

city, the society and esteem of all good citizens, the sympathy and friendly offices which well-doing even in this life secures, the provision of means honourably acquired for the support of life, the exercise of body and mind, and freedom from the temptations and vices of idleness, are some of the invaluable benefits which honourable industry confers. We might adduce many other illustrations to show that a life of virtue, that is to say, a life conformable to the laws of temperance and righteousness confers pleasures which in quantity, quality and duration exceed all enjoyments of excess and wrong. What other meaning can we attach to such a constitution of things than this, so far as its bearing on our thesis is concerned : That God has placed the solid and natural enjoyment of life in temperance and virtue. Such a constitution of things, therefore, tells us, as if by an articulate voice, that so far is the Author of our being from tempting us to evil by the enjoyments derivable from His gifts, that on the contrary His design is to lead us by these enjoyments to holiness, since the only way to obtain the real pleasures of His bestowments is a temperate or holy use of them. The only persuasives then which God addresses to the inclinations and understanding of man are intended to attract him to a lawful, that is to say, a holy use or temperate enjoyment of natural pleasures. By the motives of His own real and lasting happiness our Maker incites us to temperance and virtue. From all this it follows that it is incomparable folly for man to persist in seeking happiness in sinful excesses from which God warns him off by the sting of retributive pain. Before the deluded man who lives in sinful excess, who transgresses material and moral law, can be happy, the constitution of divine and human nature and all the ordinances of the spiritual and material universe will have to be overthrown and reversed. We have another proof in the constitution of conscience that God does not tempt men by the attractions of His gifts. If we saw a watchman standing at the entrance to a path that led to scenes and circumstances replete with terrible perils and lifting up a warning voice to every man who sought to enter, and if he did enter, remonstrating loudly with him against proceeding farther, we could not surely say that he was tempting men to dangerous steps and ruinous issues. On the contrary we would say that he was doing all in his power to prevent their steps from peril or destruction. This is but an imperfect emblem of the