

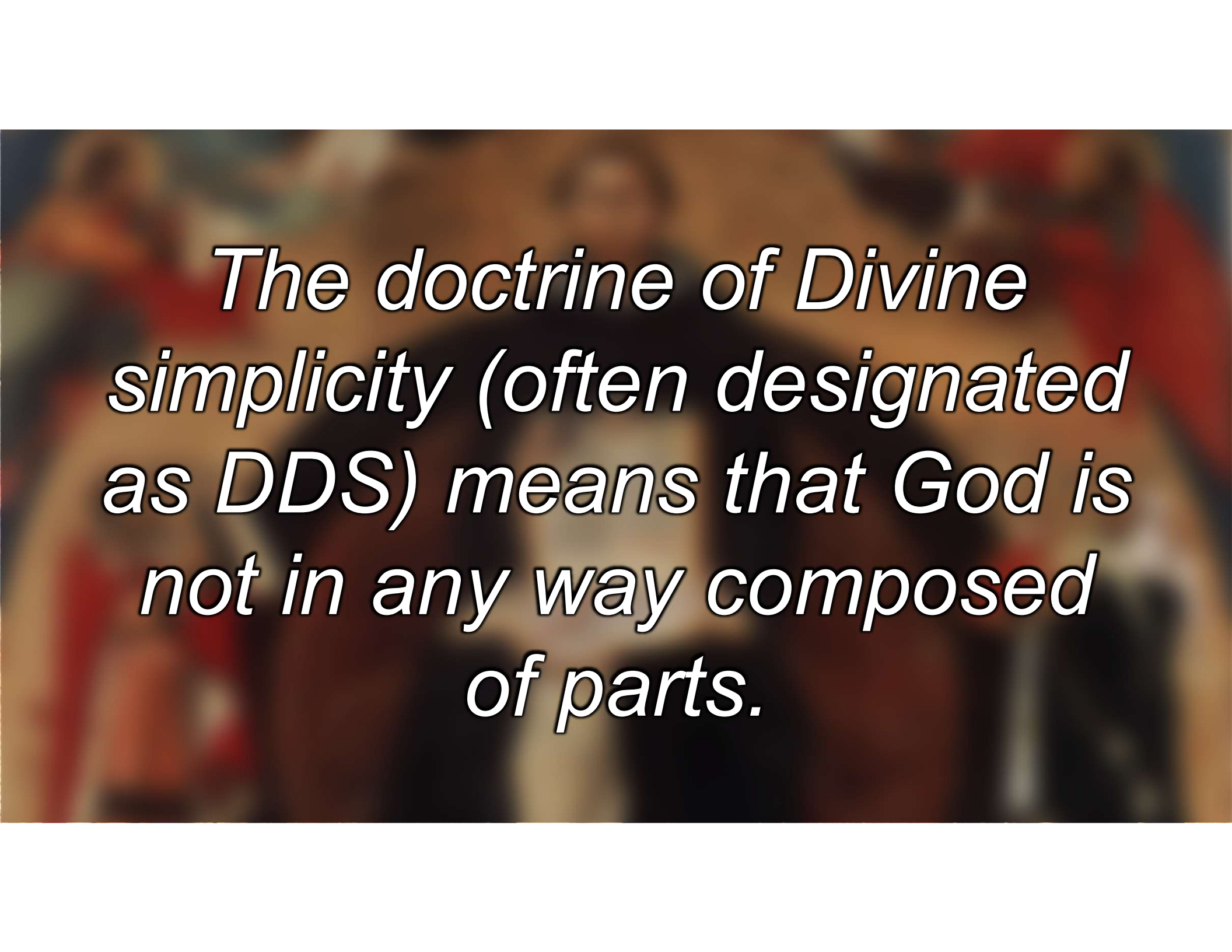
# Thomas Aquinas's Doctrine of Divine Simplicity



# Defining Simplicity



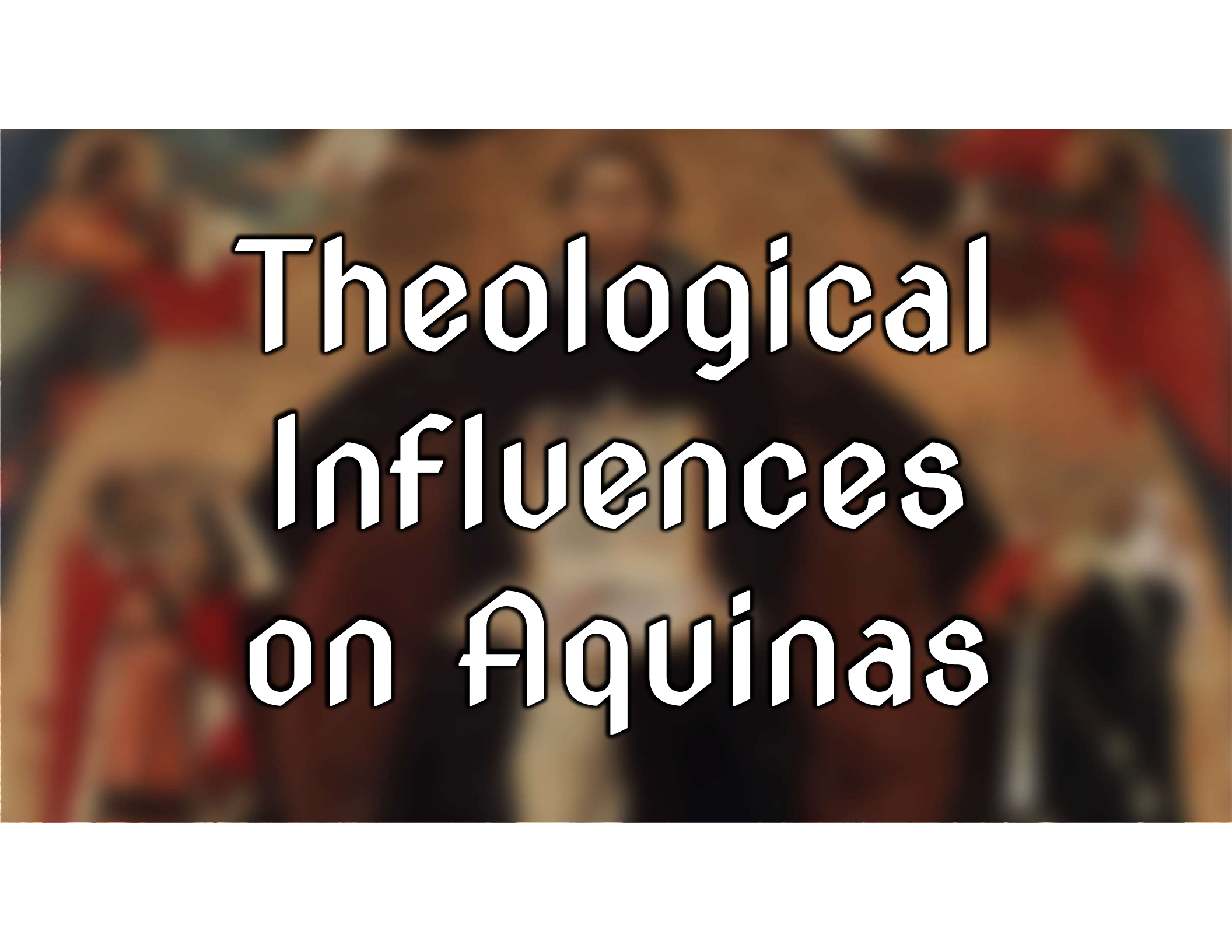
*In this context, the term  
'simple' does not mean  
'easy' as opposed to 'difficult'  
but is contrasted  
with 'composed'.*



*The doctrine of Divine simplicity (often designated as DDS) means that God is not in any way composed of parts.*

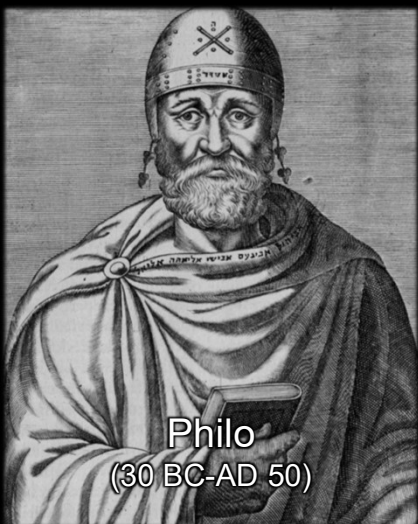


*For Aquinas, to say that God is **simple** is just to say that God is not **composed** of parts in any way.*

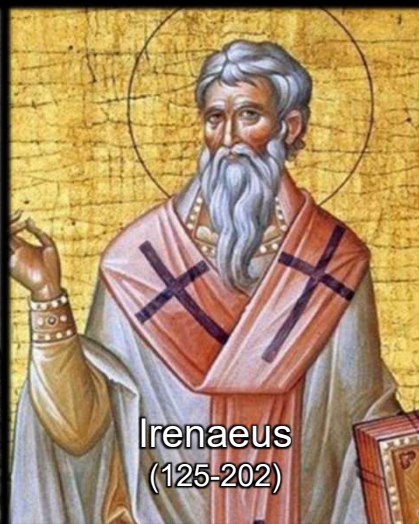


# Theological Influences on Aquinas

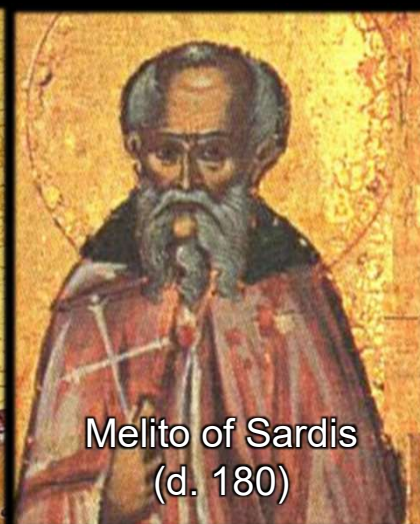




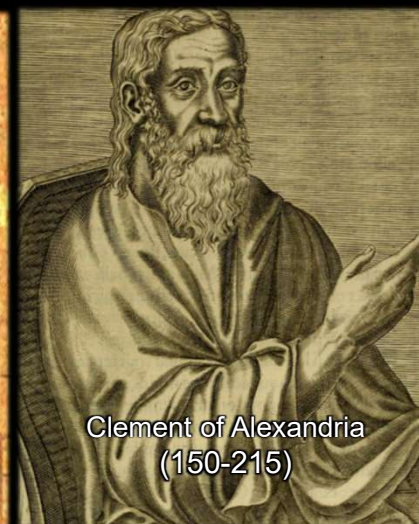
Philo  
(30 BC-AD 50)



Irenaeus  
(125-202)



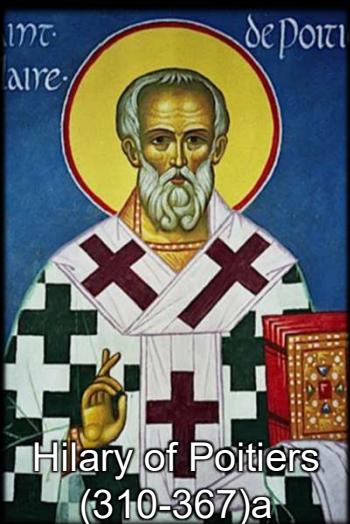
Melito of Sardis  
(d. 180)



Clement of Alexandria  
(150-215)



Origen  
(185-254)



Hilary of Poitiers  
(310-367)



Basil the Great  
(329-379)



John of Damascus  
(675-749)



Peter Abelard  
(1079-1142)

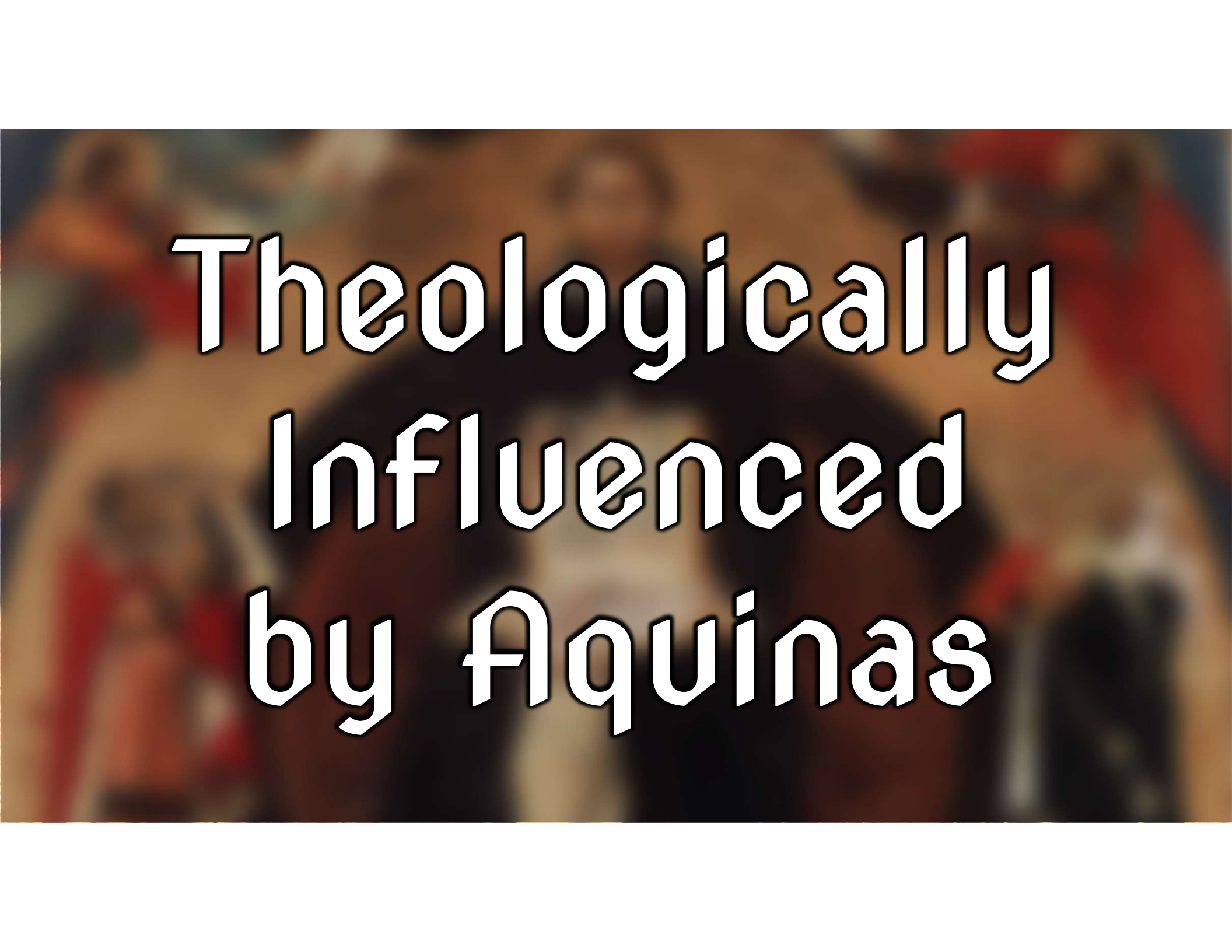


Peter Lombard  
(1100-1160)



Fourth Lateran Council  
(1215)





Theologically  
Influenced  
by Aquinas





John Calvin  
(1509-1564)



Jacobus Arminius  
(1560-1609)



John Owen  
(1616-1683)



Francis Turretin  
(1623-1687)



Stephen Charnock  
(1628-1680)



John Gill  
(1679-1771)



Charles Hodge  
(1797-1878)



William G. T. Shedd  
(1820-1894)



James Petigru Boyce  
(1827-1888)



Herman Bavinck  
(1854-1921)



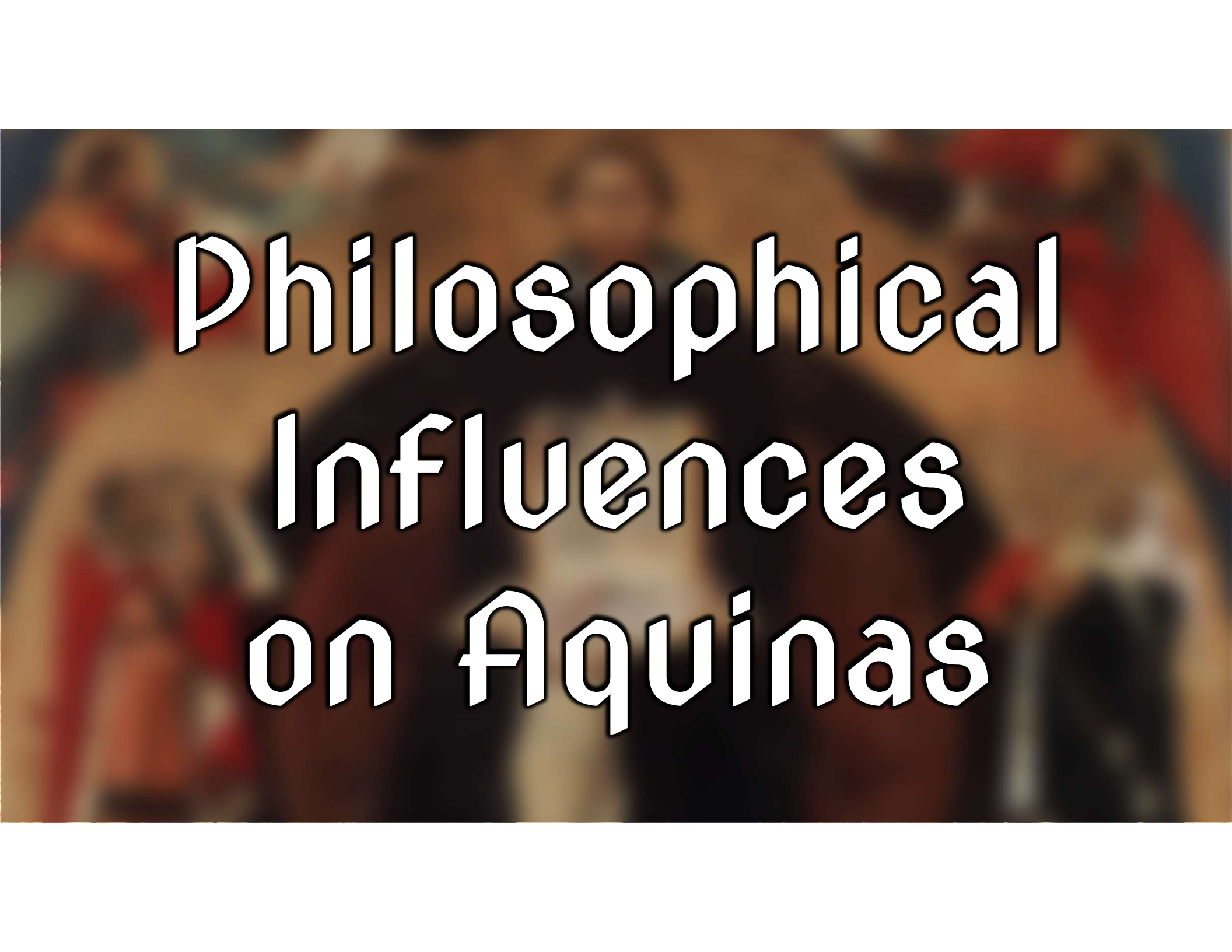
Louis Sperry Chaffer  
(1871-1952)



Louis Berkhof  
(1873-1957)

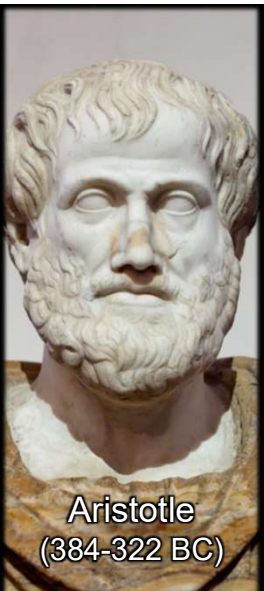


Norman L. Geisler  
(1932-2019)



# Philosophical Influences on Aquinas





Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)



Plotinus  
(205-270)



Proclus  
(410-485)



Augustine  
(354-430)



Pseudo-Dionysius  
(5th - 6th century)



Boethius  
(480-524)



Al-Farabi  
(870-950)



Avicenna  
(980-1037)



Anselm  
(1033-1109)



Averroës  
(1126-1198)



Maimonides  
(1135-1204)



Phillip the Chancellor  
(1160-1236)



Alexander of Hales  
(1170 (80?)-1245)



William of Auvergne  
(1190-1249)



Albert the Great  
(1206-1280).

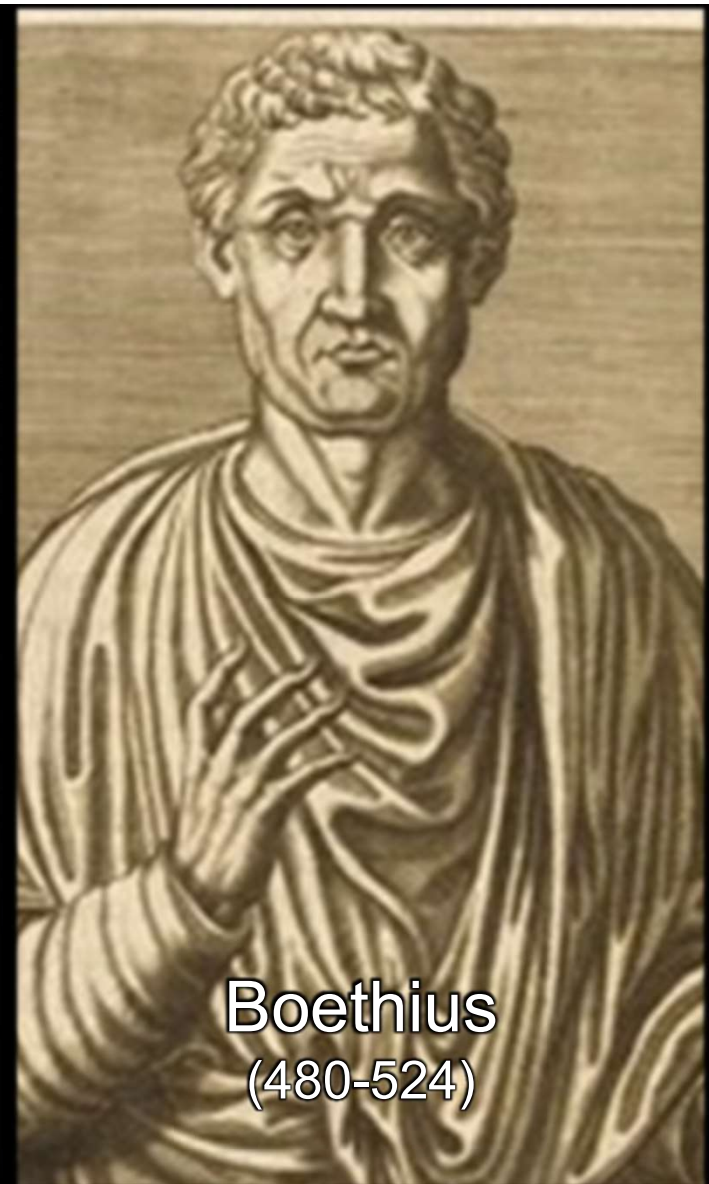




Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

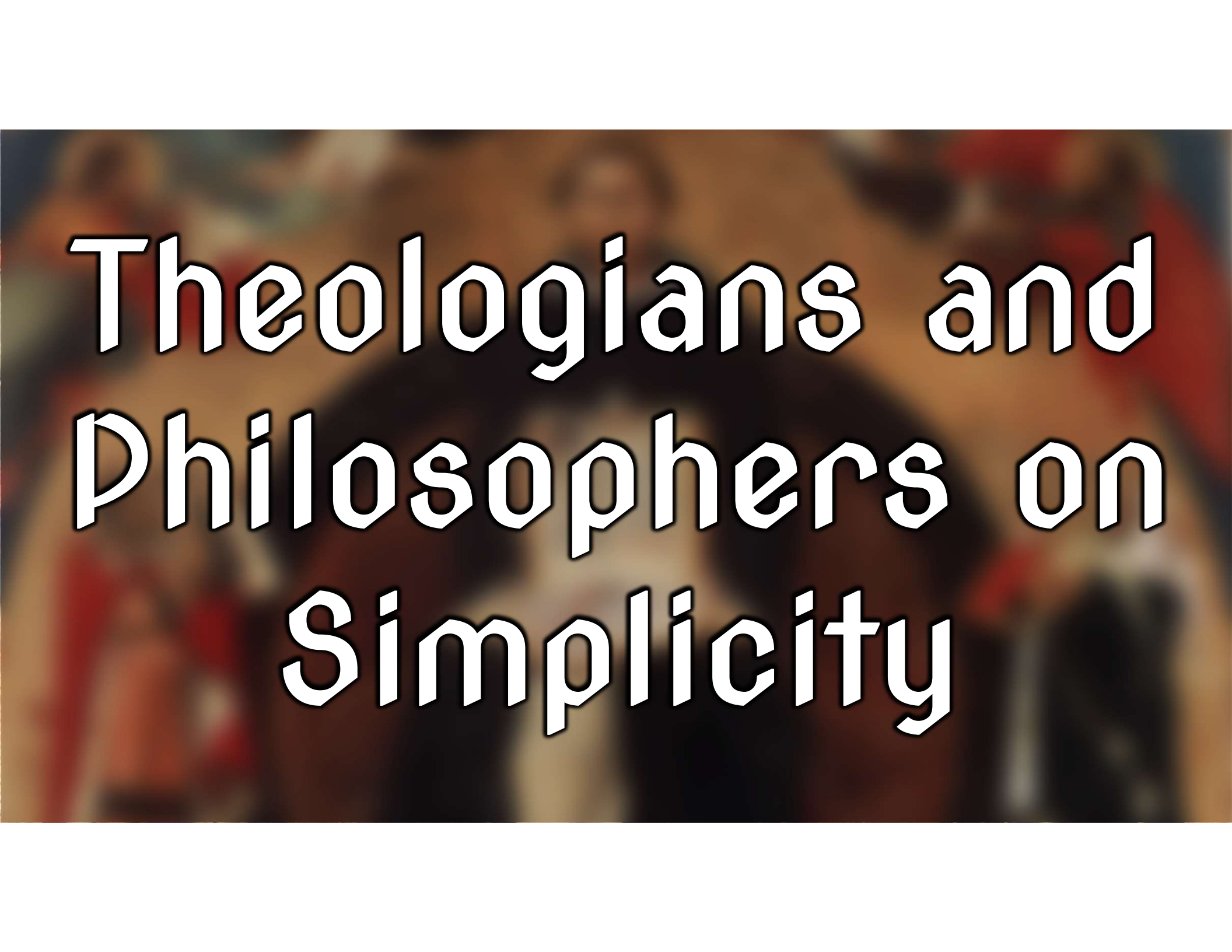


Pseudo-Dionysius  
(5th - 6th century)



Boethius  
(480-524)

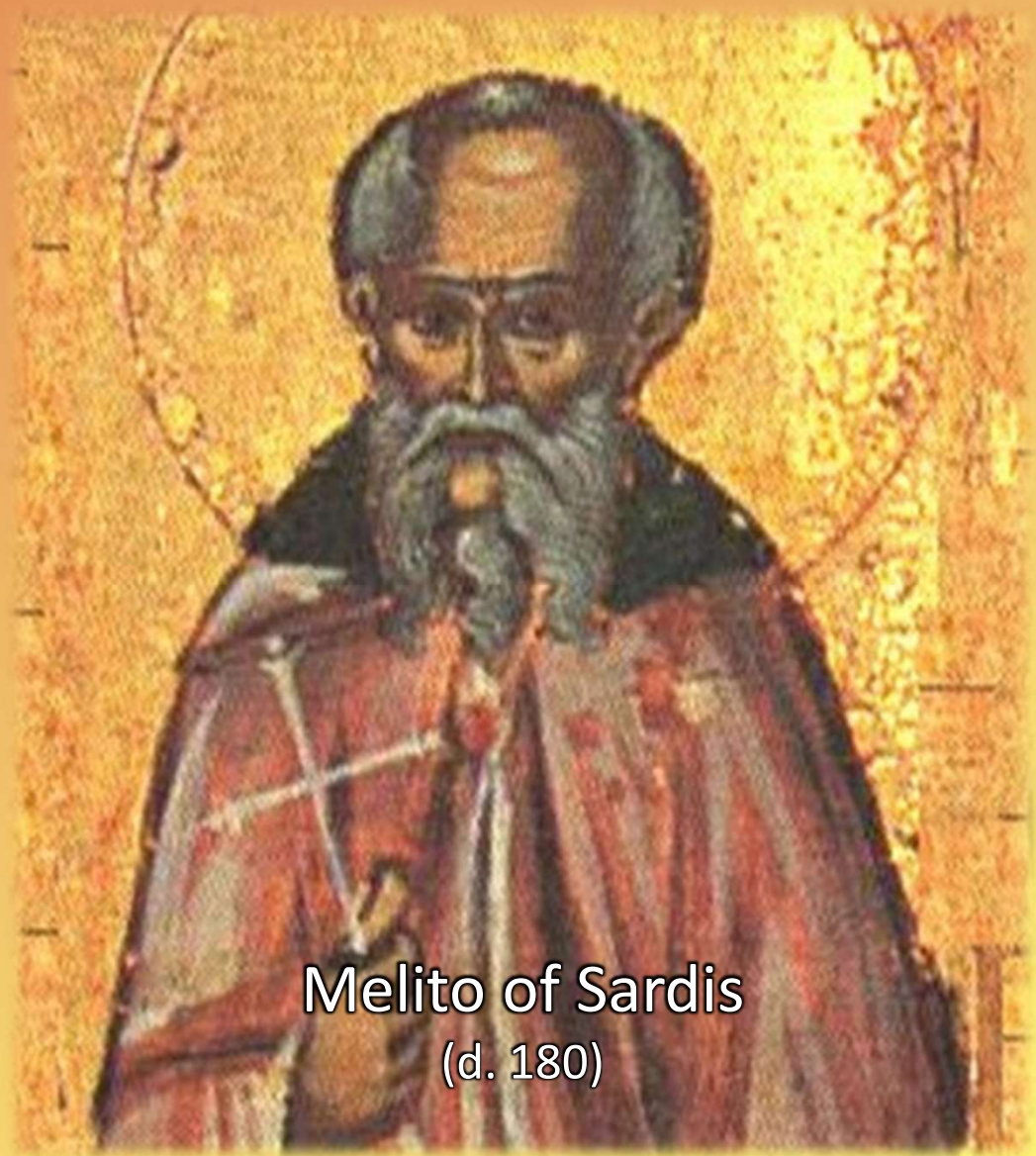




# Theologians and Philosophers on Simplicity

***"On these accounts He came to us; though He was incorporeal, He formed for Himself a body after our fashion ... being invested with a body, yet not circumscribing the unmixed simplicity of His Godhead."***

[From the *Discourse on the Cross*, <https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/melito.html>, accessed 07/24/23.]

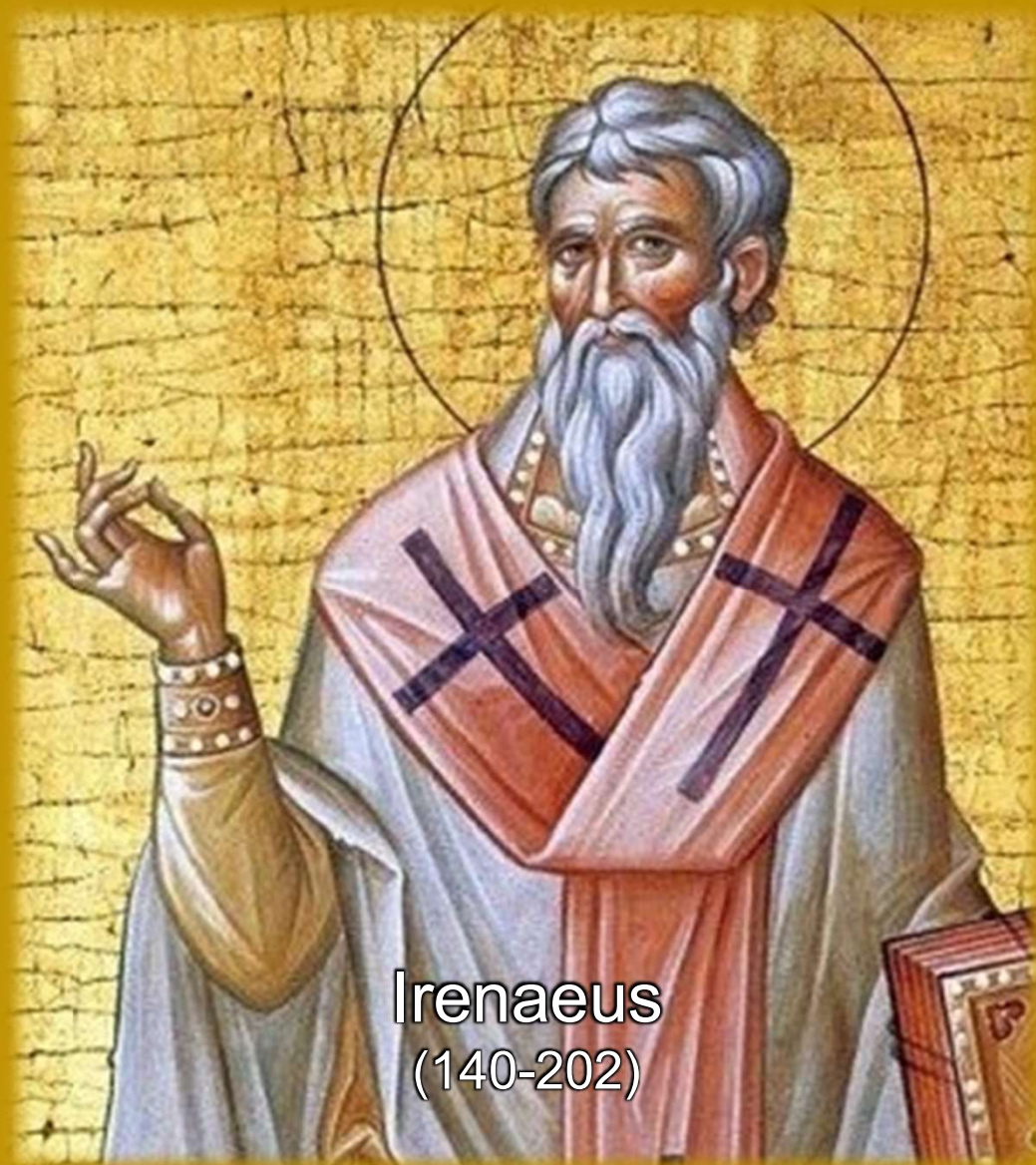


**Melito of Sardis**  
(d. 180)



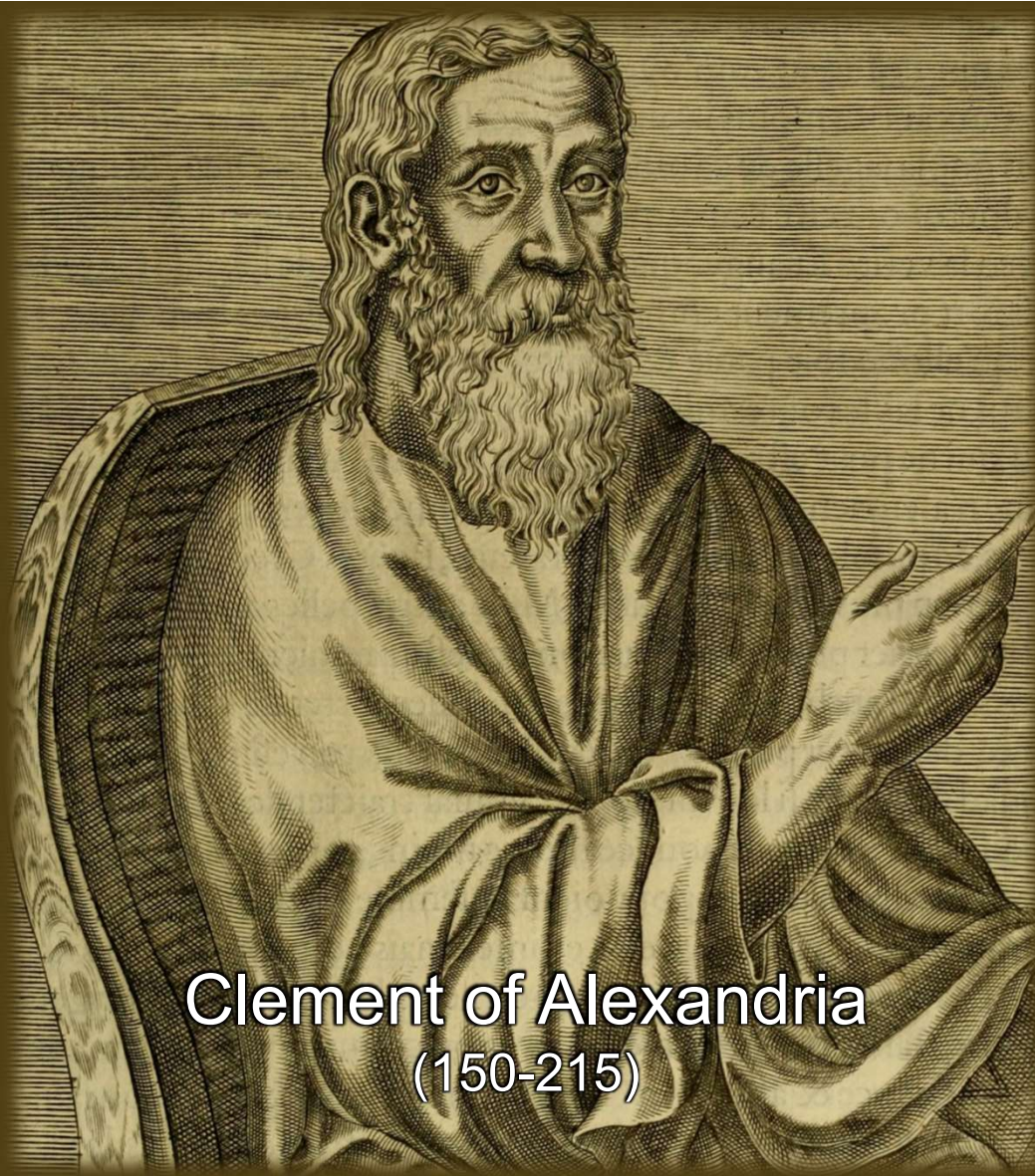
***"He is a simple,  
uncompounded  
Being, without  
diverse members,  
and altogether like,  
and equal to  
himself."***

[*Against Heresies* II, 13, Christian Classics Ethereal Library,  
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>]



Irenaeus  
(140-202)





Clement of Alexandria  
(150-215)

***"God is both invisible and ineffable ... For how is one to speak about that which is neither a genus nor a differentia nor a species nor an individuality nor a number—in other words which is neither any kind of accidental property nor the subject of any accidental property? ... Nor can one speak of him as having parts."***

[*Miscellanies* 5, xii, 78-82, in Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer, eds. *Documents in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 4, 6]





Origen  
(185-254)

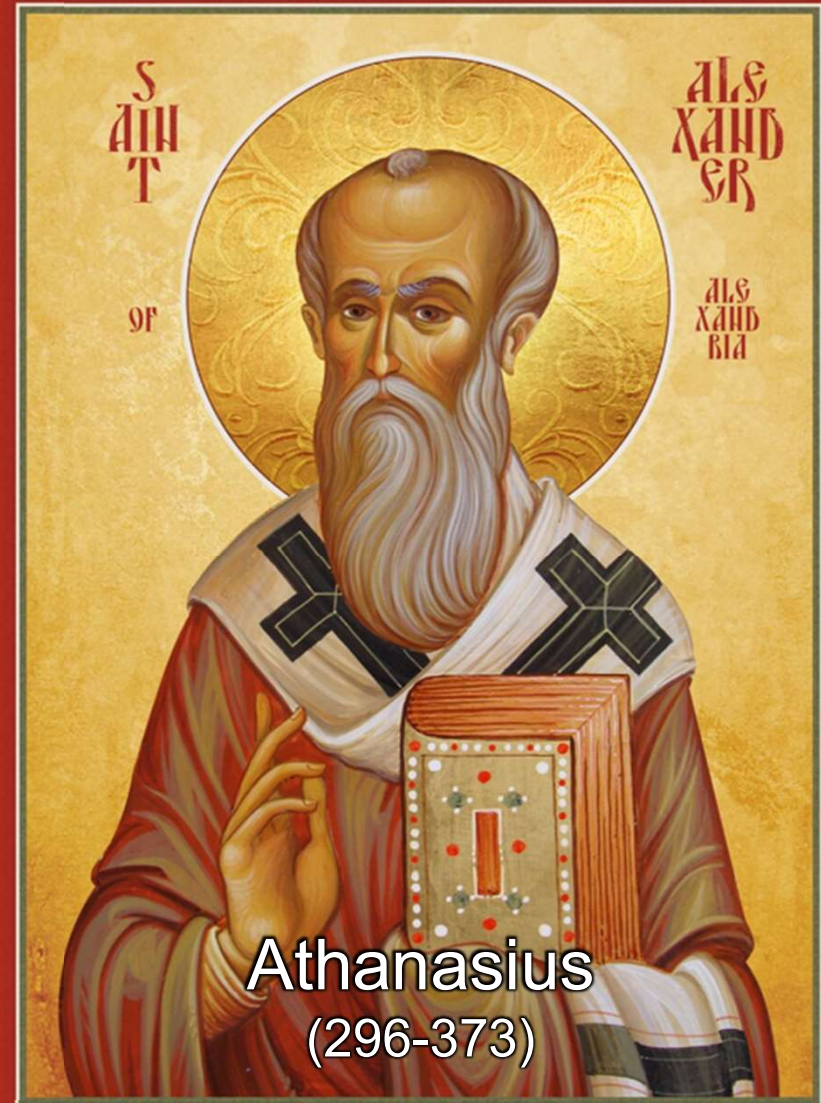
***"God, therefore, is not to be thought of as being either a body or as existing in a body, but as an uncompounded intellectual nature, admitting within Himself no addition of any kind ... But God, who is the beginning of all things, is not to be regarded as a composite being, lest perchance there should be found to exist elements prior to the beginning itself, out of which everything is composed, whatever that be which is called composite."***

*[To the Bishops of Africa (Ad Afros Epistola Synodica), Chap. 7 "The Position that the Son is a Creature Inconsistent and Untenable"]*

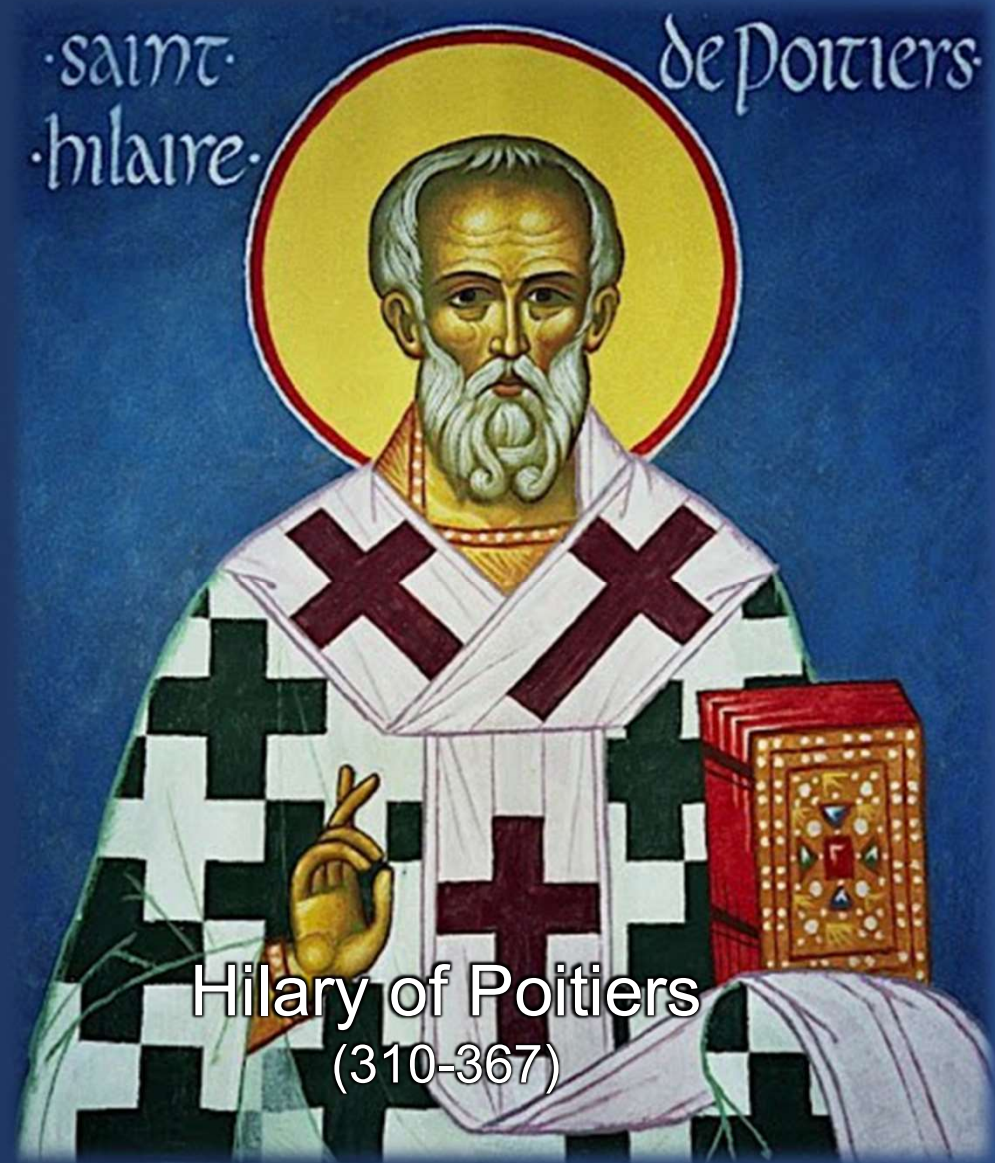


***"For God, who compounded all things to give them being, is not compound, nor of similar nature to the things made by Him through the Word. Far be the thought. For He is simple essence, in which quality is not, nor, as James says, 'any variableness or shadow of turning.' "***

*[To the Bishops of Africa (Ad Afros Epistola Synodica), Chap. 7 "The Position that the Son is a Creature Inconsistent and Untenable"]*







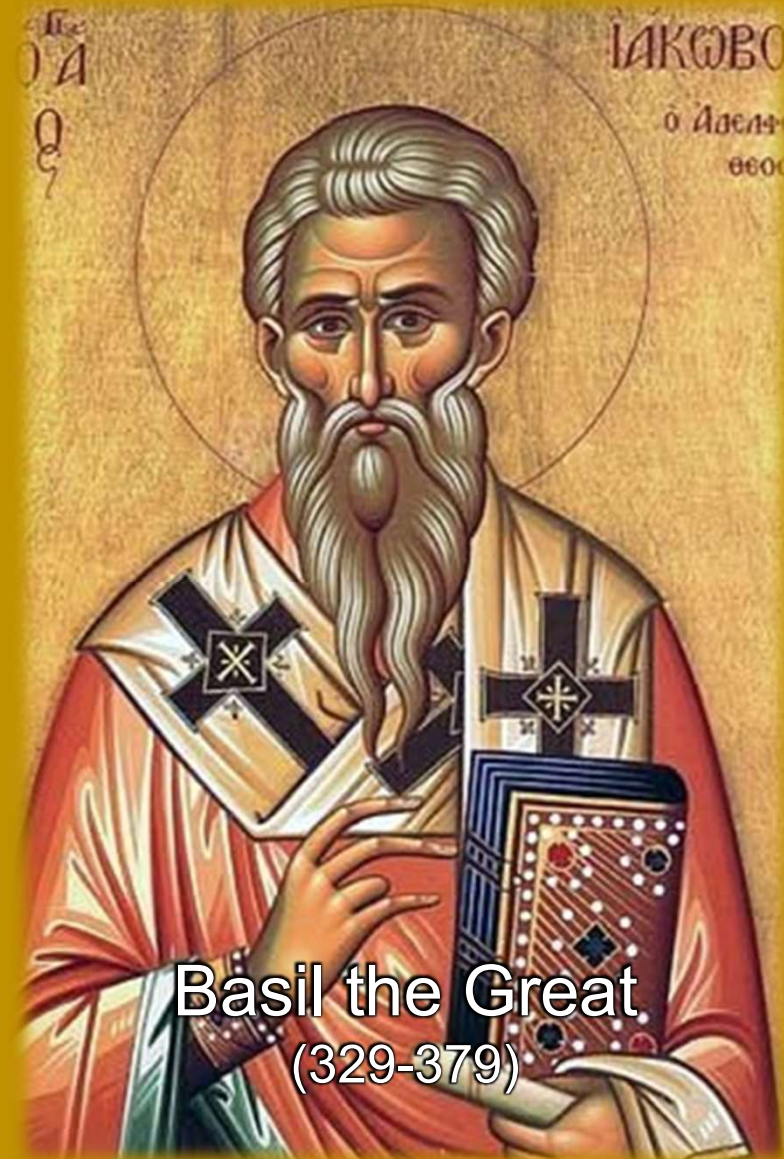
***"God is not after human fashion of a composite being, so that in Him there is a difference of kind between Possessor and Possessed; but all that He is, is life; a nature, that is, complete, absolute and infinite, not composed of dissimilar elements but with one life permeating the whole."***

[On the Trinity, viii, § 43, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/330208.htm>, accessed 09/08/21]



***"His attributes are various, but his essence is simple."***

[Letter 234 in Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer, eds. *Documents in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 11]



**Basil the Great**  
(329-379)



***"There is then  
one sole Good,  
which is simple,  
and therefore  
unchangeable;  
and that is God."***

[*City of God*, XI, 10, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1984),  
440]

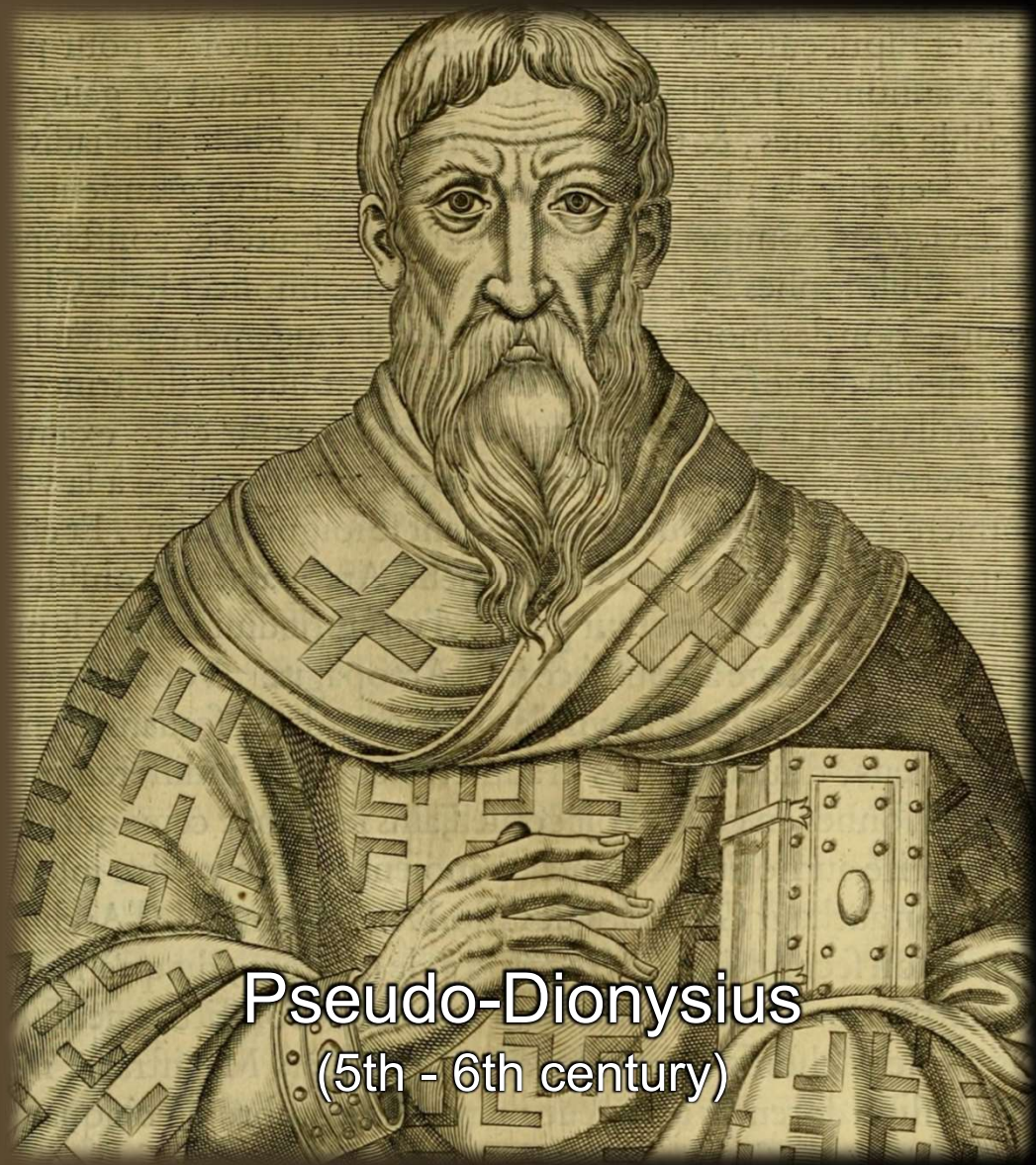


**Augustine**  
(354-430)



***"Hence, we see in almost every theological treatise the Godhead religiously celebrated, both as Monad and unity, on account of the simplicity and oneness of Its supernatural indivisibility ..."***

[On the Divine Names, Caput I, §IV,  
<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/dionysius/works.i.ii.i.html>, accessed 08/30/22]



**Pseudo-Dionysius**  
(5th - 6th century)



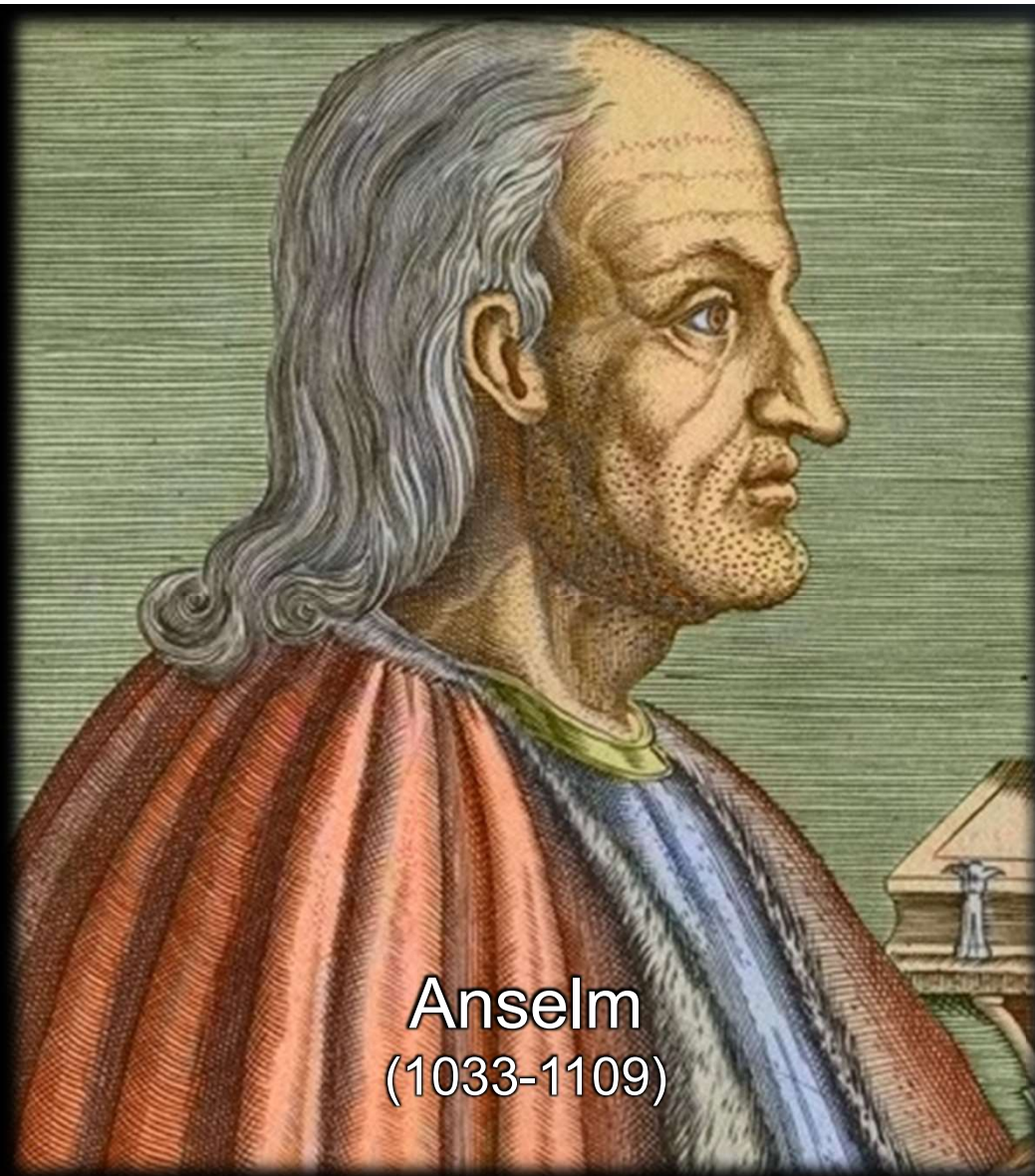


John of Damascus  
(676-749)

***"We believe, then, in One God, one being, having no beginning, uncreated, unbegotten, imperishable and immortal, everlasting, infinite, uncircumscribed, boundless, of infinite power, simple, uncompound, incorporeal, without flux, passionless, unchangeable, unalterable, unseen, the fountain of goodness and justice, ..."***

[An Exposition on the Orthodox Faith, chap. 8;  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/33041.htm>, accessed 09/08/21]





Anselm  
(1033-1109)

***"There are no parts in thee, Lord, nor art thou more than one. But thou are so truly a unitary being, and so identical with thyself, that in no respect are thou unlike thyself; rather thou are unity itself, indivisible by any conception. Therefore, life and wisdom and the rest are not parts of thee, but all are one; and each of these is the whole, which thou art, and which all the rest are."***

[*Proslogium*, 18, trans. S. N. Deane (La Salle: Open Court, 1962), 25]





Peter Lombard  
(1100-1160)

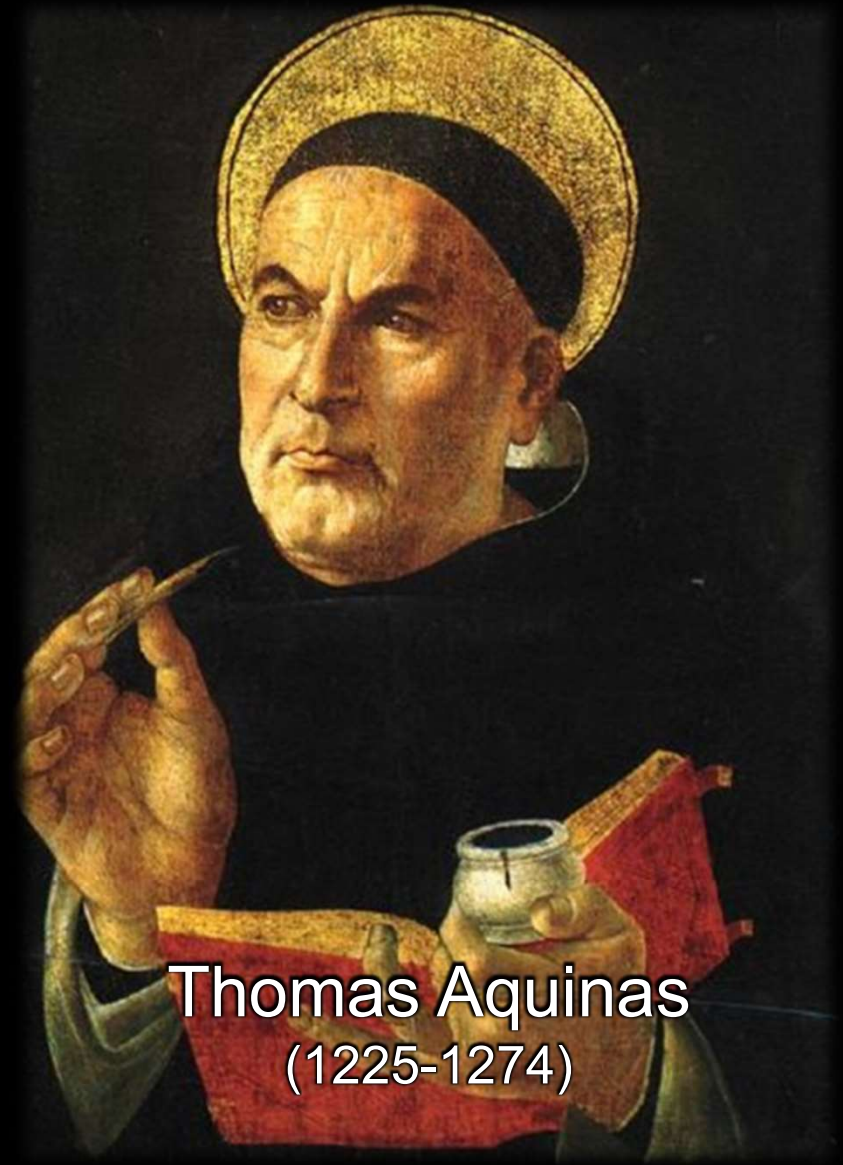
***Simplicity means "no diversity or change or multiplicity of parts, or accidents, or any other forms."***

[*The Sentences*, Bk. 1, *The Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Giulio Silano, *Medieval Sources in Translation* 42 (Toronto: PIMS, 2007), 8.3 (23), as cited in Jordan P. Barrett, *Divine Simplicity: A Biblical and Trinitarian Account* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 77]



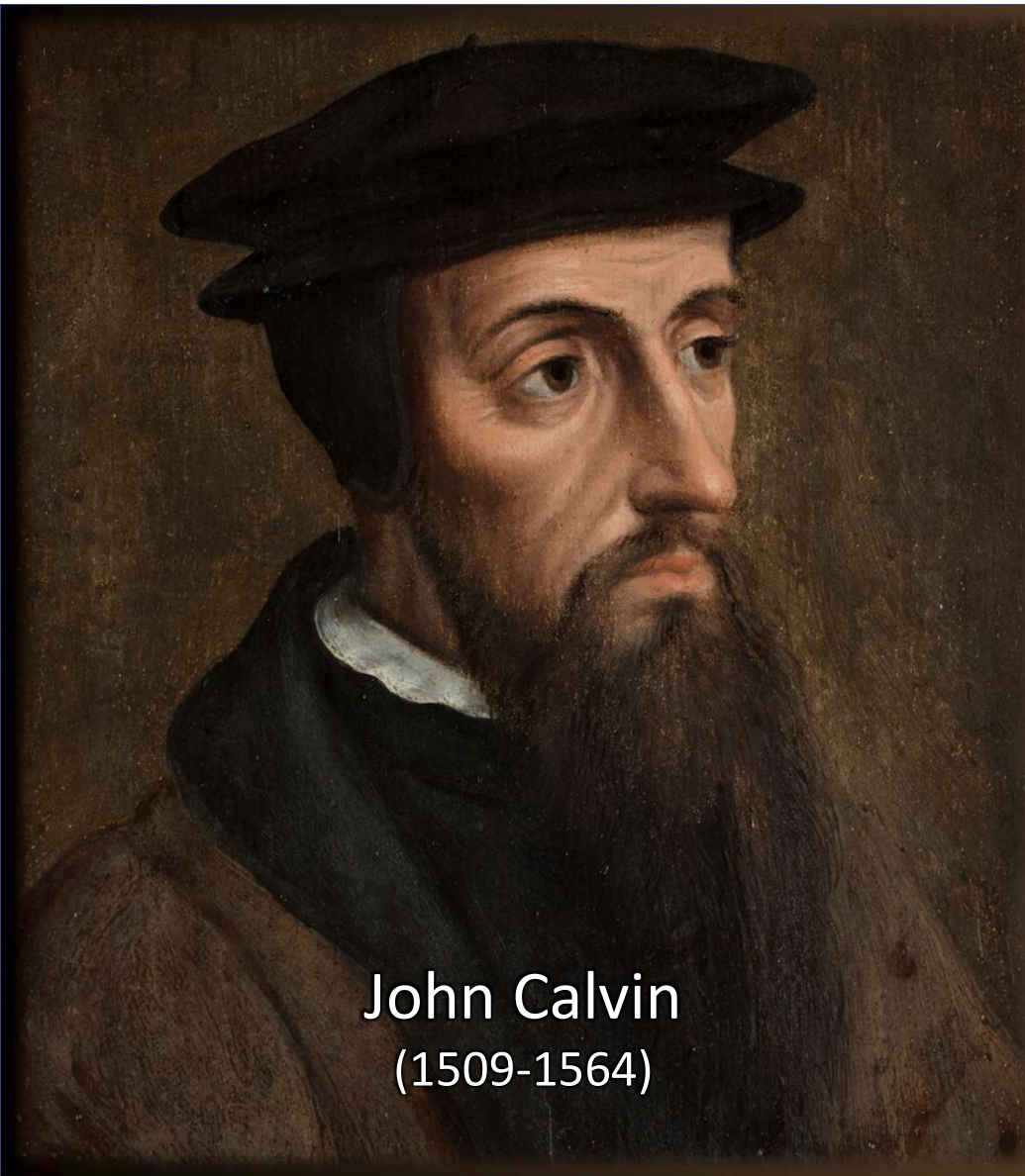
***"The absolute simplicity of God may be shown in many ways. . . For there is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of matter and form; nor does His nature differ from His 'suppositum'; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and accident. Therefore, it is clear that God is nowise composite, but is altogether simple."***

[ST I, Q3, art. 7]



**Thomas Aquinas**  
(1225-1274)



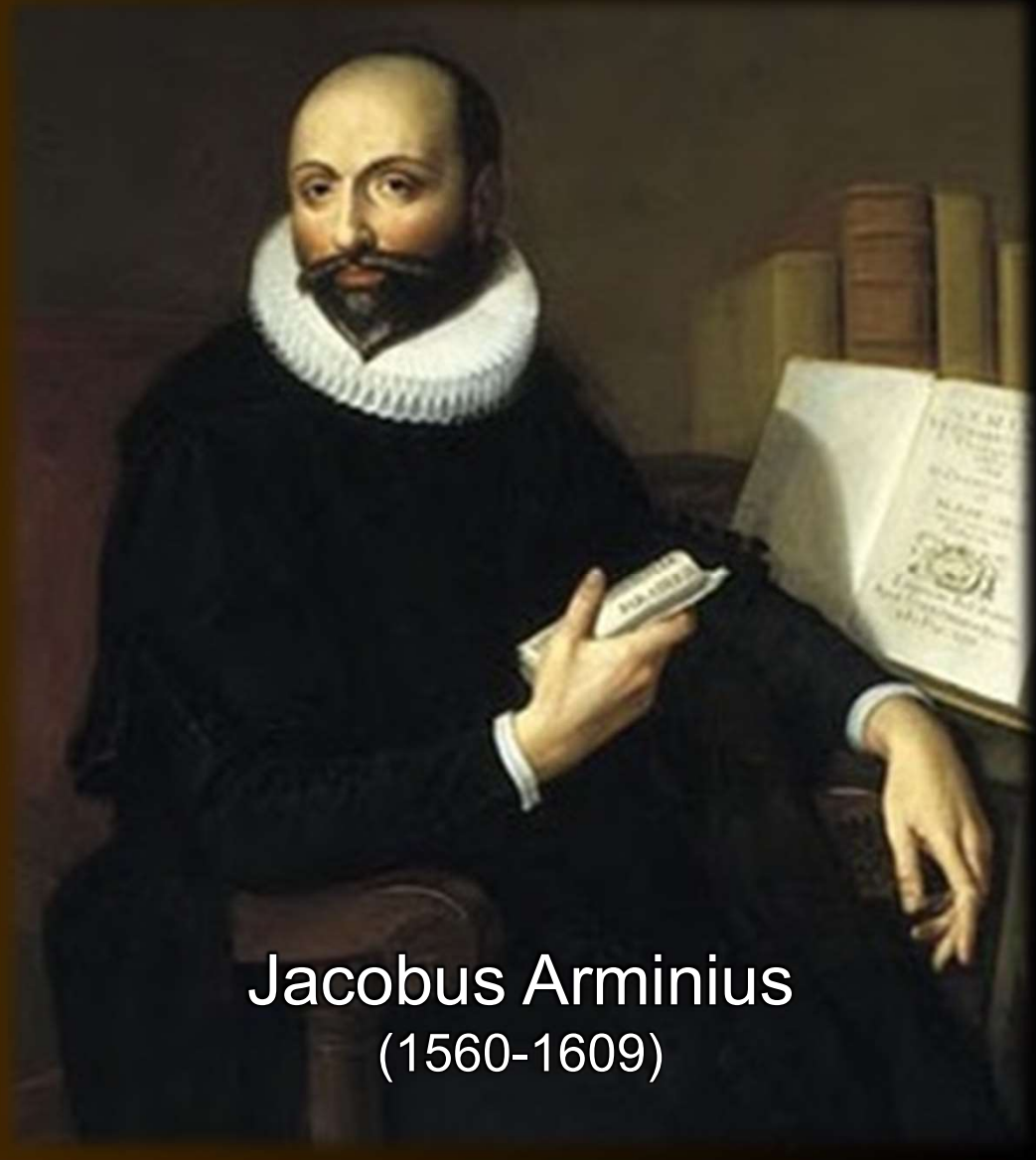


John Calvin  
(1509-1564)

***"For the essence of God [is] simple and undivided, and contained in himself entire, in full perfection, without partition or diminution."***

[*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), Bk. 1, XIII, §2), vol. 1, p. 110]

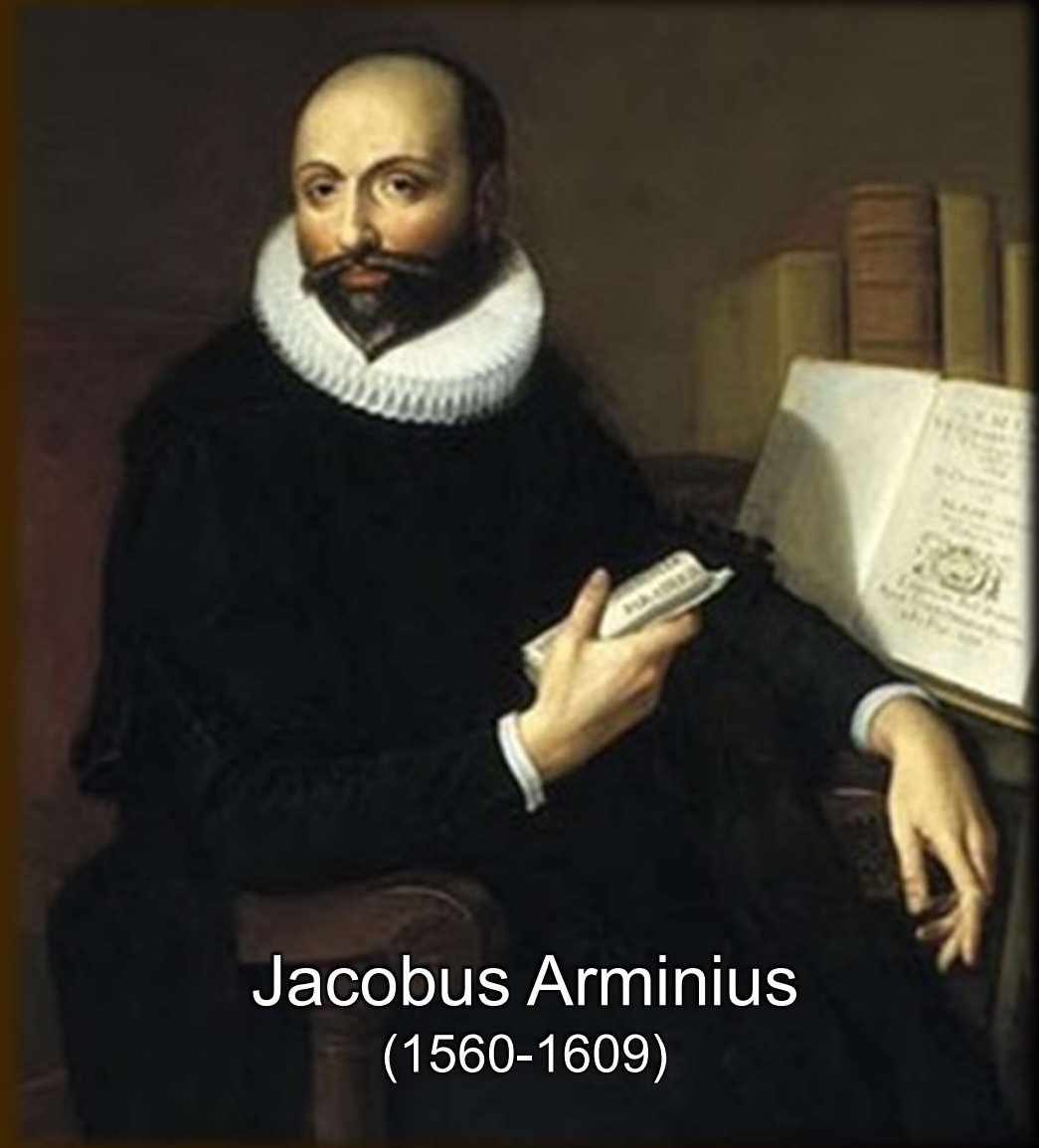
***"Simplicity is a pre-eminent mode of the Essence of God, by which he is void of all composition, and of component parts whether they belong to the senses or to the understanding. ..."***



**Jacobus Arminius**  
(1560-1609)



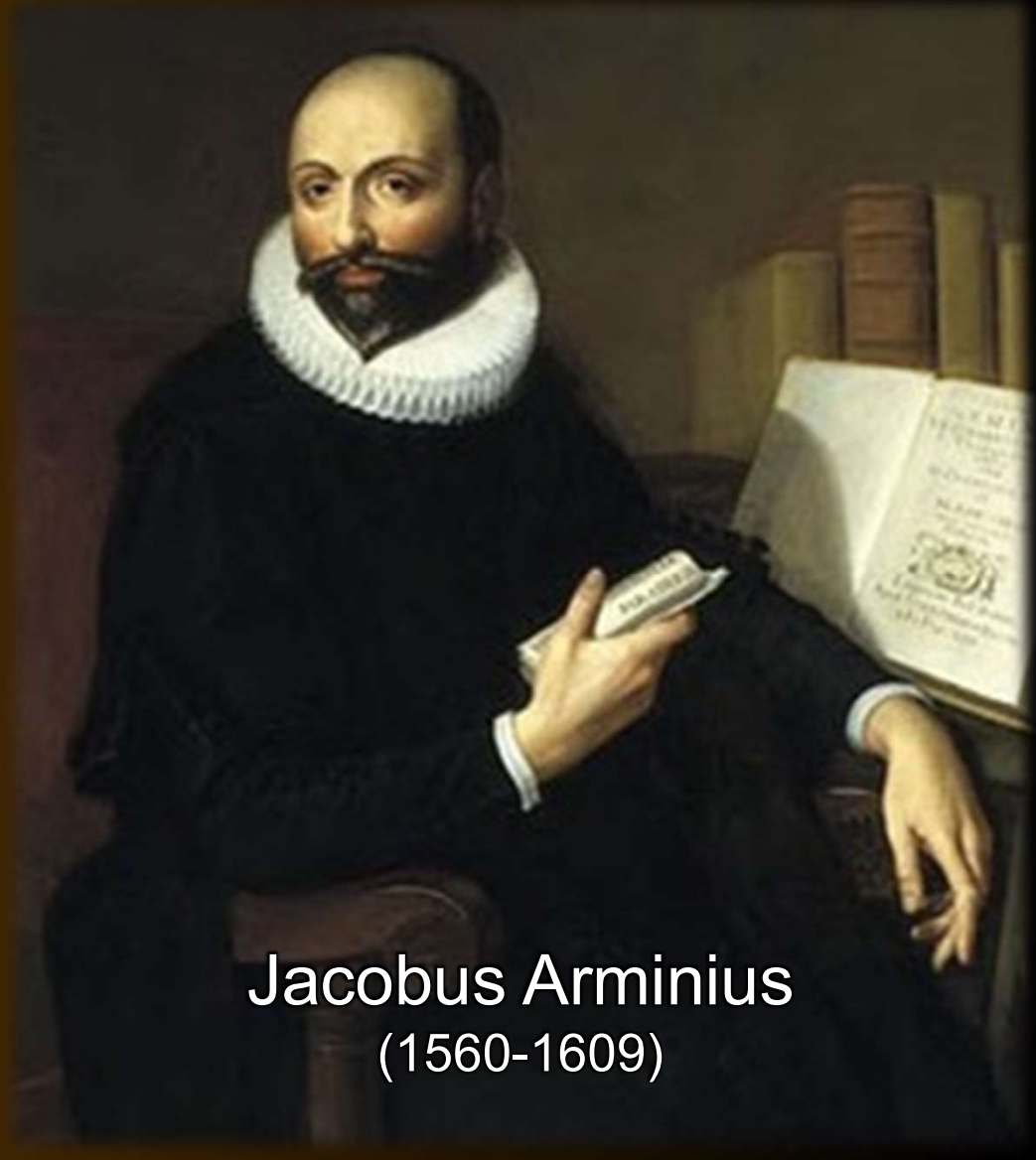
***"The essence of God,  
therefore, neither consists  
of material, integral and  
quantitative parts, of matter  
and form, of kind and  
difference, of subject and  
accident, nor of form and  
the thing formed, ...***



**Jacobus Arminius**  
(1560-1609)

***"neither hypothetically and through nature, through capability and actuality, nor through essence and being. Hence God is his own Essence and his own Being, and is the same in that which is, and that by which it is."***

[Jacobus Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, 3 vols., trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), I, 438]

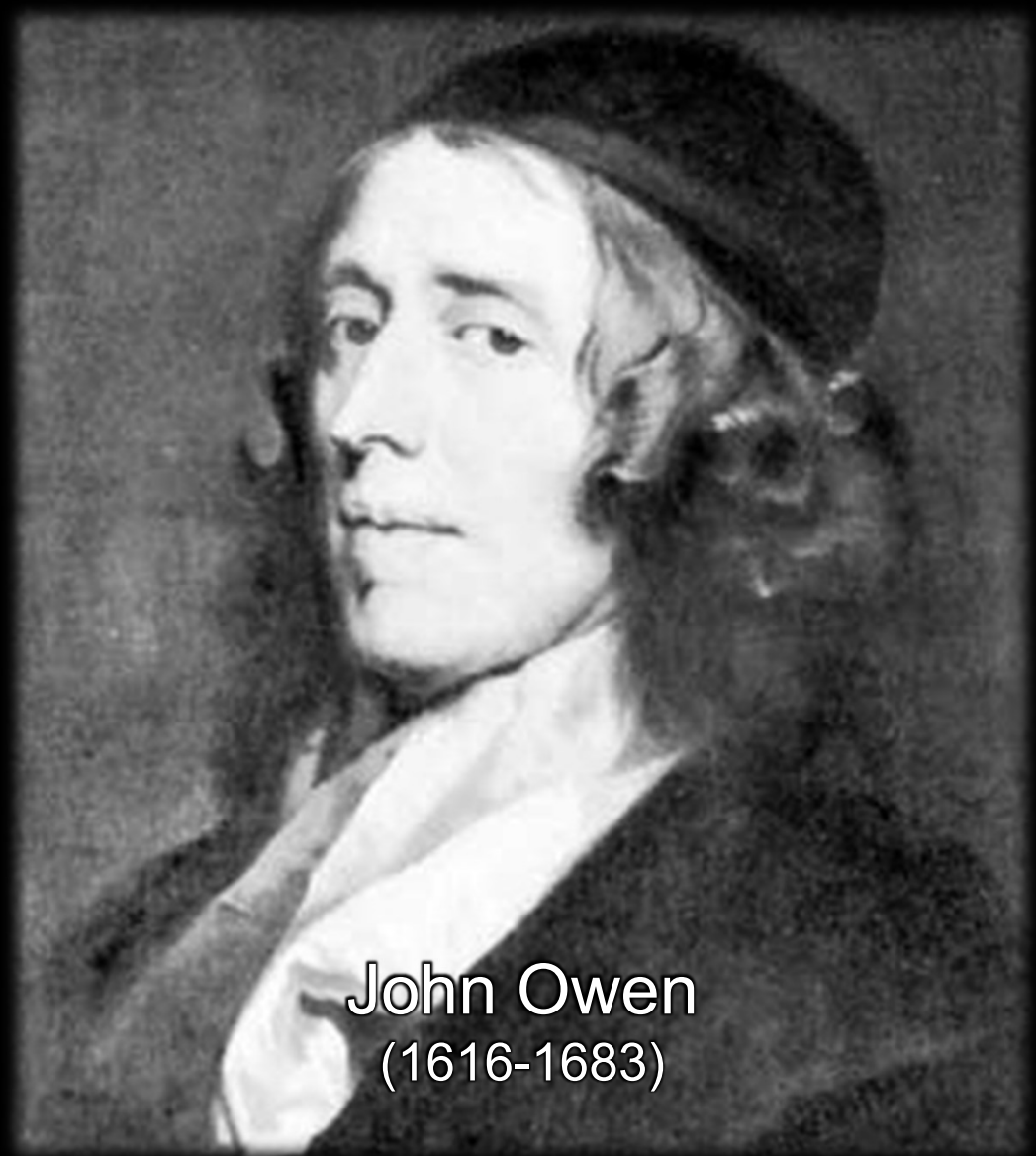


**Jacobus Arminius**  
(1560-1609)



***"The attributes of God,  
which alone seem to be  
distinct things in the  
essence of God, are all of  
them essentially the same  
with one another, and  
every one the same with  
the essence of God  
itself."***

[Vindiciae Evangelicae: The Mystery of the Gospel Vindicated and Socinianism Examined: Mr. Biddle's First Chapter Examined in The Ages Digital Library: The John Owen Collection CD ROM (Rio, WI: AGES Software), 94]



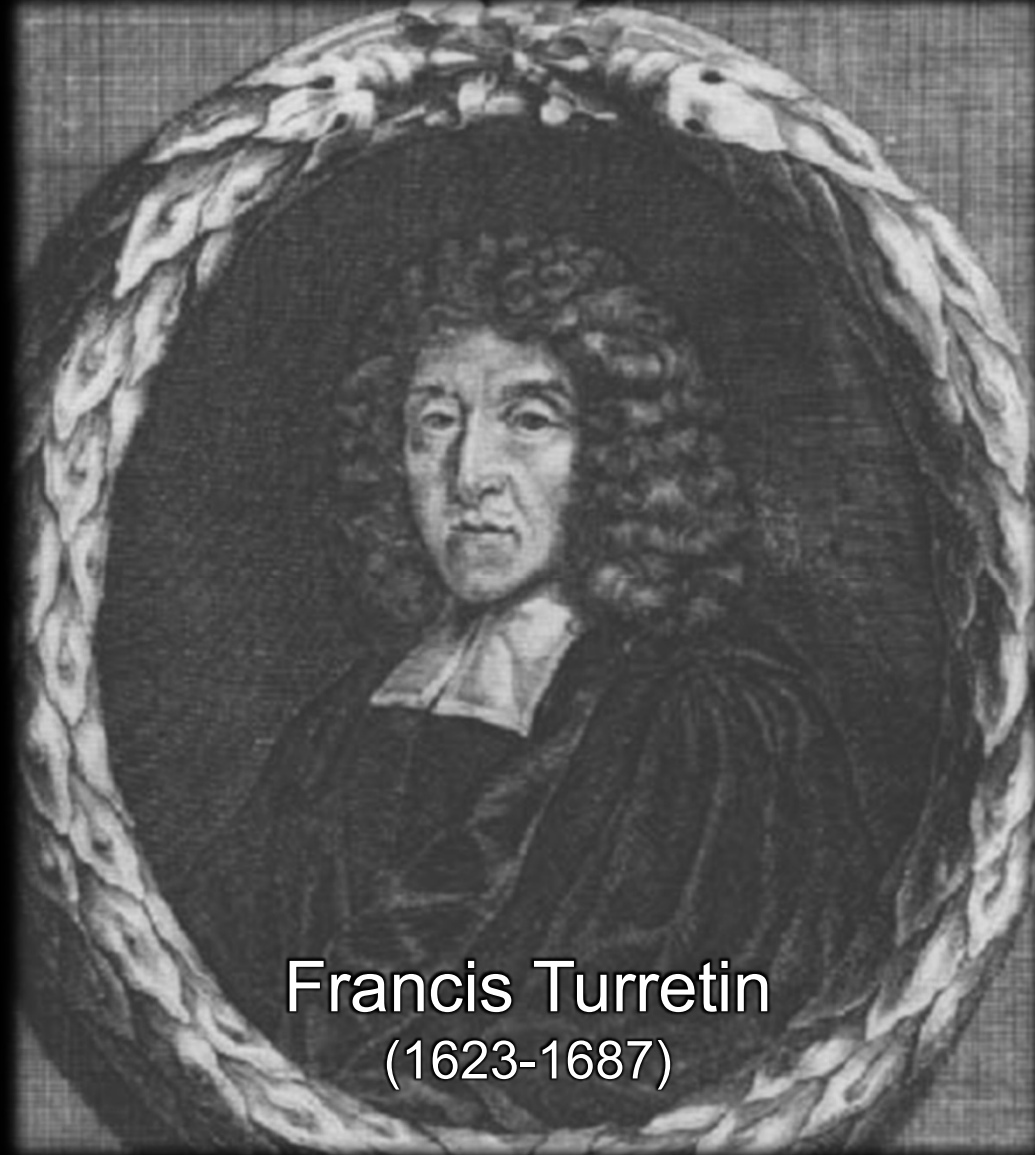
**John Owen**  
(1616-1683)



***"Is God most simple and free from all composition? We affirm against Socinus and Vorstius. ...***

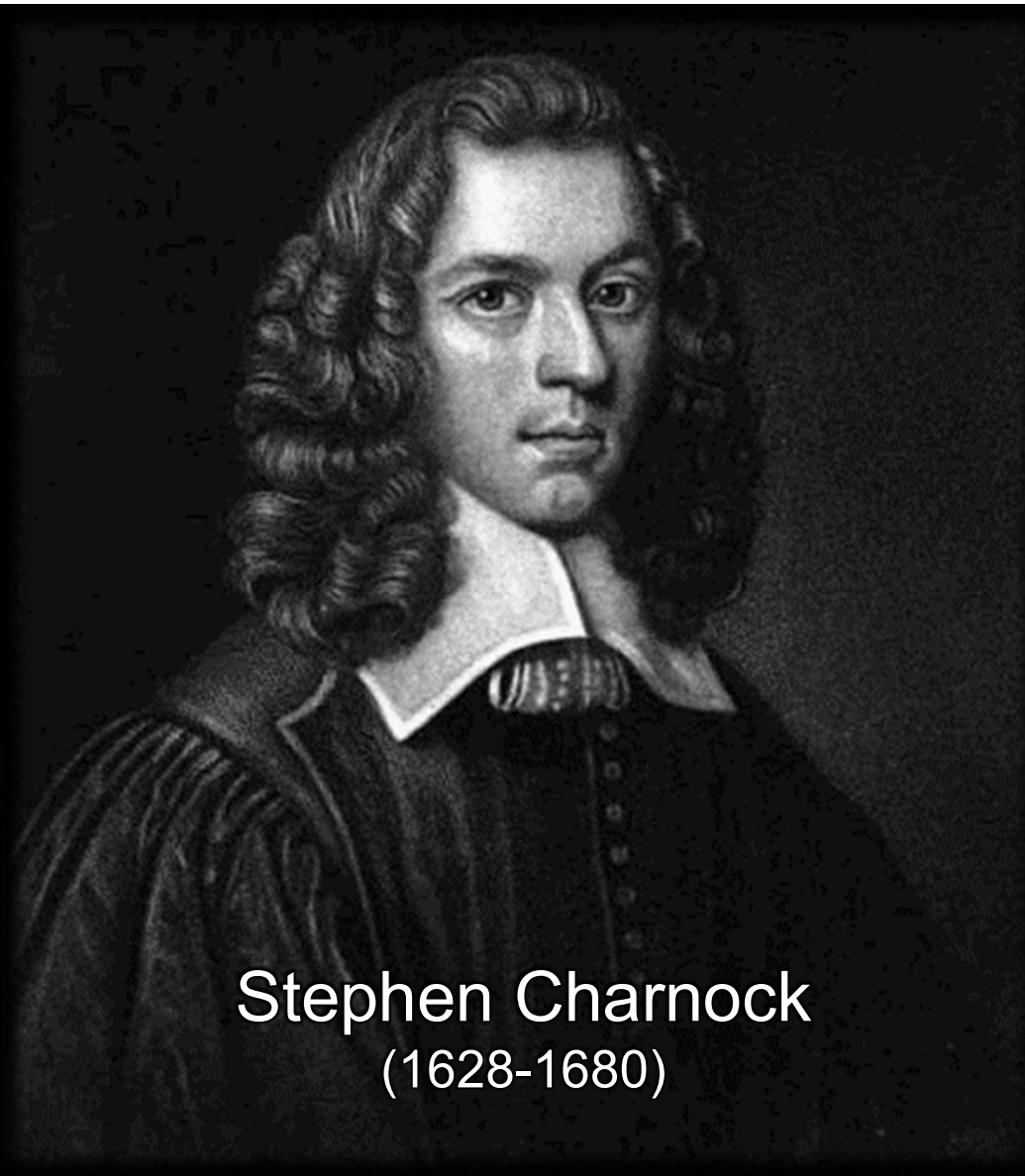
***The orthodox have constantly taught that the essence of God is perfectly simple and free from all composition. ... The divine nature is conceived by us not only as free from all composition and division, but also as incapable of composition and divisibility."***

[Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols. trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992), I, 191]



**Francis Turretin**  
(1623-1687)

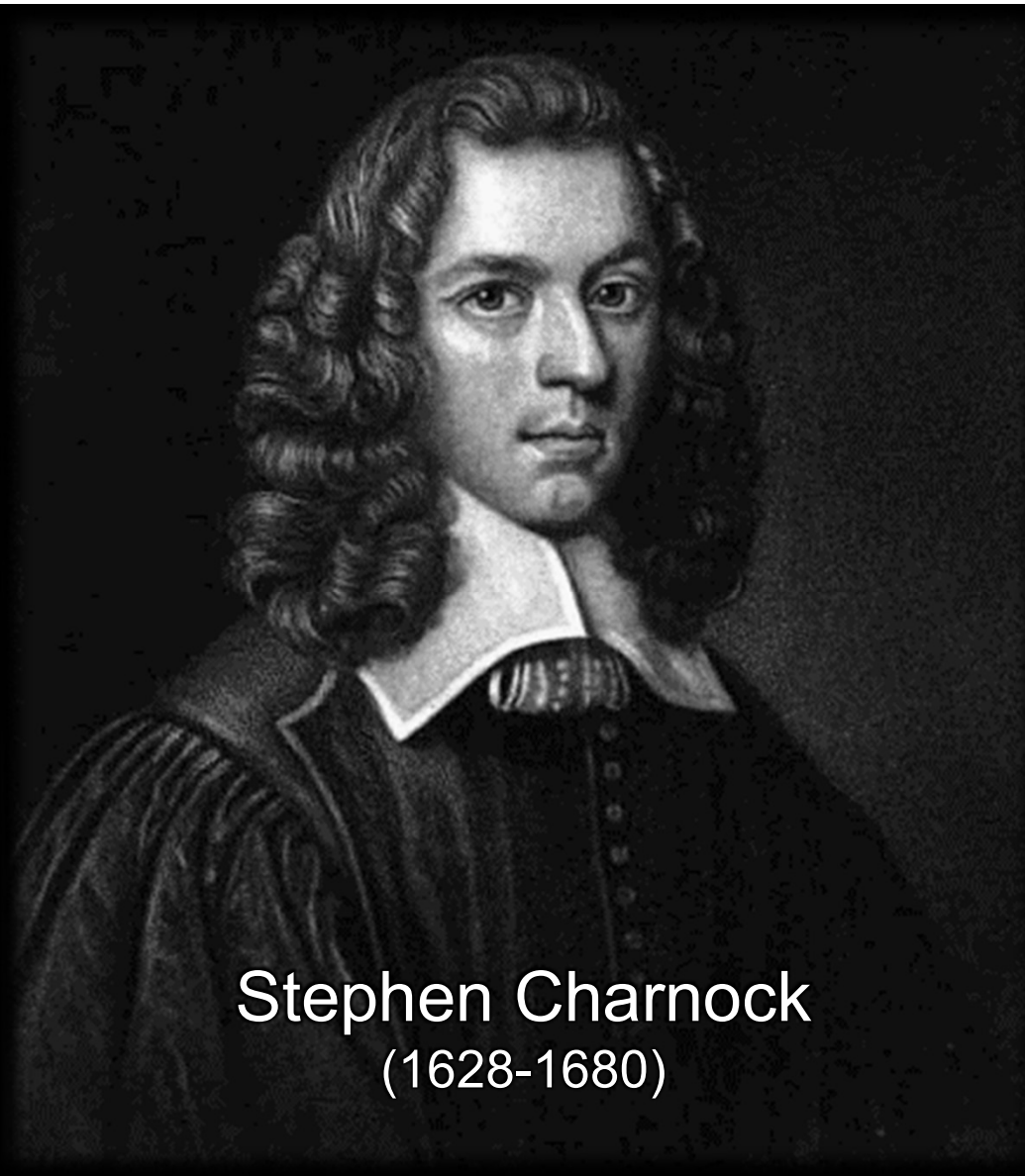




Stephen Charnock  
(1628-1680)

***"This is signified by the name God gives himself (Ex. iii. 14): 'I am that I am:' as simple, pure, uncompounded being, without any created mixture ..."***

[Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), I, 182-183]



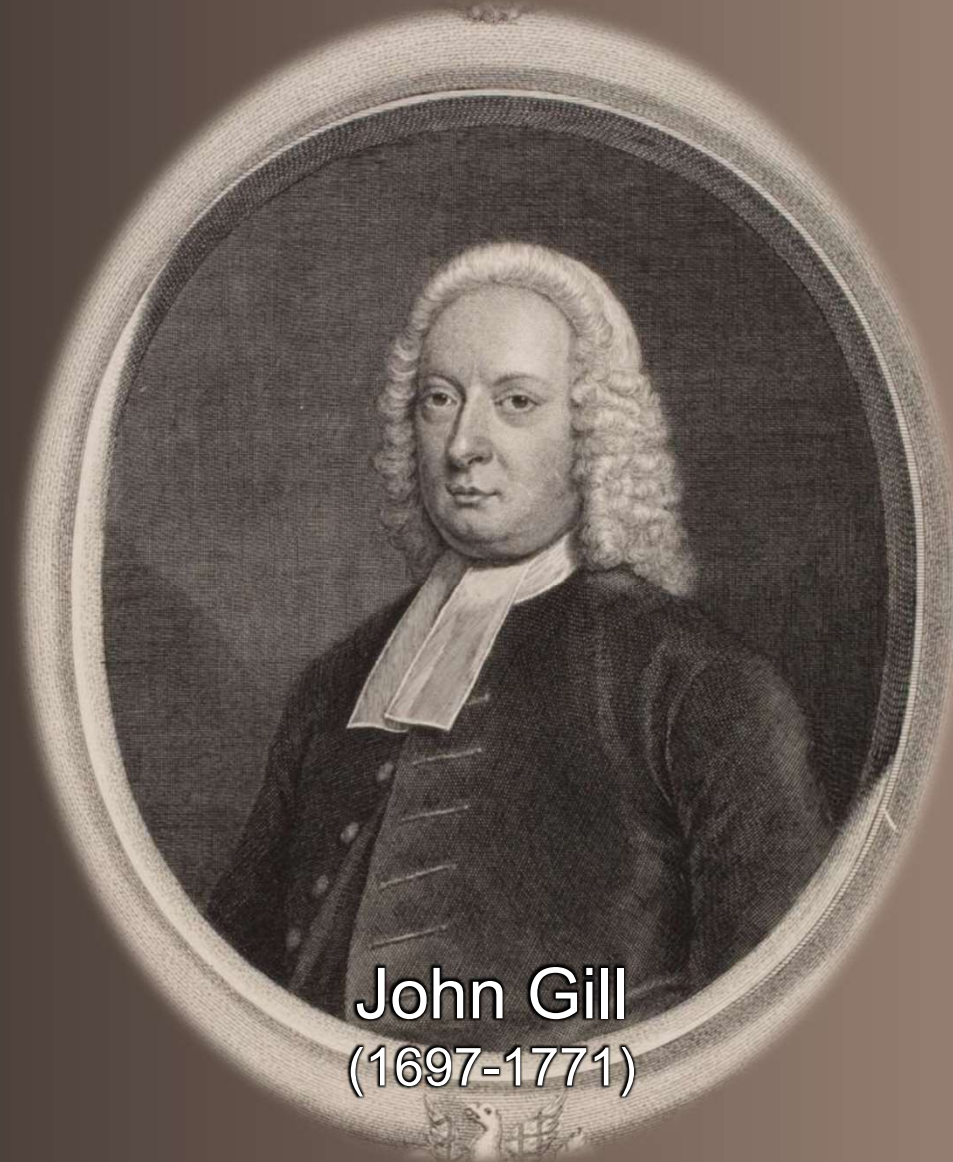
Stephen Charnock  
(1628-1680)

*"God is the most simple being;  
for that which is first in nature,  
having nothing beyond it,  
cannot by any means be  
thought to be compounded; for  
whatsoever is so, depends upon  
the parts whereof it is  
compounded, and is not the  
first being."*

[*Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), I:333]



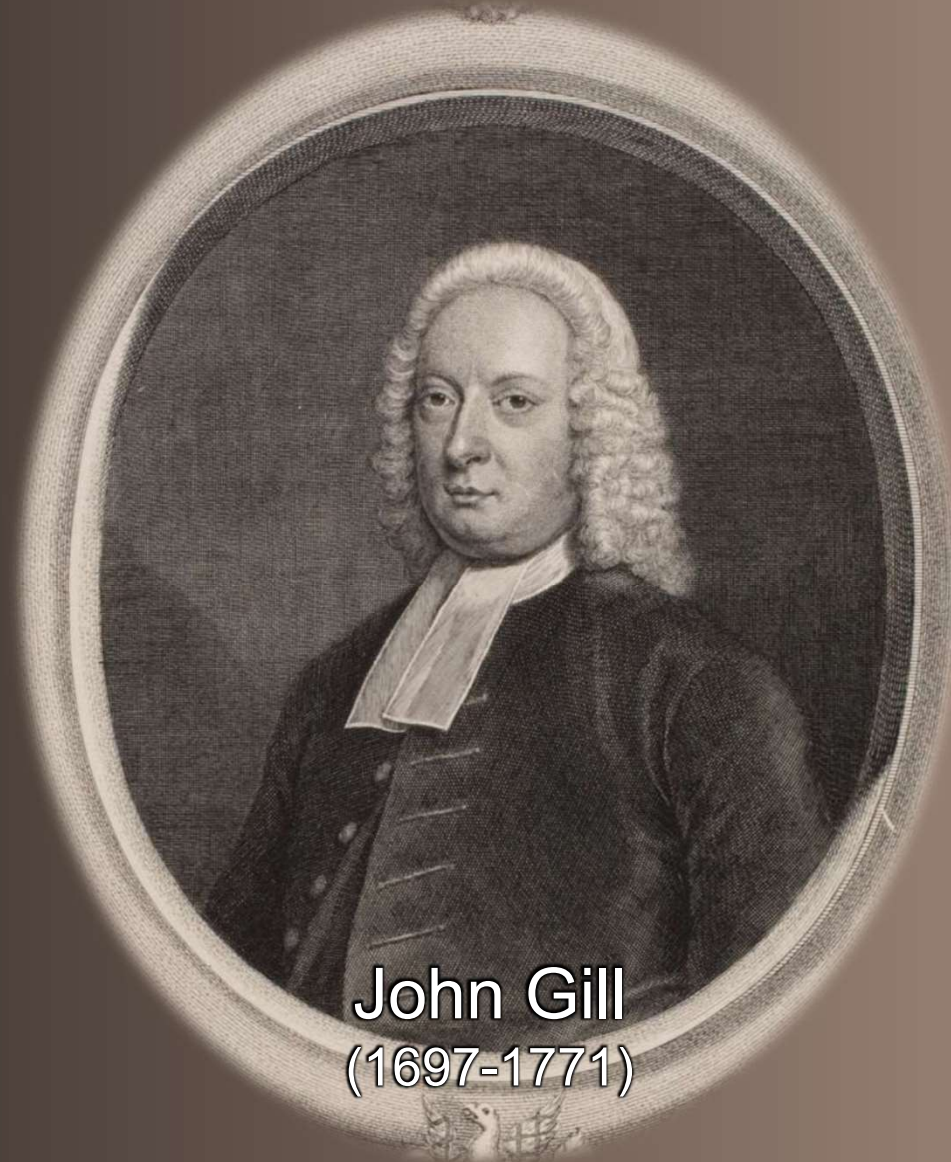
***"God being a Spirit, we learn that he is a simple and uncomposed Being, and does not consist of parts, as a body does; his spirituality involves his simplicity. ... every attribute of God is God himself, is his nature, and are only so many displays of it. It is certain God is not composed of parts, in any sense;***



**John Gill**  
(1697-1771)

***"not in a physical sense, of essential parts, as matter and form, of which bodies consist: nor of integral parts, as soul and body, of which men consist: nor in a metaphysical sense, as of essence and existence, of act or power: nor in a logical sense, as of kind and difference, substance and accident."***

[*A Body of Divinity*, (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), 33-34]

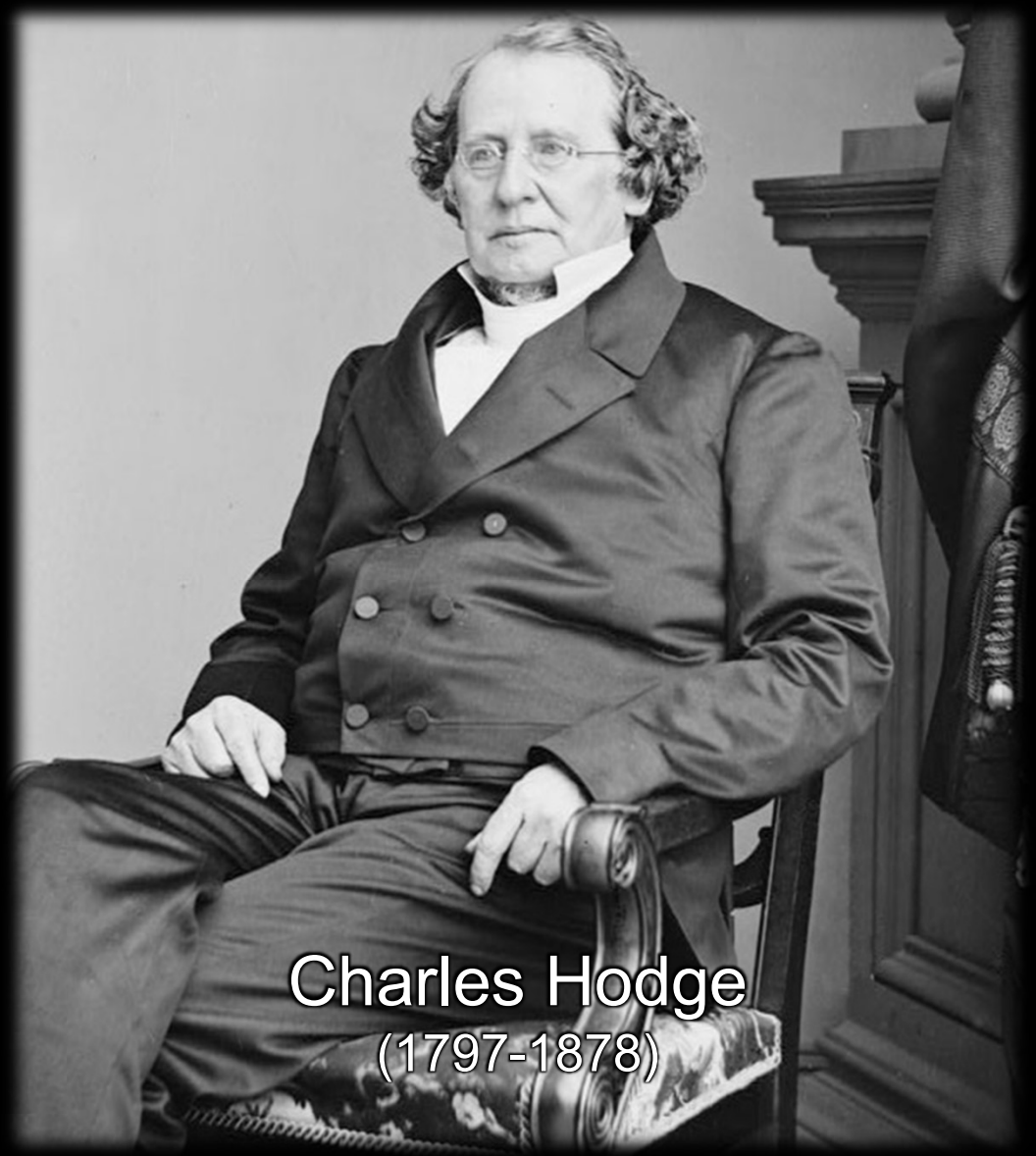


**John Gill**  
(1697-1771)

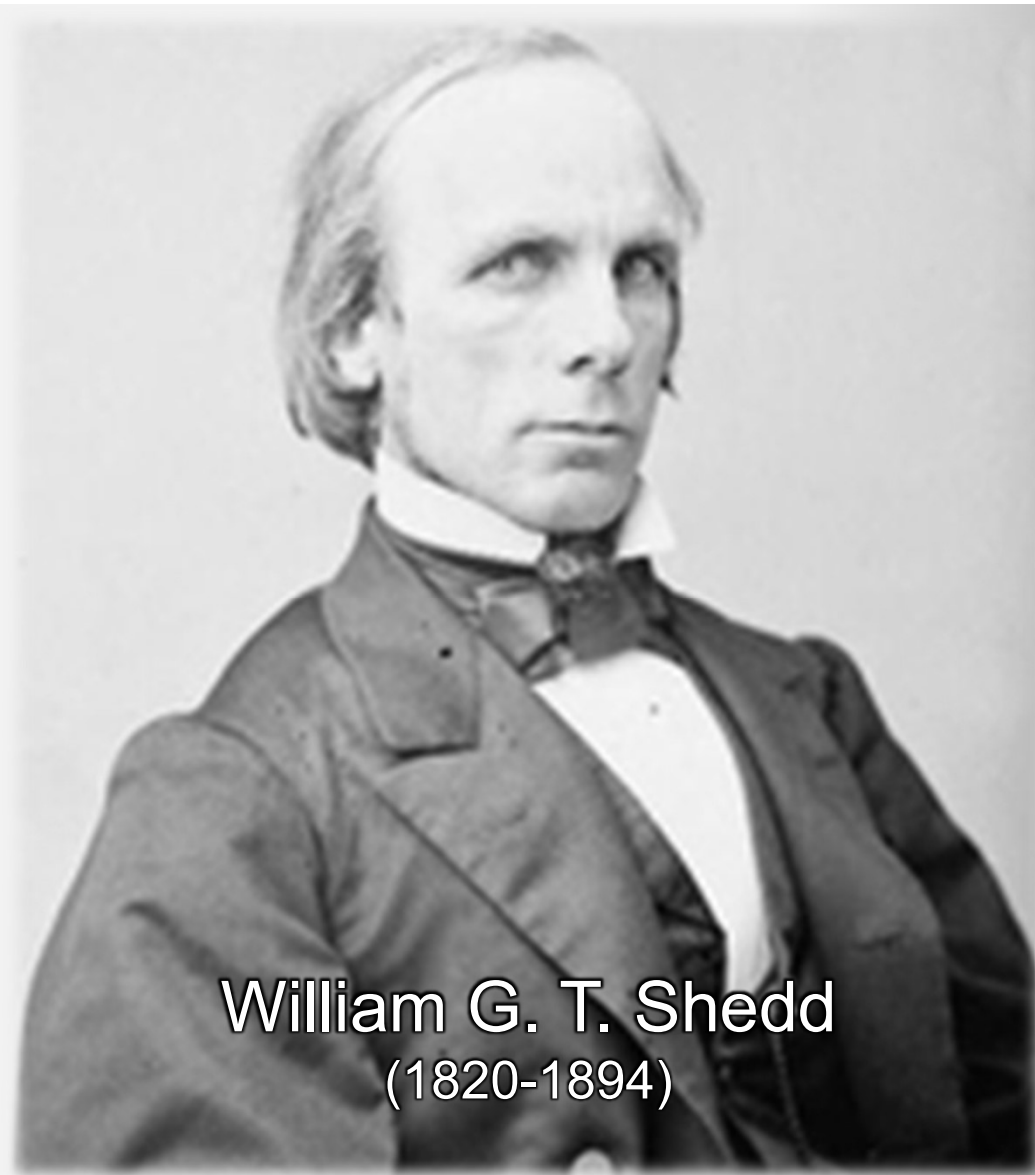


***"If God is a spirit, ... it follows that God is a simple Being, not only as not composed of different elements, but also as not admitting of the distinction between substance and accidents."***

[*Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), I, V, §4, p. 379]



Charles Hodge  
(1797-1878)



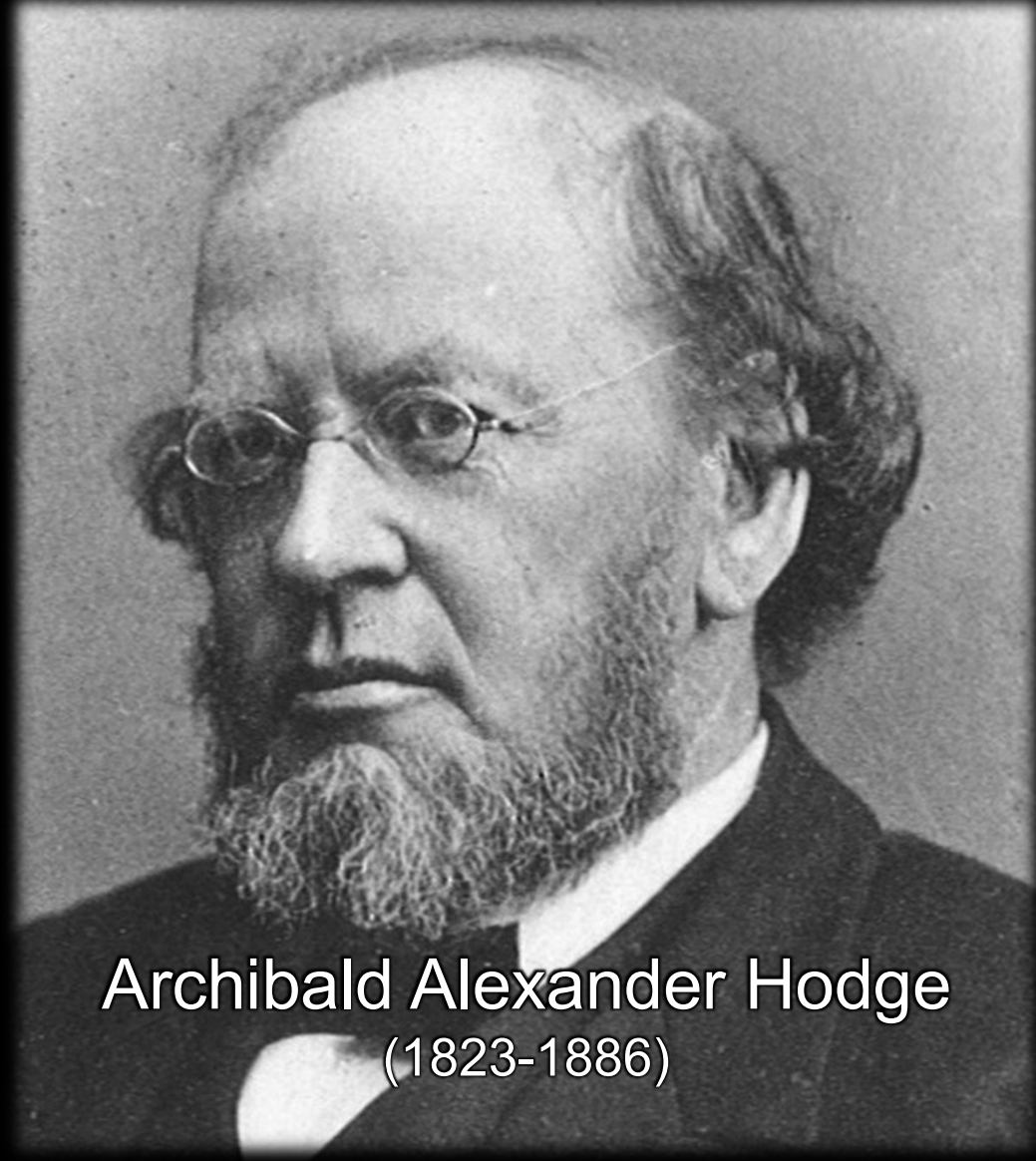
William G. T. Shedd  
(1820-1894)

***"The Simplicity of God denotes that his being is uncompounded, incomplex, and indivisible. Simplicity does not belong to angels and men."***

[William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3 vols. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), vol. 1, p. 338]



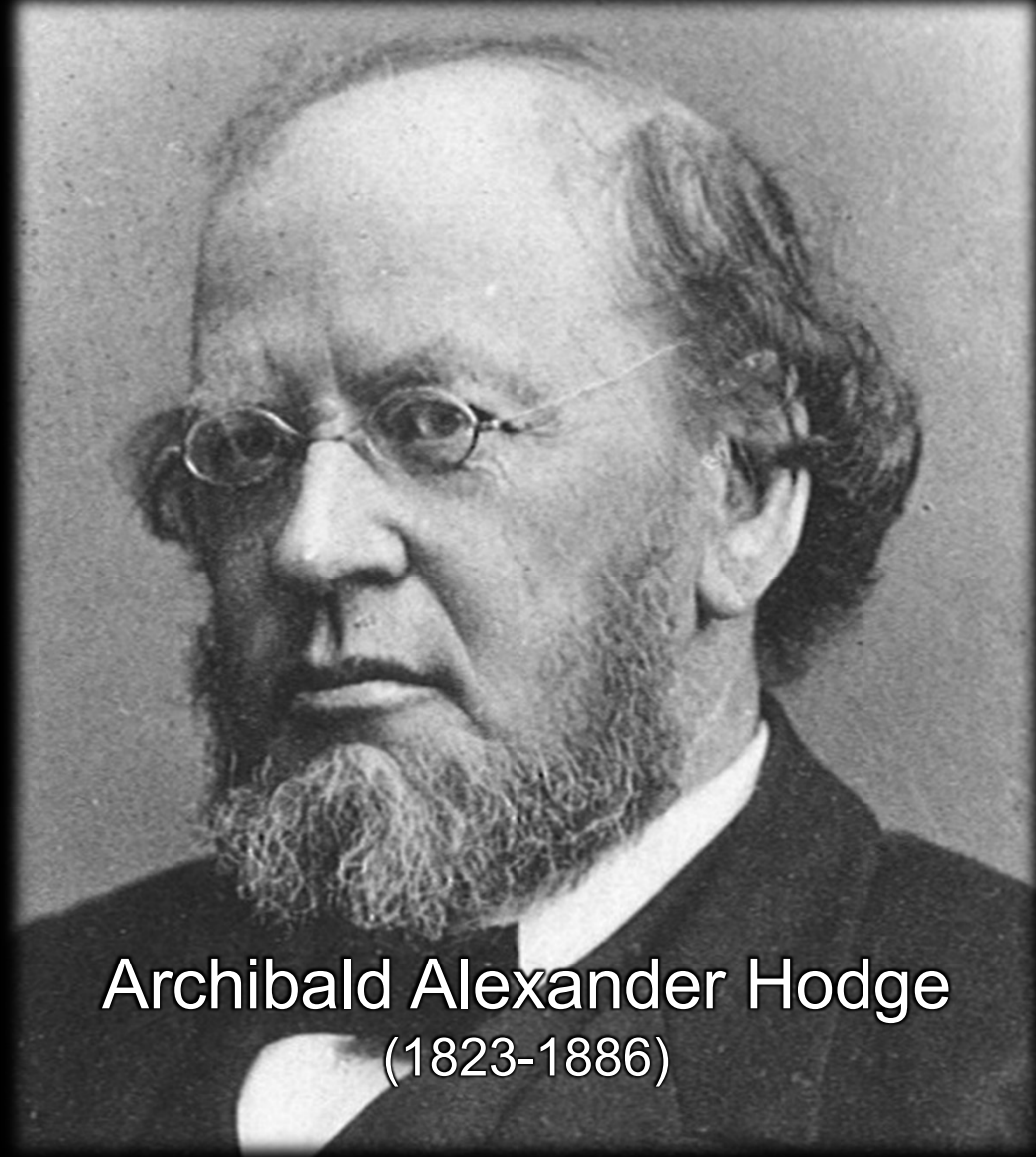
**"In order to avoid both extremes theologians have been accustomed to say that the divine attributes differ from the divine essence and from one another, 1st, not *realiter* or as one thing differs from another, or in any such way as to imply composition in God. Nor 2d, merely *nominaliter*, as though there were nothing in God really corresponding to our conceptions of his perfections.**



**Archibald Alexander Hodge**  
(1823-1886)

**"But 3d, they are said to differ *virtualiter*, so that there is in him a foundation of adequate reason for all the representations which are made in Scripture with regard to the diving perfections and for the consequent conceptions which we have of them."**

[A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology: For Students and Laymen* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 136-137]

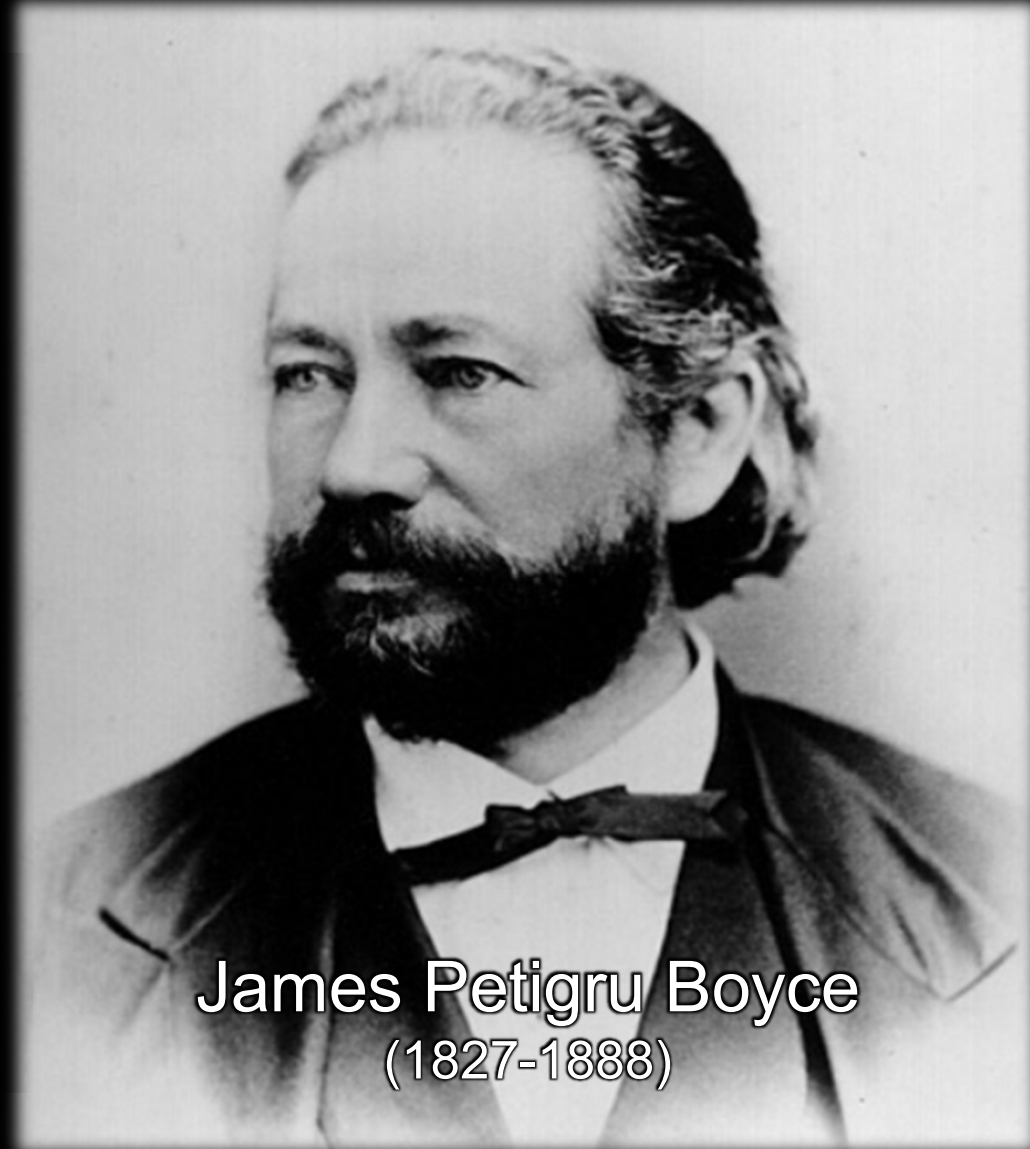


**Archibald Alexander Hodge**  
(1823-1886)

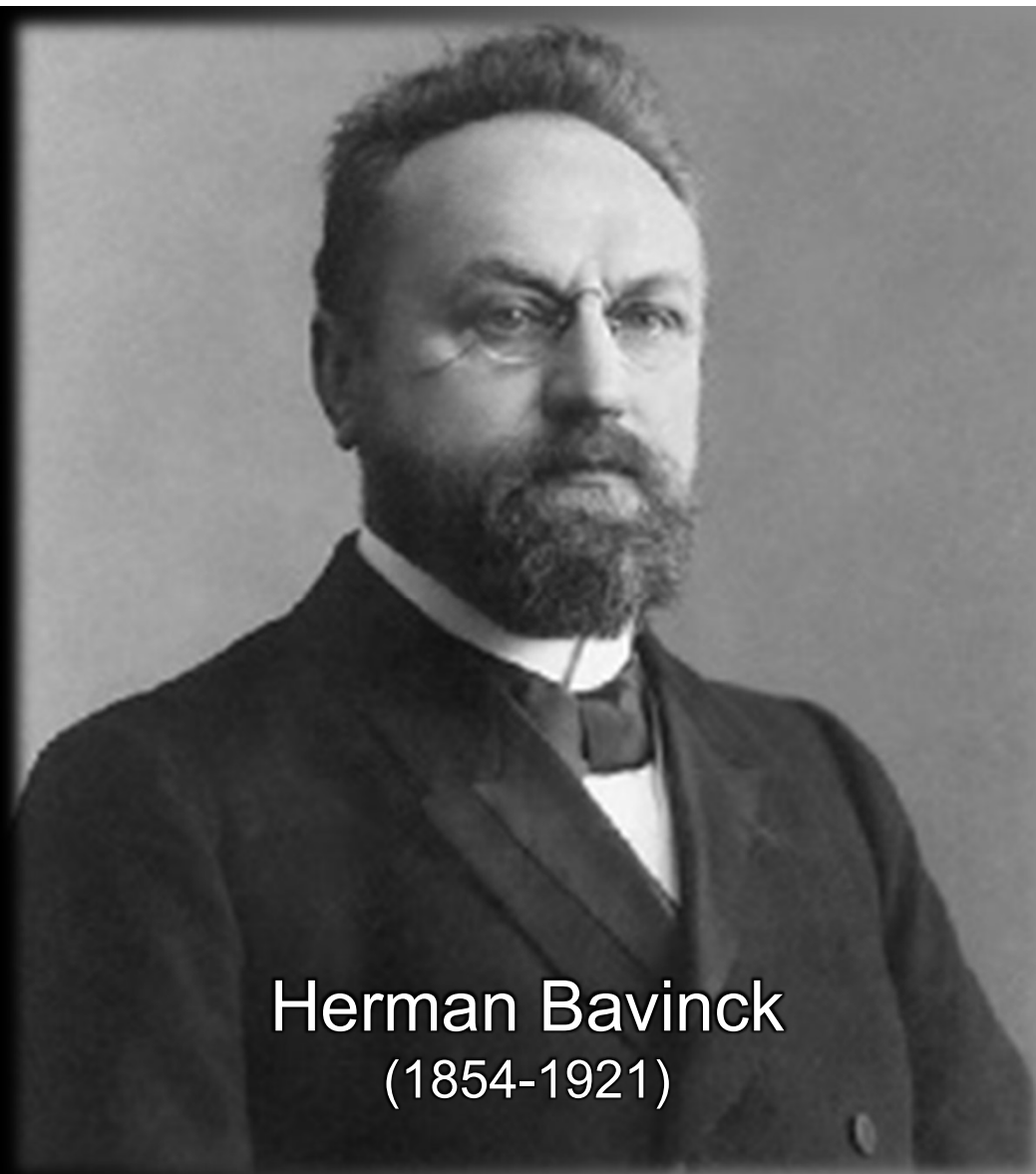


***"By this we mean, that the nature of God, comprising his essence and his attributes, is simple or uncomposed pure spirit. ... In God there can be no composition, and therefore his spiritual nature must be uncompounded. Even his attributes and his nature must be in such a manner one, that his attributes essentially inhere in that nature and are not capable of separation from it, which really makes them one with that nature."***

[James Petigru Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1887), 67]



**James Petigru Boyce**  
(1827-1888)

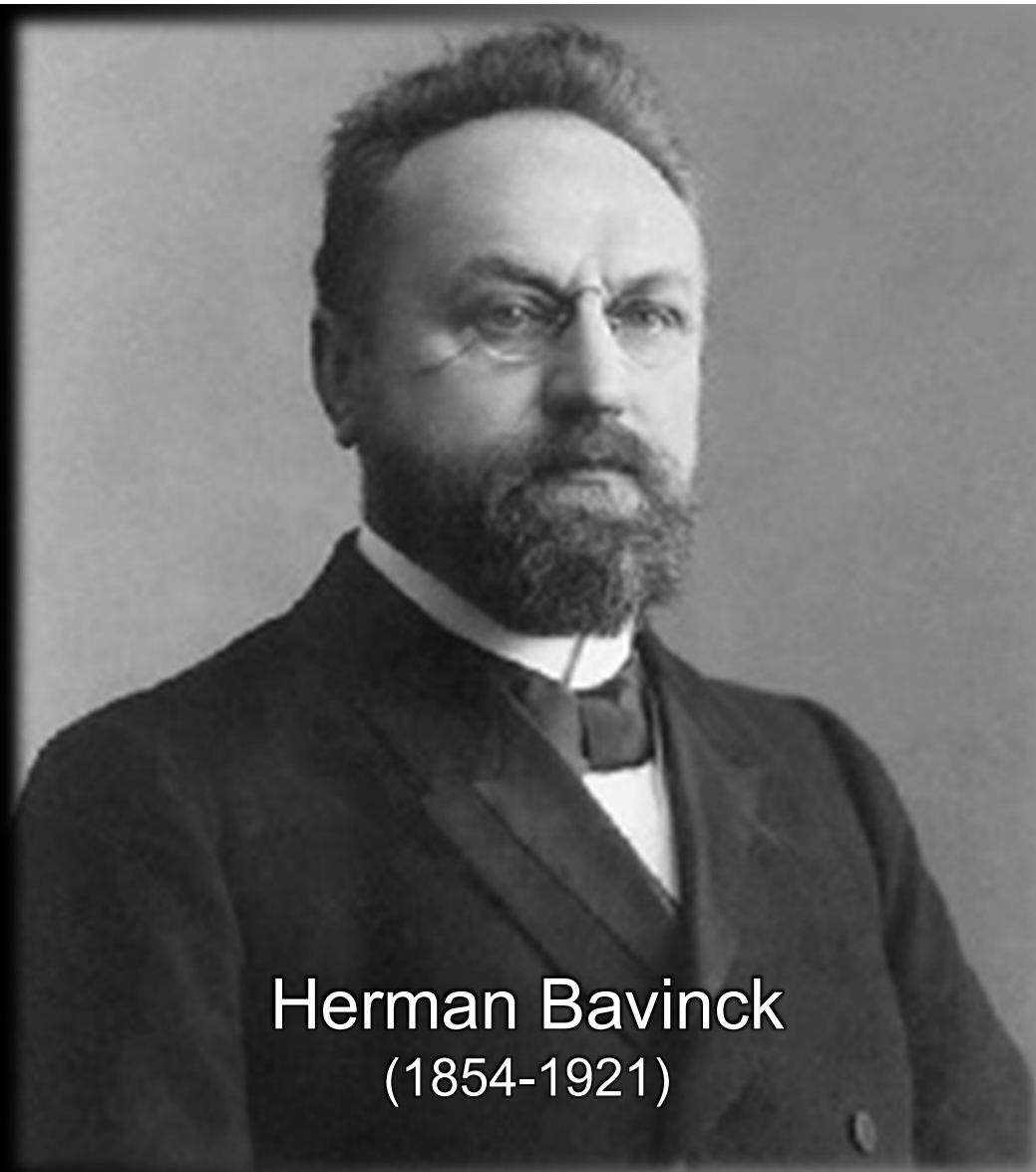


Herman Bavinck  
(1854-1921)

*"When theology speaks of God as 'essence,' it did not obtain this concept by abstraction but by the opposite process of addition, that is, by attributing to God in an absolute sense all the perfections that occur in creatures and therefore by thinking of him as absolute reality, the sum total of all being, the 'purest and simplest actuality.' Accordingly, the being that is ascribed to God in theology is at the same time the richest, most perfect, most intensive, most determinate and concrete, absolute and simple Being."*

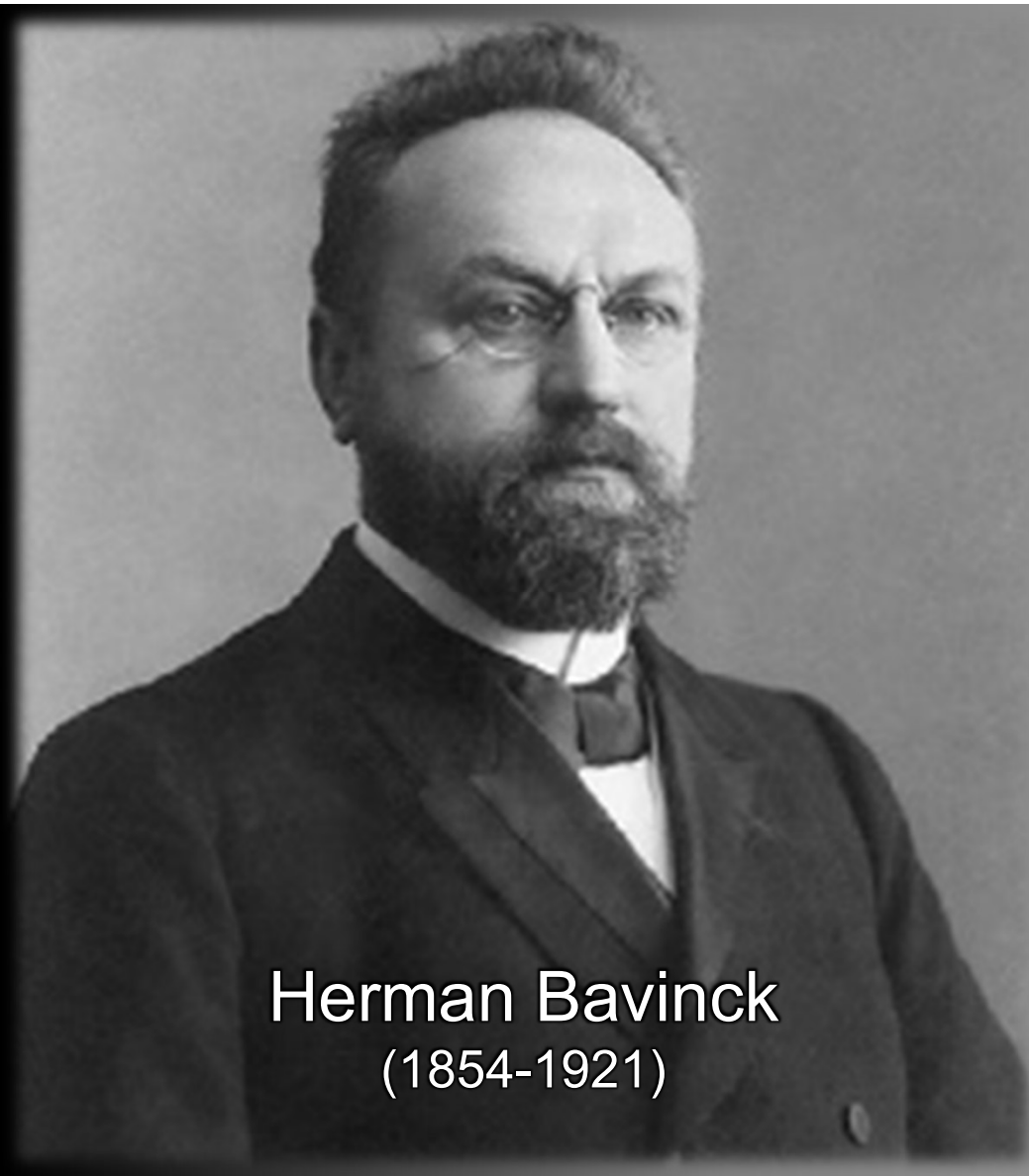
[Bavinck, Herman, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, trans. John Vriend, John Bolt, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 121; (Exported from Logos Bible Software)]





Herman Bavinck  
(1854-1921)

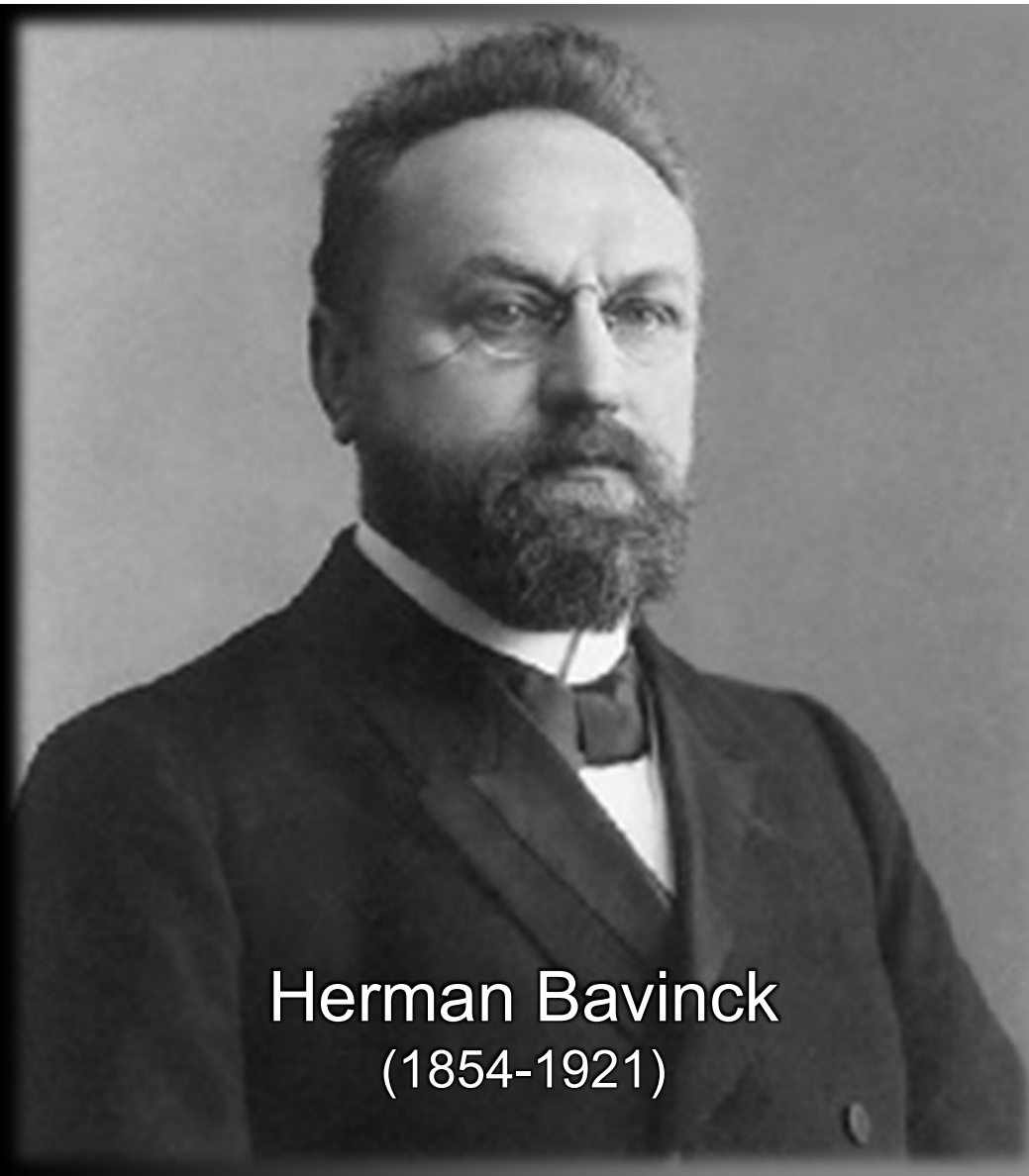
*"This simplicity is of great importance, nevertheless, for understanding of God. It is not only taught in Scripture (where God is called 'light,' 'life,' and 'love') but also automatically follows from the idea of God and is necessarily implied in the other attributes. Simplicity here is the antonym of 'compounded.'*



Herman Bavinck  
(1854-1921)

*"If God is composed of parts, like a body, or composed of genus (class) and differentiae (attributes of differing species belonging to the same genus), substance and accident, matter and form, potentiality and actuality, essence and existence, then his perfection, oneness, independence, and immutability cannot be maintained . . .*





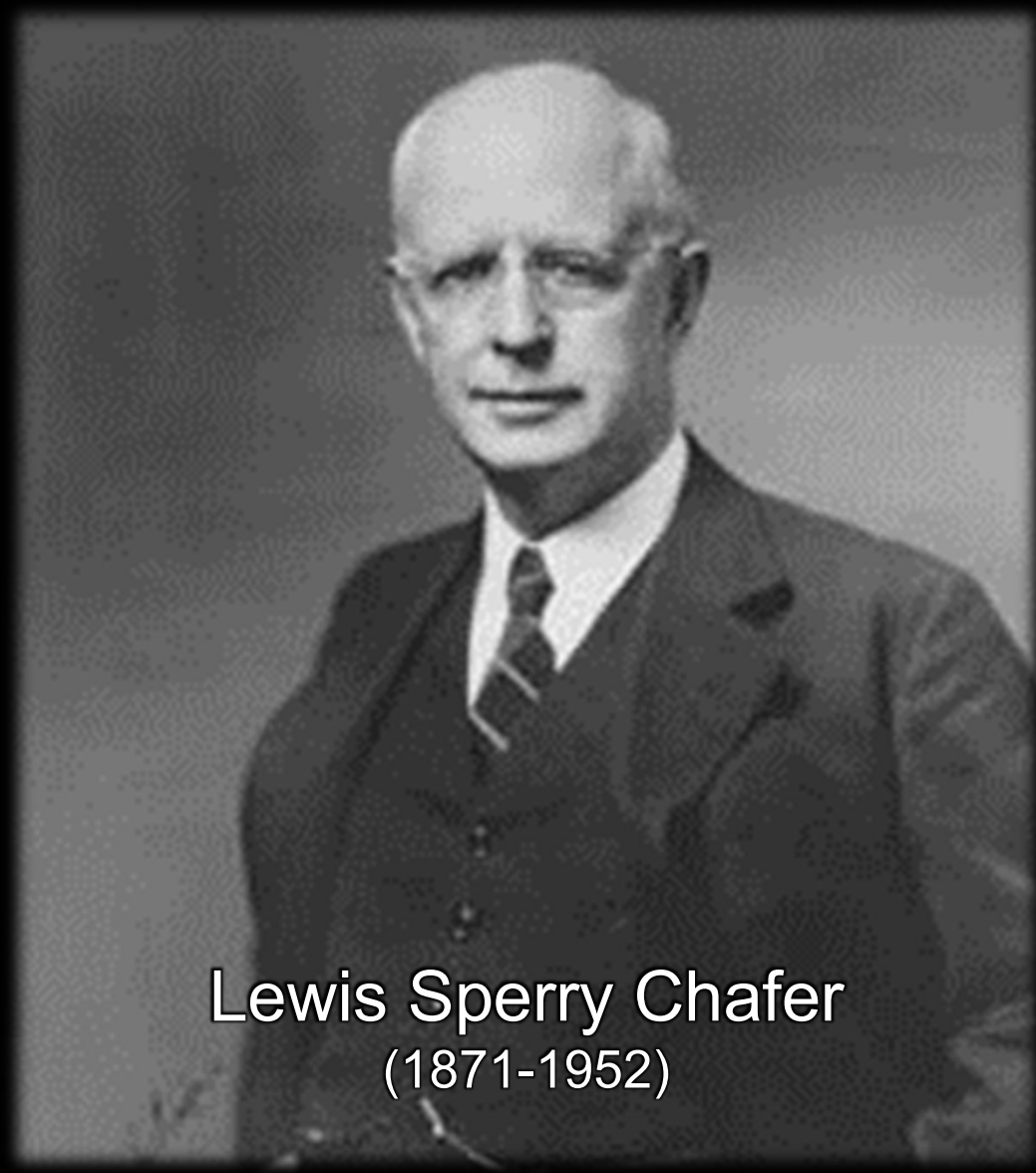
Herman Bavinck  
(1854-1921)

***"In the case of creatures all this is very different. In their case there is a difference between existing, being, living, knowing, willing, acting, and so on. All that is compounded is created. No creature can be completely simple, for every creature is finite."***

[Bavinck, *Logos digital*, 2004:176]

***"By this term it is indicated that the divine Being is uncompounded, incomplex, and indivisible. ... He being the perfect One, is to be worshiped as the finality and infinity of simplicity."***

[*Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary Press, 1947), I, 213]



**Lewis Sperry Chafer**  
(1871-1952)



***"From the simplicity of God it follows that God and His attributes are one. The attributes cannot be considered as to many parts that enter into the composition of God, for God is not, like men, composed of different parts."***

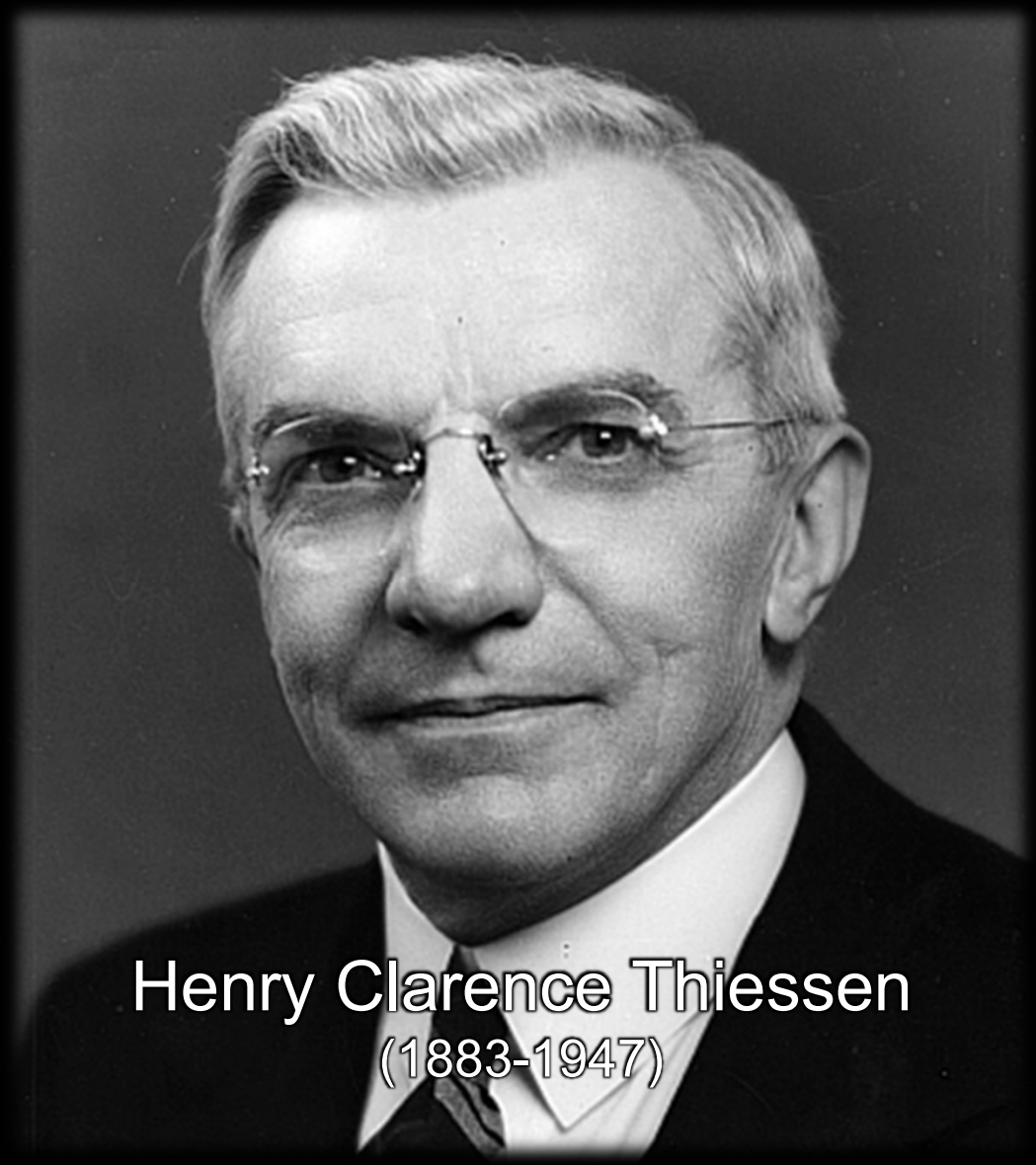
[Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1941), 44-45]



**Louis Berkhof**  
(1873-1957)

***"That the divine nature  
is undivided and  
indivisible is intimated  
in Deut. 6:4 .... That is,  
God does not consist  
of parts nor can He be  
divided into parts. His  
being is simple ...."***

[Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*  
(Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1949), 134]

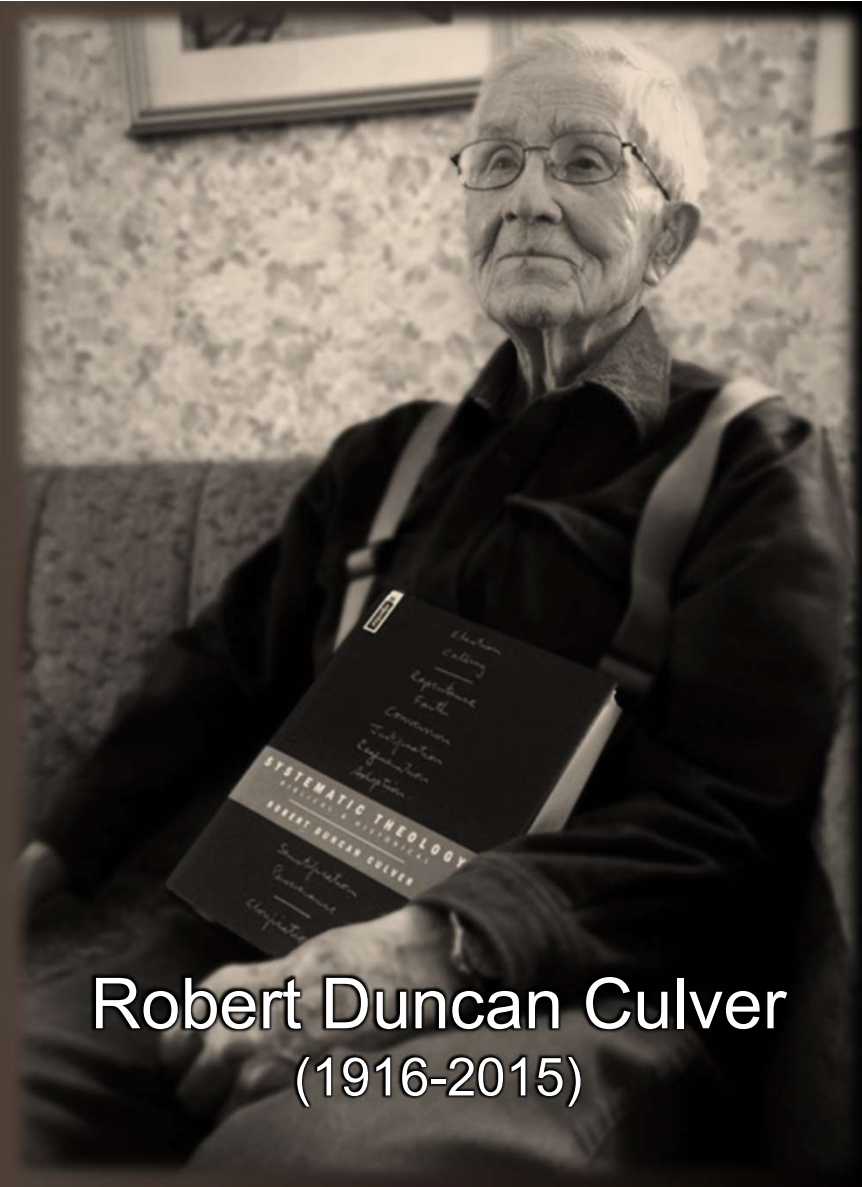


**Henry Clarence Thiessen**  
(1883-1947)

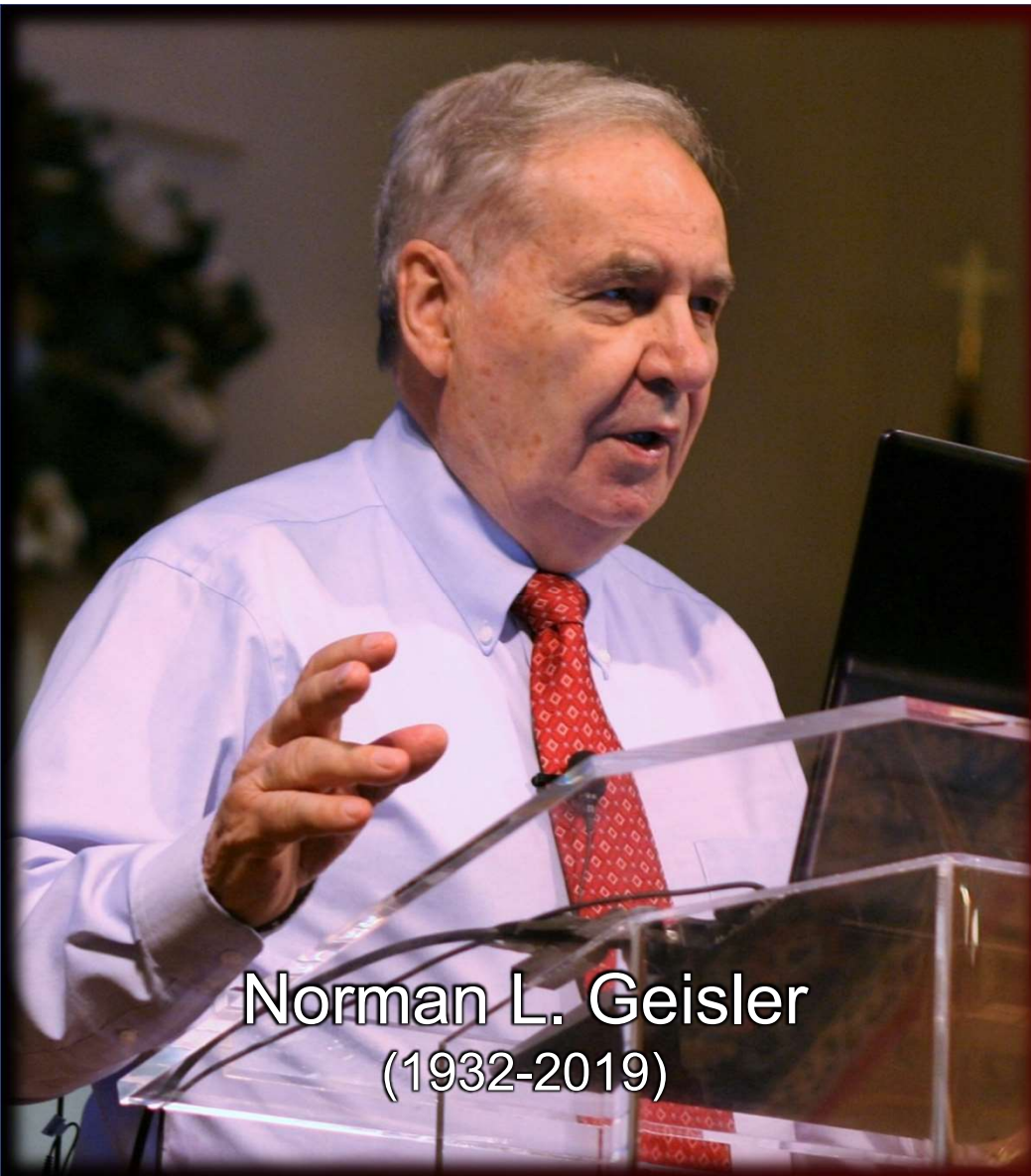


***"Orthodox theologians generally affirm that the being or substance of God is simple. Then they try to explain and offer cautions. By simple or simplicity, we mean without parts. ...There is no variance in any one or al the attributes, for they are steadily the same ..."***

[Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 63]



**Robert Duncan Culver**  
(1916-2015)



Norman L. Geisler  
(1932-2019)

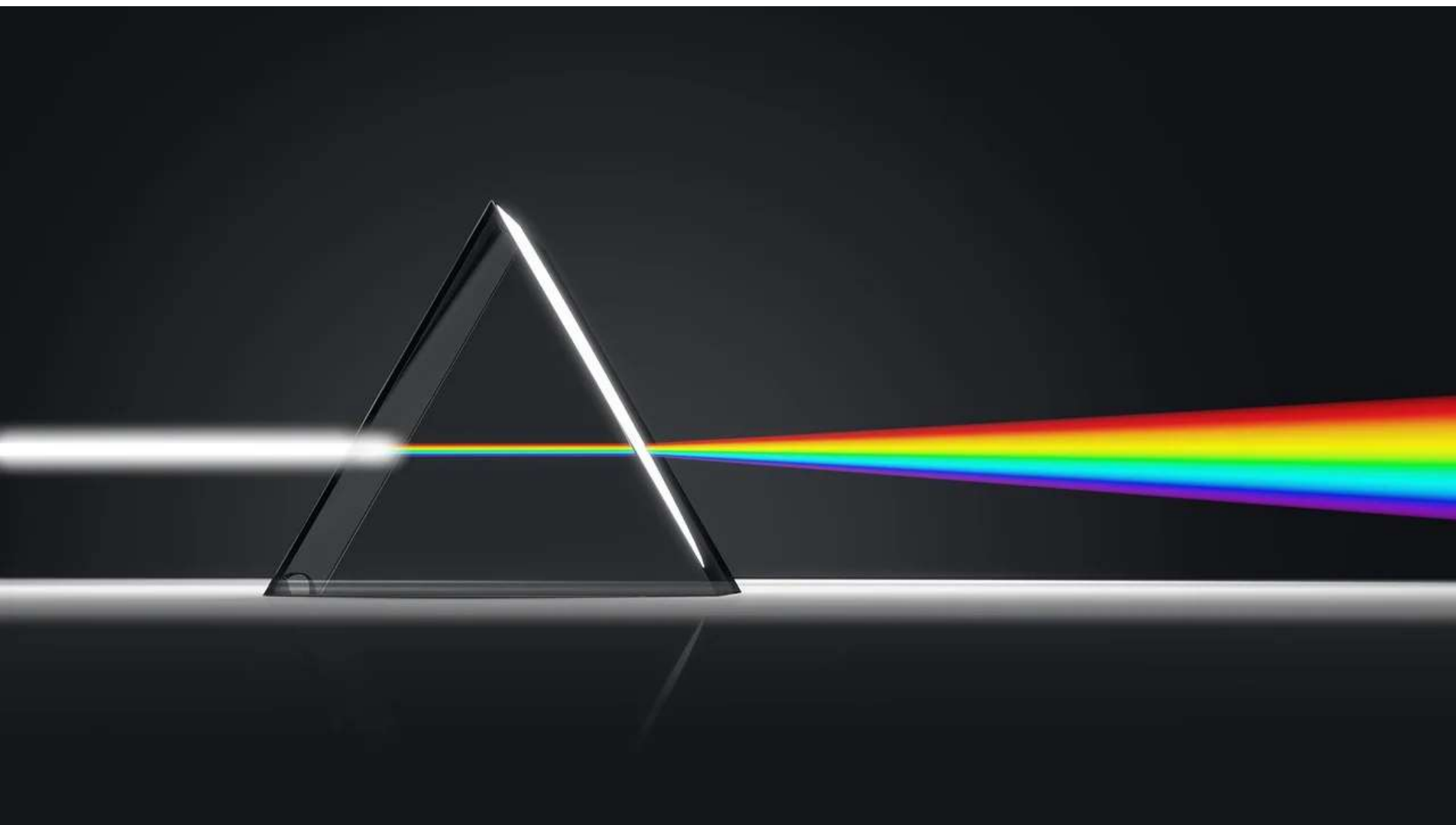
***"The divine attribute of simplicity is foundational to the orthodox view of the nature of God. ... God is ontologically one Being, without dimensions, poles, or divisions."***

[Norman Geisler, H. Wayne House, Max Herrera, *The Battle for God: Responding to the Challenge of Neotheism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 142]





# Defending Simplicity





Whether God Is a Body?

---

Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?

---

Whether God is the Same as His Essence of Nature?

---

Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?

---

Whether God is Contained in a Genus?

---

Whether in God There Are any Accidents?

---

Whether God is Altogether Simple?

---

Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

Whether God  
Is a Body?



*It is absolutely  
true that God is  
not a body; and  
this can be shown  
in three ways.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 1. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)



## ∞ First ∞

*1. No body is in motion unless it be put in motion, as is evident from induction.*



## ↻ First ↻

1. No body is in **motion** unless it be put in **motion**, as is evident from induction.

The word 'motion' here means 'change', i.e., the actualization of a potential.



## ∞ First ∞

- 1. No body is in motion unless it be put in motion, as is evident from induction.*
- 2. Now it has been already proved (1:2:3),*



## ↻ First ↻

1. *No body is in motion unless it be put in motion, as is evident from induction.*
2. *Now it has been already proved (1:2:3),*

This is referring to the first of Aquinas's "Five Ways"—the argument from motion found in the *Summa Theologiae Part I, Question 2, Article 3*.

## ∞ First ∞

- 1. No body is in motion unless it be put in motion, as is evident from induction.*
- 2. Now it has been already proved (1:2:3), that God is the First Mover, and is Himself unmoved.*
- 3. Therefore it is clear that God is not a body.*



## ∞ Second ∞

1. *The first being must of necessity be in act, and in no way in potentiality.*
  - a. *For although in any single thing that passes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is prior in time to the actuality;*
  - b. *Nevertheless, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality;*
  - c. *For whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality.*
  - d. *Now it has been already proved that God is the First Being.*
  - e. *It is therefore impossible that in God there should be any potentiality.*
2. *But every body is in potentiality because the continuous, as such, is divisible to infinity.*

## ↻ Second ↻

1. *The first being must of necessity be in act and in no way in potentiality.*

- a. *For although it is prior in time to actuality, the potentiality is not prior to actuality.*
- b. *Nevertheless, it is not in act by itself, but by some being in actuality.*
- c. *For whatever is in potentiality is reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality.*
- d. *Now it has been already proved that God is the First Being.*
- e. *It is therefore impossible that in God there should be any potentiality.*

2. *But every body is in potentiality because the continuous, as such, is **divisible to infinity**.*

I suspect that Aquinas means here "divisible to a potential infinity."



## *Second*

1. *The first being must of necessity be in act, and in no way in potentiality.*
  - a. *For although in any single thing that passes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is prior in time to the actuality;*
  - b. *Nevertheless, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality;*
  - c. *For whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality.*
  - d. *Now it has been already proved that God is the First Being.*
  - e. *It is therefore impossible that in God there should be any potentiality.*
2. *But every body is in potentiality because the continuous, as such, is divisible to infinity.*
3. *It is therefore impossible that God should be a body.*

## *∞ Third ∞*

1. *God is the most noble of beings.*
2. *Now it is impossible for a body to be the most noble of beings;*
  - a. *For a body must be either animate or inanimate.*
  - b. *An animate body is manifestly nobler than any inanimate body.*
  - c. *But an animate body is not animate precisely as body; otherwise all bodies would be animate.*
  - d. *Therefore its animation depends upon some other thing, as our body depends for its animation on the soul.*
  - e. *Hence that by which a body becomes animated must be nobler than the body.*
3. *Therefore it is impossible that God should be a body.*





Whether God Is a Body?

Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?

Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?

Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?

Whether God is Contained in a Genus?

Whether in God There Are any Accidents?

Whether God is Altogether Simple?

Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

Whether God is  
Composed of  
Matter and Form?



*It is impossible  
that matter should  
exist in God.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 2. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

## *↻ First ↻*

- 1. Matter is in potentiality.*
- 2. But we have shown (1:2:3) that God is pure act, without any potentiality.*
- 3. Hence it is impossible that God should be composed of matter and form.*



## ↻ Second ↻

1. *Everything composed of matter and form owes its perfection and goodness to its form.*
2. *Therefore its goodness is participated, inasmuch as matter participates the form.*
3. *Now the first good and the best—viz. God—is not a participated good, because the essential good is prior to the participated good.*
4. *Hence it is impossible that God should be composed of matter and form.*

## ∞ Third ∞

1. *Every agent acts by its form.*
2. *Hence the manner in which it has its form is the manner in which it is an agent.*
3. *Therefore whatever is primarily and essentially an agent must be primarily and essentially form.*
4. *Now God is the first agent, since He is the first efficient cause.*
5. *He is therefore of His essence a form; and not composed of matter and form.*



"God is absolute  
form, or rather  
absolute being"

[*Summa Theologiae*, I, 3, 2 and I, 3, 7, trans. Fathers of the English  
Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)



Whether God Is a Body?



Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?

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Whether God is the  
Same as His  
Essence or Nature?

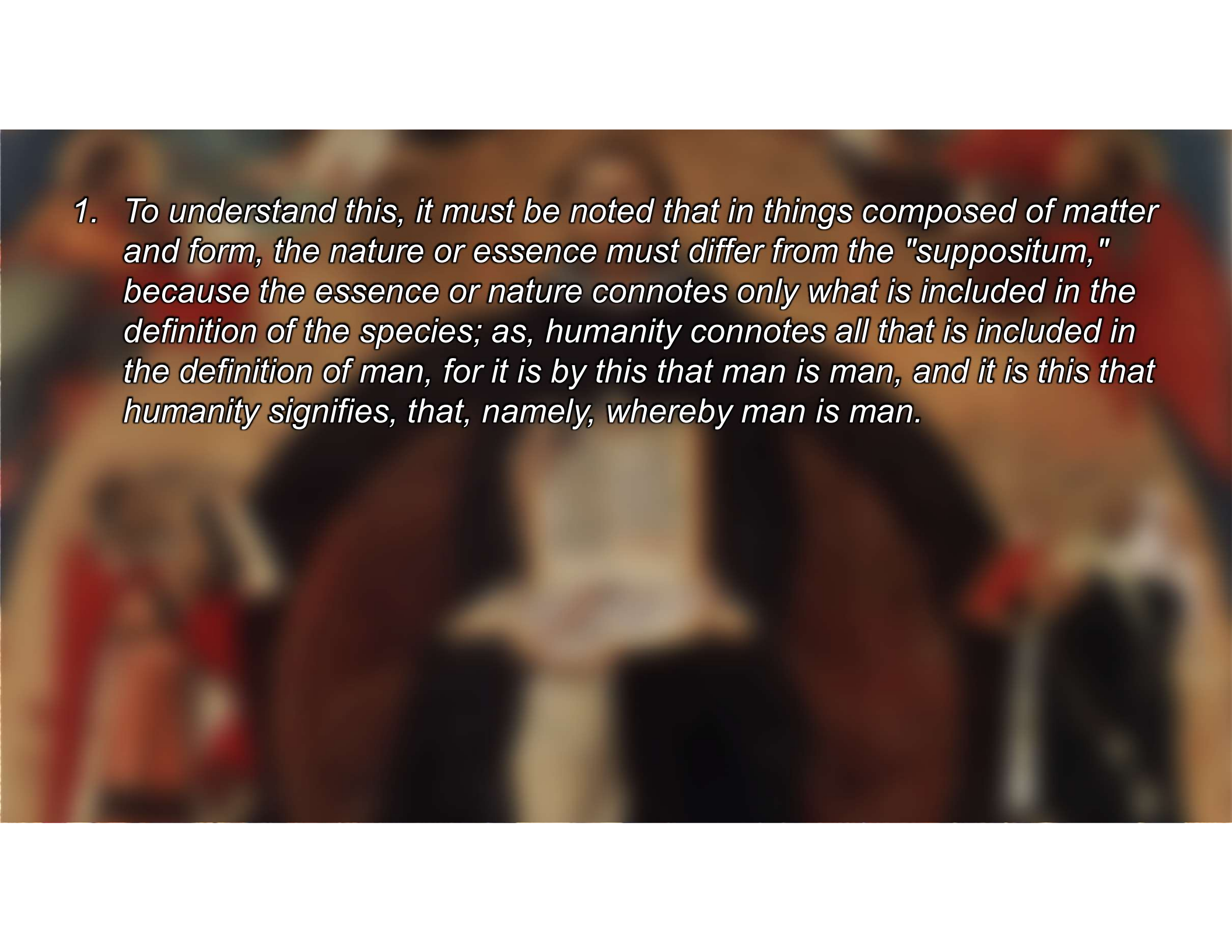
*God is the same  
as His essence  
or nature.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 3. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)



- 
1. *To understand this, it must be noted that in things composed of matter and form, the nature or essence must differ from the "suppositum," because the essence or nature connotes only what is included in the definition of the species; as, humanity connotes all that is included in the definition of man, for it is by this that man is man, and it is this that humanity signifies, that, namely, whereby man is man.*

1. To understand this, it must be noted that in things composed of matter and form, the nature or essence must differ from the "**suppositum**," because the essence or nature connotes only what is included in the definition of the species; as, humanity connotes all that is included in the definition of man, for it is by this that man is man, and it is this that humanity signifies, that is, by this, whereby man is man.

"a substance that is complete in itself and **uncommunicated**"

[Bernard Wuellner, *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy* (Fitzwilliam: Loreto, 2012), 120-121]

"unshared; not belonging to another as a part of it"

[Bernard Wuellner, *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy* (Fitzwilliam: Loreto, 2012), 127]



1. To understand this, it must be noted that in things composed of matter and form, the **nature or essence** must differ from the "**suppositum**," because the essence or nature connotes only what is included in the definition of the species; as, humanity connotes all that is included in the definition of man, for it is by this that man is man, and it is this that humanity signifies, that, namely, whereby man is man.

**HUMANITY**

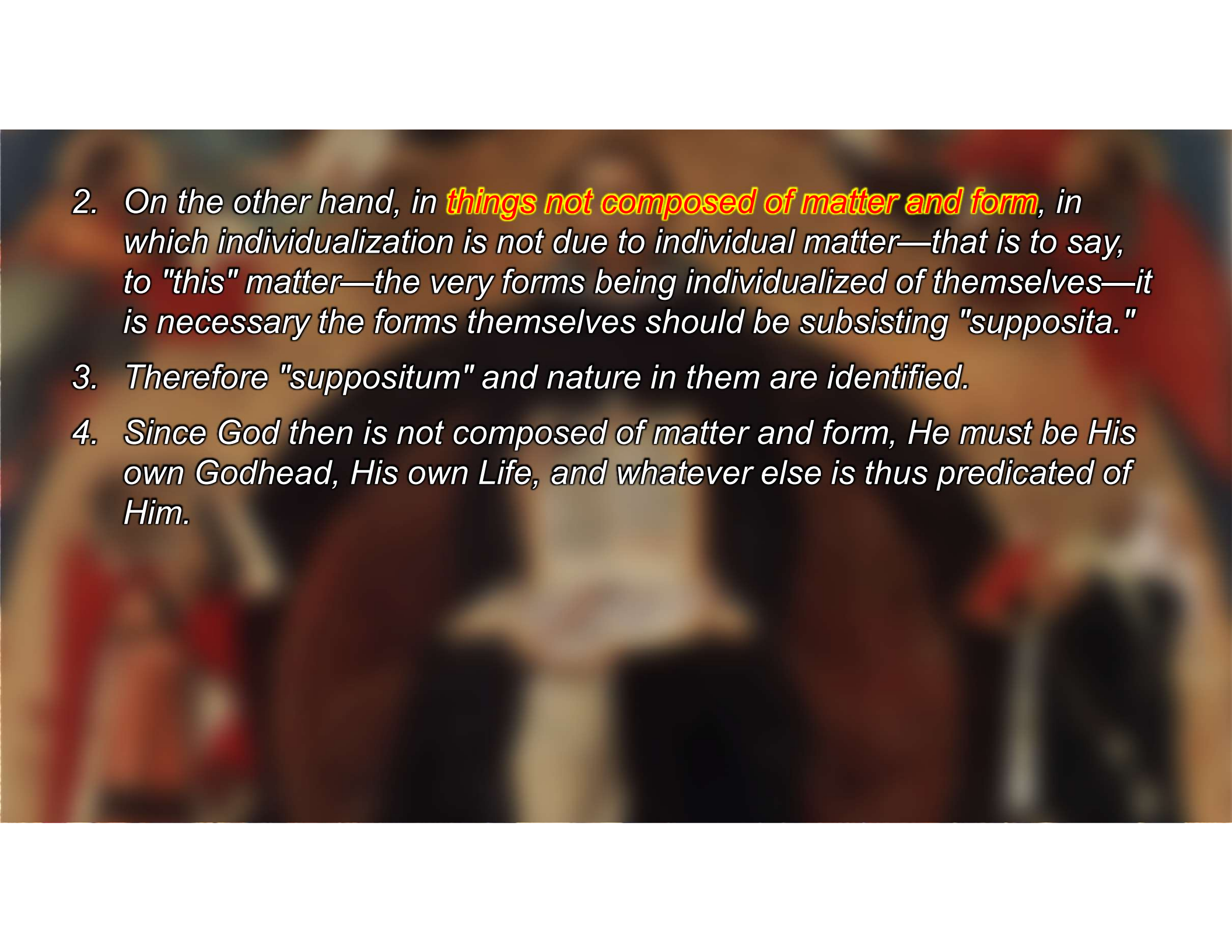
definition of the species

**INDIVIDUAL HUMAN**

a man

- a. *Now individual matter, with all the individualizing accidents, is not included in the definition of the species.*
  - 1) *For this particular flesh, these bones, this blackness or whiteness, etc., are not included in the definition of a man.*
  - 2) *Therefore this flesh, these bones, and the accidental qualities distinguishing this particular matter, are not included in humanity; and yet they are included in the thing which is man.*
- b. *Hence the thing which is a man has something more in it than has humanity.*
- c. *Consequently humanity and a man are not wholly identical; but humanity is taken to mean the formal part of a man, because the principles whereby a thing is defined are regarded as the formal constituent in regard to the individualizing matter.*



- 
2. On the other hand, in *things not composed of matter and form*, in which individualization is not due to individual matter—that is to say, to "this" matter—the very forms being individualized of themselves—it is necessary the forms themselves should be subsisting "supposita."
  3. Therefore "suppositum" and nature in them are identified.
  4. Since God then is not composed of matter and form, He must be His own Godhead, His own Life, and whatever else is thus predicated of Him.

2. On the other hand, in **things not composed of matter and form**, in which individualization is not due to individual matter—that is to say, to "this" matter—the very forms being individualized of themselves—it is necessary the forms themselves should be subsisting "supposita."
3. Therefore "suppositum" and nature in them are identified.
4. Since **God then is not composed of matter and form**, He must be His own Godhead, His own Life, and whatever else is thus predicated of Him.

It would seem, therefore, that form/matter composition (i.e., hylomorphic composition) is a necessary and sufficient condition for there being an essence / suppositum distinction.

Thus, the identity of "suppositum" and nature would be true not only of God, but also of angels.





Whether God Is a Body?



Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?



Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?

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Whether God is Contained in a Genus?

Whether in God There Are any Accidents?

Whether God is Altogether Simple?

Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

Whether Essence  
and Existence are  
the Same in God?



*God is not only His own essence, as shown in the preceding article, but also His own existence. This may be shown in several ways.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 4. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

# ∞ First ∞

1. *Whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused*
  - a. *either by the constituent principles of that essence*
    - i. *(like a property that necessarily accompanies the species—as the faculty of laughing is proper to a man—*
    - ii. *and is caused by the constituent principles of the species),*
  - b. *or by some exterior agent—as heat is caused in water by fire.*



## *↻ First ↻*

2. *Therefore, if the existence of a thing differs from its essence, this existence must be caused either*
  - a. *by some exterior agent or*
  - b. *by its essential principles.*
3. *Now it is impossible for a thing's existence to be caused by its essential constituent principles,*
  - a. *for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence,*
  - b. *if its existence is caused.*

## ∞ First ∞

4. *Therefore that thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another.*
5. *But this cannot be true of God; because we call God the first efficient cause.*
6. *Therefore it is impossible that in God His existence should differ from His essence.*



## ↻ Second ↻

1. *Existence is that which makes every form or nature actual; for goodness and humanity are spoken of as actual, only because they are spoken of as existing.*
2. *Therefore, existence much be compared to essence, if the latter is a distinct reality, as actuality to potentiality.*
3. *Therefore, since, in God there is no potentiality, as shown above (A.1), it follows that in Him essence does not differ from existence.*
4. *Therefore, His essence is His existence.*

## ∞ Third ∞

1. *Just as that which has fire, but is not itself fire, is on fire by participation; so that which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation.*
2. *But God is His own essence, as shown above (A.3).*
3. *If, therefore, His is not His own existence He will be not essential, but participated being.*
4. *He will not therefore be the first being—which is absurd.*
5. *Therefore God is His own existence and not merely His own essence.*





Whether God Is a Body?



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Whether God is  
Contained in a  
Genus?



*That He cannot  
be a species of  
any genus may  
be shown in three  
ways.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 5. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

⌘ Genus ⌘

*animal*

⌘ Specific difference ⌘

*rationality*

⌘ Species ⌘

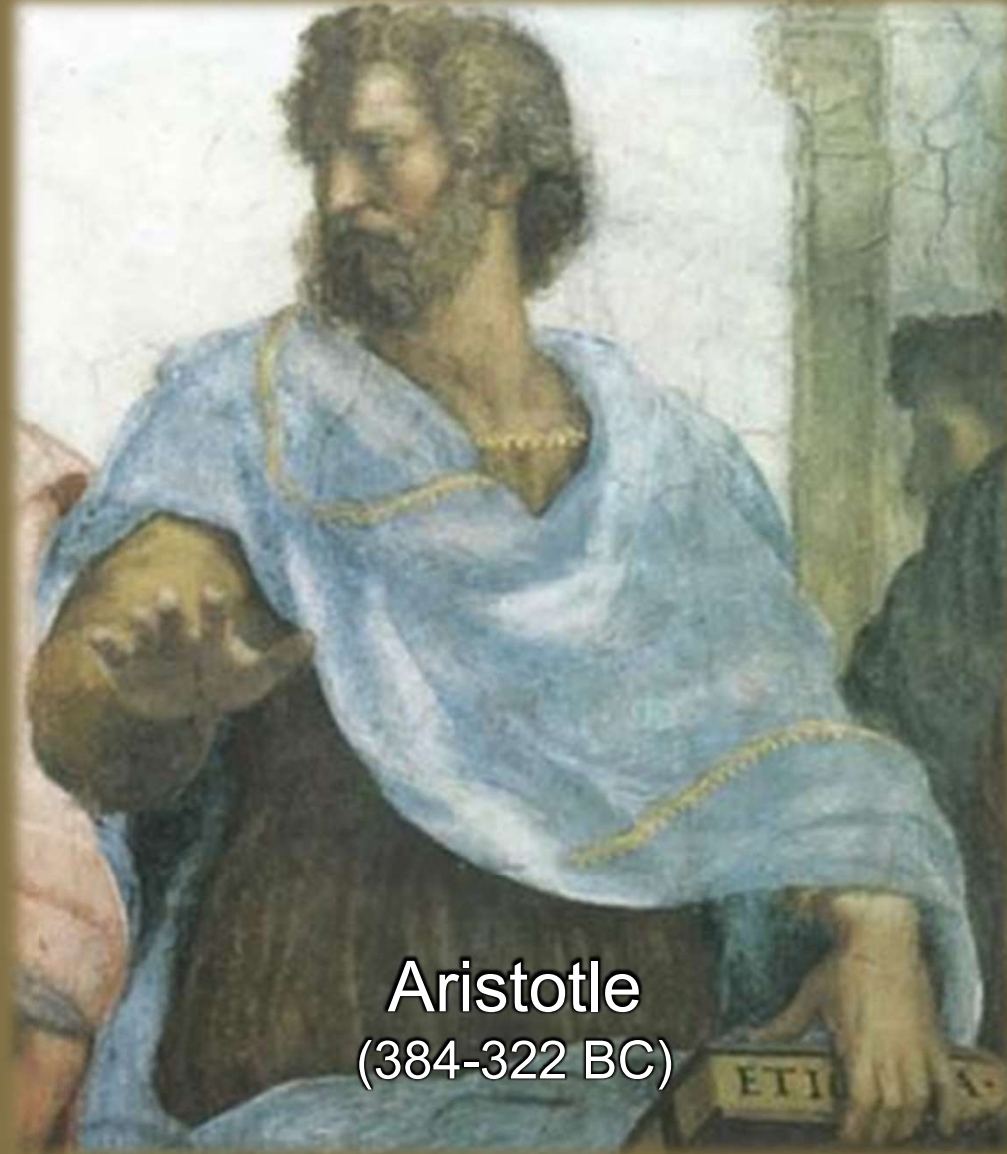
*human*

⌘ Proper accident ⌘

*five fingers*

⌘ Accident ⌘

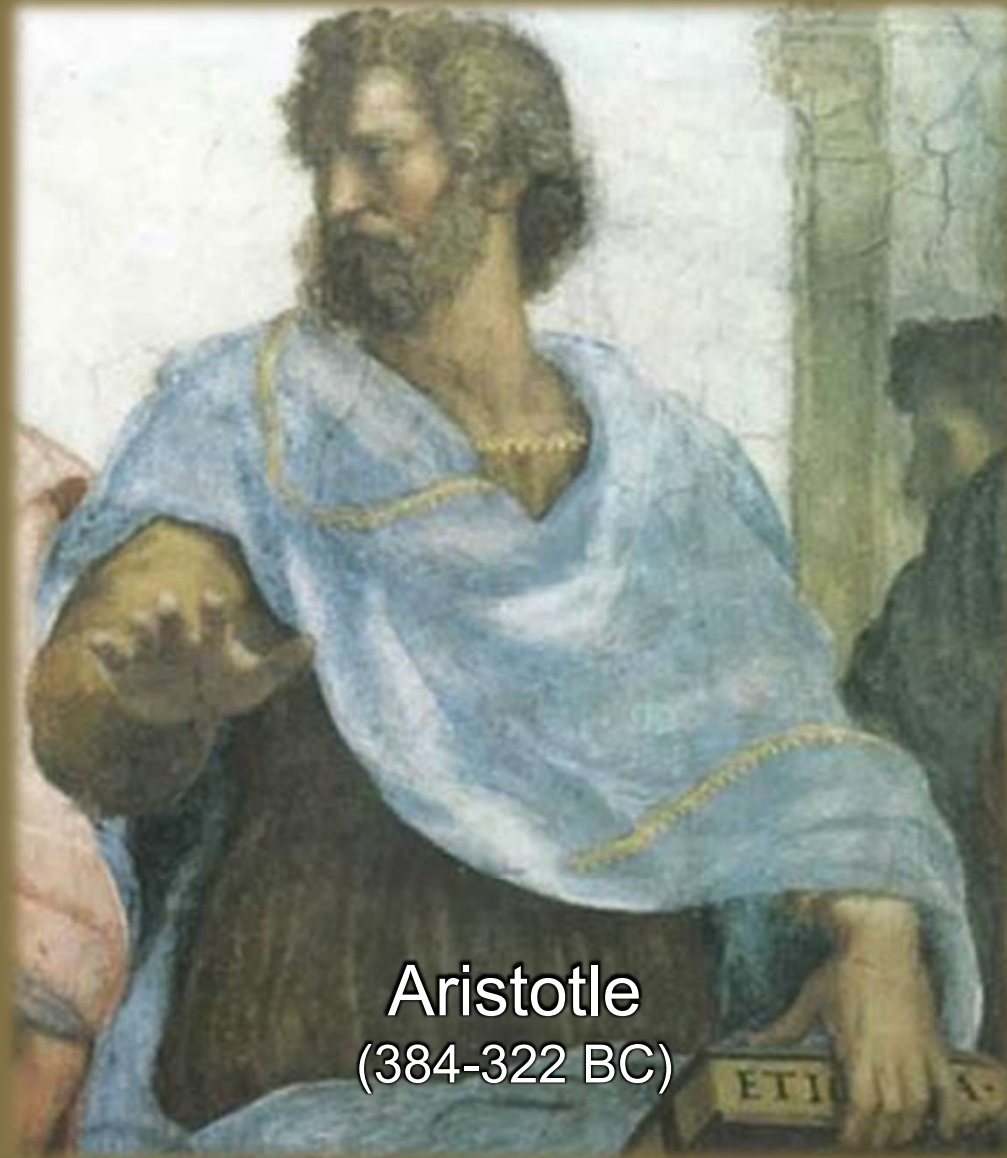
*black hair*



Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)



# ❧ PROPERTIES ❧



Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

# ∞ First ∞

1. *A species is constituted of genus and difference.*
2. *Now that from which the difference constituting the species is derived, is always related to that from which the genus is derived, as actuality is related to potentiality.*
3. *For animal is derived from sensitive nature, by concretion as it were, for that is animal, which has a sensitive nature.*
4. *Rational being, on the other hand, is derived from intellectual nature, because that is rational, which has an intellectual nature, and intelligence is compared to sense, as actuality is to potentiality.*
5. *The same argument holds good in other things.*
6. *Hence since in God actuality is not added to potentiality, it is impossible that He should be in any genus as a species.*



## ↻ Second ↻

1. *Since the existence of God is His essence, if God were in any genus, He would be the genus "being", because, since genus is predicated as an essential it refers to the essence of a thing.*
2. *But the Philosopher has shown (Metaph. iii) that being cannot be a genus, for every genus has differences distinct from its generic essence.*
3. *Now no difference can exist distinct from being; for non-being cannot be a difference.*
4. *It follows then that God is not in a genus.*

Genus

Animal

Specific  
difference

rationality

Is it possible for there to be  
an animal that does not  
have rationality?

Rationality is not entailed  
by the genus animal.

Is it possible for there to be  
an animal that does have  
rationality?

Rationality is not precluded  
by the genus animal.



# Existence

## specific difference

1. If the specific difference cannot be automatically included in the genus (and if the genus is existence or being) then the specific difference does not exist.
2. But if the specific difference cannot exist, then it cannot be a difference.
3. But any genus can have a specific difference.
4. Therefore, existence cannot be a genus.

## ∞ Third ∞

1. *All in one genus agree in the quiddity or essence of the genus which is predicated of them as an essential, but they differ in their existence.*
  - a. *For the existence of man and of horse is not the same; as also of this man and that man:*
  - b. *thus in every member of a genus, existence and quiddity—i.e. essence—must differ.*
2. *But in God they do not differ, as shown in the preceding article.*
3. *Therefore it is plain that God is not in a genus as if He were a species.*



## ∞ Third ∞

4. *From this it is also plain*
  - a. *that He has no genus nor difference,*
  - b. *nor can there be any definition of Him;*
  - c. *nor, save through His effects, a demonstration of Him:*
  - d. *for a definition is from genus and difference; and the mean of a demonstration is a definition.*

## Third

5. *That God is not in a genus, as reducible to it as its principle, is clear from this,*
  - a. *that a principle reducible to any genus does not extend beyond that genus; as, a point is the principle of continuous quantity alone; and unity, of discontinuous quantity.*
  - b. *But God is the principle of all being.*
6. *Therefore He is not contained in any genus as its principle.*





Whether God Is a Body?



Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?



Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?



Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?



Whether God is Contained in a Genus?

Whether in God There Are any Accidents?

Whether God is Altogether Simple?

Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

Whether in God  
There Are any  
Accidents?



*From all we have  
said, it is clear  
there can be no  
accident in God.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 6. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

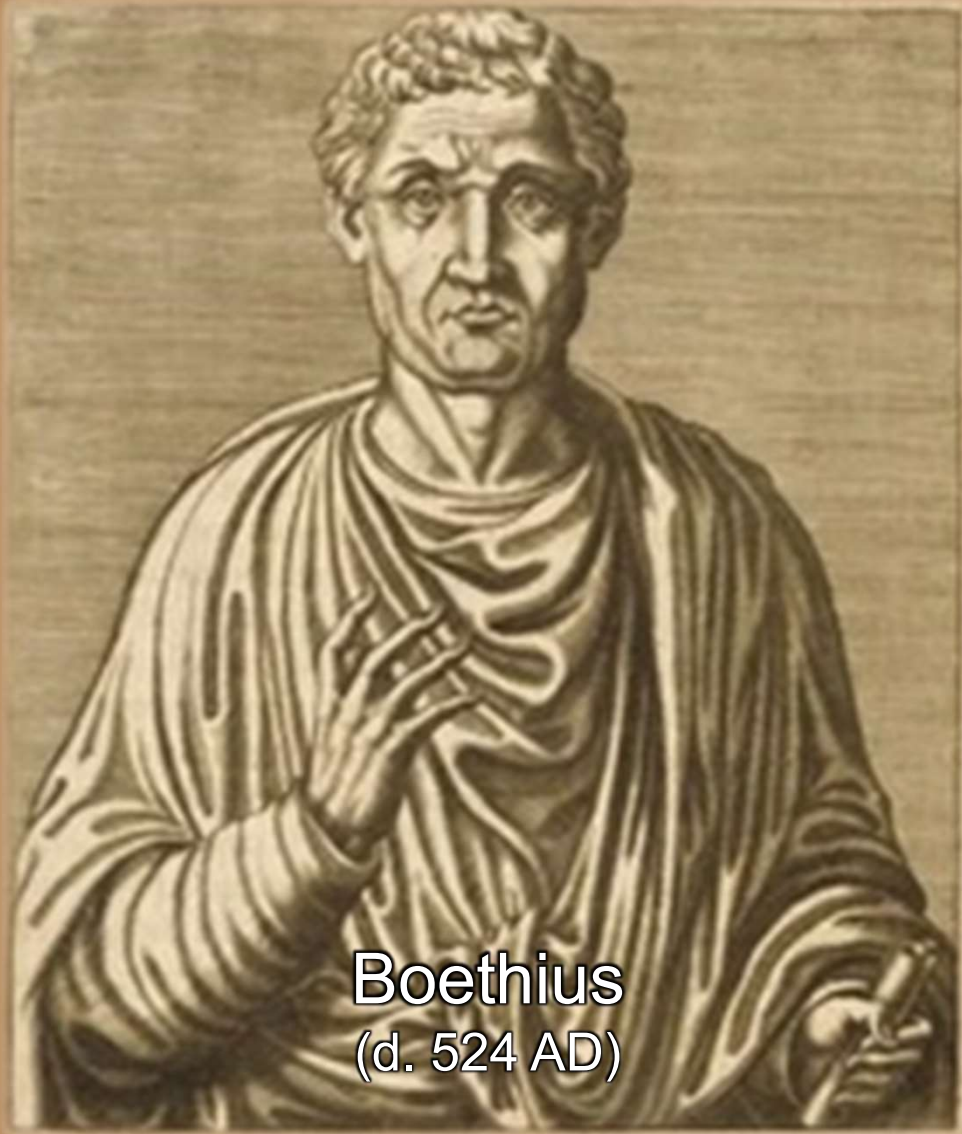
## ∞ First ∞

1. *A subject is compared to its accidents as potentiality to actuality; for a subject is in some sense made actual by its accidents.*
2. *But there can be no potentiality in God, as was shown (1:2:3).*



## ∞ Second ∞

1. *God is His own existence; and as Boethius says (**Hebdom.**), although every essence may have something superadded to it, this cannot apply to absolute being.*



Boethius  
(d. 524 AD)

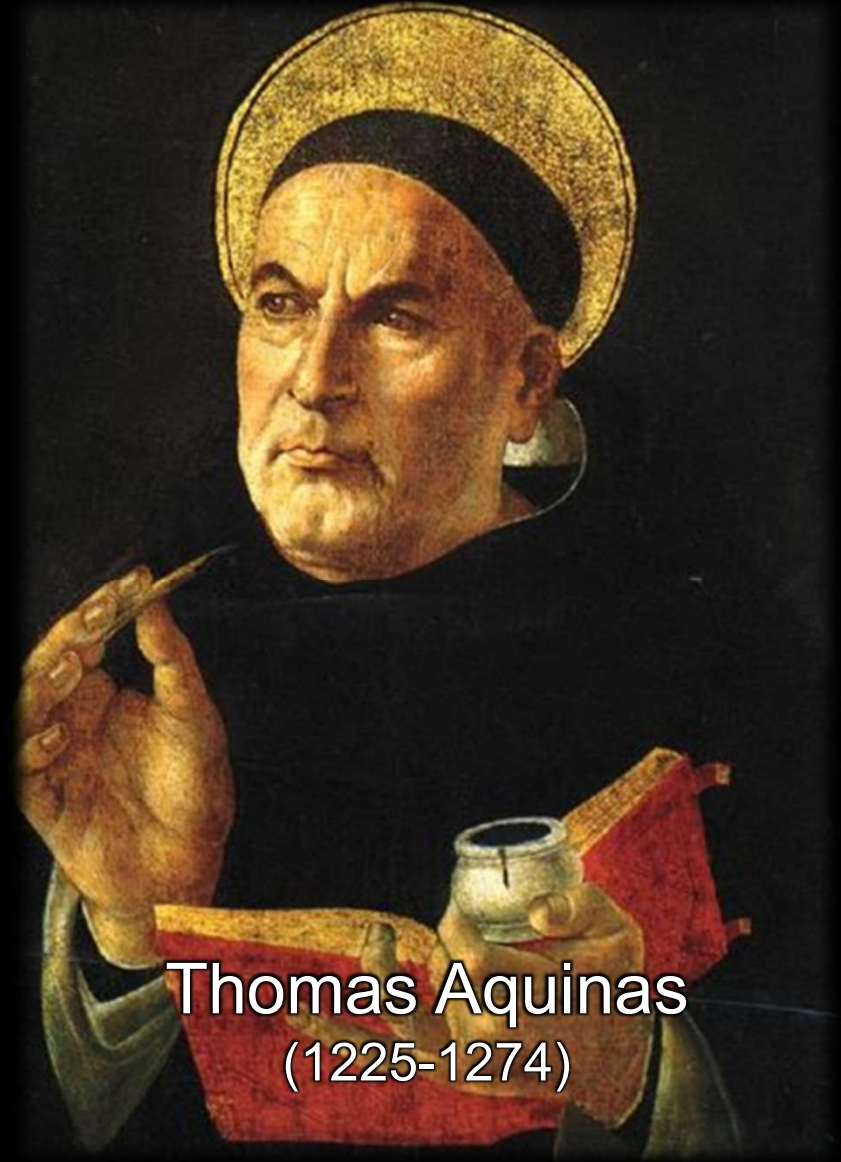
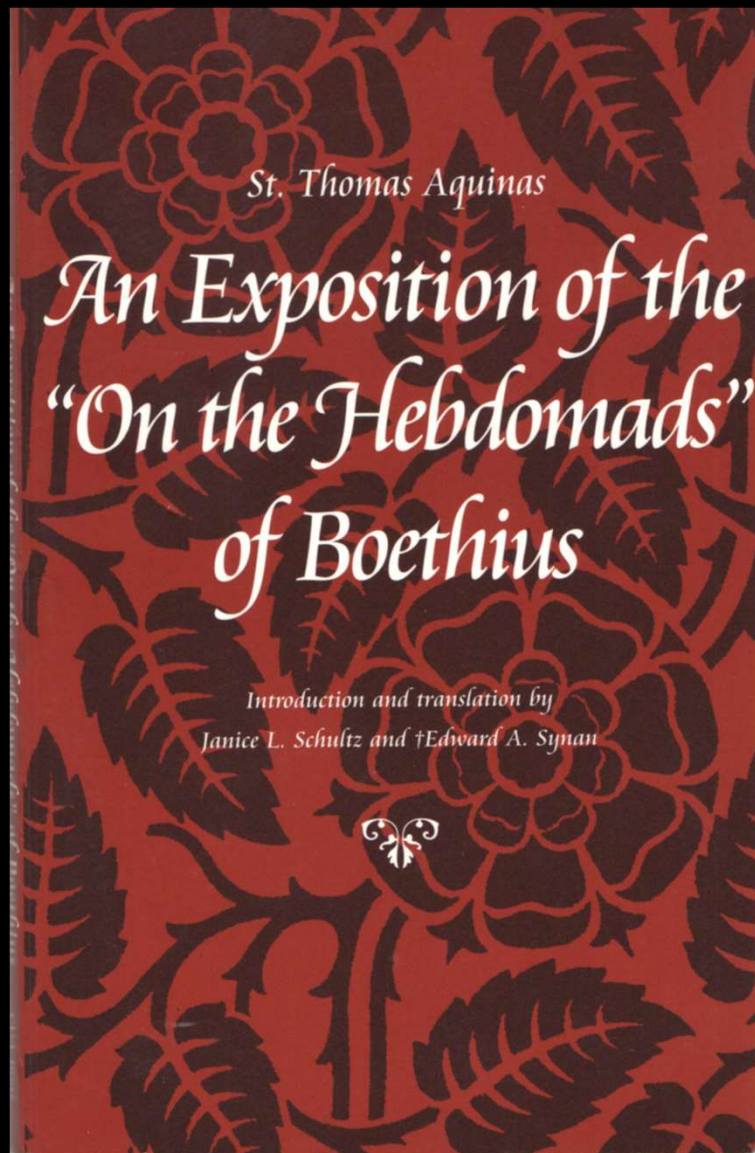
# Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius

works include:

*On the Consolation of  
Philosophy*

*On the Hebdomads (de  
hebdomadibus)*





## ↻ Second ↻

1. *God is His own existence; and as Boethius says (Hebdom.), although every essence may have something superadded to it, this cannot apply to absolute being.*
2. *Thus a heated substance can have something extraneous to heat added to it, as whiteness, nevertheless absolute heat can have nothing else than heat.*



## Third

1. *What is essential is prior to what is accidental.*
2. *Whence as God is absolute primal being, there can be in Him nothing accidental.*
3. *Neither can He have any essential accidents (as the capability of laughing is an essential accident of man)*
  - a. *Such accidents are caused by the constituent principles of the subject.*
  - b. *Now there can be nothing caused in God, since He is the first cause.*
4. *Hence it follows that there is no accident in God.*



Whether God Is a Body?



Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?



Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?



Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?



Whether God is Contained in a Genus?



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Whether God is  
Altogether Simple?

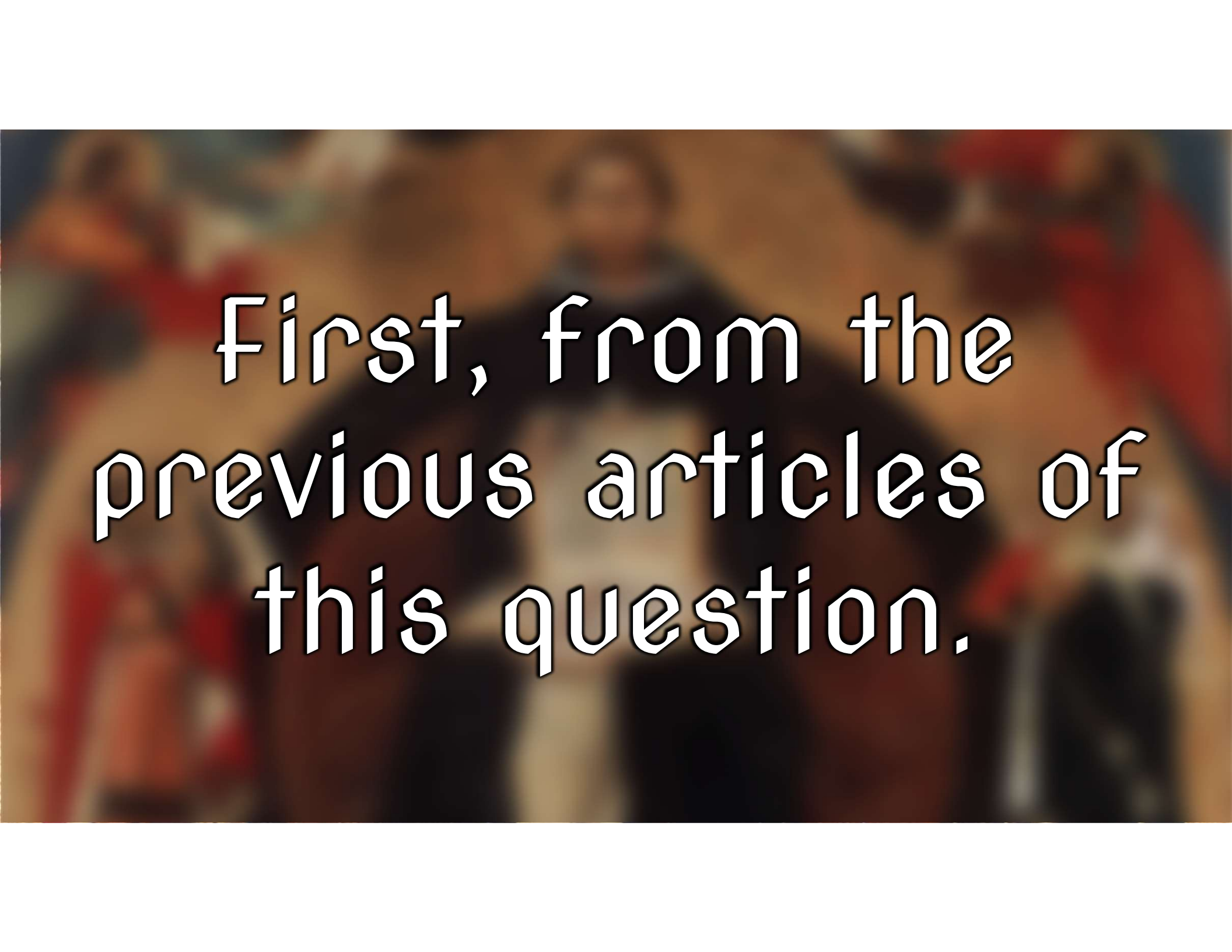
*The absolute  
simplicity of God  
may be shown in  
many ways.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 7. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)





First, from the  
previous articles of  
this question.

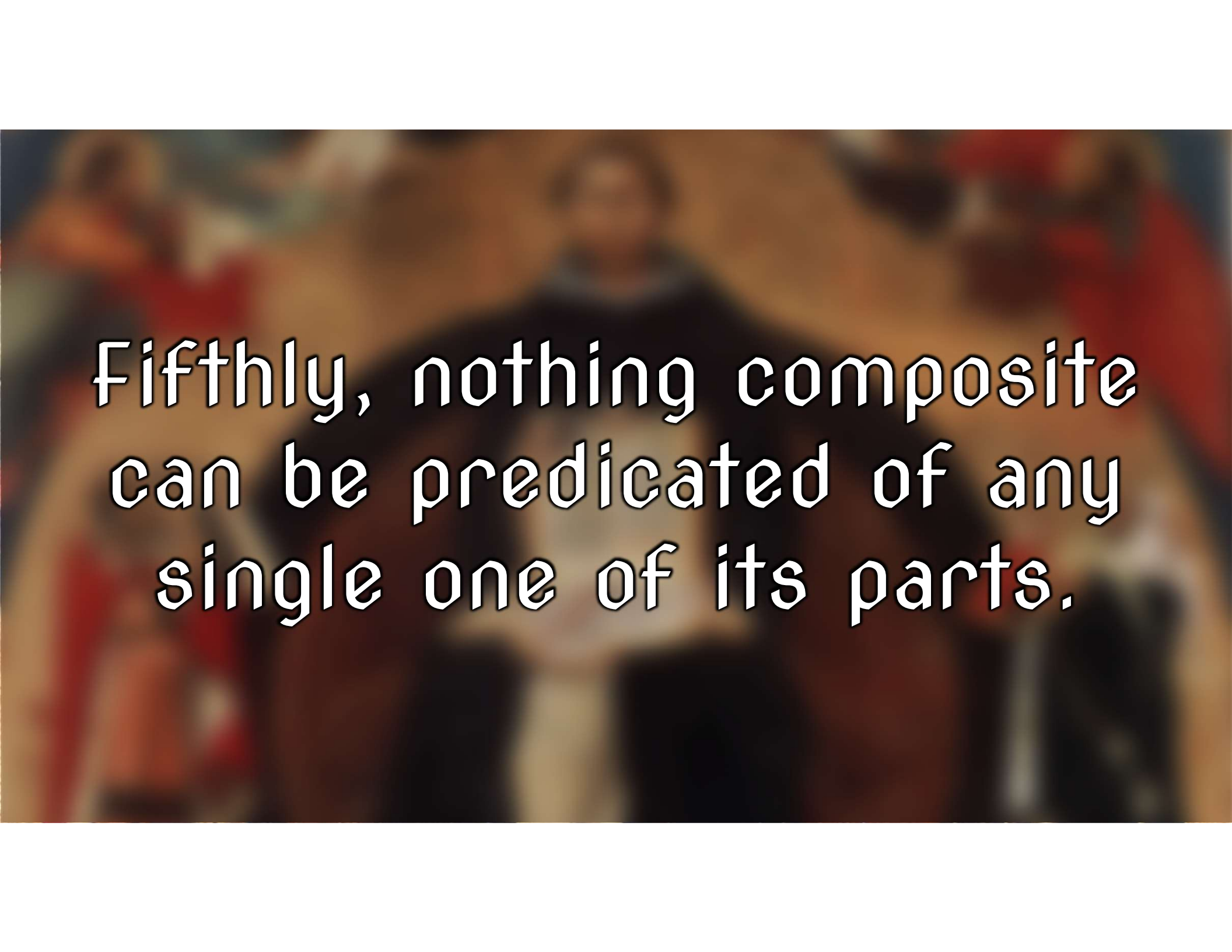
Secondly, because every composite is posterior to its component parts, and is dependent on them; but God is the first being, as shown above (Q. 2, A. 3).



Thirdly, because every composite has a cause, for things in themselves different cannot unite unless something causes them to unite. But God is uncaused, as shown above (Q. 2, A. 3), since He is the first efficient cause.

Fourthly, because in every composite there must be potentiality and actuality; but this does not apply to God; for either one of the parts actuates another, or at least all the parts are potential to the whole.





Fifthly, nothing composite  
can be predicated of any  
single one of its parts.

"And this is evident in a whole made up of dissimilar parts; for no part of a man is a man, nor any of the parts of the foot, a foot.

But in wholes made up of similar parts, although something which is predicated of the whole may be predicated of a part (as a part of the air is air, and a part of water, water), nevertheless certain things are predicable of the whole which cannot be predicated of any of the parts; for instance, if the whole volume of water is two cubits, no part of it can be two cubits.

Thus in every composite there is something which is not it itself."



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)



"But, even if this could be said of whatever has a form, viz. that it has something which is not it itself, as in a white object there is something which does not belong to the essence of white; nevertheless in the form itself, there is nothing besides itself.

And so, since God is absolute form, or rather absolute being, He can be in no way composite."

[St. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), I, Q3, art.7]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

Nothing composite can be predicated  
of any single one of its parts.

No part of a man is itself a  
man, nor is any of the parts  
of the foot itself a foot.


True, but if the whole of water  
is two cubits, no part of it  
is two cubits.

But isn't part of air also itself  
air? And isn't part of water  
also itself water?

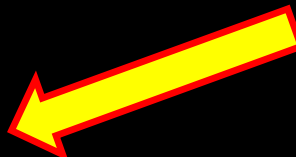
Therefore, in every composite there is  
something which is not it itself.



Nothing composite can be predicated  
of any single one of its parts, continued.



But isn't it true that in something  
that has form, there is something  
in it that is not part of the form, as  
in a white object there is  
something that does not belong  
to the essence of white?



True enough. Nevertheless in the  
form itself, there is nothing  
besides the form itself.

"And so, since God is absolute form, or rather absolute being, He can be in no way composite."





Whether God Is a Body?



Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?



Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?



Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?



Whether God is Contained in a Genus?



Whether in God There Are any Accidents?



Whether God is Altogether Simple?

Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

Whether God  
Enters into the  
Composition of  
Other Things?



*It is not possible for  
God to enter into  
the composition of  
anything, either as a  
formal or a material  
principle.*

[*Summa Theologiae* I, 3, 8. trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province  
(Westminster: Christian Classics, 1948)]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

## *∞ First ∞*

- 1. God is the first efficient cause.*
- 2. Now the efficient cause is not identical numerically with the form of the thing caused, but only specifically: for man begets man.*
- 3. But primary matter can be neither numerically nor specifically identical with an efficient cause; for the former is merely potential, while the latter is actual.*



## ∞ Second ∞

1. *Since God is the first efficient cause, to act belongs to Him primarily and essentially.*
2. *But that which enters into composition with anything does not act primarily and essentially, but rather the composite so acts;*
  - a. *for the hand does not act, but the man by his hand; and,*
  - b. *fire warms by its heat.*
3. *Hence God cannot be part of a compound.*



## Third

1. *No part of a compound can be absolutely primal among beings—not even matter, nor form, though they are the primal parts of every compound.*
  - a. *For matter is merely potential.*
    - ❖ *Potentiality is absolutely posterior to actuality, as is clear from the foregoing (I:3:1).*
  - b. *A form which is part of a compound is a participated form.*
    - ❖ *As that which participates is posterior to that which is essential, so likewise is that which is participated;*
    - ❖ *as fire in ignited objects is posterior to fire that is essentially such.*
2. *Now it has been proved that God is absolutely primal being (I:2:3).*



Whether God Is a Body?



Whether God is Composed of Matter and Form?



Whether God is the Same as His Essence or Nature?



Whether Essence and Existence are the Same in God?



Whether God is Contained in a Genus?



Whether in God There Are any Accidents?



Whether God is Altogether Simple?



Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?