

energy, larger and more potent in some than in others. There are those whose moral constitution seems to be made of wax; every temptation they encounter melts them. There is in them no *flint*, to dull the point and repel the force of satan's darts; no *firmness*, to stand the shock. The merest whiff whirls them away, as if they were the down of a thistle. They are as impressionable as a sponge, and the impression is as lasting. Like certain worms that take the colour of the foliage on which they creep, their weak moral natures contract the hue of the company in which they mingle. But, that easy impressibility to the touch of vice and vicious companionship is not always due to a native deficiency. It has been acquired. Once conscience was quick with its protest against the seductions of the devil. But there was within no **CHRIST** to support conscience, no *religion* to strengthen morality. Passion gained ascendancy, once, twice, thrice; acquiring fresh vigor with each fatal victory. At length the poor victim drifts passively and powerlessly on the downward current. He is the merest, meanest slave to his depraved appetites and his corrupt companions. Is the wine cup in his way? He must drink. Do his comrades utter profane oaths and vulgar jests? He must echo their utterances. Do they encircle and entice him? He must shuffle the cards, rattle the dice, and drive the ball on the roulette table. He is under their power as the steel filings are under the attraction of the magnet. What a pitiable spectacle of moral imbecility!

But not *all* are such, you will say. No, not all are