

Euthyphro's Dilemma (cf. *Euthyphro*)

Consider this: is what is pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?

Modern version:

Does good = 'whatever God wills'?

Or

Is good = God's will, *because* it is good?

Examine this ancient dilemma

- Explain why it is a dilemma

- Explain the ramifications ('knock-on effects') of coming down one or other side of the dilemma.

I. The Dilemma

- (1) Either God does not exist, or God exists.
- (2) If God does not exist, then God's commands cannot make an action moral.
- (3) If God exists, then God's commands cannot make an action moral.
- (4) Therefore, God's commands cannot make an action moral.

II. A Defence

A. Neither (1) nor (2) requires defence: (1) is analytic, and (2) is obvious.

B. Plato supports (3) by arguing:

1. Suppose what is moral is commanded by God.
2. If so, then
 - a) what is moral is moral because it is commanded by God or
 - b) God commands what is moral because it is moral.
3. If (2b), then what is moral is moral independently of God's commanding it and God's commands cannot make an action moral.
4. If (2a), then whatever is commanded by God is moral.
5. It is not the case that whatever is commanded by God is moral (e.g. God could command something atrocious).
6. Therefore, (2b).
7. Therefore, what is moral is moral independently of God's commanding it and God's commands cannot make an action moral.
8. Therefore, if God exists, God's commands cannot make an action moral.