

THE
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HISTORICAL OPTIMISM: WILHELM DILTHEY.

THE division of the sciences into natural and mental is of comparatively recent date. Wilhelm Dilthey was perhaps the first to emphasize effectively the secular character and independence of the mental sciences. Heinrich Rickert has proposed to substitute for the term "mental sciences," whose currency is due chiefly to Dilthey's writings, the more restricted term, "sciences of culture." He has not, however, succeeded in introducing that name. As proposed by Dilthey, the mental sciences, whose meaning, province, and import must be brought clearly into view, as against the undue claims of the natural sciences which deny their limits, lay the emphasis of the inquiry upon introspection. By this method a closed system of the mental sciences is to be worked out, within which "the knowledge of reality, determinations of value, norms, and formulations of purpose are related." The object is to enable the mental sciences in this form to take up their position as equals, over against the system of the natural sciences. For Dilthey, the foundation of philosophy consists in introspection, for "in philosophy the unitary nature of man, which expresses itself variously in different spheres of life and appears temporally determined, rises to a consciousness of the connection of these expressions and thereby to the autonomous self-certainty of existence and action." For the knowledge of reality, the determination of value and the fixation of purpose, introspection is in the last analysis the decisive factor in the organic connection of the inner life. Beyond this organic connection thought cannot go. In his essay entitled "The Study of Individuality," Dilthey