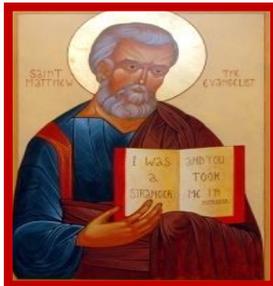


seven loaves of the mercies of God. The *first mercy*, he says is that He hath preserved me from many sins, into which I should otherwise have fallen. The *second*, that He hath overlooked the sinner and his sins. The *third* that he has excited me to repentance; the *fourth*, that He hath received the penitent to favour. The *fifth*, that He hath given grace that I should not fall back into my former sins. The *sixth*, that He hath given the gift of good living. The *seventh*, that He hath given to me unworthy, to venture to hope for Heaven.

Verse 37- *And they all ate, and were filled—seven baskets—as many as there were loaves.* As much bread remained as there was offered to Christ at the first, indeed more, since each basket (*sporta*) which is an ordinary load for a man, as carried in the hand, would contain more than one loaf. Indeed Francis Lucas is of opinion that a *sporta* (*σπυριδα*) contained two *cophini*; and was a load for two. The Arabic, however, for seven *sportæ*, translates seven *cophini*. Christ wished the fragments and the crumbs to be collected, both in memory of the miracle, and that nothing of God's gifts should be lost, and also that He might teach us to be careful, and to use God's creatures and food with frugality. From this command of Christ it is a constitution in some religious orders that everyone should collect his own crumbs in a dish. Hear what is related in the Life of S. Odo, Abbot of Cluny. "All carefully collected the crumbs when the bread was cut, and received them with a benediction before the end of the lection. When the lesson was finished no one ventured to take either these crumbs or any other food. They looked upon the crumbs as more holy than other food on account of the miracle." This miracle is also related of a monk at the point of death, who had not ate his crumbs according to the custom, when he was in health, but suffered them to fall from the table; the devil often showed a little bag full of crumbs, and terrified the man, and forced him to cross himself and cry out. From that day forward the crumbs were collected with great care. Another miracle is related that the crumbs in the hands of a certain religious, who had carefully preserved them, were turned into pearls, which were afterwards made into an ornament for the Church. S. Francis in a vision beheld himself collecting the crumbs of bread; and being ordered from Heaven to make them all into one host, and distribute it amongst the brethren, he saw those who refused it, marked with leprosy. By and bye he received from God the following explanation of his vision: the crumbs are the words of the Gospel, the host is the Rule, the leprosy is iniquity.

Verse 39- *And when He had sent away the multitude . . . in to the parts of Magdala.* The Vulgate has *Magedan*. Magedan is a town beyond the sea of Galilee, near Gerasa. The district is now called Magedena, says S. Jerome (*locis Hebr.*). Mark (viii. 10), instead of Magedan has Dalmanutha, either because the place had two names, as S. Augustine thinks, and some codices of Mark have Magedan instead of Dalmanutha; or rather because there were two places or towns near one another, and Christ came to the confines of both when He came to the shore which pertained to each town. Some persons are mistaken in thinking Magedan to be the same as Megiddo, where king Josiah was slain. Megiddo is on this side the Sea of Galilee, and far distant from Magedan. It is nigh the brook Kishon, and borders on Cæsarea and the Mediterranean. This verse belongs to the following chapter; for it was at Magedan the Scribes asked for a sign from Heaven.



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Matthew 15: 1-39

Douay Rheims Version

Christ reproves the Scribes. He cures the daughter of the woman of Canaan: and many others: and feeds four thousand with seven loaves.

1. Then came to him from Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees, saying:
2. Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
3. But he answering, said to them: Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said:
4. Honour thy father and mother: And: He that shall curse father or mother, let him die the death.
5. But you say: Whosoever shall say to father or mother, The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me, shall profit thee.

hidden meaning of Scripture, as it were the marrow and fatness of the wheat. So S. Jerome.

And her daughter, &c. Mark has, *she found the child lying upon a bed,* taking rest, securely and joyfully. The sinful soul, when delivered by the pardoning grace of Christ rests upon the bed of a tranquil, serene, and joyful conscience.

Verse 29- *And when Jesus had passed over,* &c. As S. Jerome says, "He went up into a mountain, that, like a bird, He might stir up His tender young ones to fly." And Rabanus: "That He might lift up His hearers to meditate upon supernal and heavenly things. He sat down, that He might show rest is only to be sought for in things above."

Verse 30- *And there came to Him,* &c. The Gloss explains mystically thus—"The dumb are those who do not praise God. The blind are those who do not understand the way of life. The lame are those who do not go along the straight road of good works."

Excellently says blessed Peter Chrysologus (*Serm.* 50): "Christ came to take our infirmities, and to give us His strength; to seek things human, to give things divine; to receive injuries, to confer dignities; to bear wearisomeness, to bestow healing. For the physician, who does not bear with infirmities, knows not how to heal. And he who is not weak with the weak, cannot make the weak strong."

Verse 31- *They glorified Me God of Israel,* because He had shown unto them Messiah, the worker of so many blessings and miracles.

Verse 32- *But Jesus, having called His disciples,* &c. "For he would," says S. Jerome, "feed those whom He had healed." Thus perfect were Christ's works of mercy, and He would teach us to do likewise. *I have compassion,* Greek, *σπλαγχνίζομαι,* Hebrew *אני מרתם merachem*—i.e., I am moved and have pity in my inward bowels upon this multitude, who are suffering hunger for My sake; for they have followed Me fasting for three whole days. See here the burning desire of the people after Christ. They were so intent upon His doctrine that they even forgot their food. Moreover, Christ takes care of, first their souls, then their bodies. Let a prelate and a pastor do the same. It belongs to Christ's providence to fulfill His own declaration, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Thus S. Charles Borromæo, forgetful of himself, devoted himself wholly to the service of his people. At the time of the forty hours' prayer, he spent the whole of the forty hours in church, preaching, praying, and celebrating, without sleep or food, as is related in his *Life.* So intent was his mind upon God, that he did not feel hunger. He fed upon faith and charity, according to the saying of Christ to the Samaritan woman: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work."

They have continued with Me, &c. "Although," says S. Chrysostom, "when they came, they had food, yet it was now consumed. Wherefore He did not do this miracle on the first, or the second day, but on the third, when nothing was left, that they first being in need might receive with larger desire what was done."

Verse 33- *And His disciples,* &c. The Arabic is, *whence shall we find bread in the desert which shall satisfy this multitude?*

Verse 34- *And Jesus said,* &c. Syriac, *a small quantity of little fishes.*

Mystically. S. Bernard in his sermon on the Seven Loaves takes them to mean the seven gifts of God. "*The first loaf,*" he says, "is the word of God, in which is the life of men, as He Himself testifies. The *second loaf* is obedience: since My food, He says, is to do the will of God. The *third loaf* is holy meditation, concerning which it is written, cogitation shall preserve thee. (*Vulg.*) In another place it seems to be called the bread of life and understanding. The *fourth loaf* is the weeping of those who pray. The *fifth* is the labour of repentance. The *sixth loaf* is the pleasant unanimity of companions. It is a loaf formed of many grains, leavened with the wisdom of God. The *seventh loaf* is the Eucharist. For the bread, He says, which I give, is My flesh, for the life of the world." The same S. Bernard in a subsequent sermon interprets *the*

with the leavings of the dogs.”

Moraliter: Contemplate the ideal of perfect prayer, and imitate it. This woman of Canaan teaches us to pray. 1. With great *humility*, in that she acknowledges herself to be a dog. 2. With *faith*, because she calls Christ the son of David, *i.e.*, the Messiah, the God and Saviour promised to the Jews. 3. With *modesty* because she sets before Christ the right of dogs and her own misery; yet does she not draw from thence the conclusion that Christ should heal her daughter, but leaves that to Him. 4. With *prudence*, in that she takes hold of Christ by His own words, and gently turns His reasoning against Himself, into an argument for obtaining her desire. 5. With *reverence*, with religion and devotion, because she made her supplication on her knees. 6. With *resignation* in that she did not say, “Heal my daughter,” but “*help me*,” in the manner which shall seem to Thee best. 7. With *confidence*, because although a Gentile, she had a firm hope that she would be heard by Christ. 8. With *ardour*. 9. With *charity*, in that she made intercession for her daughter, as if she were anxious for herself, saying, *help me*. 10. With *constance* and *perseverance*, in that she persisted when she was twice repulsed and became yet more earnest in prayer. Truly says Chrysologus (*Serm.* 100.) “Deservedly is she adopted as a daughter, and raised to the table, who in her humility placed herself beneath the table.” S. Laurence Justinian, the first Patriarch of Venice imitated this woman, who prayed thus to God when he was at the point of death. “I dare not ask for a seat among the happy spirits, who behold the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless Thy creature asks for some portion of the crumbs of Thy most holy table. It shall be more than enough for me, O how much more than enough! if Thou wilt not refuse some little place to this Thy poor servant beneath the feet of the least of Thine elect.”

Verse 28- *Then Jesus, &c.* Mark has, *for this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter.* Christ would not restrain any longer His admiration, but cried out as it were with wonder, *O woman great is thy faith.* As S. Chrysostom says, He would adorn her with a shining crown. *Let it be done to thee as thou wilt*, *i.e.*, what thou askest. These words says Chrysostom are like those in the first chapter of Genesis. Let there be a firmament, and it was done. Whence it follows, *her daughter was healed.* See here the efficacy of fervent prayer, as Jacob wrestled with the angel and overcame him, and obtained the blessing which he asked. Therefore was he called *Israel*, that is, having power with God. Prayer therefore makes us *Israel's*, having power with God.

Tropologically, the daughter vexed by a devil is a soul that is tempted and polluted by sin, which ought to distrust its own strength and trust in Christ. It ought to invoke Him with humility, acknowledging itself a dog (that is, a vile sinner), yet not so as to despair of pardon. It becomes a great physician to cure great diseases, and the great God to do great works, and the great Christ to sanctify and save great sinners.

Allegorically, this daughter is the Gentile Church. The Jews, who were formerly the children, because of their unbelief in Christ became as dogs, according to the words, “Many dogs are come about me” (Ps. xxii. 16); but the Gentiles, which were dogs, have been made children, and eat at Christ’s table the bread of the Eucharist and the

6. And he shall not honour his father or his mother: and you have made void the commandment of God for your tradition.
7. Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying:
8. This people honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me.
9. And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men.
10. And having called together the multitudes unto him, he said to them: Hear ye and understand.
11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.
12. Then came his disciples, and said to him: Dost thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word, were scandalized?
13. But he answering, said: Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.
14. Let them alone: they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.
15. And Peter answering, said to him: Expound to us this parable.
16. But he said: Are you also yet without understanding?
17. Do you not understand, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy?
18. But the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and those things defile a man.
19. For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.
20. These are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man.
21. And Jesus went from thence, and retired into the coast of Tyre and Sidon.
22. And behold a woman of Canaan who came out of those coasts, crying out, said to him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil.
23. Who answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us:
24. And he answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep, that are lost of the house of Israel.
25. But she came and adored him, saying: Lord, help me.
26. Who answering, said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs.
27. But she said: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.
28. Then Jesus answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was cured from that hour.
29. And when Jesus had passed away from thence, he came nigh the sea of Galilee: and going up into a mountain, he sat there.
30. And there came to him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others: and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them:

31. So that the multitudes marvelled seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32. And Jesus called together his disciples, and said: I have compassion on the multitudes, because they continue with me now three days, and have not what to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33. And the disciples say unto him: Whence then should we have so many loaves in the desert, as to fill so great a multitude?

34. And Jesus said to them: How many loaves have you? But they said: Seven, and a few little fishes.

35. And he commanded the multitude to sit down upon the ground.

36. And taking the seven loaves and the fishes, and giving thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples gave to the people.

37. And they did all eat, and had their fill. And they took up seven baskets full, of what remained of the fragments.

38. And they that did eat, were four thousand men, beside children and women.

39. And having dismissed the multitude, he went up into a boat, and came into the coasts of Magedan.

Verse 1- *Then there came to Him, &c.* The Scribes of Jerusalem, as being at the very fountain head of faith and religion, arrogated to them selves the right of censuring the doctrine of new teachers, such as Christ was. They sent therefore persons to investigate what His teaching was, that they might animadvert upon it, and bring Him into subjection to themselves. The Scribes prided themselves upon their knowledge of the law, the Pharisees upon their sanctity.

Verse 2- *Why do thy disciples, &c. Bread,* in this verse, is a common Hebraism for all kinds of food. Observe: Moses, in the old Law, enjoined, by God's command, that the Jews should abstain from contact with the dead bodies of rapacious birds and unclean animals, from lepers and various other persons and things. And if any one touched them accidentally, he was accounted unclean; and was not allowed to enter the Temple until he had performed the ablutions which the law prescribed. And these corporeal washings were enjoined for the purpose of adumbrating to the dense minds of the Jews those spiritual washings of the soul, which are effected by contrition and repentance. (*See what I have said on Levit. xi. 31.*) The Jews then, but especially the Pharisees, who wished to be accounted more religious than other people, made their whole sanctity consist in such outward and frequent washings before their meals, yea even when they were taking their food, as seems to be here intimated. This was why, at the wedding-feast at Cana, there were placed six water-pots for these purificatory purposes. This was why they so frequently washed the cups and basins, out of which they ate and drank, yea even their beds and tables, as may be seen in Mark vii. 4. They were thus careful, lest if the vessels out of which they ate were polluted, they should contaminate those who ate out of them. But all this was merely done out of custom, since the law prescribed nothing of the kind. Observe 2. This excessive scrupulosity of the Jews was little, if indeed at all conducive to piety, or profit, since it kept them wholly intent upon external washings. And so it called off their minds from the interior care and purification of the mind from sin. Neither did God require of them this exceeding anxiety about external lustrations;

wandering sleep. Syriac sheep which have wandered from the house of Israel. It was as though He said. To the Israelites alone Christ was promised, that they should be His flock, that I as their shepherd in bodily presence, should feed them alone. Whence Christ is called by S. Paul, "the Minister of the circumcision," *i.e.*, of the Jews. (*Rom. xv. 8.*)

Verse 25- *She came and worshipped Him, &c., i.e.,* knelt down before Christ. When this woman of Canaan was rejected by Christ, she did not stand back, nor cast away hope. She persisted more eagerly, she was more hopeful, she cried more loudly. And by this her constancy and perseverance she deserved to be heard. For God, when He is invoked, often does not answer at first, in order that he who is praying may be yet more earnest. For God will refuse nothing to those who persevere, as is plain from the example of this woman. For, "she was persistent in prayers, wise in her answers, faithful in her words." says S. Ambrose.

Verse 26- *He answered, it is not meet, Gr. καλὸν, that is, fair, becoming.* Christ speaks after the manner of the Jews, who were wont to call the Gentiles, as being vilest idolators, *dogs*. This is the second repulse of the Canaanitish woman by Christ and sterner than the first. He pricks her, as it were, by calling her a dog, to whom it is customary to throw crusts of bread. By *bread* He means not corporeal, but spiritual bread, namely the grace of the Gospel and of His miracles. For these were promised to the Jews alone, as to sons of God. Mark adds that Christ said, *suffer the children first to be filled*. In like manner Christ often humbles and mortifies holy souls, that they may ask yet more humbly and ardently, that they may obtain. Wisely says S. Chrysostom (*Hom. 30 in Gen.*) "Whether we obtain what we ask, or do not obtain, let us persevere always in prayer. And let us give thanks, not only when we obtain, but even when we suffer a repulse. For when God denies us anything, it is no less a favour than if He granted it. For we know not as He knows what is good for us."

Verse 27- *But she said, yea Lord, &c.* She means to say, "It is altogether true what Thou sayest, O My Saviour. I acknowledge that I am a worthless dog, and not worthy that the children's bread should be given to me, who am a Gentile. Yet the dogs and the curs (in Greek the word is the same, *κυνάρια*) are wont to eat the crumbs of bread which fall from the tables of their master's children. Nourish me then as Thy dog. I cannot leave my master's table. You cannot drive me from Thee either by rough words or by blows. I will not leave Thee, until thou give me what I ask. Give me therefore, O most merciful Lord, only a crumb, give me this least favour of my daughter's health. Let this one crumb fall among us Gentiles, and I will gather it up." She presses Christ prudently, convincingly, and yet modestly by His own words; and by her humble faith and reasoning conquers Him willing to be conquered by her prayer, says S. Chrysostom; and S. Jerome says, "'I know,' are her words, 'that I do not deserve children's bread, nor to receive whole food, nor can I sit at the table with the father, but I am contented

countries which lie between the Mediterranean Sea and the river Euphrates. Moreover Mark calls her *a Greek*. She was called a Greek, although she was a Syrian, because in the New Testament especially by S. Paul, all Gentiles are called Greeks. (See *Rom.* i. 17. *Gal.* iii. 28.). This was because of the wide extension of the Greek language, which in time became extended to Syria.

Cried aloud. A loud voice is a sign of earnestness and desire. *Have mercy upon me*, that is upon my daughter, whom I love as myself. Her torture is my torture. Yea, rather would I be tormented myself, than behold her tormented. If you will have mercy upon her by her deliverance from the devil, it will be the same as though you had shown mercy unto me. Parents have greater love for their offspring than children have for their parents.

Son of David, i.e., O thou Messiah, whose special work it is to have pity upon the wretched, and to cast out of them the demons, and to restore men to themselves and to God, even as the Prophets have foretold, and the Jews proclaim with united voice. This woman of Canaan knew that Christ was Messiah, partly by common report, partly by a Divine instinct.

Vexed by a devil: Arab. *has an evil demon*. For the devil torments, tears, excruciates the members of such as he possesses to their own great pain, and the horror of the beholders. He afflicts their souls with dreadful phantasms and spectres, and with griefs and fears. For the devil has an intense hatred against God, and consequently against man, who is the image of God. And so he injures and torments him to the utmost of his power.

The woman does not add, *Come and deliver her*. She only represents her affliction to Christ. She leaves the rest to His providence and His love. In this she shows her marvellous resignation, and her confidence in Christ.

Verse 23- *He answered her not*, &c. That He might prove and augment her faith, hope, humility and constancy: and, as S. Chrysostom says, that he might set her as an example to others.

And His disciples . . . Send her away, i.e., by giving her what he asks, the deliverance of her daughter. *She crieth after us*. Deliver her from the pain and labour of following our footsteps, and us from the misery of hearing her, lest she deafen us. But, "from the pleading and fervent heart, groans unutterable are emitted, whereby Christ is soothed, as with sweet music," says S. Augustine.

You may observe, Mark says, *she came into the house*, and there fell at the feet of Christ. S. Augustine says (*de consens. Evang. l. ii. c. 49*), that she first came to Christ in the house, as Mark relates, and that afterwards when He went out of the house she followed Him, and continued to beseech Him. But it seems more probable that she first met Christ in the way, and afterwards made supplication to Him in the house.

Verse 24- *But he said . . . lost sheep:* Vulg. *sheep which have perished.* Arab.

but seems rather to have discouraged it. (*Deut.* iv. 2). Christ therefore being about to put an end to these vain and frivolous, or noxious traditions, and being desirous of directing their whole attention to the purification of the mind, was unwilling to observe these ablutions, or to enjoin them upon His disciples, although He did not say so in express words, in order to avoid the envy and calumnies of the Pharisees. In vain, therefore, do the heretics object this passage against Catholics, as though it were opposed to Apostolic and Ecclesiastical traditions. For these last are most profitable and spiritual, and were instituted and handed down by the Apostles and their successors for the more perfect observance of the Law of God. The other traditions were Pharisaic, that is futile, erroneous, and contrary to God's Law. Yea, the Scribes even preferred them before the Divine Law, and observed them in place of it. This is plain from the 9th verse. So SS. Jerome, Chrysostom, and others. All this becomes obvious from the Talmudists, who in the book called, *The Hundred Benedictions*, declare that the hands must be previously washed and wiped, or else the bread which is eaten is judged to be unclean. And water must be presently poured three times upon the hands, first washing the fingers, and then the whole hand. Lastly, it is necessary that in this ablution the left hand should act as a servant to the right. Such were their nugatory triflings. Moreover, the Pharisees, as S. Justin testifies (*contra Tryph.*), were called Baptists. See S. Epiphanius (*lib. i. Hæres. 17*) where he says that there was a certain sect of Scribes and Pharisees, who used to baptize themselves every day in the year. For this reason they were called *Daily Baptists*. They thought a man could not live unless he was dipped in water every day, and by this means washed and purified from every fault. There are some Jews among the Rabbies who practise the same rites even at the present day. But this is to live the life of ducks and fishes, rather than of men.

Verse 3- *Jesus answered, &c., for the sake of your tradition.* Arabic, *for the sake of your ordinances*. Instead of, *for the sake of*, some translate, *through*. But the meaning is the same in both; viz., your traditions set at nought and violate the Law of God. Therefore they are false and impious, and ought not to be observed. Note the word, *your*. Your traditions were not instituted by God, or His Saints: nor by the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets. They were only invented in recent times by the Scribes and Pharisees, your predecessors. And you wish to maintain them, not from love and reverence for them, but because ye have come into their place, and because ye would arrogate to yourselves power and authority to ordain similar traditions. But there are Divine and Patriarchal traditions, which must be in every way observed. They are, that the Books of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the rest of the Prophets are Canonical: that God is One in Essence, Three in Person: that sins are blotted out by true contrition arising from the love of God: that infants are guilty of original sin, and therefore must be cleansed by the Sacrament which God has ordained, and so on. These traditions ye ignore, or make of none effect, O ye Scribes; being wholly taken up with your own traditions.

Verse 4- For God hath said. Gr. ἐνετείλατο, i.e., has commanded. Honour, &c. Honour in this place, as elsewhere in Scripture, signifies not *only reverence*, but *help, almsgiving, sustentation*. This is plain from what follows.

And whoso curseth, &c. Arabic, *Whoso speaketh an evil word against his father, or his mother. Die the death*, i.e., die certainly, and without any hope of pardon. The meaning is, If he who only reviles his father, or his mother in words, is by the Law guilty of death, how much more he who injures them in deed, and deprives them of that sustentation which is due to them by the law of nature, and not only deprives them, but authoritatively teaches others to deprive them of it, as ye do, O ye Scribes, by your teaching about *Corban*, as will be seen in the following verse:

Verse 5- For ye say, &c., *profited by me: understand, such a person does well, and shall fulfil the law of God*. The meaning is—Whatsoever gift I shall offer, or vow to God, this *shall be profitable*; both to myself and to thee, O my father, or my mother, in both mind and body. For God, pleased with this gift, shall, in return, liberally bestow gifts upon thee and me, and shall provide for your sustenance. By this manifold and specious semblance of religion and a vow, the Scribes taught that alimony might be refused to parents, if the value of it were offered to God. And they did this to bring gain and profit to themselves. For many of the Scribes and Pharisees were priests, who received the offerings made to God. Now in this matter they were manifestly in error, in that the bond and law of piety, by which children are bound to provide for their parents when poor, is of the law of nature, and therefore every vow, every offering, and all ties ought to yield to it. Thus if anyone devoted his property to God, and his father were to fall into poverty, his property must be given to his father, not to the Church. Yea, a son cannot enter a Religious Order if his parents are in extreme want; and even if he have entered, he is bound, in such a case, to come out of it, in order that he may succour them. So teach D. Thomas, Sylvester, Navarre, Toletus, and other doctors, in their explication of cases arising under the fourth commandment. (*The Anglican Fifth*). Wherefore S. Augustine, as Possidonius testifies in his life, (c. 14), refused inheritances that were offered by some persons to his Church; because he saw it to be right and just that they should be enjoyed rather by the children, or parents, or relations of the deceased. Some legacies also that were offered by parents he restored to their children, when they desired them. And he added that “legacies ought to be offered rather than required.” Observe: gift in Heb. is קרבן *corban*, as in Mark vii. 11. The word is frequently used in Lev. cap. 1, 2, 3, &c., where lambs, goats, and calves, offered to God are called *corban*, i.e., an oblation. Hence the Treasury, into which offerings were cast by the people was called *corban*, or *corbana*. (See Matth. xxvii. 6.) Therefore the covetous Scribes taught the people to offer their property to God and the Temple, and to say to their parents when in want, *corban*. This was much the same as saying, like the Belgians to poor people, when they ask alms, *Godt helpe u*; or as the French say, *Dieu vous aide*. This is a way of saying that they are unwilling or unable to help themselves. Moreover, by saying *corban*, they shut their parents’ mouths, by instilling into them scruples of conscience, lest they should deprive God of His own *corban*, His own offering. It was as if they said, this is sacred, it is vowed and dedicated to God. Take care then, my father, that you do not commit a sacrilege, by asking it for your own use. When the

Verse 20- *These are the things which defile a man*, &c. This is the conclusion, setting forth the scope and object of the parable, which is to shew that neither unclean hands, nor unclean or unwashed food defile men but an impure and depraved will alone. From hence it is plain that the Scribes thought that the unclean or unwashed food itself defiled the soul of the eater, as I have said on the second and third verses. For apart from such an idea, Christ does not find fault with the action of washing the hands before meals, considered in itself. For this is a custom which has prevailed amongst all nations from the most ancient times, both for the sake of health, and to put the guests in mind of inward purity.

As Virgil says:

“The bread in baskets servants bring;
Napkins, and water from the spring.”

To sit down to table with unwashed hands is considered dirty and boorish, and a cause of disgust to a man’s fellow guests. Wherefore in old time, not only Priests, but all the faithful were wont to wash their hands before prayer. Hence the words “Washing pure hands” (1. Tim. 2. viii.). For formerly the faithful received the Eucharist in their hands, not in their mouth. See what I have there said.

Moraliter. Learn from these words how everyone’s heart ought to be prepared, adorned and kept, forasmuch as it is the workshop of all evil and all good, of every vice and every virtue. As that elder said, who is quoted by John Moschus, “Be the doorkeeper of thine heart.” And Solomon, “Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life and death.” (Prov. iv. 23.)

Verse 21- *And Jesus departing from thence*, &c. He came into Phœnicia, the capital of which was Tyre, on the borders of the Holy Land; for Tyre was more to the south, Sidon to the north. Many, both from Tyre and Sidon, who were stirred up by the fame of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, flocked to Him in crowds.

Verse 22- *And behold a woman of Canaan*, &c. A Canaanite, not of Cana in Galilee, but one of the posterity of Canaan, the son of Ham, the son of Noah. The Canaanites were of the seven nations of Palestine. They dwelt near the coast, as appears from Numb. xiii. 29, and were expelled by Joshua, but not entirely. They remained in Phœnicia, that is to say in Tyre and Sidon, which the Hebrews were never able to capture. Sidon, the founder of the city of that name, is called (Gen. x. 15.) the first-born of Canaan, the son of Ham. The Canaanites therefore are the same as the Phœnicians. For this reason the LXX, in Joshua v. 1. instead of *kings of Canaan*, translate *kings of Phœnicia*. Mark (vii. 26.) calls this woman, a *Syrophœnician*, because she was from that part of Phœnicia which borders upon Syria, or rather because Syria includes Phœnicia and all the adjacent

converted into pure chyle, blood and flesh. Therefore it cannot defile a man, nor through him, his soul.

This saying of Christ gave rise to the error of the Master of Sentences, who teaches that all men derive from Adam a tiny particle of flesh, and in this manner contract from the same Adam, original sin, in which all have sinned. (*Rom. v.*) He says that this particle is self-multiplied, and increased by itself—as though it alone were each man's *substance*—but not by means of food. For food only warms this particle, but is not its aliment, nor does it increase it, but wholly goes forth into the draught, as Christ here saith. And that this particle alone shall arise at the last day. Hence too he gathers that Christ, although he was born of Adam, yet did not contract from him original sin, because that particle which He derived from Adam was pure, and free from every vice and sin. All this he endeavours to prove from these words of Christ. But he is refuted at length by S. Thomas (1 *p. q. ult. art. 1.*) For even though Adam had possessed a body as big as a mountain it would not have been large enough to contain as many particles as would be required for each of so many thousands of millions of men who are descended from him. Again those particles must be corruptible, since all flesh soon becomes corrupt. Wherefore the greater portion of the human race derive none of their material part from Adam: yet do they contract from him original sin, because they were reckoned up in him according to natural generation, (*causaliter*), because they sprung from him, as his children, by continuous descent.

Lastly Cœcolampadius impurely and foolishly twists these words of Christ into an argument against the real Presence of the Flesh of Christ, in the Eucharist. He says, “If the Flesh of Christ be our food, then like food it goeth out into the draught which is horrible to think of,” But Roffensis answers him (*lib. 5. cap. 29.*) by saying that the Body of Christ in the Eucharist exists in an indivisible and impassible manner, and when we eat It, It is not divided, nor altered, nor digested, as common flesh is digested, consequently it has no worthless parts to go out into the draught. For the whole process of digestion and change takes place in the species of bread and wine, not in the Body of Christ.

Verse 18- *But that which proceedeth from the mouth, &c. The heart, i.e.,* the reason and the will, whose symbol, yea, their seat and workshop the heart is. For the heart supplies the vital and animal spirits which are necessary for the intellect in order to understand, and for the will in order to love. Indeed Galen teaches that our common sense (*sensus communis*), which is directly subservient to the understanding, resides in the heart. Aristotle, with more probability, thinks it resides in the brain. But the heart subserves the brain, and supplies the spirits.

Verse 19- *Proceed evil thoughts, &c.* As from a fountain water bursts forth, so from the heart *i.e.,* from the will, when it is depraved by luxury, or imbued with anger, there flow out evil thoughts of lust, or revenge. They burst forth in the mouth, by means of speech: and from the mouth they break out into deeds, when we carry our words into action.

parents heard this, they were thunder-struck, and preferred to die of hunger, rather than be sacrilegious towards God.

Verse 6- *And honour not, &c* These words are best taken as those of the Scribes, rather than of Christ. They gave it as the reason why a child need not succour his parents, that he preferred God to them, and honoured God with the gift which should have been given to them. Whence Mark has, *and suffer him no longer to do ought for his father or his mother.*

Ye have made void, Gr. ῥηκυρώσατε, i.e., ye have made obsolete, abrogated. Observe the word *your*, for there are three kinds of traditions. The first are Divine, being such as God has sanctioned by His command, even though they are not found in Scripture. Such a tradition is—that infants must be baptized. For this is nowhere written, but is the constant tradition of the Church. The second are Ecclesiastical, which the Church, that is, her pontiffs and prelates have commanded, such as the ceremonies of the Sacraments; also feasts and festivals. And these are not so much human as Divine traditions, because the Church is governed by the Holy Ghost. The third are civil. These are sometimes good, and sometimes bad, because contrary to the law of God; such as these traditions of the Scribes about *corban*.

Verse 10- *And calling the multitude, &c.—understand,* I will teach you concerning the real purity, or impurity of the soul, that ye may unlearn what the Scribes have taught you, that the soul is made unclean by unclean hands or unclean food.

Verse 11- *Not that which—defiles: Gr. κοινῶι, i.e., makes common, i.e., defiles.* For unclean meats were common to everyone, even to the unclean. But clean meats were only for the clean, for these alone might eat them. Hence *common* has the same meaning as *unclean*. This is plain from Acts x. 15. He means, The Scribes teach you, O people, that it is not lawful to eat with unwashed hands, because unwashed hands make the food unclean; but unclean food makes the soul unclean, that is, displeasing to God. But they are in error, because not that which from without enters into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes forth from the mouth, from within, and so from the heart. For sin must be voluntary, or else it is not sin, as S. Augustine says. So, too, virtue—if it be not voluntary—is no virtue. This error of the Scribes originated in what is said in Lev. xi., where pork and other unclean meats are called execrable and abominable, and are said to pollute the soul. Whence, in verse 42, it is forbidden to pollute the soul with unclean food. And in verse 44 it is said, “Be ye holy (that is, clean in eating), for I am holy”—*i.e.,* clean. And shortly afterwards, “Pollute not your souls with any creeping thing by eating it.” The Scribes took all these things ignorantly, as though the meats themselves brought pollution on the soul, in that the soul touched them in the stomach, during the process of digestion. But they were in error, because that uncleanness was

legal and corporeal, but did not pollute the mind with sin. Food is not capable of sin, but the will alone. Since, therefore, food possesses no sin in itself, how can it infect the soul with sin? Pythagoras and Plutarch (*Tract. de esu carn. et l. viii. Sympos. c. 10*) teach that people should abstain from flesh and beans, because they contaminate the soul. The Turks say the same of wine, which is forbidden them in the Koran. Busbequius, the imperial ambassador to the Sultan relates that he saw a Turk who, on wine being offered him—which he was greedy to drink—raised a great shout. He was asked why he did so. “I am calling out,” he said, “to my soul to go down from my stomach into my feet, that it may not be polluted with the wine, forbidden by our law, which I am about to drink.” Thus, in the time of Christ and the Apostles, the first heresiarchs (who arose from among the Jews, as Simon Magus, Saturninus, and afterwards Manes, Marcion, and the Encratites) taught that wine and flesh were not created by God, but by the devil, and were therefore, in their own nature, evil and to be avoided. Some of them said that with the flesh of the animal they ate its soul, and that that soul had the gift of reason, and was therefore pious or impious. Hear S. Epiphanius (*Hæres. 64*): “Manes says that he who eats flesh eats a soul, and is bound to become of like nature with it; so that if he eat a bull, he will become a bull; if he eat pork, he will become a pig.” Speaking of these, the Apostle says, imposters shall come, who will teach “to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.” (1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.) See what I have there said. Wherefore the heretics wrest this passage against the fasts ordained by the Church. For the Church does not forbid flesh on fast days because flesh is evil in itself, but with the object of restraining gluttony, and of exercising penance and obedience. If, therefore, anyone eats flesh on a fast day, he does not sin on account of the flesh, but on account of his disobedience to the Church. In like manner, if the Jews ate pork or other forbidden food, they polluted their souls, not with the pork, but by their disobedience.

Verse 12- *Then His disciples, &c., then, viz.,* when the multitude being sent away, Christ had come with His disciples into the house. This is plain from Mark vii. 17. *Were scandalised, i.e., were offended,* because the Pharisees made all their holiness consist in external washings, and such like things.

Verse 13- *But he answered, &c., plant, i.e.,* seed, shrub, tree, by which SS. Hilary and Chrysostom understand doctrine. That is, He means the doctrine of the Pharisees concerning unclean food polluting the soul, shall be by Me confuted and rooted up. But by *plant* others understand more correctly *men*. For these were planted by God in Paradise, but being corrupted by the serpent, are planted anew by God with Christ, who is the tree of life. They are planted through faith and grace, and then they bring forth the fruit of good works unto eternal life. Otherwise, they remain barren and corrupt trees, meet to be cast into the fire, as John the Baptist threatened the Pharisees. For they were always the enemies of Christ, and consequently of God the Father. Thus S. Jerome and Origen (*Hom. 1. in Jerem.*), Maldonatus, and others.

Verse 14- *Let them alone, &c.* He means, let the Scribes be scandalised. Do not be troubled that they are offended at my doctrine and correction. They themselves are

bad. They do not see the light of truth and of faith which I set before them, but in their blindness and error, whereby they make sanctity consist in washing and other external things, they are obstinate and incorrigible; and are *leaders of the blind*, namely, of the people, to whom they teach this error, and would drag with themselves into the pit of destruction. Wherefore I openly demonstrate this their error to the multitudes who are as yet capable of being enlightened and corrected, that they may beware of it Christ here teaches that the scandal of the Pharisees is to be despised, when, forsooth, anyone is scandalised and offended by his own malice and perverse obstinacy. For, as S. Gregory says, “If offence be taken at the truth, it is better that scandal should arise than the truth be abandoned” (*Hom. vii. in Ezek.*).

Verse 15- *Peter answered, &c. This parable,* meaning the one where Christ said, *not that which entereth into the mouth, &c.*

Verse 16- *Without understanding,* in not perceiving that purity or impurity consists in things which pertain to the mind, especially in such things as angry words, in cursing and perjury, which proceed out of the heart, through the mouth?

Verse 17- *Do ye not understand . . . into the draught, &c.* Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, from these words took occasion to charge Christ with being ignorant of physiology, as S. Jerome tells us. For not all the food which enters into the mouth goeth out into the draught, but the better part of it is converted into the substance of him who eats it, for his nourishment and increase. S. Jerome answers them as follows, “Whilst they attempt to show another’s ignorance, they make an exhibition of their own. For although liquid food and light moisture be poured into the body, yet when they have done their office in the veins and limbs, and have passed through the secret passages of the body, which the Greeks call *πόρους*, they descend to the inferior parts, and go into the draught”

But this statement must be received subject to limitations. For all food, but not the whole of the food, and only with respect to its *fæcous* portions goes into the draught. The first digestion of the food, and its conversion into chyle takes place in the stomach, from whence those portions which are useless for the purposes of nourishment are emitted into the draught. A second digestion takes place in the liver, where the chyle is converted into blood. A third digestion may be said to take place in the various members of the body, which assimilate the blood received into the veins from the liver and convert it into flesh. Then there is a separation of the useless portions by means of the pores, and they are expelled in the form of sweat. This is why Mark adds, *Goeth out into the draught, purging all meats*. Christ’s meaning therefore is—unclean food does not pollute the soul, as the Scribes teach, for what is unclean and impure in the food goeth out into the draught: that therefore which remains is pure, and is