[1]. Saint John Damascene[2] says that God permits sin for one of three ends: either for the glory of God, or for the profit of others, or, finally, for the good of the very one who sins. The permission of sin is sometimes ordered to the glory of God, which Saint Paul seems to indicate when he says that, in order to manifest His power in favor of the predestined, He patiently permitted the perdition of many[3]. At other times God permits sin as a means for obtaining the good of others distinct from the one who sins, which the sacred writer seems to indicate when he says that God commanded Shimei to curse David (and to commit that sin of contumely), to the end that David might acquire true humility[4]. Finally, at other times God permits sin to the end that the sinner may draw from it the profit of virtue and salvation, which Saint Augustine seems to indicate when he says that it is expedient for the proud to fall (by God's permission) into some manifest sin, to the end that they may acquire the virtue of humility and self-knowledge[5]. And similar phrases could be heaped up without end. From which it is gathered that God proposes to Himself a good end on His own initiative, and afterwards, as a means for obtaining that end, carefully chooses the permission of a sin, denying the efficacious graces by which it would be avoided.

It is true that in ecclesiastical literature there are frequently found ways of speaking in which it is affirmed that God orders sin to some good end. But it is never a question of good ends preconceived by God on His own initiative and prior to the absolute foresight of sin, but of ends that God wills to obtain after sin has been foreseen as absolutely future, which sin presupposes the permission made before that purpose. The phrases mentioned are common ways of speaking, by which the good effect obtained on the occasion of sin is expressed as though it were the final cause for which the evil is permitted.

Saint Augustine himself gives the key for interpreting such ways of speaking. Investigating why God created the devil, knowing that he was to tempt men, he says that God did not create him in order that he might do good to men by his temptations, but that, despite knowing that he was to be evil and to tempt men, He willed to create him and to make his temptations profit man[6]. The good that is done on the occasion of sin He willed after

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[1] SUÁREZ, *De praedestinat.*, l. 3, c. 8, n. 5.

[2] *De fide orthodoxa*, l. 2, c. 29.

[3] *Rom.*, 9, 22-23.

[4] Dominus praecepit illi ut malediceret...; si forte respiciat Deus afflictionem meam. 2 Reg., 16, 10, 12.

[5] Audeo dicere superbis esse utile cadere in aliquod apertum manifestumque peccatum unde sibi displiceant: S. AUGUSTINE, *De civitate Dei*, l. 14, c. 13.

[6] Non quia ipsum malum condidit, sed quia cum sciret eum ad hoc propria voluntate malum futurum ut nobis noceret, creavit eum ad hoc ut de illo bonis prodesset: S. AUGUST., *De Genesi ad litt.*, l. 2, c. 22. The sense is that God did not permit sin in order to draw goods from it, but that, knowing that the wicked one was to sin, He drew goods

foreseeing sin as absolutely future; He did not will it as an end for the obtaining of which He permitted sin. It is not first to propose to oneself a good end and second to choose as a means the permission of sin, because that encloses the implicit will of sin. Rather the reverse: first comes the permitting of sin and the seeing of sin as absolutely future, and afterwards the ordering of the already foreseen sin to some good end, making use of it as a mere occasion and not as a means apt for the end. In this sense all the testimonies adduced can be understood. And this interpretation of the texts must be allowed us as legitimate, since Suárez himself and Ruiz de Montoya interpret in the same sense those locutions of Scripture in which it is said that God commanded Shimei to commit the sin of contumely against David so that David might obtain humility, or when it is said that God hardened Pharaoh in order to show His power in favor of His people. They say that it is not first the willing of David's humility and afterwards the ordering of Shimei's sin as a means, but the reverse: first came the foreseeing of Shimei's sin and afterwards the making use of this occasion to give David humility; nor was it first the willing to show His power in favor of His people and afterwards the taking of Pharaoh's hardening as a means, but rather first came the foreseeing of Pharaoh's hardening and afterwards the making use of that hardening as an occasion to show His power in favor of His people.

The *second reason* adduced in their favor by those who defend the ordering of the permission of sin to a good end preconceived on God's own initiative is that, if that ordering does not occur, God would be doing something without any purpose, and thus His conduct would be irrational and foolish. God makes the permission of sin most freely, in such a way that He could have refrained from making it; it does not depend on the creature but only on God, since the elements of which it consists depend on God alone. The *positive* part, which is the general concurrence for everything, God alone grants; the denial of the efficacious graces, by which sin would be avoided, likewise depends on God alone, and in it the creature has no part whatever. On the other hand, the permission of sin is something in itself indifferent, and must be rendered morally good by the end. If it were not rendered morally good by the end to which it is ordered, God would be performing an idle action, not morally good, indifferent. It is necessary, then, to say that God orders the permission of sin to an end that He proposes to Himself prior to the permission of sin and to the commission of sin[1].

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from his sins. This he expresses on many other occasions. He did not permit the sin of Judas in order to be able to suffer, but, knowing that he was to be a traitor, He made use of his sin in order to suffer: Elegit discipulos... Habuit inter eos unum, quo malo bene utens, et suae passionis dispositum impleret, et Ecclesiae suae tolerandorum malorum praeberet exemplum. [The Latin of this last citation appears corrupt in the source; dispositum presumably for dispositionem.] Cf. Pensamiento, 1952, n. 9, note 3.

[1] Permissio (peccati), licet non sit mala, tamen non est per se et intrinsece ita bona, ut sit propter se amabilis, sed ex se est quasi obiectum indifferens, quod honestatur ex

The objection is very specious, but we believe that the solution is likewise clear. The permission of sin contains two elements: one positive and the other negative.

The positive consists in the offering of the general concurrence for everything the creature can do in the circumstances in which it finds itself. And that element has an intrinsic purpose and an extrinsic one intended by God; the intrinsic purpose of the indifferent concurrence is to constitute the creature as a complete and free cause in proximate first act; and the extrinsic purpose is that it may do good freely and unimpededly, without, however, the physical faculty of resisting being taken from it. This positive part is not what is characteristic of the permission of sin, because it occurs even when there is no permission of sin. Yet for all that, it is also part of the permission of sin, and, as has been seen, God wills it for a purpose; but that purpose does not carry with it that God implicitly wills sin.

The *negative* part consists in denying the efficacious graces with which it is foreseen that sin would be avoided. This part implies two things: the internal divine act by which He denies the efficacious graces, and the non-donation or absence of the efficacious graces. The internal divine act is not to be ordered to any end, since it is the divine essence itself, and the essence depends on no purpose whatever, nor is it ordered to any purpose; it is of itself the subsistent and most sufficient good. The non-donation or the absence of the efficacious graces is not to be ordered to any end. That is to be ordered to some end which is an action or a thing done; but what is neither action nor thing done is not ordered to any end. The rendering morally good of such an absence or non-donation is not effected by the end to which it is destined, but by the fact that he who does not give does nothing against any right or rule, and because he acts according to his right and his dominion. God, in denying the efficacious graces, does not go against any rule of reason, because He owes them to no one, the fully sufficient graces the rational creature already has sufficing for it to do good if it wills; God disposes of His goods in that manner because He has the right to dispose of what is His as He wills. In acting thus He is opposed to no rule of reason or of law; and this is the whole of its possible moral justification.

From all that has been said it is concluded that by reason of the end of sin God is not the cause of the existence of sin in the world. God does not seek sin in order to obtain a good or a purpose preconceived before foreseeing sin as absolutely future; only after foreseeing it as absolutely future does He make use of it as a mere occasion for drawing forth excellent goods, which is not to intend sin but to remedy the evils of sin. Neither does God order the permission of sin to an end preconceived on His own initiative and before foreseeing sin as absolutely future, because that would imply the implicit will

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fine. Deus autem non vult permissionem nisi sapientissimo et honestissimo modo; ergo vult illam ex aliquo honesto fine per se intento, qui pertineat ad manifestationem gloriae suae: De praedestinatione, l. 3, c. 8, n. 10.

of sin, and God would be the ultimate reason for sin in the world, which is impossible. The permission as regards its *positive* part God orders to constituting the creature as a complete and free cause in proximate first act and to its doing the good it ought; and as regards its *negative* part, which is the denial of the efficacious graces, He neither orders it to a preconceived end nor can He so order it; it is neither action nor thing done, and so it need not necessarily be ordered to an end; God does it because He has the right to do it, without being opposed to any rule of reason or of law, and because He so willed, which is the ultimate reason of free decisions.

§ 3. HOW COULD GOD, WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO HIS HOLINESS AND HIS GOODNESS, CHOOSE THIS ORDER OF THINGS, IN WHICH THERE WOULD BE SINS AND ETERNAL PERDITION?

This problem was implicitly resolved in treating of the efficient cause of sin, and we treat it now separately in order to give it an explicit solution. The problem arises upon considering that God, before creating the world, knew perfectly that, if He created the world, there would be in it the deluge of sins and of eternal ruin that we contemplate; and that, being able most easily to impede it, whether by choosing another order of things or by not creating those who were to be lost, He nevertheless would not impede it; He acted, then, against His infinite holiness and His goodness, according to a frequently repeated complaint.

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An answer frequently heard is the following: God could choose this plan without detriment to His holiness or His goodness because with this plan God obtains many goods. And here they expatiate on describing the goods obtained on the occasion of physical and moral evils: very many persons conceive a most profound humility, a great contempt for and detachment from earthly things, an unconquered patience and fortitude in unjust ″persecutions″; God Himself has occasion to show His attributes of patience, of clemency, of infinite mercy in working the redemption on the occasion of sin, and even His vindictive justice against those hardened in evil.

It is true that on the occasion of sins the goods that have been mentioned are obtained, and all of them consist in some way in the destruction of sin. This is clearly seen in penance and in the strengthening of the virtues opposed to those violated; and if these goods are not obtained, there is obtained at least the fruit of God′s manifesting His punitive justice, so that those who voluntarily would not serve the order may be violently oppressed by the order. If God could not obtain these goods on the occasion of sin, He could not permit it. It would be supremely irrational for God to establish an order as rigorous as that which reason demands and yet to permit

it to be broken without any counterweight of penance or of punishment. But these goods *do not suffice* to make the action of permitting sin licit. If an action were licit merely because on its occasion goods are obtained, we could perform any action whatever, even the most criminal, and it would be sufficiently excused by the goods obtained with it. It is necessary that the action be licit on other titles, and then it will be sufficiently justified. The titles that justify an action are that it not be against holiness or against goodness, and this is what we are going to explain now with respect to the permission of sin.

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And, first of all, God could choose this plan without detriment to His *holiness*. God would have acted against His holiness if He had chosen this plan precisely in order that there might be sins and eternal ruin, or, at least, if in concurring in the sinful action with His general concurrence He were the cause of sin directly by His action, or at least indirectly by not having impeded it, being able to impede it so easily. But God did not create the world nor choose this plan in order that there might be sins; He willed that all should act in conformity with right reason and with the divine precepts, and in this way be happy for all eternity; and this He willed with such full sincerity that to this end He gave all men fully sufficient graces and erected salutary institutions whose liberality confounds us, such as the Incarnation, the Church, the sacraments, and the economy of interior grace. If men sin and are eternally lost, it is not because God so intended, but because creatures rebelled against the obedience due and abused the liberty and the means He gave them.

Neither can it be said that God is the cause of sin *directly by concurring* with His action in the sinful action of the creature; the sinful action, inasmuch as it issues from God, tends to actuate a complete and free cause, which is most praiseworthy, and only inasmuch as it issues from the creature is it determined to a morally evil object and to such circumstances in which the malice is inseparable from the positive act. Finally, neither can it be said that God is the cause of sin *indirectly* by not impeding it, though He could impede it so easily: God is bound by no title to impede sin, once He has given the means necessary and superabundant for avoiding it.

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The choice, then, of this plan is not opposed to the divine holiness. Neither is it opposed to His *goodness*. God would have acted against His goodness and liberality if, antecedently to the absolute foresight of sin, He had positively destined the rational creature to hell, as Calvin held[1]; or if He

[1] See the refutation of this heresy in BELLARMINE, *Controv.*, t. 4, l. 2, c. 3;

had positively excluded it from glory, as Bañez holds[1]; or if He had denied it predestination to glory, as Suárez holds. In these three cases the rational creature could justly complain against the divine goodness. God, on His own initiative and before foreseeing sin as absolutely future, destines no one to hell, positively excludes no one from happiness, and denies to no one predestination to beatitude. For His part He most sincerely wills that all should share in His glory and His happiness, and to this end gives them the sufficient and superabundant means with which all can avoid sin and eternal unhappiness; if, in spite of this, the sinner is lost and will not profit from so great a good, he has to accuse not others but only himself. It is evident that it says nothing against the goodness of a benefactor if he lets a person die of hunger and cold to whom he gave abundant money to buy food, shelter, and covering, and the instructions necessary to be able to make use of this money, when the wretch will not profit from such opportunity and such means; he was lost voluntarily; his misfortune is an indication of his folly, but it says nothing against the goodness of the benefactor.

It remains, then, rationally demonstrated how God could choose this plan without any detriment to His holiness or to His goodness and liberality. But although the demonstration is clear and transparent for the pure intelligence, nevertheless the heart rebels and seems always to have something to set against the light of truth. Let us consider, then, the objections most frequently formulated against the holiness and goodness of God on the occasion of sin, and with this the doctrine set forth will become clearer.

* * *

First objection. They say that God is the cause of sin and of eternal ruin. For he causes the fall of men who places them in the circumstances in which he foresaw that they would be lost and in which they could not but be lost. And this is what God did, knowing what was to happen. In the circumstances in which God places man, so great are the difficulties of resisting the stimuli of youth, the seductions of example, the evil arts suggested by immoderate riches or by exaggerated poverty, that it is impossible that very many should not fall into perdition. Moreover, evil doctrines, perverse education, and ignorance hurl innumerable masses into sin and into hell without any fault of theirs; and is this not against the divine goodness and holiness?

All this declamation lacks foundation. No one sins or is lost if he does not advertently and voluntarily know that he is sinning and that he is acting

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PETAVIUS, *De Deo*, l. 10, c. 6; FRANZELIN, *De Deo Uno*, thes. 54.

[1] This opinion is defended by: DIDACUS ALVAREZ, *De auxiliis*, d. 34, n. 5; GONET, *De reprobatione*, d. 5, a. 2, parag. 4. SUÁREZ refutes this opinion many times, in the place cited [so in the original: *versículo citado*, apparently for *loco citato*]; *De praedestinatione*, l. 5, c. 3, nn. 6-10.

against the law of God. In all the circumstances that have been mentioned, either a man knows and sufficiently adverts to what he is doing, or he does not; if he does not, then he does not sin mortally and is not lost. But if he knows that he is acting against the law of God and nevertheless does it and perseveres in such a state until death, he can blame no one for his perdition but only himself. The passions, the seductions of example or of riches, the evil promptings of excessive poverty or the instigations of the flesh, he could have conquered, because he had abundant means for conquering them and for rising again at once. Why did he not do so? Whom can he blame for this but himself? Unless the insolence of the complainer should reach such a point that he would sin as much as he can and be given eternal happiness besides.

That God foresaw beforehand what was to happen does not take from the creature its responsibility, nor does it make God the cause of the falls or of the perdition. God foresaw nothing but what was to happen and the manner in which it was to happen; and what was to happen in some was that they were to sin and to be obstinate in their sin by their own liberty; God's vision is not the cause of man's sinning and being lost, but the reverse; the creature's free abuse, by which it will sin and be lost, is the reason why God sees that perdition and ruin. Let a man avoid every sin and obey all the promptings of grace, and God will see that that man does good and is saved; it is always in man's hands to be saved if he obeys grace, and to be condemned if he resists it. But God's foreseeing the rebelliousness and obstinacy of His creature must not deter Him from creating him or from requiring of him what it is just to require, unless we are willing to restrict the full liberty God must have to create whom He wills and to require of him what ought to be required, once He gives him the means fully sufficient for fulfilling his obligation.

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Second objection. They also object that God could most easily have impeded such horrendous evils, and that by impeding them in fact He would show more goodness than at present; for, being able to make so many beings happy, He refrains from doing so without any cause.

This complaint is insolent, because, after man has gratuitously received so many benefits, he still complains of not having received more. Moreover, this complaint formulates no well-founded accusation against God; it is manifest that God could have given each man in particular greater benefits in extension and in intensity; but that is to declare that God is inexhaustible and that, however much good He does, there still remains to Him power to do more; it is not to formulate any complaint against the goodness and liberality of God. One cannot accuse of a lack of goodness a benefactor who lets a wretch die of hunger, thirst, and cold to whom he has given abundant money and sufficient instructions for buying himself food, clothing, and a house, if the man will not profit from those opportunities. It is true that such a benefactor could have done more: for example, he could have carried him by

force into a comfortable house and funneled food into him, and clothed him forcibly in suitable garments; but that is not to accuse with foundation the benefactor who did not go to such extremes, but to confess that he still had power to have done more.

The wretches who complain of God ought rather to hear the complaints God has against them. My desire, God would say to them, is that all men be saved and that none fall into the eternal punishments. And my desire is so sincere that I give to all the means necessary for them to be holy and happy: I give them interior graces, which are after the manner of pedagogues who constantly warn and instruct; I give them revealed doctrine, the examples of my most holy Son, the satisfactions He acquired by His merits, and the sacraments, which are most efficacious means of salvation. Why, with all this, did they sin, and why, once they had sinned, would they not rise from sin and preferred to fall into the eternal abyss? The wretches who fall into so terrible a misery are not to complain of others but only of themselves.

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Third objection. This complaint is often heard: God foresaw that such a person was to be a lost man and finally was to be damned. Why did He create him? Why did He not leave him submerged in nothingness? A father would not let a son he greatly loves fall into the abyss.

The answer has already been given. God's vision is not the cause of a man's being wicked and being lost; rather, on the contrary, the wickedness of the man and his eternal perdition is the reason why God sees his wickedness and his perdition: let the man be good and God will see that he is an obedient man and happy forever. Moreover, God has the right to create whom He wills and to require of him the duties it is just to require and to impose on him the sanctions it is just to impose if he does not obey. And in the face of the rebelliousness of His subjects, God is not to renounce those inviolable rights of His; that would be to restrict His liberty and His dominion. Rather, against the rebelliousness of His subjects, God must manifest His dominion and His power and not let Himself be overcome by them. Finally, those who argue thus forget the analogy that obtains between God and the creature in the offices of father and of governor, and wish at all costs to introduce a perfect univocity between them (*Pensamiento*, 1953, p. 25). God is father and governor, but He has not taken up these offices under any onerous title, but under an entirely gratuitous one. God creates man and heaps benefits upon him, requiring that he serve Him in conformity with what the infinite majesty and superiority He has over the creature demands, promising him besides an eternal happiness; if, in spite of this, man does not serve Him, it is just that he should feel the rigor of the divine justice and the emptiness of his own rebelliousness.

With this we have already demonstrated how God could, without detriment to His holiness or His goodness, choose a plan or order of things in

which there was to be so much sin and eternal ruin. The only one responsible is the rational creature. God, for His part, willed the good, and in order that the good might be done He gave the fully sufficient means. And He is so powerful that even from evils He will draw goods, in spite of the malice of the creature. Let us now consider the last question of the set of problems that occupies us.

§ 4. WHY DID GOD IN FACT CHOOSE THIS ORDER OF THINGS, AND NOT ANOTHER IN WHICH THERE WOULD BE FEWER EVILS OR NONE AT ALL?

Many are the answers that have been given, and we are going to criticize some of them before setting forth the true one; in this way we shall better penetrate its sense.

And let the *first answer* be that of those who say that God has objective and *manifest* reasons for which He in fact chose this order rather than any other in which there would be no evils, or not so many as now, and they take those reasons from the goods obtained by this order of things. This reason is formulated in two ways. Some say that God must always choose the greater good of the Universe, and that the greater good of the Universe consists in the present plan in which there were to be so many evils. The reason so understood has no consistency. By it God is deprived of the liberty to create or not to create, to create this Universe or any other of the possible ones. Moreover, if God must will the greater good of the Universe, and that greater good must necessarily be composed of sins, they must necessarily say that God intends sins so that the greater good of the Universe may be realized (*Pensamiento*, 1952, p. 295).

Others understand this reason with less rigor. They say that God has chosen precisely this plan because with it the excellent goods we see are obtained, although it is not said that those goods constitute the greater good of the Universe. It is true that God obtains excellent goods with this plan, and that His decision is well justified. But in other orders of things excellent goods would likewise be obtained; and then the problem remains entire: why did He will to choose this plan rather than any other, given that this one as well as the other possible ones have their full justification and can be reasonably chosen? This answer has given us no solution whatever.

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The *second answer* says that God has powerful and objective reasons for choosing this plan rather than any other, but that those reasons are for us *hidden* and impenetrable. When we see God, then we shall know those reasons and our curiosity will be perfectly satisfied.

This answer does not satisfy the question, because of the ambiguity it encloses. What is its sense?

If they mean that the Lord's designs are hidden from us, and that we do not know the particular ends He intends, or how those ends are obtained by the events that occur, or what God has reserved for the future in the coming development of History, a very great truth is being stated. But this answer does not explain why God has chosen this plan rather than any other in which there would be no evils or fewer than at present.

If they mean that there really exist objective reasons which, once posited, it followed necessarily that His choice had to be this one and no other, then a predetermination of the divine willing on the part of the *object* is introduced, and with it, according to all, the divine liberty perishes; the choice would no longer depend on the dominion of the divine will but on the determining power of the object.

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The *third answer* says that God in fact chose this plan in order to leave the creature in full liberty of action. If God had chosen another plan in which there were no moral evil, nor obstinacy in it, nor eternal ruin, the creature would not act with perfect liberty but with a restricted and annulled liberty. Moreover, the creature would on the one hand be defectible, as is evident, and on the other hand would not be defectible, because it would not be permitted to fall or to fail.

This answer satisfies less than the preceding ones. It is evident that God could have preserved the world from moral evils without taking from His rational creatures liberty or defectibility. All the good angels He preserved from every mortal and venial sin, and yet He took from them neither liberty nor defectibility. Countless saints He has freed from sins, at least from mortal ones, and neither did He take from them liberty or defectibility. And certainly no one will doubt that God could have chosen a plan in which there were fewer evils than at present: by middle knowledge He saw all the interior and exterior circumstances in which rational creatures would have done good without departing from the right way, and by having realized those conditions He would have obtained a world exempt from so many evils, and this without having destroyed anyone's liberty or defectibility. Thus this answer gives no solution at all to the problem why God chose this order rather than another in which there were no evils, or at least not so many as at present.

Stranger still is the *fourth answer*. They say that God had to choose this plan in which *in fact* so many sins are committed because, otherwise, He would have shown *fear* in the face of sin and would have been overcome by it. It would signify that in the face of sin He would show Himself lacking in resources for drawing goods from it, and that is to show oneself overcome by sin. By permitting sin, on the contrary, He showed that He knows how to

overcome it: God is so wise and powerful that, even admitting into His plans the entry of His greatest enemy, He makes him serve *in fact* for good[1].

This solution is *literary* rather than *philosophical*. If God had chosen a plan in which there were no sins, or fewer than at present, He would likewise have exercised His liberty and dominion. He would not have confessed His inferiority and defeat in the face of sin, because, if He had not permitted it, this would be due not to fear of it or to a lack of resources and remedies against it, but to His liberty and His power, which would be as manifest as in the present plan.

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And we come at last to the *true solution*. The reason why God chose this plan, although He could have chosen others with the greatest ease, was His sovereign decision: He chose this plan, though He could have chosen another in which there were no sins, or fewer than at present, *because He so willed*, and there is no other possible reason that adequately answers the problem proposed[2]. The ultimate reason of a free decision can never be taken on the part of the object: if there were an ultimate objective reason which, once posited, it is infallibly deduced that the decision had to be this one and no other, there would be no liberty. For there to be liberty it is necessary that, all the objective reasons desirable for choosing a thing having been posited, the will can still choose or not choose, choose this decision or another different one. Why the will chooses this rather than that is not a matter of the object but of the free decision of the will. This doctrine holds not only for the divine willing but for every free willing, and on this point there is no greater mystery in God than in any free being: the free decision is always made *because one so wills*.

There is, then, a great mystery in knowing what the plans of God are, and whither the historical development of the future is going, and what will be obtained by this development, both in general and in each of the particular individuals. We are not present at the formation of the plans of the Most High, nor has the Lord deigned to reveal them entire: *quis consiliarius eius fuit?* (Rom., 11, 34). But in knowing why God willed to choose this plan that is unfolding, and not another, there is no mystery at all. The reason for it is manifest to us: He chose it because He so willed, and there is no further reason, neither hidden nor manifest.

Someone will at once say that this manner of proceeding, by His liberty alone, is irrational and therefore unworthy of God, and thus that we have still not hit upon the *true solution*.

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[1] So RAST expresses himself, *Welt u. Gott*, Herder, Freib., 1952, p. 203. [So in the original: *Heder*.]

[2] *De praedestinat.*, l. 2, c. 25, nn. 5, 6; l. 5, c. 5, n. 11.

But the word ″irrational″ must not terrify us too much. The term ″irrational″ has in philosophy, among others, two well-known acceptations. According to one acceptation, ″irrational″ is everything that cannot be deduced from a given premise or antecedent; and in this sense the free decision is the classic instance of the irrational or the arational. There is no premise or antecedent whatever from which a free decision is deduced; the antecedent being posited, the will could make this decision or make a different or opposite one: otherwise there is no liberty. And in this same sense all the effects of the free will are irrational or arational, and thus there is no premise from which it may be deduced that there must be these singulars rather than those, or that these souls and not others must be created; this depends solely on the free divine decision. And in this sense the existentialists are right when they say that of contingent existence there is no deductive philosophy, but only phenomenology, that is, intuition and description.

Another signification given to the term ″irrational″ is the absence of reasons justifying why the decision that was in fact taken could be taken. For two questions must be carefully distinguished: one is why a given resolution *could* rationally be taken, and the other is why such a resolution was *in fact* taken. In God there is never a lack of reasons justifying why He *could* take the resolution He took; He always has reasons that make the resolution supremely reasonable and justified, just as He would also have most justified reasons if He had willed to take a different or perhaps opposite resolution on many occasions. But when it is a question of why God *in fact* took that resolution instead of another different one, when *both are rationally justified*, the ultimate answer can never be taken from those reasonable justifications, because then liberty would be destroyed, as we have seen, but is always taken from the very decision that is made, and no further one can be given.

By this the sufficient reason of the willing is not denied. There will be no predetermining reason, objective or subjective, which is what our reasoning and discursive reason instinctively seeks; but there is indeed a sufficient active reason that determines the willing, and that is the very subject who freely wills; and there is a formal reason for which this and not that is willed, and that formal reason is the very act of willing, which could have been omitted and in whose place another different or opposite one could have been made.

This solution is the only one that makes intelligible why God *in fact* chose this plan and not another in which there were no evils or lesser ones. Free decisions are made intelligible only by preserving to liberty its proper character; and the proper character of liberty is that its decisions cannot be deduced from any of the objective reasons that make it reasonable and that justify it; the one who decides is the subject who freely wills, and the ultimate reason why he wills is only the very decision by which he wills.

EPILOGUE

We have reached the end of our study, whose conclusions we are going to present in a brief synthesis. There are four questions that must be answered in order to resolve the problem of the reason for evil in the world.

The *first question* is what the efficient cause of evil is. If it is a question of *physical evils*, which are not due to fault, God is the author of them, although He does not intend them so as to rest in them, but so as to attain excellent goods, both in the physical universe and, above all, in the moral order, since He thereby gives occasion for exercising great virtues and increasing merit for heaven. God is also the author of the evils of punishment, although these He does not will on His own initiative, but presupposing in those punished the sin and the merit of such punishments[1].

If it is a question of the *evil of fault*, the cause of it is solely the rational creature. God, certainly, concurs in the creature's sinful action; but with this concurrence God is not the cause of sin directly, because He does not determine the action to the morally evil object, nor indirectly, because He has no obligation of any kind to impede the sin He foresees.

The *second question* is what the final cause *of sin* is. Two questions were distinguished here: the first is the final cause *of sin*, and the answer is that God cannot seek sin either as a means or as an occasion for obtaining any ends preconceived beforehand; He can only, after foreseeing sin as already committed against His antecedent will, make use of it as an occasion for doing excellent goods. The second question is the final cause *of the permission* of sin. God voluntarily and freely permits sin; but it cannot be said that God chooses and wills and orders the permission of sin in order to obtain by it certain good ends intended on His own initiative. The permission of sin includes the denial of the efficacious aids by which sin would be avoided, and if He wills and orders and intends this denial for some determinate end, it will be inasmuch as it is apt for obtaining that end; and it is not apt for obtaining that end except inasmuch as it is bound up with sin, and that is equivalent to willing sin implicitly.

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[1] In the present order of things every evil of man is either fault or punishment for fault, at least for original fault. Thus SUÁREZ expresses himself: Et quamquam seclusa divina providentia intelligi posset in creatura rationali aliquod malum, quod non esset inflictum propter culpam... tamen ex divina providentia credimus nullum defectum perfectionis debitae esse in creatura rationali, qui non sit culpa vel ex culpa originem traxerit, et ideo Augustinus (in Imperfecto de Genesi ad litteram c. 1) omne malum dicit esse aut peccatum aut poenam peccati. Quin potius, non solum malum, quod in ipso homine formaliter est, sed etiam quod est in rebus irrationalibus vel inanimatis, si in aliquod nocumentum ipsius hominis cedat, ad malum poenae spectat, non respectu inferiorum rerum, sed ipsius hominis, propter cuius culpam infligitur vel permittitur. SUÁREZ, DM., 11, 2, 5.

The *third question* is why God could choose this plan without detriment to His *holiness* and His *goodness*. He could choose it without detriment to His *holiness*, because the permission of sin does not make God the cause of sin, either directly or indirectly. And He could do it also without detriment to His *goodness*, because God desires the salvation and holiness of all, and in order that this may be possible He gives in abundance the necessary and superabundant means. If the creature sins and is lost, it must accuse itself alone, not God.

The *fourth question* is why He in fact chose this order of things; and the answer is: *because He so willed*. Clearly He willed to obtain the precious goods that He in fact obtains; but with another order of things He could likewise have obtained excellent goods. Why, then, did He choose this order rather than any other? And the answer can be none other than this: *because He so willed*. If God is to be free in His decisions, no other answer is possible. *Because He so willed* He drew us out of nothingness. *Because He so willed* He heaped innumerable benefits upon us. *Because He so willed* He permitted man to abuse his liberty. And *because He so willed* He supplied the world with so excellent a remedy against sin as is the Incarnation of His most holy Son.

In sum: with respect to physical evil and the evil of punishment, God is the cause, not so as to stop at those evils, but so as to seek by means of them more excellent goods. But if it is a question of sin, we have demonstrated that God is not the responsible cause of it, neither from the point of view of the efficient cause nor from the point of view of the final cause.

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