

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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A Pure Mind is not a Pollyanna Mind

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (2 Peter 3:1-4, KJV 1900)

Do not overlook Peter's introduction to this chapter. ... *I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.* Our Pollyanna (Excessively or blindly optimistic) mindset would lead us to associate a pure mind with some "Sweetness and light" doctrine, but Peter wrote words of wisdom from God, so his words touch us where we need to be touched. As soon as Peter completes the "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" thought, he takes us immediately into a lesson on an errant doctrine that exemplifies the false prophet's teachings. All false prophets do not teach this doctrine, but they teach things that are equally contradictory to Scripture. More important to us, a spiritually pure mind does not follow the blind Pollyanna attitude. It holds so closely to God and to His truth from Scripture that it readily identifies the false prophet's errant ideas and rejects them. You can't be mindful of "...*the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour,*" and also embrace the false prophet's errors.

Peter firmly sets one foundation for our defense against the false prophet and his errors, Scripture alone, not Scripture plus ancient confessions, plus what respected men from the past believed, plus whatever else the false prophet thinks will carry weight with people. We should rightly study and respect ancient confessions and the writings of men from our historical faith to know what they believed and to learn how they dealt with the errors of their day, for we are liable to face similar errors in our day. However, no confession of faith ever rises to the stature or to the ultimate truth-test of Scripture. And most confessions worth our study will strongly disavow that their statements of faith are to be viewed in any way as equivalent to or even competitive with Scripture. Often the 1689 London Confession is viewed by Baptists of all stripe as a benchmark confession of acceptable beliefs. At times, men in controversy over various doctrines will quote this confession rather than affirming or defending their ideas from Scripture. It is therefore worthwhile to consider this paragraph quoted directly from the London 1689 Confession.

The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

Clearly, the framers of this confession had no desire or intention to make their confession supplant Scripture as the only valid judge of Biblical truth. Therefore, for a man subsequent to that confession to cite it as proof that his beliefs are true and/or orthodox is to misuse the confession. As with Scripture itself, confessions, this one included, are subjected to endless wresting and twisting to impose onto them the appearance of teaching many things that the men who compiled the confession did not likely know or believe at all. If we respect this confession, we will avoid making it a litmus test for truth and follow its counsel to take our spiritual questions to Scripture alone where our faith may be rightly and "...finally resolved."

David points out a favorite strategy of false teachers.

He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. (Psalms 10:10)

In feigned humility, the false teacher will often work hard to minimize the degree of error that he believes, often suggesting that his only difference from faithful believers is his choice of different words or phrases to state what he suggests is really the same truth. Peter stimulates our pure minds with the reality. What the false teacher believes and teaches is not at all the same as Biblical teaching and "...*the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*"

Scoffing at doctrines or ideas that he once embraced and taught, the false prophet will proudly tell you his new beliefs as if he had never changed his beliefs and as if his ideas were identical to the

“faith of the faithful” throughout history. Historically, you can find some respected writer or ancient confession that appears to support almost any errant idea.

What is the content of the error that Peter uses to illustrate and to exemplify a false prophet’s error?

...for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

From the Pollyanna perspective, this idea is not altogether bad or objectionable. If God is unchanging, what is wrong with believing that everything that He does and everything about His natural creation is also unchanging? What is wrong with the idea? Everything! God is God, above His creation, not part of it. Throughout Scripture, we read that this natural world in which we live will eventually wear out, run down, and change.

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. (Psalms 102:25-27)

We could prove the fundamental error of the false teaching that Peter mentions by many passages. Peter takes us through the simplest possible refutation of the false prophet’s error. In order to give his error an appearance of credibility, the false prophet ignores Scripture and obvious truth. Peter charges the false prophet with being “...willfully ignorant” of Biblical facts regarding God’s creation and this material universe. Biblical truth teaches that matter, the stuff that makes up the material world in which we live, is in fact constantly changing. You doubt it? Look in the mirror and then look at a photograph of your face from ten or twenty years ago. The mirror proves you wrong!

Carefully hidden in the envelop of the scoffer’s errant claim that everything always continues in nature unchanged, we discover a far more insidious error, a blatant denial of the Second Coming! The false prophet always strives to hide the depth of his error in an apparently credible wardrobe. Make it look mild and somewhat technical at best to give it an appearance of credibility. The believer who fails to stir up his pure mind with Scripture—and to test ideas by Scripture alone—will gullibly accept the false prophet’s claim of minor significance and swallow the ideas hungrily. The faithful believer, working to stir up his pure mind by Scripture, will detect the error and reject it.

When Paul confronted the Corinthian error regarding the resurrection, an outright denial of a literal bodily resurrection of the human body, did he at any point imply that belief or rejection of this doctrine was a minor issue, altogether optional for

the believer? Not at all. He confronted the Corinthian error directly.

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

To correlate Paul’s teaching on the resurrection with Peter’s expose of the false teacher’s error regarding the nature of this material world leads us directly and clearly to Peter’s teaching that follows in this chapter. The errant idea that nothing in nature changes, at least materially, rejects three major doctrinal truths of Scripture that Peter will expand for us.

1. **Creation.** Matter and the world in which we live are not eternal or timeless. It had a beginning. At one logical point, it didn’t exist, and, at another logical point, it did exist. Existence vs. non-existence; that is quite a significant difference, not affirmation of endless sameness.
2. **The flood.** God gives us a record in Scripture of a cataclysmic event that altered the face of this world, yet another refutation of endless sameness.
3. And finally and most importantly, **the Second Coming.** This error lies at the heart of Peter’s expose and rejection of the false prophet’s ideas. “Where is the promise of his coming?” The question itself denies the Second Coming, and Peter’s thorough teaching on the Second Coming in refuting and answering the false teaching confirms the point.

How smoothly the false prophet tries to move his followers from what he attempts to paint as a minor idea of material sameness to an outright denial of the Second Coming, the “Magnum Opus” of God’s eternal purpose for His beloved family. And this denial of the Second Coming and its inherent denial of a literal, material, bodily resurrection of our bodies is confronted and rejected in Scripture by both Paul and Peter. Neither man, both inspired writers, chosen by the Holy Spirit to write New Testament letters, viewed denial of the Second Coming and our bodily resurrection as a minor doctrinal technicality over which believers may comfortably disagree, as if the doctrine didn’t really have any major significance at all for God or for His children.

I pray that our merciful Savior will use these Scriptures to stir up our pure minds today.

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church
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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor