

THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

ON THE MODE OF CONVERSION



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by Samuel Rutherford

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On the Mode of Conversion

“That you may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” - *Ephesians 1:18-19*.

It is manifestly clear that the power of efficacious grace is nothing less than the omnipotence of God Himself, for we come to believe in Christ through that mighty, effectual, and irresistible force by which Christ was raised from the dead. Concerning the mode of conversion,

the inquiry is often made: Does grace work conversion irresistibly? To answer this, it is necessary first to establish certain premises.

1. Resistance is properly understood as the counteraction of the agent within the patient; or as some, like Zabarella, describe it in the context of reaction, resistance is the hindrance or repulsion of an action, or the refusal to admit such action. This follows from the principle that every form strives to preserve itself while simultaneously endeavoring to impede or retard the action of a contrary agent by means of reaction and counteraction. Thus, I do not agree with Zabarella when he denies that there is reaction or counteraction; for indeed, whatever resists necessarily reacts and suffers in return—if it does not, it yields and does not truly resist. Resistance can occur in various forms: physically, as when fire contends against water; hyperphysically, as when angels strive against angels; or morally, as when man opposes sound counsel. Therefore, resistance may be classified as physical, hyperphysical, or moral. The forces at play between agents and patients may be either equal, resulting in hard and incomplete resistance, or unequal, leading to resistance that culminates in complete victory.

2. We acknowledge, concerning the matter of persuasive and inviting grace—often termed prevenient, exciting, and outwardly calling—that such grace is by no means irresistible, for it is frequently met with resistance by our rebellious hearts. As it is written in Jeremiah 7:13, "I spoke to you, but you did not listen." And again in Psalm 81:14, "Oh that my people had listened to me!" However, when we speak of internal and effectual grace, it must be noted that there exists within all the elect a natural propensity to resist, though this resistance is not absolute, for the superior power of grace ultimately prevails. For it is the

nature of contraries to resist one another; and so the ingrained habit of corruption stands in opposition to the internal work of grace. This resistance is, in a sense, of a physical nature.

3. Our adversaries concede that illumination is wrought irresistibly, as affirmed in their synodical writings (Article 4, p. 16): "Whether we will or not, we cannot but know."
4. Likewise, they assert that the affections are drawn, and the power to believe is granted, irresistibly. Corvinus, in his refutation of Tilenus (Chapter 12, p. 467), affirms as much.
5. We hold that the habit of sanctifying grace and the infusion of a new heart are indeed conferred irresistibly. The Arminians, however, deny such an infusion, asserting instead that conversion is an act rooted in our Free Will.
6. In considering the will, three distinctions must be made: First, the power to believe, which, as they concede, is conferred irresistibly. Second, there is the experience of the pulsations and persuasions of the Holy Spirit. Concerning this, Corvinus writes against Bogerman (pp. 270-271): "The will cannot but feel the pulsations, persuasions, and allurements of the illuminated mind." Similarly, against Molina (Chapter 33, Section 31), he confesses: "We acknowledge that man is passive in the first moment of conversion, but this passivity pertains to the sense, not to the assent." The third aspect concerns the will's assent or dissent. On this point, the Confession (Chapter 17, Thesis 7), Corvinus against Bogerman (Part 1, p. 363), and against Tilenus (Chapter 5, p. 223), together with Episcopius in Disputation 15, Thesis 11, argue: "God never so instructs man with new powers of grace that it does not remain within the capacity of the will to

use them or not; indeed, even when all conditions necessary for action are present, the will retains the freedom to assent or dissent to God's calling."

It is not the question, first, whether grace is resistible when applied through external means, for indeed, it can be resisted in such a manner. Second, it is not asked whether grace preceding conversion is resistible, for this too we acknowledge. Third, nor is it questioned whether men can resist the more common grace, for indeed, the temporary believers do resist such grace, as is evident in Luke 8:13 and 1 Timothy 1:19. Fourth, nor is the inquiry concerned with habitual grace, which is peculiar to the elect, for that too can be resisted, otherwise the elect and truly regenerate would be incapable of sin. Fifth, it is not asked whether the mind is irresistibly enlightened, or whether the will and affections irresistibly feel the persuasions and invitations of the illuminated mind; the adversaries concede this, although it is unclear how they can deny that free will may divert the intellect from considering the arguments presented to it, thus impeding the act of illumination. Sixth, nor is it asked whether God compels the free will, which we also deny. Seventh, nor is the question whether the corruption of the will is naturally disposed to resist the divine action of grace.

Rather, the true question is this: Does God so influence the will with new grace—specifically, with the special grace of regeneration, which proceeds from His eternal election—that it remains within the power of the will to utterly and finally repudiate this grace, thereby entirely obstructing its most effectual operation, such that it can decisively refuse to obey God's call and shut the door to Him as He knocks? The Arminians affirm this. Or rather, does the grace of God, which is proper to the elect and brought into action, so triumph over the vicious rebellion and hardness of the heart that it cannot ultimately

and finally resist God's call, but is compelled by a hypothetical necessity to obey Him?

We maintain that the will can in no wise resist the internal grace of God.

For further clarity on this contentious question, the following observations may also be noted.

In the year 415, there arose Pelagius, Julian, Faustus, and others who derided the doctrine of irresistible grace, branding it as mere Fate. In our present day, four prevailing opinions are extant. The first is held by the Dominicans, who acknowledge the invincible power of grace, yet teach that man remains unconverted only because he does not will it so. This view is espoused by Alvarez, Gumel, Rispolis, and the Doctors of Salamanca and Alcala, as well as by Bañez. The second opinion belongs to the Jesuits, who assert a congruous calling, contending that conversion is effected by persuasion, by the adaptation of persuasion to a particular disposition—suggesting, absurdly, that the efficacy of conversion might hinge on something as trivial as an afternoon drinking bout. They also lean upon the notion of Middle Knowledge, a fantastical figment borne of misdirected intellects. The third opinion is that of the Pelagians, Arminians, Socinians, and Pseudo-Lutherans, who posit that grace is resistible.

In this debate, five elements of the will are considered. First, the illumination of the mind. Second, the quickening of the affections. Third, the conferral of the power to believe. Fourth, the sensation and perception of the persuasions and movements of the intellect. On these points, they concede that all these operations proceed from God irresistibly. But the crux of the matter lies in the fifth element: assent or dissent, which is the point of contention. The Arminians,

who once clung to the Jesuit doctrine of congruity, as seen in the Hague Conference (p. 311), have now abandoned it.

Yet, this controversy did not originate with Pelagius alone; it is far more ancient. It was already stirred and debated in the time of the Apostles by the carnal Romans, as seen in Romans 9:19: "If God has mercy on whom He wills, and hardens whom He wills; then why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" Paul does not respond as the Arminians might, by dividing the will of God into resistible and irresistible, peremptory and non-peremptory, efficacious and inefficacious. Instead, he retorts, "Nay but, O man, who are you that replies against God?"

We establish our position against the Arminians with these arguments.

1. God effects faith within us by that very force and power with which He raised Christ from the dead, as it is written in Ephesians 1:18-19 and Colossians 2:12. Moreover, it is by this same power that He perfects every good pleasure of His will (2 Thessalonians 1:11), and by His divine power grants us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
2. No one resists the drawing of the Father, as our Lord declares in John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." And again, "Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (John 6:45). Therefore, they come of necessity, for the proposition is necessarily true; thus, they cannot but come.
3. God not only bestows upon us the power to believe, but He also works within us both to will and to act according to His good

pleasure (Philippians 2:13). It is granted to us not only to believe but also to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). Moreover, He causes us to walk in His statutes (Ezekiel 36:27). Therefore, the grace of God works so effectually that it removes both resistance and the possibility of resistance. As it is said in the same passage, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). The stony heart is the very principle by which man resists the call of God.

4. The new heart and new spirit, by which we are made to walk in the statutes of God, stand in direct opposition to any final or complete resistance to God's call or to thwarting the gracious intention of God in calling. For, if it were possible for a man to receive a new heart and yet remain unconverted, he would be both converted and unconverted at the same time—a manifest contradiction.
5. God promises to remove the very ability to resist, as it is written: "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 30:6). Therefore, He removes the hardness and the foreskin of the heart (Ezekiel 36:26). Though the Jews, like the Arminians today, might object, saying that they could remain with stony hearts and resist the Lord even as He grants a new heart, God responds, "I will take away the stony heart" (Ezekiel 36:26). Again, He says, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33). To the objection that they might remain untaught and resist Him, God counters, "And they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest" (Jeremiah 31:34). Such are the promises found in Jeremiah 24:7, Isaiah 44:3, Ezekiel 11:19-20, Zechariah 12:10, and John

14:16.

6. For God the Father hath promised to the Son a willing people, as it is written: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110:3). Likewise, it is foretold that He shall "see His seed" (Isaiah 53:10) and that "the ends of the earth" shall be His inheritance (Psalm 2:8). His dominion shall extend "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8). Thus, the Father pledges to the Son that many shall be converted unto Him; and God, being true and faithful in His promises, ensures that these souls cannot resist His converting grace.

7. For if a man, dead in trespasses and sins, contributes nothing to his regeneration—inasmuch as it is a work of divine resurrection and a new creation—then it follows that he cannot resist the call of God or contend against the One who regenerates. And indeed, this is confirmed by the words of our Lord: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), and "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). Likewise, "even when we were dead in sins, hath He quickened us together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5).

8. Moreover, if the regenerating work of God were susceptible to being overcome by man, it would then be no stronger than the rhetoric of an orator or the enticement of a pleasant allurements. Such a notion would imply that God's power in regeneration is no greater than that of a preacher, the Devil, or even the eloquence of Cicero or Demosthenes.

9. If indeed this grace could be overcome by man, it would then be common to the unregenerate, as it would be bestowed upon them yet subsequently rejected. However, this grace is distinctly reserved for the sons of God. For it is declared, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). Likewise, Christ is "the power of God" only unto those who are inwardly called (1 Corinthians 1:23). The Holy Spirit, whom the world cannot receive, is given only to the sons of God (John 14:17).
10. Furthermore, God exercises His omnipotence in the operation of internal grace, and with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). By this omnipotence, He draws many from their trust in riches to faith and repentance, employing a power that surpasses the might of the Devil and the strength of sin. As it is written, "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Thus, the conversion of many is derived from the sovereign will and omnipotent power of God, as testified in Romans 11:23, Romans 1:16, Jude 24, 1 Peter 1:5, John 10:29, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Romans 15:13, and Romans 16:25.
11. For if man were able to resist that internal grace which is peculiar to the elect, then indeed the very decrees of God's election could be rendered void, His counsels altered, and His divine purposes frustrated—contrary to the testimony of Scripture, which declares, "The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:10-11). And again, "This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth... For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it?" (Isaiah

14:26-27). "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

12. Should this grace be conquerable, God would be seen not as imparting repentance and faith, as the Scriptures assert (Acts 5:31; 2 Timothy 2:25), but merely offering them. Yet, faith that is merely offered and not received is not God's gift; faith that is received would thus be construed as our own achievement, rather than the gracious gift of God.
13. Moreover, if grace were resistible, then the act of conversion would be relegated to the autonomy of man's free will. Consequently, the efficacy of Christ's merits, and the salvation of the elect, which God Himself intends, would hinge upon the variable will of man rather than upon the sovereign grace of God. Nevertheless, the Scriptures firmly establish that conversion is the work of divine grace, as it is written: "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:6). "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33). "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).
14. Should grace be overcome, it would imply that God calls many inwardly whom He neither predestined, justified, nor glorified—yet this contradicts the clear order of salvation presented in Romans 8:29-30: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined... Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

15. If indeed we could resist grace, then our prayers for conversion would be in vain, for we would petition God to do that which He could not accomplish without violating our freedom. This would render the very concept of conversion into a non-conversion, and the notion of obedience into disobedience.

16. Finally, if the will could thwart the working of grace, we would offer thanks and glory to God for conversion in vain. For God would no longer be acknowledged as the infallible and efficacious cause of conversion, but rather as one whose work is contingent upon the fluctuating will of man.

17. If it were true that man, by the strength of his own Free Will, could distinguish and separate himself from the unconverted, then the converted might boast, saying, "I did something by my Free Will, apart from Christ; this I possess, which I did not receive from the grace of God, namely, that I did not resist His grace, though another, endowed with the same grace, did resist." Yet, the Scriptures consistently attribute the glory of our conversion to God alone, as the sovereign and distinguishing cause, as it is written: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:4-5). "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:12-13). "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our

Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3). "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever" (Revelation 1:5-6). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

18. Should it be in the power of Free Will, and not in the sovereign power of God, that any are saved, then it would be by human volition alone that there is a Church in the world, that Christ the Bridegroom has a bride, that the Head has members, and that the King has subjects. The glory of God's forgiving mercy would be diminished, for all mortals might resist God's call through Free Will.
19. Thus, Augustine would be falsely attributing to God, from the Scriptures, dominion over human wills when he declares in *On Rebuke and Grace* (Chapter 14) and *On Grace* (Chapter 14): "God has the most omnipotent power of inclining human hearts wherever He pleases and of doing what He wills with the wills themselves." Indeed, it cannot be doubted that human wills cannot resist to the extent that God Himself may not accomplish what He wills.

The Remonstrants, in their Synodical Writings (Article 4, p. 58), formulate the question of resistibility in this manner: "Could man, when God sincerely wills that he believe and be converted, refuse to believe and be converted? Or, when God intends the conversion of

men, does He employ such efficacy of grace that, when it is applied, man cannot fail to be converted and believe; and when it is withheld, he cannot be converted and believe?" We reject this framing of the question.

On the Deficiencies and Errors of the Arminian View

1. For they offer not a single syllable regarding the inward working of grace.
2. They inquire, "Could a man fail to be converted when God employs that efficacy, or rather, that efficiency, whereby he is necessarily converted?" This is akin to asking whether, once conversion is established, it could occur that conversion is not established—an utterly self-contradictory notion.
3. The Arminians present a confused argument, positing one peremptory intention of God to convert, alongside another that is ineffectual; one absolute, another conditional. In doing so, they obscure the true nature of the question at hand.
4. Further absurdity arises when they suggest that God, according to their view, intends the conversion of Barbarians and Indians, even of the damned, by mere wishful thinking, as Corvinus asserts against Molina (Chapter 31:1, 17). They then question whether God, concerning the Indians who have never heard of Christ, and the damned, employs such efficacy of grace that, if applied, their conversion would necessarily follow. This is a nonsensical question.

Martinez de Ripalda, in his discourse on the supernatural (Volume 1, Book 2, Disputation 30, Section 6, n. 28), posits: "If you desire that the will (in opposition to the more recent Thomists) should act

immediately as that which is itself immediately made to know or desire through a supernatural act, then consider Calvin, who was unaware that it is through the will that man wills." Here, Kemnitius freely admits that it is indeed the will that properly wills and the mind that properly understands. Yet, the salutary act of willing and acting does not properly belong to the will and mind, but to divine grace, for it proceeds entirely and immediately, not from the inherent power of the human will and mind, but solely from the external power of divine grace.

In response, he wrongly attributes to us the notion that we desire the will to function purely passively. However, in addressing the substance of the question, we affirm that grace and the instructing Father operate as a dual cause.

1. Grace is the true and effectual cause, inwardly drawing, instructing, and predetermining, sole and sufficient in its operation. Free Will, on the other hand, is acted upon, drawn, and taught, wholly subordinate to grace. There exists no partnership or collaterality between Grace and Free Will, for if such were the case, our will would stand as a co-cause alongside God, jointly calling, preventing, and drawing, with the grace of God as merely another co-cause. However, it is the Father alone who draws, the Father alone who makes us hear (John 6:44-45), and not our will in conjunction with the Father. Indeed, in this matter, we are entirely passive. It is the Father alone who teaches Peter, fully and adequately; flesh and blood contribute nothing as an associate cause (Matthew 16:17). To claim otherwise would be to attribute half of Simon's blessedness to flesh and blood, equally as to the Father. Moreover, this would imply that we call ourselves with the same power as God, and that our own mercy would intervene as an internal collateral

cause of our vocation. Such a notion would render it contingent upon Free Will whether we are called or not.

2. While Free Will, when drawn and moved, may function as a vital associate cause, it remains entirely subordinate to prevenient grace. It is God alone who knocks, not merely by morally stirring and exhorting through admonition, but by a real and effective influx. We do not open the door and respond on our own; rather, He who calls and prevents also follows through with the same operative grace to incline the will in opening and responding. Martinez de Ripalda, in his treatise on the Supernatural Being (Volume 1, Disputation 30, Section 29), acknowledges that the Fathers of the Church assert man possesses a natural or innate capacity for supernatural works. Augustine, in *On the Gift of Perseverance* (Chapter 5), notes that certain individuals possess by their very nature the divine gift of intelligence, moving them toward faith when they hear words or see signs that align with their minds. Observe the terms “naturally” and “congruous to their minds,” which indicate that the act of believing is in some measure inherent and natural to man’s disposition—not because the faculty itself is wholly natural, but because there exists an incomplete, innate capacity. Augustine further states, in *On the Predestination of the Saints* (Chapter 5), that the ability to have faith is natural, but to possess faith is a gift of grace. This indicates a capacity that is not merely passive but also possesses an active potential, as we are capable of eliciting the act of faith and thus believing.

In response, we do not deny that there is a remote and certain potency of grace; however, we reject the notion that this dormant and sluggish potency is brought into action solely through congruous and moral motions—namely, the mere letter of the Law and Gospel—

by persuasive means, without the infusion of actual potency and habit. Furthermore, there is both a passive and an active potentiality. It is passive insofar as it requires supernatural power to become more proximate and active. This potentiality is not like that afforded to stones or wood or to beasts, as Augustine explains; rather, it is rational and vital, which formally erupts into action. It is not an intermediate power, as Augustine discusses in *On the Spirit and the Letter* (Chapter 33), where he expresses doubt and engages in debate. Let us first acknowledge and observe whether this inquiry satisfies the question: Is Free Will, naturally endowed by the Creator, that intermediate power which can either be extended toward faith or inclined toward unbelief? Thus, this natural potency for believing remains remote.

Martinez asserts that a purely remote potency holds no power in effecting a result beyond that which the immediate and proximate power operates; for it is only through the latter, and not through itself, that it attains the effect. He contends that a purely remote potency, lacking the proximate, is not merely weak and infirm, but utterly null. Hugh of St. Victor, in attempting to elucidate the natural activity of believing, compares it to the example of sight, which, together with light, elicits vision—not as a purely remote visive potency.

In response, Scripture firmly denies any natural potency in coming to Christ, that is, in believing, apart from the infusion of a new power (John 6:44; Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14). Thus, natural potency in this regard is passive, requiring divine intervention. If, then, the potency of believing is absent, it is indeed a remote potency, and a purely remote potency, as such, is utterly null, as the Scriptures declare, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44). Yet, though a person is a subject capable

of receiving drawing grace, it cannot be said that a remote potency attains the effect by itself, even though it may do so only through the mediation of grace. As ignited iron heats by a remote potency and attains the effect, not through the intervening fire alone, but through the density of matter by which the fiery heat is more intensely united, so too does grace operate in the soul.

Hugh of St. Victor's invention is an unfortunate one, as seen in his *Elucidatory Questions on the Epistle to the Romans* (p. 238), where he erroneously claims that the soul possesses a natural potency for meriting, likening it to the eye, which retains the faculty of vision even in darkness. He argues that light does not impart a new real potency of seeing, but rather presupposes the vision to be whole, sound, and undamaged, with the potency of seeing remaining proximate even in darkness. However, the Jesuits themselves concede that a new habit is infused by grace, albeit only to facilitate acts with greater ease and sweetness, for they assert that the natural potency is merely weak, but not entitatively diminished. Regarding cooperation, they teach that it is indifferent and general, relying solely on moral persuasion, which adds no new powers to Free Will.

Martinez, in the same section (n. 8:26), observes that the Fathers occasionally appeal to the immediate and partial power of nature in performing supernatural acts. He claims that the human will plays a role in fulfilling the commandments, just as grace does; indeed, both act immediately, otherwise grace alone would perform everything immediately. Augustine, in *On Rebuke and Grace* (Chapter 2), states, "They are acted upon that they may act." Similarly, he suggests that just as the native activity of the eyes renders a man capable of seeing light, even in its absence, so too does the native faculty of the will render a man capable of maintaining rectitude, even without grace. However, he acknowledges a crucial difference:

light is due to the eyes, completing their immediate activity, whereas grace is not owed to man, yet it is grace that completes the power to maintain rectitude. Thus, neither the will alone nor grace alone is the adequate cause of salvation.

Response: 1. Grace alone acts immediately as the efficient cause in the matter of willing, determining, inwardly teaching, and effecting. Likewise, the will alone operates in the capacity of a vital cause, formally and freely willing. Thus, neither operates independently to accomplish the whole; rather, both function in their respective roles, yet it is grace that reigns supreme.

2. If the native faculty were to render man capable of maintaining rectitude even in the absence of grace, then it would follow that a man not drawn by the Father—indeed, devoid of grace—could come to Christ and believe. This is nothing less than the error of Pelagius. Moreover, light does not impart any new potency to the eyes, but merely enables the preexisting faculty of vision.

Martinez, in Section 9, n. 40, contends that if "to assist" denotes an immediate action in God, then it must also denote an immediate action in man. A purely remote cause does not assist, but something, not the whole, is required. Thomas Aquinas, in *Summa Theologica* I, q. 23, art. 8, to the last argument, explains that one may be assisted by another in two ways: First, insofar as he receives power from him, and thus to be assisted is characteristic of the weak. In this sense, who assists the Spirit of the Lord? No one. Second, someone is said to be assisted by another through whom he executes his operation, as the Lord does through a minister. In this way, God is said to be assisted by us, insofar as we execute His ordination, as stated in 1 Corinthians 3:9: "For we are God's fellow workers."

Response: Thomas speaks of God insofar as He employs means—namely, of natural assistance, not the assistance of grace, which is the matter at hand. For we do not assist God or His grace in the act of believing, nor do we provide any assistance to grace. Indeed, we love God in heaven and enjoy Him, but would we, in such vital actions, be said to assist God? By no means.

Martinez asserts in Section 10, n. 44, that the ownership of a good work does not belong to man by reason of passive reception, as a color is attributed to an object, but rather by reason of action—indeed, by the claim of dominion through freedom. As it is written in John 15, "And that your fruit should remain," and in Revelation 2, "I know your works." Augustine, addressing Simplicianus in *Book 1, Question 2*, states, "That we might will, He willed it to be both His and ours; His, by calling; ours, by following." The sharing of ownership between grace, or God as the supernatural helper, and man in a salutary act, bears witness to the immediate action and power of God's assistance, distinct from the power of the human will.

Moreover, if the will does not enter into the act through its own power immediately, but through grace by the sole immediate action of grace, then no ownership or selfhood can rightfully belong to the will in a work of piety except that which belongs to grace. Therefore, the will itself, apart from grace, has no rightful claim to share in the ownership of the supernatural act with divine grace. Just as the entire action and power belong to grace alone, with the will merely participating by virtue of grace, so too the entirety of ownership and selfhood must be attributed to grace alone, with the will sharing only through the ownership and selfhood of grace.

Response: Thus, the Jesuits endeavor to divide the glory of conversion between God and wretched man, begrudging God and

His grace the full glory. Yet, the division of action is one thing, while the division of glory is quite another. The action of believing, which proceeds from created Free Will, is fundamentally distinct from the act of conversion wrought by the efficacious calling of grace. Therefore, this argument does not establish that the ownership of the action of knocking through internal grace belongs to the will, nor that the action of opening belongs to both grace and the creature, divided between them. Unless this is proven, it does not follow that part of the glory of God's conversion belongs to grace and part to the creature's will; rather, the glory must be entirely and wholly ascribed to God.

2. The ownership of an action can be understood in two distinct senses: physical and moral. In terms of the physical, the Jesuits are compelled to concede that the physical ownership of actions such as plowing, speaking, walking, and even hoping, is shared between God and man. However, they fail to demonstrate that the moral glory of such actions is likewise to be divided. While we do not deny that the will actively and immediately engages in the act of believing, it does so only as it is moved, inclined, and determined by internal grace, which causes us both to will and to work. Yet, from this it does not follow that the moral ownership of the act of believing is divided between God and the creature.
3. Nor do we dispute that the act of believing is indeed ours, and that a certain moral ownership must be attributed to the will. Christ Himself commended the faith of the Canaanite woman, the centurion, Abraham, and others, and He rewarded their faith.

Martinez, in Section 11, n. 47, asserts that grace is not the total cause, but merely a partial cause of a supernatural act, citing 1 Corinthians 15:10: "Not I, but the grace of God with me." Bernard calls us fellow soldiers, and Jerome refers to us as associates in the supernatural work with God.

Response: Calvin himself acknowledges that we are fellow laborers with God. Yet, because the principal causality belongs to God, who efficaciously calls, enabling us to will and to believe—though it is indeed we who will and believe—the grace of God is rightly described as the adequate and complete cause, dominating, determining, and effecting our will. In this respect, the will does not share in the fellowship of causality, though in another sense, it participates as a moved and efficaciously determined cause, exercising a partial subordinate influence and a partial inferior activity, which we do not deny. However, it is not habit alone that accomplishes the whole. Indeed, habit is not that which illuminates, as does the intellect; it is not that which excites, as does the will. A supernatural habit does not perceive a supernatural object, nor does it formally choose, reject, will, desire, or suspend an act. A supernatural habit is not a vital principle; rather, it is Free Will that serves as such a principle, through which a living being moves itself from within. A supernatural habit, as such, is not free, but merely assists Free Will.

It is asked whether the entire gracious operation of God, which the Holy Spirit employs in the conversion of man, is merely moral—such that God acts only by inviting, persuading through reasons, and enticing with both threats and promises, as well as commands—or whether God operates through the real and physical efficiency of grace, both by infusing the habit of grace and by physically and truly predetermining the will. The Arminians protest against the charge we lay upon them, asserting that they do not teach that the whole

work of conversion is accomplished merely by persuasive and moral action. Thus Corvinus, in his arguments against Molina (Chapter 45, §§ 2, 3, and Chapter 45, § 7), as well as Grevinchovius (p. 301), express their objections. However, it is evident that this is indeed their belief.

1. This is clear from their Confession (Chapters 10, 11, § 4), where they stipulate only two prerequisites for the engendering of faith: 1) probable arguments, and 2) a teachable disposition. Moreover, in the Hague Conference (p. 122), they question whether persuasion is not the most noble and fitting action of God that He may employ in the conversion of man. They further assert that men are rendered willing from unwilling by mere allurements. Arminius himself, in *Antiperkins* (pp. 751, 770, § on the drawing of the Father), acknowledges no other divine action than persuasion. They acknowledge no other action administered through the Word but that which is persuasive, for they claim it is the nature of the Word to act in this manner alone. Against this, we firmly defend the contrary.
2. If God were to act only persuasively, then the divine action in conversion would be no greater than that of a preacher, such as Cicero or Demosthenes, or even that of the Devil himself. By this reasoning, pastors would be said to create a new heart within us, to quicken the dead, and to regenerate the carnal, merely through the letter of the Law and the Gospel—a notion propagated by Pelagius, as Augustine refutes in *On Grace, Against Pelagius and Caelestius* (Chapter 3).
3. Furthermore, Scripture teaches that God infuses the Spirit of supplication (Zechariah 12:10), gives a new heart, and removes the heart of stone (Ezekiel 36:26), and quickens us who were

dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:4-5). Therefore, it is evident that God's work in conversion is not accomplished by moral persuasion alone, for life is never infused by mere moral action.

3. Persuasion, by its very nature, neither adds nor infuses any internal power into the faculties of the soul, nor does it rectify the corrupt state of Free Will. One cannot restore sight to the blind, grant the power of walking to the lame, or bestow riches upon the poor by mere eloquence, however golden the words may be.
4. If God were to regenerate solely by moral persuasion, it would imply that neither the Intellect, the Will, nor the Affections are corrupted by nature beyond a mere darkening of the mind and a lack of literal revelation. This would suggest that our inability to perform supernatural acts—such as Faith and Repentance—is no greater than a man's natural inability to comprehend Mathematical Disciplines or Metaphysics.
5. Such a view would make conversion as simple as persuading a drunkard to heed Cicero's advice on temperance, a task far removed from the true nature of spiritual regeneration.
6. Furthermore, if one merely embraces moral counsel, then it is the individual who becomes the principal and efficacious cause of the duty advised, rather than the one who offers the counsel. In such a case, the glory of conversion would be attributed to Free Will, with God receiving no more than the credit for having devised the Gospel, while the glory of Faith and the acceptance of the Gospel would belong to the individual alone.

7. If God were merely a persuader, He would have no dominion over the will. Consequently, God would not be the sovereign Lord of conversion and salvation, and it would not be within His power to determine who is converted and who is not.
8. It would be in vain to pray for the grace of one who is merely a persuader, for if persuasion alone is all that is offered, the power to obey or disobey lies entirely within oneself.

The question arises: Do the Arminians adequately attribute to God the work of conversion, as described by Bellarmine in *On Grace and Free Will* (Book 1, Chapter 13), where they ascribe external persuasion—arising from the mere letter—to men and the Devil, but reserve for God an internal persuasion that always infuses light and breathes the beginning of good will? Suarez, too, makes a similar distinction in *On the Divine Aids of Grace* (Book 3, Chapter 15, n. 17). Yet, we deny that this ascription is sufficient to honor God's role in regeneration.

1. For if, in regeneration, God acts no differently than by moral persuasion, then man's impotence to perform supernatural acts, such as Faith and Repentance, would be no greater than a man's natural incapacity to grasp Mathematical Disciplines and Metaphysics.
2. Such moral suasion by the letter alone leaves the Intellect, Will, and Affections still corrupted, merely lifting the darkening of the mind but not transforming the heart.
3. For persuasion alone imparts no new powers to the faculties of the soul, nor does it eradicate their inherent corruption and resistance.

4. Thus, conversion would become as effortless as a drunkard heeding Cicero's advice against drunkenness.
5. In such a case, the one being converted, rather than God, would be regarded as the principal cause of conversion, just as the one who embraces wise counsel is deemed more the cause than the counselor. Consequently, the glory of conversion would be attributed to Free Will rather than to God.
6. God would possess no dominion over the wills of men in conversion, being unable to convert any unless they allow it. It would no longer rest upon God who or how many are converted.
7. Prayers for God's converting grace would be in vain, for if God were only a moral persuader, the outcome would depend solely on our own free power to either yield or resist.

The Arminians, following Bellarmine, attribute mere external persuasion to men and Satan, but internal persuasion—infusing light and inclining the will—they ascribe to God. Suarez, too, makes such a distinction concerning God's grace. Yet, this does not ascribe enough to the sovereign work of God:

1. For such action would be no greater than that of human orators or even the Devil, acting only upon the mind, not reaching the heart.
2. Scripture, however, ascribes to grace the infusion of a new heart, the quickening of the dead, and other works which mere moral persuasion could never accomplish.
3. Persuasive words, even when they come from God and work inwardly, do no more to confer new powers upon a corrupt soul

than golden speeches can restore sight to the blind or wealth to the impoverished.

4. This view assumes that the faculties are hindered only by mental darkness, without recognizing their deep inner depravity.
5. By this reasoning, conversion would be as simple as a drunkard following good advice.
6. Ultimately, it would be man himself, not God, who would be the chief cause of his own conversion and therefore deserving of the glory, for the one who is persuaded contributes more to the outcome than the one who persuades.
7. In such a view, God would cease to be the sovereign Lord over the wills of men, as well as their conversion and salvation. The power to convert would no longer rest in His hands, but in the self-determination of the individual.
8. Consequently, prayer for conversion would be rendered vain, for at most, God could only offer counsel, leaving the final decision entirely within our own power to either obey or resist.
9. If this so-called "infusion of light" is merely objective, stemming from the letter of persuasion alone, it remains nothing more than external persuasion. However, if this infusion is understood as the actual conferral of a new power to Free Will, then it transcends persuasion, becoming a physical act, far surpassing mere moral influence; for no persuasion can infuse new powers into us.
10. Even Pelagius acknowledged a form of internal persuasion. Augustine, in his *Refutation of Pelagius and Caelestius* (Book 1,

Chapter 7), asserts: "He assists us through His doctrine and revelation, while He opens the eyes of our hearts, while He illuminates us with the ineffable gift of heavenly grace, while by the revelation of wisdom He awakens our will, which had been struck with wonder, to the desire for God." Indeed, in this manner, gold may also inwardly allure the mind of a thief, but it does so only objectively.

It is asked: Does God inwardly call all those whom He outwardly calls, so that they are thereby empowered to obey if they will? The Remonstrants affirm this. We deny it.

1. For God called the Jews outwardly through the word, signs, and trials; yet He did not grant them a heart to understand, nor ears to hear, nor eyes to see, even to this day. As it is written in Deuteronomy 29:3-4, "But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear." This clearly shows that He did not call them with an internal calling.
2. For in John 12:37, despite the preaching of Christ and His remarkable miracles, God called the Jews outwardly but not inwardly. As it is written in verse 39: "For they could not believe, because God had blinded their eyes."
3. Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 2:14, the natural man is outwardly called; otherwise, the Gospel would not appear as foolishness to him. Yet, he is not inwardly called, for he is unable to understand the things of the Spirit of God.
4. All who have truly heard from the Father are called inwardly and thus come to Christ. However, many who hear God's outward call through preachers are not inwardly called, and consequently, they do not come to Christ.

5. Some hear the mysteries of Christ, yet these mysteries are not revealed to them, for God has not inwardly revealed them. As it is written, "No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him" (Matthew 11:25-27). Therefore, there are some who are called outwardly but not inwardly.
6. Christ, when preached, was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. Thus, they were called outwardly. But to those who are called inwardly—both Jews and Greeks—Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).
7. Those who remain more stubborn than a rock at the preached Word, whose faces are hardened like a diamond (Jeremiah 5:8), who are as unresponsive to the Word as infants just weaned from milk (Isaiah 28:9), who are blinded (2 Corinthians 4:4), hardened (Matthew 13:15), who mock the outward call of the Word (Acts 17:32; Acts 26:24; 2 Peter 3:1-2), whose hearts are veiled because they lack the Spirit of the Lord who removes the veil (2 Corinthians 3:14-16), are called outwardly but not inwardly.

On the Sufficiency of Grace and the Operation of the Holy Spirit

It is asked: Is sufficient grace ordinarily given to all who hear the Gospel? The Remonstrants affirm this. We present our view in the following assertions.

Assertion 1: Literal knowledge and understanding of the Word, without the inward operation of the Holy Spirit, is indeed given to unbelievers and the reprobate, as it is written in Matthew 11:25-26 and Matthew 23:23.

Assertion 2: The Holy Spirit, through the Word, convicts the reprobate of their sin, as seen in John 5:45 and John 7:28.

Assertion 3: The Word of God is an instrument subordinate to the Spirit, active in itself, and endowed with its own power.

1. For the Word is "living and powerful" (2 Corinthians 10:4; Hebrews 4:12).
2. If even Cicero's oratory is deemed efficacious and powerful, how much more powerful is the Gospel, the very sword, arm, and power of God?

Assertion 4: The efficacious and living quality that accompanies the Word is not a habitual quality inherent in the Word itself, for many are left blind and stupefied at its hearing.

Assertion 5: The power that accompanies the Word is twofold. One aspect is inherent to the Word itself, which does not operate apart from the Spirit. The other adheres to the Word as the energy of the Holy Spirit, which either convicts or converts. Thus, the Word is indeed powerful, but its efficacy comes through God (2 Corinthians 10:4). It is the sword of God, yet wielded by the mouth of Christ (Revelation 19:15), the bow from which He shoots His arrows (Revelation 6:2).

Assertion 7: The power of the Holy Spirit is directed toward the mind, will, and affections, animating the very faculties of the soul. Yet, the Word itself does not animate, nor does any habitual grace imbue or inform it. Therefore, the Holy Spirit elevates the Word to a nobler action than mere persuasion. The Word serves as a preparatory instrument in conversion with respect to the act of persuasion, but it becomes consummatory concerning the physical

and supernatural act, to which the Holy Spirit also contributes. The Word has merely an objective and moral influence, impressing the grammatical and literal sense upon the intellect of the one called. The Arminians acknowledge no other influence—either of the Word or of the Holy Spirit—as stated in their *Apology* (Chapter X, fol. 11). However, the Word is an instrument elevated by the Holy Spirit, particularly concerning internal and supernatural revelation, for the Spirit brings the grammatical sense to the intellect with plainly celestial, divine, and supernatural clarity. Hence, our theologians speak of a twofold revelation of the Word: one that is literal, objective, moral, and external, which is not withheld from the reprobate, and another that is spiritual, supernatural, real, and internal. In both forms of revelation, the Word is an instrument subordinate to the Holy Spirit, serving a preparatory role in the former and a consummatory role in the latter.

Assertion 7: We assert that sufficient grace does not ordinarily accompany the preached Word.

1. Because the external call often occurs without the internal, as has been demonstrated.
2. The Adversaries themselves concede, as Arminius writes in *Antiperkins* (p. 665), and Corvinus in his rebuttal to Molina (Chapter 36, Sect. 4), that when the Word is preached to the notably obstinate, the energy of the Spirit ceases to act, rendering the Word a mere letter. Hence, they inadvertently admit:
3. That God holds two contradictory wills concerning the obstinate, inviting them through the preached Word to repentance, while simultaneously not willing their repentance, as He withholds sufficient grace from them.

4. That the commands presented to the obstinate are illusory, as if God were to command stones to speak or dust to reason—a charge they often raise against us, yet without cause.
5. Because saving grace is a precious gem, granted only to a few elect (Matthew 13:11; Matthew 16:17; Psalm 25:9-10), and not to all who hear the Gospel.
6. Because the promise of a new heart is made not to all, but only to the children of promise.

On the Presence of Grace with the Word of the Gospel

It is asked: Does no grace at all, not even common grace, accompany the Word of the Gospel? We respond: In the first instance, grace that convicts the impenitent accompanies the Word of the Gospel.

1. For just as the law is the letter that kills, so the Gospel is the ministry of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:6).
2. The Gospel is the saving Word (Titus 2:11), the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19).
3. If no grace accompanied the Gospel, then those who hear it would not be more inexcusable than those who hear only the Law. Yet, Scripture testifies that they are indeed more inexcusable (John 15:22; John 3:17; Matthew 11:21-22; Matthew 10:15; Hebrews 2:3; Hebrews 6:4-5; Hebrews 10:29).

However, in the second instance, when the Gospel is abused, it becomes, for the obstinate, as dead a letter as the Law, a sealed book (Isaiah 29:11). To them, Christ is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and the Gospel is an aroma of death leading to death (2 Corinthians 2:16).

On the Essence of Conversion

It is asked: Is the essence of conversion located in the free act of assenting to the Word and believing, or in the infusion of a new heart? The Arminians place its essence in the free act of believing alone. We declare that conversion, in its essence and in the first act, is not found in the free act of believing—though active conversion and the second act of turning to God, which is commanded as a duty, do indeed consist in such an act—but rather in the infusion of new life.

1. Conversion, in its initial act, is solely the work of God, who grants a new heart, regenerates, quickens, and infuses the sanctifying Spirit. In this divine operation, we are entirely passive, like clay in the hands of the potter.
2. The essence of new creation lies in the infusion of new divine life, not in a free act of the will, for such an act is not an infusion of life.
3. According to the Arminians, it is possible for a new heart to be infused into man—his mind illuminated and his affections imbued with new power—while his will remains unconverted and unrenewed, simply because one free act of assenting to God's call is absent. Thus, a man would possess a new heart and a new spirit infused by God, yet not be a new creature, which is absurd.
4. This reasoning would imply that the difference between one born again and one not born again, between one regenerated and one dead in sins, rests solely upon a single free act. Yet, a man in sleep could not truly be born again after such an act of assenting to God's call, for that act entirely ceases during sleep.

5. This view reduces regeneration to a habit acquired through numerous acts of Free Will, much like the habits of Logic, Grammar, and the Arts and Sciences. Thus, the grace of Regeneration would become a mere name.
6. Moreover, if this single act of assenting to God and believing is lost, it is unclear how man does not entirely fall from the grace of regeneration.

On the Infusion of Supernatural Habits

It is asked: In conversion, is a supernatural habit supernaturally infused by God into man, or is every gracious habit in the regenerate acquired by frequent acts of faith? The Arminians deny the infusion of habit. We affirm it.

1. For Scripture testifies to this truth. As it is written: "I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:26). "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring" (Isaiah 44:3). "I will pour out on the house of David the Spirit of grace and supplication" (Zechariah 12:10). "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33). It is evident that this Spirit is given neither by merit nor by frequent acts of free will, as declared in Ezekiel 36:32: "It is not for your sake that I will do these things, declares the Sovereign Lord; be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct."
2. The regenerate differ from the unregenerate precisely in this: the regenerate possess this supernatural habit, while the unregenerate do not. As Paul declares, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me" (Galatians 2:20). "To be made

new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:23-24). This new self is not something that can be put on or off like a garment; rather, it is the work of God's Spirit. "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God" (1 John 3:9). This birth is the principle of new life (John 1:13).

3. The saints are the temple of God, and the Spirit dwells within them (1 Corinthians 3:16). Christ has placed within them "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). But they are not the temple of God by the mere power of believing, for the bare power of believing does not make a sinner habitually faithful, even according to our Adversaries. Nor is the transient act of faith—which ceases when a man sleeps—a spring of water welling up within him. Therefore, it is evident that this is a habit. Yet, it is not a habit acquired by our labor and zeal, for we are called by grace, not by works (2 Timothy 1:9).
4. Although the active infusion of God's life is not the obedience that God demands of us—as the Arminians contend in their Synodical Writings (Article 4, pp. 154-155)—the passive reception of this infusion is indeed commanded of us. We are obligated to possess this new life, as summed up in the Law: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Matthew 22:37), and as explicitly commanded by God: "Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31); "Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:10).

On the Necessity of an Infused Habit for Faith

It is asked: Do the Remonstrants rightly teach, as stated in their Synodical Writings (Article 4, pp. 154-155), that since a habit is not required for action in general, but only for acting more effectively, an infused habit is therefore unnecessary, and that sufficient and accompanying grace alone suffices without such a habit? We firmly deny this.

1. To assert that a gracious habit or supernatural power is required only for more easily believing, and not for believing itself, is to embrace the error of the Pelagians. They claimed that grace is not absolutely necessary, but merely facilitates belief—like rowing with oars is sufficient, yet aided by the wind. From this reasoning, pure nature, devoid of grace, would suffice for supernatural acts, which is a grievous error.
2. If a habit acquired through frequent acts serves as the formal principle of supernatural acts, then how much more should an infused habit, bestowed by God, be such a principle? If an acquired habit holds this role, then the entire credit for conversion and salvation would be due to human effort, rather than to grace from heaven. However, if such an acquired habit is not the formal principle, then it does not bestow the essence of the act, but merely facilitates its execution.
3. If the habit of God's life is not infused within us, from whence do the subsequent acts of faith arise? If faith is not a gift from God, then neither the habit of faith nor the power to believe is infused, and thus a man cannot truly be called faithful. According to the Remonstrants, the power to believe is consistent with final infidelity, and they deny that the act of

believing itself is infused, lest they overturn the freedom of the will.

On the Source of Conversion and Divine Grace

It is asked: If the power to believe comes from God, but the free act of believing comes from man, does the principal work of conversion still originate with God? The Remonstrants affirm this in the Hague Conference (p. 335). We deny it.

1. The conferral of the power to believe, according to the Adversaries, is not the imparting of new divine life, unlike the conferral of the power to eat and drink, which is the bestowal of natural life. For they assert that the act of believing itself constitutes Conversion, and that a converted man differs from an unconverted one solely by this bare act.
2. Furthermore, the conferral of the power to believe is not conversion, nor any formal act of conversion. Such power is granted to many who never come to believe. Thus, according to them, the act of believing alone is Conversion, which assigns the principal work of conversion to Free Will, thereby stripping it from God.

On the Nature of Divine Power and Human Will

It is asked: Because God converts us by an irresistible force, does this mean that the will is thereby coerced, as the Remonstrants claim in Articles 3-4 (p. 20), arguing that: 1) There is an external agent armed with irresistible power; 2) The will struggles and resists; 3) The lesser resistance is overcome by the greater? We resolutely deny this.

On the Will's Transformation and Divine Sovereignty in Conversion

1. The will, once unwilling and reluctant, is made willing by an external agent—God Himself—through the removal of the heart of stone and the infusion of a new heart, as it is written: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).
2. A will that is compelled to act against its own inclination is indeed coerced. However, in the work of God, there is no such coercion; the will is freely moved by divine grace.

On Divine Determination and Human Liberty

It is asked: Does God's indeclinable determination of the will to a particular end overturn human liberty? The Remonstrants affirm this; we deny it.

1. God, who is infinitely wise and omnipotent, does not overthrow the nature of second causes, except in cases of miraculous transmutations, such as when He turned water into wine or Moses' staff into a serpent. Conversion, however, is not a miraculous change of substance, but rather a transformation of the qualities of the same substance, which remains in its nature.
2. God moves the free will in such a manner that it moves itself most freely to the very thing to which it has been pre-moved by God.
3. If certain created motives can infallibly incline the will while leaving liberty intact, how much more can the Creator of wills

accomplish this?

On the Inward Call and the Elect

It is asked: Are only the elect called inwardly? The Remonstrants, in Articles 3-4 (p. 32), assert that all within the visible Church—both elect and reprobate—are inwardly called. We maintain that only the elect are called inwardly.

1. As it is written in Romans 8:30: "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined; whom He predestined, He also called; whom He called, He also justified; whom He justified, He also glorified." Therefore, only the elect, who are justified and glorified, are inwardly called, while the reprobate, who are not justified or glorified, receive only the outward call.
2. In 1 Corinthians 1:24, the called are contrasted with those to whom Christ and the Gospel are a stumbling block and foolishness—those who perish.
3. God gives efficacious means to glory only to those to whom He efficaciously intends glory. Among these means is the internal call.
4. As it is written in Acts 13:48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Thus, only those ordained to eternal life respond to the call in faith and obedience.
5. The internal call flows solely from the fountain of God's election, as stated in Ephesians 1:4-6: "For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight."

On the Effectiveness of the Internal Call

It is asked: Does the internal call add nothing to the external call beyond the mere will and desire of God, by which He wills all to be converted and saved? The Remonstrants affirm this in Articles 2-3 (p. 10); we deny it.

1. The internal call adds internal grace, which, proceeding from God's eternal election, is infallibly efficacious, as stated in Romans 8:28: "Those who are called according to His purpose."
2. The infallible effect of the internal call is the creation of a new heart and a new spirit, by which we walk in God's statutes (Ezekiel 36:26-27). The external call alone has no such effect.
3. If the hardened and obstinate reprobate were called in the same manner as the elect, who are certainly converted, then the external call would be equal for both. Yet, Scripture teaches that God's will for salvation does not equate to an effectual call for all.
4. The external call is mere persuasion, and according to the adversaries, the will of saving those called posits nothing real in them. Therefore, their notion of internal grace reduces conversion to mere Pelagianism.

On the Efficacy of Grace and the Role of Free Will

It is asked: Does the efficacy of grace depend upon grace itself or upon Free Will? To understand the question rightly, we must first note that it is not asked: 1. Whether grace derives its intrinsic power of operation from Free Will, for grace is the formal principle of supernatural acts, and this is conceded by both sides. 2. Nor is it asked whether the actual efficiency of grace, in terms of its specific nature, arises from Free Will. For it is not from Free Will, but from

the very nature of grace, that grace operates in a supernatural and spiritual mode, acting in accordance with its character, as an agent determined to one purpose. 3. Nor is it asked whether the acts of willing or not willing, assenting or dissenting, and such vital acts, flow from grace as their formal principle. For grace itself does not formally will or not will, but rather the will, equipped with the habit of grace, performs these acts.

The true question is this: Is Conversion—rather than non-Conversion—and assent given to God’s calling—rather than dissent—from the actual grace that determines Free Will, equipped with habitual grace, according to the eternal purpose of God’s election? Or does it come from Free Will, indifferent in itself but determining itself to one of the two alternatives? The Arminians, based on the event—that is, from the actual influence of Free Will, which they claim is indifferent to acting or not acting—make the efficacy and second act of grace dependent. We, however, maintain that the actual efficacy of internal grace arises from: 1. The intention of God in His gratuitous election; 2. Habitual grace as the formal principle; and 3. Actual grace.

1. This is consistent with Scripture, as it is written: "The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 30:6). "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). "But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear" (Deuteronomy 29:3-4). "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants" (Isaiah 44:3-4). Here, the flourishing of grace and its second act is attributed to the Spirit poured out: "I will pour out on the house of David a spirit of grace and supplication" (Zechariah

12:10). "I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD" (Jeremiah 24:7). "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what You were pleased to do" (Matthew 11:25-26). "All those the Father gives Me will come to Me" (John 6:37). "Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him comes to Me" (John 6:45). "For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him" (Philippians 1:29). "For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

2. All solid consolation and patience of the saints, all faith, and all gratitude would be overturned if the efficacious cause of belief were changeable human liberty, rather than the special grace of God.
3. This notion stands against true humility. If Conversion were to arise from Free Will and not from grace, then the converted person would owe the glory of their Conversion to themselves, not to God and His grace.
4. If the efficacy of grace, as it pertains to the outcome, depended upon Free Will, then Conversion and salvation would be of him who wills and runs, rather than of God who shows mercy. In such a case, God would not have mercy on whom He wills.
5. Our prayers for the Conversion of men would be in vain, and giving thanks to God for the grace of conversion would be meaningless—contrary to what is written in Scripture (Ephesians 1:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Colossians 1:12-14).

6. The entire ministry of the Gospel would be undermined, for it is designed to strip man of all his own glorying, that he may glory in none but God, in Christ his Savior, and in His grace (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Matthew 11:25). All the arguments presented earlier in support of the irresistible and indeclinable operation of special grace also firmly establish our assertion here.

On the Responsibility for Non-Conversion and the Role of Divine Grace

It is asked: Is non-conversion to be ascribed to God, who withholds efficacious grace by which a man might be converted, rather than to man, who refuses to believe and resists God's call? The Remonstrants claim that if the efficacy of grace does not depend on Free Will, then the blame for non-conversion lies with God and not with man. We resolutely deny this.

1. God, in withholding efficacious grace—grace He is bound to give to no one—may be considered the negative physical cause of non-conversion, but He is not the moral or culpable cause of non-conversion in a privative or moral sense. It is entirely lawful for God to do what He wills with His own.
2. Furthermore, God denies efficacious grace, which He is under no obligation to bestow, in such a manner that the unconverted person, acting against God's command, willingly rejoices in his lack of this grace. From the inherent liberty of his depraved will, he maliciously resists God's call.
3. In this matter, God acts as the supreme sovereign, above all law, while man, subject to the law, acts from a position of disobedience and contrary to his legal obligations. God is not an

agent bound by justice or natural equity, but acts solely from His own pure and free good pleasure.

4. If non-conversion were to be attributed to God for this reason, then conversion would be attributed to the good use and influence of Free Will, leading to a doctrine where grace is dispensed according to merit, which is nothing short of Pelagianism.

On the Equality of Grace and the Response of Free Will

It is asked: Can it be that of two persons, both endowed with equal habitual grace, one is converted because he wills it, while the other remains unconverted because he does not will it? The Arminians affirm this; we deny it.

1. For if a man were converted through the exercise of Free Will, he would distinguish himself from the unconverted and have reason to glory in himself, saying, "I have the act of Conversion from my own will, which I did not receive from God, whereas the other, though equipped with equal grace, did not will to be converted."
2. In such a scenario, Free Will, rather than grace, would be the true cause of conversion.
3. There would then be no just cause for the converted to ascribe the thanks for his conversion to God.

On the Source of the Intensity of Supernatural Acts

It is asked: Does the intensity or remissness of supernatural acts such as believing or repenting arise from Free Will or from the

nature of more intense or more remiss grace? The Remonstrants claim it is from Free Will; we deny this.

1. Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not in vain. No, I labored more abundantly than they all—yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
2. For if one believes and repents with greater intensity, he would possess something which he did not receive from God and could boast of it, as though it were not a gift received.
3. Thus, all prayers for an increase in faith would be rendered vain, and the Apostles would have been mistaken in saying, "Lord, increase our faith," if a greater and more intense faith were from Free Will and not from the grace of God.
4. Likewise, no thanks would be due to God for more intense faith.
5. Nor would it be necessary to humbly submit to the wise dispensation of God, who distributes grace according to the measure that seems good to Him.
6. If greater intensity of faith arises from Free Will and not from the grace of God, then faith itself, both in its essence and in any degree, would also come from Free Will and would not be a gift from God.

On the Order of Divine and Human Influence in Conversion

It is asked: Does God influence the will by actual grace in a supernatural work because the created will first influences, or does the will influence because God, by nature, first influences with His

actual grace? The Remonstrants assert that God influences the work because our will first, by nature, exerts influence, and not the reverse. We deny this.

1. For the gracious influence of God is the cause of all supernatural acts, and therefore it is the reason we obey God's call.
2. As the bride rightly declares in the Song of Solomon 1:4, "Draw me, and we will run after thee."
3. If this were so, then our will would precede God's grace, rather than grace preceding the will.
4. Consequently, the whole glory of conversion would be attributed to Free Will, which would be the initiator, and not to grace, which would merely follow.
5. This would imply that the eternal decrees of God—concerning Election, Calling, Adoption, internal Calling, Conversion, Perseverance, and ultimately Glorification—would depend upon human will and effort rather than on God's free and gratuitous mercy.
6. This was indeed the blasphemous opinion of Cassian, as he states in *Book 3, Chapter 13*: "Sometimes the grace of God either demands or awaits certain efforts of good will, lest it should seem to confer its gifts on one entirely slumbering or indulging in idle leisure." Against this, Prosper and Hilary argued in opposition to Cassian's teaching, as recorded in *Prosper's Defense of Augustine, Book 13, Chapter 11*: "A great question arises whether, because we have offered the beginning of good will, God has mercy on us; or because God has mercy, we attain the beginning of good will?" This was the merit claimed by

Cassian, against which Prosper and Hilary disputed with the Massilians, following the teaching of Augustine, as expressed in *Epistle 107* to Vitalis.

It is asked: Upon what does the certainty and indefectibility of Conversion depend—on Free Will or on the Grace of God? The Arminians assert it depends on Free Will. We maintain that it depends on the Grace of God.

1. For if the certainty of Conversion were to depend not on the decree of Election and the Grace of God, but on a cause as mutable, slippery, fallible, contingent, and indifferent as Free Will, then the Conversion of souls and the number of the elect destined for salvation would remain uncertain and contingent.
2. It would be within the power of Free Will that no mortal should be converted and saved.
3. The very existence of the Church, along with Christ's Kingship, His role as Bridegroom and Head, would then depend not on the Grace of God, but on the caprices of Free Will.
4. Moreover, God would be unable to convert and save any more souls than those who are presently converted and saved.

On the Irresistibility of Grace

It is asked: Do the Remonstrants rightly deny that the Lord irresistibly opened Lydia's heart, claiming instead that He dealt with her will through precepts, promises, reasons, and arguments? In other words, does the irresistibility of grace conflict with the use of precepts, promises, and threats? We deny this.

1. For God commands faith in the Gospel and simultaneously works it in us by that surpassing greatness of power and efficacy of might, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Ephesians 1:20).
2. The irresistibility of grace and the invincible dominion of God over the will are perfectly consistent with the liberty of the will.

On the Opening of Lydia's Heart

It is asked: Do the Remonstrants rightly claim, as they do in their *Apology* (Chapter 17, p. 184), that the Lord opened Lydia's heart because the whole substance of Paul's sermon—namely, the precepts, promises, reasons, and arguments—was from God? We deny this.

1. By this reasoning, God would also be said to justify men simply because the entire substance of the Law—the precepts, promises, reasons, and arguments—comes from God.
2. Such a view would reduce the internal grace by which God opened Lydia's heart to nothing more than a Pelagian notion of grace, consisting merely of God's words in the form of precepts, promises, reasons, and arguments.
3. According to this view, God would have opened Lydia's heart in no different manner than He did with Simon Magus or Judas the traitor, for the same precepts, promises, reasons, and arguments of the Law were presented to them as well.
4. This logic would imply that Plato opens the hearts of Aristotle, and Aristotle those of his disciples, to understand *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, simply because all their arguments, aided by more common grace, were devised by them.

Concerning the Mode of Conversion

It is asked: Does the efficacy of grace depend upon a congruous calling? That is, are men converted to God because He employs persuasion tailored to a person so disposed, at such a place and time, which He foreknows will move the will to obey Him, even though such persuasion, in and of itself, could have been resisted? Bellarmine, Fonseca, Suarez, Valencia, and Arminius (in *Antiperkins*, p. 665) and the Remonstrants (in the *Colloquy of the Hague*, p. 311) affirm this. However, after more mature reflection, they abandon this opinion (*Remonstrants' Confession*, Chapter 13, Thesis 10). We deny it.

1. For all persuasion, of whatever kind, is nothing more than Pelagian grace and is as incapable of healing the corrupt will as golden words are of restoring sight to the blind or life to the dead.
2. There can be no adaptation to any disposition of natural man, for the natural man perceives the Gospel as mere foolishness.
3. This opinion is founded upon the stolid and profane invention of Middle Knowledge, a concept foreign to Scripture.
4. It reduces the efficacy of grace to the whims of Free Will, which is ever capable of rejecting all persuasions.
5. Moreover, it undermines the Dominion of Divine Providence over human wills, suggesting that no more and no fewer can be

converted by God than what He foreknows before every act of His will.

6. It wrongly attributes the cause of non-conversion to God's failure to call congruously, an accusation that our Theologians rightly condemn.
7. The true reason why men are not converted, according to the Scriptures, is not because they are not called congruously, but because they are not of Christ's sheep, they are not drawn by the Father, God has not given them a heart to understand, and they have not heard and learned from the Father.

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