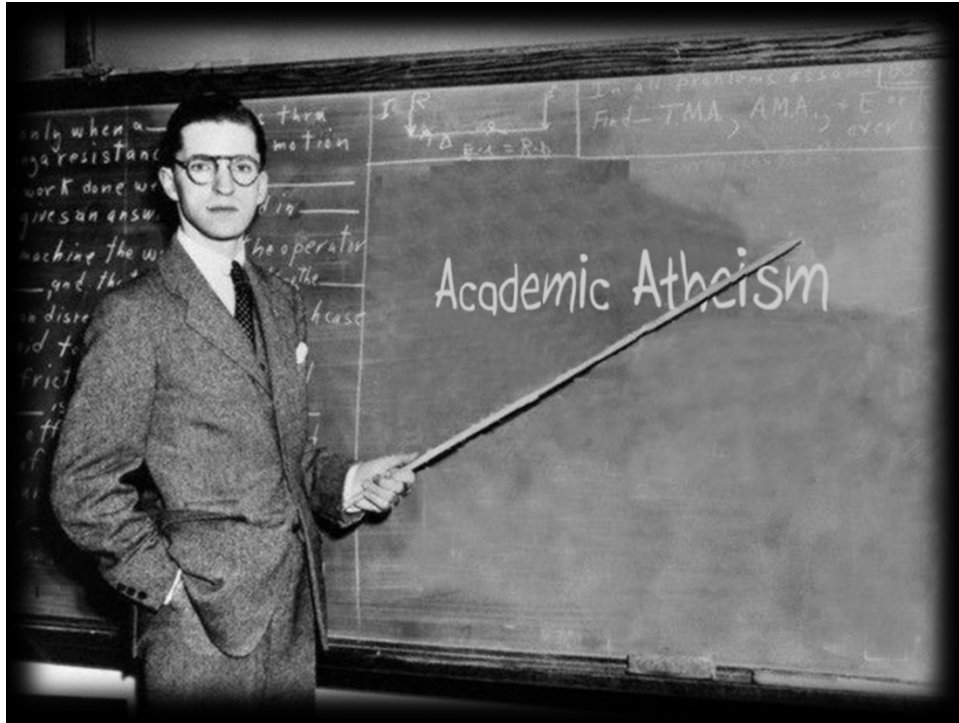
A close-up portrait of Richard Dawkins, an older man with grey hair, looking thoughtfully to the side with his hands clasped in front of him.

Answering the Atheism of Richard Dawkins

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

A classical painting of Jesus Christ with a halo, wearing a red robe over a green tunic, seated on a cloud. The background is a soft, hazy landscape.

Three Categories of Atheism





Former Charles Simonyi
Professor of the Public
Understanding of Science,
Oxford University

Fellow of the Royal Society
and of the Royal Society of
Literature

Author of:

The Ancestor's Tale

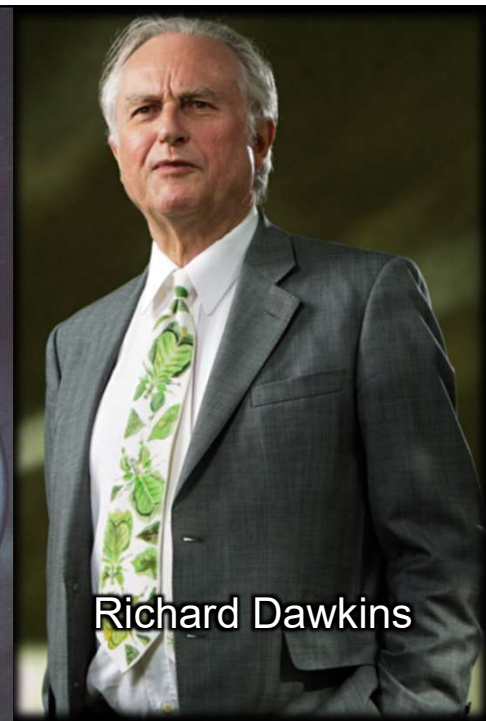
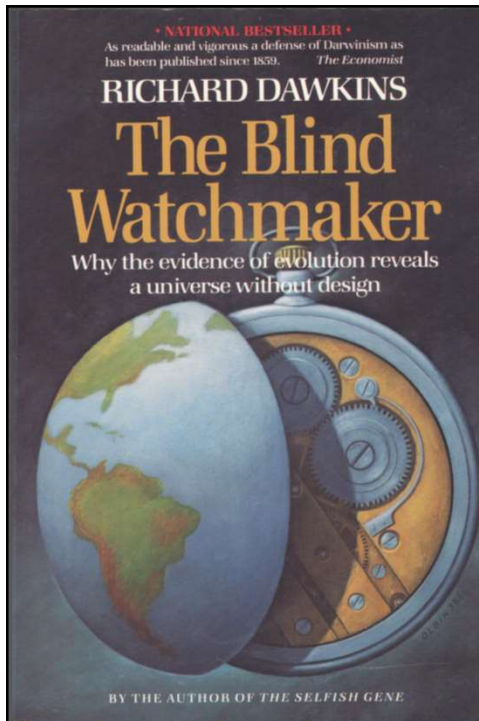
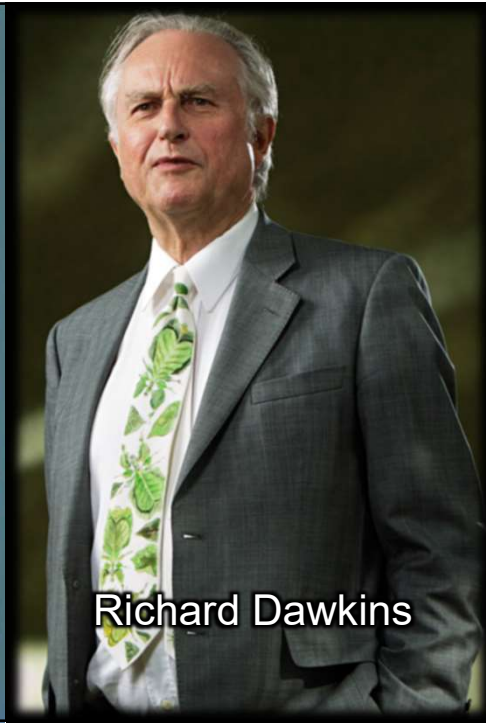
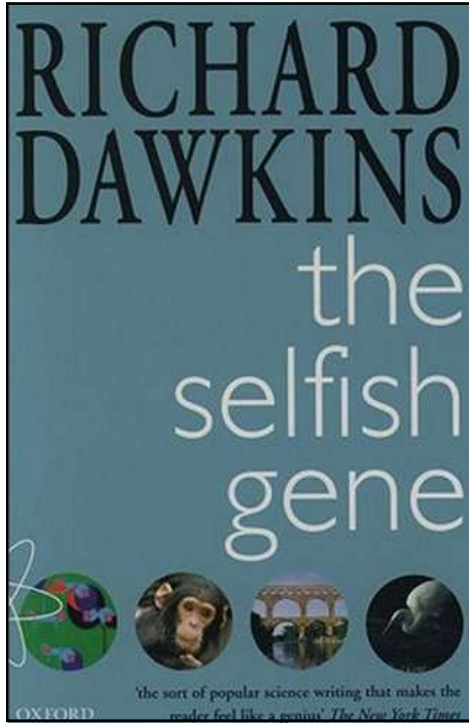
The Selfish Gene

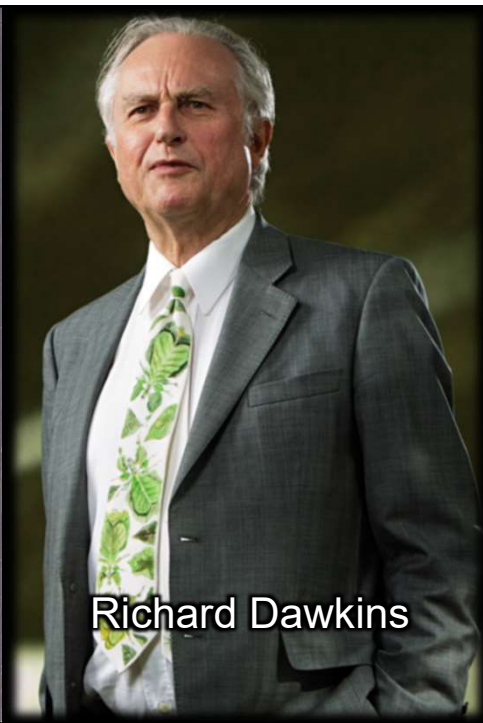
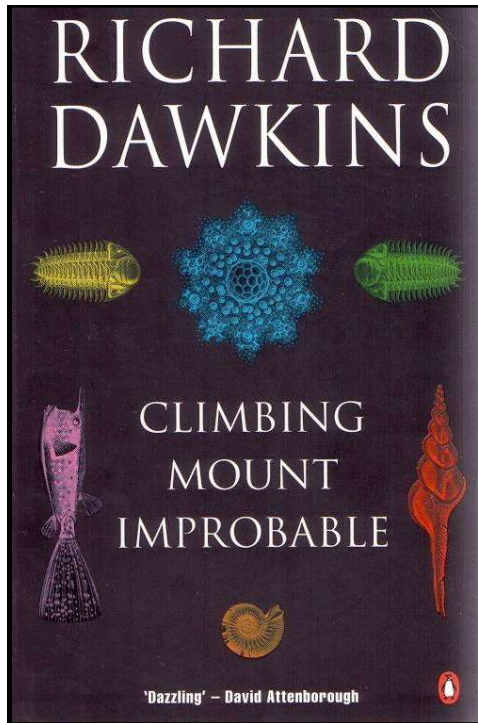
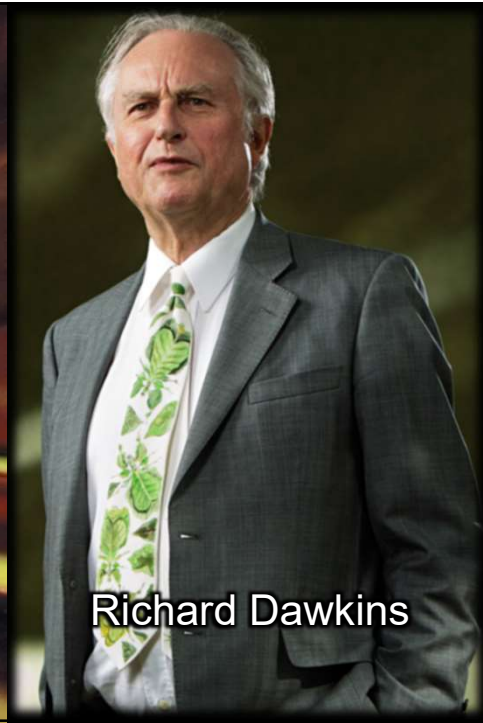
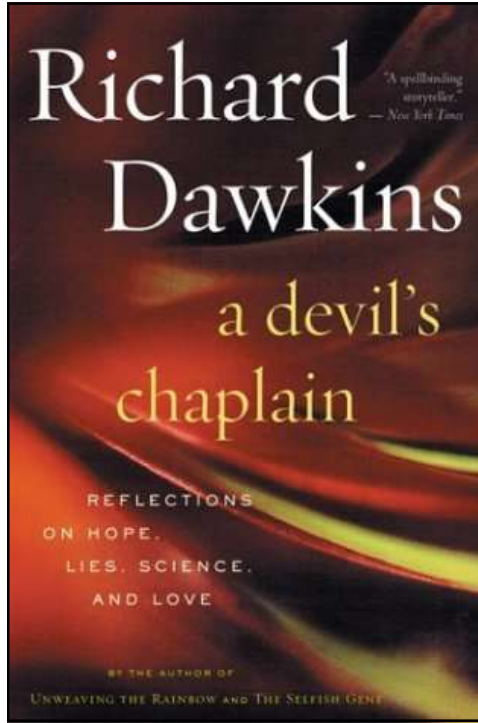
The Blind Watchmaker

The God Delusion




Richard Dawkins





The **GOD** Delusion

Richard
Dawkins

A portrait of Richard Dawkins, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark grey suit jacket, a white shirt, and a light-colored tie with a green leaf pattern. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

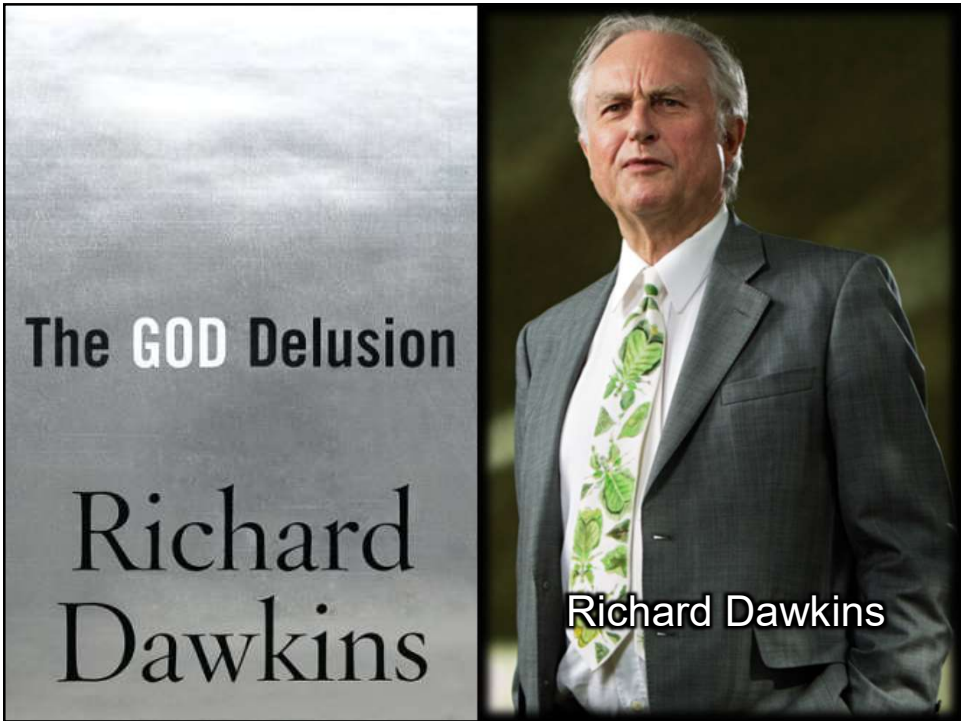
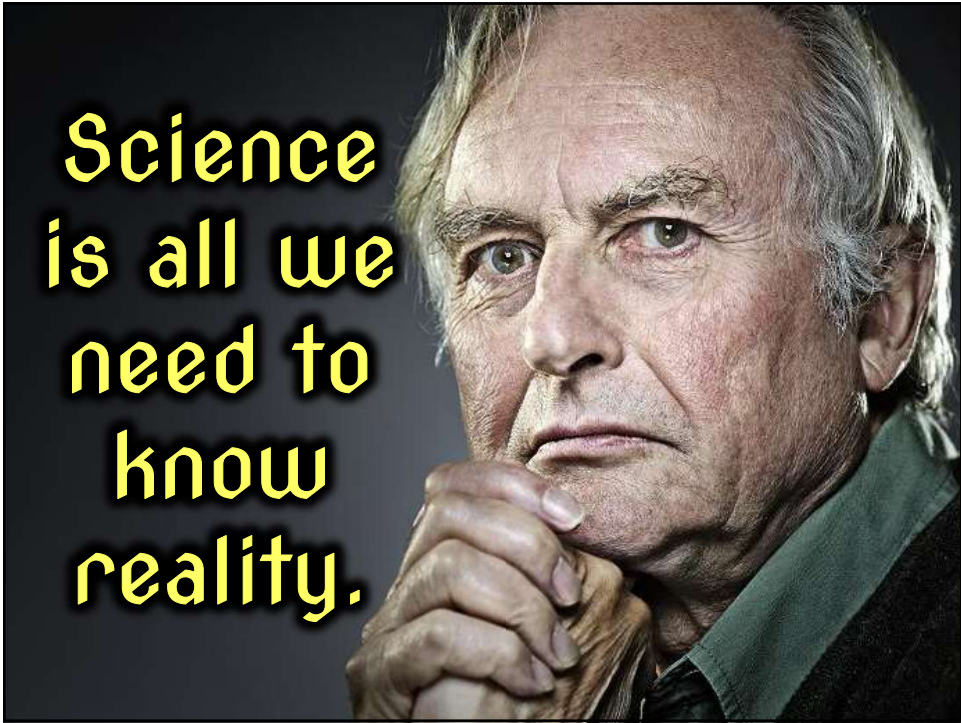
Richard Dawkins

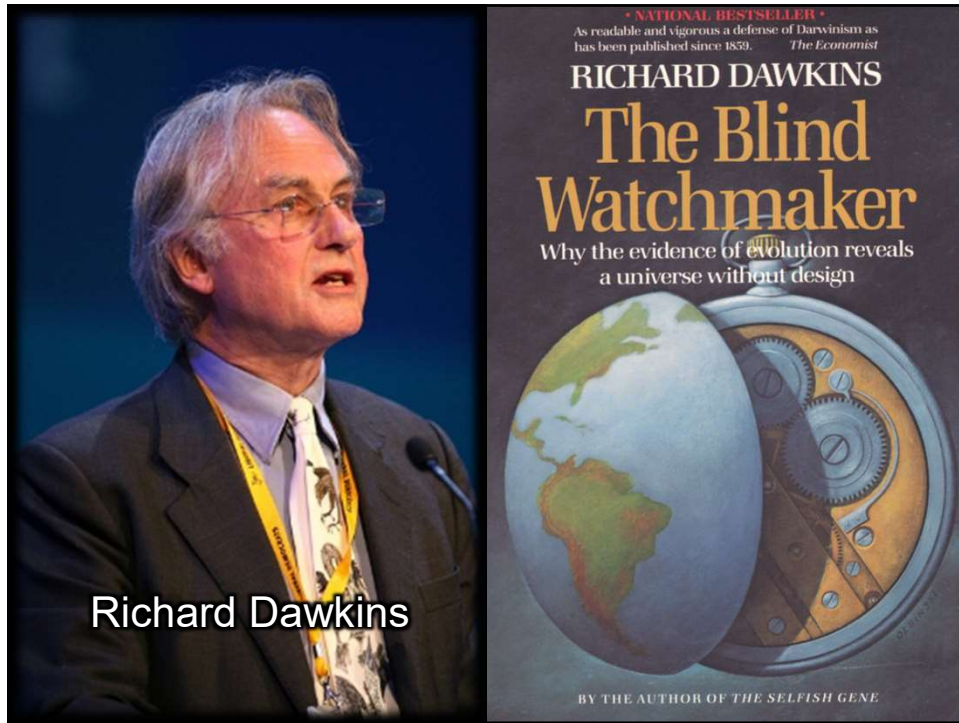
*"If this book works
as I intend,
religious readers
who open it will be
atheists when
they put it down."*

Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*,
p. 5.

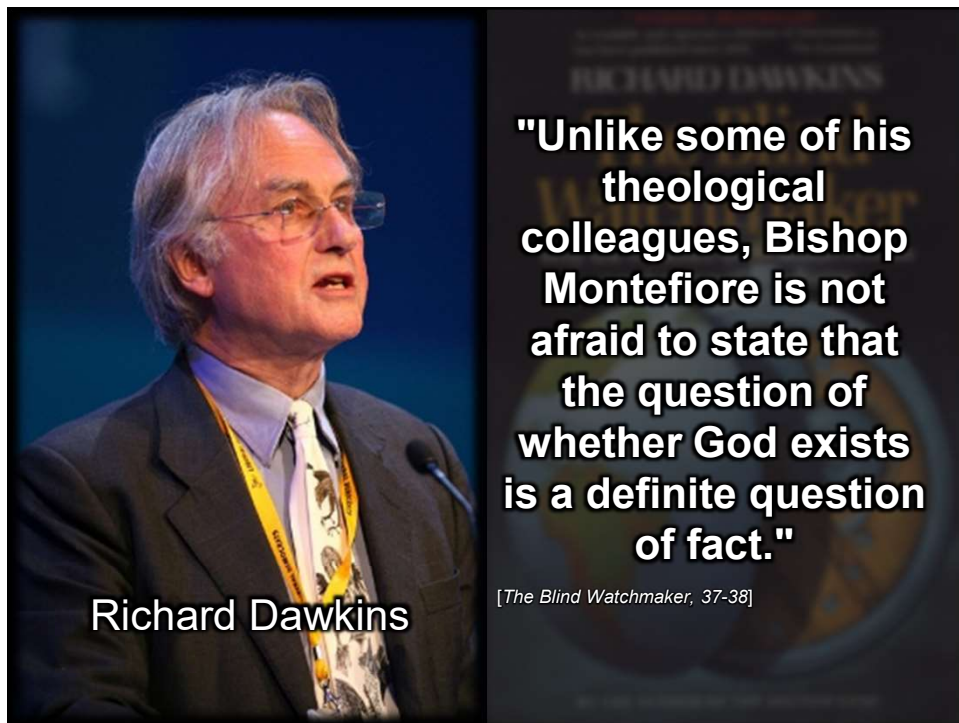
A portrait of Richard Dawkins, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark grey suit jacket, a white shirt, and a light-colored tie with a green leaf pattern. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

Ricard Dawkins





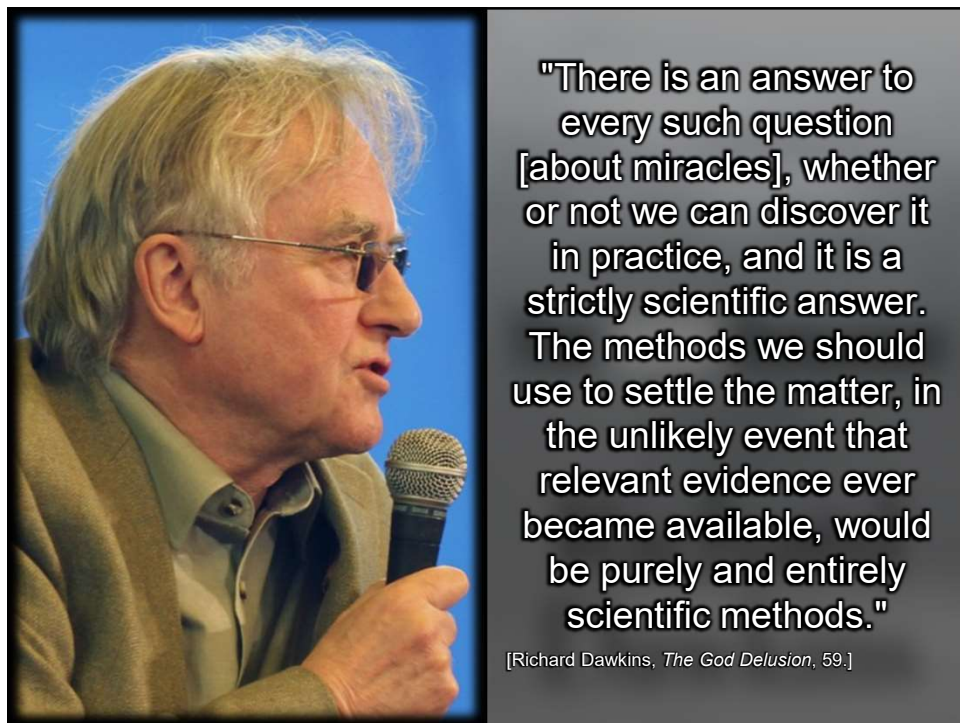
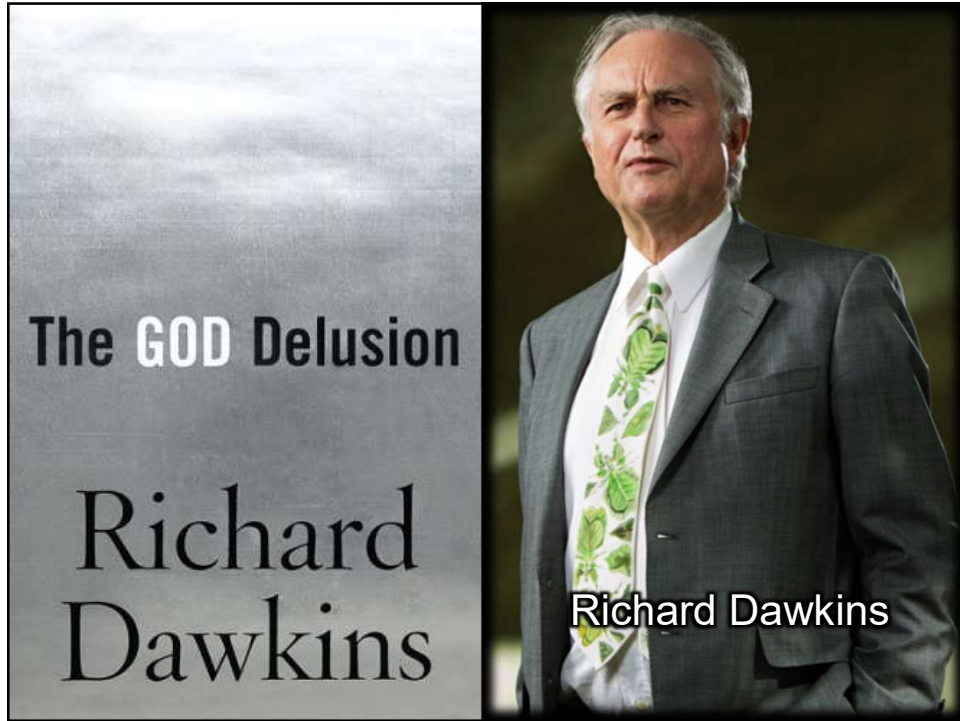
Richard Dawkins

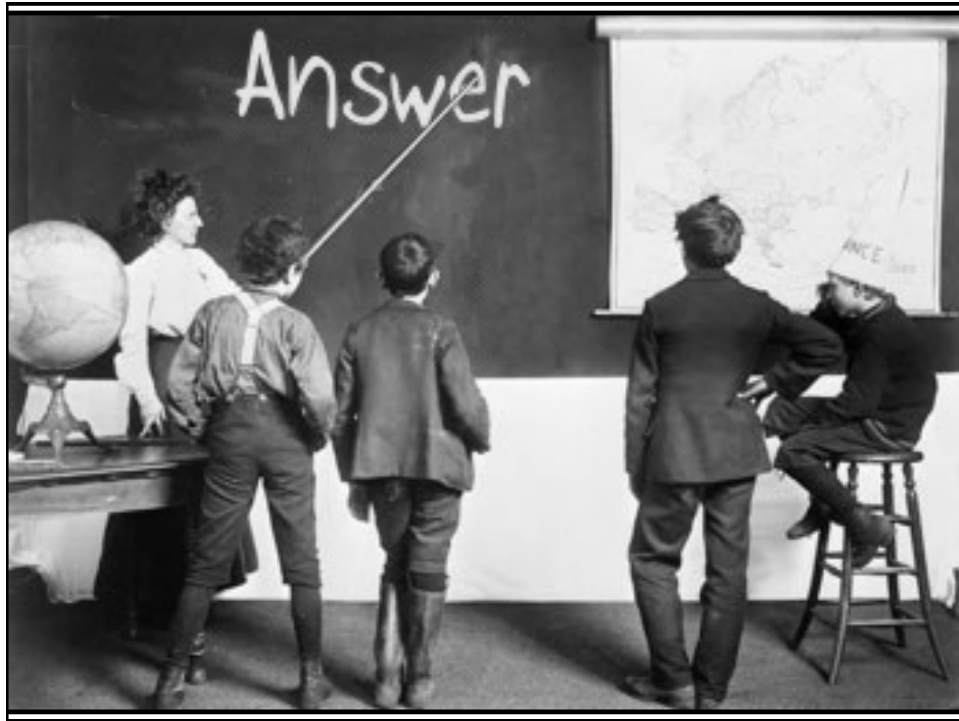


Richard Dawkins

"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Montefiore is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite question of fact."

[*The Blind Watchmaker*, 37-38]

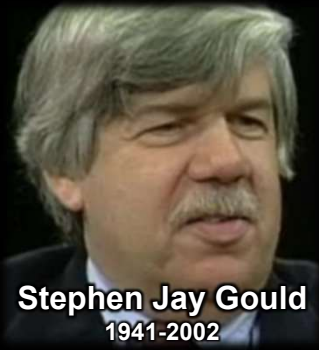




Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002


Alister McGrath

**Facts and the Relationship
of Science and Religion**



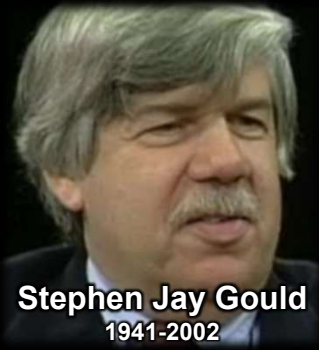
Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002

- Paleontologist, evolutionary biologist, and historian of science
- Taught at Harvard and New York University
- Famous for his theory of punctuated equilibrium
- Was very interested in the relationship between science and religion




Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002

"We may, I think, adopt this word and concept to express the central point of this essay and the principled resolution of supposed 'conflict' or 'warfare' between science and religion.



Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002

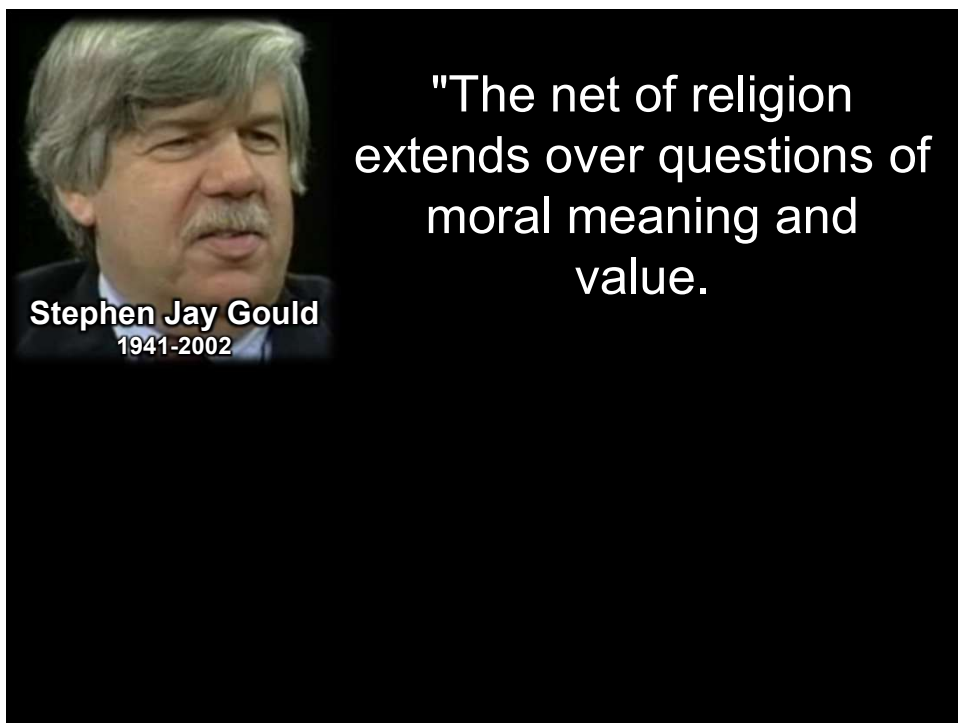
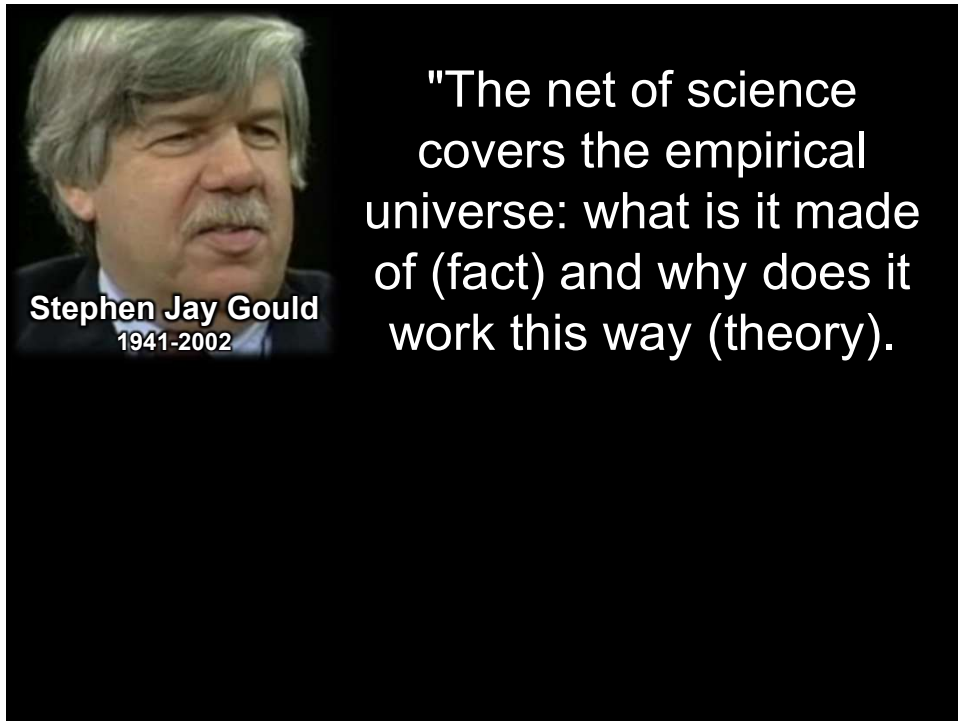
"No such conflict should exist because each subject has a legitimate magisterium, or domain of teaching authority—

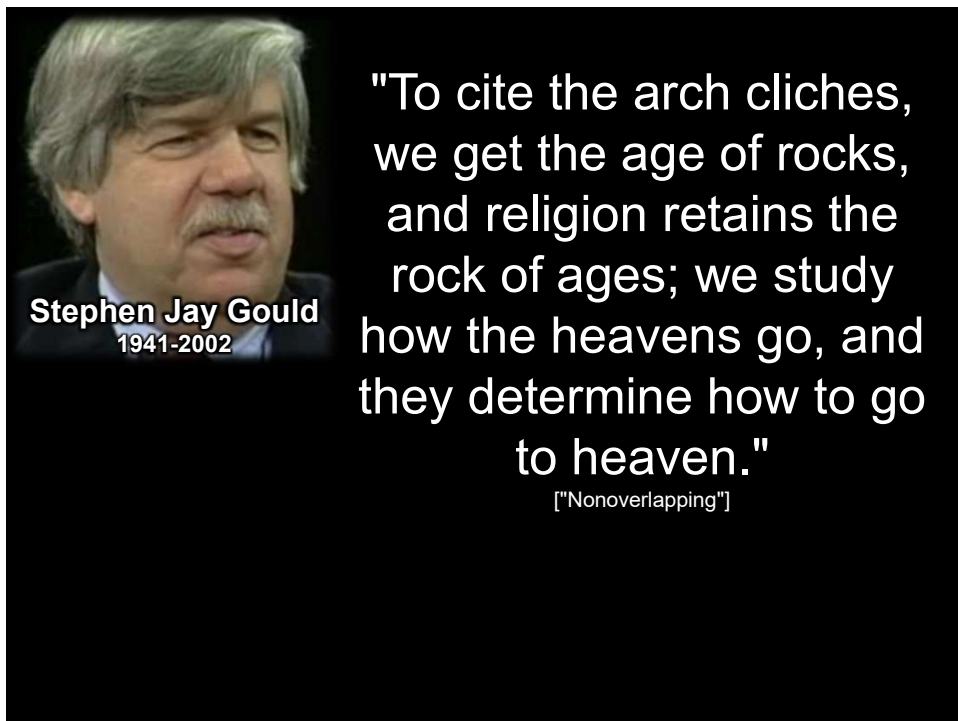
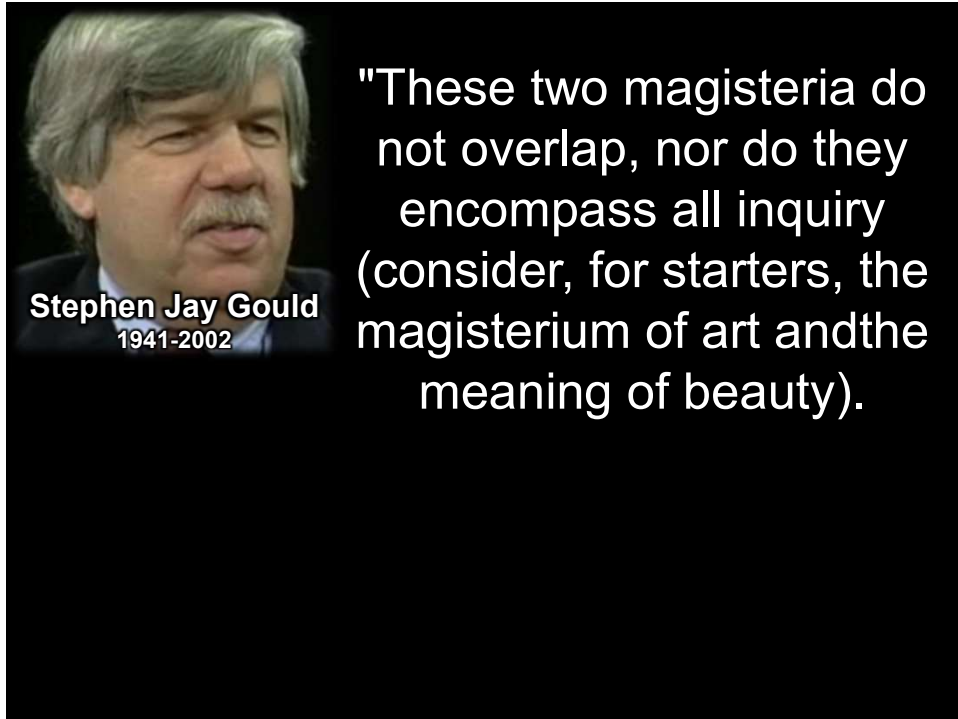


Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002

"and these magisteria do not overlap (the principle that I would like to designate as NOMA, or 'nonoverlapping magisteria')."

[Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisteria," downloaded from http://www.stephenjaygould.org/library/gould_noma.html, assessed Mar. 26, 2008]

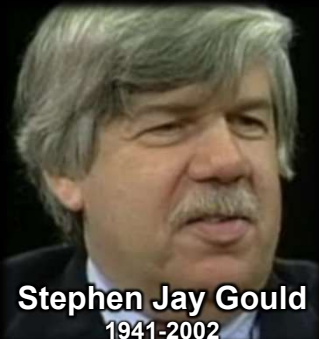






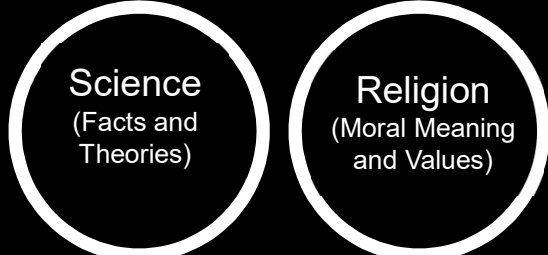
Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002

Non Overlapping Magisteria



Stephen Jay Gould
1941-2002

NOMA



Science
(Facts and
Theories)

Religion
(Moral Meaning
and Values)



Alister McGrath

- Andreas Idreos Professorship of Science and Religion at Oxford University
- Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College, Oxford



Alister McGrath

"There is, of course, a third option—that of 'partially overlapping magisteria' (a POMA, so to speak),



Alister McGrath


"reflecting a realization that science and religion offer possibilities of cross-fertilization on account of the interpenetration of their subjects and methods."

[Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion? Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine* (Downers Grove, IL: 2007), 41



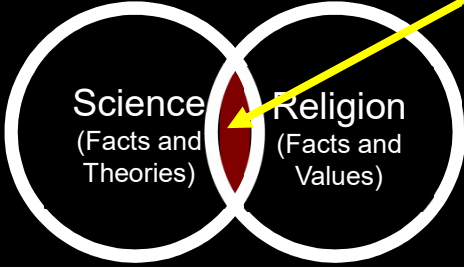
Alister McGrath

Partially
Overlapping
Magisteria



Alister McGrath

POMA




Common factual claims of science and religion
e.g., information content in biological systems

Science (Facts and Theories) Religion (Facts and Values)

"The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one."

[The God Delusion, 58-59]



Richard Dawkins

"The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one."

[The God Delusion, 58-59]

Richard Dawkins

"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Montefiore is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite question of fact."

[The Blind Watchmaker, 37-38]

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"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Montefiore is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite question of fact."

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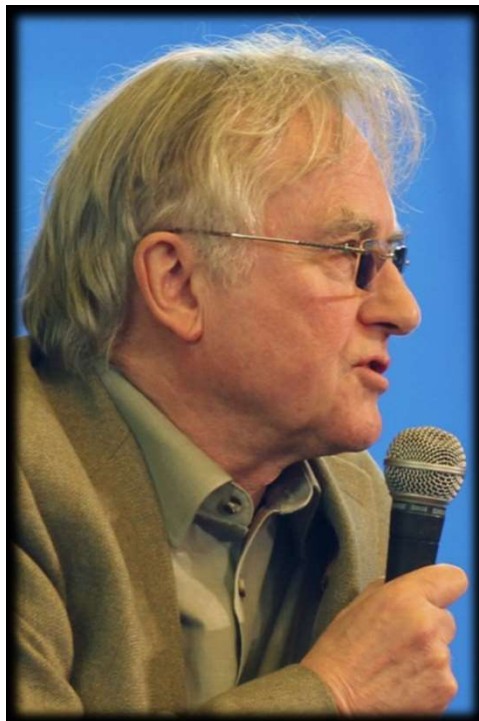
"The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one."

[*The God Delusion*, 58-59]

Dawkins

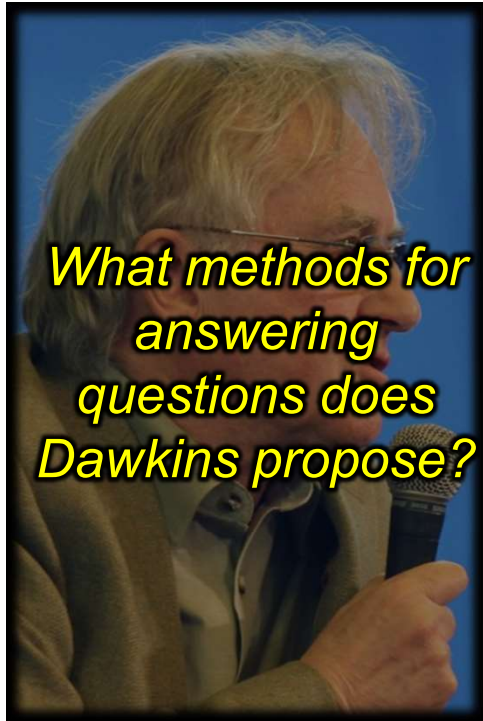
"Unlike some of his theological colleagues, Bishop Montefiore is not afraid to state that the question of whether God exists is a definite question of fact."

[*The Blind Watchmaker*, 37-38]



"There is an answer to every such question [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

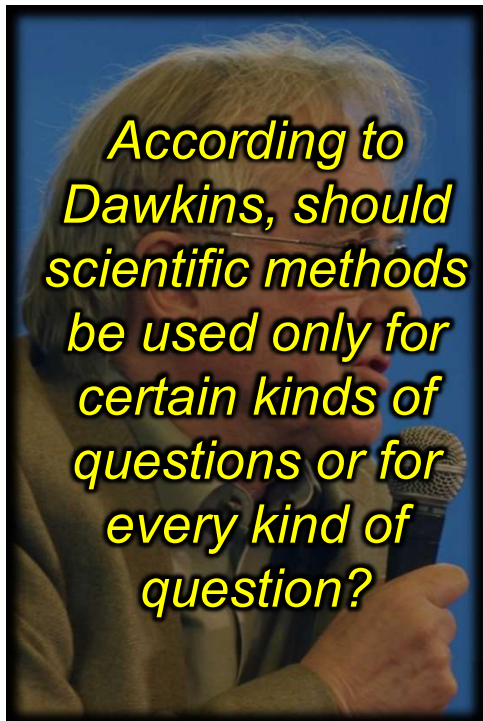
[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]



What methods for answering questions does Dawkins propose?

"There is an answer to every such question [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be **purely and entirely scientific methods.**"

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]



According to Dawkins, should scientific methods be used only for certain kinds of questions or for every kind of question?

"There is an answer to **every such question** [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be **purely and entirely scientific methods.**"

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]

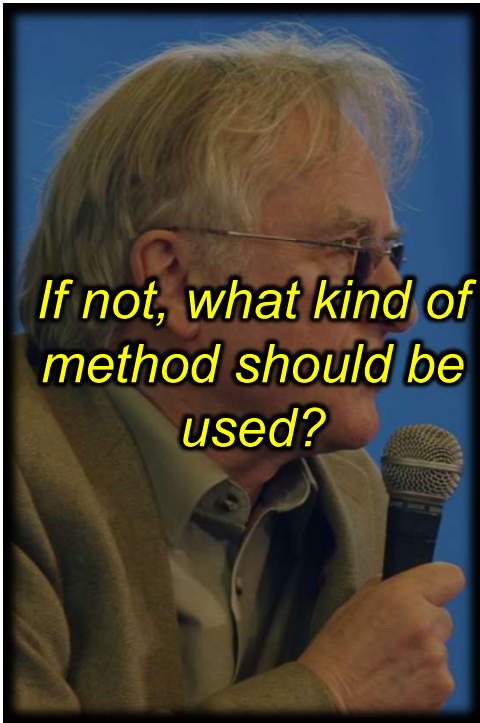


Is this statement here provable by "purely and entirely scientific methods?"

Absolutely Not!

"There is an answer to every such question [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

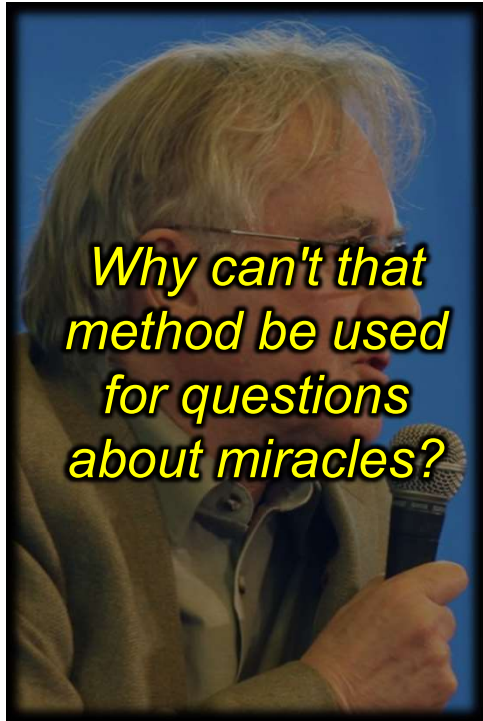
[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]



If not, what kind of method should be used?

"There is an answer to every such question [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

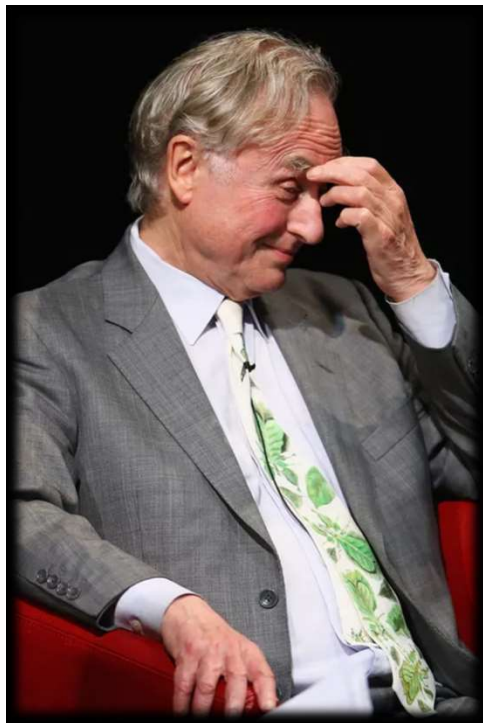
[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]



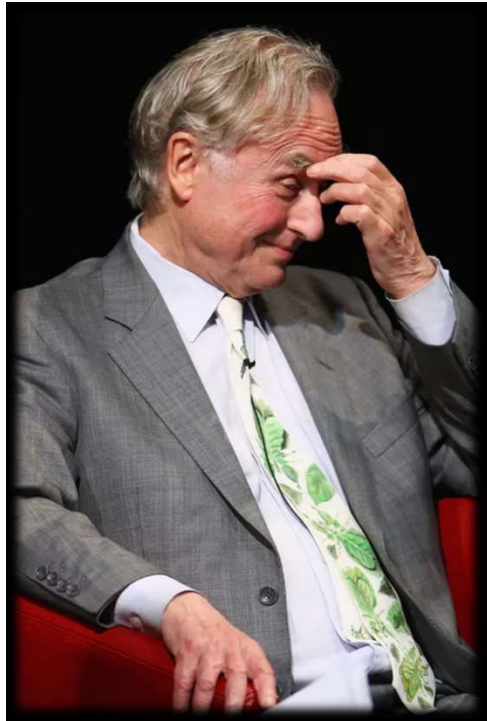
Why can't that method be used for questions about miracles?

"There is an answer to every such question [about miracles], whether or not we can discover it in practice, and it is a strictly scientific answer. The methods we should use to settle the matter, in the unlikely event that relevant evidence ever became available, would be purely and entirely scientific methods."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 59.]

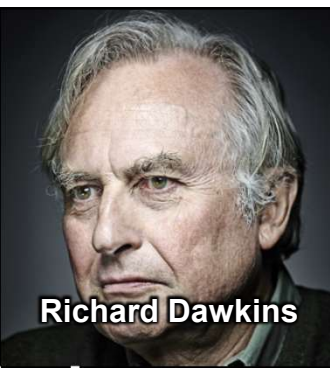


Dawkins, having quoted Cambridge astronomer Martin Rees who said questions such as why anything exists "lie beyond science ... however, they are the province of philosophers and theologians" responded ...



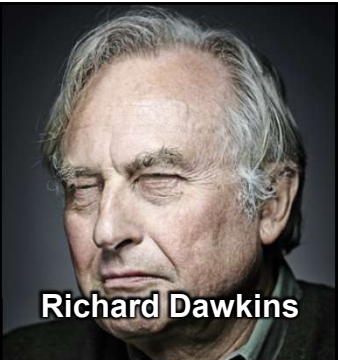
"I would prefer to say that if indeed they lie beyond science, they most certainly lie beyond the province of theologians as well (I doubt that philosophers would thank Martin Rees for lumping theologians in with them). I am tempted to go further and wonder in what possible sense theologians can be said to *have* a province."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 55, 56 emphasis added.]



Richard Dawkins

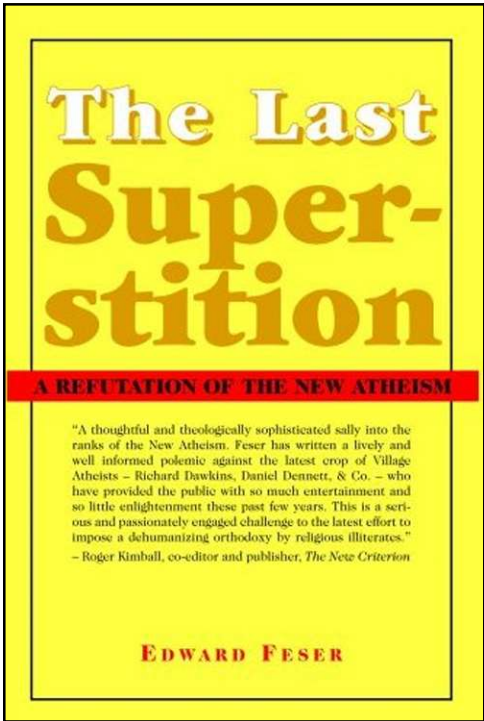
Completely Overlapping Magisteria



Richard Dawkins

COMA

Science
(Facts and Values)




The Last Superstition

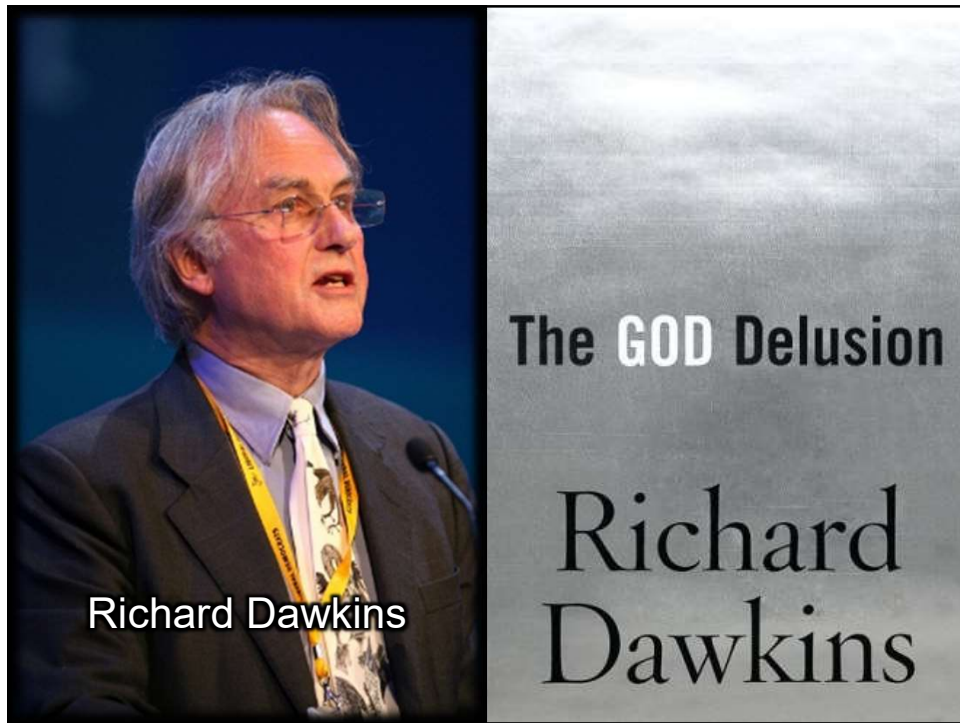
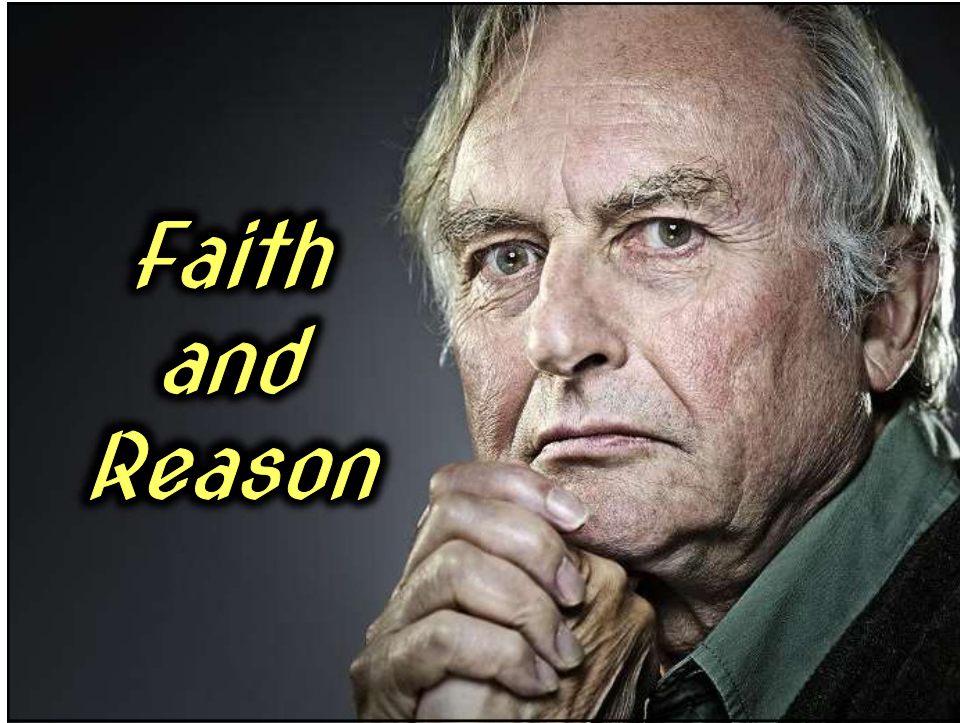
A REFUTATION OF THE NEW ATHEISM

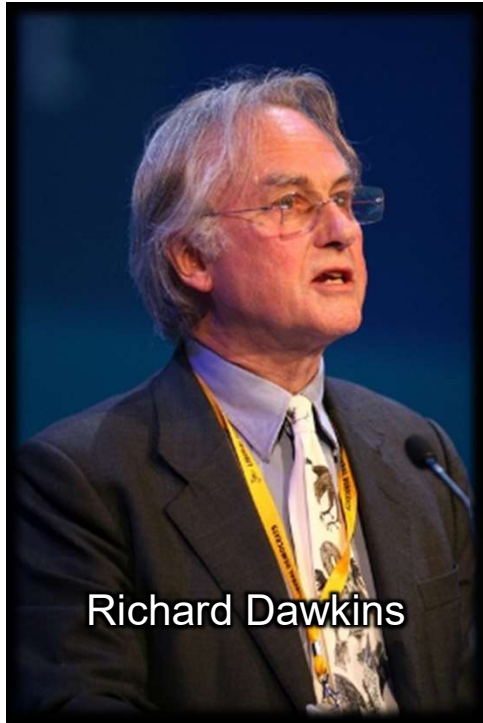
"A thoughtful and theologically sophisticated sally into the ranks of the New Atheism. Feser has written a lively and well informed polemic against the latest crop of Village Atheists – Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, & Co. – who have provided the public with so much entertainment and so little enlightenment these past few years. This is a serious and passionately engaged challenge to the latest effort to impose a dehumanizing orthodoxy by religious illiterates."
– Roger Kimball, co-editor and publisher, *The New Criterion*

EDWARD FESER



Edward Feser



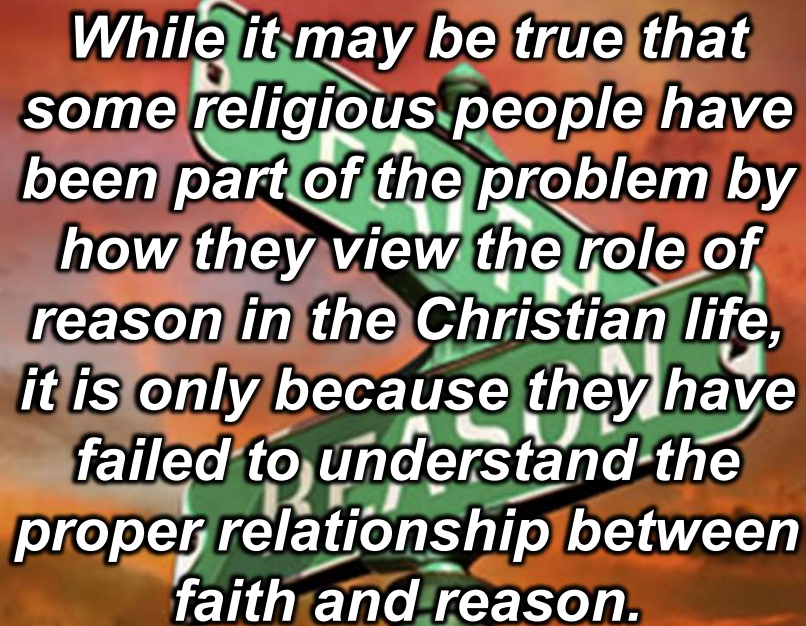


Richard Dawkins

"Faith is an evil precisely because it requires no justification and brooks no argument. ... Faith can be very, very dangerous."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 308]





While it may be true that some religious people have been part of the problem by how they view the role of reason in the Christian life, it is only because they have failed to understand the proper relationship between faith and reason.



The Classical View of Faith and Reason

Reason

Believing something on the basis of demonstration.

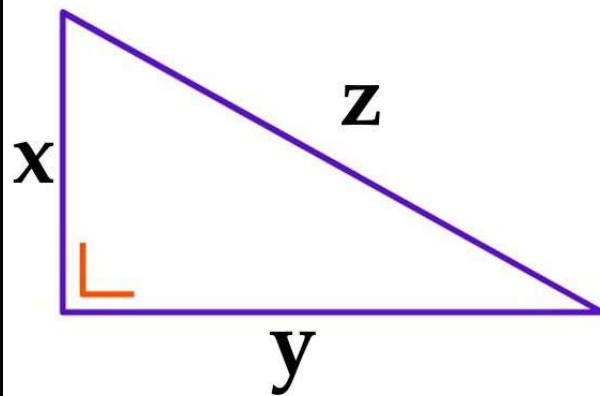
Faith

Believing something on the basis of authority.

**Consider
Fermat's
Last Theorem.**



Pierre de Fermat
1601 - 1665



Pythagorean Theorem

$$x^2 + y^2 = z^2$$

Fermat's equation:

$$x^n + y^n = z^n$$

This equation has no solutions in integers for $n \geq 3$.



Modular elliptic curves and Fermat's Last Theorem

By ANDREW WILES*

For Nada, Clare, Kate and Olivia

Cubum autem in duos cubos, aut quadratoquadratum in duos quadratoquadratos, et generaliter nullam in infinitum ultra quadratum potestatem in duos ejusdem nominis fas est dividere: cuius rei demonstrationem mirabilem sane detexi. Hanc marginis exiguitas non caperet.

Pierre de Fermat

Introduction

An elliptic curve over \mathbf{Q} is said to be modular if it has a finite covering by a modular curve of the form $X_0(N)$. Any such elliptic curve has the property that its Hasse-Weil zeta function has an analytic continuation and satisfies a functional equation of the standard type. If an elliptic curve over \mathbf{Q} with a given j -invariant is modular then it is easy to see that all elliptic curves with the same j -invariant are modular (in which case we say that the j -invariant is modular). A well-known conjecture which grew out of the work of Shimura and Taniyama in the 1950's and 1960's asserts that every elliptic curve over \mathbf{Q} is modular. However, it only became widely known through its publication in a paper of Weil in 1967 [We] (as an exercise for the interested reader!), in which, moreover, Weil gave conceptual evidence for the conjecture. Although it had been numerically verified in many cases, prior to the results described in this paper it had only been known that finitely many j -invariants were modular.

In 1985 Frey made the remarkable observation that this conjecture should imply Fermat's Last Theorem. The precise mechanism relating the two was formulated by Serre as the ϵ -conjecture and this was then proved by Ribet in the summer of 1986. Ribet's result only requires one to prove the conjecture for semistable elliptic curves in order to deduce Fermat's Last Theorem.

*The work on this paper was supported by an NSF grant.



Reason

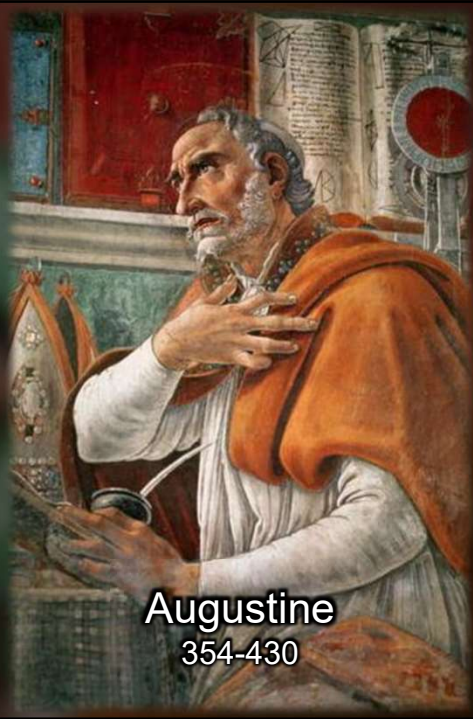
*Believing
something on
the basis of
demonstration.*

Faith

*Believing
something on
the basis of
Divine
authority.*

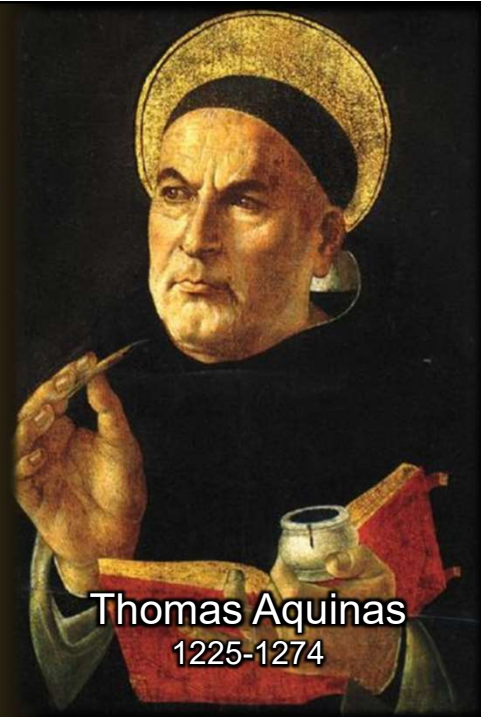
"For who cannot see that thinking [reason] is prior to believing [faith]? For no one believes anything unless he has first thought that it is to be believed.

[On the Predestination of the Saints, 5, as cited in Norman L. Geisler, ed. *What Augustine Says* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), 13]



Augustine
354-430

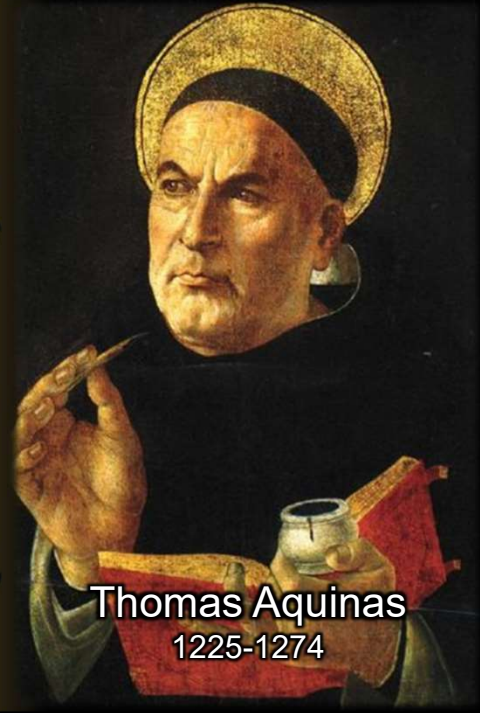
"Those things are said to be present to the understanding which do not exceed its capacity so that the gaze of understanding may be fixed on them. For a person gives assent to such things because of the witness of his own understanding and not because of someone else's testimony.



Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"Those things, however, which are beyond the power of our understanding are said to be absent from the senses of the mind. Hence, our understanding cannot be fixed on them. As a result, we cannot assent to them on our own witness, but on that of someone else. These things are properly called the objects of faith."

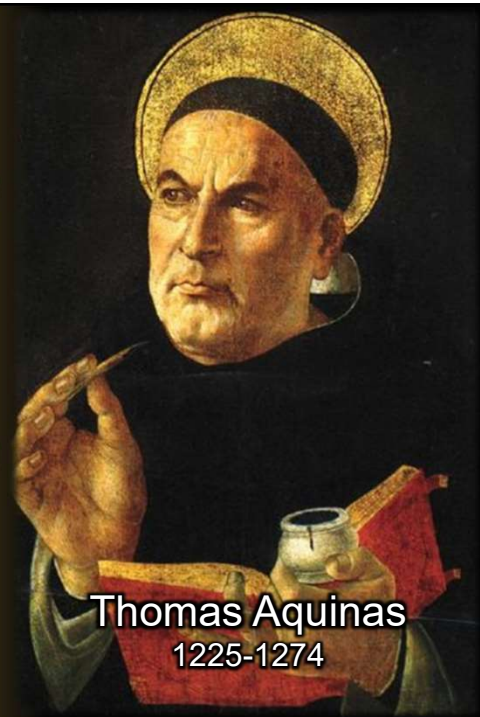
[*Truth*, QXIV, Art. 9, reply, trans. James V. McGlynn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 249-250]



Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"One who believes [i.e., has faith] gives assent to things that are proposed to him by another person, and which he himself does not see."

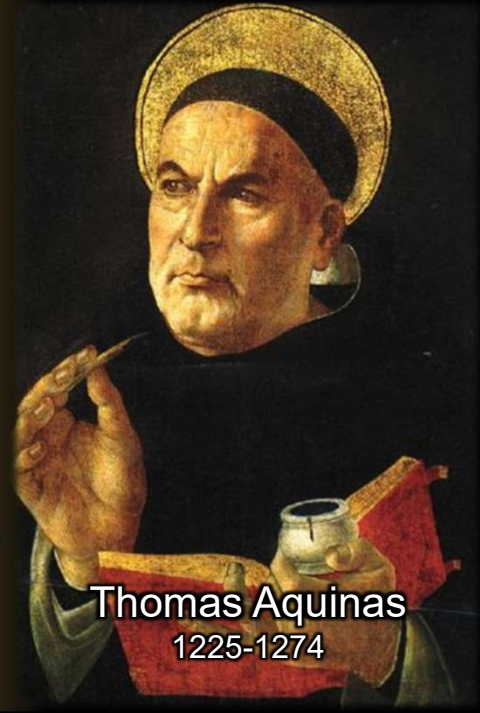
[*Truth*, QXIV, Art. 9, reply, trans. James V. McGlynn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 249-250]



Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

"Since man can only know the things that he does not see himself by taking them from another who does see them, and since faith is among the things we do not see, the knowledge of the objects of faith must be handed on by one who sees them himself. Now, this one is God, Who perfectly comprehends Himself, and naturally sees His essence."

[SCG, 3, 154 [1], trans. Vernon J. Bourke, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press), 239]

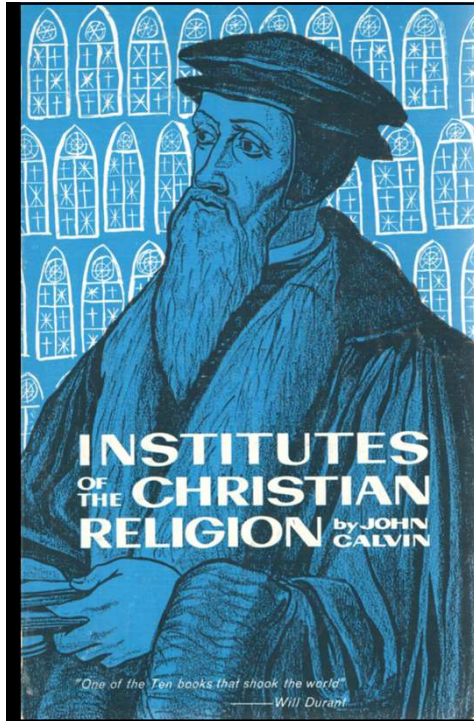


Thomas Aquinas
1225-1274

Catechism of the Catholic Church

"The existence of God the Creator can be known with certainty through his works, by the light of human reason, even if this knowledge is often obscured and disfigured by error."

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, #286 (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1994), 75]



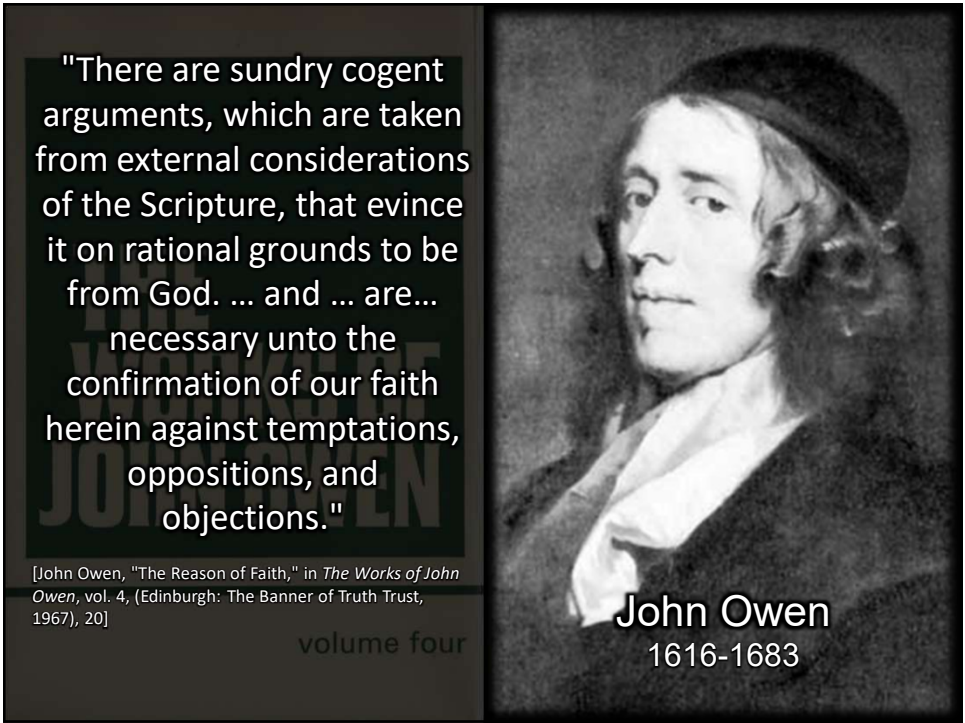
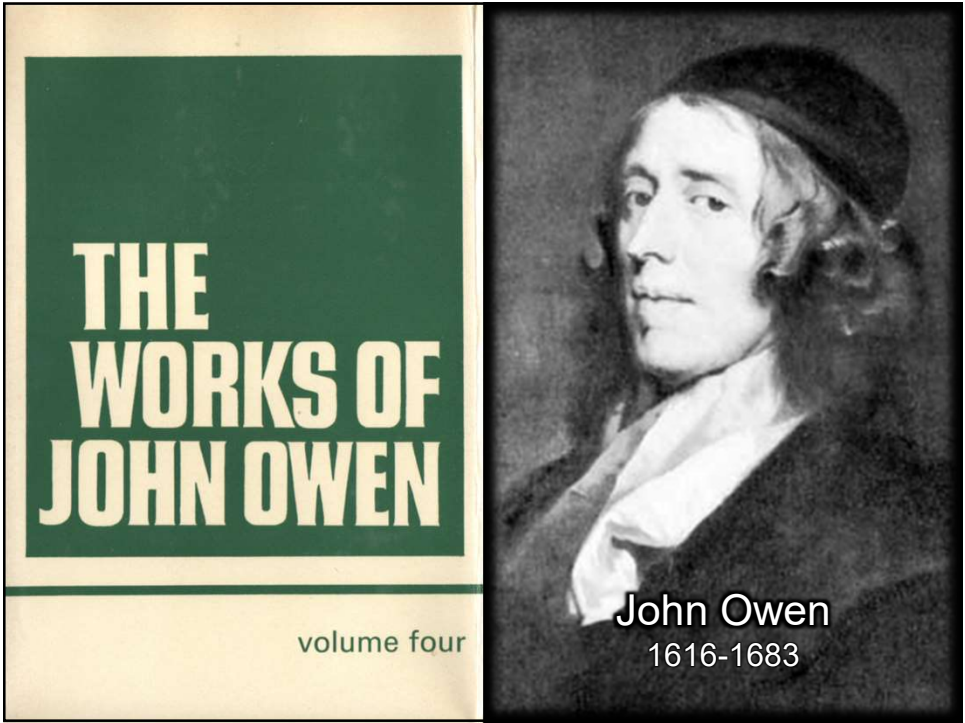
John Calvin
1509-1564

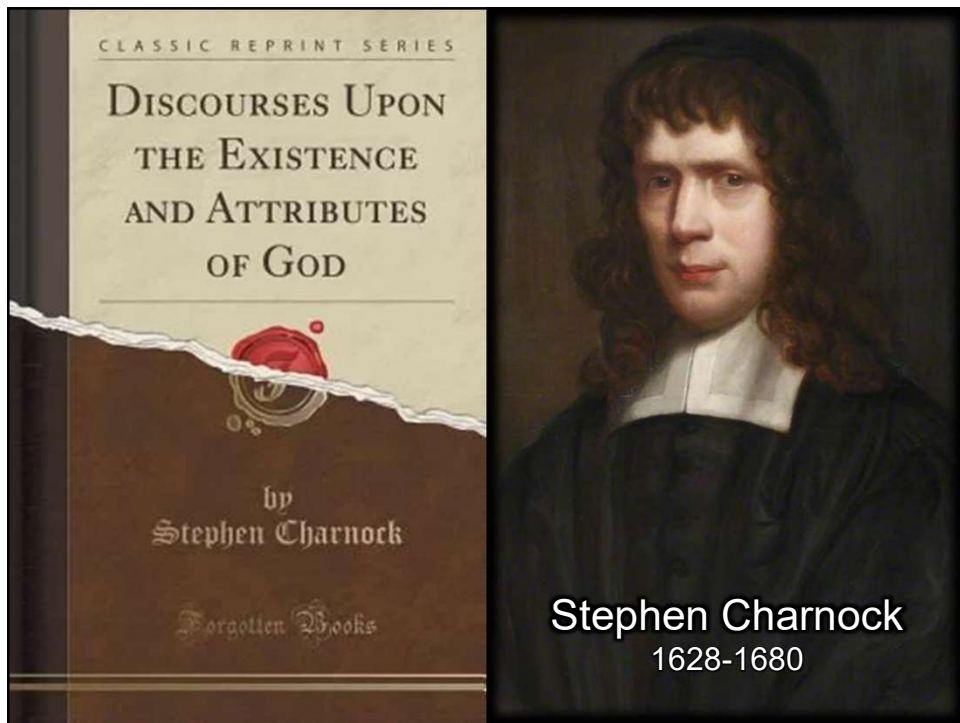
"Therefore in reading the profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us, that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator."

[*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.2.15, trans. Henry Beveridge, (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans), 236]



John Calvin
1509-1564





"Men that will not listen to Scripture ... cannot easily deny natural reason There is a natural as well as a revealed knowledge, and the book of the creatures is legible in declaring the being of a God"

[Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 27.]



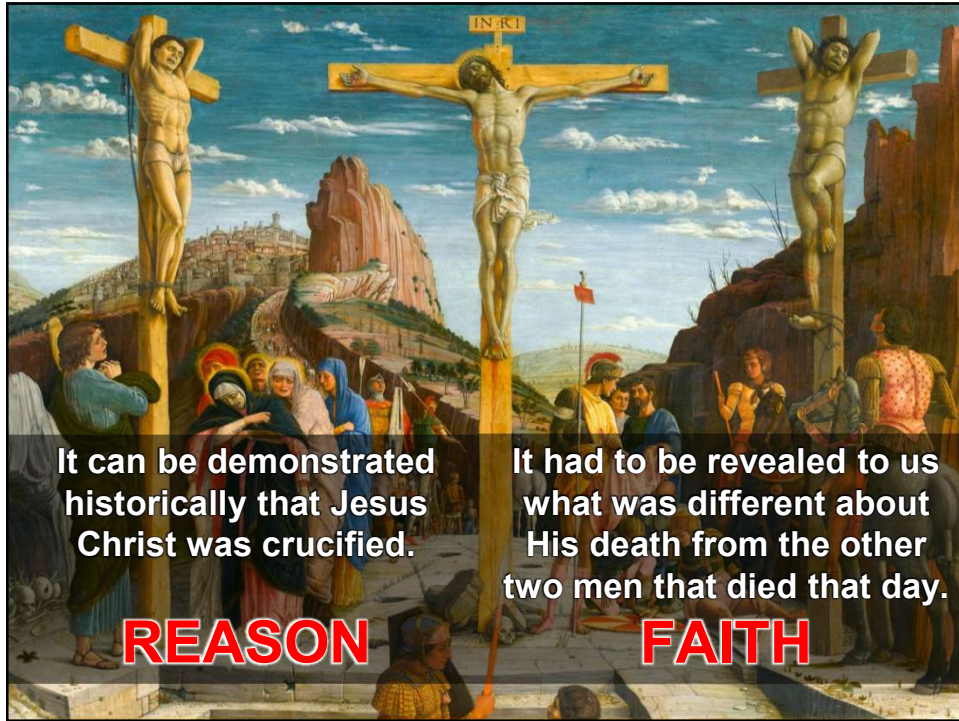
Stephen Charnock
1628-1680

"God in regard of his existence is not only the discovery of faith, but of reason. God hath revealed not only his being, but some sparks of his eternal power and godhead in his works, as well as in his word. ... It is a discovery of our reason ... and an object of our faith ... it is an article of our faith and an article of our reason."

[Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 27.]



Stephen Charnock
1628-1680

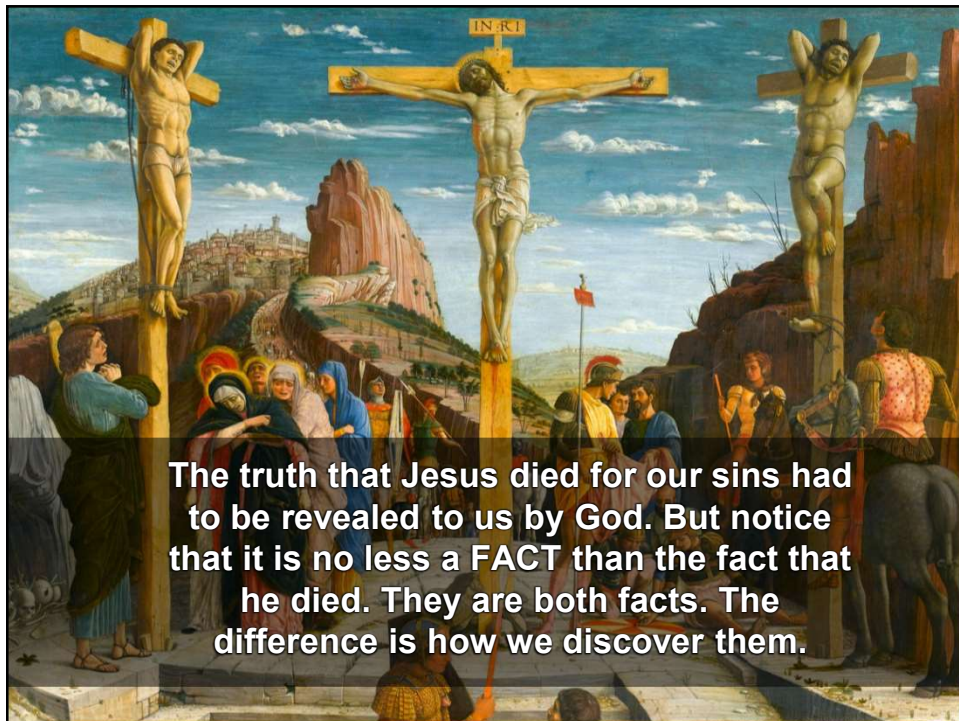


It can be demonstrated historically that Jesus Christ was crucified.

REASON

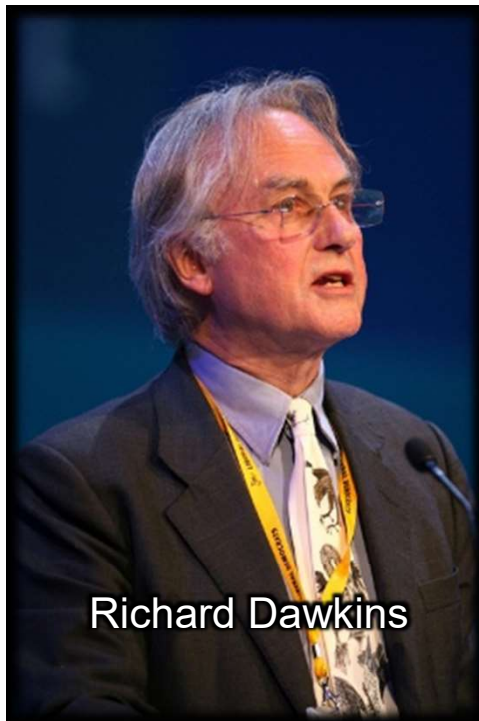
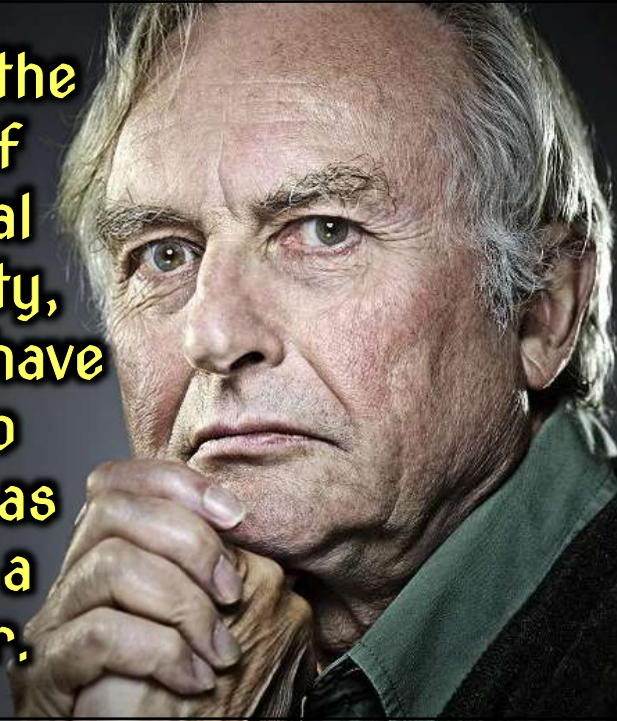
It had to be revealed to us what was different about His death from the other two men that died that day.

FAITH



The truth that Jesus died for our sins had to be revealed to us by God. But notice that it is no less a **FACT** than the fact that he died. They are both facts. The difference is how we discover them.

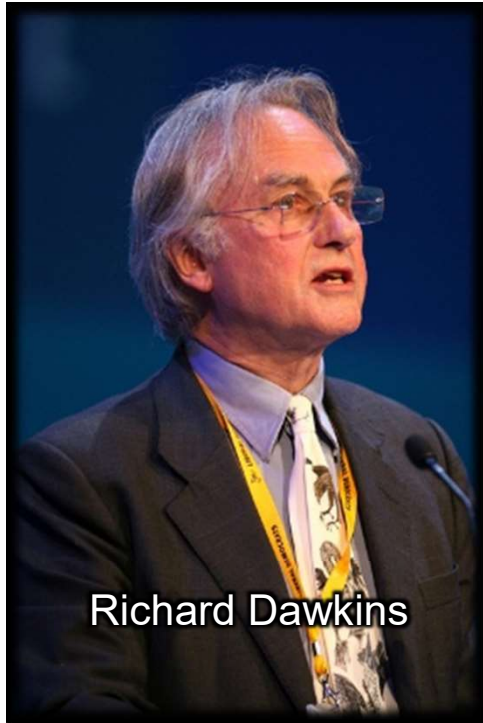
If God is the
cause of
biological
complexity,
He would have
to be so
complex as
to need a
designer.



Richard Dawkins

But of course any God capable of intelligently designing something as complex as the DNA/protein replicating machine must have been at least as complex and organized as that machine itself."

[Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 141]



Richard Dawkins

"However statistically improbable the entity you seek to explain by invoking a designer, the designer himself has got to be at least as improbable."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 114]

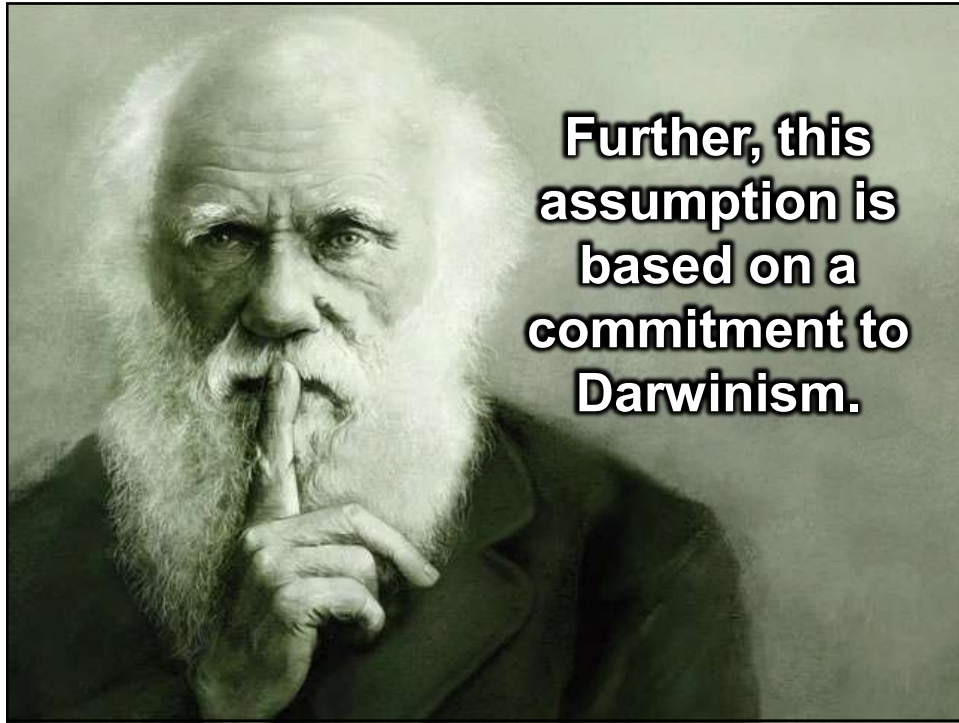


This reasoning is based on an assumption of physicalism (the view that maintains that everything that is real is physical).

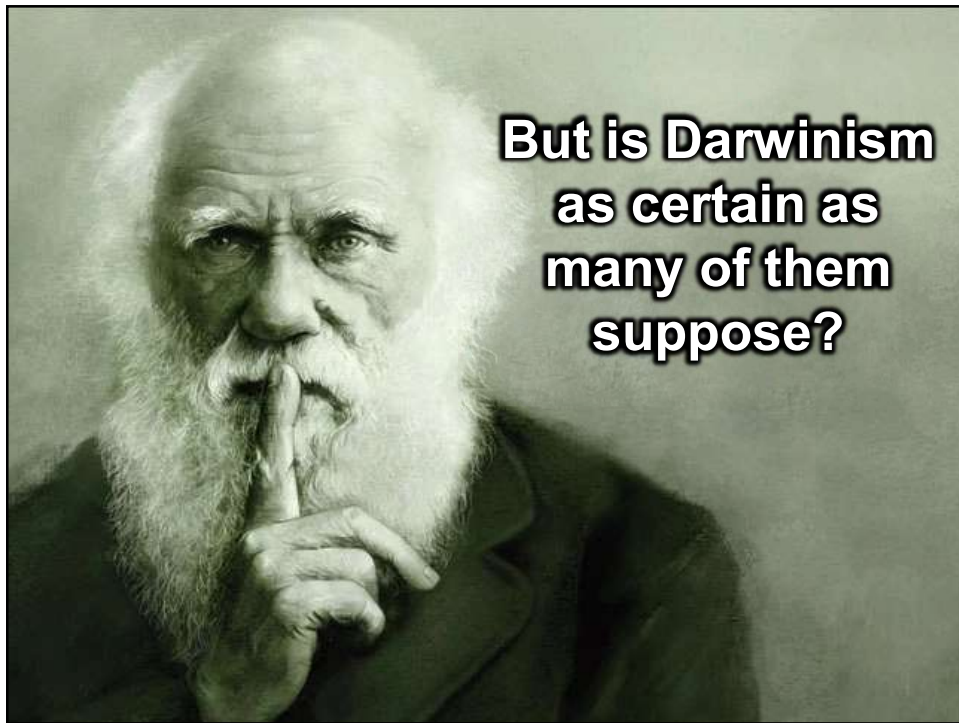


But there is no reason to think that minds which are capable of creating complex objects and processes must themselves be complex (i.e., composed of parts).





**Further, this
assumption is
based on a
commitment to
Darwinism.**



**But is Darwinism
as certain as
many of them
suppose?**

"The basic Darwinian idea . . . is about as secure as any in science ..."

"Darwinian evolution is a well-established theory. "


"There is no question . . ."

Challenging evolution is on par with challenging the Moon landing.

Challenging evolution is on par with believing in a flat Earth.

Is this so?

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 A SCIENTIFIC DISSENT
FROM DARWINISM

"We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutations and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged."


[SIGN THE LIST](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE LIST](#)

There Is Scientific
Dissent From Darwinism.
It deserves to be heard.

"I found it important to sign this statement because I believe intellectual freedom fuels scientific discovery. If we, as scientists, are not allowed to question, ponder, explore, and critically evaluate all areas of science but forced to comply with current scientific orthodoxy then we are operating in a mode completely antithetical to the very nature of science."

Dr. Rebecca Keller, Biophysical Chemistry



Observations
This doesn't mean that
Darwinism is false.

Observations

This doesn't mean that all these signers repudiate evolution entirely.

Observations

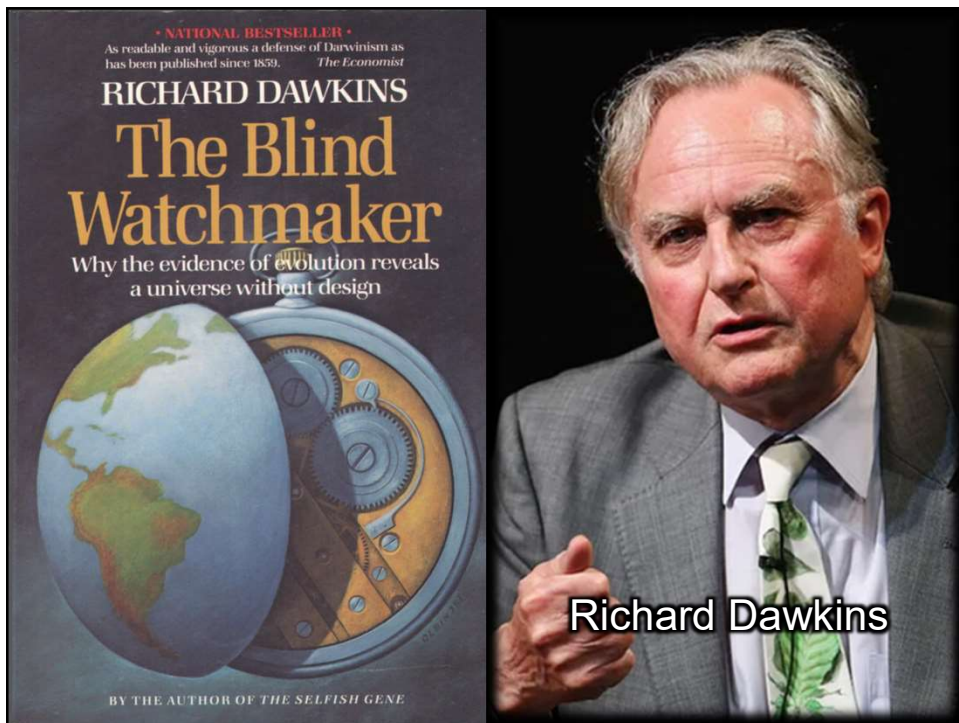
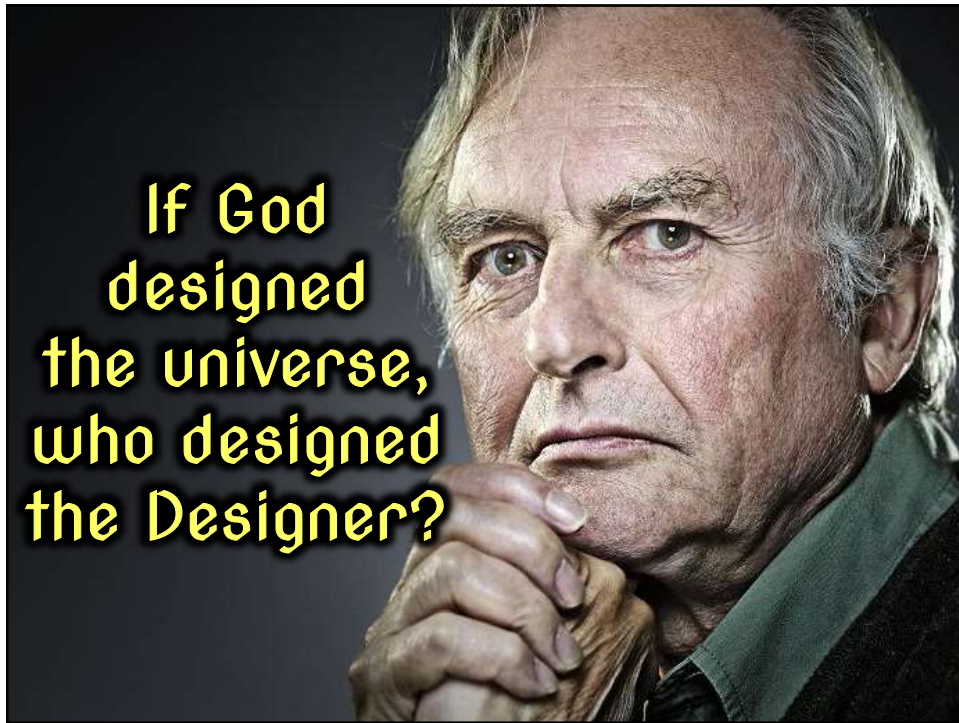
It does mean that statements such as

"The basic Darwinian idea is about as secure as any in science."

"Darwinian evolution is a well-established theory."

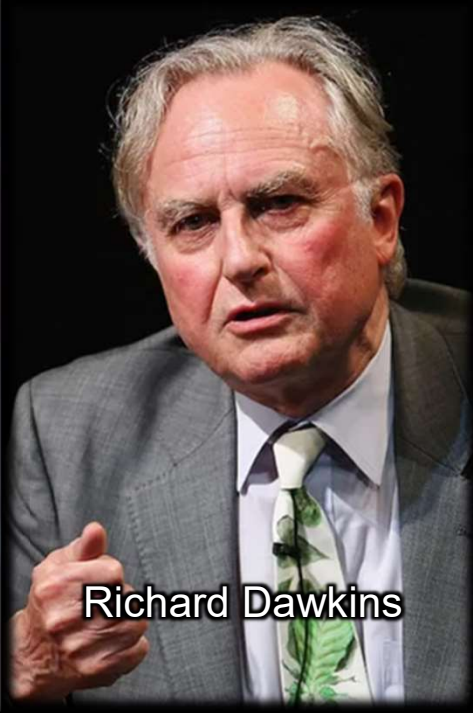
"There is no question . . ."

are unwarranted.

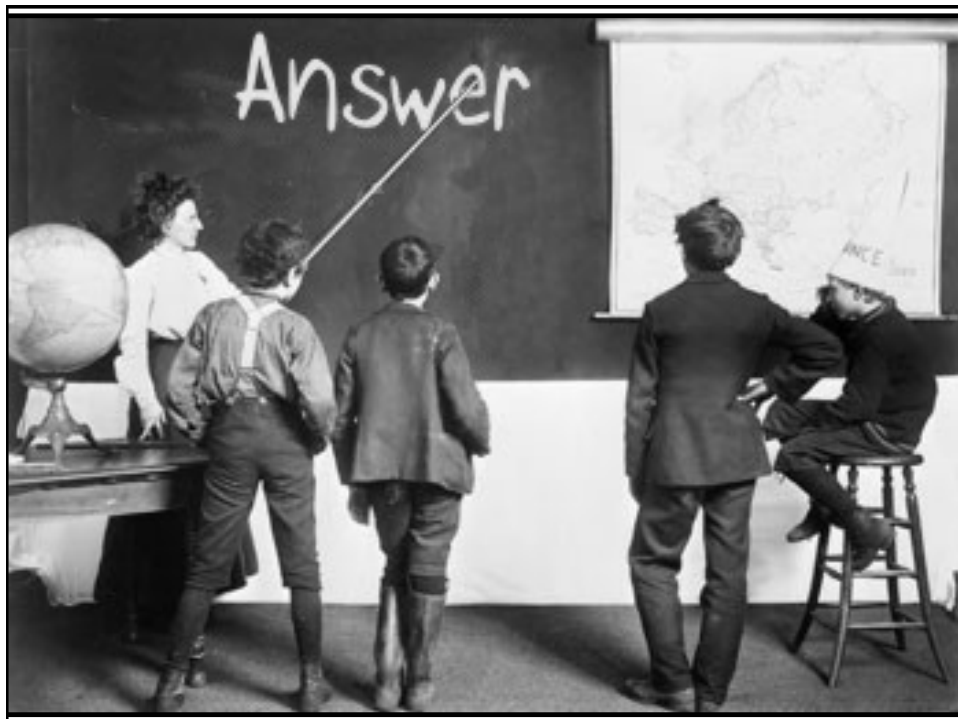


"To explain the origin of the DNA/protein machine by invoking a supernatural Designer is to explain precisely nothing, for it leaves unexplained the origin of the Designer."

[Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 141]



Richard Dawkins



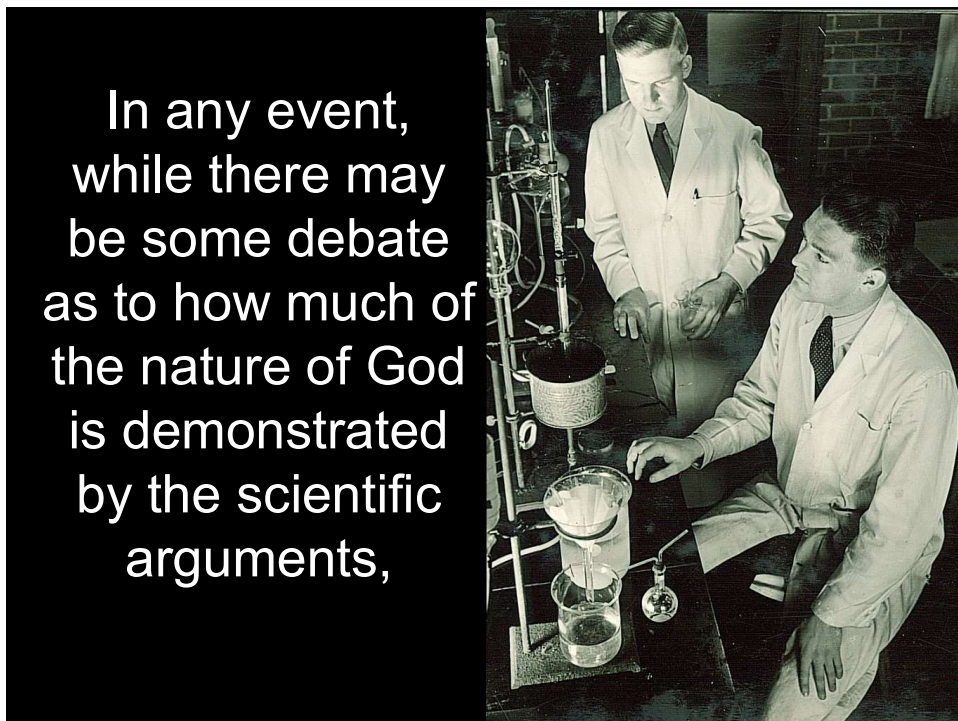
Even if it was the case that we could not explain the origin of the designer or of God, it does not follow from this that positing God "explains precisely nothing."

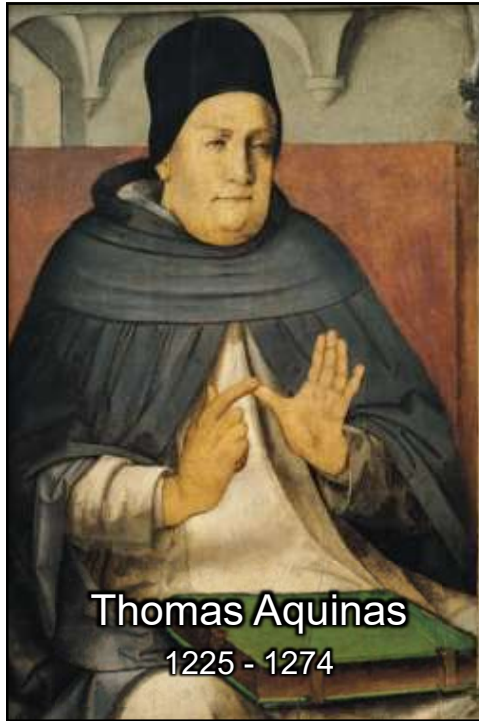


Suppose we got an intelligent message from outer space.



It would be completely reasonable to posit the existence of intelligent life as the cause even if we knew nothing else about this life.





Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

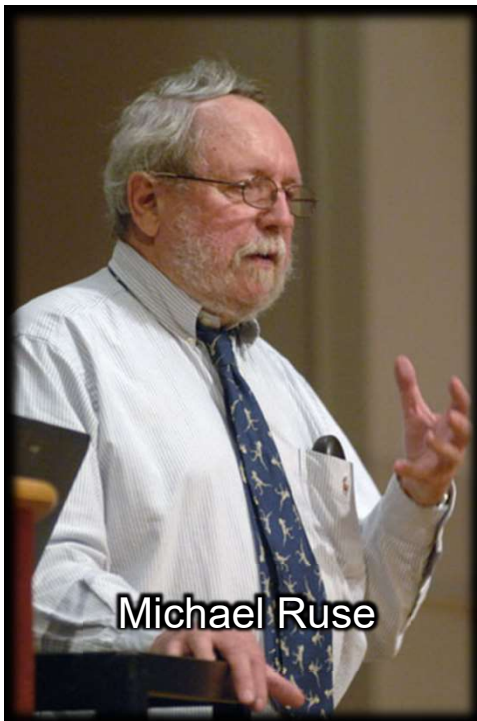
the Aristotelian /
Thomistic
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His classical
attributes as well.



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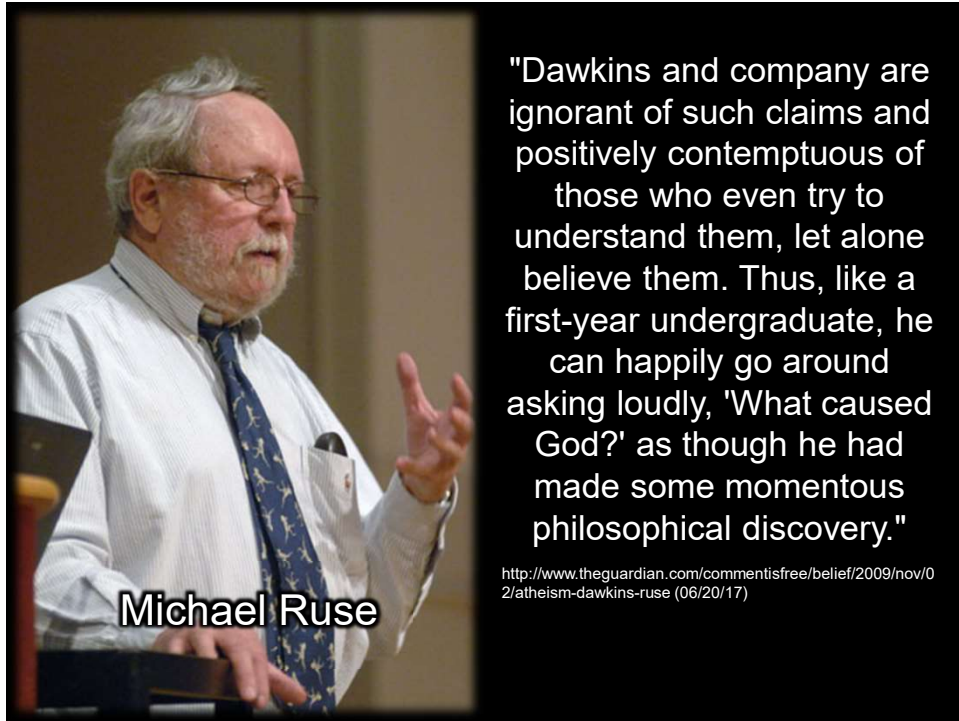


the Aristotelian / Thomistic Arguments demonstrate not only the existence of God, but all of His classical attributes as well.



Michael Ruse

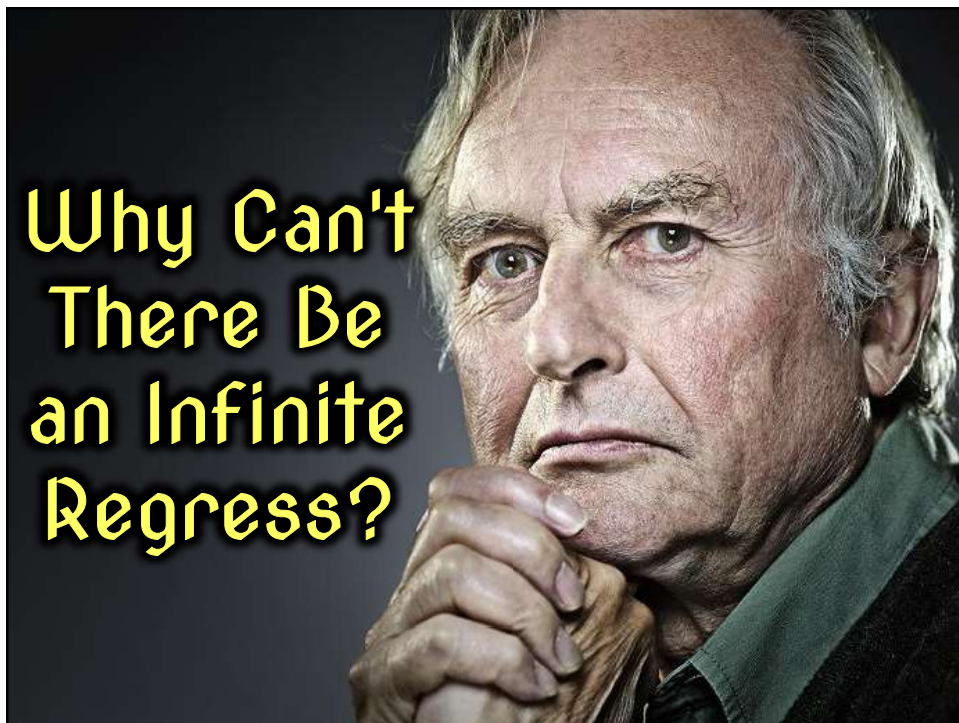
"I have written that *The God Delusion* made me ashamed to be an atheist and I meant it. Trying to understand how God could need no cause, Christians claim that God exists necessarily. I have taken the effort to try to understand what that means.



Michael Ruse

"Dawkins and company are ignorant of such claims and positively contemptuous of those who even try to understand them, let alone believe them. Thus, like a first-year undergraduate, he can happily go around asking loudly, 'What caused God?' as though he had made some momentous philosophical discovery."

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/nov/02/atheism-dawkins-ruse> (06/20/17)



Why Can't
There Be
an Infinite
Regress?

The **GOD** Delusion

Richard
Dawkins



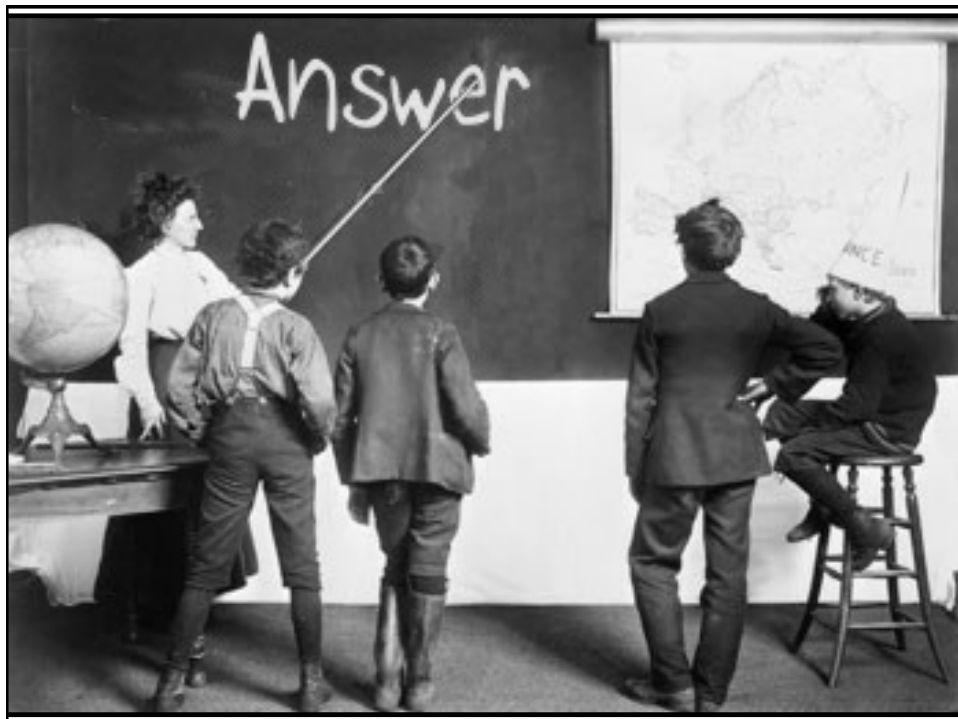
*"Thomas Aquinas's
Proofs: The Uncaused
Cause. Nothing is
caused by itself. Every
effect has a prior
cause, and again we
are pushed back into
regress. This has to be
terminated by a first
cause, which we call
God."*

[Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 77]



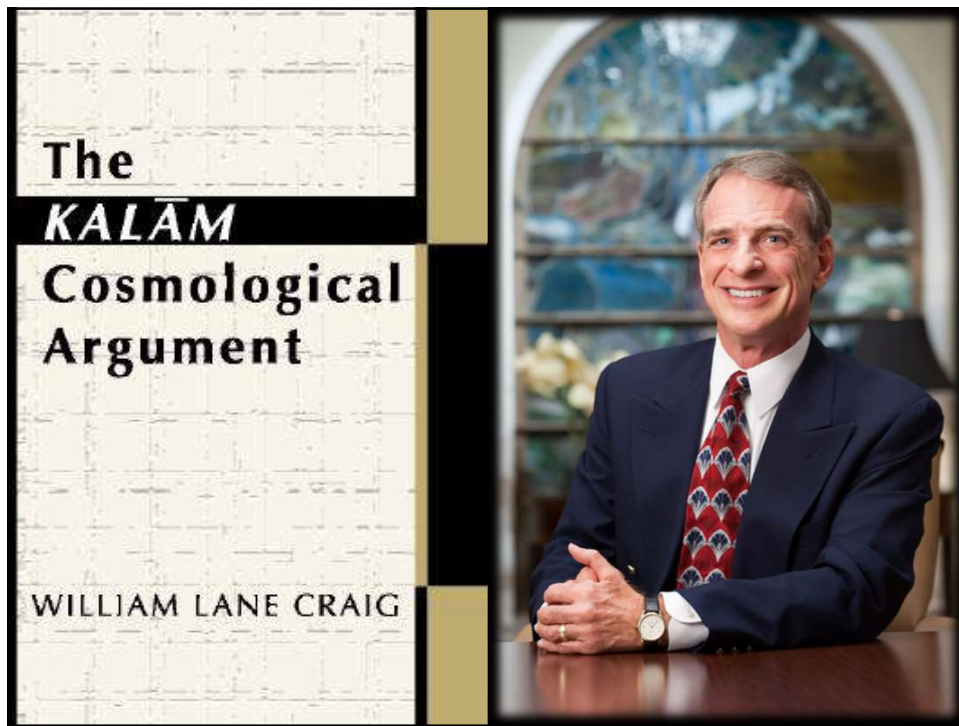
"All three of these arguments [by Aquinas] rely upon the idea of a regress and invoke God to terminate it. They make the entirely unwarranted assumption that God himself is immune to the regress."

[Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 77]



While it is true that Aquinas uses the expression "this cannot go on to infinity" in his famous arguments for God's existence ...

Dawkins is mistaken in assuming that Aquinas is making a Kalam Cosmological Argument.



Premise 1: *The Universe began to exist.*

Premise 2: *Whatever begins to exist has a cause of its existence.*

Conclusion: *Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.*



Premise 1: The Universe began to exist.

One argument for premise 1 says that a temporal infinite past is impossible because an infinite series is impossible.

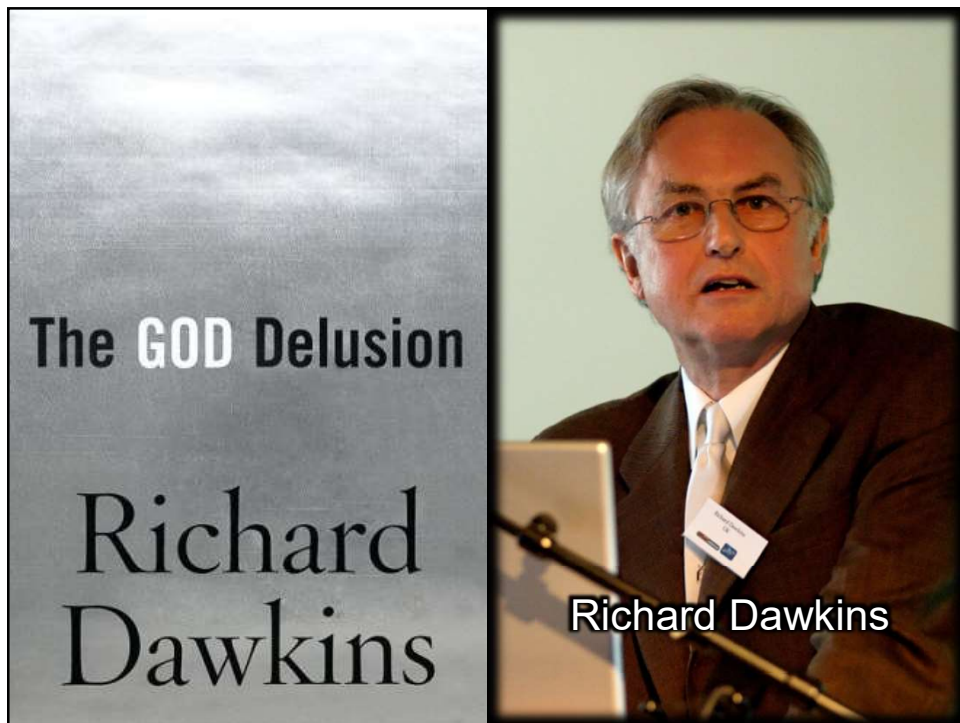
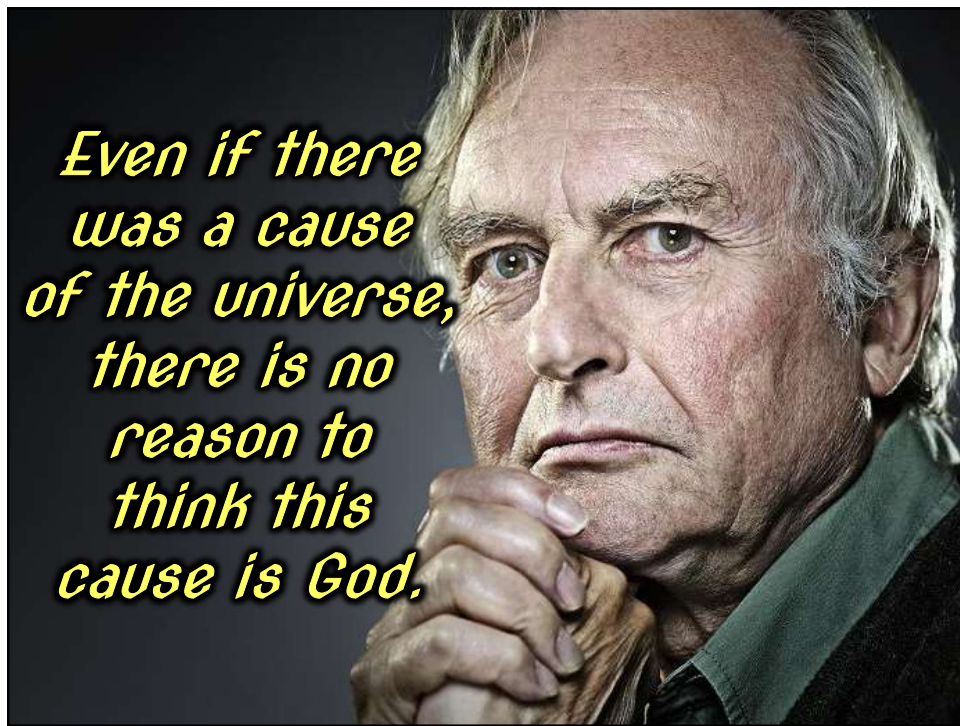
But this is not at all what Aquinas is arguing when he is denying the possibility of an infinite regress.

Dawkins is not alone in his mistaken assumption that Aquinas is arguing for the impossibility of an infinite regress in the Kalam sense.

infinitum per accidens
(accidental infinite)

VS.

infinitum per se
(per se infinite)



"Even if we allow the dubious luxury of arbitrarily conjuring up a terminator to an infinite regress and giving it a name, simply because we need one, there is absolutely no reason to endow that terminator with any of the properties normally ascribed to God."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 77]

DAWKINS



Richard Dawkins

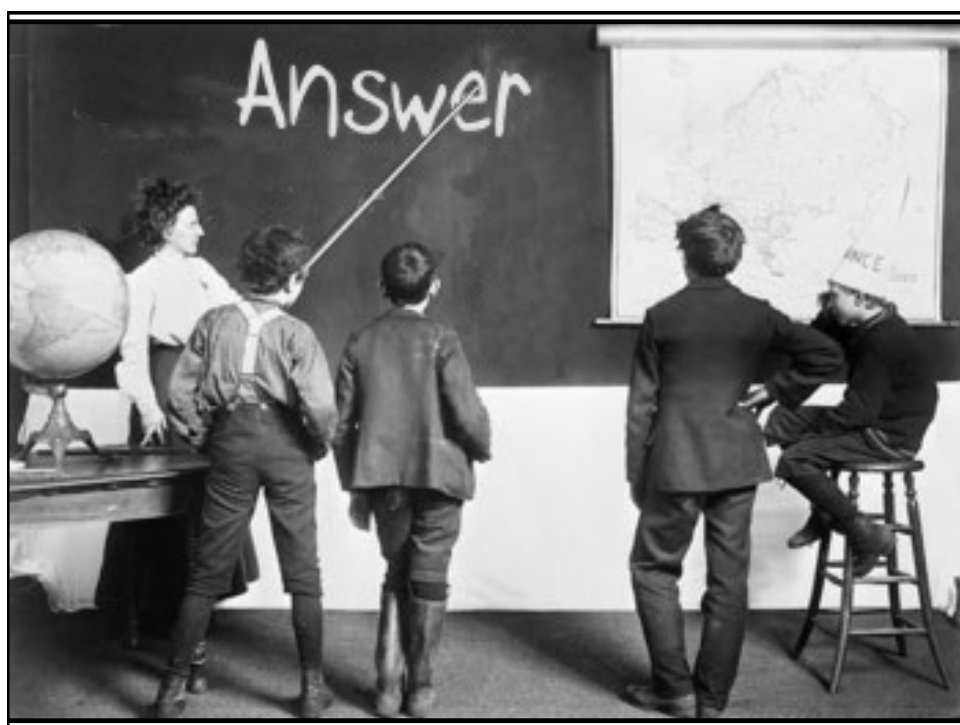
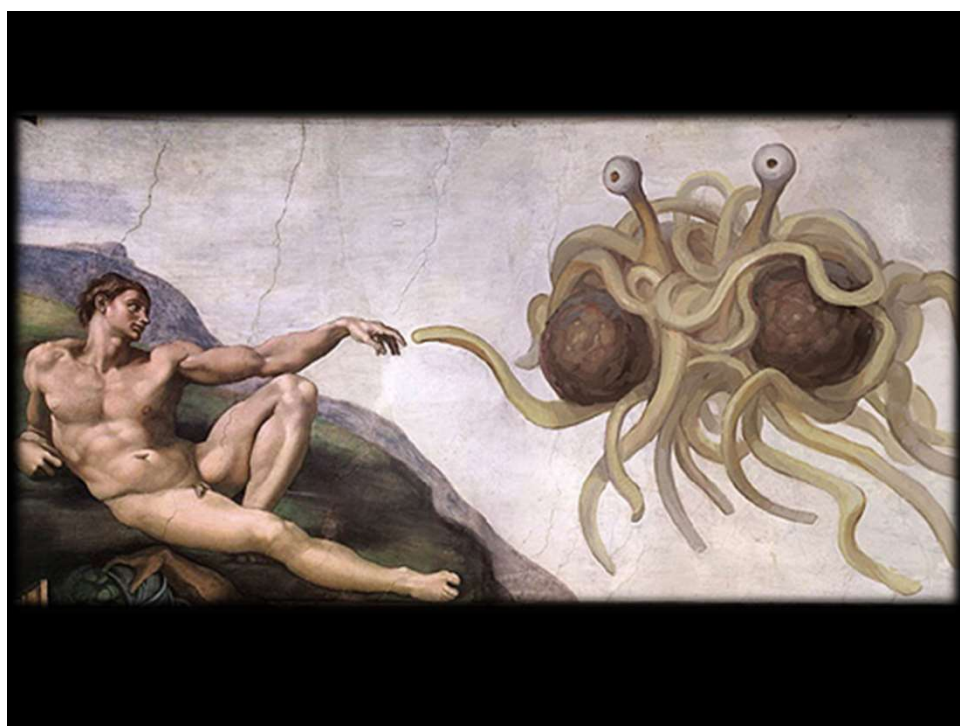
"Even if we allow the dubious luxury of arbitrarily conjuring up a terminator to an infinite regress and giving it a name, simply because we need one, there is absolutely no reason to endow that terminator with any of the properties normally ascribed to God."

[Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 77]

DAWKINS



Richard Dawkins





Even From the Scientific Evidence It Would Seem ...

- *Since it is the cause of matter,
it cannot itself be material.*
- *Since it is the cause of time,
it cannot itself be temporal.*
- *Since it is the cause of space,
it cannot itself be spatial.*

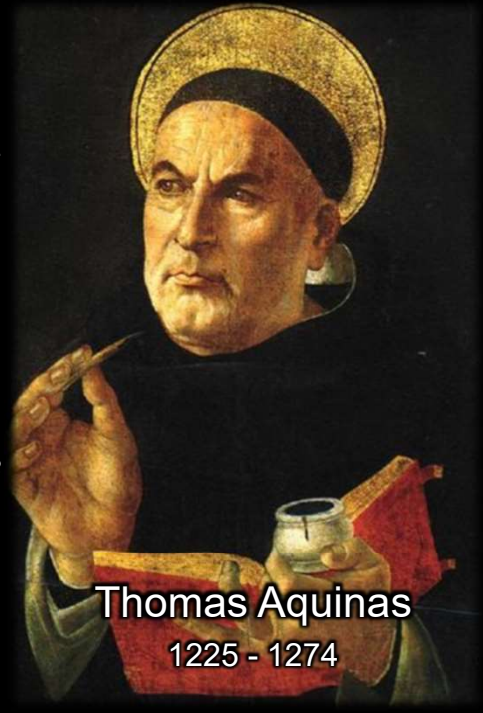


Even From the Scientific Evidence It Would Seem ...

***Thus, we have an immaterial,
timeless, space-less cause of the
existence of the universe which has
unimaginable power ...***

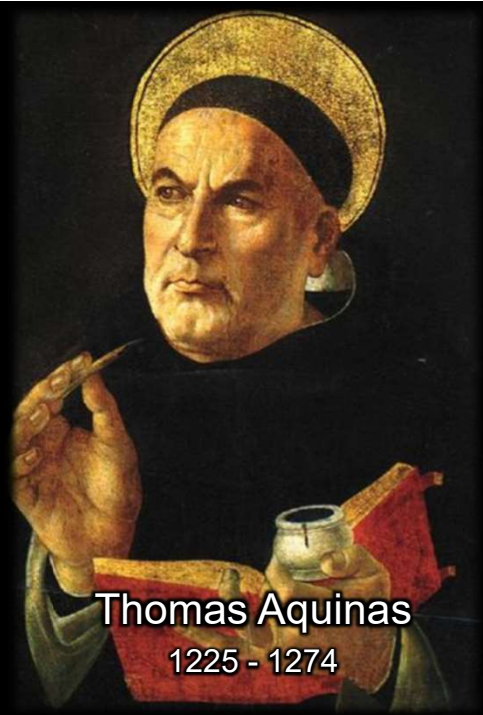
... and as Thomas Aquinas observed, "All men know this to be God."

Summa Theologia I, 2, 3

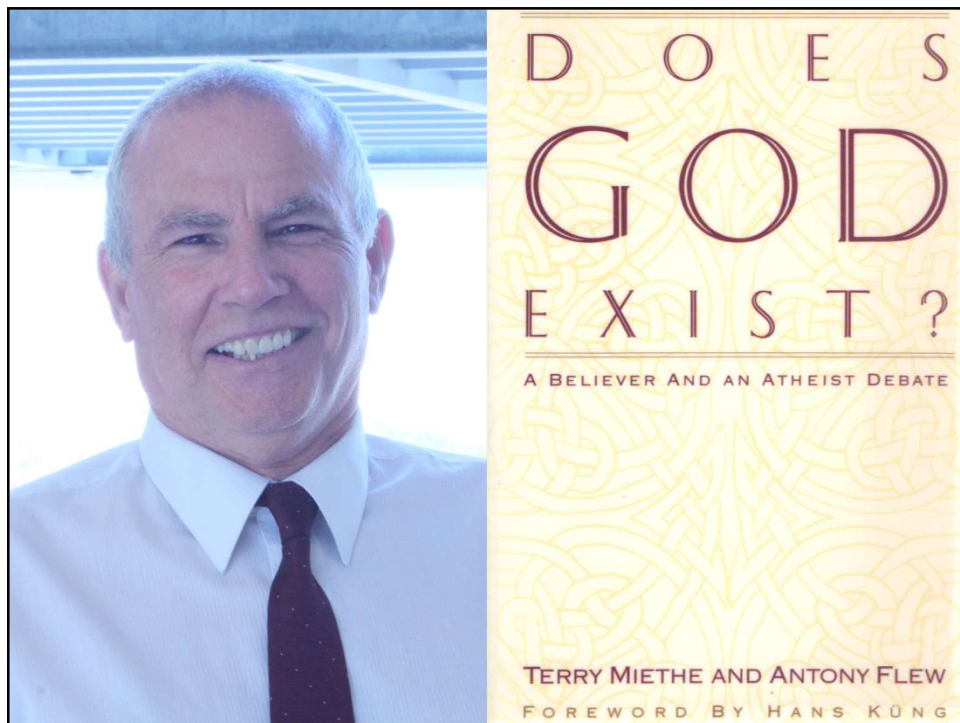


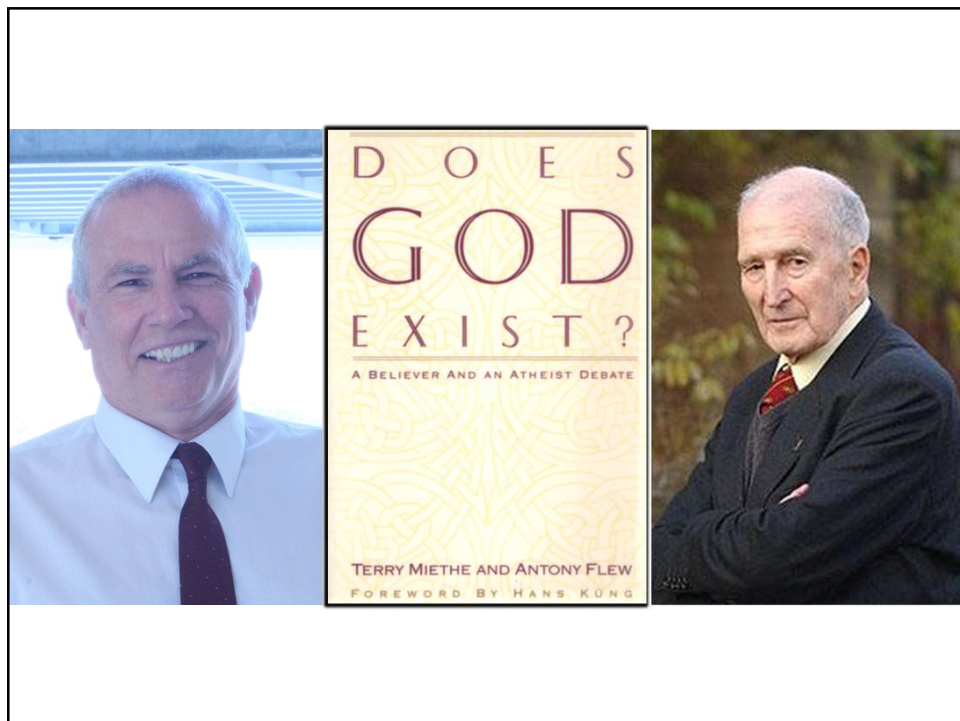
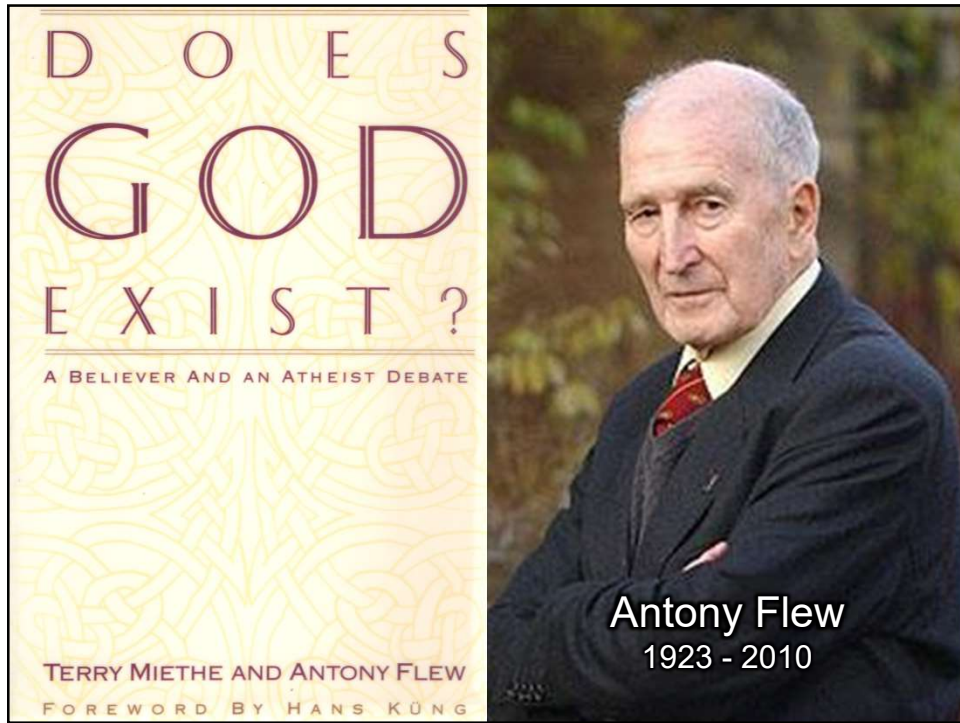
Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274

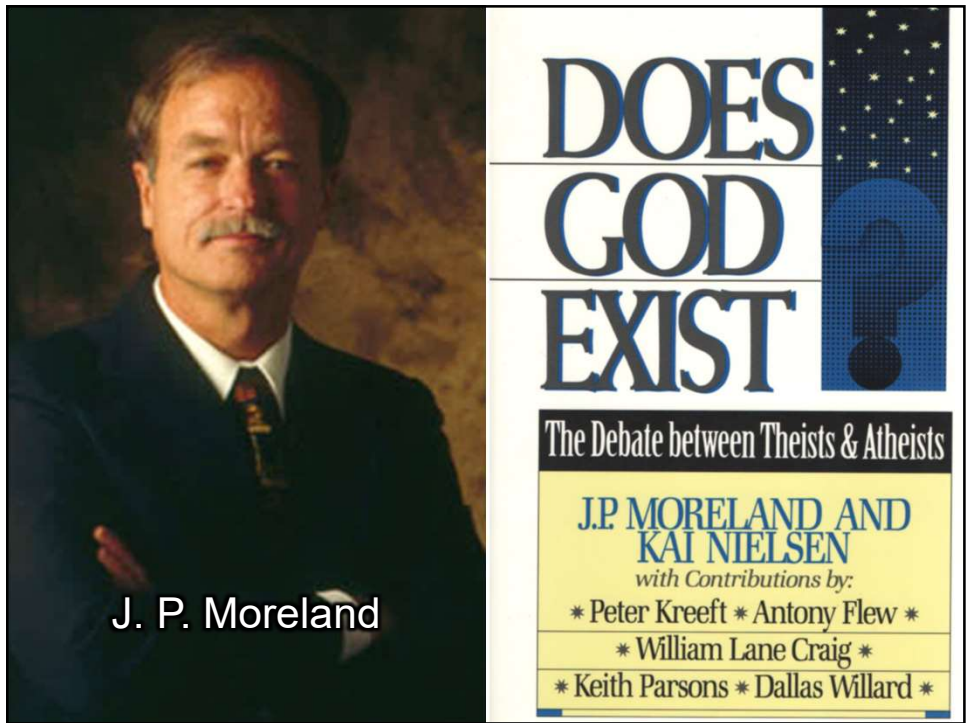
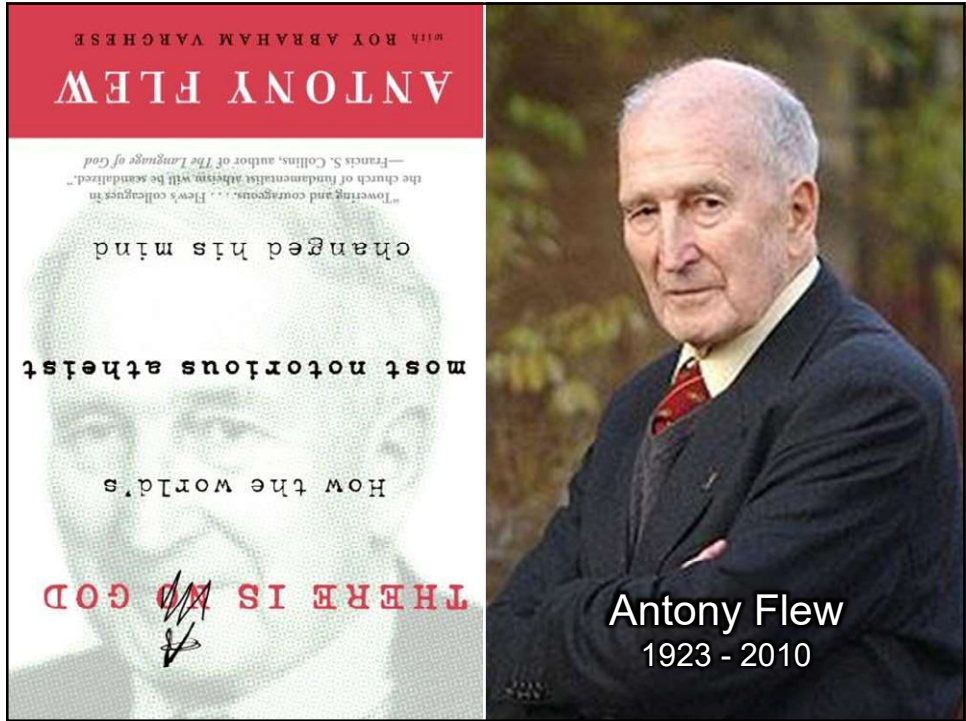
Having demonstrated the existence of God, Aquinas goes on to show how all the classical attributes of God cascade seamlessly and necessarily from his basic metaphysical commitments.

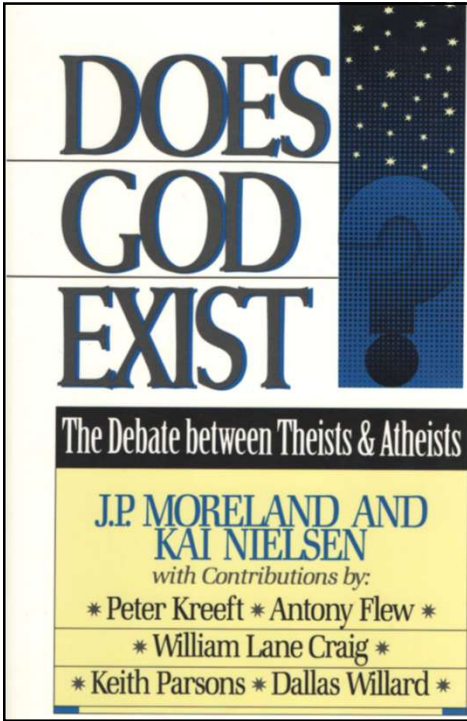


Thomas Aquinas
1225 - 1274










DOES GOD EXIST

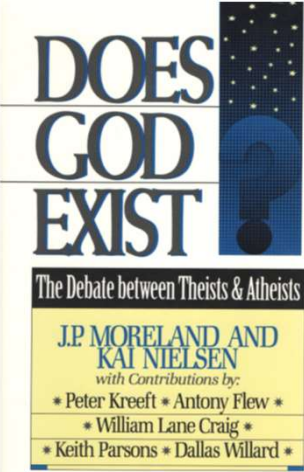

The Debate between Theists & Atheists

**J.P. MORELAND AND
KAI NIELSEN**
with Contributions by:

- * Peter Kreeft * Antony Flew *
- * William Lane Craig *
- * Keith Parsons * Dallas Willard *



Kai Nielsen




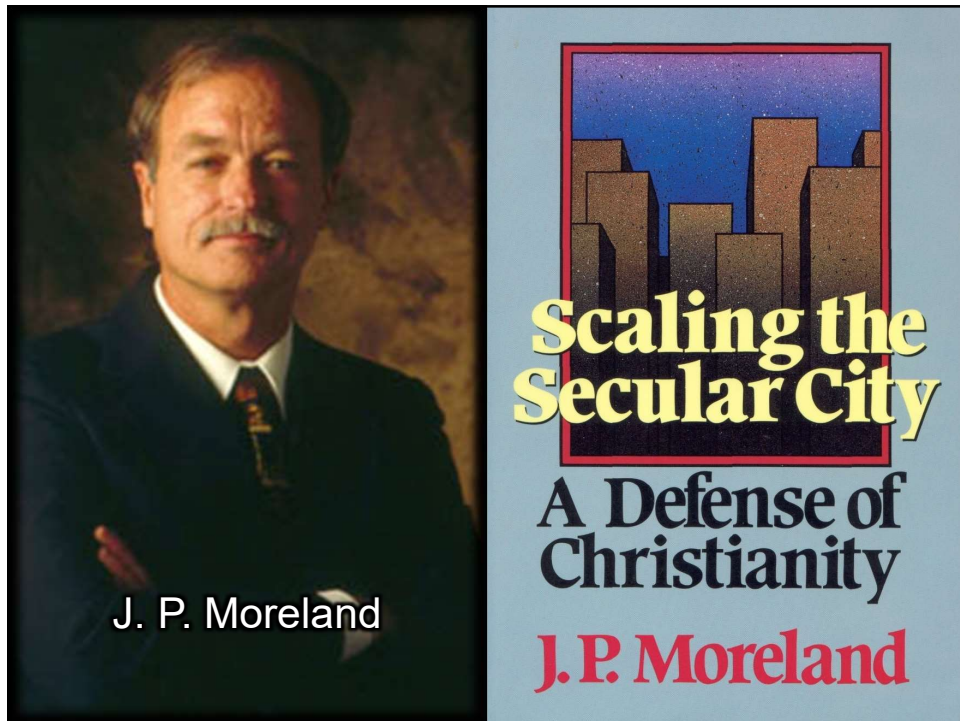
DOES GOD EXIST

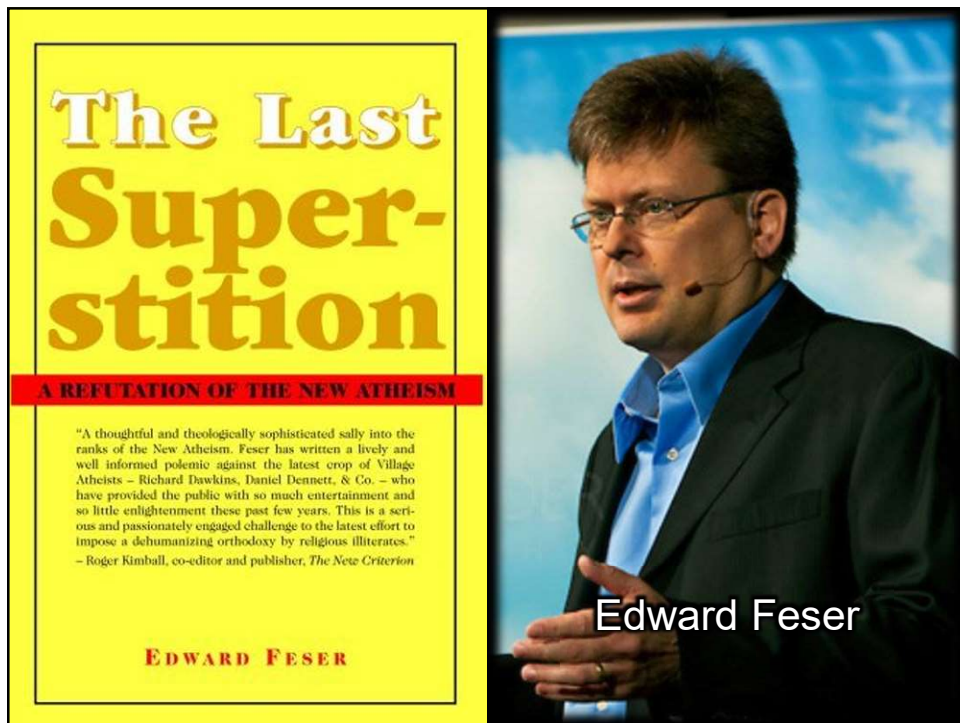
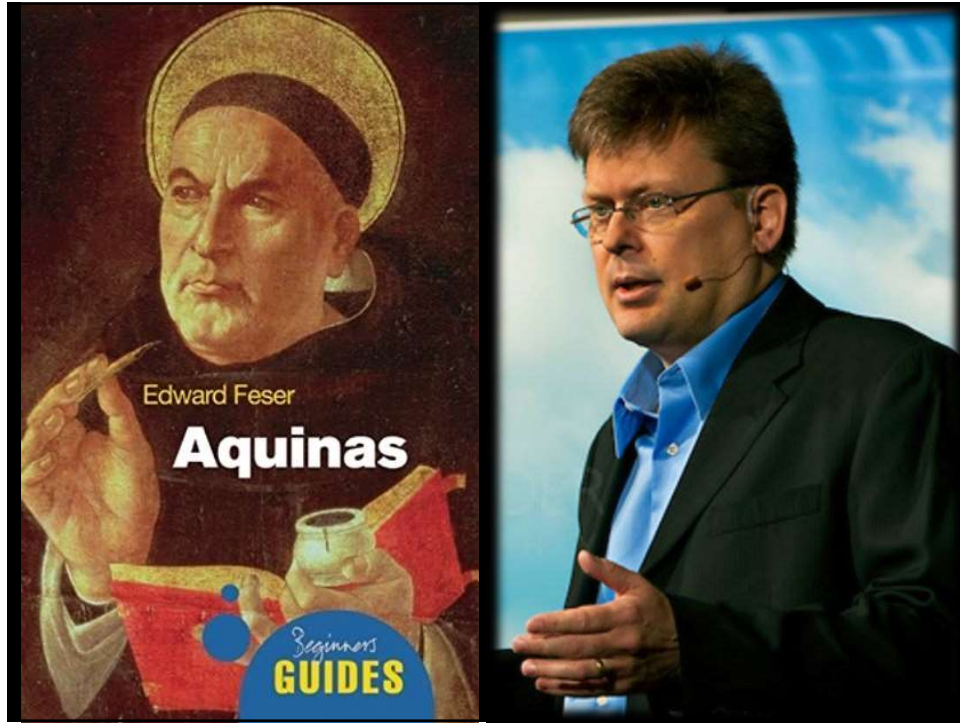
The Debate between Theists & Atheists

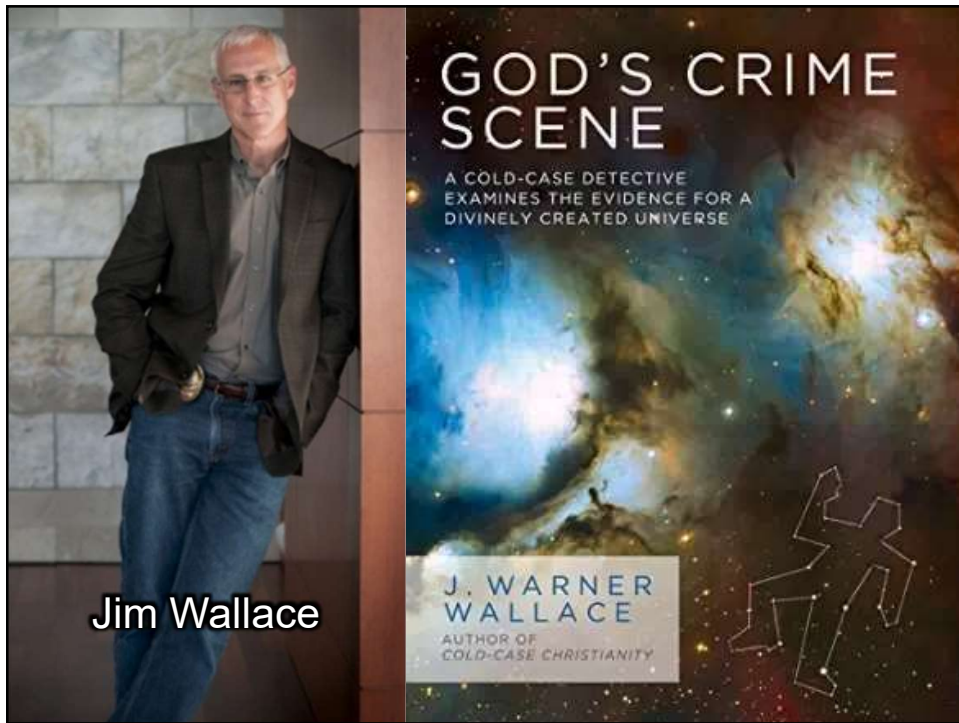
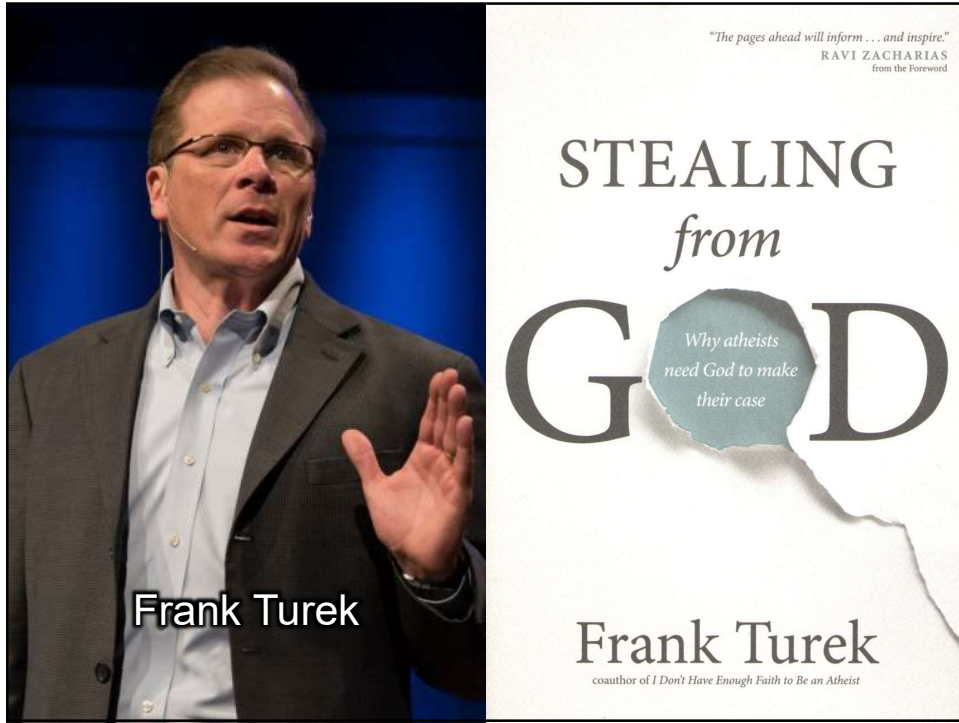
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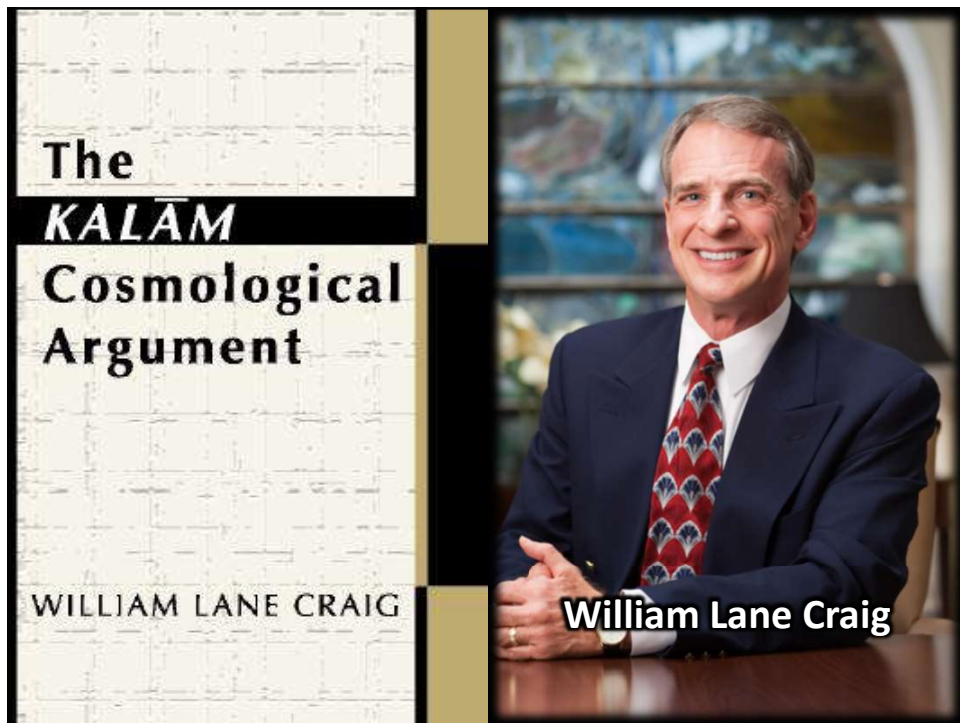
- * Peter Kreeft * Antony Flew *
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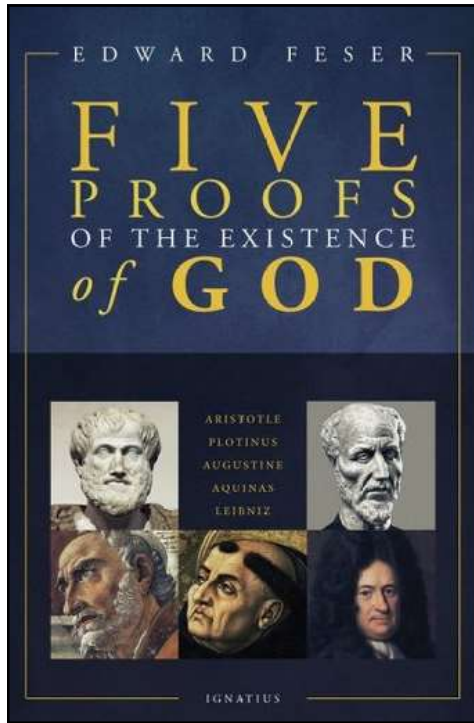




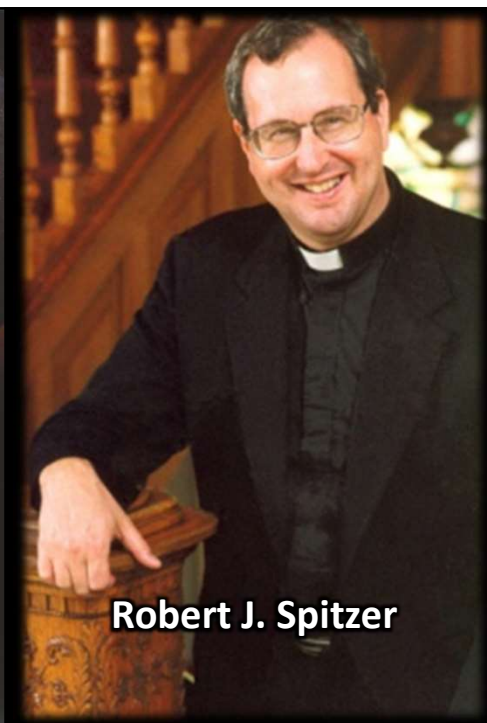
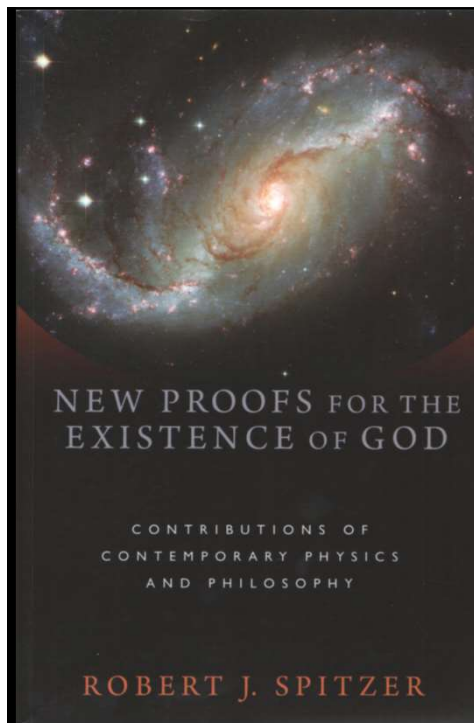




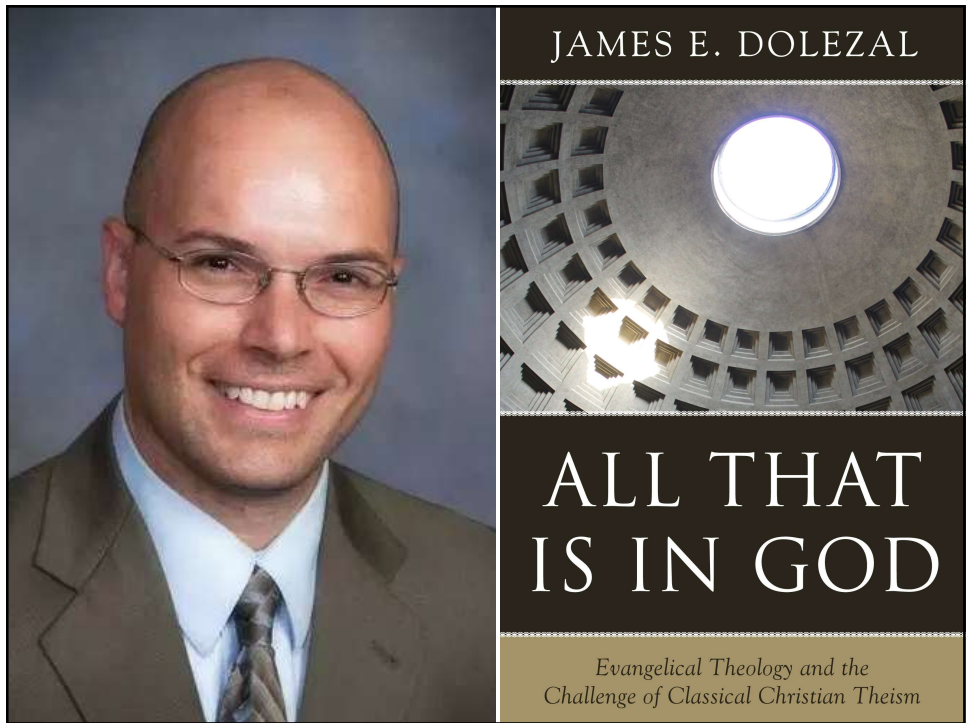
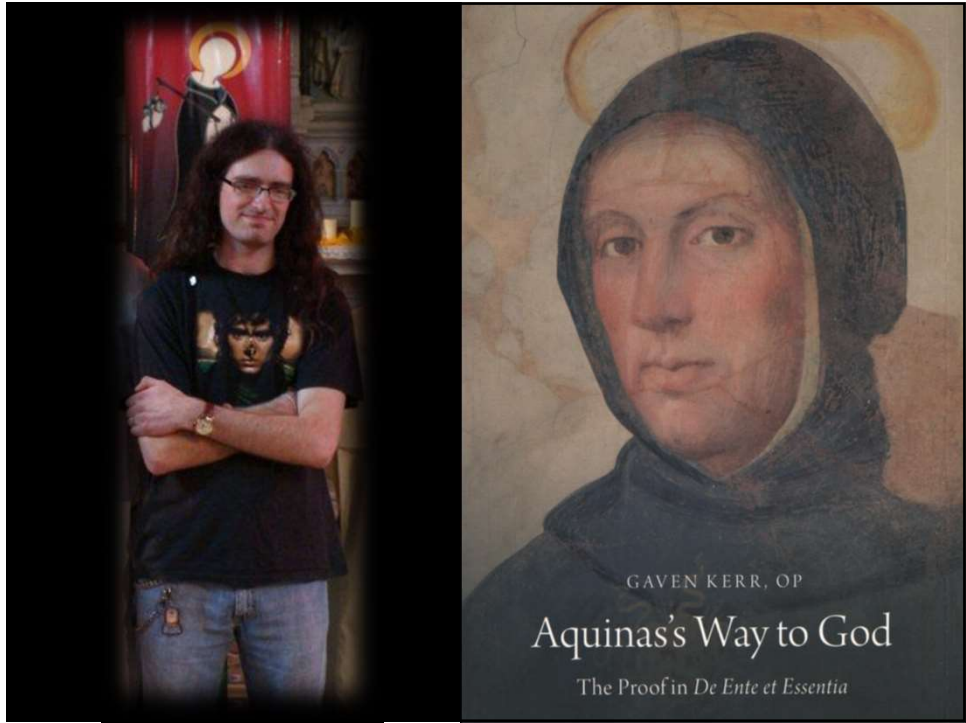


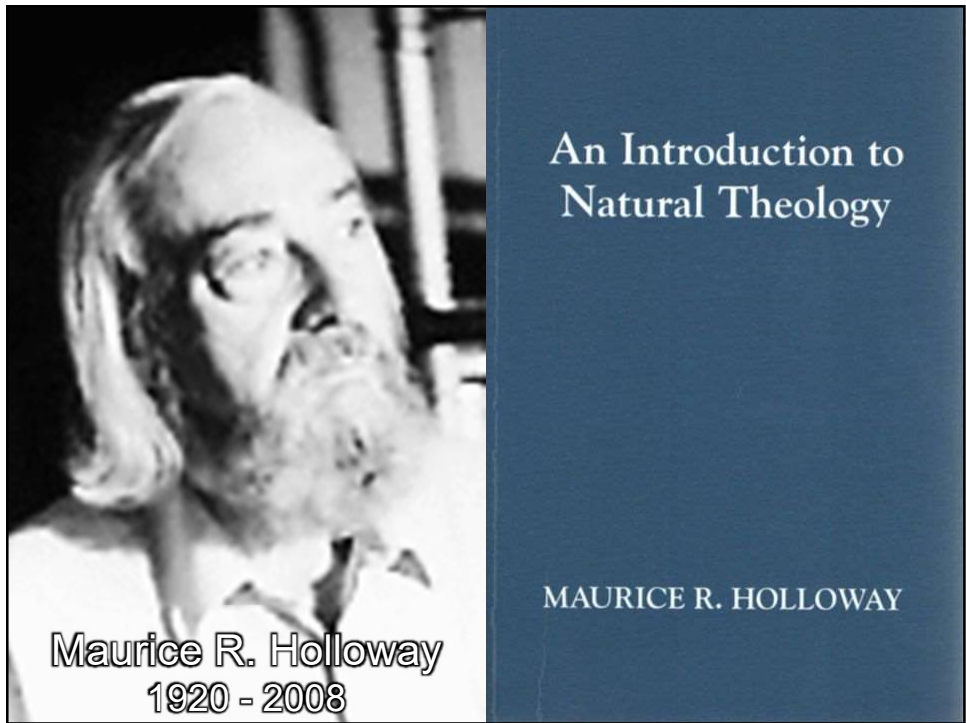
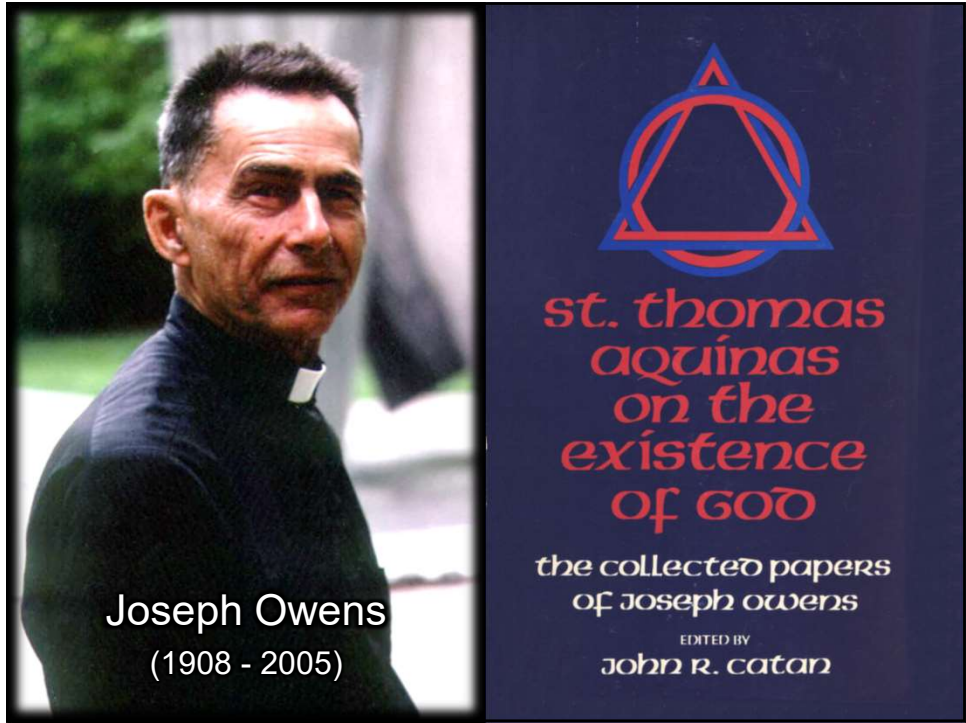


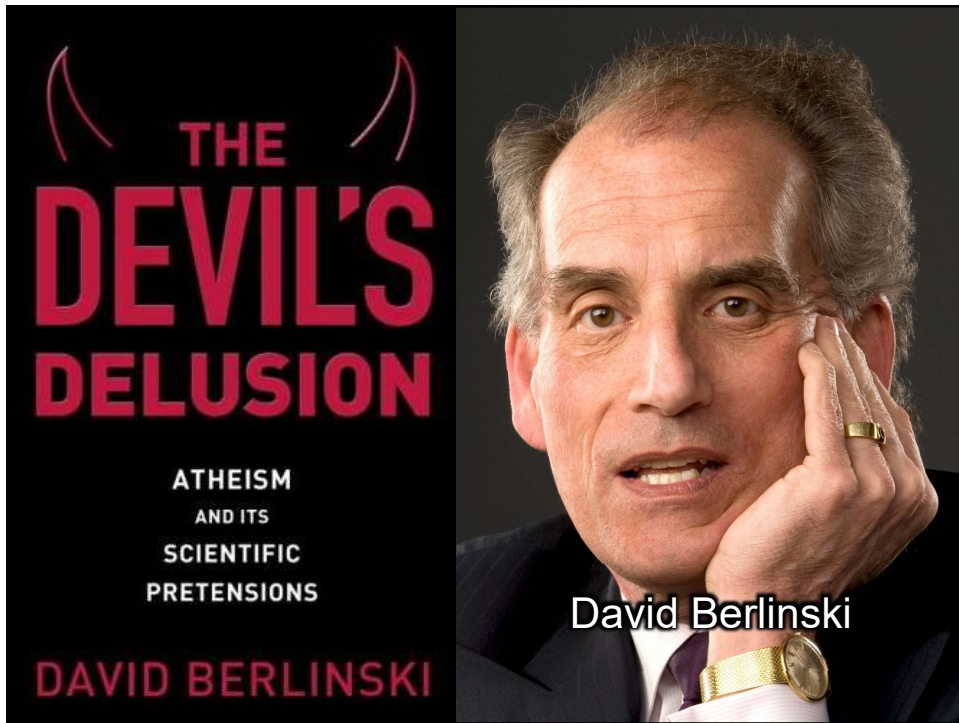
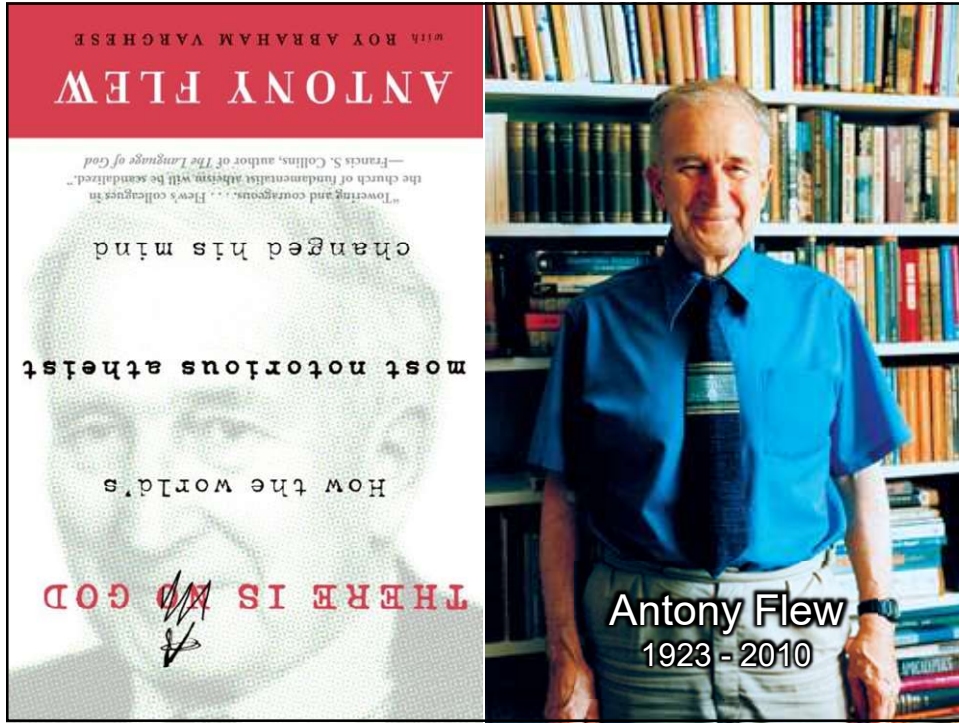
Edward Feser

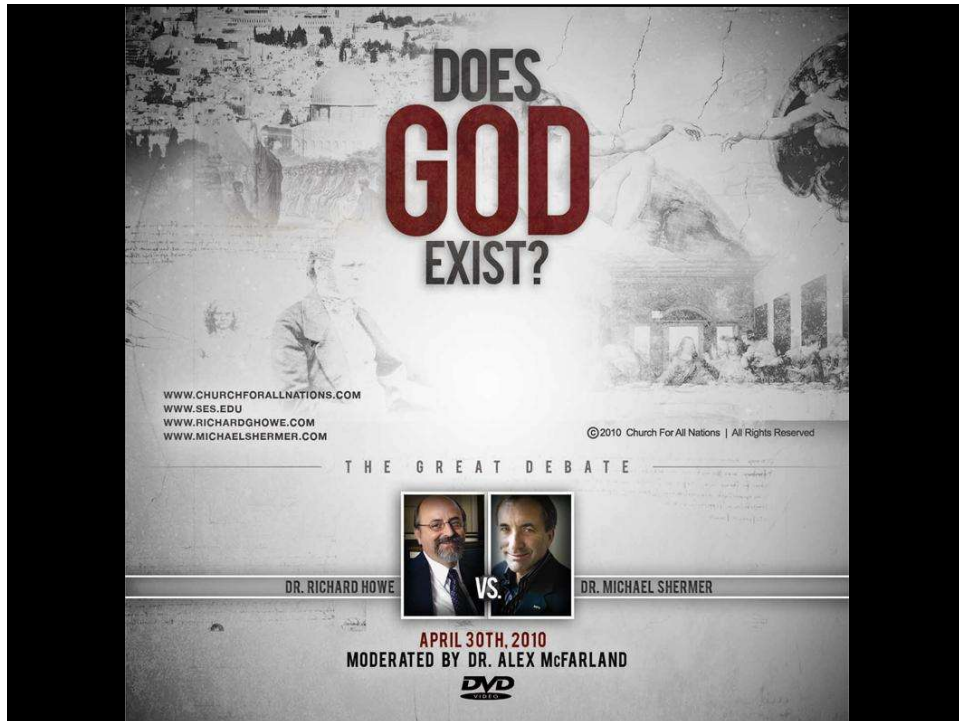


Robert J. Spitzer









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**The Virtual Office of Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.
www.richardghowe.com**

**Southern Evangelical Seminary
www.ses.edu**