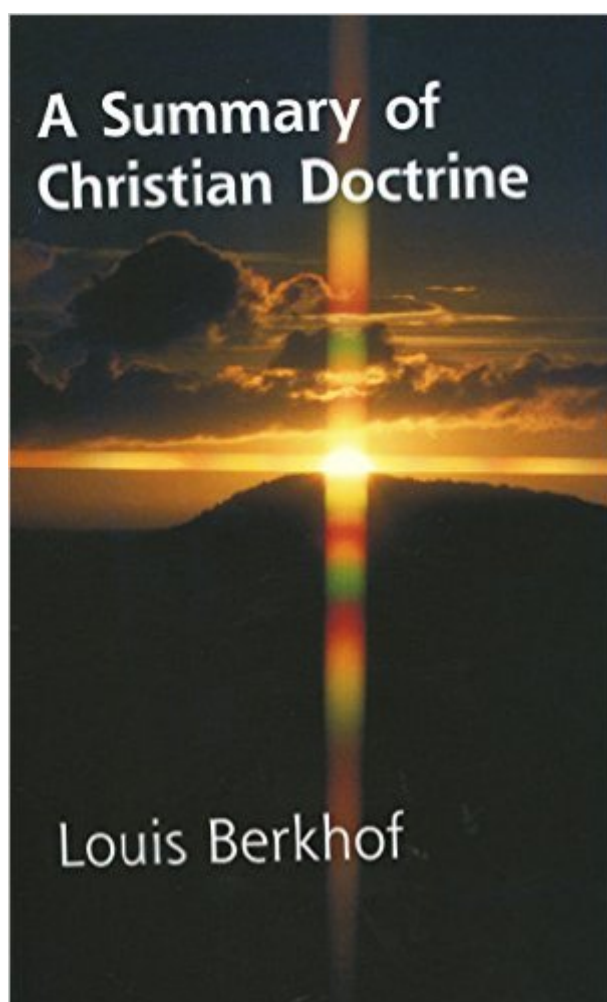


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A Summary Of Christian Doctrine



Synopsis

Just as Berkhof's Systematic Theology is outstanding in its own field, his Summary of Christian Doctrine is unequalled as a popular handbook of Christian doctrine, written from an evangelical and reformed standpoint. Systematically arranged and helpfully sub-divided, A Summary of Christian Doctrine has proved ideal for church study-groups. Passages for memorization and questions for review at the close of each chapter enhance the book's value for the student.

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Customer Reviews

Berkhof's is widely acknowledged to be the best brief systematic theology written in the middle part of this century. It is reliable, balanced, concise. While free of lots of technical excursions, Berkhof was very well versed in the broader theological discussions, both classical and contemporary. As Dutch Reformed, he is more Kuyperian and less rationalist than most Anglo-American reformed theologians who preceded him. Still great for an elder training course, or for a college student preparing for seminary. For something even more basic for interested laymen, try J I Packer's Concise Theology or R C Sproul. For something a little older and longer, A. A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology. Of course, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion is irreplaceable.

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If you are not up to going through Berkof's full 900 page Systematic Theology, this is the volume you want. It is a broad, brief and succinct summary of most of what is found in the big book. I recommend having both and using this smaller version as a type of index. As you read, if you come across things you want to study more fully, you can dive into the main volume. Berkof is an excellent resource for anyone looking into the reformed faith.

Louis Berkhof's "Summary of Christian Doctrine" contains much of what he discusses in far more detail his "Systematic Theology" and presents the material in a way that the beginner can understand. Most of the topics in "Systematic Theology" are found here in summary form, including God and creation, Man in his relation to God, the Person and work of Christ, the application of the work of redemption, the church and the means of grace, and last things. Much like he does in his longer work, Berkhof presents Christian doctrine from a Reformed perspective. At the end of every chapter there are suggestions for further study as well as questions for review. These features are useful both for individual and group study."Summary of Christian Doctrine" is ideal for someone looking for a first introduction to systematic theology. It is brief and written in non-technical language.

This writing by Louis Berkhof is of the best systematic theology to be found, even if it is brief. Berkhof, as a Calvinist, brings glory through creation and redemption history to God in this accurate summa of Christian doctrine. 'Since God not only created the world but also upholds it, we naturally pass from the doctrine of creation to that of divine providence. This may be defined as that work of God in which He preserves all His creatures, is active in all that happens in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end. It includes three elements, of which the first pertains primarily to the being (divine preservation), the second to the activity (divine concurrence), and the third to the purpose (divine government) of all things.' p 55 Compare Grudem's Arminian approach to conversion with Berkhof's classic statement on conversion: 'Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.' Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology p 709 'Conversion is that act of God whereby He causes the regenerated, in their conscious life, to turn to Him in faith and repentance.' Louis Berkhof, A Summary of Christian Doctrine p 121 To be fair, Berkhof also affirms that conversion (e.g., repentance) includes an act of the will, while a more comprehensive reading of Grudem no less affirms that it is an act of God.

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