

to a more artistic and poetical view of life and culture, to a speculation more in harmony with the artistic spirit which permeated Goethe's and Schiller's creations.

23.  
Schelling.

In Fichte's successor, Schelling, the ethical was gradually replaced by the æsthetical ideal, leading with some of his friends and disciples to the vagueness and moral laxity of the romantic movement. The ethical problem as such fell into the background, making way for the æsthetical problem on the one side and the spiritual problem on the other.

24.  
Morality  
and  
Religion.

The controversies alluded to referred to the relation of morality and religion. I have already mentioned that all through the period which preceded the new philosophical movement, a tendency had grown up to rationalise the existing doctrine of the Church, the traditional articles of Christian faith, to establish a reasoned philosophical creed, not in opposition to, but in harmony with, the deeper sense and meaning of the teachings contained in the New as well as the Old Testament, the Mosaic and Christian revelation. The fundamental idea of these endeavours was the conviction that the Divine spirit revealed itself primarily to mankind in the recesses of the moral consciousness and

of the Kantian philosophy. Thus the evil tendency presents itself in Fichte's ethical system merely as a retarding influence: it is the *vis inertiae* of all natural beings which has to be overcome by the propelling strength of the ennobling power of human character. "In this way," he says, "Kant's view receives greater clearness — viz., that the radical evil in man is inborn and that it has nevertheless its origin in freedom. It is quite

conceivable that man should remain for some time, or perhaps during his whole life, upon a lower stage, inasmuch as nothing would propel him upward. . . . But it is not necessary that he should remain there. . . . It is just as possible for him to place himself at once at the highest point, and if he has not done so this comes from his not having made use of his freedom." ('Werke,' iv. p. 182.)