

Elder Andreasen Speaks about the Spirit of Prophecy

A number of years ago, an old tape was found in England and transcribed. The message consisted of a sermon given by Elder M.L. Andreasen (1876-1962) at an Ohio camp meeting in 1955. The information you are going to read below is an invaluable heritage; we are thankful for the opportunity to share it with you. It closely parallels his diary notes on pages 193-202 in my book, *Defending the Spirit of Prophecy*.

Because it is somewhat of a rambling sermon, only the heart of his sermon is reprinted here.

This was not a carefully prepared presentation, but rather an impromptu collection of earlier experiences in Andreasen's life. **It was given a year before he learned about the doctrinal sellout during the Evangelical Conferences and strongly protested. The responses which he received from leading brethren utterly broke his heart and led to his death in 1962.** (See my book, *The Evangelical Conferences and their Aftermath*, and my more recent book, *The Evangelical Earthquake*.)

The following sermon will also be found on pp. 202-210 of my 272-page book, *Defending the Spirit of Prophecy*.

“This service this morning will be a little different from the ordinary service for the eleven o'clock hour. I have been asked to speak on the subject of the Spirit of Prophecy; more particularly, my personal experiences with Sister White. There are not many remaining who have known and been with Mrs. White; and it's thought best that this hour be used for that purpose.

“When I became an Adventist [in 1894], I'd heard about Sister White, but I was given no special instruction, I simply accepted belief of the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, as I did many other things, without going thoroughly into the subject. I gave up the eating of unclean things and the drinking of that which is not good, and just let it go at that.

“Then came the time [1898], when I prepared to teach. There I came face to face with a question that I knew I had to settle, because if I were to teach children and young people, **I must know for myself.** Not merely by hearsay, not merely by reading, but by personal experience, if that were possible. I was attending at that time the Chicago

University; not at that time normally noted for its orthodoxy or its religion. But I took there a course in the Life of Christ.

“*Desire of Ages* had just come out [1898] and I used that book as complimentary reading. And I had opportunity there to go thoroughly into the reading, the teaching of that book.

“So day by day I would read *Desire of Ages*, as my additional reading, and compare it with what I learned in class. And I found, to my astonishment, that many of the perplexing questions that even higher critics have to deal with were solved in *Desire of Ages*.

“I became more and more interested in it; and at last it came to a kind of climax. What shall I do? What is my position? What ought it to be?

“And so, several years later, believing in direct action, I set out to find Sister White and have a talk with her. So I did. [This visit by Elder Andreasen to Ellen White at Elmshaven was made in 1909.]

“I was a very young man [about 33 years old at the time] and when I knocked on the door I hardly knew what to say. I did about what a student did much later in Union College, when he came to my office and said, ‘Here I am.’

“Sister White received me very kindly. I suppose she sized me up and wondered what I was after. I said, ‘I'd like to have the privilege of admission to the vault,’ where all her writings were. I said, ‘I have read all your books and I want to see how you wrote them before anybody got a hold of them, and made corrections and omissions and paraphrases [changed phrases].’ She looked at me and said, ‘You may have the privilege.’

“And so, I went to work. I stayed there three months and worked almost night and day. I read what was in the vault, a tremendous lot of work. I was perplexed when I saw the volume of it. If I had not seen it for myself I'd have said, ‘No one, however long he has lived, could ever write that much.’ But there it was.

“So I read the *Great Controversy*, written by her own hand. I thought that she dictated her writings to someone else. But that was only rarely done. Most of it was written by herself, in her own handwriting. Then it was given to the stenographers. Then they copied it on 8½ x 11 paper,

2 double spaced, sometimes triple spaced. Then it was brought back to her for correction.

“Sometimes her helpers would themselves make small corrections—spelling, punctuation or grammar, but then they would sign their name to the item and bring it to her for approval or rejection.

“I had brought with me a great many quotations that I had found as I read *Desire of Ages* very critically. **I wanted to see how those statements were made originally, before they were printed and before anybody got a hold of them.**

“So I repeat, **I knew that Sister White had never written *Desire of Ages*. She couldn't. Of that I was sure.**

“Earlier, in the university, I had waded through Browning; and I said to myself, ‘If I had Browning in the class I'd send him home to learn how to write.’ Now, in class, I was given the work of finding immortal lines in *Desire of Ages*, as I had done in Shakespeare. I don't believe I put that quite right, because that was not the work that was given me. It's the work that I took, as I took down immortal lines in Shakespeare. —**But I had found more immortal lines in *Desire of Ages* than I did in Shakespeare!**

“**And I was astonished, and I knew Sister White had never written it. And, with that in mind, I came out to see her. What did she write? What did she write before it was ‘fixed up,’** as we say, by those who make corrections, proofreaders—*her work!*

“I had brought with me all of her many statements regarding theology, because **I knew that Sister White could never have written *Desire of Ages*, with that beautiful language, because she didn't have the education. She couldn't! So also I knew she never could have written that book, with the theology in that book, unless she had had a very broad theological education. —And she hadn't.** So I knew. I had brought with me my statements; and, **as I compared them, reading out in the original in her own handwriting,—every one of those statements I found written by her own hand,—just as they were printed in the book!** That was an astonishment to me.

“I well remember when I first discovered in *Desire of Ages* that tremendous statement, that ‘in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, and underived.’ That changed my theology and the theology of the denomination. As I read it [the book] again and again, **I had earlier found more statements that I knew that she had not written—but there they were in her handwriting.**

“**When I was done with my work, after three months, and I had a confidence in a job well done, I was convinced that those writings could be explained on no other ground than that of**

Divine Guidance. Those writings were written 2 under the direction of God.

“Sister White herself was a very pleasant personality. I used to sit with her in the morning, early—six, five *and once four*—and she was up writing. She'd sit in her rocking chair, with arms and a board across those arms, and there she'd write. I don't know why she accepted me, but I was apparently welcome.

“I sat there trying to find out all about her; and I suppose, she was reading me while I was trying to read her. We had a good time together.

“**She told me that her writings were produced under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; but that, later on, as she would reread a passage, she would learn still more about its deeper meaning.** She said, ‘I study it, same as you do.’

“Later I read what the Bible says about [what] prophet Peter says *that they themselves have to study their own writings*, to see what or what manner of time the Spirit of God which was in them did signify.

“And that is how she wrote. **I repeat: Every one of those unusual statements I had brought with me to Elmshaven, I found to be authenticated in her own handwriting.**

“We discussed many things. I remember the first time I came in and saw her office, I found it to be very antiquated. No up-to-date office furniture. And I said to myself, if I ever get enough courage, I'll tell her what I think about her furniture.

“Well the time came one morning, when she asked me, ‘Do you think I'm extravagant?’

“I said, ‘No, I don't.’

“‘Well there was a sister in here yesterday; and, when she saw me sitting in this rocking chair, she accused me of extravagance. Now I bought that second hand. I paid eight dollars for it.’

“Sister White, herself, was very companionable, a Mother in Israel. I learned many things, many things. She gave me full clearance.

“**There was one place where Willie [William C. White], the son, would not let me in.** And as usual when you may not do a certain thing, that's the thing you want to do. And so I went to Sister White. **I knew what was in there; it was the documents, the family documents that nobody ought to read but the family.** I had no business to do it. If I'd have had a little more sense, I wouldn't have asked to do it. I went there. Sister White says, ‘You may read it.’

“So I went to Willie and he gave a famous reply, “I don't doubt your word, but I don't believe it.”

“So we went, both of us, to Sister White. And I said, ‘Willie won't let me in.’ And we discussed it, and she gave permission. And so I went, perhaps I shouldn't have, but I'm glad I did. **There I saw in**

3 **her own handwriting, her letters from the time she was fourteen years old, to her relatives, her friends. Letters were long in those days, ten twelve, fifteen, eighteen pages.** I suppose they didn't write every day.

"And **she would give just a few words of a personal nature.** She might say, 'Yesterday, I went down to see the dentist.' I didn't know they had dentists in those days. Or she might say, 'I went down and I bought eight yards of calico and I'm going to make myself a dress.' **All the rest of [what was in] those letters, you could put on the front page of the Review today.** You wouldn't need to add any name to it, and every older Adventist at least would say, 'That's Sister White.' **It was a sermon. Those were the kind of letters.** And many things there that should not be revealed, but all of the same kind. And I was again profoundly impressed by the fact: a young girl, not writing for publication, not writing that a man fifty or more years later would read it, but just the ordinary letters—**the same Spirit as in all her writings.**

"My speech today is really a testimony. It is not a sermon. I am just witnessing, giving my testimony.

"I went away perplexed and satisfied, because I had seen that which could not be written by her, and yet it was. I had found no end of statements concerning theology, that are most profound, written by a woman of a limited education; that I was convinced, as I said, that though I did not understand all—here God had been at work.

"Many years later, I was asked to teach at our Theological Seminary [1938]. **I said I'd be glad to, if I may have the privilege once more of going through the [E.G. White] vault [by that time located in the basement of the General Conference, next door to the Seminary]. I got that privilege. Three summers I worked, with competent help. Again I read all, and rather critically.** I could read reasonably rapid which, by the way, all of you and all ministers particularly might do well to learn, to read rapidly without losing the context and be able to remember.

"So I read, and I think critically, as far as I could; **and, when, I was done, I was again profoundly impressed—and now finally [I concluded] that here was that which man had not written, here was God-indicted writings.**

"Do I then worship Sister White? Oh, no,

"Do I put her on a pedestal? No.

"But only at the peril of my soul may I reject those writings or neglect them [the books]—that God has given to guide us.

"I have in my possession more than twenty-thousand statements on theology, not in our books, but in the Spirit of Prophecy articles—and I wouldn't

let them go for a good deal.

"And I had found in my own study of health, again and again, oftentimes I would struggle with a problem and I'd get it. **And then I'd take, perchance sometimes, some page of Sister White; and there it is. There is what I struggled weeks and months to get; there it is.**

"The testimonies have a strange influence on me and on you. **You read them; and you go away saying, 'Lord, I have to be a better man; or I'll never see the Kingdom,** unless I repent of this, that, and the other thing.' **That's the aim, that's the purpose, that's the results of reading the testimonies.** They draw you to the Bible; they magnify God, magnify the Bible.

"Are there not in the testimonies many things that are hard to understand? To that I'd answer 'Yes.' As I said when I came to the Seminary, I will not be deceived and I will not deceive. I'll go as far as my mind can go and I'll know the truth.

"Yes, there are things hard to understand. There are some things in the Bible I struggled with for a good many years, I wish they weren't there. But they're there. Throw them out? No, no. Wait, wait. You'll find statements that you may not understand. But later on—

"In the school, one student came to me and said, 'I found a contradiction. Sister White says both that God is Judge and that God is not Judge. God is not judge, Christ is judge,—and here God is judge.'

"You'll find part of that in the chapter of the *Great Controversy*, where you'll find the Father sitting in judgment and presiding in the judgment. He is the Judge and Christ is the Advocate. You will find later on in the same book, that God is not Judge. **What do you do about that? Just leave it until you get light.**

"What light may you get? You can find, or you'll find generally, that you may believe that and believe the other also. Even though it seems to be contradictory; but light will come.

"Now the Father IS Judge—in the Investigative Judgment [while Jesus is still priest]. Christ is Judge—in the Day of Judgment, a thousand years [the Executive Judgment] after the millennium, when He is no longer priest. They are both true, both statements.

"We need to read what has been written about good eating, about good living, and live up to it!

"What has been written, you'd better read that carefully, because **every statement holds true today.** There may be a balancing statement. Get that there, but **do not neglect or reject that which has been written for our learning.**

"As we near the harbor, we need a pilot; thus she speaks of her work. **I feel like giving a sol-**

4 **emn warning to our people on the neglect of those writings that God has given us! How shall we escape? I speak from the Bible now; how shall we escape if we neglect?—not reject, not if we reject—but we neglect.** And how shall we escape? I'd like to apply that also to these writings. **How shall we escape? We'll have to give an account.**

"I advise you to get a compartment in your brain, where you can put questions that you may not fully understand. **Don't disbelieve them necessarily. But wait a bit; and it may be, after a year or two, that solution will come and you will thank God for it.**

"How shall we escape if we neglect? I thank God for the privilege of being a Seventh-day Adventist. It's a wonderful thing. But friends, if we neglect the very means God has given us—how shall we escape?"

"And so today, shall we not renew our faith and allegiance to that banner, 'The commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus.'

"And that takes in the whole thing. That takes in the writings that have been given us for this time. So again I magnify God's name. Wonderful, wonderful. **God is bringing out a people, a people that know the future as no people have ever known it. We know what's coming.** We know the persecutions. We know the trials that are coming. For, in the last days, perilous times shall come. Shall we fear then? "Gird on the armor, stand like a rock!"

"Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious—to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony."—*1 Selected Messages, 48.*

"There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded."—*1 Selected Messages, 48.*

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agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them."—*2 Selected Messages, 78.*

"In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. **Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established . . .** Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?"—*Review, May 25, 1905.*

"In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the *Testimonies* of His Spirit. **There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.**"—*4 Testimonies, 147-148.*

"God is either teaching His church, reproofing their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. **This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter.**"—*5 Testimonies, 671.*

"As the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy, 'past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. **I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God.** This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. **Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?'**"—*5 Testimonies, 671.*

"If you lose confidence in the Testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the *Testimonies*, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? **That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed.**"—*5 Testimonies, 98.*