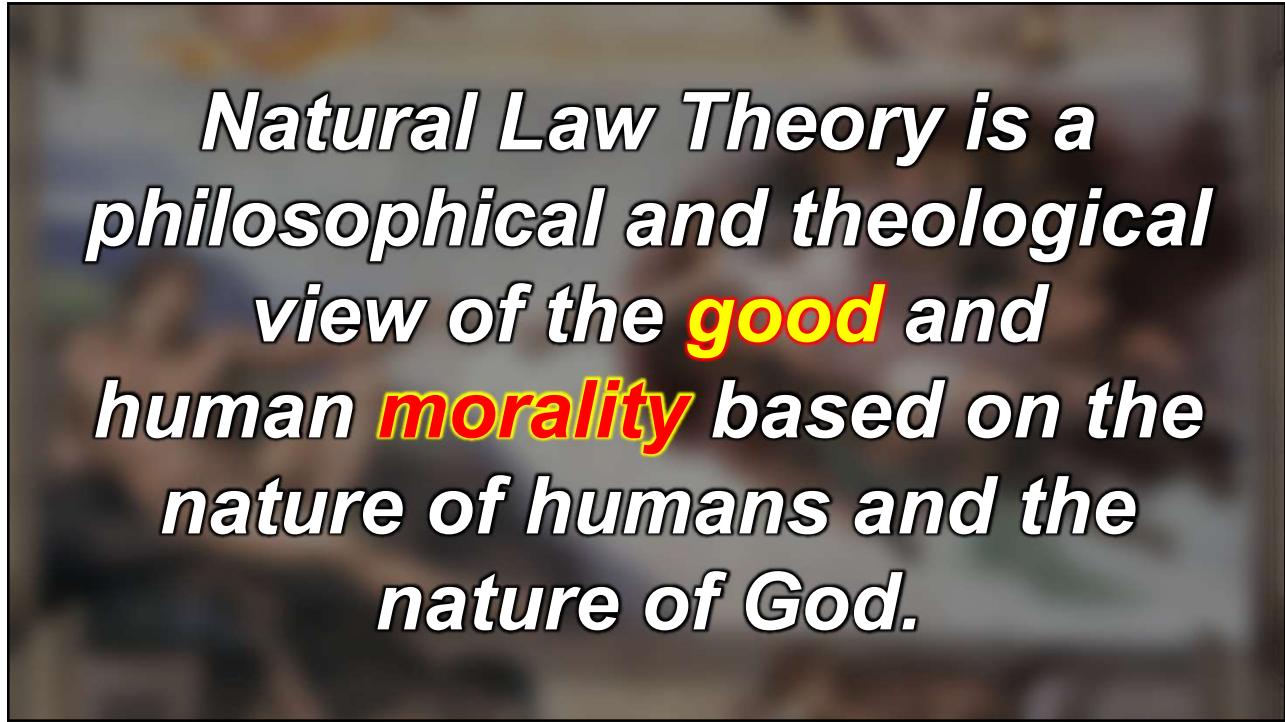
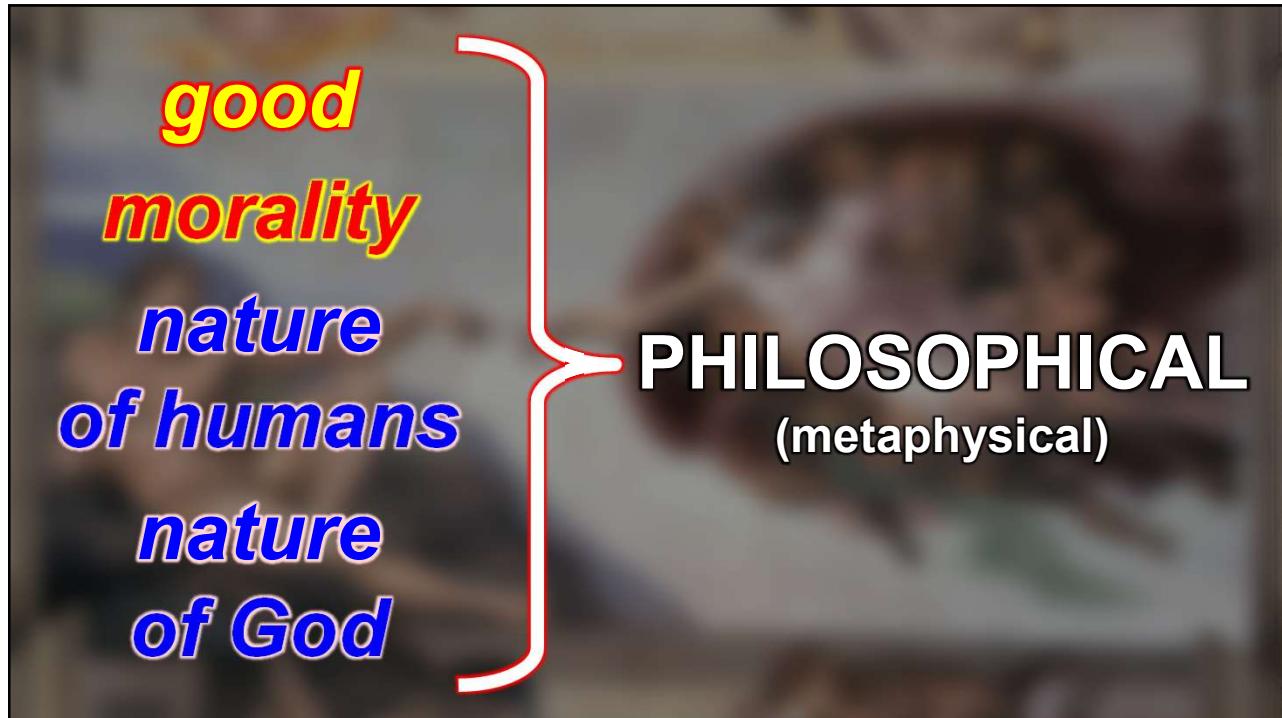
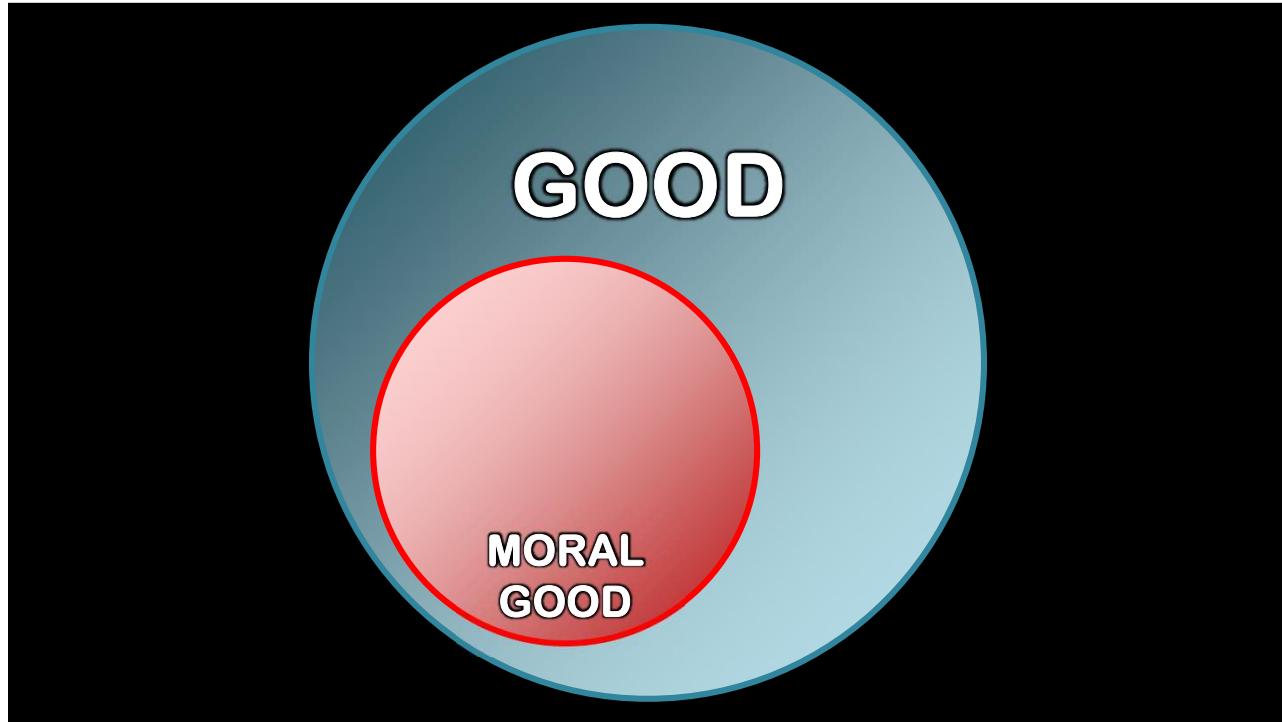


***Natural Law Ethics is
commonly referred to as
Natural Law Theory.***

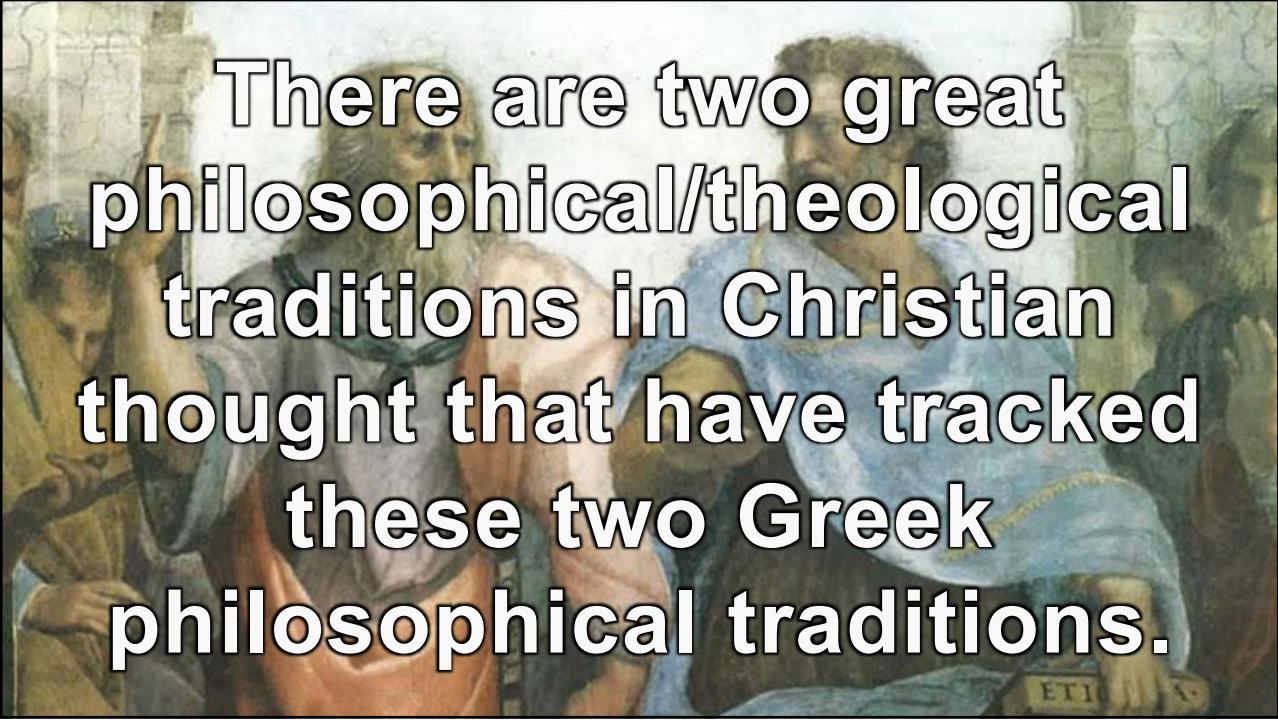


***Natural Law Theory is a
philosophical and theological
view of the *good* and
human *morality* based on the
nature of humans and the
nature of God.***



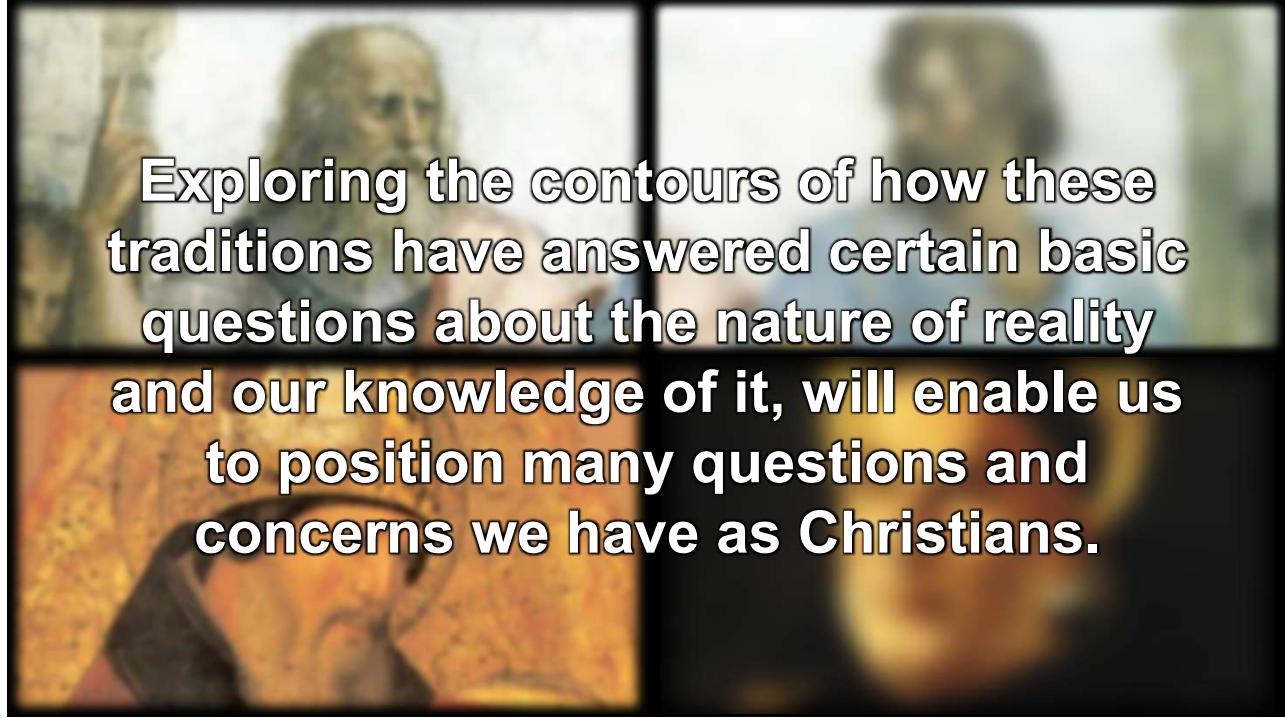
There are two great philosophical traditions in Western thought that have endured since the ancient Greeks.



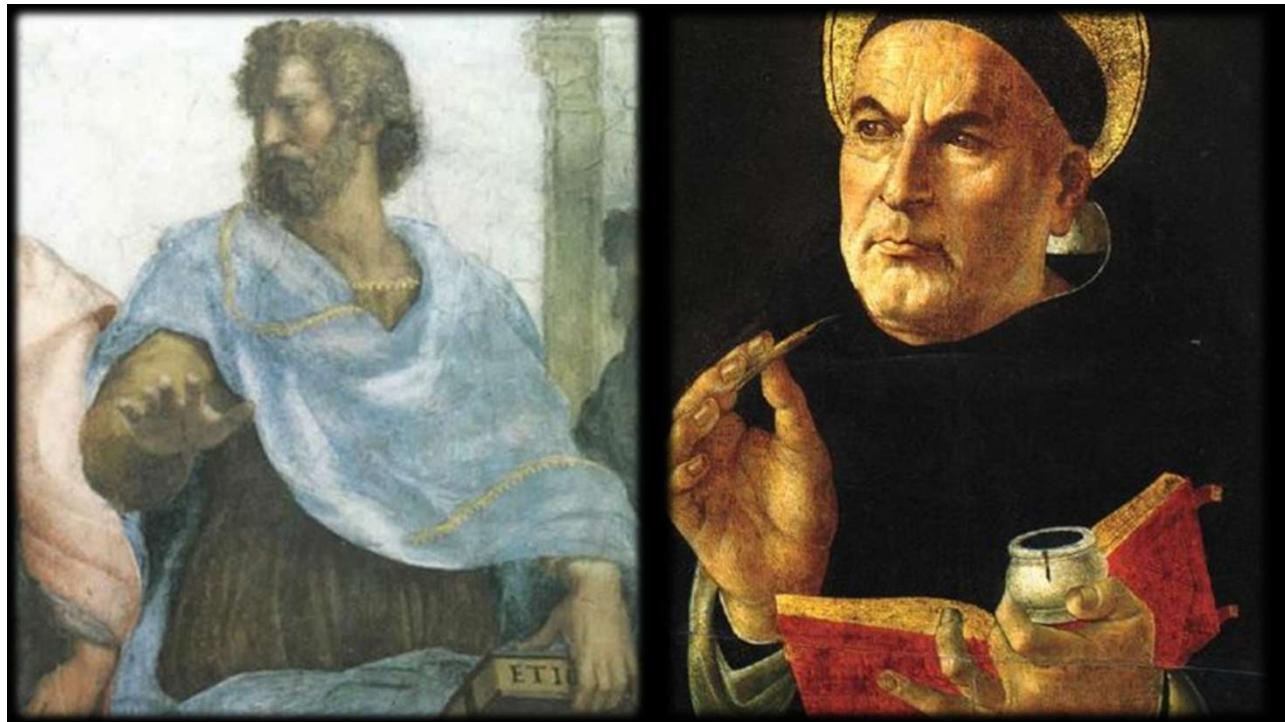


There are two great philosophical/theological traditions in Christian thought that have tracked these two Greek philosophical traditions.





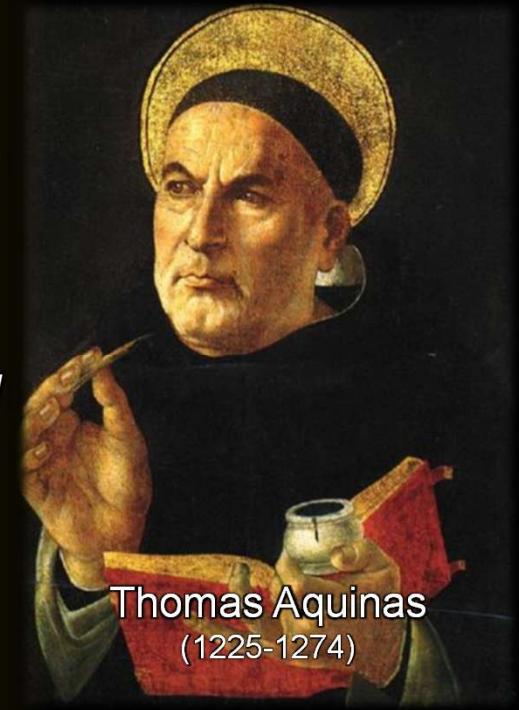
Exploring the contours of how these traditions have answered certain basic questions about the nature of reality and our knowledge of it, will enable us to position many questions and concerns we have as Christians.



Given that certain aspects of human morality are philosophical issues, Natural Law Theory maintains that such aspects of the good and moral good can be known by human reason apart from Scripture.

This is not to say that every aspect of such things is accessible by human reason. This is especially the case with man's eternal destiny.

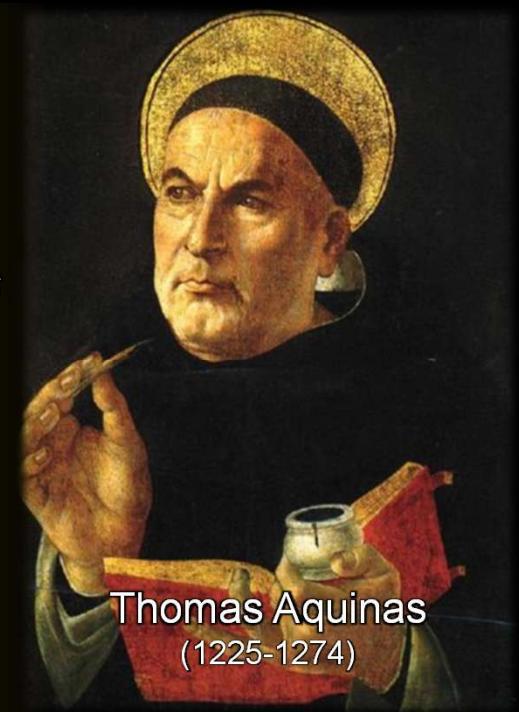
"It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built up by human reason ... because man is directed to God as to an end that surpasses the grasp of reason. ...



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation."

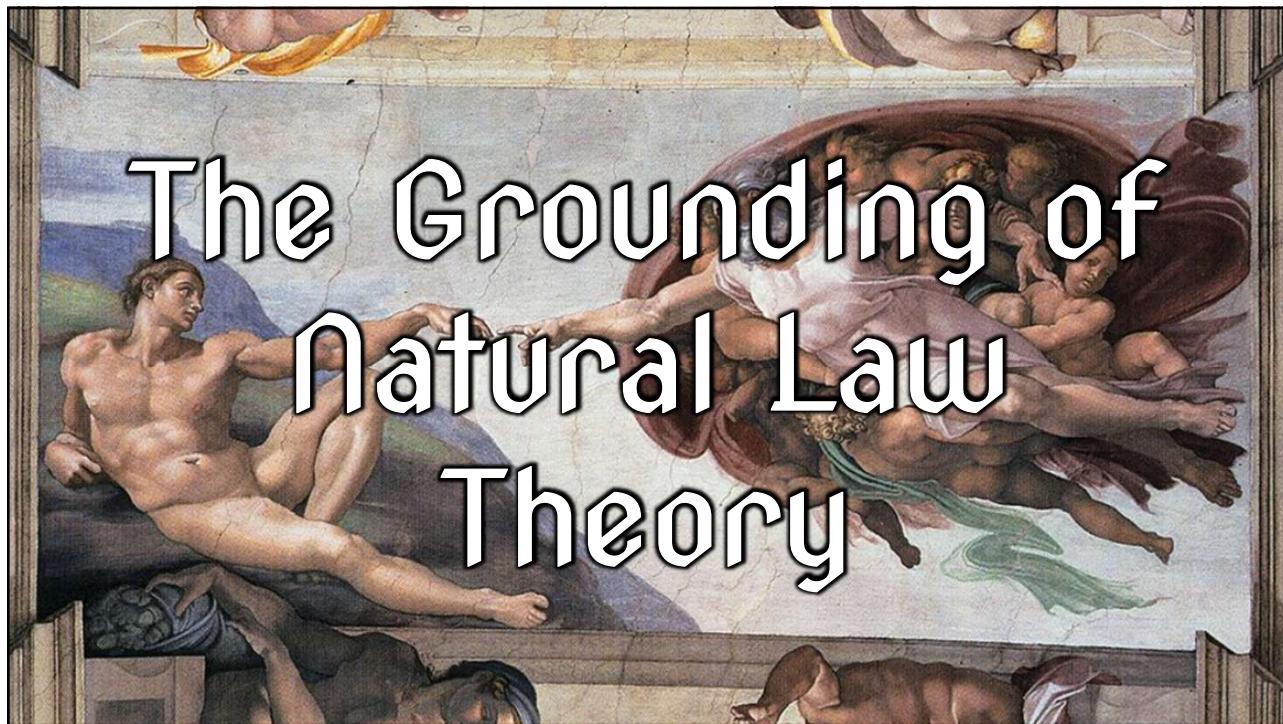
[Summa Theologiae I, 1]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

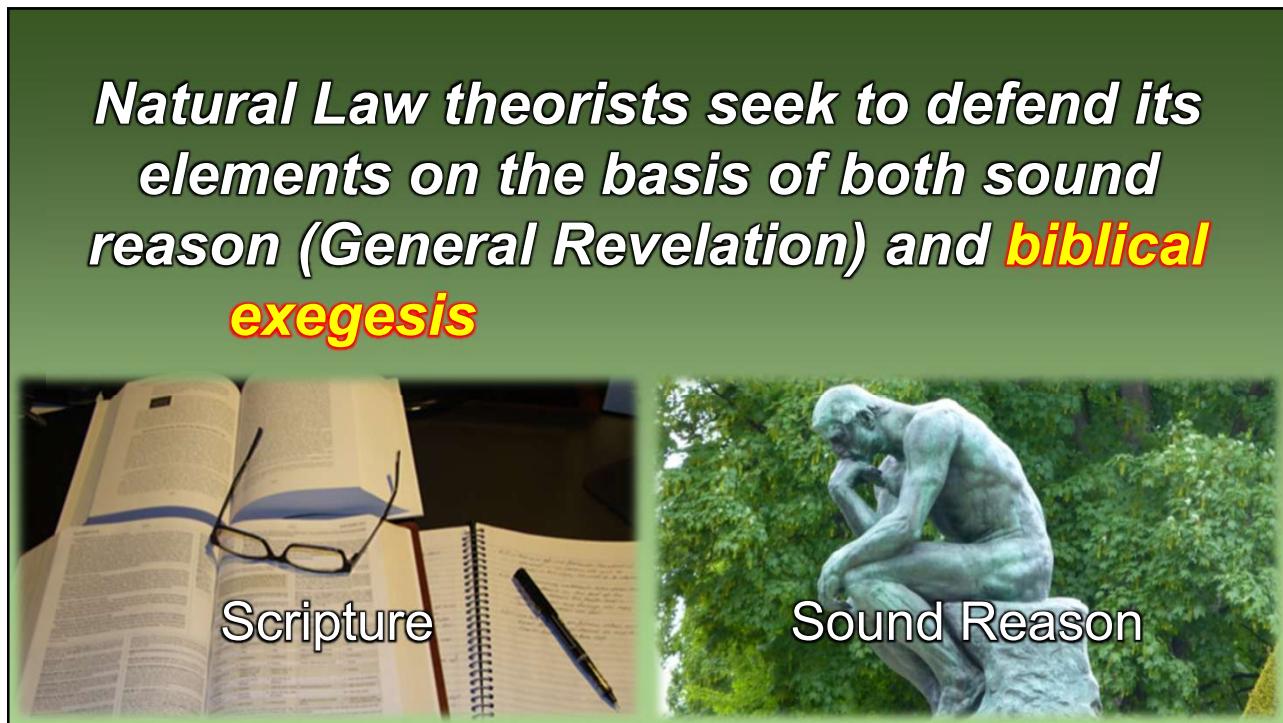
*While I agree with Aquinas's metaphysics regarding the philosophical aspects of human morality and goodness in achieving our **end** in this life, as a Protestant Evangelical, I do not agree with him regarding how we gain that ultimate **end** in the next life.*

*While I agree with Aquinas's metaphysics regarding the philosophical aspects of human morality and goodness in achieving our **end** in this life, as a Protestant Evangelical, I do not agree with him regarding how we gain that ultimate **end** in the next life.*

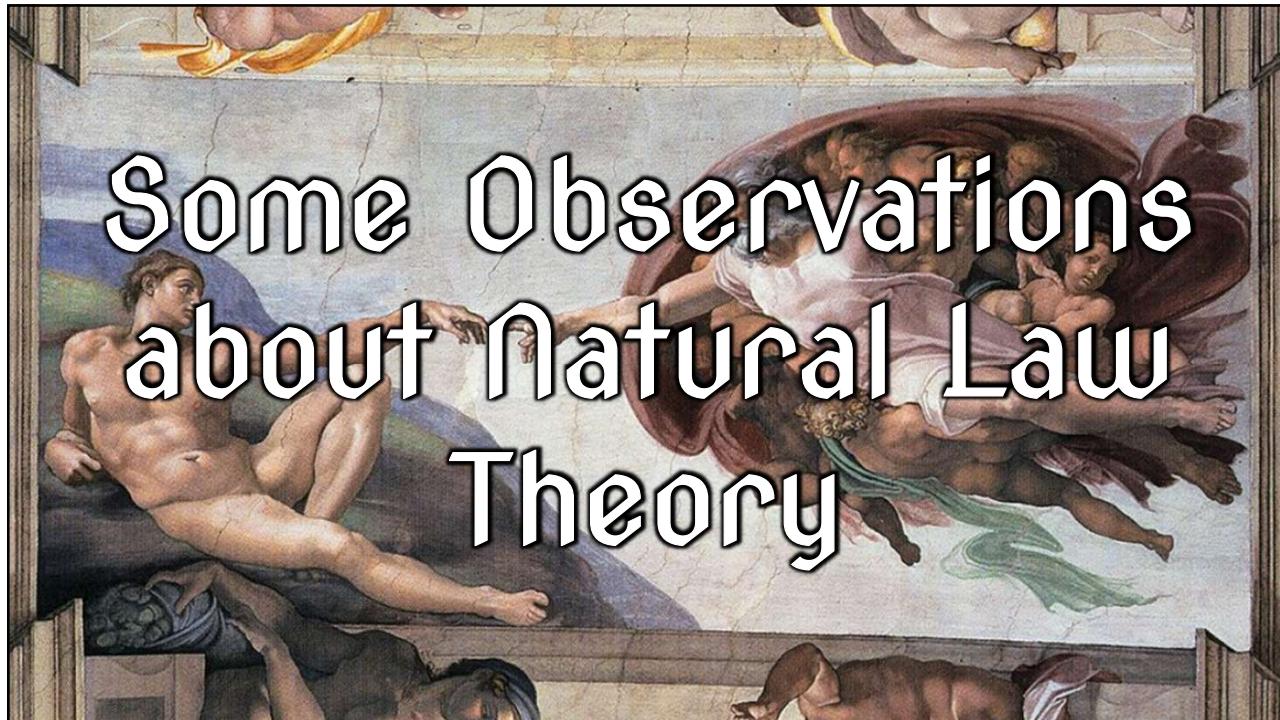


The Grounding of Natural Law Theory

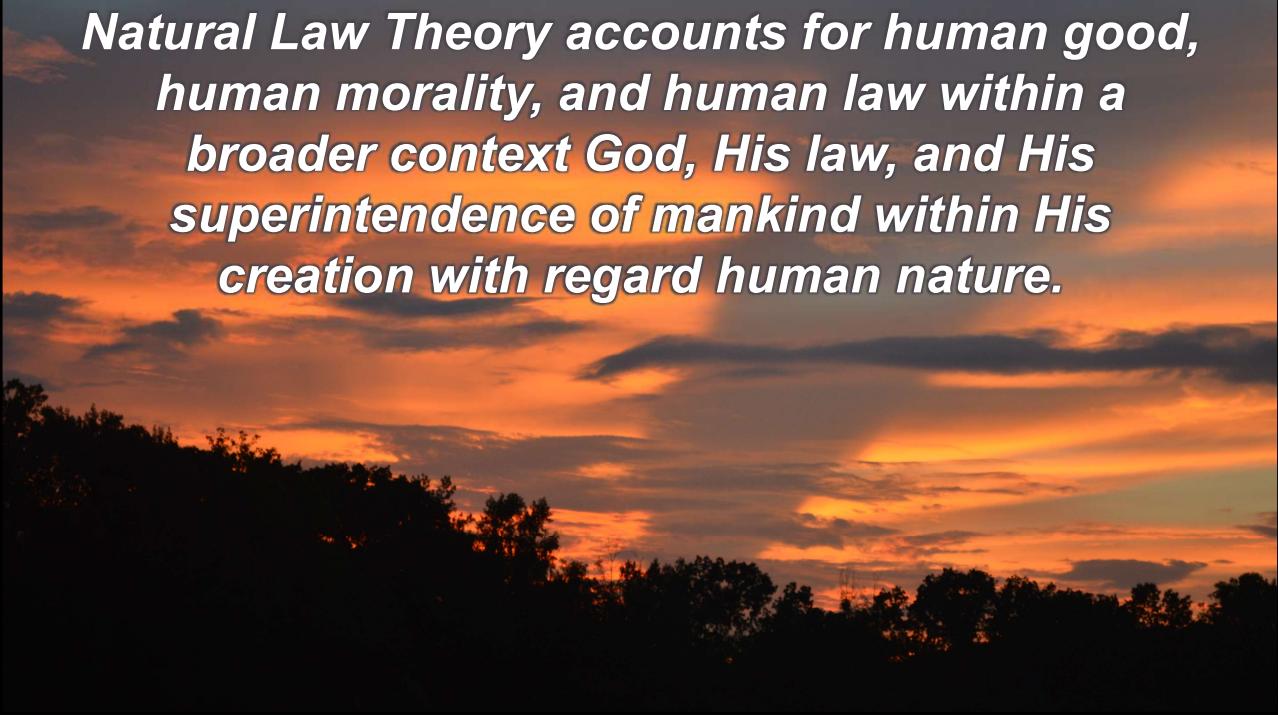
*Natural Law theorists seek to defend its elements on the basis of both sound reason (General Revelation) and **biblical exegesis***



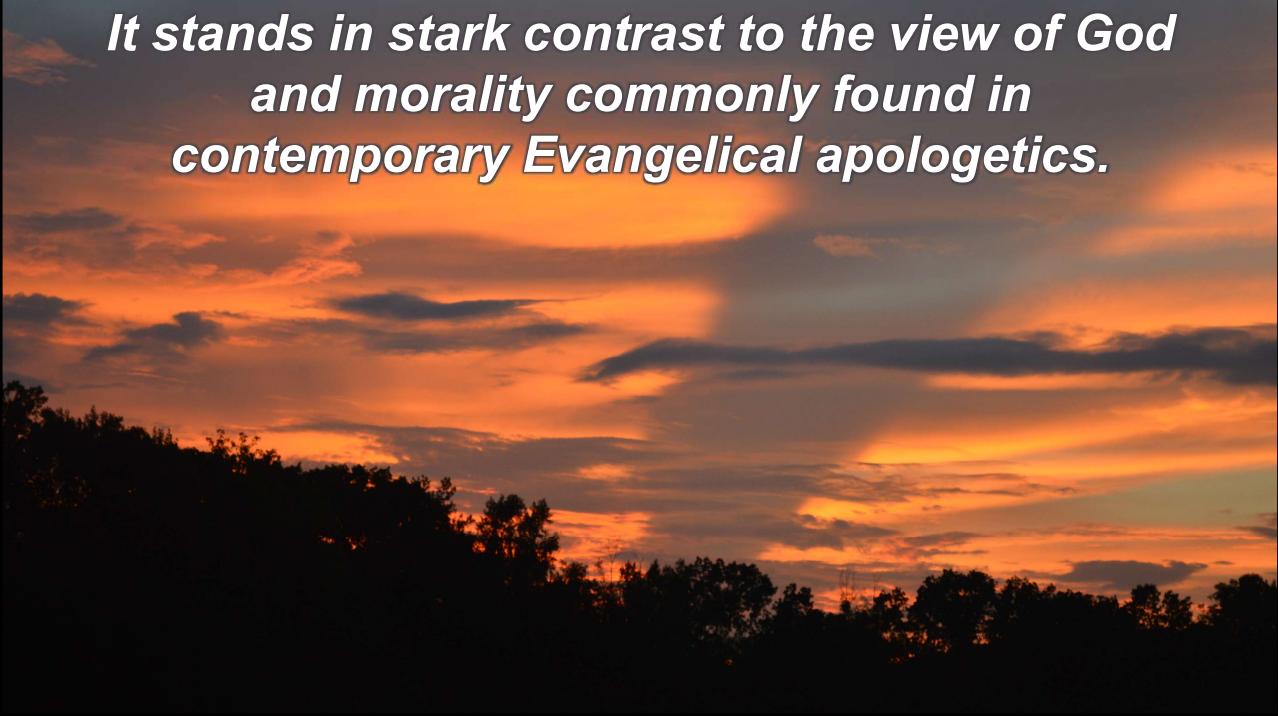
Natural Law theorists seek to defend its elements on the basis of both sound reason (General Revelation) and biblical exegesis (Special Revelation).



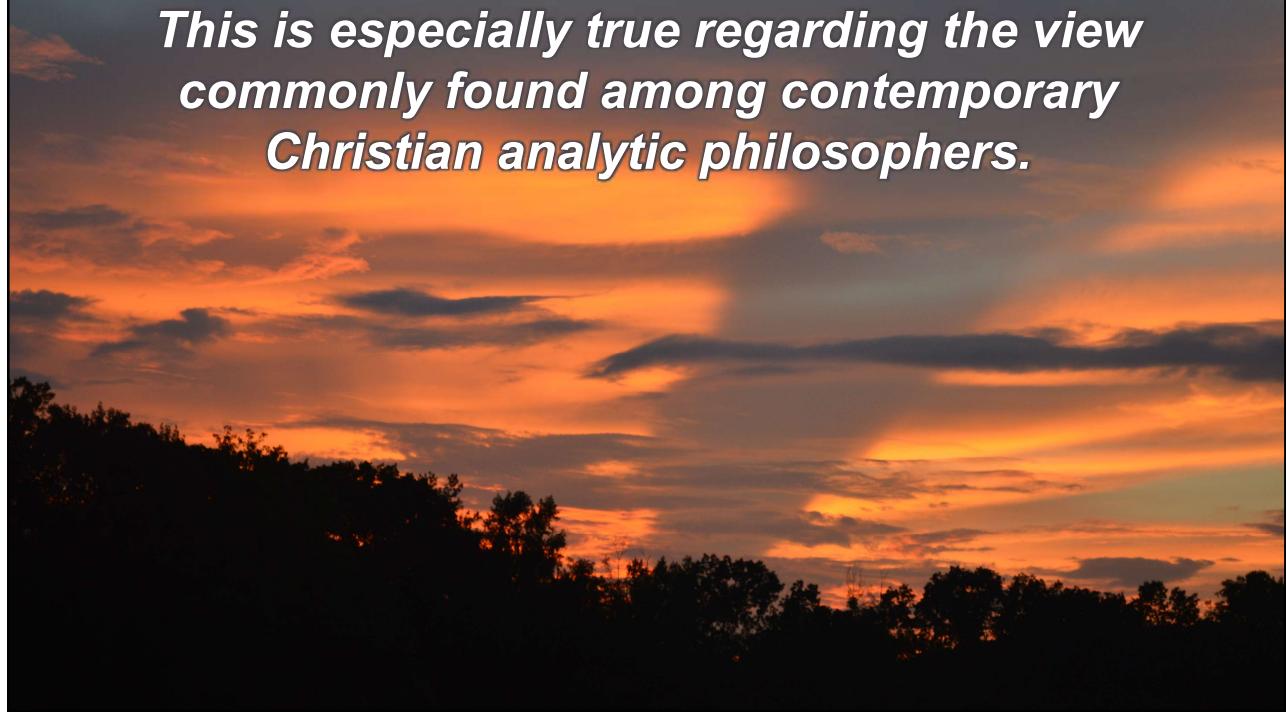
Natural Law Theory accounts for human good, human morality, and human law within a broader context God, His law, and His superintendence of mankind within His creation with regard human nature.



It stands in stark contrast to the view of God and morality commonly found in contemporary Evangelical apologetics.



*This is especially true regarding the view
commonly found among contemporary
Christian analytic philosophers.*

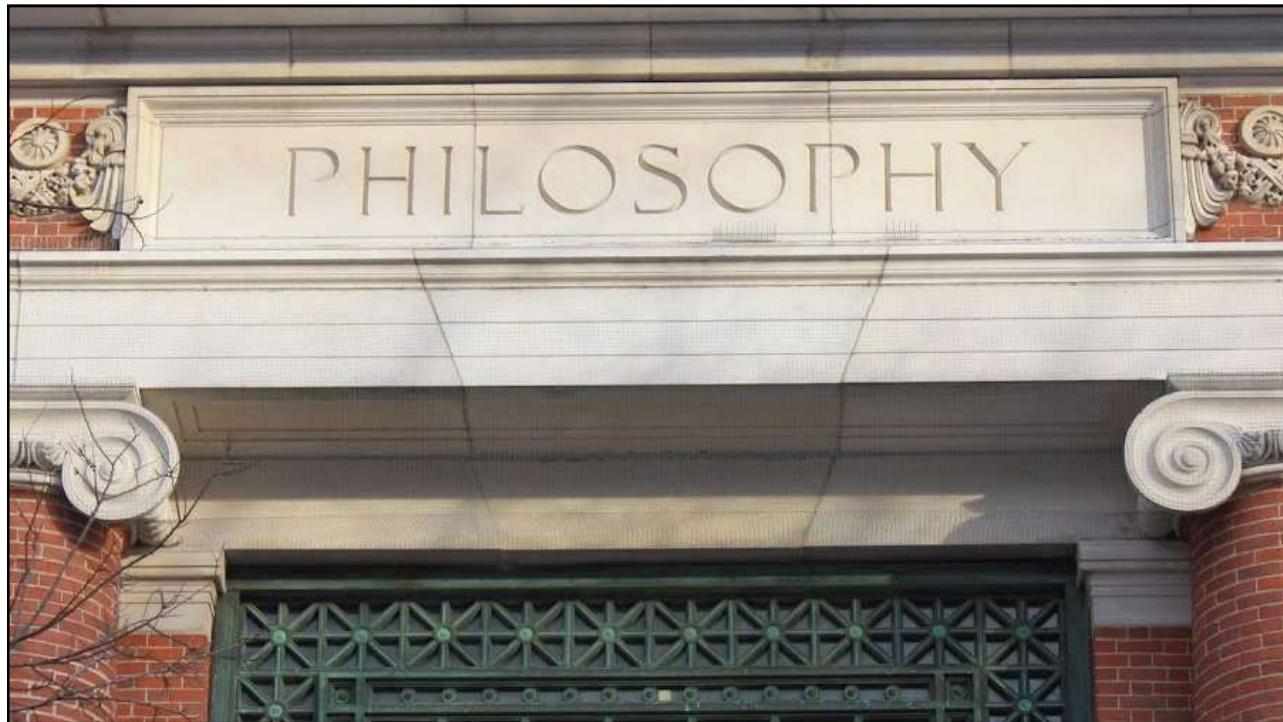


*This is especially true regarding the view
commonly found among contemporary
Christian analytic philosophers.*



- ❖ *Natural Law Theory accounts for human good, human morality, and human law within a broader context God, His law, and His superintendence of mankind within His creation with regard human nature.*
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- ❖ *This is especially true regarding the view commonly found among contemporary Christian analytic philosophers.*



Analytic philosophy and Classical philosophy are two (among several) ways of understanding the nature, content, and procedures of philosophy.

The most obvious difference is that Classical philosophy does philosophy largely along the contours and categories of Ancient Greek and Medieval Philosophy.

Because of this, the moral argument for God's existence will differ between those apologists who employ Classical philosophy and those apologists who do not.

- 1. *If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.***
- 2. *Objective moral values do exist.***
- 3. *Therefore, God exists.***

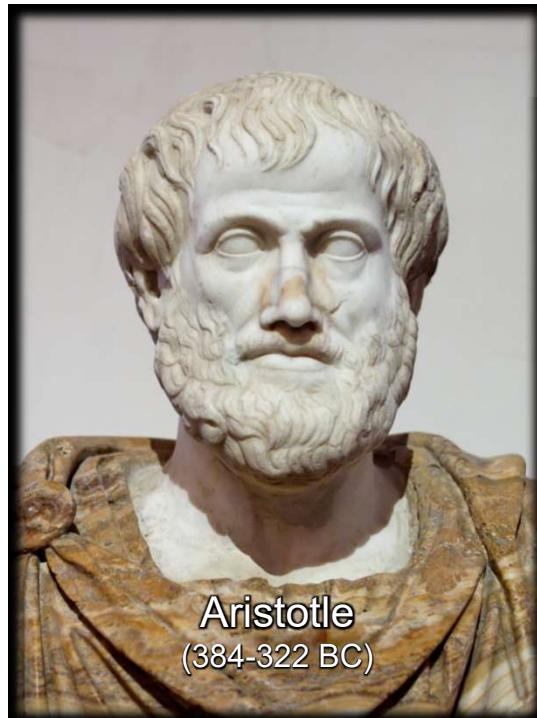


As a model of morality that follows the contours and categories of Ancient Greek and Medieval Philosophy, Natural Law Theory traffics in certain fundamental concepts, most of which themselves need to be unpacked, including:

*law nature / natural human nature
nature vs. function substance vs. accident
act / potency teleology existence
God as Being and Goodness itself
good and evil good and moral good
obligation the Transcendentals
convertibility of 'being' and 'good'*

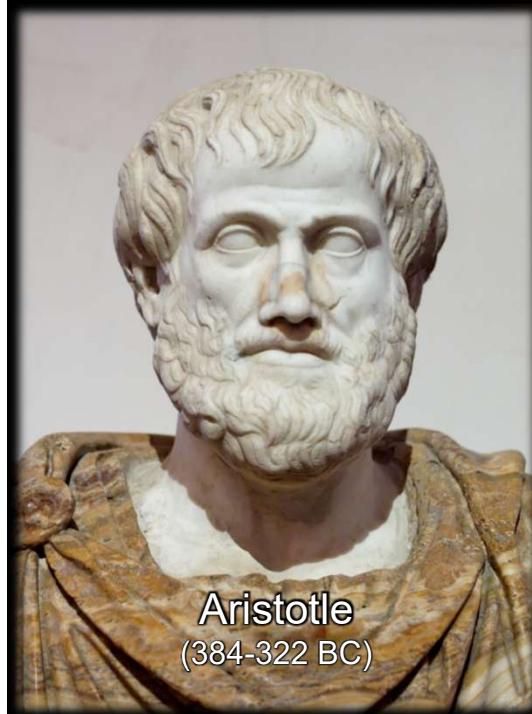


Some Advice in the Discussion of Ethical Matters



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

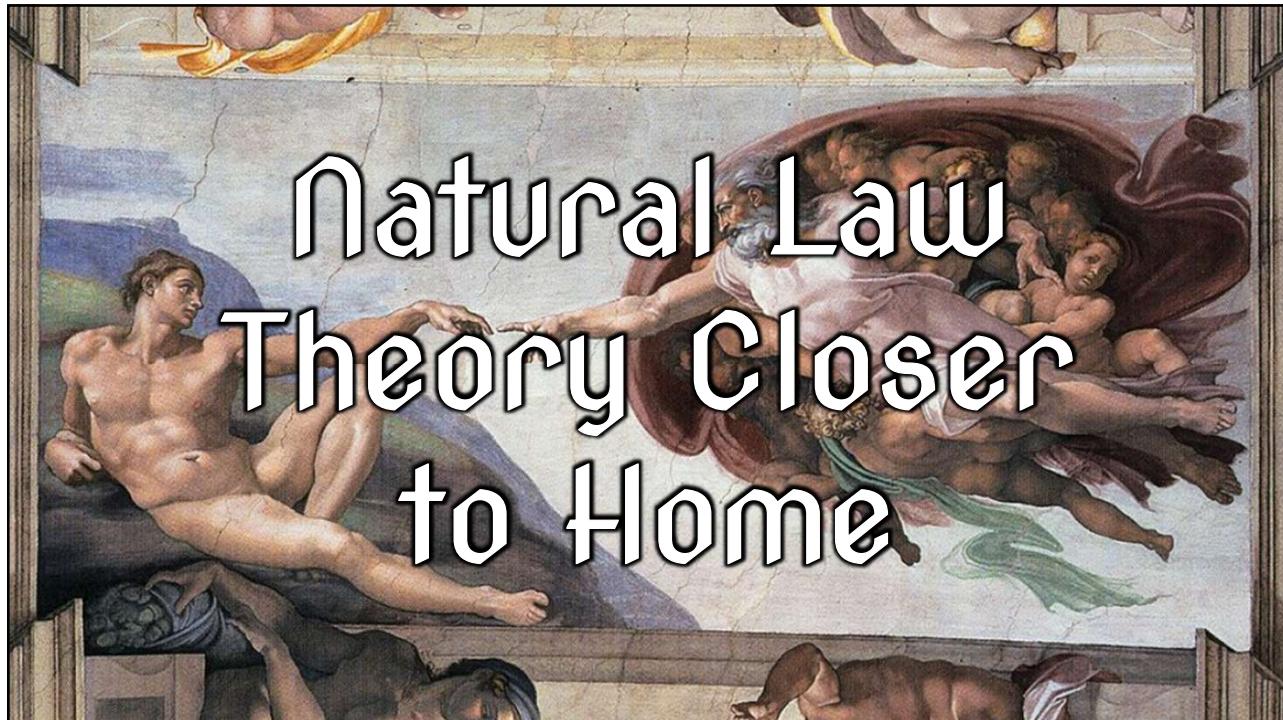
"Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject-matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions. ..."

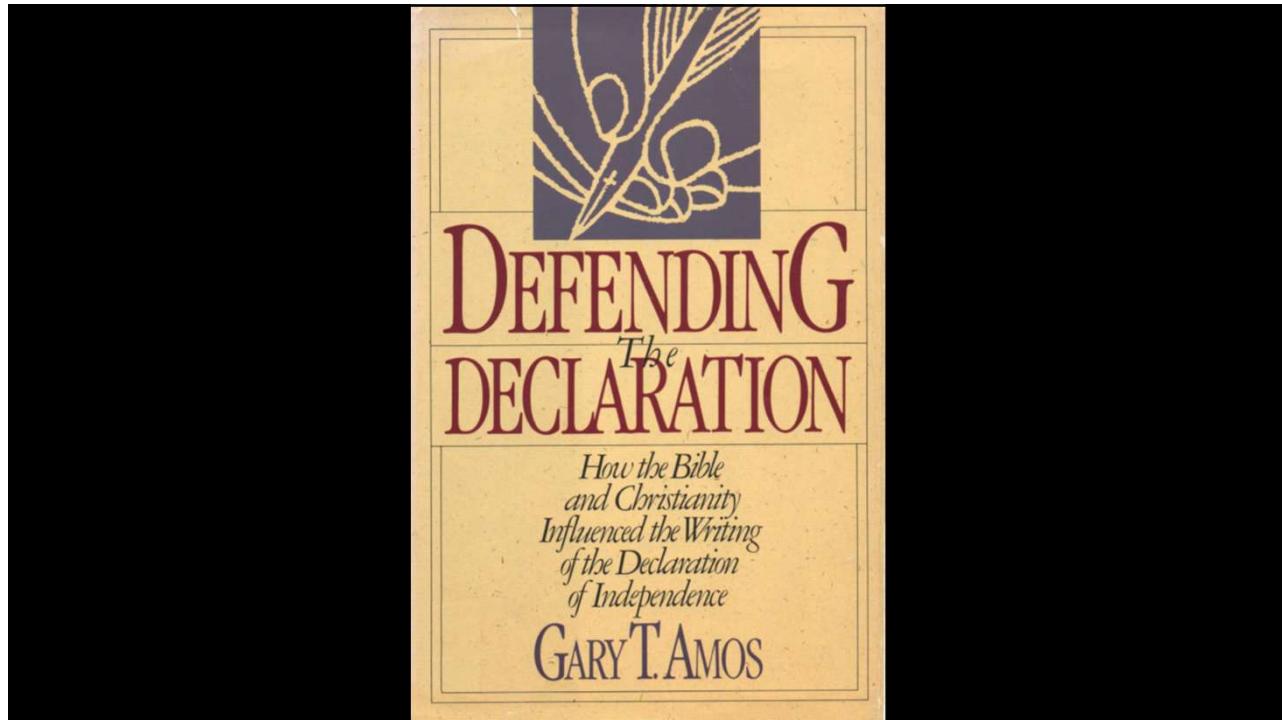


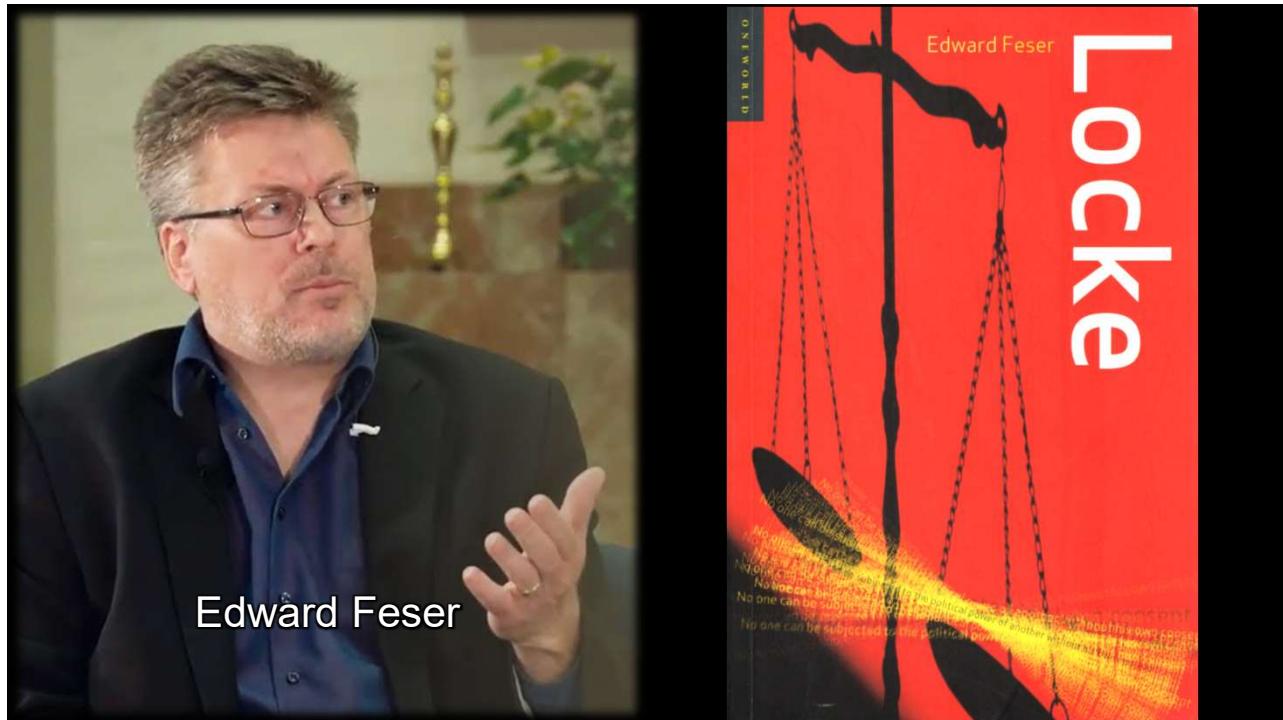
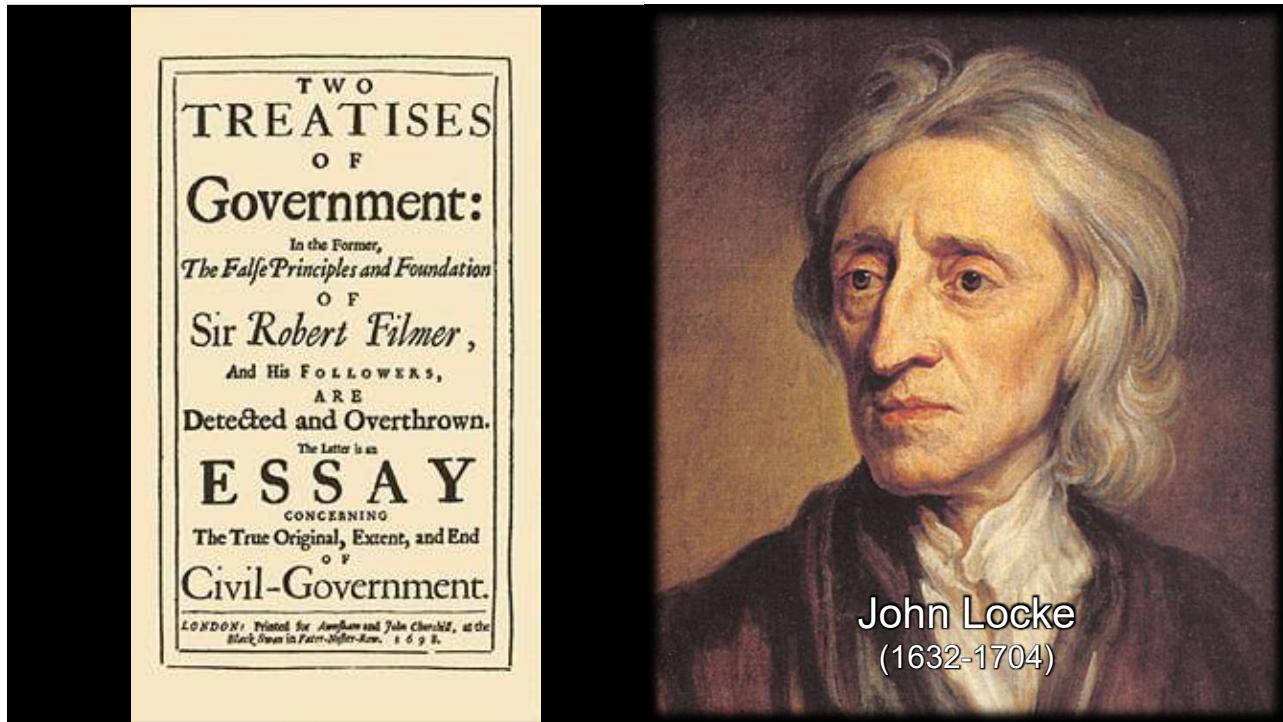
Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

"For it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits."

[Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 3, 1094^a11, 25, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 936]









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Monday, December 15, 2008

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Clarence Thomas and 'Natural Law'

By LAURENCE H. TRIBE
Published: July 15, 1991

What is really at stake in the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court? While any candidate nominated to replace Justice Thurgood Marshall would likely accelerate the Court's rightward trend, Judge Thomas's adherence to "natural law" as a judicial philosophy could take the Court in an even more troubling direction.

Most conservatives criticize the judiciary for expanding its powers, "creating" rights rather than "interpreting" the Constitution. These critics talk of returning issues like abortion to democratically elected and politically accountable bodies.

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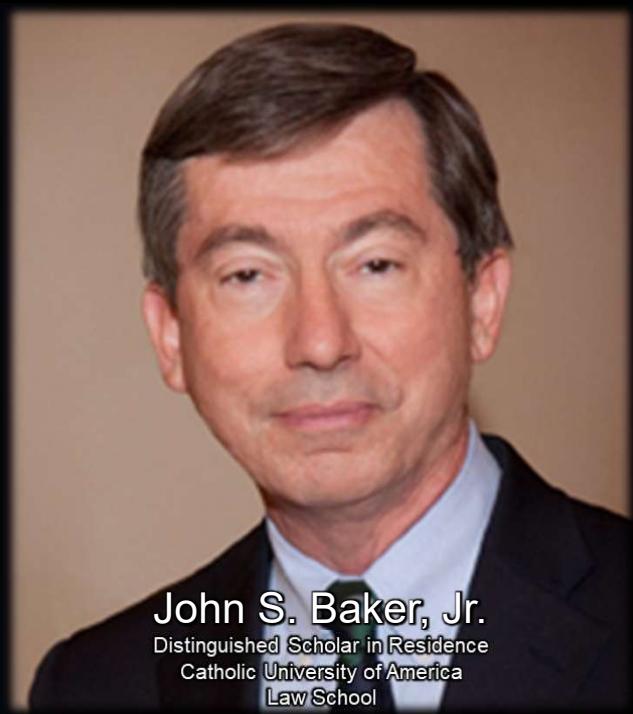
Clarence Thomas and 'Natural Law'

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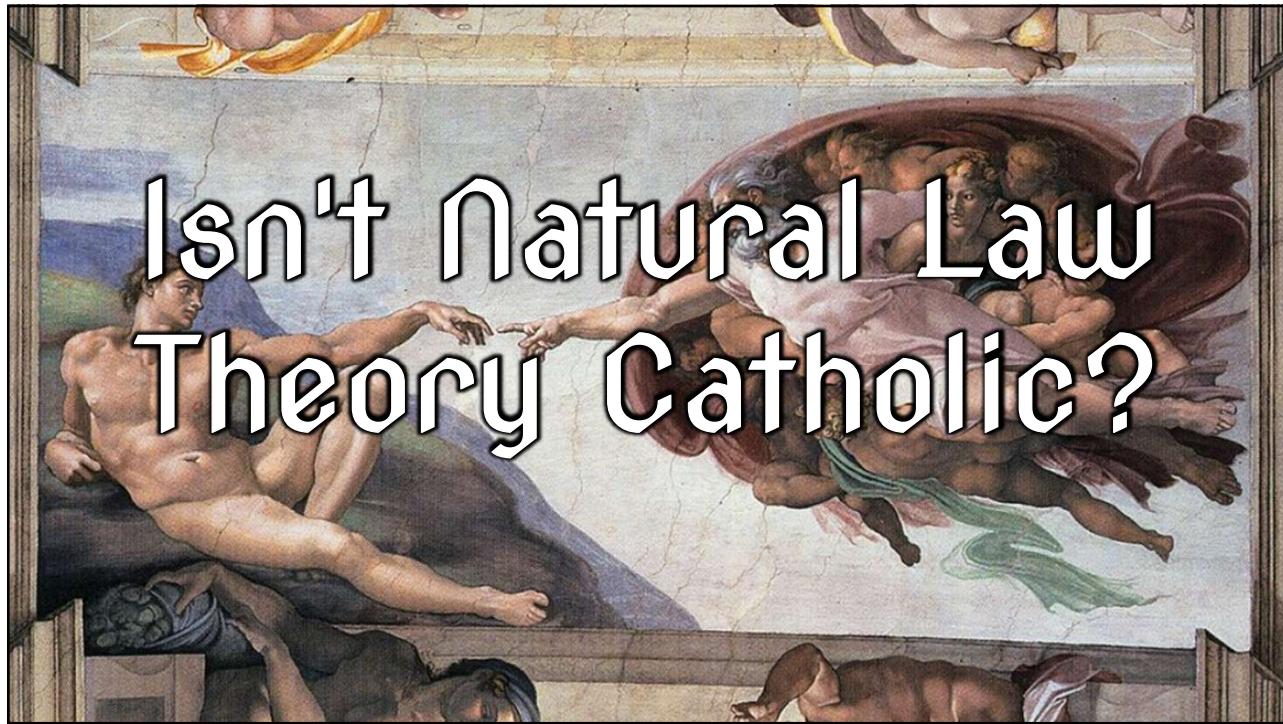
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"The anxious questions asked by the Senators about natural law and the nominee's disavowal that natural law would have any role in his decision of actual cases evidence a pervasive lack of understanding or acceptance of natural law."

[*"Natural Law and Justice Thomas," Regent University Law Review* (1999-2000): 471]

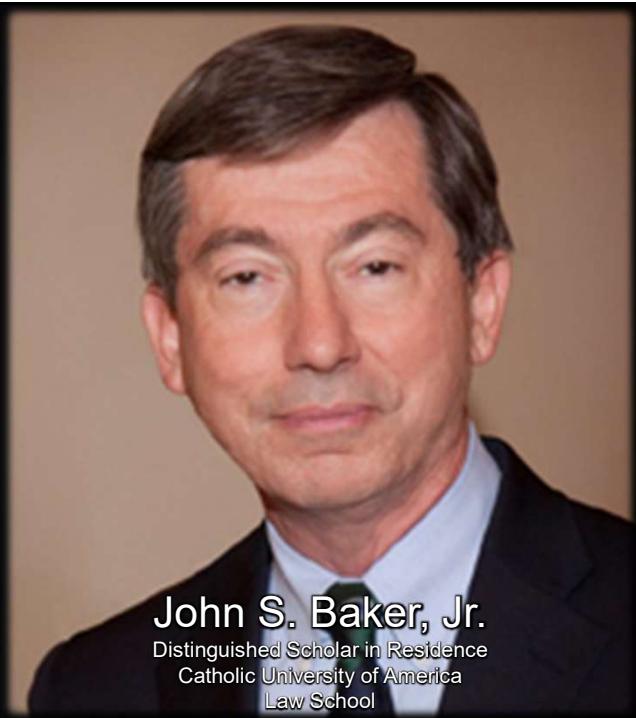


John S. Baker, Jr.
Distinguished Scholar in Residence
Catholic University of America
Law School

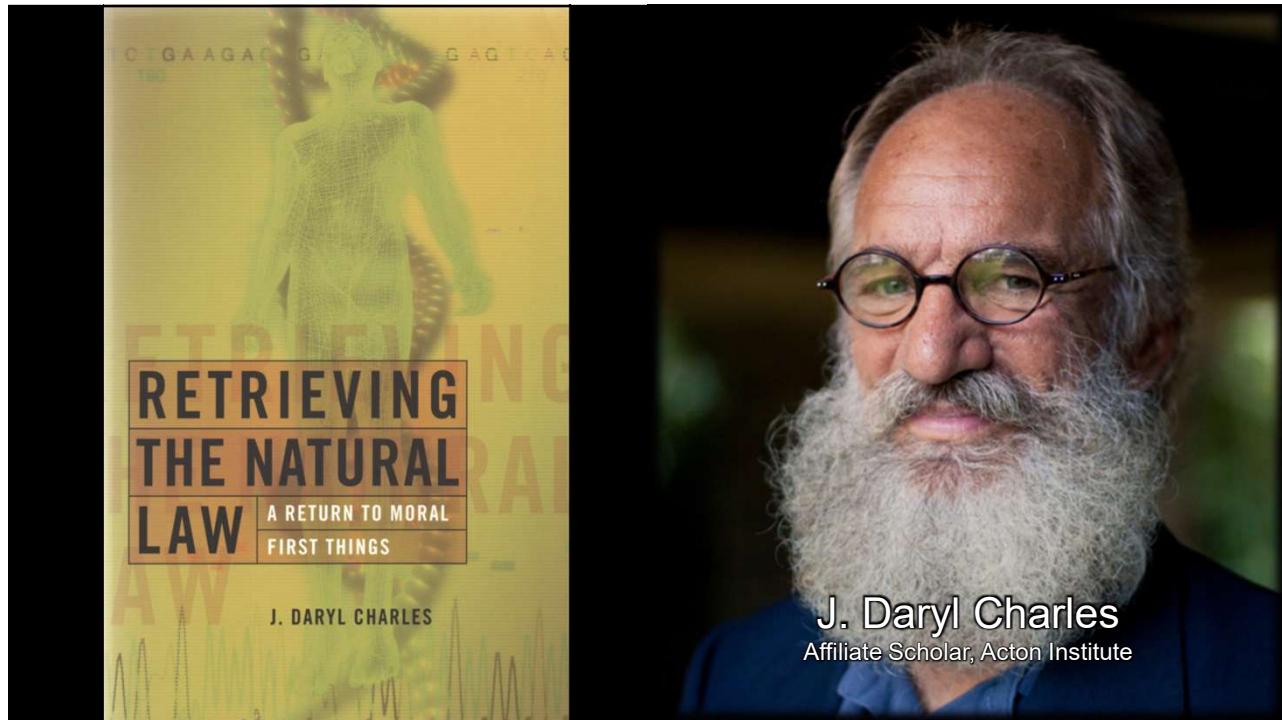


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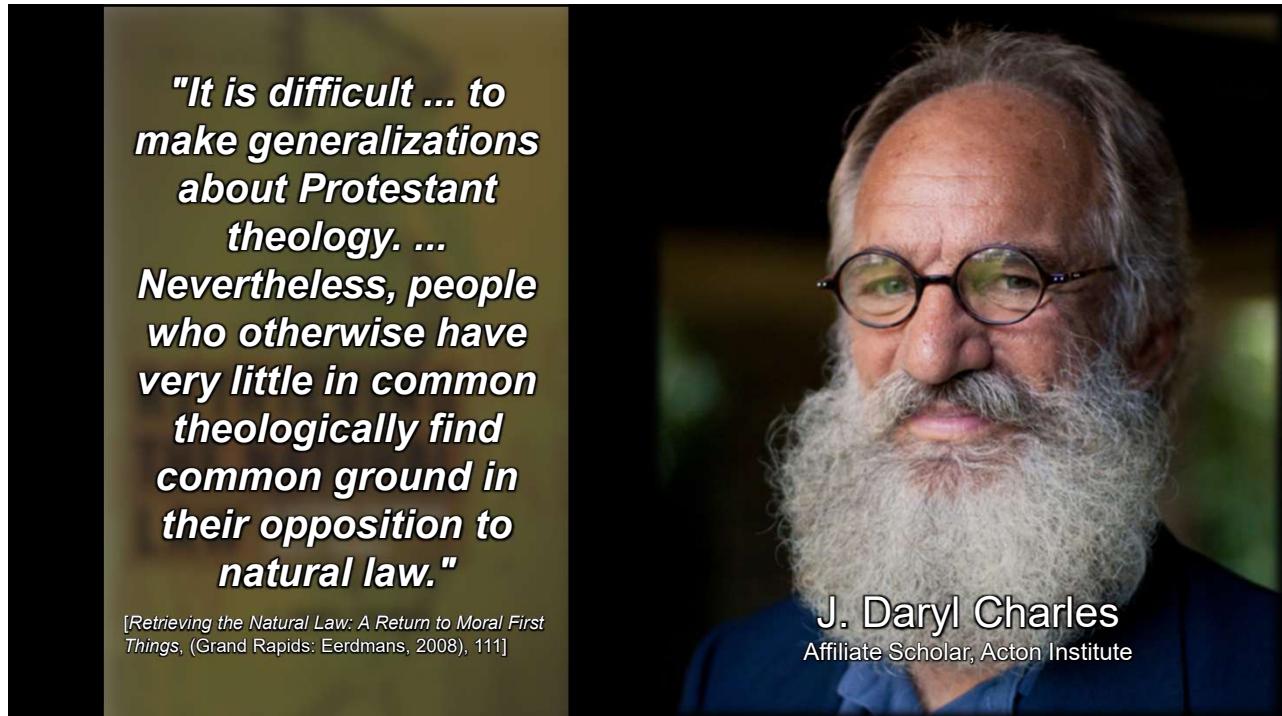
[*"Natural Law and Justice Thomas," Regent University Law Review* (1999-2000): 471]



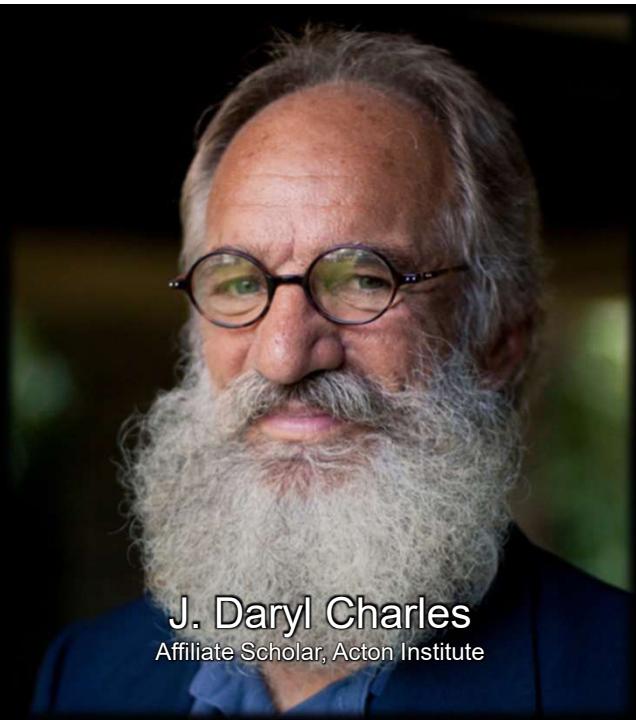
John S. Baker, Jr.
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J. Daryl Charles
Affiliate Scholar, Acton Institute



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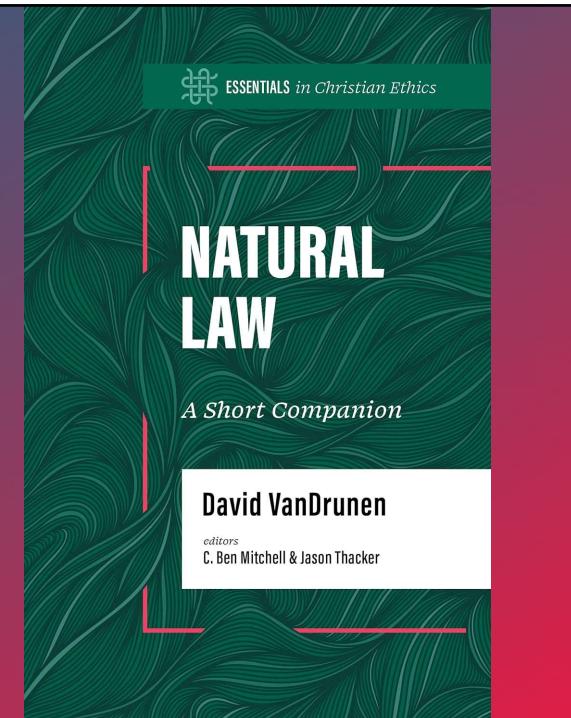
"One is hard-pressed to identify a single major figure in Protestant theological ethics who has developed and defended a theory of natural law."

[Retrieving, 112]

J. Daryl Charles
Affiliate Scholar, Acton Institute



David VanDrunen



NATURAL LAW
A Short Companion

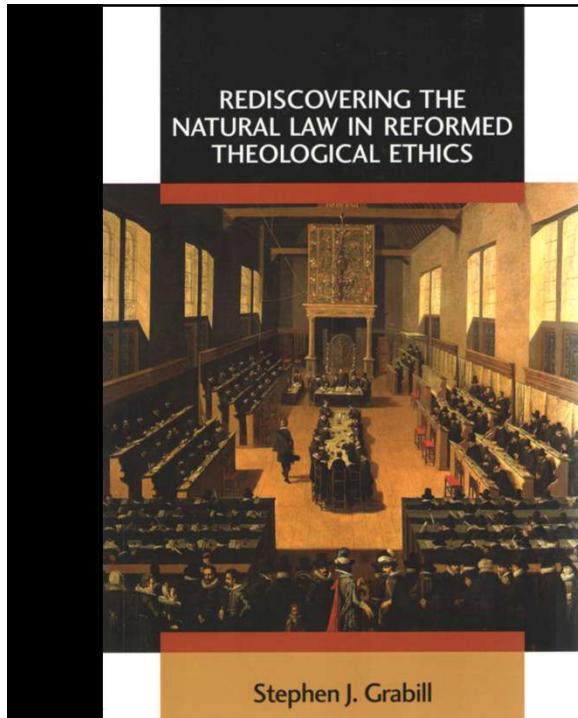
David VanDrunen
editors
C. Ben Mitchell & Jason Thacker



David VanDrunen

"Protestants should not affirm natural law despite being Protestant. They should affirm natural because they are Protestant. ... Protestants believe that Scripture is the highest authority for Christian faith and life, and since Scripture clearly teaches the reality and importance of natural law, Protestants must affirm natural law if they wish to be true to their own convictions."

[David VanDrunen, *Natural Law: A Short Companion* (Brentwood: B&H Academic, 2023), 11, emphasis in original]



"While evangelicals today (both inside and outside of confessional traditions) may be surprised—even dismayed—by [Peter Martyr Vermigli's] strong affirmation of divine witness through the natural order,



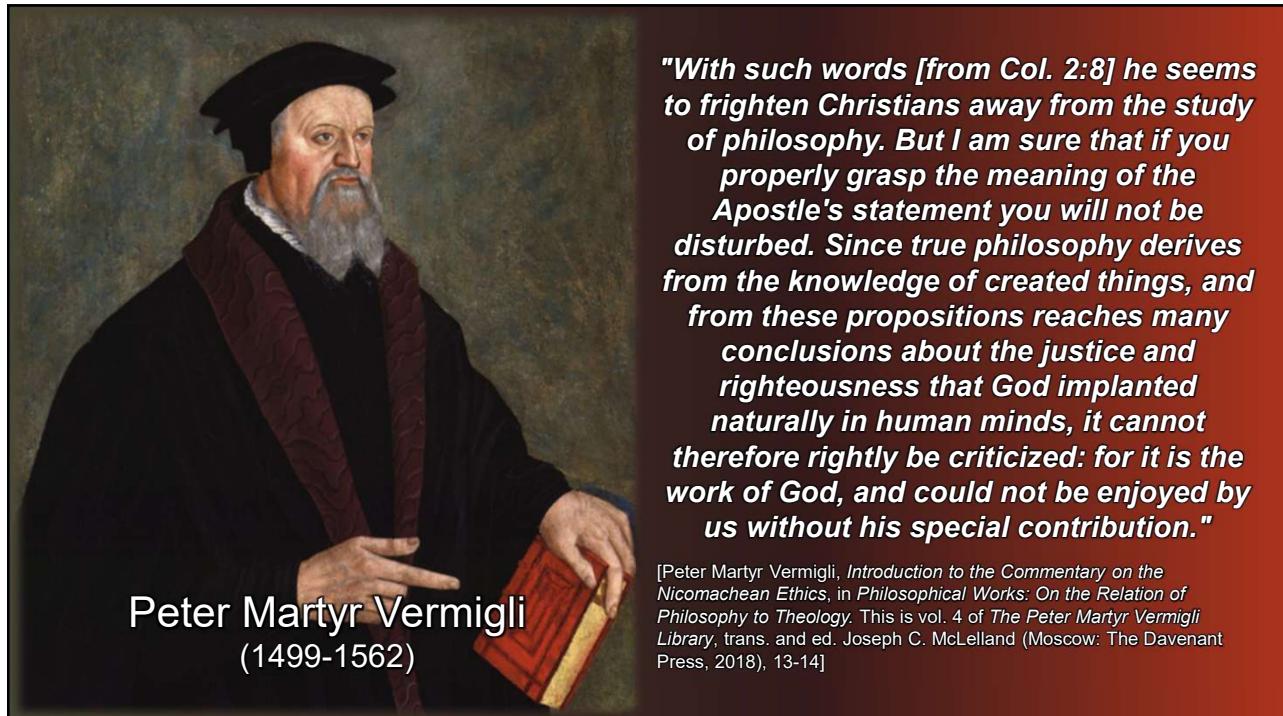
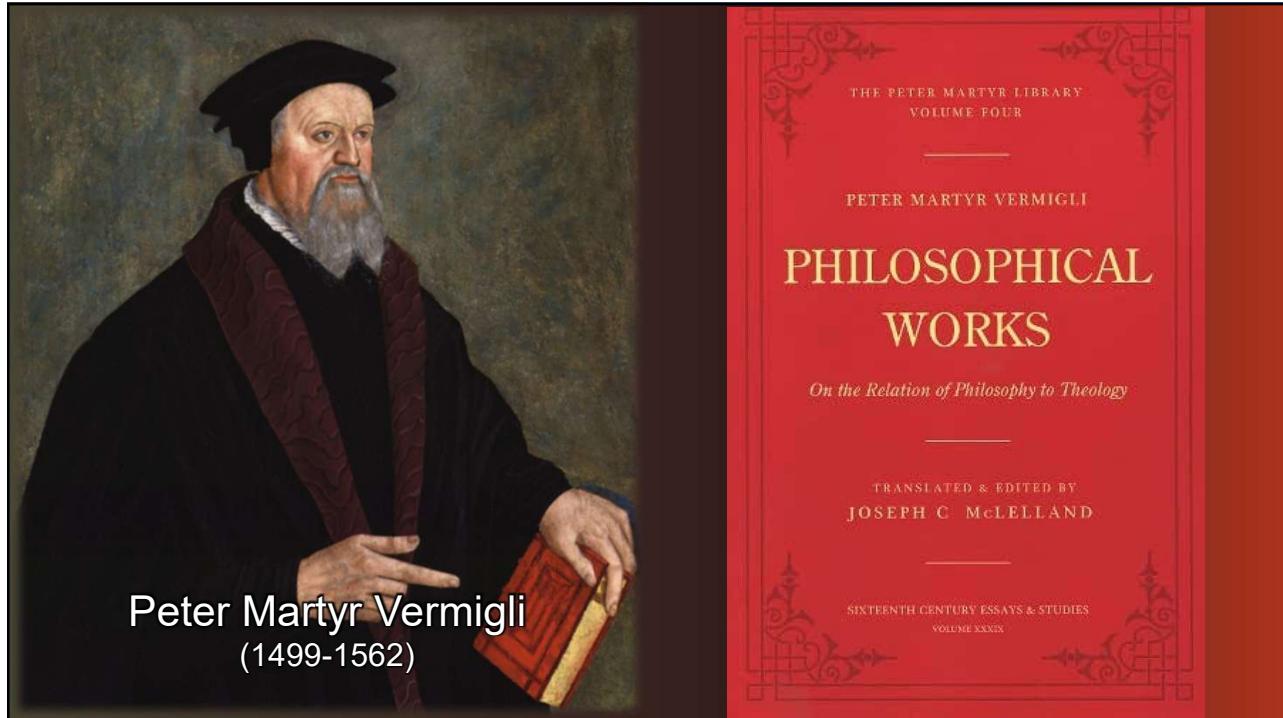
Stephen J. Grabill
Acton Institute and
Grand Rapids Theological Seminary

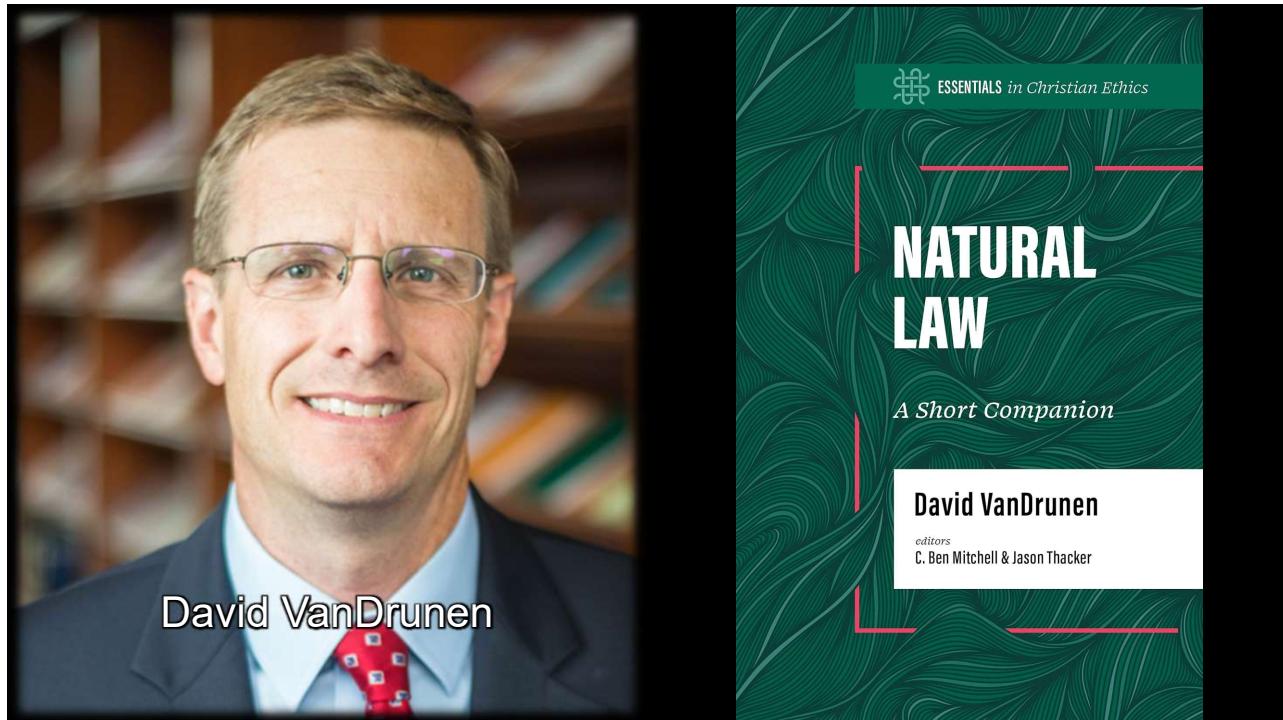
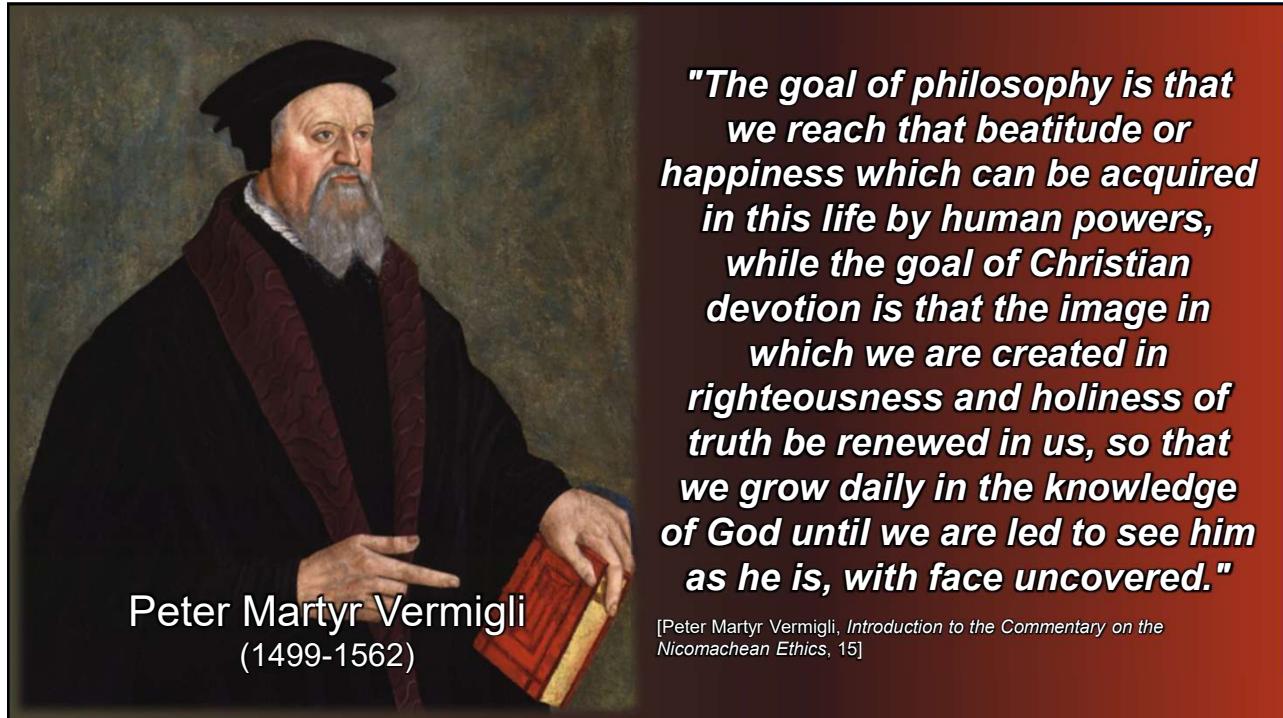
*"the older magisterial Protestant tradition (Lutheran and Reformed) not only inherited but also passed on the doctrines of *lex naturalis* and *cognitio Dei naturalis*, especially the idea of an implanted knowledge of morality, as noncontroversial legacies of patristic and scholastic thought."*

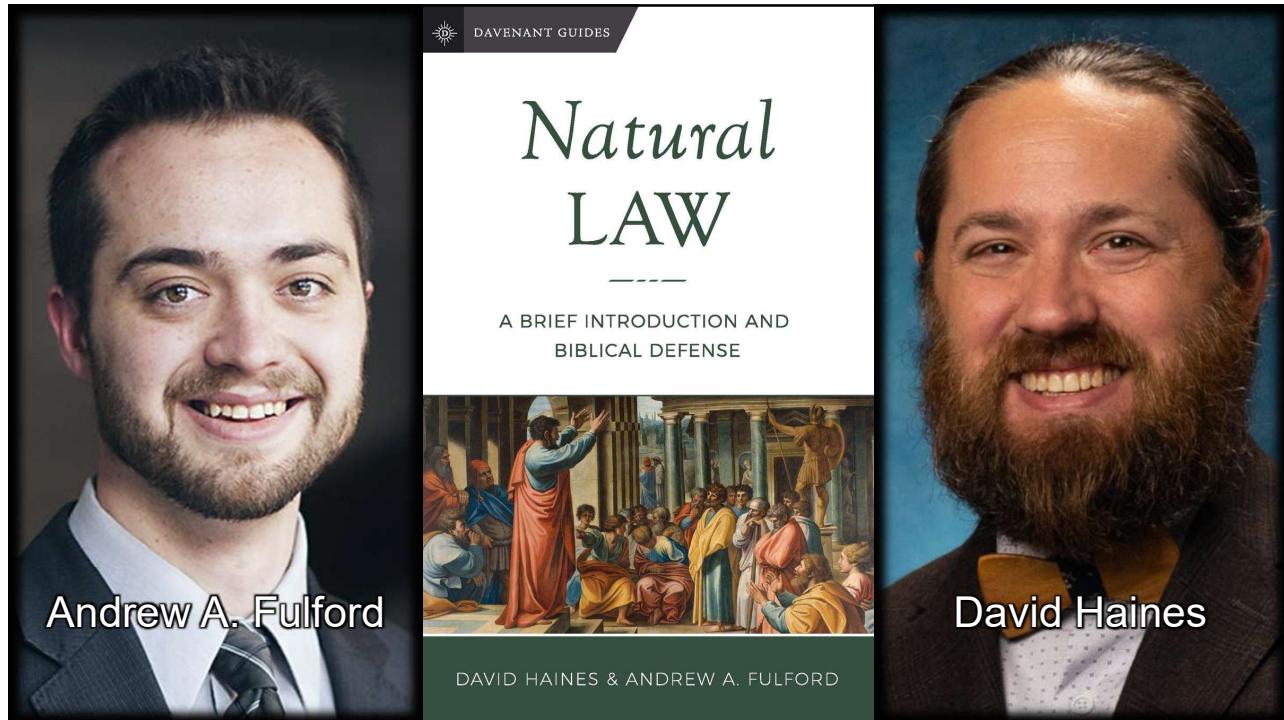
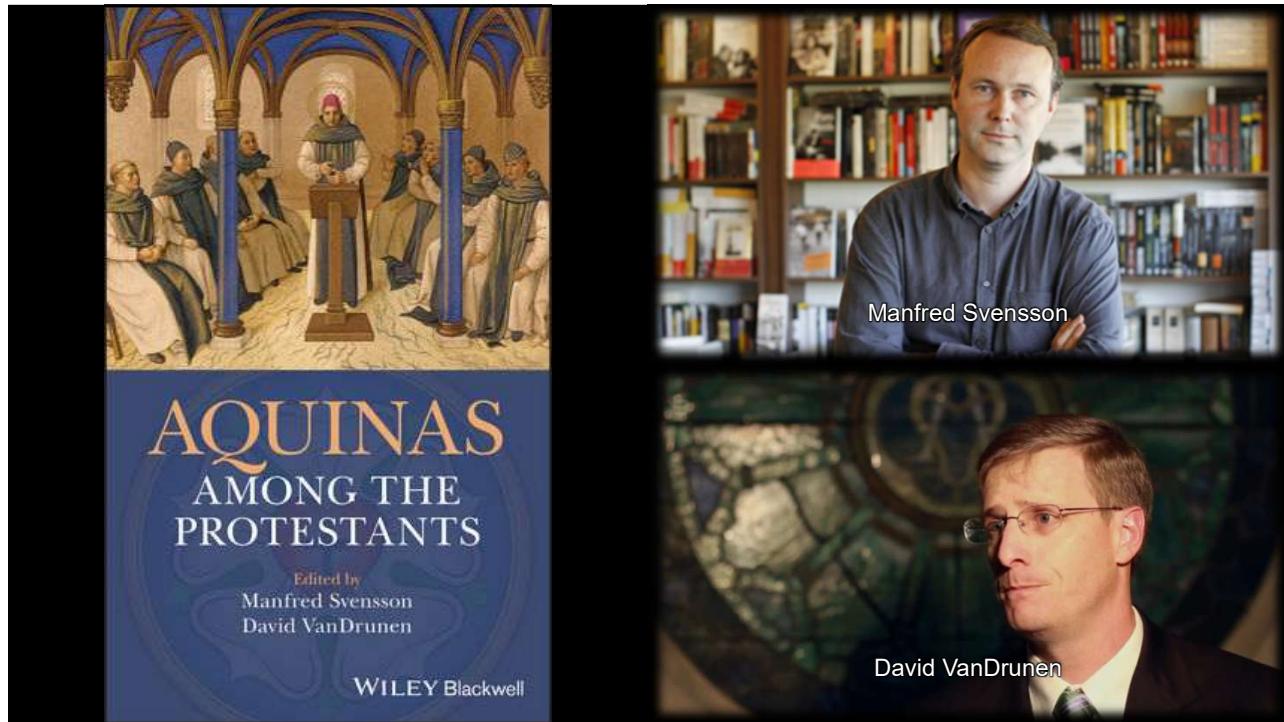
[Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 2006), 1]

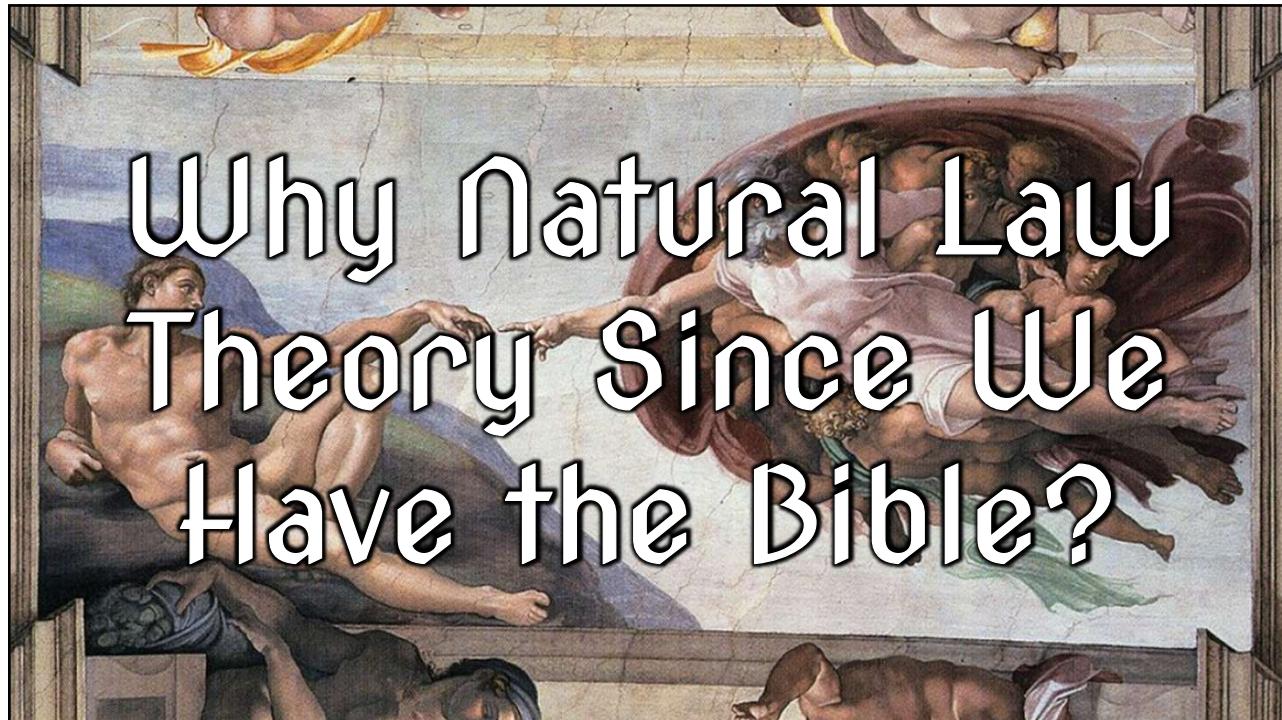
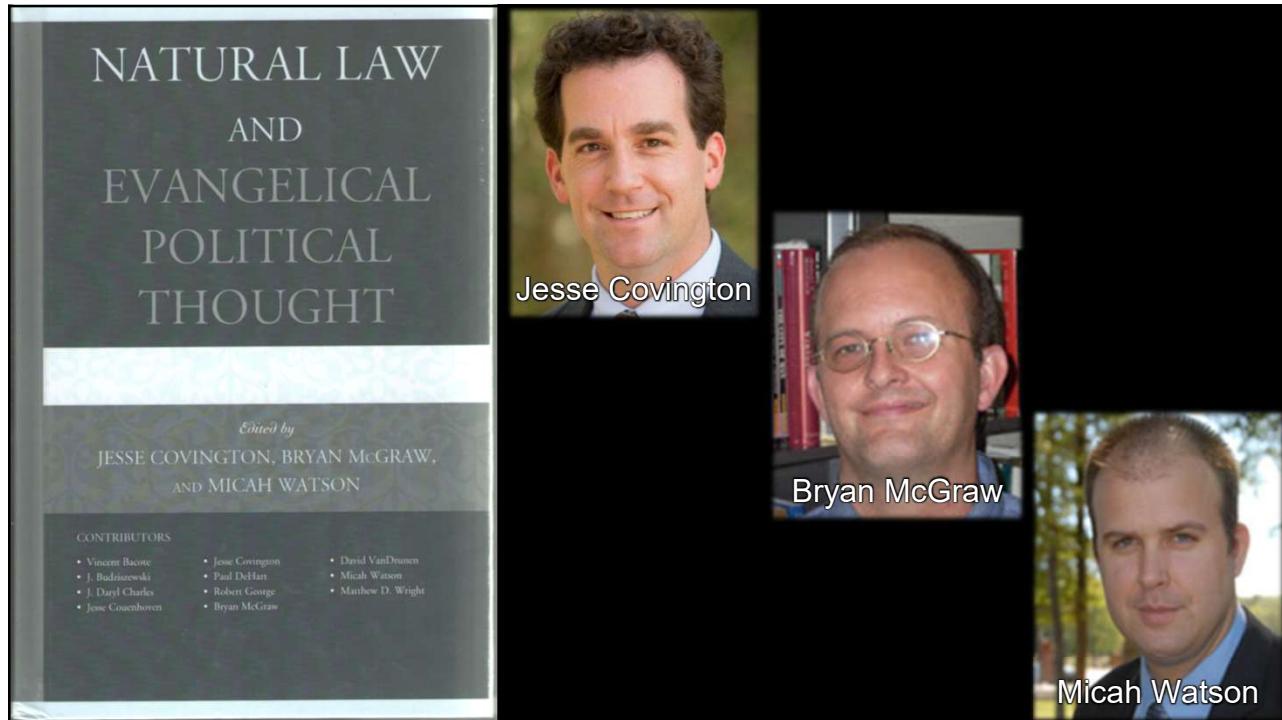


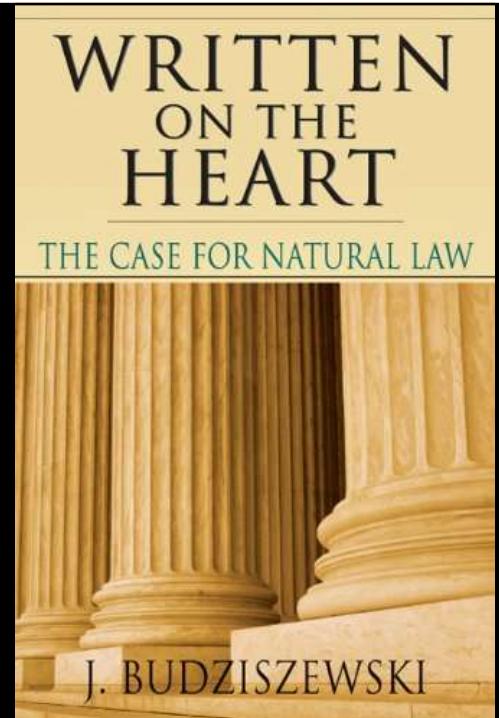
Stephen J. Grabill
Acton Institute and
Grand Rapids Theological Seminary











"Now it may be asked why a Christian should be interested in natural law at all. If one already has the Bible, what use is it? At best it would merely repeat in cursive a small part of what God had already written in great block letters."

[Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law
(Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 180]

Biblical Morality or Morality?





a righteous individual as part of a heavenly community

Romans 4:4-5

Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. {5} But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.

supernatural



our good in the next life



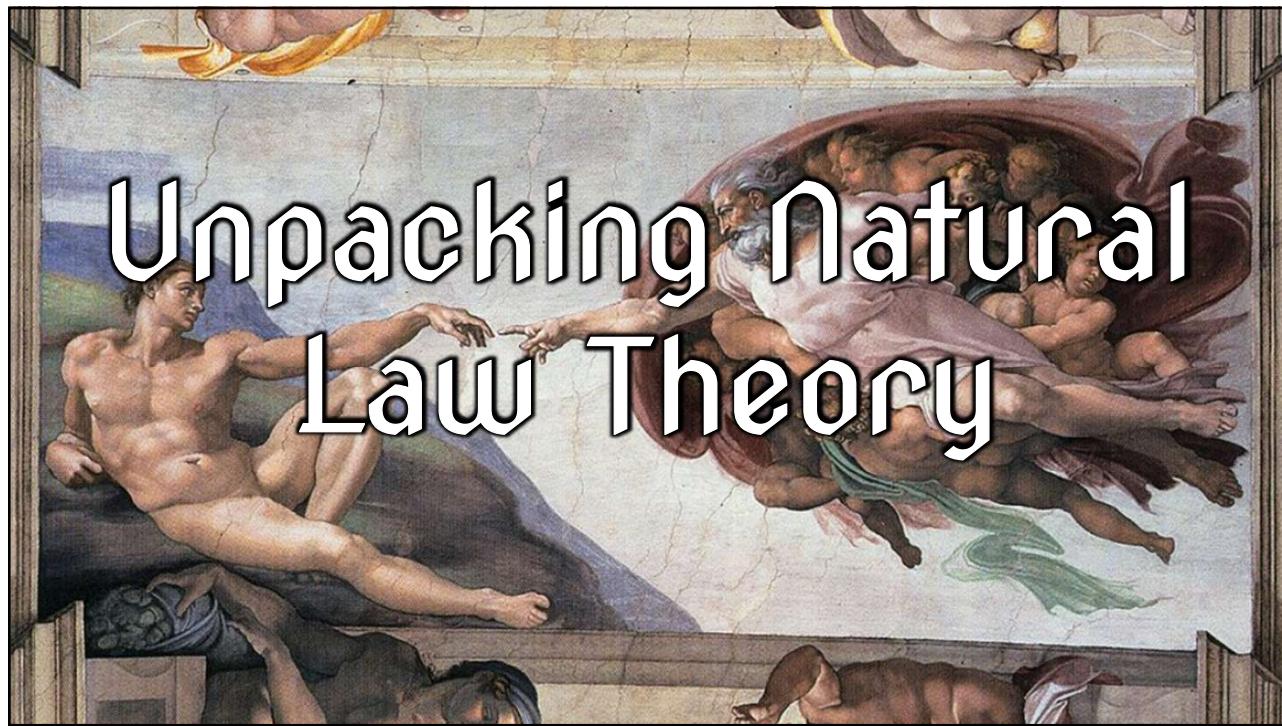
natural

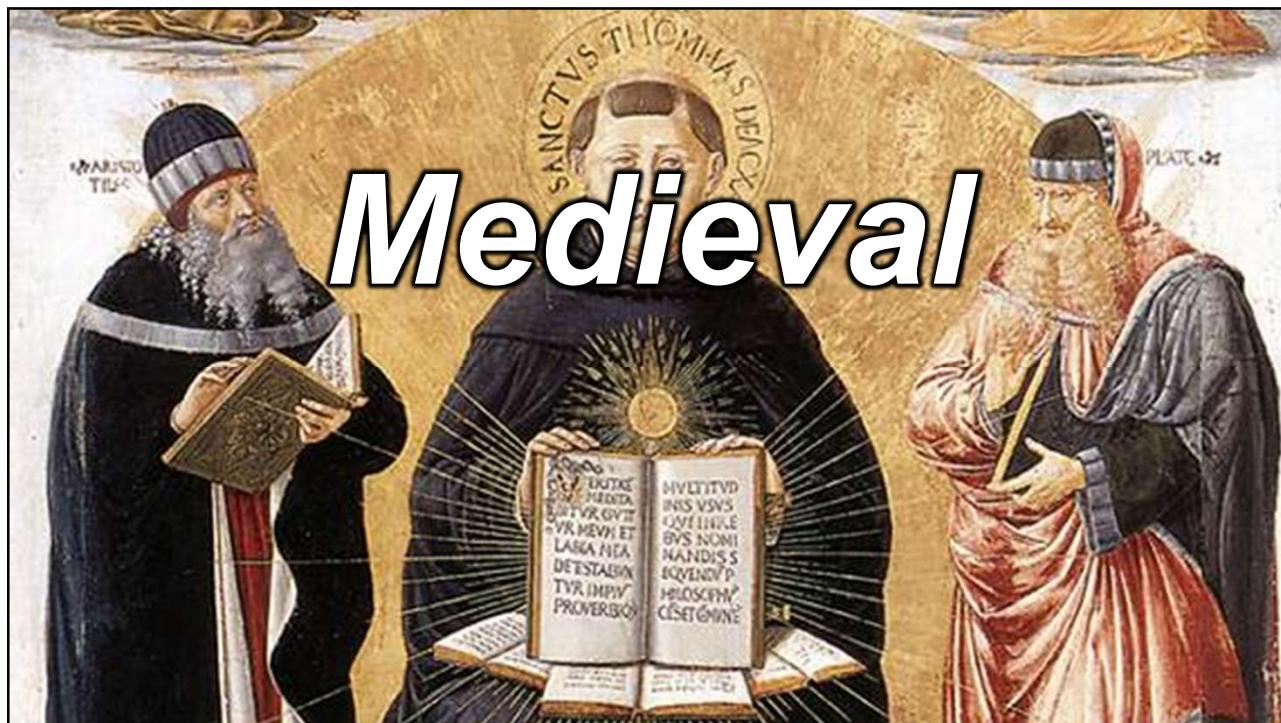
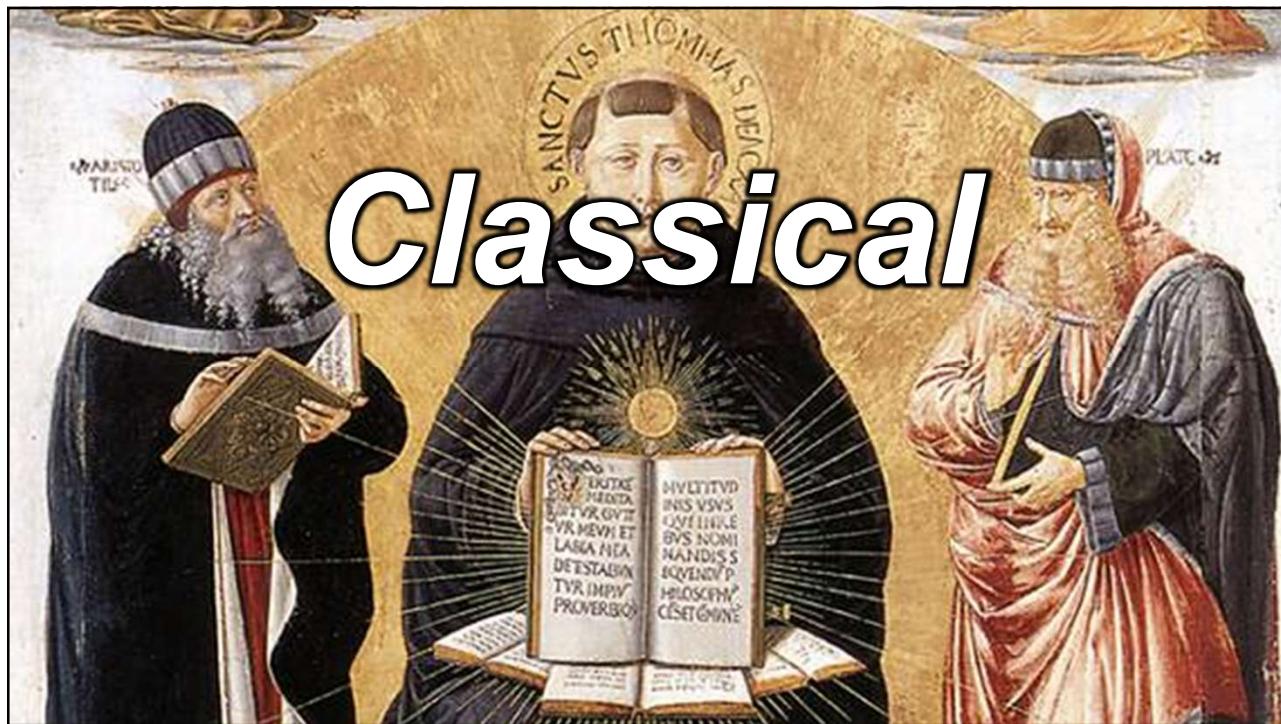
Romans 12:17-18

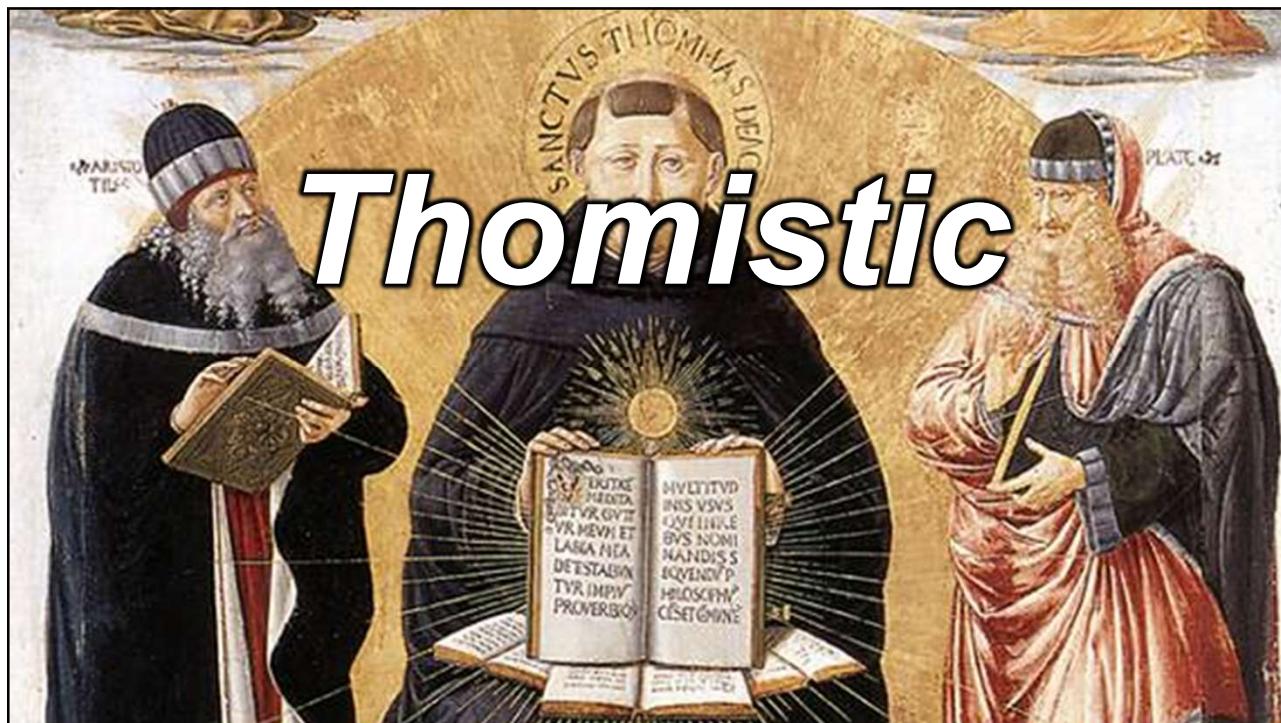
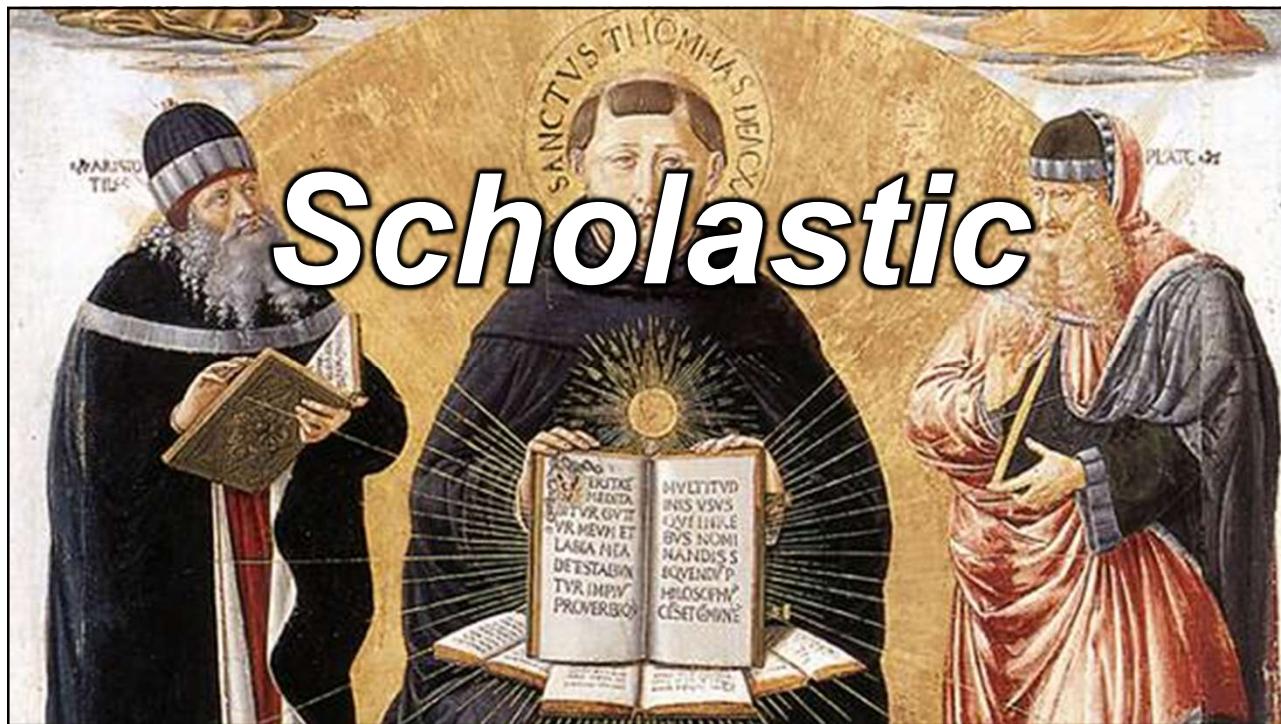
Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. {18} If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably of a flourishing community



our good in this life



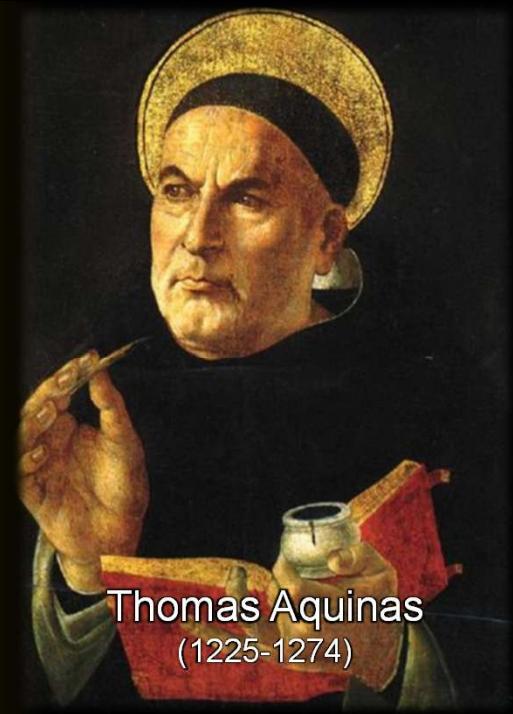




What Is Law?

"Thus from the four preceding articles, the definition of law may be gathered; and it is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated."

[*Summa Theologiae* (hereafter ST) I-II, Q. 90, art. 4, trans. St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981)]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

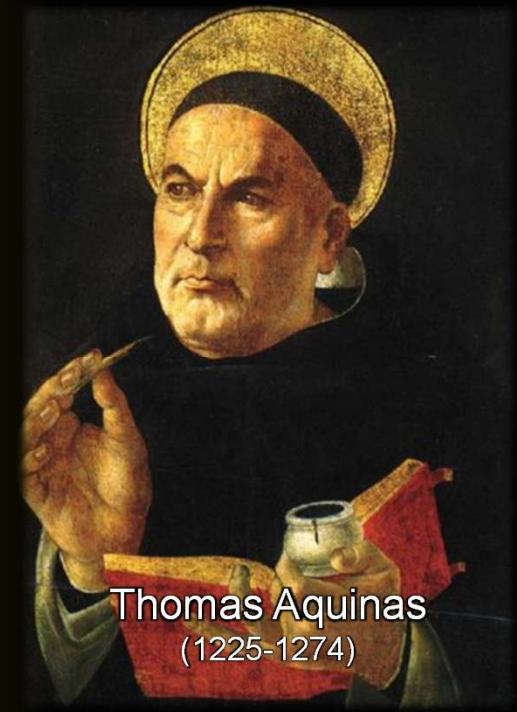
Various Kinds of Law

ETERNAL LAW

*God's providential working
of the universe*

*The plan by which God
governs creation*

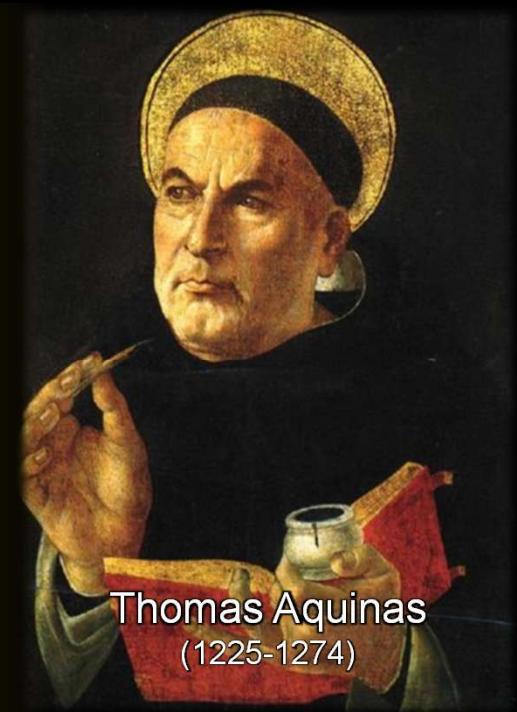
"It is evident, granted that the world is ruled by Divine Providence ... that the whole community of the universe is governed by Divine Reason. Wherefore the very Idea of the government of things in God the Ruler of the universe, has the nature of a law.



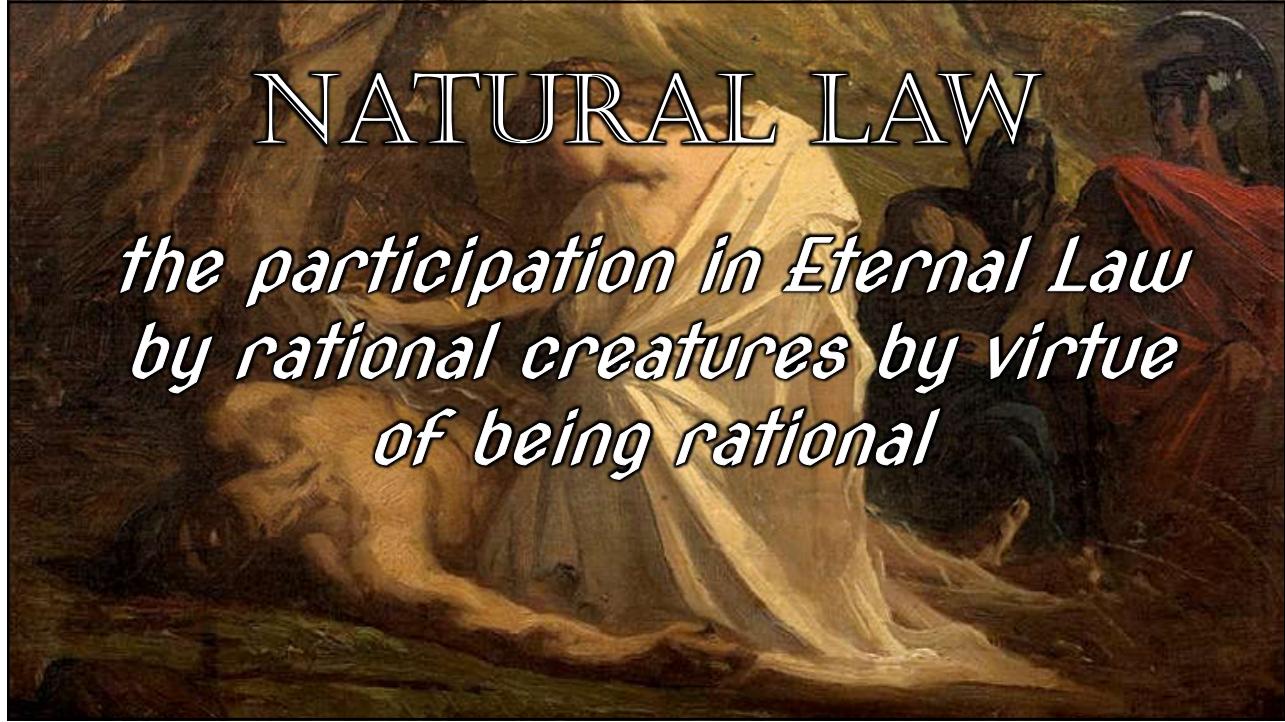
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"And since the Divine Reason's conception of things is not subject to time but is eternal, according to Prov. viii, 23, therefore it is that this kind of law must be called eternal."

[ST I-II Q91, Art. 1]

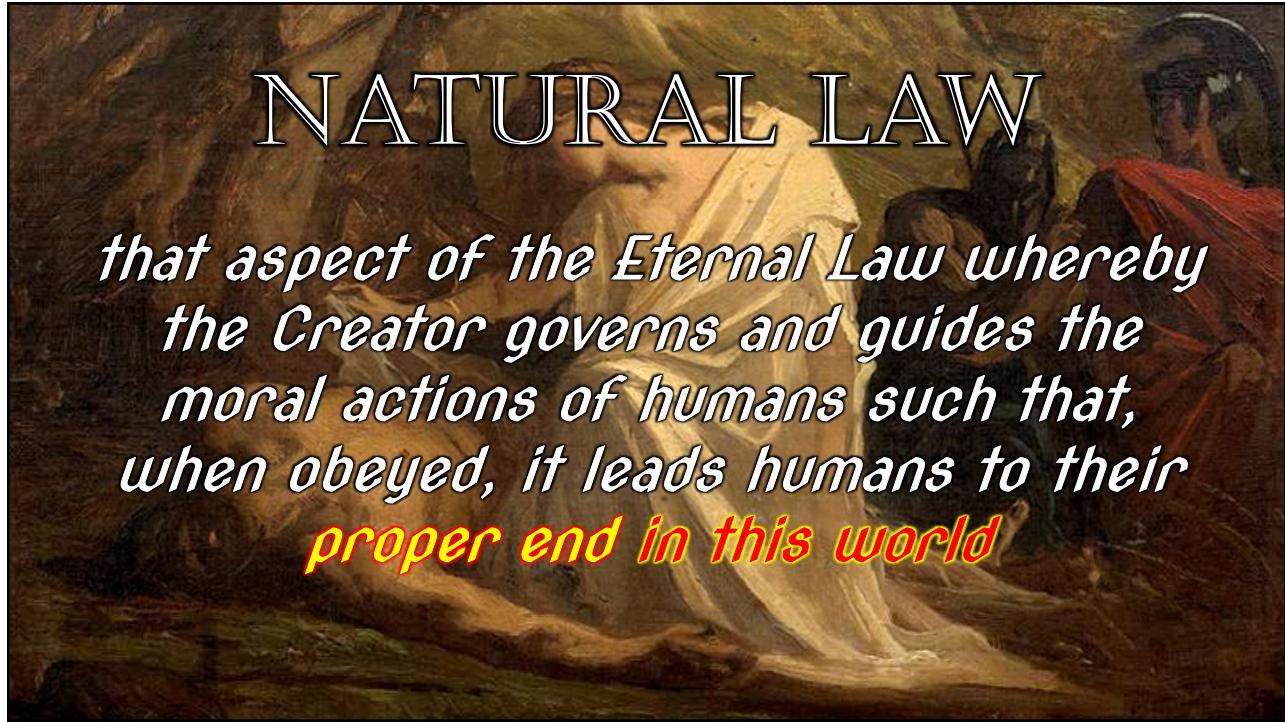


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



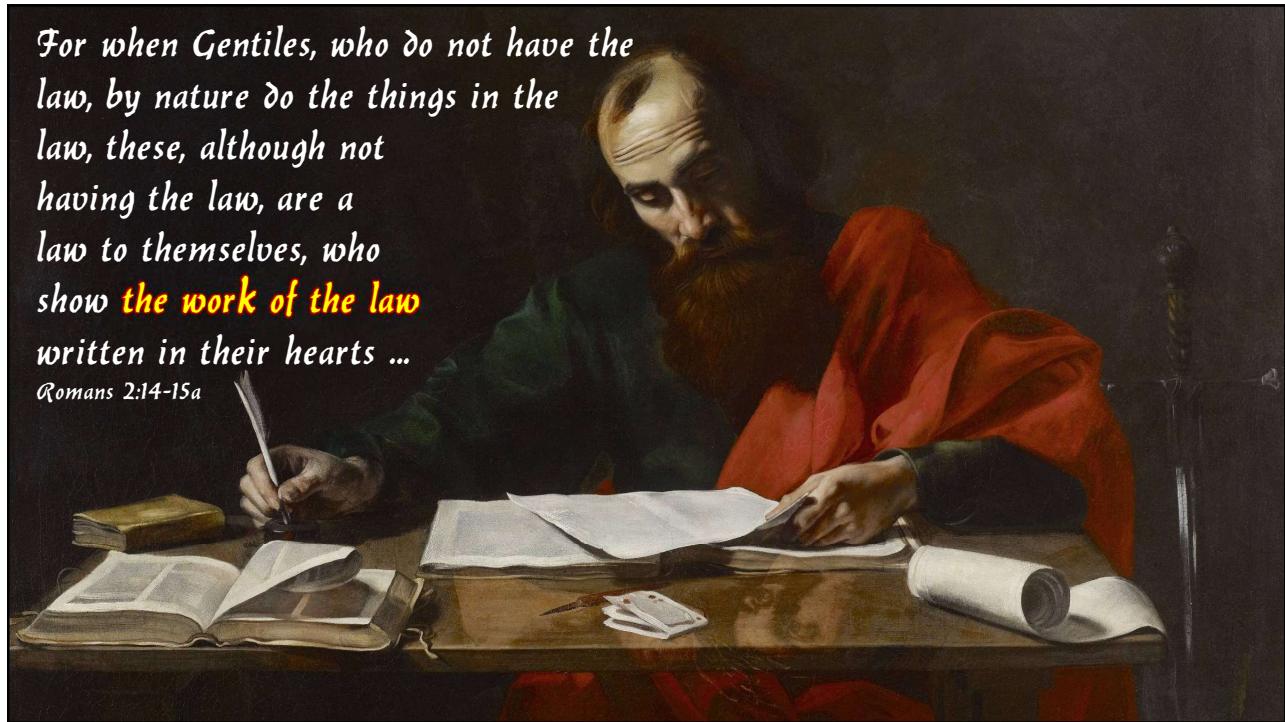
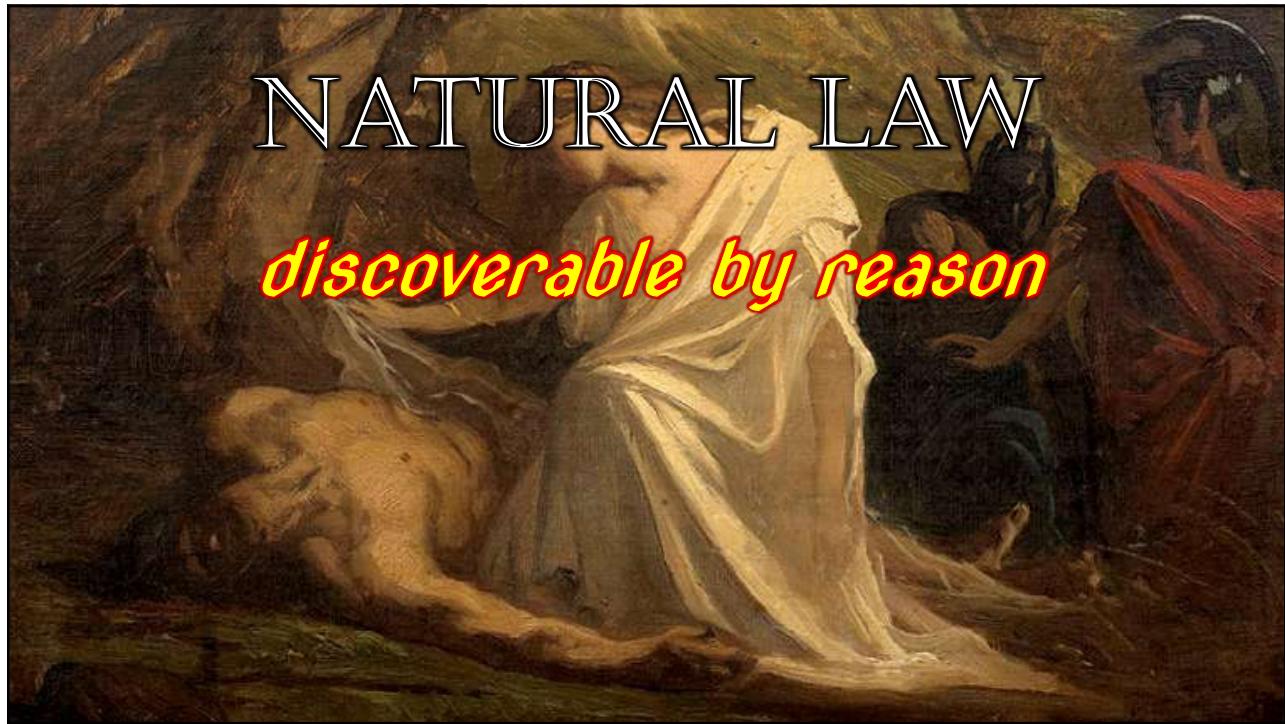
NATURAL LAW

*the participation in Eternal Law
by rational creatures by virtue
of being rational*



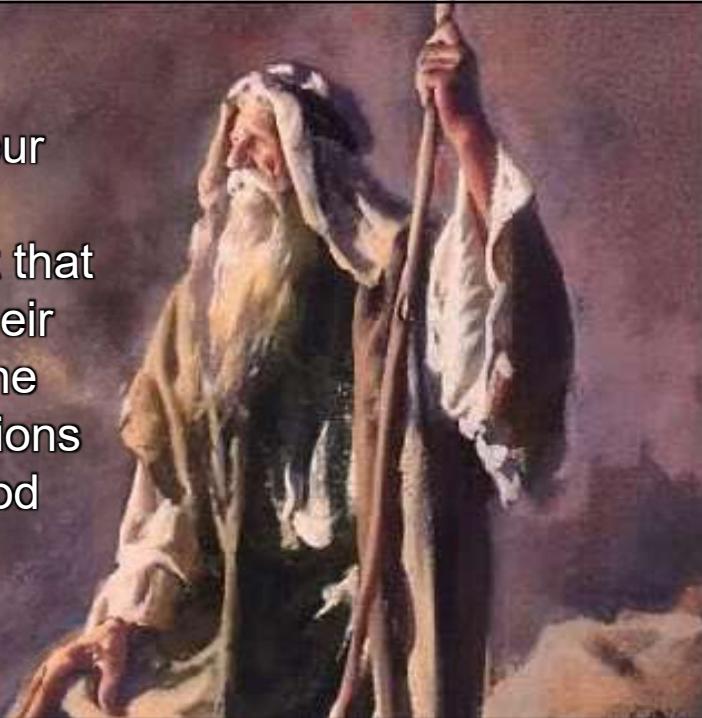
NATURAL LAW

*that aspect of the Eternal Law whereby
the Creator governs and guides the
moral actions of humans such that,
when obeyed, it leads humans to their
proper end in this world*



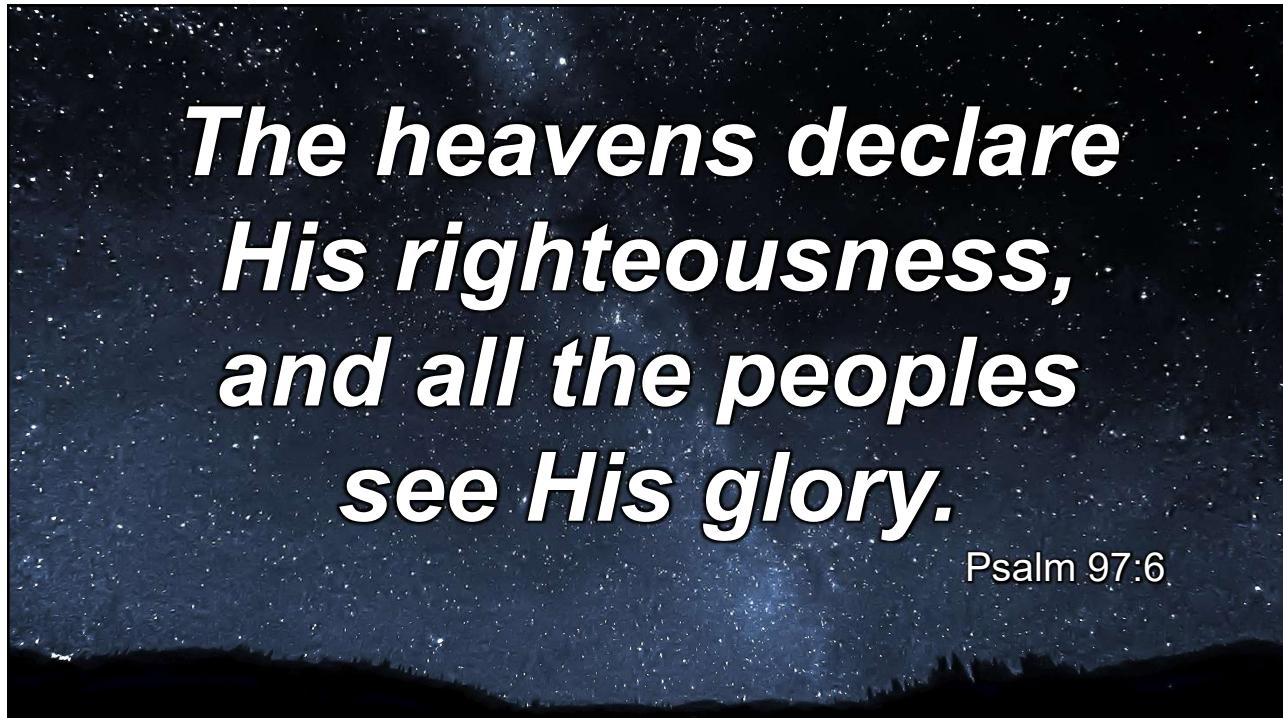
❖ Deut. 9:5 ❖

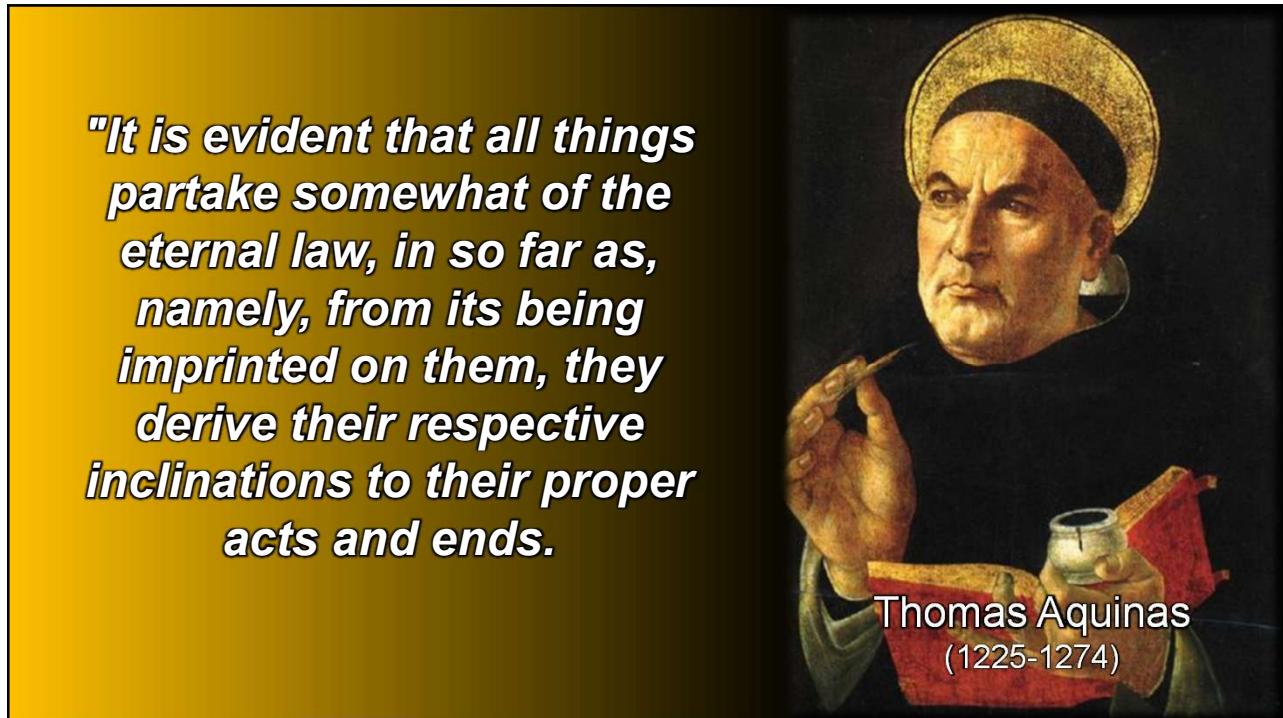
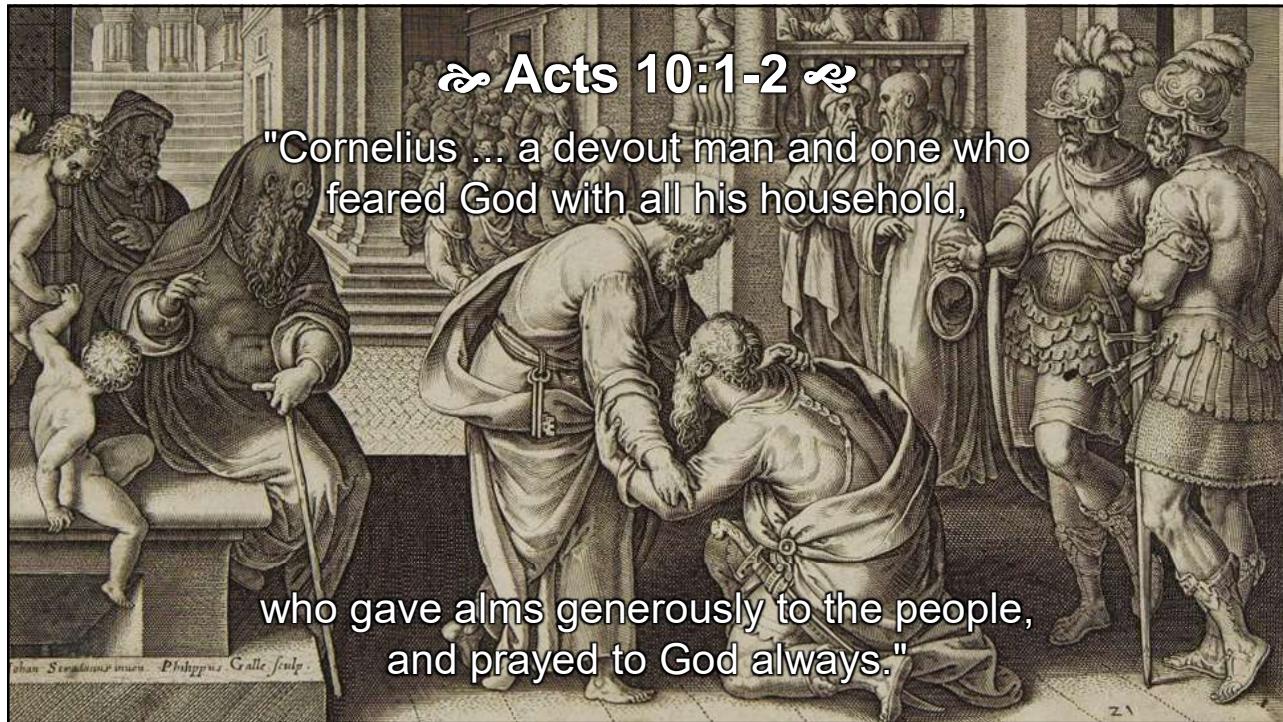
"It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you."



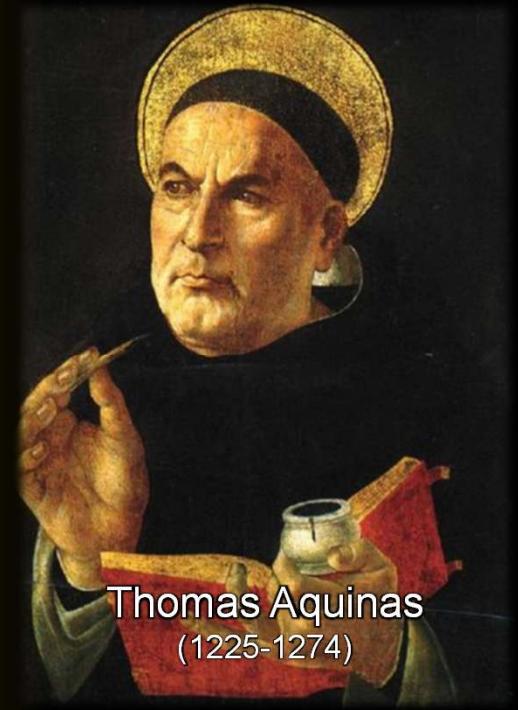
*The heavens declare
His righteousness,
and all the peoples
see His glory.*

Psalm 97:6





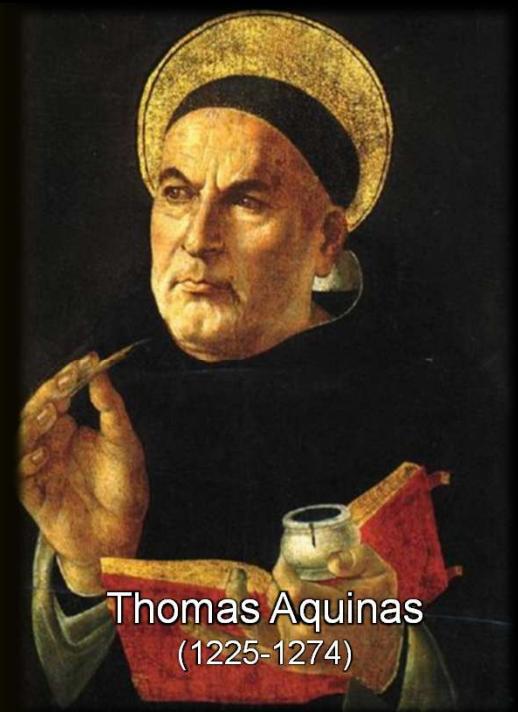
"Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law."

[ST I-II Q91, Art. 2)



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Therefore in reading the profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator.



John Calvin
(1509-1564)

"If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or contemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gifts, we insult the Giver."

[*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans), Bk. II, Chap. 2, §15, p. 236]



John Calvin
(1509-1564)

"Nothing, indeed, is more common, than for man to be sufficiently instructed in a right course of conduct by natural law, of which the Apostle here speaks [in Rom. 2:14-15]."

[*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), Bk. II, Chap. 2, §22, p. 241]



John Calvin
(1509-1564)

"Since man is by nature a social animal, he is disposed, from natural instinct, to cherish and preserve society; and accordingly we see that the minds of all men have impressions of civil order and honesty.



John Calvin
(1509-1564)

"Hence it is that every individual understands how human societies must be regulated by laws, and also is able to comprehend the principles of those laws.



John Calvin
(1509-1564)

"Hence the universal agreement in regard to such subjects, both among nations and individuals, the seeds of them being implanted in the breasts of all without a teacher or lawgiver. ... It is true, that some principle of civil order is impressed on all.



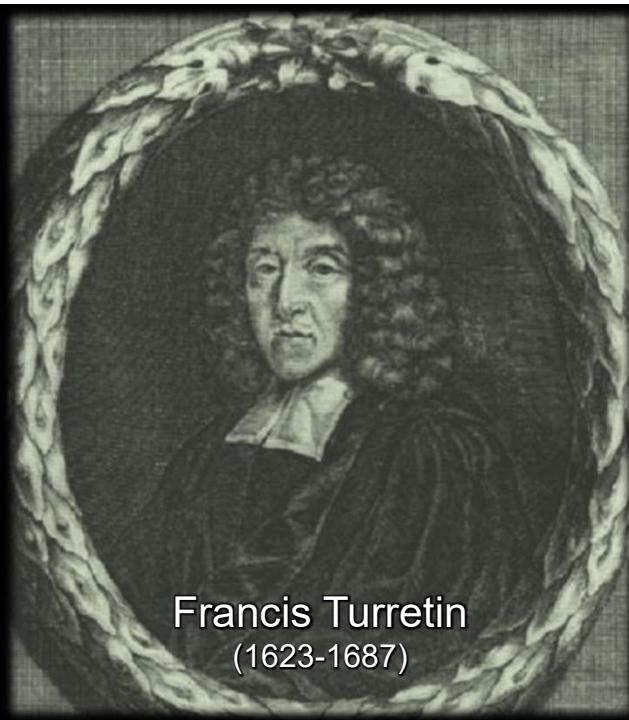
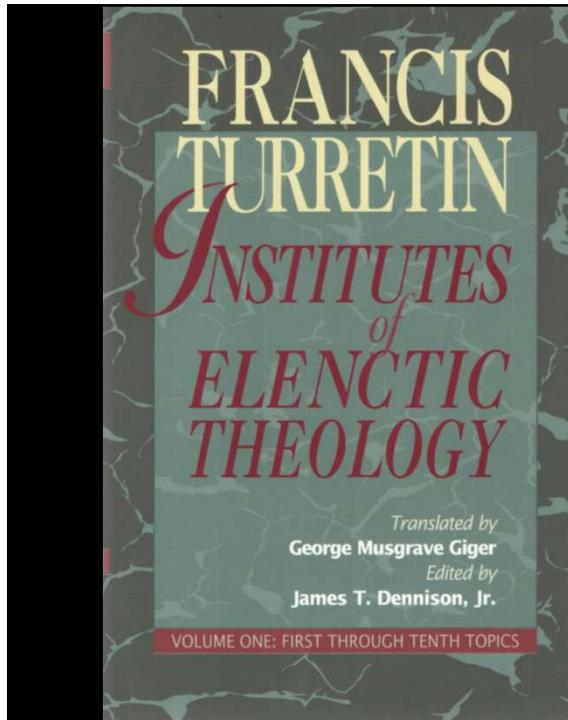
John Calvin
(1509-1564)

***"And this is ample proof
that, in regard to the
constitution of the present
life, no man is devoid of the
light of reason."***

[*Institutes*, Bk. II, §13, pp. 234-235]

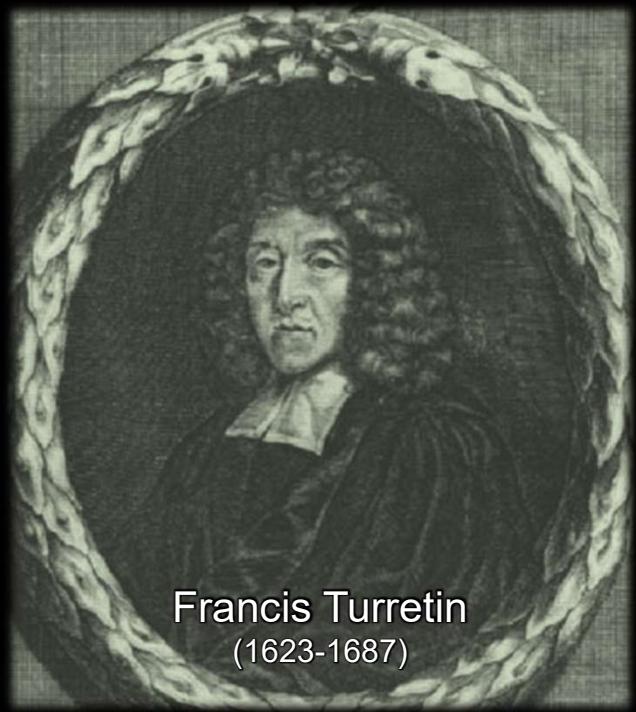


John Calvin
(1509-1564)



Francis Turretin
(1623-1687)

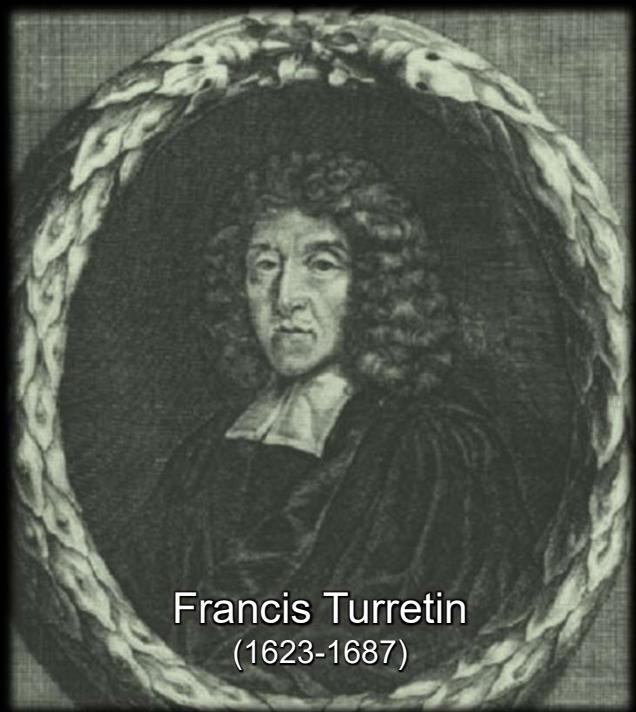
"Natural law is taken strictly and properly for the practical rule of moral duties to which men are bound by nature. ... The orthodox ... affirm that there is a natural law ... arising ... from a divine obligation being impressed by God upon the conscience of man in his very creation ... drawn from the right of nature itself, found both on the nature of God, the Creator ... and on the condition of rational creatures themselves



Francis Turretin
(1623-1687)

"(who, on account of their necessary dependence upon God in the genus of morals, no less than in the genus of being, are bound to perform or avoid those things which sound reason and the dictates of conscience enjoin upon them to do or avoid)."

[*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, First Topic: Theology, Q. XI, §§V, VII, IX, trans. by George Musgrave Giger, (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1992, vol. 2, pp. 2, 3)]



Francis Turretin
(1623-1687)

"One may well ask, 'How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?' The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are just laws, and there are unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that 'An unjust law is no law at all.' Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust?"

Martin Luther King, Jr.
(1929-1968)

"A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law **that is not rooted in eternal and natural law**. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust."

[Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letters from Birmingham Jail," April 12, 1963]

Martin Luther King, Jr.
(1929-1968)

"In regard to Thomas and Calvin on natural law, therefore, one seems safe in saying that Calvin could appeal to natural law without thereby placing himself definitively in one medieval school or another [regarding the debate between the realists and the voluntarists]."

David VanDrunen



"Indeed insofar as ideas of natural law were intimately woven into the fabric of the European ius commune of which Calvin the law student would have imbibed in his youth, he had no reason to consider his reference to natural law as anything out of the ordinary."

David VanDrunen

[David VanDrunen, "Medieval Natural Law and the Reformation: A Comparison of Aquinas and Calvin," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 80 (2006): 77-98]



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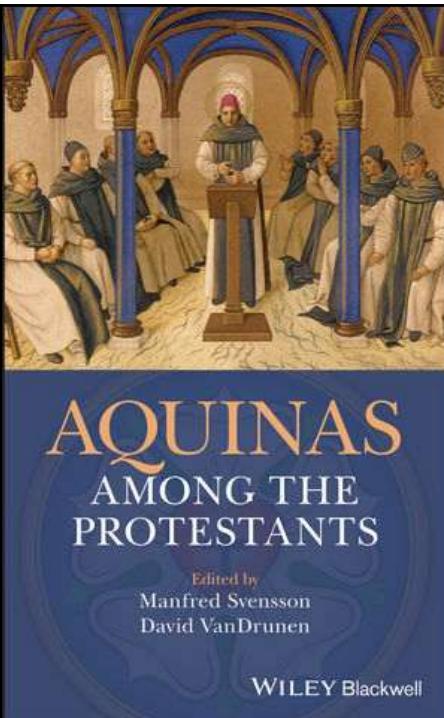
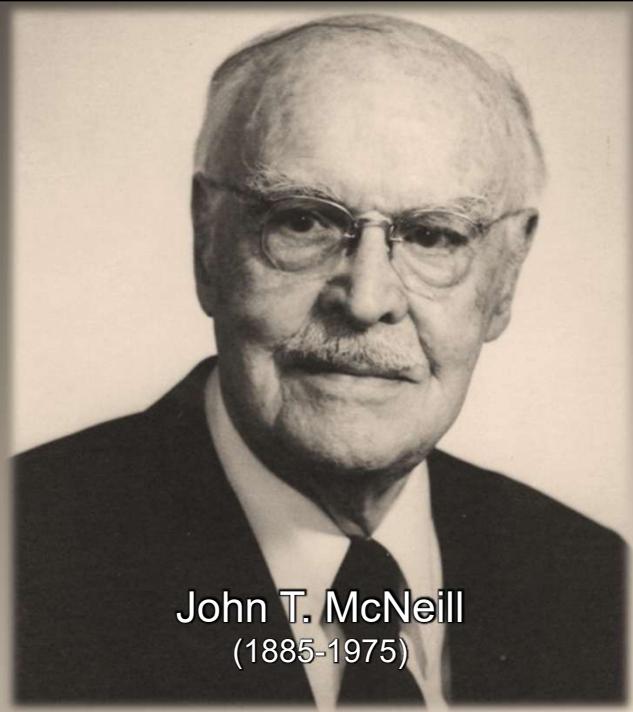
David VanDrunen

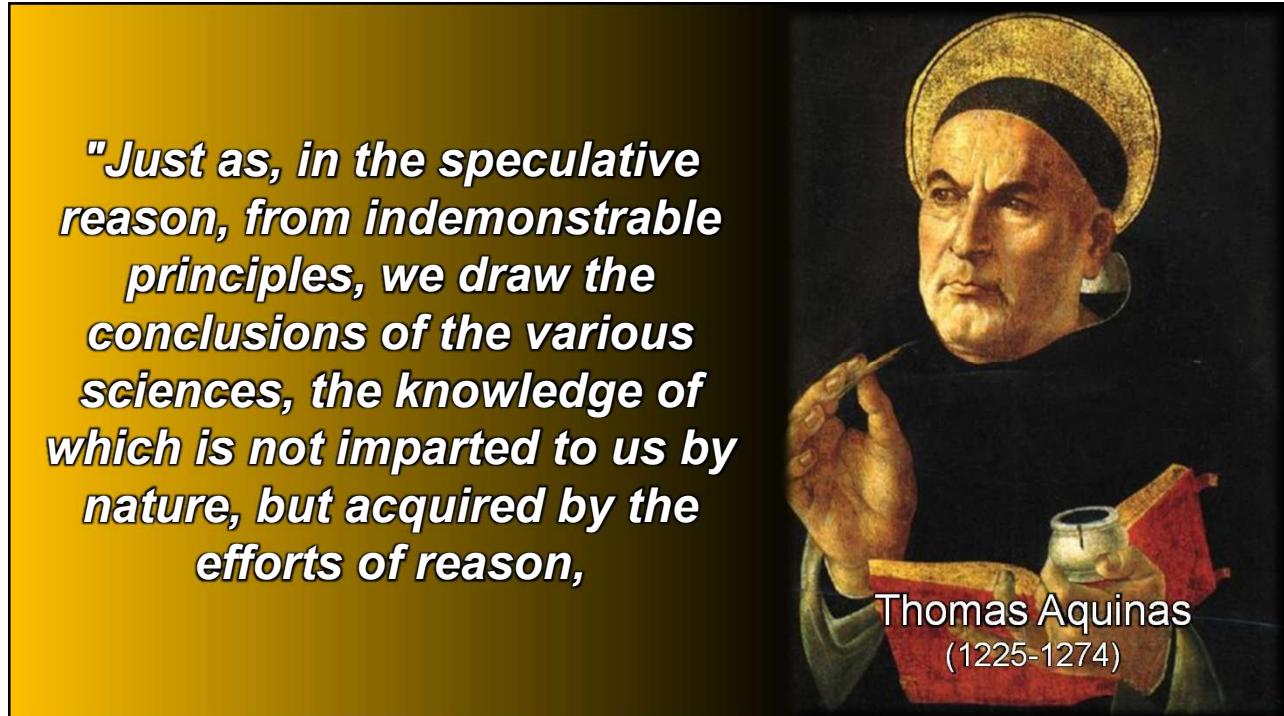
[David VanDrunen, "Medieval Natural Law and the Reformation: A Comparison of Aquinas and Calvin," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 80 (2006): 77-98]



"There is no real discontinuity between the teaching of the Reformers and that of their predecessors with respect to natural law. Not one of the leaders of the Reformation assails the principle. Instead, with the possible exception of Zwingli, they all on occasion express a quite ungrudging respect for the moral law naturally implanted in the human heart and seek to inculcate this attribute in their readers."

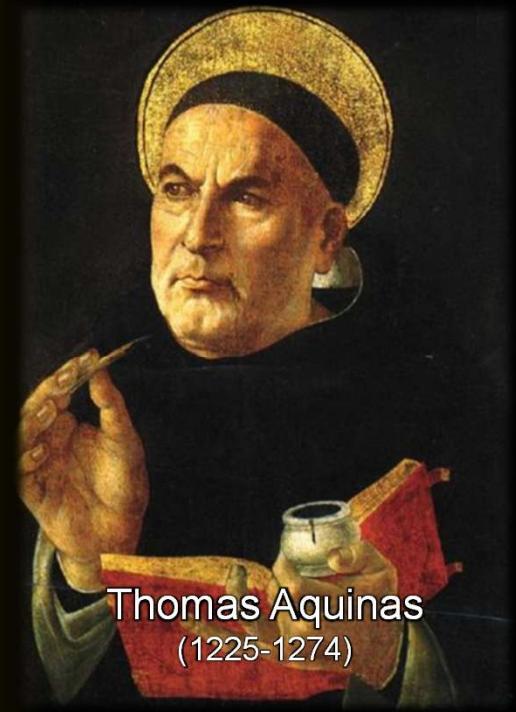
[John T. McNeill, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," in *The Journal of Religion* 26, no. 3 (July 1946): 168-182. The citation is from p. 168]





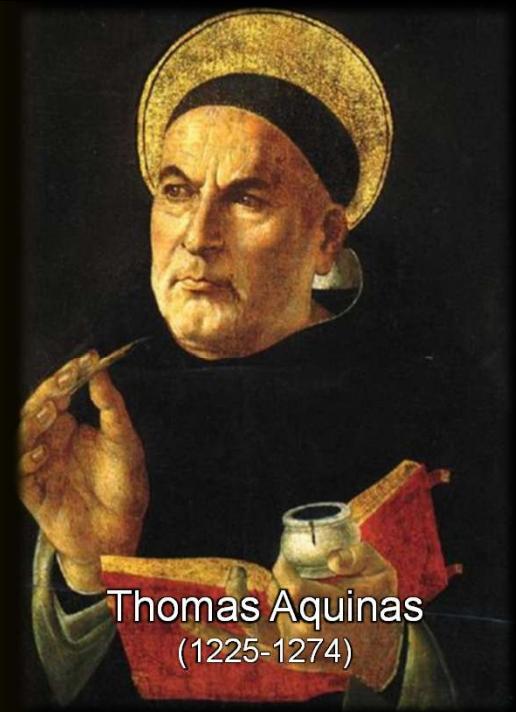
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"so too it is from the precepts of the natural law, as from general and indemonstrable principles, that the human reason needs to proceed to the more particular determinations of certain matters.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

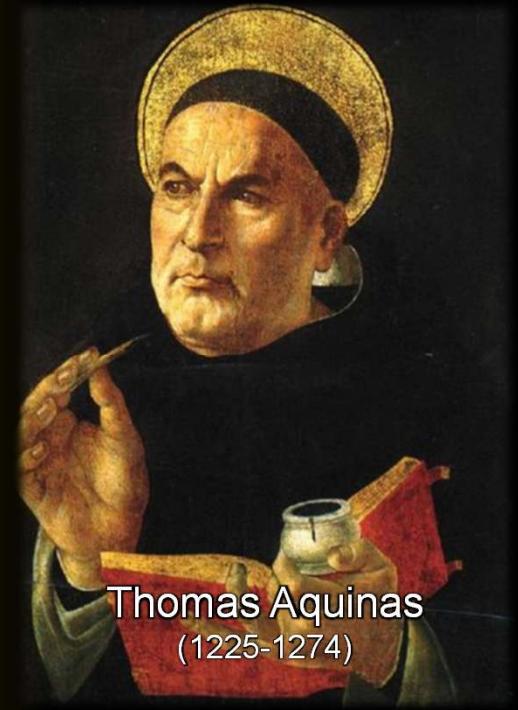
"The practical reason is concerned with practical matters, which are singular and contingent: but not with necessary things, with which the speculative reason is concerned.



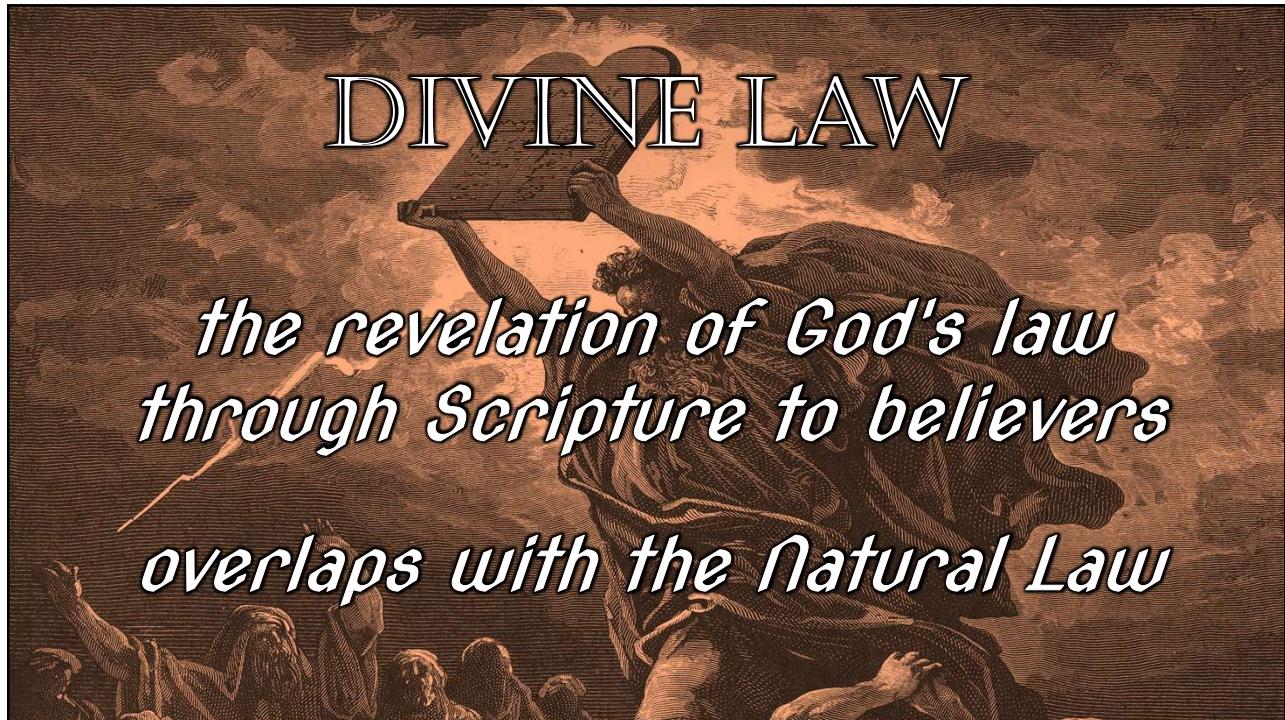
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

***"Wherefore human laws
cannot have that inerrancy
that belongs to the
demonstrated conclusions of
sciences."***

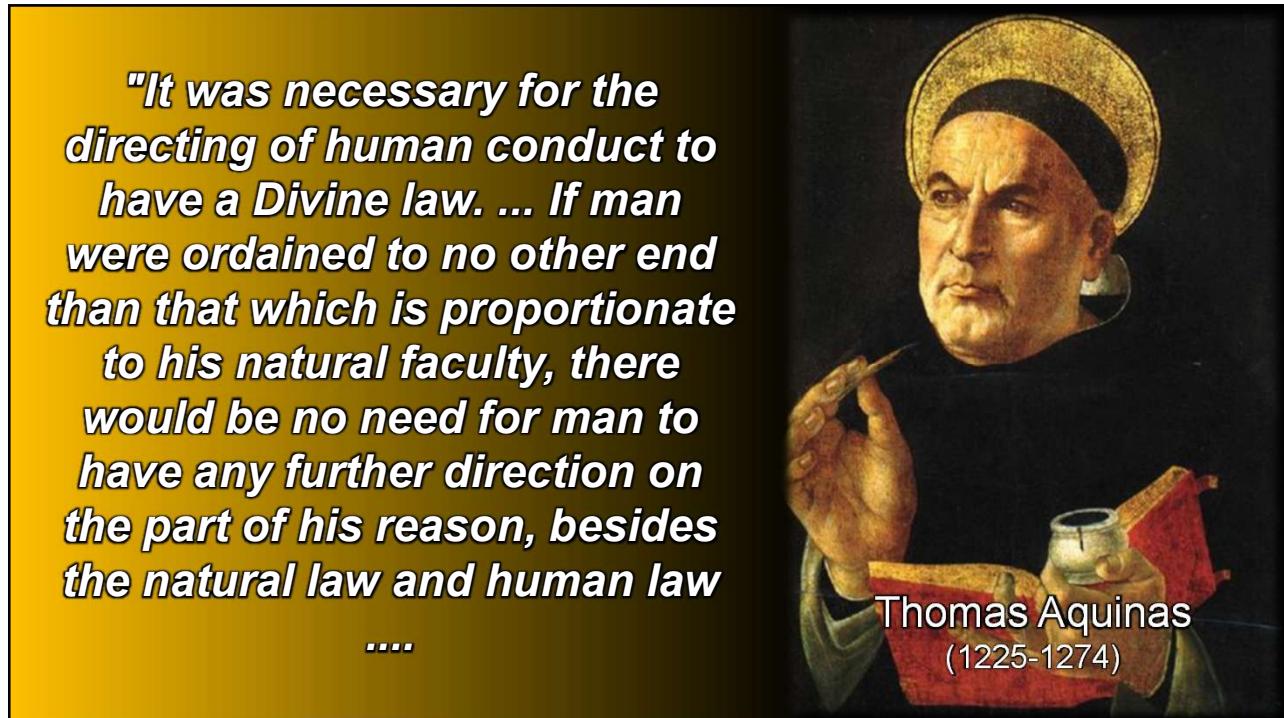
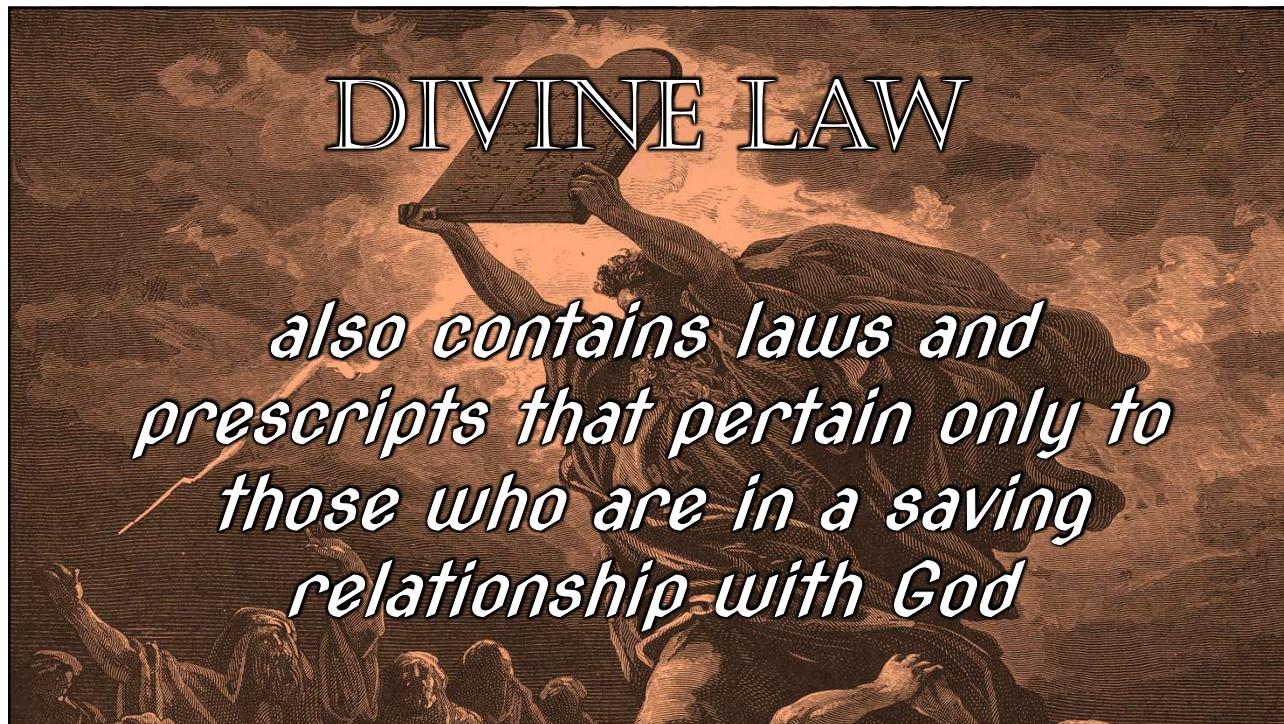
[*ST I-II Q91, Art. 3, ad. 3*]]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

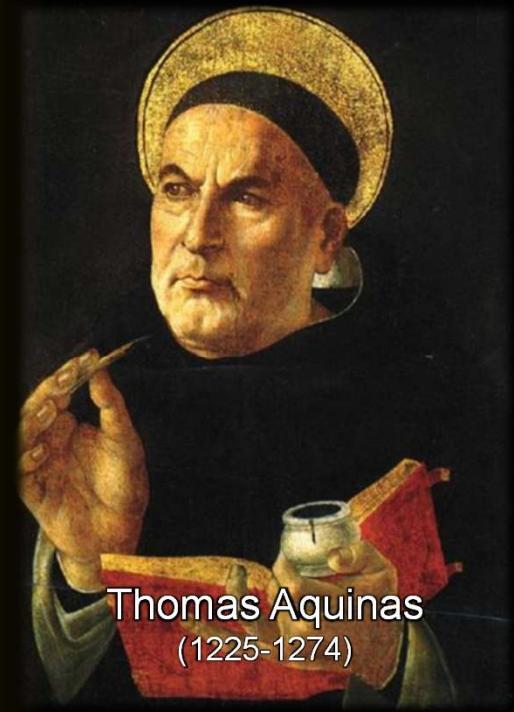


*the revelation of God's law
through Scripture to believers
overlaps with the Natural Law*

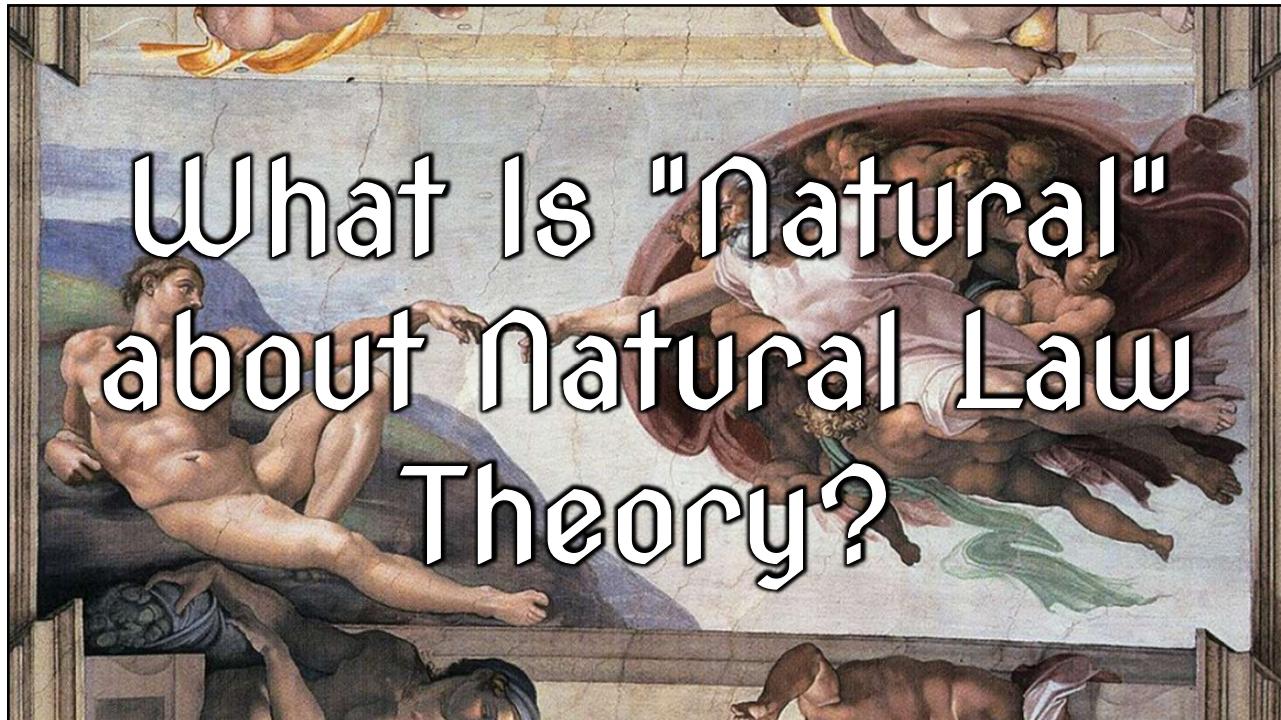


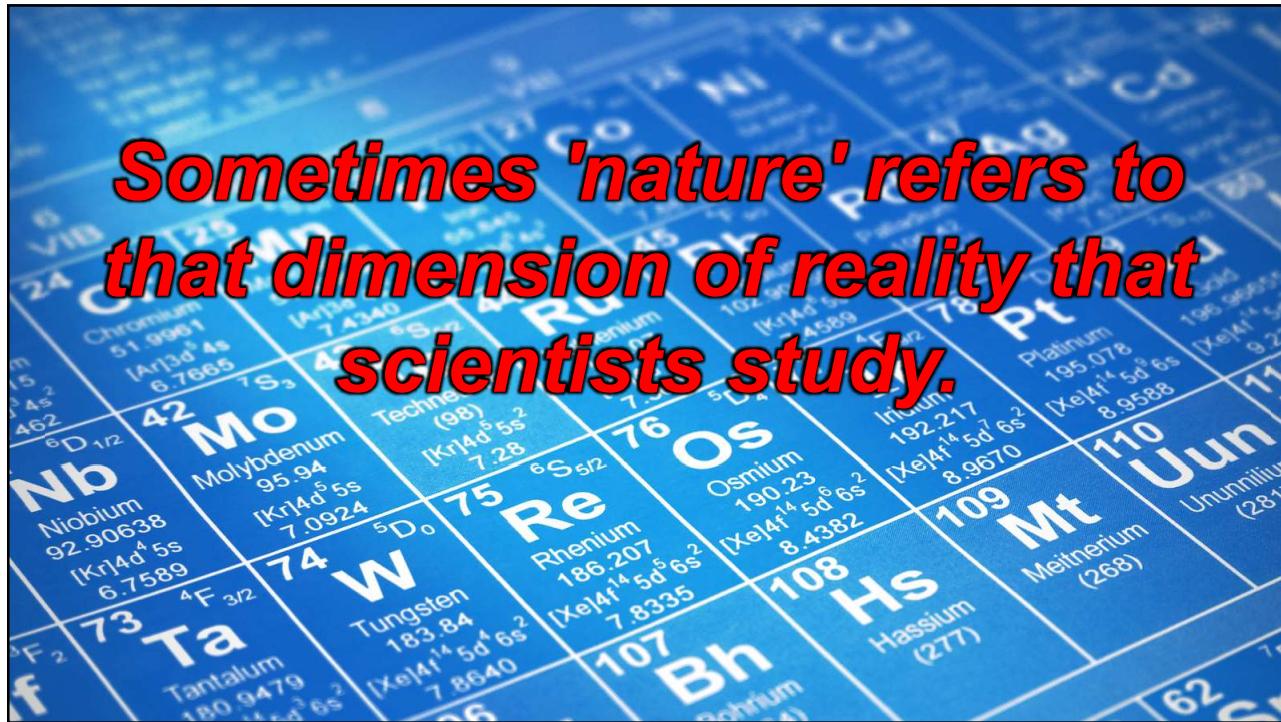
"But since man is ordained to an end of eternal happiness which is inproportionate to man's natural faculty ... it was necessary that, besides the natural and the human law, man should be directed to his end by a law given by God."

(ST I-II Q91, Art. 4)

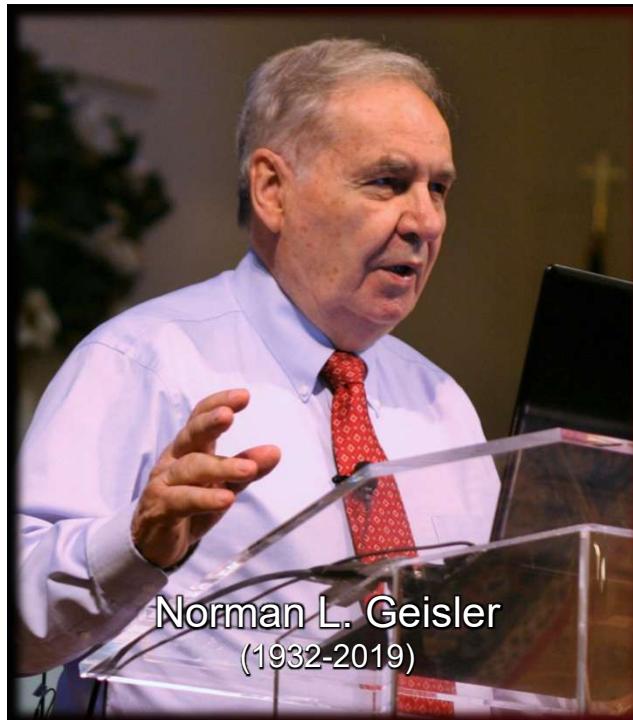
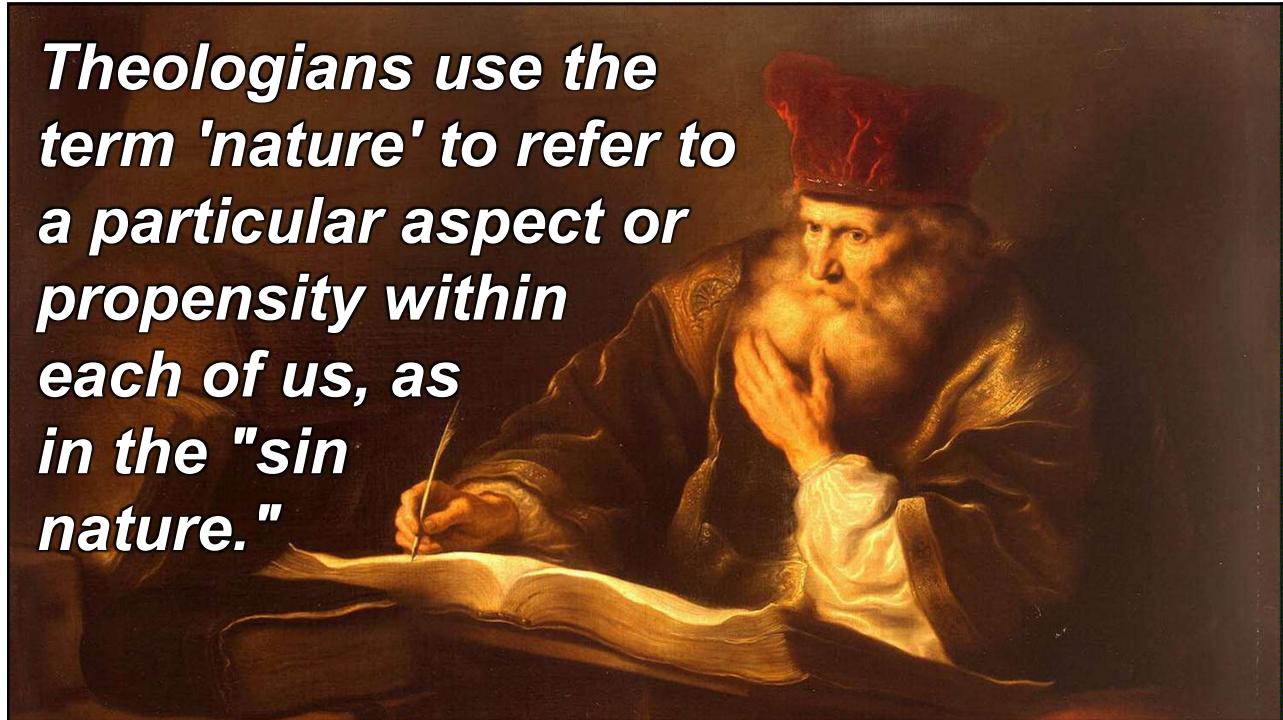


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)





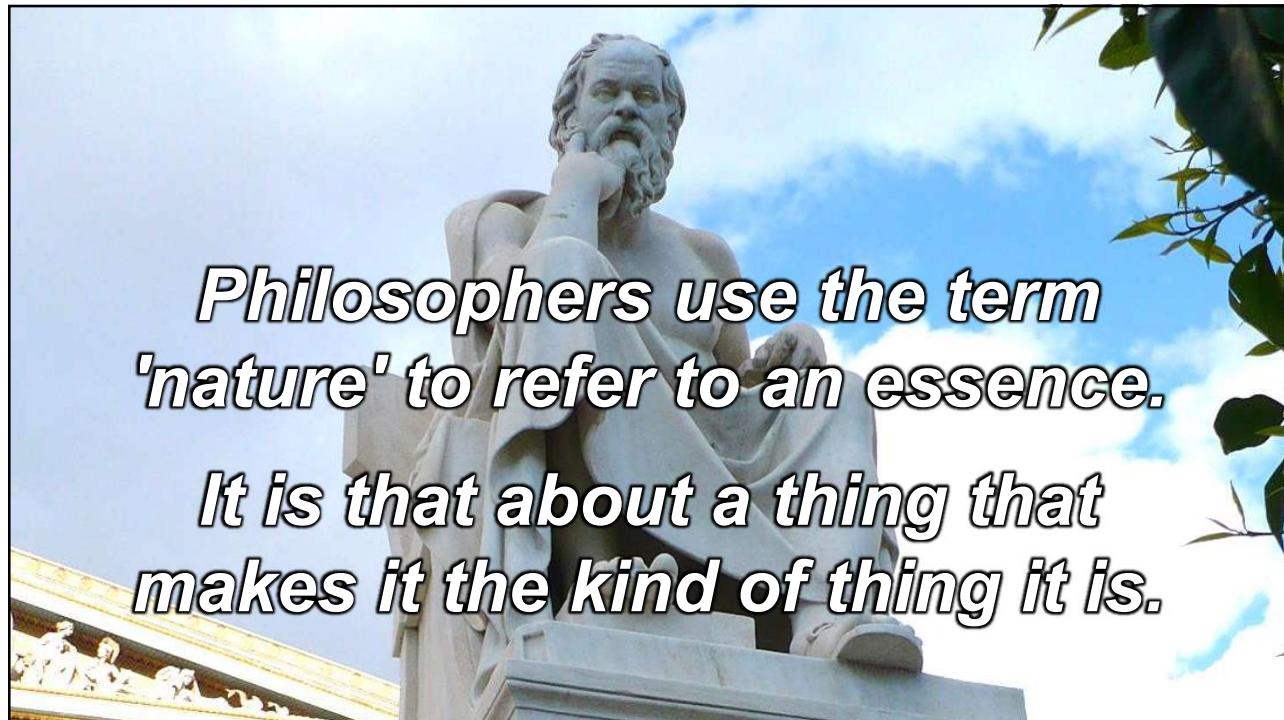
Theologians use the term 'nature' to refer to a particular aspect or propensity within each of us, as in the "sin nature."



Norman L. Geisler
(1932-2019)

"Everyone who is naturally generated from Adam—every human—inherits a sinful nature from him. ... Being sinners by nature, short of and without salvation, we inevitably are and do what comes naturally: We sin."

[Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology: Vol. Three: Sin Salvation* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004, 125.)]



"What-ness"

with respect to its matter:

Form

with respect to its operations:

Nature

with respect to its accidents:

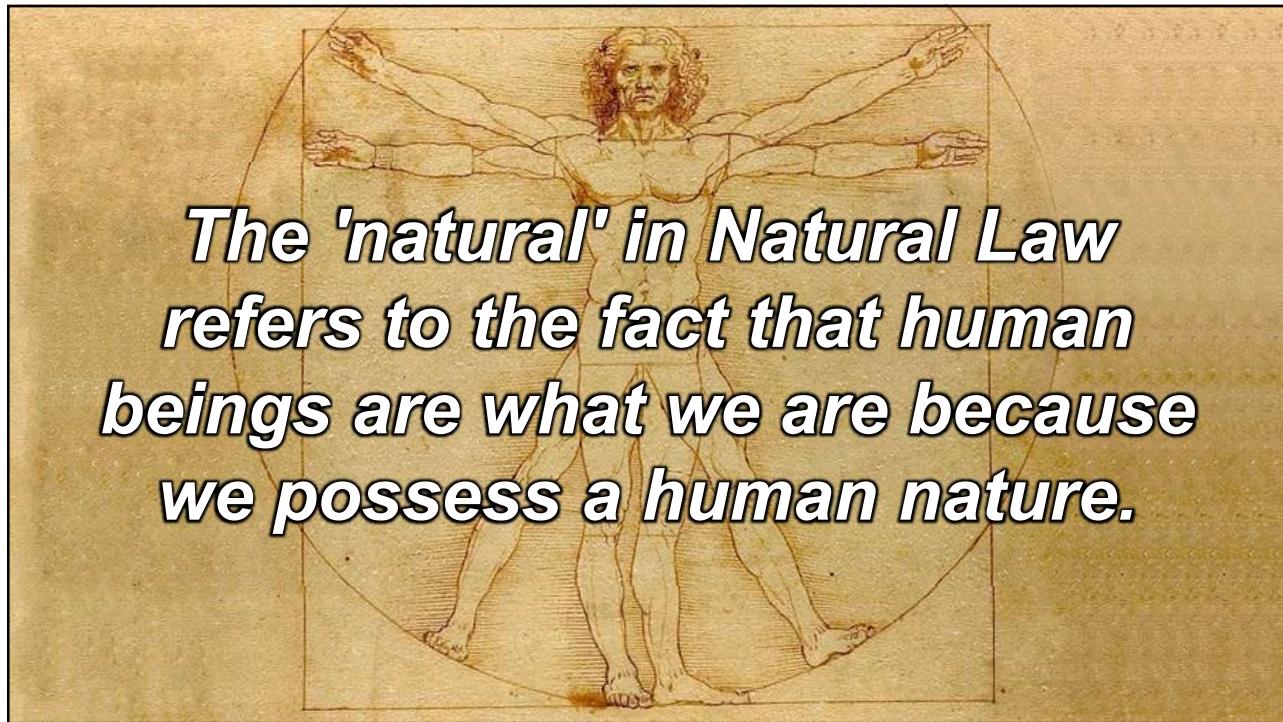
Substance

with respect to an intellect:

Quiddity

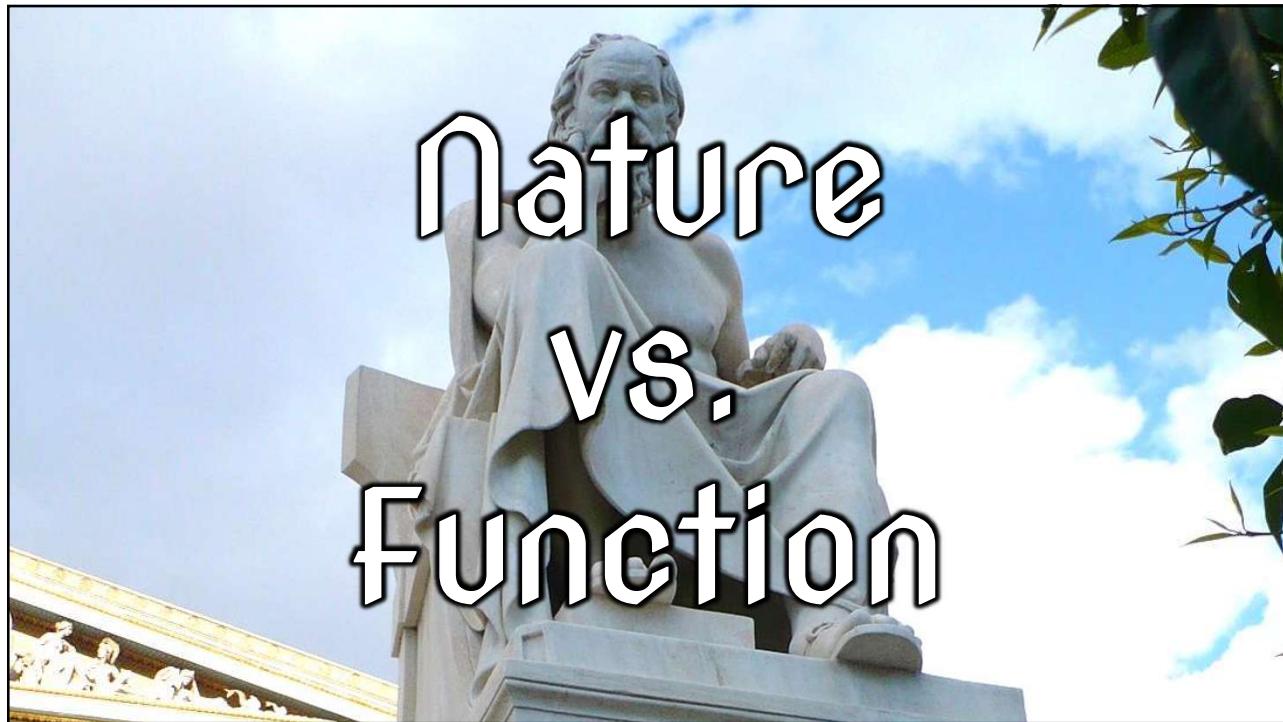
with respect to its existence:

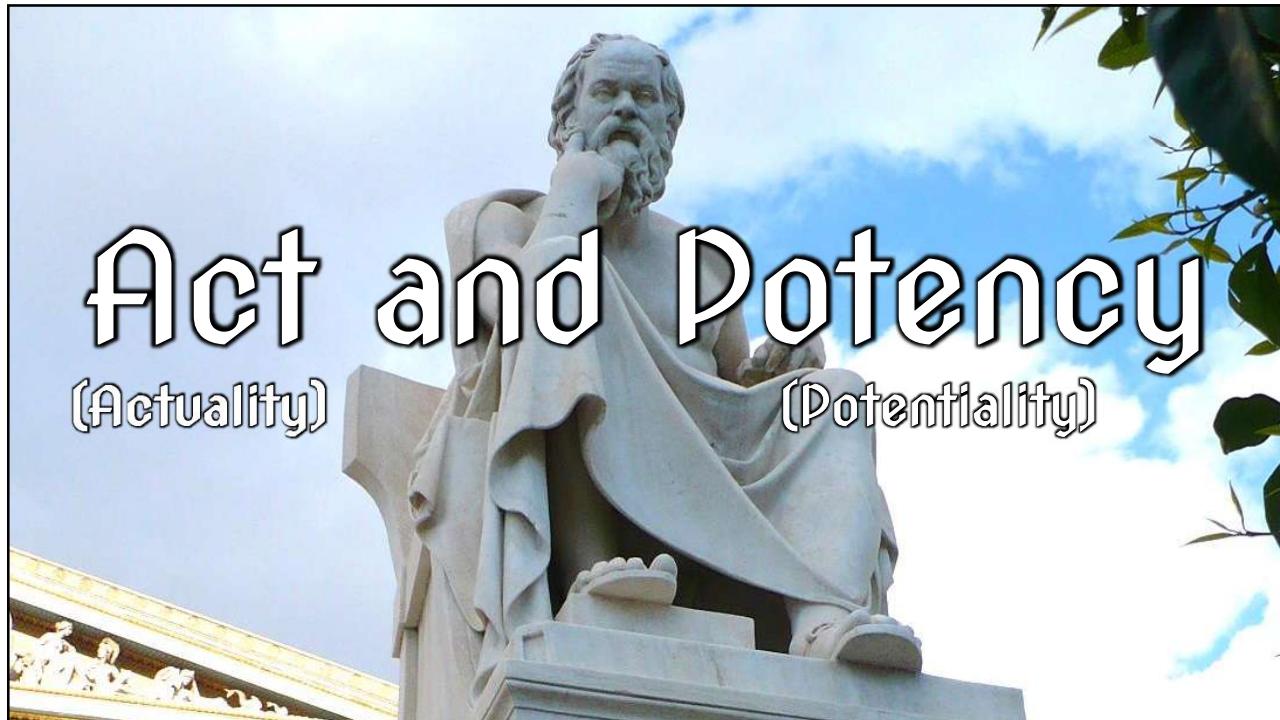
Essence



The 'natural' in Natural Law refers to the fact that human beings are what we are because we possess a human nature.







Act and potency are sometimes referred to as actuality and potentiality.

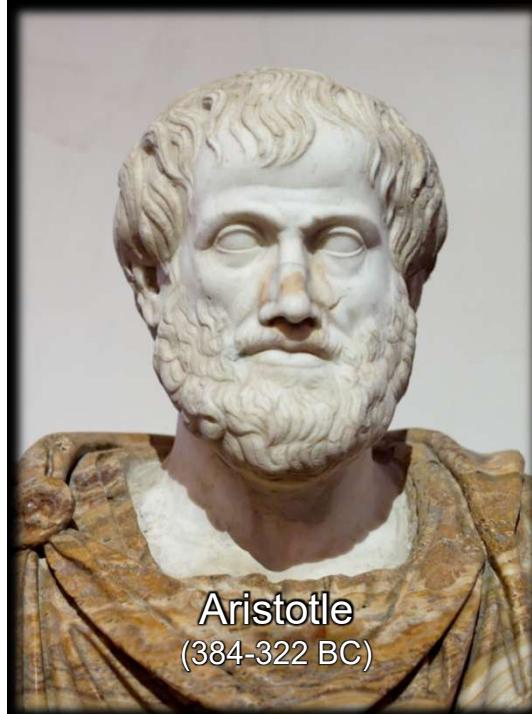
This is how Aristotle and Aquinas account for change.

❖Potency❖

= the power or capacity or possibility to be actual or real

There are both logical and metaphysical senses of the terms "potency" or "possible."

Logically, something may be possible (or potential) in as much as it is not a contradiction.

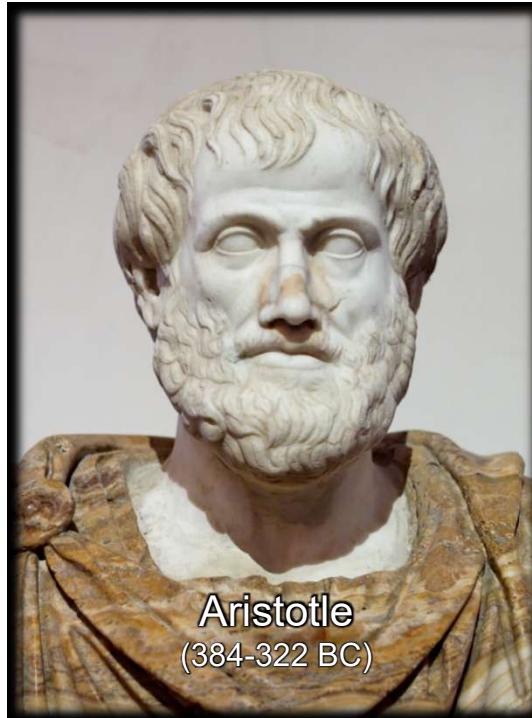


Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

**"The possible,
then, in one sense,
as has been said,
means that which
is not of necessity
false."**

[*Metaphysics D (V)*, 12, 1019^a30, trans. W. D. Ross, in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 765]

***Metaphysically, a potency
is a real capacity in a real
thing.***



"'Potency' then means the source, in general, of change or movement in another thing or in the same thing *qua* other."

[*Metaphysics*, D (V), 12, 1019^a15 - 1019^a20, trans. W. D. Ross, in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 765]

Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

Act

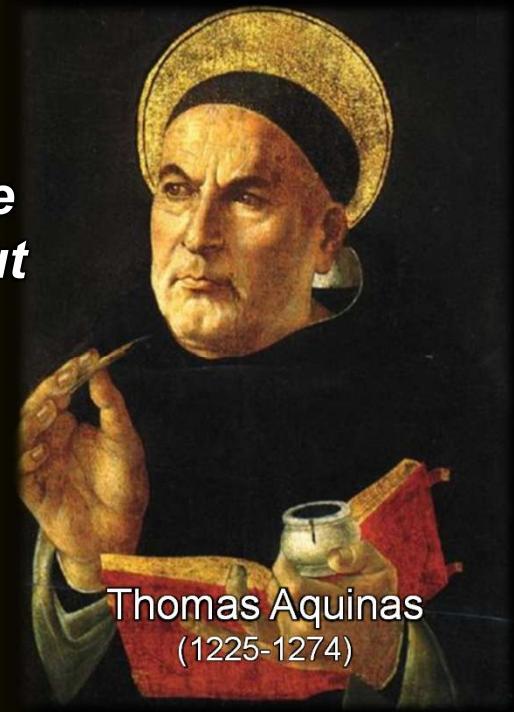
(or Actuality)

= to be real

**A potency is actualized
by a cause.**

"By non-existence we understand not simply those things which do not exist, but those which are potential, and not actual."

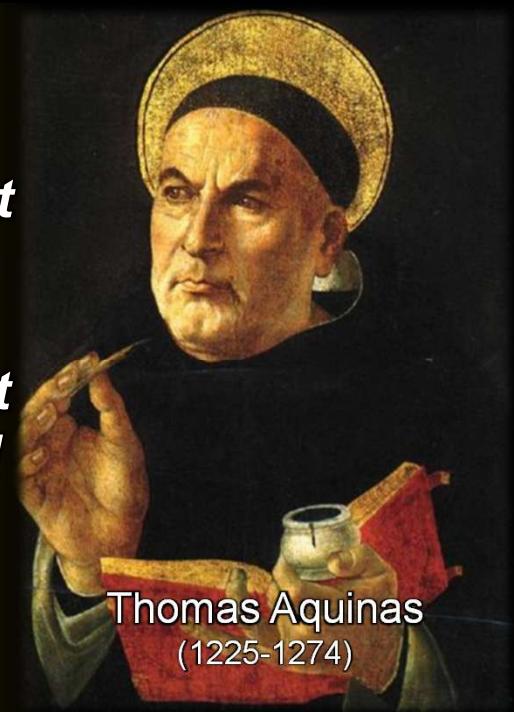
[*Summa Theologiae*, I, 5, 2, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948), 12]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Observe that some things can exist though they do not exist, while other things do exist. That which can be is said to exist in potency; that which already exists is said to be in act."

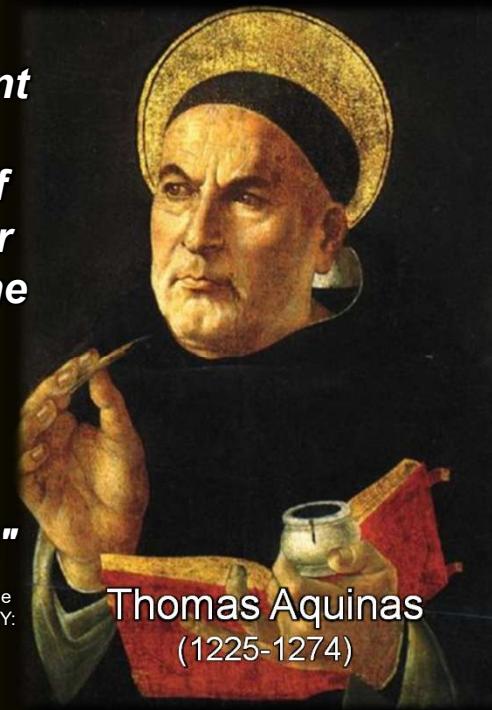
[*On the Principles of Nature*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke in *The Pocket Aquinas* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960), 61]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Now, from the foregoing it is evident that in created intellectual substances there is composition of act and potentiality. For in whatever thing we find two, one of which is the complement of the other, the proportion of one of them to the other is as the proportion of potentiality to act; for nothing is completed except by its proper act."

[*Summa Contra Gentiles*, II, 53, §1-2, trans. James F. Anderson (University of Notre Dame Press Edition) vol. 2, p. 155. Reprint of *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (Garden City, NY: Hanover House)]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

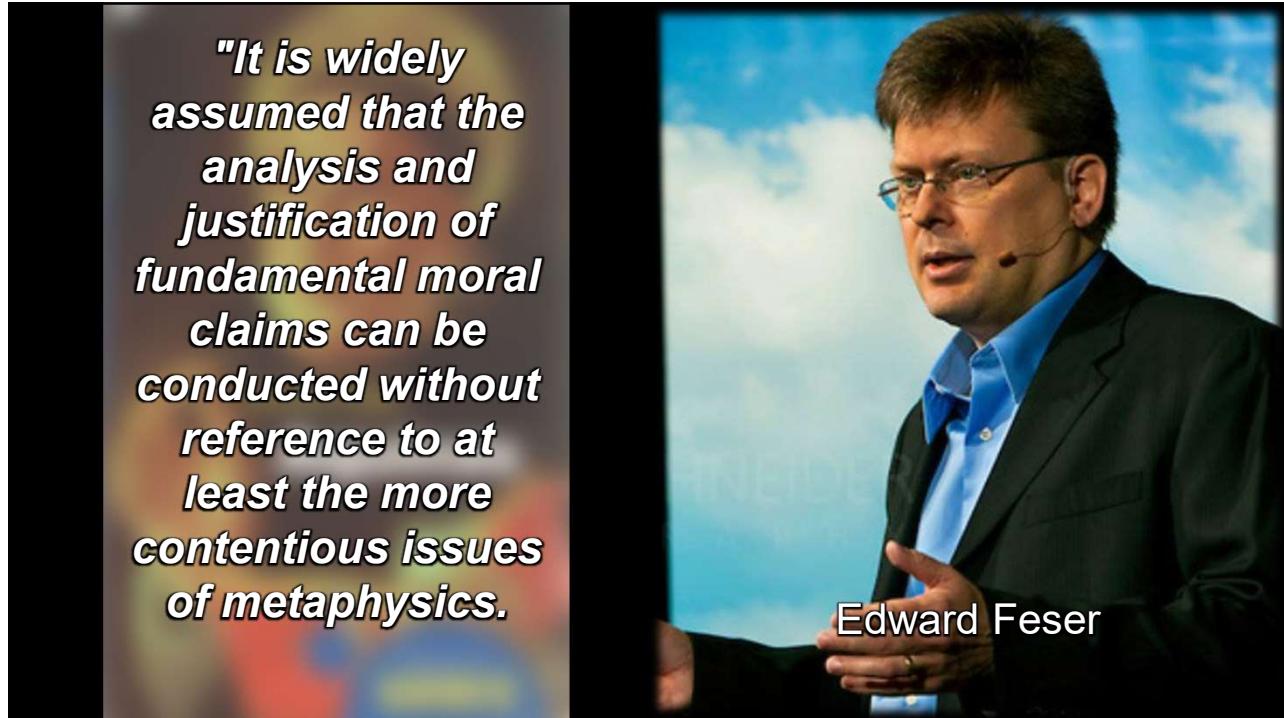
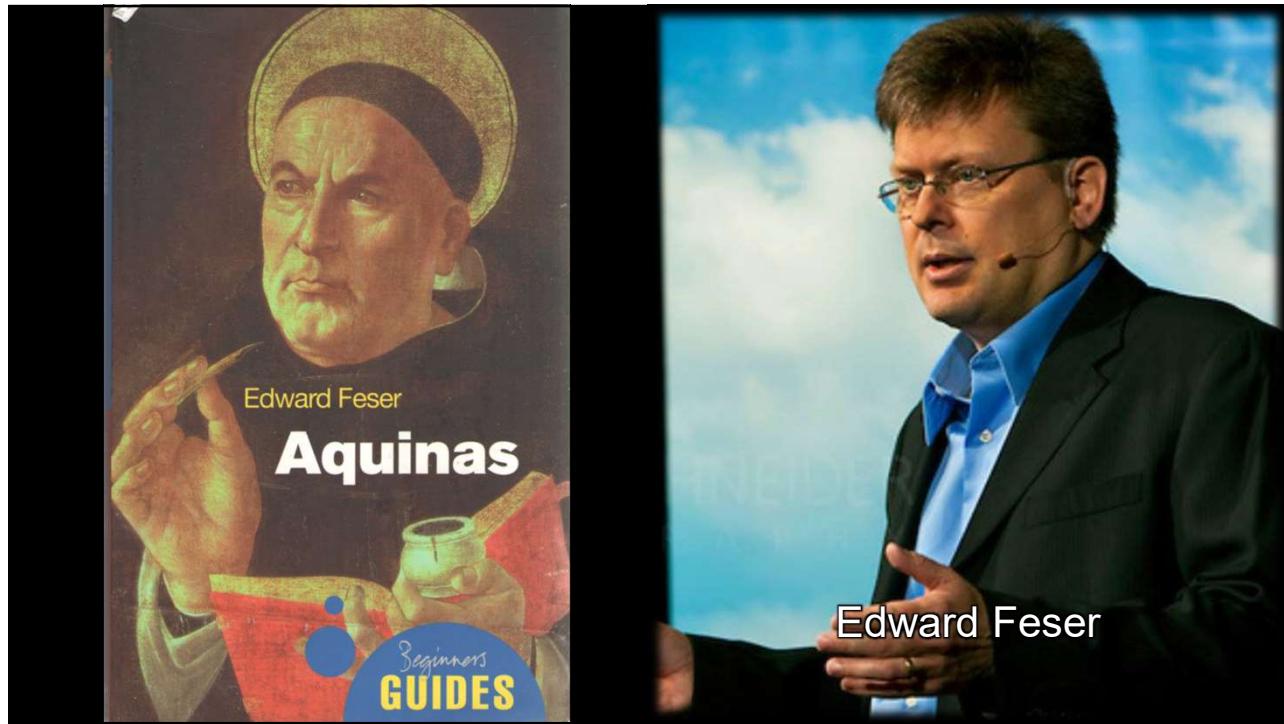
"Howsoever anything acts, it does so inasmuch as it is in act; howsoever anything receives, it does so inasmuch as it is in potency."

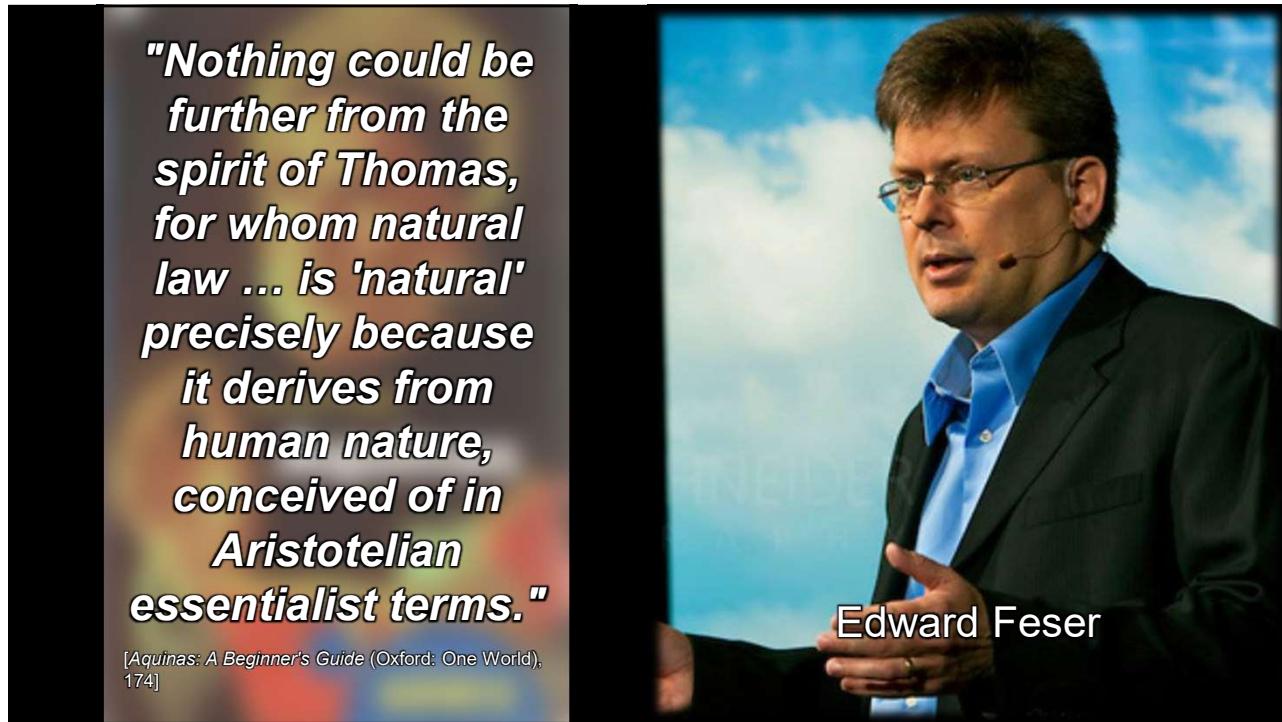
[Bernard J. Wuellner, *Summary of Scholastic Principles* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1956), 5]

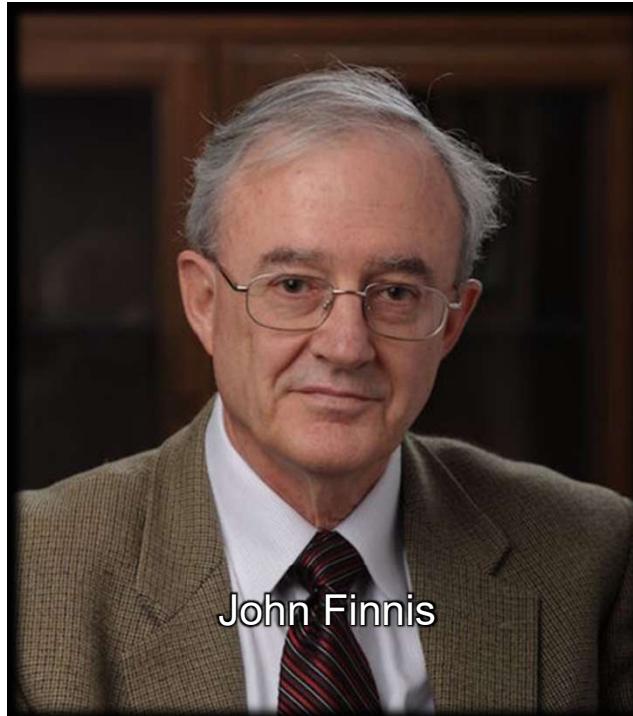
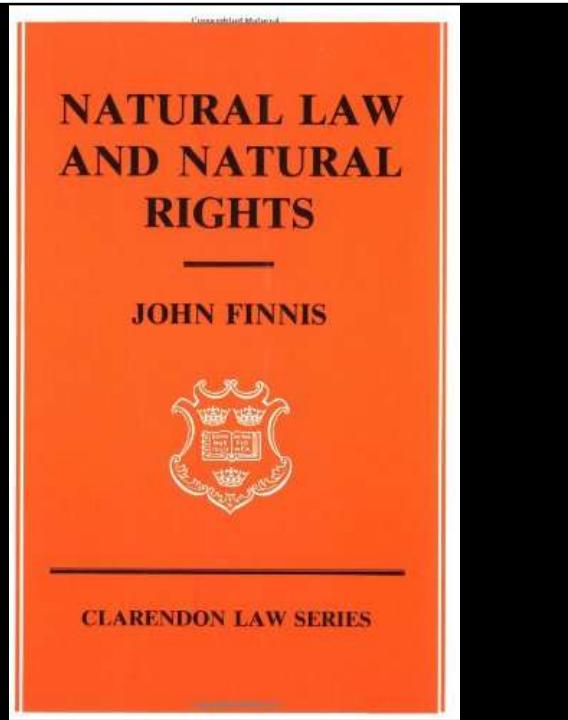
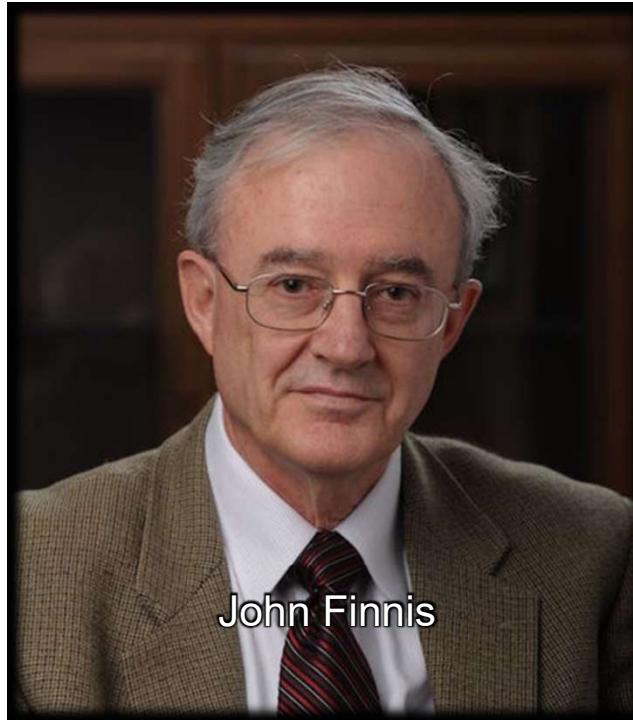
SUMMARY OF SCHOLASTIC PRINCIPLES



BERNARD J. WUELLNER



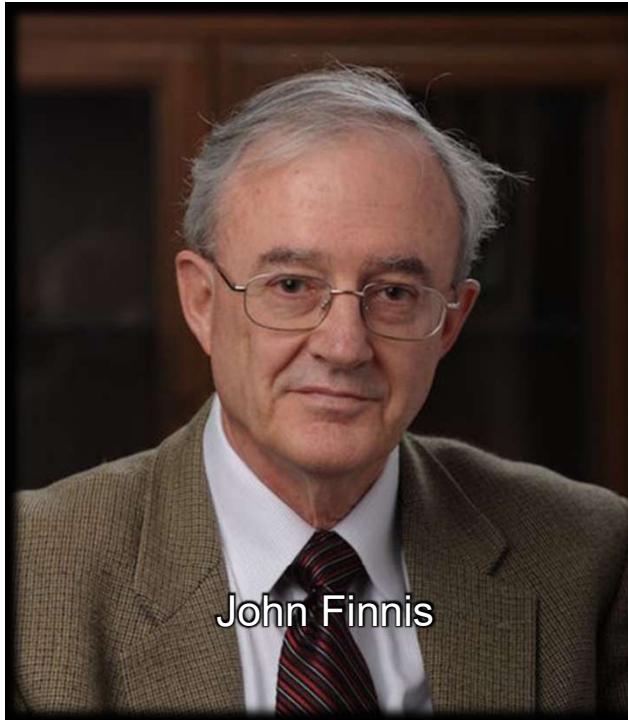




"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

³²D. J. O'Connor, *Aquinas and Natural Law* (London: 1967), p. 68.

³³Aquinas, *in Eth*, V, lect. 12, para. 1018; *S.T. I-II*, p. 94, a. 2; q. 91, a. 3c; q. 58, aa. 4.c, 5c.



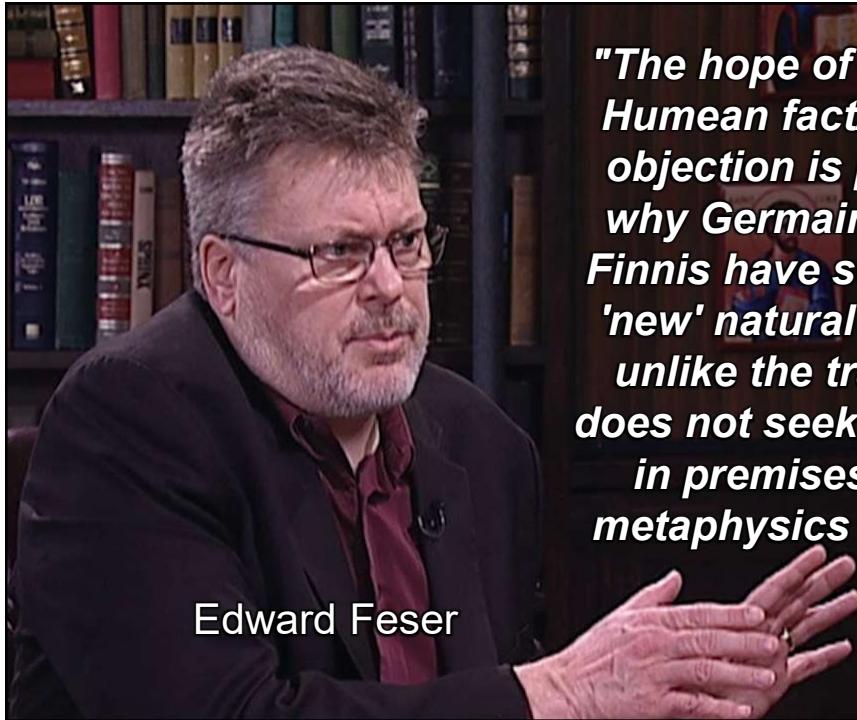
John Finnis

They are not inferred from speculative principles. They are not inferred from facts. They are not inferred from metaphysical propositions about human nature, or about the nature of good and evil, or about 'the function of a human being'³⁴ nor are they inferred from a teleological conception of nature or any other conception of nature. They are not inferred or derived from anything."

³⁴Cf. the objections of Margaret MacDonald, 'Natural Rights' in P. Laslett (ed.), *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford: 1956), 35 at p. 44.

³⁵Pace Strauss, *Natural Right and history*, pp. 7-8.

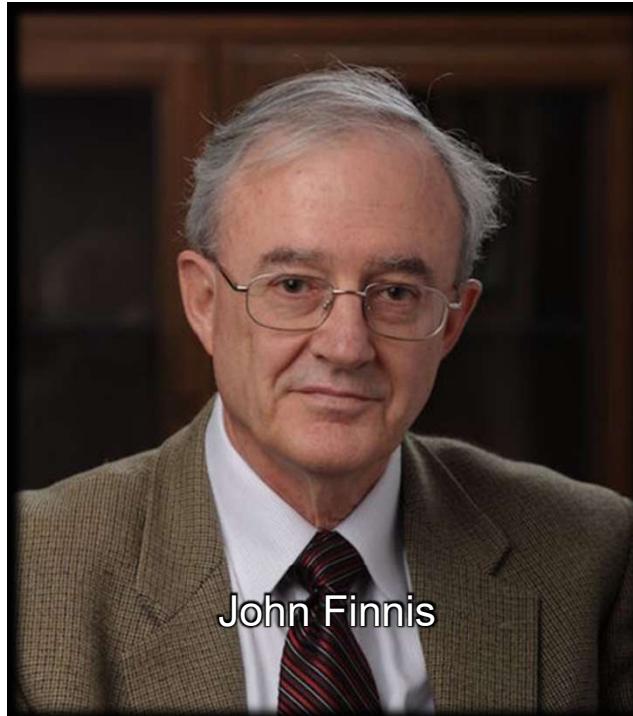
[John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 33-34)]



Edward Feser

"The hope of side-stepping [the Humean fact/value dichotomy] objection is part of the reason why Germain Grisez and John Finnis have sought to develop a 'new' natural law theory which, unlike the traditional version, does not seek to ground morality in premises concerning the metaphysics of human nature."

[Edward Feser, "Being, the Good, and the Guise of the Good" in *Neo-Scholastic Essays* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press), 279-320, p. 298, n.2]



John Finnis

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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³³Aquinas, *in Eth.* V, lect. 12, para. 1018; *S.T.* I-II, p. 94, a. 2; q. 91, a. 3c; q. 58, aa. 4.c, 5c.

But we are not claiming that good and evil have to be analyzed and fixed **BEFORE** they are applied in morals.

This is a confusion of the epistemology of morals with the metaphysics of morals.

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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³³Aquinas, *in Eth.* V, lect. 12, para. 1018; *S.T.* I-II, p. 94, a. 2; q. 91, a. 3c; q. 58, aa. 4.c, 5c.

Just because we can know X before we know anything about the metaphysics of X does not mean that there is no metaphysics of X.

Nor does it mean that the metaphysics of X should never come into the discussion when the reality of X is in dispute.

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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³³Aquinas, *in Eth.* V, lect. 12, para. 1018; *S.T. I-II*, p. 94, a. 2; q.

91, a. 3c; q. 58, aa. 4.c, 5c.

A person may know that God exists even if he never considers the metaphysical aspects of God.

But it can become critical to introduce the metaphysical issues in a dispute about the existence of God.

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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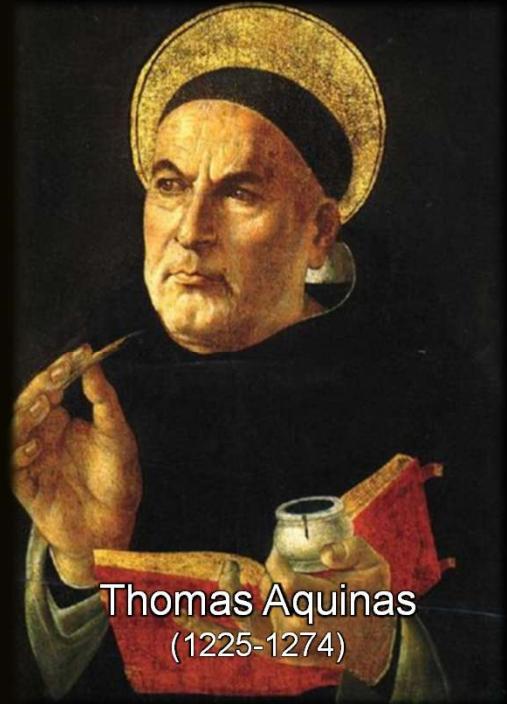
Finnis is missing Aquinas's point. Aquinas maintains that it is the **DOING** of good and evil that is self-evident and indemonstrable, not the **BEING** of good and evil.

*"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age or reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are **per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.**³³*

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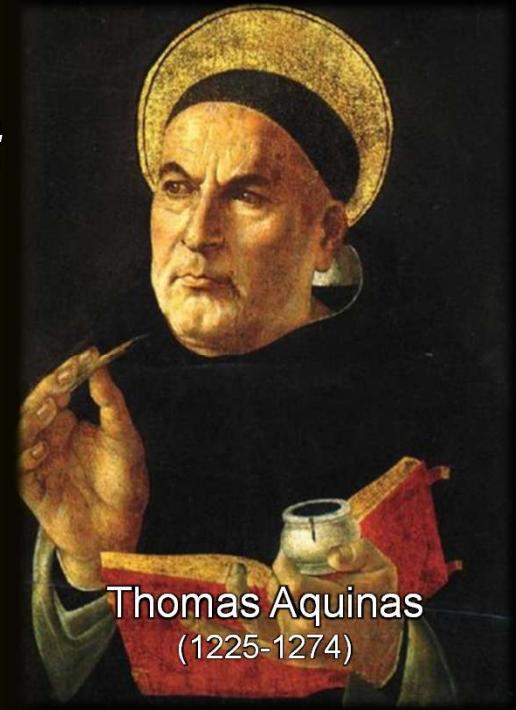
"Good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the **practical reason**, which is directed at action."

[*ST I-II*, Q94, art. 2]

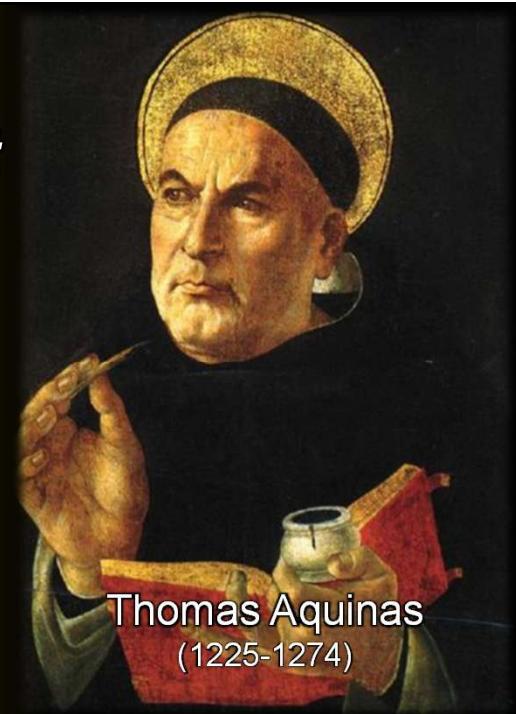


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

***"Hence, this is the first precept of law:
quod bonum est
faciendum et
prosequendum, et
malum vitandum."***



***"Hence, this is the first precept of law:
that good is
to be done and
pursued and
evil avoided."***



Finnis is missing Aquinas's point. Aquinas maintains that it is the **DOING** of good and evil not the **BEING** of good and evil that is self-evident and indemonstrable.

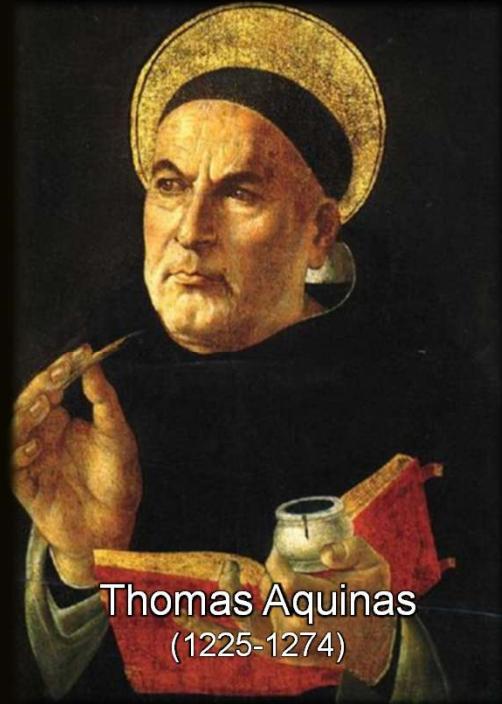
Second, Aquinas maintains that there is a difference between something being self-evident in itself though not to us and self-evident in itself and to us.

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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"A thing can be self-evident in either of two ways; on the one hand, self evident in itself, though not to us; on the other, self-evident in itself, and to us."

[ST, I, 2, 1]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

For example, the equation $2 + 2 = 4$, though self-evident in itself (in as much as the predicate '4' is contained in the subject '2 + 2'), will not be self-evident to a child learning arithmetic who has yet to learn what the equal sign means.

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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³³Aquinas, *in Eth.* V, lect. 12, para. 1018; S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2; q. 91, a. 3c; q. 58, aa. 4.c, 5c.

Thus, for Aquinas it is a first principle of law that the good is to be done and evil avoided.

This, however, says nothing against the case for and the relevance of the metaphysics of what it is that makes something good or evil.

"Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analysed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals'.³² On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principals of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self evident) and indemonstrable.³³

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³³Aquinas, *in Eth.* V, lect. 12, para. 1018; S.T. I-II, q. 94, a. 2; q. 91, a. 3c; q. 58, aa. 4.c, 5c.

Third, there is a difference between whether they are inferred from speculative principles **BEFORE** they are employed in action, and whether they can, in fact, be inferred from speculative principles.

They are not inferred from speculative principles. They are not inferred from facts. They are not inferred from metaphysical propositions about human nature, or about the nature of good and evil, or about 'the function of a human being'³⁴ nor are they inferred from a teleological conception of nature or any other conception of nature.

They are not inferred or derived from anything."

³⁴Cf. the objections of Margaret MacDonald, 'Natural Rights' in P. Laslett (ed.), *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford: 1956), 35 at p. 44.

³⁵Pace Strauss, *Natural Right and history*, pp. 7-8.

[John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 33-34)]

For example, one does not have to infer from speculative principles that God exists before one is able to believe that God exists.

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They are not inferred or derived from anything."

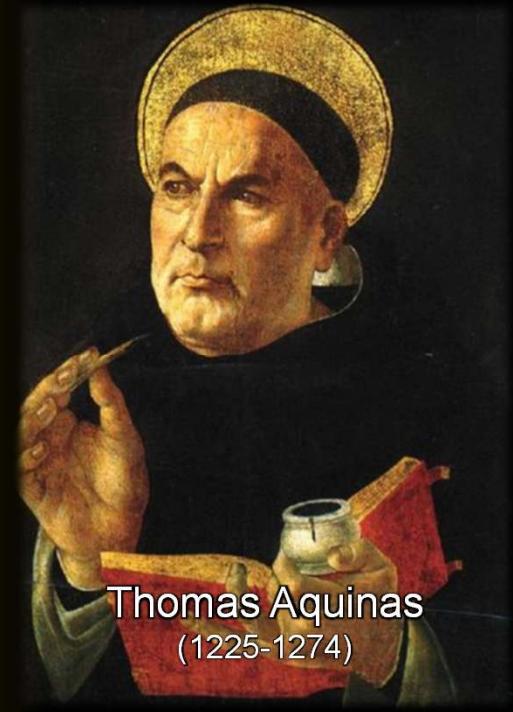
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³⁵Pace Strauss, *Natural Right and history*, pp. 7-8.

[John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 33-34)]

"There is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically [i.e. rationally] known and demonstrated."

[ST, I, 2, 1]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

This, however, is not to say that the existence of God cannot be so inferred from speculative (i.e., metaphysical) principles.

This is exactly what Aquinas does deftly.

They are not inferred from speculative principles. They are not inferred from facts. They are not inferred from metaphysical propositions about human nature, or about the nature of good and evil, or about 'the function of a human being'³⁴ nor are they inferred from a teleological conception of nature or any other conception of nature.

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[John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 33-34)]

The same point applies to morality, as I hope will become clear as we go along.

Thus, it would seem that Finnis's view is not aligned with Aquinas's.

They are not inferred from speculative principles. They are not inferred from facts. They are not inferred from metaphysical propositions about human nature, or about the nature of good and evil, or about 'the function of a human being'³⁴ nor are they inferred from a teleological conception of nature or any other conception of nature.

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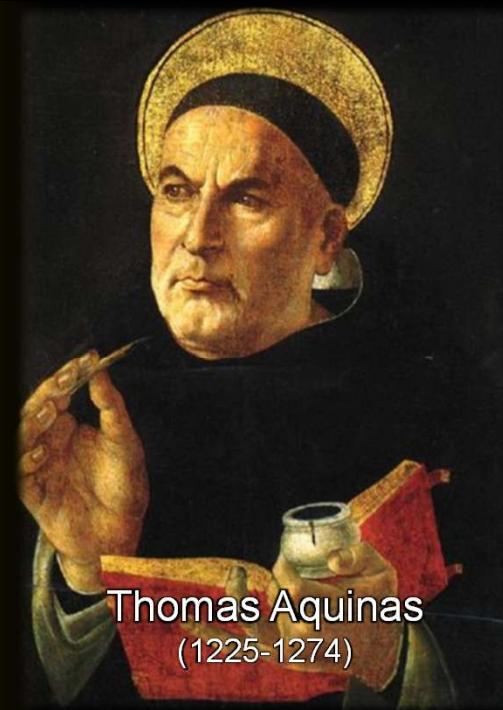
³⁵Pace Strauss, *Natural Right and history*, pp. 7-8.

[John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 33-34)]

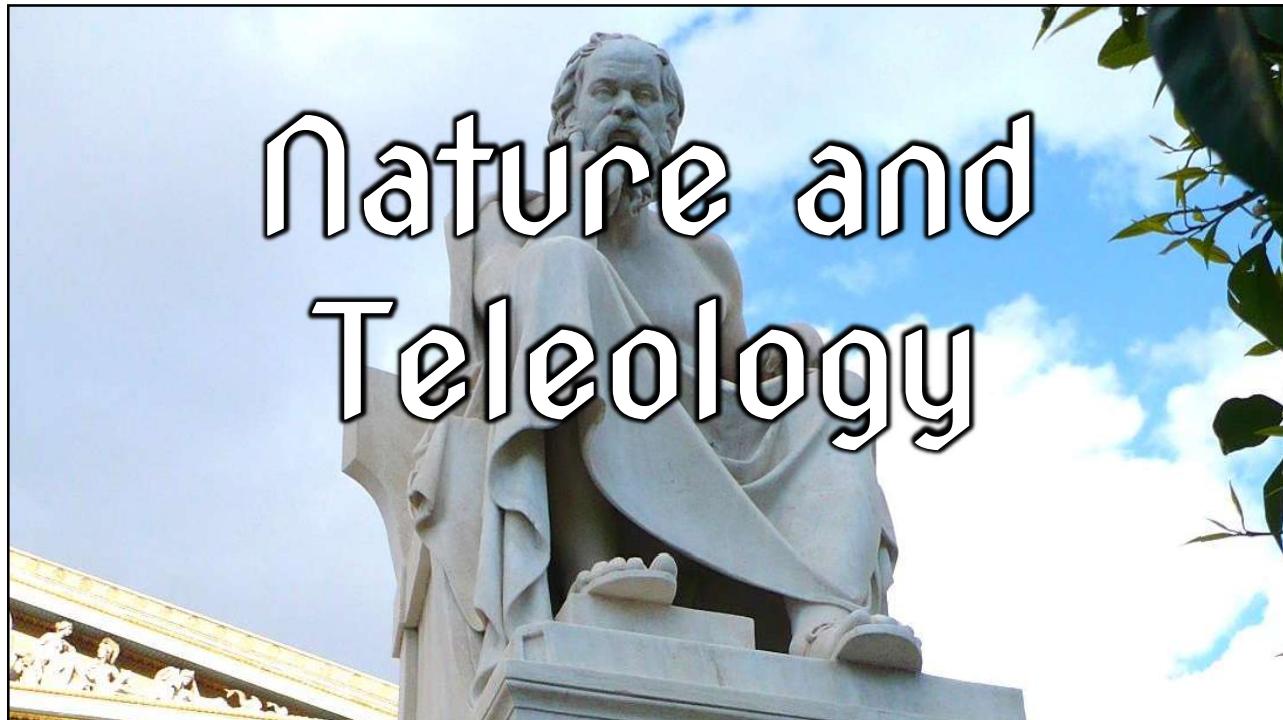
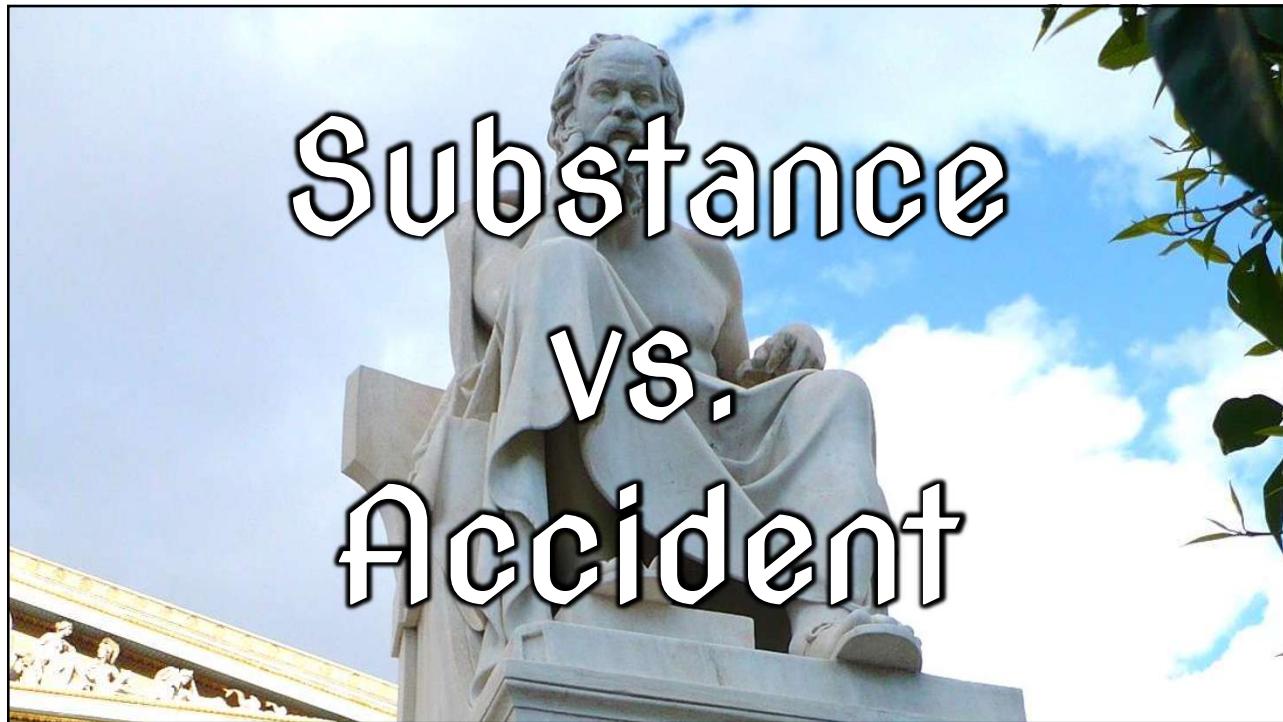
"Whenever things have such a definite nature ... the operation appropriate to a given being is a consequent of that nature.

Now, it is obvious that there is a determinate kind of nature for man. Therefore, there must be some operations that are in themselves appropriate for man."

[SCG III, 129, §4, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (University of Notre Dame Press Edition) vol. 3:II, p. 163. Reprint of *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1956)]

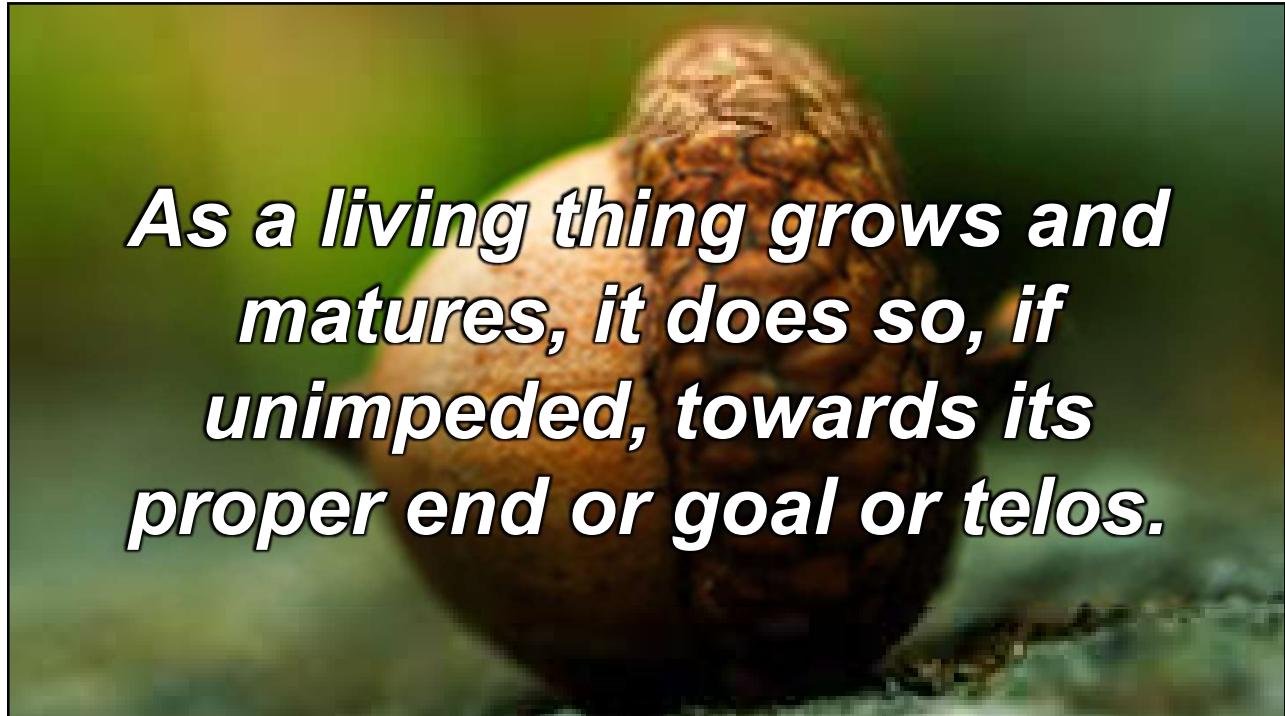


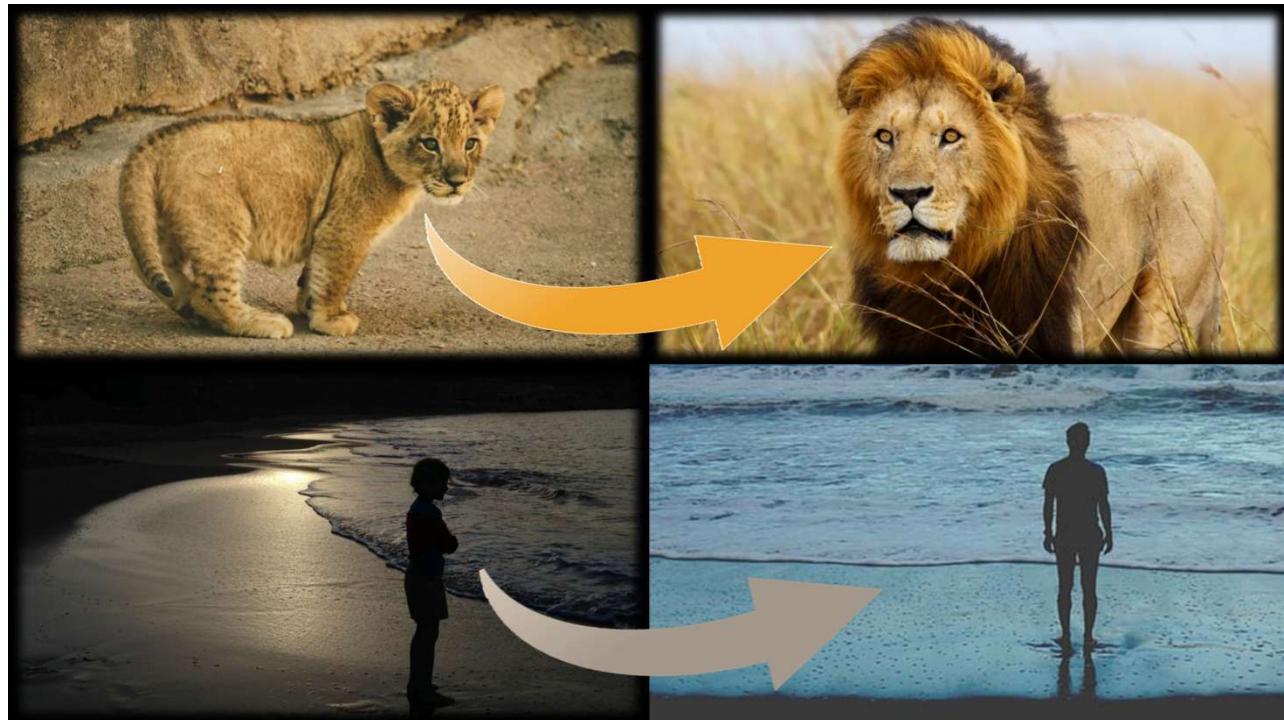
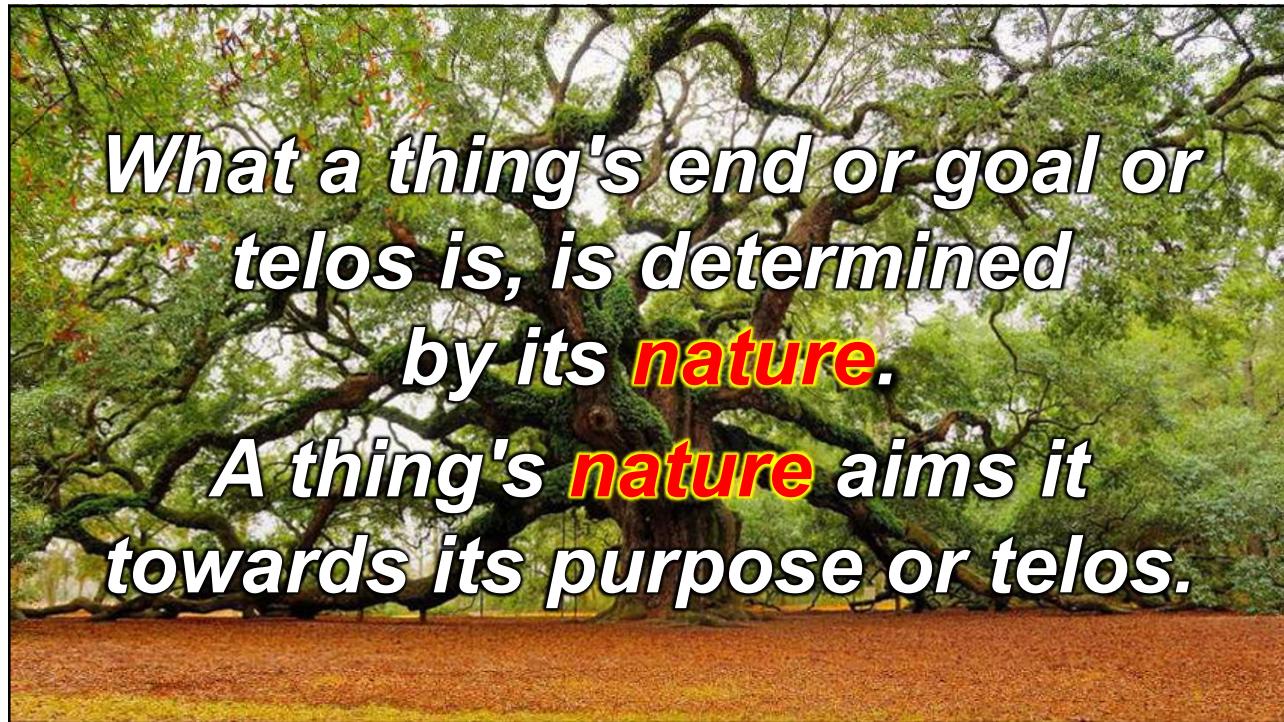
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)





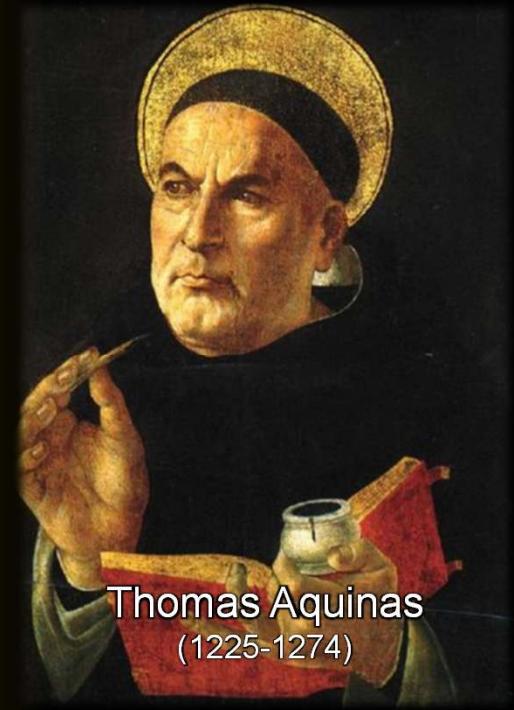
As a living thing grows and matures, it does so, if unimpeded, towards its proper end or goal or telos.





"Whenever things have such a definite nature ... the operation appropriate to a given being is a consequent of that nature. Now, it is obvious that there is a determinate kind of nature for man. Therefore, there must be some operations that are in themselves appropriate for man."

[SCG III, 129, §4, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (University of Notre Dame Press Edition) vol. 3:II, p. 163. Reprint of *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1956)]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Whenever things have such a definite nature ... the operation appropriate to a given being is a consequent of that nature. Now, it is obvious that there is a determinate kind of nature for man. Therefore, there must be some operations that are in themselves appropriate for man."

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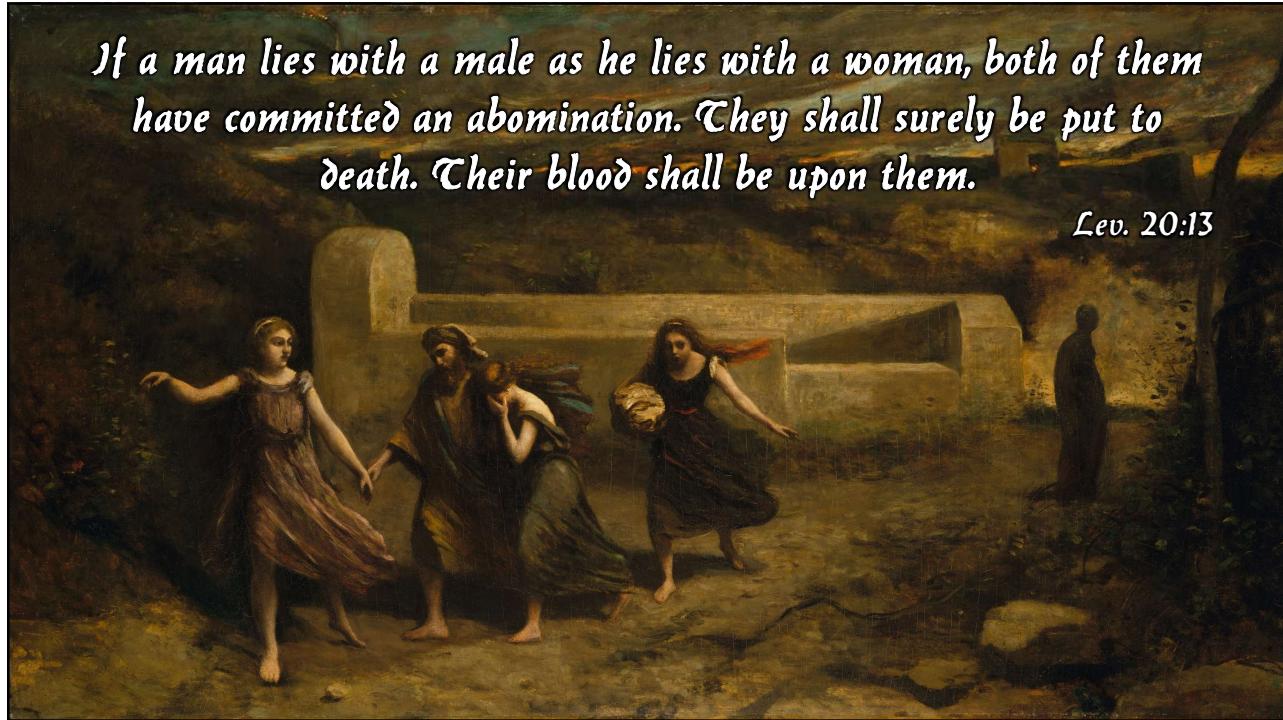
This nature for the human is not merely a reference to the human body.

Rather the nature involves that nature with respect to the operations.

*Unlike plants or other animals, humans possess **rationality** and **free will** which allow us to choose either in accordance with or in opposition to our proper end.*

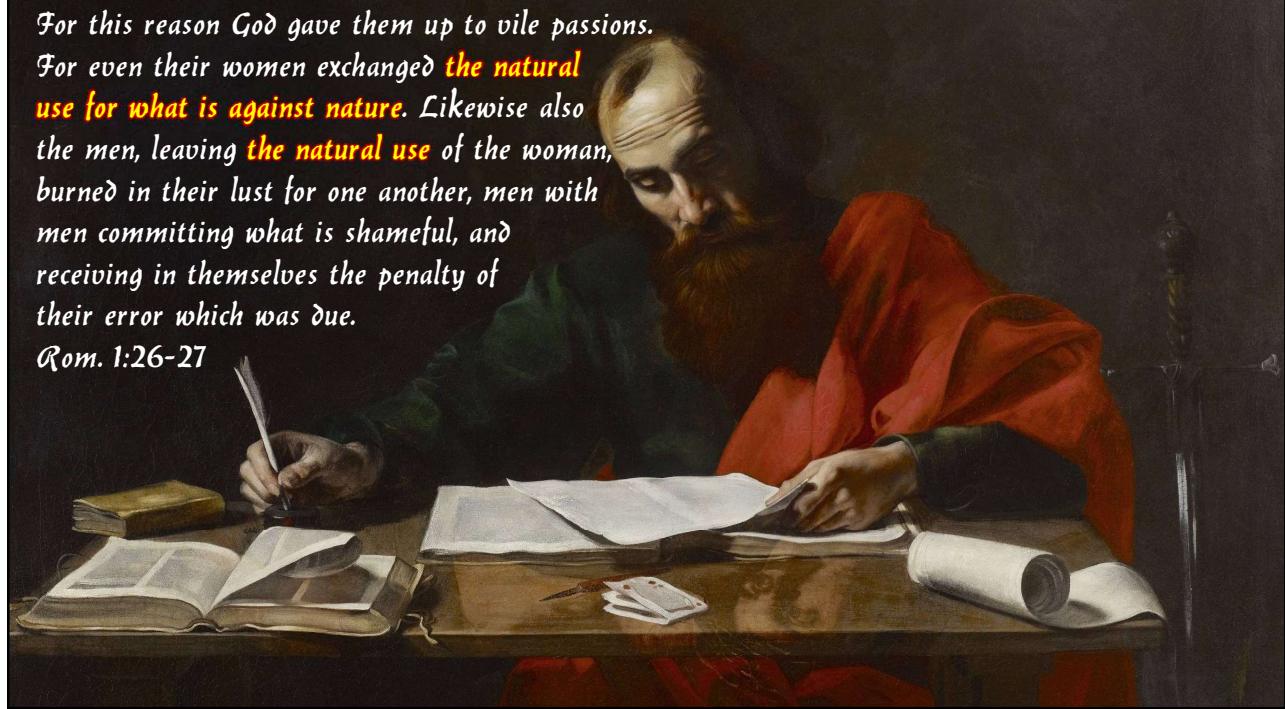
If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.

Lev. 20:13



For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged **the natural use for what is against nature**. Likewise also the men, leaving **the natural use** of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

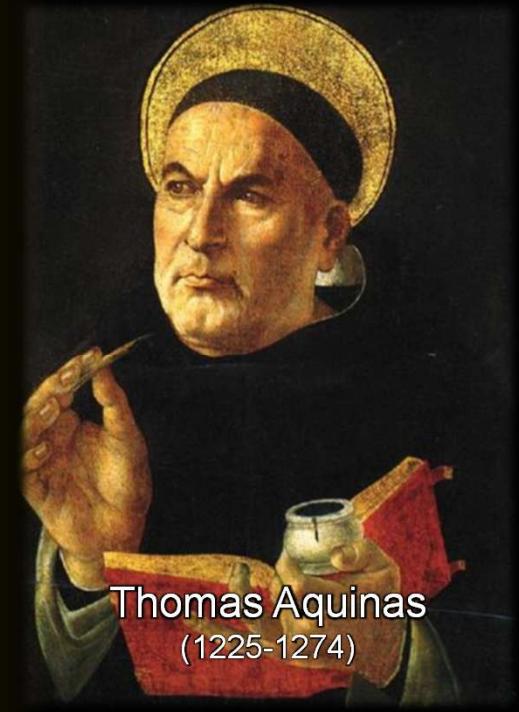
Rom. 1:26-27



When we chose in accordance with our proper end, we actualize our good or perfection, i.e., we cause them to come into existence and be made real.

"Those acts are properly called human which are voluntary because the will is the rational appetite, which is proper to man."

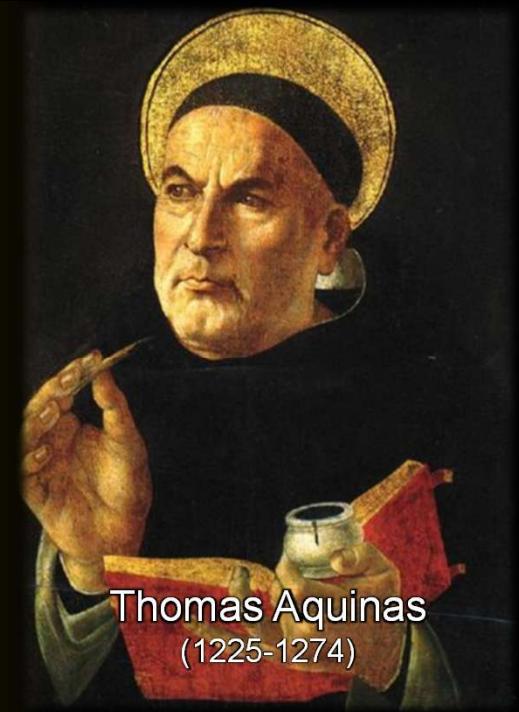
[ST I-II, Q6, introduction]



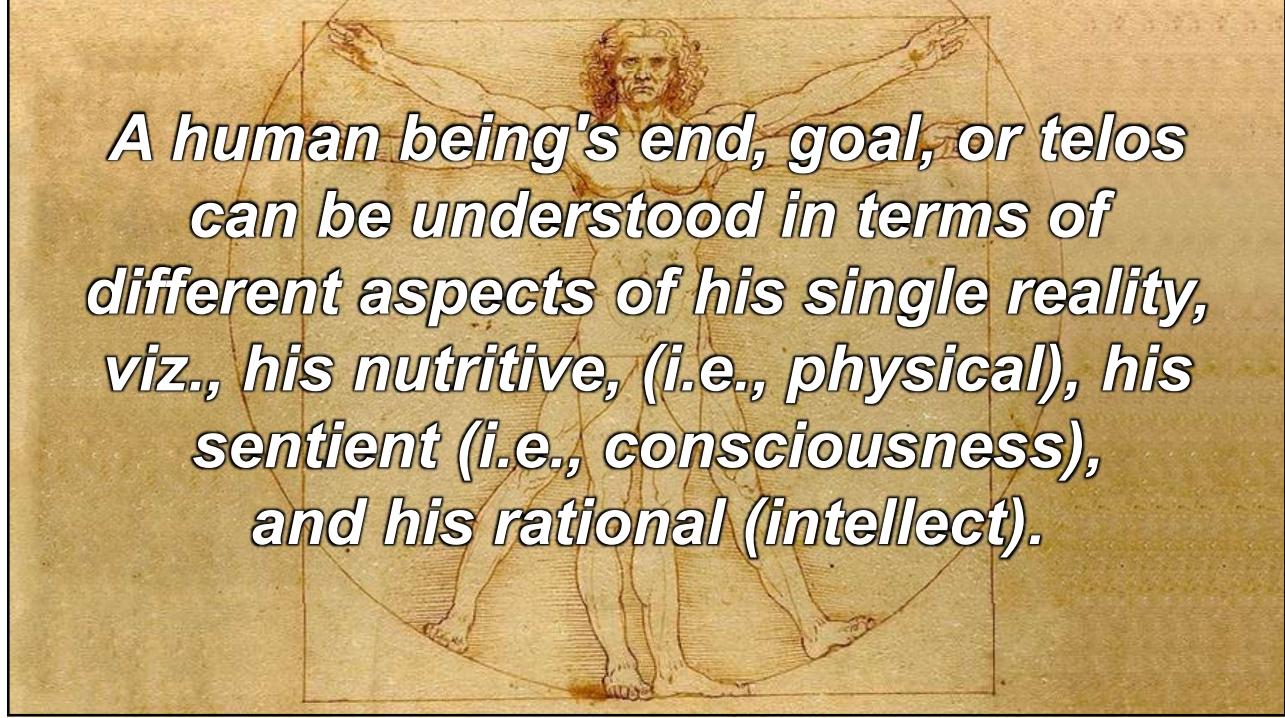
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Man determines himself by his reason to will this or that, which is true [good] or apparent good."

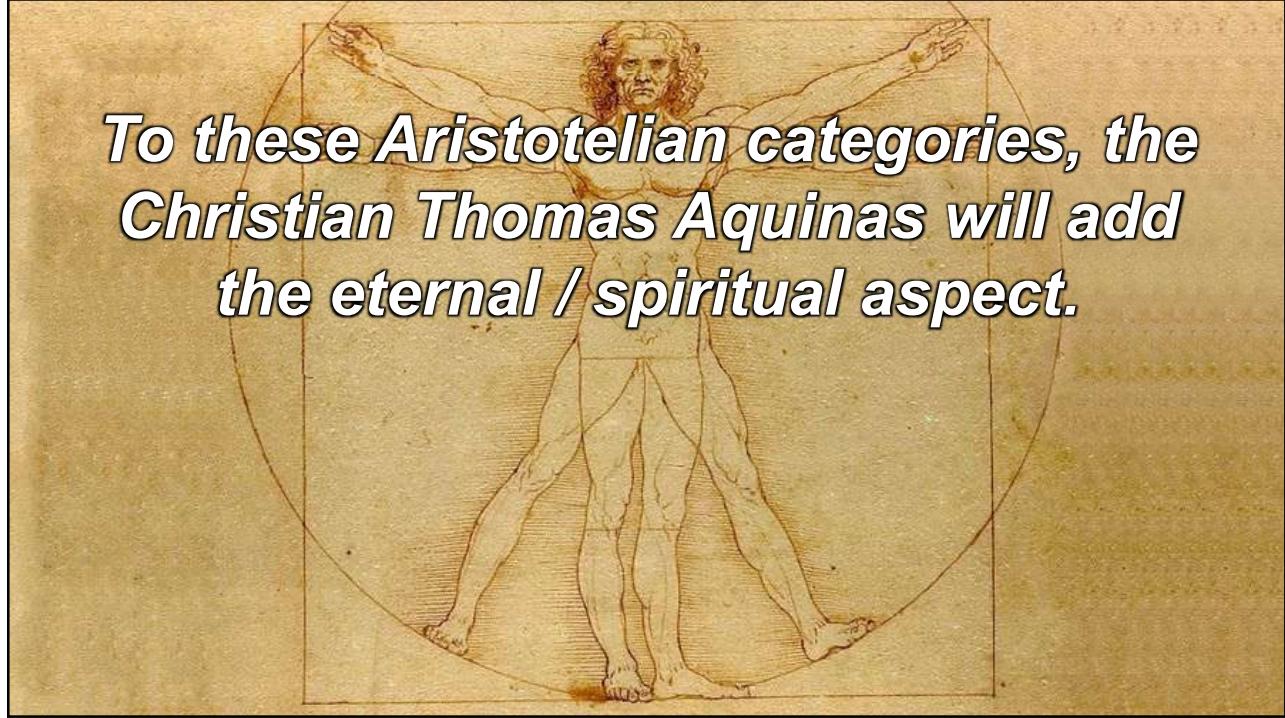
[ST I-II, Q9, ad. 3]



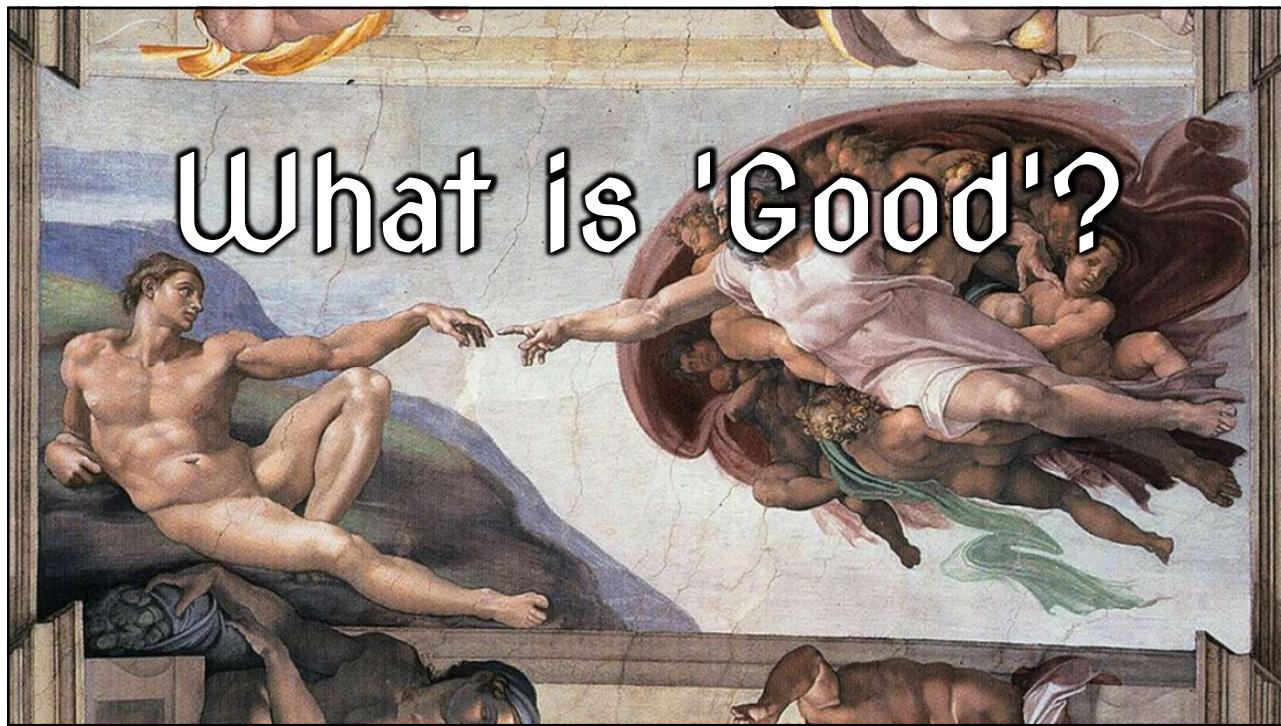
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

A detailed line drawing of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, showing a male figure in two different poses within a square and a circle, symbolizing the connection between human proportions and geometry.

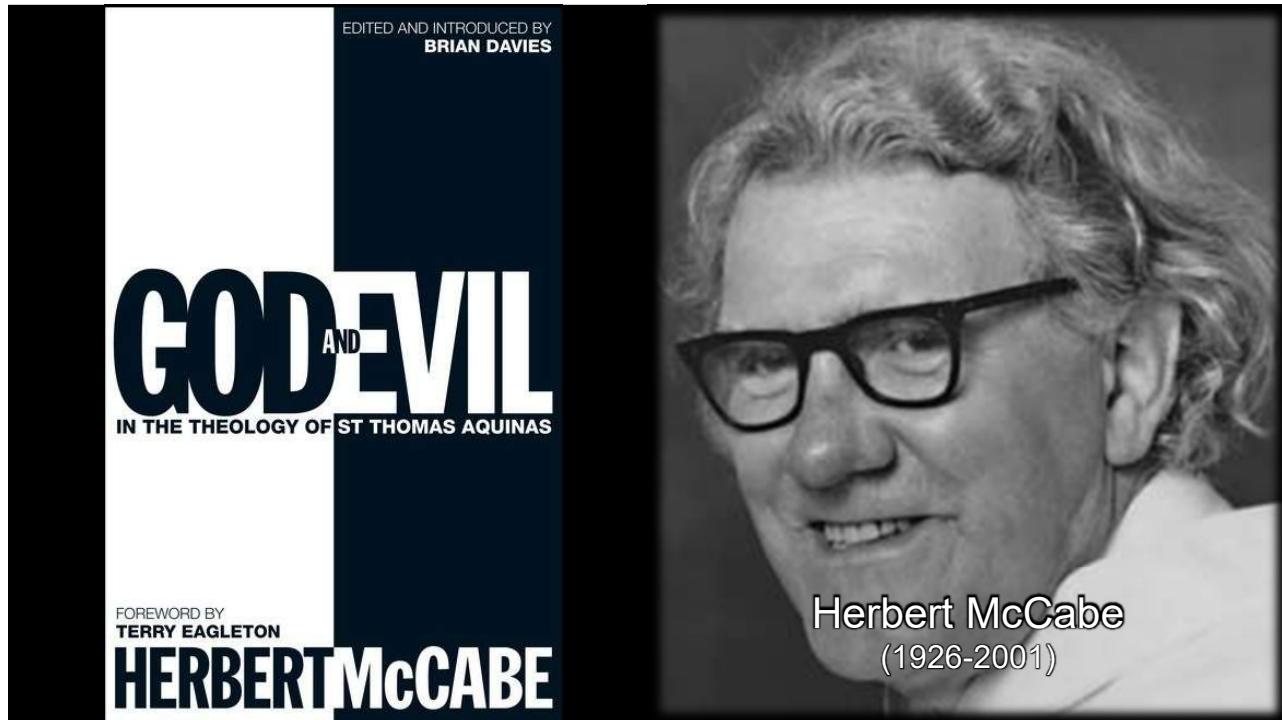
A human being's end, goal, or telos can be understood in terms of different aspects of his single reality, viz., his nutritive, (i.e., physical), his sentient (i.e., consciousness), and his rational (intellect).

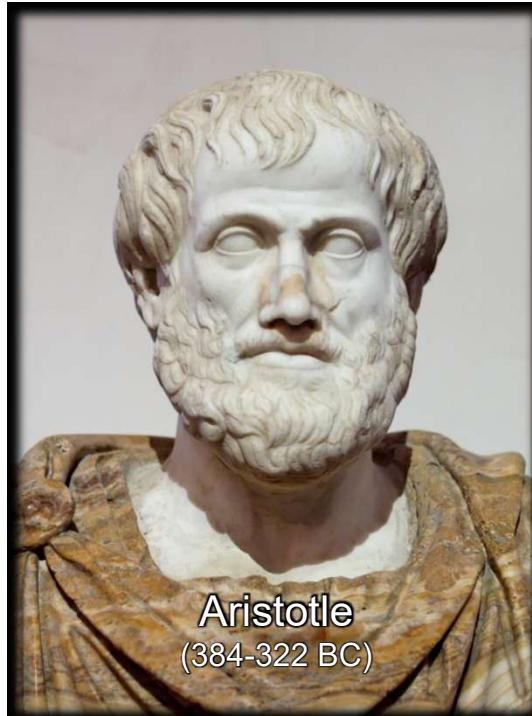
A detailed line drawing of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, showing a male figure in two different poses within a square and a circle, symbolizing the connection between human proportions and geometry.

To these Aristotelian categories, the Christian Thomas Aquinas will add the eternal / spiritual aspect.









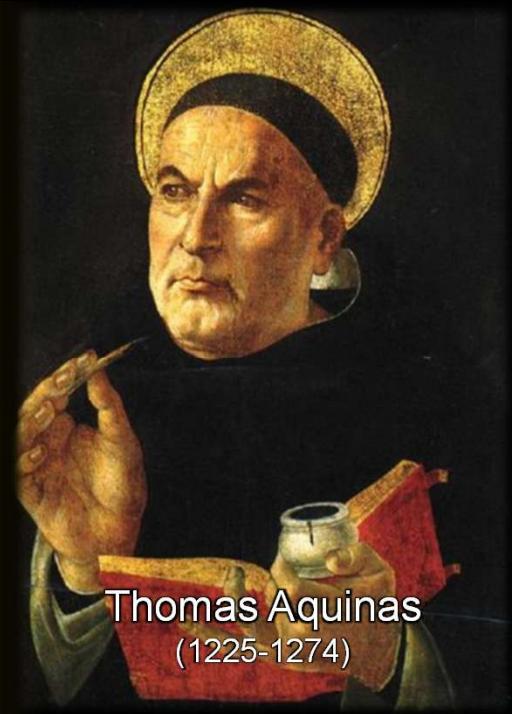
Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

"Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has been rightly declared to be that at which all things aim."

[Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 1, 1094a1-2, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 935]

"The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable."

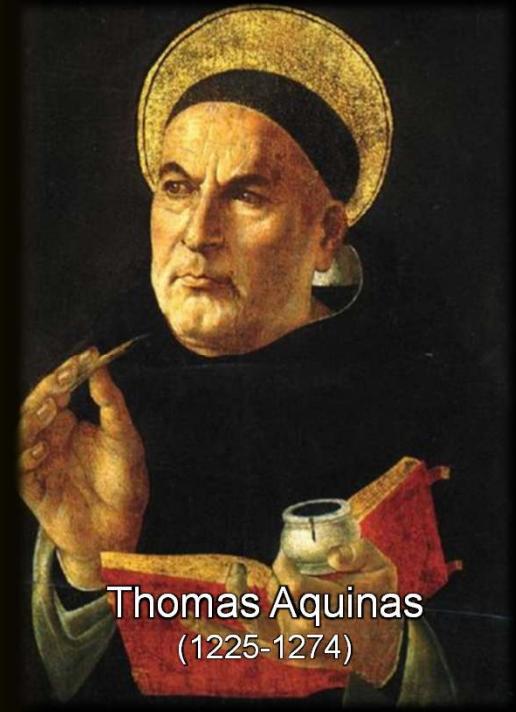
[*Summa Theologiae* I, Q5, art. 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province in *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), 23]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

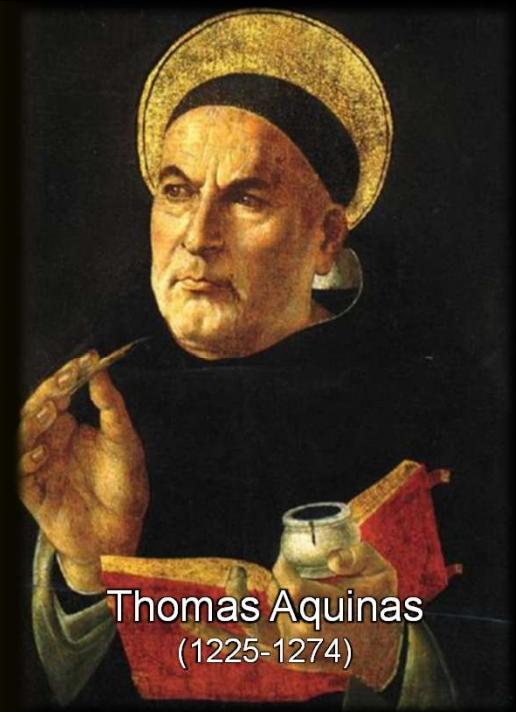
**"Goodness
signifies
perfection which
is desirable."**

[STI, Q5, art. 1]



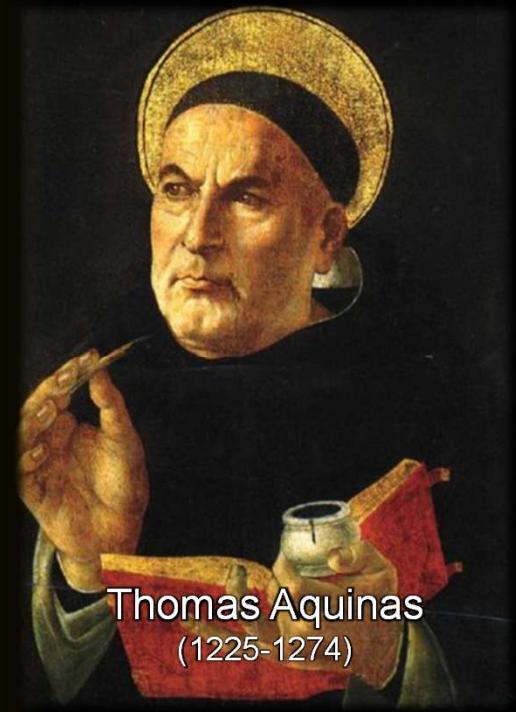
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law."



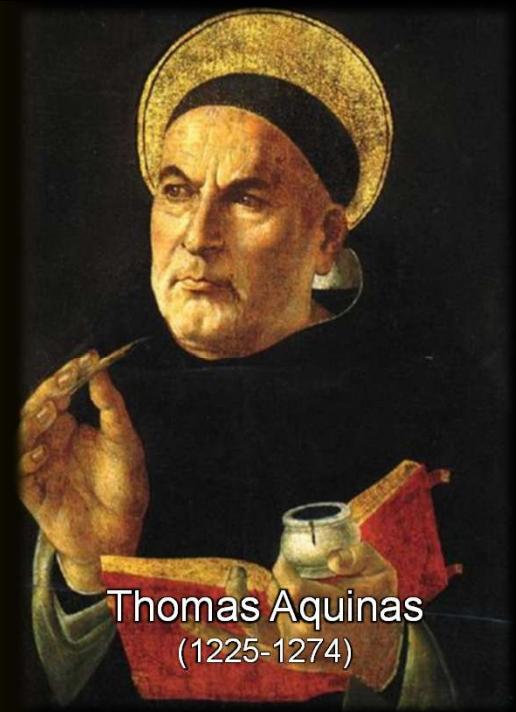
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

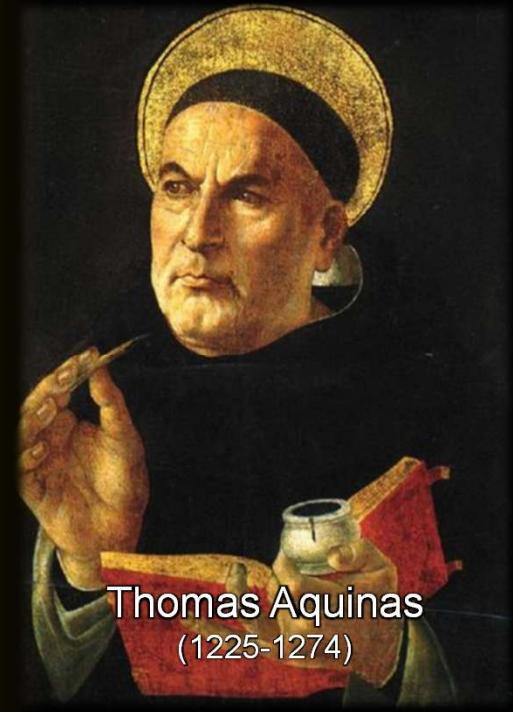
"Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, which nature has taught to all animals, such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

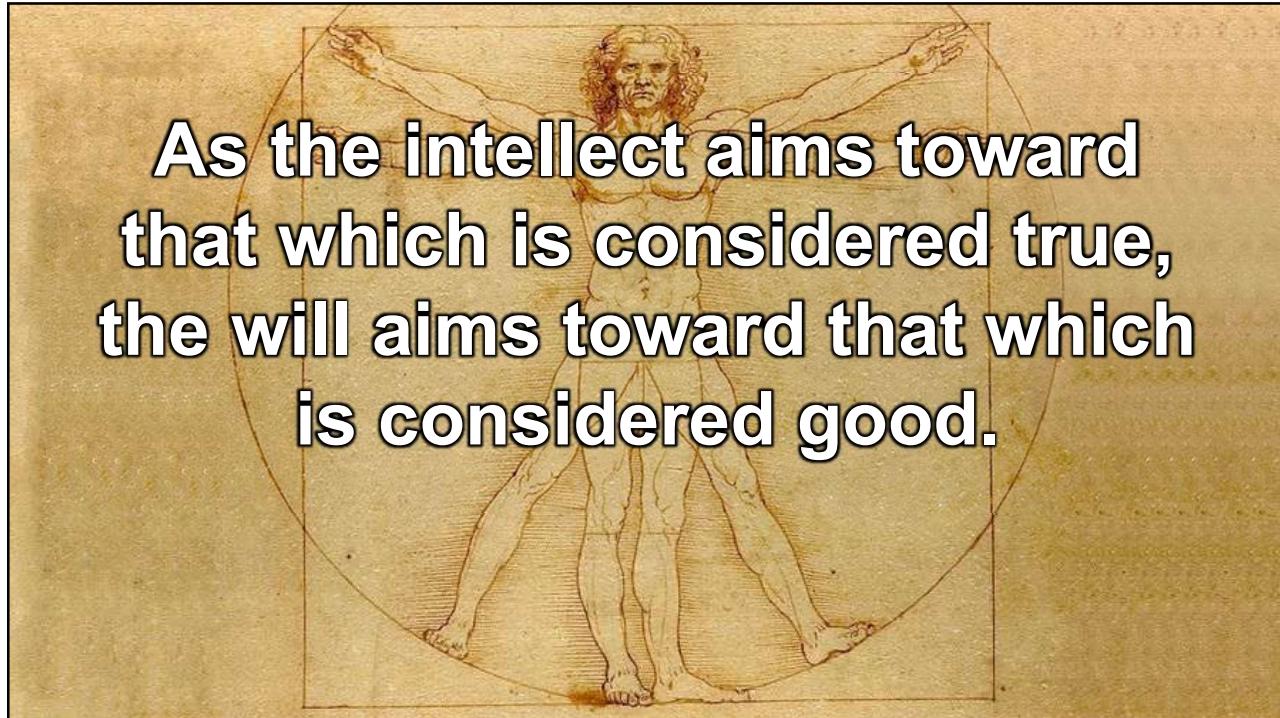
"Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination."

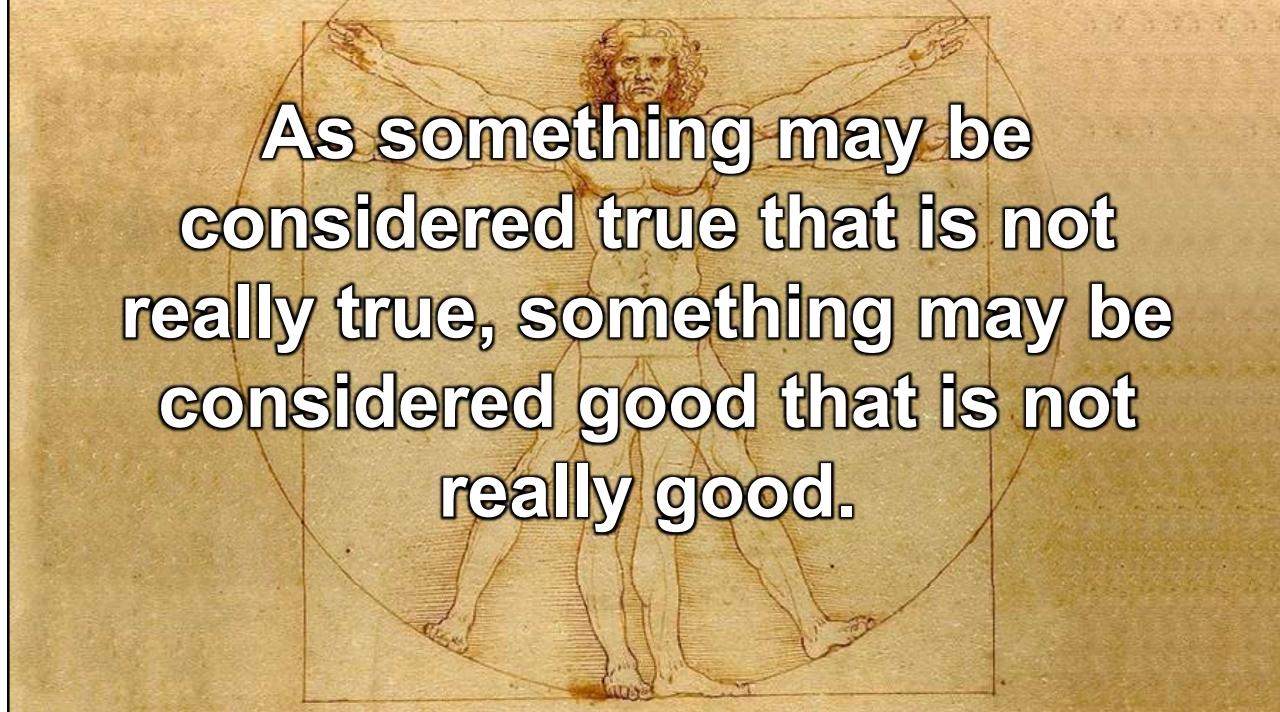
[ST I-II, 94, art 2]



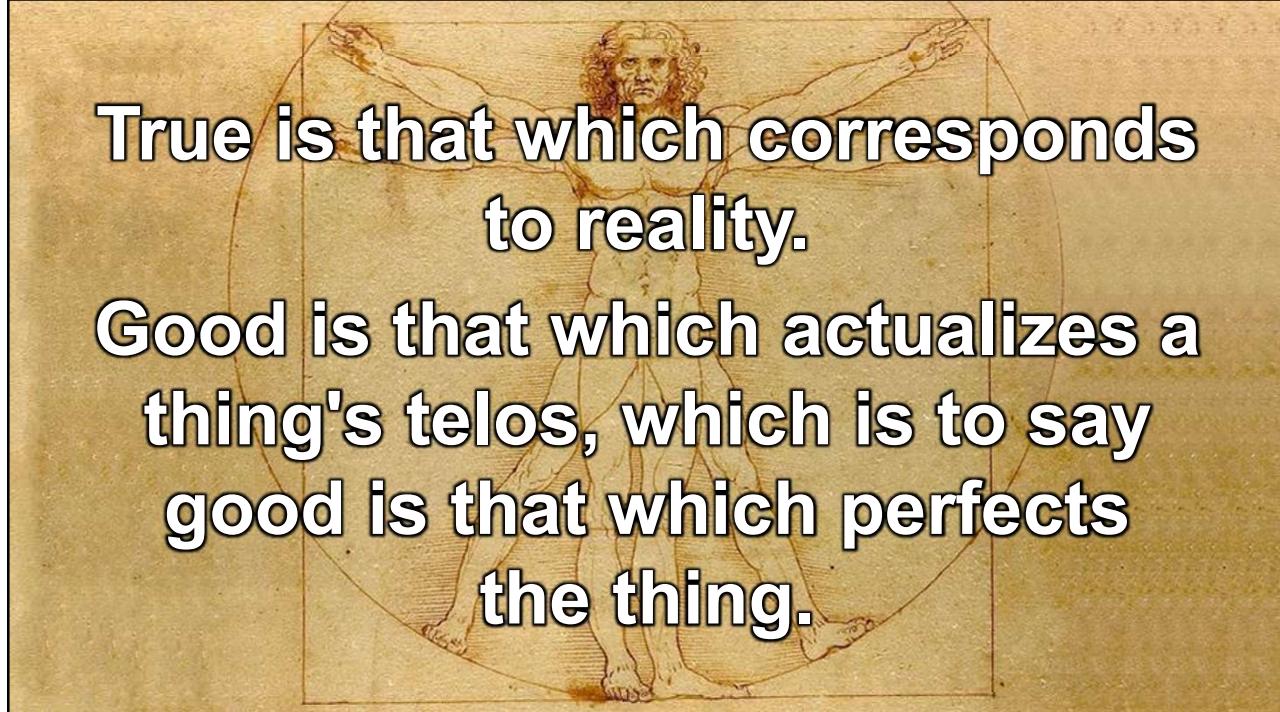
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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





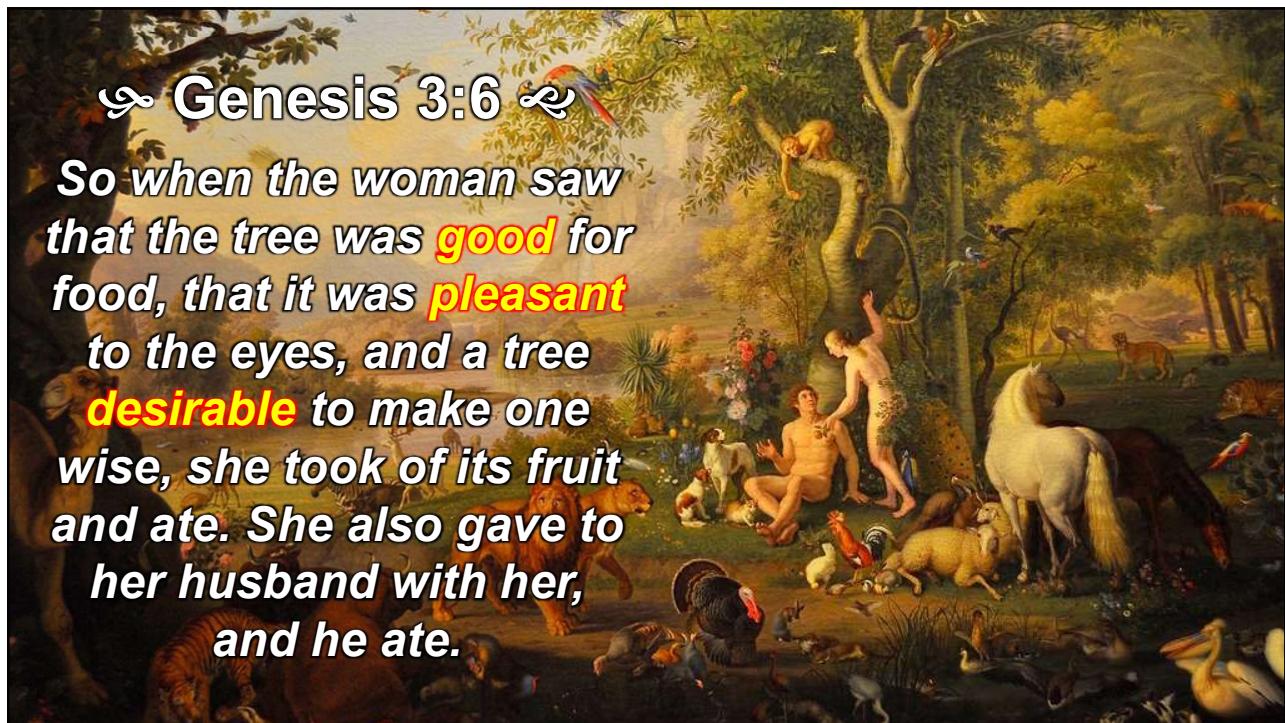
As something may be considered true that is not really true, something may be considered good that is not really good.



True is that which corresponds to reality.

Good is that which actualizes a thing's telos, which is to say good is that which perfects the thing.

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).



❖ Judges 17:6 ❖

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.



❖ Proverbs 12:15 ❖

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.

❖ Proverbs 21:2 ❖

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts.



❖ Proverbs 12:15 ❖

*The way of a fool is **right in his own eyes**, but he who heeds counsel is wise.*



❖ Proverbs 21:2 ❖

*Every way of a man is **right in his own eyes**, but the LORD weighs the hearts.*

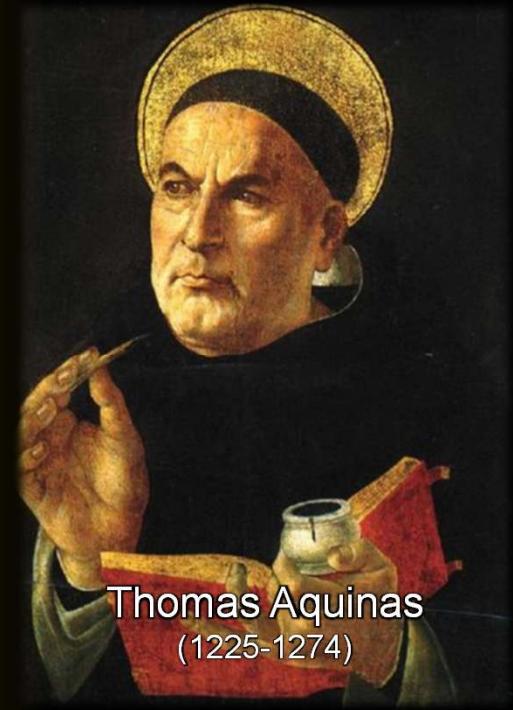


❖ 1 Kings 15:5 ❖

*... because David did what was **right in the eyes of the LORD**, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*

"Never, therefore would evil be sought after, not even accidentally, unless the good that accompanies the evil were more desired than the good of which the evil is the privation."

[*ST I*, 19, art 9]

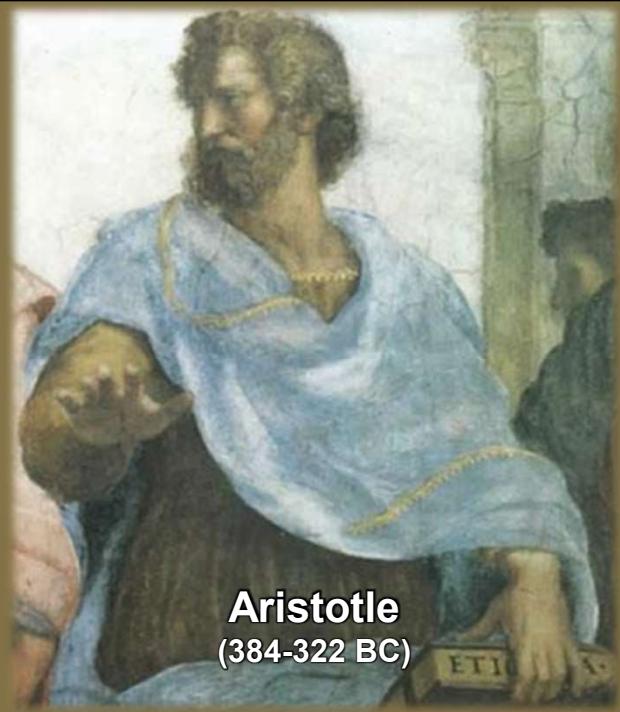


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

A human being is a good human being when he **acts well**, since it is a **perfection** of a human to have a **virtuous character** in accordance with the kind of thing he is by virtue of his **human nature** or **essence**.



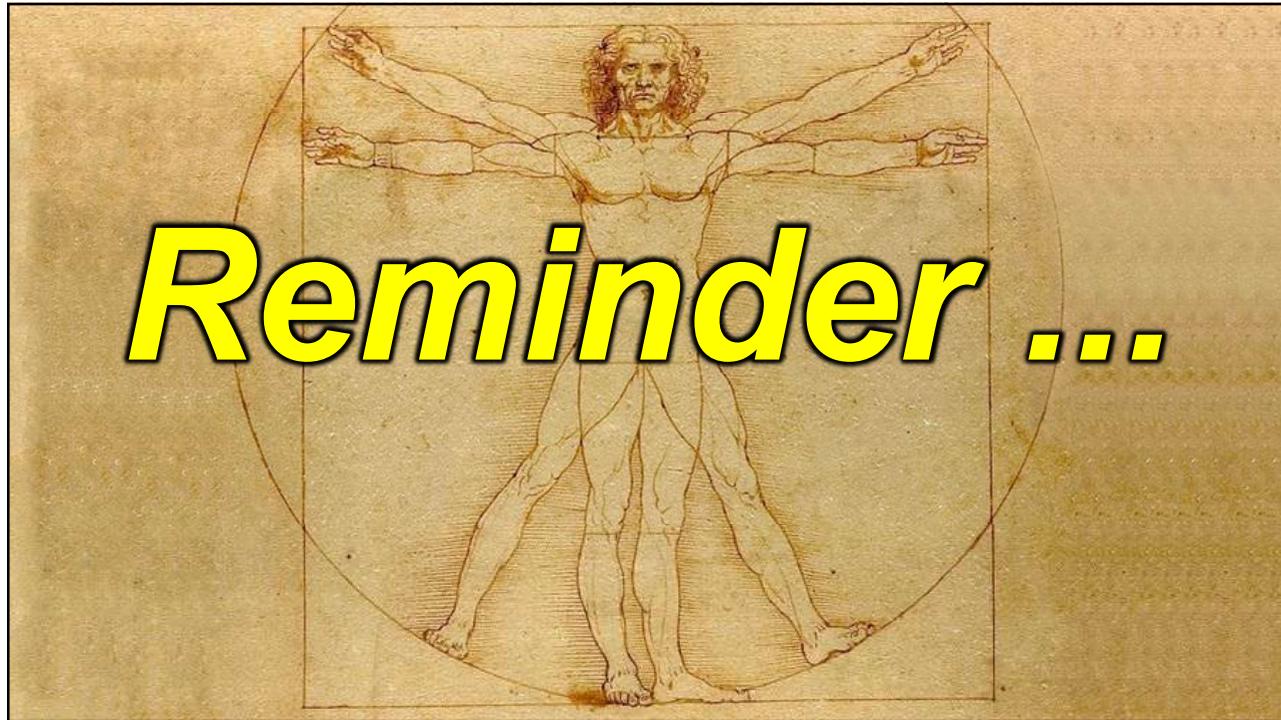
- ❖ Genus ❖
animal
- ❖ Specific difference ❖
rationality
- ❖ Species ❖
human
- ❖ Proper accident ❖
five fingers
- ❖ Accident ❖
black, blonde, or no hair



❖ PROPERTIES ❖

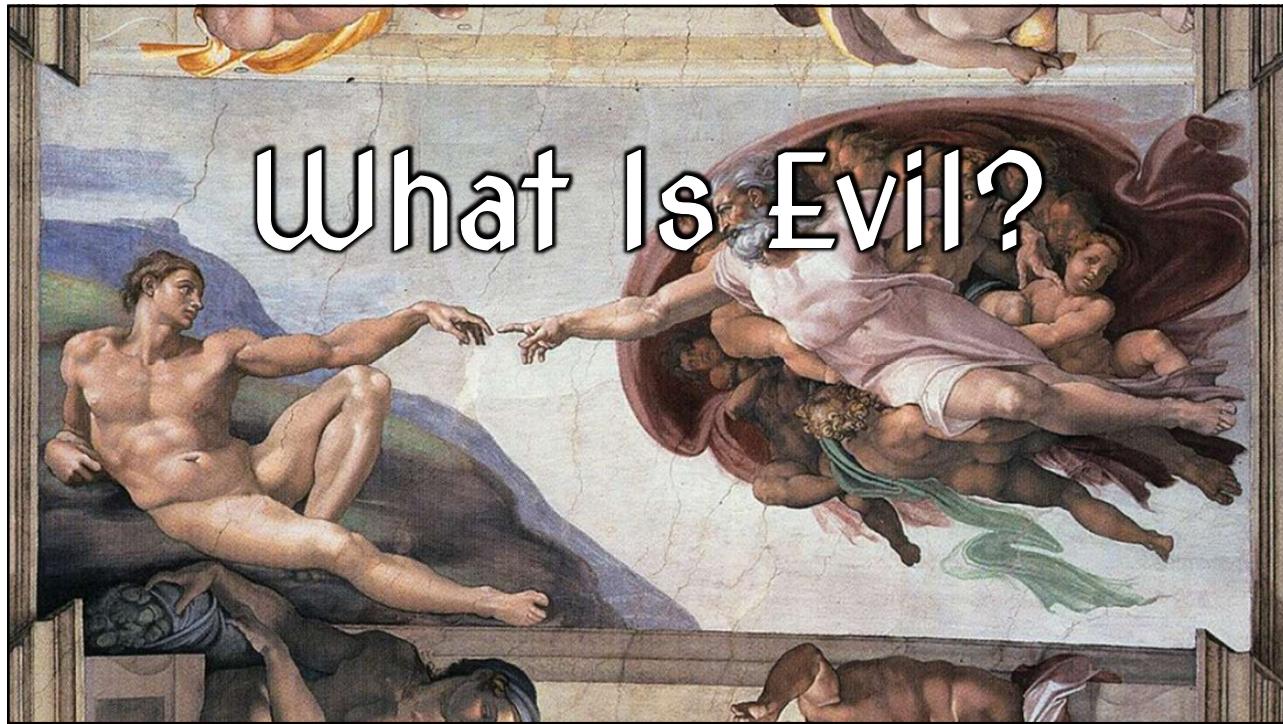
Aristotle
(384-322 BC)





Natural Law Theory, as a model of human morality, will define human goodness:

- initially (proximately) in terms of what perfects human nature, and
- ultimately in terms of God as infinite being and goodness.



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



∞Natural Evil∞

Unwarranted, pain, suffering, and death that is not caused by any conscious agent.



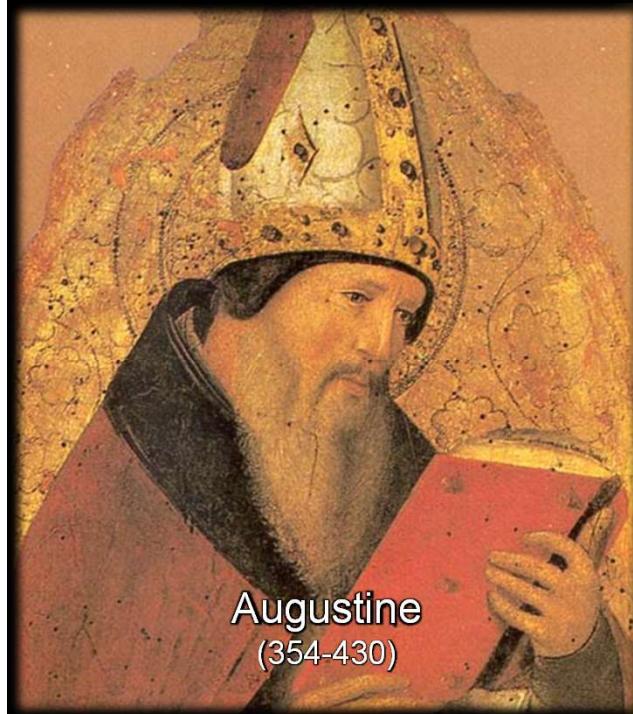
∞Moral Evil∞

Unwarranted, pain, suffering, and death that is deliberately caused by a conscious agent.

This distinction in contemporary philosophy differs from the understanding of evil in the Classical / Medieval / Scholastic / Thomistic tradition.

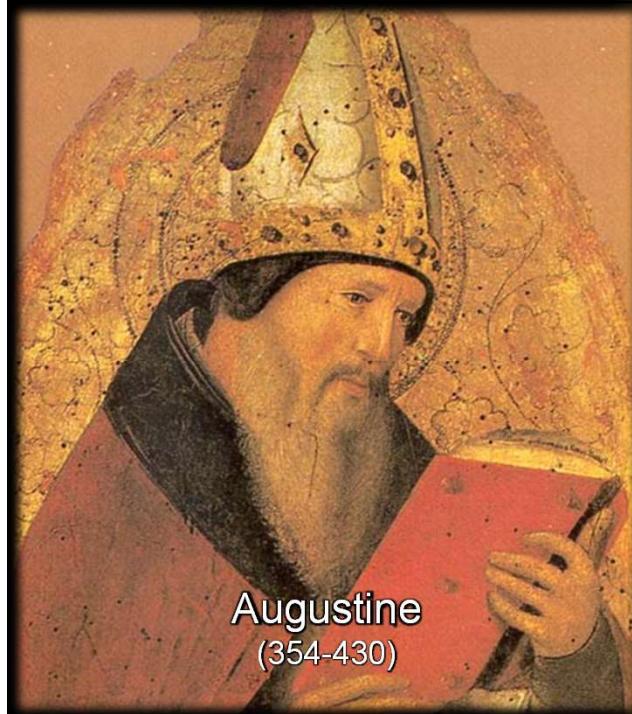
If God created everything except Himself, and, if evil is something, then it would seem that God created evil.

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



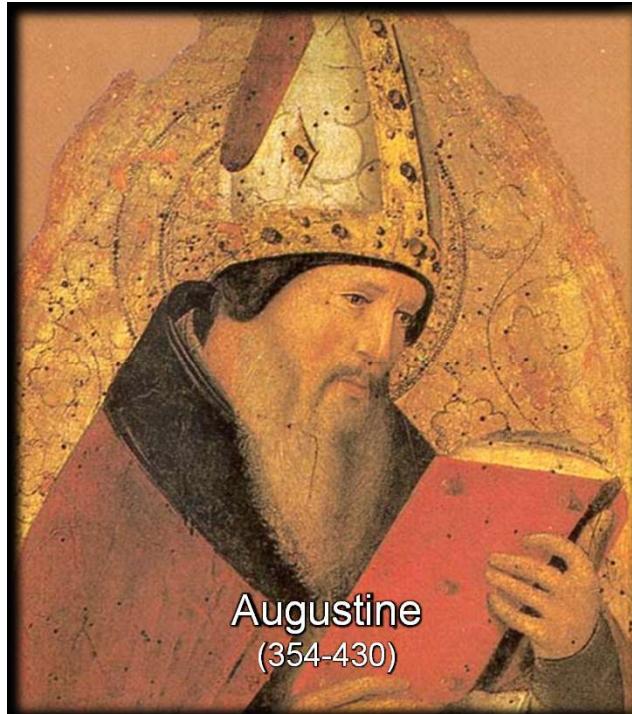
Augustine
(354-430)

Augustine
on Evil as
Privation



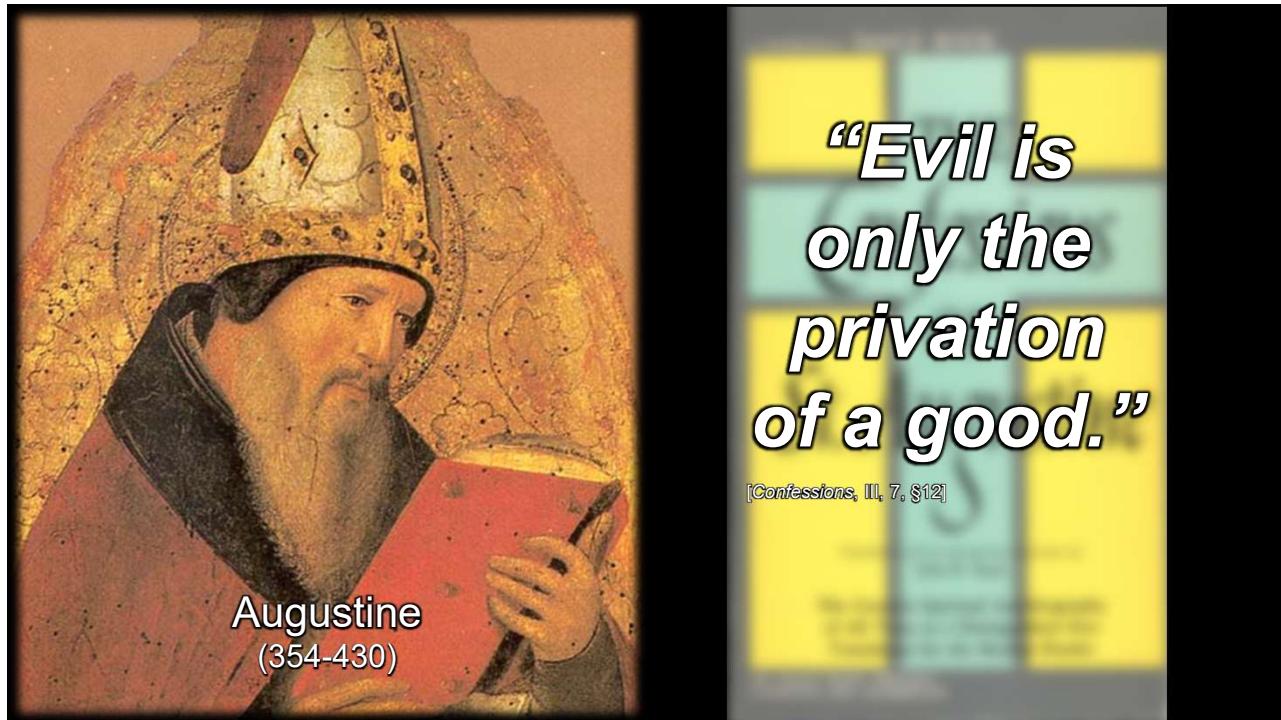
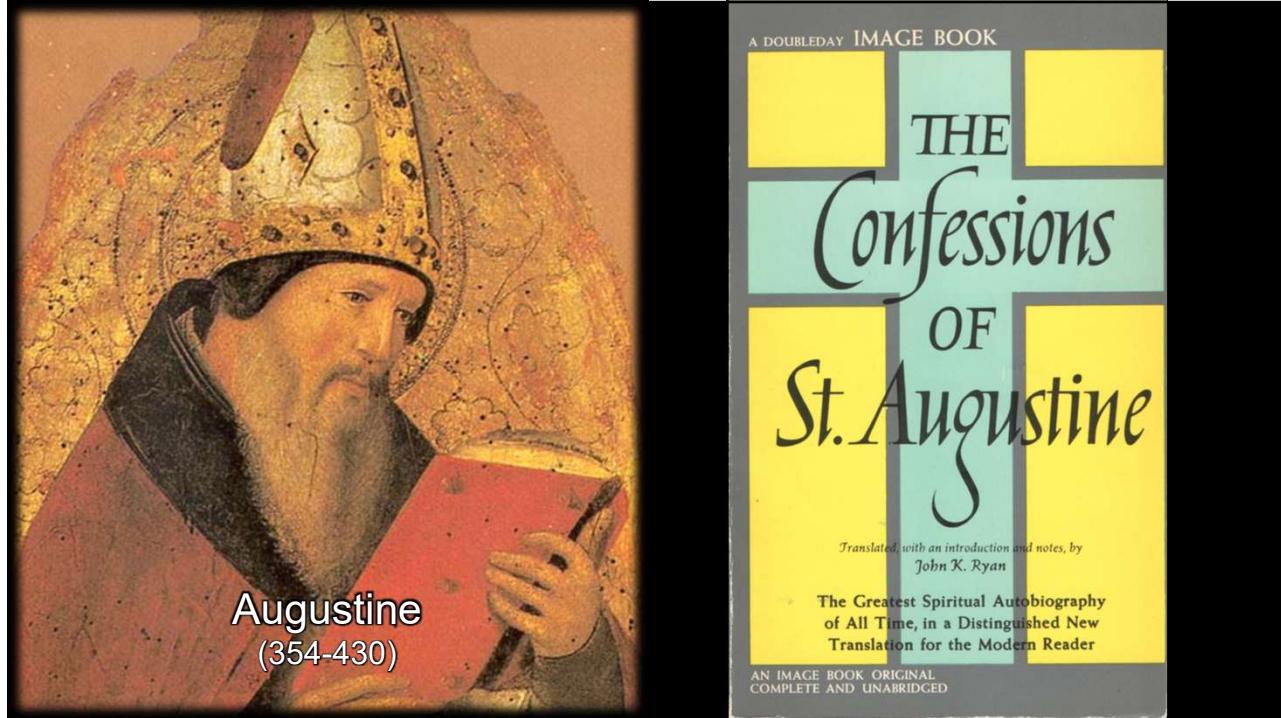
Augustine
(354-430)

There is a
difference
between:
being nothing
(unreal)
and
not being a thing.



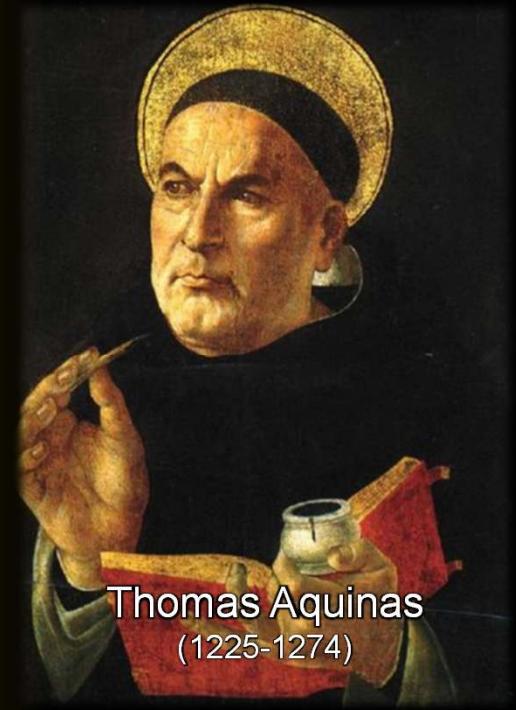
Augustine
(354-430)

Augustine argued
that evil is real but
is not a thing.
Rather, it is a
privation or a **lack**
in things.



“Now evil is in a substance because something which it was originally to have, and which it ought to have, is lacking in it.”

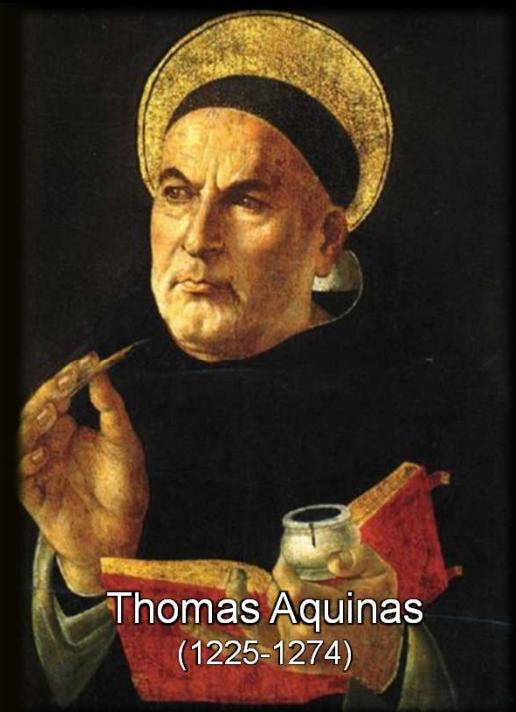
[*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 6, §1]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

“Evil is simply a privation of something which a subject is entitled by its origin to possess and which it ought to have.”

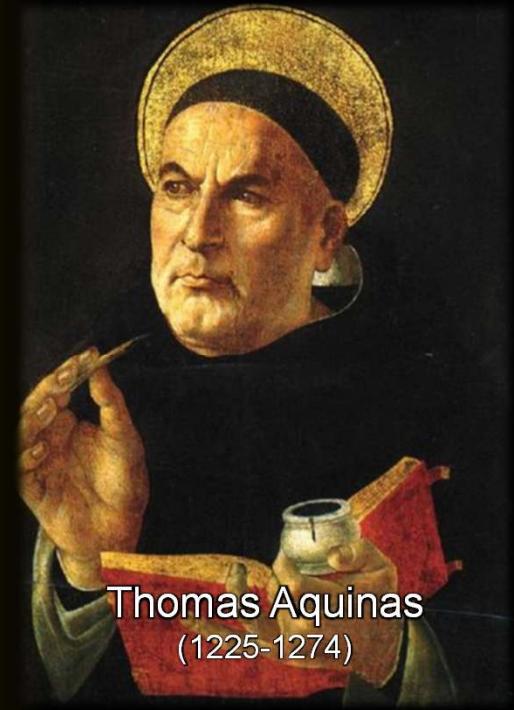
[*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 7, §2]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

“Evil cannot exist by itself, since it has no essence... Therefore, evil must be in a subject.”

[*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 11, §2]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

A *negation* is the mere absence or removal of something.

A *privation* is the absence or removal of something that “ought” to be there.



privation

Blindness is the privation of sight.

But blindness is not a thing in itself.



negation

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



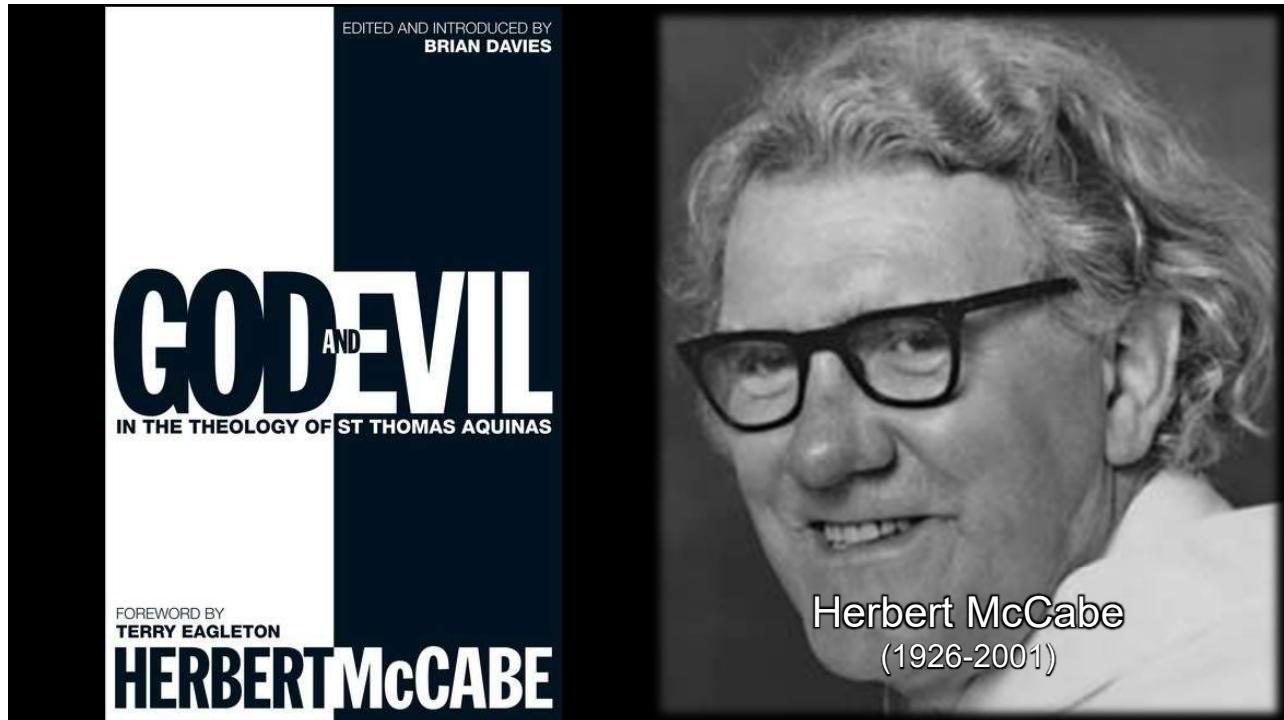
privation

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



negation

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

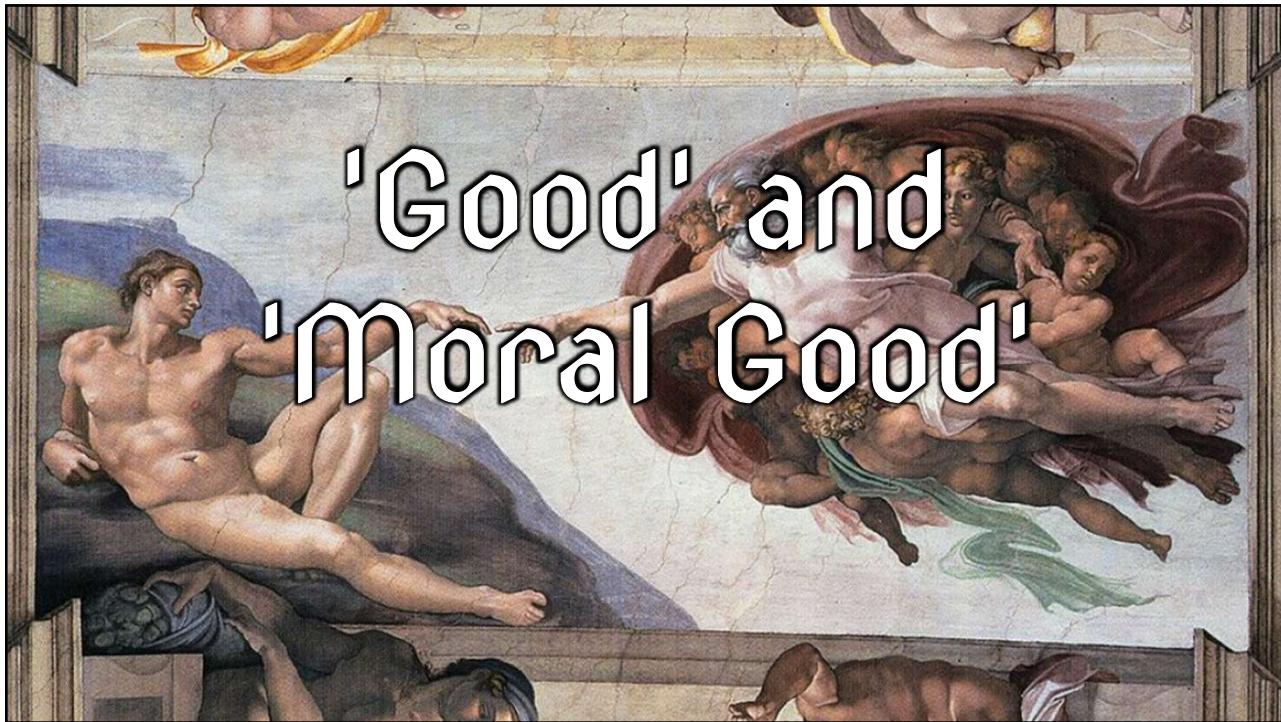


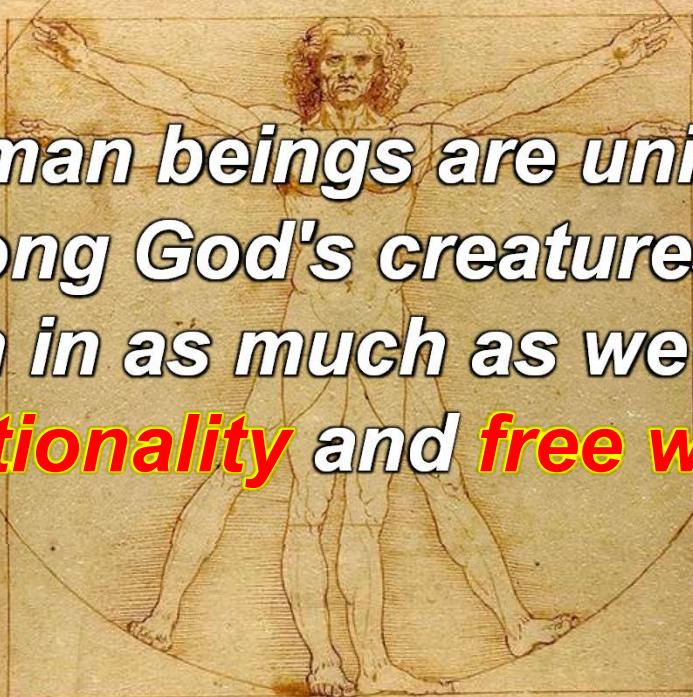
"A perfect X is an X that has all its properties; an imperfect X lacks one of more of its properties."

[*God and Evil in the Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (London: Continuum, 2010), 40]

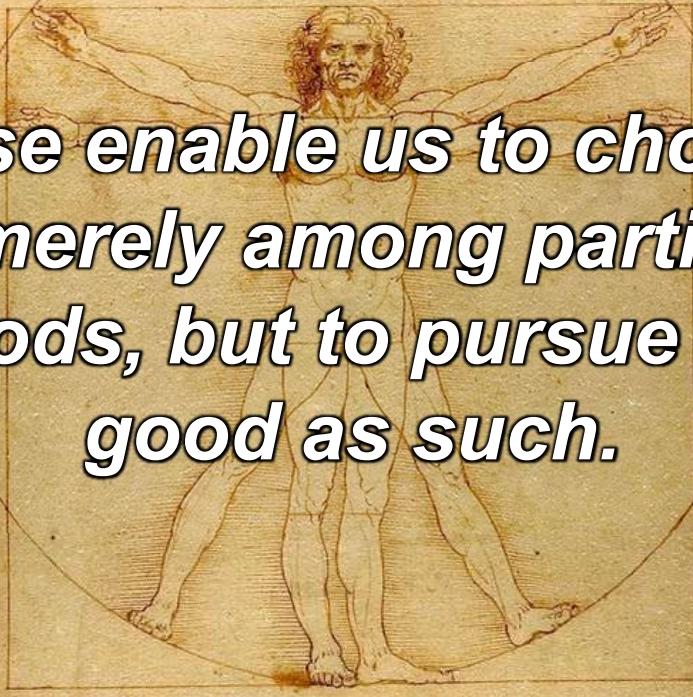
Herbert McCabe
(1926-2001)

'Good' and
'moral Good'



A detailed line drawing of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, showing a male figure in a standing pose with arms and legs spread wide, inscribed within a square and a circle. The figure is rendered in a light brown or tan color.

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

A detailed line drawing of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, showing a male figure in a standing pose with arms and legs spread wide, inscribed within a square and a circle. The figure is rendered in a light brown or tan color.

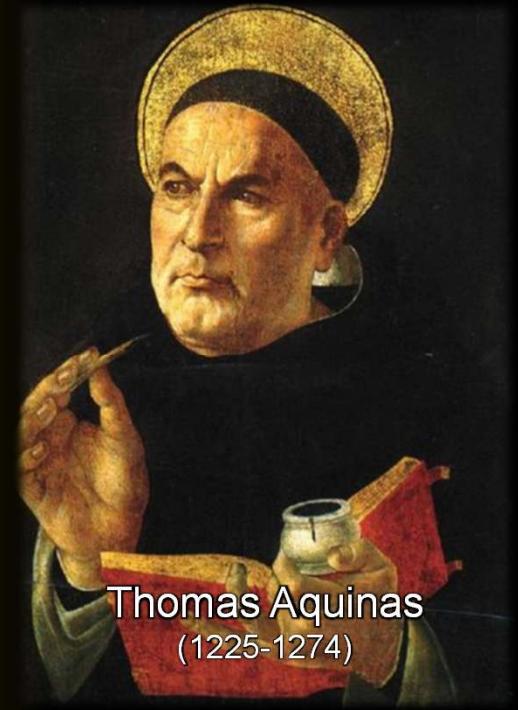
These enable us to choose, not merely among particular goods, but to pursue the good as such.

But these will also allow us to choose against our own natures and against our proper telos (end) which is our good.

"Evil may be considered either in a substance or in an action . . .

Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

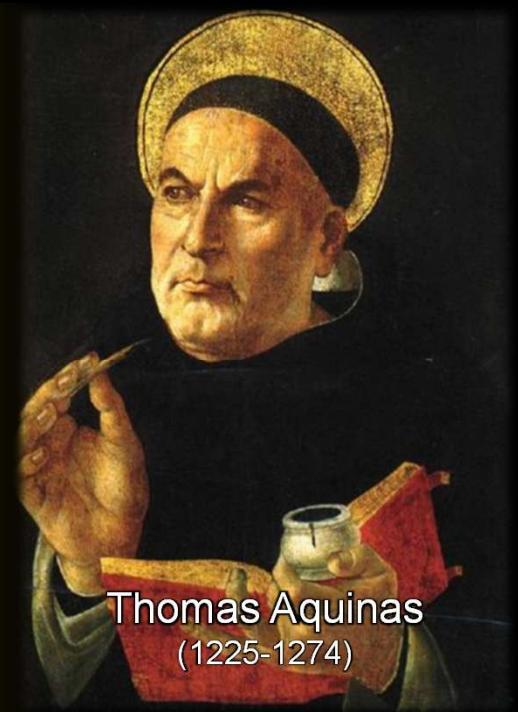
"Moral fault is found primarily and principally in the act of the will only . . . so . . . an act is moral because it is voluntary. . . .



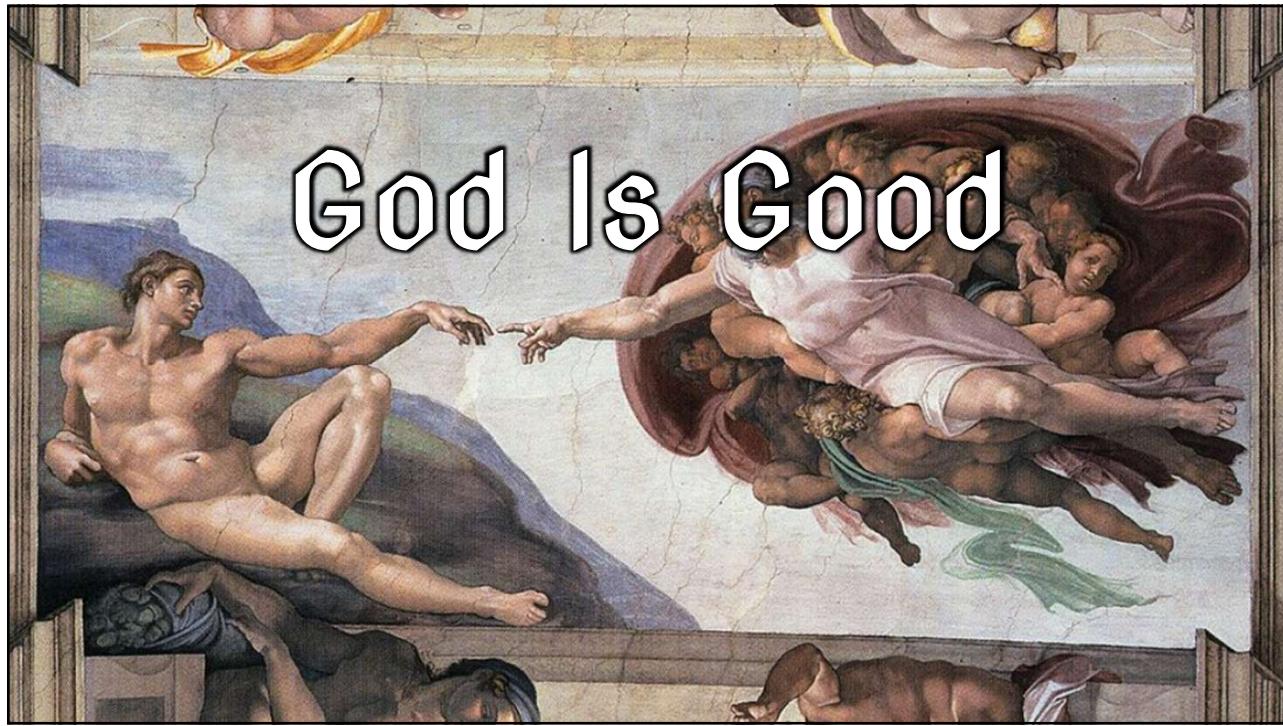
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"The root and source of moral wrongdoing is to be sought in the act of the will."

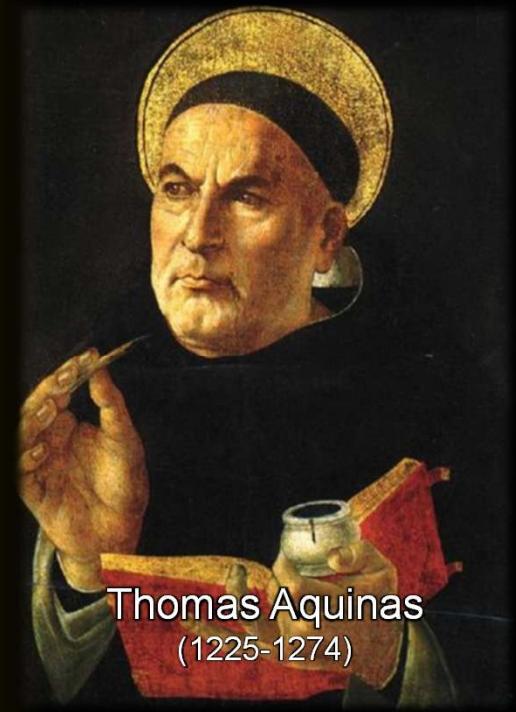
[*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 10, §13]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



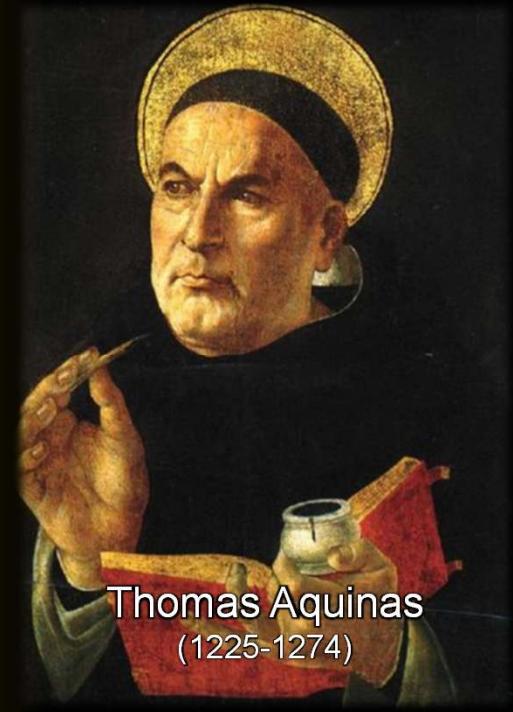
"Goodness and being are really the same, and differ only in idea; which is clear from the following argument. The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher says [Ethic. i]: 'Goodness is what all desire.'



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"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]

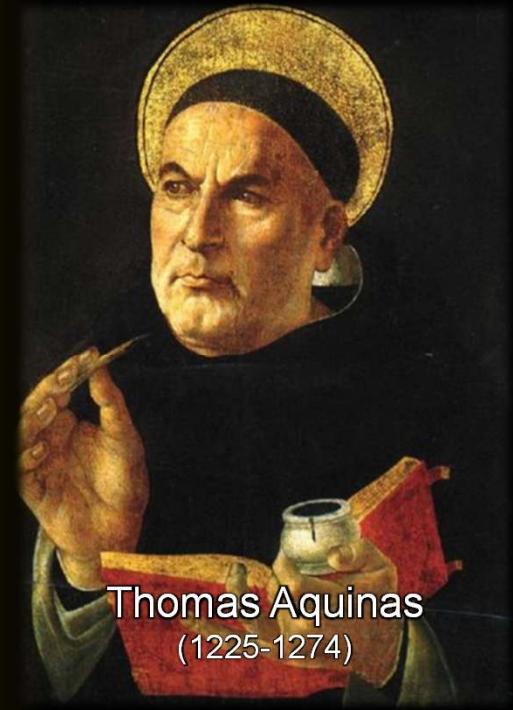


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.

***"Now it is clear
that a thing is
desirable only in
so far as it is
perfect; for all
desire their own
perfection."***

(ST I, Q5, art. 1)

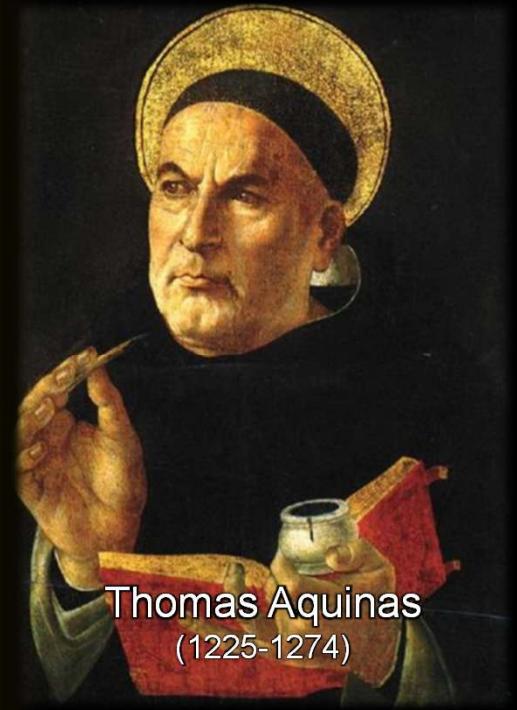


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

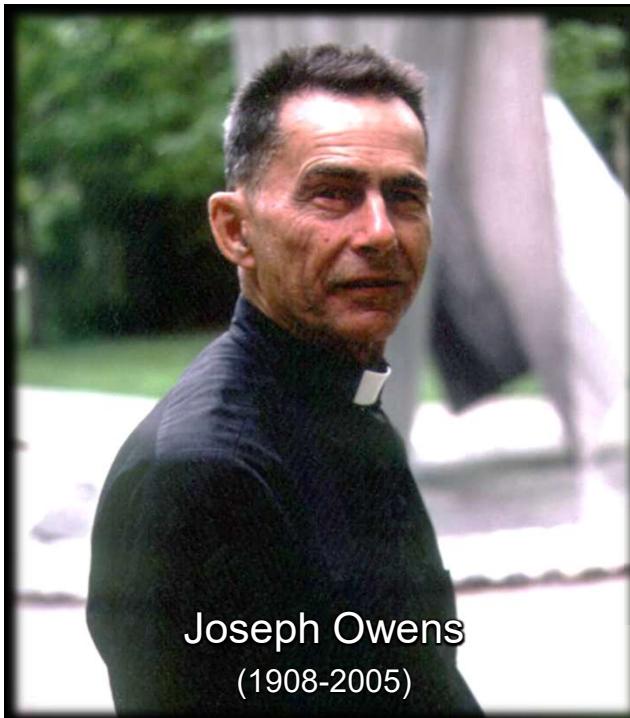
1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
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3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.

"Everything is perfect so far as it is actual."

(*ST I*, Q5, art. 1)

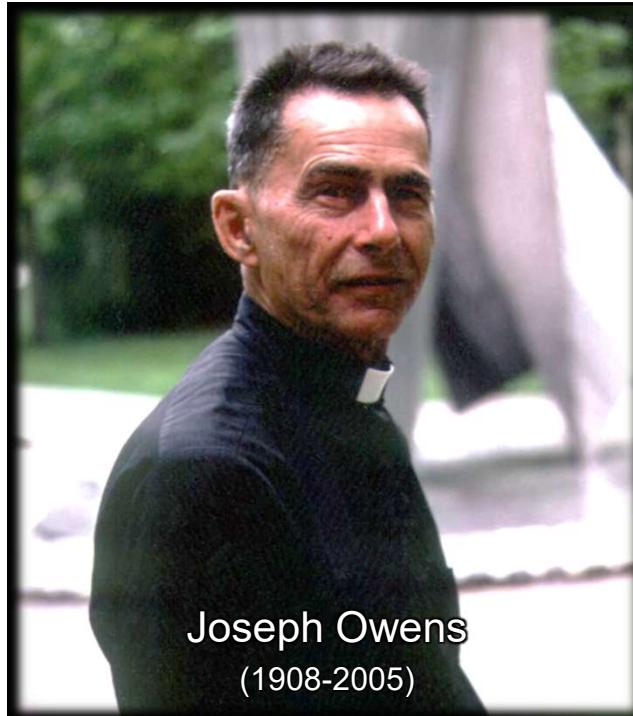


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



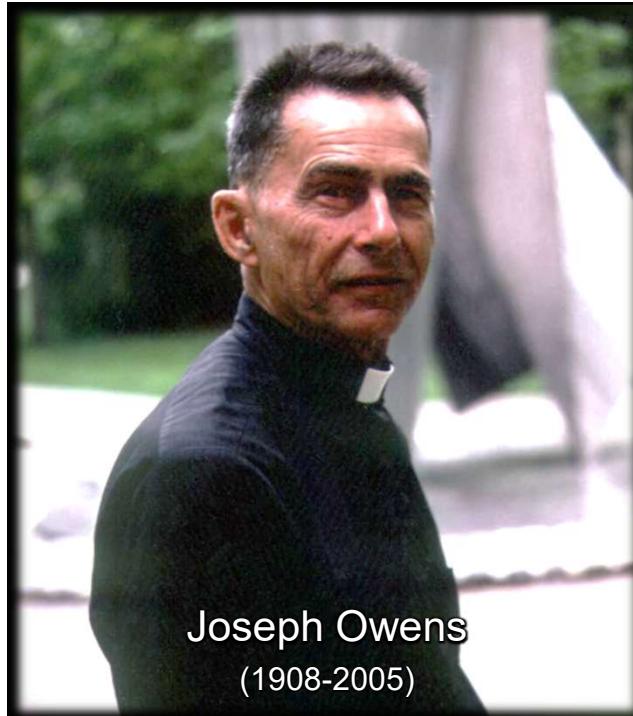
Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

"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.



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

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



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

"Since existence is required to complete the thing and all the formal elements and activities, it may be aptly called the perfection of all perfections."

[An Interpretation of Existence (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1968), 52-53]

perfection

(entelecheia, ἐντελέχεια)

en, ἐν = in

+

telos, τέλος = end, goal

+

echein, ἔχειν = to have

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'.

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*).¹ That is to say, "being" and "good" are interchangeable terms in predication (*converti enim est conversim praedicari*).² 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.³ "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, a. 1, a. 1, "An idem sit bonum et ens"; Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, fundam. 5, "Ens et bonum convertuntur, sicut uult Dionysius", d. 34, a. 2, q. 3, fundam. 4; Albert the Great, *De Hono* q. 1, a. 6; *Summa Theol.* tract. 6, q. 29; Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.* 8, 1, 2; *De Ver.* XXI, 2; *In De Hocdominibus*, lect. 3; *Summa Theol.* I, 16, 2.

² Thomas Aquinas, *De Ver.* I, 2 ob. 2.

³ *De Pot.* IX, 7 ad 5: *Bonum quod est in genere qualitatis, non est bonum quod convertitur cum ente, quod nullam rem supra ens addit.*

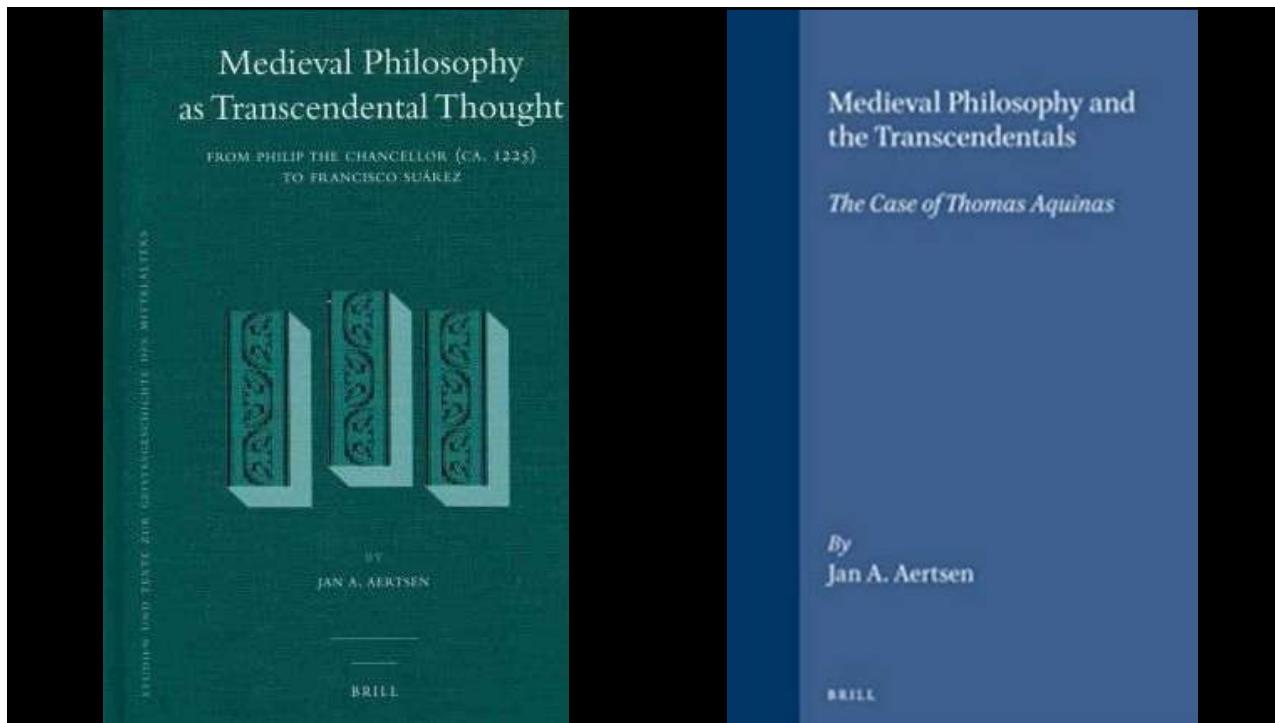
⁴ *De Ver.* I, 1: *modus generaliter consequens omne ens.*

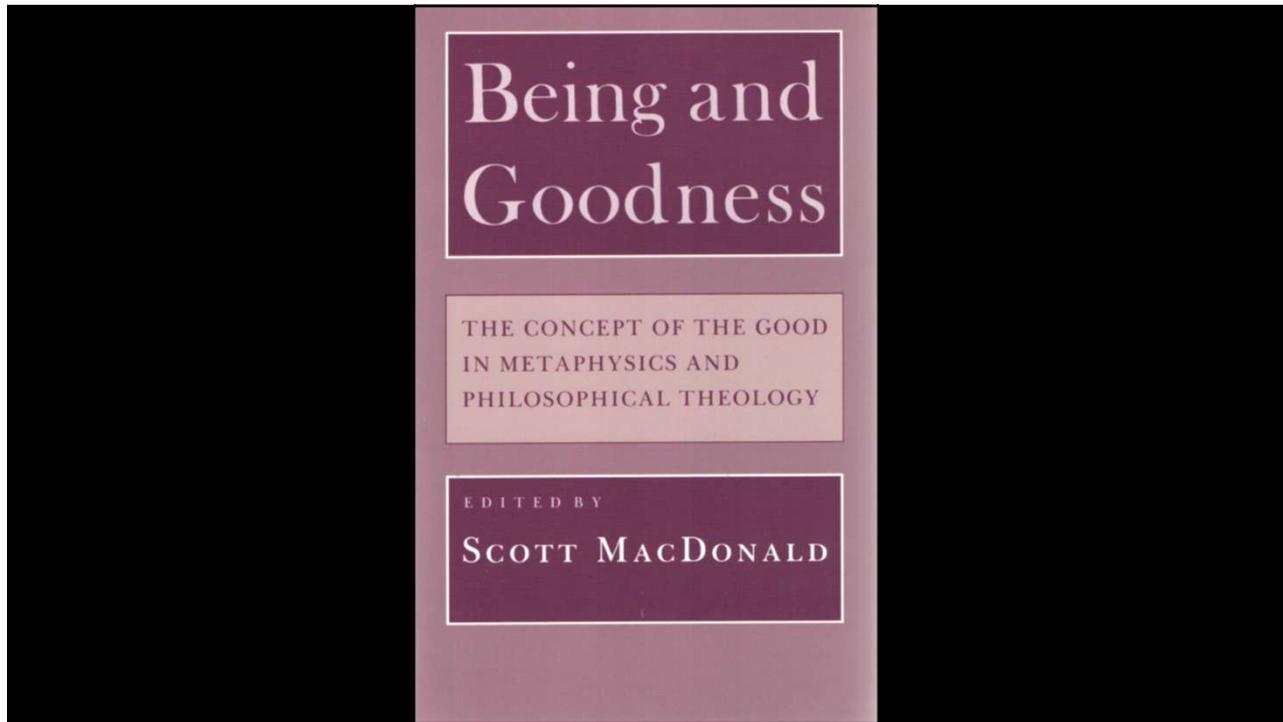
⁵ Comp. Albert the Great, *Summa Theologica* tract. 6, q. 27, c. 3: *Bonum dicit intentionem communem et est de transcendentibus omne genus sicut et ens.*

449



Jan A. Aertsen
(1938-2016)

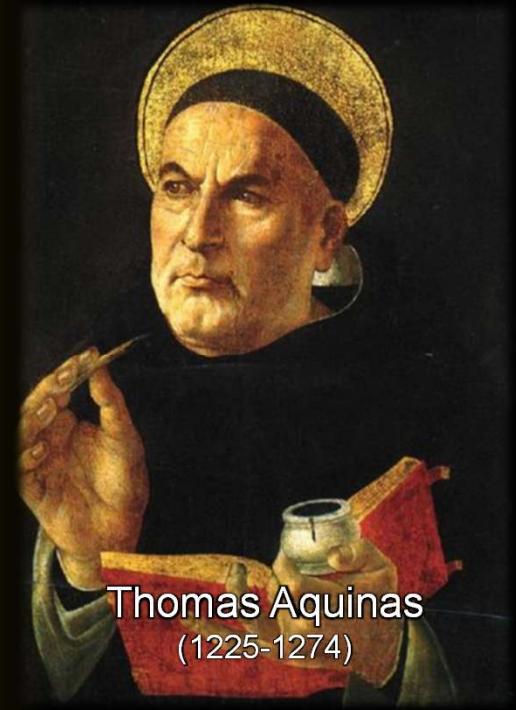




1. **'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).**
2. **'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.**
3. **'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.**
4. **'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.**
5. **God is goodness itself in as much as God is being itself.**

***"To God alone does
it belong to be His
own subsistent
being."***

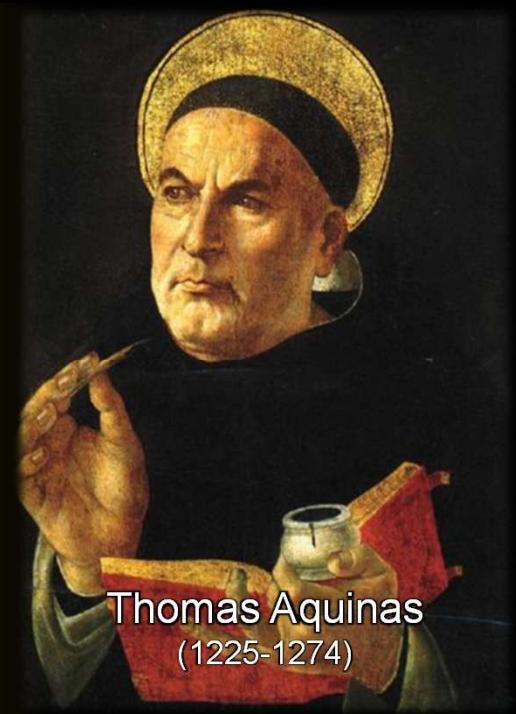
[*ST* 1, Q 12, art. iv]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

***"God is absolute
form, or rather
absolute being"***

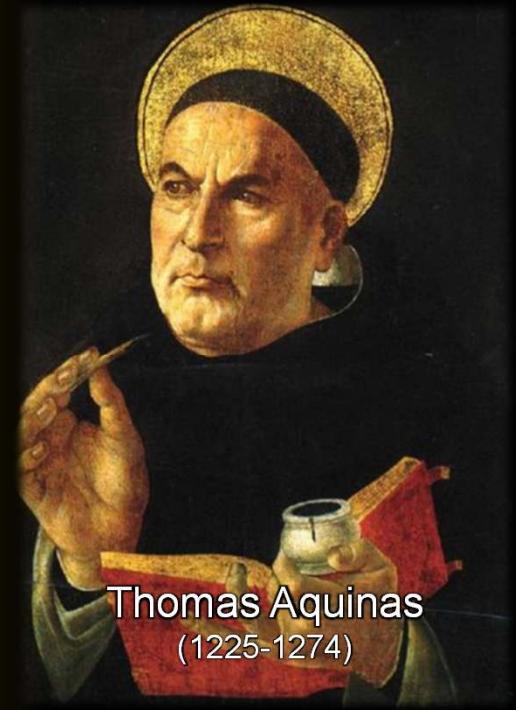
[*ST*, I, Q3, art. 7.]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"God is supremely being ... He is being itself, subsistent, absolutely undetermined."

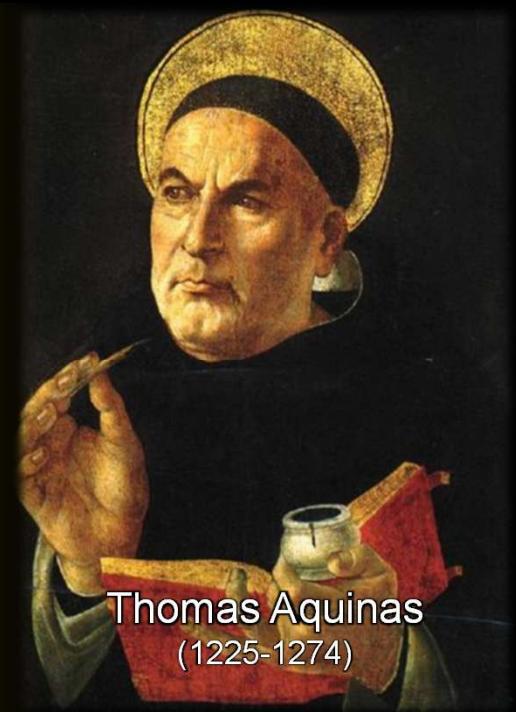
[ST 1, Q 11, art. iv]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"God is supremely being, inasmuch as His being is not determined by any nature to which it is adjoined; since He is being itself, subsistent, absolutely undetermined."

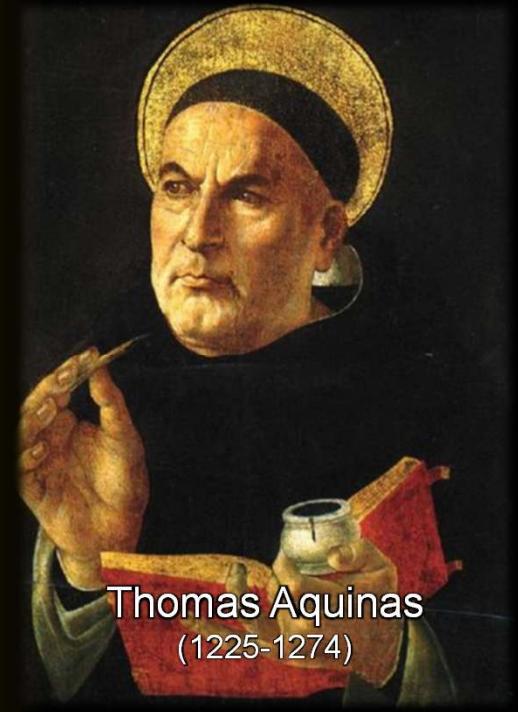
[Summa Theologiae 1, Q 11, art. 4]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

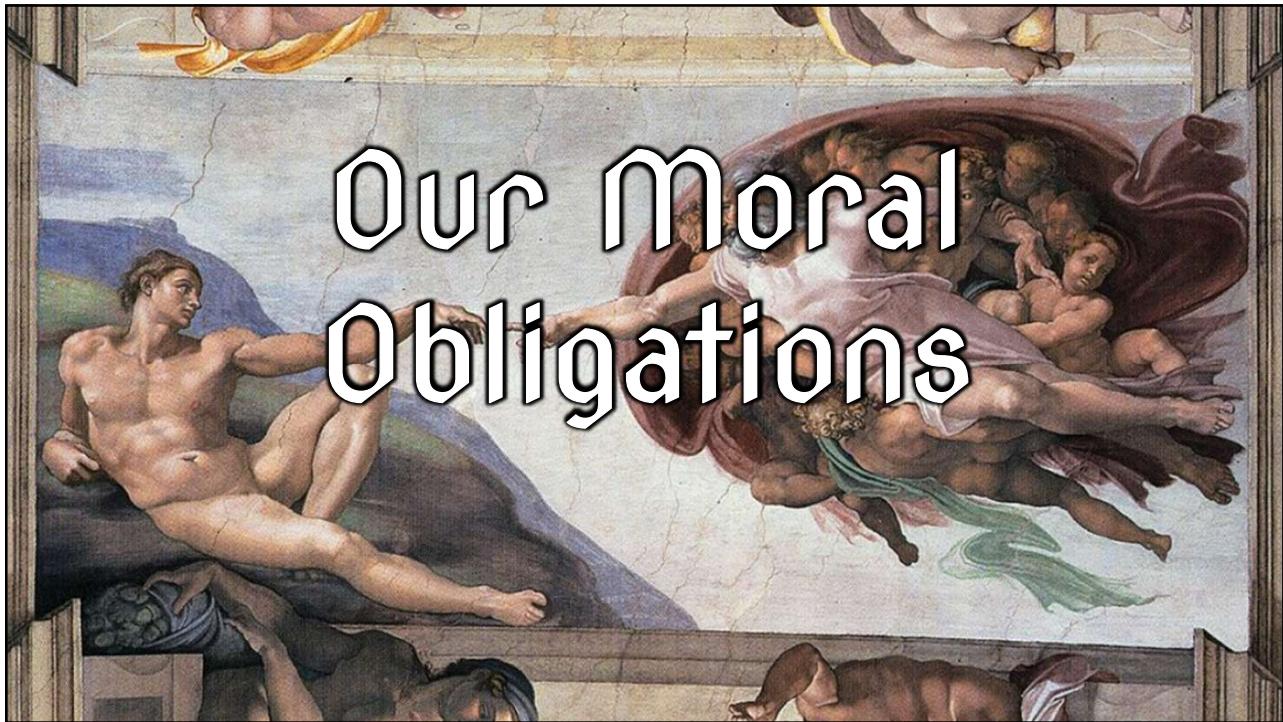
***"Good belongs
pre-eminently
to God."***

(*ST I*, Q5, art. 1)



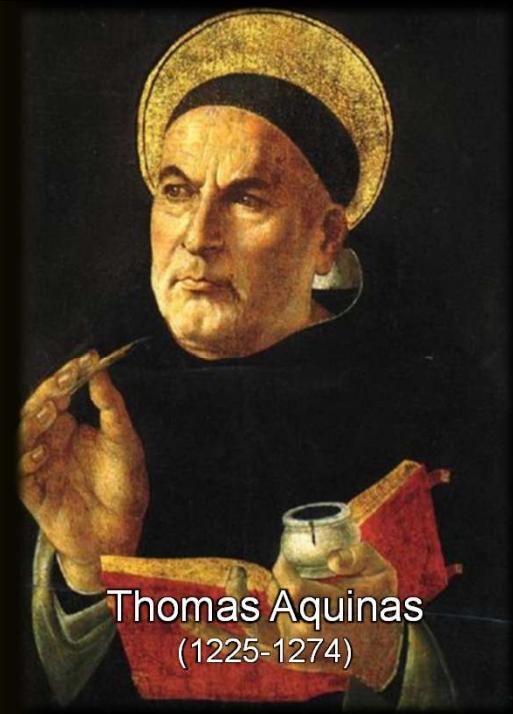
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

**Our Moral
Obligations**



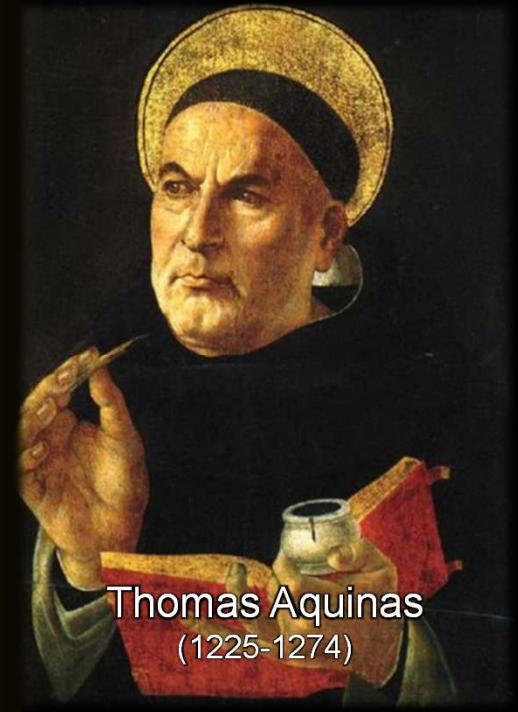
Our Moral Obligations In General

***"This is the first
precept of law ...***



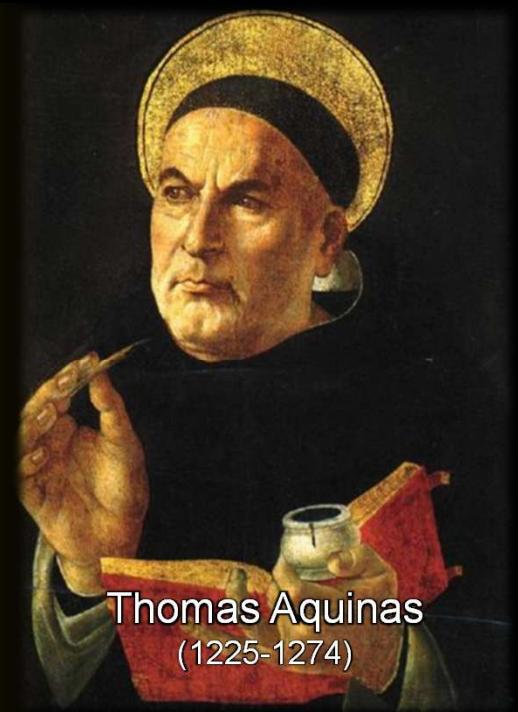
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

***"Bonum est
faciendum et
prosequendum,
et malum
vitandum."***



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

***Good is
to be done and
pursued
and evil
avoided.***



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

Our Moral Obligations To Our Fellow Man

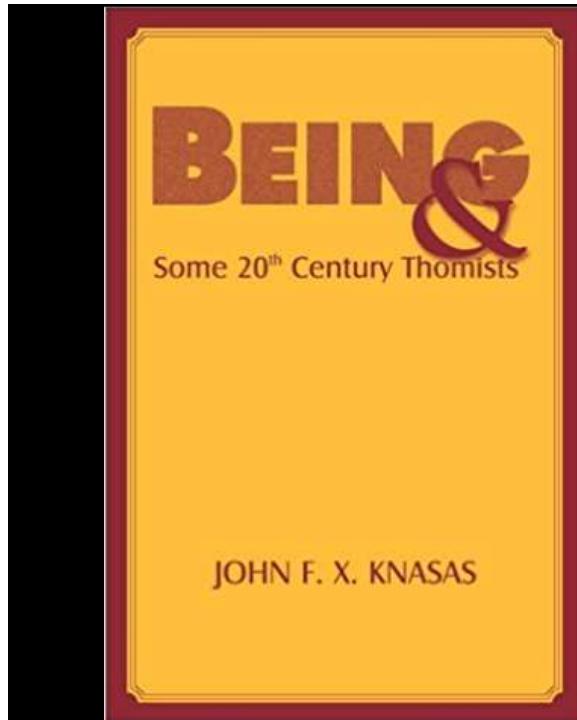
Natural Law Morality focuses primarily on our relationship to our fellow man as God manages our peaceful co-existence in society.

Biblical Morality or Morality?



Further, our moral obligation to our fellow man arises out of our recognition that human beings, unique among God's creatures on Earth, are willers, not merely of particular goods, but of the good as such.

*As such we recognize both
ourselves and other humans as
special instances of the good itself.*



John F. X. Knasas

"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."

[*Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 253.]

John F. X. Knasas



"Though all beings express the ratio boni, only the human expresses it in a sufficiently heightened way that confronts the freedom of the will with an obligation, a moral necessity. To see the good is to ignite volition; to see the good as in the human willer of it is to ignite obligation."

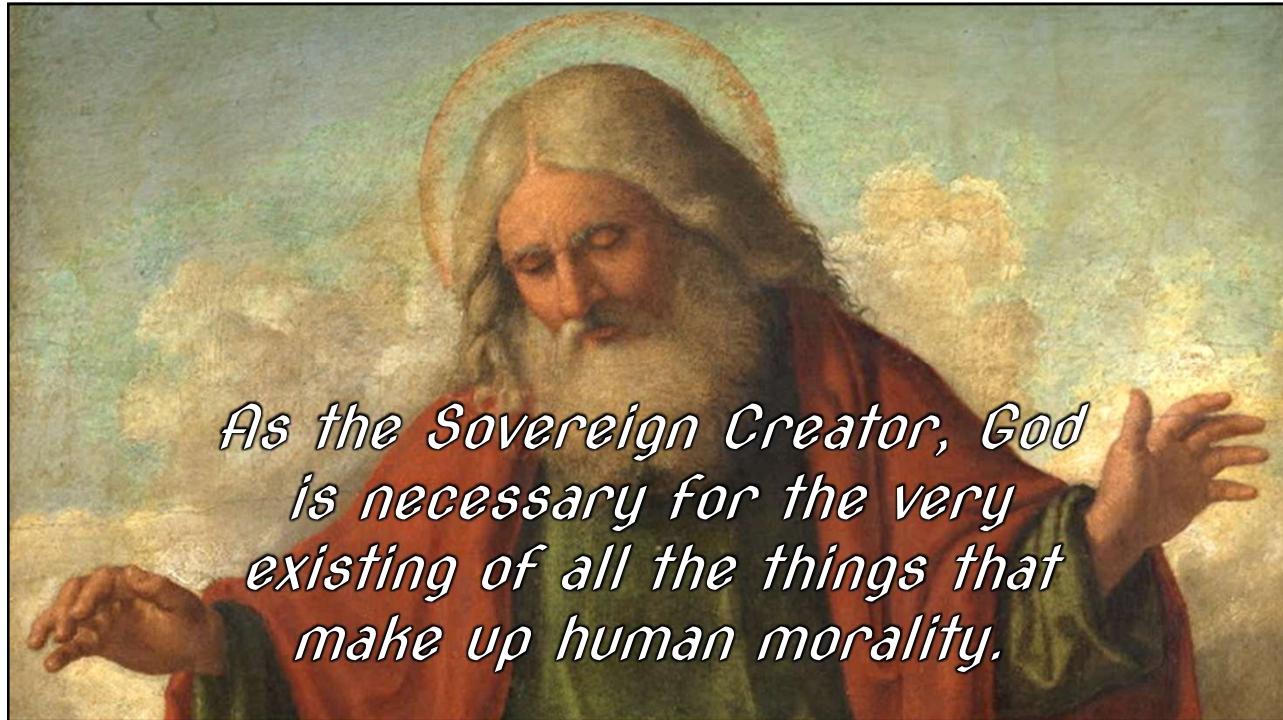
[*Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists*, 262.]

John F. X. Knasas

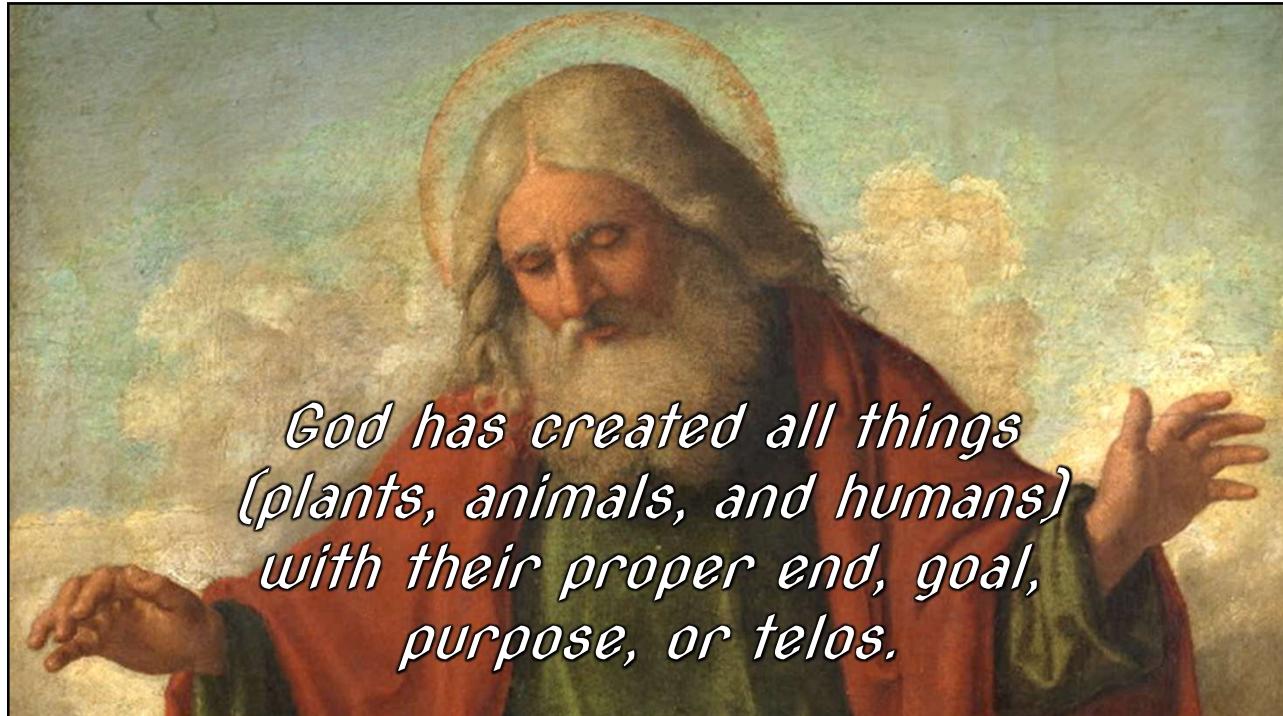


Our Moral Obligations To God

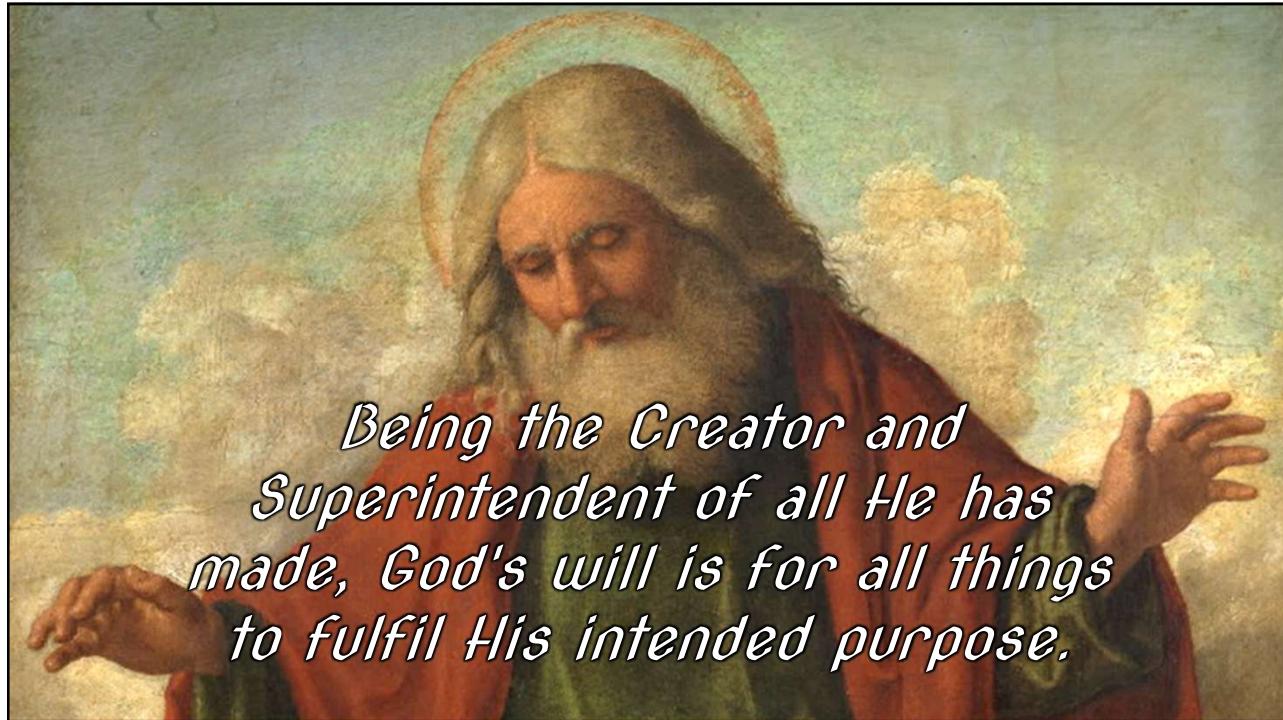




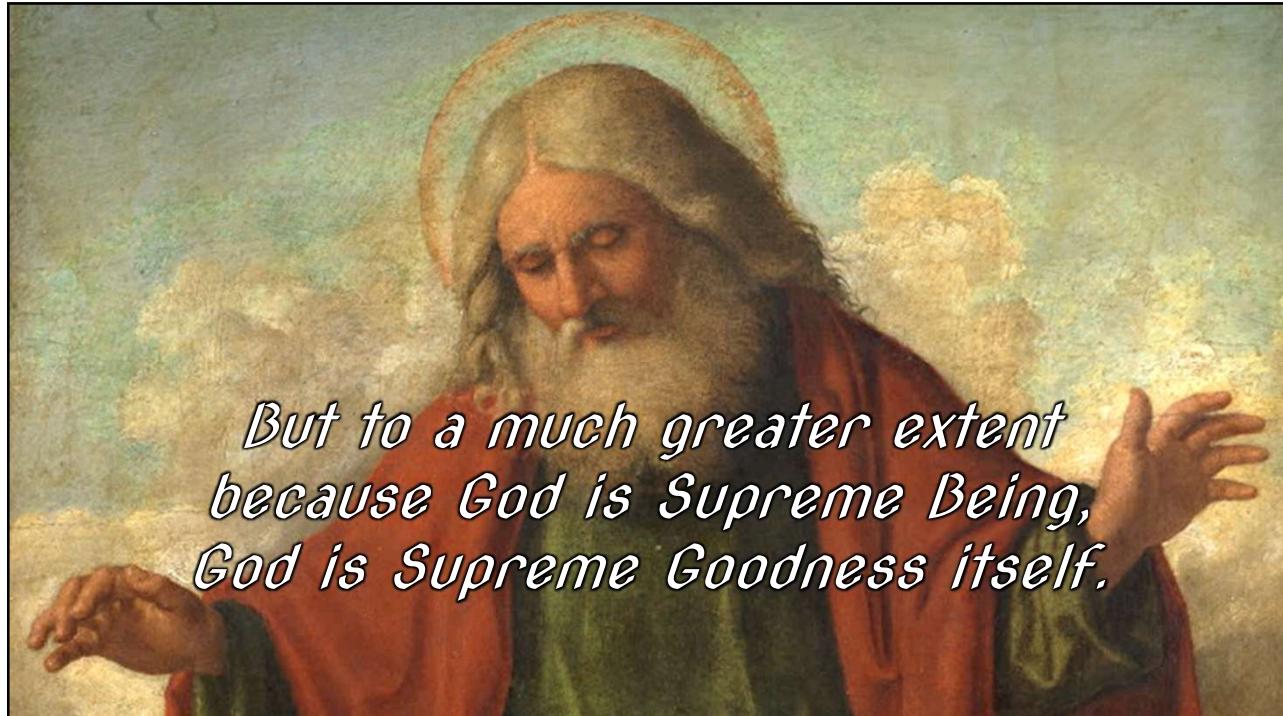
*As the Sovereign Creator, God
is necessary for the very
existing of all the things that
make up human morality.*



*God has created all things
(plants, animals, and humans)
with their proper end, goal,
purpose, or telos.*



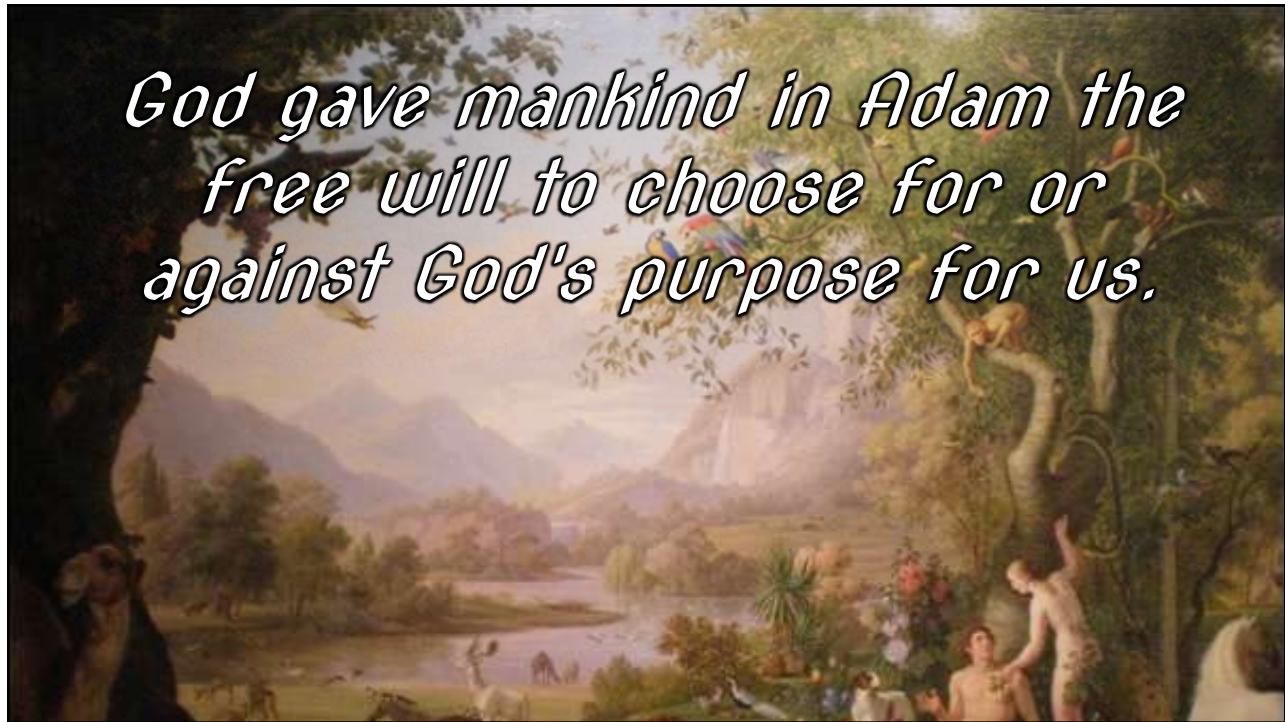
*Being the Creator and
Superintendent of all He has
made, God's will is for all things
to fulfil His intended purpose.*



*But to a much greater extent
because God is Supreme Being,
God is Supreme Goodness itself.*



*God gave mankind in Adam the
free will to choose for or
against God's purpose for us.*

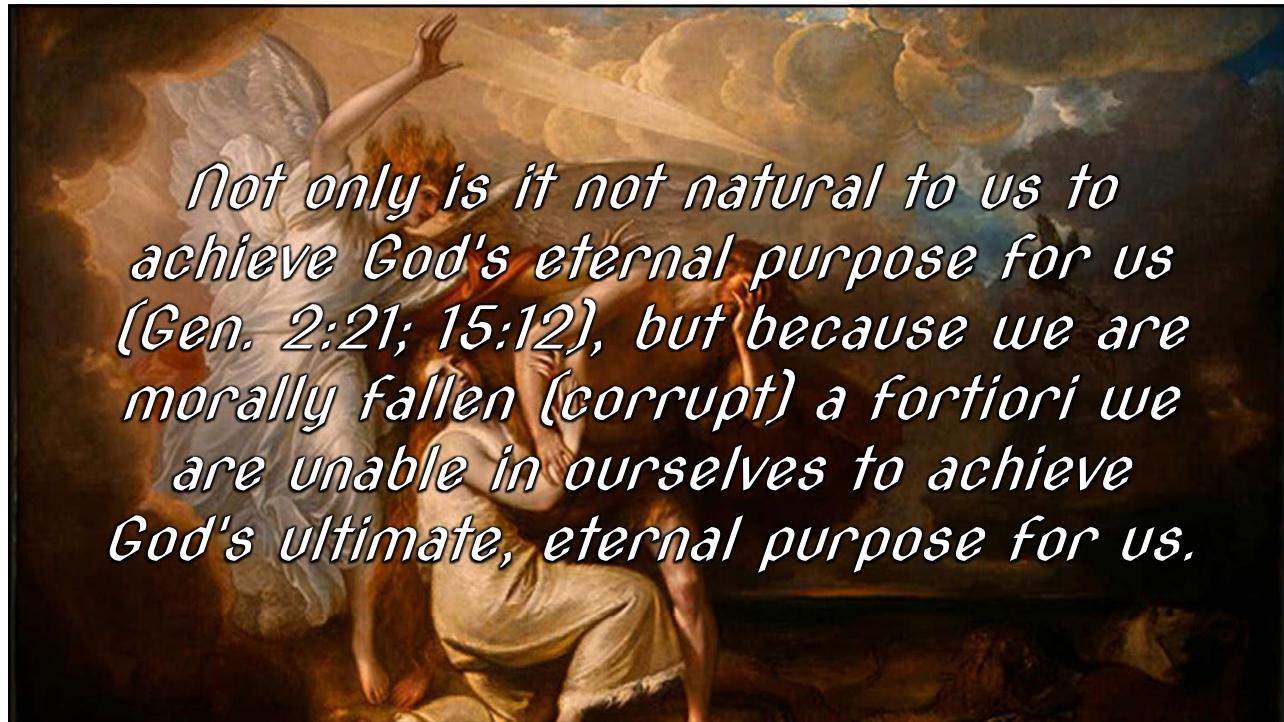


We are all morally obligated to obey the will of our Maker since His purpose for us is:

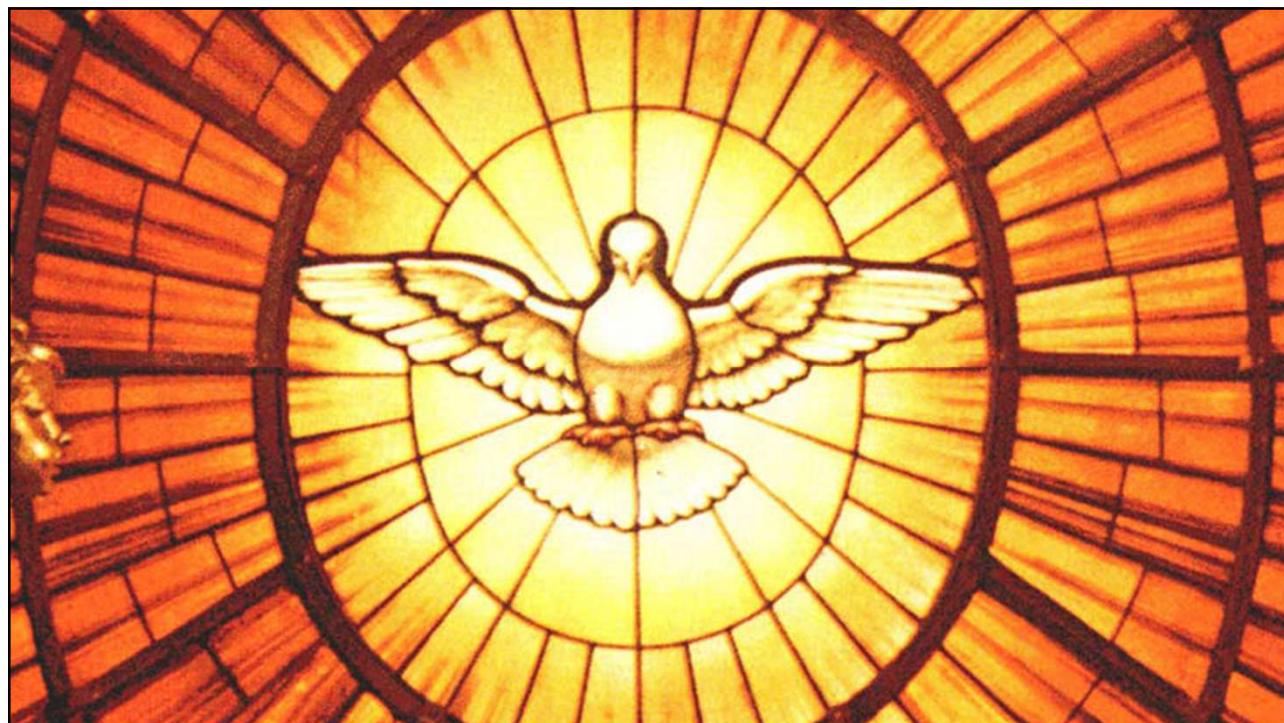
our proximate good in this life as we flourish in peaceful co-existence with our fellow man in society.

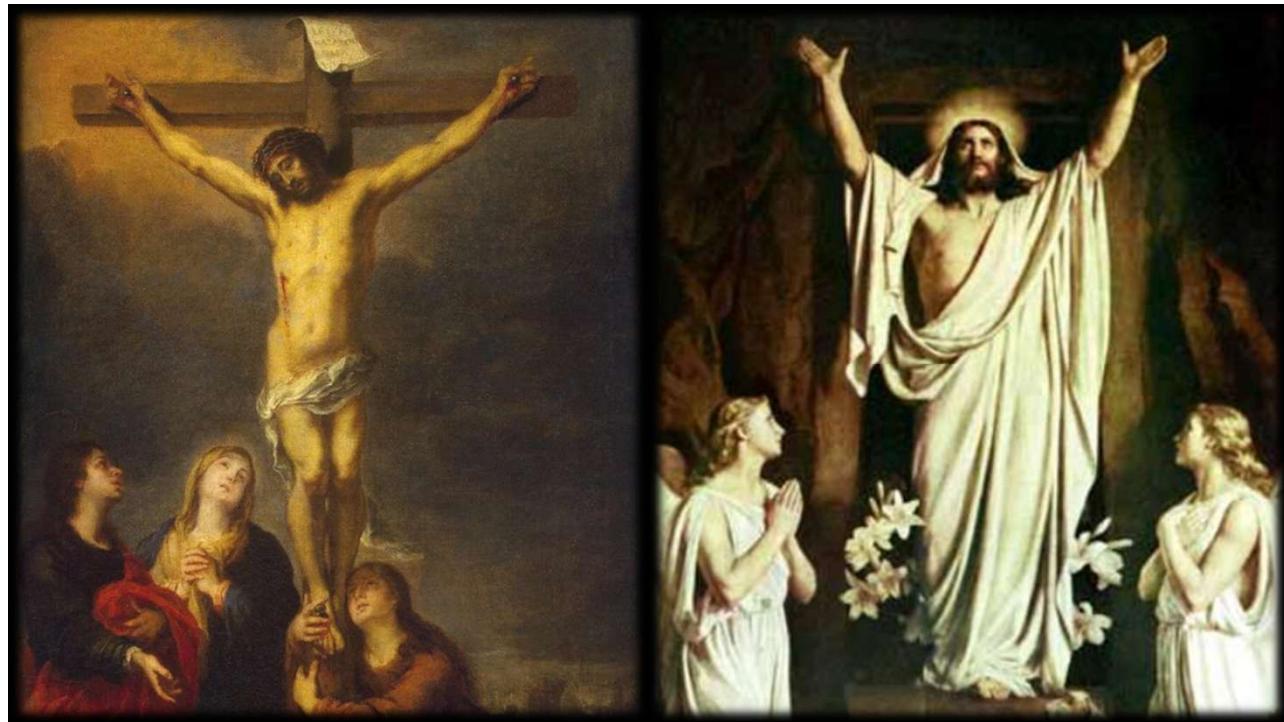
our ultimate good in the next life as we rest in blessedness knowing and enjoying Him forever in Heaven.

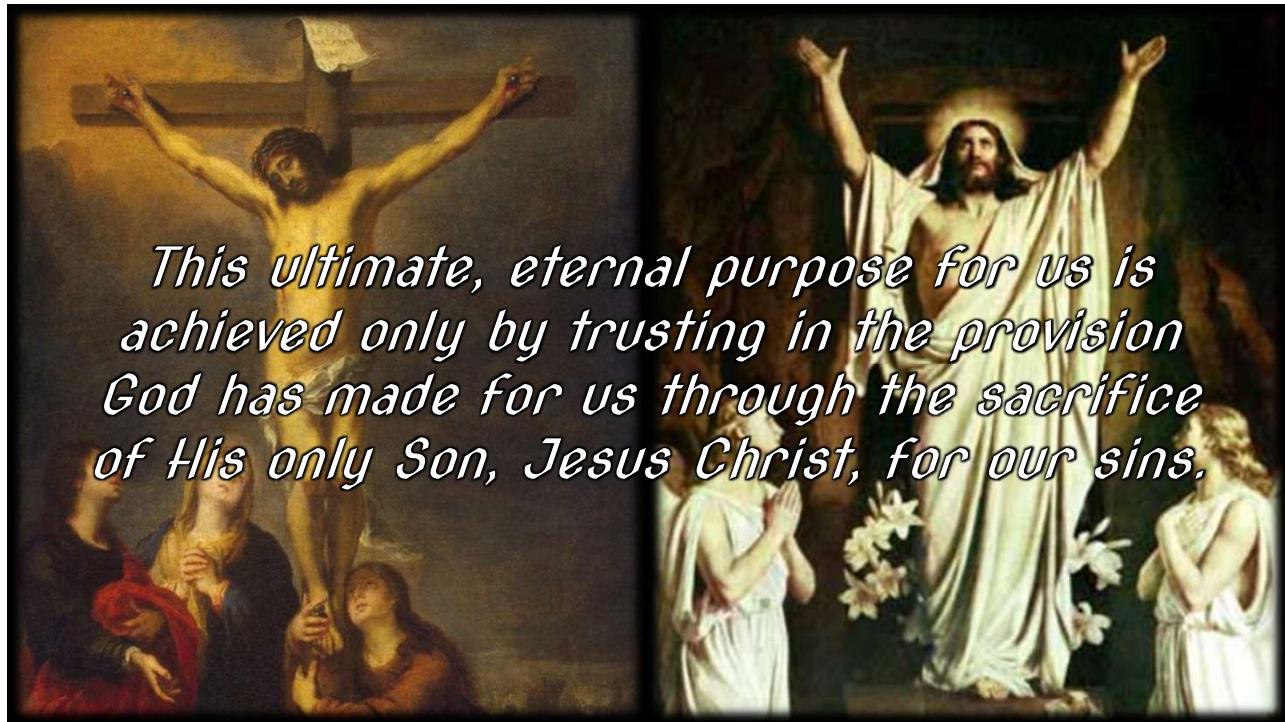
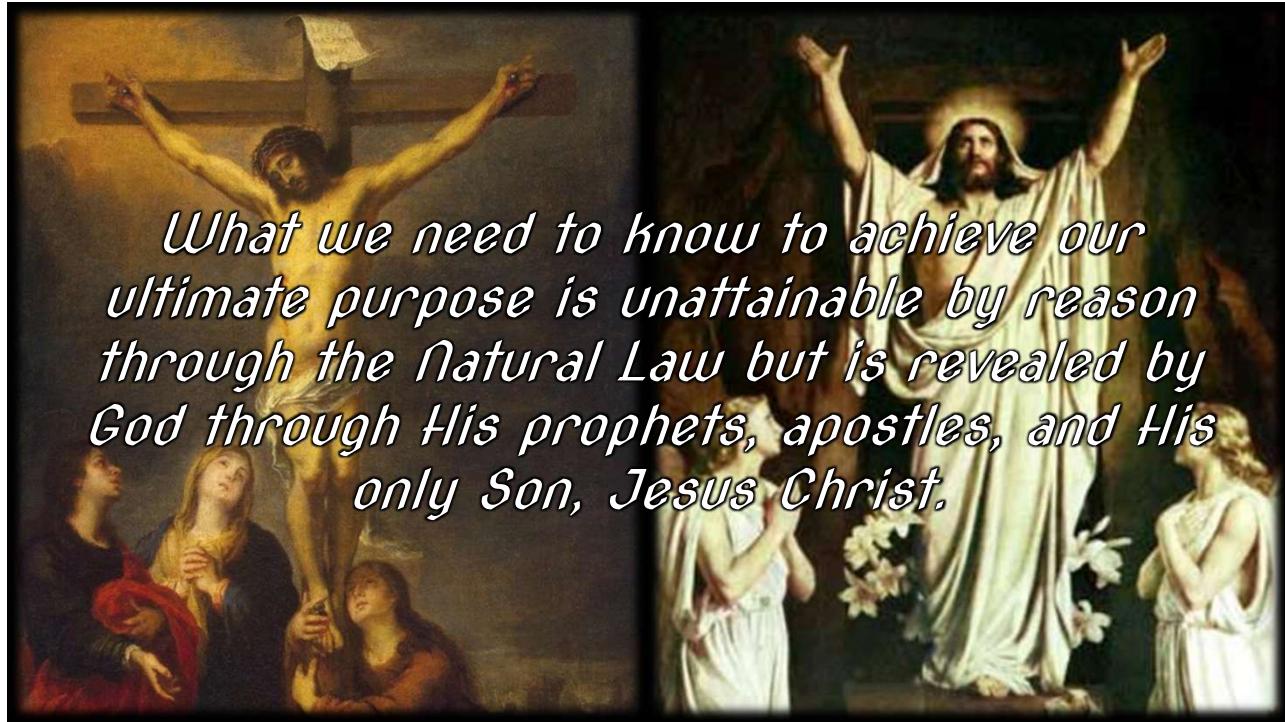


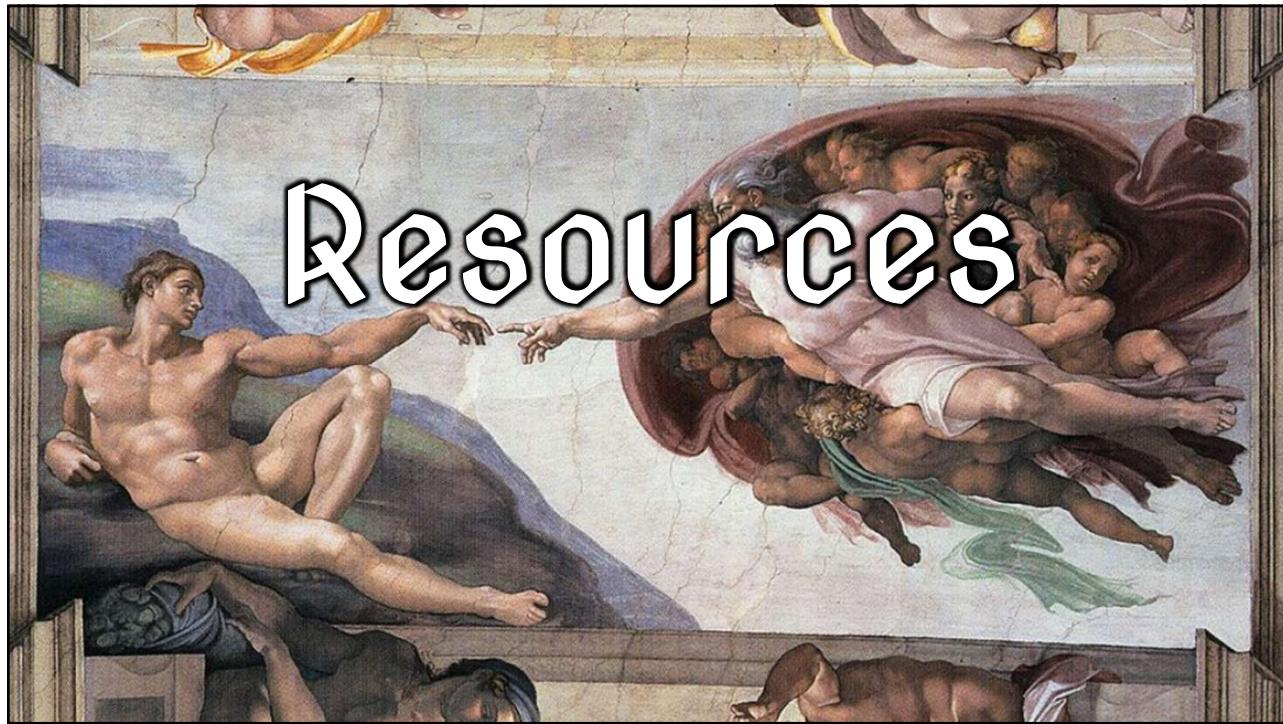


Not only is it not natural to us to achieve God's eternal purpose for us (Gen. 2:21; 15:12), but because we are morally fallen (corrupt) a fortiori we are unable in ourselves to achieve God's ultimate, eternal purpose for us.



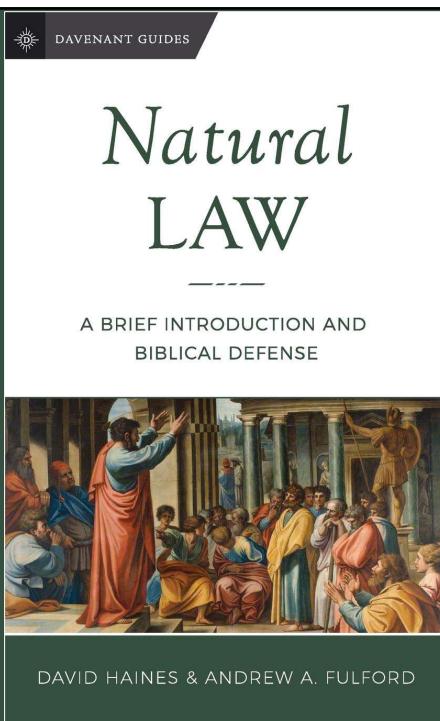








Andrew A. Fulford



DAVENANT GUIDES

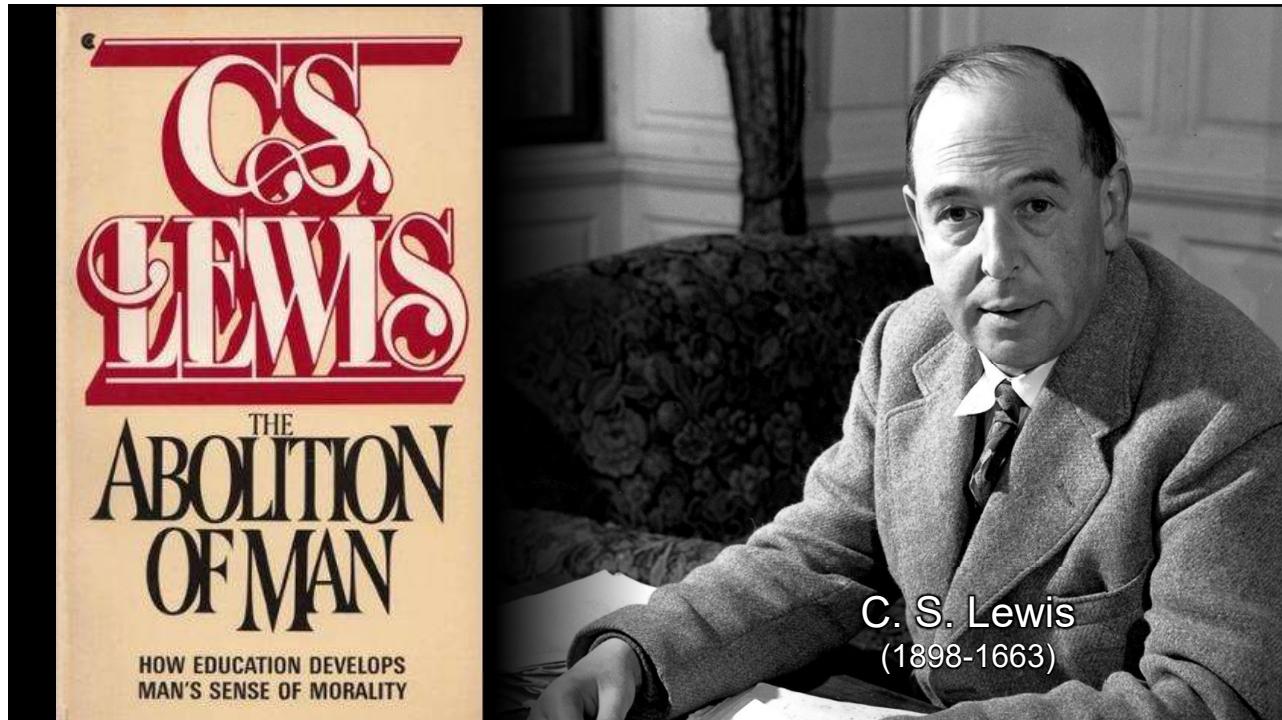
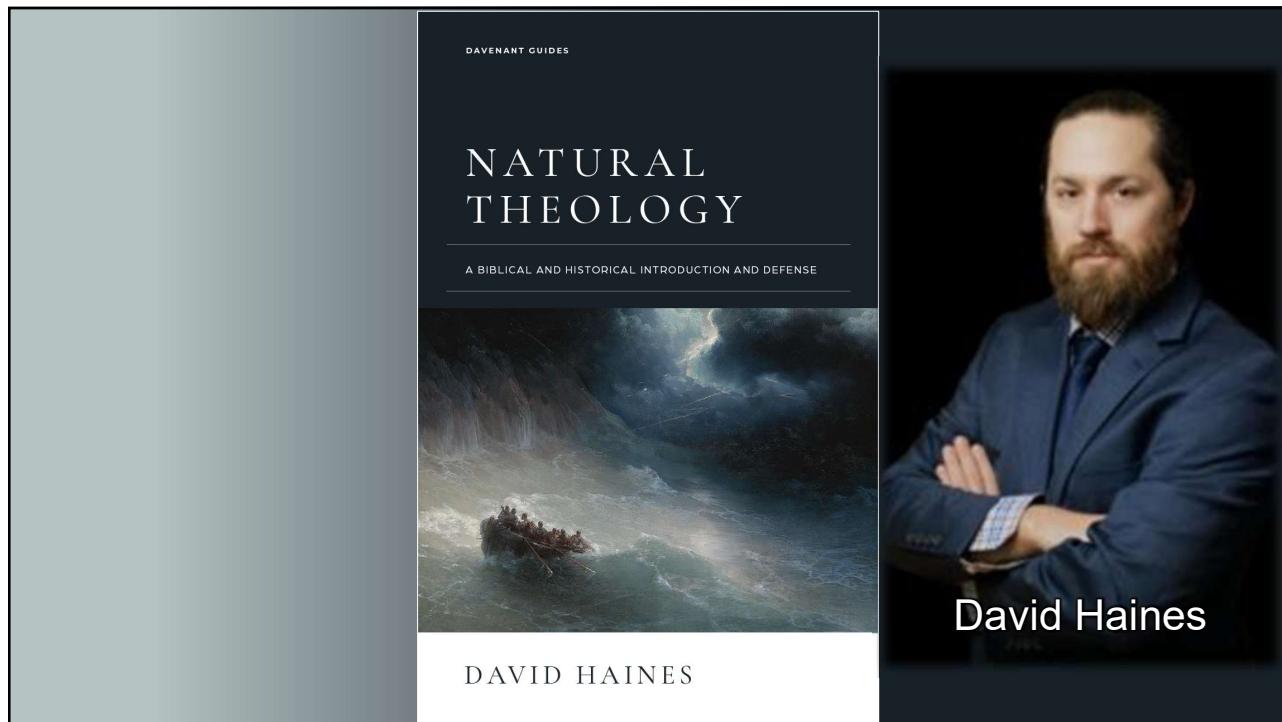
Natural
LAW

—

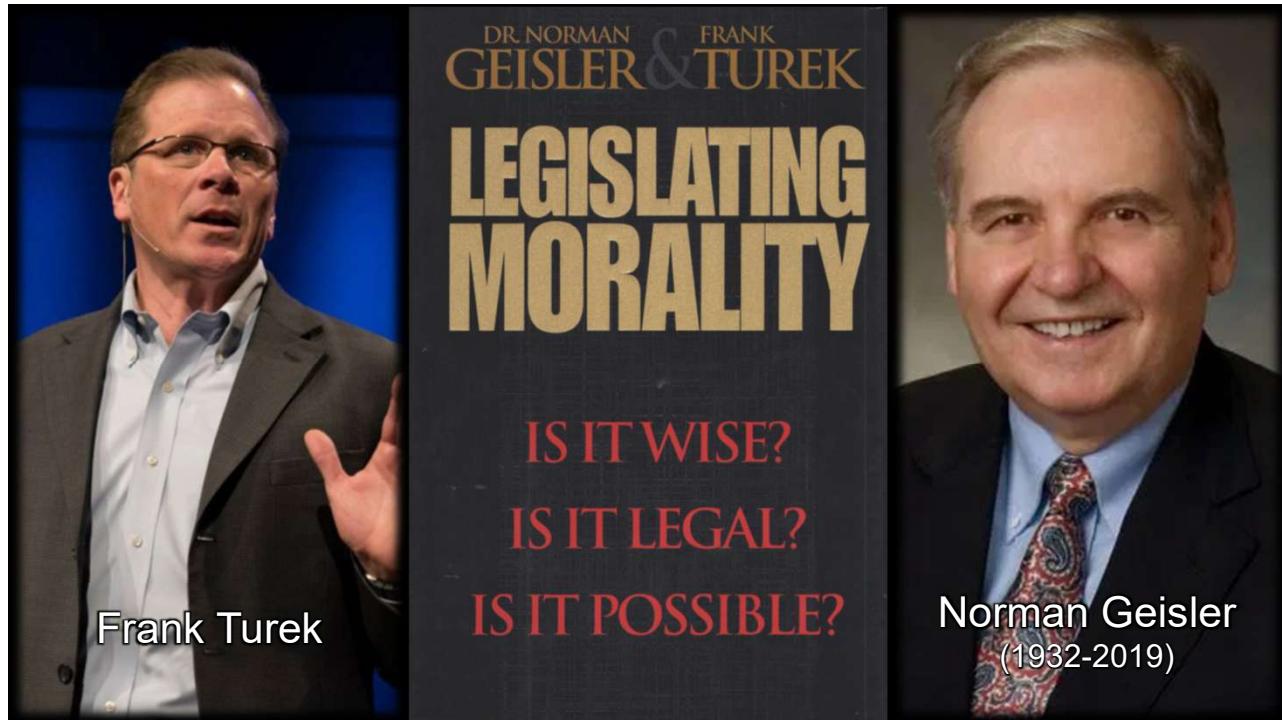
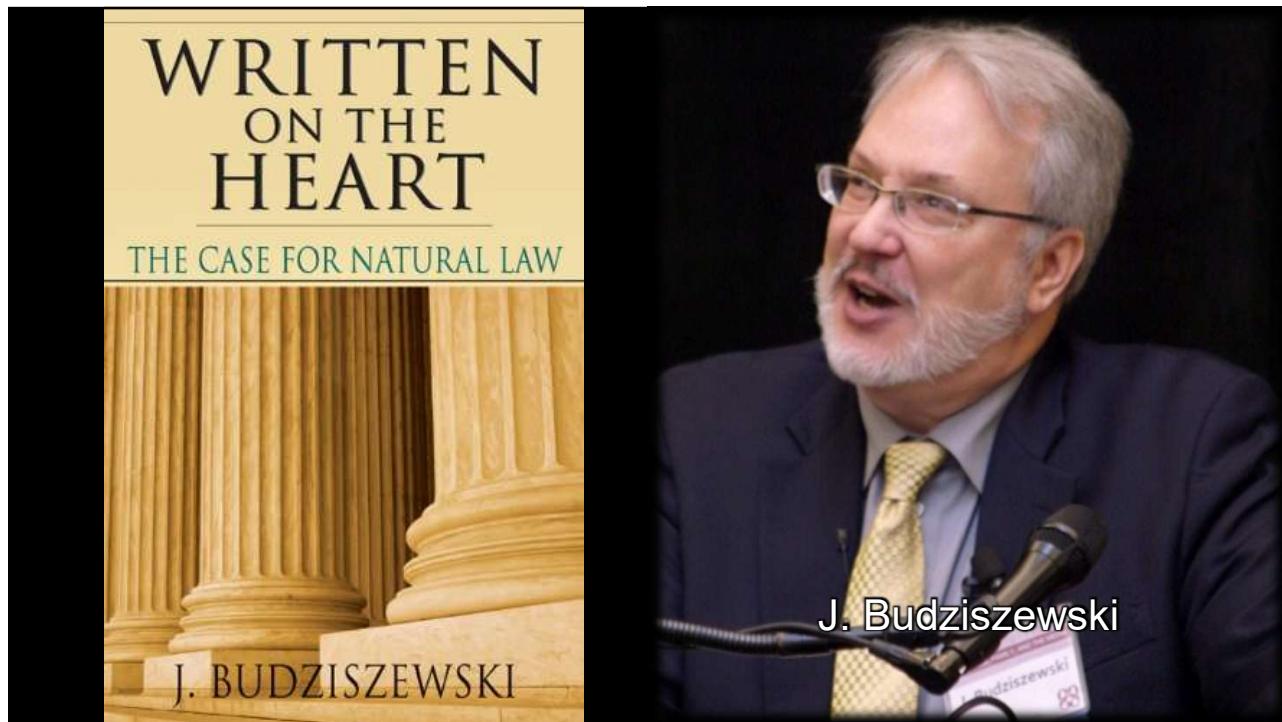
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND
BIBLICAL DEFENSE

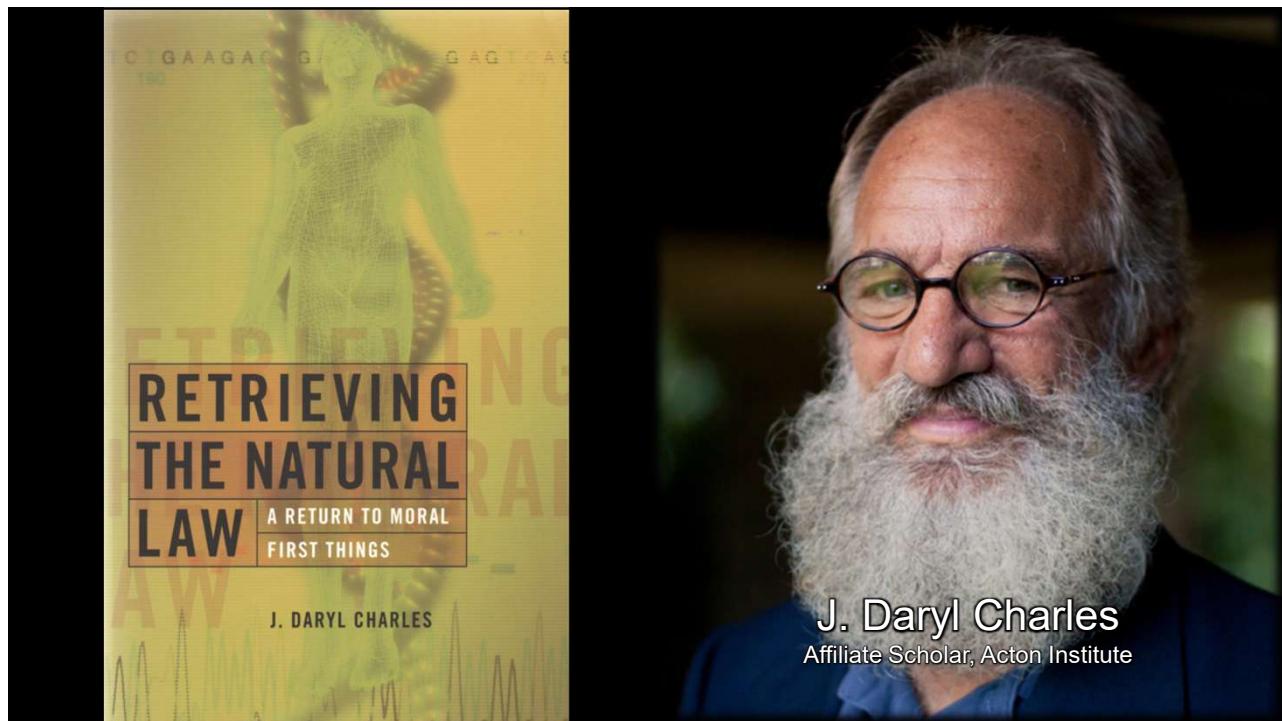
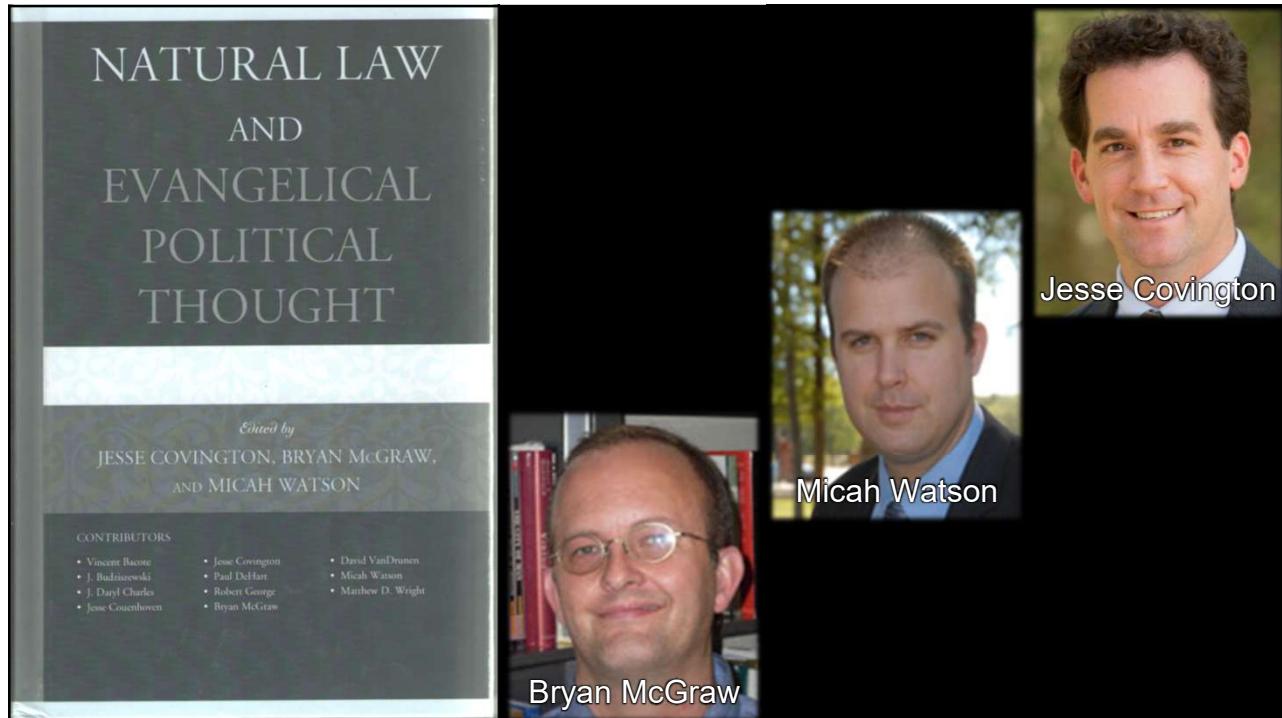


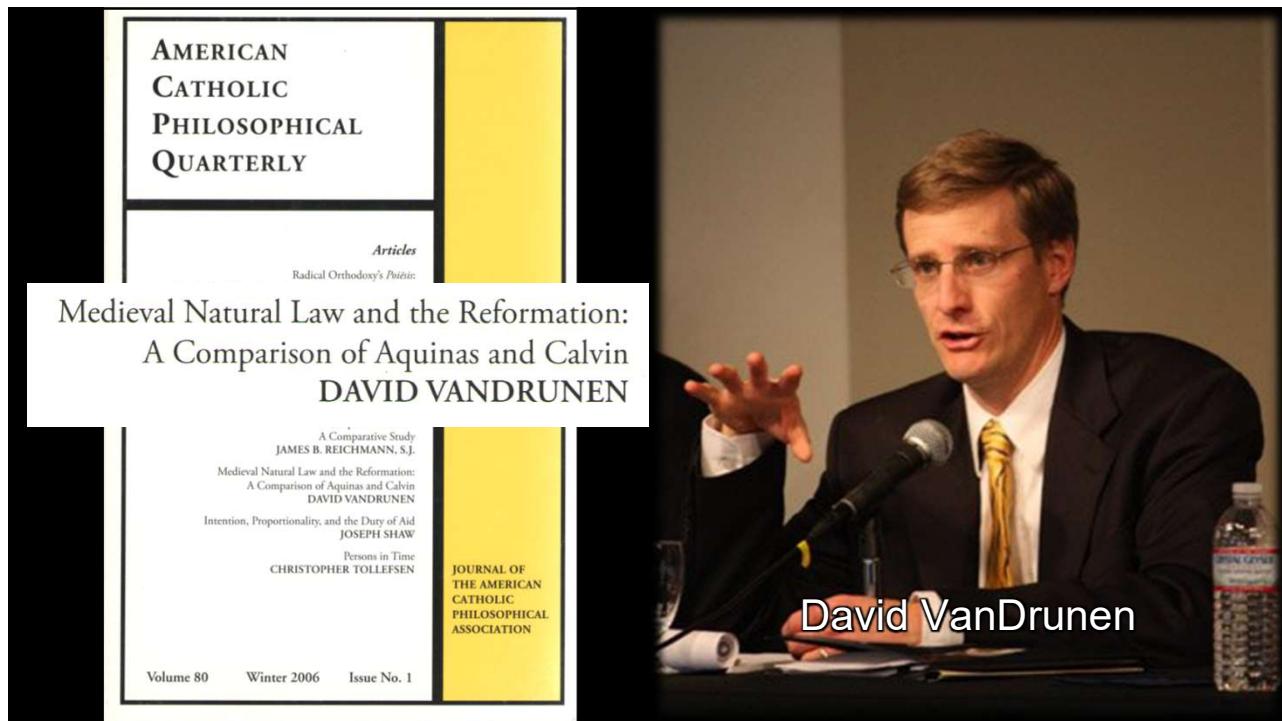
David Haines

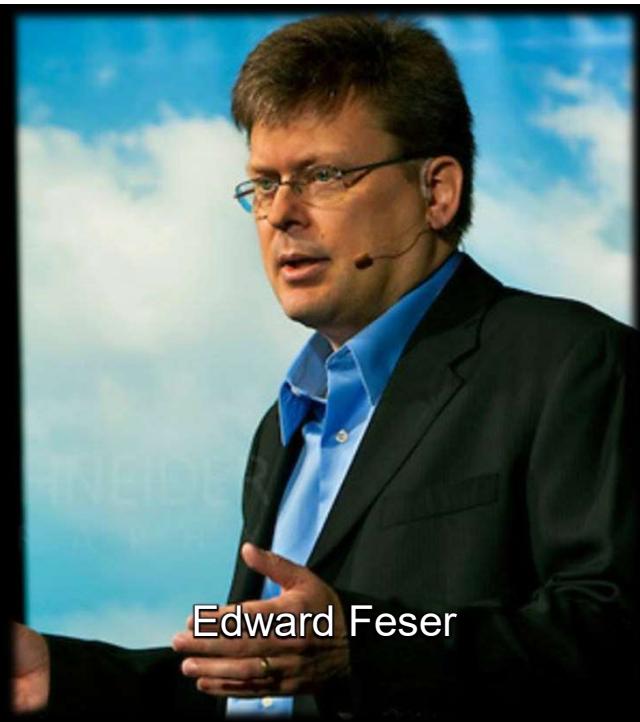
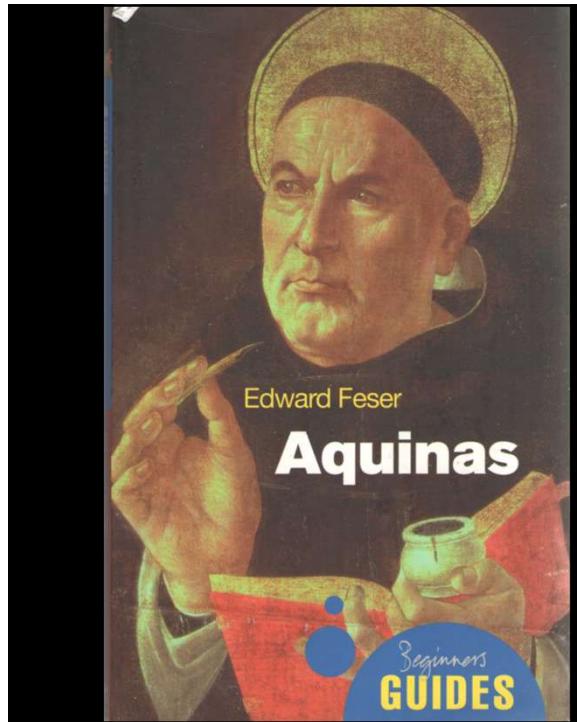
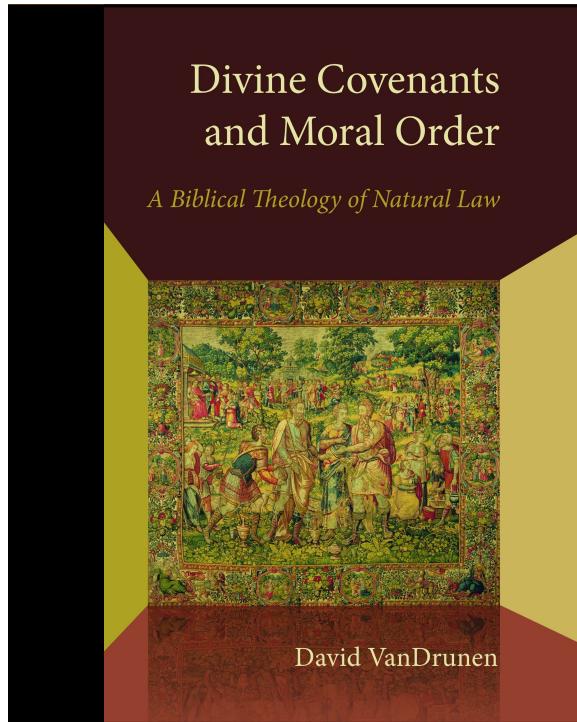


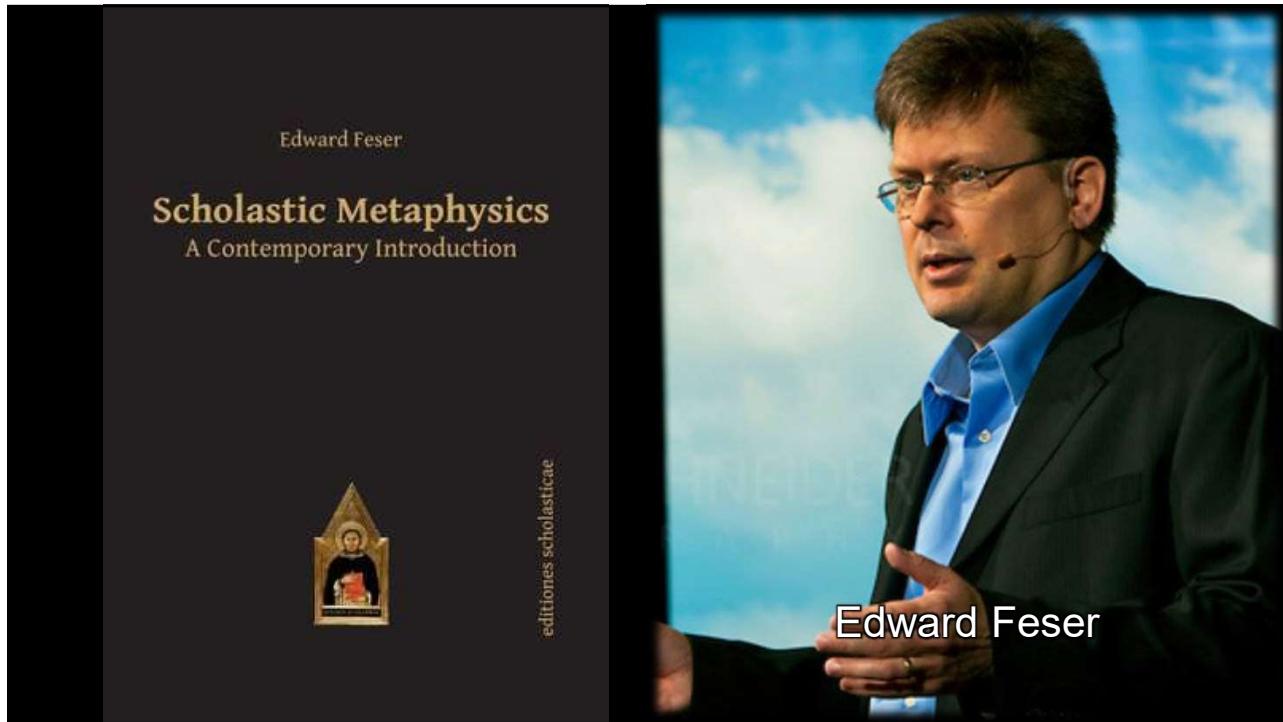
C. S. Lewis
(1898-1963)

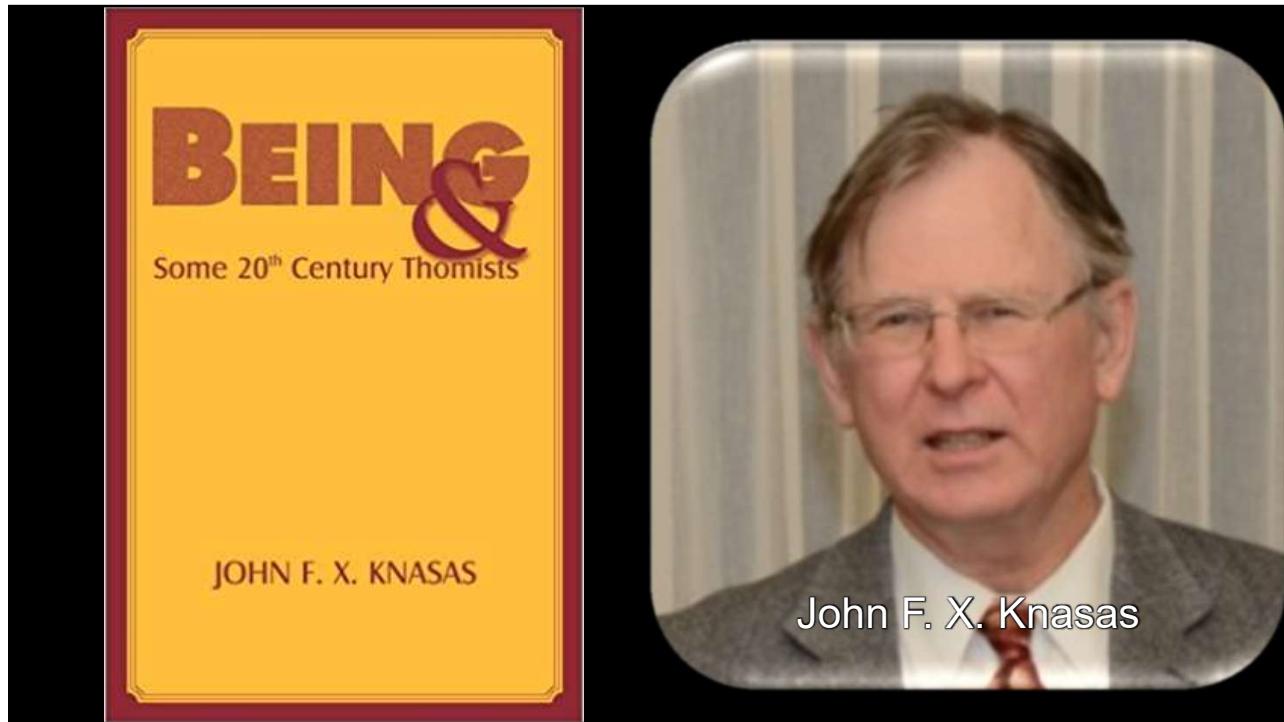












New Scholasticism 59 (1985): 449-470

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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 concessim praedicari*).¹ Wherever "being" is predicated of something, the predicate "good" is involved as well.

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¹ Alexander of Hales, *Summa I*, Int. 1, Tract. 2, q. 2, membrum 1, e. 1, a. 1, "An item sit bonum et ens"; Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, fundam. 5, "Eos et bonum convertuntur, sicut vult Diony whole", d. 34, a. 2, q. 3, fundam. 4; Albert the Great, *De Bono* q. 1, a. 6; *Summa Theol.* tract. 6, q. 28; Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.* 8, 1, 3; *De Ver.* XXI, 2; *In De Hebdomadibus*, lect. 3; *Summa Theol.* I, 16, 3.

² Thomas Aquinas, *De Ver.*, 1, 2 obj. 2.

³ *De Pot.* IX, 7, 1, "Modus generalis est in genere qualitatis, non est however modus particularis cum ente, quod nullum rem supra ens addit.

⁴ *De Fa.* I, 1; modus generaliter consequens omne ens.

⁵ Comp. Albert the Great, *Summa Theologica* tract. 6, q. 27, e. 3; Bonum dicti intentionem communem et est de transendentibus omne genus sicut et ens.

**Jan Aertsen
1938-2016**

