

## THE CASE FOR PASTOR ACCEPTANCE

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It can be truthfully said, I think, that GUIDANCE is man's most important need. No one has intuitive knowledge—only God has that. Therefore man is dependent upon GUIDANCE FROM GOD in some way or other.

There are various evidences of GUIDANCE FROM GOD as recorded in the Word of God. These evidences range from suggestion to the minds of men, on through to actual specific directions. As an example of suggestion we think of the words of God addressed to the serpent in the hearing of Adam and Eve—"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) Here the suggestion was that at some future time, not stated, the seed of the woman would "bruise" ("crush" as Rotherham translates, meaning to destroy or kill) the head of the serpent or the head of the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the serpent would "bruise" ("crush") the heel of the seed of the woman. We know how this works out in practical fulfillment—the seed of the woman, Christ, destroys the seed of Satan eventually, which includes Satan himself and all his works and followers; and the seed of the serpent was responsible for the death of the Messiah on the cross; and this death on the cross is, in comparison with the actual crushing of Satan in destruction, only the crushing of the heel, simply because the Messiah is resurrected by the power of God to eternal life, immortality on the Divine plane of being—Satan suffers the crushing of the Second Death.

As an example of an actual specific direction, we have the words of God addressed to Abraham found in Gen. 22:2, "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

These two examples of GUIDANCE are direct from God without any human intermediary.

During Old Testament times, God used other methods to GUIDE those he dealt with. Joseph was given special revelations in the interpretation of dreams. He interpreted the dreams of the servants of Pharaoh; the chief of the butlers and the chief of the bakers; and later he also interpreted the two dreams of Pharaoh concerning seven years of famine.

God's dealings with Moses are outstanding examples of GUIDANCE WITHOUT ANY HUMAN INTERMEDIARY. An angel of Jehovah was used, of course, as in all previous cases of God's guidance of men. This guidance of Moses occurred when Moses saw a burning bush and turned aside to examine such an unusual sight. Here Moses was given specific instructions to go as God's representative to deliver the Israelites from the

bondage of Egypt. This incident is found recorded in Exod. 3:10, “Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

Moses acted as God’s agent to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian servitude, and there are repeated evidences of direct guidance to Moses as to what to say and what to do in dealing with this stubborn Egyptian Pharaoh. Finally Moses was able to lead the children of Israel from Egypt and God continued to use him to guide the Israelites. In the 15th chapter of Exodus we read of an incident where the people could not drink waters of Marah for they were bitter, and the people murmured against Moses. In the 25th verse we read that Moses “cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.” And further it was stated “there God made for a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said to them, ‘If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and will do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.’”

After the Israelites had reached the desert of Sinai and had pitched their tents at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses went up into the mount and the Lord called unto him and instructed him to deliver an important message to the children of Israel. Here is the message as related in Exod. 19:4-6, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

When the Law Covenant was inaugurated, it was Moses that acted as Mediator between God and the Israelites. This is clearly indicated in Exodus 20th chapter and on. Exod. 24:1 to 3 are quite pointed in this respect—“And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him. And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the Judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.” And the 12th verse is also very specific, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.”

God also chose a certain family to fulfill the priestly office, even Aaron and his four sons. We find this recorded in Exodus 28:1. Also the tribe of Levi was selected to take the

place of the firstborns who were spared at the time of the Passover. The Lord clearly indicated that he had chosen the firstborns among the children of Israel to be his special possession. We read about this in Exod. 13:2, “Sanctify unto me the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; it is mine.” And there was a substitution made later—the tribe of Levi was chosen of the Lord to take the place of the firstborns. This is recorded in Num. 3:44 and 45, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine; I am the Lord.” And this chosen tribe was given to Aaron to be his ministers. This is indicated in Numbers 3:5-9, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle....And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.”

So what do we learn up to this point dear brethren? It is this—God made all decisions and chose certain individuals to carry out his will. No one was permitted to set himself up as a representative of God. God did not confer with anyone but he acted arbitrarily and chose certain ones to instruct and guide. Not only that but God provided the details of the instructions. Nowhere do we find any evidence that God left it up to men to decide what guidance was to be given to their fellowmen. The primary guidance was from God Himself.

When Moses felt the weight of responsibility bearing down upon him with crushing force, it was God who told him to select seventy elders of Israel. Let us read concerning this in Num. 11:17, “And I will come down and talk with thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.” Moses was truly a great man in humility and the spirit of service—humility toward God and service toward the children of Israel.

We find an interesting episode in the 12th chapter of Numbers. It is not only interesting but teaches a lesson that we do well to take heed. In fact it is a lesson that if we do not voluntarily learn, the Lord may see it necessary to impress the lesson in a way that might be extremely painful to us. In fact, if the lesson is not accepted, it could mean extinction to us in the long run.

It so happened that Moses had married an Ethiopian woman. Aaron and his sister Miriam took it upon themselves to criticize Moses for doing this. It did not seem to occur to them that God had shown his approval of Moses by selecting him to lead the children of Israel. This fact should have closed their mouths, yes, it should have caused them to

dismiss such criticisms from their thinking. But this is what they said, “Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?” And the next sentence is a bit frightening—“And the Lord heard it!” The Lord called Aaron and his sister Miriam “on the carpet” so to speak. Here is how the 4th verse reads, “And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.” We read now from the Fenton translation (verses 5 to 16), “So all three went, and Jehovah descended in the form of the cloud, and stood at the door of the Hall, and called Aaron and Miriam. Both of them accordingly went. When he said to them, ‘Listen now to My words. If there is a prophet among you, the Lord shows himself to him by vision or speaks by dream. It is not the same with My servant Moses:—he is faithful in all My house. I speak face to face with him, and openly, and he has not to seek the Ever-Living in enigmas and parables. Then why have you not regarded the message of My servant Moses?’ And the anger of the Ever-Living burnt at them, and He departed. Then the cloud turned from above the Hall, and Miriam had become a leper as white as snow; and Aaron recoiled from Miriam now she was a leper, and Aaron said to Moses, ‘Pray to the Almighty so that He may not lay upon us the sin which we attempted, and that we have committed. Let her not be like what comes dead from its mother’s womb,—with half of its flesh consumed!’ Therefore Moses cried to the Ever-Living saying, I pray God to cure her now. And the Ever-Living replied; ‘If her father had spit in her face, would she not be disgraced for seven days? Let her be isolated for seven days outside the camp; and afterwards she may return.’ Miriam was therefore isolated outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not march until the return of Miriam, but the people marched afterwards, from the Green fields and encamped in the Wilderness of Paran.” As we know, leprosy is a symbol of sin, and it was quite appropriate that Miriam be afflicted with that which symbolized sin, for truly she and her brother Aaron had sinned in speaking disrespectfully about Moses, the chosen of God. So we recognize the lesson very clearly—it is a dangerous sin to show disrespect for anyone chosen of God to guide his people.

We discern another lesson that is of particular importance to any who may be used of God to act as His agent to guide or serve others. This is found in the 20th chapter of Numbers. It seems there was a shortage of water and the people gathered themselves against Moses and Aaron and chided them for leading them out of Egypt into the wilderness. Beginning with the 7th verse we note what happened and the Lesson to draw from the occurrence—“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him.” Now we note the words and act of Moses that we may get the lesson—“And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he

smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.” What did Moses do that was so wrong? He was instructed to merely speak to the rock and it would bring forth water—this would sanctify God in the eyes of the Israelites. Instead, he smote the rock twice with his rod, took the credit for the miracle to himself and spoke in anger to the people—and he paid dearly for this misstep of irreverence toward God. What is the lesson to us? The lesson is that we are always to pay close attention to what God is doing and what he wants done, and we are to follow His directions to the very letter, and not think it is our province to take anything into our own hands.

The last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy tells us that Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died. The 9th verse of this last chapter (the 34th) informs us that “Joshua, the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.” And in the book to follow, the Book of Joshua, chapter one, verses 1 and 2, it was stated that “after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give them, even to the children of Israel.” So the same policy of God is shown here—God himself chooses the leader he wants to guide his people—in this case, Joshua, the son of Nun. Joshua showed he had the spirit of a true leader for after he had rehearsed the blessings of God upon the people he was leading, he declared, “Now, therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth;...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:14, 15.

And in the final chapter of Joshua (chapter 24), verse 29 it was said that “after these things, Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.” “And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.” So states Judges, chapter 2, verse 7. But it came to pass, a new generation arose “after them, which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Balaam... and served Baal and Ashtaroth” as well. (Judges 2:10-13) And they paid dearly for their disobedience, for we learn from chapter 3 of the book of Judges that the “anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about.” (Judges 3:8)

But God delivered his people, and this revealed the fact that it was God Himself who chose the deliverer. We find an example of this recorded in Judges, 3rd chapter, verses 9 to 11. When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer in

the person of Othniel, “And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war;...and the land had rest forty years.” This procedure was repeated during the long period of the Judges.

In the 6th chapter of the book of Judges we read that when the Israelites were in trouble again, the Lord sent an angel and a man by the name of Gideon was selected to be used to deliver the Israelites from their oppressors. And great was the victory of Gideon and his 300 over a large number of enemies. And verse 28 of chapter 8 tells us, “Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness 40 years in the days of Gideon.”

In our pursuit of our subject, we now come into the time of Samuel. We learn that Samuel was a little boy prayed for. His mother, Hannah, was barren for a number of years. She prayed earnestly to the Lord for a son and she vowed that if the Lord blessed her with a son, she would give him over to the Lord’s service for ever. The Lord heard her earnest prayer and gave her a little son, and she named him “Asked of God.” “Asked of God” you say? Yes, that was his name. But you may say, “I thought his name was Samuel.” That is right, but the name Samuel means “Asked of God.” And when the boy, Samuel was weaned, Hannah his mother brought him to Eli the priest and gave him into Eli’s care.

As “Samuel grew the Lord was with him, and Samuel did let none of God’s words fall to the ground;” and as chapter 3, verses 20 and 21 say, “And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.” So here we see a continuation of God’s way of choosing certain individuals to guide and instruct his people. The 7th chapter of 1 Samuel, beginning with the 3rd verse, tells us that Samuel exhorted the people to return unto the Lord, and put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth and serve God only and they would be delivered out of the hands of the Philistines. The 4th verse tells us of the results—“Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.” The 15th verse tells us that “Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.”

The 8th chapter reveals a sad disappointment in the life of Samuel. He had appointed his two sons to be judges in Israel, but “his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment.” (V. 3) Then the people said to Samuel (V. 5) “Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” The 6th and 7th verses reveal Samuel’s reaction and God’s response, “But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord, And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.” Here we note a powerful

lesson to all who wish to heed the ways of the Lord—we must never, never suggest or wish anything different than God decrees for our good in the way of leadership or guidance.

So Samuel did as the Lord instructed him, and warned the people as to what would happen if they had a king. Samuel was instructed to anoint a man to be the first king. We will not relate all the details, but will cite verse 17 of chapter 9, “And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.” We read the 1st verse of chapter 10, “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?” Then Samuel informed Saul that he would have certain experiences that would be signs to him that he was chosen of God to be the king of Israel. As verse 9 says, “And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all these signs came to pass that day.”

I think we are more or less familiar with the sinful doings of Saul and how God exercised his authority again by sending Samuel to anoint a new king in the person of David. David showed his reverence for God by his continued recognition of Saul as the anointed of God, and he did not attempt to run ahead of the Lord but waited many years for circumstances to shape up enabling him to read the will of God; and finally he became king of Israel.

The story of the Prophets is the same—they were not self-appointed men, neither were they appointed by men, but they were dealt with by God through the giving of visions and instructions concerning the messages they were to give and the things they were to do. They were men of great moral courage and faith in God. They were very unpopular with the Israelites who were not living up to the standard of the Law Covenant. They suffered much reproach and even physical harm. We can imagine how repulsive were the words of Isaiah to those who were disobedient—Isa. 1:3 and 4, “The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.” The shameful treatment of Jeremiah is recorded in Jer. 38:6, “Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon...and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.”

Daniel was an outstanding example of the prophets, and because of the spirit he had, he was addressed as “greatly beloved of Jehovah,” by the angel sent to reveal future events. (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19) As we thumb through the Old Testament we find a familiar phrase at the beginning of each prophecy—“The word of the Lord that came unto”—and then

the name of the prophet was given. (Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:1; Obadiah 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Nahum 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Haggai 1:1; Zech. 1:1; Mal. 1:1)

When we come to the New Testament, what do we find? A new method? No, it is the same method that God used all along—certain individuals were picked out by God to instruct and guide His people. Jesus, of course, was the chief of all the chosen ones; and he said that he spoke not his own words, but the words of His father—“...the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” (John 14:10)

And John the Baptist, who was to announce the presence of the Messiah at his first advent, was chosen of God to say “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29, 36) John the Baptist performed an Elijah work on a small scale to exhort the people to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was nigh. Only a remnant heeded his words and the vast majority was heedless of the message, and as a result a curse came upon Israel which culminated in their national destruction in the year 70 A.D.

Jesus chose 12 apostles, Paul taking the place of Judas the traitor. After the suicide death of Judas, the apostles attempted to select someone to take the place of Judas, but their selection was ignored. Saul, who later became Paul, was chosen in a very striking manner. On his way to Damascus, Saul heard the words addressed to him personally, “Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?” The Lord knew the heart of this man and that he would be suitable to use as the Apostle to carry on the work with untiring zeal and courage. Paul knew that he had been specially chosen and in Acts 26:19 we read, “Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” Yes, he knew the Lord was singling him out for use, and he responded with immediate obedience.

In Rev. 1:12, 13 we find a symbolic representation of our Lord’s supervision of the church of Christ down through the centuries of the Gospel Age—“And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” Our Lord has been in complete charge of the affairs of the church during the past 20 centuries. In the 16th verse the Son of man is shown with seven stars in his right hand, and the last verse (V. 20) interprets the seven stars and the seven candlesticks. Here is how the verse reads, “The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” All down through the Gospel Age, the Lord supervised the spiritual welfare of his saints and certain men were chosen during that time to guide and instruct the church during the seven stages of the church.

I don't think there is any question as to where we are on the stream of church time—we are in the last period—the Laodicean. In the message to the church of the Laodiceans we find these words (chapter 3, verse 20), “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” These words suggest a time of special feasting—the Lord will feast with the one who opens the door to let the Lord in, and the one who opens the door, in turn will feast with the Lord. All this suggests a special outpouring of spiritual food, the truth.

In one of our Lord's parables, it was stated that wheat and tares would be permitted to grow together until the harvest, the end of the age. In the end of the age, there would be a separation between wheat and tares and something would be used of the Lord to accomplish the separation. That something would be a message of truth—the wheat would have a heart-hunger for something that would be better to believe than that which they had in company with the tares. This is pictured to us in symbol in Rev. 14:14 to 16, “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” We have all been reaped with the Truth of the Harvest Message—we know what the Lord used to accomplish the separation.

In the prophecy of Daniel, 12th chapter, Daniel was told to shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased; and also that there would be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. Daniel was further told that the words were to be closed and closed until the time of the end; and that many would be purified, and made white and tried; that the wicked would do wickedly; and that none of the wicked should understand, but the “wise should understand.” We are in the time of the end when these three signs can be recognized, and Daniel's prophecy indicates that the wise would understand something. Prophecy was the subject of the book of Daniel, so understanding would mean an understanding of prophecy.

Now the great question is—has the Lord used His same method as in the past—of choosing someone to guide and instruct his people? Let us examine a few Scriptural points and see what we find. If we find that he does use the same method, then would it not be imperative to know who the Lord has chosen, and then pay the utmost attention to this appointment? To state the question in reverse form—would it not be the utmost folly to ignore the Lord's method and reject the Lord's appointment and attempt to ferret out the Lord's guidance in His word for ourselves? And if we did this, would we not find ourselves in utter confusion and darkness?

Let us turn to Matt. 24:45-47 and also Luke 12:42-44. The Matthew reference reads as follows: “Who then is the [‘the’ should show the emphasis as per the Diaglott] faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler ever all his goods.” And now Luke —“Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”

What is the evident and simple meaning here? It is that when the Lord returns at his second advent, he will gird himself and make the watching servants sit down to meat and come forth and serve them. Additionally, a special servant, an individual, will be selected to give the watching ones, the household, meat in due season. And—that person will be made chief steward over all the master’s goods. It is evident that all this has reference to the Lord using a specially chosen individual to serve food to the household of faith—serving truth. It might be asked, Are we dependent upon an interpretation to suggest the facts? or do the facts indicate what the interpretation should be? I think it is both—the facts and the interpretation fit together so perfectly that there can be no question that we are on the right track. What are the facts? The Pastor was among the watching ones when our Lord returned. Since our Lord’s return in 1874 we have had an outpouring of religious truth unparalleled at any time during the entire Gospel Age. Who was the instrument used to give us this outpouring of Bible truth? It was Pastor Russell. Do we see any evidence of his being chief steward over all the Lord’s goods? The facts bear this out unmistakably. He had a worldwide ministry—EVERYTHING was in his charge. He was the elected Pastor of the Bible Student world in the many ecclesias which made up that Bible Student world. The Pastor had a grasp of scripture, both doctrinally and prophetically that was nothing short of miraculous when we consider the general confusion of the creeds. As a writer, he had no equal and his works required untold barrels of printer’s ink. His works were in the millions and circulated worldwide.

But now to consider the main point of our present discourse: When we take into consideration God’s selection and use of leaders in Old Testament times; and when we notice how sharply Aaron and Miriam were reprimanded when they found fault with the leadership of Moses—would not this suggest that we should pay close attention to the ministry of the one chosen of the Lord, in our day, to give us “meat in due season?” Would not reverence for God direct us to study the writings of our Pastor thoroughly and completely on every subject, and not hastily conclude that our Pastor was mistaken, simply because somebody comes along and says so?

I remember very well, reading about the course that Bro. Benjamin Barton took when he was not too sure about the truth on the covenants back around the year 1909. I think the

course he pursued was the right one, and showed how important he felt it was that he should carefully study the Scriptures, and pray earnestly for Divine Guidance, and also showed his respect for God's appointment of our Pastor to guide the church into the truth. In the back of the Covenant Book, recently reprinted, is Brother Barton's own study. It is under the subheading of PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. It is made up of two paragraphs, and I will read exactly what Bro. Barton said:

“Before coming to the consideration of the subject direct, I would like to say a few words in relation to my own experience in connection with the matter. Whenever any thought has been promulgated by Bro. Russell, either in writing or orally, I have always held my judgment in suspense until I have been thoroughly satisfied that the Scriptures corroborate the view he has presented; and so when these thoughts upon the subject of the covenants were presented by him I could see certain Scriptures which seemingly were corroborative of his view, but there were other passages which seemed to conflict with his view. Instead of hastily concluding that Brother Russell was wrong, as many seem to have done, I determined to wait until the Lord had made this matter clear and plain. I took a composition book and headed two pages: ‘The Covenants’. At the top of one page I put the statement: ‘Scriptures and lines of thought which seem to corroborate the view of Bro. Russell.’ And on the other page I wrote: ‘Scriptures and lines of thought which seem to contradict the view of Bro. Russell.’ I then searched for every passage in the Bible which directly or indirectly seemed to relate to the subject of the covenant, especially the New Covenant. When I found a passage which seemed in perfect agreement with the view of Bro. Russell, I put it on the affirmative side, and when I found a passage which seemed to conflict, I put it on the negative side. I made no attempt to twist any passage nor to force it to conform to the idea which he presented. I then thought of all the points or arguments which would have a bearing upon the subject, and I put them on their respective sides. When I had finished I had a very large number of Scriptures and quite an array of arguments and lines of thought. The majority of them seemed to be confirmatory of Bro. Russell's position, but there were quite a number which seemed to conflict with his position. I then took the matter to the Lord in prayer—I left it entirely with Him, and asked that this matter might be thoroughly settled, and determined to hold my opinion to myself until I had given the subject such a thorough investigation that every Scripture and agreement would be removed from one side to the other, and when I had everything in the same column, I would be satisfied as to which view was right, and which was wrong.

“It required quite a number of weeks before the subject was thoroughly settled to my satisfaction. There were some passages in the book of Hebrews which seemed almost impossible of understanding as Bro. Russell had presented the matter, and I made no attempt to twist those passages, nor to distort them, or to try to work out of them a significance which the Lord did not intend us to get from them. But, in due time, I was just as thoroughly satisfied upon the subject of the New Covenant as upon any other

subject contained in the Word of God. I now see in those passages a depth of meaning and a harmony with the other statements of the Word of God of which I had once never dreamed, and I now look back and wonder how it was that I read those passages over and over and over and failed to see the real depth—the views which I expect to present in the course of this talk.” (End of quotation.)

What a reverent course Bro. Barton pursued. He studied carefully, he prayed over the matter, he did not try to force anything, he waited on the Lord “a number of weeks before the subject was thoroughly settled to his satisfaction.” What eloquent testimony this is in favor of accepting God’s choice of Bro. Russell as our Pastor. If Bro. Barton had not followed the course he did, he could have been switched off from understanding the Truth and followed the wanderings of his own mind in accordance with others who failed to see the great and compelling necessity of recognizing God’s method of GUIDING His people. This in no sense means that we blindly follow the writings of our Pastor; but it does mean that we are to give our strict and unbiased attention to what the Pastor has written, and weigh ALL THE EVIDENCES; and it is our belief that we will find that the Pastor has the true understanding of all the essentials of God’s word—on doctrine, on practical Christian living, and on dispensational and prophetic truth. We believe this so thoroughly that we are literally staking our life upon it. We believe if the brethren would carefully heed what we have in our possession, none of us would be blown about today by the various winds of doctrine which are blowing so fiercely and persistently.

On Reprint page 5506 is a letter written by Brother A. I. Ritchie. This was dated July 15, 1914. Brother Ritchie’s course was very similar to the course pursued by Brother Barton, and the end results were the same. Brother Ritchie’s letter is well worth reading.

Our Pastor understood that he was that “wise and faithful servant” of Luke 12 and Matt. 24. He wrote an article dated March 1, 1896 entitled “That Servant,” and this is found on Reprint page 1946. And now, dear brethren, I think our case is complete, and I think the recognition and acceptance of Bro. Russell as Pastor for the church here in the end of age is imperative to our spiritual progress and safety from deluding errors.