

It is thus that Dilthey attaches special importance to the study of the development of individual minds and of the great intellectual periods of history. As already stated, his earliest larger work consisted in a study of Schleiermacher, of that German philosopher who stood in the most intimate contact not only with the intellectual but also with the poetic and religious life of his age and country. This great work which promises, if finished, to be a unique biographical, literary, and philosophical monument, opens our eyes as does no other similar work to the innermost connections and relations between the workings of the poetical, religious, and speculative mind. But we have from his pen, in addition, studies of many other original figures in modern literature, and of several important phases in the historical development of modern culture. His main interest, however, seems to return always towards what he calls the mental sciences as distinguished from the natural sciences. Their peculiarity is that they treat of things which have a history, and the end and aim of his endeavours seems to be to arrive through psychological analysis at a peculiar logic or canon of thought

Dilthey is particularly intent upon the essential difference of the methods employed in the natural sciences from those of the mental sciences—a difference which he has not succeeded in making convincing to some of his critics of the opposite school (see Barth, *loc. cit.*, p. 371 *sqq.*), who consider that to give up the methods of the natural sciences is equivalent to giving up scientific treatment altogether. But Dilthey brings out an important point when he argues that in the analysis of physical phenomena the ultimate

units out of which they are composed are unknown to us, and, as such, conjectural; whereas the units out of which mental, social, and historical phenomena are composed are known to us, being living experiences. "The primordial unit (*Urzelle*) of the historical world is the living experience of a subject through the interaction of its life and its *milieu*. This environment acts on the subject and receives reactions from it. It is a compound of physical and mental surroundings" (p. 93).