

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION.

FROM AN ADDRESS BY THE LORD BISHOP OF RIPON.

In addressing a meeting of the Church Missionary Society, the Bishop of Ripon, in an eloquent address, said that he wanted to point out that in looking back over the history of the world, and in looking at it, as we had of late years been led to do, in what might be called the more scientific way than we imagined our forefathers were wont to do, we were disposed to test things by their powers of lasting, or their powers of survival. It was certainly very remarkable that in the race and conflict of various religions, Christianity had spread in the way it had done, and proved its adaptability to all the varying needs of all the various races of mankind. It had been argued by one writer that if we were to take that simple truth of the survival of the fittest and apply it to some of the maxims of the Gospel strange and unexpected results would be reached. For instance, it was said there was no maxim so unlikely to survive as the maxim which lay at the very heart of Christianity, that we should by love serve one another. At the time it received utterance, either at the lips of our Lord when he spoke of the duty of loving our neighbour as ourselves, or as uttered in the various forms by His followers after, no maxim was less likely to make its way among the men of that day. The whole spirit and attitude of the world was in antagonism to it. The world was at that age as much given over, or he ventured to think more given over, to the spirit of selfishness and hardness than it had been since. Rome, according to the ideas of many people—and he was not quoting that with reference to Pagan Rome, or from the standpoint of Christianity, or of its art and culture—"Rome," said one, "has never been anything more than *amor* read backwards." The whole idea of Rome was hostile to love, and while Rome governed the world it was unlikely that that maxim of Christ would prevail. But we had lived to see it prevail not only in the minds and hearts of Christian men, but accepted by those who did not accept Christianity, and who were quite willing to base their code of conduct upon what they were pleased to call altruism, which was nothing more than the Latin form of expressing belief that Christ was right when He said we were to serve one another. If love was viewed from the standpoint of evolution, it would be said, here is a thing which is unfit to survive, but which by marvellous circumstances had survived. If that was accepted as a scientific fact, we must come to the conclusion that because it was fit to survive, and though it did not look fit to survive, yet it had something in which the world thought it ought to recognise, and it had the power which enabled it to live on through the change of changing centuries. They knew why that principle had the power of surviving. They fondly believed that the reason it survived was because love was at the root of the universe, and our Lord declared not merely a principle of religion, as it might be judged, but a principle of eternity, when He said that "God so loved the world." That love was the root of all the conception and orderings of the universe at the hands of Him whose name was Love.

The culture, the civilisation of the world, was in the hands preeminently of Christians nations. Dr. Livingstone pointed out that it was of the greatest moment that the Christian missionary could now go out, and could address the various audiences of different lands from the standpoint of the highest cultivation which now belonged to Christian people. From Dr. Livingstone's point of view the missionary would have been at a greater disadvantage if he had belonged to a barbarous race, or if he had been a Chinaman it would have been difficult for him to argue his religion in the presence of those who had the culture and civilisation of the present day in Europe. Here was one of the measureless advantages of the combination of Christian creed and civilisation. There were some people who were content to say that the fittest would always survive, and it might be allowed, therefore, that everything which was fit would survive, and it might be left to the slow evolution of circumstances, and that if Christianity was the fittest religion, Christianity, no doubt, would survive. We sometimes cheated ourselves by phrases. In dealing with material things, he granted that it must be expected that the fittest would survive; but in dealing with the organisation which we called men and women, when we remembered that their fitness or otherwise depended upon their possession of the qualities which were within their power to possess, then the question of evolution was not to be treated as if it were a mere figure on a black-board, but it was to be treated the way in which all the best and noblest evolutions of the civilised world had taken place: they were not due to causes outside the power of co-operation of human energy; they did not evolve of themselves, but they evolved because of the dominating energy of the people who determined that they should succeed. And thus with the evolution of civilisation; we were cheating ourselves by phrases if we imagined that it meant the evolution of a certain machine which went on and nobody could help what resulted. Evolution was only a word for *process*, and the process in that case, as in the case of culture, and progress, and civilisation, was a process largely in human hands. One part in the evolution of civilisation in Europe was that one day the men of Marathon stood confronting the hordes of Persia, and the energy they displayed was one of the factors of victory. We talked of the evolution of the drama from the rudest forms, in which it was mere gesture and dancing, up to the most elaborate spectacle which might be seen in London. It was evolution, but it was evolution which was due to intelligence, to energy, and to devotion and thought. They would betray themselves if they imagined that any of the advantages of the world could be carried on if they sat down and folded their hands. It was not thus that victories were won, and it was not thus that civilisation advanced. God had ordered that the faith of Christ was to be spread abroad, and it was because men had the spirit which said "We love not our lives to the death" that the evolution of Christianity had taken place. If then aphorism underlying Christianity was "By love serve one another," behind it was wisdom which was greater than aphorism; it was the love of God that constrained them. There was a wonderful energy which was not of

men, because it was a power which was of God Himself, constraining with the force of His own love all the energy of humanity, and making out of those men of Galilee those Apostles baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire who were the pioneers of Christianity, and, therefore, the founders of modern civilisation. Therefore, however much we might read our Bibles and believe it was true that the knowledge of God would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, yet that did not exonerate us from being among those who shared the energy, care, and thought in that work; and though a benediction had been handed down from the past, the human and the Divine were related, and it was only when there was movement in the heart of man of the power which was not his own, because it was of God, would he move forward and take his share, and play his part in that great work to which God by Christ had called him.

THE PRIESTLY ATTIRE.

The Bishop earnestly desires the clergy of the diocese in all their ministrations, parochial or extra-parochial, in missions, at funerals, marriages, and baptisms, at services in private houses, at cemeteries or on public occasions—in short, whenever they exercise in public or in private their priestly office—to wear without fail their priestly vestments. In no other way can we so fully, openly, and persistently indicate before those not accustomed to our ways our priestly claims, our apostolic position, and our recognition of the Church's rule and law. The few gathered at mission services naturally resent the omission of these distinctive features of our ministerial dress. They feel that they are not regarded as of sufficient account to warrant the use of the priestly vestments, never left aside as they well know in the parish Church or before the larger congregations. They are quick to notice this lack of due consideration, and they are repelled from the Church and often made inimical to it by this thoughtless disregard of their expectations and their wishes. We win none by this concealment of our well-known practices. As little can we beguile men to the Church by hiding our distinctive principles and teachings as hope to introduce the Church into communities by ministering in our every-day attire, as the members of the religious bodies around us do. We deceive no one. We only handicap our own efforts to do men good. The moral effect of our official garb is of itself a help rather than a hindrance to our success. We at least show to those to whom we are striving to bring the Church that we are both honest and open in our efforts to reach them. It is not merely to cover the changeful fashions of the world that we use surplice and cassock, stole and cap. It is because we would claim by our very attire whenever engaged in priestly ministration that we are priests of the Church of God.—*Iowa Churchman*.

If you have not found out that Christ crucified is the foundation of the whole volume, you have hitherto read your Bible to very little profit; your religion is a heaven without a sun; an arch without a key stone; a compass without a needle; a clock without a spring or weights; a lamp without oil. It will not comfort you; it will not deliver your soul from hell.—*Bishop Ryle*.