

## [photocopie]

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fast within her bosom and the pang withholds calm rest from her limbs."

51 Moreover, the abiding peace of God is in quiet. Consequently no one will be surprised if such people, having embraced false teachings, turn aside from truth. All the more is it true if these women, itching with curiosity, are the kind whom the Apostle describes: *Silly women who are sin-laden and led away by various lusts: ever learning yet never attaining knowledge of the truth* (2 Tim. 3:7). For where truth is absent, it follows that vanity and deception are present.

52 *XII Reflection:* In the discernment of spirits the place from which a spirit comes and where it goes must be investigated. St. Bernard says that he never had the gift of discerning this in himself. Nevertheless, he humbly asserts that he experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit several times by means of an interior movement, either of his heart or of his mind. Therefore, one wonders how a person of a lower degree of sanctity can say that he often knows whence a spirit comes, especially since Christ said to Nicodemus: *The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its sound but does not know where it comes from nor where it goes* (John 3:8).

53 Then, what about this—that in the different spirits much similarity is discovered in their inspirations: the Spirit of God, the good angel, the evil spirit, and the spirit of man, the rational as well as the animal?

54 For although a similar vision can be produced by any one of these spirits by its own method proper to itself (the latter, i.e., man's, has a great variety), yet the difference can easily be perceived. But the similarity prevents those unacquainted with such matters, who, neither by their own ingenuity, nor by study in the fields of theology and physics, nor by what they were taught by others, have acquired the knowledge to distinguish them.

55 Certainly we ought not to wonder at this since we find so very few who know how to distinguish completely between the thoughts and affections of their own rational

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