

within the established Church of his country. And lastly, he assimilated many of the artistic and poetical conceptions and ideals of the romantic school, going the length even of defending one of their more doubtful productions.¹ It is therefore not surprising that in the domain of ethics he developed original ideas: further, that with so many conflicting interests, his thought and his writings should exhibit a dualism similar to that which characterises many of Leibniz's speculations.

As was the case with Fichte, Schleiermacher's philosophical views underwent considerable changes in the

¹ The 'Confidential Letters on Fr. Schlegel's Lucinde,' published anonymously, form one of the most extraordinary incidents in literary and philosophical history, and Schleiermacher's biographers have found it difficult to explain how, prompted by a feeling of magnanimity to his much-reviled friend, Schleiermacher could write and publish these Letters. In the novel itself the libertinism which followed in the wake of the French Revolution was combined with the moral laxity which characterised the age of the Italian Renaissance. It treated in an extreme, not to say atrocious manner, of the relation of the sexes and of free love, and we are reminded of the somewhat later, but much less offensive, treatment of this subject in the circle to which Shelley belonged in England. Dilthey has said all that can be said—not in defence of the novel, which is indefensible, but in explanation of Schleiermacher's Letters. With many other literary productions of that period it forms a historically interesting episode, testifying to

the violent ferment which was then working in philosophical, literary, and æsthetic circles in Germany and notably in Berlin. It is well summed up in a letter written by Henrik Steffens, thirteen years later, to Ludwig Tieck (quoted by Dilthey, *loc. cit.*, p. 509): "However true it is that the age in which Goethe and Fichte and Schelling and the Schlegels, the Novalis, Ritter, and I myself felt ourselves united, was rich in germs of a manifold nature, there lay nevertheless in the whole something audacious. An intellectual Tower of Babel was to be erected which all minds should recognise from afar. But the confusion of tongues buried this work of vainglory in its own ruins. Are you the same with whom I dreamt to be at one? I no more recognise your features, your words are unintelligible to me. And every one separated into opposite directions—most of them with the insane idea of completing nevertheless the Tower of Babel after his own fashion."