

to the Members of the
Evangelical Theological Society

And all other interested persons:

Unrelatedly I have discovered that my article on Gnosticism in Vol. IV of THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY contains two paragraphs I did not write.

The bottom two paragraphs on page 348, col. 2 have clearly been lifted, with slight alterations, from Professor A. M. Renwick's article in Baker's Dictionary of Theology. I am somewhat inclined to think that Professor Renwick's interpretation of Basilides (p. 238, col. 2) is not quite accurate; and therefore I would not have written as he did.

But the important point is that any scholar who compares the two articles will think that I have plagiarized the Baker's Dictionary's material. I did not. This was the work of the editor, who without my knowledge or permission inserted Professor Renwick's thought and words into my article.

I do not know who this editor was, for, I am told, Mr. Jay Green changed editors during the process. But whoever it was, I resent and denounce the result.

Very truly yours,

Gordon H. Clark

Green Valley, Illinois
May 21, 1942.

Dear Dr. Clark:

Paul Jewett has informed me of the effort to remove the philosophy major from the college, and to make things unpleasant for you. I am sincerely unhappy to hear these things, and I am glad to have had the opportunity to write a letter objecting to such actions.

Your classes were the most enjoyable and profitable I had while at W. Benton, and I greatly appreciate your work. I am altogether behind you.

I have been interested in securing a copy of your article on "Christian Education" or did you decide to call it "Intellectualism"? It impressed me as being an excellent article, and I would like to obtain a copy, if they are available, and if you would inform me as to how to get one.

Our prayers will be with you in the days to come that you will be in the place where God can most effectively use you.

Cordially yours
Donald L. King

Wheaton, Illinois
August 1942

To the Board of Trustees of Wheaton College:

This is submitted as the report of the Committee appointed at the June meeting to investigate certain questions which had arisen with respect to the teaching of Dr. Gordon H. Clark.

Your Committee met with Dr. Clark and conferred with him at length about the questions which had arisen and particularly as to his personal beliefs in certain theological doctrines.

We are glad that we can commend his frankness, and we do not question his scholarly attainments or the intellectual quality of his teaching.

In most respects we do not believe that his Christian beliefs would differ materially from those of others either of the faculty or of the trustees. However, he holds certain views, originating with John Calvin or with imitators of Calvin, which go beyond what we could endorse. He carries the truth that God is the original Being to the point where he frankly states that God is the author even of evil; and he identifies the sins which are committed with God's plan, to the point, as we understand him, of saying that God purposed that they should be committed. To his mind these views neither alleviate the guilt of the sinner nor the need and duty of preaching righteousness and salvation. This situation may be better understood if we quote a few particular beliefs which he holds:

God decrees one man to be a murderer, or adulterer, or an idiot.
God decrees some to heaven and some to hell.
God is emotionless, unmoved.
God's love is a manifestation of His will only, not of His affections (if any).
God never loved the non-elect.

Dr. Clark teaches some course or courses in which historic theological doctrines are reviewed. Obviously information as to the particular group of doctrines which we have mentioned must be included in such a course; and if Dr. Clark is asked as to his personal opinion, he cannot well avoid replying. We feel that his opinions, and doubtless the agitation of such views by certain groups of students, have led in certain cases to demoralizing deductions which Dr. Clark himself would deplore; for example, in the words of a former student: "Since God is the originator of everything, including sin, and He worketh in me both to will and do of His good pleasure, then my sins are not sins at all but merely the works of God in my life. Therefore I should not be too disturbed by my weaknesses."

To your Committee, the deductions are not entirely illogical, and the views themselves are unsound and for that reason dangerous. Some of your Committee feel that part of the error arises from an effort to expand, by human reason and deduction, the doctrine of the person of God beyond what is definitely taught in the Scripture; and that to attempt to directly refute such error, similarly might be to presume by human wisdom to develop doctrines

about God going beyond what He has seen fit to reveal to us.

We do not find that Dr. Clark's opinions differ materially from those which he frankly stated, and which were freely discussed, when he was employed six years ago. They may not be, in themselves, opinions the mere holding of which would disqualify him for permanent membership in our faculty; but we feel that if their active discussion cannot be avoided in teaching his present subjects, ultimately he should teach in other fields or plan for openings elsewhere.

We do not consider it feasible to fully solve this problem now, but in submitting this report to you and delivering a copy of it to Dr. Clark, we make these suggestions:

1. That to the largest extent possible he confine his teaching to the stated subjects, without advocating any theological beliefs which are controversial among orthodox Christians;

2. That if asked his personal opinion as to the group of doctrines in question, he be frank but state the belief rather than expounding his reasons, — being equally frank in admitting his susceptibility to error and that his views in this respect have not been those of most Christian leaders;

3. That he add that he by no means endorses deductions from such doctrines which have been made on such questions as personal responsibility for sin, the duty of missionary effort and evangelization, and the duty of seeking the guidance of the Spirit as to problems both of conduct and doctrine.

We find that the situation has been intensified by the promulgation of special theological doctrines by a voluntary group of students known as the Creed Club. Undoubtedly this group has regarded Dr. Clark as a sponsor, perhaps mistakenly so. They have met regularly in a room provided by the College for the use of student organizations.

We feel that Wheaton as an undenominational College should not be placed in the position of apparently fostering doctrines which would seem perverse to many groups of orthodox Christians, and that care should be taken to avoid loans of College facilities for such purposes.

The difficulties of the situation will be considered in making up class schedules for the current year. We suggest patience and prayer that these problems, difficult as they are, may be resolved in a manner that will be for the glory of the One for whose Kingdom the College exists.

Respectfully submitted,

Members of the Committee:
Mr. Fischer
Dr. Fuller
Dr. Ironside
Dr. McCarrell
Mr. Nicholas

(Signed) Herman A. Fischer
(Signed) V.R. Edman

May 25 1943

Mr. Allan C. Emery
267 Summer Street
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Emery,

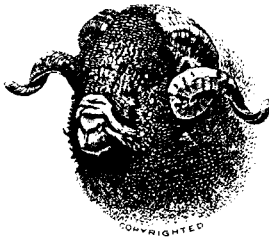
With the exception of your omitting news of Allan, I am deeply appreciative of your kind reply to my long letter of a few days ago.

Since the administration committee is to discuss my case this week, I believe, and to report to the faculty the following Tuesday, there may be some point in your writing to Dr. Edman, though the wisdom of such a procedure is a matter for you to decide. You may quote my letter. I tried to state public facts that cannot be denied.

The reinstatement of the philosophy major, however, - if the faculty decides to reinstate it - will, I fear, leave the basic problem unsolved. A section of the school holds that not merely must all of us accept the nine points of doctrine in the catalog, but that, further, no differences with the head of the Bible Department are to be tolerated. I am one of another group which believes that other views more in accord with historic Protestantism should be sympathetically represented. It is completely impossible for me to hear the reformed faith constantly attacked without saying something in its favor.

Since this is a matter of most basic policy, a clarification by the trustees, if you care to ask for it on June 13, would settle the perplexity of those who are interested. It would be a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you during your visit at that time.

Very truly yours,



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May 22 - 1942

Dr. Gordon H. Clark
Philosophy Department
WHEATON COLLEGE
Wheaton
Illinois

Dear Dr. Clark:

Your letter of May 19th is duly received, and I have read the letter which you enclosed, addressed to Allan Jr.

Allan has a very high regard for you....and he enjoyed very much the fellowship which he had with you and your family when at your home during his freshman year at Wheaton.

The conditions which you mention in your letter are certainly most unfortunate, and I am very sorry. I plan to be at the Trustees' meeting on Saturday, June 13th, returning home Sunday evening. I hope I can see you during that time and discuss this matter with you.

Would you like to have me write President Edman? If so, should I quote from your letter to me?

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Allan C. Emery.

ACE:LO

May 19 1942

Mr. Allan C. Emery
King Oak Hill
Weymouth Heights, Mass.

My dear Mr. Emery,

Your son, whom we enjoyed having with us during his year at Wheaton, told me to be free to write to him or to you, if occasion should arise. There is an occasion now.

But since I have not heard from Allan for some time, I fear that he might be in the armed forces. Therefore I have written to him but am enclosing the letter with this to you. If he is home, I judge that both of you will read it.

Very truly yours,

May 19 1942

Mr. Allan C. Emery, Jr.
King Oak Hill
Weymouth Heights, Mass.

Dear Allan,

On one or two occasions you told me that if I had any matter concerning the college which I desired to present to your father as trustee, I should feel free to write to you or to him. In the present situation I think it is proper to write; it is the first time, and it may be the last.

First an account of the situation must be made. Owing to the war and to the budget it seems that some retrenchments in the college must be made. This possibly affects the offering of some "majors" in the curriculum. When the material for the present catalog was being prepared, Dr. Thiessen told me that Dr. Edman wanted to see me about the philosophy major. I met Dr. Edman in the hall and he asked me to write a letter giving my views as to keeping or dropping it. With one of the young faculty men called into the army, I was asked to teach four hours of Greek. In my letter I showed how a philosophy major could be retained even while I taught some Greek.

The next thing I knew the catalog was published with the philosophy major missing. There had been no departmental recommendation, no committee meeting, no faculty action. It seems to me that all matters pertaining to the curriculum should pass through the faculty. Therefore I asked in the faculty meeting if this were not the case, and how it was that the philosophy major was dropped without regular action. The faculty seemed to approve of my views and instructed the administration committee (composed largely of the heads of the departments) to discuss the matter and bring back a recommendation.

In this committee meeting it became clear that the war and the budget had virtually nothing to do with the

matter, for I had some eighteen or twenty major students while other majors had less than five.

The real reason came to light in several accusations made against me. First, I was a Calvinist, and Wheaton ought not to be known as a Calvinistic school. Second, my students asked Dr. Thiessen embarrassing questions. Third, I gave my moral support to the Creed Club, a "disruptive" group of students that meet to study the Bible as interpreted by the reformed creeds.

I tried to reply to these accusations. First, I am a Calvinist. It is the doctrine of a dozen or more of the finest evangelical denominations. Wheaton is ostensibly an interdenominational school, and if Calvinism is persistently attacked (as it is), it ought to have also a sympathetic presentation. Since I do not have much time to discuss it in class (for the subject matter overlaps only at intervals), I am happy that the students meet in the Creed Club to study the matter. I cannot attend very often, but I certainly lend them my moral support.

The second charge was that my students ask Dr. Thiessen embarrassing questions. If this means that I suggest that they go and ask him questions, the charge is false. His students also come to me and ask questions. When they do so, I am neither embarrassed, nor do I think he has sent them to me. As a matter of fact, the students who know me best and sense the situation ask Dr. Thiessen very few questions. Most of the questions come from students who are simply seeking information, and yet the students tell me that Dr. Thiessen takes nearly every question as a personal affront. In one case, if the students report correctly, a girl whom I do not know, who never has taken any work from me, asked a question, and Dr. Thiessen scolded her till she cried in class.

The third charge is of course along the same general line. The Creed Club asked to use a room in the New Dorm this year. They were granted permission. They conduct a sober, dignified church service, with hymns, prayer, and what is practically a sermon. The Dean, however, charged that Calvinism was a sect and tried to put them out. They asked to have the opportunity to speak before the Committee on Student Affairs. I think that they were not granted permission, but no further attempt was made to put them out. Far from being a disruptive influence, they stand a good deal of petty persecution. Calvinism is misrepresented, I can say even slandered in classes, and often students take the cue and openly sneer at the members of the Creed Club.

Finally, in the meeting of the committee on administration, in which these charges had been made against me, Dr. Thiessen demanded that there be no mention of

a theological position different from his made in the classes. And in particular, since I am in his department, I must never disagree with him. Of course I am free to believe as I please, but the students must never know it.

This demand is, I take it, a demand for my resignation. It comes at a very awkward time of the year, when it is difficult to find another position; and I am unwilling to resign without acquainting some of the trustees with the reasons. If the trustees wish to enforce the views of Dr. Thiessen and some of the others, that will settle the matter. But I must remind them that Calvinism has been a noble and dominant part of Protestantism, whereas Dr. Thiessen's theology has never been adopted by any denomination and is only his personal production.

These are the facts as I see them, and I am writing this letter simply for your information.

Very sincerely yours,

May 14, 1974

Dr. Milton C. Fisher
Reformed Episcopal Seminary
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Dr. Fisher,

Your letter of last week was embarrassingly complimentary, but your acknowledgment of my high regard for the theological integrity of your seminary is completely true.

You also honor me by inviting me to share in your work. It is something that I find very attractive. Aside from writing, there is nothing I would rather do.

My wife and I have considered your offer with great care. It has been uppermost in our minds since we received your letter. The matter is more complex from our viewpoint here than it may seem from that of our friends in Philadelphia; and we have gone over a dozen or so important phases of such a move.

With great regret we have concluded that we must decline your offer. The matter of finances, which you mention in your letter, is not the most important consideration; and I would never suggest a figure higher than that suggested by Robert Radolph over the phone. But after weighing a dozen factors, it seems to me that it is best not to come.

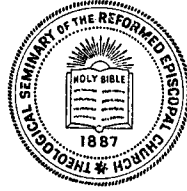
You can have only a faint idea of how attractive your offer has been. Let me assure you that my interest in and respect for your seminary is in no way diminished. I pray that the Lord will bless you all abundantly and that the influence of your teaching will extend farther and deeper than ever.

Most cordially yours,

Gordon H. Clark

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY of the REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH

25 SOUTH FORTY-THIRD STREET
PHILADELPHIA 4, PENNSYLVANIA



Telephone: BAring 2-5158

May 7, 1974

Dr. Gordon H. Clark
345 Buckingham Drive
Indianapolis, Ind. 46208

Dear Dr. Clark:

Recognizing how very much you have to offer those dedicated to the serious study and effective proclamation of the truths of God's Word, remembering your sustained interest and support of the labors of the Faculty of the Reformed Episcopal Seminary over the years to maintain sound witness and skillful training of each new generation of biblical exegetes and articulate spokesmen for the faith once delivered, and surmising that resettlement near members of your family could prove a satisfactory post-retirement adjustment--we of the current R.E.S. Faculty have made bold to approach you with the request that you consider sharing with us in the crucial task with which our Lord has commissioned us. You know our institution well enough to realize that our students come to us for the very reason that they know our position, theologically, and with very few exceptions are extremely teachable and receptive. Some are hampered by academic weaknesses, due to our admitting men prior to college exposure (the advantages of which you are also aware), but most of the really weak or unwilling ones never make it past first year Greek!

What we have in mind is your teaching two two-semester-hour courses: Apologetics to Seniors and Greek Exegesis to Middlers (John's Gospel the first term and I Peter the second). The Trustees will need to approve this call for a visiting professorship and finally determine the salary figure, but we'd appreciate having your reaction in writing, and any suggestion on your part as to what would seem appropriate remuneration would also provide guidance in the making of a firm offer.

May God grant you that guidance which will prove to our mutual benefit and the most profitable use of your time for the strengthening of His kingdom's work.

Sincerely, in His service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Milton C. Fisher".

Milton C. Fisher, Secretary
to the Faculty