

THE CONFIRMATION OF THE ORDER

TO be the champions of the Faith and the true light of the world. These were the conditions on which the Order of Friars Preachers was confirmed, these arduous terms were to be the reason of its very existence. Had Dominic foreseen all that such obligations entailed he might well have hesitated pledging himself and his brethren. But no! How could the chivalrous Guzman forego such a service; and as for his brethren, the very inspiration of the charge would set the coldest heart aflame, it would make the basest clay heroic!

Bearing, therefore, rescripts of the confirmation, as letters patent of their mission, Dominic sends forth his sons. In them that ancient league, the world, the flesh, and the devil, recognizes professed enemies against whom it will gather its forces. Henceforth, it will be their vocation to suffer, bleed and die. The arid lands where paganism stalks will drink in their blood in torrents; England will sacrifice them to the Moloch heresy; for Ireland they will become a holocaust; in France their penitential garb will be for a sign of contradiction.

But the smell of battle and the sight of blood will not frighten them, for they are champions. As such they will not be satisfied to sit beleaguered, they will sally forth; they will not parry, they will strike. They will enter in and take up their abode in the populous marts of life, and show men the novel spectacle of religion in their streets; they will not be content with that cast forth, but they themselves will snatch the brand from the burning. They will

cut deeply into the empire of Satan. The East will witness their aggressions, for Mohammedanism will lament its thousands won over to the Faith by the might of Vincent Ferrer; the frozen North will give up its heathen hordes at the inspired words of Hyacinth and Ceslaus; while the voluptuousness of the South will quail before the fiery Savonarola.

The Dominican white will often be dyed martyr-red, but it will never be stained by the black grime of heresy. Above the Babel of creeds, opinions and theories, which will din their ears for ages, the clarion cry of Honorius will always be heard by the followers of Dominic; "You are the true light of the world." But there is light only where there is truth. Therefore, that they may be in very deed, the light of the world, their only cult will be to praise, to bless, to preach—the Truth. They will give accent to their love of truth by hymns and canticles of praise; from the abundance of their wisdom they will pour forth upon an erring race, the blessed fruits of their communings with Truth Divine; the spirit of Truth Himself will breath upon them and they will proclaim with tongues aflame with Pentecostal fire.

And now looking back from the vantage point of seven hundred years to that memorable day when the Order of Friars Preachers was signed with the seal of the Fisherman, we "rejoice in the Lord"; for we feel that the ideals of Holy Dominic have been realized, we feel that his sons, our brethren, have been, in very truth, "champions of the faith, the true light of the world."

—Luke Thornton, O. P.