

QUESTION 16

Using, Which is an Act of the Will concerning the Means to an End

Next we have to consider the act of using (*usus*). On this topic there are four questions: (1) Is using an act of the will? (2) Does using belong to brute animals? (3) Does using concern a means to an end or the end as well? (4) How is using related to choosing?

Article 1

Is using an act of the will?

It seems that using (*uti*) is not an act of the will:

Objection 1: In *De Doctrina Christiana* 1 Augustine says, “Using is directing what comes into use toward the acquisition of something else (*id quod venerit in usum ad aliud obtinendum referre*).” But directing something toward something else belongs to reason, whose role it is to collate and to order. Therefore, using is an act of reason. Therefore, it is not an act of the will.

Objection 2: Damascene says, “A man makes an impulse (*facit impetum*) toward acting, and this is called ‘an impulse’ (*impetus*), and then he uses [his powers], and this is called ‘using’ (*usus*).” But acting belongs to the executing power (*ad potentiam executivam*). And no act of the will follows the act of the executing power; instead, the execution is the last thing. Therefore, using is not an act of the will.

Objection 3: In *83 Quaestiones* Augustine says, “All the things that have been made have been made for man’s use, since the reason that has been given to man makes use of all things by judging them.” But judging the things created by God belongs to speculative reason, and speculative reason seems to be altogether separate from the will, which is a principle of human acts. Therefore, using is not an act of the will.

But contrary to this: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, “Using is taking something up into the power of the will (*assumens aliquid in facultatem voluntatis*).”

I respond: Using a thing implies applying that thing to some operation; this is why the operation to which we apply a thing is called ‘using it’. For instance, horseback riding is ‘using a horse’, and striking is ‘using a staff’.

Now we apply to an operation both (a) *interior principles* of acting, viz., the powers of the soul themselves along with the bodily members, e.g., the intellect to acts of understanding and the eye to acts of seeing, and also (b) *exterior things*, e.g., a staff to an act of striking. But it is clear that we apply exterior things to an operation only by means of intrinsic principles, viz., the powers of the soul, or habits of those powers, or organs, which are members of the body.

Now it was shown above (q. 9, a. 1) that it is the will that moves the powers of the soul to their own acts, and this is what it is to apply those powers to an operation. Hence, the act of using belongs (a) first and principally to the *will* as a first mover, then (b) to *reason* as directing, and (c) to the *other powers* as executing—where these other powers are related to the will, by which they are applied to an action, as instruments are related to the principal agent. But an action is properly attributed to the principal agent and not to the instrument; for instance, the act of building is attributed to the builder and not to his instruments. Hence, it is clear that using is properly an act of the will.

Reply to objection 1: Reason does, to be sure, direct one toward something else, but the will tends toward that which is directed by reason toward something else. This is the sense in which one says that to use is to direct something toward something else.

Reply to objection 2: Damascene is talking about the act of using insofar as it belongs to the executing powers.

Reply to objection 3: Even speculative reason itself is applied by the will to its work of understanding or judging. And so speculative reason is said to use something insofar as it is moved by

the will in the way that the other executing powers are.

Article 2

Does using belong to brute animals?

It seems that using belongs to brute animals:

Objection 1: Enjoying is more noble than using, since, as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 10, “We use those things which we direct toward something else that is to be enjoyed.” But as was explained above (q. 11, a. 2), enjoying belongs to brute animals. Therefore, *a fortiori*, using belongs to them as well.

Objection 2: To apply our bodily members to acting is to use those members. But brute animals apply their members to doing things; for instance, they apply their feet to walking and their horns to striking. Therefore, using belongs to brute animals.

But contrary to this: In 83 *Quaestiones* Augustine says, “Only an animal that participates in reason can use a thing.”

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), *using* is applying a principle of action to an action, in the same way that, as has been explained (q. 15, aa. 1-3), *consenting* is applying an appetitive movement to desiring something. Now applying something to something else belongs only to that which has control (*arbitrium*) over it, and this belongs only to that which knows how to direct something toward something else, viz., reason. And so consenting and using belong only to a rational animal.

Reply to objection 1: ‘Enjoying’ implies an absolute movement of the appetite toward a desirable thing, whereas ‘using’ implies a movement of the appetite toward something that is ordered toward something else (*motum appetitus ad aliquid in ordine ad alterum*).

Thus, if using and enjoying are compared with respect to their *objects*, then enjoying is more noble than using, since what is desirable absolutely speaking is better than what is desirable solely insofar as it is ordered toward something else. On the other hand, if they are compared with respect to the apprehensive power that precedes them, then more nobility is required for using, since it belongs to reason to order one thing toward another, whereas even the sensory power is able to apprehend something absolutely speaking.

Reply to objection 2: It is by an instinct of nature that animals do things by means of their bodily members—and not because they understand the relation of those members to the operations in question. Hence, animals are not properly said either to apply their members to an act or to use their members.

Article 3

Can using concern even the ultimate end?

It seems that using can concern even the ultimate end:

Objection 1: In *De Trinitate* 10 Augustine says, “Everyone who enjoys something uses it.” But one enjoys the ultimate end. Therefore, one uses the ultimate end.

Objection 2: As Augustine says in the same place, “Using is taking something up into the power of the will.” But nothing is taken up by the will more than the ultimate end. Therefore, using can concern the ultimate end.

Objection 3: In *De Trinitate* 2 Hilary says, “*Eternity* exists in the Father, *likeness* exists in the Image, i.e., in the Son, and *using* exists in the Gift, i.e., in the Holy Spirit. But since the Holy Spirit is God, He is the ultimate end. Therefore, it is possible to use the ultimate end.

But contrary to this: In *83 Quaestiones* Augustine says, “One rightly enjoys God, but no one rightly uses God.” But God alone is the ultimate end. Therefore, the ultimate end is not to be used (*non est utendum*).

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), ‘using’ implies applying one thing to another. But what is applied to another has the character of a means to an end (*se habet in ratione eius quod est ad finem*). And so using always concerns the means to an end. It is for this reason that things which are appropriate as means to an end are called *useful*, and this very usefulness is itself sometimes called their *use*.

But notice that there are two senses of ‘the ultimate end’, viz., (a) the ultimate end absolutely speaking and (b) the ultimate end with respect to someone. For as was explained above (q. 1, a. 8 and q. 2, a. 7), sometimes it is a certain thing and sometimes it is the attainment or possession of that thing that is called the end; for instance, an avaricious man’s end is either money or possessing money. It is clear that, simply speaking, the ultimate end is the thing itself, since possessing money is good only because of the goodness of money. But in relation to this man, the ultimate end is the acquisition of money, since an avaricious man would not seek after money except in order to have it. Therefore, properly and simply speaking, the man *enjoys* the money, since he has set up money as his ultimate end; but to the extent that he directs the money toward his possessing it, he is said to *use* the money.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine is speaking here in a general way of *using*, insofar as ‘using’ implies the ordering of an end to the very *enjoyment* of the end that someone looks for in that end.

Reply to objection 2: The end “is taken up into the power of the will” in order that the will might come to rest in it. Hence, resting in the end, i.e., *enjoying* the end, is being called ‘*using* the end’ in a certain sense.

However, a means to an end “is taken up into the power of the will” not only in relation to using the means to the end, but also in relation to that other thing in which the will comes to rest.

Reply to objection 3: In the passage from Hilary, ‘using’ is being understood for resting in the ultimate end, in the sense in which, as has been explained, someone is commonly said to ‘use’ an end in order to possess it. Hence, In *De Trinitate* 6 Augustine explains, “The love or delight or happiness or beatitude in question is called ‘using’ by [Hilary].”

Article 4

Does using precede choosing?

It seems that using precedes choosing:

Objection 1: The only thing that follows after choosing is executing. But since using belongs to the will, it precedes executing. Therefore, it also precedes choosing.

Objection 2: The absolute is prior to the relational (*absolutum est ante relatam*); therefore, the less relational is prior to the more relational. But ‘choosing’ implies two relations, viz., one to the means that is chosen, and the other to that which the chosen means is preferred to. ‘Using’, on the other hand, implies only a relation to the end. Therefore, using is prior to choosing.

Objection 3: The will uses the other powers insofar as it moves them. But as has been explained (q. 9, a. 3), the will moves even itself. Therefore, it also uses itself by applying itself to acting. But it does this when it consents. Therefore, there is an act of using in the very act of consenting. But as has been explained (q. 15, a. 3), consenting precedes choosing. Therefore, so does using.

But contrary to this: Damascene says, “After choosing, the will makes an impulse toward acting, and after that it uses.” Therefore, using follows upon choosing.

I respond: The will has a twofold relation to what is willed:

The *first* relation stems from the fact that in some sense what is willed exists within the one who

wills it insofar as he is proportioned to or ordered toward what is willed (*per quamdam proportionem vel ordinem ad volitum*). Hence, even things that are naturally proportioned to a given end are said to desire that end naturally. However, to possess an end in this way is to possess it imperfectly.

Now everything that is imperfect tends toward perfection. And both natural desire and voluntary desire tend toward possessing the end itself in reality, which is to possess it perfectly. And this is the *second* relation that the will has to what is willed.

Now what is willed includes not only the end, but the means to the end. And with respect to the means to the end, the last thing that belongs to the will's *first* relation is choosing. For the will's proportion to the end is completed in choosing, so that it completely wills a means to the end.

By contrast, using already belongs the will's *second* relation, by which it tends toward attaining to the thing that it wills. Hence, it is clear that using follows choosing, as long as 'using' is being taken to designate the will's using the executing powers by moving them.

However, since in some sense the will also moves reason and uses it, 'using the means to the end' can be understood as it exists within reason's thought when reason directs the means toward the end. And 'using' in this sense precedes choosing.

Reply to objection 1: The very execution of the act is preceded by the movement by which the will effects movement toward the execution, but this movement follows upon choosing. And so since using belongs to this movement of the will, it lies between choosing and executing.

Reply to objection 2: What is relational by its essence is posterior to what is absolute, but that to which relations are attributed need not be posterior. In fact, to the extent that a cause is prior, it has a relation to many effects.

Reply to objection 3: Choosing precedes using if they are both referred to the same thing. But nothing prevents the using of one thing from preceding the choosing of something else.

Also, since the will's acts are self-reflective (*reflectuntur supra seipsos*), consenting and choosing and using can be understood to exist in each of the will's acts, so that one might say that the will consents to its choosing, and consents to its consenting, and uses itself to consent and to choose. And it is always the case that these acts, which are ordered toward what is prior, are themselves prior.