

Schleiermacher is enabled not only to interpret symbolically, as Kant and Hegel had done, but to adopt practically the positive or historical as the fulfilment, the consummation of philosophical religion and ethics.

Schleiermacher lived and taught at the same time and at the same university as Hegel. With him he never cultivated an intimate friendship. It was impossible to bring into harmony these two entirely different natures or the philosophies which sprang from them. Hegel's system was the final, and for a time triumphant, consummation of a great philosophical movement, of the attempt to make reason the supreme arbiter, the ruling power in the whole domain of human interests, to see in it the Divine spirit; in fact, to establish a completely reasoned creed. In it all other human aspirations were to be absorbed. Philosophy was the highest product of the human intellect, and

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Hegel.

but only in a development in the exposition of them. So that it is evident that the same Christian morality can as little exist for different organically co-ordinated Christian communities as that it could exist for all periods of the Church. For the specially Protestant view of the Christian Church it is essential that we consider the same as a movable totality, as one capable of progress and development, only with this restriction, without which Christianity would collapse, that we can never imagine that in the Christian Church a state of perfection could be aimed at or realised which transcends that given in Christ, but that all progress can be nothing else than a more correct understanding and a more perfect assimilation of what is laid down in Christ." And in an

earlier passage (p. 70) he says: "Progress in the community of the faithful cannot be conceived in any other way than that first in single minds a purer conception and realisation of the Christian idea is formed which in the sequel is communicated to others." It must suffice in this connection to give this distinctive utterance of Schleiermacher, whose religious philosophy will be more fully dealt with in the next chapter. It need only be mentioned here that the difference between theoretical (philosophical or abstract) and practical (actually existing) ethics has been variously dealt with by thinkers of very different shades of opinion in recent times; compare, e.g., Herbert Spencer's characteristic view on this point.