

mate? Eternity alone will disclose the ruin to the thousands and thousands of bodies and souls of those amongst whom these practices have been carried on by members of so-called Christian nations—carried on by those who ought to have been the protectors and the friends and the saviors of the heathen to whom they went. The indirect results have been no less fatal. What might not the progress of the gospel of Christ have been among the nations of the earth had that gospel been commended and enforced by the lives of those who profess to be Christians? What can more effectually have barred its advance and have stayed its progress? I must allude here, for one moment, to a challenge thrown down to you by the world. It is not often needful nor wise to pay much heed to what the world says about Christian work. Yet at times it is necessary, and I wish to draw your attention to the utterances of *The Times*, which, in a leading article dealing with your Conference, spoke the other day in these words:—

“Criticism cannot express itself as altogether contented with the amount of ground which has been annexed. . . . Before the promoters of missionary work can expect to have greater resources confided to them they will have to render a satisfactory account of their trust in the past. Their progress, it is to be hoped, is sure; indisputably it is slow. A Congress like the present would be better employed in tracing the reasons for the deficiency in quantity of success than in glorifying the modicum which has been attained. . . . The cause marches at a pace which, unless it is registered by the enthusiasm of Exeter Hall, appears little more than funereal. . . . For eyes not endowed with the second sight of the platform, the principal citadels of heathendom continue to flaunt their banners as before. If some people profess to believe that they hear too much of foreign missions, the explanation is that they see too little of their results.”

“I think that demand is a fair one, and that we are right in answering the challenge. The world asks, Why have you not accomplished more? It says: ‘Trace the reasons for your want of success, instead of talking about what you have done.’ We have come together for that purpose to-night. Whilst in the spirit of self-judgment and true humility before God for our well-known shortcomings in enthusiasm, in zeal, in self-denial, in prayerfulness, in effort, we declare before the world that, foremost, perhaps, amongst the causes which have hindered the progress of the gospel of Christ in heathen lands, have been the three practices which we desire to hear denounced to-night. How could it have been otherwise, when wherever the missionary has pitched his tent the rum merchant has sent his barrels, so that we have gone to the heathen in certain lands with the Bible in one hand and the rum-keg in another. What can those people have thought of the character of the Christianity which thus presented itself to them? How can we wonder that the gospel makes small progress? With our cannon balls and bayonets we have forced the introduction of opium into China, and, alas! taught the population to grow the drug itself in order to oust our Indian products, thereby inflicting upon them irretrievable injury. What can that people think of the Christianity that came to them in that guise? And, again, when upon the defenseless, uneducated female population of India, a Christian government has fastened the horrible diabolical system to which allusion must be made to-night, and enforced it with all the tremendous weight of its authority; when side by side with the chaplain and the church has been the Government brothel, how can we wonder that there, in India, they have laughed at our Christianity, and cast contempt upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ? If the world taunts the missionary enterprise with its little progress, and says, ‘Find out the reasons for your lack of success,’ we can indeed say, with all self-judgment as regards our own shortcomings, ‘These practices, carried out by Christian nations, and authorized and enforced by so-called Christian governments, have much to bear of the blame for our want of success.’ It is our business to-night to lift up our voices, and that with no bated breath;