

REVELATION: CALL TO HOLINESS IN VIEW OF PROPHECY
Part II: "The Things Which Are": Profiting From God's Word To US"
F. Philadelphia: The Pietists - Encouraging 20th Century Conservatives
(Revelation 3:7-13)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

As we learned last Sunday, God wants people in mainline Protestant denominational churches to go beyond reciting creeds and observing rituals, and actually believe in Christ and His Word.

However, a number of Church groups now **deny** truths **found in** the Bible, or deny the **Bible's truthfulness ITSELF** -- what should a member of such a group *do then*?

(1) Members of mainline denominations were polled with the question: "Do you believe the Bible is God's Word in any unusual sense?" In response, 82% of the Methodists, 89% of the Episcopalians, 81% of the United Presbyterians, 57% of the Baptists and 57% of the Lutherans all answered, "**NO!**" (James Montgomery Boice, Does Inerrancy Matter?, p. 9)

If someone belongs to a church that **denies** the Bible is **inspired** of **God** in any *special* way, what should he **do** about it? After all, we are talking about the **Bible**, the source of a Church's **truth!**

(2) In September, 2000, Ken Ham of Answers In Genesis reported a book is being promoted by well-known, **Evangelical** leaders teaching the Genesis 1 days could be literal days *or millions of years* (in keeping with the view God used evolution to create). Though Genesis 1 makes its days consist of evenings and mornings each, a description speaking only of **literal** days, the view this book teaches, as Ham puts it, is "you don't have to believe all the words in Genesis **as written**." (Answers Update, V. 7, Issue 9, p. 2)

Well, what does one who trusts in Christ who belongs to a group doubting the face value the words of Genesis 1 **do** about it?!

Keep in mind speaking up may cost one his membership, or a pastor in his sixties may lose his job along with his RETIREMENT PENSION that is bound up in his church's denomination! Pressure like to this has been put upon two pastors in our own Litchfield County during my tenure here at Nepaug -- one in Thomaston and another in Torrington! For their stands, they wound up working side-by-side in the assembly line at the Torrington Company!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "If a church questions what the Bible teaches, or denies the validity of the Bible itself, what should one DO?! After all, taking a stand may cost him relationships, a job or being seen as loving'!"

- I. **As we learned in previous messages, Revelation 2-3 has Christ's commands for the welfare of believers through Church History.**
- II. **Christ's message to believers in the Church of Philadelphia unveils His encouragement for those in the Conservative Bible Movement:**
 - A. The name "Philadelphia" means brotherly love, describing a group that puts its true love for fellow Christians on a high priority.
 - B. As we view Christ's needed attributes given in Rev. 3:7-8, we discern this group to be the 20th century Bible Conservatives as follows:
 1. Jesus is "holy," a word meaning **separate** from sin. This quality is crucial for those needing to **withdraw** from **apostasy**, Rev. 18:4.
 2. Christ is "true," a picture of the need to defend the **existence** of God. Darwin's survival of the fittest theory gave anti-supernatural explanations to all creation, spawning **anti-supernatural Liberal Theology**, Packer, Fundamentalism and the Word of God, p. 27.
 3. The "keys of David" speaks to Isa. 22:22 that typifies this era:
 - a. Shebna, a Judaeen official, faithlessly sought Egypt's help to preserve his retirement, burial and hence fame, Isa. 22:16.
 - b. God thus replaced Shebna with Eliakim, the latter receiving God's "keys" to rule honorably in Judah, Isa. 22:20-24.
 - c. Applied to the 20th century, (a) Shebna depicts pastors who failed to trust God for fame & retirement pensions that were locked up in apostate denominations, and who thus compromised their stands for their welfare. (b) Eliakim pictures those who stood for the truth, trusting God with their welfare!
 - C. For those who left or were forced out of apostate groups in accord with Rev. 18:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, Christ promised the following:
 1. He promised ministry opportunities to offset losses suffered for taking a stand, Rev. 3:8a. This promise came for trusting Christ ("a little strength") and for standing for Scripture's inerrancy ("kept my word") and Christ's deity ("not denied my name") 3:8b.

2. Those who "say they are Jews but lie" picture unsaved Liberals, 3:9a. God will cause them to acknowledge His **love** and blessing **for** Conservatives opposite the Liberal Theologians' criticism of Conservatives as being "unloving" for their stands for the truth, 9b.
3. Conservatives opposed Darwin's uniformitarianism to uphold Christ's literal return (Rev. 3:10a's "patience" **equals** 2 Pet. 3:3-11). Jesus thus vowed to keep them from judgment, 3:10b.
4. This shows Christ's support for the Pretrib Rapture view held by Conservatives who say we are kept from the **time** of God's wrath.
5. It **also** hints God would judge those who afflicted godly pastors, cf. 2 Thess. 1:6-9: (a) Besides pressuring pastors' re: their pensions, Europe's (**esp. German**) scholars pushed German rationalism behind the Liberal Theology the godly faced, & Hitler used **Darwin's** "survival of the fittest" to call for war on "unfit" people, Davidheiser, [Evol. & Chr. Faith](#), p. 352! (b) Thus, 2 world wars (& the **Great Depression** that addressed the **pension** issue!) would be God's judgment on those who, by adopting German rationalism, put pressure on godly pastors! This means God judged **Germany** so **harshly** for replacing its Reformation truths under Luther with errant rationalism, and God **validated** the **world's fiery** end taught by Conservatives in 2 Pet. 3:3-11 via the atomic bomb's blast!
6. The **need** for **Conservatives** was to **hold TO** their **stands**, 3:11!
7. Overcomers are promised influence and livelihood security, 3:12:
 - a. To become a "pillar" in the Church (cf. Gal. 2:9) means to become influential with others in God's flock, Revelation 3:12a.
 - b. Such overcomers would "go **no more** out," not losing their influence or jobs again as in leaving former apostate, Rev. 3:12b
 - c. God would give them reputations (a) of being men of God, (b) of God's being with their works outside of apostate groups (3:12c with Ez. 48:35; Rev. 21:2-3), (c) of God's starting new church groups through them (cf. He. 11:8-10 with 12c) and (d) give them world fame, Rev. 3:12e; Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.
 - d. This has been fulfilled by many, J. Gresham Machan being an example. Though having to leave Princeton Seminary for his defense of Christ's deity, his books richly influence us today!

Application: *If we come from a Church that denies the Bible's truth or truthfulness or Christ's Person or work, (1) we must trust in Christ for salvation from sin, Jn. 3:16. (2) Then, God calls us to stand for the truth, leaving the cost in doing so to Him, Rev. 3:7-13! (3) If the group stays apostate, we must leave it, Rv. 18:4!*

Lesson: *Those in church groups that adopted 20th century Liberal Theology are to trust God with their livelihoods, and separate from apostates out of true love for true brethren in Christ, Revelation 18:4! >*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(1) My wife's grandfather, a pastor for many years in the Midwest, attended a meeting before World War II where he heard the initial founder of what later became known as Dallas Theological Seminary give an address on, "Germany and the Bible."

Last summer while visiting Nadine's Dad in Indiana, I was privileged to read the old copy of her grandfather's Bible, and found there his notes on that significant address he heard by Griffith Thomas.

It that address, Dr. Griffith Thomas warned of Germany's departure from its true theology. Where Germany's great Martin Luther had taught "sola Scriptura," or the authority of Scripture alone, Dr. Thomas complained the nation had come to teach, "Read the Bible like any other book," or treat it like any non-divinely inspired book.

"Germany has not been reading the Bible -- it has read philosophy. People read everything about the Bible, but not the Bible itself. **Read the Bible for yourself**" had preached Dr. Thomas!

Because of such drift, Liberal Theology's German rationalism later spilled over into the rest of Europe, infecting French, English and even many American theologians. However, Conservatives in America like W. B. Riley, J. Gresham Machan and others took their stands for the inerrancy of Scripture and the deity of Jesus Christ.

As a result of World War II, Germany was divided for decades right at the place where Adolf Hitler with his errant rationalism had set up shop. I personally believe this was divine judgment for theological defection in the nation!

(2) Then, **today**, in reading Revelation 3:11 where Christ says, "Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," I see Christ's call for **us** at Nepaug Church. As in the days of Dr. Griffith Thomas before World War II, we can repeat his words that so effectively reach across the decades with complete applicability to our generation: "People read everything **about** the Bible, but **not** the **Bible itself**. **Read the Bible for yourself**."