Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

195 We must repent triply (*Penitere debemus tripliciter*)

We must repent triply.

¶ Because we sin triply, by heart, mouth, and work. By heart through compunction in which there is sorrow. By mouth through confession in which there is shame. By work through satisfaction in which there is labor. Wherefore I strike and beat my sin where I find the three previously mentioned proofs. Three namely the blow, the sound, and the touch. In the blow contrition shines. In the sound confession. In the touch satisfaction. Therefore, the penitent takes care lest he repent falsely when he estimates himself to repent truly. For to repent (*penitere*) is to hold on to pain (*penam tenere*). Therefore, it said in Psal. [6:7]: “I have labored in my groanings,” etc.

¶ Concerning only a modest and rare groaning, this did not say. Wherefore also the one groaning is not seen who immediately after confession laughs (*ridet*), because he does not hold on to the pain, but more he derides (*deridet*). That one labored perfectly in groaning who said all day long I am in sadness, [Psal. 37:9]: “I roared with the groaning of my heart.” It is to be cried over not once, but often according to that [Psal. 6:7]: “Every night I will wash my bed,” etc., that is, I will clean through my conscience through each fault by offering sacrifice for the crushed spirit in which each interior part ought to be washed. Therefore, let him take care lest in confessing he would emit a whisper instead of a sound. For he who abbreviates sins or halves them or he who expresses the fact but suppresses the manner or attenuates or excuses the crime, this one brings forth not the sound but the whisper. Therefore he ought to bring forth the circumstances of the sin according to what more he sinned in the place, in the time, in the number, in the person, according to the estate, according to the conscience, according to the degree, according to the order, if easy, if frequent, if manifest. Certainly, just as pus collected under the skin multiplies the tumor and pain until it is drawn out.

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So, the putrid matter of sin is recollected until by confession it is eradicated and then alleviated as one feels himself. Of the others, not only the sinful penitent should repent of one or a few fingers but for all at once because just as a hand has five fingers, so satisfaction has five parts, namely, prayer, abstinence, obedience, hard work, and putting on special clothing, Psal. [34:13]: “I was clothed with haircloth, I humbled my soul with fasting,” etc.

¶ Again note that the act of penance is triple to justly weigh, justly number, and justly measure. Contrition justly weighs sins. The discerning confession justly numbers them. Complete satisfaction justly measures them. How heavy is the weight of iniquity that one knew who said, Psal. [37:5]: “My iniquities are gone over my head,” etc. Justly he numbered who said,[[1]](#endnote-1) I have sinned more than the sands of the sea, etc., up to, I have done evil before you. Justly he measured, Zacheus who said, [Luke 19:8]: “The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man,” etc.

1. Not from Kings but a choral text:

   Peccavi super numerum arenæ maris  
   et multiplicata sunt peccata mea:  
   1:9b et non sum dignus videre altitudinem cœli,  
   præ multitudine iniquitatis meæ.  
   1:9c Quoniam irritavi iram tuam,  
   et malum coram te feci. [Peccavi super numerum arenæ maris - ChoralWiki (cpdl.org)](https://www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Peccavi_super_numerum_aren%C3%A6_maris) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)