

The Scott references embellish *The Great Controversy* — if the latter needs it. They do not appear incongruous, for [Ellen] White is no mean writer herself. The absurdities and excesses of the revolutionary period are highlighted, and the basic causes are brought into focus. There is a French motto, "Death before dishonor." Perhaps the bishop of Paris (mercifully nameless) should have thought of it and achieved the honor rather than the dishonor. It was my impression that *The Great Controversy*, like Scott's *Napoleon*, was written for the common man. This seems to have been lost on the eminent critic.

Carlyle's *French Revolution*, written in 1837, says essentially the same things as Scott does regarding the bishop and associated events, even giving the bishop's name. McCrie's life of Anton Lavoisier, the great French scientist and patriot, might have suited Peterson better if it had yet been written. In any case, we would look in vain in Lavoisier's writings for any aspersion of the clergy of that day; Lavoisier lived and died a staunch Catholic.

In my opinion, the English instructor at our sister university had better take on a less formidable opponent than [Ellen] White. It is unfortunate that so many readers will not have the resources available to check out the allegations. As Carlyle would say, "Faith is gone out; Scepticism is come in." In these times we need more faith, not more doubt.

#### WILLIAM S. PETERSON'S REPLY:

I am sorry to have to report that Roberts has seriously misinterpreted John Buchan's remarks on Scott's biography of Napoleon. The passage which he cites — praising Scott for his industrious research — is in fact a quotation from J. G. Lockhart, Scott's son-in-law; but Buchan then goes on to evaluate the *Life of Napoleon* in language almost identical to that which I used in my article:

It was task-work, no doubt, but a prodigious feat of task-work. Most of it was written in haste, with a mind overwrought and a heart distracted by cares. The materials were not available for a full and accurate chronicle, even had Scott the capacity and the desire to use them. . . . Both [Scott's *Life* and Hazlitt's *Life of Napoleon*] are productions of men of genius; both are on a vast scale; neither is the work of a careful scholar.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that Buchan praises the *literary* qualities of the biography, but he nowhere makes the claim that it is reliable *history*. Hence Roberts cannot legitimately invoke the authority of Buchan to endorse his own view that Scott is a sound historian. Modern historians are, in fact, almost unanimous in their low estimate of Scott's biography of Napoleon, for the very reasons which I outlined in my article.

In his attempt to defend Scott, Roberts is quarreling not only with me but with a host of witnesses. Scott's own publisher complained that the "tautologies and inaccuracies" of the *Life of Napoleon* cost him "5 hours labour" on every proof sheet of the book;<sup>2</sup> and when it was published, John Stuart Mill subjected the *Life* to a searching analysis in the *Westminster Review* which revealed once and for all the profound

deficiencies of the book.<sup>3</sup> Surely at this late date Roberts does not propose single-handedly to rescue Scott's reputation as a historian merely because Mrs. White thought highly of him.

As for Scott's anecdote about the bishop of Paris, which both Roberts and Bolton discuss, I should emphasize that I was not questioning the accuracy of Scott's account. I said only that Mrs. White distorted the episode by suppressing the key fact that the bishop renounced Christianity under coercion. Therefore, whether Carlyle mentions the episode or whether Roberts thinks the bishop should have chosen martyrdom is simply beside the point. What is at issue here is whether Mrs. White gives a fair and accurate account of the bishop's behavior; I submit that she has not.

Georges Lefebvre, one of the leading modern authorities on the French Revolution, offers the following comment on the incident: "On the night of 16-17 Brumaire, Year II (November 6-7, 1793) they [the extremists] compelled [Jean Baptiste Joseph] Gobel, the bishop of Paris, to resign, and on the 17th he came with his vicars to the Convention to confirm his action officially."<sup>4</sup> It will be seen that this agrees substantially with Scott's version, and that it emphasizes once again precisely the aspect of the story which Mrs. White ignored: that the bishop was *compelled* to act as he did. To treat Gobel as a willing apostate, as Mrs. White does, is to write bad history.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 John Buchan, *Sir Walter Scott* (London: Cassell 1932), pp. 311-312.
- 2 Eric Quayle, *The Ruin of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis 1968), p. 224.
- 3 John Stuart Mill, Scott's life of Napoleon, *Westminster Review* 9:251-303 (April 1828).
- 4 Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution from 1793 to 1799*, volume two, translated by John H. Stewart and James Friguglietti (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1962-1964), p. 78.

CYRIL EVANS, Adelaide, South Australia:

The Autumn 1970 issue of *SPECTRUM* has just been received [January 29] to enliven our midsummer reading in this part of the Antipodes. Congratulations on the whole issue, and especially for publishing Peterson's study of Ellen White's account of the French Revolution.

It is high time that some of our scientists undertake similar studies of Ellen White's medical ideas and theories. Scientists, who should be well trained in the evaluation and assessment of data, have apparently left the field open to a professor of English to analyze, in the critical scientific method and tradition, part of one of Mrs. White's works. Surely the scientists should have been first in this field. Or has their research and critique been unpublished?

Were such a scientific evaluation undertaken, it would undoubtedly show that Ellen White was very much a product of her time, influenced by some of the changing