

dogma do not impassion men as they did three centuries ago. Popular movements which were possible in the middle ages would fall flat to-day. The crusades would not be popular now. Times have changed. Sentiment has weakened. Dogma has fought and won its battles. Even in the Protestant Church there is a disinclination to fight over dogmatic questions. It is felt by many that Christianity is more a matter of life and conduct than a mere matter of dogma. And enlightened Roman Catholics are sharing this view. A dogma more or less to a church which has so many already does not make much difference. Hence the universal acceptance of the dogma of the Pope's infallibility after the subsiding of a few ripples of discontent.

To many French Roman Catholics, Protestantism is Christianity with a few less dogmas than Romanism. Why make a fuss about it, they say. Why encounter the ill-will of the masses and the anathemas of the church for the sake of such a small matter? We are agreed on the Divinity of Christ, and that being the main question, we are satisfied. Thus reason some of the foremost Roman Catholics. As the others become more enlightened, they will reason likewise, and many will be satisfied to stay where they are.

#### PROGRESS OF FREE THOUGHT.

Apart from this, free-thought is making headway among the French people. It is safe to say that among the liberal professions a large number of men are no longer Roman Catholics in the strict sense of the term. They have thrown overboard the cumbersome baggage of Romish superstitions and vain ceremonies. They have built for themselves a religious system which satisfies their conscience, while it does not bring them into open antagonism with the church. But they go no further, because if they did they know full well that their bread supply would be cut off. Needless to say that they are not the stuff out of which Protestants are made in a hurry.

But beside these reasons which antagonize the belief in the speedy conversion of the French-Canadians, there is another reason, universal in its application and stated by the Master Himself to explain a still greater unbelief: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It is even so now. The call to a holy life is heard by many. It is heeded by few. The worldly-minded, the selfish, the self-seeking, the grossly immoral,

are in no hurry to welcome principles which antagonize their beliefs and condemn their conduct. The statement that large numbers of French-Canadians are coming to Protestant ministers, beseeching them for light is not warranted by facts.

Such things occur in France, where whole communities, headed by their mayor, ask that a preacher of the Gospel be sent to them. But in the Province of Quebec such popular movements do not occur as yet. There is no such hunger and thirst after righteousness. The great bulk of the population seek an easy way of salvation through bodily exercise rather than through Godliness. They wish to be saved, but it must be through the manipulations of the priest, the sacraments, the extreme unction, rather than through the living faith in Christ, working out a perfect character, fruitful in good works. It is true that there is a spirit of enquiry among the French people, that our missionaries find more numerous openings and a more cordial reception, and that is hopeful, but the field is not yet ripe for a wholesale harvest.

#### OUR DUTY.

But whether the French people accept the Gospel in a body or one by one, our duty is clear: "Go and preach the Gospel." If we neglect to do so, our condemnation is equally plain: "Woe is me if I do not evangelize!" The seer who has visions and does not prophesy will cease to have visions, and the gift of prophecy will be taken away from him. The church which has life and neglects to impart it will die of paralysis.

It is not whether we have few or many converts, but whether, having the light, we put it under a bushel or let it shine. We have the Gospel, let us make it known, and when its leaven has leavened the whole lump, as it is bound to do, when the French-Canadians have broken their shackles and entered into the freedom of the children of God, the French problem, solved by the Gospel, will be no more. Quebec, now at a standstill, will move forward. At one with her sister Provinces on religious ground, she will gradually see eye to eye with them on all matters of social progress, education and public morals. A mighty fraternal bond will unite divergent elements, and weld into a powerful nation the two races which God has brought face to face in this Dominion. Let us work to that glorious end. God has given us the seed, let us sow it and trust Him who giveth the increase.