

CHURCH AUTHORITY OVER THE YEARS

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“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. {1888 1566.3}

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 on earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered”. (3T p. 492)

1881— Butler took over and decided to run the church as a business.

1888— Message of Righteousness by Faith. The organized church decided to have no part of it.
TERRIBLE REJECTION!

1889—14 years later: “We acknowledge the General Conference to be the highest authority recognized by God on earth. Here the whole of our people are represented, and speak through their delegates. Here is not North nor South, nor East nor West. It is one the world over.” (Gen Conf. Bulletin, Oct. 23, 1889). (Taken from an address by President Olsen, p. 95)

1894— 5 years later: “Do not misunderstand me as approving of the recent action of the General Conference Association of which you write. But in regard to that matter it is right that I should speak to them. They have many difficulties to meet, and if they err in their action, the Lord knows it all, and can overrule for the good of those who trust Him.” (Testimony to Elder Littlejohn, Aug.3, 1894)

1895— One year later: “I do not find rest in spirit. Scene after scene is presented in symbols before me, and I find no rest until I begin to write out the matter. At the center of the work matters are being shaped so that every other institution is following in the same course. And the General Conference itself is becoming corrupted with wrong sentiments and principles.” (TM p. 359)

SAME YEAR, 1895— “If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow-laborers closer to the commandments of men, many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus.” (R&H, July23, 1895)

1896— One year later, and 21 years after her first statement regarding the authority of the General Conference: “Who can now feel sure that they are safe in respecting the voice of the General Conference Association? If the people in our churches understood the management of the men who walk in the light of the sparks of their own kindling, would they respect their decisions? I answer, no, not for a moment. I have been shown that the people at large do not know the heart of the work is being diseased at Battle Creek. Many of the people are in lethargic, listless, apathetic condition, and assent to plans which they do not understand.” (Special Testimony to Review and Herald Office in Battle Creek, 1896)

SAME YEAR, 1896— “It is not in the order of God that a few men should manage the great interests throughout the field. Many of the men who have acted as counselors in board and council meetings

need to be weeded out. Other men should take their places; for their voice is not the voice of God...They have worked themselves so long, instead of being worked by the Holy Spirit, that they know not that spirit impels them to action.” (Extract from letter to Elder O.A. Tate, Aug.27, 1896)

SAME YEAR, 1896— “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. Who will then be respected as pure, holy and undefiled? Will there be any voice that God’s people can respect as a voice to be respected? There certainly is nothing now that bears the divine credentials. Who can now feel sure that they are safe in respecting the voice of the General Conference Association? Much pride and loftiness, and a spirit which desires to rule, has been manifested; But very little of the spirit which leads men to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him, has been shown. Human inventions and human plans are eclipsing sacred things, and excluding divine instruction. Men are taking the place of God by seeking to assume authority over their fellow men.” (Taken from letter to Eld. O. A. Olsen, “Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, NSW, May 31, 1896)

1899— 3 years later: “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” (Testimony to Elder S.N. Haskell, Nov. 16, 1899)

1901— Two years later: “That these men should stand in a sacred place to be the voice of God to the people as we once believed the General Conference to be, that is past.” (General Conference Bulletin 1901, p. 25, col.2, par.1)

SAME YEAR, 1901 – “It is working upon wrong principles that has brought the cause of God into its present embarrassment. The people have lost confidence in those who have the management of the work: Yet we hear that the voice of the Conference is the Voice of God. Every time I have heard this, I have thought that it was almost blasphemy. The voice of the Conference ought to be the voice of God, but it is not, because some in connection with it are not men of faith and prayer....

“I was referred to the case of Achan. The entire congregation of Israel were affected by Achan’s sin. Because of it, God could not help them, and when they went out to battle, they were beaten by their enemies. Joshua prostrated himself before the Lord, and asked, ‘What does it mean that the children of Israel flee before their enemies.’ God told him that there was an accursed thing in the camp, that spoil had been taken from the enemies of Israel. He told him that there was robbery and dissembling in the camp, and that His blessing could not rest on the people till these things were cleansed from them...

“We have reached the time when the work cannot advance while wrong principles are cherished. Two or three voices are not to control everything in the whole field. No, Indeed. In every field God has men of capability. He does not mean that these men, when they wish to take advance steps, shall send to Battle Creek in order to find out the best way in which to move. The Lord says, I will break up this plan of working. I will sever these connections. Every field shall bear its own responsibility.” (Excerpts from Manuscript 37, 1901)

"Who can truthfully say: "Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world"? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: "Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? 'How is the faithful city become an harlot!' My Father's

house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking." {8T 250.2}

SAME YEAR, 1901— "The voice of the General conference has been represented as an authority to be heeded as the voice of the Holy Spirit. But when members of the General Conference Committee become entangled in business affairs and financial perplexities, the sacred elevated character of their work is to a great degree lost. The temple of God becomes a place of merchandise, and the ministers of God's house as commercial business men." (Gen. Conf. Bulletin 1901, p. 76)

SAME YEAR, 1901— "I feel a special interest in the movements and decisions that shall be made at this Conference regarding the things that should have been done years ago, and especially ten years ago, when we were assembled in Conference, and the Spirit and power of God came into our meetings, testifying that God was ready to work for this people, if they would come into working order. The brethren assented to the light God has given but there were those connected with our institutions, especially with the Review and Herald and the conferences, who brought in elements of unbelief, so that the light that was given was not acted upon. It was assented to, but no special change was made to bring about such a condition of things that the power of God could be revealed among His people...

"Year after year the same acknowledgement was made, but the principles which exalt a people were not woven into the work. God gave them clear light as to what they should do, but they departed from that light and it is a marvel to me that we stand in as much prosperity as we do today." (Gen. Conf. Bulletin, 1901, p.23, col.2 pars. 4 and 6)

1901— Ellen White calls for a thorough reorganization of the entire General Conference. "The kingly power formerly exhibited in the General Conference at Battle Creek is not to be perpetuated... Supreme power should not be vested in a few large institutions. At the last General Conference (1901) the light was given, Divide the General Conference into union conferences. Let there be fewer responsibilities centered in one place." (MS 13,1903) PM p. 146.2

1903— A.G. Daniels is put back as General Conference president. The General Conference system is put back into hierarchal order. They set up the system of organization contrary to God's counsel.

1907— "A strange thing has come into our churches. Men who are placed in positions of responsibility, that they may be wise helpers to their fellow workers, have come to suppose that they were set as kings and rulers in the churches, to say to one brother, Do this; to another, Do that; and to another, Be sure to labor in such and such a way. There have been places where the workers have been told that if they did not follow the instruction of these men of responsibility, their pay from the conference would be withheld." (Read at 1907 Campmeeting. Testimonies to Ministers, p. 477 or Series B, No. 10)

1909— 6 years before her death and 34 years after 1875:

"Every individual soul has a responsibility before God, and he is not to be arbitrarily instructed by men as to what he shall do, and what he shall say, and where he shall go. We are not to put confidence in the counsel of men and assent to all they say unless we have evidence that they are under the influence of the Spirit of God." (R&H, July 1, 1909)