

QUESTION 177

The Gratuitously Given Grace that Consists in Speech

Next we have to consider the gratuitously given grace which consists in speech (*de gratia gratis data quae consistit in sermone*) and which is talked about in 1 Corinthians 12:8 (“To one is given by the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge”). On this topic there are two questions: (1) Does any sort of gratuitously given grace consist in speech? (2) Whom does this grace benefit?

Article 1

Does any sort of gratuitously given grace consist in speech?

It seems that there is no sort of gratuitously given grace that consists in speech:

Objection 1: Grace is given in order that it might exceed the power of nature. But it was natural reason that devised the rhetorical art, through which, as Augustine says in *De Doctrina Christiana*, an individual is able to “speak in such a way as to *teach*, to *delight*, to *persuade*.” But this belongs to gracefulness of speech (*pertinet ad gratiam sermonis*). Therefore, it seems that gracefulness of speech is not a gratuitously given grace (*gratia sermonis non sit gratia gratis data*).

Objection 2: Every grace belongs to the kingdom of God. But in 1 Corinthians 4:20 the Apostle says, “The kingdom of God lies not in speech, but in power.” Therefore, there is no sort of gratuitously given grace that consists in speech.

Objection 3: No grace is given because of merits, since, as Romans 11:6 says, “If it were from works, it would no longer be grace.” But speech is given to some because of merits; for in his exposition of Psalm 118:43 (“Do not take the word of truth from my mouth”) Gregory says, “Almighty God gives the word of truth to those who carry it out, and He removes it from those who do not carry it out.” Therefore, it seems that the gift of speech is not a gratuitously given grace.

Objection 4: Just as a man has to utter through speech things that pertain to the gift of wisdom or knowledge, so too with things that pertain the virtue of faith. Therefore, if the utterance of wisdom and the utterance of knowledge are gratuitously given graces, then by parity of reasoning the utterance of faith should be posited among the gratuitously given graces.

But contrary to this: Ecclesiasticus 6:5 says, “In a good man a gracious, i.e., grace-filled, tongue will abound.” But a man’s goodness comes from grace. Therefore, so does gracefulness of speech.

I respond: As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 111, aa. 1 and 4), gratuitously given graces are given for their usefulness to others. Now the cognition that an individual receives from God cannot be turned to the advantage of another except by the mediation of speech. And since the Holy Spirit does not fall short in anything that involves the advantage of the Church, He likewise provides for the members of the Church in the case of speech, not only in order that an individual might speak in such a way that he can be understood by different people—which pertains to the gift of tongues—but also in order that he might speak efficaciously—which pertains to the grace of speech. And this in three ways:

First, in order to instruct the intellect, which occurs when an individual speaks in such a way as to *teach*.

Second, in order to move the affections so that an individual willingly listens to the word of God, and this occurs when someone speaks in such a way as to *delight* his listeners—something that he should seek not for the sake of winning favor for himself, but in order that men might be attracted to listening to the word of God.

Third, in order that an individual might love the things signified by the words and that he might want to fulfill them, and this occurs when someone speaks in such a way as to *persuade* the listener.

To accomplish all this, the Holy Spirit uses a man’s tongue as a sort of instrument, whereas He

Himself is the one who brings the operation to completion from within. Hence, in his homily for Pentecost, Gregory says, “If the Holy Spirit does not fill the hearts of the listeners, it is in vain that the voice of those teaching resounds in their bodily ears.”

Reply to objection 1: Just as by a miracle God sometimes does in an even more excellent way what nature is capable of doing, so, too, through the grace of speech the Holy Spirit does in a more excellent way what [the rhetorical] art is capable of doing in an less excellent way.

Reply to objection 2: In this passage the Apostle is talking about speech that is based on human eloquence in the absence of the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, he prefaces the passage with, “I will know not the speech of those who are puffed up, but the power” (1 Corinthians 4:19). And before this he had said of himself in 1 Corinthians 2:4, “My speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing forth the spirit and the power.”

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, the grace of speech is given to one individual for its usefulness to others. Hence, sometimes it is diminished due to the fault of the listener and sometimes due to the fault of the speaker himself. However, the good works of the two of them do not merit this grace directly; instead, these good works only serve to remove impediments to the grace. Again, a gratuitously given grace is taken away because of sin, but an individual does not merit it through the good works by which impediments to the grace are removed.

Reply to objection 4: As has been explained, the grace of speech is ordered toward its usefulness for others. Now an individual’s sharing his faith with others comes about through the utterance of knowledge or wisdom, and thus in *De Trinitate* 14 Augustine says, “Apparently, what the Apostle calls ‘knowledge’ is knowing how faith enriches the pious and how faith is to be defended against the impious.” And so it was unnecessary for him to posit a speech of faith; instead it was enough to posit the speech of knowledge and wisdom.

Article 2

Does the grace of uttering wisdom and knowledge also belong to women?

It seems that the grace of uttering wisdom and knowledge also belongs to women:

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 1), teaching pertains to this sort of grace. But teaching is fitting for women, since Proverbs 4:3-4 says, “I was an only child in the face of my mother, and she taught me.” Therefore, this grace belongs to women.

Objection 2: The grace of prophecy is greater than the grace of speech, just as the contemplation of truth is greater than the proclamation of truth. But prophecy is given to women, as we read in Judges 4:3-4 of Deborah and in 4 Kings 22:14 of “Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum,” and in Acts 21:9 of the four daughters of Philip. Again, in 1 Corinthians 11:5 the Apostle says, “Every woman who prays or prophesies, etc.” Therefore, *a fortiori*, it seems that the grace of speech belongs to women.

Objection 3: 1 Peter 4:10 says, “As everyone has received grace, ministering that grace to one another.” But certain women receive the grace of wisdom and knowledge, and they are unable to minister it to others except through the grace of speech. Therefore, the grace of speech belongs to women.

But contrary to this: In 1 Corinthians 14:34 the Apostle says, “Let women remain silent in the churches.” And in 1 Timothy 2:12 he says, “I do not allow women to teach.” Therefore, the grace of speech is not fitting for women.

I respond: There are two ways in which an individual can make use of speech:

In one way, *privately to one or to a few, in familiar conversation*. And on this score the grace of speech can belong to women.

In the second way, *publically addressing the whole Church*. And this is not given to a woman.

First, and principally, because of the situation with the female sex, which should be subject to the male (*debet esse subditus viro*), as is clear from Genesis 3:16. But to teach and argue publically in the Church does not belong to those who are subjects; instead, it belongs to prelates. Still, men who are subjects can be commissioned to exercise this office, since they have this sort of subjection not by their natural sex, in the way that women do, but by something that supervenes as an accident.

Second, lest the minds of men be moved toward lust. For Ecclesiasticus 9:11 says, “Her speech burns like fire.”

Third, because, in general, women are not perfected in wisdom in such a way that public teaching can be appropriately entrusted to them.

Reply to objection 1: This passage is talking about the private teaching by which a mother educates her child.

Reply to objection 2: The gift of prophecy has to do with a mind illuminated by God, and on the part of the *mind* there is among human beings no difference of the sexes—this according to Colossians 3:10 (“Putting on the new human being (*induentes novum hominem*), who is renewed according to the image of Him who created him, and there is no masculine and feminine”). By contrast, the grace of speech has to do with the *instruction* of men, among whom a difference between the sexes is found. Hence, the two arguments are not similar.

Reply to objection 3: Individuals minister their divinely received graces in different ways, depending on the diversity of their situations. Hence, if women have the grace of wisdom or science, they can minister this grace in private teaching, but not in public teaching.