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Auteur : Foucault, Michel

Présentation de la fiche

Coteb022_f0311

SourceBoite_022-8-chem | Gerson.

LangueFrançais

TypePhotocopie

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

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Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 21/10/2020 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

Translation of De Probatione Spirituum 33

deals with matters too great and wonderful for her, so that she will not consider herself worthy to work out her salvation except in the way common to other human beings, namely, by the teaching of the Scriptures and the saints, and by the dictates of natural reason, unless you take it for granted and think that she receives direction not merely from angels, but from God Himself, and not only once in awhile when in extreme necessity, but almost constantly, or by daily communication.

34 Advise such a one not to long for the extraordinary, but to desire the ordinary way of salvation, for he speaks truly who says that pride deserves to be deceived. All the more does a proud man deserve to be made a fool of, who (not like a physician who watches a rising temperature, but) like a Pharisee ignores the pride inherent in his bones. For what is easier than to call oneself the most vile of sinners? But to feel this, truly and simply from the heart, is a gift of God, not merely the result of human effort.

35 Examples may be cited of the holy fathers of the desert who shunned curiosity about such visions and miracles as most dangerous and deceptive.

36 In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine thanks God for having delivered him from it; St. Bonaventure stated that it must be absolutely detested and every temptation to it repelled—sometimes by prayers and sometimes by reprimands, or by the mortification of the mind or body. An example of this is that father who in order to be delivered from the temptation of pride, besought and obtained from the Lord to be tormented by diabolical obsession for three months. Appearing to another holy father of the desert, the devil disguised as Christ said: "I am Christ, visiting you personally, because you are deserving of it." Immediately the father covered his eyes with both hands, shouted loudly: "I do not desire to see Christ now; it is enough if I shall see Him in heaven." The devil suddenly disappeared.

37 Another hermit showed the same kind of humility in regard to a similar vision, to which he replied with differ-

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