

guiding idea in most of the philosophical and historical sciences ever since.

This obscurity Fichte removed to a great extent in his later writings where he adopted a phraseology which was more in harmony with common-sense. But already in his earlier deliverances his great enthusiasm, exhibited in a powerful personality and a fervid oratory, compelled the assent and admiration even of those of his disciples to whom his written word and doctrine must have presented insuperable difficulties. The governing thought which runs through all his elaborate expositions is that the character of the underlying source and principle of everything, of the Self before it is differentiated into Self and Not-self and into many individual selves, is Activity. It is in fact the autonomous Will which is the unifying principle before and beneath everything else.

Although, therefore, the whole of Fichte's earlier writings appear *prima facie* as very little occupied with specific questions of moral philosophy such as had been elaborately discussed from all possible points of view by thinkers in this country, nevertheless the root and inspiration of all his thought is an ethical idea, the Kantian conception of an autonomous, *i.e.*, self-restraining Will or active power. And the whole tenor and object of his philosophy is to impress his age with a supreme reverence for duty and a confident self-reliance. To inculcate this he laboured unremittingly all his life, expounding his views in ever new and more intelligible expression and illustration. His was just the personality to teach what was then most wanted to raise thoughtful