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by silence, or by reticence, by which the matter is held in abeyance. Certainly to try to discover some middle course between these two extremes is well worth while, and I do not think that such a course has been sufficiently investigated.

14 *VI Reflection*: No one is capable of discerning spirits merely through skill and learning based on a knowledge of Holy Scripture alone (a point to which I shall, henceforth, devote all my attention), unless such a one has personally experienced in himself the various struggles of the emotions of the soul; unless he has flown to the heights of heaven, then has fallen to the bottom of the abyss and has there seen in the depths the marvels of God. For only those who have traveled over this mystical sea of heterogeneous affections (which seem like waves colliding against one another), can discuss its marvels. What do they know of such things who have never experienced them? This is the fourth way of testing spirits.

15 Moreover, I think that the difference between the people whom we are discussing—one a theologian, the other a contemplative—resembles that which exists between a man who has merely studied about medicine, and one who is experienced or has long practiced in that field. No one would doubt that these two qualifications could exist in the same person. Thus it can and does happen, the Lord being merciful, that the same person can be well instructed in Holy Scripture and at the same time excel in the exercise of contemplation. Discernment of spirits requires such a person as we pointed out when a sermon was preached about a certain treatise on spiritual nuptials.

16 Whenever we attempt a scientific testing of spirits by this method in people with whom we are unacquainted, and whose hearts we can neither see nor gauge, it is necessary to gather evidence from their works, for Christ says: *By their fruits you will know them* (Matt. 7:16).

17 However, one sign, or even a few signs if they are not correlated, is not reliable. Cicero, Boetius, and Aris-

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