

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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OF THE DIVISION OF GRACE (FIVE ARTICLES)

We must now consider the division of grace; under which head there are five points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether grace is fittingly divided into gratuitous grace and sanctifying grace?
 - (2) Of the division into operating and cooperating grace;
 - (3) Of the division of it into prevenient and subsequent grace;
 - (4) Of the division of gratuitous grace;
 - (5) Of the comparison between sanctifying and gratuitous grace.
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Whether grace is fittingly divided into sanctifying grace and gratuitous grace?

Objection 1: It would seem that grace is not fittingly divided into sanctifying grace and gratuitous grace. For grace is a gift of God, as is clear from what has been already stated ([Question \[110\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)). But man is not therefore pleasing to God because something is given him by God, but rather on the contrary; since something is freely given by God, because man is pleasing to Him. Hence there is no sanctifying grace.

Objection 2: Further, whatever is not given on account of preceding merits is given gratis. Now even natural good is given to man without preceding merit, since nature is presupposed

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grace. Therefore to be gratuitously given is not fittingly set down as a difference of grace, since it is found outside the genus of grace.

Objection 3: Further, members of a division are mutually opposed. But even sanctifying grace, whereby we are justified, is given to us gratuitously, according to Rm. 3:24: "Being justified freely [gratis] by His grace." Hence sanctifying grace ought not to be divided against gratuitous grace.

On the contrary, The Apostle attributes both to grace, viz. to sanctify and to be gratuitously given. For with regard to the first he says ([Eph. 1:6](#)): "He hath graced us in His beloved son." And with regard to the second ([Rm. 2:6](#)): "And if by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise grace is no more grace." Therefore grace can be distinguished by its having one only or both.

I answer that, As the Apostle says ([Rm. 13:1](#)), "those things that are of God are well ordered [Vulg.: 'those that are, are ordained by God]." Now the order of things consists in this, that things are led to God by other things, as Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. iv). And hence since grace is ordained to lead men to God, this takes place in a certain order, so that some are led to God by others.

And thus there is a twofold grace: one whereby man himself is united to God, and this is called "sanctifying grace"; the other is that whereby one man cooperates with another in leading him to God, and this gift is called "gratuitous grace," since it is bestowed on a man beyond the capability of nature, and beyond the merit of the person. But whereas it is bestowed on a man, not to justify him, but rather that he may cooperate in the justification of another, it is not called sanctifying grace. And it is of this that the Apostle says ([1 Cor. 12:7](#)): "And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto utility," i.e. of others.

Reply to Objection 1: Grace is said to make pleasing, not efficiently but formally, i.e. because thereby a man is justified, and is made worthy to be called pleasing to God, according to Col. 1:21: "He hath made us worthy to be made partakers of the lot of the saints in light."

Reply to Objection 2: Grace, inasmuch as it is gratuitously given, excludes the notion of debt. Now debt may be taken in two ways: first, as arising from merit; and this regards the person whose it is to do meritorious works, according to Rm. 4:4: "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt." The second debt regards the condition of nature. Thus we say it is due to a man to have reason, and whatever else belongs to human nature. Yet in neither way is debt taken to mean that God is under an obligation to His creature, but rather that the creature ought to be subject to God, that the Divine ordination may be fulfilled in it, which is that a certain nature should have certain conditions or properties, and that by doing certain works it should attain to something further. And hence natural endowments are not a debt in the first sense but in the second. Hence they especially merit the name of grace.

Reply to Objection 3: Sanctifying grace adds to the notion of gratuitous grace something pertaining to the nature of grace, since it makes man pleasing to God. And hence gratuitous grace which does not do this keeps the common name, as happens in many other cases; and thus the two parts of the division are opposed as sanctifying and non-sanctifying grace.

Whether grace is fittingly divided into operating and cooperating grace?

Objection 1: It would seem that grace is not fittingly divided into operating and cooperating grace. For grace is an accident, as stated above ([Question \[110\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#)). Now no accident can act upon its subject. Therefore no grace can be called operating.

Objection 2: Further, if grace operates anything in us it assuredly brings about justification. But not only grace works this. For Augustine says, on Jn. 14:12, "the works that I do he also shall do," says (Serm. clxix): "He Who created thee without thyself, will not justify thee without thyself." Therefore no grace ought to be called simply operating.

Objection 3: Further, to cooperate seems to pertain to the inferior agent, and not to the principal agent. But grace works in us more than free-will, according to Rm. 9:16: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Therefore no grace ought to be called cooperating.

Objection 4: Further, division ought to rest on opposition. But to operate and to cooperate are not opposed; for one and the same thing can both operate and cooperate. Therefore grace is not fittingly divided into operating and cooperating.

On the contrary, Augustine says (De Gratia et Lib. Arbit. xvii): "God by cooperating with us, perfects what He began by operating in us, since He who perfects by cooperation with such as are willing, beings by operating that they may will." But the operations of God whereby He moves us to good pertain to grace. Therefore grace is fittingly divided into operating and cooperating.

I answer that, As stated above ([Question \[110\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#)) grace may be taken in two ways; first, as a Divine help, whereby God moves us to will and to act; secondly, as a habitual gift divinely bestowed on us.

Now in both these ways grace is fittingly divided into operating and cooperating. For the operation of an effect is not attributed to the thing moved but to the mover. Hence in that effect in which our mind is moved and does not move, but in which God is the sole mover, the operation is attributed to God, and it is with reference to this that we speak of "operating grace." But in that effect in which our mind both moves and is moved, the operation is not only attributed to God, but also to the soul; and it is with reference to this that we speak of "cooperating grace." Now there is a double act in us. First, there is the interior act of the will, and with regard to this act the will is a thing moved, and God is the mover; and especially when the will, which hitherto willed evil, begins to will good. And hence, inasmuch as God moves the human mind to this act, we speak of operating grace. But there is another, exterior act; and since it is commanded by the will, as was shown above ([Question \[17\]](#), [Article \[9\]](#)) the operation of this act is attributed to the will. And because God assists us in this act, both by strengthening our will interiorly so as to attain to the act, and by granting outwardly the capability of operating, it is with respect to this that we speak of cooperating grace. Hence after the aforesaid words Augustine subjoins: "He operates that we may will; and when we will, He cooperates that we may perfect." And thus if grace is taken for God's gratuitous motion

But if grace is taken for the habitual gift, then again there is a double effect of grace, even as of every other form; the first of which is "being," and the second, "operation"; thus the work of heat is to make its subject hot, and to give heat outwardly. And thus habitual grace, inasmuch as it heals and justifies the soul, or makes it pleasing to God, is called operating grace; but inasmuch as it is the principle of meritorious works, which spring from the free-will, it is called cooperating grace.

Reply to Objection 1: Inasmuch as grace is a certain accidental quality, it does not act upon the soul efficiently, but formally, as whiteness makes a surface white.

Reply to Objection 2: God does not justify us without ourselves, because whilst we are being justified we consent to God's justification [justitiae] by a movement of our free-will. Nevertheless this movement is not the cause of grace, but the effect; hence the whole operation pertains to grace.

Reply to Objection 3: One thing is said to cooperate with another not merely when it is a secondary agent under a principal agent, but when it helps to the end intended. Now man is helped by God to will the good, through the means of operating grace. And hence, the end being already intended, grace cooperates with us.

Reply to Objection 4: Operating and cooperating grace are the same grace; but are distinguished by their different effects, as is plain from what has been said.

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Whether grace is fittingly divided into prevenient and subsequent grace?

Objection 1: It would seem that grace is not fittingly divided into prevenient and subsequent. For grace is an effect of the Divine love. But God's love is never subsequent, but always prevenient, according to 1 Jn. 4:10: "Not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us." Therefore grace ought not to be divided into prevenient and subsequent.

Objection 2: Further, there is but one sanctifying grace in man, since it is sufficient, according to 2 Cor. 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for thee." But the same thing cannot be before and after. Therefore grace is not fittingly divided into prevenient and subsequent.

Objection 3: Further, grace is known by its effects. Now there are an infinite number of effects---one preceding another. Hence it with regard to these, grace must be divided into prevenient and subsequent, it would seem that there are infinite species of grace. Now no art takes note of the infinite in number. Hence grace is not fittingly divided into prevenient and subsequent.

[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [FS](#) » [FS111.html](#) His mercy shall prevent me," and again, Ps. 22:6: "Thy mercy will follow me." Therefore grace is fittingly divided into prevenient and subsequent.

I answer that, As grace is divided into operating and cooperating, with regard to its diverse effects, so also is it divided into prevenient and subsequent, howsoever we consider grace. Now there are five effects of grace in us: of these, the first is, to heal the soul; the second, to desire good; the third, to carry into effect the good proposed; the fourth, to persevere in good; the fifth, to reach glory. And hence grace, inasmuch as it causes the first effect in us, is called prevenient with respect to the second, and inasmuch as it causes the second, it is called subsequent with respect to the first effect. And as one effect is posterior to this effect, and prior to that, so may grace be called prevenient and subsequent on account of the same effect viewed relatively to divers others. And this is what Augustine says (De Natura et Gratia xxxi): "It is prevenient, inasmuch as it heals, and subsequent, inasmuch as, being healed, we are strengthened; it is prevenient, inasmuch as we are called, and subsequent, inasmuch as we are glorified."

Reply to Objection 1: God's love signifies something eternal; and hence can never be called anything but prevenient. But grace signifies a temporal effect, which can precede and follow another; and thus grace may be both prevenient and subsequent.

Reply to Objection 2: The division into prevenient and subsequent grace does not divide grace in its essence, but only in its effects, as was already said of operating and cooperating grace. For subsequent grace, inasmuch as it pertains to glory, is not numerically distinct from prevenient grace whereby we are at present justified. For even as the charity of the earth is not voided in heaven, so must the same be said of the light of grace, since the notion of neither implies imperfection.

Reply to Objection 3: Although the effects of grace may be infinite in number, even as human acts are infinite, nevertheless all reduced to some of a determinate species, and moreover all coincide in this--that one precedes another.

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Whether gratuitous grace is rightly divided by the Apostle?

Objection 1: It would seem that gratuitous grace is not rightly divided by the Apostle. For every gift vouchsafed to us by God, may be called a gratuitous grace. Now there are an infinite number of gifts freely bestowed on us by God as regards both the good of the soul and the good of the body--and yet they do not make us pleasing to God. Hence gratuitous graces cannot be contained under any certain division.

Objection 2: Further, gratuitous grace is distinguished from sanctifying grace. But faith pertains to sanctifying grace, since we are justified by it, according to Rm. 5:1: "Being justified

[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [FS](#) » [FS111.html](#)lly since the other virtues are not so placed, as hope and charity.

Objection 3: Further, the operation of healing, and speaking divers tongues are miracles. Again, the interpretation of speeches pertains either to wisdom or to knowledge, according to Dan. 1:17: "And to these children God gave knowledge and understanding in every book and wisdom." Hence it is not correct to divide the grace of healing and kinds of tongues against the working of miracles; and the interpretation of speeches against the word of wisdom and knowledge.

Objection 4: Further, as wisdom and knowledge are gifts of the Holy Ghost, so also are understanding, counsel, piety, fortitude, and fear, as stated above ([Question \[68\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#)). Therefore these also ought to be placed amongst the gratuitous gifts.

On the contrary, The Apostle says ([1 Cor. 12:8,9,10](#)): "To one indeed by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of speeches."

I answer that, As was said above ([Article \[1\]](#)), gratuitous grace is ordained to this, viz. that a man may help another to be led to God. Now no man can help in this by moving interiorly (for this belongs to God alone), but only exteriorly by teaching or persuading. Hence gratuitous grace embraces whatever a man needs in order to instruct another in Divine things which are above reason. Now for this three things are required: first, a man must possess the fullness of knowledge of Divine things, so as to be capable of teaching others. Secondly, he must be able to confirm or prove what he says, otherwise his words would have no weight. Thirdly, he must be capable of fittingly presenting to his hearers what he knows.

Now as regards the first, three things are necessary, as may be seen in human teaching. For whoever would teach another in any science must first be certain of the principles of the science, and with regard to this there is "faith," which is certitude of invisible things, the principles of Catholic doctrine. Secondly, it behooves the teacher to know the principal conclusions of the science, and hence we have the word of "wisdom," which is the knowledge of Divine things. Thirdly, he ought to abound with examples and a knowledge of effects, whereby at times he needs to manifest causes; and thus we have the word of "knowledge," which is the knowledge of human things, since "the invisible things of Him... are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" ([Rm. 1:20](#)).

Now the confirmation of such things as are within reason rests upon arguments; but the confirmation of what is above reason rests on what is proper to the Divine power, and this in two ways: first, when the teacher of sacred doctrine does what God alone can do, in miraculous deeds, whether with respect to bodily health---and thus there is the "grace of healing," or merely for the purpose of manifesting the Divine power; for instance, that the sun should stand still or darken, or that the sea should be divided---and thus there is the "working of miracles." Secondly, when he can manifest what God alone can know, and these are either future contingents---and thus there is "prophecy," or also the secrets of hearts---and thus there is the "discerning of spirits."

But the capability of speaking can regard either the idiom in which a person can be understood, and thus there is "kinds of tongues"; or it can regard the sense of what is said, and thus there is the "interpretation of speeches."

[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [FS](#) » [FS111.html](#) on us are called gratuitous graces, but only those that surpass the power of nature---e.g. that a fisherman should be replete with the word of wisdom and of knowledge and the like; and such as these are here set down as gratuitous graces.

Reply to Objection 2: Faith is enumerated here under the gratuitous graces, not as a virtue justifying man in himself, but as implying a super-eminent certitude of faith, whereby a man is fitted for instructing others concerning such things as belong to the faith. With regard to hope and charity, they belong to the appetitive power, according as man is ordained thereby to God.

Reply to Objection 3: The grace of healing is distinguished from the general working of miracles because it has a special reason for inducing one to the faith, since a man is all the more ready to believe when he has received the gift of bodily health through the virtue of faith. So, too, to speak with divers tongues and to interpret speeches have special efficacy in bestowing faith. Hence they are set down as special gratuitous graces.

Reply to Objection 4: Wisdom and knowledge are not numbered among the gratuitous graces in the same way as they are reckoned among the gifts of the Holy Ghost, i.e. inasmuch as man's mind is rendered easily movable by the Holy Ghost to the things of wisdom and knowledge; for thus they are gifts of the Holy Ghost, as stated above ([Question \[68\]](#), [Articles \[1\]](#),4). But they are numbered amongst the gratuitous graces, inasmuch as they imply such a fullness of knowledge and wisdom that a man may not merely think aright of Divine things, but may instruct others and overpower adversaries. Hence it is significant that it is the "word" of wisdom and the "word" of knowledge that are placed in the gratuitous graces, since, as Augustine says (De Trin. xiv, 1), "It is one thing merely to know what a man must believe in order to reach everlasting life, and another thing to know how this may benefit the godly and may be defended against the ungodly."

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Whether gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace?

Objection 1: It would seem that gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace. For "the people's good is better than the individual good," as the Philosopher says (Ethic. i, 2). Now sanctifying grace is ordained to the good of one man alone, whereas gratuitous grace is ordained to the common good of the whole Church, as stated above ([Articles \[1\]](#),4). Hence gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace.

Objection 2: Further, it is a greater power that is able to act upon another, than that which is confined to itself, even as greater is the brightness of the body that can illuminate other bodies, than of that which can only shine but cannot illuminate; and hence the Philosopher says (Ethic. v, 1) "that justice is the most excellent of the virtues," since by it a man bears himself rightly towards others. But by sanctifying grace a man is perfected only in himself; whereas by gratuitous grace a man works for the perfection of others. Hence gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace.

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reason, which is proper to man is nobler than to feel, which is common to all animals. Now sanctifying grace is common to all members of the Church, but gratuitous grace is the proper gift of the more exalted members of the Church. Hence gratuitous grace is nobler than sanctifying grace.

On the contrary, The Apostle ([1 Cor. 12:31](#)), having enumerated the gratuitous graces adds: "And I shew unto you yet a more excellent way"; and as the sequel proves he is speaking of charity, which pertains to sanctifying grace. Hence sanctifying grace is more noble than gratuitous grace.

I answer that, The higher the good to which a virtue is ordained, the more excellent is the virtue. Now the end is always greater than the means. But sanctifying grace ordains a man immediately to a union with his last end, whereas gratuitous grace ordains a man to what is preparatory to the end; i.e. by prophecy and miracles and so forth, men are induced to unite themselves to their last end. And hence sanctifying grace is nobler than gratuitous grace.

Reply to Objection 1: As the Philosopher says (Metaph. xii, text. 52), a multitude, as an army, has a double good; the first is in the multitude itself, viz. the order of the army; the second is separate from the multitude, viz. the good of the leader---and this is better good, since the other is ordained to it. Now gratuitous grace is ordained to the common good of the Church, which is ecclesiastical order, whereas sanctifying grace is ordained to the separate common good, which is God. Hence sanctifying grace is the nobler.

Reply to Objection 2: If gratuitous grace could cause a man to have sanctifying grace, it would follow that the gratuitous grace was the nobler; even as the brightness of the sun that enlightens is more excellent than that of an object that is lit up. But by gratuitous grace a man cannot cause another to have union with God, which he himself has by sanctifying grace; but he causes certain dispositions towards it. Hence gratuitous grace needs not to be the more excellent, even as in fire, the heat, which manifests its species whereby it produces heat in other things, is not more noble than its substantial form.

Reply to Objection 3: Feeling is ordained to reason, as to an end; and thus, to reason is nobler. But here it is the contrary; for what is proper is ordained to what is common as to an end. Hence there is no comparison.