

Humanities 1
Winter 2014
Professor Cox

Writing Assignment No 3 (second graded assignment)

Write an essay about one of the following.

1. “In the Bible, humans are continually trying to create homes or homelike environments for themselves, and God is continually moving them out of those places.” To what degree, if any, is this true? Draw your evidence from the assigned readings in (1) Genesis and Exodus, (2) 1 and 2 Samuel, (3) the Psalms, (4) Isaiah and Jonah. Choose two from 1, 2, 3, and 4.
2. According to the Bible, to what degree does knowledge of God come from individual effort and to what degree does it come from participation in a community? Answer by using evidence from the assigned readings in (1) 1 Samuel, (2) 2 Samuel, (3) the Psalms, (4) Isaiah and Jonah. Choose two from 1, 2, 3, and 4.
3. Writing to John Adams on July 5, 1814, Thomas Jefferson said this about Plato:

“While wading thro’ the whimsies, the puerilities, and unintelligible jargon of [Plato’s] work, I laid it down often to ask myself how it could have been that the world should have so long consented to give reputation to such nonsense as this? . . . With the Moderns, I think, it is rather a matter of fashion and authority. Education is chiefly in the hands of persons who . . . have an interest in the reputation and the dreams of Plato. They give the tone while at school, and few, in their after-years, have occasion to revise their college opinions. But fashion and authority apart, and bringing Plato to the test of reason, take from him his sophisms, futilities, and incomprehensibilities, and what remains? In truth, he is one of the race of genuine Sophists, who has escaped the oblivion of his brethren. . . . His foggy mind, is forever presenting the semblances of objects which, half seen thro’ a mist, can be defined neither in form [n]or dimension. . . . Yet ‘Plato is a great Philosopher,’ said La Fontaine. But says Fontenelle ‘do you find his ideas very clear?’ ‘Oh no! he is of an obscurity impenetrable.’ ‘Do you not find him full of contradictions?’ ‘Certainly,’ replied La Fontaine, ‘he is but a Sophist.’ Yet immediately after, he exclaims again, ‘Oh Plato was a great Philosopher.’”

What should Adams’ response have been to Jefferson’s complaint against Plato and his admirers?

In dealing with this question, you should formulate your own thesis and argument, defending Plato from Jefferson or agreeing with as much of Jefferson as you can. You don’t need to pretend to *be* Adams. Your evidence must be drawn from the *Symposium*. As with the text of Plato, you don’t have time to argue about every element of Jefferson’s text; your job is to

identify what is important enough for you to argue about, then argue about it. Note that Jefferson's text has been reproduced (above) as he wrote it, but you don't need to imitate his spelling, capitalization, or punctuation in your own writing, except when you're quoting directly from him. Where you don't know the meaning of one of his words, of course you'll need to look it up.

Make your paper 4-5 pages long. Keep in mind what is in the writing handouts that have been passed out in section, especially the Thesis handout. Papers are due at the end of lecture on Friday, February 14.

Before turning in the hard copy, you must submit another copy to the antiplagiarism website Turnitin.com.