

***A dilemma is a choice
between two options:***

*either when both options are desirable
but only one **can** be chosen ...*

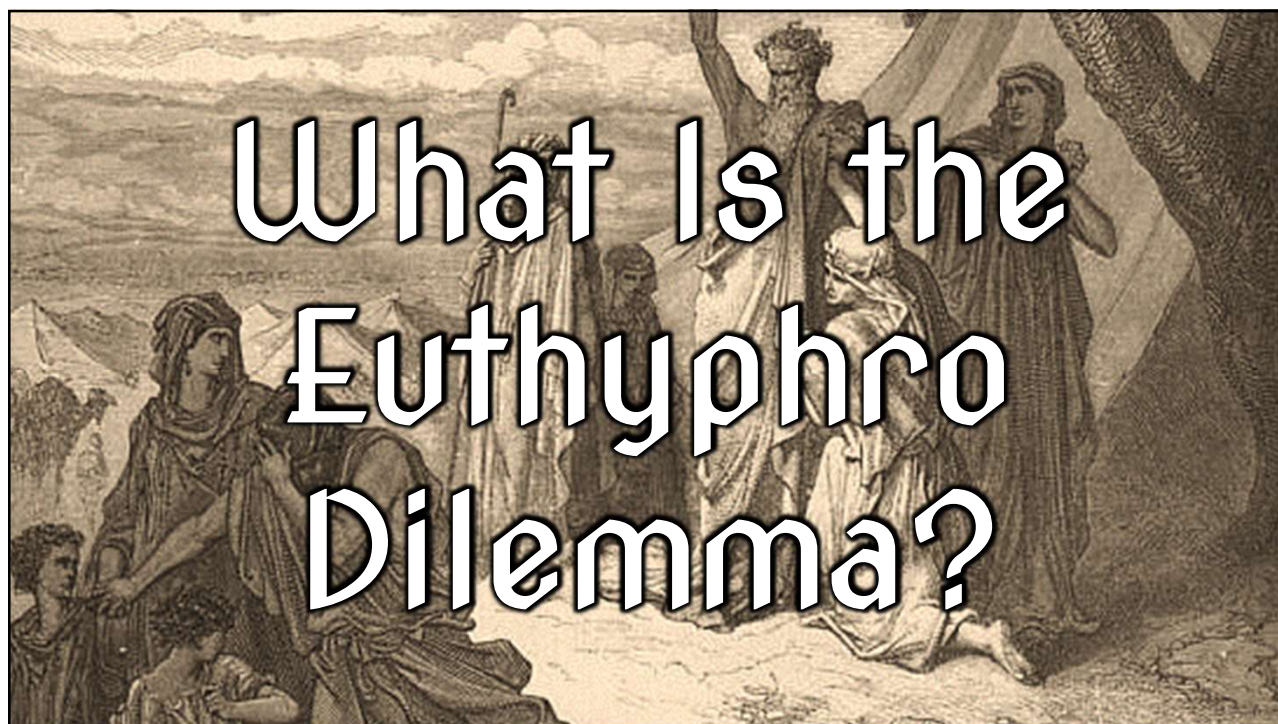


*or when both options are less than desirable and one **must** be chosen.*

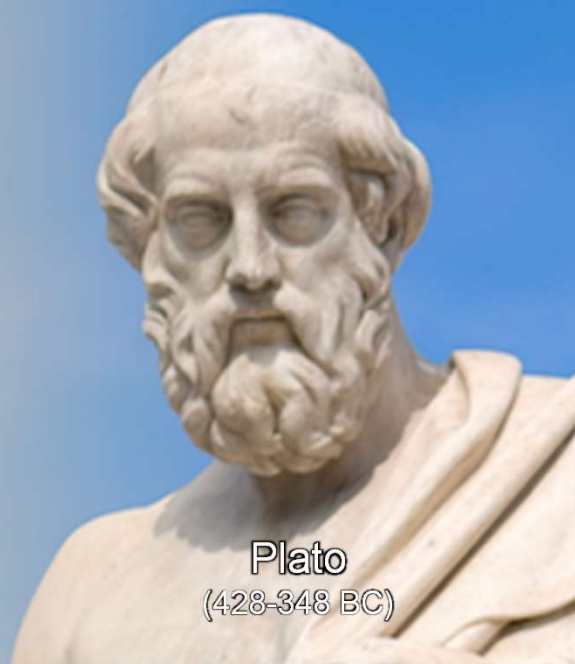


When there are only two possible choices, then it is a true dilemma.

If a dilemma is passed off as a true dilemma when in fact there is a third (or more) option, then this is a false dilemma.

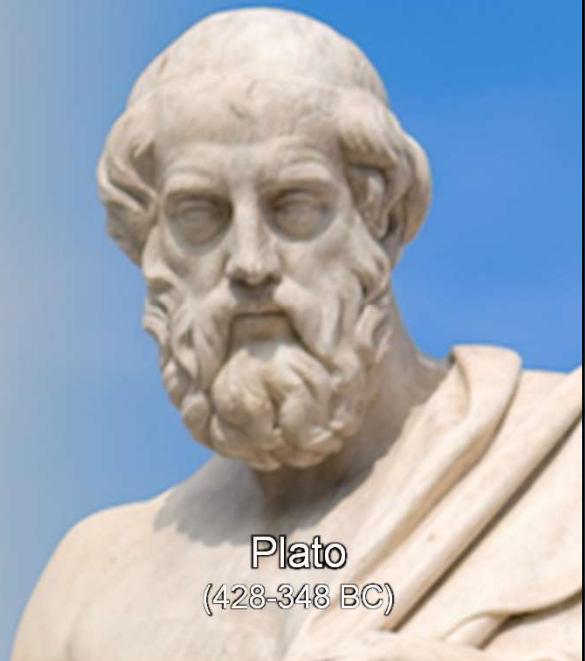


*The name
'Euthyphro'
comes from the
title of a dialogue
written by Plato.*



Plato
(428-348 BC)

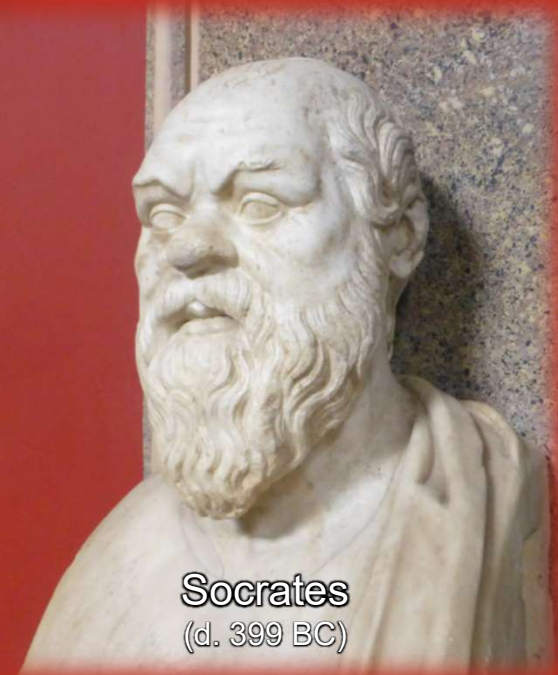
***Socrates meets
Euthyphro along
the way heading
to court to
prosecute his
own father for
murder.***



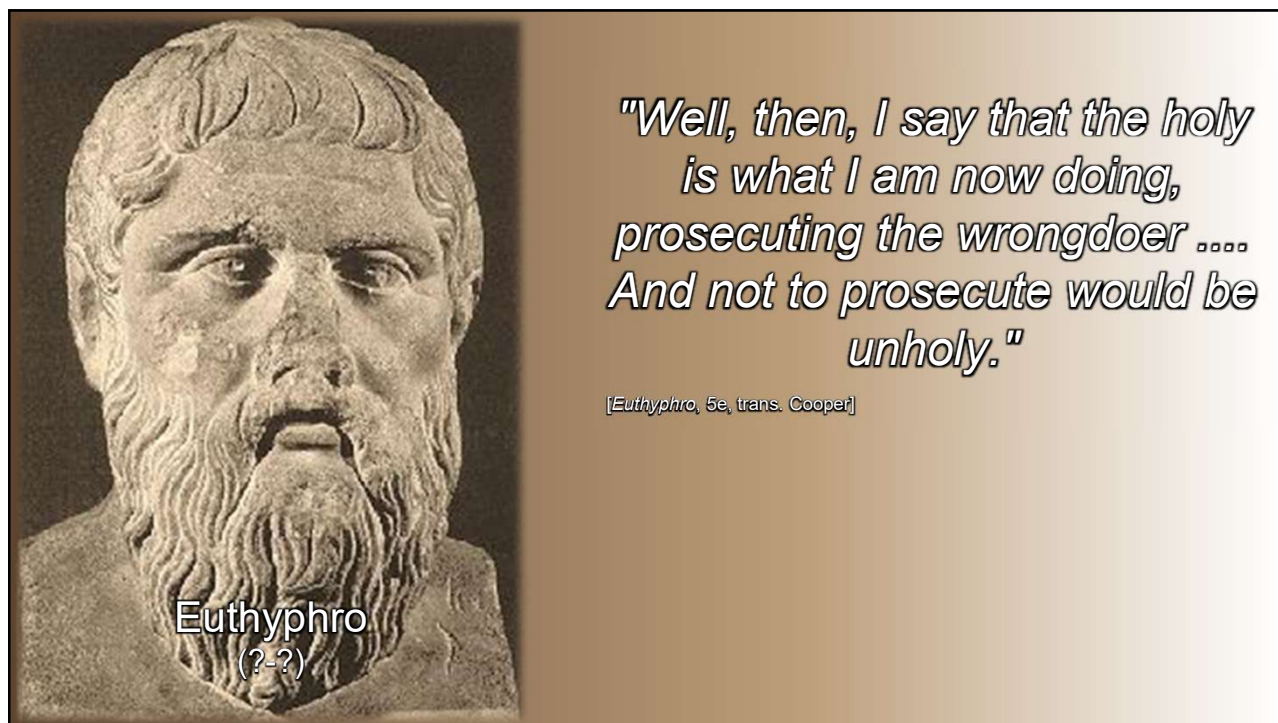
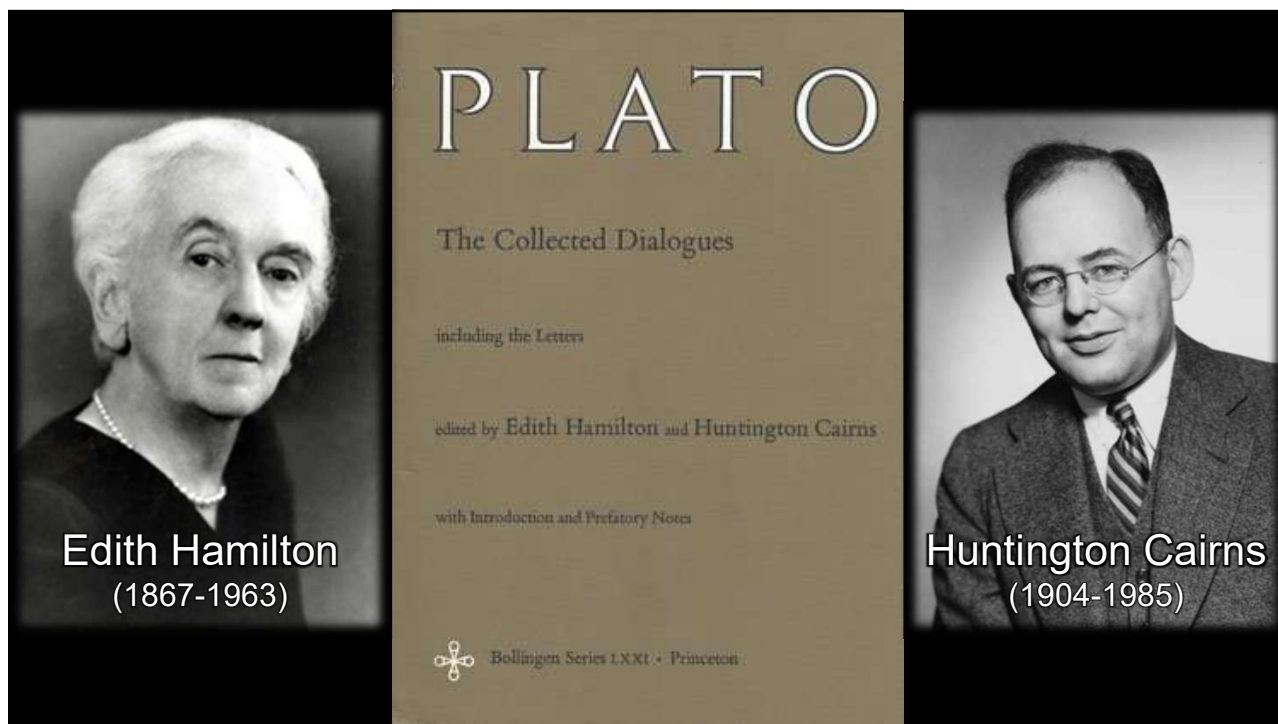
Plato
(428-348 BC)

*"So, in the name of heaven, tell me now about the matter you just felt sure you know quite thoroughly. State what you take piety [εὐσεβές, **eusebes**] and impiety [ἀσεβές, **asebes**] to be with reference to murder and all other cases. Is not the holy [ὅσιον, **hosion**] always one and the same in thing in every action, and, again, is not the unholy [ἄνόσιον, **anosion**] always opposite to the holy, and like itself? And as unholiness does it not always have its one essential form [ἰδέαν, **idean**], which will be found in everything that is unholy? ... Then tell me. How do you define the holy [ὅσιον, **hosion**] and the unholy [ἄνόσιον, **anosion**]?"*

[Euthyphro, 5d, trans. Lane Cooper (© 1941) in Plato: The Collected Dialogues, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962), 173]

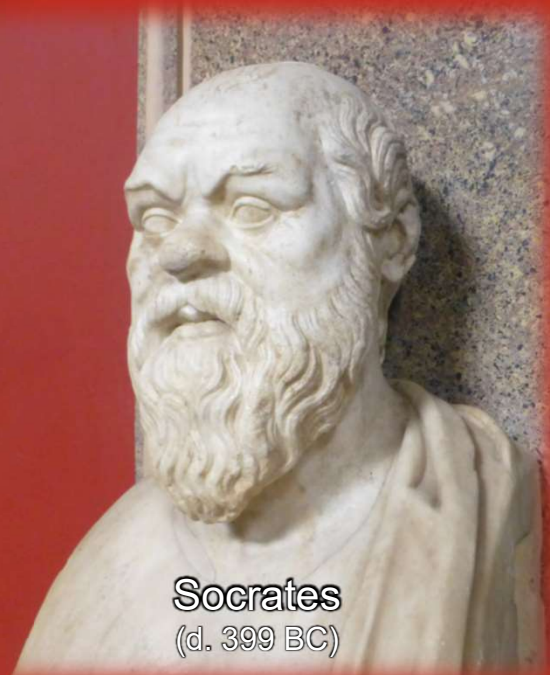


Socrates
(d. 399 BC)

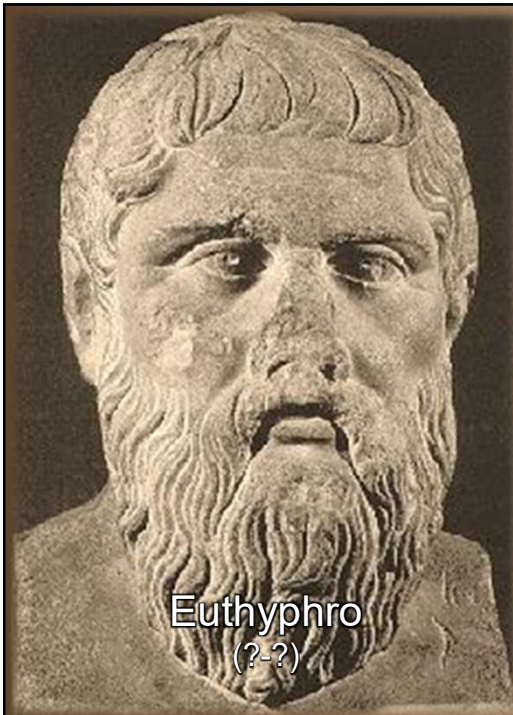


"Well, bear in mind that what I asked of you was not to tell me one or two out of all the numerous actions that are holy; I wanted you to tell me what is the essential form of holiness which makes all holy actions holy. ... Show me what, precisely, this ideal is."

[*Euthyphro*, 6d, trans. Cooper]



Socrates
(d. 399 BC)



Euthyphro
(?-?)

"Well, then, what is pleasing to the gods is holy, and what is not pleasing to them is unholy."

[*Euthyphro*, 6e, trans. Cooper]

"Is what is holy holy because the gods approve it, or do they approve it because it is holy?"

[*Euthyphro*, 10a, trans. Cooper]



Socrates
(d. 399 BC)

In its contemporary version, the Euthyphro Dilemma asks:

Is X good because God wills X

or

does God will X because X is good?

*Sometimes the Euthyphro
Dilemma is worded:*

Is X good because God commands X

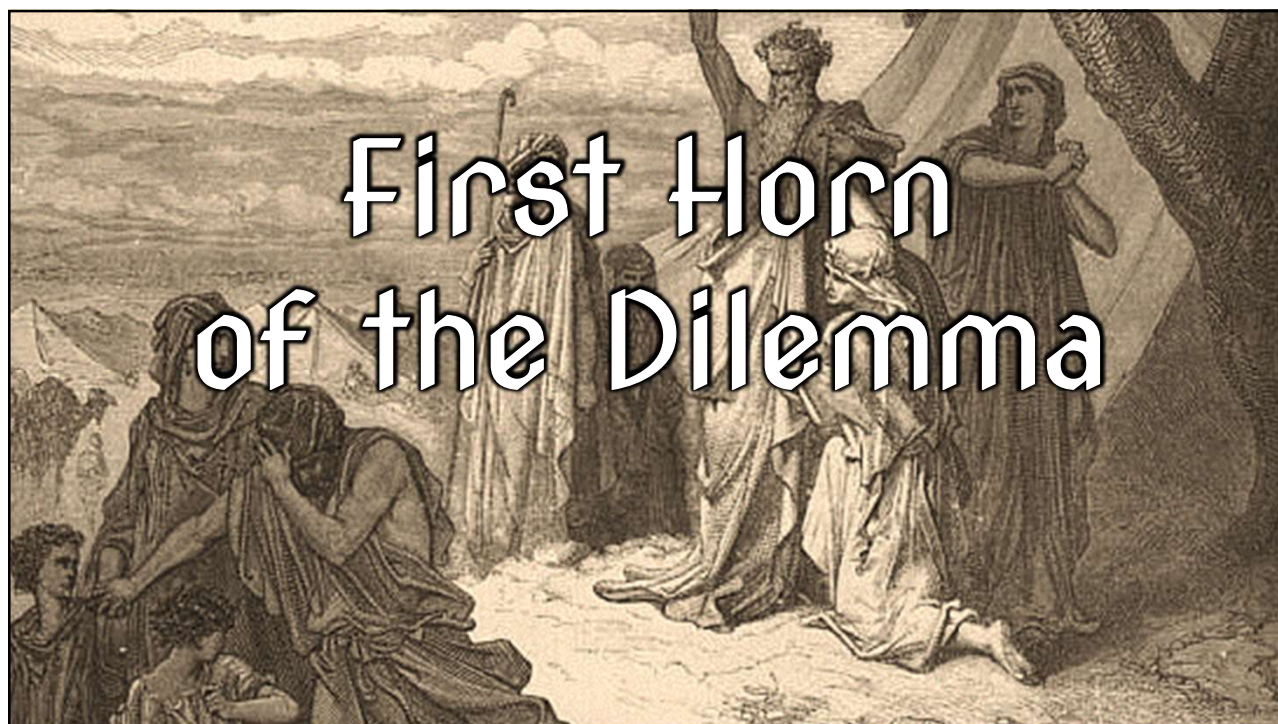
or

does God command X because X is good?

*These two options seem
to be exhaustive.*

*The Euthyphro is usually offered as
a true dilemma.*

*Since neither option is desirable,
the options are sometimes regarded as
the "horns" of the dilemma.*



*Is X good because God wills it?
This option has come to the known as
the
Divine Command Theory.*

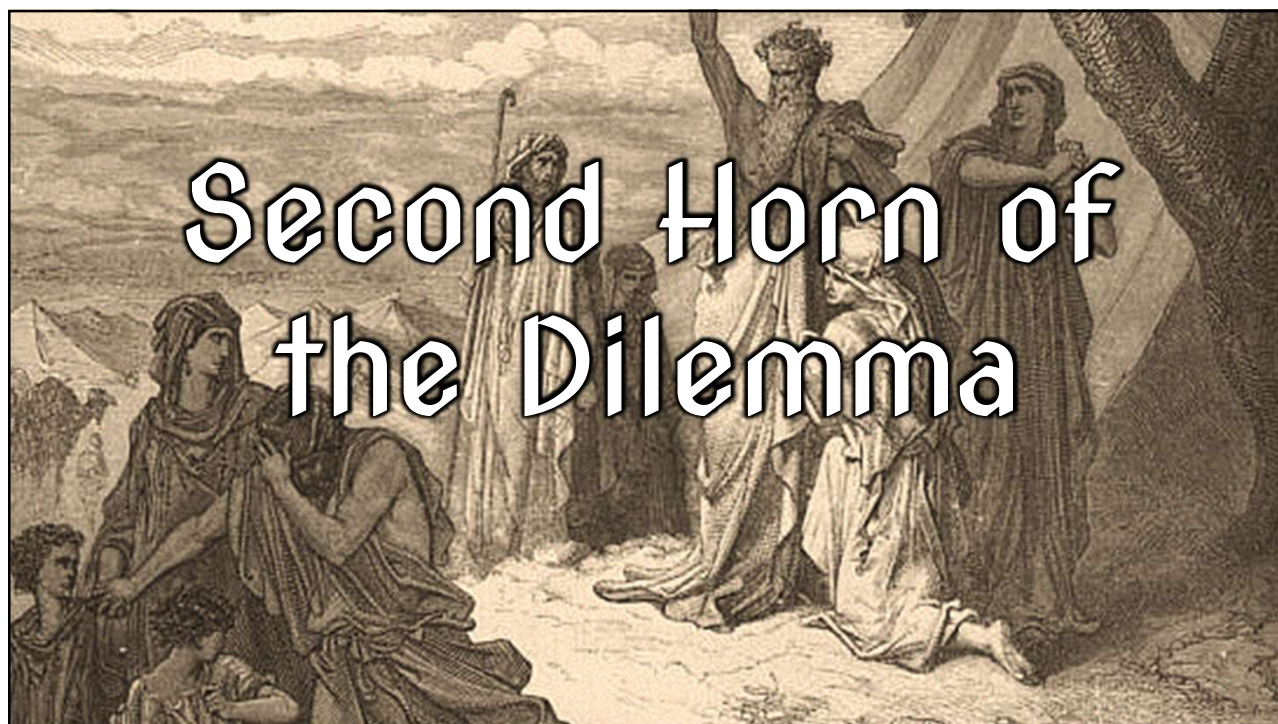
*Note that some use the expression
'Divine Command Theory' as
referring, not to what makes some
action good, but what makes the
action obligatory.*

Suggested Problems with the First Horn

First, if X is good because God wills it, then this would seem to mean that God could make something good by willing or commanding it.

Thus, if God willed rape (or racism, or murder, or any other sin) then it would be good.

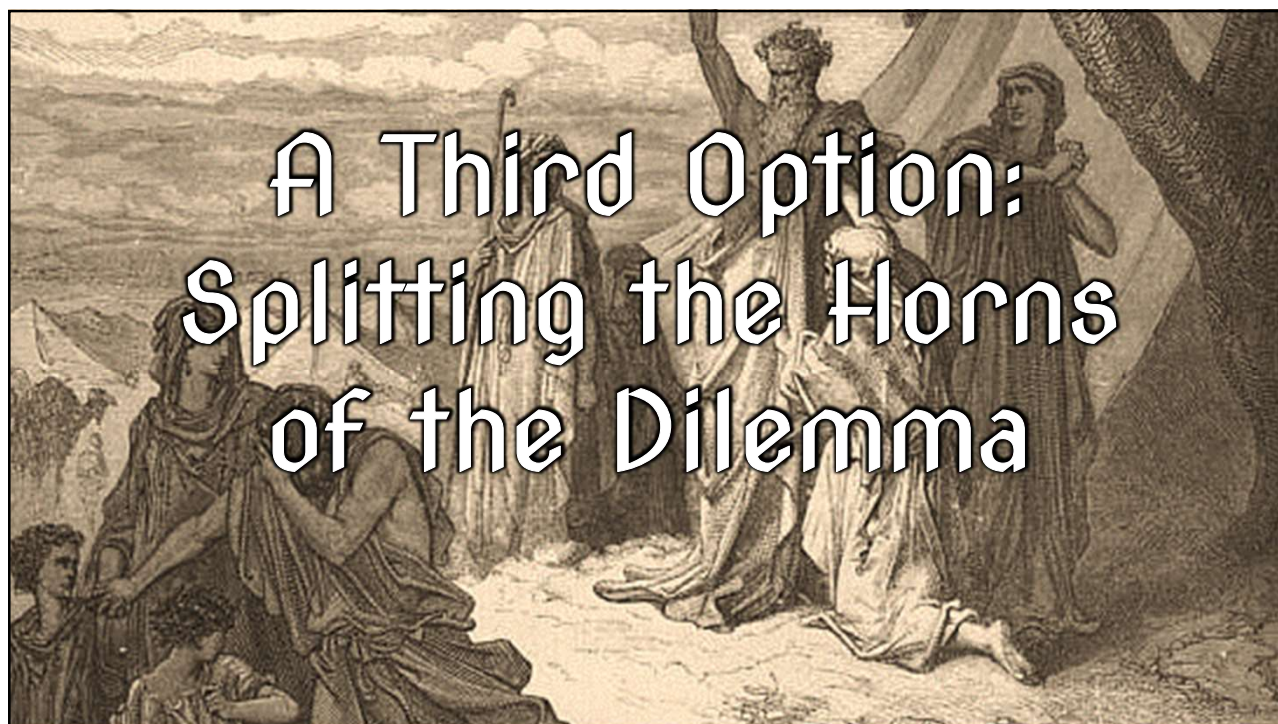
Second, if X is good because God wills it, then this would make the statement "God's will is good" to be "God's will is what God wills" which is an empty claim; what philosophers call "trivially true."



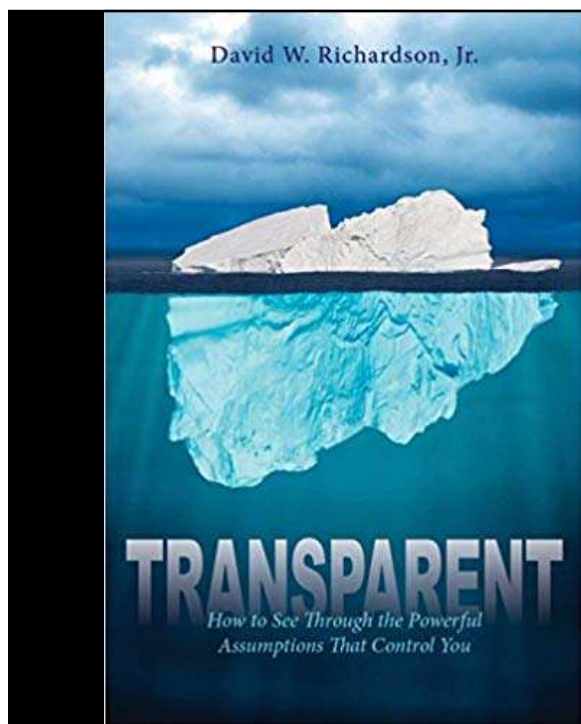
The second option says God wills X because X is good.

Suggested Problems with the Second Horn

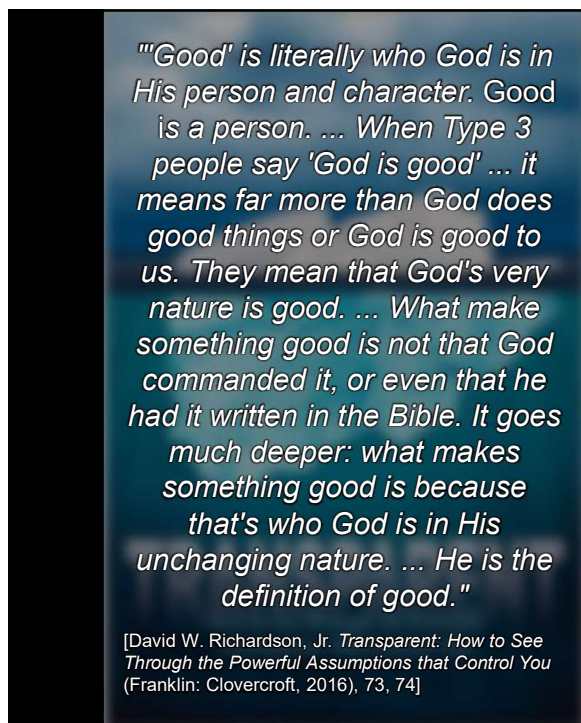
*This seems to imply a standard of
good that is outside of and
above God.*



*Good is ultimately grounded
in the nature of God.*



David W. Richardson, Jr.



"Good" is literally who God is in His person and character. Good is a person. ... When Type 3 people say 'God is good' ... it means far more than God does good things or God is good to us. They mean that God's very nature is good. ... What make something good is not that God commanded it, or even that he had it written in the Bible. It goes much deeper: what makes something good is because that's who God is in His unchanging nature. ... He is the definition of good."

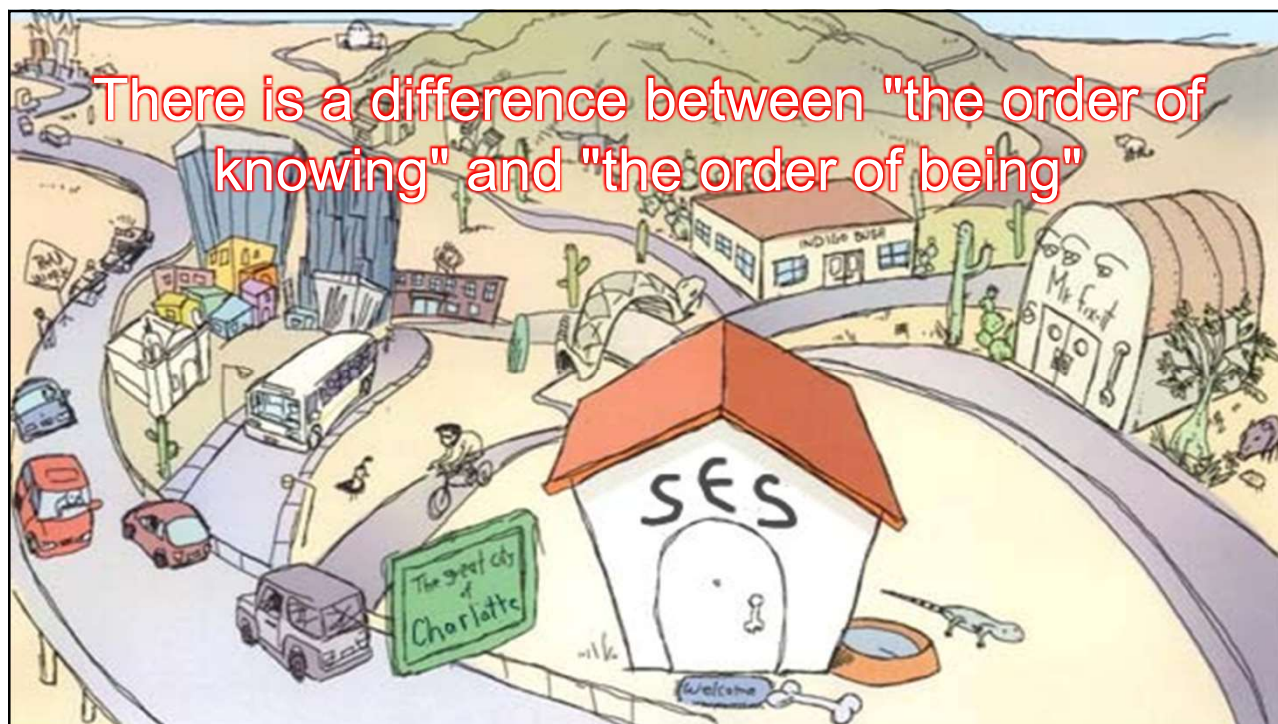
[David W. Richardson, Jr. *Transparent: How to See Through the Powerful Assumptions that Control You* (Franklin: Clovercroft, 2016), 73, 74]



David W. Richardson, Jr.

Is There a Problem with the Third Option?

However, the problem of being trivially true and empty of moral content which we saw regarding the First Horn seems to remain.

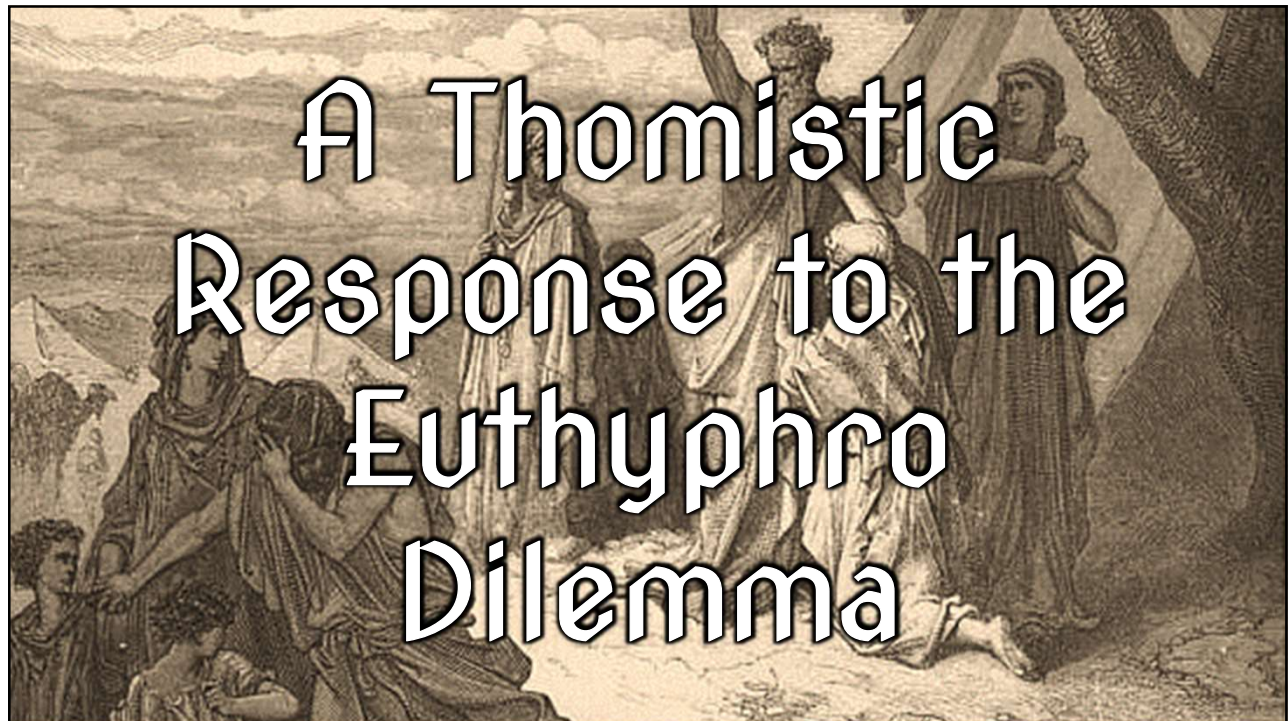


There is a difference between "the order of knowing" and "the order of being"

The map is first in the order of knowing.

SES is first in the order of being.

*In other words, one would need to know what the word 'good' means before one can apply the word to God, **but God has to exist before there can be "good."***

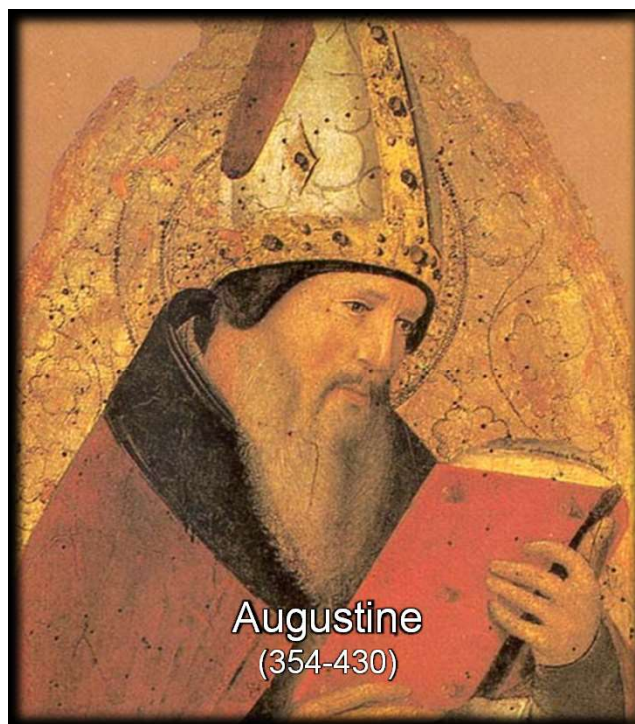


What Is Evil?

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

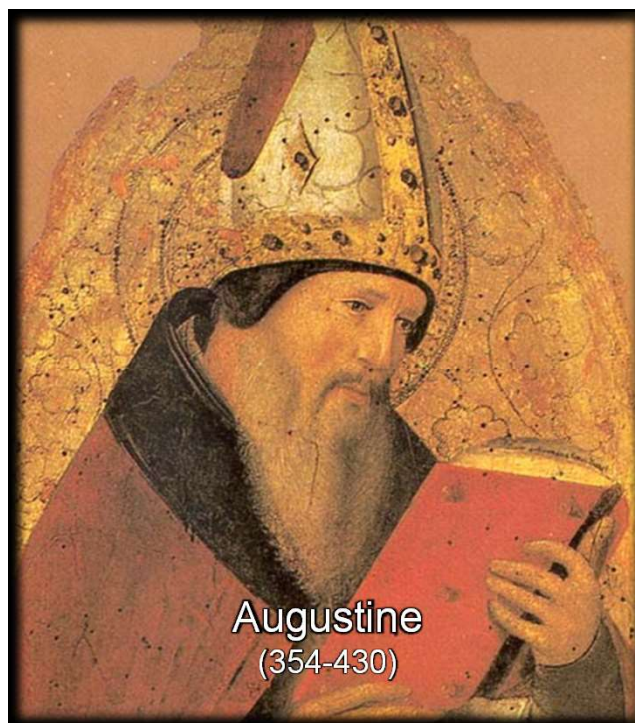
***If God created everything
except Himself, and, if evil
is something, then it
would seem the God
created evil.***

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



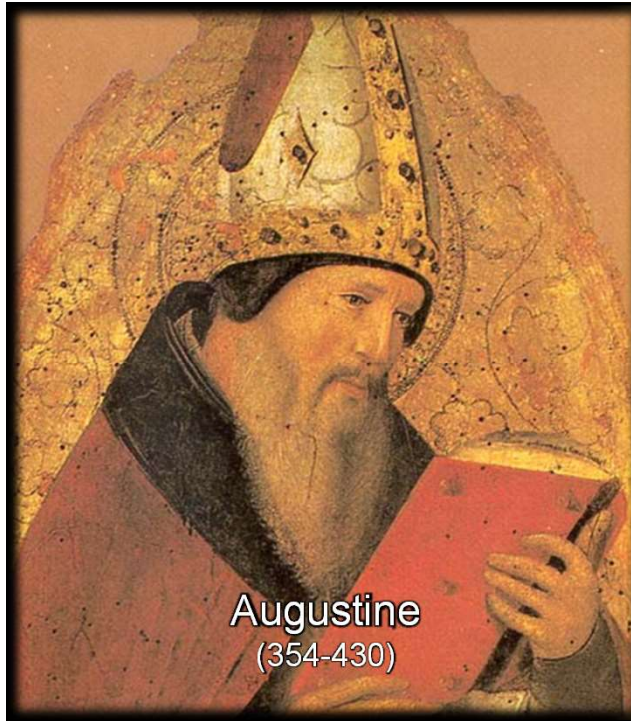
Augustine
(354-430)

Augustine on Evil as Privation



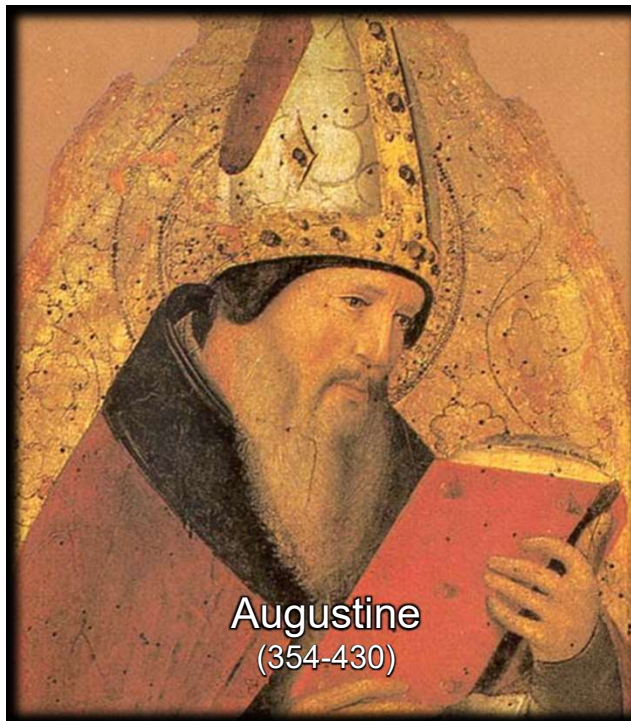
Augustine
(354-430)

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

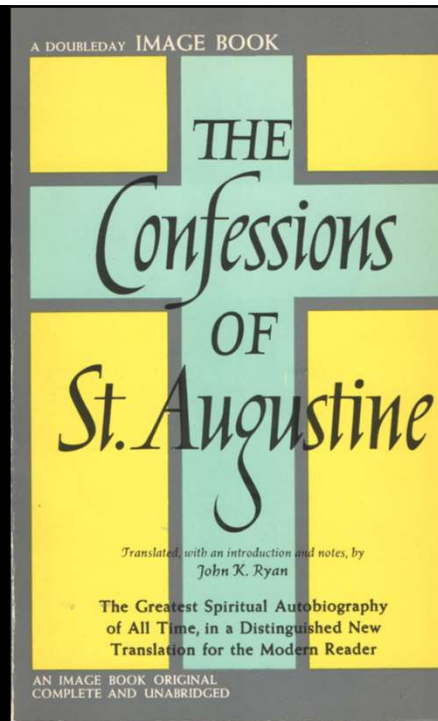


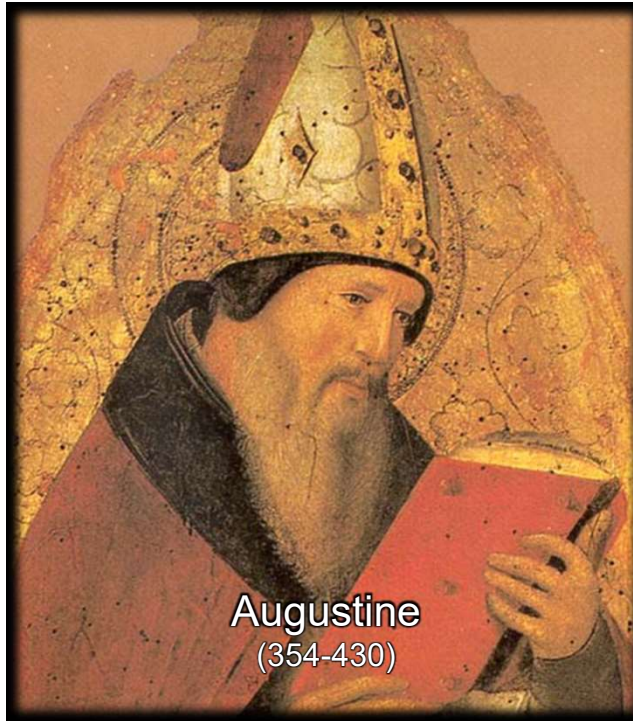
Augustine
(354-430)

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



Augustine
(354-430)





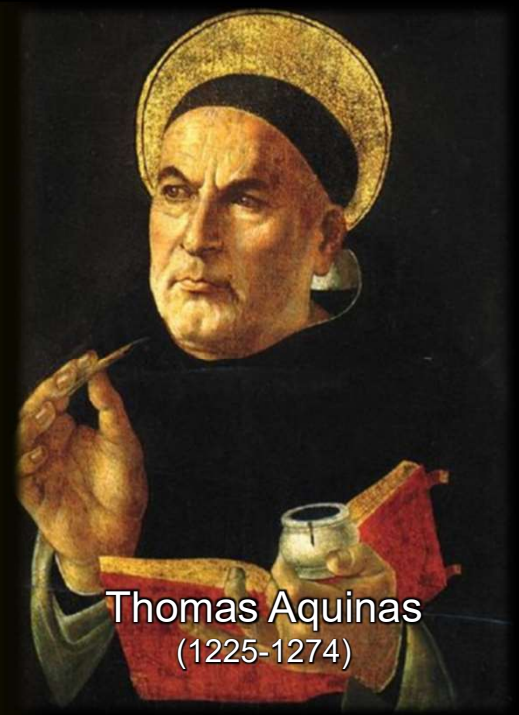
Augustine
(354-430)

***“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.”***

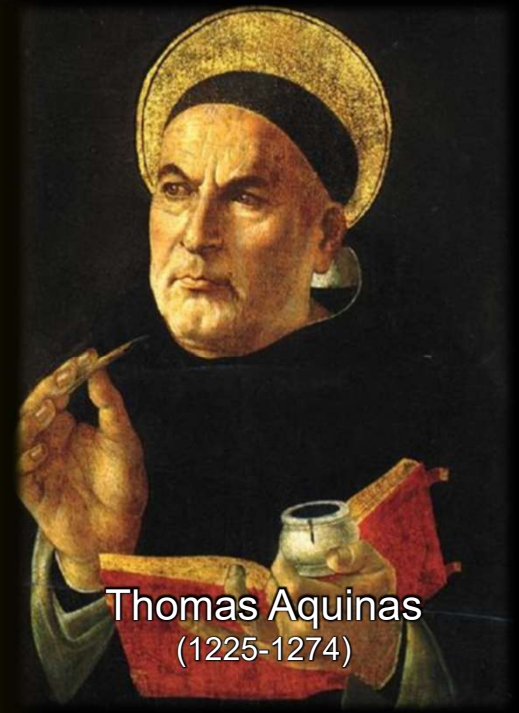
[*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 6, §1]



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.”

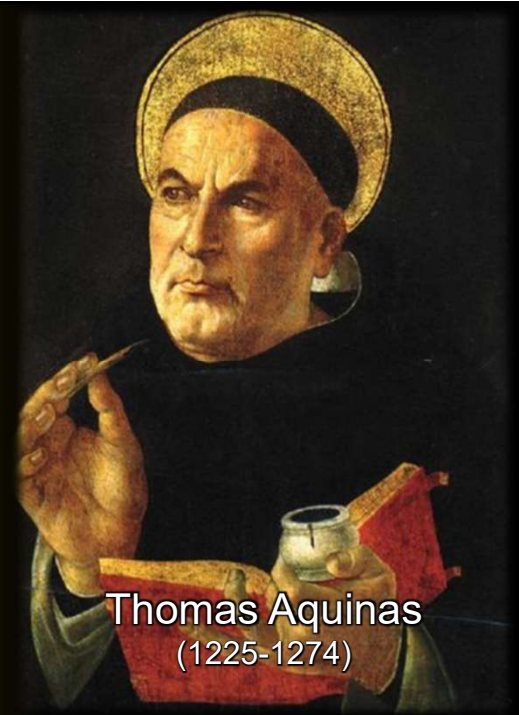
[Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 7, §2]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

“Evil 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



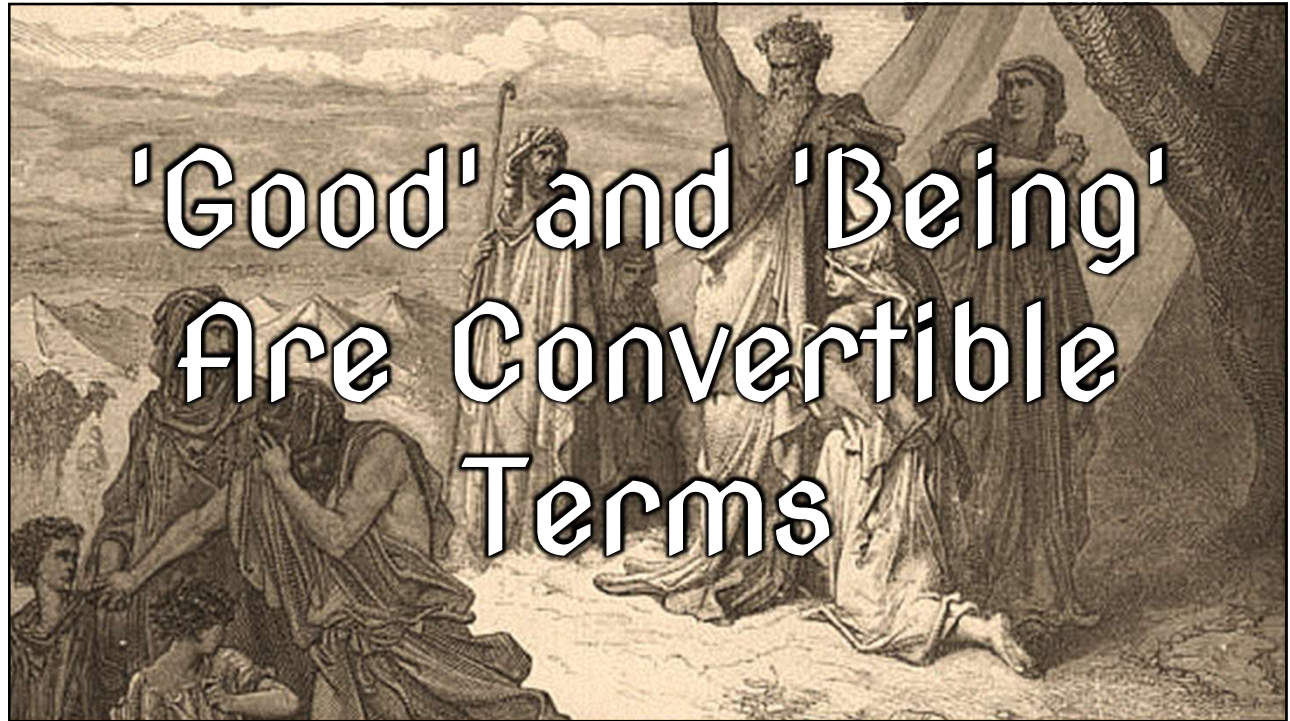
privation

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.



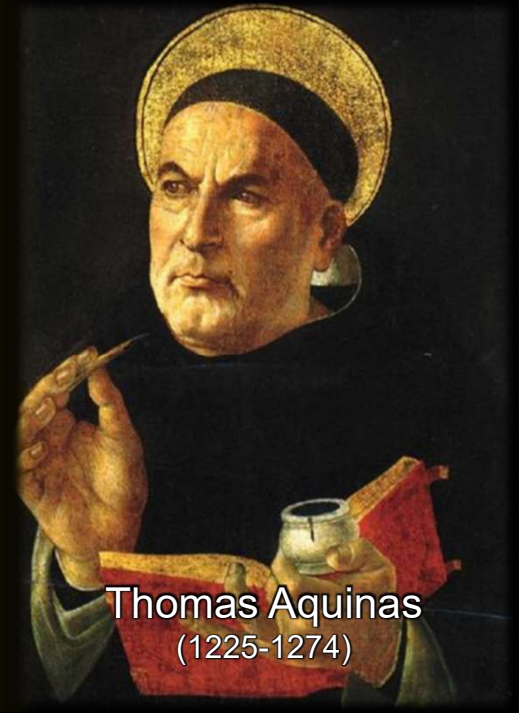
negation



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)

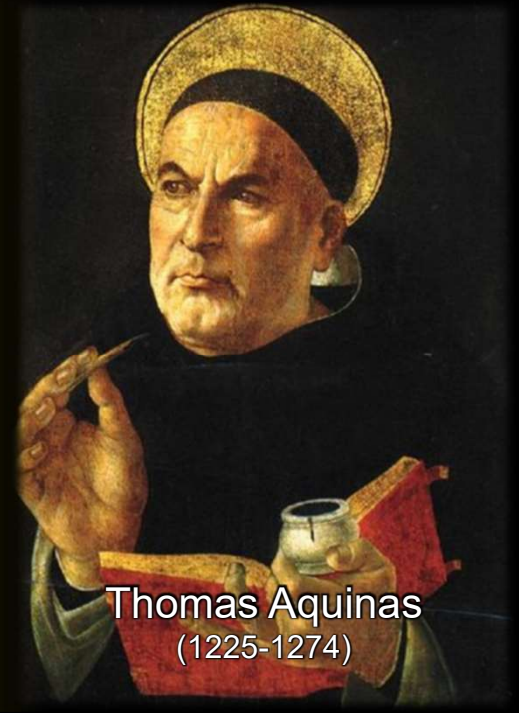


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

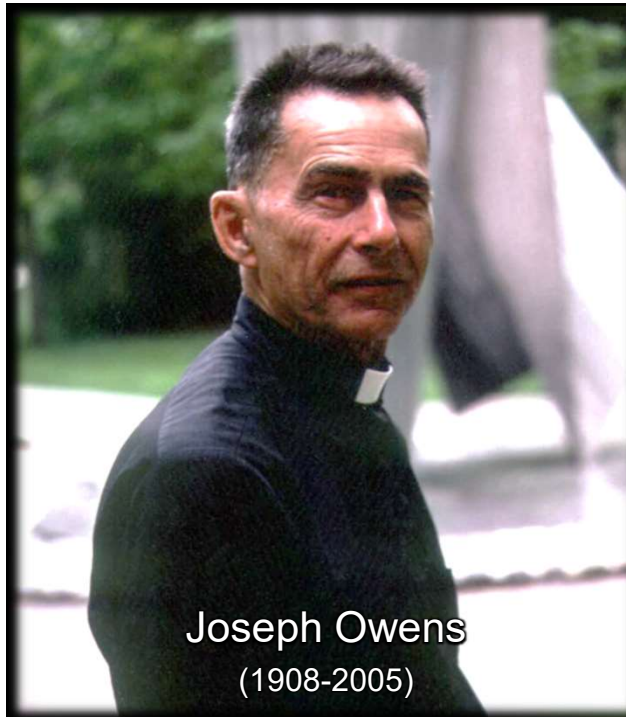
1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.

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

(ST I, Q5, art. 1)

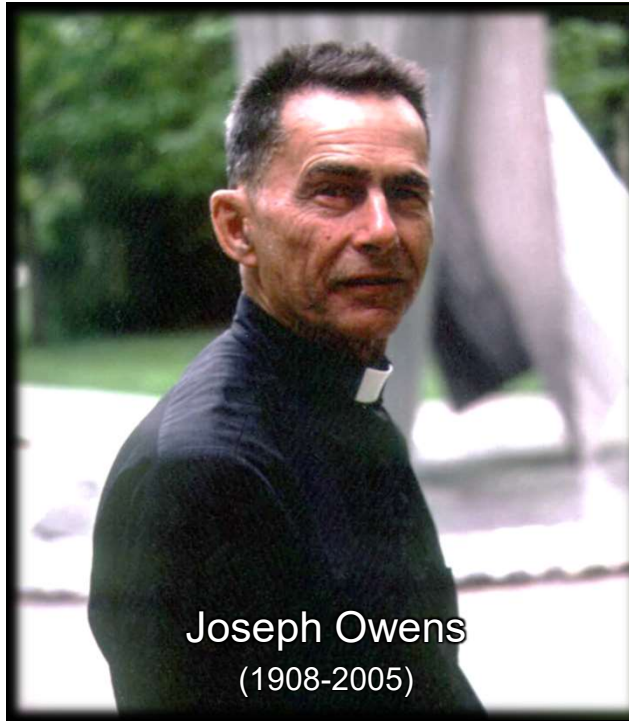


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



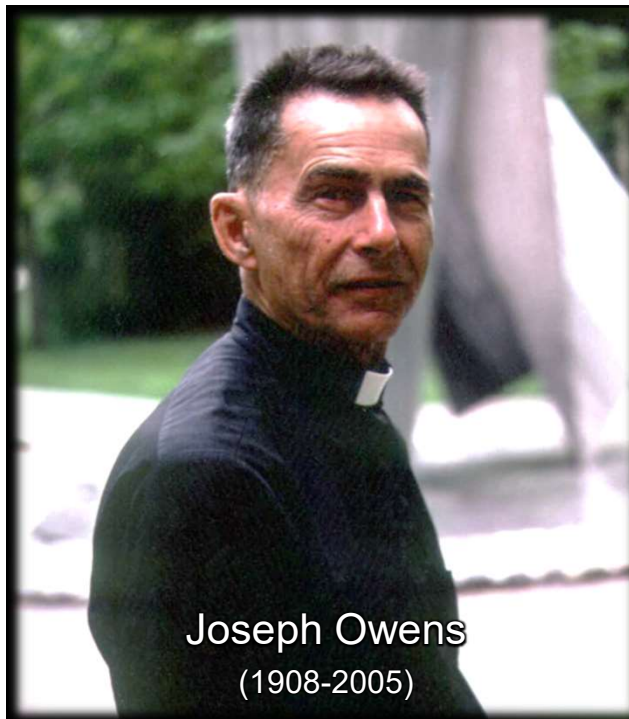
Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

"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

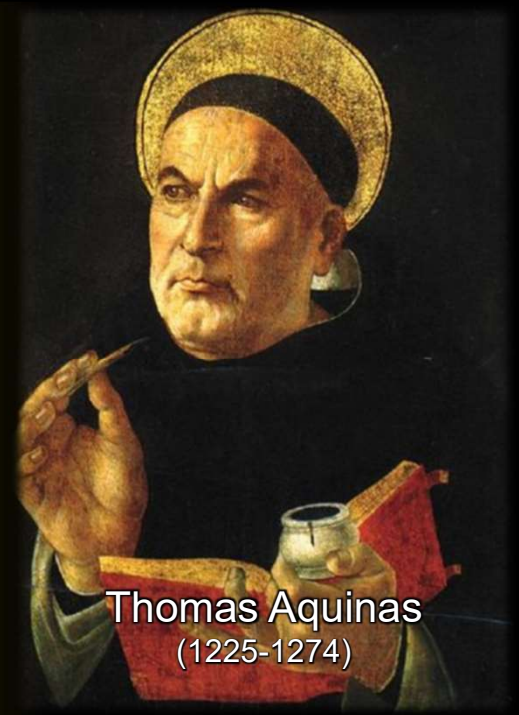
(entelecheia, ἐντελέχεια)

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'.

"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."

(ST I, 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.

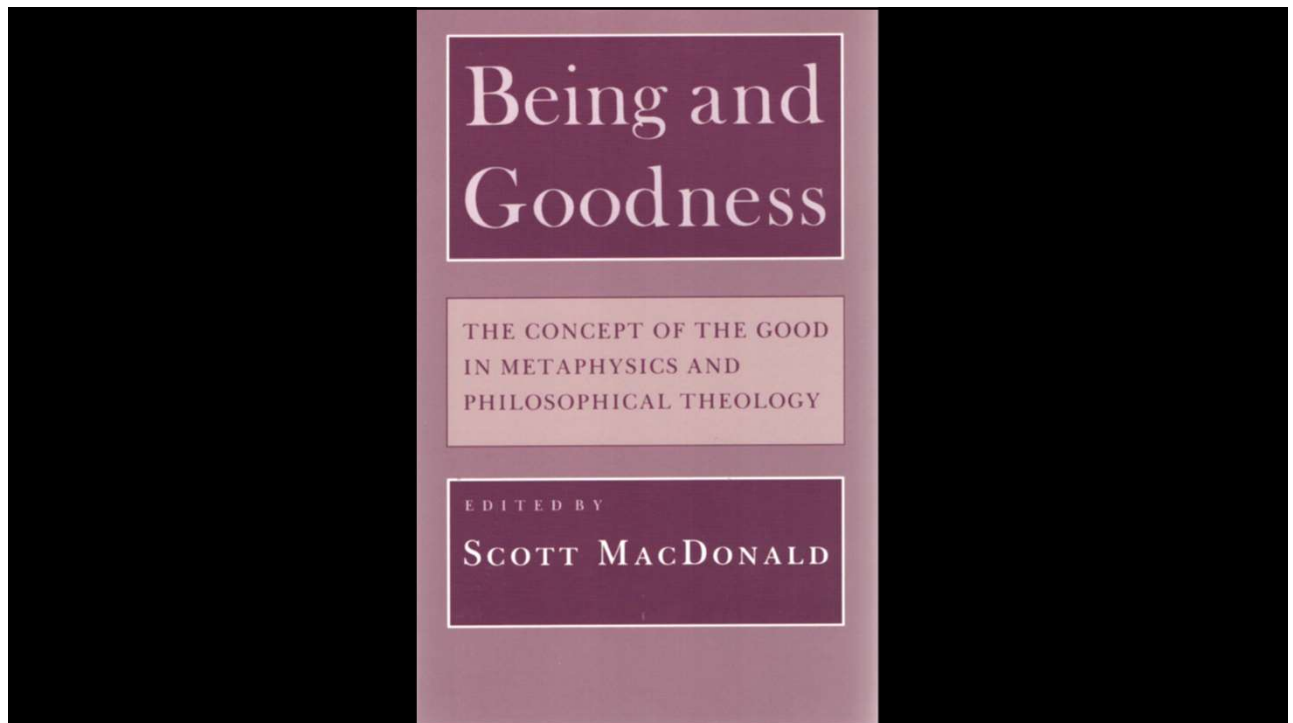
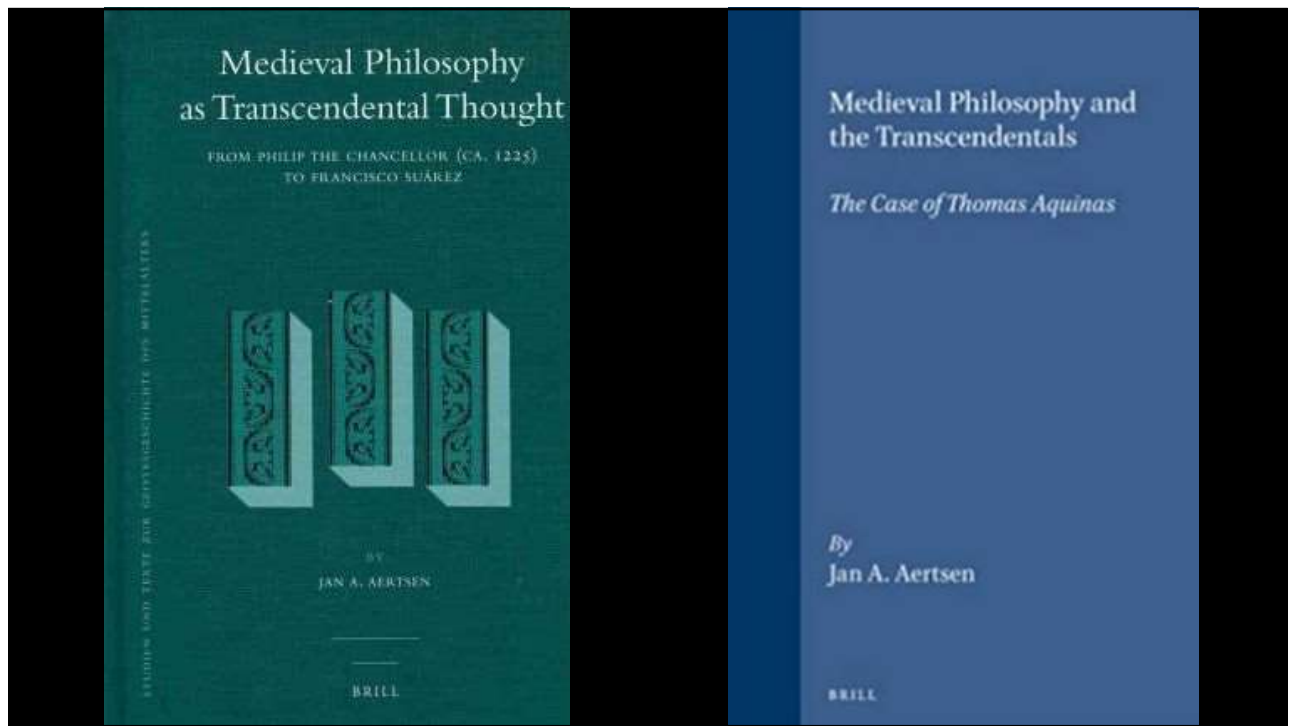
³ *De Pot.* IX, 7 ad 5: Bonum quod est in genere qualitatis, non est bonum quod convertitur cum ente, quod nullam rem supra ens addit.

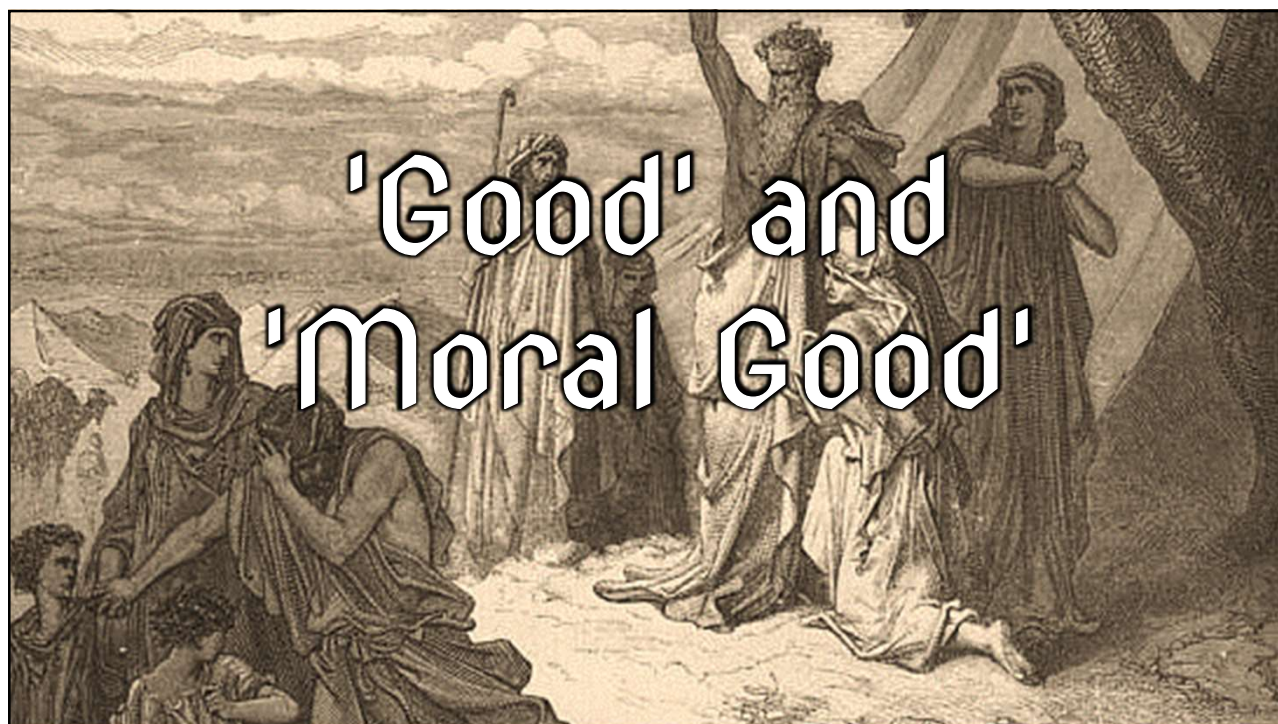
⁴ *De Ver.* I, 1: modus generaliter consequens omne ens.

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



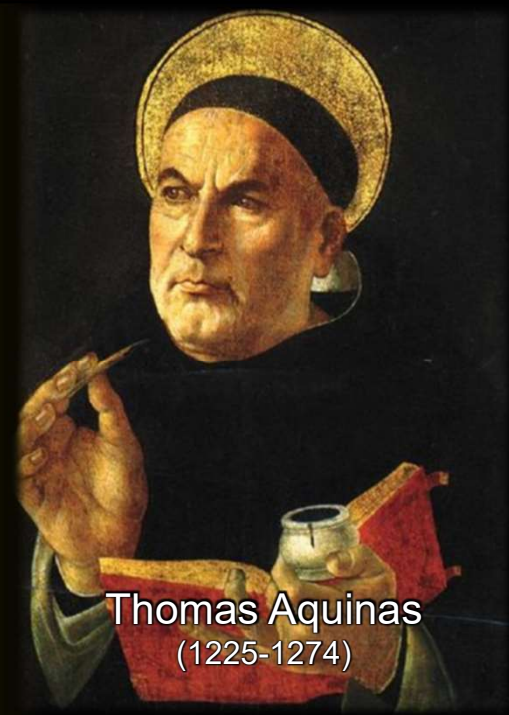


*Human beings are unique
among God's creatures on
earth in as much as we have
rationality and free will.*

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

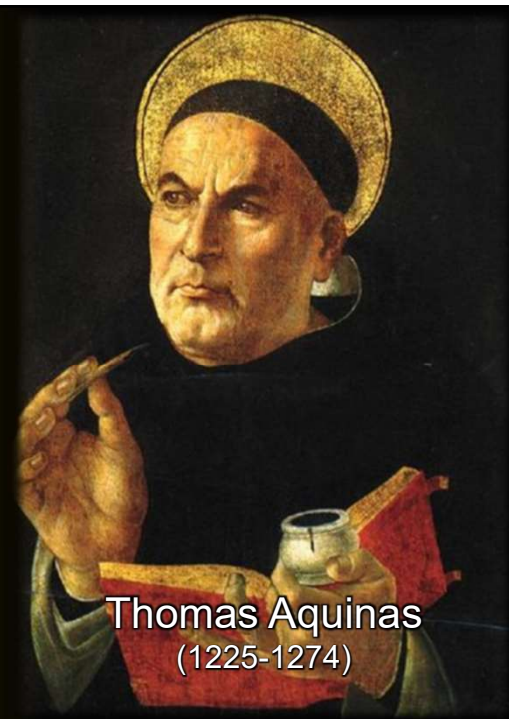
***But these will also allow us to
choose against our own
natures and against our
proper telos (end) which is
our good.***

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



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

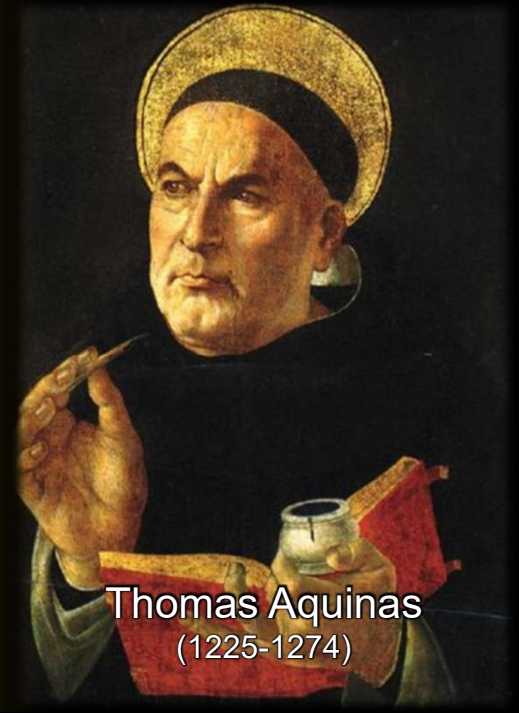
***"Moral fault is found
primarily and principally
in the act of the will
only . . . so . . . an act is
moral because it
is voluntary. . . .***



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)

Just as 'true' is the human intellect's grasp of being (i.e., the real), 'moral good' is the human will's grasp of being (i.e., the real).

In classical theism, note that these uses of 'true' and 'moral good' are with respect to human beings.

God's knowledge is not constituted by His "intellect's" "grasp" of any reality outside of Himself.

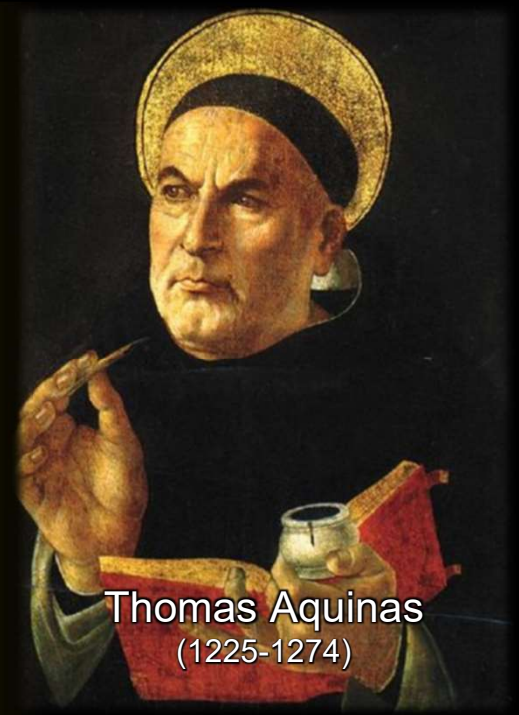
Nor is God's goodness constituted by His "will's" "grasp" of any reality of Himself.



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."

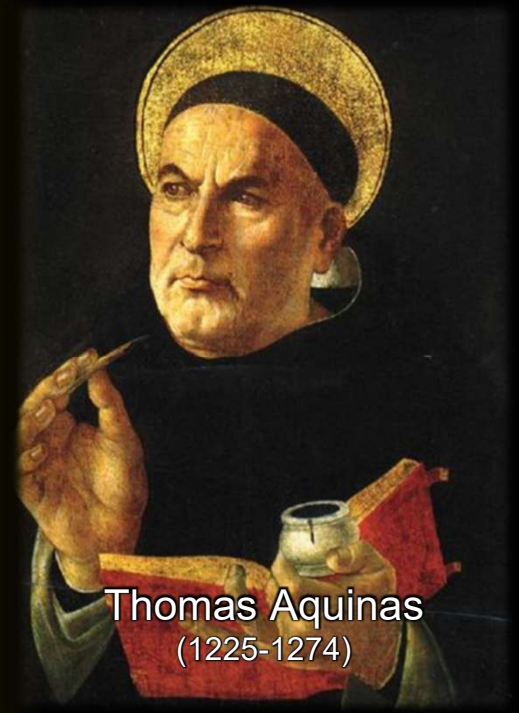
[ST 1, Q 12, art. IV]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"God is absolute form, or rather absolute being"

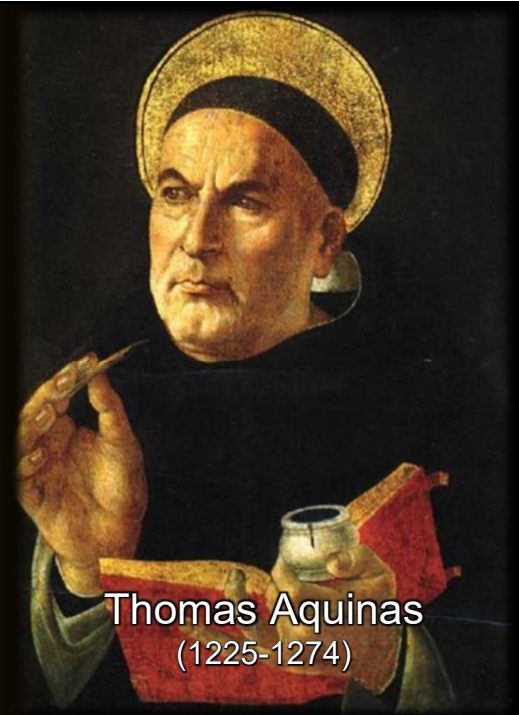
[ST, I, Q3, art. 7.]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

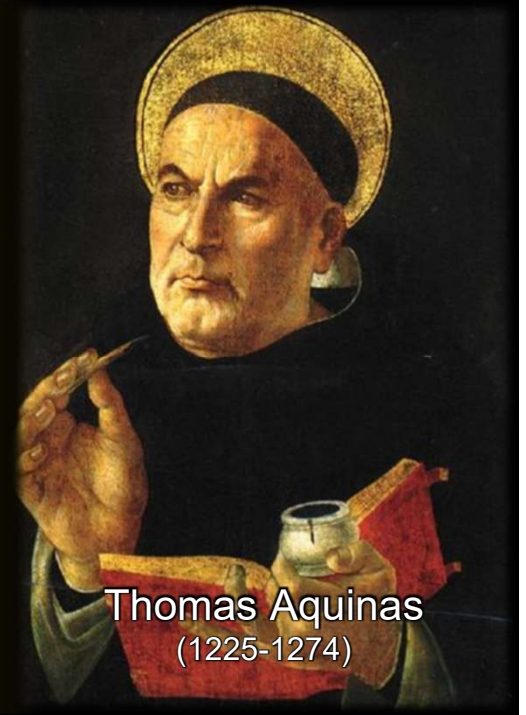
[ST 1, Q 11, art. iv.]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

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

(ST I, Q5, art. 1)



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)