

training created in him a special appreciation of the religious problem, he stood outside of any special religious organisation and did not extend his interest in this problem to an understanding of the positive historical religion and its manifestation in a community of believers—*i.e.*, in the Christian Church.

II.

The first step to an understanding of this, the most important phenomenon of modern history, was taken by one who alone among the great thinkers of modern Germany has been able to hold the balance between a genuine theological and an equally genuine philosophical interest. Schleiermacher¹ was one of those rare minds

27.
Schleier-
macher's
grasp of
historical
religion.

¹ The most important work on Schleiermacher (1768-1834) is the 'Life' by Wilhelm Dilthey (vol. i., 1870). It does not reach beyond the year 1802, but deals fully with the 'Reden über die Religion,' by far the most important of Schleiermacher's Works from a philosophical point of view; but the main value of Dilthey's book (542 pages of small type and 145 pages of valuable documents referring to the inner development of Schleiermacher) does not lie in the biographical details, nor even in the penetrating analysis of his earlier works, but rather in the interesting picture which he draws of the state of the higher mental life—literary, philosophical, and poetical—which characterised the Berlin circle of eminent writers, thinkers, and scholars at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For the moment it must

be regretted that the book has been long out of print and that the continuation is wanting. That the eminent author who will, as time goes on, probably stand out more and more as one of the most original thinkers in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, was able to appreciate many other sides and systems of mental culture, to the study of which he devoted his life, is shown by his other writings, notably by his very penetrating analysis of the early development of Hegel (quoted above, vol. iii. p. 250 n.), who, alongside of Schleiermacher, shone as a centre of intellectual light and life in the north of Germany during the twenty years from 1815 to 1835. Considering the enormous literature, biographical, epistolary, and critical, which forms the source of information from which Dilthey drew his materials,