

exemplified in Spira's story and evoked by Bolton, and Satan's experience as this is powerfully presented by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, particularly in the soliloquies in which Satan reveals the personal, subjective dimension of his existence. I shall quote briefly from these very well known speeches, just to identify key points:

... horror and doubt distract
His troubl'd thoughts, and from the bottom stirr
The Hell within him, for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more then from himself can fly
By change of place: Now conscience wakes despair
That slumberd, wakes the bitter memorie
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse;...

Ay me, they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vaine,
Under what torments inwardly I groane:
...

I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries; all good to mee becomes
Bane, and in Heav'n much worse would be my state.²¹

In *Christian Doctrine* Milton treated apostasy almost in passing, in Book II, Chapter 6, which is headed 'On Zeal', although he gave very detailed treatment earlier in the work to two central aspects of apostasy, that of reprobation and the experience or condition of 'hardening of heart'. The importance of his specific inclusion of the topic at this point in the work lies in how he defines it; apostasy is, together with 'Concealment of religion' (as exemplified by Nicodemus) and the 'Profession of one's faith at the wrong time', classified as the *opposite* to a 'firm and, when necessary, open profession of the true religion', which he understands to include a willingness to accept martyrdom.²² Milton is, in other words, emphasising the social and political dimensions of religious experience and the potential for conflict between the individual and state power over matters of belief. He is, furthermore, indicating that in such a conflict one's conviction of the truth must take precedence over all other considerations. In doing this Milton is undoubtedly, as I think it proper to claim for Bacon, assuming a certain quality of character, what Christopher Hill has described as 'an arrogant individualism, a self-confidence tempered by a strong internalized moral sense, the product almost certainly of his Puritan