

Later Ministry and Miracles

28.—Jesus cures a Man who had been Sick Thirty-eight Years.

1. In the second year of His public preaching, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to assist at the Paschal solemnities. There was at Jerusalem a pond, called Bethesda, having around it five porches. In these porches lay many sick, such as the blind, the lame, and the paralytic.

2. At certain times an angel came down into the pond and moved the waters, and he who first entered after the waters had been disturbed was cured of whatever disease he might have.

3. Now there lay in one of the porches a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus came to him and asked him if he would like to be cured. The poor man answered he had little chance, for he had no one to put him in after the angel had troubled the waters. Jesus said to him: "Arise; take up thy bed and walk." The man rose and, taking up his bed, walked.

4. The Jews, seeing what Christ had done, began to murmur, because He had cured the sick man on the Sabbath. When Jesus met their objections by telling them that not only His Father worked, but that He also worked, they became exceedingly angry; for they saw by this He made Himself equal to God.

5. They then strove to kill Him, but He all the more declared Himself the Son of God, and that in Him, and through Him, were men to be saved. Then He appealed to the works He did as the best testimony that His Father had sent Him.

30.—The Tempest Calmed.

1. Jesus came again to the Sea of Galilee, and, entering a ship, taught the multitude that stood on the shore. (Seven Parables of the Kingdom of God)

1. After Jesus had finished speaking to the people, He said to His apostles: "Let us pass over to the other side." Before they started, a Scribe came to Him and proposed to follow Him; but Jesus, knowing how selfish his heart was, simply answered: "The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but I have not whereon to lay My head." When the Scribe heard this he went away.

2. Shortly after the ship left the land a violent storm arose. The waves covered the ship, but Jesus slept. The storm increasing, the disciples came to Jesus and told Him they feared all would be lost. Then Jesus rose and, chiding them for their want of faith, calmed the winds and the sea. When the disciples saw this a great fear came upon them.

3. The stormy sea is the world; the ship is the Church, which rider safely amid the tempest, for Christ is with her.

31.—The Daughter of Jairus.

1. When the ship landed, a multitude of people came and, with great joy, welcomed Jesus. Among those who met Him was a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who begged Him to come and heal his daughter, who lay dangerously ill. Jesus went with him.

2. As Jesus was passing through the crowd, a woman who had been sick for twelve years, and had in vain sought relief from many physicians, came behind Him and touched His garment. She was immediately cured.

3. Whilst they were on the way, a servant came to Jairus and told him his daughter was dead, and it was useless to trouble himself any further. But Jesus said to him: "Fear not; only believe."

4. When they came to the house where the young woman was, they found a great crowd weeping and lamenting. But Jesus, approaching, said: "Weep not; she is not dead." They laughed at Him, for they all knew too well she was dead.

5. Then Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John and the parents of the girl, and went into the room where she lay. Taking her by the hand, He said: "Arise!" and immediately she rose and began to walk through the house.

32.—Jesus chooses His Apostles.

1. Every day crowds of people came from far and near to hear Jesus. He was moved with great compassion for them. Seeing them wandering about like sheep without a shepherd, He said to His disciples: "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few."

2. The following night was spent in prayer. In the morning Jesus called His disciples, and from

amongst them chose twelve, whom He called *apostles*—that is, sent. Their names were Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James the Less and Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

3. When Jesus had chosen them, He gave them power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to drive out devils. Then He sent them forth to preach, but forbade them to take anything with them but their staff. They were thus taught to put their trust in God, and not to hope for success through human means.

4. He moreover told them they must suffer for His sake—nay, that they would be scourged and put to death. "But," said He, "the disciple is not above the master; and if they do these things to Me, how much more to you?"

5. But He consoled them by the promise that He would be with them, and speak through them; and that those who heard them heard Him, and that those who despised them despised Him.

6. The apostles went forth two by two, preaching and driving out devils and healing the sick. Some time after this Jesus added seventy disciples, whose duties were to help the apostles, and go before Christ as the apostles had done.

7. The blessing which Our Lord gave by His doctrines was spread through His apostles, as the blessing given to Abraham long before descended to the sons of Jacob. As Gideon with his little band vanquished his enemies, so did the apostles with their staff change the face of society and subdue the world to the yoke of Christ.

33.—John the Baptist Beheaded.

1. Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, had married Herodias, his brother's wife. John the Baptist came to him, and told him it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. When Herod heard this he became exceedingly angry, and cast John into prison, hoping thus to silence him.

2. Now it happened that Herod, on his birthday, gave a grand feast to the princes of Galilee. During the feast the daughter of Herodias danced for Herod and his court. The king was much pleased, and promised to give the young woman whatever she would ask, even to the half of his kingdom. He confirmed this promise with an oath.

3. The damsel hastened to her mother, who advised her to ask for the head of John the Baptist, that thus they might be revenged on him for what he had said. The daughter returned and asked for the head of John.

4. When Herod heard this he was very sad, but, because of his oath, he sent and had John beheaded. The head was placed upon a dish and brought to the young woman, who carried it to her mother.

5. Like John the Baptist, the saintly and fearless prophet Elias had presented himself, on a similar occasion, before King Achab. Like Herod, Achab also hated the truth, and strove to put the man of God to death, but failed.

34.—The Miracles of the Loaves and Fishes.

1. About the time of the Pasch, the apostles returned from their first mission. Coming to Jesus, they told Him what they had done and what they had taught. Jesus then took them with Him, and they crossed the Sea of Galilee, and went into the desert. A great multitude followed them. When Jesus saw how many had come, He began to teach them and to heal their sick.

2. About the evening, the apostles proposed to send the multitude home, as they had nothing to give them to eat. Jesus asked what they had. The apostles answered, "Five loaves and two fishes."

3. Then Jesus commanded the people to sit down on the grass, and, having taken the loaves and the two fishes, blessed them and gave them to His apostles, who distributed them amongst the people. There were about five thousand men, besides the women and children, and yet there was enough for all. When they were done, twelve baskets of fragments were gathered up.

4. When the people saw this stupendous miracle they were filled with admiration, and wished to make Jesus their king. But He, knowing their design, hid Himself, and during the night passed with His disciples over to Capernaum.

35.—The Promise of the Blessed Sacrament.

1. The day after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the people came to Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum. When He saw how they came to Him, because they had eaten of the miraculous bread, He told them not to labor for perishable bread, but for that bread which never perished, and which He could give.

2. Then He told them that He was the living bread, and that this bread was His flesh. When the Jews heard this they were scandalized, and asked: "How could He give them His flesh to eat." But Jesus only repeated His former assertion in a stronger and more emphatic manner, and concluded with these clear and decided words: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. *For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.*"

3. Many of the disciples, when they heard these words, were very much troubled, and because they could not understand *how* Christ could give them His body to eat and His blood to drink, went away, and walked no more with Him.

4. But Jesus continued to affirm this incomprehensible mystery all the more, and at last turned to Peter, and asked him if he would also go away. But Peter, who could understand the doctrine no better than the others, declared he would not, but would believe it; not that he understood it, but because Jesus Christ had said it, and "He had the words of eternal life."

5. As the manna fell from heaven to support the Israelites in the desert, so is the Blessed Sacrament daily present upon our altars to feed and nourish the soul in the battle of life.

36.—The Woman of Canaan.

1. Jesus went into the country of Tyre and Sidon, and a pagan woman of Canaan came to Him, asking Him to cure her daughter, who was possessed by a devil. But Jesus made her no answer. The woman continued to urge her request until the disciples thought of putting her away, but Jesus forbade them.

2. The woman coming near, adored Jesus, when He said to her, "It is not good to give the bread of the children to the dogs." But she answered, "The whelps sometimes eat the crumbs that fall from the

tables of their masters." When Jesus heard this He was much struck with her faith, and cured her daughter.

Jesus found faith among the pagans of Sidon, as, on a former mission, Jonas had found it among the pagans of Nineveh.

37.—The Primacy conferred on Peter. [A.D. 32]

1. Jesus came to the city of Caesarea Philippi, and that He might try His apostles, asked what the people generally thought of Him. The apostles answered there was great difference of opinion; some taking Him for Elias, some for Moses, and some thought He was a prophet. Then Jesus asked them what was their own opinion on the matter. Peter answered in the name of all: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

2. When Jesus heard this unqualified acknowledgment of His divinity, He said to Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

3. Peter was thus the first of the apostles who made a public profession of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and, for his faith, Jesus made him the chief among the apostles, and the future visible head of the Church. For eighteen hundred years, the Popes, who are the legitimate successors of St. Peter, have been placed at the head of the Christian world.

38.—The Transfiguration.

1. After six days, Jesus took Peter and James and John with Him up into a mountain. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as snow. Moses and Elias also appeared, and began to talk with Him.

2. When the apostles saw the ravishing beauty of Christ's person, they proposed, in their joy, to build three tabernacles: one for Him, one for Moses, and one for Elias. Whilst they were speaking a voice

from heaven cried out, "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him!"

3. At these words the apostles fell flat on the ground, nor did they look up until Jesus came and bade them rise. When they lifted up their eyes they saw no one but Jesus, who commanded them to tell the vision to no one till after He had risen from the dead.

4. Jesus, transfigured, appeared between the two greatest men of the Old Law—Moses, the lawgiver, and Elias, the miracle-worker. In His glory He infinitely surpassed both the one and the other, proving clearly that He was the center of majesty as well as the origin of power, both in the Jewish and Christian dispensation.

39.—Jesus the Friend of Children.— Scandal.

1. One day, after teaching, Jesus sat down to rest, when the women brought their children to Him, that He might bless them. The apostles, anxious to spare Him, strove to keep back the crowd; but Jesus said to them, "Suffer little children to come to Me, for in their innocence they are like the angels in heaven." Then Jesus laid His hands upon the heads of the children and blessed them.

2. On another occasion the apostles asked Jesus who was the greatest in heaven. He called a little child, and, placing it in their midst, said, "That to become great in heaven, we must on earth become innocent and humble as children."

3. It was on this occasion Christ pronounced a woe upon those who scandalized the young, or led them into sin; and the reason He gave was, "their angels were ever before the face of God."

As Tobias was protected by an angel, so have we angels to guard us, though with the eyes of the body we cannot see them.

41.—The Power of the Keys given to the Apostles.

1. At the time St. Peter made his glorious profession of faith in the divinity of Christ, he received, besides the primacy in the Church, a special power of binding and loosing on earth. About the period we are writing, Jesus extended the same power to the other apostles.

2. The words in which this power was conferred were as follows: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven." And in order that there might be no doubt as to the authority of the apostles when they went forth to preach, Christ added: "He that hears you hears Me; and he that despises you despises Me."

43.—Mary and Martha.

1. After this Jesus came to a town called Bethany. Here a woman, named Martha, received Him into her house. Martha gave herself much trouble, arranging and fixing the house, that she might show her respect for her guest; but her sister Mary went and sat down at the feet of Jesus, and listened to His words.

2. When Martha saw that Mary left all the care of the house to her, she came to Jesus and requested Him to speak to her sister, that she might help her. But Jesus told Martha not to trouble herself about many things—*one thing was necessary*; and, as Mary had chosen the better part, He would not disturb her.

Questions to Consider : 43.—What is said of Martha? What is said of Mary? Whose conduct was preferred?

44.—The Lord's Prayer.

1. One day, after Jesus had been praying in a retired spot, one of His disciples came to Him, and asked Him to teach them to pray, as John had taught his disciples. Jesus said: "When you pray, say: Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

2. Jesus said besides, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. My yoke is sweet, and My burden is light. Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

48.—The Cure of the Man Born Blind.

1. Whilst Jesus was celebrating the feast of Tabernacles. He went out from the Temple on the Sabbath day. He met a man who had been blind from his birth. The disciples asked if it was because of any fault in the blind man himself, or in his parents, that he had been born blind. Jesus answered that the blindness was neither because of any fault in the man, nor in his parents, but simply to manifest the works of God.

2. Jesus spat on the ground and made clay, and spread the clay on the eyes of the blind man. Then He bade him go and wash in the pool of Siloe. The blind man went, washed, and returned seeing.

3. When those who had formerly known him saw him, they were confounded, and took him to the Pharisees. They asked him how he had been cured. He told them. When they heard how Jesus had cured him on the Sabbath, some said He was God, and some said He was a sinner, whilst others said, "A sinner cannot do such miracles; "and there was a division.

4. There were some also who would not believe the man had been blind; so they sent for his parents, who testified that he had been born blind, and that it was their son. When the blind man began to reason, and to show that none but God could restore sight to the blind, the Pharisees became very angry, and cast him out.

5. Some time after this Jesus met him, and asked him if he believed in the Son of God. When, to his question, Jesus told him He was the Son of God, the man who had been blind fell on his knees and adored Jesus, saying: "Lord, I believe."

6. In this miracle we have a remarkable fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah concerning Christ, that in His time "the eyes of the blind should be opened." Such a miracle could only be done by God; hence the anger and rage of unbelieving Pharisees when they could neither disprove nor gainsay the cure of the man who had been born blind.

Questions to Consider : 48.—What is said of the blind man? How was he cured? How did the Pharisees act? Who were called? What was done to the blind man? Why? What happened to him afterwards?

51.—The Rich Young Man.

1. A rich young man came to Jesus and asked what he must do to be saved. Jesus bade him keep the commandments. But the young man, hesitating, asked, "What commandments?" Jesus said: "gill not, steal not, neither shalt thou bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother." The young man, hearing this, answered he had kept all these from his youth.

2. Jesus then turned to him and said: "If you will be perfect, sell all you have and give it to the poor, and come and follow Me." But the young man went away sorrowful. When he had gone, Jesus turned to His disciples and remarked how difficult it was for a rich man to part with his wealth, and very few of them would enter heaven.

53.—The Resurrection of Lazarus.

1. Whilst Jesus was assisting at the feast of the dedication of the Temple, He openly taught that He and the Father were one. When the Jews heard this, and saw that He thus made Himself equal to God, they became very angry, and determined to stone Him. But hearing of their intentions, Jesus quietly left Jerusalem and went into the country about the Jordan. There He received a message from the two sisters Mary and Martha, of Bethany, telling him their brother Lazarus was very sick.

2. But He remained two days longer, remarking to His disciples that Lazarus was dead. When He came to Bethany Martha met Him, and complained that He had been so slow; but Jesus bade her have courage, for her brother would again come to life.

3. Martha called Mary, who was at home weeping. She rose and hastened to meet Jesus, who was yet outside the town, and, casting herself at His feet, said: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died."

4. When Jesus saw her weeping, and saw the other Jews who accompanied her also weeping, He asked where they had laid Lazarus. They brought Him to the sepulchre. He commanded them to take away the stone that lay over the door; then He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and praying, cried out: "Lazarus, come forth." Immediately Lazarus rose and came forth from the grave, bound in the napkins and grave-clothes in which he had been buried. Many of the Jews believed in Jesus, but others went and told the chief priests and Pharisees what had happened.

54.—The Jews Seek to Kill Jesus.

1. When the Pharisees and Scribes heard of the resurrection of Lazarus, and how the people were following Jesus, they said. "If we let Him alone, everybody will believe in Him." They asked Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, what he thought of the matter. But he answered: "It is expedient that one man die for the people, that the whole nation perish not." This he said by inspiration.

2. From that day they sought to put Jesus to death. For this reason He walked no more openly among the Jews, but, going away, dwelt in the city of Ephrem. The Jews hated Jesus because His works proved His divinity; and Cain killed his brother because God loved Abel.

3. Six days after the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus said to His apostles: "We are about to go up to Jerusalem, and I shall be betrayed and condemned to death; then I shall be scourged, and at last crucified; but I shall rise again on the third day." This remarkable prophecy was fulfilled to the letter in the passion and death of Christ.

55. Zacheus, the Chief of the Publicans.

1. There lived in Jericho a man named Zacheus, the chief of the publicans. He strove to see Jesus when He passed through the city, but, being a man of small stature, he could not on account of the crowd. He then ran on and climbed up a sycamore-tree. When Jesus came to the tree, he lifted up His eyes and said to Zacheus: "Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide in your house." Zacheus hastened, and with great joy received Him into his house.

2. When the others saw this they began to murmur because Jesus had gone into the house of a publican, who from his profession was considered a sinner. Jesus said to Zacheus: "This day salvation is come into this house, for the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost."

56.—Mary Magdalene Anoints Jesus.

1. From Jericho Jesus went to Bethany, where Simon the leper made a supper for Him. Lazarus was one of the guests, and Martha, his sister, helped to wait upon them. Now, while they were all sitting at supper, Mary Magdalene took a box of precious ointment, and, coming into the house, knelt down and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with the hair of her head. The house was filled with the sweet odor of the ointment.

2. When Judas Iscariot saw this he began to complain and to murmur at the waste. He asked why they had not sold the ointment and given the price to the poor—not that he cared for the poor, but because he carried the purse and was a thief.

3. Jesus bade them let the woman alone, for she had done a good work in embalming His body for the tomb. He said also that wheresoever His Gospel would be preached, the piety of Mary Magdalene would be proclaimed.

4. Like Judas, many nowadays cry "Prodigality!" if they are asked to contribute for the beauty of the church or the splendor of divine worship. They also say, "Let it be given to the poor," but Jesus says, "Do both: ornament the church and help the poor."