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THE NEW ATLANTIS OF FRANCIS BACON

by

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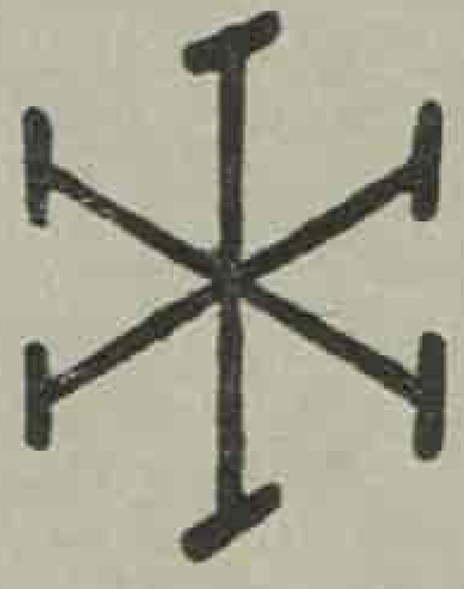

New Atlantis Foundation

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТСКА БИБЛИОТЕКА
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PREFACE

Dimitrije Mitrinović plainly had Francis Bacon's Utopia in mind when he gave the name of New Atlantis to the school he founded. But two other motives guided his choice of the name, both of which, as it happens, would have had Bacon's sympathetic approval. Bacon, as well as he, turned a searching glance back to the lost Atlantis of Plato. For the author of The Wisdom of the Ancients, more often thought of now as the trumpeter of the new world, had a deep interest in the fables which are the oldest part of our literary inheritance. 'If their age be in question' he writes, 'then their remote antiquity deserves the highest veneration; or, if we consider the form in which their teaching is conveyed, then a fable is as it were a kind of ark in which the most priceless knowledge is wont to be bestowed.' Turning now to the future we find Francis Bacon and Mitrinović united in a common concern. Bacon helped to pioneer the new Atlantic world into which Mitrinović was born and in which he believed. Both recognised in the scientific technology and Christian charity of the new age elements of hope denied to the ancient world. The paper that follows is directed to the defence of that hope.

B. Farrington

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THE NEW ATLANTIS OF FRANCIS BACON

The technological revolution has not been an unqualified success. Materially we are much better off, spiritually we are in great disorder. If we give Francis Bacon the credit for the material progress, should we not lay upon his shoulders the blame for the spiritual disorder? It is true that he always insisted that power over nature was neither good nor evil in itself. Everything depended, in his view, on the new power being governed in charity. His prayer was that a greater light in nature might not darken our understanding of the divine mysteries. But these wise cautions have not availed to exempt him from blame. It is charged against him that he debased the spiritual currency of our speech.

T. S. Eliot diagnosed a subtle disease of the spirit which set in in the seventeenth century. He named it dissociation of sensibility. This clinical term means, if I have understood it, that men then learned to think without feeling. Professor L. C. Knights in his volume of seventeenth-century studies, 'Explorations', examines Bacon's contribution to the dissemination of this disease and has no doubt of his guilt. He admits that the creation of a scientific language, to which Bacon contributed, was 'a necessary step forward if the English language was to be made, what it was not in Elizabethan times, a tool for scientific analysis.' But, in its context, this has an ominous ring. It is like saying that it is necessary that offences come, but woe to him through whom the

offence cometh. For Bacon, according to Professor Knights, dealt poetry a deadly blow. 'There is never any indication', he tells us, 'that Bacon was *moved* by poetry or that he attaches any value to its power of deepening and refining the emotions.' It would be useless to direct Professor Knights to that passage where Bacon says that 'poetry serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and to delectation'; and that 'it has ever been thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things'. Professor Knights, of course, knows the passage and even quotes it. But he allows it no force. Rather, he goes on to assert that 'Bacon ignores completely the creative and vital forces in the mind itself.' This is untrue. The whole question was gone into throughly by Coleridge a hundred and fifty years ago, when Bacon was better understood in England than he is today. (See 'The Friend', Section 11, Essay 9). His conclusion is that Bacon often expressed and everywhere supposed the existence, potentially or actually, in every rational being, of the pure reason, the spirit, the dry light, the intellectual intuition, call it what you will, in which are to be found the indispensable conditions of all science, and scientific research, whether meditative, contemplative, or experimental. What one may most deplore in Baconian studies in England, is not that they make no progress but that they are in decline.(1)

But, if we are disappointed in Professor Knights, what are we to make of the late Professor C. S. Lewis, Screwtape Lewis, if I may call him by the title which will best identify him? In his spiritual autobiography, 'Surprised by Joy', a lively work like all that ever came from his able pen, he confides to us: 'I thought Bacon (to speak frankly) a solemn pretentious ass'. Elsewhere he proceeds to give the grounds for this opinion. In his 'English Literature in the XVI Century', Lewis discusses Renaissance magic, examines Bacon in this context, and concludes that he was hardly distinguishable from a magician. 'Bacon's endeavour,' he tells us, 'is no doubt contrasted *in our minds* with that of the magicians; but contrasted *only in the light of the event*, only because *we* know

(1) For a notable exception see Anne Righter's study on Bacon in The English Mind, ed. Hugh Sykes Davis and George Watson. C.U.P., 1964.

that science succeeded and magic failed.' This is mere ignorance. The best modern account of Francis Bacon's work bears the title 'From Magic to Science'. The words are a true description of Bacon's achievement.(2)

Nobody could possibly understand Bacon from the point of view from which Lewis approaches science. In 'The Abolition of Man' he tells us: 'There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the "wisdom" of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been to conform the soul to reality. . . . For magic and applied science alike, the problem is to subdue reality to the wishes of man.' What this obscure oracle may mean I know not, unless it be that man should return to the food-gathering stage. All human history has been the story of the subjugation of nature to man's will. Whatever wisdom Lewis had in mind, it was not the wisdom of the Bible; for there the divine command to Adam is to replenish the earth and subdue it; and it was upon the God-given promise of dominion that Bacon based the argument of his 'Great Instauration'. Bacon's wisdom was the wisdom of the Bible, which always treats God as the God of history, not as a metaphysical concept. 'The Great Instauration' was not concerned with abstract truth, but was the forecast of a coming event in time. Lewis ignores this and proceeds: 'If we compare the chief trumpeter of the new era (Bacon) with Marlowe's Faustus, the similarity is striking'. I confess it does not strike me. Marlowe's Faustus sold his soul to the devil in a private bargain for selfish ends: Bacon summoned all his countrymen in the name of charity to join him in a common enterprise for the common good. Regardless of this Lewis proceeds: 'You will read in some critics that Faustus has a thirst for knowledge. In reality he hardly mentions it. It is not truth he wants from his devils, but gold, guns and girls. . . . *In the same spirit* Bacon condemns those who value knowledge as an end in itself.' So there we have it. What Bacon was after in 'The Great Instauration' was gold, guns and girls, or something of that sort. Lewis is now dead, but I shall not be so conventional as to try to find something good to say about such an argument. I owe a debt to him for some of his books.

(2) See Paolo Rossi, Francesco Bacone: Dalla magia alla scienza. Bari, 1957

But I cannot but remember that in the great variety of religious experiences there are some that do not fit easily under the title of 'Surprised by Joy'. Francis Bacon experienced and lived a truth of which Lewis seems to have had no inkling. It was, moreover, a Christian truth, if we may judge by the enthusiasm with which it was regarded by George Herbert and John Milton.

Before I turn to Bacon himself I think I should mention one more critic, Professor Basil Willey and his book 'The English Moralists', published this year. He differs from Lewis in regarding Bacon as a hypocrite rather than an ass. But like C. S. Lewis he takes a text from the description of Solomon's House in the New Atlantis. Of this Bacon had said that its purpose was the 'effecting of all things possible'. Like Lewis, Willey finds in the phrase 'a touch of *hubris*'. Like Lewis he backs up the charge by reminding us that Bacon had called himself the trumpeter of the new age. Like Lewis he omits to tell us that by this title Bacon had the modest intention of claiming only to be a bugler on a field of battle where the real fight would be waged and won by others. Like Lewis, Willey links Bacon's name with that of Faust. In short, it is all part of the same song, the one refreshing novelty being that Willey seems to have misgivings, either about what he is himself saying or perhaps about the company he is in; for he keeps interrupting himself to say 'Let us be fair to Bacon' or 'To be just to Bacon'—four times in a short study. Would it not have been simpler to scrap the essay, decide to be fair from the start and avoid the necessity for so many apologies? And now to our subject.

'The New Atlantis', a short incomplete fable, given to the world by William Rawley after Bacon's death, tells of a visit of an English ship to the island continent of Bensalem somewhere in the middle of the Pacific. It is now chiefly remembered for its description of Solomon's House. This Rawley tells us was devised by Bacon as 'a model of a college instituted for the interpretation of nature and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of men'. Nowadays it is often said that the model was 'realized in the Royal Society'. Now this is not true, or at best only half true. Solomon's House filled a place in the life of the kingdom of Bensalem unlike that which the

Royal Society has ever occupied in Britain.

James Spedding, the most understanding of all interpreters of Bacon's thought, describes 'The New Atlantis' as 'a picture of our world as it might be if we did our duty by it'. That is exact. For Bacon, science did not end with books or learned institutions. It was nothing unless it was realized in actual life; and Bacon's evident intention was to describe such a world. Those who have seen Brecht's *Galileo* will understand the difference. Galileo betrayed the truth he knew, and thus gained time to found another branch of science. Had he not done well? Not so in Brecht's judgment. Galileo had publicly betrayed a cause. For science is not just another book, however good. Science is life. It must be lived or it is nothing. In Francis Bacon's words, 'Science, like religion, is known by its fruits'.

But now let us return to Bacon's narrative of the discovery of Bensalem. An English ship sets sail into the Pacific from Peru with a supply of victuals for about a year. But when it has sailed West for many months without sighting land, the wind changes and threatens to blow them back to where they came from. From this plight they are rescued by a shift of the wind to the South. After being borne North for a long time, still without finding land, they begin to run out of provisions; they have many sick; they realize what it means to be astray in the greatest wilderness of waters in the world. But they fall to prayer, and are rewarded before long by the sight of land. The details are symbolical. Mankind is sick, hungry, and lost, and will not find a way out of its predicament except by acknowledging a higher power. Soon they approach a small but well-built port, where, after the necessary preliminaries, they are allowed to land. This small port is all they ever see of the great kingdom of Bensalem. They are vouchsafed a glimpse, but no more, of the promised land. But, I suppose, if one wanted to understand the quality of life in a strange land at its average level, a period of residence in a small port should provide a fair sample. Bacon, no doubt, thought of this, and fashioned his tale accordingly. The merits of life in Bensalem are only gradually revealed. Item by item the conviction grows in the minds of the Englishmen that they are in the presence of a civilization materially and morally in advance of

their own. The port authorities will not let them land at once but send an officer to them with a little scroll of parchment, the excellent quality of which catches their attention. Still more surprising and reassuring is it to find that the writing on the parchment is in four languages—ancient Hebrew, ancient Greek, good Latin of the school, and Spanish. The device with which the document is stamped, being of cherubims' wings and a cross, suggests that as well as being thoroughly acquainted with European civilization the people are also Christian. This is confirmed when the officer, whose dress in stuff, colour, and cut was admired by all, at once asks whether they are Christians. They begin to feel at home with one another.

Now another public officer appears. This is a Conservator of Health, who has to be satisfied that among the seventeen sick men on board there are none with infectious diseases. As soon as it is clear that there is no risk, they come under the care of a third official, the Governor of the House of Strangers. He arranges accommodation for the fifty-one persons who make up the ship's company. The seventeen sick go into separate cells with partitions of cedar wood in a long dormitary. The four principal men get a single room apiece. The remaining thirty are bestowed in pairs in fifteen rooms. The strangers' House was fair and spacious, built of a bluer brick than the visitors had ever seen, and with handsome windows, some of glass, some of a kind of oiled cambric. The food for those in health was excellent, 'better than any collegiate diet I have known in Europe', to quote the words of the narrator. As for the sick, they were given scarlet oranges, and a pill to take before settling down for the night. So they spent the first three days allowed them, 'during which time', says the narrator, 'we had every hour joy of the amendment of our sick, who thought themselves cast into some divine pool of healing, they mended so kindly and so fast'.

The reference here to the pool of Bethesda is an example of a prominent characteristic of the whole narrative. There are about thirty such references to the Bible. In so short a work they stamp it with an intentionally biblical character. But the reference to the pool of Bethesda has a deeper significance than that. In the Gospel narrative the healing is miraculous. In Bacon's fable the

healing is the result of applied science. Let us not underestimate the significance of this point. For Bacon the science of medicine is just as much a divine work as the Gospel miracle. But the age of miracles is over. A new age has begun. That is the very meaning of 'The Great Instauration', which is in plain English, a great fresh start. Roger Bacon had wished to bring magic within the circle of the approved Christian disciplines. His better-advised namesake aimed to do the same for science. The *magnalia Dei*, the mighty works of divine grace, would remain operative in the spiritual life. The *magnalia naturae*, now under the control of man, would take over in the material sphere. Christianity would be stretched to accommodate the new science and technology. If this were not done, if men continued to seek for miracles in the natural world, Christianity would sink to the level of an outmoded superstition. Schweitzer, the medical missionary, understood Bacon's role. He gave him credit for sketching the blue-print of the modern world. Scientific medicine is the new pool of Bethesda.

After the lapse of three days, when all were refreshed and the sick restored, the Governor of the Strangers' House came to them in person. Though by office Governor he was by vocation a Christian priest. He brings them the news that they have been granted a stay of six weeks in Bensalem. They need not worry about the cost of their entertainment. The House is in funds; thirty-seven years have passed since the last strangers came to visit them. He has no doubt, if they want a longer stay, it will be granted them. He then becomes the first of the three informants from whom the strangers, or the more privileged among them, learn the history, institutions, and customs of Bensalem.

The first topic raised between them after the practical matters had been settled was no doubt intended by Bacon to carry special emphasis. The strangers, being given leave to ask anything they like choose first to enquire now Christianity came to Bensalem, who was the Apostle and how the kingdom was converted to the faith. The way the question is greeted is significant. 'Ye knit my heart to you,' the Governor exclaims, 'by asking that question in the first place; for it sheweth that you first seek the kingdom of heaven.'

The past history of Bensalem, as reported by the Governor of

the Strangers' House, can be briefly summarized. According to their traditions oceanic navigation three thousand years ago was much greater than now, and Bensalem itself had then had a merchant fleet of some one thousand five hundred strong ships of great content. They had thus much intercourse with other peoples, not only with sailors but with men of letters; and communities of Persians, Chaldaeans, Arabians, and Hebrews had then settled among them and still remained. Nor had their intercourse been only with the Mediterranean world. They had also been in contact with China and Tartary. Their civilization had absorbed many cultures. But the most significant event in their early history had been the reign of King Solomona, one thousand nine hundred years before, that is to say, about three hundred B.C. This king they esteemed as the law-giver of their nation; and it was he who had founded the order or society called Solomon's House, or the College of the Six Days Works. This point is all important. Solomon's House is no novelty. It stands for something that under happier auspices might also be 2,000 years old in Europe. By a realistic touch Bacon allows the Governor, who gives the information, to be a little in doubt about the origin of the name. He thinks it came about in this way. King Solomona had learned from the Hebrews who lived among them, their doctrine of the Creation. This he had accepted, and finding his name to be virtually identical with that of the Hebrew king most renowned for wisdom, he had called his foundation Solomon's House. Note the antiquity of the foundation. It was a pre-Christian institution, made on the basis of Old Testament beliefs, at a date which is intended to make it rival the schools of ancient Greece. When Bensalem was evangelized through the agency of Bartholomew, the apostle to the Indies, about twenty years after the Ascension, it was one of the fathers of Solomon's House who welcomed the sacred books which had been miraculously brought to them floating in an ark upon the sea. Bensalem, therefore, was a land the religious history of which was the same as that of Christian Europe. It had first received the old dispensation and then the new. But it differed from Europe in that it had based its mental life upon the Bible and had thus escaped what Bacon always considered the error of the Greeks. Solomon's

House is described as 'the noblest foundation that ever was upon the earth, and the lanthorn of this kingdom'. It merits that title precisely because it was not the Academy, not the Lyceum, not the Garden, not the Porch. It was based on a different set of values.

To this point we shall return again, but we must first meet the second of the three informants of the visitors to Bensalem, and the only one with whom the narrator establishes a personal relationship. The first of the informants was the Governor of the House of Strangers. The third was to be one of the Fathers of Solomon's House. The Englishman's relationship with both these is with an official. But this one is just an agreeable acquaintance, who is thus introduced: 'By that time six or seven days were passed, I was fallen into straight acquaintance with a merchant of that city, whose name was Joabin. He was a Jew, and circumcised: for they have some few stirps of Jews yet remaining among them, whom they leave to their own religion: Which they may the better do, because they are of a far differing disposition from the Jews in other parts. For whereas they hate the name of Christ, and have a secret inbred rancour against the people amongst whom they live, these, contrariwise, give unto our Saviour many high attributes and love the nation of Bensalem extremely.' If we remember that the Jews were expelled from England under Edward I, and not readmitted until the time of Cromwell, we may find it sufficiently remarkable that Bacon should choose to place in his utopia a Jewish community, undisturbed in the practice of its religion and, apparently, admitted to full citizenship. So much, indeed, is this the case, that Joabin is the narrator's principal source of information on the social life of Bensalem and is also the one who is able to secure for him the supreme privilege of an audience with a Father of Solomon's House.

Here, as so often, Bacon was ahead of his time. This was the age of Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta' and of Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice'. In the first of these the Jew is a monster, and in the second his humanity has to be established by argument ('Hath not a Jew eyes? . . . If you prick us, do we not bleed?' and so on). But in Bacon's fiction, nothing of the sort. Joabin is the one man in Bensalem with whom the narrator 'enters into a straight acquaintance'. And if he laughs at him for certain 'Jewish dreams',

such as that the people of Bensalem were also descended from Abraham by another son, yet he recognizes him for a man 'wise, learned, of great policy, and excellently seen in the laws and customs of that nation'. In short Joabin is the one man with whom he finds it possible to become familiar in a strange city.

But, of course, here as everywhere, Bacon's choice of detail is intended to be significant. Bensalem is to be held up to Europe as a model of moral excellence as well as of scientific living, and who so fit to pronounce with authority on moral questions as a member of that race which had contributed to Bensalem not only the title of its chief institution, Solomon's House, but also the very name of the kingdom itself? The role assigned to Joabin is an indication of that preference for the Hebrew over the Greek tradition on which all Bacon's thinking rests. Bensalem could not deserve its title of Son of Peace unless it were also a model of righteousness. It is not surprising, then, that Joabin's speech should turn upon the contrast between the purity of life in Bensalem and the wickedness of Europe. 'You shall understand,' he says, 'that there is not under the heavens so chaste a nation as this of Bensalem, nor so free from all pollution and foulness. It is the virgin of the world. . . . There is nothing amongst mortal men more fair and admirable than the chaste minds of this people. . . . Know therefore that with them there are no stews, no dissolute houses, no courtesans, nor anything of that kind.'

This motive explains also the emphasis laid on the institution of the Feast of the family. This was a public honour granted to any man who should live to see 'thirty persons descended of his body alive together'. The description of the institution reminds one of the Calvin of Geneva in the stiffness of its public regulation of private life. Particularly distasteful is the place assigned to the mother in this feast in honour of the father. 'If there be a mother, from whose body the whole lineage is descended'—a likelihood which Bacon seems to regard as not very great—she has no part in the celebrations, but is to sit aloft in a little alcove by herself behind glass, from which she can look down at all the ceremonies without herself being seen.

While Joabin and his newly-acquired English friend were still in conference, a messenger arrived to tell Joabin that a rare event

was at hand. Within a week one of the Fathers of Solomon's House was due to visit their city, a thing that had not occurred for twelve years. It must be remembered that Bensalem was a great kingdom. Its territories consisted of an island-continent with a coastline of five thousand six hundred miles, together with smaller islands lying off-shore. We have no information how many other cities it contained, but they cannot have been few. Besides, the fellows or fathers of Solomon's House were but thirty-six in all, and they had many duties. Of these one is thus described: 'We have circuits or visits of divers principal cities of the kingdom; where, as it cometh to pass, we do publish such new profitable inventions as we think good. And we do also declare natural divinations of diseases, plagues, swarms of hurtful creatures, scarcity, tempests, earthquakes, great inundations, comets, temperatures of the year, and divers other things; and we give counsel thereupon what the people shall do for the prevention and remedy of them.' We are not told for which of these many purposes the Father had come to visit the port where the English sailors had come ashore. But we can understand that it was a great privilege for them to be admitted in a body to his presence and for a private audience to be granted to the one of their choice. We also understand what Bacon meant by applied science. Bensalem was a welfare state.

The coming of the Father to the city was in state. He arrived, gorgeously attired, in a horse-litter, preceded by fifty young men in white satin coats and white silk stockings, with blue velvet shoes and hats; while behind his chariot went all the officers and principals of the companies of the city. Bacon loved a bit of pageantry. But these splendours are to honour the office not the man himself. He is described simply as 'a man of middle stature and age, comely of person, and with an aspect as if he pitied men'; and when the English visitors are admitted to his presence he is found seated, indeed, on a throne richly adorned, but on a level with themselves. The contrast between the glory of the office and the humility and humanity of the man is intentional. Bacon wanted for science a central place in the constitution of the kingdom; but the ideal scientist must himself be humble and compassionate.

When the chosen representative of the English crew is admitted to the presence for the private audience, the Father of Solomon's House begins with a blessing and then sets forth (1) the end of the foundation; (2) the preparations and instruments for their works; (3) the several employments and functions to which the fellows are assigned; and (4) the ordinances and rites which they observe. It is the second of these items, the preparations and instruments, which have most attracted the attention of scientists and which are best remembered today. I shall recall some of them. There are caves dug under mountains and towers built on the tops of mountains, the former giving an underground depth of three miles and the latter an above-ground height of the same extent, each affording opportunities for experiment and observation. We read of artificial metals, new composts, new applications of water-power; of air-conditioning, telephones, flying machines, submarines, and many other things of most of which Leonardo da Vinci and others had also dreamed. There is also, naturally, much evidence of Bacon's concern for the comforts and commodities of ordinary life. The breweries, bakeries, and kitchens for preparing new drinks, new breads, new meats capable of working special effects on the health of the consumers; the workshops for the manufacture of improved papers, linens, silks, and other tissues, are characteristic of what is generally called Bacon's utilitarianism but might better be called his charity. For Bacon was right about the importance of these things for human well-being. But the great novelty does not lie in the anticipation of later inventions but rather in his anticipation of the welfare state. For this is what is implied by Solomon's House, that temple, as we might call it, in which both the progress of science and the laws of its legitimate use were equally considered. Hence proceeded the inventions and discoveries which were spread throughout Bensalem by the Fathers of the House. But here also the consequences of new inventions were scrupulously weighed. Consultations of the Fathers were held to decide which of the new inventions should be published, and which not. All the Fathers were under an oath of secrecy to publish only what was fit, and to withhold, even from the State if necessary, what might be harmful to mankind.

We may conclude with some reflections on the relevance of Bacon's fable to the England of his day. It was an England in which the problem of poverty was constantly discussed; in which the menace of plague produced a periodic exodus from London of those in a position to move; in which demonology, magic, and alchemy found a lodging in the minds of those in the highest offices of state. For such evils Bacon believed a remedy could be found in his philosophy of works. He took note of the fact that More, in his 'Utopia', could suggest no better remedy for poverty than fair shares in the little they had. Bacon foresaw, and he was right, that the application of science to industry could immeasurably multiply wealth. He observed that the doctors had inherited from Greek antiquity a very long list of incurable diseases. He suggested that it might prove possible to shorten the list, and he was right. He suggested that the reason for the flourishing of magic and alchemy lay in the fact that the philosophy prevalent in his age prided itself on its uselessness. To fight Scholasticism was to deprive Alchemy of its *raison d'etre*. Again he was right.

But how to establish the merits of his new philosophy? How even to get a hearing for it? The old had sufficed for centuries of argument whether on God or on Nature. But it had gone out of fashion, even before the monasteries which provided it with the material conditions in which it could flourish, had been suppressed. For practical purposes it was useless. The new Platonism of Ficino imported from Florence was equally unserviceable. Aristotle had given the monks something to argue about. Plato was now supplying the same function for the gentry, the new class of idlers, which had come into existence on the lands from which the monks had been expelled. Where could one turn for some sounder form of knowledge? Even the reformed Church could not supply it. 'The boundary of our Faith,' said Bacon's good friend, Lancelot Andrewes, 'was to be found in one Canon reduced to writing by God himself, two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, and the series of Fathers in that period.' Bacon agreed. Romish innovations had to be removed. But where, in the first five centuries of the history of the Church was to be found a natural philosophy on which the life of Britain could be based in the age of trans-oceanic navigation, and of the

first industrial revolution?

This was the situation Bacon had to meet. We may help ourselves to understand his problem in some measure if we again invoke Schweitzer's name. Schweitzer was passionately Christian. But he had read Kant, and Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, and the application to Christianity of their teachings made by Bauer and Strauss. Schweitzer rightly felt that this new German philosophy meant a real advance in human consciousness, and that if Christianity could not live in the new mental and spiritual climate, it could not live at all. Such was Bacon's position in the world of Elizabeth and James. So far from being a lukewarm Christian, as Professor Broad once suggested, who 'regarded the Church as a branch of the civil service and the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Minister for Divine affairs'; so far from making hypocritical genuflexions in the direction of Christianity, as Professor Willey said; he was, like Schweitzer, one to whom the call to 'Follow me' had come with irresistible force. But the new world in which Bacon had to obey the call was the new world in which the power of technology had impressed itself on the liveliest minds. He could not live in the illusory wisdom recommended by C. S. Lewis, teaching that the right attitude for man is to bow himself before 'reality' even if it comes in the form of poverty, plague, or bogus science. Instead he offered a reinterpretation of Christianity in which it was the duty of man to exercise dominion over the creation, as an expression both of his humility before the power of God, who had made it and given it its laws, and as the means of effectively fulfilling the command of charity, to love one's brother as oneself. In short one should try to follow Christ in a scientific and technological age. Two quotations may suffice to establish this point. At least they will allow me to be silent and Francis Bacon to speak for himself.

The first is from the 'Sacred Meditations' which appeared together with the 'Essays' in 1596. It was Bacon's first introduction to the public. In the second of the 'Meditations' Bacon entered upon a comparison of the miracles of the Old Testament and the New. The former were often destructive, like the plagues of Egypt. But the latter, at least so far as Jesus himself was concerned, were all acts of mercy. I quote: 'All his miracles were

for the benefit of the human body, his doctrine for the benefit of the human soul. The body of man stands in need of nourishment, of defence from outward accidents, of medicine. He gathered the multitude of fishes into the net, whereby to supply men with more plentiful food. He turned water into the worthier nourishment of wine, to glad man's heart. He caused the fig-tree, because it failed of its appointed office (that of yielding food for men), to wither away. He multiplied the scanty store of loaves and fishes that the host of people might be fed. He rebuked the winds because they threatened danger to them that were within the ship. He restored motion to the lame, light to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to the sick, cleanness to the lepers, sound mind to them that were possessed with devils, life to the dead. There was no miracle of judgment, but all of mercy, and all upon the human body.' Bacon here sketches a programme of the needs of humanity, and shows how the divine compassion dealt with them. But he has no thought of asking for a return of the age of miracles. The miracles of Jesus are for him models of compassion and taken in no other sense. Science must now take the place of miracle. It was to the bringing into existence of a new kind of science capable of carrying out the work of charity that he sought the co-operation of his countrymen in 'The Great Instauration'. In the Preface we read:

> 'I would address one general admonition to all, that they consider what are the true ends of knowledge, and that they seek it neither for pleasure of the mind, nor for contention, nor for superiority over others, nor for profit, nor fame, nor power, nor for any of these inferior things; but for the benefit and use of life; and that they perfect and govern it in charity. For it was from lust of power that the angels fell, from lust of knowledge that men fell; but of charity there can be no excess, neither did angel or man ever come in danger by it.
>
> 'Of myself I wish to say nothing. But in respect of the business which is in hand I entreat men to believe that it is not an opinion to be held, but A WORK TO BE DONE; and to be well assured that I am labouring to lay the foundation, not of any school of thought, but of human utility and power. I ask them, then, to deal fairly by their own interests; to lay

aside all spirit of emulation, all prejudice in favour of this opinion or of that, and to join forces for the common good. Freed by my help and guidance from the errors and obstacles of the way, men must come forward themselves and take their share of the labours that remain.'

Such was the New Age of which Bacon sought to make himself the trumpeter. But a world which is still filled with hunger, sickness, and ignorance, cannot yet claim to have responded to his call. Nor is it adequately served by critics like Professors Knights, Lewis, and Willey, who seem to me like three poppies on the edge of a field at harvest time shaking their heads together over the vulgarity of its load of corn.

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