

There are seven capital sins, namely, pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth.

Gluttony is an inordinate love of eating and drinking. When it refers to drinking, gluttony is called intemperance in drink, or drunkenness. Drunkenness is deservedly numbered among the capital sins, for it is the source of a multitude of other sins: impurity, blasphemy, quarrels, and all kinds of wickedness are its daughters.

The intemperance which is known as drunkenness is a mortal sin; neither the impure, says St. Paul, nor idolators, nor drunkards, shall possess the kingdom of God (i Cor. vi. 9). Drunkards outrage God beyond measure by preferring their base passion to Him, and by making, as says the same apostle, their god of their belly (Phil. iii. 9).

It is a sin at once shameful and degrading; it reduces man to the level of the beast, and banishes him from all respectable society. We are told that the ancient Spartans, in order to inspire their children with a loathing for this vice, exhibited to them the horrible spectacle of a slave under the influence of drink.

It is a sin most deplorable in its effects. The drunkard brings untold misery on himself, for he loses everything, honour, money, mind, peace of conscience and bodily health; and he brings misery on his wife and children, whom he robs of their bread, of their peace, and often of their virtue by his bad example. It is a sin which easily degenerates into a habit, and into a habit most tyrannical, almost incurable.

The grace of God is, however, all-powerful; we can preserve ourselves, we can redeem ourselves, provided we employ the means and remedies. What are they?

To remember the gall and vinegar which Jesus Christ tasted on the cross.

To fly the occasion, the bar, the pub, the club, and all associations in which temperance is not esteemed and practised.

The fear of hell, and a true repentance with a firm resolution.

The frequentation of the Sacraments. Prayer and devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

My brethren, says the Apostle, be sober and watch. Particularly you who are young, so tempted to contract habits which will render you miserable all your life, "be sober and watch; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour"; (i Pet. v. 8).