CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Pre-U Certificate

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2014 series

9774 PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

9774/02   Paper 1 (Topics and Key Texts in Philosophy and
                          Theology 1), maximum raw mark 50

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International Examinations

Topic 1 Epistemology

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

Section A

[Extract from **David Hume**: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding:* Section II, OF THE ORIGIN OF IDEAS, Sections 11–12]

1 (a) Explain Hume's distinction between impressions and ideas. **[10]**

This question can be answered by primary reference to this passage, but the question does not prohibit a wider application. A response which confines itself to elucidation of the terms and concepts given in the passage is eligible for an award up to and including Level 6. Hume here refers to the contents of the mind as 'perceptions', which are divided into *impressions* and [*thoughts*] *ideas*. Impressions are more *forceful* and vivacious than ideas. Impressions relate roughly to *feeling / sensing*, whereas ideas relate to *thinking*. Following Locke, Hume divides impressions into two kinds: those of sensation, which derive from our senses, and those of reflection, which derive from mental experience, e.g. feeling emotions. Our more lively impressions include "all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will." Ideas are *faint copies* of impressions, being less forcible and lively. For example to imagine or to remember the sights and sounds of a storm is much less forcible than experiencing the sights and sounds of that storm. Disease or madness, however, can make ideas as lively as impressions. Just as there are ideas of sensation, such as the idea of a colour, there are also ideas of reflection, such as the idea of an emotion. A third distinction between ideas and impressions is that whereas we can be confused and mistaken about ideas, this is more difficult with impressions.

At first view, the thought of man seems to be unrestrained even within the limits of nature and reality. Although the body may creep around in pain, the mind can soar anywhere in the universe: "nor is any thing beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction", nevertheless on closer examination this faculty "amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience." The basic building blocks of all thought and experience are simple impressions, such as single colours, single shapes, single sounds, etc., each of which has a corresponding idea. In addition to simple impressions, we have complex impressions, such as the colour and shape of a horse. The abstract idea of a horse is even more complex, since abstraction leads us to ignore its colour or size in favour of four legs, tail, mane, and neigh. Complex ideas like 'unicorn' might not seem to correspond to sense experience, since unicorns don't exist; nevertheless complex ideas are in fact just combinations of simple ideas which *do* correspond to sense experience: the idea of the *unicorn* = the combination of two simple ideas: *horse* + *horn*. We can think of a *golden mountain* because we are previously acquainted with two consistent ideas: *gold* + *mountain*. Equally we can think of a *virtuous horse* because we can conceive of *virtue* from our own feeling and unite it to *horse*. Where a man has a deficient sense organ, he is thereby deficient in corresponding ideas: a blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man can form no notion of sounds. Likewise a man of mild manners can form no idea of inveterate revenge or cruelty; a selfish heart cannot easily conceive the heights of friendship and generosity.

(b) Evaluate Hume's account of impressions and ideas. **[15]**

For empiricists, Hume's account of impressions and ideas appears to be a common sense account, since all ideas can be analysed into simple ideas, each of which corresponds to an impression, as with his examples of a golden mountain and a virtuous horse. Hume seems to be on solid ground where he claims that a blind man can never form a notion of colours, or a deaf man of sounds. Nevertheless Hume's assertions can be challenged, one such challenge coming from his own admission that he can think of an exception to the rule that all simple ideas are copies of impressions. If someone has seen all major shades of blue except one, and they are presented with a spectrum of blue with that shade missing, they will be able to form an idea of that shade, yet the idea of that shade has not been copied from an impression. Hume states that this exception is not important, but clearly it is: if there is one exception to the rule that ideas derive from impressions, then there can be others. Candidates are likely to present challenges to and defences of Hume's 'Copy Principle'. Other challenges to Hume include his analysis of complex ideas such as necessity, substance and self, and candidates might argue that these concepts can, or cannot, be derived satisfactorily from elsewhere. If the 'elsewhere' includes ideas that are *a priori* or innate, then Hume's account is in difficulties. Candidates might assess Hume's concept (or dismissal of) the concept of an enduring self. Some might argue that Hume's view that all ideas are derived from experience is self-evidently wrong, since we have an idea of things existing independently of experience, and if we cannot have gained this idea from experience, then where does it come from?

Section B

2 **'For a belief to be justified it must belong to a coherent system of beliefs.'**

Critically assess coherentism as a theory of epistemic justification. **[25]**

Coherentism takes a holistic view that justification is a holistic process. There are no privileged beliefs that underpin all knowledge. Knowledge is justified because it coheres with some system of which it forms a part – i.e. it fits into a consistent set of beliefs and experiences that support each other. To establish this consistency, the main requirement is logical consistency, since beliefs that are logically inconsistent are clearly not coherent. Another requirement is for integration between the different parts of a system, so (for example) a theory that offers a single explanation for divergent phenomena is more coherent than a theory that offers multiple explanations. Also, the description of cohering beliefs has to be as complete as possible. Put another way, a coherent system should follow the principles of Occam's Razor and Bayes' Theorem.

A critique of coherentism might begin with the isolation objection: it is possible to have a perfectly consistent system of beliefs in isolation from anything in the *real* world. There are many examples of coherent belief systems that are entirely false. Russell argued that since both a belief and its negation will cohere with at least one set of beliefs, the coherence theory seems to hold that contradictory beliefs can be shown to be true. According to coherentism, what is justified by the theory is each belief *within* a set of beliefs, and *not* the set itself. In Creationist thinking, for example, belief in the principle of 'irreducible complexity' is justified by a chain of beliefs that cohere with that principle, yet Creationism is arguably a totally false theory, and conflicts with other coherent sets of beliefs held for example by physics, biology and genetics. If there can be multiple coherent sets of beliefs that conflict with each other, it is hard to see how the coherentist theory of justification works. Some argue that although multiple conflicting sets exist, there can in fact only be one truly coherent set, and the task of empiricism and reasoning is to gradually eliminate all incoherent sets. This raises the counter-objection that the elimination process has to appeal to experience, which is not far from admitting that knowledge has foundations after all. Some suggest that perhaps knowledge does have foundations, but the best way of justifying knowledge is through the coherentist approach, where the picture is built up like the interlocking strands of a spider's web. Some might refer to Donald Davidson's defence of coherentism through his 'principle of charity'.

3 **Evaluate Berkeley's view that material objects are simply ideas in the mind.** **[25]**

Berkeley's 'subjective idealism' holds that realism cannot make sense of the nature and existence of material objects. Berkeley's empirical aim is to show that I can only have perceptions of material objects, so I cannot know that they exist outside my mind. Material objects are therefore ideas that exist only inside the mind. To the objection that if material objects do not exist outside my mind, then what *causes* perceptions? Berkeley replied that there are three possibilities: ideas, my mind, and another mind. Ideas are passive and do not cause anything; my mind cannot cause perceptions, because our perceptions happen to us; so they must be caused by another mind. The only likely cause of the systematic and consistent perception we experience is God. This disposes (according to Berkeley) of the objection given in 1 (a), that when material objects are not being perceived, they should cease to exist, whereas they clearly do not (as with the fire) – it is God who guarantees that consistency. Berkeley has to deal with illusions. Illusions are mis-perceptions, which implies that there must be a difference between my illusion and the 'real' world, so the real world must exist – if I see a stick that appears to be bent in water, then there must be a real world in which the stick is not bent. Berkeley's response is that there just is not a real world – all there is is my perception, in which the stick looks bent. Candidates are free to develop any arguments they like – for example it is often held that it is not legitimate to replace external causation with an unknown factor (God); and that a simpler explanation of the apparent effects of material objects is to assume that they exist. Berkeley's incipient phenomenalism seems to suffer from the objection to phenomenalist theories in general – that material objects (on phenomenalist accounts) seem to be sitting around waiting to be perceived in such a consistent manner (as in an archaeological dig, for example) that it is simplest to believe that they have really existed all along. Berkeley assumed that he was defending a number of commonsense principles – that we can trust our senses, that the objects of our perceptions are real, that the qualities we perceive as existing are real; and his denial of the separate existence of matter for him affirms those principles. Candidates are likely to employ a number of materialist accounts to challenge Berkeley's arguments.

Topic 2 Philosophical and Theological Language

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

Section A

[Extract from **Basil Mitchell**: *The Philosophy of Religion*: VIII: 'Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'.' by **H H Price**: 143, 151–152, 166–167]

4 (a) Explain the distinctions that Price makes between 'belief-that' and 'belief in'. **[10]**

Price holds that factual 'belief-in' ('I believe in fairies' / 'I believe in Father Christmas') can easily be reduced to 'belief that', but evaluative 'belief-in' ('I believe in my doctor / my friend) cannot be reduced in this way. Applied to God, belief in God is evaluative and cannot be reduced to the mere acceptance of an existential proposition. According to Price, there are varieties of belief-in statements that are *irreducible*, including belief in persons, animals and objects. The blind man believes in his guide-dog; a medieval knight believes in his horse; a keen gardener might believe in his chrysanthemums (but not his strawberry plants); a keen motorist might believe in his car; the Vikings believed in the sea; some believe in procedures, such as cold baths in the morning, or even a theory, such as that of Price. One might think that belief in a theory is reducible to a set of propositions, but to say one believes in it is to esteem it, and to gain some kind of power from it (e.g. predictive power). These categories contrast with *reducible* belief-in, such as belief in (or disbelief in) fairies or the Loch Ness Monster, beliefs which amount to nothing more than that they exist (or that they don't). Belief in God can in some cases be reducible to mere acceptance of the existential proposition that there is a God, since one can believe this without being at all religious.

Belief-in, then, is of two kinds: *irreducible* belief-in is *evaluative*, and amounts to *esteeming* or *trusting*, as in the blind man and the knight who value their animals for their qualities; *reducible* belief-in amounts to the *factual* acceptance of propositions. The two kinds can overlap: I can believe that there is a God, and I can believe in God in a specific religious sense. I can also believe in something that does not exist factually, for example during the 19th century I might have believed in allowing women in the UK to vote. Belief-in also (according to Price) has a *prospective* character that is absent from factual belief in. For example, the Christian belief in the Incarnation is on one level a belief about a past event, nevertheless for those who believe in it, the Incarnation is prospective, in that its effects will always continue to be beneficial. Belief-in can also be interested or disinterested: for example if I believe in my friend, it is in my interest / good for me that he is my friend, and I hope to gain from that friendship continually; on the other hand my belief in his friendship is disinterested belief-in because I value if for its own sake, for what he is. My belief in God can be interested in the sense that it is good for me that God exists, since God might be expected to care about people and the world, to answer prayer, and to allow me life after death; nevertheless it is also disinterested belief-in because God's existence is good in itself, and I presumably believe it to be the greatest good without which there would be no other goods.

(b) Evaluate Price's arguments about belief-that and belief-in statements and how these are applied to God. **[15]**

There are several different points of emphasis that might be used by candidates. Candidates might reject Price's differentiation between belief-in and belief-that by arguing, for example, that *all* belief-in statements reduce to belief-that statements. Belief in my doctor can be argued empirically (*that* he cures me); belief in democracy can be argued empirically (*that* democratic systems are visibly superior to autocracies in a number of ways). The medieval knight's belief in his horse reduces to a series of belief-that statements, such as:

- I believe that this horse will help me to stay alive in combat, since it is heavier / faster / more warlike than other horses.
- I believe that this horse has the right kind of temperament to take part in a battle.
- I believe that this horse is the best horse because he likes me, and I am attached to him.

No additional significance is delivered by augmenting these statements to a collective belief-in statement, so his belief in his horse is simply shorthand for a series of statements that are believed to be factually true. The third statement refers to an emotional bond between horse and knight, but this is psychological, and ordinary psychological beliefs have no special status. Those who claim to have religious experiences, for example, are merely in a particular brain-state that can be analysed by neuro-scans: such claims do not indicate a spiritual or paranormal origin for religious experiences. Belief in God similarly reduces to one or more existential propositions about God: that a spiritual being exists / has an interest in human affairs / interacts with humans, and so on; but the fact that many people deny such propositions and see them as wishful-thinking suggests that Price's analysis depends on his use of language: he is indulging in non-verifiable, non-falsifiable, and therefore meaningless speculation. Religious faith is ultimately defensible only through an approach such as reformed epistemology, which asserts that statements of belief in God are justifiable without reference to evidence, which is hardly rational.

In defence of Price, some might compare his approach to that of Hare, who asserts that religious beliefs are *bliks*: *views* of the world which are prior to evidential factors, and which are argued emotionally or instinctively. No epistemological system can deliver knowledge that is unarguably justified true belief, since the argument that we are all brains in vats cannot be defeated; so reformed epistemology can with some reason argue that faith needs no evidential justification. Hence we are justified in taking a 'leap of faith' in God, or in committing our lives to belief in a God whose attributes lead us to expect that he will reward the believer in the afterlife. This might be held to be analogous to belief in friendship / a friend, which can be valued for its own sake (i.e. as 'disinterested' belief-in), but it is obviously questionable how far such a belief can be really disinterested.

Section B

5. **Critically assess ethical naturalism.** **[25]**

Ethical naturalists regard good as a natural, factual property, so from the study of human nature we can derive a series of moral absolutes. Ethical naturalism is a form of moral realism and moral cognitivism, as opposed to the view that ethical values are either cognitive but non-natural, or else are non-cognitive. For ethical naturalists, good is a complex and analysable property. So for example psychological egoists argue that it is natural for people to act out of self-interest, so 'good' is whatever people perceive to be in their own interest. Utilitarians generally argue that one should do that which gives the greatest happiness to the greatest number, so the natural facts of utilitarianism include the view that people (from dispositions of prudence and benevolence) wish the happiness of the greatest number. Virtue theorists might locate natural facts in terms of those factors which we observe to contribute to the flourishing of the human race.

G E Moore attacked ethical naturalism by claiming that it commits the 'naturalistic fallacy' of drawing ethical conclusions from natural facts, so that something is 'good' because it is natural, or bad because it is unnatural. For Moore, 'good' is simple and unanalysable, like 'yellow', which likewise cannot be defined in terms of anything other than itself: to define 'good' in terms of anything other than itself is a naturalistic fallacy. 'Yellow' and 'good' are irreducible, simple notions, so cannot be defined using synonyms or other terms. Candidates are likely to expand on this by pointing out that Moore defends such claims through the Open Question argument, or by expanding on the 'Fact-Value Gap'. In response to these objections, some might defend ethical naturalism by attempting to bridge the 'Fact-Value Gap', e.g. by a neo-naturalist approach which argues that goodness has an objective content: in fact one cannot have a moral attitude at all which is independent of some sensible content, which we might quantify as 'human flourishing'. Candidates can offer any analysis of naturalism they like, e.g. Hume's (1969) argument that moral opinions are not qualities in objects but are mental perceptions analogous to our perception of secondary qualities such as colour and heat/cold. Some might reject any naturalist or non-naturalist argument in favour of non-cognitivism.

6. **Assess the implications of the falsification principle for the philosophy of religion.** [25]

Candidates are likely to begin with a clarification of *falsification,* perhaps with Popper's ideas extrapolated from his analysis of scientific procedures: e.g. his distrust of philosophies that are inherently non-falsifiable and therefore inherently meaningless, such as those of Plato and Marx. As a follow-up to the attack of the verification principle on the meaningfulness of religious claims, the falsification principle is generally regarded as providing a greater threat, since the attack of the verification principle on religion is not widely seen as impacting significantly on religious assertions. The implications of the falsification principle for the philosophy of religion are diverse: those seeking to defend the rationality and intelligibility of religious statements and propositions have felt the need to show that non-falsifiable assertions can still be meaningful, particularly with regard to some of the central claims of religion concerning life after death; also with regard to religious moral claims where God is seen as the source of moral law.

Candidates might follow the Flew / Hare / Mitchell symposium in Mitchell's *Philosophy of Religion.* Flew re-states the Falsification Principle by means of Wisdom's *Parable of the Gardener,* which concludes that a Gardener (God) who is invisible, intangible and eternally elusive is no different from an imaginary Gardener, or in fact from no Gardener/God at all. Flew then analyses theological assertions such as, 'God loves us as a father loves his children', applied particularly to the case of the child dying from inoperable throat cancer, to conclude that these assertions 'die the death of a thousand qualifications'. Hare rejects this, using his example of the lunatic who thinks all Oxford dons are out to kill him, concluding that religious talk does not amount to *explanations* about the world, but to a series of non-cognitive assertions that are nevertheless meaningful. Flew seems right to reject this, since believers do believe that their assertions are factual. Mitchell uses yet another parable – that of the Stranger – to counter this, suggesting that non-falsifiable religious assertions are factual (on the analogy of trust in the Stranger / God) and do count as explanations. For example the problem of evil has a potential solution in the mind and purposes of God, yet that solution is non-falsifiable. In the same way that the authenticity of the Stranger's credentials are eventually verified, Mitchell presumably looks towards verification post-mortem, but that raises the same problems as Hick's doctrine of eschatological verification, namely that that doctrine is an asymmetrical one (verified if true, not-falsified if false). Some might refer to Swinburne's story of the toys in the toy-cupboard; others to Braithwaite's argument that religious assertions are conative and non-cognitive – they function as statements of moral intention, and are in fact normally verifiable and falsifiable by observing the believer's behaviour. Flew still requires recognition that there can be no excuses for an omnipotent and omniscient God, but that depends rather on how successful one thinks the theodicies are in showing that God allows evil for a justifiable reason.

Topic 3 Philosophy of Religion

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

Section A

[Extract from: **John Polkinghorne**: *Science and Creation: The Search for Understanding*: 20, 21, 22]

7   (a) 'The fact that we are able to understand the world calls for a deeper explanation than simply stating that this just 'is the case'.'   [10]

Explain Polkinghorne's evidence for thinking this.

Polkinghorne begins the chapter on *Insightful Inquiry* by observing that science and religion unite in 'comradely concern' in the endeavour to make sense of our experience, to gain a coherent and satisfying understanding of the world in which we live. Such enquiry has four elements: (1) the adoption of a belief; (2) its interaction with experience; (3) its fuller conceptual exploration; (4) its generalisation to the widest possible range of experience. Scientists do this not to tell a pretty story about what they observe but to gain a deeper understanding of the world. The power of science lies in its ability to interrogate the world and manipulate the phenomena. Science assumes the intelligibility of the world, that it is open to rational inquiry, and formulates the basic laws of nature which govern the phenomena. That the world *is* intelligible is surely a non-trivial fact about it. Yet it might have been otherwise – the universe might have been a disorderly chaos rather than an orderly cosmos, or it might have had a rationality which was inaccessible to us. Evolution is often used as an explanation of what is found humanly to be the case, but it *explains* nothing. Such insights as Einstein's understanding of Relativity or the ability of abstract mathematics to fit perfectly with the world of quantum theory have no survival value, but we nevertheless have them. The reason for the deep-seated congruence of the rationality present in our minds with the rationality present in the world surely comes from a profound reason which is the ground of both, i.e. the rationality of the Creator: God.

This brings us to the Anthropic Principle: fine tuning of the 'cosmic knobs' is necessary to make men. Doubtless some instances of fine-tuning are to be explained by circumstance; nevertheless there still has to be something special about the world of anthropic possibility. As Paul Davies says, "the fact that these relations are necessary for our existence is one of the most fascinating discoveries of modern science". Science cannot even explain its own laws, so is it just luck that things are this way, or is there an explanation of them – a higher source of such laws? Some reply that there may be a multiverse, and that it is purely a matter of luck that all the knobs in *this* universe have produced an ordered, intelligible system. Some take a Humean kind of stance, that if we could penetrate deeply enough into matter we might see why things *have* to be the way they are, so that no more deep-rooted explanation is necessary; yet that seems unlikely, to say the least. Some argue that we impose order on the world through our own thought processes; well, of course we approach the world from our own point of view, but that view receives confirmation *from the way things already are*. Granted we know little about what is probable and improbable in a universe, and there are doubtless many things that we cannot know, nevertheless we know enough. As an intelligent guess, the radical indeterminacy of quantum events is a physical sign of the freedom God gives the universe to be itself, thus giving a creative significance to chance.

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(b) **Evaluate Polkinghorne's view that the reason why we can understand the world, and why the world can be understood by us, is that both are the creation of a rational God.** **[15]**

According to Polkinghorne, the intelligibility of the world, as far as we are concerned, is deep-rooted. He argues that attempts made to show that such intelligibility is the result of the kind of chance factors that support multiverse theory are not convincing. Human rationality has a truly amazing capacity to understand the world and to delineate the laws of science that make this understanding possible. On many levels, Polkinghorne seems to be right. If we look at recent developments in String Theory and M-Theory, for example, such advances, which incidentally give us a much broader picture of cosmological possibilities, were driven not by physicists looking at objects in the world but by purely theoretical mathematics. It seems beyond coincidence that mathematical intuition and mathematical description can take us so far. Those who support the conclusions of the Strong Anthropic Principle point out that the odds against the boundary conditions for the universe being correct to the necessary parameters, just by chance, are enormous: about 10 to the 180th power – a number so vast that it exceeds the number of quarks in the observable universe. Many of the theoretical models which attempt to show that the intelligibility of this universe is merely a matter of chance seem to have an agenda to which such theories are fitted artificially.

Balanced against this, one might say the same of Polkinghorne's own agenda, which is not just theistic but which is avowedly Christian. Whereas theism (or deism) might be rationally defensible, Christianity (one might argue) is not, so Polkinghorne merely interprets the data to suit his own predispositions. Polkinghorne's use of scripture, such as Romans 1:20: *God's invisible nature ... has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made*, is simply an echo of Polkinghorne's own approach, and has no independent value as an analysis of God or of physical reality. The Anthropic Principle is not particularly well supported by physicists and cosmologists, since the multiverse theory predicted by M-Theory (together with the fact that there may have been an infinite number of universes existing in the past), implies that there are enough universes around to meet the statistical improbability of a tiny fraction of them meeting all the boundary conditions purely by chance. Humans are merely a part of what has evolved, and the incidence of cataclysmic and natural disasters in the world and in the universe suggests that what has evolved can be made extinct instantaneously. Polkinghorne has little or nothing to say about the rest of the animal world, presumably because it does not fit with his Christian ideology.

Section B

8. **Analyse critically Hume's rejection of miracles.** **[25]**

Hume's rejection of miracles appears to stem from a predisposition to reject metaphysics, which might have had something to do with the fact that Hume defined miracles in metaphysical terms, as violations of natural laws by an unseen supernatural agent (God) done for a purpose, thus neatly defining them out of existence. Hume's main inductive argument against miracles concerns witness testimony. If we define miracles at the least likely / most improbable of all events, then it must always be more likely that the witnesses are lying or mistaken than that a miracle has occurred. Moreover the laws of nature do not allow exceptions: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle ... is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." (*Enquiry*). This need not be a compelling argument, since (as is usually pointed out), Hume's argument leaves him no room to admit a miracle if he did witness one. As Hume himself points out, no inductive argument is ever more than probable, so Hume's rejection of miracles is at best probable and may be false. Also, where Hume uses the improbability of miracles to suggest that they do not happen, believers can use the same factor of improbability to suggest that they do, since the improbability is the *condition* of the miracle. Candidates are likely also to assess Hume's subsidiary arguments against miracles: that there are no properly attested miracles by men of integrity and intelligence; that humans are naturally credulous; that most accounts of miracles come from ignorant and barbarous nations; that miracle stories in any one religion are debunked by conflicting miracle stories in the other religions; and that belief in miracles is part of the psychology of belief. Candidates should be able to give a reasoned assessment of at least some of these claims. They might also assess the strength of other claims about miracles, e.g. Wiles' view that a God who performs miracles selectively cannot be omnibenevolent; that miracles require God to act (improbably) as a causal agent in space-time, and so on, perhaps judging these to be adjuncts to Hume's rejection of miracles.

9. **Consider the view that to know there is life after death would solve the problem of evil. [25]**

This is likely to develop 'sliding door' responses, in so far as discussion of it can take many paths. Most will probably start with a statement of the evidential and logical problem of evil, the latter being in the form of a statement of the 'inconsistent triad' that God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, yet evil exists, followed by the claim that *God is omniscient* adds a fourth, and even greater problem to that posed by the inconsistent triad. Candidates might discuss this question from the standpoint of one religion, or else they might point out that the different religions offer different explanations of what life after death might be like and of how it might be achieved. In the Eastern religions, the main mode of life after death is through the Hindu and Buddhist concept of reincarnation, articulated differently in each tradition, but governed by the laws of *kamma* and *moksha*. In Christianity, for example, life after death is through resurrection to judgement, followed by heaven or hell (and perhaps purgatory), although the articulation of these concepts varies widely among Christians. Whether such ideas can be said to solve the problem of evil depends on what is accepted as a valid solution and in what is not. In the Christian Augustinian theodicy, for example, resurrection to eternal life in heaven might solve the problem of evil for the predestined elect but for those predestined to hell, resurrection to eternal punishment would solve little beyond Augustine's somewhat odd ideas about symmetry. John Hick, for example, uses Irenaean thinking to argue that the concept of hell is not coherent for those who believe that God is a God of love, and that the concept of eternal punishment would in fact constitute *the* main aspect of the problem of evil. On this view, if there are individuals excluded from heaven, then God's desire to bring all humans to his kingdom is thwarted, which does not sit well with any concept of God's omnipotence or omnibenevolence. Thus Hick concludes that although it is not a logical necessity that salvation should be universal, God's nature means that it is overwhelmingly likely that it will be so. Candidates might judge that some or all of this is metaphysical invention or wishful thinking, the only requirement being that some judgement should be made as to whether knowledge of life after death would solve the problem of evil. Some might judge that the solution, if there is one, lies in Process Theology or in some other assessment of God's nature and purpose.

Topic 4 New Testament: The Four Gospels

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

Section A

[Extract from NRSV]

John 11: 20–36

10 (a) With reference to this passage, explain the different claims about who Jesus was. [10]

Answers may identify the many different titles used for Jesus, including: Jesus as Lord, Messiah, Son of God, Son of man, teacher, resurrection and the life, prophet. The syllabus only mentions the titles Son of God, Son of man, Son of David and Messiah so the candidates who limit themselves to these titles may be awarded the top levels.

E.g. Jesus' divine powers are reflected in his foreknowledge of the events surrounding Lazarus' death and rising again. As Son of God, Jesus has the power to give life, to raise the dead. Martha calls Jesus "Son of God" when Jesus presents himself as the Resurrection and the Life (v. 25-27). Jesus' special relationship with God is reflected in Martha's words "God will give you whatever you ask of him" (v.22). As Son of man, Jesus shares the human qualities of emotion (v.33) and the need to ask questions. The title Son of man can also refer to the one who is given power by God to judge, e.g. in Daniel, which leads into the idea of him giving new life as a reward for the faithful. As Messiah, Jesus is the one who is to come (v.27), the one to bring people back to God and to establish God's reign on earth. The ability to raise from the dead shows an imploding of the end time, the reign of God in power on earth, inaugurated in the person and ministry of Jesus. The use of the word "Lord" could just mean "master", "sir" but in John's Gospel the word always has the overtones of the divine name, reflected in the post-Resurrection practice of calling Jesus the Lord and Christ. "Teacher" is another word for "rabbi". Jesus has authority to teach and makes God's message known. This connects to the idea of bringing God's reign on earth where Jesus shows people how to respond fully to the will of God.

10 (b) **'The most powerful teachings in the New Testament are those concerning resurrection.' Examine this claim.** **[15]**

There should be some examination of the relative impact of the idea of resurrection and the teachings about resurrection in comparison to other aspects of Jesus' ministry. While credit may be given for answers that include material from other parts of the New Testament e.g. Paul's letters, top levels can be obtained by those candidates who deal only with material from the Gospels.

E.g. The whole Christian message revolves around the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus has not been raised, then there is no Christianity. The disciples could only fully understand the teachings of Jesus in the light of the resurrection. This event gave a new dynamic not only to what Jesus said but also to what people believed about him. The ability to destroy the power of death and to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, realised eschatology, validates all Jesus' teachings and the claims made about him. The teachings based on the idea of resurrection show the new life and new creation that Jesus brought into being. The impact of the raising of Lazarus from the dead was immense at the time. So many people believed in Jesus on the basis of Lazarus' rising that the Jewish leaders decided they had to get rid of Lazarus, the "evidence", as well as removing Jesus. Other raisings from the dead like Jairus' daughter and the widow of Nain's son, testify to the fact that God has visited his people, that God's power is active on earth. The resurrection is the culmination of each of the Gospels. Even if Marks' Gospel ends at 16:8, the empty tomb incident implies something unique and transforming has happened which changes the lives of all Jesus' followers, even the women who ran away from the tomb in fear. The power of the Risen Christ fills the whole of the New Testament, being a central concept in the Acts and the Letters as well as shaping the Gospel narratives. However, the impact Jesus made during his life-time went well beyond any thought of resurrection. The disciples admitted later that they could not understand at the time what Jesus taught about resurrection but the Gospels imply that people were deeply impressed by his teachings about caring for the needy etc. Jesus' healing miracles show his power just as well as the raisings do, and for many people it is easier to accept a physical healing, however unusual, like the recovery of sight, than it is to believe that a person has been raised from the dead. The most probable explanation to these "raisings" is that the person was only in a deep coma, so there is nothing impressive about Jesus waking them up. Even Jesus said that Jairus' daughter was only asleep.

Section B

11 **'To love God and to love each other is a complete gospel summary.' Examine and evaluate this claim.** **[25]**

Candidates may select key passages, parables, miracles, teachings in support of this quotation. If Jesus is seen as a living example of the gospel message any illustration from the life death and resurrection of Jesus can be used to illustrate aspects of this quotation.

Evaluation of this quotation may be very wide ranging. Candidates may consider whether it is complete. Reference may be made to teachings about the love of God for humans, the Holy Spirit, New Covenant, discipleship, prayer etc. to show that it is incomplete. It may be argued that 'to love God' is all that is required. Some may consider that a sound bite is generally unhelpful. Others may comment upon what is the 'gospel' as opposed to a gospel.

E.g. According to Mark, Jesus' first message was "Repent and believe the good news." Many people consider that this is the best summary of the gospel message, of Jesus' teachings. The good news is that God loves all people irrespective of who they are or what they have done. The fact that Jesus was prepared to suffer and die the ignominious death on the cross to save people from the effects of their sins, their rejection of God, shows how great God's love is. Without this message being driven home through Jesus' teachings and actions, the call for a human response would fall flat. Jesus welcomed the outcasts and sinners. He ate with all types of people, including the wealthy tax collectors and Pharisees. He cured the lepers, the blind, the despised, to make them feel whole. He forgave sins, notably with the paralytic, even before he brought bodily health. All this is to show that God values the individual. Jesus did call people to follow his example, to be as perfect as God, to love and care for other people. Jesus stressed that the two great commandments were to love God and to love the neighbour. Many of the parables include examples of helping others, e.g. the rich man and Lazarus, the Good Samaritan and Jesus' own action show his willingness to put the needs of other people first, e.g. the feeding of the 5000. Jesus praised the example of those who put God first in a genuine way e.g. the widow at the Treasury. Doing the will of God, using all the gifts that God has given, e.g. the parable of the Talents, putting God first through genuine prayer, e.g. the teaching on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, all reflect the human response to the love that God first showed. While loving God and the neighbour are important aspects of the Gospel message, they follow on from the central point that God first loved humans, so that fact is the main summary of the Gospels.

12 **'There is no relationship between the Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel.' Critically assess this claim.** **[25]**

Candidates may be able to identify common material such as the Feeding of the Five thousand, and the passion narrative. Equally they may be able to identify material unique to John, such as the tradition of the beloved disciple and Johannine discourses. 'Relationship' may be understood in terms of dependency, and analysis of whether there is any evidence for literary dependency, or shared oral traditions. The developed theology of John may be discussed to suggest a relationship in which John expands and explains key theological issues, such as Christology and Pneumatology after much theological reflection upon the synoptic traditions. Knowledge of source, form and redaction criticism will be evident in high performing scripts.

E.g. Some people think that the style and content of John's Gospel are so far removed from the Synoptics that John's Gospel is a totally independent document. However, there is a lot of common material that suggest that at least they share the same sources. The similarities in the Passion narratives show that there must be an established, probably oral, tradition that underlies all four documents at this point. However, even here John's style is unique. His shaping of the trial before Pilate and the timing that he gives to the events show remarkable differences from the Synoptics. It is quite possible that John edited existing material to bring out theological points more fully, but that would still mean that the source material existed and was common to him and to the Synoptics. Some people point to the paucity of miracles in John in comparison to the Synoptics to show that John did not know these documents. It is quite possible that John knew, or at least was aware of, the other documents and that he chose to limit the miracles he related since the other documents had already presented the information and there was no need to duplicate the same information. However, the Feeding of the Five Thousand shows that there was some material that he wanted to use regardless of the other accounts, as he wanted to bring out the theological importance of the Eucharist in the discourse that followed on from that miracle. The fact that the Synoptics include some typically Johannine sayings, e.g. "I bless you Father of heaven for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children…" (Matthew 11:25–27) suggests again that there was a common source from which all the gospels drew. However, if John was the fisherman, the son of Zebedee, who accompanied Jesus on his mission, there would be no need for him to rely on what other people said or wrote. He was an eye-witness who could simply draw from his own experience and present reflections on his time with Jesus and the importance of Jesus' message. The fact then that there might be some similarities between what he had to say and what is found in the Synoptics is simply the inevitable consequence of all the documents dealing with the life and teaching of one person during a limited period.