
A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

And He did not appear as a malefactor, [5] but He was as a perfect Virgin standing and making proclamation and crying out and saying,

6. Turn ye, sons of men, and live, ye daughters.

7. And forsake the ways of this Hades and draw nigh to me; and I will enter into you and will bring you forth from Abaddon.

8. And I will make you wise in the ways of truth; ye shall not be corrupted neither shall ye perish.

9. Hear me, and be ye saved, for I speak among you the grace of God; and by me ye shall be saved, and shall be blessed.

10. I am your judge, and they who put me on shall suffer no harm, but they shall gain the new world that is incorruptible.

11. Mine elect walk in me, and I make known my ways to those that seek me, and make them trust in my name.

HALLELUJAH.

In conclusion the hope may be expressed that Syriac scholars and students of early Christian history will give their most serious attention to these Odes. Much work remains to be done on the text, but such labour will be worthily expended. These Odes stand very high indeed among the recent discoveries of forgotten Christian literature both for their beauty of form and for the suggestiveness of their teaching.

W. EMERY BARNES.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN TREATMENT OF SIN AFTER BAPTISM.

THE most primitive form of Christian doctrine held that Christians, as such, were free from sin. They had been born again into a state of sinlessness,[1] and it was their duty to see that they never relapsed again into the dangerous state which they had left; if they should fail in this duty, it was questionable whether they had any further chance of salvation.

[1] Sinlessness is a somewhat ambiguous term; it is here used as the equivalent of *posse non peccare*, not of *non posse peccare*.

The best-known statement of this doctrine is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was written at a time when the doctrine had become a matter of dispute, and needed clear enunciation. This is especially plain in two passages: (*a*) in Hebrews vi. 4–8, "For as touching those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the Age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." (*β*) in Hebrews x. 26, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries."

These passages, taken literally, imply the normal sinlessness of Christians, and exclude the possibility of forgiveness for wilful sin after baptism. Nor is there any reason for rejecting the unanimous tradition of early Christian exegesis which explains "enlightened" (φωτισθέντας) in vi. 4 as a reference to baptism, especially when it is remembered that Justin Martyr mentions that φωτισμὸς was the technical term for baptism (I. Apol. 61).

To the writer of the Epistle to Hebrews, then, wilful sin after baptism was regarded as unforgiveable.

The same point of view was that of St. Paul, but in his Epistles the question is not a matter of controversy, and is only implied or mentioned in passing.

For instance, if we read Romans vi. without the prejudice which comes from our knowledge of history and experience of life, we are forced to admit that St. Paul regarded the condition of the normal Christian as one of sinlessness. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin . . . being made free from sin ye became servants of righteousness," etc., leading up to the final conclusion that

(viii. 1) "there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus," because they have been freed from sin. That this is St. Paul's position is obscured too often by a wrong interpretation of vii. 24,[1] which really describes the condition of an unregenerate but distressed soul, fighting against sin until at last it cries out in a rhetorical question, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"—to which St. Paul answers, "Thanks be to God! through Jesus Christ." This exegesis makes sense, is that of the earliest commentators, and agrees with early Christian thought; whereas the view which explains it as referring to Christian—as against pre-Christian—experience, introduces confusion into the whole argument, and, though agreeable to later theology and experience is inconsistent with those of the time when the Epistle was written.

The same doctrine of the normal sinlessness of Christians is implied in 2 Corinthians v. 21, "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him," for whatever the exact definition of the rightousness of God may be, it is at least certain that it is the antithesis of sin, and we have no right to think that "might become" implies a future blessing in face of the many passages which speak of Christians as having already received "righteousness."

Moreover just as in the Epistle to the Hebrews the attainment of this sinless condition is connected with baptism, so also in Romans the introduction to the description of the breach between Christians and sin is vi. 3, "We who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death."

[1] This verse and those immediately preceding seem to me to be a piece of the spiritual autobiography of St. Paul, and refer to the time before his conversion. The main difficulty is that the writer makes a large use of the historic present, and that in v. 25 the words χάρις . . . κυρίου ἡμῶν are a parenthesis, anticipating the fact of redemption, while the rest of the verse refers still to unregenerate experience.

The common ground for St. Paul and his hearers seems to have been the fundamental Christian doctrine that by means of baptism Christians pass into a new phase of existence: some were inclined to maintain that this set them free to do as they liked, while St. Paul argued that this was not the case. They had, he contended, received the gift of righteousness, which was the antithesis of sin, and therefore they ought not to pursue a line of conduct inconsistent with this great change.

Similarly, if we turn to 1 John, we find sinlessness regarded as the normal characteristic of Christians, though the writer is largely occupied with the fact that there are in practice many exceptions to this normal type. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" (iii. 6); and "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin" (iii. 8, v. 18) represent the Johannine view of what Christian life might be and ought to be.

Thus there is little room for doubt that the primitive view was that the Christian as such was free from sin, and had the power and was under the obligation of remaining so. It is obvious that this doctrine was sure to come into conflict with the experience of life, and it is the main purpose of the present article to trace the beginnings of the developments in thought and practice due to this conflict between doctrine and experience. But before going on to discuss this point, it will perhaps not be without usefulness to consider the historical antecedents in thought of the doctrine of Christian sinlessness, and the psychological basis which rendered it acceptable.

The historical reason why the Christians regarded themselves as sinless was that sinlessness was in the literature of the Jews, and especially in the Apocalyptic writings, a necessary characteristic of the Messianic kingdom, and the Christians were (no doubt to some extent in a proleptic

sense) members of that kingdom. For instance, in the Testament of Levi (c. 18) we are told of the Messiah, "In His priesthood shall sin come to an end, and the lawless shall cease to do evil . . . and He shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, and the spirit of holiness shall be on them." Or again in Jubilees v. 12, "And he made for all His works a new and righteous nature, so that they should not sin in their whole nature for ever, but should all be righteous each in his kind alway." [1]

It is impossible to doubt that sinlessness was expected to be a characteristic of the Messianic kingdom "in the last days." "Sinlessness" is the negative method of stating this characteristic, just as "righteousness" is the positive method, and it may be suggested that an attempt to appreciate this fact is far more likely to be fruitful in explaining the meaning of "δικαιοσύνη" in the Pauline Epistles than somewhat academic and barren discussions as to the "forensic" or other character of the word. For it is at least certain that to St. Paul it was already the "last days," and that he regarded Christians as the "saints" who were members of the Messianic kingdom. Thus, however strange it may be to us, in the light of 1800 years of Christian experience, which has shown that Christians are no more sinless than other people, it was perfectly natural in the first generation for those who believed that the Messiah was coming within the limits of their own life, and that they were the members of His kingdom, to believe that they were sinless and could and ought to remain so.

The psychological basis of the doctrine is rather complicated. It turns chiefly on the fact that the word "sin" covered until quite recently, at least in popular thought,

[1] These passages, with others of the same type, from IV. Ezra, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the Apocalypse of Moses, etc., are quoted in Dr. Hans Windisch's valuable and interesting book, *Taufe und Sünde im ältesten Christentum bis auf Origenes*. J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1908.

more than one really separate idea. The best way of making plain the importance of this point for the present subject is by a reference to Prof. W. James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. It will be remembered that he divides men roughly into two classes: (*a*) those who are all their lives fairly well contented with the world and with themselves. They know that neither they nor the world is perfect, and that there is an unpleasant background of evil to life in which pain, sorrow and sin are the prominent features. Yet on the whole they are conscious that they are doing their best, and, however much they may state on official occasions that they are miserable sinners, they feel in their hearts that in them there is much health (instead of none, as their lips state); and even when things go most obviously wrong they are constitutionally unable to face the fact, and prefer to believe that somehow "All's right with the world." These are the "once-born"—probably far the greatest number of people belong to their ranks. To such persons sin is—so far as their experience goes, apart from doctrines which they take on trust from others—either the act of consciously doing wrong, or the general imperfection of human nature. The two things are, of course, quite distinct, but are commonly confused. The result of this confusion is that a not too intellectual member of this class can usually be found ready to state (1) that he is a miserable sinner—by which he means that he often makes mistakes and is generally imperfect; (2) that he has rarely if ever consciously seen right and deliberately done wrong. Such statements are only intelligible when one remembers that the history of doctrine is the triumph of words over thought, and that the word "sin" is used in a double signification—sometimes it means human imperfection and fallibility, sometimes it means a deliberate choice of evil rather than good.

Over against this class—the once-born—stands that of the twice-born. These are they who have come to appreciate the background of sorrow in life more clearly than the foreground of happiness. The imperfection of themselves and of the world is a reality which they feel in their hearts, rather than merely acquiesce in with their intellects. Those who have not passed through such an experience can only judge of it from the statements of those who have done so, and have described their feelings in books, such as, for instance, the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Sometimes this outlook on life passes away gradually, sometimes it remains throughout life, resulting in permanent unhappiness, sometimes it degenerates into insanity; but sometimes the sufferer (for so he can only be described) wins through to a higher plane of thought, in which—usually in some form of religion—he finds a higher unifying principle. Such men are the "twice-born" of Professor James' book, and probably they have a truer and really saner outlook on life than the "healthy-minded once-born."

Three further points are important for the present purpose. (1) The change from unhappiness to contentment often comes to the "twice-born" with great suddenness, and in connexion with some striking incident or some outward phenomenon; (2) whereas the twice-born are probably a small minority of mankind at any time, the converts to a new religion, or to a new religious movement, belong almost exclusively to that class. The once-born are contented, they are those who "need no repentance"; but those who are suffering seek and find help in religious movements, and in spiritual "revivals." (3) There is a universal tendency on the part of the twice-born to speak of their consciousness of imperfection and of the dark side of life as a "consciousness of sin," and of their release from their sufferings as "forgiveness," or

" getting rid of sin," or some similar expression. Whether this is the best formula or not is not important for the present purpose, but it is at least certain that the " twice-born " mean by it something which is outside the experience of the " once-born," and the result is that when, as is always the case with a religious movement which survives and becomes an organized church, the majority of the members are no longer " twice-born, but " once-born," " consciousness of sin " and " forgiveness of sin " become merely theological formulae instead of a living experience, or in the alternative there is a disastrous attempt to force the experience of " once-born " persons into the mould of the other type.

In the first century there was, as there is now, an unusual number of people who were not, in Professor James' phrase, " healthy-minded," and the result was, then as now, a period of great religious movement. Of this religious movement Christianity was a part, and the first Christians were probably all " twice-born." It was therefore perfectly natural that they should look on themselves as set free from sin, as having become sinless, and express this personal experience in language borrowed from Jewish Messianic thought. Moreover they had found peace in their acceptance of Christianity, which began with baptism ; it is therefore intelligible that they had a real experiential reason for connecting the attainment of freedom from sin with baptism,[1] and for accepting the dogmatic system which ascribed sinlessness to the followers of the Messiah and regarded baptism as the means of initiation into His kingdom.

[1] It is unnecessary here to enlarge on the fact that this train of thought was facilitated by the general belief in the first century that spiritual—and indeed material—results could be obtained by the use of "names" in invocations, and by the widespread opinion that water was a life-giving substance in more than the physical sense, or at least that it could become so under correct circumstances.

Nevertheless experience of life soon showed that the Christian after all was frequently not sinless,—in whatever sense the word sin be taken. Thus the problem arose, what was to be done in the case of a Christian who relapsed into sin ?

The most obvious suggestion was to repeat the baptism which had originally been the cause of sinlessness. The polemic directed against this suggestion in the passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Hebrews is a sufficient proof that there was a party which made this suggestion, and that it did not find favour in the eyes of those who ultimately gained the day; but the most important example which we have is the famous heretic Marcion. According to Epiphanius [1] the Marcionites admitted repeated baptism in the case of sin, and he unkindly adds that Marcion himself had been obliged to make use of this privilege. It appears that this arrangement was defended by a reference to Luke xii. 50, " I have a baptism to be baptized with," which was taken to imply a second baptism, as Christ, when He spoke these words, had already been baptized by John the Baptist. It would, however, appear from the same passage in Epiphanius that this repetition of baptism was limited to three times. Moreover, as will be seen later, this was not the only device used by Marcion to deal with the problem of sin after baptism.

According to Ps. Tert. Poem. I. 162, the same thing is true of Valentinus—(*bis docuit tingui*)—but the evidence of this document is not worth very much.

Probably the suggestion of rebaptism was the earliest, as it is the simplest, method of dealing with the question; but it was met with a resolute opposition on the part of the Church, and, except for the references to Marcion, the

[1] *Adv. Haer.* I. xlii. 3. Βαπτισθεὶς ὁ κύριος ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰωαννοῦ ἔλεγε τοῖς μαθηταῖς βάπτισμα ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι οὕτω τὸ διδόναι πλείω βαπτίσματα ἐδογμάτισεν.

only traces which remain of it are the polemical passages in Hebrews, and the emphasis laid on the *one* baptism in Ephesians iv. 5, and perpetuated—though with a probably different meaning—in the Nicene Creed.

It is worth asking why this natural suggestion of repeated baptism was so generally rejected. Probably because it did not really correspond to psychological fact in the way in which the original baptism did. As was shown above, the fact which gave baptism its importance was that it so often coincided with the turning point in the experience of the "twice-born." The first Christians had therefore a very specious argument from experience at their disposal when they regarded it as the cause of the change in their lives, and inasmuch as this change was held to be the passing from a state of sin to a state of righteousness, it was easy to identify baptism and the forgiveness of sins.

But though one may use the same word—sin—to describe both evil deeds and the state of unhappiness of the "twice-born" before they find peace, it is quite certain that this is a confusion of thought, and it is similarly certain that the sin forgiven, or got rid of, by the first baptism was as a rule sin in the latter sense, while the sin which gave rise to the problem of sin after baptism was sin in the former sense.

There was therefore a real psychological and experiential difference between the two cases. It was a confusion of thought which led men to argue that what baptism had done once it can do again; and although the Catholic was quite as confused intellectually on this point as was the heretic, his instinct—based on experience, not on logic—was more correct, and made him distinguish the "forgiveness of sins" obtained in baptism as something which could not be given twice,—at least not by the same means.

Still the rejection of rebaptism was no solution of the practical problem. Perhaps the earliest of the other

attempts of which we have clear evidence is presented by the famous verse in 1 John v. 16 f., "If any man see his brother sinning sin[1] not unto death, he shall ask, and He (i.e. the Son of God) will give him life for them that sin not unto death: there is sin unto death, not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not unto death."

The doctrine implied here is that there is a qualitative distinction between different kinds of sin. Some are deadly—the teaching which the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to hold as applying to all sin—and others are not. These last can obtain forgiveness through prayer, and through the intercession of Christ. "My little children, I write these things to you that ye sin not"—sinlessness is the ideal and normal position which the writer hopes for—"and if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."[2]

Here we get two important developments of doctrine: first, the distinction between mortal and venial sin; and secondly, the attribution to Christ not only of the function, which was originally that of the Messiah, of cleansing from sin and admitting those who had thus been made pure into his kingdom of sinless saints, but of the perpetual cleansing and interceding for the members of his Church. The changed point of view with regard to the nature of Christians necessitated a corresponding change with regard to the functions of the Christ.

The distinction introduced between deadly and venial sins of course opened up the way to a long, intricate, and very important chapter in Christian doctrine, the discussion

[1] The R.V. puts this translation of *ἁμαρτία* into the margin, and *a sin* into the text; but it is difficult to see any valid reason for doing so.

[2] Or is *δίκαιον* not predicative, "we have an advocate . . . who is righteous"?

of which is outside this article, but it is interesting to notice in passing that it throws an interesting side-light on another question of quite a different type—the text of the Apostolic decrees. The question is whether these originally spoke of "things offered to idols, blood, and fornication" as the "Western" text is, or added also a reference to "things strangled." Now it is remarkable that the oldest exegesis of the Apostolic decree, except in Alexandria, connected it not with the laws of forbidden food, but with the distinction between deadly and venial sin.[1] At the same time it is by no means certain what deduction ought to be drawn from this fact. G. Resch and, following him, Harnack take the view that the probability is that the "three-clause" Western text is the original form, and that it had originally nothing to do with the food law. The suggestion is that it referred the general moral teaching, common both to Jews and Christians, such as is represented by the "two ways" incorporated in the Didache, and it was afterwards wrongly interpreted in the West in connexion with the doctrine of deadly and venial sins, and in Alexandria in connexion with the law of food, the text being at the same time altered in the latter place by the addition of the words "and from things strangled," which were originally a gloss on "blood." On the other hand Dr. Sanday has not been persuaded by this type of reasoning, and the question remains open. Personally I think that G. Resch is right, because the exegesis which reads into the text a distinction between deadly and venial sins seems to me the earliest and most widespread, and to imply the Western text.

Over against this qualitative distinction between deadly and venial as a basis for the solution of the practical problem of sin after baptism, we find an independent attempt in

[1] The best statement of the evidence is, I think, that of G. Resch, in his *Das Apostoldecret*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, N.F. xiii. 3.

what may be called a quantitative manner. It will be remembered that Marcion, though admitting the principle of rebaptism, imposed a limit on the number of times that this might take place. As compared with the method suggested in 1 John this may fairly be called a quantitative limit to forgiveable sin, and from the Shepherd of Hermas we find that in the Church at Rome, although Marcion's doctrine of rebaptism was rejected, this quantitative system was introduced, probably even before the coming of Marcion, in order to deal with the practical difficulty of sin among baptized Christians.

Hermas deals with the matter in the third chapter of the fourth Mandate. "I will venture," he says, "to ask one thing more. . . . I have heard from certain teachers that there is no further repentance beyond that, when we went down into the water, and received remission (*ἄφεσιν*) of our former sins." It is clear that even if this be not a direct allusion to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, as 1 Clement shows, was early known in Rome, it is at least a reference to the same stern attitude towards sin after baptism which that Epistle represents. To this the angel replied, "Yes, that is so; for he who has received remission of sins must not sin again, but live in purity (*ἁγνείᾳ*);[1] but since you inquire into everything, I will explain this point also to you, though without giving occasion to future Christians or those who are faithful (*τοῖς μέλλουσι πιστεύειν ἢ τοῖς νῦν πιστεύσασιν εἰς τὸν κύριον*). For these two classes are offered no repentance for sin, but have remission of their former sins. So then for those called before these days the Lord has appointed a

[1] This word indicates clearly the type of sin which loomed largest to the early Christian mind. It also raises the question whether marriage after baptism was contemplated as allowable. Marcion, of course, forbade it; but this was not mere heresy, for it seems probable that Tertullian, even in his pre-Montanist days, did the same, and so probably, much later, did Aphraates.

repentance . . . and to me has been given the control (ἐξουσία) of this repentance. But I say to you, said he, after that great and solemn call, if a man be tempted by the devil, and sin, he has one repentance; but if he sin lightly and repent, it is unprofitable for that man, for scarcely shall he live (δυσκόλως γὰρ ζήσεται)."

No one would maintain that this passage is in all respects easy to understand—Hermas is not a writer who attains clearness by attention to detail—but the general meaning is tolerably plain. For the future a modification is introduced into the original plan of salvation, according to which sin after baptism was deadly, and a chance—but only a single chance—of efficient repentance is offered to those who have thus sinned. This does not give a direct remission of sins (ἄφεσις) as baptism does, but offers the chance of an ultimate remission, if the sinner does not again fall, but remains constantly obedient to the angel of repentance.

It is plain that this conception of repentance is the first step towards the ecclesiastical doctrine of penance, for though drawing a distinction between it and baptism, it nevertheless places it in the same class. We may also guess that there was some special reason for the change, and this is likely to have been some persecution or other crisis which had led to an extraordinary amount of backsliding; but the chronology of Hermas does not allow us to identify this with any certainty; all that can be said is that not long before 140 A.D. is the most generally probable date.

It should also be noted that Hermas is careful not to throw any doubt on the original truth of the stern doctrine previously held: he fully accepts it, but claims to have had a new revelation of an offer made by God in modification of it.

This elevation of repentance to a rank similar to that of baptism was not the only way of dealing with the problem

known to Hermas. He warns his readers against the suggestion of postponing baptism in order to escape the responsibility for a pure life (cf. Vis. 3, 7, 3). Such a suggestion was of course very natural to those who (like the ordinary "once-born" person) are quite well contented with the world as it is, but wish, in order to be safe, to do what is necessary to secure equal comfort in the world to come. Such persons do not in the least cry out to be "released from this body of death"; they wish to remain in it as long as possible; but they believe, on authority, that at death they will pass into a different sphere of life, and they desire to make certain that they are doing what is necessary for their future well-being. If they are told, as they were in the second century, that initiation into the mysteries, whether Christian or Pagan, will secure what they wish, they will be initiated. But let there be no undue haste: the Christian mysteries, at all events, entail an unpleasant asceticism, and had better be postponed as long as possible. Such reasoning, *mutatis mutandis*, is natural to the "once-born" who has been forced into a system produced originally by the "twice-born." It tends at present in Protestant circles to a so-called "death-bed repentance," and to a philanthropy deferred for old age, or distributed later, though more lavishly, by testamentary dispositions. In the early Church it led to deferred baptism. Such a practice was never encouraged in the great Church, though Tertullian in his treatise on baptism (probably written before his Montanist days) was inclined to think the danger of premature baptism greater than that of a postponement. Among heretics the custom was usual enough, and some of them—for instance, the Marcosians mentioned by Irenaeus I. xiv. 4—even practised a baptism of—not for—the dead.

From the conception of repentance found in Hermas to the idea of other sacraments to neutralize sin after baptism

was only a step. Exactly when and by whom it was first taken is more difficult to say. Probably there is much to be said for the view which sees a connexion between this movement and the difference between the original Marcan text of the institution of the Eucharist, and the Matthaean redaction. In Mark we read (xiv. 24), "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," to which Matthew (xxvi. 28) adds, "for the remission of sins," while he also changes the preceding "and they all drank of it" into the command "drink ye all of it." It is as nearly certain as anything can be that the earliest view of the Eucharist did not regard it as a means of obtaining forgiveness of sins; while a little later this was equally certainly a prevalent view. May we not see some plausibility in the suggestion that the problem of sin after baptism tended to give a changed importance to the Eucharist, and that the Matthaean text—as contrasted with Mark—shows the change?

A similar suggestion may be made, though quite diffidently, about John xiii. 1–20, which describes the washing of the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. It is, of course, well known that the Fourth Gospel does not describe the institution of the Eucharist, just as it does not describe the institution of baptism, yet few will dispute that it is from beginning to end thoroughly sacramental, and that there are implied references to the Christian mysteries on almost every page. Chapter iii., for instance, is chiefly occupied with baptism,[1] though the word is not mentioned, and the same is true of chapter ix. Chapter vi., again, is a treatment of the Eucharist, and there may be a reference to it in chapter ii. So here also, in chapter xiii., the reference to the Eucharist is quite clear, though only implicit, and I fancy that the real meaning is that it is to be regarded as the means of cleansing Christians

[1] Even in iii. 5 I believe that the reference to water is an interpolation.

from the stains of post-baptismal sin. Baptism was washing (λούεσθαι, cf. the λοῦτρον τῆς παλιγγενεσίας of Titus iii. 5), and that could not be repeated; therefore Peter's request—"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"—was refused. The disciples had been "washed," they were clean, and of this washing there was no need or possibility of repetition. But even he who has been washed may have need to remove the dust, and thus must "wash his feet." When we find this teaching so clearly glancing at baptism on the one hand, and on the other given on the occasion which was known to be connected with the Eucharist, I think that there is much to be said for the suggestion that it was intended to point to the Eucharist as a remedy for the stain of sin after baptism.

However this may be, and of course the interpretation suggested can never, at the best, be regarded as more than possible, we can certainly see in heretical bodies the traces of other sacramental institutions intended to remove sin after baptism. The history of these is outside the scope of this article: it must suffice to draw attention to two interesting examples.

The Marcosians, in the second century, were in the habit of using a second sacrament, closely resembling baptism, to which they gave the name of "Redemption" (ἀπολύτρωσις), and explained all passages in the New Testament containing the word as references to this sacrament (*see* Iren. I. xiv.).

Still more striking is the teaching of the Pistis Sophia a century or less later, which describes a whole series of sacraments or mysteries, and in chapters civ.–cvi. gives a number of rules governing the admission of backsliders to renewed participation in the mysteries, based on the interpretation of Matthew xviii. 21 f. (which enjoins forgiveness "unto seventy times seven") as a reference to sin after initiation into the mysteries.

Thus in the first attempts of the early Church to deal with the problem of sin after baptism we can see the beginnings of the later elaborate ecclesiastical edifice of doctrine and practice. The Johannine Epistles show the beginning of the distinction between venial and deadly sin, which is such an important feature of the later casuistry, the Shepherd of Hermas shows us the origin of doctrine of "penance" which is scarcely less important, and, though less marked, the traces are not wanting of the general development of the doctrine of sacramental cleansing for post-baptismal sin, of which "absolution," the Mass as a propitiation, and "extreme unction" are the surviving results.

Fully to trace the interplay of doctrine and practice, of teaching and experience, in developing these results through each century and in different localities would be an interesting task worthy of a large book,[1] for—to take one example only—it would show how Christian doctrine had come to travel through the whole range of thought, that, beginning by regarding Christians as set free from sin, ended by making them confess themselves as miserable sinners, and introduced not only the distinction between venial and deadly, but also between original and personal sin. Certainly it would be an interesting task: but I believe that I am also right in affirming that any one who undertakes it will miss his opportunity if he do not begin by distinguishing between the experiences of various psychological classes in the spirit and in the style made famous by Professor James.

KIRSOPP LAKE.

[1] A most valuable collection of facts and criticism is available to those who read Dutch in F. Pijper's *Boete en Biecht*.