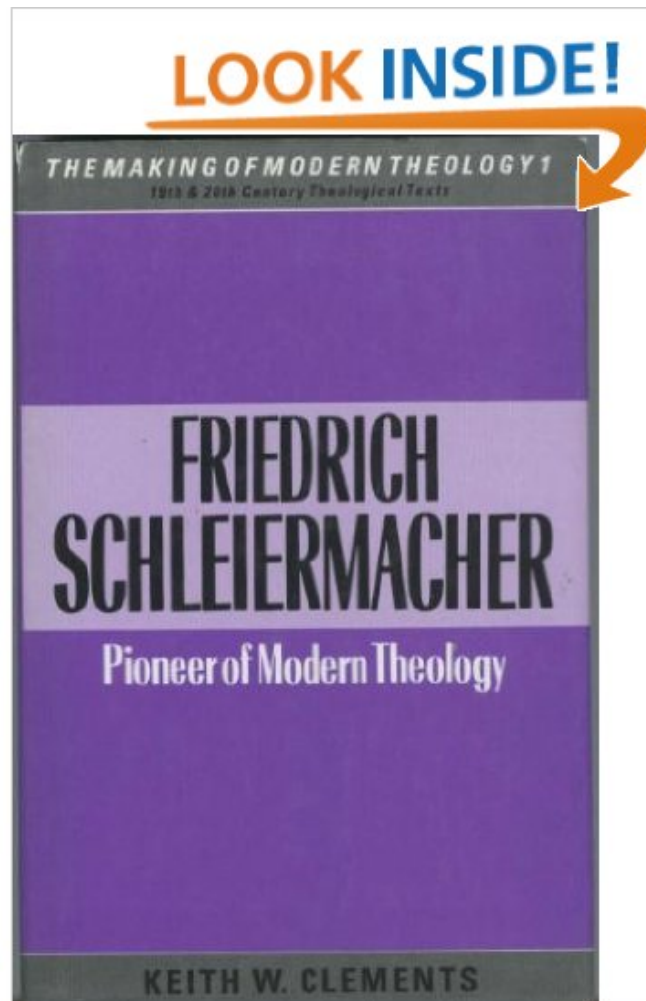


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Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pioneer Of Modern Theology (Making Of Modern Theology)



Synopsis

Schleiermacher, a German theologian at the turn of the nineteenth century, is truly one of the masters of modern theology: he sought to rebuild Protestant theology in the wake of the Enlightenment and of Kant's destruction of traditional metaphysics. He was the founder of "liberal theology" with its emphasis on inner experience and the knowledge of God as mediated through history. This volume concentrates on the key texts and ideas in Schleiermacher's thought. It presents the essential Schleiermacher for students and the general reader. Keith Clements's introductory essay and notes on the selected texts set Schleiermacher in his historical context, chart the development of his thought and indicate the significance of this theology in the development of Christian theology as a whole. Substantial selections from Schleiermacher's work illustrate key themes: Religion as feeling and relationship The distinctiveness of Christianity: redemption through Jesus Christ The nature of theology as reflection and communication Hermeneutics: conversation with history God and the world The person and work of Christ Nation, Church and State Christianity and the religions --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This volume on the works of Freidrich Schleiermacher is part of a series by Fortress Press entitled 'the Making of Modern Theology: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Texts'. Each of the volumes in the series focuses upon one particular theologian of note. These volumes are of use to students,

seminarians, ministers and other readers interested in the development of theological ideas in the modern and postmodern world. Each volume is a reader of key texts from the theologian highlighted - the text entries are annotated a bit by the editors, and the editor of each volume provides an introduction setting the general stage for context and understanding. Editor Keith Clements describes Schleiermacher as being a pioneer of modern theology. Working in the early nineteenth century, Schleiermacher recrafted the discipline of theology in the wake of Kant's radical revision of metaphysics and philosophy. The Enlightenment had taken hold in various ways: in science, in anti-clerical attitude, in philosophy. In Germany, it took a decidedly historical aspect -- religion along with other disciplines were cast in various methods of historical analysis. Interest in ancient cultures, languages, historical studies, politics and more took strong hold in the German academy, meanwhile belittling overtly and covertly the religious establishments Catholic and Protestant. Schleiermacher was a preacher and minister for a time; his lifestyle did not accord well with a typical ministerial prudence, and he soon developed a distaste for the traditional dogmatism of the religious establishment. He gravitated more toward the academic, becoming part of the founding group of the University of Berlin. He was editor of a politically radical newspaper for a time, and involved officially in politics, particularly where the cause of education is involved. His extra-theological career was nearly as impressive as his theological vocation, but it is for this latter that he is remembered today. Schleiermacher's theology turns on various points. He believed strongly that religion is based on feeling, on an immediate consciousness involving the religious person. Theology involves reflection and communication of self and others -- this is epistemologically different from 'knowing'. His methods of reading the Bible, understanding the role of Jesus, and understanding God are deeply relational and emotional, turning strongly on the relationship of humanity through history. Schleiermacher looked for a general 'religiosity' in humanity, and thus discounted the all-important and unique nature of Christianity in favour of a more general sense of religious sentiment in the people. Clements draws passages, arranged topically, from several of Schleiermacher's key works: *On Religion*, *Speeches*; *The Christian Faith*; *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology*; *Hermeneutics - the Handwritten Manuscripts*; *Christmas Eve Dialogue on the Incarnation*; *The Life of Jesus*; and *Selected Sermons*. Love him or hate him, no theologian since Schleiermacher has been able to write without in some manner responding to or reacting to him. As the father of liberal theology (not liberal in the political sense), for a time the dominant theological school in Christianity, Schleiermacher's influence is destined to remain strong for a very long time. Each volume in this series also has a selected bibliography section -- this one for Schleiermacher is divided into works by Schleiermacher (primary sources in English, including

journal articles as well as books), and works about Schleiermacher (secondary sources in English), and finally a few works containing relevant material on Schleiermacher. The book also has several indexes -- a place and subject index, and a names index. This is a very good book for scholarship. The translations of the works from the original German is new, preserving some of the language uses (masculine pronouns for God) while modifying others (gender neutral translations for terms such as Mensch, Menschen).

Schleiermacher sets the tone and pace for later Liberal Theology. This work is worth reading for gaining a proper understanding of even where evangelical theology rests today. The text is highly dense and confusing. Quite possibly, only Hegel is more confusing to read. However, Schleiermacher's view of religion, human nature, scripture, sin, redemption, etc. form the basis for much of modern and post-modern theology. While Clements argues that Schleiermacher isn't a pantheist, his own words actually argue a different case.

This work by its very nature is very hard to understand. Clements tries to make the information assessable and his comments help to direct the student in a positive manner.

A good primer on the life and thought of Schleiermacher.

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