



A RECENT PASTORAL LETTER.

THE following pages are taken from the admirable letter recently written by His Grace Archbishop Begin, of Quebec, to the Ursulines of that city, on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the introduction into Canada of the devotion to the Sacred Heart :—

“Students of the history of the Church note a marvellous fact which stands out in bold relief all through her career. In every age, when men’s piety weakens and tepidity gains ground, God intervenes in a special manner, and raises up, either by providential action or by miraculous manifestation, powerful devotions. These devotions are always as old as Christianity in matter ; in form alone they are new. They are designed to move men’s hearts ; to rekindle the sacred fire of divine love on earth, and to be a means which God employs to distribute throughout the world the numberless graces which He has merited and prepared for us. The action of Jesus Christ, our Divine Pontiff, is varied, fruitful and inexhaustible. This will stand out clearly if we consult the great traditions of piety in the Church.

“What was the chief devotion during the first four centuries, that is, up to the time of the peace of the Church under Constantine the Great ? It was the devotion to the *Good Shepherd*. Under the guise of a Shepherd, our Divine Lord presented Himself to souls, the better to draw them to Him. The aspect which touched men’s hearts most was that of a God made man, who had come down from heaven to earth to seek strayed sheep, and to gather them into one