

ART. IV.—MAX MÜLLER AND HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

THE publication of the "Life and Letters" of the late Professor Max Müller has revived again the recollection of the time when, about forty years ago, his appointment to the Professorship of Sanskrit was successfully opposed. That one so eminently qualified did not secure his election was due partly to his foreign birth and partly to his religious views. Born at Dessau in 1823, the son of Wilhelm Müller, the German poet, he first settled at Oxford in 1848. He was at an early age noted for his Sanskrit attainments, and was engaged upon the publication of the "Rig-veda." Between 1848 and 1860, the year of the election, three volumes of this work appeared. Two other Sanskrit works he had translated before this, and in 1859 he produced a volume on "Ancient Sanskrit Literature." Under these circumstances there must have been a very strong feeling at work to bring about the result of the election of 1860 when Monier-Williams was the successful candidate. In spite of the support of Dr. Pusey and Dr. Macbride, with other names of weight in the religious world, the votes of non-residents prevailed. To all who knew Max Müller, he was perfectly qualified as an English scholar, as well as an unrivalled authority on the subject of Sanskrit. But prejudice had its way, and the fear of "Germanizing" in religion was, no doubt, at that time very strong. The fact of his German nationality was equally prejudicial to his cause, and when he was brought into competition with an old Oxford man his election was hopeless. No one can doubt, after reading his life, that his personal religion was strong and fervent. He was a devout Communicant in his adopted Church of England. He professed at all times a very earnest devotion to the Person of our Lord, and it may be thought strange that any objection could be felt to him on religious grounds, especially when the object of the Professorship was not distinctly concerned with Christianity. But the perusal of his "Life and Letters" furnishes us with a clue to the strong opposition with which he met. In the first place, he appeared in England under the patronage of Bunsen, who was regarded as a leader in Neology, and in that treatment of Holy Scripture with which we are now more familiar. It was also, we must remember, the year of the appearance of "Essays and Reviews." It is true that Max Müller had already in 1854 been appointed Professor of Modern Languages, but this post was in the hands of the Curators of the T aylorian Institution, not of the University, and the subject did not suggest any connection with religion. In the second place, we gather from his subsequent career that his

sympathies were largely with the leaders of Unitarian thought in this and other countries. His intimacy with Emerson, Renan, Moncure Conway, Réville, and Jowett, his support of Keshub Chunder Sen and Bishop Colenso, showed the bent of his theological views, and might well excite the suspicions of the orthodox. In fact, when we consider his origin and nationality, and the tendency of religious thought in Germany at that time, we are almost driven to conjecture that, but for his migration to England and his reception at Oxford, which led to his naturalization and communion with the Church of England, Max Müller would have taken his place among the typical German scholars of the advanced school, who are still regarded with dislike by English Churchmen. In the atmosphere of a German University his ardent religious feelings (more German than English in their sentimental expression) would probably have cooled down, and without the support derived from Church fellowship, such as he found and valued so highly in this country, he would never have retained, as he did, the interest in Christian missions, for which he was remarkable. It may, we think, be safely said that to his English environment he owed in great measure the faith he possessed, while, at the same time, he derived advantage as a scholar from being removed from the severe competition of rivals of his own race. In the last place, when we read the concluding portion of his life, and are informed of some of his actual religious opinions on Christian doctrine, we see at once what he lacked to commend him to the support of loyal English Churchmen. It was not merely upon such abstruse points as the meaning of the word *Logos* as applied to Christ that he shrank from the fulness of the Catholic faith; but upon such elementary truths as the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and Ascension, he appeared to hold views which were plainly inconsistent with a belief in the statements of the Gospels and the Apostles' Creed. In the letter written by his parish clergyman upon the subject of Max Müller's religious views (ii., 435-438); we see plainly how completely he based his faith upon the Person of our Saviour, in independence of the miraculous element and of ecclesiastical authority. "The story of the Nativity he held to be the inevitable form which belief in the Divine Sonship would assume as soon as that belief became widely spread and popular." He thought "that the Resurrection was possibly a temporary resuscitation." He did not "conceive of the Ascension as a physical ascent through space, but a change which came over the Apostles' idea of Christ after His bodily presence had been withdrawn. This change consisted chiefly in their spiritual enlightenment as to the nature of Christ's Person and doctrine." It is

evident that these notions are absolutely subversive of the foundations of our belief in the Incarnation, in the Resurrection Body, and in the abiding presence of our Lord in heaven in His human nature. Death, after all, must sooner or later have claimed Him as its prey, and it is hard to see how, after the terrible experience of the Cross, He could have appeared again as He did, or how, if He remained on earth, He could have sanctioned the delusion as to His Resurrection, which the Apostles on this supposition cherished.

Enough has been said, we think, to show that the suspicions entertained of the Professor had a very real foundation, and though we may not see how they should interfere with his efficiency as a teacher of Sanskrit, any more than similar suspicions affected Jowett as a teacher of Greek, yet we can understand the preference which was shown by the wider constituency of the University for one who was free from any charge of unorthodoxy. It was not as if Max Müller did not introduce religion into his teaching. He was eminently a religious man; he lost no opportunity of proclaiming his sympathy with religious effort; he took a deep interest in Indian missions; he was the promoter of the great publication "The Sacred Books of the East," and the founder in this country of the science of comparative religion. It was, therefore, natural that, in any contest in which he engaged, his religious views should be called in question, and though in 1860 he had not developed them to such an extent as he did afterwards, yet the germ was there, and the germ was prophetic of the future growth. Among his last words, written to an Indian friend in 1899, we find remarks disparaging all ecclesiastical institutions, even Baptism, and casting discredit upon the use of the word *atonement*. While he upholds the Gospels as the only trustworthy record of Christ's teaching and mission, yet, as we have seen above, he brings himself to deny their plain meaning. Nor must we omit to mention the favour and encouragement which he showed to Mr. Beeby's book, "Creed and Life," in which a beneficed clergyman attacked some of the articles of the Creed (ii. 372).

We now come to a very important point on which Max Müller was considered an authority, and in which he was always taking a prominent part as a critic—viz., Christian missions in India and the East. His knowledge of these parts of the world was, it must be remembered, entirely derived from a study of ancient literature, and from the acquaintances which he formed with those natives of India who visited him in England, and who were, of course, select and favourable specimens of the Indian races. Had Max Müller ever visited India, and spent any time among the natives in their own

land, had he enjoyed the advantage of seeing their religion as there displayed, of knowing well the character of the people as a whole, and especially of the lower classes, we cannot doubt that he would have considerably modified his estimate of the Indian character, and his judgment as to the methods adopted for Christianizing them. We are much struck by his warm refusal to accept the almost universal opinion as to the deceit and corruption found among the Hindoos. All missionaries and all civil servants have brought home the impression that untruthfulness is sadly prevalent, that a very low moral standard prevails, and that perjury in the courts of law is invariably rife. We, too, many of us, know by experience that this habit of untruthfulness spreads among those Europeans who have been born in that country and have been brought up under native influence. So completely has this idea been rooted in our minds that Max Müller's denial of it strikes us very forcibly. But when we remember that his intercourse and correspondence was only with picked specimens of the Indian races, and that he had no personal knowledge of the country, we see that his opinion on this subject cannot outweigh the united testimony of those who have spent years in India, and who have mixed with men of all classes. The article in the April number of *The East and the West*, by the Bishop of Lahore, upon "The Moral Tone of India," may be cited as a specimen of the evidence which is available on all hands for the usual estimate of the natives of India.

This lack of personal knowledge invalidates also his authority upon mission work. It is not merely that he lacks the dogmatic clearness of view and sound appreciation of Christian doctrine necessary for a missionary, but he greatly underrates the need of renewal in heart and mind which is apparent among the natives of the East. His estimate of their religious system is derived, not from their rites and ceremonies as they are to-day, but from the pages of their ancient religious books, which are known only to a few among themselves, and which contain theories and maxims from which the popular religion has completely diverged. His friends, who, more enlightened than their fellows, emerged from idolatry and sought a purer creed, and who represented various movements towards a pure Theism, combined with more or less of Christian teaching, were to him the representatives of India, along with the learned Brahmins, who appreciated his knowledge of their sacred books, and revered him as one of themselves. He, accordingly, would dispense with the usual methods of propagating Christianity, would tone down much that was likely to offend, would discard

institutions sacred from their antiquity, and seize upon points in the theory of Indian religion having an affinity with Christian thought, and instead of converting the Hindoo, and making him a member of the Church, would rather join with him in establishing an Indian form of Christianity, creedless in character, of which the only necessary ingredient would be a personal devotion to Christ. There is a want of depth and thoroughness about all his letters on this subject which is not compensated for by the warm personal interest which he takes in his Indian correspondents and his own genuine religious feeling. One cannot wonder that his appearance on a missionary platform was rather alarming to many who had practical experience of heathenism, and of the deep corruption and low moral standard found existing in our Eastern Empire. Our missionaries always welcome criticism, but it must be criticism founded, not upon theories, but on practical experience, and Max Müller's experience was even less than that of the globe-trotter, who is so ready to sit in judgment upon missionary methods.

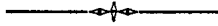
Nor was it only in Indian affairs that his judgment ran counter to those of men on the spot. In China his condemnation of the conduct of some mission agents was grounded upon an absolute ignorance of the actual condition of affairs in that country (see Stanley Smith's "China from Within").

We do not feel able to follow Max Müller in the speculations into which his Gifford Lectures led him on the real meaning of *Logos* as applied to our Lord. But it is evident that he was anxious to make out (though he failed to do so) that the early Christian philosophers, such as Clement and Origen, used the term without assigning to Christ the fulness of the Godhead. His own preference was for a "*Logos* of manhood, manifested in Christ, making Him the ideal man, the perfect man, or the realization of the thought of man as conceived by God." It is hardly necessary to point out that such an idea falls far short of the teaching of St. Paul's Epistles and of the Nicene Creed, and while we do not refuse to him the respect due to a devout, if imperfectly instructed, layman, we also plainly recognise his deficiencies as a teacher, and his incapacity for successfully criticizing or correcting the methods of those who acted as loyal members of the Church which sent them forth. Max Müller's reputation has in one respect declined during the last forty years. As an authority on philology he has been superseded, though to him belongs the credit of having infused new life into the study of language in this country. Another study, that of comparative religion, is altogether due to his influence. "The Sacred Books of the

East," that vast undertaking of which he was the originator, will always remain a monument of his learning and diligence. His memory will always be cherished by those who knew him as that of a singularly high-minded, affectionate, and laborious student. But his religious views, as distinguished from his religious character, will not, we think, be found to stand the test of time, or to have any value, such as he might have wished them to have, as an *eirenicon* between the ancient faith and modern knowledge.

CARLETON GREENE.

P.S.—Since the above was written a book has appeared, called "The Silesian Horseherd," in which Max Müller's religious tenets are fully set forth. We cannot now enter into a discussion of this work, but it may be safely said that it confirms the view taken above.



ART. V.—THE GROWTH OF PAUPERISM.

I.

THE review of the conditions of pauperism in London, now published annually in the *Times* on December 26, was for last year even more painful reading than usual. As the writer says: "In London to-day the mass of pauperism with which the guardians are dealing has no parallel, in some of its aspects, in the history of the Poor Law." What makes the matter worse is that the increase is, beyond doubt, neither a fluctuating one nor one due to exceptional circumstances. It is, as the figures show, the result of a steady growth. Taking the last five years, the figures for each December, showing the number of persons in receipt of relief in the Metropolitan area, have risen steadily from 103,184 in 1900 to 114,575 in 1903. And with increased number has gone increased cost; which in London (excluding the expenditure of the Asylums Board) rose last year to £3,414,669, being an increase upon the previous year of £214,402. And what is true of London is, we fear, to some extent—at any rate, as far as large centres of population are concerned—true of the rest of the country.

Had we been passing through a period of general and prolonged commercial depression, or had the last few winters been unusually severe, there might have been some valid excuse for this great increase of pauperism. But the actual conditions for some years past have been just the opposite of