

# 'A short Schem of the true Religion'

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## A short Schem of the true Religion{.}

Religion is partly fundamental & immutable partly circumstantial & mutable. The first was the Religion of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham Moses Christ & all the saints & consists of two parts our duty towards God & our duty towards man or piety & righteousness, piety which I will here call Godliness & Humanity.

### Of Godliness.

Godliness consists in the knowledge love & worship of God, Humanity in love, righteousness & good offices towards man. Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart & with all thy Soul & with all thy mind: this is the first & great commandment & the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. On these two commandments hang all the law & the Prophets. Mat. 22. The first is enjoyed in the four first commandments of the Decalogue & the second in the six last.

### Of Atheism

Opposite to the first is Atheism in profession & Idolatry in practise. Atheism is so senseless & odious to mankind that it never had many professors. Can it be by accident that all birds beasts & men have their right side & left side alike shaped (except in their bowells) & just two eyes & no more on either side the face & just two ears on either side the head & a nose with two holes & no more between the eyes & one mouth under the nose & either two fore leggs or two wings or two arms on the sholders & two leggs on the hipps one on either side & no more? Whence arises this uniformity in all their outward shapes but from the counsel & contrivance of an Author? Whence is it that the eyes of all sorts of living creatures are transparent to the very bottom & the only transparent members in the body, having on the outside an hard transparent skin, & within transparent juyces with a crystalline Lens in the middle & a pupil before the Lens all of them so truly shaped & fitted for vision, that no Artist can mend them? Did blind chance know that there was light & what was its refraction & fit the eys of all creatures after the most curious manner to make use of it? These & such like considerations always have & ever will prevail with man kind to beleive that there is a being who made all things & has all things in his power & who is therfore to be feared.

## Of Idolatry.

Idolatry is a more dangerous crime because it is apt by the authority of Kings & under very specious pretenses to insinuate it self into mankind. Kings being apt to enjoyn the honour of their dead ancestors: & it seeming very plausible to honour the souls of Heroes & Saints & to beleive that they can heare us & help us & are mediators between God & man & reside & act principally in the temples & statues dedicated to their honour & memory? And yet this being against the principal part of religion is in scripture condemned & detested above all other crimes. The sin consists first in omitting the service of the true God. For the more time & devotion one spends in the worship of false Gods the less he is able to spend in that of the true one: secondly in serving fals or feigned Gods, that is Ghosts or spirits of dead men or such like beings which you make your Gods by feigning that they can hear your prayers & do you good or hurt & praying to them for protection & blessings & trust in them for the same, & which are false Gods because they have not the powers which you ascribe to them & on which you trust. Whether you call them Dij or Divi Gods or Saints or by any other name is not material. If you ascribe such powers to them & put such trust in them as the heathens ascribed to & put in their Gods you make them such Gods as the Heathens worshipped & as are forbidden in the first commandment. Saint Paul tells the Heathens that the Gods which they worshipped were not Gods. he does not <1v> mean that they were not infinite eternal omnipotent & omniscient beings (for the heathens did not take them to be such) but he means that they were not what the Heathens called Gods, they were not such Gods as the heathens took them to bee. that is intelligent spirits able to heare & see their worshippers & do them good or hurt. To place such powers in the souls of dead men is that doctrine of Devils or Demons condemned by the Apostle. An Idol is nothing in the world, a vanity, a lye a fictitious power, The Egyptians & other heathens who propagated Idolatry beleived the transmigration of souls & accordingly taught that the souls of men after death went into several subjects as into the Ox Apis & other sacred animals of Egypt, into the Sun Moon & Stars, into Images consecrated to them &c & on this opinion grounded their worship of those subjects. supposing that the starrs by these Intelligences were moved in their Orbs & understood & governed humane affairs & that statues by these spirits could hear & help us & sometimes move themselves & give oracles. And these are the Devils or Dæmons which Idolators worshipped Levit 7.7. Deut 32.17 2 Chron 11.15. Psal. 106.37. 1 Cor. 10.20. Rev. 9.20. & whose worship the Prophets upbraid with folly by representing that the Idols can neither hear nor se nor walk. that is that they are not animated by such souls as those by which men hear & see & walk, but are mere inanimate stocks & stones voyd of all life & power. [So covetous men by putting that trust in riches which they should put in God become a sort of Idolaters. And much more plainly is it idolatrous to trust in charmes ceremonies, dead bodies, consecrated substances & the like. All this is worshipping the creature instead of the creator.] And thirdly the sin of Idolatry consists in making & worshipping the images of dead men or of other things in heaven above or in the earth beneath or in the waters below the earth that is of birds beasts or fishes (contrary to the second commandment) upon a supposition that by virtue of the souls of dead men or of the supreme God or any other Spirits or Demons good or bad inhabiting them or upon any other account they can hear & see their worshippers or do them good or hurt. To ascribe such powers to them is to feign them Gods (such Gods as the heathens worshipped) & to love or feare or trust in them or express such love feare or trust by prayers praises thanksgivings sacrifices adorations or any other outward action or service is the idolatry of the old heathens forbidden in the second commandment. Stocks & Stones have no such powers, they are not inhabited by the souls of dead men,, eyes have they & see not ears have they & hear not. An Idol are is nothing in the world, They are vanities, lies, fictitious powers, & on this account they are called false Gods & derided as such by all the old Prophets. And of the same kind of folly is it to place any trust in the bodies or bones of dead men or in things consecrated or other things without life or in any ceremonies or charmes: for even the trusting in riches is by the Apostle called Idolatry.

We are therefore to acknowledge one God infinite eternal omnipresent, omniscient omnipotent, the creator of all things most wise, most just, most good most holy; & to have no other Gods but him. We must love him feare him honour him trust in him pray to him give him thanks praise him hallow his name obey his commandments & set times apart for his service as we are directed in the third & fourth commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments & his commandments are not grievous 1 Iohn. 5.3 These things we must do not to any mediators between him & us but to him alone, that he may give his Angels charge over us who being our fellow servants are pleased with the worship which we give to their God.. And this is the first & principal part of religion, This always was & always will be the religion of all Gods people, from the beginning to the end of the world.

## Of Humanity

The other part of the true religion is our duty to man. We must love our neighbour as our selves, we must be charitable to all men for charity is the greatest of graces, greater then even faith or hope & covers a multitude of sins. We must be righteous & do to all men as we would they should do to us. In Politicks *Salus populi suprema lex*, In private concerns *Quod tibi fieri? non vis alteri ne feceris* were laws acknowledged by Heathens & are or ought <2r> to be the laws of all man-kind. This was the ethics morality or good manners taught the the first ages by Noah & his sons in some of their seven precepts the later heathens heathens by Socrates Cicero Confutius & other Philosophers, the Israelites by Moses & the Prophets & the Christians more fully by Christ & his Apostles. This is that law which the Apostle tells you was written in the hearts of the Gentiles & by which they are to be judged in the last day Rom. 2.12, 14, 15. "For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power & godhead, so that they [the nations or gentiles] are without excuse, because when they knew God they glorified him not as God neither were thankfull, but became vain in their imaginations & their foolish heart was darkened professing themselves to be wise they became fools & changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man & to birds & four footed beasts & creeping things. Wherefore also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonour their own bodies between themselves --- & to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication wickedness covetousness maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers without natural affection implacable unmercifull; who knowing the judgment of God (that they who commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them --- And thinkest thou this O [christian] man that judgest them who do such things & doest the same that thou shalt escape the judgment of God --- who will render to every man according to his deeds -- For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without the law [of Moses] shall also perish without the law & as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law in the day when God shall judge the secrets of Men by Iesus Christ. For not the hearers of the law are just before God but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles which have not the law do by [the light of] nature the things contained in the law these having not the law [of Moses] are [by the light of nature] a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, & their thoughts the mean while accusing or excusing one another." Rom. 1 & 2. Thus you see there is but one law for all nations the law of righteousness & charity dictated to the Christians by Christ to the Jews by Moses & to all mankind by the light of reason & by this law all men are to be judged at the last day. This was the religion of the first ages till they forsook the right worship of the true God & turned aside to the worship of dead men & Idols, & then God gave them over to their lusts & passions for working all manner of unrighteousness. But Moses made a reformation among the Israelites not from the ancient religion propogated by Noah & his posterity to the nations but from the idolatry & immorality with which the Nations had corrupted themselves. ffor as many of the

heathens as were converted from their corruptions to worshipping only the true God & follow the law of righteousness were admitted by the Jews into their Gates & outward court of the Temple as Proselytes tho they did not receive the law of Moses. The Jews rejected not the Religion of Noah & the first nations but proselyted the heathens to <2v> it as to the true ancient religion tho a religion which they accounted not so perfect as that of Moses. And in like manner we may lawfully proselyte heathens to it (that is to piety & righteousness) & ought to value & love those who profess & practise it even though they do not yet believe in Christ. ffor it is the true religion of Christians as well as heathens tho not all the true Christian religion. Tis so great & necessary a part of the Christian religion that the righteousness of the saints is the white cloathing of the Lambs wife Apoc. 19.8. & the righteous go into eternal life Matt. 25 46. () & as Christ is righteous so everyone that doth righteousness is born of God. 1 Iohn. 2.29.

Abel was righteous (Heb. 11.4 Mat. 23.35 1 Iohn. 3.12) & Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2.5) & by his righteousness he was saved from the flood (Gen 7.1.). Christ is called the righteous (1 Iohn 2.1) & by his righteousness we are saved (Rom. 3.25. & 5.18 1 Cor. 1.30) & except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall not enter into the kingdome of heaven. (Mat. 5.20.) Righteousness is the religion of the kingdom of heaven (2 Pet. 3. 13 Isa 60 21) & even the property of God himself [Iud. 5.11. 1 Sam 12.7. Ezra 9.15 Nehem 9.8. Psal. 119.137.] towards man. Righteousness & Love are inseparable for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, & if there be any other commandment, it is breifly comprehended in this saying namely Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law. Rom. 13.8, 9, 10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light & there is no occasion of stumbling. 1 Iohn 2.10 He that loveth not his brother abideth in death Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer & ye know that no murderer hath eternal life. 1 Iohn 3.14. 15 Beloved let us love one another for love is of God & every one that loveth is born of God & knoweth God & he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Beloved if God so loved us we ought to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time, if we love one another God dwelleth in us. --- If a man say I love God & hateth his brother he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we that he who loveth God love his brother also. 1 Iohn 4. Covet earnestly the best gifts [of the Spirit:] & yet I shew unto you a more excellent way [viz<sup>t</sup> that ye love one another. ffor] Though I speak with the tongues of men & angels & have not charity | love I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling Cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophesy & understand all mysteries & all knowledge & though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains & have no charity | love I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor & tho I give my body to be burned & have not charity | love it profiteth me nothing.