

HOW DO YOU RESOLVE A DILEMMA?

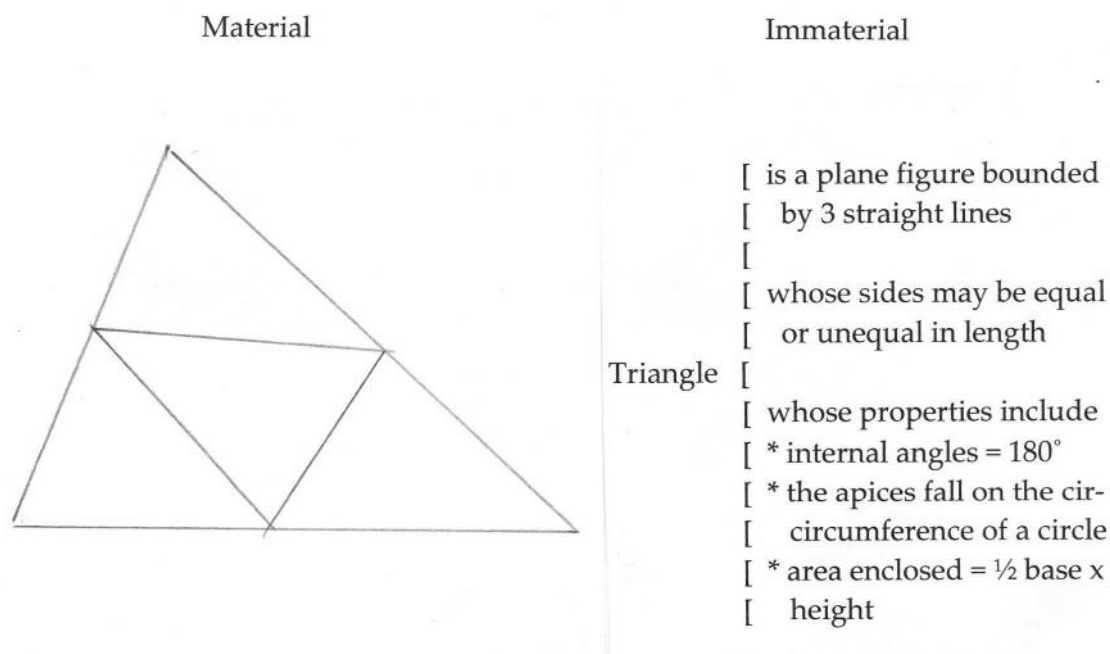
Man is mortal, therefore death is the end of him. This thought absorbs, and motivates, all atheists. *Man is immortal, therefore he will live forever.* This is the view of all who believe in God. *Man is mortal: man is immortal.* Which is true? Could they both be true? This is one of the thousands of dilemmas that present themselves to us throughout our lives. Before we set out the rules for solving them, we must look carefully at reality which is always the measure of truth.

If I draw a line on paper and separate it into parts I am engaged in an act of *physical*, or material, separation that we call *division*.

A / / / / / B

But if I apply my mind to the reality of the line, *what a line is*, I can consider it the locus of a point moving directly from A to B. Or I can consider it as one of the boundaries of a rectangle. In this act I am engaged in an act of *metaphysical* separation, or *distinction*. I am not separating the line, the one thing, into parts. I am separating it from itself, as it were; considering it under different aspects. The first is a physical act, the second metaphysical.

We can illustrate further with a triangle.



Here we have physically divided the triangle into four, a material act involving a concrete singular reality; *this* triangle, this particular triangle. In the parallel action we have applied our mind to the universal reality triangle—that is why we use the word 'triangle' rather than an image. For there is no way of signifying a universal

But *non dat quod non habet*. Man cannot do an immaterial act unless he has a correspondingly immaterial power.

nature	powers	acts	ends
	immaterial	immaterial	

But, he cannot exercise an immaterial power unless he has a nature which is itself immaterial. Therefore, he must have an immaterial nature.

nature	powers	acts	ends
immaterial	immaterial	immaterial	

It takes little to comprehend, then, that man must have an immaterial *end*, that is, an end (in the sense of *raison d'être*, reason for existence) which is also immaterial.

Hence, his soul, the part of him which makes him be a man, must be immaterial. That is, HIS SOUL IS NOT CORRUPTIBLE. Therefore, while his body can, and will, die, his soul will not. That is, man's soul is immortal.

From this explication we see the force of the second rule in resolving a dilemma.

Rule 2: Look for a distinction in one term or the other, or in both.

Here we have distinguished, that is, *taken apart with our minds*, the reality *man* as, above, we took apart the reality *triangle*. And we have shown that man is not simply a material being but a being mixed of something material and something immaterial, and shown that of these two, the critical, the determining part, his soul, is immaterial.

Let's try another pair of propositions that raise a dilemma.

Men and women are equal
Men and women are unequal

The propositions seem to contradict each other. You can only solve the dilemma by making distinctions. Let's recall what Almighty God tells us in the book of *Genesis*: "God made man in His own image and likeness... male and female He created them." (*Gen. 1: 27*) Women are *men* just as men are *men*—and don't let any Feminist tell you different! Insofar as they are *men*, that is, possessors of human nature, men and women are equal. Here we are considering man *generically*.

When, however, we come to consider *gender*, man and woman are unequal, in order that they may complement each other in the crucial functions of bringing children into the world and in providing for, and educating, them. Their functions are unequal; their practical ends are unequal. Here, again, God's revelation assists in understanding the crucial inequality between them. In *Genesis 2: 18* we read: "It is not good for man to be alone. Let Us make him a help like to himself." God made woman as man's helper and so her ordination is towards man, whether infant, child, adolescent or mature—whether male or female—to help in his (or her) development.
