

Atheism and irreligion were indeed spoken of, and this in connection both with Fichte's and Schelling's deliverances, but this meant rather an opposition to the narrow and dry formalism of the existing orthodox section of the Protestant Church doctrine than any approach to the scoffing spirit represented in France by Voltaire, and in Germany, unfortunately, by Voltaire's friend and disciple, Frederick the Great. It was at a much later date that this spirit of indifference or of animosity entered into German thought and literature. The greatest poet and the greatest thinkers of the age were still bent upon seeking and finding the Divine principle which permeated all nature as well as all the spheres of human life.

The unsettlement of philosophic thought just referred to found nowhere a larger expression than in the many changing aspects under which new ideas presented themselves to the mind and in the writings of Schelling and in the general vagueness and inconclusiveness of his reasoning. Fruitful as he was in finding ever new moulds wherein to cast and express his deepest philosophic aspirations, his teaching was apt to lead his disciples into seemingly promising but actually barren by-paths. This brought upon him deserved and undeserved attacks, provoking from him sometimes unedifying and undignified rejoinders. Obscured by these the true merits of his thought were soon forgotten, and it is only within quite recent times that attention has again been drawn to the historical importance of his labours. His philosophy was essentially prospective and suggestive. It contained the