

Reading Questions for November 12

These questions cover excerpts from an article by William Rowe called “An Examination of the Cosmological Argument.” The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to do the reading more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

In this article, Rowe is discussing an argument that is very similar to the argument that we found in Aquinas. Unlike Aquinas, Rowe does not think that the argument is successful.

*Questions:*

1. On pages 26-28 Rowe introduces and discusses a version of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR). What do the two different clauses of the PSR mean and how do they differ? Why is the second clause of this version of the PSR important in defending Rowe’s version of the Cosmological Argument?
2. On page 31-3, Rowe considers two ways of defending the PSR and criticizes both of them. What are the ways of defending it and what are his criticisms. Do you find his criticisms plausible? In the end, he concludes that the Cosmological Argument does not provide us with good rational grounds for believing its conclusion. Why does he say this? Is he right?
3. Suppose there were good rational grounds to believe Rowe’s version of the PSR. It is still worth asking if this conclusion is enough to get us the existence of God. Do you think there is a good way of arguing from the conclusion of the Cosmological Argument to the existence of God?