

much to say that the system of lakes in the centre of the Dark Continent is as well known as the magnificent lacustrine chain which forms such an important feature in the physical geography of our own country; but the time is not far distant when even that will be true.

These explorations, however, which have stripped the Nile of the mystery with which it had been invested during the course of the ages, have invested it with a new and far deeper interest. They have opened up another great field in which the problem of civilization is to be wrought out. It is the perception of this fact which causes philanthropic men everywhere to watch with so much solicitude the fate of Gordon, and the success of the Expedition, under the command of the gallant Wolseley, in which so many of our own countrymen are bearing a part. They see in it more than the rescue of one brave man, or of ten thousand men; they discern in it the laying of the foundation for a new and better order of things. The slave trade, with all its attendant horrors and abominations, is to be cut up by the roots. The inalienable rights of men—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—are to be asserted and vindicated; and this is to be done for the subject as well as for the ruling races.

The Church sees, or ought to see, even more than this in the drama which is being played in the valley of the Nile; it discerns, or ought to discern in it, the opening of another great field for missionary enterprise; another call to heroic and self-sacrificing effort for the subjection of the world to the dominion of Christ. It was the conviction that he was preparing the way for the spread of the Gospel that sustained Livingstone in his labours and sufferings during his protracted and heroic efforts to lay bare the heart of Africa. There is good reason to believe that Gordon has been supported by a similar conviction, during all the dreary months that he has been shut up in Khartoum. It has been the settled belief that he is a factor in the accomplishment of the Divine purpose in respect to this vast equatorial region and the millions of its inhabitants. It is the conviction, too, that gives special interest, in our mind, to the fact that some of our own countrymen have the honour of taking part in the Expedition ostensibly for the relief of Gordon and the garrison at Khartoum, but having for its ulterior object, as we believe—whether so intended by its projectors or not—the accomplishment of a far more important purpose.