Reflection Prompts for Week 7 & 8

Week 7
Monday & Wednesday Reading

Read the Meister entitled ‘Open Theism’ and reflect any one of the following:

1. Explain what Meister means by a ‘future contingent event’. What biblical evidence does he cite to show that God has exhaustive foreknowledge of future contingent events? Is there biblical evidence that some future events are left unsettled and so incapable of being known even by an omniscient being? In short, do you think the biblical evidence favors the classical view or open view on the nature of divine omniscience? Defend your answer.

2. Meister also presents a philosophical argument in favor of the classical view. Try to unpack this argument and critique it.

3. On p. 18, Meister argues that open theists are faced with a certain dilemma in their interpretation of biblical texts dealing with apparent predictions of future contingent events. Explain this dilemma and why, according to Meister, it poses a problem for the open theist. Do you agree with Meister that the open theist must choose at least one of these two options in dealing with the relevant passages? Or, are there other options available to the open theist that can help salvage their position?

Friday’s Reading

Read the editor’s introduction on teleological argument in course pack and ‘The Watch and the Watchmaker’, the excerpt from William Paley’s (1802) Natural Theology, pp. 52-56 in the course pack.

- Reflect on the study questions listed on p. 53.
- Present your own critique of Paley’s analogy and the conclusion he draws from it.

Week 8
Monday’s Reading

Read David Hume’s critique of a teleological argument such as Paley’s on pp. 56-63 of your course pack and reflect on the following:

- On p. 61, Philo (Hume) claims that Cleathes’ (a natural theologian’s) teleological argument gives us “no reason…for ascribing perfection to the Deity.” Describe one of the yucky theological conclusions that Philo draws from the Cleanthes’ argument. State whether or not you agree with Hume’s objections to the argument or whether these objections can be met. Defend your position.