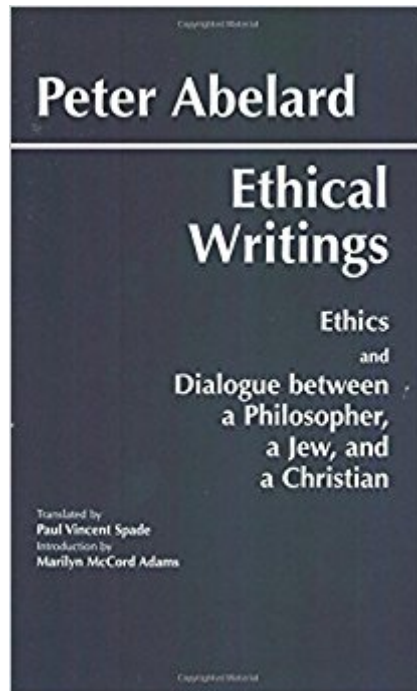


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Ethical Writings: 'Ethics' And 'Dialogue Between A Philosopher, A Jew And A Christian'



Synopsis

Abelard's major ethical writings--Ethics, or Know Yourself, and Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian, are presented here in a student edition including cross-references, explanatory notes, a full table of references, bibliography, and index.

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Customer Reviews

Ethical Writings: 'Ethics' and 'Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian' by Peter Abelard, Translated by Paul Vincent Spade, Introduced by Marilyn McCord Adams. Most major theologians have written on ethics, but Abelard's works are more important to his corpus of work than with most others. The simple reason is that so few of his works are available to us in English, and many that are were left incomplete by Abelard. The more complex reason is that Abelard's signature doctrine of atonement, which he posed as an alternative to the equally famous doctrine by Anselm of Canterbury, is based primarily on the nature of virtue ethics. What makes it even more modern sounding is that it is based on a theory of philosophical psychology and intention which is as modern as tomorrow. Both works in this volume were left incomplete by Abelard, but the volume contains all we have. The heart of Abelard's theory of intention in 'Ethics' is that sin is based on intention, not on the act, or even on the disposition to do the act. An inference he makes from this is that the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus were not acting sinfully by that act. They were acting lawfully. One wonders what Abelard would have thought of the thousands of Nazis who professed that they were 'just following orders' before WW II, in persecuting the Jews and others. But this position is a lynchpin to Abelard's doctrine of atonement, whereby one is changed by the love of

God to intend to do his will. In his 'Dialogue', the author, Abelard does not play the Philosopher. Rather, he plays the mediator in the conversation about ethics. It should be no surprise that the Christian comes out of the dialogue with the advantage.

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