

The Sacred Cow Pen

“Every tub shall sit on its own bottom.” “The Yellow Race shall rule the earth.” “God helps those who help themselves.” “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” These are all cliches which are popularly assumed to have biblical origin. None of them come from the Bible. In “The Sacred Cow Pen,” we intend to draw attention to a number of sayings, beliefs and ideas popular among present-day Christians which not only do not come from the Bible, but which are considered sacred domain and above the realm of question or honest inquiry.

Nowhere does the Bible say that anyone was the pastor of any church. The word “pastor,” meaning feeder or shepherd, is translated from the Hebrew *raah* eight times in the Old Testament, always plural. In the New Testament, the Authorized Version renders it “pastor” only one time, and it is plural. This is the *only time* it refers to men attending the flock of God’s people. The same Greek word from which “pastors” is translated in Ephesians 4:11 is translated shepherd or shepherds sixteen other times in the New Testament. Seven of these times it refers to feeders of sheep (animals). Nine times the term is used of the Lord Jesus Christ. *These are the only times it is used in the singular.* The implications are obvious. Any man who calls himself *the* pastor of a particular flock has arrogated to himself the office which is lawfully Christ’s alone!

How is it that faithful pastors, God-fearing, devoted preachers of the Gospel do such a thing? Certainly, most of them would readily acclaim that Christ, not man, is the Head of the church. Yet at the same time, they will presume to perform that function themselves. Whether they admit it or not, they have thereby elected themselves Christ’s vicar of a local church no less than the Pope claims to be Christ’s vicar of the universal church.

The fact of the matter is, no particular office or function of a church is said to be singular in nature. That is, it is never said of anyone that he is “the teacher,” “the prophet,” “the evangelist,” “the exhorter,” the “deacon,” of such and such a church. Why, then, should anyone be called “the pastor”? It may well be that a small church will have only one teacher, one deacon or one pastor. No scripture demands that there must be a certain number of these offices. But we do not assume that one individual is supposed to be “the” teacher or evangelist or deacon of a church. Why, then, should anyone be called “the pastor”? One may point out that a body has many members, yet only one head, but have we not agreed that one Head to be Christ? When, then, comes this other sub-“head”?

There is only one place in the entire New Testament where a function or an office is said to be singular. In the second and third chapters of the Revelation, John is told to address his letters to “the angel” of each church. *Aggelos* is a word used of both men and celestial creatures, simply meaning messenger. But since a mortal man is writing a letter, it is not reasonable to assume that he is writing it to a celestial creature. Christ is sending His message to His churches by a man who is charged with the responsibility of proclaiming the word of God to that church. The term most understood for such activity is “preaching,” and the man who does it is a preacher. Therefore, we can understand from this, that although a church may have a plurality of pastors, feeders, it is altogether proper for it to have one preacher.

But let us rid ourselves of the idea that this preacher is the infallible oracle of God, that he is the sole governing authority. Such an idea does not come from the Bible. More likely, it is simply a Protestant accommodation of Rome’s hated “doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (Revelation 2:15), the subjugation and rule over the laity. A man who loves such a presumed office bears more resemblance to Diotrephes than to the Shepherd of our souls.

- C. M.