

# On the Teacher (*De Magistro* ) (q. 11, a.1 of *De Veritate* )

quaestio est de magistro. et primo quaeritur  
utrum homo possit docere et dici magister, vel  
solus deus. et videtur quod solus deus doceat, et  
magister dici debeat.

i. matth., xxiii, 8: unus est magister vester; et  
praecedit: nolite vocari rabbi: super quo glossa:  
ne divinum honorem hominibus tribuatis, aut  
quod dei est, vobis usurpetis. ergo magistrum  
esse et docere, solius dei esse videtur.

ii. praeterea, si homo docet, non nisi per aliqua  
signa: quia si etiam rebus ipsis aliqua docere  
videatur, ut puta si aliquo quaerente quid sit  
ambulare, aliquis ambulet, tamen hoc non sufficit  
ad docendum, nisi signum aliquod adiungatur, ut  
augustinus probat in l. de magistro: eo quod in  
eadem re plura conveniunt, unde nescietur  
quantum ad quid de re illa demonstratio fiat;  
utrum quantum ad substantiam, vel quantum ad  
accidens aliquod eius. sed per signa non potest  
deveniri in cognitionem rerum, quia rerum  
cognitio potior est quam signorum; cum signorum  
cognitio ad rerum cognitionem ordinetur sicut ad  
finem: effectus autem non est potior sua causa.  
ergo nullus potest alii tradere cognitionem  
aliquarum rerum, et sic non potest eum docere.

Can humans teach each other? There are  
several different reasons to think that only  
God teaches and should be called teacher.

In the Gospel of Matthew it says, "There is  
one who is your teacher...Do not allow  
anyone to call you teacher." The Gloss on  
this passage says, "Do not let this divine  
honor be attributed to you or any human,  
or else you will be usurping what belongs  
only to God." Therefore, only God can  
teach or be called teacher.

Also, if humans can teach, it is only  
through using signs and symbols. Now one  
might think that teaching can take place  
through the things themselves and not  
through signs or symbols. A common  
example is if someone wanted to know  
what "*ambulare*" means and you show him  
by walking. But even in this case you will  
have to use some kind of sign in order to  
teach him. Augustine proves this in *On the  
Teacher* by pointing out that, since one  
thing can have all sorts of features, we can  
not know what the demonstration is about.  
Is it about walking itself or some feature,  
like speed? Therefore it seems that some  
kind of sign is necessary. But signs are not  
enough. For knowledge of the signs is not  
knowledge of the things themselves. In  
fact, one must know the things themselves  
before understanding the signs. Signs and  
symbols are invented in order to

iii. praeterea, si aliquarum rerum signa alicui proponantur per hominem; aut ille cui proponuntur, cognoscit res illas quarum sunt signa, aut non. si quidem res illas cognoscit, de eis non docetur. si vero non cognoscit, ignoratis autem rebus, nec signorum significationes cognosci possunt; quia enim nescit hanc rem quae est lapis, non potest scire quid hoc nomen lapis significet. ignorata vero significatione signorum, per signa non potest aliquis aliquid addiscere. si ergo homo nihil aliud faciat ad doctrinam quam signa proponere, videtur quod homo ab homine doceri non possit.

iv. praeterea, docere nihil aliud est quam scientiam in alio aliquo modo causare. sed scientiae subiectum est intellectus; signa autem sensibilia, quibus solum modo videtur homo posse docere, non perveniunt usque ad partem intellectivam, sed sistunt in potentia sensitiva. ergo homo ab homine doceri non potest.

v. praeterea, si scientia in uno causatur ab alio; aut scientia inerat addiscenti, aut non inerat. si non inerat, et in homine ab alio causatur; ergo unus homo in alio scientiam creat; quod est impossibile. si autem prius inerat; aut inerat in actu perfecto, et sic causari non potest, quia quod est, non fit; aut inerat secundum rationem seminalem: rationes autem seminales per nullam virtutem creatam in actum educi possunt, sed a deo solo naturae inseruntur, ut augustinus dicit super genes. ad litteram. ergo relinquitur quod unus homo nullo modo alium docere possit.

(omits objections vi-x)

communicate the knowledge of things. Therefore, no one can teach another knowledge of the things themselves.

Also, consider the case where someone uses certain signs with you. Now either you already know what those signs signify or you do not. If you do know those things that the signs are about, then the signs won't teach you about them. If you don't know them, then you couldn't know what the signs mean. For example, if you don't know what a stone is, then how could you know what the word stone means? Someone ignorant of what the signs mean can't be taught through those signs. Therefore, if all we have are signs by which to teach, then we can't teach each other.

Also, to teach is to cause knowledge in another person. But knowledge is in the intellect, whereas signs are received by the five senses. If signs are the only tools we use to teach, then our "teaching" would stop at the senses and not extend to the intellect. Therefore, one person cannot really teach another.

Let us suppose that one person's knowledge is caused by the knowledge in another. Now either that knowledge already exists in the individual who is to be taught, or it doesn't. If it doesn't, then we have the case of one person causing knowledge in another. But this is impossible. If it does already exist, either it exists in a fully actual state (which would make teaching superfluous) or in a seminal state. But no created power can make something in a seminal state to become fully actual. Only God can do this. Therefore, humans cannot teach each other.

xi. praeterea, scientia nihil aliud esse videtur quam descriptio rerum in anima, cum scientia esse dicatur assimilatio scientis ad scitum. sed unus homo non potest in alterius anima describere rerum similitudines: sic enim interius operaretur in ipso; quod solius dei est. ergo unus homo alium docere non potest.

xii. praeterea, boetius dicit in lib. de consolatione, quod per doctrinam solum modo mens hominis excitatur ad sciendum. sed ille qui excitat intellectum ad sciendum, non facit eum scire; sicut ille qui excitat aliquem ad videndum corporaliter, non facit eum videre. ergo unus homo non facit alium scire; et ita non proprie potest dici quod eum doceat.

(omits objections xiii-xviii)

(omits *sed contra* i-iv)

v. praeterea, ut dicitur in iv meteororum, unumquodque tunc est perfectum quando potest simile sibi generare. sed scientia est quaedam cognitio perfecta. ergo homo qui habet scientiam, potest alium docere.

(omits *sed contra* vi)

responsio. dicendum, quod in tribus eadem opinionum diversitas invenitur: scilicet in educatione formarum in esse, in acquisitione virtutum, et in acquisitione scientiarum.

quidam enim dixerunt, formas omnes sensibiles esse ab agente extrinseco, quod est substantia vel forma separata, quam appellant datorem formarum vel intelligentiam agentem; et quod omnia inferiora agentia naturalia non sunt nisi sicut praeparantia materiam ad formae susceptionem.

Also, knowledge is nothing other than the representation of things in the soul. For knowledge is the conformity of the knower to the known. But one human cannot make a copy of things in the soul of another, because a human cannot change the inside of another. Only God can.

Therefore, one man cannot teach another.

Also, Boethius says in *On the Consolation of Philosophy* that teaching only inspires the human mind to know things. But inspiring the mind is different from making it to know, just as helping a person to see with his eyes is different from making him to see. Therefore, one person does make another to know, and so does not really teach him.

On the other hand, as Aristotle says in Book IV of his *Meteorology* (and Book IX of his *Metaphysics*), everything reaches a perfect state when it can produce another like to itself. But knowledge is a perfect state of the mind. Therefore, someone who has knowledge can teach another.

My response to this question is as follows. First we should note that the same kind of disagreement is found among these three questions: how something comes into existence, how someone acquires virtue, and how someone comes to know.

I. Some people have said that things come into existence by virtue of an outside power, which they call the "giver of forms" and "intelligent cause." All other causes are merely instruments that prepare the material for the forms.

similiter etiam avicenna dicit in sua metaphys., quod habitus honesti causa non est actio nostra; sed actio prohibet eius contrarium, et adaptat ad illum, ut accadat hic habitus a substantia perficiente animas hominum, quae est intelligentia agens, vel substantia ei consimilis.

similiter etiam ponunt, quod scientia in nobis non efficitur nisi ab agente separato; unde avicenna ponit in vi de naturalibus, quod formae intelligibiles effluunt in mentem nostram ab intelligentia agente.

quidam vero e contrario opinati sunt; scilicet quod omnia ista rebus essent indita, nec ab exteriori causam haberent, sed solummodo quod per exteriorem actionem manifestantur. posuerunt enim quidam, quod omnes formae naturales essent actu in materia latentes, et quod agens naturale nihil aliud facit quam extrahere eas de occulto in manifestum.

similiter etiam aliqui posuerunt, quod omnes virtutum habitus nobis sunt inditi a natura; sed per exercitium operum removentur impedimenta, quibus praedicti habitus quasi occultabantur; sicut per limationem aufertur rubigo, ut claritas ferri manifestetur.

similiter etiam aliqui dixerunt quod animae est omnium scientia concreata; et per huiusmodi doctrinam et huiusmodi scientiae exteriora adminicula nihil fit aliud nisi quod anima deducitur in recordationem vel considerationem eorum quae prius scivit; unde dicunt, quod addiscere nihil est aliud quam reminisci.

utraque autem istarum opinionum est absque ratione.

In a similar way, Avicenna says in *Metaphysics* that the virtue of honesty is not acquired by our attempts at being honest. Instead, our attempts only keep us away from dishonesty and help prepare us to receive the quality of honesty from the intelligent cause.

Likewise, some even say that we gain knowledge from an outside cause. As Avicenna says, the ideas flow into our minds from the intelligent cause.

II. On the other hand, some have said that all things that seem to come into existence already exist but are initially hidden. The only thing natural forces have to do is bring these hidden qualities to light.

In a similar way, some have held that humans are born with all the virtues. All that needs to be done is to remove the impediments that keep the good qualities hidden, just as someone might sand away rust in order to reveal the brightness of iron.

Likewise, some have said that the human soul is created with the knowledge of all things. According to this opinion, teaching is nothing other than helping the soul to remember and consider the things it already knows. So they say that learning is remembering.

III. Both of these positions, however, have no rational basis.

prima enim opinio excludit causas propinquas, dum effectus omnes in inferioribus provenientes, solis causis primis attribuit; in quo derogatur ordini universi, qui ordine et connexione causarum contextitur: dum prima causa ex eminentia bonitatis suae rebus aliis confert non solum quod sint, sed et quod causae sint.

secunda etiam opinio in idem quasi inconveniens redit: cum enim removens prohibens non sit nisi movens per accidens, ut dicitur viii physic.; si inferiora agentia nihil aliud faciunt quam producere de occulto in manifestum, removendo impedimenta, quibus formae et habitus virtutum et scientiarum occultabantur: sequetur quod omnia inferiora agentia non agant nisi per accidens.

et ideo, secundum doctrinam aristotelis, via media inter has duas tenenda est in omnibus praedictis.

formae enim naturales praeexistunt quidem in materia, non in actu, ut alii dicebant, sed in potentia solum, de qua in actum reducuntur per agens extrinsecum proximum, non solum per agens primum, ut alia opinio ponebat.

similiter etiam secundum ipsius sententiam in vi ethicorum, virtutum habitus ante earum consummationem praeexistunt in nobis in quibusdam naturalibus inclinationibus, quae sunt quaedam virtutum inchoationes, sed postea per exercitium operum adducuntur in debitam consummationem

For the first position rules out any possibility of a chain of causes, since the first cause, such as the "giver of forms", is the only cause. But this opinion insults the universe, which is woven together by the order and connection of causes. For the primary cause, from its outstanding goodness, makes other things not only to be, but also to be causes.

The second position falls down for the same reason. For a cause that only removes an impediment is not a cause in the truest sense. So, if all causes only take away whatever is obscuring natural features, virtues, or knowledge, then there are no true causes in the world.

IV. Thus we should take the middle path between these two positions, as Aristotle recommends.

For natural forms and features do preexist, but not actually, as some say, but potentially. They are brought into being from their potential states by causes outside them but close to them, and not only by the supreme cause.

In a similar way, before virtuous qualities are fully actual in us they preexist in our natural inclinations, which are the seeds of virtue. Through practice they are brought to their proper completion.

similiter etiam dicendum est de scientiae acquisitione; quod praeexistunt in nobis quaedam scientiarum semina, scilicet primae conceptiones intellectus, quae statim lumine intellectus agentis cognoscuntur per species a sensibilibus abstractas, sive sint complexa, sicut dignitates, sive incomplexa, sicut ratio entis, et unius, et huiusmodi, quae statim intellectus apprehendit. in istis autem principiis universalibus omnia sequentia includuntur, sicut in quibusdam rationibus seminalibus. quando ergo ex istis universalibus cognitionibus mens educitur ut actu cognoscat particularia, quae prius in universali et quasi in potentia cognoscebantur, tunc aliquis dicitur scientiam acquirere.

sciendum tamen est, quod in rebus naturalibus aliquid praeexistit in potentia dupliciter.

uno modo in potentia activa completa; quando, scilicet, principium intrinsecum sufficienter potest perducere in actum perfectum, sicut patet in sanatione: ex virtute enim naturali quae est in aegro, aeger ad sanitatem perducitur.

alio modo in potentia passiva; quando, scilicet, principium intrinsecum non sufficit ad educendum in actum, sicut patet quando ex aere fit ignis; hoc enim non poterat fieri per aliquam virtutem in aere existentem.

quando igitur praeexistit aliquid in potentia activa completa, tunc agens extrinsecum non agit nisi adiuvando agens intrinsecum, et ministrando ei ea quibus possit in actum exire; sicut medicus in sanatione est minister naturae, quae principaliter operatur, confortando naturam, et apponendo medicinas, quibus velut instrumentis natura utitur ad sanationem.

The same sort of thing should be said about learning and teaching. The seeds of knowledge preexist in us. These are the elementary ideas (both simple and complex) which we understand immediately by the light of our own minds. From these common principles all other principles of knowledge grow, like a plant grows from a seed. Therefore, when from these common notions a mind moves into an actual state of knowing some more specific things (which before it knew only potentially and at a very general level), then someone can be said to have acquired knowledge.

V. We should, however, point out that in nature things can preexist potentially in two different ways.

First, something can preexist potentially in a complete and active way, when, namely, an intrinsic principle is enough to make it become fully actual. This is what often happens in the process of getting healthy, as when from the natural power within the sick person, his health can be recovered.

Second, something can preexist potentially in a passive way, such that an intrinsic principle is not enough to bring it into full existence. This is the case when fire comes into existence from air, not from any intrinsic power of the air.

When something preexists in the first way, then an outside cause helps the intrinsic cause by providing it with the things it needs to do its work. For example, when a doctor heals he is in fact ministering to nature, which is the principal cause. He adapts his practice to the needs of nature and by using medicines or other instruments provides nature with what it needs to bring about health.

quando vero aliquid praeexistit in potentia passiva tantum, tunc agens extrinsecum est quod educit principaliter de potentia in actum; sicut ignis facit de aere, qui est potentia ignis, actu ignem.

scientia ergo praeexistit in addiscente in potentia non pure passiva, sed activa; alias homo non posset per seipsum acquirere scientiam.

sicut ergo aliquis dupliciter sanatur: uno modo per operationem naturae tantum, alio modo a natura cum adminiculo medicinae; ita etiam est duplex modus acquirendi scientiam: unus, quando naturalis ratio per seipsam devenit in cognitionem ignotorum; et hic modus dicitur inventio; alius, quando naturali rationi aliquis exterius adminiculatur, et hic modus dicitur disciplina.

in his autem quae fiunt a natura et arte, eodem modo ars operatur, et per eadem media, quibus et natura. sicut enim natura in eo qui ex frigida causa laborat, calefaciendo induceret sanitatem, ita et medicus; unde et ars dicitur imitari naturam. et similiter etiam contingit in scientiae acquisitione, quod eodem modo docens alium ad scientiam ignotorum deducit sicuti aliquis inveniando deducit seipsum in cognitionem ignoti.

But when something preexists in the passive way, then the outside cause is the principal agent of change, like the fire that changes air, which is potential fire, into actual fire.

Knowledge preexists in the learner in an active, not passive, way. Otherwise, someone could not acquire knowledge by himself.

VI. Therefore, just as someone can be healed in two ways -- first by the action of nature only, second by the collaboration of nature and medicine -- so also there are two ways of acquiring knowledge. First, when the mind moves by its own natural power to an understanding of things previously unknown to it. This is called discovery (*inventio*). Second, when the mind is helped by an outside power of reason. This is called teaching (*disciplina*).

Now in those things that come about by nature and art, art works in the same way and uses the same sorts of tools as nature. For just as nature uses warmth to heal someone suffering from a cold, so also does a doctor. This is why art is said to imitate nature. Similarly, in the acquisition of knowledge, the teacher leads the student to the knowledge of things the student previously did not know in the same way that someone leads himself to discover what he previously did not know.

processus autem rationis pervenientis ad cognitionem ignoti inveniendū est ut principia communia per se nota applicet ad determinatas materias, et inde procedat in aliquas particulares conclusiones, et ex his in alias; unde et secundum hoc unus alium dicitur docere quod istum decursum rationis, quem in se facit ratione naturali, alteri exponit per signa et sic ratio naturalis discipuli, per huiusmodi sibi proposita, sicut per quaedam instrumenta, pervenit in cognitionem ignotorum.

sicut igitur medicus dicitur causare sanitatem in infirmo natura operante, ita etiam homo dicitur causare scientiam in alio operatione rationis naturalis illius: et hoc est docere; unde unus homo alium docere dicitur, et eius esse magister. et secundum hoc dicit philosophus, i posteriorum, quod demonstratio est syllogismus faciens scire.

si autem aliquis alicui proponat ea quae in principiis per se notis non includuntur, vel includi non manifestantur, non faciet in eo scientiam, sed forte opinionem, vel fidem; quamvis hoc etiam aliquo modo ex principiis innatis causetur. ex ipsis enim principiis per se notis considerat, quod ea quae ex eis necessario consequuntur, sunt certitudinaliter tenenda; quae vero eis sunt contraria, totaliter respuenda; aliis autem assensum praeberere potest, vel non praeberere.

The process of discovery begins with applying common self-evident principles to particular subject matters, and then proceeding to some particular conclusions, and then from these moving on to other conclusions. In light of this, one is said to teach another, when he makes clear through certain signs the path (*discursum*) of reasoning he himself took. Thus the teacher's presentations are like tools that the natural reason of the student uses to come to an understanding of things previously unknown to him.

Therefore, just as the doctor is said to cause health in the sick man with nature working, so also one is said to cause knowledge in another by the activity of the power of reasoning in that person, and this is called teaching. In this way one person is said to teach another and to be his teacher. Thus the Philosopher says that a demonstration is a syllogism causing knowledge.

Now if someone proposes to another certain ideas that are not self-evident or if he does not manifest how they follow from self-evident principles, then he does not cause knowledge in that person, but rather opinion or belief. For those ideas that follow necessarily from the first self evident principles have to be true, and those that are contrary to them have to be false. But to all other ideas he can give his assent or not.



huiusmodi autem rationis lumen, quo principia huiusmodi nobis sunt nota, est nobis a deo inditum, quasi quaedam similitudo increatae veritatis in nobis resultans. unde, cum omnis doctrina humana efficaciam habere non possit nisi ex virtute illius luminis; constat quod solus deus est qui interius et principaliter docet, sicut natura interius et principaliter sanat; nihilominus homo et sanare et docere proprie dicitur modo praedicto.

ad primum ergo dicendum, quod quia dominus praeceperat discipulis ne vocarentur magistri, ne posset intelligi hoc esse prohibitum absolute. glossa exponit qualiter haec prohibitio sit intelligenda. prohibemur enim hoc modo hominem vocare magistrum, ut ei principalitatem magisterii attribuamus, quae deo competit; quasi in hominum sapientia spem ponentes, et non magis de his quae ab homine audimus, divinam veritatem consulentes, quae in nobis loquitur per suae similitudinis impressionem, qua de omnibus possumus iudicare.

ad secundum dicendum, quod cognitio rerum in nobis non efficitur per cognitionem signorum, sed per cognitionem aliarum rerum magis certarum, scilicet principiorum, quae nobis per aliqua signa proponuntur, et applicantur ad aliqua quae prius nobis erant ignota simpliciter, quamvis essent nobis nota secundum quid, ut dictum est. cognitio enim principiorum facit in nobis scientiam conclusionum, non cognitio signorum.

Finally, we should note that the light of reason, by which the first principles are known to us, is endowed by God. It is in fact a kind of likeness of the uncreated truth. Thus, since every human teaching has its validity only through the power of that divine light, then it follows that God alone is the most interior and principal teacher of all, just as nature is the principal and interior healer. But this does not rule out that teaching and healing can be spoken of in the way I have already mentioned.

My responses to the objections are as follows: To the first we should say that God's command to his disciples not to let themselves be called teacher is not an absolute prohibition. We are prohibited to call someone a teacher as if he were the supreme teacher. The point is that we should not place unlimited trust in human wisdom, but only in the divine truth which speaks in us through an impression in us of its likeness and by which we can judge all things.

To the second we should say that our knowledge of things is not brought about through the understanding of the signs, but through the understanding of things more certain, such as the principles (which are presented to us through signs). These principles are applied to other things that we were previously ignorant of, even though we did know them in some way (as I have explained above). For the understanding of the principles, not of the signs, gives us knowledge of the conclusions.

ad tertium dicendum, quod illa de quibus per signa edocemur, cognoscimus quidem quantum ad aliquid, et quantum ad aliquid ignoramus; utpote si docemur quid est homo, oportet quod de eo praesciamus aliquid: scilicet rationem animalis, vel substantiae, aut saltem ipsius entis, quae nobis ignota esse non potest. et similiter si doceamur aliquam conclusionem, oportet praescire de passione et subiecto quid sunt, etiam principiis, per quae conclusio docetur, praecognitis; omnis enim disciplina fit ex praeexistenti cognitione, ut dicitur in principio posteriorum. unde ratio non sequitur.

ad quartum dicendum, quod ex sensibilibus signis, quae in potentia sensitiva recipiuntur, intellectus accipit intentiones intelligibiles, quibus utitur ad scientiam in seipso faciendam. proximum enim scientiae effectivum non sunt signa, sed ratio discurrens a principiis in conclusiones, ut dictum est.

ad quintum dicendum, quod in eo qui docetur, scientia praeexistebat, non quidem in actu completo, sed quasi in rationibus seminalibus, secundum quod universales conceptiones, quarum cognitio est nobis naturaliter indita, sunt quasi semina quaedam omnium sequentium cognitorum. quamvis autem per virtutem creatam rationes seminales non hoc modo educantur in actum quasi ipsae per aliquam creatam virtutem infundantur, tamen id quod est in eis originaliter et virtualiter, actione creatae virtutis in actum educi potest.

(omits replies vi-x)

To the third we should point out that, when we are being taught certain things through signs, we must already understand those things in some way, while being ignorant of them in other ways. For example, if we are being taught about humans, we have to already know something about being human, either that a human is a thinking animal, or some kind of substance, or at least some kind of being (which everyone already must know). Likewise, if we are learning a proof, we must already have some understanding of the subject of the proof and what is trying to be proved about the subject, in addition to prior knowledge of the first principles. For all learning is based on preexisting knowledge. Thus, the conclusion of this objection doesn't follow.

To the fourth we should say that the human mind takes ideas from the signs that our senses perceive. It then uses these to produce knowledge in itself. For signs are not the immediate cause of knowledge, but the mind moving from principles to conclusions, as I said above.

To the fifth we should reply that knowledge does preexist in the student, not completely but in a seminal state. For the common notions, which are present in our mind by nature, are like seeds of all the knowledge that will follow. Now while it is true that no created power has implanted these knowledge "seeds" in us, still the action of a created power can realize the potential of those seeds.

ad undecimum dicendum, quod in discipulo describuntur formae intelligibiles, ex quibus scientia per doctrinam accepta constituitur, immediate quidem per intellectum agentem, sed mediate per eum qui docet. proponit enim doctor rerum intelligibilium signa ex quibus intellectus agens accipit intentiones intelligibiles, et describit eas in intellectu possibili. unde ipsa verba doctoris audita, vel visa in scripto, hoc modo se habent ad causandum scientiam in intellectu sicut res quae sunt extra animam, quia ex utrisque intellectus agens intentiones intelligibiles accipit; quamvis verba doctoris propinquius se habeant ad causandum scientiam quam sensibilia extra animam existentia inquantum sunt signa intelligibilium intentionum.

ad duodecimum dicendum, quod non est omnino simile de intellectu et visu corporali.

visus enim corporalis non est vis collativa, ut ex quibusdam suorum obiectorum in alia perveniat; sed omnia sua obiecta sunt ei visibilia, quam cito ad illa convertitur: unde habens potentiam visivam se habet hoc modo ad omnia visibilia intuenda, sicut habens habitum ad ea quae habitualiter scit considerata; et ideo videns non indiget ab alio excitari ad videndum, nisi quatenus per alium eius visus dirigitur in aliquod visibile, ut digito, vel aliquo huiusmodi.

To the eleventh we should say that the student's ideas are the primary foundation on which is built all the knowledge gained through teaching. The student's own lights are the immediate builder, while the teacher's are the middle builder. For the teacher presents signs of the knowable things, from which the student's mind takes ideas in order to consider them. Thus the teacher's words or writings end up being like the subject of study, since the student takes ideas from both. The difference is that the teacher's words are a more direct way of generating knowledge than the experience of the subject since they are signs of the ideas themselves.

To the twelfth we should first notice the difference between mental perception and eyesight.

Eyesight is not a comparative power (that is, one capable of becoming aware of some things by looking at others). For all of the objects of sight are visible to it as soon as it turns toward them. It is much like someone who has already acquired knowledge of something -- in order to think it, the person merely needs to turn his attention to it. Thus, we do not need others to inspire or rouse up our vision, unless perhaps when we need someone to point out an object for us to see.

sed potentia intellectiva, cum sit vis collativa, ex quibusdam in alia devenit; unde non se habet aequaliter ad omnia intelligibilia considerata; sed quaedam statim videt quae sunt per se nota, in quibus implicite continentur quaedam alia quae intelligere non potest nisi per officium rationis ea quae in principiis implicite continentur, explicando; unde ad huiusmodi cognoscenda, antequam habitum habeat, non solum est in potentia accidentali, sed etiam in potentia essentiali: indiget enim motore, qui reducat eum in actum per doctrinam, ut dicitur in viii physic.: quo non indiget ille qui iam aliquid habitualiter novit.

doctor ergo excitat intellectum ad sciendum illa quae docet, sicut motor essentialis educens de potentia in actum; sed ostendens rem aliquam visui corporali, excitat eum sicut motor per accidens; prout etiam habens habitum scientiae potest excitari ad considerandum de aliquo.

(omits replies xii-xviii)

The mind, on the other hand, is a comparative power. Not all things are equally understandable to it. For certain things, such as the first self-evident principles it see immediately. But those ideas that follow from the principles and are implicitly contained in them need the process of reasoning and demonstration before the mind can see them. In this case the mind that is seeking to know these does need the help of teaching, unlike a mind that has already understood these ideas but is not thinking about them at the moment.

Therefore, the teacher inspires the student to understand what he is teaching, just as any cause can realize the potential in another thing. But when someone presents something to the sense of sight, that person is more of a secondary (*per accidens*) cause that helps realize potential.

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