Metaphysics (or Epistemology) Exercise 4

Phil. 93, Winter 2009. Due Tues., Jan. 27.

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 are probably false, too.
   c. He realizes that God is probably deceiving him.
   d. He thinks he may be dreaming.
   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 set out to doubt everything, he is too religious to notice that the existence of God should also be doubted.
   b. 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.
   c. He knows that God has deceived him about some things (for example, the Eucharist), so he is worried that God may have deceived him about everything.
   d. His firmly rooted belief in the existence of God provides a real reason for doubting some of his other beliefs.
   e. (c) and (d).
   f. (a), (c) and (d).

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 that a square has four sides.
   b. He thinks that he may be dreaming, and demons can exist in dreams.
   c. This fiction will help him to counteract his habitual tendency to believe plausible, but uncertain, things.
   d. He is too superstitious to notice that he should doubt the existence of demons.
   e. (a) and (c).
   f. (c) and (d).