

and came into the region of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, **Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.** After the miracle with the loaves, He immediately departed to another place, fearing that the multitude, because of this miracle, would cause an uprising and make Him king. The Pharisees ask for a sign from heaven, such as to make the sun or moon stand still, or to send down a lightning bolt, or to change the winds. For they thought that He would not be able to perform a sign from heaven, thinking that it was only by Beelzebub that He was able to work miracles on earth. But the Lord does not grant them their request. For signs from heaven are appointed for another time, namely, at the second coming of Christ, when the powers of the heavens will be shaken and the moon will no longer give out its light. But at the time of His first coming there are no such miracles, but instead everything that He does is full of meekness. Hence "there shall no sign be given unto this generation," that is, no sign from heaven.

13-21. And He left them, and entering into the boat again departed to the other side. Now His disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the boat with them more than one loaf. And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We have no bread. And Jesus, knowing it, saith unto them, Why reason ye, that ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember when I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of pieces took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among the four thousand, how many baskets full of pieces took ye up? And they said, Seven. And He said unto them, How is it that ye do not yet understand? The Lord leaves the Pharisees because they refuse all correction. One must spend time with those with whom there is hope of correction, but turn away from those who refuse to abandon their wickedness. By divine providence the disciples forget to bring bread with them, so that by means of the Lord's chastisement they might become better, and come to realize His power. When the Lord told

them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, that is, to beware of their teachings, the disciples thought that the Lord was forbidding the leavening of bread. Therefore they were rightly rebuked for not understanding the power of Christ, Who was able to make bread out of what did not exist. The Lord calls the teaching of the Pharisees and Herodians "leaven" because [like sourdough] it was swelled up with itself and full of old corruption. Anyone who has spent his life in corruption, unable to say anything spiritual that might be of sweetness to the listener, may be said to offer leaven, that is, to offer teaching which corrupts others with its moldering evil, and which in time causes others to regret they had followed that teaching. Who were the Herodians? Recently appeared teachers, who said that Herod was the messiah in whom they should believe.

22-26. And He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that He put His hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the village, nor tell it to any in the village. It appears that Bethsaida suffered from great unbelief, which is why Christ cries woe unto it, as Matthew records: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago."⁶ The Lord, therefore, comes to Bethsaida, and the people bring a blind man unto Him. But the faith of those who bring the blind man was not genuine, which is why the Lord leads him out of the village and then heals him. He spits upon the eyes of the blind man, and puts His hands on him, so that we might learn that both the word of God as well as the action which follows the word are able to work miracles. For the hand is a symbol of action, and the spit is a symbol of the word, coming as it does from the mouth. The blind man himself did not have perfect faith, which is why the Lord does not at

⁶ Mt 11:21-22