

when Jesus took up the call of the Baptist, many rallied round him, with the expectation that he was the one who should take a prominent part at least in restoring literally the kingdom to Israel.

Jesus' idea of the kingdom, however, was radically different. He did not seek an outward, temporal, and national, but an inward, spiritual and universal kingdom. Not only so, but this would seem to have been his idea from the very beginning of his ministry, and he was loyal to it to the end. There is no sufficient evidence for the view that Jesus started out as a social enthusiast, bent on realizing the national hope, and that only when he saw the utter futility of such an aim he began to present his kingdom as spiritual and inward. The evidence is all the other way. There may be a development in his teaching on the Kingdom of God, but there is no evidence of any radical change of view regarding its nature. From the beginning of his public life to the end, there is no inconsistency. At the very outset of his career, he rejected the temptation to seek a kingdom of this 'world' (4). One of his earliest and best authenticated sayings is that in which, after having defended his disciples against the charge of neglecting to fast on the ground that the bridegroom was still with them, he said, with evident reference to his early death, "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in that day" (5). Early in his life that is to say, he foresaw his death, which must prove fatal to his realization of the current national expectations.

His first disciples evidently expected at the outset that Jesus would speedily restore the kingdom to Israel. It was with wonderful patience that He sought to emancipate them from their narrow nationalism and to lift them into his conception of a universal and spiritual Kingdom. He told them that the Kingdom of God was at hand (6)—that it had already come—that it was in their very midst (7). He gave them parable after

(4). Matthew 4 : 8-10.

(5). Mark 2 : 18-20.

(6). Mark 1 : 15.

(7). Luke 17 : 20 f.