Báñez, Dominic (1528-1604) Encyclopedia Article

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Báñez, Dominic (1528–1604)

Dominic Báñez, the Spanish theologian, was born at Valladolid and died at Medina del Campo. He studied at the University of Salamanca, where he entered the Dominican order. He first taught courses in philosophy and theology in various houses of study of his order in Spain (Salamanca, Ávila, Alcalá de Henares, Valladolid) and then became a professor at the University of Salamanca, teaching philosophy from 1577 and theology from 1581. He was noted for his role as the spiritual director of St. Teresa of Ávila and for his bitter controversy with the Jesuit Luis de Molina concerning divine grace. Báñez's view on grace and human liberty is called "physical predetermination," which means that man's will is unable to act unless empowered and applied to action by an ultimate principal cause, which is God. Apart from a commentary on Aristotle's treatise *On Generation and Corruption* (1585), Báñez's philosophy is found in his theological work *Scholastica Commentaria in Primam Partem Angelici Doctoris* (Commentary on the first part of the summa of theology; 2 vols., Salamanca, 1584–1588). As a philosopher, Báñez was at his best in interpreting the metaphysics of St. Thomas. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he saw the importance of the act of being (*esse*) as constituting every nature in existence (see L. Urbano, ed., *Scholastica Commentaria*, I, p. 141). In this he anticipated the existential view of Thomistic metaphysics now favored by such thinkers as Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson. On the other hand, Báñez interpreted the real distinction of essence and existence as the difference between two individual things (*res*) and then rejected this notion. Moreover, he regarded the limitation of the act of existing by the essence that receives it as an indication that essence may, in this sense, be more noble than existence.

See Also

Aristotle; Being; Essence and Existence; Gilson, ÉTienne Henry; Maritain, Jacques; Molina, Luis De; Teresa of ÁVila, St.; Thomas Aquinas, St.

Bibliography

Works by Báñez include *Scholastica Commentaria*, newly edited by L. Urbano (Madrid and Valencia, 1934). A later section of the same *Commentary* has also been published as *Commentaria in Primam Secundae*, edited by B. de Heredia, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1942–1944).

For works on Báñez see W. R. O'Connor, "Molina and Báñez as Interpreters of Thomas Aquinas," in *New Scholasticism* 21 (1947): 243–259; and L. Gutiérrez-Vega, "Báñez filósofo existencial," in *Estudios Filosóficos* 3 (1954): 83–114.