

QUESTION 17

Hope

After faith, we next have to consider hope (*spes*): first, hope itself (questions 17-18); second, the gift of fear (question 19); third, the opposed vices (questions 20-21); and, fourth, the precepts that pertain to this matter (question 22).

As regards the first topic, we will first consider hope itself (question 17) and, second, what the subject of hope is (question 18).

On the first topic there are eight questions: (1) Is hope a virtue? (2) Is the object of hope eternal beatitude? (3) Can a man hope for someone else's beatitude through the virtue of hope? (4) Can a man licitly put his hope in a man? (5) Is hope a theological virtue? (6) How is hope distinguished from the other theological virtues? (7) What is hope's ordering with respect to faith? (8) What is hope's ordering with respect to charity?

Article 1

Is hope a virtue?

It seems that hope is not a virtue (*spes non sit virtus*):

Objection 1: As Augustine says in *De Libero Arbitrio*, "No one uses a virtue badly." But some use hope badly, since there can be a mean and extremes with respect to the passion of hope, just as with respect to the other passions. Therefore, hope is not a virtue.

Objection 2: No virtue proceeds from merits, since, as Augustine says, "God works virtue in us without us." But as the Master says in *Sentences* 3, dist. 26, "Hope comes from grace and merits." Therefore, hope is not a virtue.

Objection 3: As *Physics* 7 says, "A virtue is a disposition that belongs to what is perfect." But hope is a disposition that belongs to what is imperfect—more specifically, to someone who does not have what he hopes for. Therefore, hope is not a virtue.

But contrary to this: In *Moralia* 1 Gregory says that the three daughters of Job signify the three virtues, faith, hope, and charity. Therefore, hope is a virtue.

I respond: According to the Philosopher in *Ethics* 2, "The virtue of any given thing is what makes the thing having it good and renders its work good (*quae bonum facit habentem et opus eius bonum reddit*)." Therefore, whenever there is a good human act, it has to correspond to some human virtue. Now in all regulated and measured things (*in omnibus regulatis et mensuratis*) the good is thought of as something's attaining its proper rule; for instance, we say that a coat is good when it neither exceeds nor falls short of its due measure.

Now as was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 71, a. 6), there are two measures of human acts, one of which is proximate and homogeneous, viz. reason, and the other of which is supreme and surpassing, viz. God. And so every human act that attains to reason or to God Himself is good.

Now the act of hope, in the sense in which we are now speaking of hope, attains to God. For as was explained above when we were talking about the passion of hope (*ST* 1-2, q. 40, a. 1), the object of hope is a future arduous good that it is possible to have. Now as is clear from *Ethics* 3, there are two ways in which something is possible for us: (a) through our very own selves and (b) through others. Therefore, insofar as we hope for something that is possible for us through God's help, our hope attains to God Himself, whose help is being relied on. And so it is clear that hope is a virtue, since it makes a man's act good and makes it attain to the appropriate rule.

Reply to objection 1: In the case of the passions the mean of a virtue is taken to be where right reason is attained (*accipitur per hoc quod attingitur ratio recta*), and the nature of the virtue consists in this. Hence, in the case of hope the good of the virtue is likewise taken to be that a man, in hoping,

attains the appropriate rule, viz., God. And so no one can make bad use of a hope that attains to God, just as no one can make bad use of a moral virtue that attains to reason, since the good use of a virtue is just attaining to reason.

Still, as will become clear below (a. 5), the sort of hope that we are now talking about is not a passion, but is instead a habit of the mind.

Reply to objection 2: Hope is said to come from merits either (a) as regards *the very thing hoped for* (*quantum ad ipsam rem expectatam*), insofar as one hopes to attain beatitude because of grace and merits; or (b) as regards the *act* of hope when hope is informed [by charity] (*quantum ad actum spei formatae*).

However, the very *habit* of hope, through which one looks forward to beatitude, is caused not by merits but purely by grace.

Reply to objection 3: One who has hope is imperfect when we take into account what he hopes to obtain and does not have, but he is perfect with respect to already attaining his proper rule, viz., God, whose help he relies on.

Article 2

Is eternal beatitude the proper object of hope?

It seems that eternal beatitude is not the proper object of hope:

Objection 1: A man does not hope for what exceeds every movement of his mind, since the act of hope is a certain movement of the mind (*quidam animi motus*). But eternal beatitude exceeds every movement of the human mind; for in 1 Corinthians 2:9 the Apostle says, “It has not entered into the heart of man” Therefore, beatitude is not the proper object of hope.

Objection 2: Asking is an expression of hope (*petitio est spei interpretativa*); for Psalm 36:5 says, “Disclose your way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it.” But a man licitly asks God not only for eternal beatitude but also for goods of the present life, both spiritual and temporal—and also, as is clear from the Lord’s prayer (Matthew 6), for deliverance from evils, which will not be present in eternal beatitude. Therefore, eternal beatitude is not the proper object of hope.

Objection 3: The object of hope is something arduous. But in relation to a man, there are many other arduous things besides eternal beatitude. Therefore, eternal beatitude is not the proper object of hope.

But contrary to this: In Hebrews 6:19 the Apostle says that we have hope “that enters in,” i.e., that makes us enter “inside the veil,” i.e., into heavenly beatitude, as a Gloss on this passage explains. Therefore, the object of hope is eternal beatitude.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), the hope we are talking about here attains to God, relying on His help to obtain the good that is hoped for. Now an effect is proportioned to its cause. And so the good that we should properly and principally hope for from God is an infinite good, which is proportioned to the power of God in helping us. For it is proper to an infinite power to lead us to an infinite good. But this good is eternal life, which consists in enjoying God Himself, since nothing less should be hoped for from Him than what He Himself is. For the goodness by which he communicates goods to a creature is no less a goodness than His essence. And so the proper and principal object of hope is eternal beatitude.

Reply to objection 1: Eternal beatitude enters into the heart of a man not in the sense that in this life a man can have a cognition of what eternal beatitude is and of what it is like, but rather in the sense that it can come under human apprehension with its general notion, i.e., the notion of a perfect good. And it is in this way that the movement of hope rises up toward eternal beatitude. Hence, the Apostle

expressly says that hope “enters in, even inside the veil,” since what we hope for is still veiled from us.

Reply to objection 2: We should seek other goods from God only in relation to eternal beatitude. Hence, hope has to do principally with eternal beatitude, whereas other things are sought from God in a secondary way, in relation to eternal beatitude. Similarly, as was explained above (q. 1, aa. 1 and 6), faith has to do principally with God and secondarily with what is ordered toward God.

Reply to objection 3: To a man who aspires to something great, everything else less than that thing seems of little account. And this is why to a man who hopes for eternal life, nothing else seems arduous when compared with that hope (*habito respectu ad istam spem*).

By contrast, when compared with power of the one who has the hope, many other things can likewise seem arduous to him. And on this score, there can be hope for those things in relation to the principal object.

Article 3

Can one hope for someone else’s eternal beatitude?

It seems that one can hope for someone else’s eternal beatitude:

Objection 1: In Philippians 1:6 the Apostle says, “Confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perfect it up to the day of Jesus Christ.” But the perfection of that day will be eternal beatitude. Therefore, one can hope for someone else’s eternal beatitude.

Objection 2: What we ask from God we hope to obtain from Him. But we ask from God that He will lead others to eternal beatitude—this according to James 5:16 (“Pray for one another that you might be saved”). Therefore, we can hope for the eternal beatitude of others.

Objection 3: Hope and despair have to do with the same thing. But one can despair of someone else’s eternal beatitude; otherwise, it would have been pointless for Augustine to say in *De Verbis Domini*, “Despair of no one as long as he is alive.” Therefore, one can likewise hope for someone else’s eternal beatitude.

But contrary to this: In *Enchiridion* Augustine says, “Hope is only for things that pertain to the one who is supposed to harbor hope for them.”

I respond: There are two ways for someone to have hope: (a) *absolutely speaking*, and on this score hope is only for an arduous good that pertains to oneself; and (b) *with something else presupposed*, and on this score one can also hope for things that pertain to someone else.

To make this clear, notice that love and hope differ in the fact that love implies the union of the lover with what is loved, whereas hope implies the appetite’s moving or stretching out toward some arduous good. Now a union belongs to things that are distinct from one another, and so love can relate directly to another, whom one unites to himself through love and whom he cherishes as himself (*habens eum sicut seipsum*). By contrast, a movement always tends toward a proper terminus that is proportioned to the thing that is moving, and so hope directly relates to one’s own good and not to what pertains to someone else.

However, if the union of the lover to another is presupposed, then one can desire and hope for something for another as for himself. And on this score one can hope for someone else’s eternal beatitude insofar as he is united to him through love. And just as it is the same virtue of charity by which one loves God, himself, and his neighbor, so, too, it is the same virtue of hope by which one has hope for himself and for another.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: This makes clear the replies to the objections.

Article 4

Can someone licitly put his hope in a man?

It seems that one can licitly put his hope in a man (*aliquis possit licite sperare in homine*):

Objection 1: The object of hope is eternal beatitude. But we are helped in attaining eternal beatitude by the patronage of the saints (*patrociniis sanctorum*); for instance, in *Dialogi* 1 Gregory says, “Predestination is helped by the prayers of the saints.” Therefore, one can put his hope in a man.

Objection 2: If it were not the case that one can put his hope in a man, then it could not be thought a vice in a man that no one can put his hope in him. But there are some in whom this is said to be a vice, as is clear from Jeremiah 9:4, “Let every man guard himself from his neighbor, and let him not put his trust in any brother of his.” Therefore, someone may licitly put his hope in a man.

Objection 3: As has been said (a. 2), asking is an expression of hope. But one can licitly ask for something from a man. Therefore, he can licitly put his hope in him.

But contrary to this: Jeremiah 17:5 says, “Cursed be the man who puts his trust in a man.”

I respond: As has been explained (*ST* 1-2, q. 40, a. 7 and q. 42, aa. 1 and 4), there are two things that hope is related to, viz., (a) the *good* that one intends to obtain and (b) the *help* through which that good is obtained. Now the good that one hopes will be obtained has the character of a final cause, whereas the help through which one hopes to obtain that good has the character of an efficient cause. And in both of these genera of causes, one finds a principal cause and a secondary cause. For the principal end is the ultimate end, whereas a secondary end is a good that is ordered toward the [principal] end. Similarly, the principal agent cause is the first agent, whereas a secondary efficient cause is an instrumental secondary agent.

Now hope has eternal beatitude as its ultimate end, whereas it has God’s help as the first cause that leads one toward beatitude. Therefore, just as one is not permitted to hope for some good other than beatitude as an ultimate end, but is instead permitted to hope for such a good only as something that is ordered toward the end of beatitude, so, too, one is not permitted put his hope in any man, or in any creature at all, as the first cause that moves one toward beatitude. However, it is licit to put one’s hope in some man, or in some creature, as a secondary or instrumental cause by which one might be helped in obtaining any good that is ordered toward beatitude. And this is the sense in which we turn to the saints, and in which we seek certain things from men, and in which those whom one cannot trust to provide help are blamed.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: This makes clear the replies to the objections.

Article 5

Is hope a theological virtue?

It seems that hope is not a theological virtue:

Objection 1: A theological virtue is a virtue that has God for its object. But hope has for its object not just God, but also other goods that we hope to obtain from God. Therefore, hope is not a theological virtue.

Objection 2: As was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 64, a. 4), a theological virtue does not consist in a mean between two vices. But hope consists in a mean between presumption and despair. Therefore, hope is not a theological virtue.

Objection 3: Expectation (*expectatio*) belongs to longsuffering (*longanimitas*), which is a part of

fortitude. Therefore, since hope is a certain sort of expectation, it seems that it is a moral virtue and not a theological virtue.

Objection 4: The object of hope is something arduous. But tending toward what is arduous belongs to magnanimity, which is a moral virtue. Therefore, hope is a moral virtue and not a theological virtue.

But contrary to this: In 1 Corinthians 13 hope is enumerated along with faith and charity, which are theological virtues.

I respond: Since specific differences divide a genus *per se*, we must pay attention to why hope has the character of a virtue in order to find out under just which difference of [the genus] *virtue* it is located.

Now it was explained above (a. 1) that hope has the character of a virtue from the fact that it attains to the highest rule of human acts. And this rule is attained to both as the *first efficient cause*, insofar as one relies on His help, and also as the *ultimate final cause*, insofar as one looks forward to beatitude in the enjoyment of Him. And so it is clear that the principal object of hope, insofar as it is a virtue, is God.

Therefore, since, as was explained above (ST 1-2, q. 62, a. 1), the nature of a theological virtue consists in its having God as its object, it is obvious that hope is a theological virtue.

Reply to objection 1: As has been explained (a. 4), everything else that hope looks forward to acquiring is such that it hopes for it in relation to God as its ultimate end and as its first efficient cause.

Reply to objection 2: In the case of things that are regulated and measured, the mean is understood as that in accord with which the rule or measure is attained (*secundum quod regula vel mensura attingitur*). Now insofar as one overshoots the rule, there is too much (*superfluum*), whereas insofar as one falls short of the rule, there is too little (*diminutum*). But in the rule or measure itself there is no mean or extremes.

Now a moral virtue has as its proper object what is regulated by reason, and so it belongs to a moral virtue *per se* to lie in the middle as regards its proper object. By contrast, a theological virtue has the first rule itself—not regulated by any other rule—as its proper object. And so it does not belong to a theological virtue *per se*, or with respect its proper object, to lie in the mean.

However, this can belong to it *per accidens*, by reason of its being ordered toward its principal object. For instance, faith cannot have a mean and extremes in relying on the First Truth, which no one can rely on too much. However, it can have a mean and extremes in the things which it believes, in the sense that a truth lies in the middle between two falsehoods. Similarly, hope does not have a mean and extremes on the part of its principal object, since no one can rely too much on God's help. However, as regards the things which one is confident that he will obtain, there can be a mean and extremes, insofar as either (a) he presumes that he will obtain something that lies beyond what is proportioned to him or (b) he despairs of obtaining what is proportioned to him.

Reply to objection 3: The sort of expectation that is posited in the definition of hope does not imply delay in the way that the expectation that belongs to longsuffering does. Rather, it implies a relation to God's help, regardless of whether what is hoped for is delayed or not delayed.

Reply to objection 4: Magnanimity tends toward an arduous good while hoping for something which is within one's power. Hence, it has to do properly with the accomplishment of great deeds. By contrast, as has been explained, hope, insofar as it is a theological virtue, has to do with attaining what is arduous by the help of someone else.

Article 6

Is hope a virtue distinct from the other theological virtues?

It seems that hope is not a virtue distinct from the other theological virtues:

Objection 1: As was explained above (*ST* 1-2, q. 54, a. 2), habits are distinguished from one another by their objects. But the object of hope is the same as the object of the other theological virtues. Therefore, hope is not distinct from the other theological virtues.

Objection 2: In the creed of the Faith, in which we profess the Faith, it says, “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” But as was explained above (a. 5), it belongs to hope to look forward to future beatitude. Therefore, hope is not distinct from faith.

Objection 3: Through hope a man tends toward God. But tending toward God belongs properly to charity. Therefore, hope is not distinct from charity.

But contrary to this: Where there is no distinction, there is no numbering. But hope is numbered along with the other theological virtues; for instance, in *Moralia* 1 Gregory says that the virtues are three, viz., faith, hope, and charity. Therefore, hope is a virtue distinct from the other theological virtues.

I respond: A virtue is called ‘theological’ from the fact that it has God as the object to whom it adheres. But there are two ways in which someone can adhere to a thing: (a) for the thing’s own sake and (b) insofar as something else comes from it.

Thus, charity makes a man adhere to God for His own sake, uniting the man’s mind to God through the affect of love.

By contrast, hope and faith make a man adhere to God as a source from which certain things accrue to us (*sicut cuidam principio ex quo aliqua nobis proveniunt*). Now what accrues to us from God are (a) cognition of the truth and (b) the attainment of perfect beatitude:

Thus, faith makes a man adhere to God insofar as He is the source of our cognition of the truth; for we believe those things to be true which have been spoken to us by God.

On the other hand, hope makes us adhere to God because He is the source of perfect beatitude for us, viz., insofar as through hope we rely on God’s help to obtain beatitude.

Reply to objection 1: As has been explained, God is the object of these virtues in different respects (*secundum aliam et aliam rationem*). But as was established above (*ST* 1-2, q. 54, a. 2), different aspects (*diversa ratio*) of an object are sufficient for a distinction among habits.

Reply to objection 2: Looking forward is posited in the creed of the Faith not because it is an act proper to faith, but insofar as the act of hope presupposes faith, as will be explained below (a. 7). And so the act of faith is made manifest by the act of hope.

Reply to objection 3: Hope makes us tend toward God as a certain final good to be obtained and as an efficacious aid to help us. By contrast, charity properly makes a man tend toward God by uniting his affections to God—so that, namely, the man lives not for himself but for God.

Article 7

Is hope prior to faith?

It seems that hope is prior to faith:

Objection 1: A Gloss on Psalm 36:3 (“Hope in the Lord, and do good”) says, “Hope is the entry to faith and the beginning of salvation.” But salvation comes by faith, through which we are justified. Therefore, hope is prior to faith.

Objection 2: What is posited in a thing’s definition is prior to that thing and better known than it. But hope is posited in the definition of faith, as is clear from Hebrews 11:1 (“Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for”). Therefore, hope is prior to faith.

Objection 3: Hope precedes a meritorious act; for in 1 Corinthians 9:10 the Apostle says, “He who plows should plow in the hope of receiving fruit.” But the act of faith is meritorious. Therefore, hope is prior to faith.

But contrary to this: Matthew 1:2 says, “Abraham begot Isaac”—that is, says a Gloss, “Faith begot hope.”

I respond: Faith is absolutely speaking prior to hope. For the object of hope is an arduous future good that it is possible to have. Therefore, in order for someone to have hope, it is required that the object of hope be proposed to him as something possible. But as is clear from what has been said (aa. 2 and 6), the object of hope is in one sense eternal beatitude and in another sense God’s help. And both of these are proposed to us by faith, through which we come to know that we are able to attain eternal life and that God’s help has been prepared for us—this according to Hebrews 11:6 (“One who approaches God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek after Him”). Hence, it is clear that faith is prior to hope.

Reply to objection 1: As the Gloss adds in the same place, hope is called ‘the entry to faith’, i.e., to what is believed, “in the sense that through hope one enters into seeing what is believed.”

Alternatively, one can reply that hope is the entry to faith in the sense that through it a man enters into being stabilized and perfected in faith.

Reply to objection 2: ‘Thing to be hoped for’ is posited in the definition of faith because the proper object of faith is not apparent in its own right. Hence, it was necessary that it be designated, through a sort of circumlocution, by that which follows upon faith.

Reply to objection 3: Not every meritorious act has hope preceding it. Rather, it is sufficient if the act has hope concomitant with it or consequent upon it.

Article 8

Is charity prior to hope?

It seems that charity is prior to hope:

Objection 1: In commenting on Luke 17:6 (“If you had faith the size of a mustard seed ...”) Ambrose says, “From faith comes charity and from charity hope.” But faith is prior to charity. Therefore, charity is prior to hope.

Objection 2: In *De Civitate Dei* 14 Augustine says, “Good movements and affections come from love and holy charity.” But to hope, insofar as it is the act of hope, is a certain good movement of the mind. Therefore, it is derived from charity.

Objection 3: In *Sentences* 3, dist. 26 the Master says that hope comes from merits, which precede not only the thing hoped for but even hope itself, and which charity precedes by its nature. Therefore, charity is prior to hope.

But contrary to this: In 1 Timothy 1:5 the Apostle says, “The end of the precept is charity from a pure heart and from a good conscience,” and a Gloss says, “that is, from hope.” Therefore, hope is prior to charity.

I respond: There are two sorts of orderings. One is an ordering according to the way of *generation and matter*, and in accord with this ordering what is imperfect is prior to what is perfect. The other is an ordering according to *perfection and form*, and in accord with this ordering what is perfect is naturally prior to what is imperfect.

Now according to the *first* sort of ordering, hope is prior to charity. This is obvious as follows: As was established above when we were talking about the passions (*ST* 1-2, q. 27, a. 4 and q. 28, a. 6 and q. 40, a. 7), hope—and every appetitive movement—is derived from love. But some sorts of love are perfect and some are imperfect. A perfect love is that by which someone is loved in his own right (*secundum se*), as when someone loves the good for him, in the way that a man loves his friend. Imperfect love is that by which someone loves something not in its own right but in order that some good

might come to him himself, in the way that a man loves a thing that he has a sensory desire for (*sicut homo amat rem quam concupiscit*). Now the first sort of love of God pertains to charity, which adheres to God in His own right. By contrast, hope has to do with the second sort of love, since he who hopes intends to obtain something for himself. And so in the *path of generation* hope is prior to charity. For as Augustine puts it in *Super Primam Canonicam Ioannis*, just as someone is led to love God by the fact that, fearing punishment from Him, he stops sinning, so, too, hope leads to charity insofar as, hoping to be rewarded by God, someone is incited to love God and to keep His commandments.

By contrast, in accord with the *ordering of perfection*, charity is naturally prior. And so, when charity arrives, hope is rendered more perfect, since we especially place our hope in our friends (*quia de amicis maxime speramus*). And it is in this sense that Ambrose says that hope comes from charity.

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: Hope, and every appetitive movement, proceeds from some sort of love, viz., a love by which someone loves a good that he looks forward to. But not every instance of hope proceeds from charity; instead, the only hope that proceeds from charity is that by which someone hopes for a good from God as from a friend.

Reply to objection 3: The Master is talking here about hope informed [by charity] (*loquitur de spe formata*), which charity, along with the merits caused by charity, is naturally prior to.