

QUESTION 105

How God Moves Creatures

Next we have to consider the second effect of God's governance, which is change among creatures: first, the changes effected by God among creatures (question 105) and, second, the changes effected by one creature in another (questions 106-119).

On the first topic there are eight questions: (1) Can God directly change matter with respect to its form? (2) Can God directly move a body? (3) Can God move an intellect? (4) Can God move a will? (5) Does God act in everything that acts? (6) Can God do anything outside the order instilled in things? (7) Are all the things that God does in this way miracles? (8) What are the different types of miracles?

Article 1

Can God directly change matter with respect to its form?

It seems that God cannot directly change (*non possit immediate movere*) matter with respect to its form:

Objection 1: As the Philosopher proves in *Metaphysics* 7, nothing can effect a form in *this* matter except a form that itself exists in matter, since a thing effects what is similar to itself. But God is not a form in matter. Therefore, He cannot cause a form in matter.

Objection 2: If an agent is related to many [possible effects], then it will not produce any of them unless it is channelled to that particular one by something else; for as *De Anima* 3 says, a general opinion (*universalis opinio*) moves someone only by the mediation of some particular apprehension. But God's power is a universal cause (*universalis causa*) of all things. Therefore, it cannot produce any particular form except by the mediation of some particular agent.

Objection 3: As was established above (q. 104, a. 2), just as being-in-general (*esse commune*) depends on the first universal cause, so determinate being (*esse determinatum*) depends on determinate particular causes. But a thing's determinate being stems from its proper form. Therefore, the proper forms of things are not produced by God except by the mediation of particular causes.

But contrary to this: Genesis 2:7 says, "God formed man from the slime of the earth."

I respond: God can move matter directly (*immediate*) with respect to its form. For something that exists in passive potentiality can be brought into actuality by an active power that contains that passive potentiality under its own power. Therefore, since matter is contained under God's power insofar as it is produced by God, it can be brought into actuality by God's power. And this is what it is for matter to be moved with respect to its form. For the form is nothing other than the matter's actuality.

Reply to objection 1: There are two ways in which an effect is similar to its agent cause:

In one way, it is similar in that it has the *same species*, as when a man is generated by a man and a fire is generated by a fire.

In the second way, it is similar because of *virtual containment*, insofar as the effect's form is virtually contained in the cause. It is in this way that animals generated from putrefaction, along with plants and corporeal minerals, are similar to the sun and stars by whose power they are generated. In this way, then, an effect is similar to its agent cause because it is part of the totality to which the agent's power extends.

Now as was explained above (q. 44, a. 2), God's power extends to both form and matter. Hence, a composite that is generated is similar to God because of virtual containment, just as it is similar to its composite generating cause because of a likeness to its species. Hence, just as a composite generating cause can move matter with respect to a form by generating a composite similar to itself, so too can God.

However, no other form that does not exist in matter can do this, since matter is not contained in the power of any other separated substance. And this is why demons and angels act on visible things here below not by impressing forms on them, but by employing corporeal seeds [via local motion] (cf. q. 110, a. 4).

Reply to objection 2: This argument would go through if God acted by a necessity of nature. But since He acts through His will and intellect, which has cognition of the proper notions (*rationes proprias*) of all forms and not just of their universal notions (*non solum universales*), it follows that He can determinately impress *this* form or *that* form on matter.

Reply to objection 3: The very fact that secondary causes are ordered to determinate effects is something they have from God. Hence, given that God is able to order other causes toward determinate effects, He is likewise able to produce determinate effects by Himself.

Article 2

Can God directly move a body?

It seems that God cannot directly move a body:

Objection 1: Since, as is proved in *Physics 7*, the mover and what is moved have to exist together (*oportet esse simul*), there must be some sort of contact (*contactus*) between the mover and what is moved. But there cannot be contact between God and a body, since in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 1, Dionysius says, “With God there is no touch” (*Dei non est aliquis tactus*). Therefore, God cannot directly move a body.

Objection 2: God is a mover that is not moved. But this is what an apprehended desirable thing is. Therefore, God effects movement insofar as He is desired and apprehended. But He is apprehended only by an intellect, which is neither a body nor a corporeal power. Therefore, God cannot directly move a body.

Objection 3: In *Physics 8* the Philosopher proves that an infinite power effects instantaneous motion (*movet in instanti*). But it is impossible for a body to be moved with an instantaneous motion (*in instanti moveri*); for since every movement is from one opposite to another, it would follow that two opposites exist in the same thing at the same time—which is impossible. Therefore, a body cannot be directly moved by an infinite power. But as was proved above (q. 25, a. 2), God’s power is infinite. Therefore, God cannot directly move a body.

But contrary to this: God effected the work of the six days directly, and this work included the movement of bodies, as is clear from the fact that Genesis 1:9 says, “Let the waters be gathered together in one place.” Therefore, God can directly move a body.

I respond: It is a mistake to claim that God cannot effect by Himself all of the determinate effects that are brought about by any created cause. Hence, since bodies are moved directly by created causes, there should be no doubt at all that God can directly move any given body.

Indeed, this is a consequence of the things explained above (a. 1). For every movement of any given body either (a) follows upon some form, in the ways that the local motion of heavy bodies and lightweight bodies follows upon the form given them by what generates them (which is why what generates them is called a mover), or (b) is a path to some form, in the way that the action of effecting heat is a path to the form of fire. But it is one and the same thing that (a) impresses the form and (b) disposes [the patient] for the form and (c) gives the movement that follows upon the form; for instance, fire not only (a) generates another fire, but also (b) gives warmth and (c) effects upward movement.

Therefore, since God can directly impress a form on matter, it follows that He can move any given body with respect to any given movement.

Reply to objection 1: There are two sorts of touching (*tactus*), viz., *corporeal*, as when two bodies touch one another, and *virtual*, in the sense that something sad touches one who is saddened. Thus, as regards the first sort of contact, God, since He is incorporeal, neither touches nor is touched. However, as regards virtual contact, He touches creatures by moving them, but He is not touched by them because no natural power had by any creature can get through to Him (*ipsum pertingere*). And this is the sense in which Dionysius meant that “with God there is no touch,” viz., that He is not touched.

Reply to objection 2: God moves as something desired and understood. But it is not necessary for Him in all cases to move as something that is desired and understood by what is moved. Rather, He must always move as something desired and known by *Himself*, since He does all things for the sake of His own goodness.

Reply to objection 3: In *Physics* 8 the Philosopher tries to prove with the following argument that the first mover’s power is not a power that exists in a magnitude:

The first mover’s power is infinite (which he proves by appeal to the fact that the first mover can effect motion for an infinitely long time); but if an infinite power existed in a magnitude, it would effect motion in no time at all, which is impossible; therefore, it must be the case that the first mover’s infinite power does not exist in a magnitude.

From this it is clear that a body’s being moved in no time at all follows only upon an infinite power that exists in a magnitude. The reason for this is that every power that exists in a magnitude effects motion with all of itself (*secundum se totam*), since it effects motion by a necessity of nature. But an infinite power exceeds any finite power incommensurably (*improportionabiliter*). Now a motion has a greater velocity to the extent that the power of the mover is greater. Therefore, since a finite power effects motion for a determinate time, it follows that an infinite power effects motion in no time at all. For there is some proportion that any given temporal interval bears to any other temporal interval.

By contrast, a power that does not exist in a magnitude is the power of an intelligent being who acts in his effects in a way that befits them. And so, since it is impossible for a body to be moved in no time at all, it does not follow that this being effects motion in no time at all.

Article 3

Does God directly move a created intellect?

It seems that God does not directly move a created intellect:

Objection 1: An intellect’s action stems from what it exists in, since, as *Metaphysics* 9 says, this action does not pass into any external matter. But the action of a thing that is moved by another stems not from what it exists in, but instead from the mover. Therefore, an intellect is not moved by another. And so it seems that God cannot move an intellect.

Objection 2: That which has within itself a principle sufficient for its own movement is not moved by another. But an intellect’s movement is the very act of intellectual understanding itself—in the sense in which, according to the Philosopher in *De Anima* 3, acts of intellectual understanding and of sensing are called ‘movements’. But the intelligible light instilled in an intellect is a sufficient principle of an act of intellectual understanding. Therefore, an intellect is not moved by another.

Objection 3: Just as a sensory power is moved by a sensible thing, so too an intellect is moved by an intelligible thing. But God is not intelligible to us; instead, He exceeds our intellect. Therefore, God

cannot move our intellect.

But contrary to this: The teacher moves the intellect of the student. But as Psalm 93:10 says, “God teaches man knowledge.” Therefore, God moves man’s intellect.

I respond: Just as in the case of corporeal movements the mover is defined as what gives a form that is a principle of the movement, so, too, what is said to move an intellect is what causes a form that is a principle of the intellectual operation which is called a movement of the intellect.

Now an intellect’s operation has two principles in the one who is engaged in intellectual understanding, viz., (a) the intellectual power itself, which is a principle even in the one who is [only] potentially engaged in intellectual understanding, and (b) the principle of actual intellectual understanding, viz., the likeness of the thing understood within the one understanding it. Therefore, when something is said to move an intellect, either (a) it is giving the power to understand to the one engaged in intellectual understanding, or (b) it is impressing on it a likeness of the thing understood.

Now God moves a created intellect in both of these ways.

For He is the first immaterial being. And since intellectuality follows upon immateriality, it follows that He is the first being having intellectual understanding. Hence, since the first in any ordering is a cause of those that follow, it follows that any power of intellectual understanding is from Him.

Similarly, since He is the first being and since all things preexist in Him as in their first cause, they must exist in Him as intelligible in accord with His mode. For just as all the intelligible conceptions of things exist first in God and flow from Him into other intellects, in order that those other intellects might have actual intellectual understanding, so, too, these conceptions flow into creatures, in order that those creatures might subsist.

So, then, God moves a created intellect (a) insofar as He gives it its power of intellectual understanding—whether its natural power or some additional power—and (b) insofar as He imprints intelligible species on it. And in both cases, He keeps and preserves these things in being.

Reply to objection 1: The intellectual operation is, to be sure, from the intellect in which it exists as from a secondary cause, but it is from God as from a first cause. For the fact that the one who is engaged in intellectual understanding is able to understand is itself given to him by God.

Reply to objection 2: The intellectual light is, taken together with the likeness of the thing understood, a sufficient principle of an act of intellectual understanding. However, it is a secondary principle and depends on the first principle.

Reply to objection 3: What is intelligible moves our intellect insofar as it in some way imprints upon the intellect a likeness of itself through which it can be understood intellectually. But, as was shown above (q. 12, a. 2 and q. 56, a. 3), the likenesses that God imprints on a created intellect are not sufficient for understanding God Himself through His essence. Hence, as has been explained (q. 12, a. 4), He moves a created intellect and yet is not intelligible to that intellect.

Article 4

Can God move a created will?

It seems that God cannot move a created will:

Objection 1: Everything that is moved by something extrinsic is coerced. But a will cannot be coerced. Therefore, it is not moved by anything extrinsic. And so it cannot be moved by God.

Objection 2: God cannot bring it about that contradictories are simultaneously true. But this would follow if He moved a will, since to be moved voluntarily is to be moved by oneself and not by

another. Therefore, God cannot move a will.

Objection 3: Movement is attributed more to the mover than to the thing moved; hence, homicide is attributed not to the rock, but to the one who throws it. Therefore, if God moves a will, it follows that voluntary works would not be attributed to the man as merit or demerit. But this is false. Therefore, God does not move any will.

But contrary to this: Philippians 2:13 says, “It is God who works in us, both to will and to accomplish.”

I respond: Just as an intellect, as was explained above (a. 3), is moved both (a) by its object and (b) by the one who gave it the power of intellectual understanding, so too a will is moved both (a) by its object, which is the good, and (b) by the one who creates the power of willing.

Now as regards its being moved by its object, a will can be moved by any good whatsoever, even though it is moved sufficiently and efficaciously only by God. For nothing can move a movable thing sufficiently unless the active power of the mover exceeds or is at least equal to the passive power of the movable thing. But a will’s passive power extends to the good in general (*ad bonum in universali*); for its object is the universal good just as the intellect’s object is universal being. But every created good is a certain particular good, whereas God alone is the universal good. Hence, God alone fulfills a will (*implet voluntatem*) and sufficiently moves it as an object.

Similarly, the power of willing is caused by God alone. For an act of willing (*velle*) is nothing other than a certain inclination toward the will’s object, which is the universal good. But to incline something toward the universal good is the role of the first mover, to whom the ultimate end is proportioned—just as, in human affairs, to direct something toward the common good is the role of one who presides over the multitude.

Hence, it is proper to God to move the will in both of these ways—but especially in the second way, i.e., by inclining it from within (*interius eam inclinando*).

Reply to objection 1: That which is moved by another is said to be coerced if it is moved contrary to its proper inclination; however, if it is moved by another thing that gives it its proper inclination, then it is not said to be coerced. For instance, a heavy thing is not coerced when it is moved downward by the thing that generates it. So, then, God, in moving the will, does not coerce it, since He gives it its proper inclination.

Reply to objection 2: To be moved voluntarily is to move oneself (*moveri ex se*), i.e., to be moved by an intrinsic principle. But that intrinsic principle can itself come from some other extrinsic principle. And so to move oneself is not incompatible with being moved by another.

Reply to objection 3: If a will were moved by another in such a way that it in no way moved itself, then the will’s works would not count for merit or demerit. However, since, as has been explained, being moved by another does not rule out moving oneself, it follows that the nature of merit and demerit is not undermined.

Article 5

Does God act in everything that is acting?

It seems that God does not act in everything that is acting:

Objection 1: Nothing that is insufficient should be attributed to God. Therefore, if God acts in everything that is acting, then He acts sufficiently in each thing. Therefore, it would be superfluous for a created agent to do anything (*superfluum esset quod agens creatum aliquid operaretur*).

Objection 2: A single action does not belong to two agents at once (*una operatio non est simul a duobus operantibus*), just as two things that are being moved cannot have numerically one motion. Therefore, if a creature's action is from God operating in the creature, then that action cannot simultaneously belong to the creature. And so no creature does anything.

Objection 3: A thing's maker is said to be a cause of the thing's action, insofar as the maker gives the thing the form by which it acts. Therefore, if God is a cause of the action of the things made by Him, then this will be so because He gives them the power to act. But this occurs at the beginning, when He makes the thing. Therefore, it seems that He no longer acts in a creature that is acting.

But contrary to this: Isaiah 26:12 says, "You have done all our works in us, O Lord."

I respond: The claim that God acts in everything that is acting has been understood by some in such a way that no created power does anything, but instead God alone does all things directly. For instance, it is not the fire that gives heat, but instead God gives heat in the fire, and likewise for all other cases.

However, this is impossible.

First of all, on this view the ordering of causes and effects (*ordo causae et causati*) would be removed from created things. This involves a lack of power on the part of the creator. For it is part of an agent's power that it should endow its effect with the power to act.

Second, it would make no sense to attribute to things the operative powers that are found in them, if they never acted through those powers. To the contrary, all created things would seem in some way senseless, if they were stripped of their proper operations, since each thing exists for the sake of its own action. For the imperfect always exists for the sake of the more perfect. Thus, just as matter exists for the sake of form, so form, i.e., *first* act, exists for the sake of its own operation, i.e., *second* act. And so a created thing's end is its operation.

So, then, one should understand that (a) God acts in things and yet that (b) the things themselves have their own proper action. To see this clearly, note that even though there are four kinds of causes, the material cause is not a principle of action, but instead serves as a subject that receives the effect of an action. By contrast, the end and the agent and the form all serve as principles of action, but in a certain order. For the first principle of action is the end, which moves the agent; the second principle is the agent; and the third is the form of that which is applied to acting by the agent (though the agent itself acts through its own form as well). This is clear in the case of artifacts. For the craftsman is moved to act by the end, which is the thing made, e.g., a chest or a bed; and he applies to his action the hatchet, which cuts by means of its sharpness.

So, then, it is in accord with these three principles that God acts in every agent that is acting:

First, in accord with the nature of an end. For every action is for the sake of some real or apparent good. But nothing is or appears good except insofar as it participates in a likeness of the highest good, which is God. It follows that God Himself is a cause, in the sense of an end, of every action.

Again, note that if there are many ordered agents, it is always the case that the second agent *acts in the power* of the first agent (*secundum agens agit in virtute primi*). For the first agent moves the second agent to act (*primum agens movet secundum ad agendum*). Accordingly, all things act in the power of God Himself, and so He is a cause of the actions of all agents.

Third, note that it is not just the case that God moves things to act in the sense of applying their forms and powers to action, in the way that a craftsman applies a hatchet to cutting even though he sometimes does not give the hatchet its form; rather, God also endows created agents with their form and preserves them in being. Hence, He is a cause of actions not only insofar as He gives the form that is a principle of the action, in the way that the thing that generates is a cause of the movement of heavy and lightweight bodies, but also insofar as He conserves the forms and powers of things, in the way that the sun is said to be a cause of the manifestation of colors insofar as it gives and conserves light, by which

colors are made manifest. And since a thing's form exists within the thing and to that extent is considered prior and more universal, and since God is properly the universal cause in all things of *esse* itself, which is more intimate to things than anything else, it follows that God acts intimately within all things. And this is why in Sacred Scripture the actions of nature are attributed to God as acting in nature—this according to Job 10:11 (“You have clothed me with skin and flesh; You have put me together with bones and sinews”).

Reply to objection 1: God acts sufficiently in things in the manner of a first agent; nor is it the case because of this that the action of secondary agents is superfluous.

Reply to objection 2: A single action does not proceed from two agents of a single order. But nothing prevents one and the same action from proceeding from a first agent and a secondary agent.

Reply to objection 3: God not only gives forms to things, but also, as has been explained, conserves them in being, applies them to action, and serves as the end of all actions.

Article 6

Can God do anything outside of the order instilled in things?

It seems that God cannot do anything outside of the order instilled in things:

Objection 1: In *Contra Faustum* 26 Augustine says, “God, the founder and creator of all natures, does nothing contrary to nature.” But what lies outside of the order naturally instilled in things seems to be contrary to nature. Therefore, God cannot do anything outside of the order instilled in things.

Objection 2: The order of nature is from God in the same way that the order of justice is. But God cannot do anything outside of the order of justice, since in that case He would be doing something unjust. Therefore, He cannot do anything outside of the order of nature.

Objection 3: God instituted the order of nature. Therefore, if God did anything outside of the order of nature, it seems that He is mutable—which is absurd.

But contrary to this: In *Contra Faustum* 26 Augustine says, “God on occasion does something contrary to the usual course of nature.”

I respond: Every cause is such that some sort of ordering flows from it into its effects, since every cause has the nature of a principle. And so when the causes are multiplied, so are the orderings, one of which is contained under another in the same way that one cause is contained under another cause. Hence, a higher cause is not contained under the ordering of a lower cause, but just the opposite. There is a clear example of this in human affairs. For the ordering of a home depends on the father of the family, and this ordering is contained under the ordering of the city, which proceeds from its leader (*rector*), and this ordering is contained under the ordering that proceeds from the king, by whom the whole kingdom is ordered.

Therefore, if the ordering of things is thought of insofar as it depends on the *first* cause, then in this sense God cannot do anything contrary to the order of things, since if He did so, then He would be acting contrary to His own foreknowledge or will or goodness. By contrast, if the order of things is thought of insofar as it depends on one of the *secondary* causes, then in this sense God can act outside of the order of things. For He is not subject to any ordering of secondary causes, but instead any such ordering is subject to Him in the sense that it proceeds from Him through the choice of His will and not by a necessity of nature. For He could have instituted some other ordering of things. Hence, when He wants to, He can act outside of the order that has been instituted—for instance, by bringing about the effects of secondary causes without them, or by producing effects that the secondary causes do not extend to. This

is why, in *Contra Faustum* 26, Augustine says, “God acts contrary to the usual course of nature, but He does not act in any way against the highest law, since He does not act against Himself.”

Reply to objection 1: There are two ways in which it can happen that something occurs outside of the nature instilled in natural things:

In one way, through the action of an agent that did not confer the relevant natural inclination—as, for instance, when a man moves a heavy body upwards; for the heavy body does not get from the man its inclination toward downward movement. This is something contrary to nature.

In the second way, through the action of that agent on which the thing’s natural action depends. And this is not contrary to nature, as is clear in the case of the ebb and flow of the sea, which is not contrary to nature even though it lies outside of the natural motion of water, which moves downward. For this [tidal movement] comes from the influence of a celestial body, which the natural inclinations of lower bodies depend on.

Therefore, since the order of nature was instilled in things by God, it is not contrary to nature if He does something outside of that order. Hence, in *Contra Faustus* 26 Augustine says, “Whatever He does—He who is the source of every mode, number, and ordering of nature—is natural to each thing.”

Reply to objection 2: The order of justice involves a relation to the *first* cause, which is the rule of all justice. And so God can do nothing outside of this order.

Reply to objection 3: God instilled a fixed order in things in such a way that He nonetheless reserved to Himself whatever He would on occasion do in a different way for His own good reasons (*aliter ex causa*). Hence, when He acts outside of this order, He does not change.

Article 7

Is everything that God does outside of the natural order of things a miracle?

It seems that not everything God does outside of the natural order of things is a miracle:

Objection 1: The creation of the world, as well as of souls, and the justification of the wicked are accomplished by God outside of the natural order, since they are not done by means of the action of any natural cause. And yet these are not called miracles. Therefore, not everything that God does outside of the natural order of things is a miracle.

Objection 2: A miracle is said to be “something difficult and unusual that occurs beyond the power of nature and beyond the hope of those who marvel at it.” But there are some things done outside of the order of nature that are not difficult, since they involve small matters, such as the recovery of precious stones or the healing of the sick. Nor, again, are they unusual, since they occur frequently, as when sick people were placed in the streets in order to be healed under Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15). Nor, again, are they beyond the power of nature, as when people are cured of fevers. Nor, again, are they beyond hope, since we all hope for the resurrection of the dead, which is accomplished outside of the order of nature. Therefore, not everything that is done outside of the order of nature is a miracle.

Objection 3: The name ‘miracle’ (*miraculum*) is taken from ‘wonder’ (*admiratio*). But wonder is directed at things that are manifest to the sensory power, and sometimes things happen outside of the natural order in things that are not manifest to the senses, as when the apostles became knowledgeable without either discovering anything or learning anything. Therefore, not everything that is done outside of the order of nature is a miracle.

But contrary to this: In *Contra Faustum* 26 Augustine says, “When God does something contrary to the course of nature that is normal and known to us, such things are called great deeds or marvels

(*magnalia vel mirabilia*).”

I respond: The name ‘miracle’ (*miraculum*) is taken from ‘wonder’ (*admiratio*).

Now wonder arises when the effects are obvious and the cause is hidden; for instance, as it says at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, someone is filled with wonder when he sees an eclipse of the sun and is ignorant of its cause. But it can happen that the cause of some obvious effect is known to someone even though it is not known to others. Hence, something is surprising (*mirum*) to one man, but not to others; for instance, an uneducated man is surprised at (*miratur*) an eclipse of the sun, but an astronomer (*astrologus*) is not.

By contrast, ‘miracle’ means something that is full of wonder in the sense that it has a cause that is hidden absolutely speaking and from everyone. But this cause is God. Hence, it is those things that are done by God outside of the causes known to us that are called miracles.

Reply to objection 1: Even though creation and the justification of the wicked are done by God alone, they are not properly speaking called miracles. For they are not apt to be done by other causes, and so they do not occur ‘outside of the order of nature’ because they have nothing to do with the order of nature.

Reply to objection 2: A miracle is called difficult not because of the dignity of the matter in which it is done, but because it exceeds the power of nature. Similarly, a miracle is called unusual not because it does not occur frequently, but because it lies outside of the normal course of nature (*praeter naturalem consuetudinem*). Again, a miracle is said to be beyond the power of nature not only because of the substance of the thing that is done, but also because of the mode and order of doing it. And a miracle is said to be beyond the hope of nature, but not beyond that hope of grace that stems from the faith by which we believe in a future resurrection.

Reply to objection 3: Even though the apostles’ knowledge was not manifest in itself, it was nonetheless manifest in its effects, and because of these effects it appeared wondrous (*mirabilis*).

Article 8

Is one miracle greater than another?

It seems not to be the case that one miracle is greater than another:

Objection 1: In *Epistola ad Volusianum* Augustine says, “In things that are done miraculously (*in rebus mirabiliter factis*), the whole reason for what is done is the power of the one doing it.” But it is the same power, viz., God’s power, that brings about all miracles. Therefore, it is not the case that one miracle is greater than another.

Objection 2: God’s power is infinite. But what is infinite exceeds everything finite incommensurably (*improportionabiliter*). Therefore, an infinite power’s doing *this* thing is no more to be marvelled at than its doing *that* thing. Therefore, it is not the case that one miracle is greater than another.

But contrary to this: In John 14:12 our Lord, talking about miraculous works, says, “The works that I do, He also shall do; and greater than these shall He do.”

I respond: Nothing is called a miracle by comparing it to God’s power, since anything that is done is minimal when compared to God’s power—this according to Isaiah 40:15 (“Behold the Gentiles are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the smallest grain of a balance”). Instead, something is called a miracle by comparing it to the power of nature, which a miracle exceeds. And so a miracle is said to be greater insofar as it exceeds the power of nature to a greater degree.

Now there are three ways in which something exceeds the power of nature:

In one way, with respect to *the substance of the thing that is done*, e.g., that two bodies should be in the same place at the same time (*duo corpora sint simul*), or that the sun should travel backwards, or that a human body should be glorified—which nature cannot do in any way at all. These occupy the highest grade among miracles.

Second, something exceeds the power of nature not with respect to *what* is done, but with respect to *that in which* it is done, as with the resuscitation of the dead or the giving of sight to the blind, and so on. For nature can cause life, but not in someone who is dead; and nature can bestow sight, but not to someone who is blind. These works occupy the second place among the miracles.

In the third way, something exceeds the power of nature with respect to *the mode and order of doing it*, as when someone is suddenly cured of a fever by God's power in the absence of medical care and of the normal process of nature in such matters (*absque curatione et consueto processu naturae in talibus*), or as when the air is instantaneously filled with heavy rains by God's power in the absence of natural causes, as happened in reply to the prayers of Samuel (1 Kings 12:18) and of Elijah (3 Kings 18:44-45). Works of this sort occupy the lowest place among miracles. Yet all of these works themselves have different grades, depending on the different ways in which they exceed the power of nature.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2: This makes it clear how to reply to the objections, which go through in regard to God's power.