

## St. Thomas Aquinas

# The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

---

[Index](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Second Part of the Second Part](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Question: 177](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

### OF THE GRATUITOUS GRACE CONSISTING IN WORDS (TWO ARTICLES)

We must now consider the gratuitous grace that attaches to words; of which the Apostle says ([1 Cor. 12:8](#)): "To one... by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge." Under this head there are two points of inquiry:

(1) Whether any gratuitous grace attaches to words?

(2) To whom is the grace becoming?

---

[Index](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Second Part of the Second Part](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Question: 177](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Article: 1](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

### Whether any gratuitous grace attaches to words?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that a gratuitous grace does not attach to words. For grace is given for that which surpasses the faculty of nature. But natural reason has devised the art of rhetoric whereby a man is able to speak so as to teach, please, and persuade, as Augustine says (De Doctr. Christ. iv, 12). Now this belongs to the grace of words. Therefore it would seem that the grace of words is not a gratuitous grace.

**Objection 2:** Further, all grace pertains to the kingdom of God. But the Apostle says ([1 Cor. 4:20](#)): "The kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power." Therefore there is no gratuitous grace connected with words.

**Objection 3:** Further, no grace is given through merit, since "if by grace, it is not now of works" ([Rm. 11:6](#)). But the word is sometimes given to a man on his merits. For Gregory says (Moral. xi, 15) in explanation of Ps. 118:43, "Take not Thou the word of truth utterly out of my mouth"

---

[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [SS](#) » [SS177.html](#)  
from them that do it not." Therefore it would seem that the gift of the word is not a gratuitous grace.

**Objection 4:** Further, it behooves man to declare in words things pertaining to the virtue of faith, no less than those pertaining to the gift of wisdom or of knowledge. Therefore if the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are reckoned gratuitous graces, the word of faith should likewise be placed among the gratuitous graces.

**On the contrary,** It is written (Ecclus. 6:5): "A gracious tongue in a good man shall abound [Vulg.: 'aboundeth']." Now man's goodness is by grace. Therefore graciousness in words is also by grace.

**I answer that,** The gratuitous graces are given for the profit of others, as stated above ([FS, Question \[111\]](#), [Articles \[1\]](#), 4). Now the knowledge a man receives from God cannot be turned to another's profit, except by means of speech. And since the Holy Ghost does not fail in anything that pertains to the profit of the Church, He provides also the members of the Church with speech; to the effect that a man not only speaks so as to be understood by different people, which pertains to the gift of tongues, but also speaks with effect, and this pertains to the grace "of the word."

This happens in three ways. First, in order to instruct the intellect, and this is the case when a man speaks so as "to teach." Secondly, in order to move the affections, so that a man willingly hearkens to the word of God. This is the case when a man speaks so as "to please" his hearers, not indeed with a view to his own favor, but in order to draw them to listen to God's word. Thirdly, in order that men may love that which is signified by the word, and desire to fulfill it, and this is the case when a man so speaks as "to sway" his hearers. In order to effect this the Holy Ghost makes use of the human tongue as of an instrument; but He it is Who perfects the work within. Hence Gregory says in a homily for Pentecost (Hom. xxx in Ev.): "Unless the Holy Ghost fill the hearts of the hearers, in vain does the voice of the teacher resound in the ears of the body."

**Reply to Objection 1:** Even as by a miracle God sometimes works in a more excellent way those things which nature also can work, so too the Holy Ghost effects more excellently by the grace of words that which art can effect in a less efficient manner.

**Reply to Objection 2:** The Apostle is speaking there of the word that relies on human eloquence without the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore he says just before ([1 Cor. 4:19](#)): "I... will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power": and of himself he had already said (1 Cor. 2:4): "My speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the spirit and power."

**Reply to Objection 3:** As stated above, the grace of the word is given to a man for the profit of others. Hence it is withdrawn sometimes through the fault of the hearer, and sometimes through the fault of the speaker. The good works of either of them do not merit this grace directly, but only remove the obstacles thereto. For sanctifying grace also is withdrawn on account of a person's fault, and yet he does not merit it by his good works, which, however, remove the obstacles to grace.

**Reply to Objection 4:** As stated above, the grace of the word is directed to the profit of others. Now if a man communicates his faith to others this is by the word of knowledge or of wisdom. Hence Augustine says (De Trin. xiv, 1) that "to know how faith may profit the godly and be

---

## Whether the grace of the word of wisdom and knowledge is becoming to women?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that the grace of the word of wisdom and knowledge is becoming even to women. For teaching is pertinent to this grace, as stated in the foregoing Article. Now it is becoming to a woman to teach; for it is written ([Prov. 4:3,4](#)): "I was an only son in the sight of my mother, and she taught me [\*Vulg.: 'I was my father's son, tender, and as an only son in the sight of my mother. And he taught me.']. " Therefore this grace is becoming to women.

**Objection 2:** Further, the grace of prophecy is greater than the grace of the word, even as the contemplation of truth is greater than its utterance. But prophecy is granted to women, as we read of Deborah (Judges 4:4), and of Holda the prophetess, the wife of Sellum ([4 Kgs. 22:14](#)), and of the four daughters of Philip ([Acts 21:9](#)). Moreover the Apostle says ([1 Cor. 11:5](#)): "Every woman praying or prophesying," etc. Much more therefore would it seem that the grace of the word is becoming to a woman.

**Objection 3:** Further, it is written ([1 Pt. 4:10](#)): "As every man hath received grace ministering the same one to another." Now some women receive the grace of wisdom and knowledge, which they cannot minister to others except by the grace of the word. Therefore the grace of the word is becoming to women.

**On the contrary,** The Apostle says ([1 Cor. 14:34](#)): "Let women keep silence in the churches," and ([1 Tim. 2:12](#)): "I suffer not a woman to teach." Now this pertains especially to the grace of the word. Therefore the grace of the word is not becoming to women.

**I answer that,** Speech may be employed in two ways: in one way privately, to one or a few, in familiar conversation, and in this respect the grace of the word may be becoming to women; in another way, publicly, addressing oneself to the whole church, and this is not permitted to women. First and chiefly, on account of the condition attaching to the female sex, whereby woman should be subject to man, as appears from Gn. 3:16. Now teaching and persuading publicly in the church belong not to subjects but to the prelates (although men who are subjects may do these things if they be so commissioned, because their subjection is not a result of their natural sex, as it is with women, but of some thing supervening by accident). Secondly, lest men's minds be enticed to lust, for it is written (Ecclus. 9:11): "Her conversation burneth as fire." Thirdly, because as a rule women are not perfected in wisdom, so as to be fit to be intrusted with public teaching.

**Reply to Objection 1:** The passage quoted speaks of private teaching whereby a father instructs his son.

---

[Donate bitcoin.](#) St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [SS](#) » [SS177.html](#)  
part of which there is no difference of sex among men, according to Col. 3:10,11, "Putting on the new" man, "him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him, where there is neither male nor female [\*Vulg.: 'Neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free.' Cf. FP, Question [93], Article [6], ad 2 footnote]." Now the grace of the word pertains to the instruction of men among whom the difference of sex is found. Hence the comparison fails.

***Reply to Objection 3:*** The recipients of a divinely conferred grace administer it in different ways according to their various conditions. Hence women, if they have the grace of wisdom or of knowledge, can administer it by teaching privately but not publicly.