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CRITERIA OF RELIGION AFFILIATION IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
OF THE 1ST AND 2ND CENTURY

Summary

The Christian Church in the 1st and 2nd century was already conscious of being a community of believers. The criteria of membership developed gradually and frequently only incidentally. Consequently it is still too early to say of a developed problem orthodoxy/orthopraxis or heterodoxy/heteropraxis. The basic 2nd century criteria of being a member of Christian Church in and out were as follows: belief in Jesus Christ corroborated by baptism, a sincere will of belonging to the Church of true believers in Christ, and a duty to live in agreement with the high moral standards. If a Christian man or woman broke the principles observed by the community, he/she was successively removed from the Church society of the faithful, and had to remain out of the Church until he/she again converted to the true faith. The similarities between the Christian excommunication and Jewish *herem* are clearly visible. A heterodoxy was regarded as sinful (a lack of unity with the church) and consequently must have been a painful experience of isolation from one another on both sides, orthodox and heterodox.