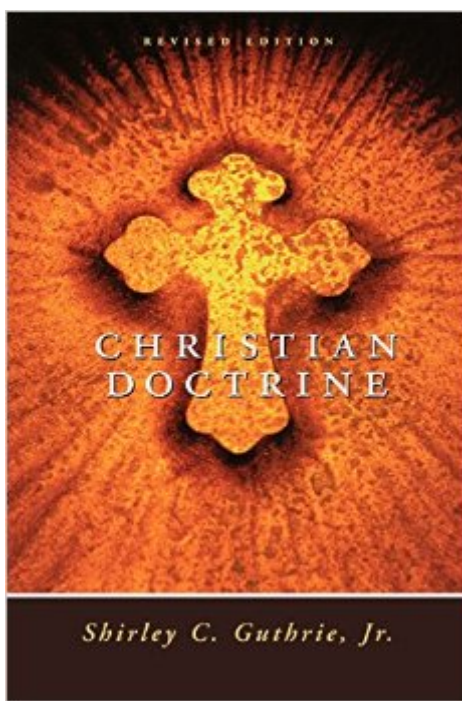


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Christian Doctrine, Revised Edition



Synopsis

Christian Doctrine has introduced thousands of laity, students, and theologians to the tenets of the Christian faith. This edition reflects changes in the church and society since the publication of the first edition and takes into account new works in Reformed theology, gender references in the Bible, racism, pluralism, ecological developments, and liberation theologies.

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Customer Reviews

Guthrie's "Christian Doctrine" is an excellent introduction to Presbyterian/Reformed theology. A student of Karl Barth's, Guthrie's style, clarity, and structure enable this revised version of his Covenant Life Curriculum doctrinal offering to be appropriated by laity and clergy alike. The updated version is inclusive of theological voices that have joined the ongoing debate in the last thirty years. At the end of each chapter questions are provided to enable group study. This is a wonderful study for serious small group or Sunday school class work. A must have for any serious layperson in the Presbyterian/Reformed family.

Shirley Guthrie's introduction to Christian theology was recommended to me by Professor Roger E. Olson as a primer book for a theology/doctrine small group I started at my church, and it most helpfully delivered. Guthrie's book comes from a Presbyterian tradition that cherishes the works of Calvin and the documents of Westminster divines. Though he sees himself in neo-orthodox tradition, he displays a thorough knowledge of the London and Belgic Confessions as well as the Heidelberg Catechism, and remains reverent to them as he provocatively speaks to issues of

racism, economic disparity, and human life. He also is a great writer that communicates complex subjects with remarkable ease. Guthrie's strongest chapter by far is on the Atonement, where he deals with many of the hard problems in a penal-substitution theory that normally obfuscate the fact that God is FOR us and loves us without abandoning the theory altogether. His chapters on the church, Holy Spirit, and the Trinity are also especially strong. Written in the 1960's Guthrie took on some of the hot topics of the day, which shows a sometimes prophetic voice, yet also a dated one. His view of World Council of Churches is awkwardly optimistic, and his weakest chapters are on the subject of Predestination and Biblical studies, though he does have some helpful notes on subjects of general and special revelation. Though some might be scared of Guthrie's neo-orthodox moorings, I can heartily recommend this book to any evangelical who is looking for a bigger picture of Christian theology.

I was expected much when bought this book, a best-seller for more than thirty years and has introduced thousands of laity, students, and theologian to the tenets of the Christian faith. But after read some chapters, I am a little bit disappointed. It is ok in general, that's why I give it 3 stars, but Guthrie just too fast to move his theological topic into the contemporary issues or applications, before he dig deep enough. For example, when he discuss about Trinity, he used so many words to speak about interreligious dialogue and the gender problem, and in chapter about creation, he speak a lot about the exploitation of our natural environment. Of course it is good to write a systematic theology with an eye to today issues but this book is short enough for a systematic theology book, only about 400 pages (content proper) and must deal with so many systematic topics (19 topics) from who is a Theologian to the doctrine of eschatology, so when he emphasis one thing, he must sacrifice the other. I realize that earth pollution is an important issue today but when I buy this book what I want is to understand what the bible said about creation. Furthermore, this book is said to be written in reformed perspective, but if what you mean with reformed perspective is reformed in the line of John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge or Louis Berkhoff, you may quite disagree with some of Guthrie position.

I came across the book in 2002, when I was about to leave my seminary. I was studying at an conservative-evangelical seminary in East Java province. To speak frankly, my teachers never introduced me to this volume. But I found it outstanding! Shirley Guthrie, in my view, succeeds in articulating the Reformed faith for today's Christianity. I seldom find conservative systematic volumes have weighty points on the doctrine of trinity and creation in clear reasoning. With the

revival of Calvin's focal points on those areas (and the connexion between the two), represented by Reformed theologians like Barth, Moltmann, Colin Gunton (the latter of which I pay my deep admiration), Guthrie strongly condensed the much more complicated discourse into the current straight-to-matter-volume. Forgotten by many theologians, that the one-ness of God, according to Guthrie, means worshipping the one-true God whom the Scripture proclaims, and not the "-ism"s (77); thus he doesn't undermine the one-ness to philosophical speculations--God being one in his 'ontos'; henceforth he paves the way the prominence of trinitarian theologian. So interesting while discussing the Holy Spirit, he has spaces on Christian spirituality as "looking outside, this worldly and recognizing the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit." (298-302), and no doubt that this is a staunch Reformed spirituality. For readers--pastors and lay people--please don't have reservation to pick this GREAT volume. Are you seeking a compact volume to nurture your mind, enrich your spirituality and grip your faith on solid foundation? This is ONE to choose.

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