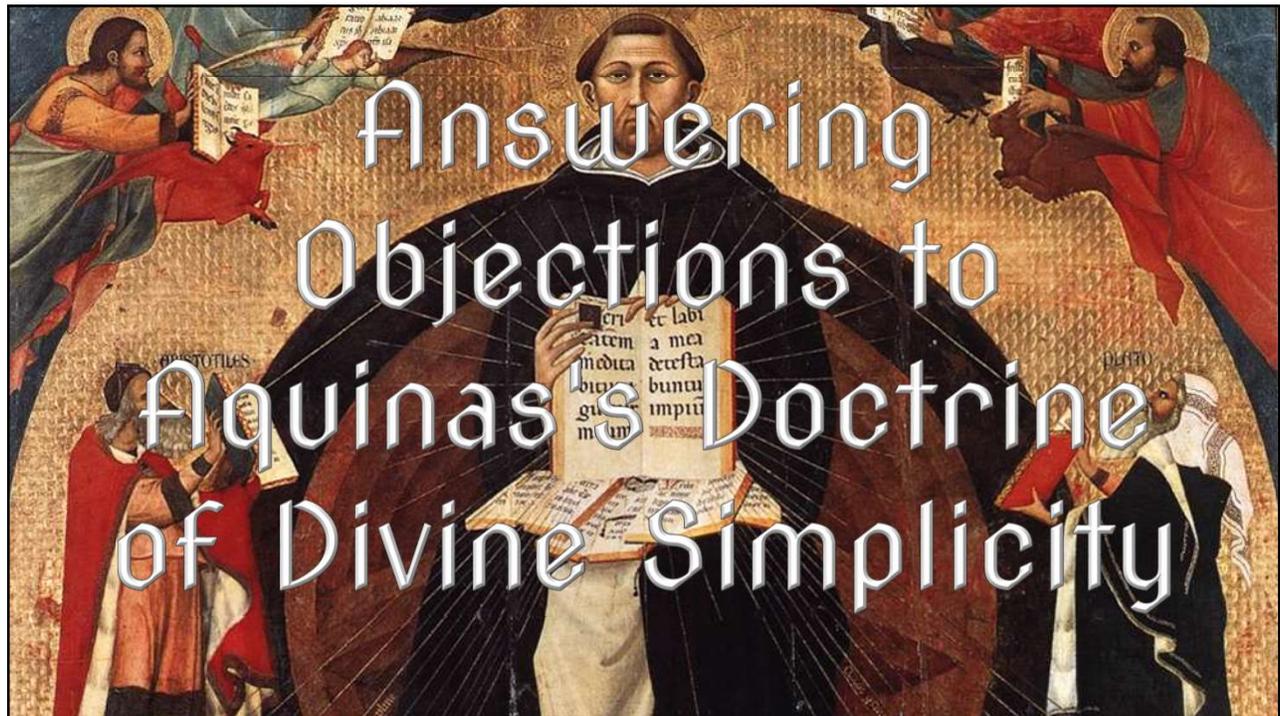


STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION!



 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?

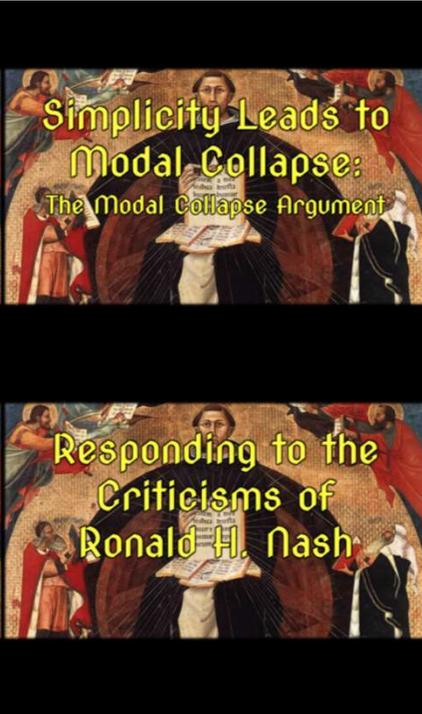
 Whether God is Contained in a Genus?

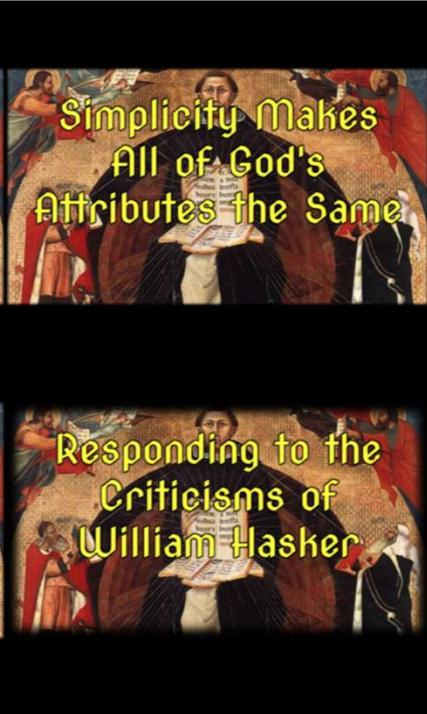
 Whether in God There Are any Accidents?

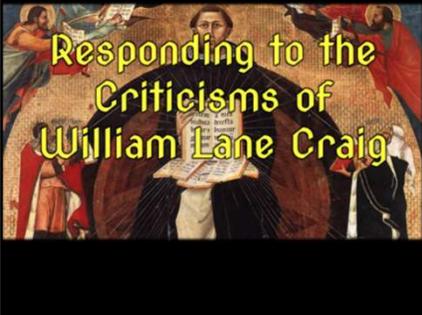
 Whether God is Altogether Simple?

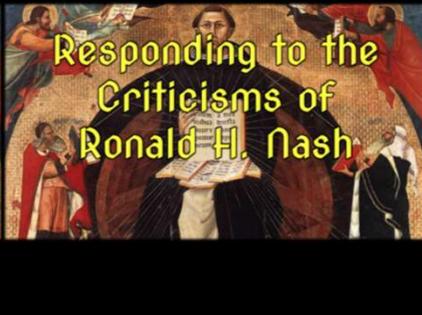
 Whether God Enters into the Composition of Other Things?

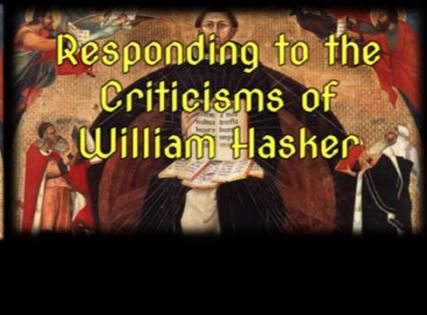
 Simplicity is Incompatible with the Doctrine of the Trinity

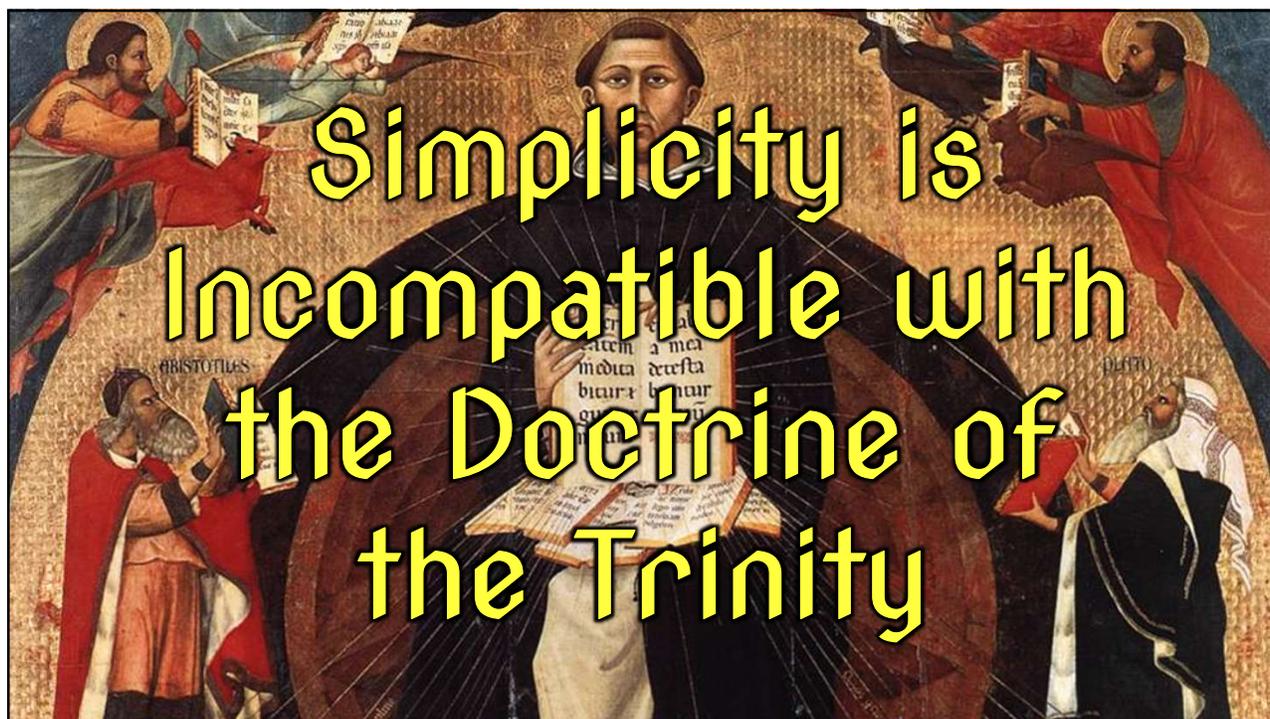
 Simplicity Leads to Modal Collapse:
The Modal Collapse Argument

 Simplicity Makes All of God's Attributes the Same

 Responding to the Criticisms of William Lane Craig

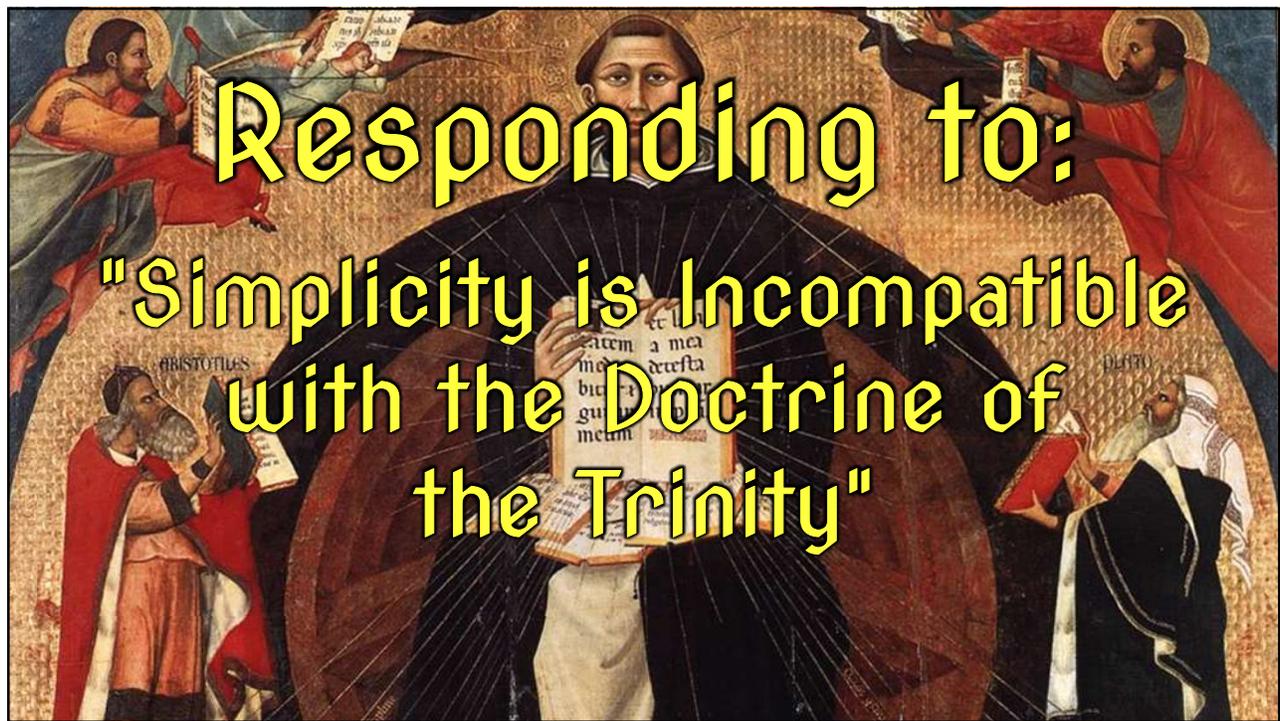
 Responding to the Criticisms of Ronald H. Nash

 Responding to the Criticisms of William Hasker



The doctrine of Divine Simplicity says that God has no parts.

If this is so (the objection goes), then it is not possible for God to be in the three Persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



This is the most common objection to the doctrine of Divine Simplicity I have encountered.

The irony is, it is precisely the doctrine of Divine Simplicity that keeps the doctrine of the Trinity from collapsing into either a tri-theism (each person is a god) or partialism (each person is a third of God).

To say that God has no parts is not to say that there are no distinctions or relations within God.

Rather, it is to say that such distinctions or relations do not constitute any composition of parts in God.

As humans, all of our experiences of relations are either:

- ❖ ***a relation between substances, e.g., one human to another human, or***
- ❖ ***a relation between parts of a substance, e.g., between a foot and a hand or between a branch and a leaf.***

There is nothing in creation that is exactly like God.

The essence of God is the relation of the three subsistences (persons) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Because human knowledge arises from the senses and is completed in the intellect, Aquinas identified the threefold way reason arrives at the knowledge of God:

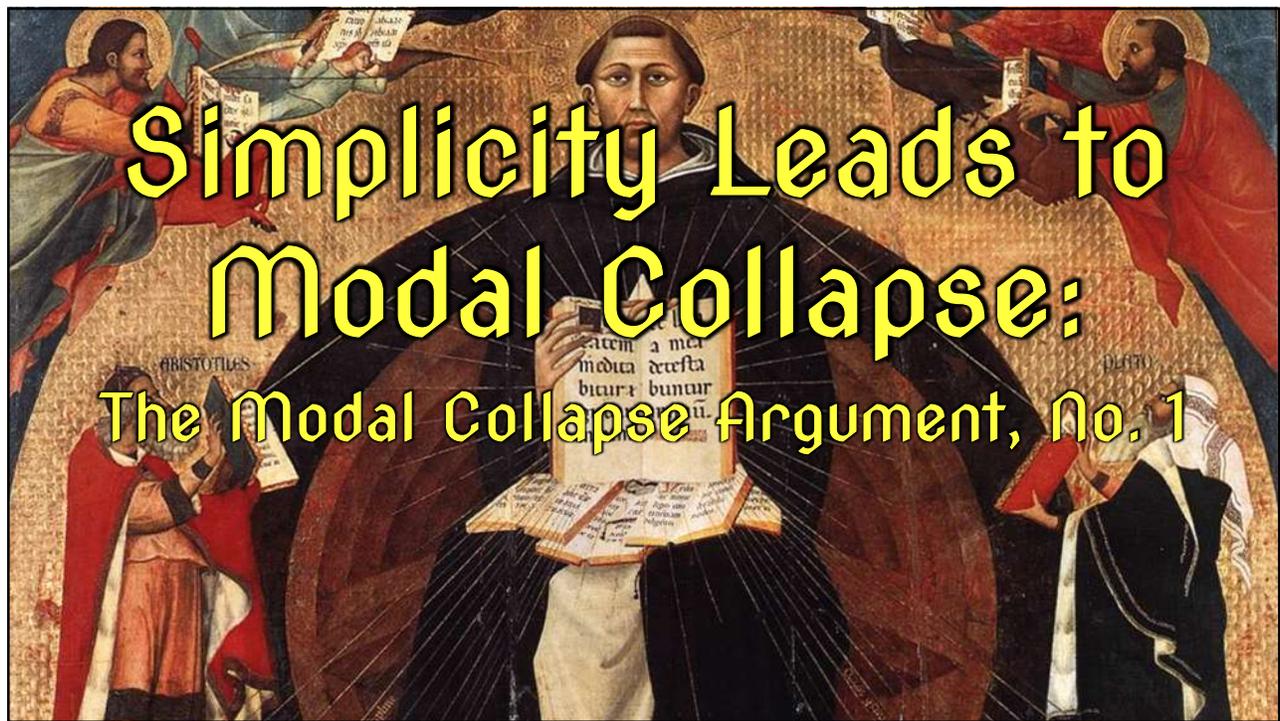
- ❖ *way of negation*
- ❖ *way of cause*
- ❖ *way of preeminence (supereminent darkness)*

Since God's Simplicity is demonstrable prior to God's Special Revelation of Himself as a Trinity, the Simplicity of God serves as safeguard against trinitarian heresies.



"Simplicity rules out a couple of things. Those can't be three substances and those can't be three parts of one substance. Tri-partitism is ruled out and tri-theism is ruled out. But why would you rule those out without Simplicity forcing you to do so? ..."

"So, it's not even a question of 'Can I somehow articulate a coherence of Simplicity and Trinity?' What I'm really interested in is 'Can I have a Christian doctrine of the Trinity without Simplicity?' And my answer is 'No'"



The Modal Collapse Argument seeks to show that if the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity is true, then the creation necessarily exists.

The name comes from the allegation that, given the doctrine that God is a necessary being coupled with the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity, the supposed contingency of creation (very nearly a universally held doctrine among Christians) collapses into being necessary as well.

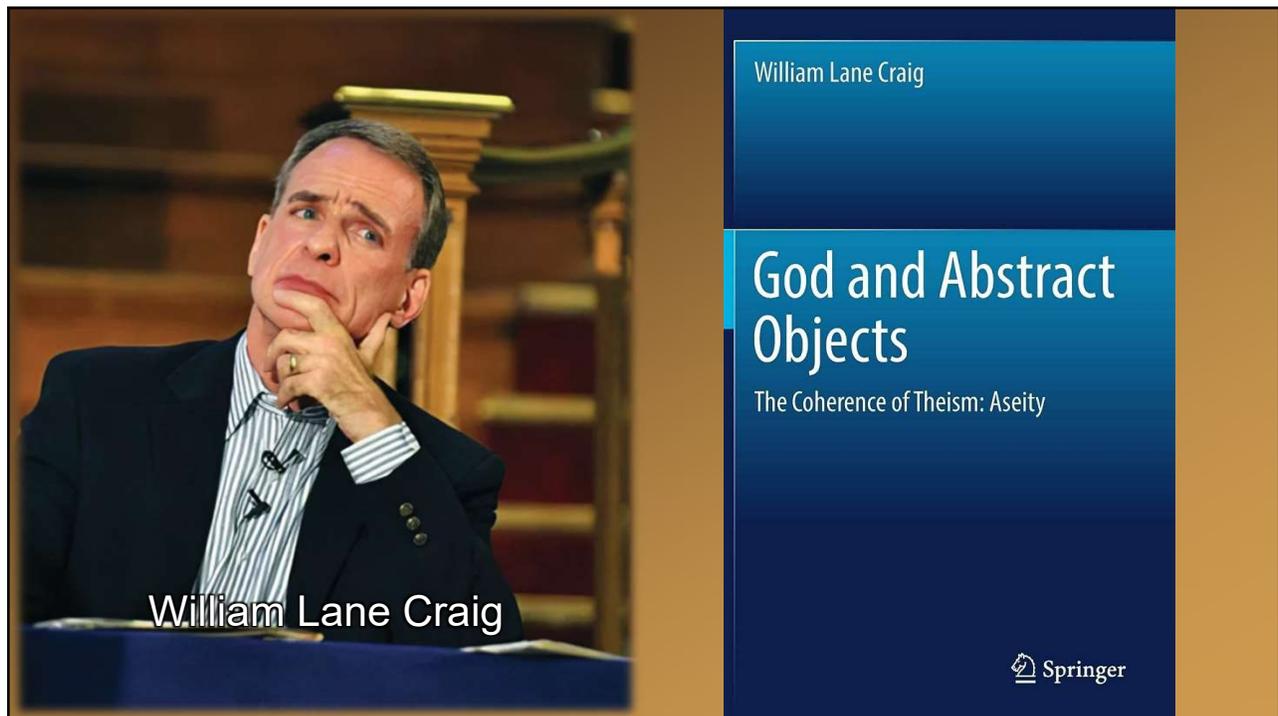
The argument plays on the notion that the since the Doctrine of Simplicity entails that all of God's attributes are necessary, this would include God's "act" of creation.

Thus, if God's act of creation is necessary, then creation is necessary.

Since it is false that the creation is necessary, then either the doctrine that God is necessary is false or the doctrine of Divine Simplicity is false (or both).

Since the conclusion that God is contingent (i.e., not necessary) is untenable (according to both those who hold to the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity and those who advance the Modal Collapse Argument), then it follows that the doctrine of Divine Simplicity is false.

1. If God is simple, then God is identical to each of His attributes and acts.
2. If God is identical to each of His attributes and acts, then each of God's attributes and acts are identical to each other.
3. God's creation of the universe is an act of God.
4. God's necessity is an attribute of God. / \therefore God's act of creation is necessary.
5. If God's act of creation is necessary, then creation is necessary. / \therefore Creation is necessary.
6. Creation is not necessary. / \therefore God is not simple.





William Lane Craig

"If God is not distinct from His essence, then God cannot know or do anything different than what He knows and does. He can have no contingent knowledge or action, for everything about Him is essential to Him. But in that case all modal distinctions collapse and everything becomes necessary. Since 'God knows that p' is logically equivalent to 'p is true,' the necessity of the former entails the necessity of the latter. Thus, divine simplicity leads to an extreme fatalism, according to which everything that happens does so with logical necessity."

[Craig, *God and Abstract Objects*, 146]



**Responding to
"Simplicity Leads to
Modal Collapse:
The Modal Collapse Argument, No. 1"**

Invalid Modal Logic

Modal Operator Symbols

□ Necessity

translated: "Necessarily ..." or "It is necessary that ..."

◇ Possibility

translated: "Possibly ..." or "It is possible that ..."

Some General Symbols

~ Not

translated: "Not ..." or "Non ..." or "It is not [] ..." or "It is not the case that ..."

Thus, $\sim \square$ means "It is not necessary that ..." and $\sim \diamond$ means "It is not possible that ..."

∴ Therefore

1. \square God exists.
 2. God is identical to His act of creation.
-

$\therefore \square$ creation exists.

1. $\square (8 > 7)$
 2. The number of planets in our solar system is 8.
-

$\therefore \square$ (the number of planets in our solar system is > 7).

1. (7)

2. The number of planets in our solar system is 8.

∴ (the number of planets in our solar system is > 7).

1. ($8 > 7$)

2. The number of planets in our solar system is 8.

∴ (the number of planets in our solar system is > 7).

1. God exists.

2. God is identical to His act of creation.

\therefore creation exists.

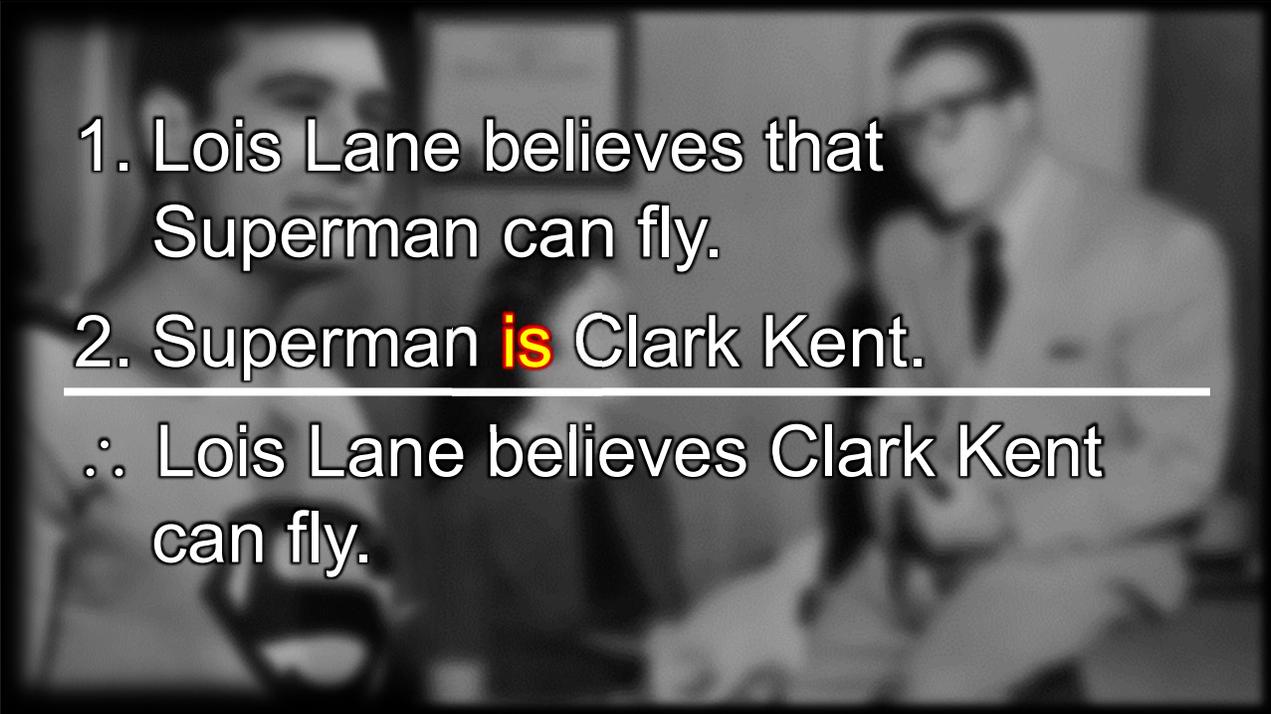
Illicit Designator

1. God exists.

2. God is identical to His act of creation.

\therefore creation exists.

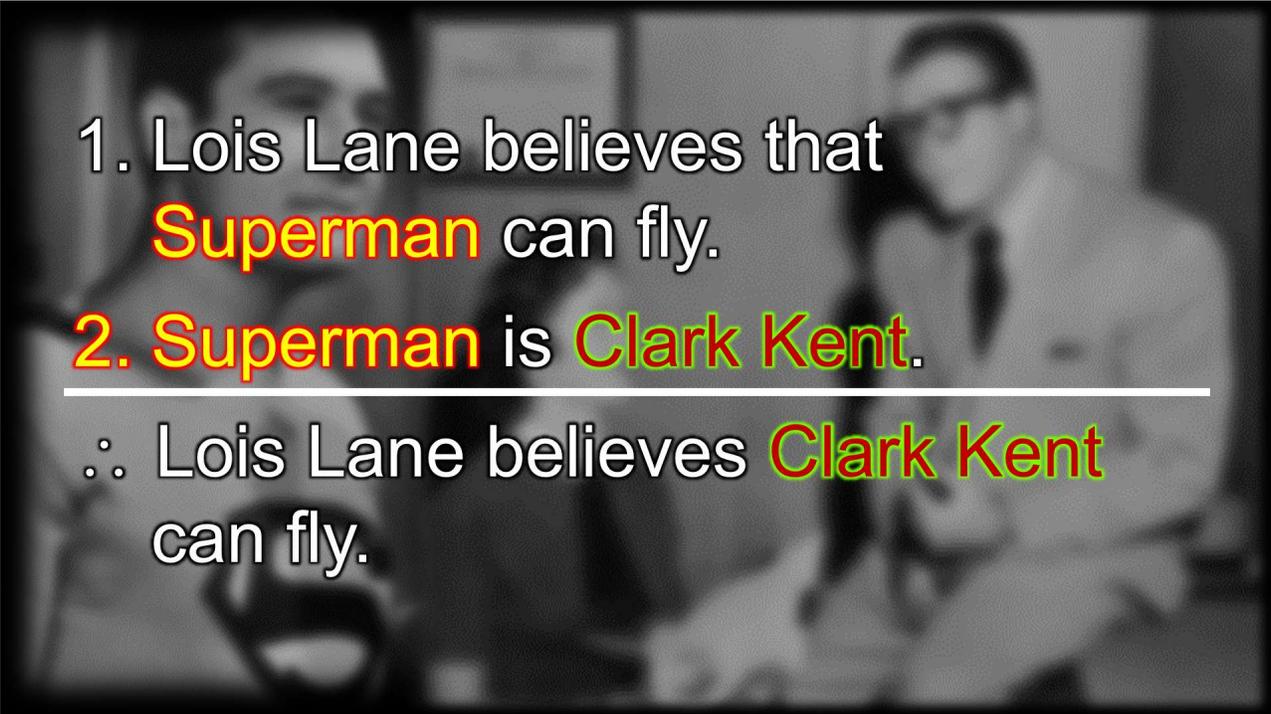




1. Lois Lane believes that
Superman can fly.

2. Superman **is** Clark Kent.

∴ Lois Lane believes Clark Kent
can fly.



1. Lois Lane believes that
Superman can fly.

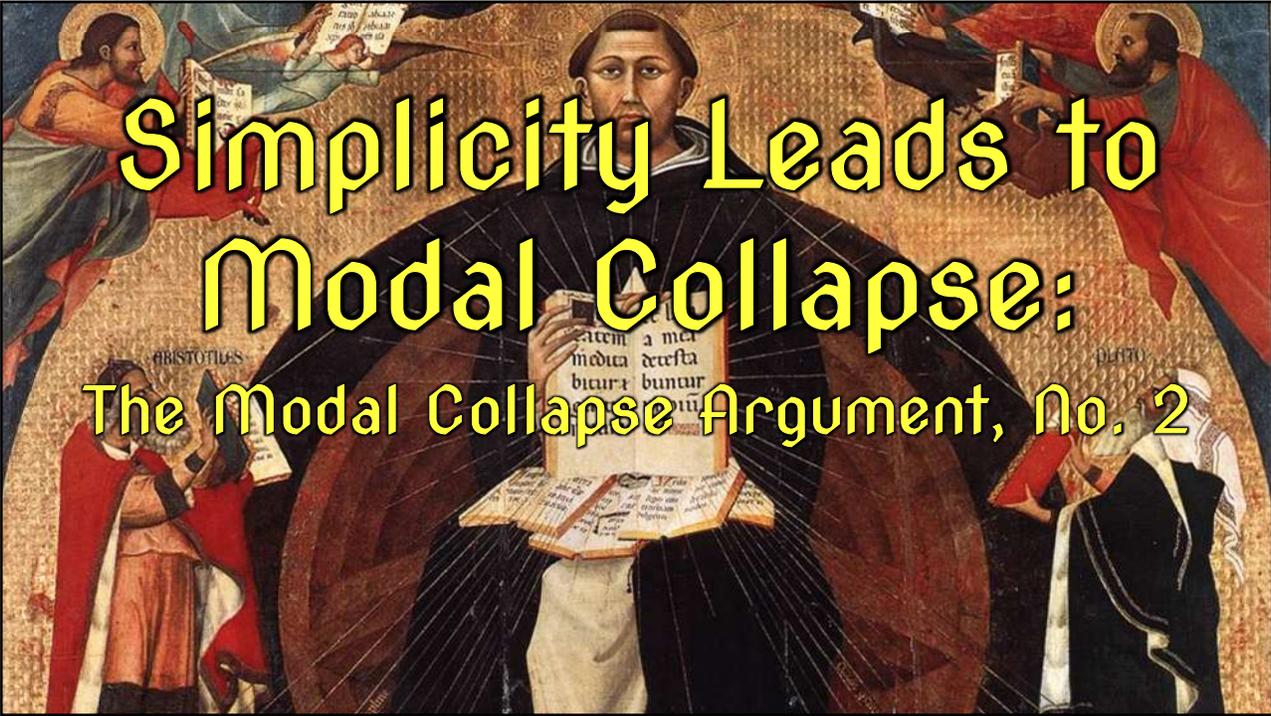
2. **Superman** is **Clark Kent**.

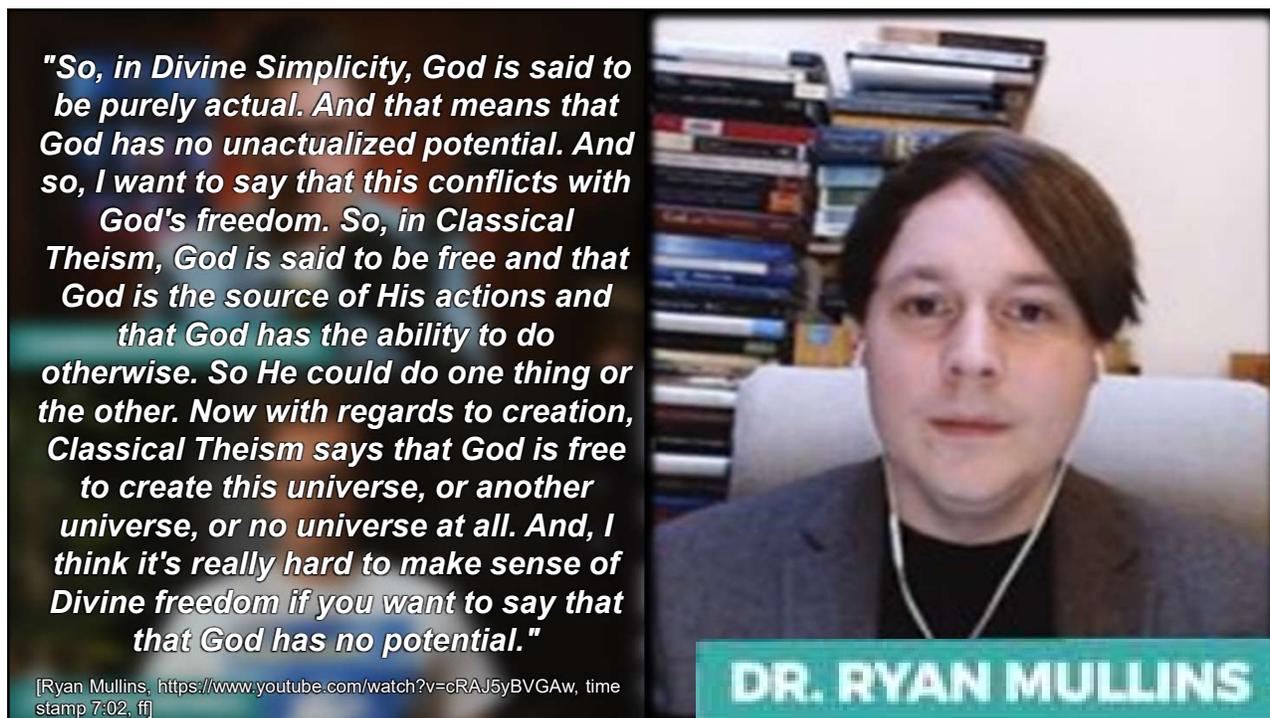
∴ Lois Lane believes **Clark Kent**
can fly.

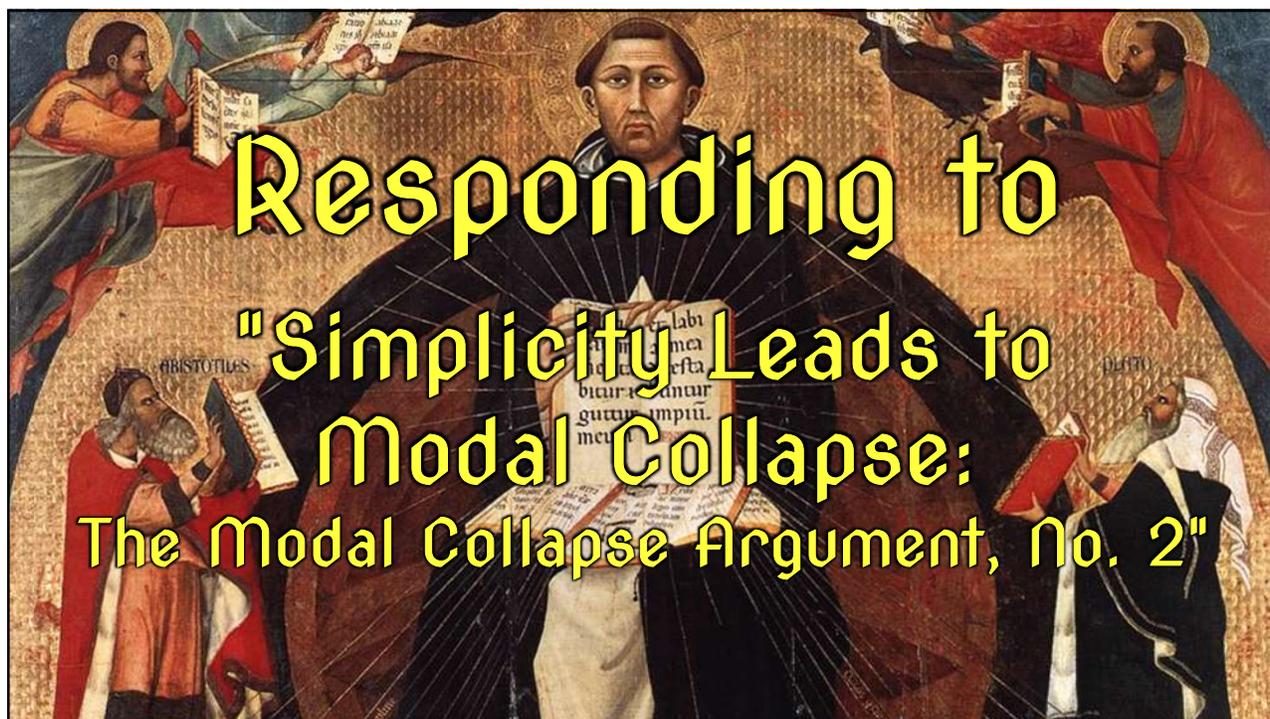


1. Lois Lane believes that **Superman** can fly.
2. **Superman** is **Clark Kent**.
∴ Lois Lane believes **Clark Kent** can fly.

↻ Sense and Referent ↻
The terms 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' differ in sense but are the same in referent.







"So, in *Divine Simplicity*, God is said to be purely actual. And that means that **God has no unactualized potential**. And so, I want to say that this conflicts with God's freedom. So, in *Classical Theism*, God is said to be free and that God is the source of His actions and that God has the ability to do otherwise. So He could do one thing or the other. Now with regards to creation, *Classical Theism* says that God is free to create this universe, or another universe, or no universe at all. And, I think **it's really hard to make sense of Divine freedom** if you want to say that that God has no potential."

[Ryan Mullins, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRAJ5yBVGAw>, time stamp 7:02, ff]



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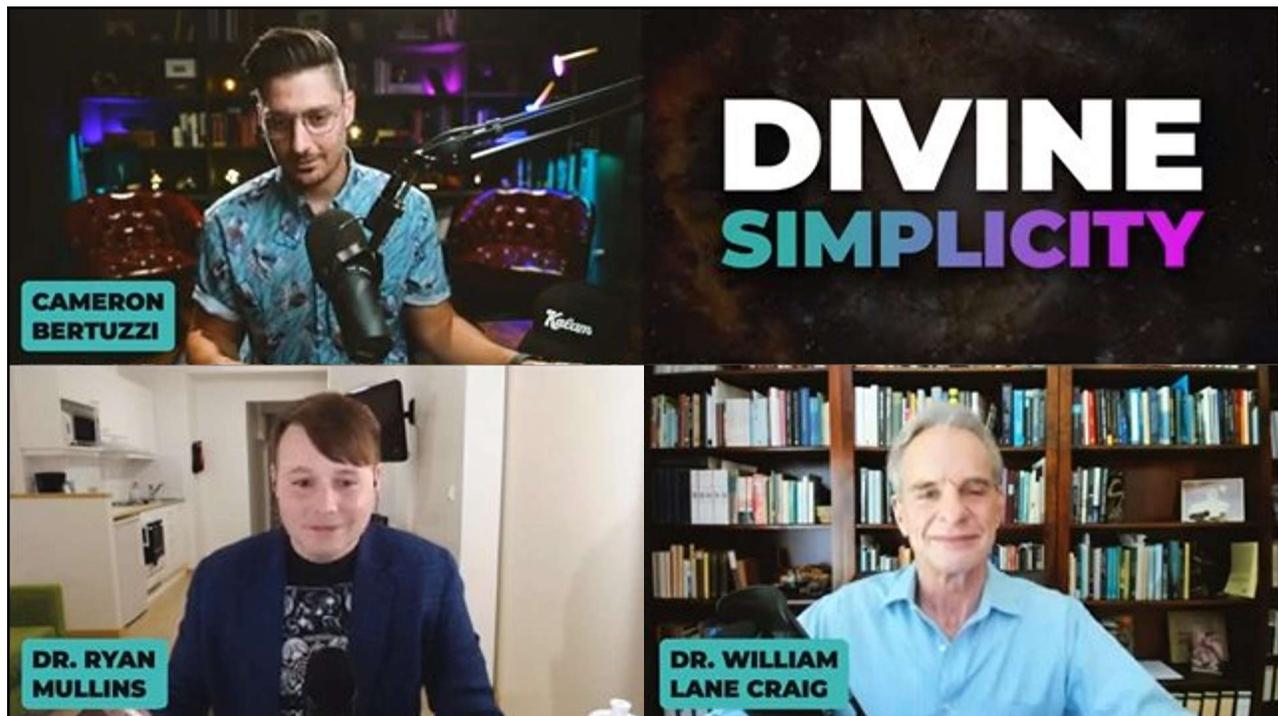
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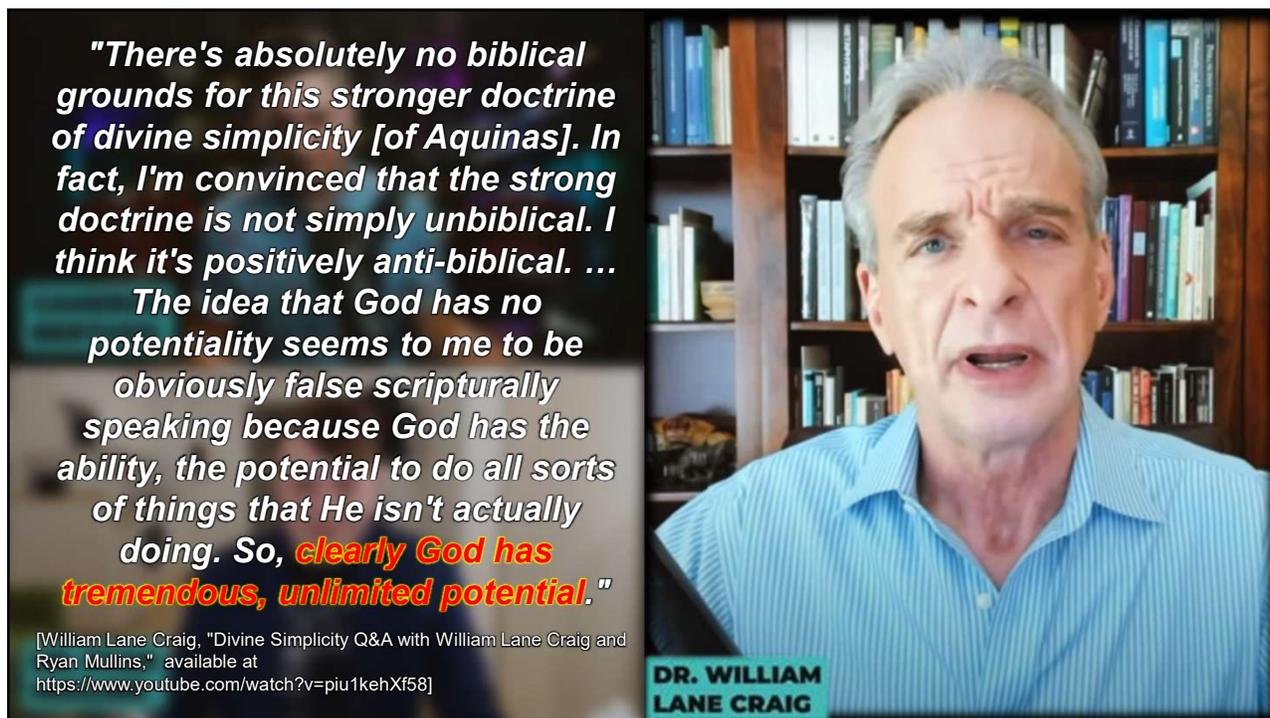
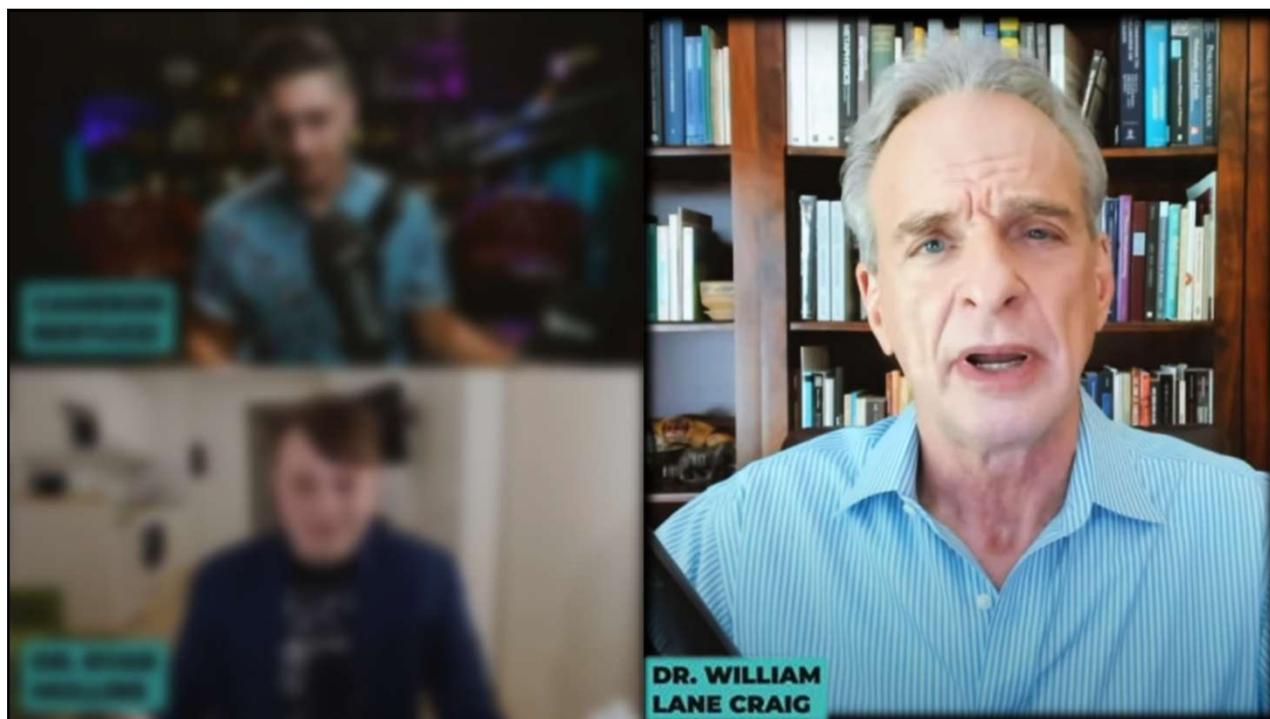
The first source of trouble with Mullins' line of thinking here is his unqualified assertion that "God has no unactualized potential."

Mullins is overlooking a critical distinction in Aquinas's metaphysics about act and potency.

Because of this, not surprisingly he thinks "it's really hard to make sense of Divine freedom."

William Lane Craig take the same mistaken line of thinking.

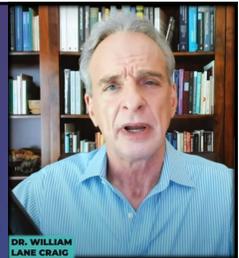






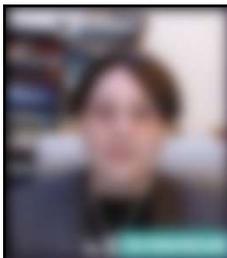
DR. RYAN MULLINS

"In Divine Simplicity, God is said to be purely actual. And that means that God has no unactualized potential. ... I think it's really hard to make sense of Divine freedom if you want to say that that God has no potential."



DR. WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

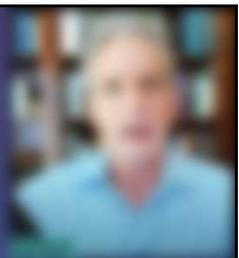
"The idea that God has no potentiality seems to me to be obviously false scripturally speaking ... God has ... the potential to do all sorts of things that He isn't actually doing. So, clearly God has ... unlimited potential."



DR. RYAN MULLINS

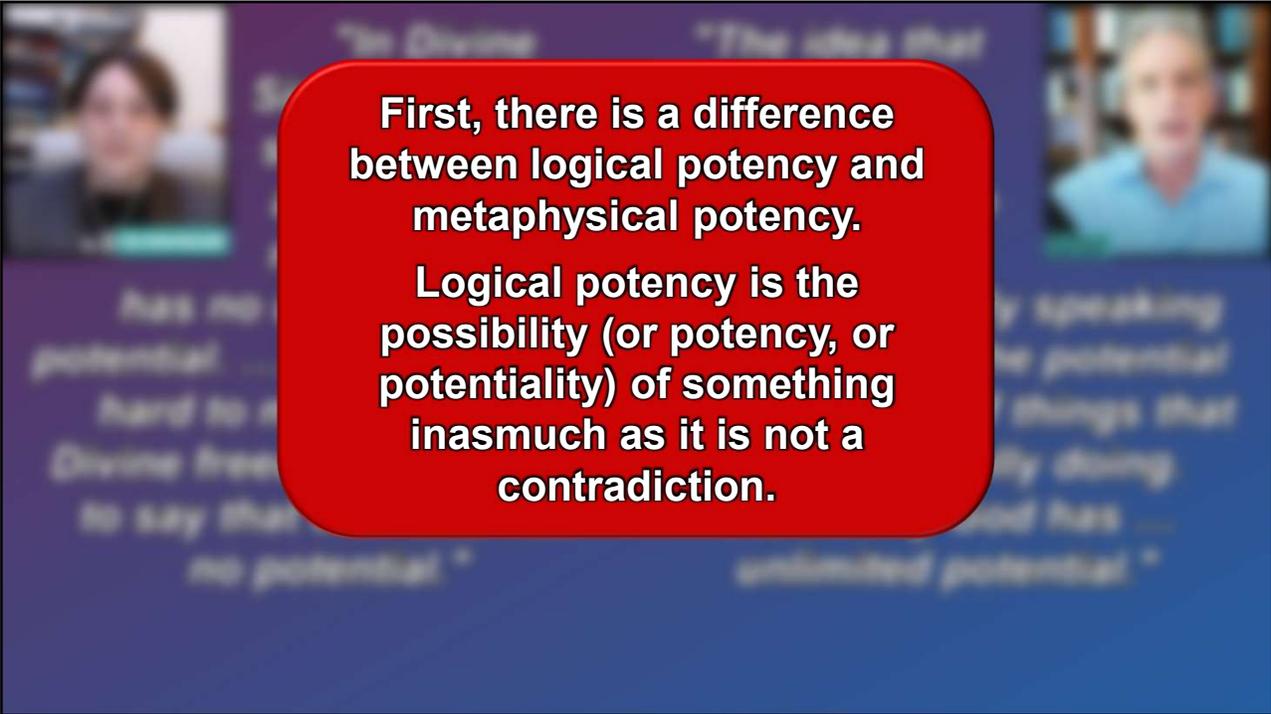
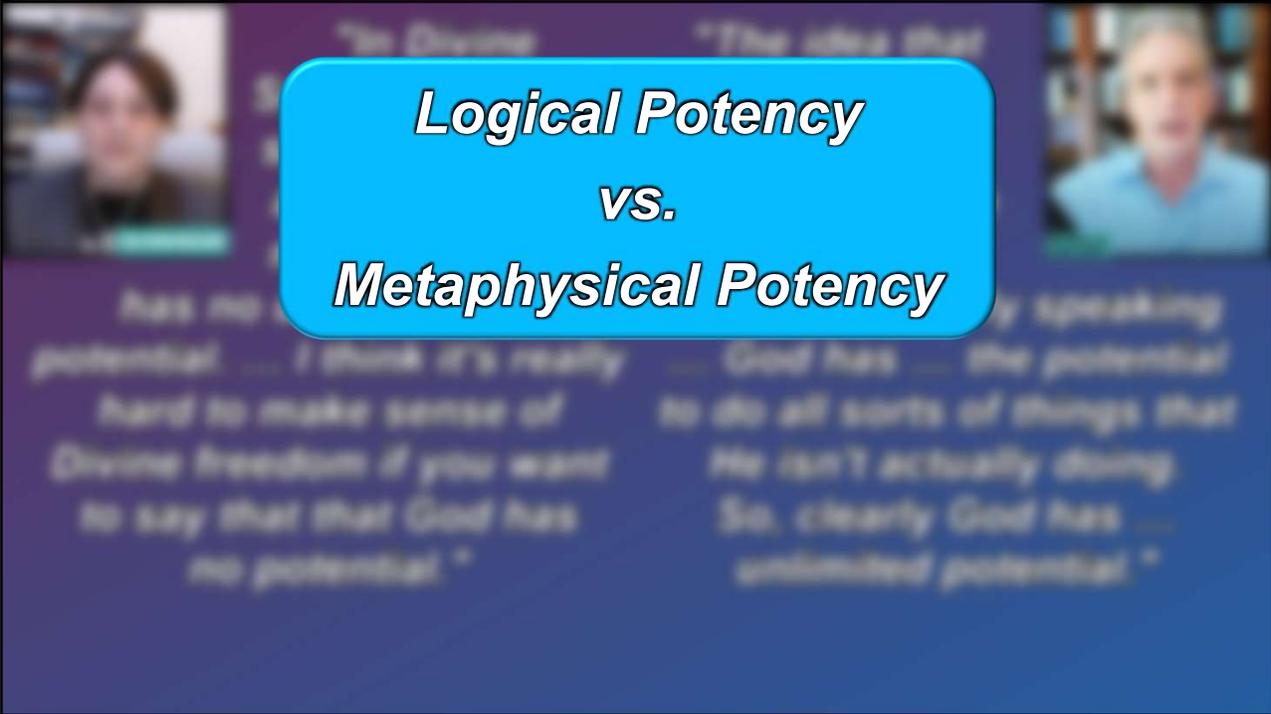
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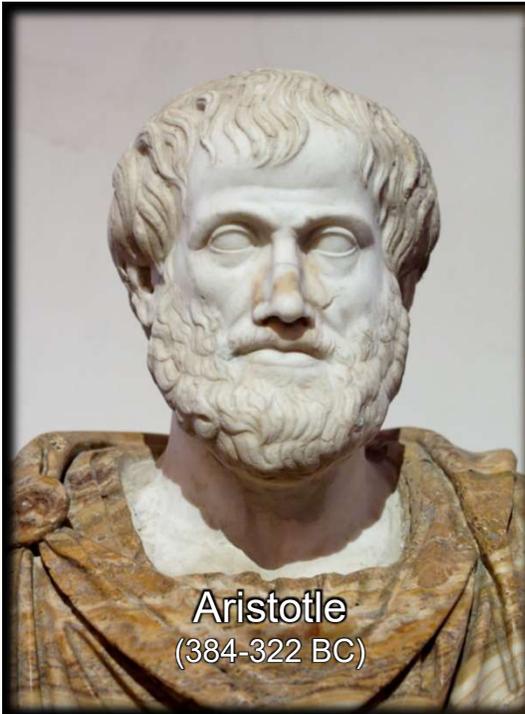
**In order to fairly assess Aquinas's thinking, one must understand the relevant metaphysical categories being employed.
Several comments on 'potency', (potential; potentiality) are in order.**



DR. WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

The idea that God has no potentiality seems to me to be obviously false scripturally speaking ... God has ... the potential to do all sorts of things that He isn't actually doing. So, clearly God has ... unlimited potential."





Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

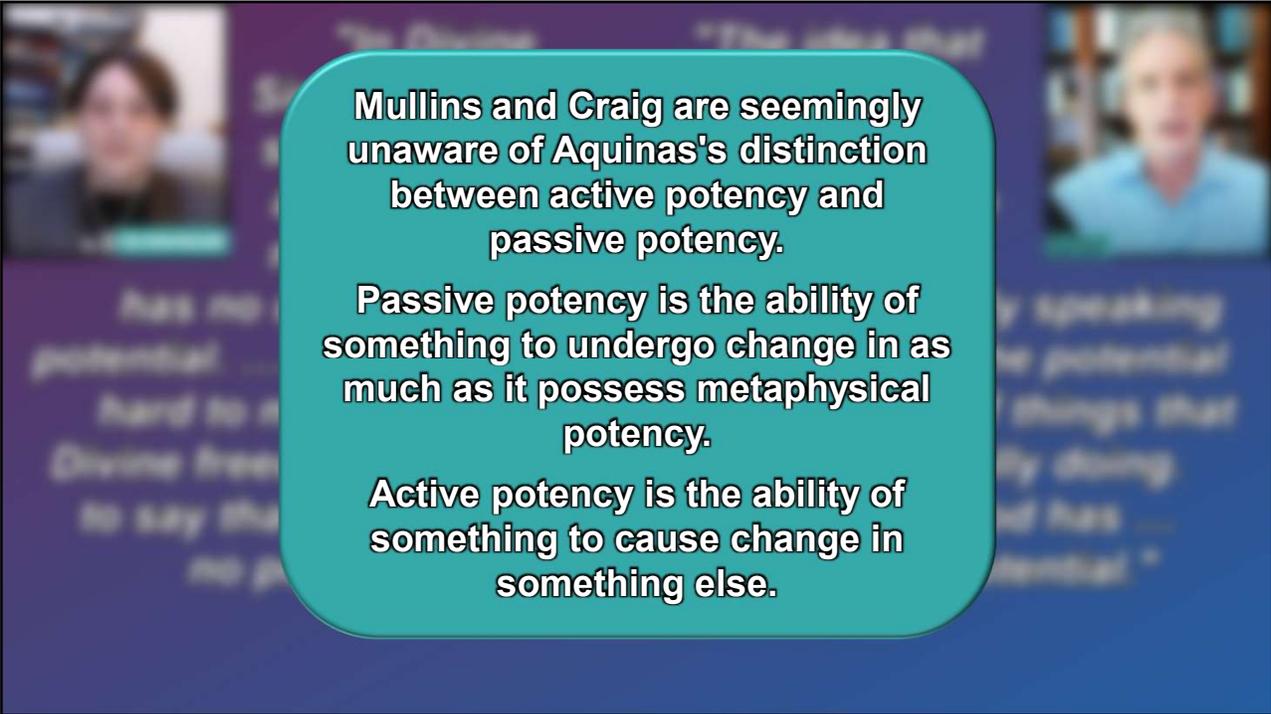
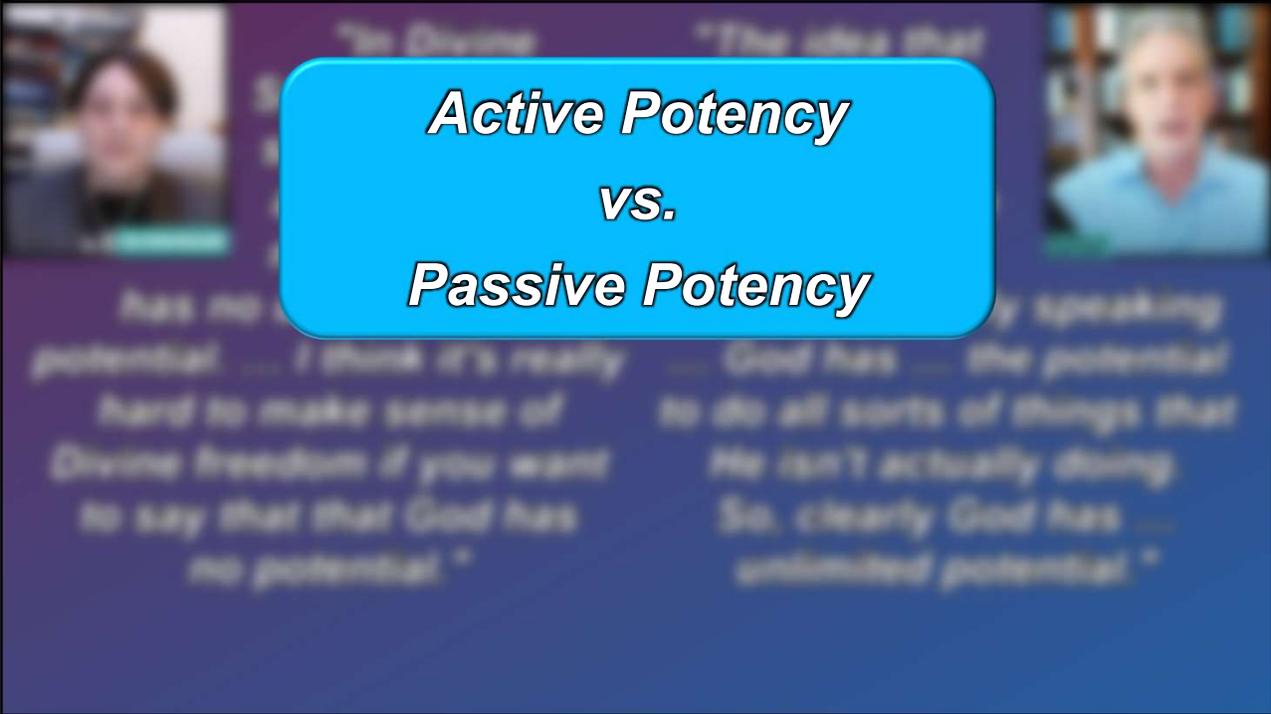
"The possible, then, in one sense, as has been said, means that which is not of necessity false."

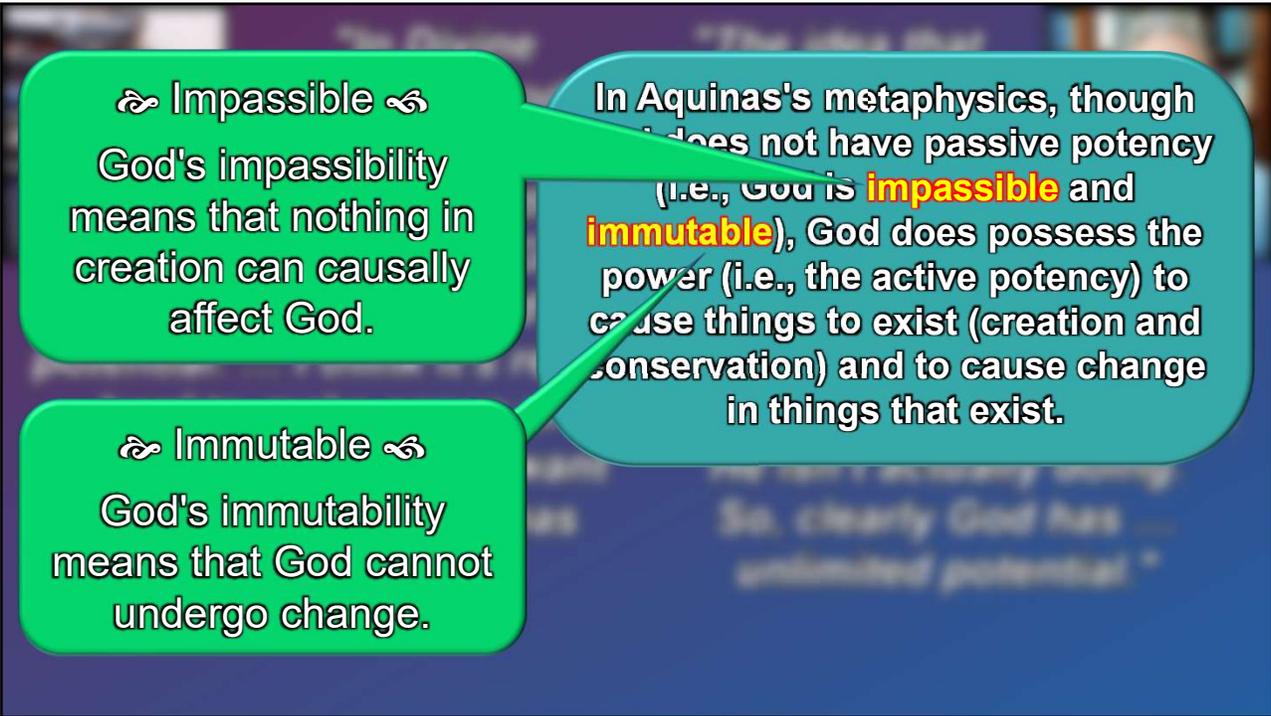
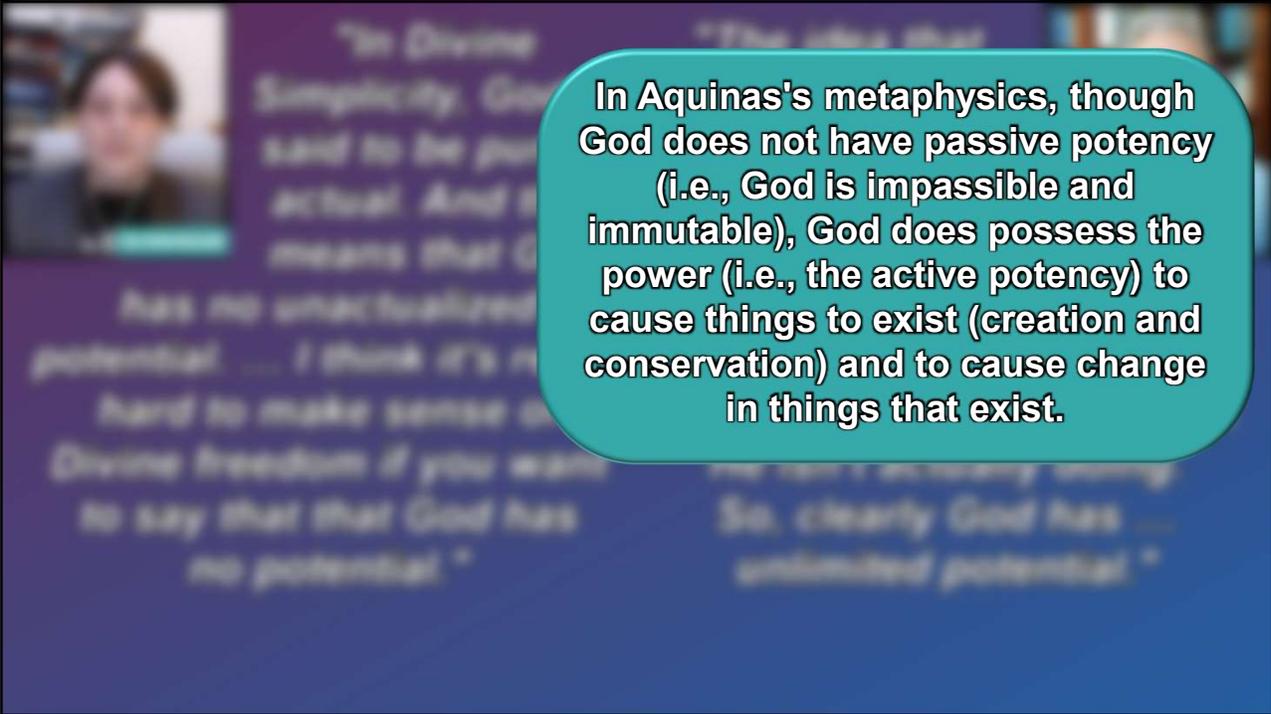
[Metaphysics D (V), 12, 1019^a30, trans. W. D. Ross, in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 766]

Metaphysical potency is a metaphysical constituent of something that can be actualized (only by something else that is already actual).

Actualizing a potency in a thing constitutes a change in the thing.

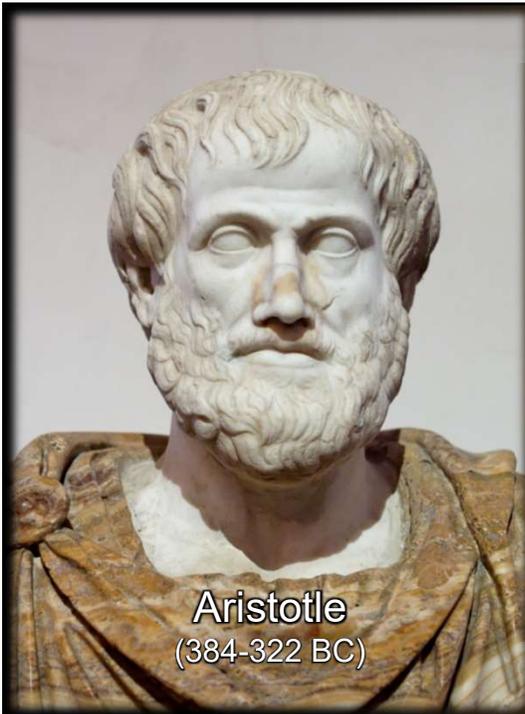
That which actualizes a potency (either logically or metaphysically) is a cause.





God choosing to cause something to exist is not an actualization of a passive potency in God.

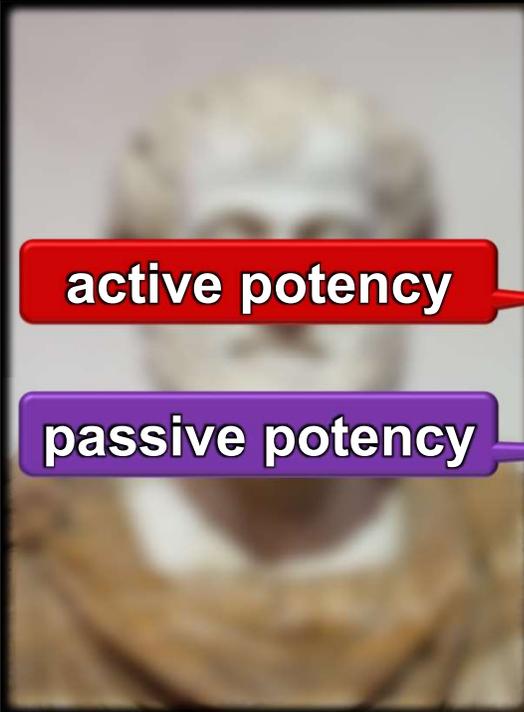
Grave misunderstandings arise in Aquinas's critics in as much as they are unaware that Aquinas, very often, uses the terms 'potency' or 'potentiality' to mean passive potency.



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

"We ... ascribe potency to that whose nature it is to move something else or to be moved by something else."

[*Metaphysics* Θ (IX), 6, 1019^a30, trans. W. D. Ross, in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 766]



active potency

passive potency

**"We ... ascribe
potency to that
whose nature it is to
move something else
or to be moved by
something else."**

[Metaphysics Θ (IX), 6, 1019^a30, trans. W. D. Ross, in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 766]

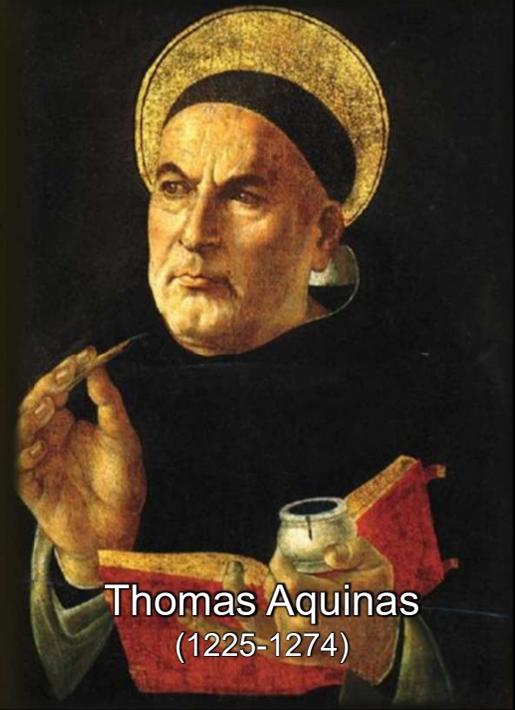
**"Now it is possible that things that
are not absolutely, should be in a
certain sense. For things absolutely
are which are actual; whereas
things which are not actual, are in
the power either of God Himself or
of a creature, whether in active
power, or passive; whether in
power of thought or of imagination,
or of any other manner of meaning
whatsoever."**

[STQ 14, art. 9]



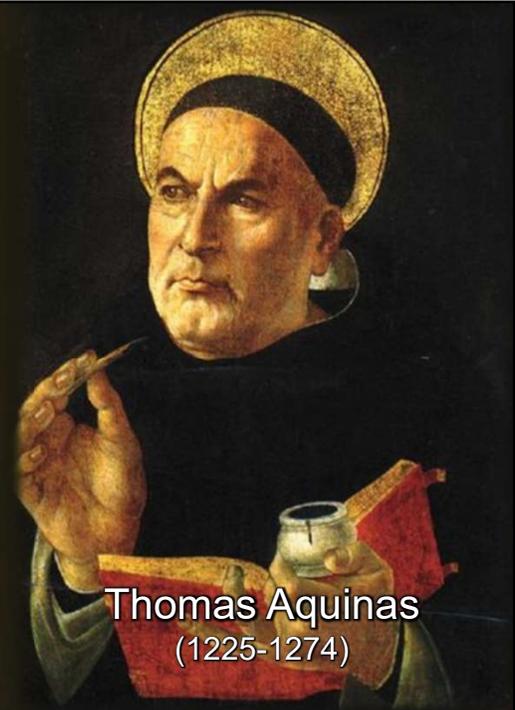
Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Power is twofold—namely, passive, which exists not at all in God; and active, which we must assign to Him in the highest degree. For it is manifest that everything, according as it is in act and is perfect, is the active principle of something: whereas everything is passive according as it is deficient and imperfect. Now it was shown above [Q 3, art. 2; Q 4, art. 1, 2] that God is pure act, simply and in all ways perfect, nor in Him does any imperfection find place.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

"Whence it most fittingly belongs to Him to be an active principle, and in no way whatsoever to be passive. On the other hand, the notion of active principles is consistent with active power. For active power is the principle of acting upon something else; whereas passive power is the principle of being acted upon by something else, as the Philosopher says [Metaph. v. 17]. It remains, therefore, that in God there is active power in the highest degree."

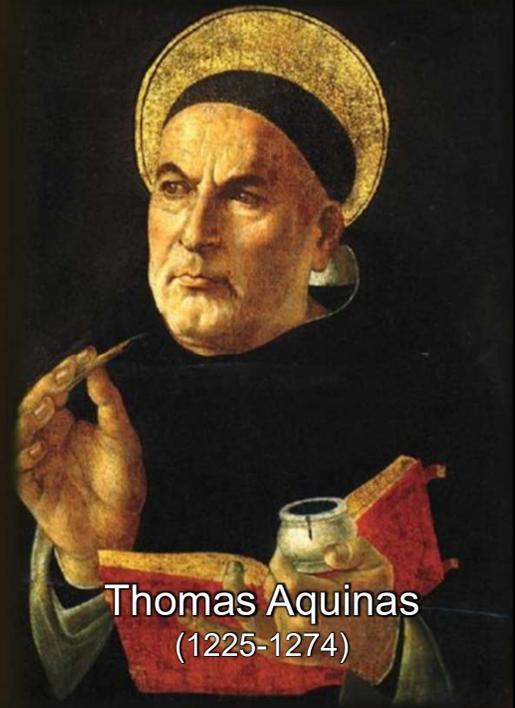


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

[ST Q 25, art. 1]

"Active power is not contrary to act, but is founded upon it, for everything acts according as it is actual: but passive power is contrary to act; for a thing is passive according as it is potential . Whence this potentiality is not in God, but only active power.."

[ST Q 25, art. 1, ad. 1]



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

*"So, in Divine Simplicity, God is said to be purely actual. And that means that God has no unactualized potential. And so, I want to say that this conflicts with God's freedom. So, in Classical Theism, God is said to be free and that God is the source of His actions and that **God has the ability to do otherwise**. So He could do one thing or the other. Now with regards to creation, Classical Theism says that God is free to create this universe, or another universe, or no universe at all. And, I think it's really hard to make sense of Divine freedom if you want to say that that God has no potential."*

[Ryan Mullins, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRAJ5yBVGAw>, time stamp 7:02, ff]



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[Ryan Mullins, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRAJ5yBVGaw>, time stamp 7:02, ff]

Mullins is seeking to point out an inconsistency if not incoherency within *Classical Theism*.

He observes that *Classical Theism* maintains that God has no potentiality while also maintaining that God is free to do otherwise than what He does.

Mullins argues that the *Modal Collapse Argument* demonstrates that *Classical Theism's* doctrine of God as pure actuality entails that all of God's actions are necessary.

Thus, on *Classical Theism*, God cannot freely do other than what he does.

Since Mullin's *Neo- (or Modified) Classical Theism* maintains that God is free to do otherwise than what He does, then Mullins concludes that *Classical Theism* is false.



Aquinas deals directly with this question in *On the Power of God*, Bk. 1, Q.1, art. V "Can God Do What He Does Not?" and *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 19, art. 3 "Whether Whatever God Wills He Wills Necessarily" and I, Q. 25, art. 5 "Whether God Can Do What He Does Not?"



Aquinas's treatments of various aspects of the issues of necessity and possibility include whether God acts out of necessity (the charge Mullins is making), whether God can do other than what He foresees what He will do, and whether the supposition that God could do one thing or otherwise entails that God can change.



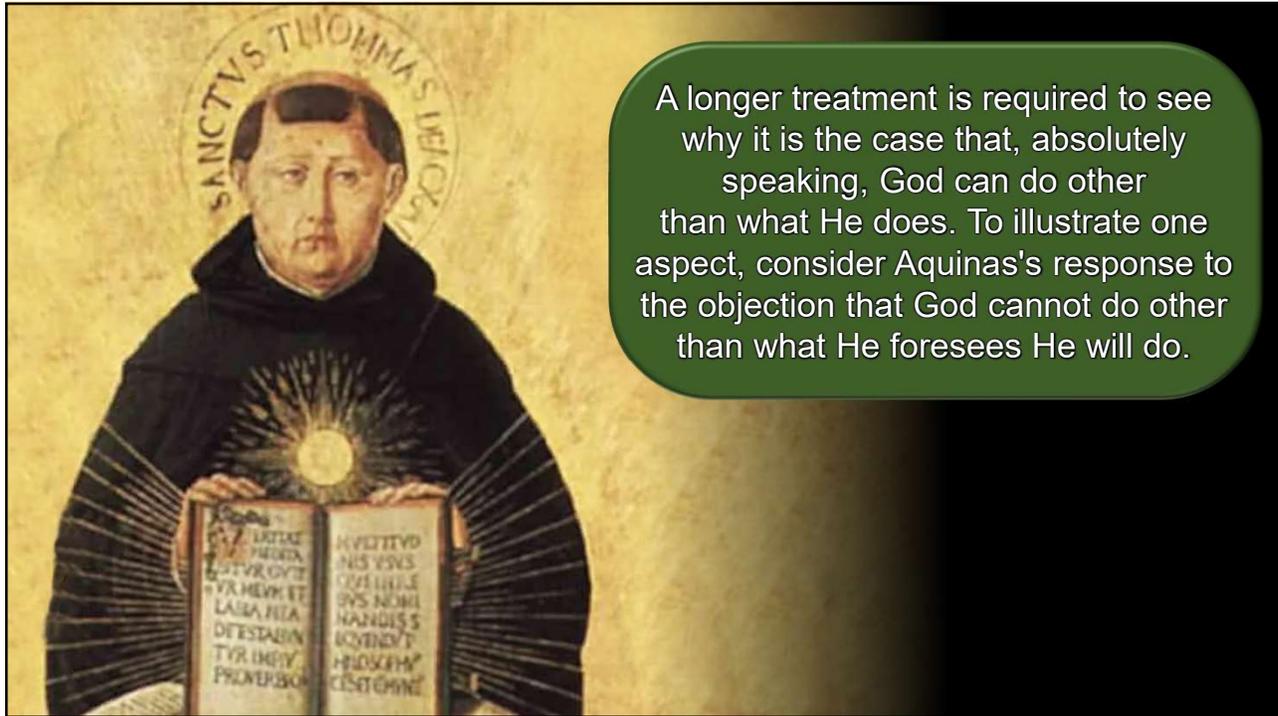
Without trying to reproduce Aquinas's full thinking on the matter, one of his points warrant comment here.



First, there is a difference between absolute necessity and suppositional necessity. Absolute necessity is when "one of the principles necessary for an action does not extend to that action." (*On the Power of God*, Bk. 1, Q. 1, art. V, (trans. The English Dominican Fathers, (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), p. 30, ff). He uses the example of the necessity of a healthy foot for walking. "Thus, if the foot is fractured a man cannot walk."



Suppositional necessity is when X is supposed, then not-X cannot obtain. Aquinas gives the illustration "So long as I sit, I cannot walk." Clearly, suppositionally speaking God cannot do other than He does, for on the supposition that He creates the universe, it cannot be the case that He did not create the universe.



A longer treatment is required to see why it is the case that, absolutely speaking, God can do other than what He does. To illustrate one aspect, consider Aquinas's response to the objection that God cannot do other than what He foresees He will do.

*"When you say that God is not able to do except what he has foreseen that he would do, the statement admits a twofold construction: because the negative may refer either to the power signified in the word **able**," or to the act signified in the word **do**." In the former case the statement is false: since God is able to do other things besides those that he foresees he will do, and it is in this sense that the objection runs. In the latter case the statement is true, the sense being that it is impossible for God to do anything that was not foreseen by him. In this sense the statement is not to the point."*

[On the Power of God, Bk. 1, Q. 1, art. V, (trans. The English Dominican Fathers, (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 31]

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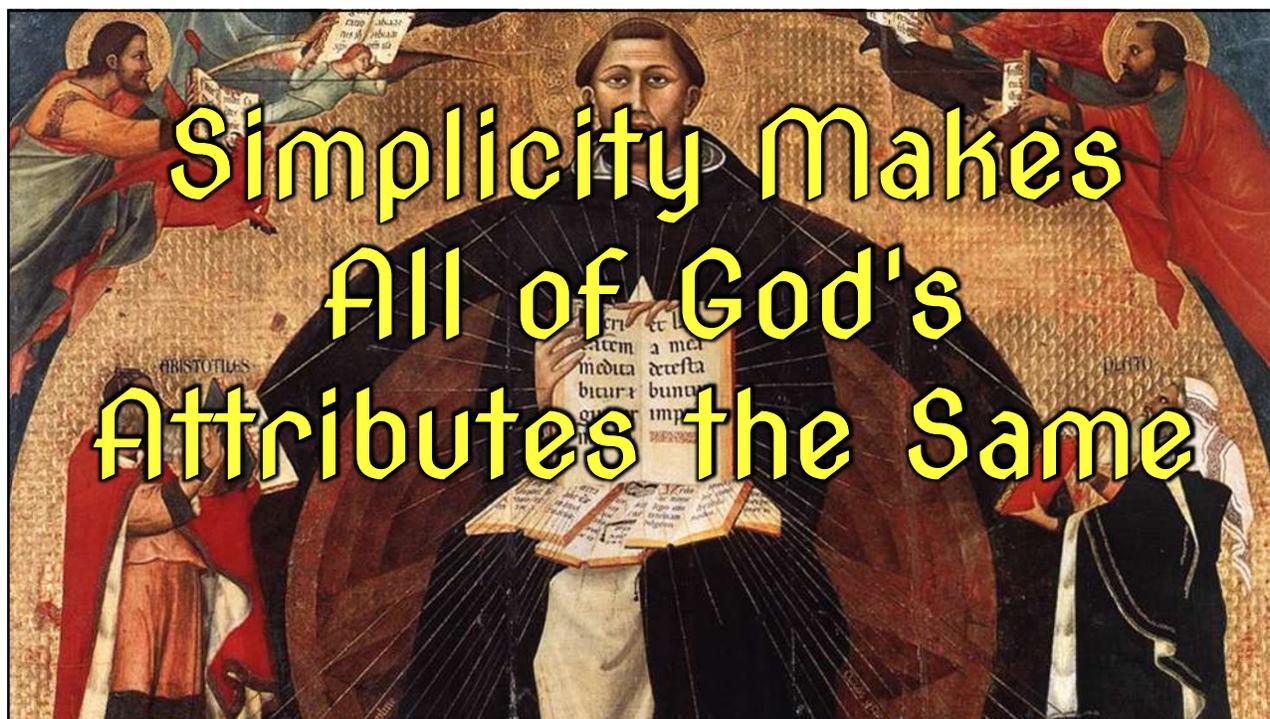
[On the Power of God, Bk. 1, Q. 1, art. V, (trans. The English Dominican Fathers, (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 31]

Here Aquinas applies his arguments made elsewhere regarding the contours of God's omnipotence in showing that God is able to do anything that is not a contradiction.

*"When you say that God is not able to do except what he has foreseen that he would do, the statement admits a twofold construction: because the negative may refer either to the power signified in the word "able," or to the act signified in the word "do." In the former case the statement is false: since God is able to do other things besides those that he foresees he will do, and it is in this sense that the objection runs. In the latter case the statement is true, the sense being that **it is impossible for God to do anything that was not foreseen by him**. In this sense the statement is not to the point."*

[On the Power of God, Bk. 1, Q. 1, art. V, (trans. The English Dominican Fathers, (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 31]

Here Aquinas applies his argument made elsewhere regarding suppositional necessity.



A cousin of the Modal Collapse Argument, this objection says that the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity entails the untenable notion that if all of God's attributes are the same as God's essence, then all of God's attributes are the same as each other.

1. ☐ God exists.

2. God is identical to His act of creation.

∴ ☐ creation exists.

MENU APP ↗

 Theopolis

EVENTS GIVE

CONVERSATION

The Doctrine of Divine Simplicity

[Ryan Mullins](#)

POSTED

July 18, 2019

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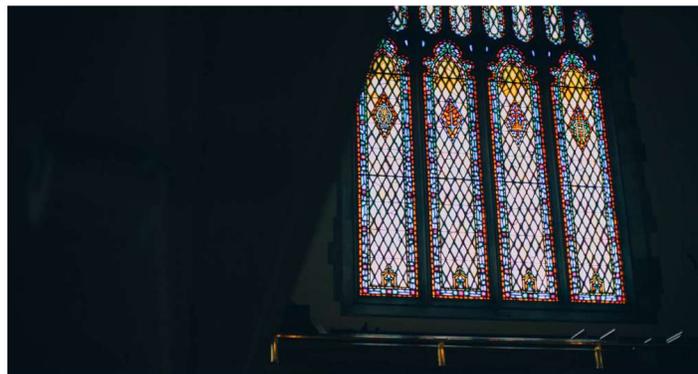
[The Doctrine of Divine Simplicity](#): by [Ryan Mullins](#)

[What Sorts of Parts Is God Without?](#): by [Peter Leithart](#)

[Apophaticism and Divine Simplicity](#): by [Joe Lenow](#)

[Simply Irresistible](#): by [Edward Feser](#)

[The Ongoing Debate Over Divine Simplicity: A Response to the Conversation](#): by [Ryan Mullins](#)



There is a Christian doctrine that most theologians affirmed up until the 19th Century. Recent proponents of this doctrine claim that if you deny this doctrine you are an idolater, or even an atheist. Some theologians make it sound as if Christianity lives or dies with this doctrine. What doctrine is this that elicits such strong rhetoric? Perhaps you think the answer has something to do with Jesus Christ, or a major biblical teaching.

"On the classical understanding of God, theologians will say that all of God's essential properties are identical to each other, and identical to the divine nature, which is identical to God's existence."

[Ryan Mullins, "The Doctrine of Divine Simplicity," <https://theopolisinstitute.com/conversations/the-doctrine-of-divine-simplicity/> accessed 05/24/23]



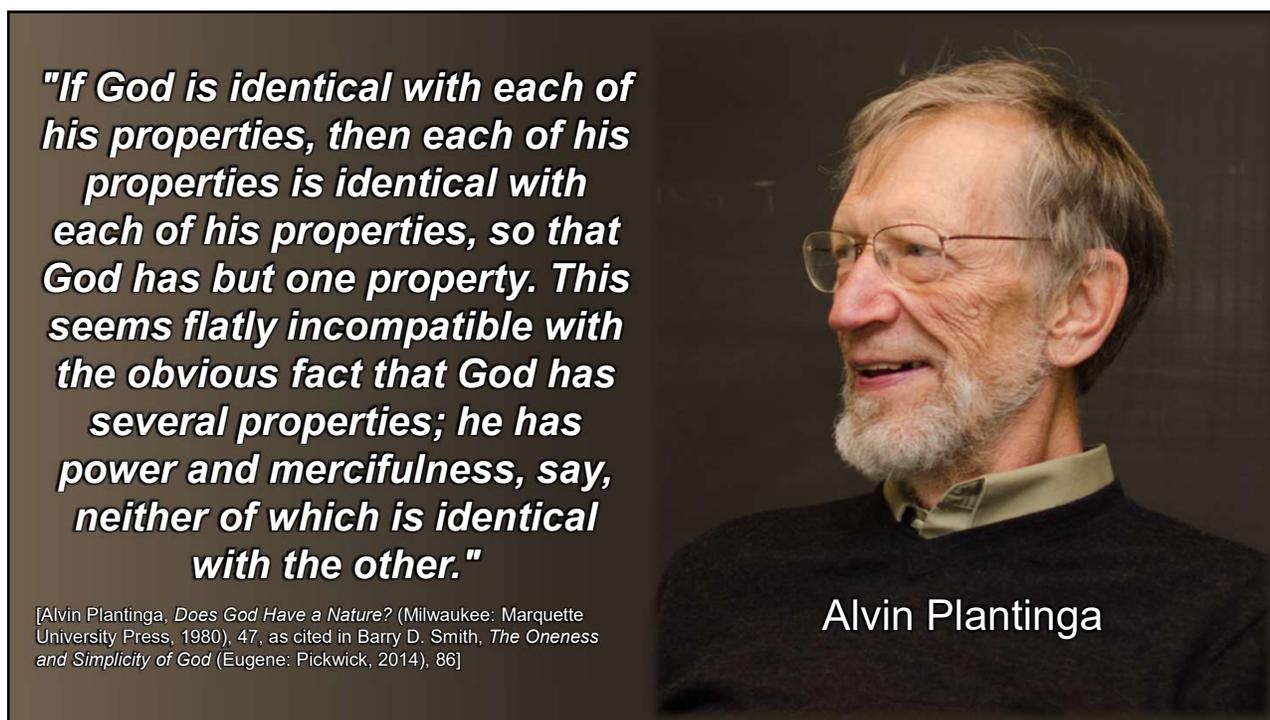
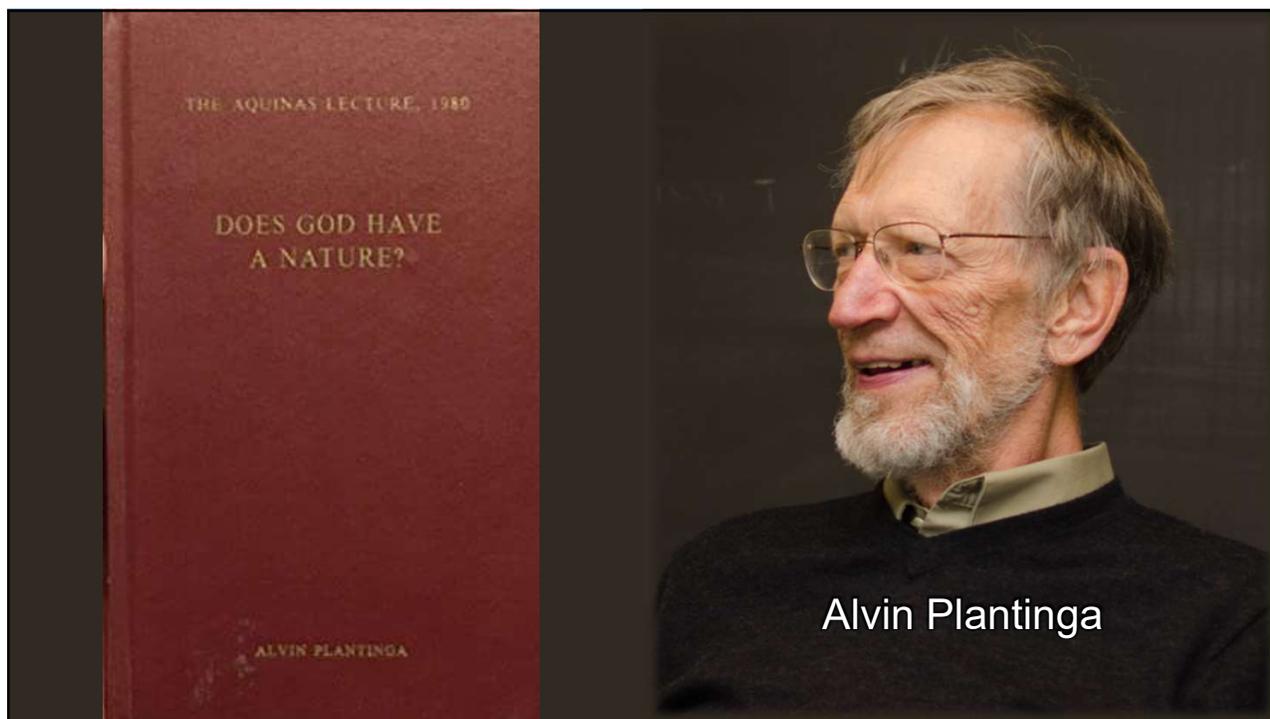
Ryan Mullins

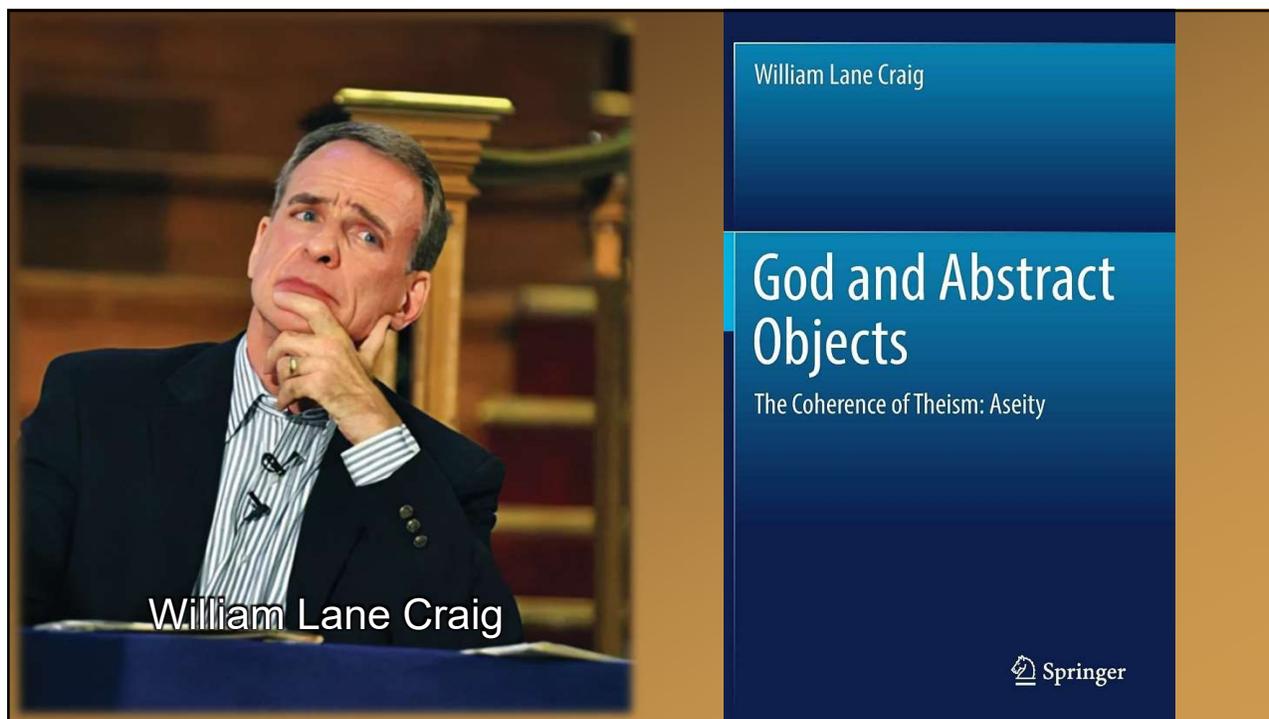
"There are multiple perfections that God is said to have, like wisdom and power. These perfections are not identical, and yet they are supposed to be identical in God. How can diverse concepts be identical when they clearly are not?"

[Ryan Mullins, "Simply Impossible: A Case against Divine Simplicity," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 7 (2013): 181-203 (201)]



Ryan Mullins







**CHRISTIAN
APOLOGETICS
JOURNAL**

SPECIAL ISSUE ON METAPHYSICS

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The purpose of the Christian Apologetics Journal
is to provide a forum for the presentation of articles
contributing to the defense of the historic Christian Faith.

VOLUME 3, NO. 2 / FALL 2004

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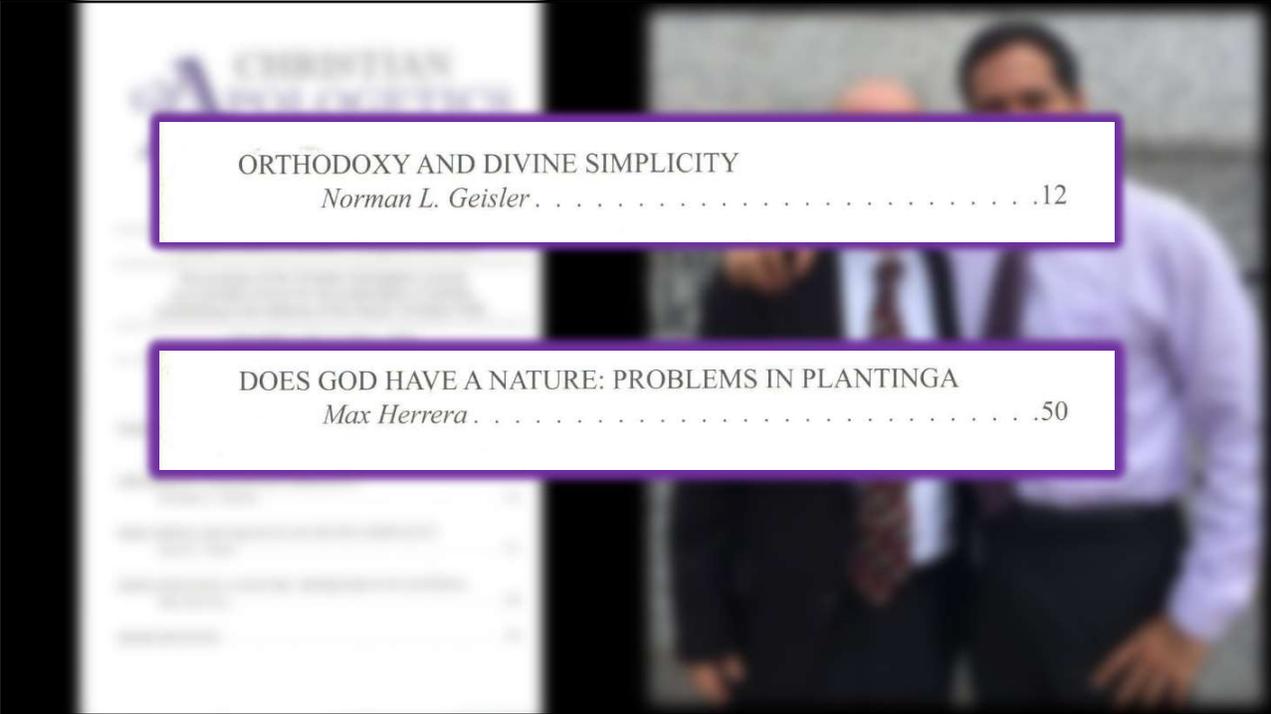
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"On the classical understanding of God, theologians will say that all of God's essential properties are identical to each other, and identical to the divine nature, which is identical to God's existence."

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Ryan Mullins

"On the classical understanding of God, theologians will say that all of God's essential properties are identical to each other, and identical to the divine nature, which is identical to God's existence."

[Ryan Mullins, "The Doctrine of Divine Simplicity," <https://theopolisinstitute.com/conversations/the-doctrine-of-divine-simplicity/> accessed 12/22/23]

Mullins fails to factor in Aquinas's doctrine of analogy which maintains that what humans affirm about the nature of God is always within the limits of how the human intellect apprehends the nature of God as God He has revealed Himself in creation.

↻ Romans 1:20 ↻

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,"



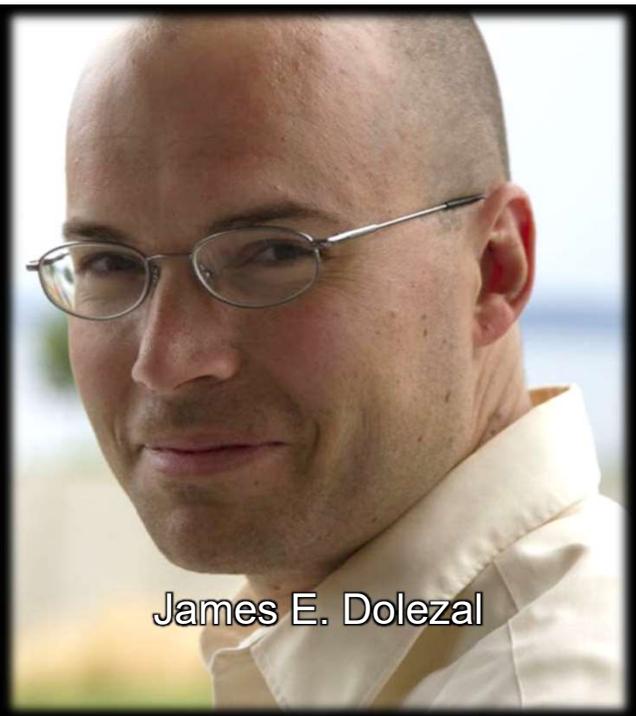
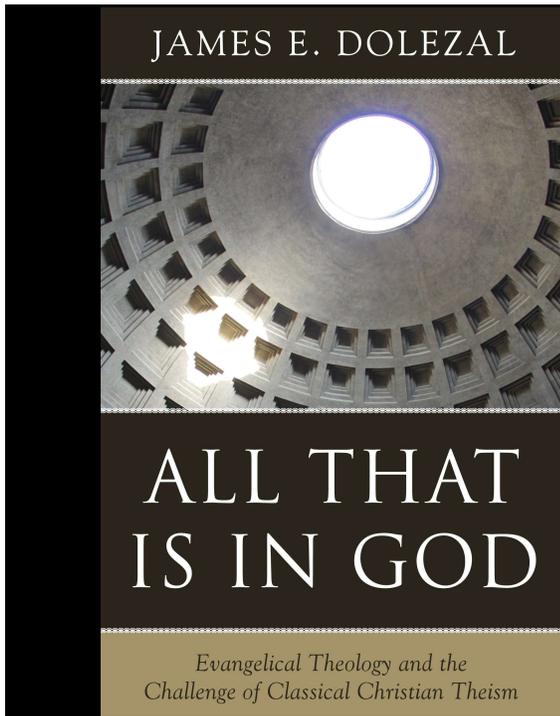
"Properly understood, the doctrine does not say that power, knowledge, goodness, essence, existence, etc., as they exist in us, are identical. Rather, it says that there is in God something that is *analogous* to power, something *analogous* to knowledge, something *analogous* to goodness, etc., and that these "somethings" all turn out to be one and the same thing.



Edward Feser

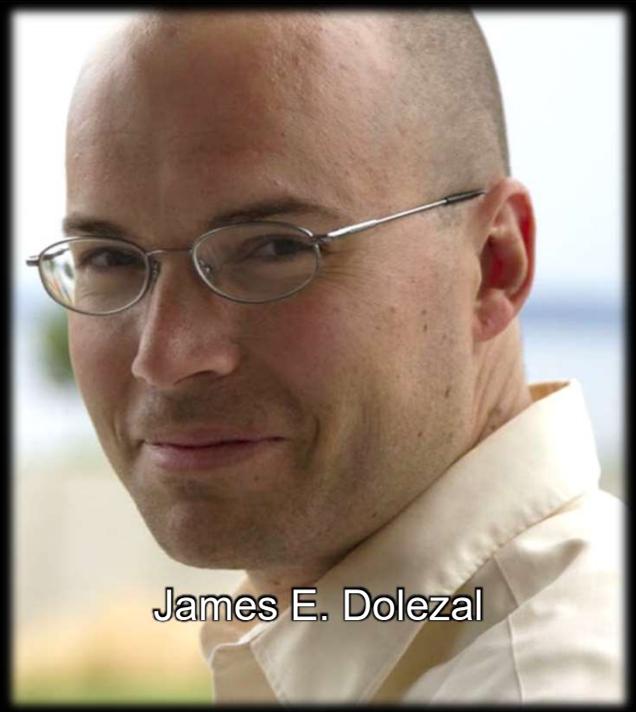
“ 'Power,' 'knowledge,' 'goodness,' etc. are merely different, analogously used descriptions we use in order to refer to what is in God one and the same reality, just as (to borrow Frege's famous example) the expressions 'the morning star' and 'the evening star' differ in sense while referring to one and the same thing (the planet Venus).”

[Edward Feser, "William Lane Craig on Divine Simplicity," <https://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2009/11/william-lane-craig-on-divine-simplicity.html>, accessed 08/07/23]



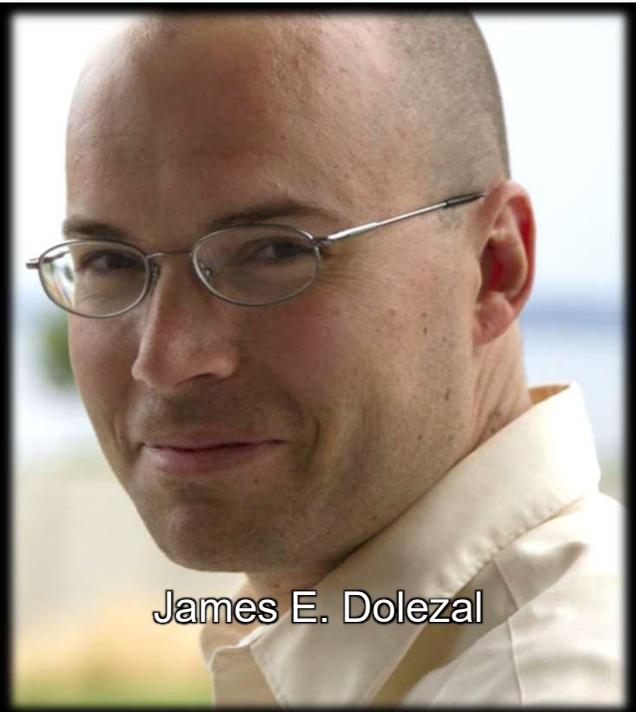
James E. Dolezal

*"In light of the strong identity claims of the classical simplicity doctrine, some wonder what we are to make of the distinctions made among the divine attributes in our God-talk. Does not the real identity of these things in God render meaningless the distinctions we tend to draw among His attributes in our theologizing? In response, it should be observed that the distinctions we make among the attributes in our God-talk **follow from the manner in which God's perfection is revealed, not from the manner in which it exists in Him.***



James E. Dolezal

*"Inasmuch as the language and imagery by which God reveals Himself in nature and Scripture draw upon a vast range of really distinct perfections in the created order, so likewise human speech about Him tends to follow the same route in the distinctions it makes. Each attribute, in its distinction from all others, enables us to glimpse a sliver of the perfect fullness of God's being. The manner in which we know and talk about His perfection does not—indeed, cannot!—correspond **univocally** to the way God is in Himself.*

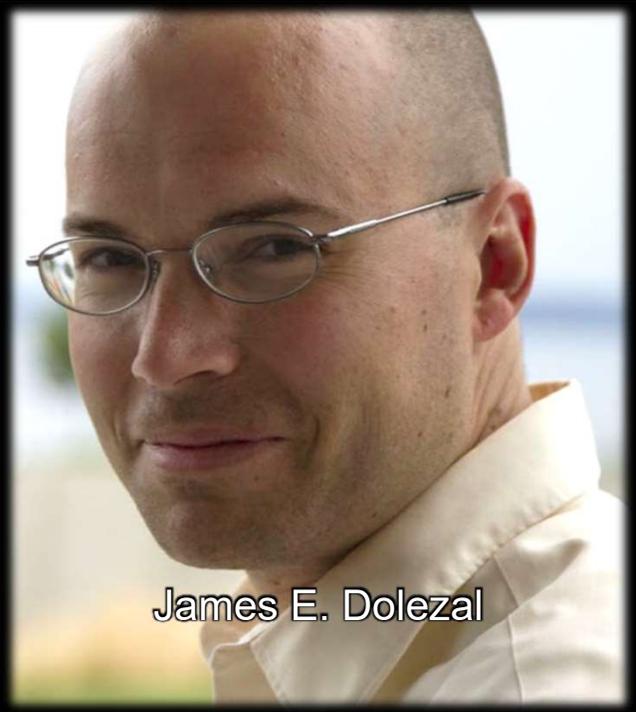


James E. Dolezal

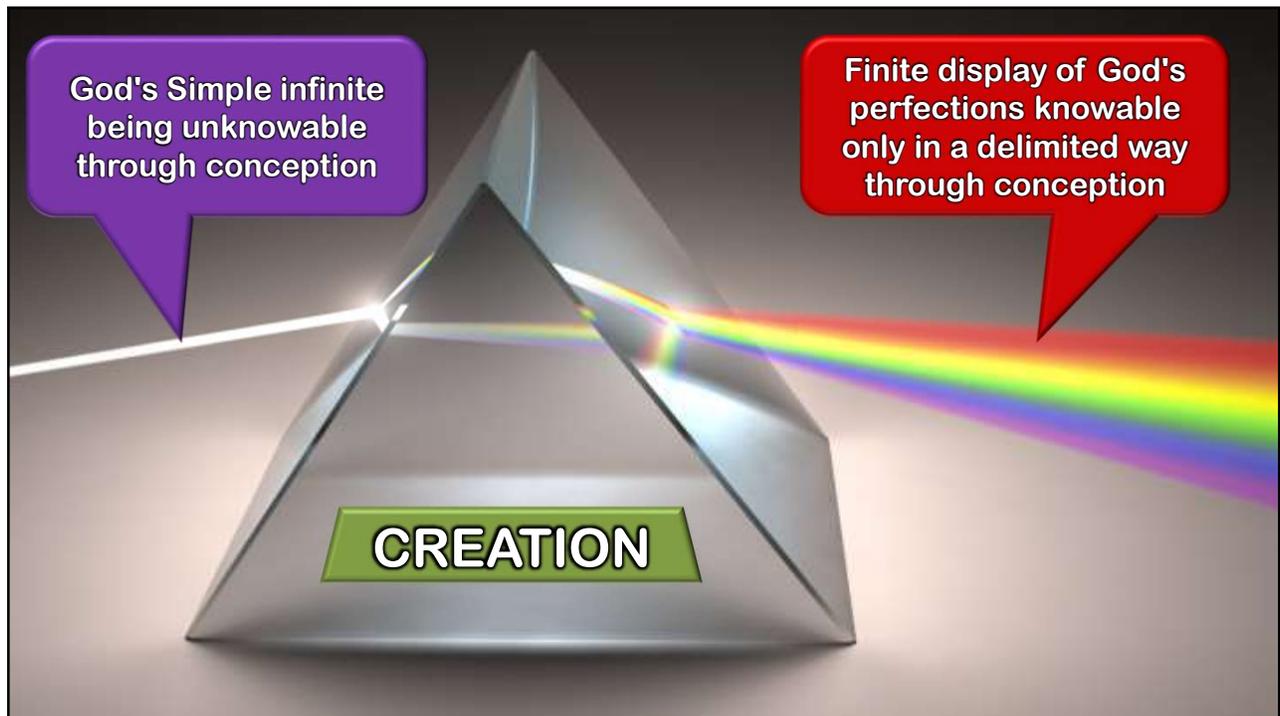
"Rather, in revelation He refracts through the prism of creation and history His perfect fullness of simple being. What is simple in Him thus appears to us under the form of a spectrum of distinct virtues."

[James E. Dolezal, *All That Is In God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017)]

ALL THAT IS IN GOD



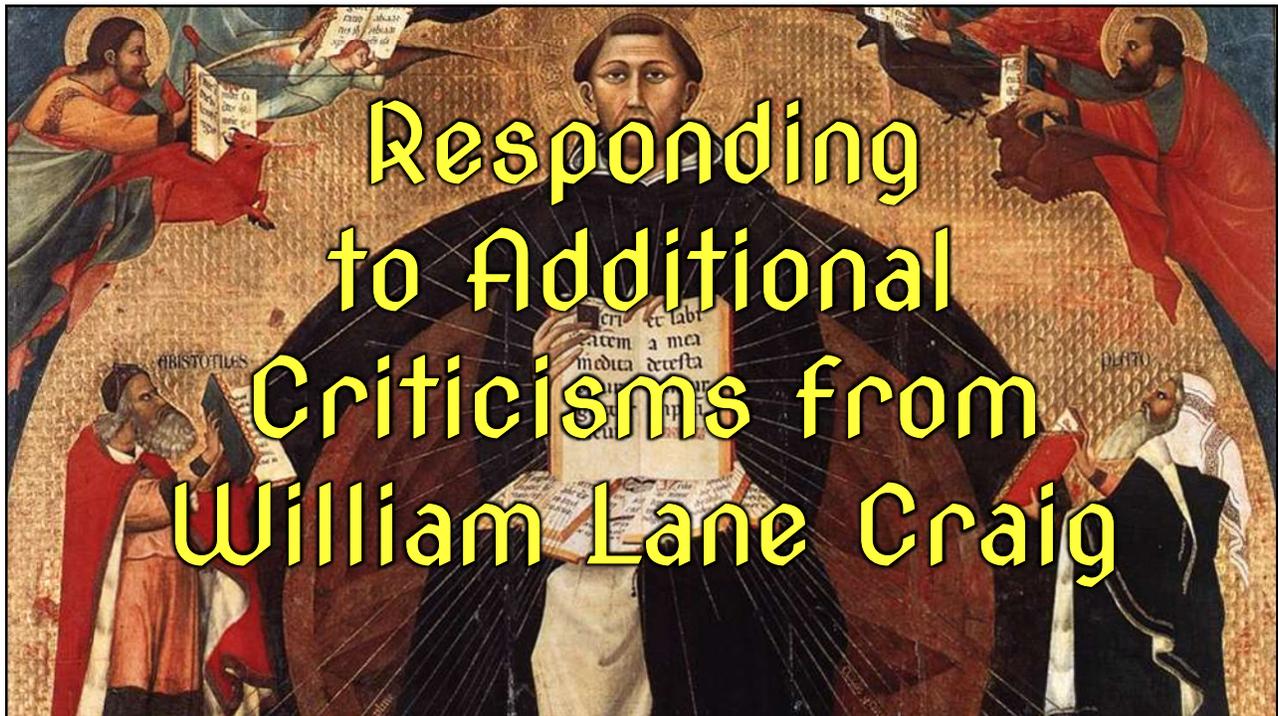
James E. Dolezal



God's Simple infinite being unknowable through **conception**

Finite display of God's perfections knowable only in a **delimited** way through **conception**

These are technical terms in the context of Aquinas's epistemology of Abstraction (of Form) and Judgment (of existence).





"Our first objection voiced by a number of critics, especially in the Protestant world, is that the doctrine of the divine simplicity is unbiblical. Drawing, it seems, far more on pagan philosophical sources than on the scriptural witness, Aquinas has presented, it seems, a deeply distorted and hopelessly abstract notion of God more akin to a Buddhist abyss or a Hindu absolute than the living, personal, and very particular God of the Bible."

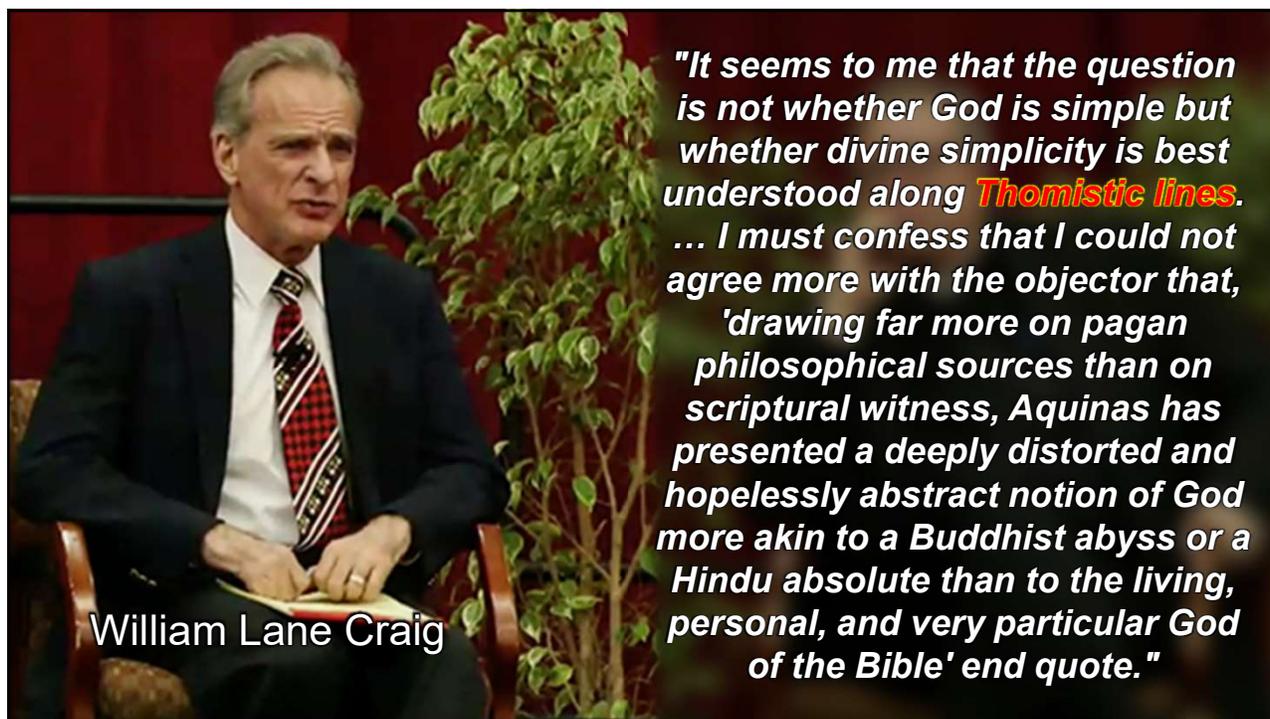


Robert Barron



William Lane Craig

Robert Barron



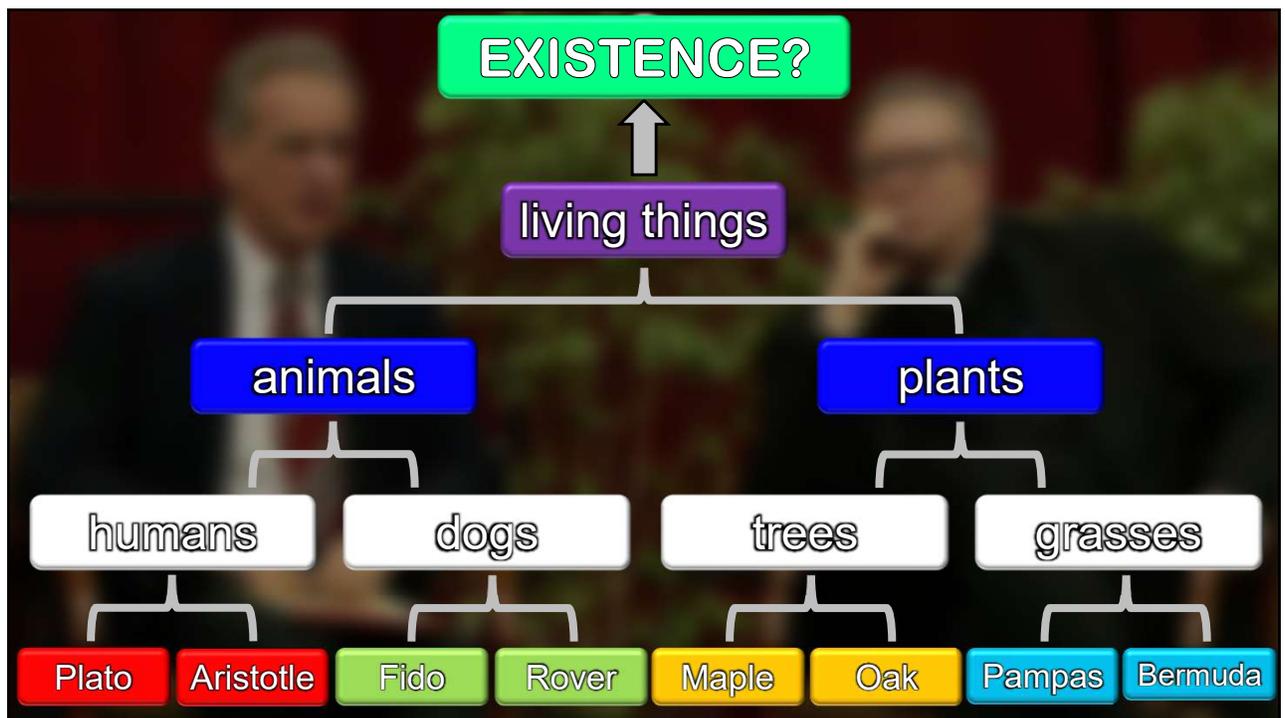
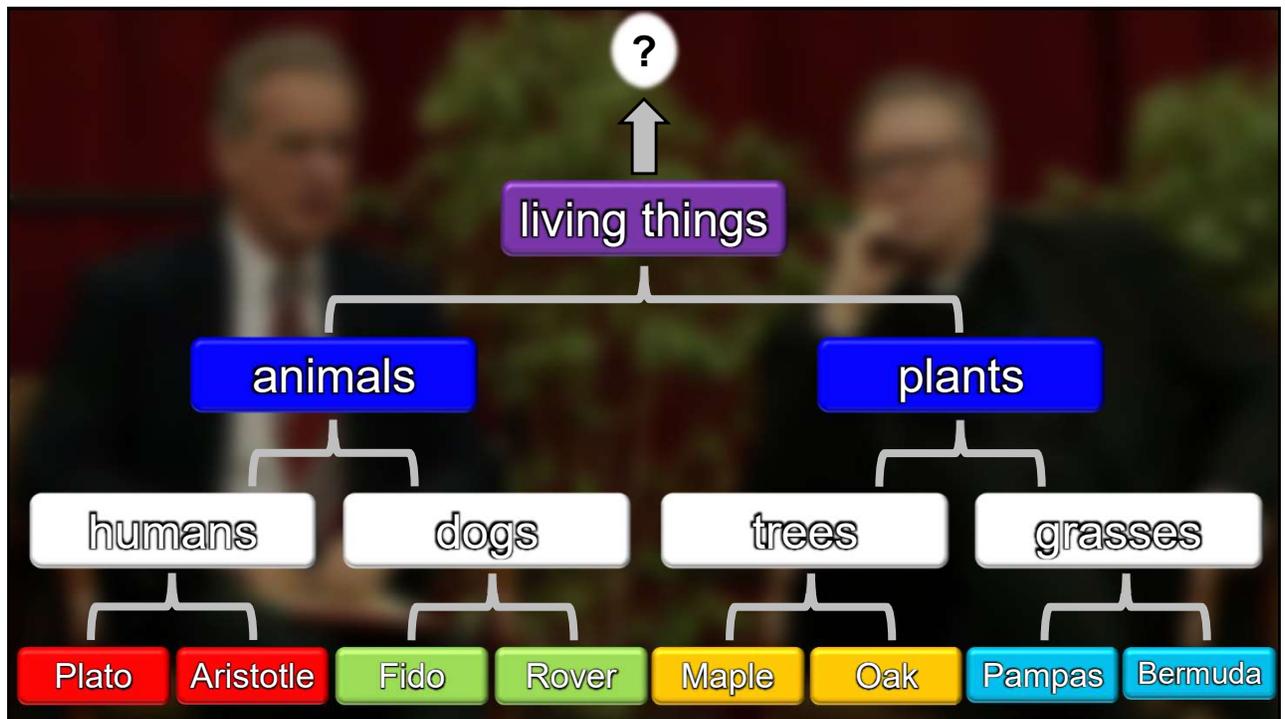
William Lane Craig

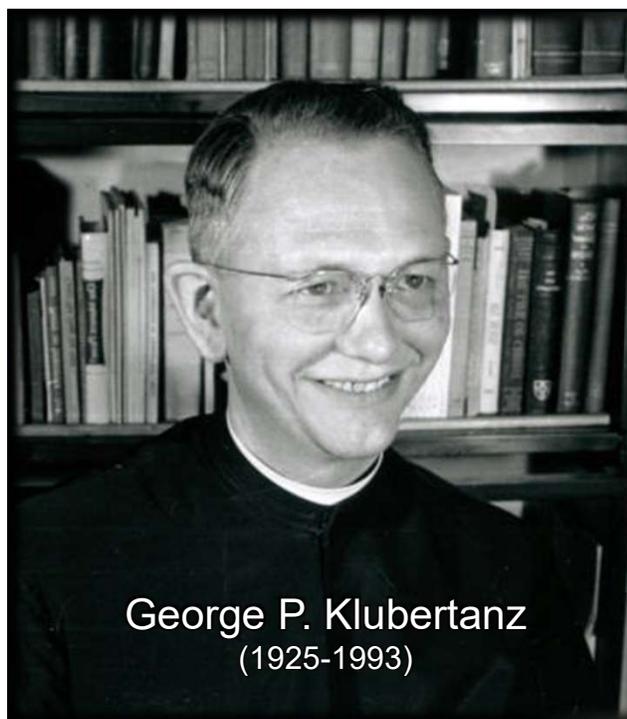
*"It seems to me that the question is not whether God is simple but whether divine simplicity is best understood along **Thomistic lines**. ... I must confess that I could not agree more with the objector that, 'drawing far more on pagan philosophical sources than on scriptural witness, Aquinas has presented a deeply distorted and hopelessly abstract notion of God more akin to a Buddhist abyss or a Hindu absolute than to the living, personal, and very particular God of the Bible' end quote."*

I submit that Craig is mistakenly treating Aquinas's doctrine of divine simplicity as if Aquinas is taking existence to be a genus.

The thinking would go like this:

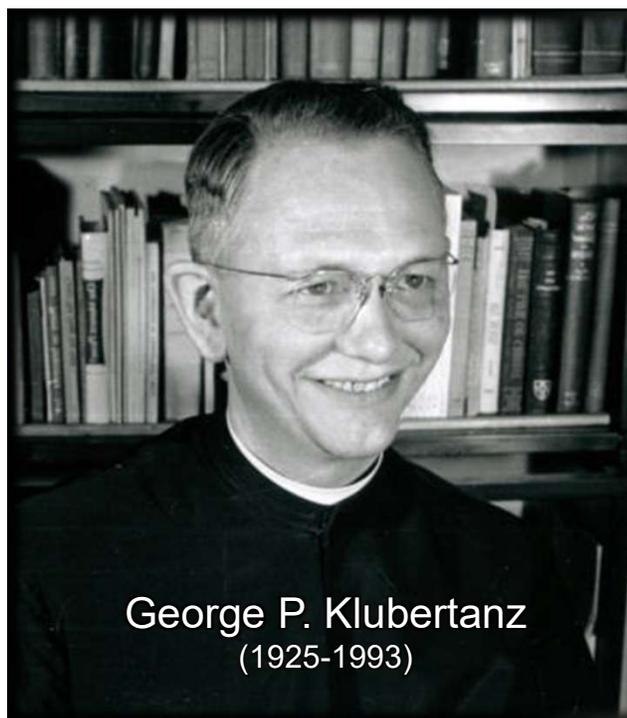
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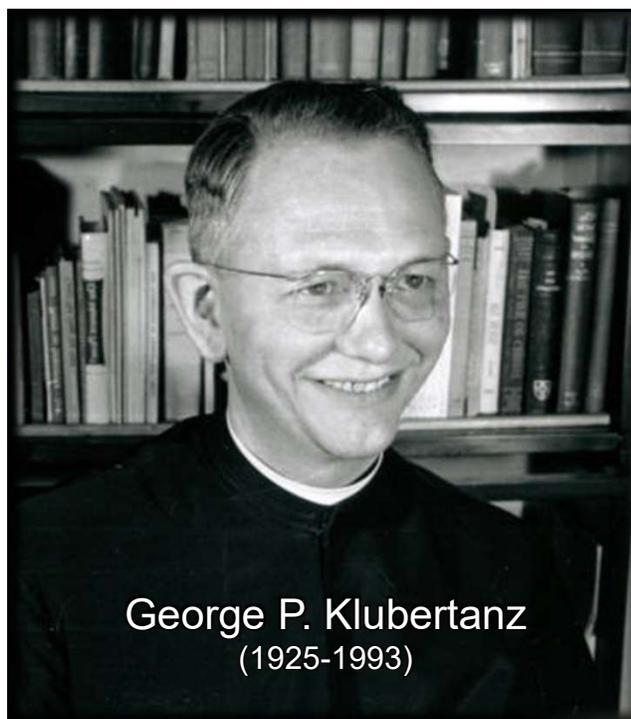
George P. Klubertanz
(1925-1993)

"Being as it is understood in its first and proper metaphysical sense is named from that which is most actual and concrete, namely, the act of existing."



George P. Klubertanz
(1925-1993)

"Being is not the 'widest in extension and the least in comprehension,' because the logical rule of the inverse variation of extension and comprehension holds only for universals."



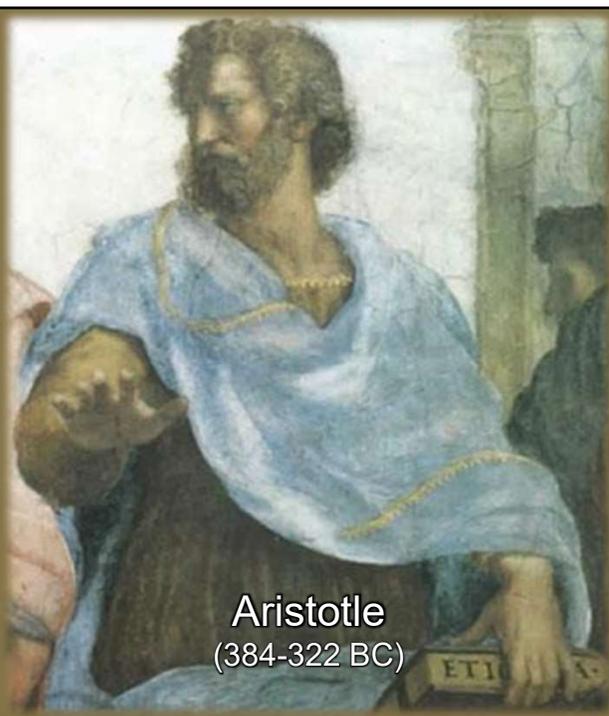
George P. Klubertanz
(1925-1993)

"Being is at once the widest in extension—for "is" can be said of all things—and the fullest in (implicit) comprehension—for any real act or perfection IS."

[George Klubertanz, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Being* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1995), 185-186, emphasis in original]

"But it is not possible that ... being should be a single genus of things; for the differentiae of any genus must ... have being ... but it is not possible for the genus taken apart from its species ... to be predicated of its proper differentiae; so that if ... being is a genus, no differentia will ... have being."

[Aristotle, *Metaphysics* B (III), 3, 998b 21-26, trans. W. D. Ross in Richard McKeon, ed. *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 723]



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

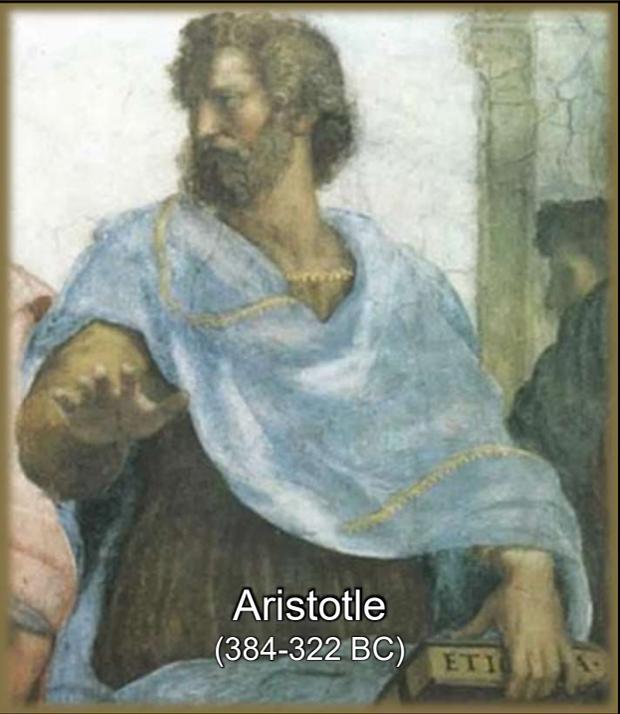
☞ Genus ☞

☞ Specific difference ☞

☞ Species ☞

☞ Proper accident ☞

☞ Accident ☞



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

☞ Genus ☞

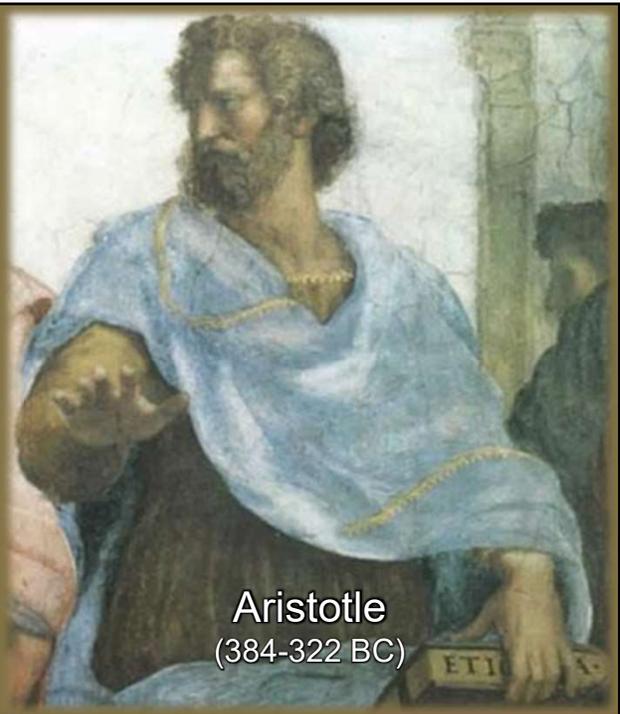
animal

☞ Specific difference ☞

rationality

☞ Species ☞

human



Aristotle
(384-322 BC)

Genus
animal

Specific difference
rationality

Species
human

The specific difference is not included in the genus but neither is it necessarily excluded by the genus.

The specific difference added to the genus gives rise to the species.

Genus
being (existence)

Specific difference
?

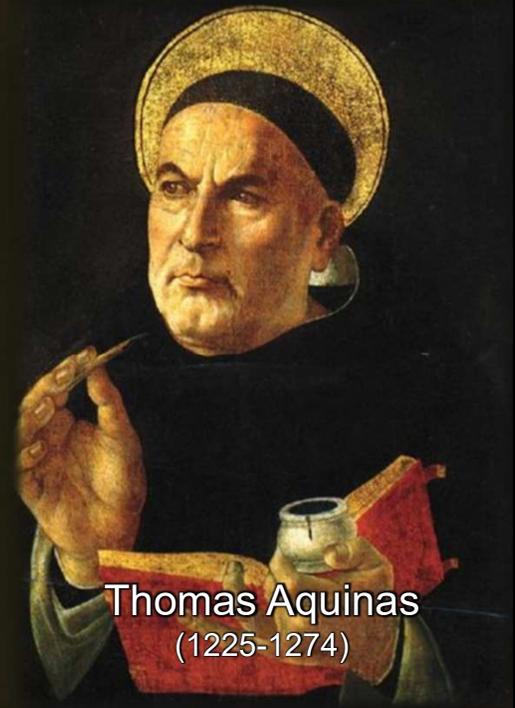
Species
?

The specific difference is not included in the genus but neither is it necessarily excluded by the genus.

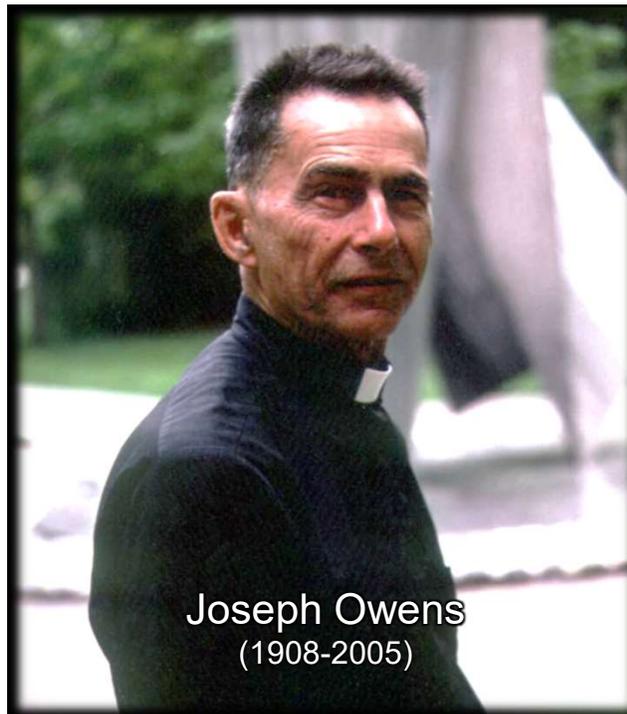
The specific difference added to the genus gives rise to the species.

"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. But the Philosopher has shown [Metaph. iii] that being cannot be a genus, for every genus has differences distinct from its generic essence. Now no difference can exist distinct from being; for non-being cannot be a difference. It follows then that God is not in a genus."

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

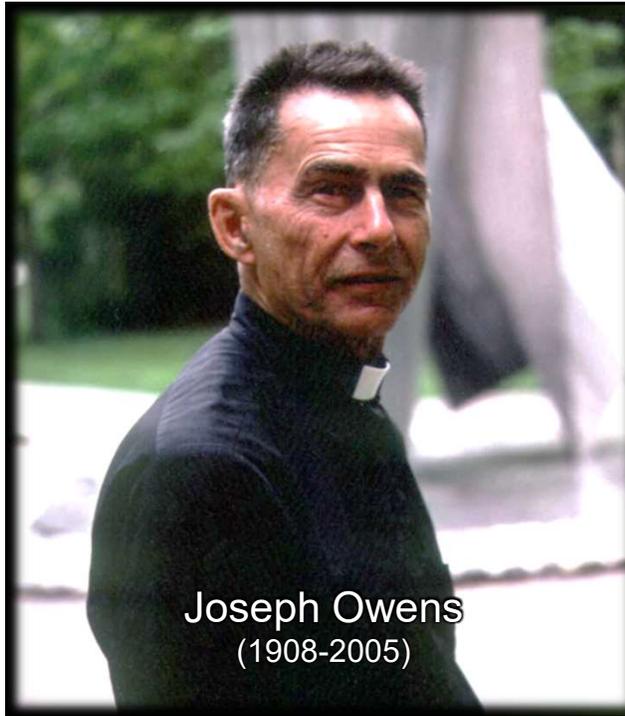


Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)



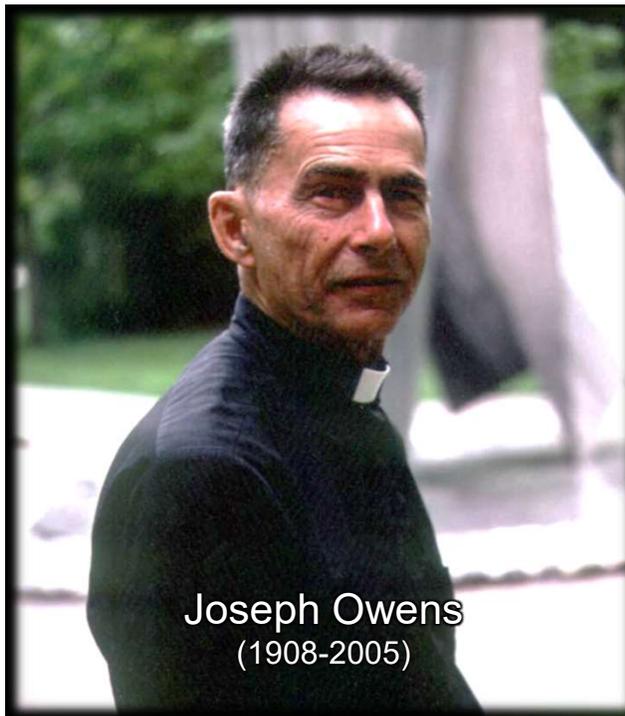
Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

"This is what actually occasions the trouble about the concept of existence. As seen earlier, this concept has been regarded as totally void of content. The conclusion drawn has been that the term 'being' should be banished from philosophy. If an attempt is made to attain this concept by continuing the process of abstracting grade after grade in the natures of sensible things, the result will inevitably be an empty concept."



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

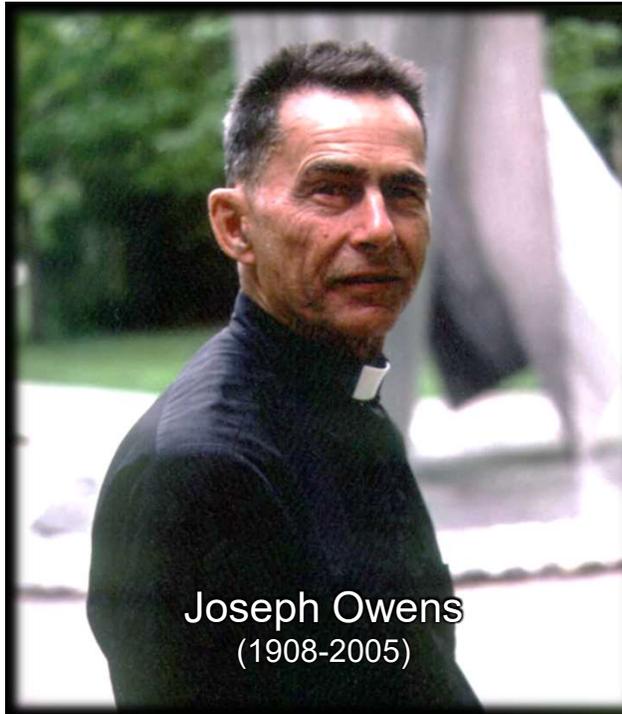
"But if attention is given to the actuality attained in judgment, over and above what is attained through abstraction, the result is very different. The abstract natures of things can be graded in terms of actuality or perfection. Life is more perfect and more actual than mere corporeality, sentience than vegetation, rationality than sentience. But all these formal characteristics require actuation by existence."



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

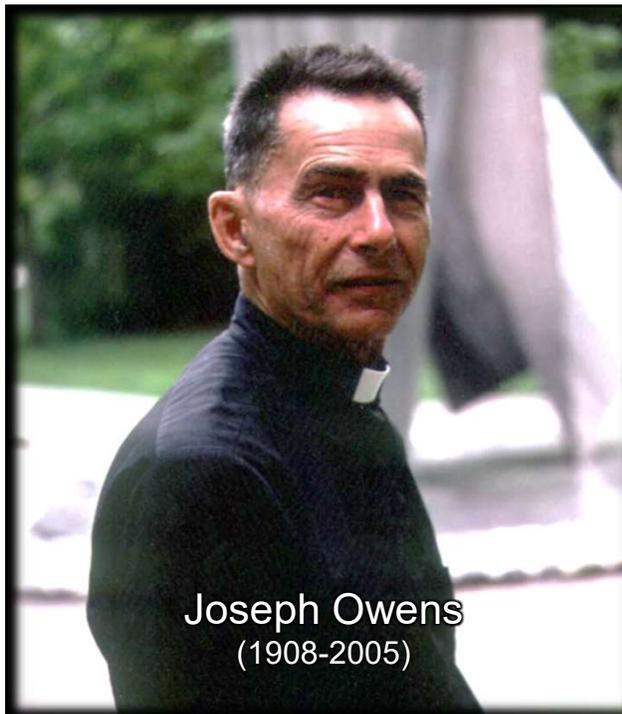
"Existence can accordingly be defined as the actuality of all actualities and the perfection of all perfections. It is thereby defined by use of concepts drawn from sensible things through abstraction, but combined in a way that focuses the mind's attention on what has been attained through a different intellectual act, namely judgment."

[Joseph Owens, *Cognition: An Epistemological Inquiry* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1992), 175]



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

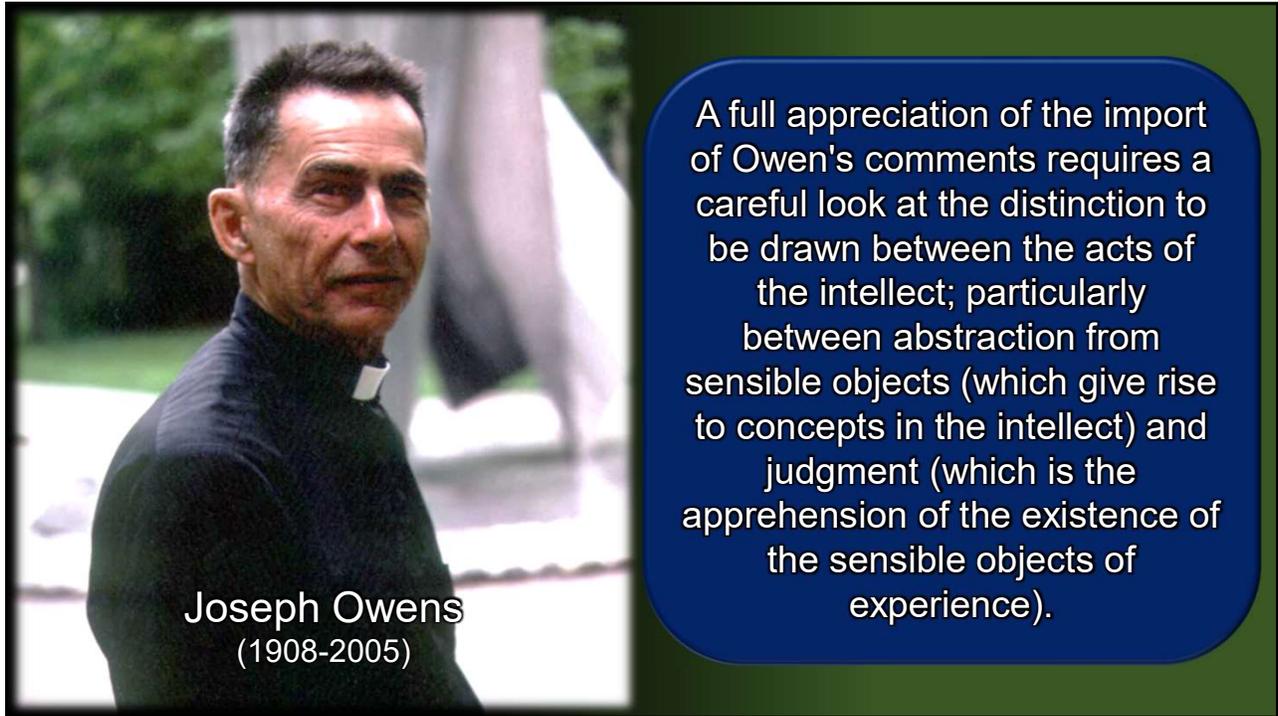
"One basic trouble, for instance, is the tendency to conceive the metaphysics of St. Thomas as an ontology. Ontology, in the historically established sense of the term, is a general study of being that remains in some way distinct, at least partially, from a natural theology. It is a study of being that is not primarily, from the view point of method, a study of God. On the strength of a concept that is regarded as common to all beings and proper to none, it allows the investigation of being to proceed to the transcendentals and to the ultimate distinction between being and things without having first established the nature of being as subsistent in God.



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

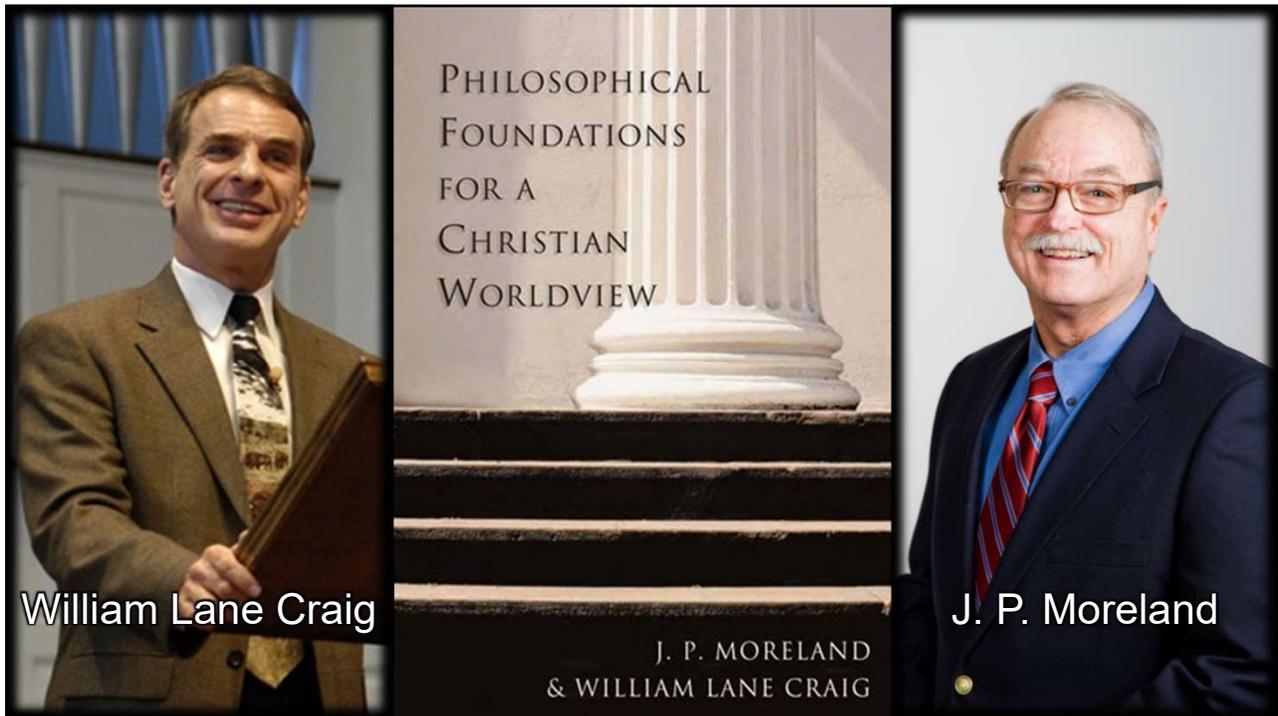
"The difficulties of finding an authentically scientific object in the general notion of being, understood in this ontological way, have become only too clear in the course of philosophical thought from the time of Kant's Critique. Being, when considered as a nature isolated by a process of abstraction in the way humanity or animality is isolated, turns out to be an empty concept that is the equivalent of nothing and is a notion incapable of serving as an object of scientific investigation."

[Joseph Owens, "The 'Analytics' and Thomistic Metaphysical Procedure," *Medieval Studies* 26 (1964): 83-108 (84)]



Joseph Owens
(1908-2005)

A full appreciation of the import of Owen's comments requires a careful look at the distinction to be drawn between the acts of the intellect; particularly between abstraction from sensible objects (which give rise to concepts in the intellect) and judgment (which is the apprehension of the existence of the sensible objects of experience).



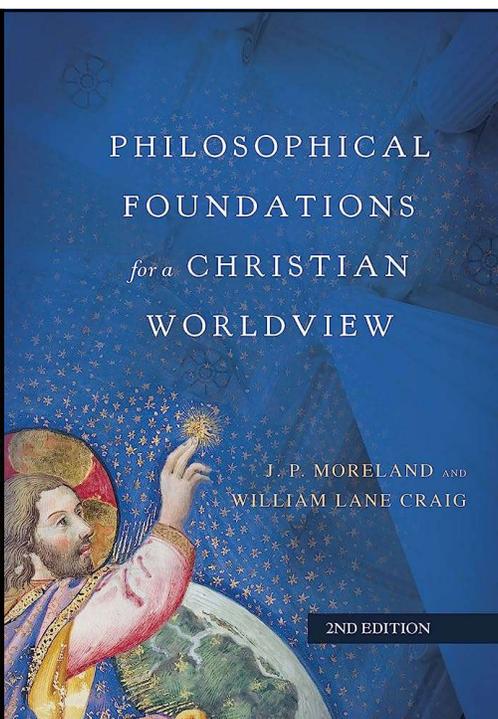
William Lane Craig

J. P. Moreland

J. P. MORELAND
& WILLIAM LANE CRAIG



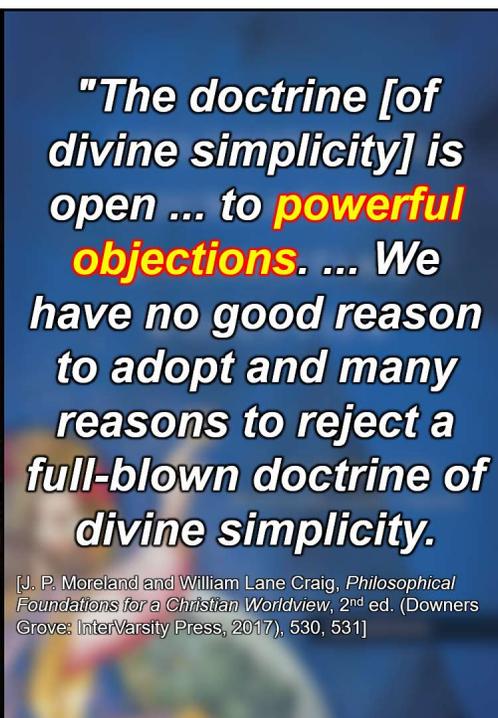
William Lane Craig



J. P. Moreland



William Lane Craig



J. P. Moreland



William Lane Craig

*"The doctrine [of divine simplicity] is open ... to **powerful objections**. ... We have no good reason to adopt and many reasons to reject a full-blown doctrine of divine simplicity.*

J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 530, 531]



J. P. Moreland

It is my contention that certain of these "powerful objections" involve straw man fallacies.

For example, one objection rests on the mischaracterization that Aquinas treats being as a genus.

Another objection employs a univocal understanding of being.

Both of these mistaken notions figure into the Modal Collapse Argument against simplicity.

*"For thinkers in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Anselmian conception of **God as the greatest conceivable being or most perfect being** has guided philosophical speculation on the raw data of scripture, so that God's biblical attributes are to be conceived in ways that would serve to exalt God's greatness. Since the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data and since what constitutes a 'great-making' property is to some degree debatable, philosophers working within the Judeo-Christian tradition enjoy considerable latitude in formulating a philosophically coherent and biblically faithful doctrine of God."*



William Lane Craig

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"Perfect Being Theology"

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY APPROACH

By the use of the tools, methods, and categories of analytic philosophy:

1. Carefully define the term 'perfect'.
2. On the basis of this definition, identify what "perfect making properties" must constitute a "perfect being."
3. Since God by definition is a "perfect being," then conclude that God must possess these "perfect making properties."
4. Any property that does not "clearly" appear in the Bible and/or is clearly not "perfect making" must be denied of God.

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY APPROACH

By the use of the tools, methods and categories of classical philosophy:

1. Carefully discover what the nature of God must be like as the First Cause.
2. On the basis of this discovery identify what attributes must be true of God.
3. Identify those attributes as the definition of what it means to be ultimately and infinitely perfect.

*"For thinkers in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Anselmian conception of God as the greatest conceivable being or most perfect being has guided philosophical speculation on the raw data of scripture, so that **God's biblical attributes are to be conceived in ways that would serve to exalt God's greatness.** Since **the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data** and since what constitutes a 'great-making' property is to some degree debatable, philosophers working within the Judeo-Christian tradition enjoy considerable latitude in formulating a philosophically coherent and biblically faithful doctrine of God."*

Understandably, Craig is using his prior notions of "greatest conceivable being" and "most perfect being" to set boundaries on what the text of Scripture can mean.

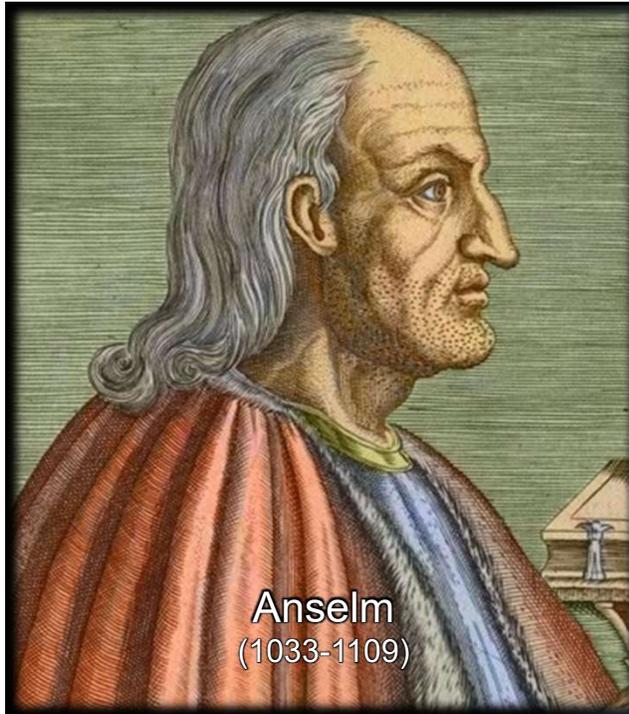
Further, Craig (correctly, in my view) acknowledges that the text of Scripture "underdetermines" (i.e., says less than) what God is like.

*"For thinkers in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the **Anselmian** conception of God as the greatest conceivable being or most perfect being has guided philosophical speculation on the raw data of scripture, so that **God's biblical attributes are to be conceived in ways that would serve to exalt God's greatness.** Since **the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data** and since what constitutes a 'great-making' property is to some degree debatable, philosophers working **in the Judeo-Christian tradition** enjoy considerable latitude in formulating a philosophically coherent and biblically faithful doctrine of God."*

To be sure, Craig is certainly free to incorporate the philosophical methods and ideas from any philosopher / theologian he desires.

In many respects, I have no issues with Craig naming Anselm as a representative of the "Judeo-Christian tradition."

It should be noted, however, (and as we have seen), the same Anselm who gave him the method of "perfect being theology" also himself affirmed the doctrine of Divine simplicity!



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 the, 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]

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 72]



William Lane Craig

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[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Note Craig's first juxtaposition.

Simplicity, impassibility, and immutability are denied today though they were affirmed in the middle ages.

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian **philosophers** **today** deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though **medieval** theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Notice Craig's second juxtaposition.

It is philosophers who deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability while it is theologians who affirmed them.

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, **most Christian philosophers today** deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Consider Craig's comment that most Christian philosophers today deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability.

I wonder how many Catholic Christian philosophers there are today in comparison to the number of non-Catholic Christian philosophers.

Catholics are required by Canon 1 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) to hold to simplicity.

"We firmly believe and openly confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immense, omnipotent, unchangeable, incomprehensible, and ineffable, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; three Persons indeed but one essence, substance, or nature absolutely simple; ..."

Canon 1

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, **most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making.**"*

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Catholics are required by Canon 1 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) to hold to simplicity.

Is it true, therefore that "most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple"?

*"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, **most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making.**"*

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Granting, for the sake of argument, that most Christian philosophers today deny God is simple, is this an argument that the doctrine of simplicity is false?

Or could it be that having so many contemporary Christian philosophers denying simplicity is a commentary on the regrettable state of contemporary Christian philosophy?

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Last, note the two "arguments" Craig offers as to why today's Christian philosophers today deny simplicity, impassibility, and immutability.

1. These attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible.
2. These attributes are not clearly great making.

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Regarding the first argument, did not Craig earlier acknowledge that "the concept of God is underdetermined by the biblical data"?

Why, then, should we necessarily conclude anything about simplicity if indeed the Bible does not ascribe simplicity to God?

Could it not be (granting for the sake of argument) that this is one of those instances where the biblical data "underdetermine" the concept of God?

1. These attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible.

"Theists thus find that antitheistic critiques of certain conceptions of God can actually be quite helpful in formulating a more adequate conception. For example, most Christian philosophers today deny that God is simple or impassible or immutable in any unrestricted sense, even though medieval theologians affirmed such divine attributes, since these attributes are not ascribed to God in the Bible and are not clearly great making."

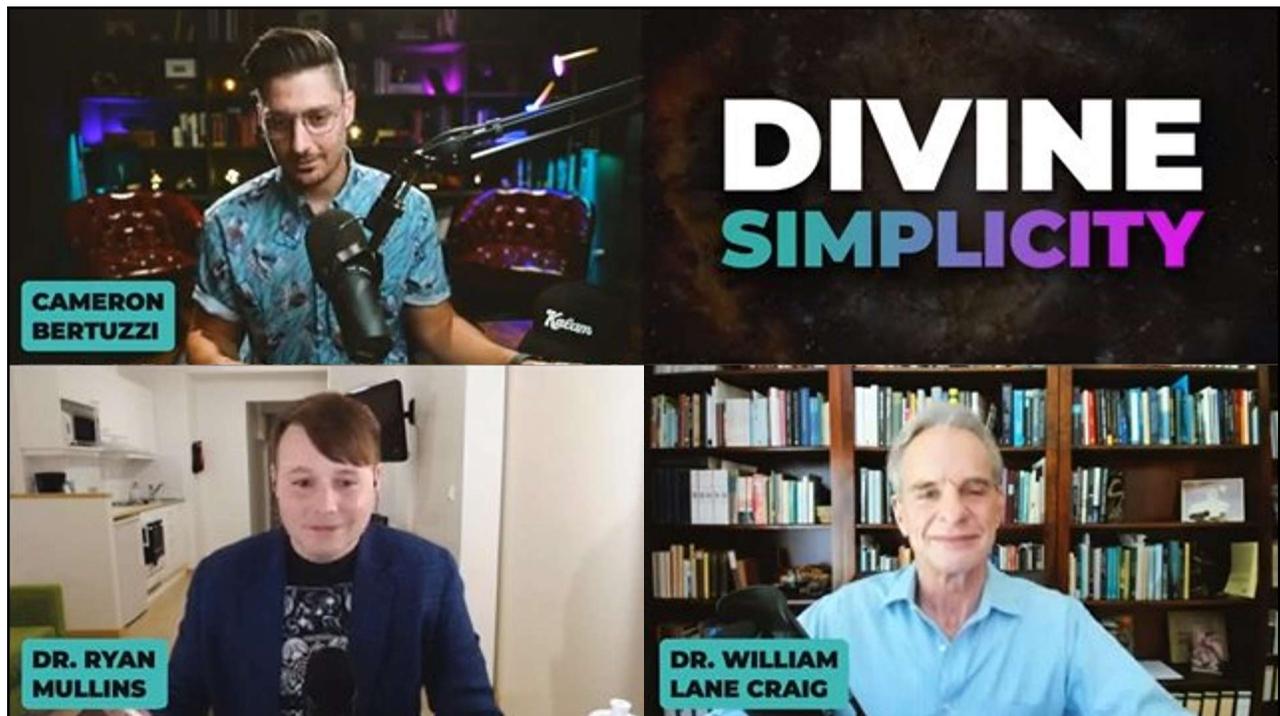
[William Lane Craig, "Theistic Critiques of Atheism, *Cambridge Companion*, 72]

Regarding the second argument, the truth of simplicity does not rise or fall on the basis of philosophically discovering what "great making properties are" on the basis of a prior determination of what "perfect" means.

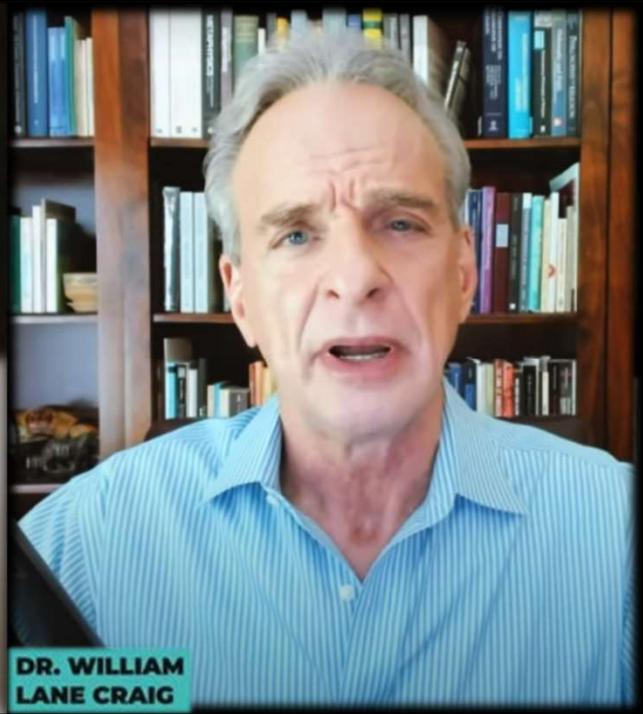
Rather, one should discover what God must be like as the First Cause, and then ascribe the characterization of 'perfect' to that.

God determines what 'perfect' means rather than the meaning of 'perfect' disclosing what God must be like.

2. These attributes are not clearly great making.



"I count myself a classical theist even though I don't hold to this strong doctrine of divine simplicity [of Thomas Aquinas]. I agree that God's not made of parts that might fall apart. I don't think that God is corruptible. I don't think that God has even metaphysically separable parts. But that doesn't commit me to theses like God has no potentiality, that God has no properties, that God's essence is existence, and so forth. ..."



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One might think that if Craig denies that God has metaphysically separable parts, this would mean that he does, indeed, hold to the doctrine of simplicity.

DR. WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

*"I count myself a classical theist even though I don't hold to this strong doctrine of divine simplicity [of Thomas Aquinas]. I agree that God's not made of parts that might fall apart. I don't think that God is corruptible. **I don't think that God has even metaphysically separable parts.** But that doesn't commit me to theses like God has no potentiality, that God has no properties, that God's essence is existence, and so forth. ..."*

But the reason he does not think God has metaphysically separable parts is because, as an anti-realist, he denies that there are such things as metaphysical parts in the first place.

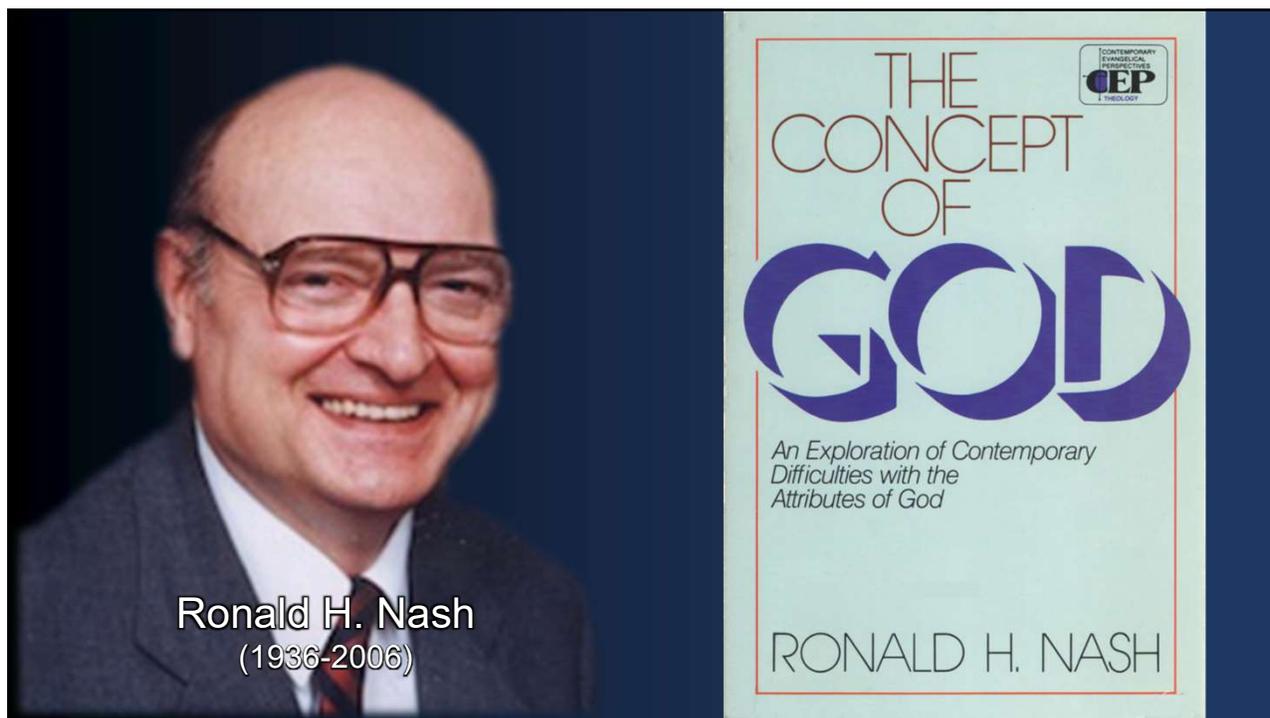
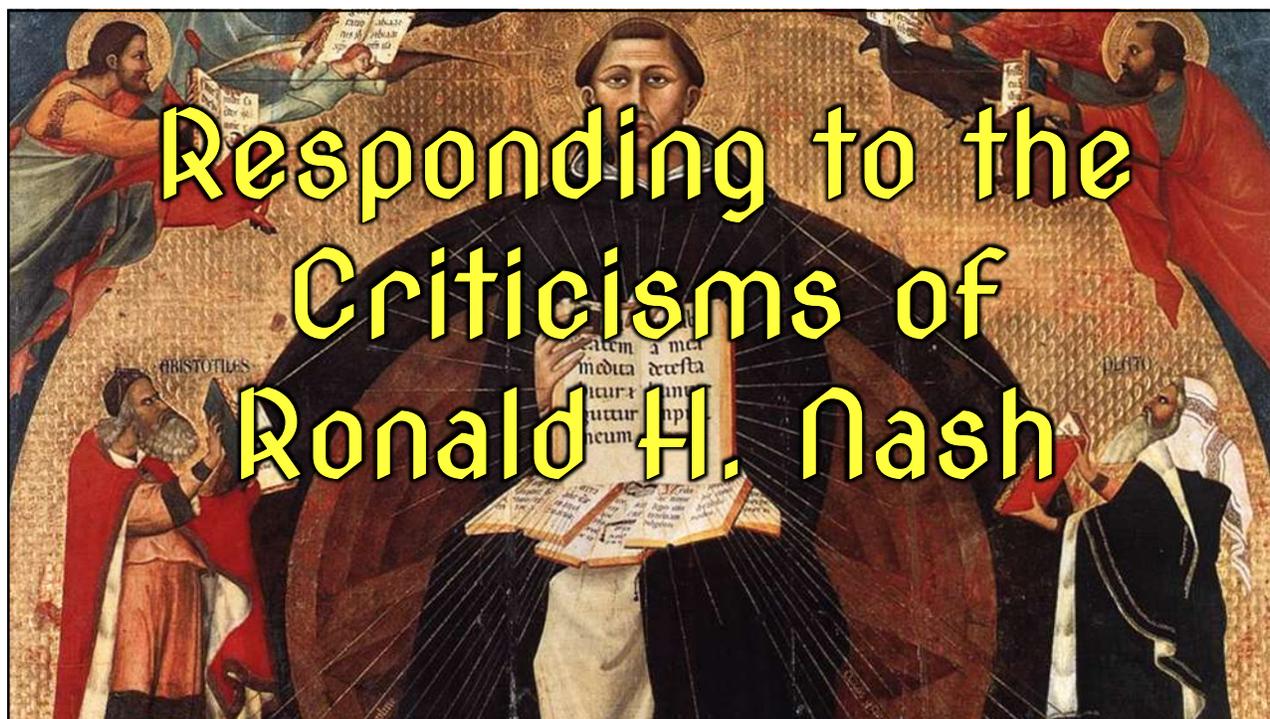
DR. WILLIAM
LANE CRAIG

*I think that the Bible tells us quite a number of God's **essential properties** so that we do have a good idea of what some of God's **essential properties** are—His goodness, His holiness, His being all powerful, His being all knowing, his being all present, his being eternal—all of these are **essential properties** of God that the Scripture teaches us because God Himself has revealed Himself to us in Scripture.*

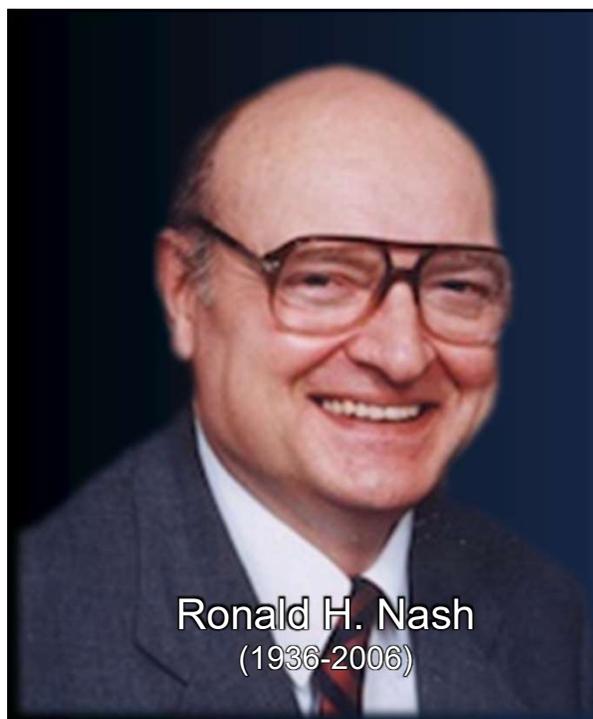
Craig does not hold to "constituent ontology."

Given this, one wonders what to make of his language about God's "essential properties."

DR. WILLIAM
LANE CRAIG



Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)



Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)

"It would appear that Christian theologians have **no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity**. It seems doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God. **No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given.** And it is difficult to see how the property of simplicity is **unique to God.**"

[Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 95-96]

Hopefully, this presentation has contributed somewhat to giving some good reasons.

Further, understandably Nash could not have been expected to interact with the more formidable literature to any significant depth in his popular and short treatment.

Nevertheless, the level of confidence of his conclusions against simplicity seems unwarranted by not having done such an adequate deep dive.

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[Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 95-96]

Given the metaphysics according to which the doctrine of simplicity is to be understood in its most robust formulation, the stakes are indeed quite high for what it preserves regarding our understanding of several of God's attributes.

"It would appear that Christian theologians have no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity. It seems **doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God** No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given. And it is difficult to see how the property of simplicity is unique to God."

(Russell K. Scahill, *The Christian God: An Examination of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Green Faith, Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 95-96)

☞ God as Transcendent ☞

Since the doctrine of simplicity alone means that God essence is existence, which is to say God is substantial existence itself (*deus ipsum esse subsistens est*), then only the doctrine of simplicity safeguards a thoroughgoing doctrine of God as transcendent.

No creature is existence itself, but *has* existence as something distinct from its nature.

Thus, the existence that God IS, is different than the existence that creation HAS.

"It would appear that Christian theologians have no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity. It seems **doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God** No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given. And it is difficult to see how the property of simplicity is unique to God."

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☞ God's Ultimacy ☞

"[Simplicity] is a consequence of God's *ultimacy*. For anything composed of parts is ontologically posterior to those parts, and can exist only if something causes the parts to be combined."*

*[Edward Feser, "Simply Irresistible"
<https://theopolisinstitute.com/conversations/simply-irresistible/>
accessed 09/01/22]

"It would appear that Christian theologians have no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity. It seems **doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God** No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given. And it is difficult to see how the property of simplicity is unique to God."

[Richard Taylor, *The Ontology of God: A Critical Examination of Some Medieval and Modern Theories*, London: Duckworth, 1962, 95-96]

☞ God as Creator ☞

Since the doctrine of simplicity alone means that God essence is existence, which is to say God is substantial existence itself (*deus ipsum esse subsistens est*), then only the doctrine of simplicity safeguards a thoroughgoing doctrine of creation.

All things in creation *have* existence and can only *have* existence because they are being continually caused to *have* existence by God who *is* existence itself.

"It would appear that Christian theologians have no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity. It seems **doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God** No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given. And it is difficult to see how the property of simplicity is unique to God."

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In his book, Nash displays a deep misunderstanding of **existential** Thomism.

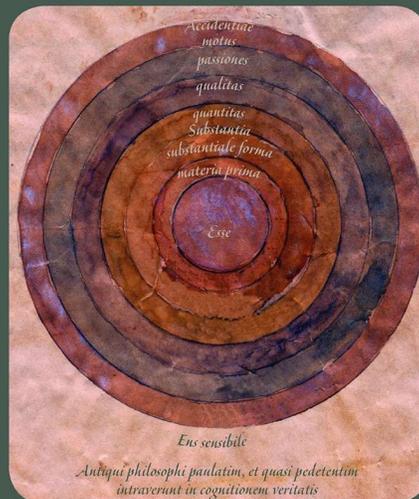
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Thomas M. Nash, *The Creation of God: An Examination of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (New York: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 95-96.

In his book, Nash displays a deep misunderstanding of **existential** Thomism.

Thomistic Existentialism & Cosmological Reasoning

JOHN F. X. KNASAS



In his book, Nash displays a deep misunderstanding of existential Thomism. This is evident when he uses the Process theologian David Ray Griffin as the voice of evaluating Aquinas's philosophical theology.

Because of this, Nash never seems to realize that the *actus purus* (pure actuality) in the philosophy of Aquinas differs markedly from the *actus purus* (pure actuality) in the philosophy of Aristotle who never himself had any metaphysics of existence in distinction from essence.

But it is precisely this metaphysical doctrine that makes simplicity what it is in Aquinas's philosophy.

"It would appear that Christian theologians have no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity. It seems doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God. **No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given.** And it is difficult to see how the property of simplicity is unique to God."

Richard H. Nash, *The Christian God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Green Plains, Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 95-96.

Given that Nash fails to grasp exactly what the doctrine of simplicity is in Aquinas's philosophy, it is no surprise that he cannot see any of the profound entailments the doctrine of simplicity has for philosophical theology.

Otherwise, he would have seen that the doctrine of simplicity shows not only how God is unique in His being, but also that there cannot be more than one being whose essence is existence itself.

"It would appear that Christian theologians have no good reason to affirm the doctrine of divine simplicity. It seems doubtful that the doctrine adds anything significant to our understanding of God. **No satisfactory analysis of simplicity has yet been given.** And it is **difficult to see how the property of simplicity is unique to God**"

Richard H. Nash, *The Christian God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Green Plains, Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 95-96.



Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)

"Perhaps, like Emil Brunner, we should conclude that the doctrine has no practical value; it is pure speculation 'which has nothing at all to do with the God of the Christian faith.'"

[Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 95-96. Nash cites Brunner from *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950), 294]



Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)

"Plantinga's recent book makes plain that the doctrine of simplicity is also used in an attempt to avoid a dilemma that threatens the coherence of theism:



"if God is sovereign, then He cannot have a nature; if God has a nature, then He cannot be sovereign. Attempts to escape this dilemma by following either nominalism or Descartes lead to several grievous errors"

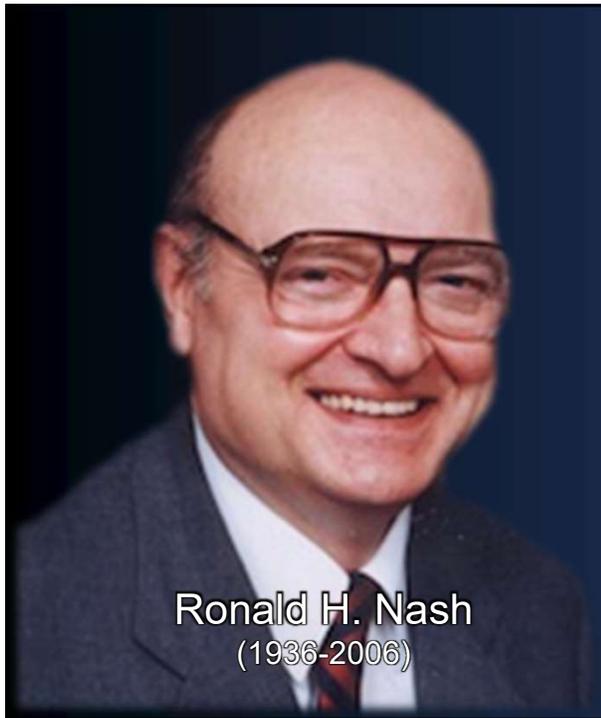
Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)



Aquinas's attempt to escape the dilemma by equating God with His nature is unsatisfactory also because it entails conclusions that conflict with other important tenets of Christian theism."

Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)

[Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 95. The work by Plantinga is *Does God Have a Nature?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980)]



Ronald H. Nash
(1936-2006)

"The acceptance of Aquinas's suggestion that God is identical with His properties carries a high price tag. It leads to the odd suggestion that the biblical teaching that God is characterized by a variety of distinct properties is wrong. It also appears to deny the personhood of God."

[Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God: An Exposition of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 94-95]

Quodlibetal Blog
Musings from Anywhere by Dr. Richard G. Howe

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Feb 22

Discussing Aquinas by quodlibetalblog

I recently had a thoughtful young man ask me a question about God's simplicity (the doctrine that says that God is not composed of any parts—metaphysical or otherwise), particularly in regard to God being able to freely create or freely not create. This entry, *mutatis mutandis*, is the heart of my admittedly too brief and undeveloped response to him.

I recently participated in a panel discussion on Aquinas's doctrine of divine simplicity at the Evangelical Philosophical Society's joint session with the American Academy of Religion in Denver, CO with Brian Huffling, Stephen Davis and William Lane Craig. You can watch the video on my YouTube channel here. My paper is available here. (My

Pages

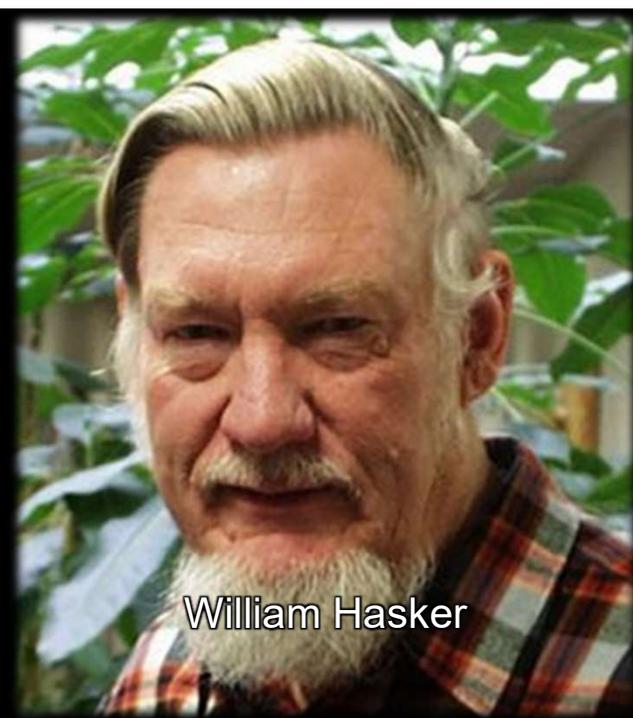
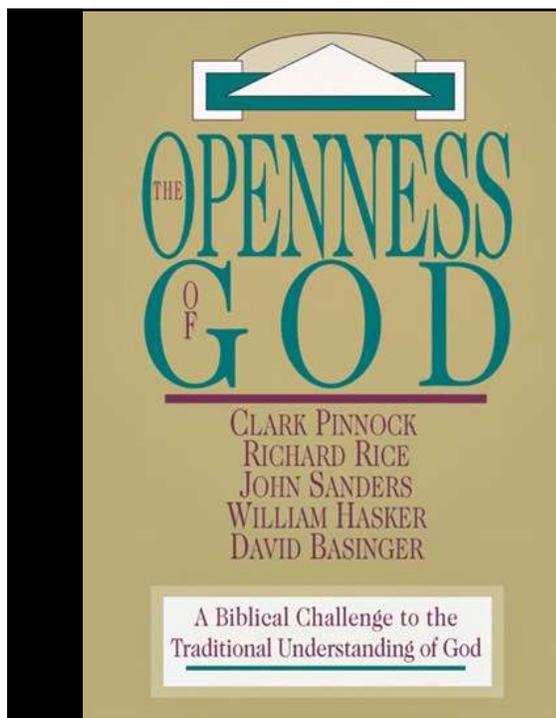
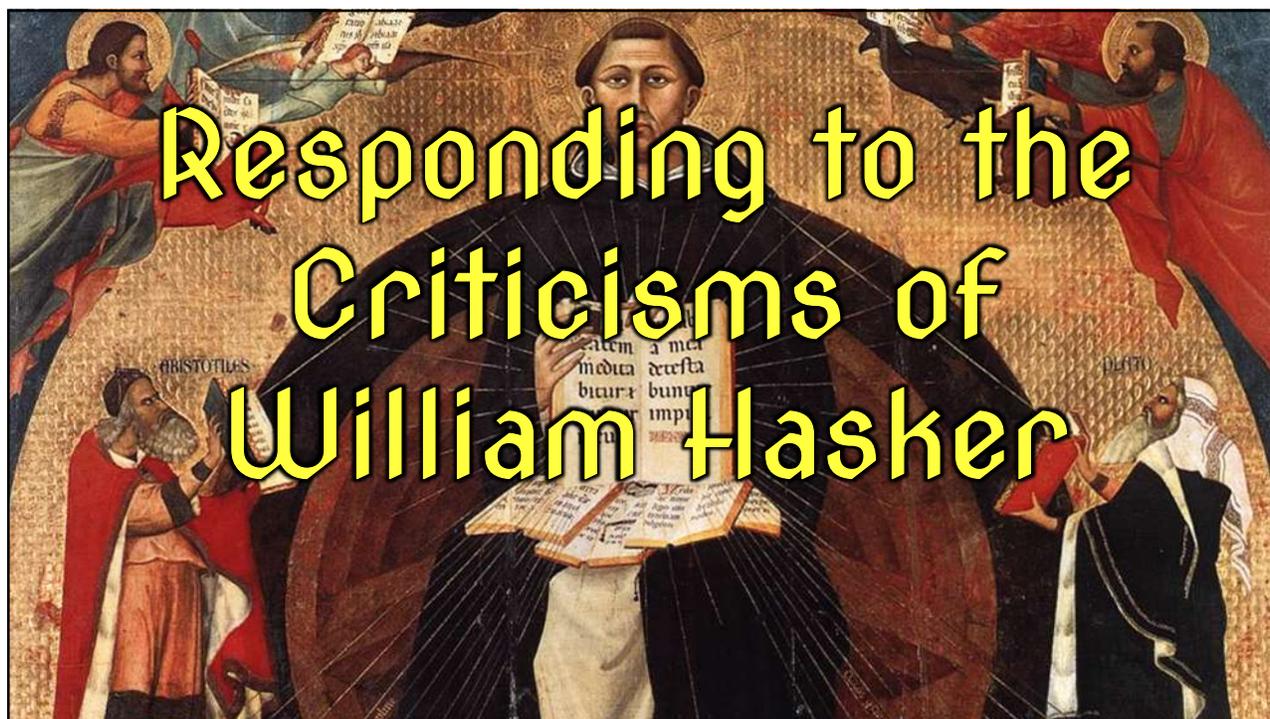
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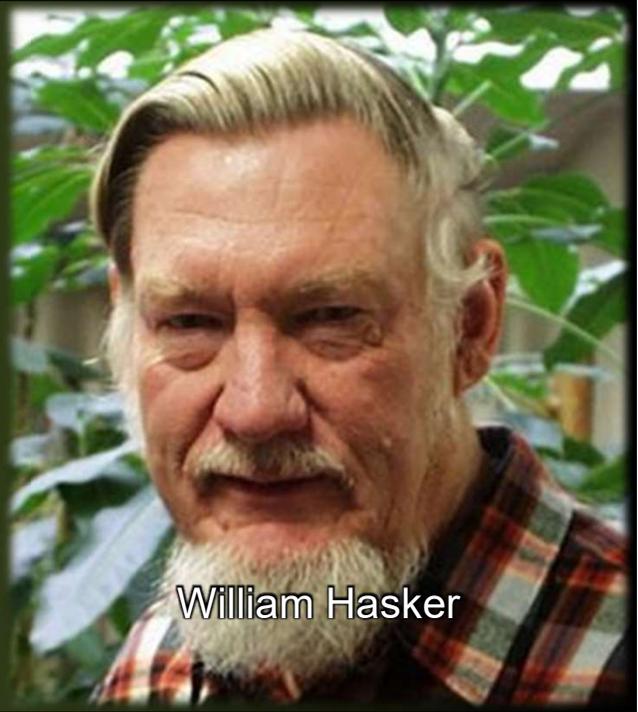
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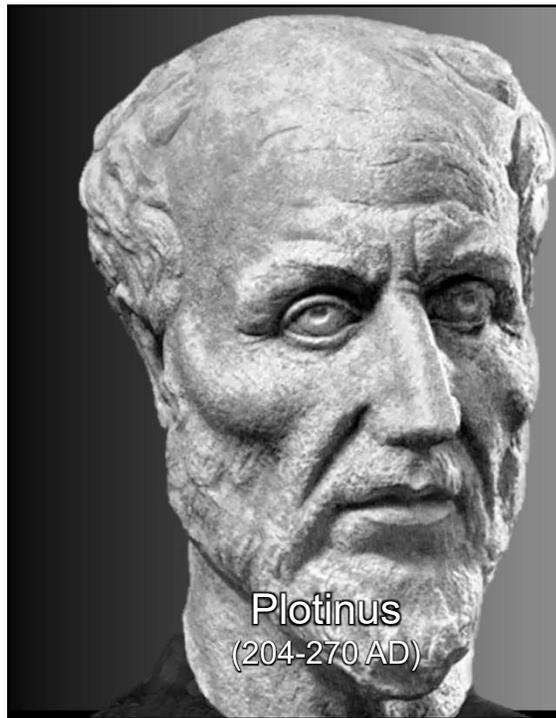


William Hasker

"The philosophy of neo-Platonism, as seen in *Plotinus* and later on in *Pseudo-Dionysius*, was a powerful molding force in ancient and medieval theology.



William Hasker

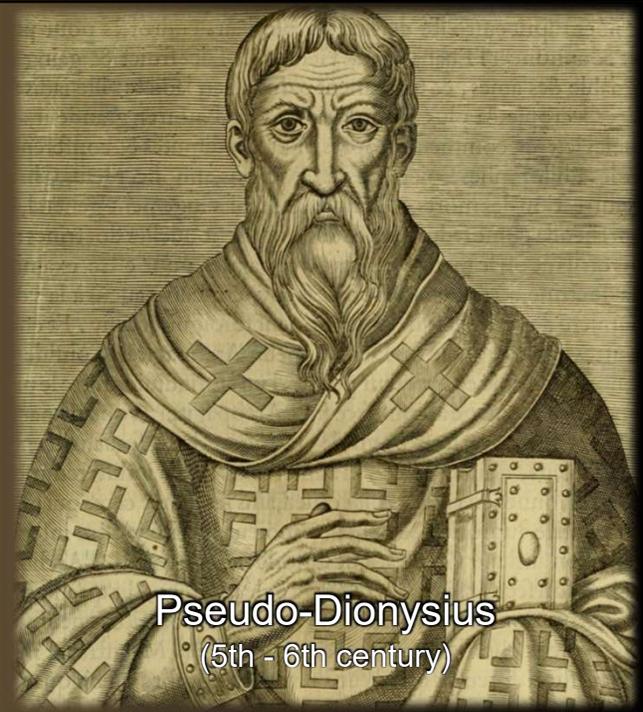


Plotinus
(204-270 AD)

- ❖ author of *Enneads* (from the Greek for nine), organized by his disciple Porphyry into six groups of nine treatises
- ❖ regarded as the founder of Neo-Platonism
- ❖ "... initiated a new phase in the development of the Platonic tradition ..."
- ❖ noted for his doctrines of "the one" and "emanation"

*[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plotinus/>, accessed 09/01/22]

- ❖ author of *Divine Names*, *Mystical Theology*, *Celestial Hierarchy*, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, and more
- ❖ originally identified as Dionysius the Areopagite, the disciple of Paul in Acts 17:34
- ❖ embodied the ideas of the Neo-Platonist philosopher Proclus (410-485)
- ❖ major influence on Aquinas both by example and counter-example



Pseudo-Dionysius
(5th - 6th century)

FRAN O'ROURKE

PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS

AND THE

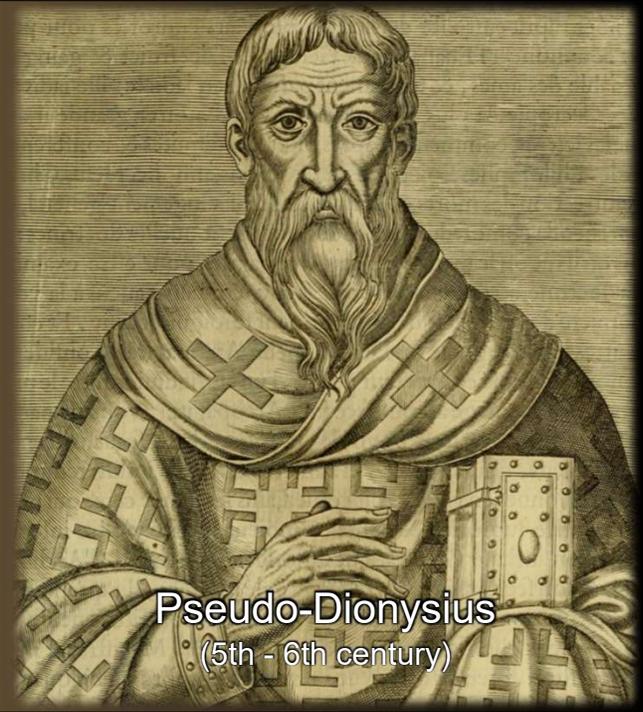
METAPHYSICS

OF

AQUINAS

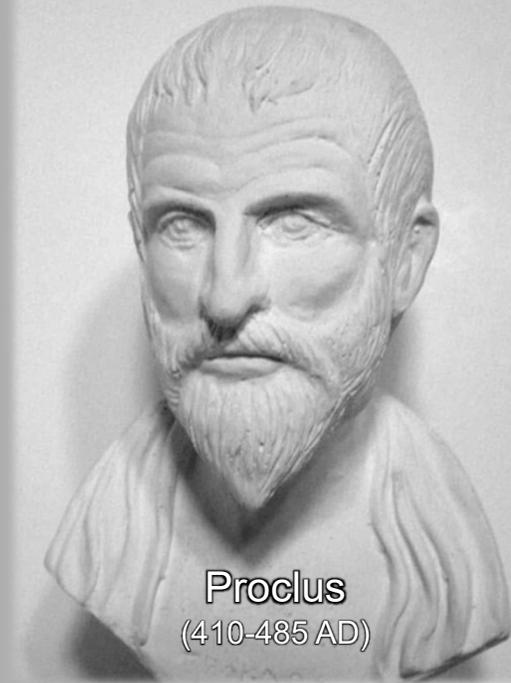


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Pseudo-Dionysius
(5th - 6th century)

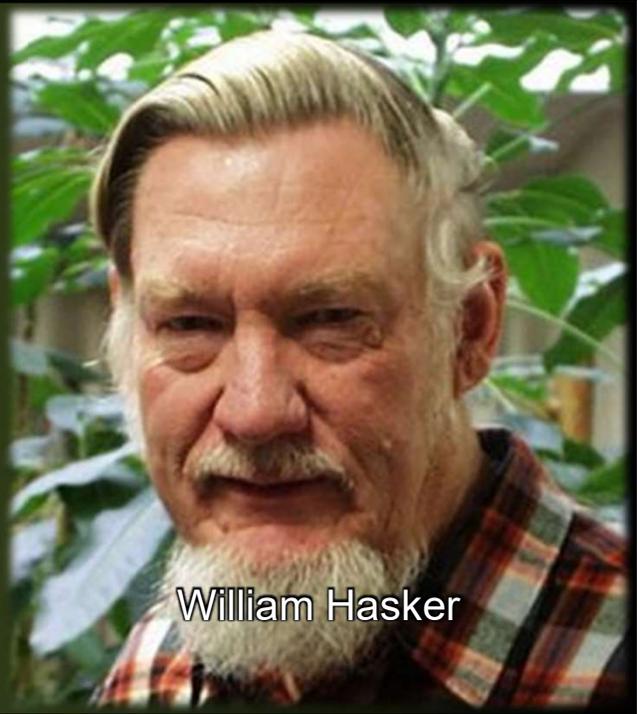
- ❖ wrote commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus*, *Republic*, *Parmenides*, *Cratylus*, and more
- ❖ possessed "a wide knowledge concerning the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle and of his Neo-Platonic predecessors"*
- ❖ had the reputation "of being the greatest Scholastic of Antiquity"*



Proclus
(410-485 AD)

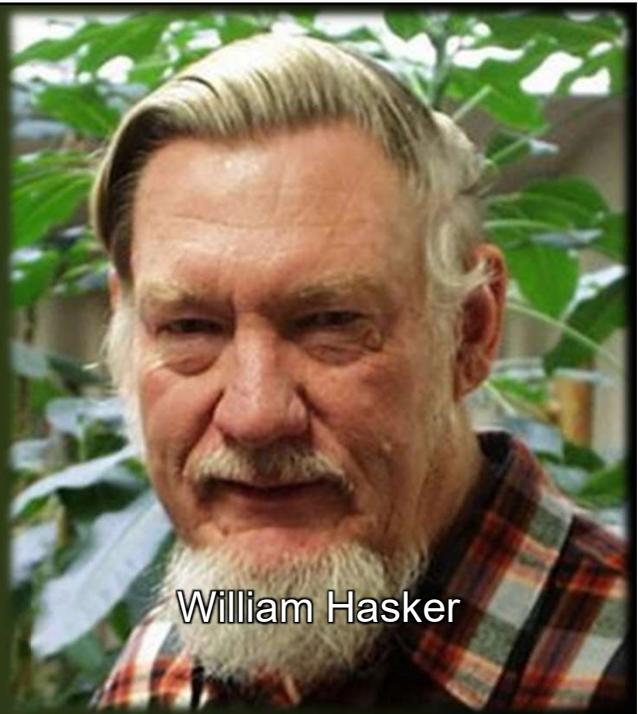
*[Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* Bk 1, Pt. V, XLVI (Garden City: Image Books), 478]

"Today, however, neo-Platonism really does not exist as a living philosophy, though it continues to have considerable indirect influence through the theological tradition."



William Hasker

"The doctrine of divine simplicity, so crucial to the classical understanding of God, has been abandoned by a strong majority of Christian philosophers, though it still has a small band of defenders."

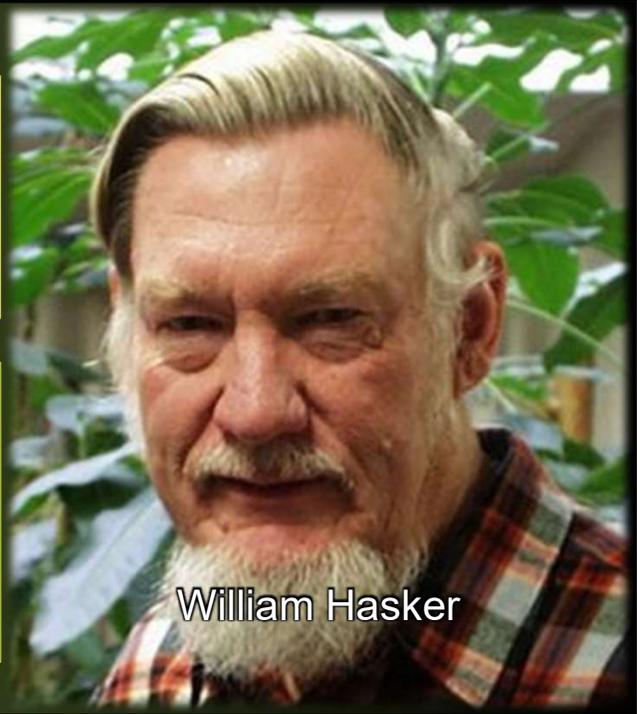


William Hasker

[William Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective" in *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 127]

*"Today, however, **neo-Platonism really does not exist as a living philosophy ...**"*

*"The doctrine of divine simplicity ... **has been abandoned by a strong majority of Christian philosophers ...**"*



William Hasker