

Comprehension 8: CSS 2015

Q: Read the following text carefully and answer the questions below: (20)

Experience has quite definitely shown that some reasons for holding a belief are much more likely to be justified by the event than others. It might naturally be supposed, for instance, that the best of all reasons for a belief was a strong conviction of certainty accompanying the belief. Experience, however, shows that this is not so, and that as a matter of fact, conviction by itself is more likely to mislead than it is to guarantee truth. On the other hand, lack of assurance and persistent hesitation to come to any belief whatever are an equally poor guarantee that the few beliefs which are arrived at are sound. Experience also shows that assertion, however long continued, although it is unfortunately with many people an effective enough means of inducing belief, is not in any way a ground for holding it.

The method which has proved effective, as a matter of actual fact, in providing a firm

foundation for belief wherever it has been capable of application, is what is usually called the scientific method. I firmly believe that the scientific method, although slow and never claiming to lead to complete truth, is the only method which in the long run will give satisfactory foundations for beliefs. It consists in demanding facts as the only basis for conclusions, and in consistently and continuously testing any conclusions which may have been reached, against the test of new facts and, wherever possible, by the crucial test of experiment. It consists also in full publication of the evidence on which conclusions are based, so that other workers may be assisted in new researchers, or enabled to develop their own interpretations and arrive at possibly very different conclusions.

There are, however, all sorts of occasions on which the scientific method is not applicable. That method involves slow testing, frequent suspension of judgment, restricted conclusions. The exigencies of everyday life, on the other hand, often make it necessary to act on a hasty balancing of admittedly incomplete evidence, to take immediate action, and to draw conclusions in advance of the evidence. It is also true that such action will always be necessary, and necessary in respect of ever larger issues; and this in spite of the fact that one of the most important trends of civilization is to remove sphere after sphere of life out of the domain of such intuitive judgment into the domain of rigid calculation based on science. It is here that belief plays its most important role. When we cannot be certain, we must proceed in part by faith—faith not only in the validity of our own capacity of making judgments, but also in the existence of certain other realities, pre-eminently moral and spiritual realities. It has been said that faith consists in acting always on the nobler hypothesis; and though this definition is a trifle rhetorical, it embodies a seed of real truth.

Questions:

1. Give the meaning of the underlined phrases as they are used in the passage? (4 marks each)
2. What justification does the author claim for his belief in the scientific method?
3. Do you gather from the passage that conclusions reached by the scientific method should be considered final? Give reasons for your answer?
4. In what circumstances, according to the author, is it necessary to abandon the scientific method?
5. How does the basis of "intuitive judgment" differ from that of scientific decision?

Answers:

1.

Expressions/Phrases

defense

Answer no 1:

1) Justified by the event than others: The justification of a belief is made justified by giving famous examples associated with that particular belief which could be either historical or contemporary.

2) An effective means of inducing belief: A strong adherence to one's belief is an effective way to persuade others to acknowledge that belief.

3) Trends of civilization: A popular or generally acceptable way of doing something or practiced by civilization.

4) The Nobles hypothesis: To perform those acts which are considered noble according to someone's faith.

Answer no 2:

The justifications claimed by the author for his belief in the scientific method are that it is a reliable method for providing sound basis for belief. Moreover, this method is based on examining the facts and also the conclusions which are derived from testing those facts. Furthermore, the evidences for drawing conclusions are published so that other researchers could find aid during conducting any research or to extract faults from the previous researches.

Answer no 3:

The conclusions reached by the scientific methodology should not be considered final because, according to the passage, this method is unable to reach the whole truth. Another reason is that the conclusions drawn out by researchers can not be self evident truth. There are much chances that those conclusions could be declared by further research. Moreover, there are some facts or truths which exists but it is nearly impossible to find evidence for those realities. Resultantly, such truths will not be acknowledge by this method because the researchers do not have any evidence for such truths.

Answer no 4: According to the author, it is necessary to abandon the scientific method when it cannot give clear cut answers or is completely silent upon certain issues. In such kind of issues, people should be confident about their own belief in certain kind of phenomenon and also in their own judgements. Such issues can be about the questions pertaining to the life after death, existence of God, or the possibility of certain miracles.

Answer no 5: The basis of intuitive judgement differ from that of scientific decision because the former is related to receiving direct knowledge about something and the resultant judgement derived from that knowledge. The latter decision is made through rigorous testing of evidences and making the resultant conclusion after those testing. The former cannot be proved through evidence, while the latter can be proved through evidence.