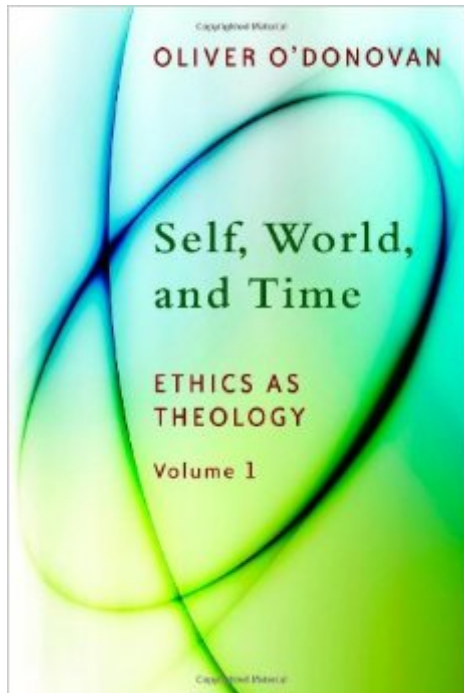


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Self, World, And Time: Volume 1: Ethics As Theology: An Induction



Synopsis

Self, World, and Time takes up the question of the form and matter of Christian ethics as an intellectual discipline. What is it about? How does Christian ethics relate to the humanities, especially philosophy, theology, and behavioral studies? How does its shape correspond to the shape of practical reason? In what way does it participate in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Oliver O'Donovan discusses ethics with self, world, and time as foundation poles of moral reasoning, and with faith, love, and hope as the virtues anchoring the moral life. Blending biblical, historico-theological, and contemporary ideas in its comprehensive survey, Self, World, and Time is an exploratory study that adds significantly to O'Donovan's previous theoretical reflections on Christian ethics.

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Customer Reviews

Extraordinary book. O'Donovan writes remarkably dense, lucid, and beautiful prose. I can't remember the last time I felt this sad at reaching a book's end. The six chapters are as follows: "Moral Awareness," "Moral Thinking," "Moral Communication," "Moral Theory," "The Task of Moral Theology," and "The Trajectory of Faith, Love, and Hope." This book is "an 'Induction,' to pave the way for further 'Explorations.' It is concerned primarily with the form and matter of Christian Ethics as a discipline, in relation to its material (moral thought and moral teaching), its setting among the humanistic faculties of study, and its proper shape, a triadic trajectory in which self, world, and time are reflected and restored" (xi). O'Donovan argues for wakefulness / awareness as the fundamental metaphor for the moral life. "What seems like the beginning is not really a beginning at all," he says.

"We wake to find things going on, and ourselves going on in the midst of them" (2). And, this being so, "we know we must give our attention to being wider awake" (4). To what must we give attention? To the self as agent, to the world as the field of action, and to time as the future-present moment in which to "do something ... to endure before the throne of judgment" (17). He closes the chapter by noting some of the "moral diseases" that result from ignoring one or two of these foci of our awareness. "Good moral theory, like moral experience itself, triangulates" (18). Chapters 2-4 nicely illuminate the terrain of Christian Ethics, but they are less central to the thrust of this book than Chapters 1, 5-6.

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