

BANEZIANISM—a theological system created by D. Báñez (1528–1604) and the Dominican school, built upon the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, focussed on the problematic of nature and grace, man’s free will, and divine predestination.

Banezianism came into history for two reasons: first, as a coherent theological system formed on the realist Thomistic tradition (on the ground of Aquinas’ metaphysics), which has become a permanent part of theological thought, especially in the domain of charitology and theological anthropology; second because of its creative opposition to the Jesuit school, primarily grouped around the doctrine of L. de Molina (1536–1600).

The leading thesis of Banezianism is the doctrine (based on the thought of St. Thomas) that God, the First Cause (the Creator of the world and the most perfect agent), possesses absolute authority over all beings. Existence and its result, the action of all contingent (non-necessary) beings is free of contradiction only in light of their connection with the Absolute, who is Pure Existence and who alone is a necessary being. It follows from this that free will is also subject to God’s absolute dominion. God’s perfect action (action that in every respect transcends human cognitive abilities) as the First Cause in a necessary manner (in an ontological sense) precedes all the activities of creatures, whether they be irrational or rational and free. God’s action (co-action) thus occurs here prior to the action of His creatures—*praedeterminatio ad actum*. D. Báñez, the author of this line of thought, emphasized that this is not only God’s action in the moral order but also on the physical plane—*praemotio physica*. This “physical pre-motion” is prior to the act of creation by virtue of the primacy of nature. Such action of God does not, however, destroy man’s free will. From the theological point of view, grace, as God’s gift imparted to man, is absolutely prior and fully sovereign (it is efficacious of itself, by its nature as it were, and as such, joined with man’s free will, it makes a deed that merits salvation). In this point of theological argumentation, Molina responded by introducing a technical term—*scientia media* (intermediate knowledge). In this interpretation, God possesses intermediate knowledge, i.e., knowledge that is between God’s knowledge of all possible things, and God’s knowledge of what is real (in effect God’s “preceding grace” becomes “assisting grace”, which in a concrete action corresponds with man’s free will and causes the salvific fruit of the action). Báñez spoke here of predestination and of so-called efficacious grace. God’s motion does not exclude freedom in human actions, but is the necessary reason for their existence. His knowledge concerns all future accidental situation (those that pertain to man’s will); they are all performed in the field of God’s will—God provides the impulse for rational human nature to perform any act (this happens through the physical motion that makes it possible for them to be realized). Thus God can “predetermine” free creatures in such a way that they undertake actions in the way proper to them, i.e., freely, just as God can define creatures irrational by nature, and so, creatures which undertake their actions (which realize their nature) in the mode of necessity. It follows from this that God always acts in accordance with the nature he inscribed in all things: free creatures act in freedom, while creatures without reason or free will perform their actions in the sphere of necessity.

With the exception of purely historical values (the theology and philosophy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) that revealed a lively interest in the doctrinal solutions proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas, the system of Banezianism has remained to this day under various forms, especially in view of the timeliness and relevance of theological problems concerning questions of nature and grace, their relations to one another, and because of a gradual renaissance of interest in the theological problematic of nature and grace.

J. Stuffer, *D. Thomae Aquinatis doctrina de Deo operante*, In 1923; M. Andres, *Historia de la teología en España*, R 1962; W. Granat, *Dogmatyka katolicka* [Catholic dogmatics], Lb 1965, V 413–448; Krápiec Dz [Works] VII 393–396; J. Stöhr, *Zur Frühgeschichte des Gnadenstreites. Gutachten spanischer Dominikaner in einer bisher unbekanntem Handschrift*, Mr 1980; L. F. Ladaria, *Teología del pecado original y de la gracia*, Ma 1993, 170–173.

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