

with orthodox teaching in the Bible “would find these honest revelations of this exponent of the wisdom movement deeply troubling and thus be inclined to accept the epilogist’s advice to be wary of the sages’ words” (p 173). At the end of this long study the author comes to the fourfold conclusion that Qoheleth does not denounce wisdom directly, that he nowhere “admits the possibility of divine revelation” (p 235), that the only viable course of action for Qoheleth is to enjoy life, and that Qoheleth’s conclusions are incompatible with the teaching of the remainder of the Bible.

Indices of authors and of scripture referred to, appear on the last pages of the book. The contents of Shields’ thesis will give rise to intense debate. His book is well researched, but one often gets the idea that he is forcing certain arguments in his favor. His idea of a single theology of the whole Old Testament as being “the orthodox” theology of revelation and covenant commands, repetitively used to prove his point of Ecclesiastes’ foreignness vis à vis the rest of the Bible, opens itself to severe criticism. A long history of Old Testament Theology is simply ignored by his idea of “orthodoxy”. Questions that beg answering are for example why Proverbs, with its “naïve” wisdom and Job, with its unorthodox theology, are still part of the canon although they represent a stage of wisdom that has been overtaken and why they are not also recontextualized in the same way that Ecclesiastes is? These questions merely constitute the beginning of the debate.



Van Ruler, A A 2007 – *Verzameld Werk, deel I: De aard van de theologie* (Besorgd door Dr D van Keulen)

Publisher: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum

Reviewer: Dr J P (Kobus) Labuschagne (University of Pretoria)

Arnold Albert van Ruler (1908-1970) is regarded by many as one of the three great Dutch “*Hervormde*” (*Reformed*) theologians of the 20th century – that is together with O Noordmans and KH Miskotte. It is his theological depth and insight, his widely accepted theological influence and his whole-hearted involvement in church-life that earned him this high regard. In spite of contemporary postmodern disinterest in *systematic* theology, many still admire and appreciate Van Ruler for his kind of theology that is deeply rooted in the tradition of the *catholica* – the Christian church through the centuries – and more specifically the *Reformed tradition* with its origin in the 16th century Reformation.

As a result of what can be seen as an ongoing interest in Van Ruler’s work and additionally even as a renewed interest in the works of Van Ruler, a group of concerned scholars in 2005 finally decided that Van Ruler’s work should be recompiled and published. Dr Dirk van Keulen was appointed as editor and he was assisted by a commission, which included the following members: Dr WJ van Asselt, Dr P van den Heuvel and Drs J Stelwagen. *De Aard van de Theologie* is the first of 7 volumes, and was published in July 2007. The others, which are to follow in due course, are:

- Volume 2: *Openbaring en Heilige Skrif*
- Volume 3: *God, schepping, mens, zonde*
- Volume 4: *Christus, de Geest en het heil*
- Volume 5: *Kerk, sacramenten en de laaste dingen*

Boekbesprekings / Book Reviews

Volume 6: *Cultuur, samelewing, onderwys, politiek*

Volume 7: *Reformatie, oecumene en gesprek met anderen*

Volume 1 – *De Aard van de Theologie* – has a lengthy introduction of 54 pages and deals with the “*nature of theology*”. The book of 550 pages comprises 4 parts:

(i) *University and science* – This part gives an insight into Van Ruler’s understanding of university and science, and focuses on an explanation of truth and on the presuppositions for scientific study.

(ii) *Theological science* – This part includes his views on the relationship of science and faith, his views on the relationship of philosophy and theology (which clearly shows Karl Barth’s influence), his views on the methodology of dogmatics, his teachings on the importance of a Trinitarian theology (which reflects his connections with the Reformation), his emphasis on Christocentricity, and his explanations concerning science in theology (in which his deviation from Barth comes to the fore).

(iii) *The study of theology* – This part includes some unknown Van Ruler-texts, which reflect on the place theology takes in the university context, and also explain his understanding of and preference for the *duplex ordo* structure of the theological faculties at the universities of Utrecht, Leiden, Groningen and Amsterdam. The *duplex ordo* system is known for the distinction it makes between scientific disciplines and church subjects in theological studies.

(iv) *Theology 1930-1970* – In this section the attention is drawn to the status of theological science and theological studies in the Dutch culture from 1930 to 1970, and also to new questions and developments in theology.

The book is important and recommended for the understanding of Dutch *Reformed* theology in the 20th century, and is certainly a valuable contribution. Van Ruler was indeed one of the great Dutch theologians of the 20th century.



Afrikaanse omsetting: Piet Venter, Johann Symington & Amie van Wyk 2007 – *Augustinus – Belydenisse: Getuienis oor ’n lewe in God*

Uitgewer: Lux Verbi. 475 Bladsye. Prys R139.95.

Resensent: Ds C E C Hertzog (Middelburg)

Augustinus is een van die bekendste kerkvaders en sy *Belydenisse* een van die klassieke werke in die Christelike tradisie. Dit word onder andere duidelik uit die feit dat geen kerkvader so dikwels deur Calvyn aangehaal word as Augustinus nie. En dit bykans 1200 jaar nadat die werk voltooi is! Geen wonder dat Noordmansk gesê het dat elke teologiese student die werk ten minste drie keer behoort te lees nie. Danksy ’n vertaling met die medewerking van Piet Venter, Johann Symington en Amie van Wyk is hierdie geestelike besinning nou in Afrikaans beskikbaar.

Augustinus vertel van sy eg persoonlike soeke na die waarheid sedert sy kinderdae. Alhoewel dit mag lyk of die verhaal ’n outobiografie kan wees bevat dit veel meer as ’n lewenskets. Op die agteromslag van die hardebandboek word Augustinus se soeke soos volg verduidelik: