



"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

A BENIGN OR MALIGNANT CONSPIRACY - WHICH?

To a committee - named "Historical Background of the 1888 Experience Committee", chaired by a Vice President of the General Conference - Elder D. K. Short, also a member of the committee, submitted a manuscript entitled, The Mystery of 1888. In the introduction of this manuscript, Elder Short wrote:

This compilation has been prepared by Donald K. Short, upon invitation as a member of a special committee authorized by the General Conference. It has been compiled *for Seventh-day Adventists and in particular leaders and ministers* who should have a rather full knowledge of Adventist history and an understanding of the Spirit of Prophecy and the teachings that make "us" a people in the final generation of the world.¹

In this document a question is asked. Has there been a "benign cover-up conspiracy. . . a kind of a denominational Watergate" in regard to the 1888 experience? (Or do the facts indicate a "malignant" conspiracy?) Observe the suggestion of a conspiracy in full context. Short wrote:

Seventh-day Adventist history has been written and no effort in all the universe can change it nor can any apology alter a single facet of it. But is it possible that an attempt is being made now to interpret and cover-up certain episodes in that history in order to make it fit a public stance that has been taken by the Church and published abroad? The amount of official material published since 1950 is considerable, totaling over 1200 pages in three books. The more that is published, the greater the problem becomes. The confusion and anomalies developing are on the increase. There is a very sad credibility gap emerging. The last two publications, by Olson and Froom, are serious misfortunes and present apologies which will not bear analysis. To have the Ellen G. White Estate approve and condone these publications is tragic enough. But to go even further and seek to interpret, and to expound the "intent" of what Ellen G. White has said, presents a most solemn predicament. This is not to condemn any man or group of men. It only brings into focus a situation "we" face as a people! Pride is a terrible sin, as sacred history proves. Rebellion grows out of it.

For decades "we" have stood amazed at the way the world seeks every possible means to lawfully disregard the fourth commandment. The untenable, though sometimes plausible, excuses put forward are legion. The attempt to ignore and cover-up are distressing and ignoble.

The published positions "we" have accepted in recent years and the Historical Foreword as found in Testimonies to Ministers, and similar attitudes taken and promoted by the Ellen G. White Estate seem to be in same vein.

Is it possible that "we" have fallen into some sort of a benign cover-up conspiracy which "we" consider justified for the sake of the dead and the preservation of denominational pride and reputation, but which in reality is a tragic fall into a kind of denominational Watergate?²

This summary of certain implications from our history - and for that matter very recent history - demand our close attention. We shall in this thoughtpaper note what is called "an emerging credibility gap" in relationship to the suggested "cover-up conspiracy". In so doing we shall follow closely the evidence presented in the manuscript - The Mystery of 1888 - but giving the primary source documentation wherever possible so that the reader may check for himself.

In the above quotes from Elder Short, he spoke of the "credibility gap emerging." His exact words are:

The amount of material published since 1950 is considerable, totaling over 1200 pages in three books. The more that is published, the greater the problem becomes. The confusion and anomalies developing are on the increase. There is a very sad credibility gap emerging.²

The first of these three books was written by Dr. Norval F. Pease, and was entitled, By Faith Alone. The Foreword was written by the then president of the General Conference, Elder R. R. Figuhr, but not in his capacity as President. This book, according to Figuhr, was to be the answer to comments regarding 1888 being raised by various persons in the church, "especially in recent months" (1962). He wrote - "This book sets the record straight."³ What does Pease present in setting the record straight? Note the question he asks, and the answer he gives:

Where was the doctrine of justification by faith to be found in 1888 and the preceding years? In the creeds of the Protestant churches of

the day; hence from the Seventh-day Adventist viewpoint, "in the companionship of error." The same churches which were rejecting the advent message and the law of God were holding, at least in form, the doctrine of justification by faith. From such a doctrinal environment God "rescued" this truth, and placed it where it should be - in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁴

Consider the import of this. Sister White stated emphatically that the message of 1888 - Justification by Faith as taught by Elders Jones and Waggoner - "is the third angel's message in verity."⁵ Now if this is inspired truth from the Lord's servant, and it is, then Pease is saying that the Third Angel's Message was not obtained by the Church until 1888, and that from 1844 to 1888 was held in the creeds of the Protestant churches. If so, then what was the unique position God assigned to the Advent Movement in 1844? To what lengths men will go to rewrite history simply to avoid the truth that history correctly written would reveal!

The second book was published for Elder A. V. Olson posthumously by the Ellen G. White Estate under the direction of Dr. A. L. White. It was entitled, Through Crisis to Victory, 1888 - 1901. The Foreword written by White stated that this work is "a stimulating historical review of a changing and perilous period in the development of a church movement." It was written with the avowed purpose of changing what was termed, "misleading conclusions." Those with these conceptions were accused of basing their judgment on "fragmentary bits of information." This period - 1888-1901 - was noted as "a period over which Providence could spell out the word, *victory*."⁶

From the very title it is suggested that the year 1901 marked the date when the crisis of the final decade of the 19th Century was resolved, and the hour of triumph had arrived. It is beyond question that the very essence of the Advent Movement is the realization of the end of the world, and the ushering in of the Eternal Kingdom. Thus if "victory" was the judgment of God in 1901, and a proper evaluation of history verified this, then we should not even be here at this time

to discuss what we are writing about. What a contrast to this thesis projected by the Ellen G. White Estate are the words of the prophetess herself -- *written in 1901:*

We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.⁷

Now if "insubordination" is "victory", then who wants victory? As Short points out - seeking to vindicate the leadership's rejection of the Message of 1888, and calling the year 1901, the year of victory, is "In the final analysis. . . to charge God for His delay in returning!"⁸ - the very thing the servant of the Lord warned us not to do.

Who are we to believe - a book published by the White Estate, who are to faithfully protect, and project correctly the inspired heritage to the Church, or are we to accept the verdict of the prophetess herself? Rather than "emerging", there has emerged a credibility gap in regard to the custodians of the spiritual gift to the Church. And another question, has the leadership of the White Estate conspired with the hierarchy of the Church to falsify our church history? Is this just benign, or is it malignant?

The third book in none other than Movement of Destiny by Dr. LeRoy E. Froom bearing the imprimatur of the present president of the General Conference, Elder R. H. Pierson, in his capacity as President. In Froom's own preface - "From the Author to the Reader" - he stated that this book is a result of a charge given to him by Elder A. G. Daniells in 1930 to undertake a survey of the whole plan of redemption with its principles, provisions, and divine Personalities "*as they unfolded to our view as a Movement from 1844 onward, with special emphasis upon the developments of '1888', and its sequel.*" This book was also to "round out in historical sequence what he [Daniells] had begun in 1926 in a comparatively brief recital of

his epochal Christ Our Righteousness."⁹

Of this 1888 Session, Froom writes:

The epochal Minneapolis Session stands out like a mountain peak, towering above all other sessions in uniqueness and importance. It was a distinct turning point. Nothing like it had occurred before, and none has since been comparable to it. It definitely introduced a new epoch. After its initial conflict a period of revival and heart searching followed. And that which brought this about was the message of Righteousness by Faith in Christ as "all the fulness of the Godhead" - an expression that became a vital keynote, stressed at the stormy session.

Christ was uplifted before the Conference as never before in our history, with a fullness that had not heretofore been envisioned or proclaimed. That was the crux of it all. 1888 therefore came to mark the beginning of a new note and a new day, the significance of which was not fully sensed at that time.

1888 was not a point of defeat, but a turn in the tide for ultimate victory. It was the beginning of decades of clarification and advance - despite struggled and setbacks.¹⁰

Of this same session, the servant of the Lord wrote:

But all the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated Him in a manner similar to that which the Jews treated Christ.¹¹

How can we call Minneapolis "a mountain peak" which marked a new epoch, when at the session, the leadership rejected the Holy Spirit? How can we say that "1888 was not a point of defeat, but a turn in the tide for ultimate victory"? Is spurning Christ in the Person of the Holy Spirit to be considered a victory rather than a defeat? Incredible! Indeed a "credibility gap" of the greatest dimensions.

We need to keep in mind that the men who wrote these books had access to the files of the Ellen G. White Estate. One author was chairman of the Board of the Estate at the time of his writing, and then after his death, the Estate itself in the person of Dr. Arthur White finished the material for publication. Froom, himself, claims that over sixty of the leading scholars of the Church approved what he wrote.¹² There is only one conclusion to draw - there has been a conspiracy to rewrite our church history, thus deceiving the laity in an attempt to keep the

rank and file subserviant to the leadership with unquestioned loyalty. How long are we going to accept this "blindness" foisted on us by such leadership? How long are we going to reject the eyesalve of truth, that we may see? How long are we going to be bound to the "comfortable pew" by the shackles of erroneous propaganda?

In the next thought paper we shall continue to note the "mystery of 1888" and observe what Daniells wrote about 1888, which Froom professes to enlarge honestly and accurately. We shall note the extent that the Ellen G. White Estate has entered into the conspiracy to deceive the laity, and the rank and file of the ministry of the Church.

¹D. K. Short, The Mystery of 1888, A Study of Seventh-day Adventist History in the Light of the Minneapolis General Conference of 1888. Presented to the "Historical Background of the 1888 Experience Committee," April, 1974, p. i

²Ibid. p. 74

³Norval F. Pease, By Faith Alone, p. vii

⁴Ibid., pp. 138-139

⁵Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 1, 1890

⁶A. V. Olson, Through Crisis to Victory, p. 7 (Emphasis theirs)

⁷Ellen G. White, Letter to Dr. P. T. Magan, dated December 7, 1901

⁸D. K. Short, The Mystery of 1888, p. 49

⁹L. E. Froom, Movement of Destiny, p. 17 (Emphasis his)

¹⁰Ibid, p. 187

¹¹Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series A, #6, p. 20

¹²See Monograph, The Times of the Gentiles Fulfilled, Exhibit B, p. 37

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NOTE - If there are those of our readers who would like to help underwrite the publication of Elder D. K. Short's manuscript - The Mystery of 1888 - please contact the Manager of Publications and Research of the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 237, Florence, Miss., 39073, for details. If sufficient funds become available, and the interest in the manuscript warrants it, we shall cooperate with the laity of the Church in its publication. We desire to hear from the field before laying any definite plans.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS:-

On November 26, 1975, the front page of the Vicksburg Evening Post carried the following announcement:

COMMUNITY GIVES THANKS

The Community Thanksgiving Service will be held Thursday morning at 10 o'clock at the Bowmar Avenue Baptist Church. Dr John G. McCall, pastor of the First Baptist Church will be the guest speaker. . .

Father Michael Glynn, pastor of St Paul's Catholic Church will lead the responsive reading, the Rev. C. Anthony Russo, pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will offer the Thanksgiving prayer, and the Rev. Harold Jordon, pastor of the Bowmar Avenue Baptist Church will direct music.

We must ask again - "Can two walk together lest they be agreed?" Amos 3:3, and then one further question - Has there been an infiltration into the ranks of the Adventist ministry?

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A TAPED MINISTRY - Starting with 1976, we will inaugurate a taped ministry for those who are meeting in small study groups, or who are isolated and cannot attend regular services. We do not wish these taped messages to serve as "crutches" to take the place of group study or research, but to fill the need for spiritual encouragement and growth. There will be two sermons on each tape. The tapes will sell for \$2.50 per cassette, postpaid. (Those wishing to obtain these tapes on a library rental basis, please write for details.)

January, 1976 - #1 - *"Egypt, Where Our Lord Was Crucified"*
- *"Christ or Barabbas?"*

For the present send all orders and requests to the Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 237, Florence, Miss., 39073.

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THOUGHT PAPERS - The issues of "Watchman, What of the Night?" for February and March will continue to review major indictments to be found in the manuscript - The Mystery of 1888 - by Elder D. K. Short.

For February - *"Daniells versus Froom"*

For March - *"Ellen G. White versus Ellen G. White Estate"*

Don't forget - if you wish to see this manuscript published and want to find out how you can under-write such a publication, please contact immediately the Manager of Publications and Research, Adventist Laymen's Foundation, P. O. Box 237, Florence, Miss., 39073.

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