

Church Authority:

Is the General Conference Still the Voice of God on Earth Today?

Many in the Seventh Day Adventist church without question assert that the General Conference (GC) is the voice of God and His highest appointed authority on earth today. Any question of the situation being otherwise either brings about a perplexed look or incites strong opposition, especially from the pastors and church leaders. This pastoral hierarchy is assumed whenever materials of doctrinal controversy arise which challenge the church's teaching. This is especially marked in cases where the message found in the original writings of the Shepherd's Rod comes up for discussion. The responses often given when someone questions the GC as the final authority in matters of faith and practice are:

1. "We should not be critical or judge our leaders"
2. "We are just lay members, someone has to lead the work."
3. The GC is no longer the voice of God so we must leave the church and meet in home churches where the Spirit of Prophecy (SOP) is still being taught.

In order to better understand the condition of the church leadership from God's perspective, we will turn to a series of statements from the pen of inspiration which are arranged in chronological order. The important thing to notice is the change in view prior to 1888 and those after this date. The significance of 1888 as a turning point in relationship of the leadership of the denomination to heaven has to do with the rejection of the message of Christ's Righteous brought to the General Conference Session in Minneapolis, Minnesota by Elders A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner (see: 1 SM 234-35, TM 79-80, 90-91, 468, CWE 30.1)¹. What is interesting to note is that six years before (1882) the backsliding in the church was already well recognized as seen in the statement in Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 217.

(1875) I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered. Your error was in persistently maintaining your private judgment of your duty against the voice of the highest authority the Lord has upon the earth. After you had taken your own time, and after the work had been much hindered by your delay, you came to Battle Creek in answer to the repeated and urgent calls of the General Conference. You firmly maintained that you had done right in following your own convictions of duty. You considered it a virtue in you to persistently maintain your position of independence. You did not

¹ For a more detailed analysis, see: Robert J. Wieland and Donald K. Short "The 1888 Message Reexamined" 1987, Eusey Press, Leominster, MA

seem to have a true sense of the power that God has given to His church in the voice of the General Conference. You thought that in responding to the call made to you by the General Conference you were submitting to the judgment and mind of one man. You accordingly manifested an independence, a set, willful spirit, which was all wrong.” — **Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 492.2**

(1875) He (*James White in writing the conclusion of Testimony No. 25*) added other points, suggesting it might have been better when the church was being organized if he had refused to continue to act "a more prominent part" than those associated with him in office. He expressed his gratitude that the matter was now fully settled in his own mind, and he affirmed the concept that "the General Conference is the highest authority God has on earth." — *Ibid.*, p. 192." — **EGW Biographical Sketches Vol. 2, p. 467.1**

(1882) I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders.

The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us. — **Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 217**

(1888) Cling close to your Bible, for its sacred truths can purify, ennoble and sanctify the soul. You must hold the truth and teach it as it is in Jesus, else it is of no value to you. Before the light of God's truth let human opinions and ideas and human wisdom appear as they are in the sight of God--as foolishness. Let no man feel that his position as president either of the General Conference or of a state conference clothes him with a power over the consciences of others that is the least degree oppressive, for God will not sanction anything of this kind. He must respect the rights of all, and all the more because he is in a position where others will pattern after him.

Your position binds you under the most sacred obligations to be very careful what kind of a spirit you entertain towards your brethren. They are acting a part in God's cause as well as yourself. Will not God teach them and guide them as well as yourself? You are not even to allow yourself to think unkindly of them, much less to climb upon the judgment seat and censure and condemn your brethren, when you may be yourself, in many respects, more deserving of censure than they. Your work is bearing the inspection of God." — **Letter 21, 1888, pp. 10, 11** (Oct. 14, 1888 to Brother Butler).

(1891) There are many things that should be conducted in a more serious way. There have been board meetings and council meetings where certain principles have been placed before the board and resolutions voted to be carried out. Elder Olsen has supposed that the matter would be conducted on correct principles, and he trusted matters too much to others to carry out. But there were unfaithful stewards in responsible positions who appeared to sanction the propositions but who had not the least intention of carrying them out. They would do the opposite of that which came before them for their decisions. Therefore wrongs were practiced and evils were carried out in untruthful, deceptive lines.

Some minds are not worked by the Holy Spirit. They are so constituted, through following their own human judgment and using common fire in their service as stewards of God, that their ways have been accepted as the Lord's ways, and solemn, sacred matters which relate to the various lines of work have been carried in altogether a different manner than the propositions made. One or more men gave assent to measures laid out before the board or councils, but all the time they decided they would have their own way and carry out the matter as they chose. This was the light presented to me. Elder Olsen's advisers were blinding his eyes so that he should see through the eyes of these men who were preaching under a deception. *This is the reason I was obliged to take the position that there was not the voice of God in the General Conference management and decisions. Methods and plans would be devised that God did not sanction, and yet Elder Olsen made it appear that the decisions of the General Conference were as the voice of God. Many of the positions taken, going forth as the voice of the General Conference, have been the voice of one, two, or three men who were misleading the Conference.* There were things in regard to Sunday work, in regard to the color line, and in regard to the Sentinel, that better never have been introduced in the Conference. The Lord did not preside in many meetings. There were some loud voices and urgent pressing of things that were backed by a will and determination that savored more of the common fire than the sacred. Plans were made that were all out of line with the unction or the leadings of the Spirit of God. Manuscript 33, 1891." — **Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17, p. 167.1**

(1896) "In this step there has been a change of responsibility, but the wrong principles remain unchanged. The same work that has been done in the past will be carried forward under the guise of the General Conference Association. The sacred character of this association is fast disappearing. What will then be respected as pure, holy, and undefiled? Will there be any voice that God's people can regard as a voice they can respect? There certainly is nothing now that bears the divine credentials. Sacred things are mixed and mingled with earthly business that has no connection with God."--Lt 81, 1896 (SplRHWBC 18.)" — **The Publishing Ministry, pg. 142**

(1896) If it were possible, the enemy would clog the wheels of progress and prevent the truths of the gospel from being circulated everywhere. With this object he leads men to feel that it is their privilege to control the consciences of their fellow-men according to their own perverted ideas. They dismiss the Holy Spirit from their councils, and then, under the power and name of

the General Conference, they invent regulations through which they compel men to be ruled by their own ideas and not by the Holy Spirit. . . .

There is need of an education in regard to the rights and duties of men in authority who have lorded it over God's heritage. When a man is placed in a position of trust, who knows not what kind of spirit he should exercise in dealing with human minds, he needs to learn the very first principles as to his authority over his fellow-men. Right principles must be brought into the heart, and wrought into the warp and woof of character." — **Letter 83, 1896** (May 22, 1896 to O.A. Olsen).

(1896) The voice from Battle Creek, which has been regarded as authority in counseling how the work should be done, is no longer the voice of God." — **Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17, p. 185.**

(1898) How much pleased I would be to see you and visit with you. I have so much desired that you would visit us in Australia; but it has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God, and therefore I feel no desire to write, although again and again I have come to the point of requesting you to make a visit to Australia. Cannot you do this? Please write us whether you can." — **Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17, p. 216.1**

(1898) (Written "To the General Conference and Our Publishing Institutions.")

In the General Conference the counsels of God have been set aside, and the counsels and wisdom of men have been relied upon. God has seen this, and He is displeased. The General Conference--what is it? what does it comprehend? Is it a General Conference, or is it something wrapped up and called by that name? With the exception of a limited number, the people who ought to know are not intelligent in regard to its workings. A few have managed matters according to their own judgment, and the people at large know scarcely anything of what is being done at the heart of the work, only as it is represented by the men who have not set the Lord ever before them.

As I was made to understand something of the management of the work in this great center, it was all that I could bear. My spirit was pained within me, for I had lost confidence in that which I had ever presented before the people as the voice of God to His children. It has not been the voice of God. There has been a lording power exercised over God's heritage in decisions which were not dictated by the Spirit of God. Unconsecrated men who were brought in connection with the work have exercised their own wisdom, and have woven into the work their own unconverted peculiarities. Their own principles have been counterworking the principles of truth and righteousness. We cannot therefore present before the people that the voice of the General Conference in its decisions must move and control them; for its propositions and decisions cannot be accepted. They are not in the right line of progress. God is cropped out of their counsels." — **Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17, p. 221**

(1899) "It has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God." — **Gen. Conf. Daily Bull., February 24, 1899 par. 3**

(1899) *Let those in America who suppose the voice of the General Conference to be the voice of God, become one with God before they utter their opinions.* The Word of God is to be lived as well as preached. It is to be brought into every phase of the Christian work done in this world. The men God has appointed to do His work must be emptied of self. Let Jesus in. Open the door of the heart to the heavenly Guest. Let no man be looked up to as God. When those who come nigh [to] God in service are consecrated, cleansed, and purified, approaching nearer and still nearer the divine benevolence, they can voice the commission of God, and be respected.

The obeying of the Word of God will lead to a state of things vastly different from that which now exists. There will be the putting away of fleshly lusts and greed for gain. That this sin has existed could not be better demonstrated than by the grasping for large wages by those who were professedly acting in Christ's stead, claiming to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. God is displeased that His work is not advancing in new territories.--Letter 187, 1899. (Written to S. N. Haskell, from "Sunnyside," Cooranbong, N. S. W., Nov. 16, 1899.)— **Manuscript Releases, Vol. 13, p. 291.1**

(1901) "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law." The law has been made void by those who have followed the wrong principles that have characterized the work for the past twelve years. As these things were presented before me in Australia, the whole of the third chapter of Zechariah was portrayed before me. These words were repeated: "And He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Satan was accusing backsliding Israel. In like manner he purposes to point to the unprincipled proceedings of those who have had great light in these last days. He keenly observes the backsliding of those who have been placed at the head of the work--the very men who through communications have been informed that they were out of place and in *error in representing the voice of the General Conference president as being the voice of God. For many years it has not been thus, and it is not thus now; nor will it ever be thus again, unless there is a thorough reformation.*" — **Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17, p. 241**

(1901) O, my very soul is drawn out in these things! Men who have not learned to submit themselves to the control and discipline of God, are not competent to train the youth, to deal with human minds. It is just as much an impossibility for them to do this work as it would be for them to make a world. *That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,—that is past.* What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle." — **Gen. Conf. Bull., April 3, 1901 par. 25**

(1902) A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the

Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.” — **Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902.**

(1909) Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such things as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And in order that the Lord's work may advance, healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.” — **Testimonies, Vol. 9, pp. 257-58.**

So is the GC today still the voice of God today?

These are the passages most often quoted by pastors and other leaders today when statements from the SOP are pointed out which describe the true condition of the church and the responsibility that falls on the leading men who have become derelict to their God appointed duties. They come from the book “*Last Day Events*” which was compiled from the writings of Ellen White and published by an uninspired committee of men in 1992.

Confidence in SDA Organization Reaffirmed

“We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization, for this would mean apostasy from the truth.--2 SM 390 (1905).” — **Last Day Events, p. 55.2**

This is speaking of a period shortly after the GC reorganized in 1901. Obviously the counsel given is that “we cannot *now* enter into any new organization” according to the devising of men. If read in its proper context, this warning is directed at those who are trying to remove the pillars of the Advent faith, namely the three angels messages. This does not say that God Himself won't bring about a reorganization (purification) latter in time according to His appointed order, which would strengthen and reaffirm the judgment hour message. To say that God won't purify and reorganize would be to make the SOP contradict itself as we read from the statements below.

“Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” — **Testimonies to Ministers, p. 300**

“A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of

the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. *Reformation signifies a reorganization*, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.” — **RH, February 25, 1902 par. 8**

Another passage from LDE used by church leaders to justify their belief that the Seventh-day Adventist church in its current Laodicean condition will stand until the end of time is as follows:

“I am instructed to say to Seventh-day Adventists the world over, God has called us as a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. He has appointed that His church on earth shall stand perfectly united in the Spirit and counsel of the Lord of hosts to the end of time.--2 SM 397 (1908).” — **Last Day Events, p. 55.3**

To try to apply this statement to the church today would be misleading and using it out of its proper context, The title of the section this statement was taken from is “The Church Triumphant” which refers to a period when the church is purified and all the saints are perfectly united and with one accord so that the latter rain, the Holy Spirit in power can be poured out during the Loud Cry. However, today we are in the church militant, the period where wheat and tares are mingled together and our condition is far from that described in the church triumphant. In fact, as a people we are described as Laodicean, a miserable wretched (blind and don’t even know it), poor (in truth), blind (no spiritual discernment), and naked (lacking Christ’s righteous) condition.

“At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans to restrict God’s work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected.

God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has invested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work.--9T 260, 261 (1909).” — **Last Day Events, p. 56.1**

This passage clearly describes where God’s authority on earth shall reside, in a General Conference Session of representatives from all parts of the earth when they are assembled together to plan and advance God’s work. Members have a voice in the form of their voting rights. Today this event occurs every five years at various locations around the world. What about the time between General Conferences? The statement makes plain that God’s authority does not reside with one man or a small group of men between General Conference sessions, the Executive Committee.

We need not be misled into believing that the General Conference Headquarters located in Tacoma Park, Maryland or the local union conference leadership is the same as the General Conference Session, which is comprised of delegates from all over the world representing each local conference. It is important to distinguish the proper understanding of General Conference. The statements from inspiration which speak of the General Conference no longer being the voice of God as we once believed are clearly directed at the leading men who are paid to work at the General Conference Headquarters, the Executive Committee, (or local conferences which follow their pattern) *in between* Sessions.

“God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for he who does this despises the voice of God.--AA 164 (1911).” — **Last Day Events, p. 56.2**

Once again this statement is not addressed in its proper context. The passage is speaking of the experience of the early church at Antioch when there was true unity among the believers and no corruption in the leadership being led by the Holy Spirit filled disciples. It would be unfair and misleading to apply this statement to the church today in its condition of deep apostasy from the will of God (see, 5T 217). If we read the passage in its fuller context it is warning about the danger of individuals in the church who are inclined toward individual independence from the church body. The condition of the church described here will only be realized again when the church is delivered from its current Laodicean state and brought to the church triumphant in preparation for the Loud Cry. Let us read and analyze the passage in its fuller context.

“God has made His church on the earth a channel of light, and through it He communicates His purposes and His will. He does not give to one of His servants an experience independent of and contrary to the experience of the church itself. Neither does He give one man a knowledge of His will for the entire church while the church--Christ's body --is left in darkness. In His providence He places His servants in close connection with His church in order that they may have less confidence in themselves and greater confidence in others whom He is leading out to advance His work.

There have ever been in the church those who are constantly inclined toward individual independence. They seem unable to realize that independence of spirit is liable to lead the human agent to have too much confidence in himself and to trust in his own judgment rather than to respect the counsel and highly esteem the judgment of his brethren, especially of those in the offices that God has appointed for the leadership of His people. *God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for he who does this despises the voice of God.*

Those who are inclined to regard their individual judgment as supreme are in grave peril. It is Satan's studied effort to separate such ones from those who are channels of light, through whom God has wrought to build up and extend His work in the earth. To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to bear the responsibilities of leadership in connection with the

advancement of the truth, is to reject the means that He has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of His people. For any worker in the Lord's cause to pass these by, and to think that his light must come through no other channel than directly from God, is to place himself in a position where he is liable to be deceived by the enemy and overthrown. The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christian shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to co-operate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give to the world the glad tidings of the grace of God." — **Acts of Apostles, pp. 163-4**

What else does the SOP say about church leaders in our day?

Are we to blindly and implicitly trust them with our soul salvation and think that not another ray of divine light will come from heaven unless it comes through these self-appointed guardians of our spiritual trusts? God forbid that such an order of things should come about. Is there an earnest soul out there who will be listening for the voice of the Lord as if searching for hidden treasure?

The great leaders of religious thought in this generation sound the praises and build the monuments of those who planted the seed of truth centuries ago. Do not many turn from this work to trample down the growth springing from the same seed today? The old cry is repeated, "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow [Christ in the messenger He sends], we know not from whence he is." John 9:29. *As in earlier ages, the special truths for this time are found, not with the ecclesiastical authorities, but with men and women who are not too learned or too wise to believe the word of God.*" — **Christ's Object Lessons, p. 79.1**

When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the *religious leaders would not tolerate the light*, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. *Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented.* Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience." — **Desire of Ages, p. 232.2**

We must learn that others have rights as well as we ourselves. When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor, to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will

give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." [2 TIM. 2:24, 25.]

Every soul must look to God with contrition and humility, that He may guide and lead and bless. We must not trust to others to search the Scriptures for us. *Some of our leading brethren have frequently taken their position on the wrong side;* and if God would send a message and wait for these older brethren to open the way for its advancement, it would never reach the people. These brethren will be found in this position until they become partakers of the divine nature to a greater extent than ever they have been in the past." — **Gospel Workers, p. 303.3**

But we see that the God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines. Because those who were once the depositaries of truth became unfaithful to their sacred trust, the Lord chose others who would receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and would advocate truths that were not in accordance with the ideas of the religious leaders. And then these leaders, in the blindness of their minds, give full sway to what is supposed to be righteous indignation against the ones who have set aside cherished fables. They act like men who have lost their reason. They do not consider the possibility that they themselves have not rightly understood the word. They will not open their eyes to discern the fact that they have misinterpreted and misapplied the Scriptures, and have built up false theories, calling them fundamental doctrines of the faith.

But the Holy Spirit will, from time to time, reveal the truth through its own chosen agencies; and no man, not even a priest or ruler, has a right to say, You shall not give publicity to your opinions, because I do not believe them. That wonderful "I" may attempt to put down the Holy Spirit's teaching. Men may for a time attempt to smother it and kill it; but that will not make error truth, or truth error. The inventive minds of men have advanced speculative opinions in various lines, and when the Holy Spirit lets light shine into human minds, it does not respect every point of man's application of the word. God impressed His servants to speak the truth irrespective of what men had taken for granted as truth." — **Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 69-70**

I was shown that the manner of Achan's confession was similar to the confessions that some among us have made and will make. They hide their wrongs and refuse to make a voluntary confession until God searches them out, and then they acknowledge their sins. A few persons pass on in a course of wrong until they become hardened. They may even know that the church is burdened, as Achan knew that Israel were made weak before their enemies because of his guilt. Yet their consciences do not condemn them. They will not relieve the church by humbling their proud, rebellious hearts before God and putting away their wrongs. *God's displeasure is upon His people, and He will not manifest His power in the midst of them while sins exist among them and are fostered by those in responsible positions.*" — **Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 270.2**

"Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan." — **Testimonies to Ministers, p. 409.3**

Who is the Voice of God on earth today?

“God stands ready to bestow rich blessings upon men; but few will bend from their selfishness to receive the gracious gift. From age to age there is acted over the same rejection of light that grieved the heart of Christ when He was on earth. *There is seen the same refusal to hear the voice of God through His appointed agencies, because the message borne does not sanction human theories. Christ is as really rejected today by the rejection of His messages of warning and reproof as when He stood in this world a man among men.*” — **RH, April 2, 1901 par. 12**

“Paul and Barnabas were recommended to them as men who had hazarded their lives for the Lord. Judas and Silas were sent with these apostles to declare to the Gentiles by word of mouth the decision of the council: “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.” *The four servants of God were sent to Antioch with the epistle and message that was to put an end to all controversy; for it was the voice of the highest authority upon the earth.*” — **Acts of the Apostles, p. 195.3**

“The word of the Lord, spoken through His servants, is received by many with questionings and fears. And many will defer their obedience to the warning and reproofs given, waiting till every shadow of uncertainty is removed from their minds. The unbelief that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to the evidence that God is pleased to give. He requires of His people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not upon perfect knowledge. *Those followers of Christ who accept the light that God sends them must obey the voice of God speaking to them when there are many other voices crying out against it. It requires discernment to distinguish the voice of God.*

Those who will not act when the Lord calls upon them, but who wait for more certain evidence and more favorable opportunities, will walk in darkness, for the light will be withdrawn. The evidence given one day, if rejected, may never be repeated.” — **Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 258**

“The follower of Christ...*is to regard the Bible as the voice of God speaking directly to him.*” — **Acts of the Apostles, p. 475**

“The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and [the man of] wisdom shall see thy name: *hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*” — **Micah 6:9**

We can see from these statements that indeed God does have a voice on earth today and it comes in the form of messages of timely truth straight from the Bible that bear warnings and reproofs that God may guide and instruct His church and prepare them to meet the crisis ahead. Who brings these messages? Look throughout history; has the message of the hour that God has brought to warn His people of impending judgment ever come through the leading religious men of the day? *Never*, it had always been those faithful servants who are distrustful of self and willing to do God's bidding and warn the people even at the peril of their own lives. Men of low esteem in

the world's eyes, fishermen, farmers, tax collectors, the common laymen were the ones who answered the call to the prophetic office or carried the message to the church. It is no different today. Only those who are thirsting and hungering for righteousness will heed the call. Only those who recognize their need of something more than what they are being fed from the pulpit will recognize the message of the hour when it comes. Will you hear the rod that speaks, "the LORD'S voice that crieth into the city" when it comes to your door?

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