

February 15, 1943

The President and
The Trustees of Wheaton College
Wheaton, Illinois

Gentlemen:

With regard to the adoption, by the Trustees of Wheaton College, of the report concerning the teaching of philosophy and the doctrines that God is a most pure spirit without body, parts, or passions, and that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, I desire to make the following statements.

In general, the conditions laid down in the report are contrary to the conditions under which I originally accepted employment. The report states, "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." I made it clear then that if conditions such as those contained in this report were contemplated, I would not consent to teach here. The present reversal of policy constitutes in my non-legal opinion a breach of the terms of my employment.

The conditions as stated in the report are, "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;" My reasons for refusing to accept these conditions are the same now as they were six years ago, and involve both academic and religious principles.

Academically, these two recommendations to the effect that philosophy be taught without stating my reasons for propositions of theodicy is the equivalent of requiring a medical faculty to teach medicine without discussing the cause of typhoid fever or tuberculosis. This is a type of teaching with which I am unfamiliar.

On the ground of religious and moral conviction the following points must be enumerated.

First: I reject the contentions of paragraph six that sound deduction from Scripture is illegitimate, and also that the spirituality

of God and his foreordination can be neither supported nor refuted by argument from Scripture.

Second: To comply with recommendation two would be immoral. The effect of compliance would be to persuade students that the two doctrines in question are merely some personal aberration, and would obscure the significant fact that they were the views of the greatest reformers and have been for more than three hundred years the official position of a score of denominations, represented in this country by the following:

The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
 The Presbyterian Church in the U. S.
 The United Presbyterian Church of North America
 The Associate Presbyterian Church of North America
 The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
 The Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod
 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 The Bible Presbyterian Church
 The Bohemian and Moravian Brethren Churches

Third: The Scriptures in many places (e.g. Acts 20:27 and II Tim. 3:16) require the proclamation of the whole gospel. The diluted Christianity and the expurgated Bible contemplated in this report are abhorrent to me.

Fourth: By adopting this report the Trustees of Wheaton College have officially pronounced the two doctrines in question "unsound" and "dangerous." This is an open condemnation of all reformed denominations. Naturally I cannot support an organization that pronounces all the above mentioned Churches unsound and dangerous.

Fifth: To comply with these conditions would be to repudiate my vows of ordination to the eldership. The fact that others, since the growth of modernism in some denominations, neglect to perform their vows does not relieve me of my responsibility to Almighty God.

For these and similar reasons I am unable to comply with the requirements recently enacted by the Trustees, and I hereby present my resignation from the faculty of Wheaton College.

For the reasons that the College has made its plans to have me teach for the current school year and that I have made similar plans, my resignation is effective at the end of the 1942-1943 school year, but my tenure of the position until that time must be subject to the agreement I had on the above matters when I was first employed.

Very truly yours,

philosophy of history! God's providence, His sovereignty, even His self-consistency are ruled out. Since the Jews, not the church, are His major concern, in days such as these we have very little with which to be encouraged. All that we can do is hope and pray that the attack on the church will soon come to an end. We have no guarantee that the present situation is under God's absolute control for the spreading abroad of His church; nor can we take comfort from the experiences of God's people of old. If we hold to dispensational views, lack of perspective and hopelessness can be the only result.

The Christian's Comfort

But let us thank God that Modern Dispensationalism is false. Our God, even as in the days of Israel, still reigns and watches over His people—the church of Christ. As the believing of Israel were held in the hollow of His hand in Old Testament days, the believing of all nations are today also in the same position of utter safety. Even the wrath of men shall praise Him, for He is marching on to victory. He is fulfilling His sovereign and divine plan for the redemption of men, which He commenced at the dawn of creation. This is our joy and our peace in days of terror such as those in which we live.

DR. CLARK RESIGNS FROM WHEATON COLLEGE FACULTY

RULING Elder Gordon H. Clark, Ph.D., for six years professor of philosophy at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, has resigned from that position. The resignation has been accepted by the executive committee of Wheaton's board of trustees, and will take effect at the end of the current school year.

Dr. Clark's letter of resignation, in which he discusses the grounds of his action, follows:

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Very truly yours,
GORDON H. CLARK

The following is the reply of the board of trustees, accepting Dr. Clark's resignation.

Your letter of February 15th addressed to the Trustees of the College and to me [Dr. V. R. Edman, President] was presented at the last meeting of the Executive Committee. By vote of that Committee your resignation to be effective at the end of the 1942-1943 school year [August 31, 1943] was accepted. The action of the Committee refers solely to the resignation and does not imply acceptance of the reasons therein stated.

Dr. Clark is a ruling elder and member of Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

It is expected that THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN will in the near future publish further comment on the important issues that forced Dr. Clark's action.