

which may justly be deemed accurate : The feeble flock of the day of our Lord's Ascension, numbering only a few hundred, is now represented by a mighty host of 400,000,000 souls.

In the early part of the first century, there was everything from a human standpoint to discourage, and little to cheer the infant Church of Christ. At that time with the exception of the Holy Land, and a few isolated places, the whole world was pagan. From the Emperor on his throne to the labourer in the field, all the learned and all the unlearned, all the rich and all the poor, every city, town and hamlet, every stronghold and every interest, all were on the side of heathenism. The Magi from the East had asked, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews"? Christ was a King, but of all the Kings then ruling in the world, none seemed so weak as He whose throne was forever and ever; of all sceptres His apparently the feeblest which held sway over no empire, at least of which the world took cognizance, and whose followers seemed to inherit no other legacy than the bitter hostility of the Jew, the sneer of the Greek and the haughty contempt of the Roman.

If we contrast the state of the world as it then was with the position of affairs to-day, we shall see how much the Church has to gladden her heart and make her take fresh courage from the past. In this year of grace, before Him, who when He was on earth had not where to lay His head, two mighty continents with all their busy millions bow down and call Him Lord, and He who once was despised and rejected of men is to-day "worshipped in cities more splendid than Ephesus and in empires more vast than that of Rome." The relative position, moreover, of these things towards Him whose Kingdom was not of this world, is also marvellously changed ; their pomp and empire have all passed away ; their graves, like those of a household, lie side by side in the great cemetery of the forgotten past, but this King has grown ; each century has spread new glories at His feet, until at the present hour, after nearly nineteen hundred years, He is the mightiest of all—sole King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In the first century the world scorned to notice Him ; to-day its lords and rulers bow their heads and own Him infinite and supreme.

Encouragement comes also to the Church from the manifested power of the Gospel in overcoming the fiercest and most intractable savages of the earth, and in making them the lowly followers of the blessed Saviour. Barbaric nations once supposed absolutely incapable of feclamation are to-day found among the professors of Christ's name,