

benefit. For if a listener pays the utmost attention, God will give to him in return great benefit. But if he is lax, the degree of benefit will likewise be less. He who has eagerness and zeal will receive benefit. But from him who does not have eagerness and zeal, even what he thinks he has will be taken away. Even the small spark of zeal which he used to have is extinguished by laziness, just as it is kindled by attention.

**26-29. And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed onto the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full grain in the ear. But when the crop is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.** The kingdom of God means God's economy for us [that is, His ordering of His creation towards our salvation]. The "man" is God Himself, Who became man for our sake. The seed which He cast onto the earth is the preaching of the Gospel. After He had cast it, He slept, meaning, He ascended into heaven. Yet He rises night and day, for though God appears to sleep, He rises: at night, when He raises us up by means of temptations to a knowledge of Himself; and by day, when He orders our life with sweetness and joy. The seed grows, "He knoweth not how." For we have free will, and whether the seed increases or not depends on our own inclination. For we do not bear fruit by necessity, but by our own will, first producing the leaf and showing forth the beginnings of good when we are infants and have not yet reached the measure of maturity in Christ. Then we produce the ear, when we are able to withstand the storms of temptations. For then the stalk has grown joint upon joint, and stands upright, and is more mature. Then comes the full grain in the ear when one bears the good fruit. "When the crop is brought forth," then the sickle gathers the fruit. The sickle means the Word of God, and the harvest signifies the end of the world.

**30-34. And He said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is smaller than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all the plants, and shooteth out great branches; so that the winged creatures of the air lodge in its shade.**

**And with many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples.**

The word of faith is very small: "believe in Christ and you will be saved." You see, it is as small as the grain of mustard seed. But once the preaching of the Gospel had been sown on the earth, it grew and became more spacious, until the winged creatures of the air, meaning those who are lofty and exalted in mind and knowledge, could lodge in it. For how many of the wise have abandoned the Greek wisdom and found rest in the preaching? Thus the preaching became greater than all else, and put forth great branches. For the apostles parted, like branches, one going to Rome, another to India, another to Greece, and others to other parts of the earth. He spoke to the multitudes in many parables, offering parables according to the frame of mind of His listeners. For the multitude were ordinary, unlearned folk, and for this reason He mentions the grain of mustard, the blade, and the seed, so that with common everyday words He could teach them something beneficial; or, so that He could induce them to approach Him and ask, and by asking, to learn what they did not know. For He explained everything to His disciples when they were alone, as they had approached Him and asked. "He explained all things" means that He explained everything which they did not understand and about which they had asked. For He did not explain literally "all things", including what was already clear. Rather, they learned those things about which they had asked; the rest was clear to them. In this way, then, He "expounded all things" to them.

**35-41. And the same day, when the evening was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the boat. And there were also with Him other little boats. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was now full. And He was in the stern of the boat, asleep on a headrest: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish? And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea**