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W. J. Hill O.P.

Excerpt

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 17, 1

Consequenter post fidem considerandum est de spe:

- primo, de ipsa spe;
- secundo, de Dono Timoris;
- tertio, de vitiis oppositis;
- quarto, de præceptis ad hoc pertinentibus.

Circa primum occurrit:

- primo, consideratio de ipsa spe;
- secundo, de subjecto ejus.

Quæstio 17. de spe secundum se

Circa primum quærentur octo:

1. utrum spes sit virtus;
2. utrum objectum ejus sit beatitudo æterna;
3. utrum unus homo possit sperare beatitudinem alterius per virtutem spei;
4. utrum homo licite possit sperare in homine;
5. utrum spes sit virtus theologica;
6. de distinctione ejus ab aliis virtutibus theologicis;
7. de ordine ejus ad fidem;
8. de ejus ordine ad charitatem.

articulus 1. utrum spes sit virtus

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ I. Videtur quod spes non sit virtus. *Virtute enim nullus male utitur*, ut dicit Augustinus in libro *De libero arbitrio*.² Sed spe aliquis male utitur, quia circa passionem spei contingit esse medium et extrema, sicut et circa alias passiones. Ergo spes non est virtus.

2. Præterea, nulla virtus procedit ex meritis, quia *virtutem Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*, ut Augustinus dicit.³ Sed spes est *ex gratia et meritis proveniens*, ut Magister dicit, 26 dist. III libro *Sent.*⁴ Ergo spes non est virtus.

¹cf III *Sent.* 26, 2, 1. *De spe* 1²*De lib. arb.* II, 18; 19. PL 32, 1267; 1268³*Enarrat. in Ps.*, ps. 118, serm. 26. PL 37, 1577. *De gratia et lib. arb.* 17. PL 44, 901. cf Peter Lombard II *Sent.* 26, 5 (Quaracchi I, 446)⁴Peter Lombard, III *Sent.* 26, 1 (Quaracchi II, 670). Peter Lombard (†1160) was called simply *Magister* by the scholastics.⁵The man possessed of any virtue can obviously completely disregard that habitual

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HOPE ITSELF

After faith hope comes next in order of consideration:

- first, the virtue itself (17–18);
- second, the Gift of Fear (19);
- third, vices opposed to hope (20–21);
- fourth, precepts about it (22).

The first of these raises the issue,

- first, of the virtuous habit itself;
- secondly, of its subject.

Question 17. hope itself

Regarding the virtue itself there are eight points of inquiry:

1. is hope a virtue?
2. is its object eternal beatitude?
3. does it extend to hoping for another's happiness?
4. does it allow for putting one's trust in other men?
5. is it a theological virtue?
6. how is it distinguished from the other theological virtues?
7. how is it related to faith?
8. and to charity?

article 1. is hope a virtue?

THE FIRST POINT:¹ 1. There is reason for holding that hope is not a virtue. For Augustine observes that *it is impossible to make evil use of a virtue*,^{2a} and after all it is quite possible to hope in a malicious way. The reason for this is that, as with any passion, hope is capable of either a middle course or of extremes. Thus it fails to have the status of a virtue.

2. Moreover, Augustine's insistence that *the sole source of virtue is God himself*^{3b} is simply an acknowledgment that virtue cannot be merited. But Peter Lombard notes that hope does *eventuate from grace and merits*,⁴ and thus it falls short of virtue.

disposition and act viciously, and without necessarily surrendering the virtue thereby; but he cannot employ the *habitus* or disposition itself as the origin of a vicious act. cf 1a2æ. 55, 4 & ad 5.

^bAugustine here refers only to what are called supernatural infused virtues, bestowed along with sanctifying grace in a totally gratuitous manner. cf 1a2æ. 55, 4 & ad 6.

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3. Præterea, *virtus est dispositio perfecti*, ut dicitur in 7 *Physic.*⁵ Spes autem est dispositio imperfecti, scilicet ejus qui non habet id quod sperat. Ergo spes non est virtus.

SED CONTRA est quod Gregorius in 1 *Moral.* dicit.⁶ quod per tres filias Job significantur hæ tres virtutes, fides, spes, charitas. Ergo spes est virtus.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, secundum Philosophum, in 2 *Ethic.*, *virtus uniuscujusque rei est quæ bonum facit habentem, et opus ejus bonum reddit.*⁷ Oportet ergo ubicumque invenitur aliquis actus hominis bonus, quod respondeat alicui virtuti humanæ. In omnibus autem regulatis et mensuratis bonum consideratur per hoc quod aliquid propriam regulam attingit, sicut dicimus vestem esse bonam, quæ nec excedit nec deficit a debita mensura. Humanorum autem actuum, sicut supra dictum est,⁸ duplex est mensura, una quidem proxima et homogæna, scilicet ratio; alia autem suprema et excedens, scilicet Deus. Et ob hoc omnis actus humanus attingens ad rationem aut ad ipsum Deum est bonus.

Actus autem spei, de qua nunc loquimur, attingit ad Deum. Ut enim supra dictum est⁹ cum de passione spei ageretur, objectum spei est bonum futurum arduum possibile haberi. Possibile autem est aliquid nobis dupliciter: uno modo per nosmetipsos; alio modo per alios, ut patet in 3 *Ethic.*¹⁰ Inquantum ergo speramus aliquid ut possibile nobis per divinum auxilium, spes nostra attingit ad ipsum Deum, cujus auxilio innititur. Et ideo patet quod spes est virtus, cum faciat actum hominis bonum, et debitam regulam attingentem.

⁵Aristotle, *Physics* VII, 3, 246b23

⁶*Moralium* 1, 27. PL 75, 544. St Gregory the Great (†604), Pope, Doctor of the Church, whose writings, especially in moral matters, enjoyed great authority in the Middle Ages

⁷Aristotle (ordinarily referred to by St Thomas simply as ‘the Philosopher’), *Ethics* II, 6. 1106a15

⁸2a2ae. 8, 3 ad 3

⁹1a2ae. 40, 1

¹⁰Aristotle, *Ethics* III, 3. 1112b27

^cThe complete text from Aristotle here reads ‘virtue is a disposition of those already perfect to the best’, meaning that the very possibility of virtue presupposes a preliminary perfection, a nature constituted and complete in its own static order and naturally orientated towards whatever extrinsic objects may be further perfective of it. cf 1a2ae. 49, 1, 2, 3; 54, 3; 55, 4 ad 2; 110, 3. The objection and response by-pass this meaning and centre on a broader sense of *perfecti*.

^dAs an operative rather than entitative *habitus* or disposition (cf 1a2ae. 50, 2; 56, 1) virtue ‘habituates’ or disposes with a certain permanency, the soul of man to-

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3. Again, contrary to Aristotle's contention in the *Physics* that *virtue is a disposition of those already perfect*,^{5c} hope, since it involves the lack of that which is hoped for, seems to be more characteristic of one who is imperfect, and so is not a virtue.

ON THE OTHER HAND Gregory takes the three daughters of Job as symbols of the three virtues of faith, hope and charity,⁶ thereby indicating that hope is one of the virtues.

REPLY: According to Aristotle, in anything virtue is what makes its possessor good and its activity sound.^{7d} The occurrence of any good work in the case of humans, then, demands the existence of corresponding human virtue. Now in all things subject to regulation and measure, their being good is reckoned on the basis of their reaching the rule proper to them; we say for example that the fit of a garment is good when it is neither larger nor smaller than what the measurements call for. As to human acts the measure is twofold: one proximate and of the same order, reason; the other ultimate and transcendent, namely God.^{8e} Wherefore every human act coming up to reason or to God is by that very fact good.

Now the act of that hope here in point reaches God. For, as noted earlier on in the treatise on the emotion of hope,⁹ hope's object is a good that lies in the future and that is difficult but possible to attain. This quality of an object as possible, however, Aristotle explains to mean its availability either through personal effort or through help from others.¹⁰ When it is a case, then, of hoping for something as possible to us precisely through God's help, such hope, by reason of its very reliance upon God, reaches God himself. Evidently, then, it is a virtue, since it makes one sphere of human activity to be good and to reach one of the rules it is supposed to reach.

wards perfective activity; it is thus perfective of a man in dispositive ways prior to and consequent to actually perfecting his very operation. Aristotle's definition is thus an integral one. cf 1a2æ. 49, 3; 55, 2 & ad 1; 63, 1 & 2.

^eThe goodness of the act, morally considered, derives totally from the goodness of the will, which in turn is determined by whether or not the object to which it is inclined is genuinely perfective of, i.e. good for, the subject. The function of reason in directing the will is merely the recognition of such 'good'; the ultimate determinate of what is good for any nature being the very source of that nature and its intrinsic tendencies. Reason, then, measures the volitional act in a proximate and homogeneous way; God himself in a remote and transcendent fashion. See Appendix 3. cf 1a2æ 18, 1-5; 19, 1-4, Vol. 18 of this series, Appendices 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15.

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SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 2a2ae. 17, 2

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod in passionibus accipitur medium virtutis per hoc quod attingitur ratio recta; et in hoc etiam consistit ratio virtutis. Unde et in spe bonum virtutis accipitur secundum quod homo attingit sperando regulam debitam, scilicet Deum. Et ideo spe attingente Deum nullus potest male uti, sicut nec virtute morali attingente rationem, quia hoc ipsum quod est attingere, est bonus usus virtutis. Quamvis spes, de qua nunc loquimur, non sit passio, sed habitus mentis, ut infra patebit.¹¹

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod spes dicitur ex meritis provenire quantum ad ipsam rem expectatam, prout aliquis sperat beatitudinem se adepturum ex gratia et meritis; vel quantum ad actum spei formatæ. Ipse autem habitus spei, per quam aliquis expectat beatitudinem, non causatur ex meritis, sed pure ex gratia.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod ille qui sperat est quidem imperfectus secundum considerationem ad id quod sperat obtinere quod nondum habet, sed est perfectus quantum ad hoc quod jam attingit propriam regulam, scilicet Deum, cujus auxilio innitur.

articulus 2. utrum beatitudo æterna sit objectum proprium spei

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod beatitudo æterna non sit objectum proprium spei. Illud enim homo non sperat quod omnem animi sui motum excedit, cum spei actus sit quidam animi motus. Sed beatitudo æterna excedit omnem humani animi motum; dicit enim Apostolus *1 Cor. 2* quod *in cor hominis non ascendit*.² Ergo beatitudo æterna non est proprium objectum spei.

2. Præterea, petitio est spei interpretativa; dicitur enim in *Ps. 36*, *Revela Domino viam tuam, et spera in eo, et ipse faciet*.³ Sed homo petit licite a Deo non solum beatitudinem æternam, sed etiam bona præsentis

¹¹2a2ae. 17, 5; 18, 1¹cf 3a. 7, 4. III *Sent.* 26, 2, 2 ad 2. *De spe* 1 & 4²*1 Corinthians* 2, 9. 'The Apostle' is St Paul³*Psalms* 36, 5¹Passion or emotion as such is an infra-rational response of an animal organism, and thus amoral. In the unity of the human being emotions become subject to the extrinsic directives of reason; and it is virtue that tempers or excites the response so that it realizes the mean set by reason. cf 1a2ae. 24; 59, 1 & 5.²The English word 'habit', implying an automatic mode of response to which one has been passively accustomed through mere repetition, simply does not convey the sense of the Latin *habitus*, as the genus to which virtue belongs. The latter signifies the deliberate qualification of natural energies of a faculty, a more or less permanent orientation of the powers, that is directional and amounts to a participation in reason; the employment of *habitus* is always thus a free act. 'Disposition' seems to

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Hence: 1. Where the emotions are concerned,^f the virtuous mean is seen to be their measuring up to right reason and the ideal of virtue consists in this. In the case of hope as well, then, virtuousness consists in a person by the fact of his hope attaining the rule he should, namely God. This is why no one can misuse a hope that attains God, any more than he can a moral virtue coming up to right reason; the very act of attaining a rule means the proper use of virtue. We should note, however, that the hope at issue here is not an emotion but a disposition^g of spirit, as will soon be explained.¹¹

2. When hope is said to derive from merits what is meant is not the virtue itself but its object, i.e. the thing expected, as in this present example beatitude is hoped for from grace and merits.^h Or it is possible that Peter Lombard means the act of hope issuing from the virtue in so far as it is informed by charity. As for the very habit of hope itself, the act of which is the expectation of beatitude, this is in no way caused from merits but is a pure gift of grace.

3. To be sure one who hopes is imperfect with respect to what he hopes to obtain and does not yet possess. But he is perfected as to this that he already reaches the rule proper to his actions, namely God on whose help he relies.

article 2. is it eternal beatitude that is properly hoped for?

THE SECOND POINT: ¹ I. It seems that eternal beatitude is not the proper object of hope. A man does not hope for what lies utterly beyond his own capacities, since hope's act is a personal aspiration. But eternal beatitude is totally beyond the reach of the human spirit; indeed, St Paul goes so far as to say that it has not even *entered into the heart of man*.² Therefore beatitude is not the proper object of hope.

2. Also, hope is articulated in petition; to take an instance at random from the *Psalms*, *Commit your life to the Lord and hope in him, and he shall prosper you*.³ But the Lord's Prayer makes it abundantly clear that such petitions are not limited to eternal happiness; on the contrary, man

be a closer approximation in English, but is not quite accurate either, especially since Aristotle uses this term to signify operative qualities that are tenuously acquired, lacking the permanence requisite to virtue. cf 1a2ae. 49, 2 ad 3; 3, 4; 50, 5; 68, 1 ad 2. Vol. 22 of this series, *Introduction*.

^hThe merits meant here are supernatural, titles to further growth in grace or to what grace is ordered to, arising from good use of present grace. But since the state of sanctifying grace includes theological hope, there is no way of meriting it; it is gratuitous like grace itself. Its increase, of course, is another matter altogether. cf 1a2ae. 114, 1, 4, 5, 8.

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vita tam spiritualia quam temporalia, et etiam liberationem a malis, quæ in beatitudine æterna non erunt, ut patet in Oratione Dominica, *Matt.* 6.⁴ Ergo beatitudo æterna non est proprium objectum spei.

3. Præterea, spei objectum est arduum. Sed in comparatione ad hominem multa alia sunt ardua quam beatitudo æterna. Ergo beatitudo æterna non est proprium objectum spei.

SED CONTRA est quod Apostolus ad *Heb.* 6 dicit, *Habemus spem incedentem*, id est incedere facientem, *ad interiora velaminis*,⁵ id est ad beatitudinem cœlestem, ut glossa ibidem exponit.⁶ Ergo objectum spei est beatitudo æterna.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod, sicut dictum est,⁷ spes de qua unum loquimur attingit Deum, innitens ejus auxilio ad consequendum bonum speratum. Oportet autem effectum esse causæ proportionatum. Et ideo bonum quod proprie et principaliter a Deo sperare debemus est bonum infinitum, quod proportionatur virtuti Dei adjuvantis. Nam infinitæ virtutis est proprium ad infinitum bonum perducere. Hoc autem bonum est vita æterna, quæ in fruitione ipsius Dei consistit. Non enim minus aliquid ab eo sperandum est quam sit ipse, cum non sit minor ejus bonitas per quam bona creaturæ communicat quam ejus essentia. Et ideo proprium et principale objectum spei est beatitudo æterna.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod beatitudo æterna perfecte quidem in cor hominis non ascendit, ut scilicet cognosci possit ab homine viatore quæ et qualis sit; sed secundum communem rationem, scilicet boni perfecti, cadere potest in apprehensione hominis; et hoc modo motus spei in ipsam consurgit. Unde et signanter Apostolus dicit, *Heb.* 6, quod *spes*

⁴*Matthew* 6, 2

⁵*Hebrews* 6, 19

⁶*Glossa interl.* (vi, 144v); cf *Glossa Lombardi*. PL 192, 446. St Thomas cites the *Glossa Ordinaria* (referred to in this edition as *The Gloss*), which dates from the twelfth century and is the work of Anselm of Laon (†1117) and his school, but contains parts traceable to Walafridus Strabo (†849). (St Thomas's citations do not correspond to the text in PL 162(2) 1187 ff). He also cites other glosses, among them the *Glossa Interlinearis in Utrumque Testamentum*, also of Anselm of Laon. (All other than 'The Gloss' are here designated simply 'a gloss'.)

⁷art. 1

^aLiterally, the good hoped for (*speratum*); the object of hope is something more than the object of simple desire. It is not exactly the object of expectation either; hope is something more than desire and something less than expectation, the second adding an element of faith to hope, being thereby more properly an act of intellect than of will. cf 1a2ae. 40, 1, 2 ad 1.

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has every right to hope for the good things of this life, temporal as well as spiritual, and even deliverance from evils that will have no place in eternal life.⁴ So eternal beatitude by itself is not the exclusive object of hope.

3. Again, anything difficult of attainment falls within the scope of hope and man's capabilities are such that many things other than eternal beatitude present difficulties for him. Thus the object of hope should not be limited to eternal beatitude.

ON THE OTHER HAND there are the words of *Hebrews*, *This hope we have . . . reaching even beyond the veil*,⁵ which a gloss⁶ interprets as meaning a hope extending to celestial happiness. It would appear then that the object of hope is eternal beatitude.

REPLY: As was noted in the previous article,⁷ the hope with which we are dealing attains God in the sense that it rests upon his help to obtain the good sought after.^a Now an effect should match its cause, and so the good we should rightly and chiefly hope for from God is an unlimited one, matching the power of God who helps us. For it belongs to his limitless power to bring us to limitless good. Such a good is life eternal, consisting in the joyful possession of God himself. This is simply to say that we should hope for nothing less from God than his very self; his goodness, by which he confers good upon creaturely things, is nothing less than his own being. And so the proper and principal object of hope is indeed eternal blessedness.^b

Hence: 1. While it is true that there is no clear cognizance of what eternal beatitude is in the sense that one still in this life could know its exact nature and conditions, yet some vague idea of it is possible in the concept 'the limitless good.'^c Indeed this is exactly the way that the longing of hope arises in us. And herein lies the real significance of St Paul's words

^bThe formal terminative object (*formale quod*) rather than the formally motivating object (*formale quo*). Also, granting the distinction between objective and subjective beatitude, i.e. between the good to be possessed and man's possession thereof, it is the first that is intended here, objective beatitude, as connoting, however, beatitude in its formal or subjective sense. cf 1a2æ. 1, 8; 2, 7; 3, 1.

^cA perfect knowledge of beatitude would be nothing less than the very experience of it in beatific vision; man's awareness of it in this life is only in the obscurity of faith and in dependence upon images and analogies. cf 1 *Corinthians* 13, 12; 2, 9. The response is suggesting that there is a positive content and value in the concept of the good to express some true meaning about blessedness to the human mind. cf 1a. 13 and Vol. 3 of this series.

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*incedit usque ad interiora velaminis;*⁸ quia id quod speramus, est quasi adhuc velatum.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod quaecumque alia bona non debemus a Deo petere nisi in ordine ad beatitudinem æternam. Unde et spes principaliter quidem respicit beatitudinem æternam, alia vero quæ petuntur a Deo respicit secundo in ordine ad beatitudinem æternam; sicut et fides principaliter quidem respicit ea quæ ad Deum ordinantur, ut supra dictum est.⁹

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod homini qui anhelat ad aliquid magnum, parvum videtur omne aliud quod est eo minus, et ideo homini speranti beatitudinem æternam, habito respectu ad istam spem, nihil aliud est arduum; sed habito respectu ad facultatem sperantis possunt etiam quædam alia ei* esse ardua. Et secundum hoc eorum potest esse spes in ordine ad principale objectum.

articulus 3. utrum aliquis possit sperare alteri beatitudinem æternam

AD TERTIUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod aliquis possit sperare alteri beatitudinem æternam. Dicit enim Apostolus. *Phil. 1, Confidens hoc ipsum quia qui cœpit in vobis opus bonum, perficiet usque in diem Christi Jesu.*² Perfectio autem illius diei erit beatitudo æterna. Ergo aliquis potest alteri sperare beatitudinem æternam.

2. Præterea, ea quæ a Deo petimus, speramus obtinere ab eo. Sed a Deo petimus quod alios ad beatitudinem æternam perducatur, secundum illud *Jac. ult., Orate pro invicem, ut salvemini.*³ Ergo possumus aliis sperare beatitudinem æternam.

3. Præterea, spes et desperatio sunt de eodem. Sed aliquis potest desperare de beatitudine æterna alicujus; alioquin frustra diceret Augustinus in libro *De verbis Domini, de nemine esse desperandum dum vivit.*⁴ Ergo etiam potest sperare aliquis alteri vitam æternam.

SED CONTRA est quod Augustinus dicit, in *Enchirid.* quod *spes non est nisi rerum ad eum pertinentium qui earum spem gerere perhibetur.*⁵

*Piana: omits *ei*, to or for him

⁸Hebrews 6, 19

⁹2a2æ. 1, 1

¹cf *De spe*, 4

²Philippians 1, 6

³James 5, 16

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that hope reaches *even beyond the veil*,⁸ namely that what we hope for remains for now hidden from us.

2. We should pray to God for no other favours apart from their subordination to eternal happiness. This points to hope being chiefly set upon eternal bliss; upon other objects of prayer as secondary and subordinate to it. There is a somewhat similar case with faith, which is primarily concerned with truth about God and only secondarily with the truth of other things as relating in some fashion to God.⁹

3. To one who sets his heart upon something great, anything less is of minor importance. And so the man hoping for everlasting bliss is not inclined to count anything else as difficult when measured against this hope. Nevertheless, measured against his personal limitations other things do remain difficult and accordingly his hope may well extend to them, but in due subordination to what hope is chiefly bent upon.

article 3. can one hope for another's eternal beatitude?

THE THIRD POINT: ¹ I. It would seem proper to hope for eternal beatitude for another. At least we have the example of St Paul's hope for his fellow Christians at Philippi, *I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it even to the day of Jesus Christ.*² The fulfilment to come in that day is surely eternal happiness and so one can hope for this in behalf of others.

2. Also, what we pray to God for, we hope to obtain from him. The admonition of *St James, Pray for one another that you may be saved*,³ is an indication that we should pray that others be led to eternal happiness. Therefore it is right for us to make eternal happiness for others the concern of our hope.

3. Again, hope and despair regard a situation that can give rise to either of these two contrary responses. Surely it is possible to despair concerning the salvation of another, otherwise there would be no point to St Augustine's caution, *We ought not to despair of anyone so long as he lives.*⁴ Hence it is also possible to hope for eternal beatitude for someone else.

ON THE OTHER HAND there is St Augustine's contention that *hope is concerned only with things that are in the interest of the one who entertains the hope.*⁵

⁴*Sermones ad popul.* 71, 13. PL 38, 456

⁵*Enchiridion* 8. PL 40, 235