

parable—[†] teach them the nature of the Kingdom which had already begun to come, and the method of its realization. He compared the development of the Kingdom to the growth of the seed (8). He warned men that the progress of the Kingdom must be slow and difficult (9). He encouraged his disciples to perseverance in prayer, that the tardiness of the coming might not lead them to despondency (10). He exhorted them to "watch," lest, as the result of the Master's long delay, they might at his coming be off their guard (11). He taught by word and action that the Kingdom was for the social outcasts as well as for the legally righteous among the Jews—for heathen dogs as well as for Israelitish children. He spoke of the Gentile day of grace. It was necessary that the Gospel be preached throughout all the world, before the final coming of the Kingdom (12). But they were dull disciples. Their inbred limitations were a hindrance to their reception of his teaching. Even to the last they cherished the hope of a visible Kingdom soon to be realized. They did not appreciate the gentle hints he has been giving them of his early death; and when the time for his departure drew nigh, and he must speak plainly to them, they were offended (13). The thought of his death, before his work was done, was sorely disappointing. The Jews as a people could not forgive Jesus for having parodied their national hope. His unpardonable crime in their eyes was that he should profess to be their Messiah, and yet refuse to do any of the works which they expected their Messiah to do. So the bitterest disappointment of his disciples was that he should be put to death without so much as having made an effort to restore the Kingdom to Israel (14). But the Master himself was not disappointed. He spoke of his death as necessary to the fulfilment of his work, and he assured his followers that he would come again: that his kingdom would then enter upon a new era of prosperity and ultimately appear

(8). Mark 4 : 26-29.

(11). Matthew 25 : 1-13.

(12). Mark 14 : 9.

(9). Mark 4 : 1-9.

(13). Compare Mark 9 : 30-37 and Mark 10 : 32-37.

(10). Luke 18 : 1-8.

(14). Luke 24 : 21.