

On the evening of June 30 1942 a committee of the trustees of Wheaton College, composed of Doctors Edman, McCarrell, Fuller, Ironside, and Mr. Fischer, met with me. They had heard complaints from certain members of the faculty, from students, and from the parents of students respecting my theological views.

The session lasted from 7:30 P.M. to 10:30 P.M., and most of the time was taken up by their attempt to learn my views and my attempt to explain them. I was handicapped by what appeared to be the almost complete ignorance of the historic position of the reformed churches. For example, Dr. Fuller was abruptly taken aback when I told him that the Westminster Confession taught the doctrine of reprobation.

Although I argued that a position carefully set down by learned men and accepted by a score of denominations for three hundred years could not legitimately be called extreme, I am confident that they all regard reprobation and the foreordination of sinful acts of men as incredibly extreme.

Some time was given to the consideration of the statements of students who had learned of Calvinism. I gather that they think I am responsible not only for every absurd statement one of my students makes, but that I am also responsible for a great many absurdities committed by students with whom I have never talked.

When I raised the matter of the secret method of dropping the philosophy major and the false statements circulated about me and certain of my friends who are outside the college, Mr. Fischer informed me that the committee had not come to discuss personal discourtesy.

The committee took no action, nor did it make any suggestions. Mr. Fischer personally suggested a more cautious expression of views.

I do not know whether the committee plans to meet again or not. One of the members, I think it was Mr. Fischer, intimated that if the situation did not improve, the trustees would be forced to do something or other.

Dec. 15 1942 Dr. Edman for the first
reported that the Board had not
acted on the Committee's report at
their meeting in October.

Dr. E. told me on ^{Dec. 31.} Report accepted, + services
terminated, at meeting a few days before

Jan 21. Fischer said he would ask
huskers to rescind act + let me
resign.

Track team ran on Sunday Nov. 23 1942

December 12 1941

Mrs. W. H. Anderson
285 Prospect Street
 Dover, New Jersey

My dear Mrs. Anderson,

Your good letter of December 8 has just come to hand. I was deeply affected by your letter, and its contents have become to me a matter of great concern. When first your son came to the campus I became acquainted with him both in the class room and in campus life. I noted then that he had need of some adjustments to life as he very quickly became partisan in some of the difficulties ensuing in the athletic department. After that he seemed to get along better. I regret very deeply his becoming involved in this present controversy over theological issues.

I am calling your letter to the attention of responsible individuals for their consideration. I shall greatly appreciate your continued prayers in our behalf for wisdom and guidance in these matters, and of course also for your lad and any others that may be so confused.

With prayer for you all at home, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(Signed) V. R. Edman

Mrs. Anderson also wrote to Schoon on Sept 27 1941.
Schoon answered on Dec. 18 1941, & signed himself
Assistant to the Dean of Men. Yet the Dean's
office kept Wm. A. in our house the year of 41 + 42
& would have let him return for 42 + 43, had
we not discovered Mrs. Anderson's protest &
insisted that he live elsewhere.

March 14 1942

President V. Raymond Edman
Wheaton College

Dear Dr. Edman,

The following is my analysis of the situation in philosophy. Whatever the decision may be, changes will have to be made in the catalog material.

When the nation is at war, its citizens, in an effort to do something, often waste their energies in useless undertakings and sometimes do more harm than good. This is particularly evident in the general relaxing of standards.

War does not alter the values, and should not alter the standards of a liberal education. Though some young men must postpone their studies, the conditions of a prison camp, for example, by forcing one back upon one's inner resources, reveal the superficiality of a utilitarian program based on principles of economic determinism.

A college should therefore make strenuous efforts not to impoverish its curriculum. If, however, the faculty is drafted, and replacements cannot be made, the necessary reductions in curriculum should be spread evenly rather than imposed on one department to the aggrandizement of others, and the modus operandi should be the combination instead of the annihilation of major subjects.

In the case of philosophy at Wheaton, in which the major requirements have been kept low to further a broad liberal program, it would be a strange irony if the ability of the instructor to use the tools of his subject should be the cause of his being prevented from continuing major work.

There is no objection to teaching four hours of German, French, or Greek. As the number of the faculty

is reduced, each one remaining should be willing to assume a fair share of the burden. The point of the present argument is, however, that assuming four hours of a language does not make a philosophy major impossible.

Because of liberal ideals the required units in a philosophy major number but twenty-one. Six of these are ethics and theism. Ancient, Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary now give thirteen more. There are also offered two two-year cycles amounting to eight units. Besides these, a first term of modern philosophy, courses in the Hellenistic age and in logic are in the purely elective group. Even if all this latter group were omitted, it would still be possible to offer a major in philosophy.

The teaching load for one term, with certain changes in hours from the present schedule, could be as follows:

Ancient or Medieval	3	hours
Modern or Contemporary	3	hours
Two-year cycle	2	hours
One other course	3	hours
Greek	4	hours
	15	hours

Thus it is clear that from the arithmetical as well as from the liberal point of view, the dropping of the philosophy major is not justified.

Yours very truly,

LAW OFFICES

1018 REAL ESTATE TRUST BUILDING

BROAD AND CHESTNUT STREETS

PHILADELPHIA

HENRY PRESTON ERDMAN

1907-1936

**JOHN HARPER
WILLIAM M. BUCHANAN
PHILIP B. DRIVER, JR.**

May 1, 1942

Mr. Gordon Clark
610 Howard St.
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Gordon:-

I represent a Pennsylvania Corporation and also am a member of its Board of Directors. Three years ago, a matter involving this corporation came to my attention and I investigated it rather carefully. As a result, I came into possession of unquestioned evidence showing that one of the Board members was an embezzler of the corporation's funds. With this evidence on hand, I called a meeting of the Board without notice to the defaulting member, placed my evidence before them and then was treated to a series of speeches by the various members of the Board as to the firm, forceful manner in which the situation should be handled; what each of them felt about the defaulting member, what an outrage it was etc, etc, etc.

We then called a meeting of the full Board of Directors to give the defaulting member a chance to give any explanation he cared to make. This he tried rather foolishly to do, then I awaited the explosion -- which never took place. I rather enjoyed the discomforture of these strong minded fellow members of the Board who could not find a word to say and eventually the task became mine to speak.

I realize I have given you rather a poor analogy in one sense because you are not being charged by the Board of Trustees of Wheaton College or by the Faculty with any improper action. Your Board members, therefore, have more reason to be quiet at an open meeting than in my case.

Assuming that the officers or the Board of Directors have determined to sever your connections with the college and assuming that I have any ability to analyze the situation which is 1,000 miles from me, I would definitely come to the conclusion that the Board members have been averaging out their silence at an open meeting with a great deal of talk elsewhere and that they have probably made up their minds to

May 1, 1942

to find some method of indirectly terminating your teaching position at Wheaton College. Even if they are not trying to terminate your position, I believe that they are going to make it distasteful for you to stay at Wheaton College.

I believe your position in the future would be much stronger if you resigned from Wheaton College voluntarily. This, of course, you probably would not want to do until you first had another position open. It would, therefore, appear to me to be most wise to immediately try to locate another college which will be more to your liking, not only in respect to the atmosphere but also probably from a financial viewpoint.

I do not know too well what the issues are between you and the President and Registrar but if they involve a matter of principle or honor, I am certain you will not give ground so that it is pointless for me to give you any advice on such a question. If the issue is something else, sometimes a little give-and-take will smooth out the situation, at least temporarily, and time may be of some importance to you until you can find more satisfactory surroundings.

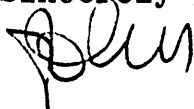
I do not envy you your situation. Being responsible to one person or one group for all of the work that you do has its disadvantages. Personally, I prefer my position being responsible to several hundred clients, no one of whom can have sufficient of my time or work to make any serious difference.

I do not know that I can add much more to your situation except to say that your friends who know of your ability and your moral honesty will undoubtedly give you 100% moral support which, under some circumstances, is a help.

The notions which the residents of Wheaton may have concerning your Christianity are quite unimportant. In criminal law, a man's reputation is important but his Christianity is a matter between himself and his Creator and his reputation one way or the other is of but passing moment. I frequently am quite certain that fundamentally you and I believe in the same thing.

Keep your chin up.

Sincerely yours,



JH:em

610 Howard St. Wheaton, Ill.
May 1 1942.

Dear Cliff, Bob, and Burt,

In reply to a letter from Cliff urging me to withdraw my total abstinence resolution, I think I owe a statement to Bob and Burt since I respect their judgment, desire their advice, and in the case of Burt because what I may say here will sound inconsistent with what I wrote him previously on this matter.

First of all, to try to make this letter a little more complete, I affirm my belief in the doctrine of Christian liberty. Spurgeon smoked, Luther drank beer (the stinking stuff), and with the statement prepared by the committee of nine on the matter I am in complete agreement.

Furthermore I sympathize, more than the seminary men image I judge, with their unwillingness to make even an apparent concession to the Wheaton group, the perfectionists, the victorious life group, and that type of people. I know very well that my resolution would not change their attitude one bit toward us. The people whom the resolution is aimed at are good, humble Christians here and there who have been deeply grieved at our mess. It is a fact that the students at Westminster, and perhaps the younger ministers, have said and done unjustifiable things. People will no doubt always call us (as Burt so cautiously expressed it to me) "unbending." And our men must be ready to take it on the chin. Guts are required. But I do believe that some of our number have acted unwisely even taking into consideration either their youth, their more prominent position, or any and all considerations.

No doubt all this is granted. Now what am I to do about it. I wrote to Burt that I felt I had put my hand to the plough. But if it is really the wrong plough, I should turn back and be inconsistent. So let me be as inconsistent as possible in this letter, if for no other reason than to get your reactions.

Whatever I do will no doubt be misconstrued. In fact the situation I face is so complicated that I cannot construe my own conduct. To make this clear will require a few personal details. Kindly have patience.

The whole question of my right at Wheaton to acquaint the students with the historic position of a large section of Protestantism has been raised. The head of my department defines "cooperation" as requiring my compliance with his theology. A lot of it reminds me of our delightful Presbytery meetings in the old church, except that there it was more in the open. To be brief, I am considering resigning, though one or two of the faculty who know me a little more intimately than the rest say not to. But it seems to me that my days are numbered no matter what.

Hence I must find a new job. College or university positions are scarce. There is just a possibility at one or two seminaries, for example Reformed Episcopal. If I should turn to the ministry, it would be just for the job, wouldn't it?

As a matter of fact, about a year ago, I wrote confidentially and tentatively to Woolley about the wisdom of seeking ordination from Phila. Presbytery. The drawback of course is that I lack certain parts of seminary work, the matter would therefore have to be taken to the General Assembly. I dislike the publicity of this course, and if denied would dislike it still more. Then when I learned I was on the Committee of Nine, I postponed this idea, and no one knows of it but Woolley. I would be far more in accord with our Church than with any other. I greatly appreciate Cliff's statement of solid contentment (recognizing room for improvement of course) with our set up. Yet, on account of personal connections, I could get along with the R. Ep; and it might seem best, if teaching in their seminary, to enter their church. The requirements are easier, and no doubt they would accept my academic work as the full equivalent of seminary work. Well, you say, I am looking for a job. If I withdraw the resolution and seek ordination in the OPC, I'm playing politics. If I go to the R. E., I never had any convictions of a reformed nature. And if I leave the OPC for any reason, I am backing out and doing dirt to my friends. The last sentence has a great measure of truth to it, as Burt very kindly indicated privately to me at our last meeting. My lawyer friend puts some emphasis on this last point; the other things will be said, though I do not regard them as true.

There are some minor considerations that you think I should not even think of. I have all sorts of thoughts, without necessarily having the right one yet. One of these is the probable fact that I could be ordained in the R. E. church almost at any time. But for the Phila. Presbytery to act, and then the G. A. would take at least until June 1943. Should anyone be ordained after he is forty? That age is bad enough as it is. Further, I have grave doubts that the Phila. Presbytery would be willing to make the concessions I need.

To sum up: I cannot now see what is morally right, nor what is expedient for me. To you three I am ~~planning~~ disclosing the whole situation, subjective as well as objective. I shall greatly appreciate your advice. You will I know be cautious how you use this information. Whether Bob ought to approach Rian about my chances in Presbytery, I leave to his discretion. I ought to tell Woolley at least that I have indicated to you my thought of ordination, and release him from any imposition of confidence on this point. Will you, Bob, do that; my time right now is jammed full. I am enclosing a tentative draft of my reasons if I present a resignation.

Cordially

LAW OFFICES

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1907-1936

JOHN HARPER
WILLIAM M. BUCHANAN
PHILIP B. DRIVER, JR.

May 4, 1942

Mr. Gordon H. Clark
610 Howard Street
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Gordon:-

I should be nearer Wheaton, Illinois or your situation should be much closer to Philadelphia, because I do not have much confidence in the advice which I must give on a situation which is so far removed and whose details I am not at all acquainted with.

For this reason, I hope you will not follow any of my advice unless the reasons therefor appeal to you.

I gather that you have definitely concluded you are going to resign as a member of the faculty of Wheaton College, and that your present problem is now one of method. I can only suggest that you be very careful that you do not go on the defensive as I believe it will hurt your situation not only at Wheaton, but at any other college where you may try to get a position. As an illustration, I would suggest that the procedure of the faculty be not described as "underhanded procedure". This indicates that you are complaining about something that the Board of Trustees or the Officers have done to you. Again I have suggested that you cross out the phrase, "I have been denied the right to acquaint the students" and have suggested the wording, "An attempt is being made to deny the students the right to become acquainted". Again my position is to avoid language that you are complaining or on the defensive.

I do not know that my substitute wording has completely accomplished the purpose I had in mind, but my general thought is that you are an employee of the college; the officers and directors have the right to run the college as they see fit without complaint from you, and your strongest position is that if you do not agree with it, you should, with dignity, step out. I most certainly believe that your reasons for so doing should be set forth.

Enclosed I am returning to you your suggested wording of two paragraphs of a resignation by you. I hope you are able to read my scribbling. Twice I have used the wording "Trustees" and I am not sure that it is the

May 4, 1942

Trustees to whom you are referring. I have indicated this uncertainty with a question mark.

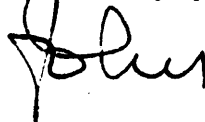
You are angry and undoubtedly properly so, but do not show it any more than you must and be very careful not to do anything which looks as though you were trying to "show up" the Trustees or strike back at them. If you do and it becomes known, I am afraid you will find your opportunities to find a new position much more limited.

As for printing the letter and sending it to the philosophers of the country: if your purpose in sending it, and if the reaction of the recipients will be that you, with as much dignity as possible, stepped out of a situation which was against your principles, I would send it. If, however, the recipients are likely to get any idea that you have been given a "raw deal" or that you are trying to show up Wheaton College for what you believe it to be, I would not send it.


I feel the same with respect to sending the letter to the college constituency.

I am afraid that I cannot suggest anything else which will be of any help to you, but you certainly have my very best wishes and if I can be of any other service, by all means call upon me.

Sincerely yours,



JH:em

P. S. I have just had my secretary re-read this letter to me and in spots it sounds as though I was preaching to you or being unduly harsh with your suggestions. I did not intend to be; I am sure you will not take it except as I intended; and I am, therefore, not going to re-dictate the letter (which brings a smile of relief to my secretary's face). 

Carlisle, Mass.
May 4, 1942

Dr. Gordon Clark,
Wheaton, Ill.

Dear Dr. Clark,

Thanks for all the information in your letter. I may have occasion to use some of it to correct false notions.

It would be my judgment that it is best to wait and see whether you hear from Pres. Wood. I am quite sure that Tenney will bring up your name, and if Pres. Wood is at all interested he will undoubtedly get in touch with you.

If I can be of help at any time, please let me know.

Sincerely in Christ,


Burt Goddard

THE NATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTE

340 WEST FIFTY-FIFTH STREET

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

May
four
1942

Dr. Gordon H. Clark
610 Howard Street
Wheaton, Illinois

Dear Dr. Clark

I cannot tell you how sorry I am about the matters referred to in your recent letter and enclosure. I have purposely kept ignorant about such problems. I had no idea things were as described, though I did get a card from Ed Elliott in which he hinted that the philosophy major had been dropped.

Naturally, without any further knowledge, and in line with my policies hitherto, I would urge you to hold on as long as possible and maintain as high standards as possible.

I wish we could offer you something here, but our budget will not permit any expansion, and our salaries are extremely small, even if there were a place.

I shall be praying for you and your family, and shall be interested in all that concerns you.

Yours in Christian fellowship


J. Oliver Buswell, Jr.
President

job/b

To take effect at the close of the present semester
I hereby present my resignation as Asso Prof
of Phil. at Wheaton College in ~~full~~ protest
against two phases of current policy.

First: the philosophy major was dropped from
the catalog without departmental recommendation,
~~with~~ committee action, ~~with~~ ^{or} faculty
approval. One cannot submit to such
an underhanded procedure and retain
self respect. I am also at variance
with the policy of lowering ~~the~~ graduation
and entrance requirements, and the
~~great~~ lack of encouragement, ~~to original~~
~~productive work by the~~ not to mention
the positive handicaps, with reference
to scholarly productivity by the faculty.

Second:

WHEATON COLLEGE

510 BOX 98

The Wheaton College for Christian Education

Second: while the college has the undisputed right to require a sincere adherence to the doctrinal position stated in the catalog, I have been denied the right to acquaint the students, either in class or in a student club, with the historic position of the ^{several} Presbyterian ~~Churches~~, ^{denominations}, the ^{several} Reformed Churches, the Congregational, a large number of Baptist churches, — in general the position of the greatest ~~men~~ men of the Protestant Reformation. Cooperation is defined as compliance with the theology of one or a few individuals, a theology never adopted by any denomination, nor by Whiston College. The unauthorized imposition of new standards, contrary to the historic creeds of Protestantism, is on a par with the unauthorized dropping of the philosophy major, and its cause.

First, the philosophy major was dropped from the catalog without departmental recommendation, committee action or faculty approval. One cannot submit to such an ~~un-~~unorthodox ~~handed~~ procedure and retain self-respect. I am also at variance with the policy of lowering graduation and entrance requirements, and the lack of encouragement, not to mention the positive handicaps, with reference to scholarly productivity by the faculty.

Second, while the college has the undisputed right to require a sincere adherence to the doctrinal position stated in the catalog, ~~I have been denied the right to acquaint the students~~, either in class or in a student club, with the historic position of the several Presbyterian denominations, the several Reformed Churches, the Congregational bodies, a large number of the Baptist churches -- in general the position of the greatest men of the Protestant reformation. Cooperation ~~is defined~~ as compliance with the theology of one or a few individuals, a theology never adopted by any denomination, nor by Wheaton College. The unauthorized imposition of ~~new~~ standards, contrary to the historic creeds of Protestantism, is on a par with the unauthorized dropping of the philosophy major, and its cause.

an attempt is being made to deny students the right to be acquainted with the trustees

being

I am entirely out of sympathy with this situation and, to maintain my self respect and to permit Wheaton College to function as the trustees (?) desire, I must resign my position as _____

First, the philosophy major was dropped from the catalog without departmental recommendation, committee action or faculty approval. One cannot submit to such an underhanded procedure and retain self-respect. I am also at variance with the policy of lowering graduation and entrance requirements, and the lack of encouragement, not to mention the positive handicaps, with reference to scholarly productivity by the faculty.

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x. *keeping the students thus in ignorance is neither intellectually worthy of a college nor morally worthy of a Christian.*

610 Howard St.
Wheaton, Ill.

May 9 1942

Dear Bob,

When I was with you in April, I did not think that things would develop so quickly. Had I seen ahead, I should have discussed matters more at length with all of you. At the present moment the outcome is still not clear. In your letter of May 8 you refer to a letter I wrote to one of the students. I gather from your remarks that he or you have misunderstood. The only student to whom I write is Westlake; if you have anyone else in mind, he has no letter from me. The letter I sent you last was, and still is the latest news. Therefore your "perhaps unreasonable suggestion" viz., to hang on, is neither unreasonable nor out of date. So far as I officially know, I can stay here next year if I want to. I may be fired; I may resign. But right now, I may stay.

Unfortunately I must get advice from my friends by letter, and it is a poor method. I have tried to remain on good terms with Buswell. Regardless of McIntire and Faith, I am positive that Buswell is honest and above board. Granted that he has made mistakes in practice and that his theology is peculiar in spots, I fear that many in our Church do not realize what he was up against here at Wheaton; and I know too how he defamed me when some of Bible Synod protested to him about keeping me at Wheaton. So I wrote to him also for advice. He too said hang on.

I suspect that there is a student at Westminster who get news ahead of time and usually gets it wrong; for the said student wrote to an instructor here regretting that I had been asked to resign. If Westlake tells you anything, it will (barring unclarity in my writing) be true, but one other young man combines a lively imagination with consistently poor judgment.

So, I may stay, for all I know now. But is it worth while to stay? If I can beat the combination against me, it may be worth while. The present head of the department may retire, and I would have (?) a chance to take his place. The students here are earnest Christians, horribly ignorant, but no ~~more~~ dumber than other students, May be I could later make more progress. But at the present moment all this looks very doubtful. Rather I judge that philosophy will be secretly discredited (as has been done) and invisible restrictions and hindrances will multiply. Several influential men on the faculty urge students not to take philosophy, and then the dear registrar shows how there is little interest in the subject, hardly worth continuing it.

What then? Find another college perhaps. probably not a Christian college. Few students ever thinking of going into the ministry. Perhaps I could get one student in two years

to go to Westminster. Of course I could write articles on Plotinus and show his effect of Augustinianism. I am already making my small way in the American Philosophical Assn with Plotinus. I could achieve the distinction of being a mediocre Plotinian. It would be a relatively easy, comfortable, and enjoyable life; provided I could get a job, for colleges are not advertizing for philosophers this year.

What then? Teach at Reformed Episcopal, or at Gordon? Not bad perhaps. I could strengthen R.E., help them get out of the Federal Council. It would be enjoyable, I know and like most of their men; and it would be definitely Christian work. Plotinus would be laid aside; I could continue my commentary on First Peter, study contemporary religious thought, and live in Phila -- a distinct attraction. At Gordon? Well, I need a job, and any port in a storm. Burt says that the President wants to make it more Reformed; I might even do some good.

Cut out.

~~Or else? Find a church. That requires ordination. I am the world's worst diplomat, but maybe I could keep a church going. I even think that without too much bad luck I could convince an independent group to enter the OPC. Of course the group would have to be found first. It might have to be founded, and that would be a harder job. Whether I would be more useful in a church or in teaching is another consideration.~~

~~For any light you have on the situation I shall thank you. I ~~feel~~ feel just now like the theology of crisis. That is, my present decision (if it is I and not the Trustees who decide) will probably stand for, quite lkely, the rest of my life. If a change is to be made, now is the time, and I want all the wisdom I can gather.~~

Now for the resolution: I am delighted to hear of your brother's church coming in. Bradford wrote me that his church has been favorable to Faith since 1937. He thinks that the resolution would help him. And I must confess that, rightly or wrongly, I think the seminary men are woefully blind to the situation. Kuiper speaks of having a course introduced to take care of the matter. In my judgment no course on ethics is needed for this matter. Unless the professors change their attitude, a course will be no good. And if they change their attitude, a course would not be necessary. But what hope is there of the professors changing their attitude? For this reason I want to push the resolution. And I hate to withdraw it for fear that the opposition will raise such a loud noise that your brother's church, or Bradford's, will be harmed. It hinders the whole denomination to have a few that argue in effect: don't do this; it is not expedient; and it is not expedient because we shall see to it that it ~~is~~ makes more of a stink than it is worth. Cliff wrote me an almost overpowering letter to get me to withdraw it, and maybe I shall have to, but it will be a bitter disappointment. Strange as it may seem in view of my experiences at Wheaton, I have maintained a hope that the OPC could lead a considerable

section of the fundamentalists. They need leadership, and it ought to fall to us. But to lead them, we must have their confidence. . . . Well, you can continue the line of thought for yourself.

cut out

Now for ordination. As I think I said in my last letter, Marsden raised the question about two years ago. I said No, rather positively, because I thought I was fixed for life, and as a professor I did not need it. But the idea remained, and I broached it to Woolley about a year ago. Then I postponed it because I wanted to serve on the Committee of Nine. The only deterring consideration now is the particular mess in which I find myself. That the situation has a bearing on my desire for ordination, I do not deny; certainly it has accelerated the progress of thought. And now that it is time to settle some problems, other problems also might as well be settled also.

Will you therefore kindly join with Woolley (if he will) and present the enclosed paper to the Philadelphia Presbytery?

P.S. John Harper, 1018 Real Estate Trust Bldg., southeast corner of Broad and Chestnut, knows all these details. In explaining them to him, I made mention of you and suggested that he attend church once again in his life. A point of contact that I hope you can use. I confess I have not spoken seriously enough to him.

610 Howard Street
Wheaton Illinois

May 9 1942

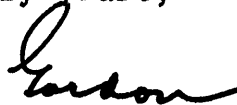
Dear Paul,

In view of our friendship for the past ten years, and to conclude a matter that has been revolving in my mind for a little while, would you be so kind as to join with Bob Strong in presenting the enclosed (self-explanatory) paper to the Philadelphia Presbytery?

I should be greatly obliged if you can consent to do this for me.

If the Presbytery cares to consider the matter, perhaps a meeting in the summer could be arranged. It would be most convenient, if perchance the Committee of Nine is continued and if I am still on it, to have these two meetings on successive days. But such details will take care of themselves.

Cordially yours,



To the Presbytery of Philadelphia of
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Fathers and Brethren:

Although it is not usual for a person in mid-life to seek ordination to the gospel ministry, the constitution of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church makes provision for the possibility of certain irregular cases.

About two years ago a minister of our Church suggested ordination to me. At the moment I gave the matter little thought. The idea grew, however, and recent events have completed a decision that was almost formed last summer. Accordingly, while I have always tried to serve God, now, from a desire to intensify or particularize that service, I apply to you for ordination.

The most conspicuous irregularity is that of a seminary education. The Presbytery and the Church will have to decide, along with all other matters involved, whether to accept my academic work and private study as the equivalent of the regular requirements.

Be assured that, regardless of the decision, I shall, so far as I am able, actively advance the reformed faith and support The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Your brother in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gordon H. Clark". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Your brother in Christ".

May 9 1942

To the Presbytery of Philadelphia of
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Fathers and Brethren:

Although it is not usual for a person in mid-life to seek ordination to the gospel ministry, the constitution of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church makes provision for the possibility of certain irregular cases.

About two years ago a minister of our Church suggested ordination to me. At the moment I gave the matter little thought. The idea grew, however, and recent events have completed a decision that was almost formed last summer. Accordingly, while I have always tried to serve God, now, from a desire to intensify or particularize that service, I apply to you for ordination.

The most conspicuous irregularity is that of a seminary education. The Presbytery and the Church will have to decide, along with all other matters involved, whether to accept my academic work and private study as the equivalent of the regular requirements.

Be assured that, regardless of the decision, I shall, so far as I am able, actively advance the reformed faith and support The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Your brother in Christ

Gordon H. Clark

May 9 1942

Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church

WILLOW GROVE, PENNSYLVANIA

Rev. Robert Strong, S. C. D.
PASTOR

May 6, 1942

Dear Gordon:

You had indicated in my hearing that conditions were not too pleasant at wheaton, but I did not realize what you were up against until your letter came. The treatment you have received in your work and the demands that your department head has imposed are simply outrageous. Anyone knowing the facts would entirely sympathize with your feeling that matters were rapidly approaching the stage where the situation would have to be deemed intolerable. At the meeting of the Committee of Nine last night (present: Rian, Kuiper, Van Til, Thompson, myself) it was mentioned that something like a show-down had occurred; the information came from one of the students, who had received a letter from you. My perhaps unreasonable suggestion would have been to hold on as long as you possibly could at wheaton--for the sake of the students you would still be influencing in spite of all restrictions, for the sake of preserving an OPC testimony in that strategic area, etc.--but this latest development, which evidently came right on the heels of your letter to us three, makes my contemplated suggestion out of order, I take it. That fact directs me to address myself particularly to the two questions of your resolution and your application for ordination.

Before I turn to these subjects let me report some of the things that were said last night about developments at Wheaton. Van Til was especially outspoken in his regret at the course of events. He paid the highest tribute to your work out there, pointing out that the wheaton group at westminster is at the seminary because of your influence and that, whereas he used to have to spend a large part of his time in the first year in rooting out Arminian notions from wheaton-trained minds, now, thanks to you, the Wheaton men come Calvinists already. The seminary fellows view it as a great loss to their own work that you are having such embarrassing difficulties put in your way as to all but force you to resign from the Wheaton faculty. The whole church will groan at the news that Gordon Clark is seriously considering leaving Wheaton.

Now about your resolution. I still feel that it would be better not to present. I mean that I feel the same way even after reading your letter and sincerely entering into the problem with which you are faced as the one who brought the abstinence matter again to the notice of the church. Not to present the resolution might involve you in a charge of inconsistency, it is true. But new factors have entered that will make such a charge fall quickly to the ground. This, for example: last night my brother's church had a congregational meeting to vote on the question of joining The OPC--I haven't heard from him yet this morning, but after his saying that both of the boards of the church were unanimously in favor of affiliation I have no doubt about the outcome--and I wonder if we all ought not to feel that the new relation thus established should be guarded very tenderly. Here as OP churches go is a very strong church; we're thrilled to be thus reinforced; we want them to get settled into the denominational harness painlessly. Might not a big row on the abstinence question do harm at this point? Now it's quite true that my brother is red-hot for an abstinence resolution, but I should think that his zeal would now be even stronger for the success of the new step in which he had led his congregation and that he would be well enough satisfied with something on expediency rather than a bitterly fought-over abstinence resolution. If my analysis is accurate and if the point appeals to your thinking too, there could be no justice in charging you with inconsistency or with seeking personal advantage in withdrawing or not sending in your resolution; and everyone would, I think, come quickly to recognize the fact. So I say, since the good of the church would be served and your own integrity would not be in the least compromised, you would do well to withhold the resolution, Gordon.

Now about your ordination. I think we could put that through all right. Your prestige in our group is very high. All recognize that you have selflessly served the Cause. If it is your judgment that you are now ready for the step of ordination there will be mighty few who won't be ready to go along wholeheartedly. I cannot think that anyone will impugn your motives. Instead of that the men will rally around a man who has stood to his guns in a hard place of battle. That's my judgment. As you say, the constitutional procedure is pretty slow.

Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church

WILLOW GROVE, PENNSYLVANIA

Rev. Robert Strang, S. T. D.
PASTOR

If things have indeed come to a final head at Wheaton and you are under the necessity of making a new connection quickly and you can do so better attached to another group, I for one would understand perfectly if you should make the change. Who indeed wouldn't? With all my heart I'd lament the necessity and I'd certainly do everything in my (little) power to obviate the necessity, but it would be my last thought to reproach you about the change if it came.

All of this boils down to a very brief statement: we're for you, Gordon, all the way and have the most complete confidence in you; whatever you do, you'll do because you think it's right to do and that's enough for us.

Yours in the bonds of ~~faith~~ and prayer--

Cordially,

Bob

P.S. May I add that my secret hope is that you'll be offered a chair at some institution where you can continue your great work of molding the thinking of young men and women. How desperately are men like yourself needed in the colleges and universities of today! I am fully consistent in saying this and in also encouraging you in your desire for ordination.

Carlisle, Mass.
May 15, 1942

Dr. Gordon H. Clark,
Wheaton, Ill.

Dear Dr. Clark,

I can give only hasty remarks and reactions due to the pressure of time.

As for your choices concerning occupation I would suggest that you follow your own heart. Don't enter the ministry because of the pressure of circumstances--only if you feel a real call which can't be turned aside. If I felt called to teach I would even leave the denomination if it seemed wise and necessary to do so in order to keep on teaching. If I felt called to preach I would first exhaust every possibility of getting into the denomination with which I was most in accord, theologically and ecclesiastically (I mean Church Government).

As for presenting resolutions and hinging staying in or getting out of the church on anything pertaining to such resolutions, I can only say that that isn't my idea of the church and denominationalism. The only reasons which appeal to me for leaving a denomination don't include such an one. It seems too much like the Bible Presbyterian business. I don't think we have any right to leave a church because of extra-Confessional differences.

I'm sure my remarks don't sound humble, but I mean them that way. I just don't have time to write at length and so must go right to the point. I hope you'll forgive me.

With all best wishes--in Christ,

Burt Goddard

May 13 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,

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 Wheaton, and I greatly appreciate your work. I am altogether behind you.

I have been interested in securing a copy of your article on "Christian Devotion" 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 S. Cunningham