

Friends at Court

CLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR

- August 16, Sunday. Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost. St. Joachim, Father of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- „ 17, Monday. Octave of St. Lawrence, Martyr
- „ 18, Tuesday.—St. Hyacinth, Confessor.
- „ 19, Wednesday.—St. Elizabeth, Queen, Widow
- „ 20, Thursday.—St. Bernard, Abbot, Doctor.
- „ 21, Friday.—St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Widow.
- „ 22, Saturday.—Octave of Assumption.

St. Joachim, Father of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Fathers of the Church unite in extolling the sanctity of St. Joachim and St. Anne, whose privilege it was to be the parents of the Most Pure Mother of God.

St. Jane Frances of Chantal, Widow.

This saint was born at Dijon in 1573. She was married at the age of twenty to the Baron de Chantal, but eight years later she had the misfortune to lose her husband through an accident. Having completed the education of her children, she founded, under the direction of St. Francis de Sales, and with the co-operation of some other ladies of rank, the religious Order of the Visitation. She died in 1641.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

A PRAYER.

To Thee, dear Lord, I come to-day with humble heart:
Oh, hear my prayer! Unto me, Lord, Thy grace impart.

From out the depths of hopelessness and misery
I call and trust that Thou wilt hearken unto me.

Without Thee nothing can I do. Behold my needs!
To Thy great everlasting strength my weakness pleads.
As when Thou walk'st on earth the sons of men among,
Heal'st Thou the sick, the lame, the palsied, midst the throng;

Heard'st Thou the leper's cry of 'Master, pity me!'
The blind man's fond appeal of 'Lord, that I may see!'
So wilt thou hear me, Lord, and smail my faith would be,

Were I to fear lest my poor prayer unanswered be.

Securely in Thy Sacred Heart let me abide;
Safe from the dangers that beset on every side.
Into Thy hands entirely I myself resign:
Oh, keep me as I wish to be, securely Thine!
With Thy accustomed clemency, Lord, deal with me:
And in Thy courts Oh, may I serve eternally.

— Catholic News.

'If every night, before we go to sleep,' says Father Faber, 'we begged our dear Lady to offer up to God the Precious Blood of her Divine Son for grace to hinder one mortal sin somewhere in the world during that night, and then renewed the same offering in the morning for the hours of daylight, surely such an offering could not fail to win the grace desired, and thus each one of us might probably hinder numbers of mortal sins every year.'

What we need is eyes to see. The presence of the benevolent God is evidenced in a thousand ways, but we lack the power or the disposition to appreciate this marvellous fact. Many a man has seen a country graveyard, but it required a Gray to see in it a great poem. Literature is filled with gems that genius has rescued from the rubbish heaps. So a cultivated spiritual sense may see everywhere tokens of the Divine Presence, and the common is transformed into the uncommon by the glory of it.

'STAND FAST IN THE FAITH'

(A Weekly Instruction specially written for the N.Z. Tablet by 'GIMMEL'.)

EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH (X.)

(Continued.)

The great success that waited upon the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, and doubtless of other missionaries, amongst the pagans brought to the front a question that had been raised when St. Peter received Cornelius into the Church. On what conditions were these converts from amongst pagans and Jewish proselytes to be admitted? Had they to submit to the religious obligations that weighed upon the Jews, and in particular had they to undergo the rite of circumcision? The apostolic missionaries, especially St. Paul, would not hear of imposing these obligations on the pagan converts, but many 'false brethren' sought to bring them into bondage to the Law, for they insisted that though one received justification through the Faith of Christ, yet perfection lay in observing to the full the Law of Moses. This might appear a small matter, but it really struck at the very root of Christianity. The Church was founded upon the Person of Jesus risen from the dead; and if she was to be bound by any law of commandments whatever, besides those which Christ and His Apostles had prescribed, she was brought back to the position she would have been in had Christ never died at all: in fact, still under the law. The Gentiles were bound by the law of charity not to offend the prejudices of their Jewish brethren; but when it came to the question of salvation, then if any point were conceded, the whole Christian religion was imperilled.

The controversy on the point raged chiefly at Antioch, and it was there decided to send a deputation, consisting of Paul, Barnabas, and others, to Jerusalem in order to lay the whole matter before the apostles and the 'ancients.' They met with considerable opposition, but the authorities, above all the great pillars of the Church, Peter, John, and James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, took their part and acknowledged Paul and Barnabas as brother Apostles of equal divine mission with themselves.

In order to settle the question, a Council—the first General Council of the Catholic Church—was held under the presidency of St. Peter. That apostle spoke first. After pointing out that he himself had been chosen to bring the Gentiles in the first instance into the Church, he went on to show how 'God had obliterated all differences by purifying their hearts; and further, he declares not only that the Gentile converts are not to be brought under bondage, but that he himself and all the circumcised Christians look for salvation, not in any way through circumcision or the Mosaic Law, but solely through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.' Paul and Barnabas then told the assembly how they preached to the Gentiles, and how God had blessed their mission with success. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, and the special representative of the Jewish Christians, agreed with his fellow-apostles, at the same time remarking that the preaching of the Gospel to pagans was but a fulfilment of ancient prophecy. The Council's solution of the difficulty was then embodied in the following letter:—

'The Apostles, the Presbyters, and brethren send greeting unto the brethren, the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard that some going out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, "Ye must be circumcised and keep the law": to whom we gave no commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled together, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have given their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to

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