



UNIVERSALITAS & PERVASIVITAS

il costituirsi e diffondersi della S.J. e suoi echi (1540 - 1773)

DI A. PISANI

Schede autori Attività politico - diplomatica

Francisco Suarez

“ 1548-1617, Spanish Jesuit philosopher, b. Granada. He studied at Salamanca and was ordained in 1572. He taught successively at Ávila, Segovia, Valladolid, Rome, Alcalá, and Salamanca and in 1597 was appointed to the Univ. of Coimbra, Portugal (then under Spanish dominion). He may be called the last of the scholastic philosophers. His system is mild and characteristic of the Jesuit theologians. His ‘congruism’ is a middle course between the teachings of Luis Molina and the Dominican predestinarian teachings. Suárez taught that one may hold the same doctrine by science and faith. His teaching on the divine right of kings that earthly power is properly held by the body of men and that kingly power is derived from them so enraged James I of England that the king had Suárez’s *De defensione fidei* burned by the hangman. This political doctrine, based on the Roman Catholic doctrine of the equality before God of all men, is a basis of subsequent Catholic teachings on democracy. Suárez was highly esteemed by Grotius and his followers. In his *Tractatus de legibus* he made an important distinction between natural law and international law, which he saw as based on custom.



See J. H. Fichter, *Man of Spain* (1940); H. Lacarte, *The Nature of Canon Law according to Suarez* (1964).”

“Doctor Eximius, a pious and eminent theologian, as Paul V called him, born at Granada, 5 January, 1548; died at Lisbon, 25 September, 1617. He entered the Society of Jesus at Salamanca, 16 June, 1564; in that city he studied philosophy and theology from 1565 to 1570, and was ordained in 1572. He taught philosophy at Avila and at Segovia (1571), and later, theology at Avila and Segovia (1575), Valladolid (1576), Rome (1580-85); Alcalá (1585-92), Salamanca (1592-97), and Coimbra (1597-1616). All his biographers say that he was an excellent religious, practicing mortification, laborious, modest, and given to prayer. He enjoyed such fame for wisdom that Gregory XIII attended his first lecture in Rome; Paul V invited him to refute the errors of King James of England, and wished to retain him near his person, to profit by his knowledge; Philip II sent him to the University of Coimbra to give prestige to that institution, and when Suárez visited the University of Barcelona, the doctors of the university went out to meet him, with the insignia of their faculties. His writings are characterized by depth, penetration and clearness of expression, and they bear witness to their author’s exceptional knowledge of the Fathers, and of heretical as well as of ecclesiastical writers. Bossuet said that the writings of Suárez contained the whole of Scholastic philosophy; Werner (Franz Suárez, p. 90) affirms that if Suárez be not the first theologian of his age, he is, beyond all doubt, among the first; Grotius (Ep. 154, J. Cordesio) recognizes in him one of the greatest of theologians and a profound philosopher, and Mackintosh considers him one of the founders of international law.”



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“In Scholasticism, he founded a school of his own, ‘Suarism’, the chief characteristic principles of which are:

1. the principle of individuation by the proper concrete entity of beings;
2. the pure potentiality of matter;
3. the singular as the object of direct intellectual cognition;
4. a nonconceptual distinction between the essence and the existence of created beings;
5. the possibility of spiritual substance only numerically distinct from one another;
6. ambition for the hypostatic union as the sin of the fallen angels;
7. the Incarnation of the Word, even if Adam had not sinned;
8. the solemnity of the vow only in ecclesiastical law;
9. the system of Congruism that modifies **Molinism** by the introduction of subjective circumstances, as well as of place and of time, propitious to the action of efficacious grace, and with predestination *ante praevisa merita*;
10. possibility of holding one and the same truth by both science and faith;
11. belief in Divine authority contained in an act of faith;
12. production of the body and blood of Christ by transubstantiation as constituting the Eucharistic sacrifice;
13. the final grace of the Blessed Virgin Mary superior to that of the angels and saints combined.

“Suárez classes” were established in several universities—Valladolid, Salamanca (1720), Alcalá (1734)—and various Scholastic authors wrote their works *ad mentem Sáii*. Charles III suppressed those classes throughout his dominions by a royal decree of 12 August, 1768, and prohibited the use of Jesuit authors, and therefore of Suárez, in teaching. It is obvious, says Cardinal Gonzalez, that, in so many volumes written by Suárez, there are to be found some matters of little utility, or the practical or scientific importance of which are not in proportion to the time and space that Suárez devotes to them. He is also charged with being somewhat diffuse. His book “De Defensione Fidei” was burned at London by royal command, and was prohibited by the Parliament of Paris (1614) on the ground that it contained doctrines that were contrary to the power of sovereigns.

WORKS

Suárez published his first work, “De Deo Incarnato”, at Alcalá, in 1590; he published twelve other volumes, the last of which, “De Defensio Fidei,” written against the King of England, was published at Coimbra, in 1613. After his death the Jesuits of Portugal published ten other volumes of his work, between 1619 and 1655. Of all of these works, two different editions were made; the first, at Venice, 23 volumes in folio (1740-1757); and the second in Paris (Vives), 28 volumes (1856-1861). In 1859 Mgr Manlou published another volume in folio, containing six short treatises that had not been previously published. Father De Scorraille (Etudes, Vol. LXIV, pp. 151-175) gave an account of the manuscripts of Suárez, noting the fact that they were numerous and that he himself possessed seventy-five of them. Many of these and others besides were found by Father Rivière. The works of Suárez were held in the highest esteem in his day, as is shown by the numerous partial editions that were made of them (Lyons, Salamanca, Madrid, Coimbra, Mayence, Cologne, Paris, Evora, Genoa), as also by the fact, related by his biographies, that one of the wings of the old college of the Jesuits at Salamanca was restored with the product of the sale of his metaphysical works. A compendium of the theology of Suárez was published by Father Noel, S.J. (Madrid, 1732); a short epitome of this theological disputes, by the Portuguese Father Francis



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Soárez, S.J. (Lisbon, 1626), and a compendium of the metaphysics, by Father Gregorio Iturria, S.J. (Madrid, 1901).

Cfr.: PEREZ GOYENA - Transcribed by Janet Grayson – *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume XIV – Copyright © 1912 by Robert Appleton Company Online Edition Copyright © 1999 by Kevin Knight – Nihil Obstat, July 1, 1912. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14319a.htm>

"...if a legitimate prince governs tyrannically and no other means of self-defence can be found than the expulsion and deposition of the king, then the people, acting as a whole...may depose him." During the sixteenth century, a mixing of the profane and the sacred took place in the political scene characterized by the appearance of the doctrine of Divine Right of Kings. Throughout mostly northern Europe, and particularly in France, monarchs were demanding for themselves divine sovereignty just as the church had claimed divine moral authority. What occurred was a divinization of the state in which the monarch claimed to be answerable to neither church nor his subjects but to God alone.

Against such defenders of Divine Right, like King James I of England, Francisco Suarez sought to defend the sacred institutions against a secular perversion that threatened the integrity of both church and state. Suarez, a Jesuit priest and professor of theology at the University of Salamanca in Spain, believed that no monarch could possess attributes of the sacred.

Suarez argued that the church was the only institution established through divine intervention by an immediate act of Christ and thus truly of divine right. The authority of the state is not of divine but of human origin. It is the people who consent to be governed by the political authority, not from God directly. Thus the people, in extreme cases, may depose their king.

The church's object is the health of each individual soul and its spiritual salvation, as opposed to the state whose jurisdiction is solely temporal, concerned with the common good in secular life. Given the primacy of the spiritual over the temporal, the church is thus superior to the state. This does not mean, however, that the church has unrestricted temporal power. The pope's legitimate authority lay in spiritual and theological, rather than secular and political, matters. The major works of Francisco Suarez include *De Legibus* on law and *Defensor Fidei*, a defense of the church against King James I.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"Francisco Suarez (1548-1617)." In the Liberal Tradition: A History of Liberty by the Acton Institute.

In the Liberal Tradition: A History of Liberty is a collection of short biographies highlighting the life and thought of central characters in the history of liberty.

<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/history/world/wh0073.html>

“Contre Luther, qui entend se faire là encore l’interprète d’Augustin, Suarez refuse d’envisager la thèse que l’origine de l’Etat serait intrinsèquement liée à la Chute. Pour lui, l’Etat est fondé *ex institutione primae naturae* ... La création ou l’institution de l’Etat, à titre de *communitas perfecta*, est donc de droit naturel. Telle était la position défendue par Bellarmin : le pouvoir politique... provient de Dieu par *jus naturae*, par l’intermédiaire du droit naturel... Bellarmin comme Suarez



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insiste sur la naturalité de l'autorité politique, qui appartient intrinséquement à la nature humaine... Cette thèse a des conséquences évidentes quant à l'origines du pouvoir, liée à celle du sujet naturel et premier de ce pouvoir. Dieu n'intervient dans l'institution politique que comme *causa prima et universalis*, ou encore *causa remota*. Certes, la société politique a besoin d'une cause efficiente tirée de la libre decision de citoyens, il faut un acte moral à la source de cette vie collective : le contrat. La communauté civile est placée toute entière dans le plan de la nature qui suffit à rendre compte de l'Etat comme corps organique, corp mystique, don't la fin ... est le bien commun, sans que les conditions de l'ordre social soient essentiellement modifiée par la révélation chrétienne. La puissance publique, telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui chez les princes chrétiens, n'est ni plus grande ni d'autre nature que chez leurs prédécesseurs paiens."

Cfr.: Jean-François Courtine *Théologie morale et politique chez Suarez in Les jésuites à l'age baroque 1540-1640*, Grenoble, Jérôme Million, 1996 p. 261-278.

Dopo aver formulato ormai in modo maturo e organico la teoria del potere indiretto e negata quindi la potestà del papa di emanare leggi in materia temporale al di fuori del territorio in cui lui stesso è signore specifica che esse leggi 'enim non obligant universum Orbem, sed illos tantum qui temporaliter sunt sub Ecclesiae dominio, ac iurisdictione civili... unde etiam possunt tales leges Pontificis non amitti in aliis territoris...'. Lo stesso Suarez affrontando in un altro passo il problema della possibile unione del potere ecclesiastico e del potere civile nelle stesse persone, ritiene di dover denunciare due errori opposti: quello di coloro che, come Enrico VIII, hanno preteso di riunire nella persona del re anche il potere spirituale... e coloro che giudicano ripugnare al pontefice e ai sacerdoti in genere il governo temporale. La verità cattolica, secondo Suarez, è empirica e possibilistica: le due potestà non sono necessariamente né separate né congiunte... e la storia dimostra che la Chiesa è vissuta per secoli senza poteri temporali ma li ha anche per lunghi secoli legittimamente esercitati; gli svantaggi di questa unione sono certamente superati dai vantaggi... Ritorna quindi dopo un secolo e mezzo, nel contesto dell'assolutismo maturo e delle guerre di religione, la tesi già avanzata da **Enea Silvio Piccolomini** sui vantaggi dell'unione dei due poteri nelle mani degli ecclesiastici. Si può facilmente notare da una parte la completa laicizzazione o politicizzazione del processo di formulazione: quest'affermazione risulta completamente svincolata da ogni premessa teologica e basata unicamente su constatazioni di ordine politico, sulla necessità del rafforzamento del potere interno e della lotta contro l'eresia; dall'altra la contraddizione in cui ciò pone il Suarez, e con lui tutti i teorici del potere indiretto del papa della Controriforma, per il riconoscimento implicito del problema derivante agli Stati dal permanere di un potere esterno ad essi e non assimilabile. Questo mi sembra possa confermare, da un altro punto di vista, ciò che è stato detto sul fatto che in Suarez la subordinazione degli Stati alla Chiesa non deriva dalla intrinseca natura dello Stato ma da relazioni estrinseche.

Cfr.: Paolo Prodi *Il sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* Bologna, il Mulino, 1982, p. 59-60.

Suarez scrisse anche un trattato sulla penitenza che venne sottoposto a censura dal Sant'Uffizio in quanto, contravvenendo un suo specifico decreto del 1602, schiudeva la possibilità a confessioni



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‘per litteras seu internuntium’. Il trattato (*Commentariorum ac Disputationum de censuris in communi, excommunicatione, suspensione et interdicto, itemque irregularitate, tomus quintus*) venne condannato con decreto *donec corrigetur* del 7 settembre 1609, condanna che sarà ritirata solo nel 1900.