

tacks on the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church by the teachers. But in all of them the Bible is supposed to be regularly read, and the facts of Old and New Testament History to be taught. This, together with the freer atmosphere of these schools, is evidently what is dreaded. The Bible is against the Roman Catholic Church, therefore that church is against the Bible, and against every institution that gives it a place in its work. One does not need to seek further the key to its action.

The most noteworthy thing about this most recent pastoral is the moderation of its tone. It contains none of the denunciation of Protestantism and abuse of Protestant institutions that so recently characterized the fulminations of Archbishop Cleary. It has no reference to the lofty claims of the Church such as Archbishop Bourget was wont to revel in. It avoids even threats of ex-communication against those who may disobey the warning. We must congratulate the young ecclesiastic who has recently been called to the Episcopal chair in the commercial metropolis on the new style which he has adopted. It is an improvement on the old.

As to the practical effect of the pastoral we do not anticipate that it will amount to much. An effort will of course be made to apply it in the confessional, and a number of pupils will probably be withdrawn from the schools between this and Easter. But this is an annual affair, and they are usually found in their places again once the Easter duties are over. The fact is that the Protestant schools are generally a great deal more efficient than the Roman Catholic ones, and parents are becoming more and more determined to give their children the best education possible. The only way to prevent them going to Protestant schools would be to provide equally good schools themselves. But if we may judge from their opposition to an improved school system, by a re-organization of the Education Department, they are in no haste to bring good schools within reach of the masses. They are just about as much afraid of good schools under their own control as they are of those directed by Protestants.

THE EASTER FESTIVAL.

THE Presbyterian Church in the past has paid but little heed to the seasons of the so-called religious year, even Christmas and Easter have come and gone without any recognition whatever in the services of the sanctuary. Special interest has gathered rather around the Communion services, the times for which were appointed by the local churches according to the convenience of the people. Of late years, however, the social customs connected with the ecclesiastical seasons have made their influence felt, especially in the cities, and this has been followed by the tendency to turn them to account for religious uses, as lending additional interest to the themes connected with the Incarnation and with the Resurrection. The Sunday services, including both sermon and music, give prominence to these subjects, and some have even gone the length of having extra services on Christmas day and on Good Friday.

Not a few of the more conservative minds are disposed to look with a good deal of suspicion on this tendency and are afraid of what it may lead to in the future. This fear, it must be said, is not without ground in the history of the past. Such observances have been a fruitful source of superstition among ignorant people in all ages. And once they are introduced, who is to say where they shall stop?

But it is possible to be quite too suspicious in matters of this sort, and to exaggerate the danger arising from them. The church has learned something since the middle ages, and if it has any genuine spiritual life it may be trusted to discard observances that are really working mischief. The world is not drifting towards Popery, but is steadily moving away from it. We may safely enough do some things now that once were mischievous because of the ignorance of the people. The chief danger is not in the direction of superstition but of allowing religion to degenerate into mere sentiment. If Christmas and Easter are observed it should not be simply to adorn the service but to emphasize the Incarnation and the Resurrection, as two of the essential facts in the life of Christ. In the emphasis which we have been accustomed to place on the death of Christ, these have been to some extent neglected in the teaching from our pulpits, and not a little of the growing popularity of these special seasons may be due to the feeling that their recognition is helpful in restoring these forgotten doctrines to their rightful place in the list of pulpit themes. One thing is certain that, whether we observe such festivals or not, the preacher should let no year go by without giving the subjects which they represent a place in his list of sermon topics. Fidelity to the whole truth requires it, and the spiritual wants of the people demand it.

ENCROACHING ON THE SABBATH.

THE interest of the working men in the due observance of the Lord's Day is being illustrated in Pittsburgh where an active agitation is in progress against threatened encroachments on the workers' day of rest. An extract from an exhaustive and well-prepared report on the subject, drawn by a committee of the Federation of the churches of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, will interest our readers in Ontario at the present time. Thus saith the Committee:

"Your committee would respectfully report that upon inquiry we find that the hours of labor required of the men in the mills, and especially in the steel departments, have been steadily encroaching upon the sacred rest of the Sabbath; that mills which formerly did not begin work until after midnight on Sabbath night have changed their time of beginning to some hours before the close of the Sabbath; and that others begin as early as 4 o'clock on Sabbath afternoon.

"We find that the cause assigned for this is increased competition, created mainly by one firm, which has uniformly operated its works during a part of the Sabbath; that many manufacturers deplore the Sabbath labor; and that the workmen in large numbers regard it as an infringement of their sacred rights."

The cause assigned is increased competition. Here the lame excuse of "necessity" is not even brought forward. The American firms have got beyond that elementary stage, and come out boldly for "profit." The working men, and the churches in Canada have here an object lesson. From small and apparently reasonable beginnings, great advances are rapidly made in matters controlled by money considerations rather than by conscience. "Necessity" was urged in the Merritton Carbide case, although the Magistrate's analysis of the evidence showed clearly that no necessity existed at all. The beginnings of such encroachments are to be watched closely, and stubbornly opposed. Let us value highly our Sabbath laws and stand loyally for their enforcement; improve upon them where necessary, and so use them that the public mind shall be educated to their necessity and to true sympathy with their object.