

questions of morals and casuistry, will soon become like a sword covered with rust, or like a hand unaccustomed to work. Hence Paul says that "he exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." A conscience enlightened, sprinkled, instructed, is a beautiful and precious toy until it is exercised in the temptations, trials, duties of the station in which God has placed us, and then it becomes the most admirable and effective of weapons.

Here is, therefore, balm, for a diseased conscience. Light from the Spirit, blood from Calvary, instruction from the Bible, and exercise in the battle-field of the world. Lord, evermore give to us, and keep with us, such a conscience.

II. THE FRUITS OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

II. Let us next consider the *fruits* of a good conscience, or, *how we may know it*. "Man is a being," some one has said, "built around conscience." The conscience is the heart of the man. As the conscience is, therefore, so is the man. Conscience is the heart out of which are the issues of life. What are the fruits of a good conscience? (1) A good conscience makes a man *willing* to be a Christian. The religious obedience of some comes from *fear*. The children of Israel were obedient as long as they were under the rod. The religious duties of others are only an outward *form*, and not from the heart. But where there is a good conscience, the obedience is *willing*, it is from *choice*, it is *sincere*. This is the first step in the Christian life. "*He shall make his people willing.*" It is found in all the struggles of the Christian life. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Let us notice, however, that the willingness is not a mere feeble desire, such as many wicked men have after a better life. The word used by Paul is the same as in this phrase—"But they that *will* be rich," those who are determined to be rich. The language of this state is, "Lord, I believe," etc. Dear hearers, have you this mark of a good conscience? Can you say with the people in the days of Joshua, "Nay, but we *will* serve the Lord." Have you this mark, then you are a true Christian and no Atheist.

(2) A good conscience, in the next place, makes a *steadfast* Christian, *willing to live*. There are many who are willing to dream of good life, to describe it, to praise it. But to *live* it, is a different business. A child may make a few steps, or run where the ground is plain. But it takes a man to go through a rough country for days and weeks in all kinds of weather. At the foot of Sinai the children of Israel seemed willing. "All