

Thomistic Concept Of Prudence

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INTRODUCTION

It is my intention in this work, not to contrast the thomistic concept of prudence with that of any other, but rather to give only what Saint Thomas himself teaches. For if St. Thomas is understood, the teaching of the Church becomes simultaneously clear. This presentation of St. Thomas' doctrine will be handled in outline form so as to give a clearer approach to this most important virtue, prudence.

All citations will accordingly be from Saint Thomas' Summa Theologiae, prima and secunda secundae. And in the thesis itself, what is not directly from St. Thomas, is basically his thought either in summary or paraphrase.

It is my hope that this treatment of prudence will make the virtue a little more clearer and hence the more desired. This will, not in the greatest stretch of the imagination, certainly not be a thorough expose of the virtue of prudence. However, I hope it will enkindle or keep alive a desire to go directly to St. Thomas. For his presentation makes all truth easier to grasp; and his clear concise logic gives to the pursuit of knowledge a positive sense of achievement.

....With all thy possession purchase prudence.
Take hold on her and she shall exalt thee: thou
shalt be glorified by her when thou shall embrace
her.....Proverbs, chapter 4, verses 7-8.

1.

CONCERNING VIRTUES AS TO THEIR ESSENCE

Human virtue is a good operative habit. Habit, because man's human powers, intellect and will are tended toward universals (truth and good) and must be determined to particular good acts by habits.

The rational powers, which are proper to man, are not determined to one particular action, but are inclined indifferently to many; and they are determinate to acts by means of habits. Therefore human virtues are habits. 1.

Human virtue is operative because it is a perfection, and perfection implies operation.

Now man is so constituted that the body holds the place of matter, the soul that of form. The body indeed, man has in common with all other animals...only those forces which are proper to the soul, namely the rational forces, belong to man alone. And therefore human virtue cannot belong to the body, but belongs to that which is proper to the soul. Wherefore human virtue does not have reference to being but to act. Consequently it is essential to human virtue to be an operative habit. 2.

Goodness is also essential to human virtue, because it is a perfection of a power. And power's limitation must need be good for evil implies defect not power.

Virtue is defined as a "good quality of the mind by which we live rightly or righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us without us." This definition is most suitable for it comprises all the four causes of virtue.

The formal cause of virtue, as of everything, is gathered from its genus and difference, when it is defined as a good quality: for quality is the genus of virtue, and the difference, good. But the definition would be more suitable if for quality we substitute habit, which is the proximate genus.

Now virtue has no matter out of which it is formed, as neither has any other accident; but it has matter about which it is concerned, and matter in which it exists, namely the subject.

The matter about which virtue is concerned is its object, and this could be included in the above definition, because the object fixes the virtue to a certain species, and here we are giving the definition of virtue in general. And so for the material cause we have the subject, which is mentioned when we say that virtue is a good quality of the mind.

The end of virtue, since it is an operative habit, is operation. But it must be observed, that some operative habits are referred to as vicious habits because they have reference to evil: others are sometimes referred to good, sometimes to evil; for instance opinion is referred to both the true and the untrue: whereas virtue is a habit which is always referred to the good: and so the distinction of virtue from those habits which are always referred to evil, is expressed in the words by which we live righteously: and its distinction from those habits which are sometimes referred to good, sometimes to evil in the words, of which no one makes bad use.

Lastly God is the efficient cause of all infused virtue, to which this definition applies; and this is expressed in the words which God works in us without us. If we omit this phrase, the remainder of the definition will apply to all virtues in general, whether acquired or infused. 3.

As regards the good used in the definition of virtue, St. Thomas differentiates between the two types of good.

Good which is put in the definition of virtue, is not the good in general which is convertible with being, and which extends further than quality, but the good as fixed by reason, with regard to which Dionysius says: 'that the good of the soul is to be on accord with reason' (Divine Names, IV). 4

In reference to the fact that no one can make bad use of any virtue, it seems in certain cases a virtue has been put to bad use. This is said in reference to the virtue concerned in so far as one looks upon the virtue externally, "for instance by having evil thoughts of a virtue, i.e. by hating or being proud of it: but one can't make bad use of a virtue as a principle of action, so that an act of virtue be evil." 5

CONCERNING THE INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL VIRTUES

The habits of the speculative intellect are virtues because they confer an aptness for doing good, viz. the consideration of truth, since this is the good work of the intellect.

"Since habits of the speculative intellect do not effect the appetative part, nor effect it in any way, but only the intellective part; they may indeed be called virtues in so far as they confer an aptness for a good work" 6.

In regards to the speculative intellect there are three habits, Wisdom, Science and Understanding. There are three because speculatively we know truth in two ways, in itself or through some other truth. If in itself, it is a principle and proper to understanding. If through another, it may be seen in view of its proximate principles, a habit viewed thuswise is science. Or it may go beyond the proximate and seek an ultimate explanation, a habit in this way would be wisdom.

Science depends upon understanding as on a virtue of a higher degree: and both of these depend upon wisdom, as obtaining the highest place, and containing beneath itself both understanding and science, by judging both of the conclusions of science, and of the principles upon which they are based. 7.

As man is man because of intellect and will so he has virtues proper to both. For understanding, wisdom, art, and science are only perfections of man's intellect; they are not of themselves moral perfections.

These moral and intellectual perfections or virtues then, are distinct. For knowledge certainly doesn't produce moral good in us. If it did, then whenever we would know what is right, it would follow that we couldn't do wrong. This is manifestly not the case. The moral virtues thus guide us rightly as

regards our choice of our knowledge of good and evil.

Accordingly for a man to do a good deed, it is requisite not only that his reason be well disposed by means of a habit of intellectual virtue; but also that his appetite be well disposed by means of a habit of moral virtue. And so moral virtue differs from intellectual virtue, even as the appetite differs from reason. Hence just as the appetite is the principle of human acts, in so far as it partakes of reason, so are moral habits are to be considered virtues in so far as they are in conformity with reason. 8.

Some would contest the division or distinction of virtue into the intellectual and moral. But this division is not only fitting but altogether mandatory. Since the only human actions of man have as their basis the intellect or will or both. Thus the perfection of these faculties are justly called intellectual and moral. There are some virtues however which are neither, such as faith, hope, and charity. But these are superhuman virtues.

As virtue perfects man's speculative or practical intellect in order that this deed, it will be an intellectual virtue: whereas if it perfects his appetite it will be a moral virtue. It follows therefore that every human virtue is either intellectual or moral. 9.

CONCERNING THE MEAN OF VIRTUE

The good of the moral virtues consists in the conformity with the rule of reason and this is the mean they use, that of human reason. This mean of reason is the middle way between excess and deficiency.

The moral virtues derive their goodness from the rule of reason, while their matter consists in passions or operations. If therefore we compare moral virtue to reason, then, if we look at that which it has of reason, it holds the position of one extreme viz. conformity; while excess and defect take the position of the other extreme, viz. deformity. But if we consider moral virtue in respect of its matter, then it holds the position of mean, in so far as it makes passion conform to the rule of reason. 10.

The mean of moral virtues are sometimes rational, real, or both.

Every mean is a rational mean if the mean of reason is considered as that which the reason puts into some particular matter, since moral virtue observes the mean through the conformity with right reason. The rational mean is sometimes the real mean as in the case of justice. And on the other hand sometimes the rational mean is not the real mean but is considered in relation to us, our beer capacity for example.

The intellectual virtues also observe the mean. The object of the speculative intellectual virtue is truth taken absolutely; this truth is apprehended by our intellect but is measured by things by way of conformity. This conformity is a certain mean. The truth of practical intellectual virtue, considered in relation to things, is by way of that which is measured. Thus both in the practical and speculative virtues of the intellect, the mean consists in the conformity with things.

Accordingly the good of the speculative intellect consists in a certain mean, by way of conformity with the things themselves, in so far as the intellect expresses them to be what they are, or as not being what they are not: and it is in this that the nature of truth consists. There will be excess if something false is affirmed as though something were, which in reality is not: and there will be deficiency if something is falsely denied, and declared not to be whereas in reality it is. 11.

PRUDENCE = AN INTELLECTUAL OR MORAL VIRTUE?

The intellectual habit of art is certainly a virtue, for it perfects the intellect in knowledge of how to do things. And moreover it is a virtue in the same way that speculative habits are in so far as both don't make good works as regards the use of the habit, but only as regards the aptness to work well.

Now what determines the goodness of the use of art is prudence, a

distinct virtue from art. For art is right reason about things to be made, and prudence is right reason about things to be done.

Where the nature of virtue differs there is a different kind of virtue. Now some habits have the nature of virtue, through merely conferring the aptness for a good work: while some habits are virtues, not only through conferring aptness for a good work but also through conferring the use. But art confers the mere aptness for a good work; since it does not regard the appetite; whereas prudence confers not only aptness for a good work, but also the use: for it regards the appetite, since it presupposes the rectitude thereof.

The reason for the difference is that art is right reason about things to be made while prudence is right reason about things to be done.

Now making and doing differ in that making is an action passing into outward matter; whereas doing is an action abiding in the agent. Accordingly prudence stands in the same relation to these human actions....Consequently it is requisite for prudence, which is right reason about things to be done, that man be well disposed with regards to the end; and this depends upon the rectitude of the appetite. Wherefore for prudence there is need of moral virtue which rectifies the appetite. 12.

Thus in order for right living, the need for prudence is easily seen. For it deals with the right way of performing man's human actions, his free acts.

In virtue of all it contains, prudence is a very complex virtue. For there are many others subject to it, which without close scrutiny might be taken for prudence itself. The three principle virtues subject to prudence are counsel, as regards the speculative intellect, and judgement and command as regards the practical intellect. These three are but helps or specific contributions to the virtue of prudence.

Although the moral and intellectual virtues are distinct, as has been shown above, nevertheless they have various and important inter-relationships. Moral virtue is impossible without our first having the intellectual virtues of understanding and prudence. For prudence is that virtue

by which our choice of means toward a goal is made, and prudence takes for granted understanding. The moral virtues can exist, however, without the other intellectual virtues.

Moral virtues can be without some of the intellectual virtues viz. wisdom, science, and art; but not without prudence and understanding. Moral virtue cannot be without prudence, because it is a habit of choosing, i.e. making us choose well. Now for a choice to be good two things are necessary: 1) that the intention be directed to a due end; and this done by moral virtue. 2) that man take rightly those things which have reference to the end: and this cannot be done unless he reason, counsel, judge, and command aright, which is the function of prudence and the virtues annexed to it. Wherefore there can be no moral virtue without prudence and understanding. 13.

Conversely of the intellectual, prudence and prudence alone is the virtue which cannot exist without the moral virtues, because prudence demands a rightness of will or intention in every act. And this correct attitude or intention of the mind is proper to moral virtues because they perfect the passions of man.

Other intellectual virtues can but prudence cannot be without the moral virtues. The reason for this is that prudence is right reason about things to be done (and this not merely in general but also in particular) about which things actions are....in order that man be rightly disposed with regard to particular principles of action, viz. the ends; he needs to be perfected by certain habits, whereby it becomes connatural, as it were, to man to judge aright the end. This is done by the moral virtues: for the virtuous man judges aright of the end of virtue itself, because such as man is, such does the end seem to him. Consequently the right reason about things to be done viz. prudence, requires man to have moral virtue. 14.

Thus from what has been said above, it is manifestly clear that prudence is strictly classed as an intellectual virtue, but dependent upon moral perfection.

PRUDENCE AS A CARDINAL VIRTUE.

Before we launch into the discussion as to prudence in reference to

moral virtue, it might be best to clear up in our minds the fact that prudence is also placed under the title of a moral virtue. For it is one of the cardinal virtues. In this wise it will best to quote entirely an objection and its answer from question 58, article three of the Prima-Secundae.

Objection: It would seem that virtue is not adequately divided into moral and intellectual virtue. For prudence seems to be a mean between moral and intellectual virtue, since it is reckoned among the intellectual virtues (Ethic. vi. 3, 5); and again is placed by all among the four cardinal virtues, which are moral virtues... Therefore virtue is not adequately divided among or into the intellectual or moral virtues as though there were no mean between them.

Answer: Prudence is essentially an intellectual virtue. But considered on the part of its matter, it has something in common with the moral virtues: for it is right reason about things to be done. It is in this sense that it is reckoned with the moral virtues. 15.

With this distinction we can more intelligently show how prudence deserves a place among the cardinal virtues. The moral virtues are deservedly called principle or cardinal because they are most perfect of all (2) types of human virtue. For they go farther than conferring the faculty for doing well. they actually cause the good to be done. For this reason, although they are below the intellectual virtues as regards subject (for they perfect the passions while the intellectual virtues perfect the intellect) they are above them as regards operation.

The possibility of calling other virtues principle or cardinal would arise from the misunderstanding of the nature of the moral virtues. For any good which man does is basically covered or contained by one of these virtues.

If, as was just said, any good man does springs from the cardinal virtues, these virtues must necessarily differ, because man can do more than one good thing. The principle criteria for distinction of the various cardinal virtues are the powers which they perfect. Prudence and Justice are concern-

ed with the particular and social actions of man respectively, and temperance and fortitude strengthen or perfect the concupiscible and irascible sense appetite of man.

The cardinal virtues are often referred to as social, perfecting, perfect, and Exemplar virtues. Social, in so far as they in man according to his nature, since man is a social animal by nature; Perfecting, since they belong to man who is on his way toward the Divine similitude; Perfect, because these are also the virtues of those who have attained the Divine similitude; Exemplar, because they may be considered as originally existing in God, and we attempt to come up to the Divine perfection.

As has been said above, prudence is concerned with the particular actions of man. (indeed this is why it is listed among the moral virtues) That prudence is concerned about the particular acts of man, and hence is most necessary if man is to live a good life is clearly shown by St. Thomas.

Prudence is a virtue most necessary for human life. For a good life consists in good deeds. Now in order to do good deeds, it matters not only what a man does, but also how he does it; to wit, that he do it from right choice and not merely from impulse or passion. And since choice is about things in reference to the end, rectitude of choice requires two things; namely, the due end, and something suitably ordained to that due end. Now man is suitably directed to his due end by a virtue which perfects the soul in the appetative part, the object of which is the good and the end. And to that which is suitably ordained to the due end man needs to be rightly disposed by a habit in his reason, because counsel and choice which are about things ordered to the end, are acts of the reason. Consequently an intellectual virtue is needed in the reason, to perfect the reason, and to make it suitably affected towards things ordained to the end; and this virtue is prudence. Consequently prudence is a virtue necessary to lead a good life. 16.

CONCERNING THE PARTS OF PRUDENCE IN GENERAL.

Just as there are three types of parts, integral, subjective or logical, and potential, so prudence can be divided accordingly.

Parts are of three kinds, namely, integral, as wall, roof, and foundation are parts of a house; subjective, as ox and lion are parts of animal; and potential, as nutritive and sensitive powers are parts of the soul. Accordingly parts can be assigned to virtue in these three ways. 17.

As regards integral parts, the things which need to concur for the perfect act of a virtue, there are eight. Five of these belong to prudence as a cognitive virtue, namely, memory, reasoning, understanding, docility, and shrewdness. The others belong to prudence as commanding and applying knowledge to action, namely, foresight, circumspection, and caution.

The reason for the division among these eight is seen from the fact three things may be observed in reference to knowledge. In the 1st. place knowledge itself, which, if it is of the past, is called memory, if of the present, whether contingent or necessary, is called understanding or intelligence. Secondly, the acquiring of knowledge which is caused either by teaching, to which pertains docility, or by discovery, and this belongs to shrewdness. Thirdly the use of knowledge, in as much as we proceed from things known to knowledge or judgement of other things, and this belongs to reason. And the reason, in order to command aright, requires to have three conditions. First, to order that which is befitting the end, and this belongs to foresight; secondly, to attend to the circumstances of the matter in hand, and this belongs to circumspection; thirdly, to avoid objects, and this belongs to caution. 18.

The subjective or logical parts of prudence are its various species. Thus: prudence whereby a man rules himself, and whereby a man rules a multitude, these in turn will be multiplied or subdivided according the multitude differs, eg. military, political, and domestic prudence. If prudence is considered in a wider sense as including also speculative knowledge, then its parts include dialectic, rhetoric, and physics according to three methods of prudence in the sciences. It may seem strange to include these as parts of prudence, but St. Thomas clearly shows why this is done.

The first of these (the three methods of prudence in the sciences) is the attaining of science by demonstration, which belongs to physics (if physics be understood to comprise all demonstrative sciences). The second method is to arrive at an opinion through probable premises, and this belongs to dialectics. The third method is to employ conjectures to induce a certain suspicion, or to persuade somewhat, and this belongs to rhetoric. It may be said, however, that these three belong to prudence properly so called, since it argues sometimes from necessary premises, sometimes from probabilities, and sometimes from conjectures. 19.

The potential parts of a virtue are those virtues, which are certainly virtues in themselves, but which nevertheless are still further directed to some more generic virtue.

In this way the parts of prudence are: 1) good counsel, 2) synthesis, which concerns judgement in ordinary occurrence, and 3) gnome, which concerns judgement in matters of exception to the law, while prudence concerns the chief act that of commanding. 20.

CONCERNING THE QUASI-INTEGRAL PARTS OF PRUDENCE.

Prudence has regard for contingent matters of action, and thuswise it is guided by what happened in the majority of cases, because like is concluded from like (or principles must be proportionate to their conclusions). For this knowledge we need experience, and experience is the result of many memories. Thus memory is a part of prudence. Because of its role in prudence St. Thomas gives four ways of perfecting the memory: make an unusual illustration of what one wishes to remember, consider it, will to remember it, and reflect on it often.

Understanding, as the correct estimate about some first self evident principle, is a part of prudence. For prudence is reason applied to action, and these first principles are necessary to reason.

Understanding denotes here, not the intellectual power, but the right estimate about some final principle, which is taken as self-

evident: thus we are said to understand the first principles of demonstrations. Now every production of reason proceeds from certain statements which are taken as primary: wherefore every process of reasoning must needs proceed from some understanding. Therefore since prudence is right reason applied to action, the whole process of prudence must needs have its source in understanding. Hence it is that understanding is reckoned as a part of prudence. 21.

Prudence must be taught by others or by experience.

As prudence is concerned with particular matters of action, and since such matters are of infinite variety, no one man can consider them all sufficiently; nor can this be done quickly, for it requires length of time. Hence in matters of prudence man stands in very great need of being taught by others, especially by old folk who have acquired a sane understanding of the ends in practical matters. 22.

In either case, whether taught by experience or by man, man must needs be docile. For it is only by docility that man is rendered capable of being taught anything. Thus docility is a part of prudence.

As docility enables man to acquire congruity from another, so shrewdness enables him to acquire congruity, or a right estimate, by himself. Hence prudence requires shrewdness as one of its parts, since prudence consists in a right estimate about matters of action.

As the work of prudence is to take good counsel, and since reason is necessary for good counsel, reason is rightly called a requisite or quasi-integral part of prudence, because it is needed for the perfection of prudence

The virtue of prudence is properly about the means to an end, and its proper work is to set these means in due order to the end. Consequently, future contingent things, in so far as they are or can be directed by man to the end of human life, are the matter of prudence: and these things are implied in the word foresight, so foresight is a part of prudence.

Accordingly foresight is the principal of all the parts of prudence, since whatever else is required for prudence, is necessary precisely that some particular thing might be directed to its end in the right manner. Hence it is that the very name of prudence is taken from foresight (providentia) as from its principal part. 23.

Circumspection, which compares the means with the circumstances, in order to arrive at the right thing to be done, (which evidently is the work of prudence) is then a part of prudence.

Just as it belongs to foresight to look on that which is by its nature suitable to an end, so it belongs to circumspection to consider whether it is suitable to the end in view of the circumstances. Now each of these presents a difficulty of its own, and therefore each is reckoned as a distinct part of prudence. 24.

Finally, caution is a part of prudence. Because prudence is concerned with contingent matters of action, and here there is a mixture of good and evil, thus prudence, as all moral acts, needs caution so that we may have such a grasp of the good as to avoid the evil.

CONCERNING THE SUBJECTIVE PARTS OF PRUDENCE.

It is the purpose of prudence, as well as its function, to govern and command, so that wherever in human acts we find a special kind of governance and command, there must be a special kind of prudence corresponding to these various acts of man. Now it is evident that there is a special kind of governing in one who not only governs himself but also a city or kingdom. So also there is a corresponding species, or subjective part, of prudence, i.e. regnative prudence.

The philosopher names regnative prudence after the principal act of a king which is to make laws, and although this applies to other forms of government, this is only in so far as they have a share of kingly government. 25.

Although regnative prudence is the highest of the species by which a multitude is governed, it would be incomplete without prudence on the part of those who obey. Because the subjects have a free will, a certain rectitude of government is required in them, that they may direct themselves in obeying their superiors; and to this belongs the species of prudence which is called political.

A different aspect of the object diversifies the species of a habit. Now the same actions are considered by the king, but under a more general aspect, as by his subjects who obey: since many obey one king in various departments. Hence regnative prudence is compared to this political prudence of which we are speaking, as master craft to handicraft. 26.

Now the household is a mean between the individual and the city or kingdom. And as prudence governing the individual is distinct from political prudence, so must domestic prudence be distinct from both.

The commanding of a kingdom in reference to the common good could be said to be twofold, to govern and protect. Things pertaining to the common good as regards governing belong to political prudence. It is only fitting therefore that things pertaining to the common good as regards protection from assailants belong to military prudence. Although military prudence is the least among these four types of prudence, nevertheless in times of war and strife it can be said to be the greatest in so far as without it the others would be in positive jeopardy. Because military prudence is concerned with the right use of external things, some would place it as an art rather than a part of prudence. But because of its reference to the common good military prudence is rightly called such.

CONCERNING THE POTENTIAL PARTS OF PRUDENCE.

When a human act is made good, this is done by means of a virtue. Since the taking of good counsel is connected with prudence and is preeminently an action of man, good counseling or euboulia must be considered a human virtue.

Although connected with prudence euboulia is a separate virtue in itself, as we have seen above. But without prudence euboulia could not be. For virtues are said to be different according to their acts, and since euboulia makes man take good counsel and prudence makes man command well, they are distinct, but distinctly related. Since euboulia is directed to prudence as counsel is directed to command, i.e. to something principal, in this case to a principal virtue.

Different acts are directed in different degrees to the one end which is a good life in general: for counsel comes first, judgement follows, and command comes last. The last named has an immediate relation to the last end: whereas the other two acts are related thereto remotely. Nevertheless these have certain proximate ends of their own, the end of counsel being the discovery of what has to be done, and the end of judgement, certainty. Hence this proves not that euboulia is not a distinct virtue from prudence, but that it is subordinate thereto, as a secondary to a principal virtue. 27.

Synesis, right judgement about particular practical matters, is as such a virtue akin to prudence. Since prudence also has to do with right judgement about practical matters. Synesis and euboulia are then closely related to prudence, but at the same time are distinct virtues in themselves. Because virtues differ as their acts do, and good judgement and good counseling, i.e. synesis and euboulia's, respective acts differ.

Just as synesis is the virtue of right judgement about particular practical matters, it would be fitting to have another virtue as regards

right judgement in higher matters or principles. This virtue is called gnome. By reason of this virtue then man can discriminate in his judgement and thereby judge a greater number of things by his reason. This gnome although a part of prudence, is, just as synesis and euboulia, a separate virtue in itself.

It belongs to Divine Providence alone to consider all things that may happen beside the common course. On the other hand, among men, he who is most discerning can judge a greater number of such things by his reason: this belongs to gnome, which denotes a certain discrimination in judgement. 28.

PRUDENCE AND THE GIFT OF COUNSEL.

Counsel is fittingly a gift of the Holy Ghost. For the gifts of the Holy Ghost are dispositions whereby the soul is rendered amenable to the motion of the Holy Ghost. And since it is proper to man to be moved through research of reason to perform any particular action, this research of reason being called counsel, the Holy Ghost is said to move man by way of counsel. Since in this wise the soul is made amenable to motions of the Holy Ghost.

Hence counsel and prudence manifestly correspond to each other. Prudence which denotes rectitude of reason, is chiefly perfected and helped through being ruled and moved by the Holy Ghost, and this is counsel's function. Therefore counsel corresponds to prudence as helping and perfecting it.

A lower principle of movement is helped chiefly, and is perfected through being moved by a higher principle of movement, as a body being moved by a spirit. Now it is evident that the rectitude of human reason is compared to the Divine Reason, as a lower motive principle to a higher: for the Eternal Reason is the supreme rule of all human rectitude. Consequently prudence, which denotes rectitude of reason, is chiefly perfected and helped through being ruled and moved by the Holy

Ghost, and this belongs to the gift of counsel. Therefore the gift of counsel corresponds to the virtue of prudence, as helping and perfecting it. 29.

In this outline of prudence, the importance of this most fundamental virtue has not been sufficiently demonstrated directly. Although by seeing all that prudence contains or needs for its operation, it would be difficult not to see that man must needs have prudence if he is to live well. In view of this fact, that prudence is all important, I believe there could be no more fitting a close than St. Thomas' cogent argument as to the importance of prudence for a good life.

Prudence is a virtue most necessary for human life. For a good life consists in good deeds. Now in order to do good deeds, it matters not only what a man does, but also how he does it; to wit that he do it from right reason and right choice and not merely from impulse or passion. And, since choice is about things in reference to the end, rectitude of choice requires two things; namely, the due end, and something suitably ordained to that end. Now man is suitably directed to his due end by a virtue which perfects the soul in the appetative part, the object of which is the good and the end. And to that which is suitably ordained to the due end man needs to be rightly disposed by a habit in his reason, because counsel and choice, which are about things ordained to the end, are acts of the reason. Consequently an intellectual virtue is needed in the reason, to perfect the reason, and make it suitably affected towards things ordained to the end; and this virtue is prudence. Consequently prudence is a virtue necessary to lead a good life. 30.

Deo Gratias

....That thy ear may hearken to wisdom: incline thine heart to know prudence. For if thou shalt call for wisdom, and incline thine heart to prudence: If thou shalt seek her as money, and shalt dig for her as for a treasure: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and shalt find the knowledge of God....

Proverbs chapter 2 vs. 2-5

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1. Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 55, a. 1, corpus.
2. I-II, q. 55, a. 2, corpus.
3. I-II, q. 55, a. 4, corpus.
4. I-II, q. 55, a. 4, ad 2.
5. I-II, q. 55, a. 4, ad 5.
6. I-II, q. 57, a. 1, corpus.
7. I-II, q. 57, a. 2, corpus.
8. I-II, q. 58, a. 2, corpus.
9. I-II, q. 58, a. 3, corpus.
10. I-II, q. 64, a. 1, ad 1.
11. I-II, q. 64, a. 3, corpus.
12. I-II, q. 57, a. 4, corpus.
13. I-II, q. 58, a. 4, corpus.
14. I-II, q. 58, a. 5, corpus.
15. I-II, q. 58, ob. and ad 3.
16. I-II, q. 57, a. 5, corpus.
17. II-II, q. 48, a. 1, corpus.
18. II-II, q. 48, a. 1, corpus.
19. II-II, q. 48, a. 1, corpus.
20. II-II, q. 48, a. 1, corpus.
21. II-II, q. 49, a. 2, corpus.
22. II-II, q. 49, a. 3, corpus.
23. II-II, q. 49, a. 6, ad 1.
24. II-II, q. 49, a. 7, ad 3.
25. II-II, q. 50, a. 1, ad 3.
26. II-II, q. 55, a. 2, ad 2.
27. II-II, q. 51, a. 2, ad 2.
28. II-II, q. 51, aa. 4, ad 3.
29. II-II, q. 52, a. 2, corpus.
30. I-II, q. 57, a. 5, corpus.

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