

tre devrait être vue comme une orientation à la théologie paulinienne. Les débutants apprécieront le style clair et l'exégèse exemplaire, ils tireront profit des remarques d'ordre secondaire, des translitérations, des définitions et de l'évaluation des traductions anglaises de l'épître. D'autres tireront parti de la prise en compte des travaux récents en anglais (les travaux des spécialistes de langue allemande et française sont rarement cités) et des informations sur les auteurs et œuvres hellénistiques. L'absence de débat avec les spécialistes fait que des opinions sont parfois rejetées sans autre. Ce commentaire est idéal pour une première approche ou pour rafraîchir sa connaissance de l'épître aux Romains.

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Professor Keck intended this commentary on Romans to meet "the needs and interests of theological students", to whom he has been no stranger throughout the years. Keck discloses his respect for these students and for the text in his call for the student to read Romans first of all, and in his conclusion, an explicit encouragement, for them to read it "again, and again – as an act of praise" (p. 385). Further, rather than merely dispensing facts, Keck aims to lead the students to interact with the apostle's letter so they themselves can decide, "whether, and to what extent, Paul was right" (pp. 33-34). To help them in this process, Professor Keck does give his students guidelines; for example, he claims that Romans should be seen as an "orientation" to Pauline theology, rather than a summary of it. The most noteworthy theme of this orientation, he posits, is how the cross and the empty grave stress the character of God: Romans is "theocentric" because it is first "christomorphic" (p. 37). According to Keck, it is this theme that unfolds as Paul thinks from solution to plight and argues from plight to solution (p. 146). Further, Keck emphasises the importance of understanding the letter as a whole, "for it is more than the sum of its parts" (p. 21). He also hesitates to compare other Pauline works to Romans, lest one misread Romans due to comments meant for another time and place; however, he does compare other Jewish literature (from other times and places) to the letter.

Newer students to New Testament studies will find at least five aspects of this commentary beneficial. 1) Keck writes in a style that is conversational, captivating, and clear. 2) He includes parenthetical remarks to define terms many commentators assume the reader already knows (e.g. "God-fearer" and "paronomasia"). 3) For those unskilled in Greek, he transliterates, defines, and provides word studies for key terms such as *epithymia*. 4) As the book exemplifies biblical exegesis, students can glean how one seasoned scholar approaches a text. It does not demonstrate enough, however, the contemporary application gained from this exegesis. 5) The greatest contribution is Keck's frequent evaluations, critiques, and comparisons of common English translations with one other. This comparison becomes especially enlightening in his treatment of chapters 13-15.

Those familiar with Romans will enjoy Keck's interaction with the most recent English works on the letter (unfortunately, he rarely cites German or French scholarship) as well as his frequent, but not overwhelming, discussions of relevant Hellenistic works and authors; he especially refers to *Wisdom* but also cites other apocryphal works (e.g. *Susanna*, *4 Macc.*), pseudepigraphal writings (e.g. *2 Enoch*, *Jubilees*) and popular authors (e.g. Philo and Plato). One might become frustrated, however, with the lack of debate with both recent and standard scholarship. This is undoubtedly due to the desire to be concise and is perhaps more of a critique of the series rather than the commentator himself; nevertheless, it often leads to sweeping dismissals of views, some of which are commonly held and others of which are greatly debated. For instance, Keck holds "unacceptable" the view held by "many scholars" that 2.14-16 refers to the Christian gentile; however, he does not interact with any of the commentators who hold this view. Moreover, he too quickly passes over debates such as the classification of the genitive *for pistis Iesou Christou*, the identity of the *ego* in Rom 7:7-25, and the interpretation of Christ in Rom. 9:4. Further, he inserts general statements without qualification such as, "Everything Paul says about the Law is negative" (p. 118). The danger, here, is: rather than one understanding Romans and all of its complexities, one could come away only understanding Keck's simplified interpretation of it. To be fair, Keck does discuss some passages in more detail as he highlights their intricacies; for instance, he spends considerable time attempting to account historically for Rom. 13:1-7 and humbly concludes that in the end, "the passage will be more successful in thwarting a convincing explanation than the experts in achieving it" (p. 325). More examples like this – where a master of biblical theology candidly wrestles with the text – would have further enriched this book.

In light of the above and with the awareness that it has been simplified in places, the size and style of this commentary make it ideal for an introduction to or review of Romans. Throughout the years, Professor Keck has contributed so much to scholarship, and with this book, his legacy as one who handles the word without shame and with precision and who seeks to equip students to do the same, continues.

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### *The Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics*

Meilaender, G. & Werpehowski, W (eds.)

Oxford, OUP, 2005, HB, ix + 546, £75.00, ISBN: 0-19-926211-X

#### SUMMARY

A substantial guide to the academic field of theological ethics through the medium of originally commissioned essays by (chiefly) North American thinkers, giving a flavour not only of material differences in the constructive projects



of practitioners, but also in the variety of formal methodologies and styles of writing.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ein substanzieller Führer durch das akademische Gebiet der theologischen Ethik mittels neu in Auftrag gegebener Essays von (hauptsächlich) nordamerikanischen Denkern, der einen Geschmack nicht nur für die materiellen Unterschiede der konstruktiven Projekte der Fachleute gibt, sondern auch für die Vielfalt formaler Methoden und Schreibstile.

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage est un guide substantiel pour pénétrer le champ académique de l'éthique théologique. La rédaction de ses articles a été confiée (principalement) à des penseurs nord-américains. Il donne un aperçu non seulement des différences quant aux projets concrets mis en œuvre par les praticiens, mais aussi quant à la variété des méthodologies formelles et des styles rédactionnels.

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Few of us have books written with us explicitly in mind, but, this Handbook format from OUP is aimed at neither beginners, nor established scholars, but at 'those who know a good bit, who would be in a position to do advanced work in a field, and who might be helped and stimulated by a survey of the field.' The editors 'think and hope that this volume will do that for readers interested in the field of theological ethics.'<sup>(1)</sup> And that is me in a nutshell. As a postgraduate student I am the intended reader, so I obligingly read in the 'better' way recommended by the editors, taking 'the handbook whole, to read it as a mode of entry into the focused (yet quite diverse) conversation that is the continuing tradition of discourse we call "theological ethics"'<sup>(4)</sup>.

The editors' introduction sets out the ambitions of the Handbook. Whilst each of the 30 essays included is commissioned with permission to 'develop their own constructive arguments' (1), it is the collection as a whole that is intended to provide the survey of the field. So the structure of the collection, set out in its contents, gives a good indication of these aims, at least in outline, against which to judge the execution. Taking their guidelines from Calvin's priority of knowledge of God to knowledge of self, Part I presents 5 essays under the title *Dogmatics and Ethics*, dealing with 'Creation', 'Redemption', 'Eschatology', 'Ecclesiology' and 'Divine Grace'. Part II covers *Sources of Moral Knowledge*, covering 'Scripture', 'Divine Commands', 'Tradition in the Church', 'Reason and Natural Law' and 'Experience'. Part III on *The Structure of the Christian Life*, offering 'Vocation', 'Virtue', 'Rules', 'Responsibility' and 'Death', is deliberately paired with Part IV on *The Spirit of the Christian Life* treating the explicitly theological loci of 'Faith', 'Hope' and 'Love'. Part V moves into '*Spheres of the Christian Life*' set up as essays of the 'Christians and...' format, taking in 'Government', 'Family', 'Economics', 'Culture' and 'the Church'.

Before looking at the sixth section we can offer a general comment: it is not only the topics that represent the variety of the field, but also the style, quality and boldness of the writing. We find confident dogmatic assertion from the likes of Gene Outka (Faith), John Webster (Hope), and, respectively, Sowle Cahill, Reno, Tanner, Wannenwetsch and Meilaender in Part I. We even get to discussion of actual ethical problems by Philip Turner ('Tradition in the Church' – marriage), Amy Laura Hall ('Love' – disability), and Darlene Fozard Weaver ('Death' – care of the dying). However, the relative lack of this practical detail (excluding the essay on economics which is perhaps too narrowly focused on a detailed discussion of Cost-Benefit Analysis) in Part V – which would be the natural home for such discussion – is frustrating to the reader who might suppose that theological ethics should find something to say about those matters that seem problematic to Christians and other actors in the world. That said, Douglas Ottati's essay on 'Experience' demonstrates the vice-like hold of a particular form of generic human sciences-speak that this reviewer finds quite suffocating: e.g. 'the interpreted experiences of different persons and groups are often responsive to relatively common situations and realities.' Which is not to dismiss it, but to highlight the breadth of the approaches represented in the volume and argue positively for a resource that helps the student to acquire a taste for a certain theological flavour of argument and style of writing. On the thinness of the constructive work that the editors promised, we might (generously) concede that this is the limitation of the short essay format, although sufficient counter-examples present themselves to challenge the less adventurous – exemplified by the uncontroversial (!) master-essayist, Stanley Hauerwas, making a collaborative appearance in the last essay of the collection.

Nevertheless it is in this last Part VI that the collection loses its way somewhat. It takes a different turn to survey *The Structure of Theological Ethics: Books that Give Shape to the Field*. Chapters deal with Troeltsch's *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*; Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, Kirk's *The Vision of God*, H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*; Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man*; Mahoney's *The Making of Moral Theology*; and *Catholic Social Teaching*. Briefly, whilst the essays are good and interesting in themselves they seem a little out of place. The student, particularly if not North American (the background of most of the contributors) will be asking if they *did* shape the field they are entering and if they still *do*? One may also question why so few of the contributors from the first five parts make any reference to them in their own essays? Another book entirely, for students of theological ethics, would much more usefully gather these essays together with theological reflections on influential works by, say, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, Heidegger, MacIntyre, Foucault, or the earlier greats of the Christian tradition, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, etc.

Overall, this volume displays a pleasing conception



which, in its execution, stimulates more than it frustrates.

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***A Portrayal of Trust:  
The Theme of Faith in the Hezekiah Narratives***

**David Bostock**

Great Britain: Paternoster, 2006, xx + 251 pp.

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**SUMMARY**

In this book, the author proposes that faith is the key theological motif in the Hezekiah narratives. Most of the book focuses on the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18-20, and the author concludes that Hezekiah is portrayed as a man who was unwavering in his trust in YHWH. The final two chapters consider the relationship between the Hezekiah narratives and their greater contexts (the book of Kings and the book of Isaiah). The book may be helpful to those interested in what the Old Testament has to teach us about faith.

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

In diesem Buch schlägt der Autor vor, dass Glaube das theologische Schlüsselmotiv der Hiskia-Erzählungen ist. Der Großteil des Buches konzentriert sich auf die Charakterisierung Hiskias in 2. Könige 18-20, und der Autor kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Hiskia als ein Mann charakterisiert wird, der in seinem Vertrauen auf Jahwe standfest war. Die beiden abschließenden Kapitel betrachten die Beziehung zwischen den Hiskia-Erzählungen und ihren größeren Kontexten (das Buch der Könige und Jesaja). Das Buch kann denen eine Hilfe sein, die an der alttestamentlichen Lehre vom Glauben interessiert sind.

**RÉSUMÉ**

D. Bostock considère que la foi est le motif théologique clé dans les récits du règne d'Ézékias. Il consacre la plus grande partie de l'ouvrage à la manière dont Ézékias est présenté en 2 Rois 18-20 et conclut qu'on a là le portrait d'un homme à la foi inébranlable en Yahvé. Dans les deux derniers chapitres, il étudie la relation entre les récits du règne d'Ézékias et les contextes plus larges (le livre des Rois et celui d'Ésaïe). L'ouvrage est intéressant par son apport sur l'enseignement de l'Ancien Testament concernant la foi.

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As the title suggests, the book explores the characterization of Hezekiah in order to see what it has to teach us about faith. Using the Kings version as the base text, the author notes that given the fact that the verb *'mn* ("trust") is not used in the book of Kings outside of 2 Kings 18-19, the frequent use of the verb in those chapters (nine times) indicates that *'mn* is the key theological motif (*Leitmotif*) in these narratives.

The author deals with the received form of the text

from a literary perspective characterized as narrative criticism. The bulk of the book consists of an exegesis of 2 Kings 18-20. In chapter 2, careful attention is paid to the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:1-12 and the author concludes that the thrust of these verses is to show the reader that Hezekiah's trust in YHWH was unequalled in other kings, and as such, Hezekiah is an example of a man of faith *par excellence*.

In the next chapter, Hezekiah's response to the "Assyrian Threat" in 2 Kings 18:13-19:37 is examined. The contrast between the two main characters of this section (Sennacherib and Hezekiah) enhances Hezekiah's portrayal in the narrative. While Sennacherib is a dishonourable, arrogant aggressor who accepts tribute from Hezekiah and yet still attempts to overthrow Hezekiah and the city, the fact that Hezekiah goes to the Temple to pray confirms that his trust is in YHWH since prayer and faith are intertwined.

Although *'mn* does not appear in 2 Kings 20, the author contends that the chapter should not be left out of the discussion. He notes that Hezekiah's illness may be symbolic of the Assyrian attack, while, again, his prayer to YHWH shows evidence of his faith in a time of attack. Even though Hezekiah is sick, he proves that he believes God can act in a miraculous way by choosing the harder option of moving the shadow backward. As such, even in his sickness, Hezekiah is depicted as a man of faith in YHWH. 2 Kings 20:12-21 is important to the discussion as it seems to jeopardize the author's thesis that Hezekiah is consistently portrayed as a man of faith. In this section Hezekiah seemingly is found to be at fault for showing the Babylonians the treasures of the temple, hence Isaiah's prophecy of the coming destruction and exile of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's answer that he is pleased that destruction will come in his sons' days and not in his lifetime often leads scholars to conclude that he is a selfish individual with no regard to his sons. Rejecting this interpretation, however, the author concludes that, "Hezekiah's response expresses his trust in God and gratitude for the peace and security during this reign, knowing that the God who has delayed judgment once is ready, willing and able to do the same, if his people and especially their rulers will respond in a proper way towards YHWH" (p. 144).

The final two chapters are devoted to the relationship between the Hezekiah narratives and their wider contexts in which they are set (the book of Kings and the book of Isaiah). The author suggests that the book of Kings is a polemic against worshipping other gods and is an exhortation to worship YHWH. Hezekiah, therefore, is the ultimate example of one who fully trusted in YHWH. In the book of Isaiah, the literary relationship between the "royal narrative" of Isaiah 36-39 and the other royal narrative found in Isaiah 7 is considered. The author proposes that the two narratives are connected once again through an implicit contrast. Whereas in chapter 7 Ahaz is the supreme example of a man who lacks faith, in chapters 36-39 Hezekiah is the supreme