

The Great Controversy makes it clear that Mrs. White was referring to a period of 250 to 300 years. Wylie for this period gave a figure of hundreds of thousands.¹ Albert Hyma, a recent historian, gives a figure of 400,000.² He should qualify as a historian even for Peterson, as his book is dated 1931.

Education does not ensure that one can interpret history accurately when prejudice is present. Perhaps divine inspiration is just what is needed to read history and repeat it accurately.

A similar example follows where Monort is spoken of as a "priest of the new order." Alison, who apparently was the source of this anecdote, called him a comedian. Peterson feels that there was a "clear indication" by Mrs. White that she wished to be understood as identifying him as an apostate Roman Catholic priest. I had read this many times, and it never had occurred to me that she was attempting to describe an apostate Catholic priest. I rather think Peterson is seeing Catholic prejudice where none was intended.

At the top of page 66 [Peterson] discusses a statement on page 274 of *The Great Controversy* where the Bishop of Paris renounced Roman Catholicism as "priestcraft with no foundation in history or sacred truth." He feels she should have included Sir Walter Scott's two sentences: "It is said that the leaders of the scene had some difficulty inducing the bishop to comply with the task assigned him, which, after all, he executed, not without present tears and subsequent remorse. But he did play the part prescribed." Whether including these sentences would have increased or decreased the Roman Catholic image is difficult for me to see. I question that Catholic malice would be the motive for not including this "hearsay" information.

Peterson's criticism proving Ellen White "a very human" if "godly woman" proves again how remarkable that she was able to "escape the intellectual influences and limitations that are experienced by every man and woman" and write history so accurate that her critics stand clearly revealed as in error by their own exposé.

REFERENCES

- 1 James A. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, fourth edition (London: Cassell and Company, Limited N. D.).
- 2 Albert Hyma, *Europe from the Renaissance to 1815* (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company 1931), p. 222.

WILLIAM S. PETERSON'S REPLY:

The fundamental assumption of Bolton's letter is that my article was designed primarily to list and correct the factual errors in "The Bible and the French Revolution." Hence he finds the core of the article on pages 64-66 and implies that everything before and after these pages is superfluous padding. I certainly cannot accept this view of the article, which, as a matter of fact, examined a number of other questions that Bolton evidently feels are unimportant: the record of *The Great Controversy's* liter-

ary development; the shared assumptions and political attitudes of the historians whom Mrs. White consulted; and, most importantly, what the factual errors in the chapter tell us about Mrs. White's handling of her sources.

Bolton is wrong, therefore, when he peremptorily dismisses my article as "no new contribution" merely because one or two of the factual errors in question have been cited before. I made no false claim of originality; when Arthur White or Francis D. Nichol had already discussed some matter in print, I pointed this out. Whatever value my article has lies in its fresh approach to the problem and the kinds of questions that it asks — not simply in the list of errors which has so absorbed Bolton's attention. I might add that I am baffled by his assertion that I discredited, "without data," Mrs. White's sources. The article was fully documented. Possibly Bolton accidentally overlooked the notes at the end.

Now to turn to the specific points which Bolton raises:

1. He says that I "consider" Wylie to be the published source of Mrs. White's description of the St. Bartholomew Massacre. There can be no doubt about this particular assertion; I refer Bolton to the two parallel columns of page 63 of my article for evidence of how closely Mrs. White was following Wylie at this point, even to the verge of plagiarism. Wylie first makes this statement: "It was now eleven o'clock of Saturday night, and the massacre was to begin at daybreak. . . . The signal for the massacre was to be the tolling of the great bell of the Palace of Justice." Two pages later Wylie writes: "The Queen-mother anticipated the signal by sending one at two o'clock of the morning to ring the bell of St. Germain l' Auxerois, which was nearer than that of the Palace of Justice."¹ Mrs. White in 1888 says that "the great bell of the palace" signaled the beginning of the massacre; in 1911, tacitly acknowledging her error, she says merely that it was "a bell" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 272).

Now, nobody (except Bolton) denies that Mrs. White made a mistake. The only interesting question is *how* the mistake was made. Arthur White's explanation is ingenious but not, I think, convincing: "She [Mrs. White] was now [in 1911, while revising *The Great Controversy*] informed that historians differed on the point of which bell actually gave the signal, (1) the bell of the palace, (2) the bell of the palace of justice, or (3) the bell of the church of St. Germain. . . . The plan was that the bell of the palace would give the signal, and certain reliable historians state that it did. Others differed."² My own explanation of the error is that Mrs. White had read the first passage in Wylie (and the verbal correspondences between Wylie's account and hers are very striking) but not the second. In other words, I believe Mrs. White was guilty of hasty and careless research. If Bolton chooses to regard one of her acknowledged errors as evidence of superior insight, he is of course free to do so.

2. The paragraph in which Mrs. White speaks of the "millions" (later corrected to "multitudes") refers directly to the Terror; there is no mention of war in it. Thus I think the number of deaths cited by Mrs. White must be connected with the Terror alone, though she does also, inexplicably, refer to a ten-year period. Donald Greer, in a careful statistical study, has found records of 16,594 victims during the Terror. "Further research in local archives might add two or three hundred names," remarks Greer; "but if every death sentence of the period were known it is extremely doubtful that the total would reach 17,000."³ Again, since Mrs. White confessed to the

error by changing the sentence in 1911, I cannot imagine why Bolton wishes to defend a figure which the writer herself disavowed.

3. As for the number of Protestants who fled France in the sixteenth century, I can only say that I have laid out all the evidence already in my article. I invite the readers of SPECTRUM to reexamine my paragraph (page 65 and note 25) and then judge whether my interpretation or Bolton's is correct. I believe the evidence speaks for itself.

4. Mrs. White's remark about "one of the priests of the new order" follows close on the heels of Scott's anecdote about the Bishop of Paris, which concludes with this sentence: "Several apostate priests followed the example of this prelate." Under these circumstances, who could possibly conclude — as Bolton claims to have done — that "one of the priests of the new order" was in fact not a priest?

REFERENCES

- 1 James A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, volume two (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin 1874-1877), pp. 600, 602.
- 2 Arthur White, Ellen G. White as an historian (unpublished manuscript), pp. 22-23.
- 3 Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror during the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith 1966), p. 26.

69

WALTER H. ROBERTS, Loma Linda University:

At hand is volume one of the 1827 edition of Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, which I had been reading just before the appearance of [Peterson's] article, and John Buchan's life of Sir Walter Scott written [in observance of] the centenary of the latter's death. Buchan evaluates Scott's biography of Napoleon, with its introductory comments on the French Revolution in essentially the following terms:

It represents a herculean labor matched by tireless industry — a prodigious feat. Scott read, and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum as he outlined the work. Authoritative source materials were not lacking and were secured from at home and abroad. It is a history for the ordinary reader and not for the scholar. The prerequisites of such a work would include: a just perspective, a well-proportioned narrative, and vigor and color in the telling.

In respect to the first, the work is remarkable for the fact that it was written so close in time to the events described. In respect to the second, the expository matter is skillfully interwoven into the text; it is lacking only in the ability to sustain the reader's interest throughout the nine volumes (attributable in part to the pressure under which it was composed). The work was attacked by the critics on the basis of not being judgmental enough of Napoleon; and after all, the author was not a bona fide historian. Observably, it was the product of a man of genius and on a vast scale (as even a casual perusal will confirm). I might interject here that the *Messiah* was written "in haste," but again by a man of genius.