

## The Snare of Making God Relevant

2 Timothy 4:1

Therefore I solemnly witness  
before God and the Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is going to judge *the* living and *the* dead  
according to His appearance and His kingdom,  
**preach the Word**

This is the climactic point of *both* of Paul's letters to pastor Timothy. The worst temptation to which Timothy was most likely to succumb was to speak *according to man*. Paul's dictum to counter this is therefore, "Preach the Word."

There are many substitute dictums that can guide preachers and which *have* guided them through the centuries, but the only direction that will find preachers approved of God is to know and tell the people what God has testified in Scriptures- to speak *according to God* rather than according to man.

The substitute dictum our generation follows in defining preachers is "Relate to Man." Its sister dictum is "Make God Relevant." When preachers do these they are considered faithful servants of God.

So-

Is the minister's main qualification his ability to con-

nect to the *people*?

Or is his main qualification his ability to connect to *God*?

This is certainly not to imply that the pastor most *distant* from the people is the best one. A minister solemnly performing ceremony may seem connected to God, but he cannot thereby connect the people to the God who speaks in Scriptures. The preacher who speaks of Scriptures, but in mysteries, not plainly explaining the Bible, is also not truly connected to God; though he may seem so by his loftiness.

The preacher's ability to connect to God is rightly defined by his ability to understand and obey Scriptures (if his understanding does not lead to obedience, it is not true understanding). The he simply explains what he understands and follows.

That brings up another substitute dictum our generation falls for: "Be practical rather than theoretical." But the preacher cannot afford to bend all his messages towards the practical. He must concentrate on simply rightly representing all God says. There will surely be practical application when he does this, but he must not start by avoiding 'theory'. True practice is based on correct concept. Sanctification is built on doctrine.

Unfortunately, by this definition, the Church is not looking for a word from God in our day.

But we live in strange times. Counterfeits are definitely available. Many flock to preachers who are TOO connected to God. They say, "God told me ..."

Now a minister cannot *really* be *too* connected to God. When he is simply representing God by His

words in Scripture, he is plenty connected to God. "Too connected" is a facetious way of saying that some ministers have skipped the intermediate step of studying Scriptures and claimed direct revelation from God.

But the church that wants a word from God *by God's definition* simply wants a man who can demonstrate that *this* is what God says solely by *his handling of Scriptures*.

Churches are initially frightened by someone who says, "God says" based simply on Scriptures. They don't want someone too authoritative. They want someone who will support the party line:

[Matthew 7:28, 29](#) And it happened, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His doctrine. For He taught them as *one having authority*, and not as the scribes.

The scribes were into promoting the status quo. They therefore could not simply say, "The Bible says ..." They had to say, "Rabbi so-and-so says ...", "The Mishna says ...", "The Talmud says ..."

No good preacher will ignore insightful commentaries on Scriptures, but ultimately he must decide: What is God saying here? And that is what he must pass along to his people.

"Preach the Word."

There is no more profound command given to the Church throughout the ages.

There is no command more ignored today.

