

A Relation of the Desperate Estate of Francis Spira (1635 or earlier)

Nathaniel Bacon

Transcript

British Library, Additional MS 22591, ff. 280r–288v

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A Relacion of [th]e desperate Estate of Frauncis Spira in [th]e yeere 1548

The Backslider in hart Shalbe filled with his owne wayes pro: 14: 14:

[*Right margin:* flower motif A Preface of Natha: Bacon] For the Truthe of this ensuing Relac[i]on / besyde the Circu[m]sta[n]ce of Place / Person / Tyme and occasion soe exactlye observed / I reser my selfe to the Relac[i]on of those Godlie men / whoe in severall languages haue manifested to the World the severall passages there of / And allthoughe I am not ignorant / that at the First they were not onlye Credited / but discredited and slaundered by such as found them to be A Blurr to the Romane Profession / yet lost they not their Lustre thereby / But being acquitted by Compurgato[r]s of Seu[er]al Nations / and some of the Romane Religion / being all of the[m] expectato[r]s of this Tragedy It occasions not only A Further set manifestac[i]on and Confirmac[i]on of the Truthe / But allsoe A more large & frequent Confluence / to see that w[hi]ch Formerlye they had onlye heard of This maye p[ar]tlye appeare out of the succeeding Storye / but more fullye out of all appologie written by Vergerius B[isho]pp of Constantinople whoe was abused for spreading the Fame of this Example / to the Staine of Poperie / in w[hi]ch Appologie N: Rotta Suffragaine of Padua is shortlye and plainelye declared what was done and whoe were present

It is to be demaunded what moved mee to Compile this Treatise Spira telleth him / that it should move Feare & Peu[n]ence And indeed amongst all those that came to see him / fewe or none returned vnshaken

Virgerius in his First Epistle saithe I would faine goe to him againe / but I feare and Tremble exceedinglye. And in this Apologie it is such a Rare Example / as I would willinglie goe to [th]e farthest parte of the Earthe to heare or see the like

The Ladye Jane (in her Christian Letter to her Fathers Chap laine that had fallen into Spira's snare) Sayth / remember [th]e lame[n]table Estate of Spira / I doe acknowledge that there hath beene form[e]lye A Booke published in our Mothers tounge / Conc[er]ning the Subiecte/ But as farre as I can learne (for I could never yett obtaine to anye of them) It was nothinge soe large and various as the [pre]sent Treatise / and I haue heard onlye A translac[i]on of one of the

Tractates

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Tractates fro[m] where I haue gathered this p[resen]te discourse in p[ar]te

Concerning my Care and Fidelitie in this busines / It is such as I maye trulye saye w[i]thout change of Collo[r] / That there is not one sentence in all this worke attributed to the Pardon of Spira But it hath his warrant / either fro[m] the Epistles of Vergerius & Gribaldus Professors

and doctors in the Lawes of Padua / or fro[m] the discourses of Henry Stringer A Scottishman
Segismona Gelous A Transilvanian / and Martine Borha A devine of Basilli /

Neither haue I taken anye other Libertie than As a Relator / to weaue the aboue saide
discourses one w[i]th another / Soe as those which vnder severall writters / were before
cou[n]ted severall / are nowe by mine Endeavo[r]s made into one entire Historye / Connexed
by due succession of tyme / and occasion as punctuallie as could bee aymed at by the
Circu[m]stances noted in the writing of those holye & learned men before named / Now to the
narrac[i]on itselfe /

finis of the preface

[*Left margin:* Entrance to the matter]

In the yeere 1548: when the glorious Sonne of the Gospell was but newlye risen in Europe
in the dayes of the raigne of k: Edward the 6: of that name kinge of England / and in the
Territorie and vnder the Iurisdic[i]on of the Cittie of Venice / on the border of Italie / in the
Towne of Citadelle lived one Frau[n]cis Spyra / an Advocate of great ranke and esteeme /
being of knowne learning and elequence of greate experience of Carriage Circu[m]specte /
and severe / his Speeche grave and composed / his Cou[n]ten[a]nce sharpe and austere /
every way befitting that authoritie / wherevnto he was endowed w[i]th outward blessinge
of wiffe and Children / and wealth in abundance / what his worst p[ar]ts were I haue none
other warrant / than his owne wordes w[i]ch if not tainted overmuch with the Bitternesse
of A desperate mynde / and bearing the Cou[n]tenance rather of passion than of Sober
Cou[n]tenaunce Co[n]fession / maye seeme to add a period to all futher Comendac[i]ons / It
was (saith hee) excessivelie Covetuous of monyes / and accordingley I applyed my selfe to
gett it / by iniustice / Corrupting Iustice by deceit / in being tricked to delude Iustice / Good
causes I haue either defended deceitfullye / or sould them to the Adversarye p[er]fidiouslye /
All Causes I defended w[i]th all my might / I willinglye opposed the ope[n] truthe and the
trust comitted to mee / I either betrayed / or p[er]verted

Thus having worne out 44: yeeres or there abouts / the noyse of the newe / or rather newlye
opynions revived by Luther / coming into those parts / rep[re]sented an obiect of Noveltie
vnto him who beinge as desirous to knowe / as he was famous for knowledge suffered not
theis wandring opinions to passe vnexamined / but searching into the Scriptures / and into all
Bookes of Controversie that he could gett both old / and newe / and finding more than Fame
and opinion he began to cast that nature soe well / as he entertayneth / loveth them / & onely
them at length / and w[i]th such zeale / as he became A p[ro]fesso[r] & teacher of them / First
to his wiffe / Children / and Familie / and after to his Friends / familiar acquaintance / and
in Comparison seemed too neglect all other Affaires / intending ever to presse [th]e mayne
pointe

that

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that wee must whollye and onely depend on the Free & vncha[n]gable love of God /in the
death of Christ / as the onely sure waye to salvatio[n] and this Continued for the Space of 6:
yeeres / or there abouts/ even soe longe as the Fire could keepe it selfe in p[ri]vate Walles /
But at [th]e length it brake Fourthe into publique meetings / soe as the whole Cler-Province
of Padua damned by the lustre therof the Clergie finding the trade of their Pardons to decaye /

and their Purgatorye to waxe cold / began to bestirre themselves / glosing their acc[i]ons first with Calumnious aspersions vpo[n] the whole p[ro]fession / then more plainly striking at Spira / with greivous accusac[i]ons / and to effect their p[ur]pose some p[ro]mise labo[r] / others Favo[r] / some Advice / and others mayntenau[n]ce all ioyne to devide either [th]e Soules fro[m] the Bodye / or both from God/

Nowe was John Casa the Popes Legate nowe resident at Venice being by Birthe A Florentine / and one that never wanted mallice against those of this waye / nor craftines to effect his malicious p[ur] poses / to him theis men repayre w[i]th outc[r]yes against Spira / that he was the man [tha]t Condemned the receaved rights of the Church / deluded the Ecclesiasticall Power / and scandalized the pollicie thereof / one of noe meane rancke being A man of accompt / and authoritie / etc thereto learned in the Scriptures / elegant in Speeche / and in A word a daungerous Lutheran having allsoe manye disciples / etc ergo not to be disputed

Nowe began the Legate to rest his Eye vpon the terrible alcer[t]ac[i]on that latelye had happened in Germanie / where by the meanes of one onely Luther / the Romaine Religio[n] had suffered such A Blowe / as [tha]t it could neither be cured by dissimilac[i]on / nor defended by Power / but the Clergie must either mend their Mannors / or loose their dignitie /

On the other Syde / when he sawe how p[ro]pense the Como[n]wealth inhabitinge in the bordering Countrys / where to entertaine [th]e new opynio[n] hee nowe thought it noe time to dispute or p[er]suade / but w[i]th speed retour[n]s to the Senate / and p[e]ruseth authoritie from them to send for Spira /

Spira by this tyme / had considered w[i]th himselfe [th]e nature of his Carriage / houe evident and notorious it was / and soe subiect to be envied by such as neither loved his p[er]son nor Religion / he well proved that his opynions were not retyred / nor speculatuie / but suche as aymed at the overthrowe of the Romish Hyecarchie and at chang[e] of Pollicye / wherein at the best he could expect but A bloody victory and that his Enemies wanted neither Power / nor occasion to call him to accompt in publique / when he must either Apostalize and shamefully give his former liffe / yea his owne Conscience the lye or endure the vtmost mallice of his deadlye Enemies / or forsake his wiffe / Children / Freinds / Goods / Authoritie / and his deere Cou[n]trye and betake himselfe to A Forraine People / there to endure a thousa[n]d miseryes [tha]t doe continuallye wayte vpon A Voluntarye Exile /

Being thus tossed and distracted in the restlesse waves of doubt / w[i]thout guide to trust to or haven to flye to for Succo[r] / on a Suddane / the Spiritt assisting hee felt A Calme and began to discou[r]se w[i]th himselfe in this manner / whye standest thou in uncertainties thou vnhappye man / cast awaye feares / put on thy Sheild / [th]e Sheild of Faithe / where is thy wanted Courage / thy Goodness / thy Co[n]sta[n]cye remember [tha]t Christes glorye lies at the stake / suffer thou w[i]thout feare / and he will defend thee / he will call thee what thou shalt a[n]swer he can beate downe all daunger / bringe thee out of Prison / rayse thee fro[m] the dead / Consider Peter in Prison / the martyrs in the

Fire

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First / If thou makest a good Confession / thou mayst indeed goe to p[ri]son / or deathe / but an eternall reward remaines in heaven for thee / what lost thou in the world Comparable

to eternall life / to ever(la)sting happines / If thou dost otherwise thinke of the Scandall /
 Como[n] people liue by example / thinking whatsoever is done / is well done/ Feare / [th]e
 losse of Peace / and Ioye / Feare Hell / deathe / and Eternall wrathe / or if [th]e flesh be soe
 stronge / to cause thee to doubt / of [th]e issue / Flye thy Cou[n]trye / gett thee awaye thoughe
 never soe farr rathe[r] than denye [th]e Lorde of Liffe /

Now was Spira in Reasonable quiett / being in p[ar]te resolved to yeald to those weightie
 Reaons / yet holdeth it wisdome to examine all thinges /

Hee consults allsoe with Flesh and bloud / thus doth the battaile renue / and the Flesh beginns
 in this manner /

Bee well advised fond man / Consider the Reasons on both sydes / & then Iudge / how thou
 canst thus overweene thine owne Sufficiencie as thou neither regardest the example of thy
 Progenito[r]s / nor [th]e iudgm[en]t of the whole Church / were thy Fathers inferio[r] to
 thee / or seest thou more than all the world / beside thee / wilt thou redemme thos Soules
 nowe in eternall Rest / and bring them downe to hell / whoe haue ever bene Saints in
 their generac[i]ons / dost thou not consider what miserye this thy rashnes will bringe thee
 too / thou shalt loose all thy substance gotten w[i]th soe much care / and travaile / thou
 shalt vndergoe the most exquisite Torm[en]ts / that mallice itself can devise / thou shalt
 be cou[n]ted an Heretique of all / and to close vpp all / thou shalt dye shamefullie / what
 thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon / the Bloodye Axe / the burning fago[t] are
 they delightfull / Be wise ~~thy~~ at length / and keepe thy liffe & hono[r] thou mayst live to doe
 much good / to good men / as God Comau[n]ds thee thou mayst bee an orate ornament to
 thy Countrye / {put Case} thy Country lesse would be of small esteeme with thee wilt [tho]u
 bringe thy Freindes allsoe into daunger / w[i]th thee thou hast begotte[n] childre[n] wilt thou
 cutt their Throats now / & inhumanely butche[r] the[m] w[hi]ch may in tyme bring hono[r]
 to their Cou[n]trye / Glorye to God / hope & furtherau[n]ce to his Church / Goe to the Legate
 weake man freelye / co[n]fesse thy Fault / & help all [th]y miseryes

Thus did the Cares of the world / & [th]e deceitfullnes of riches choake the good seed [tha]t
 was foundlye sown / soe as fearing he faints & yeilds vnto the allurementsn of this present
 worlde / & being thus blinded he goes to the legate at Venice / and saluteth him with this
 newes /

Having for these divers yeeres entertained an opinion concerninge some Articles of Faithe /
 Contrarye to the Ordodoxe / and receaved iudgm[en]t of the Church / And altered manye
 thinges / against the authoritie of the Church of Rome / and the vniu[er]sall Bishopp I
 hu[m]blye acknowledge my faulte / and erro[r] / and my Follye / in misleadinge othe[r]s I
 therefore humblie yeild myselfe in all obedience to [th]e Supreame Bishopp into the Bosome
 of [th]e Church of Roome / never to dep[ar]t againe fro[m] the traditions / and decrees of the
 holye Sea / I am hartelye sorry for what is past / & I hu[m]blye begg p[ar]do[n] for soe greate
 an offence/

The Legate p[er]ceaving Spira to faint / he pursueche him to the vttermost / hee causeth
 A resitac[i]on of all his Erro[r]s to be drawne in writing / together w[i]th the Confession
 annexed to it / & Comaunds Spira to suscribe his name / w[hi]ch accordinglee hee did

Then the Legate comaunds him to returne to his owne Towne / and there to declare this
 Confession of his / & to acknowledg [th]e whol doctrine of the Church of Rome / to be holye
 and true / & to abiure the opinions of Luther / and other such teachers as false & hereticall /

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(Man knoweth the beginning of Sinne but he knoweth not the yssues there of) Spira hauing once lost footing / goes downe amayne / he cannot staye nor gainesaye the Legate / but p[ro]miseth to accomplish his whole will / and pleasure / hee soone addresseth him selfe to his Iourney / and being outward on the waye / he thinkes w[i]th him selfe what large Spoyles he had brought awaye fro[m] his co[n]flict w[i]th the Legate / what A glorious Testimonie hee had given of his gr[ea]t Faithe / and constancie / in Christs Cause / and to bee plaine how impioslye hee had denied Christ and his Gospall at Venice / & what he p[ro]mised further to doe in his owne Countrye

And thus partlye w[i]th Feare / and p[ar]tlye w[i]th shame / being co[n]fou[n]ded he thought he heard A Voyce speaking to him in this mauner Spira what dost thou heere / whether goest thou vnhappye man / give thy hand writting to the Legate at Venice / yett see thou dost not seale it in thine owne Cou[n]trye / doest thou indeed thinke eternall life to meane as that thou p[re]ferrest this p[rese]nte to life before it / dost thou well in preferring Wiffe / and Children / before Christ / is the undye applause of the people / better indeed than the glorye of God / and the possessio[n] of this worlds good / dearer to thee / than the Salvation of thine owne Soule / is the small vse of A moment of tyme / more desirable than eternall wrathe is dreadfull / thinke w[i]th thy selfe what Christ endureth for thy sake / is it not equall that thou shouldest suffer for him comparable w[i]th the glorye [tha]t shall be revealed / All thou suffer with him / thou hast alreadye done / neverthelesse [th]e gate of mercie is not quite yett shutt / take heed that thou leapest not since to sinne least thou repent when it will be to late /

Nowe was Spira in a wilderness of doubt not knowinge w[hi]ch waye to turne himselfe / or what to doe / yett being arrived in his owne Cou[n]trye / and amongst his friends / w[i]th shame enoughe hee related what he had done / and what he had p[ro]mised to doe futher and how the Terro[r]s of God / on the onsyde / and the Terro[r]s of [th]e world on the other syde / did continuallye wracke him / and therefore hee desired of them advise in this soe doubtfull A Case / his Freindes vpo[n] small deliberac[i]on / au[n]swered / that it was requisite [tha]t he should take heed that he did not in anye wise betraye his wiffe / his childre[n] and all his Freindes into daunger / seeing that by soe small A matter as the recitinge of A Schedule / w[hi]ch might be done in lesse space than halfe an howre / he might both free himselfe fro[m] p[rese]nte dau[n]ger and p[re]serue manye that attended vpon him / adding moreove[r] that he could gett noe Creditt in relenting fro[m] that w[hi]ch alreadye in greatest p[ar]te he had p[er]formed before the Legate at Venice / & that in the p[er]fect accomplishm[en]t thereof little or noe discreditt could arise / more than what by the former accon[t] he had alreadye sustemed / on the other syde if he did not p[er]forme his p[ro]mise made to the Legate / he could neither discharge himselfe of the ahamme / w[hi]ch he had alreadye incurred / nor avoyd farre more heauie & insupportable miseryes / than p[ro]bablie he should haue endured / if her p[er]sisted obstinatelye in his former opinions /

This was the last blowe of the Battaile / and Spira vtterlye ou[er]come / goes to the Pretor / and p[re]fers to performe his p[ro]mise made to the Legate / whoe in the meane thyme had taken order to haue all thinges readie / nad had sent the Instrum[en]t of abiurac[i]on to so figured by Spira / to the Pretor / by the hand of Certaine Preist / At [th]e tyme

the

the miserable man worne out w[i]th restlesse Cares w[i]thout any minutes^{of} rest the next morning being come / he getts vpp / and bbeing readye he desp[er]ately entreth into the publique Congregac[i]on / where Masse being finished in the pr[esen]ce both of Freindes / and Enemies / and of the whole asse[m]blye (being by Estimac[i]on about 2000: people) yea and of heaven / there hee recited that infamous abiurac[i]on word for word / as it was written / it being done he was fined at 30: peeces of Gold / w[hi]ch he p[re]sentlye paide / five whereof were given to the Preist / that bought [th]e abiurac[i]on the other 25: were employed toward the making of A shrine to put [th]e Eucharist in

then was he sent home / restored to his goods / dignities / wiffe / and Children/ noe sooner was he departed but he heard a dolefull voyce Saying to him

Thou wicked wretch thou hast renounced the Covenant of thine obedience / thou hast broken thy Vowe / hence Apostate / and beare w[i]th thee the sentence of thine eternall damnation/

Hee trembling and quaking in Bodye / fell downe in A Sound / releiff was at hand for the Bodye / but fro[m] that time forward / he neu[er] found anye peace / or ease of his mynde / but Continuing in vncessau[n]t Torments he p[ro]fessed

That he was captivated vnder the reve[n]ging hand of [th]e gr[ea]t God / that he heard continuallye that fearefull Se[n]tence of [th]e wise Iudge that he was Vterlie vndone / that he could neither hope for grace / nor Christs Intercession w[i]th God [th]e farther / in his behalfe /

Thus was his Fault ever heavye on his heart / and ever his Iudgement before his Eyes / nowe began his Freindes some of the[m] to repent too late / of their last Councell / others not looking soe higher / as the Iudgm[en]ts of God / laid all the blame vpo[n] his mela[n]choly Constituc[i]on / that over shadowed his Iudgement / wrought in him a kind of madness / everye one censured as his fancie lead him / yett for remedie / all agreed in this / To vse both [th]e wholsome helpe of Phi sic[i]ons / and pious advice of devines / and therefore thoughte it meete to convey him to Padua / where plentie of all manner of things were to be had / This they accordinglye did / both w[i]th his wiffe and Children / and his whole Familie / and other of his Freindes allso accompaning him / and being arrived at the house of one James Leanards / they sent for three Phisitions of most note whoe vppon due observac[i]on of the Effects / and othe[r] Symptomes of his disease / and some p[ri]vate Conference one w[i]th another amongst themselves retourned Verdict / in this manner / vi[delic]et

That they could not discerne that his Bodye was anye waye affected w[i]th any dau[n]ger / or distemp[er] / originallie fro[m] itselpe / by reason of overruling of any humor / but that this passion of his did arise fro[m] some greiffe of the mynde / w[hi]ch being overburthened / did not overpresse the Spiretts / as they wanted free passage stir red vp the humors / whereof the Bodye of man is full of / & those ascending to the braine / troubled the Fancie / and shadowed [th]e state of Iudgment / and soe corrupted it / this was the bodye of his disease / and that endeavoured to p[er]forme by purgac[i]on / either to consume / or at least to divert the Cou[r]se of these humors from the braine / but all their skill effected nothing / w[i]th Spira Nothing saide / alas poore man / howe farr wide are you / doe you thinke that this disease is to be cured by potions / believe me there must be other manner of medicines / it is neither Potions / Plasters / nor druggs / that

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can helpe a fainting Soule / Cast downe w[i]th sence of Sinne / and the wrathe of God /
It is onely Christ that must be the Phisic[i]on / and the Ghospell the onely Antidote / The
Phisicians easelye believed him after that they had vnderstood the whole truthe of the matter /
and therefore they advised him to seeke for spirituall Comforts /

By this Tyme the fame of this man was spread ou[er]all Padua / & the neighbo[r] Cou[n]trie
p[ar]tlye for that he was A man of esteeme partlye because as the disease was strange / soe
the occasio[n] was rem[ar]kable / for this done / not in A Corner / soe as daylie there came
multitudes of all sortes / to see him / some out of Curiositye / onely to see / & discour[se]
some out of A Pious desire / to trye all meanes that might reduce him to comforte againe / or
at least to benifitt themselves / by such A Spectacle of miserie / and of the Iustice of God /
amongst theis Paulus Vergerius / and Mathew Gribaldus deserue especiallye to be named as
the most principall labo[er]rs for this mans Comforte / They finde him (being nowe about
Fiftie yeares of Age) neither affected w[i]th the dotage of old Age / nor w[i]th [th]e vncessant
headstrong passions of youth / But in [th]e strength of his experience and Iudgement / In
A burning heate calling exte[n]ssively for drinke / yet his vndersta[n]ding actiue / qicke
of app[re]hension / wittie in discourse / aboue his ex-ordinary manner / and indicioulye
oppositiue

His Freindes laboured by all faire meanes to induce him to receaue some nourishm[en]t /
w[hi]ch he obstinatlye gainesayinge / they forciblye infused some liquid thinge / as
sustenance into his mouth / most of w[hi]ch he spitt out againe / exceedinglye chafinge / and
in that fretting moode saide

It is verrye true that all thinges worke together for good / for those that feare God / soe to [th]e
wicked all things are co[n]trarye / For whereas A plentifull ofspring is the blessing of God /
and his reward / being A staye to the weake state of their Parents / being aged / but to mee
they are Cause of bitterness / and vexatio[n] /

They do strive to make me trye out this miserye / I would faine be at an end / I deserue not
this dealinge at their hands / Oh that I were gone from thence / that some Bodye would lett
out this wearye Soule /

His Freindes saluted him / and asked what hee Conceiued to bee the Cause of his disease / for
though he brake out into a lame[n]table discour[se] of the passage he formerlye related / and
that w[i]th such a passiolate elocutio[n] that he caused manye to weepe / and most to tremble

They Contrarilye to comforte him / propounded manye of the p[ro]mises recorded in
scripture / & many exa[m]ples of Gods mercie /

My Sinne is greater / than the mercie of God / Naye au[n]swered they the mercie of God
is aboue all Sinne / God would haue all men to be saved / It is true (quothe hee) he would
haue those / that hee hath elected to be saved / hee would not haue damned reprobates to
be saved / I am one of that number I knowe it / For I willinglye & ag[ain]st my knowledge
denied Christ / and I feele that he hardens mee / and will not suffer mee to hope/

After some silence / one asked him whether hee did not beleeeve that doctrine to be true /
for the w[hi]ch he was accused before [th]e Legate he au[n]swered I did beleeeve it when I

denied it / But now I neither believe [tha]t now the doctine of the Romish Church / I believe nothing / noe hope / noe Faithe / noe trust / I am a Reprobate like Caine / or Judas / whoo casting away all hope of mercie / fell into dispayre

and

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and my Freindes doe mee greate wronge / that they suffer mee not to goo to the place of misbeleevers / as I iustlye deservue / there they began sharpelye to rebuke him / requiring / and charging him in any Case he did not violate the mercie of God / To w[hi]ch he saide / the mercie of God is exceedinglye large / and extends to all the Heart / but not to mee no[r] any like mee whoe are sealed to it I tell you I deserue it mine owne Conscience co[n]demneth mee no[r] needeth any other Iudge / Christ came (said they) to take away Sinne / and calling for A Booke they read to him Conc[er]ning the passion of Christ / and Coming to his nayling on [th]e Cross Spira said this indeed is Comfortable to such as are elected / but as for mee wretch / nothing but greif and torm[en]ts / because I co[n]temned them /

Thus roaring w[i]th Feares / and tossing himselfe vpp and downe vpon the bedd / as he laye / intreated them to read noe more /

As Gribaldus was coming to see him Vergerius said to Spira deare Sir/ heere is docto[r] Gribaldus / a Godlie and Faithfull Freinde of yo[ur]s / he is Come to see you / he is wellcome (quoth he) but hee shall finde mee ill / Gribaldus replied S[i]r this is but an illusion of [th]e devill / whoe doth what he can to Vexe you / but turne you to God / w[i]th yo[ur] whole hearte and he is readye to showe you mercie / The Earthe you knowe is full of his mercie / It is hee as hath said / as often as A Sinner repents of his Sinne / he will rem[em]ber his Sinnes noe more /

Consid[er] his in the Exa[m]ple of Peter / that was Christs Familiar and an Apostle / and yett denied him thrice / w[i]th au[n] oathe / and yett God was mercifull to him

Consider the Theiffe / that spent his whole liffe wickedlye / and Yett for all that / did God graciouslie aaccept^h respect him in the last minute of his life / As [th]e Lords hand now shortened [tha]t it Caunst saue /

[*Left margin:*Luke: 22: 6: /] To this Spira au[n]swered / if Peter greiued and repented / it was because Christ had pittie vpo[n] him / and he wept because Christ beheld him w[i]th A mercifull Eye / and in [tha]t hee was p[ar]doned / it was not because he wept / but because God was gracious to him / but God wept not mee / and soe I am not A whitt moved / neither can I weepe / & soe I am a Reprobate / I feelee noe Comfort that can enter into my harte / there is noe place there / but only for Torm[en]t and vexinge of Spiretts / I tell you my Case is p[ro]perlye mine owne / noe man was ever in the like plight / and soe myne estate is fearefull /

[*Left margin:*Heb: 10: 3] Then roaring out in the bitterness of his Spiritt / he said itt is A Fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God /

[*Left margin:*Math: 10: 33: /] The violence of his passio[n] & actio[n] sutable did amaze manye of the beholders / In soe much [tha]t some of the said w[i]th a whisperinge voyce that he was possessed / hee overhearing it saide / doe you yett doubt of it / I haue A whole Legion of devilles / [tha]t take vpp their dwellings in mee / and possesse mee as their owne / and

iustlie too / For I haue deny ed Christ / whether did you that willinglie / or noe / said they /
That is nothing to the Purpose / said Spira / Christ saidd-whoever soever denied mee before
men / him will I denye before my Father

Christ will not be denied / noe / not in word / and soe it is enough if in harte I never denied
him /

They obserued much of his distemp[er] / from the horro[r]s / and sense of the Paines of
Hell / They asked him whether he thought there were worse paines than he endured for the
p[re]sent / he said that he knewe there were farre worse paines than those that he hadd then
suffer for the wicked shall arise to their Iudgm[en]t / but they shall not be

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able to stand in their Iudgm[en]t / this I tremble to thinke of / yet doe I desire nothing more
than at the length I might come to the place / where I might be sure to feelee the worst / & soe
be freed fro[m] fears of worst to come /

Oh / but you ought to consider (said one) that those opinions / for w[hi]ch you were accused
before the Legate / were impious / and soe you are not to thinke [tha]t thereby you denied
Christ / but rather that you confessed him and acknowledged ~~him~~ the infalliable Truth of the
Catholique church Truelye said he when I denied those opynions / I did thinke them to be
true / and yett I did deny them / Goe too saide they / now beleue that they are true / Now
I cannot (said he) God will not suffer me to beleue them / nor trust in his mercie / what
would you haue of me I would faine attaine to that power / but cannot / thoughe I should be
p[re]sentlye burned for it

But whie doe you (said they) esteeme this soe greivous A Sinne / when as the learned
Legate constrained you to it / w[hi]ch hee surelye would never haue do[n]e / if yo[u]r former
opynions had not bene erroneious / Noe good Frauncis the devine besotted you / lett not the
greivousnes of Sinne / if any such bee amaze you /

[*Right margin:* Rom: 9: 13:] You saie right (replyed hee) the divell hath possessed mee/ and
God hath lett mee to his power / for he said I neither can believe the Gospell / nor trust in
his mercie / I haue Sinned against the holye Ghost and God / by his imutable decree / hath
bound mee over to p[er]petuall Punishm[en]t / w[i]thout anye hope of pardon / It is true [tha]t
greatnes of Sinne / nor the multitude of them / can binde Gods mercyes / for if A man be
elected / thoughe guiltie of never soe manye Sinnes / hee is notw[i]thstanding blessed / and
if A man be A Reprobate though he comitte fewer Sinnes / yett shall he be damned ever for
them / all they did not soe much trouble mee / for I trusted [tha]t God would not laye tham
to my Chardge / but nowe hauing against the holye Ghoste / God hath taken awaye from
mee / all power of Repentau[n]ce / & now brings all my Sinnes / to my remembrau[n]ce / and
thus guiltie of one guiltie of all / and therefore / it is noe matter / whether my Sinnes be great
or small / fewe or manye / they are such as neither Christs blood nor Gods mercie belongs
to mee / God will haue mercie on who[m] he will haue mercie / and one whom he will / he
hardeneth / this is that gnawes my harte / he hath hardened / I saye that he doth daylye more
and more harden mee / and therefore I tell you [tha]t there was never such A Monster as I
am / never was man soe liue A Spectacle or soe exceeding miserye

I know the doctrine of Iustificac[i]on by Christ / and I denyed & abiured it to be the Ende that I might keepe this frayle liffe from adversitie / and my Children from Povertie / and nowe behold howe bitter this life is to mee / and God onely knowes what shall become of this my Familie / but surely noe good is like to betide it / but rather daylie worse / and worse / and such A Ruine / as at the lengthe one stone shall not be lefte vppon another /

But whie should you onely (said Gribaldus) conceue soe deeply of yo[u]r Sinne / seeing you cannot choose but know / that many haue denied th-Christe / yett never fell into dispayre

Well (answered hee) I can see noe ground of Comforte for

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such as neither can I warrant them / from this revenginge wrath thoughe it please God yett to suffer such to be in peace / and besydes there will A tyme Come of change / and then they shalbee truelye tryed / and if it were not thus / yett God is wise in makinge mee an example to others / and I cannot iustlye Complaine / for he will haue mercye / on whom he will / it is his hidden p[ro]vidence / and whoe can oppose it / There is noe punishm[en]t soe greate / but I haue defended it / for this soe heynous offence / I assure you it is noe small matter to denye Christ /and yett it is more ordinarye and Comon / then men do conseve of it / it is not onely A denyall / or abiurac[i]on before A magistrate as it is w[i]th mee / for as often as A Christian doth but dissemble the knowne truthe / soe often as hee approued of false worshipp / by p[re]senting himselfe at it / soe often as he doth thinges as are vnworthie of his Callinge / Soe often denieth he Christ / thus did I / and therefore am I iustlye punished for it

yo[u]r Estate (quoth Gribaldus) is not soe strong as you make it / Iob was soe farre gone as he complained / that God had sett him as A marke to shoote at / and davyd that was A man after Gods owne harte / Complained often that God had forsaken him / and was become his Enemie / yett both receyved Comforte againe/ Comforte yo[u]r selfe therefore / God will come at lengthe / thoughe nowe hee seeme a farr of / Oh Brother au[n]swered Spira I beleuee all this the devilles believe and tremble / but dayvid was ever elected / and dearelye beloued thoughe hee fell / yett God never tooke awaye his Spirritt / and soe was heard when hee prayed / Lord take not thy holye Spirritt fro[m] mee / but I am in another Case / being ever accused fro[m] the prescence of God / neither can I praye as hee did / because his holye Spirritt is quite gone / and cannot be recalled / and soe I knowe I shall liue in continuall hardness / soe longe as I live / O [tha]t I maye feele the least sense of the Loue of God to mee / thoughe for A small moment as nowe I feele his heavye wrathe / w[hi]ch burneth like the Torments of Hell in mee / and afflicts my Conscience with Pangs intollerable / verilye desperac[i]on is hell itselfe /

Heere Gribaldus saide / I doe verilye hope Spira that hathinge soe severelye Chastised you in this liffe / Corrects you heere in mercie that he maye spare you heere after / and that he hath mercies sealed vpp for you against tyme to Come

Naye heeye doe I knowe said Spira / that I am A Reprobate / because hee afflicts mee w[i]th hardnes of harte / O that my Bodye had suffered all my liffe longe / soe that he would be pleased to release my Soule / and ease this burthened Conscience

Gribaldus being desirous to ease his mynde / from continuall meditac[i]on from his Sinne / and allsoe to sound how far the p[re]sent hee stood affected to the opynions of the Romish

Churche / asked him w[ha]t he thought because of the Soules of men / soe soone as he dep[ar]ted out of the Bodye / to w[hi]ch he a[n]swe[r]ed / allthough this be nott soe fullye reasolved in the Scriptures / yett I verelie believe that the Soules of the Electe goe p[re]sentlie to the Kingdome of Glorie (as some ymagine) verye well said one of the Spectato[r]s / when the Scriptures the[n] say that God bringeth downe to Hell / and rayseth vpp / seeing it cannott be meante of the State of the Soules after deathe / w[hi]ch as thou sayest either goeth to heaven w[i]thout Change / or to hell w[i]thout redempc[i]on it might be needs be vnderstood of the estate of the Soules in this life / like that where in thou arte at this p[re]sentsent / and often tymes wee see

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that god suffereth men / to fall into the lawes of dispayre / and yet rayseth them vp againe / and therefore dispayre not / but hope it shall be ever thus with thee in his good tyme /

This is the worke / this is the Labor / for I tell you / when I at Venice did first abiure my profession / and soe as it were drewe an Ind[ic]tm[en]t the Spiritt of God after admonished mee / and when at Cistadella / I did as it were sett to my Seale / the suggested mee doe not write / Spira doe not seale it yett I resisted the holye Ghost / and did both / and at that verye p[re]sentsent I did evidentlie feelee a wound inflicted my very will / soe as thouge I saye I would believe / yett I cannot saye I will believe / and it befalls mee in this my miserable Estate / as one that is fast in Irons / and his Friendes Coming to see him / doe pittie his Estate / and doe p[er]suade him to shake of his Fetters / and to come out of Bonds / w[hi]ch he would faine doe but cannot / This is my very case you p[er]suade mee to beleue / howe faine would I doe it / but I cannot / Oh noe / I cannot / Then violentlie graspinge his hands together / and raysing vpp himselfe / Behold saide he I am stronge / yett by little and little / I consume / and decaye / and my Servants would faine pre serue this wearie liffe / but at length the will of God must bee donee / and I shall perrishe miserablie as I deserue /

Reioyce you righteous in the Lord blessed are you whose hearthe the Lord hath mollified

Then after some Pause he said / It is wonderfull I earnestlie desire to praye unto God w[i]th my harte / yett I cannot / I see my damnac[i]on / and I knowe my remedie is onely in Christ / yett I cannot sett my selfe to laye hold on him / such are the Punishm[en]ts of the damned / they confesse what I confesse they emulate yea envye [th]e Electe / yett their repentance doth them noe good / for th[e]y can[n]ot mend their wayes / As he was thus speaking he obserued divers Flyes that came about him / and some lighted on him / behold saithe hee nowe allsoe Beelzebub comes to this banquet you shall shortlye see myne ende / and in mee an example to manye / of the Iustice and Iudgm[en]t of God / About this tyme came in two B[isho]pps w[i]th divers Scholars of the Vniversitie / one of them being Paulus Vergerius / having observed Spira more then anye other / being continuallie conversant w[i]th him told him that his estate was such as rather stood in need of prayer than of Advise / and therefore desired him to praye w[i]th him in the Lords Prayer / Spira consented and began Our father which arte in heaven Then breaking Forthe into Teares hee stopped But they saide /it is well yo[u]r greiffe is A good signe / I bewayle saith he my miserye / for I p[er]ceave I am forsaken of God / and cannot call to him in my harte / as I was wont to doe / Lett vs goe on said Vergerius Thy kingdome come / O Lord (said Spira) bring mee allsoe into this Kingdome / I beseech thee shutt mee not out / Then coming to thes word[s] Giue us this daye our dalye bread / hee

added / O Lord I enoughe and abundance to feed this karcase of myne / but there is another bread / I humblie crave the bread of thy Grace / w[i]thout w[hi]ch I knowe I am but A dead man / Lead us not into Temptac[i]on / Seeing O Lord I am brought into Temtac[i]on helpe mee Lord that at length I may escape the Enemie hath ou[er]come / helpe me I beseech thee to ou[er]come [th]e cruell Tyrant

Theis thinges hee spake w[i]th A mournfull voyce / [th]e teares trickling downe abundantlye and expressing such affecc[i]on and passion as

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that turned over the bowels of those there p[re]sent with greiffe & Compassion / they then turning to Spira said / you knowe that none can call Christ Iesus (lord) but by the holye Ghost / you must therefore thinke of yo[u]r selfe according to that affectio[n] w[hi]ch you expresse in yo[u]r Prayers informing thereby that God hath not bereaved you of his Spiritt vtt[er]lye I p[er]ceaeue I call on him to my eternall damnac[i]on for I tell you againe It is a newe and vnheard of example [tha]t you finde in mee / If Iudas (said they) had but lived his dayes / w[hi]ch by nature he might haue done / he might haue repented / and Christ would haue receaued him to mercye and yet he sinned most greuouslye against his master / w[hi]ch did soe much esteeme of him / as to honor him / w[i]th the degree of Apostle & did maineteyne and feed him / he au[n]swered Christ did allsoe feede and honor mee / neither is yett my Fault one Iott lesse / then that of his / because it is not more honor to bee p[er]sonally p[resen]te w[i]th Christ in the Flesh then to be in his p[resen]ce by the illuminac[i]on of the holye Spiritt / & besides I denye that even Iudas could haue repented / howe long soe eu[er] he had liued / for grace was quite taken fro[m] him / as it is nowe fro[m] mee /

Oh Spira saide they you know you are in a Spirituall disserc[i]on you must not beleeeve what the deville suggests / he was ever A Lye[r] fro[m] the beginning / and A meere Impostor / and will Cast a Thousand lyinge Fancies into yo[u]r mynde / to beguyle you withall / you must watch believe those whom you Iudge to bee in a good estate / and more able to discern of you then yo[u]rselfe / Believe vs saide they / and wee will tell you / God will be mercifull vnto you / Oh heere is the knott said Spira / I would I could beleeeue / but I cannot / then he begann to reckon vpp what fearefull dreames and Visions he was co[n]tinually troubled w[i]thall / that he sawe devilles come flocking into his Cha[m]ber and about his Bedd / terrifying him w[i]th strange noyses / that these were not fancies / but that he sawe them as reallye as he sawe [th]e standers / and besydes these outward terrors / he felt continuallye A wracking torture of his mynde / and a continuall butcherie of his Confidence / being the verye p[ro]per pangs of the damned wights in hell / Cast of these Fancies (said Gribaldus) these are but illusions / hu[m]ble yo[u]r selfe in the p[re]sence of God / & prayse him / the dread prayse not [th]e Lord au[n]swered hee nor they that goe downe into the Pitt / what Hell can bee worse then desperac[i]on / or what greater punishm[en]t then the gnawing worme / vnquenchable Fire / Horror Confusion / and w[hi]ch is worst of all desp[er]a c[i]on it selfe continuallye tortures mee / and nowe I cou[n]te my p[rese]nt Estat worse / then if my Soule (dep[ar]ted out of my Bodye) were w[i]th Iudas / and the rest of the damned / and therefore I nowe desire rather to be there / then thus to liue in the Bodye/

One being pr[e]sent rehearsed certaine wordes out of [th]e Psalmes If my children forsake my Lawe / and walke not in my Iudgm[en]t I will visite your transgressions with rodde /

and yo[u]r Iniquity with Stripes / neuerthelesse my Loving kindness will I not vt terlye take from them / nor suffer my Faithfulnes to fayle Marke this Oh Spira / my Covenant will I not breake /

These P[ro]mises said Spira belongs onely to the Electe / which if tempted maye fall into Sinne / but are lifted vpp / and recoiled out as the p[ro]fett speaketh / though he fall / he shall not vtterlye be cast downe for the Lord vpholdeth him / Therefore Peter could rise for he was elected but the Reprobates when they fall cannot rise againe / as appeared in Caine Saule / and Iudas / God dealeth one way w[i]th the Electe / and another w[i]th the reprobate /

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The next daye he prayed with them in the lattaine tongue / & w[i]th excellent affection as outwardlye appeareth / Blessed be God (sayde Vergerius) these are noe signes of eternall Reprobate[i]o[n] you must Oh Spira seeke out the Secrett Counsell of Gods Elect[i]on and rebroate[i]on / for noe man can knowe soe longe as hee liveth / whether by his good or Badd deeds / he be worthie of Gods loue or ange[r] doe you not knowe that the P[ro]phett david co[m]plained that God cast off his Soule /

I know all this / I knowe the mercies of God are infinite / and doe surpasse the Sinnes of the whole world / and that they are effec tuall to all that believe / But this Faithe and Hope is the guifte of God / Oh that he would giue it to mee / but it is impossible for me to beleeeve as {} to drinke vpp the Sea at a draught / as for that of Salomon if he had ever tried [tha]t w[hi]ch I nowe feelee by woefull experience / hee would never haue spoken as he did but the Truth is never had mortall man such an evident experience of Gods au[n]ger & hatred against him as I haue / you [tha]t are in A good estate thinke repentaunce and Faith to bee A worke of greate Facilitie / and therefore you thinke it an Easie matter to p[er]suade A man to beleeeve the whole needs not A Phisic[i]o[n] / and he that is well can give Cou[n]sell easelye to him that is ill / but this Hell to mee / my hearte is hardened I can not beleeeve / manye are called / but fewe are chosen /

Vpon what ground doe you conceave soe ill an opynion of yo[u]r selfe / saide Vergerius /

I once (said hee) did knowe God to be my Father / not onely by Creat[i]on / but by regenerat[i]on / I knowe him by his belouued Sonne the author and Finisher of our Salvat[i]on I could praye to him and hope to haue p[ar]don of Sinnes / fro[m] him I had A tast of his Sweetnes peace / and Comforte / now co[n]trarilye I know not God as a Fath[e]r but as an Enemy / what more my harte hates God / and seekes to be aboute him / I haue nothing left to flye to but Terror & dispaye

Belike you thinke then (said they) that those whoe haue [th]e ^earnest and First Fruits of the Spiritt maye not w[i]thstanding fall away

The Iudgments of God are as a deepe Abyss wee are soone drowned if wee enter into them / he that thinketh hee standeth lett him take heed least he fall / as for my Selfe I knowe [tha]t I am fall-fallen backe / and that I did once knowe the Truth / though it be not soe throughlye / for if I had beene one of you / I had continued w[i]th you / I knowe not else what to saye but that I am one of [tha]t no[m]ber w[hi]ch God hath threatened to teares in Peeces

Naye not soe au[n]swered they / for God maye come though at the last houre / keepe hold therefore / at the least by Faythe hope

This is my Case I tell you I cannot / God hath deprived of hop this brings terror to my mynde / & pineth [th]e body w[hi]ch now is soe weake / that it cannot performe [th]e severall offices thereof / for as [th]e elect haue the spiritt testifyinge that they are the Sonnes of God / Soe the Reprobate even whilst they liue doe often feelee A worme in their Conscience / where by they are condemned already And therefore soe soone as I p[er]ceaued this wound inflicted on my mynde & will / I know that I wanted the guifte of saving Grace / and that I was vtterlye vndone / God Chastizeth his Children w[i]th temporarie Correct[i]o[n]s

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that they maye come as gold out of the Fire / but punisheth the wicked w[i]th blindnes in their Vnderstanding / and hardnes of heart / and woe to such / fro[m] whence God takes his Holye Spiritt

Here one rebuking him / told him that he gaue to muche Creditt to sense / that he was not to beleeeve him selfe/ but rath[e]r him [tha]t was in a good estate / and I testifie to you said hee / [tha]t God will be mercyfull to you /

Nowe aunswered Spira for because I am in this euill estate therefore can I beleeeve nothing / but what is Contrarye to my Salvation / and Conscience / but you are confident of yo[u]r good Estate / looke that it be true / for it is noe small matter to bee assured of sinceritie a man had neede to be exceeding stronglye grou[n]ded in the truthe / before hee can be able to affirme such A matter as you nowe doe / It is not the p[er]formance of A Few outward duties / but a mightie constant labour / w[i]th all the intention both of the hearte & affectio[n] / w[i]th full desire and endeavo[u]r continuallye to sett for the the glory of God / there must be neither feare of Legate Inquisito[r]s prisons / or any deathe whatsoever / manye thinke themselves happye [tha]t are not / It is not everye one that saithe Lord Lord shall goe to heaven /

They Came another daye / and found him with his Eyes shutt as if he had bine drowsie / and verye loath to discourse / at w[hi]ch tyme all soe there came in A verye grave man / whoe demaunded of Spira whether he knew him or not / he lifted vpp his Eyes & not sudenlye remembring him / the Man said to him I am Presbiter Anthony Hortimna / I was w[i]th you at Venice some Eight weekes sithence /

O cursed daye (said Spira) Oh cursed daye / O that I nev[er] had come thither / would to God I had then dyed / after came in A Preist called Barnardinus Cardomus bringing w[i]th him A booke of Exorcisnes to Comiure this devill / who[m] when Spira sawe shaking his Stave / hee saide I am p[er]suaded verilye indeed / [tha]t God hath left mee to [th]e power of the devill / but such they are as they are not to be found in yo[u]r Letanie / neither will they be cast out by Spells

The Preist proceeding in his intended purpose w[i]th A strange vncouth gesture / and loud voyce abiured the Spiritt to come into Spiras tongue / and au[n]swere / Spira deridinge his fruitles lab[o]r turned from him

A Bishopp being there p[re]sent said to Spira Brother God hath put vertue into the word and Sacram[en]t / and wee haue [th]e one meance and finde not that effecte w[hi]ch wee desire /

shall wee trye [the]e effecacie of the Sacrament / surelye if you take it as a true Christia[n] ought to receaue the Bodye and bloud of Christ it will p[ro]ue a sou[er]aigne medicine for A Sicke Soule

This I cannot doe (answeared hee) for those [tha]t haue noe right to the p[ro]mises / haue noe right to the Soales / the Eucharist was ap pointed onely for Beleuiers / If we haue noe Faithe / wee eate & drinke damnation to our selves / about a monthe sithence I re ceaved it / but I did not well in the doinge / for I tooke it in co[n]straint and soe I tooke it to my deper Condemnac[i]on

Here Vergerius began to importe earnestlye to beware that he did not willfullye reiect grace / and put himselfe out of heaven / Charging him vehementlye by the loue that was betweene them / by all the Love [tha]t he bare to his Children / yea to his owne soule

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that he would seriouslye sett him selfe to retourne to that Faith & hope w[hi]ch once he had in the death of Christ / w[hi]ch manye suche like wordes Spira having heard much of the like matter formerlye & being moved some what saide /

you doe but repeate (Vergerius) what should I hope / whye should I beleeeve / God hath taken away Faith fro[m] mee / show mee the[n] whe[re] then I maye goe / show mee A heaven wherevnto I maye retire / you tell mee of Gods mercie / when God hath cast mee of / you tell mee of Christs intercession / and I haue denyed him / you comaund mee to be leeeve / I saye I cannot / you bringe mee noe Comforte / yo[u]r Comfort is as impossible to mee / as to keepe the morall Lawe If you p[er]swade me to loue God w[i]th all my harte Soule and strength / and God giues mee not the Power / Can I p[er]forme yo[u]r desire / doth not the Psalmist say / teach vs to loue thy Comau[n]d[m]ents Hypocrites saye / they loue God w[i]th all their hartes / but they lye for for my part I will not lye / but tell you planelye such is my Case / that though you should never soe much importune mee to hope or beleeeve (though I desire it) yett I cannot for God (as a puni shm[en]t for my misdeeds) hath taken away from mee all savinge graces/ Faithe / Hope / and all / I am not the man you take me for / belike you thinke I delight in this Estate / If I doe knowe Vergerius / that if you could but p[er]ceiue the least sparke of hope in my harte / of a better Estate hereafter / I would not refuse to endure the wrathe of God for A Thousand yeeres / soe that I maye attone to the Ende of this miserie / w[hi]ch I knowe nowe will be eternall But I tell you my will is wounded whoe longs more to beleieue then I doe / but all [th]e grou[n]d worke of my hope{ } is gone quite / for if the Testimonie of the holye Scripture be true / as they are most certainlye true / is not this as true / whosover denyeth mee before men / him will denye before my Father which is in heaven is not this Prop[er]lye my Case as if he had bine purposelye intended against this p[er]son of myne / and I praye what shall become of them that Christ denyeth / seing there in noe other name vnder heaven by w[hi]ch wee maye bee saved / nor saithe the Epistle to the Hebrews It is impossible for those [tha]t were enlightened once / and haue tasted of the heavenlye guifte & haue bine p[ar]takers of the holye Ghost if they fall awaye to be renewed by repentance / what can be more plaine against mee / is not [tha]t Scripture allsoe / if we Sinne willinglye after wee haue receaud the knowledge of the Truth there remains noe more Sacrifice for Sinne / but certaine looking for Iudgm[en]t / the Scriptures speake of mee Paule mentions mee / Peter telles mee it had bine better I had not knowne the waye of righteousnes /

then after I haue knowne it to turne from the holye Comandm[en]ts / I had bine better I had not knowne it / yett my Condemnac[i]on had bine most certaine / doe you not see evidentlye that I whoe haue willfullye denyed the knowne truth maye not onlye expect (and that iustlie) damnac[i]on / but worse if w[o]rse maye bee Imagined / god will haue mee vndergoe this Iust punishm[en]t of my Sinne / and make mee an example of his wrathe for yo[u]r sake/

The Companye p[re]sent admiring this discou[r]se of his accusing him selfe of his Forepassed liffe / Soe gravelye and wiselye debatinge it concerning the Iudgm[en]t / that possessed him/ and being as it were in admirac[i]on of his Estate Spira proceeded againe in this manner

Take good heed to yo[u]r selves / it is noe light matter to be a Christi[an] it is not Baptism / reading of the Scriptures / or bousting of the Faithe that is in Christ (thoughe even these are good) that can proue one to be

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an absoute Christian / you knowe what I saide before / there must be a conformitie of liffe / a Christian must be stronge / inconquer{ }able not carrying an obscure p[ro]fession / but resolute expressing the Image of Christ / and holding out against all opposic[i]ons to the last breath / you must quit all dilligence by righteousnes and holynesse to make this calling and election sure / manye there be that snatche at the p[ro]mises of the Ghospell / Tis if they did vndoubtedlye belonge vnto them / and yett they remaine sluggish & Careless / and being flattered by [th]e things of this p[re]sent worlde / they passe on their Cou[r]se in quietnesse & securitie as if they were the onlye happie men / whom neverthesse the lord in his p[ro]vidence hath ordeyned to eternall wrathe / as you maye see in St Lukes gospell of the Riche man / thus it was w[i]th mee therefore take heed

Then came one of his Nephewes / and offered him some sustenance / w[hi]ch he disdained fullye refusing / soe moved the young mans Choller that he charged him w[i]th hypocrisie & dissimulatc[i]on or Fre[n]zie /

To whom Spira grauelye answeringe / said youj maye interprett the matter as you will / but I am sure I am not onlye the Actor of this Tragidie / I would it were Frenzie either fancied or true / for if it were fancies I could putt it of at pleasure / if it were of reall Frensie / yett there were some hope of Gods mercie / whereas now I knowe what God hath p[ro]mised mee an Enemye / and guiltie of high treaso[n] against his ma[jes]tye / I am A cast awaye / A Vessell of wrathe / yet dare you call it dissembling and Frenzie / and can mocke at the Formidable Example of the heavye wrathe of God / I should teache you Feare & terror / but it is naturall to the Fleshe / either out of mallice or or ignorance to speake p[er]verslye of the workes of god / the natu[r]all man p[er]ceaveth not the thinges of God / because they are spirrituall discerned

How can it bee / saide Gribaldus) that you can thus excellentlye discourse of the Iudgm[en]te of God / and of the grace of his holy spirrit that you find A Wante of them (take this for c[er]taine (saith he) I want the mayne Grace of all / and that w[hi]ch is absolutelye necessary and good doth often sinned extort most true and strange testimonyes of his ma[jes]tyes Iustice and mercye / yea out of the mouthes of verye Reprobates / for even Iudas after he had wickedlye betrayed his Lord and master / was constrayned to confesse his Sinne / and to

uistifie the Innocencie of Christ / and therefore if I doo [th]e like it is noe strange matter / God hath taken Faithe from mee / & left mee the other guifts for my greater Condemnac[i]on

By howe much the more I remember what I had / & heare others discourse of what they haue / by soe much is my Torment the more / that I know that I wante / and knowe that there is noe waye / to be releived

This spake hee / the Teares all the while trickling downe pro fessing that his panghs were suche / as that the damned wights in Hell indurd not the like miserye / that his Estate was worse then Caine and Iudas / and therefore hee desired to dye / yett beholde (saithe hee) the Scriptures accomlisht in mee / and death shall flye from them / and verilye hee seemed exceedinglye / to feare least his life should be drawne out to A longer Thread / and finding neither Ease / nor rest / ever anone crying out O miserable wretche then turning to the Companie he besought them in this manner

Oh Brethren take diligent heed to yo[u]r liffe / make more

accompt

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accompt of the guifts of Gods spiritt then I haue done / learne to beware my miserye / thinke not that you are assured Christians because you vnderstand some thinges of the Ghospell / take heed you growe not secure /vpo[n] that ground be constant and moueable in [th]e maintenance of yo[u]r p[ro]fession / confesse Christ even vnto deathe if you be called thereto / He that loves Father / mother / Sister / Brother Sonnes / daughters / kindred / Houses / Landes / more then Christ is not worthie of him

These wordes / as said they / doe not sound as A Wicked Reprobate I doe herein but imitate the Riche Glutton (said Spira) whoe thoughe in Hell / yett was carefull that his Brethren should not come into the place of Torm[en]t / and I saye to you Brethren take heed of this miserable Estate wherein I am / lett the Epistles of Peter be never out of yo[u]r myndes / some places maye seeme to be darke / but verye fewe / for Christ p[ro]mised him the keyes / meaning his spiritt whereby he should enter into / And disclose the secrett Cou[n]sells of God / And then turning himselfe to certayne young men that were p[rese]nte he desired them to conceave him aright / I doe not speake this to derogate from the Certaintie of saving Faithe{ } and the p[ro]misses of the Ghospell for they are most sure / but take heed for relying vpon that Faithe that workes not an holye and vnblameable liffe / worthie of A Beleiu[er] Creditt mee I will saye I haue tryed it / I p[re]sume I had gotten the right Faithe / I preached it to others / I had all places of Scripture that might support it as I thoughte my selfe / and in the meane tyme livinge impiouslye and carelesslye / behold howe the Iudgm[en]te of God hath over taking mee / not to Correction / but to Condemnacio[n] and nowe you would haue haue mee to beleive but it will not bee/ for I feele to late that good thinges belongs onelye to such as are good whose sinnes are Covered w[i]th Christs deathe and blood / as with Apparell / and guarded w[i]th his righteous meritts / fro[m] the flood of Gods wrathe / as w[i]th a mightie Wall / least miserable mortalls should be swallowed vpp w[i]th the greatness of their Sinnes / but as for mee I haue willinglye and with myne owne handes as it were haue pulled downe the rampeire behinde w[hi]ch I might haue rested in safetie / and nowe are the swellinge waters even come into my Soule and I am cast awaye

One of his Freindes cha[n]ced to saye that certainelye he was overcome of Melanchollye / w[hi]ch being overheard / Spira said well bee it soe / for thus allsoe is gods wrathe manifested against mee / in that he hath taken awaye fro[m] mee the vse of myne vndersta[n]ding and reason soe as I can neither rightlie Esteeme nor Iudge of my distemper / nor hope for remedie / you see brethren what A daungerous thing it is to stoppe or staye in things that concerne gods glorie / especiallye to dissemble vpo[n] anye Tearmes w[ha]t A fearefull thinge it is to be neere and almost A christian / never was the like example to this of myne / and therefore if you be wise you will seriouslye consider / Oh that God would lett loose his hand from mee / that it were w[i]th mee as in tymes past / I would scorne the threats of the most cruell Tyrants beare torment / w[i]th invin[c]able resoluc[i]ons / and glorie in the outward p[ro]fession of Christ / till I were cloaked in the Flame / and my Bodye turned into ashes /

you saye you are deperate (said some) Oh Spira whye doe you not strive w[i]th some weapon or other to make an End of yo[u]r liffe / as desperate men vse to doe / lett mee haue A sword (said Spira)

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whye what will you with it (said they) I cannot tell (said he) what this minde would moue { } mee too / vpo[n] occasion / what I would doe they perceiving small effect of all this their labour / but rather that he grow worse / for avoyding recou[r]se of people (for eu[er]y day seldom fewer then Twentie continued w[i]th him) and to stoppe the Course of fame which was continuallie blowne abroade of him / they concluded to carrye him backe againe into his owne Cou[n]try / and those his freinds that came to comforte him began to take their leaves of him Vergerius amongst the rest required that at their p[ar]tinge they might praye together w[i]th him /

Spira hardlye consented / and as vnwillinglie performed / he saide my harte is estranged fro[m] God / I cannot call him Father fro[m] my harte / all good motions and inclinac[i]ons are nowe quite gone / my harte is full of maledic[i]on hatred and blasphemie against God I finde I growe more and more hardened in harte / and cannot hee[lp] helpe my selfe / nowe stopp yo[u]r Prayers for mee / they shall turne to yo[u]r benefitt they can doe mee noe good / Vergerius came to take his leave of him / whom Spira imbracinge saide / allthoughe I knowe that nothing can bringe anye benefitt to me A Reprobate but that eu[er]y thing shall turne to my deepe damnac[i]on yet I giue you hartye thanks for yo[u]r kinde office of loue / and goodness / and the Lorde turne it to you w[i]th A plentifull increase of good

The next daye being brought to his intended Iourney by the waye looking rou[n]d about him w[i]th a gastlie looke he saw a knife lying vpo[n] the table / to w[hi]ch he runned hastilye caught hold of it as intending to mischeiffe himselfe / but his Friends laying hold of him stopped him in his purpose / wherevpon in Indignac[i]on he saide / I woulde I were above God for I knowe he will haue noe mercie on mee /

Thus went he homewards sayinge often that hee Envied the Condi[i]on of Caine and Iudas / he lay about 8: weekes in this case in continuall burning / neither desiring nor receaving any thinge but by Force / and that w[i]thout disgestio[n] / Soe spent he appeared A perfect Anatomye / expressing to the veiwe nothinge but veines and synewes / vehementlye raging for drinke / and pineing yet fearing to live longe / dreadful of Hell / yet coveting deathe /

in continuall Torment / yet his owne Tormentor / and thus co[n]suming himselfe w[i]th
greiff / horror / impatience / and dispayre / living A liuinge Man in hell / hee rep[re]sented
an extraordinary exaple of the Iustice and Power of God / Thus (as farre as appeareth) within
fewe dayes after his arrivall at his owne home he dep[ar]ted this pr[e]sent liffe /

[*Left margin: flower motif*] Lett this be an occasion to make us remember that secrett things
belong to God / but charitye to man / to teach him to hope all things

Finnis

Other manuscript witnesses

- Bodleian Library, MS Eng. hist. d. 92, ff. 38r–59v
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.248, ff. 11r–30r

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/BaconRelationDesperateEstateFrancisSpira.html>