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978-0-521-18439-7 - The Principle of Sufficient Reason: A Reassessment

Alexander R. Pruss

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The Principle of Sufficient Reason

The Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) says that all contingent facts must have explanations. In this volume, the first on the topic in the English language in nearly half a century, Alexander Pruss examines the substantive philosophical issues raised by the PSR, which currently is considered primarily within the context of various cosmological arguments for the existence of God. Discussing several forms of the PSR and selected historical episodes from Parmenides, Aquinas, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant, Pruss defends the claim that every true contingent proposition must have an explanation against major objections, including Hume's imaginability argument and Peter van Inwagen's argument that the PSR entails modal fatalism. Pruss also provides a number of positive arguments for the PSR, based on considerations as different as the metaphysics of existence, counterfactuals and modality, negative explanations, and the everyday applicability of the PSR. Moreover, Pruss shows how the PSR would advance the discussion in a number of disparate fields, such as metaethics and the philosophy of mathematics.

Alexander R. Pruss is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. He has published many papers on metaphysics, philosophy of religion, applied ethics, probability theory, and geometric symmetrization theory. With Richard M. Gale he is coeditor of *The Existence of God*.

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Georgetown University



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For my father and mother

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