Questions on Descartes’ *Meditations III & IV*

1. Why is it important to Descartes to determine as early as possible whether God exists and is a deceiver?
2. What is the difference between innate, adventitious, and fictitious ideas?
3. How is the “spontaneous inclination” to believe that my ideas are caused by things outside me different from the “natural light” by which I can discern truth?
4. How are all ideas alike as “modes of thought”? and how are they different in terms of their “objective reality”?
5. What is the difference between the objective reality of an idea and the actual or formal reality of a thing?
6. What does Descartes mean by “it is manifest by the natural light that there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect”?
7. How does Descartes combine his description of the objective reality of our idea of God to show that his knowledge of God’s existence is not something he made up?
8. Why can’t I know whether the bodily things of which I have ideas really exist?
9. Why is my clear and distinct idea of God as an infinite substance not something for which I could have been the cause?
10. How does my having this idea of God prove that he actually exists?
11. If my will is infinite (like God’s), then how why would I choose to think things wrongly—that is, how can error be explained?
12. How can I use my free will to avoid error?