

The Problem of Evil

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

Provost

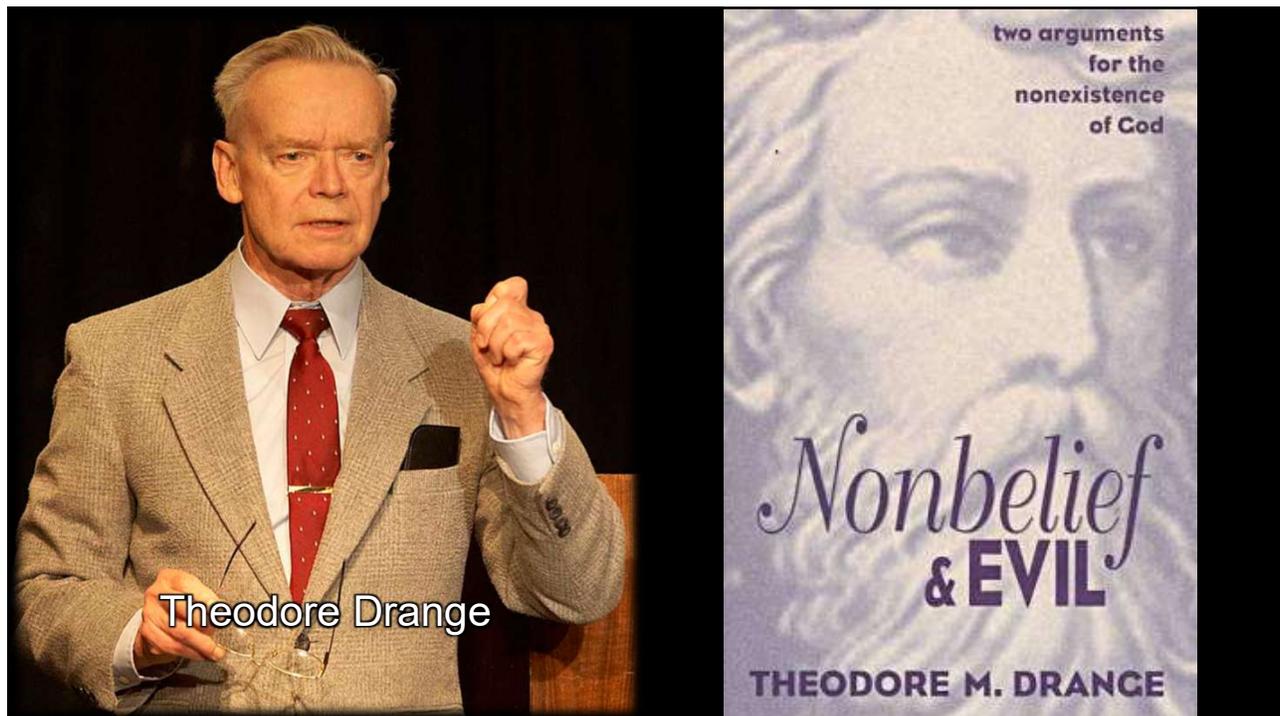
Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics
Norman L. Geisler Chair of Christian Apologetics
Southern Evangelical Seminary

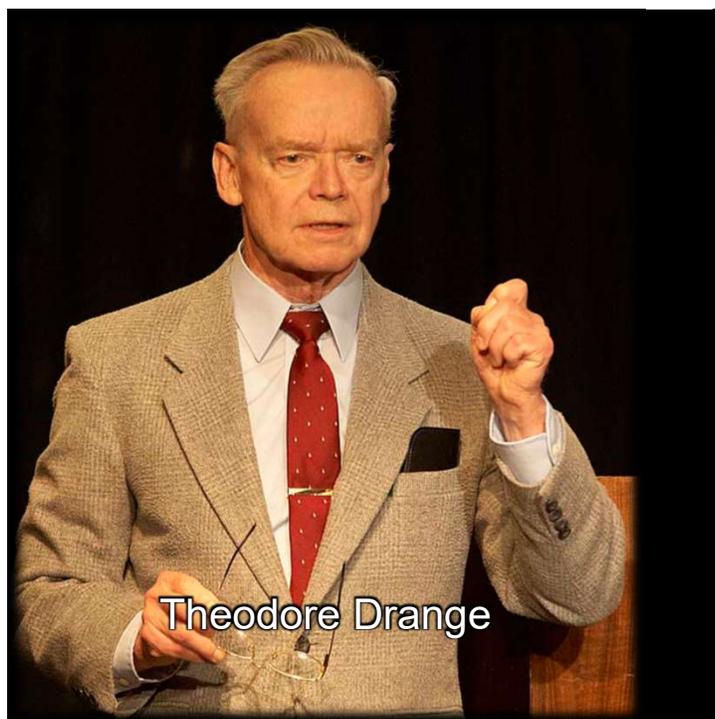
**Defining Evil
Distinguishing Evil
Different “Problems” of Evil
Historical Roots
Formulating the Problem
Some Non-Evangelical Options
Some Evangelical Options
The Classical Approach**



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

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





Theodore Drange

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

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



Distinguishing Evil

One of the most common distinctions contemporary philosophers make regarding evil is between

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

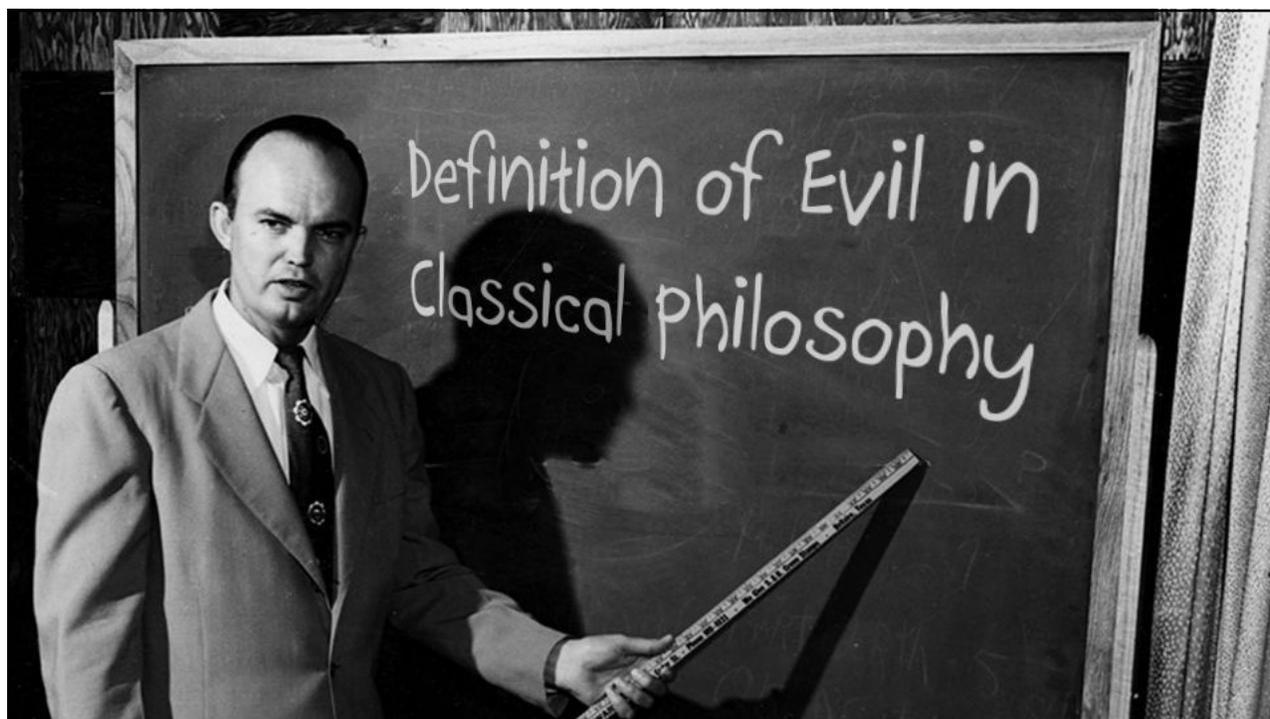
Natural Evil



∞Moral Evil∞

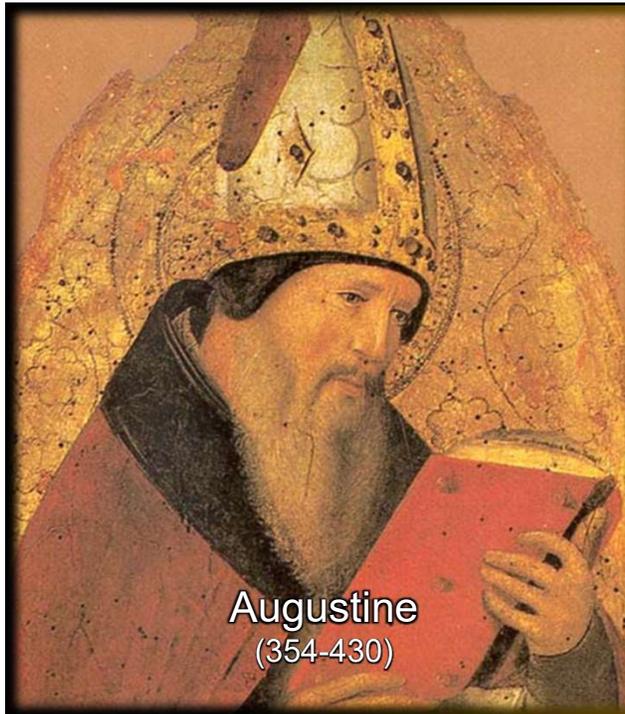
∞Moral Evil∞

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



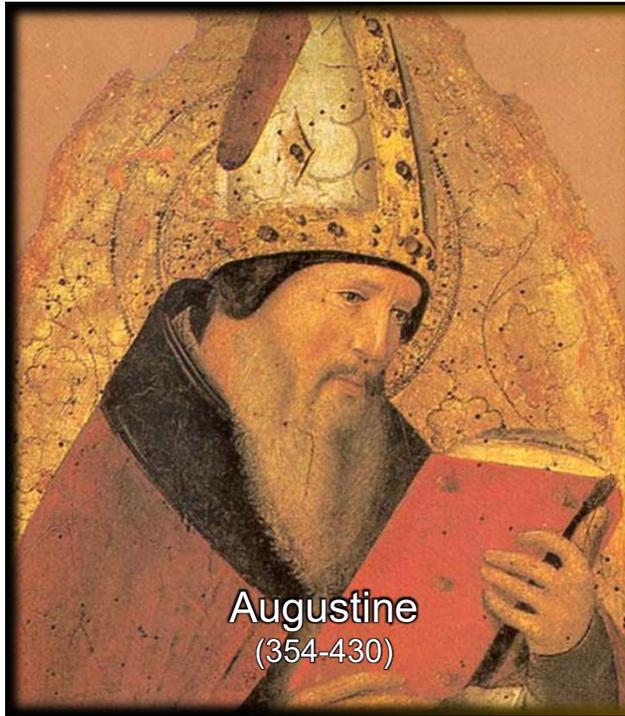
***If God created all things and
evil is something,
then God created evil.***

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



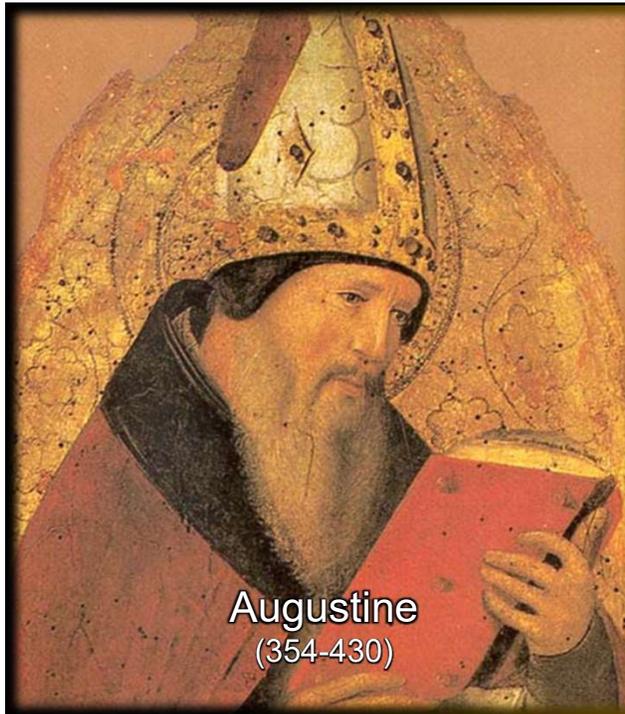
Augustine
(354-430)

**Augustine
on Evil as
Privation**



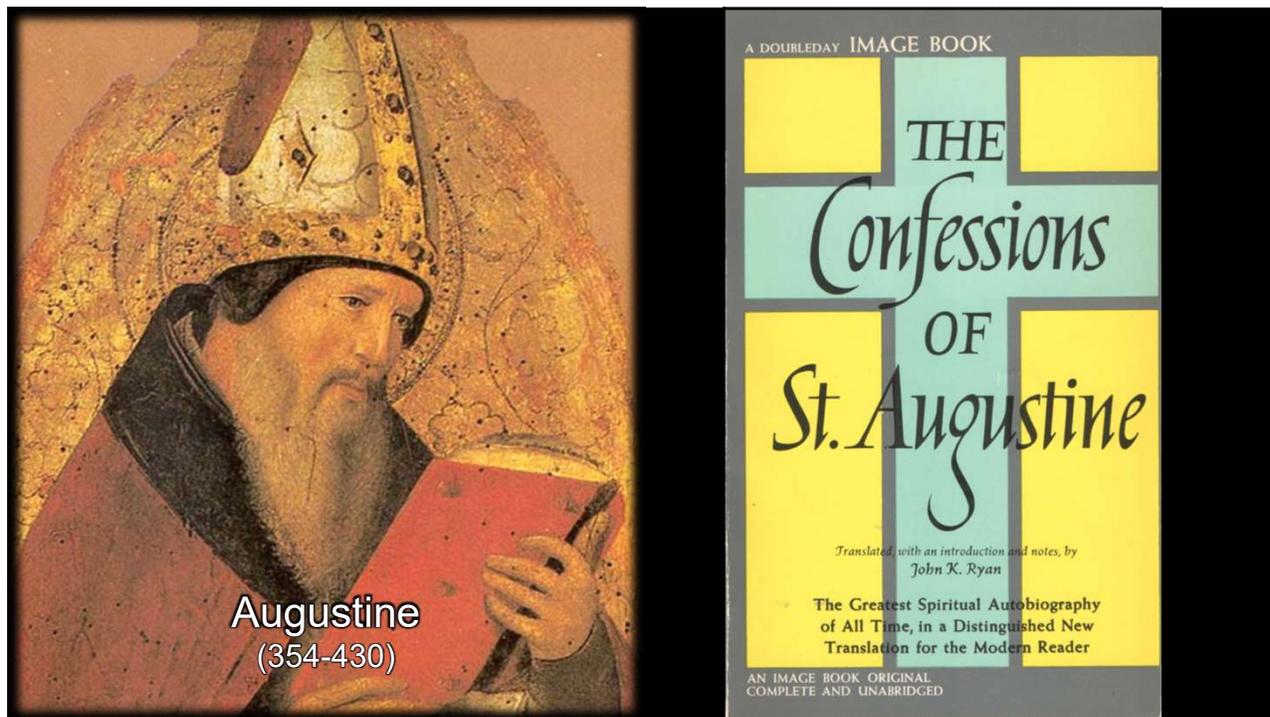
Augustine
(354-430)

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.



Augustine
(354-430)

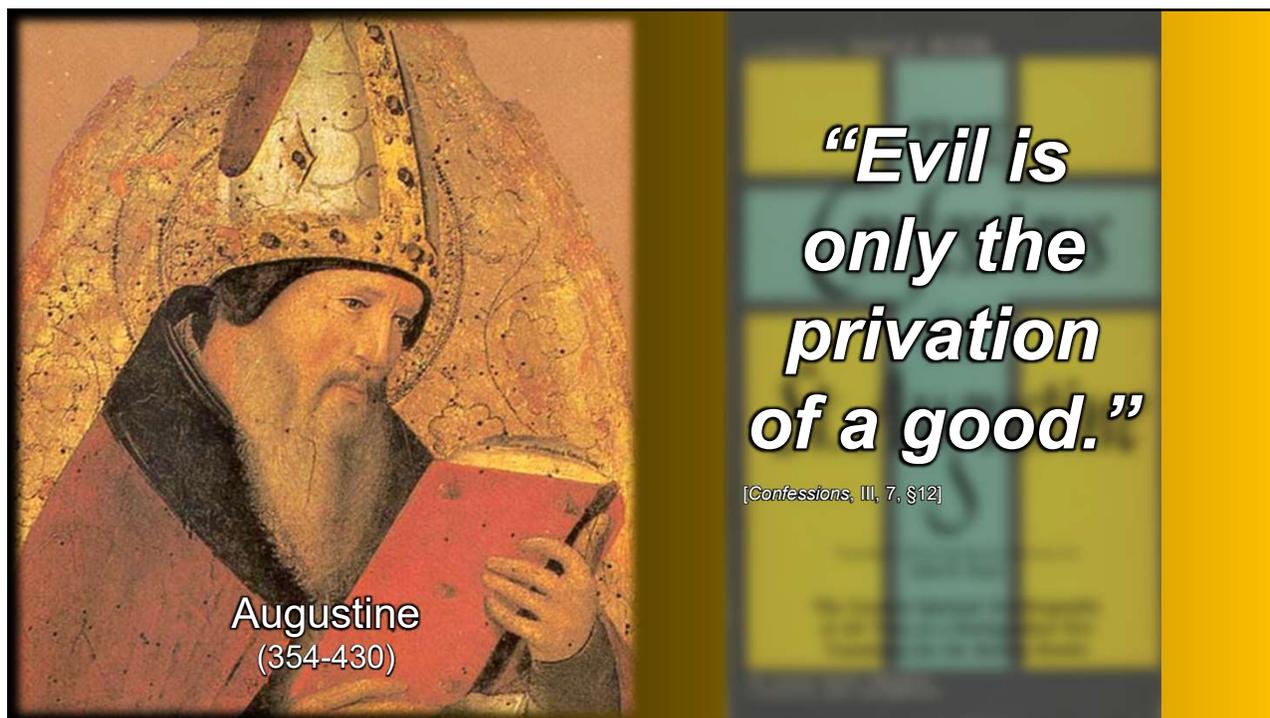
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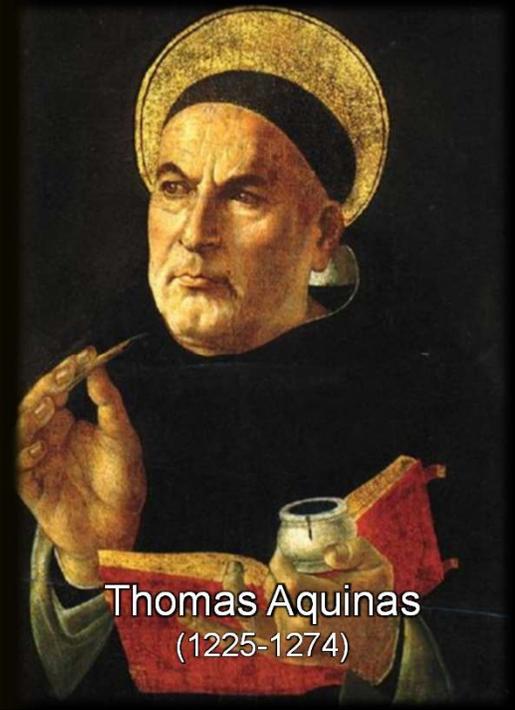
Augustine
(354-430)

**“Evil is
only the
privation
of a good.”**

[Confessions, III, 7, §12]

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

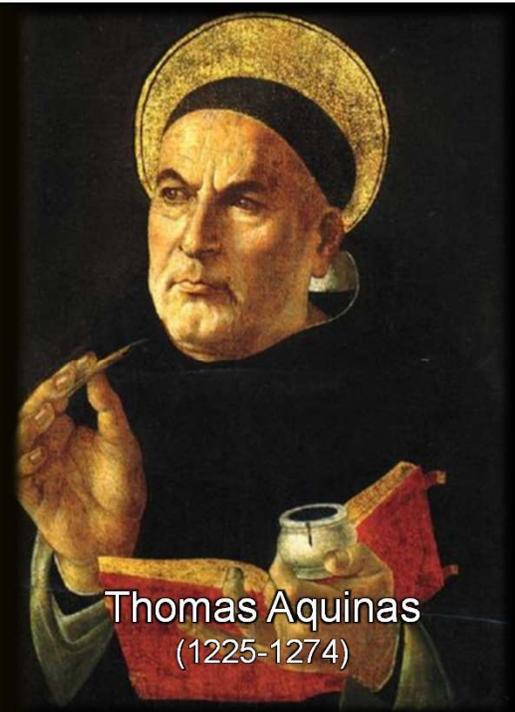
[Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 6, §1]



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.”

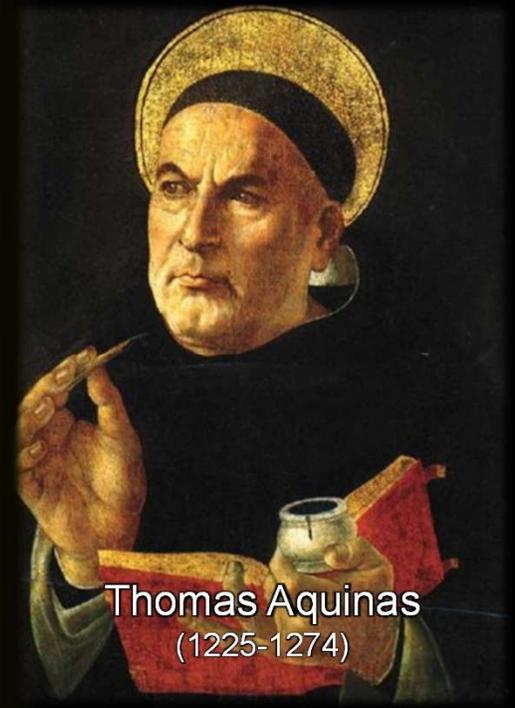
[Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 7, §2]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

“Evil is the absence of the good, which is natural and due to a thing.”

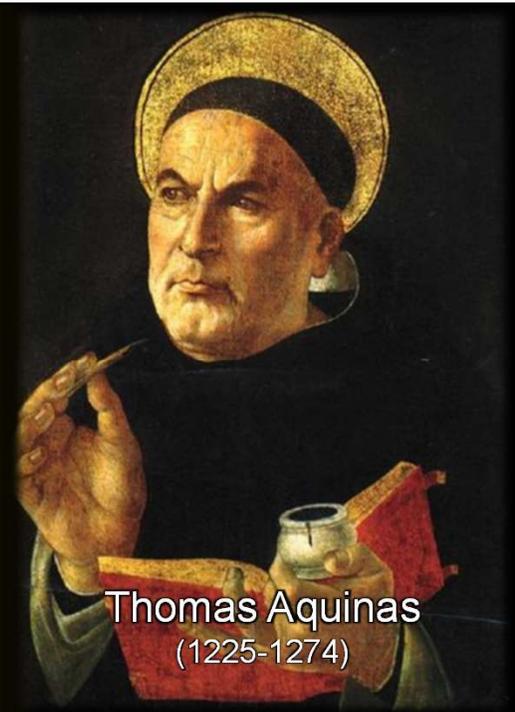
[*Summa Theologiae*, I, Q49, art. 1]



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

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

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



negation



privation

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

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



negation

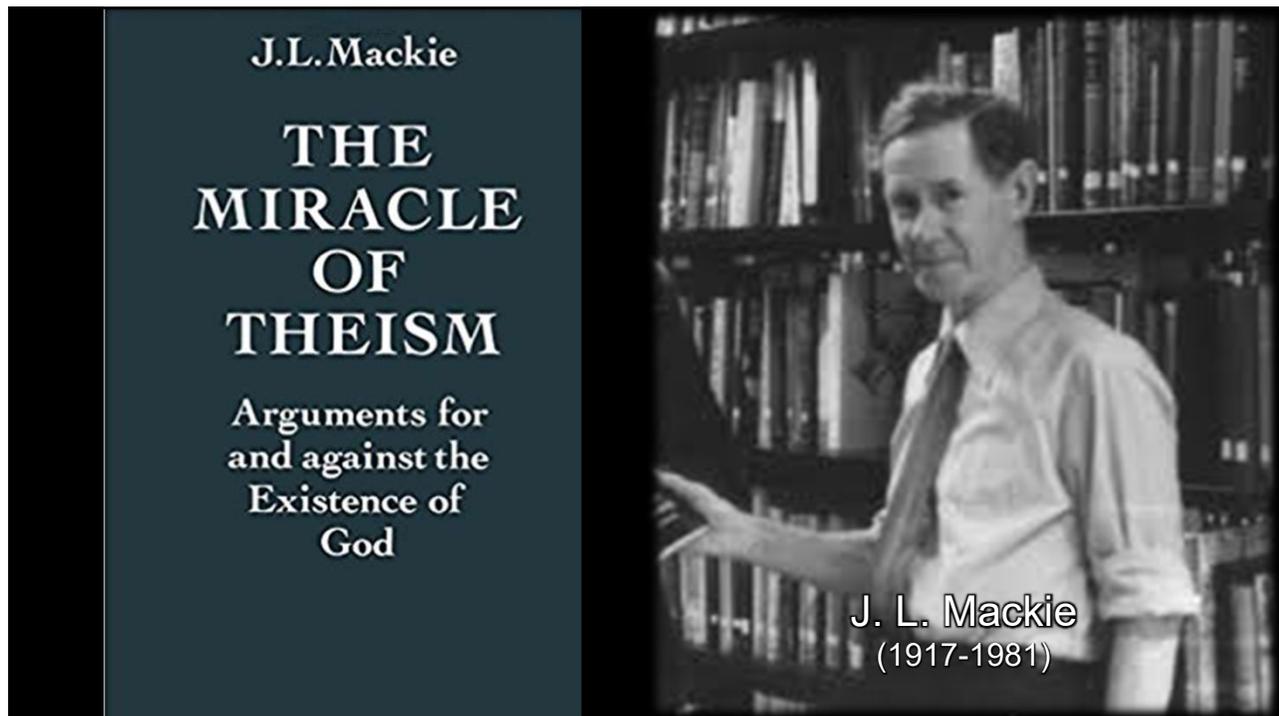


*Different
"Problems" of Evil*



*The Logical
Problem of Evil*

*the logical problem of evil is
notion that the propositions
“God exists”
and
“Evil exists”
are **logically** incompatible*



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

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



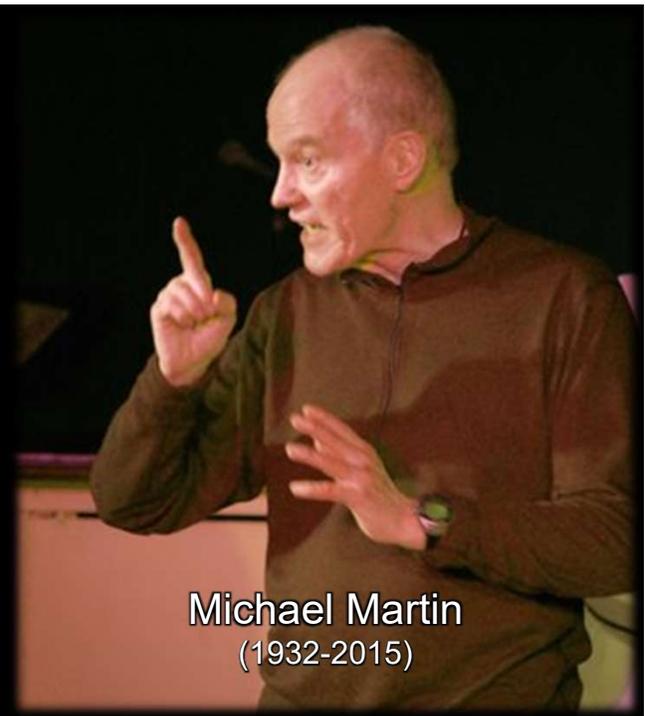
J. L. Mackie
(1917-1981)

A·T·H·E·I·S·M

A Philosophical Justification



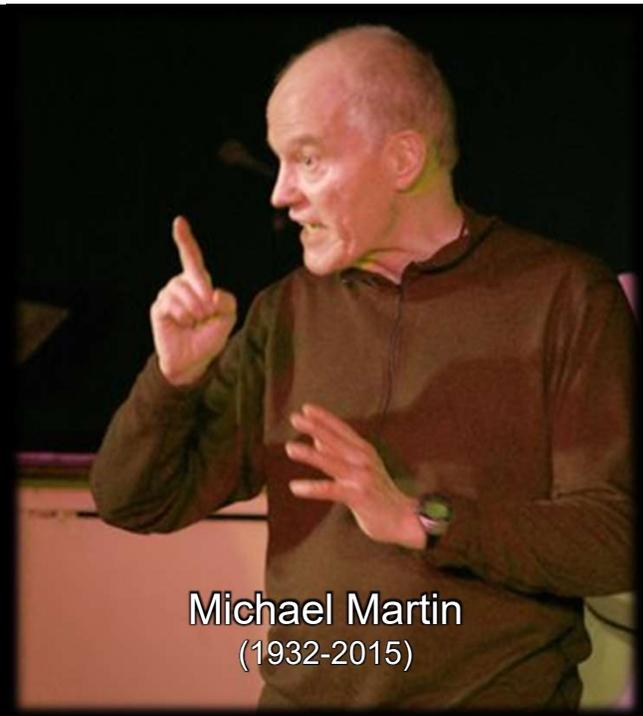
MICHAEL MARTIN



Michael Martin
(1932-2015)

"Because of the failure of deductive arguments from evil, atheologians have developed inductive or probabilistic arguments from evil for the nonexistence of God."

[*Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 335]

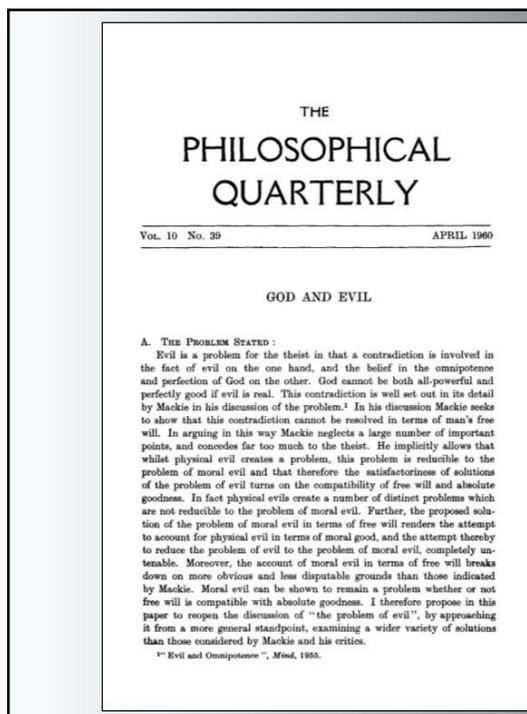
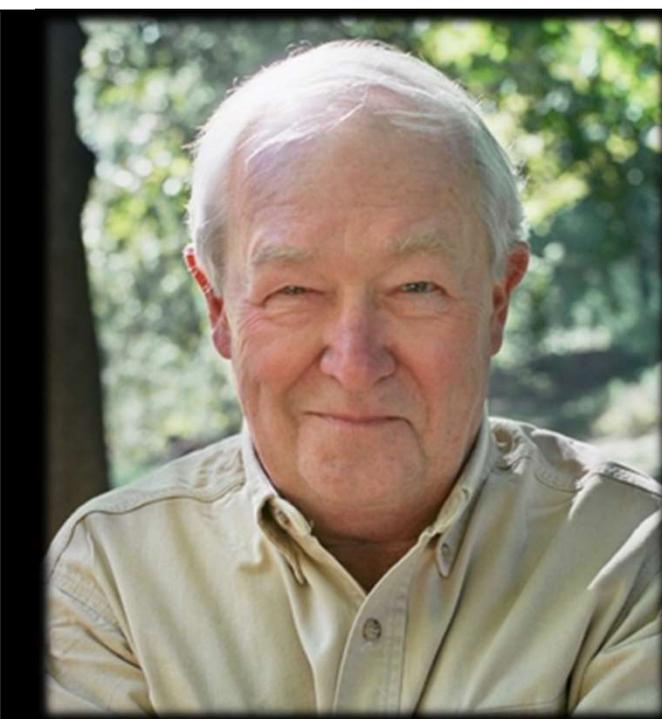
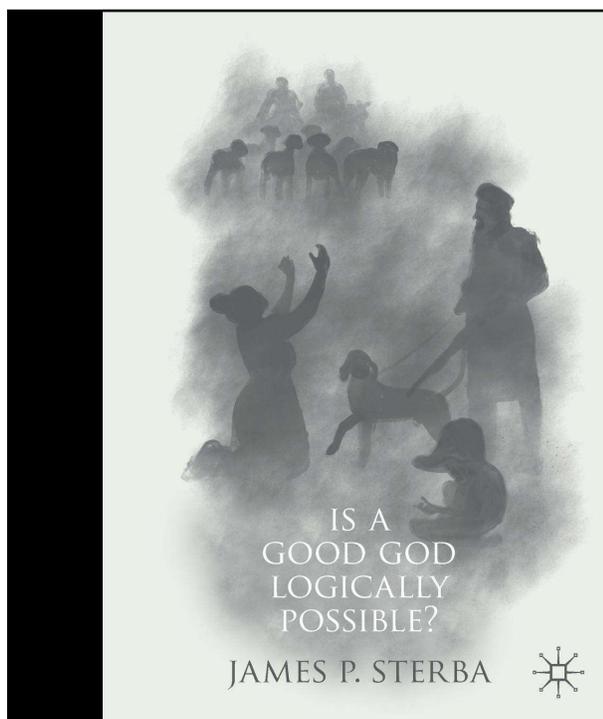


Michael Martin
(1932-2015)



"The deductive argument from evil claims that there is a contradiction inherent in affirming both the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God and the existence of evil. Most philosophers today agree that an inconsistency is not readily apparent, and surely a direct contradiction is generated by the three premises, without the addition of qualifying statements."

[Andrea M. Weisberger, "The Argument from Evil," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*, ed. Michael Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 167]



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

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

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Is a Good God Logically Impossible?

BY RICHARD CARRIER / ON AUGUST 27, 2019 / 6 COMMENTS

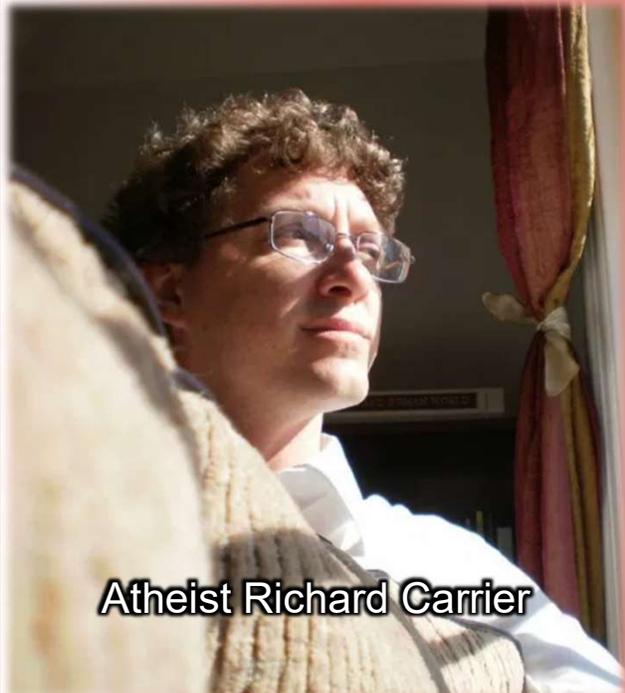
Philosopher James Sterba just came out with [a book of that title](#), arguing for the conclusion that a good God is logically impossible, given present observations. At the same time, Michael Shermer and Brian Huffling published [in *Skeptic Magazine*](#) a closing exchange in reaction to their debate on the same question.

Both are very interesting reads; Sterba's even quite useful, if you want to hone your ability to explain why the Argument from Evil cannot be dismissed with any of the tactics delusional

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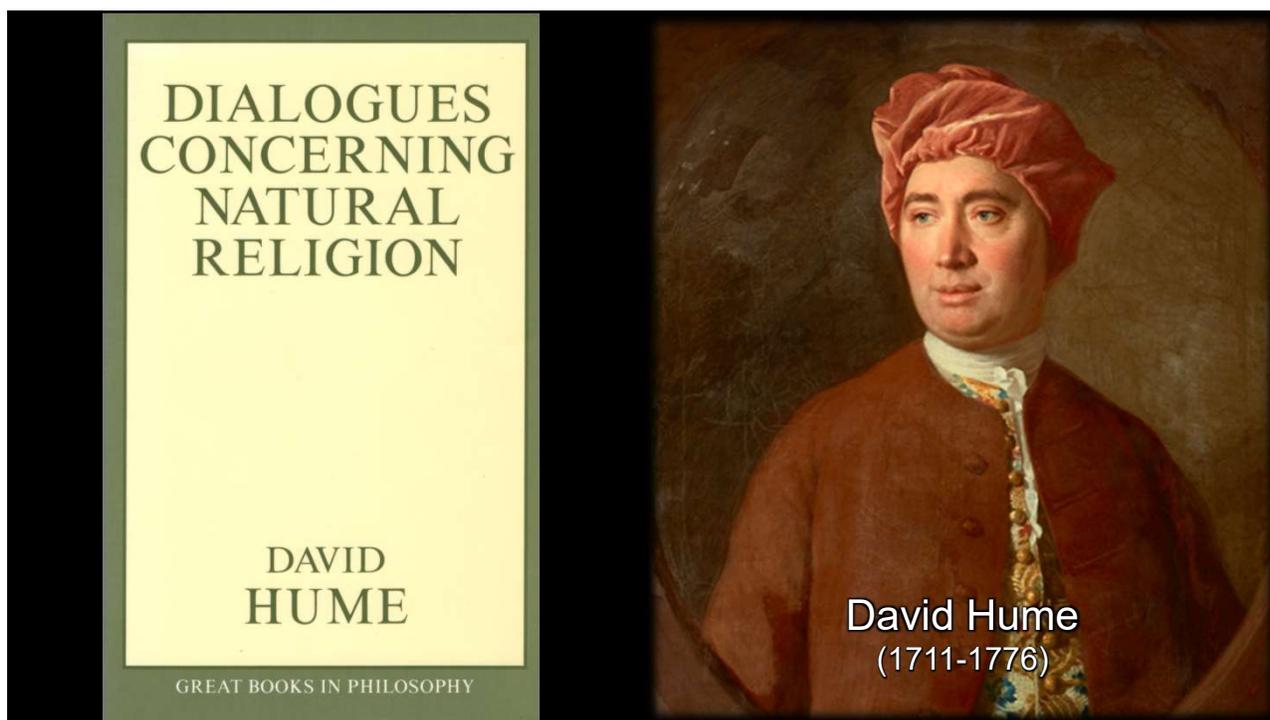
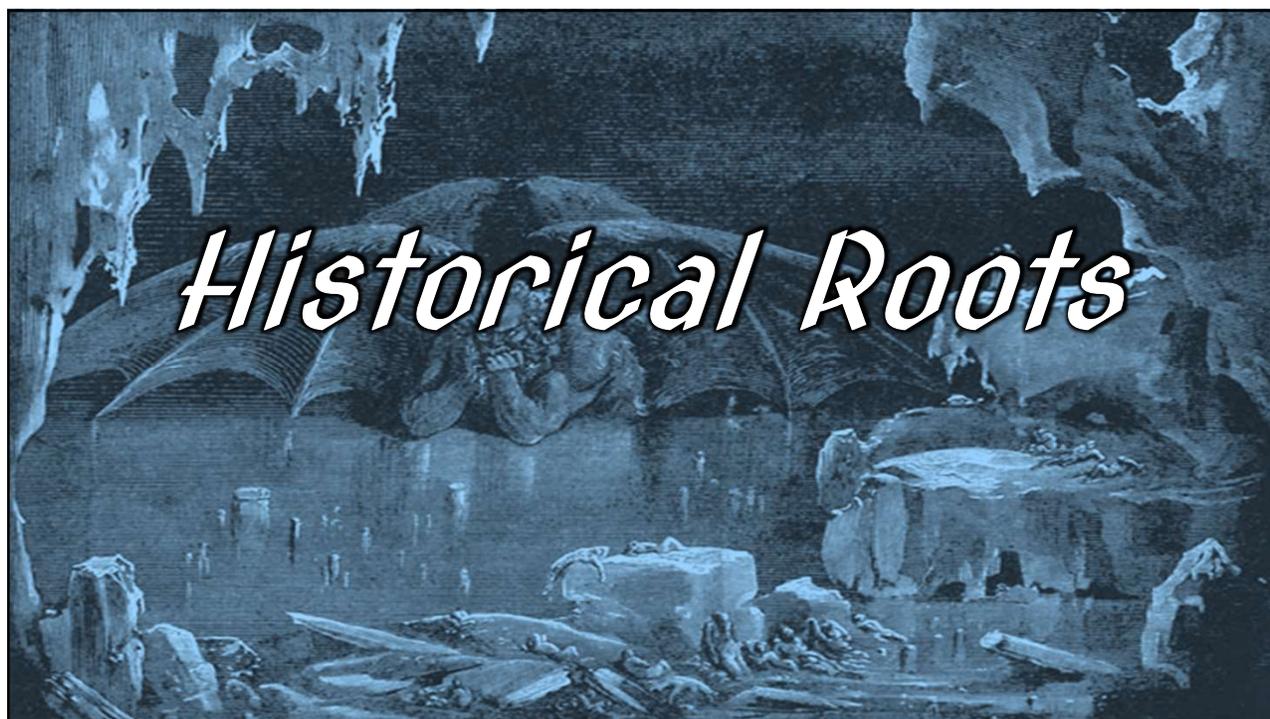


Atheist Richard Carrier

"So as clever and useful I find Sterba's argument to be, I don't see it providing a logical proof of the impossibility of a good God."

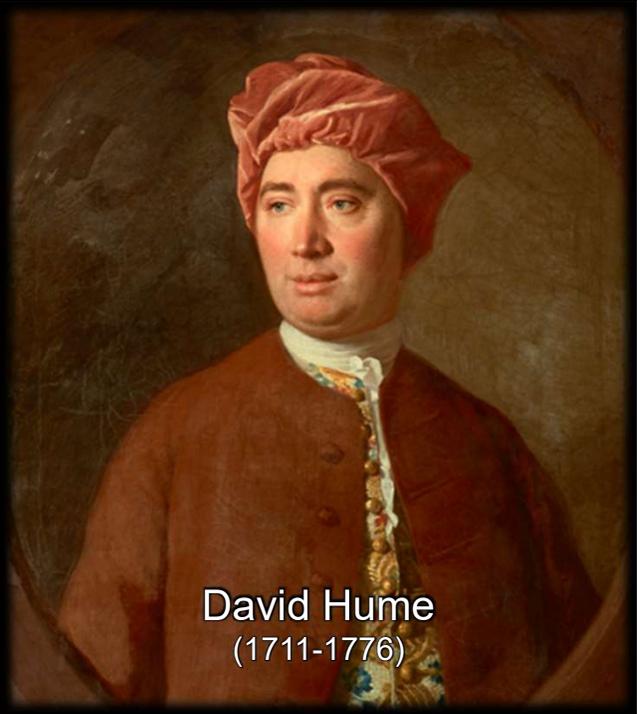
***The Pastoral
(Existential)
Problem of Evil***

***The Philosophical /
Inductive / Evidential /
Moral Problem of Evil***

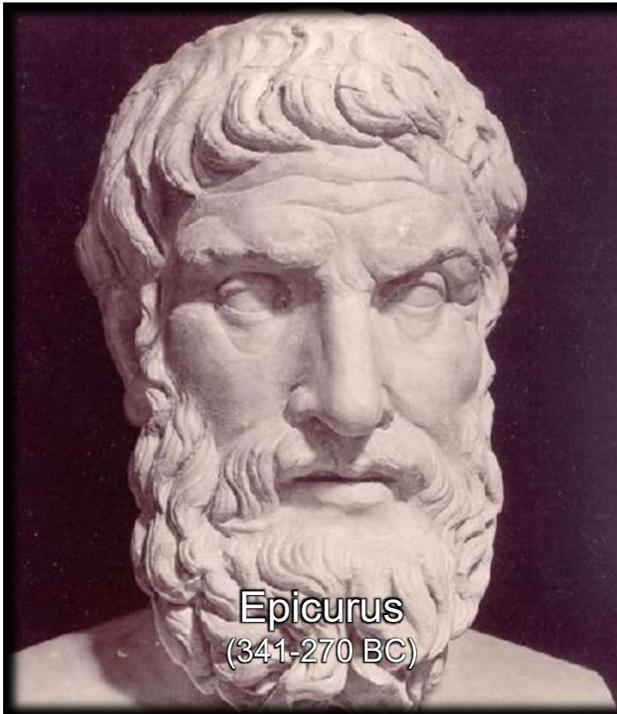


Philo: "Epicurus' old questions are yet unanswered. Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?"

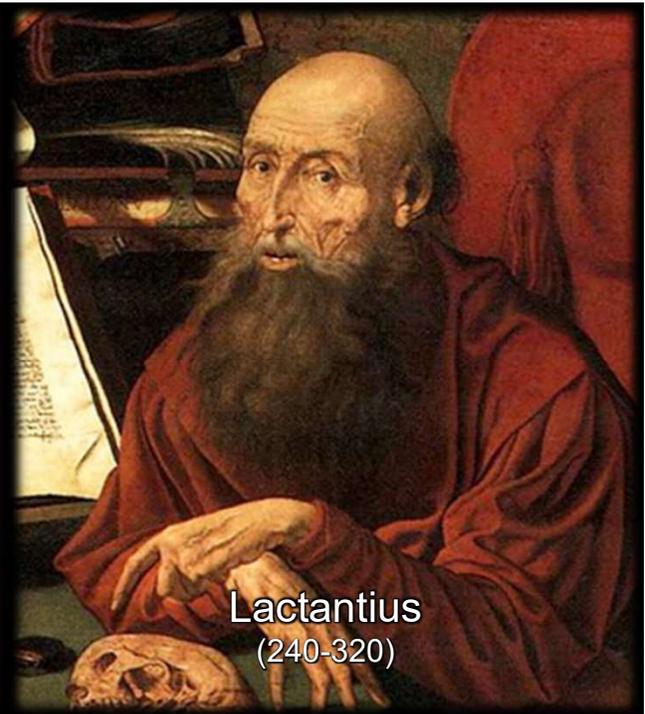
[Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1989), 84]



David Hume
(1711-1776)

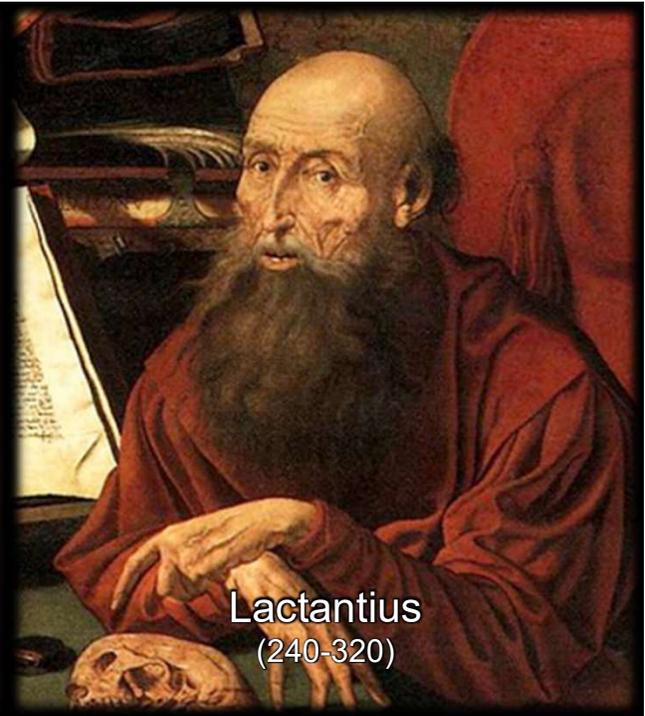


Epicurus
(341-270 BC)



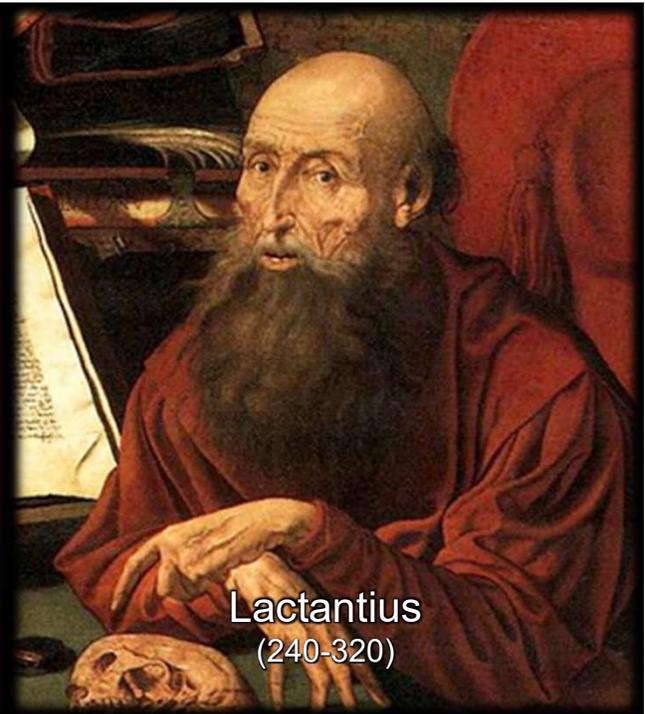
Lactantius
(240-320)

“God, [Epicurus] says, either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able.



Lactantius
(240-320)

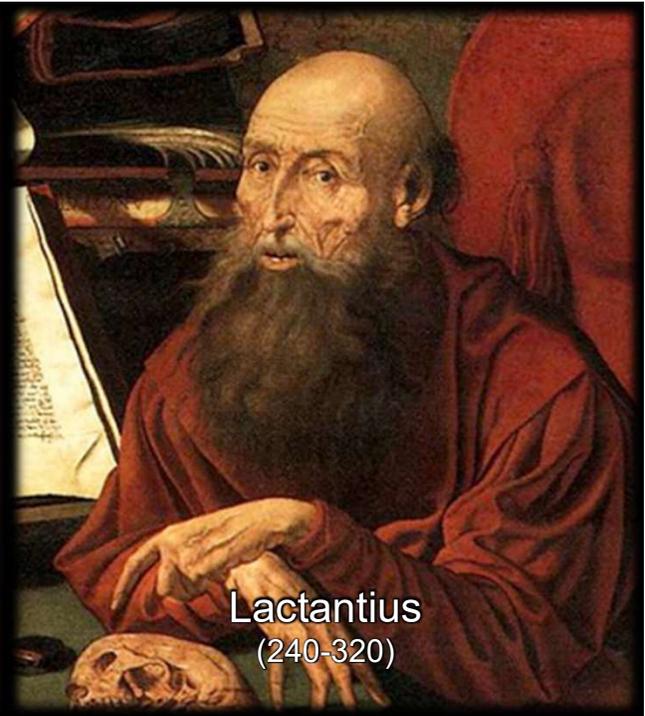
“If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God;



Lactantius
(240-320)

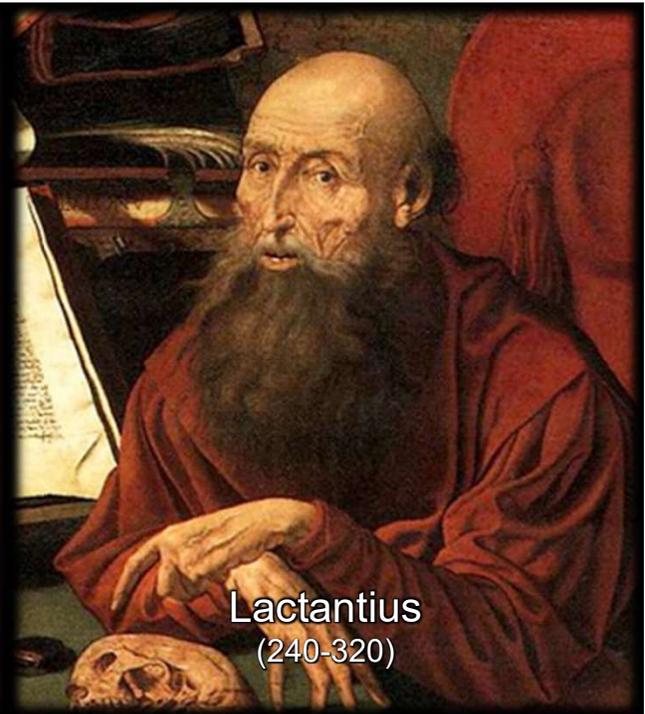
“If He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? or why does He not remove them?”

[Lactantius, *On the Anger of God*, XIV,
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0703.htm>, accessed 08/10/22]

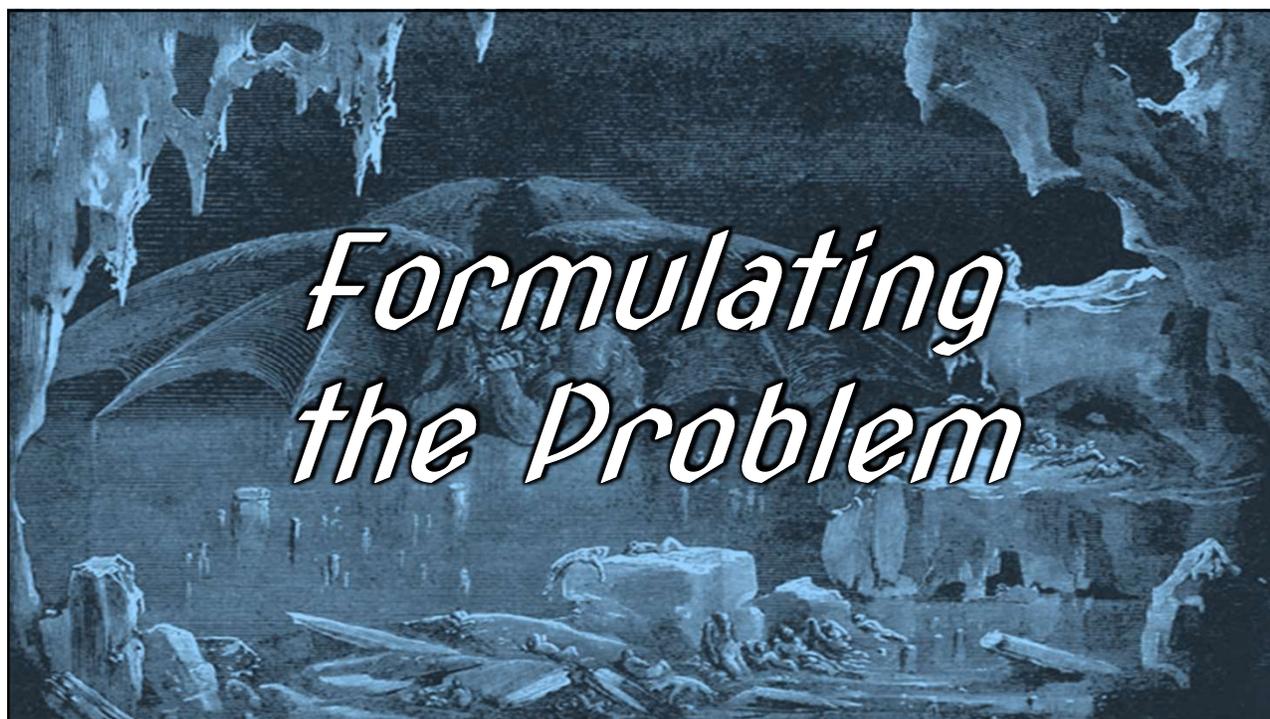


Lactantius
(240-320)

It would seem that Lactantius was mistaken in attributing this quote or sentiment to Epicurus.



Lactantius
(240-320)



∞ Premise 1 ∞

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

∞ Premise 2 ∞

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

∞ Premise 3 ∞

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

↪ Premise 3 ↪

left well enough
alone and not
created in the
first place

taken steps to
prevent the
occurrence
of evil

∞ Premise 4 ∞

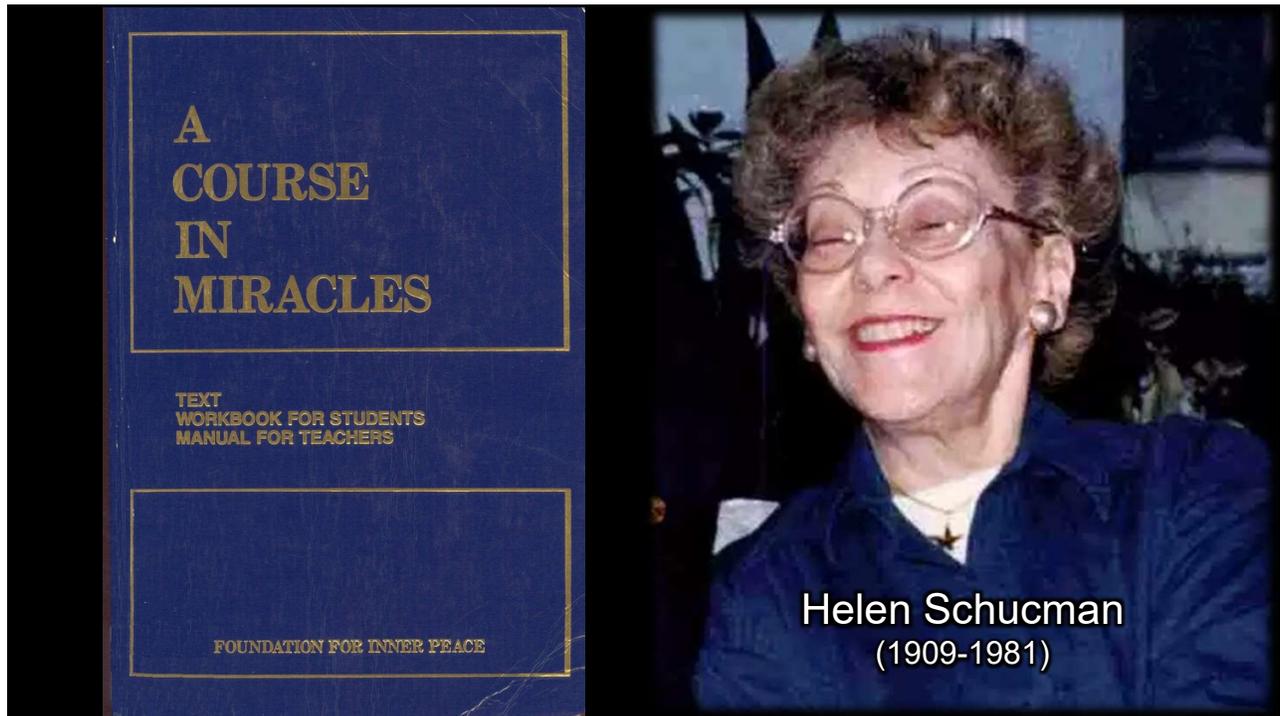
*There is evil, i.e. evil
is not prevented.*

❧ Conclusions ❧

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

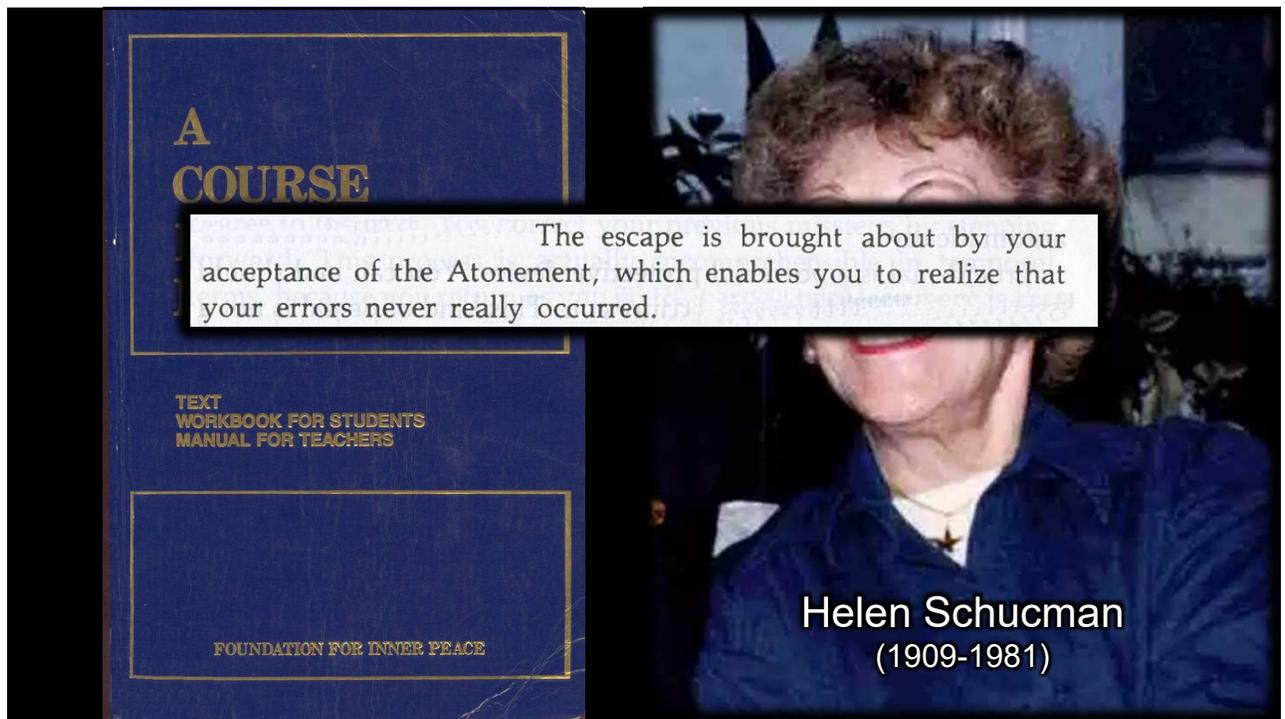


*Evil does
not exist.*

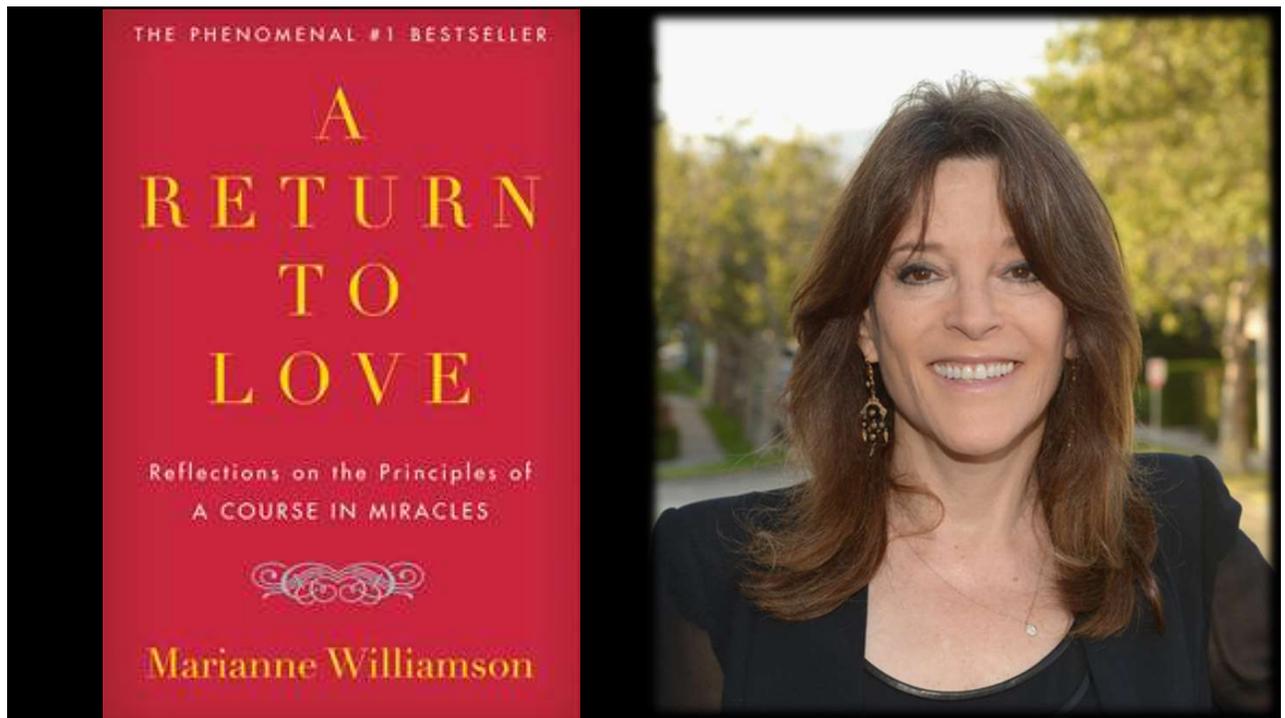


Helen Schucman
(1909-1981)





Helen Schucman
(1909-1981)





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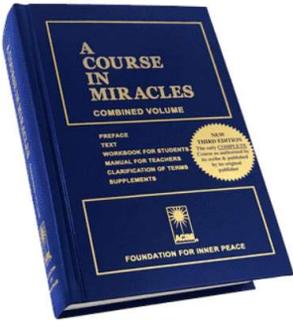
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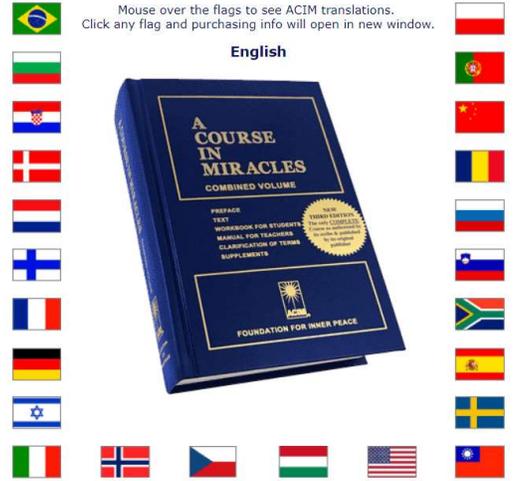
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 Cost: Free, donations accepted to support the space

What if you were able to go about your life being exactly yourself without any shame, insecurity, fear, regret, or doubt? What if you found out that all those mistakes you made in the past really didn't happen the way you think? What if, you were able to release yourself and others from all guilt and blame for the every day mistakes we see in this life? What if you didnt have to

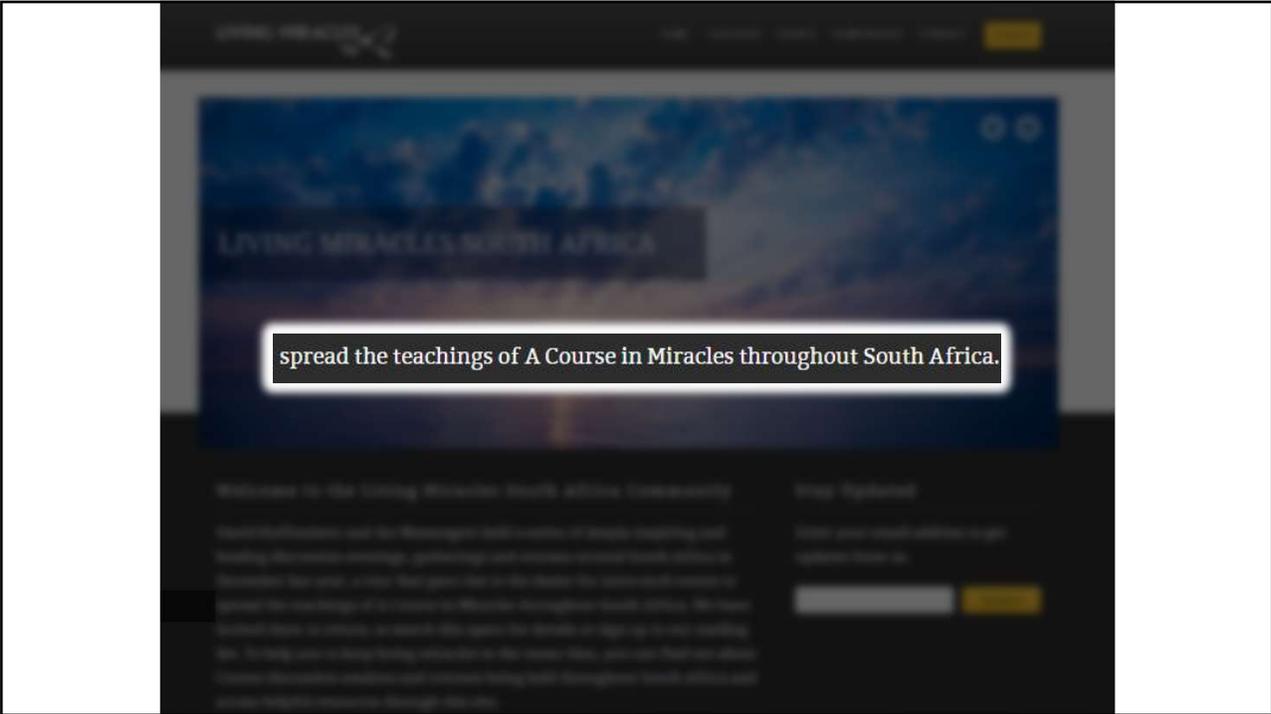
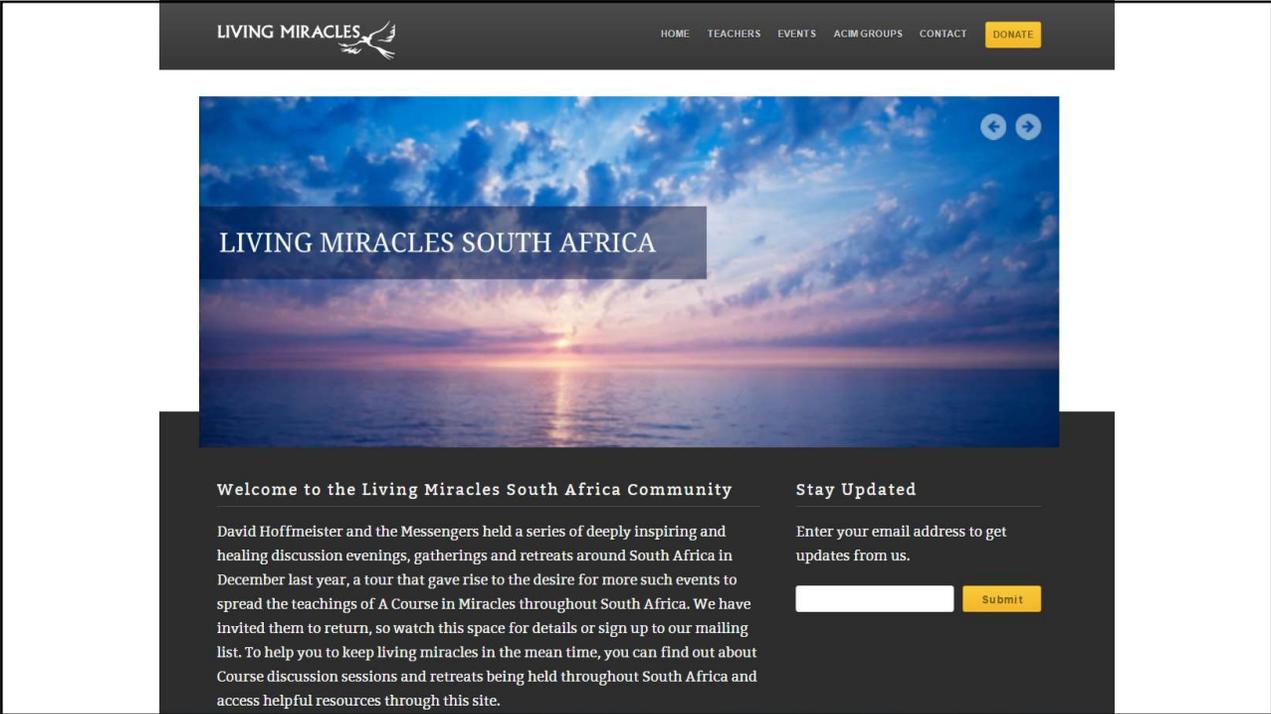
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Welcome to the Living Miracles South Africa Community

David Hoffmeister and the Messengers held a series of deeply inspiring and healing discussion evenings, gatherings and retreats around South Africa in December last year, a tour that gave rise to the desire for more such events to spread the teachings of A Course in Miracles throughout South Africa. We have invited them to return, so watch this space for details or sign up to our mailing list. To help you to keep living miracles in the mean time, you can find out about Course discussion sessions and retreats being held throughout South Africa and access helpful resources through this site.

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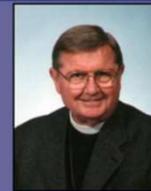
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Rev. Shannon Johnston



Rev. Gene Asbury

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October 10 & 17, 2004
- The Rev. Shannon S. Johnston

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"A Return to Love: Reflections on A Course in Miracles" by Marianne Williamson

through much suffering, repentance, and at times, even fear. So, read this and own it. SSJ[†]

**Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us.
We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,
talented, and fabulous?"
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking.
We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fears,
our presence automatically liberates others.**

"A Return to Love: Reflections on A Course in Miracles"
by Marianne Williamson

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Boone, NC
Founded May 11, 2014

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This course meets every FIRST and THIRD Sunday.

A Course In Miracles aims at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. This course can be summed up very simply in this way: Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. The course focuses on love, peace, forgiveness. It does not consider itself to be the only path... instead, it has the feel of a non-sectarian, non-denominational spirituality. The curriculum of the course is explained at both the theoretical and practical levels. It is, therefore, considered a universal spiritual teaching, and not a religion.

ACIM is a unique, self-study thought system of forgiveness, through which love and peace can be attained.

A Course in Miracles (ACIM) is a way of looking at life differently. The emphasis is on connection with spirit instead of listening to the voice of the ego. The book consists of a text (theoretical), a 365 page workbook (practical application) and a manual for teachers. All available in our bookstore.

The Atlanta Unity Course in Miracles group is an ongoing group that has been meeting since January 2007. The format is informal, and is meant to be a conversational discussion based on each person's experience with ACIM. One week does not necessarily build upon a previous week. The facilitator

DIVINE WORDS WORTH FOLLOWING
Who's ready for the fall festival this Sunday and what yummy dish are you bringing to the potluck? #130498

DAILY WORD
Daily Word, published by Unity, offers insight and inspiration to help people of all faiths live healthy, prosperous and meaningful lives.

DAILYWORD
Friday, October 24, 2014
NATURE
Communing with nature, I find oneness.
Read today's message from Daily Word magazine.

Welcome!

+ JOIN AND SUGGEST A NEW MEETUP

Upcoming 1 | Suggested 0 | Past | Calendar

A Course in Miracles Study Group

The Treehouse Center for Spirituality and Healing
1774B Century Boulevard, Atlanta, GA (map)

Thu Oct 24
7:00 PM

RSVP **3 days left**

We are going to be reading and discussing Chapter 13. See you on Thursday! [LEARN MORE](#)

3 attending
0 comments

Hosted by: Tanya (ACIM students)

This Meetup repeats every week on Thursday

A Course in Miracles Study Group	1 attending	Thu Oct 31, 7:00 PM
A Course in Miracles Study Group	1 attending	Thu Nov 7, 7:00 PM
A Course in Miracles Study Group	1 attending	Thu Nov 14, 7:00 PM

MORE MEETUPS ▼

THE URANTIA BOOK

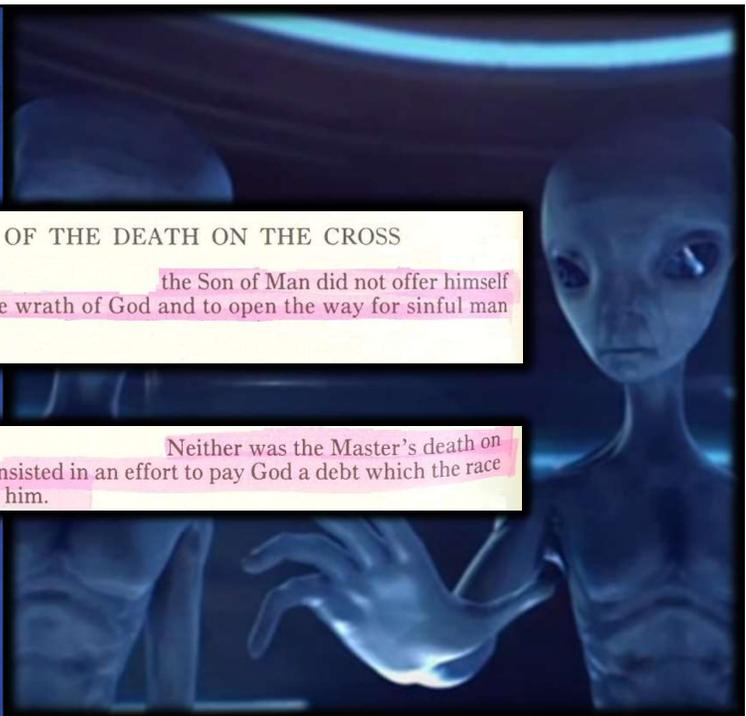


THE URANTIA BOOK

4. MEANING OF THE DEATH ON THE CROSS

the Son of Man did not offer himself as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God and to open the way for sinful man to obtain salvation;

Neither was the Master's death on the cross a sacrifice which consisted in an effort to pay God a debt which the race of mankind had come to owe him.





Join Us in Community and Fellowship

A worldwide family of truth seekers from every religion, race, and country.

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"Loyal persons are growing persons, and growth is an impressive and inspiring
"In preaching the gospel of the kingdom, you are simply teaching friendship
with God."



Atlanta Urantia Study Group

October 20, 2013 Your Study Location for the UB in Atlanta



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This weeks featured video:

The Urantia Book, Paper 24, Higher Personalities of the Infinite Spirit,

Section 1, The Universe Circuit Supervisors, Page (264.1) or 24.0.1
Meeting October 16, 2013

UB Study Documents

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[Our Religion](#)

[Adam and Eve's Children](#)

[UB Forward Simplification](#)

Useful Links

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PATOBANTON

Life is a Miracle

Roger's Corner
[A Journey to beliefs "In My Opinion"](#)

[Worship and Prayer Guide](#)

Children's Corner
[Looking for New Ideas](#)
[Whisper's Song](#)
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Blogs
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FORUM for Members
Community Calendar & Events
Society Charter Application
Study Groups
Volunteer

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Below is a list of all the study groups. View a map of study group locations.

<p>Charlotte NC Urantia Book Study Group Charlotte, NC, 28078 US Markel Whisonant 704 492-9827 MarkelWhisonant@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Charlottesville VA ~ Urantia Book Study Group Charlottesville, VA, 22936 US Preston Thomas 434 973-6851 lptjr@comcast.net</p>
<p>Chehalis WA Urantia Book Study Group Chehalis, WA, 98532 US Susan Lamoreaux 360 245-3269 smlamoreaux@myhome.net</p>	<p>Chicago IL ~ Urantia Study Group Chicago, IL, US Eugene Asidao and Nestor Nano 773 478-4317 (Eugene) 773 367-9544 (Nestor) elaueugene@aol.com or nrm0320@gmail.com Saturdays from 2:00 - 5:00 PM</p>
<p>Chicago IL First Society Forum Study Group Chicago, IL, 60660 US David Owen 773-472-7612 (David) cece606@gmail.com alternating Sundays - 1:30-3:30 PM (Sept - May)</p>	<p>Chicago IL Study Group at 533 Diversey Chicago, IL, 60614 US Urantia Foundation 773 525-3319 urantia@urantia.org Tuesdays - 7:0 PM</p>

URANTIASTUDYGROUP.ORG English

Home Account Register About Study Groups FAQ About Us Contact Us

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

City	Charlotte
Postal Code	28220
Region or Metro Info	Charlotte
Primary Language	English
Meeting Day	Sunday
Meeting Time	11:00am
Meeting Regularity	Weekly
Primary Contact Name	Click to see
Primary Contact Email	Click to see
Primary Contact Phone	Click to see
Secondary Contact Name	Click to see
Secondary Contact Email	Click to see
Secondary Contact Phone	Click to see

All are welcome

Queen City Truth Seekers

 Face-to-Face

Map Satellite



English | Suomi



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2017
May (1)
March (8)

2016
December (12)
September (4)
June (9)
March (8)

2015
December (8)
September (9)
July (1)
June (11)
March (10)

2014
December (9)
September (10)
July (10)
June (1)
March (9)

2013
December (10)
November (2)
September (12)
July (1)
June (9)
April (1)
March (11)

2012
November (13)
August (14)
June (13)

Seeding the Revelation in South Africa

in Distribution

Date:
Sat, 12/01/2007

Author:
Simone Cox

By Simone Cox, South Africa

Note from Tamara Wood – Urantia Foundation Coordinator for the South African Initiative:

A project to place over 1000 Urantia Books across Southern Africa has been sponsored by many individuals within the reader community and carried out by Mark Bloomfield. The project began in June when the first shipment of 500 books was received by Mark in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Since then 700 books have been gratefully accepted by public libraries, universities and religious institutions as indicated by the many thank you letters Urantia Foundation has received.

Mark has covered a lot of territory within South Africa and has also placed books in Namibia and Botswana. Currently, he is en route to Mombassa, Kenya where 300 books will be arriving for additional library placement. After this round, Mark will return to South Africa to receive one more shipment of 300 books in order to complete this phase of his mission.

The Trustees and Staff extend their thanks to the reader community for participating in this service of making our treasured text available to so many individuals across Southern Africa.

On behalf of the budding Urantia community in South Africa, kindly allow me to express our gratitude and appreciation for the wonderful work you are doing in service of the fifth epochal revelation, our Christ Michael and our beloved planet, and for your generous contributions to our own efforts.

As a spiritually progressive country, South Africa is thirsty for the rich blessing of the Urantia teachings. Not only will we benefit greatly from the books seeded into our local libraries, but we also enjoy upliftment and encouragement from your loving prayers and kind support.

Announcements

Annual Reports

Appointments

Audio Urantia Book

Board Meeting Decisions

Chinese Translation

Committee Reports

Danish Translation

Distribution

Dutch Publishing

Education Outreach

English Publishing

Estonian Publishing

Farsi Translation

Finnish Publishing

French Publishing

Fundraising

Gatherings

German Publishing

Hebrew Translation

Hungarian Publishing

In Memoriam

Indonesian Translation

Inspirational

Italian Publishing

Japanese Translation

Korean Publishing

Lithuanian Publishing

Polish Publishing

Portuguese Publishing

Reader Comments

Russian Publishing

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2017 Southeast Urantia Gathering

Trust: Enduring In Faith



2017 Southeast Urantia Gathering
Alabama 4-H Youth Center
Columbiana, AL May 6, 2017

The screenshot shows the Meetup page for 'The Asheville Study Group'. At the top, the Meetup logo is visible. The group title 'The Asheville Study Group' is prominently displayed in a red banner. Below the banner, there are navigation links: Home, Members, Sponsors, Photos, Pages, Discussions, and More. A 'Join us!' button is located in the top right corner.

The main content area includes a description of the group: 'The Asheville Study Group is a gathering of students who have embraced The Fifth Epochal Revelation to human kind. These enthusiastic readers of The Urantia Book have, in light of its teachings, developed a hunger for Truth, hearts for service, and a fervent desire to become more effective in our personal and organizational ministries.' It also states: 'Ours is a purpose driven group, one which recognizes that God resides within each of us. We engage in lively discussion and build authentic community as we search the revelation for ways to become ever more responsive to Divine leading. The group dynamic serves to refine our vision, to inform our personal motivation as well as enhance our commitment to the highest fidelity in relationships.' and 'We sponsor activities that help people discern Our Father's will, to develop an appreciation for the opportunities He grants us, and work to increase each person's understanding of the Jesusonian command to love one another as he loves us.'

On the left side, there is a sidebar with the following information:

- Asheville, NC
- Founded Feb 29, 2016
- Members: 25
- Group reviews: 3
- Upcoming Meetups: 1
- Past Meetups: 15
- Our calendar
- Help support your Meetup: Chip In
- Organizer: Bob Kalk (with a contact button)
- We're about: Urantia Book - Spirituality - Christian - Jesus Christ - Reading & Discussion - The Urantia Book - Urantia - Urantia Readers - Discover The Urantia

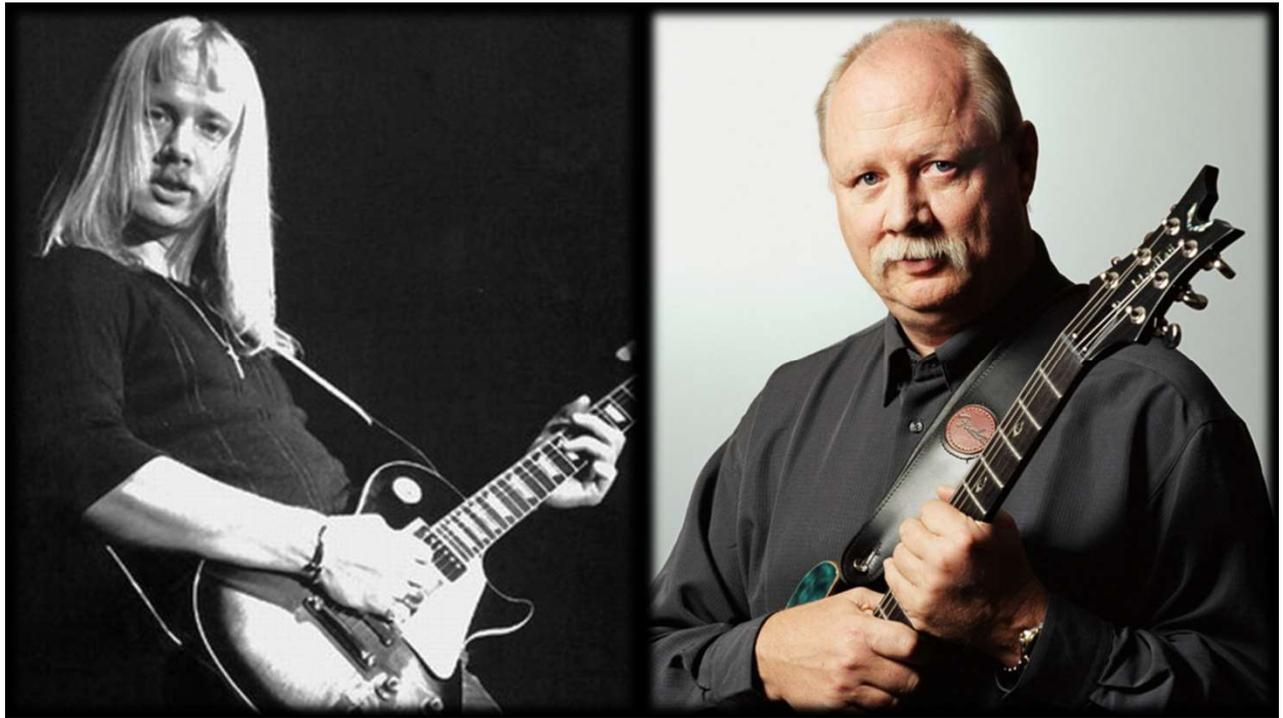
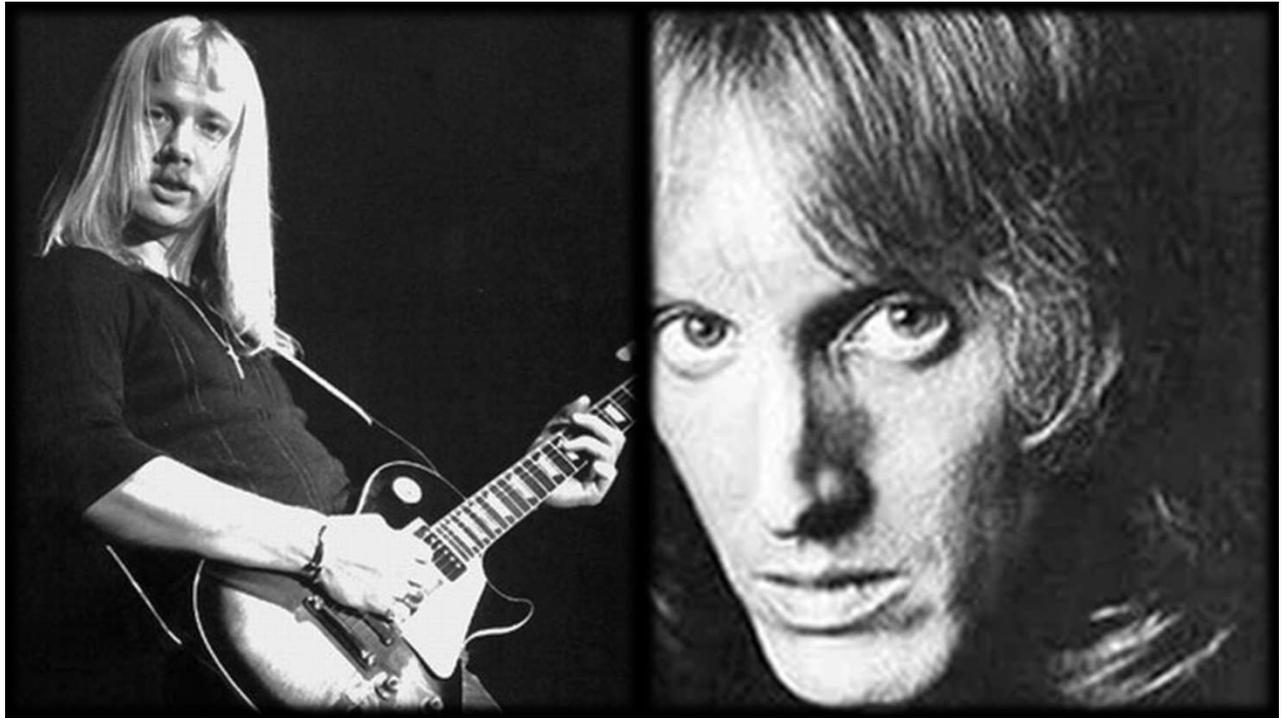
At the bottom of the main content area, there is a 'Welcome!' section with an 'Upcoming (1)' tab selected. The event listed is 'Birth and Infancy of Jesus (Paper 122)', an Online Video Conference on Saturday, April 15 at 3:00 PM. The description reads: 'The Urantia Book Paper 122 Birth and Infancy of Jesus 122:0.1. [masked] IT WILL hardly be possible fully to explain the many reasons which led to the selection of... Learn more'. There are 3 people going and 0 comments.

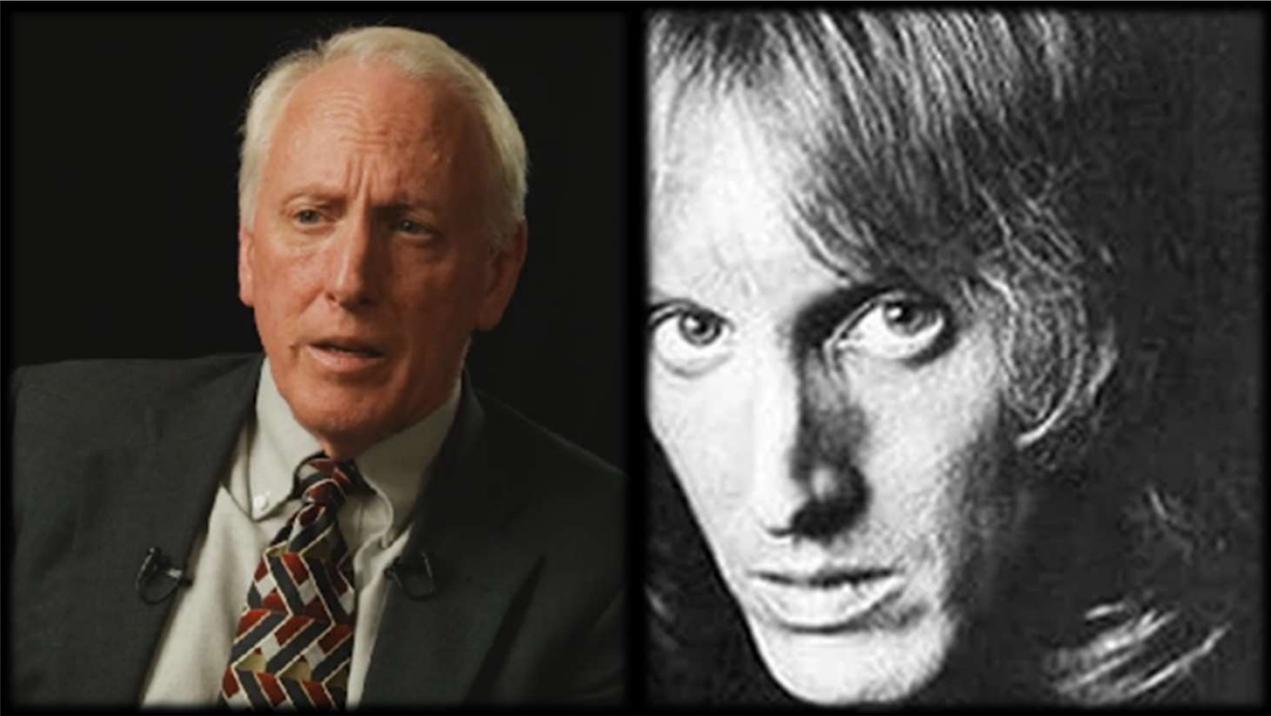
On the right side, there is a 'What's new' section showing a new discussion by Bob K. titled 'The Times of Michael's Bestowal' from March 20.

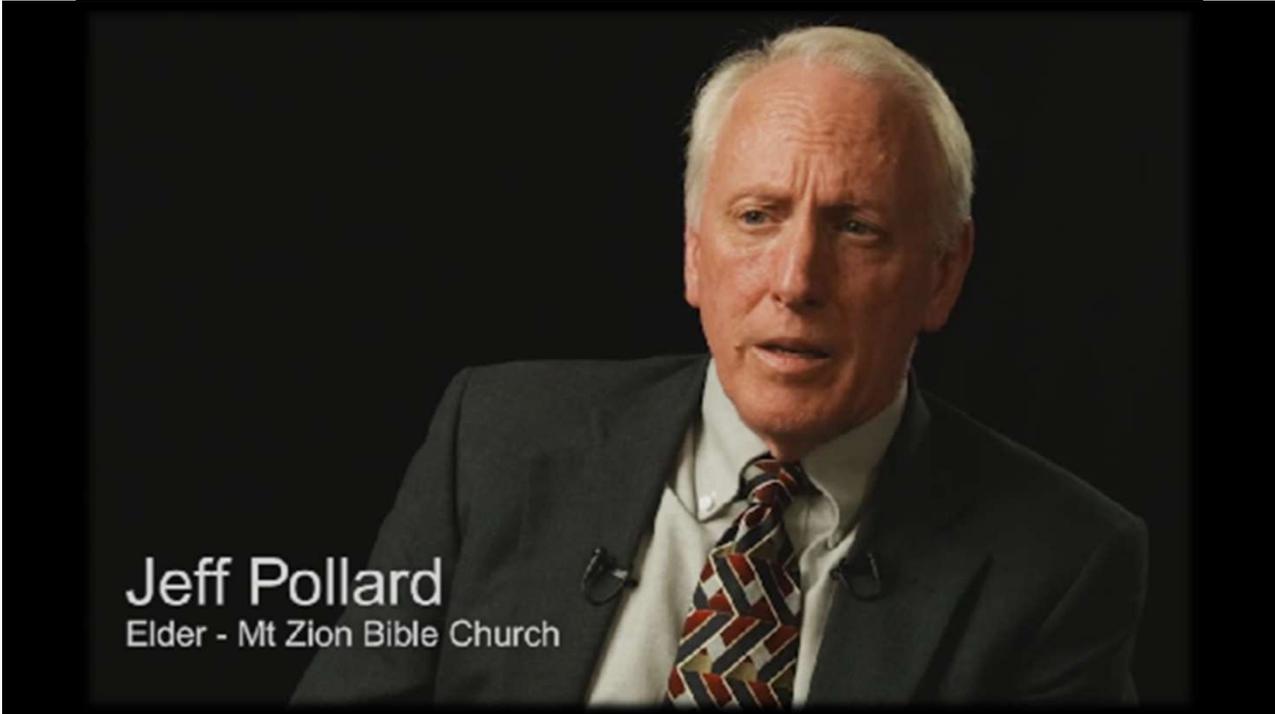


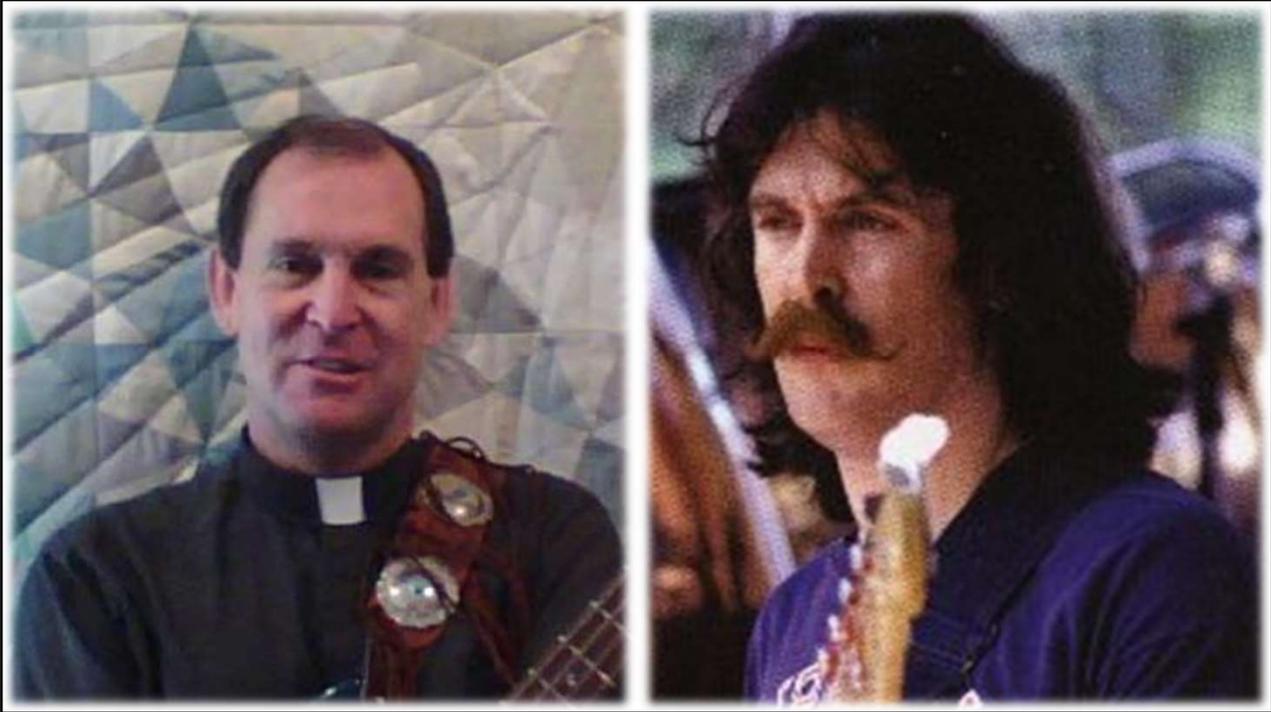
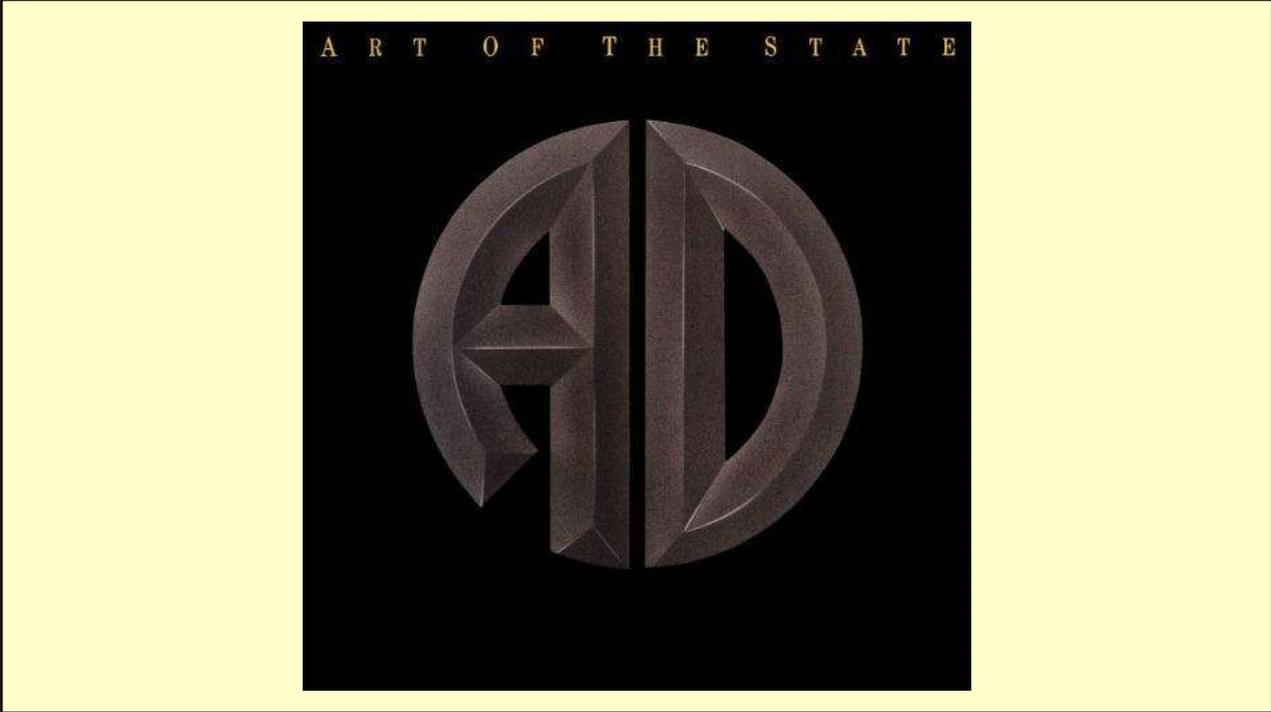












***God is not
all-good.***

Greek Polytheism

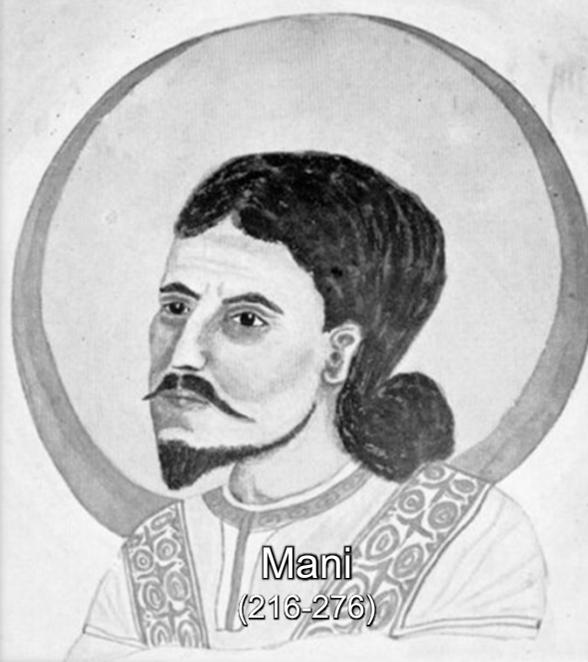
*held that there were both good and
evil gods*

*explained evil in the world by the evil
among the gods*



Manicheanism

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



Manicheanism

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



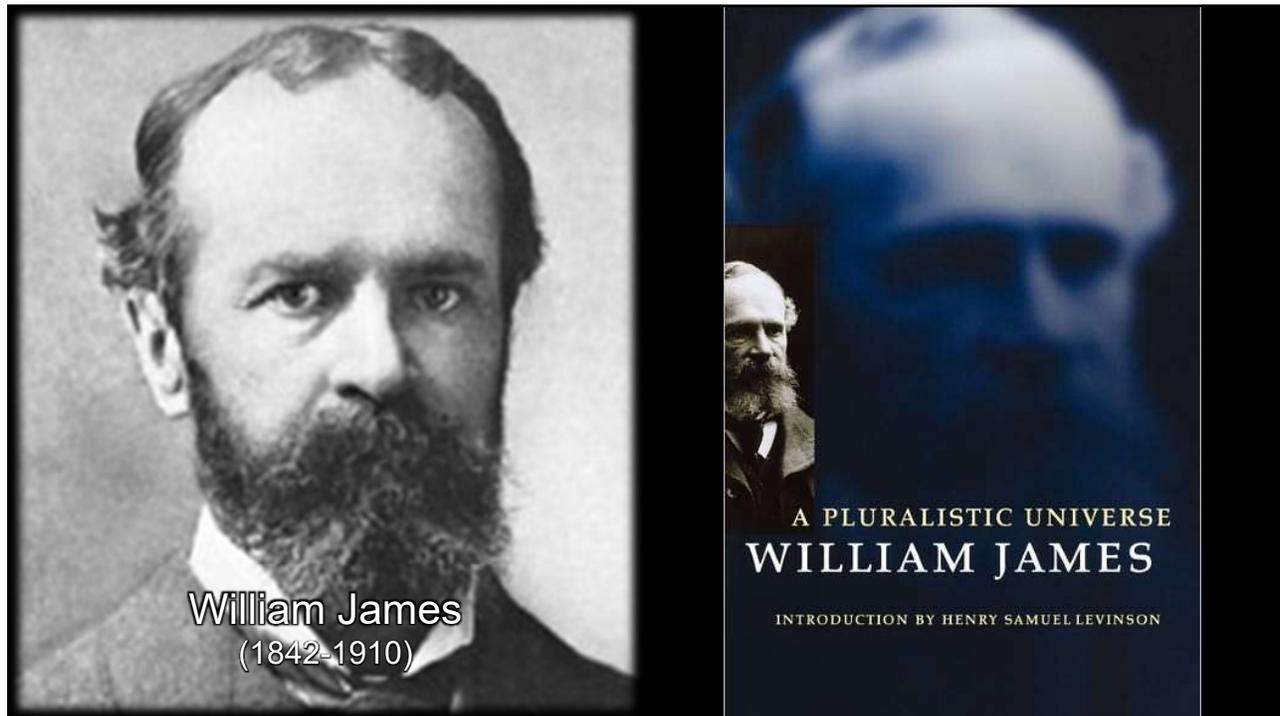
Manicheanism

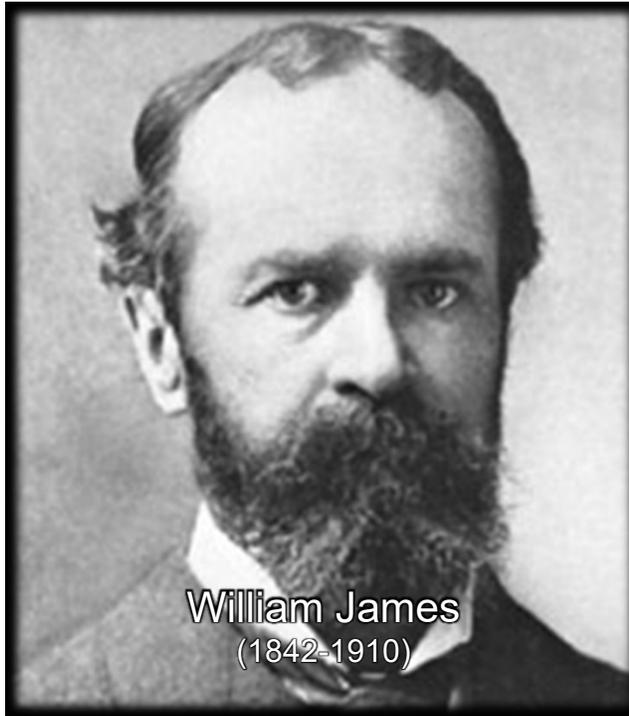
"The opposition of God and Matter is seen in the realm of nature as the conflict of Light and Darkness, Truth and Error."

[R. McL. Wilson, "Mani and Manichaeism" in Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing & The Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1967), 5:149]



*God is not
all-powerful.*

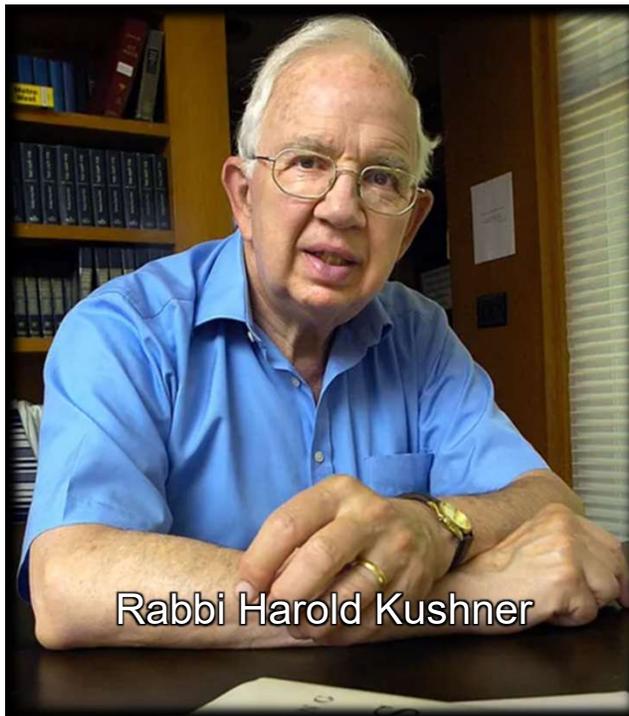




William James
(1842-1910)

"The line of least resistance, then, as it seems to me, both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once."

[A Pluralistic Universe, Lecture VIII, Conclusions]



Rabbi Harold Kushner

When Bad Things Happen to Good People

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HAROLD S.
KUSHNER

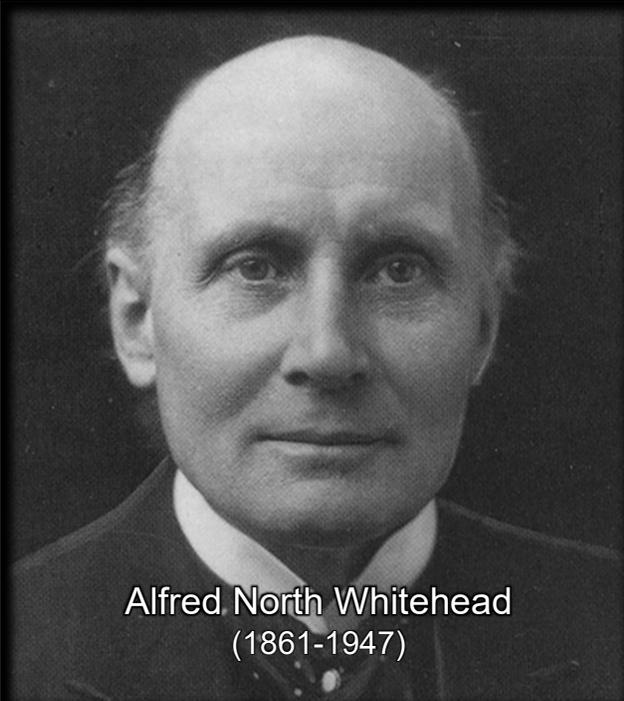


Rabbi Harold Kushner

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

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

***God is not
all-knowing.***

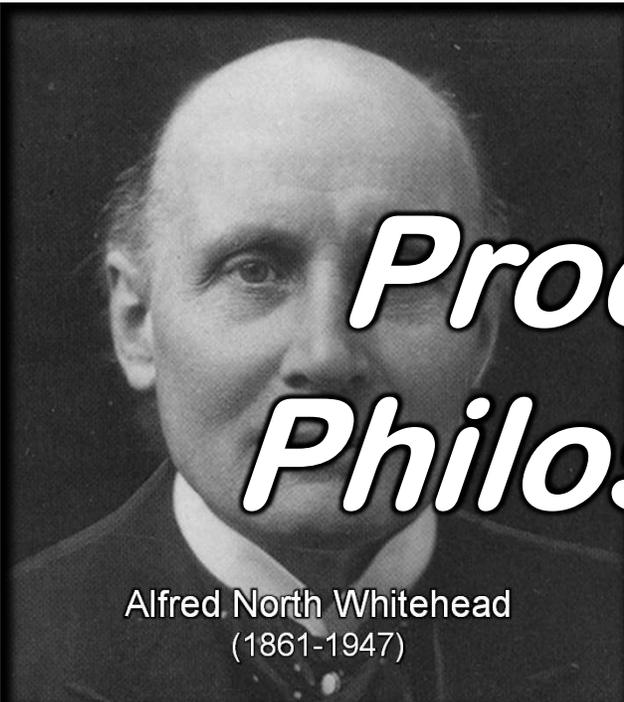


Alfred North Whitehead
(1861-1947)

**Process
and Reality**
CORRECTED EDITION



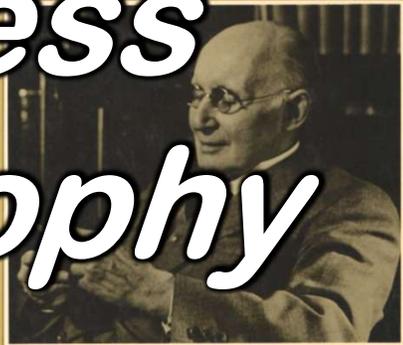
Alfred North Whitehead
Edited by David Ray Griffin
and Donald W. Sherburne



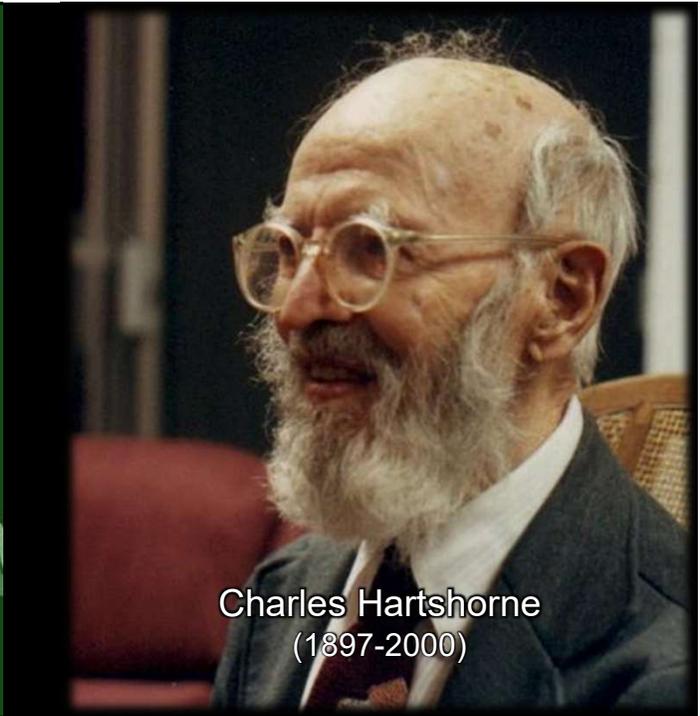
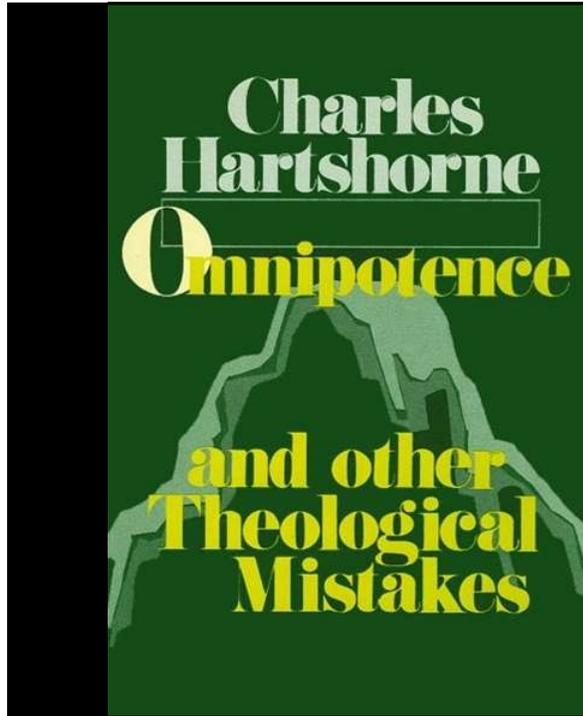
*Process
Philosophy*

Alfred North Whitehead
(1861-1947)

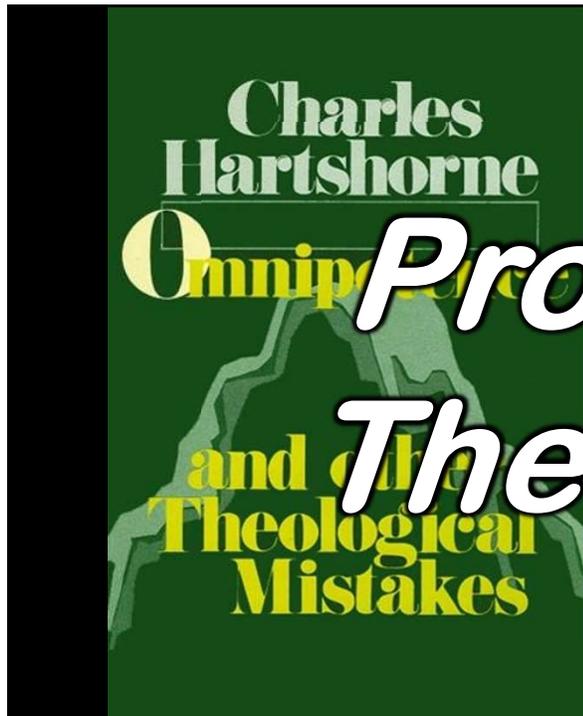
**Process
and Reality**
CORRECTED EDITION



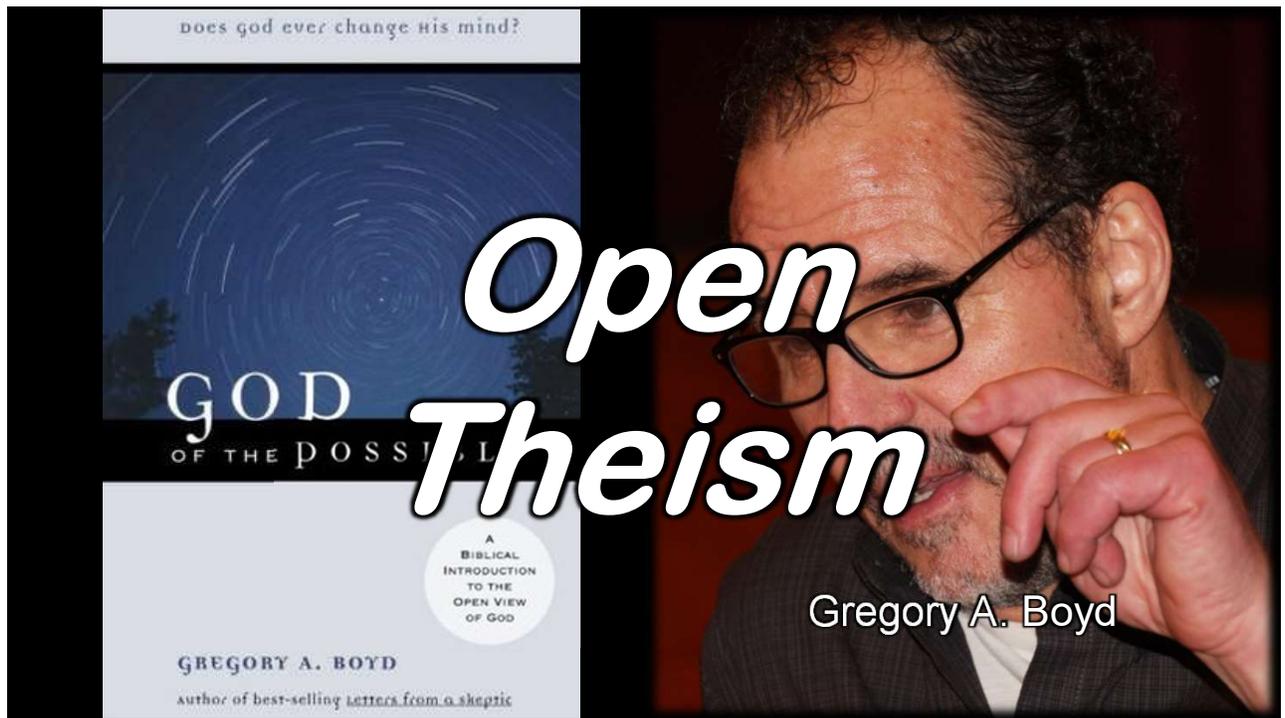
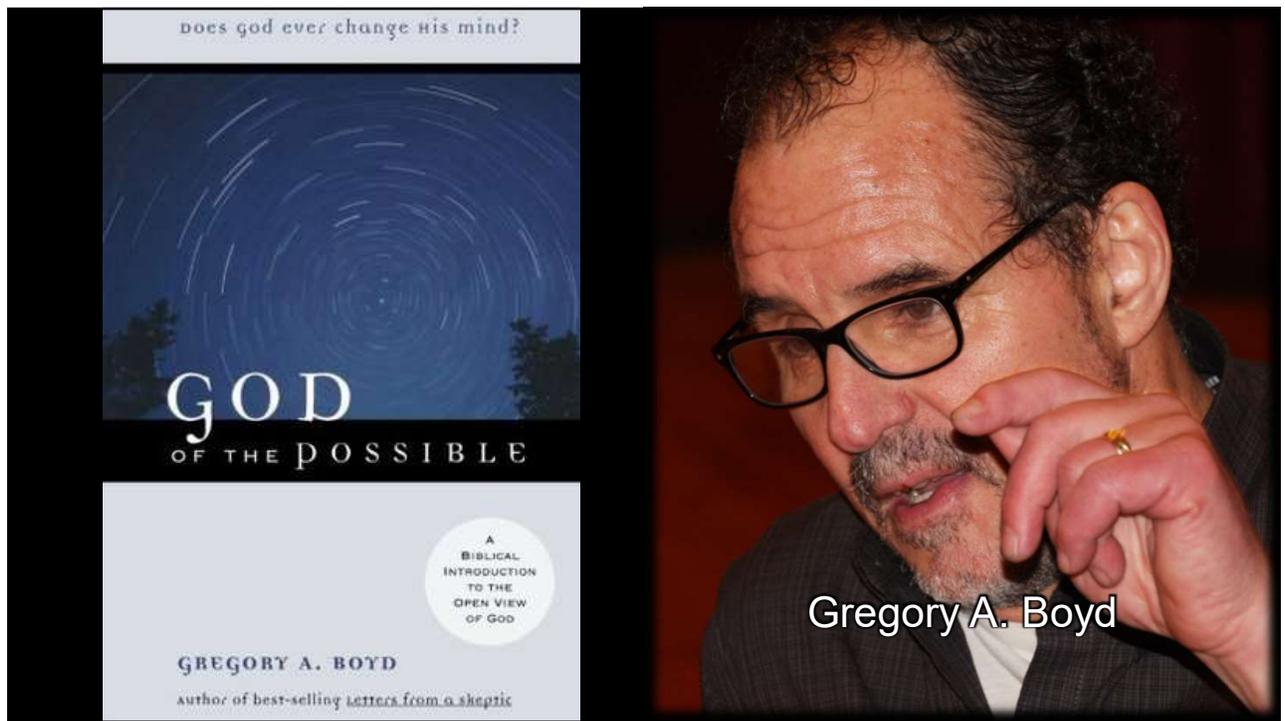
Alfred North Whitehead
Edited by David Ray Griffin
and Donald W. Sherburne



Charles Hartshorne
(1897-2000)

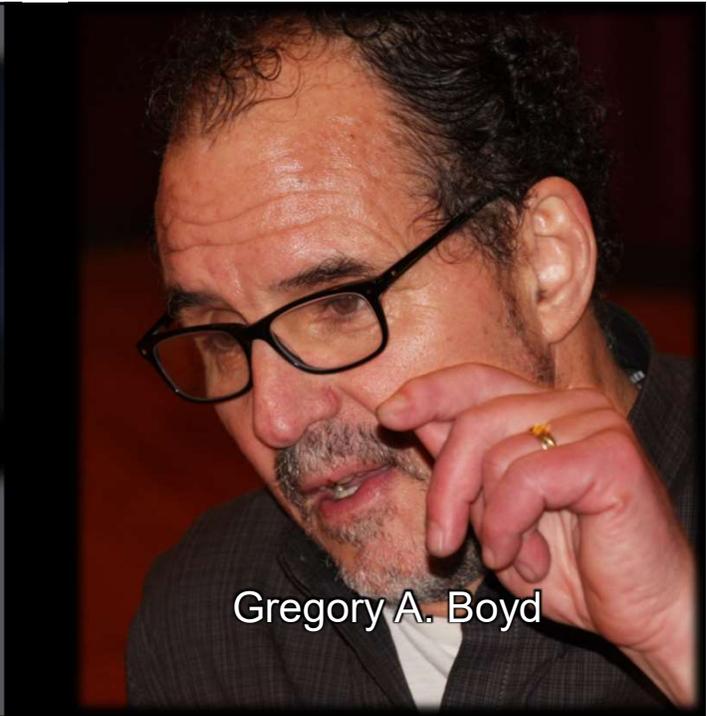


Charles Hartshorne
(1897-2000)



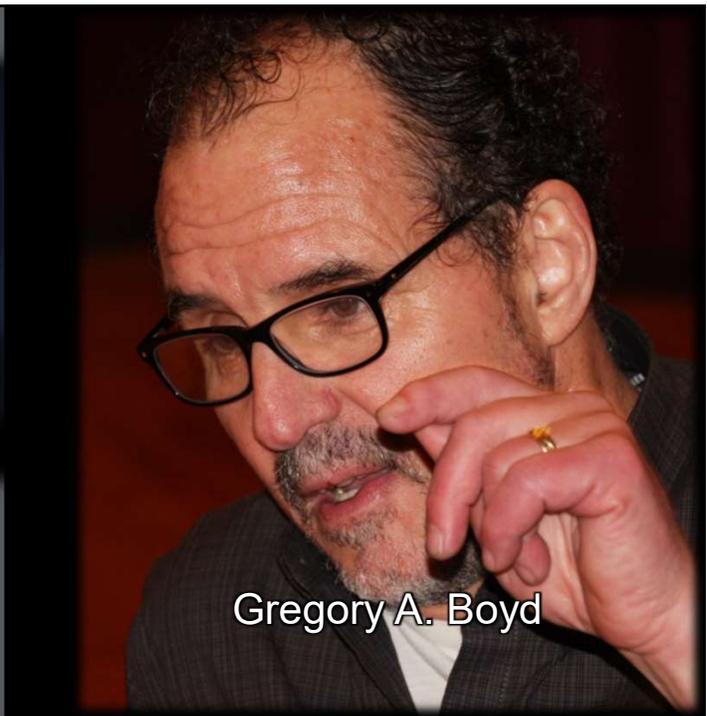
"The fifth practical difference that the open view makes concerns our understanding and response to the problem of evil. ...

[*God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 98]



Gregory A. Boyd

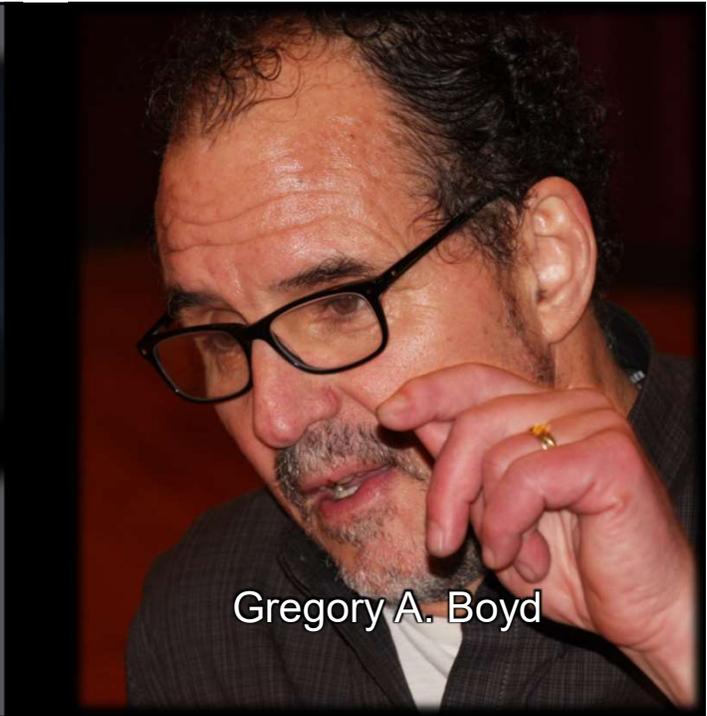
"My agnostic father ... asked me why God would allow Adolf Hitler to be born if he foreknew that this man would massacre millions of Jews. ...



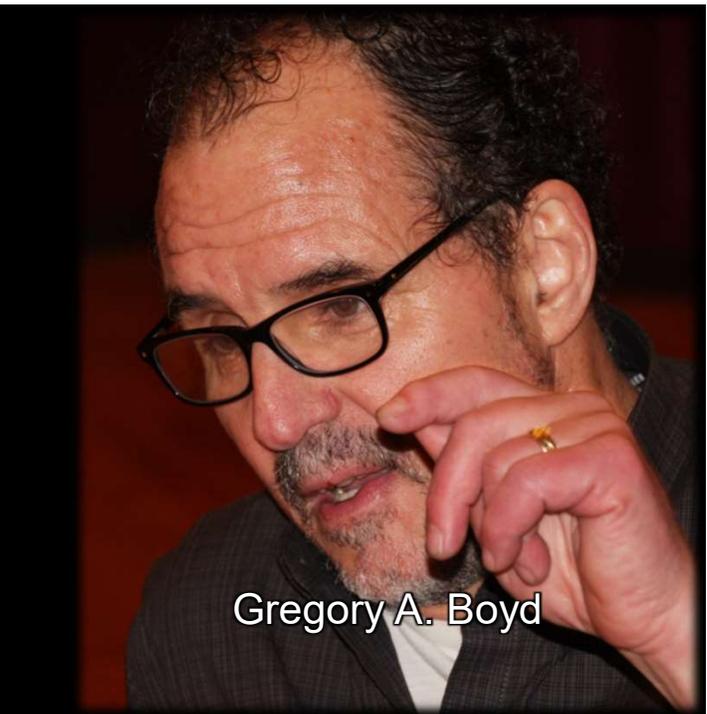
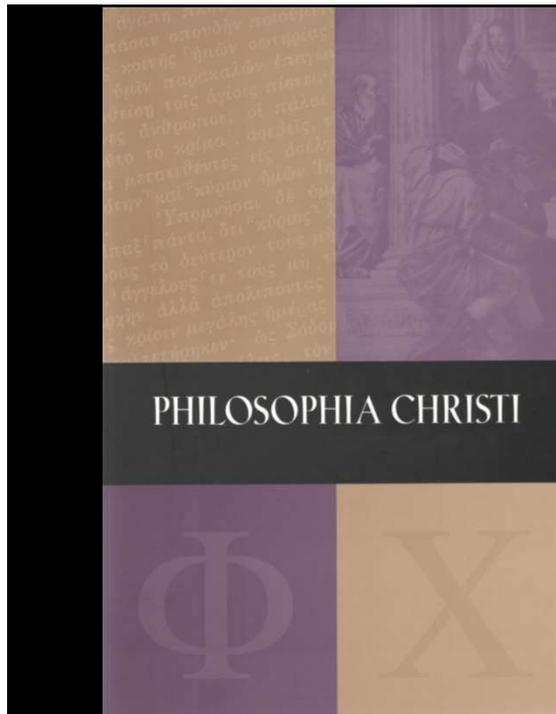
Gregory A. Boyd

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

[God of the Possible, 98]

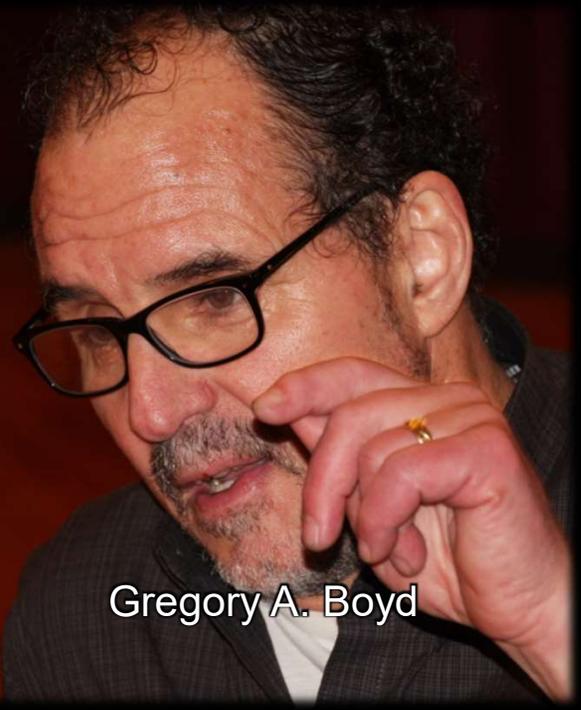


Gregory A. Boyd



Gregory A. Boyd

"Scripture also frequently depicts God as experiencing regret ... disappointment, frustration, and unexpected outcomes ... suggesting that the future is to this extent composed of possibilities rather than certainties."



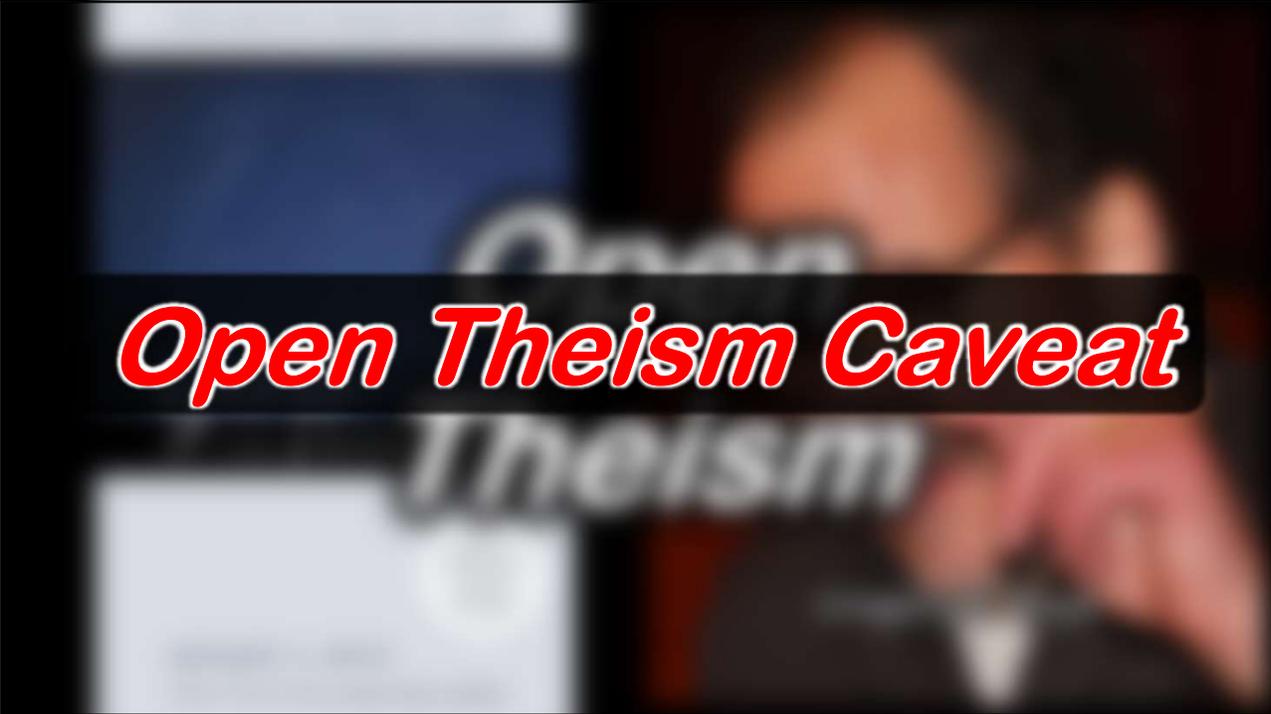
Gregory A. Boyd

"It is, I submit, more difficult to conceive of God experiencing such things if the future is exhaustively settled in his mind than if it is in part composed of possibilities."

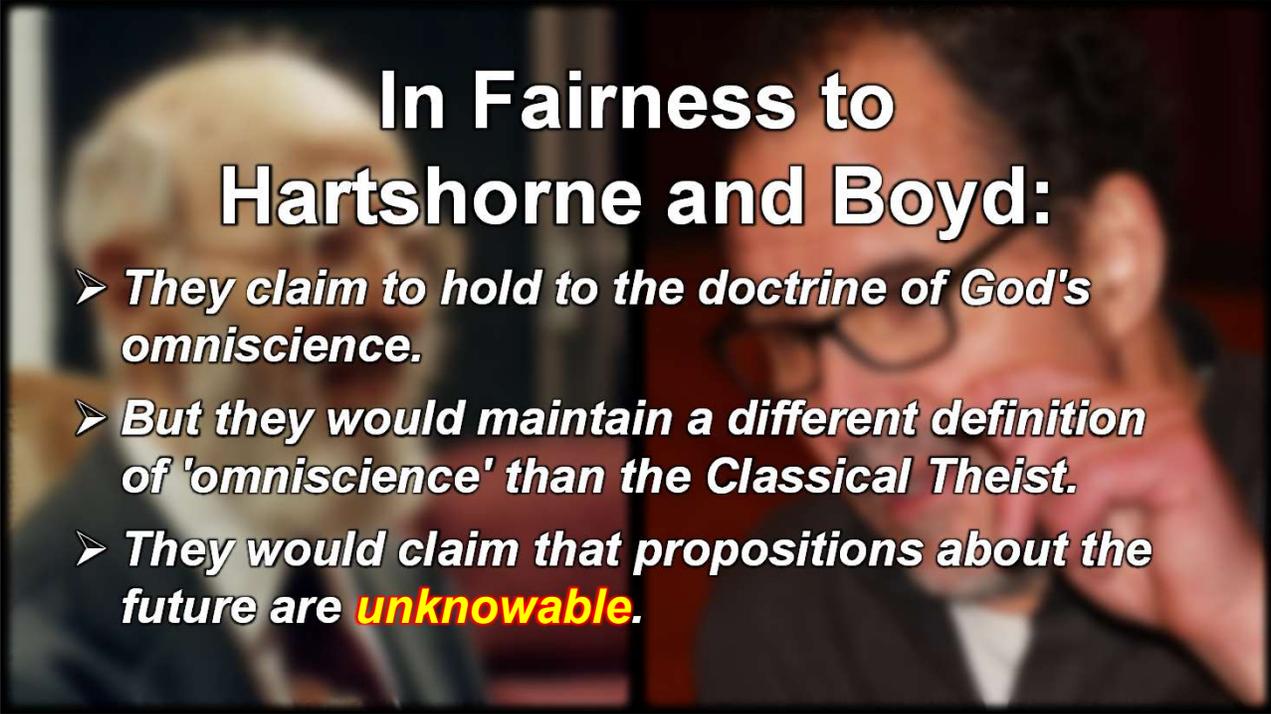
[Gregory A. Boyd, "Neo-Molinism and the Infinite Intelligence of God," *Philosophia Christi* 5, No.1, (2003):192]



Gregory A. Boyd

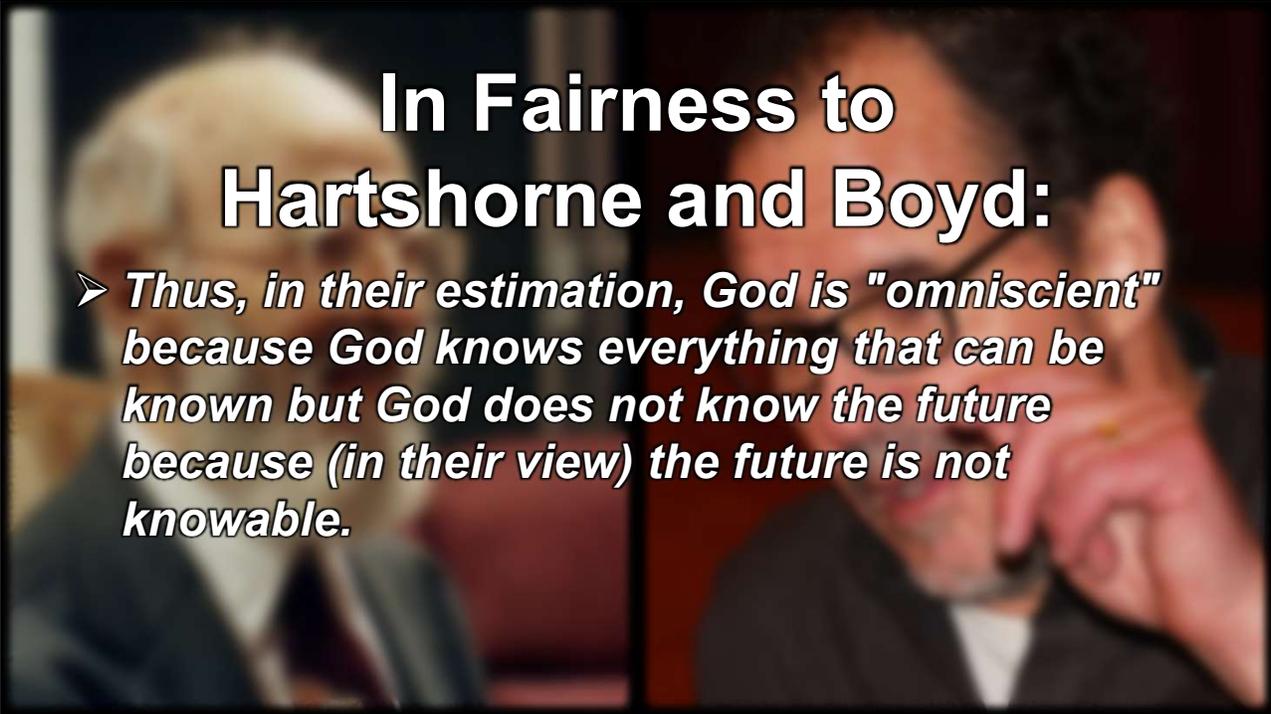


Open Theism Caveat



In Fairness to Hartshorne and Boyd:

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



In Fairness to Hartshorne and Boyd:

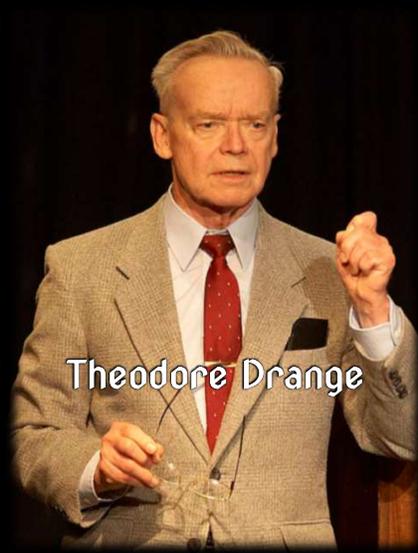
- *Thus, in their estimation, God is "omniscient" because God knows everything that can be known but God does not know the future because (in their view) the future is not knowable.*

***God does
not exist.***

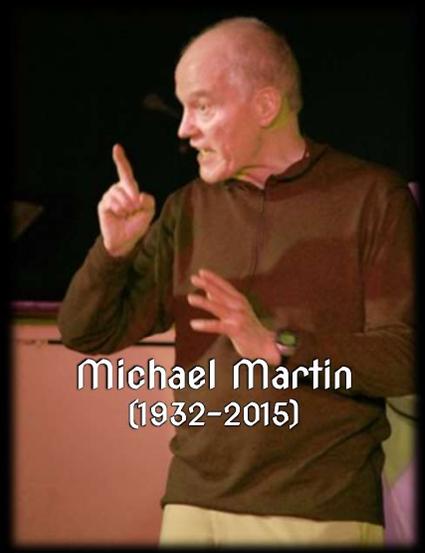
Academic Atheism



J. L. Mackie
(1917-1981)

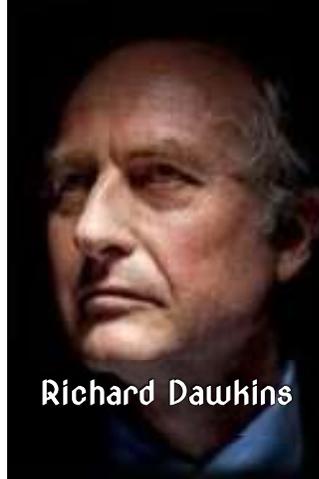


Theodore Drange



Michael Martin
(1932-2015)

The New Atheism



Richard Dawkins



Sam Harris

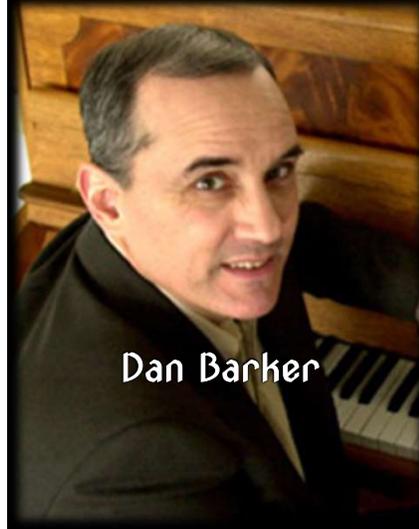


Christopher Hitchens
(1949-2011)



Daniel Dennett

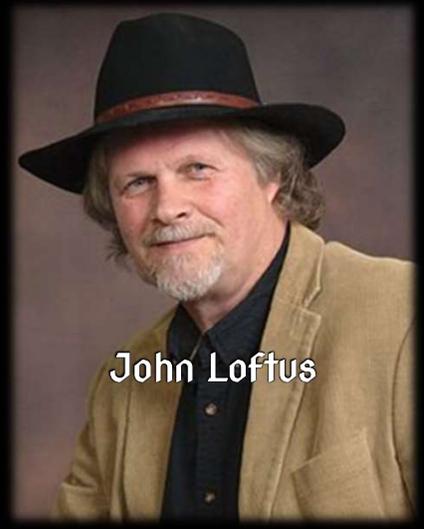
Popular Atheism



Dan Barker



George Smith



John Loftus

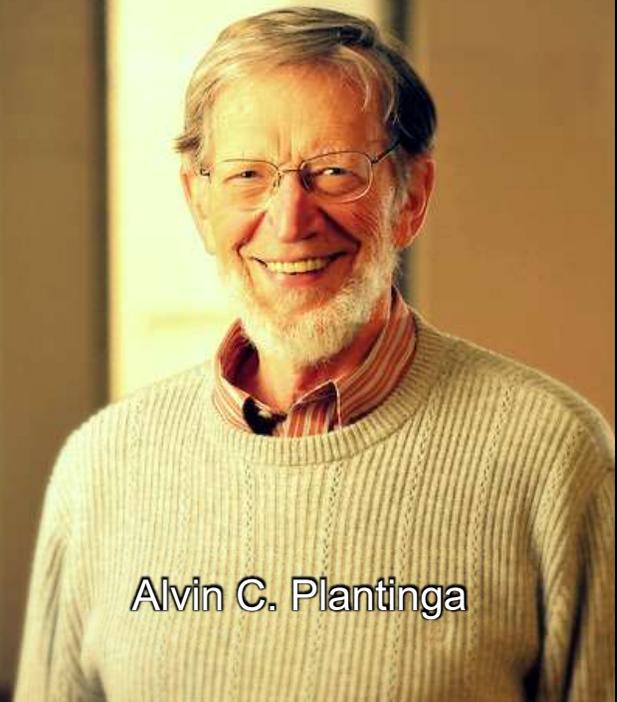


- 1. Since God has not explicitly revealed in His word why He has allowed evil, we can only speculate about how to reconcile evil within creation with God as the Creator.*
- 2. But our speculation can be informed and constrained by what God has revealed about Himself*
 - a. through creation (General Revelation and Natural Theology) and*
 - b. through Scripture (Special Revelation and Systematic Theology).*

The Free Will Defense

God, Freedom, and Evil

ALVIN C. PLANTINGA

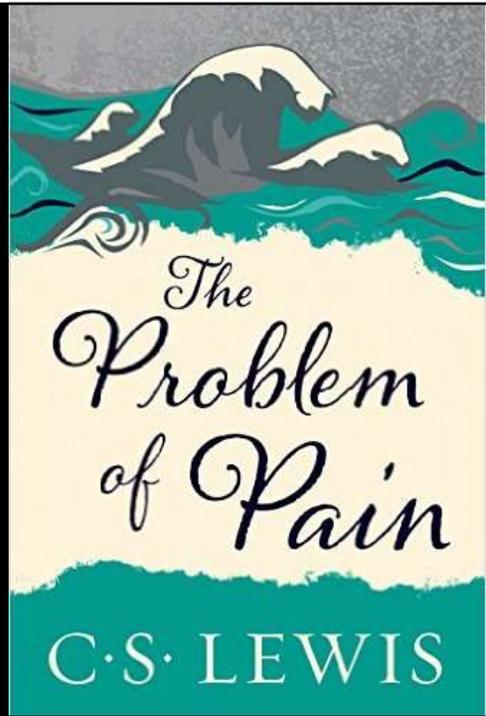


Alvin C. Plantinga

The Natural Order Defense of C. S. Lewis

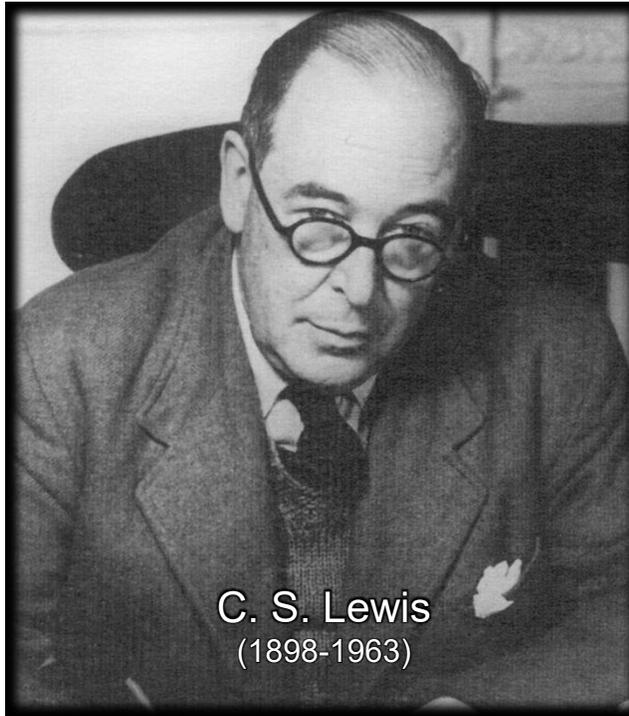


C. S. Lewis
(1898-1963)



C. S. Lewis
(1898-1963)

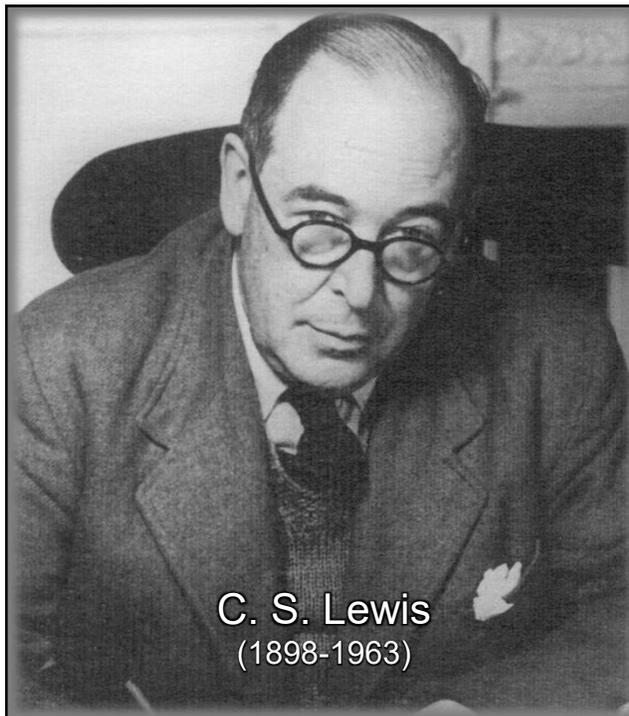
*"Fixed laws,
consequences
unfolding by causal
necessity, the whole
natural order, are at
once the limits within
which their common
life is confined and
also the sole
condition under
which any such life is
possible."*



C. S. Lewis
(1898-1963)

"Try to exclude the possibility of suffering which the order of nature and the existence of free-wills involve, and you find that you have excluded life itself."

[*The Problem of Pain* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940), 22]

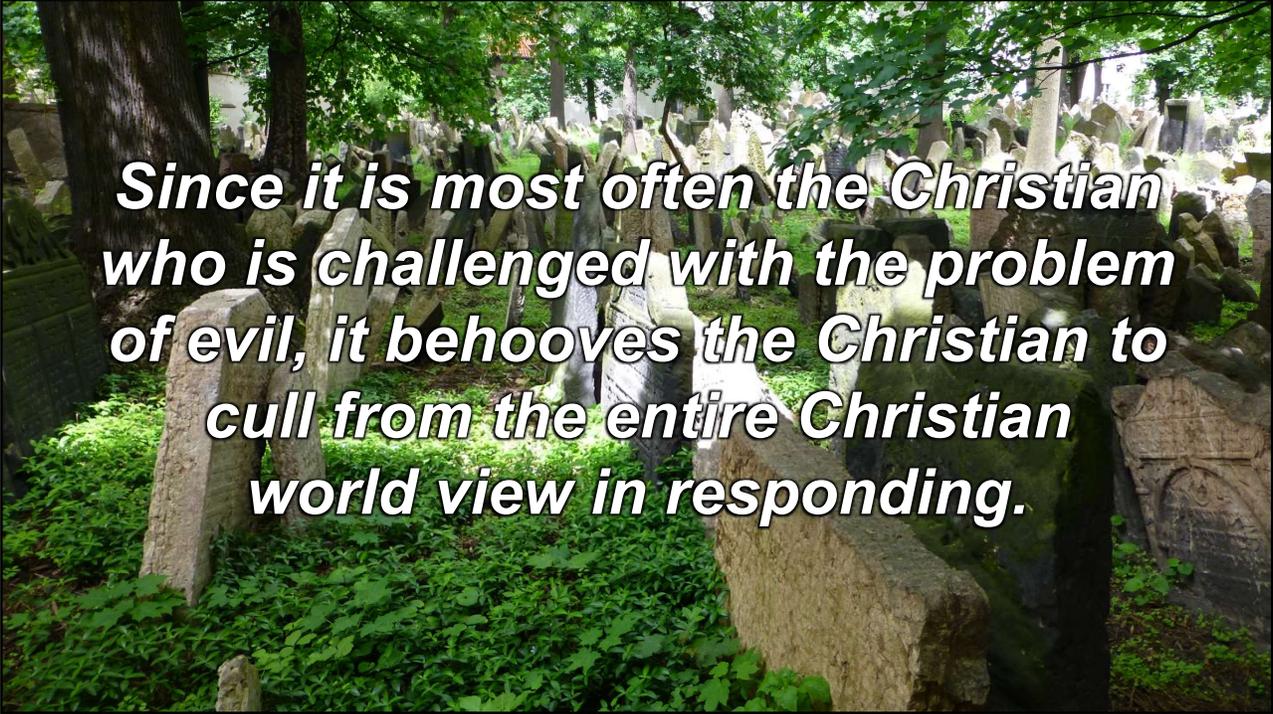


C. S. Lewis
(1898-1963)

C. S. Lewis's Natural Order Defense

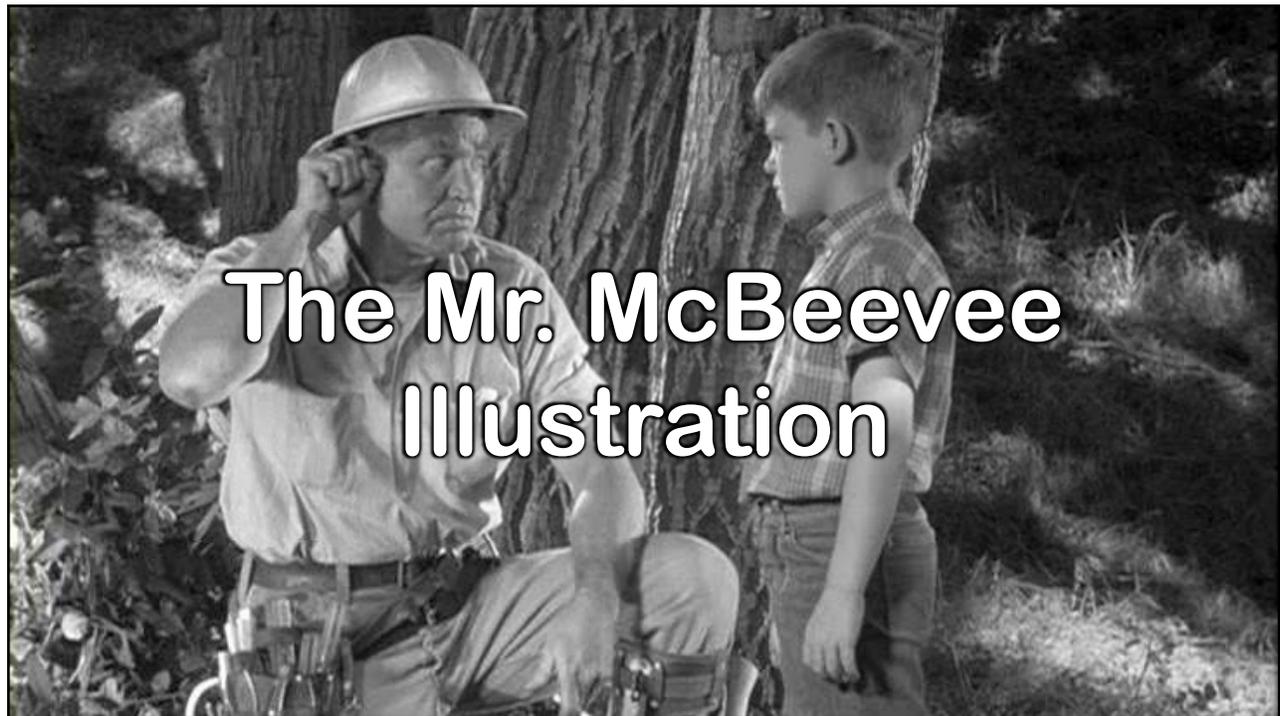
- ***God created humans with free will.***
- ***The responsible exercise of free will requires a world of non-capricious physical regularities (laws).***
- ***These regularities create the possibility of natural evil.***

Consideration of the Afterlife

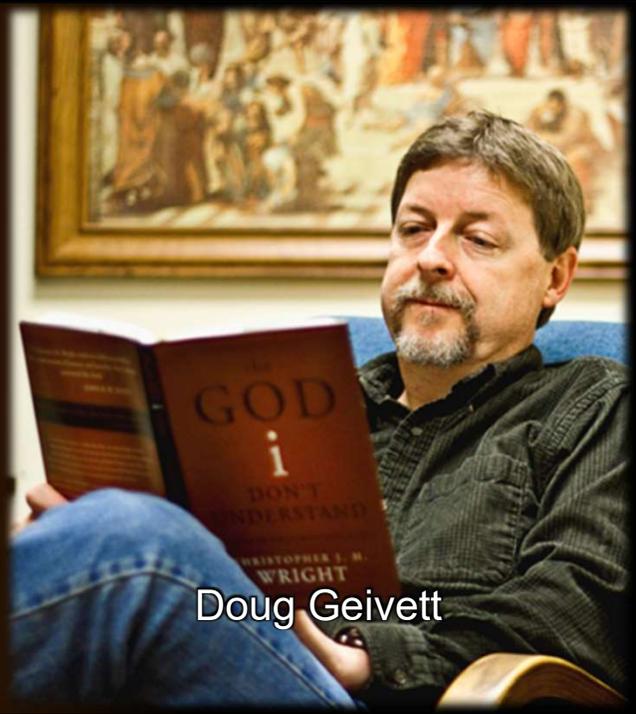


Since it is most often the Christian who is challenged with the problem of evil, it behooves the Christian to cull from the entire Christian world view in responding.

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



"While it might be easy to imagine what we would do if we had God's power, it is impossible to know what we would do if we had God's knowledge."



Doug Geivett

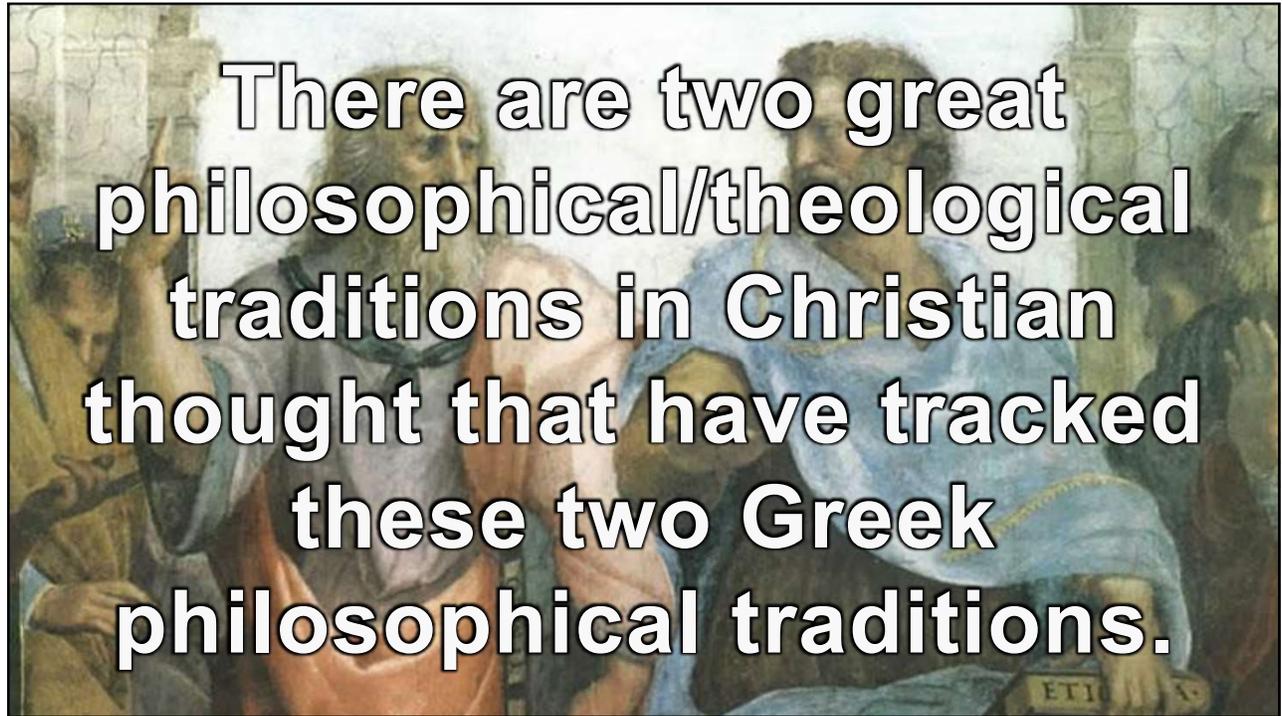


A Classical Approach



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.

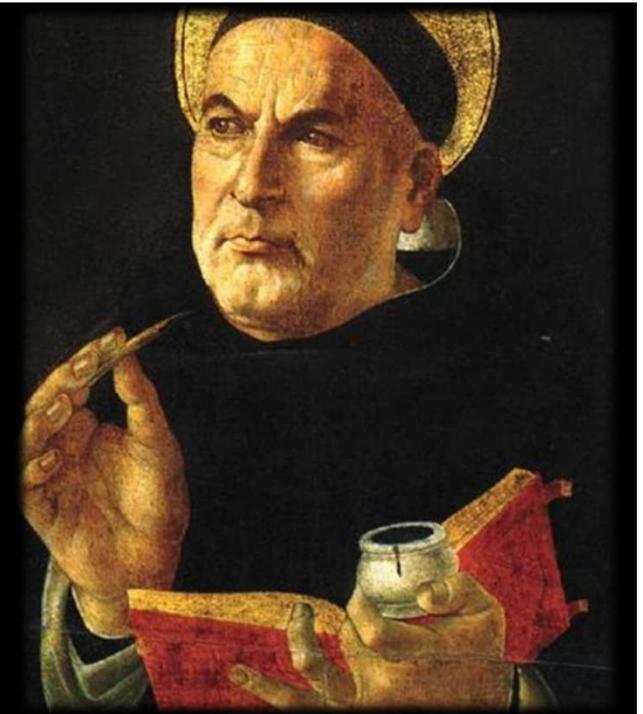


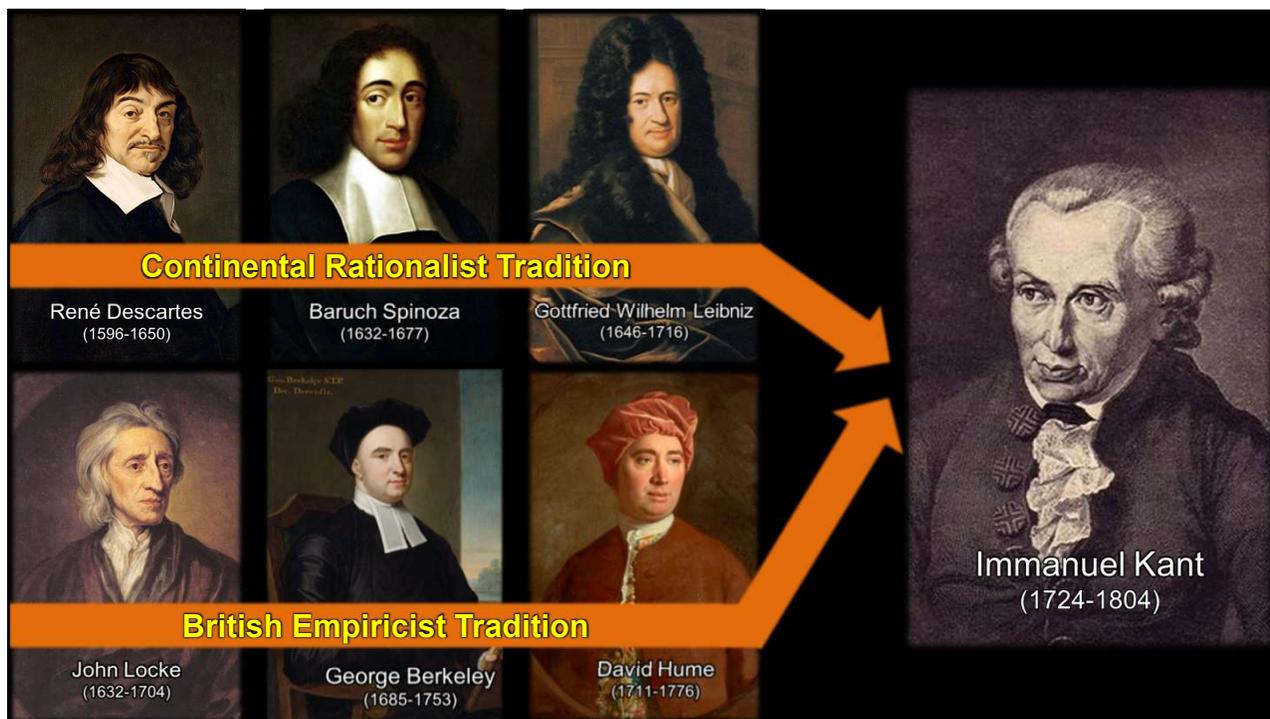
Augustine

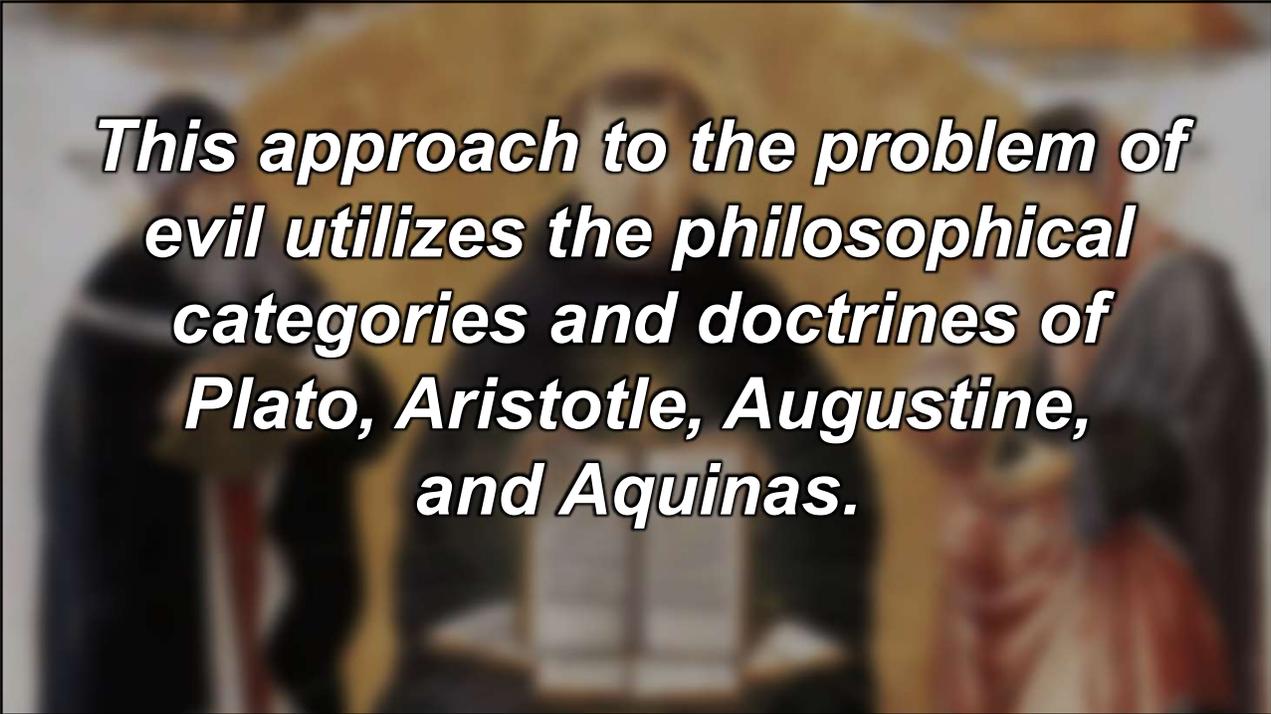
(354-430)

Aquinas

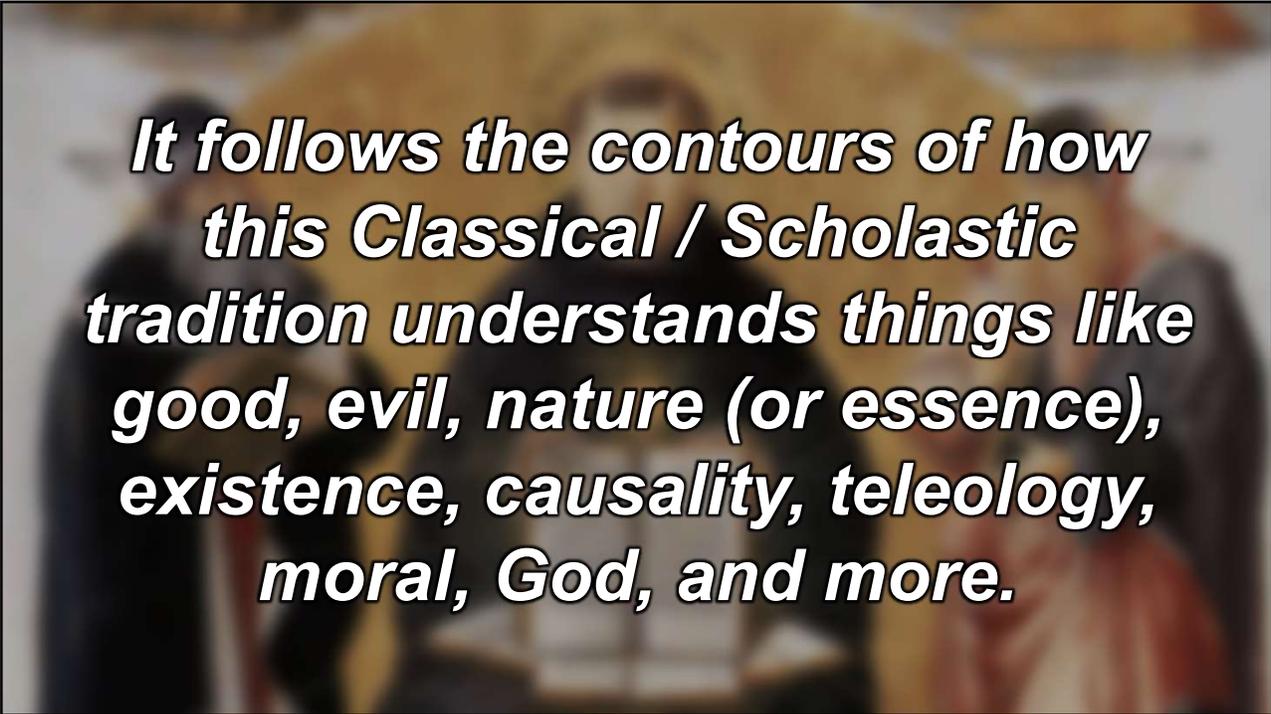
(1225-1274)







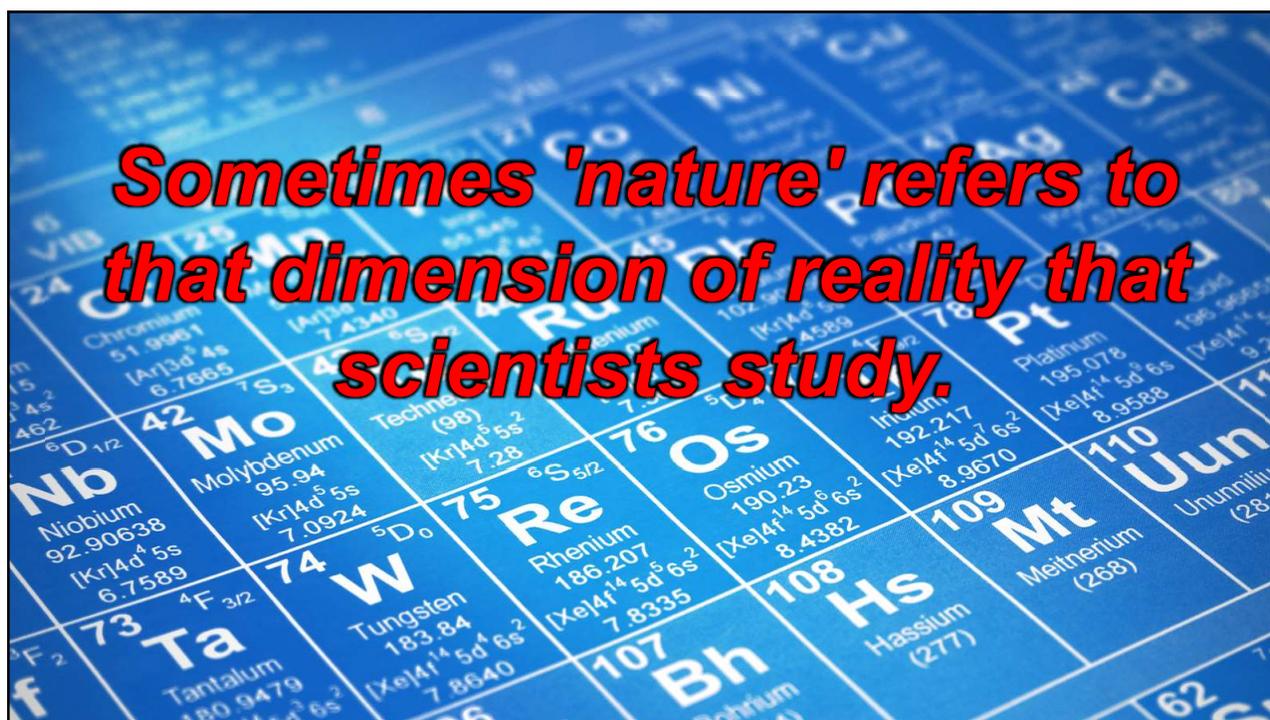
This approach to the problem of evil utilizes the philosophical categories and doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas.



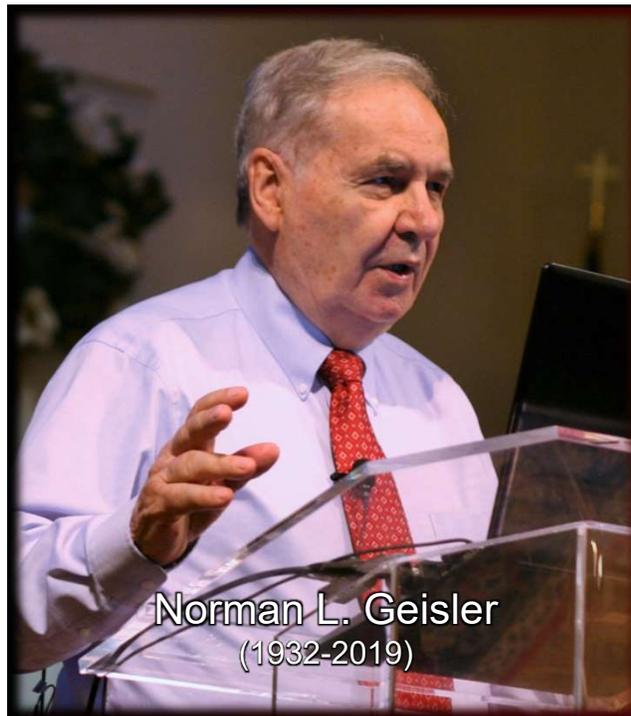
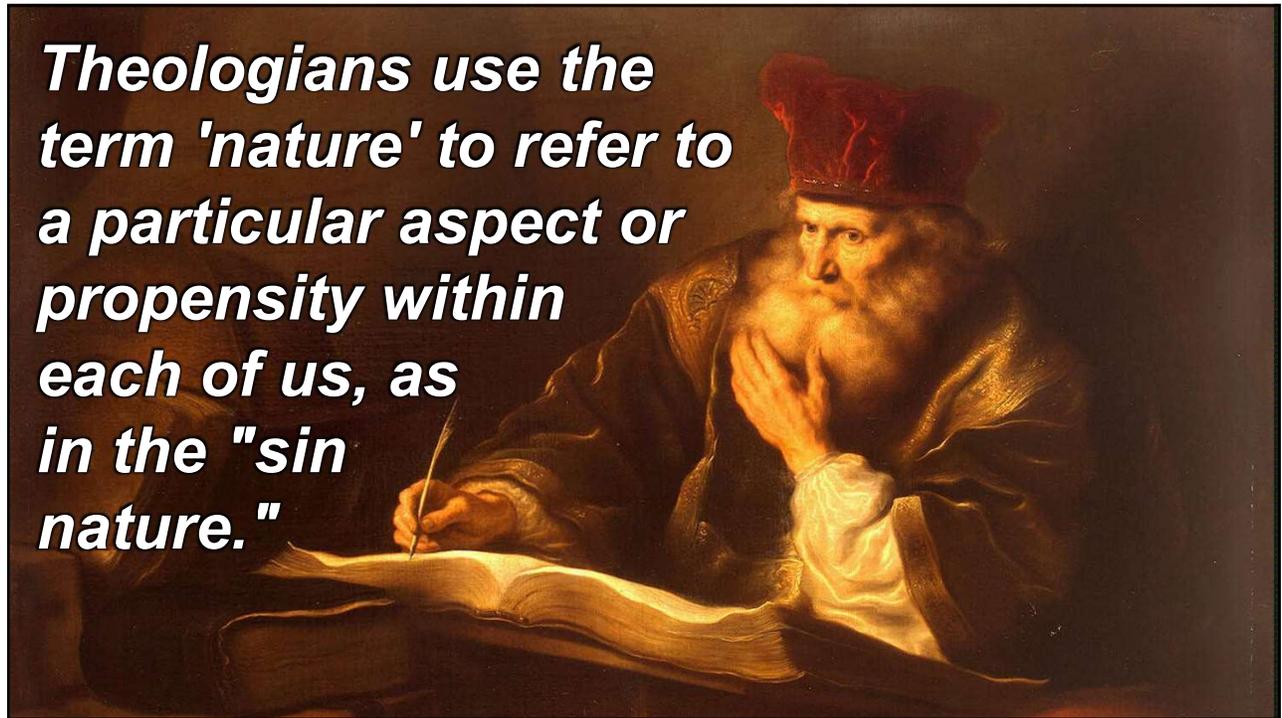
It follows the contours of how this Classical / Scholastic tradition understands things like good, evil, nature (or essence), existence, causality, teleology, moral, God, and more.



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



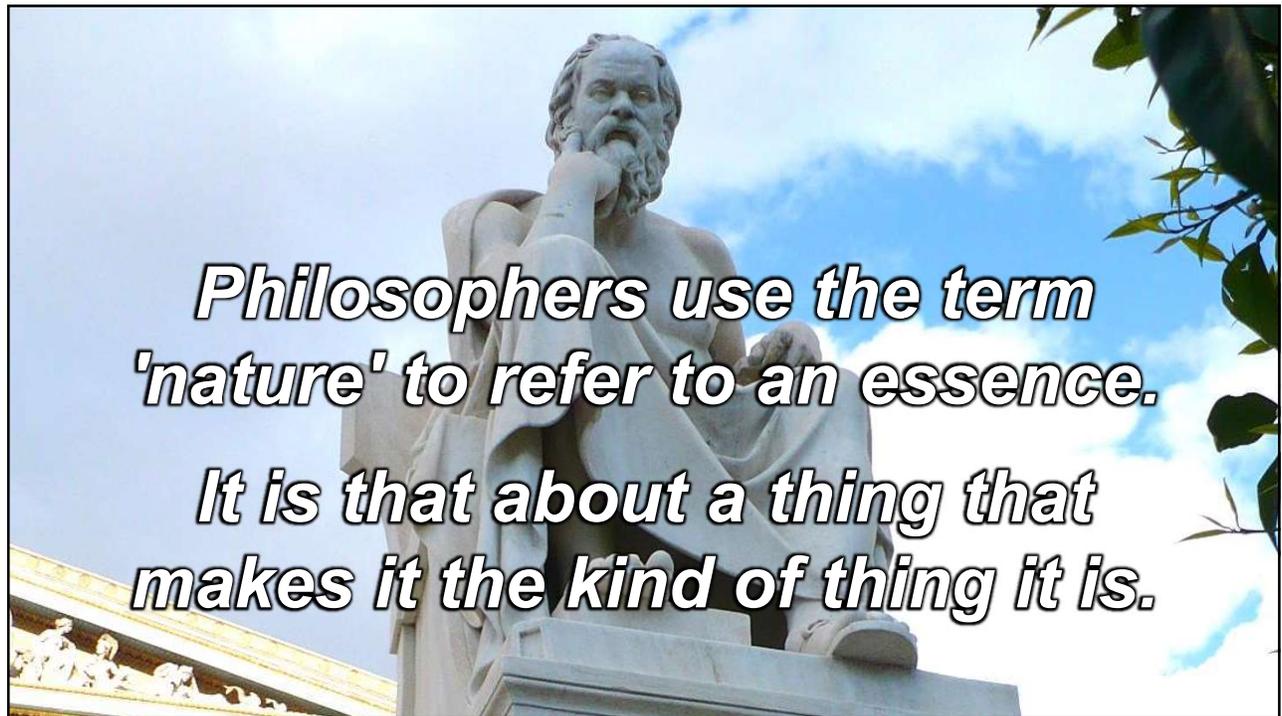
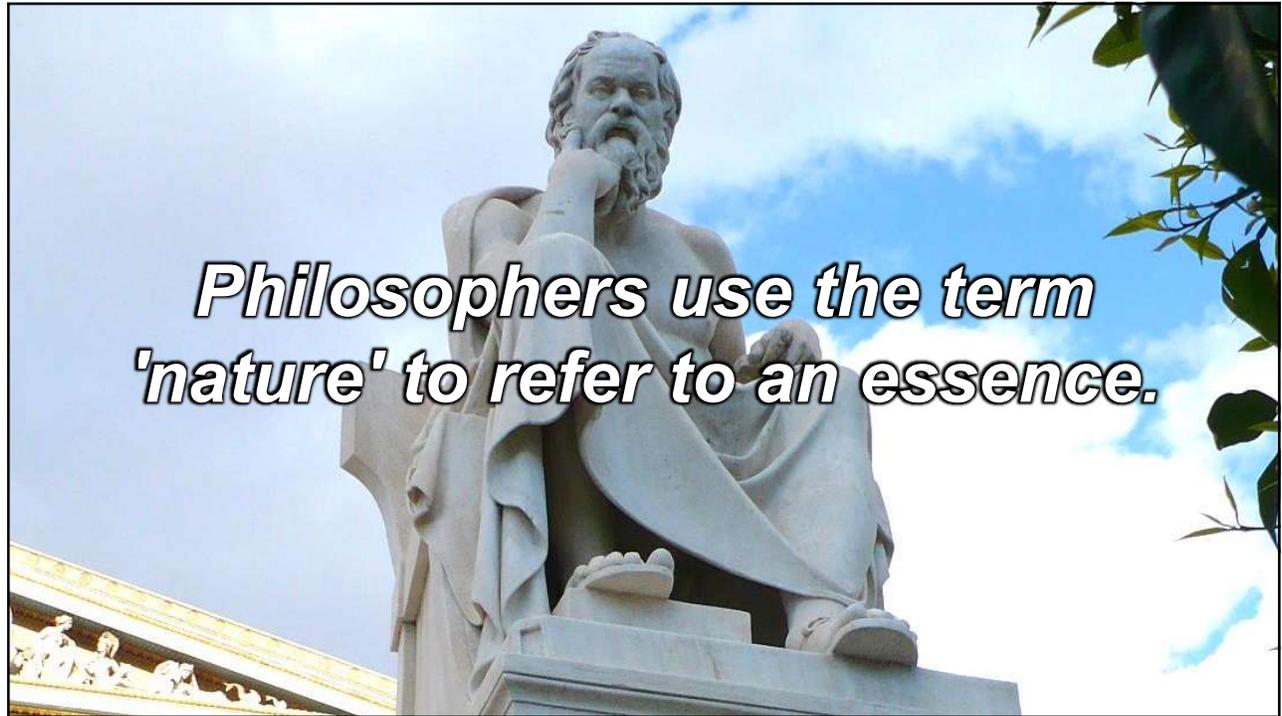
Theologians use the term 'nature' to refer to a particular aspect or propensity within each of us, as in the "sin nature."



Norman L. Geisler
(1932-2019)

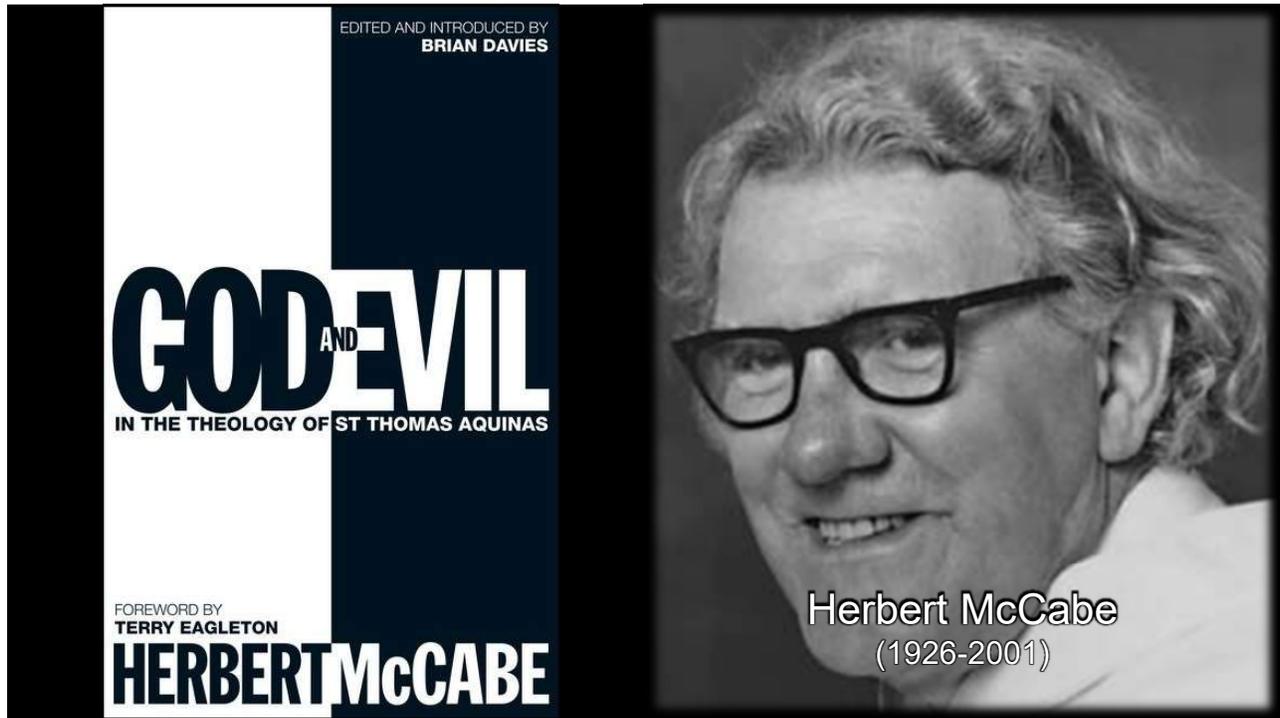
"Everyone who is naturally generated from Adam—every human—inherits a sinful nature from him. ... Being sinners by nature, short of and without salvation, we inevitably are and do what comes naturally: We sin."

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



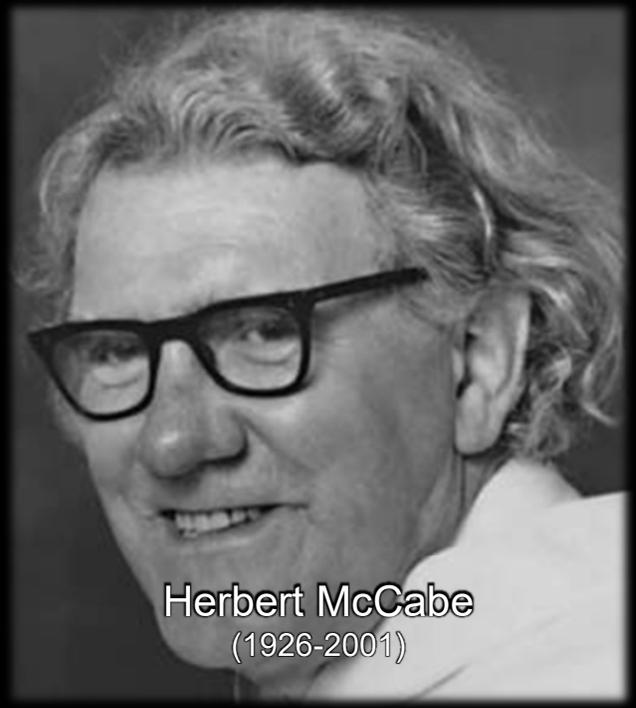






**"A perfect X is
an X that has
all its
properties; an
imperfect X
lacks one of
more of its
properties."**

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



Herbert McCabe
(1926-2001)





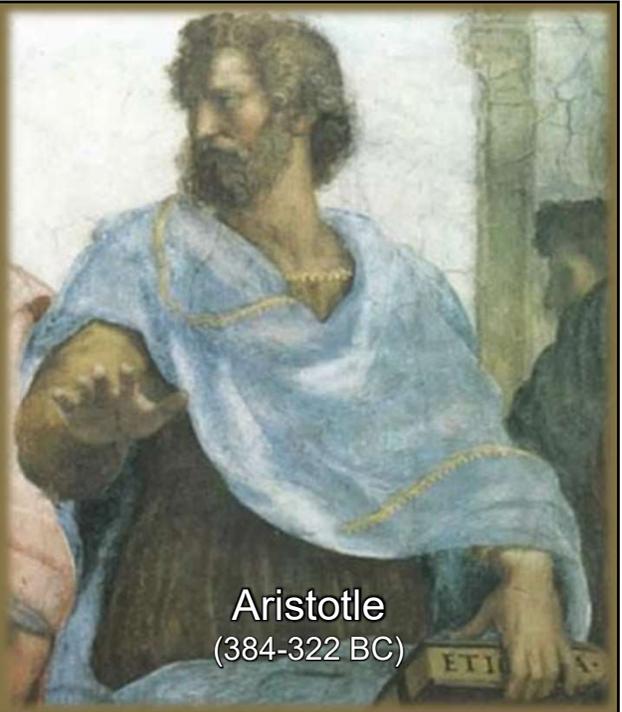
☞ Genus ☞

☞ Specific difference ☞

☞ Species ☞

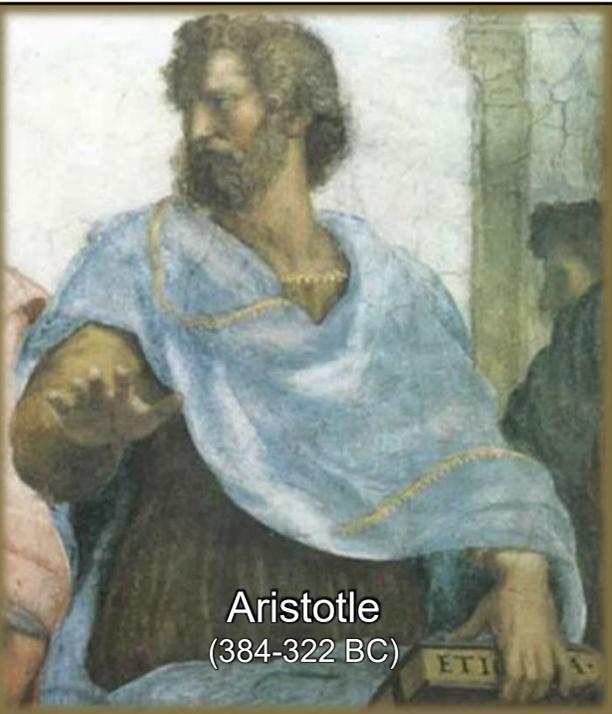
☞ Proper accident ☞

☞ Accident ☞



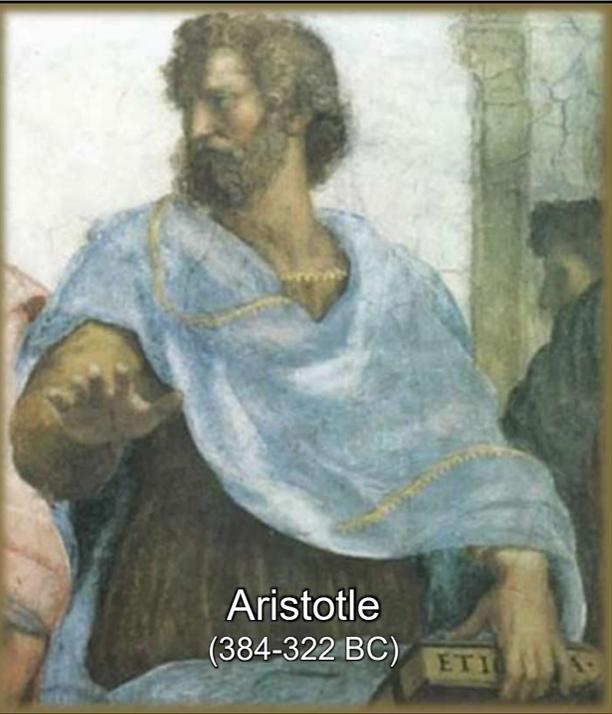
Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

- ☞ Genus ☞
animal
- ☞ Specific difference ☞
rationality
- ☞ Species ☞
human
- ☞ Proper accident ☞
five fingers
- ☞ Accident ☞
black hair



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

- ☞ Genus ☞
- ☞ Specific difference ☞
- ☞ Species ☞
- ☞ Proper accident ☞
- ☞ Accident ☞



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

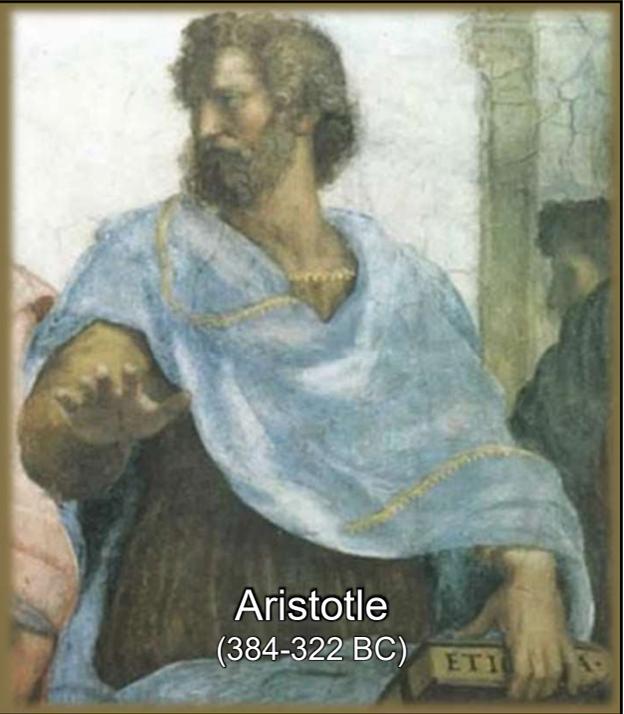
☞ Genus ☞

☞ Specific difference ☞

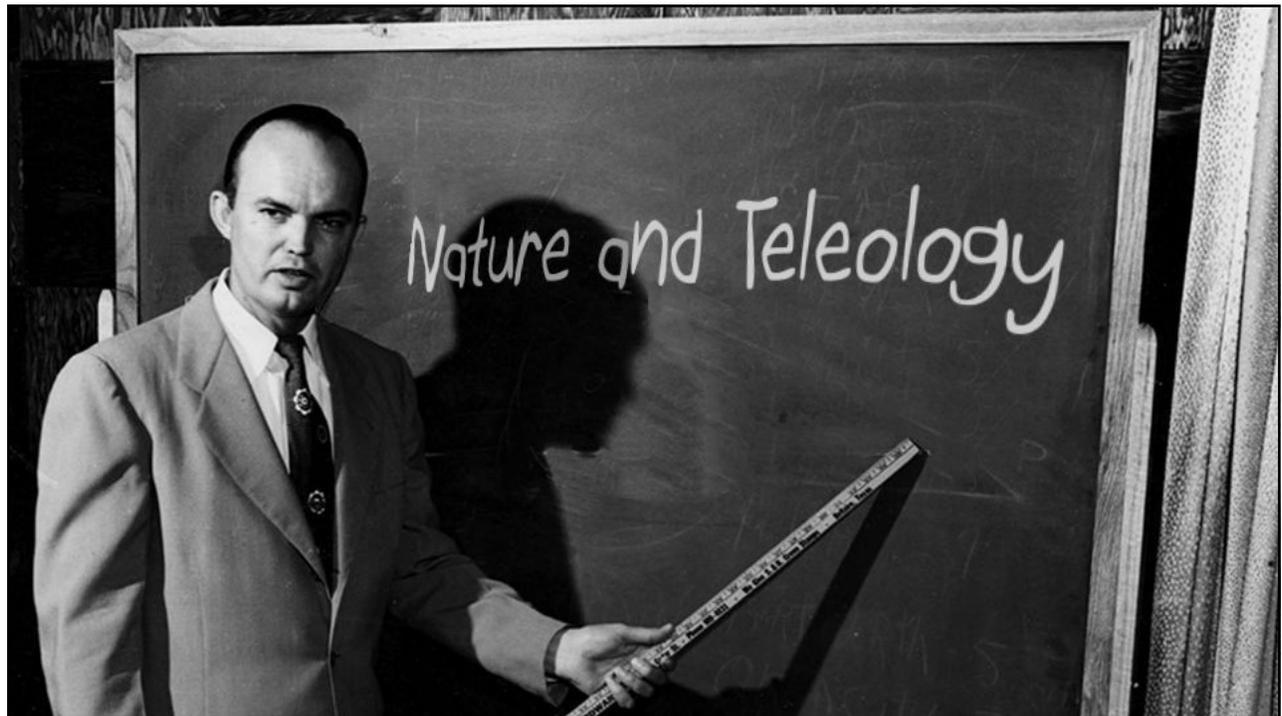
☞ **PROPERTIES** ☞

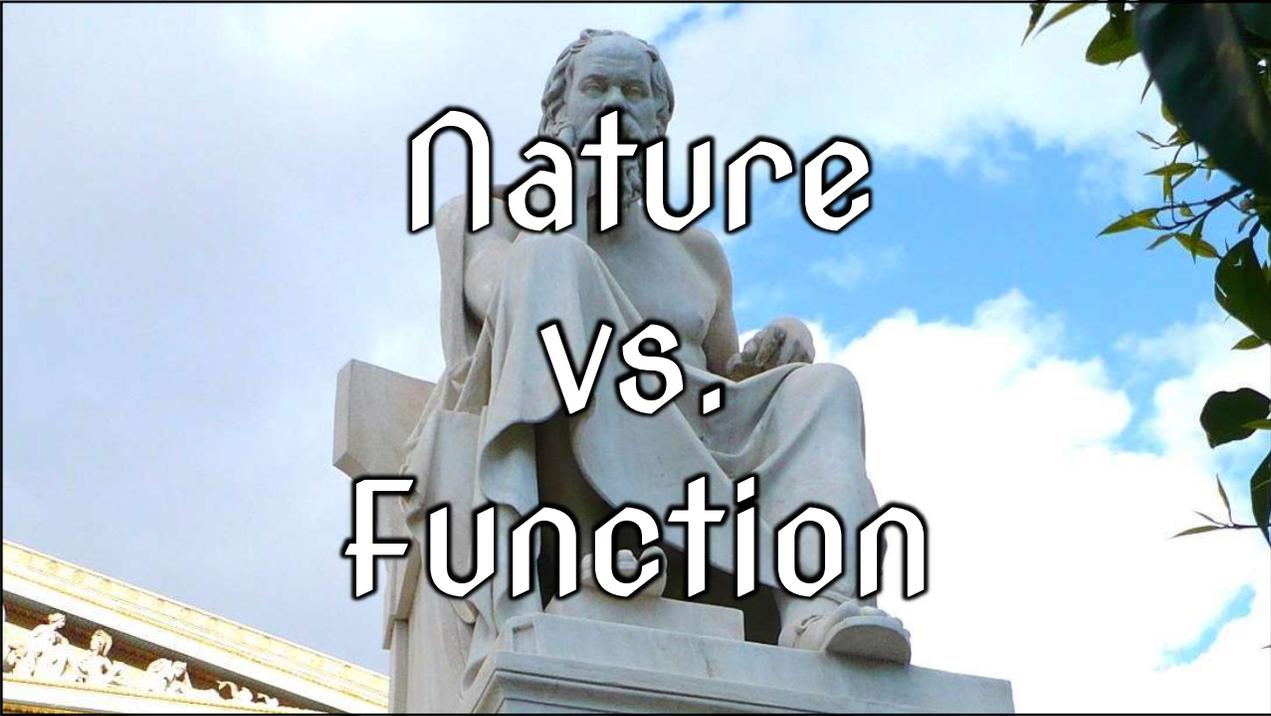
☞ Proper accident ☞

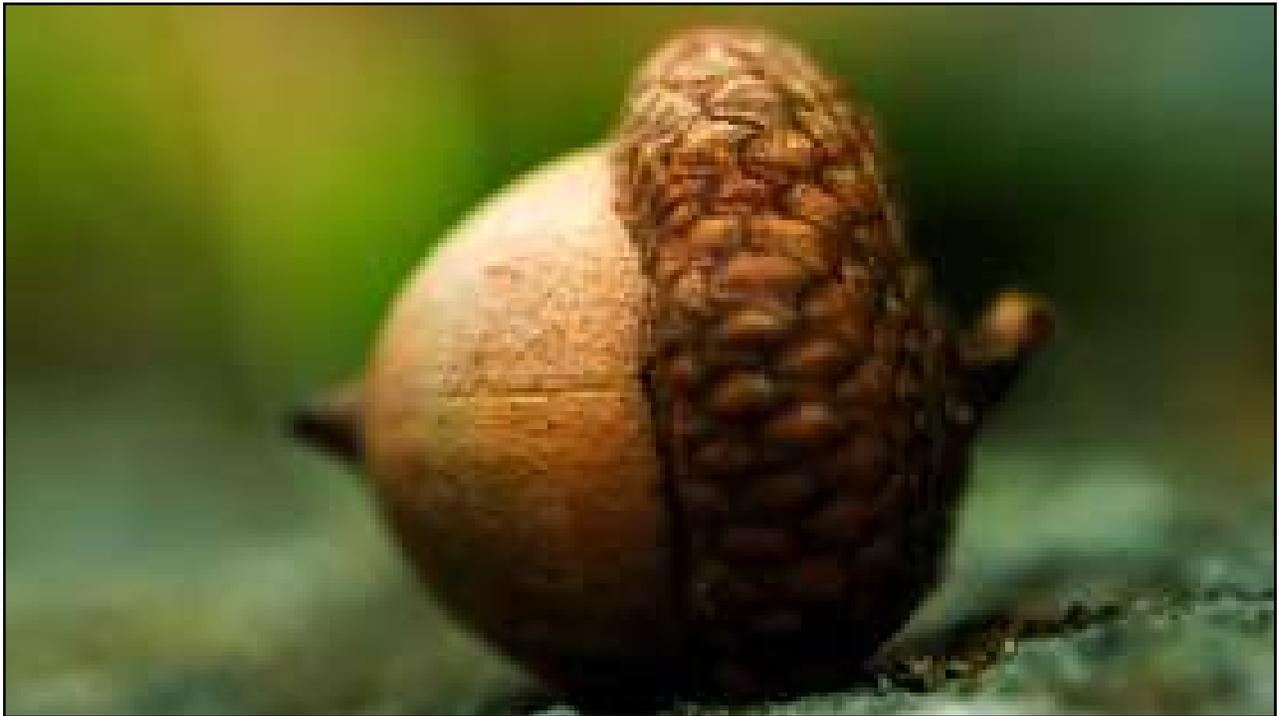
☞ Accident ☞

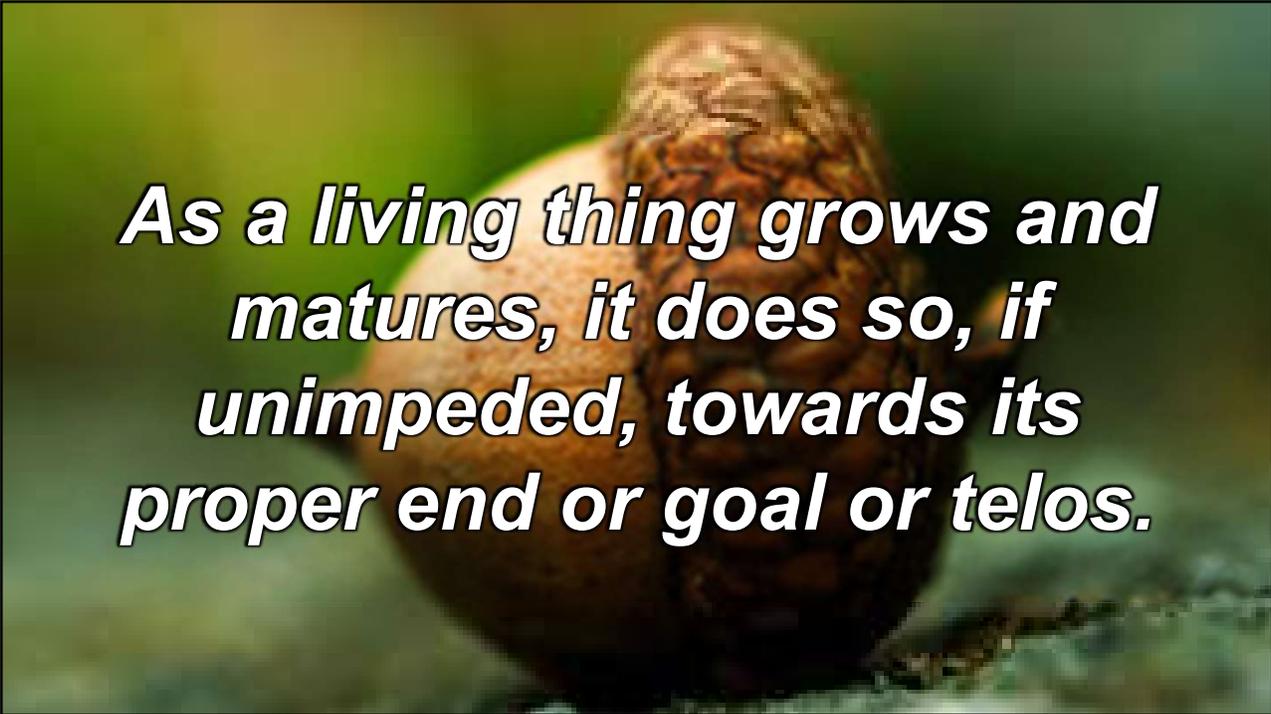


Aristotle
(384-322 BC)



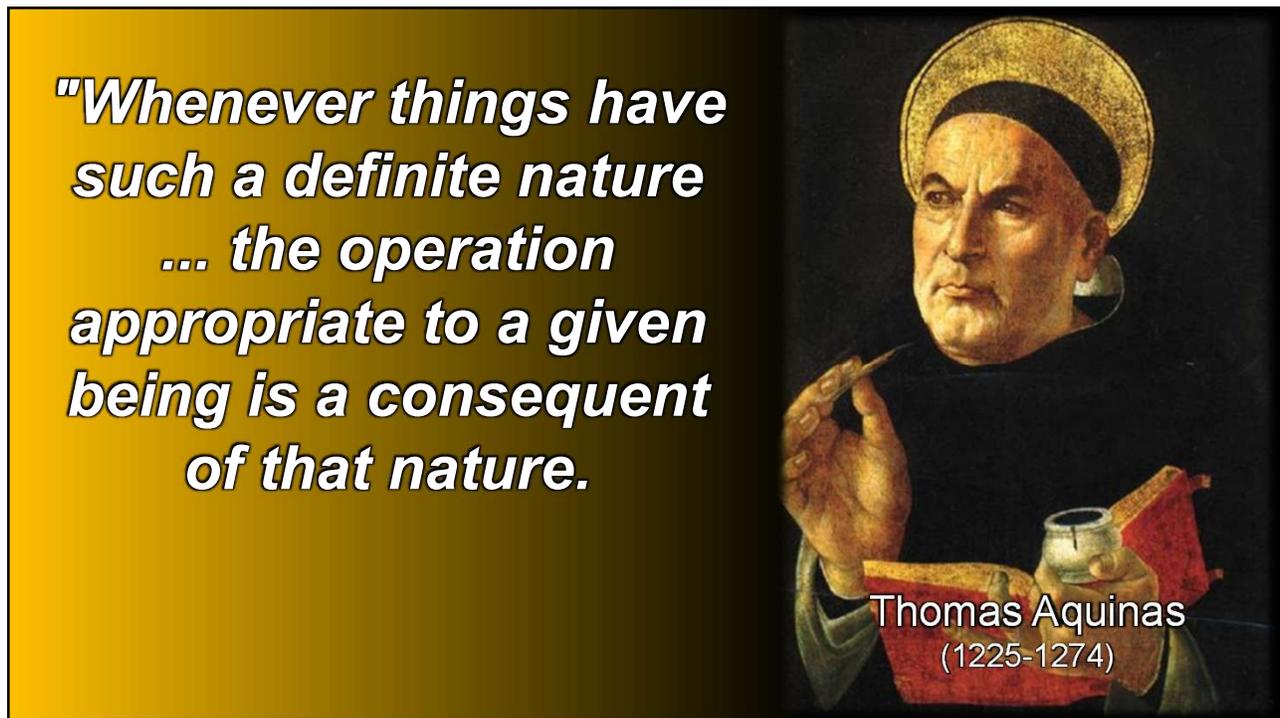
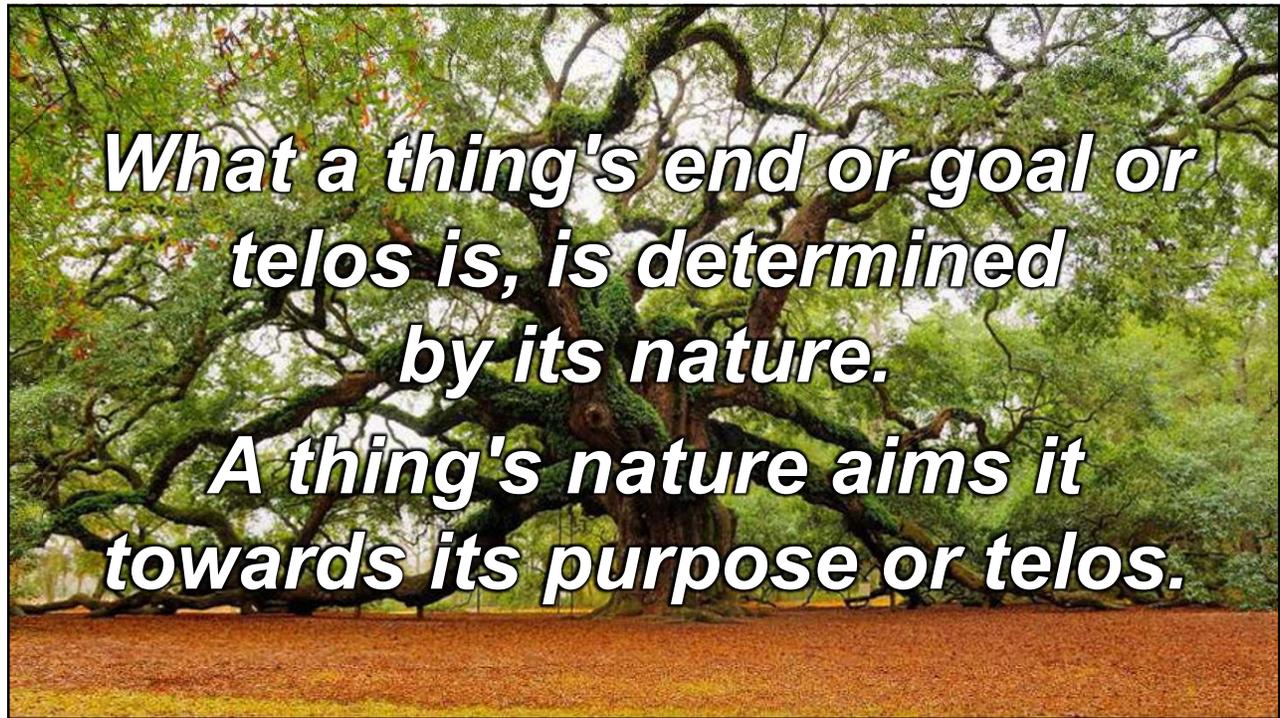


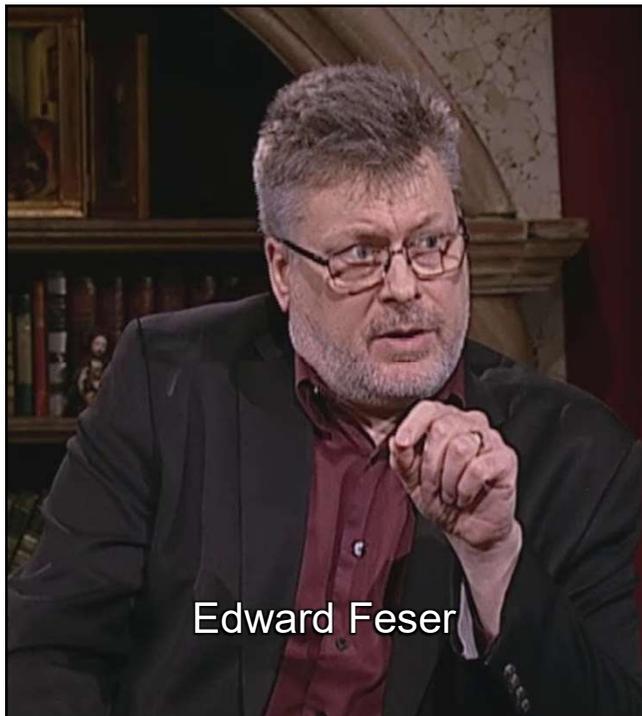
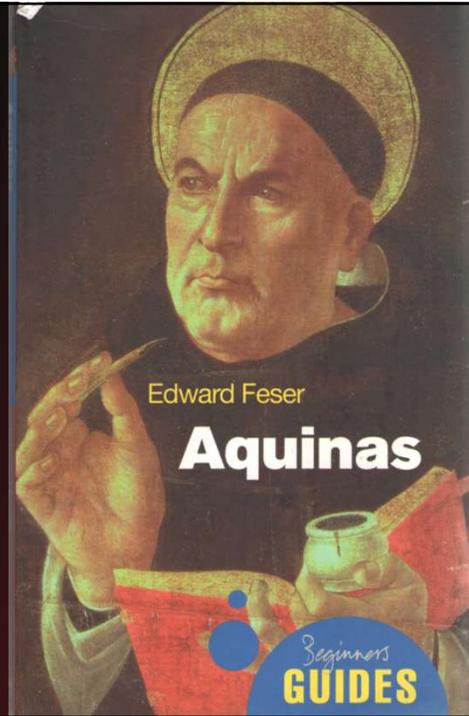
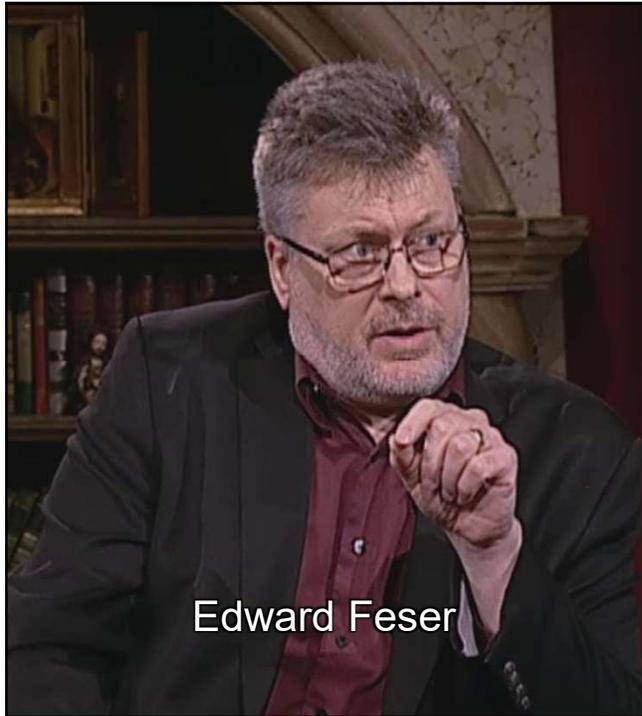




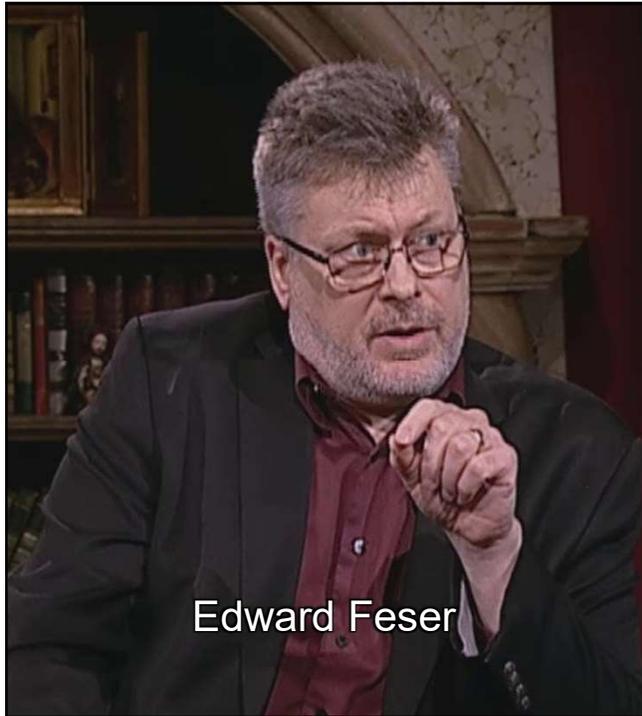
As a living thing grows and matures, it does so, if unimpeded, towards its proper end or goal or telos.







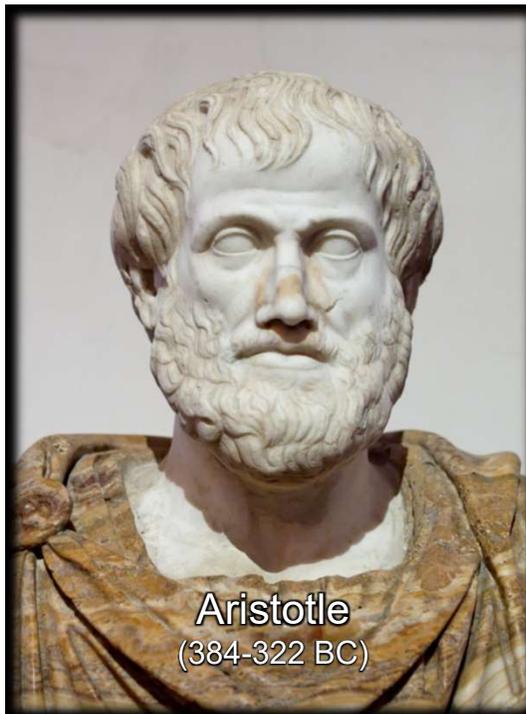
"It is widely assumed that the analysis and justification of fundamental moral claims can be conducted without reference to at least the more contentious issues of metaphysics."



Edward Feser

"Nothing could be further from the spirit of Thomas, for whom natural law ... is 'natural' precisely because it derives from human nature, conceived of in Aristotelian essentialist terms."

[Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide (Oxford: One World), 174]



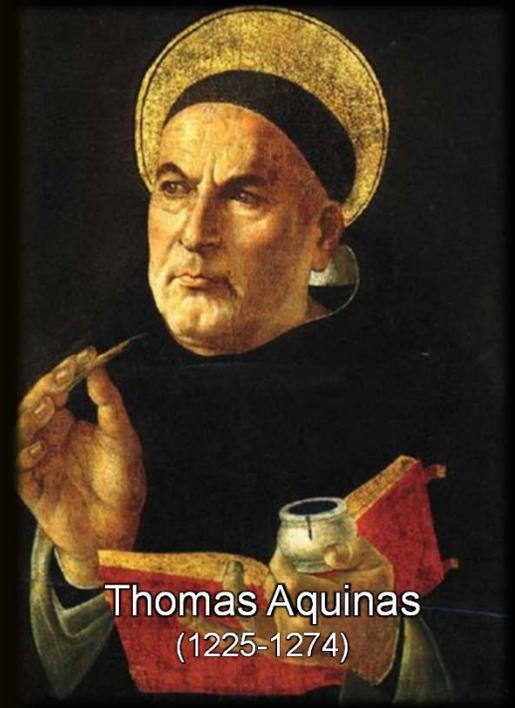
Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

"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."***

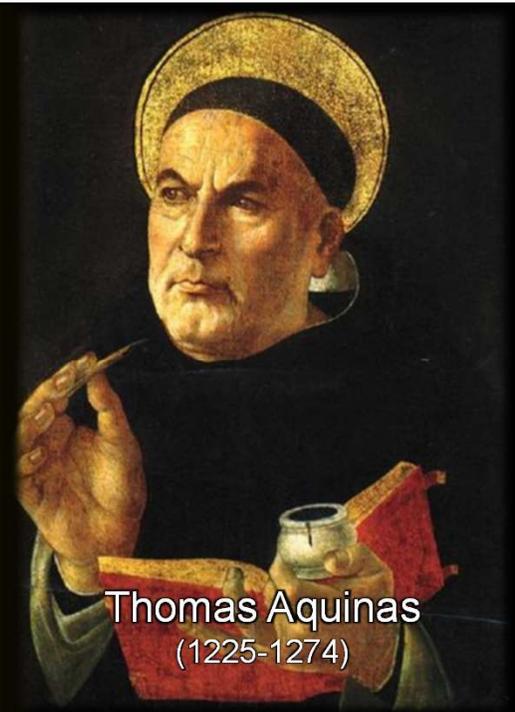
[Summa Theologiae I, Q5, art. 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province
in *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five
Volumes* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), 23]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

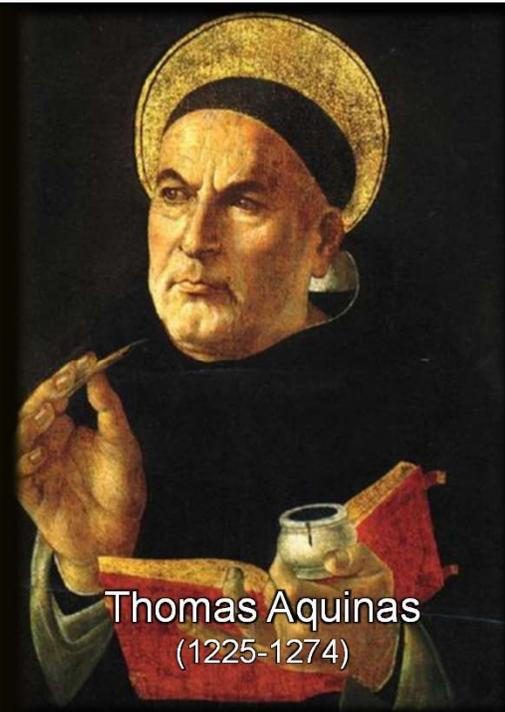
[ST I, Q5, art. 1]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



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



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

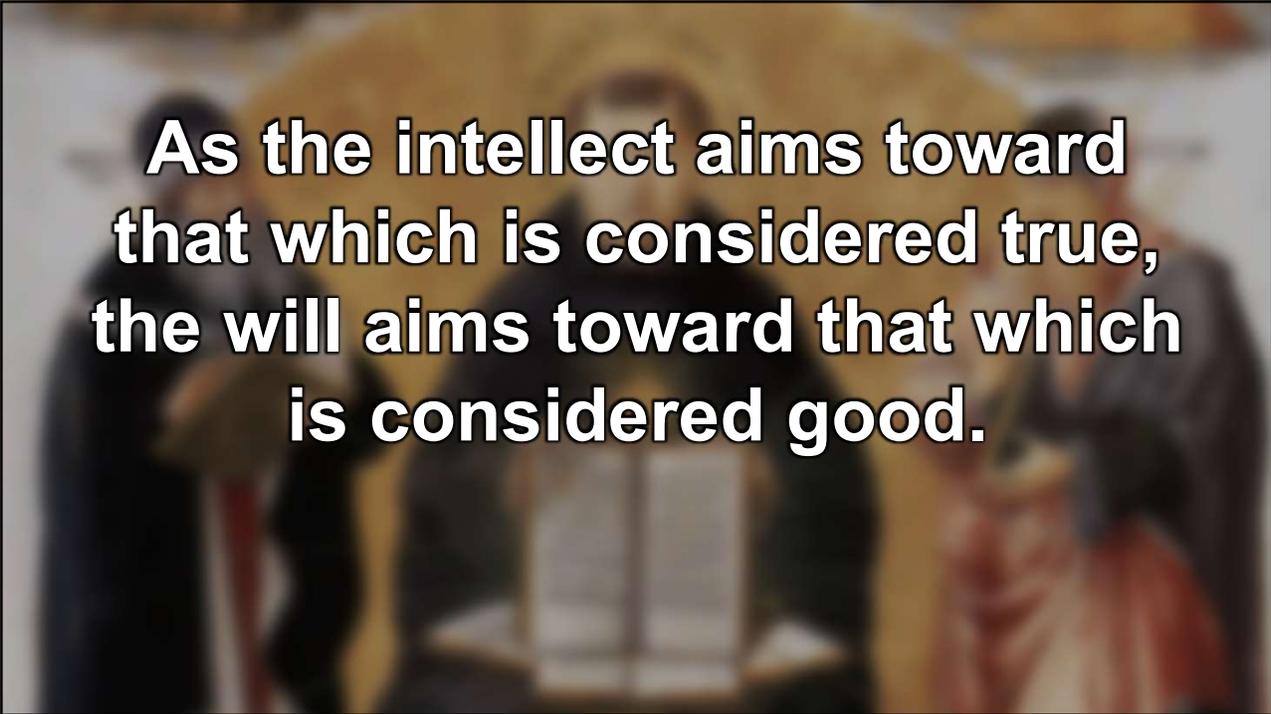
"Now, it is obvious that there is a determinate kind of nature for man. Therefore, there must be some operations that are in themselves appropriate for man."

[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)]

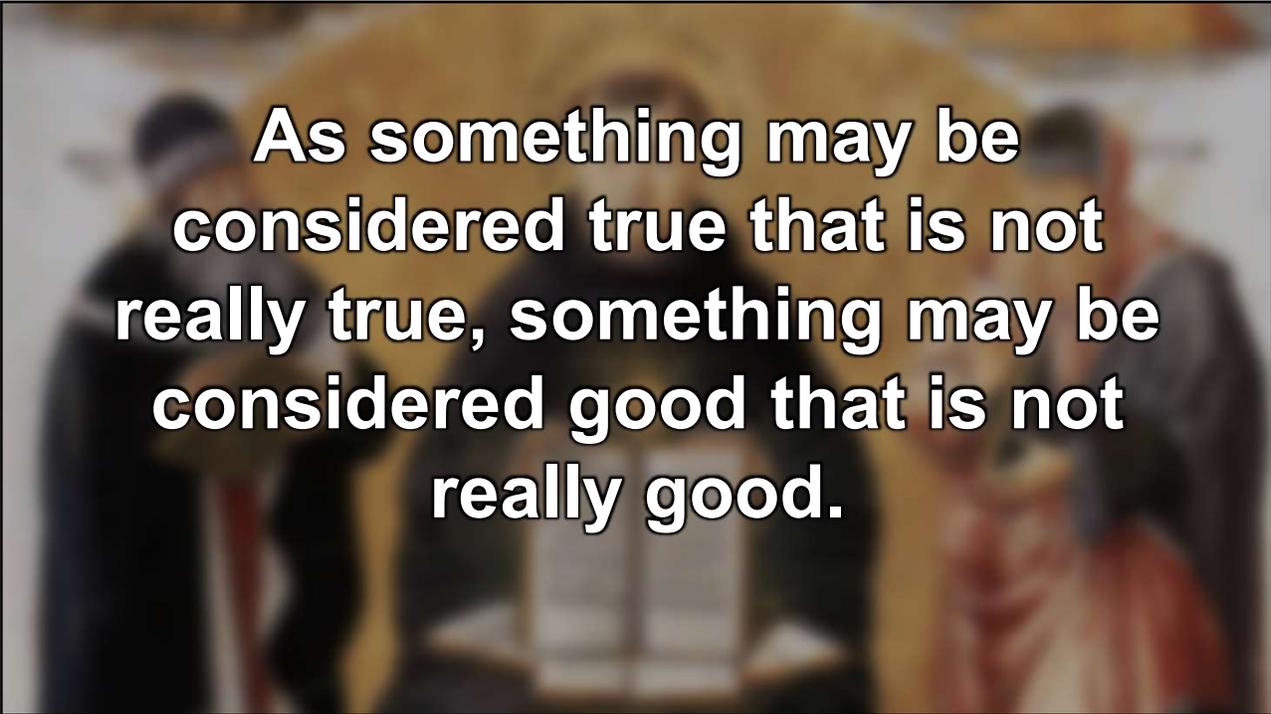


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

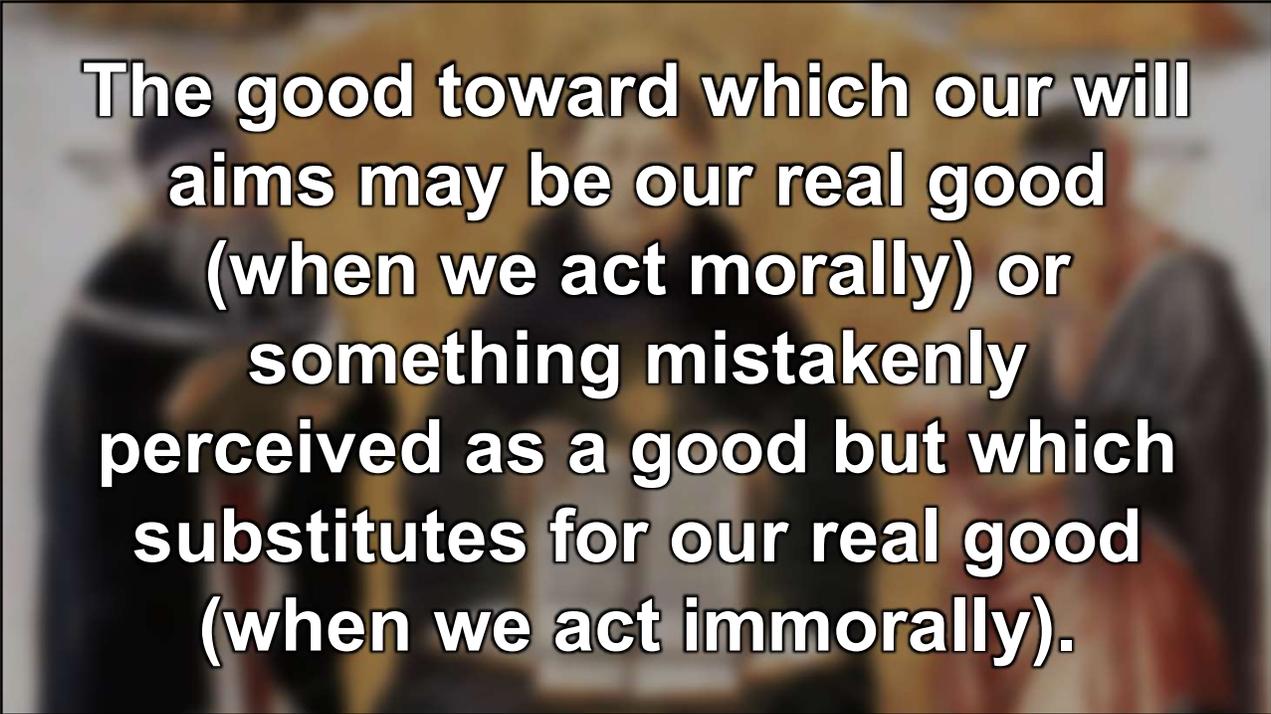
Human beings are unique among God's creatures on earth in as much as we have rationality and free will.



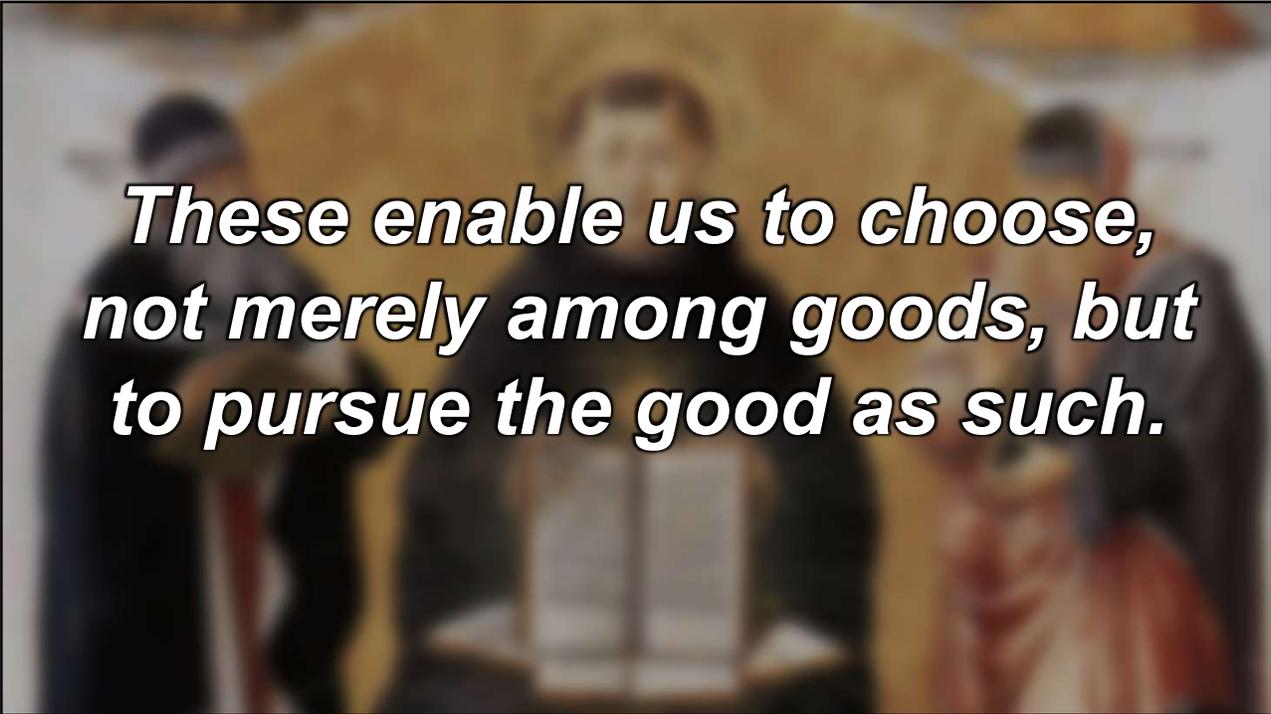
**As the intellect aims toward
that which is considered true,
the will aims toward that which
is considered good.**



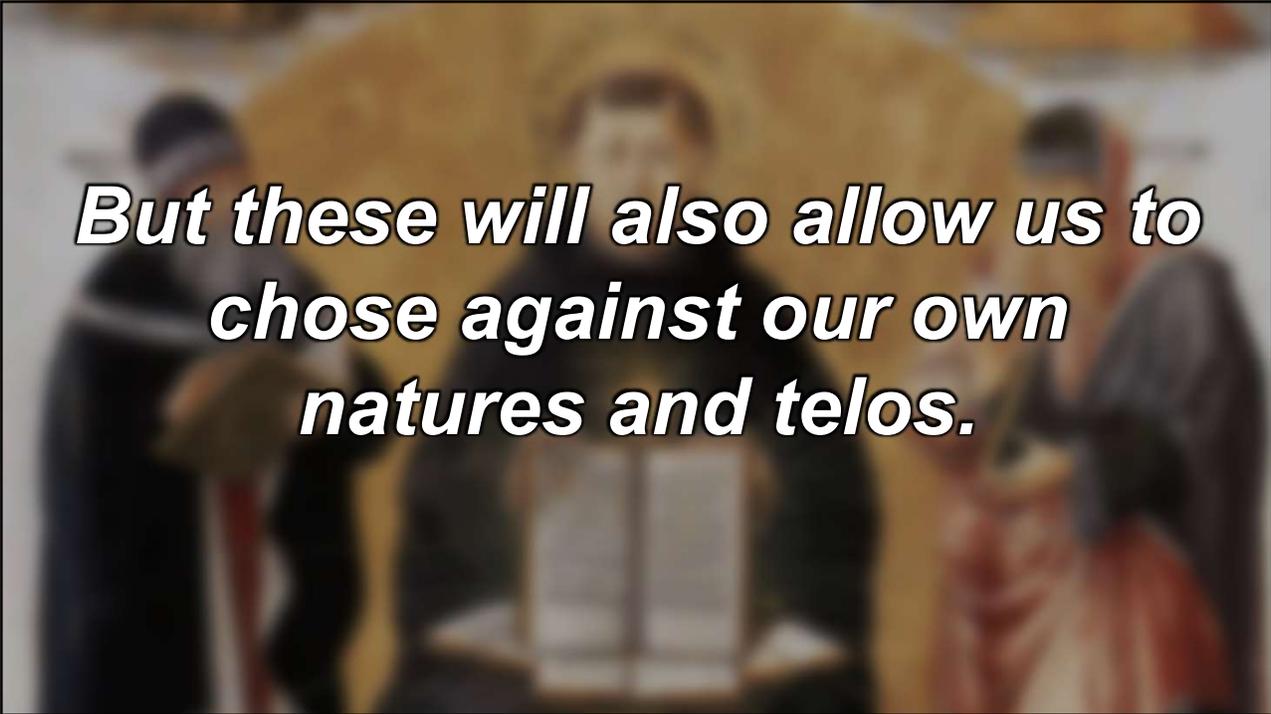
**As something may be
considered true that is not
really true, something may be
considered good that is not
really good.**



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

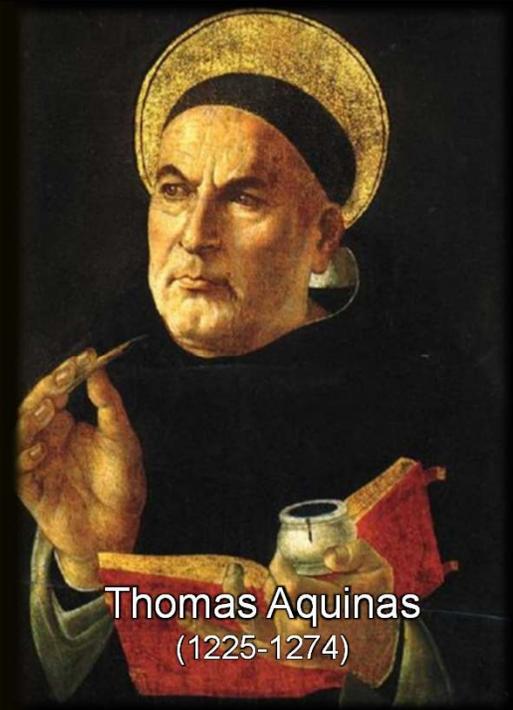


These enable us to choose, not merely among goods, but to pursue the good as such.

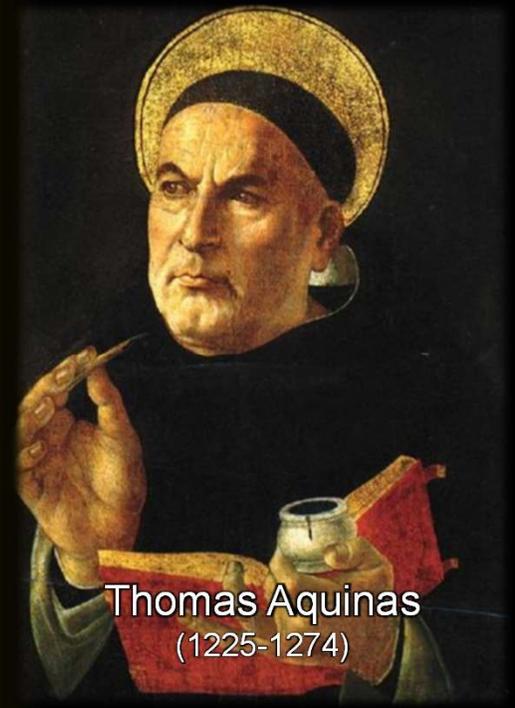


***But these will also allow us to
chose against our own
natures and telos.***

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



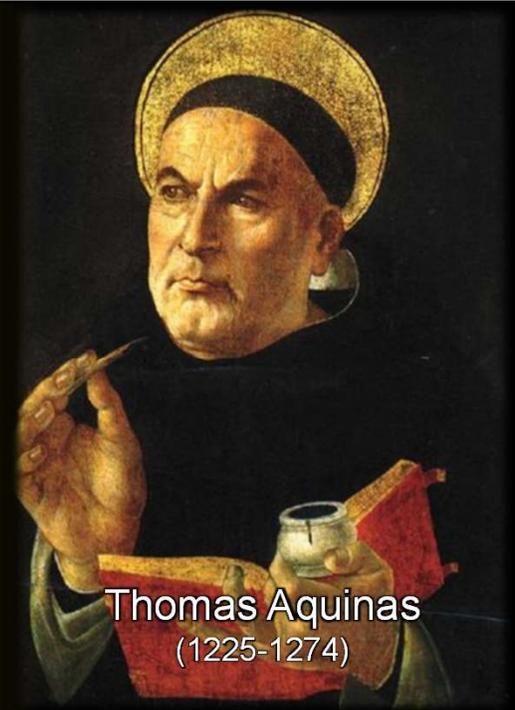
"Moral fault is found primarily and principally in the act of the will only ... so ... an act is moral because it is voluntary. ..."



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

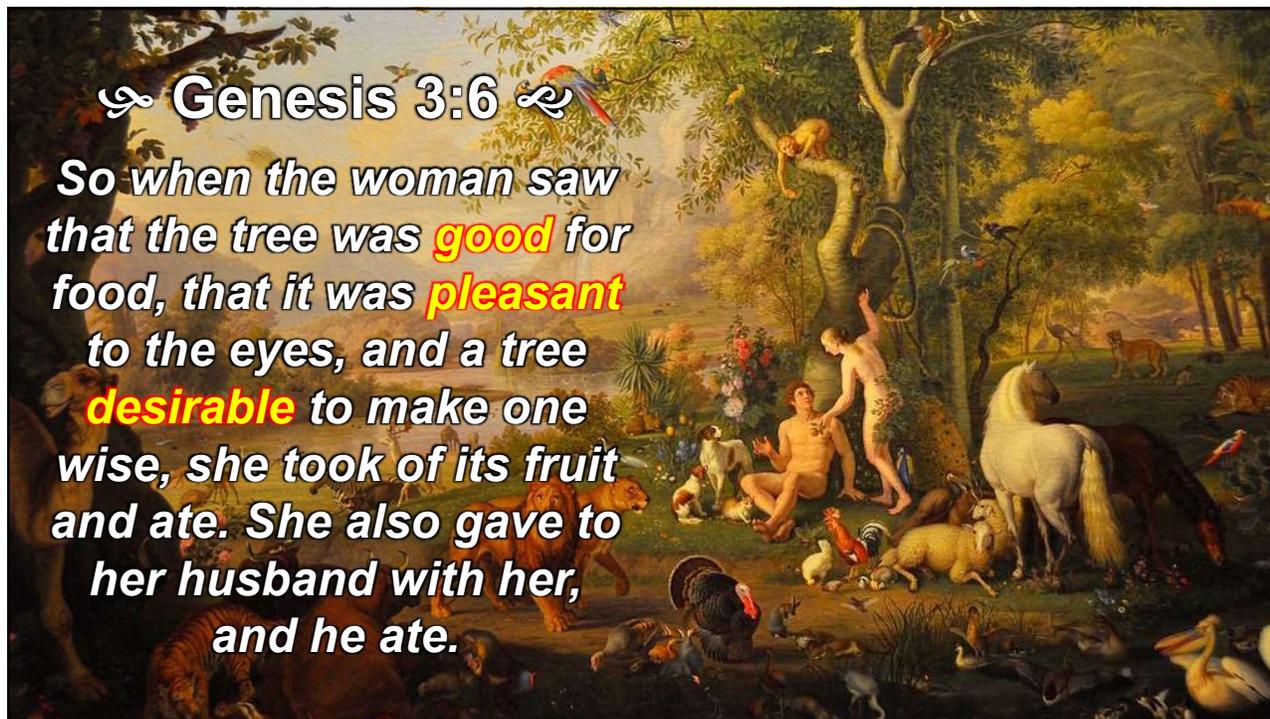
Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 10, §13



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

✧ Genesis 3:6 ✧

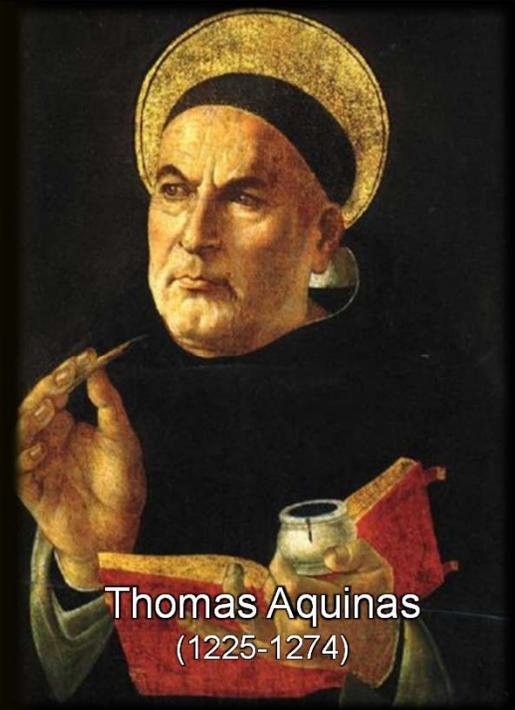
So when the woman saw that the tree was **good** for food, that it was **pleasant** to the eyes, and a tree **desirable** to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.



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)

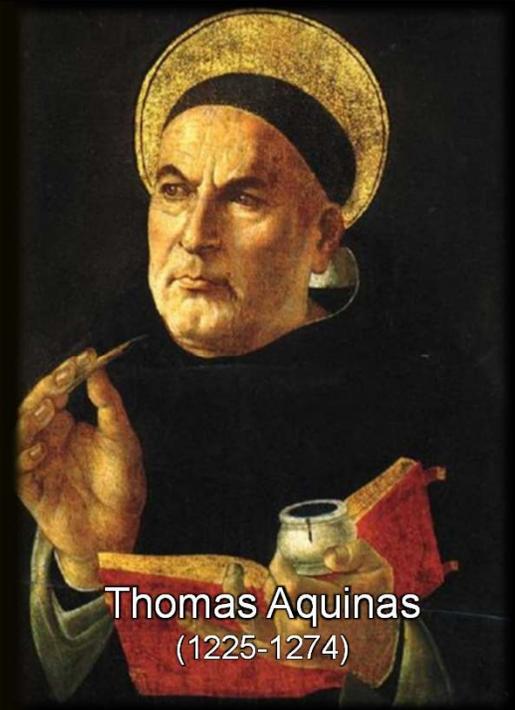


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

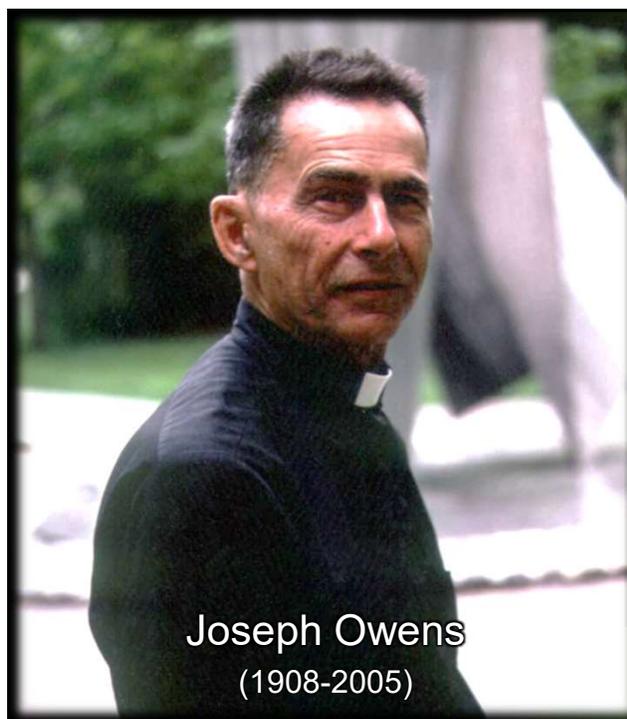
1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.

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

(ST1, Q5, art. 1)

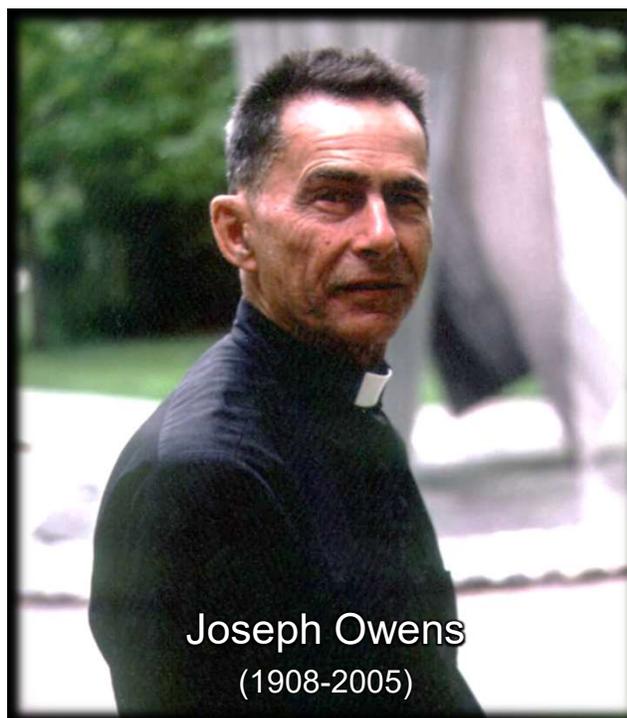


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



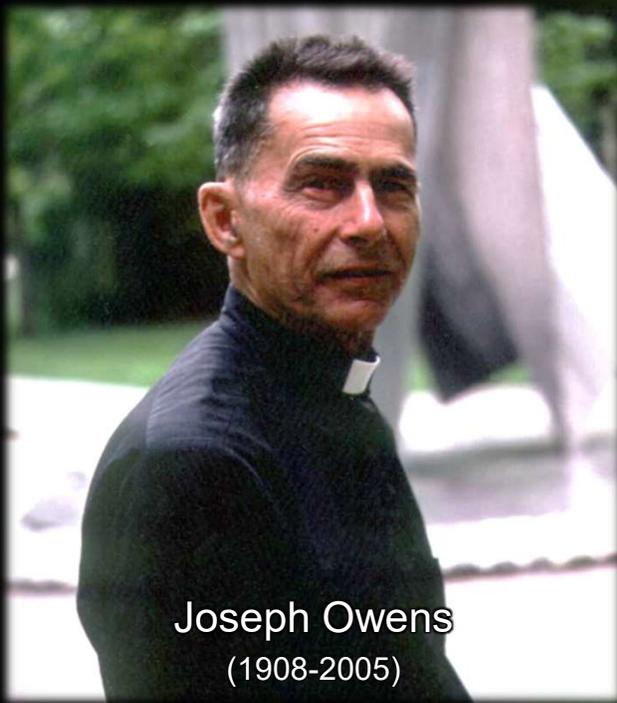
Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

"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

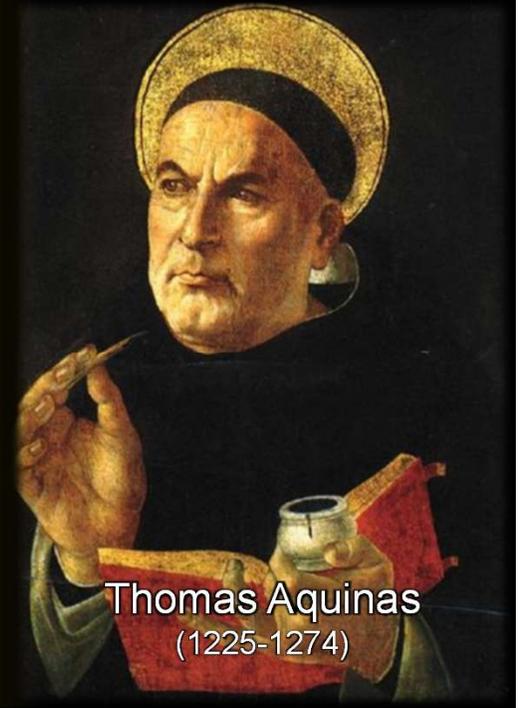
(entelecheia, ἐντελέχεια)

to have the end or goal in

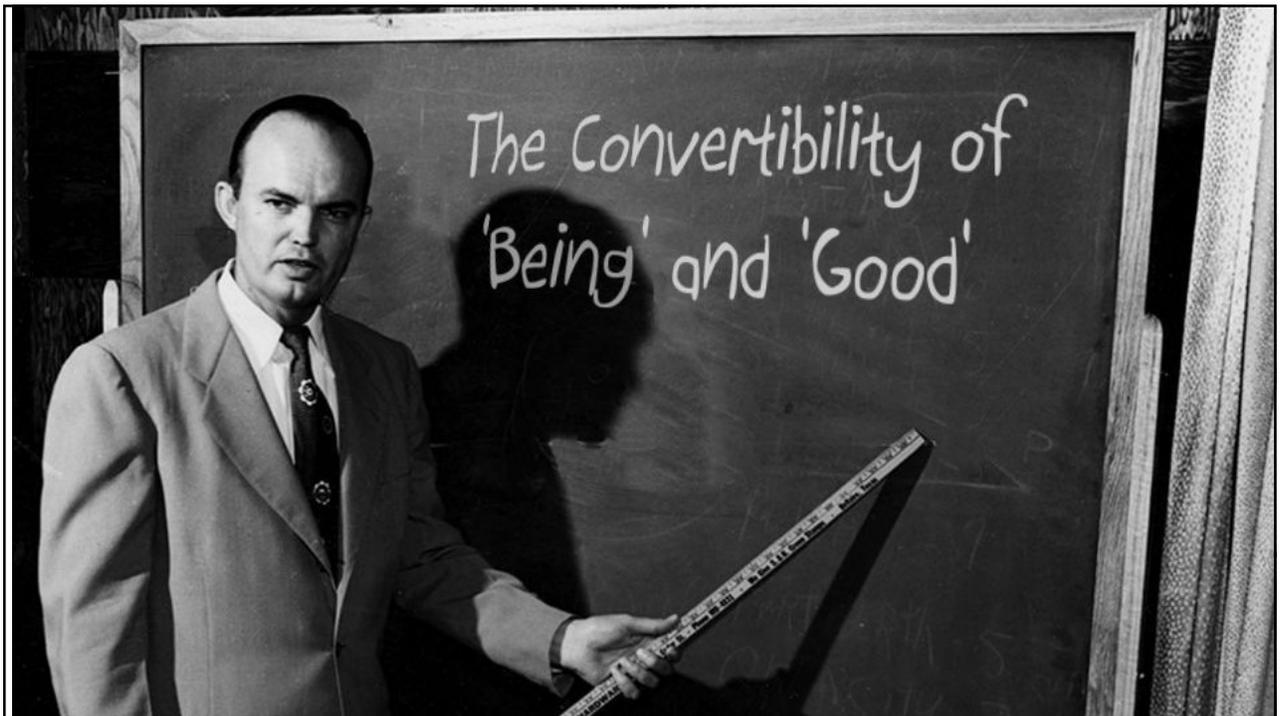
1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.
4. 'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.

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

(ST1, Q5, art. 1)



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



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 an 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 concernim predicari*).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. 2, q. 2, membrum 1, c. 1, a. 1, "An idem sit bonum et ens"; Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 1, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, fundam. 5, "Ea et bonum convertuntur, sicut vult Dionysius", d. 34, a. 2, q. 3, fundam. 4; Albert the Great, *De Bonis* q. 1, a. 6; *Summa Theol.* tract. 6, q. 28; Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.* 8, 1, 3; *De Ver.* XXI, 2; *In De Hebdomadis*, lect. 3; *Summa Theol.* I, 16, 2.

² Thomas Aquinas, *De Ver.* I, 2 obj. 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 Theologiae* tract. 6, q. 27, c. 3: Bonum dicitur intentionem communem et est de transcendentibus omne genus sicut et ens.



Jan Aertsen
1938-2016

BEING &

Some 20th Century Thomists

JOHN F. X. KNASAS



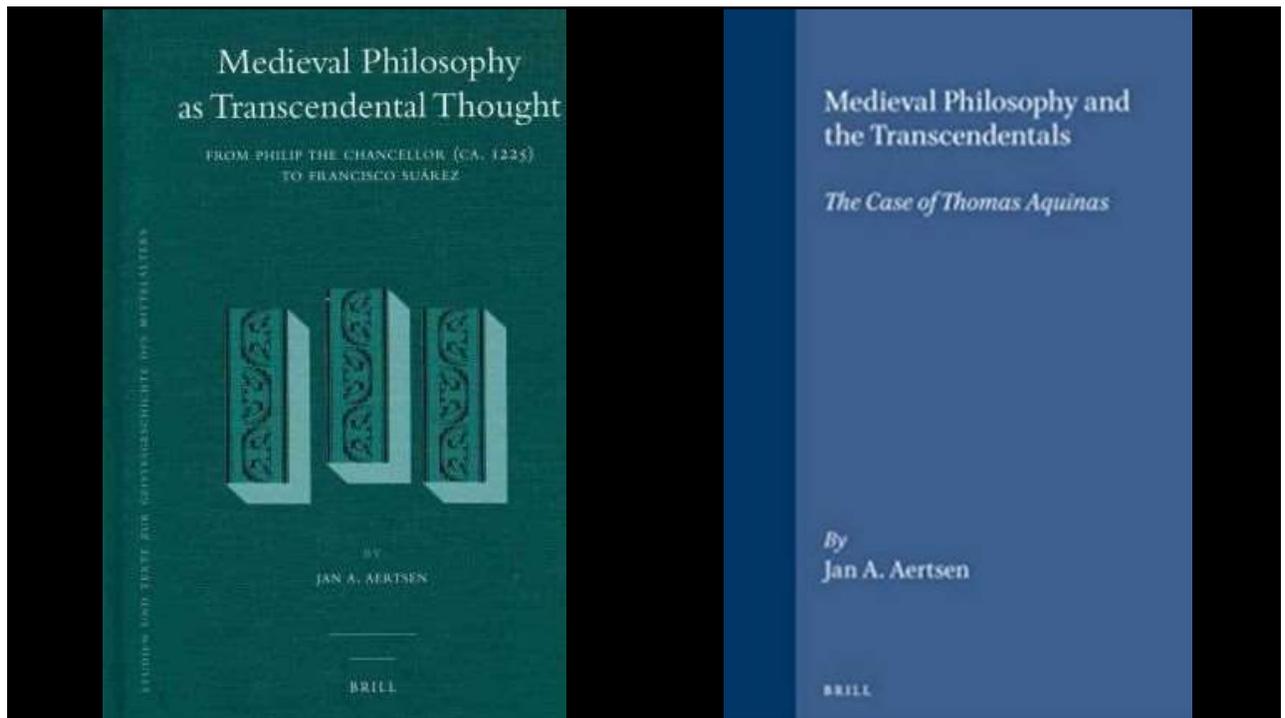
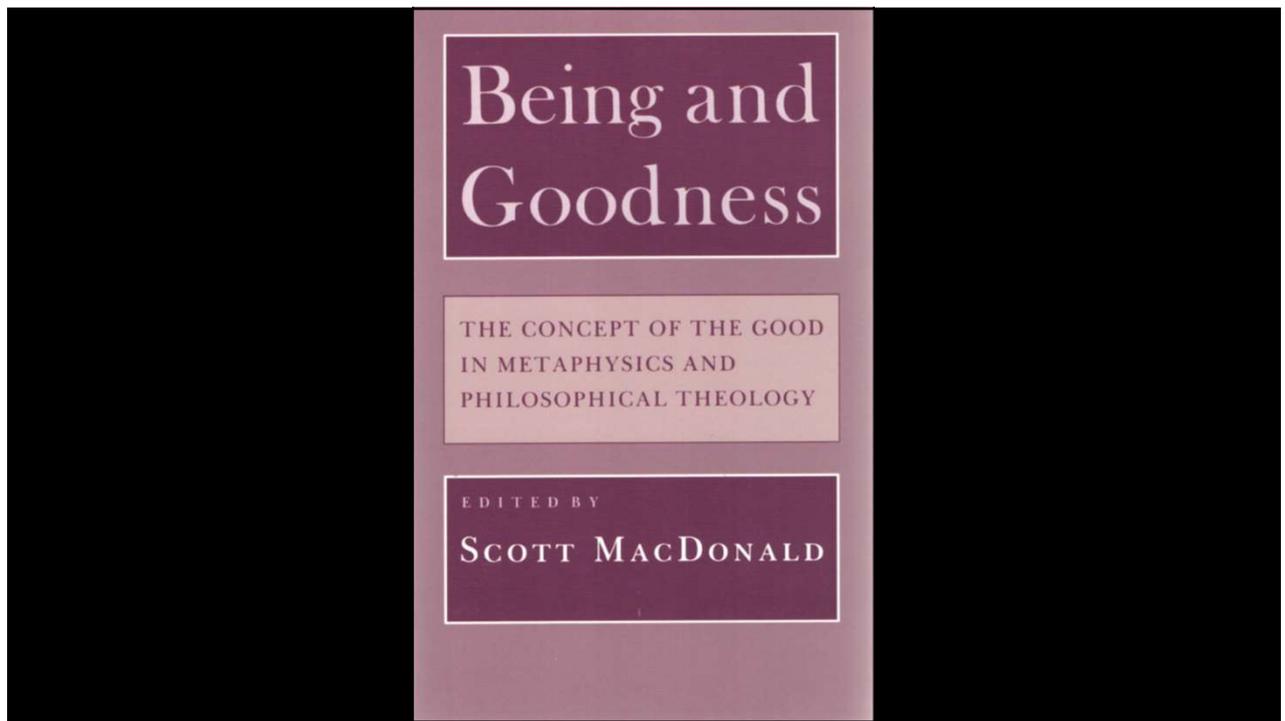
John F. X. Knasas

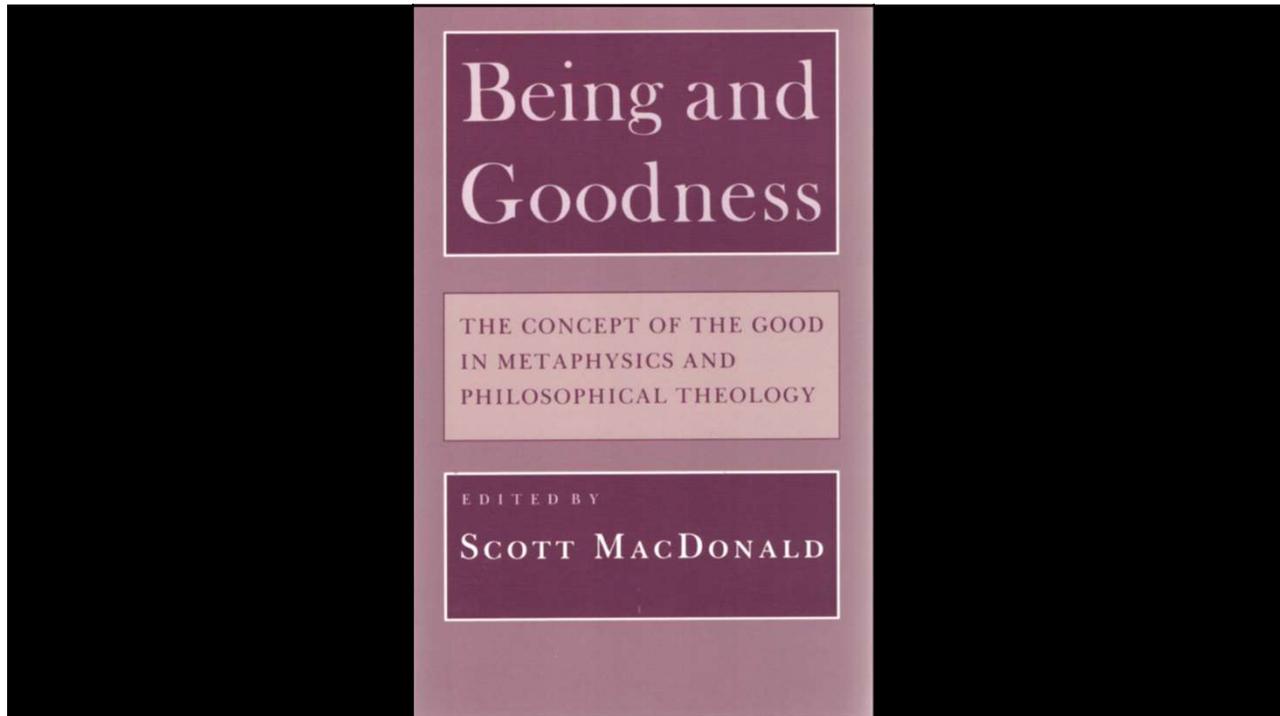
"To see man as the willer of the ratio boni is to engender a special status among things. ... No other thing in our experience so directly and intimately relates to the ratio boni. Only man has good as the proper object of his appetitive power ... and to understand this fact is for one to realize that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

ST-II, Q94, art. 2



John F. X. Knasas

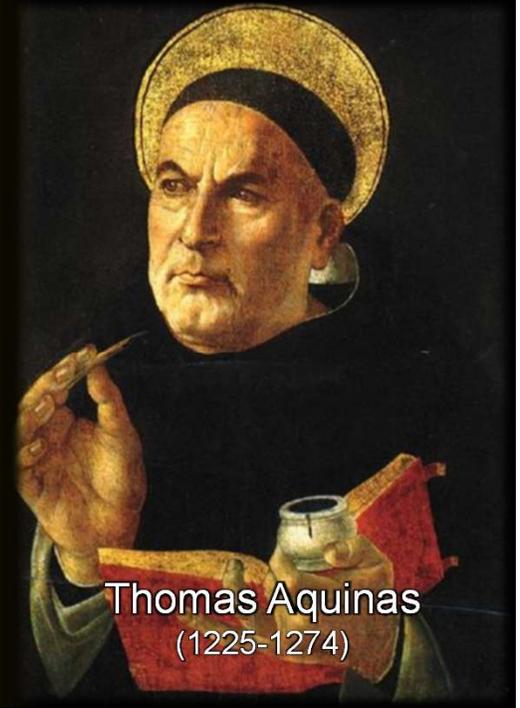




1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.
4. 'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.
5. God is goodness itself in as much as God is being itself.

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

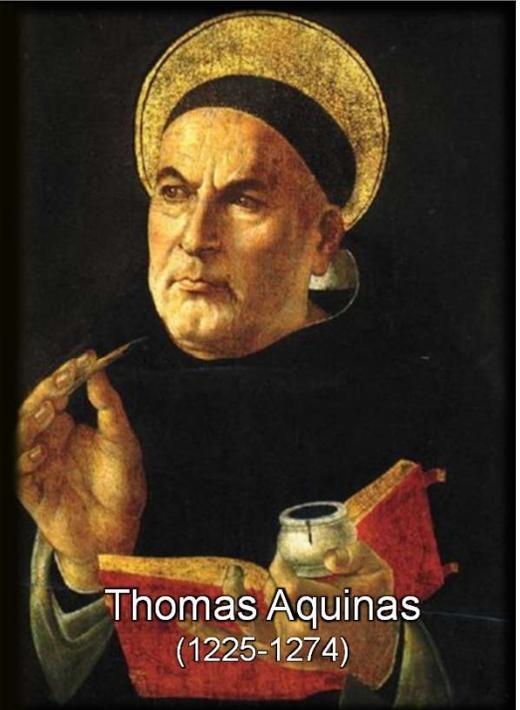
[ST 1, Q 12, art. iv]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

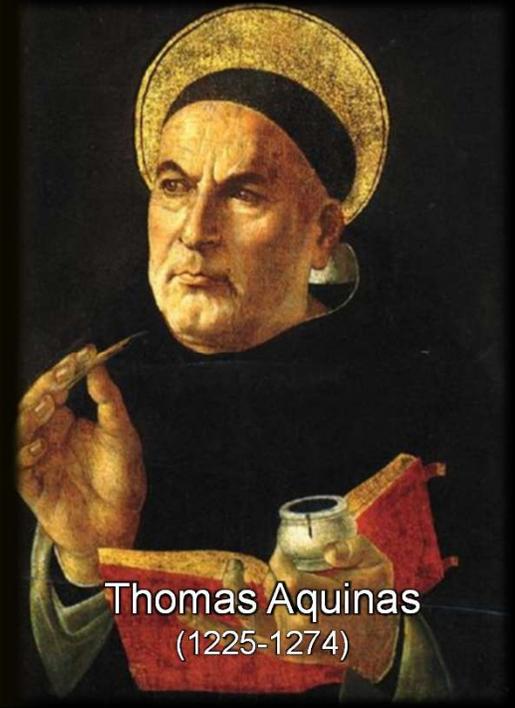
[ST, I, Q3, art. 7.]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

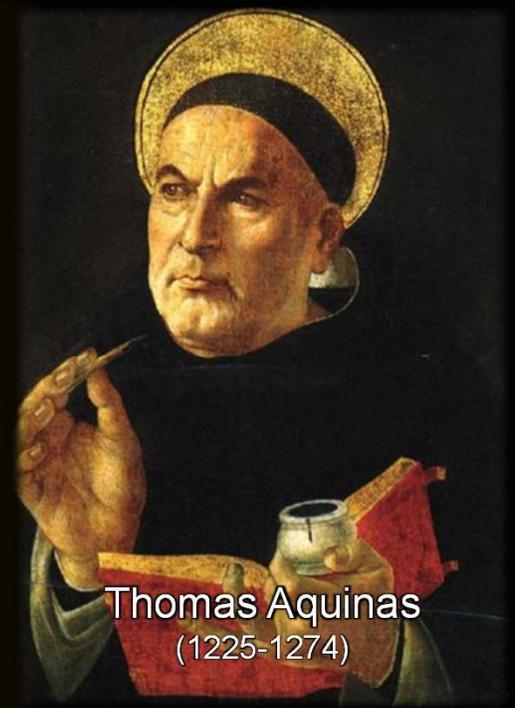
[ST 1, Q 11, art. iv.]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Good belongs pre-eminently to God."

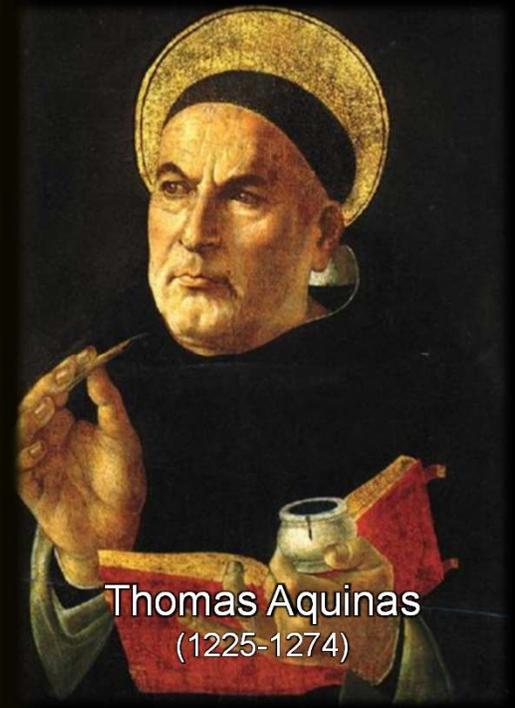
(ST 1, Q5, art. 1)



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

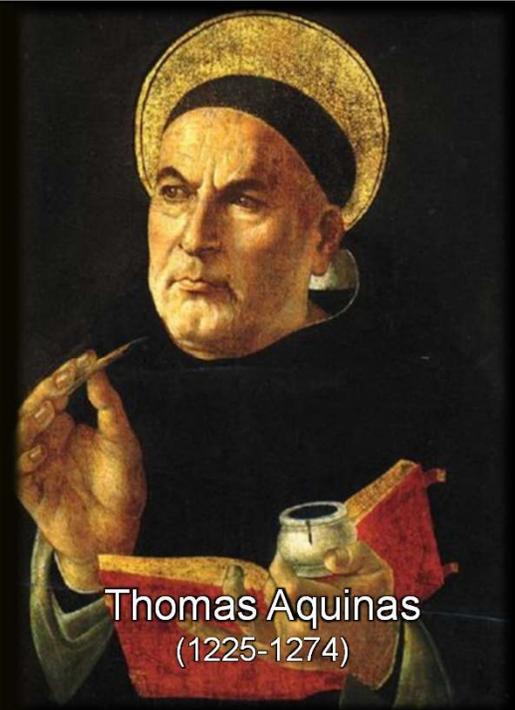
ST I-II, Q94, art. 2



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

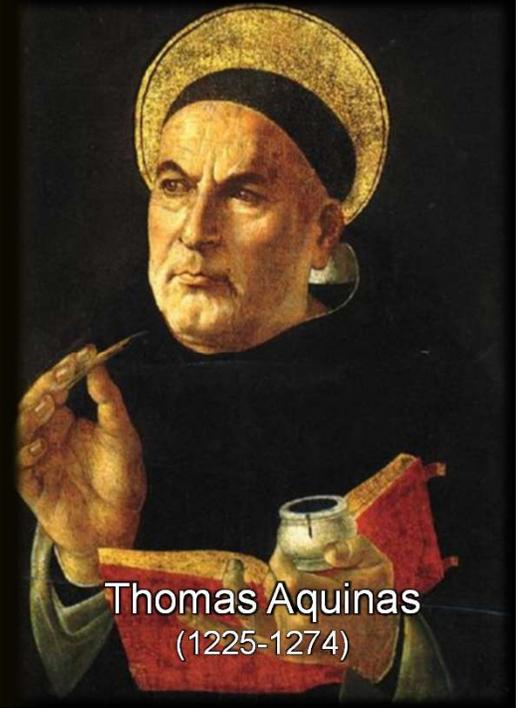
"The first indemonstrable principle is that **the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time** Now as being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed at action."

ST I-II, Q94, art. 2



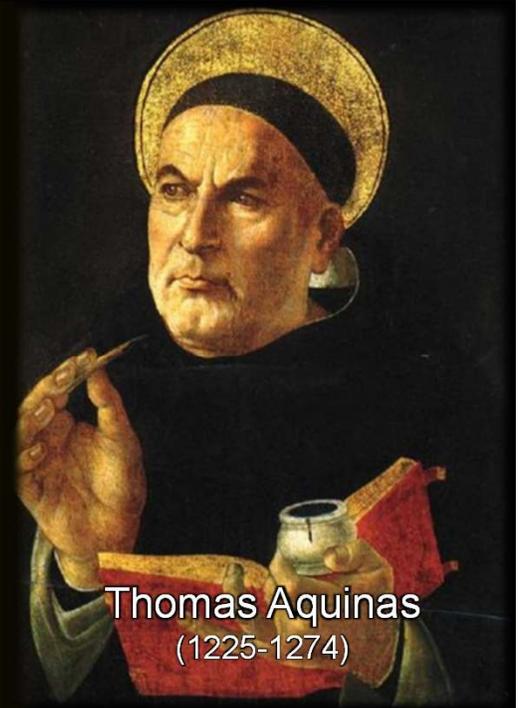
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

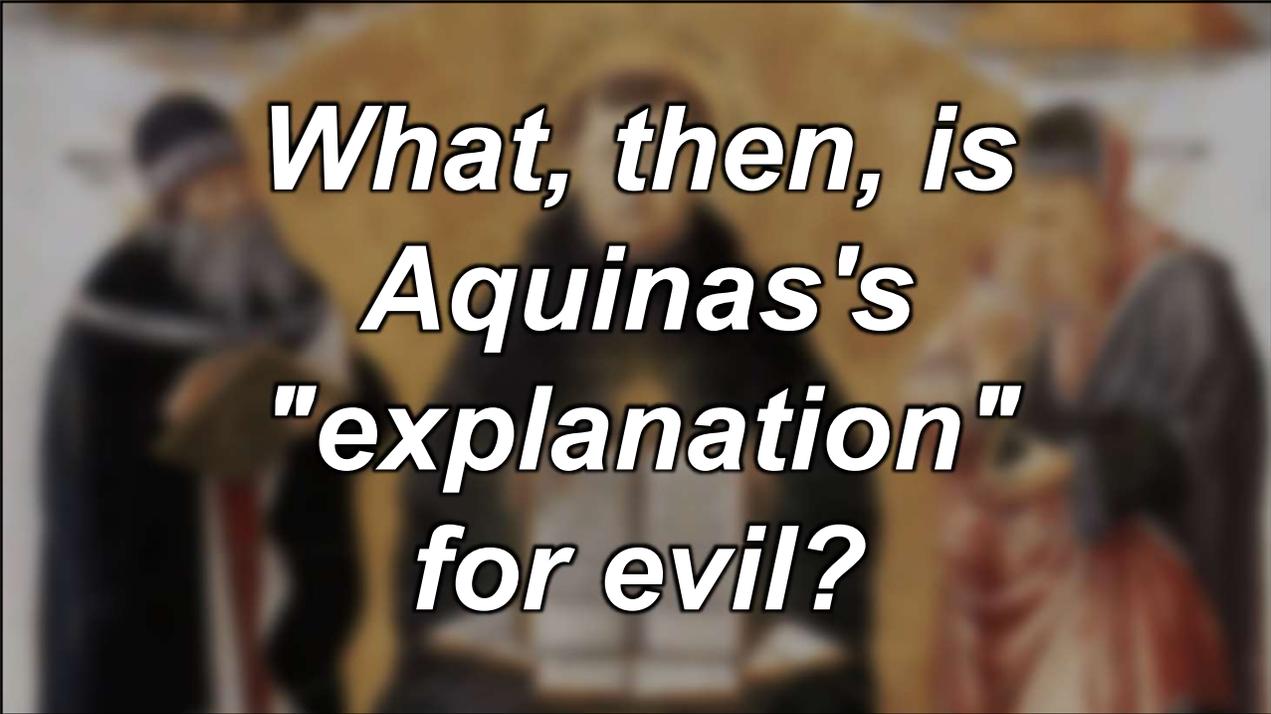


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

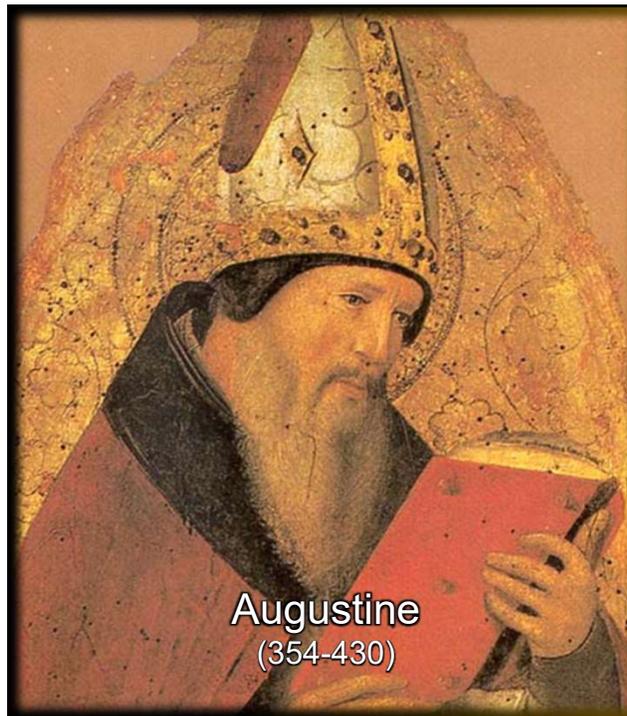
***Good is
to be done and
pursued
and evil
avoided.***



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



***What, then, is
Aquinas's
"explanation"
for evil?***



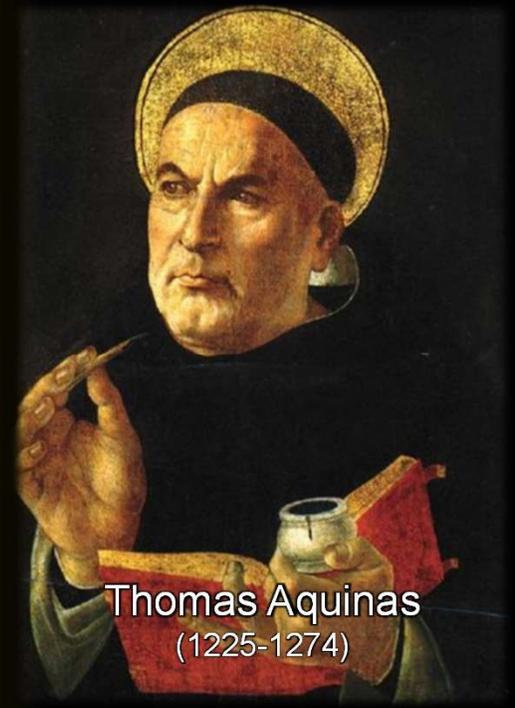
Augustine
(354-430)

***"For the Omnipotent God,
whom even the heathen
acknowledge as the Supreme
Power over all, would not
allow any evil in his works,
unless in his omnipotence
and goodness, as the
Supreme Good, he is able to
bring forth good out of evil."***

[Augustine, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love*, III, § 11, trans. Albert C. Outler, p. 5, available at <http://www.saintsbooks.net/books/St.%20Augustine%20-%20Enchiridion%20on%20Faith,%20Hope,%20and%20Love.pdf>, accessed 08/11/22]

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

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



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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



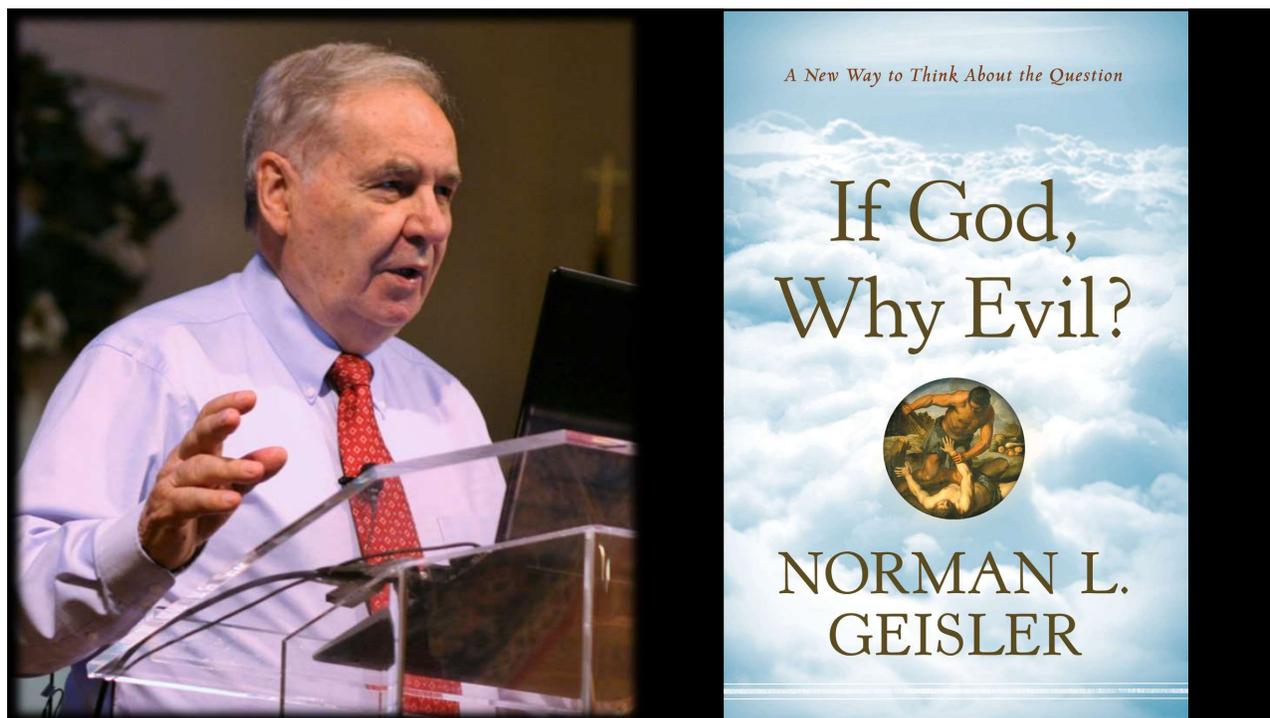
There is a difference between natural and moral evil as well as a difference between good and moral good.

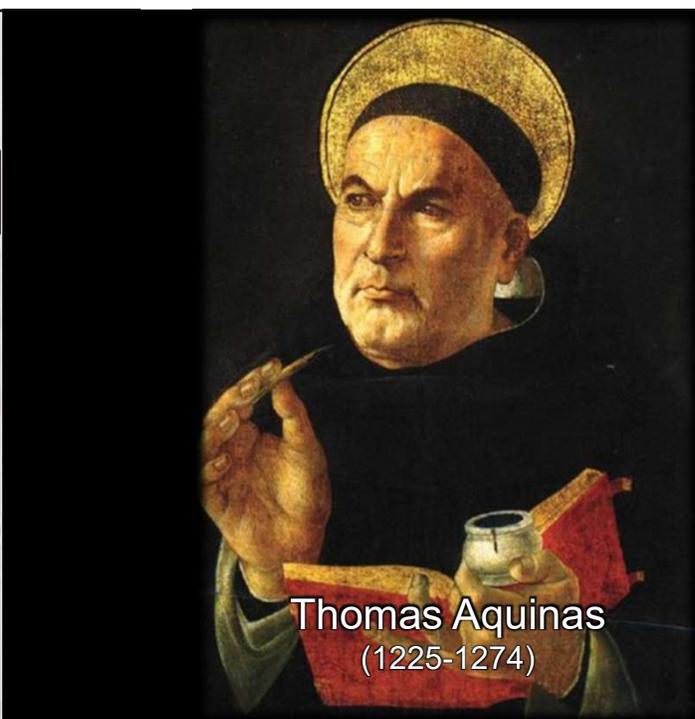
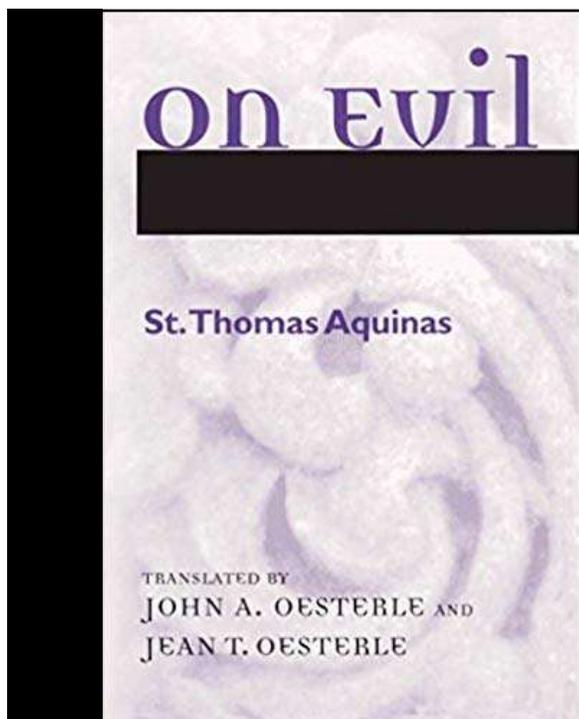
Solutions to the problem of evil seek to address both.

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

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

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





Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

