

Chance

What a vicious part "blind, all conforming Chance" plays in life. The principle of evil has no more alluring or destructive demonstration. To the youth, it offers, a short cut to fortune. In middle age the habit of pursuit becomes fixed, and old age finds the will paralyzed, the mind unsettled and the craving for the unattainable as firmly seated as life itself. Those who devote their lives to the pursuit of Chance are worshippers at the shrine of a false God. And then when the awful strain of temptation yielded to, comes—as most certainly it will—and the character of the victim is shipwrecked, he realizes the sinister truth of the saying that "To those whose God is honour, disgrace alone is sin." Oh how keenly such a man, at such a moment, wishes that in his early years he had founded his conduct on the principle of good, embodied in the wise expression:—"When the heart is pure and straight, there is hardly anything which can mislead the understanding in matters of immediate personal concernment."

He Descended into Hell.

This is the way that E. M. Poole's instructive "Sunday Evening Lessons on the Creed" treats this much misunderstood article. "Christ entered into Paradise before he ascended into Heaven into the very presence of the Father. Shall our reward be greater than His, our felicity more complete? Or are we to enter into full joy, while the great saints of the Old Testament are yet waiting for the consummation of bliss? (Heb. xi.: 39, 40; Rev. vi.: 9, 12). The Bible especially tells us that the early saints wait for us before they receive their reward, and they that are alive at the coming of the Lord shall not prevent or go before them that sleep (I. Thess. iv.)." A waiting place for faithful souls is thus revealed but what is it?—a place of rest and refreshment; a place of progress in holiness, no doubt, and a place of "joy and felicity" as our own burial service declares.

Jesuit Training

We have all heard of Jesuits and their training but for the first time Mr. R. H. Sheffield of Brussels, Belgium, lifts the veil in the New York Evening Post, and lets us see the severity, criticism and justice meted out to the luckless youth destined for the work of a Jesuit propaganda. The whole article is full of information and humour, so full that we wish we had room to reproduce it. It opens with the novice at breakfast when the superior announces, "This novice is to be closely watched. Each one of the students will be called upon to publicly criticise Mr. Novice's conduct and what is more, the grounds of such criticism must be clearly stated." After hearing these criticisms, he is told that it is his duty to investigate every one of them in the silent solitude of his own cell. He must examine their real value as applied to his own life. No weakness however cherished must be allowed to continue when he has once come to the conclusion that it is a weakness. On the other hand no virtue must be abandoned on account of unwelcome criticism. What a trial! No wonder that fifty per cent. drop out. But what a discipline!

Another Trial

"I can smile now at my first-half in a Jesuit College," said one of the leading men in a French institution. "During the first three days, I was left pretty much to myself. On the fourth morning the doyen of the college knocked at the door of my cubicle just after prayers. I let him in; he said, 'Have you noticed anything strange about me?' I said I had not, and inquired why he asked. 'Because,' he replied, 'I should like

to hear your criticism of myself.' Then he added, 'And you! Why do you wear that gold locket on your breast?' I told him it was the only remembrance I possessed of my dead mother. 'Don't show it, then,' he said; 'it's not suggestive of humility!' I intimated that his advice was ill-timed. He led me into the corridor and pointed towards the great door of the college: 'Those who want to become Jesuits,' he said, 'have to sacrifice even their most cherished sentiments. If they do not like that, they cannot be Jesuits; in that case, the door is always open.' So the locket souvenir was put away and with it my dearest and most cherished earthly affection."

A Testing Journey

We cannot resist one more extract, a long one, but what we think our readers will enjoy. "After we had gone on thus for some four or five months, the superior called two of my companions and myself one morning to his study and said, 'You three are to go to X (naming a town fully a hundred and fifty miles away). There you will proceed to the Jesuit College and do as its superior bids you.' The boldest of the three reminded the great man that we did not possess a sou between the three of us, and that we had not the faintest idea of how to get to our journey's end. "Why do you raise objection?" asked the superior. "Either you must desire to become Jesuits or you do not. If the former, obey! If the latter, why are you here?" So we started off. Laymen would call the life we led during our journey, the lot of vagabonds and tramps. I need not tell you about it. The journey took us a fortnight. Fortunately, no time limit had been set ere we started—though this might very well have been done had the superior thought fit. Ten nights out of that fortnight we slept in the open; the other four we were lodged by peasants—twice in a granary, once in a kitchen, and once in a stable. I earned three meals for each of us by writing letters for peasants. One of my comrades was awarded with two big country loaves for cleaning out as many pigsties; while the three of us received two shillings in money for picking fruit for half a dozen hours at a stretch. The night after that fruit-picking we walked all night on the off chance of getting to a certain village in time for another fruit-picking job next morning—which proved a hoax. Three days we ate nothing but dry bread and drank nothing but brook water. One day we ate nothing at all. Best of all—we thought it was worst of all at that time—when we finally walked into the superior's study at the college to which we had been sent and informed him that we had been told to place ourselves under his orders, he merely replied: "It is well. You are learning to obey. Now go back to your own college again."

How Shall They Preach Except They be Sent?

This question in Romans x.: 15, has arrested many a thoughtful mind, and it raises the question of the authority of the preacher in that remarkable chapter where St. Paul is discussing the world wide proclamation of the Gospel. It is on record that a bishop put this question to the celebrated Jewish convert, Dr. Wolff, who started off to preach to scattered Jews without any authority, and who boldly answered the bishop's question by saying the Holy Ghost sent him. "I am willing to receive you," replied the bishop, "as sent by the Holy Ghost to found a new church and a new succession of ministers, if you can prove your call, but where are your miracles?" Wolff studied his Bible earnestly to settle this point and seeing that God gave Moses and Christ the endorsement by miracles and that miracles were therefore the Divine seals of a new ministry, he, being unable to show any miracles, deemed it his duty to be sent by proper authority; and submitted to ordination.

AN UNBROKEN CHAIN.

"No event in the world's course is merely an event and no more," says Dr. Tennant in the October 'Hibbert.' "Every event is also a 'cause.' It produces, or rather occasions, a chain of effects. Now, to prove the past occurrence of an event from its effects, which can still be observed—to track a bygone phenomenon, so to speak, by its footsteps—is one of the recognized and one of the most fruitful of scientific methods; but it can surely be no less scientific a method when employed in the sphere of human history than when applied to disclose the past changes of our planet. The past is involved in the present in the case of human history as much as in that of geological evolution; and from the impression produced by a great personality upon his age there should be some means of arguing back to the historic life that wrought it." The opening words of the first book of the New Testament announce it to be "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The New Testament is the record of the fulfilment of the revelation of the human, yet Divine, Being, as the Old Testament is the record of the promise of His coming. Theodoret well said that "in Christ the human power is a partaker of the Divine power." And our Lord said of Himself: "Before Abraham was I am." And again: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." St. John opens his Gospel with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not." Words, said a Platonic philosopher, that might well be written in letters of gold. Now, our Lord, as it is well known, appealed not once or twice to the prophetic utterances made with regard to Him and His coming in the Old Testament, and thereby put His seal upon the character and authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures. It is not our purpose or intention to treat this grave and solemn subject by way of controversy. We, however, deem it due to our readers that we should shortly record our adherence to what we deem to be the unbroken chain of the traditional view—the view that we believe in the main harmonizes with the record of the Scriptures, that accords with the teaching of our Lord and the tradition of the Church, of which He was the Founder. We do not for a moment think of imputing unworthy motives or applying epithets to those who differ from our view. The expressed opinion of that eminent jurist and legal author, Professor Greenleaf, on the validity of the Old Testament writings is "That the Books of the Old Testament, as we now have them, are genuine; that they existed in the time of our Saviour, and were commonly received and referred to among the Jews as the sacred books of their religion; and that the text of the four evangelists has been handed down to us in the state in which it was originally written; that is, without having been materially corrupted or falsified either by heretics or Christians, are facts which we are entitled to assume as true until the contrary is shown." Professor Greenleaf's comments are referable to evidence that would be accepted by courts of law on the question of the general authenticity of the Bible. How can it be successfully argued that evidence of a purely speculative character with regard to parts of the books of the Bible, or individual books themselves, should be accepted, especially when such speculations are contrary to the general belief in their authenticity, and to the homogeneity of the sacred Scriptures themselves? Should we not demand of those who seek to lead the Church in these matters that they prove themselves com-