**Good and Evil – *Sample answer***

1. ***What is meant by the term ‘evil’? (1)***

The term ‘evil’ means an absence of good, something immoral and probably resulting in harm to others

1. ***Give two examples of actions a Christian might consider evil (2)***

Murder and worshipping Satan

1. ***State three things that might guide Christians in their moral behaviour (3)***

Firstly, Christians would look to the words of the Bible for guidance. Secondly, they might ask ‘what would Jesus do?’ and attempt to follow Jesus’s example in their own lives. Thirdly, Christians might examine their conscience, trying to find the ‘voice within’ to guide them on the right moral path.

1. ***Explain how the suffering of Christ might help Christians cope with suffering (6)***

The suffering of Christ would give great strength to a Christian experiencing suffering in their own lives. Christ was the Son of God and yet God willed for him to experience extreme suffering and painful and humiliating death. Why should we expect to avoid suffering? The Bible is very clear that we cannot escape suffering in this world. Christians believe that your reaction to suffering is very important. Your own suffering, and that of Christ, brings you closer to others who are suffering and may help you to treat others who are suffering with more compassion. Whatever happens, we must accept the Will and Plan of God.

Christ’s suffering would also bring hope to Christians. They believe that after his death, Christ was resurrected and later ascended to heaven to be with God. This would remind Christians that their suffering will end and, provided that they act in the right way, they too can be resurrected and be with God. This belief would certainly help them to cope with suffering.

1. ***“Doing the right thing will never cause suffering” Discuss this statement, etc.***

This is a complex philosophical and religious question and there are a number of possible reactions to it. Christians are likely to agree with the statement on the whole, believing that if they follow the guidance given by God in the Bible, everything will work out for the best. It is important to remember that Christians do not believe that this world is ‘paradise’ – that comes after we die. The Bible is full of stories illustrating the suffering of good people. A good example to illustrate this is Job. A religious and obedient man, Job was tested in a very severe fashion by God, losing his family, possessions and health in the process. However because Job ‘did the right thing’ and kept his faith in God, everything was given back to him in the end. Another example for Christians would be the story of Jesus. Jesus died a painful and humiliating death, believing that God had given up on him. However he was resurrected and ascended to heaven to be with God.

Critics of religion would point out that people do not actually know what the ‘right thing’ is. Atheists believe that the Bible is just made up stories and the instructions contained in it are not necessarily the right thing. For example, the Bible contains passages that are sexist or homophobic. Anyone following these passages might indeed believe that they were doing the right thing, but their actions would certainly result in the suffering of the people they were treating unfairly. Richard Dawkins, in his book ‘The God Delusion’ points out many examples of religious people committing terrible actions in the name of religion, for example terrorists like Osama bin Laden. No doubt such terrorists believe they are doing ‘the right thing’. However their actions certainly cause great suffering.

My own opinion on the statement is that doing the right thing can often cause suffering, but that usually this is only short term suffering and that things work out well in the long term if you do the right thing. If I am training to be an athlete, not being able to feast on a MacDonald’s burger might cause me short term suffering. However, in the long run it would make me a better athlete. The same thing applies to morality. It might cause me suffering and embarrassment to admit that I have done something wrong, like broken my Mum’s favourite porcelain poodle, or forgotten to do my RE homework. However that is still much better than carrying around the guilt and fear that my wrongdoing might be discovered, for weeks on end. Christian attitudes are similar. In certain circumstances it might be easier to lie or steal, but I feel that being honest means that long-term your life will be better, people will respect you more and you will not keep creating new problems in your life.