

excludes and what it supposes. It excludes, in fact, a proud self-sufficiency; it excludes the presumption of arriving with human means at a supernatural end; it excludes the fallacy of trusting to one's self in the hour of danger and temptation. On the other hand, it supposes a lively faith in the existence of God; it supposes a practical homage to His power and mercy; it supposes a confident recourse to His providence, by which we can obtain the grace both to avoid every evil and do every good. So admirable are the qualities of this Spiritual Childhood that it is not surprising that the Divine Master has made it a necessary condition for obtaining life eternal.

Spiritual Childhood: A Necessity for Life Eternal

Jesus and the Children

One day He drew from the crowd a little child, and, showing him to His disciples, He said: "Amen I say unto you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. xviii., 3). Oh, what an eloquent lesson for the destruction of the false ideas and the ambitions of those who, imagining the Kingdom of Heaven to be just as an earthly empire, aimed at securing there the best places, and therefore were inquiring who would be first in that kingdom! And to emphasise even more strongly that Spiritual Childhood would be the determining factor of pre-eminence in the Kingdom of Heaven, the Divine Master continued, saying: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven"

Another day some mothers were presenting to Jesus their babies that He might touch them, and the disciples reproved them; but Jesus rebuked those disciples, saying: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and impede them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Then, too, He concluded: "Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it." (Matt. x., 15.)

Holy Father's Comment

Noteworthy is the force of this divine language. Not content with affirming positively that the Kingdom of Heaven is of the children, or that he will be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven who has made himself little as a child, He teaches again, in the form of an explicit exclusion, that they will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven who have not become as little children.

Now, when a master proposes a lesson in various forms, does he not mean to convey, by those many and varied forms of instruction, that the lesson in question is one to which he attaches a particular importance? He exerts himself so much to drive it home to his hearers because he desires that, by one mode of presentation or by the other, they may take it to heart. We are forced, therefore, to the conclusion that the Divine Master was anxious that His disciples should learn that Spiritual Childhood is a condition necessary for the attainment of Eternal Life.

Return to Childhood Necessary

Perhaps someone will urge that the way of confidence and abandon in God was suggested only to those fortunate few from whom malice has not deprived the graces of childhood, as if the Childhood of the Spirit could not be looked for when childish innocence is lost. But the words of the Divine Master—"Unless you be converted and become as little children"—do they not indicate the necessity of a change and of work or action? "Unless you be converted"—there you have indicated a change that the disciples of Jesus Christ must make to be again children, and it is readily understood that he only can again become a child who child no longer is. "Unless you become as little children"—there you have indicated a work which the disciples of Jesus Christ must do to appear as children, and it is clear that a man can work to be or appear either that which he has never been, or that which he no longer is; but since man must have been a child, the words "unless you become as little children" carry with them the obligation to acquire again the qualities of childhood. It would be ridiculous to suggest the possibility of acquiring again the aspect and the weakness of childhood's years;

but it is not out of reason to see in the divine words a warning given, even to men of mature years, to make them return to the practice of those virtues which constitute the Spiritual Childhood. Of this Spiritual Childhood the Church to-day points out a concrete example when it proclaims the heroic degree of the virtues of Sister Theresa of the Infant Jesus.

The Holy Father then outlined the life of this Venerable Servant of God, showing how her sanctity depended neither on long years nor arduous undertakings, nor profound studies, but simply in the complete abandonment to the Divine Will.

"The Story of a Soul"

The sanctity of the Servant of God, continued the Supreme Pontiff, was not dimmed, neither by words uttered on her death-bed, nor by the counsels and exhortations to circulate widely her *Story of a Soul*, in which Little Theresa had described herself. She who, in all her life, had given constant proof of humility could not utter words apparently contrary to this virtue, if not under the influence of a divine command.

Her Promise

Sister Theresa, a little before she died, promised that she would pass her Paradise in doing good to men. We know she has maintained her promise, because innumerable are the graces attributed to her intercession, especially during the recent world conflict. We Ourselves have received a great number of letters from soldiers and officials of the French army, which attributed to Sister Theresa the grace of having escaped imminent danger of death. They were letters that bore the seal of sincerity, because often accompanied by the announcement of a change in the mode of life in gratitude for the favor received. But who does not perceive that the new heroine, whose charity is now brought to perfection, will not be more liberal of her favors to those who strive to copy her most closely?

We hope that the secret of the sanctity of Sister Theresa of the Infant Jesus may not remain hidden from any of Our children. And so that it may produce in all the wonderful effects it produced in Theresa, We invoke the benediction of God, not only on those who are present, but also upon all the members of the Christian family.

SEVENTH CENTENARY OF ST. DOMINIC

CELEBRATION IN DUBLIN.

A Dublin message under date September 1, says:—In St. Saviour's Church recently there was a special celebration of the seventh centenary of Saint Dominic. High Mass was solemnised and the celebrant was, in accordance with custom, a Franciscan.

Dealing with the labors of the Dominicans in Ireland, the preacher said that Dominican historians are agreed that one of the brethren who witnessed the miracle of the loaves in the refectory of St. Sixtus in Rome, was an Irishman, who three years after St. Dominic's death, came to Ireland bringing some of his brethren with him. Through seven centuries they had remained with the people of Ireland. He need not tell them how the Dominicans and the Franciscans labored through the centuries of religious persecution to keep the Faith alive in Ireland.

What heroes were among them in those trying times! Dermot O'Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel, bore with inconceivable patience the corrosive plasters they put upon his limbs, and they cut away his flesh before they put him to death. Richard Barry, Prior of Cashel, whose noble bearing so won the respect of his judges that he was offered his freedom if he would only take off his religious habit, answered: "These garments are the livery of Christ. I have worn them from my youth and never will I put them off."

He was accordingly roasted over a slow fire. Lawrence O'Farrell, of Longford, when led to the scaffold, put his Rosary beads around his neck, folded his hands, and was hanged. When suspended in the air, to the great amazement of the onlookers, he withdrew one of his hands and held his cross above his head in token of his triumph.

Such were the Dominicans in the Penal Days. It was not only by their preaching and the example of their holy lives that they kept the Faith strong and lively,

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