



Dennison, James T., ed.

The Letters of Geerhardus Vos

Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006. Pp. 274. Paper. \$29.99. ISBN 9780875521879.

Nick Norelli

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

The Letters of Geerhardus Vos is much more than the title would suggest. The book is divided into four principal parts. The first, “The Life of Geerhardus Vos” is a detailed bibliography of Vos. The reader is told that this is the “fullest biographical article on Vos to date.” Some parts can be a bit tedious to work through, and Vos wasn’t the most exciting person to have ever lived, but Dennison paints a clear portrait of a man who was under-appreciated in his day and still rather obscure at present.

The second section, “The Writings of Geerhardus Vos” is a detailed bibliography of all of Vos’ extant writings. Dennison records them chronologically and includes everything from Vos’ letters to his book reviews, journal articles, monographs, and poetry. There is also a list of miscellaneous manuscripts, class lecture notebooks belonging to Vos, and finally a list of select resources about Vos. It’s interesting to see what Vos was writing throughout the various periods of his life.

The third section, “The Letters of Geerhardus Vos” is what the title already has the reader interested in. It was a trip to see Vos corresponding with theological giants such as Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, B. B. Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen. The formality of the letters is also something to behold. It’s very different than what we’re generally used to in modern times when we rattle off a quick text message or email. If I’m honest, the novelty of the letters wore off after the first couple of dozen. The most interesting thing about them is just how different a time it was when Vos lived and wrote.

The fourth and final section, “The Poetry of Geerhardus Vos” is the shortest of the book. There are only four poems recorded: “The Sword;” “A Song of Nativity;” “Kerstfeest-Gebed” (Eng. “Christmas Prayer”); and “The Magnificat.” The third poem is written entirely in Dutch. The poetry is fine for what it is, but as one not terribly interested in poetry this section was lost on me.

In all this is a volume that repays the time spent reading it. The biography is the best section, hands down, and has me geared up to finally dive into Vos’ larger works, most of which I’ve acquired over the last year. Dennison is to be congratulated for putting together such a handy guide to the life and work of this obscure theologian.