

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

NO. 24.—APRIL, 1893.

I. THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION AS AFFECTED
BY THE ESSENTIAL RELATION BETWEEN
THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE.

Do we think in words? Do we think only in words? Do we always when we engage in thought employ for that purpose language? Is it possible to think fruitfully, to think to any advantage, to think at all in any other way? On the assumption that one can think without words, is it possible to express, even to one's self, to formulate,—to communicate one's thoughts, *i. e.*, convey them intelligibly to others,—through any other medium? Must there not be some medium or vehicle for every form whatever of thought-expression; and must or must not that medium be language?

Some of these and kindred questions are not merely of curious interest, but also of profound significance and consequence, and have accordingly not only awakened the attention and occasioned and stimulated the researches of the great body of philologists and logicians, and the specialists in physiology proper, and of course those in mental physiology and what is now known as physiological psychology, but have also occupied the minds of some of the wisest philosophers and greatest intellects the world has ever seen. But what is still more to the purpose at present, the answers given to some of these questions have an incidental bearing on the inquiry as to the fact and extent of an infallible inspiration.

It will be the aim of this essay to indicate and touch upon the main problems which arise from a consideration of the more important of the interrogatories just referred to, and then to point

VII. NOTES.

THE TRIAL OF PROFESSOR SMITH.

The gravity of the questions which have been at issue recently before the Presbyteries of Cincinnati and New York is indicated by the character and the extent of the interest with which the proceedings have been followed. Of course the accused, whose ministerial standing was at stake, and their presbyteries, whose fidelity to Scripture and to the standards was supposed to be compromised, had the first interest in the result; but in the church at large, communicants as well as presbyters were impressed with a common sense of responsibility. For once at least the arbitrary lines which divide the church were forgotten and its unity was realized in the concern and anxiety which pervaded it throughout. Beyond even these wide limits, that interest spread not only to the various evangelical churches, but to religious bodies of all sorts, and to men who were unattached religiously. Sermons were delivered, addresses were made, interviews were published, all bearing upon the one theme, and presenting, of course, conflicting views, which were more or less coherent and pertinent; while all classes of society freely and copiously commented and criticized, as the stages of the proceedings were passed, one by one.

The only explanation of this genuine popular interest is the instinctive recognition of the gravity of the issue. The busy world cannot pause long for mere questions of ecclesiastical detail; conscientious members of Christian churches find enough ordinarily within their own spheres to absorb their interest and their effort without busying themselves about the progress or the difficulties of sister churches; popular sympathy with those who are at variance with ecclesiastical authority is local and transient; and the only satisfactory explanation of the widespread interest is that the issue really affected all Christian churches alike, and raised questions which even irreligious men had long conceded to be settled forever. The Bible, rather than the men, or the church, was felt to be on trial, and for this reason, the men

supposed to assail it and the church supposed to defend it were brought into a factitious prominence. It was in vain that the accused denied a purpose to impair the authority of the Bible, and that the church denied that that authority could be impaired; it was in vain, that, with some impatience, this widespread interest was deprecated as an interference with the internal affairs of the church: the issue was fixed in the public mind, and it could not be dislodged. How far the public mind was right, will, from one standpoint, be made evident in these pages, which are set apart for a note on the trial of Professor H. P. Smith by the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

That trial was in keeping with the gravity of the interests involved. It continued through eighteen days and covered a month of time. It raised questions of doctrine and the history of doctrine, of exegesis and hermeneutics, of ecclesiastical ethics and jurisprudence. It has left behind it a mass of material¹ that deserves careful study by those who would form a reliable judgment of the issue.

THE HISTORY OF THE CASE.

The occasion of this trial was partly an address delivered by Professor Smith before the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Cincinnati, on March 31, 1891, at its invitation, and in view of the then recent utterances of Professor Briggs. When the invitation was extended to Professor Smith, he suggested that his colleague, Dr. Evans, be included, which was agreed to, and accordingly, on two successive Mondays, the Association listened to Professor Evans, whose paper had been prepared as part of a discussion in Presbytery, "on the

¹The pamphlet *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration* covers one hundred and twenty-six pages and the indictment thirty-one pages octavo; the *Response, Rejoinder and Argument* of Professor Smith, one hundred and sixty-two pages octavo; the preliminary arguments of the Prosecuting Committee, one hundred and fifty-four typewritten foolscap pages; the argument of one member of the committee, on the merits of the case, ninety pages octavo of closely written matter; the minutes of the court, one hundred and eight pages folio. The best report published, that of *The Independent*, extends through seven issues and fills thirty columns, equal to one hundred pages octavo. Just as these pages are finished, a volume appears, entitled *Inspiration and Inerrancy, a History and a Defence*, by Henry Preserved Smith, Professor in Lane Seminary, Cincinnati; Robert Clarke & Co., 1893, pp. 374. It contains, in addition to the writings of Professor Smith referred to above, chapters on "The Situation," "The Occasion," "The Debate," "Action Proposed," in which a full, and, from the author's standpoint, a correct history of the movement which culminated in his trial is given.

relation of the General Assembly to the teaching of Biblical criticism in our theological seminaries," and by courtesy of the Association "delivered there instead of in the Presbytery"; and afterwards, on one Monday, to Professor Smith. These papers were published in a pamphlet, entitled *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, which has reached a third edition. The Presbytery of Cincinnati, on December 21, 1891, adopted a resolution, approving of the action concerning the Scriptures taken by the Assembly, which had been in session at Detroit during the month of May, and appointing a committee "to have this subject under consideration, and report at the next stated meeting what further action, if any, should be taken by this Presbytery."

Parallel with the action of Presbytery and necessary to the history of the case was the action of the Board of Trustees of Lane Theological Seminary, in which for seventeen years Professor Smith has occupied the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis. The Board is a self-perpetuating body and draws its membership from all parts of Ohio and Indiana. It is composed of ministers, elders, and private members of the Presbyterian Church, although it has sometimes elected to membership Congregational ministers. It reports annually to the Assembly, but, like some other seminaries, its relations to the Assembly are not very clearly defined. On March 15, 1892, the Board gave consideration to the "petition" of twenty-six ministers, members of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, which recited the foregoing action of Presbytery, and suggested that the Board "take such action as it deemed wise in the premises, with a view to obtaining the indorsement of the Presbytery and that prosperity to the Seminary which all its friends desire"; and also to a paper, signed by four of the professors, in which they took occasion "to subscribe individually to the foregoing formula,¹ and hereby declare anew our full purpose to observe faithfully all the terms and

¹ In the presence of God and of the trustees of this Seminary, I declare my belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

I receive also and adopt the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.

I likewise approve and engage to support the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States, and to be zealous and faithful in my endeavors to maintain the peace and purity of the church.

And also to qualify those young men who may be under my care, to explain, defend and apply the truths of the gospel.

conditions contained in this covenant, and to teach nothing that is contrary thereto"; and also a communication from the fifth professor, Dr. Roberts, saying that he was ready to take the pledge, *ex animo*, at any time appointed by official authority, adding that the question confronting him as a professor, in connection with the pledge, "is not concerned with the form of words found therein, but with the meaning of said words."

The action of the Board upon these papers was as follows :

"The Board appreciates and heartily commends the desire and purpose of the members of Faculty in the communication just submitted, and in view thereof it is

"*Resolved*, That this Board is fully assured that the obligations expressed in this 'Formula of Inauguration' are, and will be, faithfully recognized by the members of the Faculty, and that nothing is now taught in the seminary, or will be taught in the future, that would tend to impair the faith of the students in the Scriptures as the word of God, or to lessen their loyalty to the system of doctrine and duty embodied in the standards of our church."

Further, it was ordered that copies of this "be furnished members of the Presbytery of Cincinnati." No formal answer to the "petition" appears to have been adopted. In accepting the resignation of Professor Evans the Board resolved, among other things :

"That we also testify our high appreciation of his Christian learning, fidelity and courage as an eminent and conscientious teacher of God's word, knowing as we do his abiding confidence in, and love for, 'the faith once delivered to the saints.'"

About this time, there appeared two newspaper articles, dealing with the question, How much is implied in ordination vows? signed by Professor Smith.¹ These, together with the address referred to above, were the occasion of the trial.

¹ It was privately reported during the progress of the trial that there was no significance in the appearance of these articles at the time at which they were published. The first article was said to have been written months before and to have been held during that time by the editors, so that Professor Smith was himself surprised by its appearance. This report, however, was not confirmed by Professor Smith. The second article was written in answer to criticisms upon the first. Now that the trial is over, Professor Smith breaks his very honorable reserve and says : "None the less have I had occasion to regret the publication of the articles. They were at once seized upon as an attempt on my part to justify myself for remaining in the church after I had consciously departed from its system of doctrine. . . . They gave impetus in fact to the movement in Presbytery, and gave occasion to what was to me the most painful of the charges brought afterward by the prosecution."—*Inspiration and Inerrancy*, p. 175.

The report of the Committee of Presbytery appointed December 21, 1891, was ready at the spring meeting of Presbytery, April 19, 1892, but it was not presented because of the illness of Professor Smith's son; nor at the next stated meeting, June 20, 1892, because of his absence abroad, and also because "Professor Smith may soon place himself in such relation to the Presbyterian Church and its teachings, as will be satisfactory to the Presbytery and the church at large, and thus avoid the necessity for further proceedings." At the stated meeting, September 21st, the report was presented, consisting of two parts, in one of which it was recommended that process be instituted against Professor Smith, and in the other that the endorsement of Presbytery be withheld from Lane Seminary until the teachings of its Faculty were in harmony with the deliverances of the Assembly. The first part of the report was taken up, and after full discussion and by a vote of forty-two to sixteen, a Committee of Prosecution was appointed and directed to present charges and specifications at a meeting of Presbytery to be held October 17th. On that day the committee presented its report, a copy was served upon Professor Smith, and the summons was made returnable on November 14th, all rights under the statute of limitations having previously been waived by him.

THE PROCEDURE.

The contrast between ecclesiastical and secular procedure came out very forcibly during the trial, and there was the usual effort to exalt the latter at the expense of the former, and to reason from what the one is to what the other ought to be. It was, however, soon made clear that secular procedure was as rigorously barred as the procedure of one State would be in the courts of another State. The procedure which is adapted to criminals is not needed among professing Christians, especially among Christian ministers; that which is calculated to dispose of person or property is no guide to that which is designed to affect the conscience and to determine ecclesiastical relations; and that which is necessary in courts whose daily business it is to try cases is not in any sense a standard for courts which sit judicially but once or twice in a generation. The church has never been put to the necessity of constructing an elaborate penal code, and, while the lack of precedents and of authorities is perplexing when a judicial case is before it, that very lack is indirect testimony to the infrequency with which such cases arise. Substantial justice can be secured by the constitutional procedure, and beyond this the church need not go.

The procedure under which the trial was had differed in some important particulars from that which is in force in the Southern Church. The procedure of 1821 remained in the Southern Church until 1879, and in this, until 1884. It would be interesting to trace these variations from a common stock throughout, but it is essential to a fair understanding of this trial that they be noted so far as they bear upon the case. These variations are:

Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.

Presbyterian Church, U. S.

1. *Object of Process.*

§ 4. Nothing which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, or to the regulations and practice of the church founded thereon.

§ 152. Nothing which cannot be proved to be an offence from Scripture as interpreted in these standards.

2. *Proceedings upon Return of Citation.*

§ 22. Objections may be filed to regularity of organization, jurisdiction of judicatory, sufficiency of charges and specifications in form and legal effect. Judicatory determines and may dismiss, or permit amendments.

§ 174. Charges read to the accused if present, who then is called on to say whether he is guilty or not.

3. *Effect of an Expression of Opinion.*

§ 188. Pending the trial, any member expressing an opinion on the merits to either party or to any person not a member of the court is disqualified.

4. *Minutes of the Trial.*

§ 189. "All the testimony" in addition to other items specified by both procedures.

5. *Definition of Censures.*

§ 40. Admonition, rebuke, suspension, [which may issue after one year in] deposition, excommunication.

§§ 156, 158. Admonition, definite suspension, indefinite suspension, deposition, excommunication. A higher censure may be inflicted if a lower fails to reclaim.

6. *Rights of Members in the Higher Courts.*

§ 70 ff. Lost in review and control, complaint and appeal; not lost in reference.

§ 239. Not lost except upon challenge of one or other of original parties, the challenge subject to the vote of the members of superior court who are not members of the inferior.

* 7. *Effect of Appeals.* .

§ 100. Notice suspends proceedings in admonition and rebuke; in other cases judgment in force pending decision of appeal.

§ 255. Arrests sentence, but § 265 continues judgment in suspension, excommunication and deposition.

8. *Order of Appeals.*

§ 102. Generally to judicatory immediately superior.

§ 259. None other than to judicatory immediately superior except by its consent.

9. *Judicial Commissions.*

§ 118. All judicial cases to a judicial commission.

§ 94. May be appointed for any case of trial on appeal.

Consent of parties required.

Composed of others than members of inferior court.

The difference between the two procedures as to the object of process is formal rather than practical, the one coördinating Scriptures and the regulations and practice of the church, the other holding the formularies of the church which contain this practice to be authoritative interpretations of Scripture. The proceedings upon the return of citation under the one are manifestly more specific than under the other, and afford protection to the accused from unjust charges and from irregularly constituted courts, while on the other hand the provision for access of any sentence in the U. S. procedure is an improvement upon the U. S. A. procedure which allows access only in suspension. Under U. S. procedure, appeal to the Assembly from the decision of Presbytery would be impossible. Jurists will, of course, differ in their estimate of these two procedures. Each case must, however, be judged by its conformity to the procedure which governed it, and, by this standard, the trial of Professor Smith was notable for the rigid adherence to the forms and methods prescribed.

This trial served to bring out the fact that many of the precedents found in the various Digests are valuable only as information, having been invalidated by the adoption of the new Book in 1884. They are invalidated also by the adoption of the new Book U. S. in 1879. Thus, in the Craighead case, the Assembly of 1824 laid down certain directions for framing charges. Under the procedure of 1821, these directions were not complied with in the case of Professor Smith, but it was shown that, under the procedure of 1884, these were no longer in force and could not be introduced to sustain objections to the suffi-

ciency of the charges in form and legal effect.¹ Under both of the new procedures, only those precedents are in force which were taken under provisions that have remained unchanged, and where new provisions are introduced no precedents are authoritative, except those made since the procedure was adopted.

THE COURT AND THE PARTIES.

The court was composed of the ministers of Presbytery, except those absent and excused for cause, and the elders who were members of the last stated meeting, except that when these could not attend, substitutes, appointed by sessions, were admitted. The roll showed sixty out of a possible one hundred and twenty, and outside criticism fastened upon this fact. Yet those familiar with the rolls of Presbyteries, at even stated meetings, will not wonder that, at a meeting which was to last for weeks, so many churches were unrepresented.

The court sat as a body of judges, not as a box of jurors; the Moderator was not a foreman but a chief-justice, the result was a decision, not a verdict. The nearest parallel in secular procedure is the Senate of the United States in proceedings of impeachment. The failure to recognize the real constitution of the court gave occasion to various misleading arguments from jury-practice. Thus, although no provision is made in the constitution, an effort was made to exclude three members of the court, on the ground of previously expressed opinions, and failure in this is one of Professor Smith's grounds of appeal; yet, however cordially the propriety of the restraint of such expressions be admitted, it cannot be made, as in jury-practice, a qualification. The provision concerning this in the procedure of the Presbyterian Church U. S. is only "pending the trial." So, unanimity in the decision was not, as in jury cases, essential, but, as often occurs in courts of law, dissent from the majority was recognized. And, further, the court was the judge in all questions of law, order and fact, the decision of the Moderator being always subject to appeal.

The competency of the court has, in some quarters, although not by Professor Smith in the remotest way, been assailed on the ground that ordinary pastors and elders, busy with the practical duties of life, are not qualified to pass upon delicate questions of a literary or linguistic character, and it was even proposed that hereafter questions of this sort be remitted for judicial action to a court composed of spe-

¹The same effort to use the Craighead case was made in the trial of Dr. Briggs, and apparently with more effect.

cialists. The members of the court gave no evidence of an ambition to decide questions beyond their depth, and were apparently conscious of their want of special training, particularly in the mysteries of Higher Criticism; but they felt that they not only might, but, according to their vows, they must decide upon the conformity of these views with the standards of the church. For the church the standards present a rule by which the ever-changing theories of men may be tested as to their relation to revealed truth, and the plain men who make up the body of the ministry and of the eldership are competent to apply this rule, even while they are entirely incompetent to pass opinions on the theories in their scientific and philosophic aspects. If the Scriptures be true and the standards accurately express that truth, nothing which contradicts the standards can be true, however strong the grounds on which it may rest. For the church the Scriptures are true and the standards express that truth, and it is not nearly so difficult to determine the question of conformity to or contrariety with the standards, as has sometimes been supposed; and, further, whether difficult or not, the constitution lays it upon presbyters, and not upon specialists, to decide all questions concerning ministerial standing.

The open-mindedness of the court was manifested in the variations of the votes. On one vote only nine sustained Professor Smith, while on another, forty sustained him; on one vote, seventeen was the number opposed to him, on another, forty-nine were opposed to him; thus making a change of thirty-three. This relieves the court of any appearance, even, of voting blindly either for or against Professor Smith. It assures impartiality.

Of the parties, it must be said that their sincere desire for a righteous decision was unmistakable. Neither side sought undue advantage over the other, nor wasted time on technicalities, and although they occupied many hours of the attention of the court they held that attention because they were believed to be endeavoring to present each his own side in the best possible way. The Committee of Prosecution, appointed by the Presbytery to act in the case, was treated, as is always the case, to popular odium, and various epithets intended to express dislike were applied to its members. It was, however, recognized by the court and by Professor Smith that this committee was acting only in the discharge of duty, and that personally its members were reluctant to take many steps which that duty required of them. The chairman was Dr. McKibbin, pastor of the Walnut Hills Church,

with which the Seminary Church united some years ago, and which is now one of the largest and most influential churches in the Synod. He is a man of most generous impulses and yet of unflinching courage, intrepid in the maintenance of the truth, whose duties in the prosecution involved the sacrifice of many pleasant personal relations. Mr. Lowe, the second member, was formerly a judge on the State bench who, after an honorable and promising career, entered the ministry several years ago and brought with him his judicial habit of mind. Elder Shields was the third member, and his argument upon the case was a happy illustration of the statement made above, that a specialist is not the only one who can grasp the merits of the case from an ecclesiastical stand-point.

Dr. Smith, of course, appeared in the two-fold aspect of the accused and counsel for the accused. For once the old adage was disproved, and the accused had perhaps the very best counsel he could have chosen, for it is impossible to recall an instance in which he failed to take the course most favorable to his client. The court was fortunate, too, in that, if it must try one of its members, that member should prove himself so capable of clear and lucid statement, so careful to confine his argument to the exact point at issue, so free from the influence of the abounding popular sympathy thrust upon him, so devoid of effort to propound his theories of criticism, or to arrogate authority by reason of his special studies. One of the most effective passages in his *Argument* was in reply to a charge of arrogance based upon his statement that "for our present inquiry, the testimony of one exegetical scholar is worth more than that of three systematic theologians." (*Insp. and Iner.* p. 281.) No one who witnessed the calm, dignified, deferential demeanor of Professor Smith can fail to admire the fine mingling of indignation and injured feeling, when he says (p. 11):

"They accuse me of arrogance and contempt of my fellows—pluming myself on my small attainments in scholarship. If this be so, I will ask the pardon of the youngest member of this court. If this be so, I will accuse myself of worse heresy than any the committee have discovered. 'He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.' 'He that receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein.' If there is anything I had supposed myself anxious to avoid it is the pride of attainment. If there is anything I had supposed myself anxious to cultivate it is the habit of viewing things as a believer in Christ, one of his followers, one who sees light in his light. That I have fallen short of my ideal and of yours in this respect I can very well believe. I beg you not to apply to me a standard too high for human attainment."

THE CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS.

The charges and specifications were, at the close of the preliminary argument, amended by the committee with the consent of the court. They are given in full below, except that repetitions of phrases such as "In the pamphlet referred to," etc., etc., with which each specification begins, are omitted. The original form is indicated by the use of brackets, the differences between the two being purely technical.

CHARGE I.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., a minister in said church, and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching (in two articles in the *New York Evangelist*, dated respectively March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892,) "contrary to the regulations and practice of the church founded" on the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in the constitution of said church, that a minister in said church may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said church.

SPECIFICATION I.—He teaches erroneously in the *New York Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, that a doctrinal qualification is only required in the officers of the church at the time of ordination.

SPECIFICATION II.—He teaches erroneously in the *New York Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892, that whether in any individual case the church requires continued adherence to the doctrinal standard received and adopted at ordination is only to be made known by judicial process.

CHARGE II.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., being a minister in said church and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching, in a pamphlet entitled *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful; *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense.

SPECIFICATION I.—In a pamphlet entitled *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, published by the said Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., in different editions in the year 1891, which pamphlet has been extensively circulated with his knowledge and approval, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has asserted [been guilty of asserting] sundry errors of historic fact. (Pages 92, 100, 101 and 102.)

SPECIFICATION II.—He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has suppressed [been guilty of suppressing] sundry historic truths, owing to inability or unwillingness to believe them. (Pages 104, 105, 107, 109.)

SPECIFICATION III.—He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles incorporated into his narrative, and endorsed by his authority, material drawn from unreliable sources. (Pages 101, 103.)

SPECIFICATION IV.—He teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles was so great, that the truth of history therein contained can only be discovered by such investigation, discrimination and sifting as is necessary to the discovery of the truth in histories by uninspired and fallible men. (Page 100.)

SPECIFICATION V.—He teaches the historic unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles to have been such that “the truth of events” cannot be ascertained from what he actually asserts, but from what he unwittingly reveals. (Pages 100, 108, 109.)

SPECIFICATION VI.—He teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles extended to other inspired historic writers of the Old Testament. (Page 102.)

SPECIFICATION VII.—He teaches that the historic unreliability charged by him upon the inspired historical writers of the Old Testament is chargeable, though in a less degree, upon the inspired writers of the New Testament. (Page 115.)

SPECIFICATION VIII.—He teaches that the disclosures of religious experience given by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit, and free from moral defect. (Page 101.)

SPECIFICATION IX.—He teaches that the assertions made by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not to be relied upon as absolutely true. (Page 101.)

SPECIFICATION X.—He teaches that the last twenty-seven chapters of the Book of Isaiah are not correctly ascribed to him. (Pages 95, 96, of pamphlet.)

SPECIFICATION XI.—He specifically affirms the impossibility of the Old Testament Scriptures being free from all error, whether of doctrine or fact [or precept.] (Page 92, cited below.)

CHARGE III.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., a minister in said church, a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in a pamphlet entitled *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, while alleging that the Holy Scriptures are inspired, and an infallible rule of faith and practice, with denying in fact their inspiration in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to the Holy Scriptures, by the Holy Scriptures themselves and by the Confession of Faith.

SPECIFICATION I.—He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings. (Page 116, cited below.)

SPECIFICATION II.—He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with error of fact in their affirmations. (Pages 92, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 109, 115, cited under Charge II.)

SPECIFICATION III.—He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with such unreliability in their utterances that the truth of events can not be ascertained from their utterances themselves. (Pages 100, 102, 108, 109, cited under Charge II.)

SPECIFICATION IV.—He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with a bias in the inspired writers, rendering them incapable of recording the truth of events because incapable of believing it. (Pages 104, 105, 107, 109, cited under Charge II.¹)

THE PRELIMINARY ARGUMENT.

When the court was formally constituted on November 14th, Pro-

¹ In the parallel case before the Presbytery of New York, Professor Briggs was not liable to Charge I., made against Professor Smith, and he was charged, as Professor Smith was not, with erroneous views concerning the authority of reason and of the church, the fulfilment of prophecy, the process of redemption after death and sanctification. The parallel includes Charges III., V., VI., of the New York indictment, as follows :

CHARGE III. "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D., being a minister of the said church and a member of the Presbytery of New York, with teaching that errors may have existed in the original text of the Holy Scripture, as it came from its authors, which is contrary to the essential doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture and in the standards of the said church, that the Holy Scripture is the word of God written, immediately inspired, and the rule of faith and practice." The specification quotes from the Inaugural Address, p. 35.

CHARGES V. AND VI. "The Presbyterian Church, etc., as above, with teaching that Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch [Charge VI., that Isaiah is not the author of half of the book that bears his name], which is contrary to direct statements of Holy Scripture and to the essential doctrines of the standards of the said church, that the Holy Scripture evidences itself to be the word of God by the consent of all its parts, and that the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." Specifications from Inaugural Address, p. 33.

A critical comparison of these indictments shows that that prepared by the New York committee is, as to its form, the more exact, in that, (1), Each charge states the particular doctrine of Scripture and the standards which is contravened; (2), Each specification quotes the exact words which are objected to; (3), The denial of the Mosaic and Isaianic authorship is made the basis for two separate and distinct charges; (4), The whole of Scripture and of the standards is offered in evidence. Yet the form was not of essential importance, seeing that the less exact form was found sufficient to warrant the court in Cincinnati in entering a judgment of guilty, while in New York, the charges, although found sufficient, were not sustained as proven, despite the fact that the only evidence offered consisted in quotations from the acknowledged writings of the accused.

fessor Smith appeared, in compliance with the citation, and presented exceptions¹ to,

“(1.) The qualifications of three members of the court.²

“(2.) The order and regularity of the preliminary proceedings.

“(a.) The prosecution was resolved upon in pursuance of the report of a committee not empowered to deal with this subject.

“(b.) The prosecution was resolved upon in pursuance of a partisan and prejudiced report.

“(c.) The prosecution was resolved upon without inquiry whether it were necessary for the ends of discipline to investigate the alleged offence.

“(d.) The prosecution was begun without any effort by conference with me to avoid the necessity of actual process.

“(3.) The sufficiency of the charges and specifications in form and legal effect.”

To consider these in their order—

(2.) (a.) There is no constitutional provision which outlines the course to be pursued prior to the decision of Presbytery to initiate process. That decision may be reached with or without the report of a committee. It is enough that the Presbytery have information which, in its judgment, requires investigation, whether, as in this case, it comes through a committee appointed to have in consideration certain teachings in seminaries, or through a committee appointed to consider a particular case, or through no committee and upon the common knowledge of the Presbytery.

(b.) No evidence was adduced to sustain this exception.

(d.) The means of reconciliation required by our Lord in Matthew xviii. 15-17 are applicable in cases of alleged personal injury, and are not required when the prosecution is initiated by a Presbytery. As to the effort to avoid actual process, by private conference, the evidence was conflicting.

(c.) The protracted discussion in Presbytery at its stated meeting in September, when the process was ordered, was concerned almost exclusively with this question. Long arguments were made dealing with the various ends of discipline, each in detail, to show that these did not require action; *aa.* that the point at issue was merely a conflict between two theories of inspiration neither of which was of confessional authority; *bb.* that Professor Smith, together with his colleagues, had recently re-affirmed his adherence to the Confession; *cc.*

¹ These exceptions are quoted in the language of Professor Smith's appeal to Synod, which is probably their most mature form.

² This has been considered on page 10, above.

that the General Assembly had both at Detroit and Portland made sound deliverances on the subject of biblical authority, besides which the Presbytery of Cincinnati had issued and circulated extensively a Pastoral Letter on the word of God, and that, if this was not enough, another paper could be passed by the Presbytery, disclaiming approval of the views of Professor Smith and beseeching him to be as mild as possible in his utterance of them; *ad.* that the processes of discipline are not the best weapons with which to combat the results of historical criticism; and *et.* finally, that ecclesiastical trials do more harm than good.

It is strange, in view of these various arguments, made in his behalf, at a full meeting of Presbytery, that Professor Smith can allege as a ground of appeal that inquiry was not made concerning the necessity of process; that the inquiry issued in a decision contrary to his views, and to the views of those who so ably supported him, must not be taken as proof that it was not made. On the contrary, the arguments there adduced produced so great an effect that they sensibly colored the views and the votes of a number of presbyters throughout the entire course of the trial. On more than one occasion it was acknowledged that the position taken was due rather to a continuing disapproval of the initiation of process than to any fault found with the particular steps of that process. Various utterances during the progress of the trial, and notably since its close, by writers well-thought of in the church, go to show that they have been unable to get beyond this initial stage, so that of course they see and write of the entire proceedings from the standpoint at which they have viewed the preliminary questions. Due allowance must be made for this in any effort to estimate the importance which ought to be attached to these utterances. Starting with such views, deprecating the very first steps in the direction of process, it was to be expected that such writers should find that every step, however conformed to the law, only tended to exacerbate their feelings, until, by the time the issue was reached, they found it difficult to express sufficiently the vehemence of their disapproval. For this reason, it is all the more needful to analyze these arguments, and so, taking them in their inverse order, it may be remarked—

(*et.*) Many of the utterances would suggest that the question at issue was the efficacy of discipline in general rather than the proper steps under our established procedure. "Does the word of God need this severity of process to sustain its claims?" it is asked, and the "barbarity" of the Book of Discipline is enlarged upon, while the

the process itself is characterized as "the harsh use of power," and the experiences of those who have witnessed similar cases of process are related to show how mischievous these are. It is difficult to see the pertinency of such reasonings, however cogent they might be if the Rules of Discipline were undergoing reconstruction; nor is it any less difficult to understand how those who have "approved" of the government and discipline of the church can occupy ground which seems to indicate disapproval of discipline, for it cannot be supposed that they sympathize with the Kentucky legislator, who, when a rigid prohibition measure was before the House, announced himself as in favor of it as a law, but against its enforcement. Our judicial procedure is not perfect; in many ways it is open to desirable amendments, and it is quite within liberty for one to seek its entire abolition; but questions of this sort must not be confused with the questions of the proper steps to be taken under that procedure as it is. Reflections upon the inefficacy of discipline in general cannot serve as censures upon the court which dealt with the case of Professor Smith. It is not allowable to smite our judicial procedure over the back of any specific case under it.

(*dd.*) The purpose of discipline is well enough known to prevent any very widely spread misconceptions. Rhetorically, it is of course very effective to propound the query, How can church-censures affect the conclusions of criticism? but it is understood by all parties that the effect is rhetorical only. Discipline is not a method by which it is proposed to "combat" historical criticism. With historical criticism as such, discipline has nothing to do in the way either of help or of hindrance; it is concerned neither to propagate nor to prosecute any opinions or results which in that or any other department of inquiry may be reached; its function is to conserve the moral and the doctrinal purity of the church, to maintain unimpaired among church-officers as a preëmption-right that system of doctrine which has been sincerely received and adopted by every one of them. It deals with the conclusions of historical criticism or any other science only as these intrude themselves upon its domain. Upon a *prima facie* case it inquires into the plans of the new-comer, and demands of her whether she come peaceably or to establish herself as an independent, irresponsible, and antagonistic influence; if she come peaceably, she is welcome for the sake of the good she may do, but, if not, she cannot think herself outraged if she is escorted beyond the frontier as an unwelcome intruder. In the buoyancy of her youth the new science of historical criticism, or, at least, certain of her representatives, has been

tempted to make light of established metes and boundaries, as merely "arbitrary" and quite beneath the notice of so exuberant a spirit as hers: it is to be hoped, however, for her own sake at least, that she will gradually learn that there are rights which by long years antedate any she may have acquired, and that her future depends upon the respect she can win from these her seniors. The "fire and knife," by which one of these has proposed that she shall establish herself, have been tried hitherto with disastrous results to those who handled them.

(*cc.*) Professor Smith has so aptly answered his own defenders on this point that it is enough to quote his words, *Argument*, p. 9:

"It would have been easy for me to leave the church, especially when the General Assembly urged upon all not in agreement with our church to leave her ministry. And we are told that any company of citizens has a right to associate to defend any absurdity and may determine the objects they will pursue and the terms of their membership. But this comparison seems to forget the very point at issue. The company of citizens who associate in a club to advocate (let us say) the flatness of the earth will be held by law strictly to its own articles of association. It will not be allowed to expel members at the mere will of the majority. That is the very point in hand. All that I have ever claimed is that, being myself convinced that I am in entire harmony with the doctrine of the church, I cannot yield to the resolution of any majority which assumes to decide that question contrary to the constitution of the church."

This is said by Professor Smith in view of the deliverance of the Assembly at Portland.¹ It would apply, *pari passu*, to the Pastoral Letter of the Presbytery of Cincinnati and to all similar utterances of church courts on doctrinal questions. So far as these utterances deal with the doctrine of the church, they are deliverances, not judicial decisions. They express the views of the majority, and so of the judi-

¹"The General Assembly would remind all under its care that it is a fundamental doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired and infallible word of God. Our church holds that the inspired word, as it came from God, is without error. The assertion of the contrary cannot but shake the confidence of the people in the sacred books. All who enter office in our church solemnly profess to receive them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. If they change their belief on this point, Christian honor demands that they should withdraw from our ministry. They have no right to use the pulpit or the chair of the professor for the dissemination of their errors until they are dealt with by the slow process of discipline. But if any do so act their Presbyteries should speedily interpose, and deal with them for violation of ordination vows. The vow taken at the beginning is obligatory until the party taking it is honorably and properly released. The General Assembly enjoins upon all ministers, elders and Presbyteries to be faithful to the duty here imposed."

catory by which they were adopted; and thus they carry great weight and are entitled to respectful consideration. They properly restrain or modify the utterances even of those that oppose them, but they do not bind the conscience; they do not determine finally what is the doctrine of the church upon the point in question; and they do not affect the standing in the church of those who dissent from them. Ecclesiastical standing cannot be invalidated by resolution; doctrine is defined in the constitution authoritatively interpreted, and the conscience is bound by this, the organic law of the church, only.¹ Pile deliverance upon deliverance, yet the doctrine of the church remains unaffected, and the liberty of the individual unrestrained. A deliverance is not a judicial decision, as is illustrated by the course of a number of ministers belonging to the Presbytery of Cincinnati, who supported very cordially the deliverance of the Presbytery contained in its Pastoral Letter, but who dissented from and protested against the decision of the same Presbytery against Professor Smith, whose views were contrary to those set forth in that letter.

Others who sustain Professor Smith appear to confuse a deliverance with a decision from a standpoint directly opposed to this. If the one thought that a deliverance would be a sufficient end to the issue, the others seem to hold that a deliverance was entirely beyond the prerogatives of the Assembly, and in no measured terms they censure the Assembly for establishing "new tests of orthodoxy." This is to mistake the significance of the deliverance entirely. According to the constitution there belongs to the Assembly the power of "reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, presbytery or synod." Its utterance quoted above was such a reproof of and testimony against what it held as error in doctrine, and this was not in any proper sense a new test of orthodoxy, but the interpretation which that Assembly put upon the

¹ The Assembly's "functions in this regard [disciplinable offences], we judge, are of two kinds—*advisory* and *authoritative*; and between these there should be a careful discrimination. . . . This function of reproof may be exercised in reference to any evil grave enough to call for it. The testimony of such a body as the General Assembly, especially if unanimously given, must needs have great weight. It has, indeed, only a moral influence. It is not authoritative. It binds no other body, not even a succeeding Assembly. It binds no individual; yet cases are not infrequent in which a moral influence of this sort, if not the only one that could be employed, is the most efficacious. . . . As respects the authoritative function of the Assembly, or its power of discipline, that, we judge, can only be exercised in the forms and methods marked out in the constitution." N. S. Assembly, 1856, pp. 197-201.

established tests of orthodoxy. That interpretation is not binding¹ upon any conscience which cannot receive it, because it is not a final decision; but it was entirely constitutional for the Assembly to set forth that interpretation as it did. There was no "usurpation" in the Assembly which passed it, and there is no law against a respectful dissent, or even a protest properly framed and presented in or to the judicatory of those who reject it. It was clearly within the rights of the Assembly to bear its testimony, to advise the withdrawal of those who dissented, and to enjoin upon lower courts to institute inquiry; but it is equally within the rights of those who differ to lodge their protests, to seek by open and honorable means to have the testimony modified, and to remain in the church, if convinced that the testimony is unscriptural, and to require the usual procedure for the determination of their standing. Yet it has been assumed that the Assembly sought to impose doctrine by a majority vote, greatly to the disregard of the rights of presbyters.²

(*bb.*) The sincerity with which Professor Smith had so recently re-adopted the standards was not brought in question by the decision to initiate process. The significance of the words, not the sincerity of the subscriber to the standards, was the point at issue. If sincerity were the only point at issue in subscription, that subscription might soon be dispensed with altogether, for men equally sincere might from

¹ "It does not appear that the constitution ever designed that the General Assembly should take up abstract cases and decide on them, especially when the object appears to be to bring those decisions to bear upon particular individuals not judicially before the Assembly."—*Minutes*, 1822, p. 50.

² While these notes are in course of preparation, a very spirited, though somewhat tardy, protest against the deliverance at Portland is uttered from a pulpit in Washington, in which city the next Assembly will in a few weeks convene. It is pronounced "an act of the grossest usurpation, to resist which is the urgent duty of every Presbyterian that loves his church and cherishes her historical stand for liberty, both personal and ecclesiastical. The General Assembly is as much bound by the constitution as is the humblest minister or member of the church. It has no more authority to impose the opinion of a majority of its members upon us as a doctrine than it has to declare that its views about lynching shall have all the force and weight of a federal statute, and to send a district-attorney or a judge to prison because he fails to prosecute and convict accordingly." It is evident that the distinction between a deliverance and a judicial decision is in this passage obscured; but even upon the lowest view of the authority of a deliverance resistance thereto cannot be said to be "the urgent duty" of any Presbyterian under any circumstances.

the same words reach conclusions directly opposite, in which case the words would cease to be in any sense a rule or standard.

(*aa.*) This will be considered under "The Effect of Inspiration." It may, however, be remarked that many who opposed the initiation of process on this ground did so, not because personally they held "the theory of inspiration" attributed to Professor Smith, but because they felt that it was within the limits of confessional liberty. Indeed, it is one of the features of the controversy that those most strenuous in his support were equally strenuous in rejecting his theory and were zealous in asserting their adherence to the historic position of the church. It ought, therefore, to be understood that the personal faith of none of the members of the court was under investigation, and, indeed, was quite aside from the case. The question was one as to the range within which differences among those who accept the standards do not impair the system of doctrine, and the lines were drawn between those who would and those who would not define these limits in such a way as to exclude the theory of Professor Smith. The responsibility of those who sanction the toleration of the views is as great as that which attaches to those that hold the views. There is no third course open. The so-called Middle Party in the church is supposititious only.

THE CHARGES IN GENERAL.

Three questions must be answered affirmatively before a charge can be established under our procedure. First, Is the charge conformed to the law? Does it allege a real offence? Second, Do the specifications sustain the charge and comply with the rules laid down for the preparation of them? Third, Do the facts as found in the evidence sustain the specifications and thus carry the charges? A vote upon any one of these questions is not by any means an infallible index to the doctrinal position of the voter. One must distinguish sometimes between what might have been charged and what, as a matter of fact, is charged, and then a negative vote would not indicate approval of the accused, but criticism of the framers of the charge; or granted the charge was properly drawn, the selection and arrangement of specifications might be found insufficient and a negative vote would follow quick upon an affirmative vote; or once more, the facts established in evidence may fail to warrant the specifications and thus to sustain the charges; and a vote of *not proven* might be given by one whose doctrinal position was directly antagonistic, and who, under other circum-

stances, would have voted condemnation. Apparent inconsistencies are sometimes unavoidable to one who exercises a judicial self-restraint, and to those familiar with the complex questions involved, "straight" voting is conclusive evidence neither of abounding zeal for the truth nor of intelligent sympathy with an accused party.

Under the procedure of the church, the first and second questions proposed above are held to deal with "the sufficiency of the charge and specifications in form and legal effect," while the third question deals with "the merits of the case." Both are open to argument; in the former the charge and specifications are (or are not) sustained as sufficient; in the latter, they are (or are not) sustained as proven. In the trial of Professor Smith eight days were occupied in the argument of the parties and the discussion of the court on the sufficiency of the charges, and no more than eight days were devoted to the merits of the case, and of this time comparatively little was occupied by the court. The explanation of this apparently undue proportion is that the two questions were unavoidably considered together; the sufficiency could not be established in entire independence of the merits of the case. The parties were therefore not held down to the argument upon sufficiency, and the court ignored the distinction in its deliberations. The effect of this was that the strength of all parties in the case, with the exception of Professor Smith,¹ was laid out upon the first question, and when the second came up nothing was brought out that had not in some form been previously considered. The "careful deliberation" required of the court in private session was therefore not wanting, but it had in large measure been anticipated.²

The present writer does not feel called upon to separate these two questions, nor, indeed, to dwell long upon the technical features of the case. Such consideration as they call for will be given under each charge and in connection with the merits of the case.

It ought to be added that much of the argument by the parties and by the court was devoted to Scripture passages and to theological authorities. To enter upon these would prolong this note unduly, especially as the quotations from authorities would involve the history of the doctrine almost from the beginning.

¹His *Argument*, which is devoted to the merits of the case, is the most cogent and comprehensive part of his defence.

²In the case of Professor Briggs, comparatively little time was spent on the question of sufficiency, the arguments being chiefly on the merits of the case.

CHARGE I.—THE OBLIGATION OF ORDINATION VOWS.

The following extracts from Professor Smith's articles set forth the substance of this charge:

"It is a good time to consider the question: How broad is the Presbyterian Church? The question concerns doctrinal belief, and it refers to officers of the church. For it is clear that our standards are not intended for laymen and are not applied to them. Any man who 'professes the religion of Christ,' can become a church member.

"The question then is: What latitude of belief is allowed to *officers* of the Presbyterian Church? The answer must be sought in what are called the *vows* taken at ordination. These obligations are set forth in a series of questions to which affirmative answers are required. It is worth noticing, however, that these questions do not all require vows. And the only one which is a vow concerning doctrine, is the one in which the ministers promise 'to be zealous in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church.' The form of this vow is significant. The candidate does not engage to be zealous in maintaining the doctrines of the Confession or the Westminster system, but to be zealous in maintaining *the truths of the gospel.*"—*Insp. and Iner.* p. 176.

The following is quoted in the indictment:

"But it is worth remarking, that this doctrinal qualification is required only at ordination. That men's views may change after ordination was as true in the last century as it is now. Had it been the intention of the church to secure strict doctrinal uniformity, it would have required frequent subscription if not frequent examination. Not only is no provision made for this, but the candidate for ordination is nowhere warned that if his doctrinal views should change, he must acquaint his Presbytery with the fact. Even in the present doctrinal alarm, but one man has proposed repeated subscription, and even he limited his proposition to professors of theology. It is clearly the theory of the church that a minister once inducted into the sacred office may be safely left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By his success in the ministry he acquires a right not to be disturbed, except in cases of exceptional gravity, and even here the presumption may be said to be in his favor." P. 178.

"Practically, the answer to our question is this: The Presbyterian Church is broad enough to retain in its offices any man who has once sincerely received and adopted the Confession as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures, until by judicial process the courts of the church have deposed him from office. In the best sense this is not High nor Low, but Broad." P. 179.

This charge was the occasion of more perplexity than the other two combined. Professor Smith was less lucid in his defence here than at any other stage of the proceedings. He left the impression of one whose views had not been fully set forth in his utterances, yet who, for the

time being, felt constrained to make the best possible defence of those utterances. For every sentence he quoted in vindication of his position another was quoted by the prosecution which was beyond vindication. Finally, the court settled it by acquitting Professor Smith upon a statement not properly before it in evidence.

Three distinct questions are presented by this charge :

1. What are the regulations and practice of the church as to ordination vows ?

2. Is an assertion contrary to these regulations or to this practice an offence ?

3. Was such assertion made by Professor Smith ?

1. The organic law is the only authority on this point.

Among the preliminary principles of the Form of Government is—

“II. That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications (*sic*) of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed.”

The Synod of 1729 declared :

“And in case any minister of this Synod, or any candidate for the ministry, shall have any scruple (*sic*) with respect to any article or articles of said Confession and Catechisms, he shall at the time of his making said declaration declare his sentiments to the Presbytery or Synod, who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise of the ministry within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his scruple or mistake to be only about articles not essential and necessary in doctrine, worship, and government. But if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge such ministers or candidates erroneous in essential and necessary articles of faith, the Synod or Presbytery shall declare them incapable of communion with them.”

The Synod of 1736 hoped that its declaration would “satisfy all our people as to one firm attachment to our good old received doctrines contained in said Confession without the least variation or alteration” (*sic*).

The first paragraph of the terms of reunion of the Synods of New York and Philadelphia in 1758 is as follows:

“Both Synods having always approved and received the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms as an orthodox and excellent system of Christian doctrine founded on the word of God, we do still (*sic*) receive the same as the confession of our

(*sic*) faith, and also adhere to the plan of worship, government, and discipline contained in the Westminster Directory, strictly enjoining it upon all our members and probationers for the ministry, that they preach and teach (*sic*) according to the form of sound words in said Confession and Catechisms, and avoid and oppose all errors contrary thereto.”

The Assembly of 1824 declared concerning the Confession of Faith and the Standards of the Church: They “as a system of doctrines, therefore, cannot be abandoned (*sic*) in our opinion without an abandonment of the word of God.”¹ The plan of reunion of 1870 contained the following:

“2. The reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be (*sic*) sincerely received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity.”

These citations show clearly enough that adherence to the system of doctrine is an obligation not restricted to the moment of licensure and ordination, but is continuous, that is, it is taken as indicating the fixed opinion, the abiding faith of the subscriber. Whatever license be allowed in other Reformed churches, these passages show that the American Church requires the acceptance of the standards as the confession of the faith of every office-bearer, and that when his faith changes so that these standards no longer express it, he loses thereby his right to office in the church. The adoption of the system of doctrine is a qualification, not in the sense of a term of admission, but as indicating one's abiding convictions; that is, it is not merely a door through which one must pass, but a mental habiliment, without which it were indecent for him to appear. Men, therefore, who have once taken the vows, cannot, as Professor Smith claims, “be safely left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit”; or, if so, that guidance is interpreted for them in the standards, and variation therefrom indicates the loss of that guidance.

Further, the distinction which Professor Smith draws between “the doctrines of the Confession or of the Westminster system” and “the truths of the gospel” is contrary to the principles on which that system rests. Doubtless many find a ready excuse for their attitude towards confessional doctrines on the theory that they are something more

¹ This has not the force of organic law, but is quoted for information.

than and apart from the truths of the gospel, which for its own purposes the church has imposed upon office-bearers; but the theory will not justify the attitude. The doctrines of the Confession or of the Westminster system are to the church a correct and comparatively complete statement of the truths of the gospel, so that it is impossible to maintain the one at the expense of the other. The true contrast is between gospel truth as stated in the Confession and gospel truth as stated in other than confessional language. The Confession is, therefore, not a burden of tradition which, with Pharisaic zeal, the church has bound upon the backs of her representatives, but a systematic interpretation of the truths of the gospel which the church has adopted because it states those precious truths accurately and fully, and which she very naturally proposes to those who would bear her name and proclaim the gospel under her authority.

2. All assertions contrary to the regulations and practice of the church are not offences within the exact sense of the word. Some errors arise from mere ignorance, others are on minor points. All errors are not equally pernicious, and the courts are charged to distinguish between the fact of error and the gravity of error before pronouncing any error an offence. This must be taken account of in this charge.

Further, the personal adherence of Professor Smith to the system of doctrine is not under this charge challenged. It is a general and a hypothetical question that is raised, not a personal one. But if so, wherein is his statement concerning doctrinal qualifications an offence?

The answer to this question is: It is not a doctrinal question that is at issue. He has successfully challenged the citation of a single doctrine of the Confession which is impugned by his statement concerning ordination vows: he is entirely guiltless therefore of heresy under this charge. If the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms constituted the standards, it would be impossible to locate a charge against him for his utterances concerning these vows.

But because it is not a doctrinal question, it does not follow at all that it is merely a historical question, as Professor Smith claims, which is to be determined by an ordinary investigation of the facts. This is not a doctrinal question, but doctrinal questions are not the only ones which determine ministerial standing.¹ The Confession and

¹ Professor Briggs in his *Defence* (p. 2), and more fully in his *Response* (p. 122), to the old charges, apparently labors under the same impression that a charge must contravene some essential doctrine of the Westminster Confession, as if the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline were not as really part of the Constitution as the Confession and the Catechisms.

the Catechisms are not impugned by Professor Smith's views, but these are only a part, although a large part, of the standards of the church. Heresy and immorality are offences under our procedure, but they are not the only offences.

Questions of order, questions of government, as distinct from questions of doctrine, have their influence upon ministerial standing. They relate not to the faith, but to the practice of the church; they are found not in the Confession and Catechisms, but in the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline; they deal not with heresy and immorality, but with ecclesiastical disorder, the extreme form of which is ecclesiastical rebellion. The stability of the church as an organization rests upon the maintenance of order, the administration of government, and that which threatens it from this quarter is as truly an offence as the denial of a cardinal doctrine of the faith.

3. The charge was not sustained by the court, not because of any doubt concerning the utterances of Professor Smith, but with some because these were held insufficient to establish the charge, and with others, enough to make a majority, because of the following from his *Response* :

“Neither in this article, nor anywhere else, do I assert that a minister may ‘abandon essential features of the system of doctrine held by said church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said church.’ Nor do I believe it.” *Insp. and Ine.*, p. 204.

Being of the nature of argument and not evidence, this statement was not properly before the court. The Prosecuting Committee offered to dismiss this charge at once if Professor Smith would put this statement in such form that the court could consider it, but he preferred to argue on the “text of the articles.” This he did, and his statement was at no time within the judicial knowledge of the court,¹ yet, by a stretch of these functions, a majority determined to accept this as a disclaimer, and, therefore, a sufficient reason for acquitting him of the charge.

The effect of the acquittal, therefore, in no sense implies a toleration of the view that one who has once subscribed to the standards may be safely left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but a conviction on the

¹ Quite a discussion arose over the proper disposition of this statement. It was claimed that the *Response* and *Rejoinder* had been admitted in evidence and then excluded. A protest was offered and answered, and Professor Smith makes it a ground of appeal to the Synod, notwithstanding his decision to argue on “the text of the articles.”

part of the majority that Professor Smith did not believe this in the sense which his words seem to convey. The acquittal must in one sense have proven a disappointment to him in that it was not based upon the articles, but upon the statement in his *Response*, so that after all, his articles on ordination vows are not vindicated.

The broad question raised in this charge is stated thus by Professor Smith: "Now the question arises, how shall we know *what are essential articles?* It was *this* matter which I had in mind when I spoke of the church herself drawing the line. Let me illustrate: Dr. Hodge, in the article already alluded to, mentions a definite atonement as one of the essential articles of our system. On this point some would not agree with him (*sic*). How does the church decide between them? I cannot see any way which is conclusive of the mind of the church except by judicial process."

On this subject Dr. McKibbin, speaking of the second specification, said:

"Suppose that is true, and if we tried Professor Smith for an offence committed three weeks after his ordination, he could claim he did not know how much would be required of him until after a trial, and might say, 'You can try me.' Now suppose you convict a man of having taught something erroneously, upon this view what would you convict him of? You would have to convict him of teaching what was contrary to the doctrinal standard received and adopted at ordination, and he would claim that he did not know how much of this doctrinal standard was required until after the trial. It is perfectly preposterous to suppose that the faith of the church is to be settled by ecclesiastical trials. An ecclesiastical trial settles the fact as to whether a man's faith is in harmony with the church. There is a limited sense in which some points of dispute may be settled in the court. * * * * The obligations of a Presbyterian minister are settled by what that Book requires of him. * * It might be a question as to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Suppose a man says, 'I do not know whether the church requires me to believe in the divinity of Christ until they try me.' * * * You can see at once that it would lead to utter anarchy in the church."

Upon this question, it need only be added:

1. Dr. Hodge has expressed the common view of the church in the article (*Bib. Rep.* xxx. 669) referred to by Dr. Smith. He says:

"The substance or essence of a system of doctrines is the system itself. In this case the essence of the thing is the whole thing. The essential doctrines of Pelagianism are Pelagianism, and the essential doctrines of Calvinism are Calvinism (p. 672). The words 'system of doctrine' have a fixed historical meaning. The objection that it is an open question, what doctrines belong to the system and what do not,

and therefore if the objection be limited to the adoption of the system, it cannot be known what doctrines are received and what are rejected, is entirely unfounded" (p. 688).

It should be easy to see the difference between the relation which the doctrine of a definite atonement sustains in such a system and that which is held by the confessional sections on the power of the state, marriage, divorce, etc.—the one a necessary part of the system without which it falls to pieces, the others not in any way deducible therefrom.

2. The remark of Professor Smith that as to the essential importance of the doctrine of a definite atonement "some would not agree with" Dr. Hodge, suggests that they receive the Confession "for substance of doctrine," and not as "containing the system of doctrine;" the former leaving it open to each one to define for himself what that substance is, the latter affixing the definite historical meaning, universally recognized as belonging to the Reformed theology, and familiar to all who intelligently adopt the Confession.

3. The conclusion that the essential articles of faith are determinable only by judicial process is not in consonance with the historic position of the church. It would change the rare exception into a regular and established function; it would afford license to every one who chose to impeach any doctrine however fundamental until he was formally disciplined; it would make "heresy-hunting" the only reliable process of learning the doctrine of the church, and make of the heretic one who merely affords occasion to decide what is fundamental; it would precipitate upon the church a series of trials, which her constitution never contemplated, from which her high calling must exempt her, and which her plain and straightforward Confession makes needless. Doctrine is determined already and discipline is not to make it any more clear, but to deal with those who, under vows, yet reject the doctrine.

CHARGES II. AND III.

These were considered together in the court for the reason that they necessarily involved one another. The views of Professor Smith are set forth below, in one column, first as given in his *Pamphlet*, and in the other as stated during the trial; and the references are to the pages of *Inspiration and Inerrancy*:

P. 122.—"Unless we can assume the standing miracle, the historical sources of the Old Testament need, in order to discover the truth of events, the

P. 282.—"There is no instance that I can recall where a writer as distinguished from a prophet makes such a claim to identify his utterances with God's. What is

same sort of analysis, sifting and cross-questioning that must be given to other sources of history, and this analysis, sifting and cross-questioning is precisely—Higher Criticism.”

P. 124.—“For our present inquiry, we are interested in the two forms of the history of Israel as presented on the one side by the Books of Samuel and Kings, and on the other in the Books of Chronicles. The study of these books shows the method of the authors with a definiteness which leaves nothing to be desired. We see that the chronicler had before him our Book of Kings as one of his sources. He takes from it what suits his purpose. What he takes he generally transfers without material change. He omits a good deal which does not answer his purpose, and he inserts a good deal from other sources. He pursues exactly the plan, that is, which we suppose to have been followed by the other historical writers.”

P. 125.—“Remembering that the chronicler was much further away in time from the events narrated, we find it natural that he should have an exaggerated idea of the resources of his country in the days of her glory. In the case of David’s purchase of the field of Ornan, he finds the price a niggardly one for the prince to pay. He, therefore, does not hesitate (supposing that a mistake has been made) to put in a larger sum. Of course we need not lay this to the charge of the final redactor of the book. He had probably before him other written elaborations of the history in which his exaggerated idea of the past was already embodied. The

meant is that the *prophets* claim to speak as God’s spokesmen. *They* identify their utterances with God’s. *Their* right to speak is that they are commissioned by God. If any one doubts this let him take the plainly historical portions of the Old Testament. Let him make a thorough examination of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Esther and Nehemiah. He will find not one single instance, I venture to say, in which the writer clearly claims even to be God’s spokesman. Much less will he find one where he identifies his utterances with God’s utterances. In the books of the prophets we find such expressions in abundance, because the prophet was God’s spokesman. He did identify his utterances with God’s, and he had a right to. But in the historical portions even of the prophetic books the writer carefully refrains from making such claims.”

P. 216.—“Now I suppose it to be generally understood—the committee certainly have no reason to be ignorant of it—that we stand on the common ground of the infallibility of the Scriptures as the church’s rule of faith and practice. There is no difference between us, therefore, as to *doctrine* or *precept*. The sole question at issue is whether every statement on matters of fact *outside the sphere* of doctrine and precept is without error.”

P. 225.—“It is entirely legitimate, therefore, to distinguish between two elements in Scripture: What was the subject of revelation, and what was not the subject of revelation. But it is easy to see further that these two parts have a close connection. What is drawn from tradition, written

personal equation is as difficult to suppress in the historian as is individuality of style. Why should one be overruled any more than the other?"

P. 130.—"It is clear that we cannot ascribe freedom from error to the statement of a book compiled in this way. You will say, then it should be cast out of the Canon. To which I reply, by no means. The Book of Chronicles is invaluable to us, not for what it directly teaches, but for the light it throws indirectly upon its own time. What the Jews of the Persian monarchy were thinking, how they regarded the older history, how they were preparing the way for the Scribes and Pharisees, for the crucifixion and the Roman war, for the Talmud and Barkochba—this is made known to us in the Book of Chronicles and by almost no other book in the Bible. But it is made known to us by reading between the lines, that is to say, by considering and weighing not what the author says of others, but by what he betrays of himself. What is the truth of history, my friends? Is it simply the narrative of events definitely defined, and labelled, and arranged in order? Is it a catalogue of kings, of each of which it records that he was born, made war and died? Is it not rather a series of pictures, each of which describes an age with its thoughts, its aspirations, its ideals? If so, sacred history cannot be made up by a string of inerrant statements."

Note, p. 130.—"As some questions have been raised by my assertions about the chronicler, I will add that of course I do not suppose him guilty of intentional

documents, or the observation of the writer, has a distinct bearing upon that which is directly revealed. It furnishes a comment upon it, shows the setting, the time, and circumstances in which the revelation was given. It shows the progress of revelation, the difficulties it met, the manner in which it was received, and the experiences of those who received it. These two parts in this way make up a homogeneous book. It consists of a revelation with illustrative material, and the latter is of course subordinate in importance to the revelation. Precision of language would require us to say the Bible *contains* a revelation. In common language, however, we say not only that it contains a revelation, but that it *is* a revelation. This is speaking *a parte potiori*, and not with scientific exactness."

P. 236.—"Bear in mind the exact point which is to be tested by Scripture. It is not whether the Bible contains a revelation—this is admitted on all hands. It is not whether the recipients of the *revelation* were fitted by inspiration both to receive and communicate *it*—this is equally admitted. It is not whether the writers of the books were divinely guided in choice of material from whatever source, for this is not contested by any. The only issue is the further one: Whether they were also divinely guided to remove from previously existing literary material every error of fact, no matter *how indifferent in its bearing on faith and morals*; and, whether in giving their own observation and experience they were so far lifted above the universal liability to error that they never *made a mis-*

falsification of the record. He had before him, it would appear, a considerable literature which commented on the history in the spirit of the time—his changes are made from these documents. The ideas which govern this literature were a part of the mental furniture of the chronicler himself. His inspiration, which made him a source of religious edification to his contemporaries, and which makes his work still a part of the infallible rule of faith, *did not correct his historical point of view*, any more than it corrected his scientific point of view, which no doubt made the earth the centre of the solar system.”

take, even in the sphere of secular science or history. For this is the doctrine of the committee, and this they affirm to be a fundamental doctrine of the Scripture. They claim it is so fundamental that no one accepts the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures who does not accept this doctrine. Now, I hope to show you not only that this doctrine is not a fundamental doctrine of Scripture, but also that it is not a doctrine of Scripture at all. The only way to do this is to examine the texts adduced by the committee, for it is clear that they have cited every thing that bears on the subject.”

P. 249.—“Here is biblical inspiration. When God sends a man to deliver his message, it is in vain for the man to try to change it. The divine *afflatus* carries him along so that he cannot resist. But this is evidently true only of direct revelations of God’s will. No such inspiration is anywhere intimated concerning the writers of the record.”

P. 286.—“Make the clear distinction between biblical inspiration of the prophet and theological inspiration of the scribe, and while you will find one asserted frequently (though not on every page) you will find the other faintly and rarely indicated. In this method you will find less definiteness, perhaps, but in the long run more certainty.”

P. 225.—“Now, up to this point we are all agreed. All parties here acknowledge the following points: (a), The Bible contains a revelation from God; (b), It contains other material not in the proper sense revealed; (c), This material is of importance (32) to us

because of its bearing on the history of revelation; (d), This material was chosen and arranged by men acting under a distinct influence of the Holy Spirit, which influence we call, technically, inspiration; and (e), The result is a book which in its totality is the church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life."

Before proceeding to the consideration of these charges in detail, it may be remarked—

1. Any discussion within even the extended limits of this note must necessarily be cursory and superficial, because of the many points which must be covered. Upon any one of these enough to fill these pages might profitably be written, but with obvious injustice to others which bore with equal force upon the result of the trial. Nor will it be expected that one who is not a specialist, but an active pastor, will essay to speak with authority upon the questions of criticism which are at issue.

2. The term inerrancy had no place in the judicial aspect of the case. It is not a confessional term, and it cannot be used as a test of ministerial standing. As a convenient phrase, synonymous with "immediate inspiration," it is perhaps defensible. The same is true of "verbal," "plenary," as applied to inspiration—they are convenient, but they are not "tests of orthodoxy."

3. The Books of Chronicles are, of all Old Testament records, the chief barrier to the post-exilic theory of the Pentateuch. They contain frequent references to the laws of the Pentateuch in the life of Israel long before the time of Ezra, and many of those who have accepted the prevailing critical theories make no concealment of the dislike they entertain for the chronicler, and of their desire to be rid of his testimony. Professor Smith has disclaimed such a motive, and his disclaimer must be accepted. Moreover, he has not pronounced upon the post-exilic theory,¹ and he ought not to be charged with its conclusions. Yet his charges against the chronicler are made also by those who maintain the post-exilic theory, and they may very properly be

¹ In a very exhaustive review of Wellhausen's theories, in *The Presbyterian Review*, III., 357, he criticises adversely some of the leading conclusions of this theory.

scrutinized lest they contain somewhat of that "bias" which they so freely attribute to the chronicler.

4. It is not wise to impale ourselves upon the alternative that the authority of Scripture stands or falls with every conclusion we may have reached in our investigations. This has the effect of keeping us in continual suspense, for our conclusions are undergoing continual modifications; or else of straining our arguments beyond what they will legitimately yield, lest, by their failure, Scripture, too, shall fail. Neither should we permit ourselves to draw inferences concerning the state of mind of those whom we are obliged to controvert; or to attribute to those who fail to accept the true view of the divine authorship of Scripture what seem to us to be the logical consequences of their principles.

5. The present writer will not undertake to follow or to criticise the various steps in the proof of these charges, but rather to indicate only the main points which were involved.

THE HISTORIC TRUTHFULNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

In his *Argument* Professor Smith says (pp. 54, 55):

"To deny *all* historic truthfulness to the Scriptures is of course destructive of Christianity. If the Gospels be myths, if the Acts of the Apostles be a romance, if the Epistles be forgeries—then the historic facts which lie at the basis of our religion are gone. I hope I need not protest that *this* historic truthfulness is as dear to me as to any one."

Professor Smith, therefore, does not deny *all* historic truthfulness to Scripture, and he particularly emphasizes the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles as containing "the historic facts which lie at the basis of our religion." But he leaves us to conjecture concerning the truthfulness of other historic portions, and the gravity of the conjecture appears from the fact that half of the Scripture at least is of a historical character, and he has given us no assurance concerning any Old Testament history. Further, he has in his *Pamphlet*, cited above, charged that the chronicler "had an exaggerated idea of the resources of his country in the days of her glory," that his book is "invaluable to us, not for what it directly teaches, but for the light it throws indirectly upon its own time." "His inspiration . . . did not correct his historical point of view." What the Jews of the Persian monarchy were thinking is in Chronicles "made known to us by reading between the lines, that is to say, by considering and weighing, not what the author says of others, but by what he betrays of himself."

This theory¹ concerning the Books of Chronicles has some far-reaching implications, which must be taken into account. Thus—

1. It assigns them the character, not of history, but of the sources of history, which call for analysis, sifting and cross-questioning, before they can be expected to yield satisfactory results. If they are history in any real sense, this process has already been applied to their sources by the same writer, and we have before us the results in such form that we can accept them; but if they are only sources of history, the process falls to us to apply, and the apparatus of criticism must be worked under high pressure, for, upon this alternative, the history has not yet been written, and during all the centuries past our fathers have been content with the sources alone.

2. It refuses them a degree of trustworthiness often granted to secular and uninspired writers, who, while liable to err, are recognized as authorities on the periods of which they write. Of this, Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*, Green's *England*, McMaster's *United States*, will serve as fair examples in that they are quotable as settling the questions with which they deal. They attain to this authority not merely because they are free from intentional falsification, from which Professor Smith would relieve the chronicler, but also because their pages are free from broad misstatements of facts, however unconscious and unintentional. They not only mean to tell the truth, but as a fact they tell it. They are not only sincere, which Professor Smith would probably allow the chronicler was, but they are also competent, which the chronicler was not, upon the theory under present consideration. If we had to "read between the lines," to watch, not for what the writer says of others, but for "what he betrays of himself," to discount "the exaggerated ideas of the resources of his country," they would instantly lose their character as historical authorities and sink to the level of Pepys and Froissart and the mass of other "sources."

It cannot be too much insisted upon that this is the immediate consequence of Professor Smith's theory: Chronicles is not even good secular history. Green and Bryce without inspiration could do better than he with all his inspiration. Professor Smith demands that we treat the Bible as we do other books; upon this showing, we could wish he had treated it even as well as he does other books.

3. It vitiates the revelation which, according to Professor Smith, is contained in Scripture. This could easily be shown to come in large measure through the medium of history. In the structure of Scrip-

¹The case of Professor Briggs does not raise this question. It is, however, involved in his recent work on "The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch."

ture, there is no division between the historical and the doctrinal portions. The light of revelation shines through every-day occurrences. The will of God is made known through events as well as through formal messages. Doctrine springs out of fact. Divine truth is taught in the types and ceremonies of the church in the wilderness and through the later dealings of God with his people in Canaan. If history must now for the first time be gathered out of these sources which we have had unsifted for so long, we will be obliged to revise our whole conception of the contents of revelation and prepare to re-adjust our doctrine upon the new basis. Our doctrine must be as unsifted as the history that bases it, and the system of doctrine we have been receiving is evidently open to rigid and damaging cross-examination.

This is exultingly asserted by some of the school of critics, but it has been denied by Professor Smith, who reiterates his acceptance of the system of doctrine contained in Scripture. With unabated confidence in his sincerity, it must be added that the exultant tone is by far the most natural one, and that his personal rejection of these consequences will not abate in any degree the force with which they will tell against the doctrinal system he has adopted.

4. It is contrary to the confessional doctrine. In his *Argument* (p. 53) he says :

“In this particular connection I beg your attention to the argument made in the court that the doctrine of the historic trustworthiness (by which in order to the decision of the case before you must be understood the *entire* historic trustworthiness) of the Scriptures ‘*underlies* the whole confessional doctrine, and requires no explicit and formal statement, just as the doctrine of the divine existence underlies the Scriptures themselves and does not require a formal statement. For both in the Scriptures and in the Confession there are some things which constitute the bed-rock of faith, the statement of which would be mere surplusage.’”

From this Professor Smith dissents, first, because the difference between Scripture and the Confession is that the latter “exists to *state* doctrine,” which it fails to do so far as historic trustworthiness¹ goes ; and second, that the denial of the divine existence “simply reduces the Scriptures to inanity,” but the withdrawal of the absolute historic truthfulness seems to him to leave the building undisturbed (p. 54). But, the historic truthfulness of Scripture is not merely fundamental in the sense in which its independence, its sufficiency, its authority, in

¹ The overture to insert the words “The truthfulness of the history” in Ch. I., § V., has not as yet been finally adopted.

faith and practice are fundamental, for this is the sense in which the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Resurrection are fundamental, while the historic truthfulness of Scripture is the basis on which these fundamental doctrines rest. Can Scripture be "independent" in any real sense if its historical statements are open to continual and radical correction? In what sense is it "sufficient" if it needs the reconstruction which our present critical school is attempting? and how much of an "authority" is it under this theory? It is, therefore, not one with these fundamental doctrines, but underneath them all, and therefore it does not require the same formal statement, although perhaps the proposed amendment to the Confession may, if adopted, save similar misunderstanding hereafter. The Confession without the doctrine of historic truthfulness might be less "inane" than Scripture without the doctrine of the divine existence, but it would have a slender basis for the doctrines of the independence, the sufficiency, the authority of Scripture. Indeed, so closely are these dependent upon the doctrine of historic truthfulness that the charge might have been based upon one or other of them.

This is the gravamen of the second charge. It does not enter upon the question of inspiration. It is properly confined to a merely secular historic trustworthiness. This Professor Smith has denied, and for this he was adjudged to hold views in conflict with the doctrine of the church concerning the Scriptures. That he personally believes in biblical history is no relief from teachings that would make that history untrustworthy, or at least indeterminate for others less settled in their faith. Further, that the instances cited are of minor importance is no protection against the application of the same reasonings to those portions of the history which are inseparable from the revelation itself.

THE EFFECT OF INSPIRATION.

The view of Professor Smith is with some fullness set forth in the foregoing citations. He would distinguish between two elements in Scripture: What was the subject of revelation, and what was not the subject of revelation. "Precision of language would require us to say that the Bible *contains* a revelation," and only *a parte potiori* can we say, "it *is* a revelation." In the *Argument* he says (page 50):

"What I am concerned to point out is, that there are two senses of the word [inspiration], and that there is a difference between theological and biblical usage. In theology, inspiration is the organizing principle of the books. In the Bible itself, inspiration is the activity

of the Spirit which fits the organs of *revelation* for their work. Now, if this distinction is clearly grasped, it shows that a member of the court was mistaken in thinking that I confound inspiration and revelation."

The question at issue, then, is not the nature or the mode, but the effect, of inspiration. This was clearly recognized in the court, and the significance of the distinction between nature and mode, on the one hand, and effect, on the other, was appreciated. The former, being within the sphere of the mysterious agency of the Holy Spirit, being, indeed, as inscrutable as the act of regeneration, or the conception of our Lord by his mother, the Virgin Mary, are clearly beyond the reach of theological or confessional definition; and the church has not only never sought to impose, or even to formulate, a theory as to the nature or the mode of inspiration, recognizing that whatever opinions might be held were lacking in Scripture warrant, were clearly outside the system of doctrine, and afforded no ground for difference among those who together adopted that system.

But it is very different with regard to the latter, the effect of inspiration, which is neither inscrutable nor mysterious, but is manifest in the pages of Scripture, and is so definite that it has afforded basis to the historic doctrine that the Scriptures thus inspired are the infallible rule of faith and life; that this is part of the system of doctrine itself, and so affords a test of good standing in those churches which receive that system. The issue, then, was not merely "between two theories of inspiration, neither of them confessionally defined," but rather about the confessional doctrine as to the effect of inspiration. It was a question as to the authoritative interpretation of the standards as we have them, and not as to some extra-confessional refinement of modern schoolmen.

The question may be stated in various forms. Thus: Did inspiration secure the record of Scripture as we have it, or merely the utterances of the prophets and apostles contained therein? Did it give an infallible revelation in a fallible or in an infallible record? Was its effect upon the writer only, or upon the book which he wrote? Is the Scripture as we have it the word of God, or does it merely contain the word of God? It is submitted that the citations made above from the utterances of Professor Smith sustain this as a fair statement of the question.

The distinction between the Scripture as being and as containing the word of God may be taken as the key to the situation. Professor Smith and those who think with him stand upon the latter alternative.

That distinction was first propounded by J. G. Tollner, who died in 1774, and who maintained that there were some things in Scripture which do not belong to the word of God, such as historical events; that although all in the Scripture has respect to the word of God, all parts are not equally rich in the word of God; that on the other hand, the word of God is not limited to the Scripture, and he who propounds divine truth propounds the word of God, which also is contained in reason, and found in the different forms of religion known among men; Christians possessing that word, however, in its most excellent, most perfect, and clearest form. The comparatively recent origin of the distinction and its implications as to the relative value of the word of God in Scripture are, of course, significant, but the distinction itself is enough for our present consideration. It has been variously stated, and these various statements have been held as divergent theories, while the unifying principle will, upon close examination, appear. Those who hold that Scripture contains the word of God may all be classified as separating either between—

1, The fundamental and the non-fundamental; or, 2, The substance and the form;¹ or, 3, The doctrinal and the historical; or, 4, The revealed and the non-revealed.

Professor Smith emphasizes the fourth of these pairs of alternatives, although the third also finds place in his defence. He believes that the Scripture contains a revelation and that in its doctrine it is infallible, but that the "illustrative material" used along with the revelation and the history in which the doctrine is found does not come to us with the same infallible authority.

The question, however, is not as to the existence in the record of the two elements, whether they be called human and divine, or historical and doctrinal, or revealed and non-revealed: there is no issue here at all, and, except perhaps in one writer quoted, all admit the fact that these two elements are combined in Scripture. The question is not as to the existence of the two, but as to the possibility of separating them, of reducing the compound into its original elements. The fact that

¹ Professor Briggs apparently adopts this statement. Besides the citation from his Inaugural given in the charges against him, he says in *Biblical Study*, p. 161: "We cannot, in the symbolical or historical use of the term, call this providential (*sic*) care of his word, or superintendence over its external production (*sic*) inspiration. Such providential superintendence is not different in kind with regard to the word of God, the visible church of God, or the forms of the sacraments."

the two are there, would, upon the analogy of human sciences, such as chemistry, suggest that analysis could distinguish them; and in the great desire to treat the Bible as we treat other books, this has been very cheerfully undertaken, and great confidence in the result has been felt. We have been taught to expect within a few years a new Parallel Bible, in which we can read on one side the divine, the doctrinal, the revealed, the fundamental; and on the other side, the human, the historical, the non-revealed, the circumstantial elements. Indeed, recent literature has afforded several essays in this direction, but unfortunately these have not had a wide circulation, perhaps because they lack the imprimatur of critical authority, which, while it raises our expectations and tells us of its progress, is not yet prepared to furnish even an outline of this new and very interesting work. The news which leaks out to the world, it must be added, is not very encouraging as to the rate of progress. There appears to be some difference of opinion among the editors. What is divine to one is human to another; what one of conservative antecedents regards as doctrinal is to another of liberal ancestry historical only and possibly merely circumstantial. Professor Smith finds in Scripture the full system of doctrine taught in the Westminster Standards, and if he were editor-in-chief, the new Bible would contain upon its divine side nearly everything which the Reformed churches have been accustomed to find in Scripture; but unfortunately the editorial authority appears divided, Professor Smith evidently has not the last word, and there is no telling in what form the new Bible will ultimately appear, nor when it will be issued.

It must be manifest to any who have studied the structure of Scripture, that although the two elements are there they cannot be separated. Where does the revelation end? Where does the merely historical begin? What is the essence of Scripture? These questions seem at first-thought to have ready answers, but the farther we go the more elusive we find these answers to be, and the greater room for the vitiating personal equation of the student. The fact is, that doctrine is taught in history as well as in direct communications from God; that revelation is given by the deeds as well as the words of the inspired men, it being a principle in ecclesiology that apostolic practice is of equal authority with apostolic doctrine; that the fundamental is often discovered in what apparently is non-fundamental, as in New Testament uses of Old Testament facts. If the two were to be separated, some rule of separation would be necessary, else every one would find in Scripture just what suited his preconceived ideas; that

we have no such rule is strong presumption that the separation is not to be made, and that the two elements constitute the unit of Scripture. Accordingly, both in Scripture and in the standards, Scripture is treated as one. Ten times in the standards is it called "the word of God," once "the word of God written," twice "the very word of God." God is the author of it in such way as to cover with his authority what is compiled from records, or what might have been stated by the writer unaided from above. The Westminster divines, who in one place spoke of the word of God contained in Scripture and in another place of the Scripture which is the word of God, can hardly be quoted in support of Tollner's distinction.¹ It can be shown that they sought to distinguish Scripture not from Scripture, but from a tradition and priestly authority which made itself of equal authority with Scripture.

This naturally leads up to Professor Smith's doctrine of inspiration, which, in its biblical sense, is to be restricted to the revealed portions of the word. A careful perusal of his *Argument* shows that the member of the court referred to was mistaken in thinking he confounded inspiration and revelation; perhaps it can be shown even that he did not identify them; but it is clear that he regards them as conterminous. Biblical inspiration secures to us the revealed will of God, and what is not revealed is beyond this influence. If we ask, What does inspiration bring? we are told, The revealed will of God; if we ask further, What is the revealed will of God as distinguished from "illustrative material"? we are told, That which biblical inspiration conveys. There is no definite idea to be had by this use of terms; there is rather an ambiguity which, as Mr. Sidgwick tells us in his new book on *Distinction and the Criticism of Beliefs*, is "like every other insidious fault, most effective when it is least suspected, least easy to see at a careless glance." For practical purposes biblical inspiration, as defined by Professor Smith, affords no help in determining the will of God in Scripture, but leaves it open to the individual to decide first what is revealed; then only is the inspiration brought in, as if to confirm each one in his own views of what that will is. But besides biblical inspiration for the revealed portions of Scripture, Professor Smith believes in a technical or theological inspiration, which to some

¹ The argument of Professor Briggs that *contain* rather than *is* is the doctrine of the standards, because "no statement of the Confession should be regarded as an essential and necessary statement which has not in its doctrinal parts its necessary statement in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms" (*Defence*, p. 13), would make the Shorter Catechism to be the ultimate standard.

extent influences the form in which the non-revealed matter comes to us. Both of these kinds of inspiration are said to be taught in Scripture, the one asserted frequently, the other rarely and indistinctly.¹ The non-revealed matter is inspired, not biblically and infallibly, but technically, and so in any given passage we have to decide which element is present before we can know which inspiration it has.

The present writer must confess that Professor Smith is the first theological authority from whom he has learned this distinction. It is not a distinction among the three functions of the one influence, viz.: the conveyance of divine truth, the restatement of the truths of natural religion, the truthfulness of the ordinary statements of the writers. These, Reformed theologians usually acknowledge, without feeling obliged to discriminate sharply among them. This is rather a distinction in kind; which to be operative requires the reduction of Scripture into its two component elements.

The Confession does not apparently afford any ground for this distinction. It knows but one inspiration, "immediate inspiration," and this is attributed neither to the revealed nor to the non-revealed portions, but to "the Old Testament in Hebrew," and "the New Testament in Greek," and its function was to keep the Scripture pure in all ages, and therefore authentical. Neither is the scriptural warrant for the distinction very clear, and it would have been helpful if Professor Smith had classified the passages wherein biblical inspiration is asserted, and those in which, however "rarely and indistinctly," technical inspiration is taught.

This he has not done. Moreover, the term, inspiration, *απαξ λεγόμενον*, 2 Tim. iii. 16, suggests no such distinction. Its influence extends to "all Scripture," to "the Holy Scriptures," which from a child Timothy had known, and which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. If this is biblical inspiration, it covers the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole without distinction of elements; if it is merely technical inspiration, it is, on Professor Smith's ground, insufficient to convey to us the revealed will of God: it is one inspiration in either case.

That one inspiration is "the organizing principle of Scripture," as Dr. Henry B. Smith, of Union Seminary, New York, taught. Under it he held, in his *Sermon on Inspiration*, that—

¹ Professor Briggs, quoted above, evidently discards the theory of technical inspiration, and leaves the form or external production of Scripture to the mere providential care of God.

“All, even the most insignificant, portions of the original Scriptures have their life from the Spirit, even as the principle of life embraces the hairs of the head as well as the beating of the heart. All is shaped by the wise builder into one glorious temple, which speaks of him from the foundation to the topmost stone.”

No authority, scriptural or confessional, can be adduced for the critical separation of the record into divine and human elements; that record, as such, is made our infallible rule of faith and practice. If it were not thus infallible as a record, its inspiration would for us mean nothing. It is no assurance to us to be told that, long ago, prophets and apostles spoke words which God gave them, for, unless we can know what those words were, it would be tantalizing to be told that they were spoken. Scarcely less tantalizing would be the other and modified statement, that the revelation is in the record, and is to be discovered there by the reader; for with the consciousness of bias and of our infirmities of judgment, we would be ill-fitted to pick out the portions clearly revealed. Who shall define for us? To whom shall it be given to locate the boundaries of faith? Wherein are we better, amid the darkness and superstition and the obtrusive falsehoods of the day, if there is a revelation in the record, but only somewhere? Those very falsehoods can and do shelter themselves behind the name of Scripture, and claim to be within the circle of Scripture truth; and when we would dislodge and expose them, they can, under Professor Smith's distinctions, claim that the passages which condemn them are historical, or circumstantial, or non-revealed, or only technically inspired. Professor Smith insists that we remember the language of the Confession, that Scripture is an infallible rule *of faith and practice*. We agree; and we in our turn insist that it be a *rule* indeed, and not a mere column of smoke, rising beautifully straight in a still atmosphere, but twisted into every variety of shape by the first zephyr of doctrine that moves across the theological firmament.

We are now prepared to define, with Professor Smith, the points of which we can say, “Thus far all are agreed.” He has stated them very clearly from his position, and on that statement he proceeds to consider the errors in the present text of Scripture, as if these were the only points at issue. How far his statement expresses the agreement between the parties will appear by comparing with it a corresponding statement of what may, from the historic position of the church, be held as fairly implied in the statement of Professor Smith. If he can accept ours we will gladly accept his, and thus by an interchange of statements establish clearly the agreement between us:

(a), The Bible contains a revelation.

(b), It contains other material not in the proper sense revealed.

(c), This material is of importance to us, because of its bearing on the history of revelation.

(d), This material was chosen and arranged by men acting under a distinct influence of the Holy Spirit, which influence we call, technically, inspiration.

(e), The result is a book which, in its totality, is the church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life. *Insp. and Iner.*, p. 225.

(a), The Bible cannot be separated into revealed truth and other material.

(b), The other material is an essential part of the history of revelation.

(c), The same influence, which secures to us the revealed, secures also the other material to us.

(d), That influence is inspiration.

(e), An infallible rule of faith and life cannot be afforded by a fallible book.

No substantial agreement can be reached unless one of these statements be allowed to explain the other. If it be held that they are not mutually explanatory, it is needless to pass on to other points at issue, for here are points of fundamental importance on which divergences have arisen, and which must be settled before other minor and secondary questions are raised. This is the justification of the arrangement of this note and of the consideration already given to "The Historic Truthfulness of Scripture," and "The Effect of Inspiration." This is the difficulty in the way of those who represent the issue as being about a few insignificant discrepancies in Scripture. Doubtless Professor Smith sincerely desired to offer the best possible explanation of these, and, as will appear below, these ought to be explained. But his explanation is a costly one if it carries away not only these discrepancies, but the truthfulness of Scripture history and inspiration in any effective sense also. One does not make war on mosquitoes with a Gatling gun, especially if those mosquitoes are flying around one's front door; and if one persist, his friends restrain him before even his first discharge, rather than leave him to learn the certain consequences of his method of warfare in the house which he himself loves so well. Wreck and ruin are heavy damages to pay for experimental methods of warfare, and also for experimental methods of biblical study.

It remains for the church to determine in an authoritative way how far away from "the historic basis of the church from the Reformation onward" is the lower court which condemns one who denies the truthfulness of Scripture history and any effective inspiration. If these be "new tests of orthodoxy," the old ones ought to be stated with great

force. If the church is in danger of a new departure under the slavery of "a mere theory," there can be no language too vehement in which to arrest her progress, but at the same time it must be clearly shown that both the trustworthiness of the record and the substantial unity of the Book under the influence of inspiration are mere theories. It cannot be too strongly or too frequently urged that the question is not primarily about "the inerrancy of the original autographs," but about the historic truthfulness and the effective inspiration of our present copies. It is to be feared that attention has been withdrawn from these, the most important points at issue, to the issue of "inerrancy," and that positions are taken in the discussion of this issue which tend to obscure those other and more important points. This applies both to those who accept inerrancy as commonly stated, and to those who reject it as an innovation—the one failing to realize that inerrancy is important only in its relations to historic truthfulness and effective inspiration, the other thinking that these being certainly secured, inerrancy is entirely unimportant. On the one hand it must be admitted that sometimes inerrancy has been treated outside of its relation to the ends which it subserves, and on the other hand it is clear that it has been lightly discarded as if those ends were already and independently attained. We are persuaded that the latter is the greater danger. The mine which has been dug under "the dry and brittle fences that constitute denominationalism," has not been stopped at the fences, but has been carried underneath the very citadel of the faith, for the reason, possibly, that the miners, working underground, have lost their bearings. Were it sprung in its present form, the fences would indeed be destroyed, but the citadel would go with the fences. This would prove a great disappointment to the victorious hosts of critics, who are represented as panting after "the heavenly glories" contained in the citadel, and just ready to capture them from the church which has for so long held them, while amid the wreck and ruin of the citadel, those who, not critics themselves, have given the critics full license, will in deep sorrow of heart wish the mine under the fences had never been begun.

THE ERRORS IN THE PRESENT TEXT OF SCRIPTURE.

From the standpoint of historical criticism this, the last, should have been first. The order of discussion observed throughout this note is the reverse of that which prevails in writers of the school of Professor Smith. These would have given first consideration to the errors, and from their conclusions as to these would have constructed

their theory of inspiration. The present writer is not directly concerned with historical criticism as a science, but with the authority of Scripture as to faith and life. Professor Smith, and others, assure us that their views concerning these errors do not impair this authority, so that we are justified, perhaps, in giving first consideration to the questions which do so deeply involve that authority, and in leaving to the last those errors which, whatever our view about them, do not, according to Professor Smith, abate it. For Bible students generally, and for the great body of the church, this method is valid, even if, for specialists, the method adopted by the school of criticism be preferable.

It is hardly necessary to say that these errors are not a new discovery. The surprise and even alarm with which they have recently been greeted are periodical in the history of the church. The controversies of the last century, which dealt largely with the various discrepancies, variations, and contradictions might profitably be studied by any who, for the first time, have heard of these. And it is quite superfluous to confront the church at large, as has been done in a recent and widely-distributed sermon, with the alternative of confessing to a "lack either in candor or in mathematical common sense," for there is no disposition to deny any of the "contradictions between the Book of Kings and the Book of Chronicles."

But while there are errors, there is no conceded list of errors. We are frequently warned that, unless we are prudent, the critics will publish their list, but it is open to doubt whether the list is entirely ready for publication. Indeed, we might almost be reconciled to its appearance, if it were ready, because then our Damoclean suspense would be ended and we would know the worst. Meanwhile our broad, modern investigation is continually bringing unlooked-for confirmations of Scripture and correcting our misinterpretations of obscure passages, and men like Canon Rawlinson are telling us that "when such a contradiction has seemed to be found [between authentic history and the Hebrew records], it has invariably happened that in the progress of historical inquiry the author from whom it proceeds has lost credit and finally become to be regarded as an entirely untrustworthy authority."

Until this forthcoming list of errors appears, any thorough-going analysis is impossible. The favorite term is "errancy," but obscurity must lurk in any term that covers not only grammatical and literary faults in general, but mistakes in names and numbers as in the list of the dukes

of Edom, the roster of David's army, and the figures in certain wars; variations, as in the forms of the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue and the words of Institution; exaggerations, and a bias which makes it necessary for us to read between the lines to detect what the writer may betray of himself. A like obscurity must attach to any doctrine, such as the so-called doctrine of inerrancy, which seeks to vindicate moral faults on the same principles which it applies to clerical errors and poor syntax, and which labors with variant accounts along the lines needed for tainted testimony. For these reasons the controversy, while noisy, has been desultory.

Nor is the real importance of the question at issue fully agreed upon. Professor Smith apparently is not at one with himself. He says—

In his *Insp. and Iner.*, pp. 301, 302: "We who study the Bible as exegetes are obliged to notice the actually existing discrepancies. We cannot deny their existence, or say, with Mr. Lowe, that they are not material [*sic*]. We know they are there."

In his *Insp. and Iner.*, p. 343: "Remember the point at issue. It is not whether there is material [*sic*] variation. It is not whether the New Testament writer makes a legitimate application of what he quotes," etc., etc.

The passage from his *Argument* refers to but one class of discrepancies—the variations of the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament language; but it does not appear how these can be immaterial, while of the discrepancies in general we cannot "say that they are not material."

In this state of the question, it may suffice to remark that,

1, To those who regard the authority of Scripture, an error in the original means more than an error in our copies, for the same reason that, if water be poisoned in its source, the damage is more serious than if that poison be introduced at some point along its course. It is, therefore, legitimate to assign to transmission as many of the errors noted as it will fairly explain, without being chargeable with overzeal for the authority of the Scripture.

2, The authority of Scripture depends, not necessarily upon exactness, but rather upon accuracy, in its statements. The distinction is one to be felt rather than fully expressed. It implies that this authority is vindicated if it "secure a correct statement of the facts and principles intended to be affirmed," and that more than this is not essential. This is the answer to Professor Smith's query, which in substance is, You admit grammatical errancy, why deny historical errancy? And the reason is, that the one is consistent, and the other inconsistent, with a correct statement of these facts.

3, It is doubtful if an admission of historical errancy would satisfy some of the critical school. Already a philosophical errancy has been asserted, and an eschatological errancy is at least suggested. This Cerberus has not yet stated just what sop will appease him, and those who long for peace are liable to disappointment very soon after they have formally conceded historical errancy. In fact, peace between the church and the present critical position seems rather far away.

THE JUDGMENT.

In the case of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America against the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., Presbytery, after careful deliberation upon the charges, specifications and testimony, has arrived at the following conclusions :

(1), Charge I. and the two specifications under it are not sustained. Dr Smith is, therefore, declared not guilty of this charge, and is hereby fully acquitted.

(2), Charge II. is sustained. All the specifications under this charge are also sustained except the eighth, which is not sustained.

(3), Charge III. is sustained. All the specifications under this charge are sustained.

Charges II. and III. have thus been proved, and Dr. Smith is found guilty of both of these charges.

Therefore, the judgment of the Presbytery, sitting as a court, is that the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., be, and hereby is, suspended from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, until such time as he shall make manifest, to the satisfaction of Presbytery, his renunciation of the errors he has been found to hold, and his solemn purpose no longer to teach or propagate them.

At the same time, the Presbytery expresses the kindest feelings toward Professor Smith, and it makes this disposition of the case because the interests of truth imperatively demand it.

This judgment is based upon the decision of the court acquitting Professor Smith of charge I., and sustaining charges II. and III. Its effect is to declare that the court found that the views charged to Professor Smith were his views, and that they were contrary to the standards of the church. So far as a court of original jurisdiction can decide, this is a judicial decision, although not a final decision.

The censure imposed has been made a distinct ground of appeal by Professor Smith in that this "penalty would be excessive even if I were guilty of the offences charged." It should be borne in mind, however, that it was recognized from the very beginning that the issue involved ministerial standing. Any sentence lighter than suspension does not do this. If the present writer is not mistaken, Professor Smith in insisting upon certain technicalities during the

trial did so on the very proper ground that his ministerial standing was in question, and that he must protect himself in every possible way. And, even if this be untrue, there was no suggestion made in the discussion of the case, that it was merely a question of admonishing him for his utterances; on the contrary, one of the strongest pleas in his behalf was that it would imperil his future usefulness to the church. Not until the decision of the court upon the charges was about to be rendered was the question raised between admonition and rebuke on the one hand, and suspension on the other.

Further, the same reasons which led a portion of the court to oppose the initiation of process, led them with accelerated force to oppose the sentence of suspension. They thought at the outset that no ground for action existed, and very naturally they voted against the resolution appointing the Committee of Prosecution; against the sufficiency of the charges in form and legal effect, though not against all of the specifications; and against sustaining any one of the charges. It was to be expected, therefore, that if some censure must be imposed they would also favor the mildest one possible. To these must be added another portion of the court which, while it sanctioned the initiation of process, disapproved of one or more steps in that process, and accordingly of the censure imposed. The opposition to the sentence of suspension was, therefore, in one sense original and in another sense cumulative.

The censure itself stands midway in the ascending scale; it is as far away from the severest as it is from the mildest; and it ought to be taken as expressing the degree of disapproval felt by the court for the views of Professor Smith. If only a mild disapproval of the views held by Professor Smith was felt, this penalty was excessive; but the only measure of the degree of disapproval is the censure itself, and, by imposing suspension, the court indicated how deep that disapproval was. The censure is a judicial condemnation of the error as radical, and it was chosen in preference to deposition, only because of the hope that the future might effect some modification that would justify the court in removing it. If the procedure had provided for access of penalty from any lower censure to the one next above, that of rebuke might have been urged on the ground, that, if it proved ineffective, suspension could, without further process, have been inflicted; but, as shown above, this access of penalty is limited to suspension in relation to deposition. The effect of a censure of admonition or rebuke is ex-

hausted as soon as the formula has been pronounced, and it not only leaves ministerial standing unimpaired, but imposes no further restraint unless fresh utterances be made the subject of entirely new process. As Professor Smith gave no intimation of any purpose to modify or restrain the expression of his views, rebuke would, therefore, have been inadequate.

THE APPEAL AND THE COMPLAINT.

Twelve grounds of appeal are stated by Professor Smith, some of which have been cited and discussed. The others pertain to the sufficiency of Charges II. and III., to the action of the court in sustaining these charges, to certain testimony, and to the vote of a member of the court, which was recorded and counted in his absence.

A complaint is also lodged by certain members of the court, not of the Prosecuting Committee, against the action in dismissing Charge I. as not sustained on the ground of evidence which the complaint affirms was not properly before the court.

In this double form, the case will be heard by the Synod of Ohio, which convenes in the Second Church of Cincinnati in the month of October.

Meanwhile, Professor Smith has called the attention of the Board of Trustees of Lane Seminary to the censure under which he is resting. As the constitution of the Seminary requires only that professors be members, not necessarily ministers, of the Presbyterian Church, the question of the status of Professor Smith at this time might have been raised. It was not raised, however, and Professor Smith was, after this session (not immediately, because of the practical difficulty of providing a substitute), relieved from his duties until his case be finally decided. In deference to the Presbytery the Board could not do less; in justice to Professor Smith, it ought not to have done more.

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Cincinnati.