

Parable of the Sower

Mark 4

LEVEL 5 - THE LITTLEST THINGS THAT HAVE BIG CONSEQUENCES

LITTLE THINGS CAN GROW TO SOMETHING BIG

Think from your own experience about little things that have grown to something big or have had a great series of consequences. Do you know of actual examples in one of the following?

1. Deciding to learn a certain musical instrument
2. Choosing to participate in a certain sport
3. Choosing one's career

In any one of these choices, can people trace it back to a chance conversation or something they read or some other little thing that sparked off an interest?

Have you heard a couple tell how they met or how they started getting interested in each other? Did it begin with a seemingly little thing?

THE Word TEACHES HOW GOOD CAN GROW FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS

1. The mustard seed



The most vivid example of the little becoming big is the tiny mustard seed to which the Lord referred in *Mark 4: 30-32*:

but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.

2. Loving our neighbor

There is a most encouraging teaching in the Writings about a little bit of a good love in this life being able to grow tremendously in heaven, where we can even learn to love our neighbor more than ourself. Number 406 in *Heaven and Hell* speaks about some spirits who had recently come from the world. They were told:

If they would be like angels, they ought to love the neighbor more than themselves.

They couldn't imagine how that would be possible. But then they were told about how a degree of good love can really grow a lot in the other world:

But they were told that every good grows immeasurably
in the other life...

They were given examples from everyday life that proved to them that loving others more than self is possible:

They were told that the possibility of such love is shown
in the world from the conjugal love of some who have suffered
death to protect a consort from injury, from the love of parents
for their children, which is such that a mother would rather
starve than see her child go hungry; and from the sincere
friendship, in which one friend will expose himself to danger for
another...

3. A little effort brings great results

We very readily see faults and evils in other people. To see them in ourselves and make some honest effort against them is a great thing in human life, even when it looks like a little.

In the *Doctrine of Life* 97 we are told that even a little resistance to evil leads to meaningful change in our lives:

Let them resist evils in intention only once a week, or twice in a month, and they will perceive a change.

Number 530 of *True Christian Religion* says that if on occasion we look at ourselves and determine to resist our evils, this is "sufficient" to get us "on the way to heaven."

This is pictured in the parable of the mustard seed:

If a man by combat against evils as sins has procured for himself in the world anything spiritual, although it be a very little, he is saved: and his uses afterwards grow like the grain of mustard seed, into a tree. (*Divine Love* 17)

4. Growing into a garden



We are told in *Apocalypse Explained* 974 that when a man turns away from evils then the things that he does are outwardly and inwardly good and "living" from the Lord:

A seed pictures the Lord

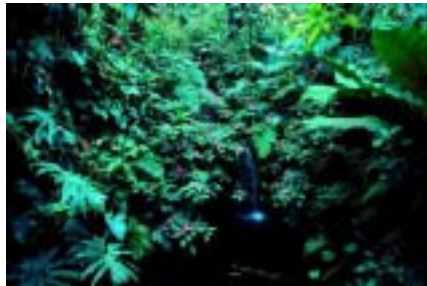
A seed is a picture of the immensity and eternity of the Lord (*True Christian Religion* 32).



In every seed there is implanted a certain immensity and eternity: an immensity because it can be multiplied to infinity, and an eternity, because that multiplication has continued without interruption from the creation of the world, and still continues, and will continue forever.

Then examples are given of what would happen if all the seeds produced came to fruition:

In a very little time the fish of the sea would fill the ocean,



and plants would cover the surface of the earth.



You may enjoy reading this number from *True Christian Religion* for yourself.