

with our fall into sin, is a malignant form of the terrible disease that defiles and devours our souls.

In order that we may see and understand that God does not tempt men by the attractions of His creatures and the delights of His gifts and bounties let us consider what the real meaning and intention of the pain attending the excessive pursuit of them are. A man who enters on a course of undue living does not proceed far till he feels retributive sufferings. Unless he retraces his steps they will inevitably bring him to a state of wasted strength, innumerable sicknesses, ruin of means, loss of reputation ; he will, in fact, become a wreck in soul and body. This train and issue of evils do not come on him at once but gradually, as the outcome of a course of excess. Before he is fully submerged in the flood of retribution, he has to pass through many intermediate stages of admonitory pains. Now these pains which attend every act of excess, warn him that he is on a dangerous and forbidden path, and by their very sharpness counsel and command him to turn back and seek for safety in the forsaken course of moderation and virtue. By the very sufferings then which accompany sinful excess in all its stages the Author of our being seeks to put an arrest on our advancement in transgression, just as truly as by the pain which undue contact with fire excites He drives us away from being consumed. He is so far, therefore from tempting, that on the contrary He has put the sharp dissuasives of pain in the paths of transgression to stop the destructive progress of the transgressor.

The temperate use of divine gifts is the way to experience the perfection of them ; it cannot, therefore, surely be true that God tempts us to sin and excess by that perfection. The temperate man enjoys pleasures which in quantity and quality and duration exceed the quickly spent raptures of intemperance. Health, of which the main preservation is temperance, is a daily fountain of enjoyment, rendering a man capable of using all the good gifts of God with a relish that excess destroys. In a life of purity there are satisfactions, lasting and delightful, that cannot be found in habits of licentiousness. No dark memories haunt the pure, no legion of foul desires and lawless passions, grown powerful through indulgence, tyrannize over the soul. Honorable industry is accompanied with satisfactions and benefits that are entirely unknown to a life of idleness. The respect of our fellow men, their trust in our integ-