

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

ideas to which she was subjected by those around her. Probably the influence on her medical writings of the distant Tolstoy group and his followers, as well as the profound influence of men of strong personality like Bates and Kellogg, would be clearly shown. The many ideas, in her writings, which are no longer medically or scientifically acceptable would be discussed. The historical perspective would be preserved, and we would see how valuable were her remarks to a certain group at a specific time in one country in particular. We would no longer, however, feel compelled to regard what was reasonable for certain people or groups seventy years ago as of value or credibility today. As with most of us, she would be seen to have been ahead of her day in a few things, behind in others, but basically a product of her environment, reading, and education in the times in which she lived.

Richard B. Lewis should also be commended for the stress he places on correct usage of words and phrases, and for the discussion of logical analysis and thought in his paper in the same issue. These two papers [by Peterson and Lewis] certainly add cogency to Peterson's concluding sentence: "Most Seventh-day Adventists could more readily respect and understand a fallible, imperfect Ellen White than the superhuman saint that the church has often given them in the past."

BENTON M. STIDD, Western Illinois University:

Peterson's well reasoned analysis is a significant contribution to Adventist understanding of the nature of inspiration as manifested by Mrs. White. If further study yields similar results from a broad spectrum of her writings, a full-scale evaluation is inevitable.

In the light of the present interest in earth history and the relationship between science and revelation, high priority should be given to a Petersonian analysis of Mrs. White's statements in these areas. If it is established that God has not seen fit to override the thought patterns, assumptions, and scientific conceptions peculiar to an inspired writer of a particular era, then a much more thoughtful approach to such writings is required. This will of necessity require a greater reliance on personal decision based more on *all* the facts available and less on the authority of a particular writer. Such a conclusion would no doubt be resisted by authoritatively oriented individuals and religious bodies, for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the psychological satisfaction associated with reliance on an absolute authority.

May I add my support to the suggestion made by Fraser [Problems of Creation and Science, *SPECTRUM* Autumn 1969] that a symposium be organized to deal with conflicts between science and Scripture? I suggest further that such a symposium be organized by personnel at Andrews University representing both science and theology, and that the problem be considered from both points of view.