



PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/02

Paper 2 Key Texts and Topics in Philosophy and Theology 1

May/June 2010

2 hours

Candidates answer on the enclosed Answer Booklet.

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Choose **one** of Topics 1 to 4. Answer **two** questions. You must answer **both** parts of the question in Section A and **one** question from Section B for the Topic you have chosen. You should divide your time equally between the questions you attempt.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

* 2 8 0 6 9 1 8 5 5 4 *

This document consists of **5** printed pages and **3** blank pages.



Choose **one** of Topics 1 to 4.

Answer **two** questions.

You must answer **both** parts of the question in Section A and **one** question from Section B for the Topic you have chosen.

You should divide your time equally between the questions you attempt.

Topic 1 Epistemology

Answer Question 1 **and** either Question 2 **or** Question 3.

Section A

To make our difficulties plain, let us concentrate attention on the table. To the eye it is oblong, brown, and shiny, to the touch it is smooth and cool and hard; when I tap it, it gives out a wooden sound. Anyone else who sees and feels and hears the table will agree with this description, so that it might seem as if no difficulty would arise; but as soon as we try to be more precise our troubles begin. Although I believe that the table is 'really' of the same colour all over, the parts that reflect the light look much brighter than the other parts, and some parts look white because of reflected light. I know that, if I move, the parts that reflect the light will be different, so that the apparent distribution of colours on the table will change. It follows that if several people are looking at the table at the same moment, no two of them will see exactly the same distribution of colours, because no two can see it from exactly the same point of view, and any change in the point of view makes some change in the way the light is reflected.

[Extract from **Bertrand Russell**: *The Problems of Philosophy*: 2]

- 1 (a) With reference to this passage, explain what kinds of philosophical problems are raised by Russell's discussion of appearance and reality. [10]
- (b) Critically assess Russell's views on the nature and existence of matter. [15]

Section B

- 2 Critically assess reliabilism as a theory of knowledge. [25]

OR

- 3 'It is impossible to uphold phenomenalist theories of perception.' Critically examine this claim. [25]

Topic 2 Philosophical and Theological Language

Answer Question 4 **and** either Question 5 **or** Question 6.

Section A

What is not so generally recognised is that there can be no way of proving that the existence of a god, such as the God of Christianity, is even probable. Yet this also is easily shown. For if the existence of such a god were probable, then the proposition that he existed would be an empirical hypothesis. And in that case it would be possible to deduce from it, and other empirical hypotheses, certain experiential propositions which were not deducible from those other hypotheses alone. But in fact this is not possible. It is sometimes claimed, indeed, that the existence of a certain sort of regularity in nature constitutes sufficient evidence for the existence of a god. But if the sentence "God exists" entails no more than that certain types of phenomena occur in certain sequences, then to assert the existence of a god will be simply equivalent to asserting that there is the requisite regularity in nature; and no religious man would admit that this was all he intended to assert in asserting the existence of a god. He would say that in talking about God, he was talking about a transcendent being who might be known through certain empirical manifestations, but certainly could not be defined in terms of those manifestations. But in that case the term "god" is a metaphysical term. And if "god" is a metaphysical term, then it cannot be even probable that a god exists. For to say that "God exists" is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot be either true or false. And by the same criterion, no sentence which purports to describe the nature of a transcendent god can possess any literal significance.

[Extract from **A.J. Ayer**: *Language, Truth and Logic*: 115]

- 4 (a) With reference to this passage, explain why Ayer claims that language about a transcendent God is meaningless. [10]
- (b) Evaluate Ayer's attack on religion. [15]

Section B

- 5 Examine critically the view that 'good' is a factual property. [25]

OR

- 6 Evaluate the significance for religious belief of Wittgenstein's concept of language games. [25]

Topic 3 Philosophy of Religion

Answer Question 7 **and** either Question 8 **or** Question 9.

Section A

I believe that the justification for the enterprise lies in the nature of theology. If it is to lay claim again to its medieval title of the Queen of the Sciences that will not be because it is in a position to prescribe the answers to the questions discussed by other disciplines. Rather it will be because it must avail itself of their answers in the conduct of its own inquiry, thereby setting them within the most profound context available. Theology's regal status lies in its commitment to seek the deepest possible level of understanding. In the course of that endeavour it needs to take into account all other forms of knowledge, while in no way attempting to assert an hegemony over them. A theological view of the world is a total view of the world. Every form of human understanding must make its contribution to it. The offering of the physical sciences to that end must be made, at least partly, by those who work in them. Theology cannot just be left to the theologians, as is made clear by the recent spectacle of a distinguished theologian writing over three hundred pages on God in creation with only an occasional and cursory reference to scientific insight. It is as idle to suppose that one can satisfactorily speak about the doctrine of creation without taking into account the actual nature of the world, as it would be to think that the significance of the world could be exhaustively conveyed in the scientific description of its physical processes.

[Extract from **John Polkinghorne**: *Science and Creation. The Search for Understanding*: 1-2]

- 7 (a) With reference to this passage, explain why Polkinghorne sees natural theology as being crucially important for understanding the world. [10]
- (b) Assess critically Polkinghorne's attempt to lead physics to theology. [15]

Section B

- 8 Does the fact that something exists rather than nothing mean that there is a God? [25]
- OR
- 9 'The concept of life *after* death is incoherent.' Critically assess this claim. [25]

Topic 4 New Testament: The Four Gospels

Answer Question 10 **and** either Question 11 **or** Question 12

Section A

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

[John 1: 1-18]

- 10 (a)** Examine the significance of this passage for an understanding of who Jesus was. [10]
- (b)** 'The synoptic gospels are concerned with the "Christ of faith" not the "Jesus of history".' Discuss. [15]

Section B

- 11** Assess what place and importance the apocalyptic teachings of Jesus have in the New Testament. [25]

OR

- 12** 'Jesus was a law-breaker not a law-maker.' Discuss. [25]

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Question 7 © John Polkinghorne; *Science and Creation*; The Search for Understanding; SPCK; 1988.

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