

*Vremya* of the supposed murder of a woman by some of the Khlisti at Saratov. Herr Grass, however, has few if any stories to tell of their crimes.

They seem to hold pretty much the same opinions as Tolstoi: the man himself is the temple of the Divinity; his religion is subjective. He is recommended to practise austerities in food and bodily purity. According to some, those who have taken a wife must put her away. Each community seems to have an inspired woman whom they call the Mother of God; the prophet and leader is the Christ. The custom of dancing (*radenie*) till they have worked themselves into a condition of sacred orgasm is a prevailing feature, but this is a development which has been found in many parts of the world, notably among the negroes in America. Singing and dancing are accompanied with a claim to the gift of tongues which is illustrated by many of the stories given by Herr Grass. We must remember that the same thing is part of the ritual of the Irvingites, and may perhaps explain why Irvingism has made considerable progress among the Russians. This fact is not ignored by M. Leroy-Beaulieu in his very comprehensive account of Russian sects. We have often ourselves been struck with the enthusiasm displayed by the Russians for this sect. We knew a woman of high education who had translated into Russian the Irvingite service-book.

As in the previous part of his work, Herr Grass gives us illustrations from many of the Russian hymns and ritualistic poems sung by these sectaries in the midst of their self-inflicted flagellations. The idea of this punishment being a mode of spiritual exaltation is familiar enough to readers of religious movements in the West during the Middle Ages.

The lives of many of these humble votaries, whether male or female, are given by our author. It seems in most cases the same story. In nearly every instance the fanatic has been sent to Siberia or the Caucasus. There is a manly obstinacy, if we may use the phrase, in the pietism of these sectaries. They have almost always been drawn from the ranks of the peasants, although there was a certain movement among the upper classes, in the case of a Mme. Tatarinova, who conducted drawing-room seances at St. Petersburg with religious ecstasies. The meetings were broken up by the order of the Emperor Alexander I. Although, however, these sectaries have so often sprung from the common people, we are struck with the gentleness of some of their doctrines. Thus Tchurkin, one of their teachers, said that to kill cattle, birds, or fish was as great a sin as to kill a man. Because in birds and fishes there is a soul, just as there is in man, only they cannot speak,—but all breathing things praise the Lord, and for every slain beast man will have to make atonement to God. Precisely the same opinions are put forward in the Slavonic version of Enoch, and many readers of Tolstoi will remember similar sentiments in his pages. Let us hope that a gentler treatment will be adopted towards these sectaries. In earlier days, as in the case of the prophetess Afrosinia Ivanova, they were sometimes sent to the stake. We must be grateful to Herr Grass for the valuable facts he has accumulated, for inasmuch as these fanatics do not (to all appearance) use any books, and are many of them grossly illiterate, it is rather difficult to ascertain their opinions.

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## The New Method of Studying the Bible.

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### III.

1. What is involved in the method, and what are the results to which it may lead, if used without the necessary qualifications, which have already been indicated, three recent controversies in Germany may show. The *Babel-Bible* battle has been very hotly waged. Fr. Delitzsch, in a lecture before the German Emperor on 13th January

1902, appealed to the monuments, not, as has been usually done, in support of the traditional views against the Higher Critics, but to justify his denial of the uniqueness of the divine revelation in the Old Testament. He derives from the Assyro-Babylonian literature not only the stories of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, but even the sense of guilt, the decalogue, and the monotheism of the Old Testament; and denies

altogether that there is any divine revelation in the Old Testament. The Higher Critics in Germany have met his contention by insisting on the superiority and uniqueness of the religion of the Old Testament in its distinctive features, while recognizing similarity and even dependence on other religions in some of its lower elements. Some of these critics even insist that this superiority and uniqueness is explicable only by recognizing in it a divine revelation.<sup>1</sup>

2. The demand has been made by Krüger and Wrede that the separate study of the New Testament should be given up, and that the New Testament literature should be treated in connexion with the history of primitive Christianity. The reasons given for this demand are as follows. It is only the doctrine of inspiration that fixes a gulf between the writings in the New Testament and contemporary writings excluded from it. The freedom of historical science must not be limited by the ecclesiastical decision that fixed the canon. We cannot distinguish the literature included in the New Testament as apostolic from all the other, as no such chronological boundary can be fixed. All the canonical literature cannot be separated from the extra-canonical by any judgment of religious value, although the Synoptic, Pauline, and Johannine may be so distinguished. It is only after comparison with all contemporary literature that any such judgment can, from the historical standpoint, be pronounced. The attempt of Ritschl, followed by Harnack, to find the elevation of the New Testament writings in their vital connexion with the Old Testament, and the degradation of the later writings in their subjection to Hellenic influences, must be pronounced a failure. The ecclesiastical interest, which demands this separate treatment, has no right to dictate its methods to science. This procedure has a two-fold pernicious result; it rudely snaps the link between ecclesiastical dogma and the doctrine of the New Testament; and it leaves primitive Christianity inadequately explored, as the extra-canonical writings may throw not a little fresh light on even the canonical. Bousset seeks to relieve the fear that the widening of the field of study will tend to lower the worth of the writings which Christian faith most values, with the assurance that these have an inherent virtue, by which they will main-

<sup>1</sup> Nowack in *Theologische Rundschau*, 1903, pp. 414-430, 461-471.

tain their significance for science as well as for faith.<sup>2</sup> In regard to this contention it may be said that Christian faith has no interest in imposing any arbitrary limits on the study of its origins; but should desire that the study should be as thorough as possible. As long as the canon is maintained in the Church, practical convenience will probably be held to justify the limits hitherto recognized in New Testament introduction, history, and theology, although works disregarding these will appear in the interests of scientific study. What Christian faith will insist on is the supreme value for it, of the bulk, if not altogether the whole, of the New Testament.

3. Niebergall's argument for 'the absoluteness of Christianity,' published in 1901, evoked a criticism by Troeltsch, which for our present purpose has considerable importance. To Niebergall's method, condemned as dogmatic, Troeltsch opposes what he calls the historical method, which he describes in terms altogether in accord with what has already been said. He recognizes that the application of the method carries with it a very serious peril; for 'if religion, including Christianity, is only a play of human representations and necessities, conditioned by time and place, which has its basis only in the sensible world, has no unique goal and no final norm,' where can we get a sure foundation for our religious life? He has, therefore, to allow the following modifications in the application of the religious-historical method to Christianity. (a) He admits that religious psychology reaches in the leading personalities of religious history 'a last fact akin and yet unlike to moral judgment and æsthetic taste, a life of the soul, which reveals the independence, the inner unity, and the originality of religion,' and which consists of 'the original, actual, repeatedly experienced contact with God.' (b) He maintains that in the history of religion we may discover progress, and are led to the conclusion that in Christianity the progress has reached its highest stage. But as in this we are guided by our personal feeling, all we can affirm is that Christianity is relatively the highest religion we can conceive, but not that it is the absolute religion. (c) He holds that all logical, epistemological, and ethical problems point for their solution to the highest unity, an absolute consciousness; and, although this is not the religious conception of God, it

<sup>2</sup> Bousset in *Theologische Rundschau*, 1899, pp. 1-15.

leaves a place in human thought for such a conception. In making these concessions, the truth of religious experience, the worth of personal conviction, the need of a solution of the problem of thought, Troeltsch, as Reischle points out, goes

beyond the limits of the rigidly historical method, and so qualifies his own demand for its exclusive use in Christian theology.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reischle in *Theologische Rundschau*, 1901, pp. 261-275, 305-324.

## The Pilgrim's Progress.

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### The House Beautiful.

THIS is one of Bunyan's most charming conceptions. Its significance and its interest are as strong from the literary as from the religious point of view. The traveller, coming in the dusk of evening to the house from whose door and windows warm lights are streaming, with their offer of rest and hospitality, is one of the pleasantest figures in the poetry of every generation. The old romances are full of such pleasant episodes, and they find echoes in every one of the long list of those who have written of life under the figure of a pilgrim-age or journey.

Such a rest-house, with relief and good fellowship for the tired and solitary traveller, is a symbol that may be very variously interpreted; each writer builds for his own spirit its own house. One of the most beautiful and familiar of modern instances is R. L. Stevenson's 'House Beautiful,' where the lonely cottage on the moor, dreary enough to outward appearance, and unromantic as the plainest life, is glorified by the open eyes of the appreciative spirit by the simple but marvellous work of Nature through the seasons of the year. This, however, is analogous rather to Bunyan's Interpreter's House in one of its broader aspects of spiritual communion than to this, which, as we shall see, has a specialized meaning. Christina Rossetti, in her poem of 'Uphill,' has a weird description of the road that winds uphill all the way, only to end in what Sir Walter Scott, in a similar metaphor, in the 'Lord of the Isles,' calls 'that dark inn, the grave.'

Bunyan's House Beautiful stands, in contrast with the inner spiritual meaning of the Interpreter's House, for the external Church, the Church visible and its membership; and it gives

a peculiarly rich and attractive view of these. In Part III. it is represented as a convent, with much discourse on fasting instead of the feasting of this part. From the *Celestial Railroad* it is omitted altogether, and only referred to with a few scornful jests; the way is so easy that there is no need of rest in that journey, and the Church of Christ is far too old-fashioned for the new religion.

The Church is here seen in its social aspect. It is just by the wayside; not out of the world, a secluded place of dim religious light, shut off for the purposes of mere mystery. It is a home, with the fireside element strongly emphasized, in which we hail as our first view of the Church one which lays its stress on the social side of it, welcoming and genial. The incident stands for the beginning of Christian fellowship, that memorable fact in religious history—memorable not on earth only, but in heaven, for when 'they that loved the Lord spake often one to another,' we are told that a book of remembrance was written. The fellowship also is again that of encouragers. In times of depression, weakness, and regret, the friendly hand of the Church may do much for the saving of a man, and the whole passage is an excellent manual for those who are teaching a class of young communicants.

In the light of this interpretation of the House Beautiful, we see the more precise significance of the events which have immediately preceded. The lions and the loss of the roll represent the difficulties which were and still are felt about entering the membership of the Christian Church. Most serious is the loss of assurance, which in all generations delays the entrance of many. With Bunyan's arbour story, compare Question 172 of the Larger Catechism.

The whole of this brilliant and charming passage