

THE WORD OF FAITH

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE KENNETH E. HAGIN EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of saluation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest:

and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

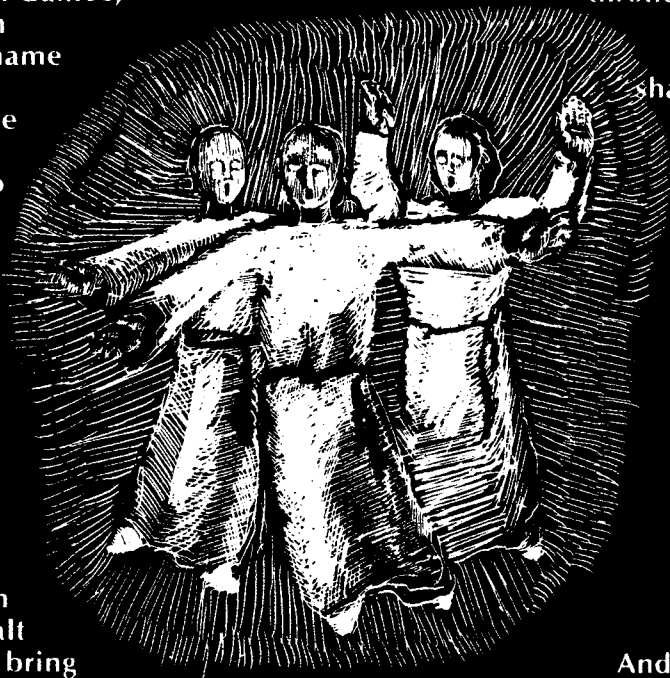
And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

And the angel departed from her.

-Luke 1:26-38



THE VIRGIN BIRTH

by Kenneth Hagin

(Continued on Page 4)

BOOK PRICE INCREASE

On January 1, 1976, some of our book prices will increase as follows:

*Books currently priced at \$.60 will increase to \$.75.

*Books currently priced at \$1.25 will increase to \$1.50

Orders received before December 31, 1975 will be shipped at the old prices.

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Volume VIII 12

Dear Mr. Hagin,

I am a new Christian even though I grew up in a family where we went to church every Sunday. I always believed in Jesus, but I really never knew him, I am now 22 years old and we are best of friends,

Another friend of mine that I work with started listening to KDTX-FM... I used to get so upset with him and the station I would turn it off. Then one day God opened up my ears and softened my heart, I started listening to Jimmy Swaggart, Don George and yourself. It was just forty-five minutes a day but it changed my life--and later on many around me.

In the three programs I found out that God wasn't what I believed him to be at all. Now I make it a habit to read the Word at least two hours a day or more. And I have found out the Holy Spirit will teach me...I asked and was filled with the Holy Spirit after reading your book EXCEEDINGLY GROWING FAITH and I BELIEVE IN VISIONS, both of which I found to be extremely intense, exciting, and a real blessing. Praise God...My deepest love and thanks for showing me how empty I was and how FULL God will make one.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
 (A Brother)

September 30, 1975

Dear Bro. K. Hagin,

...It was during your broadcast that the Lord healed me of a tumor of the uterus on April 14, 1975. Praise the Lord! I was to go into the hospital on April 19, 1975 for surgery. But praise God, I was lying in bed on the 14th of April as you were teaching faith and it seems that it was so plain to me for the first time--and that instant I was healed.

Praise God!

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RADIO NEWS

Please check our radio log in this issue for new broadcasts in **Brighton (Denver), Colorado—Belle Glade, Florida—Chicago, Illinois—Greenville, South Carolina.**

Station	KHz/MHz	Time	Station	KHz/MHz	Time
D.C. AREA			MISSISSIPPI		
Prince Frederick	WMJS-FM 92.7	10:30 PM	Jackson	WJFR-FM 96.3	10:30 AM
Falls Church	WFAX 1220	9:30 PM	MISSOURI		
ALABAMA			St. Louis	KXEN 1010	9:15 AM
Birmingham	WDJC-FM 93.7	11:15 AM	Kansas City	KCDV 1510	11:00 AM
ARIZONA			St. Louis	WGNU-FM 106.5	6:15 PM
Phoenix	KHCS 1010	11:30 AM	NORTH CAROLINA		
Tucson	KFMM-FM 99.3	11:30 AM	Charlotte	WHVN 1310	2:00 PM
CALIFORNIA			NEW MEXICO		
Carona	KREL 1370	11:45 AM	Albuquerque	KKIM 1000	12:45 PM
San Francisco	KFAZ 1100	2:15 PM	NEW YORK		
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San Diego	XEMO 860	10:45 PM	OHIO		
Riverside	KBBL-FM 99.1	1:45 PM	Hamilton	WQMS-FM 96.5	8:45 AM
COLORADO			Columbus	WCVO-FM 104.9	12:15 PM
Denver	KBRN 800	9:00 AM	Canton	WTOF-FM 98.1	5:30 PM
Denver	KQXI 1550	11:45 AM	OKLAHOMA		
FLORIDA			Tulsa	KBHF-FM 98.5	8:30 AM & 10:30 PM
Belle Glade (So. Fla.)	WSWN 900	8:15 AM	Oklahoma City	KBYE 890	9:30 AM
GEORGIA			Pryor	KOLS 1570	4:45 PM
Atlanta	WGUN 1010	10:45 AM	OREGON		
IDaho			Ashland	KDDV 1350	8:30 AM
Caldwell	KBGN 910	4:00 PM	Portland	KPDG-AM & FM 800 & 93.7	1:15 PM
ILLINOIS			PENNSYLVANIA		
Chicago	WEAW 1330	12:15 PM	Philadelphia	WIBF-FM 103.9	8:15 AM
Peoria	WPFO 1020	11:15 AM	Pittsburg	WZUM 1590	9:45 AM
Rockford	WQFL-FM 100.9	1:00 PM	SOUTH CAROLINA		
INDIANA			Greenville	WBBR 1580	1:15 PM
W. Terre Haute	WWVR-FM 105.5	2:05 PM	TENNESSEE		
Hammond	WYCA-FM 92.3	9:00 PM	Nashville	WNAH 1360	11:45 AM
Indianapolis	WBRI 1500	3:15 PM	TEXAS		
Plymouth	WCTA-FM 94.3	6:15 PM	Brownwood	KLSN 99	5:45 AM
IDAHO			Houston	KFMK-FM 98	10:00 AM
Des Moines	KDMI-FM 97.3	8:00 AM	Dallas	KDTX-FM 102.9	11:00 AM & 9:45 PM
Cedar Rapids	KTOF-FM 104.5	8:30 AM	Corpus Christi	KCTA 1030	12:45 PM
KANSAS			Crane	KBSN 970	10:00 AM
Pittsburg	KDAM 860	10:00 AM	WASHINGTON		
Wilmington	KLEY 1130	5:45 PM	Seattle	KBLE-FM 93.3	6:15 PM
KENTUCKY			Yakima	KBBO 1390	10:05 AM
Louisville	WFIA-FM 103.9	6:00 PM	MEXICO		
MICHIGAN			Monterey	XEG 1050	8:45 PM
Detroit	WBFG-FM 98.7	3:45 & 9:15 AM			
MINNESOTA					
St. Paul	KNDF-FM 95.3	12:00 Noon			

THE PASTOR

PART 1

Fourth in the Ministry Gifts Series

by Kenneth Hagin

EPHESIANS 4:11-12

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

The word pastor is used only once in the King James translation of the New Testament. That's here in Ephesians 4:11. This seems a little strange when we realize the office of pastor is probably the most widely recognized office in the Christian ministry today. Yet I am satisfied there are many references to this pastoral office.

The Greek word translated pastor literally means shepherd. It is translated so referring to our wonderful Lord and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ—who might legitimately be considered the greatest example of a true pastor.

JOHN 10:11

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

HEBREWS 13:20

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant...

1 PETER 2:25

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1 PETER 5:4

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

A pastor is a shepherd of God's sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd of all God's sheep. But He has some under shepherds. The pastor stands in that office. God calls men and equips them to shepherd or pastor a flock.

We can see the necessity for shepherds. As believers began to

be gathered together in recognized local churches, or groups, or assemblies, in early New Testament days, the need for certain ones to exercise a position of loving oversight and care would naturally arise. Jesus spoke of people going astray as sheep without a shepherd. (Did you know that's why many sheep are going astray today? Because they're without a shepherd.)

Such persons were required to be more or less settled in the locality and residents, for a time at least, of that one place. They were distinguished from the apostles and other ministries who were called to move around.

It's plain that the early churches were put in the charge of local elders. The Greek word for elder simply means an older person. Dr. P. C. Nelson, the noted Greek scholar, pointed out that in the babyhood state of the church they didn't have pastors. They were starting out.

"Let's get back to the Acts of the Apostles," some folks say.

No. Let's don't get back there. If we do the church will be a baby thing—in a babyhood state. Back to some of the experiences available to us—yes. But we don't want to get back there altogether. When the church started out it was a baby church. They didn't have any ministers except the apostles. It takes time to develop ministries. It takes time to develop the pastoral office.

Very often to begin with they would simply appoint some of the older men to oversee the local flock or assembly until God could develop ministries.

The Word of God speaks about not putting in a novice even as a

deacon. How much more that would be true in any other office. That's why God starts a minister out someplace else—preaching, evangelizing, telling the story, developing—before He makes a pastor out of him. Ministry gifts and spiritual gifts can be developed.

These elders would simply be older men who by reason of their standing and experience were obviously fitted to a place of position and responsibility.

But, if this term elder had special reference to their age and standing—there was the more official title of *overseer* or *bishop*. The Greek word, *episkopos*, is the same for both. It conveys a meaning of definite leadership and official position. Remember how Jesus is the chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls—Overseer of our souls. Hallelujah!

Notice how the word overseer is used in Paul's admonition to the elders of the church at Ephesus:

ACTS 20:28

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

It takes a little space to print the following passages here. But I believe it's important that we get right into them and read them. We'll comment as we go:

1 TIMOTHY 3:1

1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work...

I want to again point out that the word here translated bishop is the same Greek word translated, overseer. What this is really talking about is the pastoral gift.

1 TIMOTHY 3:2-7

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Continued on Page 7

Continued from Front Cover

The Virgin Birth

by Kenneth Hagin

Seven hundred fifty years before, God had marked out this daughter of David who is to give birth to that wonderful Being in a manger cradle in Bethlehem through the prophet Isaiah:

ISAIAH 7:13-14

13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Lord Himself will give a sign. He will show you a miracle, a wonder; something out of the ordinary will take place.

What will it be?

A virgin shall conceive and bear a son. A virgin will give birth to a son in a supernatural way. His name shall be called Immanuel—which means, *God with us*, or, *Incarnation*.

God's first promise of the Incarnation is given in His conversation with Satan just after Adam had committed high treason.

God said to Satan:

GENESIS 3:15

15 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.

God the Father realizes man's needs can only be met by the Incarnation of His Son. He realizes this One could not be born of natural generation. So He gives a prophecy that a woman shall give birth to a child independent of natural generation—it shall be called the seed of woman.

In Jeremiah 31:22 God declared, "...A woman shall compass a man." Or, more literally, a woman shall encompass a man child.

This Incarnate One could not be born of natural generation because man is a fallen being. His seed is subject to Satan. This Seed, this Holy One, must be One who is not a subject of Satan. This wonderful Being must be conceived of the Holy Spirit. The womb of the

virgin is to be simply the receptacle of that Holy One unto the day He is brought forth.

Adam was created. The rest of the human race was generated by natural processes. But this One to be brought forth is to be formed by a special act of divine power. The Apostle Paul speaks of His birth in the following words:

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

A modern translation of that passage helps us see it more clearly:

Who existing in the form of God counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped: But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in the fashion as a man he humbled himself becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

He had existed always in the form of God; but He empties Himself and takes the form of a bond servant; being made in the likeness of man.

HIS PREEXISTENCE

The Person we now know as Jesus Christ is one of the three divine persons of the Diety. As God, He had no beginning. It is the time before He became a man that we refer to as His preexistence. Micah speaks of Him as existing from all eternity:

MICAH 5:2

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

John speaks of Him as existing in the very beginning with the Father:

JOHN 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Jesus speaks of Himself as being before Abraham and before the world was created:

JOHN 8:58

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

JOHN 17:5, 24

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was...

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Paul speaks of Him as existing before all things and as the Creator and Upholder of all things:

HEBREWS 1:1-3, 8

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high;...

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

EPHESIANS 3:9

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

The Incarnation presupposes that this Being who became incarnate had a separate existence previous to His coming to the earth. The entire gospel of John is based upon the fact that Jesus had a previous existence with the Father—and that while He was walking the earth He remembered His ex-

periences in the other world and spoke to the Father of them; and also of when He would go back and take up again life with the Father. (See John 8:42; 13:3; 16:28,-30; 17:3-5.)

This One to be born of the family of Judah to be a ruler in Israel, according to Micah 5:2, "...whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," had traveled up and down through the eternities and had left His footprints on the ages.

In the beginning this Eternal One was with God—with Him in fellowship and purpose, working with Him; creating with Him. (John 1:1,3; Heb. 1:2.) Way back in the beginning we hear God say,

"Let us make man in our image." (Gen. 1:26.)

Here are some of the divine names and titles given to Jesus which prove He is by nature divine and a member of the Godhead.

GOD, IMMANUEL Matt. 1:23...**THE WORD** Jn. 1:1...**LORD AND CHRIST** Acts 2:36...**LORD OF ALL** Acts 10:36...**LORD OF GLORY** I Cor. 2:8...**WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE** Is. 9:6...**THE LORD'S CHRIST** Luke 2:26...**THE SON OF GOD** Matt 4:3, 14:33; I John 4:15...**MY SON** Matt. 3:17...**THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON** John 1:18, 3:16-18...**THE FIRST AND LAST, ALPHA AND OMEGA, BEGINNING AND ENDING** Rev. 22:13...**THE LORD** Acts 9:17...**SON OF THE HIGHEST** Luke 1:32...**BREAD OF GOD** John 6:33...**HOLY ONE OF GOD** Mark 1:24...**HOLY CHILD JESUS** Acts 4:30...**KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS** Rev. 19:16...**LORD AND SAVIOUR** II Peter 3:2...**THE WORD OF GOD** Rev. 19:13

Yet this Being, called the Word, who was God, and was with God in fellowship and companionship, possessing the same nature, existing in the same form and on an equality with God—took upon Himself the body of man. He became flesh that He might become man's Redeemer.

JOHN 1:14

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And when He came into this world God prepared a body for Him:

HEBREWS 10:5

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

God prepared a body—for this Being called the Son of God. He was not born by natural generation as we know it. God performed a miracle by taking Him out of the Godhead, or from the Godhead, in heaven and placing Him in the womb of a virgin to be united with flesh by a unique conception.

We note here that when Christ became a man in the Incarnation He became man for eternity. He did not assume humanity as a garment to be worn for 33 years, then cast off and laid aside. But He became a man forever. Today at the Father's right hand there is a man in heaven as the result of the Incarnation.

I TIMOTHY 2:5

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

The fact that it was possible for diety and humanity to become united reveals the place the first man held in the plan of the Father God. (See Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8:5.) God had created man in His own image just a shade lower than Himself—so nearly like God it was possible for God and man to become united for eternity in one individual. It was possible for God and man to become united! God can dwell in these human bodies of ours. God can impart His Life and nature to our spirits and dwell in our human bodies. That's what takes place at the New Birth.

Every born again man is an incarnation. The believer is as much an incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth. God can now irradicate spiritual death from the spirit of man and give man His life.

INCARNATE REVELATOR

Man born into a world ruled by Satan did not by nature know His Creator. But the Incarnation of Jesus Christ—God manifested in the flesh—has given the world true knowledge of the nature of God.

From the time Adam sinned, and man died spiritually, God and man have been spiritually separ-

ated. Spiritually dead men could not know the nature of man's Creator without a revelation from Him. And man rejected revelation in the blindness of his mind. He brought forth false conceptions of God.

A nation's conception of God determines its worship and its life. The ignorance and untold misery of heathen nations is due to their darkened conception of God. God has been conceived as the weird, the cruel, the grotesque. As the immoral. As the aloof. As an impersonal energy. But never as He is.

That's why Jesus came! To reveal Him as He is! As a God of Love! As a Father God!

Even Israel which possessed as clear a revelation as God could give of Himself to spiritually dead men, had no true conception of God when Christ came into the world. The product of Israel's conception of God was the Pharisee. We see the counterpart of that today in the Christian world—proud, bitter, unkind, arrogant, self-seeking. Israel had such a false conception of God they didn't recognize Him when He stood in their midst.

Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." John said of Him, "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18).

I love Rotherham's translation of John 1:14. "And the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us and we gazed upon His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

It has been our tendency to dwell upon Christ's self-denial, His sufferings in coming to earth from glory. Yet as we know Him better, we believe it was a joy to Him, who so loved man and so desired man's fellowship to dwell on earth among men that He might give to alienated man a true conception of his Creator.

INCARNATE REDEEMER

GALATIANS 4:4-7

4 But when the fulness of the time was

Continued on next page

Continued from Page 5

come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

God, in sending Jesus, wrought for us His Great Plan of Redemption.

The Redemption of man must emanate from God. Because man is a broken, helpless slave without resources in the hands of an enemy (Satan) who rules him without mercy and who has the authority to cast him into hell. God must provide a Redeemer.

This Redeemer must be adequate to meet every demand of Justice and every need of man. He must be big enough to conquer Satan, and to bring Life and immortality to the broken, bondaged human.

This Redeemer must become incarnate. As a spiritual being He must take on a human body. This body cannot be mortal as ours is. If it were, He would be a subject of Satan. He must have a body patterned after the pure body of the first man Adam. He must be conceived and born in such a manner that He will not be a subject of Satan. He must be a substitute for man. He must pass the examination and requirements Justice demands of a substitute. He could not be an angel, a disembodied spirit, or any special being created for the occasion. He must be God Himself. Diety must suffer for humanity.

The only way this can be done is for God's beloved Son to come out of God's bosom, lay aside the glory and majesty He has enjoyed through eternity at the Father's right hand, and come down here on earth and assume the physical body of a human.

Then God must take man's sin nature—that hideous monstrous thing called spiritual death—and lay it upon the spirit of his Holy Eternal Son.

The Son must go unto judgment. The wrath and indignation of Justice against sin and treason must be meted out to Him. He must pay the wages of sin. It's de-

6

manded of the human. And He becomes answerable.

Now—after He has paid the penalty, after He has suffered till the claims of Justice are fully met—then Life Eternal must be given to His spirit. His nature must be changed until the prophecy from the second Psalm is fulfilled, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." He must be born out of spiritual death into Life that Paul may say, "He is the first born from the dead, The head of the church." He is made alive in that dark domain of hell!

He must meet Satan, bind him in his own house, and take away the arms in which he is trusting.

COLOSSIANS 2:15

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

A vivid picture of Jesus in hell with all the hosts of demons upon Him, seeking to hold Him prisoner in their dark kingdom. But Jesus must arise in His new omnipotent strength, hurl back the hosts of darkness, and leave Satan paralyzed, stripped of his authority, defeated. (See Hebrews 2:14.)

Jesus must possess the gate of His enemy. He must take the keys of death and hell.

Then He must ascend up out of the darkness of hell, enter into His body which would then be filled with light and immortality, glorified and fitted to last through the ages of ages as the Head of the Church, and as a sample of the resurrection.

This Redeemer must experience spiritual death for every man so that every man may have a legal right to Eternal Life and a legal right to become a child of God.

All are dead spiritually. All are subjects of Satan. If one could have been saved without Jesus taking his place, then all could have been saved. If the world could have been saved apart from Christ, then God's sending Jesus to hell is the most colossal crime ever committed.

Man's transgression must be atoned for—and thank God, Jesus did that for us! He took my place and yours. And He did it as God. For He was virgin born and diety manifested in the flesh.

Without the virgin birth—there is no redemption.

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Continued from Page 3

Notice in particular that it is unscriptural to put a novice into this office.

TITUS 1:7-9

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

I PETER 5:2-3

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Money cannot be the controlling interest in the life of any minister. If it is, it will ruin him. He must serve because he loves God, and because he loves the sheep.

It is certainly the duty of the flock to support the pastor, the elder, the bishop, but he is not to do it for filthy lucre. His motive is to serve God and to put the people first—really to serve them, taking the oversight thereof with the right motive in mind. It is right and scriptural that ministers be supported. But if they are just doing it for money, then it becomes wrong.

I TIMOTHY 5:17-18

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward.

What laborer is worthy of double honor and his hire? The one who labors in word and doctrine. He is to be rewarded and taken care of.

Combining all these scriptures it's easy to grasp the nature of the ministers called pastors. Let me say again, the Greek word translated pastor means shepherd. The shepherd would have the oversight of the flock. No company of believers can be gathered together for long without feeling the need for such ministry. There is always the need of wise, competent oversight of the meetings of the assembly, or prayer group, or whatever, so that all things will be done decently and in order. (I Cor. 14:40.) When the Word talks about elders, or bishops, or overseers it is talking about people with the pastoral gift. For pastors are gifts given by Christ to the church. They were the recognized shepherd or shepherds of the flock. (Sometimes a flock needs more than one shepherd.)

Oh, some have figured it all out, and **they're** going to put an elder over five people, and an elder over ten people. These people are to submit to them. They tell those people exactly what to do. When to move. When to buy a car, etc. That is unscriptural. It is not the place of an elder in the church.

Submission doesn't mean what many think it does. The Bible says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God" (James 4:7). Sometimes you can't obey both God and man. First we submit to Him.

Then the Bible says for us to be submissive one to another. Does that mean we are to be slaves of one another? No. It means we're to try to get along with one another. To respect one another. To honor one another. To love one another.

The scripture is very clear that true pastors are a genuine gift from God. Above all else the positive work of a pastor is feeding the flock. Feeding the flock. Because a flock well fed is the least likely to become unhealthy spiritually.

The scripture is very clear that true pastors are a genuine gift from God. (Eph. 4:8, 11.) This is to be especially noted in our day when it seems to be thought pastors can be manufactured with some special course of training.

If one doesn't have that gift from God to stand in this office, he'll never be successful. If the gift is there, it can be and should be developed. No matter how much personal ambition we might have, no matter how good our intentions—nothing can take the place of the fact that there is a gift involved. It comes from God. It is given by God to the church. It is the Holy Ghost who makes men overseers.



(Our study on the ministry of the pastor will be continued next month.)

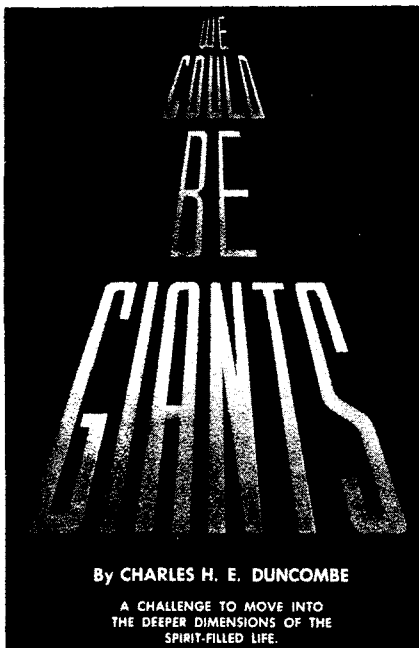
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