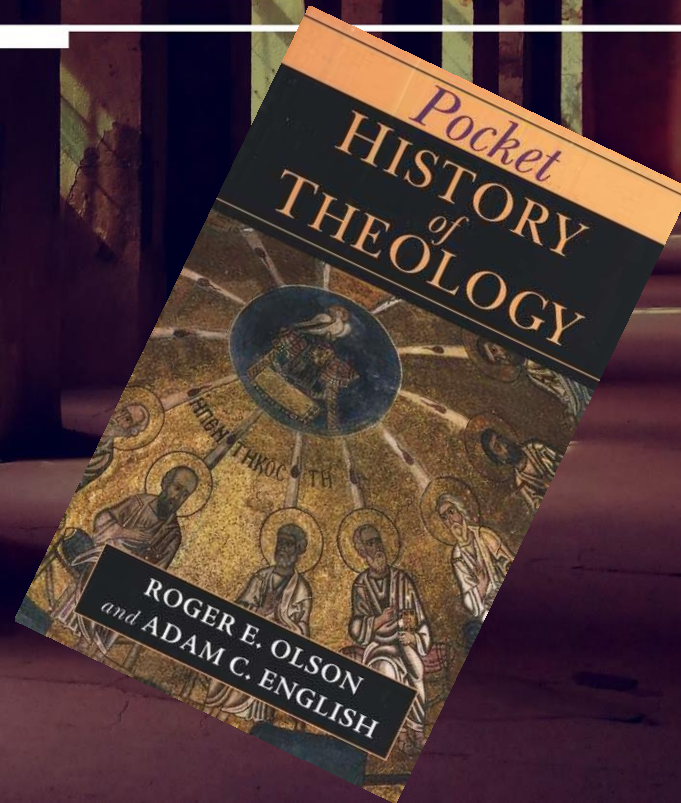


CHURCH HISTORY

9



Scholastic arguments for the existence of God

- **Anselm (satisfaction theory guy) is also famous for his “ontological argument” for the existence of God.**

Scholastic arguments for the existence of God

- Anselm defined God as "that which nothing greater can be thought".**
- He argued that this being must exist in the mind even of the person who denies the existence of God.**
- He suggested that, therefore, if the idea of a greatest possible being exists in the mind it must also exist in reality.**

Scholastic arguments for the existence of God

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) Height of Scholasticism

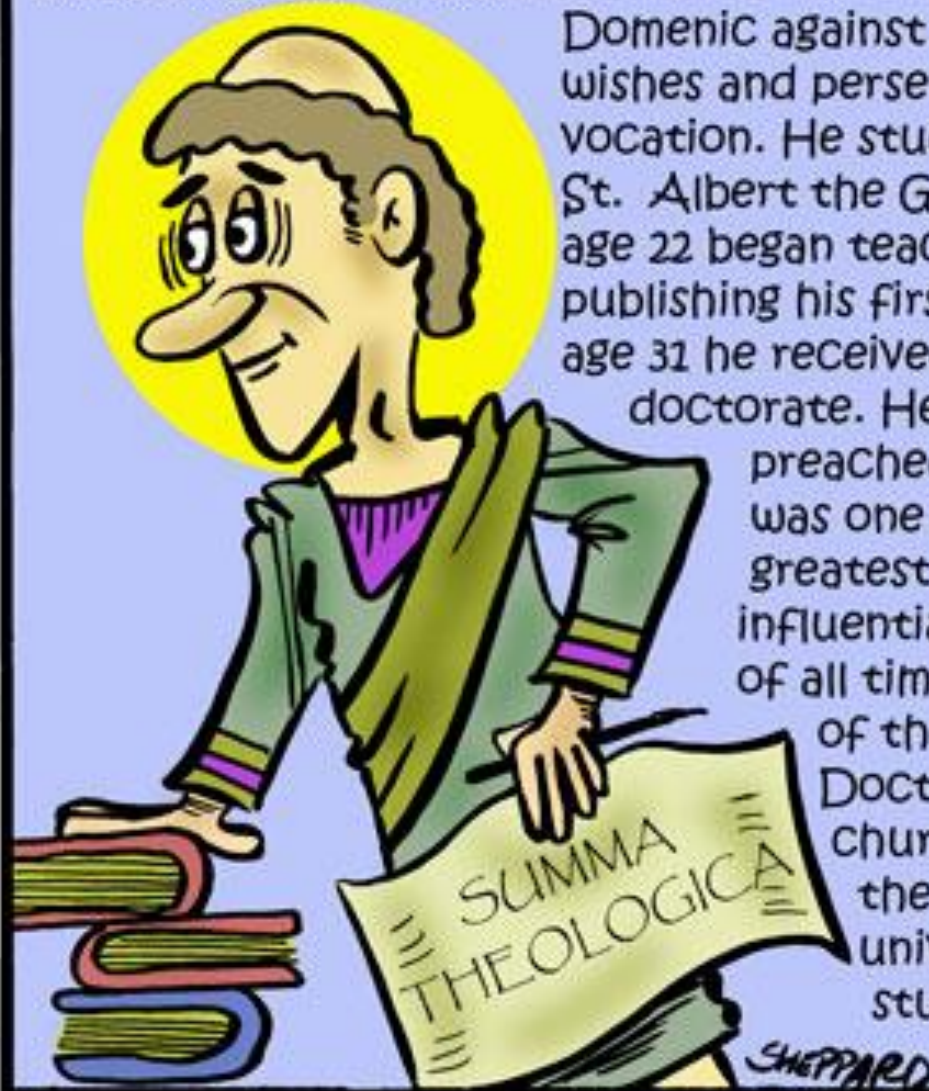
**Like Augustine, Aquinas wrote on
almost every conceivable topic related
to the university curriculum.**

SAINTS FUN FACTS

by John Sheppard

St. Thomas Aquinas surpassed all his fellow students in learning and virtue. He entered the order of St.

Domenic against his parents wishes and perserverd in his vocation. He studied under St. Albert the Great and at age 22 began teaching and publishing his first works. At age 31 he received his doctorate. He wrote and preached often and was one of the greatest and influential theologians of all time. He is one of the few Doctors of the church. He is the patron of universities and students.



Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) five proofs for the existence of God

I) The Proof from Motion

- There is motion now so there must be a First Mover which is itself unmoved. This First Mover we call God.**

2) The Proof from Efficient Cause

- **Everything in the world has its efficient cause--its maker--and that maker has its maker, and so on. So there must have been a First Maker, that was not itself made, and that First Maker we call God.**

3) The Proof from Necessary vs. Possible Being

- **All possible beings are those whose existence is not necessary (cars, trees, you, me). For all such beings there is a time before they come to be and a time after they cease to be.**
- **If everything were merely possible, there would have been a time, long ago, when nothing had yet come to be. That would mean that nothing comes from nothing which would mean there would be nothing now!**
- **But there is something now so there must be at least one *necessary* being. This Necessary Being we call God.**

4) The Proof from Degrees of Perfection

- We evaluate things/people in terms of their being more or less perfectly true, good, noble and so on.**
- We would have no such standards unless there were some being that is perfect in every way, something that is the truest, noblest, and best. That Most Perfect Being we call God.**

5) The Proof from Design

- As we look at the world around us, and ourselves, we see ample evidence of design-- the bird's wing, designed for the purpose of flight; the human ear, designed for the purpose of hearing; the natural environment, designed to support life; etc.**
- If there is design, there must be a designer. That Designer we call God.**

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

- Reason can establish God's existence, but God can be found only so far by reason alone.
- Faith is required to know God's character and attributes, and these are always only understood analogously.
- i.e. Not in the bike is *blue*, but more like he is feeling *blue*.
- It is the same word, but has a different, although related, meaning.

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

- In the same way, when speaking of God, we cannot imagine that our words apply in direct, one-to-one, correlation between earthly things and divine things.
- Wise in “God is wise” does not mean the exact same thing as in “Socrates is wise.”
- With God, wise is being used analogously – it means a similar, but not exactly the same thing.

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

- We use analogy when talking about God, not just because God possesses infinitely more of said attribute, but because God's attributes are also different in kind and quality from humans.
- All descriptions of God are merely analogies.
- We can only say what God is *like*, we have no ability to say what God *is*.

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

- **In fact, our words show us more of what we don't understand about God than what we do understand about him.**
 - **Even using the word “him” to refer to God is an analogy)**
- **Yet we don't despair because God has revealed himself in Christ and Christ makes it possible for us to speak truthfully and faithfully about what God is like.**

Humanists

(14th and 15th centuries)

- **A time when:**
 - **Nationalism was on the rise.**
 - **New ideas were spreading widely through the printing press.**
 - **Science.**
 - **The bubonic plague was decimating the population of Europe.**
 - **The church was falling into ruin (including a point where three people were all claiming to be the true pope at once).**

Humanists

(14th and 15th centuries)

- **There was a new cultural mood of freedom, education and art sweeping the elite societies of Europe (the Renaissance).**
- **This “humanism” was a *rediscovery* and a new appreciation of the human capacity, intellect, art and literature and away from authority and superstition.**
- **Elements of this movement were both embraced and resisted by the church at varying degrees.**

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1535)

- **Produced a much needed new version of the Greek NT in 1514 based on the best sources and manuscripts at the time.**
- **Debated Martin Luther over free will and predestination.**

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1535)

- **Erasmus rejected any theology that belittled, overrode, or neglected the free will and responsibility of humans.**
- **Christian theology was in desperate need of revising, reforming and rewriting away from its ties to medieval philosophy and scholasticism.**

Pre-Reformation Reformers

- **John Wycliffe (1330-1384).**
- **Born in England.**
- **Believed that the pope and church hierarchy was corrupt.**
- **The church should be governed by the people of God through their chosen representatives, rather than by a hierarchical structure of clergy.**

Pre-Reformation Reformers

- **If this were to happen the people would need to have access to the Bible in their own language so they could read and understand it.**
- **Translated the first Bible into English.**

Pre-Reformation Reformers

- **Wycliffe's ideas later influenced the reformer John Hus, who was burned at the stake in 1417.**
- **Wycliffe's bones were then dug up and burned as well.**
- **Wycliffe's followers became known as Lollards and 200 years later they help bring about the Reformation in England.**
- **Hus' legacy ended up getting a guy named Martin Luther called "the Saxon Hus".**