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Gerson's Concept of Discretio Spirituum

HARLING THE STREET

33:14). In fact, it would be tiresome, not to say foolish, to have to accept a multiplicity of visions as having been revealed by the mouth of God, and, therefore, to be believed with absolute faith. For according to St. Augustine, our faith and our religion, which God desired to be limited to the smallest number of tenets, would thus be rendered more unproportionately burdensome than was the Old Law. In the same vein, Henry von Hessen, a teacher with an unblemished reputation, wrote that the canonization of so many people ought to be restricted.

29 Another reason is also given: that a great number of Christians, having disregarded the study of Holy Scripture, would give their attention to such visions with their eyes and ears itching with curiosity (such visions being more interesting because they have just happened), and thus these people would remain in ignorance of the truths necessary for salvation.

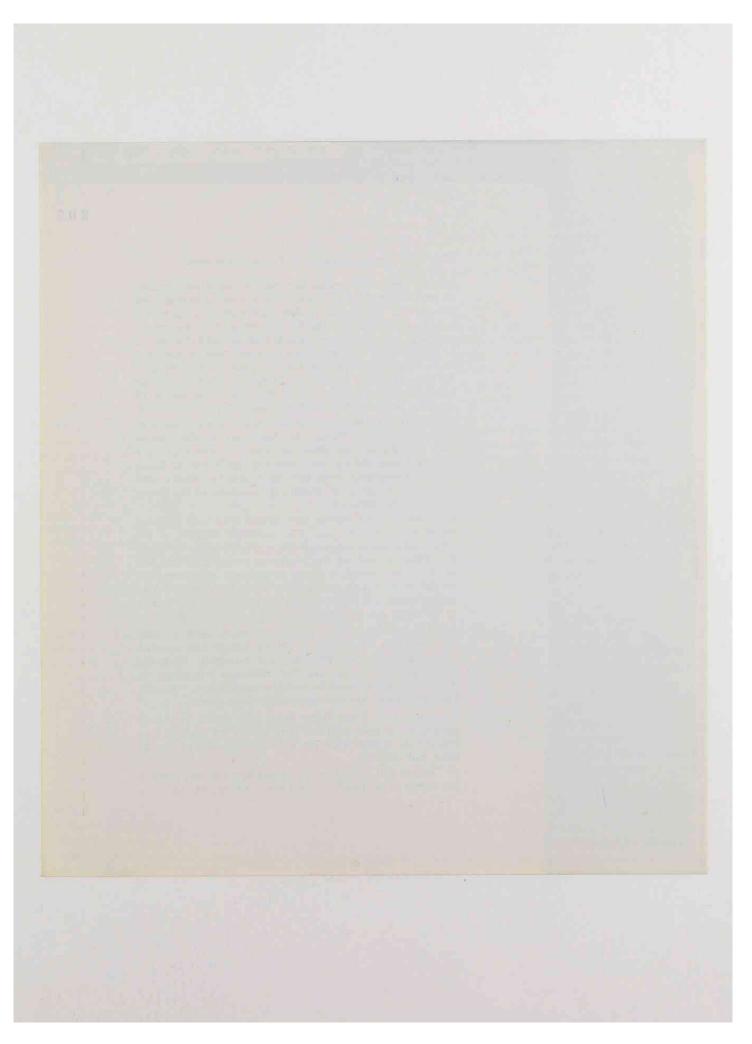
30 According to Seneca, they would have been learning about superfluous things. The venerable Richard of St. Victor says that it is necessary that the teachings of Moses and Elias, as well as the testimony of the Law and the prophets, are found in every revelation; otherwise, the revelation is entirely unreliable. This makes it evident how indispensable are theologians in the canonization processes of the saints and the examination of their teachings.

31 IX Reflection: The testing of spirits demands that the person to whom visions of this nature are reported should conduct himself prudently and cautiously. From the very beginning the purpose that motivates this person to divulge his secret must be scrutinized critically. The following remarks are concerned with these points.

32 Therefore, if you listen to or give advice to such a person, be on your guard so that you do not applaud her, praise her, or look upon her as a saint worthy of revelations and miracles.

33 Better still, contradict her, scold her severely, ridicule her as one whose heart is proud and her eyes lofty and who

BaF



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