



1954

The Problems of the Identity of the Praecipere of Prudence as Found in St. Thomas

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Recommended Citation

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THE PROBLEM OF THE IDENTITY OF THE PRAECIPIERE OF
PRUDENCE AS FOUND IN ST. THOMAS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

February

1954

LIFE

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM: WHAT IS THE PRINCIPAL ACT OF PRUDENCE?

Prudence is a virtue most necessary for a good life.¹ Such a statement concerning the importance of prudence gives rise to an inquiry concerning the nature of this good habit. And a metaphysical study of prudence demands that its acts, namely, to counsel (consilium), to judge (judicare), and to command (praecipere), be considered and identified with certain parts of the morally good act, in order that the nature of prudence be exactly determined. Now, according to St. Thomas, the chief of these acts is command, the praecipere of prudence.² The question of its identity, therefore, is of particular importance and significance.

Certain Thomists of the present day³ have expressed their views regarding the identity of the praecipere of prudence. And, an examination of their stated opinions reveals that a conflict exists. The division of positions is three-fold: (1) The praecipere of prudence is to be identified with the imperium of the moral act; (2) The praecipere of prudence is to be iden-

1 S. I., I-II, q. 57, a. 5, c. Summa Theologica Divi Thomas Aquinatis, Lecnine ed., Rome, 1886.

2 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 8, c.

3 A complete coverage cannot be made here, but a representative group of writers is considered.

titled with the judicium electionis of the moral act; and, (3) The dubious position regarding the identity of the principium of prudence.

(1) The principium of prudence is to be identified with the imperium of the moral act. Representative of this opinion are Sertillanges, Noble, Garrigou-Lagrange, and Gilson. Sertillanges has this to say:

Le troisième, le plus important de tous, car il caractérise la prudence vertue par rapport à des dispositions purement intellectuelles, c'est l'imperium. On sait assez quelle générale conception s'en forme saint Thomas. Une part immense non seulement de sa morale, mais de sa psychologie et de sa métaphysique de l'Âme tient en ce mot. Nous y avons largement insisté, comme sur une des plus originales notions thomistes. Ce que peut resumer tout, c'est ceci: l'imperium représente la raison pratique jouant son rôle ultimement pratique c'est-à-dire dirigeant l'action même, en vue de l'habiter de raison, au lieu de s'en tenir déterminations théoriques.⁴

Here Sertillanges identifies the principium as the imperium, basing his identification upon the very function of the imperium, as is indicated in the closing statement. Nothing whatsoever is said about the existence of a problem, nor is any textual material supplied supplementing Sertillanges' remarks.

Noble's French translation of the treatise on prudence of St. Thomas as found in the Summa Theologiae is of particular value because of its notes and appendices. Pertinent to this study is his note for II-II, 47, 8, o,⁵ regarding the principal act of prudence, which states that this particular discussion presupposes the doctrine of the necessity and nature of the imperium, one of the acts which go to make up the complete human act. Noble refers his

⁴ A. D. Sertillanges, La Philosophie Morale de Saint Thomas d'Aquin, éditions Montaigne, Paris, 1942, 158-9.

⁵ H. D. Noble, O. P., La Prudence, Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Summa Theologiae, Editions de la revue des jeunes, Paris, 1925, 40, n. 1.

reader to I-II, 17, 1, c, in which St. Thomas treats of the imperium. In addition to this, the reader is guided to Appendix I of Noble's work⁶ in which are listed in their proper places the acts of the intellect and will which constitute a complete voluntary act according to St. Thomas. Following the chart is this noteworthy passage:

On remarquera en particulier, dans ce tableau, les trois actes de l'intelligence: le conseil et le jugement (en regard des moyens) puis l'intimation (en regard des réalisations). Ce sont les trois actes propres à la prudence et dont elle doit assurer la perfection l'intimation étant le principal des trois. Les vertus requises aux adjointes à la prudence auront pour l'économie, d'assurer l'entière perfection de l'intelligence pratique vis-à-vis de ces trois actes.⁷

The position of Noble is thus explicitly stated—prudence functions in securing the perfection of the intellect in its chief act, command (in regard to the execution of the means). But, he, too, does not refer to any texts which would indicate that a problem exists.

Contemporary with the stated opinion of Sertillanges is that of Garrigou-Lagrange who in treating of the acquired virtue of prudence in his theological work, The Three Ages of the Interior Life, adds this note: "The principal act of prudence is indeed the imperium, or command which directs the execution of the virtuous act that must be placed here and now."⁸ In making this statement, Garrigou-Lagrange is consistent with his theory as stated much earlier in an article bearing the title, "La Prudence, Sa Place dans l'Organisme

6 Ibid., 236.

7 Ibid.

8 Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., The Three Ages of the Interior Life, translated by Sister M. Timothea Doyle, St. Louis, 1948, II, 82, fn. 16.

des Vertus,"⁹ in which he discusses the prudential acts with respect to the intellectual acts involved in the production of the moral act. According to him, among these intellectual acts three pertain to prudence, namely, counsel, the practical judgment, and command.¹⁰ And the principal act of prudence, that is, the command of prudence, is identified with the imperium, which directs the execution of the means chosen. Again, there is no indication that the praecipere of prudence might be otherwise identified.

Gilson adheres to this same theory. In his text, Moral Values and the Moral Life, he refers to the three acts of prudence as being perfective of the practical reason for the three intellectual acts of counsel, judgment, and command; and, accordingly, the praecipere of prudence is given the work of perfecting the intellect for the imperium.¹¹ Nothing further is added.

(2) The praecipere of prudence is to be identified with the judicium electionis of the moral act. Two proponents of this theory are Renard and Bourke.

In his textbook, Philosophy of God, Renard expresses his views concerning the command of prudence in notes supplementing his discussion of the nature of the intellectual virtue of prudence. Treating of the three acts of prudence, he says this of the praecipere: "A command follows which consists in the application of the things counselled and judged as ordered to the

9 Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., "La Prudence, Sa Place dans l'Organisme des Vertus," Revue Thomiste, n.s. IX, Paris, 1926, 414.

10 Ibid.

11 Etienne Gilson, Moral Values and the Moral Life, translated by Leo Richard Ward, C.S.C., St. Louis, 1914, 152.

end."¹² Footnoting this statement is this significant passage:

It should be noted that in man the command which is the supreme act of the virtue of prudence and which is an act of the intellect must precede the act of choice. The reason is that prudence, which is concerned with the moral act, must precede the internal act of the will, which is the moral act par excellence. There is, of course, another command (imperium) which occurs after choice and which is necessary for the proper use of the other faculties and members in the external operation.¹³

Renard here clearly identifies the praecipere of prudence as the judicium electionis of the moral act. In virtue of this fact that Renard makes special mention of the "other" command, the imperium, it is clear that he has it in mind, but not as being directly influenced by prudence. Furthermore, his position is more strongly presented in another note that soon follows upon the one already quoted:

We should like to state further that the three acts of prudence in man occur before the act of choice. Counsel occurs after the "intention" to the end and before the consent to the means in globo. Counsel is a discussion of the aptness of the respective means, then judgment as regards the best means takes place: "This is best"; finally there follows command of reason to the will, "This must be done". The act of the will called "choice" follows immediately. Prudence therefore is necessary for every good choice by the human act. That the act of counsel, which belongs to prudence and is an operation of the intellect, takes place between distinct acts of the will should not be surprising. In the process of a deliberation there may occur a large number of correlated acts of intellect and will. The acts of prudence would be found among the various intellectual operations. They are directive norms of the process of deliberation in the order of specification.¹⁴

Also, Renard repeats his assertion that prudence functions chiefly in

12 Henri Renard, S. J., Philosophy of God, Milwaukee, 1951, 180.

13 Ibid., fn. 94.

14. Ibid., fn. 97.

perfecting the intellect to make a right judgment of choice in his most recently published work, Philosophy of Morality.¹⁵

Bourke very explicitly expresses his opinion regarding the praecipere.

The final act of practical reasoning is the chief act of the virtue of prudence; this is the act of preception. Before the act of choice (essentially an act of the will directed by reason), there must be a last practical judgment, by which the will is formally (but not efficiently) determined to elect certain means. This last practical judgment is the judgment of election. If this judgment of election is in accord with the previous prudential acts of right deliberation and right judgment, then the judgment of election which formally commits the agent to one choice will be identical with the act of preception (praecipere). ... While preception implies a certain element of intellectual commanding, it should be observed that the final imperative (imperium) by which the intellect directs the execution and use of the means chosen, must follow the act of choice. Hence, the act of preception precedes choice, while the act of commanding the use of the means comes after choice.¹⁶

The last sentence is, in truth, conclusive of Bourke's stand with respect to the identity of the praecipere of prudence.

Neither Bourke nor Renard (perhaps for pedagogical reasons) makes any mention of the texts which offer difficulty to their interpretation, or of the position held by Sertillanges, Noble, Garrigou-Lagrange and Gilson.

(3) Dubious position regarding the identity of the praecipere of prudence. Representative of this third group is Lottin who prefers to suspend his judgment regarding the praecipere. In his text in moral theology, Lottin discusses the virtue of prudence, and, in particular, he treats of the triple role of prudence in rightly disposing the practical intellect in its acts of coun-

15 Henri Renard, S. J. Philosophy of Morality, Milwaukee, 1953, 5.

16 Vernon J. Bourke, Ethics, Milwaukee, 1951, 240-1.

selling, judging, and commanding. Commenting on the last and most important of these functions of prudence, Lottin says:

Enfin, et avant même que la volonté ait fait son choix, la raison a un troisième rôle à remplir, celui de bien commander, praecipere, la mise en oeuvre du jugement pratique; et après que le choix a été fait, la même raison a pour rôle d'en bien commander l'exécution. Cette mise en oeuvre s'intègre nécessairement dans un complexe de circonstances dont il faudra tenir compte: suis-je naturellement assez prudent en un mot? Ici encore, la vertu de prudence interviendra pour garantir la rectitude du commandement; et telle est aux yeux de saint Thomas l'importance de ce commandement rationnel du choix et de son exécution qu'il en fait l'acte principal de la vertu de prudence, auquel sont ordonnés ceux des vertus d'eubulie et de synèse. De fait, dans la vie morale, le tout n'est pas de préparer l'acte humain, mais d'en commander l'exécution, et cela d'après les dictées de la saine raison.¹⁷

Now, within this passage Lottin is just stating that it is the role of prudence to perfect man in his reason to make a right judgment of choice and to command that the good means chosen be used. But, supplementing this statement is an important note by Lottin which pertains to the problem of the identity of the praecipere of prudence.

Plusieurs auteurs identifient cet acte du commandement, praecipere, avec l'imperium dont il a été question lors de description de l'acte humain. A. D. Sertillanges, La Philosophie de Morale de Saint Thomas d'Aquin. ... H. D. Noble, La Prudence (dans Saint Thomas, Somme Theologique). ... Il est cependant remarquable que, dans ses exposés sur la vertu de prudence, saint Thomas ne fait jamais allusion à la notion d'imperium. Et même, tandis que l'imperium est présente comme consécutif au choix (S. T., I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1m.), l'acte de praecipere est, au contraire, présente avec les deux autres actes de la prudence, le consilium et le judicium, comme condition préalable requise pour la rectitude du choix (I-II, q. 58, a.4). Saint Thomas parlant de la prudence en général, la considère comme directrice du choix, per prudentiam dirigitur electio. In I Ethics, lect. 1. Toutefois, quand, dans son dernier ouvrage, il précise sa pensée, il dit que c'est par l'acte de délibération que la prudence dirige la choix, prudentia electionem per consilium dirigit. (S. T., II-II, Q. 47, a. 1, ad 2m.) Quoi qu'il en soit de la pensée de Saint Thomas, on

17 Odon Lottin, Principes de Morale, Louvain, 1947, I, 254.

peut certainement maintenir, avec les savants auteurs cites plus haut, que le commandement prudentiel se pourrait après le choix, pour l'exécution rationnelle de celui-ci.¹⁸

Most worthy of mention is the fact that Lottin actually supplies three textual references from the works of St. Thomas. It is to be noted that Lottin first uses as textual evidence St. Thomas' discussion in the Summa Theologica of the question whether there can be moral virtue without intellectual virtue; and that he refers specifically to the comment of St. Thomas regarding the act called praecipere as a requisite condition for making a right choice, adding the important observation that the act of choice for which the praecipere is needed is prior in time to the imperium. Next, Lottin has presented the statement, per prudentiam dirigitur electio, which seems to favor the theory that the praecipere of prudence is identical with the judicium electionis of the morally good act, immediately preceding another statement that appears to tell another story, prudentia electionem per consilium dirigit. Without an analysis of these texts, Lottin concludes that whatever the case may be in St. Thomas the position of Noble and Sertillanges is correct as a statement of moral theory.

In summation regarding the question of the identity of the praecipere of prudence in St. Thomas, there seems to be no awareness of a textual difficulty; all except Lottin merely assert their positions without even taking note of the difficulty; and Lottin does no more than make a passing reference to a few texts in one of his footnotes. Nevertheless, either in a direct or in an indirect way, the writings of these contemporary Thomists bring to light the

18 Ibid., fn. 1, 254-5.

fact that there exists this problem: Is the praecipere of prudence to be identified with the judicium electionis of the moral act, or with the imperium of the moral act?

In order to make more evident that which Lottin only suggests in passing, that there is a real difficulty in the texts of St. Thomas, and in order to bring the problem into clear focus, there is need for making a textual study. It is the purpose of this thesis to supply the needed textual study. Let it be noted that this thesis is thus limited to an explorative treatment of the problem of the identity of the praecipere of prudence and that the writer does not propose to solve the problem.

The procedure to be followed in accomplishing the proposed task is first to set up the framework in which the problem occurs. Since the problem is concerned with whether the praecipere of prudence is to be identified with the judicium electionis of the moral act or with the imperium of the moral act the first part will be an exposition of the moral act according to St. Thomas' teaching. Herein, all the intellectual and volitional acts involved in the production of such an act will be treated, but particular emphasis will be placed on the considerations of the judicium electionis and the imperium by means of a textual study of each in order to ascertain the thought of St. Thomas regarding the nature and functions of these acts. The second part will be an exposition of the acts of prudence within this framework. The functioning of the intellectual virtue of prudence as it perfects the practical intellect in its acts of counselling, judging, and especially commanding will be studied. This study will bring to light the connection of the prudential acts with the steps involved in the moral act, and so bring into relief the appar-

rently conflicting texts of St. Thomas on the praecipere of prudence.

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL ACT ACCORDING TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS

The intellectual-volitional character of the moral act is clearly shown in a metaphysical analysis of the steps involved in the psychological production of such an act. Now, the complete analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis, but its results will be presented as the steps in the moral act are considered. The chief concern of this writer with respect to the moral act is an examination of the judicium electionis and the imperium. However, since some understanding of the interaction of intellect and will throughout the production of the moral act is basic to the proposed investigation of the judicium electionis and the imperium, a study of the acts leading up to these two particular acts and of the acts following them is in order. St. Thomas says the following concerning the order to be followed in the production of a moral act, which may be employed as a guide for the proposed consideration of the steps involved in the production of a moral act.

In ordine autem agibilium, primo quidem oportet sumere apprehensionem finis; deinde appetitum finis; deinde consilium de his quae sunt ad finem; deinde appetitum eorum quae sunt ad finem.¹

Steps Concerned with the End—Intellectus to Intentio

The first act in the series of acts concerning the end is an act of

1 S. T., I-II, q. 15, a. 3, c.

the intellect, the intellectual apprehension of the end.² It is necessary that a thing be first known as an end or good before it can be desired. It is an end which may be either the ultimate end or some proximate end.

The next act is the act of the will tending towards the apprehended good, for the proper object of the will is the good. This first will act is properly termed voluntas absoluta³ or velle⁴. It is characteristic of the velle that the end or good which is tended towards has not been considered as attainable or realisable—"Motus enim voluntatis in finem non dicitur absolute intentio, sed simpliciter velle."⁵ The intellect functions as a formal cause in specifying this necessary act of desire for the end.⁶ It is important to add that it is the practical intellect that specifies the will's inclination directly.

With reference to the movement on the part of the will in the order of exercise, there must be taken into consideration the fact that this movement involves a first mover acting on the will itself, a first efficient cause. According to the principles of Thomistic psychology, the will is an operative potency. As such it is neither a pure act, nor is it always in act. The only

2 Ibid., I-II, q. 8, a. 1, c.; q. 13, a. 5, ad 1.

3 Ibid., I-II, q. 8, a. 1, ad 1.

4 De Ver., q. 22, a. 13, c, Quaestiones Disputatae et Quaestiones Duodecim Divi Thomae Aquinatis, Turin (Marietti), 1927.

5 Ibid., q. 22, a. 14, c.

6 S. I., I-II, q. 9, a. 1, c. Cf. Henri Renard, S. J., "The Functions of Intellect and Will in the Act of Free Choice," The Modern Schoolman, St. Louis, XXIV, Nov., 1946, 87.

being that is capable of moving the will in the order of exercise is God. God is the First Efficient Cause of the will--and thus it is He alone who can cause a natural movement in the thing whose nature He caused. God Who moves all things according to their nature moves the will as an exterior principle in the order of exercise, according to the nature of the will.⁷ The result of this is that the will being put in act in order to act by the divine motion is able to move and direct the intellect. The first movement of the will by God persists throughout the entire moral act.

St. Thomas anticipates the query concerning whether the will is moved of necessity by the exterior principle and he gives this answer.

[S]icut Dionysius dicit, IV De Div. Nom.: 'Ad providentiam divinam non pertinet naturam rerum corrumpere, sed servare.' Unde omnia movet secundum eorum conditionem; ita quod ex causis necessariis per motionem divinam consequuntur effectus ex necessitate, ex causis autem contingentibus sequuntur effectus contingentes. Quia igitur voluntas est activum principium non determinatum ad unum, sed indifferenter se habens ad multa, sic Deus ipsam movet, quod non ex necessitate ad unum determinat, sed remanet motus eius contingens et non necessarius, nisi in his ad quae naturaliter movetur.⁸

The clue to the solution lies in the fact that God, acting as an exterior principle, in moving the will does so in accordance with its nature. Now, the formal object of the will is the good, and so it is that the will as nature is determined to strive for the good as its end. And so, God moves the will toward the good. The ultimate end of man is happiness, and the willing of it has an absolute necessity; whereas, a proximate end is some particular good chosen as a means to a more remote end, and may be considered necessary only

7 De Male, VI, art. unic.

8 S. T., I-II, q. 10, a. 4, c.

insofar as it is that means needed for the attainment of the remote end. (For the sake of simplicity, the writer desires that the end of the velle referred to in this study be understood as being the ultimate end.) However, it is in accordance with the nature of man that he have a choice of particular goods, of means to the end—"Voluntas in nihil potest tendere, nisi sub ratione boni. Sed quia bonum est multiplex, propter hoc non ex necessitate determinatur ad unum."⁹ God, therefore, in moving the will with respect to the act of choice enables it to function, but He does not determine it of necessity to one thing.

Since the end of the velle was considered simply as an end, the act following the velle is an act of the intellect whereby the desired end, the apprehended good, is judged by the intellect with regards to its attainability by some means. This act is referred to today as the judgment of attainability (judicium de fine).¹⁰ Unless the judgment of attainability is positive, no integral moral act can take place; and so it is assumed here for the purpose of the study that the judgment is a positive one.

Next, the will inclines itself towards the known good, known now not only as a good, but also as a good judged to be attainable by some means. This will-act is named the intentio. In the words of St. Thomas, "motus autem voluntatis fertur in finem secundum quod acquiritur per ea quae sunt ad finem, vocatur intentio."¹¹ It is true to say then that he who intends the end in-

9 Ibid., I, q. 82, a. 2, ad 1.

10 Bourke, Ethics, 64. The foundation for this is found in the S.T., I-II, q. 12, a. 3, c, and a. 4, c; De Ver., q. 22, a. 13, c.

11 S. T., I-II, q. 12, a. 4, ad 3.

tends also the means; there is just one movement of the will to the end and to the means, if these be considered according as the will is moved to the means for the sake of the end.¹² The judicium de fine has affected the will as a formal cause in specifying the act of intending (intentio)--the will intends the end attainable through some means.

Steps Concerned with the Means--Consilium to Electio

The will in intending the end moves the intellect to consider the means. The first act in the series of acts in regard to the means is the intellectual act called consilium (counsel or deliberation). Consilium is an inquiry¹³ leading to knowledge; it is an inquiry directed towards the means to the end. The knowledge is expressed in judgments which are reached by the reasoning of the rational cognitive faculty as influenced by the efficient causality of the will. Accordingly, then, St. Thomas states that counsel belongs, in a way, both to the will, on whose behalf and by whose impulsion the inquiry can be made, and to the reason that pursues the inquiry.¹⁴ It is certainly in keeping with the mind of St. Thomas to maintain, then, that two powers are connected with the consilium; but at the same time it is to be held that the consilium is a simple act. Immediately it is an act of the intellect, though mediately it is an act of the will. The will is the moving cause or agent and

12 Ibid., a. 4, c.

13 Ibid., q. 14, a. 1, c.

14 Ibid., q. 14, a. 1, ad 1.

the intellect is that which is moved or the patient.¹⁵

The consilium has an important role in the linking together of the moral act and prudence: the consilium is the first of the acts in the series of acts regarding the means, and it is the first of the three acts of prudence. Therefore, it should be investigated more closely.

The inquiry called consilium aims to discover means for the end desired with the circumstances surrounding these means; it is an inquiry into contingent particulars desired to be known as useful for action. Stated simply and briefly, the end of counsel is the discovery of what is to be done.¹⁶

Bourke, in accordance with the teaching of St. Thomas, has this to say with regards to deliberation, "Moral deliberation is an intellectual process of weighing the various possible actions which may be done, under the actual circumstances which can be foreseen, in the light of an end to be attained."¹⁷

It does not suffice, however, that means be discovered only; they must be judged as being suitable or not to the end intended. He who goes through the process of deliberation desires certainty¹⁸ regarding the means,

15 George P. Klubertans, S. J., "Unity of Human Activity," The Modern Schoolman, St. Louis, XXVIII, Jan., 1950, 91.

16 S. T., II-II, q. 14, a. 1, c. "Consilium. . . importat quandam rationis inquisitionem circa agenda, in quibus consistit vita humana."

17 Bourke, Ethics, 238.

18 "The certitude of the practical judgment does not concern the theoretical assumptions implied in it, but the very practical aspect of it. . . . The certain truth of which the practical judgment is capable is no theoretical but a practical truth; it is not the truth of cognition, but the truth of direction; it does not consist in a relation of conformity between mind and thing, but in a relation between the judgment of the mind and the requirements of a right appetite to the end to be pursued." Yves Simon, Nature and

and the end of judgment is certainty.¹⁹ The definite decision as to what means should be used is known as the judgment concerning that which has been discovered (judicium de inventis²⁰). Of later origin than St. Thomas' term is the term judicium consilii used to express the nature of this judgment.²¹ Now, it is important to mention here that the judicium consilii is not identical with the judicium electionis, the intellectual act involved in the complex act of choice. The judgment of counsel (judicium consilii) is not a purely practical judgment. As to the object which is the singular operable, it is practical; but as to the end for which it is intended, namely, the cognition of the singular operable, it is purely speculative.²² The judgment of election, on the other hand, is wholly practical. Its object, too, is the singular operable—the thing to be done here and now; but, its end is also of a practical nature—its end is the actual operation.²³ Furthermore, the judgment of counsel (judicium consilii) does not formally determine the will in the act of choice, but this function is assigned to the judgment of election (judicium electionis).

The judgment of counsel is reached by the process of reasoning. Such

Functions of Authority, Milwaukee, 1940, 25.

19 §. I., II-II, q. 51, a. 2, ad 2.

20 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 8, c; and II-II, q. 51, a. 3, c.

21 Cf. Marianne M. Childress, "The Prudential Judgment," Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, Washington, XXII, 1947, 143.

22 §. I., I, q. 14, a. 16, c. "[V]ero speculativa est secundum modum vel finem, est secundum quid speculativa et secundum quid practica."

23 Ibid., "Cum vero ordinatur ad finem operationis, est simpliciter practica."

reasoning is ascribed to the practical intellect, and, accordingly, the judgment of counsel is the conclusion of a practical syllogism. A few pertinent remarks about the practical syllogism are now in order. The practical intellect has as its proper object truth ordered to operation. Thus practical reasoning is ordered to the execution of concrete moral actions. The end of practical reasoning is the knowledge of a single object as operable.²⁴ Each man, therefore goes through a process of practical reasoning to direct his own concrete and individual actions (in a reasonable way). Now, the syllogism employed follows this general pattern:

Major: Proper principle provided by synderesis or moral science.

Minor: Particularized judgment that will show the logical connection between the general moral rule and the proposed individual action.

Conclusion: Singular proposition referring to something to be done or omitted.²⁵

An example used by St. Thomas illustrates this general pattern:

Major: One's father should not be killed.

Minor: This man is my father.

Conclusion: This man should not be killed.²⁶

Since counsel is concerned with means to an end, it is, without a doubt, concerned with singular operables. Hence the syllogism which has as its conclusion the judgment of counsel is a special form of the general practical

24 Ibid., I, q. 79, a. 11, c.

25 Ibid., I-II, q. 76, a. 1, c: cf. Bourke, Ethics, 223.

26 Ibid., Bourke, Ethics, 245.

syllogism, and it may be represented as follows:

Major: Proper principle provided by synderesis or moral science.

Minor: Judgment provided by the inquiry which resulted in the discovery of means to the end—a singular proposition.

Conclusion: The judgment of counsel—a singular proposition.²⁷

According to St. Thomas, consent (consensus) is the application of the appetitive movement to counsel's decision.²⁸ Its specific function in the production of the integral moral act is expressed in the following passage which deals primarily with the subsequent will-act of choice:

[E]lectio addit supra consensum quandam relationem respectu eius cui aliquid praeeligitur; et ideo post consensum, adhuc remanet electio. Potest enim contingere quod per consilium inveniantur plura ducentia ad finem, quorum dum quodlibet placet, in quodlibet eorum consentitur; sed ex multis quae placent, praeaccipimus unum eligendo. Sed si inveniantur unum solum quod placeat, non differunt re consensus et electio, sed ratione tantum; ut consensus dicatur secundum quod placet ad agendum; electio autem secundum quod praefertur his quae non placent.²⁹

The special case of consensus mentioned in the foregoing which is sometimes called the "case of the unique means" will be prescinded from when the act of choice is considered.

With respect to the consensus, it may be said that it is materially an act of the will, but as informed by the judicium consilii.³⁰

27 No explicit material is supplied by St. Thomas regarding this syllogism.

28 S. T., I-II, q. 15, a. 3, c.

29 Ibid., I-II, q. 15, a. 3, ad 3.

30 Marianne Miller Childress, "Efficient Causality in Human Actions," The Modern Schoolman, St. Louis, XXVIII, March, 1951, 215.

"[E]t ideo post consensum, adhuc remanet electio."³¹ There is an indetermination both on the part of the intellect³² and on the part of the will³³ with respect to the means consented to. But if man desires to attain an end, he must choose some particular means that will draw him towards that end. The act of choice will be a free act, since it is not of the ultimate end, but of means, particular goods.³⁴ The essence of freedom is found in the placing of the acts termed judicium electionis and electio.³⁵ Choice is a complex act. St. Thomas brings this out very well in his discussion of choice in the Summa

Theologica:

[I]n nomine electionis importatur aliquid pertinens ad rationem sive ad intellectum, et aliquid pertinens ad voluntatem. Ergo. . . "electio est appetitivus intellectus, vel appetitus intellectivus."³⁶

Est autem considerandum in actibus animae, quod actus qui est essentialiter unus potentiae vel habitus, recipit formam et speciem a superiori potentia vel habitu, secundum quod ordinatur inferius a superiori; si enim aliquis actum fortitudinis exerceat propter Dei amorem, actus quidem ille materialiter est fortitudinis, formaliter vero caritatis. Manifestum est autem quod ratio quodammodo voluntatem praecedat, et ordinat actum eius; in quantum scilicet voluntas in suum obiectum tendit secundum ordinem rationis, eo quod vis apprehensiva appetitivae suum obiectum repraesentat. Sic igitur ille actus quo

31 S. T., I-II, q. 15, a. 3, ad 3.

32 Ibid., I, q. 83, a. 1, c. "Particularia autem operabilia sunt quaedam contingentia; et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum."

33 Ibid., I, q. 82, a. 2, ad 3. "[R]atio est collativa plurium; et ideo expluribus moveri potest appetitus intellectivus, scilicet voluntas, et non ex uno ex necessitate."

34 Ibid., I-II, q. 13, a. 6, c.

35 Ibid., I, q. 83, a. 3, c.

36 Aristotle, Ethics, VI, 2, 1139b4.

voluntas tendit in aliquid quod proponitur ut bonum, ex eo quod per rationem est ordinatum ad finem, materialiter quidem est voluntatis, formaliter autem rationis. In huiusmodi autem substantia actus materialiter se habet ad ordinem qui imponitur a superiori potentia. Et ideo electio substantialiter non est actus rationis, sed voluntatis; perficitur enim electio in motu quodam animae ad bonum quod eligitur. Unde manifeste actus est appetitivae potentiae.³⁷

Some light is thrown on the problem of the freedom of the act of choice through a consideration of the mutual causality of the intellect and will in the act of choice. "[Q]uando actus duarum potentiarum ad invicem ordinantur, in utroque est aliquid quod est alterius potentia."³⁸ The influence of the intellect upon the will as it elicits the act of choice is that of a formal cause; the will, on the other hand, acts in the order of efficient causality upon the intellectual faculty as it forms the ultimate practical judgment (judicium electionis).³⁹ The mutual causality may be described as follows: The rational appetitive faculty acting upon the rational cognitive faculty causes it to consider the good that is in one object, rather than the good that is in another. As a result, the judicium electionis will be an affirmation that this means is to be embraced in preference to all other means. The intellect, on the other hand, acts as a formal cause by presenting to the will this good, thus specifying the act of the will, the electio.⁴⁰ The freedom is in both powers, but it is in each in a different way.

37 S. T., I-II, q. 13, a. 1, c.

38 Ibid., I-II, q. 14, a. 1, ad 1.

39 Marianne M. Childress, "Efficient Causality in Human Actions," The Modern Schoolman, XXVIII, 216.

40 Henri J. Renard, S. J., "The Functions of the Intellect and Will in the Act of Free Choice," The Modern Schoolman, XXIV, Nov., 1946, 90.

Now, an adequate treatment of the problem of free choice is beyond the scope of this project. However, of major importance in this study is the judicium electionis, referred to above as the ultimate practical judgment, and so it will now be considered at greater length.

The judicium electionis is called a last or ultimate judgment because it is the conclusion of the last in a series of deductive reasonings,⁴¹ the process of reasoning being called to a halt by an act of the free will of the agent. Just as the judgment of counsel (judicium consilii) was the conclusion of a practical syllogism, so the judgment of choice (judicium electionis) is the conclusion of a practical syllogism, but the judgments differ, as has already been stated. Since the conclusions of the two syllogisms differ, the syllogisms themselves must differ. The terms that might be applied to both, following the terminology proposed by Bourke,⁴² are the terms cognitive moral syllogism and operative moral syllogism. The cognitive moral syllogism is named from its conclusion which is, in truth, a singular proposition about something to be done, but it is a purely cognitive judgment about a singular operable, being essentially an act of knowing. The operative moral syllogism, on the other hand, is named from its conclusion which leads immediately to the act of choosing and doing the action. This conclusion is, of course, the judicium electionis.

Textual Study--Judicium Electionis

⁴¹ St. Thomas did not refer to the judicium electionis as the last or ultimate practical judgment. The terminology is of later origin.

⁴² Bourke, Ethics, 225 and 229.

An examination of the texts in which St. Thomas refers to the judicium electionis is now to be made. The purpose of such a study is to present textually what St. Thomas holds regarding the judicium electionis in its relations to the consilium and the electio, so that later on when the problem of the functioning of prudence is discussed the interpretation of certain important passages will be in accord with the expressed doctrine of St. Thomas. The order to be followed in this textual study is to be in accord with the chronological sequence of the works of St. Thomas.⁴³ The investigation will now commence with an examination of the pertinent texts found in an early work, the Commentary on the Sentences.

In his commentary on the second book of the Sentences of Peter Lombard, St. Thomas refers to the judgment of election, using the term liberum arbitrium as he discusses the general problem of free choice, as well as using the term judicium electionis. It is in St. Thomas' reply to a proposed objection against calling free choice a power that one is first given an insight into the relation existing between the judicium electionis and the power (operative potency) called the liberum arbitrium.⁴⁴ The objection is based on the definition of liberum arbitrium as a liberum de voluntate judicium. If it is a judgment, it is argued, it is a habit, and therefore cannot be a power. To which St. Thomas answers that

⁴³ The chronology being followed is that listed in Vernon J. Bourke, Thomistic Bibliography, The Modern Schoolman, Supplement to Vol. XXI, St. Louis, 1945.

⁴⁴ That the liberum arbitrium is the will is discussed later on in this work (In II Sent., d. 24, q. 1, a. 3). The next sentence in the matter above indicates this, however.

[J]udicium, proprie loquendo, non nominat potentiam, nec habitum, sed actum. Non autem invenitur unus habitus per quem omne iudicium elicitur, cum secundum diversos habitus in diversis iudiciis procedat; nisi forte dicamus habitum illum primorum principiorum quorum cognitio naturaliter est insita nobis secundum quod in omnibus iudiciis dirigimur; quem nullus liberum arbitrium diceret; quis non est proprium et proximum directivum in electionis actum. Potest autem ad unam potentiam reduci omne iudicium electionis; et ideo congruentius hoc nomine actus datur intelligi potentia quam habitus.⁴⁵

The significance of this passage with respect to this study is that herein St. Thomas is maintaining that free choice (liberum arbitrium) is the power which is the principle of the act which is a free judgment (liberum arbitrium), taking its name from the act to which the term liberum arbitrium is applied in the strict sense. Thereby, he seems to imply that there is a causal relationship between the free judgment (iudicium electionis) and the power called liberum arbitrium.

Now, the definition of the free judgment, judgment of election, or iudicium electionis, as a liberum de voluntate arbitrium is subject to misinterpretation regarding the nature of the will's causality. Therefore, St. Thomas in a refutation of an argument in favor of the position that free choice is a distinct power very explicitly states the significance of the word "de" in the definition of the iudicium electionis.

Judicium autem liberi arbitrii intelligitur iudicium electionis; unde quod dicitur liberum de voluntate iudicium, ly "de" non denotat causam materiale, quasi voluntas sit id de quo est iudicium, sed originem libertatis; quia quod electio sit libera, hoc est natura voluntatis.⁴⁶

45 In II Sent., d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3, Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi, Mandonnet-Moos ed., Paris, 1929-1933.

46 Ibid., d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5.

To the will, then, is ascribed the role of being the cause of liberty in the free judgment, which is an important fact in the problem of free choice.

The Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate, another of the early works of St. Thomas, also contains a treatment of the general problem of free choice. In this work, too, he uses the term liberum arbitrium as well as the term iudicium electionis to signify the judgment of election, the ultimate practical judgment in the series of acts concerned with the means. But, prior to the treatment of the question of free choice, in his discussion of the rational appetitive faculty, the will, St. Thomas treats of the problem of the subject of the electio, and here one is introduced to his doctrine concerning the connection between counsel and election, which is an important feature of this whole study. St. Thomas clarifies the meaning of the Philosopher that "electio est quasi quaedam conclusio consilii,"⁴⁷ by stating the following:

[P]racticæ inquisitionis est duplex conclusio: una quæ est in ratione, scilicet, sententia, quæ est iudicium de consiliatis; alia vero quæ est in voluntate, et huiusmodi est electio; et dicitur conclusio per quendam similitudinem, quia sicut in speculativis ultimo statur in conclusione, ita in operativis ultimo statur in operatione.⁴⁸

Here, then, the terminal point of inquiry is held to be the iudicium de consiliatis, which is, of course, an act of the practical reason; but corresponding to it is the will-act of election, the electio; but, just how the iudicium de consiliatis and the electio are related is not discussed, however.

The complex nature of the electio is brought to light in the body of the same article, wherein St. Thomas discusses the role of the intellect.

47 De Ver., q. 22, a. 15, obj. 1.

48 Ibid., q. 22, a. 15, ad 1.

Nothing is explicitly stated regarding the judicium electionis, but the implicit reference to it justifies the inclusion of this text in this study.

Est tamen electio actus voluntatis non absolute, sed in ordine ad rationem, eo quod in electione oportet id quod est proprium rationis, scilicet conferre unum alteri, vel praeferre; quod quidem in actu voluntatis invenitur ex impressione rationis, in quantum scilicet ipso ratio proponit voluntati aliquid non ut utile simpliciter, sed utilius ad finem.⁴⁹

The intellect functions in acting as a formal cause in specifying the judgment of election regarding the means to be chosen.

When he discusses the problem of free choice in the De Veritate, St. Thomas in defending the "freedom" of the liberum arbitrium (free judgment) explicitly refers to it as the judicium electionis, and he again makes a reference to the connection between election and counsel, without further discussion, however.

[I]udicium cui attribuitur libertas, est iudicium electionis; non autem iudicium quo sententiat homo de conclusionibus in scientiis speculativis; nam ipsa electio est quasi quaedam scientia de praeconsiliatis.⁵⁰

Again in this work as in the Commentary on the Sentences, St. Thomas refers to the principle of the free judgment as the power called liberum arbitrium.⁵¹ Nothing significant is found in this particular discussion that pertains to the nature of the functioning of the intellect in the act called liberum arbitrium.

In the second book of the Summa Contra Gentiles St. Thomas proves

49 Ibid., q. 22, a. 15, c.

50 Ibid., q. 24, a. 1, ad 17.

51 Ibid., q. 24, a. 6, c.

that intellectual substances have free choice in acting.⁵² The emphasis with respect to the intellectual act of judgment is laid on the indetermination of the judgment before the act of election, and therefore there is no statement that immediately touches upon the question of the function of the judicium electionis.

Of the commentaries of St. Thomas on the works of Aristotle, the commentary on the Ethica contains texts immediately bearing on the problem at issue. In commenting on Aristotle's doctrine regarding choice, the object of which is said to be the result of previous deliberation, St. Thomas compares counsel and election:

[I]deo determinatio consilii praecedit electionem, quia oportet quod post inquisitionem consilii sequatur de inventiis per consilium. Et tunc primo eligitur id quod prius est judicatum. Et quod judicium rationis consequatur inquisitionem consilii, manifestat per hoc quod unusquisque qui inquirit consiliando qualiter debeat operari desistit a consiliando, quando inquisitionem suam resolvendo perducit ad id quod ipse potest operari. Et si plura potest operari, quando reduxit in antecedens, idest in id quod eis primo operandum occurrit. Et hoc est quod eligitur, scilicet quod primo operandum occurrit. Unde relinquitur quod electio praesupponit determinationem consilii.⁵³

For the first time light is thrown on the problem of the relationship between the electio and the consilium. St. Thomas explicitly states that it is a determined counsel that precedes election, the determination being effected by a judgment concerning what is to be done. He says that the judgment follows upon the inquiry of counsel, and that it is clear that this is so. For the inquirer who takes counsel how he ought to act no longer takes counsel when he has judged

52 C. G., II, 48. Summa Contra Gentiles, Leonine Manual ed., Rome, 1934.

53 In Decem Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nichomachum Expositio Pirota ed., Turin (Marietti), 1934, III, lect. 9, n. 484.

what he can do. The counselling does not go on and on, but the one taking counsel terminates such intellectual activity by determining that this particular thing which he is capable of doing he will do. That which is judged to be done is then chosen.

The pertinent texts found in the Summa Theologica are to be studied now. It is of special note to mention that St. Thomas uses the term liberum arbitrium even in this work to signify the judgment of election. Question eighty-three of the Prima Pars concerns free choice, and hence it is the main source of texts referring to the iudicium electionis. In the very first article, St. Thomas discusses the problem whether man has free choice; and he proves that man does have free choice basing his proof on man's ability to make a free judgment:

Sed homo agit iudicio, quia per vim cognoscitivam iudicat aliquid esse fugiendum vel prosequendum. Sed quia iudicium istud non est ex naturali instinctu in particulari operabili, sed ex collatione quadam rationis; ideo agit libero iudicio, potens in diversa ferri. Ratio enim circa contingentia habet viam ad opposita, ut patet in dialecticis syllogismis, et rhetoricis persuasionibus. Particularia autem operabilia sunt quaedam contingentia; et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum. Et pro tanto necesse est quod homo sit liberi arbitrii, ex hoc ipso quod rationalis est.⁵⁴

Thus, there is expressed the fact that a relationship exists between free choice and the judgment of election. The exact nature of this relationship which would include an elucidation of the function of the iudicium electionis is not discussed, however.

But, when St. Thomas treats the very important problem concerning

54 S. T., I, q. 83, a. 1, c.

whether or not free choice is an appetitive power,⁵⁵ he discusses the functioning of the intellect and the will in election.

Ad electionem autem concurrunt aliquid ex parte cognitivae virtutis, et aliquid ex parte appetitivae; ex parte autem cognitivae, requiritur consilium, per quod diiudicatur quid sit alteri praefendum; ex parte autem appetitivae, requiritur quod appetendo acceptetur quod per consilium diiudicatur.⁵⁶

In substantiation of St. Thomas' own doctrine regarding the relationship between counsel and election, as expressed in the De Veritate, is an answer to an objection to the truth that free choice is an appetitive power:

[I]udicium est quasi conclusio et determinatio consilii. Determinatur autem consilium, primo quidem per sententiam rationis, et secundo per acceptationem appetitus; unde Philosophus dicit in III Ethics,⁵⁷ quod "ex consiliari iudicantes desideramus secundum consilium." Et hoc modo ipsa electio dicitur quoddam iudicium a quo nominatur liberum arbitrium.⁵⁸

Again, St. Thomas has referred to the judgment of election as the "term" of consilium, and, here too, he maintains that free choice (liberum arbitrium) takes its name from the cognitive act of free judgment, as he did in the Commentary on the Sentences.

In the Prima Secundae, the problem of the subject of free choice again arises; and St. Thomas in refuting an argument making choice essentially an intellectual act, gives expression once more to his doctrine concerning the relationship existing between choice and the judgment of choice:

55 Ibid., I, q. 83, a. 1, c.

56 Ibid.

57 Aristotle, Ethics, III, 3, 1113a11.

58 S. T., I, q. 83, a. 3, ad 2.

[C]onclusio syllogismi quae fit in operabilibus, ad rationem pertinet; et dicitur sententia vel iudicium, quam sequitur electio. Et ob hoc ipsa conclusio pertinere videtur ad electionem, tanquam ad consequens.⁵⁹

Though, in this passage, St. Thomas affirms that the judgment of election is the conclusion of a practical syllogism, and that it belongs to the act of choice, he does not express anything about the relationship between counsel and choice.

This concludes the textual study regarding the iudicium electionis.

The aim of this study as previously stated was to present textually what St. Thomas holds regarding the iudicium electionis in its relations to the consilium and the electio. St. Thomas is consistent in maintaining throughout the works cited that (1) the iudicium electionis is a co-function with the will-act electio in the act of choice--it directs the electio; (2) the iudicium electionis as a conclusion of a practical syllogism terminates the act of consilium; and (3) because the iudicium electionis and the electio are mutually related in causing the act of choice, the electio is said, in a way, to be the conclusion of counsel.

Steps Concerned with the Execution of the Act--Imperium to Fructio

Now to return to the analysis of the steps involved in the production of a moral act. With the electio, the eighth step in the production of a moral act, there is completed the series of acts concerned with the means. Now, actually, an integral moral act has been constituted. But, if one desired to attain the end intended, the means chosen must be employed. Therefore, there is a last series of acts concerned with the execution of the moral act. In the

59 Ibid., I-II, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2.

order of exercise, the intellect and will are directed to the actual carrying out of the proposed work.⁶⁰ The first stage in the last series of acts is the intellectual act known as the imperium or command of reason—" [P]ost electionem ratio imperat ei per quod agendum est quod eligitur."⁶¹ Father Klubertans very aptly and very concisely describes the function of the imperium: "The imperium is an act of intellect translating the order of choice (end-to-means) into the order of execution (means-to-end)."⁶² In accordance with its nature as an act of reason it orders or directs that the operation which has been chosen to be done be done, and this is done by intimating or declaring what is to be done.⁶³ Moreover, the act of commanding is intimately connected with the motive force of the will, for the expression of the command, "do this," intimates something to a man by moving him thereto.⁶⁴ Thus the imperium is said to act as a formal cause in specifying the movement of the powers commanded. Since an understanding of the imperium is of initial importance, before treating of the efficient cause of the commanded movement, that is, the will-act of usus, an examination will be made of the texts pertinent to the imperium. There are only a few references to the imperium in the works of St. Thomas.

Textual Study--Imperium

60 Bourke, Ethics, 63.

61 S. T., I-II, q. 17, a. 3, ad 1.

62 George P. Klubertans, S. J., The Philosophy of Human Nature, New York, 1953, 248.

63 S. T., I-II, q. 17, a. 1, c.

64 Ibid., I-II, q. 17, a. 1, c.

Like the textual study of the judicium electionis this investigation commences with a text found in the Commentary on the Sentences. In dealing with an objection that states that prayer must be an act of the will since it is like to the imperium which is an act of the will, St. Thomas treats of the imperium. He holds that it is essentially an act of the reason on the basis of its function of ordering one thing to another.

[I]lle qui petit aut imperat, aut deprecatur, advocat aliquid ad consecutionem finis, vel prosecutionem intenti. Hoc autem non est voluntatis, quia ipsa simpliciter et absolute fertur in suum objectum, quod est finis sed est rationis, cuius est ordinare unum ad aliud; et ideo proprie accipiendo imperium non est voluntatis.⁶⁵

The interconnection between the will and the intellect in the imperium is also given expression further on in this same passage where St. Thomas discusses the ways in which the will is said to command:

[D]icitur voluntas imperare. . . in quantum principium imperium voluntate est. Advocare enim aliquem ad finem suum, quod ad imperium pertinet, praesupponit appetitum finis, et est quaedam prosecutio illius; et propter hoc potentiae, vel artes operativae, seu habitus qui sunt circa finem, dicuntur imperare istis quae sunt circa ea quae sunt ad finem: et secundum hoc voluntas, quae habet finem pro objecto, dicitur imperare, in quantum imperium, quod est actus rationis, in voluntate incipit, ad quam pertinet desiderium.⁶⁶

In his discussion of the will and its function in the De Veritate, St. Thomas again treats the problem concerning whether or not command is an act of the will. Touching upon the problem at issue is this statement of St. Thomas in which he again maintains that the function of the imperium consists in ordering:

65 In IV Sent., d. 15, q. 4, a. 1, sol. 1, ad 3.

66 Ibid.

[I]mperium est voluntatis et rationis quantum ad diversis: voluntatis quidem secundum quod imperium inclinationem quandam importat, rationis vero secundum quod haec inclinatio distribuitur et ordinatur ut exequendo per hunc vel per illum.⁶⁷

Here again there is repeated the statement that both the intellect and the will are related to the imperium.

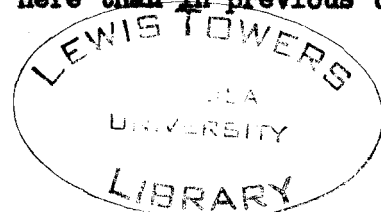
In the Prima Secundae, the same problem arises as to the subject of the imperium and St. Thomas' answer is consistent with those in his other works. In this work he goes further and gives a proof for his position that "command is an act of the reason, presupposing, however, an act of the will." Relevant to the problem of the function of the imperium is the following selection taken from his full exposition regarding the topic of the subject of the imperium:

Imperium autem est quidem essentialiter actus rationis; imperans enim ordinat eum cui imperat, ad aliquid agendum, intimando vel denuntiando; sic autem ordinare per modum cuiusdam intimationis, est rationis. . . . Aliquando autem ratio intimat aliquid alicui, movendo ipsum ad hoc, et talis intimatio exprimitur per verbum imperativi modi, puta cum alicui dicitur: Fac hoc. Primum autem movens in viribus animae, ad exercitium actus est voluntas. . . . Cum ergo secundum movens non moveat nisi in virtute primi moventis, sequitur quod hoc ipsum quod ratio movet imperando, sit ei ex virtute voluntatis. Unde relinquitur quod imperare sit actus rationis, praesupposito actu voluntatis, in cuius virtute ratio movet per imperium ad exercitium actus.⁶⁸

The text just quoted is certainly explicit with respect to two important points, namely, (1) The imperium is essentially an act of the intellect, and, (2) The imperium also pertains to the will in that the will moves the other powers in their acts, and so the reason can command due to the power of the will. Observe that St. Thomas expresses himself more fully here than in previous texts

67 De Ver., q. 22, a. 12, ad 4.

68 S. T., I-II, q. 17, a. 1, c.



on the nature of the ordering of the imperium. To order is to move something by intimating or declaring; this belongs to the intellect. Now, to order is not to move absolutely, for to move absolutely belongs to the will which first moves the powers of the soul to their proper acts in the order of exercise.

"[R]atio habet vim movendi a voluntate. . .; ex hoc enim quod aliquis vult finem, ratio imperat de his quae sunt ad finem."⁶⁹ This statement will suffice as a summation of St. Thomas' doctrine concerning the functioning of the imperium as textually revealed.

Usus to Fructio

The efficient cause of the commanded movement is the will's act of usus, for the will is that which moves the powers of the soul to their proper acts.⁷⁰ The powers which are moved to their respective acts by this movement of the will are the instrumental causes used by the will. The function of the will-act of usus, which follows upon the imperium is expressed in the following:

"[U]ti est applicare aliquod principium actionis ad actionem."⁷¹

When the commanded powers fulfill their ordered tasks, the intellect contemplates the finished or continuing act.⁷² This act of the intellect, the eleventh in the complete series of twelve acts associated with the moral act, is called in modern terminology the apprehension of suitability (Perceptio conven-

69 Ibid., I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 3.

70 Ibid., I-II, q. 9, a. 1, c.

71 Ibid., I-II, q. 16, a. 2, c.

72 Bourke, Ethics, 64.

scientiae): it judges that the commanded act is good (if it is fitting) in relation to the end originally intended.⁷³

Finally, the will acts in enjoying the fulfillment of the commanded act in relation to the end. This act is called fruition (fruitio)—"Fruitio pertinere videtur ad amorem vel delectationem quam aliquis habet de ultimo expectato, quod est finis."⁷⁴ Fruition, strictly speaking, applies to the delight concomitant upon the intellectual apprehension of the last end, but there may be an extension of the term fruitio to include the imperfect delight concomitant with the intellectual attainment of a particular end.⁷⁵ This will-act of fruition (fruitio) is the last in the series of steps involved in the production of the moral act.

With the accomplishment of the proposed treatment of the series of intellectual and volitional acts involved in the psychological production of a moral act, the way is prepared for a consideration of the functioning of prudence.

73 Ibid.; cf. S. I., I-II, q. 11, a. 1, ad 3.

74 S. I., I-II, q. 11, a. 1, c.

75 Ibid., I-II, q. 11, a. 4, ad 2. "Finis autem ultimi non habiti est fruitio propria quidem, sed imperfecta, propter imperfectum modum habendi ultimum finem."

CHAPTER III

THE ACTS OF PRUDENCE ACCORDING TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF ST. THOMAS

The Intellectual Virtue of Prudence

St. Thomas was well aware of the individual man as a moral existent engaged in an effort to lead a good life. A good life, one consisting in good actions, requires that man choose rightly concerning the end and the means to the end.¹ Accordingly, he emphasized the need of moral virtue which suitably disposes man in his appetite to a due end, and of an intellectual virtue which rightly disposes man in his reason to the means ordained to the end.² The intellectual virtue which as a habitus perfects the reason and makes it rightly affected towards means ordained to the end is prudence (prudentia).³

In agreement with Aristotle, St. Thomas defines prudence as recta ratio agibilium.⁴ This essential formula brings out the intellectual-moral character of prudence. Its recta ratio element indicates the subject of

1 S. I., I-II, q. 57, a. 5, c.

2 Ibid., I-II, q. 65, a. 1, c.

3 Ibid., I-II, q. 57, a. 5, c.

4 Ibid., I-II, q. 57, a. 4, c; also, Aristotle, Ethics, VI, 4,

prudence—"prudentia proprie sit in ratione;"⁵ while its agibiliu element indicates that it is moral as to its matter—"In definitione (virtutis moralis) convenienter ponitur virtus intellectualis communicans in materia cum ipsa scilicet prudentia."⁶ Because of this peculiarity, St. Thomas makes this statement regarding the recta ratio agibilium:

[P]rudentia media est inter morales intellectuales virtutes: est enim essentialiter intellectualis, cum sit habitus cognitivus, et rationem perficiens; sed est morale quantum ad materiam, in quantum est directiva moralium.⁷

The truth that prudence is essentially an intellectual virtue since it resides properly in the intellect merits special emphasis.

It is in his consideration of the problem whether the intellect can be the subject of virtue⁸ that St. Thomas supports the position that prudence is an intellectual virtue and one that conforms to the strict interpretation of the definition of virtue (that which makes its possessor good and his work good also⁹). According to St. Thomas, the intellect as a power of the soul can be perfected by a habit in two ways. The first way is that it can be perfected inasmuch as it precedes the will as if moving it.¹⁰ In this way, the intellect is directed to the good act but not under the formal aspect of good, that is,

5 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 1, c.

6 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 5, ad 1.

7 In III Sent., d. 23, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 2, ad 3.

8 De Vir. in Comm., a. 7, c; S. T., I-II, q. 56, a. 3, c.

9 Aristotle, Ethics, II, 6, 1106a15-17.

10 De Vir. in Comm., a. 7, c.

the good sought as a good; thus it is said to be ordered to the good materially. By means of such an intellectual virtue a man acquires only an aptness for a good act.¹¹ The term virtue is here used in a restricted sense, and the good habit to which it is applied is said to be a virtue in a relative sense. The second way that the intellect as a power of the soul can be perfected is inasmuch as it follows the will as if eliciting its own act at the command of the will.¹² In this way, the virtue perfecting the intellect is ordered to the good act under the formal aspect of good, that is, the good which is the object of the will alone.¹³ By means of such a virtue there is conferred upon man not only the aptness for a good act, but also the right use of that aptness. The term virtue as used in this case is used in the strict sense, and the good habit to which it is applied is said to be a virtue in the absolute sense. St. Thomas, in agreement with the Philosopher, lists five acquired intellectual virtues, namely, wisdom, science, understanding, art, and prudence. Of these five, all but prudence, are said to be virtues in the relative sense. Prudence alone of the intellectual virtues is said to be a virtue in the absolute sense. It is worthy of mention to note here that of the four intellectual virtues which are virtues in a restricted sense, three belong to the speculative intellect, namely, wisdom, science, and understanding, while art is a habitus of the practical intellect. Along with art, prudence is a habitus belonging to the practical intellect.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

That the intellectual virtue of prudence is a virtue absolutely and that it belongs to the practical intellect, St. Thomas expresses very clearly in the following passage from the Prima Secundae:

Subiectum vero habitus qui simpliciter dicitur virtus, non potest esse nisi voluntas, vel aliqua potentia secundum quod est nota a voluntate: . . .

Contingit autem intellectum a voluntate moveri, sicut et alias potentias; considerat enim aliquis aliquid actu, eo quod vult. Et ideo intellectus secundum quod habet ordinem ad voluntatem, potest esse subiectum virtutis simpliciter dictae. . . . Intellectus vero practicus est subiectum prudentiae. Cum enim prudentia sit recta ratio agibilium, requiritur ad prudentiam quod homo se bene habeat ad principia huius rationis agendorum, quae sunt fines, ad quos bene se habet homo per rectitudinem voluntatis.

. . . [S]ubiectum prudentiae est intellectus practicus in ordine ad voluntatem rectam.¹⁴

The Relation between Prudence and Reason

"Prudence . . . is a perfection, a virtue of the practical intellect which has as its particular function to make an exact determination of what is to be done in a particular situation."¹⁵ The relation that exists between prudence and reason, in particular, between prudence and the practical reason is indicated in this way by St. Thomas:

Sicut igitur oportet rationem speculativam habitu scientiae perfici ad hoc quod recte dijudicet de scibilibus ad scientiam aliquam pertinentibus; ita oportet quod ratio practica perficiatur aliquo habitu ad hoc quod recte dijudicet de bono humano secundum singula agenda. Et haec virtus dicitur prudentia, cujus subjectum est ratio practica.¹⁶

In stating that prudence belongs to the practical intellect, the

14 S. I., I-II, q. 56, a. 3, c.

15 William A. Gerhard, Infra-Rational Knowledge and the Intellectual Virtue of Prudence, Notre Dame, 1948, 62.

16 De Vir. in Comm., unic., a. 6, c.

teaching of Aristotle and St. Thomas concerning the use of the terms speculative intellect and practical intellect must be kept in mind. Man being endowed with an intellect is able to know truth. Now it may be that at one time man is seeking truth for its own sake, while at yet another time man is seeking truth to be directed to operation. In both instances, the object of the intellect, namely, truth, is formally the same; however, there is an accidental modification differentiating truth in both cases. Since the objects of the two acts of knowing do not differ formally, but only accidentally, only one power is necessary. Now, in virtue of this fact that the objects of this operative faculty, the intellect, are accidentally differentiated, the intellect may at some times be called the speculative intellect, and at other times, the practical intellect.

With the foregoing differentiation in mind, the following statement may be used for the purpose of summation: "[I]ntellectus speculativus est, qui quod apprehendit, non ordinat ad opus, sed ad solam veritatis considerationem; practicus vero intellectus dicitur, qui hoc quod apprehendit, ordinat ad opus."¹⁷

In accordance with this, prudence which of its very nature is concerned with means to an end, which are singular operables, is assigned to the practical intellect by St. Thomas. That the prudential act is that of discursive reasoning can be gathered from the following:

[Q]uaedam sunt in ratione practica ut conclusiones, et huiusmodi sunt ea quae sunt ad finem, in quae pervenimus ex ipsis finibus. Et horum est prudentia applicans universalis principia ad particulares conclu-

17 S. I., I, q. 79, a. 11, c.

18 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 2, c.

siones operabilium.¹⁹

Now, in virtue of the fact that in the prudential process one reasons from practical principles, something must be said concerning these principles.

Constat autem quod, sicut ratio speculativa ratiocinatur de speculativis, ita ratio practica ratiocinatur de operabilibus. Oportet igitur naturaliter nobis esse indita, sicut principia speculabilium, ita et principia operabilium.²⁰

It must first be noted that just like the first speculative principles, the first practical principles are not innate in the strict sense of the term. Rather, these principles of the practical reason belong to a special habitus, the habitus of first practical principles, called synderesis.²¹ Synderesis, as the habitus of the first principles of the practical intellect, is specifically the same as understanding (intellectus), the habitus of the first principles of the speculative intellect. But, just as the speculative and the practical intellects are only accidentally differentiated by their objects, so the habitus, intellectus and synderesis, are only accidentally differentiated from one another, in virtue of their perfecting the intellect in its search for truth under two different aspects.

In addition to these first moral principles, which are the result of the intellectual act of understanding, there are general moral rules or laws which are the conclusions of discursive reasoning.²² They are derived from the

19 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 6. Cf. also De Ver. q. 5, a. 1, c.

20 Ibid., I, q. 79, a. 12, c.

21 In II Sent., d. 24, q. 2, a. 3, c.

22 S. T., II-II, q. 58, a. 5, c.

first practical principles through the act of reasoning, and are properly called judgments of moral science.²³ It must be stressed that the judgments of moral science are general laws, that is, they are concerned with the good and evil in general of human actions.

Now, a mere knowledge of the first principles and the general rules of the moral order does not enable one to direct his particular and contingent actions; man's actions are singular. Man's actions involve very exact circumstances of persons, time, and place. Therefore, there is a need of a further intellectual act, one of reasoning, by which man unites the universal principles and rules with the particular contingent case. In order that this reasoning lead to a practical judgment ordering a good action to be done, the habitus of prudence is required. Prudence is a virtue most necessary for a good life.

The Acts of Prudence

It has been said that prudence is the habitus that enables man to reason rightly to a conclusion, which conclusion issues in a good human action. Now, "ad unum finem ultimum, quod est bene vivere totum, ordinantur diversi actus secundum quemdam gradum; nam praecedit consilium, sequitur iudicium, et ultimum est praeceptum."²⁴ Thus three diverse acts of counsel, judgment, and command are attributed to the prudential operation by St. Thomas.²⁵ There is a necessity for such diversity, since the intended effects are different and

23 Bourke, Ethics, 7 and 236. Cf. also S. T., I-II, q. 58, a. 5, c.

24 S. T., II-II, q. 51, a. 2, ad 2.

25 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 8, c.

there is not just one unvarying goodness in them. Of the three acts of prudence, command is said by St. Thomas to be the principal act.²⁶ The essential work of prudence is the "perfecting of the mind for judging and of the will for governing. Consequently, the act of command must be its chief act in order that its proper function, that of regulating moral action be attained."²⁷ However, the complete functioning of prudence follows the working of the subject in which it resides, the practical intellect; and it is true of the practical intellect that it cannot immediately issue a command due to the contingency and singularity of the thing to be done. In order, then, to arrive at a practical judgment concerning an action to be done, the practical reason first fulfills the functions of deliberating and judging.

[I]n omnibus potentiis ordinatis illa est principalior, quae ad principaliorum actum ordinatur. Circa agibilia autem humana tres actus rationis inveniuntur: quorum primus est consiliari, secundus iudicare, tertius praecipere. Primi autem duo respondent actibus intellectus speculativi qui sunt inquirere et iudicare; nam consilium inquisitio quaedam est. Sed tertius actus est proprie practici intellectus, in quantum est operativus; non enim ratio habet praecipere ea quae per hominem fieri non possunt. Manifestum est autem quod in his quae per hominem fiunt, principalis actus est praecipere, ad quem alii ordinantur. Et ideo virtuti quae est bene praecipitiva, scilicet prudentiae, tamquam principaliori, adiunguntur tamquam, secundariae, eubulia, quae est bene consiliativa, et synesis et gnosis, quae sunt partes iudicativae; de quarum distinctione dicetur.²⁸

26 Ibid.

27 R. Bernard, Somme Théologique, "La Vertu", t. I, 444: . . . "La prudence est en fin de compte la vertu préposée à l'imperium. C'est grâce à elle que chacun doit pouvoir avec aisance et promptitude de commander d'agir, et, dans les deux sens du mot, ordonner ses actes, c'est à dire, se les prescrire et y mettre la mesure et l'arrangement voulu. On ne possède vraiment et pleinement la vertu de prudence que si l'on est capable de cela."

28 S. T., I-II, q. 57, a. 6, c.

Each of the three acts of prudence will be considered in its turn with a special study being made of the command of prudence, the praecipere, the identity of which is under discussion.

The first of the three acts of right reason concerning the means to the end is the act of deliberating well; its peculiar function is the discovery of the means suited to the end, and of the other circumstances.²⁹ When the moral act in general was discussed, it was remarked that in order for there to be an integral moral act, it was not sufficient only that only the end be intended, but it was necessary also that the means to the intended end be willed.³⁰ It was remarked also that a series of acts concerning the means commences with the intellectual act termed consilium. Now, in order for man to lead a truly virtuous life, it is necessary that he deliberate well concerning the means to the end intended, that is, that he take right counsel. Counsel is not worthy to be called good unless it seeks for good means to a good end.³¹ The virtue which disposes rightly the practical intellect for the act of deliberating well is eubulia,³² which is bene consiliativa. Immediately one might well ask how this virtue is related to prudence. St. Thomas

29 Ibid., II-II, q. 51, a. 1, ad 3. "Requiritur enim ad bene consiliandum non solum adinventio vel excogitatio eorum quae sunt opportuna ad finem, sed etiam aliae circumstantiae."

30 Ch. II, 14.

31 Charles O'Neil, "Prudence, the Incommunicable Wisdom," Essays in Thomism, edited by Robert E. Brennan, O. P., New York, 1942, 202.

32 De Vir. Card., q. unic., a. 1, c.

answers: " Prudentia est bene consiliativa, non quasi bene consiliari sit immediate actus eius, sed quia hunc actum perficit mediante virtute sibi subiecta, quae est eubulia."³³

The term subordinate virtue as used in the above has specific reference to that which St. Thomas calls a potential part of a virtue.

Partes autem potentiales alicuius virtutis dicuntur virtutes adiunctae quae ordinantur ad aliquos secundarios actus vel materias, quasi non habentes totam potentiam principalis virtutis. Et secundum hoc ponuntur partes prudentiae eubulia, quae est circa consilium; et synesis, quae est circa iudicium eorum quae secundum regulas communes fiunt; et gnome, quae est circa iudicium eorum in quibus oportet quandoque a communi lege recedere. Prudentia vero est circa principalem actum, quae est praecipere.³⁴

Potential parts of a virtue are so-called inasmuch as they participate in a partial and imperfect manner in the means which belongs principally and in a more perfect manner to the perfect act of the principal virtue.³⁵ To the potential parts of a virtue is assigned the task of disposing the subject to the perfect act of the principal virtue.

To return to the virtue of good counsel (eubulia), the relationship existing between the virtue of good counsel and the virtue of prudence parallels the relationship existing between the acts of counselling and commanding; the act of counsel is ordered to the act of command as to the principal act, and so it follows that the virtue of good counsel is ordered to the

33 S. I., I-II, q. 57, a. 6, ad 1.

34 Ibid., II-II, q. 48, a. 1, c.

35 De Vir. Card., q. unic., a. 1, c.

virtue of prudence as to the principal virtue without which it would be no virtue at all.³⁶

Men are very adept at seeking out good means to a good end.³⁷ Being properly disposed by the virtue of good counsel, they readily discover good means. However, man by nature demands certainty with regards to both his speculative and his practical knowledge. This is found to be true in his effort to know the proper means which will lead him to the attainment of the intended end. Moreover, he desires a knowledge of the best means to the desired end. Consequently, it would not be profitable for him to continue on and on with his inquiry, even though this has the perfection of being right deliberation, but he must reason to a good judgment of counsel concerning what means are preferable for the attainment of the end intended.³⁸ With reference to the prudential operation, the act by which a man pronounces what means is best is termed right judgment.

In order that the judgment of counsel be a right judgment, it must be a correct apprehension of things as they are.³⁹ The practical intellect as perfected by the habitus of synesis and gnome is readily disposed to judge well concerning good means to a good end. That there is need for two different virtues under different circumstances St. Thomas clearly states:

36 S. I., II-II, q. 51, a. 2, c.

37 Ibid., q. 51, a. 3, c.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid., q. 51, a. 3, ad 1. Cf. Marianne M. Childress, "The Prudential Judgment," Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, XXII, 145.

[J]udicium de unaquaque re fit per propria principia ejus. Inquisitio autem nondum est per principia, quia his habitis, non esset opus inquisitione, sed jam res esset inventa. Et ideo una sola virtus ordinatur ad bene consiliandum, duae autem virtutes ad bene juicandum, quia distinctio non est in communibus principis, sed in propriis.⁴⁰

Synesis and gnome differ in respect of the different rules on which the judgment is based. Synesis is the subordinate virtue of prudence which disposes the practical intellect to judge well concerning the means as related to general standards of common law. On the other hand, gnome is the subordinate virtue of prudence which confers an aptitude for right judgment, but it uses higher rules or principles as its standard; it judges of matters according to natural law, when common law fails to apply.⁴¹

The Praecipere of Prudence

In the acts of deliberation and judgment the intellect is primarily seeking knowledge concerning particular means. Such knowledge does not necessarily result in a concrete moral action. Now, the third act of the practical intellect, that of command, completes the direction of operation of the practical reason. "[I]ste actus est propinquior fini rationis practicae, inde est quod iste est principalis actus rationis practicae, et per consequens prudentiae."⁴² The third act, then, is command, the praecipere of prudence, which consists in applying to action the things counselled and judged.⁴³ It is the

40 Ibid., I-II, q. 57, a. 6, ad 3.

41 Ibid., II-II, q. 51, a. 4, c. Cf also I-II, q. 57, a. 6, ad 3.

42 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 8, c.

43 Ibid.

act closest to the end of practical reason, namely, truth as ordered to action, and, therefore, it is the chief act of the intellectual virtue of prudence—recta ratio agibilia. Man's speculations concerning good means to a good end, no matter how right they may be, will never of themselves lead to the performance of the good deed which is conducive to the good life. Man must order that good means must be employed. His command is the conclusion of a purely practical syllogism, an operative moral syllogism, one of the premisses of which is a right judgment of counsel.

The assertion that command is the principal act of prudence is generally agreed upon by those accepting the Thomistic teaching regarding prudence. However, as has already been shown, investigation reveals that there is a disagreement of opinion concerning the identity of the command of prudence.⁴⁴ The intellectual virtue of prudence is intimately connected with the moral act—this is a fact beyond dispute. But, at what stage of the psychological process of the moral act it functions directly and principally is matter for controversy. Stated specifically the problem is as follows: Is the command of prudence to be identified with the judicium electionis or with the imperium of the moral act? Is, for example, the judgment, "Therefore, I will here and now pay my debts," which is the conclusion of a practically practical syllogism and is known as the judicium electionis concerning a particular thing to be done, expressive of the command of prudence, or is the command of reason which follows the electio, that is, the imperium which in this case is expressed by the imperative sentence, "Pay your debts now," directly and principally expres-

⁴⁴ Cf. supra: Ch. I, 1-9.

sive of the command of prudence, the praecipere?

The problem of the identity of the praecipere of prudence is rooted in the interpretation of various texts of St. Thomas, as is indicated by Lottin's remarks.⁴⁵ The proposed study of pertinent texts with a view to focusing the problem in St. Thomas will now commence.

There will be a two-fold major division of the texts based on whether a cited text favors: (1) the identification of the command of prudence with the judicium electionis, or, (2) the identification of the command of prudence with the imperium. Within each of these principal divisions, the order to be followed in the presentation of the texts will be that of their chronological sequence,⁴⁶ unless there be a need for a change in the order. First to be considered are the passages which seem to favor the identification of the command of prudence with the judgment of election (judicium electionis).

Identification of the Praecipere of Prudence with the Judicium Electionis

In his treatment of the cardinal virtues in his early work, the Commentary on the Sentences, St. Thomas considers the problem whether prudence has an act distinct from that of the other virtues.

Obj. 1 [U]t Philosophus dicit in VI Ethics,⁴⁷ "Prudentia praeceptiva est."—Sed praecipere de operandis idem videtur quod electio, quae est actus virtutis moralis, ut dicit Philosophus in VI

45 Cf. supra Ch. I, 7 and 8. (It is necessary to mention here that two of the textual references, namely, In I Ethics, lect. 1, n. 8, and S. I., II-II, q. 47, a. 1, ad 2, will not be included in this study, for an analysis shows them not to be pertinent texts.)

46 Cf. supra Ch. II, 23, fn. 43.

47 Aristotle, Ethics, VI, 10, 1143a8.

Ethics.⁴⁸ Ergo prudentia non habet distinctum actum aliis virtutibus.

ad 1 [E]lectio finis proximi pertinet ad virtutem moralem quantum ad hoc quod electio ad appetitum pertinet, sed electio eorum quae ad illum finem ordinantur, pertinet ad prudentiam quantum ad id quod cognitionis est; electio enim aliquid habet de cognitione, et aliquid de appetitu.⁴⁹

Without a doubt, reference is being made to prudence as it functions in its chief act, to command (praecipere), as the objection indicates. Now, in his reply St. Thomas maintains that pertaining to choice (which is about means to the end) there is needed both moral virtue which perfects man in his appetite in such a way that he is suitably directed to his due end; and prudence which rightly disposes man in his reason towards the proper means ordained to the due end. Also, it seems that in stating that "electio . . . aliquid habet de cognitione" that he is referring to the judicium electionis. Thus it seems from this passage that St. Thomas is maintaining that the virtue whose act is to issue commands, that is, prudence, does so as it perfects the practical reason to make a right choice of means to the end.

A text in the Ethics gives fundamentally the same material regarding the relation between prudence and choice as that given in the text from the Commentary on the Sentences presented above. In commenting on the problem whether there can be moral virtue without prudence, St. Thomas gives a negative answer based on the argument regarding the necessity of moral virtue and prudence for right choice:

[E]lectio recta, quae requiritur ad operationem virtutis, non est sine

48 Ibid., VI, 2, 1139a22.

49 In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 3, obj. 1 et ad 1.

prudencia et virtute morali. Quia virtus moralis ordinat ad finem, prudentia dirigit circa ea quae sunt ad finem.⁵⁰

Here again the role of prudence is said to be that of directing the right means to the good end intended, as a requisite for right choice. St. Thomas is not restricting the use of the term prudence at this time, as is evident from the fact that this text follows soon after one in which he discusses the problem of the necessity of prudence wherein he comments on prudence "quae est bene consiliativa, et iudicativa et praeceptiva,"⁵¹ without there being any intervening comments regarding a restricted use of the term prudencia.

In a later work, the Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus in Communi, there is found a statement in which there is an identification of the intellectual act praecipere with the act eligere, for which the intellect is perfected by the virtue of prudence:

In actibus etiam rationis praecipuum est praecipere, sive eligere, quod facit prudentia; ad hoc enim ordinatur ad consultiva, in quo dirigitur subulcia, et iudicium de consiliatis in quo dirigitur synesis. Unde prudentia est cardinalis, aliae vero virtutes sunt adiunctae.⁵²

Worthy of note, also, is the fact that this passage expresses St. Thomas' judgment that it is the cardinal virtue of prudence which perfects the practical intellect in its acts of commanding the right means to be used, not the subordinate virtues of subulcia and synesis.

In the De Virtutibus Cardinalibus, when treating of the four cardinal virtues, St. Thomas refers to the functioning of prudence in stating that "per

50 In VI Ethics, lect. 11, n. 1289.

51 Ibid., lect. 10, n. 1269.

52 De Vir. in Comm., q. unic., a. 12, ad 26.

prudentiam ratio sit bene praeceptiva."⁵³ However, how this is accomplished is not explained beyond the statement that "ad prudentiam pertinet id quod est praecipuum in cognitione dirigente."⁵⁴

In the Prima Secundae, in answer to the question whether prudence is a virtue necessary to man, St. Thomas has this to say:

Prudentia est virtus maxime necessaria ad vitam humanam. Bene enim vivere consistit in bene operari. Ad hoc autem quod aliquis bene operetur, non solum requiritur quid faciat, sed etiam quomodo faciat; ut scilicet secundum electionem rectam operetur, non solum ex impetu aut passione. Cum autem electio sit eorum quae sunt ad finem, rectitudo electionis deo requirit: scilicet debitum finem, et id quod convenienter ordinatur ad debitum finem: ad debitum autem finem homo convenienter disponitur per virtutem quae perficit partem animae appetitivam, cuius objectum est bonum et finis. Ad id autem quod convenienter in finem debitum ordinatur, oportet quod homo directe disponatur per habitum rationis, quia consiliari et eligere, quae sunt eorum, quae sunt ad finem, sunt actus rationis. Et ideo necesse est in ratione esse aliquam virtutem intellectualem, per quam perficiatur ratio ad hoc quod convenienter se habeat ad ea quae sunt ad finem. Et haec virtus est prudentia. Unde prudentia est virtus necessaria ad bene vivendum.⁵⁵

In this particular text, St. Thomas is certainly being consistent with his position as expressed in the Sentences and in the Ethics regarding the requisites for right choice, namely, a due end and that which is suitably ordained to the due end, that is, right means, and the corresponding need for moral virtue and prudence. Worthy of special note is the fact that he mentions counsel and choice as the acts of reason for which man's intellect must be rightly disposed by prudence, while the imperium is not mentioned. The very "why" for the

53 De Vir. Card., a. 1, c.

54 Ibid.

55 S. T., I-II, q. 57, a. 5, c.

existence of the recta ratio agibilium is explained only in terms of its being necessary for the bona electio, which precedes the imperium. This St. Thomas teaches in agreement with the teaching of Aristotle.⁵⁶

In discussing the question whether there can be moral virtue without intellectual virtue, St. Thomas considers the work of prudence with respect to the act of right choice, and he explicitly states that in order to choose rightly man must be perfected in the three acts of his reason which concern a thing to be done, namely, the acts of counselling, judging, and commanding.

Sine prudentia quidem esse non potest moralis virtus, quia moralis virtus est habitus electivus, idest faciens bonam electionem. Ad hoc autem quod electio sit bona, duo requiruntur. Primo, ut sit debita intentio finis; et hoc fit per virtutem moralem, quae vim appetitivam inclinat ad bonum conveniens rationi, quod est finis debitus. Secundo, ut homo recte accipiat ea, quae sunt ad finem; et hoc non potest esse nisi per rationem recte consiliantem, judicantem, et praecipientem; quod pertinent ad prudentiam et ad virtutes sibi annexas.⁵⁷

Here, too, then, the praecipere of prudence is ordered to the bona electio, an act prior to the imperium. This particular text seems to sum up and to connect what has been presented in the previously quoted passages.

The following text of the Prima Secundae is only an extremely concise expression of that which has already been brought to light regarding the relation between the intellectual virtue of prudence and the act of choice. However, it has a setting different from that of the other texts—for it is a part of St. Thomas' treatment of the problem whether the irascible and concupiscible powers are a subject of virtue—and therefore it seems worthwhile to include it.

⁵⁶ Aristotle, Ethics, VI, 13.

⁵⁷ S. T., I-II, q. 58, a. 4, c.

In reply to an objection that moral virtue is not in the irascible and concupiscible powers, based on the truth that the principal act of moral virtue is choice, St. Thomas discusses choice, and also brings in prudence:

[I]n electione duo sunt: scilicet intentio finis, quae pertinet ad virtutem moralem, et praescriptio eius quod est ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam. . . . Quod autem habeat rectam intentionem finis circa passiones animae, hoc contingit ex bona dispositione irascibilis et concupiscibilis. Et ideo virtutes morales circa passiones sunt in irascibili et concupiscibili; sed prudentia est in ratione.⁵⁸

This text just verifies what has already been stated.

Identification of the Praecipere of Prudence with the Imperium

The texts which seem favorable towards the identification of the command of prudence with the imperium are now to make their appearance. It is of interest and, perhaps, of significance to note, by way of introduction, that there are only a few pertinent texts to support this side of the problem, and that these are found in the Secunda Secundae. In the Secunda Secundae, St. Thomas treats of virtue primarily as related to concrete activity, whereas in the Prima Secundae he treats of virtue as an internal principle of the morally good act.

The principal act of prudence, the praecipere of prudence, receives very special treatment in the Secunda Secundae in the article bearing the title "Utrum Praecipere Sit Principalis Actus Prudentiae." The first part of the body of St. Thomas' response to this query will be presented as a prelude to a pertinent text.

[P]rudentia est recta ratio agibilium, ut supra dictum est. Unde

58 Ibid., I-II, q. 56, a. 4, ad 4.

oportet quod ille sit praecipuus actus prudentiae qui est praecipuus actus rationis agibilium. Cuius quidem sunt tres actus. Quorum primus est consiliari, quod pertinet ad inventionem, nam consiliari est quaerere, ut supra habitum est. Secundus est iudicare de inventis; et hoc facit speculativa ratio. Sed practica ratio, quae ordinatur ad opus, procedit ulterius, et est tertius actus eius praecipere; qui quidem actus consistit in applicatione consiliorum et iudicatorum ad operandum. Et quia iste actus est propinquior fini rationis practicae, inde est quod iste est principalis actus rationis practicae, et per consequens prudentiae.⁵⁹

The statement regarding the praecipere as the third act of prudence "qui quidem actus consistit in applicatione consiliorum et iudicatorum ad operandum" gives rise to the question how the praecipere applies to action the things counselled and judged.

St. Thomas' reply to an objection to the position that command is an act of prudence gives the answer: "Movere absolute pertinet ad voluntatem. Sed praecipere importat motionem cum quadam ordinatione. Et ideo est actus rationis, ut supra dictum est."⁶⁰ According to the text of the objection, to command cannot be an act of prudence, which is an intellectual virtue, for the act of commanding is said to belong to the will which has the power of moving the other powers. Now, in the text just quoted, St. Thomas, in defending the praecipere as an act of prudence, bases his argument on the nature of the intellectual act of command which denotes motion not absolutely considered,⁶¹ for the motion of the intellect in the act of command consists in intimating or declaring some act by moving a man to that act. Such an intellectual act of

59 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 8, c.

60 Ibid., II-II, q. 47, a. 8, ad 3.

61 Ibid., I-II, q. 17, a. 1, ad 3.

command is properly called the imperium by St. Thomas in the Prima Secundae.⁶² Because of this important function being here assigned to the praecipere of prudence, this text is considered by some to be a decisive text in favor of the position that the praecipere of prudence is to be identified with the imperium.

A text which indicates an identification of the praecipere of prudence with the imperium even more effectively than the one already quoted is II-II, q. 48, a. 1, ad 4.

Obj. 4 Sicut consiliari et iudicare et praecipere sunt actus rationis practicae, ita etiam et uti, sicut supra habitum est. Sicut ergo eubulia adiungitur prudentiae, quae pertinet ad consilium, et synesis et gnome, quae pertinent ad iudicium, ita etiam debuit poni aliquid pertinens ad usum.

Ad 4 Dicendum quod recte praecipere et recte uti semper se concomitantur, quia ad praeceptum rationis sequitur obedientia inferiorum virium, quae pertinent ad usum.⁶³

The context regards the question whether three parts of prudence are fittingly assigned, that is, the integral, subjective, and potential parts. The particular objection given above regards only the potential parts. It seems that eubulia, synesis and gnome perfect the practical intellect and are listed by Aristotle as the potential parts of the virtue of prudence; yet they do not suffice in fulfilling all the functions required of those parts of prudence that are subordinate to prudence. Eubulia, synesis and gnome perfect the practical intellect in the acts of reason prior to the act of commanding, that is, in the acts of counselling and judging, and they do not extend to the per-

62 Ibid., I-II, q. 17, a. 1, c.

63 Ibid., II-II, q. 48, art. unic., obj. 4 et ad 4.

fecting of the practical intellect for the act of right use which is an act of reason. What has already been stated about usus must here be recalled. Usus is essentially an act of the will, for its proper function is to apply something to an operation; first and principally usus belongs to the will as mover.⁶⁴ This act, however, as it occurs in the process of the production of a moral act follows the intellectual act of command (imperium) in such a way that the reason may rightly be said to direct the operation and thus usus is said to be an act of reason. When St. Thomas states his reply to the objection, it seems that he is most assuredly referring to the imperium when he says that "recte praecipere et ratione uti semper se concomitantur." Contained implicitly in his reply is his judgment that there is no need for a virtue to perfect the intellect for the act of use, since the virtue of prudence which disposes the practical intellect for the act of commanding rightly (where praecipere is identical with imperium) takes care of perfecting the intellect in the act of directing the right use of powers. This, then, most definitely favors the position that prudence functions principally in rightly disposing the practical intellect for the act of command called the imperium.

The summation of St. Thomas' thought regarding the role of prudence as it perfects the intellect in its chief act will be incorporated into the general summary.

General Summary

By means of an examination of the expressed views of some contemporary

⁶⁴ Ibid., I-II, q. 16, a. 1, c.

Thomists regarding the praecipere of prudence, it was shown that the grouping of the diverse opinions concerning its identity is as follows:

- (1) The praecipere of prudence is to be identified with the imperium of the moral act.
- (2) The praecipere of prudence is to be identified with the judicium electionis of the moral act.
- (3) Dubious position regarding the identity of the praecipere of prudence.

This study particularly indicated the need for a textual study of the writings of St. Thomas, in order to focus the existing problem concerning the identity of the praecipere of prudence in St. Thomas. Such a study was then proposed as the primary purpose of this thesis. The procedure to be followed in order to fulfill this aim was

- (1) To set up the framework in which the problem occurred:
 - (A) The moral act according to the philosophy of St. Thomas;
 - (B) The acts of prudence according to the philosophy of St. Thomas.
- (2) To show the full force of the texts regarding the praecipere of prudence within this framework.

In the consideration of the steps involved in the moral act according to the philosophy of St. Thomas, the most important part was the textual study of the judicium electionis and the imperium. It was seen that regarding the judicium electionis St. Thomas taught: (1) that the judicium electionis is a co-function with the will-act electio in the act of choice--it directs the electio; (2) that the judicium electionis as a conclusion of the practical syllogism terminates the act of consilium; and (3) that, because the judicium electionis and the electio are mutually related in causing the act of choice, the electio is said, in a way, to be the conclusion of counsel. St. Thomas'

teaching regarding the imperium is summed up in the following statement:

"Ratio habet vim movendi a voluntate . . .; ex hoc enim quod aliquis vult finem, ratio imperat de his quae sunt ad finem."

That the intellectual virtue of prudence functions in perfecting the practical intellect in its acts of counselling, judging, and commanding was next discussed. This led to a particularized study—a textual study—of the principal act of prudence. The textual study of the command of prudence, the praecipere of prudence, revealed at least this fact: according to the teaching of St. Thomas, the intellectual virtue of prudence is influential in perfecting the practical intellect both for the judicium electionis and for the imperium. However, it also revealed the fact that there seems to be a lack of decisiveness in the texts of St. Thomas. On one hand, St. Thomas taught that prudence functioning principally in perfecting the intellect for commanding does so in perfecting the intellect for making a right judgment of choice (judicium electionis). Now, this act precedes, in the order of time, the imperium of the moral act. Since St. Thomas stressed the fact that prudence is most necessary because of this function of perfecting the intellect for the judicium electionis, these texts seem to be of particular significance and importance. On the other hand, St. Thomas taught in the Secunda Secundae that to prudence is assigned the function of suitably disposing the practical intellect in its act of command, signified by the term imperium.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Cornelia Mary Callahan, C.S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Jan. 18, 1954
Date

Jules Toner, S.J.
Signature of Adviser