

## Discernment of Spirits: a practical instrument

The material presented here is fruit of a long process, beginning with an outline I worked up many years ago: “The Holy Spirit’s work”, which I found useful for my own discernment, and for working with people in retreats, workshops or classes on the theme of the Holy Spirit. Later I added some points that were lacking, clarified a few things, and gave biblical references for each section. This is more or less what you find in the left-hand column of the following pages, and it served me well for many years with different groups. Then, about 10 years ago I felt led to read a book highly recommended by some very respected friends: a book on the ministry of deliverance from evil spirits, by Francis MacNutt. The author, a former Dominican priest, is (still) a major figure in the charismatic renewal and in grass-roots ecumenism. He has a great pedagogical gift, and his book is very well documented, based on a wide experience, and full of sound, balanced teaching. When I finished reading it, I felt challenged to incorporate in my teaching what I had learned from it about discerning and dealing with the action of evil spirits. I had the idea of including it as a parallel column to the notes on “The Holy Spirit’s work”, to contrast God’s way of working and that of other spirits contrary to God. It turned out to be a very helpful parallel which shed light on many things, since Satan tries to copy or counterfeit God’s actions and the fruits of the Holy Spirit in order to confuse Christians and lead them astray. However, there is always a big difference between true charity (love of God) and the selfishness which manipulates others, even when it’s disguised as something “spiritual” or loving.

So I present this outline (which I’ve had occasion to show to various individuals and groups who’ve given me suggestions, criticisms and additions<sup>1</sup>) in the hope that they can help one to better discern between God’s action and the devil’s counterfeit maneuvering. We live in the context of a spiritual battle, and it’s important to realize that Satan really exists, and is intelligent; more than intelligent, he is shrewd and wily. We need all the means at our disposal to collaborate intelligently with God, and not allow ourselves to be deceived by mere appearances or empty promises. A comparison I’ve found helpful is that of a radio (receiver), which has to be on the frequency of the radio station to which one wishes to listen. Sometimes it slips off the frequency or receives interference from another very different radio station that has a frequency near the other one. Our task is to discern clearly the Lord’s voice and leadings (fine-tuning: be “tuned in” to him, or “be on his wavelength”), and not allow ourselves to be influenced by a voice and leadings which we know to be of the Evil one (another frequency and a very different message).

Finally, a few words on the following outline. The numbers are not important; it’s simply a way of dividing and referring to the text. But the placement of each block of the table facing another in the opposite column *is* important. It represents the Spirit’s way of working in a certain area of our life (left side) or Satan’s contrary (or counterfeit) action in that same area (right side). Normally each block of the table has two paragraphs. The first ones refer to what Ignatian spirituality calls “the first week” (which really has nothing to do with weeks, except in Ignatian retreats): it’s God’s -or the devil’s- normal way of presenting himself in a straightforward way (God working good, and the devil working evil). But both God and the devil have diverse ways of acting within us. The second (or last) paragraphs in each block refer to what is called the “second week”, when God or the devil use alternate means (not so familiar or evident to us). In God’s case this is the “purgative way” or state of purification which causes pain to us, and can appear to us as something negative (bad), but in reality is for our own good. Likewise, Satan can produce what is known as a “false consolation”, i.e. apparently very “spiritual” or “good” things (a certain peace, fervor, excitement) which can deceive believers into thinking it is God who is working in them when in reality it is not. But there are always significant differences between God’s work and Satan’s, which can help us to distinguish between them. Hopefully these pages will serve this purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> I’d still like to receive any suggestions, criticisms or additions from you. You can write me at the e-mail address at the end of these pages.

<b>DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS</b>
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**What does the Holy Spirit do, and how does he work in us?****What does the Evil Spirit try to do, and how does he operate?**

<p><b>1. God's Spirit GIVES LIFE, creates and recreates, renews (wind/ breath of life, living water); the One who gave us life through his Spirit can also give us life again; the Spirit raises from the dead physically and spiritually; gives new energies, new life.</b> The Spirit inculcates in the faithful a deep respect for the sanctity of human life. The Spirit characteristically gives a <b>sense of inner FREEDOM: a great liberty of spirit: the 'holy indifference'</b> of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The action of the Spirit is marked by <b>DETACHMENT: liberation from inner shackles.</b></p> <p>In the <b>purgative stage, the Spirit 'wounds' us, but heals at the same time; he gives life through the 'wound'.</b> This strengthens and prepares us to affront death as Christians: <b>it relativizes this life</b> in order to receive the definitive life: <b>God's very life.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Gen 2:7; Ps 104:29-30; Ezech 37:1-14; Is 44:3-4 Jn 3:3-8; 7:37-39; Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 3:17</p>	<p><b>1. The Evil Spirit SEEKS TO KILL: he induces us to be fed up with / tired of / disgusted with life. He tries to remove our desire / energy to live, work, struggle or take initiatives; he inspires fear of change, fear of growth (plays upon our natural defense mechanisms and depression), creating a sense of INABILITY TO ACT, inner paralysis, and spiritual sloth.</b> He fosters unhealthy dependencies upon persons, things, etc. (<b>SHACKLES</b>) which serve to paralyze or dominate us. Or again, he inspires hateful <b>death-dealing acts of bravado</b> which he convinces are more worthwhile than slow constructive processes. He can channel the frustration and sense of injustice into <b>socially destructive acts</b> of desperation: rioting, killing, wanton destruction, and he causes people to <b>hold in contempt the sacredness of human life</b> and bodily integrity (rape, torture, macabre killings), and to treat with perverse viciousness the bodies of the deceased.</p> <p>The <b>false consolation</b> can produce a <b>death wish</b> and a fixation upon death (thoughts, fascination with death); <b>he tries to convince us that death is the absolute end of everything,</b> and that it is an escape from the problems of this life, therefore something "better" than to have to struggle in the Christian life: <b>suicidal and self-destructive</b> thoughts and actions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wis 2:24; Jn 8:44; Mk 9:17-22; Heb 2:14-15</b></p>
<p><b>2. The Holy Spirit brings about a true knowledge of our own sinfulness, but always oriented toward repentance and confidence in the MERCY OF GOD.</b> (The Spirit of God never produces anxiety in us, much less leads us to despair.)</p> <p>He makes the <b>Good News of Jesus Christ</b> reach the depth of our hearts, and inspires desires of conversion and reconciliation. In this entire process he <b>ELEVATES us believers</b> through the progressive transformation of our being: he produces in us an <b>AUTHENTIC CONVERSION</b> of life. Beginners on the path of conversion are encouraged and guided by the Spirit along the surest route: that of humility and recognition of one's nothingness before the Lord.</p> <p>The Spirit of God inspires in believers radical (and effective) prophetic responses to structural evils and injustices..</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lk 3:16-17; Jn 16:7-8; Acts 2:37-38; cf. encyclical "Donum et Vivif."</p>	<p><b>2. Satan accuses us of sin</b> (especially of secret, shameful or unconfessed sins), <b>in order to highlight our GUILT,</b> indignity and estrangement from God. He utilizes <b>half truths: he speaks of our sin (truth), but never of the grace and goodness of God</b> (the other, more important part of the truth). <b>He SEEKS TO PLUNGE</b> us into <b>despair</b></p> <p>The false consolation produces an illusory sense of well-being by causing us to <b>lose our sense of sin</b> or by encouraging us to <b>systematically blame others</b> for our own faults. The lack of moral clarity ends up <b>justifying or relativizing any forms of evil.</b> He fosters naïve or spiritually evasive responses to structural evil and injustices.</p> <p>When we try to repent, the Evil Spirit tries to convince us that it's hypocritical, ineffectual or not valid (that it's a waste of time trying to change our life), or, again, he proposes avoiding the difficult requirements of conversion by means of superficial changes, i.e. leads us toward a purely <b>"COSMETIC" CONVERSION.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev 12:10 (devil = accuser); 2 Cor 2:5-11</p>
<p><b>3. The Spirit FORGIVES OUR SINS, HEALS OUR WOUNDS</b> from life's traumas (which are often fruit of our own or others' sins), <b>transforms our hard hearts and softens them,</b> and instills in us an <b>inner docility</b> (making us able to admit our faults or errors and be open to correction).</p> <p><b>He restores the INTEGRITY of our heart and spirit (spiritual virginity) in order to love in truth,</b> inculcating in believers an <b>attitude of authentic compassion</b> towards oneself and towards others. He gives us spiritual clarity in order to discover the roots and underpinnings of sinfulness in our lives. He fosters the integration of our entire personality, and brings us to a true knowledge of the living God.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ezech 36:25-27; Ps 51:12-13; Jn 20:22-23</b></p>	<p><b>3. The Evil Spirit highlights and reminds us of our personal sins: he "rides upon" our inner woundedness: he DEEPENS OUR TRAUMAS, 'hardening' our hearts / wills;</b> he prods us to anger, stubbornness and obstinacy (intransigency) by intensifying our unhealthy, exaggerated or defensive reactions and conduct (unhealthy "defense mechanisms").</p> <p><b>He seeks to imprison us in a wounded, weakened, SICKLY spiritual condition,</b> so that we will see ourselves (and others) as a <b>"hopeless case"</b>, impossible to redeem (straighten out). He <b>perverts our love,</b> directing it toward disordered or harmful forms, clouds our conscience and fosters in us an "erroneous conscience", which sees sin where in reality there is none, and doesn't see it where it is (founded upon false conceptions of God as policeman or harsh, vengeful judge.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lk 13:16; Mk 5:1-5</p>

<p><b>4. The Spirit ENCOURAGES, consoles</b> (thus his name, Consoler/Paraclete), and <b>brings us together in sweet COMMUNION of mind and heart in the Church.</b> The Spirit <b>RECONCILES</b> the marginalized and even those who are enemies (cf. Preface of Reconciliation II). He brings us into communion with the poor, with our social environment, and even with our natural surroundings (ecological awareness / harmony).</p> <p><b>He instills in us a spirit of</b> peaceful and patient <b>OBEDIENCE</b> which harmonizes our different wills according to God's plan. Christian vows (baptismal, matrimonial, religious) are all lived out within the context of free Christian obedience.</p> <p><b>The fruit of the Spirit's work is PEACE</b> such as the world cannot give it: security in the midst of dangers, inner harmony in the midst of outer antagonism and ambiguity, peace which surpasses all understanding and natural explanation.</p> <p>Jn 14:16-17.27; Acts 2:6; 11:23-24; Rom 8:19-23; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:3-6; Gal 5:22; Phil 4:7</p>	<p><b>4. The Evil Spirit DISCOURAGES, “discomforts”, and DIVIDES, provoking dissension and scandals</b> by means of envy, accusations and calumnies. <b>He seeks to create animosity between Christians</b>, especially among those who are united in one same spiritual work, in order to damage its credibility and efficacy. <b>He acts with violence</b>, seeking to provoke a spirit of <b>REBELLION / AGITATION</b>: his characteristic fruit is a <i>troubled</i> spirit. <b>In times of war or widespread civil unrest</b>, Satan inspires a spirit of <b>lawlessness</b> or unaccountability for one's actions. He may also parody Christian obedience seeking to oblige people to the accomplishment of evil by oaths, curses and pacts.</p> <p>He seeks to <i>manipulate</i> those who are not profoundly attuned to the Spirit of God (those who trust in their own criteria / judgment / views instead of allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit with evangelical criteria of faith).</p> <p>In the false consolation, he gives a <b>cheap (false) peace</b>: -a sort of truce-keeping peace, which 'concedes' things in order to avoid conflicts, including non-negotiable things for a Christian, -- because the Evil Spirit is unable to produce authentic peace.</p> <p>Gal 5:20-21; Mt 13:24-30.38-39; 1 Tim 5:14-15; 2 Tim 3:6-7</p>
<p><b>5. He makes</b> a humble, expansive, evangelizing <b>JOY spring up in our hearts</b>, which <b>rejoices over the Lord's Gospel preferences.</b> He makes us discover God the Father's providential plan which <b>chooses the poor, the little ones and the humble</b> in order to bring to completion his work in the world, and to save humanity by means of <b>service, the Cross, and the blood</b> (the voluntary death) <b>of Christ.</b> The Spirit involves each believer in the <b>pascal process.</b></p> <p>He produces <b>HUMILITY</b> both in our thoughts and in our conduct, before God and before others. He enables <b>right (pure) intentions</b> in our actions: to seek only God's will and his glory, and inspires in believers the <b>spirit of the Beatitudes</b></p> <p>Lk 1:39-47; 10:21-24; Heb 9:8-14; Phil 4:13</p>	<p><b>5. Satan causes SADNESS</b> and heaviness of spirit in the face of the difficulties in following Jesus (fear of suffering), and aversion to evangelical joy. <b>He seeks to convince</b> the poor and humble <b>that God only seeks / uses the well educated / endowed</b>, and seeks to convince the wealthy that they are God's preferred ones, and also to convince them that what God most values is their gifts / resources / success, and not their <b>humility, obedience and acceptance of the Cross</b> (failure). He leads believers to an attitude of spiritual <b>PRIDE</b>: trusting in oneself, preferring oneself to others; seeking one's own glorification and praise... such that they end up using God for their own personal ends (self aggrandizement).</p> <p>The false consolation produces a <b>selfish, nosy, boastful “joy”</b> which is indifferent to, or even excludes, other people.</p> <p>Lk 4:5-7; Mt 16:21-23</p>
<p><b>6. The Spirit enriches the Church with his GIFTS: ministries</b> (such as apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors...), <b>charisms</b> (especially healing and prophecy) <b>and other gifts</b> (wisdom, knowledge, piety...). He guides us in a subtle <b>DISCRETION in the use of the gifts</b>: everything in its due time and place; nothing done precipitatedly, out of curiosity, or in exaggerated way; always for God's glory. <b>The Spirit gives each believer some manifestation of his presence for the common good.</b> In this way, he <b>BUILDS UP the Church and produces evangelical fruits</b> (joy, peace, goodness, disinterested love, gentleness, justice...).</p> <p>In the purgative stage, he gives <b>DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS</b>, in order to unmask and distinguish the presence of the Evil Spirit, even in the midst of what seem to be the most excellent works of the Church. Whenever he reveals this mystery of evil in the midst of the Church, he always reveals at the same time the path of redemption and the means of overcoming those evils.</p> <p>Is 11:2; 1 Cor 8:1; 12:4-7.11; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:7; 5:9</p>	<p><b>6. Satan seeks to increase selfishness</b> and insinuates / incites people to <b>seek personal profit from the use of God's gifts</b> (providing them with handy occasions to do so).</p> <p>The false consolation attracts the attention of, and <b>distracts people with “SIGNS and wonders”</b> (including physical healings, false prophecy) <b>to lead them away from God</b>, and convert them into followers of miracle-workers instead of disciples of Jesus. Signs of the Evil Spirit's work are <b>notorious INDISCRETIONS</b>: things which are good in themselves but harmful because of their use in an untimely way, outside of the appropriate place, state, or proportion (exaggerated, inopportune or counter-productive actions). <b>His “signs” do not glorify God nor give lasting fruits</b> of unity and spiritual growth (above all in the theological virtues), but serve rather for the <b>SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT</b> or personal reputation of the one using the spiritual gifts.</p> <p>Mt 4:3-6; Acts 8:9-23; 2 Tes 2:9-12; Rev 13:13s</p>

<p><b>7. The Spirit acts</b> with admirable and invisible efficacy <b>in the WORD OF GOD and the SACRAMENTS</b> (especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation): he <b>SANCTIFIES, CONSECRATES AND TRANSFORMS</b>, communicating God's grace to those who receive it with open hearts; all gratuitously. He inspires the <b>desire and urgent need to receive the sacraments</b>. He opens believers to the mysteries of faith and the Incarnation, and brings about their progressive <b>CONFORMATION TO CHRIST</b>.</p> <p>In the purgative stage, he produces in believers an aversion to unworthy, routine or hypocritical manners of celebrating prayer and liturgy, and <b>demands authenticity and awareness of God's presence</b> so that both prayer and liturgy be truly life-giving. He seeks to <b>bring us to a true experience of God</b>: he is not content with mere fulfillment of duty. The Spirit fosters an <b>authentic inculturation of the faith</b>, so that the power of God may be felt in, and transform, all dimensions of human life..</p> <p>Mt 28:19; Jn 20:22-23; Acts 8:14-20; 2 Cor 3:18; 2 Tim 1:6-7.14</p>	<p><b>7. Satan tries to DESACRALIZE:</b> to ridicule or put in doubt the reality of the "sacred", and convince people that it doesn't merit any serious attention. He seeks to <b>keep people away from the Word of God and the Sacraments, by means of ANTIPATHY, DOUBTS or FEAR</b> of receiving them, or if not, seeks to foster their fruitless reception. <b>He insinuates that one is "not worthy" to receive the sacraments</b> (e.g. Eucharist), and so ought not to approach them (= <b>false humility</b>). He would have pastoral action centered in its social efficacy (deviated from its true goal of leading us to God), and fosters rationalistic criteria rather than listening to the voice of God, leading imperceptibly to <b>FORGETFULNESS OF CHRIST</b>.</p> <p><i>Satan cannot transform by grace:</i> he can only create pseudo "personalities" in people which surprise / attract attention. <b>He seeks to mislead one's search for God by way of "religious experiences" devoid of God</b> and without redemption: self-betterment, fixation with angels, spiritual "energies", psychic experiences, and disincarnated mysticism.</p> <p>cf. Lk 8:12; Rom 8:5-9; Eph 6:15-16</p>
<p><b>8. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray, and for what; like a Mother, she INSPIRES OUR PRAYER with ineffable groans</b> (mystical experiences, tongues, jubilatio...); <b>and inspires in us the very prayer of Jesus, the filial prayer of the children of God: Abba</b> (loving Father), an "incarnational" prayer. The Spirit <b>intercedes, praying in and for us</b>. The Holy Spirit shows each one his/her personal path of salvation (vocation), and encourages and inspires in us <b>adoration of God</b>.</p> <p>In times of purification, the Spirit stirs up in us our <b>HUNGER AND THIRST FOR GOD</b>. In times of aridity or experiences of inner emptiness, the Spirit instills <b>constancy in her paths</b>, based on the supernatural virtue of faith.</p> <p>Wis 9:17-18; Rom 8:15-17.26-27; Gal 4:6</p>	<p><b>8. Through guilt feelings, boredom, etc, Satan SEEKS to separate, DISSUADE, or distract us from prayer, convince us that it's untimely or useless, cause devotion to grow cold, and in general, SEPARATE US FROM GOD.</b> He instills attitudes of laziness or <b>repugnance toward the prayer of adoration</b>.</p> <p>Since Satan can't nor does he want to inspire prayer, in the false consolation, he tries to <b>divert our prayer</b> by encouraging strange, difficult or extravagant types of praying, or to lead it in an idolatrous direction. He would <b>empty our prayer of its Christian filial nature</b> by suggesting false images of God, or distorted conceptions of what contemplation is. He seeks to influence people negatively through curses, and utilizes people vulnerable to his influence for his own purposes through practices such as witchcraft, spiritism, etc.</p> <p>cf. Rev 13:11-12.15</p>
<p><b>9. The Holy Spirit, source of all love, instills and augments DIVINE LOVE (agape) in our hearts and inspires in us a great FILIAL CONFIDENCE toward God.</b> His gift is the <b>glorious liberty of the children of God</b>. He expells all fear toward God, and instills rather <b>the reverential attitude of the children of God</b> (desire never to defraud the One who trusts in us and who has given us so much). He gives us an <b>authentic love</b> towards all, and in every way.</p> <p>In his purgative function, the Spirit stimulates believers to question ourselves about our selfish aloofness and inauthenticity, and the lack of love in ourselves and our institutions. He teaches us to judge everything according to love.</p> <p>Rom 5:5; 8:21; 2 Cor 3:17; 1 Jn 4:18</p>	<p><b>9. Satan DISTORTS our image of God the Father</b> taking advantage of our personal traumas (past or present) with negative figures of paternal authority. He <b>suggests attitudes of servile fear toward God</b> to those who want to approach the Lord.</p> <p>In the false consolation, he <b>seeks to impede believers from developing an authentic love for God</b>, and tries to lead them astray by encouraging them in a utilitarian, self-interested relationship with God. He tries to pass off as Christian love a sham charity, which doesn't require sacrifice nor real change of heart (and is really just disguised egoism). He suggests forms of spirituality which are devoid of real love, but have the appearance of great religiosity.</p> <p>cf. Rom 8:38-39; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Jam 2:19</p>

<p><b>10. The Spirit of God enlightens our minds; he reveals God’s plans</b> to the prophets, <b>and the profound, incarnational sense of the inspired WORD OF GOD</b> ‘to those who meditate upon it (and sometimes makes His Word “jump out of the page” at us, when He speaks with power through a Scripture passage). <b>The Spirit reveals the FULL TRUTH to the faithful</b> (distributing his gifts of wisdom, knowledge and prudence: the <i>sensus fidelium</i>) <b>under the guidance of the pastors of the Church</b> who are gifted with the “<b>charism of the truth</b>”.</p> <p>In the purgative stage, he creates in us <b>dissatisfaction with a simple intellectual “knowledge” of the Word of God</b>, and leads us to welcome it with ardent faith, to submit to its truth, and to practice it until it becomes a <b>source of life within us</b>.</p> <p>Amos 3:7; Mt 7:27; Jn 10:4-5; 14:26; 16:12-13; 1 Cor 2:10-11; 2 Pet 1:19-21; 1 Jn 2:27</p>	<p><b>10. Satan seeks to undermine the filial relationship of believers with the pastors of the Church and the authority of Church leaders</b> by means of scandals, or again by false pastors / guides, false prophecy... but believers’ innate sense of faith warns them against those who would lead them astray.</p> <p><b>He promises (and can deliver) OCCULT KNOWLEDGE</b> of concrete events and facts, <b>but never reveals the true personal salvific significance of the things he makes known, much less their place in God’s plan</b>. He leads believers to distort the interpretation of the Bible (and is very adept at it!), specifically <b>attacking Church teaching</b>. Other times, he leads people to a sterile, inert interpretation of the Word of God which keeps it from renewing their lives and from changing the social environment..</p> <p>Mk 13:22-23; 1 Tim 4:1ss; 2 Tim 2:23-26; Rev 2:20-24</p>
<p><b>11. The Spirit sends us forth and urges us on to our Christian MISSION, and works with power in our EVANGELIZATION</b>, confirming it with <b>signs</b> (especially the signs of <b>Jesus’ evangelical options</b> for the poor, the marginalized, sinners, and his passion for the Kingdom of God).</p> <p>In times of trial (purgative stage), the Spirit <b>strengthens us</b> by instilling in our hearts evangelical courage (<i>parrhesia</i>) <b>and gives us words of wisdom to give WITNESS to Christ</b>. The Spirit opposes the utilization of apostolic works for personal or congregational advantage, and apostolates devoid of concern for the poor; he inspires desires of greater evangelical authenticity in our lives.</p> <p>Lk 12:12; Jn 15:26-27; Acts 2:4; 4:29-31; 5:1-11; 6:10; 13:2-4</p>	<p><b>11. Satan seeks to discourage / dissuade / obstruct the mission of Jesus’ disciples</b> by means of tepidity of spirit, confusion, and the nagging doubt that other objectives are more important or more useful. <b>He seeks to throw a veil of ambiguity over the witness of those who are led by the Holy Spirit</b> through the use of misleading “signs” (cf. # 6) to confuse or relativize the works of God. He tries to (but cannot) rebutt the inspired evangelical wisdom infused by the Spirit of God in believers.</p> <p><b>The Evil One spreads propaganda about his “work” in order to INCREASE HIS NOTORIETY, and make an impression in people: he gives fierceness</b> to those who are in his service so they can confront and terrorize any who oppose his work.</p> <p>2 Cor 11:13-15; 1 Th 2:18</p>
<p><b>12. The Spirit inflames our LONGING to participate in GOD’S GLORY;</b> he encourages believers to “seeks the things above”, and to prepare by freeing themselves of the bondage of sin and earthly attachments; <b>he stimulates and enlivens believers in the desire to be members of his bride the Church and delight in the immediate presence of Jesus the bridegroom.</b> (Holy Spirit as fire, spiritual unction).</p> <p>Rom 8:18-23; 2 Cor 3:17-18; Eph 1:13-14; Jude 20-21; Rev 22:17</p>	<p><b>12. Satan creates an unhealthy and sordid fascination with bondage, HELL, condemnation, and eternal death.</b> He offers his followers a parody of heaven which is patently false and perverse, and sows interest / fascination / fear of the “AntiChrist” and such things. <b>He seeks to convince believers that they are already condemned</b> to Hell because of their sins, and that there’s no sense in continuing to strive for salvation in Christ in this life.</p> <p>Cf. 2 Cor 5:18—6:2; Rev 13:4</p>
<p><b>13. The work of the Holy Spirit is characterized by wonderful SURPRISES;</b> he carries out <b>things so good that we can hardly believe our eyes</b>, and brings about things much better than what we had thought of in our most cherished dreams... <b>TRULY</b>, these things are “<b>what God has prepared</b> for those who love him”.</p> <p>Gén 18,14; Is 55:8-9; 64:3-4; Rom 8,28; 1 Cor 2,9-10; Ef 3,20-21</p>	<p><b>13. Satan too has terribly disappointing “surprises”,</b> which leave believers with the <b>experience of having been DUPED:</b> when Satan’s promises comes true, they <b>defraud</b> the deeper hopes of those who had trusted in them. Like Adam and Eve in the garden (“your eyes will be opened...”) they discover tragically the results of their own willful disobedience. All this is fruit of the <b>LIES (half truths)</b> which are Satan’s characteristic trait.</p> <p>Gén 3,5-7; Rom 6:23; Sant 1,14-16</p>

Cf. very helpful pages on Discernment of Spirits in J. Aumann OP, *Spiritual Theology* (Christian Classics, Allen TX 1980), pp. 399-415.