

The Manuale Scholarium (Excerpt)

Translated by Robert Francis Seybolt (Cambridge, 1923).

CHAPTER IV

A DISCUSSION OF METHODS AND COURSES OF STUDY

Cam. You praised this teacher to the sky, and yet he's a nominalist.¹

Bar. What of it?

Cam. I won't hear anything from him then.

Bar. You're more foolish than he, if you scorn instruction. Not only the realists, but even the nominalists have attained to a great part of philosophy.

Cam. But they're so steeped in fallacies that they reject true teaching.

Bar. You commit an offence against truth, for exceedingly learned men are found among the nominalists. Haven't you heard that in certain countries they have whole universities, as at Vienna, Erfurt, and as once it was here? Don't you think they were learned and good here? And they're still found in our day.

Cam. I know they are. I know it, but their reputation is small. They exert themselves only in the *parva logicalia*² and in sophistical opinions.

¹ *modernus est. Via moderna*, nominalism; *moderni*, nominalists. *Via antiqua*, realism; *antiqui*, realists. For the struggle between the *antiqui* and *moderni* in the universities, see Kaufmann, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Universitäten*, ii, pp. 357-362; and Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik*, iv, pp. 185-195.

Nominalism prevailed at Heidelberg until 1452, when both *viae* were put upon an equal footing. See Heidelberg statute, 1452 (*Urkundenbuch*, i, p. 165): "To all and singular attached to our university, we strictly forbid that any one detract disparagingly from realism or nominalism, or from the representatives of either of these anywhere, or say anything with contumely, or in any way that may redound to the prejudice of either of the said methods and their representatives, on penalty to be imposed by us according to the degree of his offence. Likewise, we forbid any one, by word or deed, to prevent the students from being able freely to attend and hear lectures or disputations of any master whatsoever of the present faculty, whether on realism or nominalism." See also Heidelberg, 1545 (*Urkundenbuch*, i, p. 173), 1481 (*ibid.*, i, p. 193).

² The *parva logicalia* was often presented in separate lectures, under the following titles: *Suppositiones*, *Relationes*, *Ampliationes*, *Appellationes*, *Restrictions*, *Distributiones*, *Syncategoremata*, *Obligatoria*, *Insolubilia*, *Consequentiae*. As to the *Obligatoria* and *Insolubilia*, see Prantl, *op. cit.*, iv, pp. 40 ff., 193.

Bar. You're wrong, for they are famous in argumentation. You won't find students of the arts who know syllogisms and the other forms of arguments better than the nominalists.

Cam. But they know nothing of true science.

Bar. What true science do you mean?

Cam. The *praedicabilia* of Porphyry, and the *categoriae* of Aristotle, of which they know little or nothing.

Bar. It's unbecoming of you to say such things. It would be disgraceful for such famous men not to know those things. Consider the rules of the *consequentiae* in which they are thoroughly practiced; they observe the form of argument and of the syllogism, and since universal truths are the bases of argumentation, they must necessarily know them, otherwise they would accomplish nothing in any argumentation. But this is important: they have a different method of teaching than the realists. If we listen attentively, we'll get a great deal out of their teaching.

Cam. Bart, explain to me what advantage there is then in the method of the nominalists.

Bar. I'll show you so far as I feel disposed. But I want you to understand one thing. I don't accept their doctrine so eagerly as I do that of the realists, but I think that no one's doctrine ought to be despised. So, give me your attention, and remember what I say. First, one thing which, I think, will be useful in the method of the nominalists is that we learn from them the value of premises, in which they are deeply versed — very skilful in the expression of thoughts — and they understand, of course, the *insolubilia* and the *obligatoria*, and they are well versed in methods of conversions in the case of rare forms of the syllogism by means of which they occasion to those not so well versed in them the greatest embarrassment; then, also, they know admirably the hypothetical cases that are valid, and the method to use in them; and you won't find among the dialecticians any who can speak as clearly as they do in their statements of syllogisms. This we think has some value in the things that concern the terms, such as the *suppositiones* and *ampliationes*, and the propositions that can be expounded, and lately many paralogisms which are pretty fine; and in this way, in the midst of the argument, the mouth of the respondent is quickly shut, no matter how violent he

may have been. Here you have something of use, and considerably so I think.

Cam. It is as you say, but I don't care to spend my life in these sophistical and quibbling discussions.

Bar. Do as you please.

Cam. I know a master who imitates Albert, whom they call the great doctor.³ I'll follow his teaching.

Bar. Do you think that St. Thomas is less?

Cam. I don't know. The name of Albert is mere illustrious.

Bar. Certainly not, for St. Thomas is a saint.⁴

Cam. Certain it is, that there were many saints who excelled merely in their simplicity. If my guess is right, they attained their sanctity from devotion and fasting, abstinence, etc., while Master Albert achieved the name of great because of his excellence in science.⁵

Don't you see that fame based on philosophy is more illustrious?⁶

Bar. I prefer to stand with St. Thomas.

Cam. Sluggard! If the opportunity were given, who wouldn't want to have plenty? But since you think to

enter the order of preachers, as he did, sweat with fasting and other practices leading to the blessed life, and you'll be a sharer of sanctity and an associate of that life. You speak without thinking. This isn't derived from the study of the arts, but from divine contemplation.

Bar. There's no use talking. I think that the teaching of St. Thomas is brilliant.

Cam. And I don't deny it, but I prefer Albert. Nevertheless, if you please, let's approach Master Jodocus; he follows Scotus.⁷

Bar. By no means; they all look at him with aversion.

Cam. Why, do you know?

Bar. I have no idea.

Cam. I'll tell you; it's because rivals don't understand the teaching of the most subtle Scotus.

Bar. Some say so, but it isn't true; for we have the greatest possible number of masters here, and it would be remarkable if they did not understand him.

Cam. It's well known that they aren't able to perceive many distinctions that he has made.

Bar. Let's not judge these things. Let's agree with those who are wiser.

³ Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) was called *doctor universalis*.

⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) was known as the *doctor sanctus*, and *doctor angelicus*. St. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus were among the leading exponents of Aristotelian realism (*universalia sunt redid in rebus*).

⁵ *Cerium est, quia plures fuerunt sancti simplicitatem prae seferentes; si quidem mea coniectura est, tamen ex operibus, scilicet devocione et ieiunio abstinentia, sanctitatem obtinuisse etc. dominum vero Albertum scientiae propter excellentiam meruisse magnitudinis nomen.* In his comparison of the *Manuale* with Paulus Nivis's, *Latina Ydeomata*, Fabricius, in *Zeitschrift für Bocherfreunde*, Jg. i, i, p. 181, says: "Kap. 4. Zarncke 14,17 haben alle Drucke des Manuale' tamen/ was ganz sinnlos ist, während Nivis richtig Thomam (v. Aquino) hat." While the change is permissible in this context, I do not agree with Fabricius that the use of *tamen* is "ganz sinnlos."

⁶ The reader will recall a similar argument in the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* (Stokes edition, p. 487), ii, 47. It follows: "Secondly, you ask whether I hold *St. Thomas* or *St. Dominic* to be the holier? I answer that it is a moot point. . . . Some hold *St. Dominic* to be the holier as touching his life, but not as touching his doctrine; and, on the other hand, *St. Thomas* to be the holier as touching his doctrine, but not as touching his life."

⁷ John Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308), called *doctor subtilis*, was a nominalist (*universalia sunt realia post res*).

