

his Bed, terrifying him with strange noises; that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by: and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his mind, and a continual butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper pangs of the damned wights in Hell.⁴

Bolton's description of the condition of those experiencing the anger or judgement of God elaborates vividly what Bacon calls the 'racking torture of mind':

Alas! When a poor polluted wretch, upon some special illumination by the word, or extraordinary stroke from the rod, doth once begin to behold Gods frowning face against him, in the pure glass of his most holy law; and to feele divine justice by an invisible hand, taking secret vengeance upon his conscience; his heaive heart immediately *melts* away in his breast, and *becomes as water*. He faints and failes, both in the strength of his body, and stoutnesse of his mind. His bones, the Pillars and master-timber of his earthly tabernacle, are presently *broken* in pieces, and turn'd into *rottenesse*: His spirit the eye and excellency of his soule, which should enlighten and make lightsome the whole man, is quite put out, and utterly overwhelmed with excesse of horroure and flashes of despaire. O this is it, which would not onely crush the courage of the stoutest sonne of *Adam*, that ever breathed upon earth; but even breake the back of the most glorious Angell, that did ever shine in heaven, should he lift up but one rebellious thought against his Creator!...

This extreamest of miseries, a *wounded spirit* is tempered with such strong ingredients of extraordinary fears that it makes a man a terrour to *himselfe*, and to *all his friends*... Besides the insupportable burthen of too many true and causefull terrors, it fills his darke and dreadfull fancy with a world of fained horrors, gastly apparitions, and imaginary hells, which not-with-standing, have reall stings, and impresse true tortues upon his trembling and wofull heart. It is empoysoned with such restlesse anguish, and desperate paine, that though life be most sweet, and hell most horrible, yet it makes a man wilfully to abandon the one, and willingly to embrace the other, that he may be rid of it's rage. Hence it was, that *Judas* preferred an halter and hell, before his present horror. That *Spira* said often (what heart quakes not to hear it?) that he envied *Cain*, *Saul*, and *Judas*: wishing rather any of their rooms, in the dungeon of the damned, than to have his poore heart so rent in pieces with such raging terrors and fiery desperations upon his bed of death... None can take the true estimate of this immeasurable spiritual misery, but hee that can comprehend the length and breadth of that infinite unresistable wrath which once implacably kindled in the bosome of God, burnes to the very bottom of hell, and there creates the extremity and endlessnesse of all those unexpressible torments, and fiery plagues, which afflict the devils and damned soules in that horrible pit.⁵

It is important to regard this description not as the simple assertion of theological commonplaces but as drawing upon direct experience of others' desperation which occurred together with the conviction that they were no longer among the elect and that God had entirely withheld his grace from them. When Bacon comments on the value of 'Extraordinary Examples of Divine Justice', saying that *Spira's* experience must warn us 'to take heed of backsliding... and not to dally with consciencé, an Hell on Earth, if justly incensed; more to be feared than the Spanish Inquisition', and hopes