

14
July 14 1943

My dear Gray,

First, I want to thank you for your letter of July 9 with its enclosure (which I am returning) and for your interest in the matter. Your letter came while I was away on a speaking trip, and hence the delay in reply.

Perhaps it would be well for me to give you some of the background, even if it requires a lengthy letter. And because I do not like to write long letters, try to give the information to any others who might want me to write it out again.

Dr. Thiessen at the first, when I came here in 1936, tried to have me stopped from preaching Calvinism. He failed. I was employed on the definite understanding that nothing beyond the platform was to be required of me. If you will read over the report of the committee that examined me last June, you will notice that they admit my views had not changed since 1936, and that they were well known then, and had been thoroughly discussed. I claim therefore that their imposition of the very requirements which I rejected in 1936 constitutes a virtual breach of contract. Dr. Buswell holds that legally the trustees have the right to change any requirements and can fire a man for any reason at all. The exact legality of the matter is not the point I am trying to make. It is the fact that they have broken a promise and a business arrangement.

Dr. Thiessen apparently continued to scheme to get me out. But so long as Dr. Buswell remained, he could do nothing. After Buswell was fired (ask the trustees to explain that! -- and ask how it is the two men who were most prominent of all at Wheaton in a fight against modernism have been forced out) Thiessen, Dyrness, and Edman dropped the philosophy major from the catalog without a departmental meeting, without a committee meeting, and without faculty approval. The first I learned of it was from a student who had seen the printed catalog. I tried to bring this matter to the trustees, but they categorically denied me permission to say anything against Thiessen. I had brought the matter to the faculty. Edman put the matter off; and I raised the question three times in faculty, and finally after about three months, Edman allowed the faculty to vote on the matter, and the

major was restored to the catalog by faculty vote the very last faculty meeting in June 1942. In the three months no doubt they had decided to put me out.

Glenn Andreas wrote to Dr. Edman and asked what issues were involved. Three days before the trustees committee examined me on my theological views (and found they were the same as six years before) Edman wrote to Andreas and said "Quite possibly there has gone abroad a misconception of the situation in regard to a philosophy major at Wheaton. For some years there has been a marked decline in the enrollment in that department. Under the uncertain conditions of war days, we are expecting teachers to branch out into other fields familiar to them, if there should be need. At the time the catalog was published, it was uncertain as to just how much philosophy could be offered, in view of the fact that Dr. Clark is helping with elementary Greek. As soon as possible this uncertainty was clarified; and on recommendation of the administration, the philosophy major has been continued."

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Note further that as a matter of fact there was no marked decline in the enrollment in philosophy. Even the major students numbered twenty when the major was dropped; and yet majors with two or three students were kept in the catalog. And it is distinctly false that it was uncertain how much philosophy could be offered. For at least three months before the catalog was printed, I had submitted a schedule preserving the philosophy major and keeping room for Greek. Well, just think over the facts.

Now perhaps I should take up the letter Edman sent to you in reply to the protest. In its first paragraph it asks you not to circulate it. This is in keeping with the underhanded practices of the college. Circulation would certainly hurt the college among thoughtful people; I do not see that it would hurt me at all.

The second paragraph to my mind is entirely false (except that they know of no other faculty member except O'Brien). The trustees have certainly discriminated against the Reformed faith. And the evidence is that they force me out and keep Thiessen who constantly attacks the Reformed faith. He attacks it even to the extent of making quotation from Calvin which cannot be found in Calvin, and in twisting the sequence of historical facts in Calvin's life; and in giving the impression that

supralapsarianism asserts that God foreordains evil but that infralap. does not hold that God foreordains evil. He denies that man is dead in sin, but says that he is sick and must go to the drug store for medicine; ad inf. See Jewett - he knows Thiessen's positions very well. You might ask the trustees why I resigned, if the Reformed faith had the same welcome as Arminianism. And how about the constant stream of Arminian chapel speakers, and the almost complete absence of Calvinists.

Third paragraph: the language of the report definite requires me to deceive the students. And I wish above all things that you would make a very forceful reply to the charge that I am not in agreement with the ministers of our church on the points involved. I accept thoroughly the third article of the Confession. Read it over again. Then compare it with the summary of my beliefs as worded by my friends the enemy. They asked me if I believed that God foreordains all things. Does he? I said yes. Then does he ordain that someone is born an imbecile etc. The answer is that this is one of the all things and therefore, yes. So they put in the report that God ordains some to be born imbeciles. Is God immutable? I say yes. Are emotions aspects in a calm state of mind. I say yes, as you can see in my article on Intellectualism in the Westminster Journal. Does God have emotions? Of course he does not. There is no change in God's mind; no succession of thoughts or states. And so they print that statement. And they says these doctrines are untrue and dangerous. They do not state in words that they reject the Westminster Confession; they merely attack every one of its applications.

Four: no question of classroom procedure was raised in the committee meeting. They wanted my views. How much time I spent on them in the class room was never mentioned. But my support of the Creed Club on Sunday afternoons came in for severe condemnation. And further, since when is the problem of evil not a part of the regular course in philosophy. They asked me to keep to my subject and they order me not to teach my subject.

Paragraph one on page two comes in for the same sort of comment. How can anyone be prepared to meet the unbelieving world without a position of predestination? And the end of the paragraph betrays their insincerity. Free Methodists and others advocate the second blessing. Baptists advocate immersion, and some students from Presbyterian homes are immersed while at college; but more important than these ~~two~~ two points is the constant class room attack on Calvinism by Thiessen and his dishonesty in the procedure. He may attack me before the trustees, but I may not complain about him. I must deceive the students on Calvinism to its hurt, and he is free to

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Mr. Hamilton has been here and has investigated the throwing away of our literature by the post office in the college. There is not sufficient evidence to prove that the girl did it under orders from above; but the postal inspector from Chicago came out and apparently talked turkey to her and maybe her superiors.

As for my application for ordination, I was quite disturbed at the refusal of the committee to bring my case before Presbytery; but I am pursuing the matter on the advice of Presbytery. What disturbs me more now is that Mrs. Kuiper says (to people at Quarryville) that I do not believe in miracles, and therefore do not even believe in God. This, if she said it as reported to me by a person who claims she said it to her, is slander. I not only believe in miracles--I believe that every event in the Scriptures occurred exactly as they say they occurred, but I wrote a defense of miracles in the Evangelical Quarterly some years ago. For the record, I believe that Christ raised Lazarus from the dead by calling out to him and by whatever exercise of power was necessary; and so on with the loaves and fishes, the opening of the eyes of the blind, the Virgin Birth, and all the rest. Now Hamilton believes that Elijah was fed by Arabs instead of ravens. This is a question of what the text says and what pointing is correct. There may be several such doubtful cases; but whatever the Scriptures

mean I believe occurred. Most of the cases are not doubtful. What I refused to admit before the committee was that these miracles which occurred were the acts of creation. The Scripture and the Catechism define creation as the work of the six days; there is no mention of additional acts of creation; therefore I do not see why it is necessary to assert that a miracle is a creative act, calling something into existence ex nihilo. Therefore I classify miracles as works of providence. Now this is in strict conformity with the confession. The Confession does not say that miracles are acts of creation. It speaks first of God's ordinary acts of providence and then continues (chapter five, section three,) "yet God is free to work without, above, and against them (means), at his pleasure." Therefore I would conclude that miracles are extraordinary acts of providence.

There is this further to be said. I am not sure what the framers of the Confession meant by the word 'means'. In the case of the feeding of the five thousand, the five loaves and two fishes were used and they are therefore means. In opening the eyes of the blind man, spittle and mud were used, and are therefore means. In fact, I do not know of a miracle in the Bible where means were not used. Strictly if God does something without any means at all, it is an act of creation for in creation there is absolutely nothing but the word of his power. If on the other hand, means signifies a given law of physics, such as that of the inverse squares, then God can and I believe has accomplished miracles without that means and contrary to it. What the word 'above' in the Confession means, unless it is repetitious for 'against' or contrary to or inconsistent with, I do not know. And of course I cannot assert my belief in a phrase whose meaning I do not know.

But it should be abundantly clear from my article published sometime before I applied for ordination that I believe and defend the position that Christ turned five loaves and two fishes into a meal to satisfy a great multitude and that basketfuls were gathered up afterward. ~~And~~ And you will note in the article that there is no question of pointing a Hebrew text, and that the modernist idea that the boy brought out his lunch that his act inspired the others to take out their lunches is tawdry dishonesty.

To be perfectly fair, I wish to say that I have not communicated with Mrs. Kuiper to determine whether she said I did not believe in miracles; I learned of this report only today; it comes from the or a person who says she heard her say it. So if you repeat the contents of this letter, make sure that I am not yet at least accusing Mrs. Kuiper of anything.

The committee also judged that I did not have a call to the ministry. Whether they were within their rights in making such a judgment remains to be seen. But I will not discuss the matter, except to say that I have in my own way been preaching the gospel for the past six years at least, and it is that that has got me into trouble. And I shall continue to preach the gospel in the way I can do it best whatever the committee, Presbytery, or General Assembly does or does not do. I feel I could accomplish more if I were ordained.

What a long letter this has turned out to be. You will do me a great favor by giving the facts such publicity as you think they deserve. I have nothing to hide, and while this letter is not composed in a literary style fit for printing, you may quote it, show it around, and do whatever you want to.

Cordially yours,

Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church

OF THE ORANGES
56 SOUTH MUNN AVENUE
EAST ORANGE, N. J.

RICHARD WILLER GRAY
MINISTER

CHARLES A. FREYTAG
CLERK OF SESSION
MATTHEW MCCRODDAN
TREASURER

July 9, 1943

*Ans. sent
at 10:00*

Dear Dr. Clark:

Although I have not written to you before on the subject of your relations to Wheaton, I have been intensely interested in the stand you have taken. I am back of you one hundred percent.

No doubt you have heard of the letter that a number of us at General Assembly sent to the trustees of the college. Perhaps you have not as yet seen the answer. I am enclosing it. I am going to comply to the request not to circulate it. Hence, I should like to have you return it to me. I shall also enclose a copy of the letter we sent. You may keep that if you wish. They enclosed in their reply a copy of the report of the committee who investigated you. Since you have that I will not send it.

My main purpose in writing you is to inquire as to the nature of your criticisms of chapel speakers. I heard some time ago you criticized a speaker who lauded E. Stanley Jones. This would be a little ammunition for a return letter. Perhaps there are some things you might suggest that would be of additional aid.

You no doubt heard that some of the literature of our Christian Education Committee was found in the waste basket of the college post office undelivered. It was in two lots - forty and one hundred.

I regret the stupid action taken by the Philadelphia Presbytery on your request for licenture and ordination. I trust that the situation might be ironed out satisfactorily.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Gray