

present age will not be different from that of the first. "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Revelation is undoubtedly unique, yet it has often strong analogy with what is popularly called secular history. Kingdoms rise from obscurity, gain a magnificent empyrean and sink again to obscurity as profound as that from which they rose. In like manner the course of human thought follows the same law of development. Confining our attention to the continent of Europe, we may speak of three great ages of Philosophy: Ancient, Medieval and Modern. The varying circumstances of each age modify to some extent the problems which are pondered and wrestled with. But they are nevertheless essentially the same, as are the successive answers attempted, the different systems elaborated. In each age the Empirical, the materialistic conception of the world, which offers such solution as the senses afford, is opposed to the Idealistic, in which the things of sense are more or less unreal, in which it is "the things which are not seen" that alone really are. In each age a one-sided development of the Empirical and the Idealistic leads to a despairing or scoffing scepticism. And lastly as the human mind cannot remain long at this point, mysticism claims by immediate intuition to grasp the Absolute, to attain to the vision of the Eternal.*

The longer we fix our attention upon the eighteenth century, the more plainly does it stand forth as the termination of an old age and the initiation of a new one. Scholasticism was doomed as early as the fourteenth century, but lived on even into the seventeenth. It failed indeed in its great object, viz.: The rationalization of dogma, the demonstration of matters of faith; but it bequeathed to future generations an abundance of profound and original thought. The contempt which ignorance alone could pour upon it is undeserved. There was much that was curious and perhaps trivial in discussions upon subjects, which are beyond the power of man to elucidate, but there was more that was solid and lasting, and a St. Thomas Aquinas would, perchance, in the present day be justified in the astonishment he might express at some of the speculations of a nineteenth century Philosopher. But it is nevertheless true that Scholasticism was left behind by the advancing tide of science. New knowledge was being sought for, new questions were being asked, which were outside the sphere of Scholasticism, and which required a new style of Philosophy to grapple with and be baffled by. For it is not Scholasticism only which attempts questions beyond the limited power of man to answer, nor is it in our opinion

Scholasticism which indulges in the most unreasonable speculations. The effect of living in another age accounts for the apparent absurdity of Scholastic subtleties, and the same effect may yet raise a smile on the faces of the men of a future age at the subtleties of the present.

The transition from the dying philosophy to that about to be born is marked by the Revival of Letters known as the Renaissance, by the German Reformation, and by the growth of Natural Science. It was especially discoveries about the worlds around us, the world we live in, and the beings which inhabit it, which drew away the minds of men from the subjects which delighted the Schoolmen. Men returned from heaven to earth, as it were, yet that earth was also part of God's universe, and was, therefore, no unprofitable field for investigation. One great effect of this was the Secularization of Philosophy. Philosophy and Theology had been interchangeable terms, now they stood for different subjects. The Theologian had been, heretofore, the Philosopher. The sphere of Philosophy was now open to all comers.

Yet the first attempts at an Independent Philosophy were by no means successful. Disciples of Paracelsus, or of Tauler and Böhm, their speculations were wild and fantastic, though there was, for the greater part, an earnest craving for truth underlying them. Amongst such England finds a representative in one Robert Fludd. They had broken free from an effete system, but they hardly knew what they wanted beyond freedom of investigation. Others as Campanella and Bruno attempted to revive various theories of the universe, which had been taught of old in Greece. Bruno was a Pantheist of the School of the Stoics. Campanella, a man with extraordinary imaginative powers, embellished therewith the Parmenidean philosophy, which lay at the foundation of his writings.†

These and other attempts mark the transition from the old to the new philosophy. Out of the chaos which ensued, a new creation was to rise. Science was all this while making great strides, which are connected with the names of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Harvey, but there was yet wanting the master-mind which should employ itself in setting men's minds in the right direction, and should indicate the course along which a solid pathway to knowledge should be constructed. The man who is wanted to meet the necessities of the times is seldom long wanting. In this case there were two who stand out in the commencement of the seventeenth century, as morning stars of the new era. With Descartes we have not to do at present, though his influence upon English thought was very great, particularly on the subject of innate or universal ideas. In England, Francis Bacon is the great name of the period. His influence upon English thought has been incalculable, though for the most part exerted indirectly. Bacon hardly commenced the accomplishment of what he proposed to him-

*G. Cousin's Lectures on History of Philosophy.

†Hallam's Literary History of Europe.