

## PARSON'S TALE

### Part 1 Penitence

#### I: Contrition

3 effects ("acciouns"): (1) baptism after sin; (2) deadly sin after baptism; (3) venial sin after baptism **(95)**

3 kinds ("speces") of baptism: (1) formal ("solepme"); (2) public ("commune"); (3) private, secret ("privee") **(102)**

3 things necessary for "verray parfit Penitence": (1) contrition of heart; (2) oral confession; (3) satisfaction. 'the root of the tree of penitence is contrition; from this arises a stalk that bears the branches and leaves of confession, and the fruit of satisfaction. Also from this root springs the seed of grace.' **(106)**

4 things must be understood about penitence or contrition: (1) what is contrition? (2) what moves a person to contrition? (3) how should one be contrite? (4) of what avail is contrition to the soul? **(127)**

**(133)** There are six causes which lead one to contrition: (1) remembrance of sins; (2) sin puts man in thraldom; (3) dread of the day of doom and the horrible pains of hell {poverty of hell consists of four things: (a) lack of treasure; (b) lack of food and drink; (c) lack of clothing [bed of maggots, bedclothes of the worms of hell]; (d) lack of friends} {hell-dwellers are forlorn of hope for seven reasons: (i) God shall show no mercy to them; (ii) they may please neither God nor his hallowed ones; (iii) they may not be ransomed; (iv) they have no voice to speak to God; (v) they have no escape from pain; (vi) they have no goodness in them to save them from pain; (vii) ?}; (4) remembrance of the good that is left to do on earth and the good that has been lost; (5) remembrance of the Passion that Christ suffered for our sins; (6) hope of three things: (i) forgiveness of sins; (ii) the gift of grace to do well; (iii) the glory of heaven with which God shall reward man for his good deeds

Man's contrition must be universal and total

Sometimes contrition delivers a person from sin

### Part II Confession

Confession is the "verray shewynge of synnes to the preest" **(316)**

we incur original sin when the soul enters the body; that first sin was the sin of **Covetousness**, Concupiscence, covetousness of the flesh

Two kinds of sin: venial and deadly **(357)**

### The Seven Deadly Sins & their subdivisions, circumstances, & species

#### **Superbia** (Pride) **(386)**

Two kinds: that within the heart of man and that without; the outer is a sign of the inner, as in the clothes one wears **(415: superfluity of clothing)**

Pride springs from the goods of nature, the goods of fortune, and the goods of grace **(450)**

The goods of **nature** are those either of the body or of the soul

The goods of the body are the health of the body, strength, agility, beauty, high birth, franchise

The goods of the soul are good wit, sharp understanding, subtle intelligence, natural virtue, good memory

The goods of **fortune** are riches, high degrees of lordship, praisings of the people

The goods of **grace** are knowledge, power to suffer spiritual hardship, good will, virtuous contemplation, withstanding of temptation, and like things

It is a great folly for man to be proud of any of these goods

- The Remedy against Pride is humility or meekness **(474)**  
3 kinds of humility: (1) in the heart; (2) in the mouth; (3) in works

#### **Invidia** (Envy)

Envy is against all virtues and against all goodnesses **(483)**

- Remedy against Invidia: love of God and loving of one's neighbor as oneself **(514)**

**Ira** (Wrath): two kinds, (1) good Ire, anger against wickedness; (2) wicked Ire, which is of two kinds: (i) sudden or hasty Ire, without the advice and consent of reason; (ii) willful and premeditated Ire **(532)**

From Ire comes hate, discord, war, manslaughter (six varieties of spiritual manslaughter [hatred, backbiting, giving evil counsel, withholding or reducing wages, usury, and withdrawing alms], four manners of manslaughter in deed, including abortion, birth control, onanism)

- Remedy against Ire is the virtue of mansuetude (meekness) or kindness **(654)**

#### **Accidie** (Sloth) **(676)**

• Remedy against Accidie is *fortitudo*, or strength, which virtue includes magnanimity, faith, hope, security, magnificence, constancy **(727)**

**Avaricia**: "a likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thynges"; the difference between Avarice and Covetousness is: "Coveitise is for to coveite swiche thynges as thou hast nat; and Avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thynges as thou hast, withoute rightful nede" **(739)**

Interesting assertion about God ordaining "that som folk sholde be moore heigh in estaat and in degree, and som folk moore lough, and that everich sholde be served in his estaat and in his degree" **(773)**

- Gambling **(792)**
- Relief against the sin of Avaricie-- misericorde (mercy) and pity **(804)**

**Gula** (Gluttony), and "unmesurable appetit to ete or to drynke"; there are many kinds; the five fingers of the devil's hand consist of eating before it is time, consuming overly-delicate food or drink, consuming too much, overdressing one's food (too many condiments?), and to eat greedily. **(817)**

- Remedy against Gula—abstinence **(831)**

**Luxuria** (Lechery), a close cousin of Gula, the other hand of the devil with its own five fingers: foolish looking, wicked touching, foul words, kissing, the stinking deed of lechery (especially this sin is bad when the sinner(s) is a member of the clergy) **(836)**

- Remedy against Luxuria—chastity and continence

“For ther as the womman hath the maistrie, she maketh to muche desray”  
(disarray). **(926)**

### **Penitence, Part II, Take 2**

The circumstances that aggravate sin: (1) what are you, that does the sin? (2) is it done in fornication or adultery, incest, virginity, homicide, and how long did you continue in it? (3) where did you do it? (4) who else did you implicate? (5) how many times did you sin? (6) why did you sin? (7) what manner did you do it in? **(957)**

four conditions on confessions: (1) it must be in sorrowful bitterness of heart, which condition has five signs... (2) it must be hastily done (this condition must have four things... and the “verray shrifte”, which is one of them, has two conditions); (3) you must not utter any lies in your confession; (4) the confession must be oral, not written and must be told plainly

### **Penitence, Part III, Satisfaction**

generally taken to mean alms and bodily pain. **(1029)**

Three kinds of alms: (1) contrition of the heart; (2) pity for the sins of your neighbors; (3) giving of good counsel and comfort, spiritual and bodily

Bodily pain consists of prayers, wakings, fasting, and in virtuous teaching of prayers

penance is hindered by dread, shame, hope, and desperation

the fruit of penance is the “endelees blisse of hevене”