

AN AWFUL  
MEMORIAL  
OF THE STATE OF  
Francis Spira,  
AFTER HE TURN'D  
A P O S T A T E  
FROM THE  
Protestant Church  
TO  
P O P E R Y.

+++++  
*Heaven tasted and lost, a double Hell!  
I've call'd thee Reader; pray so be:  
Read this, that others read not thee.*  
+++++

FALKIRK:  
PRINTED BY T. JOHNSTON.  
1815.

NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF SCOTLAND  
EDINBURGH

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
FRANCIS SPIRA.

\*XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX + + XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX\*

IN the year 1548, when the glorious Sun of the Gospel was but newly risen in Europe, in the reign of Edward VI. King of England, in the territory, and under the jurisdiction of the City of Venice, being the very border of Italy, in the Town of Citadella, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of great experience, of circumspect carriage and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced; endowed with the blessings of a wife and eleven children, and wealth in abundance. — What his worst parts were, I have no other warrant than his own words, which, if not tainted over-much with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion, than of a sober confession, may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

“ I was,” saith he, “ exceedingly covetous  
“ of money; and accordingly applied myself  
“ to get it by injustice, corrupting justice by  
“ deceit, inventing tricks to delude justice;

" good causes I either defended decitfully, or  
 " sold them to the adversary perfidiously.—  
 " Ill causes I maintained with all my might.  
 " I wittingly opposed the known truth; and  
 " the trust committed unto me, I either be-  
 " trayed or perverted."

Thus having worn out forty-four years, or  
 thereabouts, and the news of the *new*, or rather  
*newly revived* opinions of Luther coming into  
 those parts, represented an object of novelty  
 unto him, who being desirous to know, as he  
 was famous for knowledge, suffered not these  
 wandering opinions to pass unexamined; but  
 searching into the Scriptures, and into all books  
 of controversies that he could get, both old and  
 new, and finding more than fame and opinion,  
 he began to taste their nature so well, that he  
 entertained, loved, and owned them at length,  
 and with such zeal, that he became a professor,  
 yea, a teacher of them, first to his wife, children  
 and family, and afterwards to his friends and  
 familiar acquaintance; and, in comparison, seemed  
 to neglect all other affairs; always maintaining  
 this main point, " That we must wholly and only  
 depend on the free and unchangeable love of God,  
 in the death of Christ, as the only sure way to  
 salvation." And this was the sum of all his  
 discourse for the space of six years, or thereabout,  
 so long as the knowledge of it was kept secret;  
 but at length it brake forth in public meetings,  
 so that the whole Province of Padua was over-  
 run with the knowledge of this new doctrine.

The Clergy finding the trade of their *Pardons*  
 to decay, and their *Purgatory* to wax cold,  
 began to bestir themselves; glossing their actions  
 first with calumnious aspersions upon the whole  
 profession; then more plainly striking at Splra-

with grievous accusations. And to effect their purpose, some threatened him; others promised him favours and preferment; some would counsel him, and all joined to divide either his soul from his body, or both from God.

At this time one John Casa was the Pope's Legate at Venice, a Florentintine by birth, and one that wanted neither malice against those who were of Spira's opinion, nor craftiness to effect his malicious purposes. To him these men repaired with outcries against Spira, that he was the man that condemned the received rights of the Church, eluded the Ecclesiastical power, and scandalized the policy thereof; one of no mean rank, being a man of some account and authority, and also learned in the Scriptures, eloquent in speech, and, in one word, a dangerous Lutheran, having also many disciples, and therefore a man not to be despised.

The Legate, upon hearing this, began to reflect on the terrible alteration that had lately happened in Germany; where, by the means of one man only, *viz.* Luther, the Romish religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power, but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities. On the other hand, when he saw how readily the common people, inhabiting the bordering country of Italy, were to entertain these new opinions, he now thought it no time to dispute or persuade, but with speed repairs to the Senate, and procures authority from them to send for Spira.

Spira, by this time, had considered with himself the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such as neither liked his person nor

nalignion. He perceived that his opinions were neither retired, nor speculative, but such as aimed at the Romish faction, and a change of policy. And that his enemies wanted neither power nor occasion to call him to an account in public, when he must either, apostatize, and shamefully give his former life, yea, his own conscience the lie, or endure the utmost malice of his dreadful enemies; or forsake his wife, children, friends, goods, authority, yea, his dear country, and betake himself to a foreign people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually attend upon a voluntary exile.

Being thus distracted, and tossed by restless waves of doubt, without guide to trust to, or haven to fly to for succours, on a sudden, God's Spirit assisting, he felt a calm, and began to reason with himself in the following manner.

“ Why wanderest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man? Cast away fear; put on thy shield, the shield of faith. Where is thy wonted courage, thy goodness and constancy? Remember that Christ's glory lies at stake, suffer thou without fear, and he will defend thee; he will tell thee what thou shalt answer; he can beat down all danger; bring thee out of prison; raise thee from the dead. Consider Peter in a dungeon; the man yes in the fire. If thou makest a good confession, thou mayest indeed go to prison or death, but an eternal reward remains in heaven for thee. What hast thou in this world comparable to everlasting happiness? If thou dost otherwise, think of the scandal; (common people live by example, thinking whatever is done, is well done.); fear the loss of peace and joy; fear death, hell, and eternal wrath!! Or, if thou shalt be so strong as to cause thee to doubt

of the issue, fly thy country, get thee away, though never so far, rather than deny the Lord of life."

Now was Spira in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yield to these weighty reasons.--- Yet holding it wisdom to examine all things, he consults also with flesh and blood. Thus the battle doth renew, and the flesh began to reason thus:

"Be well advised, fond man; consider reason on both sides, and then judge. How canst thou thus overcome thy sufficiency, as thou neither regardest the examples of thy progenitors, nor the judgment of the whole church? Dost thou not consider what misery this thy rashness will bring unto thee? Thou shalt lose all thy substance, gotten with so great care and travail; thou shalt undergo the most exquisite torments that malice can devise; thou shalt be counted an heretic, and to close up all, thou shalt die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon, the bloody ax, or the burning faggot? Are they delightful? Be wise at length, and keep thy life and honour; thou mayest live to do much good to men, as God commands thee; and thou mayest be an ornament to thy country. Wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger? Thou hast begotten children, wilt thou not cut their throats, and inhumanly butcher them, who may in time bring honour to their country, glory to God, help and furtherance to his church? Go to the Legate, weak man, freely confess thy fault, and help all these miseries."

Thus did the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choak the good seed that was formerly sown. He feared and fainted, and yielded unto the allurements of this world!!!—

Being thus blinded, he went to the Legate at Venice, and thus addressed him :

“ Having for these diverse years entertained an opinion concerning some articles of faith, contrary to the orthodox and received judgment of the Church, and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the Universal Bishop; I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my folly in misleading others. I therefore yield myself in all obedience to the Supreme Bishop of the Church of Rome, never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the Holy See. I am heartily sorry for what is past, and humbly beg pardon for my offence.”

The Legate having heard Spira's confession, caused a recitation of all his errors to be drawn up in writing, together with the Confession annexed to it, and commanded Spira to subscribe his name thereto, which accordingly he did.— Then the Legate commanded him to return to his own town, and there to declare this Confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of Rome to be holy and true; and to abjure the opinions of Luther and other such teachers, as false and heretical.

Spira submitted to this humiliating order of the Legate's, and promised to accomplish his whole will and pleasure. But, on his way home, he began to think of what he had done; how he had shamefully neglected the opportunity of giving a glorious testimony of his faith before the Legate; and how he had impiously denied Christ and his gospel at Venice, besides what he had promised to do further in his own country. And thus, through fear and shame, being confounded, he thought he heard a voice speaking to him in this manner.

“Spirá! What dost thou here? Whither goest thou? Hast thou, unhappy man, given thy hand-writing to the Legate at Venice?— Yet see thou do not seal it in thine own country. Dost thou, indeed, think eternal life so mean a thing, as that thou preferest this present life before it? Dost thou well in preferring wife and children before Christ? Is the windy applause of the people better, indeed, than the glory of God; and the possession of this world’s good, more dear to thee than the salvation of thine own soul? Is the small enjoyment of a moment of time, more desirable than eternal wrath is dreadful? Think with thyself, what Christ did endure for thy sake! Is it not equal that thou shouldst suffer somewhat for him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of this present life, are not comparable to the glory that shall be revealed. If thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also reign with him. Thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; nevertheless the gate of mercy is not quite shut: Take heed that thou heapest not sin upon sin, lest thou repent when it is too late.”

Now was Spirá in the wilderness of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, or what to do; yet being arrived in his own country, and among his friends, considering what he had done, and what he had farther promised to do; and how the terror of God, on the one side, and the terror of this world on the other, did continually rack him; and therefore he desired their advice in so doubtful a case: His friends, upon small deliberation, answered, That it was requisite he should take heed that he did not, in anywise, betray his wife and children, and all his friends, into danger; seeing, that by so small



a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in less space than half an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depended on him; adding, moreover, that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already, for the most part, acknowledged before the Legate at Venice; and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more than what by the former action he had already sustained. On the other side, if he did not perform his promise to the Legate, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid far more heavy and insupportable injuries, than probably he should have endured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former opinions.

This was the last blow of the battle, and Spira, utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and makes offer to perform his promise made to the Legate; who, in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready, and sent the instrument of abjuration, signed by Spira, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain priest.

All that night the miserable man wore out with restless cares, without a minute of rest.— The next morning being come, he got up, and being ready, desperately enters into the public congregation, where Mass being finished, in the presence of friends and enemies and of the whole assembly, being, by estimation, near two thousand people; yea, and of Heaven itself! he recited that infamous abjuration, word for word, as it was written. It being done, he was fined of thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid: five whereof were given to the priest that brought the abjuration, the other five and twenty were

employed towards the making of a shrine to put the Eucharist in. Then he went home, and was restored to his dignities, properties, wife, and children.

No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direful voice saying to him,

“Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me; thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience; thou hast broken thy vow! Hence, apostate, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal damnation!”

Trembling and quaking in body and mind, he fell down in a swoon: Relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward, he never found any peace or ease of mind, by continuing in incessant torments! — He protested that he was captivated under the revenging hand of the great God! — That he heard continually that fearful sentence of Christ, that just Judge! That he knew he was utterly undone! — That he could neither hope for grace, nor Christ's intercession with God the Father in his behalf! — Thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and his judgment before his eyes!

Now began some of his friends to repent, but too late, of their rash counsel; others, not looking so high as the just judgment of God, laid all the blame on his melancholy constitution; that overshadowing his judgment, wrought in him a kind of madness: Every one censured as his fancy led him; yet, for remedy, all agreed in this, To use both the help of Physicians, and the pious advice of Divines; and therefore thought it fit to convey him to Padua, an University of note, where all manner of means were to be had.

This they accordingly did, both with his wife, children, and whole family; others also of his

friends accompanying him. And being arrived at the house of one James Arden, in St. Leonard's parish, they sent for three eminent Physicians, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other symptoms of his disease, and some private conference one with another amongst themselves, returned this answer: That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper originally from itself, by reason of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this his malady did arise from some grief or passion of the mind, which being over-burdened, did so oppress the spirits, as that they wanted a free passage; which stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full; and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fancy, shadowed the seat of judgment, and corrupted it. This was the state of his disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature. This they endeavoured to reform by purgation; either to consume, or at least divert the course of those humours from the brain. But all their skill effected nothing; which made Spira say,

“Alas! poor men, how ignorant are you? Do you think that this disease is to be cured by potions? Believe me, there must be another manner of medicine; it is neither plaister nor drugs that can help a fainting soul, cast down with the sense of sin, and wrath of God; it is only Christ that must be the Physician, and the gospel the soul's antidote.”

The Physicians easily believed him, after they had understood the whole truth of the matter; and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort.

By this time, the fame of Spira was spread all over Padua, and the neighbouring country;

partly, because as the disease, so the occasion was particularly remarkable. Multitudes, of all sorts, came to see him; some out of curiosity, only to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire, to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again; or at least, to benefit themselves by a spectacle of misery, and the justice of God. Amongst these Paulus, bishop of Justinopolis, and Mathæus Gribauldus, deserve especially to be named, as the most principal labourers for Spira's comfort.

They found him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant head-strong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgment; in a burning heat, calling excessively for drink, yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse, above his ordinary manner, and judiciously apposite.

Spira's friends laboured with him by all fair means to receive nourishment; which he obstinately refusing, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out again, exceedingly chafing; and in this fretting mood of his said,

“As it is true, that all things work for the best, to those that love God; so to the wicked all are contrary: For, whereas a plentiful offspring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate of their aged parents; to me they are a curse of bitterness and vexation! they do strive to make me live out this miserable life; I would fain be at an end of it. O that I were gone from hence! that somebody would let out this weary soul!”

His friends saluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease?

At which he broke out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related; and that with such passionate elocution, as caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many examples of God's mercy.

"My sin," said he, "is greater than the mercy of God."

Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved. "It is true, (quoth he), He would have all that he hath elected to be saved; he would not have damned reprobates to be saved: I am one of that number, I know it; for I willingly and against my knowledge, denied Christ; and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope." After some silence, one asked him, Whether he did not believe that doctrine to be true, for which he was accused before the Legate?

He answered, "I did believe it, when I denied it; but now, I neither believe that, nor the doctrine of the Romish Church: I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope.— I am a reprobate, like Cain or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair; and my friends do me great wrong that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve." Then they began sharply to rebuke him, requiring and charging him, that in any wise he did not violate the mercy of God. To which he answered, "The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the elect, but not to me, or any like to me, who are sealed up to wrath. I tell you I deserve it; my own conscience condemns me, what need is there for any other judge?"

Christ came, said they, to take away sin, Rom. ii. 5. And calling for a book, they read unto him the passion of Christ; and coming to his nailing to the cross, Spira said, "This indeed is comfortable to such as are elected; but as for me, wretch, they are nothing but grief and torment, because I contemned them." Thus crying out with grief, and tossing himself up and down on a bed whercon he lay, he intreated them to read no more to him.

When Gribauldus came to see him, Vergerius said to Spira, Dear Sir, here is Dr. Gribauldus, a godly and faithful friend of yours, come to see you. He is welcome, said he, but he shall find me ill. Gribauldus replied, Sir, this is but an illusion of the devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to shew you mercy.—The Lord, you know, is full of mercy; it is he that hath said, "That as often as a sinner shall repent of his sin, he will rememba his sin no more." Consider this in the example of Peter, that was Christ's familiar and apostle, who denied him thrice, and notwithstanding all that, did not Christ shew mercy to him? Is the Lord's hand now shortened that it cannot save?

To this Spira answered, "If Peter grieved and repented, it was because Christ looked on him with a merciful eye; and in that he was pardoned it was not because he wept, but because God was gracious to him. But God respects not me, and therefore I am a reprobate. I feel no comfort can enter into my heart; there is only place there for torments and vexings of spirit. I tell you my case is properly mine own; no man was ever in the like condition, and therefore my state is fearful!"—Then roaring out in th

bitterness of his spirit, said, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!"

The violence of his passion and action, did amaze many of the beholders so much, that some of them said, with whisepering voices, that he was possessed. He overhearing it, said, Do you doubt it? A whole legion of devils have taken up their dwelling in me, and possess me as their own! and justly too, for I have denied Christ.

Did you it wittingly, or not? said they.— That is nothing to the purpose, said Spira; Christ hath said, "Whosoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." Christ will not be denied, no not in a word; and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denied him.

They observing his distemper to arise from the sense and horror of the pains of hell, asked him, if he thought them worse pains than what he endured for the present? He said, that he knew there were far worse pains than those he then suffered: "For the wicked shall rise to their judgment; but they shall not stand in judgment," Psalm i. This I tremble to think of! yet I do desire nothing more, than that I might come to that place where I might be sure to feel the worst, and to be freed from fear of worse to come." Ay, but you are to consider, said one, that those opinions, for which you were accused before the Legate, were impious; and therefore you are not to think you denied Christ, but rather that you confessed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholic Church. Truly, said he, when I did deny those opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did deny him.

Sir, said another, try to believe now that they are true. Now I cannot, saith he; God will

not suffer me to believe them, nor trust in his mercy. What would you have me to do?— I would fain attain to this power, but cannot, tho' I should presently be burned for it.

But why do you, said another, esteem this so great a sin, whenas the learned Legate constrained you to it; which surely he would not have done if your former opinions be not erroneous? No, good Francis, the devil besets thee; let not the grievousness of any sin amaze thee.

You say right, said Spira, the devil hath possessed me, and God hath left me to his power; for I find I can neither believe the gospel, nor trust in God's mercy. I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and God, by his immutable decree, hath bound me over to perpetual punishment, without any hopes of pardon! It is true, the greatness of sins, not the multitude of them, bind God's mercy; all those sins that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not so much trouble me; for I trusted God would not lay them to my charge: but now, having sinned against the Holy Ghost, God hath taken away from me all power of repentance, and brings all my sins to remembrance; and being guilty of one, I am guilty of all: And therefore it is no matter whether my sins be great or small, few or many; they be such as Christ's blood, nor God's mercy belongs not to me! — "God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." This it is that gnaws my heart, he hath hardened me! and I find that he daily more and more doth harden me; and therefore I am out of hope!!! I tell you, there was never such a monster as I am!—never was any man alive, such a spectacle of exceeding misery!—I knew that my justifica-



tion was to be expected by Christ, and I denied and abjured it, to the end I might keep this frail life from adversity, and my children from poverty, and now behold how bitter this life is to me!— And God only knows, what shall become of this my family; but sure no good is like to betide it, but worse and worse, and such a ruin at length, as one stone shall not be left upon another!!!

But why should you, said Gribauldus, conceit so deeply of your sin, seeing you cannot but know that many have denied Christ, yet never fell into despair? “But, said Spira, I can see no ground of comfort for such; neither can I warrant them from God’s revenging hand, or that he will yet suffer such to be in peace; and besides, there will be a time of danger to come, and they shall be thoroughly tried; and if it were not so, yet God is just in making me an example to others, and I cannot justly complain. There is no punishment so great but I have deserved it, for this so hainous an offence. I assure you, it is no small matter to deny Christ, and yet it is more ordinary than commonly men do conceive of; it is not a denial made before a Magistrate, as it is with me; for as oft as a Christian doth dissemble the known truth, as often as he approves of false worship, by presenting himself at it; so often as he doth things unworthy of his calling, so often he denies Christ. This did I, and am therefore justly punished for it.”

Your estate, quoth Gribauldus, is not so strange as you make it. Job was so far gone, that he complained God had set him as a mark against him. And David, that was a man after God’s own heart, complained often that God had forsaken him, and was become his enemy. Yet both received comfort again. Comfort

yourself therefore, God will come at length, though he seem afar off.

O brother, answered Spira, I believe all this; "The devils believe and tremble!" But David was ever elected, and dearly beloved of God; and tho' he fell, yet God took not utterly away his Holy Spirit, and therefore was heard when he prayed, "Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me!" But I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God!—Neither can I pray as he did, because his Holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I shall live in continual hardness, so long as I live. Oh! that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to me, tho' but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath, that burns like torments of hell within me, and afflicts my conscience with pangs unutterable! Verily desperation is hell itself!

Then Gribauldus said, I do verily believe, Spira, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that He may spare you hereafter; and that He hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

Nay, said Spira, hence do I know that I am a reprobate, because he afflicteth me with hardness of heart. O that my body had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul, and ease my conscience, this my burdened and oppressed conscience!

Gribauldus being willing to ease his mind from the continual meditation of his sins; as also to sound him how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church, asked him what he thought became of the souls of men, after they departed out of the body? To which Spira answered: "Altho' this be not clearly revealed

in Scripture, yet I verily believe, that the souls of the elect go presently to the kingdom of glory, and not that they sleep in the body, as some do imagine." Very well, said one standing by, why do the Scriptures then say, 1 Sam. v. 9. that Goliath fell down to hell, and raiseth up? Seeing it cannot be meant of the state of the soul after death, which, as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption; it must be understood of the state of the soul in this life, like that wherein thou art at present. And oftentimes we see, that God suffers men to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again: And therefore despair not, but hope; it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

This is the work, quoth Spira, this is the labour! For, I tell you, when I at Venice did first abjure my profession, and so, as it were, drew an indenture, the Spirit of God often admonished me. And when at Citadella, I did, as it were, set my seal; the Spirit of God often suggested to me, "Do not write!—Do not seal!" Yet resisted I the Holy Ghost, and did both.—And at that very present I did evidently feel a wound in my very will. So, altho' I can say, I would believe, yet I cannot say, I will believe. God hath denied me the power of will; and it befalls me in this my state, as one that is fast in bonds, and his friends coming to see him, do pity his state, and persuade him to shake off his fetters, and come out of his bonds, which, God knows, he would fain do, but cannot. This is my very case; you persuade me to believe; how fain would I do it, but cannot. O now I cannot!—Then violently grasping his hands together, and raising himself up, Behold! said he; I am strong,

yet by little and little I decay and consume.—  
 My servants would fain preserve this my weary  
 life, but at length the will of God must be done,  
 and I shall perish miserably, as I deserve!—  
 Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord! — Blessed  
 are you whose hearts the Lord hath mollified!—  
 Then, after some pause, he went on.

I earnestly desire to pray to God with my  
 heart, yet I cannot!— I see my damnation, and  
 I know my remedy is only in Christ, yet I can-  
 not set myself to take hold of it.—Such are the  
 punishments of the damned; they repent of  
 the loss of heaven, but they cannot mend their  
 ways. — As he was thus speaking, he observed  
 divers flies that came about him, and lighted on  
 him: Behold! said he, now also Beelzebub comes  
 to his banquet; you shall shortly see my end!  
 and in me, an example to many, of the justice  
 and judgment of God!

About this time came in two Bishops, with  
 divers Scholars of the University, one of them  
 Paulus Vergerius, who having observed Spira  
 more than any other, being continually convers-  
 ant with him, told him, That his state was such,  
 as rather stood in need of prayer than advice;  
 and therefore desired him to pray with him in  
 the Lord's prayer. Spira consented, and he  
 began in the following manner.

“ Our Father which art in heaven.”

But Spira, breaking forth into tears, stopped.  
 And they said to him, It is well, your grief is  
 a good sign. — I bewail, said Spira, my misery;  
 for I perceive I am forsaken of God, and cannot  
 call to him from my heart, as I was wont to do.

Yet let us go on, said Vergerius.

“ Thy kingdome come.”

O Lord, said Spira, bring me also into this kingdom; I beseech thee shut me not out.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

O Lord, added he, I have enough, and abundance to feed this carcase of mine, but there is another bread; I humbly beg the bread of thy grace, without which, I am but a dead man.

“Lead us not into temptation.”

Seeing, Lord, that I am brought into temptation, help me, Lord, that I may escape. The enemy hath overcome, help me, I beseech thee, to overcome this cruel tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly, and expressing such affection and passion, as filled all present with grief and compunction.

Then they said to him, Sir, you know that none call Christ Jesus, the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; you must therefore think of yourself according to that soft affection which you express in your prayers; inferring thereby, that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

I perceive said Spira, that I call to him to my eternal damnation! For I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me. If Judas, said they, had but out-lived his days, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented; and Christ would have received him to mercy; and yet he sinned most grievously against his Master which did so esteem him as to honour him with the dignity of an apostle; and did maintain and feed him.

Spira answered: Christ did also feed and honour me; neither is my fault one jot less than that of his; because it is no more honour to be personally present with Christ in the flesh,

than to be in his presence by the illumination of his holy Spirit. Besides, Judas could never have repented, how long soever he had lived; for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now with me!

O Spira, said they, you know you are in a spiritual desertion; you must therefore not believe what Satan suggests: He was ever a liar from the beginning, and a mere impostor, and will cast a thousand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withal; you must rather believe those whom you judge to be in a good state, and more able to discern of you than yourself.— Believe us, and we tell you, that God will be merciful unto you.

There is the knot! said Spira. Would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was continually troubled with! That he saw the devils come flocking into the chamber and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noises! That those were not fancies, but that he knew them as really as the by-standers. And that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture in his mind, and a continual gnawing of his conscience, being the very pangs of the damned.

Cast away these fancies, said Gribouldus these are but illusions; humble yourself in the presence of God, and praise him.

“The dead praise not the Lord, said he, nor they that go down to the pit.” We that are drowned in despair, are dead, and already gone down into the pit. What hell can be worse than desperation, or what greater punishment The gnawing worm! unquenchable fire! horror confusion! and, which is worse than all, desp

ration itself continually torments me! And now I count my present state worse than if my soul, separated from my body, were with Judas, and the rest of the damned! and therefore now desire rather to be there, than to live in the body!

They perceiving but small effects of all their labour, but rather that he grew worse; for the avoiding of a concourse of people (for every day seldom fewer than twenty continued with him) and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him, they consulted to carry him back again into his own country: And those of his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their last leave of him.— Vergerius, among the rest, required, That at their parting they might pray together with him. Spira consented hardly, and as unwillingly performed: “For, said he, my heart is estranged from God; I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are quite gone; my heart is full of malediction, hatred, and blasphemy against God! I find I grow more and more hardened in heart, and cannot stop myself. Your prayers for me shall turn to your own profit, they cannot do me any good.”

Vergerius then came to take his leave of him; whom Spira embracing, said, “Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a reprobate, but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation; yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind offices of love and good-will; and the Lord return it unto you, with a plentiful increase of all good.”

The next day being brought down for his intended journey, by the way, looking round about him, with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table, to which he running hastily, snatched hold of it, as intending to do himself mischief; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose. Whereupon, with indignation, he said, I know God will not have mercy on me.

Thus went he homewards, often saying, That he envied the condition of Cain and Judas.

He lay about eight weeks in this condition, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion, so spent, that he appeared a perfect skeleton, nothing appearing but sinews and bones, vehemently raging for drink; ever pining, yet fearful for living long; dreading hell, yet coveting death, in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor. And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in hell, he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God, in punishing apostacy.

And thus, within a few days after his arrival at his own home, he departed this life.

From this we ought to remember, that secret things belong unto the Lord our God: and that that those who put their trust in him shall never be confounded: "For mercy hath he ever; and his grace faileth never."

*F I N I S.*