

“The remedies which he recommends for these evils, are, in the first place, the study of that only perfect wisdom which is to be found in the Sacred Scripture;<sup>11</sup> in the next place, the study of mathematics and the use of experiment.<sup>12</sup> By the aid of these methods, Bacon anticipates the most splendid progress for human knowledge. He takes up the strain of hope and confidence which we have noticed as so peculiar in the Roman writers; and quotes some of the passages of Seneca which we adduced in illustration of this:—that the attempts in science were at first rude and imperfect, and were afterwards improved;—that the day will come, when what is still unknown shall be brought to light by the progress of time and the labors of a longer period;—that one age does not suffice for inquiries so wide and various;—that the people of future times shall know many things unknown to us;—and that the time shall arrive when posterity will wonder that we overlooked what was so obvious. Bacon himself adds anticipations more peculiarly in the spirit of his own time. ‘We have seen,’ he says, at the end of the work, ‘how Aristotle, by the ways which wisdom teaches, could give to Alexander the empire of the world. And this the Church ought to take into consideration against the infidels and rebels, that there may be a sparing of Christian blood, and especially on account of the troubles that shall come to pass in the days of Antichrist; which by the grace of God it would be easy to obviate, if prelates and princes would encourage study, and join in searching out the secrets of nature and art.’

“It may not be improper to observe here that this belief in the appointed progress of knowledge, is not combined with any overweening belief in the unbounded and independent power of the human intellect. On the contrary, one of the lessons which Bacon draws from the state and prospects of knowledge, is the duty of faith and humility. ‘To him,’ he says,<sup>13</sup> ‘who denies the truth of the faith because he is unable to understand it, I will propose in reply the course of nature, and as we have seen it in examples.’ And after giving some instances, he adds, ‘These, and the like, ought to move men and to excite them to the reception of divine truths. For if, in the vilest objects of creation, truths are found, before which the inward pride of man must bow, and believe though it cannot understand, how much more should man humble his mind before the glorious truths of God!’ He had before said:<sup>14</sup> ‘Man is incapable of perfect wisdom in this life; it is hard for

<sup>11</sup> Part ii.<sup>12</sup> Parts iv. v. and vi.<sup>13</sup> *Op. Maj.* p. 476.<sup>14</sup> *Ib.* p. 15.