

erful calamity. The man who dozes and soaks his mind by moderate, but constantly increasing indulgence, till the power of thinking gradually disappears, is like one who becomes blind by the slow growth of a white speck upon the pupil of his eye, till he is involved in total darkness. Is there much to choose betwixt the fates of the two? They are both blind, irrecoverably blind; and, after such a catastrophe, the difference of time, when compared with their whole existence, is not worth counting on.

5 In the fifth place, intemperance injures the *purity* of the mind. Our thoughts are much affected by the state of our bodies. If the body is habitually sensualized by animal gratification, no pure or elevated thoughts can spring up in the mind that is attached to it. The materials which such a mind has to work upon, are all of the lowest and most worthless description. Its entangled and enfeebled powers labour amidst perpetually increasing accumulations of impure thoughts and imagery, till it is corrupted to the very core, till impurity forms its element and its bane. The heart of a habitually intemperate man is a soil on which nothing but rank and noxious weeds can find nourishment.

6. In the sixth and last place, intemperance destroys the *comprehension* of the mind. We have just seen that inebriety sinks the rational in the animal part of our nature. Every degree of intemperance has a tendency to confine the mind to the regions of sense, and of course to prevent the excursions of that mind, those tracts of thought, out of which springs pious or virtuous sentiment. Every act of intemperance has, even in a well-tempered man, much the same effect that the coming out of the tide has on the shells raised on the sand by the sea-shore. It obliterates them. They may be raised again, but it will require a fresh effort for that purpose. The most valuable of them may be, and often are effaced forever.

Let us suppose a richly furnished comprehensive mind to fall under the dominion of any sensual appetite, and intemperance of even the lowest degree deserves that name. What are the consequences? Every indulgence spreads a degree of darkness over it. Every indulgence robs it of a part of its stores. During every indulgence something of that refined spirit which imbues and animates these stores, makes its escape. Every indulgence impairs its power of holding what it has of valuable knowledge. Thus its powers are weakened, its light is obscured, and its boundaries narrowed, till, at last, the poor victim of his own lust becomes a feeble, stupid, helpless being; and the mind, once conspicuous for its brilliant powers and high attainments, and the object of warm and merited approbation, is imprisoned in its own impurities, and painful but unavailing regrets, and becomes the object of universal contempt or pity.

Since such are the effects of intemperance on the mind, who that is concerned about his own well-being, or about the well-being of others, would not anxiously inquire by what means so great an evil may be prevented where it may not yet be prevalent, or removed where it may? It exists in our country to a frightful degree. The temptations to it are insidious, numerous and powerful. Its ravages have been extensive and appalling, and it comes to be a question of first-rate importance, whether it is to be removed or guarded against by the observance of MODERATION or of ABSTINENCE. The apostle, in the text, says, 'abstain from fleshly lusts,' and in accordance with this injunction my purpose is, without meaning to assert that, in all states of society and in all circumstances, tasting intoxicating liquors is in itself sinful, to show that, in the *present* state of society, *abstinence* as a cure for intemperance, is much more eligible than moderation.

11. It may be laid down as a principle, to which no rational objection: