

ness of the destiny and filled our hearts with the sense of a mission. It is absolutely true that no country can be great that does not recognize its destiny. No country can be really prosperous that does not feel that it has got a mission intrusted to its care. If we rejoice in the extension of our empire, if we rejoice in the extension of our commerce, if we look forth with pleasure upon our countrymen in their wanderings abroad, let us remember the great responsibility that that imposes upon us. We are bound to see not only that the exterior things of civilized life are carried with them abroad, but that that most important possession of any people should be taken with them—that is, the ideas upon which our national life is founded. Remember that there is only one thing that we can give to another, and that is the principles that animate our own life. You may test that yourself. Is not that the case in private life? Is not that the case in your relationships with those with whom you come in contact? Do not you feel increasingly that the one thing you can give to your brother is a knowledge of the principles upon which our own life rests? It is assuredly the most precious possession that you have. It is assuredly the one that is most easily communicated, and if you have not given those with whom you have intercourse that, then assuredly you have given them nothing. That is the principle which must animate our Missionary enterprise largely. It is absolutely necessary to tell the people of the world what we English are, what our life is founded upon, what are the principles that animate our endeavors. I we have not made that clear to them then we are simple intruders. Then we are mere wanderers of a moment with no abiding resting-place because we have no abiding purpose. Our history can only last, our rule can only last, our civilization can only be beneficent, if it is thoroughgoing, if it is complete, if it is shown forth in all its real meaning and in all its genuine strength. It is in the Mission-field that that truth comes home more forcibly than anywhere else. We cannot for a moment doubt that national life is indubitably founded upon national religion—upon that and upon nothing else but that. In the Mission-field missionaries find—and Englishmen of every kind and sort find—that they can really have any communication that leads to anything with the peoples of other lands only if they talk to them about religion. Only as they understand their religion, whatever it may be, and only as they strive to put their own religion before the people with whom they talk, only so do they bridge over in any appreciable degree that chasm of race differences and conflicting interests which in this imperfect world keeps the various tribes of the human family apart. It

is only by reaching our hands across those gulfs in the strength of the brotherhood of man revealed in Christ Jesus that we become one with any other people. The great binding power, the great civilizing power of the world, must be the Gospel of Christ. Just for a moment contrast Christianity with other forms of religious belief. All other forms of religious belief have been more or less powerful in producing a certain type of national character. Look for a moment at Islam. Why did Islam succeed so far as it did succeed, and why has Islam afterwards so entirely failed? Islam succeeded because it put before the peoples of the East a possible ideal of life, tolerably easily realizable in accordance with their own manners and customs. It took them, it caught them, and they accepted it, and they set forth and embodied in their national life just that type of character which it presented. As soon as they had realized that once and set it forth they stopped, and they have stopped ever since; and there has been no progress, no opening forth of new aspirations, no struggling after new powers, no progress, political, moral, social, or intellectual. When a type of character is once realized, and when institutions are once formed, there follows the deterioration that comes from gradual degeneracy. Why does Christianity differ from all other religions? Because it contains an ideal which is unlimited, as it holds forth the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one object upon which men's eyes should be fixed, a Person Who is continually expanding, a Person Who more and more fills up the full meaning of the word, a Person Who more and more is seen to be the Way and the Truth and the Life, the one way, the whole truth, and the everlasting life of men. It is for that reason that we Christians are the progressive peoples of the earth. It is for that reason that we believe in our civilization, it is for that reason that we feel that we have something to convey to others, because our life is unlimited, because our life has no bounds for its aspirations, because at the bottom of all that we do there is the animating spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon Whom the eyes of the best men are fixed. The efforts of the best men penetrate the community and raise the spirit of men even without their knowledge, or it may be sometimes against their will, pointing out to them an unlimited field of progress, urging them on to new aspirations and enlarged fields of endeavor. That message of perpetual progress, that message calling mankind evermore onward and upwards it is our duty to carry throughout all the world. It is in that hope, it is for that purpose, that we are met here to-night. God help us and strengthen us that we may do His work while it is called to-day!