

pretend to do something that cannot be seen. Therefore the Saviour shows them that He is able to do both, saying, "Which is easier? To heal the body or the soul? Certainly it is easier to heal the body, but you think just the opposite. So I will heal the body, which in fact is easy, although it seems difficult to you. By so doing I will confirm the healing of the soul as well, which is difficult although it seems easy because it is invisible and cannot be verified." Then He says to the paralytic, "Arise, and take up thy bed," to confirm even more that the miracle was not a phantasy, and also to show that He had not only healed him but had filled him with strength. For the Lord does the same with our spiritual sicknesses. He not only delivers us from our sins, but also fills us with strength to do His commandments. Therefore I too who am a paralytic can be healed. For Christ at this very moment is in Capernaum, which, interpreted, is the house of comfort and consolation, which is the Church. For the house of the Comforter is the Church. I too am a paralytic, for the powers of my soul are inert and will not move to do good. But if I am carried by the four evangelists and brought to the Lord, then I will hear Him call me, "Child," (for by doing His commandments I become a son of God) and my sins will be forgiven me. But how can I be brought to Jesus? If they make an opening in the roof. And what is the roof? It is my mind, which over-arches all that is within me. And it is a roof made of many earthen and clay tiles, signifying earthly affairs. But if all these things are pulled away, and the strength of the mind within us is opened up and freed of the weight of earthly things, then I will be lowered, that is, I will be humbled. For I ought not to rise up in pride because my mind has been freed of its earthly covering; but, instead, after I have been unburdened of earthly things, I ought to be lowered, that is, humbled. Then I will be healed and I will take up my bed, which is my body, and employ it to do the commandments. For I should not only be raised up from sin and understand that I sin, but I should also take up my bed, that is, get my body up and set it to do good. Then we shall also be able to see with spiritual eyes, so that all our thoughts within us can say, "We never saw it on this fashion," which means, "We never understood until now that we were paralytics and have since been healed." For only he who has been cleansed of sins sees things as they truly are.

13-17. And He went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. And as He passed by,

Jesus saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting collecting tax, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at table in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, He saith unto them, They that are whole hath no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. When He had worked the miracle of healing the paralytic, the Lord went away along the sea as if desiring to be alone, but the multitude again ran after Him. Learn from this, O reader, that so much as you flee from praise and glory, just so much will praise and glory pursue you. But if you pursue them, they will flee from you. Thus, when the Lord Himself fled along the sea, the multitude again pursued Him. And yet again He fled from there as well. And as He passed by, He took Matthew. He whom Mark here calls "Levi" is Matthew, for Matthew had two names. Luke and Mark call him "Levi" in order to hide his real name. But he himself is not ashamed and in his own Gospel names himself Matthew. For he says, "Jesus saw Matthew the publican."⁵ Therefore neither should we be ashamed to confess our own sins. Levi was sitting at the tax booth, so it would seem, either demanding payment from some or figuring accounts, or doing something else that tax collectors do at their place of work. He was so excited that he left everything and followed the Lord, and he was so joyful that he invited many to eat with them. But the Pharisees, who considered themselves to be pure, found fault with this. But the Lord said, "I came not to call the righteous, that is you who consider yourselves righteous" (and here He spoke ironically for they were in fact sinners), "but to call sinners, not so that they would remain sinners, but to call them to repentance, that they might turn from their sin." Lest you think that He calls sinners, but does nothing to better them, He adds the words "to repentance".

18-20. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast:

⁵ See Mt. 9:9.