

# Vain Worship. 5:1-20

by W.J. Erdman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of worshipping God in a sincere and thankful spirit, rather than in vain and worldly ways.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:7, Ecclesiastes 3:12, Ecclesiastes 5:1, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Colossians 1:17

**Topics:** "True Worship", "God Centered"

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## Description

In the sermon 'The Seeker,' W.J. Erdman reflects on the emptiness of worldly pursuits and the superficiality of human worship, urging worshippers to approach God with reverence and sincerity. He highlights the distance between man and God, portraying Him as a distant, judgmental figure, especially in religious institutions that ignore Christ as the Redeemer. Erdman emphasizes the importance of enjoying life with gratitude and a God-centered perspective, ultimately concluding that true goodness and beauty come from acknowledging God's presence in all aspects of life.

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## Transcript

The Seeker, in the presence of all these vanities and "windy efforts," comes to another and solemn pause. He seems to muse on the relation of the Unseen Being to the professedly divinest act of men, the worship of God. He seems to turn to himself again and commune with his heart on the loftier heights of what proves to be, after all, but natural religiousness, and which cannot save him from the depths of unbelief, ignorance and despair, in which he is soon seen hopelessly floundering.

Mindful of man's jaunty liberalism and enslaving superstitions, rash vows and wordy prayers, shallow reverence and dreamy worship -- dreamy and unreal because full of intruding vanities and worldly businesses, the Speaker earnestly exhorts the multitude going to the house of God to have few words and slow and solemn steps in their worship and vows; but even then he does so like a natural man himself, knowing only of a God far away, Who is looking upon sinful man on earth with cold judicial eye, ready to destroy the work of man in wrath.

This God, so far away from men, is even now in Christendom itself, wherever honest conscience has not been superseded by mawkish sentiment, the God of the religion and worship of the natural man; and particularly the God of "Brotherhoods" and social "orders," which ignore or falsify Christ as the Redeemer, and are held together by naturalistic beliefs in the Divine, common to all men, the world over. The very titles and terms, with which they speak of God, in mortuary address and obituary resolution, are all of a Being Who is far off, mysterious, veiled away in the solitude of His own eternity.

From this view of God and His fear, the Preacher turns to behold the tyrannous extortions of the high among men, who forget they are kin to all men, and that their common mother is the earth; and he points to their future judgment by One higher than they; and then, briefly discussing, as if it were something that did not specially concern him, the vanity of both the gain and loss of riches, he settles down solidly into the conclusion that to enjoy life in a serene, thankful, God-acknowledging spirit, is the Good and the Beautiful thing under the sun; and the Good because the Comely; "the fine thing." And he gladly adds that when the remembrance of past enjoyments has become dim, the thought, that "God gave it," is also "the Good." Or possibly, and more in accord with previous conclusions of "vanity," as in the Greek version, " he will not much remember the days of his life, for God distracts him in the mirth of his heart."

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/wj-erdman/vain-worship-51-20/>

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