

of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, mindlessness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man. The Lord here is teaching the people that we ought not to understand in a bodily manner the ordinances of the law concerning food, and here He begins to unveil to some degree the intent of the law. He says that it is not what enters a man that defiles, that is, taints, him, but rather what comes forth from his heart, and He lists those things. He mentions the "evil eye", which can mean either envy or lechery. For evil is the eye of both the jealous man, whose malicious glance casts a curse on the object of his envy, and of the lecher, whose leer brings evil. "Blasphemy" means wanton insolence³ towards God, as for example when one says, "There is no Divine Providence"—this is blasphemy. And thus pride follows blasphemy in the list, for a proud man, as it were, overlooks and even looks down on God, as when he does something good and ascribes this, not to God, but to his own strength. "Mindlessness" means wanton insolence towards others. All these passions, then, taint the soul as they well up out of it and come forth. To the multitude the Lord spoke less clearly, which is why He said, "He who hath ears to hear, let him hear," meaning "He who understands, let him understand." But the disciples sensed that the Lord had spoken something more profound, and so they approached and asked about the parable, that is, about the Lord's enigmatic speech, (for a parable is a statement with a hidden meaning). To them the Lord first gave a rebuke, saying, "Are ye so without understanding also?" and then He resolved their perplexity.

24-30. And from thence He arose, and went into the region of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet: the woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the

³ In Greek, *ybris*, often rendered directly into English as 'hubris'.

dogs. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And He said unto her, On account of this saying, go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. When the Lord had spoken about food and seen that the Jews had not believed, He travelled to the region of the Gentiles. Since the Jews had not believed, salvation was about to come to the Gentiles. But He tried at first to remain unnoticed, so that the Jews might not be able later to accuse Him of having run to the unclean Gentiles. But He could not escape their notice, for it was not possible for Him to escape attention and to remain unrecognized. When the woman, therefore, heard of Him, she showed fervent faith. This is why the Lord does not at once fulfill her request, but withholds the gift, in order to show the steadfast faith of the woman, and how she persevered despite her rebuff. He does this so that we also might learn not to spin away on our heels when we do not immediately obtain what we have asked for in prayer. Instead we should persevere in prayer until we have received an answer. The Lord calls the Gentiles "dogs" because the Jews considered the Gentiles to be unclean. For the "children", that is, the Jews, God had allotted "bread", that is, His beneficence,⁴ His gift of good things. For God had showered His beneficence upon the Jews. The Lord is saying, therefore, that the Gentiles ought not to have a share in those good things allotted for the Jews. But when the woman answered wisely, and with faith, she obtained her desire. The Jews, she says, have the whole loaf, that is, they have Thee whole and entire, O Thou Who hast descended from heaven, together with all Thy beneficence. But I am asking only for crumbs, that is, for a small portion of Thy good things. See how the Lord did not say, "My power hath saved thee." But what does He say? "On account of this thy saying," that is, on account of thy faith, "go thy way," thy daughter hath been cleansed. Therefore, you, O reader, learn from this a useful lesson. For when we sin, each one of us is like this "woman", that is, we have a weak and effeminate soul. And then we are also "Phoenician", that is, stained with blood-red, soul-murdering sin, [for

⁴ "Beneficence" is a literal translation of the Greek word, *evergesia*, 'doing good'. God is often referred to in the prayers of the Church as *Evergetes*, the Benefactor of mankind.