



13+ Scholarship Examinations 2017

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

- Answer both parts of the question in Section A
- Choose one question from Section B
- Spend 30 minutes on Section A and 30 minutes on Section B
- Write your name clearly on every sheet of paper

Section A

Read the extract below and then answer all the questions. You are not expected to have seen this passage before.

Theology can never be neutral or fail to take sides on issues relating to the situation of the oppressed. For this reason it can never engage in conversations about the nature of God without confronting those elements of human existence which threaten anyone's existence as a person.

In a racist society, God is never colour blind. To say God is colour-blind is comparable to saying that God is blind to justice and injustice, to right and wrong, to good and evil. Certainly this is not the picture of God revealed in the Old and New Testaments. God takes sides. God sides with Israel against the Canaanites. In the New Testament, Jesus is not for all, but for the oppressed, the poor and unwanted of society and against all oppressors. The God of the Biblical tradition is not uninvolved or neutral regarding human affairs; God is decidedly involved. God is active in human history, taking sides with the oppressed of the land. If God is not involved in human history, then all theology is useless. The meaning of this message for our contemporary situation is clear: the God of the oppressed takes sides with the black community.

Adapted from James Cone's A Black Theology of Liberation

- a) Outline and explain the argument(s) set out in the passage above. [10 marks]
- b) Write a response to this passage, challenging some or all of the elements of the argument. [10 marks]

Section B

Choose one essay from those listed below. You need to show that you have considered more than one point of view.

1

‘Stories like Cain and Abel and the near sacrifice of Isaac suggest that God is entirely unreasonable.’ Do you agree? [20 marks]

2

‘Miracles can never be good evidence for the existence of God.’ Do you agree? You should refer to at least one miracle story that you have studied. [20 marks]

3

‘People should be allowed to wear outward symbols of their faith in all public places.’ Do you agree? You should refer to at least one named religion. [20 marks]

4

‘In the event of an accident, driverless cars should be programmed to protect the passenger(s) at all costs, rather than to limit the overall loss of life.’ Do you agree with this statement? [20 marks]



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Section A

Read the extract below and then answer all the questions. You are not expected to have seen this passage before.

In the search for certain knowledge, it is natural to begin with our present experiences, and in some sense, no doubt, knowledge comes from them. But any statement as to what it is that our immediate experiences make us know is very likely to be wrong. It seems to me that I am now sitting in a chair, at a table of a certain shape, on which I see sheets of paper with writing or print. By turning my head I see out of the window buildings and clouds and the sun. I believe that the sun is about ninety-three million miles from the earth; that it is a hot globe many times bigger than the earth; that, owing to the earth's rotation, it rises every morning, and will continue to do so for an indefinite time in the future.

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. Any one 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.

To return to the table. It is evident from what we have found, that there is no colour which pre-eminently appears to be *the* colour of the table, or even of any one particular part of the table—it appears to be of different colours from different points of view, and there is no reason for regarding some of these as more really its colour than others. And we know that even from a given point of view the colour will seem different by artificial light, or to a colour-blind man, or to a man wearing blue spectacles, while in the dark there will be no colour at all, though to touch and hearing the table will be unchanged.

Thus it becomes evident that the real table, if there is one, is not the same as what we immediately experience by sight or touch or hearing. The real table, if there is one, is not *immediately* known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known. Hence, two very difficult questions at once arise; namely, (1) Is there a real table at all? (2) If so, what sort of object can it be?

Adapted from Bertrand Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, Chapter 1

Q1)

- a) Outline and explain the argument(s) set out in the passage above. [10]
- b) Write a response to Bertrand Russell in which you argue that we can gain **genuine knowledge** about the reality of the world around us from our senses. [10]

Section B

Choose one essay from those listed below. You need to show that you have considered more than one point of view.

Q2)

'The Church today fails to follow properly Jesus' teachings about wealth and social justice.' Do you agree with this claim? [20]

Q3)

'Religious holy texts are outdated and have nothing useful to say to modern day people.' Do you agree with this claim? [20]

Q4)

'A same-sex couple cannot bring up a child as well as a heterosexual couple.' Do you agree with this claim? [20]

Q5)

'If suffering is a necessary part of life, then it would have been better for God not to have created the world at all.' Do you agree with this claim? [20]