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978-0-521-02944-5 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 36 - Prudence, (2a2ae. 47-56)

Thomas Gilby O.P.

Excerpt

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 47, I

de prudentia

CONSEQUENTER POST VIRTUTES THEOLOGICAS primo considerandum est, circa virtutes cardinales de prudentia:

- et primo de prudentia secundum se;
- secundo de partibus ejus;
- tertio de dono ei correspondente;
- quarto de vitiis oppositis;
- quinto de præceptis ad hoc pertinentibus.

Quæstio 47. de prudentia secundum se

Circa primum quærentur sexdecim:

1. utrum prudentia sit in voluntate vel in ratione;
2. si est in ratione, utrum in practica tantum, vel etiam in speculativa;
3. utrum sit cognoscitiva singularium;
4. utrum sit virtus;
5. utrum sit virtus specialis;
6. utrum præstituat finem virtutibus moralibus;
7. utrum constituat medium in eis;
8. utrum præcipere sit proprius actus ejus;
9. utrum sollicitudo vel vigilantia pertineat ad prudentiam;
10. utrum prudentia se extendat ad regimen multitudinis;
11. utrum prudentia quæ est respectu boni proprii sit eadem specie cum ea quæ se extendit ad bonum commune;
12. utrum prudentia sit in subditis, an solum in principibus;
13. utrum inveniatur in malis;
14. utrum inveniatur in omnibus bonis;
15. utrum insit nobis a natura;
16. utrum perdat per oblivionem.

^aThe theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, which have been considered in detail (2a2ae. 1-46. Vols. 31-6 of this series), open out directly to God himself who transcends ethics. Accordingly they differ from the moral virtues which deal with human values (1a2ae. 62, 2), even when they are not merely 'natural' or 'acquired' virtues, but shed on us or 'infused' by God and lifted into the life of grace (1a2ae. 63, 4). The various moral virtues are grouped round the four cardinal virtues (1a2ae. 61, 3), prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. True to his intellectualist temper, the author places prudence first, not because its deeds are nobler than those of justice (1a2ae. 66, 4), but because of its directive and imperative role

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NATURE OF PRUDENCE

prudence

AFTER THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES the cardinal virtues come next into discussion, and prudence to begin with.^a We consider

- first, the quality of prudence itself;
- then, its various parts (48–51);
- third, the corresponding gift of the Holy Ghost (52);
- fourth, its contrary vices (53–55);
- and finally, the precepts relating to it (56).

Question 47. nature of prudence

Here there are sixteen points of inquiry:

1. whether prudence is in the will or in the reason;
2. if in the reason, whether in the practical reason or in the theoretic as well;
3. whether it can know individual cases;
4. whether it is a virtue;
5. and a special virtue;
6. whether it appoints their ends for the moral virtues;
7. and fixes the just mean for them;
8. whether its proper act is effective command;
9. whether solicitude or vigilance is part of prudence;
10. whether prudence extends to the government of the people;
11. whether the prudence which regards one's own personal good is specifically the same as that which reaches to the common good;
12. whether subjects, or rulers only, have prudence;
13. whether it may be found in the wicked;
14. whether in all upright people;
15. whether it is inborn with human nature;
16. whether it may be forgotten and so lost.*

(ibid 3. cf below 2a2ae. 47, 6–8). He differs from many later moralists in insisting that precept or command, *imperium*, is essentially an act of mind, not of will (1a2ae. 17, 1, cf 90, 1).

The present volume contains his opening treatise on the Christian virtues as coming under ethical theology: the theological virtues lie largely outside, cf T. Gilby, Vol. 18 of this series; Appendices 5, *The Subordination of Morals*; 6, *Philosophical and Theological Morals*; and 7, *Morals and Religion*.

*An unusually long Question with 16 arts. 1–8 cover the main discussion, 9–16 are about supplementary matters.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 47, I

articulus 1. utrum prudentia sit in vi cognoscitiva, an in appetitiva

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod prudentia non sit in vi cognoscitiva, sed in vi appetitiva. Dicit enim Augustinus,² *Prudentia est amor, ea quibus adjuvatur, ab eis quibus impeditur, sagaciter eligens*. Sed amor non est in vi cognoscitiva, sed in appetitiva. Ergo prudentia est in vi appetitiva.

2. Præterea, sicut ex prædicta definitione apparet, ad prudentiam pertinet eligere sagaciter. Sed electio est actus appetitivæ virtutis, ut supra habitum est.³ Ergo prudentia non est in vi cognoscitiva, sed in vi appetitiva.

3. Præterea, Philosophus dicit quod *in arte quidem volens peccans eligibilior est, circa prudentiam autem minus, quemadmodum et circa virtutes*.⁴ Sed virtutes morales de quibus ibi loquitur, sunt in parte appetitiva; ars autem in ratione. Ergo prudentia magis est in parte appetitiva quam in ratione.

SED CONTRA est quod Augustinus dicit, *Prudentia est cognitio rerum appetendarum et fugiendarum*.⁵

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, sicut Isidorus dicit, *Prudens dicitur quasi porro videns; perspicax enim est, et incertorum prævidet casus*.⁶ Visio autem non est virtutis appetitivæ, sed cognoscitivæ. Unde manifestum est quod prudentia directe pertinet ad vim cognoscitivam, non autem ad vim sensitivam, quia per eam cognoscimus solum ea quæ præsto sunt, et quæ sensibus offeruntur. Cognoscere autem futura ex præsentibus vel præteritis, quod pertinet ad prudentiam, proprie rationis est, quia hoc per quamdam collationem agitur. Unde relinquitur quod prudentia proprie sit in ratione.

¹cf 1a2ae. 56, 2, ad 3; 3. III Sent. 33, 2, 4, iv. In Ethic. vi, lect. 4

²De mor. eccles. 1, 15. PL 32, 1322

³1a. 83, 3. 1a2ae. 13, 1

⁴Ethics vi, 5. 1140b22

⁵lxxxiii Quæst. 61. PL 40, 51

⁶Etymol. x, PL 82, 388

^bAbility, here called *vis*, elsewhere *potentia*, sometimes *facultas*. For the author's 'Faculty-Psychology' see 1a. 77. Vol. 11 of this series, ed. T. Suttor. The human faculties are not regarded as 'things' or mannikins, but as distinct powers of acting in one single though composite thing, the human substance. These qualities are further qualified by various 'habits' or settled dispositions to act in a certain manner, either for good (virtues, *virtutes*) or for evil (vices, *vitia*, in moral theology which is directly concerned only with evil only as a wrong or fault in moral or human acts).

The distinction between cognition and appetite, founded on the distinction between being as true and as good (cf. 1a. 5, 1 & 2; 14, 1; 19, 1), runs throughout the discussion on the virtues in the *Summa*. For the corresponding 'parts' of the soul, see 1a. 78, 1; 80, 1. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 3. Plato, *Republic* IV, 439D.

The treatise enters at once into the perennial debate whether right or wrong can be resolved into knowledge or error in the mind, or whether affective factors of

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NATURE OF PRUDENCE

article 1. is prudence in knowing or in loving ability?

THE FIRST POINT:¹ 1. In our loving ability it seems.^b For Augustine writes that prudence is love choosing wisely between the helpful and the harmful.² Now love is in our affective, not cognitive ability. So then prudence also.

2. Moreover, as appears from Augustine's definition, the function of prudence is to choose wisely. And we have agreed that choice is an appetitive act.³ Therefore prudence is not in a cognitive power, but an appetitive.

3. Besides, Aristotle observes that in art voluntary error is not so bad as involuntary, whereas in the field of prudence it is worse, as it is in that of the virtues.⁴ He is referring here to the moral virtues, which lie in our affective part, whereas art is in the reason. Consequently prudence is in our affective part rather than in the reason.

ON THE OTHER HAND Augustine holds that prudence is knowing the things to be sought after and the things to avoid.^{5c}

REPLY: According to Isidore,^d the term 'prudent', *prudens*, comes from 'looking ahead', *porro videns*, for the prudent man is keen-sighted and foresees how uncertainties will fall. Now sight is of a cognitive, not an affective power.⁶ And so it is clear that prudence is a function directly of a cognitive power. All the same that is not a sense-power, by which we know only objects offered here and now to empirical experience.^e Prudence learns from the past and present about the future; this is the special office of reason, since it involves a process of comparison. Accordingly we are left with the conclusion that prudence precisely speaking is in the reason.^f

good or bad will are more definitive. Though faithful to Socrates in his emphasis that 'right reason' is the constitutive determinant in moral virtue, as will appear, Thomas holds that 'right love' is an essential part; hence its distinction from intellectual virtue. cf 1a2ae. 56, 3; 58, 2, 3. Vol. 23, ed. W. D. Hughes.

^cFollowing Cicero, echoing the Greek Stoic, Chrysippus.

^dSt Isidore of Seville, *Hispalensis*, d. 636. To the medievals a much respected authority for his encyclopedic *Etymologies*, a storehouse of information about the classical world. The derivations he traces are sometimes fanciful. *Prudens* is a contraction of *providens*. cf below 46, 6.

^eThe memory in prudence is not simple sense-memory, but rather a reflection on it, cf below 49, 1. Comparison, *collatio*; a relating of the terms of individual experience by judgment and reasoning, *ratio particularis*, cf 1a. 78, 4.

^fThe article is supported by the Greek etymology of prudence, *phronēsis*, from *phronēō*, which expresses the activity of the *phrēn* of heart and mind, comprised in our verb to *think*, especially as in *to think to do something*.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 47, I

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est,⁷ voluntas movet omnes potentias ad suos actus. Primus autem actus appetitivæ virtutis est amor, ut supra dictum est.⁸ Sic ergo prudentia dicitur esse amor, non quidem essentialiter, sed inquantum amor movet ad actum prudentiæ. Unde et postea subdit Augustinus quod *prudentia est amor bene discernens, ea quibus adjuvetur ad tendendum in Deum, ab his quibus prudentia impediri potest*. Dicitur autem amor discernere inquantum movet rationem ad discernendum.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod prudens considerat ea quæ sunt procul inquantum ordinantur ad adjuvandum vel impediendum ea quæ sunt præsentialiter agenda. Unde patet quod ea quæ considerat prudentia ordinantur ad alia sicut ad finem. Eorum autem quæ sunt ad finem est consilium in ratione et electio in appetitu, quorum duorum consilium magis proprie pertinet ad prudentiam; dicit enim Philosophus quod *prudens est bene consiliativus*.⁹ Sed quia electio præsupponit consilium, est enim *appetitus præconsiliati*, ut dicitur in *Ethic.*,¹⁰ ideo etiam eligere potest attribui prudentiæ consequenter, inquantum scilicet electionem per consilium dirigit.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod laus prudentiæ non consistit in sola consideratione, sed in applicatione ad opus, quod est finis practicæ rationis. Et ideo si in hoc defectus accidat, maxime est contrarium prudentiæ, quia, sicut finis est potissimus in unoquoque, ita et defectus qui est circa finem est pessimus. Unde ibidem Philosophus subdit quod *prudentia non est solum cum ratione, sicut ars*;¹¹ habet enim, ut dictum est,¹² applicationem ad opus quod fit per voluntatem.

⁷Ia. 82, 4. 1a2ae, 9, 1⁸Ia. 20, 1. 1a2ae. 25, 3; 27, 4⁹*Ethics* VI, 5 & 9. 1140a25 & 1142b31¹⁰op cit III, 3. 1112a15¹¹op cit VI, 5. 1140b28¹²1a2ae. 57, 4

⁸A characteristic re-setting of Augustine in technical terms. Prudence is not love *essentialiter*, but *causaliter*, that is motivated by love, which prompts the mind to be discerning. Elsewhere Thomas says more, and his followers, notably John of St Thomas on the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, have developed his doctrine that love enters into knowledge by sympathy as a quasi-formal cause, and does not merely act on it as a quasi-efficient cause. But cf T. Gilby, Vol. 1, Appendix 10, *The Dialectic of Love in the Summa*. Choice a joint activity of mind and will; 1a2ae. 13, 1. ¹¹Things that are for the sake of an end, *ea quæ sunt ad finem*, Aristotle's *ta pros to telos*. Sometimes, but not always, or even usually, to be translated 'means to an end'. For a means as such is a pure utility, *bonum utile*, whereas moral values, such as being just, brave, or temperate, are goods in themselves, *bona honesta*, and there-

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Hence: 1. As we have already pointed out,⁷ the will sets all our other abilities into human activity. Now the initial activity of the appetitive power is loving, as we have seen.⁸ It is in this sense that prudence is said to be love, not that of its nature it is a kind of love, but because its activity is caused by love. And so Augustine adds that prudence is the love which well discerns between the helps and the hindrances in our striving towards God. Love is called discerning in that it moves the mind to discriminate.⁹

2. The prudent man thinks about matters far ahead inasmuch as they serve to help or hinder what then and there is to be done. And so it is evident that prudence is concerned with things that are for the sake of a further end.¹⁰ These fall under the deliberation of mind and the choice of will, and of the two, deliberation is the more characteristic of prudence, in accordance with Aristotle's observation that the prudent man is the well-advised man.⁹ Yet because choice presupposes deliberation, being a desire for what has been decided upon, as noted in the *Ethics*,¹⁰ it follows that choosing may be attributed to prudence in effect, in that it is guided throughout by deliberation.¹

3. The value of prudence consists not in merely thinking about a matter, but also in applying itself to do something, which is what the practical reason is for.¹ Given failure here, then this above all conflicts with prudence; for just as meeting its purpose is what matters most to anything so failing to do so is the worst that can befall it. Hence Aristotle goes on to say that prudence is not just a quality of mind, like art;¹¹ it also involves, as we have stressed,¹² our applying ourselves to a deed, and this comes about by the exercise of will.^k

fore ends, though subordinate and penultimate to our final end which is God. The metaphysical theology of the *Summa* is stubbornly pluralistic.

¹Deliberation and choice, cf 1a2ae. 13 & 14. The argument is content to stay with Aristotle's equation of prudence with well-advisedness, yet this last comes before the culminating act of prudence, which is to command, not deliberation or choice; cf below 47, 8; 51, 2. For deliberation, choice, and command as components of a full human act, see T. Gilby, Vol. 17, Appendix 1, *Structure of a Human Act*.

¹Application, i.e. effective command. See art. 8 below.

^kIn the passage quoted, Aristotle is arguing that art, *technē*, has not the excellence of virtue: elsewhere in the *Ethics* he regards it as technical skill. Yet the drift of the objection and response is clear. Prudence is committed to doing good deliberately. An unwitting lapse is excusable in morality, but is discreditable to an artist as such when he is not aware of his solecism. A gentleman is one who is never offensive—intentionally: the definition bears on the point, though it refers to good manners as an art, not a social moral virtue. cf 2a2ae. 114, on *affabilitas* or *urbanitas*.

For the distinction of art and prudence see 1a2ae. 57, 4

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 47, 2

articulus 2. utrum prudentia pertineat solum ad rationem practicam, an etiam ad speculativam

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:¹ I. Videtur quod prudentia non solum pertineat ad rationem practicam, sed etiam ad speculativam. Dicitur enim *Prov.*, *Sapientia est viro prudentia.*² Sed sapientia principaliter consistit in contemplatione. Ergo et prudentia.

2. Præterea, Ambrosius dicit, *Prudentia in veri investigatione versatur, et scientiæ plenior infundit cupiditatem.*³ Sed hoc pertinet ad rationem speculativam. Ergo prudentia consistit etiam in ratione speculativa.

3. Præterea, in eadem parte animæ ponitur a Philosopho ars et prudentia, ut patet in *Ethic.*⁴ Sed ars non solum invenitur practica, sed etiam speculativa, ut patet in artibus liberalibus. Ergo etiam prudentia invenitur et practica et speculativa.

SED CONTRA est quod Philosophus dicit quod *prudentia est recta ratio agibile.*⁵ Sed hoc non pertinet nisi ad rationem practicam. Ergo prudentia non est nisi in ratione practica.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, sicut Philosophus dicit, *prudentis est bene posse consilium.*⁶ Consilium autem est de his quæ sunt per nos agenda in ordine ad finem aliquem. Ratio autem eorum quæ sunt agenda propter finem est ratio practica; unde manifestum est quod prudentia non consistit nisi in ratione practica.

I. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est,⁷ sapientia considerat causam altissimam simpliciter: unde consideratio causæ altissimæ in quolibet genere pertinet ad sapientiam in illo genere. In genere autem humanorum actuum causa altissima est finis communis toti vitæ humanæ; et hunc finem intendit prudentia. Dicit enim Philosophus quod sicut ille qui ratiocinatur bene ad aliquem finem particularem, puta ad victoriam, dicitur esse prudens non simpliciter, sed in hoc genere, scilicet in rebus

¹cf 1a2ae. 56, 3. III *Sent.* 33, 2, 4, iv

²*Proverbs* 10, 23

³*De offic.* 1, 24. PL 16, 62

⁴*Ethics* VI, 6. 1140b35

⁵lib cit 5. 1140b20

⁶cap cit 1140a25

⁷1a2ae. 45, 1

^a*ratio speculativa, ratio practica*: not distinct faculties, but the same mind as engaged in the distinct functions of knowing for its own sake and knowing for the sake of doing or making something; 1a. 79, 11. cf 1a. 14, 16 & *De Veritate* III, 3.

^bVulgate. RSV: *a man of understanding hath wisdom.*

^cSt Ambrose, d. 397, Bishop of Milan. His *De Officiis ministrorum* is a treatise on Christian ethics, based on Cicero's *De Officiis*, but with special reference to the clergy.

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article 2. does prudence engage the practical reason, or the theoretic as well?

THE SECOND POINT:¹ 1. Both it would seem.² For it is written, *Wisdom is prudence for a man.*^{2b} Now wisdom lies mainly in contemplation. So then prudence also.

2. Moreover, Ambrose^c writes that prudence is engaged on investigating the truth, and fills us with the desire of fuller knowledge.³ Therefore it extends also to the theoretic reason.

3. Further, Aristotle puts art and prudence in the same part of the soul.^{4d} Now there is art in theory, as well as in practice; this appears in the liberal arts. Accordingly the same is the case with prudence.

ON THE OTHER HAND Aristotle holds that prudence is the right idea in our doing things.^{5e} But this is the business of the practical reason alone, and prudence, consequently, is nowhere else but there.

REPLY:^f The prudent man is one who is able to deliberate well, as Aristotle says.^{6g} Now deliberation is about what is to be done for the sake of an end. The reason as engaged with matters of this sort is the practical reason. Clearly, therefore, that is where prudence lies.

Hence: 1. Wisdom, as we have seen,⁷ contemplates the simply ultimate,^h and so to consider the ultimate cause in any particular field is a function of wisdom there. In the field of human acts¹ the ultimate cause is the common end of the whole of human life, and it is to this that prudence reaches out. Now Aristotle remarks that as a man who well thinks things out for some particular end, for instance, victory in battle, is called prudent, though not simply but with the qualification, in the field of military affairs, so he who well thinks things out for the whole of the good life is

^aNot expressly, but in effect. Aristotle distinguishes two faculties in the rational part of the soul, the scientific, *epistēmōnikon*, concerned with things whose first principles are invariable, and the calculative, *logistikōn*, or opinative, *doxastikōn*, concerned with things which admit of variation. This last is the seat of prudence and art.

^eH. Rackham translates the passage from Aristotle: prudence is a truth-attaining rational quality, concerned with action in relation to the things that are good for human beings. Right idea, right reason, *recta ratio*, *orthos logos*.

^fUnderlying the article is the Aristotelean criticism of Platonic conformity to an ideal world (cf *Republic* v–vii), not to our present environment.

^gAt this point the author is content to stay with the deliberative character of prudence; later he will treat good deliberation, well-advisedness, *euboulia*, as a virtue allied to prudence in the exact and specific sense, namely as a preceptive or imperative virtue. 2a2ae. 51, 1 & 2. For *consilium* see 1a2ae. 14, 3.

^h*causa altissima*: both highest cause and deepest ground.

¹human acts: used in the technical sense of free moral acts, defined in 1a2ae. 1, 1.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 47, 3

bellicis, ita ille qui bene ratiocinatur ad totum bene vivere dicitur prudens simpliciter.⁸ Unde manifestum est quod prudentia est sapientia in rebus humanis: non autem sapientia simpliciter, quia non est circa causam altissimam simpliciter; est enim circa bonum humanum; hoc autem non est optimum eorum quæ sunt. Et ideo signanter dicitur, quod *prudencia est sapientia viro*, non autem sapientia simpliciter.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod Ambrosius, et etiam Tullius,⁹ nomen prudentiæ largius sumunt pro qualibet cognitione humana tam speculativa quam practica. Quamvis dici possit quod ipse actus speculativæ rationis secundum quod est voluntarius cadit sub electione et consilio quantum ad suum exercitium, et per consequens cadit sub ordinatione prudentiæ; sed quantum ad suam speciem prout comparatur ad objectum, quod *est* verum necessarium, non cadit sub consilio nec sub prudentia.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod omnis applicatio rationis rectæ ad aliquid factibile pertinet ad artem; sed ad prudentiam non pertinet nisi applicatio rationis rectæ ad ea de quibus est consilium; et hujusmodi sunt in quibus non sunt viæ determinatæ perveniendi ad finem, ut dicitur in *Ethic*.¹⁰ Quia ergo ratio speculativa quædam facit, puta syllogismum, propositionem et alia hujusmodi, in quibus proceditur secundum certas et determinatas vias, inde est quod respectu horum potest salvari ratio artis, non autem ratio prudentiæ. Et ideo invenitur aliqua speculativa ars, non autem aliqua prudentia.

articulus 3. utrum prudentia sit cognoscitiva singularium

AD TERTIUM sic proceditur:¹ I. Videtur quod prudentia non sit cognoscitiva singularium. Prudentia enim est in ratione, ut dictum est.² Sed ratio est universalium, ut dicitur in *Physic*.³ Ergo prudentia non est cognoscitiva nisi universalium.

2. Præterea, singularia sunt infinita. Sed infinita non possunt comprehendere a ratione. Ergo prudentia, quæ est ratio recta, non est singularium.

3. Præterea, particularia per sensum cognoscuntur. Sed prudentia non

⁸*Ethics* VI, 5. 1140a26⁹*De invent. orat.* II, 53. Better, *De officiis* I, 5¹⁰*Ethics* III, 3. 1112b2¹cf *In Ethic.* VI, *lect.* 6 & 7²art. I³*Physics* I, 5. 189a5

¹In fact 'practical wisdom' is a happier translation than 'prudence' of *prudencia*, *phronēsis*, for prudence has come to have rather an unworthy sense: cf German *Klugheit*: foreword to 2a2ae. 53 below. Yet its wisdom is not contemptative and disinterested, but quite pragmatical. The author sides with Aristotle, not Plato, on the instant reality of this world.

Note the implication that moral values are not ultimate.

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called prudent quite simply.⁸ Clearly prudence is wisdom in human affairs, yet it is not wisdom pure and simple, because it is not about the utterly ultimate, but about the good-for-man, which is not the most ultimate and best of goods that exist. And so Scripture pointedly says that prudence is wisdom for a man, not wisdom absolutely.¹

2. Ambrose, and Cicero too,^{9k} take prudence broadly to mean any reasoned knowledge both practical and theoretical. Or if you like you might say that an act of the theoretic reason, inasmuch as it is voluntary, falls under deliberation and choice as regards its actual exercise, and consequently falls under the guidance of prudence. Yet as regards its specific and objective content, which is the bound-to-be true, it is not governed by our deliberation and prudence.

3. The applying of right reason to the making of something is a function of art. Prudence, however, is limited to matters that call for counsel, where, according to the *Ethics*, there is no fixed way of reaching the end.^{10l} Note also that inasmuch as it constructs such logical artefacts as syllogisms, propositions, and the like, which follow certain and determinate rules, the theoretic reason can preserve the quality of art, though not of prudence in their regard. And so you find art, but not a prudence, within the province of theory.

article 3. is prudence able to know individual cases?

THE THIRD POINT:¹ I. Apparently not.^a For prudence, we have agreed, is in the reason,² which, according to the *Physics*, deals with general truths.³ Therefore prudence is cognizant only of them.

2. Again, individuals are numberless and indefinite. Now reason cannot grasp the indefinite. Hence prudence, which is right reason, is not about individual cases.

3. Then also, we know particular things through sense.^b Prudence,

^kMarcus Tullius Cicero, d. BC 43, Roman orator, philosopher, statesman. His *De inventione oratoria*, an early work of which he spoke lightly, was highly prized in the Middle Ages.

^l*Ethics* III, 3. 1112a25. You do not deliberate about the inequality between the diagonal and a side of square.

^aThe discourse will be about bridging the apparent gap between two worlds, of universal eternal Forms and of individual and contingent facts.

^bThe particular and the individual are usually, as here, taken as synonymous, though strictly speaking particular refers to a restricted part of a general class, e.g. 'a man', 'a case of murder', whereas individual indicates a unique object separable from all others, e.g. the composer of the Salomon symphonies, the Massacre of Glencoe.