

depending on a previous determination of the will, gain strength by their very exercise, so as at length to become a part of ourselves and an element of our happiness. It is to the operation of this law that we must refer some of the strangest contradictions in human nature. What a melancholy contrast we too often find between the generous temper of youth, and the cold calculating spirit of a later period! between the actions of a man at one time of his life and those of another! I believe there is not one whom I am now addressing, who, if he reflect at all, will not acknowledge how much the cold hand of time has already chilled some of his better feelings. Now it is absolutely certain, that sensuality and other sins to which by nature man is prone, will do their work in marring the image of God; and, unless opposed by some countervailing principle, will end in habits making a wreck both of soul and body. In such a state of things a man becomes utterly spell-bound—he is in *the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity*, and has no power to help himself; and the hand of God alone can help him.

I am not now contending for the doctrine of moral necessity; but I do affirm that the moral government of God is by general laws; and that it is our bounden duty to study those laws, and as far as we can to turn them to our account. As far, at least, as this world is concerned, the feelings on which we act in early life may and do diminish in their intensity, and yet we may go on in a course, honourable to ourselves and useful to our country, mainly by what is called the force of habit. Of what vast importance is it then, to those I am now addressing, many of whom have barely