

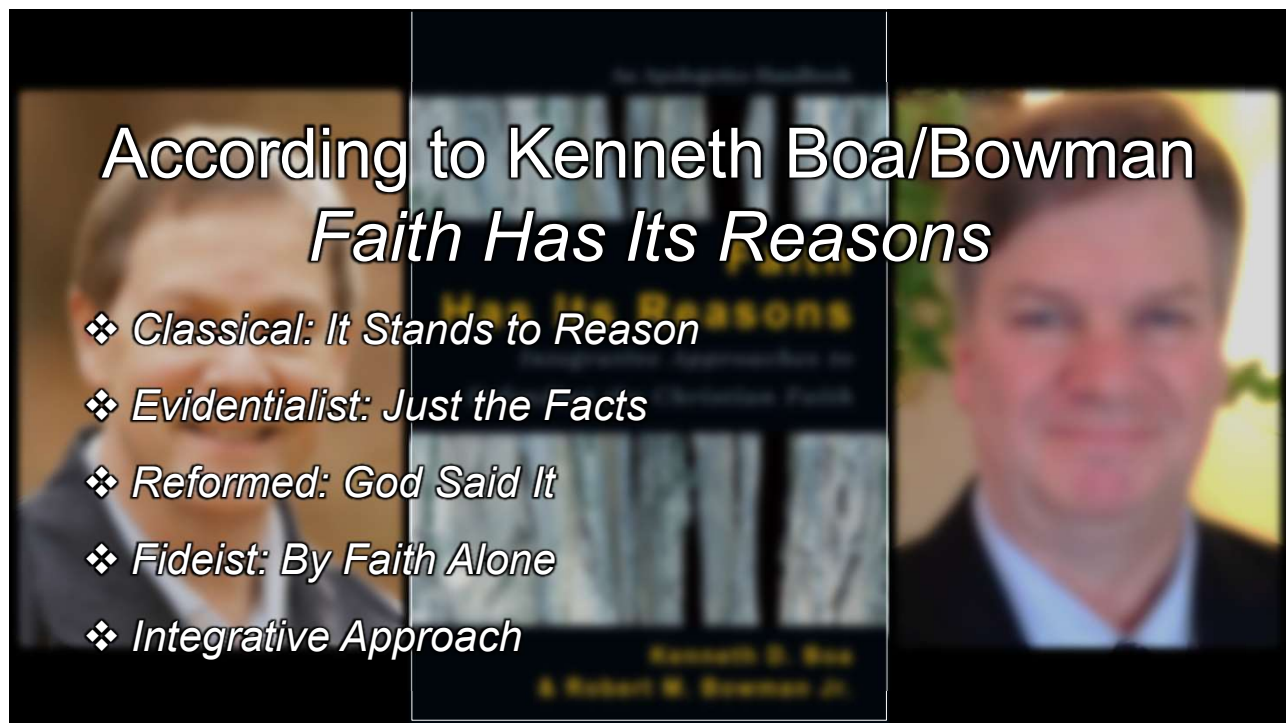
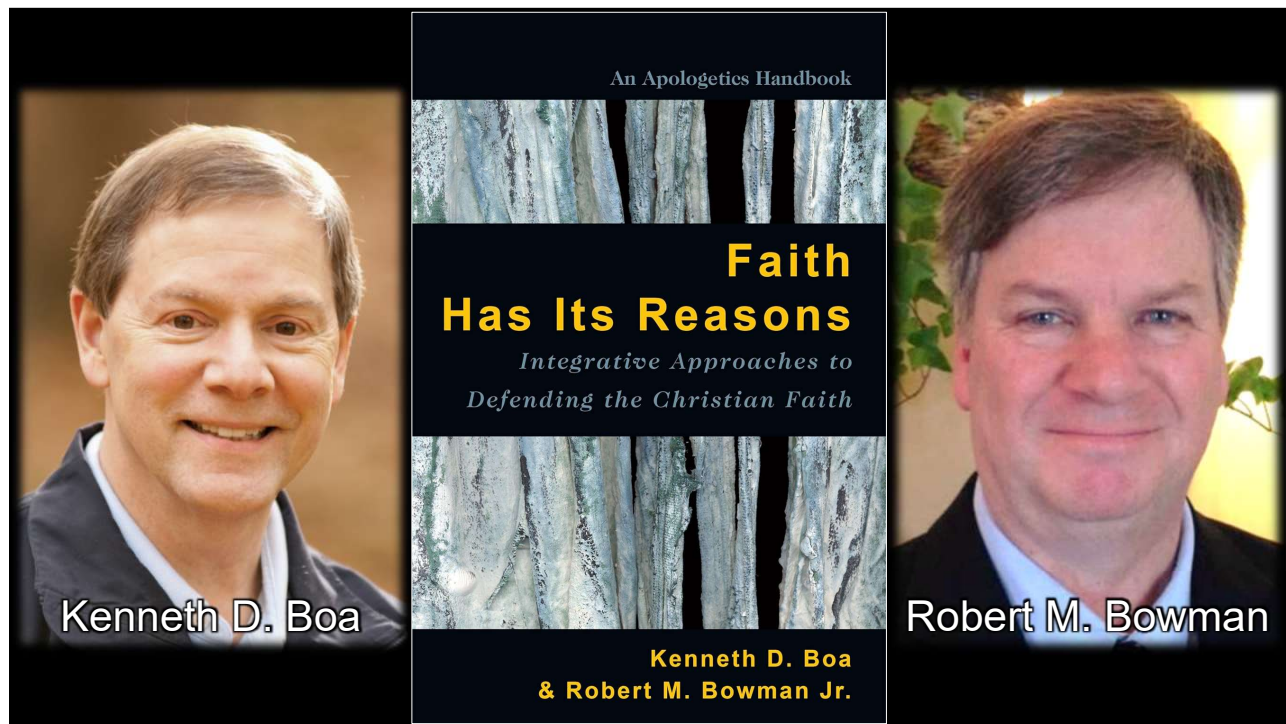
# Christian Apologetic Systems

❧ 05: Evidentialism ❧

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

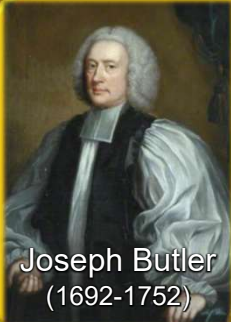
Provost

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Southern Evangelical Seminary  
Rock Hill, South Carolina, USA

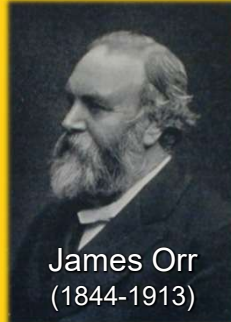


# According to Kenneth Boa/Bowman *Faith Has Its Reasons*

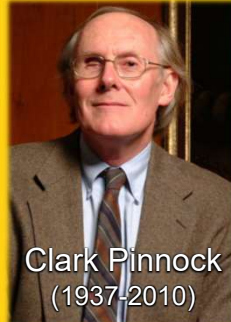
❖ *Evidentialist: Just the Facts*



Joseph Butler  
(1692-1752)



James Orr  
(1844-1913)



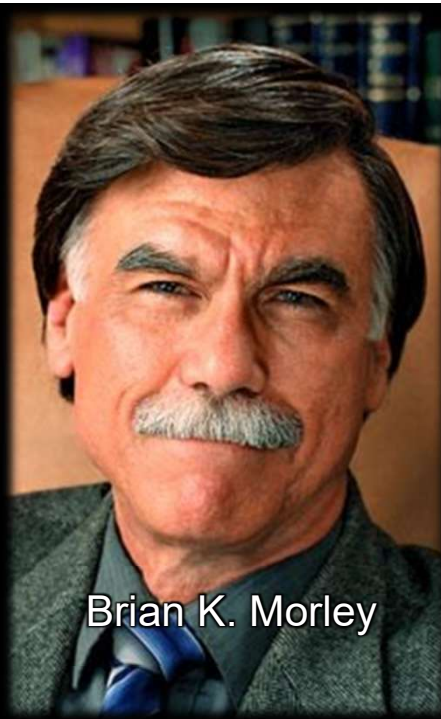
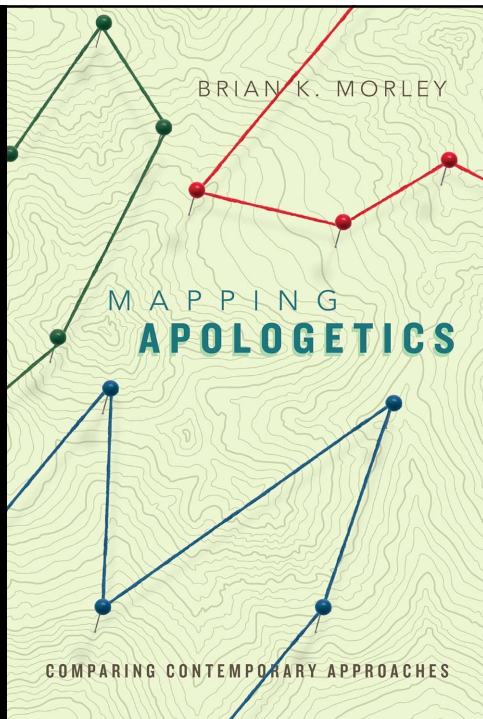
Clark Pinnock  
(1937-2010)



John Warwick  
Montgomery  
(1931-2024)



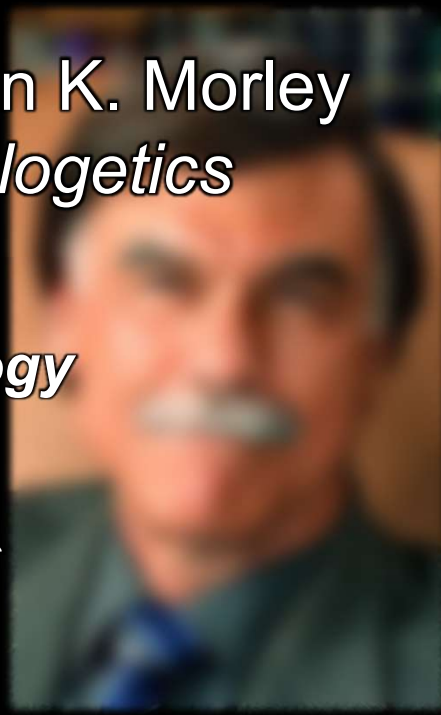
Richard Swinburne



Brian K. Morley

## According to Brian K. Morley *Mapping Apologetics*

- ❖ *Presuppositionalism*
- ❖ *Reformed Epistemology*
- ❖ *Combinationalism*
- ❖ *Classical Apologetics*
- ❖ *Evidentialism*



## According to Brian K. Morley *Mapping Apologetics*

- ❖ *Evidentialism*

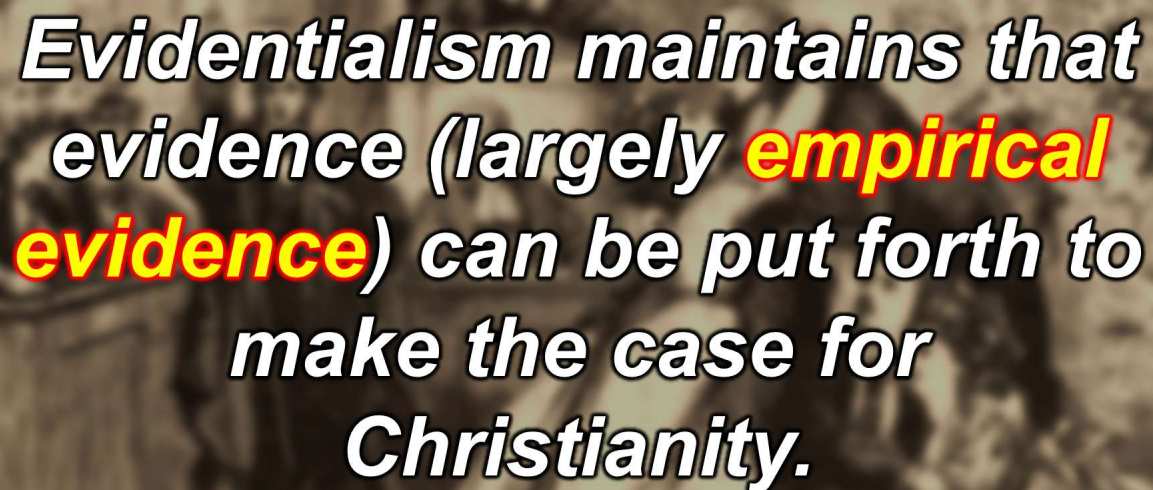


Gary Habermas

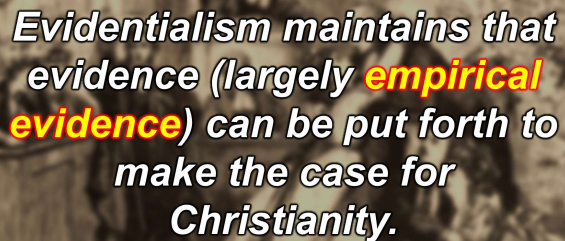
John Warwick Montgomery  
(1931-2024)



# Definition of Evidentialism



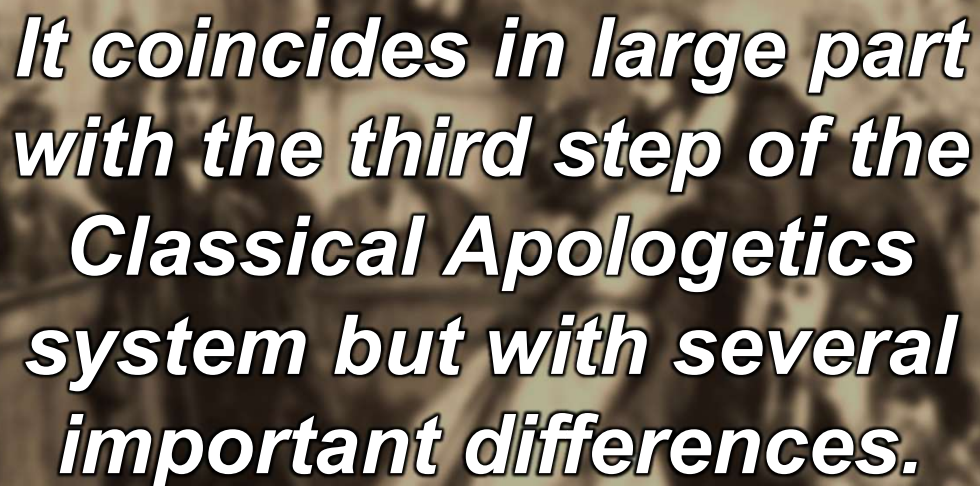
*Evidentialism maintains that evidence (largely **empirical evidence**) can be put forth to make the case for Christianity.*



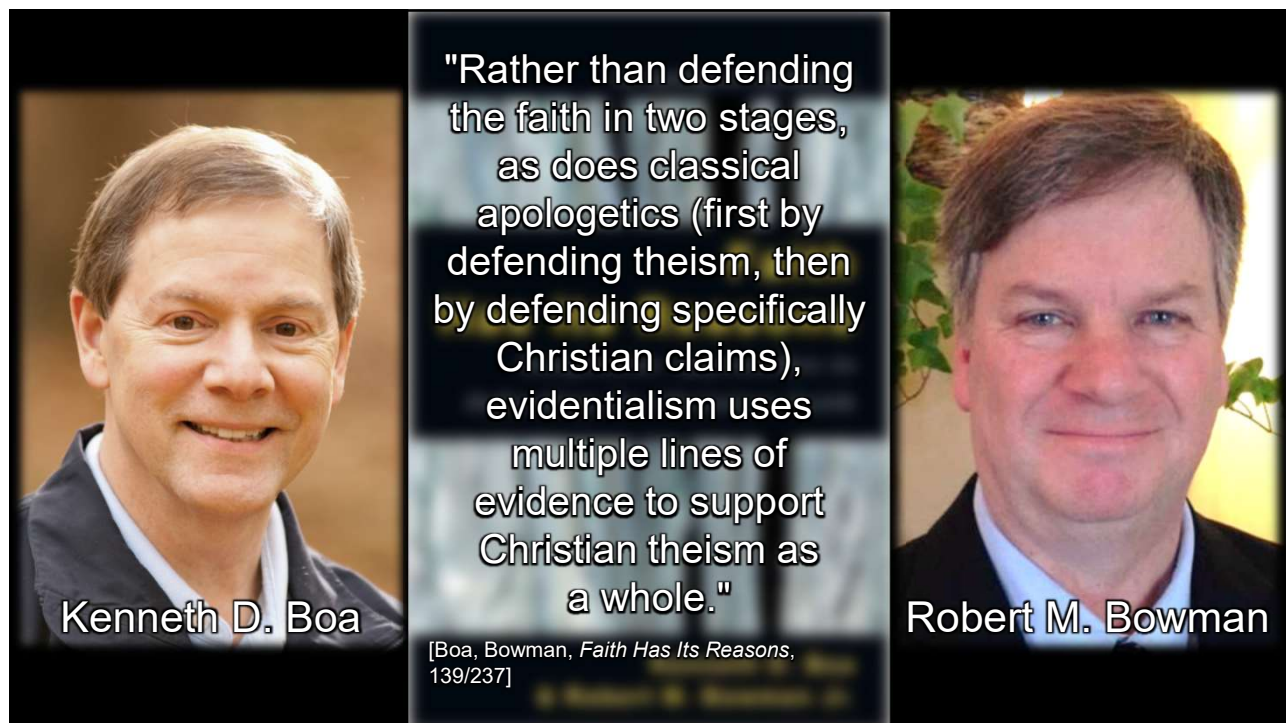
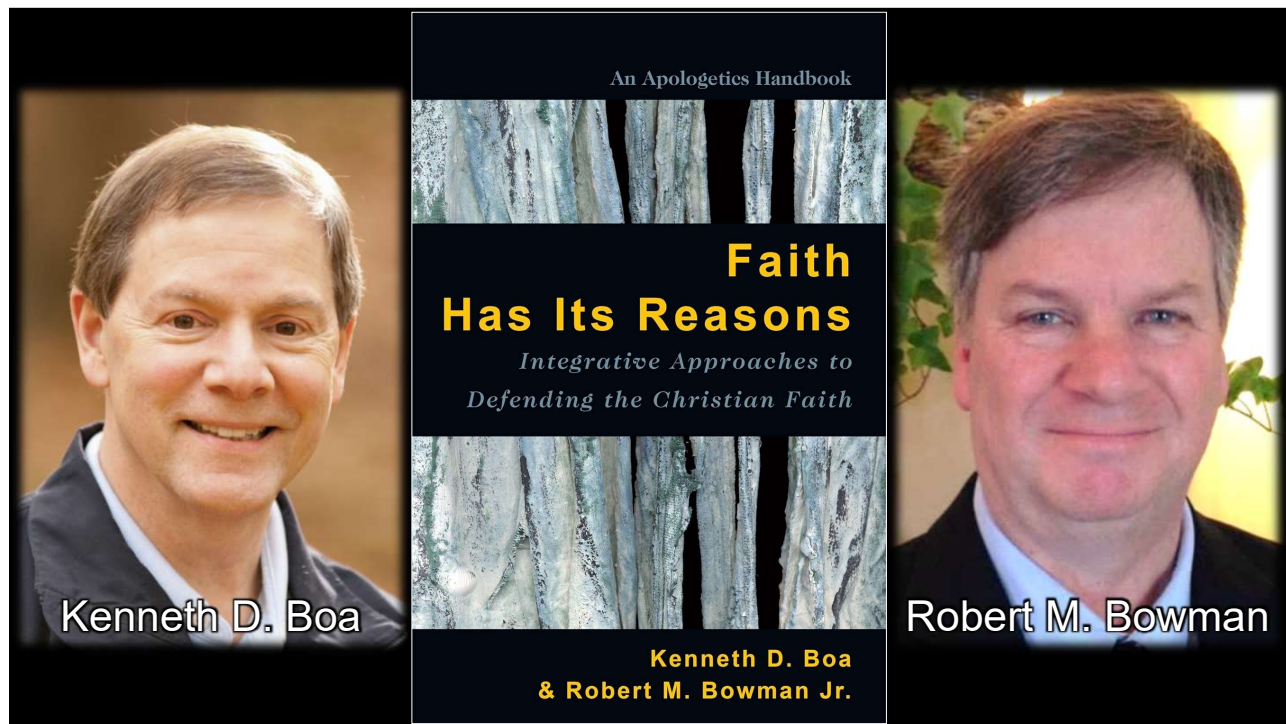
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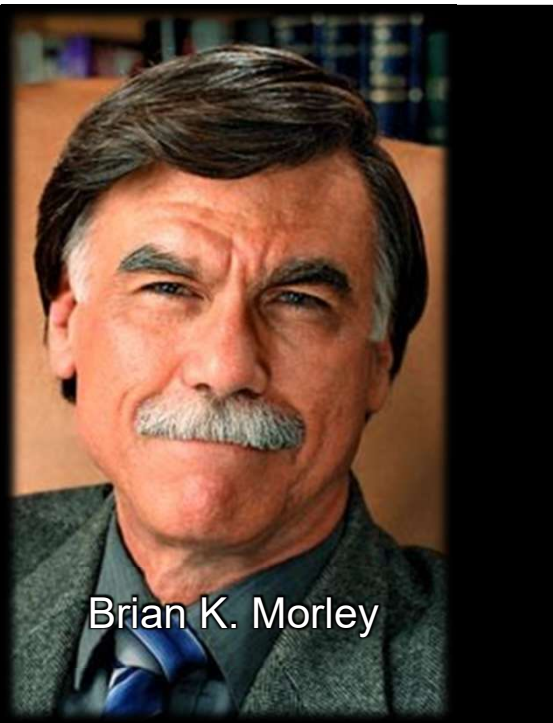
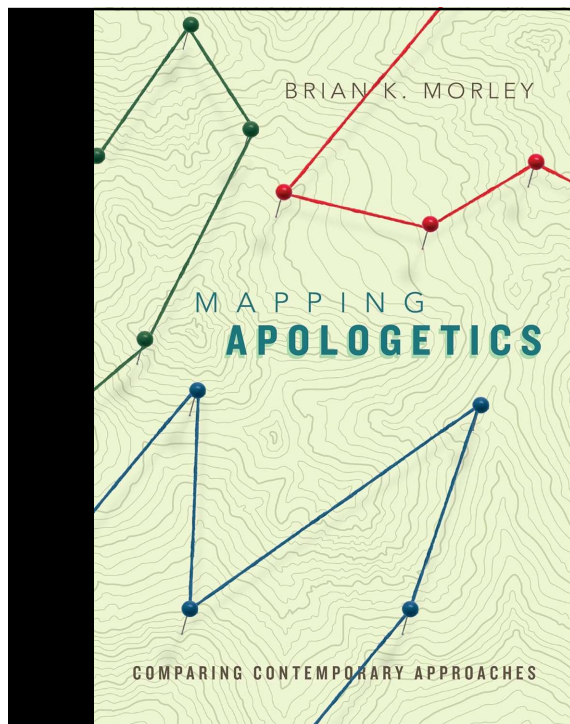
*Remember the difference between Classical Empiricism and Modern / Contemporary Empiricism.*

*Undoubtedly the empiricism they have in mind here is Modern / Contemporary Empiricism.*

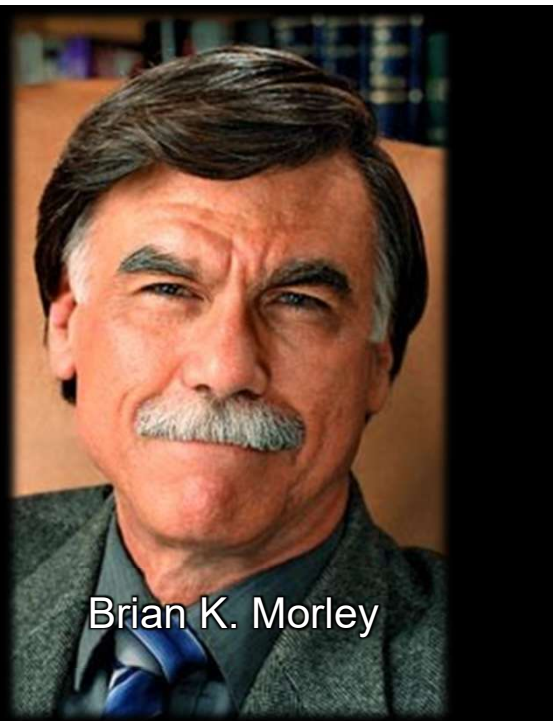
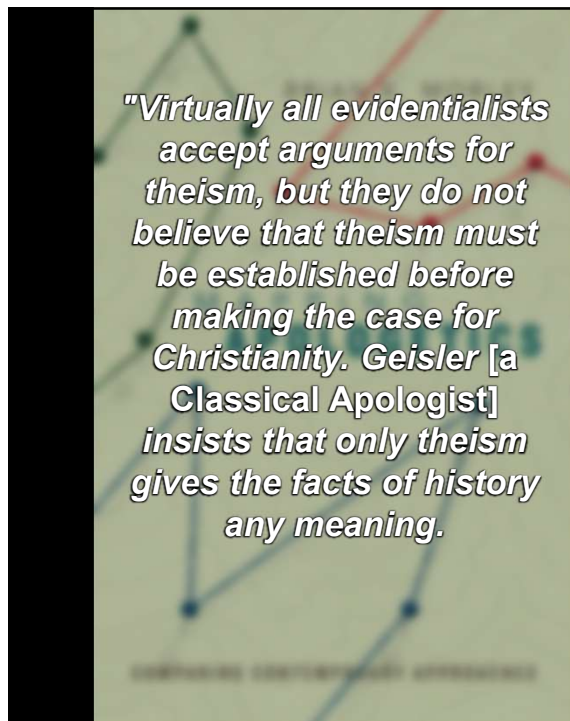


*It coincides in large part with the third step of the Classical Apologetics system but with several important differences.*





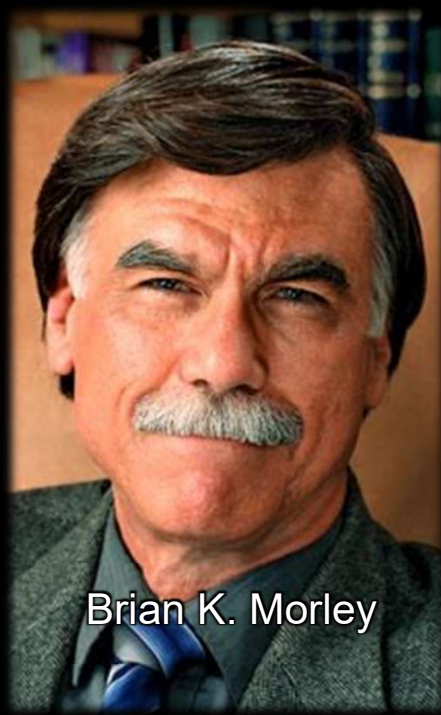
Brian K. Morley



Brian K. Morley

*"We have seen, however, that [William Lane] Craig [also a Classical Apologist] believes it is possible to make the case for Christianity without first making the case for theism, though he believes the case is stronger overall if theism is established first."*

[Brian K. Morley, *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 285)]

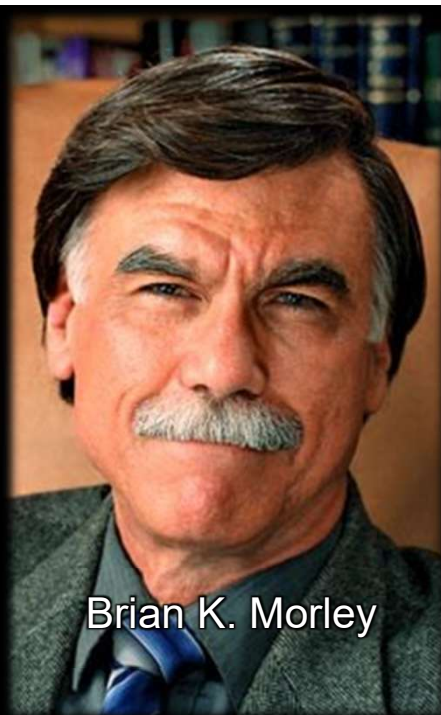


Brian K. Morley

*"Virtually all evidentialists accept arguments for theism, but they do not believe that theism must be established before making the case for Christianity. Geisler [a Classical Apologist] insists that only theism gives the facts of history any meaning."*

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[Brian K. Morley, *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 285)]



Brian K. Morley

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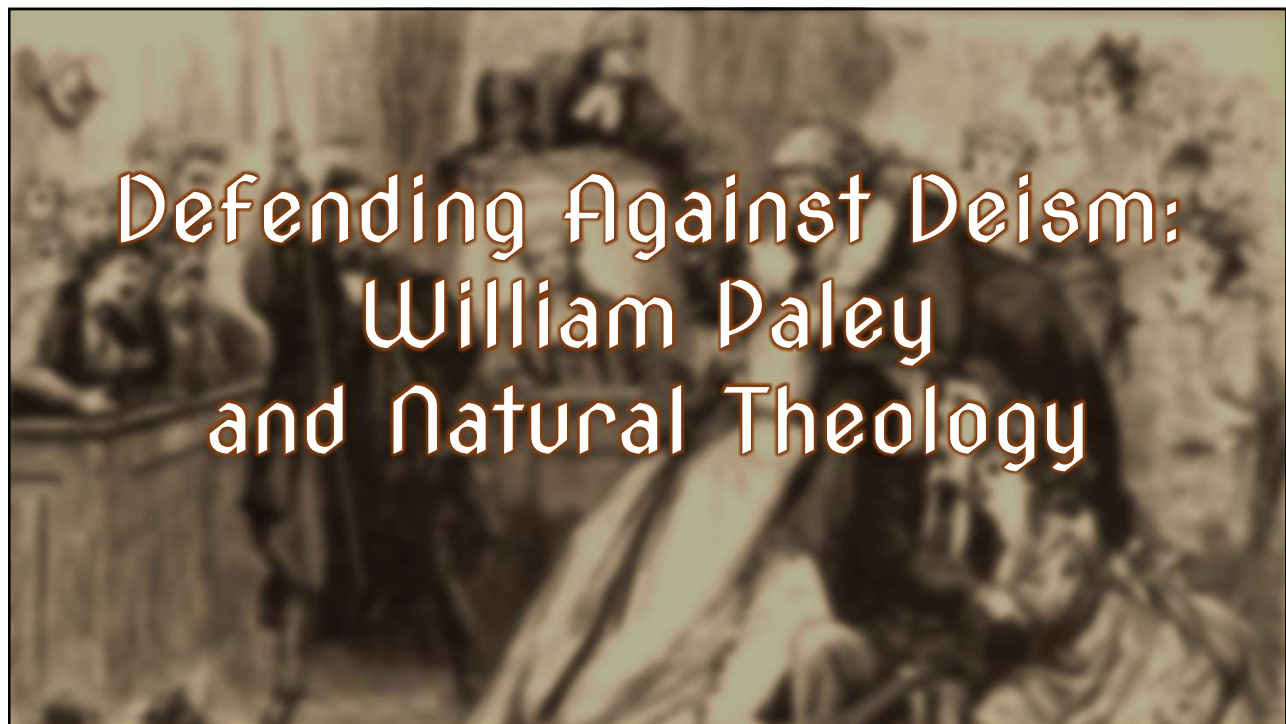
[Brian K. Morley, *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 285)]

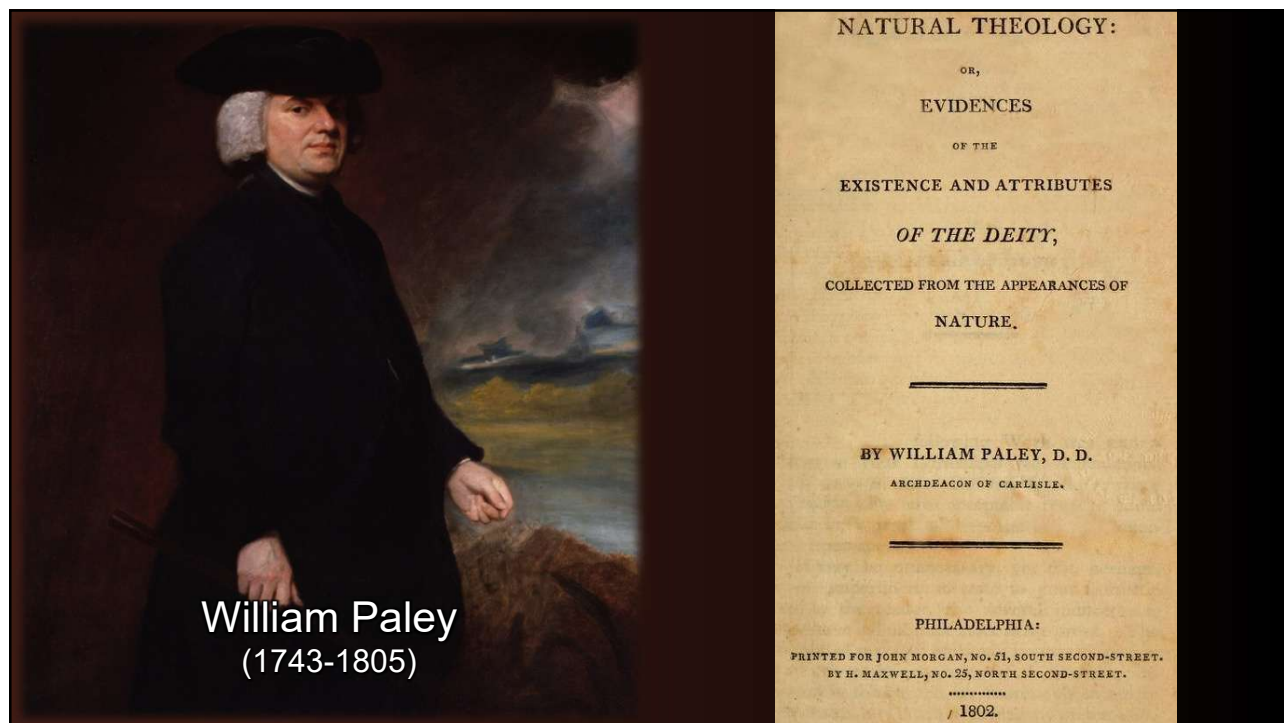
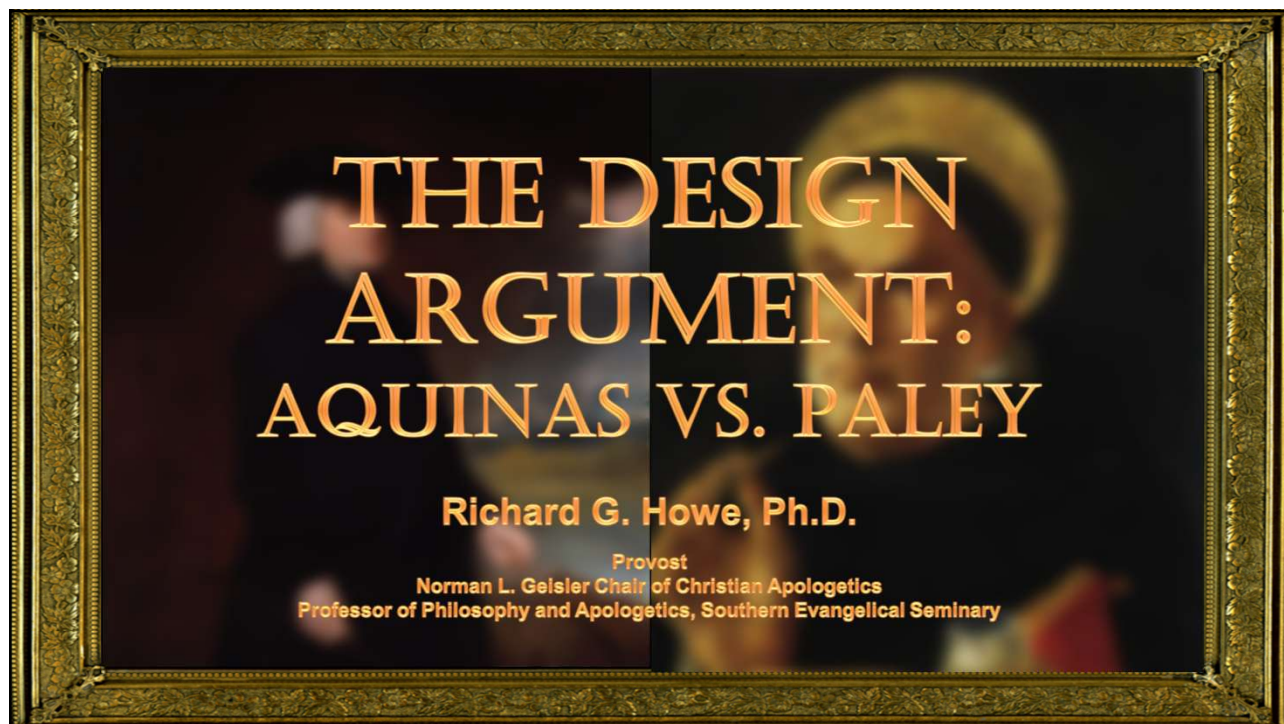
*Strictly speaking, Geisler says that without a worldview at all, the facts of history have no meaning.*

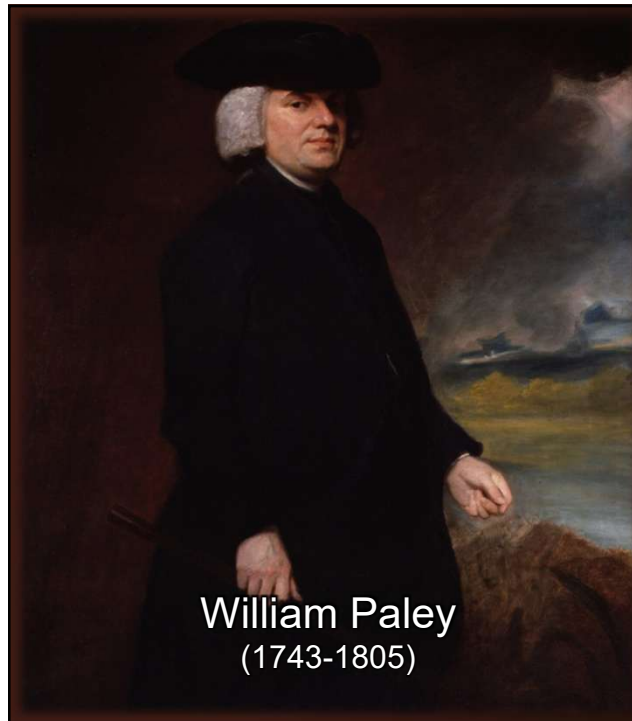
*But Geisler also says that different worldviews give the facts of history different meanings (instead of no meaning at all).*

*Thus, in summarizing Geisler, Morley should have characterized Geisler as saying "only theism gives the facts of history the TRUE meaning."*

# Historical Roots of Evidentialist Apologetics







A portrait of William Paley, an English theologian, wearing a black coat and a black cap with a white wig. He is standing against a dark, cloudy background.

William Paley  
(1743-1805)

- ❖ English theologian
- ❖ Born in Peterborough
- ❖ Degree from Christ College, Cambridge
- ❖ Elected fellow of Christ College, 1766
- ❖ Lectured on metaphysics, morals, and the Greek New Testament
- ❖ Ordained a priest in 1767
- ❖ Became chancellor of Carlisle, 1789-1792
- ❖ Active opponent of the slave-trade

***Paley bequeathed to subsequent generations of both protagonists and antagonists his now famous "watchmaker" argument.***

*In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever: nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer.*



*But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that, for any thing I knew, the watch might have always been there.*



***Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first?***



***For this reason, and for no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose,***



*e. g. that they are so formed  
and adjusted as to produce  
motion, and that motion so  
regulated as to point out the  
hour of the day; ...*



***Paley-like design arguments  
have achieved quite a high  
level of scientific  
sophistication in recent  
decades.***


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## A Biochemical Watch Found in a Cellular Heath

By Dr. Fazale Rana

January 11, 2008



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## Winding Up Paley's Watch, One More Time

By Dr. Fazale Rana

December 11, 2008

### New Discovery adds to Evidence for Biochemical Design

When I was growing up, it was still common for people to have mechanical watches that had to be wound up periodically. Battery-powered, digital watches were a rare sight.

This week, I would like to return to the past and revisit an [earlier article](#) I wrote on biochemical evidence for intelligent design. This evidence centers on the discovery of a protein complex found in cyanobacteria that functions, literally, as a mechanical watch in both a structural and operational sense.

This watch regulates metabolic processes such as nitrogen fixation and photosynthesis as well as overall gene expression within the cyanobacterial cell in

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**Biochemical Turing Machines "Reboot" the Watchmaker Argument**

By Dr. Fazale Rana May 1, 2012



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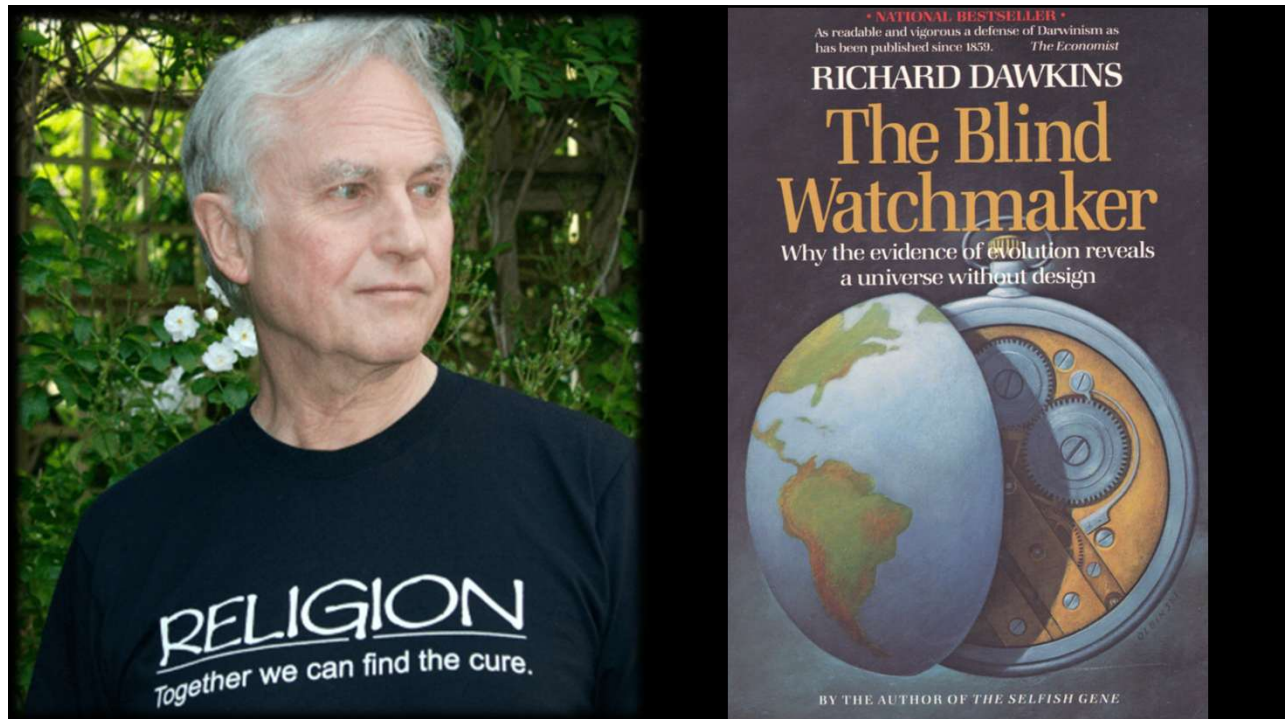
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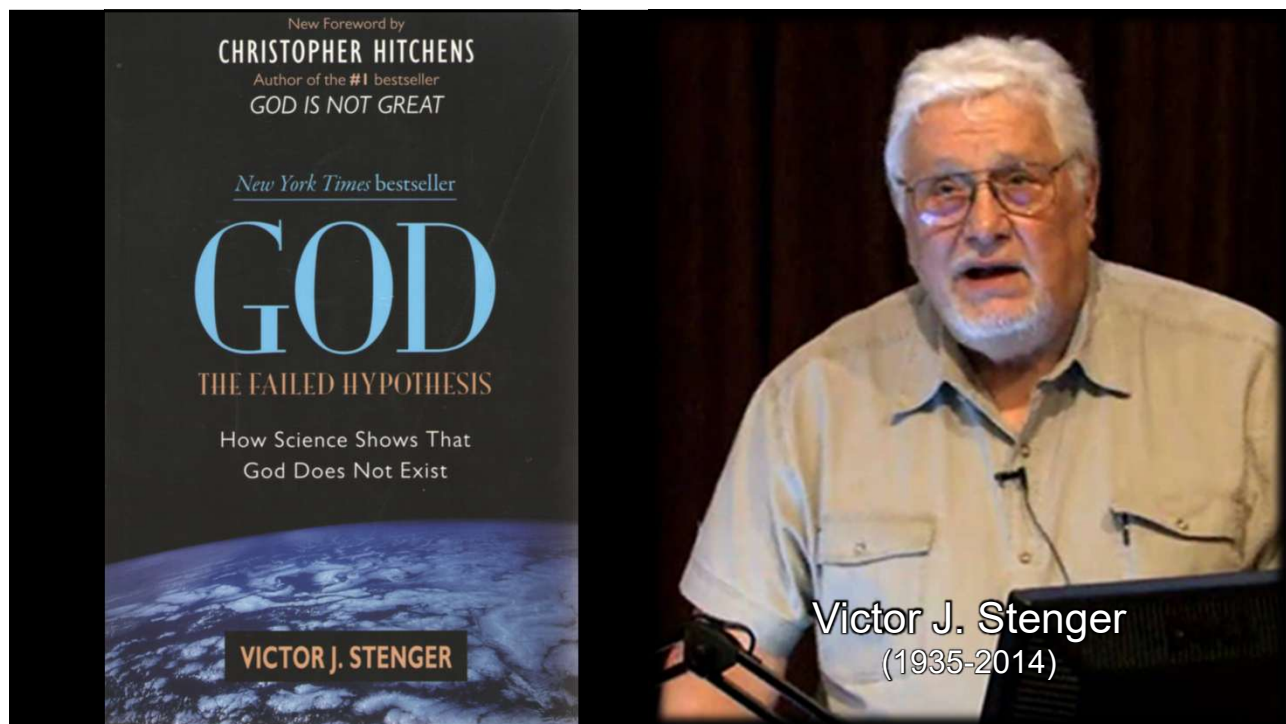
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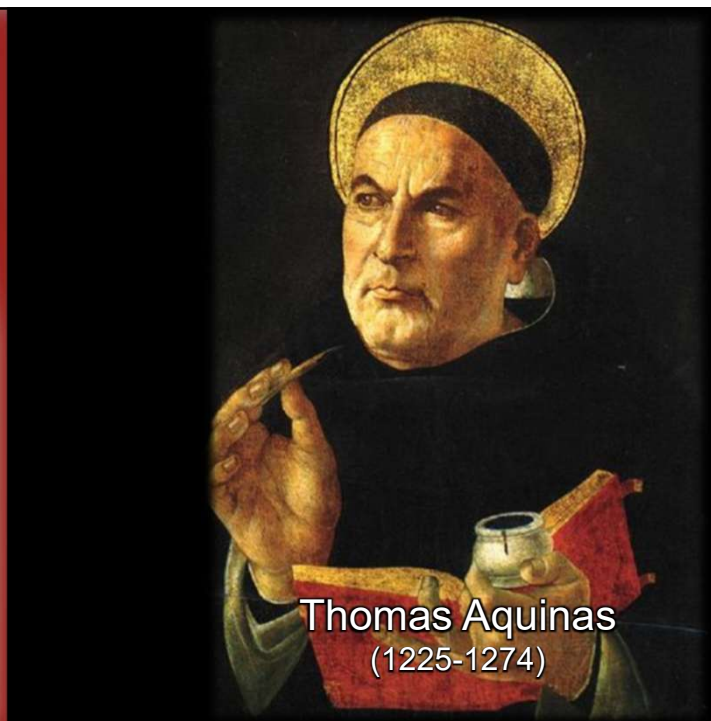
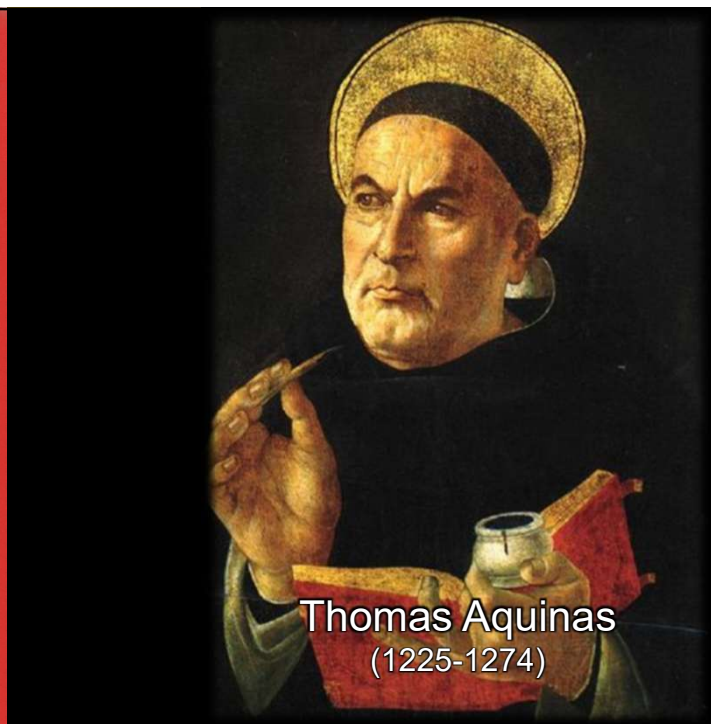
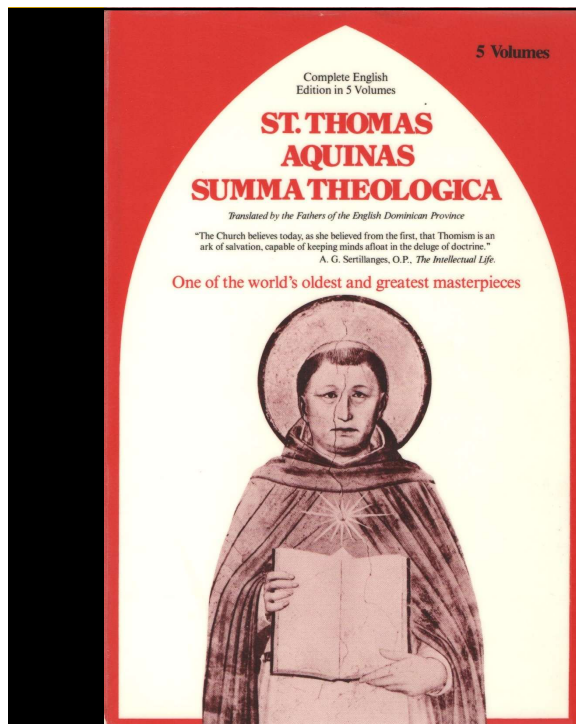
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***The surge of scientific design arguments has not gone unnoticed by the critics.***

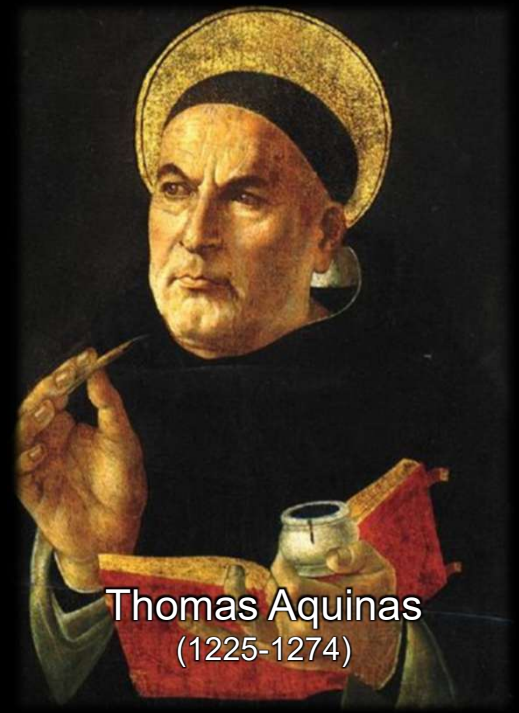




***Some maintain that Paley's design argument was anticipated by Thomas Aquinas in the fifth of his famous "Five Ways"—his five concise demonstrations for the existence of God found in his magnum opus Summa Theologiae.***

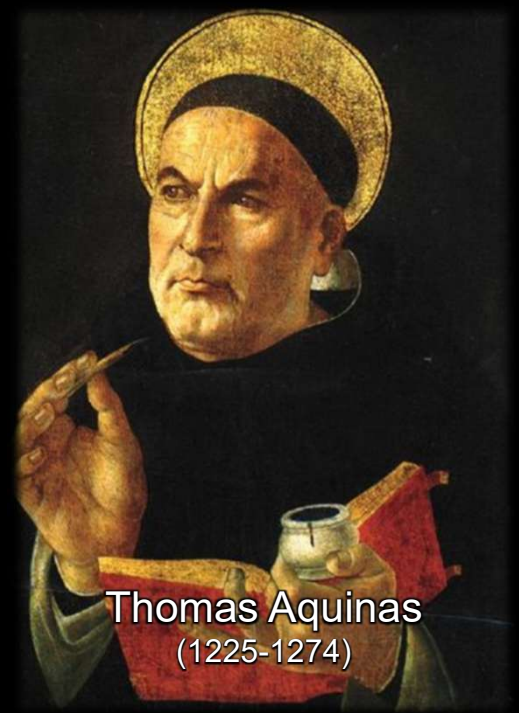


*"We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result."*



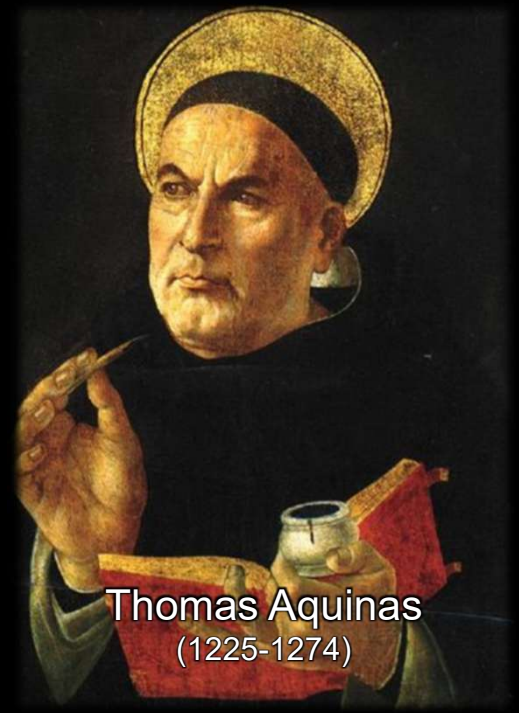
Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

*"Hence it is plain that not fortuitously [non a casu] but designedly [ex intentione], do they achieve their end."*



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

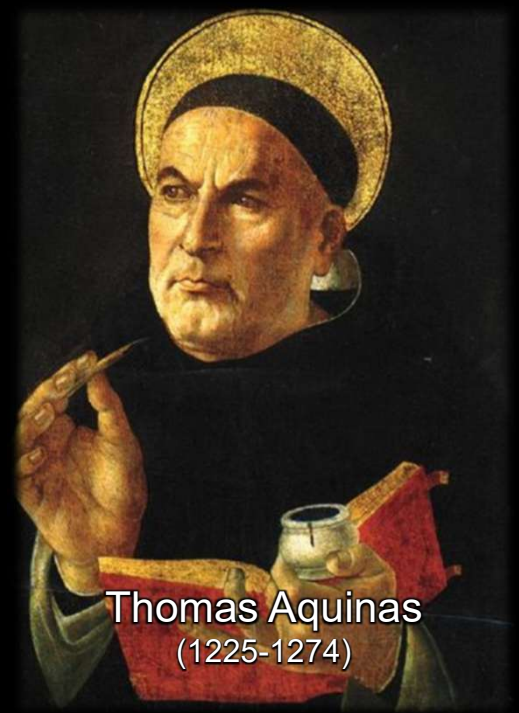
*"Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move toward an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer."*



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

*"Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God."*

[*Summa Theologica*, I, 2, iii]



Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)

***This equating (or at least connecting) Paley's and Aquinas's arguments is not uncommon in the philosophical and apologetical literature, even by Christians.***


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By Krista Bontrager May 1, 2012




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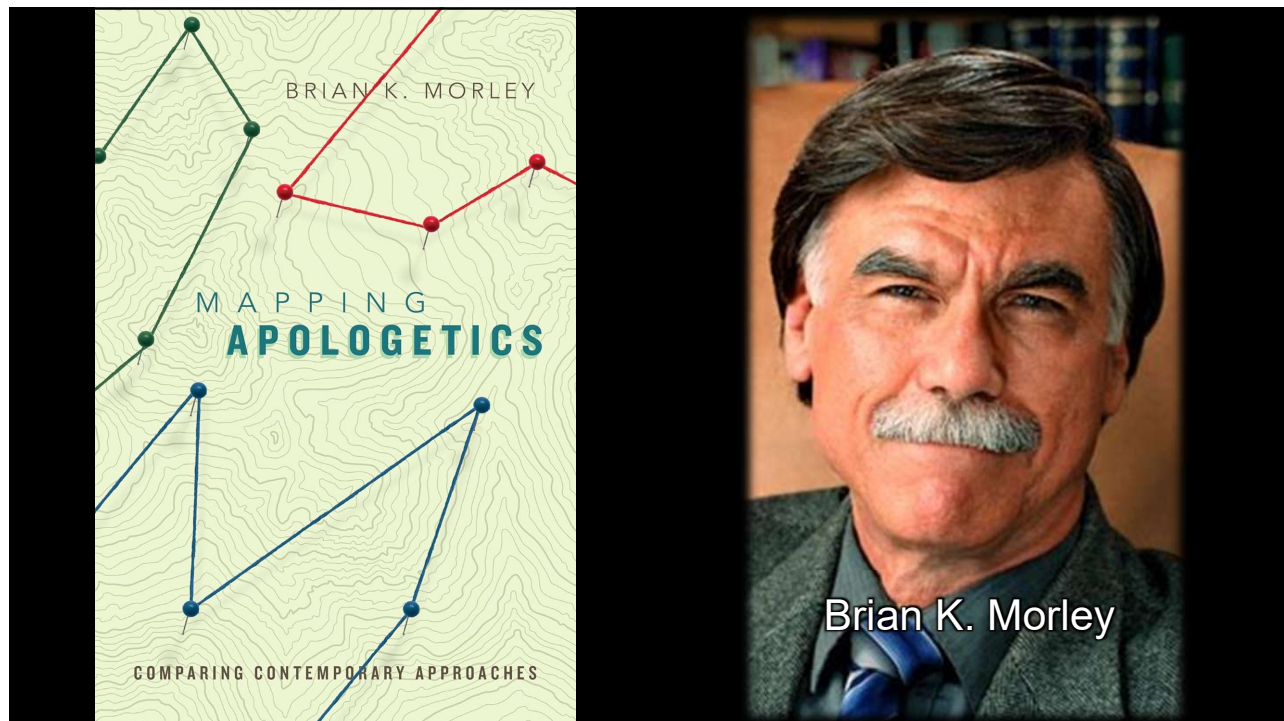
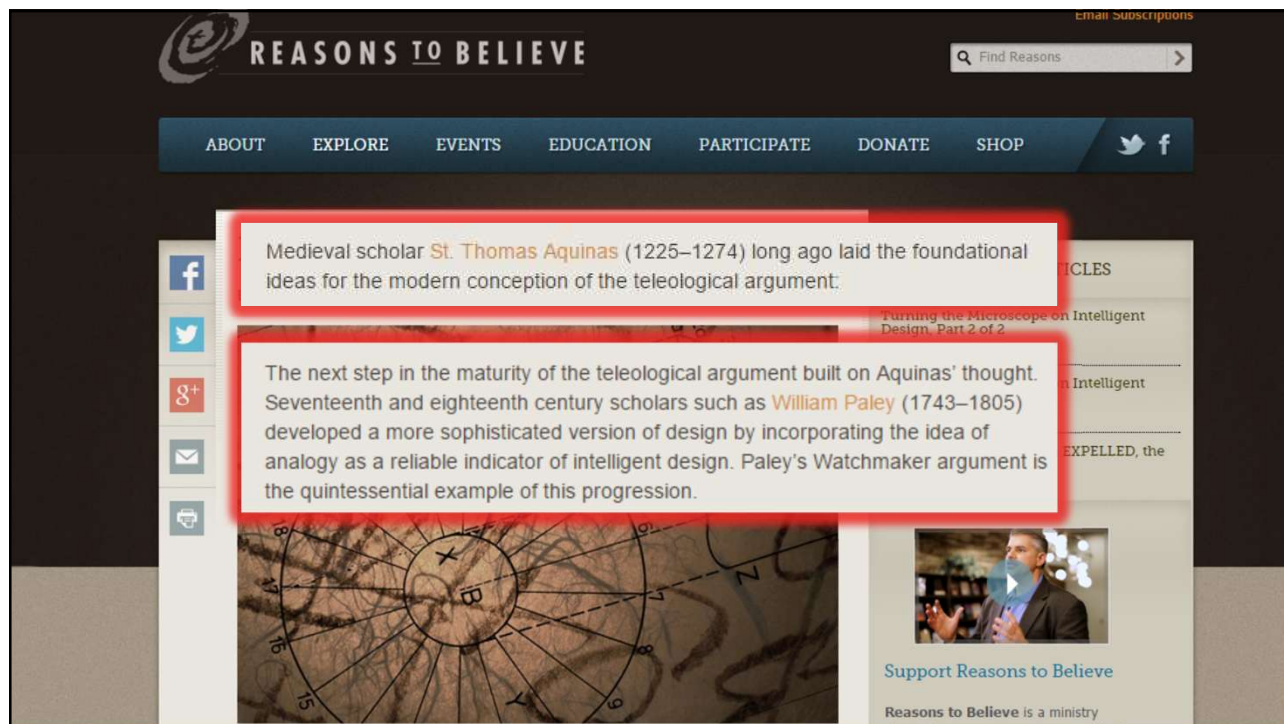
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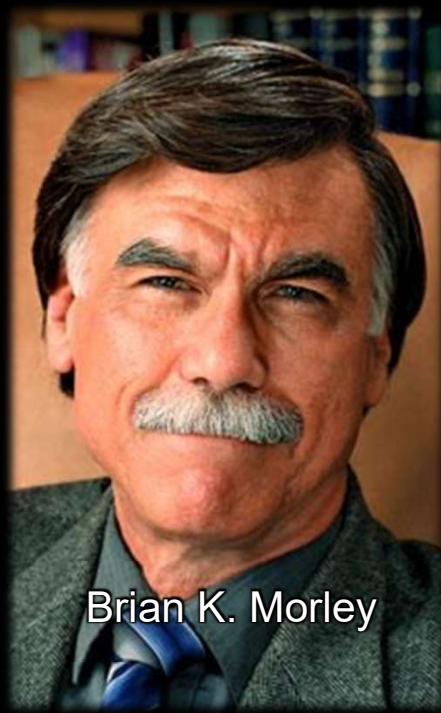
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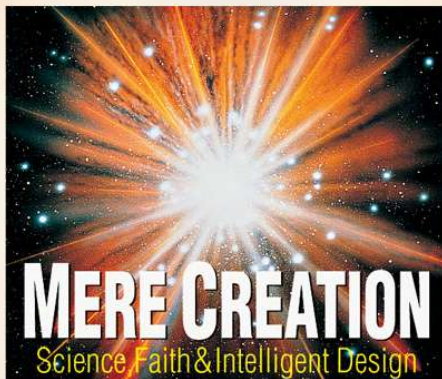


*"Recent discoveries in science have also heightened interest in a form of **the teleological argument suggested by Aquinas**. The inference from design to a designer focused on living things as the best examples of design until Darwin theorized that design was only apparent and was actually a product of natural forces."*

[Brian K. Morley, *Mapping Apologetics: Comparing Contemporary Approaches*. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 243)]

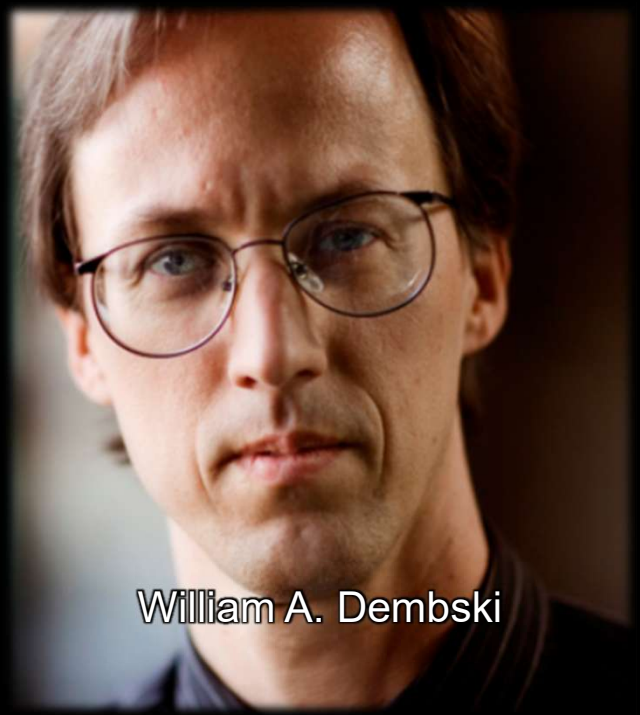


Brian K. Morley



*with contributions by*  
**Michael Behe, David Berlinski**  
**Phillip Johnson, Hugh Ross**  
**and others**

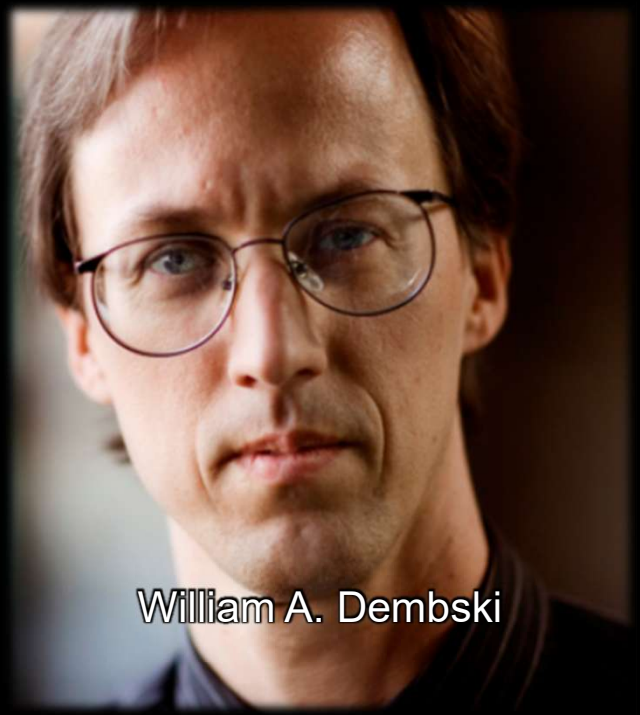
edited by  
 William A. Dembski



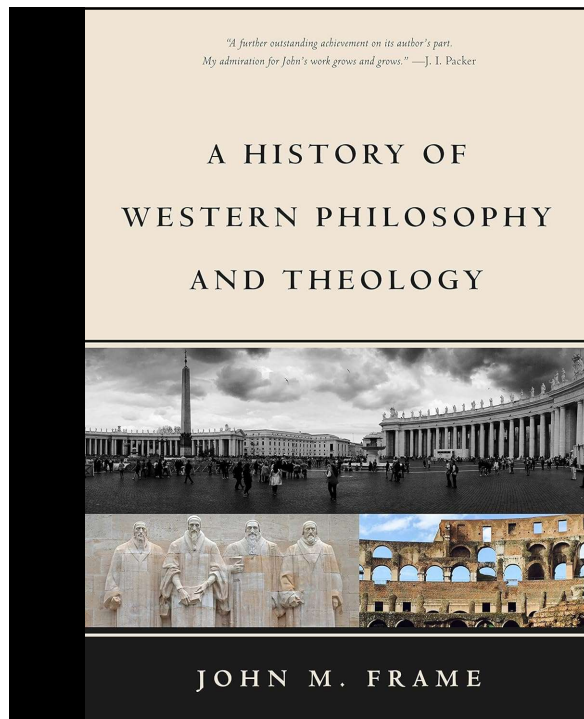
William A. Dembski

"From Church Fathers like Gregory of Nazianzus ... to medieval scholars like ... **Thomas Aquinas** ... to Reformed thinkers like ... Charles Hodge, we find theologians making design arguments. ... The most famous ... is **William Paley's watchmaker** argument."

["Introduction: Mere Creation" in *Mere Creation: Science, Faith and Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1998), 16]



William A. Dembski



John M. Frame

"The fifth way, the *teleological*, is an argument that has remained popular since Aquinas's time, associated with apologists such as William Paley and F. R. Tennant. The contemporary 'intelligent design' movement of Phillip Johnson, William Dembski, Michael Behe, and others seeks to show that this argument survives the challenge of evolutionary theory."

[*A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg: P &R, 2015), 149]



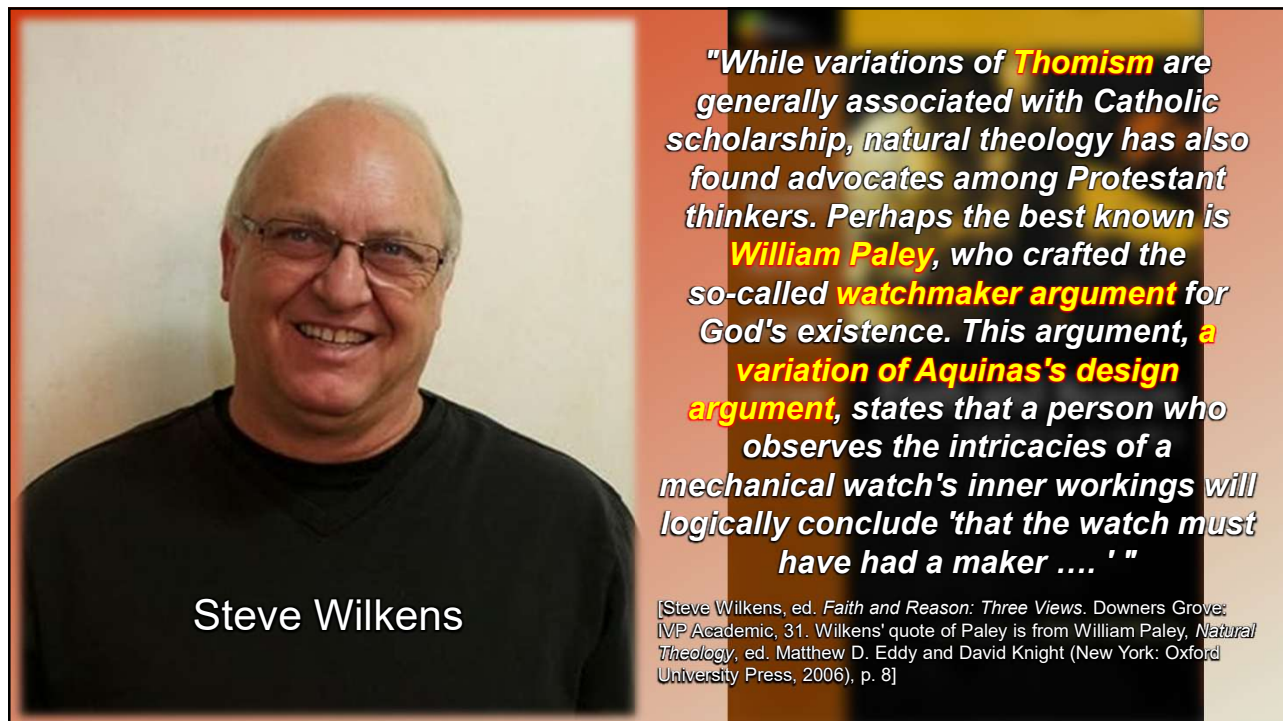
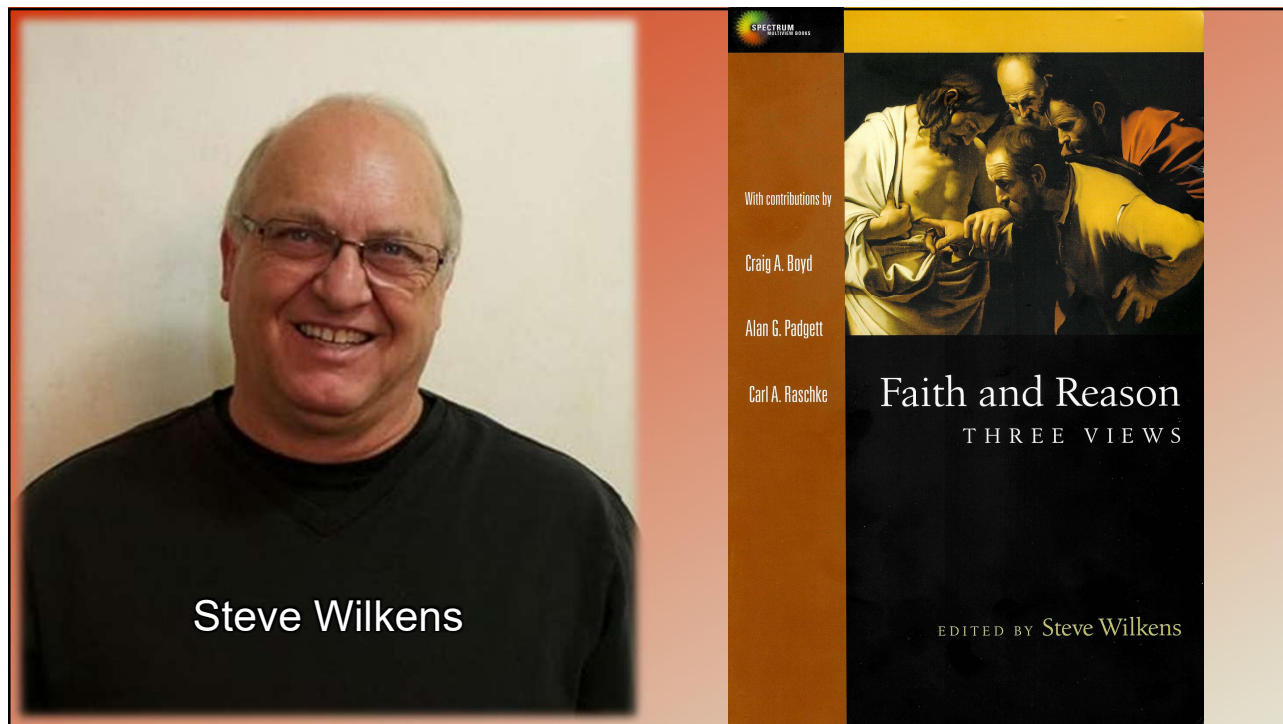
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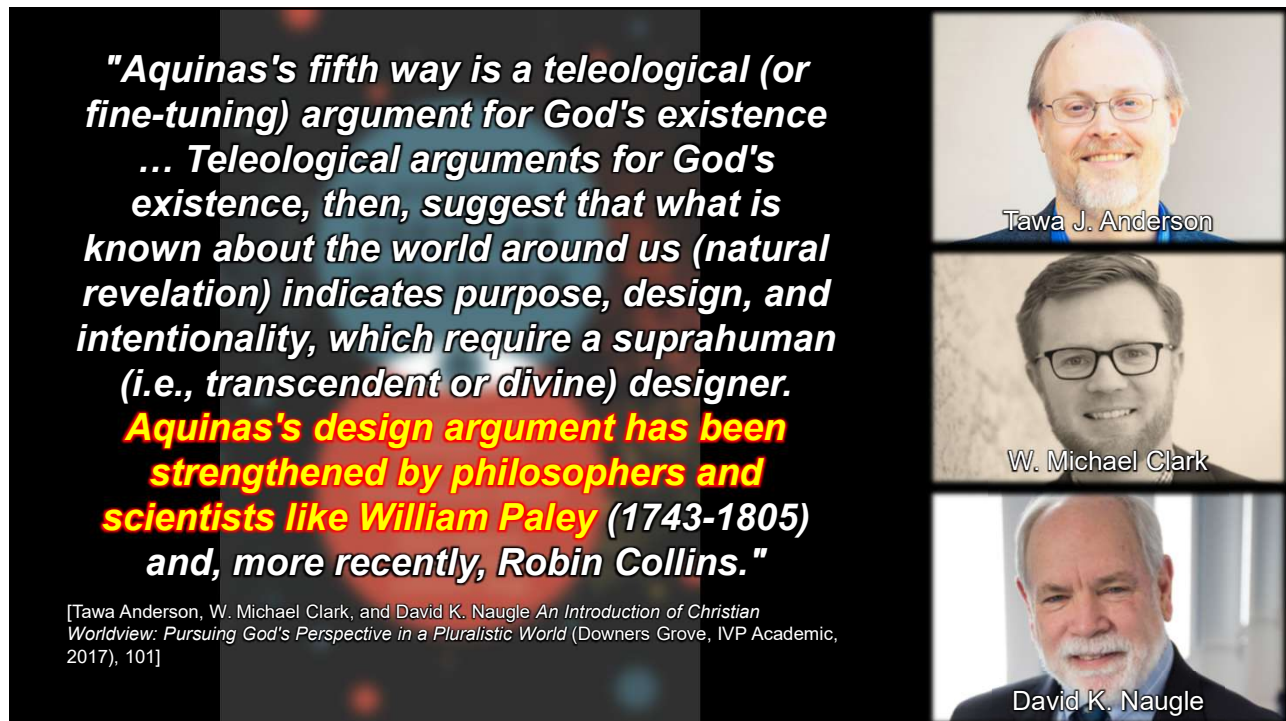
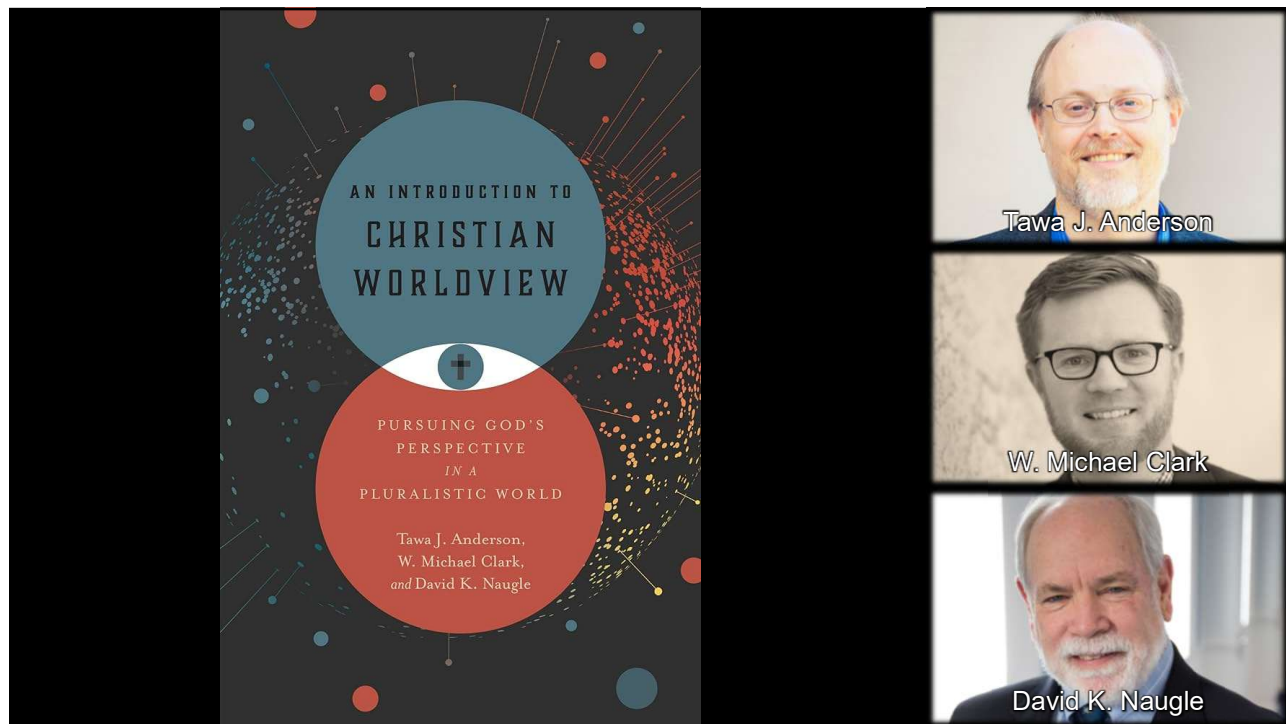
"This is Paley's Famous 'watchmaker' illustration of the teleological argument, which, we may recall, was the fifth of Aquinas's five ways of demonstrating the existence of God."

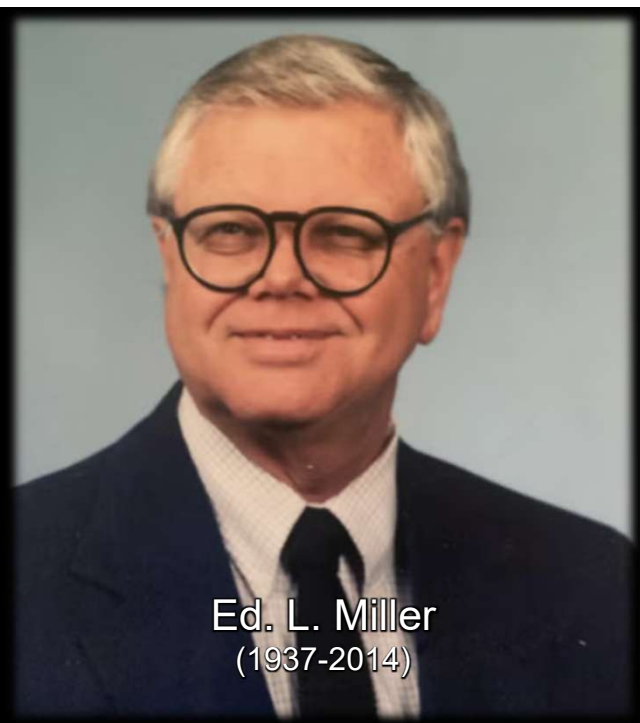
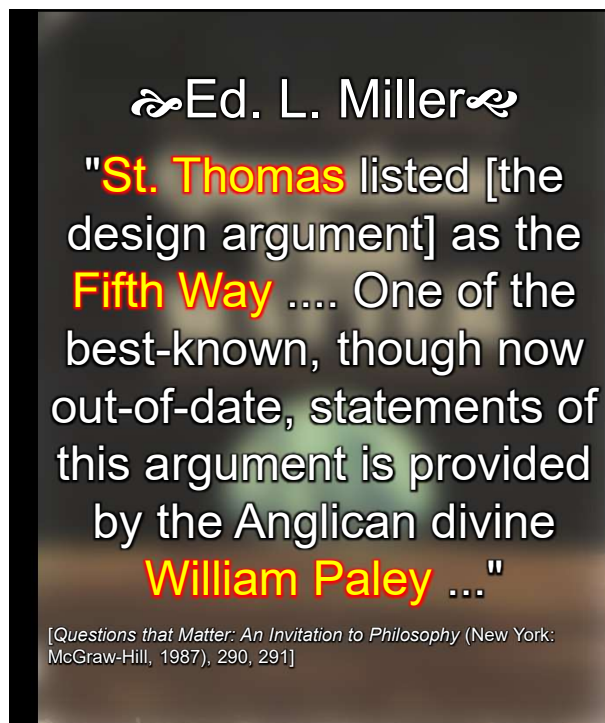
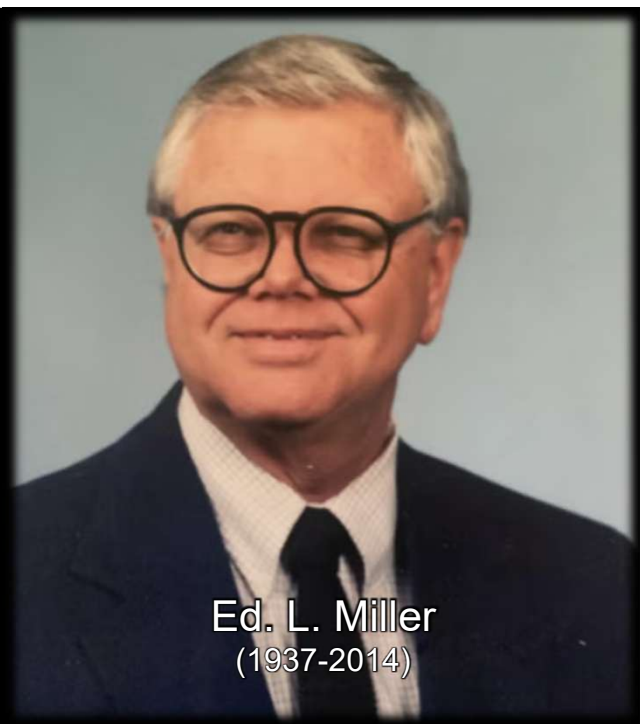
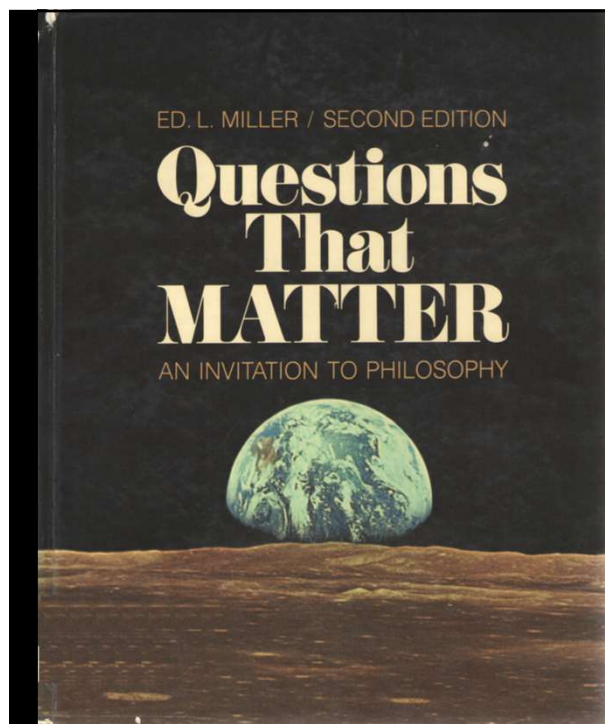
[*A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg: P &R, 2015), 239, emphasis in original]

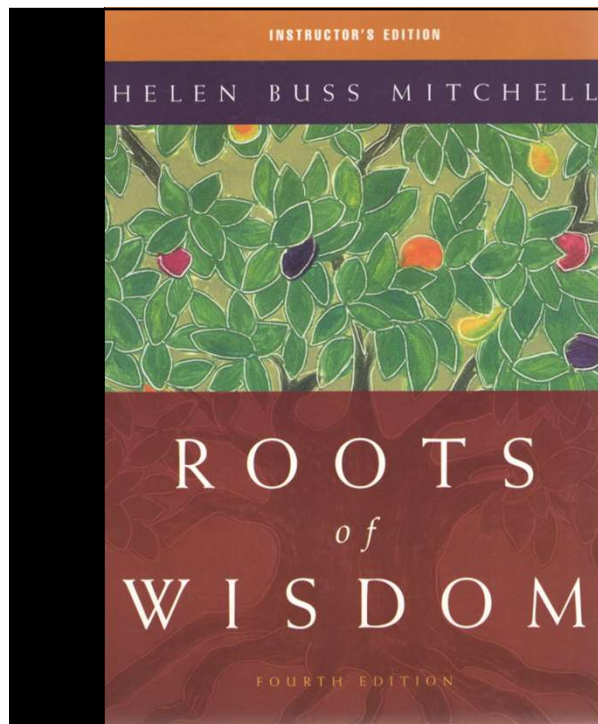


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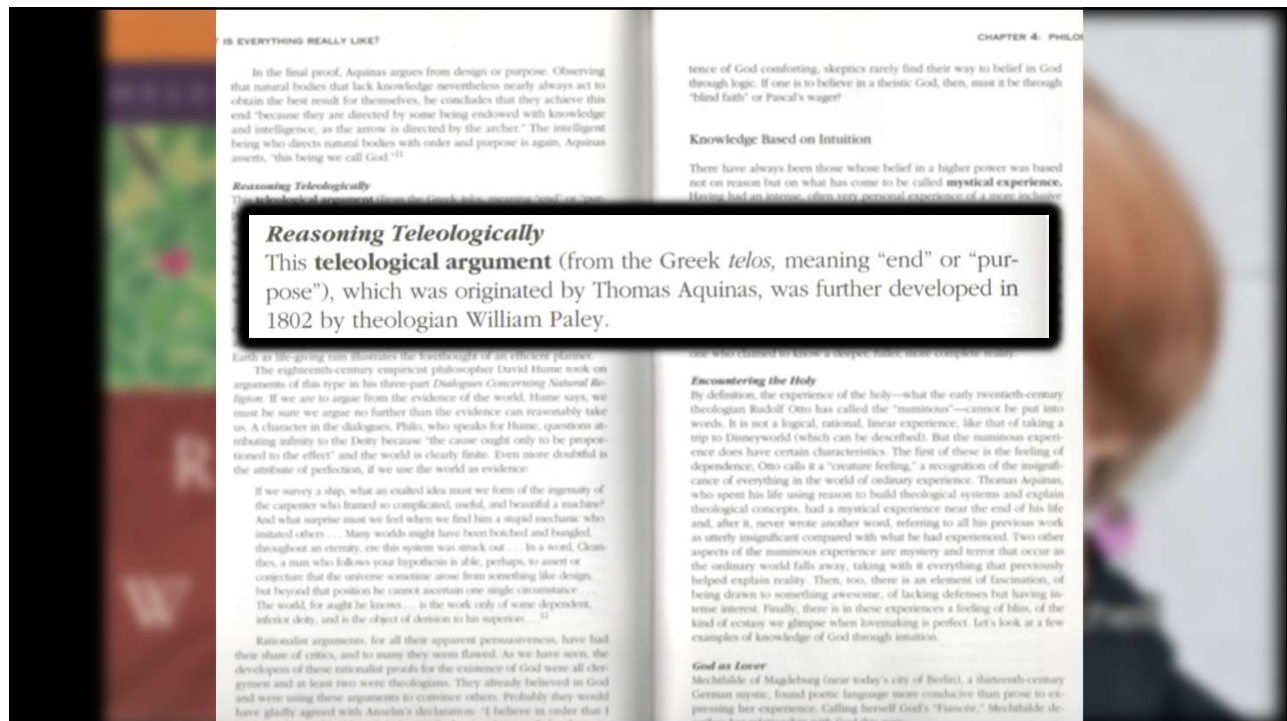


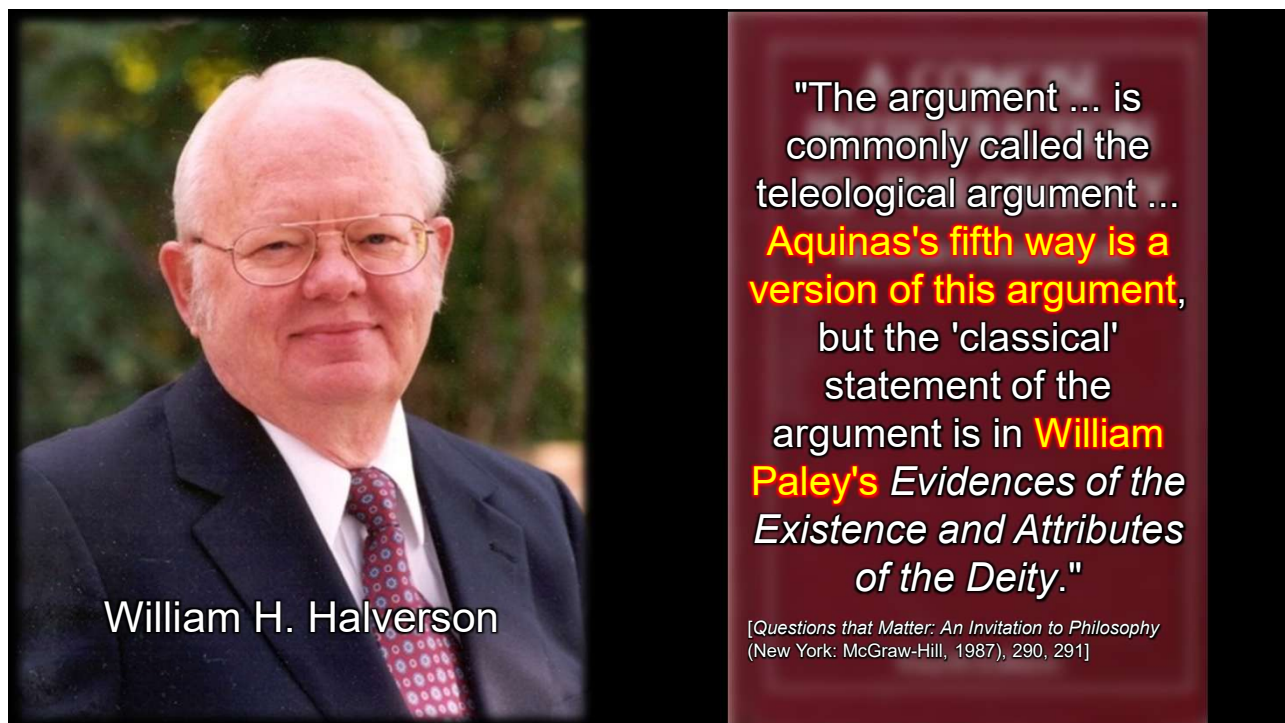
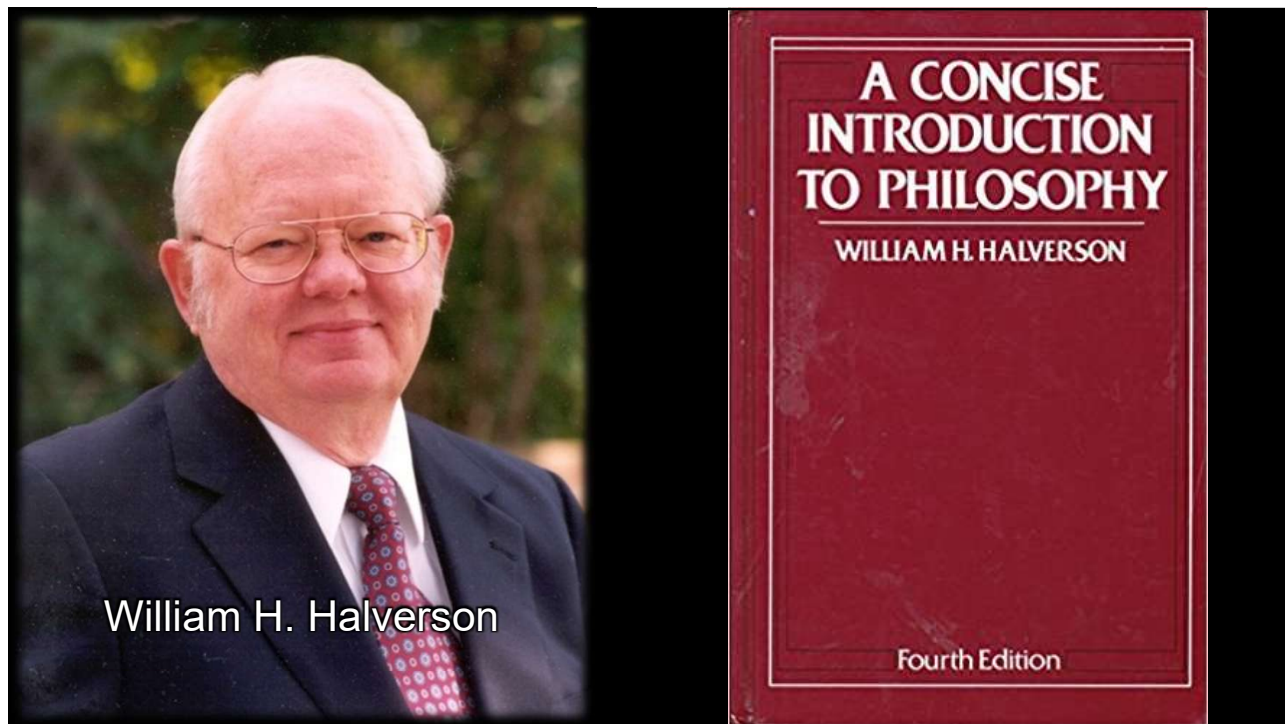




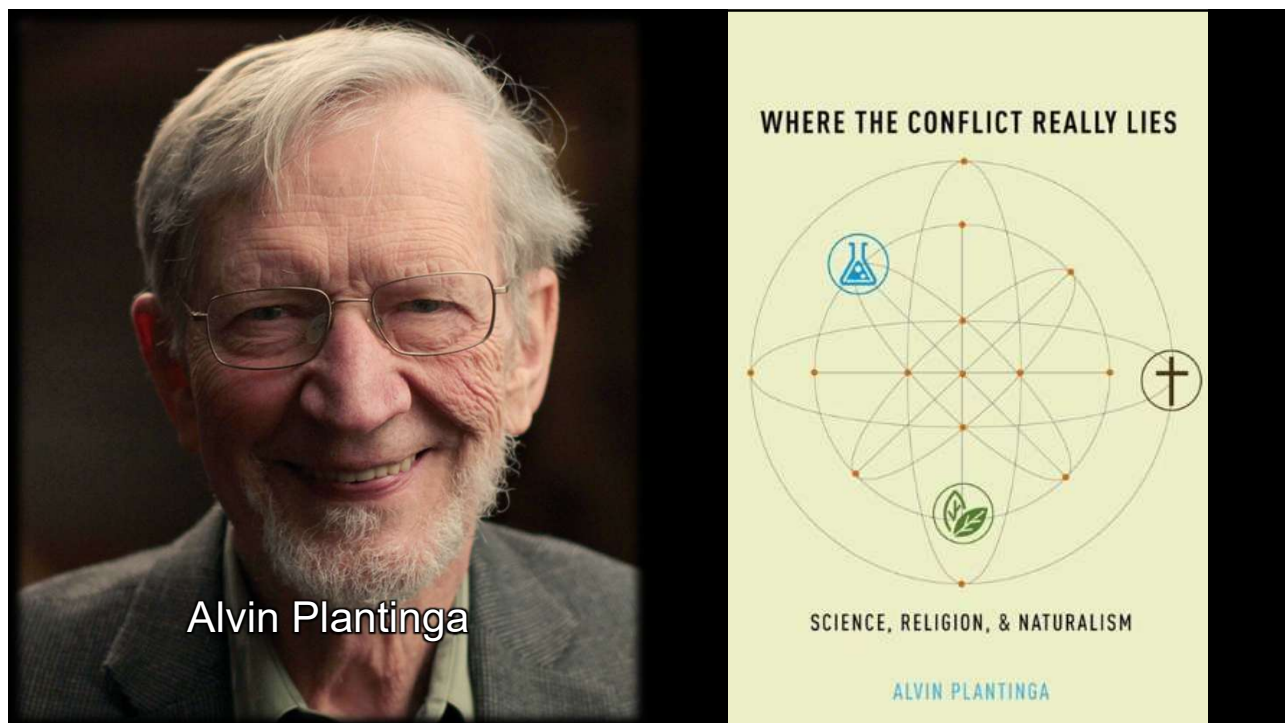



Helen Buss Mitchell





***Even as eminent a philosopher as Alvin Plantinga mistakenly associates Aquinas's "Fifth Way" with Paley's watchmaker argument.***

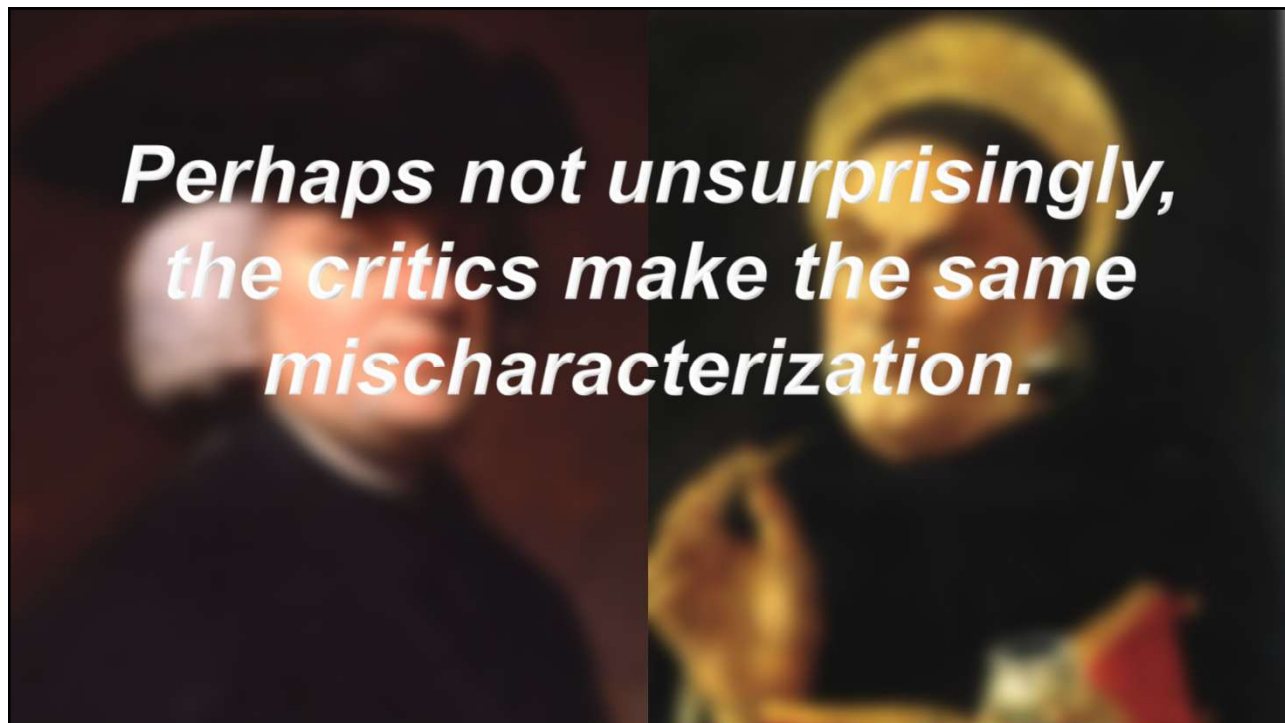




Alvin Plantinga

"Fine-tuning and Behe-type arguments are ordinarily thought of as contemporary versions of a venerable theistic argument, the so-called 'argument from design' ... Design arguments go back to the 'fifth way' of Thomas Aquinas and can also be found in the ancient world. A particularly well known (and often cited) version is due to William Paley (1743-1805)."

[Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, & Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 237)]



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## ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD - THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT (ARGUMENT FROM / TO DESIGN)

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The Teleological Argument (also popularly known as the Argument from Design) is perhaps the most popular argument for the existence of God today. It suggests that the order and complexity in the world implies a being that created it with a specific purpose (such as the creation of life) in mind.

The universe is an astoundingly complex but highly ordered system, and the world appears fine-tuned to provide exactly the right conditions for the development and sustenance of life. Proponents of the Argument from Design argue that to say that the universe (and complex natural objects within it, such as the eye or the brain) is so ordered by chance is unsatisfactory as an explanation of the

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# ARGUMENTS


The 13th Century medieval theologian St. Thomas Aquinas was perhaps the most famous subscriber to this argument, but the most cited statement of the argument is that of William Paley in the 18th Century who likened the universe to a watch, with many ordered parts working in harmony to further some purpose.

[The Argument](#) | [The Refutation](#)

**The Argument** [Back to Top](#)

The Teleological Argument (also popularly known as the Argument from Design) is perhaps the most popular argument for the existence of God today. It suggests that the order and complexity in the world implies a being that created it with a specific purpose (such as the creation of life) in mind.

The universe is an astoundingly complex but highly ordered system, and the world appears fine-tuned to provide exactly the right conditions for the development and sustenance of life. Proponents of the Argument from Design argue that to say that the universe (and complex natural objects within it, such as the eye or the brain) is so ordered by chance is unsatisfactory as an explanation of the



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## Argument from design


“ It would *have* to mean that the designer of this plan was *unbelievably* lazy and inept, or *unbelievably* callous. And cruel. And indifferent. And capricious. And *that* is the case with every argument for design, and every argument for [revelation](#) and [intervention](#), that has *ever* been made. ”

—Christopher Hitchens, on what by necessity follows from all arguments from design<sup>[1]</sup>

The **argument from design**, also known as the **teleological argument**, is an argument for the existence of [God](#) (or life-


**The divine comedy**

**Creationism**



**Running gags**

- [Biblical literalism](#)
- [Young/Old Earth](#)
- [Intelligent design](#)
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## Argument from design

It is equally an error to charge Paley with [plagiarism](#) on this count: he was writing about an opinion so widely known in his time that it was not necessary for him to disclaim originality; and it is not his fault that subsequent generations have tended to give him the credit for the argument. **Indeed the argument from design dates back at least as far as Thomas Aquinas.**

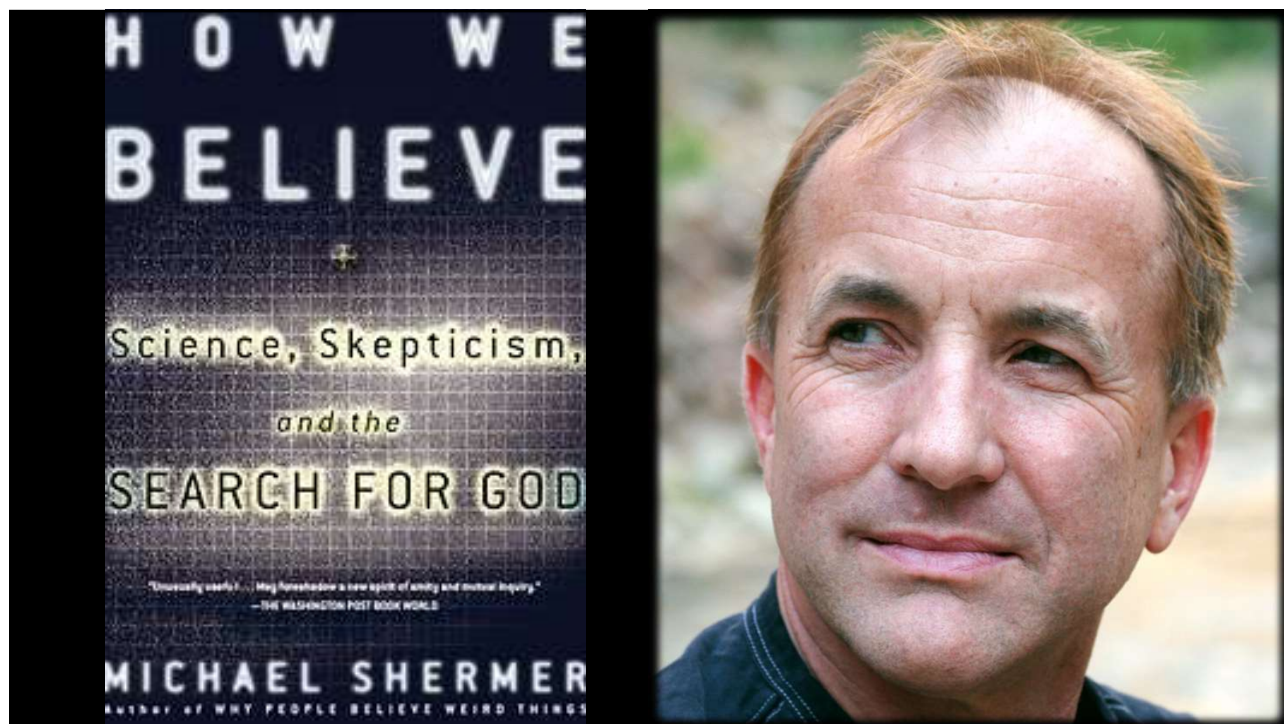
every argument for [revelation](#) and [intervention](#), that has *ever* been made. ”

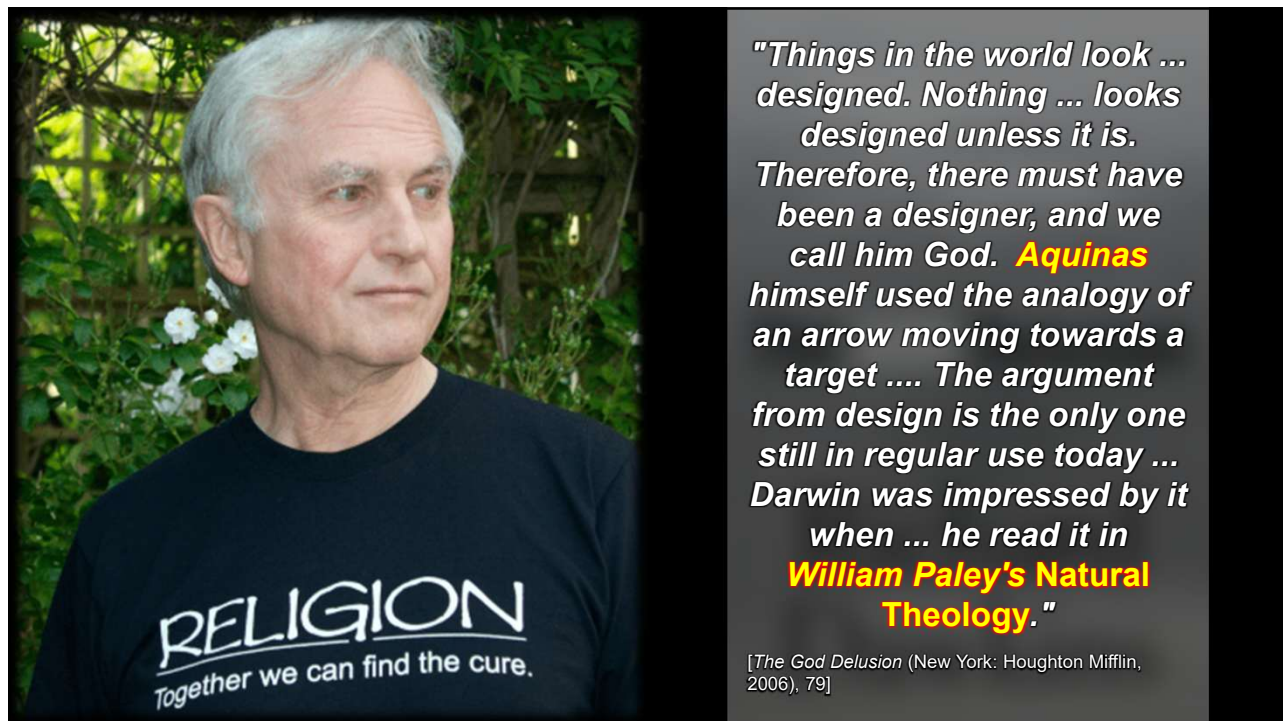
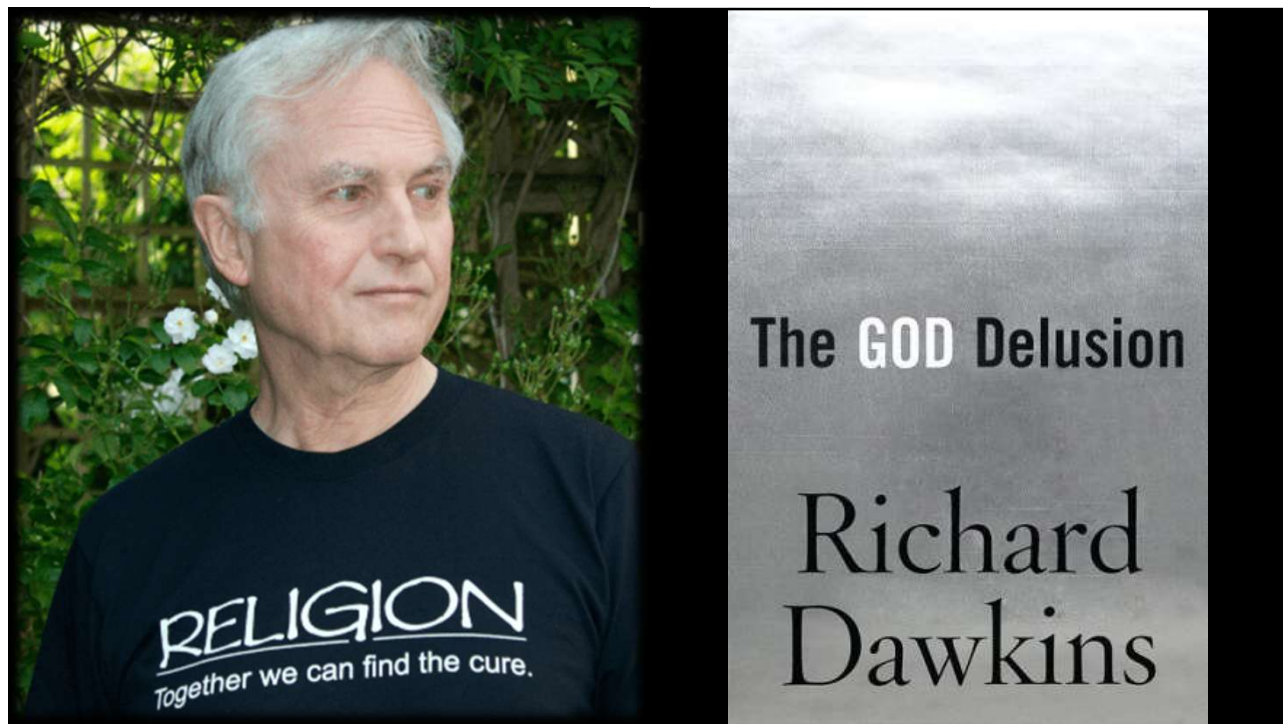
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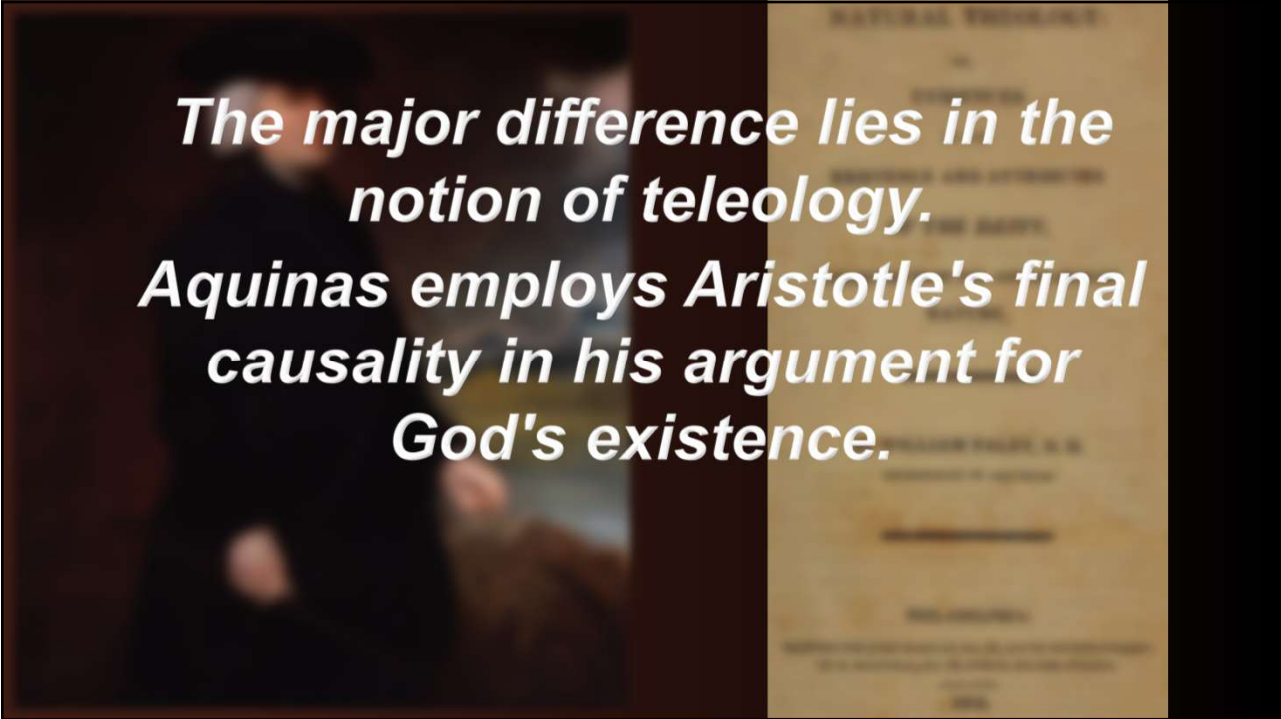
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**Running gags**

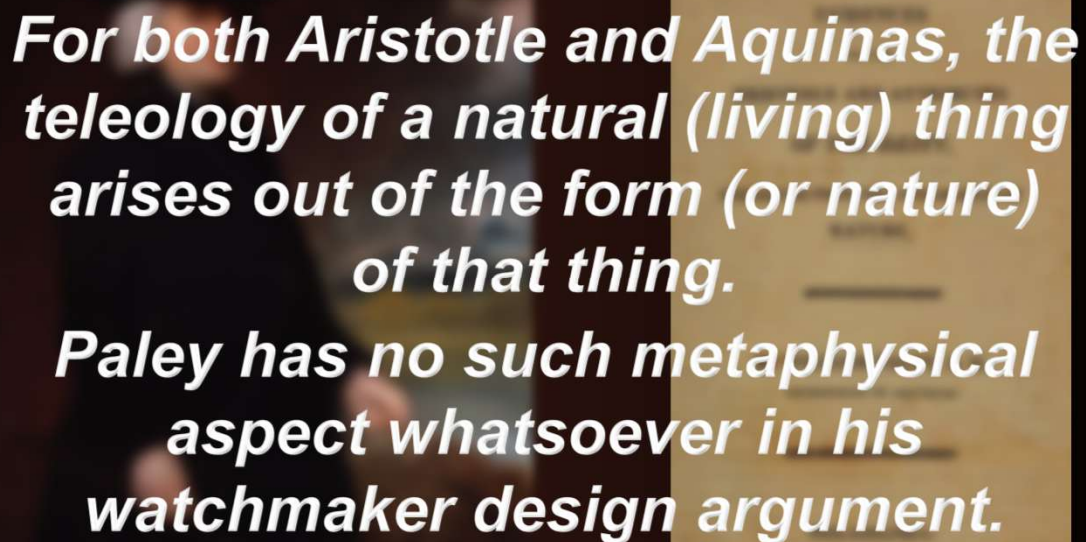
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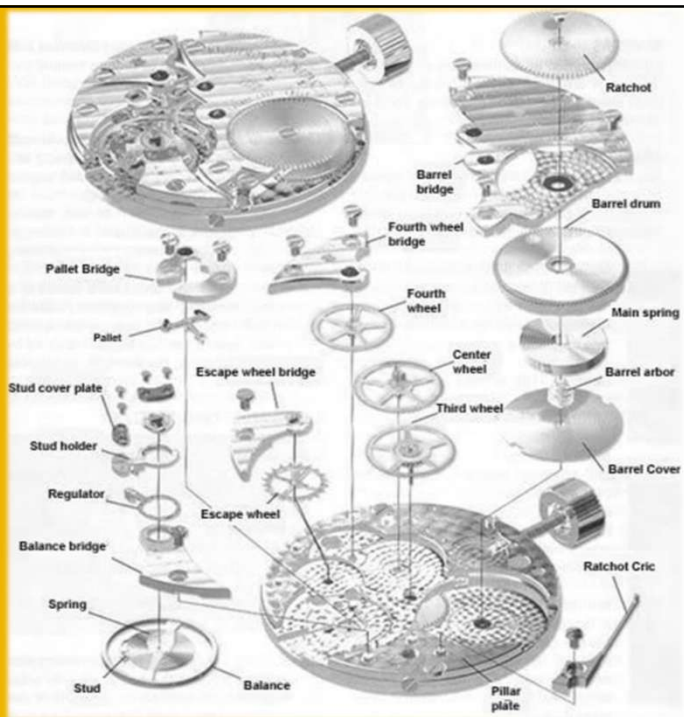
*The major difference lies in the notion of teleology. Aquinas employs Aristotle's final causality in his argument for God's existence.*



*For both Aristotle and Aquinas, the teleology of a natural (living) thing arises out of the form (or nature) of that thing. Paley has no such metaphysical aspect whatsoever in his watchmaker design argument.*

***Final causality is one of the four causes in Aristotle's philosophy that are the background of Aquinas's arguments for God's existence.***

**Formal Cause**  
that *which*  
an effect is  
= form, structure, or  
nature of the watch:  
"watch-ness"



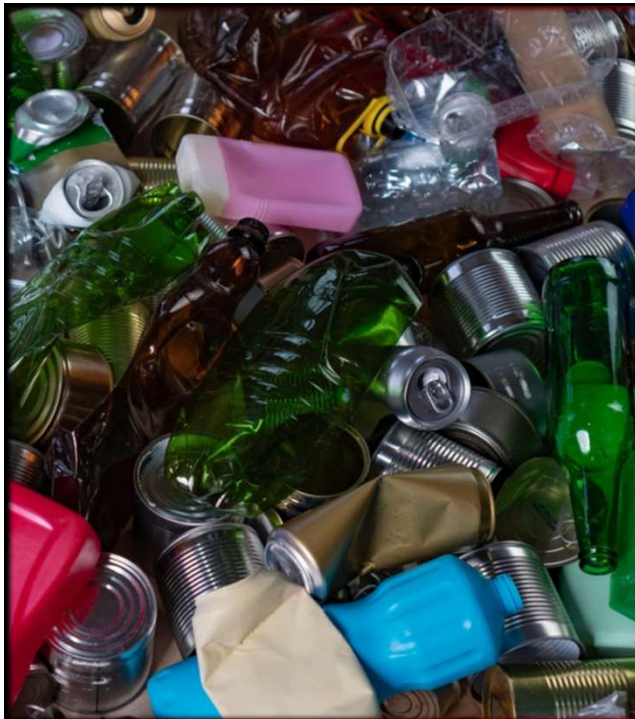
## Formal Cause

that *which*  
an effect is

= form, structure, or  
nature of the watch:  
"watch-ness"

One should note that neither Aristotle nor Aquinas maintains that artifacts (as opposed to natural) objects have metaphysical Form.

It is, however, easier to illustrate the four causes by way of an artifact.



## Material Cause

that *out of which*  
an effect is

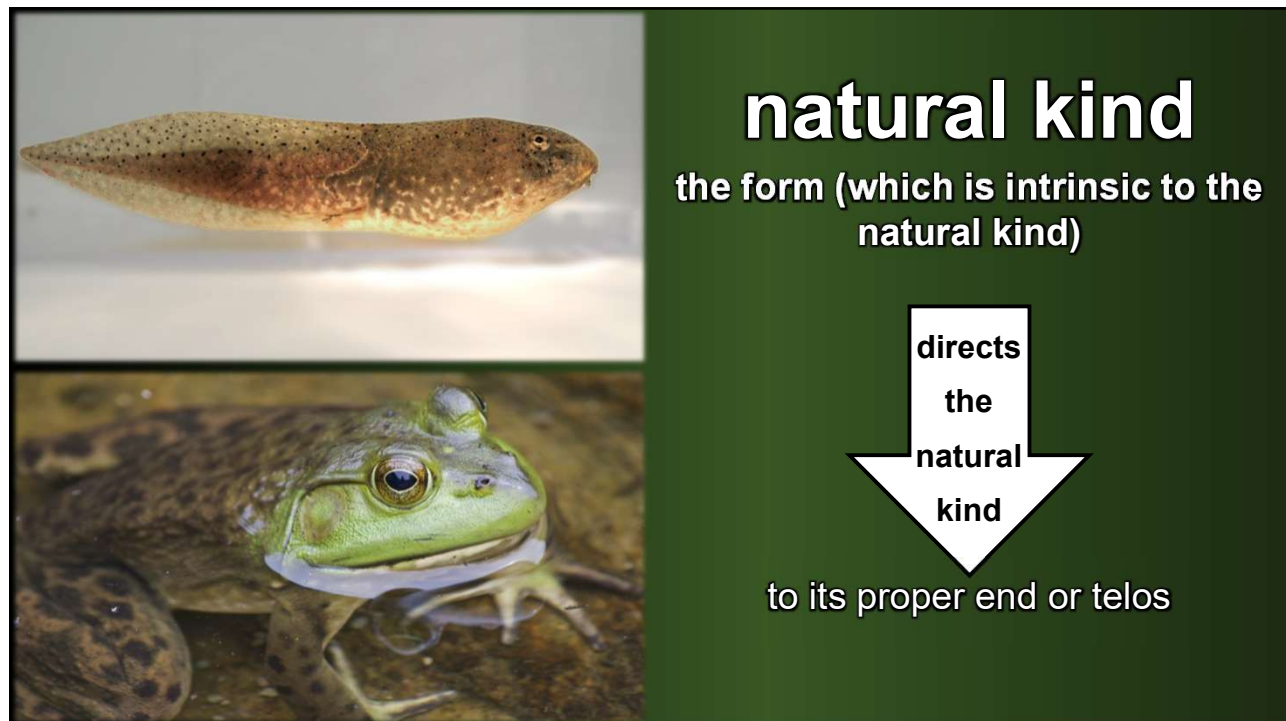
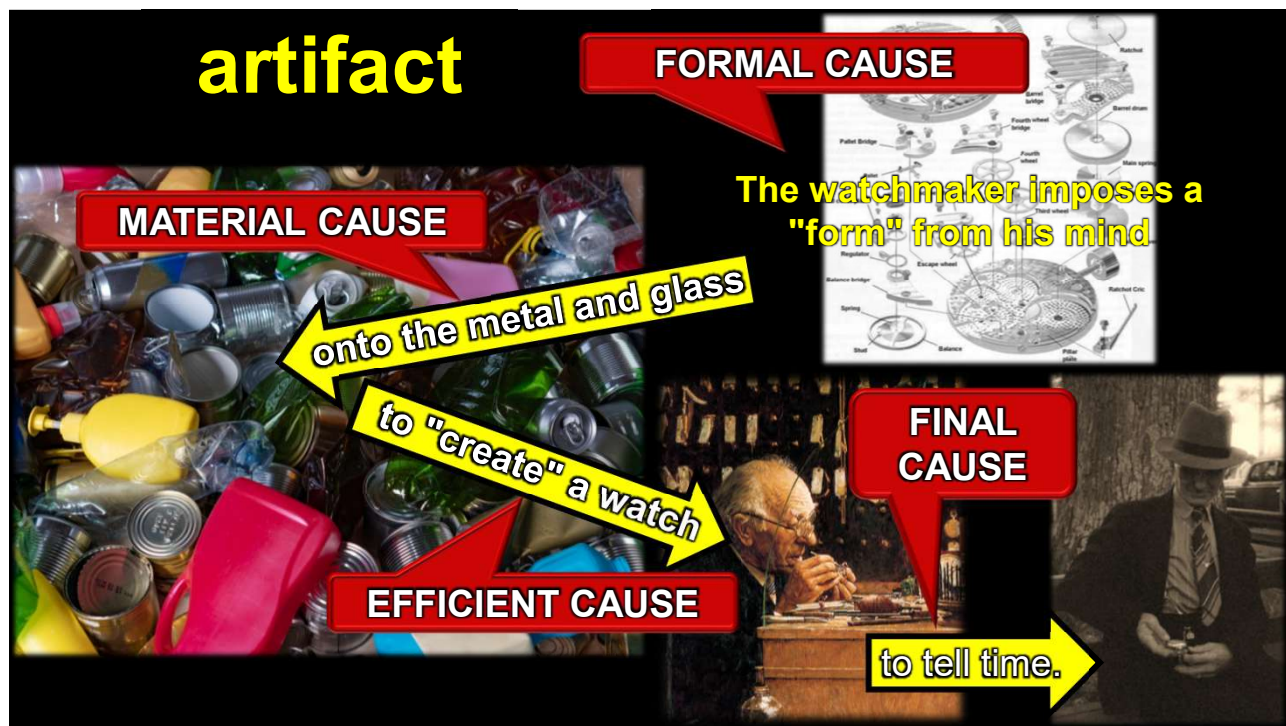
= what the watch is  
made of: metal and  
glass



Efficient Cause  
that *by which*  
an effect is  
= who produced the  
watch: the horologist

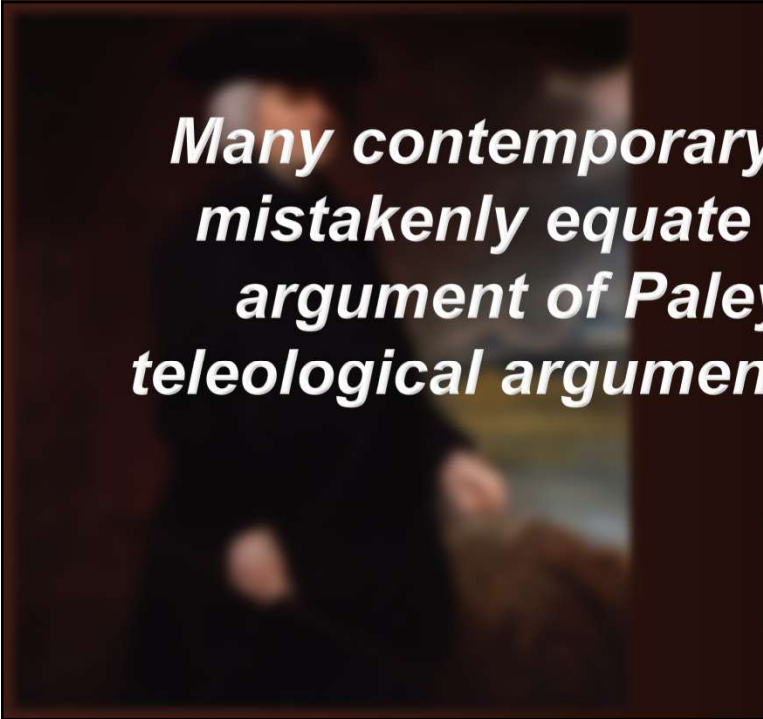


Final Cause  
that *for which*  
an effect is  
= why the watch was  
built: to tell the time

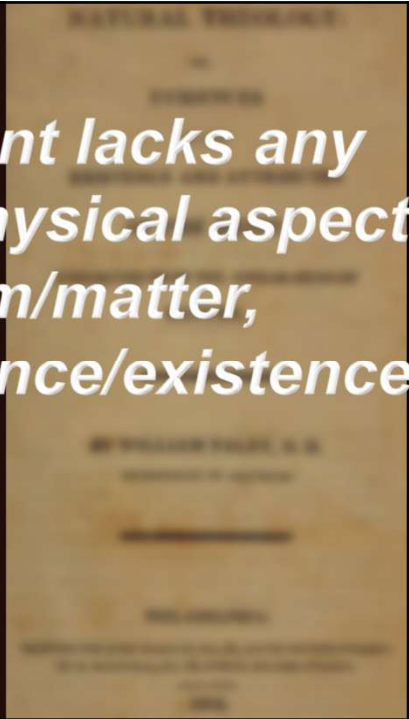
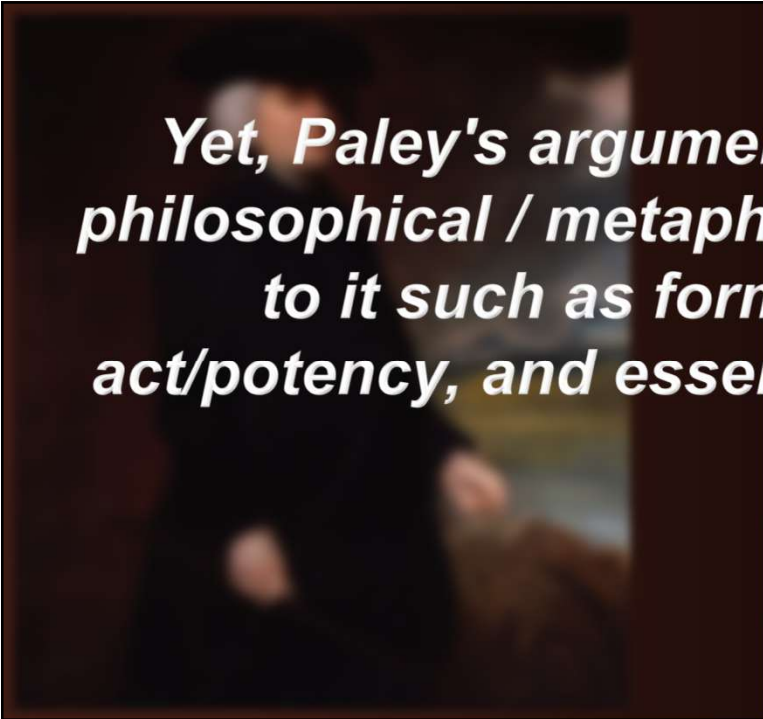


<p><b>artifact</b></p> <p><b>MATERIAL CAUSE</b> onto the metal and glass</p> <p><b>FORMAL CAUSE</b> The watchmaker imposes a "form" from his mind</p> <p><b>EFFICIENT CAUSE</b> to "create" a watch</p> <p><b>FINAL CAUSE</b> to tell time</p>	<p><b>natural kind</b> the form (which is intrinsic to the natural kind)</p> <p>directs the natural kind to its proper end or telos</p>	
<p>There is nothing intrinsic to the metal and glass that causes it to become a watch.</p> <p>The "form" or "nature" of the watch is completely accounted for by the <b>EXTRINSIC</b> mind of the watchmaker.</p>	<p>Aristotle maintains that there is a real, metaphysical aspect to the tadpole that causes it to go from tadpole to bullfrog.</p> <p>The Form is <b>INTRINSIC</b> and contains the potencies to be actualized that will move the tadpole toward its teleology.</p>	<p>Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that the Form is <b>INTRINSIC</b> to a natural object and accounts for the potencies to move it toward its teleology.</p> <p>But he argues that only God as <i>ipsum esse subsistens</i> can account for the existence of the Form as the <b>EXTRINSIC</b>, i.e., transcendent Creator of the world.</p>

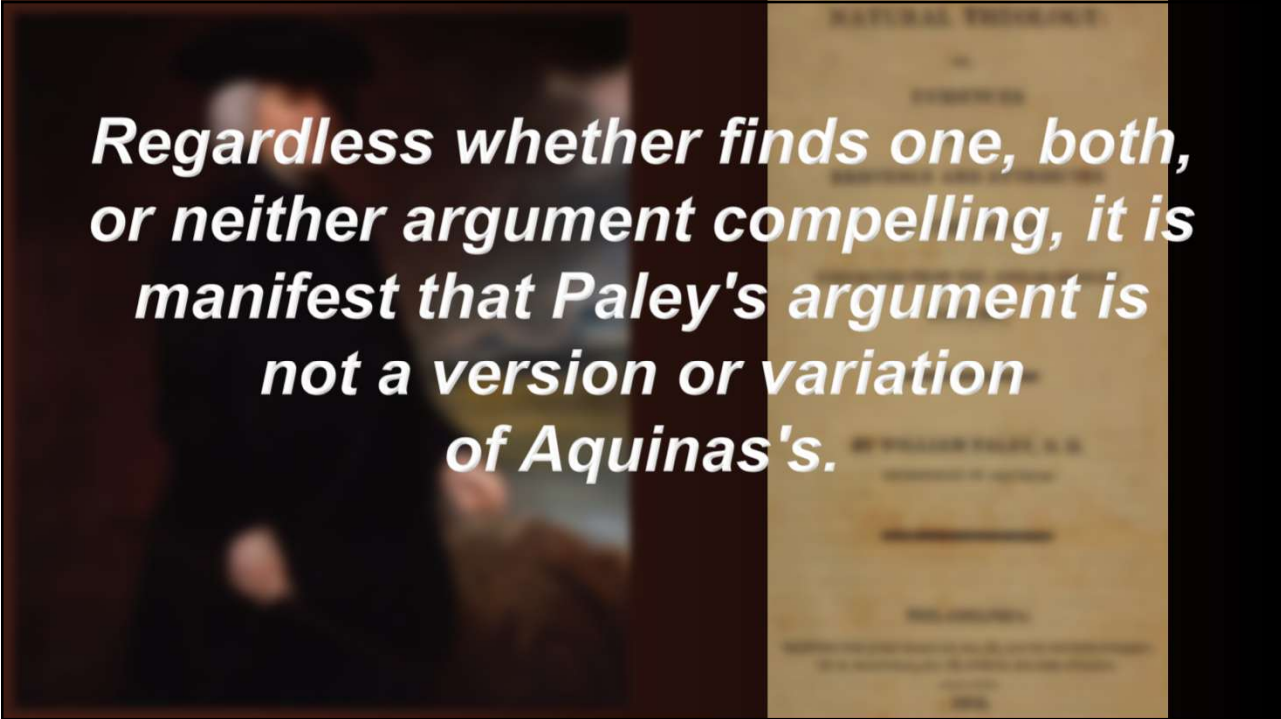
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***Many contemporary apologists  
mistakenly equate the design  
argument of Paley with the  
teleological argument of Aquinas.***



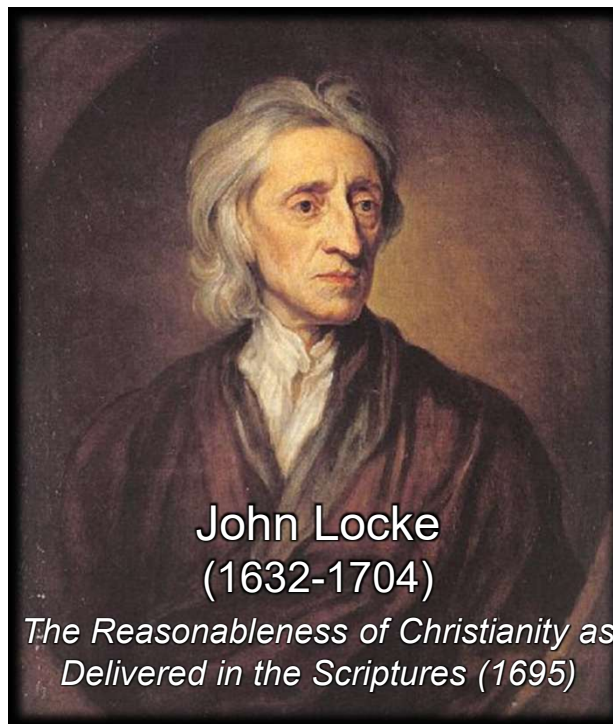
***Yet, Paley's argument lacks any  
philosophical / metaphysical aspects  
to it such as form/matter,  
act/potency, and essence/existence.***



***Regardless whether finds one, both,  
or neither argument compelling, it is  
manifest that Paley's argument is  
not a version or variation  
of Aquinas's.***

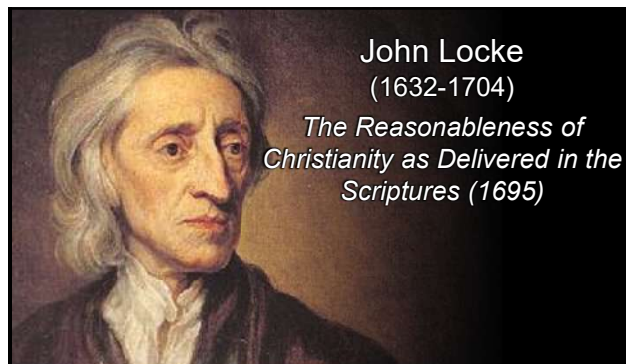


**The Rise of the Legal  
Witness Model**



- ❖ English philosopher of epistemology and political philosophy
- ❖ Studied theology, natural science, philosophy, and medicine at Oxford University
- ❖ "... found the stodgy Scholasticism that still pervaded the Oxford of his day to be 'perplexed with obscure terms and useless questions'"\*
- ❖ Also authored of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Two Treatises on Government*

\*William F. Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2002), 281.




- ❖ English theologian
- ❖ Bishop in the Church of England
- ❖ Educated at Cambridge University
- ❖ Aimed his apologetic efforts against the Deists during Deist Controversy of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries
- ❖ Some scholars suggest that his *The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* was read and countered by David Hume

Thomas Sherlock  
(1678-1761)

*The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* (1729)

- ❖ English theologian
- ❖ Bishop in the Church of England
- ❖ Educated at Cambridge University
- ❖ Aimed his apologetic efforts against the **Deists** during Deist Controversy of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries
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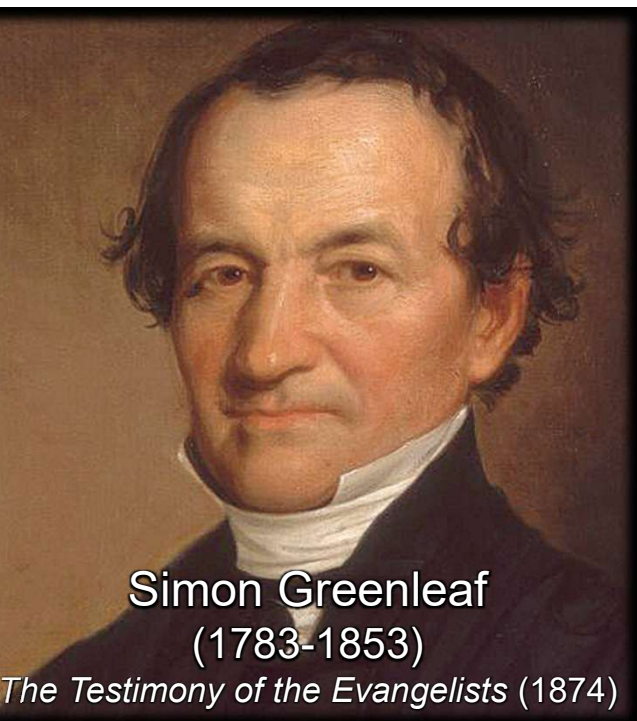
Deism is the view that God exists and has created the universe, but does not miraculously intervene in the affairs of creation.



**Richard Whately**  
(1786-1863)

*Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte* (1849)  
*Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidences* (1850)

- ❖ Anglican archbishop of Dublin
- ❖ Educated at Oriel College, Oxford
- ❖ Actively supported Catholic emancipation and the granting of civil rights to Jews
- ❖ Authored *Elements of Logic* (1826) which some consider to be the first English work defending logic as a field of study
- ❖ Involved in debates surrounding principles of economics and value

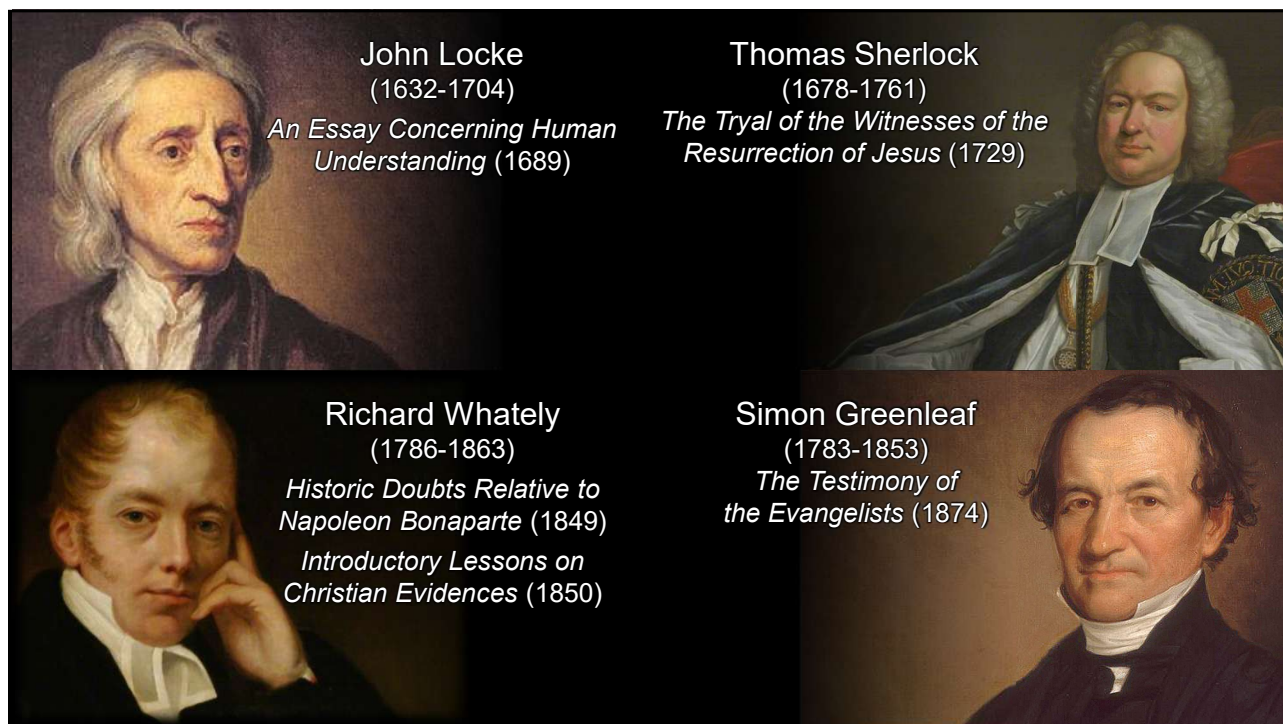



**Simon Greenleaf**  
(1783-1853)

*The Testimony of the Evangelists* (1874)

- ❖ American lawyer
- ❖ Taught law at Harvard Law School
- ❖ "... took Sherlock's approach to the resurrection to new heights"\*
- ❖ His *Treatise on the Law of Evidences* (3 vols.) was a standard text in American law into the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- ❖ The Simon Greenleaf School of Law was founded by John Warwick Montgomery.

\*Boa, Bowman, Faith Has Its Reasons, 142/241



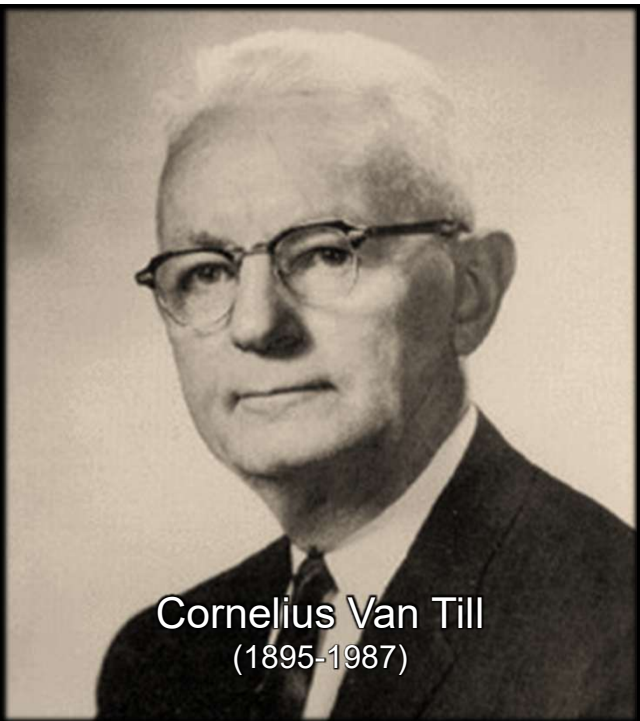
**Joseph Butler  
(1692-1752)**

- ❖ Raised Presbyterian but later entered Anglicanism
- ❖ Authored *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*
- ❖ "Many historians see this book as the greatest refutation of deism that was produced in the early eighteenth century."\*
- ❖ It is widely recognized among scholars that Butler's work was admired by David Hume.

\*L. Russ Bush, *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics: A.D. 100—1800* (Grand Rapids: Academie (Zondervan), 1983), 327-328.



Joseph Butler  
(1692-1752)



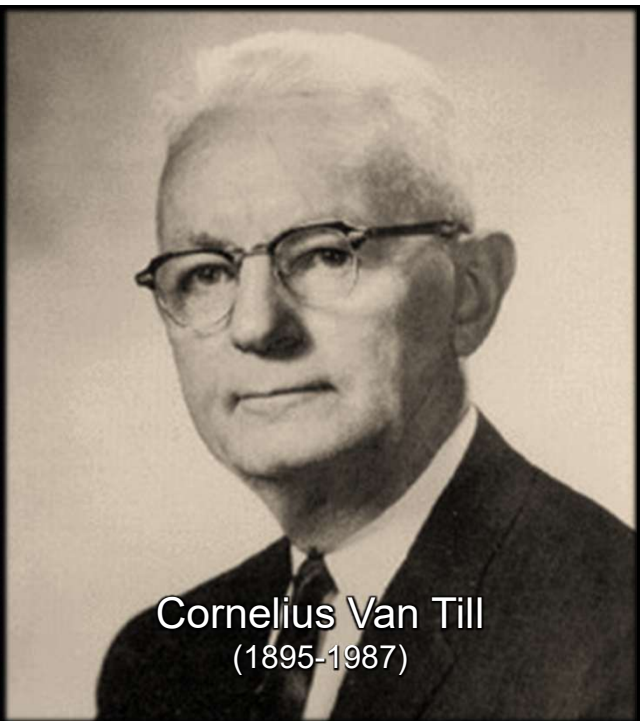
Cornelius Van Till  
(1895-1987)



Joseph Butler  
(1692-1752)



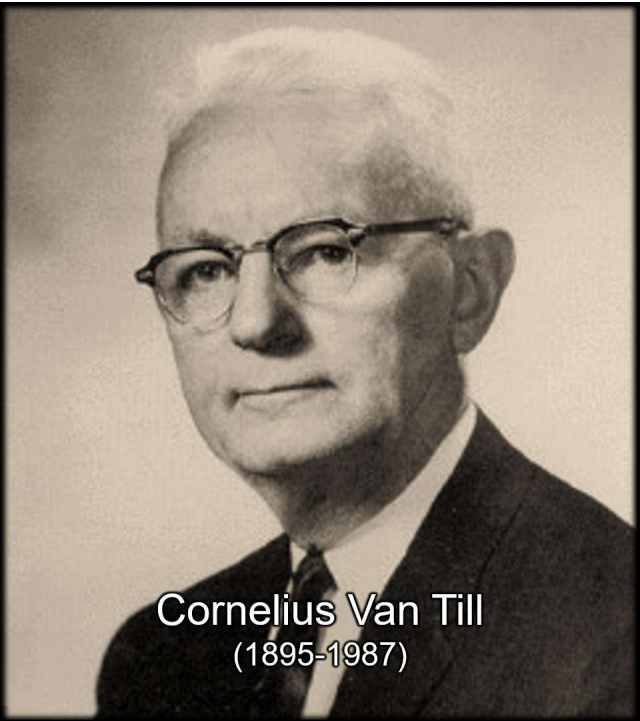
Thomas Aquinas  
(1225-1274)



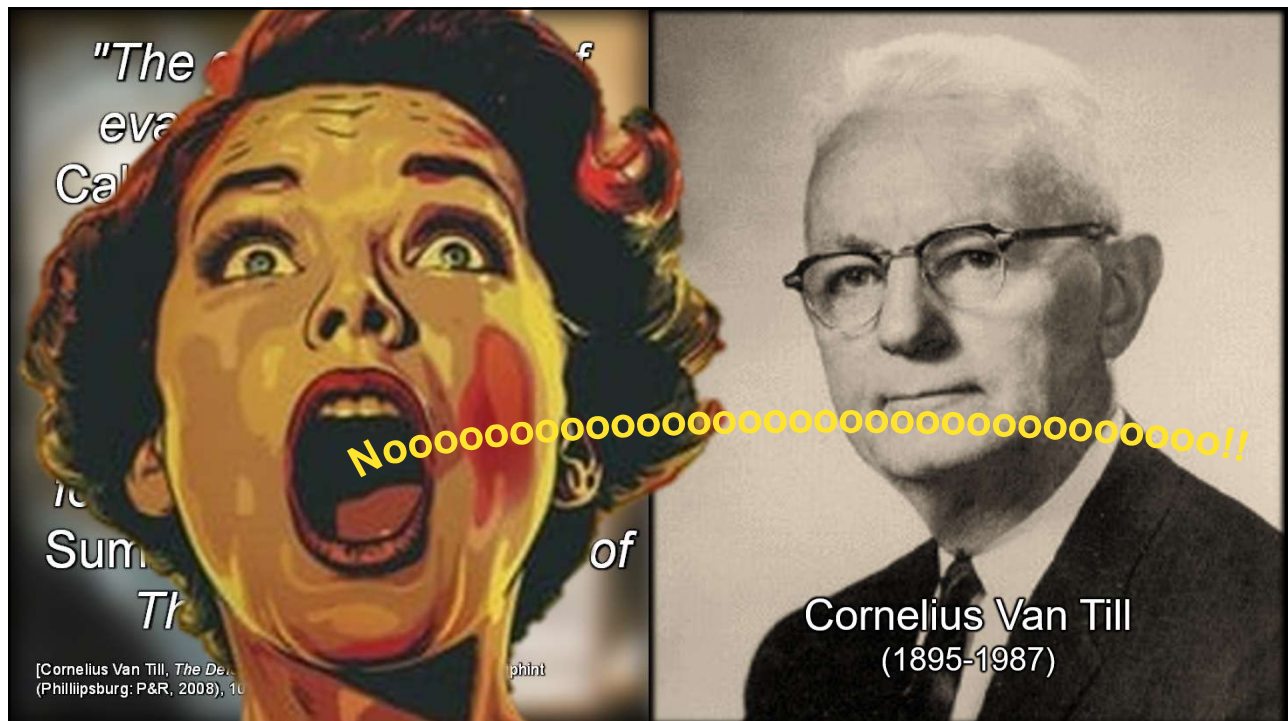
Cornelius Van Till  
(1895-1987)

*"The great textbook of evangelical [i.e., non-Calvinistic Protestantism] apologetics is Bishop Butler's famous Analogy. ... Its argument is closely similar to that which is found, for instance, in the Summa contra Gentiles of Thomas Aquinas."*

[Cornelius Van Till, *The Defense of the Faith*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. by K. Scott Oliphint (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008), 102]



Cornelius Van Till  
(1895-1987)



[Cornelius Van Till, *The Defense of the Faith*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. by K. Scott Oliphint (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008), 102]

Cornelius Van Till  
(1895-1987)

In criticizing Van Till's characterization of Butler's thinking as "closely similar" to Aquinas's, I am not suggesting that Butler's apologetic is necessarily flawed.

Indeed, as I have already pointed out, Evidentialism is very nearly identical to the third step in the Classical Apologetic system.

However, when it comes to elements in one's apologetic that implicitly or explicitly employ some measure of metaphysics (e.g., in arguing for God's existence or attributes, exploring God and morality, or unpacking aspects of human knowledge), I am suggesting that when such elements are not grounded in Classical Realism, they are more susceptible to philosophical refutation.

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