

Study for the Month September 2014

**Decree enforcing worship of beast**, 5T 525

**Enforcement of Sunday observance**, GC448-9; (Ed. 233-4); TM 133

**Highest earthly authority will enforce [America]**, 5T 213

**To be enforced on pain of persecution and death**, 5T 213

**Efforts to tear down Sabbath observance distinguishes worshippers of**, GC 446

**Violating God's law distinguishes the leopard-like beast**, GC 445-6

See also 4BC 1171; COL 77; GC 439-40.

Christ's Object Lessons, Ellen G. White, pp. 76, 77: Ch. "Like a Grain of Mustard Seed," based on Matt. 13: 31, 32; Mark 4: 30-32; Luke 13: 18, 19.

"In the multitude that listened to Christ's teaching there were many Pharisees. These noted contemptuously how few of His hearers acknowledged Him as the Messiah. And they questioned with themselves how this unpretending teacher could exalt Israel to universal dominion. Without riches, power, and honor, how was He to establish the new kingdom? Christ read their thoughts and answered them:--

'Whereunto shall we like the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?' *In earthly governments there was nothing that could serve for a similitude [likeness, resemblance]. No civil society could afford Him a symbol.* 'It is like a grain of mustard seed,' He said, 'which, when it is sown upon the earth, yet when it is sown, growth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof.' (Revised Version)

'The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life-principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. *So it is with the kingdom of Christ.* It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite of those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the Founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace [see Isa. \_\_\_\_]. **The Holy Spirit represents the worldly kingdoms under the symbol of fierce beasts of prey;** but Christ is 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' (John 1: 29). **In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience.** *The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world.* To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.

**The Parable of the Mustard Seed.** "As Jesus spoke this parable, the mustard plant could be seen far and near, lifting itself above the grass and grain, and waving its branches lightly in the air. Birds flitted from twig to twig, and sang among the leafy foliage. Yet the seed from which sprang this giant plant was among the least of all seeds.

At first it sent up a tender shoot; but it was of strong vitality. And grew and flourished until it reached its present great size. *So the kingdom of Christ in its beginning seemed humble and insignificant. Compared with earthly kingdoms it appeared to be the least of all.* By the rulers of this world Christ's claim to be a king was ridiculed. Yet in the mighty truths committed to His followers the kingdom of the gospel possessed divine life. And how rapid was its growth, how widespread its influence! When Christ spoke this parable, there were only a few Galilean peasants to represent the new kingdom. Their poverty, the fewness of their numbers, was urged over and over again as a reason why men should not connect themselves with these simple-minded fishermen who followed Jesus. But the mustard seed was to grow and spread forth its branches throughout the world. *When the earthly kingdoms whose glory then filled the hearts of men should perish, the kingdom of Christ would remain, a mighty and far-reaching power. . . . .*

“*So the work of grace in the heart* is small in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the soul, an influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can measure its results?

“Not only is the growth of Christ's kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated.

#### **TDG 186: Working of the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! Lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17: 20, 21, K.J.V.

“The kingdom of heaven can be felt, but not seen. **The inward working of the Spirit of God is compared to leaven . . .** Christ by this parable illustrates the human heart. The leaven of truth, working inwardly will be revealed in the life. The heart must be cleansed from all impurity, man must be fitted with traits of character that will enable him to do service for God in *any* line.

“The process is invisible by which the leaven changes the mass of meal into which it has been introduced, but it works until the meal is converted into bread. *So must the Spirit of God work a radical change.* New faculties are not supplied, but a thorough change is made in the employment of these faculties. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives are implanted. But while every faculty is regenerated, man does not lose his identity.

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Not all empires, world powers, kingdoms, and nations expounded on by the world's historians, both secular and sacred, are depicted in the overall description of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Only those that directly affect and impact the people of God and His work on earth are given beast symbols descriptive of their outstanding and dominant characteristics and careers down through the centuries until their total destruction by the final kingdom of God, described, not as a beast, but beginning as a stone “not cut out by man's hands” and strikes the man then grows to cover the whole earth. This kingdom begins when Christ returns.