In this religious and moral critique of liberalism, Travis Kroeker analyses how religio-ethical discourse is changed when it is translated into the economic policy discourse of North American liberalism. Focusing on influential representatives of contemporary Christian social ethics, he examines attempts to reconcile prophetic religion and public policy.

Kroeker argues that in trying to make their theological ethics relevant to economic policy Christian social ethicists have accepted assumptions that are incompatible with theological beliefs. Starting with the Social Gospel movement, he discusses the positions of theologian Walter Rauschenbusch and Canadian politician James Shaver Woodsworth. He then turns to Christian Realism and compares the views of Reinhold Niebuhr with those of Gregory Vlastos, the central figure in the Canadian Fellowship for a Christian Social Order. He also examines recent pastoral letters on the economy by the Canadian and U.S. conferences of Roman Catholic bishops.

In conclusion, Kroeker suggests an alternative theological approach based on the classical Christian realism of Augustine that might better address the moral malaise of liberal political economy.

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  P. Travis Kroeker
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Christian Ethics and Political Economy in North America

A Critical Analysis

P. TRAVIS KROEKER
To my parents

Anna Klassen Kroeker
Peter Lawrence Kroeker