

“But Wisdom is justified of all her children.”

LUKE, vii, 35.

IT was indeed a hard and puzzling ordeal for the Jews to have to judge, at the same time, two characters so diverse, and, to their minds, so contradictory, as those of John the Baptist and JESUS CHRIST. Let us place ourselves in their position. When they had, to some extent, overcome their repugnance to John's unconventional life and words, had reconciled themselves to his inconvenient directness in commanding unpleasant sacrifices, their troubles were not over.

Instead of establishing them as his disciples—their work to pace with him a theological academy, the privileged sharers of an esoteric faith, he tells them that they are but at the threshold; that he himself cannot guide them further; that a higher and greater teacher must now be theirs.

And the new Instructor seemed to reverse all that had been learned. Where John had abstained, he enjoys. Where the old teacher had left liberty, he imposes new and stringent mandates. Where John had answered questions of casuistry with specific instruction, JESUS leaves them to their own conscience: he declines to be a judge or a divider, he refuses to be named one of the prophets, he retires when they would fain make him king.