

(d) Our Lord cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalen. There is no suggestion of this in the case of Mary of Bethany.

(e) In cc. 11-12, St. John has much to say of Mary the sister of Lazarus. In chapter xix, 25, he numbers Mary Magdalen among the women standing near the Cross, and gives not the slightest hint that she is the sister of Lazarus. The surname Magdalen would point rather to distinction. Moreover St. John introduces persons of whom he has spoken previously, as well known: e.g., Nicodemus, the same man who came to Jesus by night (vii, 50; xix, 39); Judas, not the Iscariot (xiv, 22).

To sum up. Jn. xi, 2 alone offers the possibility of identifying the Sinner and Mary of Bethany, but the probabilities are against this interpretation; the texts afford at best but slight and dubious support for the identity of Magdalen and the Sinner, and their evidence appears to be all against the identification of Magdalen and Mary of Bethany.

Can the problem be settled by the psychological arguments? Here we are on more debatable ground . . . Undoubtedly an attractive case can be made out on psychological grounds for the identity of the three women, with the aid of conjectures of varying degrees of plausibility, but psychological considerations are also invoked in support of the distinction thesis. Lagrange is prepared to admit a strong likeness between Magdalen and the Sinner, but not at all between Magdalen and Mary of Bethany (L'Évangile de J.C., p. 161)

Prat thinks that their common love for the Master, presents quite distinct features; penitent love in the Sinner, love of gratitude in Magdalen, and love of ecstatic contemplation in Mary of Bethany (Jésus Christ II, p. 502). Holtzmeister thinks it unlikely that Our Lord would have admitted Magdalen to His company, if she were a recently converted public sinner; or on the same grounds that He would have been a frequent guest in the home at Bethany, if the sister of Lazarus were the Sinner (*Verbum Domini*, July 1936, pp. 195-6). Such considerations carry us into the realm of conjecture. Confining ourselves to the Gospel texts it does not seem too much to say that the evidence is strongly in favour of the view that the three Maries are indeed distinct women.

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*Is Mk. xvi, 18 an inspired authority for Extreme Unction, or is it simply a personal command to the Apostles? Jas. v, 14-15, says nothing about institution by Christ.*

In Mk. xvi, 18 the Evangelist is not speaking of the sacrament of Extreme Unction but of the power of miracles given by our Lord to the Church. This power was meant to assist her in spreading the faith

in spite of the strong opposition she would meet from the pagan world she set out to conquer. Evidence of the exercise of this miraculous power by the Apostles and their successors is abundant, cf. Acts ii, 4; x, 46; xvi, 18; xxviii, 4, 8, and Irenaeus. The latter, quoted by Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* v, 7, 3, says: "Therefore also in His name His true disciples, receiving grace from Him, perform them for the benefit of the rest of mankind, according as each one has received the gift from Him. For some cast out devils surely and truly . . . others have knowledge of future events, and visions and prophetic utterances; others, again, heal the sick through the laying on of hands and restore them whole . . . And, assuredly, it is not possible to tell the number of gifts which throughout all the world the Church, having received them from God in the name of Jesus Christ . . . exercises every day for the benefit of the heathen, neither deceiving any nor using her gifts for gain." Trans. Lawlor and Oulton I, p. 152. While miracles are not nowadays of such frequent occurrence as they used to be when the Church was beginning to spread, the Church does, nevertheless, claim the witness of miracles, which have, in fact, always been prominent in the lives of the saints and occur, for instance, in our own days at Lourdes.

Jas. v, 14f describes for us the rite of Extreme Unction and does so in a way which makes it clear that its use was, at that time, already well known and widespread. It is true that he does not mention the institution of the sacrament by our Lord and other details we should like to have known, but this need not surprise us since there are many things which the Scriptures do not mention explicitly. In fact had St. James ended his epistle before v, 14 many would have said there was no reference at all in the Scriptures to Extreme Unction. But what St. James does show is the common faith in the spiritual and corporal effects of this anointing made with oil in the name of Christ. That our Lord should have given a new and higher significance to the anointing with oil so often used in those days as a cure for sickness seems quite natural, if we remind ourselves that he chose water for the sacrament of Baptism.

Finally it might be well to recall the passage in Mk. vi, 13 where we read of the Apostles anointing the sick with oil when they miraculously cured them by the power of Christ. This action was a foreshadowing, a type or figure of the sacrament of Extreme Unction (cf. Council of Trent, Denzinger 908). Lagrange would see in this passage of St. Mark something more than a type or figure for he writes: "The terms 'figure' and 'type' are perhaps not strong enough for it is rather a question of the actual sources of the sacrament." *Ev. St. Marc*, p. 155.

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