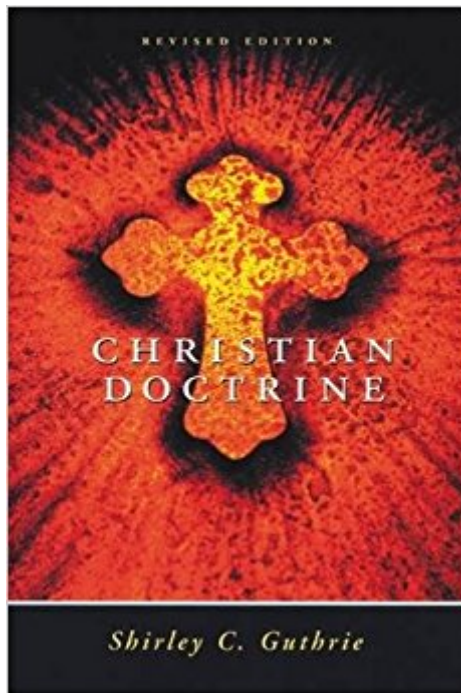




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# Christian Doctrine, Revised Edition



## 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Shirley C. Guthrie Jr. was, for many years, Professor of Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.

This review is... a bit problematic, since as much as I enjoyed this book I felt that there were some things holding it back that kept me from fully "loving it"! Still, I'm going to be generous and give this 5 stars, but all together my true thoughts are that this is a 4.5 star book. So, what exactly is this book about? Well, Christian Doctrine speaks about the general theology of Christianity (obviously), albeit from a Reformed point of view. However, rather than Guthrie writing strictly from a Presbyterian point of view, he instead explains the "Reformed" view is more of a theology, something that any Christian from any denomination can follow and preach. Altogether, his work focuses on the theology of his teacher, Karl Barth, and explains some truths and misconceptions about the Bible. One such example is the idea of evangelization; not only do we go out to convert people so that they will be saved from Hell, but also so that they can know God, be liberated from their sinful sides, and reconcile their relationships with God, people, and the world around them. Altogether, for me, it

was a tremendous book and not only taught me a lot but also helped me strengthen my faith. At the time of reading this book, I was going through a crisis of faith, one that was more about questions over "Is God truly loving?" and "Is Heaven perfect for everyone, or will everyone be the exact same there?" as well as the traditional/typical "Is God real?" questions. After reading this though, it really did help me understand this all better; not to the extent where I would put Christian Doctrine as an equal to the Bible (far from it), but I do think that Guthrie's own wisdom and advice really did help me understand better and I grew in my relationship with God. Along with this, one of the things I respected most about Guthrie was his willingness to become vulnerable--while he was clear on what his theological beliefs were (at least when he decided to share them), at the beginning of the book he does encourage the readers to understand that he is only human and therefore it is okay, even good, to disagree with him. Having been around many theologians who have acted as if they have a monopoly on theology, or at least don't want to ever consider anyone else's view if it didn't align with their own, this was a refreshing and wonderful view. Granted... that doesn't mean this is a perfect book. Putting aside the fact that I have at least some bias, due to this book helping me when I was in a crisis of faith, there are some times where Guthrie's choice of words are... difficult to understand, to say the least. One such example is when he discusses love between humans of the same sex (in a general way, such as through familiar or sibling love), he does state that we shouldn't assume that the Bible blesses homosexual marriage, yet afterwards goes on to state that we shouldn't also believe that these unions should be judged individually and without bias. For me, this was a bit confusing; my best guess is that Guthrie was either saying that we shouldn't assume the Bible has one interpretation about homosexuality or that while same-sex marriage might not be Biblical, homosexual union itself isn't. Even though I don't think this is, ultimately, an incredibly big problem, it still is a heated debate in the contemporary church and some more insight would have been appreciated. Similarly, when he speaks about death, he takes what appears to be a Christian Mortalist/Non-Reductive Physicalist view (that there is no "spiritual" Heaven or Hell, and that when we die we "cease to be" but that the Resurrection will see us completely restored to life), which implies to me him saying that any form of afterlife is nonexistent or is at least doubtful in the Christian tradition. Yet, once again, he states that this view of death does not mean we cannot hope for an "afterlife", which once again could either refer to the Resurrection or could mean he is saying that our souls/consciousness existing after our bodies have died as possible but ultimately unnatural. Altogether, these and other arguments make his writing seem a little odd and confusing. Regardless, I still feel that Christian Doctrine is a great, maybe even underrated, book and many more people should read it--especially in comparison to other theology books (my

recommendations would be *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis and *The Orthodox Way* by Bishop Kallistos Ware). While I can't say, at least with full confidence, that *Christian Doctrine* will become a revolutionary game-changer for the Christian Church or Guthrie will take a place as one of the "great contemporary theologians" like C.S. Lewis or Karl Barth, I will say that this is a book that not only makes for an incredible and easy read but also can open your eyes, and mind, to not just new interpretations, but also more knowledge as to what could be "truly Biblical".

An unusually accessible and impressive volume detailing the typical reformed position on a host of theological issues: creation, predestination, sanctification, the future, sin, etc... The author is an excellent teacher and offers some really compelling justifications for why one's traditionally accepted views on one or more of the book's topics might be ready for an update. Highly recommended.

This is not the dry book that one expects a book entitled "Christian Doctrine" to be. One might think a book on Christian Doctrine could be dry and even divisive, advocating his particular position on doctrinal issues. Instead, he explores doctrinal issues, explores the various positions, offers thought-provoking ideas, and then leaves you to determine your thoughts and position. Well done! A great resource that I will review time and time again.

Purchased book for college course work. Learned about the different doctrines of theology. Book was easy to understand which was excellent because my coursework is online classes. It took the meaning of Jesus to higher level of understanding. I will probably read several more times even though I am finished with my class. Would recommend to this book to anyone that is in ministry.

This is THE go-to book for Presbyterian (Reformed) theology. Shirley was my theology professor in seminary, which does make me a tad prejudice, but he explains tough issues such as predestination with both depth and clarity. For laity and clergy alike. Can't do any better.

Years ago in theological school this was our standard doctrine text. I have used it for many years because it is so accessible, so thorough and so wise. Because it is so readable, I have often loaned it to people who were puzzling over difficult issues (the redemption section, in particular)... and I suppose that is where my original copy went. Now I have this replacement copy - and I will mark down who borrows it from now on!!! Couldn't live without it.

I'd recommend Shirley Guthrie's book on Christian Doctrine to any lay Christian wanting to know more about the basis for their faith. Guthrie studied under the great theologian Karl Barth and was Professor of theology at Columbia and studied himself at Princeton. He presents all the views pro and con and never tells you what to think. An excellent introduction to theological questions.

Absolutely love this book for my theology study. It's from the reformed tradition (mainly Presbyterian) and breaks down doctrine in an easy to understand way.

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