

In the next place, the divine mission was attested either by physical miracles of which many are recorded in the Old Testament or by manifestations of miraculous knowledge of which likewise there are many instances on record in the Bible. Such miraculous knowledge referred to matters which, though in the present, could not have been known to the prophet in the normal way, e.g., I Kings ix, 20; or they referred to events in the near future, so that the fulfilment could be verified in proof of the claim of the prophet to a divine mission, e.g., Num. xvi, 30; IV Kings vii, 1. The concurrence of these two means of recognition—the first indirect and negative, the second direct and positive, enabled men of goodwill to recognise with moral certainty the prophets that were really sent by God.

No doubt false prophets simulated a divine sending and deceived some, but in this matter as in other religious questions the truth of God's word applies: " ' If you seek me with all your heart, I shall let myself be found ' saith the Lord."

J. P. ARENDZEN.

*Are we to hold that the anonymous sinner of Lk. vii, 36ff, Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and Mary Magdalen are three distinct persons, or two, or one and the same person?*

St. Luke mentions an unnamed sinner who anointed the feet of Christ (l c.) St. Luke and St. John speak of Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, who was hostess to Christ at Bethany (Lk. x, 39-42; Jn. xi, 1-33; xii, 1-8). All four Evangelists mention Mary Magdalen ("the Magdalen") as one out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, who was one of the holy women who accompanied Him in His Galilean ministry (Lk. viii, 2), who went up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem before the Passion, and stood near the Cross (Mt. xxvii, 55; Mk. xv, 40; Jn. xix, 25), and on the Resurrection Day went to the tomb with the other women to anoint His body (Mt. xxviii, 1; Mk. xvi, 1; Lk. xxiv, 10), was the first to see the Risen Christ (Jn. xx, 16; Mk. xvi, 9), and was sent by Him to the Apostles to announce His Resurrection.

Since the time of St. Gregory the Great the opinion that the three Mariés are one and the same person has been widely popular in the west, and its popularity may mislead many into regarding it as the traditional opinion. Fr. Holtzmeister has shown conclusively that there is no exegetical tradition among the Fathers on this matter. The Eastern Church venerates the Sinner on 31st March, Mary of Bethany on 18th March, and Mary Magdalen on 22nd July. In the Latin Liturgy, the Church makes use of texts relative to all three women in the Mass and Office of the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, but in so doing has no intention of proposing an infallible judgment on the question of their unity or

distinction. Among the Latin Fathers, St. Ambrose put forward as a possibility the identity of the Sinner and Mary of Bethany. St. Augustine (*de Consensu Evangelistarum*, 2, 79, 154), seems to favour this view but it does not seem to represent his final judgment. It is only from St. Gregory the Great (†604) onward that the unity theory became widely held in the west. In 1516 Lefèvre of Etaples defended the thesis of three distinct Marias. St. John Fisher warmly championed their unity. The theological faculty of the Sorbonne in 1521 decreed that the opinion which maintains their unity "must be held as in conformity with the Gospel of Christ and in agreement with the rite of the Catholic Church." This decree notwithstanding, the problem continued to be debated, and commentators reached divergent conclusions . . . Some maintain that only two women are in question, either identifying the Sinner with Magdalen (as e.g., Calmet), or with Mary the sister of Lazarus (as e.g., Knabenbauer). The unity thesis still has its defenders, but most modern Catholic Scripture scholars distinguish three women. No doctrinal issue is involved and each one is free to hold the view which he believes to be best founded.

The identification of all three has been arrived at in the following way. The Sinner is identified with Mary of Bethany, either because the anointing in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Lk. vii) is thought to be identical with that at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper (Jn. xii, 3; cf. Mt. xxvi, 6-13; Mk. xiv, 3-9); or (admitting the distinction of the anointings) because the details of the anointing at Bethany seem to presuppose an earlier anointing by the same woman. The further identification of the anointress with Magdalen, helped no doubt by the name Mary common to both, was suggested by the remark of St. Luke and St. Mark (Lk. viii, 2; Mk. xv, 9), that she was one out of whom Christ had cast seven devils. Interpreted metaphorically, this is taken as a veiled hint that Magdalen had led a life of sin, and the text thus becomes an argument for her identity with the Sinner—Mary of Bethany. The exegetical link thus established is further reinforced by the appeal to the psychological argument, to which the defenders of unity attach paramount importance. In all three women we observe the same devotedness, the same generous and ardent love for the Master, the same reactions in His presence.

What is the value of these arguments? The argument for the identity of the Sinner and the sister of Lazarus based on the unity of the anointings of Lk. 7 and Jn. 12 may be dismissed. Catholic authors are practically unanimous in distinguishing the two episodes. A stronger argument is offered by the text of John xi, 2: "Mary, whose brother Lazarus had now fallen sick was the woman who anointed (ἡ ἀλείψασσα) the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair." "The aorist participle here employed is used in the New Testament in a timeless

sense. It could refer here to the anointing of Lk. vii as to a past event, and in this case Mary of Bethany is identical with the Sinner. It could equally refer to the anointing which John has still to relate (xii, 3) already known to his readers from the Synoptics (Mt. xxvi, 6-13; Mk. xiv, 3-9), of which Our Lord had said that it would be told wherever the Gospel would be preached. A comparison of the texts supports the latter interpretation. The circumstances of the anointing referred to in Jn. xi, 2, agree with those of Jn. xii, 3, not with Lk. vii, 36ff. The sinner weeps over the Saviour's feet, wipes away the tears with her hair, and anoints His feet. The woman of Jn. xi, 2, like Mary of Bethany (Jn. xii, 3), anoints His feet, and wipes away the ointment with her hair, nor does she weep. We may add that nowhere in the other Gospels is there any suggestion that Mary of Bethany had been a sinner (known as such) in the city (Lk. vii, 36); and St. Luke introduces Mary the sister of Martha (x, 39), without any suggestion that he suspects the existence of a connection between her and the Sinner.

If the Sinner is not Mary of Bethany, is it possible that she is to be identified with Magdalen? Their identity is nowhere explicitly asserted. Indeed, immediately after the episode of Lk. vii, 36ff, the Evangelist introduces Mary Magdalen as a person new to the Gospel story, as one out of whom Christ had cast seven devils (viii, 2). Ordinarily the Evangelists distinguish clearly enough between diabolical possession and the state of sin. It remains possible, however, that the term "seven devils" is used in the figurative sense of a life of sin. Even if we grant this, it remains a tenuous argument on which to base the identity of Magdalen and the Sinner. It is suggested that St. Luke wished to conceal their identity out of respect for Magdalen, but we cannot gather this from the text as it stands, and we have no other evidence as to the Evangelist's intention.

There remains the final possibility that Mary Magdalen and Mary of Bethany are one and the same. The evidence of the Gospels is all against this identification. St. Matthew and St. Mark mention Magdalen only and introduce the anointress of Bethany without naming her, but St. Luke and St. John distinguish them clearly enough:

(a) Mary Magdalen is always so designated. The sister of Lazarus is called simple Mary, or Mary sister of Martha and Lazarus.

(b) The home of the sister of Lazarus was near Jerusalem, at Bethany, since it is called the village of Mary and Martha (Jn. xi, 1). Mary Magdalen had gone up with Christ from Galilee to Jerusalem (Mt. xxvii, 55; Mk. xv, 41) which suggests that her home was in Galilee not in Judea. Her surname "the Magdalen" can only mean that Magdala on the shores of the Sea of Galilee was her place of origin.

(c) Mary of Bethany is always associated with her sister Martha; Mary Magdalen never.

(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.

P. MORRIS.

*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