

the observance of religious ordinances. We must not believe too much. He who believes two and two make *five*, will be just as mistaken in his calculations, as he who believes two and two make *three*. The truth lies between these extremes.

2 *Righteousness should be Practical.*

There is an intimate connexion between faith and works: the latter, to be acceptable, must be the fruit of the former. Religious duties are numerous—all, however, summed up by Solomon, thus “finally, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” Christ embraces them in two comprehensive precepts: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all the heart, &c., and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Moral and religious duties twofold, negative and positive. We are told what to avoid, and what to do. The omission of a duty is often as heinous as the performance of a forbidden action. Illustrated in the dealings of Saul with the Amalekites, 1 Samuel x. 5. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Perfect obedience is required: “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point,” &c., James ii. 10, 11. We are told the “eye of the Lord is everywhere,” &c., and “that there is no creature that is not manifest,” &c. No action can escape the scrutiny. The requirements of the law are clear. “He hath showed thee,” &c., see Micah vi. 8.

3. *Righteousness must be Experimental.*

God’s service demands the heart. A man’s motives must be right. His conduct must be the result of love to God and man.

“I see the perfect law requires,
Truth in the inward parts;
Our full consent, our whole desires,
Our undivided hearts.”

“Behold, thou desirest,” &c., Psalms li. 6, 7. With respect to *practical* righteousness, the best of men have been deficient. “There is none righteous; no not one.” With the purest motives a man may err in judgment, and, consequently, in practice. But men may be right in heart. David exhorted Solomon to “serve the Lord with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,” see Psalms xxxii. 1, 2. “But,” says the objector, “show me a man who is pure in heart.” The demand is unreasonable. God alone can do so, and He has given his testimony with respect to several. In Gen. vi. 9, we learn that “Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations.” Job