

# **CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD**

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Christian doctrine of God by James S. Candlish

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**JAMES S. CANDLISH**

**CHRISTIAN  
DOCTRINE OF GOD**



HAND-BOOKS  
FOR  
BIBLE CLASSES  
*AND PRIVATE STUDENTS.*

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THE  
CHRISTIAN  
DOCTRINE OF GOD

BY  
*Prof. Candlish, D.D.*



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REV. MARCUS DODS, D.D.,  
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WHYTE, D.D.

*CANDLISH ON THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD.*

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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE  
OF GOD.

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## P R E F A C E.



THE object of this volume is to provide a text-book on the first part of Systematic Theology similar to the many compends that were found useful to students in former times, but adapted to the requirements of the present age. Several such works have appeared, and had a large circulation in Germany, such as Hase's *Hutterus Redivivus*, Luthardt's *Compendium der Dogmatik*, and others; but the only book in English exhibiting in brief compass the theology of the Reformed Church is Dr. A. A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology*, which is already a quarter of a century old. A greater adaptation of the form of presenting the unchanging truth of the gospel to the habits of viewing such subjects at present seems to be desirable, especially in the following ways.

The evidences of Christianity cannot be kept so distinct from its contents as was common down to the last generation, for it is increasingly felt that the contents of Christianity are its strongest evidence, commending themselves to the mind, conscience, and heart of man. It is desirable to bring more closely together doctrine and evidence, Apologetic and Systematic Theology: not proving or assuming the absolute authority of Scripture before entering on the study of its contents, and then allowing no appeal save to it; but rather beginning upon more general ground, and showing in regard to each doctrine, as we come to it, that it rests on solid ground of fact, using not merely the evidence of Scripture testimony, which, however, must always hold the chief place in any statement of Christian doctrine; but also, wherever it is possible, the proofs and confirmations arising from nature, experience, and history.

The increased knowledge that we have of non-Christian religions

makes it desirable to utilize, when possible, in Systematic Theology the results of modern research in that department, by comparing the doctrines taught in Scripture, not only with deviations from them within the pale of Christendom, but with the principles of the great ethnic religions and systems of philosophy; and such a use of the Science of Religion, or Comparative Theology, is especially suited for a missionary age of the Church, when she is awake to her high calling, to testify of her Lord and His salvation in the face of the varying creeds of all the nations.

The growth and value of the study of Biblical Theology should also be recognised by the Systematic theologian, and must modify the form and manner of his discussion of doctrines. Account should be taken of the distinctive character of the different portions of Scripture, and their historical relation to each other, as successive stages in a gradual process of education, increasing in clearness and fulness as it goes on; and an endeavour should be made to take as the leading idea of the systematic arrangement, not any dictate of mere philosophy, but some Biblical notion understood in its true historical sense. The notion of the kingdom of God seems to be that which has the highest authority and is most comprehensive; and it has therefore been taken here as the basis of the arrangement and establishment of the various doctrines of Christianity.

Regard for these considerations has led to some deviation from the order and manner in which the body of Christian doctrine has commonly been set forth; but it has not required any alteration of the substance and real meaning of the theology of the Reformation; and if there is occasionally a frank expression of dissent from men and documents of high reputation in the Reformed Churches, that is not inconsistent with great respect for them, and hearty agreement in maintaining the essential doctrines of grace.