Metaphysics (or Epistemology) Exercise 5


1. Descartes (or his fictional representative, the Meditator) sets out to find real reasons for doubting all his previous opinions. He does this because:
   a. He wants to establish something certain in the sciences.
   b. He has discovered that some of his previous opinions were false, so he knows that the others were not achieved by a correct method and so cannot be relied on.
   c. He has discovered that some of his previous opinions were false, so he considers the others to be most probably false, as well.
   d. He thinks it is probably impossible to prove anything with certainty—doubts can always be raised.
   e. (a) and (b).
   f. (a), (b) and (c).

2. In the ninth paragraph of the First Meditation (middle of p. 78 in our book), Descartes (or the Meditator) mentions that he has a firmly rooted and long-standing belief in the existence of God. He says this because:
   a. Although he claims to doubt everything, he actually has a secret religious agenda: to prove the existence of God. So he begins working in statements about God once he has the reader off guard.
   b. Although he set out to doubt everything, he is too religious to notice that the existence of God should also be doubted.
   c. He is a rationalist. He doesn’t really believe in irrational things such as the existence of God. However, in those days it was dangerous to say that one didn’t believe in God.
   d. His firmly rooted belief in the existence of God provides a real reason for doubting some of his other beliefs.
   e. (a) and (d).
   f. None of the above.

3. Near the end of the First Meditation, Descartes (or the Meditator) entertains the possibility that a malicious and powerful demon is deceiving him. He does this because:
   a. This provides a real reason for doubting even the existence of God.
   b. He has concluded that there probably is such a demon.
   c. Belief in demons is irrational. He must find a reason for doubting them.
d. Now that he has shown that God is a deceiver who has allowed him to go wrong in the past, there is no reason not to think of God himself as a “malicious demon.”

e. (a) and (d).

f. None of the above.