

within him, knowledgeable in the ways of the world but not corrupted by them, knowing the necessity of acting in the world according to the truth as he understands it even though such action will bring him into conflict with the powerful, whether holders of high office or controllers of public opinion. Athanasius, in other words, is a man of the kind and quality affirmed by Milton in the person of the angel Abdiel:

So spake the Seraph *Abdiel* faithful found,
Among the faithless, faithful onely hee;
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshak'n, uneduc't, unterrifi'd
His Loyaltie he kept, his Love, his Zeale;
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostil scorn, which he susteind
Superior, nor of violence feard aught.¹³

Further consideration of this work is called for, because comment to which Bacon is drawn by the events he is recounting reflects directly upon both *A Relation* and the *Ordinance*. Firstly, there is one conviction which is absolutely central to his understanding of life in the world and of the way human societies work: 'For as God hath determined that every member of the Church shall live in continual war within himself; so also shall the Church have Heresies and Schismes, that they which are approved, may be made manifest.' For Bacon there is no middle position between truth and heresy, the single society and that society fragmented into competing sects. On the one hand there is 'Unity and Purity of the Doctrine of Religion'; on the other, 'Sects, Schismes, Heresies, and the Spirits of Professors never satisfied, but still lingring, as now a-dayes after new opportunities of liberty from being under Church Government, which they call, *Liberty of Conscience*'. The major difference in this respect between the times of Athanasius and of Bacon is that the schismatics then gathered their adherents 'not out of other Christian Congregations, as now-a-dayes, but out of the heathens... And yet were these not independent, as now the gathered Churches are; but in cases of difference had recourse to... Councils'.¹⁴

Bacon's explanation for the development of sects and heresies, besides the inherent disposition of fallen humanity, is 'lack of government', a reason which involves both civil and ecclesiastical authorities. One aspect of the great interest which Athanasius' times clearly had for him was the bringing together of the government of Church and State under one head, the Emperor Constantine, and the way in which that power came to be used to