the book, and they will probably determine its audience. Historians of technology should not, however, ignore it. They will benefit from the rich material it displays and from struggling with the challenge of its methods.

In view of the wide-ranging nature of the book, a bibliography would have been helpful.

OTTO MAYR

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Theology and Science in the Thought of Francis Bacon.

By Steven Matthews. Aldershot, Hants., and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008. Pp. xiii+150. $99.95.

This work intentionally joins Stephen A. McKnight's *The Religious Foundations of Francis Bacon's Thought* (reviewed in *Technology and Culture* 48, no. 3) in arguing that Sir Francis Bacon was more deeply religious than he is conventionally thought to have been. Although Steven Matthews's book is full of interesting suggestions, a lack of breadth, rigor, and precision will leave many readers unconvinced.

Matthews's first chapter rightly reminds us how tumultuous and diverse the English Reformation was. Not only were confessional doctrines in conflict and in flux, there were also influences from patristic scholarship, Neoplatonism, and a revived interest in Hebrew scriptures. Matthews does not mention the interest in ancient pagan culture. This is unfortunate since Bacon frequently alluded to pagan gods and published a commentary on Greek myths, but never one on church fathers, Neoplatonism, or Hebrew.

When Bacon was twenty-eight, he circulated an unpublished essay that discussed a controversy between Puritans and church bishops. Bacon criticized both sides and called for moderation, compromise, and tolerance. The essay has been taken as a repudiation of the consuming and staunch confessional religiosity of Bacon's own Calvinist mother. But largely because Bacon warned the Puritans that they risked heresy, Matthews espies in the essay a deep concern with theological and confessional correctness. He claims that Bacon's "turn away from Puritanism" was not a rejection of his mother's religiosity. Rather it "proved" that he had inherited her theological "piety" and "passion." Moreover, these "would shape everything that he wrote" (p. 25).

Bacon's turn away from Puritanism was, Matthews claims in his second chapter, a turn toward the Christianity of the early church. For Bacon's views here, Matthews considers his little-studied *Meditationes Sacrae* and *Confession of Faith*. In each, Matthews notes anti-Calvinist positions and identifies theologians, especially Augustine and Irenaeus, who had similar views. Unfortunately, Bacon says so little—and so little that was distinctive or uncommon—and the church fathers so much that it is difficult to follow

JULY
2009
VOL. 50

Matthews's suggestion of a theological commitment on Bacon's part to patristic theology and certainly difficult to justify calling Bacon a "scholar of . . . Patristics" (p. 139).

Matthews's tendency to make much of little tarnishes the next chapter and indeed the rest of the book. Central to both is the proposal that, as Bacon used it, "instauration" referred not to his proposal for reform of learning, science, and the practical arts but to a moment in sacred history that had recently begun and that Bacon thought he was unique in recognizing. Here, Matthews is developing an observation made by Charles Whitney, but Whitney rightly warned against giving an exclusively biblical sense to Bacon's term ("Francis Bacon's Instauratio: Dominion of and over Humanity," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50, no. 3). The word was not rare, and Whitney's inventory of all Bacon's uses shows scant evidence for Matthews's claims. Bacon surely believed he lived in propitious times and believed his reforms could advance mankind's good fortunes. But nothing good will come from conflating the two concepts, no matter how much Bacon may have relished the biblical overtones in the term he chose for his proposal.

The rest of the book relies heavily on this new, fused concept of instauration. Around it Matthews builds a whole Baconian theology involving the chain of causes, sacred history, eschatology, free will, the priority of faith over science, and the status of natural philosophy as a form of religion. Although there are potentially valuable contributions throughout, they are too tied up with this misbegotten conception of Baconian instauration to make them easily accessible.

Matthews insists that assessments of Bacon have been distorted by cultural agendas, especially religious ones. This book seems to fall into the same trap. The reasoning is marred by non sequiturs, misleading paraphrases, suggestions trying to be arguments, and a lack of attention to passages in the Baconian corpus normally used to defend opposing views. Matthews writes with an expertise in theology uncommon even for Reformation historians. But that depth may not have helped him avoid the trap he rightly criticizes in others.

On a separate matter, we should not let pass without criticism the many typesetting errors. Whatever the work's strengths and weaknesses, it surely deserved a more careful presentation.

In summary, those who know the corpus and secondary literature enough to read critically will find here provocative suggestions and intriguing leads. Others will need to be cautious about the book's arguments and conclusions.

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