

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/02

Paper 2 Key Texts and Topics in Philosophy and Theology 1

May/June 2011

2 hours

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.

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.



This document consists of **6** printed pages and **2** 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

Nothing is so convenient as a decisive argument ... which must at least *silence* the most arrogant bigotry and superstition, and free us from their impertinent solicitations. I flatter myself, that I have discovered an argument of a like nature, which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and consequently, will be useful as long as the world endures. For so long, I presume, will the accounts of miracles and prodigies be found in all history, sacred and profane.

Though experience be our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact; it must be acknowledged, that this guide is not altogether infallible, but in some cases is apt to lead us into errors. One, who in our climate, should expect better weather in any week of JUNE than in one of DECEMBER, would reason justly, and conformably to experience; but it is certain, that he may happen, in the event, to find himself mistaken. However, we may observe, that, in such a case, he would have no cause to complain of experience; because it commonly informs us beforehand of the uncertainty, by that contrariety of events, which we may learn from a diligent observation. All effects follow not with like certainty from their supposed causes. Some events are found, in all countries and all ages, to have been constantly conjoined together. Others are found to have been more variable, and sometimes to disappoint our expectations; so that, in our reasonings concerning matter of fact, there are all imaginable degrees of assurance, from the highest certainty to the lowest species of moral evidence.

A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full *proof* of the future existence of that event. In other cases, he proceeds with more caution: He weighs the opposite experiments: He considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments: To that side he inclines, with doubt and hesitation; and when at last he fixes his judgement, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call probability. All *probability*, then, supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where the one side is found to overbalance the other, and to produce a degree of evidence, proportioned to the superiority. A hundred instances or experiments on one side, and fifty on another, afford a doubtful expectation of any event; though a hundred uniform experiments, with only one that is contradictory, reasonably beget a pretty strong degree of assurance. In all cases, we must balance the opposite experiments, where they are opposite, and deduct the smaller number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence.

To apply these principles to a particular instance; we may observe that there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful, and even necessary to human life, than that which is derived from the testimony of men, and the reports of eyewitnesses and spectators.

[Extract from **David Hume**: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*: Section X, 'Of Miracles']

- 1 (a) With reference to this passage, explain Hume's main argument against miracles. [10]
(b) Critically assess Hume's arguments against miracles. [15]

Section B

- 2 Critically assess coherentism. [25]

OR

- 3 'It is impossible to uphold a realist theory 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

A. ANTHONY FLEW

Let us begin with a parable. It is a parable developed from a tale told by John Wisdom in his haunting and revelatory article 'Gods'. Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One explorer says, 'Some gardener must tend this plot.' The other disagrees, 'There is no gardener.' So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. 'But perhaps he is an invisible gardener.' So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds. (For they remember how H.G. Wells's 'Invisible Man' could be both smelt and touched though he could not be seen.) But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movements of the wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the Believer is not convinced. 'But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves.' At last the Sceptic despairs, 'But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?'

[Extract from **Basil Mitchell**: *The Philosophy of Religion*: I: 'Theology and Falsification. A symposium' (Anthony Flew, R.M. Hare, and Basil Mitchell): 13]

- 4 (a) Explain how Anthony Flew uses the principle of falsification to attack the idea that religious statements are meaningful. [10]
- (b) Critically assess **either** the contribution of Hare's concept of *bliks*, **or** of Mitchell's parable of 'The Stranger', as a response to Flew's attack. [15]

Section B

- 5 Examine critically the view that 'good' is non-cognitive. [25]

OR

- 6 How far can the terms: *omnipotent*, *omniscient*, and *omnibenevolent*, be applied coherently to God? [25]

Topic 3 Philosophy of Religion

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

Section A

...Because sin ... belongs to our own innermost nature and is at the same time the source of so many forms of evil it has usually, and surely rightly, been seen as constituting the heart of the problem of evil. Accordingly at this central point the theodicy-problem takes the form: Why has an omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely good and loving Creator permitted sin in His universe?

To this question the Christian answer, both in the Augustinian and in the Irenaean types of theodicy, has always centred upon man's freedom and responsibility as a finite personal being. This answer has recently been critically discussed in the philosophical journals under the name of the free-will defence. The discussion has been of great value in clarifying the issues involved, and as a result it is evident that, fully stated, the free-will defence falls into three stages.

The first stage establishes a conception of divine omnipotence The second phase of the argument claims that there is a necessary connection between personality and moral freedom such that the idea of the creation of personal beings who are not free to choose wrongly as well as to choose rightly is self-contradictory and therefore does not fall within the scope of the divine omnipotence It is upon the third phase that discussion centres. Granted that God is going to make finite persons and not mere puppets or automata; and granted that persons must be genuinely free; could not God nevertheless have so made men that they would always freely do what is right?

[Extract from **John Hick**: *Evil and the God of Love*: 264-267]

- 7 (a) (i) Explain briefly the reasoning of the free-will defence, **and**
 (ii) with reference to this passage, show how Hick attempts to prove that it would be logically impossible for God to "have so made men that they would always freely do what is right." [10]
- (b) Examine critically Hick's defence of the free-will defence. [15]

Section B

- 8 'The only success of the ontological argument is that it supports the faith of those who already believe in God.' Critically assess this claim. [25]

OR

- 9 'Religious experiences tell us only about religious belief. They tell us nothing about God.' Critically assess this claim. [25]

Topic 4 New Testament: The Four Gospels

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

Section A

⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement has seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The Shorter Ending of Mark

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]]

The Longer Ending of Mark

⁹[[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. ¹¹But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

¹²After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. ¹³And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

¹⁴Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. ¹⁶The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.]]

[Mark 16: 8-20]

10 (a) Discuss the contents and authorship of this passage. [10]

(b) Critically assess the significance of the resurrection narratives. [15]

Section B

11 'Jesus was more interested in teaching people how to behave rather than what to believe.' Critically assess this claim. [25]

OR

12 Critically examine the claim that the only purpose of the crucifixion narratives is to establish that Jesus truly died. [25]

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Question 4 © Basil Mitchell; *The Philosophy of Religion*; Oxford University Press; 1971.

Question 7 © John Hick; *Evil and the God of Love*, Revised ed; Macmillan; 1966.

Question 10 © New Revised Standard Version of the Bible; Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; 1989.

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