

Francis Daniel Pastorius – Discussion Questions and Talking Points

From D2L:

1. This writing is a lot better, different from the others, clearer, easier to understand. Perhaps because it was translated. More modernized English. The subjects are also clearly laid out; direct answers to questions. He stated exactly what he needed, or the point – then he would immediately back it up, or follow it with another statement. It is also different from the others.
2. This writing doesn't seem to have any emotions or feelings. Yet, at the end, it contains the feeling of missing his father a lot.
3. He is different from the others in that he is German.
4. Another difference is his view of Native Americans. He is more friendly toward them. He likes them more. He did not look down on them. He thought they all deserved the same freedoms. He seemed to have the best understanding that they were people. Some of the "savages" have more desire to have knowledge of God than some who teach Christianity. He is able to humanize them.
5. Why, then, did the "savages" go off into the forest? For more land? Just for distance?
6. Pastorius helped to end slavery in the colonies. I wondered though, was this only a part of the German settlements? He did not look down on the slaves. He thought they all deserved the same freedoms. He seemed to have the best understanding that they were people. He is able to humanize them.
7. What all 4 of our first 4 writers have in common is they all dislike the system of Christian religion in Europe, which leads to the action of traveling to New England.
8. Another similarity is the hand of God is shown through all and given much credit. From jump (?) to the end he speaks of his Father and God's grace towards him.
9. He seemed very educated and was a great writer because of it. (How? Why?) He seemed as if he was open minded to many things. For example, the culture and religion. (How? Why?) His thinking is more modern, or ahead of his time than the other authors we read about. He also seemed to be a real compassionate man as opposed to "religious," where compassion is often second to rules. (See Winthrop?!)
10. He owned a library, and was an author of many books.
11. He was completely humble to William Penn and the founding of Pennsylvania.
12. Intriguing: "each serves God according to his best understanding, and may believe whatever he is able to believe" (248).

Other Things:

1. Because of the modern **translation** from the German, Pastorius's letter is accessible to today's readers.
2. Also, Pastorius has a likeable, straightforward, and even-toned **voice**, especially compared to the emotional heights and depths of the **Puritans**.
3. Do some basic (or advanced) research (Wikipedia?) to explore a bit more about **Pietism**, which focused on the importance of the individual's relationship to God, and so appealed to intellectuals like Pastorius.
4. Pastorius's letter serves two (2) purposes:
 - a. To provide an honest account of life in early Pennsylvania and, specifically, Germantown, which Pastorius founded; and
 - b. Like Smith's *Generall Historie* and *A Description of New England*, to encourage further immigration to the colony.
5. In contrast to Bradford and Winthrop, Pastorius's letter depicts a secular civil government that assumes a basic trust of individuals to behave according to their consciences even as it reveals a reasonable awareness of human failings.
6. Like Columbus's letter and Smith's *Generall Historie*, Pastorius's letter served as an **advertisement** to an audience whom he hoped would settle in Pennsylvania.
7. Like Bradford and Winthrop, Pastorius articulates structures of social organization and government.
8. Pastorius's landscape includes much of the same area that Elizabeth Ashbridge wrote about in her autobiography.

Questions for Discussion

1. According to Pastorius, what are some benefits to life in Pennsylvania?
2. Compare Pastorius's account of religious or civil authority to that described by either Winthrop or Bradford.

3. Compare Pastorius's account of Native Americans to that of Bradford, Smith, or Knight. What is the reason for the differences and similarities, in your opinion?
4. What qualities, revealed in his letter, make Pastorius a good leader in the colony of Pennsylvania?