



# ***The Problem of Evil***

***Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.***

Provost

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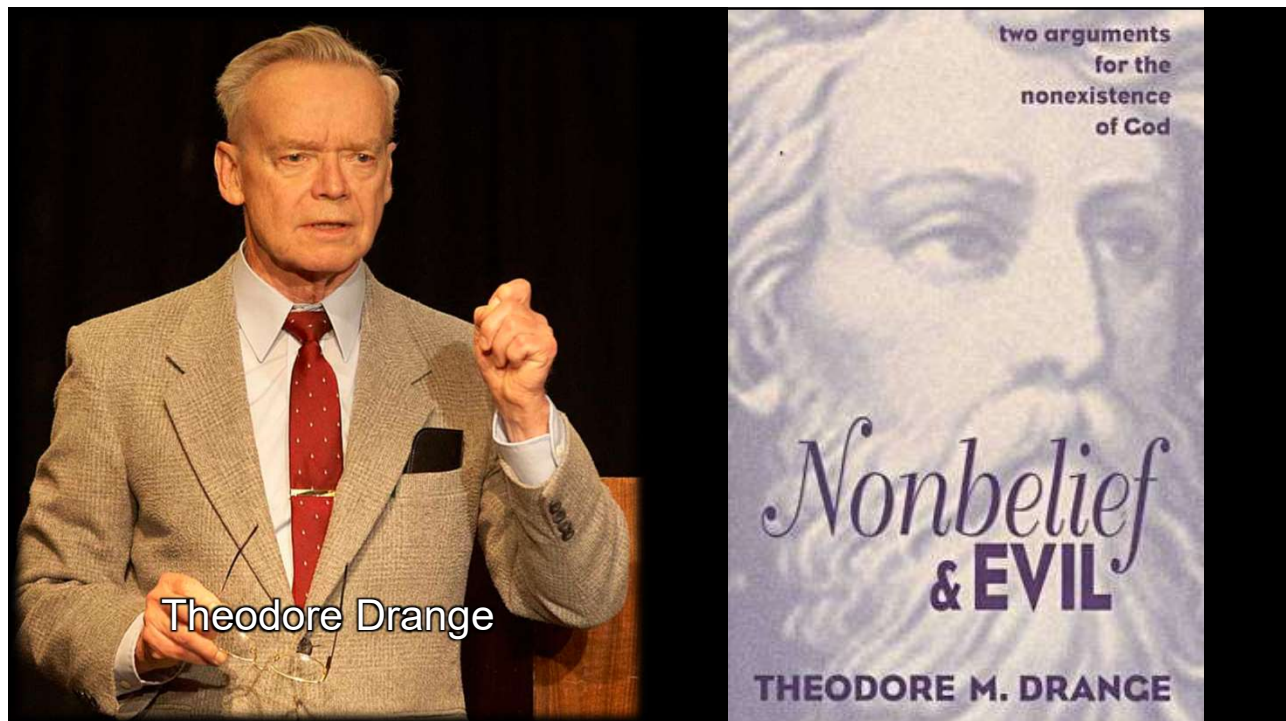
**Defining Evil  
Distinguishing Evil  
Different “Problems” of Evil  
Historical Roots  
Formulating the Problem  
Some Non-Evangelical Options  
Some Evangelical Options  
The Classical Approach**

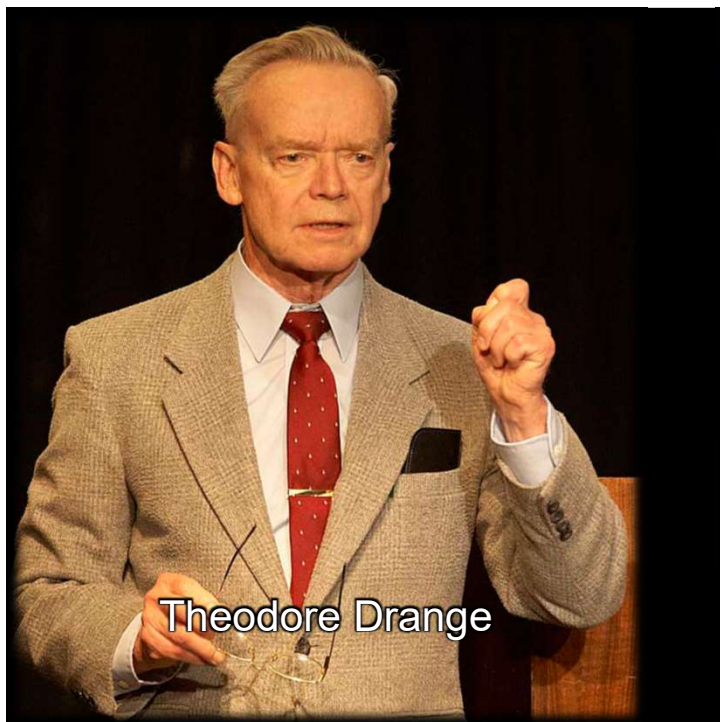


## *Defining Evil*

***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.***



A photograph of Theodore Drange, an older man with white hair, wearing a light-colored suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie. He is holding a pair of glasses in his right hand and gesturing with his left hand. The background is dark.

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]



*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.***

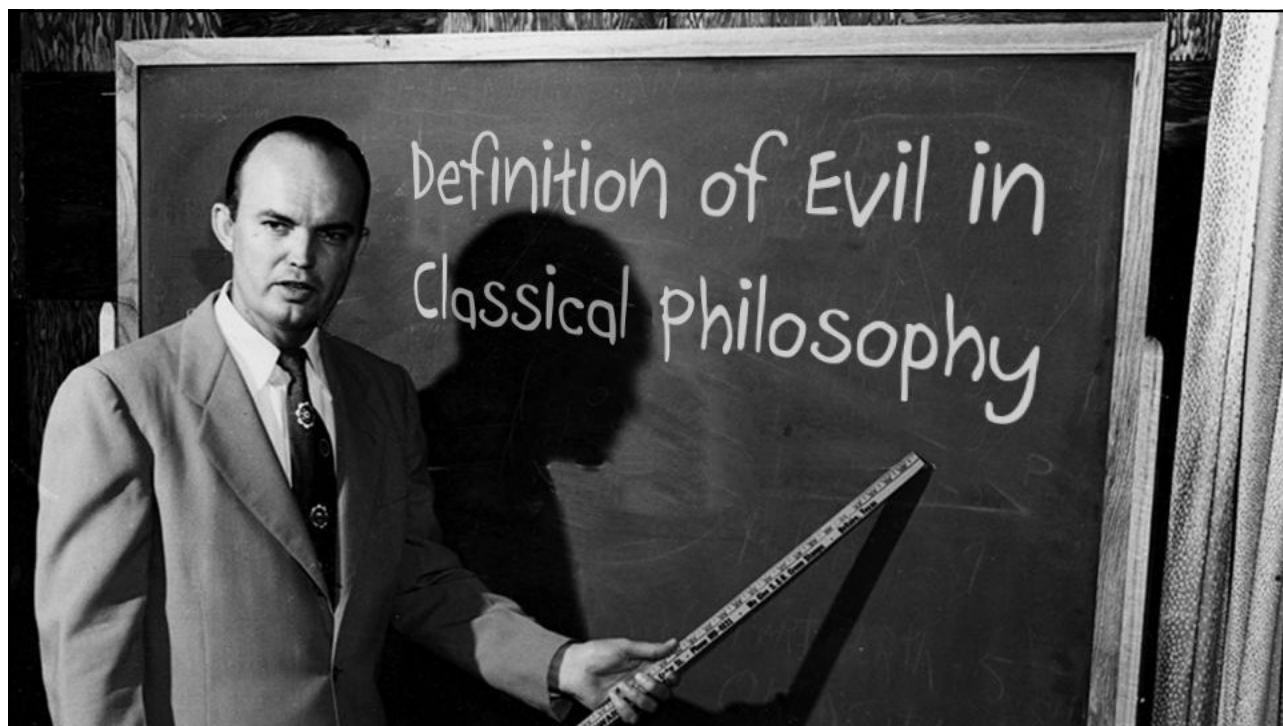
# ∞Natural Evil∞



# *∞Moral Evil∞*

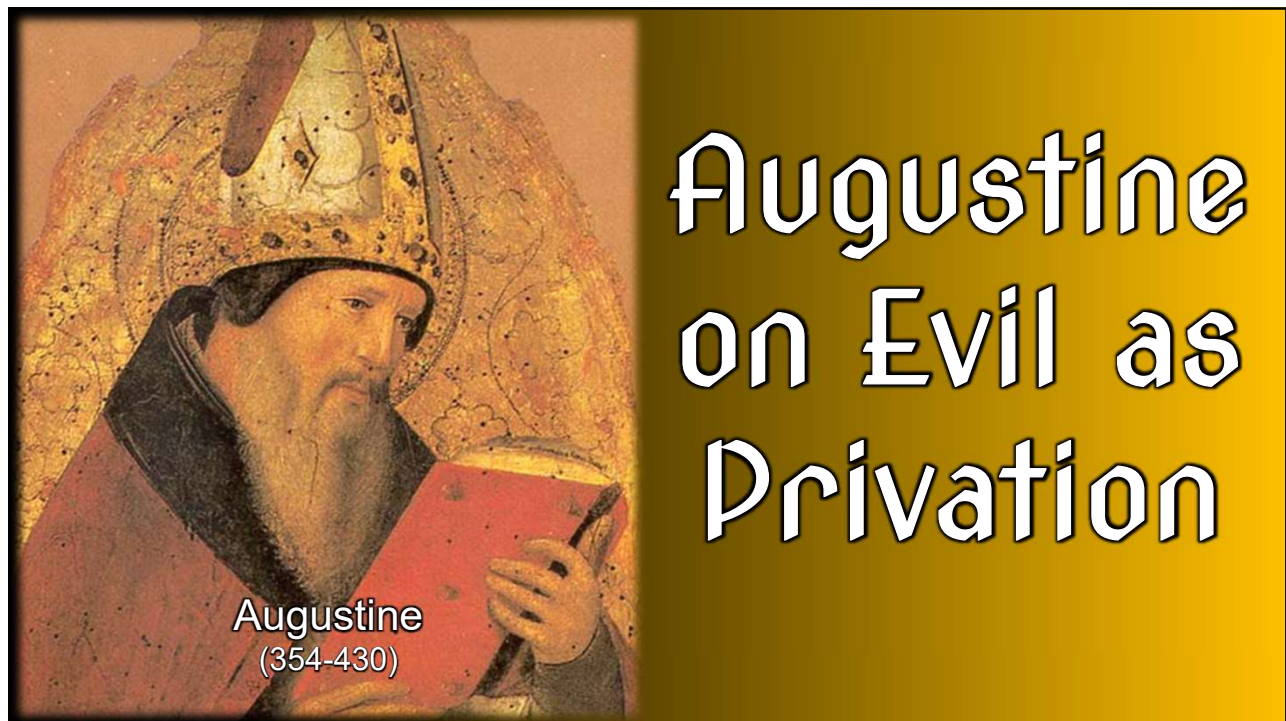
## *∞Moral Evil∞*

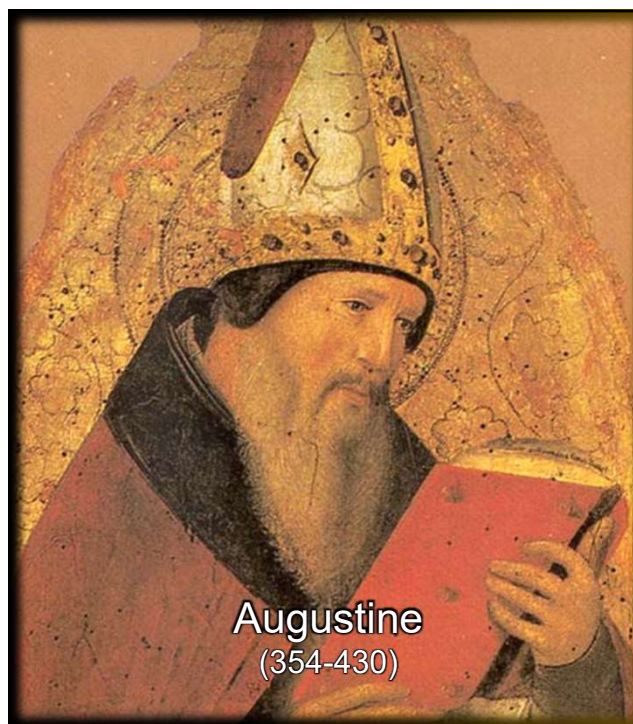
*Unwarranted, pain, suffering, and death that is deliberately caused by a conscious agent.*



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

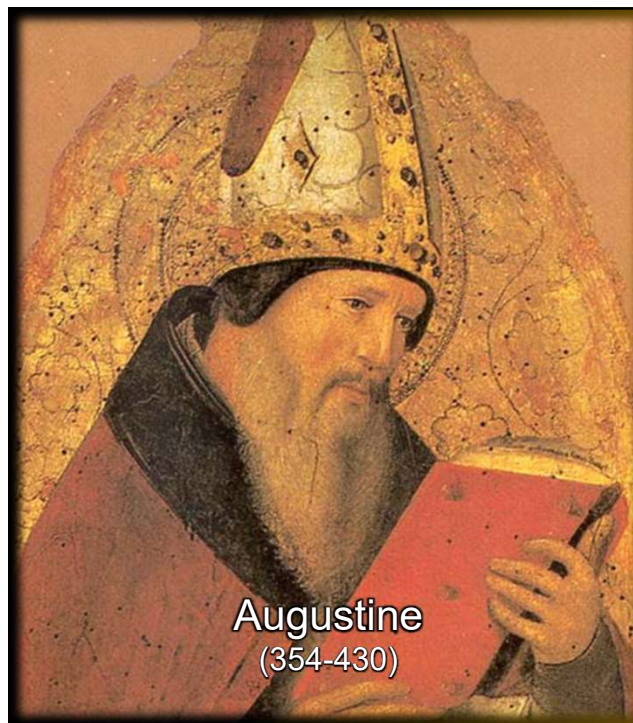
***If God did not create evil,  
then it would seem either:  
evil is **unreal**  
or  
evil is **not a thing**.***





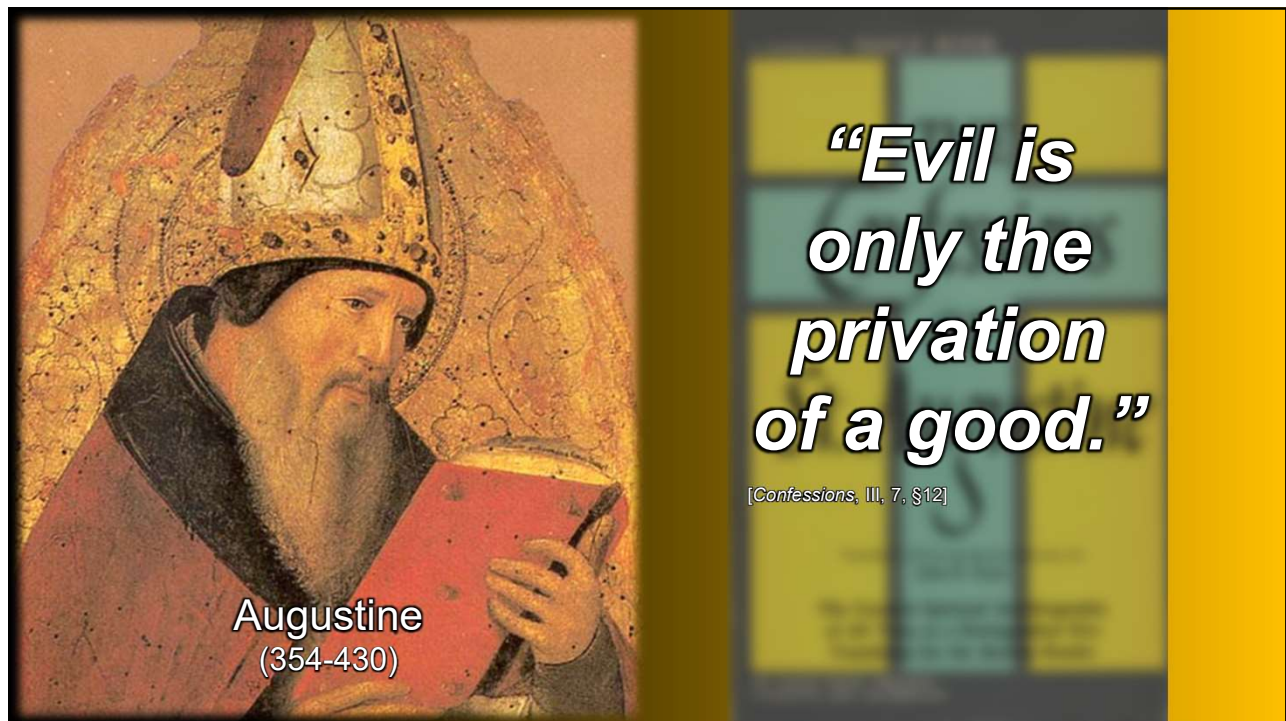
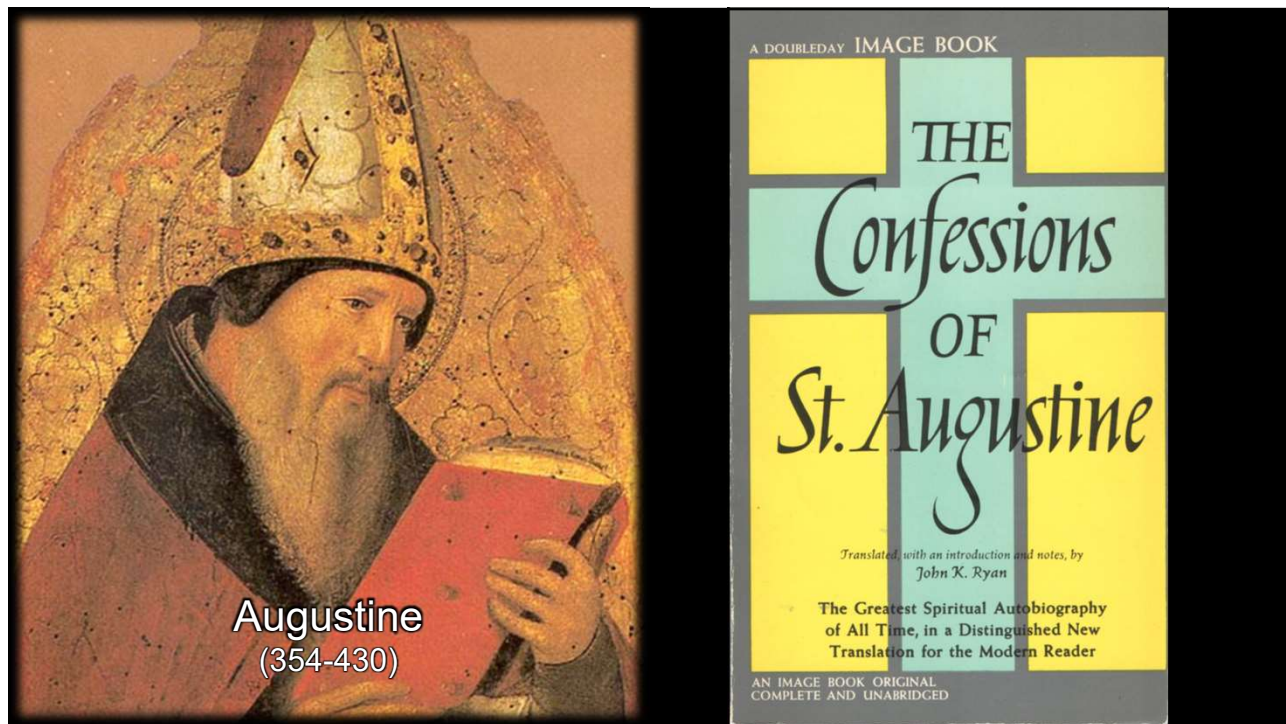
Augustine  
(354-430)

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



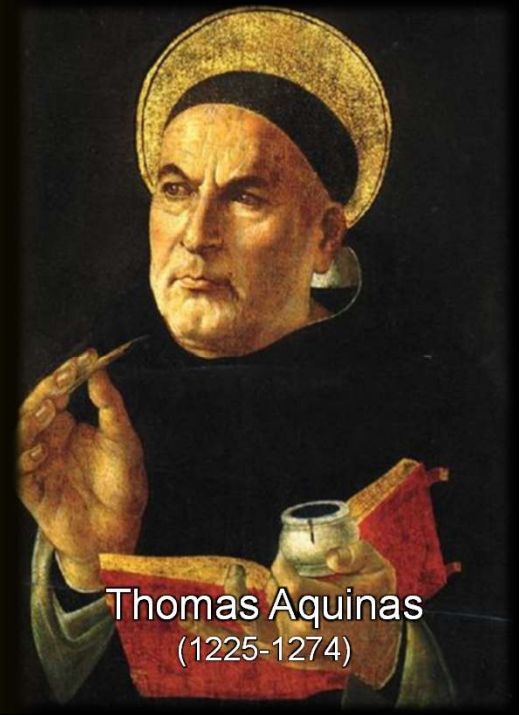
Augustine  
(354-430)

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



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

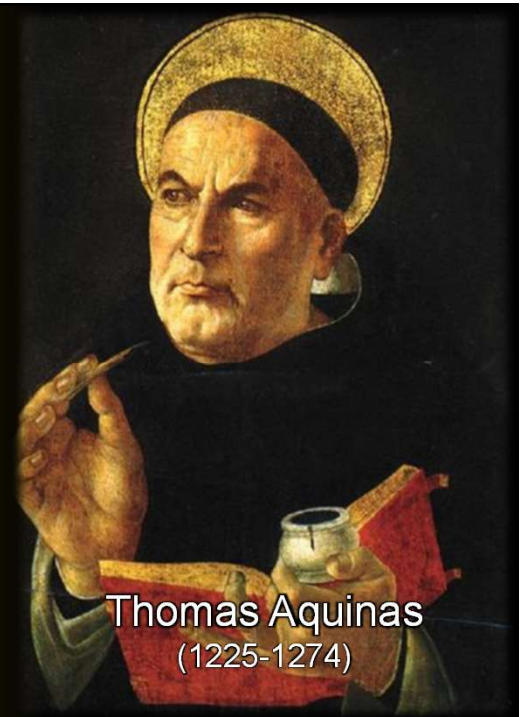
[Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 6, §1]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

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

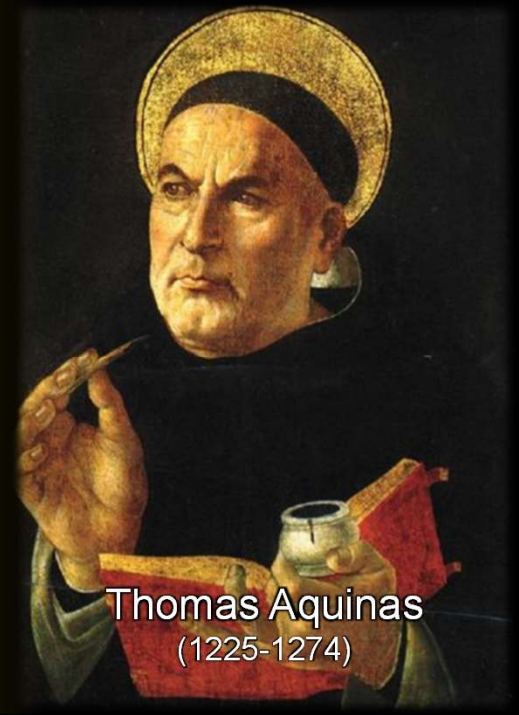
[Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 7, §2]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

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

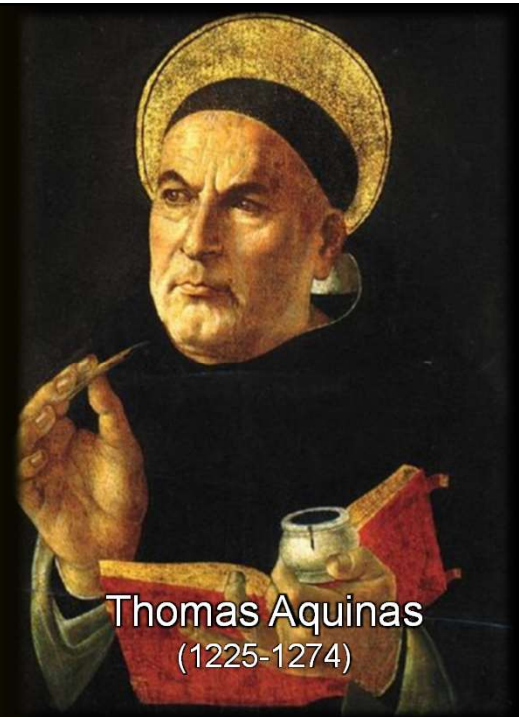
[*Summa Theologiae*, I, Q49, art. 1]



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.*



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

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



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

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



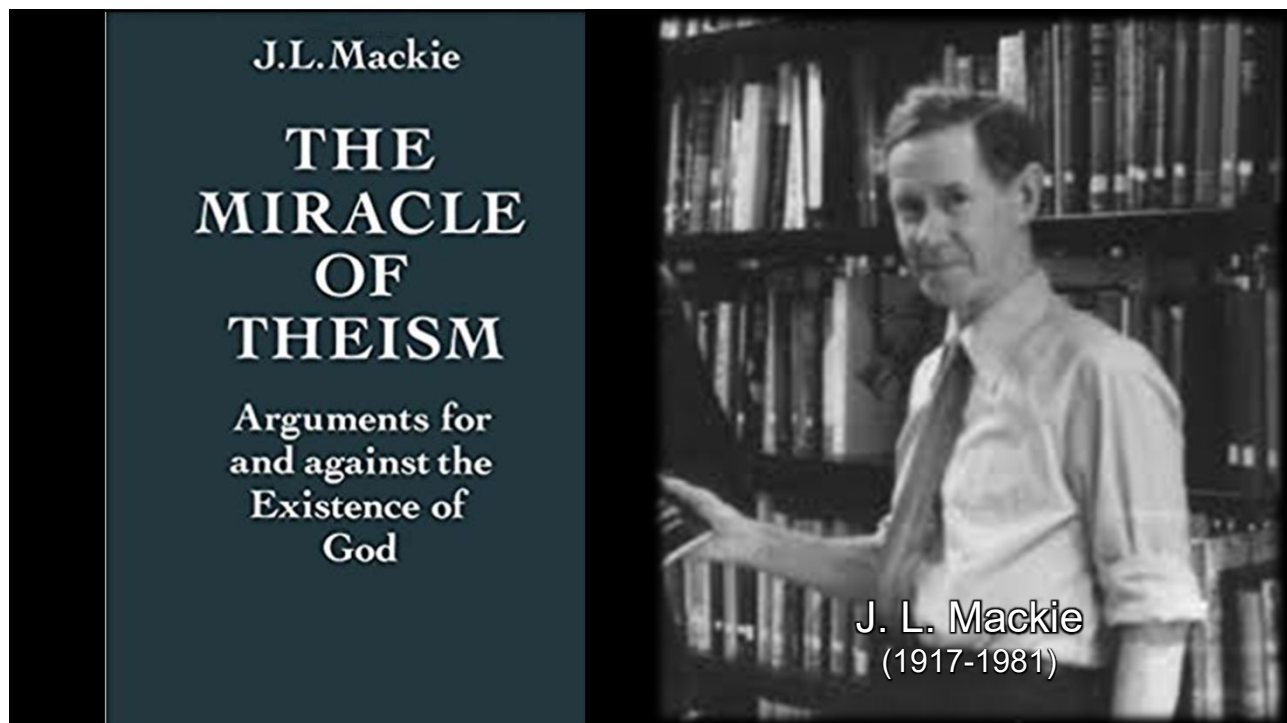


# *Different "Problems" of Evil*



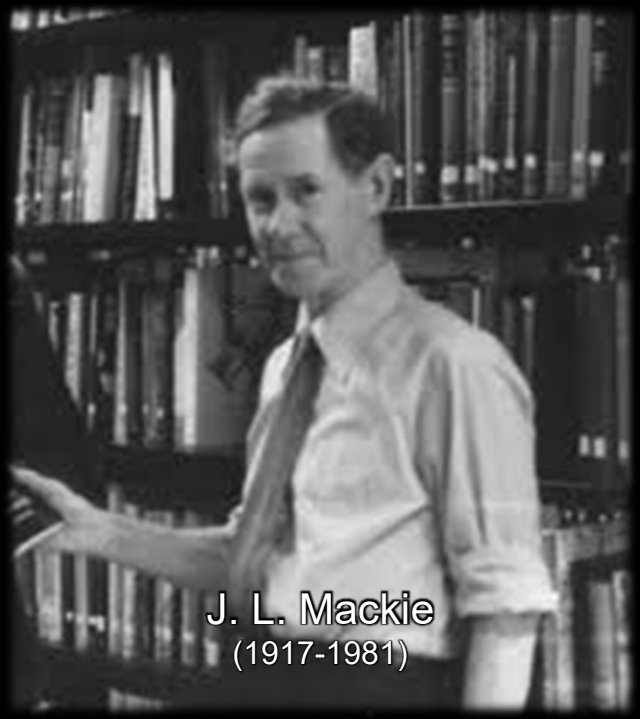
# *The Logical Problem of Evil*

*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]



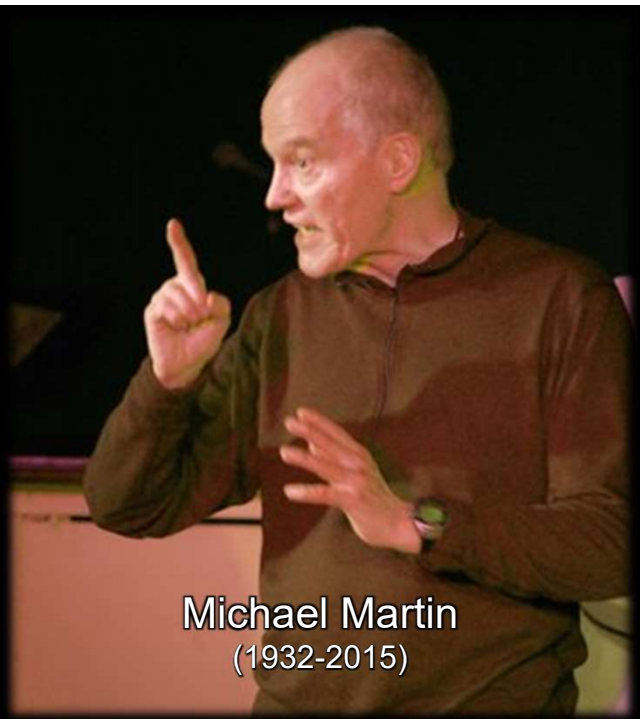
**J. L. Mackie**  
(1917-1981)

# ATHEISM

*A Philosophical Justification*



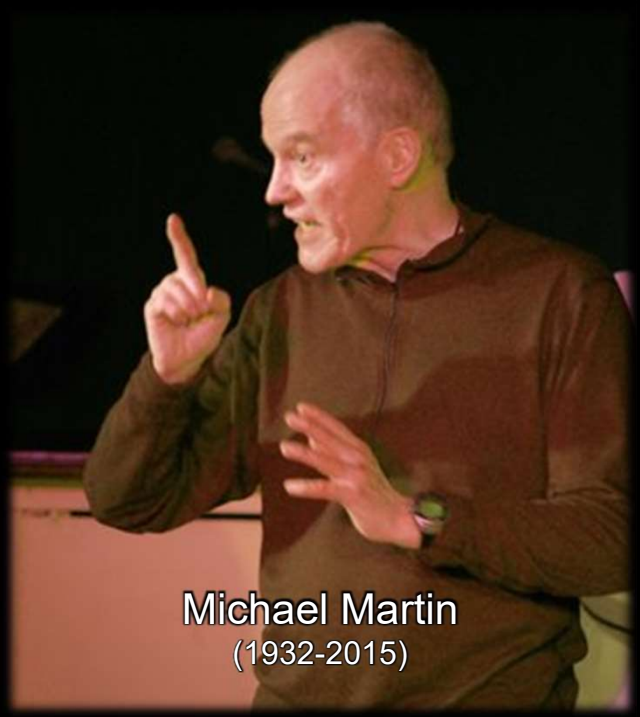
**MICHAEL MARTIN**



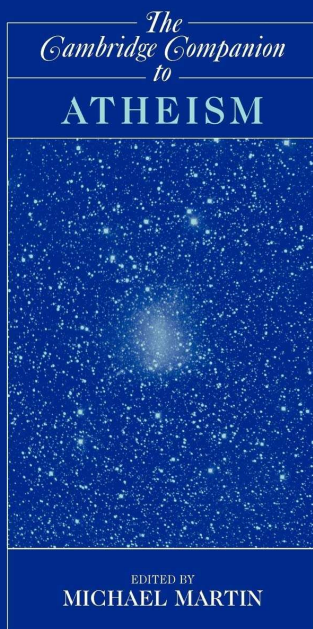
**Michael Martin**  
(1932-2015)

**"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]

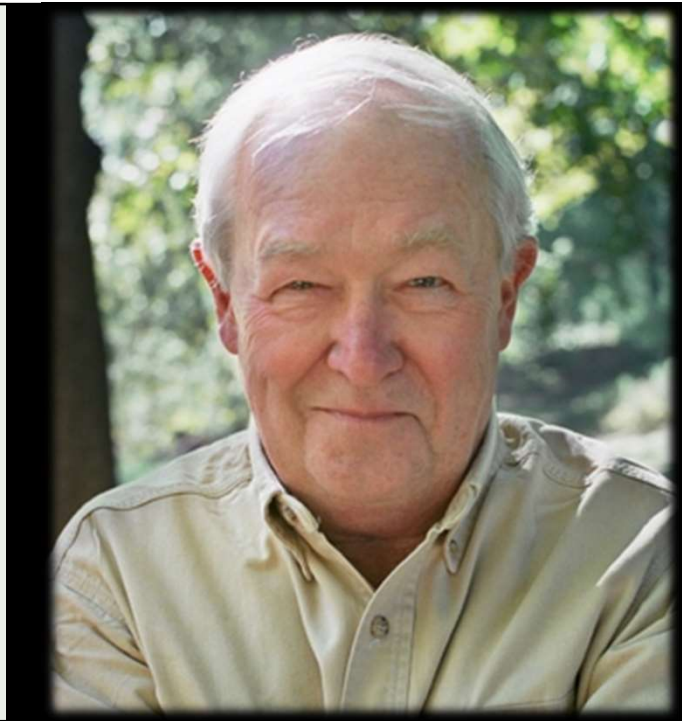
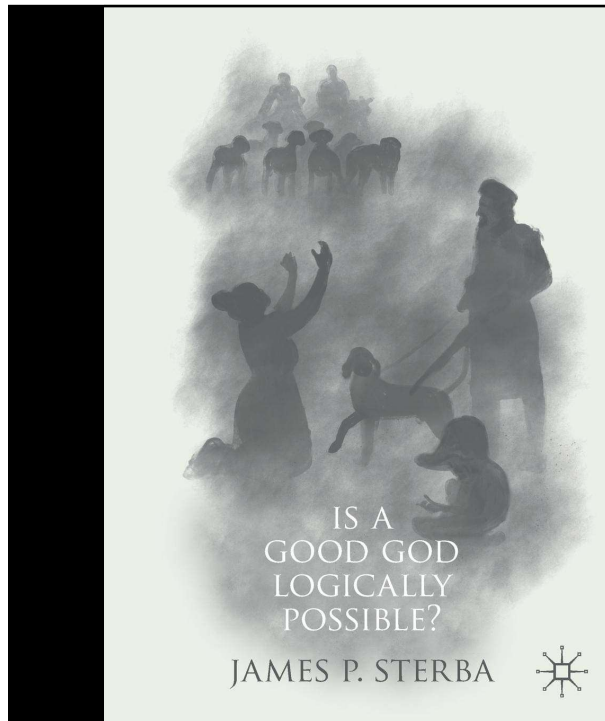


**Michael Martin**  
(1932-2015)



***"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]



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GOD AND EVIL


**A. THE PROBLEM STATED:**  
 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. God cannot be both all-powerful and perfectly good if evil is real. This contradiction is well set out in its detail by Mackie in his discussion of the problem.<sup>1</sup> In his discussion Mackie seeks to show that this contradiction cannot be resolved in terms of man's free will. In arguing in this way Mackie neglects a large number of important points, and concedes far too much to the theist. He implicitly allows that whilst physical evil creates a problem, this problem is reducible to the problem of moral evil and that therefore the satisfactoriness of solutions of the problem of evil turns on the compatibility of free will and absolute goodness. In fact physical evils create a number of distinct problems which are not reducible to the problem of moral evil. Further, the proposed solution of the problem of moral evil in terms of free will renders the attempt to account for physical evil in terms of moral good, and the attempt thereby to reduce the problem of evil to the problem of moral evil, completely untenable. Moreover, the account of moral evil in terms of free will breaks down on more obvious and less disputable grounds than those indicated by Mackie. Moral evil can be shown to remain a problem whether or not free will is compatible with absolute goodness. I therefore propose in this paper to reopen the discussion of "the problem of evil", by approaching it from a more general standpoint, examining a wider variety of solutions than those considered by Mackie and his critics.

<sup>1</sup> "Evil and Omnipotence", *Mind*, 1955.

*"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

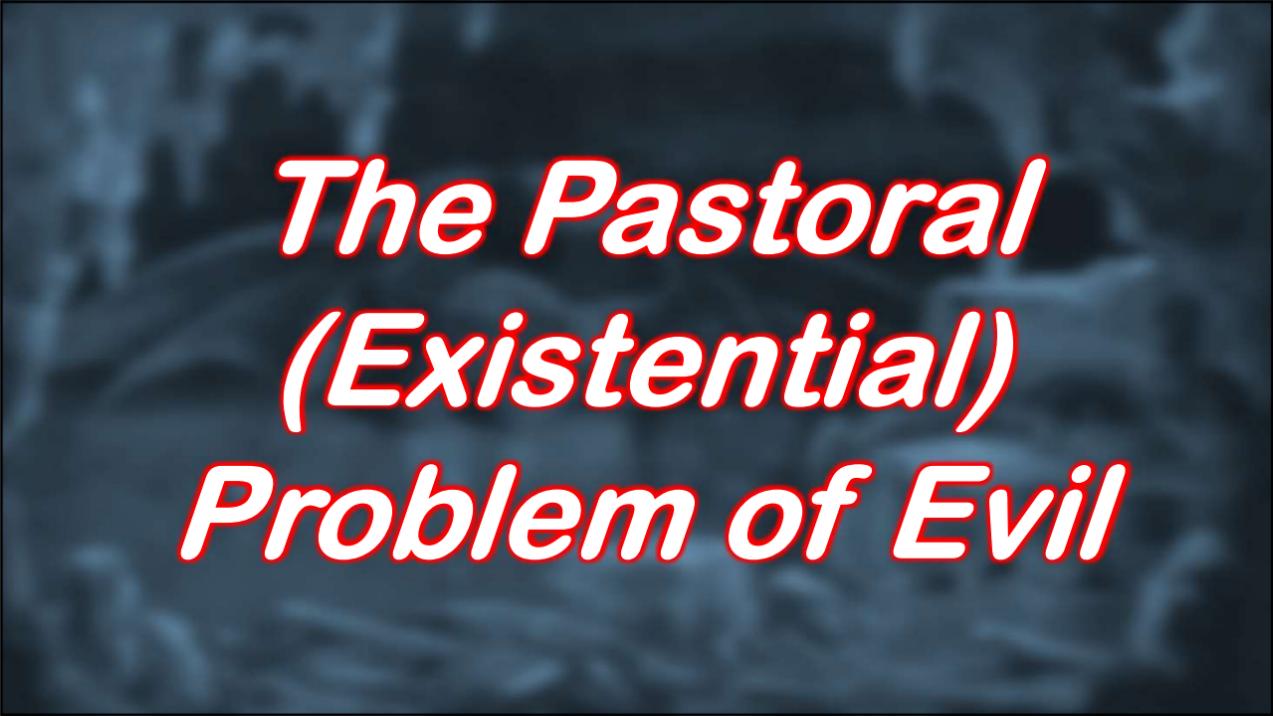
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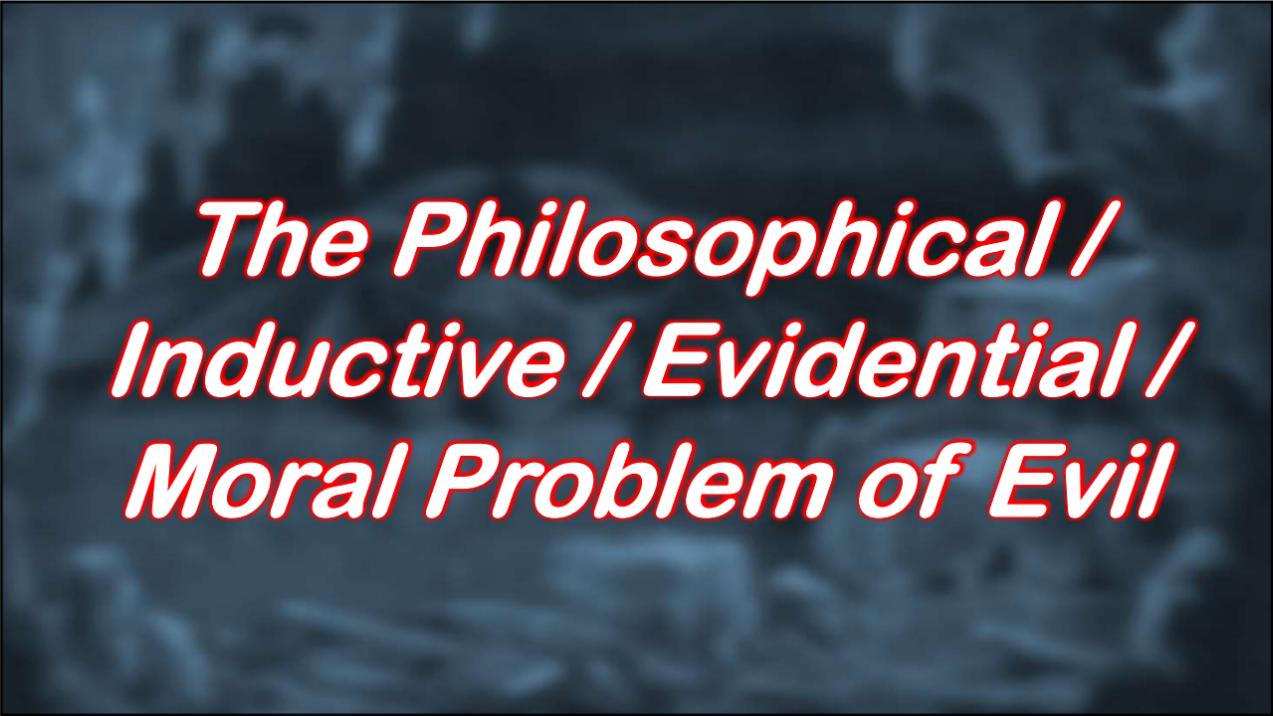


Atheist Richard Carrier

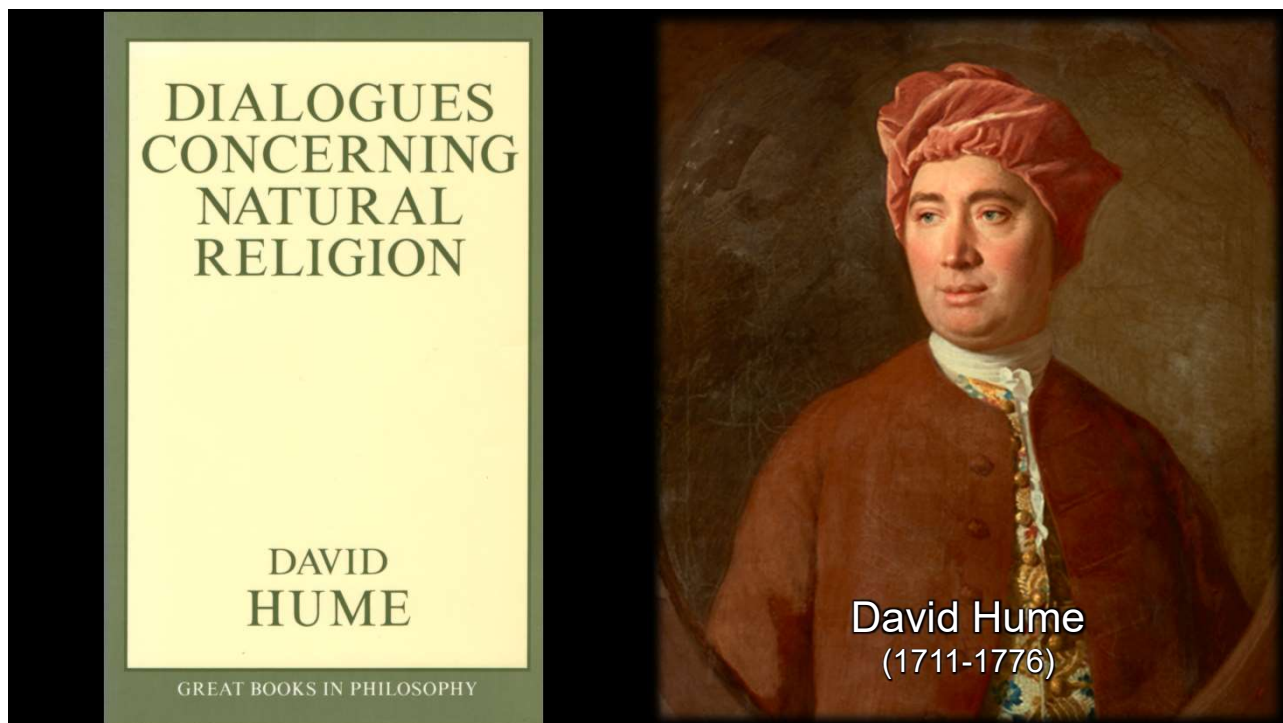
*"So as clever and useful I find Sterba's argument to be, I don't see it providing a logical proof of the impossibility of a good God."*



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



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

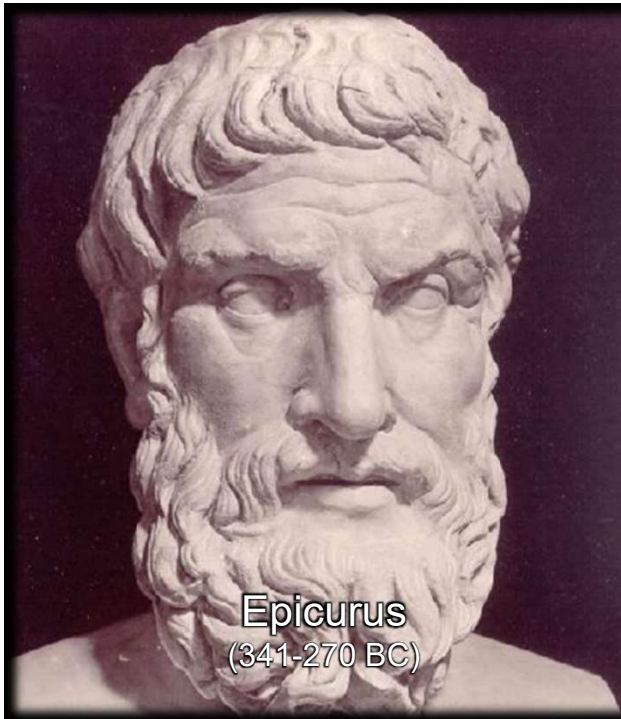


**Philo: "Epicurus' old questions are yet unanswered. Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?"**

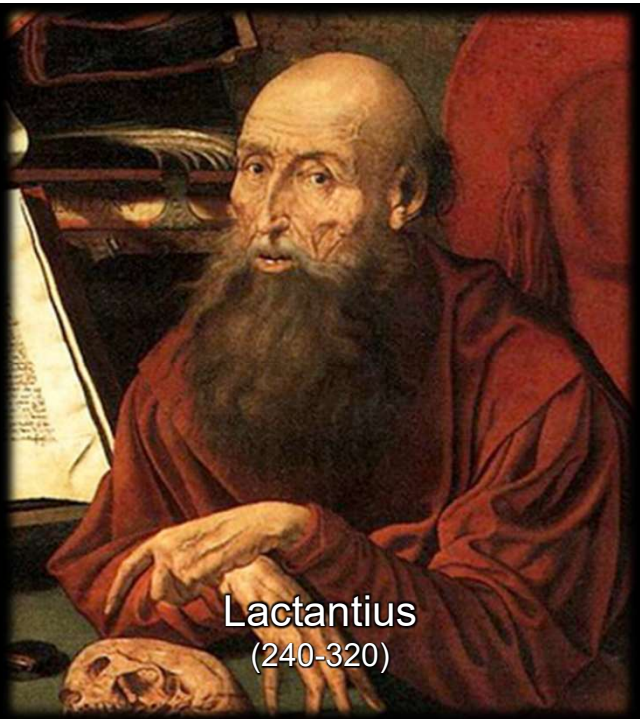
*[Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1989), 84]*



**David Hume**  
(1711-1776)

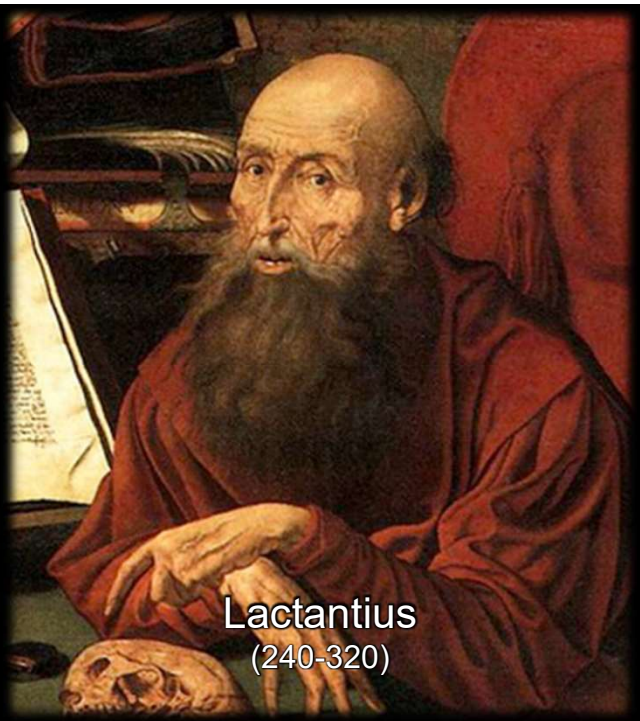


**Epicurus**  
(341-270 BC)



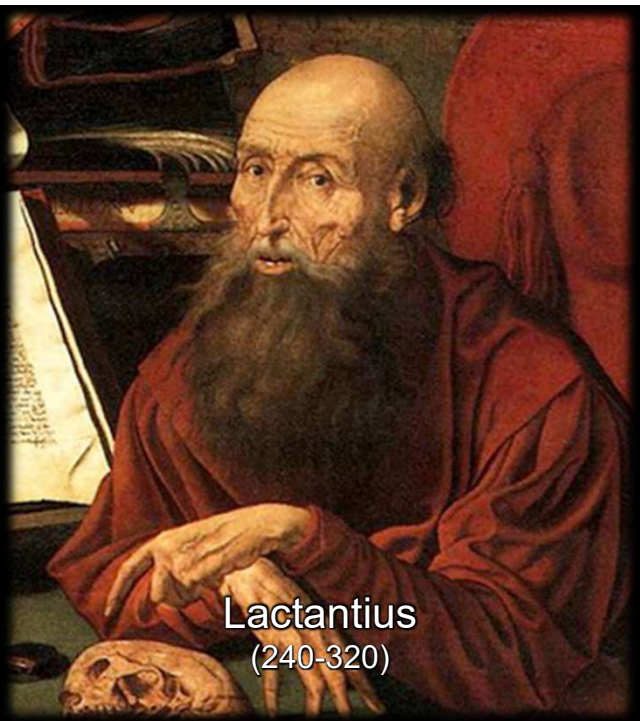
**Lactantius**  
(240-320)

**“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)

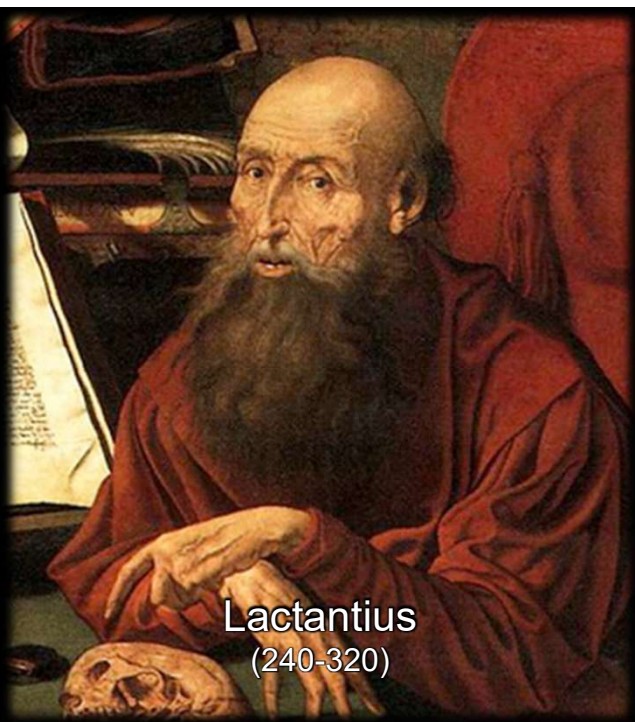
**“If He is willing and is  
unable, He is feeble,  
which is not in  
accordance with the  
character of God; if He  
is able and unwilling,  
He is envious, which is  
equally at variance with  
God;**



Lactantius  
(240-320)

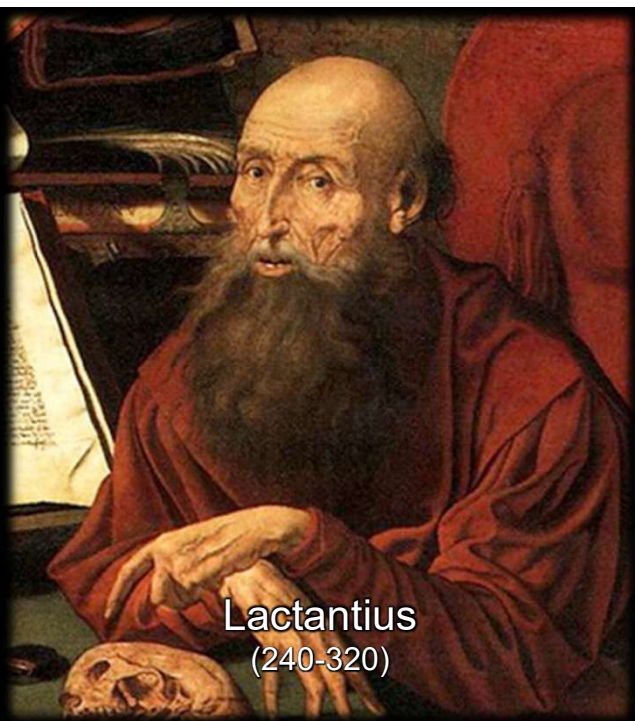
**“If He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? or why does He not remove them?”**

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

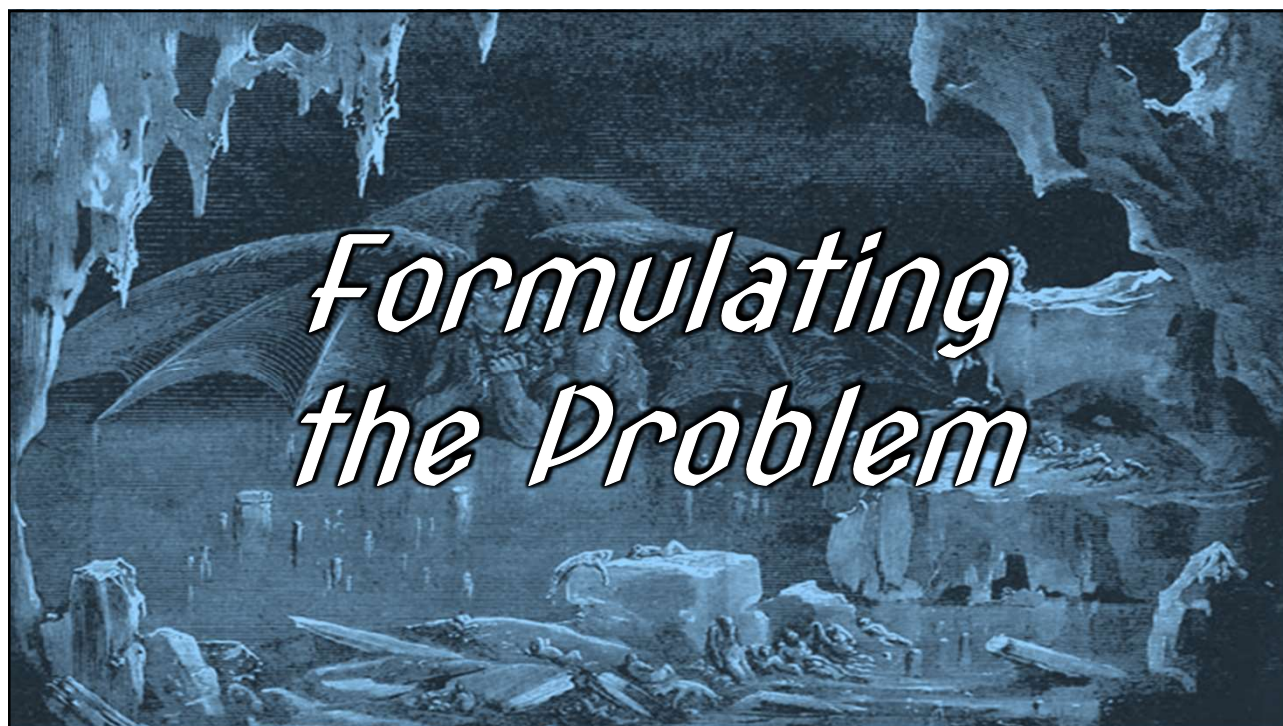


Lactantius  
(240-320)

**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.*

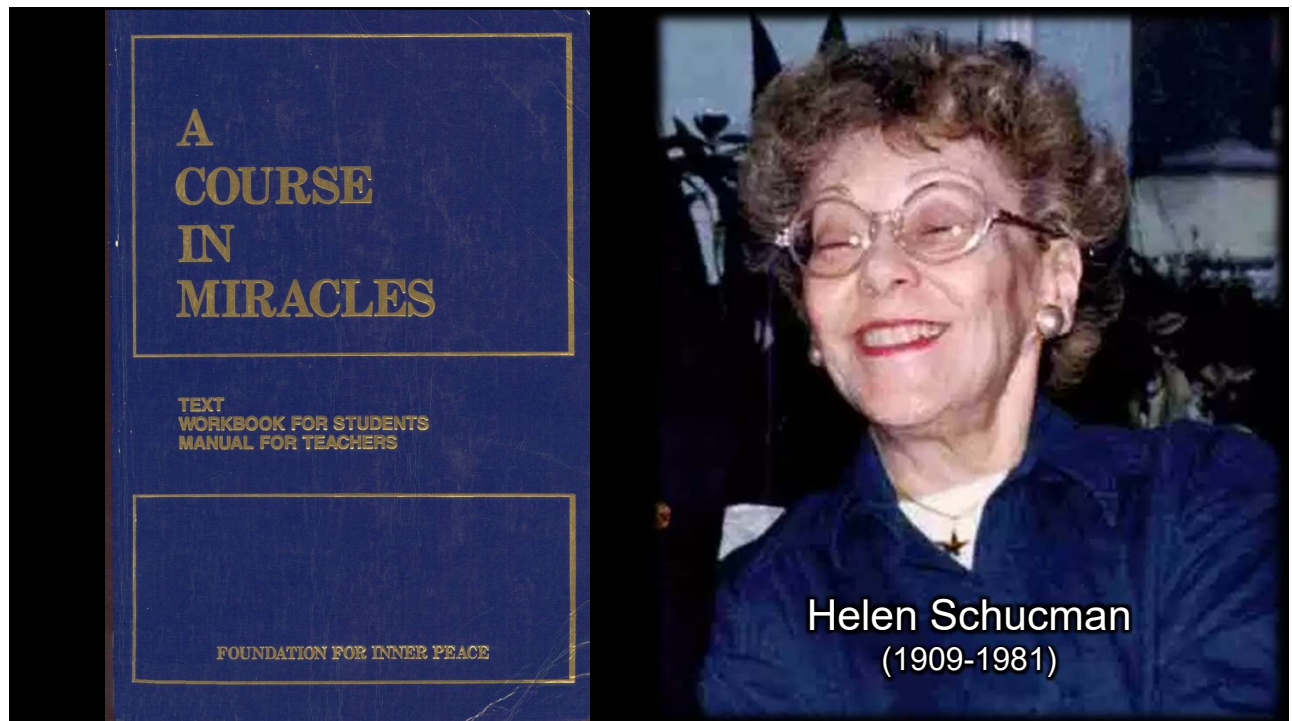
## ❧ Conclusions ❧

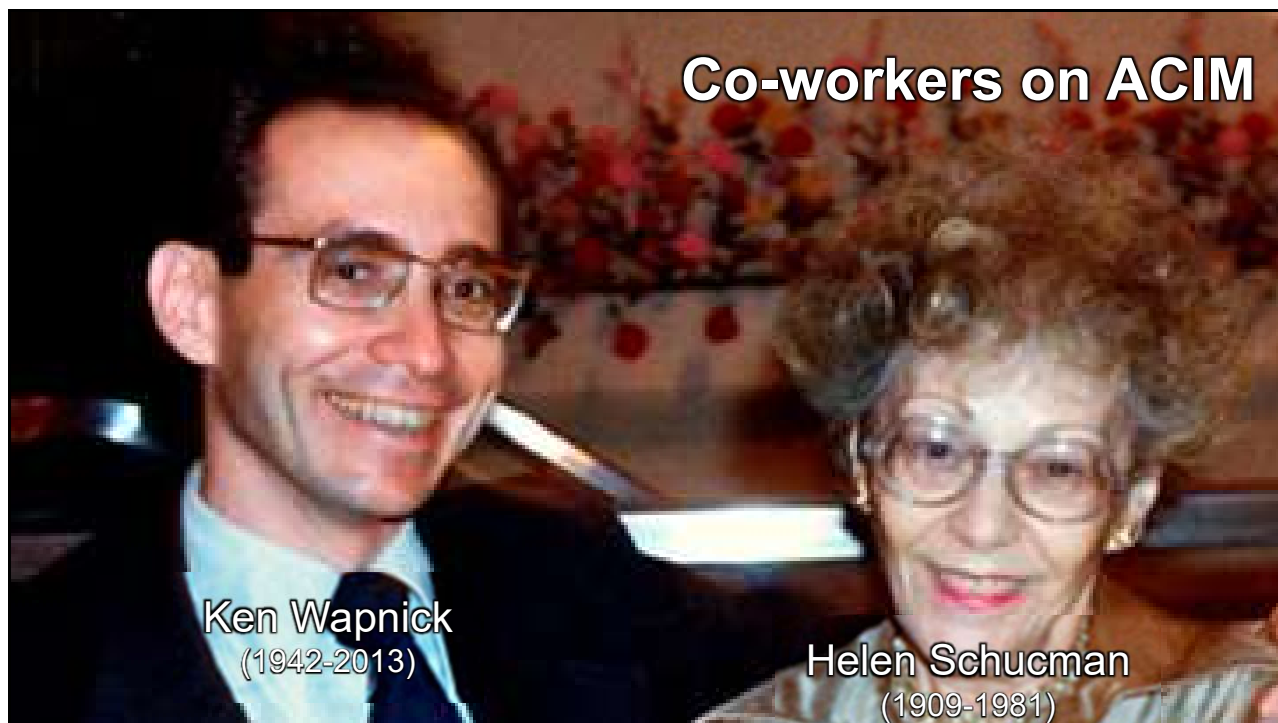
*Either evil does not exist  
or God is not all-good  
or God is not all-powerful (or both)  
or God is not all-knowing  
or **God does not exist***

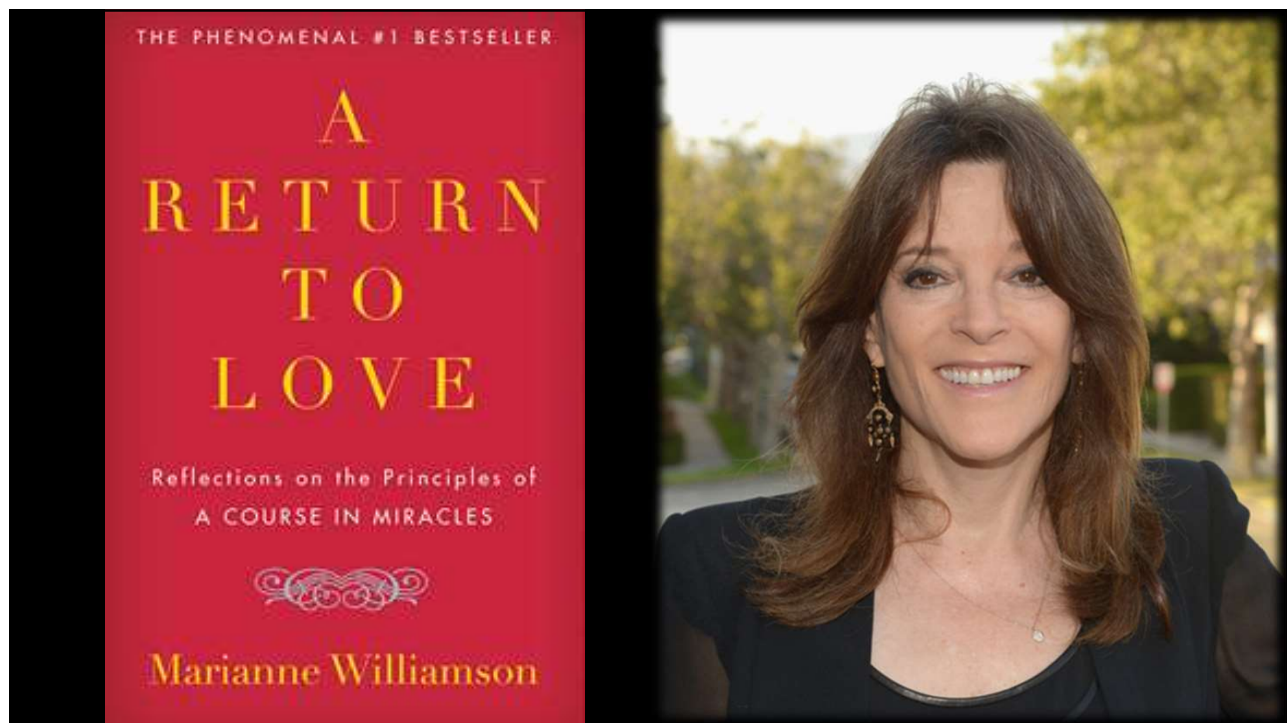
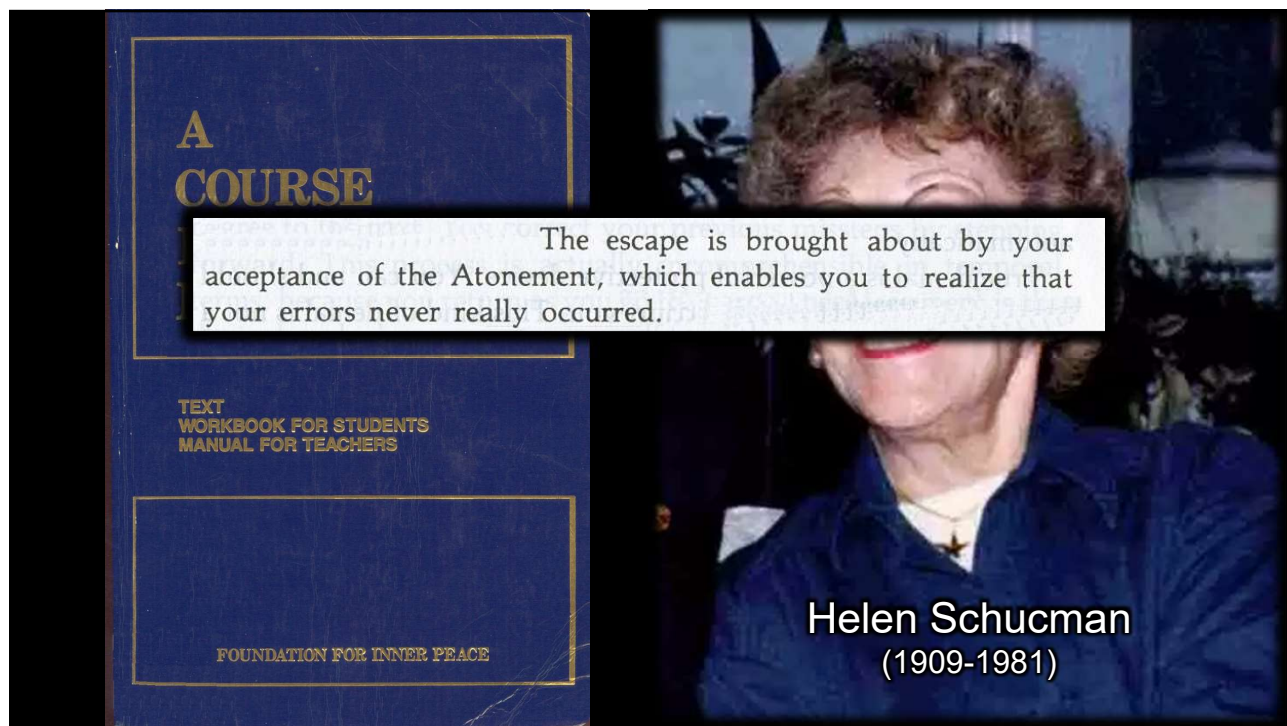


*Some  
Non-Evangelical  
Options*

*Evil does  
not exist.*









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Photo: The Calgary Astronomy Meetup Group




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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 didnt 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 them because you could see right past them to only Loves presence? Sound

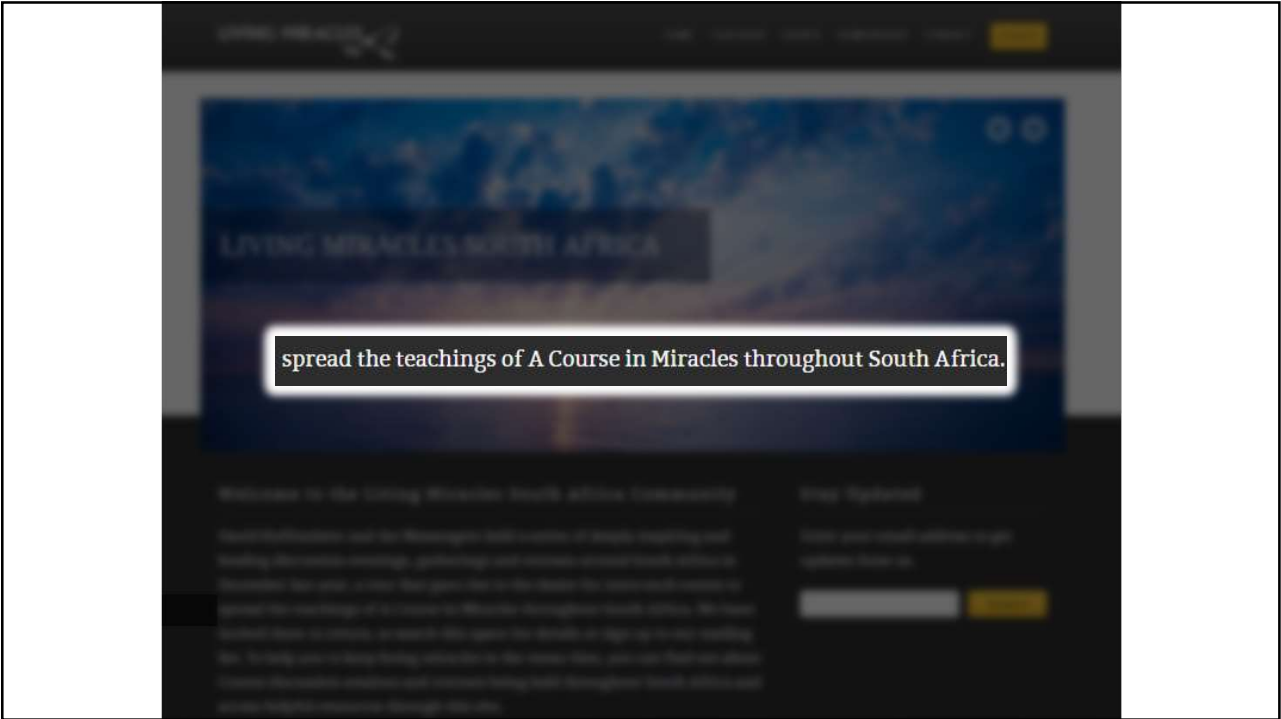
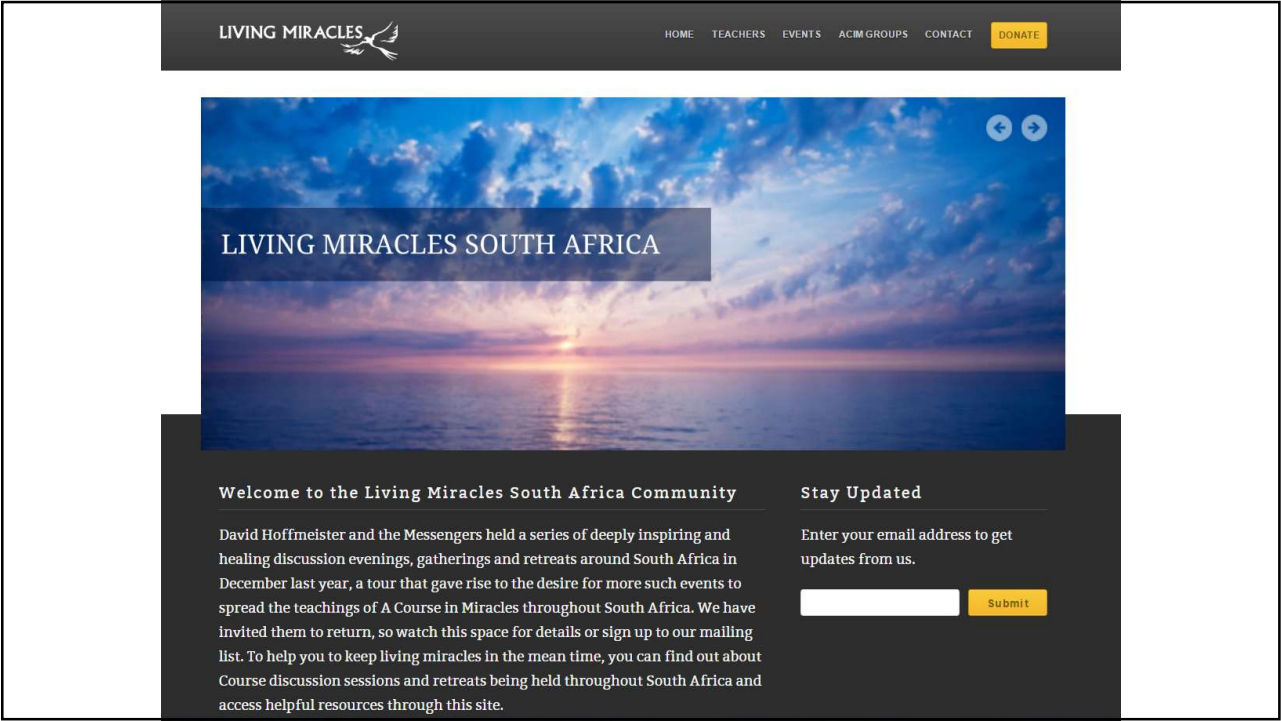
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David Hoffmeister and the Messengers held a series of deeply inspiring and healing discussion evenings, gatherings and retreats around South Africa in December last year, a tour that gave rise to the desire for more such events to spread the teachings 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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October 10 & 17, 2004  
- The Rev. Shannon S. Johnston

## TAKE THIS TO HEART

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

insights, mixed emotions, anxiety, and even fear. So, read this and own it. SSJ<sup>+</sup>

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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We're about:  
A Course in Miracles

This is a group for those who are interested in studying and practicing the principles of A Course in Miracles. If you would like to get in touch with the pure essence of unconditional Love that you truly are, this group is for you. We support each other in deeper understanding and practicing of the Course's principles in our daily lives. The format of the group involves reading the Course together and sharing the insights and applications with the group.

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### Welcome!

[Upcoming \(1\)](#) [Past](#) [Calendar](#)

#### A Course In Miracles Study Group

Courtyard Boone  
1050 Highway 105, Boone, NC (map)



Join us for reading and discussing A Course in Miracles and its applications in everyday life. We are meeting every Sunday for about two hours. We are going to finish... [Learn more](#)

Hosted by: Tanya (Organizer)

Sun Apr 2

12:30 PM

[RSVP](#)

4 days left

2 going

0 comments

### What's new



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## A COURSE IN MIRACLES



[← Back to Calendar](#)

**WHEN:** October 5, 2014 @ 12:45 pm – 2:15 pm

**REPEATS:** Monthly on 1st Sunday, forever

**WHERE:** Atlanta Unity, Room 108  
3597 Parkway Lane  
Norcross, GA 30092  
USA

**COST:** Love Offering

**CONTACT:**  Cat Rye  E-mail

[Click to view map](#)

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? 4 hours ago

### DAILY WORD

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



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](#)
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## 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**

3 attending  
0 comments

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

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

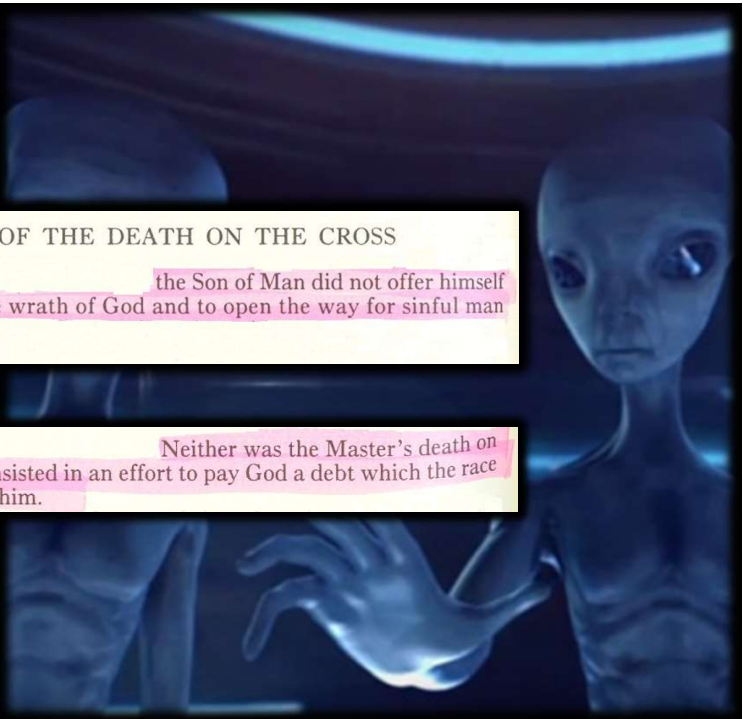



## THE URANTIA BOOK


### 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.




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Forum Picnic in the 40's

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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**


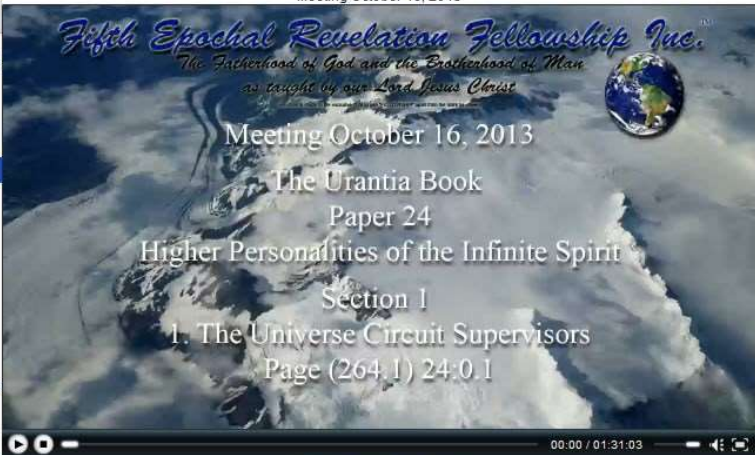
October 20, 2013      Your Study Location for the UB in Atlanta

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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




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[Urantia Basic Fellowship](#)




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[A Journey to beliefs](#)  
["In My Opinion"](#)  
[Worship and Prayer Guide](#)


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## STUDY GROUPS LIST

[Search our Study Group database](#)

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

**Charlotte NC Urantia Book Study Group**  
Charlotte, NC, 28078 US  
Markel Whisonant  
704.492-9827  
[MarkelWhisonant@yahoo.com](mailto:MarkelWhisonant@yahoo.com)


**Charlottesville VA ~ Urantia Book Study Group**  
Charlottesville, VA, 22936 US  
Preston Thomas  
434.973-6851  
[lpjtr.@comcast.net](mailto:lpjtr.@comcast.net)

**Chehalis WA Urantia Book Study Group**  
Chehalis, WA, 98532 US  
Susan Lamoreaux  
360.245-3269  
[smlamoreaux@myhome.net](mailto:smlamoreaux@myhome.net)

**Chicago IL ~ Urantia Study Group**  
Chicago, IL, US  
Eugene Asidao and Nestor Nano  
773.478-4317 (Eugene) 773.367-9544 (Nestor)  
[elaugene@aol.com](mailto:elaugene@aol.com) or [nrm0320@gmail.com](mailto:nrm0320@gmail.com)  
Saturdays from 2:00 - 5:00 PM

**Chicago IL First Society Forum Study Group**  
Chicago, IL, 60660 US  
David Owen  
773-472-7612 (David)  
[cece606@gmail.com](mailto:cece606@gmail.com)  
alternating Sundays - 1:30-3:30 PM (Sept.-May)

**Chicago IL Study Group at 533 Diversey**  
Chicago, IL, 60614 US  
Urantia Foundation  
773.525-3319  
[urantia@urantia.org](mailto:urantia@urantia.org)  
Tuesdays - 7:0 PM




English


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### 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	<a href="#">Click to see</a>
Primary Contact Email	<a href="#">Click to see</a>
Primary Contact Phone	<a href="#">Click to see</a>
Secondary Contact Name	<a href="#">Click to see</a>
Secondary Contact Email	<a href="#">Click to see</a>
Secondary Contact Phone	<a href="#">Click to see</a>

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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.

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French 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 Asheville Study Group

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**Asheville, NC**  
 Founded Feb 29, 2016

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Group reviews	3
Upcoming Meetups	1
Past Meetups	15
Our calendar	

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**Organizer:**  
 **Bob Kalk**  
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**We're about:**  
 - Urantia Book - Spirituality  
 - Christian - Jesus Christ  
 - Reading & Discussion  
 - The Urantia Book - Urantia  
 - Urantia Readers  
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**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.

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.

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.

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**Welcome!**


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**Birth and Infancy of Jesus (Paper 122)**  
 Online Video Conference  
 Asheville Time - Virtual Space, Asheville, NC (map)

Sat Apr 15  
 3:00 PM  
[RSVP](#)  
 3 going  
 0 comments

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](#)

**What's new**

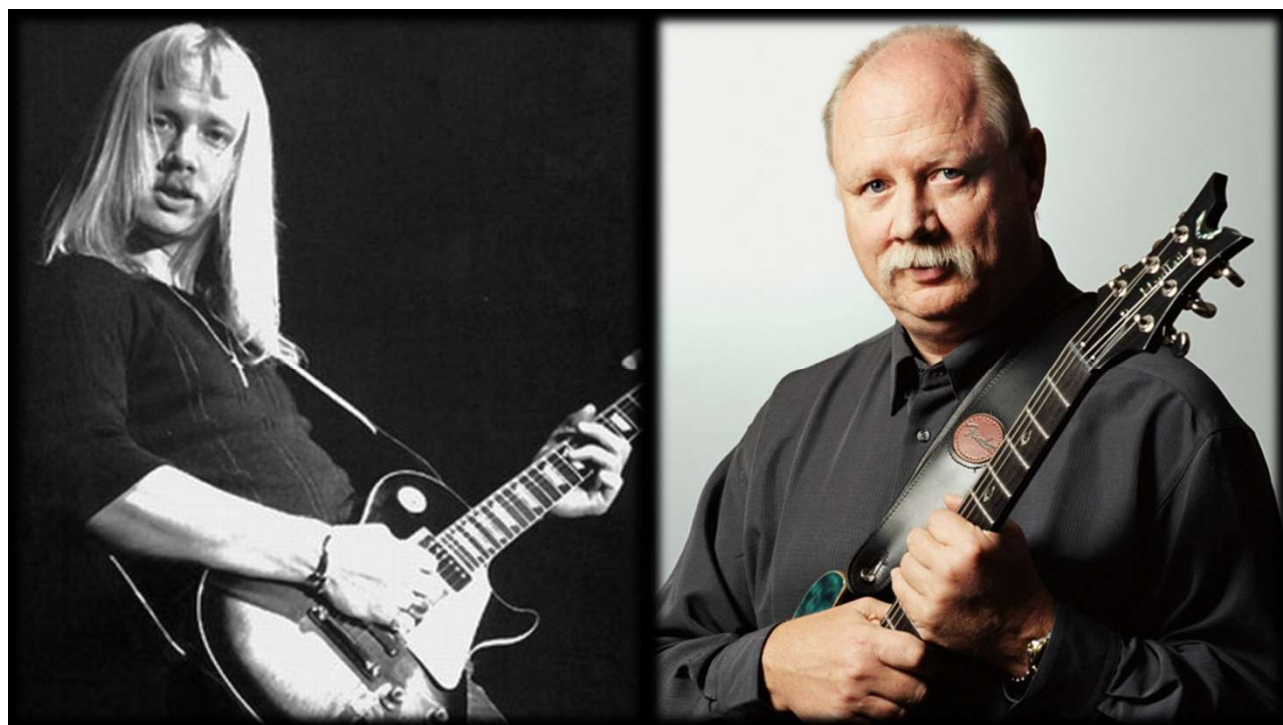
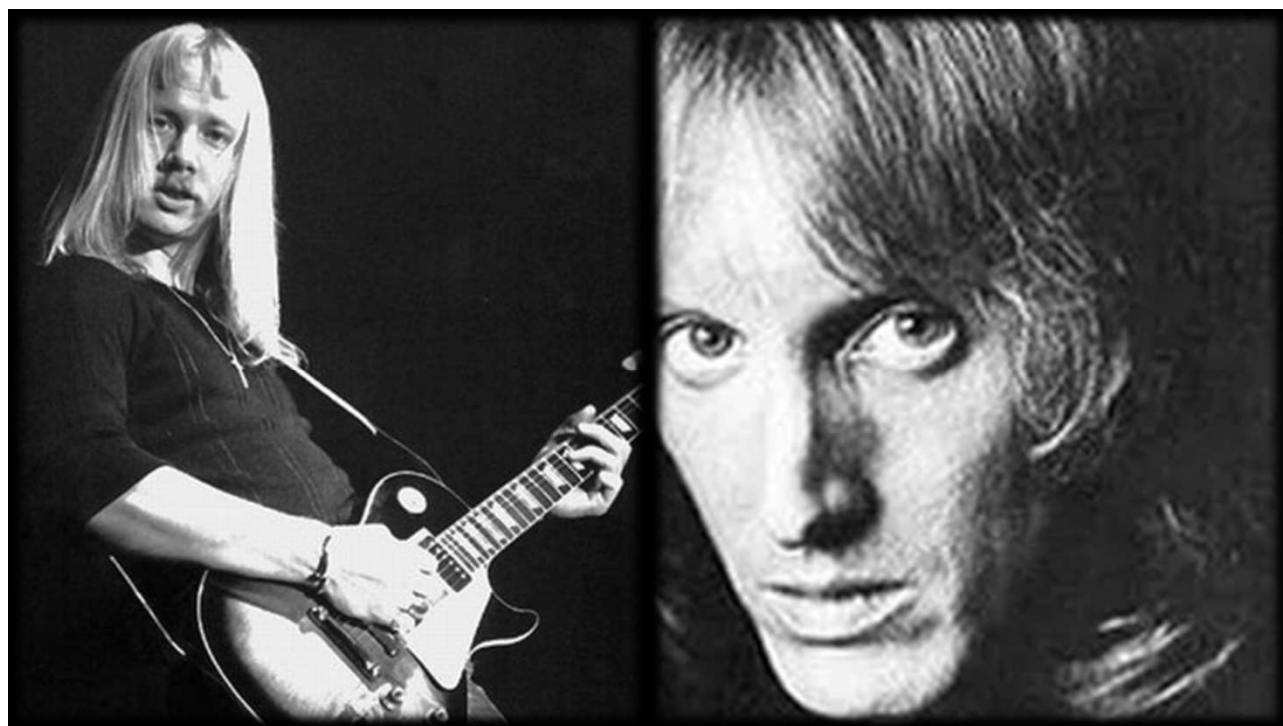


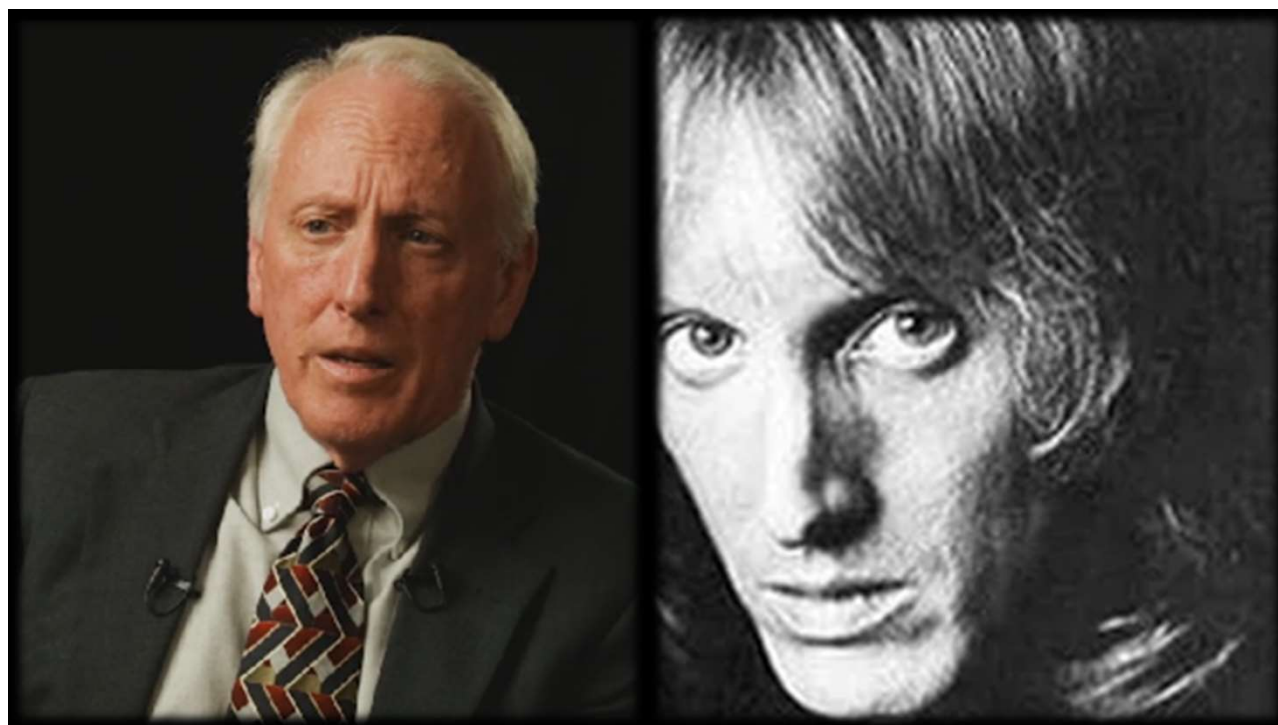
**NEW DISCUSSION**  
 Bob K. started The Times of Michael's Bestowal  
 March 20  
[NEW COMMENT](#)



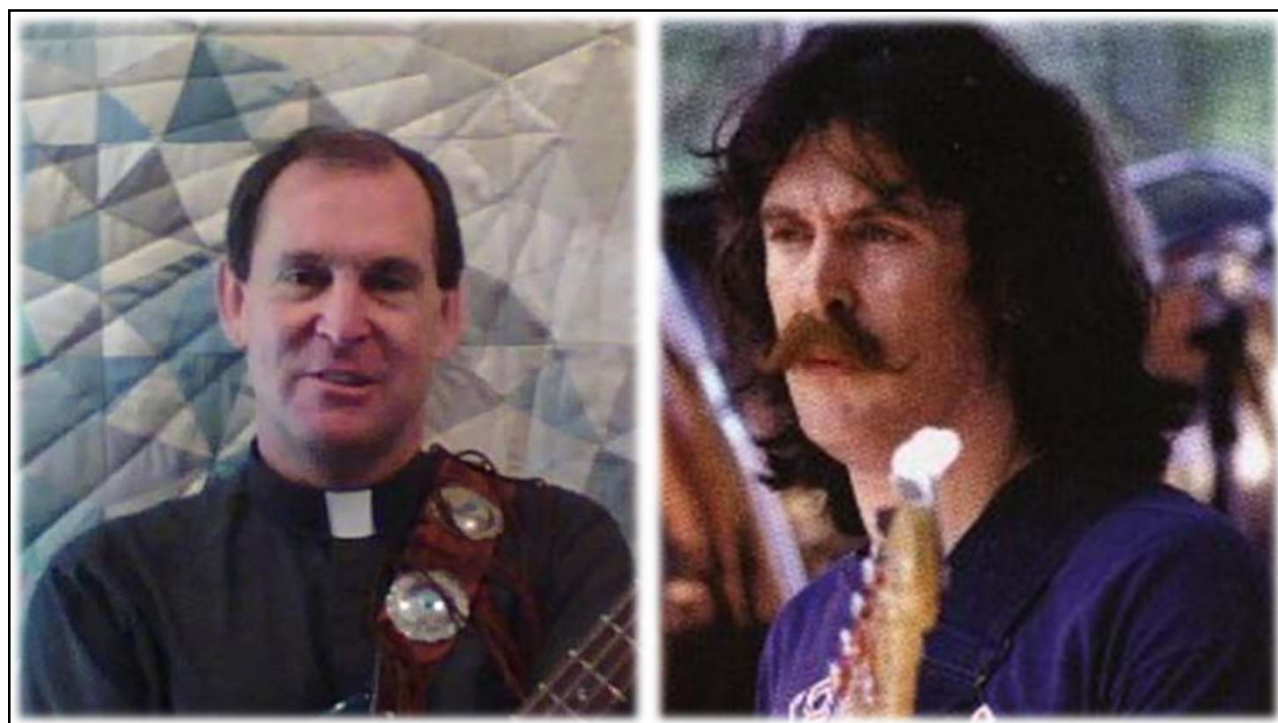
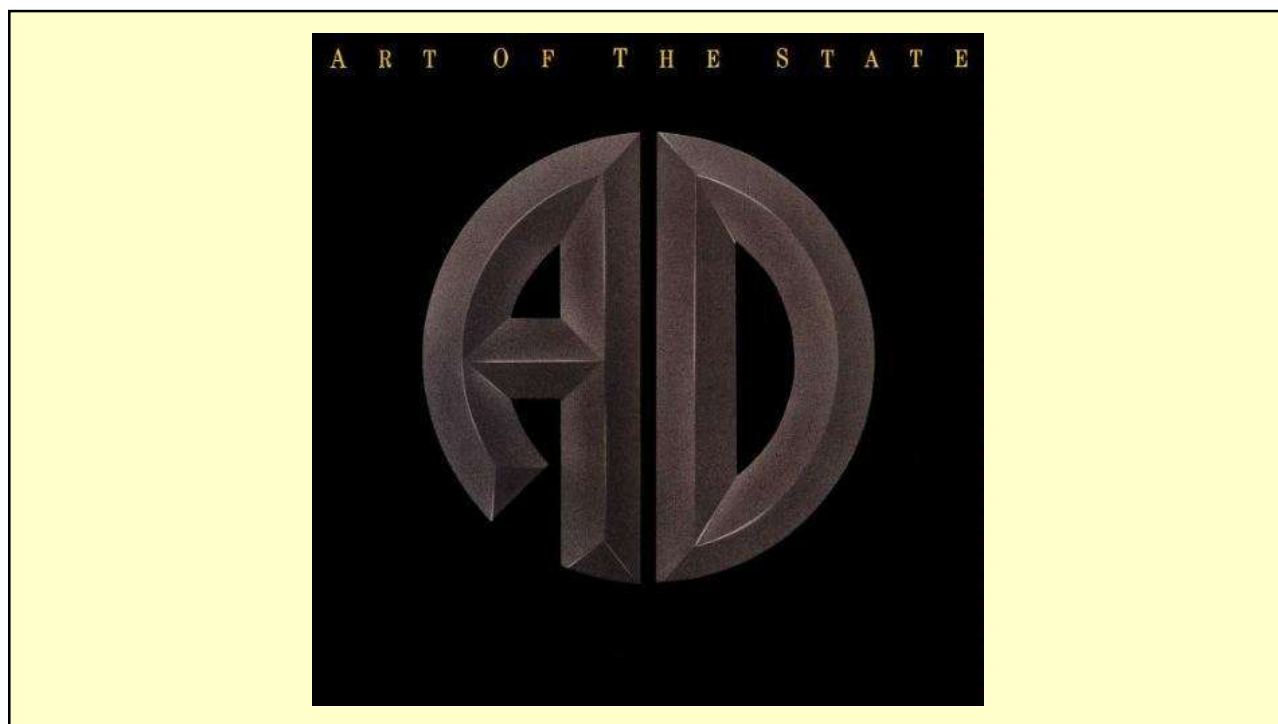












***God is not  
all-good.***

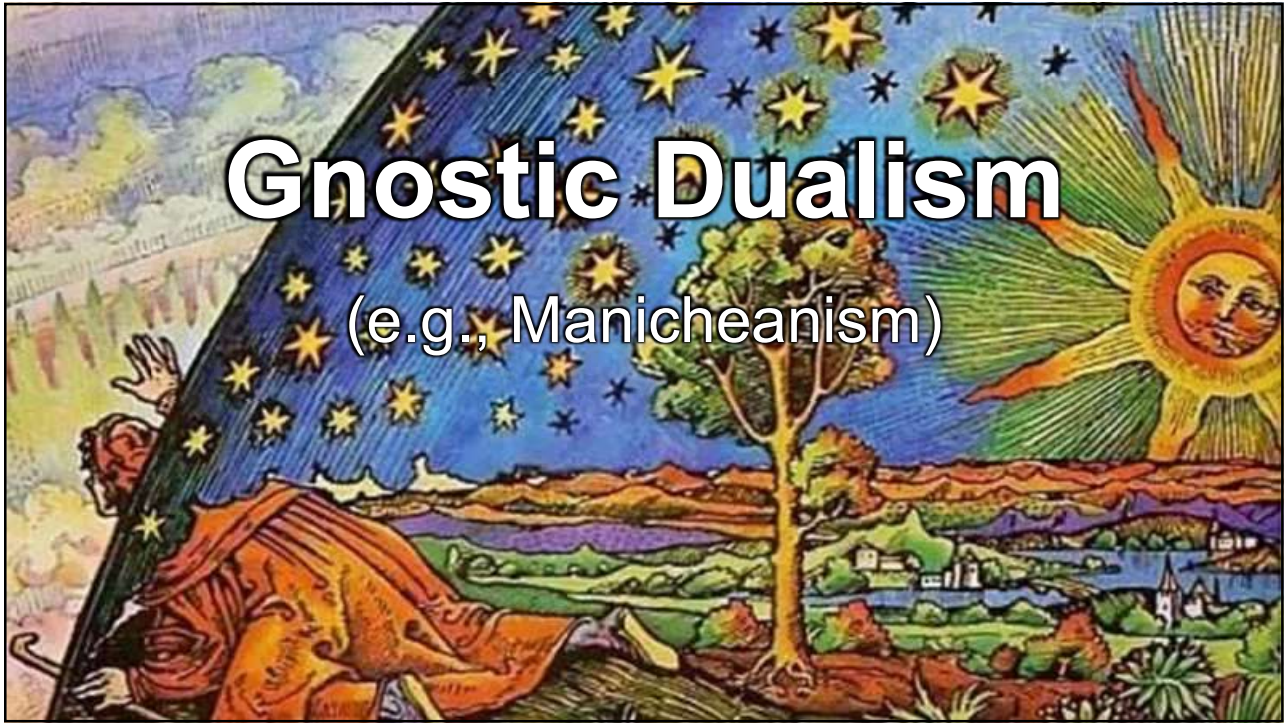
## **Greek Polytheism**

*held that there were both good and  
evil gods*

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

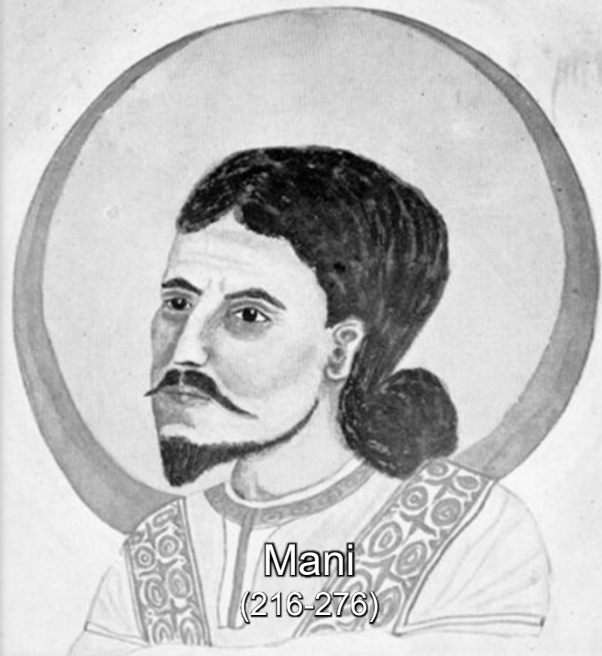
# Gnostic Dualism

(e.g., Manicheanism)



## 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."



Mani  
(216-276)

# 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."



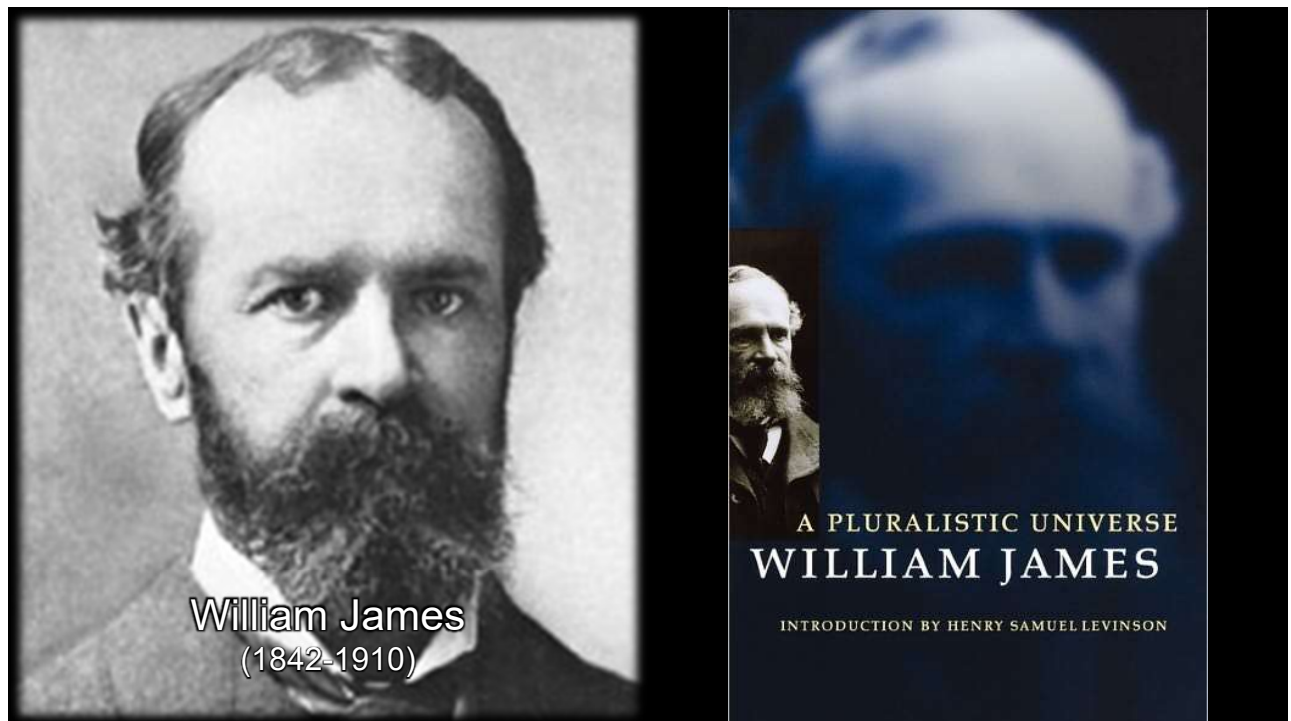
# Manicheanism

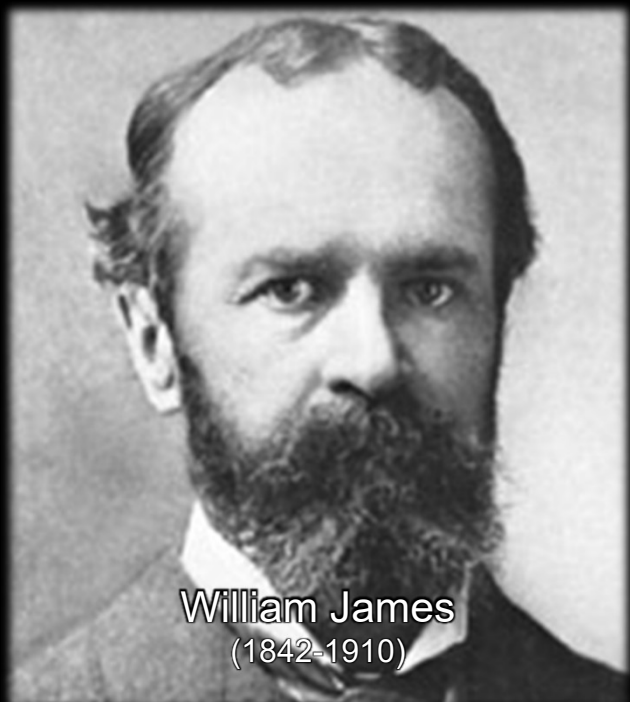
"The opposition of God and Matter is seen in the realm of nature as the conflict of Light and Darkness, Truth and Error."

[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  
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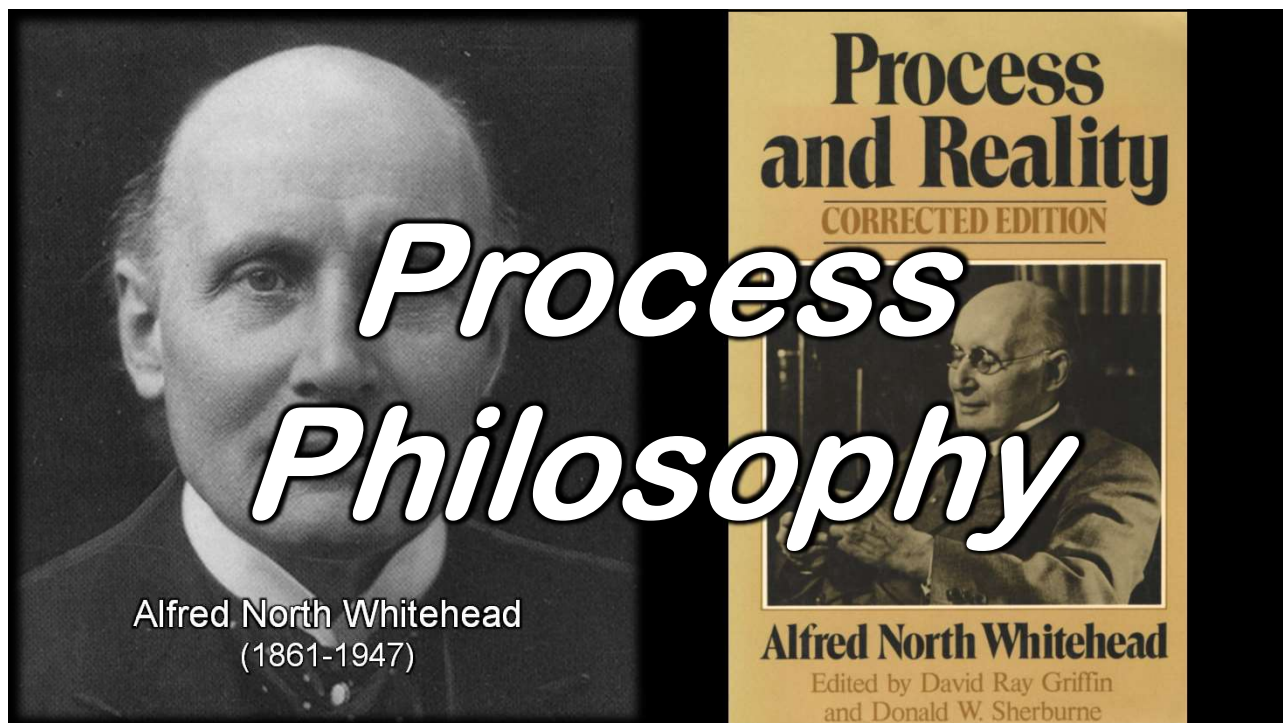
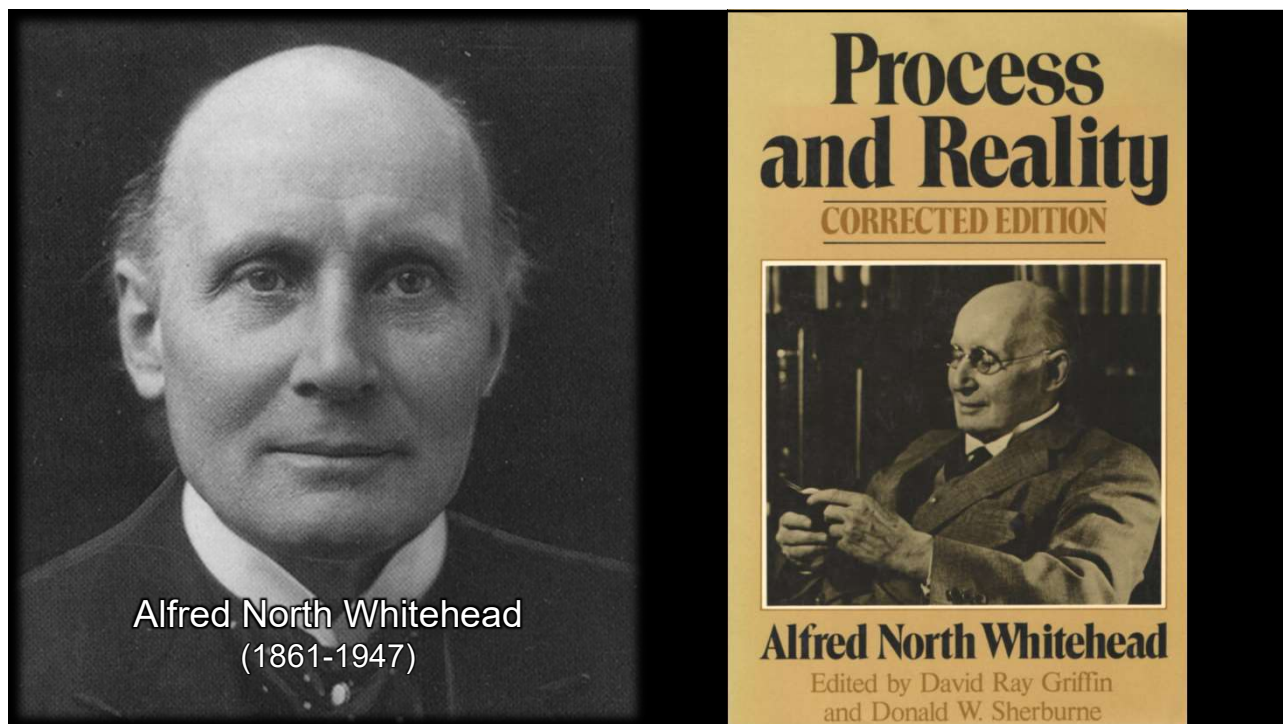
A photograph of Rabbi Harold Kushner, an elderly man with white hair and glasses, wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is seated at a desk with his hands clasped, looking directly at the camera. Behind him is a bookshelf filled with books and a window with blinds.

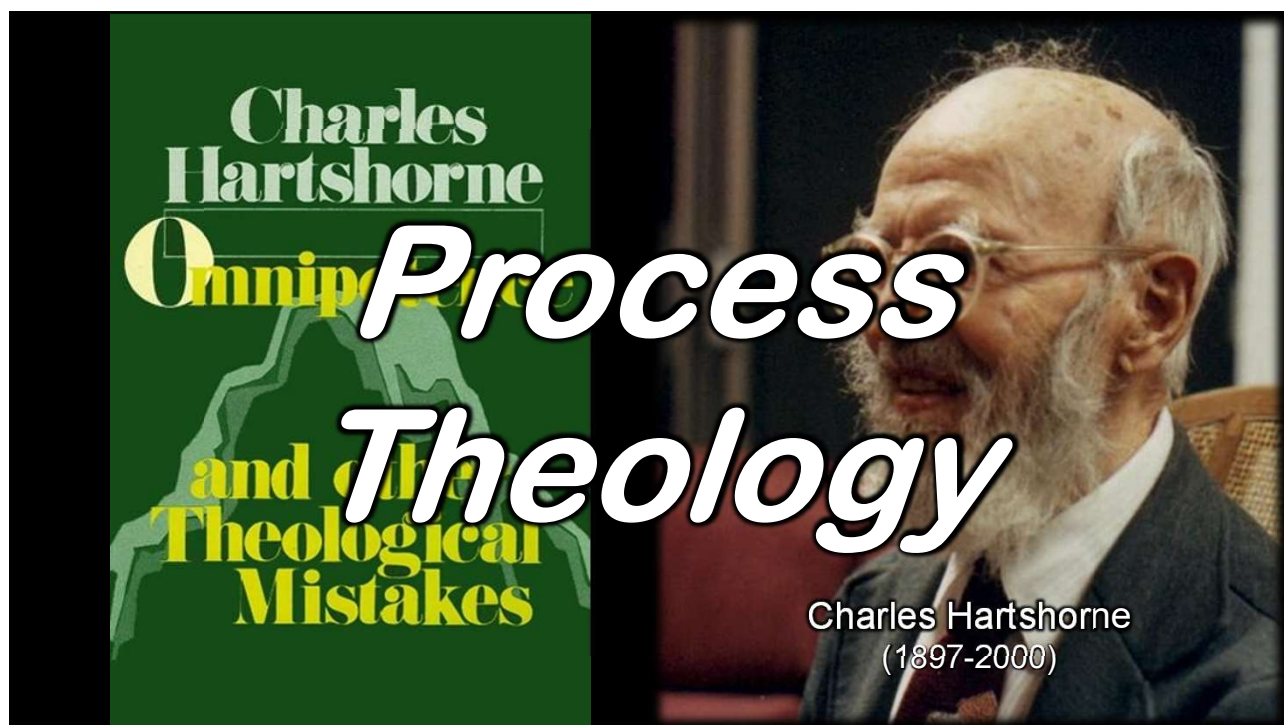
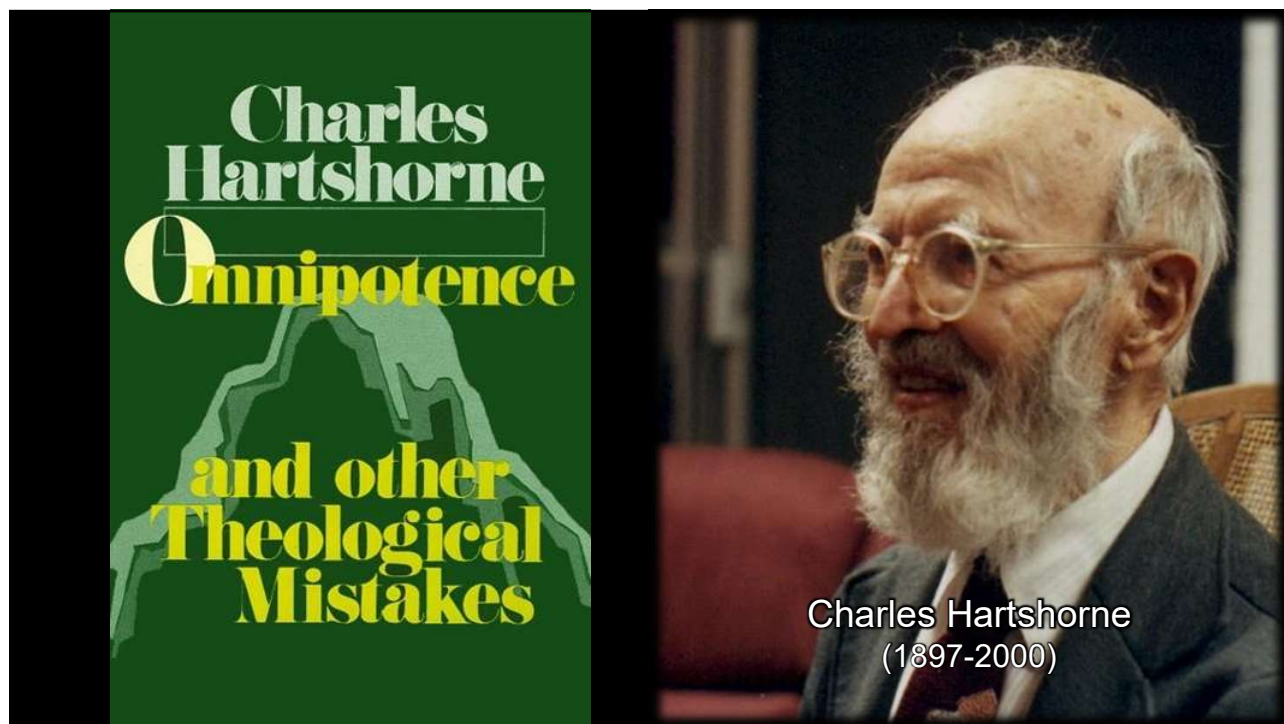
Rabbi Harold Kushner

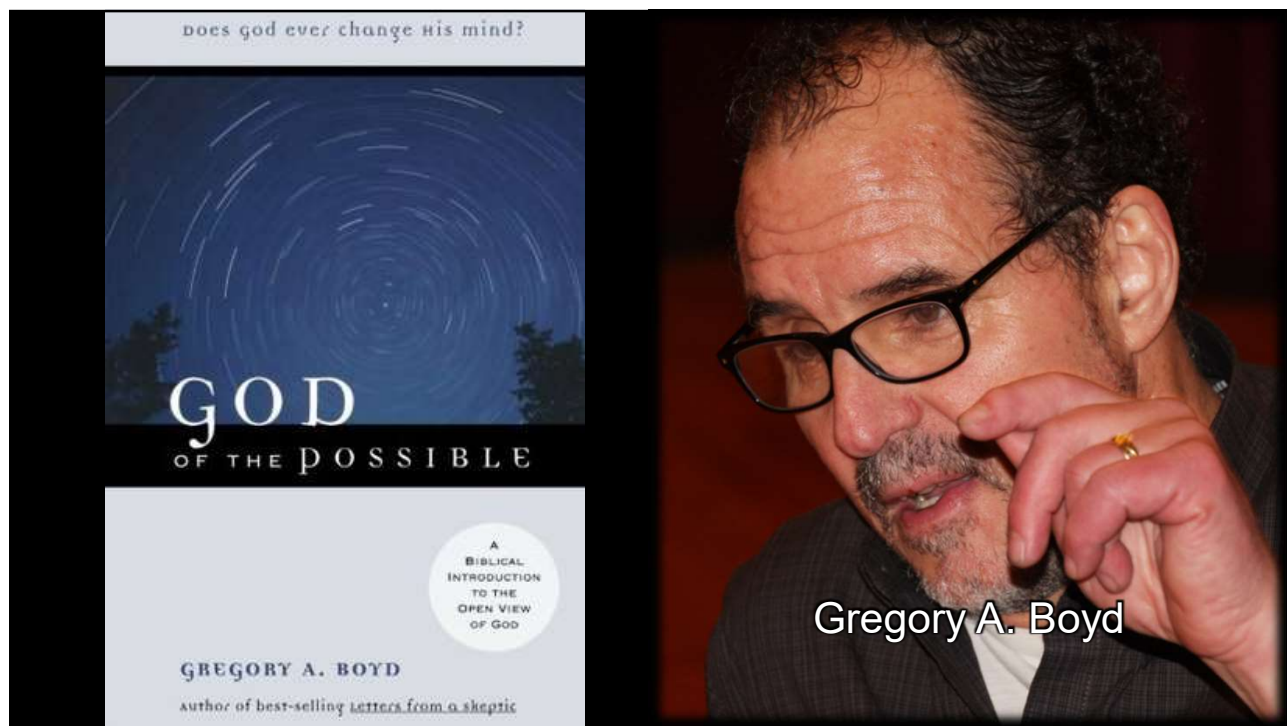
***"I recognize His limitations. He is limited in what He can do by the laws of nature and by the evolution of human nature and human moral freedom. ... Even God has a hard time keeping chaos in check and limiting the damage that evil can do"***

[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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 203]

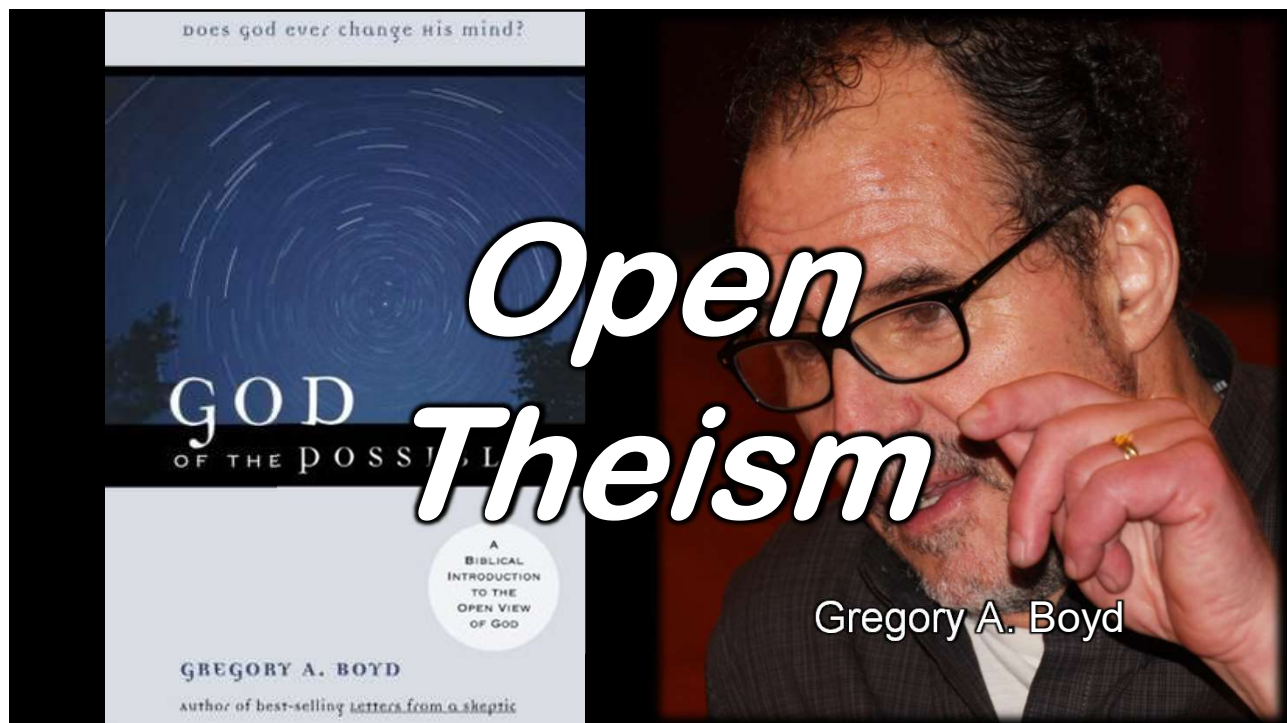
***God is not  
all-knowing.***







Gregory A. Boyd

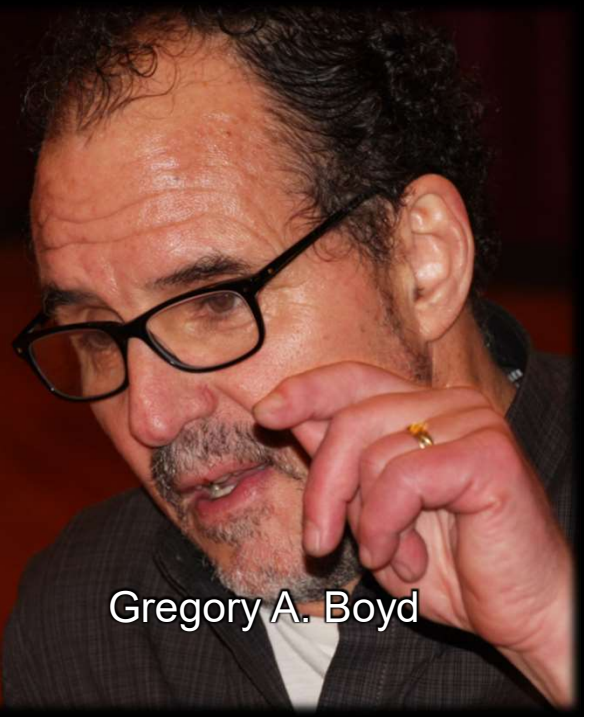


Gregory A. Boyd

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

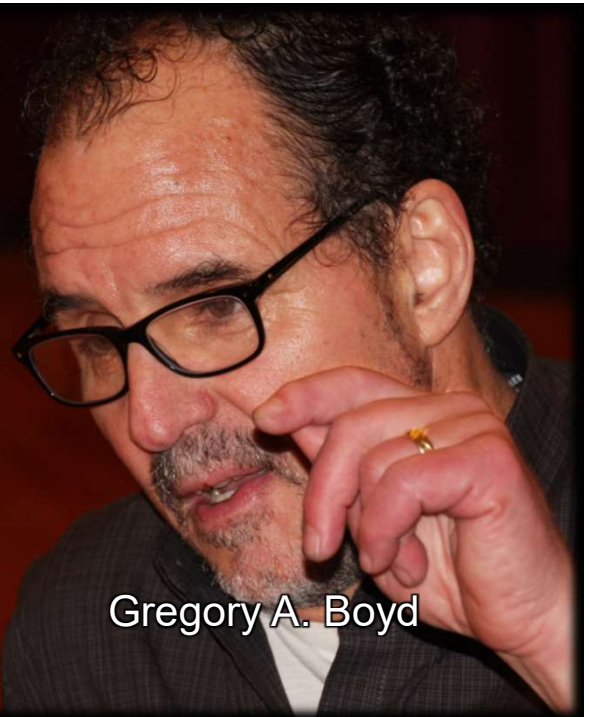
[*God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 98]

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

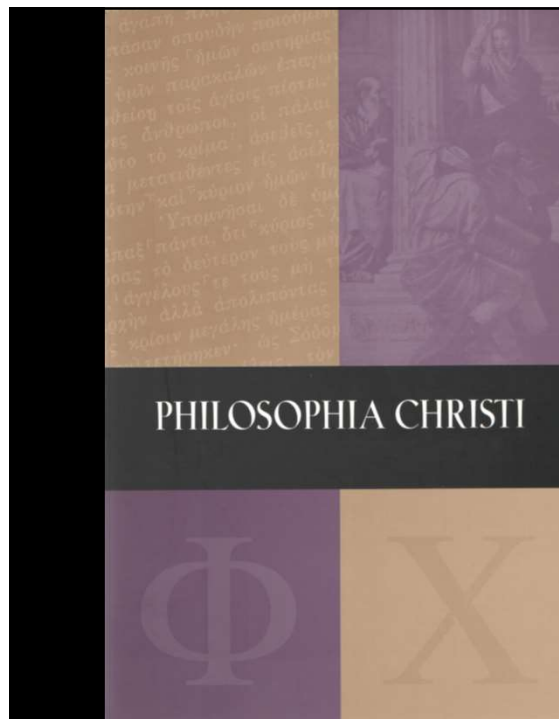


***"The only response I could offer then, and the only response I continue to offer now is that this was not foreknown as a certainty at the time God created Hitler."***

[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:

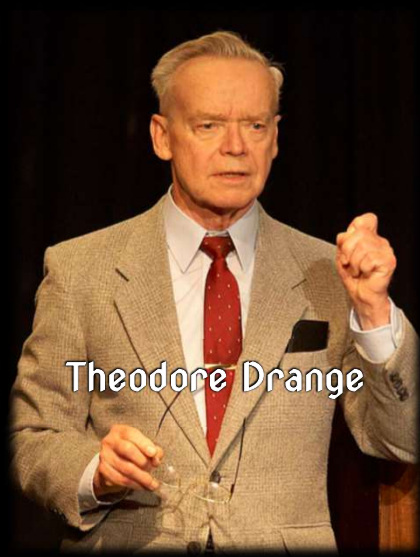
- *Thus, in their estimation, God is "omniscient" because God knows everything that can be known but God does not know the future because (in their view) the future is not knowable.*

***God does  
not exist.***

# Academic Atheism



J. L. Mackie  
(1917-1981)

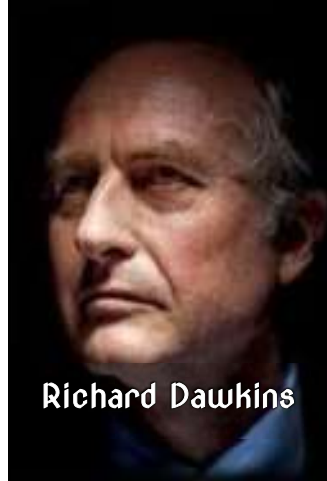


Theodore Drange



Michael Martin  
(1932-2015)

# The New Atheism



Richard Dawkins



Sam Harris

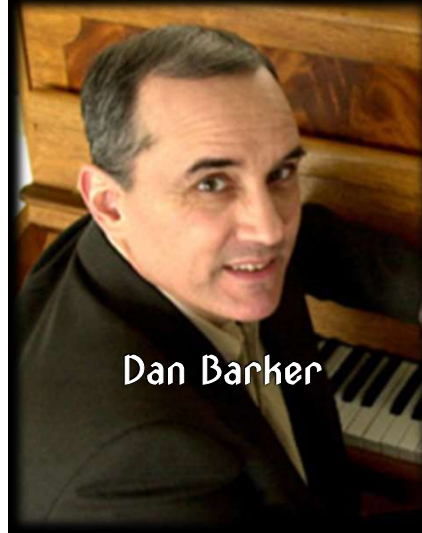


Christopher Hitchens  
(1949-2011)



Daniel Dennett

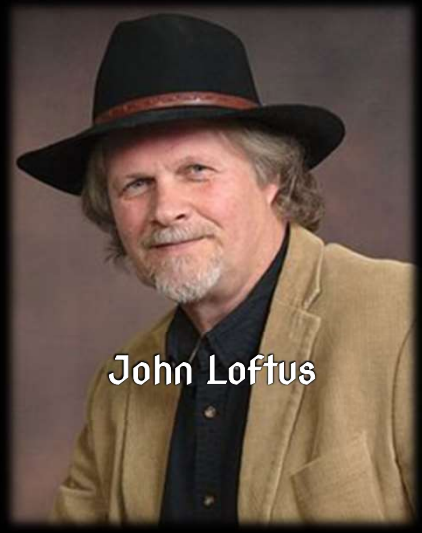
# Popular Atheism



Dan Barker



George Smith

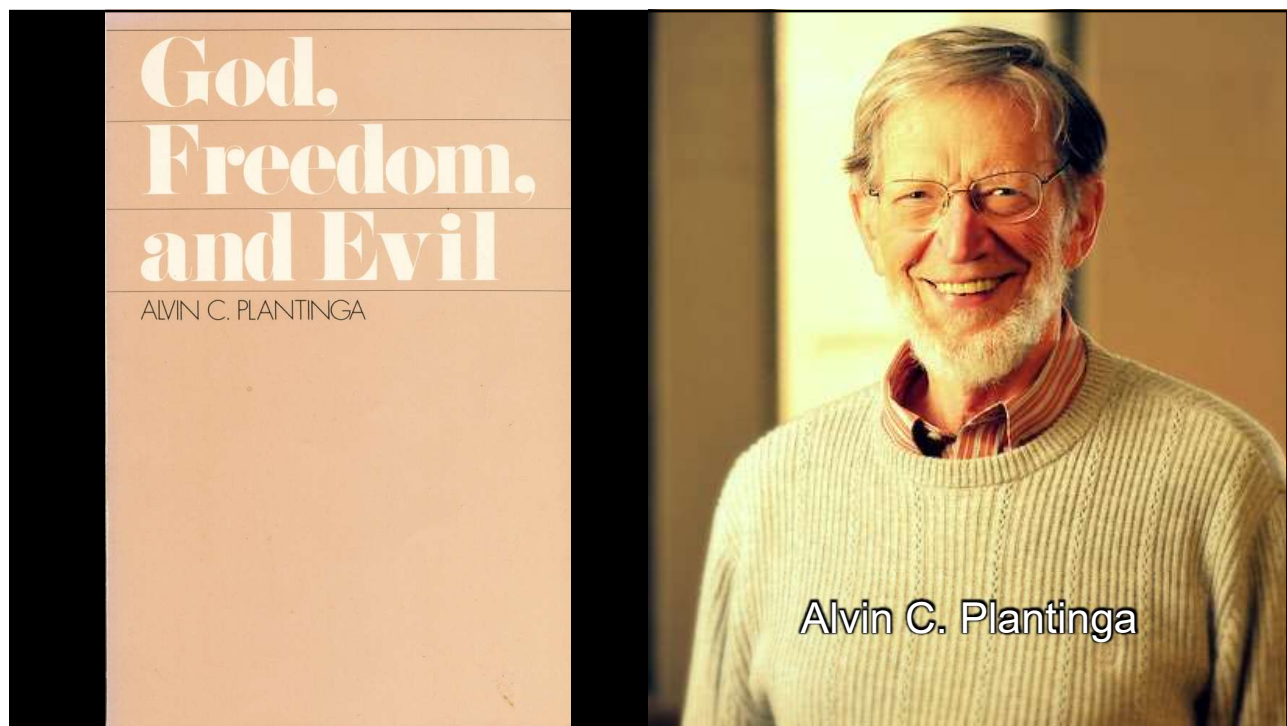


John Loftus

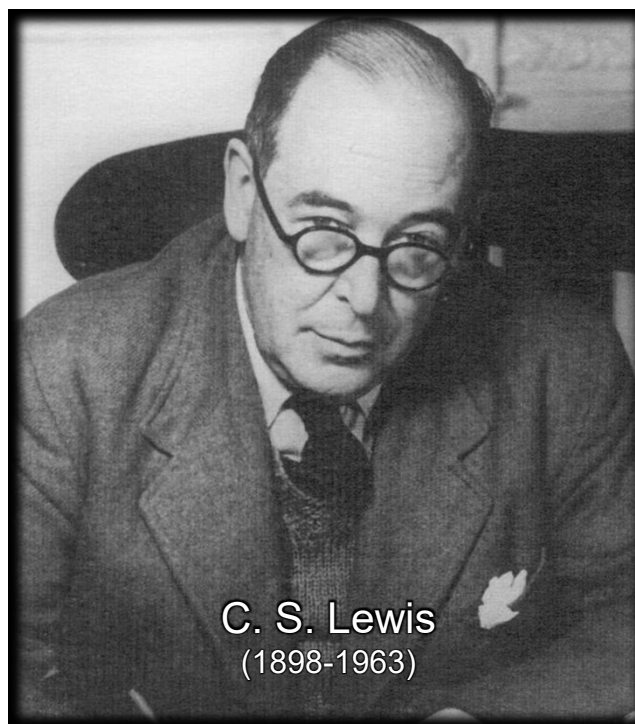
*Some  
Evangelical  
Options*

- 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).*

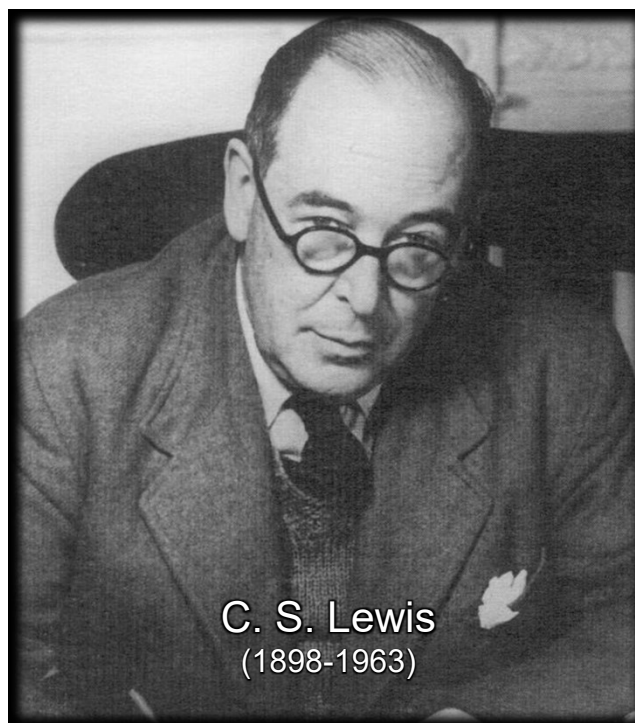
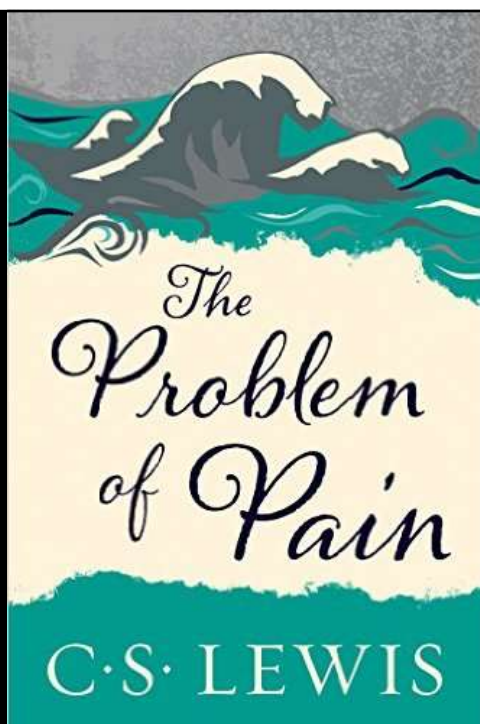
# The Free Will Defense



# The Natural Order Defense of C. S. Lewis

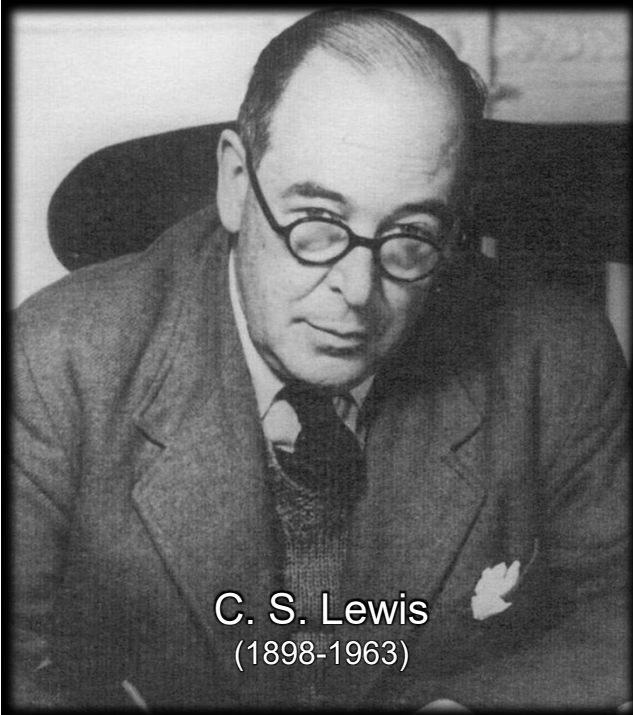


C. S. Lewis  
(1898-1963)



C. S. Lewis  
(1898-1963)

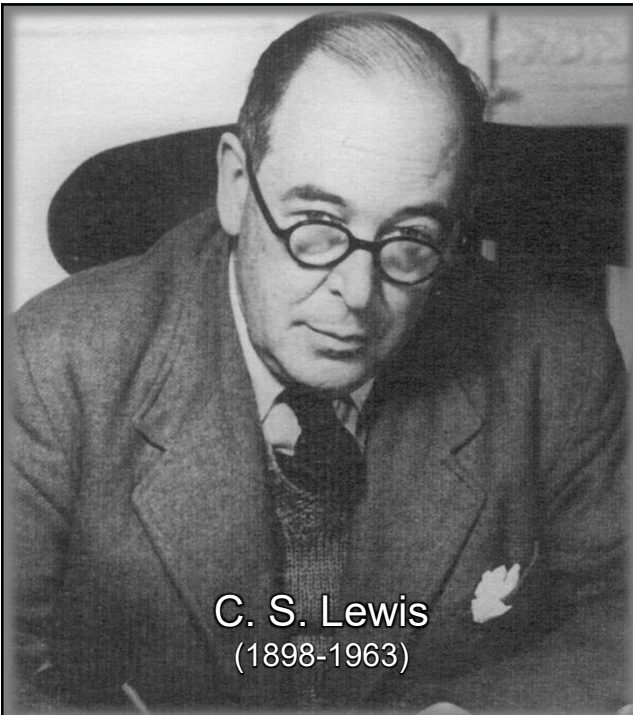
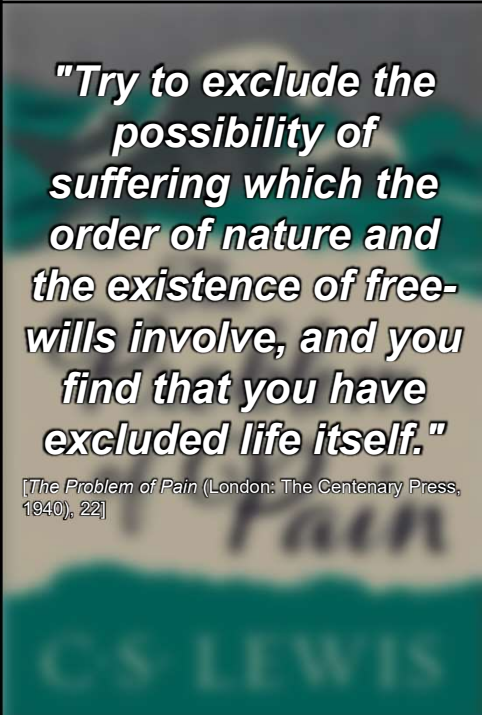
*"Fixed laws,  
consequences  
unfolding by causal  
necessity, the whole  
natural order, are at  
once the limits within  
which their common  
life is confined and  
also the sole  
condition under  
which any such life is  
possible."*



**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]

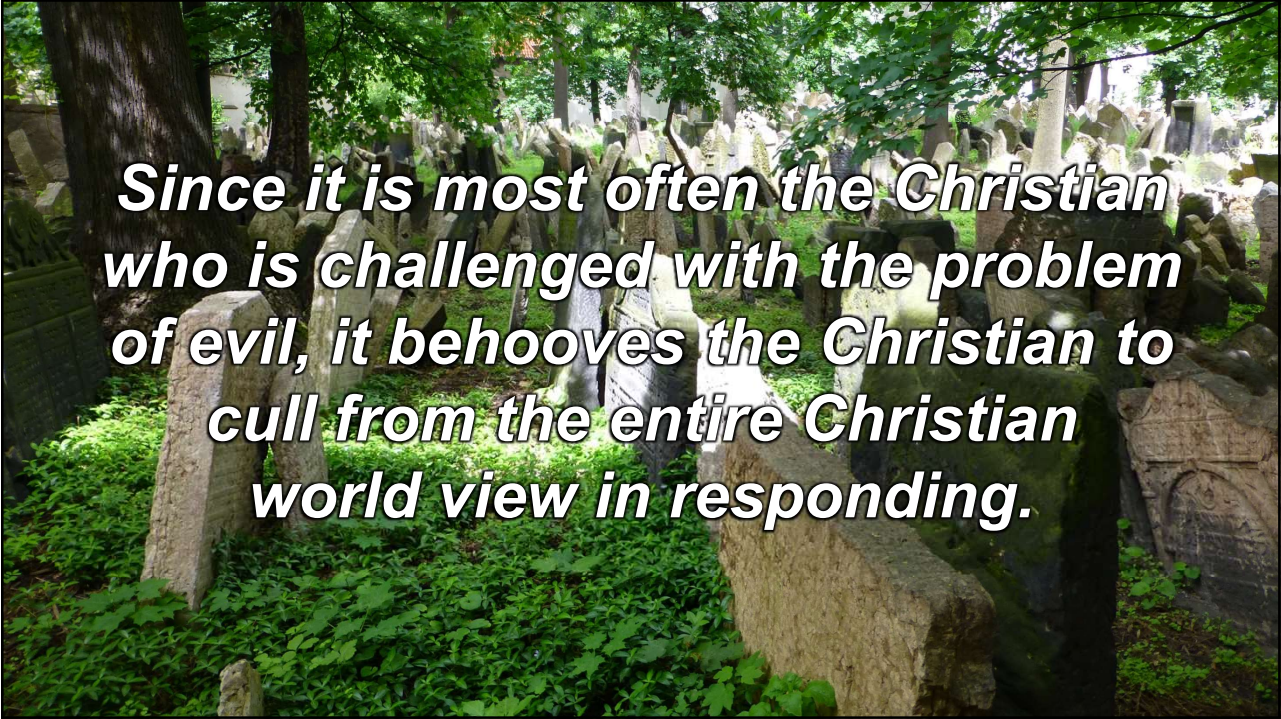


**C. S. Lewis**  
(1898-1963)

**C. S. Lewis's Natural Order Defense**

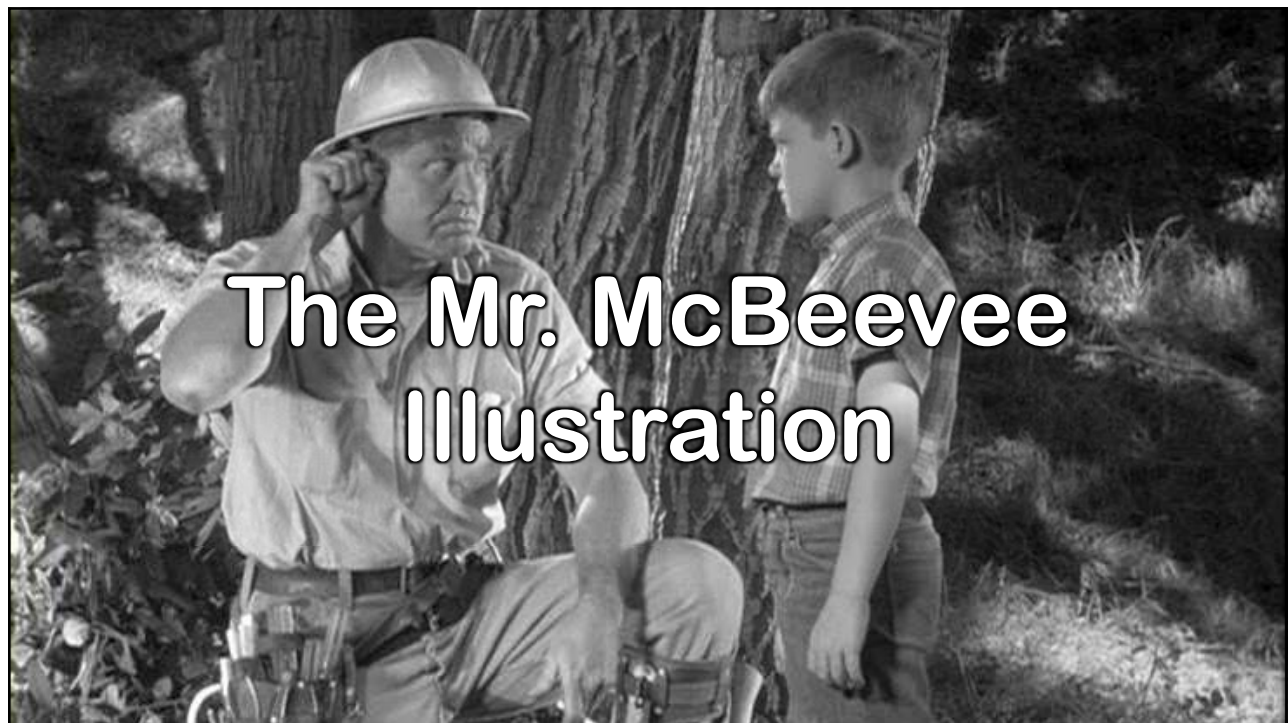
- ***God created humans with free will.***
- ***The responsible exercise of free will requires a world of non-capricious physical regularities (laws).***
- ***These regularities create the possibility of natural evil.***

# 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."*



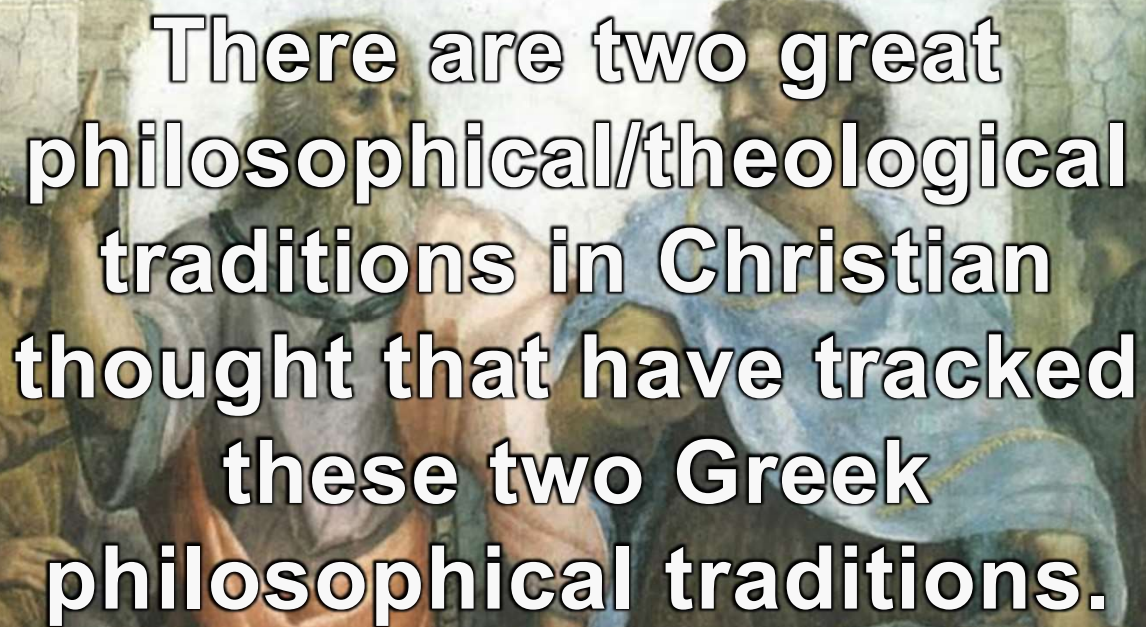
Doug Geivett





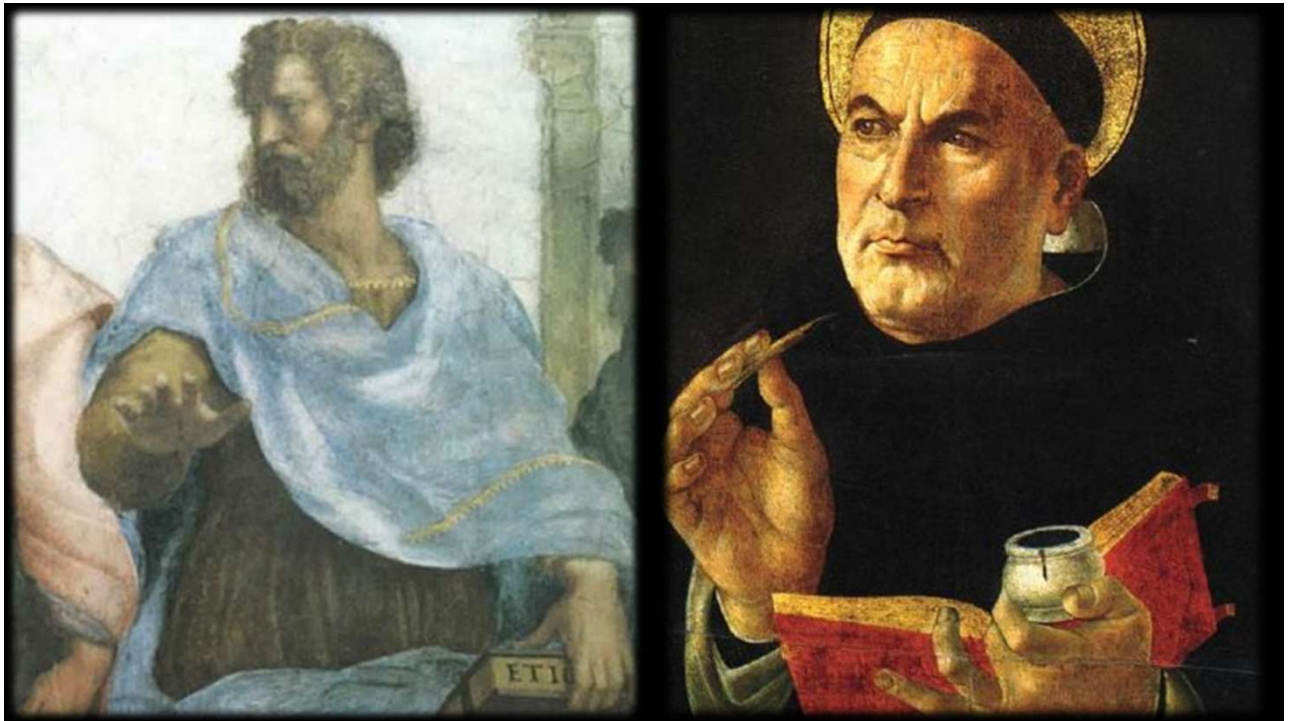
**There are two great  
philosophical traditions  
in Western thought that  
have endured since the  
ancient Greeks.**

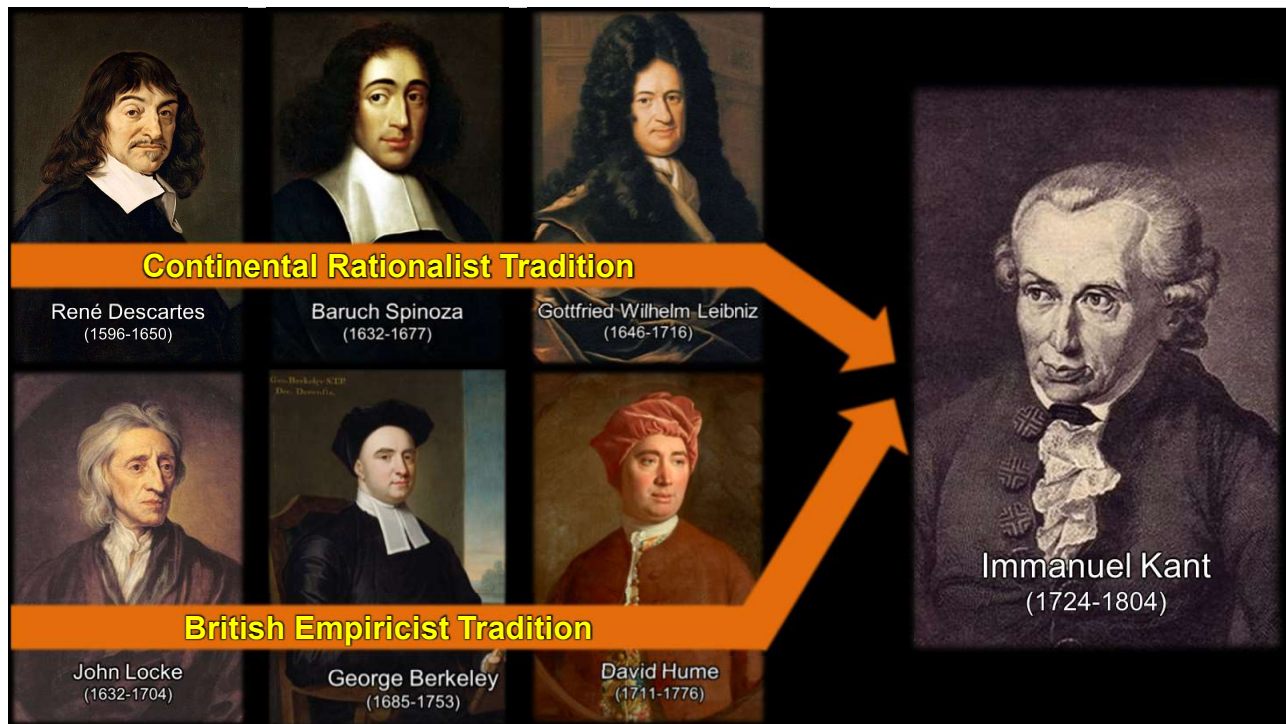


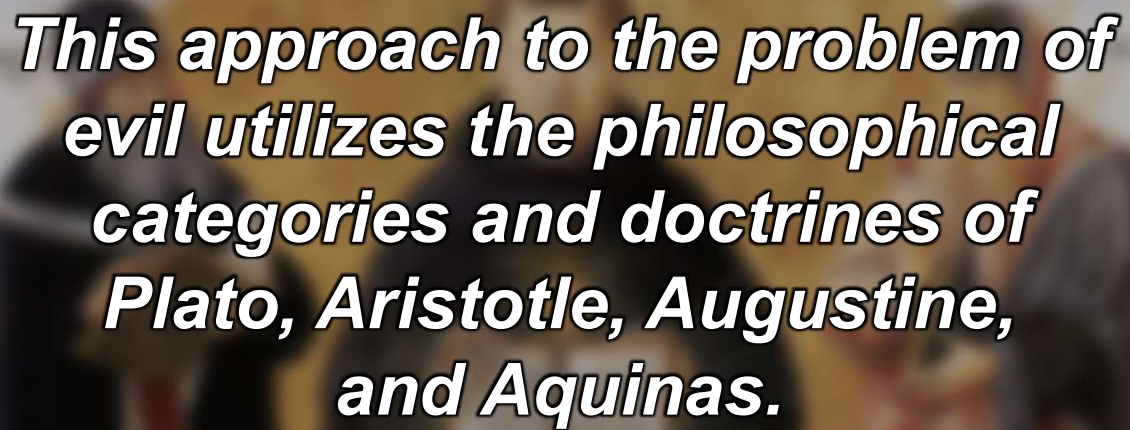


There are two great philosophical/theological traditions in Christian thought that have tracked these two Greek philosophical traditions.

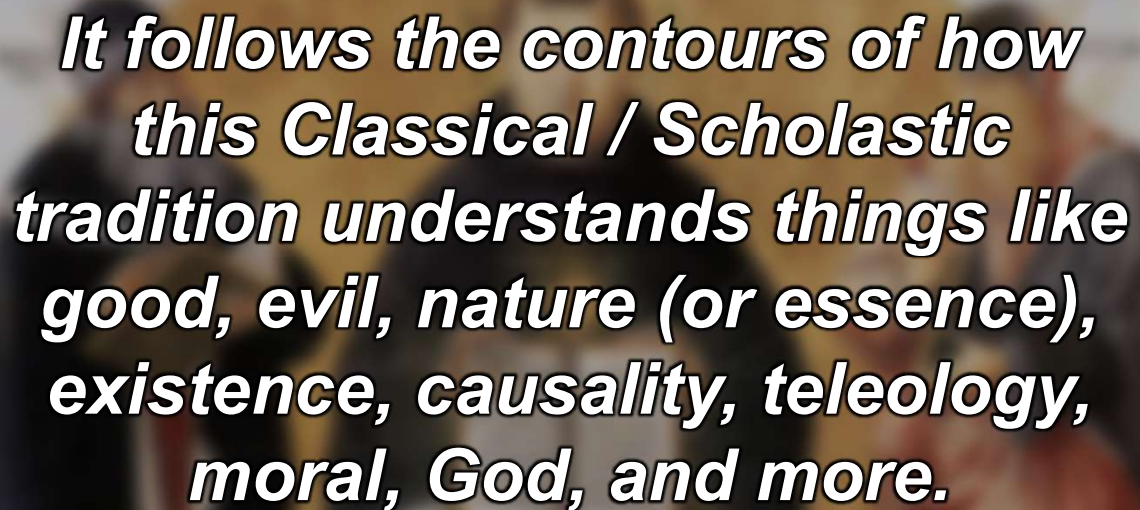








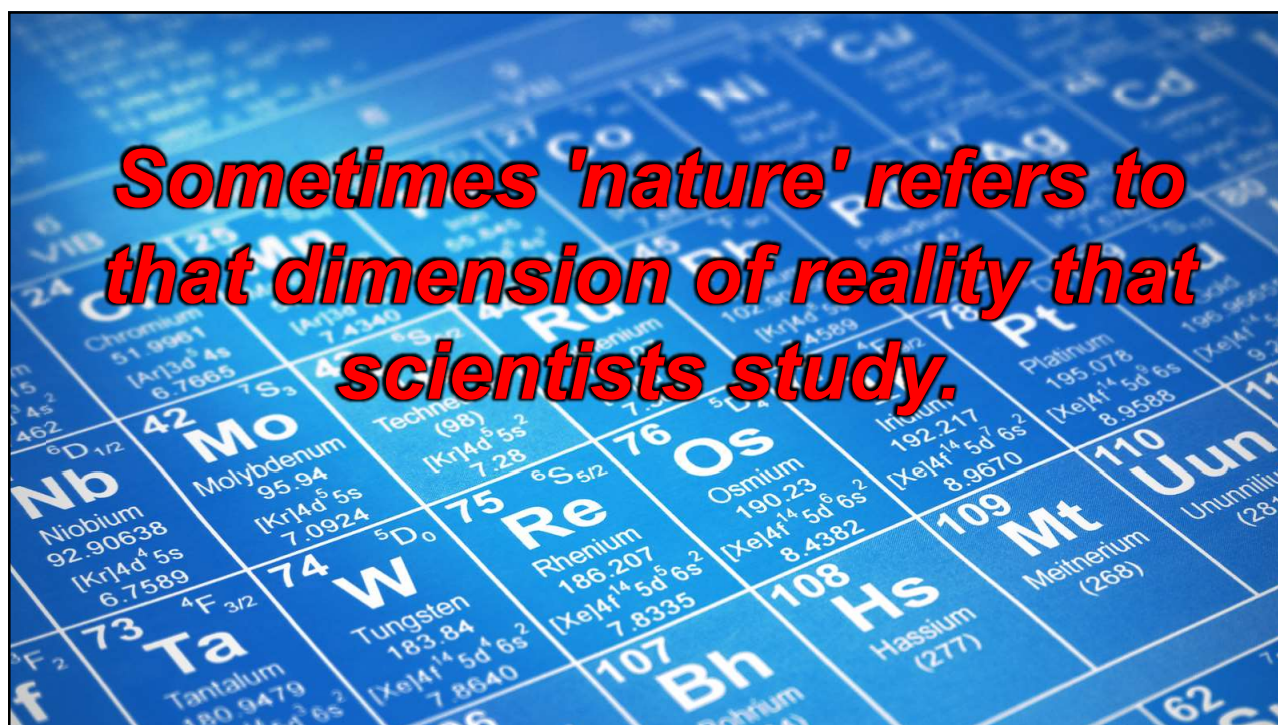
***This approach to the problem of evil utilizes the philosophical categories and doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas.***



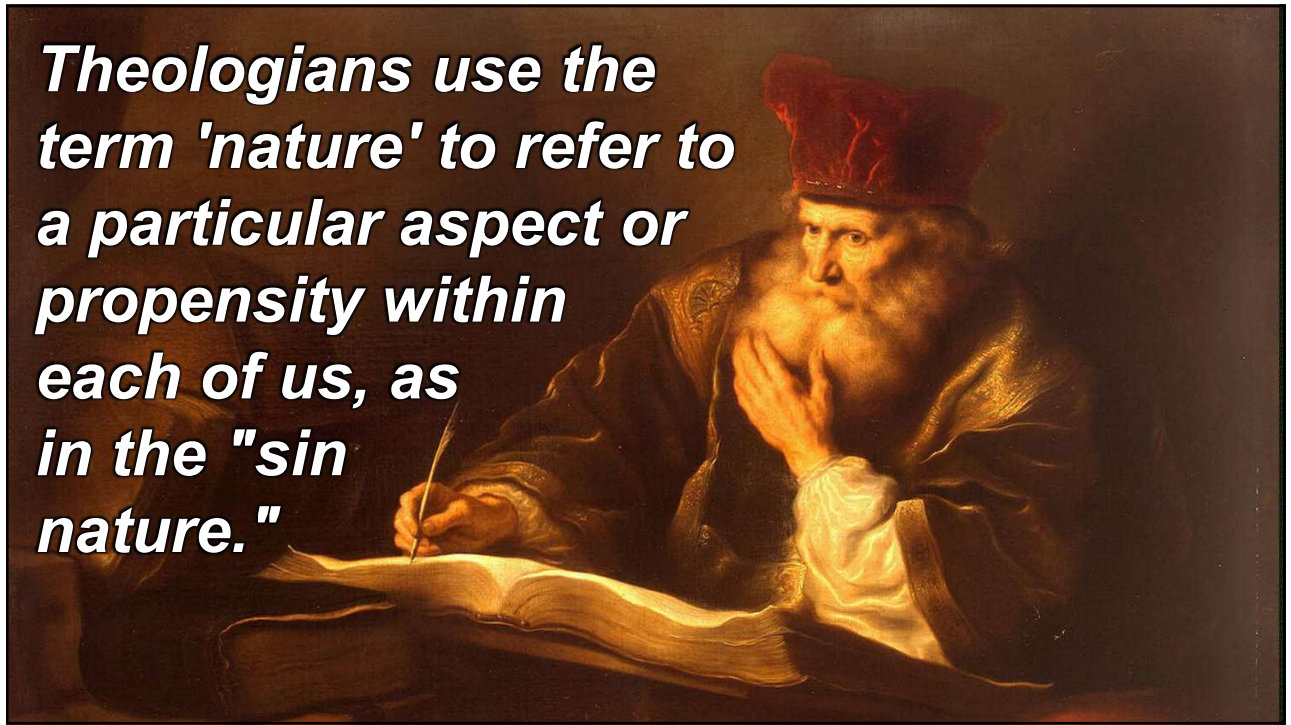
***It follows the contours of how this Classical / Scholastic tradition understands things like good, evil, nature (or essence), existence, causality, teleology, moral, God, and more.***



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

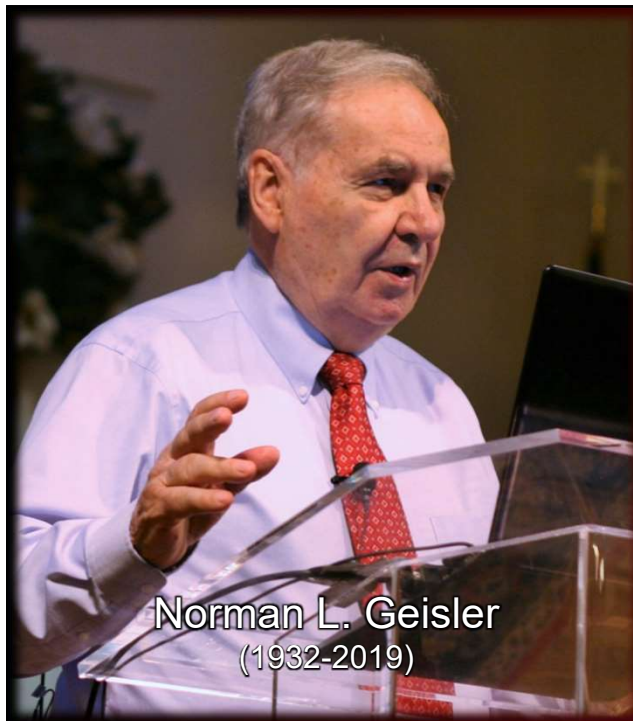


***Theologians use the term 'nature' to refer to a particular aspect or propensity within each of us, as in the "sin nature."***

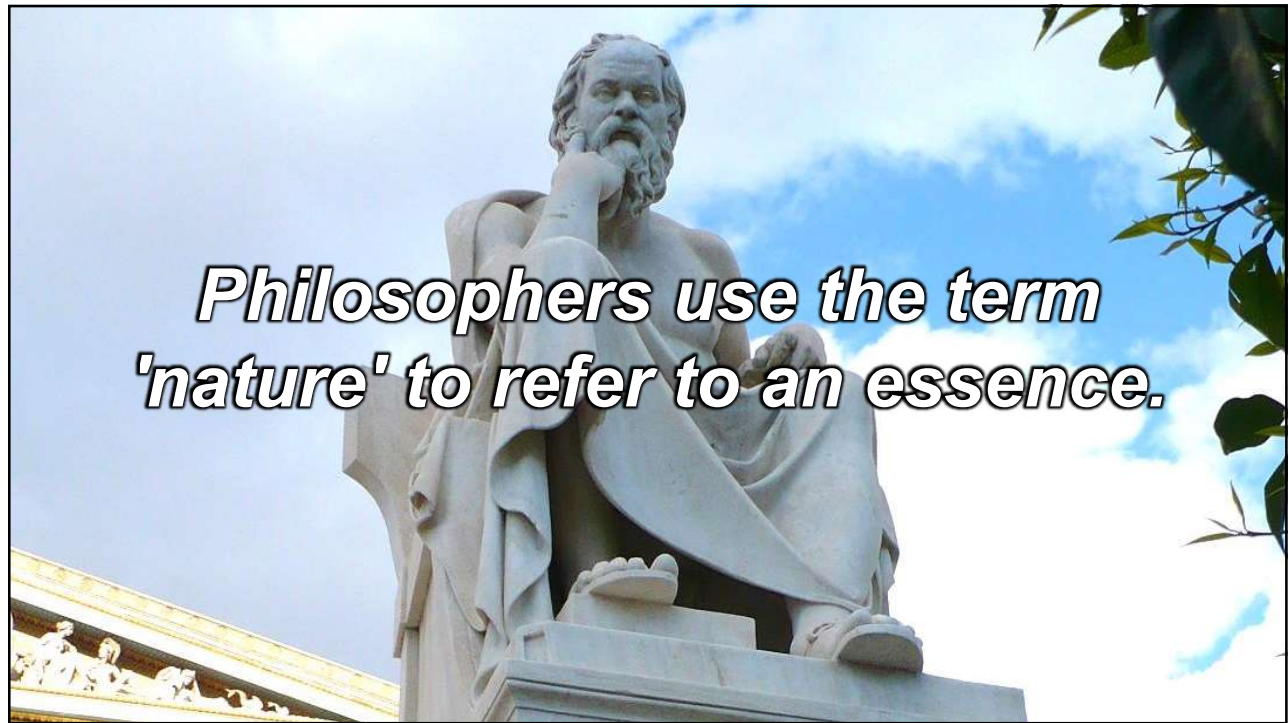


***"Everyone who is naturally generated from Adam—every human—inherits a sinful nature from him. ... Being sinners by nature, short of and without salvation, we inevitably are and do what comes naturally: We sin."***

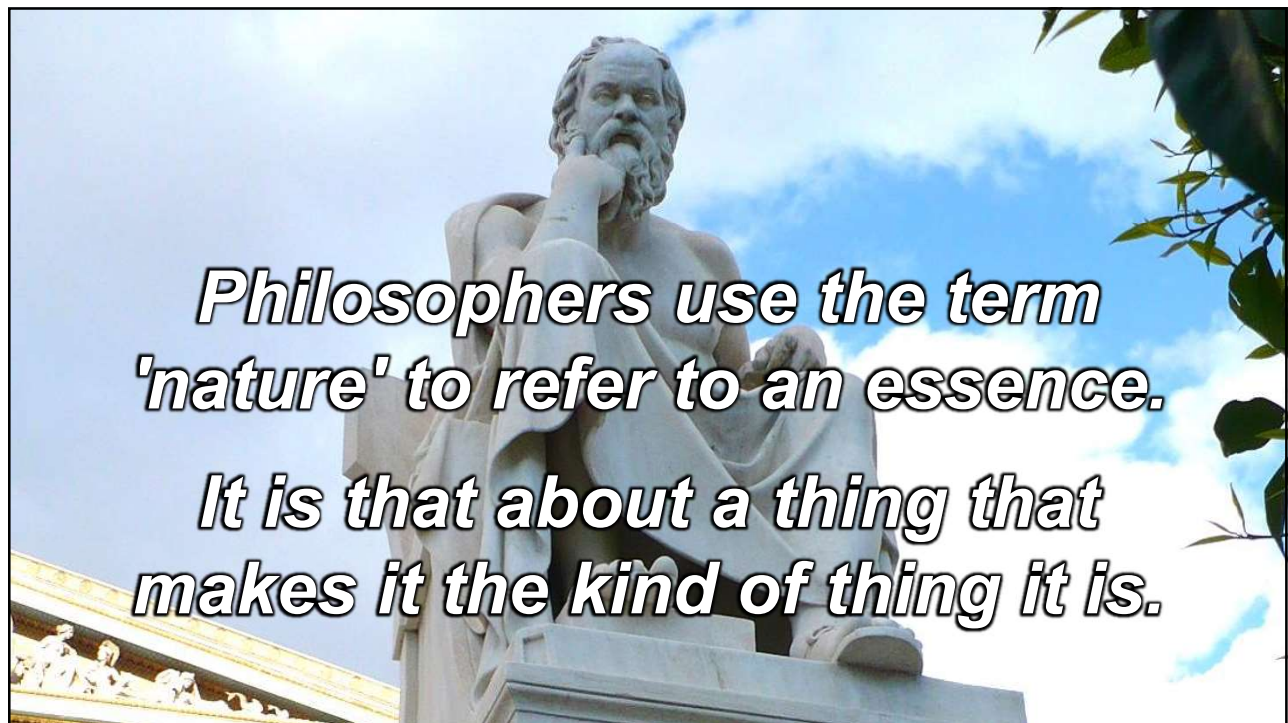
**Norman L. Geisler**  
(1932-2019)



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



*Philosophers use the term  
'nature' to refer to an essence.*

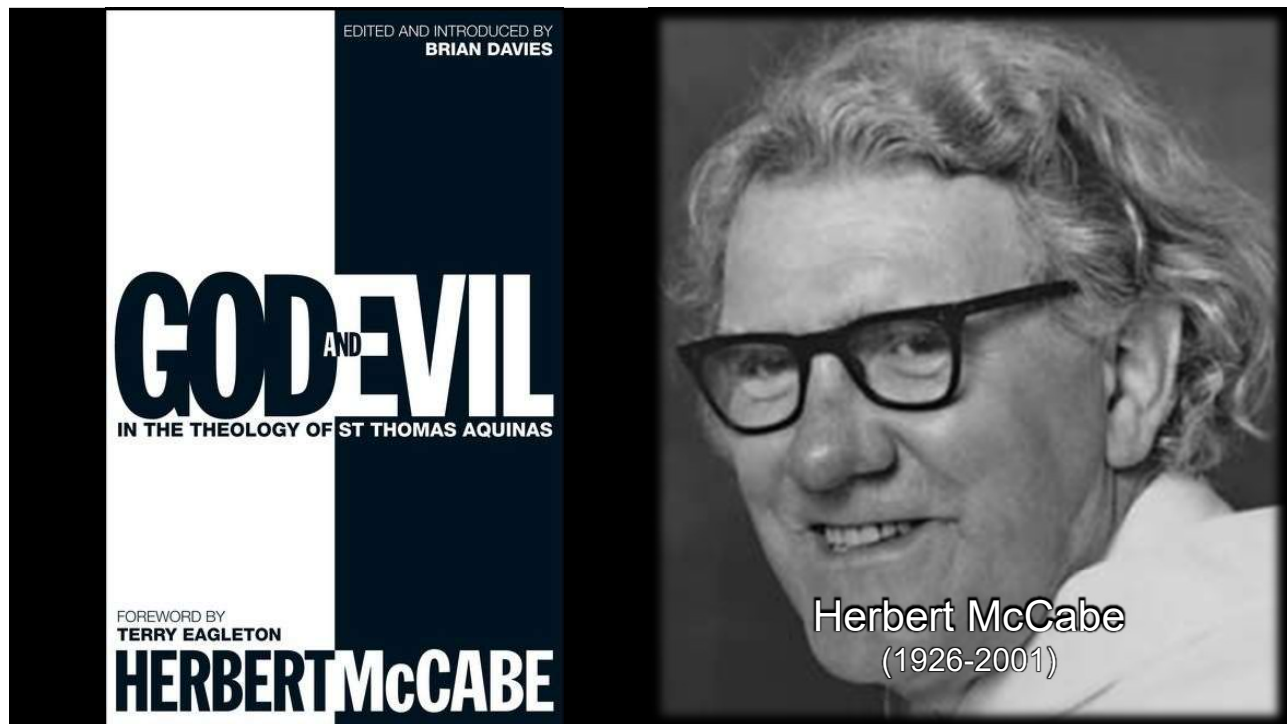


*Philosophers use the term  
'nature' to refer to an essence.*

*It is that about a thing that  
makes it the kind of thing it is.*

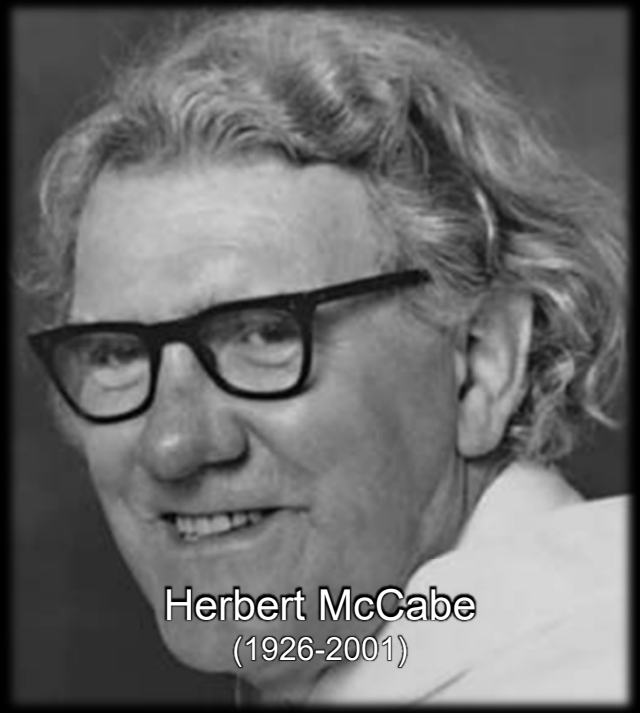






**"A perfect X is  
an X that has  
all its  
properties; an  
imperfect X  
lacks one of  
more of its  
properties."**

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



Herbert McCabe  
(1926-2001)





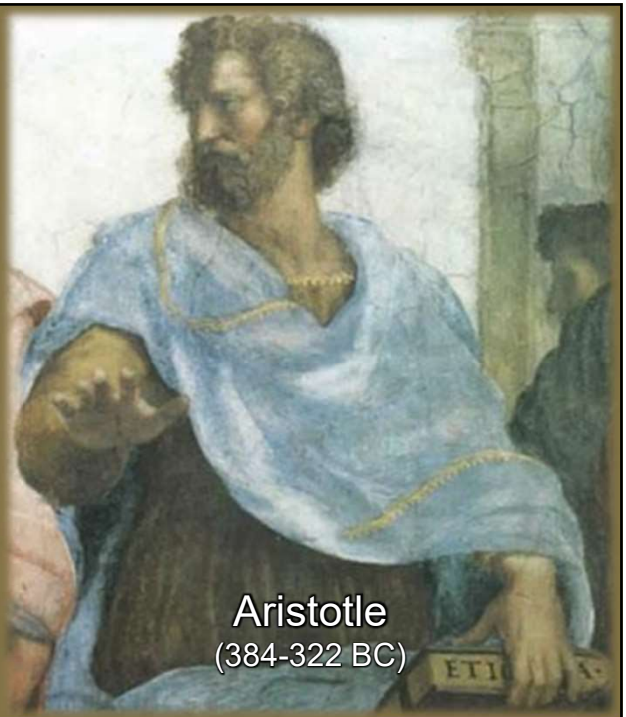
☞ Genus ☞

☞ Specific difference ☞

☞ Species ☞

☞ Proper accident ☞

☞ Accident ☞



Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

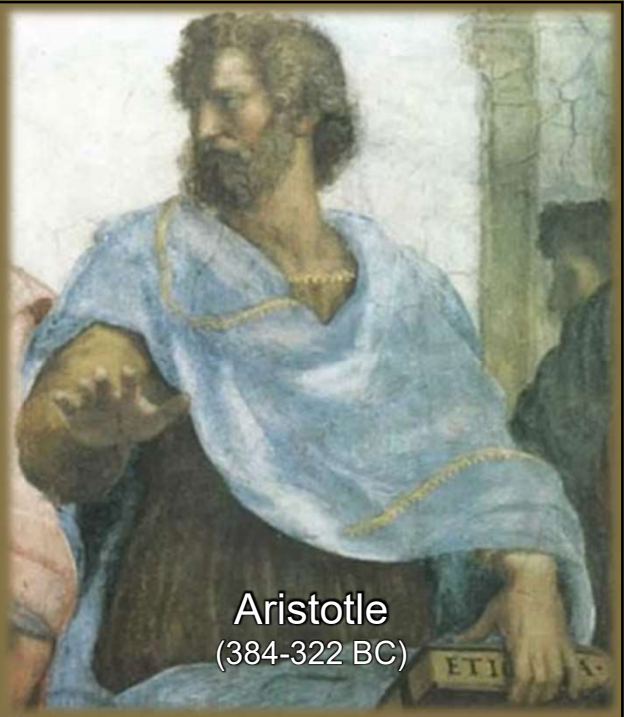
☞ Genus ☞  
*animal*

☞ Specific difference ☞  
*rationality*

☞ Species ☞  
*human*

☞ Proper accident ☞  
*five fingers*

☞ Accident ☞  
*black hair*



Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

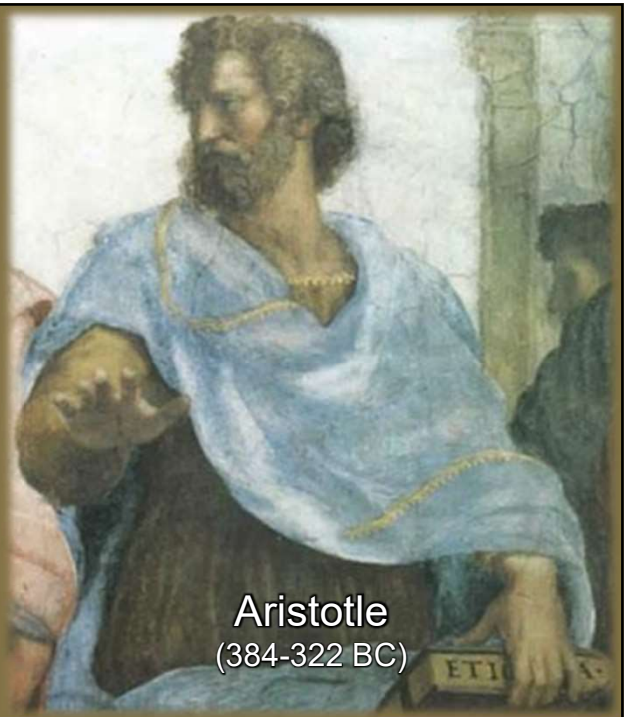
☞ Genus ☞

☞ Specific difference ☞

☞ Species ☞

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☞ Accident ☞



Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

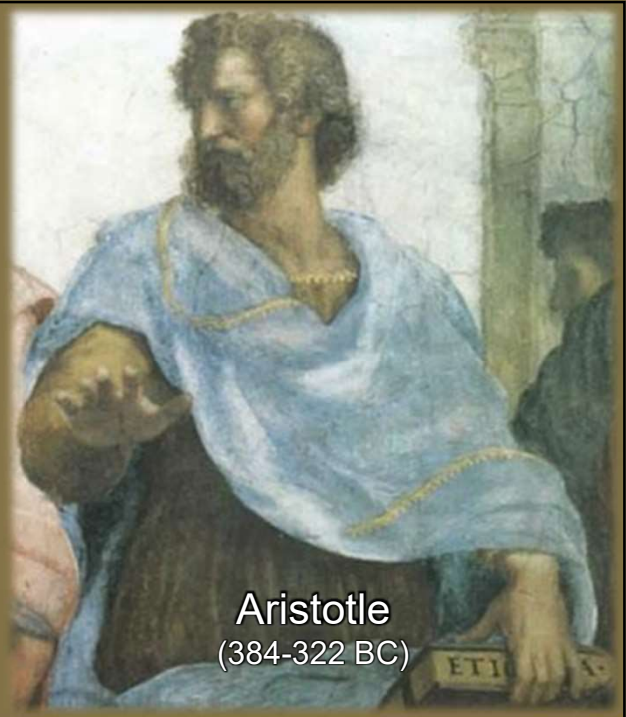
☞ Genus ☞

☞ Specific difference ☞

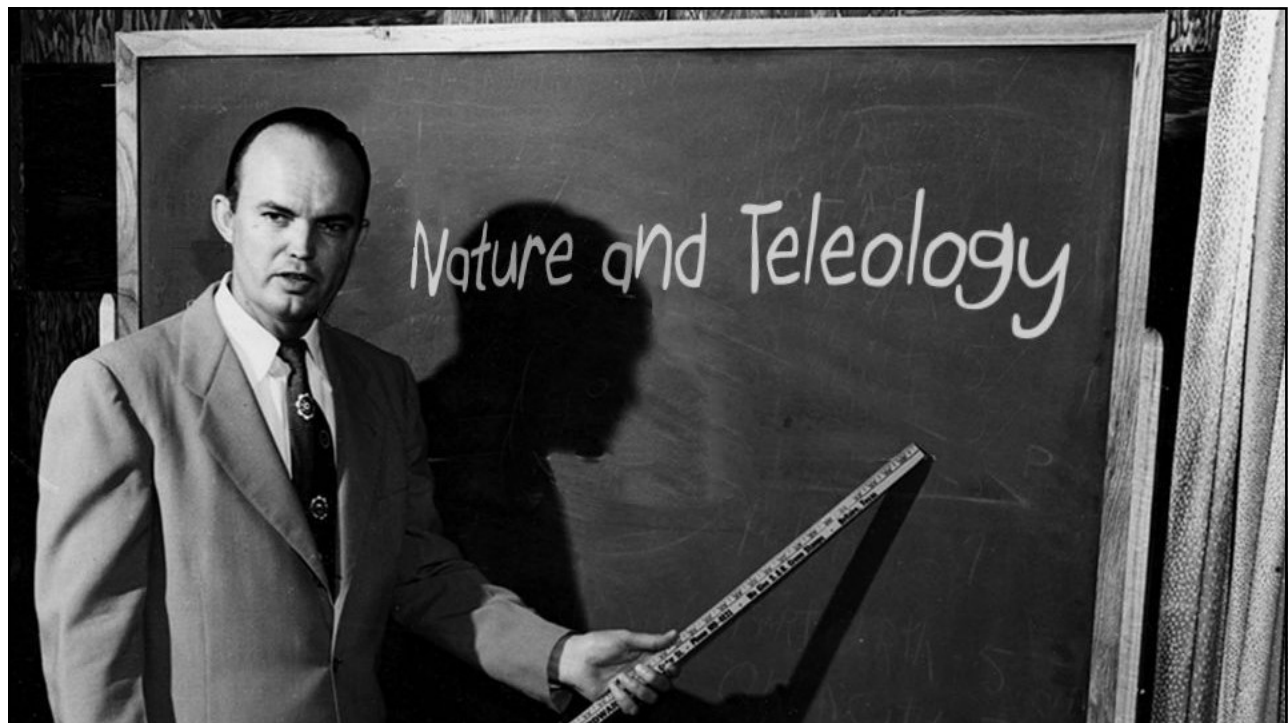
☞ **PROPERTIES** ☞

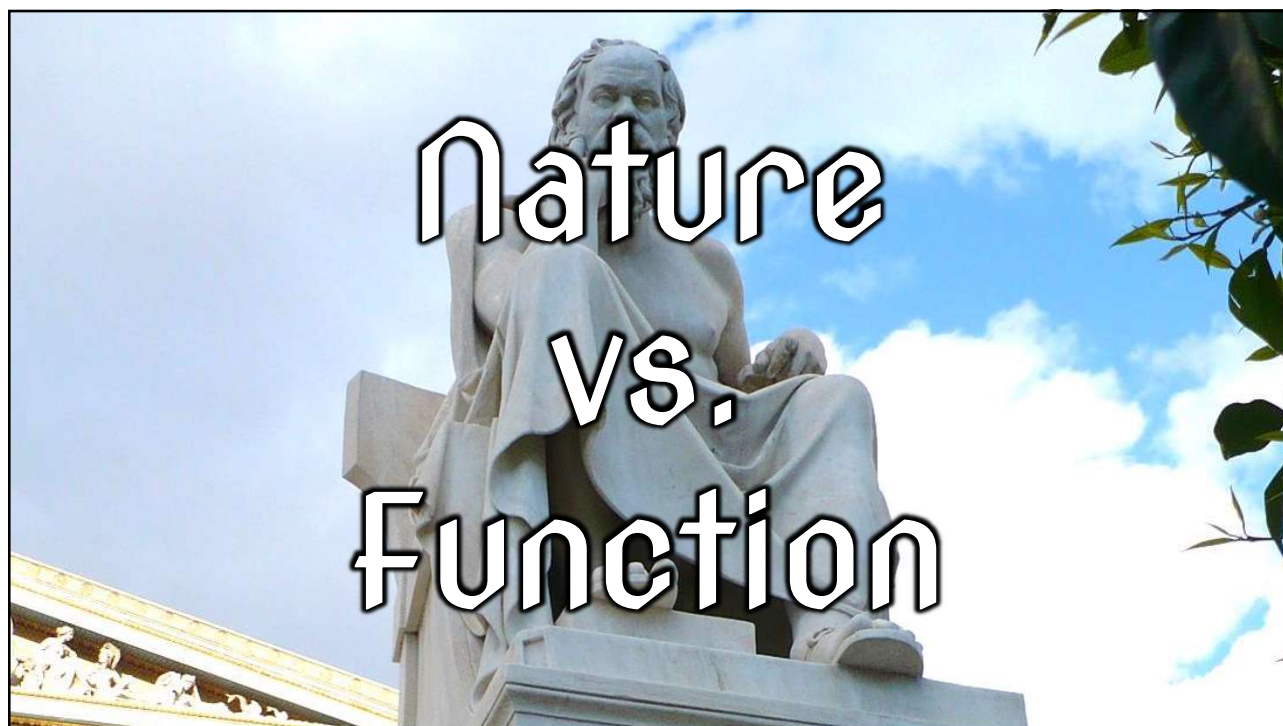
☞ Proper accident ☞

☞ Accident ☞

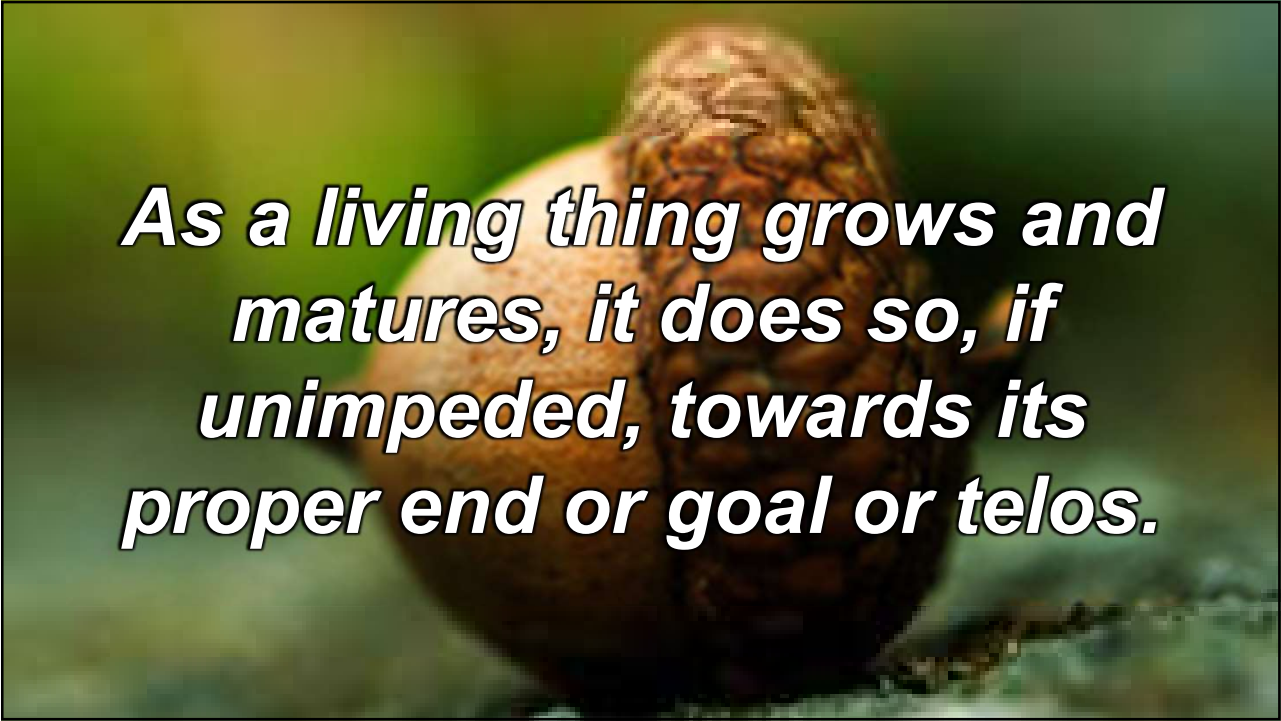


Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)









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

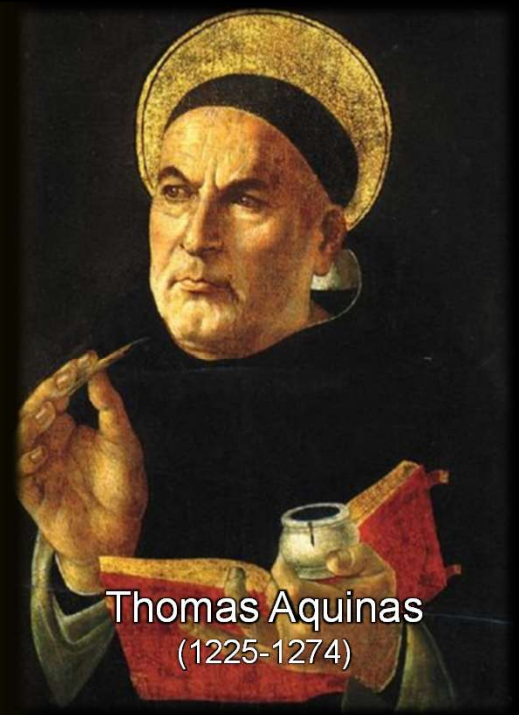




*What a thing's end or goal or telos is, is determined by its nature.*

*A thing's nature aims it towards its purpose or telos.*

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



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

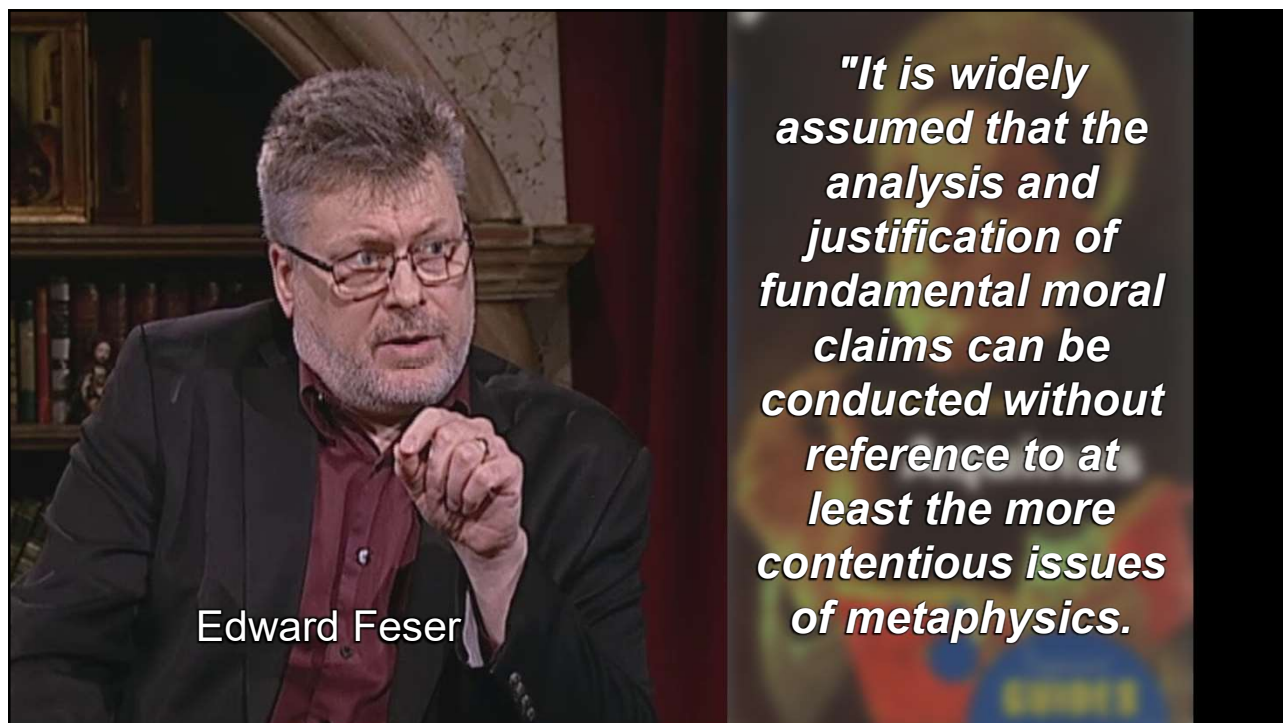


Edward Feser

Edward Feser

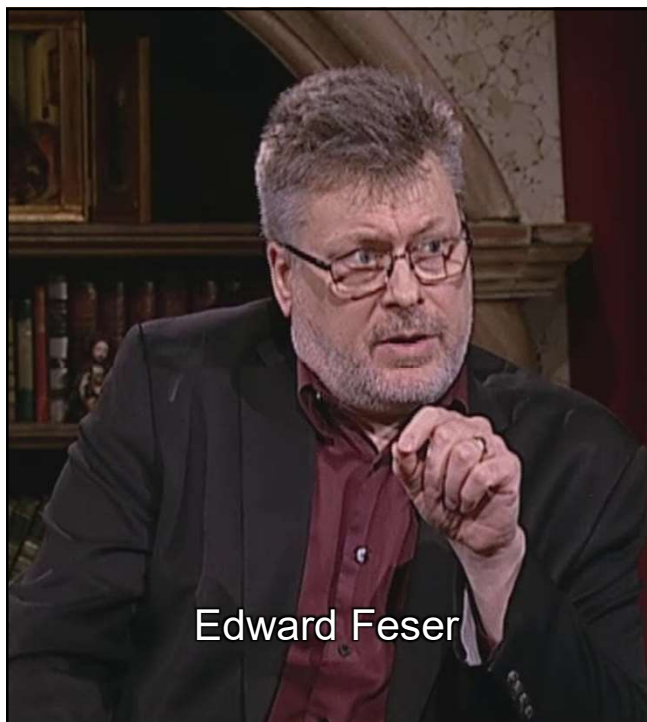
## Aquinas

Beginners  
GUIDES



Edward Feser

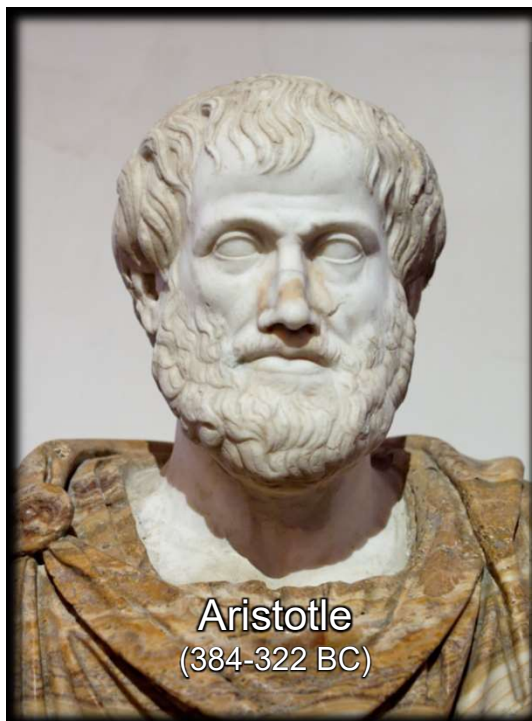
*"It is widely assumed that the analysis and justification of fundamental moral claims can be conducted without reference to at least the more contentious issues of metaphysics."*

A photograph of Edward Feser, a man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark jacket over a red shirt. He is sitting in front of a bookshelf and has his hand near his chin in a thoughtful pose.

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]

A marble bust of Aristotle, showing him with a full beard and curly hair, wearing a draped garment.

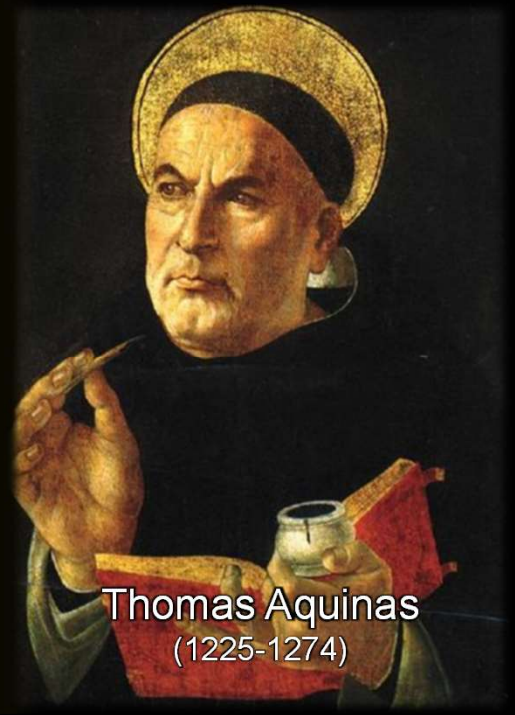
Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

***"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."***

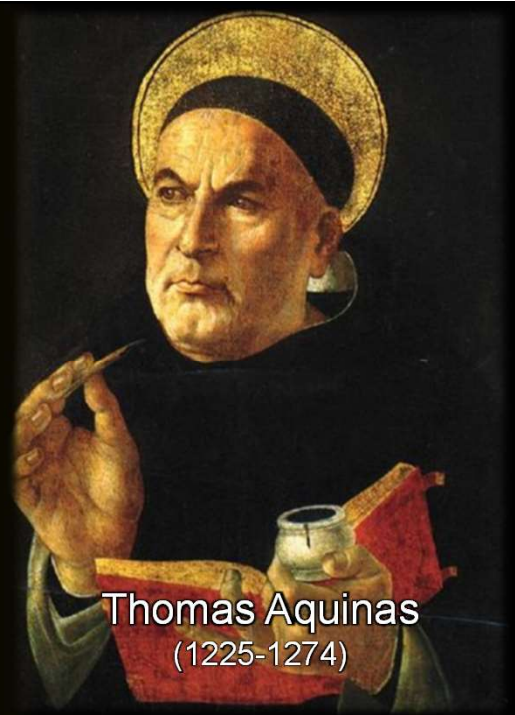
[Summa Theologiae I, Q5, art. 1, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
in St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five  
Volumes (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), 23]



**Thomas Aquinas**  
(1225-1274)

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

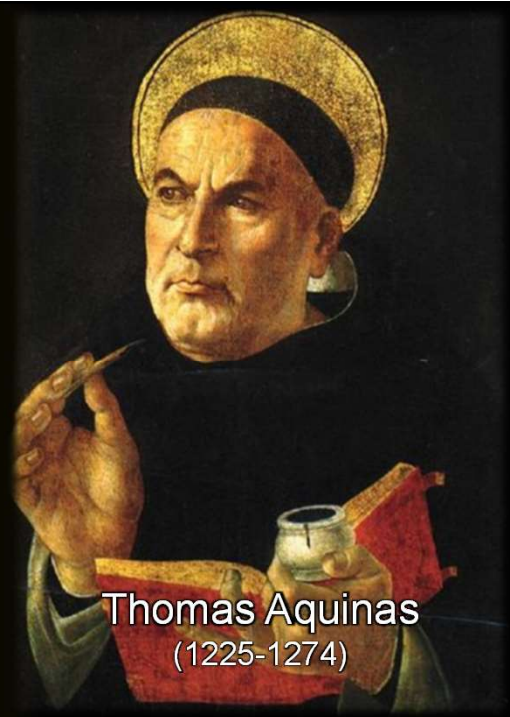
[ST I, Q5, art. 1]



**Thomas Aquinas**  
(1225-1274)



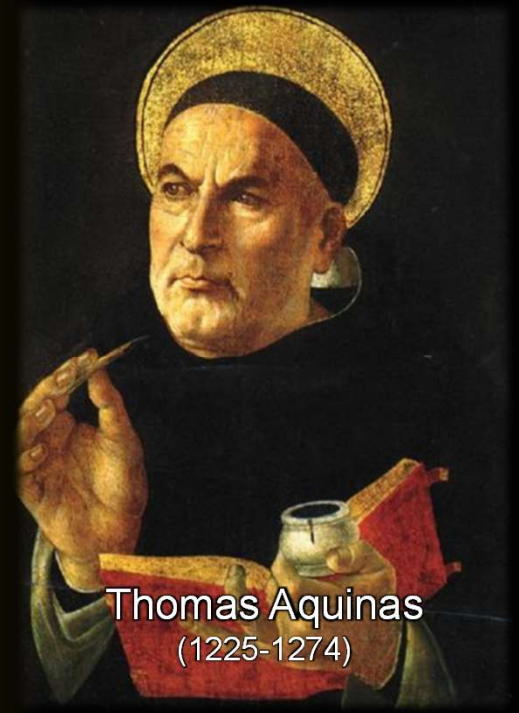
***"Whenever things have  
such a definite nature  
... the operation  
appropriate to a given  
being is a consequent  
of that nature."***



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

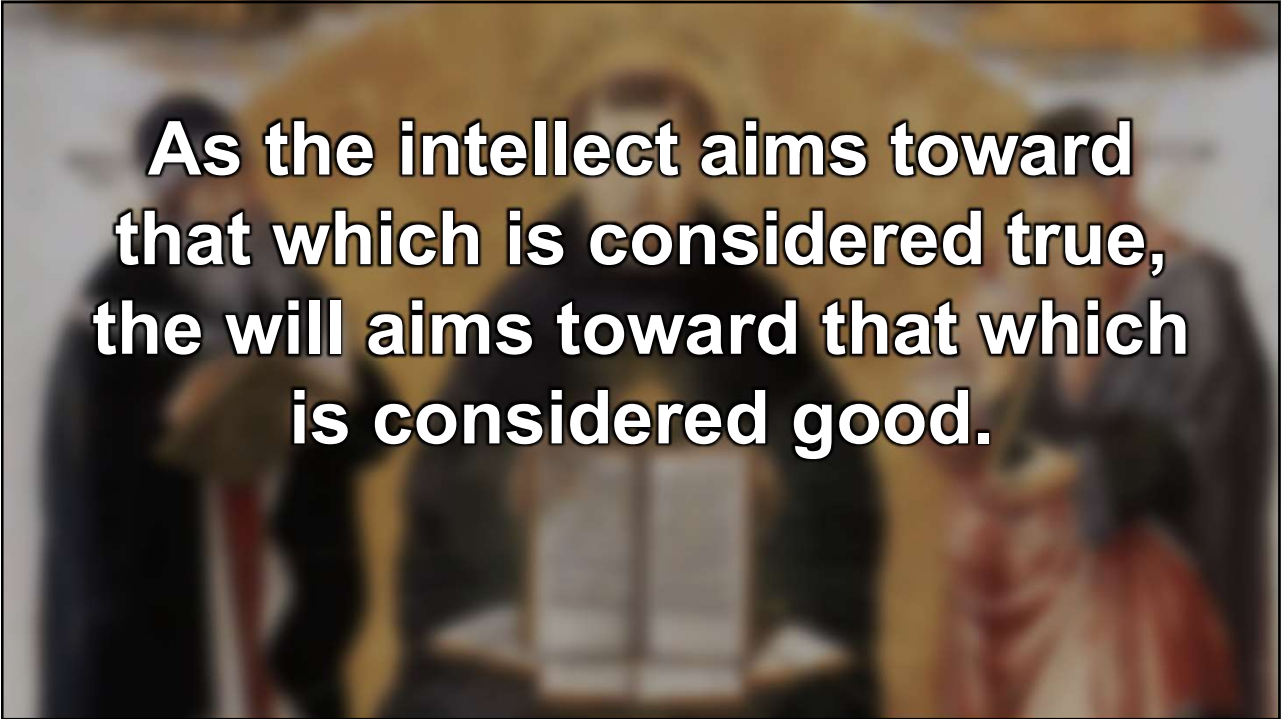
***"Now, it is obvious that there is a determinate kind of nature for man. Therefore, there must be some operations that are in themselves appropriate for man."***

[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)]

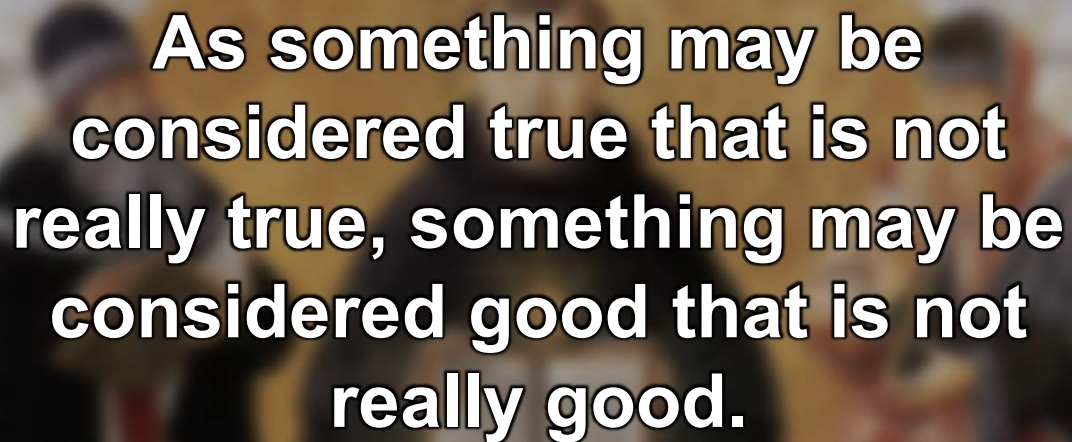


**Thomas Aquinas**  
(1225-1274)

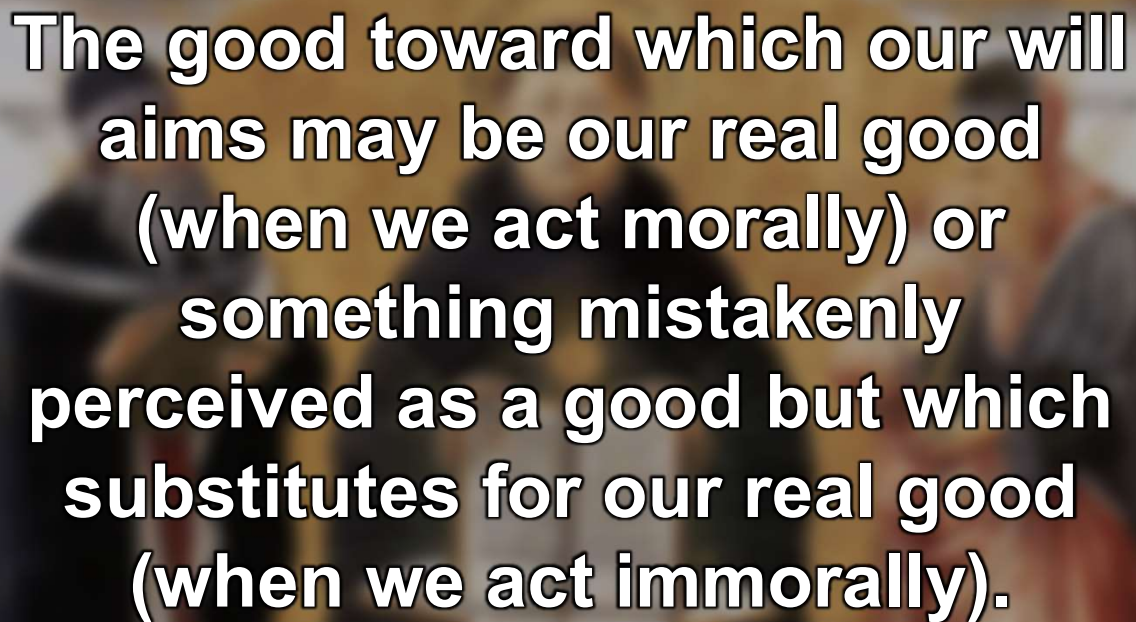
***Human beings are unique among God's creatures on earth in as much as we have rationality and free will.***



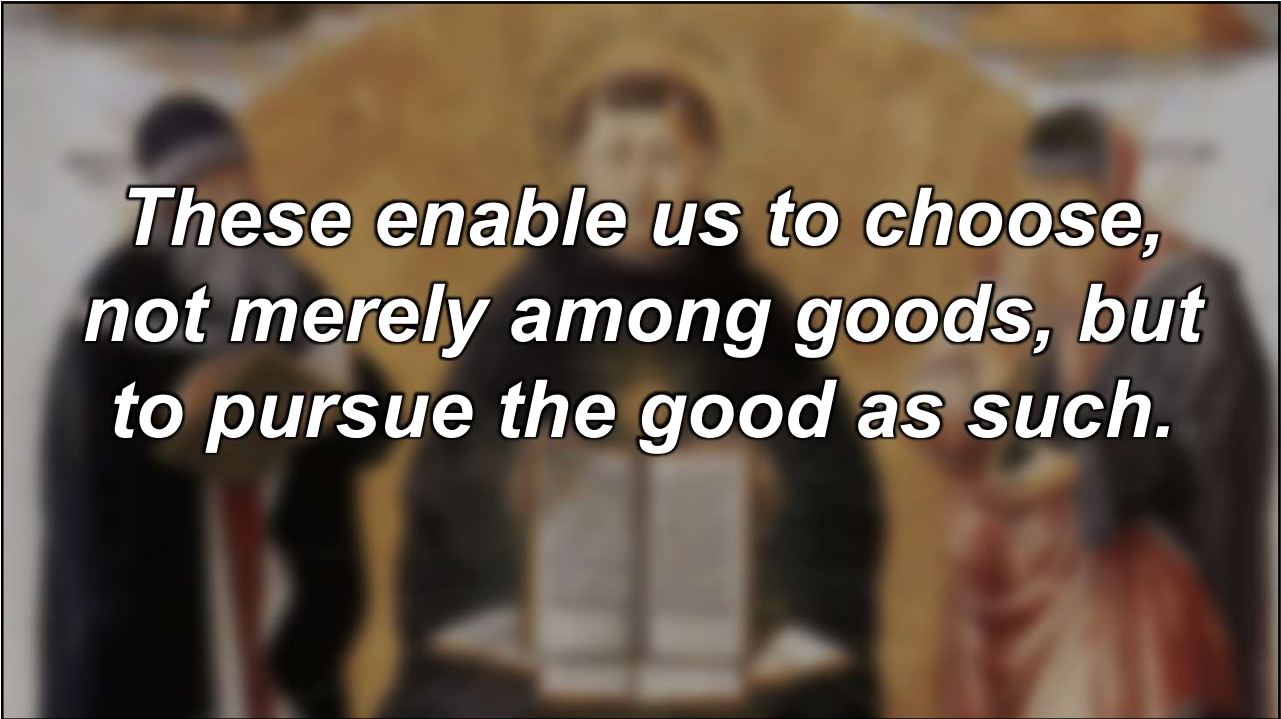
**As the intellect aims toward  
that which is considered true,  
the will aims toward that which  
is considered good.**



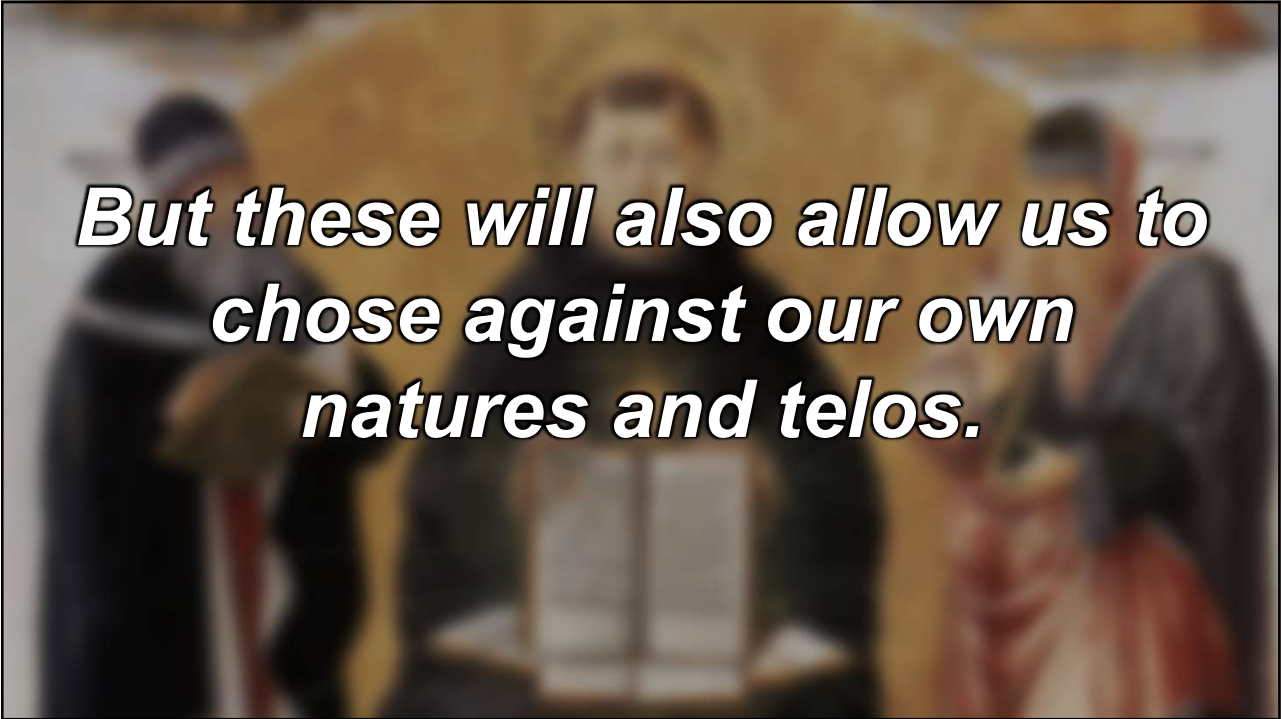
**As something may be  
considered true that is not  
really true, something may be  
considered good that is not  
really good.**



**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).**

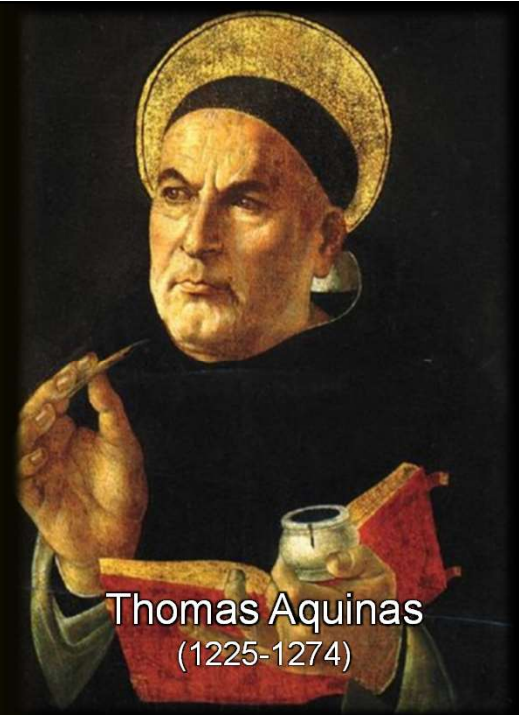


***These enable us to choose,  
not merely among goods, but  
to pursue the good as such.***

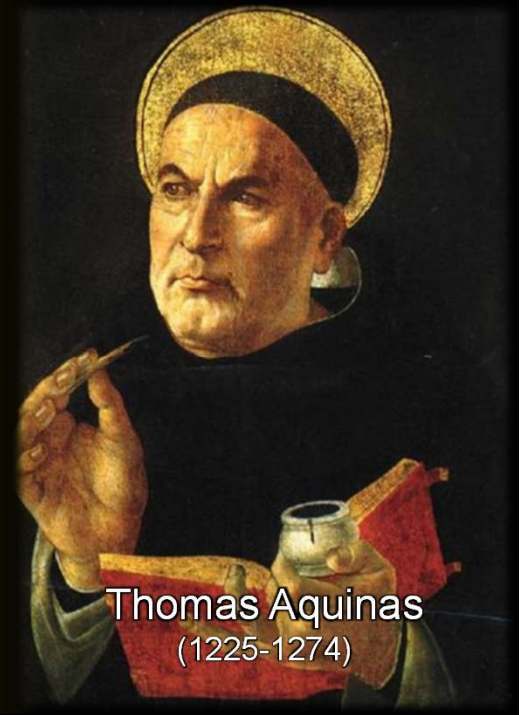


***But these will also allow us to  
chose against our own  
natures and telos.***

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



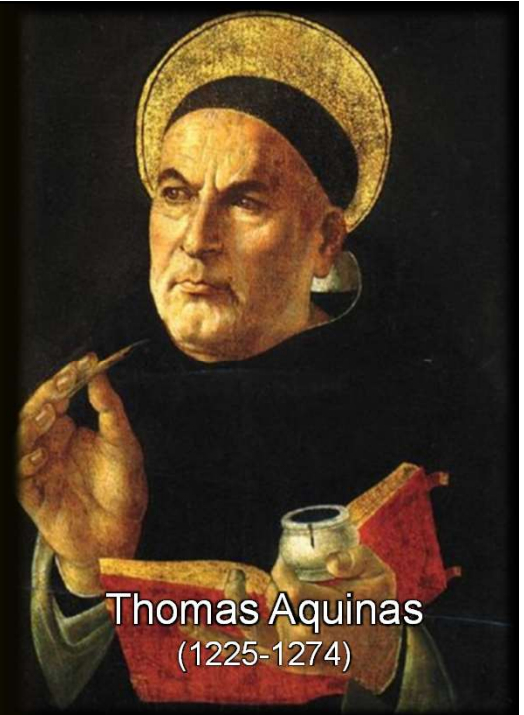
***"Moral fault is found primarily and principally in the act of the will only ... so ... an act is moral because it is voluntary. ..."***



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 ✧

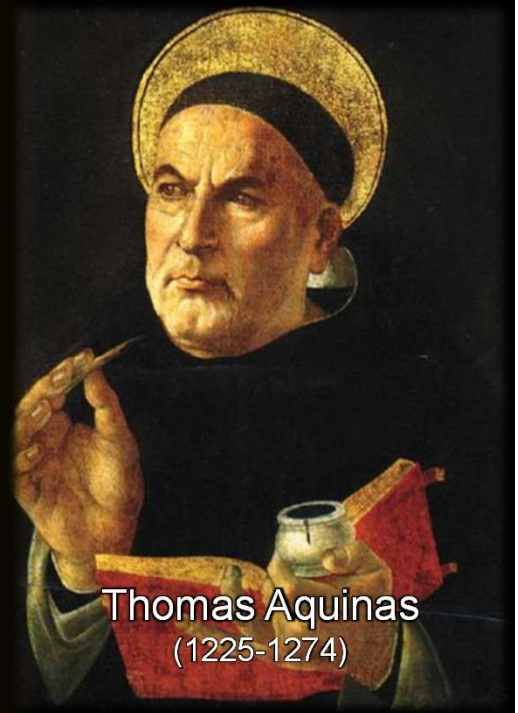
So when the woman saw that the tree was **good** for food, that it was **pleasant** to the eyes, and a tree **desirable** to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.



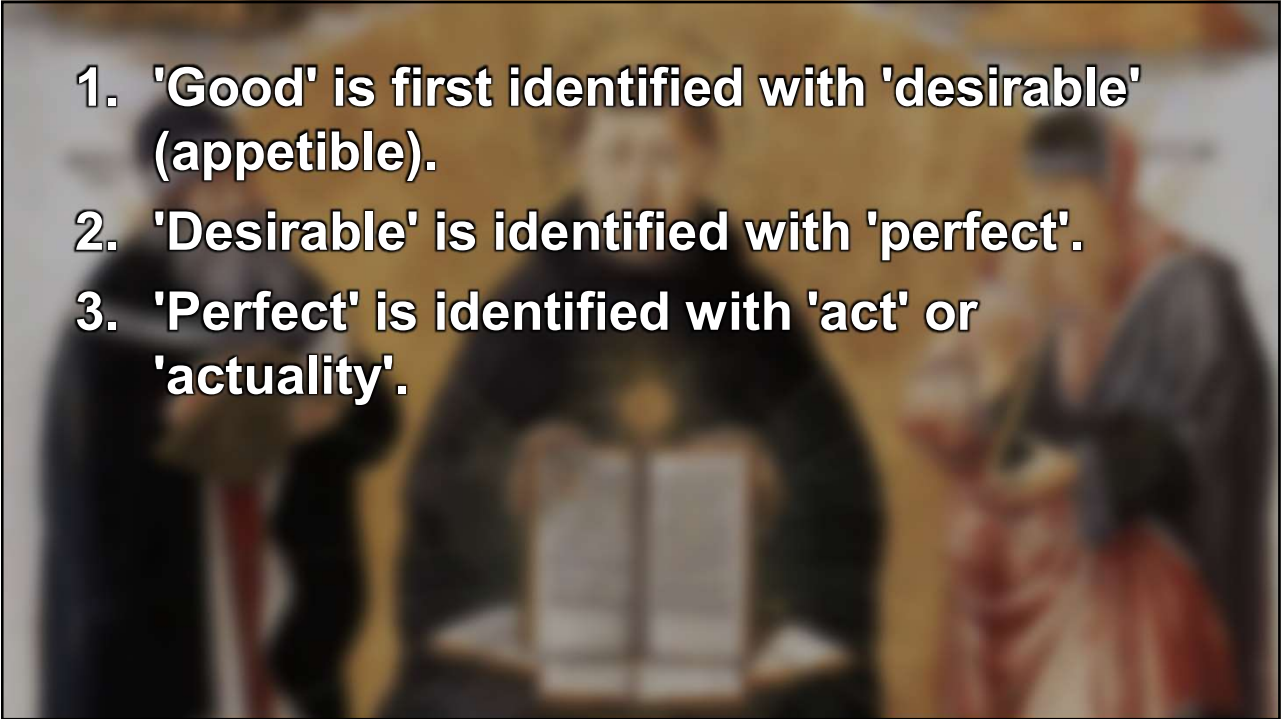
1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.

***"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)

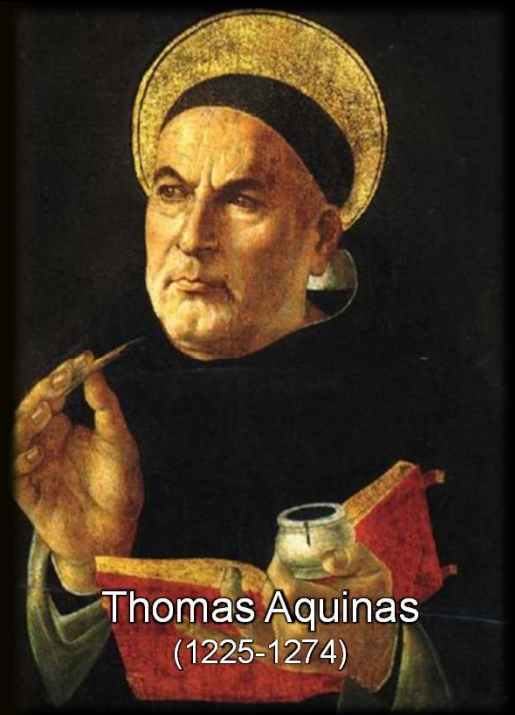


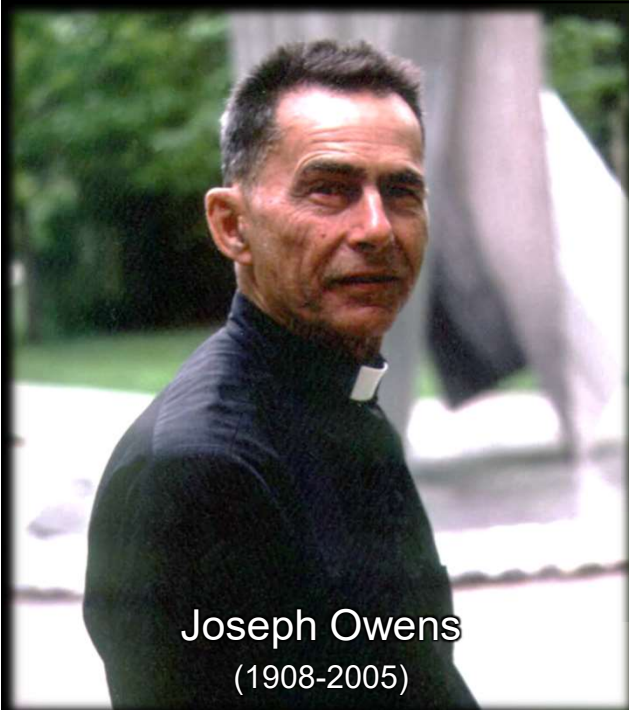
Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

- 
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."***

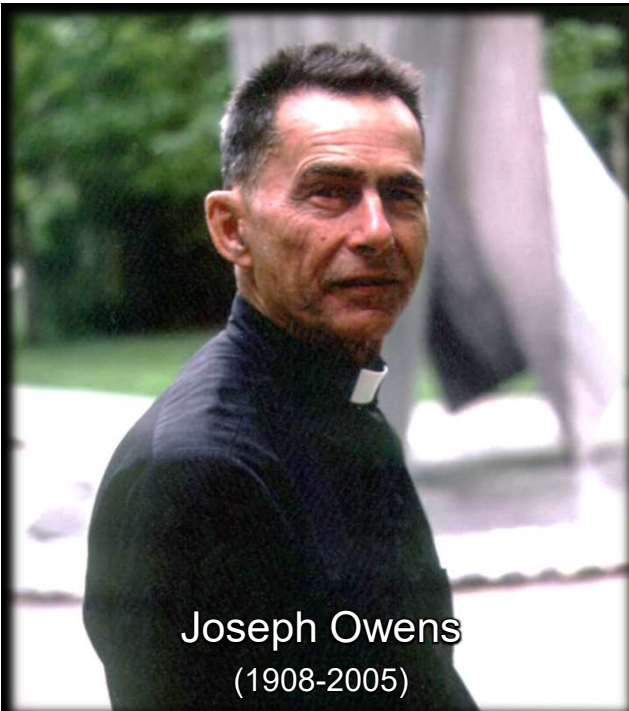
(ST1, Q5, art. 1)



A portrait of Joseph Owens, a man with short dark hair, wearing a black clerical shirt with a white collar. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with greenery and a white structure.

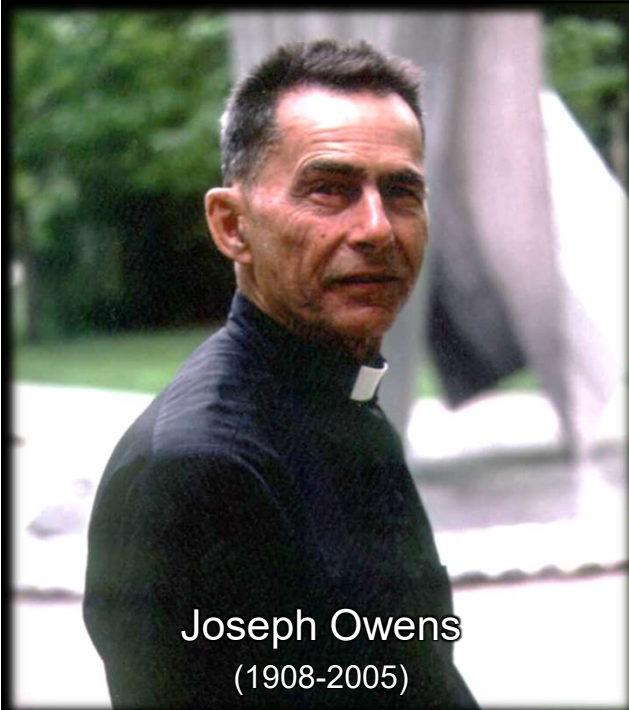
***"An alternate word for actuality in this respect is "perfection" (entelecheia). It was used by Aristotle along with actuality to designate the formal elements in the things.***

Joseph Owens  
(1908-2005)

A portrait of Joseph Owens, a man with short dark hair, wearing a black clerical shirt with a white collar. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with greenery and a white structure.

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

Joseph Owens  
(1908-2005)



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

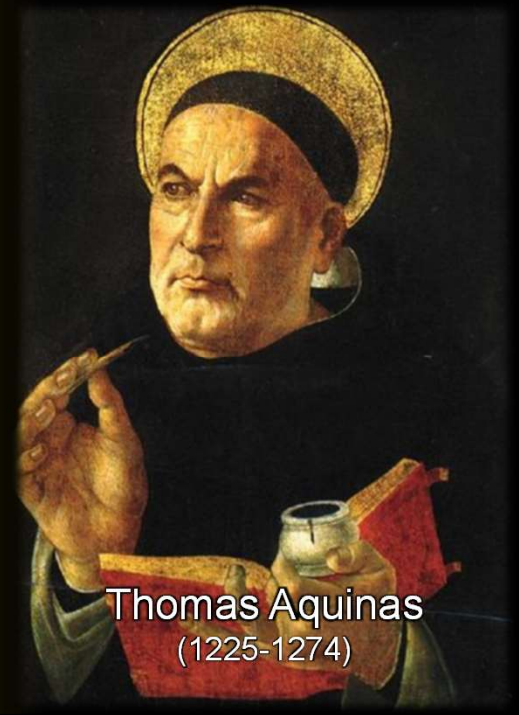
(entelecheia, ἐντελέχεια)

*to have the end or goal in*

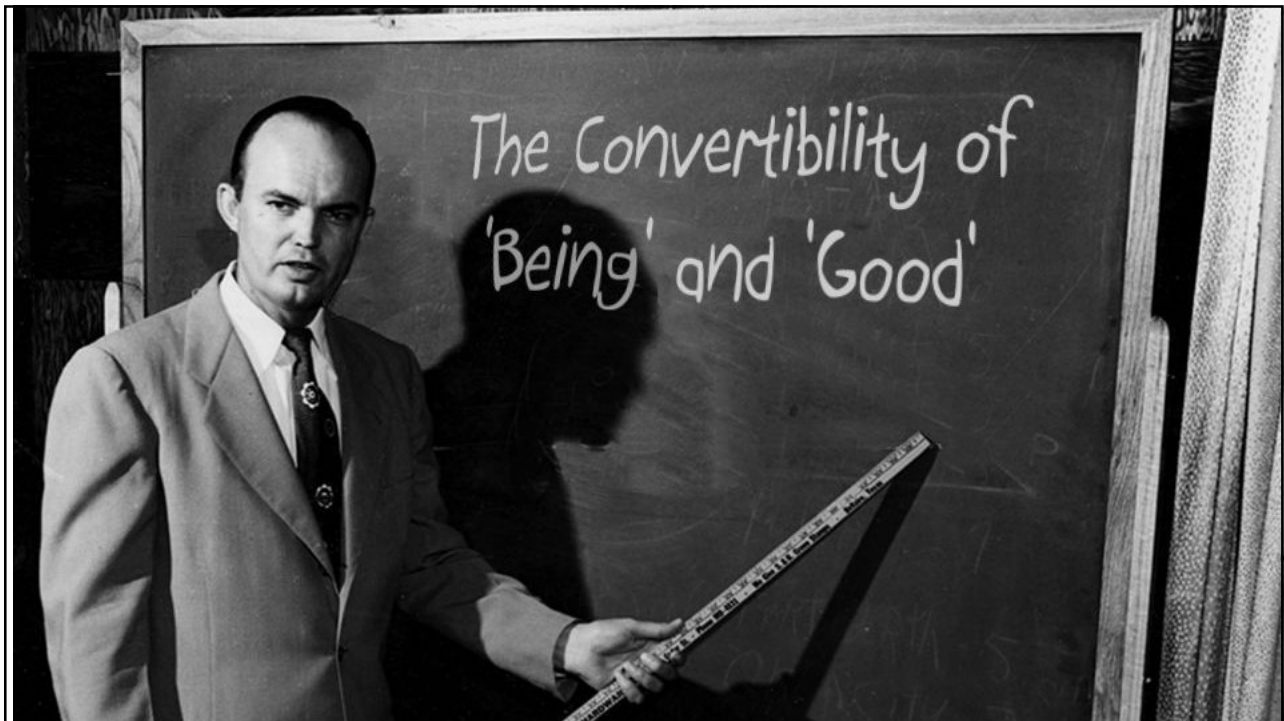
1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.
4. 'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.

*"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*).<sup>1</sup> That is to say, "being" and "good" are interchangeable terms in predication (*converti enim est concernim praedicari*).<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> "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."<sup>4</sup> In other words, "good" is coextensive with "being", it is one of the so-called *transcendentia*<sup>5</sup> which, since Suarez, are usually referred to as "transcendentals".

<sup>1</sup> 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, "Res 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.* 1, 16, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *De Ver.* 1, 2 obj. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *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.

<sup>4</sup> *De Ver.* 1, 1: modus generaliter consequens omne ens.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Albert the Great, *Summa Theologiae* tract. 6, q. 27, c. 2: Bonum dicitur intentionem communem et est de transcendentibus omne genus sicut et ens.



Jan Aertsen  
1938-2016

# BEING &

Some 20<sup>th</sup> Century Thomists

JOHN F. X. KNASAS



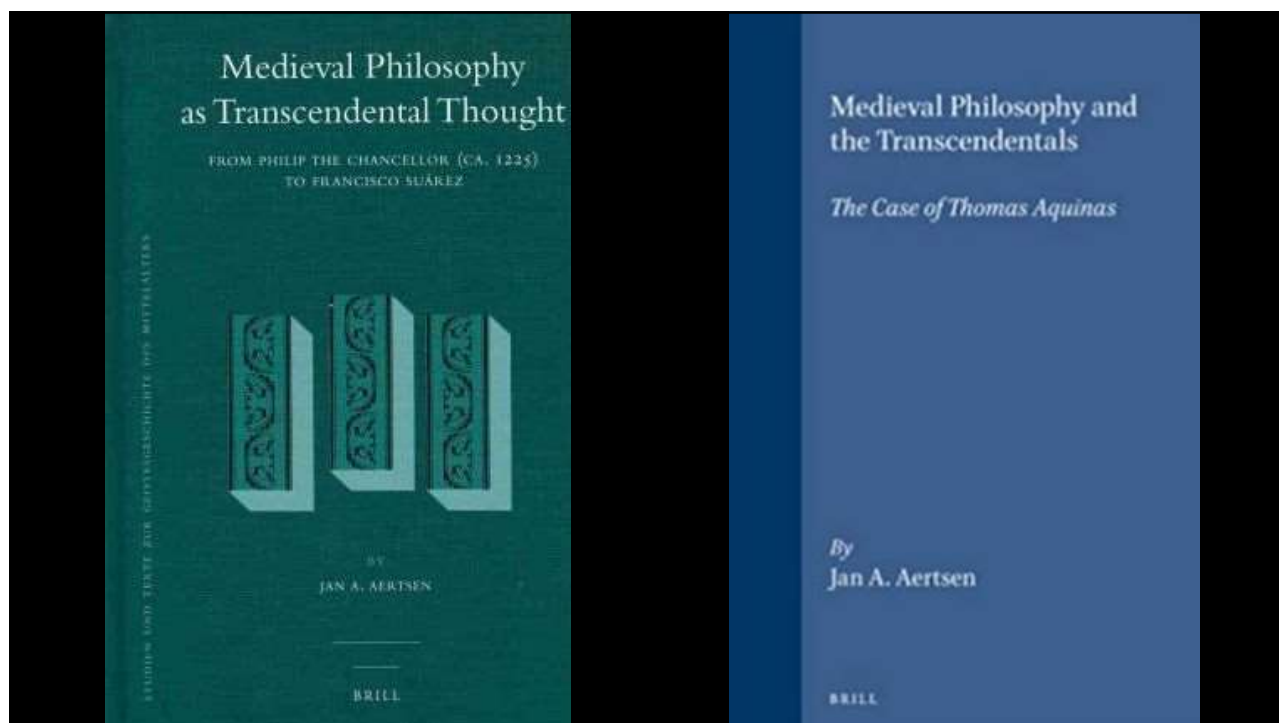
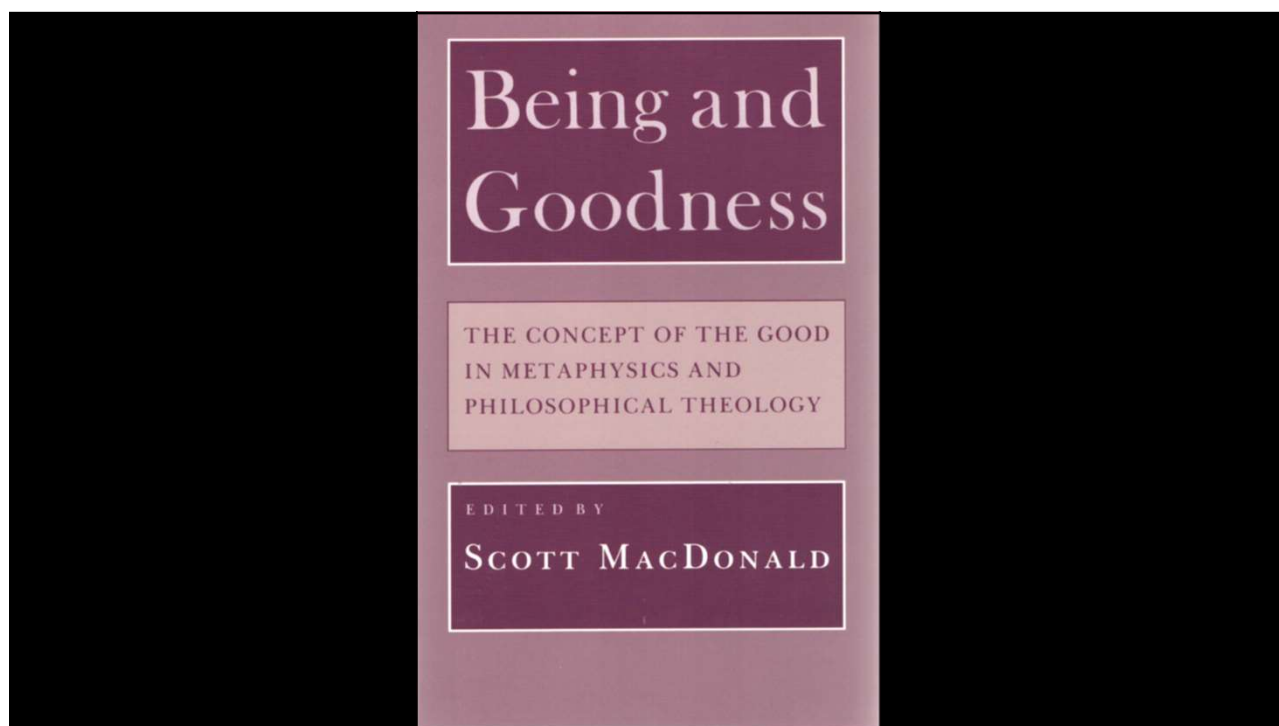
John F. X. Knasas

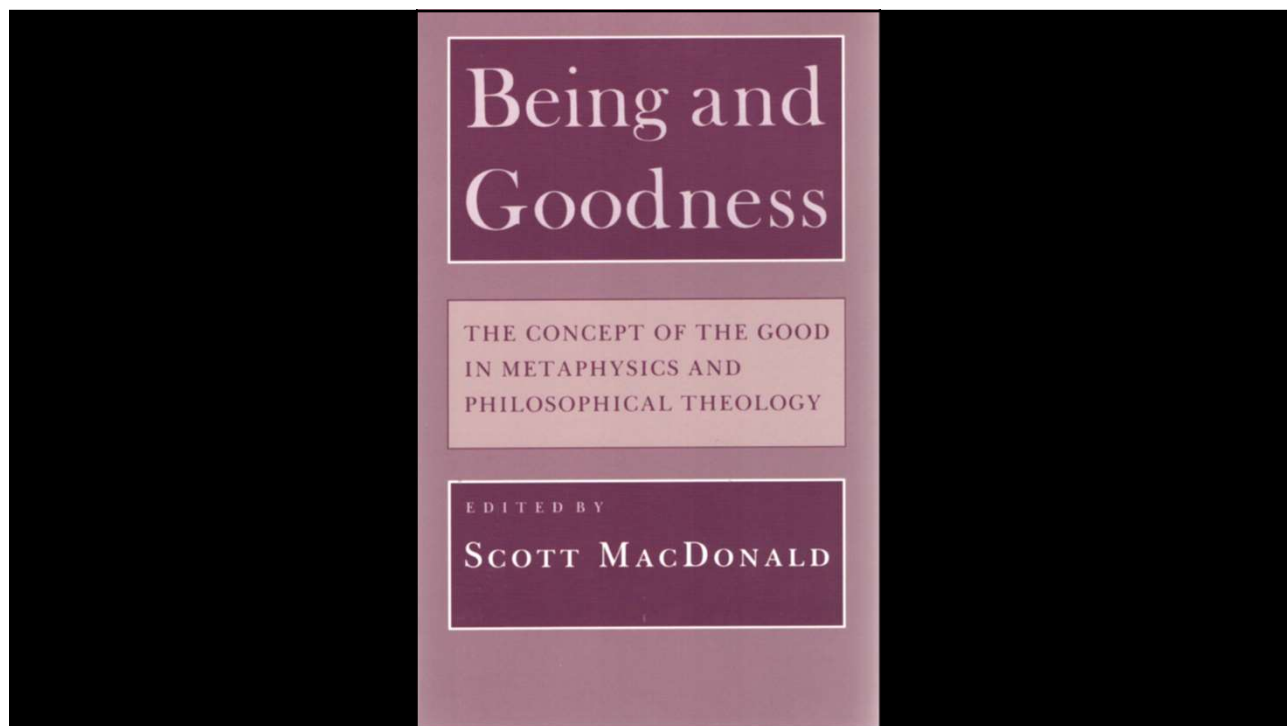
*"To see man as the willer of the ratio boni is to engender a special status among things. ... No other thing in our experience so directly and intimately relates to the ratio boni. Only man has good as the proper object of his appetitive power ... and to understand this fact is for one to realize that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

ST I-II, Q94, art. 2



John F. X. Knasas

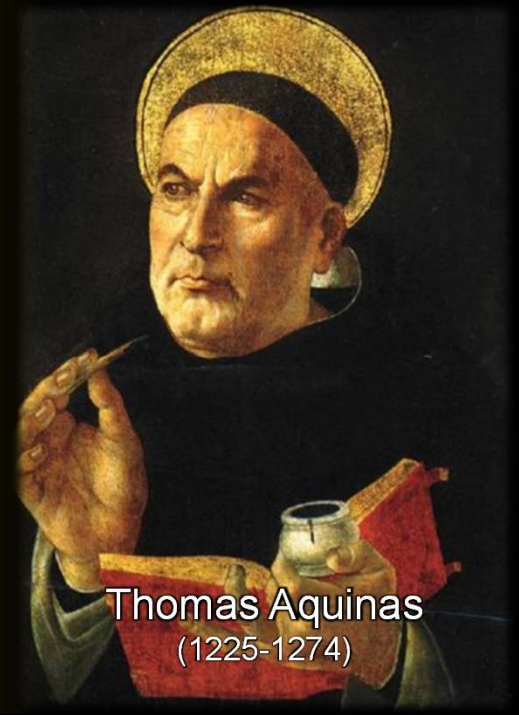




1. 'Good' is first identified with 'desirable' (appetible).
2. 'Desirable' is identified with 'perfect'.
3. 'Perfect' is identified with 'act' or 'actuality'.
4. 'Actuality' is identified with 'being'.
5. God is goodness itself in as much as God is being itself.

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

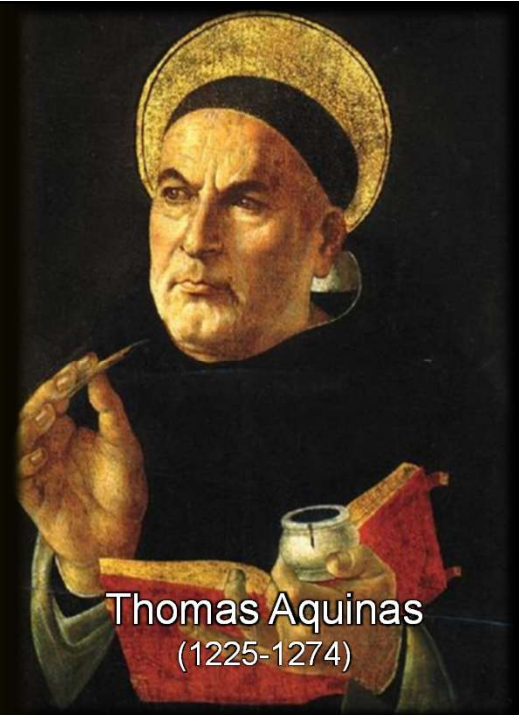
[ST 1, Q 12, art. iv]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

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

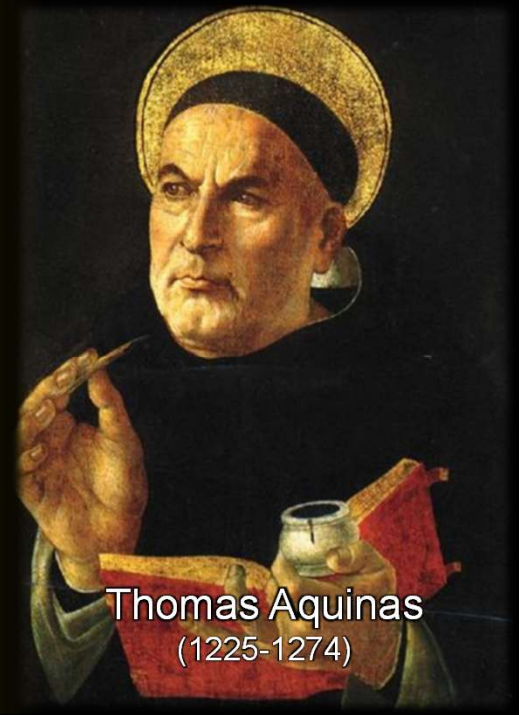
[ST, I, Q3, art. 7.]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

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

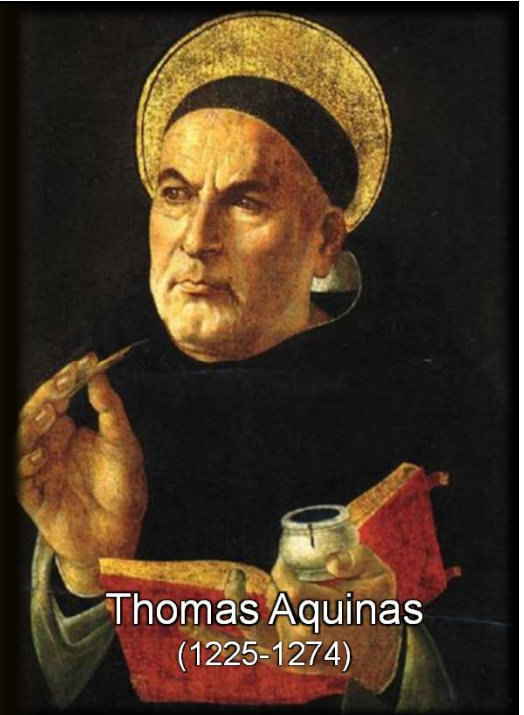
[ST 1, Q 11, art. iv.]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

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

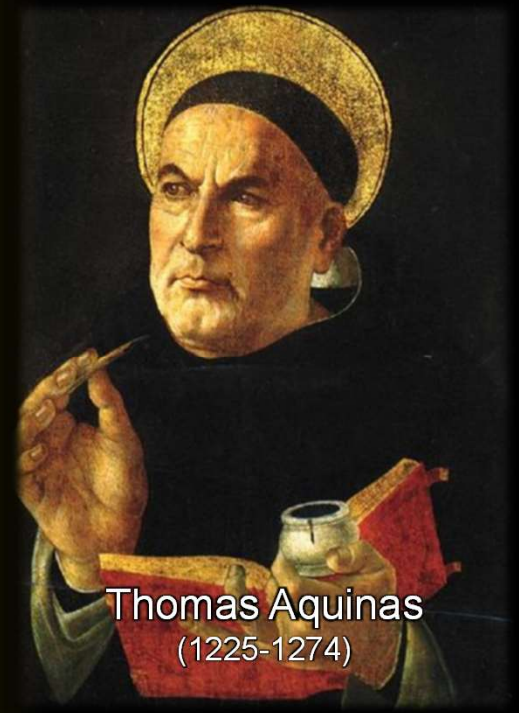
(ST 1, Q5, art. 1)



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."***

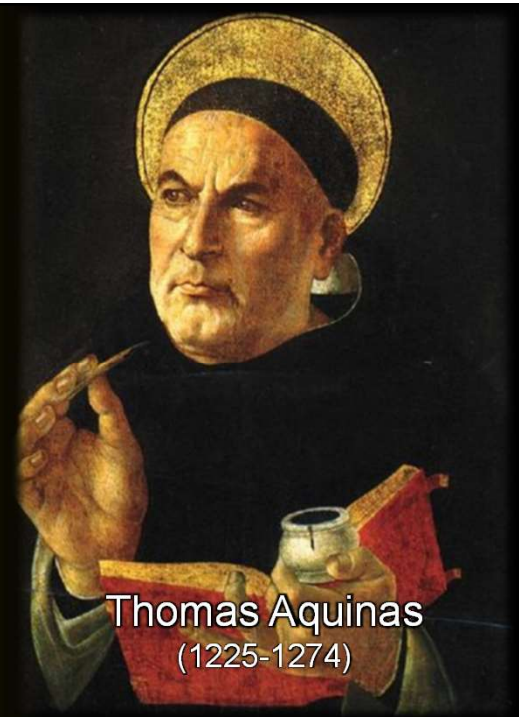
ST I-II, Q94, art. 2



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

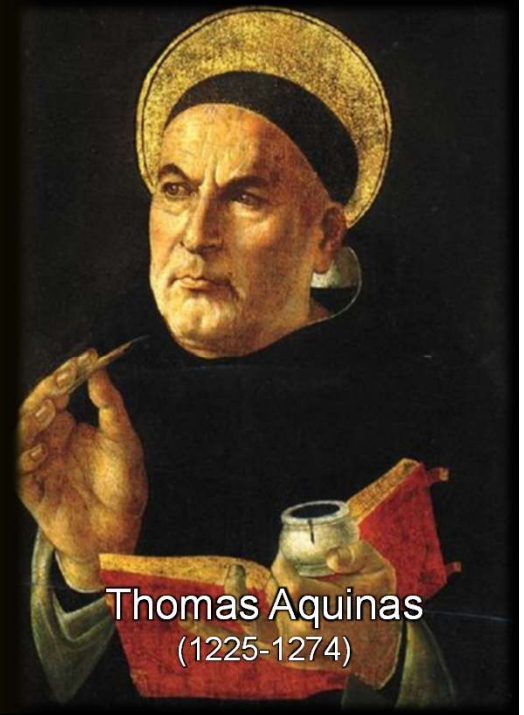
***"The first indemonstrable principle is that **the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time** .... Now as being is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply, so good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed at action."***

ST I-II, Q94, art. 2



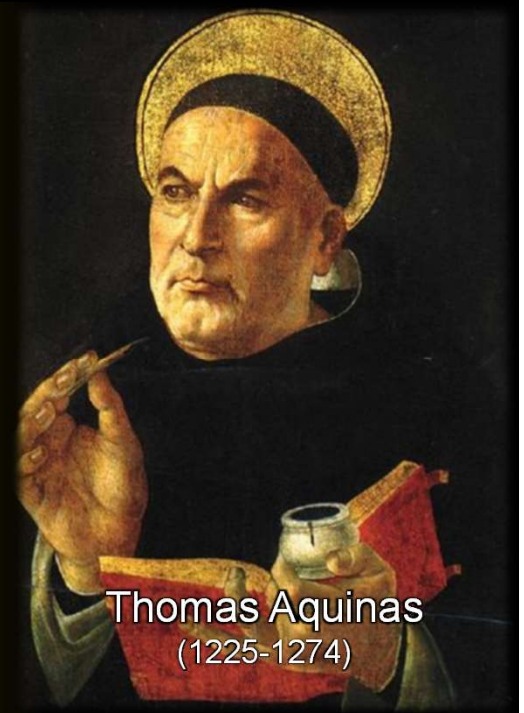
Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

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

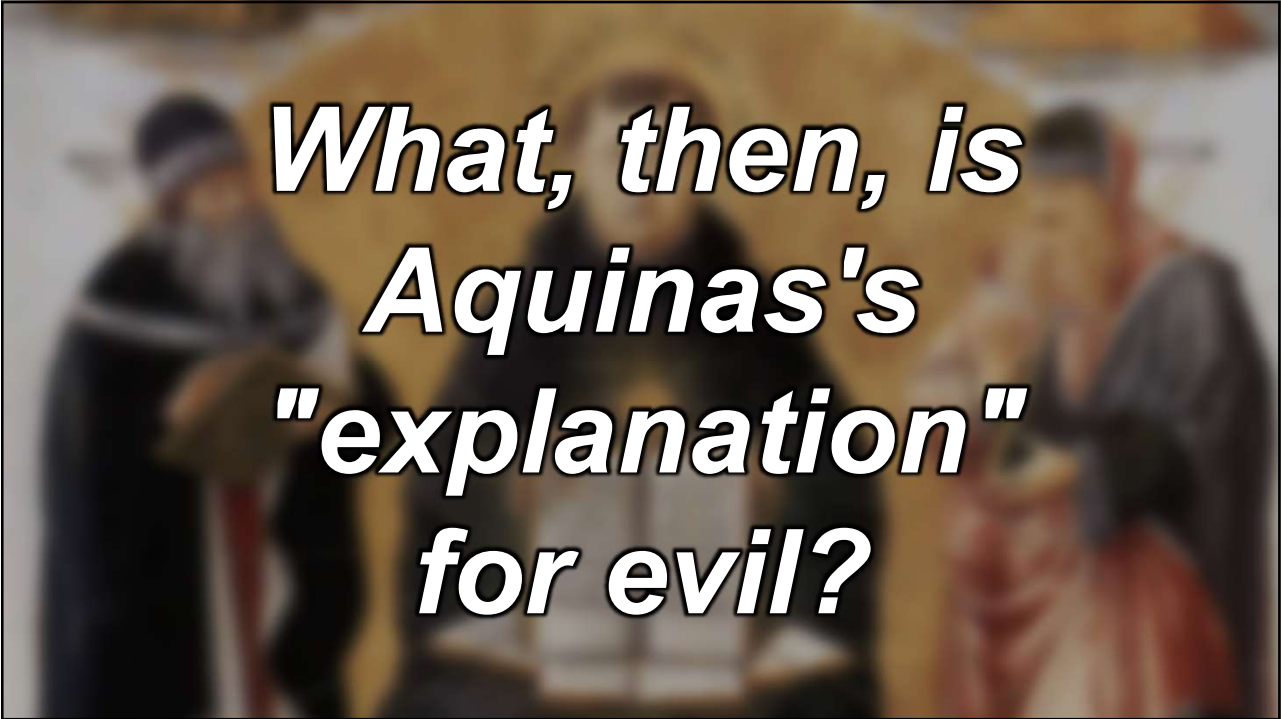


Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

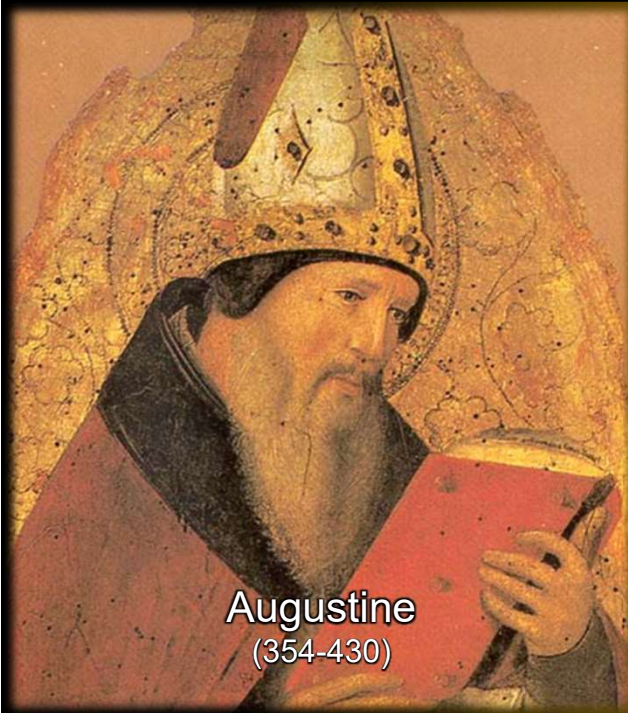
***Good is  
to be done and  
pursued  
and evil  
avoided.***



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)



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



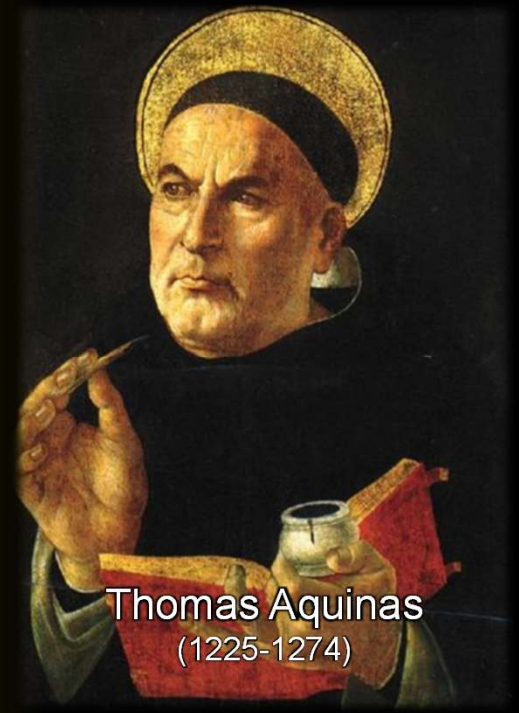
**Augustine**  
(354-430)

***"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)

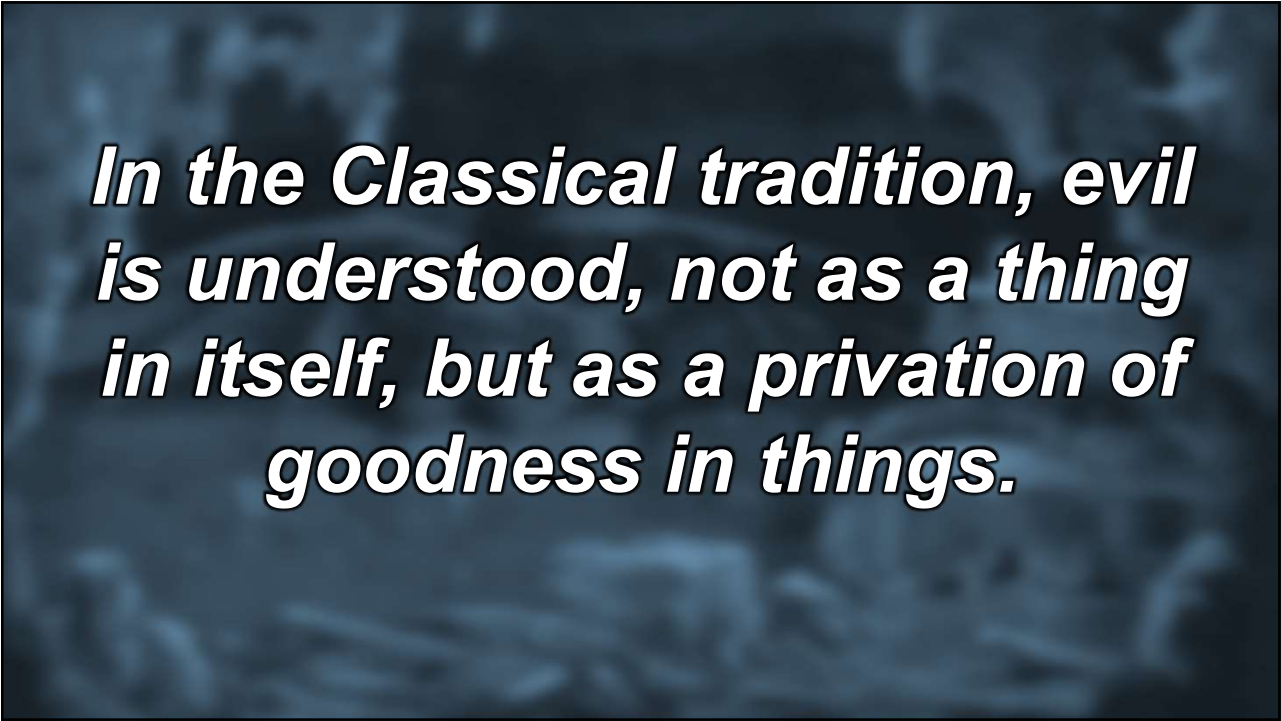
- ***It can be demonstrated that God exists and that He is both good and omnipotent.***
- ***We know God is all good and all powerful even when we cannot demonstrate the connection between specific evils in the world and the specific goods that God might produce from them.***



***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.***

