

Comprehension 23: CSS 2000

Q: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

(20)

The vitality of any teaching, or historical movement, depends upon what it affirms rather than upon what it denies, and its survival and continued power will often mean that its positives are insufficiently regarded by opposing schools. The grand positives of Bentham were benevolence and veracity; the passion for the relief of man's estate, and the passion for truth. Bentham's multifarious activities, pursued without abatement to the end of a long life, were inspired by a "dominate and all comprehensive desire for the amelioration of human life"; they were inspired, too, by the belief that he had found the key to all moral truth. This institution, this custom, this code, and this system of legislation—does it promote human happiness? Then it is sound. This theory, this creed, this moral teaching—does it rightly explain why virtue is admirable or ditty is obligatory? Then it is true: all else is misrepresentation. The limitation of Bentham can be gauged by his dismissal of all poetry (and most religion) as "misrepresentation". This is his negative side. But benevolence and veracity are Supreme Values, and if it falls to one of the deniers to be their special advocate, the believers must have long been drowsed. Bentham believes the Church teaches children insincerity by making them affirm what they cannot possibly understand or mean. Thy promise, for example to fulfill the undertaking of their god-parents, that they'll "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world" etc. "The Devil" Bentham comments "who or what is he, and how is it that he is renounced?" has the child happen to have any dealings with him? Let the Archbishop of Canterbury tell us, and let him further explain how his own "work" is distinguished from the aforsaid Pomp and Vanity". What King, what Lords Temporal or Spiritual, have ever renounced them? (Basil Willey)

Questions:

1. What does the writer mean by the underlined expressions?
2. What is Bentham's philosophy based upon?
3. What according to the writer is Bentham's limitation?
4. On what grounds does Bentham believe that the Church teaches children insincerity?
5. In what context has the Archbishop of Canterbury been quoted i.e. is he praised or condemned?

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Question no: 1

1) Multifarious activities:

The writer means diverse activities of Bentham regarding his quest to find moral truth and human happiness.

2) Amelioration of human life:

By the term "amelioration of human life", writer means betterment of human life. Bentham's activities were driven by his desire to improve the human life.

3) It is sound:

The term "It is sound" means that Bentham developed his understanding and basis of judgement about authenticity.

4) Gauged:

The term "gauged" means in the context of the passage that Bentham's philosophy had some limitations which could be judged by the fact that he rendered all the poetry and most of the religion as misinformed misrepresentation.

5) Be their special advocate:

The writer means by the term "be their special advocate" that according to Bentham's perception of misrepresentation of poetry and religion, if a person who is not a believer of veracity and benevolence principles ~~be~~ starts enforcing them or doesn't completely understand their meaning, then believers must have been disillusioned.

6) Drowsed:

In the passage, the word "drowsed" means to be kept away from reality and truth. According to writer, if a denier of principles of veracity and benevolence advocated them, then believers must have been deceived till then.

7) Renounce the devil:

The phrase "Renounce the devil" means to condemn evil. In the context of text, it means that Church teaches children to always condemn the evil, the concept of which they don't actually understand.

8) aforesaid:

"Aforesaid" means above mentioned.

Question no: 2

Bentham's philosophy is based upon his quest to find happiness for humanity and alleviate the state of human life. Principles of benevolence and veracity guided his philosophy.

Question no: 3

According to the writer, limitation of Bentham's approach is that rendered all poetry and most of the religion as misrepresentation. He deemed activities of the church like teachings of condemnation of evil as questionable and based on such thoughts declared them as misrepresented aspects of religion and poetry. This according to the writer is his limitation.

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Question no: 4:

Bentham believes that church teaches children insincerely by enforcing and propagating beliefs which children can't actually understand. For example; the church teaches children to condemn the devil which no one has ever seen. He questions on part of children that they might inquire that who and what devil is and how is he renounced without having any interaction or dealing with him. On these grounds, according to Bentham the church propagates insincerity.

Question no: 5.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been quoted by writers and addressed by Bentham in the context that he asks the Bishop to explain the act of "renouncing devil" and how his own work differs from the pompous world trapped by the devil. The archbishop of Canterbury has been condemned for his misrepresentation of religion and propagation of insincerity among children.