REVIEWS

Pride or Prejudice?

WM. FREDERICK NORWOOD

JOHN HARVEY KELLOGG, M.D.
By Richard W. Schwarz
Nashville: Southern Publishing Association 1970 256 pp $5.95

Richard W. Schwarz's study of the life and contributions of John Harvey Kellogg, an influential physician in the middle period of the development of the Seventh-day Adventist church, is unique in certain respects: (1) Heretofore the church has not opened its archives to history scholars for a thorough study of some aspects of its development. (2) A scholarly study of the life and work of a controversial character who was dismissed from membership in the Battle Creek, Michigan, Adventist congregation merits the attention of professional historians within and without the church.

In securing access to thirty years of correspondence between Doctor Kellogg and Ellen G. White from the trustees of the White Estate, Schwarz has lifted the veil that tends to shroud the mass of significant papers, correspondence, and memorabilia still waiting in various depositories for historical examination and evaluation. The sympathetic attitude of the White Estate trustees toward Schwarz, one hopes, is an indication of the quality of official attitude that will increasingly be manifested by responsible custodians.

When they made correspondence available to Schwarz, the White trustees knew that he was committed to writing a doctoral dissertation for the University of Michigan. They knew also that Schwarz had access to the Kellogg papers at Michigan State University, to various private collections, and to other primary and secondary sources. Furthermore, they must have known that he would not be writing as an Adventist apologist. Thus, the helpfulness of the White archivists achieves added dimension.

I do not mean to imply that no writers within the church's organizational structure have ever been given access to needed historical materials. Access must have been given to Loughborough, Olsen, Spalding, and a few others whose works were directed primarily to church members to strengthen their faith in the advent movement.[1] Such works are commendable as forms of biography, essay, or even history — but only if history is not thereby distorted. More recent writers, Nichol and Froom in particular, with their heavy sectarian emphasis, have been powerful apologists.[2] They opted to use history in defense of the faith.

It should be emphasized that Schwarz did not write as a defender either of Kellogg or of the church officials who engaged the doctor in tart debate, but as a competent historian. Knowing that no historian can be strictly objective, Schwarz expressed in the preface to his dissertation a fear that his Adventist background might lead him to

treat with prejudice the antagonism that developed between Kellogg and the church officials. He concluded his statement by quoting the words of Kellogg himself, written in 1919 to his wife, Ella Eaton Kellogg: "It needs more than human wisdom to rightly balance up and estimate justly the motives and influences which enter into one's experience."[3] Perhaps wisely, the hesitancies expressed in the preface of the dissertation are not repeated in the preface to the published book.

The book preface calls attention to the absence of documentation and suggests that readers interested in sources cited consult the dissertation. Gaining access to unpublished dissertations, except on microfilm, is not a simple matter. Through the kindness of a colleague who secured a photocopy at considerable expense, I was able to examine Schwarz's dissertation. The ten chapters and bibliography constitute a typescript of 504 pages, whereas the printed book, with twenty-one chapters and an index, fills 256 pages. Since it can be assumed that publishers not specifically serving a scholarly readership make the decision not to publish footnotes or references, this unfortunate omission should not be attributed to the author. Nevertheless, it is better that the book be published as it is than that it be accessible solely to the relatively few Adventist historians who might trace it to its cloistered shelf in the University of Michigan library.

When a book about a person as controversial as John Harvey Kellogg comes from a church-owned publisher (which is understandably committed to the support of its parent organization) certain questions arise. To what extent, if any, was the author pressed to denature an objective effort to treat personalities and episodes in factual fashion — especially if this objectivity would seem to soil the quasi-official view on institutions and persons? The dissertation does not play down the simple but strong religious influence in his early years which shaped Kellogg's lifelong dedication to healthful living. Neither does it give short shrift to the years of cooperation between the church and the doctor when Ellen White was his close friend and adviser. (With tears streaking his pinkish ninety-year-old cheeks he once said, "Ellen White was the best friend I ever had."[4]) It is obvious that Schwarz attempted to turn his dissertation into a readable biography flavored with just enough verbalisms of a subculture to put the church reader at ease.

I do not know what were the instructions of the publisher to Schwarz, and I have not made a thorough passage-by-passage comparison of the dissertation with the book. But nowhere did my reading arouse suspicion of undue pressure. In neither account does Schwarz sink to the level of the joyous muckrakers of the early twentieth century or resort to the distortion of journalistic flippancy found in two popuar works, *Cornflake Crusade* and *Some Nuts among the Berries*.[5] The dissertation's 14,000-word treatment of the sequence of events related to Kellogg's conflict with the church is reduced to a chapter of some 7,000 words in the published book; the former is well-documented and must be read by anyone who wishes to know the facts of this complex conflict of personalities. Here, if anywhere, the publisher's editorial board must have offered some firm counsel, for Schwarz could have dealt more severely with Kellogg in some of his egocentric postures, and likewise with the church officials in their periods of severe authoritarianism. Streamlining this published chapter, however, does no serious violence to the biography, but it does tend to rob the account of many interesting and significant facts.

Schwarz's objectivity is similar in some respects to that of Horace B. Powell in *The Original Has This Signature — W. K. Kellogg*.[6] Unfortunately, Powell's interesting volume (not written as a dissertation) also appeared without a bibliography and without documentation except what little can be derived from the text itself.

It is common knowledge that John Harvey and Will Keith, his younger brother, did not get along after their early health food ventures gained commercial significance. John Harvey tended to treat his brother as subject to his direction, as indeed Will was for the many years he was an employee of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. The doctor later attempted to claim exclusive use of the family name commercially, but a court of law denied him that monopoly. Each of the two Kelloggs was a genius in his own right, but their "rights" clashed at numerous crossroads. Their hostility finally simmered down to a cold war that lasted until the elder brother died in December 1943 at the age of ninety-one years. The tragedy is that the situation might have been otherwise during the last five years of their concurrent existence. Will Keith expressed deep regret that there had been no real reconciliation at their last meeting on October 3, 1942. On June 22, 1948, a member of Mr. Kellogg's staff read to him (he was blind) a letter that the doctor had dictated before his death. Conciliatory in tone, the letter revealed regret that circumstances had severed their interests and brotherly relationship; it noted that Will's better business judgment had saved him from a vast number of mistakes of the sort made by John Harvey; and it expressed an earnest desire to make amends for "any wrong or injustice of any sort" he had done to his brother and praised him for giving the name he bore "a place among the notable ones of our time." Regrettably, a member of the household of John Harvey decided that the physical and mental decline alluded to in the letter should not be revealed to Will Keith. Therefore, the letter was not delivered until years later. Will Kellogg, who usually sublimated his emotions, was deeply grieved when he realized he had been robbed of an opportunity for a more complete reconciliation. This episode, omitted by Schwarz, is treated fully by Powell.[7]

Schwarz has delineated other emotionally charged situations that occurred when it appeared that the contending groups within the church — leaders and sympathizers who were polarized over the Battle Creek situation — had reached a rapprochement. There were some public confessions and renouncements of hostility, but the smoldering embers of pride and prejudice soon flared into a hostility that went through cycles of alternate calm and eruption. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists had participated little if any in financing the Battle Creek Sanitarium, but the church as the parent organization clearly had a vested interest in the sanitarium.[8] Hence, it entered into the final struggle for control that developed a few years after termination of the 1938 bankruptcy trusteeship. Litigation ended in compromise within months after Kellogg's death. The church received a reasonable share of the assets ($550,000 in cash and three farms valued at $75,000) and a court mandate to use it for sanitarium activities in the state of Michigan.

Readers of Schwarz's volume should remember Doctor Kellogg for his amazing breadth of interests, his professional associations and writings, his persevering industry, and his unrelenting determination. All of these qualities were vital to the success of the Battle Creek Sanitarium after he joined the staff. His dynamism overflowed into

many of his related corporate creations — the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association, the Race Betterment Foundation, the Race Betterment Conferences, the Sanitarium Food Company, the journal *Good Health,* the American Medical Missionary Board, and the American Medical Missionary College.

The American Medical Missionary College was unusual because of its integral relationship with the social welfare programs instituted by Kellogg in Chicago. In addition, as residents in the college settlement house in Chicago, the medical students had limited instructional privileges in a few hospitals of the city. This clinical outlet and the charity cases at the sanitarium in Battle Creek were thought to provide ample teaching cases. A few high-level endorsements of the college, probably wangled by Kellogg, seem to be the justification for Schwarz's praise of the quality of medical education at American Medical Missionary College compared with that in contemporary medical colleges. The author has exercised better historical judgment by noting, however, that when Kellogg in 1908 stated that "the outlook for our College is better than it ever has been before," the Illinois State Board of Health had already decided to drop the college from its list of approved schools. Unfortunately, Schwarz did not follow with the observations on the college made about a year later by Abraham Flexner, whose report on all medical schools in the country was sponsored and published by the Carnegie Foundation.[9] This prime source does not appear in the bibliography of the dissertation. In my opinion, the American Medical Missionary College, in spite of certain commendable features, was always a marginal operation — in finances, in controlled hospital beds in Chicago, and in maintaining a stable, organized clinical faculty. Furthermore, the divided campus was no asset. Like many other weak schools, it could not survive the long overdue nationwide clean-up of medical education triggered by Flexner's exposé.

In his epilogue Schwarz has summarized the lasting contributions John Harvey Kellogg, a man who was indefatigable in his pursuit of a mission, made to the health habits of Americans. Schwarz has exhibited a similar diligence in bringing his very useful study to completion. His book has much meat for the social and church historian of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, many clergymen and physicians as well as the silent majority of church laymen will read the volume with growing appreciation. How timely it would be if the Adventist church, like Schwarz, would dispassionately view the Battle Creek epoch as history that needs to be told, but in some respects not repeated.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1 John N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement, Its Rise and Progress* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association 1905).

Mahlon E. Olsen, *Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1925).

Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1961).

2 LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1971).

Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1944).

3 Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg: American Health Reformer* (University of Michigan: unpublished PH.D. dissertation 1964), p. iv.

4 Doctor Kellogg made these remarks in a personal conversation with me in approximately 1942.

5 Gerald H. Carson, *Cornflake Crusade* (New York: Rinehart 1957).
Ronald Deutsch, *Some Nuts among the Berries* (New York: Ballantine Books 1957).

6 Horace B. Powell, *The Original Has This Signature — W. K. Kellogg* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1956).

7 Powell, pp. 285-287.

8 Members of the church contributed heavily to the founding and advancement of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

The Witnessing of Wit

ROY BRANSON

SENSE AND NONSENSE IN RELIGION
By Sten H. Stenson
New York: Abingdon Press 1969 255 pp $5.95

In *Sense and Nonsense in Religion* Stenson responds to the loss of faith dramatized by the death-of-God theology and to the conviction that "religious Jews and Christians" either must preserve their "rational integrity as members of twentieth-century technological culture by giving up their religion" or must preserve their "religion in a secular world by giving up their rational integrity" (p. 155). Stenson reacts to this contemporary dilemma with a defense of paradox made familiar by neo-orthodox theologians. Making paradoxical statements is the appropriate, "reasonable" way for the religious person to affirm simultaneously the empirical world of nature and the mysterious truths grasped through "metaphysical intuition" (p. 220). Karl Barth could have said the same thing.

Stenson's original contribution is discussing paradox in terms of humor. Not that he identifies religion with wit and punning — that would be adopting a sort of natural theology. But Stenson wants to show the appropriateness of religious language by comparing its logic with that of humor.

The most relevent characteristic of humor is its ambiguity. "There could be no puns or witticism if it were not for the fact that the same words, pictures, movements, and so forth can be intended and interpreted in several different ways at the same time" (p. 106). Religious language is characteristically ambiguous. It points at the same time to both immanent and transcendent reality.