

was not popular at the time when the controversy arose as to the drift of Fichte's speculation. Moral philosophy had not then descended to the level of utilitarianism and naturalism. In abandoning to a large extent the formalities of the reigning orthodox belief, the enlightened thought of the age did not tend towards irreligion. It was rather deeply religious and spiritual, it did not aim at destroying the intimate connection of religion and morality, it regarded religion as the necessary metaphysic of ethics. Thus Fichte declared that: "From the beginning of the world down to the present day, religion, whatever form it may have assumed, has been essentially metaphysic: and he who despises and derides metaphysic—*i.e.*, everything *a priori*—either knows not what he does or else he despises and derides religion."<sup>1</sup>

man to his own independence, and has made the self-assurance of his own reasoning self the corner-stone of all his convictions, affording, at the same time, the view of a mysterious connection which values the individual with all the highest and best that it may succeed in only as a member in a series, only as an instrument in the development of an infinite life. The realm of reason and of moral autonomy is at the same time a kingdom of grace: herein Fichte's system mirrors the twin aspects of all moral experience, the last word of all the deepest thought on the ground of the world-process, and it does so more truly than any other system. We feel ourselves free and at the same time bound, we may and must trust our own power, and must, if we desire to be honest, regard with wonder as a mysterious gift this power itself which leads us towards success; we know that whatever exists in the way of reason, clarity,

goodness, and beauty on this earth is our work and cannot be any one else's, and should still not know how to create reason and beauty were it not that something in our nature which we have not given to ourselves lends us its wizard's mantle. It is possible to understand mankind and its historical labour perfectly, as Positivism does, without having always in view that mysterious connection which joins it to the deepest root of reality; but something remains unexpressed in the background which no inclusive world-formula can well do without. Nothing can happen in this world that is not prepared and grounded in its innermost essence: and a world in which a realm of conscious reason is possible must count amongst its ultimate constituents reason itself." (F. Jodl, 'Geschichte der Ethik,' vol. ii., 1889, pp. 87 *sqq.*).

<sup>1</sup> Fichte, 'Werke,' vol. vii. p. 241.