

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*.” 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 Kings 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 Pet. 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.

Reply to Objection 2. The grace of prophecy consists in God enlightening the mind, on the 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[†].” 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.

* Vulg.: ‘I was my father’s son, tender, and as an only son in the sight of my mother. And he taught me.’ † Vulg.: ‘Neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free.’ Cf. Ia, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2 footnote