

VIRGINIA STEINWEG

WITH-  
OUT  
FEAR  
OR THE LIFE  
OF  
FAVOR M. L. ANDREASEN

## VISITING IN ELLEN WHITE'S HOME

IT HAD been a restful Sabbath. Now as the sun was sinking behind the wooded hills surrounding the little valley, Grandmother, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, the helpers in the home and office, and a few visitors were all singing together. Grandmother's clear soprano voice was plainly distinguishable. After several hymns had been sung she began a vivid description of what heaven will be like.<sup>1</sup>

M. L. thrilled to realize that he was actually a member of this family, albeit for a few days only. Henry and Herbert White, the twin sons of W. C. White, who were sitting close to him, had invited him that morning to ride with them in their buggy ahead of that of their father, Willie, and Grandmother on their nine-mile ride up to Pacific Union College, where Grandmother was to speak. During the week the children had pulled him out to the barn to see Grandmother's new calf and to watch the day-old chicks and their mother eating grain. They had told him how little Arthur had tried to count the buttons down the front of Grandmother's dress, but had gotten mixed up, and how she had put her dainty hands around him and hugged him. For a short while in the afternoon after school, before time for chores, M. L. had heard the children playing base-

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<sup>1</sup> Grace White Jacques, "My Special Grandmother," *The Youth's Instructor*, Dec. 5, 1961.

ball in the large pasture. Later he had found them by the well house, washing and cutting up apricots Grandmother had bought to be dried, then shipped to ministers' families in the South, and to missionaries overseas.

Tomorrow morning M. L. would again sit at the table Grandmother so graciously presided over. Maybe there would be the special treat of "gems," whole-wheat or unbolted corn-meal muffins. For dinner he hoped there would be Grandmother's favorite dishes, baked corn soufflé, tomatoes and macaroni, and tiny cooked mustard greens.

How did it come about that Andreasen was here at Elmshaven, a guest in the home of Ellen G. White? He has recorded the reasons for his going and what this visit meant to him and his lifework:

*My personal contact with Mrs. E. G. White was confined to the latter years of her life and was of short duration. I had read her writings and to some extent studied them from the time of my baptism as a young man in 1894, and had met her personally on several occasions.*

*It was not until 1909, however, that I began serious consideration of what the Testimonies meant to the remnant church. I was at that time president of the Greater New York Conference and had read with interest the various messages concerning the work that should be done in the larger cities of the land. I was perplexed that apparently little had been done to comply with the instruction given. Elder E. E. Franks had been holding meetings in Carnegie Hall with good results. Elders S. N. Haskell, Luther Warren, G. B. Starr, Dr. Kress, and Professor Prescott had visited and worked in New York City. Mrs. White herself had visited the city, and it was felt that little more could be done at that time.*

*This brought me to an extended consideration of the messages sent and how they had been accepted*

*and acted upon. Some of them seemed to have fallen in good ground while others apparently had been considered good advice but not of compelling importance, and consequently had been neglected or forgotten.*

*This study led me to a review of such evidence as was available to me bearing on the question of the origin of the writings of Mrs. E. G. White. Hitherto I had accepted the testimonies of others without any critical appraisal or profound conviction one way or the other. Now, however, I felt I had come to a point in life when I must make definite decisions for myself. This became the more necessary as I was shortly called to head the newly established seminary in Hutchinson, Minnesota, and would have to deal with young men about to enter the ministry. For their sakes I decided that I must know for myself and not depend upon any secondary authorities, however good they might appear to be.*

*This led me to consider a journey to St. Helena, California, where Mrs. White resided at that time. I wished to have firsthand knowledge as far as it was obtainable. I did not wish to be deceived, nor did I wish to deceive others.*

*Consequently, in due time I arrived in St. Helena and was cordially received by Mrs. White. I stated my reason for coming, which was to obtain permission to examine her writings in manuscript before anyone had done any editorial work on them. I had brought with me many quotations from her writings that were of outstanding interest either for their theological import or their beauty of expression.*

*In my own mind I was convinced that Sister White had never written them as they appeared in print. She might have written something like them, but I was sure that no one with the limited education Sister White had could ever produce such exquisitely worded statements or such pronouncements on*

difficult theological problems. They must have been produced by a well-trained individual, conversant not only with theological niceties but also with beautiful English.

I was given ready and free access to the vault where the manuscripts were kept, and I immediately began work. I was overwhelmed with the mass of material placed at my disposal. It did not seem possible for one individual to produce such a quantity of matter in a lifetime, most of which was handwritten. I had imagined that Sister White dictated most of her writings, for she had helpers. Now I found that while she might at times dictate, most of her writings were produced by her own pen. It was these writings in which I was interested and that I examined. I spent several days at this work, and, being a reasonably rapid reader, and with the assistance of the office staff, I accomplished my task.

When I was done, I was both amazed and perplexed. Here I saw before my eyes that which I believed could not be done. I verified many of the quotations I had brought with me. I saw in her own handwriting some of the statements that I was sure she had not written—could not have written. Especially was I struck with the now-familiar quotation in *The Desire of Ages*, page 530: "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived." This statement at that time was revolutionary and compelled a complete revision of my former view—and that of the denomination—on the deity of Christ.

I had examined many of the manuscripts in the vault with the exception of the family letters. Though the son, W. C. White, doubted that I would get permission to read them, Sister White readily gave me access. And so I read them. Here were the letters written by the parents to the children and the children to the parents, by James to Ellen and Ellen to James. Ellen's letters might begin with "Dear

*James" or "Dear Husband," followed by some remark or statement of a purely personal character, and then she would launch into an extended recital of some religious topic with appropriate admonition and counsel. If the few introductory remarks were left out, the complete letter could be printed on the editorial page of the Review today, no name need be appended, and many readers would immediately recognize the origin of the composition.*

*The same distinct phraseology, the same style and intensity of desire for a greater knowledge of God, marked her writings although at the time the letters were not considered as material for publication.*

*When I was ready to leave St. Helena, Sister White presented me with several of her books, inscribed on the flyleaf with her own name and also a small printed wish for the Lord's blessing. The only book I have left with her name in it is *The Desire of Ages*. I also took with me some of her unprinted writings that she graciously gave me. A few of these were handwritten, but mostly they were typewritten copies of communications she had sent out, some of them had corrections in her own hand.*

*When I knew her, Sister White was an aged woman, but in full possession of her faculties. She was gracious, considerate, and kind, a true mother in Israel. I visited her once early in the morning, but at whatever hour I came, she was already at work. There were some who claimed that she was already in her dotage. She must have heard this, for one morning she gave me eight pages to read of what she had written that morning. After I had read it, she smiled at me and said in a playful voice, "That's pretty good, isn't it, for an old woman in her dotage!" and then she laughed. The first time I heard Sister White laugh I was shocked, for I did not think that a person in her position should laugh. But laugh she*

*did at times, a sweet, quiet, girlish laugh, altogether appropriate. She was good company and not at all the stern, demanding, and commanding personality I had pictured her to be. She was a mother in Israel, and I came to love her.*

*When I finally bade her farewell, it was with the profound conviction that I had been face to face with a manifestation and a work that I could account for only on the ground of divine guidance. I was convinced that her work was of God, that her writings were produced under the guidance of God, and that she had a message both for the world and the people of God.*

*In writing this, I am not attempting to "prove" anything. I am merely giving my testimony of that which I know. And that testimony is clear and unequivocal. I believe that the writings of Sister White are true messages of God for this church and that no one can ignore and disobey them except at great, infinitely great, loss.*

*Let me make this clear. I am not to worship Sister White or her writings. I am to worship God. I am not to preach Sister White. I am to preach Christ. I am not to consider her writings another Bible. As a Protestant I must stand on the Bible and the Bible only. I am not to consider her writings an addition to the Bible, presenting new light. I am to use them as a magnifying glass that does not create new truths but makes plainer that which is already revealed. In my own life and thinking I find them of surpassing value. I most highly recommend them to others.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> M. L. Andreasen, unpublished manuscript.