

its attention to these methods themselves and showed their essential inadequacy for philosophical purposes, thus preparing the way for a different treatment. A conviction that this is necessary constitutes perhaps the only feature common to all the more important philosophical writings of the present age, and will, if it succeeds in finding clear and definite expression, constitute a real advance in philosophical thought. That such a new position must be gained was already clearly before the mind of some of the great thinkers in the beginning of the century, but their attempts though eminently suggestive were premature, and could not stand against the rising tide of naturalistic thought which flooded the whole of philosophical literature in the middle of the century.

5.
Scientific
methods.

Dealing now somewhat more closely with the first phase in the change of modern thought, I must remind my readers that most of the pioneers of modern philosophy were thinkers impressed by the new scientific methods. Some of them occupy even a foremost place in the history of science itself. Among the latter Descartes and Leibniz stand out prominently as representatives and inventors in the most advanced regions of mathematical thought. Others, such as Bacon and Spinoza, recommended scientific methods—the former the experimental, the latter the mathematical—for the purposes of philosophical inquiry.

Locke proposed to analyse the processes of “human understanding” by following the lead of the natural sciences and investigating origins, dealing with ideas as the elements of thought and knowledge. This led to