

**Why Philosophy and Theology Need Each Other**  
**Gonzaga University Socratic Club**  
**March 23, 2010**

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Specialization is death to a Renaissance Man. The Renaissance Man has an intimate familiarity and even mastery of all fields of knowledge. He also possesses social grace and is adept in physical and artistic endeavors. Specialization is death, because to become engrossed in one fascinating area would be to neglect another. That would stunt Renaissance Man's growth as a well-rounded person who has developed all facets of his potential.

The great painter and inventor Leonardo da Vinci often tops lists of Renaissance Men. Such lists are not limited to individuals who lived between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, nor are they limited to male human beings—a good reminder, by the way, that English has historically granted to the word “man” more than one meaning, like it has to so many other words. I trust myself to your intelligence as an audience to understand how I use it. But to add a person's name to such a list is to subject his accomplishments to even more intense scrutiny than normal: was this person really so accomplished? Really so well-rounded? In everything? Even Leonardo is not particularly renowned as a poet. And was he an artist with the sword as well as the brush? Could he dance? Or did he only think he could dance?

In fact, Renaissance Man is an ideal or, if you are a cynic, he is a fiction. Here's proof: listmakers need to traverse the whole of human history just to have enough candidates for a Top 10 list! The term itself appears first to have been used in print in 1906.<sup>1</sup> While it certainly intends to highlight some ideals associated with the Renaissance timeperiod, perhaps it also expresses a wistful recognition that, from the perspective of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the last time it was possible to achieve such an ideal was some three centuries earlier. After all, if individuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries were all characterized by mastery of knowledge, social grace, physical prowess, and artistry, why would anyone need to refer back to the Renaissance to name the ideal?

But being an ideal, or even a fiction, is not necessarily a bad thing: ideals often reveal our deepest potential that we intuitively sense we can become with luck, effort, and grace, while fiction often reveals our ideals. However, even if Renaissance Man seems more rare, perfect, and unattainable than Mr. Right, the ideal is not high enough, nor the fiction good enough. Let the standard be raised! For note that our

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<sup>1</sup> S.v. “renaissance,” Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed Mar. 13, 2010, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=Renaissance+man&searchmode=phrase>.

description of Renaissance Man says nothing about whether Renaissance Man is morally good. Perhaps he is a socially charming, electric guitar virtuoso, MVP genius—but an evil genius.

Oddly enough, it's here where we've just raised the bar higher, where Renaissance Man has to become Sir Renaissance the Good, that we discover not only why philosophy and theology need each other, but also that maybe the ideal is not so unattainable after all. Let's see how that is by looking at the relationship between philosophy and theology.

Philosophy and theology: what do we mean by these two words? We have to get that straight before we can consider the relationship between them. (Take note of that strategy for answering essay questions on tests, by the way.) Philosophers are fond of introducing their subject matter by explaining that “philosophy” literally means “love of wisdom.” Now we all sense that wisdom is a very good thing, but philosophers go on to say that wisdom is the very best thing. Interestingly enough, theologians will agree with them. Why then aren't all theologians philosophers, or vice versa? Because while agreeing on the importance of wisdom, philosophers and theologians disagree on what exactly wisdom is and, consequently, where it is to be found and how to attain it.

For philosophers, wisdom is basically human knowledge of ultimate causes. Not just any causes, but those that undergird what we call “causes” in an everyday sense. For example, if we asked after the causes why I'm here today, a historian might answer that I was invited by Drs. Calhoun and Clayton, while a travel agent will say I came by plane. They're both correct; the invitation and the airplane both caused me to be here. But a philosopher will ask about what kind of creature is it that travels halfway across a continent to converse with other creatures about ideas? What good is being sought in this action, and how important of a good is that? How do the listeners know if the ideas are true? How do the listeners even know if they know? To answer wild and fascinating questions like these, philosophers will draw upon human experience, human observation, and human brainpower.

Theologians, in contrast, seek not so much this human wisdom, or human knowledge of causes, wonderful and beautiful as it is; rather they seek divine wisdom—God's wisdom, which is still more wonderful and beautiful. Now, assuming God is transcendent, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, which in this Christian context it should be safe to assume, then theologians are going to be radically dependent on God's revelation in their work. For what creature could wrest from God His wisdom, or guess it accurately? No, but He has disclosed it freely, as a gift of love. So, as recipients of this gift, theologians are quite happy to admit that the hardest part, the beginning, has been done for them. They are quite happy to admit that, as professionals, they are bound to respect—no, even more, strongly: obey these first principles, for if God has given them, they are quite certain and who are they to change them? (Note that this approach is, in general, different from that of religious studies. The theologian believes,

studies, and worships God; the religious studies scholar studies the theologian's beliefs and acts of worship. While religious studies scholars may be people of faith themselves, the beliefs of the religious studies scholar are irrelevant to his work.)

Of course, some persons are both philosophers and theologians, but we'll keep the subjects separate here for the sake of considering what is unique about each. So, then, philosophy seeks after the best of human wisdom we can get, and theology seeks after the best of divine wisdom we are given. The relationship between philosophy and theology will largely mirror then the relationship between reason and faith—not because philosophers are always reasonable and theologians are not reasonable at all—but because the first principles of these two sciences are given, respectively, by reason and by faith.

In terms of models for the relationship, there are at least two problematic extremes. The first is fideism, which, oversimplified, says theology doesn't need philosophy. Thinkers with this tendency question reason's ability to discover reliable truth related to God. Or, they question the conclusions drawn by some philosophers, Biblical critics, and the like, and rather than questioning the thinkers, they doubt the helpfulness of these fields of studies.

The poster-children for this model might be Tertullian, Luther, and Barth—not that these three thinkers are necessarily fideists themselves, but they are often read as having that sort of tendency. The fact that all three were engaged in polemics does not help the situation, for nuances are obscured in polemical situations. Let us take a look a couple comments made by these authors, again, not to say they were fideists, but to see what a fideist would find sympathetic in their comments.

Tertullian, writing in the early third century, had this to say,

For philosophy provides the material of worldly wisdom, in boldly asserting itself to be the interpreter of the divine nature and dispensation. The heresies themselves receive their weapons from philosophy....It is the same subjects which preoccupy both the heretics and the philosophers. Where does evil come from, and why? Where does human nature come from, and how?....What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? Between the Academy and the church?....We have no need for curiosity after Jesus Christ, nor for inquiry after the gospel.<sup>2</sup>

To be fair to Tertullian, philosophers, and heretics, note that he does not equate philosophy and heresy, but that he does think heresies are often based upon philosophy. The fideist, however, would focus on the radical separation between “Athens and Jerusalem,” between philosophy and theology.

Martin Luther is notorious for calling reason the devil's whore in the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

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<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, in: *The Christian Theology Reader*, trans. and ed. Alister E. McGrath, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 7-8.

Usury, gluttony, adultery, manslaughter, murder, etc., these can be seen and the world understands that these are sins. But the devil's bride, reason, the lovely whore come in and wants to be wise, and what she says, she thinks, is the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

In context, Luther is concerned by how we tend to think what we want to think; we invoke reason to justify our sins. Note how this concern clearly implies that doing that is an abuse of reason. The fideist, however, is attracted by Luther's condemnation of the errors to which reason can fall. Since Luther doesn't dwell with the same passion on the positive possibilities of reason, a person can easily doubt whether there are any.

Finally, in our own time, the watershed Protestant theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Karl Barth:

I can see no third alternative between that exploitation of the *analogia entis* which is legitimate only on the basis of Roman Catholicism...and a Protestant theology which draws from its own source, which stands on its own feet, and which is finally liberated from this secular misery. Hence I have had no option but to say No at this point. I regard the *analogia entis* as the invention of Antichrist....<sup>4</sup>

The *analogia entis*, or analogy of being, is a key philosophical and theological concept employed by St. Thomas Aquinas, among others. Likewise speaking in a polemical context, Barth's concern is that Protestant theologians of his day, in attempting to incorporate aspects of a natural theology, had "traded down," so to speak, losing essential elements of faith by giving undue place to reason. The fideist would see Barth here as forcing a choice between Catholicism and reason on the one hand, and Protestantism and faith on the other.

Within the contemporary Catholic community, in this same fideistic stream, we should count what is sometimes called, "creeping infallibility," that is, the tendency to regard every papal utterance as an *ex cathedra* statement and every line in a document from the Vatican, including Vatican II, as a dogmatic definition. The Catholic Church's own teaching regarding her infallibility is far more modest than that suggested by some who are "more Catholic than the pope" on right AND left. Extreme thinkers of this fideistic bent often find God to be more godly the more contradictions—not paradoxes, but contradictions—they think they find within Him. Intellectual difficulties are, pardon the expression, "flushed down the Toilet of Mystery," as a colleague of mine has put it.

The positive thing highlighted by this fideistic model is just how great a treasure God's revelation is. It saves us from the deathly darkness of our ignorance and sin. We ought not to forget this, surely. Nor should we forget that we are creatures, and our intellects finite. Some scholars do need reminding.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, "The Last Sermon in Wittenberg, Rom. 12:3," in: Jaroslav Jan Pelikan (Hrsg.), *Luther's Works*, Vol. 51: Sermons I (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1999), 371, CD-ROM.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, preface.

But does adequately acknowledging the gifts of revelation and creation require that our intellects be sacrificed? Or was Christ's sacrifice on the cross the only true and life-giving sacrifice, one which redeems the whole person, including the intellect?

The model on the opposite extreme from fideism is rationalism, which essentially says philosophy doesn't need theology, or reason doesn't need faith. It is not surprising that there are no real examples here from early Christianity. Those Christians understood only too well that the coming of Christ meant the redemption and perfection of the world; that included the already-existing discipline of philosophy. No, rationalism is an altogether modern phenomenon, and by modern I mean it has its roots in that period of philosophy called "modernity," which is usually described as beginning with Descartes. It may seem odd to call Descartes rationalistic in this way. After all, he was a practicing Catholic, and his philosophical meditations begin with an argument for God's existence. It may also seem odd to call Kant rationalistic in the way. After all, wasn't he trying to preserve a realm for faith by dividing reality into the phenomena we experience and the unknown and unknowable reality behind the phenomena? Yet Descartes and Kant and their descendents left room for faith only by cordoning off an ever-smaller and smaller territory for it. Philosophy, burgeoning out into history, literary studies, and the natural sciences, was claiming theology's territory for its own. These sciences grew fat, not only on their own strength, but by tearing pieces off theology—and theology, frightened for its life in some quarters, willingly gave up its limbs in a desperate attempt to save its heart. And so, down the history of liberal Protestantism, we come via Adolf von Harnack to the descendents of Rudolf Bultmann, who, after demythologizing Scripture, find there is nothing left among the burial cloths; there is no risen Lord of History whose pierced side is probed by Thomas' fingers. There is only the shade and embellished memory of an optional Jew.

On the Catholic side, in contrast to the creeping infallibility of fideism, we have a creeping dissent. What is creepy about this move is the question of integrity. Arius and Nestorius, notable heretics of the early Church, thought they were preaching the Catholic Faith at a time when doctrines and terms were not clearly defined. They were doing their best to be faithful to what they thought was the standard, they just were wrong. Tertullian and Luther knew what the Catholic Church taught, disagreed with it (rather vehemently), and eventually left. In contrast, there are contemporary people, even theologians, who dissent from the Church on areas that have been clearly defined, yet they still insist upon calling themselves "Catholic." In philosophical terms, this is the problem of nominalism versus realism. In everyday terms, this is the problem of integrity of thought and life, or more simply yet, "truth in advertising." In theological terms, things are stranger yet: these individuals deny the infallibility of the pope and councils, but claim infallibility for themselves. The argument is this: I disagree with the pope. We can't both be right. I'm not wrong. So he is. Creeping dissent is the futile quest of understanding

seeking faith. Understanding says, “It’s all about me and what I think.” It idolizes itself and sets itself up as a magisterium. It doesn’t hear faith saying, “It’s not about you; it’s about God. Find Him, and you will find yourself. But navel-gazing is looking for light in a black hole.”

What happy medium might we find between these two extreme models of fideism and rationalism, in which philosophy and theology claim they have no need of each other? I propose we start with the theologian’s favorite place to introduce theology: As philosophy is “the love of wisdom,” theology is “faith seeking understanding.” St. Anselm coined the phrase in the Middle Ages, but the roots of the idea go back to the ancient Church, for example, to St. Justin Martyr in the second century who said, “Whatever either lawyers or philosophers have said well, was articulated by finding and reflecting upon some aspect of the Logos”<sup>5</sup> and to St. Augustine in the fourth who said,

The Egyptians possessed idols and heavy burdens, which the children of Israel hated and from which they fled; however, they also possessed vessels of gold and silver and clothes which our forebears, in leaving Egypt, took for themselves in secret, intending to use them in a better manner (Exodus 3: 21-2; 12: 35-6) .... In the same way, pagan learning is not entirely made up of false teachings and superstitions .... It contains also some excellent teachings, well suited to be used by truth, and excellent moral values. .... The Christian, therefore, can separate these truths from their unfortunate associations, take them away, and put them to their proper use for the proclamation of the gospel ....<sup>6</sup>

What is helpful for our discussion here is to note the believer, the Believed, and their mutual relationship that is implicit in the definition. The One Believed is the Eternal Truth, that infinite intelligence that creates all things good. If Its creation is good, there is every reason for God to respect His creatures and the abilities He’s given them. This is so even after the Fall. If everything made by God is good, we fallen creatures remain good, as we can conclude for, behold, we are not unmade. We are less good than in the Beginning, because we lack Truth and the relationship we had with Him in the Beginning, but less good is still good. Divine respect for creation stands against every fideism, for it implies that we are to use the powers of reason God gave us. Nay, more: we are commanded to use them, for we shall have to render an account of the talents God has entrusted to our stewardship.

The believer is also implicit in the definition of theology as faith seeking understanding. The believer is the finite person with created reason. We are not God, so none of us understands everything. We have different capacities for understanding. Our believing and understanding are worked out in time. So it is that it takes time and effort for our faith to understand more—and not all have the leisure and gifts

<sup>5</sup> St. Justin Martyr, *Apologia* I.xlvi.2-3; II.x.2-3, in: *The Christian Theology Reader*, trans. and ed. Alister E. McGrath, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 4.

<sup>6</sup> St. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, II.xl.60-1, in: *The Christian Theology Reader*, trans. and ed. Alister E. McGrath, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 9.

to pursue this inquiry rigorously. And even those who do, make progress with infinitesimal slowness compared to the infinite riches of God's wisdom. Hence it is that reason's allegiance is owed to the Reason that reveals itself as our origin, our end, and the deepest meaning of everything in between. Such allegiance rules out all rationalism in which creaturely minds idolize themselves. The authority of Eternal Truth is acknowledged even in things that might have been otherwise, such as the structure of the Church. Perhaps Truth's authority is even acknowledged especially when we respect such contingencies, for they are the result of a decision by the "love that steers the stars," to borrow Dante's lovely appellation for God.

But if attention to the relationship between believer and Believed in theology rules out both fideism and rationalism, then it does likewise in philosophy, if one has a Catholic view of creation as revelatory of God. For philosophy as "the love of wisdom" implies both lover and the reality, intimate knowledge of which is wisdom. The philosopher can attain truth, in which the mind matches that reality, but the philosopher must also recognize the limits of the human mind.

Now I have carefully said fideism and rationalism are ruled out if one has a Catholic view of things—not just the view of Catholics, for many are captivated by creeping infallibility or creepy dissent, but Catholicism's own view. Why do I think we need this caveat? Quite simply: with a different view of creation in relation to God, we will have a different self-understanding of reason's role and capabilities; we will then likewise have different goals for the use of reason in the quest for wisdom, human and divine, and we will employ different methodologies to attain those goals. Theology is like the highest general in an army, who gives the order that both is the origin of the activities of those under him and provides the end or goal of their action. Or, as St. Bonaventure said,

[J]ust as all those creations [of the various ways of knowing reality, including the arts and sciences] had their origin in one light [that is, God's], so, too, are all these branches of knowledge ordained for the knowledge of Sacred Scripture [or theology]; they are contained in it; they are perfected by it; and by means of it they are ordained for eternal illumination.<sup>7</sup>

In this sense of theology as an ordering principle, everyone, even atheists, has a theology or more broadly put, a faith, for everyone has principles that govern their other choices. Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak explains,

Thinking from an Archimedean standpoint [that is, from a viewpoint of one standing at the end of a lever long enough to move the Earth, or in other words, a decontextualized viewpoint from

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<sup>7</sup> St. Bonaventure, "Retracing the Arts to Theology, or Sacred Theology: The Mistress among the Sciences," *Latin Philosophy in the Thirteenth Century*, 404.

which one supposedly can judge everything objectively] is either an abstraction—and to that extent only a provisional or hypothetical enterprise until it find its place in the whole of a life—or it is indeed autarchic [that is, a principle unto itself], but then it expresses another faith: the faith (or the “religion”) that identifies autonomous thinking with the truest and deepest dimension of life. .... If philosophy tries to be autarchic, it is a rival of other religions, claiming for itself the same kind of ultimacy, universality, and authority....”<sup>8</sup>

[EXPLAIN PEPPERZAK]

Hence, from the Catholic perspective, the results of intellectual inquiry will be mixed when detached from a theology based on God’s revelation and faithful to it: On the one hand, because Catholicism affirms the goodness of creation even after the Fall, it likewise affirms the possibility of reason, finite as it is, to attain some truth. On the other, because Catholicism affirms the Fall, it knows reason is weakened, easily deceived and deluded, especially when tempted to self-idolization, that is, the temptation to mistake its authority as absolute authority.

You may already have a glimpse now why philosophy needs theology. All arts and sciences, all human activities, reflect ultimate principles, but they reflect them more explicitly, and are affected more concretely by them, the more generally or broadly they engage the reality of the world. What do I mean? Well, consider a potter sometime in the distant past. He makes pots. You might ask him why he does that. He may never have considered the question. “I make pots because that’s what I’ve always done. My father made pots before me, and so on back in our family history, and he taught me to make pots,” he might say. But you press him, “Yes, but why make pots at all?” Now the answers will vary. “To support my family.” “To put beauty in the world.” “To continue the family reputation.” “To gain glory.” “To make money.” And so on. One might press him again at this level, “And why do that?” “Because nothing is more important than family.” “Because beauty is a delight.” “Because I wish my name to have immortal fame.” “Because money enables me to do what I want; money is power.” You have now begun to plumb the potter’s previously unarticulated philosophy, his understanding of himself, his place in the world, his relation to others, his purpose in life. If you pressed further, you would touch upon his sense of his origin and his end, that is, the purpose of his life. Although his answers to those questions really do affect how he does his work, the potter doesn’t need to articulate them in order to make pots; he really just needs to know how to cast a pot, which glaze to use, how long to fire the pot, and so on.

For the philosopher, however, the articulation of those questions about the human person in the world is his very business. Philosophy is close to theology in reflecting upon much of the same subject

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<sup>8</sup> Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, *Philosophy between Faith and Theology: Addresses to Catholic Intellectuals* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2005), 78, 80.



matter, although it doesn't share theology's revealed principles. By no means does theology micromanage philosophy, for then philosophy would merely be ceding its own proper activity as colonel to the general, while generals who micromanage unit movement, logistics, and other areas make poor generals because they neglect their own sphere of action. No, theology sets a context, implicitly or explicitly, for philosophy. For one could ask the same questions of the philosopher that were asked of the potter. Ultimate questions, however, can only be adequately answered with ultimate reality. The theologian who is asked these questions remains within his field. The philosopher, however, encounters the interface where philosophy and theology meet without one becoming the other, and he must step personally, not professionally, through the looking glass. He need not advert to his theology or faith in his work, but it is there still the same.

This first reason why philosophy needs theology, to give it ultimate context, may not be so controversial as the second way I would argue is essential, but it follows directly from the first. If revealed theology exists and if an authoritative organ of transmitting it exists—for some that means Christ and the Church, for others it means the natural world and human experience, then we may come to know conclusions to certain philosophical problems via what we regard as a reliable source. Clearly this is only possible with a certain degree of intellectual humility. Confident in the conclusion, a philosopher in such a situation may set about looking to understand why it is true. In other words, he reverse engineers the conclusion. Once that is done, of course he is able to go the other way, from non-theological premises to conclusion, and so demonstrate it. This approach may seem very odd; aren't limiting ourselves or cheating in some respect? I don't think so. One is liberated from a host of wrong answers and a great waste of time when your professor gives you study guides and tips where to find the answer. No one protests against study guides. Nor does having the right answer mean one doesn't have to engage all other possibilities. Indeed the ability to consider objections thoughtfully and respond to them on the basis of a right answer is a mark both of the power of an idea and the maturity of a thinker. Theology need not tell philosophy how to go about its business, but since both are concerned about truth, neither field should disdain examining a suggestion by the other. They look at the same reality from different perspectives and with different gifts. One might say it's something like the Wright brothers looking at birds' wings to think about flight. Biology was suggestive to engineering, but even with the solution in hand, engineering still had to figure out the problem on its own terms.

If theology then implicitly gives context to philosophy, and sometimes may even explicitly prove helpful to philosophers, in what way does theology need philosophy? Again, we hinted at the reason earlier when we considered the definition of theology as faith seeking understanding. God respects His creation. He made us creatures of a certain kind and desires that we live life to the full. That means all

areas of life, including philosophy, can be called upon by the theologian to aid faith seeking understanding. That task is simultaneously service of God, who has given mankind stewardship of creation and has made the God-Man its high priest. But service of God is made concrete in a particular way in Church life, for example, in preaching, the sacraments, and the moral life. In these areas, too, philosophy can enrich theology's commission. Rhetoric, logic, and argumentation are implicitly called upon in preaching; metaphysics in the sacraments; ethics in moral theology, and the philosophy of human nature in all three. And certainly logic is essential to careful theology. I am always struck by those theologians of a fideistic bent who want to give arguments why philosophy is dangerous or unnecessary—and employ logic in doing so. Or take another example: Any number of contemporary errors in theology might be avoided by eliminating equivocal use of theological terms—which can be recognized, again, using philosophical techniques. Some theologians who pay too little attention to philosophy are simply giving new window-dressing to old heresies, all the while thinking themselves *avant garde*. The emperor in his new clothes might be a warning of the dangers of following the latest fashions. In short, without coopting theology's own task, which is to reason based on revealed principles, philosophy aids faith seeking understanding

- by helping us better understand what God has done in creation
- by helping us think more carefully about what He has revealed
- by helping us better express truth to others
- by helping us remove obstacles to receiving truth.

Philosophy and theology then are not separate subjects, as a cube is set alongside an incommensurate sphere. They, and all other subjects, are more like nesting Russian dolls, each unique and distinct, but related, the shape of one affecting the shape of the others and the outermost one setting the expectation for all within. Philosophy is love of wisdom; as such, it must at least be open to divine wisdom. Theology is faith seeking understanding; it is loving God with the human minds He created.

In this holistic view that is an alternative to overspecialization not only in philosophy and theology, but in all areas, there is no purely secular realm. What would such a realm look like in any case? A purely secular realm, where the Creator has no place, exists no place at all. Likewise, in this holistic view, theology is no longer cannibalized, and then canned and put safely contained on the back shelf of a mental cupboard. God does not fear the idols, but our idols very much fear God and so vigorously try to marginalize Him. Let theologies again wrestle with mental arms and legs, instead of being like Monty Python's dismembered and ignored Black Knight, who vainly cries out, "Come back! I'll bite your legs off!"

And so we come, as I promised, to how to be a Renaissance Man in the age of Information Explosion, or rather how to be something better. Renaissance Man, we said, was sadly lacking, for it was never said that an essential trait was goodness. If Renaissance Man would be all he can be, he must have moral excellence, or virtue; he must be Sir Renaissance the Good. But, in fact, even that is not good enough. For Sir Renaissance has still the potential to be St. Renaissance, who is holy with the very holiness of God, the God who can do anything, knows everything, and is all-good. Then St. Renaissance, whether man, woman, or child, need not be proficient in all human activities—an impossible task for finite creatures in any case—but all that he does will be done well. All that he does will be properly ordered in right relation to each other and to the ultimate end. All that he does will be infused and efficacious by the ultimate ordering reflected in theology. He will not merely be *good at*, that is, proficient in this or that, but be good with what makes all activities likewise good, that is holy. Then we will understand how it is that a young girl with very little formal education, who lived nine years in a cloistered convent and died of tuberculosis when she was 24, how St. Therese of Lisieux could be right to hold that picking up a straw for the love of God was a deed mighty in significance and power. Then we will understand why, in the early Church, the title “theologian” was not an academic recognition nor a career choice. It was first said of St. John the Evangelist, and it was said with wonder. For St. John the Theologian did not just know things about God; he knew God, and he was His “beloved disciple.” “Renaissance,” after all, means “re-birth,” and we are truly Renaissance people when we are reborn, and live well, as God’s children.