

STUDIES OF THE DOCTRINES OF
"THE COMPLAINT"

Serious doctrinal issues have been raised in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church during the years 1944-1946. The thirteenth General Assembly elected five ministers to study the four doctrines in question. It is the duty of all ministers and elders of our Church to study these doctrines so as to protect the Church from error. It is the conviction of many of the ministers that the doctrines of The Complaint are not the doctrines of the Word of God or of our subordinate standards. We believe that in several respects The Complaint goes beyond the Confession and is contrary to the historic position of the Reformed Churches. This paper is one of several which, appearing during the winter of 1946-1947, aim to preserve the original position of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Gordon H. Clark

THE PHILOSOPHY OF "THE COMPLAINT."

At the General Assembly of May 1946, following a speech by Dr. Van. Til, I began a defense of my position. As it took fifty minutes to complete the introduction, wisdom dictated that the Assembly take a recess. The remaining days of the Assembly seemed to me to offer no compelling moment for the main part of my speech. And therefore I take this opportunity to present some of the main material. As an introduction to this paper I should like to indicate my own position on the incomprehensibility of God, and then by way of contrast discuss the theory of the Complaint.

It may be remembered that at the General Assembly I expressed my whole hearted approval of that early portion of Dr. Van Til's address, in which he summarized the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God. With his explicit remarks in that part of that speech, I agree.

Furthermore, with some of the material in the Complaint contains several columns of quotations from standard reformed writers. These writers are important representatives of Calvinism, and yet they are not infallible. Since, too, the quotations were selected to fit the tenor of the Complaint, it may be that these quotations contain unguarded statements. At least, the quotations may possibly be so made as to alter the intention of the authors.

For example, in The Complaint, page 3, column 2, Charnock is quoted as saying, "it is utterly impossible either to behold him or comprehend him." As quoted in the Complaint, this may give a wrong impression. Charnock in the context is talking about literal vision with the physical eyes. In this sense it is, as he says, impossible to "behold" a pure Spirit. But the doctrine of the Complaint, as will be shown, implies that it is utterly impossible to contemplate or behold God with the mind. This is not the force of Charnock's paragraph; and it is not true. The complainants, by omitting the information that Charnock is speaking of physical sensation, attempt to make it appear that Charnock supports their own, very different, position.

However, if these quotations be detached from the Complaint, the following sentences in particular state nothing else than the truth, as I see it. With these statements I fully agree.

"We cannot have an adequate or suitable conception of God"
(Charnock).

"It is utterly impossible to have a notion of God commensurate to the immensity and spirituality of his being" (Charnock).

"When it is said that God can be known, it is not meant that he can be comprehended. To comprehend is to have a complete and exhaustive knowledge of an object. It is to understand its nature and relations . . . God is past finding out. We cannot understand the Almighty to perfection" (Charles Hodge).

In this excellent statement by Charles Hodge, attention should particularly be drawn to his definition of comprehend. It seems that neither side in the present controversy has always used the term in this exact meaning. Clarity would be more perfectly attained if all of us could limit ourselves to this one meaning. But the force of English usage had led us to think of incomprehensibility as meaning unintelligibility. And it seems to me that the Complaint teaches rather the unintelligibility or the irrationality of God than the incomprehensibility of God in Hodge's sense of the term.

The Answer, which still deserves more thorough study by all those interested in the present matter, was written with the Complaint sharply in view. In opposition to the Complaint's view that incomprehensibility means irrationality or unknowability, the Answer defends the view of Charles Hodge that "to comprehend is to have a complete and exhaustive knowledge." This meaning does not require the conclusion that God cannot be known at all. It means rather that we cannot know all about God. Therefore, in its account of the doctrine, the Answer puts in the very first place an assertion that incomprehensibility must not be so understood as to deny that God can reveal truth. With this foremost assertion of the possibility of revelation the Answer gives a fair, even if not an "adequate" account of the doctrine. Since I am one of its authors, it obviously represents my views.

The Answer, page 9, says, "Dr. Clark contends that the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God as set forth in Scripture and in the Confession of Faith includes the following points: 1. The essence of God's being is incomprehensible to man except as God reveals truths concerning his own nature; 2. The manner of God's knowing, an eternal intuition, is impossible for man; 3. Man can never know exhaustively and completely God's knowledge of any truth in all its relationships and implications; because every truth has an infinite number of relationships and implications, and since each of these implications in turn has other infinite implications, these must ever, even in heaven, remain inexhaustible for man. 4. But, Dr. Clark maintains, the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God does not mean that a proposition, e.g. two times two are four, has one meaning for man and a qualitatively different meaning for God, or that some truth is conceptual and other truth is nonconceptual in nature."

But while these several quotations all reflect sound doctrine, this sound doctrine may be, and in the case of the Complaint part of it has been embedded in a document which by its philosophy and epistemology deviates from the sound doctrine it quotes. Sometimes, as in the case of Dr. Van Til's address in General Assembly, the complainants summarize the doctrine quite acceptably; but when they develop their views, as they have in the Complaint, it is seen that their epistemology so distorts the

doctrine that the resultant whole cannot logically be regarded as Reformed. The source of the difficulty and the chief issue between the two parties is epistemological. The men who wrote the Answer maintain the position of Warfield, Hodge, Charnock, and Calvin. That the Complaint does not consistently hold this position, but that it alters and vitiates the doctrine by an untenable epistemology, it is the aim of this paper to prove.

To this end the paper discusses first, The Philosophic Background of the Complaint; second, The Philosophy of the Complaint; third, A Subsequent Paper; and fourth, The Biblical Doctrine.

THE PHILOSOPHIC BACKGROUND

The necessity of examining the philosophic background of the Complaint is seen in the fact that certain members of the Assembly openly admitted that they did not understand the issues and accordingly based their votes on their confidence in the ability and scholarship of the complainants. Now, it is not unreasonable for people to follow their trusted leaders when they cannot judge the merits of a case for themselves. But there comes a time to examine the basis of such confidence. A perpetual and blind following of any human leader is not the mark of an educated and conscientious person. The Rev. Robert H. Graham, in a letter dated July 8 1946, speaks of the authors of the Complaint as theological giants. That is his privilege. It is the privilege of all to examine the evidence to see if his estimate is supported by a study of their writings.

Dr. Van Til's views are obviously the philosophic background of the Complaint. Therefore to understand the Complaint, one must examine the philosophy of Dr. Van Til. Now, his views were formed partly by his study of the history of philosophy; and it is also true that his interpretations of the history of philosophy is colored by his views. Inasmuch as he has written at length of this history, let us first examine his work in this easily tested field.

To show how Dr. Van Til expounds the views of other men, let us first turn to his Syllabus on Apologetics, page 84, where he is discussing medieval philosophy. He says, "In stating the problem (whether universals are ante rem, in re, or post rem) the scholastics failed to distinguish between God and man. They did not ask first whether the ideas of universals were prior to a thing known in the case of God, in order then in a separate question to ask whether the universals were prior to a thing in the case of man." Now contrast Dr. Van Til's understanding of medieval philosophy with that of Windelband, History of Philosophy, page 299: "Even Abelard, however, explains this likeness of character in a multiplicity of individuals upon the hypothesis that God created the world according to archetypes which he carried in his mind. Thus according to his view, the universals exist firstly, before the things, as conceptus mentis in God; secondly, in the things, as likenesses of the essential characteristics of individuals; thirdly, after the things, in the human understanding as its concepts and predicates acquired by comparative thought (*italics, Windelband's*). . . . As regards the real question

at issue he had advanced so far that it was essentially his theory that became the ruling doctrine in the formula accepted by the Arabian philosophers -Avicenna- 'universalia ante multiplicitem, in multiplicite, et post mutiplicitatem;' to universals belongs equally a significance ante rem as regards the divine mind, in re as regards Nature, and post rem as regards human knowledge. And since Thomas and Duns Scotus in the main agreed with this view, the problem of universals, which, to be sure, has not yet been solved, came to a preliminary rest, to come again into the foreground when Nominalism was revived."

It is clear that Dr. Van.Til says that the scholastics did not do what as a matter of well known fact they did do. It should be specifically noted that this is not just a question of interpretation. Someone might want to defend Dr. Van Til on the ground that every philosopher proposes his own interpretations of previous philosophers. One man has one view of the scholastics and another man has a different view, and Dr. Van Til is entitled to his. This is not the case at issue. The point is that Dr. Van Til has not correctly represented the views in question. He has said that the scholastics failed to do what as a matter of plain historical fact they did do.

In the next place notice should be taken of Dr. Van Til's account of Descartes. In the mimeographed syllabus on Christian Theistic Evidences, page 96, Dr. Van Til says that Descartes "studied the mind as an entity that had nothing to do with the body."

But in The Principles of Philosophy, Part Two, Descartes states his second thesis as "How we likewise know that the human body is closely connected with the mind." In Part Four of the same work, section 189, Descartes says, "We must know, therefore, that although the human soul is united to the whole body, it has, nevertheless, its principal seat in the brain . . ." And a few lines below: "the movements which are thus excited in the brain by the nerves variously affect the soul or mind, which is intimately conjoined with the brain . . ." Cf. passim. Again, as in the case of the scholastics, there seems to be a discrepancy between Dr. Van Til's account and the sources.

Dr. Van Til continues, in his Christian Theistic Evidences, to say, "Descartes thought of the mind in exclusively intellectual terms. 'L'ame pense toujours' was the principle of his psychology. The emotional and the volitive were disregarded." But it should not be forgotten that Descartes wrote a volume On the Passions of the Soul. A brief indication that Descartes did not disregard the volitional and the emotional aspects of man's nature is found in Article 18 of this work: "Our volitions are of two kinds . . ." And then Descartes goes on to distinguish them. Article 41 of the same work says, "The will is so free in its nature that it can never be constrained. . ." Article 45 says, "Our passions cannot be directly excited or removed by the action of the will; but they can be indirectly through the representation (or, imagination) of things which are customarily joined with the passions. . ."

Nor is it necessary to confine the evidence to Descartes work On the Passions of the Soul. The Meditations themselves show that Dr. Van Til

is not altogether accurate. In Meditation IV Descartes explains error on the ground of a certain relation between the understanding and the will: "I observe that these (errors) depend on the concurrence of two causes, viz. the faculty of cognition which I possess, and that of election or the power of free choice -- in other words, the understanding and the will." Then Descartes continues for a few pages to discuss the will, in spite of the fact that Dr. Van Til asserts that Descartes disregarded the volitional aspect of man's personality. Further evidence will be found in Descartes' Reply to the Second Objections.

Then Dr. Van Til continues: "The mind of man was thought of as being independent of God." How could this assertion be made when two thirds the way through Meditation III Descartes writes: "I possess the perception (notion) of the infinite before that of the finite; that is, the perception of God before that of myself, for how could I know that I doubt, desire, or that something is wanting to me, and that I am not wholly perfect, if I possessed no idea of a being more perfect than myself, by comparison of which I knew the deficiencies of my nature?"

A little further on Descartes writes: "I am desirous to inquire further whether I, who possess this idea of God, could exist supposing there were no God . . ." And then he goes on to argue at considerable length that first he could not be dependent on himself; second, that he could not be dependent on his parents; third, that there could not be several causes as the ultimate explanation of his being; and then for some pages Descartes stresses his dependence on God. Finally he says, "And in truth it is not to be wondered at that God at my creation implanted this idea (of God) in me, that it might serve, as it were, for the mark of the workman impressed on his work." And then, "I not only find that I am an incomplete (imperfect), and dependent being, . . . but at the same time I am assured likewise that he upon whom I am dependent possesses in himself all the goods after which I aspire . . . and that he is thus God." But Dr. Van Til asserts that Descartes thought of the mind of man as independent of God!

Dr. Van Til's book, The New Modernism, is also faulty in its understanding of philosophy. On page 11 he says, "Leibniz thought it was possible for man, by means of a refined logical apparatus, to learn to distinguish one penguin from another."

Now, Leibniz, in his Discourse on Metaphysics, VIII, (where he is talking about Alexander the Great instead of penguins) says "God, however, seeing the individual concept, or haecceity, of Alexander, sees there at the same time the basis and reason of all the predicates which can be truly uttered regarding him; for instance that he will conquer Darius . . . -facts which we can learn only through history." Ibidem XIII: "If anyone were capable of carrying out atcomplete demonstration by virtue of which he could prove this connection of the subject . . . with the predicate, . . . he would bring us to see" etc. Apparently therefore Leibniz teaches that man is not capable of distinguishing one person or one penguin from another by pure logic. Bearing on the same subject, even if not so directly, is ibidem V: "To know in particular, however, the reasons which have moved him (God) to choose this order of the universe . . . - this passes the capacity of a finite mind, above

all when such a mind has not come into the joy of the vision of God." This passage places limitations on human knowledge which Dr. Van Til apparently misses in Leibniz.

Dr. Van Til continues on page 11 to say, "All knowledge, he contended, that is all true knowledge, is speculative or analytical at bottom. By working up the contents of your mind you may eventually learn all the fields of truth and all they contain."

Now, if the word analytical be omitted, the phrase, all true knowledge (what would false knowledge be?) and the word, speculative, in Dr. Van Til's sentence are sufficiently vague to make the sentence true in some sense or other. But Leibniz never taught that all knowledge was analytical. In the Discourse XIII, Leibniz teaches that some truths are not analytical, but contingent. Some predicates cannot be obtained from their subjects by the law of contradiction; and even in God's perfect knowledge, the "demonstration" of the predicate is not as absolute as are those of numbers or geometry. The contrary does not imply a contradiction, and hence not all truth is analytic. Cf. further, On the Ultimate Constitution of Things, of Nov. 23, 1697.

In view of these items that have now been analyzed, it is necessary to conclude that there are historical inaccuracies in Dr. Van Til's treatment of philosophy. Since the items analyzed are not matters of delicate interpretation where one man's opinion is almost as good as another's, but are matters of historical fact, the reader is cautioned not to accept Dr. Van Til's every statement without examination. And if caution is required in the purely historical portion of his work, it would seem reasonable to use even more caution in the study of his constructive argumentation. What it is important to see is that the philosophic background of the Complaint is not to be accepted uncritically. In view of this philosophic background one has prima facie reason to suspect the epistemology and apologetics of the Complaint. It must be clear to anyone who has studied that document that its ideas and accusations are largely based on Dr. Van Til's views, and hence the truth and the accuracy of the philosophic work behind the Complaint are of tremendous importance in estimating its value. Not that the Complaint should be condemned on mere suspicion: the suspicion will be verified by an examination of the document itself.

THE COMPLAINT AND ITS PHILOSOPHY

Of all the documents in the present controversy the Complaint is the most important. It is not the impromptu answers of a single person to a barrage of questions, but it is the result of extended collaboration. Any mistake that one person might have made on the spur of the moment had to pass the inspection of, and would be corrected by, all the other authors. Hence its wording must be considered the most accurate possible; and its presentation must be the most authoritative presentation of the views of those men. It was written, signed, and published by Professor R. B. Kuiper, Professor Paul Woolley, Professor Cornelius Van Til, Professor Edward J. Young --five members of the faculty of

Westminster Theological Seminary, and also by Mr. Arthur W. Kuschke and Mr. Leslie W. Sloat, who were at that time connected with the Seminary. (Six other men, not so directly connected with the Seminary, also collaborated.) Hence the Complaint must be considered as the actual position of the large majority of the Westminster faculty. Note in particular that a Complaint against a Presbytery is always a serious matter. It is extremely serious when charges of heresy are made. And this Complaint speaks of an unblushing humanistic rationalism and vicious independence of God. The awfulness of this charge, and the widespread publicity given to the document, all show that this must have been the most carefully prepared statement that these professors could make. It must accurately express their deepest convictions. Let us then examine this most important document.

The Complaint admits that Dr. Clark distinguishes between what may be called the divine psychology and human psychology in the act of knowing. God's mode of knowing is intuitive, while man's is always temporal and discursive. This distinction, the Complaint claims, is insufficient; a further distinction is needed. It is obvious therefore that the complainants hold to a two-fold theory of something in addition to a two-fold theory of the act of knowing.

Note too that the difference they wish to establish between God's knowledge and man's knowledge is not that God knows and man does not know all the implications of a given truth. This, of course, is true, but it is not the distinction the Complaint insists upon. The Complaint insists on a two-fold theory of something connected with a single truth itself, quite apart from its implications (cf. The Complaint, p.6, col.2).

A little examination will show that this other something, of which the complainants say they are two kinds - one for God and one for man, is the truth itself. The Complaint teaches a two-layer theory of truth. On page 5, col. 1, it says, "Dr. Clark denies that there is any qualitative difference between the contents of the knowledge of God and the contents of the knowledge possible to man." Since they make this as an objection, it must be that they assert a qualitative difference between the contents of the knowledge of God and the contents of the knowledge possible to man.

At this point the important question arises, what are the contents of one's knowledge? Obviously the contents of one's knowledge are the truths one knows. The only answer to the question, what does one know? is a list of the truths known. Truth is the object and content of knowledge. The contents of God's knowledge are the truths he knows, and the contents of a man's knowledge are the truths the man knows. The Complaint maintains that these two sets of truths are qualitatively different.

This qualitative difference between the truths God knows and the truths that man knows is further emphasized in The Complaint, page 5, col. 2, bottom. Again as an unacceptable conclusion from Dr. Clark's views they state, "a proposition would have to have the same meaning for man as for God." Since this is unacceptable to them, the Complaint must teach that a proposition does not have the same meaning for man

as for God. Propositions therefore have two meanings. 'David was king of Israel' means one thing for us; it means something different for God. What it means for God, we cannot know because the meaning God has is qualitatively different from ours, and man can never have God's meanings.

The culmination of this argument in the Complaint is reached in the next column: p.5, col. 3. To make sure that everyone would understand that this is the crux of the matter, to make everyone see that this is the distinction between God's knowledge and man's knowledge that the doctrine of incomprehensibility requires, the complainants have put it in italics. Here is found the main point of the whole discussion. The Complaint says, "we dare not maintain that his knowledge and our knowledge coincide at any single point" (italics theirs).

Note well that the complainants are not content to say that God's knowledge differs from man's in certain ways, such as in its extent and in its mode. They insist that there is no point of contact whatever. Not a single point. With this I heartily disagree. Far from denying that there is a single point of coincidence, I maintain that there is an area of coincidence. That area includes, "David was king of Israel," and 'Jesus was born at Bethlehem,' and several other items. These are points where God's knowledge and man's knowledge coincide. The propositions mean to the man who knows them, to the man who grasps their meaning, exactly what they mean to God, although God, as was said, knows implications of these propositions that man does not know; but the truth itself is the same for man as it is for God. If a man does not grasp God's truth, he grasps no truth at all, for there is no other truth than God's truth. God knows all truth. And if a man grasps any truth at all, since it is God's truth, that truth is a point or even an area of coincidence.

The Complaint, on the other hand, makes the truth God has qualitatively different from the 'truth' man has. There is not a single point in common. Whatever meaning God has, man cannot have. And since the Bible teaches that God has all truth, it must follow on the theory of the Complaint that man has no truth. The theory of the Complaint is therefore skepticism.

Another passage in the Complaint serves to make the matter still more clear. A paragraph above has discussed the meaning of the term, content. The Complaint itself specifies the sense in which it uses this term. On page 7 col. 3, it states another unacceptable conclusion in propositions these words: "This knowing of propositions cannot, in the nature of the case, reflect or inspire recognition by man of his relation to God, for the simple reason that the propositions have the same content, mean the same, to God and man." Note that these last few words equate same content with mean the same. Thus it is clear that according to the Complaint the content is the meaning. And it follows that the Complaint holds that propositions do not mean the same thing for God as they do for men. There is no point of coincidence between the meaning a man has and the meaning God has.

No one therefore can logically avoid the conclusion that the

Complaint teaches a skeptical two-layer theory of truth. A proposition is its meaning. A proposition is not the sound waves in the air; a proposition is not the ink marks on paper; a proposition is not the words used. Mens semper cogitat; l'âme pense toujours; the mind always thinks: these are not three propositions - they are one and the same proposition, one and the same truth (or, falsehood), because they are identical in meaning. The Complaint holds that God has one set of meanings, and man has another set (if he have any at all). There is not a single point of coincidence.

The application of this skeptical theory to the practical matter of the preaching of the Gospel is also seen in the last quotation. The Complaint said, "This knowing of propositions cannot, in the nature of the case, reflect or inspire any recognition by man of his relation to God, for the simple reason that the propositions have the same content, mean the same, to God and man."

The Complaint here teaches that if a man had the same meaning God had of a proposition, (such as, Christ died for sin), he could not for that very reason recognize his relation to God. Before a man can be inspired to recognize his relation to God, he must put on propositions a meaning different from God's. Why is this? What use would the Bible be to us, if its words could not mean the same thing to us as they do to God? And what sort of a God is it that could not express, could not reveal, his meaning to man? Or, conversely, how could sentences that mean one thing to God and something else to man reflect or inspire any proper recognition by man of his relation to God? The import of the Complaint in this passage seems to render the preaching of the Gospel futile.

And therefore the Complaint, collaborated upon, signed, and published by a majority of the Westminster faculty, teaches a two-layer theory of truth. And its theory is not in accord with Reformed theology. It is a theory of skepticism that should be attacked and refuted, rather than defended and inculcated, by a faculty subscribing to the Westminster Confession.

A SUBSEQUENT PAPER

Since the publication of the Complaint, some verbal claims have been made that the Complaint is not an accurate presentation of the views of its signers. It has been said that the complainants have changed their views and have moved closer to the Reformed faith. And a paper sent To the Commissioners to the Thirteenth General Assembly, by a Committee for the Complainants, is appealed to as evidence. This subsequent paper we must examine, although, in the absence of a retraction by the complainants themselves, such a mimeographed paper can be only of secondary importance. If the Complaint no longer represents the position of the complainants, they should, I think, publicly repudiate it and apologize for its skeptical philosophy and baseless accusations. But since this subsequent paper, in its very first paragraph, condemns The Answer, one would imagine that it is consistent with The Complaint.

An examination of the first part of this paper, the section on The Incomprehensibility of God, will show this to be the case: the complainants have not changed their views. The paper expounds the same objectionable doctrine that is found in the Complaint.

It is true that at one point the paper seems to withdraw from the position of the Complaint. On page 3 it says, "Truth is one. And man may and does know the same truth that is in the divine mind . . ." This statement is entirely acceptable because it flatly contradicts the Complaint. And if the paper as a whole consistently maintained this view, it too would be acceptable. But it is soon seen that this, which seems to be a retraction is but a temporary and superficial lapse from their fixed doctrines. The very same paragraph continues to say that man "cannot possibly have in mind a conception to eternity that is identical or that coincides with God's own thought of his eternity." This is nothing else than the doctrine of the Complaint over again. In the first lines of the paragraph they say that man can have the same truth that is in the divine mind, and immediately below they say that man cannot have the same concept of eternity. The conception of eternity that the complainants have --not God's conception of eternity-- is the conception of endless years. If this is not God's conception of eternity, it must follow that the complainants have the wrong conception of eternity. Man, according to them, cannot know that God is eternal; he can only know that God has endless duration. Endless duration is an analogy of eternity. God has the truth; man has only an analogy of the truth, and he can be quite sure that he does not have the truth itself.

The committee that wrote this paper attempts to support its contention by pointing out that the Bible frequently speaks of eternity in terms of endless years. The paragraph in question stresses God's condescension or accommodation in revelation. This Scriptural language is well known; God is called the Ancient of Days; he is from everlasting to everlasting; and his years shall not fail. But to argue from these facts to the conclusion that man can have no other concept of eternity except that of endless duration is to argue badly. From the fact that revelation sometimes accommodates itself to man in figures of speech, it does not follow, as this paper says it does, that therefore he cannot possibly have in mind a conception of eternity that is identical or that coincides with God's own thought of his eternity."

The Scriptures also speak of the arm of the Lord, the hand of God, and the eyes of God. Does it follow that we can have no other concept of the being of God except the concept of a corporeal being? Hand and eyes are figures of speech, and we know that they are figures of speech because the Bible teaches that God is a pure Spirit. Similarly we know that 'endless years' is a figure of speech because in literal language the Bible teaches that God is immutable and eternal.

The conclusion this paper insists upon here is denied in the paragraph itself, for the authors betray the fact that they themselves have a concept of eternity different from that of endless duration. If they had no concept of eternity other than that of an everlasting lapse

of time, how would they be able to say, "he is not subject to the passing of time. God's being is without succession." If they did not have the concept of "without succession," they could not have discussed it in this paper.

However, in spite of this testimony from their own material, the committee for the complainants denies that man's concept and God's coincide or are identical. It is true that this paragraph asserts a "correspondence" between God's thought and man's thought. But if man's concept of "correspondence" is no more like God's than man's concept of eternity is said to be, how can one be sure that man means the same thing as God would mean if he says man thought corresponds to God's? To be sure of a correspondence between two things, it is necessary that both of them be present to consciousness. No one can compare two things if he is acquainted with only one of them. Correspondences and analogies cannot be founded except on some point or area of coincidence. Obviously therefore the complainants have not been converted to the view that truth is one and that man may have it. They still hold that man has only an analogy of the truth and not the truth itself.

On page 6 of the same paper their theory of truth is further elaborated. About the middle of the page we read, "The distinction between knowledge of a truth and knowledge of its implications is artificial and atomistic." But if a premise is not distinguishable in meaning from a conclusion, then all truths have been merged into one homogeneous mass and reasoning has become impossible. Consider the distinction between the axioms and the theorems of geometry. One of the axioms is that "all right angles are equal." One of the implications or theorems is that "the interior angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles." Is there only an artificial distinction between these two statements? Is it not rather a perfectly natural distinction? The two propositions are essentially, not artificially, different in meaning. And if we extend our view and say that all truths are parts of one system, then the proposition 'Moses spoke to Pharaoh,' could in a sense be called a premise for the proposition 'David was king of Israel.' Why should the distinction between two such propositions be called artificial? What sort of epistemology is it that makes the meaning of one sentence even though related to every other in the system- only artificially different from the meaning of another?

The authors of this Subsequent paper proceed consistently. At the bottom of this paragraph on page 6 they say, "the human mind likewise cannot know it as a bare proposition, apart from an actual understanding of implications."

While the context refers to one specific proposition, the theory requires this pronouncement to be applied to every proposition. The authors must hold that no proposition can be understood apart from an actual understanding of implications.

The first question that occurs is, why not? Their assertion that it is so, does not make it so. For example, take the proposition 'some books are not interesting.' This is a particular negative, and in the traditional Aristotelian logic a particular negative, while it may be

expressed in several forms, does not by itself imply another proposition of different meaning. But if it has no implications, then according to the theory we cannot know what it means. But that is absurd. Have the complainants given sufficient thought to logic to justify their assertion? And quite aside from the technicalities of Aristotelian or non-aristotelian logic, one must ask this second question: when a child is for the first time taught that one plus one are two, does the child have an "actual understanding of implications?" According to this theory, before a child can understand the first proposition, he must understand a second proposition -its implication; and of course before he can understand this second proposition, he must understand a third -its implication; and before and so on. The child must know everything before he knows anything. This fits in exactly with the skeptical theory which the Complaint and this Subsequent paper defend.

The authors of the paper may wish to reply that they did not mean to say that the child had to understand all the implications; they meant merely that he has to understand some of the implications.

But look at the sentence again. The word "likewise" seems to indicate that they mean all the implications, for the word "likewise" refers to a comparison between God's knowledge and man's knowledge. Note that they say, "The divine mind cannot know that truth without knowing its implications and the human mind likewise cannot know it" etc. The force of the comparison seems to require man to have an actual understanding of all the implications. In other words, a man must be omniscient, if he is to know anything at all, for he cannot know any single truth without an actual understanding of (its) implications.

Although this interpretation is required by their argument, they may have omitted the word 'its' purposely, not noticing that such a purposeful omission ruins their comparison of the divine mind with the human. Now, if they withdraw from their position and try to claim that a man must understand only a few implications before he can understand only a few implications before he can understand his first proposition, there is another question that the complainants must answer. They must explain how many implications are needed before a man knows the first proposition. Is it necessary to understand ten theorems of geometry before it is possible to understand one axiom? Or five theorems? Or just one? Then the complainants will have to explain what principle they use to limit the number of five rather than ten, or to one rather than two. When they attempt to make these explanations, it will be clear that they are in utter confusion. If anyone of us will look into his own mind and consider the truths he knows, he will find many propositions there without an actual understanding of their implications.

Before ending this part of the discussion, I wish to draw attention to the following assertions of the paper in question. On page 7, paragraph 1, are these words: "Dr. Clark's fundamental insistence upon identity (italics theirs) of divine and human knowledge . ." On page 8 near the bottom we find, "Dr. Clark insists upon identity of divine and human knowledge of a particular truth . . ."

It is amazing that these men continue to circulate these false statements after I have so many times denied them, I denied them in the examination (cf. Transcript, 31:9-10). I denied them in The Answer (pages 20-21). I denied them in speeches in two Assemblies and in countless conversations. The Report of the committee to the thirteenth General Assembly denied them for me (page 3, next to the bottom paragraph). And in spite of all this, the committee for the complainants has neither seen nor heard these denials, and continue to make the same false statements. Truly, this is incomprehensible.

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

Now let us turn to Reformed doctrine; but instead of examining the Westminster Confession, we may better go directly to the source of authority and examine the Scriptures. It will be highly instructive to contrast the Scriptures with the skeptical theory of the Complaint.

The Gospel of John, which so emphasizes the Godhood of Jesus Christ, has a great deal to say about truth.

John 1:17 Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
5:53 Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth.
8:32 And ye shall know the truth.

Does anyone now dare to say that there is not even a single point of coincidence between God's knowledge and ours? Is there in this, or in what follows, any hint of a two-layer theory of truth? Are there two qualitatively different truths? Do we possess only an analogy of the truth?

John 8:45 I say the truth.
15:7 I tell you the truth.
16:13 He shall guide you into all truth.
17:17 Sanctify them in thy truth; thy word is truth.

The Word is not something qualitatively different from the truth. The sentences in the Word do not properly bear a meaning different from the meaning God has. The Word is the truth, the truth of God; and we have that truth.

Cf. Also: I Kings 17:24; Psalms 25:5, 43:3, 86:11, 119:43, 142, 151; Rom. 1:18, 3:7; II Cor. 6:7, 7:14, 11:10; Gal. 2:5, 14; Eph. 1:13. Etc.

These verses do not indicate that we cannot grasp God's meaning, or that the truth cannot be known, or that God cannot be known.

Since God is truth, this whole matter involves the question of our knowledge of God. Can we know God? It will do us no good, if we can know only something qualitatively different from God; it will not help if there is no point of contact between us and God. The question is, can we know God? If answer be made in terms of negation and

analogy alone; if all possibility of God's knowledge and man's coinciding at any point be denied; if no sentence in the Bible can possibly have the same meaning for man that it has for God; the logical result is a skepticism that makes revelation impossible and Christianity a vain dream. But if man can know some things that God knows; if man can grasp some of God's meaning; if God's knowledge and man's have some points in common; then true religion will be no delusion, but a glorious reality.