

did the religious problem occupy and stimulate the early speculations of Fichte. Hesitating for a time whether he would be a religious or a philosophical teacher, he finally entered the academic career, in which he became a great moral, religious, and political power; and the religious interest asserted itself in a still greater degree in the later of his published works and in his later courses of lectures.

The first of his writings, which at once made him celebrated, was a Critique, written in the Kantian spirit, of the conception of historical Revelation—a problem which had been discussed already by Lessing in his Treatise on the 'Education of Humanity,' but which at that time had not yet been dealt with by Kant himself.

In opposition to the doctrine of the inherent goodness of the natural man, proclaimed by Rousseau, and also to the rationalistic conception of Christianity as a purely moral code, Fichte dealt in his Treatise with the much deeper problem of Sin, Evil, and Redemption. And thus he showed a greater understanding of the religious problem than was current in the existing rationalistic and sentimental literature of the day. Fichte was, however, forced into opposition with the orthodox section, as was Lessing before him, through attacks of the former, largely provoked by jealousy of his rising academic influence and of the novel spirit which he infused into university life. Inspired as Fichte was by a belief in the omnipotence and omnipresence of the Divine Spirit, which he conceived to be the Moral Order, he nevertheless could not reconcile