

neath. The Divine command is the imperative injunction of the Redeemer Himself:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and the heart-rending cry is that deep groan, which, whether coming from Mohammedans, Hindoos, Buddhists or the utter heathen of barbaric lands, represents the despair of 973,000,000 of human beings.

The encouragement which the state of the world to-day affords to the Church to persevere in her holy work of advancing the cause of Christ among the nations who know him not, is great and manifold. It is summed up in the following statement, gathered from statistics 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 Jews, 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 reclamation, are to-day found among the professors of Christ's name, and illustrating in their lives the power of Divine truth. The hymns of Heber, Wesley and Newton, are now sung, not only in the splendid Churches of Europe and America, but Hindoos and Mohammedans have caught them up on the sunburnt plains of India; Fiji and New Hebrides Christians have re-echoed them amid the islands of the Pacific, while Mongols in China, and Africans on the shores of the great Nyanza have learned their sweetness, and with glad hearts sing them now afresh into the listening ear of God.

Instead, therefore, of being discouraged, the Church should rejoice, and, gathering confidence from the triumphs of the past, go forth with renewed energy and faith to hasten the coming of her Lord. And what if some oppose the work of Foreign Missions, and say, like the spies returned to Kadesh, that difficulties are insuperable, walls too high, and giants too many, expect success; let us not be depressed, but, on the contrary, let us say, "O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that Thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them." Let us, like Joshua and Caleb, still the people, infuse a brighter hope and more trustful courage; remembering that He who has commanded His Church to preach His Gospel to every creature, is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

Lastly, the triumph of Missions will be forever secured in that glorious hour when God will take the stone which the builders refused and make Him the head of the corner. When type and sign and prophesy shall all be fulfilled, and when Christ shall be at the head, not only of those who to-day constitute the heathen, but sole Lord of all the earth; the one crowned King from pole to pole.

The Church here in Canada has done well in the great cause of Foreign evangelization. By means of her Mission Board she has made the dissemination of the Gospel among the heathen part of her very existence and system. Internal development and external progress both demand and receive her constant solicitude and care. The Board, therefore, in appealing now to you seeks to enlist the sympathy and gain the hearty support of all our members in the