

MANUAL OF REFORMED DOCTRINE

A Comprehensive Guide to Reformed Christian Teaching

Annotated

Louis Berkhof



Ligature

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This edition preserves Berkhof's text while correcting logged transcription faults and adding approved editorial notes and live indexes.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Louis Berkhof (1873–1957) was a pastor, professor, seminary president, and one of the most widely read Reformed theologians of the twentieth century. His clear organization helped generations of ministers, teachers, and students grasp Christian doctrine as one connected body of teaching.

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company first published *Manual of Reformed Doctrine* in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1933. Berkhof designed it as an ordered and comprehensive guide to the main teachings of the Christian faith. Its course moves from revelation and the doctrine of God through creation, humanity, Christ, salvation, the church, the sacraments, and the last things.

This edition follows the 1933 setting. Ligature completed two full proof passes and reconciled the original index against that edition. We preserved Berkhof's wording, argument, review questions, and references for further study. We corrected only recorded transcription faults and clear printer errors.

Ligature adds chapter notes, a detailed contents section, a timeline, live indexes, references, and a biography. These additions support study. They do not replace Berkhof's argument or claim authority over his text.

—The Editors
Ligature Press

PREFACE

After the publication of my “Reformed Dogmatics”, the publisher requested me to prepare for publication a more compendious work on Reformed doctrine, which might be fit for high school and college classes, and might also be used profitably by our older catechumens. Mindful of the great importance of the proper indoctrination of the young people of the Church, I did not have the courage to refuse, but undertook to prepare a brief manual. The work seemed particularly important to me in view of the widespread doctrinal indifference of the present day, of the resulting superficiality and confusion in the minds of many professing Christians, of the insidious errors that are zealously propagated even from the pulpits, and of the alarming increase of all kinds of sects that are springing up like mushrooms on every side. If there ever was a time when the Church ought to guard her precious heritage, the deposit of the truth that was entrusted to her care, that time is now. I have tried to give a rather comprehensive and yet concise statement of our Reformed conception of the truth, and sincerely hope that its clarity may not have suffered through its brevity. At the end of every chapter I have given a list of questions which will help the student to test his knowledge of what it contains. In my references for further study I have been rather sparing, since I did not desire to overload the student in any way. Moreover, I have limited myself almost exclusively to Reformed authors. I hope it will not seem presumptuous that I have invariably referred first of all to my own work on “Reformed Dogmatics,” since this Manual is based on the larger work throughout and can best be understood in the light of its more detailed discussion of Reformed doctrine. May the King of the Church make this Manual a blessed influence in the instruction of our covenant youth.

L. Berkhof
Grand Rapids, Mich.
May 10, 1933.

INTRODUCTION

