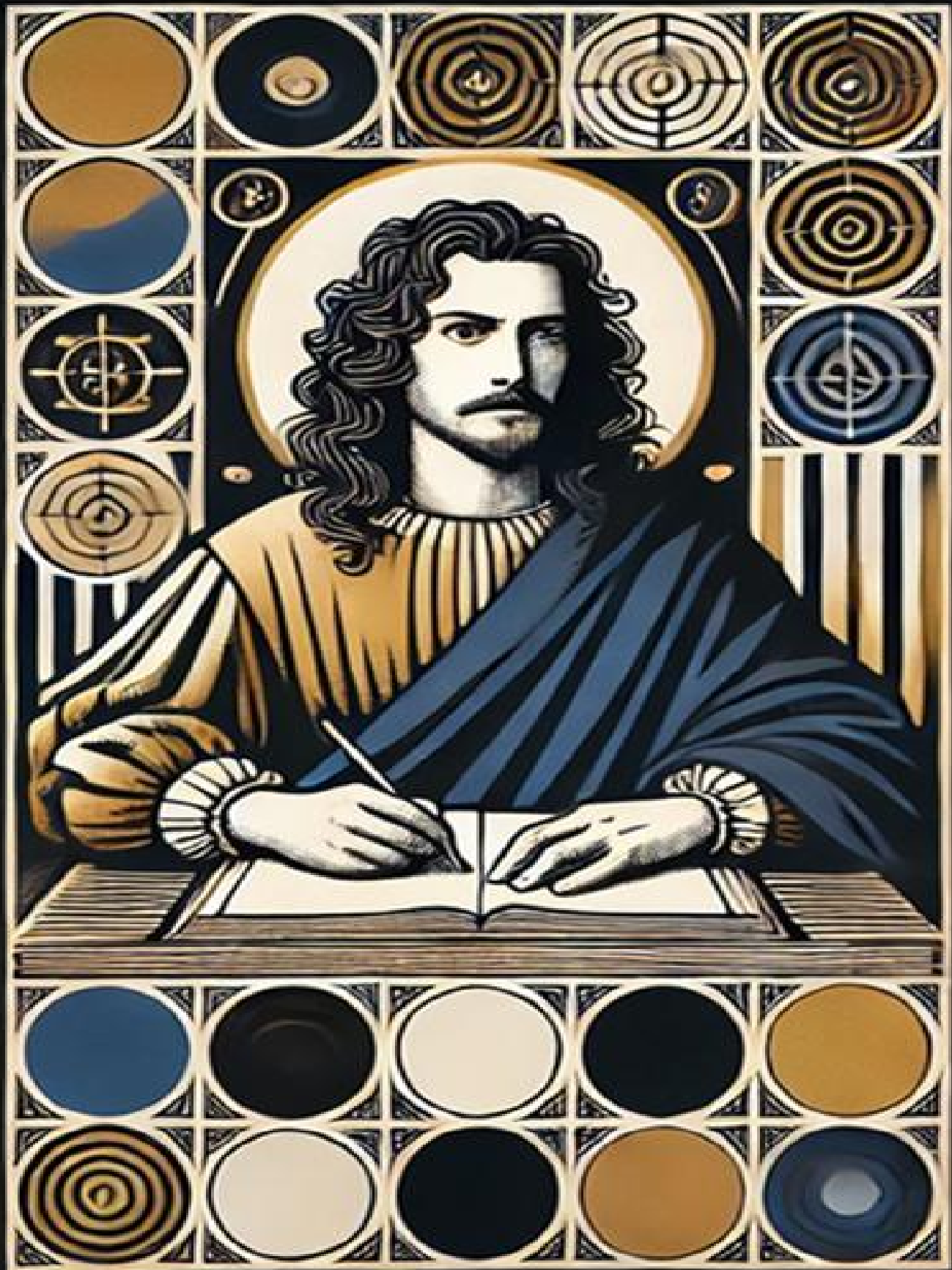
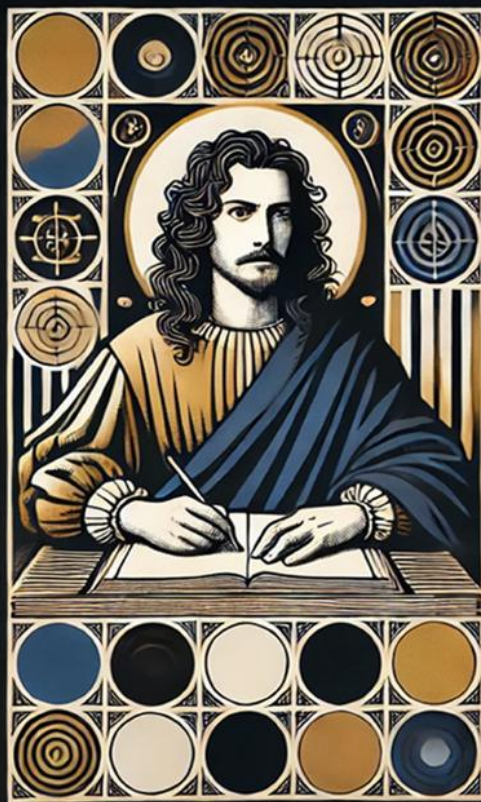


SPIRITUAL WORSHIP



STEPHEN CHARNOCK

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On Spiritual Worship

by Stephen Charnock

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JOHN 4:24.—*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

HAVING thus despatched the first proposition, 'God is a Spirit,' it will not be amiss to handle the inference our Saviour makes from that proposition, which is the second observation propounded.

Doct. That the worship due from us to God ought to be spiritual, and spiritually performed

Spirit and truth are understood variously. Either we are to worship God

1. Not by legal ceremonies; the evangelical administration being called spirit in opposition to the legal ordinances as carnal, and truth in opposito them as typical. As the whole Judaical service is called flesh, so the whole evangelical service is called spirit. Or spirit may be opposed to the worship at Jerusalem, as it was carnal; truth, to the worship on the mount Gerizim, because it was false. They had not the true object of worship, nor the true medium of worship as those at Jerusalem had. Their worship should cease, because it was false, and the Jewish worship should cease, because it was carnal

There is no need of a candle when the sun spreads its beams in the air; no need of those ceremonies when the Sun of righteousness appeared; they only served for a candle to instruct and direct men till the time of his coming. The shadows are chased away by the displaying the substance, so that they can be of no more use in the worship of God, since the end for which they were instituted is expired, and that is discovered to us in the gospel, which the Jews sought for in vain among the baggage and stuff of their ceremonies

2. With a spiritual and sincere frame. 'In spirit,' i.e. with spirit; with the inward operations of all the faculties of our souls, and the cream and flower of them; and the reason is, because there ought to be a worship suitable to the nature of God. And as the worship was to be spiritual, so the exercise of that worship ought to be in a spiritual manner.* It shall be a worship in truth, because the true God shall be adored without those vain imaginations, and fantastic resemblances of him, which were common among the blind Gentiles, and contrary to the glorious nature of God, and unworthy ingredients in religious services. It shall be a worship in spirit, without those carnal rites the

degenerated Jews rested on. Such a posture of soul, which is the life and ornament of every service, God looks for at your hands. There must be some proportion between the object adored, and the manner in which we adore it. It must not be a mere corporeal worship, because God is not a body; but it must rise from the centre of our soul, because God is a Spirit. If he were a body, a bodily worship might suit him, images might be fit to represent him; but being a Spirit, our bodily services enter us not into communion with him. Being a Spirit, we must banish from our minds all carnal imaginations of him, and separate from our wills all cold and dissembled affections to him. We must not only have a loud voice, but an elevated soul; not only a bended knee, but a broken heart; not only a supplicating tone, but a groaning spirit; not only a ready ear for the word, but a receiving heart; and this shall be of greater value with him than the most costly outward services offered at Gerizim or Jerusalem

Our Saviour certainly meant not, by worshipping in spirit, only the matter of the evangelical service as opposed to the legal administration, without the manner wherein it was to be performed. It is true, God always sought a worship in spirit; he expected the heart of the worshipper should join with his instituted rights of adoration in every exercise of them; but he expects such a carriage more under the gospel administration, because of the clearer discoveries of his nature made in it, and the greater assistances conveyed by it

I shall therefore

I. Lay down some general propositions

II. Shew what this spiritual worship is

III. Why we must offer to God a spiritual service

IV. The use.

I. Some general propositions

Prop. 1. First, The right exercise of worship is founded upon and riseth from the spirituality of God.* The first ground of the worship we render to God is the infinite excellency of his nature, which is not only one attribute, but results from all; for God as God is the object of worship, and the notion of God consists not in thinking him wise, good, just, but all those infinitely beyond any conception. And hence it follows that God is an object infinitely to be loved and honoured. His goodness is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as a motive of our homage: Ps. 130:4, 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' Fear, in the Scripture dialect, signifies the whole worship of God: Acts 10:35, 'But in every nation he that fears him is accepted of him;' so 2 Kings 17:32, 33. If God should act towards men according to the rigours of his justice due to them for the least of their crimes, there could be no exercise of any affection but that of despair, which could not engender a worship of God, which ought to be joined with love, not with hatred. The beneficence and patience of God, and his readiness to pardon men, is the reason of the honour they return to him. And this is so evident a motive, that generally the idolatrous world ranked those creatures in the number of their gods, which they perceived useful and beneficial to mankind, as the sun and moon, the Egyptians the ox, &c. And the more beneficial anything appeared to mankind, the higher station men gave it in the rank of their deities, and bestowed a more peculiar and solemn worship upon it. Men worshipped God to procure or continue his

favour, which would not have been acted by them, had they not conceived it a pleasing thing to him to be merciful and gracious

Sometimes his justice is proposed to us as a motive of worship: Heb. 12:28, 29, 'Serve God with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire;' which includes his holiness, whereby he doth hate sin, as well as his wrath, whereby he doth punish it. Who but a mad and totally brutish person, or one that was resolved to make war against heaven, could behold the effects of God's anger in the world, consider him in his justice as a consuming fire, and despise him, and rather be drawn out by that consideration to blasphemy and despair, than to seek all ways to appease him? Now though the infinite power of God, his unspeakable wisdom, his incomprehensible goodness, the holiness of his nature, the vigilance of his providence, the bounty of his hand signify to man that he should love and honour him, and are the motive of worship, yet the spirituality of his nature is the rule of worship, and directs us to render our duty to him with all the powers of our soul. As his goodness beams out upon us, worship is due in justice to him; and as he is the most excellent nature, veneration is due to him in the highest manner with the choicest affections

So that indeed the spirituality of God comes chiefly into consideration in matter of worship. All his perfections are grounded upon this. He could not be infinite, immutable, omniscient, if he were a corporeal being.* We cannot give him a worship unless we judge him worthy, excellent, and deserving a worship at our hands; and we cannot judge him worthy of a worship unless we have some apprehensions and admirations of his infinite virtues; and we cannot apprehend and admire those perfections, but as we see them as causes shining in their effects. When we see, therefore, the frame of the world to be the work of his power, the order of the world to be the fruit of his wisdom, and the usefulness of the world to be the

product of his goodness, we find the motives and reasons of worship; and weighing that this power, wisdom, goodness, infinitely transcend any corporeal nature, we find a rule of worship, that it ought to be offered by us in a manner suitable to such a nature as is infinitely above any bodily being. His being a Spirit declares what he is, his other perfections declare what kind of Spirit he is. All God's perfections suppose him a Spirit; all centre in this. His wisdom doth not suppose him merciful, or his mercy suppose him omniscient. There may be distinct notions of those, but all suppose him to be of a spiritual nature. How cold and frozen will our devotions be if we consider not his omniscience, whereby he discerns our hearts![†] How carnal will our services be if we consider him not as a pure spirit! In our offers to, and transactions with men, we deal not with them as mere animals, but as rational creatures; and we debase their natures if we treat them otherwise. And if we have not raised apprehensions of God's spiritual nature in our treating with him, but allow him only such frames as we think fit enough for men, we debase his spirituality to the littleness of our own being. We must therefore possess our souls with this, we shall else render him no better than a fleshly service. We do not much concern ourselves in those things of which we are either utterly ignorant, or have but slight apprehensions of

That is the first proposition; the right exercise of worship is grounded upon the spirituality of God

Prop. 2. This spiritual worship of God is manifest by the light of nature to be due to him. In reference to this, consider

1. The outward means or matter of that worship which would be acceptable to God was not known by the light of nature. The law for a worship, and for a spiritual worship by the faculties of our souls, was

natural, and part of the law of creation, though the determination of the particular acts whereby God would have this homage testified was of positive institution, and depended not upon the law of creation. Though Adam in innocence knew God was to be worshipped, yet by nature he did not know by what outward acts he was to pay this respect, or at what time he was more solemnly to be exercised in it than at another. This depended upon the directions God, as the sovereign governor and lawgiver, should prescribe. You therefore find the positive institutions of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the determination of the time of worship, Gen. 2:3, 17. Had there been any such notion in Adam naturally, as strong as that other, that a worship was due to God, there would have been found some relics of these modes universally consented to by mankind, as well as of the other. But though all nations have by an universal consent concurred in the acknowledgment of the being of God, and his right to adoration, and the obligation of the creature to it, and that there ought to be some public rule and polity in matters of religion (for no nation hath been in the world without a worship, and without external acts and certain ceremonies to signify that worship), yet their modes and rites have been as various as their climates, unless in that common notion of sacrifices, not descending to them by nature, but tradition, from Adam; and the various ways of worship have been more provoking than pleasing. Every nation suited the kind of worship to their particular ends and polities they designed to rule by. How God was to be worshipped is more difficult to be discerned by nature with its eyes out than with its eyes clear. The pillars upon which the worship of God stands cannot be discerned without revelation,* no more than blind Samson could tell where the pillars of the Philistines' theatre stood, without one to conduct him. What Adam could not see with his sound eyes, we cannot with our dim eyes; he must be told from heaven what worship was fit for the God of heaven. It is not by nature that we can have

such a full prospect of God as may content and quiet us. This is the noble effect of divine revelation, he only knows himself, and can only make himself known to us. It could not be supposed that an infinite God should have no perfections but what were visible in the works of his hands, and that these perfections should not be infinitely greater than as they were sensible in their present effects. This had been to apprehend God a limited being, meaner than he is. Now it is impossible to honour God as we ought, unless we know him as he is; and we could not know him as he is without divine revelation from himself; for none but God can acquaint us with his own nature. And therefore the nations void of this conduct heap up modes of worship from their own imaginations, unworthy of the majesty of God, and below the nature of man. A rational man would scarce have owned such for signs of honour, as the Scripture mentions in the services of Baal and Dagon, much less an infinitely wise and glorious God. And when God had signified his mind to his own people, how unwilling were they to rest satisfied with God's determination, but would be warping to their own inventions, and make gods, and ways of worship to themselves, Amos 5:26, as in the matter of the golden calf, as was lately spoken of

2. Though the outward manner of worship acceptable to God could not be known without revelation, and those revelations might be various, yet the inward manner of worship with our spirits was manifest by nature. And not only manifest by nature to Adam in innocence, but after his fall, and the scales he had brought upon his understanding by that fall. When God gave him his positive institutions before the fall, or whatsoever additions God should have made had he persisted in that state, or when he appointed him after his fall to testify his acknowledgment of him by sacrifices, there needed no command to him to make those acknowledgments by those outward ways prescribed to him with the intention and prime

affection of his spirit. This nature would instruct him in without revelation. For he could not possibly have any semblance of reason to think that the offering of beasts, or the presenting the first-fruits of the increase of the ground as an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over him, and his bounty to him, was sufficient, without devoting to him that part wherein the image of his Creator did consist. He could not but discern by a reflection upon his own being, that he was made for God as well as by God; for it is a natural principle, of which the apostle speaks Rom. 11:36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things,' &c., that the whole whereof he did consist was due to God; and that his body, the dreggy and dusty part of his nature, was not fit to be brought alone before God, without that nobler principle which he had by creation linked with it. Nothing in the whole law of nature, as it is informed of religion, was clearer, next to the being of God, than this manner of worshipping God with the mind and spirit. And as the Gentiles never sunk so low into the mud of idolatry as to think the images they worshipped were really their gods, but the representations or habitations of their gods, so they never deserted this principle in the notion of it, that God was to be honoured with the best they were, and the best they had. As they never denied the being of a God in the notion, though they did in the practice, so they never rejected this principle in notion, though they did, and now most men do, in the inward observation of it. It was a maxim among them that God was mens, animus, mind and spirit, and therefore was to be honoured with the mind and spirit. That religion did not consist in the ceremonies of the body, but the work of the soul; whence the speech of one of them,* 'Sacrifice to the gods not so much clothed with purple garments as a pure heart.' And of another,† 'God regards not the multitude of the sacrifices, but the disposition of the sacrificer.' It is not fit we should deny God the cream and flower, and give him the slotten part and the stalks. And with what reverence and intention of mind they thought their

worship was to be performed is evident by the priests' crying out often, *hoc age, mind this, let your spirits be intent upon it*

This could not but result

(1.) From the knowledge of ourselves. It is a natural principle, 'God hath made us, and not we ourselves,' Ps. 100:1, 2. Man knows himself to be a rational creature. As a creature, he was to serve his Creator; and as a rational creature, with the best part of that rational nature he derived from him. By the same act of reason that he knows himself to be a creature, he knows himself to have a Creator. That this Creator is more excellent than himself, and that an honour is due from him to the Creator for framing of him; and therefore this honour was to be offered to him by the most excellent part which was framed by him. Man cannot consider himself as a thinking, understanding being, but he must know that he must give God the honour of his thoughts, and worship him with those faculties whereby he thinks, wills, and acts.[‡] He must know his faculties were given him to act, and to act for the glory of that God who gave him his soul and the faculties of it; and he could not in reason think they must be only active in his own service, and the service of the creature, and idle and unprofitable in the service of his Creator. With the same powers of our soul whereby we contemplate God, we must also worship God. We cannot think of him but with our minds, nor love him but with our will; and we cannot worship him without the acts of thinking and loving, and therefore cannot worship him without the exercise of our inward faculties. How is it possible, then, for any man that knows his own nature, to think that extended hands, bended knees, and lifted up eyes, were sufficient acts of worship, without a quickened and active spirit

(2.) From the knowledge of God. As there was a knowledge of God by nature, so the same nature did dictate to man that God was to be glorified as God. The apostle implies the inference in the charge he brings against them for neglecting it, Rom. 1:21. 'We should speak of God as he is,' said one;* and the same reason would inform them that they were to act towards God as he is. The excellency of the object required a worship according to the dignity of his nature, which could not be answered but by the most serious inward affection as well as outward decency; and a want of this cannot but be judged to be unbecoming the majesty of the Creator of the world, and the excellency of religion. No nation, no person did ever assert that the vilest part of man was enough for the most excellent being, as God is; that a bodily service could be a sufficient acknowledgment of the greatness of God, or a sufficient return for the bounty of God.† Man could not but know that he was to act in religion conformably to the object of religion, and to the excellency of his own soul. The notion of a God was sufficient to fill the mind of man with admiration and reverence, and the first conclusion from it would be to honour God, and that he have all the affection placed on him that so infinite and spiritual a being did deserve. The progress then would be, that this excellent being was to be honoured with the motions of the understanding and will, with the purest and most spiritual powers in the nature of man, because he was a spiritual being, and had nothing of matter mingled with him. Such a brutish imagination to suppose that blood and fumes, beasts and incense, could please a Deity, without a spiritual frame, cannot be supposed to befall any but those that had lost their reason in the rubbish of sense. Mere rational nature could never conclude that so excellent a spirit would be put off with a mere animal service, and attendance of matter and body without spirit, when they themselves, of an inferior nature, would be loath to sit down contented with an outside service from those that belong to them; so that this instruction of our Saviour, that God is to

be worshipped in spirit and truth, is conformable to the sentiments of nature, and drawn from the most undeniable principles of it. The excellency of God's nature, and the excellent constitution of human faculties, concur naturally to support this persuasion. This was as natural to be known by men, as the necessity of justice and temperance for the support of human societies and bodies. It is to be feared that if there be not among us such brutish apprehensions, there are such brutish dealings with God in our services against the light of nature, when we place all our worship of God in outward attendances and drooping countenances, with unbelieving frames and formal devotions; when prayer is muttered over in private slightly, as a parrot learns lessons by rote, not understanding what it speaks, or to what end it speaks it; not glorifying God in thought and spirit, with understanding and will

(3.) Spiritual worship, therefore, was always required by God, and always offered to him by one or other. Man had a perpetual obligation upon him to such a worship, from the nature of God; and what is founded upon the nature of God is unvariable. This and that particular mode of worship may 'wax old as a garment, and as a vesture may be folded up and changed,' as the expression is of the heavens, Heb. 1:11, 12, but God endures for ever. His spirituality fails not, therefore a worship of him in spirit must run through all ways and rites of worship. God must cease to be spirit, before any service but that which is spiritual can be accepted by him. The light of nature is the light of God; the light of nature being unchangeable, what was dictated by that was always, and will always be, required by God. The worshipping of God being perpetually due from the creature, the worshipping him as God is as perpetually his right, though the outward expressions of this honour were different, one way in paradise (for a worship was then due, since a solemn time for that worship was appointed), another under the law, another under the

gospel. The angels also worship God in heaven, and fall down before his throne; yet though they differ in rites, they agree in this necessary ingredient,—all rites, though of a different shape, must be offered to him not as carcasses, but animated with the affections of the soul. Abel's sacrifice had not been so excellent in God's esteem, without those gracious habits and affections working in his soul, Heb. 11:4. Faith works by love; his heart was on fire as well as his sacrifice. Cain rested upon his present, perhaps thought he had obliged God. He depended upon the outward ceremony, but sought not for the inward purity. It was an offering brought to the Lord, Gen. 4:5; he had the right object, but not the right manner: ver. 7, 'If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?' And in the command afterwards to Abraham, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect,' was the direction in all our religious acts and walkings with God. A sincere act of the mind and will, looking above and beyond all symbols, extending the soul to a pitch far above the body, and seeing the day of Christ through the veil of the ceremonies, was required by God. And though Moses, by God's order, had instituted a multitude of carnal ordinances, sacrifices, washings, oblations of sensible things, and recommended to the people the diligent observation of those statutes by the allurements of promises and denouncing of threatenings, as if there were nothing else to be regarded, and the true workings of grace were to be buried under a heap of ceremonies, yet sometimes he doth point them to the inward worship, and, by the command of God, requires of them the 'circumcision of the heart,' Deut. 10:16, the 'turning to God with all their heart and all their soul,' Deut. 30:10, whereby they might recollect that it was the engagement of the heart and the worship of the spirit that was most agreeable to God, and that he took not any pleasure in their observance of ceremonies, without true piety within, and the true purity of their thoughts

(4.) It is therefore as much every man's duty to worship God in spirit, as it is their duty to worship him. Worship is so due to him as God, as that he that denies it disowns his Deity. And spiritual worship is so due, that he that waives it denies his spirituality. It is a debt of justice we owe to God to worship him, and it is as much a debt of justice to worship him according to his nature. Worship is nothing else but a rendering to God the honour that is due to him, and therefore the right posture of our spirits in it is as much or more due than the material worship in the modes of his own prescribing; that is grounded both upon his nature and upon his command, this only upon his command; that is perpetually due, whereas the channel wherein outward worship runs may be dried up, and the river diverted another way; such a worship wherein the mind thinks of God, feels a sense of God, has the spirit consecrated to God, the heart glowing with affections to God. It is else a mocking God with a feather. A rational nature must worship God with that wherein the glory of God doth most sparkle in him. God is most visible in the frame of the soul; it is there his image glitters. He hath given us a jewel as well as a case, and the jewel as well as the case we must return to him. The spirit is God's gift, and must return to him, Eccles. 12:7. It must return to him in every service morally, as well as it must return to him at last physically. It is not fit we should serve our Maker only with that which is the brute in us, and withhold from him that which doth constitute us reasonable creatures. We must give him our bodies, but 'a living sacrifice,' Rom. 12:1. If the spirit be absent from God when the body is before him, we present a dead sacrifice. It is morally dead in the duty, though it be naturally alive in the posture and action. It is not an indifferent thing whether we shall worship God or no, nor is it an indifferent thing whether we shall worship him with our spirits or no. As the excellency of man's knowledge consists in knowing things as they are in truth, so the excellency of the will in willing things as they are in goodness. As it is

the excellency of man to know God as God, so it is no less his excellency, as well as his duty, to honour God as God. As the obligation we have to the power of God for our being binds us to a worship of him, so the obligation we have to his bounty, for fashioning us according to his own image, binds us to an exercise of that part wherein his image doth consist. God hath 'made all things for himself,' Prov. 16:4; that is, for the evidence of his own goodness and wisdom. We are therefore to render him a glory according to the excellency of his nature, discovered in the frame of our own. It is as much our sin not to glorify God as God, as not to attempt the glorifying of him at all. It is our sin not to worship God as God, as well as to omit the testifying any respect at all to him. As the divine nature is the object of worship, so the divine perfections are to be honoured in worship. We do not honour God, if we honour him not as he is; we honour him not as a spirit, if we think him not worthy of the ardours and ravishing admirations of our spirits. If we think the devotions of the body are sufficient for him, we contract him into the condition of our own being, and not only deny him to be a spiritual nature, but dash out all those perfections which he could not be possessed of were he not a spirit

5. The ceremonial law was abolished to promote the spirituality of divine worship. That service was gross, carnal, calculated for an infant and sensitive church. It consisted in rudiments, the circumcision of the flesh, the blood and smoke of sacrifices, the streams of incense, observation of days, distinction of meats, corporal purifications; every leaf of the law is clogged with some rite to be particularly observed by them. The spirituality of worship lay veiled under a thick cloud, that the people could not behold the glory of the gospel, which lay covered under those shadows: 2 Cor. 3:13, 'They could not stedfastly look to the end of that which was abolished!' They understood not the glory and spiritual intent of the

law, and therefore came short of that spiritual frame in the worship of God, which was their duty; and therefore, in opposition to this administration, the worship of God under the gospel is called by our Saviour in the text, a worship in spirit; more spiritual for the matter, more spiritual for the motives, and more spiritual for the manner and frames of worship

(1.) This legal service is called flesh in Scripture, in opposition to the gospel, which is called spirit. The ordinances of the law, though of divine institution, are dignified by the apostle with no better a title than carnal ordinances, Heb. 9:10, and a carnal command, Heb. 7:16; but the gospel is called the ministration of the spirit, as being attended with a special and spiritual efficacy on the minds of men, 2 Cor. 3:8. And when the degenerate Galatians, after having tasted of the pure streams of the gospel, turned about to drink of the thicker streams of the law, the apostle tells them that they 'begun in the spirit,' and would not be 'made perfect in the flesh,' Gal. 3:3; they would leave the righteousness of faith for a justification by works. The moral law, which is in its own nature spiritual, Rom. 7:14, in regard of the abuse of it in expectation of justification by the outward works of it, is called flesh. Much more may the ceremonial administration, which was never intended to run parallel with the moral, nor had any foundation in nature, as the other had

That whole economy consisted in sensible and material things which only touched the flesh; it is called 'the letter,' and the 'oldness of the letter,' Rom. 7:6; as letters, which are but empty sounds in themselves, but put together and formed into words, signify something to the mind of the hearer or reader. An old letter, a thing of no efficacy upon the spirit, but as a law written upon paper. The gospel hath an efficacious spirit attending it, strongly working upon the mind and will, and moulding the soul into a spiritual frame for

God; according to the doctrine of the gospel, the one is old and decays, the other is new, and increaseth daily

And as the law itself is called flesh, so the observers of it and resters in it are called 'Israel after the flesh,' 1 Cor. 10:18; and the evangelical worshipper is called a 'a Jew after the spirit,' Rom. 2:29. They were Israel after the flesh as born of Jacob, not Israel after the spirit as born of God; and therefore the apostle calls them Israel and not Israel, Rom. 9:6; Israel after a carnal birth, not Israel after a spiritual; Israel in the circumcision of the flesh, not Israel by a regeneration of the heart

(2.) The legal ceremonies were not a fit means to bring the heart into a spiritual frame. They had a spiritual intent; the rock and manna prefigured the salvation and spiritual nourishment by the Redeemer, 1 Cor. 10:3, 4. The sacrifices were to point them to the justice of God in the punishment of sin, and the mercy of God in substituting them in their steads, as types of the Redeemer and the ransom by his blood. The circumcision of the flesh was to instruct them in the circumcision of the heart. They were flesh in regard of their matter, weakness, and cloudiness; spiritual in regard of their intent and signification; they did instruct, but not efficaciously work strong spiritual affections in the soul of the worshipper. They were 'weak and beggarly elements,' Gal. 4:9, had neither wealth to enrich nor strength to nourish the soul. They could not perfect the comers to them, or put them into a frame agreeable to the nature of God, Heb. 10:1, 9:9, nor 'purge the conscience from those dead' and dull dispositions which were by nature in them, ver. 14; being carnal, they could not have an efficacy to purify the conscience of the offerer, and work spiritual effects. Had they continued without the exhibition of Christ, they could never have wrought any change in us, or purchased any favour for us.* At the best they were but shadows, and

came unexpressibly short of the efficacy of that person and state whose shadows they were. The shadow of a man is too weak to perform what the man himself can do, because it wants the life, spirit, and activity of the substance. The whole pomp and scene was suited more to the sensitive than the intellectual nature, and, like pictures, pleased the fancy of children, rather than improved their reason. The Jewish state was a state of childhood, Gal. 5:2, and that administration a pedagogy, 4:24. The law was a schoolmaster, fitted for their weak and childish capacity, and could no more spiritualise the heart than the teachings in a primer school can enable the mind, and make it fit for affairs of state; and, because they could not better the spirit, they were instituted only for a time, as elements delivered to an infant age, which naturally lives a life of sense rather than a life of reason. It was also a servile state, which doth rather debase than elevate the mind, rather carnalise than spiritualise the heart; besides, it is a sense of mercy that both melts and elevates the heart into a spiritual frame: Ps. 130:4, 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' And they had in that state but some glimmerings of mercy in the daily bloody intimations of justice. There was no sacrifice for some sins, but a cutting off without the least hints of pardon; and in the yearly remembrance of sin there was as much to shiver them with fear as to possess them with hopes, and such a state which always held them under the conscience of sin could not produce a free spirit, which was necessary for a worship of God according to his nature

(3.) In their use they rather hindered than furthered a spiritual worship. In their own nature they did not tend to the obstructing a spiritual worship, for then they had been contrary to the nature of religion and the end of God who appointed them. Nor did God cover the evangelical doctrine under the clouds of the legal administration, to hinder the people of Israel from perceiving it, but because they

were not yet capable to bear the splendour of it had it been clearly set before them. The shining of the face of Moses was too dazzling for their weak eyes, and therefore there was a necessity of a veil, not for the things themselves, but the weakness of their eyes, 2 Cor. 3:13, 14. The carnal affections of that people sunk down into the things themselves, stuck in the outward pomp, and pierced not through the veil to the spiritual intent of them; and by the use of them, without rational conceptions, they besotted their minds, and became senseless of those spiritual motions required of them. Hence came all their expectations of a carnal Messiah; the veil of ceremonies was so thick, and the film upon their eyes so condensed, that they could not look through the veil to the Spirit of Christ. They beheld not the heavenly Canaan for the beauty of the earthly, nor minded the regeneration of the spirit while they rested upon the purifications of the flesh. The prevalency of sense and sensitive affections diverted their minds from inquiring into the intent of them. Sense and matter are often clogs to the mind, and sensible objects are the same often to spiritual motions. Our souls are never more raised than when they are abstracted from the entanglements of them. A pompous worship, made up of many sensible objects, weakens the spirituality of religion. Those that are most zealous for outward are usually most cold and indifferent in inward observances, and those that overdo in carnal modes usually underdo in spiritual affections

This was the Jewish state.* The nature of the ceremonies being pompous and earthly, by their show and beauty meeting with their weakness and childish affections, filled their eyes with an outward lustre, allured their minds, and detained them from seeking things higher and more spiritual. The kernel of those rites lay concealed in a thick shell, the spiritual glory was little seen, and the spiritual sweetness little tasted. Unless the Scripture be diligently searched, it seems to transfer the worship of God from true faith and the spiritual

motions of the heart, and stake it down to outward observances and the opus operatum; besides, the voice of the law did only declare sacrifices, and invited the worshipper to them with a promise of the atonement of sin, turning away the wrath of God. It never plainly acquainted them that those things were types and shadows of something future, that they were only outward purifications of the flesh. It never plainly told them at the time of appointing them that those sacrifices could not abolish sin, and reconcile them to God. Indeed, we see more of them since their death and dissection in that one Epistle to the Hebrews than can be discerned in the five books of Moses. Besides, man naturally affects a carnal life, and therefore affects a carnal worship; he designs the gratifying his sense, and would have a religion of the same nature. Most men have no mind to busy their reason above the things of sense, and are naturally unwilling to raise them up to those things which are allied to the spiritual nature of God; and therefore the more spiritual any ordinance is, the more averse is the heart of man to it. There is a 'simplicity of the gospel,' from which our minds are easily corrupted by things that pleasure the sense, as Eve was by the curiosity of her eye and the liquorishness of her palate, 2 Cor. 11:3. From this principle hath sprung all the idolatry in the world. The Jews knew they had a God who had delivered them, but they would have a sensible God to go before them, Exod. 32:1; and the papacy at this day is a witness of the truth of this natural corruption

(4.) Upon these accounts, therefore, God never testified himself well pleased with that kind of worship. He was not displeased with them, as they were his own institution, and ordained for the representing (though in an obscure manner) the glorious things of the gospel; nor was he offended with those people's observance of them, for since he had commanded them, it was their duty to perform them, and their sin to neglect them; but he was displeased with them as they were

practised by them, with souls as morally carnal in the practices, as the ceremonies were materially carnal in their substance. It was not their disobedience to observe them; but it was a disobedience, and a contempt of the end of the institution, to rest upon them, to be warm in them and cold in morals. They fed upon the bone, and neglected the marrow; pleased themselves with the shell, and sought not for the kernel. They joined not with them the internal worship of God, fear of him, with faith in the promised seed, which lay veiled under those coverings: Hos. 6:6, 'I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.' And therefore he seems sometimes weary of his own institutions, and calls them not his own, but their sacrifices, their feasts, Isa. 1:11, 14. They were his by appointment, theirs by abuse. The institution was from his goodness and condescension, therefore his; the corruption of them was from the vice of their nature, therefore theirs. He often blamed them for their carnality in them, shewed his dislike of placing all their religion in them, gives the sacrificers, upon that account, no better a title than that of the 'princes of Sodom and Gomorrah,' Isa. 1:10; and compares the sacrifices themselves to the 'cutting off a dog's neck,' 'swine's blood,' and the 'murder of a man,' Isa. 66:3. And indeed God never valued them, or expressed any delight in them. He despised the feasts of the wicked, Amos 5:21, and had no esteem for the material offerings of the godly: Ps. 50:13, 'Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?' which he speaks to his saints and people, before he comes to reprove the wicked, which he begins, ver. 16, 'But to the wicked, God said,' &c. So slightly he esteemed them, that he seems to disown them to be any part of his command, when he brought his people out of the land of Egypt: Jer. 7:22, 'I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' He did not value nor regard them, in comparison of that inward frame which he had required by the moral law; that being given before the law of ceremonies, obliged them, in the first

place, to an observance of those precepts. They seemed to be below the nature of God, and could not of themselves please him. None could in reason persuade themselves that the death of a beast was a proportionable offering for the sin of a man, or ever was intended for the expiation of transgression. In the same rank are all our bodily services under the gospel. A loud voice without spirit, bended bulrushes without inward affections, are no more delightful to God than the sacrifices of animals. It is but a change of one brute for another of a higher species; a mere brute, for that part of man which hath an agreement with brutes. Such a service is a mere animal service, and not spiritual

(5.) And therefore God never intended that sort of worship to be durable, and had often mentioned the change of it for one more spiritual. It was not good or evil in itself; whatsoever goodness it had was solely derived to it by institution, and therefore it was mutable. It had no conformity with the spiritual nature of God, who was to be worshipped, nor with the rational nature of man, who was to worship. And therefore he often speaks of taking away the new moons, and feasts, and sacrifices, and all the ceremonial worship, as things he took no pleasure in, to have a worship more suited to his excellent nature. But he never speaks of removing the gospel administration, and the worship prescribed there, as being more agreeable to the nature and perfections of God, and displaying them more illustriously to the world

The apostle tells us it was to be disannulled because of its weakness, Heb. 7:18. A determinate time was fixed for its duration, till the accomplishment of the truth figured under that pedagogy, Gal. 4:2. Some of the modes of that worship being only typical, must naturally expire and be insignificant in their use, upon the finishing of that by the Redeemer, which they did prefigure; and other parts of it, though

God suffered them so long because of the weakness of the worshipper, yet because it became not God to be always worshipped in that manner, he would reject them, and introduce another more spiritual and elevated. 'Incense and a pure offering' should be offered everywhere unto his name, Mal. 1:11

He often told them he would make a new covenant by the Messiah, and the old should be rejected;* that the 'former things should not be remembered, and the things of old no more considered,' when he should do 'a new thing in the earth,' Isa. 43:18, 19. Even the ark of the covenant, the symbol of his presence and the glory of the Lord in that nation, should not any more be remembered and visited, Jer. 3:16; that the temple and sacrifices should be rejected, and others established; that the order of the Aaronical priesthood should be abolished, and that of Melchisedec set up in the stead of it in the person of the Messiah, to endure for ever, Ps. 110; that Jerusalem should be changed, a new heaven and earth created, a worship more conformable to heaven, more advantageous to earth. God had proceeded in the removal of some part of it, before the time of taking down the whole furniture of this house. The pot of manna was lost, Urim and Thummim ceased, the glory of the temple was diminished, and the ignorant people wept at the sight of the one, without raising their faith and hope in the consideration of the other, which was promised to be filled with a spiritual glory. And as soon as ever the gospel was spread in the world, God thundered out his judgments upon that place in which he had fixed all those legal observances; so that the Jews, in the letter and flesh, could never practise the main part of their worship, since they were expelled from that place where it was only to be celebrated. It is one thousand six hundred years since they have been deprived of their altar, which was the foundation of all the Levitical worship, and have wandered in the

world 'without a sacrifice, a prince or priest, an ephod or teraphim,'
Hos. 3:4

And God fully put an end to it in the command he gave to the apostles, and in them to us, in the presence of Moses and Elias, to hear his Son only: Mat. 17:5, 'Behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear him;' and at the death of our Saviour, testified it to that whole nation and the world, by the rending in twain the vail of the temple

The whole frame of that service, which was carnal, and by reason of the corruption of man, weakened, is nulled, and a spiritual worship is made known to the world, that we might now serve God in a more spiritual manner, and with more spiritual frames

Prop. 6. The service and worship the gospel settles is spiritual, and the performance of it more spiritual. Spirituality is the genius of the gospel, as carnality was of the law; the gospel is therefore called spirit. We are abstracted from the employments of sense, and brought nearer to a heavenly state. The Jews had angels' bread poured upon them; we have angels' service prescribed to us: the praises of God, communion with God in spirit, through his Son Jesus Christ, and stronger foundations for spiritual affections. It is called a reasonable service, Rom. 12:1. It is suited to a rational nature, though it finds no friendship from the corruption of reason. It prescribes a service fit for the reasonable faculties of the soul, and advanceth them while it employs them. The word reasonable may be translated word service,* as well as reasonable service; an evangelical service, in opposition to a law service. All evangelical service is reasonable, and all truly reasonable service is evangelical

The matter of the worship is spiritual. It consists in love of God, faith in God, recourse to his goodness, meditation on him, and

communion with him. It lays aside the ceremonial, spiritualiseth the moral. The commands that concerned our duty to God, as well as those that concerned our duty to our neighbour, were reduced by Christ to the spiritual intention

The motives are spiritual. It is a state of more grace, as well as of more truth, John 1:17, supported by spiritual promises, beaming out in spiritual privileges. Heaven comes down in it to earth, to spiritualise earth for heaven

The manner of worship is more spiritual. Higher flights of the soul, stronger ardours of affections, sincerer aims at his glory; mists are removed from our minds, clogs from the soul; more of love than fear; faith in Christ kindles the affections, and works by them

The assistances to spiritual worship are greater. The Spirit doth not drop, but is plentifully poured out. It doth not light sometimes upon, but dwells in, the heart. Christ suited the gospel to a spiritual heart, and the Spirit changeth a carnal heart to make it fit for a spiritual gospel. He blows upon the garden, and causes the spices to flow forth; and often makes the soul in worship like the chariots of Amminadab in a quick and nimble motion. Our blessed Lord and Saviour by his death discovered to us the nature of God, and after his ascension sent his Spirit to fit us for the worship of God, and converse with him

One spiritual evangelical believing breath is more delightful to God than millions of altars made up of the richest pearls, and smoking with the costliest oblations, because it is spiritual; and a mite of spirit is of more worth than the greatest weight of flesh. One holy angel is more excellent than a whole world of mere bodies

Prop. 7. Yet the worship of God with our bodies is not to be rejected upon the account that God requires a spiritual worship. Though we must perform the weightier duties of the law, yet we are not to omit and leave undone the lighter precepts; since both the magnalia and minutula legis, the greater and the lesser duties of the law, have the stamp of divine authority upon them

As God, under the ceremonial law, did not command the worship of the body, and the observation of outward rites, without the engagement of the spirit, so neither doth he command that of the spirit without the peculiar attendance of the body

The Schwelkfindians denied bodily worship; and the indecent postures of many in public attendance intimate no great care either of composing their bodies or spirits. A morally discomposed body intimates a tainted heart

Our bodies as well as our spirits are to be presented to God, Rom. 12:1. Our bodies in lieu of the sacrifices of beasts, as in the Judaical institutions: body for the whole man; a living sacrifice, not to be slain, as the beasts were, but living a new life, in a holy posture, with crucified affections. This is the inference the apostle makes of the privileges of justification, adoption, co-heirship with Christ, which he had before discoursed of; privileges conferred upon the person, and not upon a part of man

. 1. Bodily worship is due to God. He hath a right to an adoration by our bodies as they are his by creation; his right is not diminished but increased by the blessing of redemption: 1 Cor. 6:20, 'For you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits, which are God's.' The body as well as the spirit is redeemed, since our Saviour suffered crucifixion in his body, as well as agonies in his soul. Body is not taken here for the whole man, as it may be in

Rom. 12; but for the material part of our nature, it being distinguished from the spirit. If we are to render to God an obedience with our bodies, we are to render him such acts of worship with our bodies as they are capable of. As God is 'the Father of spirits,' so he is 'the God of all flesh;' therefore the flesh he hath framed of the earth, as well as the noble portion he hath breathed into us, cannot be denied him without a palpable injustice. The service of the body we must not deny to God, unless we will deny him to be the author of it, and the exercise of his providential care about it. The mercies of God are renewed every day upon our bodies as well as our souls, and therefore they ought to express a fealty to God for his bounty every day. 'Both are from God, both should be for God. Man consists of body and soul; the service of man is the service of both. The body is to be sanctified as well as the soul, and therefore to be offered to God as well as the soul. Both are to be glorified, both are to glorify. As our Saviour's divinity was manifested in his body, so should our spirituality in ours. To give God the service of the body, and not of the soul, is hypocrisy; to give God the service of the spirit, and not of the body, is sacrilege; to give him neither, atheism.'* If the only part of man that is visible were exempted from the service of God, there could be no visible testimonies of piety given upon any occasion: since not a moiety of man, but the whole, is God's creature, he ought to pay a homage with the whole, and not only with a moiety of himself

2. Worship in societies is due to God, but this cannot be without some bodily expressions. The law of nature doth as much direct men to combine together in public societies for the acknowledgment of God, as in civil communities for self-preservation and order; and the notice of a society for religion is more ancient than the mention of civil associations for politic government: Gen. 4:26, 'Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,' viz., in the time of Seth. No

question but Adam had worshipped God before as well as Abel, and a family religion had been preserved; but as mankind increased in distinct families, they knit together in companies to solemnize the worship of God.* Hence, as some think, those that incorporated together for such ends were called the sons of God; sons by profession, though not sons by adoption; as those of Corinth were saints by profession, though in such a corrupted church they could not be all so by regeneration, yet saints, as being of a Christian society, and calling upon the name of Christ, that is, worshipping God in Christ, though they might not be all saints in spirit and practice. So Cain and Abel met together to worship, Gen. 4:3, 'at the end of the days,' at a set time. God settled a public worship among the Jews, instituted synagogues for their convening together, whence called 'the synagogues of God,' Ps. 74:8. The Sabbath was instituted to acknowledge God a common benefactor. Public worship keeps up the memorials of God in a world prone to atheism, and a sense of God in a heart prone to forgetfulness. The angels sung in company, not singly, at the birth of Christ, Luke 2:13, and praised God not only with a simple elevation of their spiritual nature, but audibly, by forming a voice in the air. Affections are more lively, spirits more raised in public than private; God will credit his own ordinance. Fire increaseth by laying together many coals in one place; so is devotion inflamed by the union of many hearts, and by a joint presence; nor can the approach of the last day of judgment, or particular judgments upon a nation, give a writ of ease from such assemblies: Heb. 10:25, 'Not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, but so much the more as you see the day approaching.' Whether it be understood of the day of judgment, or the day of the Jewish destruction and the Christian persecution, the apostle uses it as an argument to quicken them to the observance, not to encourage them to a neglect. Since, therefore, natural light informs us, and divine institution commands us, publicly to acknowledge ourselves the servants of God, it implies

the service of the body. Such acknowledgments cannot be without visible testimonies, and outward exercises of devotion, as well as inward affections. This promotes God's honour, checks others' profaneness, allures men to the same expressions of duty. And though there may be hypocrisy, and an outward garb without an inward frame, yet better a moiety of worship than none at all; better acknowledge God's right in one than disown it in both

3. Jesus Christ, the most spiritual worshipper, worshipped God with his body. He prayed orally, and kneeled, 'Father, if it be thy will,' &c., Luke 22:41, 42. He blessed with his mouth, 'Father, I thank thee,' Mat. 11:26. He lifted up his eyes, as well as elevated his spirit, when he praised his Father for mercy received,' or begged for the blessings his disciples wanted, John 11:41; 17:1. The strength of the spirit must have vent at the outward members. The holy men of God have employed the body in significant expressions of worship; Abraham in falling on his face, Paul in kneeling, employing their tongues, lifting up their hands. Though Jacob was bedrid, yet he would not worship God without some devout expression of reverence; it is in one place leaning upon his staff, Heb. 11:21; in another bowing himself upon his bed's head, Gen. 47:31. The reason of the diversity is in the Hebrew word, which without vowels may be read Mittah, a bed, or Matteh, a staff; howsoever, both signify a testimony of adoration by a reverent gesture of the body. Indeed, in angels and separated souls, a worship is performed purely by the spirit; but whiles the soul is in conjunction with the body, it can hardly perform a serious act of worship without some tincture upon the outward man, and reverential composure of the body. Fire cannot be in the clothes, but it will be felt by the members; nor flames be pent up in the soul without bursting out in the body. The heart can no more restrain itself from breaking out, than Joseph could inclose his affections,

without expressing them in tears to his brethren, Gen. 45:1, 2. 'We believe, and therefore speak,' 2 Cor. 4:13

To conclude; God hath appointed some parts of worship which cannot be performed without the body, as sacraments; we have need of them because we are not wholly spiritual and incorporeal creatures

The religion which consists in externals only, is not for an intellectual nature. A worship purely intellectual is too sublime for a nature allied to sense and depending much upon it. The Christian mode of worship is proportioned to both; it makes the sense to assist the mind, and elevates the spirit above the sense. Bodily worship helps the spiritual. The members of the body reflect back upon the heart, the voice bars distractions, the tongue sets the heart on fire in good as well as in evil. It is as much against the light of nature to serve God without external significations, as to serve him only with them without the intention of the mind. As the invisible God declares himself to men by visible works and signs, so should we declare our invisible frames by visible expressions. God hath given us a soul and body in conjunction, and we are to serve him in the same manner he hath framed us.

II. What Spiritual Worship Is?

The second thing I am to shew is, what spiritual worship is. In general, the whole spirit is to be employed. The name of God is not sanctified but by the engagement of our souls

Worship is an act of the understanding, applying itself to the knowledge of the excellency of God, and actual thoughts of his majesty, recognising him as the supreme Lord and governor of the world, which is natural knowledge; beholding the glory of his attributes in the Redeemer, which is evangelical knowledge; this is the sole act of the spirit of man. The same reason is for all our worship as for our thanksgiving. This must be done with understanding: Ps. 47:7, 'Sing ye praise with understanding,' with a knowledge and sense of his greatness, goodness, and wisdom. It is also an act of the will, whereby the soul adores and reverenceth his majesty, is ravished with his amiableness, embraceth his goodness, enters itself into an intimate communion with this most lovely object, and pitcheth all his affections upon him

We must worship God understanding; it is not else a reasonable service. The nature of God and the law of God abhor a blind offering; we must worship him heartily, else we offer him a dead sacrifice. A reasonable service is that wherein the mind doth truly act something with God. All spiritual acts must be acts of reason, otherwise they are not human acts, because they want that principle which is constitutive of man, and doth difference him from other creatures. Acts done only by sense are the acts of a brute; acts done by reason are the acts of a man; that which is only an act of sense cannot be an act of religion. The sense without the conduct of reason is not the subject of religious acts, for then beasts were capable of religion as well as men. There cannot be religion where there is not reason; and there cannot be the exercise of religion, where there is not an exercise of the rational faculties. Nothing can be a Christian act, that is not a human act. Besides, all worship must be for some end; the worship of God must be for God; it is by the exercise of our rational faculties, that we only can intend an end. An ignorant and carnal worship is a brutish worship

Particularly

1. Spiritual worship is a worship from a spiritual nature. Not only physically spiritual, so our souls are in their frame, but morally spiritual, by a renewing principle. The heart must be first cast into the mould of the gospel, before it can perform a worship required by the gospel. Adam living in paradise might perform a spiritual worship, but Adam fallen from his rectitude could not. We being heirs of his nature, are heirs of his impotence. Restoration to a spiritual life must precede any act of spiritual worship. As no work can be good, so no worship can be spiritual, till we are created in Christ, Eph. 2:10. 'Christ is our life,' Col. 3:4. As no natural action can be performed without life in the root or heart, so no spiritual act without Christ in the soul. Our being in Christ is as necessary to every spiritual act, as the union of our soul with our body is necessary to natural action. Nothing can exceed the limits of its nature; for then it should exceed itself in acting, and do that which it hath no principle to do. A beast cannot act like a man, without partaking of the nature of a man; nor a man act like an angel, without partaking of the angelical nature. How can we perform spiritual acts without a spiritual principle? Whatsoever worship proceeds from the corrupted nature, cannot deserve the title of spiritual worship, because it springs not from a spiritual habit. If those that are evil cannot speak good things, those that are carnal cannot offer a spiritual service. Poison is the fruit of a viper's nature: Mat. 12:34, 'O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.' As the root is, so is the fruit. If the soul be habitually carnal, the worship cannot be actually spiritual. There may be an intention of spirit, but there is no spiritual principle as a root of that intention. A heart may be sensibly united with a duty, when it is not spiritually united with Christ in it. Carnal motives and carnal ends may fix the

mind in an act of worship, as the sense of some pressing affliction may enlarge a man's mind in prayer. Whatsoever is agreeable to the nature of God, must have a stamp of Christ upon it; a stamp of his grace in performance, as well as of his meditation* in the acceptance. The apostle lived not, but 'Christ lived in him,' Gal. 2:20; the soul worships not, but Christ in him. Not that Christ performs the act of worship, but enables us spiritually to worship, after he enables us spiritually to live. As God counts not any soul living but in Christ, so he counts not any a spiritual worshipper but in Christ. The goodness and fatness of the fruit comes from the fatness of the olive wherein we are engrafted. We must find healing in Christ's wings, before God can find spirituality in our services. All worship issuing from a dead nature, is but a dead service. A living action cannot be performed without being knit to a living root

2. Spiritual worship is done by the influence and with the assistance of the Spirit of God. A heart may be spiritual, when a particular act of worship may not be spiritual. The Spirit may dwell in the heart, when he may suspend his influence on the act. Our worship is then spiritual, when the fire that kindles our affections comes from heaven, as that fire upon the altar wherewith the sacrifices were consumed. God tastes a sweetness in no service, but as it is dressed up by the hand of the Mediator, and hath the air of his own Spirit in it: they are but natural acts without a supernatural assistance. Without an actual influence we cannot act from spiritual motives, nor for spiritual ends, nor in a spiritual manner. We cannot mortify a lust without the Spirit, Rom. 8:13, nor quicken a service without the Spirit. Whatsoever corruption is killed, is slain by his power; whatsoever duty is spiritualised, is refined by his breath. He 'quickens our dead bodies' in our resurrection, ver. 11; he renews our dead souls in our regeneration; he quickens our carnal services in our adorations; the choicest acts of worship are but infirmities,

without his auxiliary help, ver. 26. We are logs, unable to move ourselves, till he raise our faculties to a pitch agreeable to God, puts his hand to the duty, and lifts that up, and us with it. Never any great act was performed by the apostles to God, or for God, but they are said to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Christ could not have been conceived immaculate as 'that holy thing,' without the Spirit's overshadowing the virgin; nor any spiritual act conceived in our heart, without the Spirit's moving upon us, to bring forth a living religion from us. The acts of worship are said to be in the Spirit, 'supplication in the Spirit,' Eph. 6:18; not only with the strength and affection of our own spirits, but with the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost, if Jude may be the interpreter, ver. 20,—the Holy Ghost exciting us, impelling us, and firing our souls by his divine flame, raising up the affections, and making the soul cry, with a holy importunity, 'Abba, Father.' To render our worship spiritual, we should, before every engagement in it, implore the actual presence of the Spirit, without which we are not able to send forth one spiritual breath or groan, but be wind-bound, like a ship without a gale, and our worship be no better than carnal. How doth the spouse solicit the Spirit with an 'Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south wind,' &c., Cant. 4:16

3. Spiritual worship is done with sincerity. When the heart stands right to God, and the soul performs what it pretends to perform; when we serve God with our spirits, as the apostle, Rom. 1:9, 'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son;' this is not meant of the Holy Ghost, for the apostle would never have called the Spirit of God his own spirit; but with my spirit, that is, a sincere frame of heart. A carnal worship, whether under the law or gospel, is when we are busied about external rites, without an inward compliance of soul. God demands the heart: Prov. 23:26, 'My son, give me thy heart;' not give me thy tongue, or thy lips, or thy hands;

these may be given without the heart, but the heart can never be bestowed without these as its attendants. A heap of services can be no more welcome to God, without our spirits, than all Jacob's sons could be to Joseph without the Benjamin he desired to see. God is not taken with the cabinet, but the jewel; he first respected Abel's faith and sincerity, and then his sacrifice; he disrespected Cain's infidelity and hypocrisy, and then his offering. 'For this cause he rejected the offerings of the Jews, the prayers of the Pharisees, and the alms of Ananias and Sapphira, because their hearts and their duties were at a distance from one another. In all spiritual sacrifices our spirits are God's portion. Under the law the reins were to be consumed by the fire on the altar, because the secret intentions of the heart were signified by them: Ps. 7:9, "The Lord trieth the heart and the reins." It was an ill omen among the heathen if a victim wanted a heart. The widow's mites, with her heart in them, were more esteemed than the richer offerings without it.* Not the quantity of service, but the will in it, is of account with this infinite Spirit. All that was to be brought for the framing of the tabernacle was to be offered 'willingly with the heart,' Exod. 25:7. The more of will, the more of spirituality and acceptableness to God: Ps. 119:108, 'Accept the free-will-offering of my lips.' Sincerity is the salt which seasons every sacrifice. The heart is most like to the object of worship; the heart in the body is the spring of all vital actions, and a spiritual soul is the spring of all spiritual actions. How can we imagine God can delight in the mere service of the body, any more than we can delight in converse with a carcass

Without the heart it is no worship; it is a stage-play, an acting a part without being that person really which is acted by us; a hypocrite, in the notion of the word, is a stage-player. We may as well say a man may believe with his body as worship God only with his body. Faith is a great ingredient in worship, and it is 'with the heart man believes

unto righteousness,' Rom. 10:10. We may be truly said to worship God, though we want perfection, but we cannot be said to worship him if we want sincerity. A statue upon a tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good and true a service; it wants only a voice, the gestures and postures are the same; nay, the service is better; it is not a mockery, it represents all that it can be framed to. But to worship without our spirits is a presenting God with a picture, an echo, voice, and nothing else; a compliment, a mere lie, a 'compassing him about with lies,' Hosea 11:12. Without the heart the tongue is a liar, and the greatest zeal, dissembling with him. To present the spirit is to present that which can never naturally die; to present him only the body, is to present him that which is every day crumbling to dust, and will at last lie rotting in the grave. To offer him a few rags easily torn, a skin for a sacrifice, a thing unworthy the majesty of God, a fixed eye and elevated hands, with a sleepy heart and earthly soul, are pitiful things for an ever blessed and glorious Spirit; nay, it is so far from being spiritual, that it is blasphemy; to pretend to be a Jew outwardly, without being so inwardly, is in the judgment of Christ to blaspheme, Rev. 2:9. And is not the same title to be given with as much reason to those that pretend a worship and perform none? Such a one is not a spiritual worshipper, but a blaspheming devil in Samuel's mantle

4. Spiritual worship is performed with an unitedness of heart. The heart is not only now and then with God, but 'united to fear' or worship 'his name,' Ps. 86:11. A spiritual duty must have the engagement of the Spirit, and the thoughts tied up to the spiritual object. The union of all the parts of the heart together with the body is the life of the body, and the moral union of our hearts is the life of any duty. A heart quickly flitting from God makes not God his treasure; he slight the worship, and therein affronts the object of worship. All our thoughts ought to be ravished with God, bound up

in him as in a bundle of life. But when we start from him to gaze after every feather, and run after every bubble, we disown a full and affecting excellency, and a satisfying sweetness in him. When our thoughts run from God, it is a testimony we have no spiritual affection to God. Affection would stake down the thoughts to the object affected. It is but a mouth-love, as the prophet phraseth it: Ezek. 33:31, 'But their hearts go after their covetousness.' Covetous objects pipe, and the heart danceth after them, and thoughts of God are shifted off to receive a multitude of other imaginations. The heart and the service stayed a while together, and then took leave of one another. The psalmist still found his heart with God when he awaked, Ps. 139:18; still with God in spiritual affections, and fixed meditations. A carnal heart is seldom with God, either in or out of worship. If God should knock at the heart in any duty, it would be found not at home, but straying abroad. Our worship is spiritual when the door of the heart is shut against all intruders, as our Saviour commands in closet-duties, Mat. 6:6. It was not his meaning to command the shutting the closet-door, and leave the heart-door open for every thought that would be apt to haunt us. Worldly affections are to be laid aside, if we would have our worship spiritual. This was meant by the Jewish custom of wiping or washing off the dust of their feet before their entrance into the temple, and of not bringing money in their girdles. To be spiritual in worship is to have our souls gathered and bound up wholly in themselves, and offered to God. Our loins must be girt, as the fashion was in the eastern countries, where they wore long garments, that they might not waver with the wind, and be blown between their legs, to obstruct them in their travel. Our faculties must not hang loose about us. He is a carnal worshipper that gives God but a piece of his heart, as well as he that denies him the whole of it; that hath some thoughts pitched upon God in worship, and as many willingly upon the world. David sought God, not with a moiety of his heart, but 'with his whole heart,'

with his entire frame, Ps. 119:10. He brought not half his heart, and left the other in the possession of another master. It was a good lesson Pythagoras gave his scholars,* not to make the observance of God a work by the by. If those guests be invited, or entertained kindly, or if they come unexpected, the spirituality of that worship is lost; the soul kicks down what is wrought before. But if they be brow-beaten by us, and our grief rather than our pleasure, they divert our spiritual intention from the work in hand, but hinder not God's acceptance of it as spiritual, because they are not the acts of our will, but offences to our wills

5. Spiritual worship is performed with a spiritual activity and sensibleness of God, with an active understanding to meditate on his excellency, and an active will to embrace him when he drops upon the soul. If we understand the amiableness of God, our affections will be ravished; if we understand the immensity of his goodness, our spirits will be enlarged. We are to act with the highest intention, suitable to the greatness of that God with whom we have to do: Ps. 150:2, 'Praise him according to his excellent greatness.' Not that we can worship him equally, but in some proportion the frame of the heart is to be suited to the excellency of the object; our spiritual strength is to be put out to the utmost, as creatures that act naturally do. The sun shines, and the fire burns, to the utmost of their natural power. This is so necessary that David, a spiritual worshipper, prays for it before he sets upon acts of adoration: Ps. 80:18, 'Quicken us, that we may call upon thy name.' As he was loath to have a drowsy faculty, he was loath to have a drowsy instrument, and would willingly have them as lively as himself: Ps. 57:8, 'Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.' How would this divine soul screw himself up to God, and be turned into nothing but a holy flame! Our souls must be boiling hot when we serve the Lord. (ζέοντες), Rom. 12:11. The heart doth no less burn

when it spiritually comes to God, than when God doth spiritually approach to it, Luke 24:32. A Nabal's heart, one as cold as a stone, cannot offer up a spiritual service

Whatsoever is enjoined us as our duty, ought to be performed with the greatest intenseness of our spirit. As it is our duty to pray, so it is our duty to pray with the most fervent importunity. It is our duty to love God, but with the purest and most sublime affections. Every command of God requires the whole strength of the creature to be employed in it. That love to God, wherein all our duty to God is summed up, is to be with all our strength, with all our might, &c.[†] Though in the covenant of grace he hath mitigated the severity of the law, and requires not from us such an elevation of our affections as was possible in the state of innocence, yet God requires of us the utmost moral industry to raise our affections to a pitch at least equal to what they are in other things. What strength of affection we naturally have ought to be as much and more excited in acts of worship than upon other occasions and our ordinary works. As there was an activity of soul in worship, and a quickness to sin when sin had the dominion, so when the soul is spiritualised the temper is changed, there is an inactivity to sin and an ardour in duty. The more the soul is 'dead to sin,' the more it is 'alive to God,' Rom. 6:11, and the more lively too in all that concerns God and his honour. For grace being a new strength added to our natural, determines the affections to new objects, and excites them to a greater vigour. And as the hatred of sin is more sharp, the love to everything that destroys the dominion of it is more strong. And acts of worship may be reckoned as the chiefest batteries against the power of this inbred enemy. When the Spirit is in the soul, like the rivers of waters flowing out of the belly, the soul hath the activity of a river, and makes haste to be swallowed up in God, as the streams of the river in the sea. Christ makes his people 'kings and priests to God,' Rev. 1:6.

First kings, then priests; gives first a royal temper of heart, that they may offer spiritual sacrifices as priests; kings and priests to God, acting with a magnificent spirit in all their motions to him. We cannot be spiritual priests till we be spiritual kings. The Spirit appeared in the likeness of fire, and where he resides, communicates, like fire, purity and activity

Dulness is against the light of nature. I do not remember that the heathen ever offered a snail to any of their false deities, nor an ass, but to Priapus their unclean idol; but the Persians sacrificed to the sun a horse, a swift and generous creature. God provided against those in the law, commanding an ass's firstling, the offspring of a sluggish creature, to be redeemed, or his neck broke, but by no means to be offered to him, Exod. 13:13. God is a Spirit infinitely active, and therefore frozen and benumbed frames are unsuitable to him: 'He rides upon a cherub, and flies,' he comes 'upon the wings of the wind,' he rides upon 'a swift cloud,' Isa. 19:1, and therefore demands of us not a dull reason, but an active spirit. God is a living God, therefore must have a lively service. Christ is life, and slothful adorations are not fit to be offered up in the name of life. The worship of God is called wrestling in Scripture, and Paul was a striver in the service of his Master: Col. 1:29, 'in an agony' (ἀγωνιζόμενος). Angels worship God spiritually with their wings on; and when God commands them to worship Christ, the next scripture quoted is that he makes them 'flames of fire,' Heb. 1:7

If it be thus, how may we charge ourselves? What Paul said of the sensual widow, 1 Tim. 5:6, that she is 'dead while she lives,' we may say often of ourselves, we are dead while we worship. Our hearts are in duty as the Jews' were in deliverances, 'as those in a dream,' Ps. 126:1; by which unexpectedness God shewed the greatness of his care and mercy, and we attend him as men in a dream, whereby we

discover our negligence and folly. This activity doth not consist in outward acts. The body may be hot and the heart may be faint, but in an inward stirring, meltings, flights. In the highest raptures, the body is most insensible. Strong spiritual affections are abstracted from outward sense

6. Spiritual worship is performed with acting spiritual habits. When all the living springs of grace are opened, as the fountains of the deep were in the deluge, the soul and all that is within it, all the spiritual impresses of God upon it, erect themselves to bless his holy name, Ps. 103:1

This is necessary to make a worship spiritual. As natural agents are determined to act suitable to their proper nature, so rational agents are to act conformable to a rational being. When there is a conformity between the act and the nature whence it flows, it is a good act in its kind; if it be rational, it is a good rational act, because suitable to its principle. As a man endowed with reason must act suitable to that endowment, and exercise his reason in his acting, so a Christian endued with grace must act suitable to that nature, and exercise his grace in his acting. Acts done by a natural inclination are no more human acts than the natural acts of a beast may be said to be human. Though they are the acts of a man as he is the efficient cause of them, yet they are not human acts, because they arise not from that principle of reason which denominates him a man. So acts of worship performed by a bare exercise of reason, are not Christian and spiritual acts, because they come not from the principle which constitutes him a Christian. Reason is not the principle, for then all rational creatures would be Christians. They ought therefore to be acts of a higher principle, exercises of that grace whereby Christians are what they are; not but that rational acts in worship are due to God, for worship is due from us as men, and we are settled in that

rank of being by our reason. Grace doth not exclude reason, but ennobles it, and calls it up to another form; but we must not rest in a bare rational worship, but exert that principle whereby we are Christians. To worship God with our reason, is to worship him as men; to worship God with our grace, is to worship him as Christians, and so spiritually; but to worship him only with our bodies, is no better than brutes

Our desires of the word are to issue from the regenerate principle: 1 Peter 2:2, 'As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.' It seems to be not a comparison, but a restriction. All worship must have the same spring, and be the exercise of that principle, otherwise we can have no communion with God. Friends that have the same habitual dispositions have a fundamental fitness for an agreeable converse with one another; but if the temper wherein their likeness consists be languishing, and the string out of tune, there is not an actual fitness, and the present indisposition breaks the converse, and renders the company troublesome. Though we may have the habitual graces which compose in us a resemblance to God, yet for want of acting those suitable dispositions, we render ourselves unfit for his converse, and make the worship, which is fundamentally spiritual, to become actually carnal. As the will cannot naturally act to any object but by the exercise of its affections, so the heart cannot spiritually act towards God but by the exercise of graces. This is God's music: Eph. 5:19, 'singing and making melody to God in your hearts.' Singing and all other acts of worship are outward, but the spiritual melody is 'by grace in the heart,' Col. 3:16. This renders it a spiritual worship, for it is an effect of the fulness of the Spirit in the soul; as ver. 19, 'But be filled with the Spirit.' The overflowing of the Spirit in the heart, setting the soul of a believer thus on work to make a spiritual melody to God, shews that something higher than bare reason is put in tune in the heart. Then is the fruit of the garden pleasant to Christ, when

the Holy Spirit, 'the north and south wind, blow upon the spices,' Cant. 4:16, and strike out the fragrantcy of them. Since God is the author of graces, and bestows them to have a glory from them, they are best employed about him and his service. It is fit he should have the cream of his own gifts. Without the exercise of grace, we perform but a work of nature, and offer him a few dry bones without marrow

The whole set of graces must be one way or other exercised. If any treble be wanting in a lute, there will be a great defect in the music. If any one spiritual string be dull, the spiritual harmony of worship will be spoiled

And therefore

1. First, Faith must be acted in worship; a confidence in God. A natural worship cannot be performed without a natural confidence in the goodness of God. Whosoever comes to him must regard him as a rewarder and a faithful Creator, Heb. 11:6; a spiritual worship cannot be performed without an evangelical confidence in him as a gracious Redeemer. To think him a tyrant, meditating revenge, damps the soul; to regard him as a gracious king, full of tender bowels, spirits the affections to him. The mercy of God is the proper object of trust: Ps. 33:18, 'The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.' The worship of God in the Old Testament is most described by fear, in the New Testament by faith. Fear, or the worship of God, and hope in his mercy, are linked together. When they go hand in hand, the accepting eye of God is upon us; when we do not trust, we do not worship. Those of Judah had the temple worship among them, especially in Josiah's time, Zeph. 3:2, the time of that prophecy; yet it was accounted no worship, because no trust in the worshippers. Interest in God cannot be improved without an exercise of faith. The gospel worship is

prophesied of to be a confidence in God, as in a husband more than in a lord: Hosea 2:16, 'Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no mere Baali.' 'Thou shalt call me;' that is, thou shalt worship me, worship being often comprehended under invocation. More confidence is to be exercised in a husband or father than in a lord or master

If a man have not faith, he is without Christ; and though a man be in Christ by the habit of faith, he performs a duty out of Christ without an act of faith. Without the habit of faith, our persons are out of Christ; and without the exercise of faith, the duties are out of Christ. As the want of faith in a person is the death of the soul, so the want of faith in a service is the death of the offering. Though a man were at the cost of an ox, yet to kill it without bringing it to the door of the tabernacle was not a sacrifice but a murder, Lev. 17:3, 4. The tabernacle was a type of Christ, and a look to him is necessary in every spiritual sacrifice. As there must be faith to make any act an act of obedience, so there must be faith to make any act of worship spiritual. That service is not spiritual that is not vital, and it cannot be vital without the exercise of a vital principle; all spiritual life is 'hid in Christ,' and drawn from him by faith, Gal. 2:20. Faith, as it hath relation to Christ, makes every act of worship a living act, and consequently a spiritual act. Habitual unbelief cuts us off from the body of Christ: Rom. 11:20, 'Because of unbelief they were broken off;' and a want of actuated belief breaks us off from a present communion with Christ in spirit. As unbelief in us hinders Christ from doing any mighty work, so unbelief in us hinders us from doing any mighty spiritual duty

So that the exercise of faith, and a confidence in God, is necessary to every duty

2. Love must be acted to render a worship spiritual. Though God commanded love in the Old Testament, yet the manner of giving the law bespoke more of fear than love. The dispensation of the law was with fire, thunder, &c., proper to raise horror and benumb the spirit, which effect it had upon the Israelites, when they desired that God would speak no more to them. Grace is the genius of the gospel, proper to excite the affection of love. The law was given 'by the disposition of angels,' with signs to amaze; the gospel was ushered in with the songs of angels, composed of peace and good will, calculated to ravish the soul. Instead of the terrible voice of the law, Do this and live; the comfortable voice of the gospel is, Grace, grace. Upon this account, the principle of the Old Testament was fear, and the worship often expressed by the fear of God; the principle of the New Testament is love. 'The mount Sinai gendereth to bondage,' Gal. 4:24; mount Zion, from whence the gospel or evangelical law goes forth, gendereth to liberty; and, therefore, the Spirit of bondage unto fear, as the property of the law, is opposed to the state of adoption, the principle of love, as the property of the gospel, Rom. 8:15; and therefore the worship of God, under the gospel or New Testament, is oftener expressed by love than fear, as proceeding from higher principles, and acting nobler passions. In this state we are to 'serve him without fear,' Luke 1:74; without a bondage-fear, not without a fear of unworthy treating him, with a fear of his goodness, as it is prophesied of, Hosea 3:5. Goodness is not the object of terror, but reverence. God, in the law, had more the garb of a judge; in the gospel, of a father; the name of a father is sweeter, and bespeaks more of affection. As their services were with a feeling of the thunders of the law in their consciences, so is our worship to be with a sense of gospel grace in our spirits. Spiritual worship is that, therefore, which is exercised with a spiritual and heavenly affection proper to the gospel. The heart should be enlarged, according to the liberty the gospel gives of drawing near to God as a father; as he gives

us the nobler relation of children, we are to act the nobler qualities of children. Love should act according to its nature, which is desire of union, desire of a moral union by affections, as well as a mystical union by faith, as flame aspires to reach flame and become one with it. In every act of worship we should endeavour to be united to God, and become one spirit with him. This grace doth spiritualise worship. In that one word love, God hath wrapt up all the devotion he requires of us. It is the total sum of the first table, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;' it is to be acted in everything we do; but in worship our hearts should more solemnly rise up and acknowledge him amiable and lovely, since the law is stripped of its cursing power, and made sweet in the blood of the Redeemer. Love is a thing acceptable of itself, but nothing acceptable without it. The gifts of one man to another are spiritualised by it. We would not value a present without the affection of the donor. Every man would lay claim to the love of others, though he would not to their possessions. Love is God's right in every service, and the noblest thing we can bestow upon him in our adorations of him. God's gifts to us are not so estimable without his love nor our services valuable by him without the exercise of a choice affection. Hezekiah regarded not his deliverance without the love of the deliverer: 'In love to my soul thou hast delivered me,' Isa. 38:17; so doth God say, In love to my honour thou hast worshipped me

So that love must be acted, to render our worship spiritual

3. A spiritual sensibleness of our own weakness is necessary to make our worship spiritual. Affections to God cannot be without relentings in ourselves. When the eye is spiritually fixed upon a spiritual God, the heart will mourn that the worship is no more spiritually suitable. The more we act love upon God, as amiable and gracious, the more we should exercise grief in ourselves, as we are vile and offending.

Spiritual worship is a melting worship as well as an elevating worship; it exalts God, and debaseth the creature. The publican was more spiritual in his humble address to God, when the Pharisee was wholly carnal with his swelling language. A spiritual love in worship will make us grieve that we have given him so little, and could give him no more. It is a part of spiritual duty to bewail our carnality mixed with it. As we receive mercies spiritually when we receive them with a sense of God's goodness and our own vileness, in the same manner we render a spiritual worship

4. Spiritual desires for God render the service spiritual; when the soul 'follows hard after him,' Ps. 63:8, pursues after God, as a God of infinite communicative goodness, with sighs and groans unutterable. A spiritual soul seems to be transformed into hunger and thirst, and becomes nothing but desire. A carnal worshipper is taken with the beauty and magnificence of the temple, a spiritual worshipper desires to see the glory of God in the sanctuary, Ps. 63:2. He pants after God. As he came to worship, to find God, so he boils up in desires for God, and is loath to go from it without God, 'the living God,' Ps. 42:2. He would see the Urim and the Thummim, the unusual sparkling of the stones upon the high priest's breastplate. That deserves not the title of spiritual worship, when the soul makes no longing inquiries: 'Saw you him whom my soul loves?' A spiritual worship is, when our desires are chiefly for God in the worship; as David desires to 'dwell in the house of the Lord;' but his desire is not terminated there, but 'to behold the beauty of the Lord,' Ps. 27:4, and taste the ravishing sweetness of his presence. No doubt but Elijah's desires for the enjoyment of God, while he was mounting to heaven, were as fiery as the chariot wherein he was carried. Unutterable groans acted in worship are the fruit of the Spirit, and certainly render it a spiritual service, Rom. 8:26. Strong appetites are agreeable to God, and prepare us to eat the fruit of worship. A

spiritual Paul presseth forward to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection; and a spiritual worshipper actually aspires in every duty to know God, and the power of his grace. To desire worship as an end, is carnal; to desire it as a means, and act desires in it for communion with God in it, is spiritual, and the fruit of a spiritual life.

5. Thankfulness and admiration are to be exercised in spiritual services. This is a worship of spirits. Praise is the adoration of the blessed angels, Isaiah 6:3, and of glorified spirits: Rev. 4:11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power.' And Rev. 5:13, 14, they worship him, ascribing 'blessing, honour, glory, and power to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' Other acts of worship are confined to this life, and leave us as soon as we have set our foot in heaven. There no notes but this of praise are warbled out. The power, wisdom, love, and grace in the dispensation of the gospel seat themselves in the thoughts and tongues of blessed souls. Can a worship on earth be spiritual, that hath no mixture of an eternal heavenly duty with it? The worship of God in innocence had been chiefly an admiration of him in the works of creation; and should not our evangelical worship be an admiration of him in the work of redemption, which is a restoration to a better state? After the petitioning for pardoning grace, Hos. 14:2, there is a rendering the calves or heifers of our lips, alluding to the heifers used in eucharistical sacrifices. The praise of God is the choicest sacrifice and worship, under a dispensation of redeeming grace. This is the prime and eternal part of worship under the gospel. The Psalmist, Ps. 149 and 150, speaking of the gospel times, spurs on to this kind of worship: 'Sing to the Lord a new song; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King; let the saints be joyful in glory, and sing aloud upon their beds; let the high praises of God be in their mouths.' He begins and ends both psalms with Praise ye the Lord. That cannot be a spiritual and evangelical worship that hath nothing of the praise of

God in the heart. The consideration of God's adorable perfections discovered in the gospel will make us come to him with more seriousness, beg blessings of him with more confidence, fly to him with a winged faith and love, and more spiritually glorify him in our attendances upon him

6. Spiritual worship is performed with delight. The evangelical worship is prophetically signified by keeping the feast of tabernacles: 'They shall go up from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles,' Zech. 14:16. Why that feast, when there were other feasts observed by the Jews? That was a feast celebrated with the greatest joy, typical of the gladness which was to be under the exhibition of the Messiah, and a thankful commemoration of the redemption wrought by him. It was to be celebrated five days after the solemn day of atonement, Lev. 23:34, compared with ver. 27, wherein there was one of the solemnest types of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. In this feast they commemorated their exchange of Egypt for Canaan, the manna wherewith they were fed, the water out of the rock wherewith they were refreshed. In remembrance of this, they poured water on the ground, pronouncing those words in Isaiah, 'they shall draw waters out of the wells of salvation,' which our Saviour refers to himself,' John 7:37, inviting them to him to drink 'upon the last day, the great day of the Feast' of Tabernacles, wherein this solemn ceremony was observed. Since we are freed by the death of the Redeemer from the curses of the law, God requires of us a joy in spiritual privileges. A sad frame in worship gives the lie to all gospel liberty, to the purchase of the Redeemer's death, the triumphs of his resurrection. It is a carriage as if we were under the influences of the legal fire and lightning, and an entering a protest against the freedom of the gospel. The evangelical worship is a spiritual worship, and praise, joy, and delight are prophesied of as great ingredients in attendance

on gospel ordinances, Isa. 12:3–5. What was occasion of terror in the worship of God under the law, is the occasion of delight in the worship of God under the gospel. The justice and holiness of God, so terrible in the law, becomes comfortable under the gospel, since they have feasted themselves on the active and passive obedience of the Redeemer. The approach is to God as gracious, not to God as unpacified; as a son to a father, not as a criminal to a judge. Under the law, God was represented as a judge, remembering their sin in their sacrifices, and representing the punishment they had merited; in the gospel as a father, accepting the atonement, and publishing the reconciliation wrought by the Redeemer. Delight in God is a gospel frame, therefore the more joyful, the more spiritual. The Sabbath is to be a delight, not only in regard of the day, but in regard of the duties of it, Isaiah 58:13; in regard of the marvellous work he wrought on it, raising up our blessed Redeemer on that day, whereby a foundation was laid for the rendering our persons and services acceptable to God: Ps. 118:24, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it.' A lumpish frame becomes not a day and a duty that hath so noble and spiritual a mark upon it.

The angels, in the first act of worship after the creation, were highly joyful: Job 38:7, They 'shouted for joy,' &c

The saints have particularly acted this in their worship. David would not content himself with an approach to the altar, without going to God as his 'exceeding joy,' Ps. 43:4, my triumphant joy. When he danced before the ark, he seems to be transformed into delight and pleasure, 2 Sam. 6:14, 16. He had as much delight in worship as others had in their harvest and vintage. And those that took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, would as joyfully attend upon the communications of God. Where there is a fulness of the Spirit, there is a 'making melody to God in the heart,' Eph. 5:18, 19; and where

there is an acting of love (as there is in all spiritual services), the proper fruit of it is joy, in a near approach to the object of the soul's affection. Love is appetitus unionis. The more love, the more delight in the approachings of God to the soul, or the outgoings of the soul to God. As the object of worship is amiable in a spiritual eye, so the means tending to a communion with this object are delightful in the exercise. Where there is no delight in a duty, there is no delight in the object of the duty. The more of grace, the more of pleasure in the actings of it. As the more of nature there is in any natural agent, the more of pleasure in the act, so the more heavenly the worship, the more spiritual. Delight is the frame and temper of glory. A heart filled up to the brim with joy, is a heart filled up to the brim with the Spirit. Joy is the fruit of the Holy Ghost, Gal. 5:22

(1.) Not the joy of God's dispensation, flowing from God, but a gracious active joy streaming to God. There is a joy when the comforts of God are dropped into the soul, as oil upon the wheel, which indeed makes the faculties move with more speed and activity in his service, like the chariots of Amminadab; and a soul may serve God in the strength of this taste, and its delight terminated in the sensible comfort. This is not the joy I mean, but such a joy that hath God for its object, delighting in him as the term, in worship as the way to him. The first is God's dispensation, the other is our duty. The first is an act of God's favour to us, the second a sprout of habitual grace in us. The comforts we have from God may elevate our duties, but the grace we have within doth spiritualise our duties

(2.) Nor is every delight an argument of a spiritual service. All the requisites to worship must be taken in. A man may invent a worship, and delight in it, as Micah in the adoration of his idol, when he was glad he had got both an ephod and a Levite, Judges 17. As a man may have a contentment in sin, so he may have a contentment in worship;

not because it is a worship of God, but the worship of his own invention, agreeable to his own humour and design, as Isaiah 58:2, it is said, they 'delighted in approaching to God,' but it was for carnal ends. Novelty engenders complacency; but it must be a worship wherein God will delight, and that must be a worship according to his own rule and infinite wisdom, and not our shallow fancies

God requires a cheerfulness in his service, especially under the gospel, where he sits upon a throne of grace, discovers himself in his amiableness, and acts the covenant of grace and the sweet relation of a Father. The priests of old were not to sully themselves with any sorrow when they were in the exercise of their functions. God put a bar to the natural affections of Aaron and his sons when Nadab and Abihu had been cut off by a severe hand of God, Lev. 10:6. Every true Christian, in a higher order of priesthood, is a person dedicated to joy and peace, offering himself a lively sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; and there is no Christian duty but is to be set off and seasoned with cheerfulness. He that loves a cheerful giver in acts of charity, requires no less a cheerful spirit in acts of worship. As this is an ingredient in worship, so it is the means to make your spirits intent in worship. When the heart triumphs in the consideration of divine excellency and goodness, it will be angry at anything that offers to jog and disturb it

7. Spiritual worship is to be performed, though with a delight in God, yet with a deep reverence of God. The gospel, in advancing the spirituality of worship, takes off the terror, but not the reverence of God, which is nothing else in its own nature but a due and high esteem of the excellency of a thing according to the nature of it. And therefore the gospel, presenting us with more illustrious notices of the glorious nature of God, is so far from indulging any disesteem of him, that it requires of us a greater reverence, suitable to the height

of its discovery, above what could be spelled in the book of creation. The gospel worship is therefore expressed by trembling: Hos. 11:10, 'They shall walk after the Lord; he shall roar like a lion; when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.' When the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall lift up his powerful voice in the gospel, the western Gentiles shall run trembling to walk after the Lord. God hath always attended his greatest manifestations with remarkable characters of majesty, to create a reverence in his creature. He caused the wind to march before him, to cut the mountain, when he manifested himself to Elijah, 1 Kings 19:11; a wind and a cloud of fire before that magnificent vision to Ezekiel, Ezek. 1:4, 5; thunders and lightnings before the giving the law, Exod. 19:18; and a mighty wind before the giving the Spirit, Acts 2. God requires of us an awe of him in the very act of performance. The angels are pure, and cannot fear him as sinners, but in reverence they cover their faces when they stand before him, Isaiah 6:2. His power should make us reverence him, as we are creatures; his justice, as we are sinners; his goodness, as we are restored creatures. 'God is clothed with unspeakable majesty; the glory of his face shines brighter than the lights of heaven in their beauty. Before him the angels tremble, and the heavens melt; we ought not, therefore, to come before him with the sacrifice of fools, nor tender a duty to him without falling low upon our faces, and bowing the knees of our hearts in token of reverence.'* Not a slavish fear, like that of devils, but a godly fear, like that of saints, Heb. 12:28, joined with a sense of an immoveable kingdom, becometh us. And this the apostle calls a grace necessary to make our service acceptable; and therefore the grace necessary to make it spiritual, since nothing finds admission to God but what is of a spiritual nature. The consideration of his glorious nature should imprint an awful respect upon our souls to him. His goodness should make his majesty more adorable to us, as his majesty makes his goodness more admirable in his condescensions to us. As God is a

Spirit, our worship must be spiritual; and being he is the supreme Spirit, our worship must be reverential. We must observe the state he takes upon him in his ordinances; 'he is in heaven, we upon the earth;' we must not therefore be 'hasty to utter anything before God,' Eccles. 5:7. Consider him a Spirit in the highest heavens, and ourselves spirits dwelling in a dreggy earth. Loose and garish frames debase him to our own quality; slight postures of spirit intimate him to be a slight and mean being; our being in covenant with him must not lower our awful apprehensions of him. As he is 'the Lord thy God,' it is a 'glorious and fearful name,' or wonderful, Deut. 28:58. Though he lay by his justice to believers, he doth not lay by his majesty. When we have a confidence in him, because he is the Lord our God, we must have awful thoughts of his majesty, because his name is glorious. God is terrible from his holy places, in regard of the great things he doth for his Israel, Ps. 68:35. We should behave ourselves with that inward honour and respect of him as if he were present to our bodily eyes. The higher apprehensions we have of his majesty, the greater awe will be upon our hearts in his presence, and the greater spirituality in our acts. We should manage our hearts so as if we had a view of God in his heavenly glory

8. Spiritual worship is to be performed with humility in our spirits. This is to follow upon the reverence of God. As we are to have high thoughts of God, that we may not debase him, we must have low thoughts of ourselves, not to vaunt before him. When we have right notions of the divine majesty, we shall be as worms in our own thoughts, and creep as worms into his presence. We can never consider him in his glory, but we have a fit opportunity to reflect upon ourselves, and consider how basely we revolted from him, and how graciously we are restored by him. As the gospel affords us greater discoveries of God's nature, and so enhanceth our reverence of him, so it helps us to a fuller understanding of our own vileness

and weakness, and therefore is proper to engender humility. The more spiritual and evangelical therefore any service is, the more humble it is. That is a spiritual service that doth most manifest the glory of God, and this cannot be manifested by us without manifesting our own emptiness and nothingness. The heathens were sensible of the necessity of humility by the light of nature;* after the name of God signified by 'Εἰ inscribed on the temple at Delphos, followed Γνωθὶ Σεαυτον, whereby was insinuated, that when we have to do with God, who is the only Ens, we should behave ourselves with a sense of our own infirmity and infinite distance from him. As a person, so a duty, leavened with pride, hath nothing of sincerity, and therefore nothing of spirituality in it: Hab. 2:4, 'His soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him.' The elders that were crowned by God to be kings and priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices, uncrown themselves in their worship of him, and cast down their ornaments at his feet, Rev. 4:10 compared with 5. The Greek word to worship, προσκυνεῖν, signifies to creep like a dog upon his belly before his master, to lie low. How deep should our sense be of the privilege of God's admitting us to his worship, and affording us such a mercy under our deserts of wrath! How mean should be our thoughts, both of our persons and performances! How patiently should we wait upon God for the success of worship! How did Abraham, the father of the faithful, equal himself to the earth when he supplicated the God of heaven, and devoted himself to him under the title of very dust and ashes! Gen. 18:27. Isaiah did but behold an evangelical apparition of God and the angels worshipping him, and presently reflects upon his own uncleanness, Isa. 6:5. God's presence both requires and causes humility. How lowly is David in his own opinion, after a magnificent duty performed by himself and his people: 1 Chron. 29:14, 'Who am I? and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly?' The more spiritual the soul is in its

carriage to God, the more humble it is; and the more gracious God is in his communications to the soul, the lower it lies

God commanded not the fiercer creatures to be offered to him in sacrifices, but lambs and kids, meek and lowly creatures; none that had stings in their tails or venom in their tongues.[†] The meek lamb was the daily sacrifice; the doves were to be offered by pairs; God would not have honey mixed with any sacrifice, Lev. 2:11. That breeds choler, and choler pride; but oil he commanded to be used, that supples and mollifies the parts. Swelling pride and boiling passions render our services carnal; they cannot be spiritual without an humble sweetness and an innocent sincerity; one grain of this transcends the most costly sacrifices. A contrite heart puts a gloss upon worship, Ps. 51:16, 17. The departure of men and angels from God began in pride; our approaches and return to him must begin in humility; and therefore all those graces which are bottomed on humility must be acted in worship, as faith, and a sense of our own indigence. Our blessed Saviour, the most spiritual worshipper, prostrated himself in the garden with the greatest lowliness, and offered himself upon the cross a sacrifice with the greatest humility. Melted souls in worship have the most spiritual conformity to the person of Christ in the state of humiliation, and his design in that state; as worship without it is not suitable to God, so neither is it advantageous for us. A time of worship is a time of God's communication. The vessel must be melted to receive the mould it is designed for; softened wax is fittest to receive a stamp, and a spiritually melted soul fittest to receive a spiritual impression. We cannot perform duty in an evangelical and spiritual strain without the meltingness and meanness in ourselves which the gospel requires

9. Spiritual worship is to be performed with holiness. God is a holy Spirit; a likeness to God must attend the worshipping of God, as he

is; holiness is alway in season, 'it becomes his house for ever,' Ps. 93:5. We can never 'serve the living God' till we have 'consciences purged from dead works,' Heb. 9:14. Dead works in our consciences are unsuitable to God, an eternal living Spirit. The more mortified the heart, the more quickened the service. Nothing can please an infinite purity but that which is pure; since God is in his glory in his ordinances, we must not be in our filthiness. The holiness of his Spirit doth sparkle in his ordinances; the holiness of our spirits ought also to sparkle in our observance of them. The holiness of God is most celebrated in the worship of angels, Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8. Spiritual worship ought to be like angelical; that cannot be with souls totally impure. As there must be perfect holiness to make a worship perfectly spiritual, so there must be some degree of holiness to make it in any measure spiritual. God would have all the utensils of the sanctuary employed about his service to be holy; the inwards of the sacrifice were to be rinsed thrice.* The crop and feathers of sacrificed doves was to be hung[†] eastward towards the entrance of the temple, at a distance from the holy of holies, where the presence of God was most eminent, Lev. 1:16. When Aaron was to go into the holy of holies, he was to sanctify himself in an extraordinary manner, Lev. 16:4. The priests were to be barefooted in the temple in the exercise of their office; shoes alway were to be put off upon holy ground: 'Look to thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,' saith the wise man, Eccles. 5:1. Strip the affections, the feet of the soul, of all the dirt contracted; discard all earthly and base thoughts from the heart. A beast was not to touch the mount Sinai without losing his life; nor can we come near the throne with brutish affections without losing the life and fruit of the worship. An unholy soul degrades himself from a spirit to a brute, and the worship from spiritual to brutish. If any unmortified sin be found in the life, as it was in the comers to the temple, it taints and pollutes the worship, Isa. 1:15, Jer. 7:9, 10. All worship is an acknowledgment of the excellency of God as he is holy;

hence it is called a 'sanctifying God's name.' How can any person sanctify God's name that hath not a holy resemblance to his nature? If he be not holy as he is holy, he cannot worship him according to his excellency in spirit and in truth; no worship is spiritual wherein we have not a communion with God. But what intercourse can there be between a holy God and an impure creature, between light and darkness? We have no fellowship with him in any service, unless we 'walk in the light,' in service and out of service, as he is light, 1 John 1:7. The heathen thought not their sacrifices agreeable to God without washing their hands, whereby they signified the preparation of their hearts before they made the oblation. Clean hands without a pure heart signify nothing; the frame of our hearts must answer the purity of the outward symbols: Ps. 26:6, 'I will wash my hands in innocence, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.' He would observe the appointed ceremonies, but not without cleansing his heart as well as his hands. Vain man is apt to rest upon outward acts and rites of worship; but this must always be practised, the words are in the present tense, I wash, I compass. Purity in worship ought to be our continual care. If we would perform a spiritual service, wherein we would have communion with God, it must be in holiness; if we would walk with Christ, it must be in white, Rev. 3:4, alluding to the white garments the priests put on when they went to perform their service. As without this we cannot see God in heaven, so neither can we see the beauty of God in his own ordinances

10. Spiritual worship is performed with spiritual ends, with raised aims at the glory of God. No duty can be spiritual that hath a carnal aim. Where God is the sole object, he ought to be the principal end. In all our actions he is to be our end, as he is the principle of our being; much more in religious acts, as he is the object of our worship. The worship of God in Scripture is expressed by the 'seeking of him,' Heb. 11:6. Him, not ourselves; all is to be referred to God. As we are

not to live to ourselves, that being the sign of a carnal state, so we are not to worship for ourselves, Rom. 14:7, 8. As all actions are denominated good from their end as well as their object, so upon the same account they are denominated spiritual. The end spiritualiseth our natural actions, much more our religious. Then are our faculties devoted to him when they centre in him. If the intention be evil, there is nothing but darkness in the whole service, Luke 11:34. The first institution of the Sabbath, the solemn day for worship, was to contemplate the glory of God in his stupendous works of creation, and render him a homage for them: Rev. 4:11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honour, glory, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' No worship can be returned without a glorifying of God; and we cannot actually glorify him without direct aims at the promoting his honour. As we have immediately to do with God, so we are immediately to mind the praise of God. As we are not to content ourselves with habitual grace, but be rich in the exercise of it in worship, so we are not to acquiesce in habitual aims at the glory of God, without the actual overflowings of our hearts in those aims

It is natural for man to worship God for self. Self-righteousness is the rooted aim of man in his worship since his revolt from God; and being sensible it is not to be found in his natural actions, he seeks for it in his moral and religious. By the first pride we flung God off from being our sovereign, and from being our end; since a pharisaical spirit struts it in nature, not only to do things to be seen of men, but to be admired by God: Isa. 58:3, 'Wherefore have we fasted, and thou takest no knowledge?' This is to have God worship them instead of being worshipped by them. Cain's carriage, after his sacrifice, testifieth some base end in his worship; he came not to God as a subject to a sovereign, but as if he had been the sovereign, and God the subject; and when his design is not answered, and his desire not

gratified, he proves more a rebel to God, and a murderer of his brother. Such base scents will rise up in our worship from the body of death, which cleaves to us, and mix themselves with our services, as weeds with the fish in the net. David therefore, after his people had offered willingly to the temple, begs of God that their 'hearts might be prepared to him,' 1 Chron. 29:18; that their hearts might stand right to God, without any squinting to self-ends

Some present themselves to God, as poor men offer a present to a great person, not to honour them, but to gain for themselves a reward richer than their gift. 'What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?' &c., Mal. 3:14. Some worship him, intending thereby to make him amends for the wrong they have done him, wipe off their scores, and satisfy their debts; as though a spiritual wrong could be recompensed with a bodily service, and an infinite Spirit be outwitted and appeased by a carnal flattery. Self is the spirit of carnality. To pretend a homage to God, and intend only the advantage of self, is rather to mock him than worship him. When we believe that we ought to be satisfied rather than God glorified; we set God below ourselves, imagine that he should submit his own honour to our advantage. We make ourselves more glorious than God, as though we were not made for him, but he hath a being only for us; this is to have a very low esteem of the majesty of God. Whatsoever any man aims at in worship above the glory of God, that he forms as an idol to himself instead of God, and sets up a golden image. God counts not this as a worship. The offerings made in the wilderness for forty years together, God esteemed as not offered to him: Amos 5:25, 'Have you offered to me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?' They did it not to God, but to themselves; for their own security, and the attainment of the possession of the promised land. A spiritual worshipper performs not worship for some hopes of carnal advantage; he uses ordinances as

means to bring God and his soul together, to be more fitted to honour God in the world in his particular place. When he hath been inflamed and humble in any address or duty, he gives God the glory; his heart suits the doxology at the end of the Lord's prayer, ascribes the kingdom, power, and glory to God alone; and if any viper of pride starts out upon him, he endeavours presently to shake it off. That which was the first end of our framing ought to be the chief end of our acting towards God. But when men have the same ends in worship as brutes, the satisfaction of a sensitive part, the service is no more than brutish. The acting for a sensitive end is unworthy of the majesty of God to whom we address, and unbecoming a rational creature. The acting for a sensitive end is not rational, much less can it be a spiritual service; though the acting may be good in itself, yet not good in the agent, because he wants a due end. We are then spiritual, when we have the same end in our redeemed services as God had in his redeeming love, viz., his own glory

11. Spiritual service is offered to God in the name of Christ. Those are only 'spiritual sacrifices' that are 'offered up to God by Jesus Christ,' 1 Peter 2:5; that are the fruits of the sanctification of the Spirit, and offered in the mediation of the Son. As the altar sanctifies the gift, so doth Christ spiritualise our services for God's acceptation; as the fire upon the altar separated the airy and finer parts of the sacrifice from the terrene and earthly. This is the golden altar upon which the prayers of the saints are offered up before the throne, Rev. 8:3. As all that we have from God streams through his blood, so all that we give to God ascends by virtue of his merits. All the blessings God gave to the Israelites came out of Zion,—Ps. 134:3, 'The Lord bless thee out of Zion,'—that is, from the gospel hid under the law; all the duties we present to God, are to be presented in Zion, in an evangelical manner. All our worship must be bottomed on Christ. God hath intended that we should 'honour the Son as we honour the Father.'

As we honour the Father by offering our service only to him, so we are to honour the Son by offering it only in his name. In him alone God is well pleased, because in him alone he finds our services spiritual and worthy of acceptance. We must therefore take fast hold of him with our spirits, and the faster we hold him, the more spiritual is our worship. To do anything in the name of Christ, is not to believe the worship shall be accepted for itself, but to have our eye fixed upon Christ for the acceptance of it, and not to rest upon the work done, as carnal people are apt to do. The creatures present their acknowledgments to God by man, and man can only present his by Christ. It was utterly unlawful, after the building of the temple, to sacrifice anywhere else. The temple being a type of Christ, it is utterly unlawful for us to present our services in any other name than his

This is the way to be spiritual. If we consider God out of Christ, we can have no other notions but those of horror and bondage. We behold him a Spirit, but environed with justice and wrath for sinners; but the consideration of him in Christ veils his justice, draws forth his mercy, represents him more a Father than a Judge. In Christ, the aspect of justice is changed, and by that the temper of the creature; so that in and by this mediator we can have a spiritual 'boldness, and access to God with confidence,' Eph. 3:12, whereby the spirit is kept from benumbedness and distraction, and our souls quickened and refined. The thoughts kept upon Christ, in a duty of worship, quickly elevates the soul, and spiritualizeth the whole service. Sin makes our services black, and the blood of Christ makes both our persons and services white

To conclude this head

God is a Spirit infinitely happy, therefore we must approach to him with cheerfulness; he is a Spirit of infinite majesty, therefore we must

come before him with reverence; he is a Spirit infinitely high, therefore we must offer up our sacrifices with the deepest humility; he is a Spirit infinitely holy, therefore we must address with purity; he is a Spirit infinitely glorious, we must therefore acknowledge his excellency in all that we do, and in our measures contribute to his glory, by having the highest aims in his worship; he is a Spirit infinitely provoked by us, therefore we must offer up our worship in the name of a pacifying mediator and intercessor.

III. Why Spiritual Worship is Due to God

The third general is, Why a spiritual worship is due to God, and to be offered to him. We must consider the object of worship, and the subject of worship; the worshipper and the worshipped. God is a spiritual being, man is a reasonable creature. The nature of God informs us what is fit to be presented to him; our own nature informs us what is fit to be presented by us

Reason 1. The best we have is to be presented to God in worship. For

1. Since God is the most excellent being, he is to be served by us with the most excellent thing we have, and with the choicest veneration. God is so incomprehensibly excellent, that we cannot render him what he deserves. We must render him what we are able to offer: the best of our affections, the flower of our strength, the cream and top of our spirits. By the same reason that we are bound to give to God the best worship, we must offer it to him in the best manner. We cannot give to God anything too good for so blessed a being. God being a great King, slight services become not his majesty, Mal. 1:13, 14. It is unbecoming the majesty of God, and the reason of a creature,

to give him a trivial thing. It is unworthy to bestow the best of our strength on our lust, and the worst and weakest in the service of God. An infinite Spirit should have affections as near to infinite as we can. As he is a Spirit without bounds, so he should have a service without limits: when we have given him all, we 'cannot serve him' according to the excellency of his nature, Joshua 24:19; and shall we give him less than all? His infinite excellency, and our dependence on him as creatures, demands the choicest adoration. Our spirits being the noblest part of our nature, are as due to him as the service of our bodies, which are the vilest. To serve him with the worst only is to diminish his honour

2. Under the law God commanded the best to be offered him. He would have the males, the best of the kind; the fat, the best of the creature, Exod. 29:13, the inward fat, not the offals. He commanded them to offer him the firstlings of the flock; not the firstlings of the womb, but the firstlings of the year, the Jewish cattle having two breeding times, in the beginning of the spring and the beginning of September; the latter breed was the weaker, which Jacob knew, Gen. 30, when he laid the rods before the cattle when they were strong in the spring, and withheld them when they were feeble in the autumn. One reason, as the Jews say, why God accepted not the offerings of Cain was, because he brought the meanest, not the best of the fruit; and therefore it is said only that he brought of the fruit of the ground, Gen. 4:3, not the first of the fruit, or the best of the fruit, as Abel, who brought the firstling of his flock, and the fat thereof, ver. 4

3. And this the heathen practised by the light of nature. They for the most part offered males, as being more worthy; and burnt the male, not the female, frankincense, as it is divided into those two kinds. They offered the best when they offered their children to Moloch. Nothing more excellent than man, and nothing dearer to parents

than their children, which are parts of themselves. When the Israelites would have a golden calf for a representation of God, they would dedicate their jewels, and strip their wives and children of their richest ornaments, to shew their devotion. Shall men serve their dumb idols with the best of their substance, and the strength of their souls; and shall the living God have a duller service from us than idols had from them? God requires no such hard but delightful worship from us, our spirits

4. All creatures serve man, by the providential order of God, with the best they have. As we, by God's appointment, receive from creatures the best they can give, ought we not with a free will render to God the best we can offer? The beasts give us their best fat, the trees their best fruit, the sun its best light, the fountains their best streams: shall God order us the best from creatures, and we put him off with the worst from ourselves

5. God hath given us the choicest thing he had: a Redeemer that was 'the power of God, and the wisdom of God;' the best he had in heaven, his own Son, and in himself a sacrifice for us, that we might be enabled to present ourselves a sacrifice to him. And Christ offered himself for us, the best he had, and that with the strength of the Deity 'through the eternal Spirit;' and shall we grudge God the best part of ourselves? As God would have a worship from his creature, so it must be with the best part of his creature. If we have 'given ourselves to the Lord,' 2 Cor. 8:5, we can worship with no less than ourselves. What is the man without his spirit? If we are to worship God with all that we have received from him, we must worship him with the best part we have received from him. It is but a small glory we can give him with the best, and shall we deprive him of his right by giving him the worst? As what we are is from God, so what we are ought to be for God. Creation is the foundation of worship: Ps. 100:2,

3, 'Serve the Lord with gladness: know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that made us.' He hath ennobled us with spiritual affections; where is it fittest for us to employ them, but upon him? and at what time, but when we come solemnly to converse with him? Is it justice to deny him the honour of his best gift to us? Our souls are more his gift to us than anything in the world. Other things are so given, that they are often taken from us, but our spirits are the most durable gift. Rational faculties cannot be removed without a dissolution of nature

Well, then;* as he is God, he is to be honoured with all the propensions and ardour that the infiniteness and excellency of such a Being requires, and the incomparable obligations he hath laid upon us in this state deserve at our hands. In all our worship, therefore, our minds ought to be filled with the highest admiration, love, and reverence. Since our end was to glorify God, we answer not our end, and honour him not, unless we give him the choicest we have

Reason 2. We cannot else act towards God according to the nature of rational creatures. Spiritual worship is due to God, because of his nature; and due from us, because of our nature. As we are to adore God, so we are to adore him as men. The nature of a rational creature makes this impression upon him: he cannot view his own nature without having this duty striking upon his mind. As he knows by inspection into himself, that there was a God that made him, so that he is made to be in subjection to God, subjection to him in his spirit as well as his body, and ought morally to testify this natural dependence on him. His constitution informs him that he hath a capacity to converse with God; that he cannot converse with him but by those inward faculties. If it could be managed by his body without his spirit, beasts might as well converse with God as men. It can never be a 'reasonable service' as it ought to be, Rom. 12:1, unless the reasonable faculties be employed in the management of it. It must be

a worship prodigiously lame, without the concurrence of the chiefest part of man with it. As we are to act conformably to the nature of the object, so also to the nature of our own faculties. Our faculties in the very gift of them to us were destined to be exercised; about what? What? All other things but the author of them? It is a conceit cannot enter into the heart of a rational creature, that he should act as such a creature in other things, and as a stone in things relating to the donor of them; as a man with his mind about him in the affairs of the world, as a beast without reason in his acts towards God. If a man did not employ his reason in other things, he would be an unprofitable creature in the world. If he do not employ his spiritual faculties in worship, he denies them the proper end and use for which they were given him; it is a practical denial that God hath given him a soul, and that God hath any right to the exercise of it. If there were no worship appointed by God in the world, the natural inclination of man to some kind of religion would be in vain; and if our inward faculties were not employed in the duties of religion, they would be in vain. The true end of God in the endowment of us with them would be defeated by us, as much as lies in us, if we did not serve him with that which we have from him solely at his own cost. As no man can with reason conclude that the rest commanded on the Sabbath, and the sanctification of it, was only a rest of the body,—that had been performed by the beasts as well as men; but some higher end was aimed at for the rational creature,—so no man can think that the command for worship terminated only in the presence of the body; that God should give the command to man as a reasonable creature, and expect no other service from him than that of a brute

God did not require a worship from man for any want he had, or any essential honour that could accrue to him, but that men might testify their gratitude to him, and dependence on him. It is the most horrid

ingratitude not to have lively and deep sentiments of gratitude after such obligations, and not to make those due acknowledgments that are proper for a rational creature. Religion is the highest and choicest act of a reasonable creature. No creature under heaven is capable of it that wants reason. As it is a violation of reason not to worship God, so it is no less a violation of reason not to worship him with the heart and spirit. It is a high dishonour to God, and defeats him not only of the service due to him from man, but that which is due to him from all the creatures. Every creature, as it is an effect of God's power and wisdom, doth passively worship God; that is, it doth afford matter of adoration to man, that hath reason to collect it and return it where it is due. Without the exercise of the soul, we can no more hand it to God, than without such an exercise we can gather it from the creature; so that by this neglect the creatures are restrained from answering their chief end; they cannot pay any service to God without man; nor can man without the employment of his rational faculties render a homage to God, any more than beasts can. This engagement of our inward power stands firm and unviolable, let the modes of worship be what they will, or the changes of them by the sovereign authority of God never so frequent, this could not expire or be changed as long as the nature of man endured. As man had not been capable of a command for worship, unless he had been endued with spiritual faculties, so he is not active in a true practice of worship, unless they be employed by him in it. The constitution of man makes this manner of worship perpetually obligatory, and the obligation can never cease till man cease to be a creature furnished with such faculties. In our worship, therefore, if we would act like rational creatures, we should extend all the powers of our souls to the utmost pitch, and essay to have apprehensions of God equal to the excellency of his nature, which though we may attempt, we can never attain

Reason 3. Without this engagement of our spirits, no act is an act of worship. True worship being an acknowledgment of God and the perfections of his nature, results only from the soul, that being only capable of knowing God, and those perfections, which are the object and motive of worship. The posture of the body is but to testify the inward temper and affection of the mind. If therefore it testifies what it is not, it is a lie and no worship. The cringes a beast may be taught to make to an altar may as well be called worship, since a man thinks as little of that God he pretends to honour, as the beast doth of the altar to which he bows. Worship is a reverent remembrance of God, and giving some honour to him with the intention of the soul. It cannot justly have the name of worship that wants the essential part of it. It is an ascribing to God the glory of his nature, an owning subjection and obedience to him as our sovereign Lord. This is as impossible to be performed without the spirit as that there can be life and motion in a body without a soul. It is a drawing near to God, not in regard of his essential presence,—so all things are near to God,—but in acknowledgment of his excellency, which is an act of the spirit; without this, the worst of men in a place of worship are as near to God as the best. The necessity of the conjunction of our soul ariseth from the nature of worship, which being the most serious thing we can be employed in, the highest converse with the highest object requires the choicest temper of spirit in the performance. That cannot be an act of worship which is not an act of piety and virtue, but there is no act of virtue done by the members of the body without the concurrence of the powers of the soul. We may as well call the presence of a dead carcass in a place of worship an act of religion, as the presence of a living body without an intent spirit. The separation of the soul from one is natural, the other moral; that renders the body lifeless, but this renders the act loathsome to God. As the being of the soul gives life to the body, so the operation of the soul gives life to the actions. As he cannot be a man that wants the form of a man, a

rational soul, so that cannot be a worship that wants an essential part, the act of the spirit. God will not vouchsafe any acts of man so noble a title, without the requisite qualifications: Hosea 5:6, 'They shall go with their flocks and their herds to seek the Lord,' &c. A multitude of lambs and bullocks for sacrifice to appease God's anger, God would not give it the title of worship, though instituted by himself, when it wanted the qualities of such a service. The spirit of whoredom was in the midst of them, ver. 4. In the judgment of our Saviour it is a vain worship, when the traditions of men are taught for the doctrines of God, Mat. 15:9; and no less vain must it be, when the bodies of men are presented to supply the place of their spirits. As an omission of duty is a contempt of God's sovereign authority, so the omission of the manner of it is a contempt of it, and of his amiable excellency; and that which is a contempt and mockery can lay no just claim to the title of worship

Reason 4. There is in worship an approach of God to man. It was instituted to this purpose, that God might give out his blessings to man. And ought not our spirits to be prepared and ready to receive his communications? We are in such acts more peculiarly in his presence. In the Israelites' hearing the law, it said God was to 'come among them,' Exod. 19:10, 11. Then, men are said to stand before the Lord: Deut. 10:8, 'God before whom I stand;' that is, whom I worship. And therefore when Cain forsook the worship of God, settled in his father's family, he is said to 'go out from the presence of the Lord,' Gen. 4:16. God is essentially present in the world, graciously present in his church. The name of the evangelical city is Jehovah Shammah: Ezek. 48:35, 'The Lord is there.' God is more graciously present in the evangelical institutions than in the legal; he 'loves the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob,' Ps. 87:2. His evangelical law and worship which was to go forth from Zion, as the other did from Sinai, Micah 4:2. God delights to

approach to men, and converse with them in the worship instituted in the gospel, more than in all the dwellings of Jacob. If God be graciously present, ought not we to be spiritually present? A lifeless carcass service becomes not so high and delectable a presence as this; it is to thrust him from us, not invite him to us; it is to practise in the ordinances what the prophet predicts concerning men's usage of our Saviour: Isa. 53:2, 'There is no form, no comeliness, nor beauty that we should desire him.' A slightness in worship reflects upon the excellency of the object of worship. God and his worship are so linked together, that whosoever thinks the one not worth his inward care, esteems the other not worth his inward affection. How unworthy a slight is it of God, who proffers the opening his treasure, the re-impressing his image, conferring his blessings, admits us into his presence, when he hath no need for us, who hath millions of angels to attend him in his court, and celebrate his praise! He that worships not God with his spirit, regards not God's presence in his ordinances, and slights the great end of God in them, and that perfection he may attain by them. We can only expect what God hath promised to give, when we render to him what he hath commanded us to present. If we put off God with a shell, he will put us off with a husk. How can we expect his heart, when we do not give him ours? or hope for the blessing needful for us, when we render not the glory due to him? It cannot be an advantageous worship without spiritual graces; for those are uniting, and union is the ground of all communion

Reason 5. To have a spiritual worship is God's end in the restoration of the creature, both in redemption by his Son, and sanctification by his Spirit. A fitness for spiritual offerings was the end of the coming of Christ, Mal. 3:3. He should purge them, as gold and silver by fire, a spirit burning up their dross, melting them into a holy compliance with, and submission to, God. To what purpose? That they may 'offer

to the Lord an offering in righteousness,' a pure offering from a purified spirit. He came to 'bring us to God,' 1 Peter 3:18, in such a garb as that we might be fit to converse with him. Can we be thus without a fixedness of our spirits on him

The 'offering of spiritual sacrifices' is the end of making any 'a spiritual habitation, and a holy priesthood,' 1 Peter 2:5. We can no more be worshippers of God, without a worshipper's nature, than a man be a man without human nature. As man was at first created for the honour and worship of God, so the design of restoring that image, which was defaced by sin, tends to the same end. We are not brought to God by Christ, nor are our services presented to him, if they be without our spirits. Would any man, that undertakes to bring another to a prince, introduce him in a slovenly and sordid habit, such a garb that he knows hateful to him? or bring the clothes or skin of a man stuffed with straw, instead of the person? To come with our skins before God, without our spirits, is contrary to the design of God in redemption and regeneration

If a carnal worship would have pleased God, a carnal heart would have served his turn, without the expense of his Spirit in sanctification. He bestows upon man a spiritual nature, that he may return to him a spiritual service. He enlightens the understanding, that he may have a rational service, and new moulds the will, that he may have a voluntary service. As it is the milk of the word wherewith he feeds us, so it is the service of the word wherewith we must glorify him. So much as there is of confusedness in our understanding, so much of starting and levity in our wills, so much of slipperiness and skipping in our affections, so much is abated of the due qualities of the worship of God, and so much we fall short of the end of redemption and sanctification

Reason 6. A spiritual worship is to be offered to God, because no worship but that can be acceptable. We can never be secured of acceptance without it. He being a Spirit, nothing but the worship in spirit can be suitable to him. What is unsuitable cannot be acceptable. There must be something in us, to make our services capable of being presented by Christ for an actual acceptation. No service is 'acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,' but as it is a 'spiritual sacrifice,' and offered by a spiritual heart, 1 Pet. 2:5. The sacrifice is first spiritual, before it be acceptable to God by Christ. When it is 'an offering in righteousness,' it is then, and only then, pleasant to the Lord, Mal. 3:3, 4. No prince would accept a gift that is unsuitable to his majesty, and below the condition of the person that presents it. Would he be pleased with a bottle of water for drink, from one that hath his cellar full of wine? How unacceptable must that be that is unsuitable to the divine majesty! And what can be more unsuitable, than a withdrawing the operations of our souls from him, in the oblation of our bodies? We as little 'glorify God as God' when we give him only a corporeal worship, as the heathen did when they represented him in a corporeal shape, Rom. 1:21; one as well as the other denies his spiritual nature. This is worse, for had it been lawful to represent God to the eye, it could not have been done but by a bodily figure suited to the sense; but since it is necessary to worship him, it cannot be by a corporeal attendance, without the operation of the spirit. A spiritual frame is more pleasing to God than the highest exterior adornments, than the greatest gifts and the highest prophetic illumination. The glory of the second temple exceeded the glory of the first, Hag. 2:8, 9. As God accounts the spiritual glory of ordinances most beneficial for us, so our spiritual attendance upon ordinances is most pleasing to him. He that offers the greatest services without it, offers but flesh: Hos. 8:13, 'They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of my offerings, but the Lord accepts them not.' Spiritual frames are the soul of religious services; all other carriages

without them, are contemptible to this spirit. We can never lay claim to that promise of God, none shall 'seek my face in vain.' We affect a vain seeking of him, when we want a due temper of spirit for him; and vain spirits shall have vain returns. It is more contrary to the nature of God's holiness to have communion with such, than it is contrary to the nature of light to have communion with darkness.

IV. To make use of this

Use 1. First, it serves for information

1. If spiritual worship be required by God, how sad is it for them that are so far from giving God a spiritual worship, that they render him no worship at all! I speak not of the neglect of public, but of private; when men present not a devotion to God from one year's end to the other. The speech of our Saviour, that we must worship God in spirit and in truth, implies that a worship is due to him from every one. That is the common impression upon the consciences of all men in the world, if they have not, by some constant course in gross sins, hardened their souls, and stifled those natural sentiments. There was never a nation in the world without some kind of religion, and no religion was ever without some modes to testify a devotion. The heathens had their sacrifices and purifications; and the Jews, by God's order, had their rites whereby they were to express their allegiance to God

Consider

(1.) Worship is a duty incumbent upon all men. It is a homage mankind owes to God, under the relation wherein he stands obliged

to him. It is a prime and immutable justice to own our allegiance to him. It is as unchangeable a truth that God is to be worshipped, as that God is. He is to be worshipped as God, as Creator, and therefore by all, since he is the Creator of all, the Lord of all, and all are his creatures, and all are his subjects. Worship is founded upon creation, Ps. 100:2, 3. It is due to God for himself and his own essential excellency, and therefore due from all. It is due upon the account of man's nature. The human rational nature is the same in all. Whatsoever is due to God upon the account of man's nature, and the natural obligations he hath laid upon man, is due from all men, because they all enjoy the benefits which are proper to their nature

Man in no state was exempted, nor can be exempted from it. In paradise he had his Sabbaths and sacraments. Man therefore dissolves the obligation of a reasonable nature, by neglecting the worship of God

Religion is in the first place to be minded. As soon as Noah came out of the ark, he contrived not a habitation for himself, but an altar for the Lord, to acknowledge him the author of his preservation from the deluge, Gen. 8:20; and wheresoever Abraham came, his first business was to erect an altar, and pay his arrears of gratitude to God, before he ran upon the score for new mercies, Gen. 12:7, 13:4, 18. He left a testimony of worship wherever he came

(2.) Wholly therefore to neglect it, is a high degree of atheism. He that 'calls not upon God,' 'saith in his heart, There is no God,' and seems to have the sentiments of natural conscience as to God stifled in him, Ps. 14:1, 4. It must arise from a conceit that there is no God, or that we are equal to him (adoration not being due from persons of an equal state), or that God is unable or unwilling to take notice of the adoring acts of his creatures. What is any of these but an

undeifying the supreme Majesty? When we lay aside all thoughts of paying any homage to him, we are in a fair way opinionatively to deny him, as much as we practically disown him. Where there is no knowledge of God, that is, no acknowledgment of God, a gap is opened to all licentiousness, Hos. 4:1, 2; and that by degrees brawns the conscience, and razeth out the sense of God. Those forsake God that 'forget his holy mountain,' Isa. 65:11. They do not practically own him as the Creator of their souls or bodies. It is the sin of Cain, who, turning his back upon worship, is said to 'go out from the presence of the Lord,' Gen. 4:16. Not to worship him with our spirits, is against his law of creation; not to worship him at all, is against: his act of creation; not to worship him in truth is hypocrisy; not to worship him at all is atheism, whereby we render ourselves worse than the worms in the earth, or a toad in a ditch

(3.) To perform a worship to a false God, or to the true God in a false manner, seems to be less a sin than to live in perpetual neglect of it. Though it be directed to a false object instead of God, yet it is under the notion of a God, and so is an acknowledgment of such a being as God in the world; whereas the total neglect of any worship is a practical denying of the existence of any supreme Majesty

Whosoever constantly omits a public and. private worship, transgresses against an universally-received dictate, for all nations have agreed in the common notion of worshipping God, though they have disagreed in the several modes and rites whereby they would testify that adoration. By a worship of God, though superstitious, a veneration and reverence of such a being is maintained in the world; whereas by a total neglect of worship, he is virtually disowned and discarded, if not from his existence, yet from his providence and government of the world. All the mercies we breathe in are denied to flow from him. A foolish worship owns religion, though it bespatters

it. As if a stranger coming into a country mistakes a subject for the prince, and pays that reverence to the subject which is due to the prince, though he mistakes the object, yet he owns an authority; or if he pays any respect to the true prince of that country after the mode of his own, though appearing ridiculous in the place where he is, he owns the authority of the prince; whereas the omission of all respect would be a contempt of majesty. And therefore, the judgments of God have been more signal upon the sacrilegious contemners of worship among the heathens, than upon those that were diligent and devout in their false worship; and they generally owned the blessings received, to the preservation of a sense and worship of a deity among them. Though such a worship be not acceptable to God, and every man is bound to offer to God a devotion agreeable to his own mind, yet it is commendable, not as worship, but as it speaks an acknowledgment of such a being as God, in his power in creation, and his beneficence in his providence

Well, then, omissions of worship are to be avoided. Let no man execute that upon himself, which God will pronounce at last as the greatest misery, and bid God depart from him, who will at last be loath to hear God bid him depart from him. Though man hath natural sentiments that God is to be worshipped, yet having an hostility in his nature, he is apt to neglect, or give it him in a slight manner. He therefore sets a particular mark and notice of attention upon the fourth command, 'Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.' Corrupt nature is apt to neglect the worship of God, and flag in it. This command therefore, which concerns his worship, he fortifies with several reasons

Nor let any neglect worship, because they cannot find their hearts spiritual in it. The further we are from God, the more carnal shall we be. No man can expect heat by a distance from the sunbeams, or

other means of warmth. Though God commanded a circumcised heart in the Jewish services, yet he did not warrant a neglect of the outward testimonies of religion he had then appointed; he expected according to his command, that they should offer the sacrifices, and practise the legal purifications he had commanded; he would have them diligently observed, though he had declared that he imposed them only for a time. And our Saviour ordered the practice of those positive rights as long as the law remained unrepealed, as in the case of the leper, Mark 14:4. It is an injustice to refuse the offering ourselves to God, according to the manner he hath in his wisdom prescribed and required

If spiritual worship be required by God, the

2. It informs us, that diligence in outward worship is not to be rested in. Men* may attend all their days on worship, with a juiceless heart and un-quickened frame, and think to compensate the neglect of the manner, with abundance of the matter of service. Outward expressions are but the badges and liveries of service, not the service itself. As the strength of sin lies in the inward frame of the heart, so the strength of worship in the inward complexion and temper of the soul. What do a thousand services avail, without cutting the throat of our carnal affections! What are loud prayers, but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, without divine charity! A Pharisaical diligence in outward forms, without inward spirit, had no better a title vouchsafed by our Saviour, than that of hypocritical. God desires not sacrifices, nor delights in burnt offerings. Shadows are not to be offered instead of substance. God required the heart of man for itself; but commanded outward ceremonies, as subservient to inward worship, and goads and spurs unto it. They were never appointed as the substance of religion, but auxiliaries to it. What value had the offering of the human nature of Christ been of, if he had not had a

divine nature to qualify him to be the priest! And what is the oblation of our bodies, without a priestly act of the spirit in the presentation of it! Could the Israelites have called themselves worshippers of God according to his order, if they had brought a thousand lambs that had died in a ditch, or been killed at home? They were to be brought living to the altar, the blood shed at the foot of it. A thousand sacrifices killed without, had not been so valuable as one brought alive to the place of offering. One sound sacrifice is better than a thousand rotten ones. As God took no pleasure in the blood of beasts without its relation to the antitype, so he takes no pleasure in the outward rites of worship, without faith in the Redeemer. To offer a body with a sapless spirit, is a sacrilege of the same nature with that of the Israelites when they offered dead beasts. A man without spiritual worship is dead whiles he worships, though by his diligence in the externals of it, he may, like the angel of the church of Sardis, 'have a name to live,' Rev. 3:1. What security can we expect from a multitude of dead services! What weak shields are they against the holy eye and revenging wrath of God! What man, but one out of his wits, would solicit a dead man to be his advocate or champion? Diligence in outward worship is not to be rested in

Use 2. Shall be for examination. Let us try ourselves concerning the manner of our worship. We are now in the end of the world, and the dregs of time; wherein the apostle predicts, there may be much of a 'form, and little of the power of godliness,' 2 Tim. 3:1, 5. And therefore it stands us in hand to search into ourselves, whether it be not thus with us; whether there be as much reverence in our spirits, as there may be devotion in our countenances and outward carriages

1. How therefore are our hearts prepared to worship? Is our diligence greater to put our hearts in an adoring posture, than our bodies in a decent garb? Or are we content to have a muddy heart, so we may

have a dressed carcass? To have a spirit a cage of unclean birds, while we wipe the filth from the outside of the platter, is no better than a pharisaical devotion, and deserves no better a name than that of a whited sepulchre

Do we take opportunities to excite and quicken our spirits to the performance, and cry aloud with David, 'Awake, awake, my glory'? Are not our hearts asleep when Christ knocks? When we hear the voice of God, 'Seek my face,' do we answer him with warm resolutions, 'Thy face, Lord, we will seek'? Ps. 27:8. Do we comply with spiritual motions, and strike while the iron is hot? Is there not more of reluctancy than readiness? Is there a quick rising of the soul in reverence to the motion, as Eglon to Ehud, or a sullen hanging the head at the first approach of it? Or if our hearts seem to be engaged and on fire, what are the motives that quicken that fire? Is it only the blast of a natural conscience, fear of hell, desires of heaven as abstracted from God? Or is it an affection to God, an obedient will to please him, longings to enjoy him, as a holy and sanctifying God in his ordinances, as well as a blessed and glorified God in heaven

What do we expect in our approaches from him? That which may make divine impressions upon us, and more exactly conform us to the divine nature? Or do we design nothing but an empty formality, a rolling eye, and a filling the air with a few words, without any openings of heart to receive the incomes, which according to the nature of the duty might be conveyed to us? Can this be a spiritual worship? The soul then 'closely waits' upon him, when its 'expectation is only from him,' Ps. 62:6. Are our hearts seasoned with a sense of sin, a sight of our spiritual wants, raised notions of God, glowing affections to him, strong appetite after a spiritual fulness? Do we rouse up our sleepy spirits, and make a covenant with all that is within us to attend upon him? So much as we want of this, so

much we come short of a spiritual worship. In Ps. 57:7, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.' David would fix his heart, before he would engage in a praising act of worship. He appeals to God about it, and that with doubling the expression, as being certain of an inward preparedness. Can we make the same appeals in a fixation of spirit

2. How are our hearts fixed upon him, how do they cleave to him in the duty? Do we resign our spirits to God, and make them an entire holocaust, a whole burnt-offering in his worship? Oh, do we not willingly admit carnal thoughts to mix themselves with spiritual duties, and fasten our minds to the creature, under pretences of directing them to the Creator? Do we not pass a mere compliment on God, by some superficial act of devotion, while some covetous, envious, ambitious, voluptuous imagination may possess our minds? Do we not invert God's order, and worship a lust instead of God with our spirit, that should not have the least service, either from our souls or bodies, but with a spiritual disdain be sacrificed to the just indignation of God? How often do we fight against his will, while we cry 'Hail, master;' instead of crucifying our own thoughts, crucifying the Lord of our lives; our outward carriage plausible, and our inward stark naught! Do we not often regard iniquity more than God in our hearts, in a time of worship, roll some filthy imagination as a sweet morsel under our tongues, and taste more sweetness in that than in God? Do not our spirits smell rank of earth while we offer to heaven? and have we not hearts full of thick clay, as their 'hands were full of blood'? Isa. 1:15. When we sacrifice, do we not wrap up our souls in communion with some sordid fancy, when we should entwine our spirits about an amiable God? While we have some fear of him, may we not have a love to something else above him? This is to worship, or swear by the Lord, and by Malcham, Zeph. 1:5. How often doth an apish fancy render a service inwardly ridiculous, under a grave

outward posture, skipping to the shop, warehouse, counting-house, in the space of a short prayer! And we are before God as a Babel, a confusion of internal languages; and this in those parts of worship which are in the right use most agreeable to God, profitable for ourselves, ruinous to the kingdom of sin and Satan, and means to bring us into a closer communion with the divine majesty. Can this be a spiritual worship

3. How do we act our graces in worship? Though the instrument be strung, if the strings be not wound up, what melody can be the issue? All readiness and alacrity discover a strength of nature, and a readiness in spirituals discovers a spirituality in the heart. As unaffecting thoughts of God are not spiritual thoughts, so unaffecting addresses to God are not spiritual addresses. Well then, what awakenings and elevations of faith and love have we? what strong outflowings of our souls to him? what indignation against sin? what admirations of redeeming grace? How low have we brought our corruptions to the footstool of Christ, to be made his conquered enemies? how straitly have we clasped our faith about the cross and the throne of Christ, to become his intimate spouse? Do we in hearing hang upon the lips of Christ; in prayer, take hold of God and will not let him go; in confession, rend the caul of our hearts, and indict our souls before him with a deep humility? Do we act more by a soaring love than a drooping fear? So far as our spirits are servile, so far they are legal and carnal; so much as they are free and spontaneous, so much they are evangelical and spiritual. As men under the law are subject to the constraint of bondage, Heb. 2:15, 'all their lifetime,' in all their worship, so under the gospel they are under a constraint of love, 2 Cor. 5:14. How then are believing affections exercised, which are always accompanied with holy fear, a fear of his goodness that admits us into his presence, and a fear to

offend him in our act of worship? So much as we have of forced or feeble affection, so much we have of carnality

4. How do we find our hearts after worship? By our after-carriage we may judge of the spirituality of it

(1.) How are we as to inward strength? When a worship is spiritually performed, grace is more strengthened, corruption more mortified. The soul, like Samson after his awakening, goes out with a renewed strength. As the inward man is renewed day by day, that is, every day, so it is renewed in every worship. Every shower makes the grass and fruit grow in good ground where the root is good, and the weeds where the ground is naught. The more prepared the heart is to obedience in other duties after worship, the more evidence there is that it hath been spiritual in the exercise of it. If is the end of God in every dispensation, as in that of John Baptist, to 'make ready a people prepared for the Lord,' Luke 1:17; when the heart is by worship prepared for fresh acts of obedience, and hath a more exact watchfulness against the encroachments of sin. As carnal men, after worship, sprout up in spiritual wickedness, so do spiritual worshippers in spiritual graces. Spiritual fruits are a sign of a spiritual frame. When men are more prone to sin after duty, it is a sign there was but little communion with God in it, and a greater strength of sin, because such an act is, contrary to the end of worship, which is the subduing of sin. It is a sign the physic hath wrought well, when the stomach hath a better appetite to its appointed food; and worship hath been well performed when we have a stronger inclination to other acts well pleasing to God, and a more sensible distaste of those temptations we too much relished before. It is a sign of a good concoction, when there is a greater strength in the vitals of religion, a more eager desire to know God. When Moses had been praying to God, and prevailed with him, he

puts up a higher request, to behold his glory, Exod. 33:13, 18. When the appetite stands strong to fuller discoveries of God, it is a sign there hath been a spiritual converse with him

(2.) How is it especially as to humility. The Pharisees' worship was, without dispute, carnal; and we find them not more humble after all their devotions, but over-grown with more weeds of spiritual pride; they performed them as their righteousness. What men dare plead before God in his day, they plead before them in their hearts in their day; but this men will do at the day of judgment, 'we have prophesied in thy name,' &c., Mat. 7:11. They shew what tincture their services left upon their spirits. That which excludes them from any acceptation at the last day, excludes them from any estimation of being spiritual in this day. The carnal worshippers charge God with injustice in not rewarding them, and claim an acceptation as a compensation due to them: Isa. 58:3, 'Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?' A spiritual worshipper looks upon his duties with shame, as well as he doth upon his sins with confusion, and implores the mercy of God for the one as well as the other. In Psalm 143:2, the prophet David, after his supplications, begs of God not to enter into judgment with him, and acknowledges any answer that God should give him, as a fruit of his faithfulness to his promise, and not the merit of his worship. 'In thy faithfulness answer me,' &c. Whatsoever springs from a gracious principle, and is the breath of the Spirit, leaves a man more humble; whereas that which proceeds from a stock of nature, hath the true blood of nature running in the veins of it, viz., that pride which is naturally derived from Adam. The breathing of the divine Spirit is in everything to conform us to our Redeemer; that being the main work of his office is his work in every particular Christian act influenced by him. Now Jesus Christ in all his actions was an exact pattern of humility. After the institution and celebration of the Supper, a special act of worship

in the church, though he had a sense of all the authority his Father had given him, yet he humbles himself to wash his disciples' feet, John 13:2–4. And after his sublime prayer, John 17, he humbles himself to the death, and offers himself to his murderers, because of his Father's pleasure: John 18:1, 'When he had spoken those words, he went over the brook Kedron' into the garden. What is the end of God in appointing worship is the end of a spiritual heart in offering it, not his own exaltation, but God's glory. Glorifying the name of God is the fruit of that evangelical worship the Gentiles were in time to give to God: Ps. 86:9, 'All nations which thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.' Let us examine, then, what debasing ourselves there is in a sense of our own vileness and distance from so glorious a Spirit. Self-denial is the heart of all gospel grace. Evangelical spiritual worship cannot be without the ingredient of the main evangelical principle

(3.) What delight is there after it? What pleasure is there, and what is the object of that pleasure? Is it communion we have had with God, or a fluency in ourselves? Is it something which hath touched our hearts or tickled our fancies? As the strength of sin is known by the delightful thoughts of it after the commission, so is the spirituality of duty by the object of our delightful remembrance after the performance. It was a sign David was spiritual in the worship of God in the tabernacle when he enjoyed it, because he longed for the spiritual part of it when he was exiled from it. His desires were not only for liberty to revisit the tabernacle, but to see the 'power and glory of God in the sanctuary,' as he had seen it before, Ps. 63:2. His desires for it could not have been so ardent, if his reflection upon what had passed had not been delightful; nor could his soul be poured out in him for the want of such opportunities, if the remembrance of the converse he had had with God had not been

accompanied with a delightful relish, Ps. 42:4. Let us examine what delight we find in our spirits after worship

Use 3 is of comfort. And it is very comfortable to consider that the smallest worship with the heart and spirit, flowing from a principle of grace, is more acceptable than the most pompous veneration, yea, if the oblation were as precious as the whole circuit of heaven and earth, without it. That God, that values a cup of cold water given to any as his disciple, will value a sincere service above a costly sacrifice. God hath his eye upon them that honour his nature. He would not 'seek such to worship him' if he did not intend to accept such a worship from them. When we therefore invoke him, and praise him, which are the prime parts of religion, he will receive it as a sweet savour from us, and overlook infirmities mixed with the graces

The great matter of discomfort, and that which makes us question the spirituality of worship, is the many starts of our spirits and roving to other things

For answer to which

1. It is to be confessed that these starts are natural to us. Who is free from them? We bear in our own bosom a nest of turbulent thoughts, which, like busy gnats, will be buzzing about us while we are in our most inward and spiritual converses. Many wild beasts lurk in a man's heart, as in a close and covert wood, and scarce discover themselves but at our solemn worship

No duty so holy, no worship so spiritual, that can wholly privilege us from them. They will jog us in our most weighty employments, that, as God said to Cain, sin lies at the door, and enters in, and makes a riot in our souls. As it is said of wicked men, they cannot sleep for

multitude of thoughts, Eccles. 5:12, so it may be of many a good man, he cannot worship for multitude of thoughts. There will be starts, and more in our religious than natural employments; it is natural to man. Some therefore think the bells tied to Aaron's garments between the pomegranates were to warn the people, and recall their fugitive minds to the present service, when they heard the sound of them, upon the least motion of the high priest. The sacrifice of Abraham, the father of the faithful, was not exempt from the fowls picking at it, Gen. 15:11. Zechariah himself was drowsy in the midst of his vision, which being more amazing, might cause a heavenly intentness: Zech. 4:1, 'The angel that talked with me came again, and awaked me, as a man is awaked out of sleep.' He had been roused up before, but he was ready to drop down again; his heart was gone till the angel jogged him. We may complain of such imaginations, as Jeremiah doth of the enemies of the Jews: Lam. 4:19, 'Our persecutors are swifter than eagles;' they light upon us with as much speed as eagles upon a carcass; they pursue us upon the mountain of divine institution, and they lay wait for us in the wilderness, in our retired addresses to God

And this will be so while

(1.) There is natural corruption in us. There are in a godly man two contrary principles, flesh and spirit, which endeavour to hinder one another's acts, and are always stirring upon the offensive or defensive part, Gal. 5:17. There is a body of death continually exhaling its noisome vapours. It is a body of death in our worship as well as in our natures; it snaps our resolutions asunder, Rom. 7:19; it hinders us in the doing good, and contradicts our wills in the stirring up evil. This corruption being seated in all the faculties, and a constant domestic in them, has the greater opportunity to trouble us, since it is by those faculties that we spiritually transact with God; and

it stirs more in the time of religious exercises, though it be in part mortified; as a wounded beast, though tired, will rage and strive to its utmost, when the enemy is about to fetch a blow at it. All duties of worship tend to the wounding of corruption; and it is no wonder to feel the striving of sin to defend itself and offend us, when we have our arms in our hands to mortify it, that the blow may be diverted which is directed against it

The apostles had aspiring thoughts, and being persuaded of an earthly kingdom, expected a grandeur in it. And though we find some appearance of it at other times,—as when they were casting out devils, and gave an account of it to their Master, he gives them a kind of a check, Luke 10:20, intimating that there was some kind of evil in their rejoicing upon that account,—yet this never swelled so high as to break out into a quarrel who should be greatest, until they had the most solemn ordinance, the Lord's supper, to quell it, Luke 22:24. Our corruption is like lime, which discovers not its fire by any smoke or heat till you cast water, the enemy of fire, upon it; neither doth our natural corruption rage so much as when we are using means to quench and destroy it

(2.) While there is a devil, and we in his precinct. As he accuseth us to God, so he disturbs us in ourselves; he is a bold spirit, and loves to intrude himself when we are conversing with God. We read that when the angels presented themselves before God, Satan comes among them, Job 1:6. Motions from Satan will thrust themselves in with our most raised and angelical frames. He loves to take off the edge of our spirits from God; he acts but after the old rate; he from the first envied God an obedience from man, and envied man the felicity of communion with God; he is unwilling God should have the honour of worship, and that we should have the fruit of it; he hath himself lost it, and therefore is unwilling we should enjoy it; and

being subtle, he knows how to make impressions upon us suitable to our inbred corruptions, and assaults us in the weakest part; he knows all the avenues to get within us (as he did in the temptation of Eve), and being a spirit, he wants not a power to dart them immediately upon our fancy; and being a spirit, and therefore active and nimble, he can shoot those darts faster than our weakness can beat them off. He is diligent also, and watcheth for his prey, and seeks to devour our services as well as our souls, and snatch our best morsels from us. We know he mixed himself with our Saviour's retirements in the wilderness, and endeavoured to fly-blow his holy converse with his Father in the preparation to his mediatory work

Satan is God's ape, and imitates the Spirit in the office of a remembrancer. As the Spirit brings good thoughts and divine promises to mind, to quicken our worship, so the devil brings evil things to mind, and endeavours to fasten them in our souls to disturb us. And though all the foolish starts we have in worship are not purely his issue, yet being of kin to him, he claps his hands, and sets them on like so many mastiffs to tear the service in pieces

And both those distractions, which arise from our own corruption and from Satan, are most rife in worship when we are under some pressing affliction. This seems to be David's case, Ps. 86. When, in verse 11, he prays God to 'unite his heart to fear and worship his name,' he seems to be under some affliction, or fear of his enemies: Oh free me from those distractions of spirit, and those passions which arise in my soul upon considering the designs of my enemies against me, and press upon me in my addresses to thee and attendance on thee. Job also in his affliction complains, Job 17:11, that his purposes were broken off. He could not make an even thread of thoughts and resolutions; they were frequently snapped asunder, like rotten yarn when one is winding up

Good men and spiritual worshippers have lain under this trouble. Though they are a sign of weakness of grace, or some obstructions in the acting of strong grace, yet they are not alway evidences of a want of grace. What ariseth from our own corruption, is to be matter of humiliation and resistance; what ariseth from Satan, should edge our minds to a noble conquest of them. If the apostle did comfort himself with his disapproving of what rose from the natural spring of sin within him, with his consent to the law and dissent from his lust, and charges it not upon himself, but upon the sin that dwelt in him, with which he had broken off the former league, and was resolved never to enter into amity with it, by the same reason we may comfort ourselves, if such thoughts are undelighted in, and alienate not our hearts from the worship of God by all their busy intrusions to interrupt us

2. These distractions (not allowed) may be occasions, by an holy improvement, to make our hearts more spiritual alter worship, though they disturb us in it, by answering those ends for which we may suppose God permits them to invade us. And that is

(1.) When they are occasions to humble us

[1.] For our carriage in the particular worship. There is nothing so dangerous as spiritual pride; it deprived devils and men of the presence of God, and will hinder us of the influence of God. If we had had raised and uninterrupted motions in worship, we should be apt to be lifted up; and the devil stands ready to tempt us to self-confidence. You know how it was with Paul, 2 Cor. 12:1–7, his buffetings were occasions to render him more spiritual than his raptures, because more humble. God suffers those wanderings, starts, and distractions to prevent our spiritual pride, which is as a worm at the root of spiritual worship, and minds us of the dusty

frame of our spirits, how easily they are blown away, as he sends sickness to put us in mind of the shortness of our breath and the easiness to lose it. God would make us ashamed of ourselves in his presence, that we may own that what is good in any duty is merely from his grace and Spirit, and not from ourselves; that with Paul we may cry out, 'By grace we are what we are,' and by grace we do what we do. We may be hereby made sensible that God can alway find something in our exactest worship, as a ground of denying us the successful fruit of it. If we cannot stand upon our duties for salvation, what can we bottom upon in ourselves? If, therefore, they are occasions to make us out of love with any righteousness of our own, to make us break our hearts for them because we cannot keep them out, if we mourn for them as our sins, and count them our great afflictions, we have attained that brokenness which is a choice ingredient in a spiritual sacrifice. Though we have been disturbed by them, yet we are not robbed of the success; we may behold an answer of our worship in our humiliation in spite of all of them

[2.] For the baseness of our nature. These unsteady motions help us to discern that heap of vermin that breeds in our nature. Would any man think he had such an averseness to his Creator and benefactor, such an unsuitableness to him, such an estrangedness from him, were it not for his inspection into his distracted frames? God suffers this to hang over us as a rod of correction, to discover and fetch out the folly of our hearts. Could we imagine our natures so highly contrary to that God who is so infinitely amiable, so desirable an object, or that there should be so much folly and madness in the heart, as to draw back from God in those services which God hath appointed as pipes through which to communicate his grace, to convey himself, his love, and goodness to the creature? If, therefore, we have a deep sense of, and strong reflections upon, our base nature, and bewail that mass of averseness which lies there, and that

fulness of irreverence towards the God of our mercies, the object of our worship, it is a blessed improvement of our wanderings and diversions. Certainly if any Israelite had brought a lame and rotten lamb to be sacrificed to God, and afterward had bewailed it, and laid open his heart to God in a sensible and humble confession of it, that repentance had been a better sacrifice, and more acceptable in the sight of God, than if he had brought a sound and a living offering

(2.) When they are occasions to make us prize duties of worship. When we argue, as rationally we may, that they are of singular use, since our corrupt hearts and a malicious devil doth chiefly endeavour to hinder us from them, and that we find we have not those gadding thoughts when we are upon worldly business, or upon any sinful design which may dishonour God and wound our souls, this is a sign sin and Satan dislike worship, for he is too subtile a spirit to oppose that which would further his kingdom. As it is an argument the Scripture is the word of God, because the wickedness of the world doth so much oppose it, so it is a ground to believe the profitableness and excellency of worship because Satan and our own unruly hearts do so much interrupt us in it. If, therefore, we make this use of our cross-steps in worship, to have a greater value for such duties, more affections to them and desires to be frequent in them, our hearts are growing spiritual, under the weights that would depress them to carnality

(3.) When we take a rise from hence, to have heavenly admirations of the graciousness of God; that he should pity and pardon so many slight addresses to him, and give any gracious returns to us. Though men have foolish ranging every day, and in every duty, yet free grace is so tender as not to punish them: Gen. 8:21, 'And the Lord smelt a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not curse the ground for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from

his youth.' It is observable that this was just after a sacrifice which Noah offered to God, ver. 20; but probably not without infirmities common to human nature, which may be grounded upon the reason God gives, that though he had destroyed the earth before, because of the evil of man's imaginations, Gen. 6:5, he still found evil imaginations; he doth not say in the heart of Shem, or others of Noah's family, but in man's heart, including Noah also, who had both the judgments of God upon the former world, and the mercy of God in his own preservation before his eyes; yet God saw evil imaginations rooted in the nature of man, and though it were so, yet he would be merciful. If therefore we can, after finding our hearts so vagrant in worship, have real frames of thankfulness that God hath spared us, and be heightened in our admirations at God's giving us any fruit of such a distracted worship, we take advantage from them to be raised into an evangelical frame, which consists in the humble acknowledgments of the grace of God. When David takes a review of those tumultuous passions which had ruffled his mind, and possessed him with unbelieving notions of God in the persons of his prophets, Ps. 116:11, how high doth his soul mount in astonishment and thankfulness to God for his mercy, ver. 12. Notwithstanding his distrust, God did graciously perform his promise, and answer his desire; then it is, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' His heart was more affected for it, because it had been so passionate in former distrusts. It is indeed a ground of wondering at the patience of the Spirit of God, that he should guide our hearts when they are so apt to start out; as it is the patience of a master to guide the hand of his scholar, while he mixes his writing with many blots. It is not one or two infirmities the Spirit helps us in, and helps over, but many, Rom. 8:26. It is a sign of a spiritual heart when he can take a rise to bless God for the renewing and blowing up his affections, in the midst of so many incursions from Satan to the contrary, and the readiness of the heart too much to comply with them

(4.) When we take occasion from thence to prize the mediation of Christ. The more distractions jog us, the more need we should see of going out to a Saviour by faith. One part of our Saviour's office is to stand between us and the infirmities of our worship. As he is an advocate, he presents our services, and pleads for them and us, 1 John 2:1; for the sins of our duties, as well as for our other sins. Jesus Christ is an high priest, appointed by God to take away the iniquities of our holy things, which was typified by Aaron's plate upon his mitre, Exod. 28:36, 38. Were there no imperfections, were there no creeping up of those frogs into our minds, we would think our worship would merit acceptance with God upon its own account; but if we behold our own weakness, that not a tear, a groan, a sigh is so pure, but must have Christ to make it entertainable; that there is no worship without those blemishes; and upon this, throw all our services into the arms of Christ for acceptance, and solicit him to put his merits in the front to make our ciphers appear valuable: it is a spiritual act, the design of God in the gospel being to advance the honour and mediation of his Son. That is a spiritual and evangelical act, which answers the evangelical design. The design of Satan and our own corruption is defeated, when those interruptions make us run swifter, and take faster hold on the high priest, who is to present our worship to God, and our own souls receive comfort thereby. Christ had temptations offered to him by the devil in his wilderness retirement, that from an experimental knowledge he might be able more compassionately to succour us, Heb. 2:18: we have such assaults in our retired worship especially, that we may be able more highly to value him and his mediation

3. Let us not therefore be discouraged by those interruptions and starts of our hearts

(1.) If we find in ourselves a strong resistance of them. The flesh will be lusting: that cannot be hindered; yet if we do not fulfil the lusts of it, rise up at its command and go about its work, we may be said to walk in the Spirit: Gal. 5:16, 17, we 'walk in the Spirit,' if we 'fulfil not the lusts of the flesh,' though there be a lusting of the flesh against the spirit. So we worship in the Spirit, though there be carnal thoughts arising, if we do not fulfil them; though the stirring of them discovers some contrariety in us to God, yet the resistance manifests that there is a principle of contrariety in us to them; that as there is something of flesh that lusts against the spirit, so there is something of spirit in worship which lusts against the flesh. We must take heed of omitting worship, because of such inroads, and lying down in the mire of a total neglect. If our spirits are made more lively and vigorous against them; if those cold vapours which have risen from our hearts, make us like a spring in the midst of the cold earth more warm, there is in this case more reason for us to bless God than to be discouraged. God looks upon it as the disease, not the wilfulness of our nature; as the weakness of the flesh, not the wilfulness of the spirit. If we would shut the door upon them, it seems they are unwelcome company; men do not use to lock their doors upon those they love: if they break in and disturb us with their impertinencies, we need not be discomforted, unless we give them a share in our affections, and turn our back upon God to entertain them. If their presence makes us sad, their flight would make us joyful

(2.) If we find ourselves excited to a stricter watch over our hearts against them; as travellers will be careful when they come to places where they have been robbed before, that they be not so easily surprised again. We should not only lament when we have had such foolish imaginations in worship breaking in upon us, but also bless God that we have had no more, since we have hearts so fruitful of weeds. We should give God the glory when we find our hearts

preserved from these intruders, and not boast of ourselves, but return him our praise for the watch and guard he kept over us to preserve us from such thieves

Let us not be discomfited; for as the greatness of our sins upon our turning to God is no hindrance to our justification, because it doth not depend upon our conversion as the meritorious cause, but upon the infinite value of our Saviour's satisfaction, which reaches the greatest sins as well as the least, so the multitude of our bewailed distractions in worship are not a hindrance to our acceptation, because of the uncontrollable power of Christ's intercession

Use 4 is for exhortation. Since spiritual worship is due to God, and the Father seeks such to worship him, how much should we endeavour to satisfy the desire and order of God, and act conformable to the law of our creation and the love of redemption! Our end must be the same in worship which was God's end in creation and redemption: to glorify his name, set forth his perfections, and be rendered fit, as creatures and redeemed ones, to partake of that grace which is the fruit of worship. An evangelical dispensation requires a spiritual homage; to neglect, therefore, either the matter or manner of gospel duties, is to put a slight upon gospel privileges. The manner of duty is ever of more value than the matter; the scarlet dye is more precious than the cloth tintured with it. God respects more the disposition of the sacrificer than the multitude of the sacrifices.* The solemn feasts appointed by God were but dung, as managed by the Jews, Mal. 2:8. The heart is often welcome without the body, but the body never grateful without the heart. The inward acts of the Spirit require nothing from without to constitute them good in themselves; but the outward acts of devotion require inward acts to render them savoury to God. As the goodness of outward acts consists not in the acts themselves, so the

acceptableness of them results not from the acts themselves, but from the inward frame animating and quickening those acts, as blood and spirits running through the veins of a duty to make it a living service in the sight of God. Imperfections in worship hinder not God's acceptation of it, if the heart spirited by grace be there to make it a sweet savour. The stench of burning flesh and fat in the legal sacrifices might render them noisome to the outward senses, but God smelt a sweet savour in them as they respected Christ. When the heart and spirit are offered up to God, it may be a savoury duty, though attended with unsavoury imperfections; but a thousand sacrifices without a stamp of faith, a thousand spiritual duties with an habitual carnality, are no better than stench with God

The heart must be purged, as well as the temple was by our Saviour, of the thieves that would rob God of his due worship. Antiquity had some temples, wherein it was a crime to bring any gold; therefore those that came to worship laid their gold aside before they went into the temple. We should lay aside our worldly and trading thoughts before we address to worship: Isa. 26:9, 'With my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Let not our minds be gadding abroad, and exiled from God and themselves. It will be thus when 'the desire of our soul is to his name, and the remembrance of him,' ver. 8. When he hath given so great and admirable a gift, as that of his Son, in whom are all things necessary to salvation, righteousness, peace, and pardon of sin, we should manage the remembrance of his name in worship with the closest unitedness of heart, and the most spiritual affections. The motion of the spirit is the first act in religion; to this we are obliged in every act. The devil requires the spirit of his votaries: should God have a less dedication than the devil

Motives to back this exhortation

1. Not to give God our spirit is a great sin. It is a mockery of God, not worship; contempt, not adoration, whatever our outward fervency or protestations may be.* Every alienation of our hearts from him is a real scorn put upon him. The acts of the soul are real, and more the acts of the man than the acts of the body, because they are the acts of the choicest part of man, and of that which is the first spring of all bodily motions; it is the λόγος ἐνδιαθετός, the internal speech, whereby we must speak with God. To give him, therefore, only an external form of worship, without the life of it, is a taking his name in vain. We mock him, when we mind not what we are speaking to him, or what he is speaking to us; when the motions of our hearts are contrary to the motions of our tongues; when we do anything before him slovenly, impudently, or rashly. As in a lutinist it is absurd to sing one tune and play another, so it is a foul thing to tell God one thing with our lips, and think another thing with our hearts. It is a sin like that the apostle chargeth the heathens with: Rom. 1:28, 'They like not to retain God in their knowledge;' their stomachs are sick while they are upon any duty, and never leave working, till they have thrown up all the spiritual part of worship, and rid themselves of the thoughts of God, which are as unwelcome and troublesome guests to them. When men behave themselves in the sight of God as if God were not God, they do not only defame him, but deny him, and violate the unchangeable perfections of the divine nature

(1.) It is against the majesty of God, when we have not awful thoughts of that great majesty to whom we address; when our souls cleave not to him when we petition him in prayer, or when he gives out his orders in his word. It is a contempt of the majesty of a prince, if, while he is speaking to us, we listen not to him with reverence and attention, but turn our backs on him to play with one of his hounds or talk with a beggar, or while we speak to him to rake in a dunghill. Solomon adviseth us to 'keep our foot when we go to the house of

God,' Eccles. 5:1. Our affections should be steady, and not slip away again; why? ver. 2. Because 'God is in heaven,' &c. He is a God of majesty, earthly dirty frames are unsuitable to the God of heaven, low spirits are unsuitable to the Most High. We would not bring our mean servants or dirty dogs in a prince's presence chamber; yet we bring not only our worldly but our profane affections into God's presence. We give in this case those services to God which our governor would think unworthy of him, Mal. 1:8. The more excellent and glorious God is, the greater contempt of him it is to suffer such foolish affections to be competitors with him for our hearts. It is a scorn put upon him to converse with a creature while we are dealing with him; but a greater to converse in our thoughts and fancies with some sordid lust which is most hateful to him. And the more aggravation it attracts, in that we are to apprehend him, the most glorious object, sitting upon his throne in time of worship, and ourselves standing as vile creatures before him, supplicating for our lives, and the conveyances of grace and mercy to our souls. As if a grand mutineer, instead of humble begging the pardon of his offending prince, should present his petition not only scribbled and blotted, but besmeared with some loathsome excrement. It is unbecoming the majesty both of God and the worship itself, to present him with a picture instead of substance, and bring a world of nasty affections in our hearts, and ridiculous toys in our heads before him, and worship with indisposed and heedless souls. Mal. 1:14, He is a great king, therefore address to him with fear and reverence

(2.) It is against the life of God. Is a dead worship proportioned to a living God? The separation of heavenly affections from our souls before God, makes them as much a carcass in his sight as the divorce of the soul makes the body a carcass. When the affections are separated, worship is no longer worship but a dead offering, a lifeless bulk; for the essence and spirit of worship is departed. Though the

soul be present with the body in a way of information, yet it is not present in a way of affection, and this is the worst; for it is not the separation of the soul from informing that doth separate a man from God, but the removal of our affections from him. If a man pretend an application to God, and sleep and snore all the time, without question such a one did not worship. In a careless worship the heart is morally dead while the eyes are open. The heart of the spouse awaked whiles her eyes slept, Cant. 5:2, and our hearts on the contrary sleep while our eyes awake

Our blessed Saviour hath died to 'purge our consciences from dead works' and frames, that we may 'serve the living God,' Heb. 9:14; to serve God as a God of life. David's soul cried and fainted for God under this consideration, Ps. 42:2. But to present our bodies without our spirits is such a usage of God that implies he is a dead image, not worthy of any but a dead and heartless service, like one of those idols the psalmist speaks of, Ps. 115:5, that 'have eyes and see not, ears and hear not,' no life in it. Though it be not an objective idolatry, because the worship is directed to the true God, yet I may call it a subjective idolatry, in regard of the frame, fit only to be presented to some senseless stock. We intimate God to be no better than an idol, and to have no more knowledge of us and insight into us than an idol can have. If we did believe him to be the living God, we durst not come before him with services so unsuitable to him, and reproaches of him

(3.) It is against the infiniteness of God. We should worship God with those boundless affections which bear upon them a shadow or image of his infiniteness, such as the desires of the soul, which know no limits, but start out beyond whatsoever enjoyment the heart of man possesses. No creeping creature was to be offered to God in sacrifice, but such as had legs to run or wings to fly. For us to come before God with a light creeping frame is to worship him with the lowest finite

affections; as though anything, though never so mean or torn, might satisfy an infinite being; as though a poor shallow creature could give enough to God without giving him the heart, when indeed we cannot give him a worship proportionable to his infiniteness, did our hearts swell as large as heaven in our desires for him in every act of our duties

(4.) It is against the spirituality of God. God being a Spirit, calls for a worship in spirit: to withhold this from him, implies him to be some gross corporeal matter. As a Spirit, he looks for the heart, a wrestling heart in prayer, a trembling heart in the word, Isa. 66:2. To bring nothing but the body when we come to a spiritual God to beg spiritual benefits, to wait for spiritual communications, which can only be dispensed to us in a spiritual manner, is unsuitable to the spiritual nature of God. A mere carnal service implicitly denies his spirituality, which requires of us higher engagements than mere corporeal ones

Worship should be rational, not an imaginative service, wherein is required the activity of our noblest faculties; and our fancy ought to have no share in it, but in subserviency to the more spiritual part of our soul

(5.) It is against the supremacy of God. As God is one, the only sovereign, so our hearts should be one, cleaving wholly to him, and undivided from him. In pretending to deal with him, we acknowledge his Deity and sovereignty; but in withholding our choicest faculties and affections from him, and the starting of our minds to vain objects, we intimate their equality with God, and their right as well as his to our hearts and affections. It is as if a princess should commit adultery with some base scullion while she is before her husband, which would be a plain denial of his sole right to her. It intimates

that other things are superior to God; they are true sovereigns that engross our hearts. If a man were addressing himself to a prince, and should in an instant turn his back upon him upon a beck or nod from some inconsiderable person, is it not an evidence that that person that invited him away hath a greater sovereignty over him than that prince to whom he was applying himself? And do we not discard God's absolute dominion over us, when, at the least beck of a corrupt inclination, we can dispose of our hearts to it, and alienate them from God? As they in Ezek. 33:32, left the service of God for the service of their covetousness, which evidenced that they owned the authority of sin more than the authority of God. This is not to serve God as our Lord and absolute master, but to make God serve our turn, and submit his sovereignty to the supremacy of some unworthy affection. The creature is preferred before the Creator, when the heart runs most upon it in time of religious worship, and our own carnal interest swallows up the affections that are due to God: it is 'an idol set up in the heart,' Ezek. 14:4, in his solemn presence, and attracts that devotion to itself which we only owe to our sovereign Lord; and the more base and contemptible that is to which the spirit is devoted, the more contempt there is of God's dominion. Judas his kiss, with a Hail, Master, was no act of worship, or an owning his Master's authority, but a designing the satisfaction of his covetousness in the betraying of him

(6.) It is against the wisdom of God. God, as a God of order, has put earthly things in subordination to heavenly, and we by this unworthy carriage invert this order, and put heavenly things in subordination to earthly, in placing mean and low things in our hearts, and bringing them so placed into God's presence, which his wisdom at the creation put under our feet. A service without spiritual affections is a 'sacrifice of fools,' Eccles. 5:1, which have lost their brains and understandings; a foolish spirit is very unsuitable to an infinitely

wise God. Well may God say of such a one, as Achish of David, who seemed mad, 'Why have you brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?' 1 Sam. 21:15

(7.) It is against the omniscieny of God. To carry it fair without and impertinently within, is as though God had not an all-seeing eye that could pierce into the heart, and understand every motion of the inward faculties; as though God were easily cheated with an outward fawning service, like an apothecary's box with a gilded title, that may be full of cobwebs within. What is such a carriage, but a design to deceive God, when with Herod we pretend to worship Christ, and intend to murder all the motions of Christ in our souls! A heedless spirit, an estrangement of our souls, a giving the reins to them to run out from the presence of God to see every reed shaken with the wind, is to deny him to be searcher of hearts, and the discernor of secret thoughts; as though he could not look through us to the darkness and remoteness of our minds, but were an ignorant God, who might be put off with the worst as well as the best in our flock. If we did really believe there were a God of infinite knowledge, who saw our frames, and whether we came dressed with wedding-garments suitable to the duties we are about to perform, should we be so garish, and put him off with such trivial stuff, without any reverence of his majesty

(8.) It is against the holiness of God. To alienate our spirits is to offend him while we pretend to worship him; though we may be mighty officious in the external part, yet our base and carnal affections make all our worship but as a heap of dung; and who would not look upon it as an affront to lay dung before a prince's throne? Prov. 21:27, 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: how much more when he brings it with a wicked mind?' A putrified carcass under the law had not been so great an affront to the holiness of God as a frothy, unmelted heart, and a wanton fancy in a time of

worship. God is so holy, that if we could offer the worship of angels, and the quintessence of our souls in his service, it would be beneath his infinite purity. How unworthy then are they of him, when they are presented not only without the sense of our uncleanness, but sullied with the fumes and exhalations of our corrupt affections, which are so many plague-spots upon our duties, contrary to the unspotted purity of the divine nature! Is not this an unworthy conceit of God, and injurious to his infinite holiness

(9.) It is against the love and kindness of God. It is a condescension in God to admit a piece of earth to offer up a duty to him, when he hath myriads of angels to attend him in his court and celebrate his praise; to admit man to be an attendant on him, and a partner with angels, is a high favour. It is not a single mercy, but a heap of mercies to be admitted into the presence of God: Ps. 5:7, 'I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercies.' When the blessed God is so kind as to give us access to his majesty, do we not undervalue his kindness when we deal uncivilly with him, and deny him the choicest part of ourselves? It is a contempt of his sovereignty, as our spirits are due to him by nature; a contempt of his goodness, as our spirits are due to him by gratitude! How abusive a carriage is it to make use of his mercy to encourage our impudence, that should excite our fear and reverence! How unworthy would it be for an indigent debtor to bring to his indulgent creditor an empty purse instead of payment! When God holds out his golden sceptre to encourage our approaches to him, stands ready to give us the pardon of sin and full felicity, the best things he hath, is it a fit requital of his kindness to give him a formal outside only, a shadow of religion, to have the heart overswayed with other thoughts and affections, as if all his proffers were so contemptible as to deserve only a slight at our hands? It is a contempt of the love and kindness of God

(10.) It is against the sufficiency and fulness of God. When we give God our bodies and the creature our spirits, it intimates a conceit that there is more content to be had in the creature than in God blessed for ever, that the waters in the cistern are sweeter than those in the fountain. Is not this a practical giving God the lie, and denying those promises wherein he hath declared the satisfaction he can give to the spirit, as he is the God of the spirits of all flesh

If we did imagine the excellency and loveliness of God were worthy to be the ultimate object of our affections, the heart would attend more closely upon him, and be terminated in him; did we believe God to be all-sufficient, full of grace and goodness, a tender Father, not willing to forsake his own, willing as well as able to supply their wants, the heart would not so lamely attend upon him, and would not upon every impertinency be diverted from him. There is much of a wrong notion of God, and a predominancy of the world above him in the heart, when we can more savourily relish the thoughts of low inferior things than heavenly, and let our spirits upon every trifling occasion be fugitives from him. It is a testimony that we make not God our chiefest good. If apprehensions of his excellency did possess our souls, they would be fastened on him, glued to him; we should not listen to that rabble of foolish thoughts that steal our hearts so often from him. Were our breathings after God as strong as the pantings of the hart after the water brooks, we should be like that creature, not diverted in our course by every puddle. Were God the predominant satisfactory object in our eye, he would carry our whole soul along with him

When our spirits readily retreat from God in worship upon every giddy motion, it is a kind of repentance that ever we did come near him, and implies that there is a fuller satisfaction, and more attractive excellency, in that which doth so easily divert us, than in

that God to whose worship we did pretend to address ourselves; it is as if, when we were petitioning a prince, we should immediately turn about, and make request to one of his guard, as though so mean a person were more able to give us the boon we want, than the sovereign is

2. Consideration by way of motive. To have our spirits off from God in worship is a bad sign. It was not so in innocence. The heart of Adam could cleave to God; the law of God was engraven upon him; he could apply himself to the fulfilling of it without any twinkling; there was no folly and vanity in his mind, no independency in his thoughts, no duty was his burden; for there was in him a proneness to, and delight in, all the duties of worship. It is the fall hath distempered us, and the more unwieldiness there is in our spirits, the more carnal our affections are in worship, the more evidence there is of the strength of that revolted state

(1.) It argues much corruption in the heart. As by the eructations of the stomach we may judge of the windiness and foulness of it, so by the inordinate motions of our minds and hearts we may judge of the weakness of its complexion. A strength of sin is evidenced by the eruptions and ebullitions of it in worship, when they are more sudden, numerous, and vigorous than the motions of grace. When the heart is apt like tinder to catch fire from Satan, it is a sign of much combustible matter suitable to his temptation. Were not corruption strong, the soul could not turn so easily from God when it is in his presence, and hath advantageous opportunity to create a fear and awe of God in it; such base fruit could not sprout up so suddenly were there not much sap and juice in the root of sin

What communion with a living root can be evidenced without exercises of an inward life! That Spirit, which is a well of living

waters in a gracious heart, will be especially springing up when it is before God

(2.) It shews much affection to earthly things, and little to heavenly. There must needs be an inordinate affection to earthly things, when upon every slight solicitation we can part with God, and turn the back upon a service glorious for him, and advantageous for ourselves, to wed our hearts to some idle fancy that signifies nothing. How can we be said to entertain God in our affections, when we give him not the precedency in our understandings, but let every trifle jostle the sense of God out of our minds? Were our hearts fully determined to spiritual things, such vanities could not seat themselves in our understandings, and divide our spirits from God. Were our hearts balanced with a love to God, the world could never steal our hearts so much from his worship, but his worship would draw our hearts to it

It shews a base neutrality in the greatest concernments, a halting between God and Baal, a contrariety between affection and conscience, when natural conscience presses a man to duties of worship, and his other affections pull him back, draw him to carnal objects, and make him slight that whereby he may honour God. God argues the profaneness of the Jews' hearts from the wickedness they brought into his house and acted there: Jer. 23, 'Yea, in my house,' that is, my worship, 'I found their wickedness,' saith the Lord. Carnality in worship is a kind of an idolatrous frame; when the heart is renewed, idols are cast to the moles and the bats, Isa. 2:20

(3.) It shews much hypocrisy to have our spirits off from God. The mouth speaks, and the carriage pretends, what the heart doth not think; there is a dissent of the heart from the pretence of the body

Instability is a sure sign of hypocrisy. Double thoughts argue a double heart. The wicked are compared to chaff, Ps. 1:4, for the uncertain and various motions of their minds by the least wind of fancy. The least motion of a carnal object diverts the spirit from God, as the scent of carrion doth the raven from the flight it was set upon

The people of God are called God's spouse, and God calls himself their husband; whereby is noted the most intimate union of the soul with God, and that there ought to be the highest love and affection to him, and faithfulness in his worship; but when the heart doth start from him in worship, it is a sign of the unstedfastness of it with God, and a disrelish of any communion with him. It is as God complains of the Israelites, a going a-whoring after our own imaginations

As grace respects God as the object of worship, so it looks most upon God in approaching to him. Where there is a likeness and love, there is a desire of converse and intimacy; if there be no spiritual entwining about God in our worship, it is a sign there is no likeness to him, no true sense of him, no renewed image of God in us. Every living image will move strongly to join itself with its original copy, and be glad, with Jacob, to sit steadily in those chariots that shall convey him to his beloved Joseph

Motive 3. Consider the danger of a carnal worship

(1.) We lose the comfort of worship. The soul is a great gainer when it offers a spiritual worship, and as great a loser when it is unfaithful with God. Treachery and perfidiousness hinder commerce among men, so doth hypocrisy in its own nature communion with God. God never promised anything to the carcass, but to the spirit of worship. God hath no obligation upon him by any word of his, to reward us with himself, when we perform it not to himself. When we give an outside worship, we have only the outside of an ordinance. We can

expect no kernel, when we give God only the shell. He that only licks the outside of the glass can never be refreshed with the rich cordial enclosed within. A cold and lazy formality will make God to withdraw the light of his countenance, and not shine with any delightful communications upon our souls; but if we come before him with a liveliness of affections, and steadiness of heart, he will draw the veil, and cause his glory to display itself before us. An humble praying Christian, and a warm affectionate Christian in worship, will soon find a God who is delighted with such frames, and cannot long withhold himself from the soul. When our hearts are inflamed with love to him in worship, it is a preparation for some act of love on his part, whereby he intends further to gratify us. When John was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day,'—that is, in spiritual employment, and meditation, and other duties,—he had that great revelation of what should happen to the church in all ages, Rev. 1:10. His being in the Spirit, intimates his ordinary course on that day, and not any extraordinary act in him, though it was followed with an extraordinary discovery of God to him. When he was thus engaged, he 'heard a voice behind him.

God doth not require of us spirituality in worship to advantage himself, but that we might be prepared to be advantaged by him. If we have a clear and well disposed eye, it is not a benefit to the sun, but fits us to receive benefits from his beams. Worship is an act that perfects our own souls; they are then most widened by spiritual frames, to receive the influence of divine blessings, as an eye most opened receives the fruit of the sun's light better than the eye that is shut. The communications of God are more or less, according as our spiritual frames are more or less in our worship. God will not give his blessings to unsuitable hearts. What a nasty vessel is a carnal heart for a spiritual communication! The chief end of every duty enjoined by God is to have communion with him; and therefore it is called a

drawing near to God. It is impossible, therefore, that the outward part of any duty can answer the end of God in his institution. It is not a bodily appearance or gesture whereby men can have communion with God, but by the impressions of the heart and reflections of the heart upon God. Without this, all the rich streams of grace will run beside us, and the growth of the soul be hindered and impaired. 'A diligent hand makes rich,' saith the wise man; a diligent heart in spiritual worship brings in rich incomes to the humble and spiritual soul

(2.) It renders the worship not only unacceptable, but abominable to God. It makes our gold to become dross, it soils our duties, and bespots our souls. A carnal and unsteady frame shews an indifferency of spirit at best; and lukewarmness is as ungrateful to God as heavy and nauseous meat is to the stomach; he 'spues them out of his mouth,' Rev. 3:16. As our gracious God doth overlook infirmities where intentions are good, and endeavours serious and strong, so he loathes the services where the frames are stark naught: Ps. 66:18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.' Lukewarm and indifferent services stink in the nostrils of God. The heart seems to loathe God, when it starts from him upon every occasion, when it is unwilling to employ itself about and stick close to him; and can God be pleased with such a frame? The more of the heart and spirit is in any service, the more real goodness there is in it, and the more savoury it is to God; the less of the heart and spirit, the less of goodness, and the more nauseous to God, who loves righteousness and 'truth in the inward parts,' Ps. 51:9. And therefore infinite goodness and holiness cannot but hate worship presented to him with deceitful, carnal, and flitting affections. They must be more nauseous to God than a putrified carcass can be to man; they are the profanings of that which should be the habitation of the spirit; they make the spirit, the seat of duty, a filthy dunghill, and are as

loathsome to God as money-changers in the temple were to our Saviour

We see the evil of carnal frames, and the necessity and benefit of spiritual frames. For further help in this last, let us practise these following directions

Direct. 1. Keep up spiritual frames out of worship. To avoid low affections, we must keep our hearts as much as we can in a settled elevation. If we admit unworthy dispositions at one time, we shall not easily be rid of them at another.* As he that would not be bitten with gnats in the night, must keep his windows shut in the day: when they are once entered, it is not easy to expel them; in which respect, one adviseth, to be such out of worship as we would be in worship. If we mix spiritual affections with our worldly employments, worldly affections will not mingle themselves so easily with our heavenly engagements. If our hearts be spiritual in our outward calling, they will scarce be carnal in our religious service. If we 'walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh,' Gal. 5:16. A spiritual walk in the day will hinder carnal lustings in worship. The fire was to be kept alive upon the altar when sacrifices were not offered, from morning till night, from night till morning, as well as in the very time of sacrifice. A spiritual life and vigour out of worship, would render it at its season sweet and easy, and preserve a spontaneity and preparedness to it, and make it both natural and pleasant to us

Anything that doth unhinge and discompose our spirits, is inconsistent with religions services, which are to be performed with the greatest sedateness and gravity. All irregular, passions disturb the serenity of the spirit, and open the door for Satan. Saith the apostle, 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil,' Eph. 4:26, 27. Where wrath breaks the lock, the devil

will quickly be over the threshold; and though they be allayed, yet they leave the heart some time after, like the sea, rolling and swelling after the storm is ceased

Mixture with ill company leaves a tincture upon us in worship. Ephraim's allying himself with the Gentiles, bred an indifferency in religion: Hosea 7:8, Ephraim 'hath mixed with the people;' 'Ephraim is a cake not turned.' It will make our hearts, and consequently our services, half dough, as well as half baked. These and the like make the Holy Spirit withdraw himself, and then the soul lies like a wind-bound vessel, and can make no way. When the sun departs from us, it carries its beams away with it; then doth 'darkness spread itself over the earth, and the beasts of the forests creep out,' Ps. 104:20. When the Spirit withdraws a while from a good man, it carries away (though not habitual, yet) much of the exciting and assisting grace; and then carnal dispositions perk up themselves from the bosom of natural corruption. To be spiritual in worship, we must bar the door at other times against that which is contrary to it. As he that would not be infected with a contagious disease, carries some preservative about with him, and inures himself to good scents

To this end, be much in secret ejaculations to God; these are the purest flights of the soul, that have more of fervour and less of carnality; they preserve a liveliness in the spirit, and make it more fit to perform solemn stated worship with greater freedom and activity. A constant use of this would make our whole lives, lives of worship. As frequent sinful acts strengthen habits of sin, so frequent religious acts strengthen habits of grace

Direct. 2. Excite and exercise particularly a love to God, and dependence on him

Love is a commanding affection, a uniting grace; it draws all the faculties of the soul to one centre. The soul that loves God, when it hath to do with him, is bound to the beloved object: it can mind nothing else during such impressions. When the affection is set to the worship of God, everything the soul hath will be bestowed upon it; as David's disposition was to the temple, 1 Chron. 29:3. Carnal frames, like the fowls, will be lighting upon the sacrifice, but not when it is inflamed. Though the scent of the flesh invite them, yet the heat of the fire drives them to their distance. A flaming love will singe the flies that endeavour to interrupt and disturb us. The happiness of heaven consists in a full attraction of the soul to God, by his glorious influence upon it. There will be such a diffusion of his goodness throughout the souls of the blessed, as will unite the affections perfectly to him. These affections, which are scattered here, will be there gathered into one flame, moving to him, and centering in him. Therefore the more of a heavenly frame possesses our affections here, the more settled and uniform will our hearts be in all their motions to God, and operations about him

Excite a dependence on him: Prov. 16:3, 'Commit thy works to the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.' Let us go out in God's strength, and not in our own; vain is the help of man in anything, and vain is the help of the heart. It is through God only we can do valiantly in spiritual concerns as well as temporal; the want of this makes but slight impressions upon the spirit

Direct. 3. Nourish right conceptions of the majesty of God in your minds. Let us consider, that we are drawing to God, the most amiable object, the best of beings, worthy of infinite honour, and highly meriting the highest affections we can give; a God that made the world by a word; that upholds the great frame of heaven and earth; a majesty above the conceptions of angels; who uses not his

power to strike us to our deserved punishment, but his love and bounty to allure us; a God that gave all the creatures to serve us, and can in a trice make them as much our enemies as he hath now made them our servants. Let us view him in his greatness, and in his goodness, that our hearts may have a true value of the worship of so great a majesty, and count it the most worthy employment with all diligence to attend upon him. When we have a fear of God, it will make our worship serious; when we have a joy in God, it will make our worship durable. Our affections will be raised, when we represent God in the most reverential, endearing, and obliging circumstances. We honour the majesty of God, when we consider him with due reverence, according to the greatness and perfection of his works; and in this reverence of his majesty doth worship chiefly consist. Low thoughts of God will make low frames in us before him. If we thought God an infinite glorious Spirit, how would our hearts be lower than our knees in his presence! How humbly, how believingly pleading is the psalmist, when he considers God to be without comparison in the heavens; to whom none of the sons of the mighty can be likened; when there was none like to him in strength or faithfulness round about, Ps. 89:6–8. We should have also deep impressions of the omniscience of God; and remember we have to deal with a God that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins; to whom the most secret temper is as visible as the loudest words are audible; that though man judges by outward expressions, God judges by inward affections. As the law of God regulates the inward frames of the heart, so the eye of God pitches upon the inward intentions of the soul. If God were visibly present with us, should we not approach to him with strong affections, summon our spirits to attend upon him, behave ourselves modestly before him? Let us consider, he is as really present with us, as if he were visible to us; let us therefore preserve a strong sense of the presence of God. No man but one out of his wits, when he were in the presence of a prince, and making a

speech to him, would break off at every period, and run after the catching of butterflies. Remember in all worship you are before the Lord, to whom all things are open and naked

Direct. 4. Let us take heed of inordinate desires after the world. As the world steals away a man's heart from the word, so it doth from all other worship; 'it chokes the word,' Mat. 13:27; it stifles all the spiritual breathings after God in every duty. The edge of the soul is blunted by it, and made too dull for such sublime exercises. The apostle's role in prayer, 1 Peter 4:7, when he joins 'sobriety' with 'watching unto prayer,' is of concern in all worship, sobriety in the pursuit and use of all worldly things. A man drunk with worldly fumes cannot watch, cannot be heavenly, affectionate, spiritual in service. There is a magnetic force in the earth, to hinder our flights to heaven. Birds, when they take their first flights from the earth, have more flutterings of their wings, than when they are mounted further in the air, and got more without the sphere of the earth's attractiveness; the motion of their wings is more steady, that you can scarce perceive them stir; they move like a ship with a full gale. The world is a clog upon the soul, and a bar to spiritual frames. It is as hard to elevate the heart to God in the midst of a hurry of worldly affairs, as it is difficult to meditate when we are near a great noise of waters falling from a precipice, or in the midst of a volley of muskets. Their clayey affections bemire the heart, and make it unfit for such high flights it is to take in worship. Therefore get your hearts clear from worldly thoughts and desires, if you would be more spiritual in worship

Direct. 5. Let us be deeply sensible of our present wants, and the supplies we may meet with in worship. Cold affections to the things we would have, will grow cooler. Weakness of desire for the communications in worship, will freeze our hearts at the time of

worship, and make way for vain and foolish diversions. A beggar that is ready to perish, and knows he is next door to ruin, will not slightly and dully beg an alms, and will not be diverted from his importunity by every slight call, or the moving of an atom in the air. Is it pardon we would have? Let us apprehend the blackness of sin, with the aggravations of it as it respects God; let us be deeply sensible of the want of pardon and worth of mercy, and get our affections into such a frame as a condemned man would do. Let us consider, that as we are now at the throne of God's grace, we shall shortly be at the bar of God's justice; and if the soul should be forlorn there, how fixedly and earnestly would it plead for mercy! Let us endeavour to stir up the same affections now, which we have seen some dying men have, and which we suppose despairing souls would have done at God's tribunal.* We must be sensible that the life or death of our souls depends upon worship. Would we not be ashamed to be ridiculous in our carriage while we are eating? and shall we not be ashamed to be cold or garish before God, when the salvation of our souls, as well as the honour of God, is concerned? If we did see the heaps of sins, the eternity of punishment due to them; if we did see an angry and offended judge; if we did see the riches of mercy, the glorious outgoings of God in the sanctuary, the blessed doles he gives out to men when they spiritually attend upon him: both the one and the other would make us perform our duties humbly, sincerely, earnestly, and affectionately, and wait upon him with our whole souls, to have misery averted and mercy bestowed. Let our sense of this be encouraged by the consideration of our Saviour presenting his merits. With what affection doth he present his merits, his blood shed upon the cross now in heaven! And shall our hearts be cold and frozen, flitting and unsteady, when his affections are so much concerned? Christ doth not present any man's case and duties without a sense of his wants, and shall we have none of our own

Let me add this: let us affect our hearts with a sense of what supplies we have met with in former worship. The delightful remembrance of what converse we have had with God in former worship, would spiritualise our hearts for the present worship. Had Peter a view of Christ's glory in the mount fresh in his thoughts, he would not so easily have turned his back upon his master. Nor would the Israelites have been at leisure for their idolatry, had they preserved the sense of the majesty of God discovered in his late thunders from mount Sinai

Direct. 6. If anything intrudes that may choke the worship, cast it speedily out. We cannot hinder Satan and our own corruption from presenting coolers to us, but we may hinder the success of them. We cannot hinder the gnats from buzzing about us when we are in our business, but we may prevent them from settling upon us. A man that is running on a considerable errand, will shun all unnecessary discourse that may make him forget or loiter in his business. What though there may be something offered that is good in itself; yet if it hath a tendency to despoil God of his honour, and ourselves of the spiritual intentness in worship, send it away. Those that weed a field of corn, examine not the nature and particular virtues of the weeds, but consider only how they choke the corn, to which the native juice of the soil is designed. Consider what you are about; and if anything interpose that may divert you, or cool your affections in your present worship, cast it out

Direct. 7. As to private worship, let us lay hold of the most melting opportunities and frames. When we find our hearts in a more than ordinary spiritual frame, let us look upon it as a call from God to attend him. Such impressions and motions are God's voice, inviting us into communion with him in some particular act of worship, and promising us some success in it. When the psalmist had a secret

motion to seek God's face, and complied with it, Ps. 27:8, the issue is the encouragement of his heart, which breaks out into an exhortation to others to be of good courage, and wait on the Lord, ver. 13, 14, 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.

One blow will do more on the iron when it is hot, than a hundred when it is cold. Melted metals may be stamped with any impression; but once hardened, will with difficulty be brought into the figure we intend.

Direct. 8. Let us examine ourselves at the end of every act of worship, and chide ourselves for any carnality we perceive in them. Let us take a review of them, and examine the reason, Why art thou so low and carnal, O my soul? as David did of his disquietedness: Ps. 42:5, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?' If any unworthy frames have surprised us in worship, let us seek them out after worship; call them to the bar; make an exact scrutiny into the causes of them, that we may prevent their incursions another time; let our pulses beat quick, by way of anger and indignation, against them. This would be a repairing what hath been amiss; otherwise they may grow, and clog an after worship more than they did a former. Daily examination is an antidote against the temptations of the following day, and constant examination of ourselves after duty is a preservative against vain encroachments in following duties; and upon the finding them out, let us apply the blood of Christ by faith for our cure, and draw strength from the death of Christ for the conquest of them, and let us also be humbled for them. God lifts up the humble. When we are humbled for our carnal frames in one duty, we shall find ourselves by the grace of God more elevated in the next.

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