

porary theory of science. An insistence upon this radical distinction of religious from philosophical and scientific thought has, in one form or other, been the theme of religious philosophy in Germany ever since the time of Ritschl, who has thus emphasised the most important side of Schleiermacher's teaching. Nothing essentially new has been added, though the variations in which this theme has been elaborated are numerous and interesting.¹

46.
Radical
distinction
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¹ We have seen in earlier chapters of this History how in the course of the second half of the century clearer ideas were gained as to the independence of scientific research in relation to philosophical discussions. We have seen how a few clearly-defined principles have become the foundations of large regions of natural knowledge; such principles had to justify themselves through experience; for scientific purposes this has proved sufficient. The scientific interest was satisfied if such principles were clearly stated, and could be usefully applied in describing, measuring, and foretelling natural phenomena. A similar demarcation of interests has been attempted in quite a different region. Religious Thought has striven in a similar way to vindicate its independence of philosophical considerations by similarly justifying itself before an independent tribunal, this being religious (including moral) experience. To have helped in this direction is probably the principal merit of Ritschl's doctrine, and as this point is equally important to the liberal and the conservative schools of religious thought, Ritschl has, in a sense, brought these two schools together. Neither of them may have, in the sequel, adopted, in

its integrity, the view he took, but that he made them consider the logical and psychological foundations of their respective systems, assures to him a permanent place in the history of recent theology from whichever side it may be written. This is very clearly shown by the enormous literature dealing with Ritschl's theology, and especially with the point referred to. I confine myself to mentioning the 'History of Recent Theology in Germany,' by Fr. H. R. von Frank (revised and continued by Grütz-macher, 4th edition, 1908), which devotes 76 out of 376 pages to Ritschl's theology and the movement created by it. The author belonged to the conservative "Erlangen School," and is on the whole, though not without sympathetic understanding, opposed to Ritschlianism. It will also be quite clear to my readers that the history of philosophic thought has no concern with the structures which religious thought, be it doctrinal or practical, has reared upon the foundations laid down, just as little as it has been our concern to follow admitted scientific principles into the rapidly increasing and changing details of natural knowledge and natural philosophy in themselves.