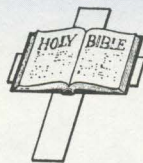


The Methodist Churches

FAIRVIEW, WESLEY CHAPEL

AND MORAVIA, IOWA



REV. T. D. HERSEY, Minister

February 13, 1968

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Dr Wilber T Dayton
405 Kenyon Avenue,
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Dear Wilbur:

Today I received the third issue of the Wesleyan Theological Journal, and am noticing its contents with all consideration and concern. To begin with, I write in response to the first statement of the purpose of the WTS, "To encourage exchange of ideas among Wesleyan-Arminian theologians." I do not know whether I qualify as a licensed theologian or not, but at least I am interested in studying and evaluating theological thinking and discussion. I've been informed that the next annual meeting is to be at Vennard College, and if so, I should be able to attend the next meeting if I am still here.

Now I am writing this letter to share with you my response and reaction to the contents of the present issue of the WTJ. Whether what I write may be stimulating to you or anyone else of the WTS, depends on whether what I write can be read and understood by whom it may concern. One of the problems that face all people, theologians, philosophers, professionals, specialists, is that they get to going around in a circle of interests that is congenial to them, until they get so deep in a rut that they can no longer see the landscape other than the side-walls of the rut that they have made for themselves. Since life consists of everything inside and outside the walls, then those within the ruts of their own making get farther and farther from relevancy with the whole of life.

The WTS is an important group with a purpose significant enough to be able to examine the whole field of life and avoid making ruts or falling into ruts. I believe in its purpose and objectives, or I would not be associating with it. But there are many who have no sympathy with its objectives, and I am wondering how much impact that the WTS is bringing upon the many by its influence as an organization. Are we an association just to preserve ourselves and our objectives from extinction, or are we to extend ourselves and our objectives to become convincingly the objectives of the many? It is with these thoughts in mind that I examine and evaluate the contents of the present issue of the WTJ, and I do so with loyal sympathy to the cause, and not to be critical for any reason of trying to destroy it.

So, considering the contents of the opening address of Dr Arnett on "John Wesley and the Bible", how do I read it? I note that the criterion is set on the basis of "one's attitude toward the Bible as the ultimate and final authority for faith and practice." It is a worthy criterion, but I would ask: Is it high enough? For me personally, I set a higher criterion to which if I give it my allegiance, I cannot regard the Bible as the "ultimate and final authority" and this position could lead me to be misunderstood. So I will proceed to define what is "ultimate and final" in authority for me, and that is God. This is, of course, obviously accepted by everyone that believes in God, and it would seem that at least a corollary criterion should be in accepting the Bible as THE WORD of God. This could be possible except that it is quite clearly written in the Bible that "the WORD of God" refers primarily to Jesus Christ to those who are of the Christian faith.

And if we accept Jesus as the ^{second} person of God, then we are right back with the ultimate authority only in God, and the Bible not even a secondary authority by its own witness. We can locate passages in the Bible that seem to enhance and support the Scriptures as an authority, but when we examine all such passages, they are conditional on the fact that "holy men wrote as they were

were moved by the Holy Spirit", the third person of God, thus turned back to God as the sole ultimate authority, by the Bible's own witness of itself. Now why do I insist that God should be considered as the sole ultimate authority, and the Bible a rather uncertain secondary authority at the most? The reason is that the ultimate authority must be absolutely beyond all manipulation at the hands or minds of men, and this cannot be said about the Bible. The many versions of the Bible are stark evidence that man cannot ultimately reach the truth of life without getting beyond and behind every version of the Bible. The study of Hebrew and Greek texts is an example of the most earnest attempt to get behind the versions to the truth which the Bible is supposed to contain. The Bible as an absolute authority is not beyond the manipulation of man.

Now, Dr Arnett's address was not on the main tenet of Biblical inerrancy, but on attitudes about such a tenet. He gives the three points of what attitudes have contributed to the concerns of Christianity, such as: 1) "Difficulties and divisions", 2) Disunity, and 3) Doubts about Christian faith. And then he examines John Wesley's attitude toward the Bible, but I wonder whether he discovered Wesley ever taking the position that the Bible is absolute? He makes the statement that he was "one of the best trained and best read men of his time", which indicates that Wesley did not limit his reading solely to the Bible. The second quotation from Wesley indicates that the basis of any agreement was possible only "at the feet of our common Master" -- not in the study of the common Book. "To hear His Word, to imbibe His Spirit and to transcribe His life in our own!" John Wesley's humility established him as a worthy witness, but it did not establish a position about the Bible that he took as his own.

"It is evident that John Wesley Studied the Bible Diligently". And there is no question about this, just as there have been diligent students of Shakespeare or of Homer. This diligence of John Wesley merely established him as an authority on the Bible, but not necessarily the Bible as an authority. The third division of the address, does it get down to actually reporting and rightly interpreting John Wesley's attitude of "the Bible as Authority"? The first statement should have been the basis for answering this question; John Wesley upheld three criteria of truth -- not solely one! Scripture was upheld as the first of the three, but not in any absolute sense to the exclusion or even demoting of the other two. Altho Scripture was not superseded by the other two, yet it was necessarily dependent on them for clarity and confirmation. He argued for the infallibility of the Bible, but he would have to be infallible himself to establish his argument to the final truth about the Bible.

The next three points that conclude the address, continue to show Wesley's attitude toward the Bible, by the way that he used it. He "appropriated and expounded the Bible Redemptively." And that word "Redemptively" is not explicitly used aright, for the Bible does not redeem anyone, only Christ does that. The better word to be used is "evangelistically", and that is exactly how John Wesley used the Bible, to win souls TO CHRIST! not primarily to the Bible. The next point is "Practicality", which was the weakest of his applications of the use of the Bible, and in which he was the most uncertain. His aim was to be as practical as he could, but in practice he was a notorious failure, and the whole tradition of Methodism since has been handicapped with his impracticality. The third point of Devotionality, is perhaps the second main use that he could make of the Bible. And these would be the two basic uses that could be made of the Bible: to help others, and to help oneself, as John Wesley used them. There is a very important application of the Bible in Practicality, but so far very few is any have made much advance is the usefulness of the Bible in this way.

The next discussion to be considered is that by Dr Kuhn on "The Life of Sanctity" (as I would abbreviate it.) The opening paragraph "is worthy of all acceptance" and I have no reservations to express about it. The second paragraph begins a discussion of the unexamined subject of ethics which needs to be clearly defined if we are to avoid confusion and misunderstanding and error. Is ethics to be considered within the limited application of the interpersonal influence that people have on one another to determine their behavior? Or is it to be considered beyond its basic meaning to include the application of the

divine influence that determines the behavior of people in their interpersonal relationships, as they respond to or react against that divine influence? Can we read into the definition of "ethics" more than was intended for it?

So in the introduction of this thesis, I am in agreement with what is intended for the discussion of sanctity and sanctification, and in question only about what is intended to be meant by "ethics" and "morality". There needs to be a serious examination of these subjects to determine how much they should mean and what place they should have in life, and whether they should be forced to include applications beyond their exact limitations. Perhaps, because this has not been done, "Practicality" has been the weakest aspect in the lives of too many sanctified Christians. They just don't know how to face and to adjust themselves effectively and positively in the circumstances of daily living. They may know all about the many things that they should not do, but they are hard put to know even a few things of what they should do. Does Dr Kuhn discuss this problem or able to, without a clear understanding of what we should mean by "ethics" and "morality"?

Unfortunately, he does not. His discussion proposes to descend "from high theological ground, into the arena in which our life must be lived." But he does not get down to that arena at all, and his entire discussion is within the comparison of the philosophical themes of idealism versus realism. The first division of his subject is considering the philosophies of idealism; and the second division considers realism. Attempts may be made to get down into the arena of living, but only by looking at life indirectly thru the mirror of idealism or of realism. Thus, instead of "sanctity" the discussion proceeds into a listing (unexamined) of "ethical theories", and classifying them as subjectivistic and objectivistic; then sub-dividing into lesser or more particular theories of hedonism versus utilitarianism. The objectivistic "theories" are classified as rational, metaphysical, and revelational.

So I will need to give attention to what he offers and not on the subject he proposed to discuss and from which he departed to discuss something else. I shall try to relate what he offered as it may have bearing on the subject of sanctity, altho this may take some stretching. First, if I relate what he said with the address on John Wesley, it must be noted that Wesley accepted rationalism as a reliable altho limited criterion for truth. He perhaps related revelationalism with the Scripture, altho not with the obvious philosophical implications upheld in this thesis of ethical theories. And it would seem that Wesley ignored metaphysicalism altogether and upheld experience, which might be related to the discussion under realism. But to say that the Holiness Movement is slanted to revelationalism is a very broad accommodation, for it is more simply an attempt to carry on the tradition of views and practices of John Wesley, than of anything philosophical.

"Sanctity" is incidentally presented in the discussion of Pharisees and Jesuits, because the contrasting basis of their casuistry. But there is a carelessness in this area of the discussion, as Pharisaism did not degenerate "into a traditionalism which split hairs". Rather, it disappeared to the encroachments of Scribes (inerrant Scriptures) and Sadducees (modernists) that raised up a new movement of the rabbinism that took the traditionalism by the horns and began splitting hairs ever since. And behind the contemporary Holiness movement there are a number of various traditions besides Jesuitism. There is mysticism, puritanism, pietism, and others traditional and paganistic. Many of such traditions have led to the variety of casuistries that divide the Holiness movement into the many fractured splinters in which it is broken. Is the WTS a step in the right direction to get above and beyond casuistries, or will it be side-tracked into the emphasis of some philosophical theory?

By means of the subject of "Casuistry" which is indirectly introduced as a mere "word", the discussion now veers toward the side of philosophic realism. The subject of casuistry should have been more clearly presented instead of the philosophical classification of ethical theories, which was not a complete list. Thus, the practical problems related to sanctity could have more directly been considered. Five casuistic applications are suggested, in which the problem

that is otherwise called the "new morality" is implied. In the current issue of Harper's magazine, there is an article on that subject in which the discussion requires some serious thinking to discover that "new morality" is something radically different than the popularized interpretations of it. However, Dr Kuhn evidently has not been acquainted with more than the popular version of the "new morality", as he proceeds with his discussion within that milieu. He almost examines the problem of sanctity of those in the Holiness Movement with how they face racial differences. He introduces it briefly and turns to a more exciting discussion about sexuality but primarily about some of the consequences of sexuality in life and death issues. Economics is introduced but the discussion reverts again to sexuality for most of the application about realism, and many basic problems are ignored altogether.

Finally there is a dichotomy raised between perfectionism and responsibility. It is illustrated by a lengthy letter that is quoted, but the whole matter is left limited within rationalization at the level of humanism--in other words, directly related to ethics and morality, but not evaluated or illuminated by philosophy, theology, or the higher experience and understanding of total sanctity (i.e. total acceptance with God). The concluding section contains elements of what could have been enlarged into a proper discussion of sanctity facing the problems of living in the world. There should have been an attempt to search and to discover the higher wisdom, in response to the assurance: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." This was evidently not done in the preparation of this thesis, or there would have been more wisdom expressed and less theory discussed. Here is an open field for the members of the WTS.

The third thesis is on "Facing Objections Raised Against Biblical Inerrancy", by Dr Thompson. The question that arises is this: Are the real objections faced? Of the possible attitudes that can be taken for or against the Bible, I wonder whether the actual ones have been mentioned. "When men become convinced that the Bible is...a record of man's religious strivings and evolution, its authority will be gone." Just how does a man's conviction about the Bible deprive it of its authority? How does any amount of doubt about the Bible make it irrelevant for faith or as a standard for practice? The introduction to this thesis is certainly not to doctoral standard in careful writing. If the attacks on the Bible by its enemies brings it into serious jeopardy, there is nothing like the defense by its friends to utterly destroy it! Maybe such writing can be comforting to the uneducated, it is certainly not very convincing to the educated, to win them in any way to accept the Bible as truth.

And just what truth is there in the statement: "God has employed three stages in making divine truth known to man"? "Two of them (are not only) in the past"-- but they have never been in existence. God has always made known divine truth to man by the Holy Spirit, and men receive it no differently today than Adam did in the Garden of Eden. The Bible is a "testimony" of God speaking to man by His Spirit, and proving it in their experience of life. There is nothing evolutionary about it, whether by naturalistic theories or by theological stages. Then before the discussion even begins, it is clearly admitted that the Bible is liable to be erroneous in any except the original "autographs". And since none have access to those autographs but must depend solely and entirely on imperfect copies, the accuracy of the truth conveyed must be by the Holy Spirit.

As for "the doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy", the first argument in its favor is supposedly from the standpoint of a "Scriptural position" but actually and only from a "logical premise". Whether "the infallible God of truth would not or could not direct human instruments to write anything that is false", it must be admitted that He does allow "human instruments to write anything that is false", else there would be nothing written, sacredly or otherwise that was false. It can always be assumed to be true that God always gives the perfect truth, but can man always receive the truth perfectly and exactly? Theoretically it is possible, what man is ever able to speak exactly as God has spoken? Holy men of old were "moved by the Holy Ghost", but that word "moved" does not mean that they followed perfectly the moving of the Holy Ghost. They moved perhaps to the best of their understanding. "No prophecy is of private interpretation"

and that means exactly that man cannot interpret prophecy except by the Holy Spirit, even were he to read the original autographs! The point that I see is that God doesn't need to have a perfect means to get His message of truth across, for it is by His Spirit that He gets the message across thru every means that He makes use of.

The second argument on Biblical inerrancy is from the "Church's Position" -- if the Church started with John Calvin. But that leaves a pretty big hole in the history of Christianity. But the discussion turns aside to an evaluation of Neo-orthodoxy, which attempts to find a vital usefulness in the Bible in spite of the errors in any of the versions that may be used. Neo-orthodoxy, of course, doesn't get very far, as it does not discover the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Bible to and the truth of the Bible. But as far as it goes, Neo-orthodoxy gets closer to the truth than the rigid views of decadent-Calvinism. It is willing to lead a man with as much or as little faith as he may have make use of the Bible at all. To insist on emphasis concerning subjectivity versus objectivity, is to insist on philosophy and intellectual understanding, whereas the truth is more closely related to faith and spiritual responsiveness.

The third part of the discussion is purportedly on "Objections to Biblical Inerrancy", and these seem to consist of superficial incidentals about the variations in the text that need explanation. And of course, the more that the possible variations are noticed, the more the problem grows concerning how to make sense out of the Bible. This could go on endlessly, and has been the basis for all the critical studies that have been made about the Bible in the past two hundred years. But these examinations of variations and incidentals miss the entire heart and purpose of the Scriptures, so that the truth is overlooked altogether for such a side-line interest such as consistency. The principle objections are not faced at all and are ignored altogether, and whoever raises them is discounted as disreputable.

The conclusion sums up logic but not truth, and very poor logic at that. And logic is no substitute for faith, for logic does not prove truth and always tends to obscure truth, whereas faith accepts truth and puts it to the test of experience. Logic has the basic defect of always avoiding experience for testing the truthfulness of any of its proposals. The argument is oversimplified as tho there were only two alternatives, whereas there may be any number of alternatives consisting of slight portions of the truth and large areas of error, and none of the alternatives can be altogether rejected or accepted. I believe that the Bible is God's testimony in man concerning basic and objective truth that is available and beneficial to man only as the Holy Spirit interprets that truth in its proper application to man's life. I do not believe that God's testimony requires perfect conditions for that truth to radiate into the lives of men, any more than that sunlight requires perfect conditions to bring one manner of benefit to the earth. Inerrancy is a doctrine that insists that perfect conditions are essential for God's testimony of the truth to be conveyed at all, and experience proves that to be not true at all. God's testimony comes thru every manner of condition that may be raised for or against the truth, and God's testimony always comes thru.

Then there is your own dissertation on "Theology and Biblical inerrancy", and your introduction provides some thought-provoking statements. I can accept them as they are with some qualifications that do not deny them as you made them, but perhaps enlarges upon them. It can be agreed by all concerned of where "theology begins", but it must also be admitted that theology can wander all over the map and off the map into what can be regarded as erroneous theology. "Christian theology" (should find) its meaning in Christ; but it is more to the point to emphasize that its application should be in Christ. "Scriptures are the means used by the self-revealing God", but only as secondary means. The primary means were the men who received the testimony of God and wrote down what they received. For the Scriptures are not the result of God doing the writing Himself and giving the result to man. This is the tenet of Mormonism and Moslemism, concerning their "holy books", which are believed

to be God-inspired and God-inscribed. But your general statements of your introduction are quite acceptable to me as they are.

But I would ask questions of your first point discussed that "Inerrant Scriptures (are) implied in a high view of God." The truth is a limited view of God is necessary to feel compelled to uphold the doctrine of "inerrant Scriptures". Altho what you write is of higher calibre discussion than that of Dr Thompson, it is defective in the dependence on logic that is not tested by experience. The Scriptures ~~are~~ the testimony of God in the experiences of men. Unless this is realised, there is no way that we have to showing to many that the Bible is merely a sketchy history of the religion of a certain segment of mankind and their imaginations about God. What a man imagines has nothing to do with what he experiences. What a man does with his religion has little connection with what he experiences. But when God discloses Himself in the experiences of men, then what the man receive is beyond all that they can imagine or practice in religion.

Your second point purports to implicate "The Authority of Jesus Christ". But from what you have written, I don't see the connection. The reason is that when I read the Gospels of His life and ministry, I note that the writers do much quoting of Old Testament Scriptures, primarily to convince the Jews that Jesus was their promised Messiah. And what they did to convince the Jews, failed to convert them, because the Jews had been so accustomed to manipulating the Scriptures for every conceivable application of their lives, that they could not believe that the Gospel writers were anything more than another sect among themselves who could manipulate the Scriptures. As for Jesus Himself, He could manipulate the Scriptures to expose His detractors of how easy it was to tie them into impossible knots to speak against Him at all. And for those who would be His disciples in all earnestness, He did not teach them the Scriptures at all but HIS OWN SAYINGS that were not Scripture at all until afterward when the Gospel-writers wrote them down.

Then you make the statement: "Biblical inerrancy derives from theology." And I can well agree with that statement; but theology does not ~~derive~~ derive from God but from man-made attempts to find explanations and understanding about God. It is also true that God alone "account for the Scriptures". That I believe, and what God speaks is inerrant, but how a man hears is not inerrant. And that is the unanswered problem that cannot be answered by the defenders of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. As for the third point of the converse logic of "Inerrant Scriptures reveal God and Christ." There is no pagan darkness that can hide God from any man, else that darkness would be greater than God. "The Light shineth in the darkness and the darkness cannot put it out"! The truth about God can only be finally accepted thru His testimony in the lives of men. It may be written testimony or it may be direct testimony. and the confirmation of that testimony is "His Spirit witnessing with our spirit, that we are the sons of God", in the actual experience of men. The Bible IS A source of knowledge of God, because it is the testimony of God in the experience of these who wrote the Scriptures. People are won to the Lord thru the consistency of the testimony and life of the soul-winners -- not in the expertness in the fluency of knowledge of the contents of the Bible.

The fourth point has the formidable logical term of "a priori", but the discussion gives attention to the actual theological subject of faith toward God, or the knowledge of God that one may have. Faith is the approach toward God and in acceptance of the testimony of God in the Bible, only in response of faith toward the Spirit of God in the interpretation and application of Scripture. No logical, philosophical, or theological approach to the Bible brings anything but an infinite confusion of opinions about what the Bible is all about or what can be done with it for religious or practical or superstitious purposes. This point is off the subject of inerrancy onto a subject that is really basic, that is of faith and its place and use in life. Inerrancy requires credulity but eschews faith, for faith leads to experience and credulity leads only to logic that may convince but does not save the soul. Even resort to reason is discussed in this section to support inerrancy.

Your fifth point concerns the "Importance of Biblical Inerrancy to Theology", and it is here that my original qualification may have its application. Before you began any of your discussion, you should have arrived at the full definition of theology, as a man-made attempt to explain the idea or awareness of God. Theology is not the testimony of God to the experience of man, but attempts to analyse that experience and to interpret it and perhaps to relate it to every other interest in life. Since Biblical inerrancy as a doctrine requires a very limited concept of God, it is hardly pertinent that its acceptance or rejection would have much consequence on any structure of theology about the absolute God. He does not require special conditions for Him to do anything; because of our limitations, we do require special conditions to do anything or to receive anything from God. Some people require the condition of the use of a doctrine of inerrancy of an secondary means of truth from God to support their faith, because they are primarily weak in their faith and in understanding God to be much greater than they suppose Him to be. Unconsciously, they are really wanting to control God by subjecting Him to be within the limitations of the Scriptures that can be manipulated for their own interests in life.

The statement "Scripture is the primary source of Christian theology", is a good generality. But Calvinism derives from Augustine's attempt to reconcile pagan philosophy with Christian experience. And it must be confessed that pagan philosophy has no place in the Scriptures. Therefore Calvinism, at least, must have its primary source in Augustinianism and its relationship to the Bible only indirectly. Calvinism had to manipulate the Scriptures to fit preconceived notions to formulate its theology. But when we investigate all "Christian theologies", we discover that there are many "Christian doctrines" that have no basis for being in the Bible. Take the one major doctrine of the Trinity, which has no direct Biblical reference to support it, and yet which can be affirmed in the testimony of God in the experiences of men within and beyond the written records of the Scriptures. There are those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity because it has no direct Biblical support for it.

ON "Scripture is the norm ... between truth and error, Jesus told the Sadducees that their error was 'in not knowing the Scriptures' BECAUSE THEY DID NOT "KNOW THE POWER OF GOD!" There you have it: EXPERIENCE was lacking in their attempt to use the Scriptures aright, without heeding the Spirit to lead them into all truth. Scripture was not the norm to help them to distinguish truth from error, and this was also true with the Scribes and the Pharisees, all of whom had a commanding knowledge of the Scriptures, but were unable to relate the Scriptures to their experiences in life. They could not tell right from wrong, orthodoxy from heresy, solely by their knowledge of the Scriptures. The followers of Jesus had knowledge of the Scriptures but could not understand why He was crucified until the Scriptures were interpreted to them by the risen Christ and by His Spirit to lead them into all truth and into remembrance of the things that He had spoken to them, and which had never been written down before they wrote them down.

The unique authority and authenticity of Christian theology is more illusion than reality. It is constantly being revised and consists of all the best ideals of all pagan theologies, and will include even more of the doctrines of such theologies, as the religions that contain them are converted to Christianity. Contemporary Christian theology includes all the highest concepts of the Hellenist religion, the Roman religion, and the Teutonic religion of Europe. It includes also practically all the theology of the Jewish religion, and much of other religions and theologies as well. The uniqueness of Christian theology is its inclusiveness of many theologies, and its ultimate uniqueness will be when it includes them all. As for its authenticity, it can never be a substitute for the testimony of God in human experience, for all theology at its best only the attempt of man to define God and life.

The "utter reliability of the Scriptures" is not subject to the doctrine of their inerrancy, but to the truth of God's testimony in the experience of

men. Christianity is more than a preaching religion, but the preaching of fulfillment to all religion and the conversion of all religion to fulfillment in Christ. "Its beliefs are not opinions, to be discussed (AND are more than) truths to be proclaimed" -- it is truths to be accepted and to be lived in actual and practical experience. It is truths of God's testimony in the experience of men as demonstrated in the life and ministry and sacrifice of Christ and continued in the experience of men.

The further discussion on "reliability" excludes the power of God and the Spirit of God and the testimony of God in the experience of men. How "reliable" is any witness for Christ? How authentic is any witness for Christ? These are very serious questions, whether of the Holy men who wrote of old about their experiences of God, or of contemporary witnesses for Christ about their own experiences of God? Reliability and genuine authenticity are determined and delineated by the Holy Spirit and not by a sentence of words unrelated to human life and experience. That any man's witness is so defective that it is completely unreliable, this does not affect the authority of Christ nor the validity of redemption, since neither of these is determined by the conditions or attitudes of men for or against God. Christ was not destroyed by His crucifixion, and redemption is based solely on His death and resurrection, and no matter what false witnesses try to do to discredit him and redemption in Him, they all fail.

Your final points on doubt and hope must be questioned on the basis of the words of Jesus Himself. It is easy to say that many professed Christians are in grave delusion because they know God other than by any acceptance of a doctrine on inerrancy, and that those who accept it are free from that delusion. Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Do the defenders of inerrant Scriptures have fruits of good works that are manifest to all? Are they the most effective in winning the lost and in establishing churches with many members, compared with others that do not? Are they the most successful in attaining even for themselves outstanding achievement in spiritual experience, in devotion and service? Really, it is not Christian to compare people with one another, but rather with their own possibilities of life. That is the real criterion by which to judge anyone. Above all who is it that has the living witness of the testimony of God within his life and experience?

Dr Mattke's thesis "John Fletcher's Methodology" is a biographical sketch or an eulogy with which there may not be much basis for any disagreement. As I read it, I would venture to say that his emphases should be revived to throw off the creeping encroachments of incipient Calvinism into the ranks and the control of the Wesleyan-Arminian movement. The defense of Scripture inerrancy is one example of such encroachment, and there are others. But returning to the life of Fletcher and his contribution to the traditions of Arminianism, it is perhaps unfortunate that he did not allow himself to be a successor of Wesley. It could have been the means of correcting the defects that have plagued Methodism ever since. The "general pauperism theologically in Wesleyan circles" is directly traced back to Wesley himself, and Calvinism was revived under the ministry of the popular preacher CH Spurgeon, who is the standard bearer for all Baptist denominations as Wesley is for all Methodist denominations.

There is need for a thoro study of Fletcher's works in the context in which they were written, and applications made of them today in the light of contemporary concerns. This will have to be a Wesleyan-Arminian project without encouragement of any Fundamentalists or Evangelicals who are more inclined toward Calvinism. Just recently I received some tracts from one such brother in Pennsylvania, and to which I wrote my views on the subjects raised and discussed in his tracts. One of the emphases that he was making, was on the divine inspiration of the Bible, a doctrine which I accept but with the qualification that the ultimate authority of the Bible is with the "Inspirator" which is the Holy Spirit. Antinomianism was one of the sub-

jects discussed indirectly in the connection that was made of it being the basis of the new morality. My position was that the error of the new morality was the same as that made with the pro-nomianism and the old morality. The more familiar word for pro-nomianism, of course, is simply moralism. Our discussion was to the point that most people have no idea of what the concern of the new morality is all about beyond the popularized ideas that it is the old immorality in a new disguise. The points that I made were that morality is not God ordained law by man-made rules and regulations, and that moral law as constructed in the minds of men, is no substitute for the divine law of the ten commandments and their fulfillment in the two greatest commandments of love toward God and toward all men. Morality is not from God but is of men and derives from the philosophies of this world and not by revelation from God. Now it is quite likely that I should qualify some of these statements from their generality to particular applications.

I suppose that if I were to know in thoro detail of John Fletcher's contribution to the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition, that what I am doing in this response that I'm now making to the Wesleyan Theological Journal, would be in line with his emphases. I have not read his "Checks to Antinomianism" so have no idea of what his argument was all about, but it is my concern today as it was with Wesley, We are leaning "too much toward Calvinism." The terrible misfortune with Methodism today is that millions of Methodists can apparently be Christian "without being new creatures, without casting old things away, without God's image, without the fruits of the Spirit."

Of course, the thesis presented in the WTJ, is not of the content but of the method of Fletcher's contribution. The method that he used was probably important but the content was the matter of primary importance. Do you know of any contemporary works in publication, that discusses the contents of Fletcher's works and that interprets them and applies them today? The method is briefly summed up in the words "careful historical analysis of the problem." This may not mean that rightly understood and interpreted the historical material which he analysed, even tho his intentions were in the right direction. All heresies in the history of Christianity are but extreme positions of reaction against other errors, to the extent that orthodoxy itself does not exist, per se, other than a balance of the checks by all heresies interacting with one another. Thus in the vitality of Christianity, there has always been the need of tension among the views of many.

It was good reading of this biographical sketch of Fletcher, and I would judge that it is the best presentation in this issue of the WTJ. It brought to mind a problem that I find to be endemic in all churches with no exceptions that I know of. The problem is that all churches are afraid to face up to any study of any viewpoints than their own that may be emphasized at the time. No conservative literature is allowed to be recommended for study in Methodism, and no radical literature is allowed to be recommended for study in Wesleyanism. Church histories are not allowed to be inclusive of all branches of Christianity to the extent of exposing the basic and serious defects in the particular segment of the church that is being promoted. All denominations should be corrective and contributory to one another, rather than competitive, and the ecumenical movement is no attempt to provide this application among the denominations. Rather, the ecumenical movement is primarily a jockeying for position so that all other denominations are tolerated within 'our' denomination (ie, all Protestants are to be accepted into Roman Catholic folds, all segment Methodist denominations are to be accepted into the Methodist monolithic system.

If I understand the discussion that is being made about methodology of John Fletcher, it began with as careful analysis of the historical records as was available to him, inclusive of Arminianism and Jansenism. It attempted to correct the dependence on Aristotelian logic by use of eclectic dialecticism? But I wonder about the attempted applications to contemporary life today. Ecumenicism is a movement that is more inclined to follow the policy of Wesley than it is that of Fletcher. The "radical right" and the "existential left"

are only extreme positions with a proper purpose of correcting errors of antinomianism rather than enhancing it. Like all extreme positions, they are unbalanced and therefore are of only limited application in life before they must be shelved in the cupboards of orthodoxy.

The essay on "The Books in John Wesley's Life" is, of course, an adaptation in summary of a doctoral thesis, and therefore has much extraneous verbosity that seems necessary to scholastic endeavors. It is partly biographical toward the specialty of evaluating what Wesley read and how he reacted to what he read. It is probable that he made no comments on books with which he had complete agreement, and that the books available for his reading were quite limited in number. Some of the books that were part of his reading, I have acquired and have tried to imagine in what way they influenced his views on life. Of course, I read books primarily for the effect that they have on my own thinking and understanding, so in some ways I'm inclined more my own evaluations of them, than on Wesley. But I wonder whether tendencies of his life can be determined by the books that he read, and his reason for reading them. Were there books that he read and commented on, not because they represented any phase of his life, but that he read them for the discipline that they enforced on him to read them.

For instance, was his reading of devotional books representative of his interests, or the "works righteousness" that compelled him to read what he felt was good for him, and not because he liked to read such books. We know that part of his life was spent in search of salvation, and would incline him toward a certain course in reading that would not necessarily represent his preference in reading. It would seem altho that a very intimate study of his life in general would be necessary to understand some of his reading in particular. Was sickness a factor that caused him to read the book on health? And what were the factors that influenced him to avoid books of fiction other than the worthlessness of some books of fiction? And as an adviser to would-be readers, did he avoid reading the books himself that he advised others not to read? How much of Wesley's standards in reading have become a tradition in Methodism much to the detriment of the Church?

The discussion on "The Communion of the Holy Spirit", by Dr Wynkoop is in line with the emphasis that I have made on the previous discussions, and so I am inclined to look favorably on this treatise. I might prefer the use of other words than she used in some statements, but only to enhance the intent of the statement. Thus in the first statement made, the word "solution" seems less appropriate than another word would be. All problems in life are not expected to have external solutions or answers or results. Problems also may be more than mere difficulties to be settled, and may represent challenges to motivate us for life, opportunities to encourage achievement, testings to exercise us, and other disciplines intended to be a continual part of life in its fulfillment, rather than matters to be completed and superseded by other things. Thus the Holy Spirit was more than mere a "solution to problems."

Of course, this is the thought that is discussed in the introduction. The Holy Spirit is more than "the solution to the problem of personality in God and man (with) light on the Trinity." I'm not sure what the "problem" of personality is, unless it is the difficulty with which men are able to sense not only the personality of God but also of themselves. It is only when men recognize each other as persons to be accepted as they are and to be loved for what they are, that they escape the problem of impersonalism. There is the real problem in life, that when it becomes so advanced as to depersonalize someone, he becomes disoriented with life toward insanity. To depersonalize or impersonalize God by ones attitude toward God, is to estrange oneself from God so as to be unable to communicate with God, either thru prayer toward God or receiving the Word from God. And the Spirit is the person of God that does make real the personality of God and of man, and thus to overcome the problem of IMPersonalism.

My concept of the Holy Spirit is inclusive of some ideas not found in traditional concepts of the Holy Spirit. The primary doctrine with me is concerning the Trinity of God, toward an understanding of how three persons could be one God, beyond the sole being of one God with three manifestations or three hyperstases as some would make of God. For my understanding of the Trinity begins from the affirmation that man was made in the image of God, and thus the nature of man reflects in some measure the nature of God. And the totality and infinity of man is represented not just in one individual person of man, but a family of man: father, mother, and child. To me this reflects the nature of God in whose image man was made. The three persons of God could thus be called: Father, Mother, and Son. The Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of God have been grasped in Christian theology, but the concept of the third person of God has always been vague and unformulated in all theologies. Yet when we study the Scriptures of the three persons of God, we discover that the qualities attributed to the different persons are easily fit in with the concept of the Trinity being the family of God in three persons, even tho traditionally the third person has never been referred to as 'she', and at times even impersonally as 'it'.

Very definitely, the Holy Spirit "preserves theology from abstraction and salvation from becoming discrete;" and "revelation remains dynamic and relevant", and not a completed event of the remote past. And because of the vagueness of the theology concerning the Holy Spirit, all doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit has too often been "speculative". And there has been a definite reason for this. When we proceed to theologize about God, we tend to fragmentize ourselves away from our own identity and relationships with others. We ignore the fact that we are related to parents, and to mates and children. Such omission radically distorts all theological thinking into abnormal or subnormal concepts that are not related to life at all, nor to any clear understanding of God. We tend to idealize toward monotheism but we fragmentize toward polytheism, and what we should realize is a clearer affirmation of the Trinity of God and our own personality and relationships with others in what life actually is.

Monotheism began in the first place with those who lost their own self-identity in solitariness of separation from all others. "It is not good for man to be alone", so God man a woman for man, not only to find his own identity, but also to realize that God is much more than monotheism. But man has been even longer discovering the identity and personality of woman, and has been quicker to discover the identity and personality in his children. He has been able to recognize the resemblance of himself in his children, and has tried to impose his personality and identity upon his children, but they have generally been able to determine their own identity and personality against all impositions made against them. Thus, the coming of Jesus as the Son of God was not a difficult step to lead man to see God beyond the monotheistic concept to the trinitarian concept of God. This was made possible because of the emphasis that Jesus made about the Holy Spirit taking the place of Christ Himself in the lives of those that He was leaving in His physical manifestations to them.

It is significant, therefore, that Dr Wynkoop should write this presentation on the Holy Spirit altho limited to speak within the terminology that is traditionally used in referring to the Holy Spirit. For this has ever been the problem of women in discovering their identity and personality in life while accepting the terminology of men and the objectives of men. Thus men have been the world-makers and women only the "influence" to help the men or to hinder the men in making their worlds, and the personality of women has always been kept indistinct and ambiguous. This factor in human relationships has been detrimental to a clear theology about the Holy Spirit, which in very name indicates indefinite influence rather than real personality. So what Dr Wynkoop wrote was rather remarkably cogent against the handicaps by which she was required to write and to speak. All this that I'm writing, is not intimated at all in what she wrote.

When she wrote that "the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the least abstract and impersonal", she was writing exactly from a woman's viewpoint, and she was writing exactly right! "It is precisely the Holy Spirit that makes all Christian doctrine practical and relative to life." Exactly, and that is why I have taken so much exception to the previous articles on the Inerrancy of the Scriptures, the work of the Holy Spirit was ignored! "The Holy Spirit explains the Trinity (altho she does not say how), and personalizes Christ (altho she doesn't say as the Son of God), and pulls together all truth and right into one consistent whole." And is this not also the typical work of a mother in the home? What is a home without a mother, or children without a mother, or a father without a mother? What I'm writing may seem dangerous because it is strange to the customary view of life from a solitary standpoint rather than from a family standpoint in which all members are recognized as persons in their own right.

The Spirit's "name is fellowship and nature, communion; philosophically, He (?) is ultimate truth; religiously, moral purity and wholeness; theologically, universal spirit; and to a Christian, spiritual life and continuity." These are the words of a woman, speaking a true affirmation concerning the Holy Spirit, but forced to use the terminology of men. "The Holy Spirit cannot be separated from the whole of existence and will not be abstracted." Even the men may try to ignore women as persons and abstract them into depersonalized things. In fact, this is what the 7th commandment is all about, rather than physical sexuality by which it is usually understood. The sin of adultery is the violation of the integrity of personality and includes all sexual deviations that depersonalize an individual from having a normal place in the family. Divorce is adultery in the way that it depersonalizes the marital relationship. Adultery and idolatry are synonymous in the Old Testament; adultery depersonalizing people into things, and idolatry depersonalizing God into things. And idolatry is what we are doing when we Objectify the Holy Spirit "with the words of Scripture."

Notice how the thesis on the Holy Spirit begins with the emphasis on personality. "Personality is the despair of the philosopher", since the discipline of philosophy begins by renouncing or ignoring personal relationships in the family. "How can the social dimensions of personality be consistent with the singularity of God? The Holy Spirit ... changes logic to personality." And there you have the same emphasis that I was making against logic in the earlier articles. Notice a woman's definition of personality from her own experience: "Persons 'flow into one another', (without) loss of identity but an overlapping of mutual concerns so that a man lives in his sons, or he may receive the spirit of another (who? his wife!) and in some sense be that other man." This may seem quite right to men, but you change those rhetorical 'he's' to 'she', and every woman will understand exactly what was said: "a woman lives in her sons, or she may receive the spirit of another (her husband) and in some sense be (or represent, or find her personal fulfillment in life in) that other (person) man (her husband).

She finds a definition of personality in the theological definition by Wiley, that is fairly congenial with a woman's own experience of personality. He, of course, tries to contain the trinal elements into one individuality since he is thinking from the solitary viewpoint and not from the family viewpoint of community, altho he does recognize that there are social relationships in the nature of personality -- or is that her enlargement of Wiley's definition beyond what he recognized in personality? "The social nature (of personal relationships) is the first step away from mechanistic determinism and into moral freedom." Solitary man is prone to invent machines of impersonal determinism, whether he is a mental philosopher or a manual technician. "The Christian God (is) truly personal (with) the God of creation (saying) 'Let US make---'! This is not the polytheism of fragmented personality, but the unification of the communal three persons of God, that is later characterized as "God is love", "of God as a social being. There is one God, says the Bible, but God is a Divine Society."

She then proceeds to enlarge the subject of love, as illustrated in family situations, and that love cannot exist as an abstract quality unapplied to the community of persons. She speaks entirely from the standpoint of a woman in emphasizing self-identity and identity in others, relationship and personal integrity (in contrast to impersonal fragmentation). The Holy Spirit "forces responsible personal identity and the relationship of persons." "The Holy Spirit shatters formal logic because He is so personal." "He preserved the Logos from impersonality and insures the moral qualities necessary to personality." Whenever she refers to morality, it means something more than what men mean by morality; it has more the idea of sociality. The whole paragraph on "the nature of human personality", is "worthy of all acceptation" and I cannot enlarge upon it or improve it more exactly than it is. In fact, the remaining paragraphs of this first point of discussion deserve careful reading and application to life.

The second line of thought on "The relation of Jesus to the Holy Spirit" makes for good reading. She knows what the effect of event of Jesus into the world accomplished for mankind, and she sees clearly that the Holy Spirit is the major means for fulfilling this purpose of Christ. She does have the limitation of not seeing in what way that the second and third persons of God are working together. She would be able to, were she to see the whole work of the Holy Spirit from the standpoint of the total personality of a woman, not only as a social person in relationship with other social persons, but also as a mother of children and thus the means of bringing new life into the world. "The work of Christ was to end the estrangement between God and man." That is exactly right, and how did He do it? Not alone but by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Beyond what she wrote about this relationship of Christ to the Holy Spirit, I can enlarge further on how much more this is true than what she gave. To do so, we must have in mind several doctrines simultaneously, and this may be rather difficult as they are major doctrines. One is the three persons of the Trinity working together, the second is the application of the doctrine of Incarnation, and the Third is the realization of the doctrine of Salvation in Christian spiritual experience. The purpose of the work of the three persons of God for man, is more than ending the estrangement between man and God. Reconciliation and atonement are but the first step toward atonement between God and man. For man needs more than union with God, he needs life from God; life that consists of the very nature of God -- we are to be partakers of God's life. We are helpless to do anything about it until God does everything about it needed for it to be possible for us simply to receive what He provides. Estrangement is thus ended when God partakes of our nature to the extent of containing His nature, which is the ultimate meaning of the Incarnation of Christ.

But Christ's Incarnation has no significance at all for us, unless it vitally relates to our need of God and of what God does for us to make it possible for us to be able to receive the nature of God within ourselves. This Christ did not do all by Himself in coming into the world, for the Trinity of God do not work independent of each other but simultaneous with one another, in the ultimate perfection of their unity together. There is the sense in which only Jesus became a man, and not the Father and not the Spirit. Jesus became a man to solve the problem of sin in the life of mankind, by identifying Himself with that sin which was destroyed by His own death on the cross in the supreme sacrifice of His life. But that work of Jesus for man accomplished nothing for man, unless and until Jesus returned to life by His resurrection, to a life which becomes a new life for all mankind as they receive of it. This brings us to the third doctrine of salvation.

Salv-ation in Christ is the work of the total activities of the Trinity, and not just the work of Christ, or of the Spirit, or of the Father. It is a continuous work of the three in simultaneous application of their atoning work of reconciling man to God and of bringing man the new life from God.

The new life in Salvation is the life nature of Christ reBorn in the spiritual experience of the one accepting Christ as Savior by the power of God the Father and by the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit. We are a "new-creation", and the "new-life" is not our own, but Christ's life within us. The only possible illustration that can explain this, is in the moment of simultaneous experience of mankind at the moment of conception of a child in the act of procreation. God the Father with God the Spirit re-create the new-life of Christ the Son within us, and we are saved. This is a technical and theological view of what happens to us when we are saved.

The point that I am making by this theological position that I take, is that every doctrine must be relevant to Christian spiritual experience, or it has no value at all. The doctrine of predestination, of election, of inerrancy, and a number of other doctrines that have been raised for theological and logical explanations, are necessary only in the imagination of those who do not recognize the greatness of God. All such doctrines are of no value or usefulness for bringing man and God together and bringing new life to man. Dr Wynkoop does not discuss all of these matters, as they are unnecessary for her thesis, altho they are important to help men toward a better understanding of what Christian life really is.

The third line of thought of "The relation of the Holy Spirit to Humanity", is beyond the original objective of creation and of personality, and beyond the central objective of salvation and of communion with God. There is the ultimate objective of existence and of the purpose of human life at all. Here the importance of the person and work of the Holy Spirit is as essential as motherhood is for the continuation of mankind on the earth. The Holy Spirit "is the hub of the wheel of theology, the key to Christian philosophy, and the moral minimum of human experience." The next paragraph affirms the extent of the wholeness of human personality in fulfillment that is made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit. This is followed by a serious warning of the seriousness of the alternative of rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit from which there is no hope for wholeness of human personality in any of its aspects or interests.

Then, the main objective of holiness in all its positive application and fulfillment, is the ultimate work of the Holy Spirit. "In the ultimate sense He makes us persons". We are separated from "the herd (to) true individuality." This is to establish the integrity or wholeness of our personality. We are separated unto God "in fellowship with Him" of our atonement with Him. This is to establish the integrity or wholeness of our sociality. We are purified from all sinfulness unto God to be filled with the Spirit unto fruitfulness unto every good work. Dr Wynkoop gives a summary of the details of holiness teachings of the traditions that have developed about it, but remained lacking of the one thing most needful as the goal of the holy life, FRUITFULNESS IN GOOD WORKS.

The next subject discussed is "Psychodynamics Versus Evangelism by President Bonner and Professor Carter, and which seems to be a comparison between psychiatric therapy and spiritual conversion, if we use common terminology. It is evidently a subject too big for the two who present it, as the two disciplines are not interchangeable so as to be comparable. Religious experience does not correct mental derangement and psychiatric therapy does not correct spiritual disorders, and those who deal in one or the other of the two specialties do not know enough about their own specialty to recognize the validity of the other specialty. Since Freudianism is becoming passe' with the more contemporary students of psychology, the psychodynamics discussion will be somewhat out-of-date even before it is discussed. Of course a good many amateur psychologists don't know that, so the discussion is for their benefit.

As for analysis and evaluation of conversion experience, I do not know that any definitive study has ever been made that I've heard of. Those that have made some measure of observations about it, have been

those of the holiness movement that have seriously examined the applications in experience of the two works of grace, somewhat from the theological standpoint. Those evangelicals that don't bother about considering further experiences of grace, do not examine the nature of spiritual experience and assume that everyone is either saved or lost, and to give all attention to persuading the lost to be saved, and abandoning them to their fate if they do not come to any decision to accept salvation.

Of course those who are vaguely informed Freudians think that they have enough information to correlate what they know with a re-interpretation of the spiritual condition of carnality, in which they are also poorly informed. This is a real problem in the easy going culture that has become the environment in which we all now live. The secular minded could not care less with the subject of this discussion, and the spiritually minded had better become better informed in what it is all about before they venture into making opinions or taking responsible positions and views that have any realistic grasp of the subject. But those who have written this article have dared to jump in with what they have, and how well do they manage to swim in a subject that is over their heads?

Well, the first question is a search for the meaning of Freud's theory of the ID. So my discussion will have to be about the subject at hand whether it has intellectual standing today or not. It is assumed that Freud bases all motivation of the ID to sexuality, and any distress of the ID is the result of abnormal or subnormal development or deviation of sexuality. I don't find any presentation of the Pauline position whether he indicates that sexuality is the fleshly source of inner sinfulness or not. So the purported endeavor "to compare and contrast the respective Freudian and Pauline positions" seems to side-track completely. This historical background or the philosophical background of Freud is compared with the traditional background that is theologically attributed to Paul, but the comparisons of backgrounds does not compare their actual positions.

The doctrine of depravity is introduced, as tho it were the essential position of Paul instead of a derived position thru the disciplines of theologies subsequent to Paul. But it is effectually answered long before Paul appeared on the scene in the question of the Psalmist: "Whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit?" The doctrine of depravity assumes that the Spirit of God is effectually absent from man since the fall by Adam, which would indicate that evil is greater than the Spirit of God, and this is not true. By means of the three Criteria of John Wesley, there is no Scriptural, rational, or experiential validity of the doctrine of depravity, and it might as well be shelved with the other out-dated doctrines that were formerly used in a theological attempt to explain what was not understood for lack of information on the matters considered.

Freud's chaotic ID is attributed to animalistic evolutionary insurgency, but I'm wondering whether evolution was even invented yet in the days of Freud. Paul's chaotic carnality is attributed to analogous excerptary anarchy of flesh over the spirit, but I'm wondering whether there has been an adequate understanding of what Paul wrote. There seems to be a reference to Milton slipping in from somewhere in the controversy to support Paul, it seems. But the comparisons of the remedies to the chaotic conditions, why should the amateur interpretation of Freudianism be suggested to compare with the professional holiness promoters? Professional Freudianism does not advocate self-expressionism but clinical catharsis by confession and discussion of the problem, and what to do to eliminate it altogether, so that there is no need for either expressionism or repressionism but a redirection based on an understanding of what the problem of life really was.

The second part of this article is entirely a presentation of the theoretical hypothesis of Freud himself, whether it is currently used by Freudians or not. It is primarily informational with incidental comparison with Romans 7. The third part continues the discussion of theory as originally given but as not subsequently modified or revised by Freudians.

The third part of this thesis is an attempt to define the spirit in man from the viewpoints of a number of theorists, starting with Freud's. Or perhaps it would be better to say that the viewpoints are merely listed but not defined, and no analysis is made of any of them to determine whether any of them could be comparable to anything of Paul's views. Some very lazy home-work was done on this article and it is surprising that it had to take two men to do so little. It would have been better to have omitted this article altogether, if it is the intention of the WTS to be regarded as a truly scholarly organization. However, I realize that it is an attempt to improve the scholarliness of those who have this common heritage to the level of being able to persuade all scholars that our heritage is not only defensible but worthy of serious consideration and acceptance in vital spiritual experience of life.

I have gone into this exhaustive detail of reviewing this third issue of the WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL, as my contribution as an associate member of the WTS. What I have written may be of interest and stimulation by whomever it may concern to read it, whether you have time to do so or some of the students at the seminary, of the response or reaction of the contents of the WTJ. I have written this letter as I have had time of fitting it into my pastoral schedule and while in the midst of a week of evangelism in the church here, so some of it has been done late at night. I have not thought twice or revised any of what I've written, and it is quite possible that I would modify some of what I have written, or would enlarge on some of it more fully than I have, on any of the points of the position that I take and the views that I've presented. And by this letter you can see that I take my membership in the WTS seriously, as well as the WTJ that was sent of the discussions that were presented. Like the apostle Paul, I may write more formidably than I can speak, but in all things I seek to serve the Lord in the work of His kingdom.

Sincerely yours,
Tom Hersey