

## Two Books from NPH

Northwestern Publishing House recently had (is having?) a big sale, and I ordered some books both for my churches and for myself. The two I ordered for myself were *The Complete Timotheus Verinus* and *God So Loved the World*, which is a study of biblical doctrine. I'm quite pleased with both hardcover books. Though I have bookmarks in the midst of somewhere between six and a dozen other books, I've begun reading the former, and it's a little hard to stop. I cracked the latter open to read some of it, and found it so clearly written that it would be an important asset to a church library. Of course, I haven't read the whole thing yet, so there could be some surprises. But so far it looks very good, centered and focused upon Jesus Christ and the atonement He has provided for the sins of the world.

*The Complete Timotheus Verinus* was mentioned and quoted from by [Bruce](#). What he wrote about it is true, especially that it has much that could and should be applied to present-day church controversies. For example, the author notes that pastors, as public teachers of God's Word, not only have the responsibility to teach the members of their own flocks, but also to serve as general teachers of the Church and watchmen, ready to identify trouble and warn God's people against it. This is not a self-appointed responsibility, but one that is laid upon pastors in their call and ordination. When pastors refuse to do this (and I say "when" because we are all quite fallible), we are failing a part of our holy office. So there will be times when we are compelled by our call to say or write things, when we would personally prefer to remain silent for the sake of peace. Few people really enjoy stirring up trouble and painting a target upon their own backs. However, pastors should realize that the target was already painted upon them when they were called to the office, and the "trouble" was already thoroughly stirred up by Christ himself. Turning away from it is the same as turning away from the Cross, and from the Crucified.

In the same context, *The Complete Timotheus Verinus* makes some practical observations about our personal dealings in the midst of controversy. There will be some who agree with one another, yet who are compelled by conscience or God's Word to speak in different ways. It is therefore incumbent upon the teachers in the Church to exercise restraint and charity in both speaking or writing and in reading or listening to what others have to say. Yet the teachers will inevitably show varying amounts of restraint and moderation, so they must also willingly make allowances for that, and not condemn one another for their different manners of dealing with the controversy.

Already I have found a great deal that could be, and should have been, applied to the ELS ministry-and-suspension controversy. Don't you? I look forward to reading more, and I'm glad I have plenty of bookmarks.