

**Jean Gerson, *De examinatione doctrinarum* 2, 474 (ed. Glorieux)**

Porro si quaeratur a me, quis inter caeteros doctores plus videatur idoneus, respondeo sine praejudicio, quod dominus Bonaventura, quoniam in docendo solidius et securius, pius insuper, justus et devotus.

Praeterea recedit a curiositate quantum potest, non immiscens positiones extraneas vel doctrinas saeculares dialecticas aut philosophicas terminis theologicis obumbratas more multorum; sed dum studet illuminationi intellectus, totum refert ad pietatem et religiositatem affectus.

Then if one asks me who would seem the most adequate doctor among all the others, I respond without any prejudice that Bonaventure is that one, because he is quite solid and confident in teaching, pious, right and devote.

Moreover he remains far from curiosity as much as he can, without adding extraneous positions or secular doctrines driven by dialectics or philosophy, hiding them through theological terms, like many do; but while he studies through the illumination of the intellect, he is all oriented towards the piety and the religiosity of the affection.

**Jean Gerson, *Contra curiositatem studentium* 1, 230, 40 (ed. Glorieux)**

Philosophos antiquos sicut curiositas fefellit, ita formidandum est ne theologos nostri temporis ipsa similis curiositas decipiat.

De errore philosophantium causato ex curiositate nimia loquitur Seneca in Epistola de liberalibus artibus, et Hugo melius in prooemio commenti sui super Angelicam hierarchiam.

Porro si philosophi se inter hos limites coarctassent, et Deum sic cognitum ut dignum fuerat, glorificassent, bene erat cum eis; sed pergere ultra volentes defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio.

As curiosity drove the ancient philosophers to the error, in this way we have to avoid that the same , similar curiosity makes the theologians of our times fall.

About the error of philosophers caused by the excessive curiosity spoke Seneca in the letter about the liberal arts and Hugh of Balma even better in the introduction to his commentary on the Angelic Hierarchy.

Then if philosophers would restrict themselves in their limits and would celebrate God as worth of honors, it would have been good for them; but willing to go further the failed in researching their object of research.

**Jean Gerson, *Contra curiositatem studentium***

Quamobrem dum terminos quosdam apud aliquem ex doctoribus approbatis invenimus non usitatos in schola communi illos introducere non debemus, nisi pia et reverenti resolutione praevia ut dicendo: terminus iste a tali sic accipiebatur; qui scilicet usus vel quia usus communis aliter accipit, cavenda est audientium offensio in divinis.

Exempli gratia: nihil prius aut posterius, nihil majus aut minus; haec est fides catholica.

Si doctores usi sunt terminis prioritatem aut majoritatem signantibus in divinis, protinus eos resolvere oportet ad hanc unicam et stabilem fidei regulam, quod Filius est a Patre, et Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et Filio, et Pater a nullo.

Si mille millia terminorum adduxeris ad explicandum hoc fidei secretum, nihil amplius, si non vis errare, cognosces quam istam unicam, et paucissimis verbis explicatam veritatem.

Augustinus et Damascenus nomen hoc "causa", in divinis admiserunt.

Pater est causa Filii.

Hilarius dixit quod Pater major est auctoritate.

Augustinus in Confessionibus ponit in Deo gradus et ordinem; dicit Deum assumpsisse hominem; immo hoc Ecclesiae canticum solemne habet: Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, etc.

Et hoc modo de multis aliis apud istos et alios exempla suppetunt.

For this reason, when we find some unusual words in some of the approved doctors, we don't have to introduce them in the common school, if not with a previous devout and reverent resolution, like saying: this word is taken by that author in this sense; since the common use interprets in another way, we must avoid to offend those who hear in the divine things.

For example: no previous or following, no major or minor. This is the catholic faith.

If the doctors used terms defining a priority or a majority in the divine things, it is necessary to immediately convey those words to this one and fixed rule, that the Son comes from the Father and the Holy Spirit from the Father and from the Son and the Father comes from nobody.

If you bring thousands of words for explaining this secret of the faith, if you don't want to be mistaken, you should know nothing else than this sole truth explained through a very few words.

Augustine and John of Damascus admitted the use of the word "cause". The Father is cause of the Son.

Hilary of Poitiers said that the father is major in the authority.

Augustine in the Confessions puts degrees and order in God; he says that God took the human form; so the Church has this solemn canticle: "You took it to deliver man".

### **Jean Gerson, *De modis significandi*, 1, 38 (ed. Glorieux)**

Theologus in inquisitione speculabilium curiositatem evitet non plus quam expedit, moralia dimittendo.

Sequatur insuper modos significandi quibus utitur communis schola doctorum etiam si quandoque posset invenire suo iudicio magis idoneos.

### **Jean Gerson, *Epistola ad fratrem Bartholomaeum II***

Secunda consideratio: modus loquendi doctorum si reperiatur improprius et parabolicus, vel inusitatus aut figurativus, extendi vel in usum trahi non debet sed ad sensum proprium et non figurativum reverenter exponi.

Alioquin frustra essent doctores in theologia constituti principaliter ad hoc officium elucidandi sacram scripturam quam magis atque magis aliter agendo confunderent.

Tolerent igitur patienter homines inferioris gradus et scientiae si dicta eorum quaerantur ad proprium usum coarctari, non in perniciem doctrinae catholicae dilatari.

Hac consideratione permotos existimo doctores novissimos Thomam, Bonaventuram et similes, dum omisso omni verborum ornatu tradiderunt theologiam per quaestiones ut sub certis regulis et sub praecisa verborum forma tutissimam haberemus theologiam tam practicam quam speculativam, reducendo doctores omnes priores ad unam securam que locutionis proprietatem.

Second consideration: the way of speaking of the doctors in theology, if it is considered as not proper or parabolic or strange or figurative, should not be extended or used, but it is necessary to expose (the doctrine) in a reverent way according to the proper sense and not to the figurative meaning.

Otherwise without reason the doctors in theology would have been constituted mainly with the duty of clarifying the sacred scripture, more than for mixing it up, acting in a more and more different way.

Therefore, people of an inferior level and of inferior science would support more patiently their words, if these words are requested to be limited to the proper use and not to be increased for damaging the catholic doctrine.

I think that the most recent doctors Thomas, Bonaventure and others were driven by this consideration, while, leaving apart any verbal ornamentation, they transmitted the theology through questions, so that we have both the practical and the speculative theology under certain rules and under a precise form of expression, reducing all the previous doctors to one and safe property of expression.

#### **Thomas de Aquino, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* 11, 4.**

Ad ultimum dicendum, quod curiositas superfluam curam importat et inordinatam: unde non solum in studio litterarum, sed in omnibus studiis ad quae animus occupatur, superflua cura, quae curiositatem facit, reprehensibilis est. [...] Ipsa etiam sapientia maximum opus est: et antefertur Maria quae audiebat, Marthae quae ministrabat.

To the last argument it's necessary to say that curiosity brings a superfluous and disordered care: therefore not only in the study of the letters, but in all the studies in which the soul is occupied, the superfluous care, that leads to curiosity, is blameworthy. [...] Wisdom itself is the maximum achievement: and Mary, who listened, was preferred to Martha, who got busy.