

## SPINOZA WAS LESS THAN HONEST ABOUT WHAT LOVING GOD MEANS

The philosopher, Baruch Spinoza who was born in 1632 and died in 1677 thought the Bible commandment to love God with your entire being and strength, was to be put in practice by doing loving things for your neighbour. But to love God with your entire being and strength means you love him with all your will and your emotions leaving no room for anything else. If you do good works for a neighbour you do them for God only. The actions are inwardly for God and only outwardly for your neighbour. Spinoza ignored these facts and basically reduced the command to love God to loving one's neighbour. He concluded that the two commands and the scriptures that taught them declared that we can believe whatever we wish but are under obligation only to believe in what is strictly necessary for carrying out loving service to our neighbour. If Spinoza was right, then Jesus should have said there was only one greatest commandment, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Why bring God into it and unlovingly cause confusion?

Spinoza should then, to have been consistent, declared the Bible to be an evil book for it obliges us to believe that Adam and Eve sinned for us and ruined creation and that Elijah went up to Heaven in a flaming chariot and that a man should not have loving sex with another man. The entire Bible claims to be the word of God. Spinoza was a Jew. It is worse for Christians for they have a longer Bible than the Jewish one and are obligated to believe needless ideas such as that Jesus was born of a Virgin and that he could create bread to feed five thousand plus out of a few loaves. Even the view that the short and unnecessary epistle by Paul to Philemon is inspired by God is an example. It follows then that if Spinoza is right that the Bible is only brain food for bigots.

Spinoza is right that only what is necessary for doing the best for ourselves and our neighbour is right and should be obligatory. But he is wrong to interpret the vicious commandments as supporting that idea. The love of God in the Bible means believing all the Bible says about God. The commandment says that if belief in God is unnecessary and harmful or if it disturbs mentally ill people it should still be promoted. This is clearly saying that Bibles and Gods and religion come before your rights and those of your neighbour. The commandment to love God entirely says that the neighbour or yourself isn't as important as God. Thus it is up to God not you or your feelings or your reason to decide what it is to love your neighbour. Loving them means treating them the way God wants them to be treated. So it is love then when God commands it to put an adulteress to death or to mutilate a baby boy in the act of religious circumcision.