

Miraculous Cures Wrought by Jesus. His Reasons for Teaching In Parables

The Pharisees and Sadducees determined to oppose Jesus today in the synagogue. They had laid their plans and bribed the people to raise a tumult in which Jesus was to be formally thrust out of the edifice or taken prisoner. But the affair turned out quite differently. Jesus commenced His teaching in the synagogue by a very vigorous address, like

one having power and authority to speak. The rage of the exasperated Pharisees increased at each moment. It was about to be let loose upon Him when suddenly a great disturbance arose in the synagogue. A man belonging to the city and possessed by the devil, and who on account of his madness had been fast bound, had while his keepers were in the synagogue broken his bonds. He came plunging like a fury into the synagogue, and with frightful cries pressed his way through the people, whom he tossed right and left, and who also began to utter screams of terror. He ran straight to the spot where Jesus was teaching, crying out: "Jesus of Nazareth! What have we to do with Thee? Thou hast come to drive us out! I know who Thou art! Thou art the Holy One of God!" But Jesus remained quite unmoved. He scarcely turned from His elevated position toward him, made only a menacing gesture sideways with His hand, and said quietly: "Be still, and go out of him!" Thereupon the man, becoming silent, sank down, still tossed to and fro on the ground, and Satan departed from him under the form of a thick, black vapor. The man now grew pale and calm, prostrated on the ground, and wept. All present were witness to this awful and wonderful spectacle of Jesus' power. Their terror was changed into a murmur of admiration.

The courage of the Pharisees forsook them, and they huddled together, saying to one another: "What manner of man is this? He commands the spirits, and they go out of the possessed!" Jesus went on quietly with His discourse. The man that had been freed from the devil, weak and emaciated, was conducted home by his wife and relatives, who had been in the synagogue. When the sermon was over, he met Jesus and asked for some advice. Jesus warned him to refrain from his evil habits lest something worse might befall him, and exhorted him to penance and Baptism. The man was a cloth weaver. He made cotton scarves, narrow and light, such as were worn



around the neck. He returned to his work perfectly cured in mind and body. Such unclean spirits often domineer over men that freely give themselves up to their passions.

After this scene, the Pharisees were afraid to assault Jesus that day, and so they remained quiet while He went on with His teaching. The lessons for the Sabbath were taken from Moses and Osee. There were no more interruptions, though Jesus spoke very forcibly and severely. His appearance and His words were much more impressive than usual. He spoke as One having authority. The instruction over, He went to Mary's, where were gathered the women with many relatives and disciples.

I counted all the holy women who were associated together till the death of Jesus to help the little Community. There were seventy. At this time there were already thirty-seven who took part in this duty. Sabia and Athalia also, the daughters of Lais of Naim, were toward the last admitted among the female followers. At the time of St. Stephen, they were among the Christians who settled in Jerusalem.

Next morning Jesus again taught unmolested in the synagogue. The Pharisees had said to one another: "We can do nothing with Him now, His adherents are too numerous. We shall contradict Him now and then, we shall report all at Jerusalem, and wait till He goes up to the Temple for the Pasch." The streets were again filled with the sick. Some had come before the Sabbath, and some till now had not believed, but on the report of the possessed man's cure, they had themselves transported thither from all quarters of the city.

Many of them had been there before, but had not been cured. They were weak, tepid, slothful souls, more difficult to convert than great sinners of more ardent nature. Magdalen was converted only after many struggles and relapses, but her last efforts were generous and final. Dina the Samaritan turned at once from her evil ways, and the Suphanite, after sighing long for grace, was suddenly converted. All the great female sinners were very quickly and powerfully converted, as was also the sturdy Paul, to whom conversion came like a flash of lightning. Judas, on the contrary, was always vacillating, and at last fell into the abyss. It was the same with the great and most violent maladies which I saw Jesus, in His wisdom, cure at once. They that were afflicted with them, like the possessed, had no will whatever to remain in the state in which they were, or again, self-will was entirely overcome by the violence of the malady. But as to those that were less grievously affected, whose sufferings only opposed an obstacle to their sinning with more facility, and whose conversion was insincere, I saw that Jesus often sent them away

with an admonition to reform their lives; or that He only alleviated without curing their bodily ills, that through their pressure the soul might be cured. Jesus could have cured all that came to Him, and that instantaneously, but He did so only for those that believed and did penance, and He frequently warned them against a relapse. Even those that were only slightly sick He sometimes cured at once, if such would prove beneficial to their soul. He was not come to cure the body that it might the more readily sin, but He cured the body in order to deliver and save the soul. In every malady, in every species of bodily infirmity, I see a special design of God. Sickness is the sign of some sin. It may be his own or another's, a sin of which he may be conscious or not, that the sufferer has to expiate, or it may be a trial expressly prepared for him, which by patience and submission to God's will he may change into capital that will yield a rich return. Properly speaking, no one suffers innocently, for who is innocent, since the Son of God had to take upon Himself the sins of the world that they might be blotted out? To follow Him, we are all obliged to bear our cross after Him.

Since joy and the highest degree of patience in suffering, since the union of pain with the Passion of Jesus Christ, belong to the perfect, it follows that a disinclination to suffer is in itself an imperfection. We are created perfect and we shall again be born to perfection, consequently the cure of sickness is an effect of pure love and mercy toward poor sinners' a favor wholly unmerited by them. They have deserved more than sickness, they have deserved death; but the Lord by His own death has delivered them that believe in Him and perform works in accordance with their faith.

And so I saw Jesus on this day cure many possessed, paralyzed, dropsical, gouty, dumb, blind, many afflicted with an issue of blood, in fine, violent maladies of all kinds. I saw Him several times pass by some that were able to stand. They were those who had frequently received slight relief from Him, but their conversion not being earnest, they had relapsed in body and soul. As Jesus was passing by them, they cried out: "Lord, Lord! Thou dost cure all that are grievously sick, and Thou dost not cure us! Lord, have pity on us! We are sick again!" Jesus responded: "Why do ye not stretch forth your hands to Me?" At these words, all stretched out their hands to Him, and said: "Lord, here are our hands!" Jesus replied: "Ye do indeed stretch forth these hands, but the hands of your heart I cannot seize. Ye withdraw them and lock them up, for ye are filled with darkness." Then He continued to admonish them, cured several, who were converted, slightly relieved others, and passed by

some unnoticed.

That afternoon He went with all His disciples and relatives to the lake. There was on the south side of the valley a pleasure garden provided with conveniences for bathing, the water being furnished from the brook of Capharnaum. Here they paused, and administered Baptism in the garden. The Blessed Virgin with several of the women, among them Dina, Mary, Lais, Athalia, Sabia, and Martha, went for a walk in the neighborhood of Bethsaida, a little beyond the lepers' asylum. A caravan of pagans was encamped thereabouts, and among them were several women from Upper Galilee. The Blessed Virgin consoled and instructed them. The women sat in a circle on a little eminence, and Mary sometimes sat, sometimes walked among them. They asked her questions which she answered clearly, and told them many things about the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and Jesus.

Jesus meantime was instructing a crowd in parables. The disciples did not understand Him. Later, when again alone with them, He explained the parable of the sower. He spoke of the tares among the wheat and of the danger of pulling up the wheat with them. It was principally James the Greater who told Jesus that he and his companions did not understand Him, and he asked Him why He did not speak more clearly. Jesus answered that He would make all intelligible to them, but that on account of the weak and the pagans, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God could not then be exposed more plainly. As even with such precautions, these mysteries alarmed His hearers, who in their state of depravity, esteemed them too sublime for them, they must at first be presented, as it were, under the cover of a similitude. They must fall into their hearts like the grain of seed. In the grain the whole ear is enclosed, but to produce it, the grain must be hidden in the earth. He explained to them likewise the parable referring to their own call to labor in the harvest. He insisted chiefly upon their following Him; they would soon be with Him always, and He would explain all things to them.

James the Greater said also: "Master, why wilt Thou explain all to us who are so ignorant? Why must we publish these things to others? Tell them rather to the Baptist, who believes so firmly who Thou really art. He can publish them, he can make them known!" That evening when Jesus was teaching again in the synagogue, the Pharisees, who could once more breathe somewhat freely, began to dispute with Him on the subject of His forgiving sins. They reproached Him with the fact of His having in Gabara said to Mary Magdalen that her sins were forgiven her, and they asked how He knew that. How could He do that? Such talk was blasphemy! Jesus silenced them. Then they

tried to provoke Him to say that He was not a man, that He was God. But Jesus again confounded them in their words. This scene took place in the forecourt of the synagogue. At last the Pharisees raised a great cry and tumult. But Jesus slipped from their hands and into the crowd, so that they could not tell where He had gone. He went by the flowery dale back of the synagogue to the garden of Zorobabel and thence by roundabout ways to the house of His Mother. He tarried there a part of the night, and sent word to Peter and the other disciples to meet Him next morning at the opposite side of the valley beyond Peter's fishery, as He wished them to go with Him to Naim.

The Centurion Cornelius and his servant asked Jesus what they should do. He answered that they and all their family should receive Baptism.