

Jesus Journeys with Lazarus to the Place of Baptism

The entertainment over, Jesus rested awhile and then started with Lazarus toward Jericho to the place of baptism. One of Lazarus' servants went on ahead with a lighted torch, for it was night. After walking for about half an hour, they reached an inn belonging to Lazarus where at a later period the disciples often stopped. This inn must not be confounded with that other of which I have often made mention, and at which also the disciples frequently put up. That one was farther on in an opposite direction. The hall in which



Jesus and Mary were received by Lazarus on their arrival at his house, was the same in which Jesus was stopping and teaching before the resurrection of Lazarus when Magdalen went to meet Him. On arriving at the inn, Jesus removed His sandals and went barefoot. Lazarus, touched with compassion, begged Him in consideration of the rough, stony roads not to do so. But Jesus gravely replied: "Let it be thus! I know what it behooveth Me to do," and so they entered into the wilderness. The desert, broken up by narrow chasms, stretched out before them a distance of five hours toward Jericho. Then came the fruitful vale of Jericho, also interspersed by wild tracts, about two hours' in breadth, whence to John's place of baptism was a journey of another two hours. Jesus walked more quickly than Lazarus, and was often an hour ahead of him. A multitude, among them some publicans whom Jesus had sent from Galilee to the baptism, were now on their return journey.

They passed Jesus in the desert, though at some distance, on their way back to Bethania. Jesus stopped nowhere. He passed Jericho on His left and a couple of other places on the way, but paused at none.

Lazarus' friends, Nicodemus, Simeon's son, and John Marc, had spoken but little with Jesus. But to one another they were constantly interchanging words of admiration at His behavior, His wisdom, His human, yes, even His personal attractions. In His absence or when walking behind Him, they said to one another: "What a man! There never before was such a one, there never again will be another like Him! How earnest, how mild, how wise, how discerning, and yet how simple! But I cannot perfectly comprehend His

words, though I accept them with the thought, 'He said it!' One cannot look Him in the face, for He seems to read one's thoughts. Look at His figure—how majestic in bearing! How swiftly He moves, and yet no undignified haste! Whoever walked like Him! How quickly He journeys from place to place, and yet shows no signs of weariness! He is always ready to start again for hours. What a man He has turned out to be!" Then they went on to speak of His childhood, His teaching in the Temple, and referred to the dangers attendant on His first voyage when He had aided the sailors. But not one of them dreamed that he was speaking of the Son of God.

They saw that He was greater than all other men, they honored Him, and stood in awe of Him; still He was to them only a man, though, indeed, a man full of prodigies. Obed of Jerusalem was an aged man, the fraternal nephew of the husband of old Anna the Prophetess. He was a pious man, one of the so-called Elders at the Temple, a member of the Sanhedrin. He was one of the secret disciples of Jesus and, as long as he lived, lent assistance to the Community.