

A Glance at the Disciples Going to the Baptism

I saw the disciples whom Jesus had dispatched with messages arrive in Capharnaum. They were about five of the best-known. They had an interview with Mary, and then two of them went to Bethsaida for Peter and Andrew. James the Less, Simon, Thaddeus, John, and James the Greater were present. The disciples spoke of the mildness, meekness, and wisdom of Jesus, while the followers of John the Baptist proclaimed with enthusiasm the austere life of their master, and declared that they had never before heard such an interpreter of the law and the Prophets. Even John spoke enthusiastically of the Baptist, although he already knew Jesus. His parents had once lived only a couple of hours from Nazareth, and Jesus loved him even as a child. The disciples celebrated the Sabbath here.



The next day I saw the nine disciples along with those named above on the road to Tiberias, whence they were to go to John, passing near Ephron and then through the desert toward Jericho. Peter and Andrew particularly distinguished themselves by the zeal with which they spoke of the Baptist. He was, they said, of a noble, priestly race; he had been educated by the Essenians in the wilderness, he would suffer no irregularity around him, he was as rigorous as he was wise. Then Jesus' disciples put forward the mildness and wisdom of their Master, to which the others retorted that many disorders arose from such condescension, and they cited instances in proof of what they said. Jesus' disciples replied that their Master, too, had been educated by the Essenians and that, moreover, He had but lately returned from travelling. But John entered not into this discussion. I did not hear him saying anything more in that strain. They started together for the place of baptism, but after a few hours took different directions. As I listened to their conversation, I thought, "Men were then as they now are."