

MOTTO: From Bacon of Verulam, Preface to the Great Instauration

Of myself, I say nothing; but of the thing which is considered. I beg humans to reflect it is not an opinion [*Opinionem*] to be held but a work [*Opus*] to be done; and to retain certainty that I am laboring to build the foundation not of any sect or doctrine but of human usefulness and dignity. Next I ask them to deal fairly by their own interests... to join in consultation for the common good ... and to come forward and take part. Besides, they are to be of good hope, not to imagine that our Instauration is something infinite and beyond mortals, and they are to grasp the spirit, when in fact it is the end and lawful limit of infinite error.

Kant's points drawn from this motto:

1. Science is useful and is justified only in terms of its utility. [Read Kant's Logic.] A knowledge of nature is useful for understanding the human state.
2. Experimentation is a way of avoiding faulty conclusions. An Instauration is a renewal, a restoration, or a repetition. He intends to restore metaphysics to its status as a Queen of the sciences, this to be conducted along the lines of an Experiment.
  - a. Appearances are to be restored as a central component in this metaphysical thought-experiment. Dogmatism ignored appearances, focusing on exaggerated claims about knowing reality itself or the nature of things (what Kant will call the 'thing-in-itself' [*Ding an sich*]). Skepticism emphasized appearances, especially how easy it is for us to be deceived by appearances (the square tower in the distance appearing round), concluding that we can never have access to the real nature of things. However, Kant takes appearances [*Erscheinungen*] to be empirically real, not mere illusions [*Scheinen*], but appearances are distinct from sensations, about which we can be mistaken. Also, appearances presuppose things in themselves, but the latter cannot be known by scientific method or dogmatic speculative proofs.
  - b. The true philosopher is not merely a natural scientific investigator. To restore metaphysics to the position of the 'Queen of the sciences' is to acknowledge the central role of the philosopher as moral reasoner.
3. Kant is not laboring to build foundations for a sect or school, as did dogmatists (and perhaps some skeptics). Nor is he concerned to take the easy way out of the Indifferentists (such as, the so-called 'Common Sense' philosophers and some humanists, who disown the importance of science in improving the human condition). Science must contribute to human dignity. This can be done only by recognizing the limits of science and human knowledge, but this will leave room for rational faith and morality.
4. These tasks are not beyond the grasp of mortals. By recognizing the limits of what we can know, and still acknowledging the centrality of the moral life (what we can think), we can put an end to useless, dogmatic speculations about next life, nature of soul, etc.