

OFFICE OF THE PASTOR
THE MOODY MEMORIAL CHURCH
1609 N. LA SALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

July 3, 1942

Dr. Gordon H. Clark,
Wheaton College,
Wheaton, Illinois.

My dear Dr. Clark:

Since our interview with you the other evening I have been much in prayer about the whole matter and have thought it over a great deal. It finally came down to this in my mind: Would I as a father want either a son or a daughter of mine to be exposed to the hyper-Calvinistic teaching to which you gave utterance? I certainly would not. I should feel I was trifling with the eternal interests of my child if I permitted it.

Our Lord Jesus was speaking not only of teachers but of doctrines when He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and during a ministry of over fifty years I have seen some most appalling fruit from this type of instruction. It is so far removed from the evangelical standards of Wheaton that I do not see how anyone could consistently give it out in class under the sanction of the College authorities.

On the other hand, may I say that I felt greatly drawn to you personally. Your frankness, your geniality, your gracious spirit as you responded to our questions made a deep impression on my mind, and I cannot but hope that you will see the unwisdom of giving out your present views if you are retained at Wheaton. I know that a number of parents are greatly distressed because of the effect the teaching has had on their children, whom they trust to Wheaton believing that they would return to them with the same ardent spirit that they had when they left home; instead of which they are now utterly indifferent to soul-winning and have faulty views of individual responsibility to God.

I remember many years ago, when my own soul was in deep exercise over the Scriptural presentation of Divine Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility, I felt myself inclined at one time to swing to hyper-Calvinism, and at another to a modified Arminianism, such as that taught by Finney. At that time there fell into my hands a pamphlet entitled "The Sovereignty of God in Salvation," by the late F. W. Grant, which was a greater help to me than anything I had ever seen up to that time, and to this ~~time~~^{day} my faith is anchored to the truth it presents. I hope you will not think me presumptuous if I ask you to read this article. It is still in print, but in a volume with many other essays on Scriptural subjects, and I am

G.H.C.

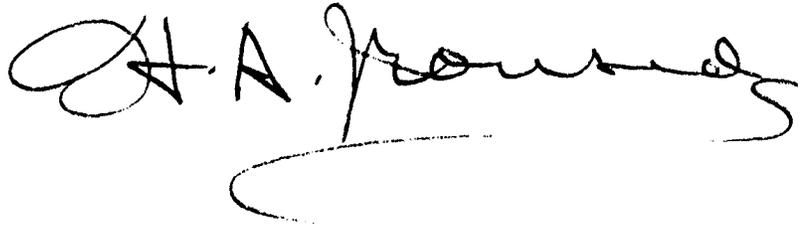
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asking the publishers to mail you a copy. The volume is entitled "Leaves from the Book," and you will find the article referred to on page 146.

I am not a philosopher. I am simply a plain preacher of the Gospel, but one who has throughout the years noted with some degree of care the effect of various systems upon the souls of those, particularly the young, who imbibe them, and I am convinced that extreme views on Sovereignty are hurtful and not helpful, at least in the majority of cases.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. A. Prunty". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "H. A. Prunty".

HAI:ELD

*Copies to Rian, Rudolph,
Linnell & Co.*

610 Howard Street
Wheaton Illinois

July 11 1942

Dr. Harry A. Ironside
1809 N. La Salle Street
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Dr. Ironside,

Since I do not go to my mailbox in the College every day during the summer, there has been some delay in replying to your letter. In the meantime the book you so kindly sent, and for which I thank you, has arrived, and I have read the section you indicated and other sections also.

The author makes an attempt to combine Calvinism and Arminianism. But since the former insists on the necessity of the regeneration of the will (as well as of every other part of man), and since the latter allows some spiritual ability to remain despite the fall, I am unable to see how the two views can be reconciled. As to which view is correct, one of the decisive Scripture passages, in my opinion, is Romans 3:10 ff.

The day that your letter and book came, I also received the enclosed leaflet. Three of our ministers prepare it, and with the young people of our churches they distribute twenty to twenty-five thousand copies from door to door each month. The article on the front page contains a Scriptural reference more consonant with our Confession than is any view limiting God's sovereignty. Nor can I agree that the leaflet or the men lack evangelistic spirit.

There is one sentence in your letter which has implications that I am compelled to deny. Referring to my views you write, "It is so far removed from the evangelical standards of Wheaton that I do not see how anyone could consistently give it out in class under the sanction of the College authorities."

I am compelled, I say, to deny the implication of dishonesty contained, however unintentionally, in this sentence.

When I was first approached relative to the position I now hold, I made it perfectly clear that I was a Presbyterian and that I sincerely received and adopted the Westminster Confession. Moreover I read to the several men who interviewed me the third chapter of the Confession, which states exactly what you heard me state the other evening. The

doctrines of election and reprobation are nothing new; they have been subscribed to by all the reformed churches from the beginning. I must therefore positively affirm that I did not use subterfuge in obtaining my present position. Nor did I ever suppose that the articles of faith of the College were intended to exclude those who held the standard Presbyterian doctrines. Those articles, it seems to me, are intended to include several varieties of Evangelical Christianity.

I am not saying that you intended to imply that I was or am dishonest. In fact, after the other evening I do not see how such an idea could enter your mind. But under the present circumstances, since the words themselves might be so taken, I cannot let the sentence pass without entering a categorical denial.

Again let me thank you for your kindness and interest. If you have read the material I gave you the other evening, we can no doubt agree in prayer that God would lead the people of our nation and of the world to repentance and give them faith in Christ our Lord.

Very respectfully yours,

OFFICE OF THE PASTOR
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1609 N. LA SALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

July 13, 1942

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

My dear Dr. Clark:

Thank you for yours of the 11th. No, I certainly did not mean in any way to impugn your integrity when I wrote as I did, but I am thoroughly convinced that hyper-Calvinism is not consistent with a true evangelical attitude. Perhaps I should have used the word "evangelistic" rather than "evangelical."

I think the great trouble is trying to stress certain credal expressions. The Bible is neither Calvinistic nor Arminian. Men have drawn both types of teaching from it, but each by ignoring certain other lines of truth. I think it would be far better if we could forget human statements and keep to the book itself.

Sincerely in Christ,

W. A. Irons

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