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# Outline of Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*

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## PROLEGOMENA

### I. Names Applied to the Systematic Presentation of Theology

### II. The Nature of Dogmas

#### **A. The Name "Dogma":**

1. Derivation and Meaning of the Term
2. The Biblical Use of the Word
3. Various Uses of the Term in Theology

#### **B. The Formal Characteristics of Dogmas**

1. Their Subject-Matter is Derived from Scripture
2. They are the Fruit of Dogmatic Reflection
3. They are Officially Defined by Some Competent Ecclesiastical Body

#### **C. The Necessity of Dogmas:**

1. Causes of Present Day Opposition to Dogmas
2. Dogmas Essential to Christianity

#### **D. The Elements Involved in Dogmas:**

1. The Social Element
2. The Traditional Element

### 3. The Element of Authority

## III. The Idea of Dogmatic Theology

### **A. The Relation of Dogmas to Dogmatics**

1. Dogmas Arise out of the Necessity of the Believing Community
2. Theology May and Has Frequently Served as an Auxiliary in the Formation of Dogmas
3. Dogmatic Theology Finds the Nucleus of its Subject-Matter in the Dogmas of the Church

### **B. The Object of Dogmatic Theology**

1. The Conception of the Object of Dogmatic Theology in the Early Church
2. The Development of a New Conception in Modern Subjective Theology
3. Recognition of the Objective Character of Dogmatic Theology in Recent Times

### **C. Theology as Science**

1. The Scientific Character of Theology Denied
2. The Possibility of Maintaining the Scientific Character of Theology

### **D. The Encyclopedic Place of Dogmatics:**

1. The Group of Studies to Which it Belongs
2. The Relation of Dogmatics to Apologetics
3. The Relation of Dogmatics to Ethics

## IV. The Task, Method and Distribution of Dogmatics:

### **A. The Task of Dogmatics**

1. Modern Conceptions of the Task of Dogmatics
2. The Reformed Conception of the Task of Dogmatics

### **B. The Method of Dogmatics**

1. Various Views as to the Source from Which the Content of Dogmatics is Derived
2. The Manner in Which the Material is Secured and Treated

### **C. Distribution of the Material of Dogmatics**

1. The Trinitarian Method
2. The Analytical Method
3. The Covenantal Method
4. The Christological Method
5. The Method Based on the Kingdom Idea
6. The Synthetic Method

#### V. History of Dogmatics:

##### **A. The Period of the Old Catholic Church**

1. Origen's *Peri Archon*.
2. Augustine's *Enchiridion*...
3. John of Damascus' *Ekdosis*...

##### **B. The Period of the Middle Ages**

1. The Works of Anselm
2. The *Sentences*
3. Alexander of Hales' *Summa*
4. Thomas' *Summa*

##### **C. The Period of the Reformation**

1. Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*
2. Zwingli's *Commentarius de vera et falsa religione*
3. Calvin's *Institutio Christinae Religionis*

##### **D. The Period of Protestant Scholasticism**

1. Dogmatical Study Among the Lutherans
2. Dogmatical Study Among the Reformed
3. Dogmatical Study Among the Roman Catholics

##### **E. The Period of Rationalism and Supernaturalism**

1. Pietist Dogmatics
2. Rationalistic Dogmatics

3. Supernaturalist Dogmatics

**F. The Period of Modern Theology**

1. Schleiermacher and his School
2. The Speculative School
3. The neo-Lutheran School
4. The Mediating School
5. The School of Ritschl
6. Reformed Theology

## THE PRINCIPIA OF DOGMATICS

I. Principia in General**A. *Principia* in Non-Theological Sciences**

1. Definition of *Principium*
2. Definition of the non-Theological Sciences

**B. *Principia* in Religion or Theology**

1. God is the *Principium Essendi*
2. The *Principium Cognoscendi Externum* is God's Special Revelation
3. The *Principium Cognoscendi Internum* is Faith

II. Religion**A. The Essence of Religion**

1. The derivation of the word "religion"
2. Scriptural terms for religion
3. Historical conceptions of the essence of religion

**B. The Seat of Religion**

1. Its seat in the intellect
2. Its seat in the will
3. Its seat in the feelings
4. Its seat in the heart

**C. The Origin of Religion**

1. The historical method
2. The Psychological Method
3. The Theological Method

**III. The Principia Cognoscendi Externum (Revelation)****A. Name and Concept of Revelation**

1. Connection between religion and revelation
2. The general idea of revelation
3. Historical conceptions of revelation
4. The idea of revelation in Modern theology
5. The proper conception of the nature of revelation
6. Distinctions applied to the idea of revelation

**B. General Revelation**

1. The value and significance of general revelation
2. The insufficiency of general revelation

**C. Special Revelation**

1. The scriptural idea of revelation
2. The means of special revelation
3. The contents of special revelation
4. The purpose of special revelation

**D. Special Revelation and Scripture**

1. Historical views of the relations between the two
2. The Reformed conception of the relations between the two

**IV. The Inspiration of Scripture****A. The Doctrine of Inspiration in History**

1. Before the Reformation
2. After the Reformation

**B. Scriptural Proof for the Inspiration of the Bible**

1. Proofs for the inspiration of the secondary authors of Scripture considered apart from their writing
2. Proofs for the inspiration of the secondary authors in writing the books of the Bible

**C. Nature and Extent of Inspiration**

1. The nature of inspiration
2. The extent of inspiration

**D. Attempts to Discredit the Doctrine of Inspiration**

1. They who defend it are reasoning in a circle
2. Jesus did not teach the doctrine of inspiration
3. The phenomena of Scripture contradict the doctrine
4. The doctrine applies only to the autographa and is therefore impractical

**E. Objections to the Doctrine of Inspiration**

1. The general nature of the objections
2. General remarks on the objections

**F. The Perfections of Scripture**

1. The divine authority of Scripture
2. The necessity of Scripture
3. The perspicuity of Scripture
4. The sufficiency of Scripture

***V. Principium Cognoscendi Internum*****A. The Human Understanding**

1. Historical statement of this position
2. Evaluation

**B. Speculative Reason**

1. Historical statement of this position
2. Evaluation

**C. Devout Feeling or Religious Intuition**

1. Historical statement of this position
2. Evaluation

**D. The Moral Consciousness**

1. Historical statement of this position
2. Evaluation

**E. Faith or the Proper *Principium Internum***

1. The name of the *principium cognoscendi internum*
2. Distinctive nature of the knowledge of faith

**F. The Ground of Faith**

1. The doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* in the church
2. Mistaken notions of the *testimonium*
3. Correction view of the *testimonium*

## Part One: Doctrine of God

## [SECTION 1: THE BEING OF GOD]

I. The Existence of God

- A. The Place of the Doctrine of God in Dogmatics
- B. The Scriptural Proof for the Existence of God
- C. The Denial of God's Existence
- D. The So-Called Rational Proofs

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- A. God Incomprehensible but Knowable**
- B. Denial of God's Knowability**
- C. Self-Revelation the Prerequisite of all Knowledge of God**

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