

pressions, with which evidently these were filled. They doubtless thought of greatness after the model of this world; and that model was the furthest possible removed from all true greatness, as it was from the thought of a little child. It was needful, then, to begin with the first step of the ladder of thought. And for this purpose He called a little child unto Him, and "set him in the midst of them." How bewildered must these disciples have been! What earthly connection could that little one have with the subject before them? We believe they could see none; and therefore they would naturally dismiss all thoughts which were at that time filling their minds. They saw the little child, and they waited to see what the Saviour would make of it. And these were the words that followed—"Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

They had been discussing who should be the greatest, and forgot to ask who were those that should be admitted. That question came first; settle first of all who should be admitted into the kingdom of Heaven, and then put the question: among those thus admitted, who of them would be the greatest? Now, in the Saviour's answer, He does not deny that in the kingdom of Heaven there will be some greater than others; that all there will not be alike. Although it might be a question as to whether such a point as the one before us would ever occur to those that are within that kingdom and are great there.

The Saviour plainly teaches us that the entrance qualification, fully carried out, is what will constitute greatness in the kingdom of Heaven. That qualification demands—first, that we should be converted; second, that we should be so converted that we will become as little children; third, that just as that character is developed, so shall we be great in the kingdom of Heaven. Thus the Saviour says, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same

is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven." Let us, then, prayerfully consider the Saviour's answer to the question thus put, in the three steps thus suggested:

1. *We must be converted in order to enter the kingdom of Heaven.*

Observe, first of all, that the Saviour is speaking, not to the multitude, but to his own disciples, who had forsaken all to follow Him. So that by conversion, as applied to them, he cannot really mean the giving of themselves unto him; that they had done already. They were His, and He claimed them as His own, and yet he addresses them in the most personal manner possible—"Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." They were the followers of Christ, and yet they had need of being converted! What can the Saviour mean? Is it possible to be a follower of Christ, and yet not see the kingdom of Heaven? Does not the Saviour's language imply such a possibility? How else can we construe the words before us, so as to exclude such an idea? Or is there a sense in which a man may be a follower of Christ, and yet not be saved by Him unto life eternal? We admit that all who followed Christ in the flesh did not thereby, through Him, inherit life eternal. The personal and outward observance of every precept and law does not, for that reason, admit a man into the kingdom of Heaven, although it may entitle him to be enrolled as His follower and a member of His Church. A turning away from the evil of our way is certainly demanded, but if our thoughts and feelings are not turned as well as our feet, we are not converted in the sense in which the Saviour uses that word. These disciples of His, though they had left all to follow Him, yet had not left their former thoughts and feelings behind them. Thoughts of greatness such as those which they held, while as yet they were members of the world, and not followers of Christ, still possessed them. And while these were