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A PARALYTIC HEALED.

IV. QUAR., LESSON IV., OCT. 28, MARK 2:1-12.

Golden Text – "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." – Mark 2:10.

The healing of the sick was one of the distinguishing features of our Lord's earthly ministry – doubtless for several reasons, which are very manifest – (1) It foreshadowed the great work of his Millennial reign – the healing of the nations and the wiping away of all tears from off all faces. (2) His miraculous healing of the sick and raising of the dead attracted wide attention, drew the multitudes to see and hear him, and established his authority as a teacher sent from God. (3) It manifested his love and sympathy for the afflicted and suffering.

Quite a difference will be observed between the work of the Lord during the three and a half years of his ministry and that of [R1722 : page 335] the Apostles. Jesus taught mainly the surface and introductory truths of Christianity, and beyond these he opened his mouth only in parables and dark sayings which could seldom be understood by those who heard, while the Apostles brought forth the deeper things of God and did very little healing, etc.

This was because the time had not yet come for opening up the deep things of God, and consequently the people were not yet prepared to receive them. It was as our Lord said upon one occasion, – "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth...and he will show you things to come." (John 16:12,13.) At Pentecost the holy spirit came upon the early Church, and has been in the hearts of all God's truly consecrated people ever since, enabling all such to hear the deep things with appreciation and gladness and some to teach it with power and unction.

After the first introduction of Christianity, the miracle-working power gradually left the Church (1 Cor. 13:8), because no more needed as an introduction, and because the times of restitution – of healing and refreshing the world – had not yet come, and were not designed to be inaugurated for eighteen hundred years. But the deep and glorious truths of God's Word, the "exceeding great and precious promises" now made manifest to his saints, are the many things which the Lord had to tell, but which none were able to receive prior to the day of Pentecost.

We understand our Lord's words, "Greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12), to refer to the *spiritual work* of the Church during this Gospel age, – opening the eyes of men's understanding and, as God's ambassadors, calling and perfecting the saints for the great work of the Millennial age. We can conceive of no greater or grander work than this: it is certainly far superior to the curing of the physically blind and lame and deaf. Our Lord could not engage in *this* greater work himself, because the *world* could not be "called" or accepted to divine favor and anointing with the spirit of adoption until provision had been made for the forgiveness of their sins. That provision was our Lord's *death* as a "ransom for all" and his ascent "on high, there to appear in the presence of God for us [on our behalf]." Thus the "greater" work was left to his followers under his direction, but made possible for them by his previous work – his sacrifice of himself. The partial offer, favor to fleshly Israel, was by virtue of their typical justification and typical acceptance with God by the typical merit of their typical atonement sacrifices.

When the Lord perceived the faith of the afflicted one and his friends, his reply, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," implied that restoration to the divine favor which guaranteed healing and full restitution to health and life in God's appointed time. Apparently the Lord was going to let him wait the appointed time, with the simple assurance of the present favor of God, thus to test his faith and the measure of his satisfaction in the assurance.

His object in subsequently granting the immediate cure, as stated in verse 10, was to manifest his authority to forgive sins – "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed and went forth before them all." This was the divine testimony to the power of Jesus to forgive sins and to bring to pass in God's own time all the blessings that forgiveness of sins implies; viz., full restitution to human perfection. Praise the Lord for the good tidings illustrated and emphasized in the miracles of our Lord!
