Sample reading response PHIL100

Section 1

In ‘The Fixation of Belief’, Peirce argues for the thesis that the method of science is superior to the method of tenacity, authority, and intuition. The purpose of the method of science is to uncover the facts and enable us to acquire true beliefs or beliefs that are more likely to be true. The method of science is also called the rational method of inquiry.

Section 2

Peirce argues that the method of science is superior to the specified alternative methods because the method of science is self-corrective, whereas the other methods of fixing belief are not self-corrective. It is a common fact that people often disagree about some topic or other, for example, the topic of climate change. The method of science can resolve such disagreements because it compels the disputants to conform to the facts. For instance, observations of the earth’s climate constitute key pieces of evidence that support the hypothesis that climate change is real. Therefore, the person who believes that climate change is not real is wrong. Since the method of science can resolve disagreements, it is more attractive than the other methods.

Section 3

In the reading Peirce praises the method of tenacity in an odd way (pp. 53-54). The tenacious person, he suggests, typically enjoys permanent success. But is this really true? It seems that a person who follows the method of tenacity is successful just because they are lucky. Should the tenacious person be admired? Does Peirce think we do and should admire a tenacious person because they follow the method of tenacity, or perhaps he is confusing the fact of success with following the method of tenacity?