

through the light of reason; these two sides of human nature had been brought together in the philosophy of Kant, and more perfectly in that of Fichte. Moreover, Fichte's doctrine gave a more satisfactory definition and explanation of the moral conscience which Kant had taken as an ultimate fact or datum. This explanation was traced in Fichte's system to the harmony between the empirical or individual and the underlying universal self. This harmony or unity afforded a special kind of assurance, the certainty of conscience, a guide for conduct. In his popular expositions Fichte termed this underlying or universal self, the Moral Order. With this conception he approached the position taken up by Spinoza, who conceived it pantheistically; but he was also not very far removed from the position taken up by many moral philosophers in this country, some of whom, with Shaftesbury, took this as the ultimate datum of their ethical system, whilst others, like Bishop Butler, went a step further in conceiving that this moral order had its centre in a personal Deity.

25.  
The Moral  
Order.

Thus it was quite possible to give to Fichte's exposition a twofold interpretation and development. It could either be construed pantheistically — indeed, as some said, atheistically — being as such opposed to the existing orthodox belief; or it could, on further reflection, lead to a belief in the existence of a Divine personality in the commonly accepted terms of the Christian faith. Thus we find, in the sequel, two opposite schools of ethical thought attaching themselves to Fichte as a leader in their speculation: the school of speculative

26.  
Twofold in-  
terpretation  
of this.