

19.
Position in
Germany
at the
beginning
of the
century.

representatives of German thought and literature during the latter part of the eighteenth century: in Kant and Goethe. Yet before their genius manifested its greatness and originality through independent critical and poetic creations, the two ways had been prepared, but not clearly separated, by Lessing and Herder, of whom the former was the more critical and accurate, the latter the more original and suggestive. In the persons of Lessing and Herder a theological education secured the religious interest which both maintained throughout their career without attaching themselves to any definite philosophical school or to any narrow denominational confession. Both were actuated by the love of freedom and the spirit of tolerance, in both also there lived the spirit of Leibniz as well as that of Spinoza. They inherited from the former the historical sense and the idea of development in nature and history; in the latter they admired the creative spirit as well as the organising and constructive effort. The special work of philosophy was taken up by Kant with the distinct desire to bring about a reconciliation between science and religion, but in a different manner from that which Leibniz had attempted or which had been adopted by the more enlightened among his followers. They had conceived of faith and religion as consisting in a special knowledge of things spiritual, notably of God and His revelation, of human freedom and immortality. These spiritual truths were contrasted and brought together with what were termed the truths of nature, such as Causality, Necessity, the physical pre-determined law and order of things.