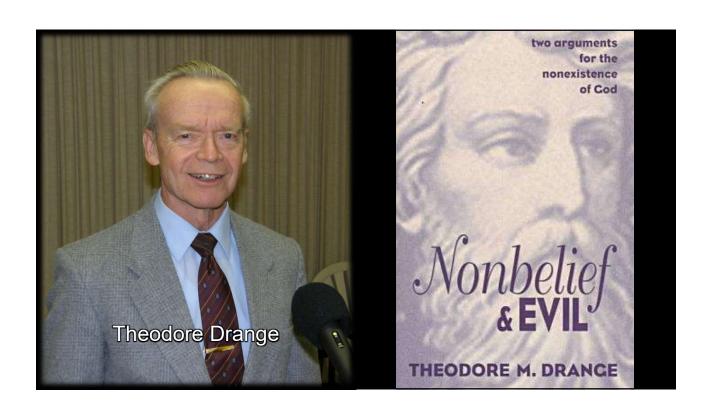
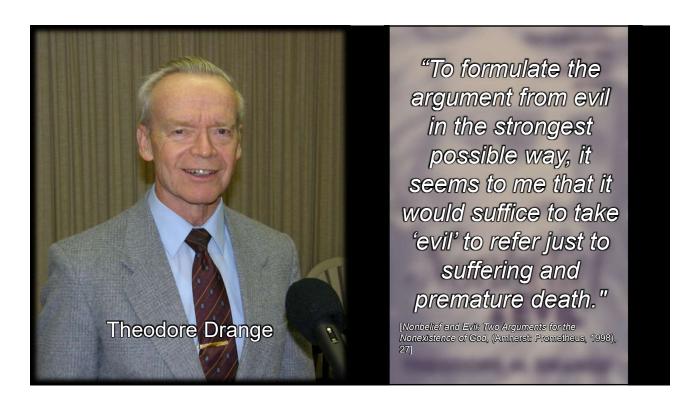
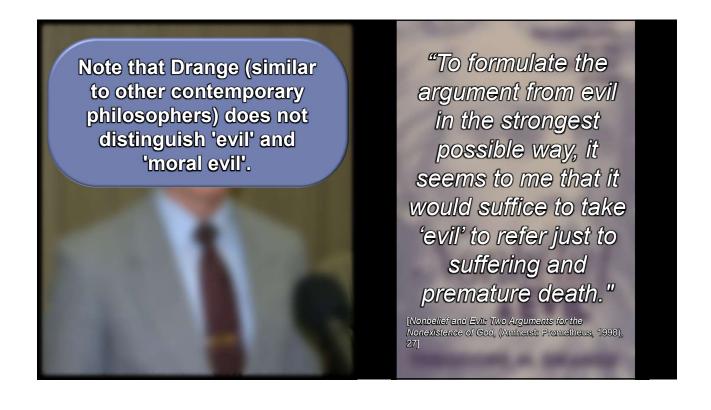


In contemporary philosophy, evil usually has to do with suffering, and death.

This definition of evil in contemporary philosophy differs from the definition of evil in the Classical / Scholastic (i.e., Aristotelian / Augustinian / Thomistic) tradition.







As such, while wanting to make an argument that leads to a conclusion about the nature of reality, i.e., whether God does or does not exist, he never connects his definition of evil to either the nature of human beings or to the nature of reality as such but only to the experience humans have of reality.

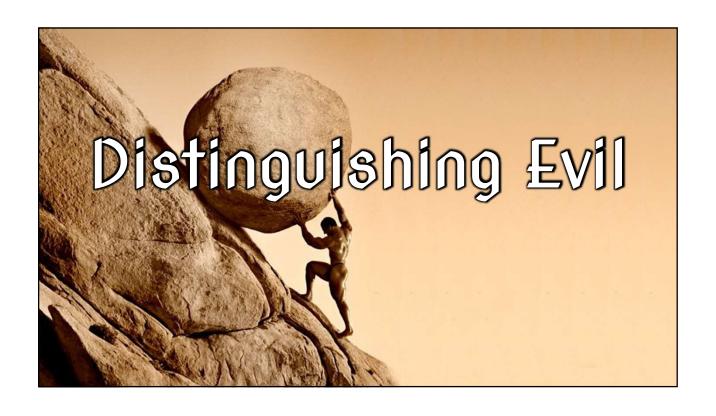
"To formulate the argument from evil in the strongest possible way, it seems to me that it would suffice to take 'evil' to refer just to suffering and premature death."

[Nonbelief and Evil: Two Arguments for the Nonexistence of God, (Amherst: Prometheus, 1998), 27]

To claim that certain philosophers fail to distinguish between 'evil' and 'moral evil' is not to say that such philosophers fail to make other distinctions in their definition of evil.

"To formulate the argument from evil in the strongest possible way, it seems to me that it would suffice to take 'evil' to refer just to suffering and premature death."

[Nonbelief and Evilt Two Arguments for the Nonexistence of God, (Amherst: Prometheus, 1998), 27]



One of the most common distinctions contemporary philosophers make regarding evil is between natural evil and moral evil.



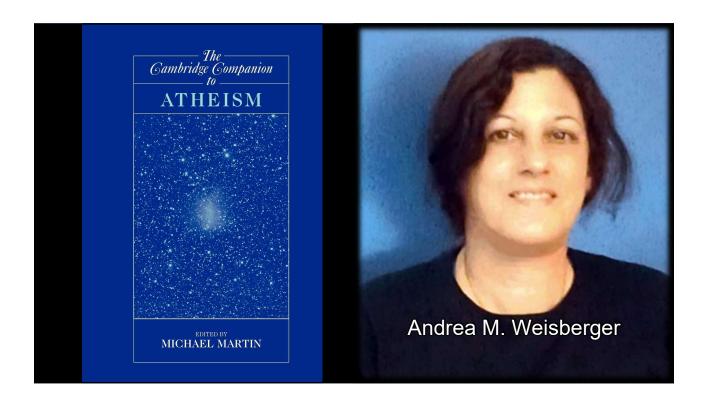












"The existence of evil is the most fundamental threat to the traditional Western concept of an all-good, all-powerful God.

Andrea M. Weisberger

"Both natural evil,
the suffering that
occurs as a result of
physical
phenomena, and
moral evil, the
suffering resulting
from human actions,
comprise the
problem of evil.



"If evil cannot be accounted for, then belief in the traditional Western concept of God is absurd."

[Andrea M. Weisberger, "The Argument from Evil," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 166, emphasis in original]



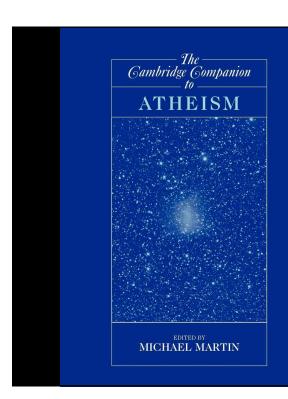






In Weisberger's article, there seems to be nothing that would make one think that her "traditional Western concept" of God has anything to do with the classical concept of God, i.e., the God of Classical Theism in the tradition of Aquinas.

In this regard, one would do well to heed the observation of Gavin Hyman.





"It seems a truism to say that modern atheism rejected a modern God. But such a statement has considerable significance if it can be shown that a specifically modern conception of God was distinctive and marked a new departure from that which had prevailed hitherto.



"Many have claimed that this was indeed the case, to such an extent that the modern God was a 'thing' quite different from the premodern God. Indeed, to say that the modern God was a 'thing' in many ways captures the distinction; for premodern theology, God was not a 'thing' at all.



"The transition can perhaps best be understood in terms of a corresponding transition in the use of language. ...

Although Aquinas' teaching on analogical language is well known, its centrality and ubiquity with respect to all his other teachings has not been appreciated."

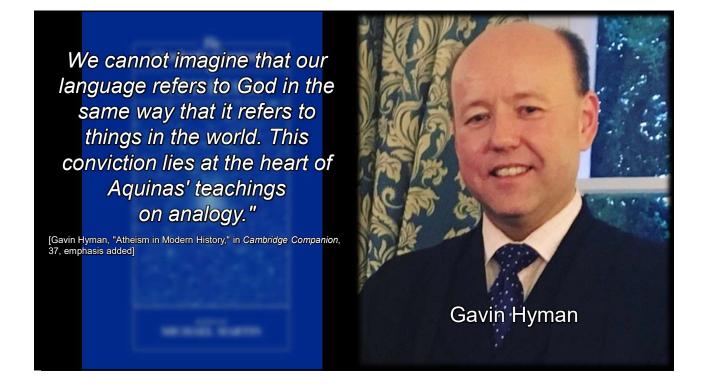


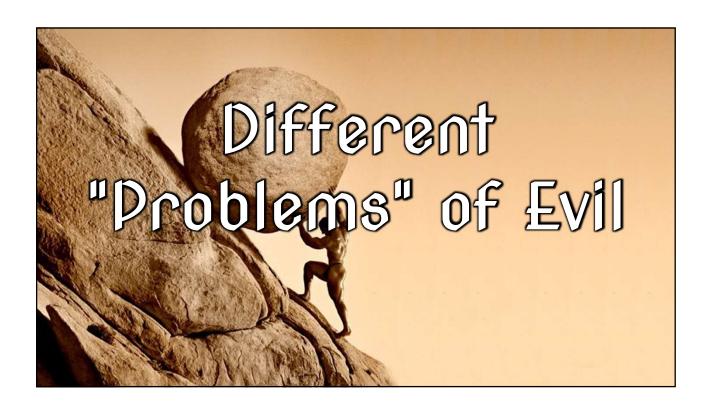
"For Aquinas, the fundamental problem with language is that it has been developed by creatures to refer to creaturely things. It is therefore inadequate—and potentially misleading—when applied to God.

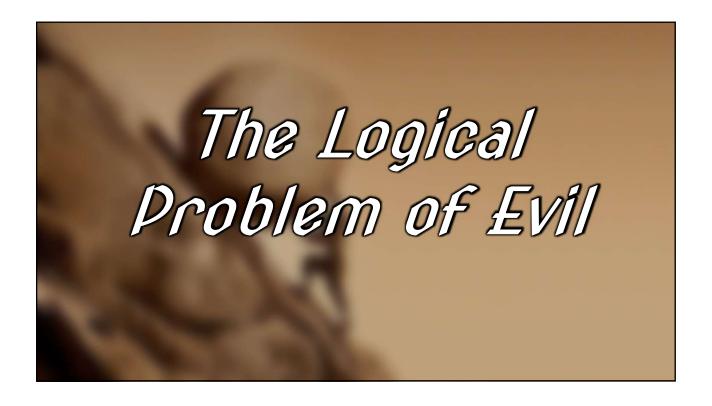


If we are to avoid the conclusion that nothing whatsoever can be said about God, then we must at least recognize that our language can be applied to God only in a highly qualified and provisional way.

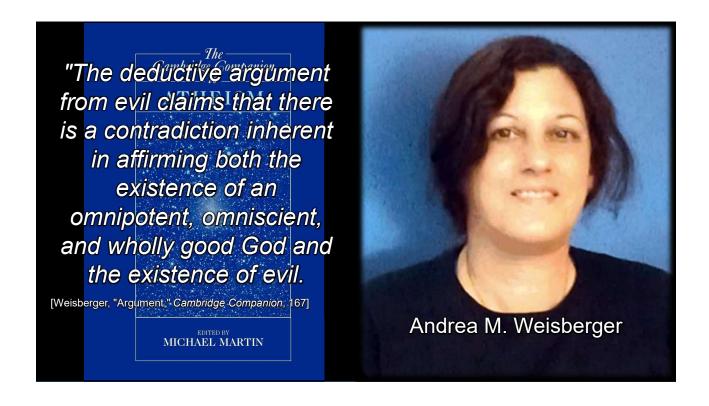








The logical problem of evil is notion that the propositions "God exists" and "Evil exists" are logically incompatible.



The basic intuition of the inconsistency involved in the problem of evil is captured by the following formulation, from Michael Martin:

- 1. God is all-powerful.
- 2. God is all good.
- 3. Evil exists in great abundance.

[Weisberger, "Argument," Cambridge Companion, 166]



Most philosophers today agree that H.Esurely no direct contradiction is generated by the three premises, without the addition of qualifying statements."

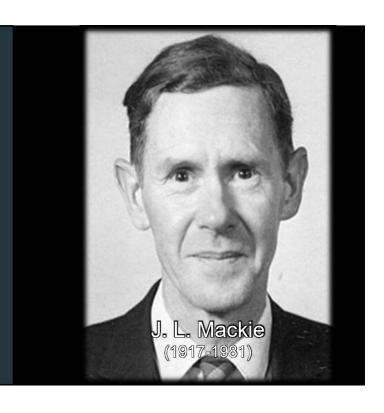
[Welsberger, "Argument," Cambridge Companion, 167]

Andrea M. Weisberger

J.L.Mackie

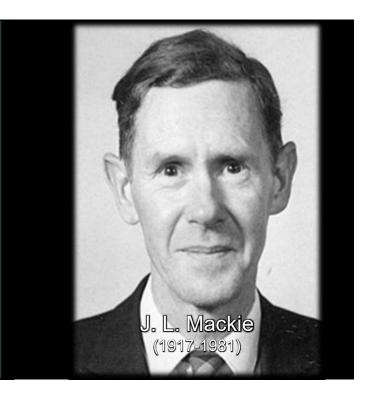
THE
MIRACLE
OF
THEISM

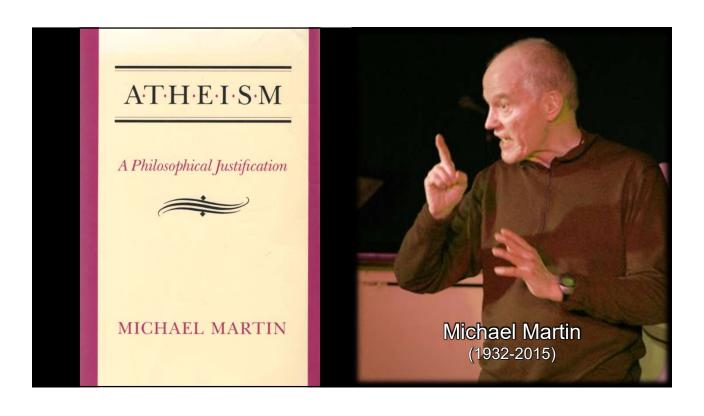
Arguments for and against the Existence of God

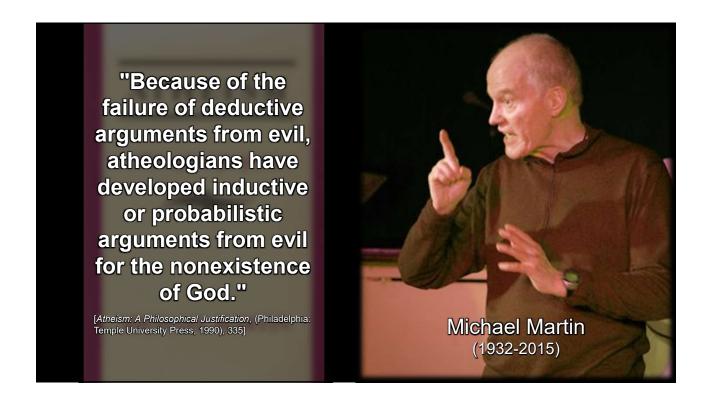


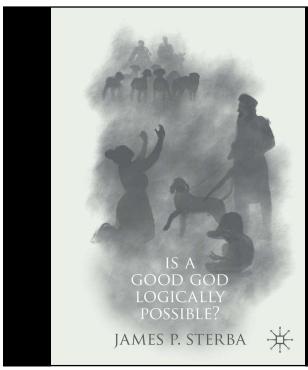
"We can concede that the problem of evil does not, after all, show that the central doctrines of theism are logically inconsistent with one another."

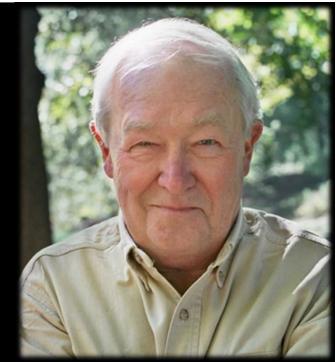
[The Miracle of Theism, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 154]











PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

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GOD AND EVIL

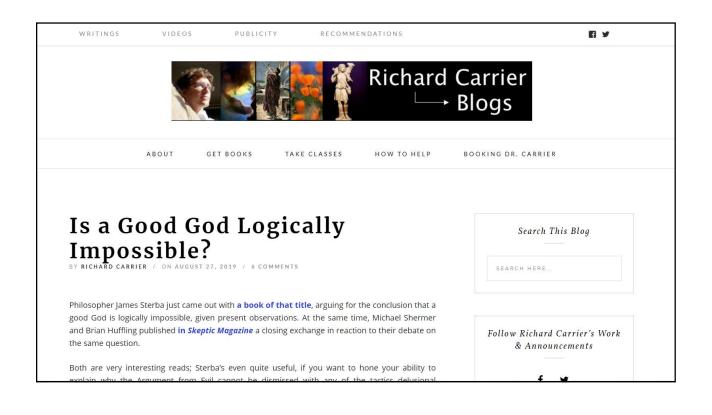
The Problem Syates:

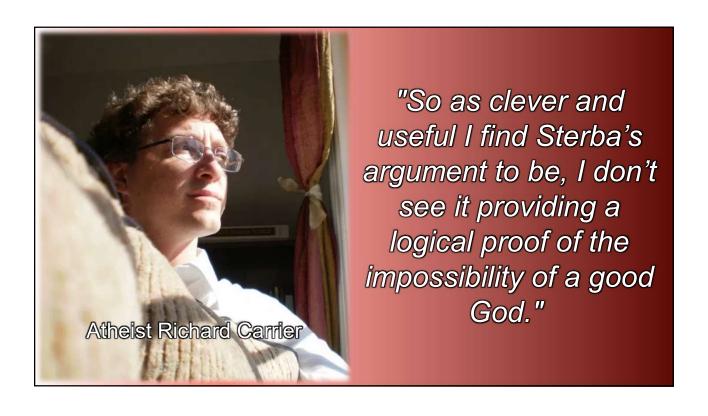
Evil is a problem for the theist in that a contradiction is involved in he fact of evil on the one hand, and the belief in the omnipotence and perfection of God on the other. God cannot be both all-powerful and erfectly good if evil is real. This contradiction is well set out in the detail y Mackie in his discussion of the problem. In his discussion facts discussion of the problem. The solice such so show that this contradiction cannot be resolved in terms of man's free will. In arguing in this way Mackie neglects a large number of important soints, and concedes far too much to the theist. He implicitly allows that shifts physical evil creates a problem, this problem is reducible to the problem of evil turns on the compatibility of few will and absolute pochous. In fact physical evil creates a four the compatibility of few will and absolute pochous. In fact physical evils evicts a number of delatic problems of the contradiction of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will reaches the admittance of the contradiction of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will reaches the admittance of the problem of the contradiction of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will reaches the admittance of the contradiction of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will call the problem of the problem of the contradiction of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will call admitted the problem of on of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will renders by account for physical evil in terms of moral good, and the attem reduce the problem of well to the problem of moral evil, commands. Moreover, the account of moral evil in terms of free www. on more obvious and less disputable grounds than those who made evil can be shown to remain a problem whether we will is compatible with absolute goodness. I therefore prop pure to reopen the discussion of "the problem of evil", by any from a more general standpoint, examining a wider variety of an those considered by Mackies and its crities.

1º Evil and Omsipotence ", Mind, 1855.

"Evil is a problem for the theist in that a contradiction is involved in the fact of evil on the one hand and the belief in the omnipotence and perfection of God on the other."

[H. J. McCloskey, "God and Evil," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 10, no. 39 (April 1960): 97-114]

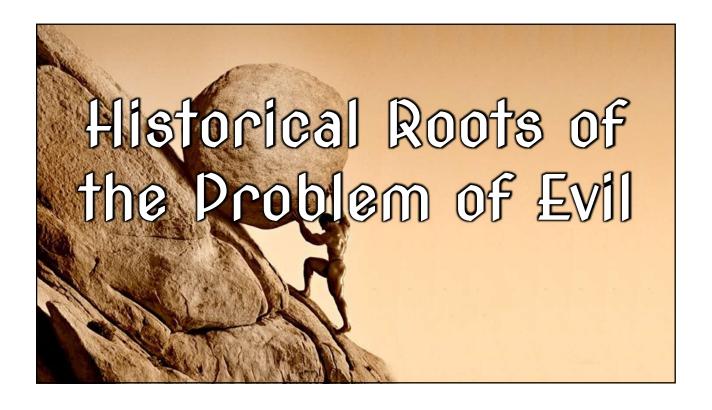


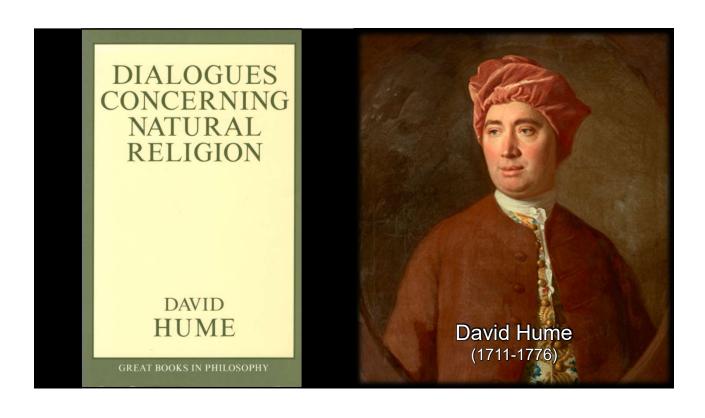


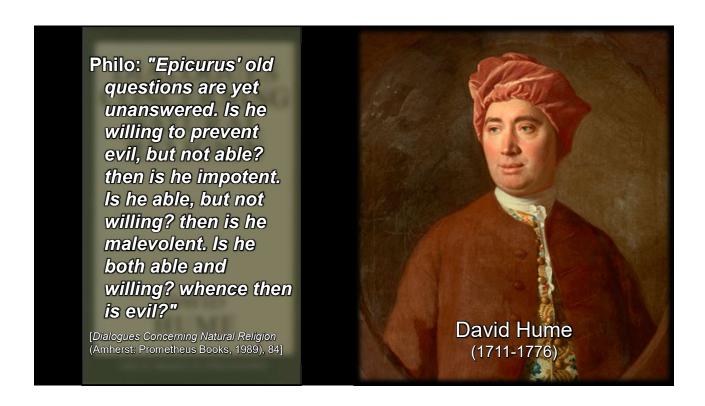
The Pastoral (Existential) Problem of Evil

The Philosophical Problem of Evil

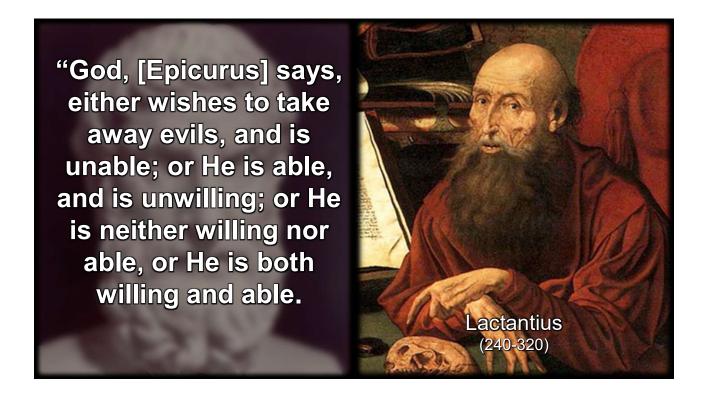
The Evidential or Moral Problem of Evil



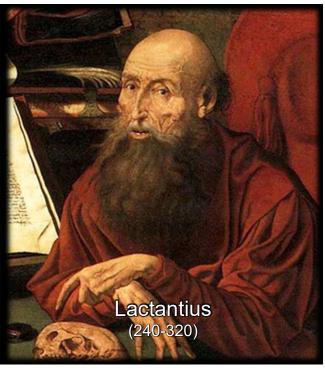


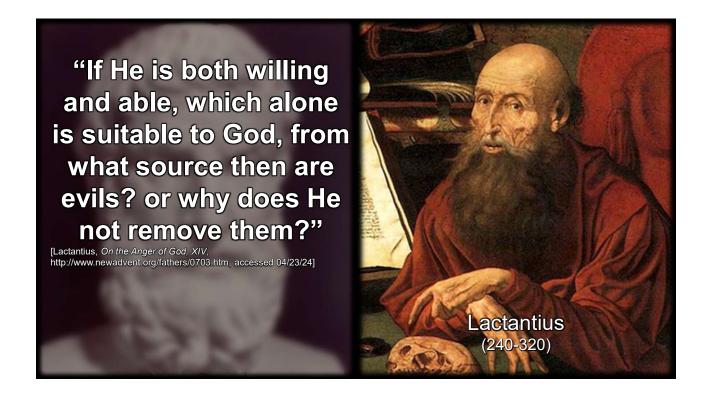


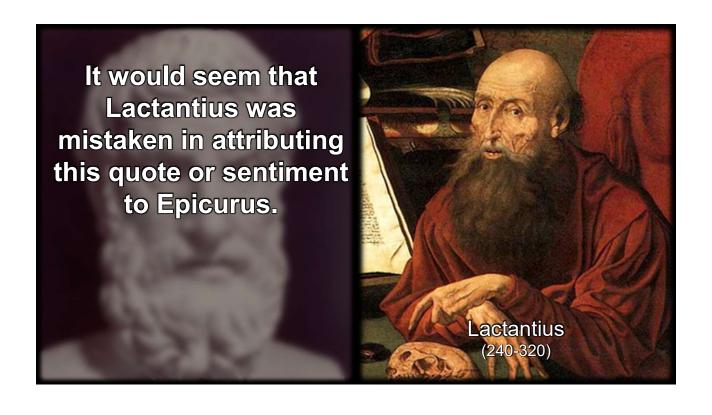


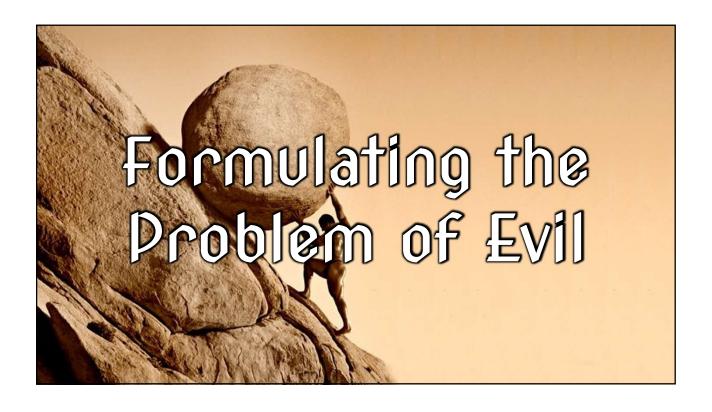


"If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God;











If God is all good (omnibenevolent),
He would prevent evil.

If God is all powerful (omnipotent),
He could prevent evil.

If God knew in advance that creation would fall into sin He would have either:

left well enough alone and not created in the first place

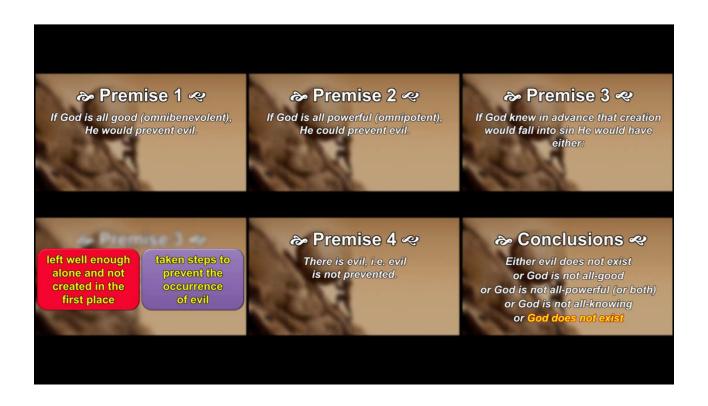
taken steps to prevent the occurrence of evil



There is evil, i.e. evil is not prevented.

& Conclusions &

Either evil does not exist or God is not all-good or God is not all-powerful (or both) or God is not all-knowing or God does not exist





Evil does not exist.

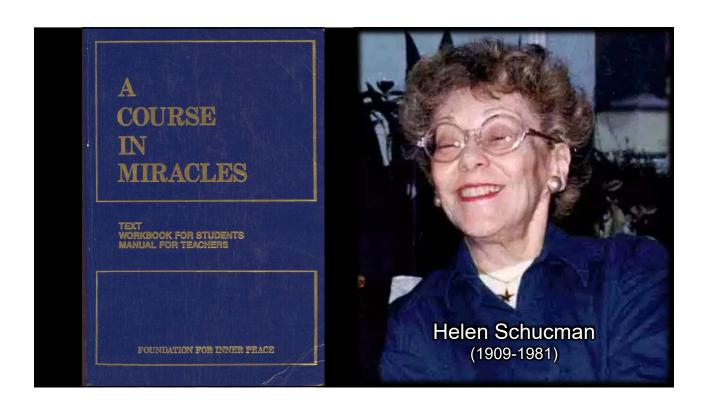
God is not all-good.

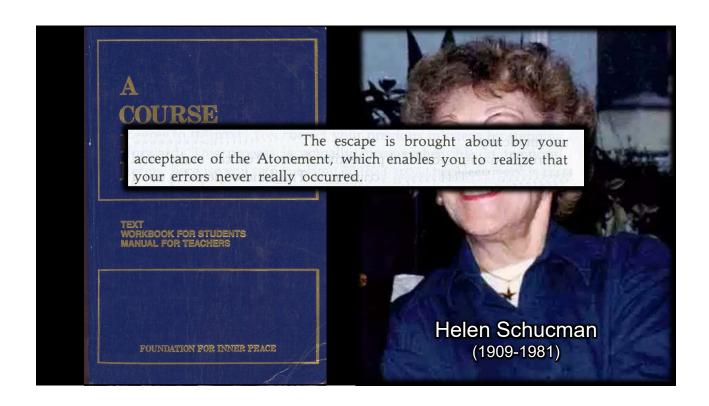
God is not all-powerful.

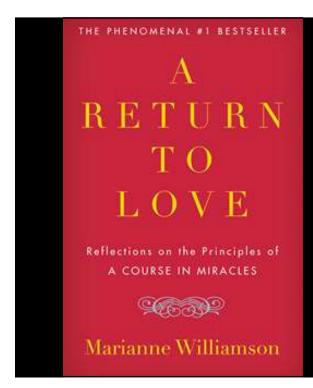
God is not all-knowing.

God does not exist.

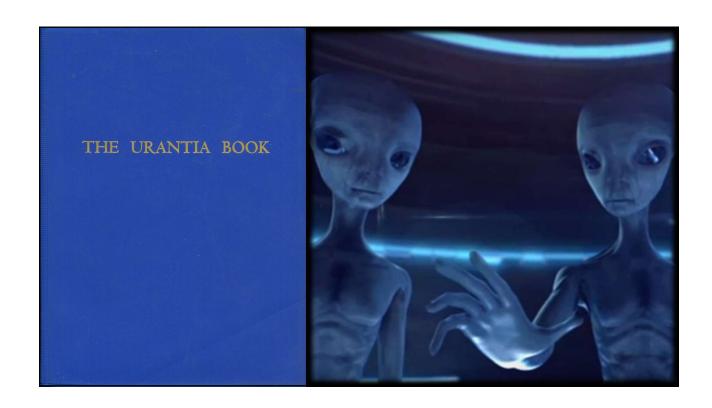


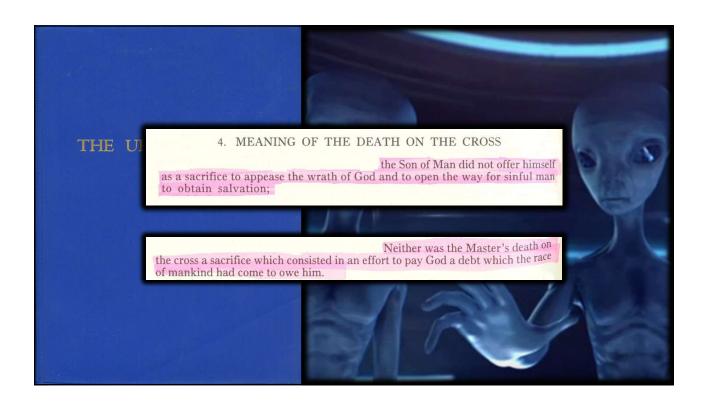


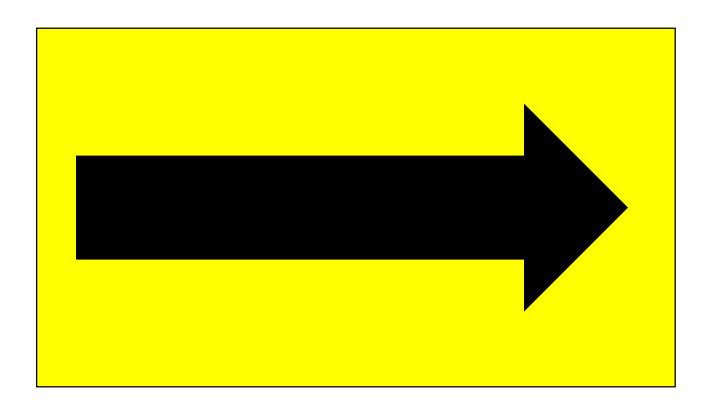






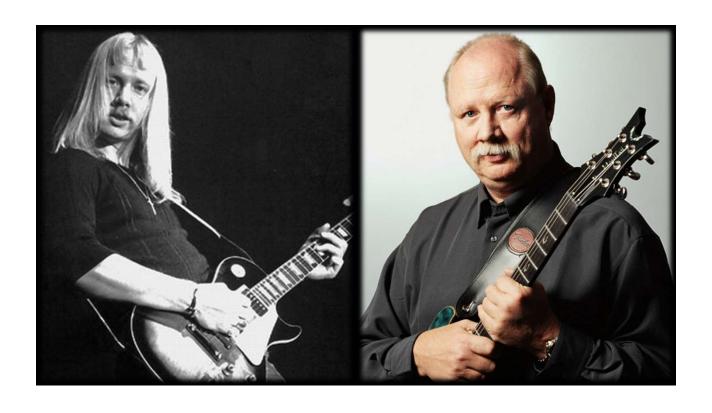


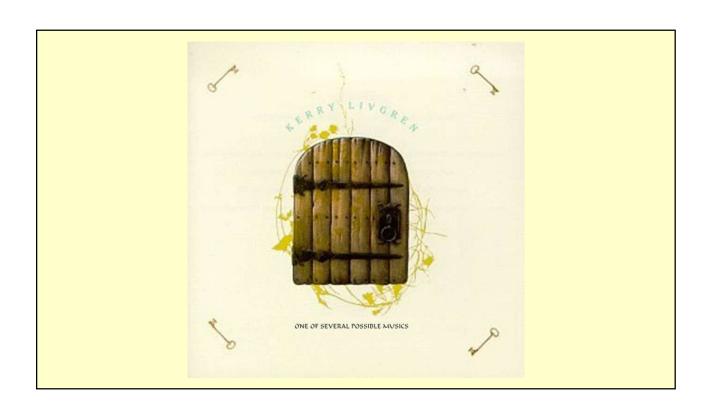


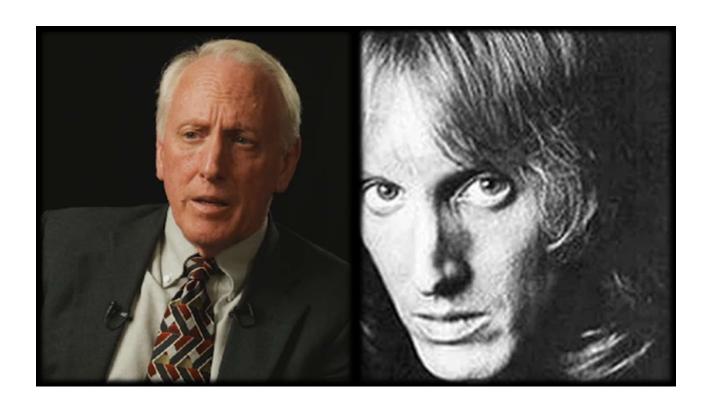


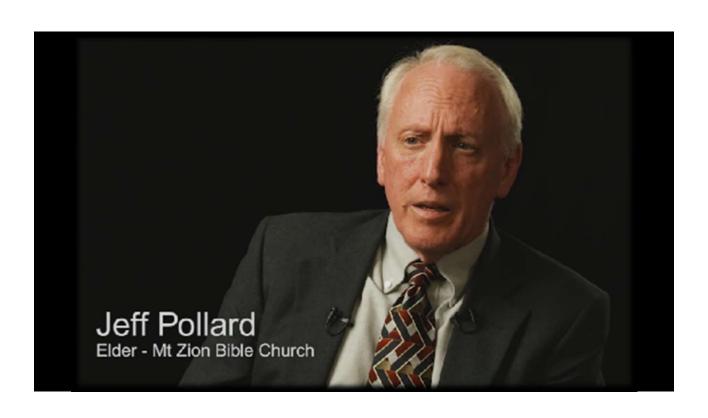


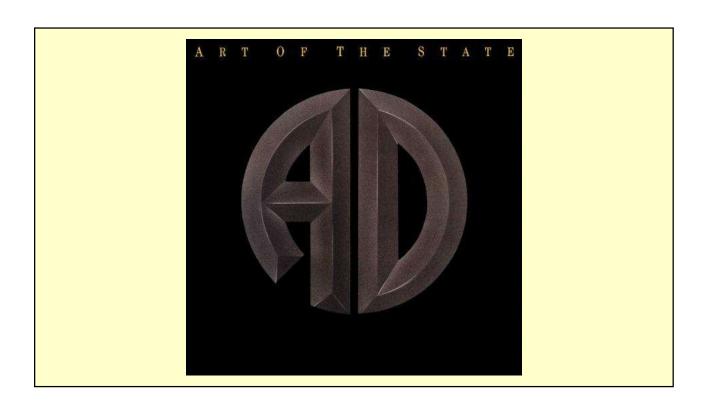


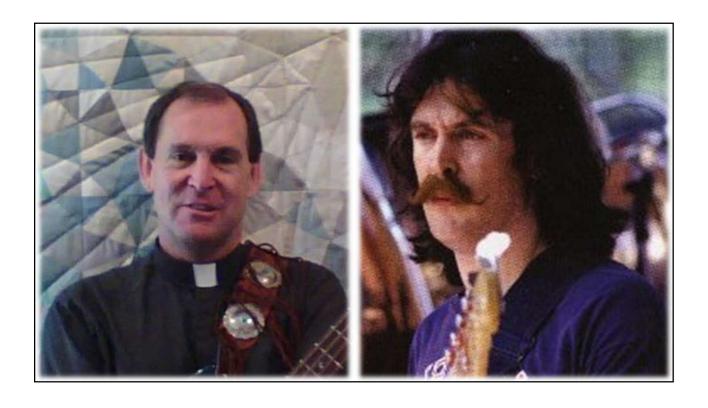


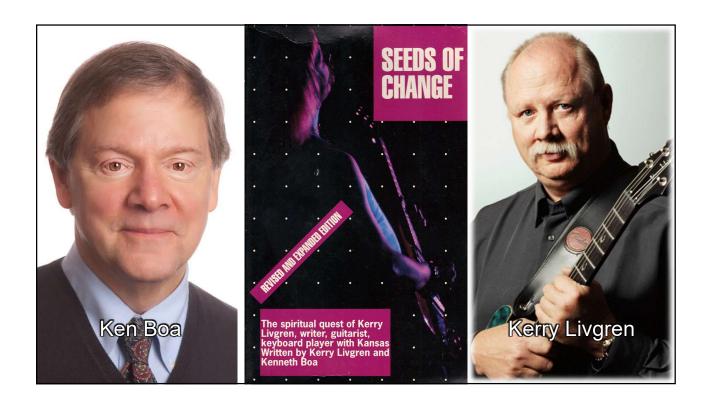




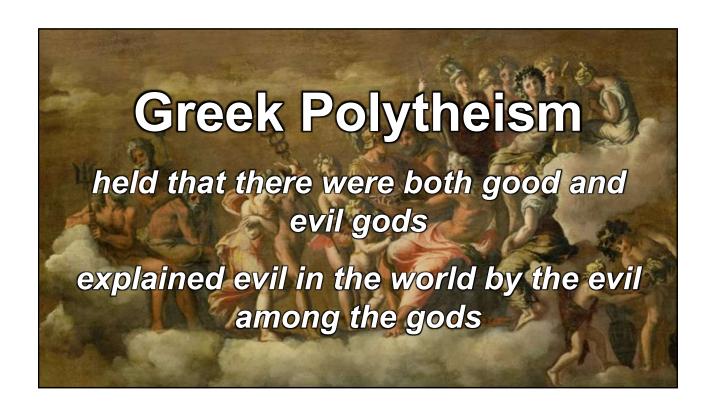


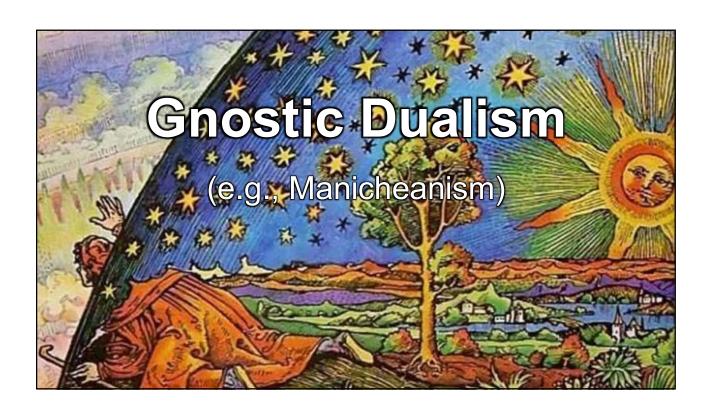






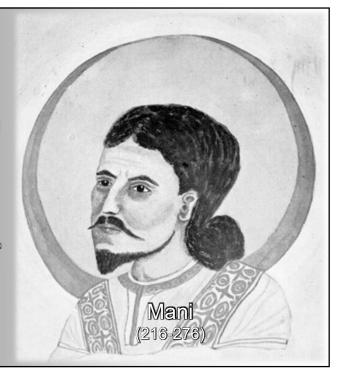






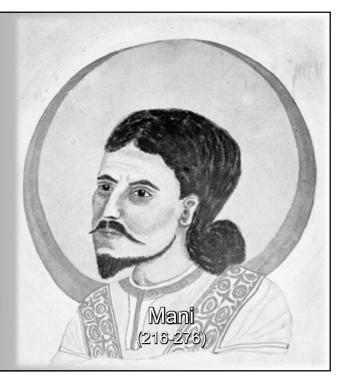
Manicheanism

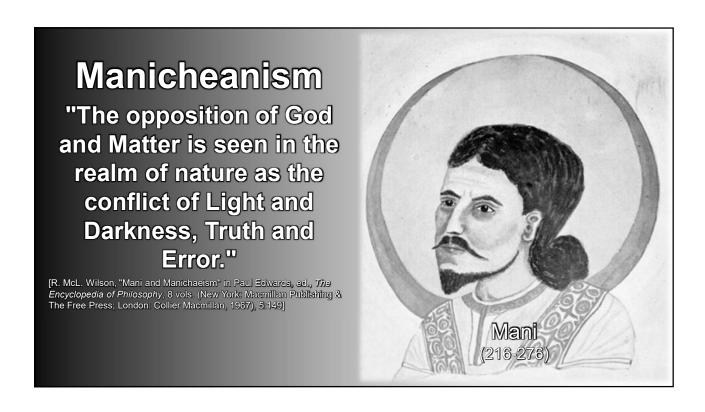
"The chief characteristic
... is a consistent dualism
which rejects any
possibility of tracing the
origin of good and evil to
one and the same source.



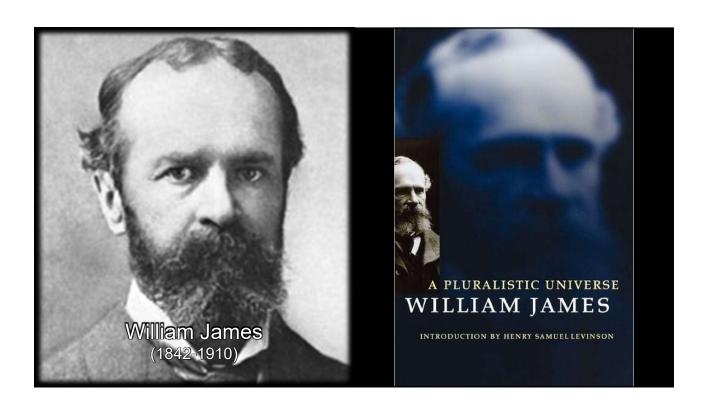
Manicheanism

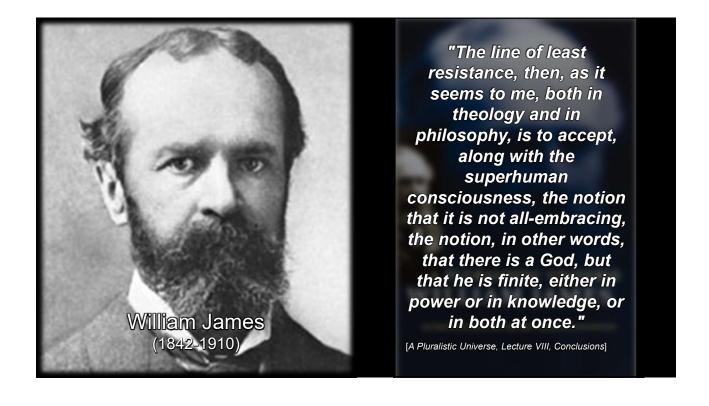
"Evil stands as a completely independent principle against Good, and redemption from the power of Evil is to be achieved by recognizing this dualism and following the appropriate rules of life.













When Bad Things Happen to Good People

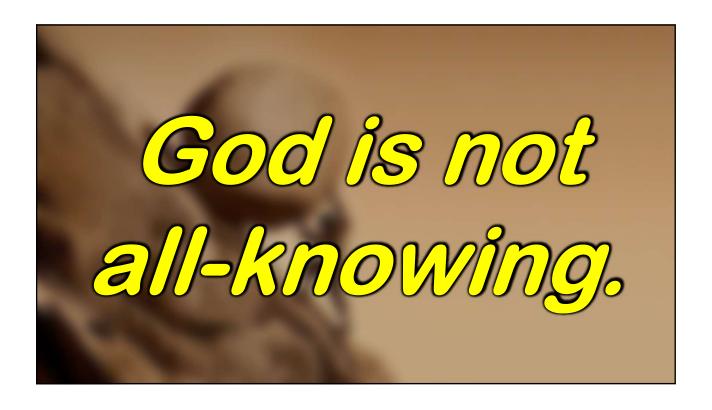
THE INSPIRATIONAL #1 BESTSELLER OVER 4 MILLION COPIES SOLD

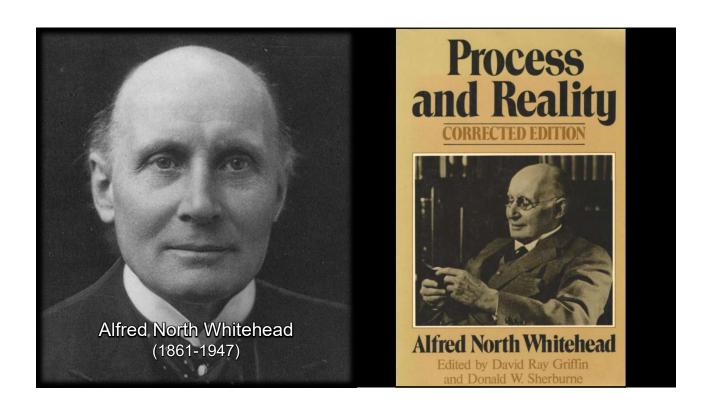
HAROLD S. KUSHNER

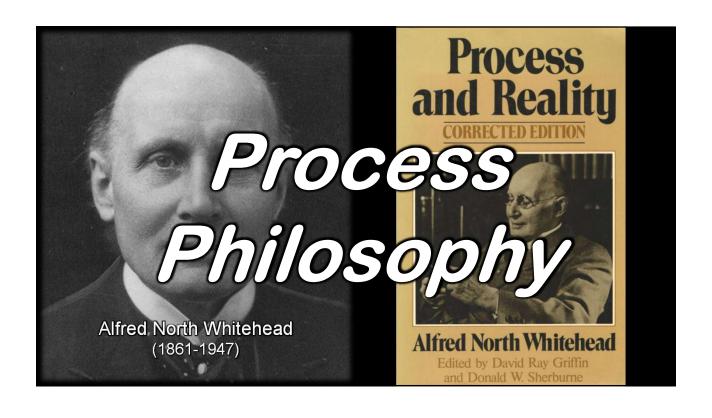


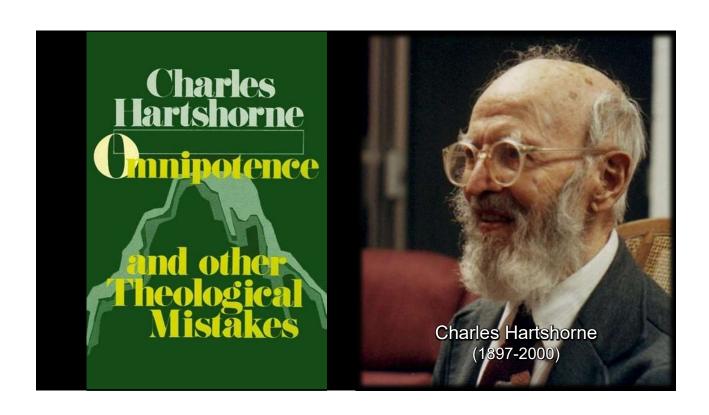
"I recognize His
limitations. He is limited
in what He can do by the
laws of nature and by
the evolution of human
nature and human moral
freedom. ... Even God
has a hard time keeping
chaos in check and
limiting the damage that
evil can do"

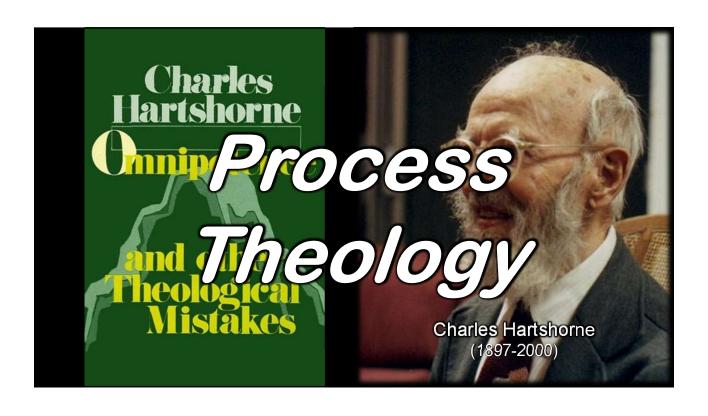
[Harold S. Kushner, When Bad Things Happen to Good People, pp. 134, 43, cited in Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 203]

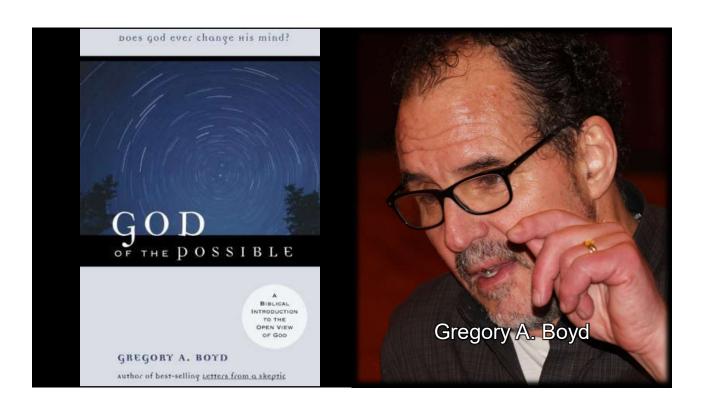


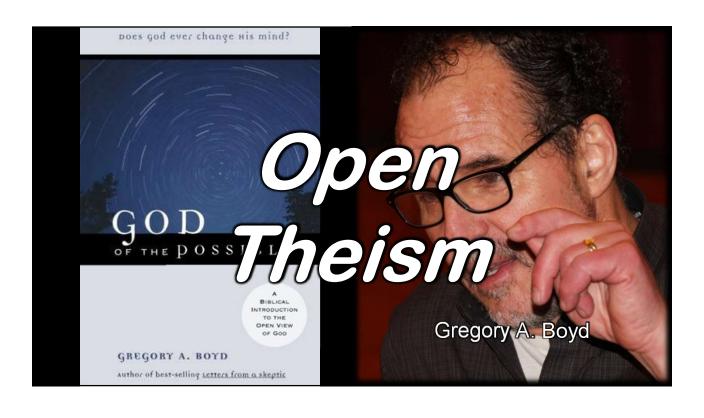


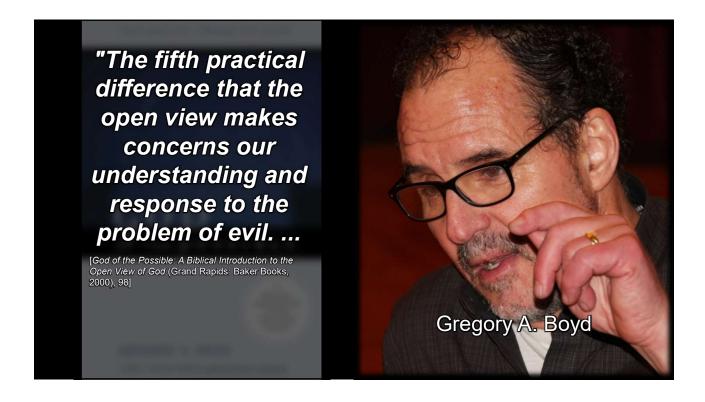








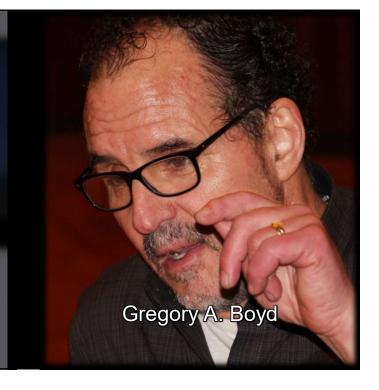


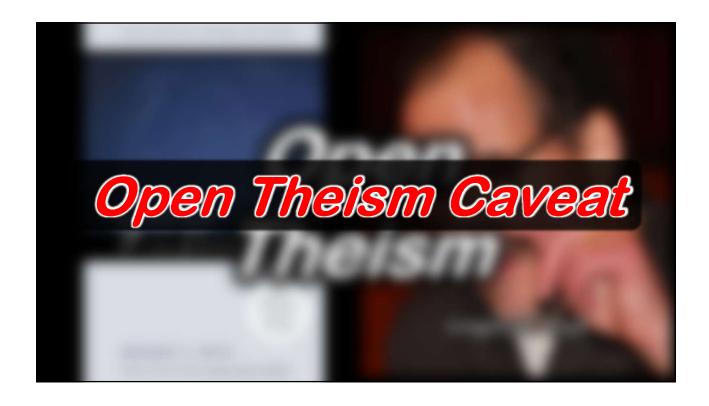


"My agnostic father ... asked me why God would allow Adolf Hitler to be born if he foreknew that this man would massacre millions of Jews. ...



"The only response I could offer then, and the only response I continue to offer now is that this was not foreknown as a certainty at the time God created Hitler."





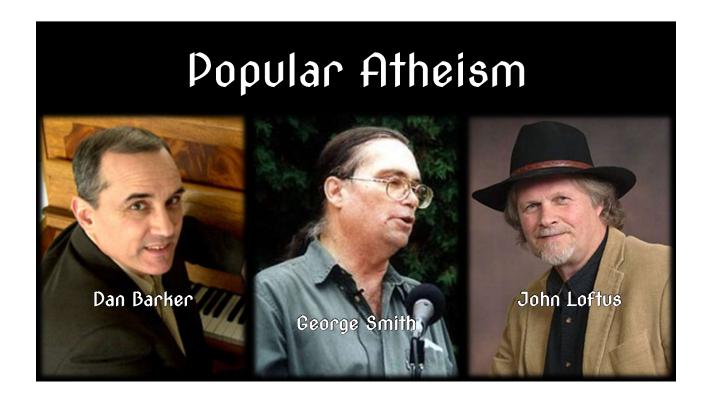
In Fairness to Boyd:

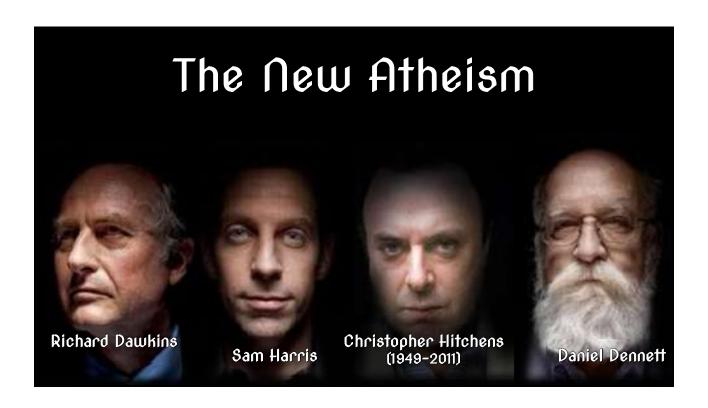
- They claim to hold to the doctrine of God's omniscience.
- But they would maintain a different definition of 'omniscience' than the Classical Theist.
- > They would claim that propositions about the future are unknowable.

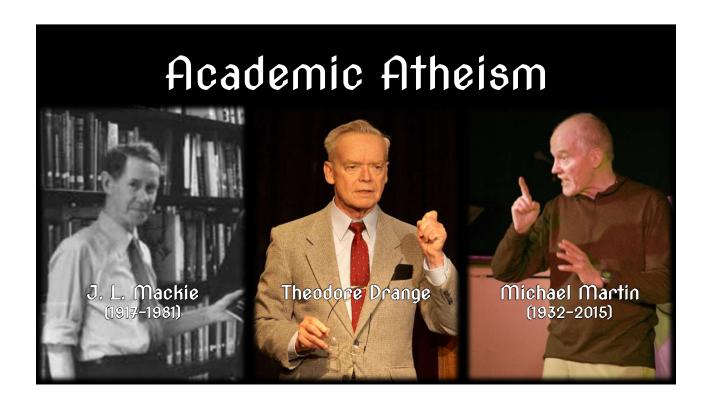
In Fairness to Boyd:

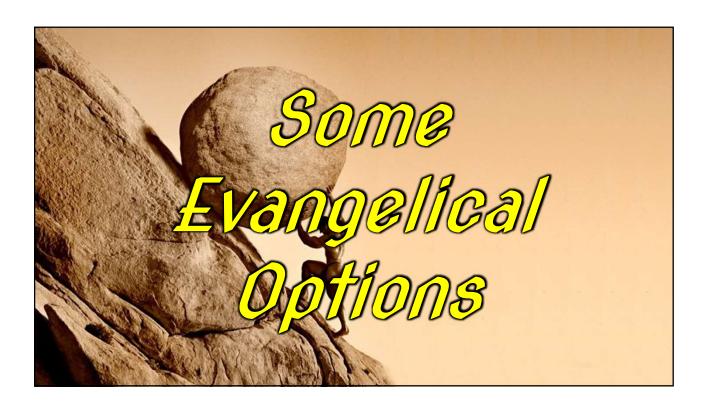
➤ Thus, in their estimation, God is "omniscient" because God knows everything that can be known but God does not know the future because (in their view) the future is not knowable.



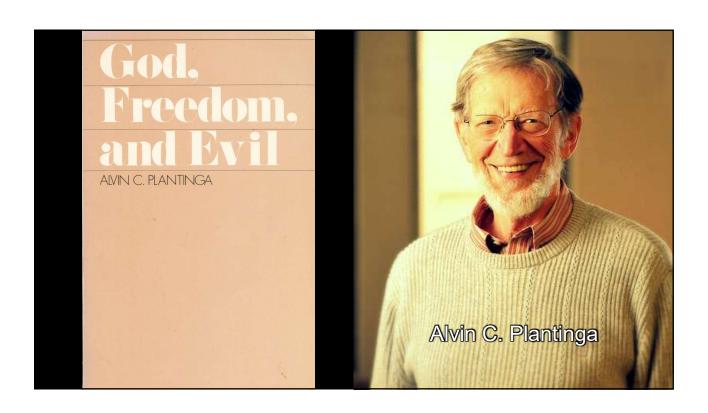


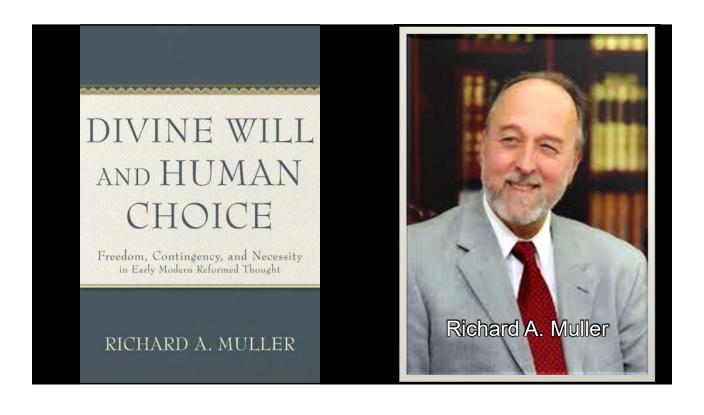




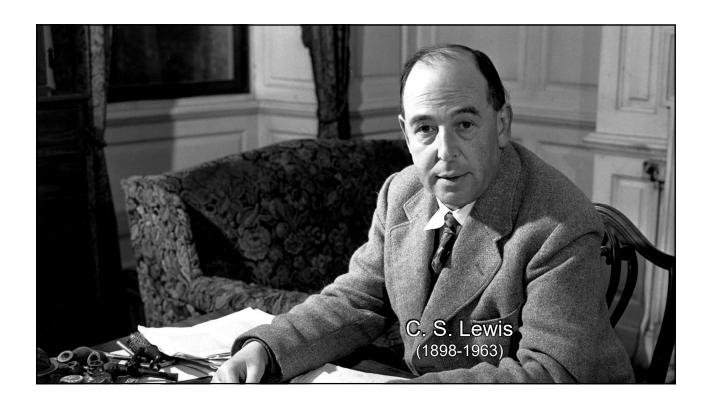


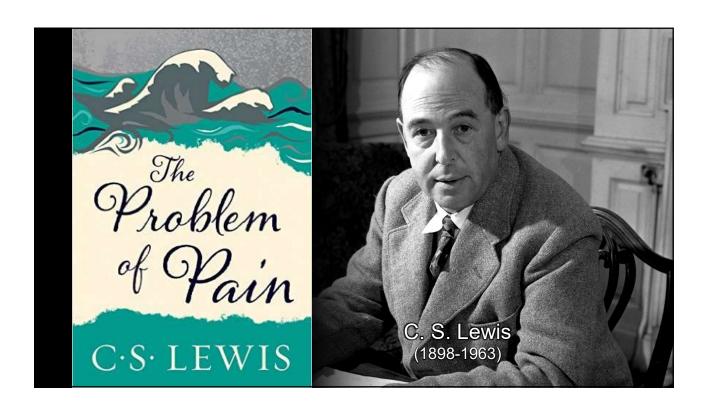
The Free Will Defense



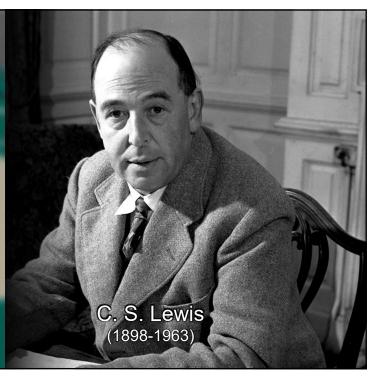


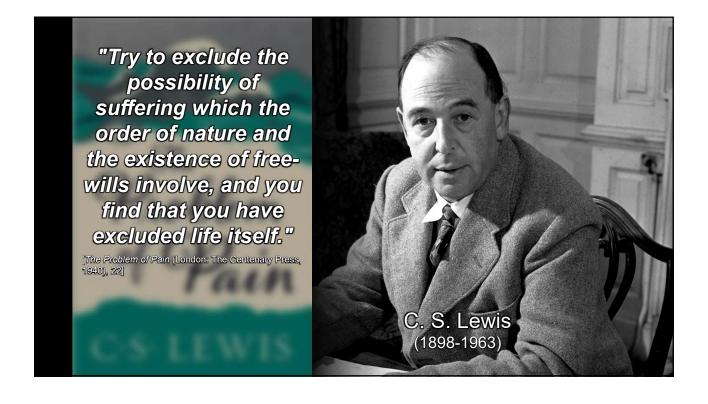
The Natural Order Defense of C. S. Lewis

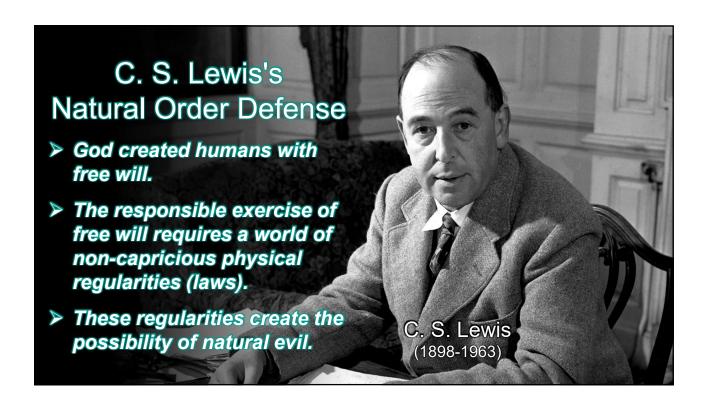




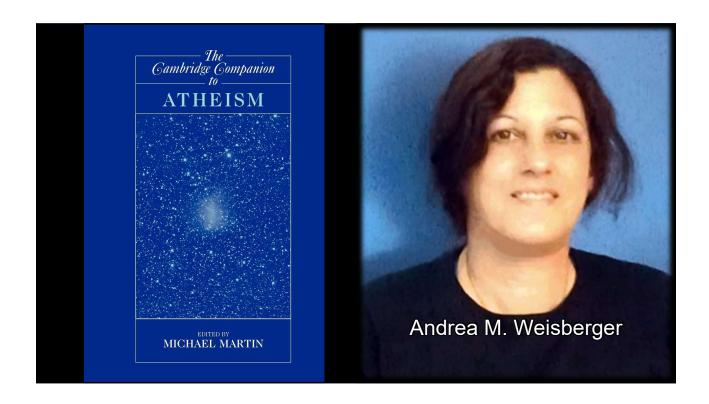
"Fixed laws, consequences unfolding by causal necessity, the whole natural order, are at once the limits within which their common life is confined and also the sole condition under which any such life is possible.

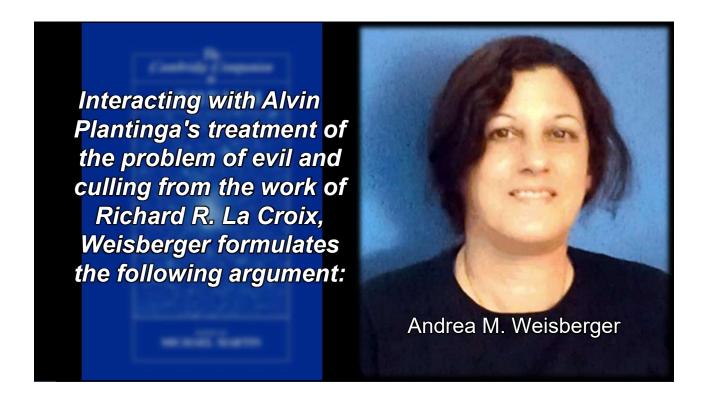






Would It Have Been Better if God Had Never Created the World?





- "(i) There is a God who created everything that exists.
- (ii) Before God created there was nothing but God.
- (iii) After God created, everything is causally dependent on God.
- (iv) God had the choice of whether or not to create this world.
- (v) In one possible scenario, God could have chosen not to create anything at all.
- (vi) If this choice were actualized, God would not have created a world in which evil existed.
- (vii) Since God is perfectly good, if God had not created anything, all that would exist would be perfect goodness."

[Weisberger, "Argument," Cambridge Companion, 168]

- (i) There is a God who created everything that exists.
- (ii) Before God created there was nothing but
- (iii) After God created, everything is causally dependent on God.
- (iv) God had the choice of whether nor not to create this world.
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- (vi) If this choice were actualized, God would not have created a world in which evil existed.
- (vii) Since God is perfectly good, if God had not created anything, all that would exist would be perfect goodness.

Thomists would certainly agree that creation was due to God's free choice.

He could have decided not to create at all.

But what could it possibly mean to talk about a "choice" being "actualized" when the meaning of 'choice' here excludes anything being created?

- (i) There is a God who created everything that exists.
- (ii) Before God created there was nothing but God.
- (iii) After God created, everything is causally dependent on God.
- (iv) God had the choice of whether nor not to create this world.
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- (vii) Since God is perfectly good, if God had not created anything, all that would exist would be perfect goodness.

The problem is that to actualize X is to give X existence.

If the 'X' here is the "choice," then to actualize the "choice" is to give the "choice" existence.

But to give something existence is to create.

- (i) There is a God who created everything that exists.
- (ii) Before God created there was nothing but
- (iii) After God created, everything is causally dependent on God.
- (iv) God had the choice of whether nor not to create this world.
- (v) In one possible scenario, God could have chosen not to create anything at all.
- (vi) If this choice were actualized, God would not have created a world in which evil existed.
- (vii) Since God is perfectly good, if God had not created anything, all that would exist would be perfect goodness.

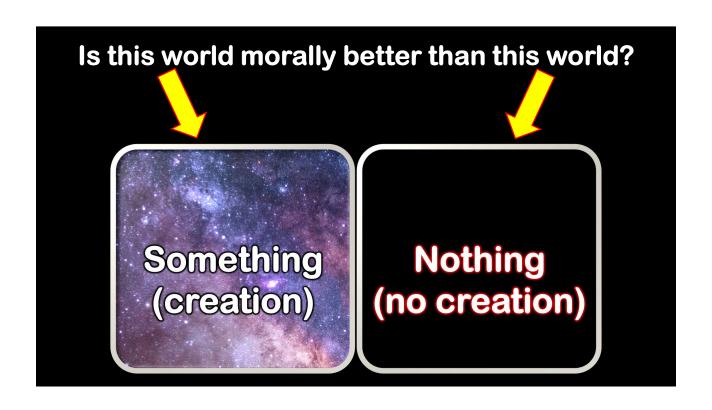
Thus, actualizing the "choice" would be creating the "choice."

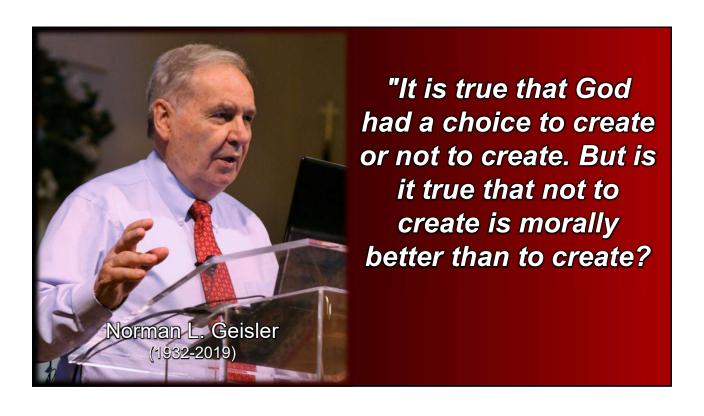
But the "choice" here means that nothing is created.

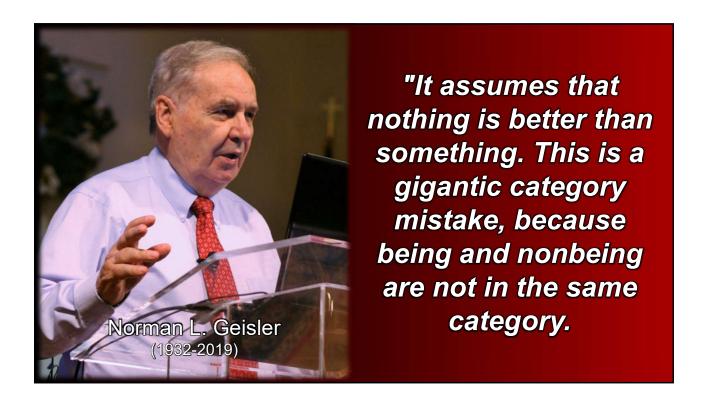
But now we have a contradiction, to wit, that something was created that was not created.





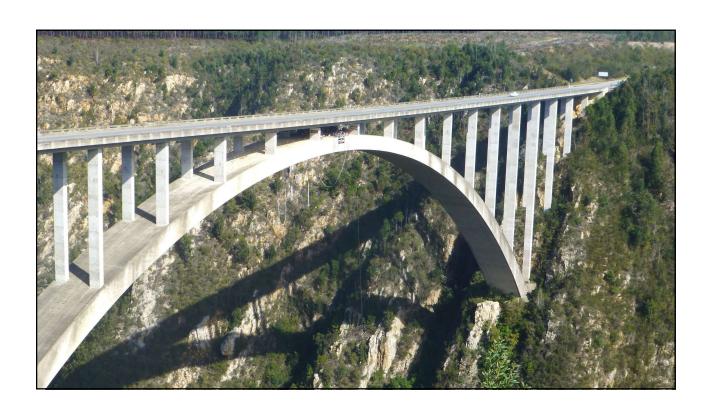


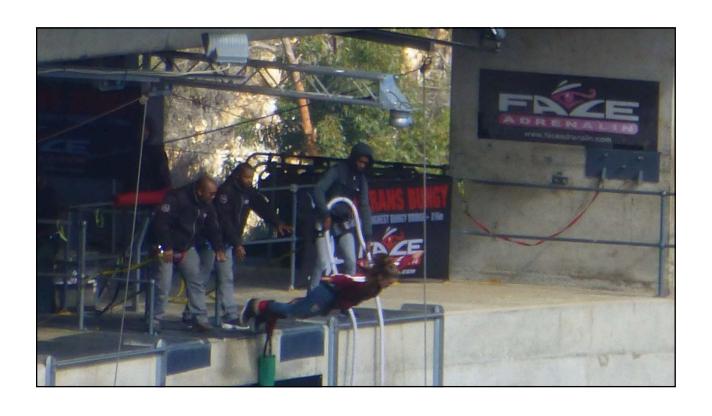






You commit this fallacy when you illicitly mix or cross categories or ascribe an attribute or property to a thing or concept which could not possibly have that attribute or property.

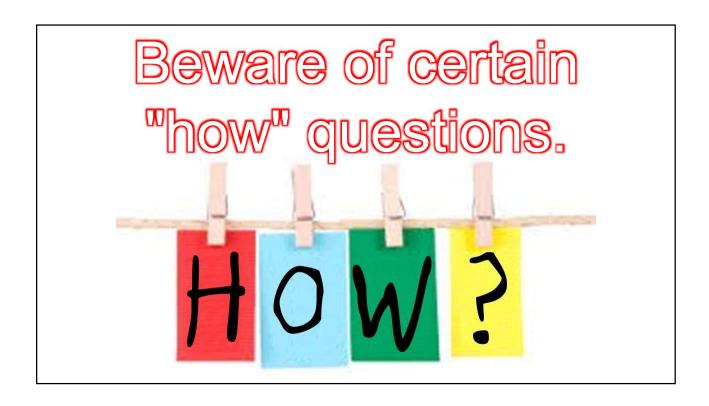


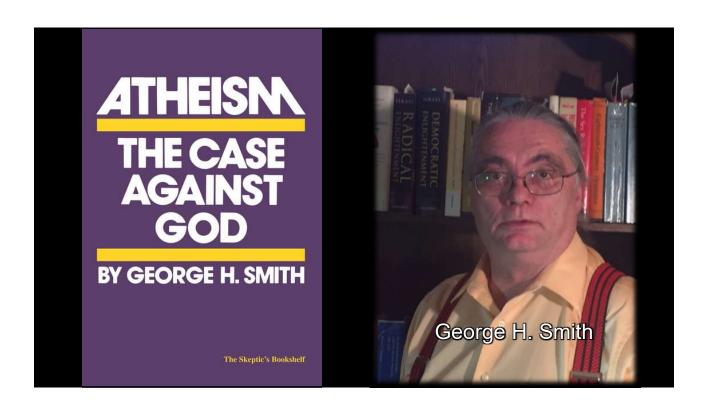


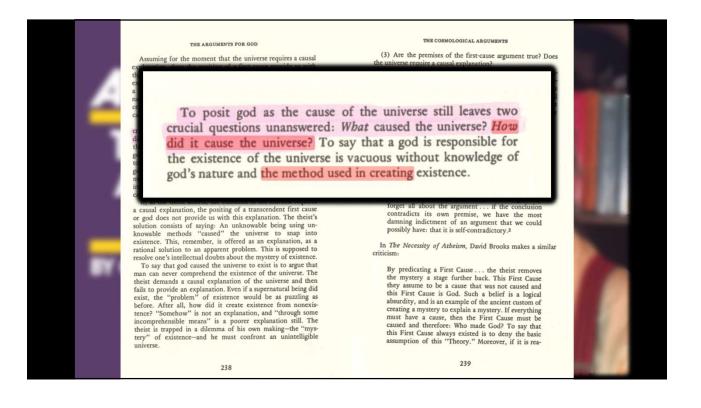


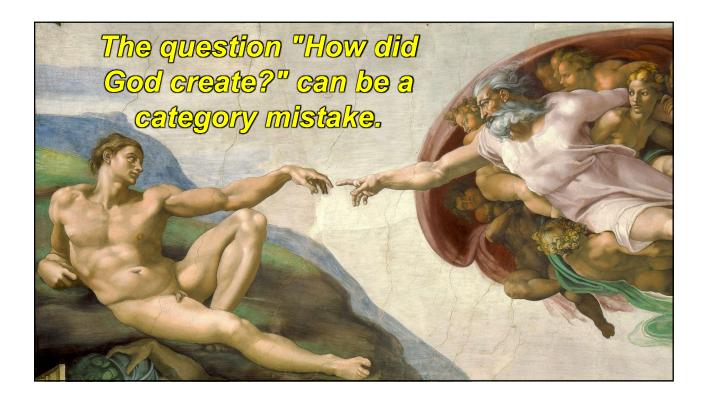
"How long can you survive stranded at sea without drinkable water?"

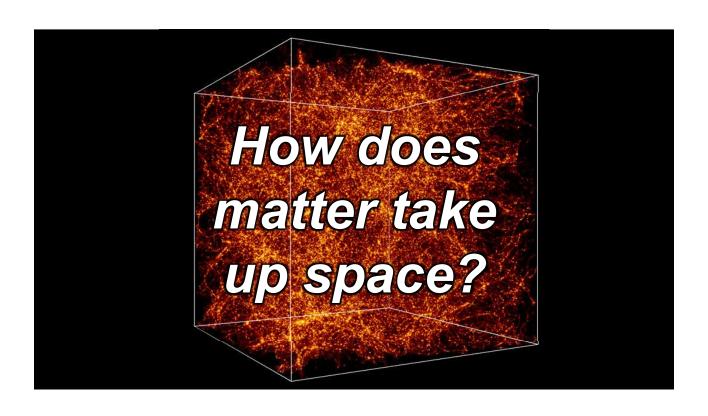
"How long can you survive stranded at sea for about two weeks?"

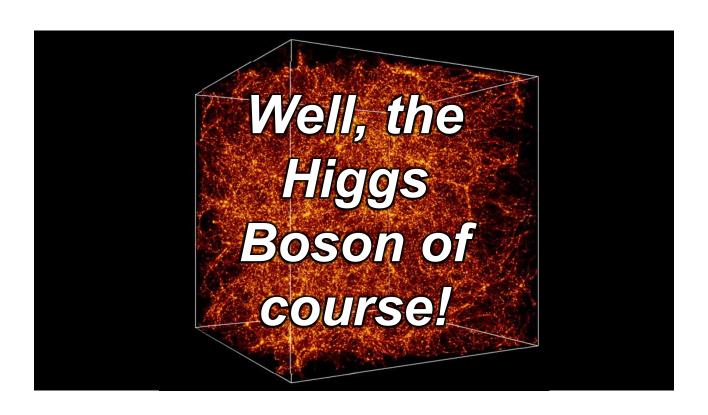


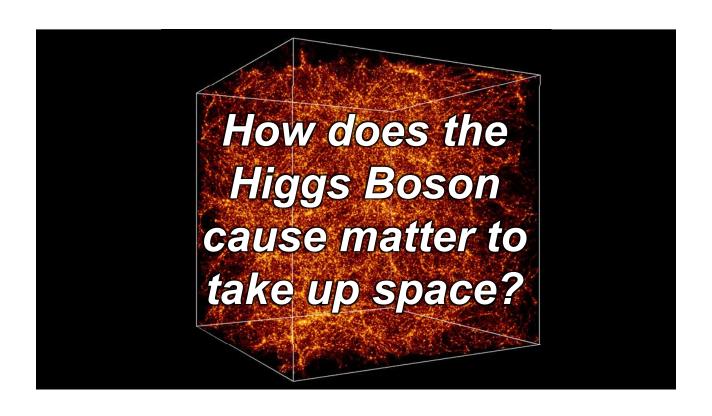




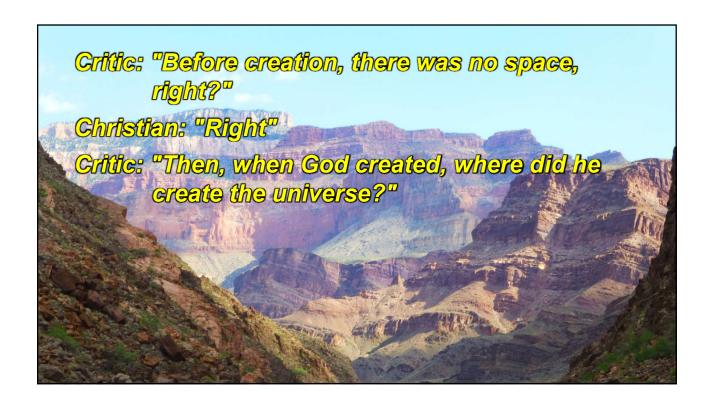




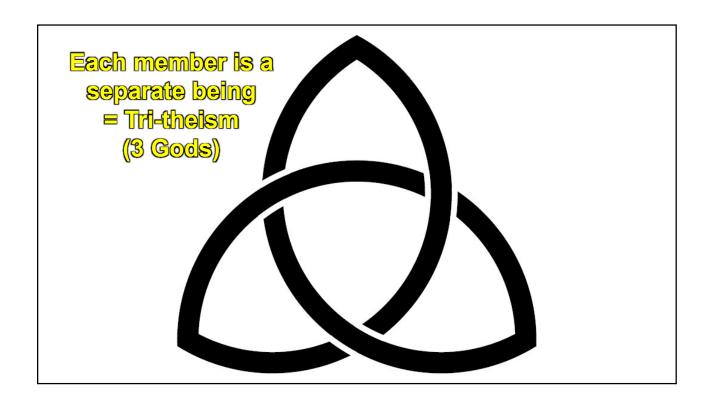


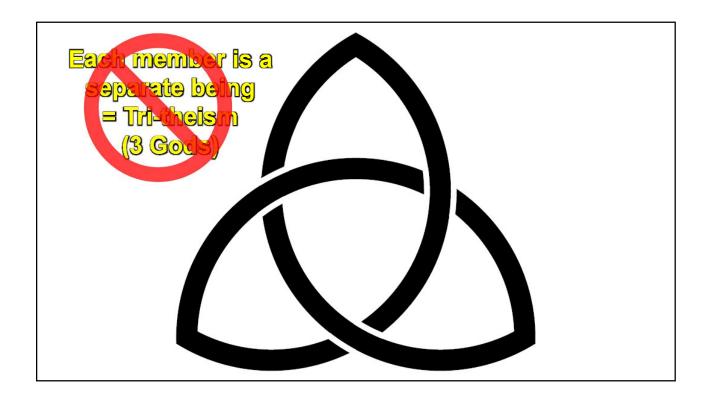


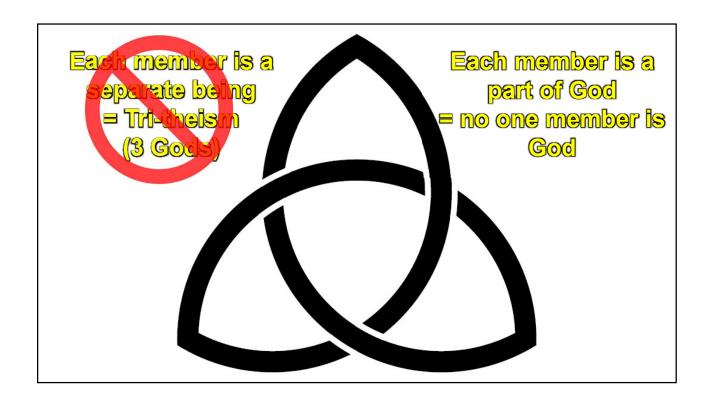


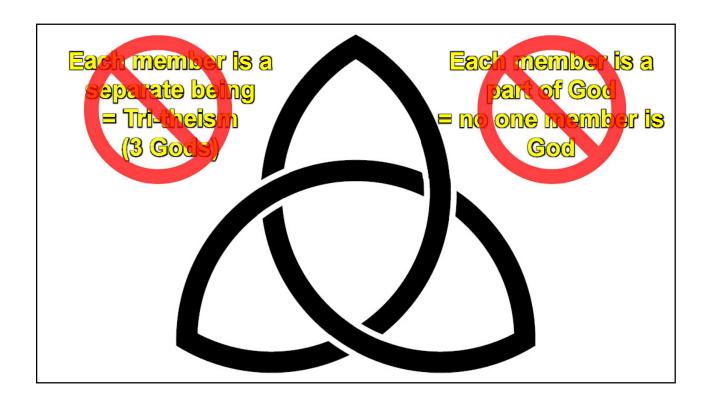


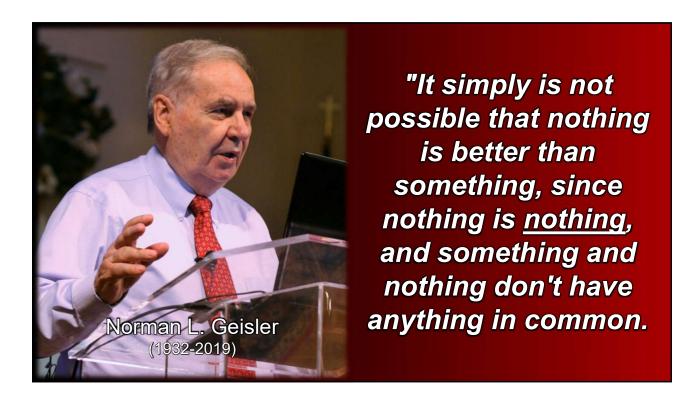


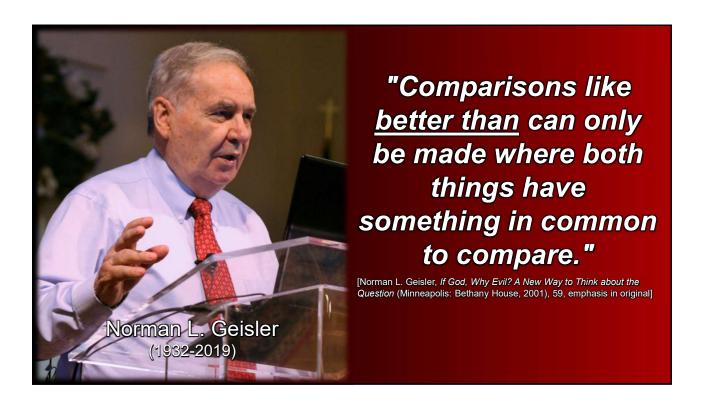




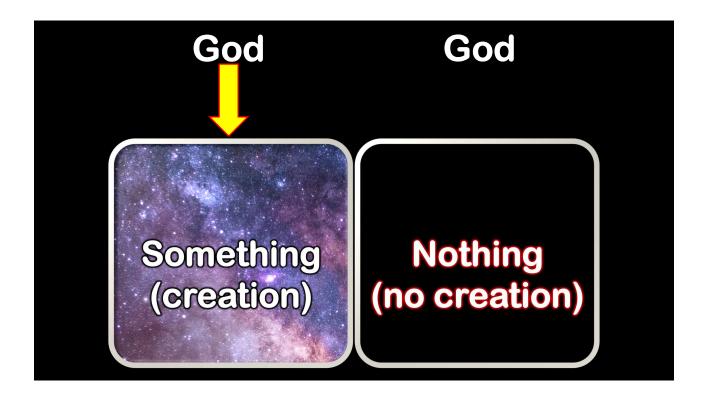






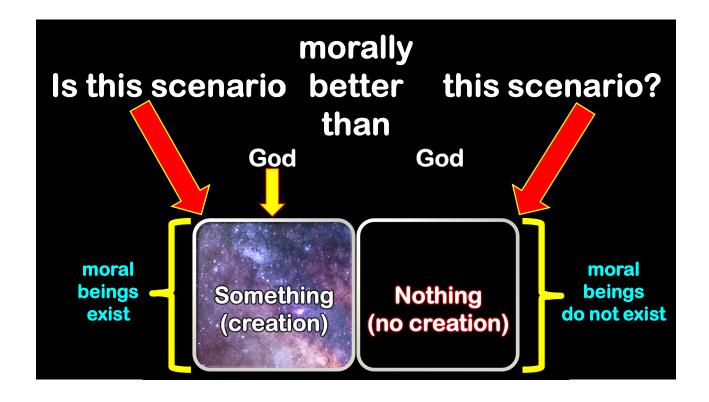


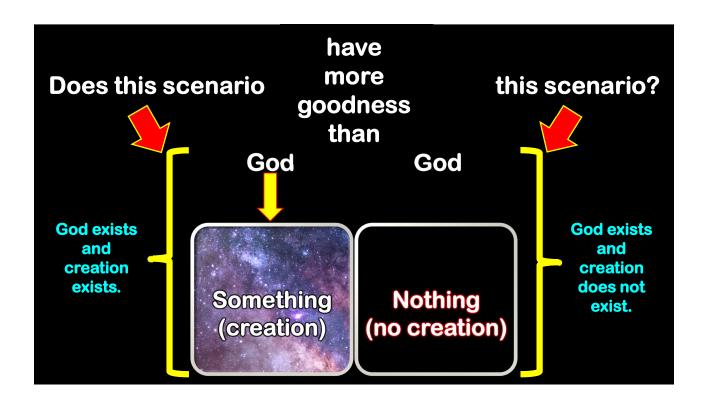


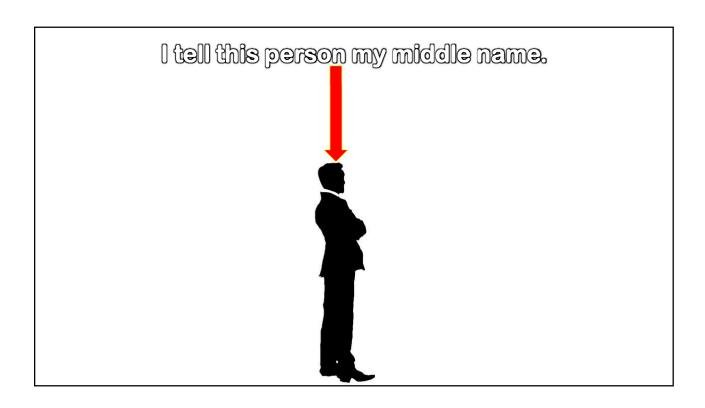


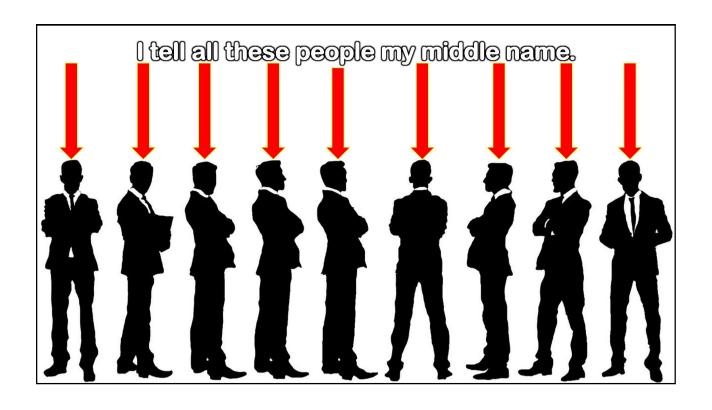
- (i) There is a God who created everything that exists.
- (ii) Before God created there was nothing but God.
- (iii) After God created, everything is causally dependent on God.
- (iv) God had the choice of whether nor not to create this world.
- (v) In one possible scenario, God could have chosen not to create anything at all.
- (vi) If this choice were actualized, God would not have created a world in which evil existed.
- (vii) Since God is perfectly good, if God had not created anything, all that would exist would be perfect goodness.

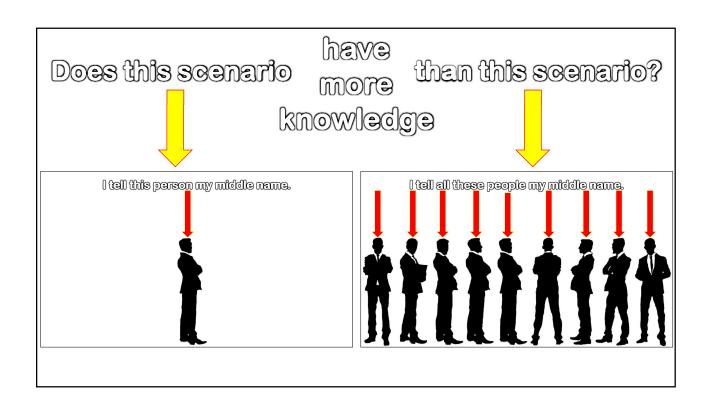
Setting aside for the moment the lurking problematic metaphysics of saying that evil exists, what are we to conclude from Weisberger's (La Croix's) point here?











Consideration of the Afterlife

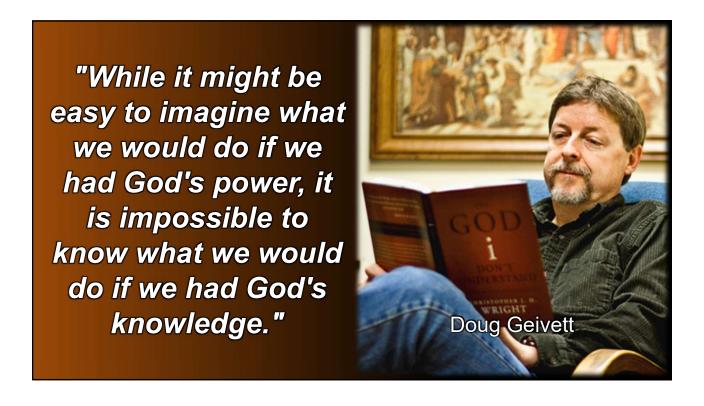


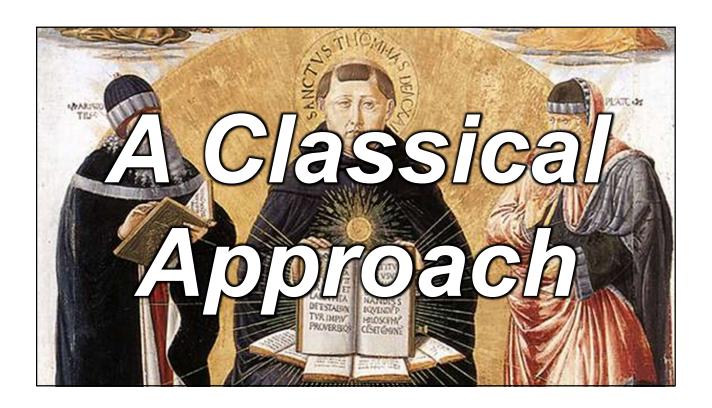
Since it is most often the Christian who is challenged with the problem of evil, it behooves the Christian to cull from the entire Christian world view in responding.

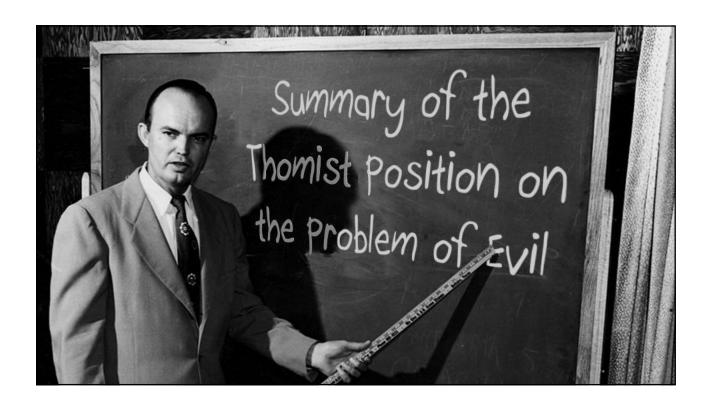
- In the consummation of history, all will be good.
- > All moral goods will be rewarded. (which is good)
- All moral evils will be punished. (which is good)

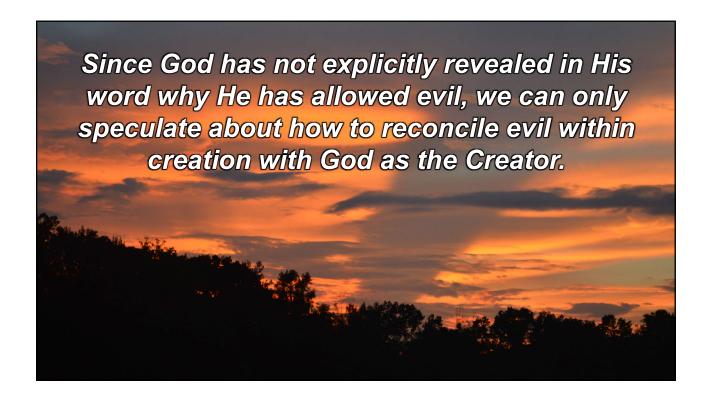
Would It Have Been Better if God Never Created the World?

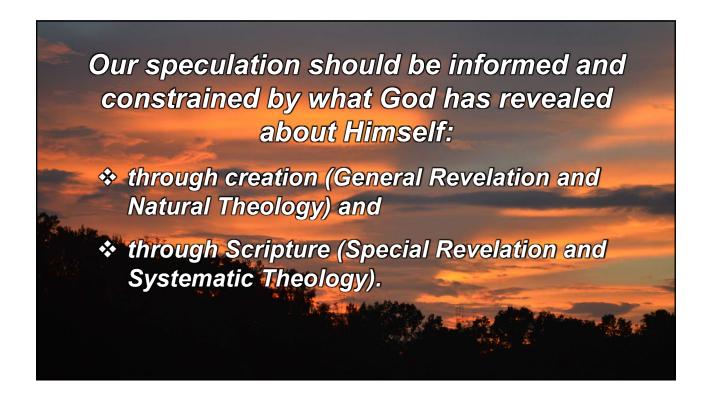


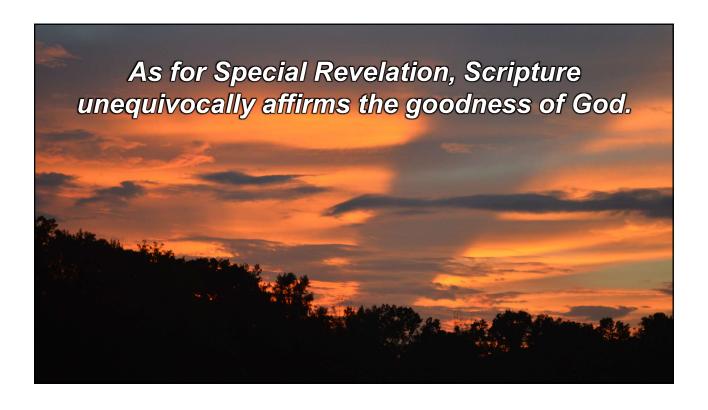










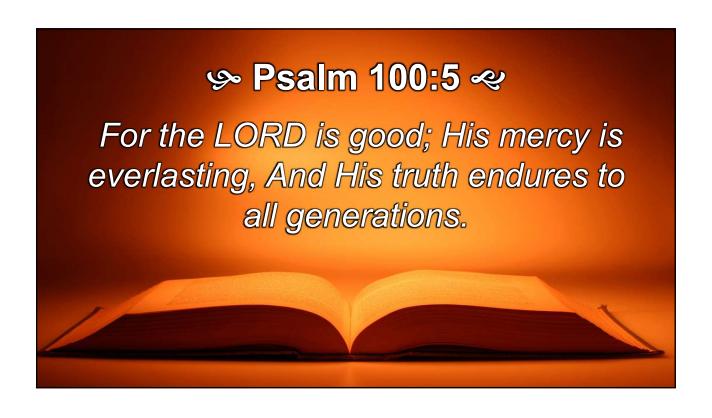


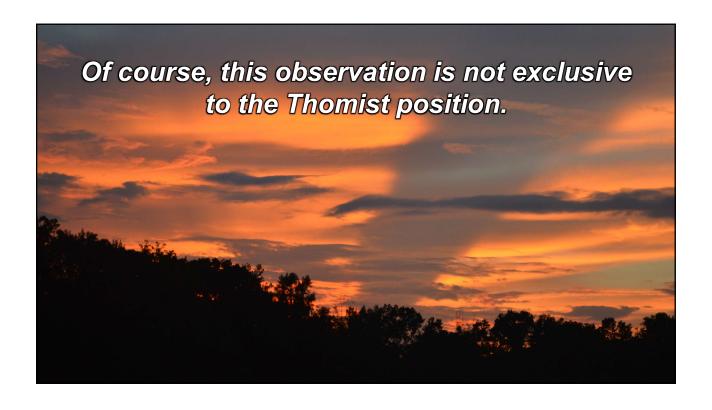


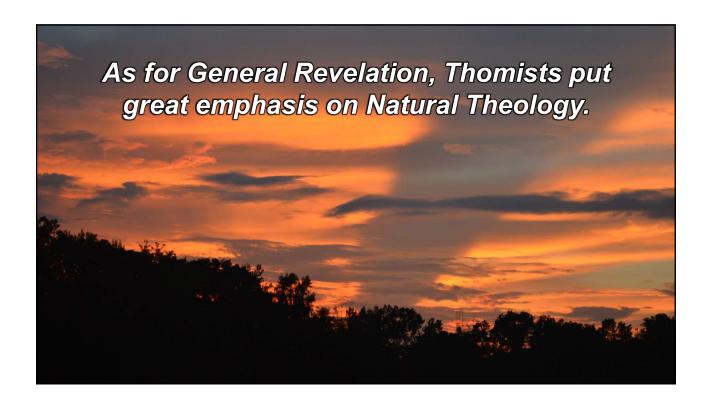


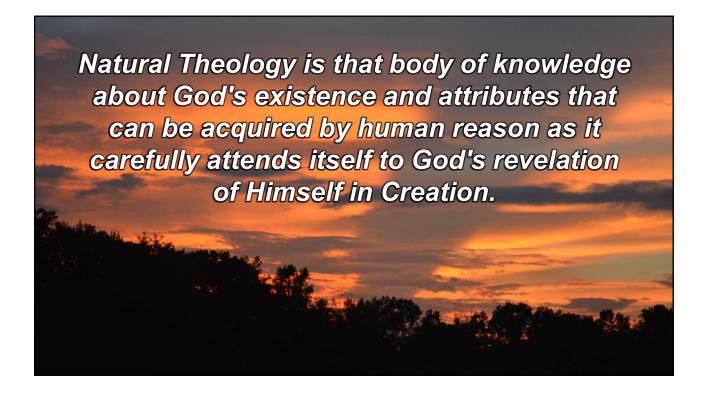






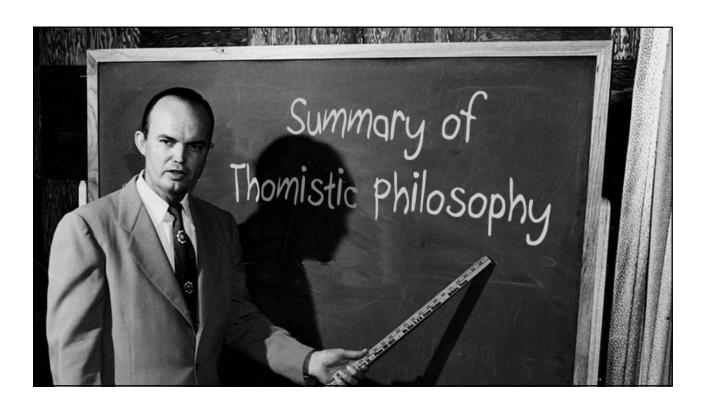






For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ...

Rom. 1:20a



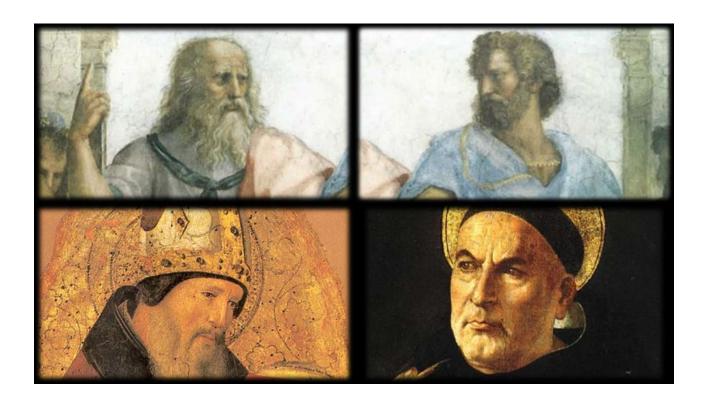
There are two great philosophical traditions in Western thought that have endured since the ancient Greeks.



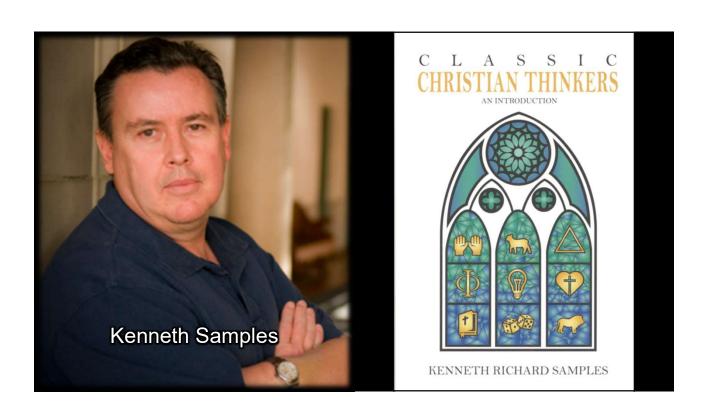


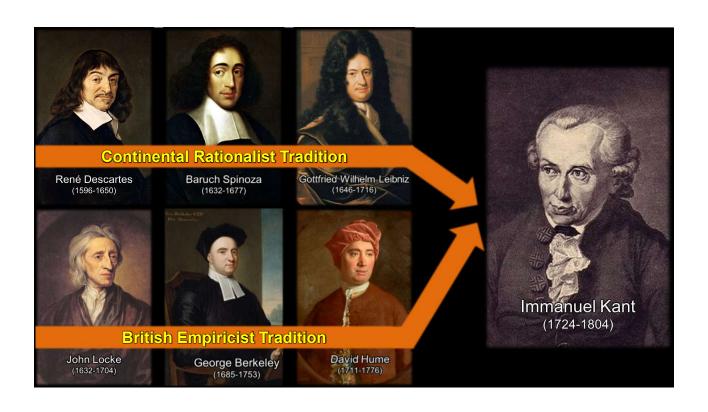
There are two great philosophical/theological traditions in Christian thought that have tracked these two Greek philosophical traditions.





Exploring the contours of how these traditions have answered certain basic questions about the nature of reality and our knowledge of it, will enable us to position many questions and concerns we have as Christians.

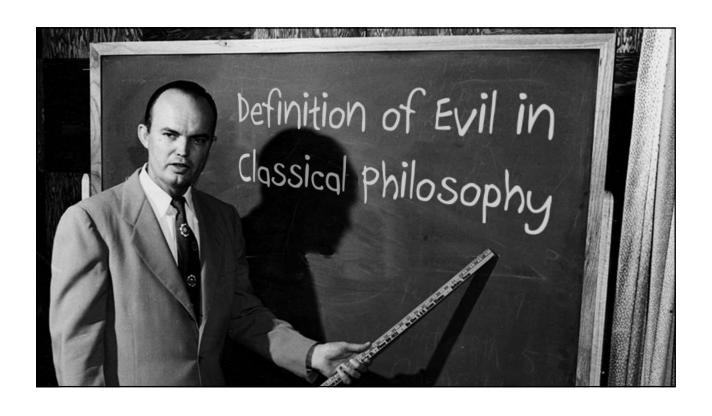






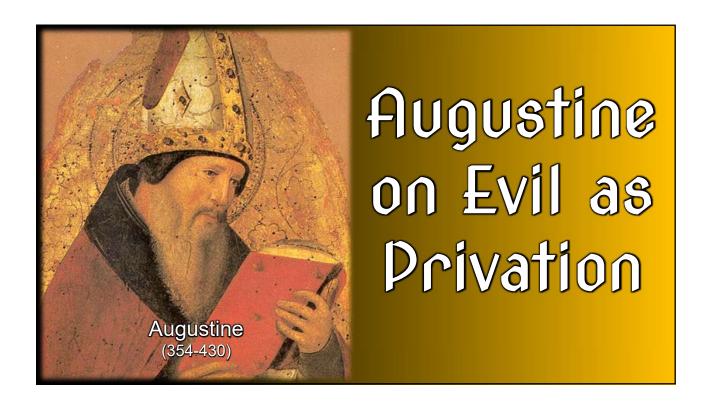
This approach to the problem of evil utilizes the philosophical categories and doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas.

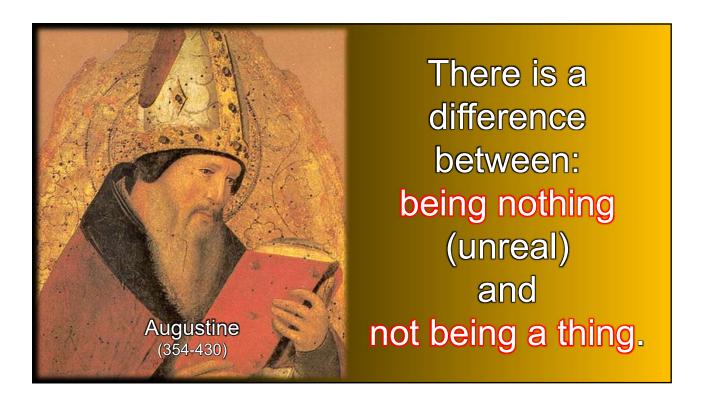
It follows the contours of how this Classical / Scholastic tradition understands things like good, evil, nature (or essence), existence, causality, teleology, morality, God, and more.

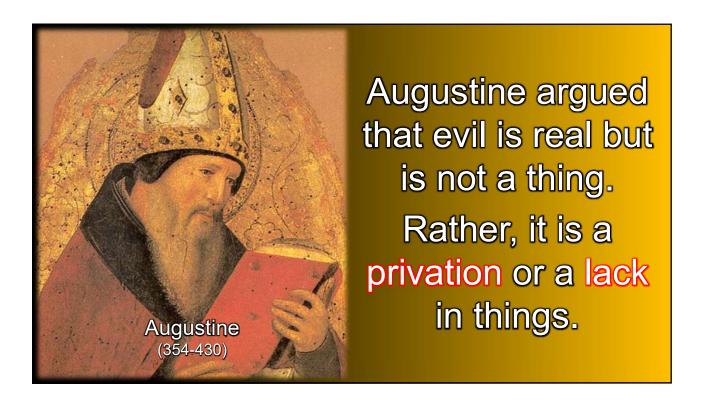


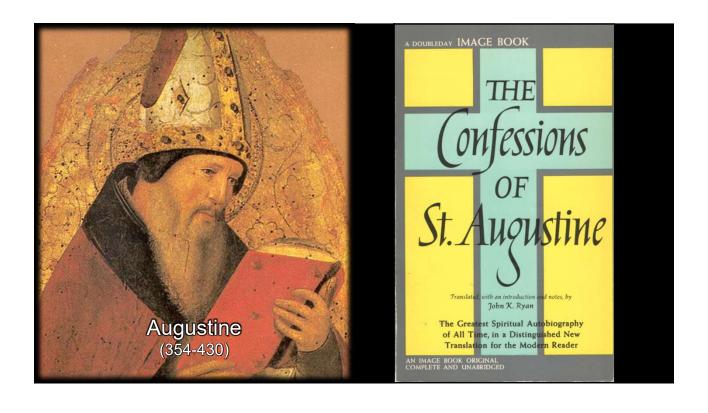
If God created all things and evil is something, then God created evil.

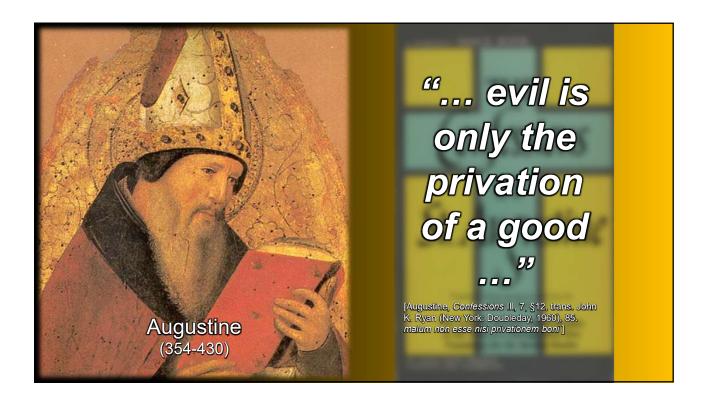
If God did not create evil, then it would seem either: evil is unreal or evil is not a thing.

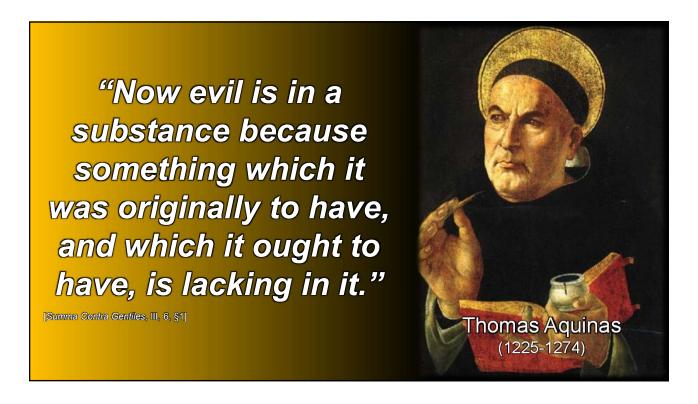


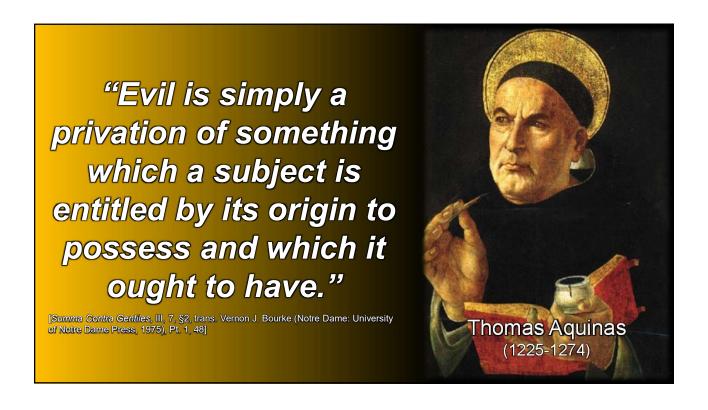


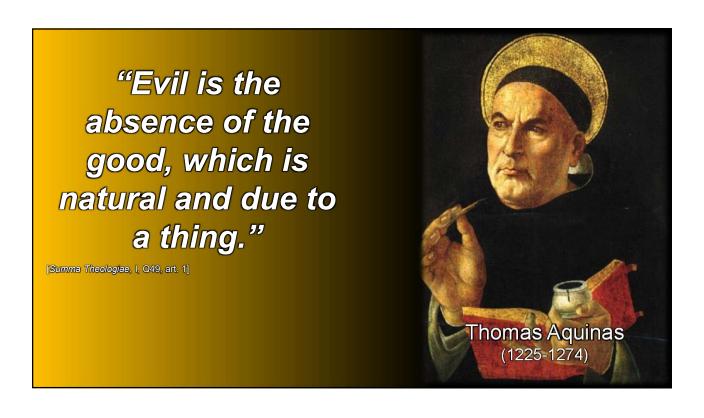


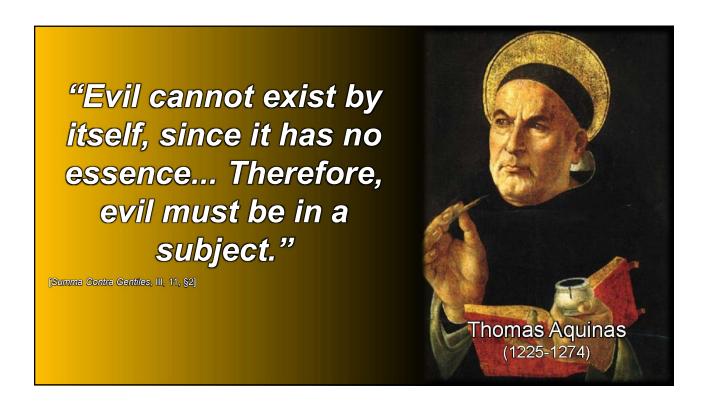












Note that there is a difference between a privation

Note that there is a difference between a privation and a negation.

A negation is the mere absence or removal of something.

A negation is the mere absence or removal of something.

A privation is the absence or removal of something that "ought" to be there.



Blindness is the privation of sight.
But blindness is not a thing in itself.



A rock cannot see, but It is not blind because It "ought" not be able to see.

Blindness is the privation of sight.
But blindness is not a thing in itself.





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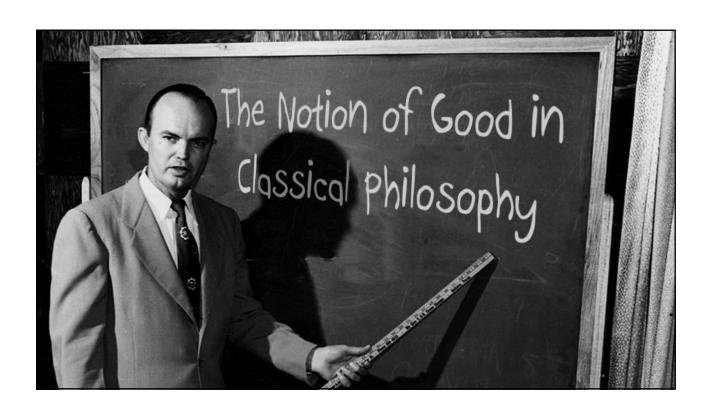




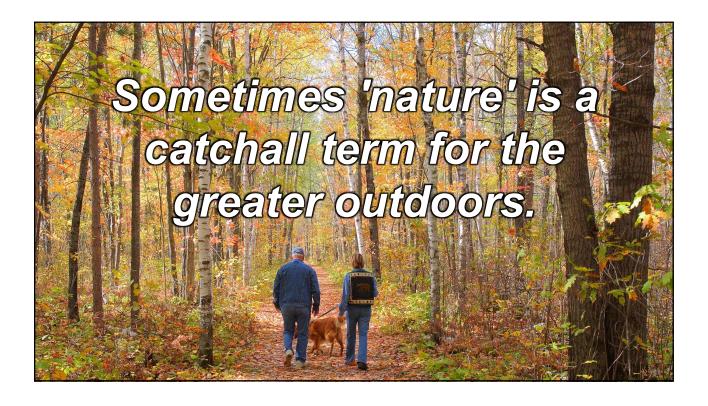
A rock cannot see, but it is not blind because it "ought" not be able to see.

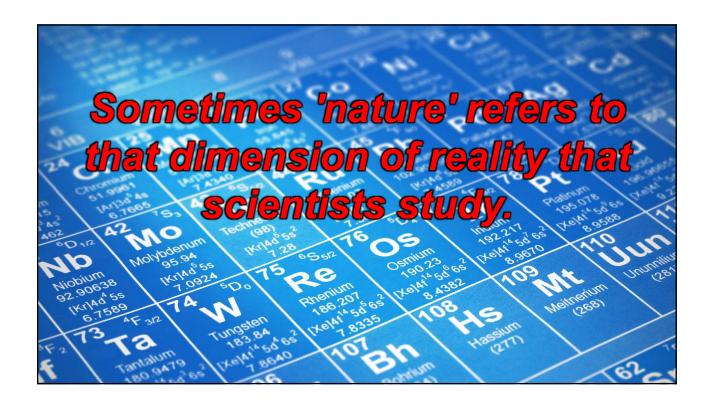
Blindness is the displacement of sight.
But blindness is not a thing in itself.

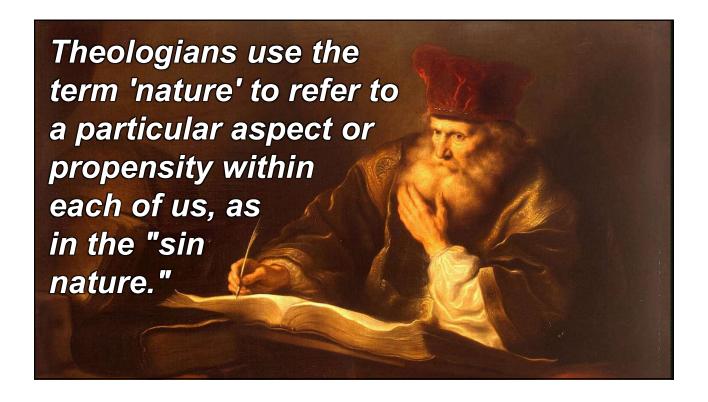


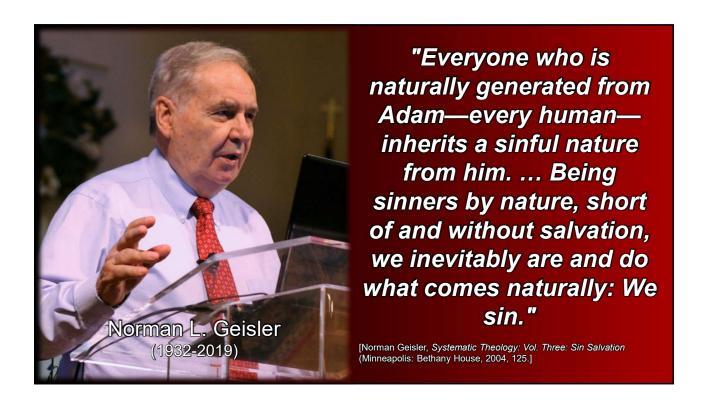


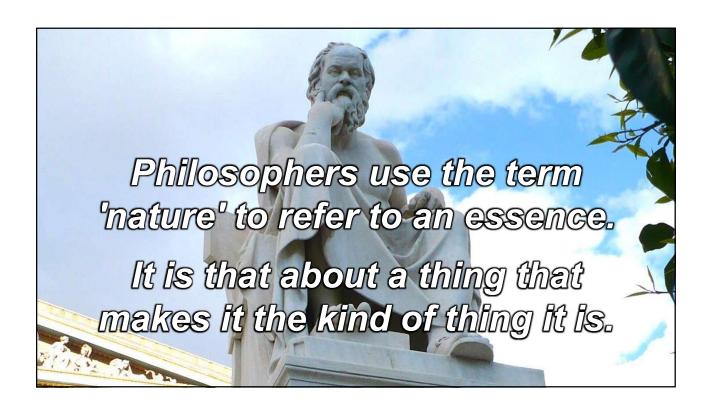
In the Classical/Scholastic
Tradition, the "good" of a thing
is fundamentally understood
along the lines of the "nature"
of that thing.







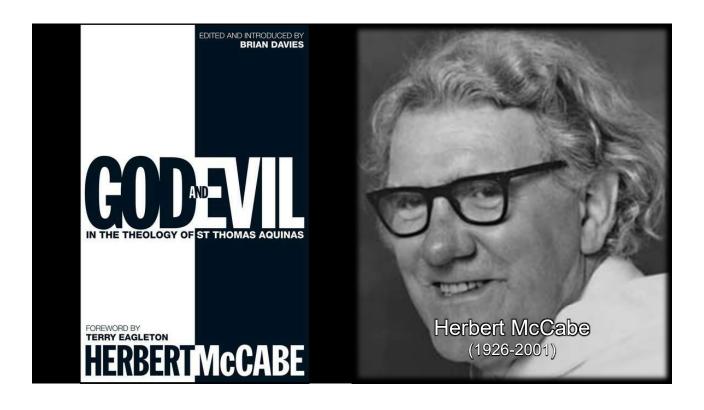












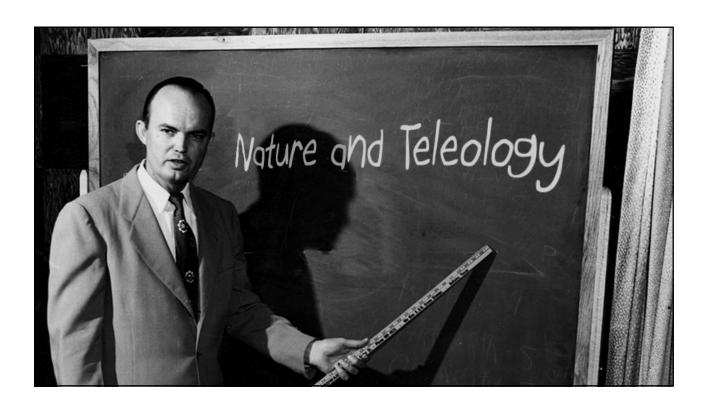


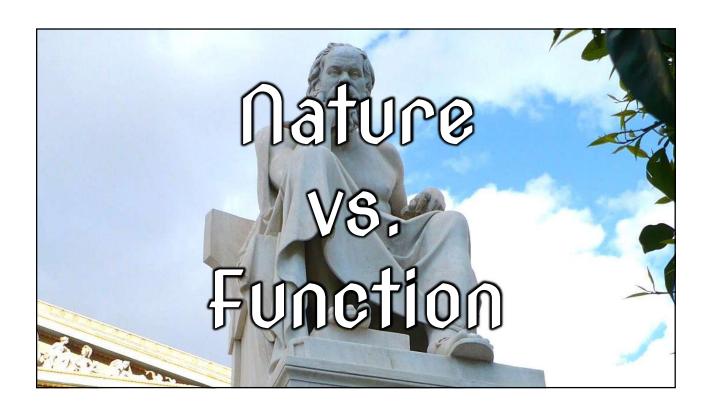




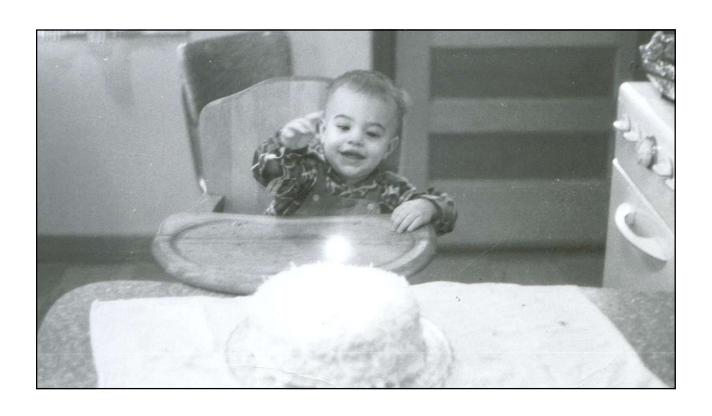


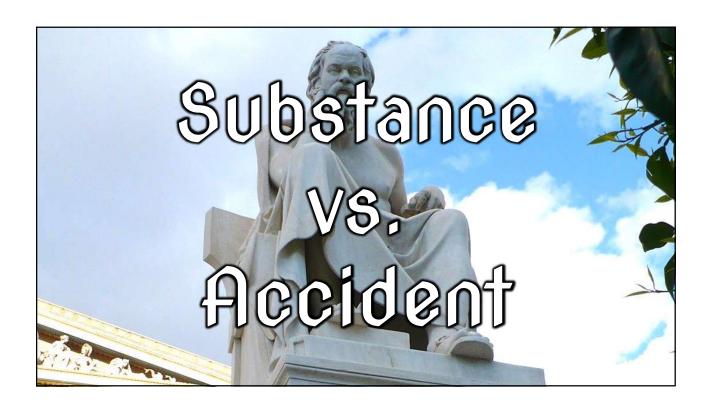






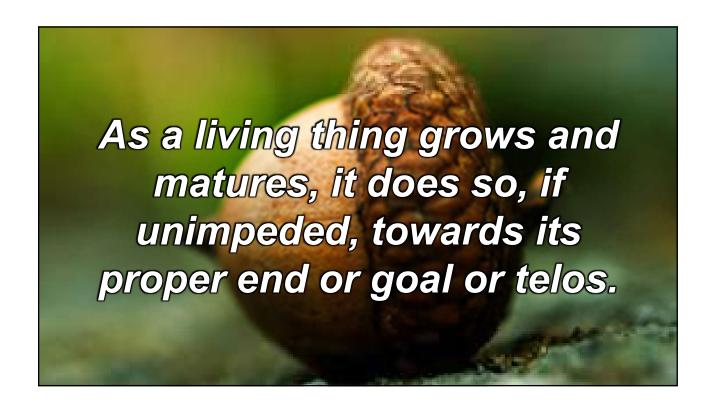


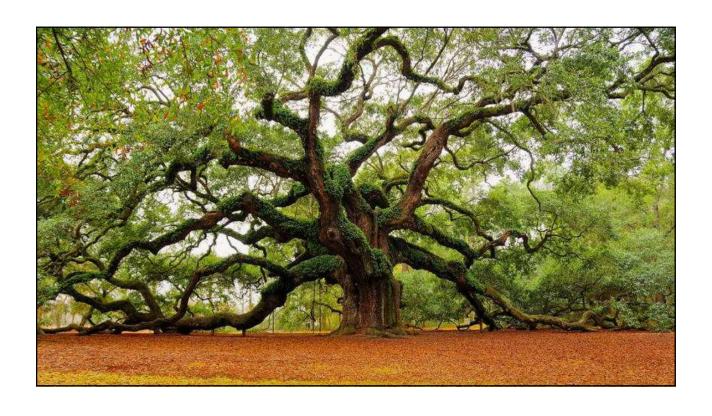


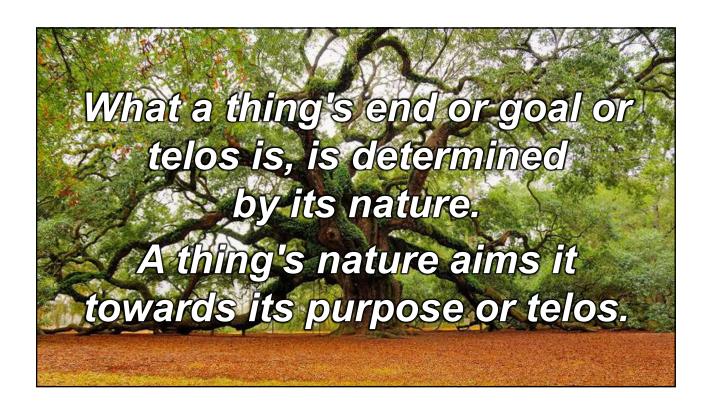


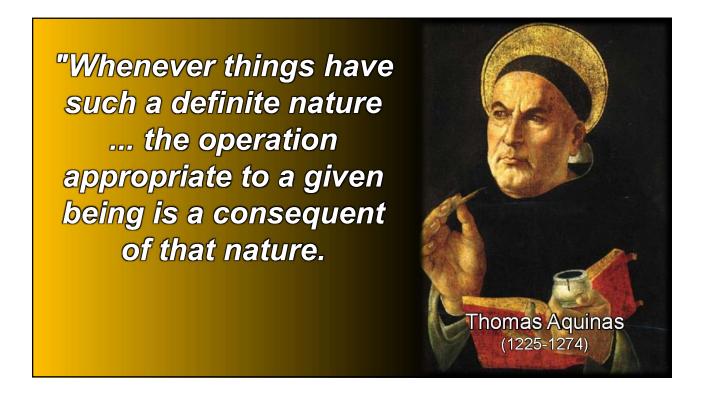




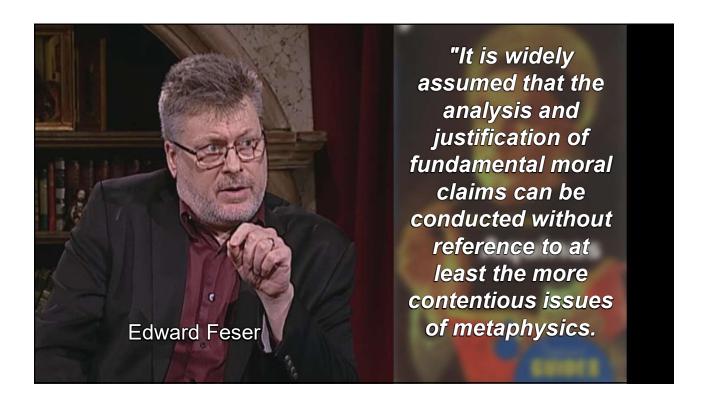


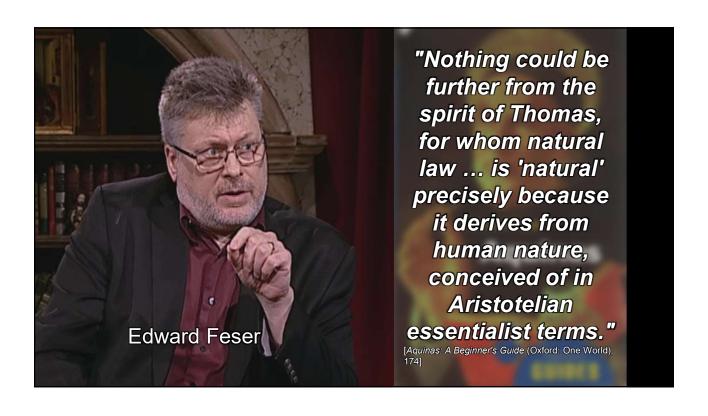


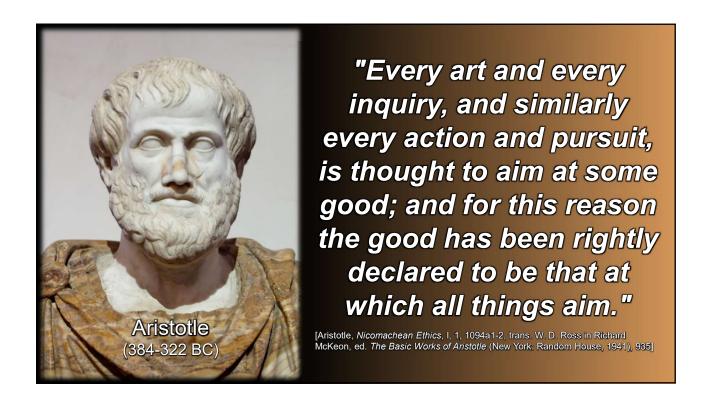


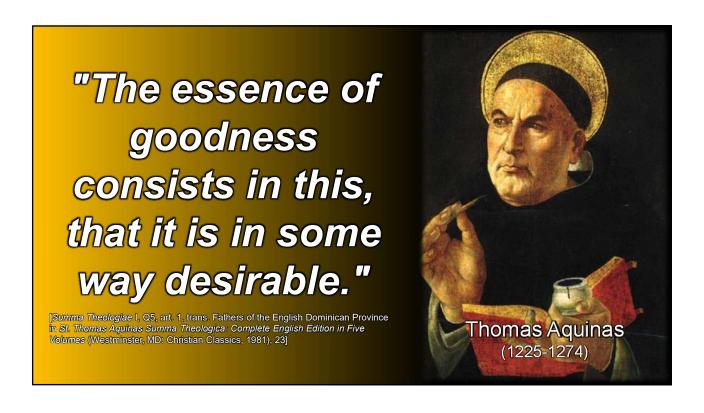


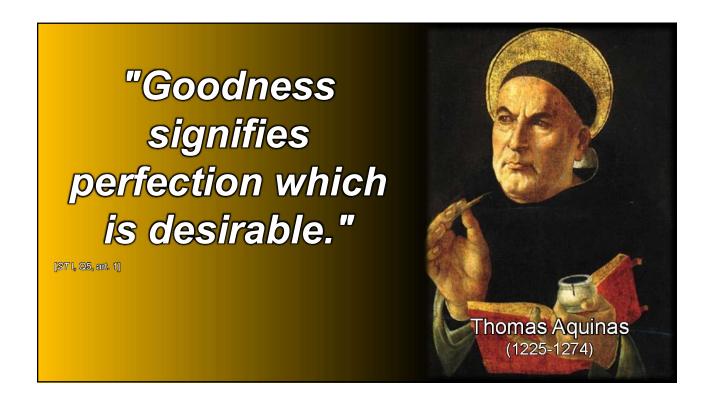


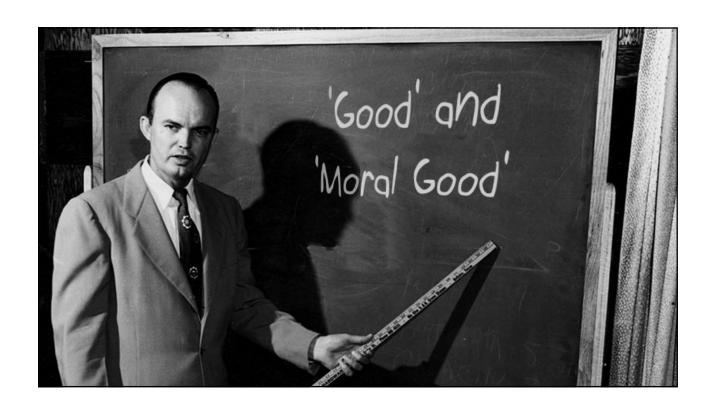


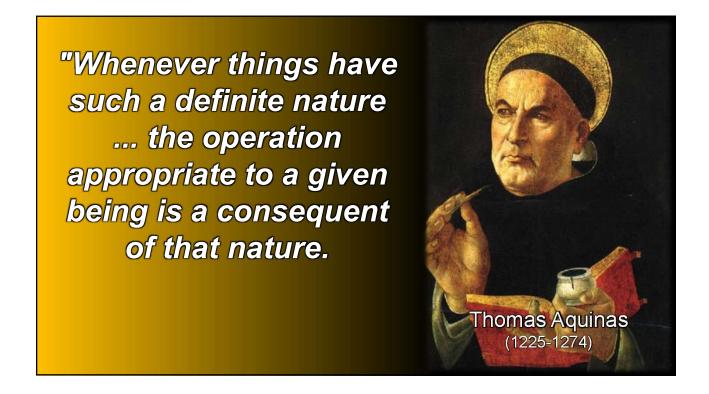


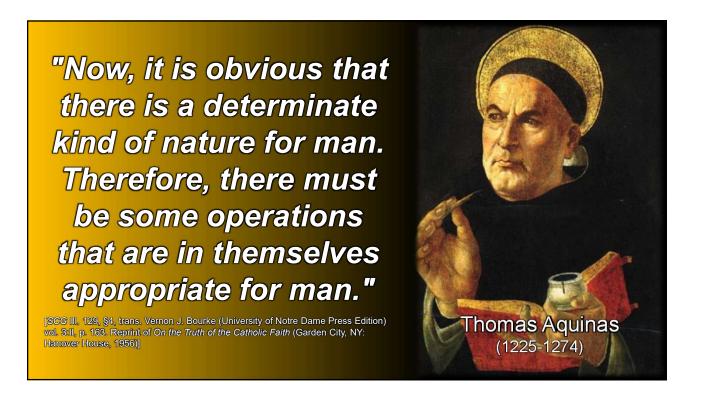












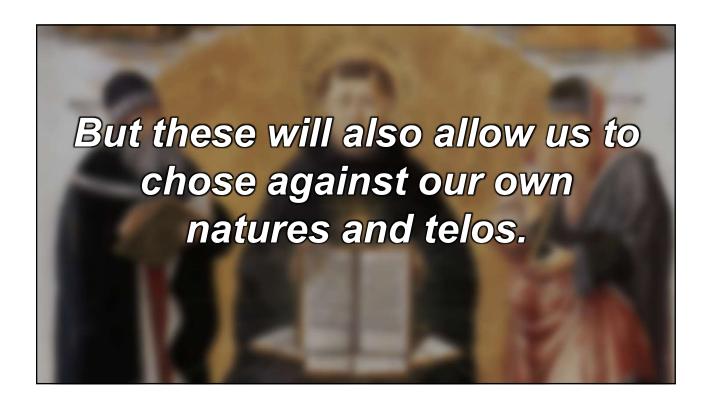
Human beings are unique among God's creatures on earth in as much as we have rationality and free will.

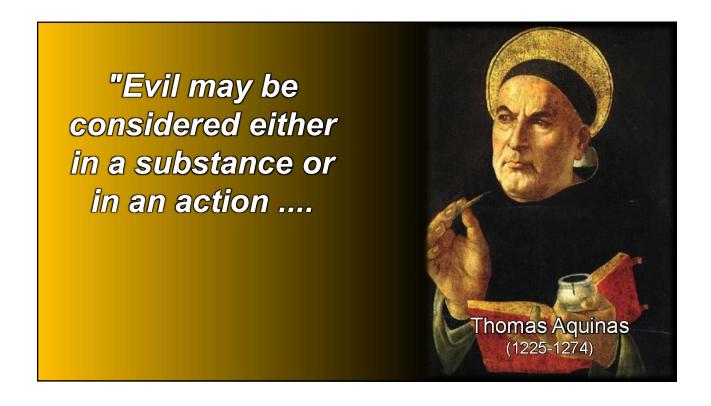
As the intellect aims toward that which is considered true, the will aims toward that which is considered good.

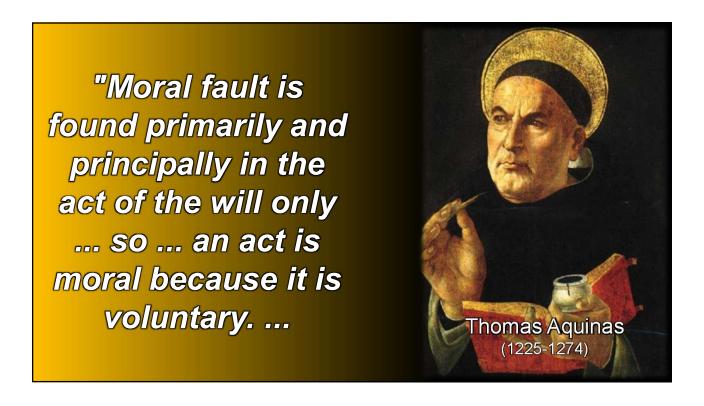
As something may be considered true that is not really true, something may be considered good that is not really good.

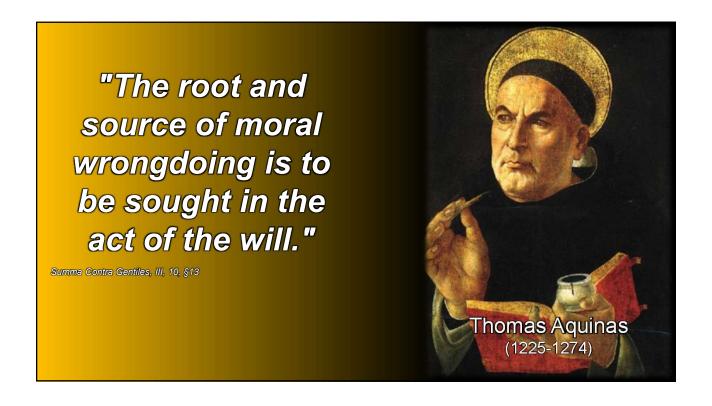
The good toward which our will aims may be our real good (when we act morally) or something mistakenly perceived as a good but which substitutes for our real good (when we act immorally).

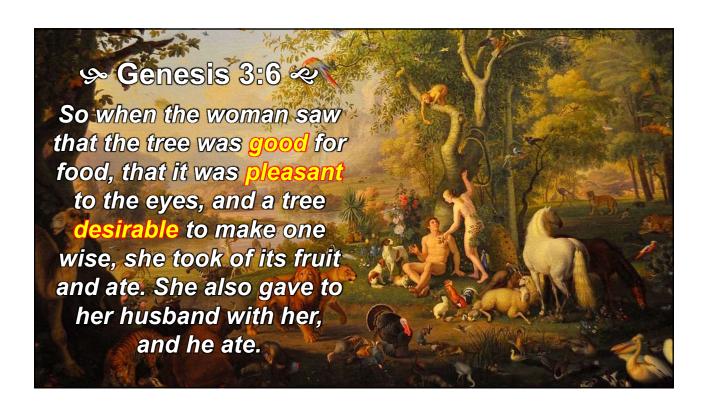
These enable us to choose, not merely among goods, but to pursue the good as such.

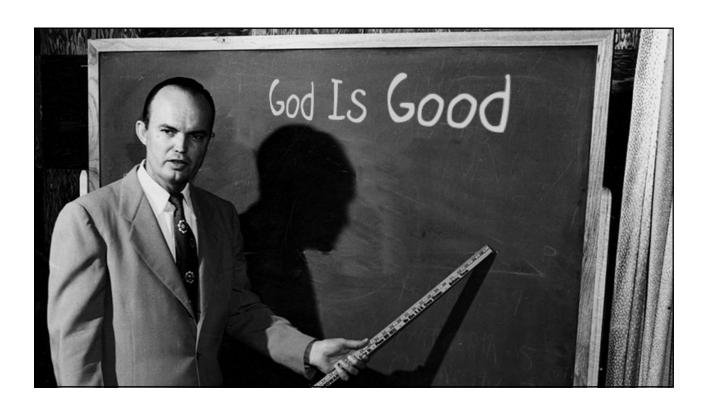


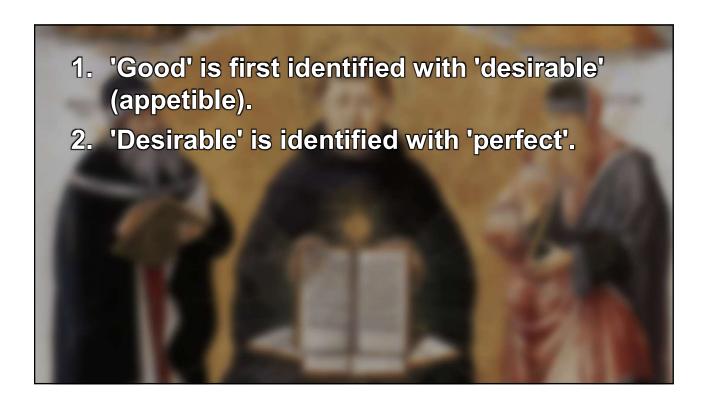


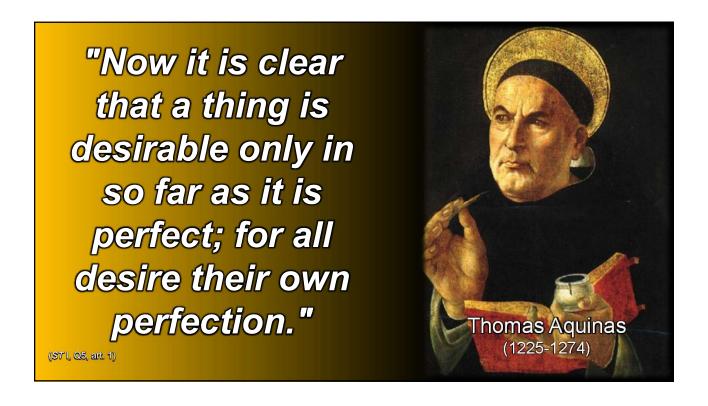




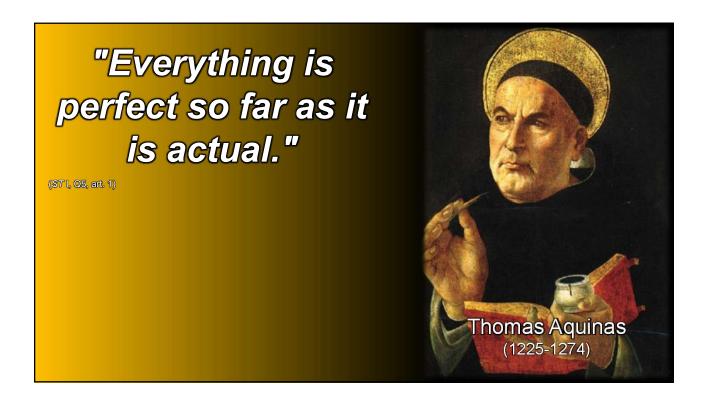


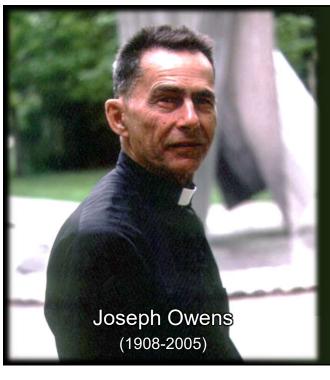




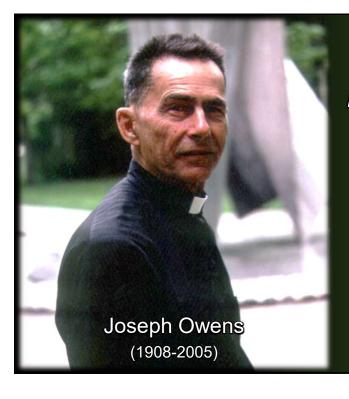


- 1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
- 2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
- 3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.

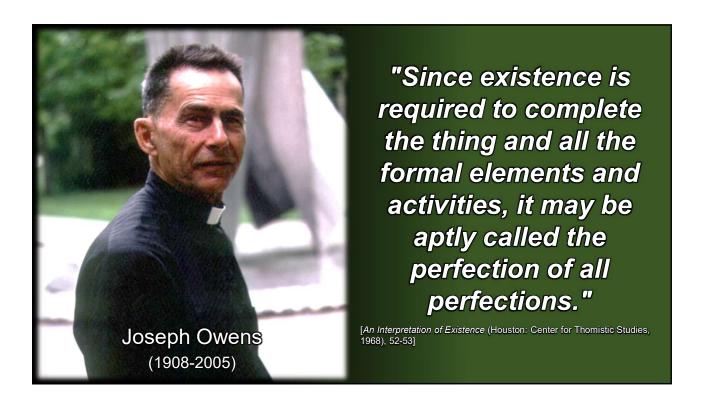




"An alternate word for actuality in this respect is "perfection" (entelecheia). It was used by Aristotle along with actuality to designate the formal elements in the things.



"These perfected the material element in the sense of filling its potentiality and completing the thing.





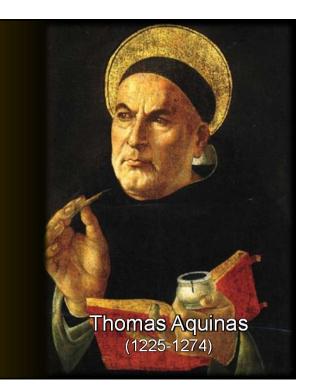
perfection

(entelecheia, ἐντελέχεια)

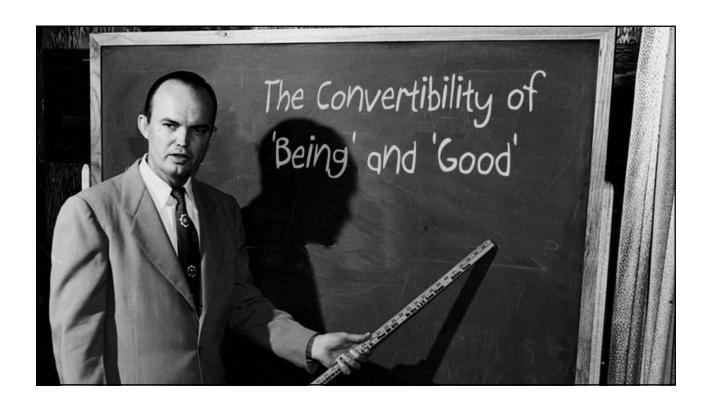
to have the end or goal in

- 1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
- 2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
- 3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.
- 4. 'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.

"Goodness and being are really the same, and differ only in idea; which is clear from the following argument. The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher says [Ethic i]: 'Goodness is what all desire.' Now is it clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it exists; for it is existence that makes all things actual, as is clear from the foregoing [Q. 3, A. 4; Q. 4, A. 1]. Hence it is clear that goodness and being are the same reality."



(STI, Q5, art. 1)



A full exploration of how it is that 'being' and 'good' are convertible, which is to say that 'being' and 'good' are really the same, requires a examination of the Medieval doctrine of the Transcendentals.

New Scholasticism 59 (1985): 449-470

The Convertibility of Being and Good in St. Thomas Aquinas

by Jan A. Aertsen

In MANY medieval thinkers, e.g. Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, the statement can be found: "being and good are convertible" (ens et bonum convertuntur). That is to say, "being" and "good" are interchangeable terms in predication (converti enim est conversim praedicari). Wherever "being" is predicated of something, the predicate "good" is involved as well.

That must imply that "good" is here not a concept that

adds a real content or a new quality to "being", as a result of which "being" is restricted. For in that case there would be no question of convertibility. "Good" is an attribute which pertains to every being, it is a property of being as such, a "mode that is common, and consequent upon every being." ⁴
In other words, "good" is coextensive with "being", it is one of the so-called transcendentia 5 which, since Suarez, are usually referred to as "transcendentals".

1 Alexander of Hales, Summa I, Inq. 1, Tract. 3, q. 3, membrum 1, e., a. 1, "An idem sit bonum et ens"; Bonaventure, In I Sent, d. 1, 1, a. 1, q. 1, fundans. 5; "Ens et bonum convertueirs, rient velt einsystum", d. 34, a. 2, q. 3, fundam si; Albert the Graat, De Bone q. a. 6; Summa Theel. tract. 6, q. 29; Thomas Aguinas, In I Sent. 8, 1, De Yer, XXI, 2; In De Hebdomesidum, lect. 3; Summa Theel. I, 16, 3. 2 Thomas Aguinas, De Yer, I, 2, obj. 2.

3 De Pet. IX, 7 ad 5; Benum quod est in genere qualitatis, non est num quod convertitur cum ensiq, quod unilam rans supra ens addit.

4 De Yer, I, 1; medus generaliter consequens omne ens.

**Comp. Albert the Graat, Summa Theelogica tract. 6, q. 27, e. 3; comm dielt intentionem communem et est de transcendentibus omns ensistent et ens.

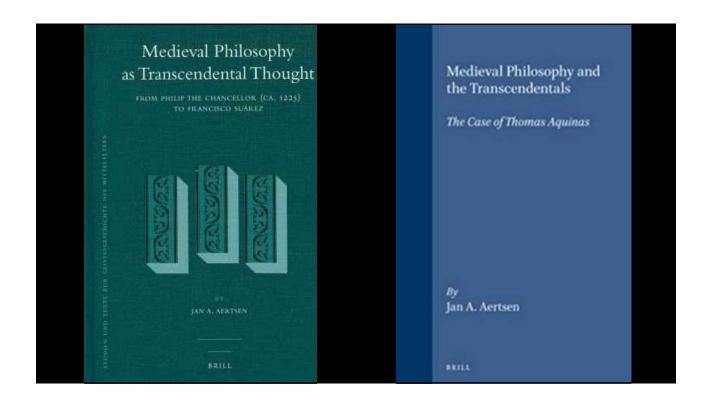


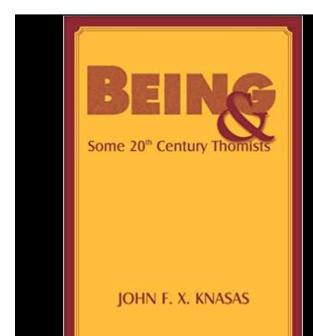
New Scholasticism 59 (1985): 449-470

The Convertibility of Being and Good in St. Thomas Aquinas

by Jan A. Aertsen

IN MANY medieval thinkers, e.g. Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, the statement can be found: "being and good are convertible" (ens et bonum convertuntur). That is to say, "being" and "good" are interchangeable terms in predication (converti enim est

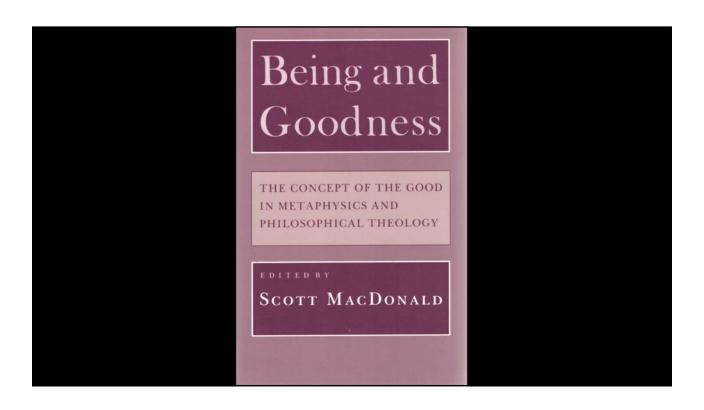




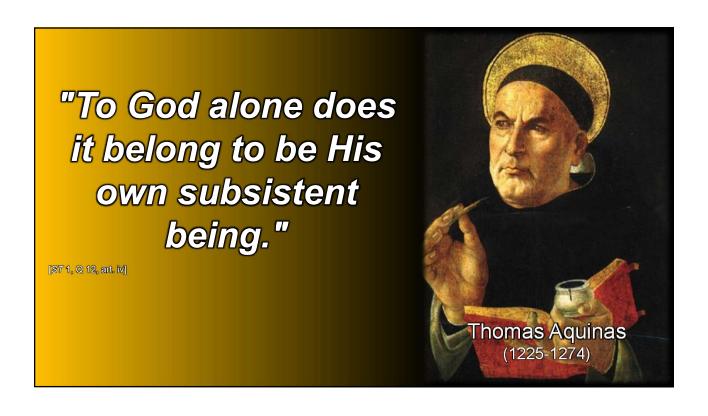


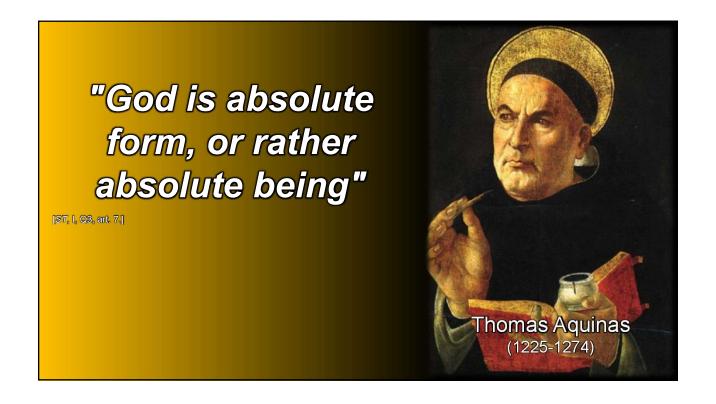
"To see man as the willer of the ratio boni is to engender a special status among things. ... No other thing in our experience so directly and intimately relates to the ratio boni. Only man has good as the proper object of his appetitive power ... and to understand this fact is for one to realize that one should treat oneself and others in a special way."

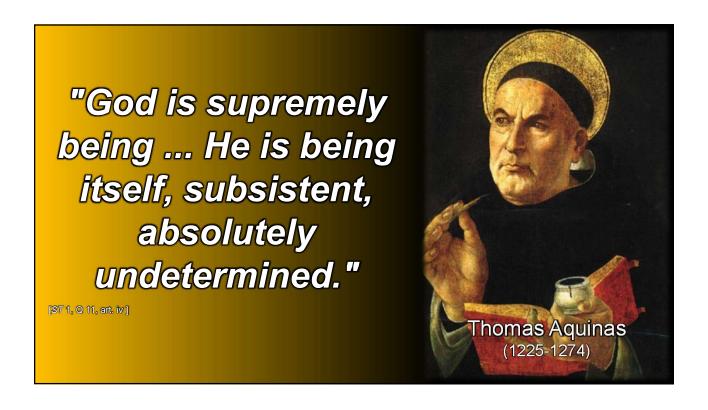


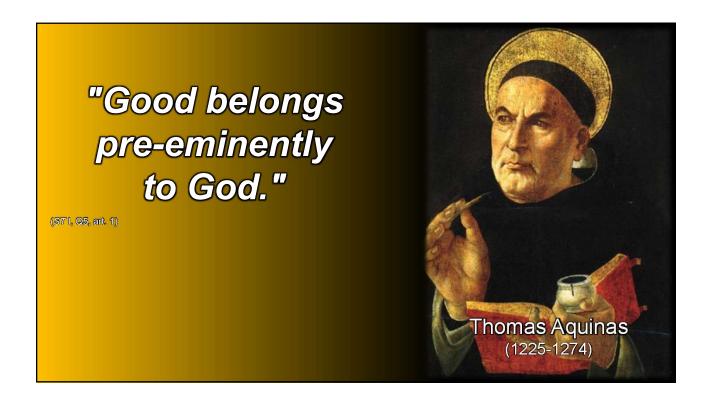


- 1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
- 2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
- 3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.
- 4. 'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.
- 5. God is goodness itself in as much as God is being itself.





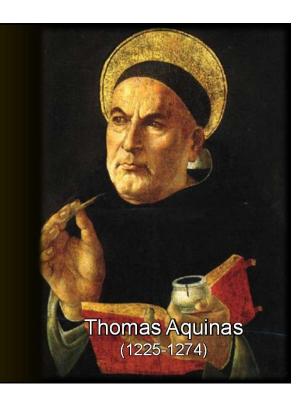




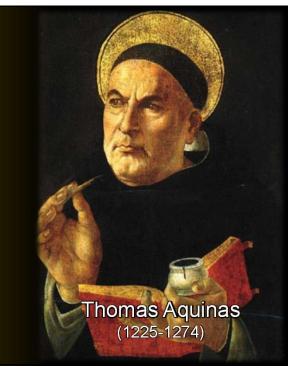
"The first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time Now as being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed at action."

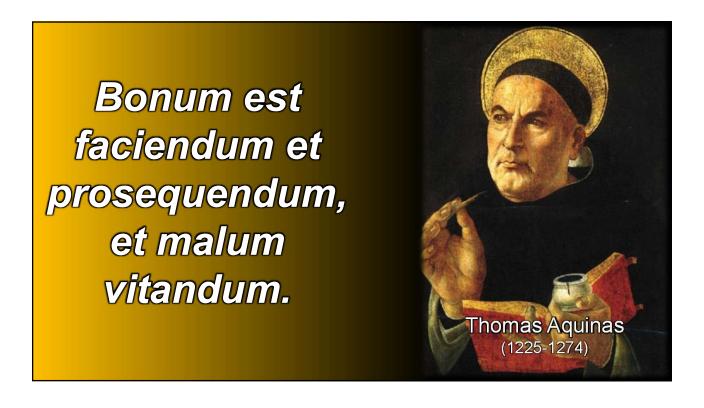
ST I-II, Q94, art. 2

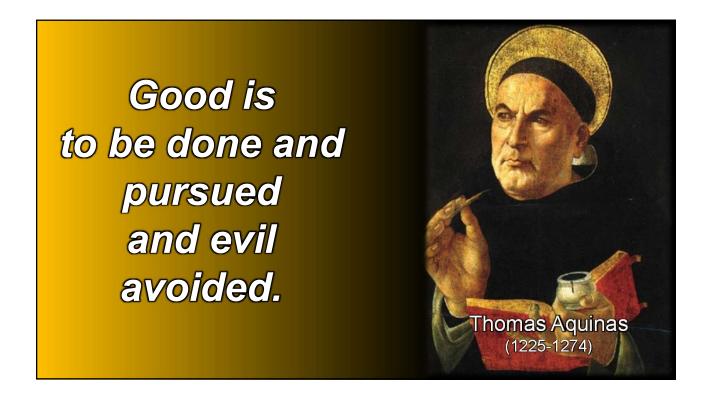
ST I-II, Q94, art. 2

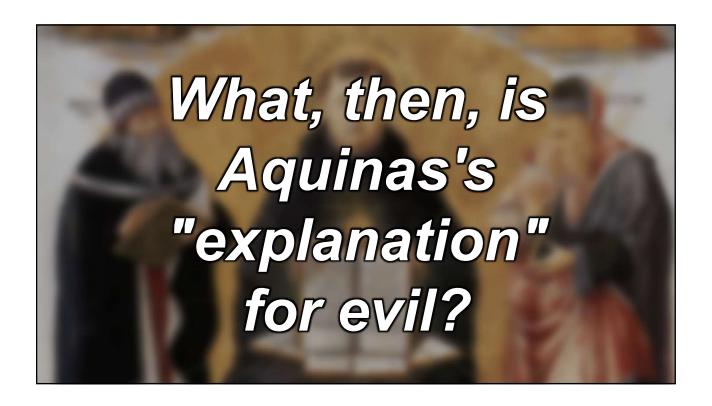


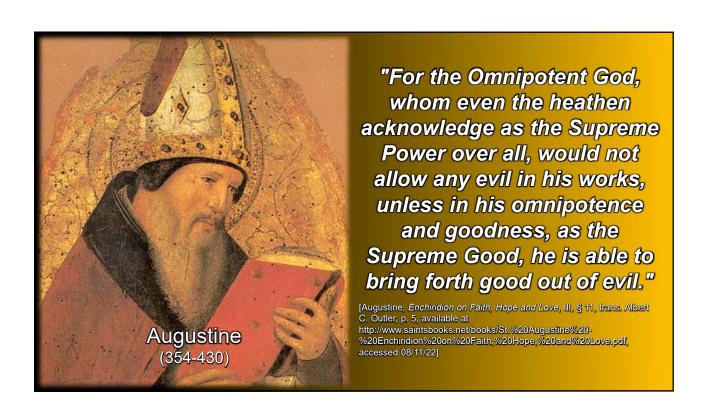
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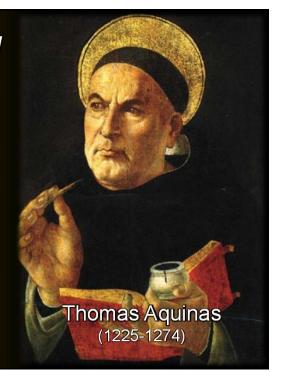






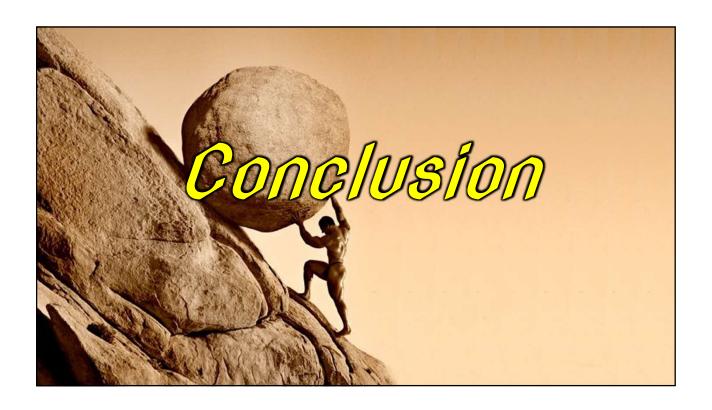


"As Augustine says 'Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil in his works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil.'
This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good."



[ST, I, Q2, art. 3, ad. 1]

- It can be demonstrated that God exists and that He is both good and omnipotent.
- We know God is all good and all powerful even when we cannot demonstrate the connection between specific evils in the world and the specific goods that God might produce from them.



There is a difference between natural and moral evil as well as a difference between good and moral good.

Solutions to the problem of evil seek to address both.

In the Classical tradition, evil is understood, not as a thing in itself, but as a privation of goodness in things.

Some solutions to the problem of evil are incompatible with Evangelical Christianity.

There are solutions to the problem of evil that are compatible with biblical Christianity and Classical Theism.

