

The paradox of the stone

Here is a very old paradox designed to show that an omnipotent being is impossible:

1. Either (i) God can create a stone so large that God cannot lift it or (ii) God cannot create a stone so large that God cannot lift it.
 2. If (i), then there is something God cannot do (lift the stone).
 3. If (ii), then there is something God cannot do (make the stone).
 4. There is something God cannot do. (1,2,3)
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C. God is not omnipotent. (4)

How would Aquinas respond to this argument?

How would Descartes respond?

Suppose that in place of

‘a stone so large that God cannot lift it’

we used

‘the state of affairs of there being a rock so large that the creator of that rock cannot lift it’

Is this possible? Can God bring it about?

How about:

‘the state of affairs of there being a rock so large that the creator of that rock cannot lift it and the creator of that rock was not caused to create it by God’

Is this possible? Can God bring it about?