

1 Peter 1. 3-12. Caerphilly. 4 December 2013.

Our reading for this evening consists of the main opening section of the First Epistle of Peter ... which comprises chapter 1 verses 3 to 12 ...

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for you, who are being guarded by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In which you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, that the proving of your faith – much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is proved by fire -- may be found to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Whom, not having seen, you love, and, though now you do not see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy inexpressible and filled with glory, receiving the end (the outcome) of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning which salvation, prophets, who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, sought and searched diligently; inquiring what, or what manner of, time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these.

To whom it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to you they ministered those things, which have now been announced to you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

I hardly need to say that this is a very full passage, which, believe it or not, runs as one unbroken sentence in the Greek text. This sentence, and therefore our passage, could be said to focus, in order, on each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity ... on God the Father as the central figure in verses 3 to 5, on the Lord Jesus in verses 6 to 9, and on the Holy Spirit in verses 10 to 12.

I don't intend this evening to expound the whole of the passage. I want rather to consider with you especially verses 3 to 9, and to break this section down into three short parts ... verse 3, verses 4 and 5, and verses 6 to 9 ... and to do this under three simple headings.

I owe my first heading – that for verse 3 – to the title given to the cover of the latest issue of the Barnabas Fund magazine ... namely, 'Hope for the hopeless'.

My second heading – that which I have given to verses 4 and 5 – is not 'Hope for the hopeless', but 'Home for the homeless'.¹

And my third, and final, heading – that for verses 6 to 9 – is 'Joy for the joyless'.

First then, verse 3, '**Hope for the hopeless**'.

In verses 3 to 5, we discover that the Father has not only bestowed new life on us in the past – 'who, according to His great mercy, has begotten us again' – that He not only extends His great power to us in the present – to us 'who are being guarded by the power of God' – but that He holds out a bright hope to us for the future – for He 'has begotten us again to a living hope ... to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading'.

In *his* epistle, James associates our new birth with God's sovereign will,² and the apostle John in his first epistle associates our new birth with God's extraordinary love.³ Whereas Peter, I note, traces our new birth to God's 'great mercy' – to God's great feelings of pity for us in our wretched plight and miserable condition. The thought, though not the phraseology, is identical to that expressed by Paul in chapter 2 of his epistle to the Ephesians (Ephesus being one of the key churches in the province of Asia, to which in part, Peter addressed this letter): 'God, being rich in mercy ... even when we were dead in our trespasses, quickened us (made us alive) together with Christ'.⁴

And it is to God's 'much' mercy (literally) that we owe not only our new birth but our living hope. Although there is *some* truth in designating Peter as 'the apostle of hope',⁵ we find that the apostle Paul also speaks often of the hope of the Christian, describing it as both a 'good hope'⁶ and a 'blessed hope'.⁷ But to Peter the assured bright prospect set before the believer is rather 'a living hope'. And this is hardly surprising, for it is clear from the opening chapters of this letter – and elsewhere – that Peter was very fond of that word 'living' ... speaking as he does (i) of God as 'the living God',⁸ (ii) of the word of the Lord, not only as the 'abiding', but as 'the living ... word of God',⁹ (iii) of our Lord Jesus as a 'living stone',¹⁰ and (iv) of believers as being built up 'as living stones'.¹¹

A 'living hope'. Peter's words stand out in marked contrast to the despair and hopelessness which prevailed though much of the ancient world. We remember that, in his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul characterised the Gentile world of his day as 'having no hope'.¹²

We can take as an example one of the saddest papyrus letters that has come down to us from the following century.

The letter¹³ was written by a woman named Irene, offering her sympathy to bereaved friends. The letter runs : 'Irene ... to TA-ON-Ö-FREE¹⁴ and Philo ... good comfort. I am as sorry and weep over the departed one as I wept for Didymas (one of her own immediate family) ... And all things whatsoever were fitting, I have done ... But, nevertheless, against such things one can do nothing. Therefore comfort one another. Fare well'.

As the scholar who translated the letter points out, it is clear that Irene, a well-to-do lady, 'experiences the difficulty of those whose business it is to console and *who have no consolation to offer* ... Who could help feeling', he asks, 'for the helplessness of this woman ...?'

Yes, and helpless because hopeless.

And such hopelessness was by no means restricted to the ancient world. I recently came across a quote attributed to Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish author and historian of the 19th century; '... he who has hope, has everything'.¹⁵

And to think that the man who said that, in writing to a friend, should pen the words, 'you will think me far gone - much bankrupt in hope and heart - and indeed I am. Without hope. A gloomily serious, silent and sad old man ... in mute dialogue with death, judgment and eternity'.¹⁶

Grim words! And which of us can fail to associate Mr Carlyle's expression 'without hope' with that which I quoted just now from the apostle Paul, when characterising the Gentile world of *his* day, 'having no hope'.

But over against the hopelessness of a 2nd century Irene and a 19th century Thomas Carlyle, in splendid contrast, Peter can write, through Silvanus,¹⁷ of 'a living *hope*'.

And that because, as has been well said, 'Where there is Christ there is hope'.¹⁸

How blessed we are to have such a hope! And not only for ourselves, but for all our loved ones who are believers. So that, when a fellow Christian is taken to be with Christ, although we rightly grieve over our loss (bringing with it the inevitable pain of separation),¹⁹ we do not grieve over any loss sustained by the one who has fallen asleep – far from it!²⁰ Yes, we sorrow and grieve, but not as 'the rest who have no hope'.²¹

And, as Peter observes, this 'living hope' is extremely well grounded. For the foundation of the Christian's hope lies in 'the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead' – to the reality of which Peter himself was a personal witness – as he constantly affirmed in his preaching as recorded in the Book of Acts.²²

And our Lord's resurrection served not only as God's vindication of our Lord's Sonship,²³ as God's endorsement of all our Lord's claims and actions,²⁴ and as God's confirmation of our Lord's role as the appointed universal judge of all mankind,²⁵ but also as God's pledge that all who belong to the Lord Jesus will also be raised to share His glory.²⁶

'The king of terrors' (as Job's friend Bildad once personified death²⁷) has been well and truly toppled and dethroned by the Risen Lord!²⁸ And through Him, the Living Lord, God 'gives us the victory' – a 'living hope' indeed. 'Thanks be to God!'²⁹

Moving on from verse 3 to verses 4 and 5, we discover, not now 'Hope for the hopeless', but '**Home for the homeless**'.

And what a home this is! 'An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading'.

Now this *is* something! For, not only in God's great mercy are we begotten again, but our new birth brings with it a legacy! That which God said He wanted to do for Israel in the days of Jeremiah, 'I would put you among the children, and give you a beautiful inheritance',³⁰ that He has done for us. As the apostle Paul expressed it in Romans 8, 'we are children of God, and if children, then heirs'.³¹

But my suggested heading for verses 4 and 5 speaks of a 'Home for the homeless'. So let's think for a moment or two about that closing word, 'homeless'. For that word sums up very accurately the condition in which many, if not all, of Peter's readers found themselves. In his opening verse, he had addressed them as 'the elect (as 'the choice') sojourners – the choice exiles ('refugees' if you like) of the dispersion scattered throughout the five Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.³²

The intended recipients of his letter were now temporary residents only. And this in more senses than one. For it is, he says, 'as strangers and sojourners', that he exhorts them in the next chapter 'to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul'.³³ In effect, the apostle was reminding them that, in the words of a popular spiritual song of the last century,³⁴ 'This world is not my home, I'm just a passin' through'.

Yes, in the spiritual sense, they were 'sojourners'. An early example of Christian apologetics,³⁵ the so-called 'Epistle to Diognetus', written sometime in the second century, captured well the spirit of Peter's words. Concerning Christians, it says, 'They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign ... Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven'.³⁶ How true.

But the readers of Peter's letter were, I say, sojourners in more senses than one. For these believers were also, literally, displaced people. Factually, they were sojourners, and factually they were scattered.

Ah but, Peter assures them, God has provided a 'Home for the homeless' – 'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading'.

It is a fact that, proportionately, there are more Old Testament quotations and allusions in First Peter than in any other book of the New Testament ... 'proportionately' please note.

And this word 'inheritance' was a word very rich in associations for anyone as familiar with the Old Testament as Peter's readers undoubtedly were – and that whether his readers were predominantly Jewish or not!

For, throughout the Old Testament, the 'inheritance' given to God's people was almost exclusively said to be 'the land' – the so-called Promised Land ... that which, in part at least, had once belonged to the nations of Canaan.

No less than seven times, Moses refers in the Book of Deuteronomy alone to 'the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance'.³⁷ Much later, King Solomon prayed to God on behalf of 'your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance'.³⁸

Oh no, there can be no doubt that the very mention of an 'inheritance' would have directed the minds of Peter's readers to the 'inheritance' once given to – and long enjoyed by – the nation of Israel. But, as Peter makes clear, the inheritance now enjoyed by Christians – whether of Jewish or Gentile descent – was very different ... not least because their 'inheritance' is 'reserved' ('laid up in safe custody', as the word implies) in heaven – far beyond the reach of increasing pressure from the Roman state, from imprisonment, from wild beasts in the arena – or, indeed, from any earthly trial or suffering.³⁹

There was no danger that their 'adversary the devil'⁴⁰ could ever rob them of this heavenly paradise,⁴¹ as once he had robbed the first man and woman of their earthly paradise.⁴² The heavenly inheritance of the Christian is far outside his reach and range!

In his second epistle, Peter writes of people and things which are 'reserved' ... but there, in each case, 'reserved' for God's judgement ... whether the angels who sinned,⁴³ unrighteous men,⁴⁴ ungodly false teachers,⁴⁵ or the existing heavens and earth.⁴⁶

But here he speaks of 'an inheritance ... reserved', and that, he says, 'in heaven' for his readers. But their inheritance is distinguished from that once enjoyed by the nation of Israel, not only in that it, unlike Israel's, is heavenly in its character, but because, unlike Israel's, he insists, it is 'incorruptible and undefiled and unfading'.

And every word is loaded. For Israel's inheritance – the Promised Land – soon proved to be none of these things.

Israel's earthly inheritance was certainly not 'incorruptible'. One of the meanings of the word translated 'corrupt' in the Greek Old Testament is that of 'laying waste', of 'ravaging', a land. This is the word used, for instance, of David's army-commander Joab when it is said that he 'led out the army and ravaged the country of the Ammonites',⁴⁷ and used, in Isaiah 24, of the inhabited world being 'laid waste', being 'devastated', by God's judgement.⁴⁸

In secular Greek also the word described any area which had been ravaged by an invading army. And many times Israel's land-inheritance had experienced just this 'corruption' – being trampled, successively, by the invading armies of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, and, more recently, the Romans.

But, if Israel's Promised Land had not proved 'incorruptible', neither had it long remained 'undefiled'.

Before ever Israel conquered and possessed the land, the Lord told them that the land had already been defiled by the immorality and idolatry of the Canaanites.⁴⁹ And the last three books of Moses sounded loud warnings to

the nation against them 'defiling' that which, ultimately, was God's land.⁵⁰ And yet, in spite of the Lord's repeated warnings, Israel defiled the land by their idolatry, bloodshed, and sexual vices. The Lord had to reproach them, for example, through the prophet Jeremiah, 'I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my land',⁵¹ adding later, 'they have defiled my land with their dead detestable idols'.⁵²

But the land of Canaan was not only ravaged ('corrupted') by foreign invaders, and polluted ('defiled') by its own inhabitants. Many times the beauty of the land 'faded' away⁵³ – blasted and blighted by warfare and pestilence, and parched by drought, each usually as the expression of divine chastisement on account of Israel's own sins.⁵⁴

We may well thank God this evening that the 'inheritance reserved in heaven' for us is 'incorruptible and undefiled and unfading'.

And Peter would have us know that, not only is the inheritance kept for us, but we are kept for the inheritance ... 'guarded by the power of God'. And what a tremendous encouragement that is. For it would be small comfort indeed to know that nothing can corrupt, defile or mar our heavenly inheritance if we also knew that we could lose it at last.

As is often pointed out, the word translated 'guarded' is mainly (although not always) employed in a military context; used, for example, by the apostle Paul at the close of 2 Corinthians 11, when he recalled how 'in Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city'⁵⁵ – guarded it with a garrison, that is.

We can probably say, therefore, that as a garrison stands guard around a city to protect it, so the almighty power of God stands guard to protect the believer, with 'faith' being the instrument by means of which we grasp and avail ourselves of that power.

Nor is God's preserving power available for only a limited time. It will continue until the believer enjoys the full and final instalment of his or her salvation – deliverance from the very presence and possibility of sin.⁵⁶ And truly, as far as that future aspect of our salvation is concerned, 'Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed'.⁵⁷

And this full enjoyment of our salvation – our glorification, if you like – Peter insists, is 'ready to be revealed in the last time'. In other words, every preparation for the final unveiling of our salvation is already finalised. What a consoling thought to those having to endure sufferings – whether in Peter's day or ours – 'it won't be for much longer'.

Which brings me to the section from verse 6 to verse 9, and to our third heading for this evening – no longer 'hope for the hopeless', or 'home for the homeless', but what I have called, '**joy for the joyless**'.

You should have no problem identifying where that word 'joy' comes from, the word 'rejoice' occurring twice in our short section.⁵⁸ As to the 'joyless', I confess this rests on less firm ground – on Peter's reference to 'being grieved' in verse 6; 'if necessary, you have been grieved ('have been put to grief') by various trials' ... the word 'grief' pointing, not to any form of physical pain, but to mental distress ... that which affects the spirit rather than the body, and which is often far more difficult to bear.

Clearly, the source of the mental anguish suffered by his readers lay in the different forms of persecution which they were then having to endure. And, to me, Peter's acknowledgment that their trials were not only 'fiery',⁵⁹ but 'various'⁶⁰ – were 'manifold' – were 'of many kinds' – the word originally carrying the meaning 'many-coloured' – that this acknowledgment goes no small way to justifying my claim that, given the severity of their ordeal, if left to their own resources, these early Christians would have had every reason to be 'joyless'.

And so, verse 6 ... 'In which you *rejoice*, though now ... you have been grieved by various trials'. As I say, 'Joy for the joyless'.⁶¹

The 'in which' refers back – not only to the future final instalment of salvation mentioned at the close of verse 5,⁶² but to the whole range of spiritual blessings set out from the beginning of verse 3.

Peter uses here one of several words translated 'rejoice' in the New Testament – this word carrying the underlying thought 'to rejoice greatly', 'to rejoice with exultation'.

Certainly Peter's hearers had no reason to rejoice greatly in their *earthly circumstances* – either in the present or in the foreseeable future. But they did have every reason to rejoice greatly in their present and future *spiritual blessings* which Peter has summarised in the past few verses.

'In which you rejoice, though now ... you have been grieved by various trials'. It is at least possible that Peter had in mind the occasion in the Upper Room, when the Lord Jesus, speaking in the context of His imminent

departure, forewarned His disciples, 'you will weep and lament ... you will be grieved' (the word which Peter uses here), but then He (the Lord Jesus) went on to promise them, 'your grief will be turned to joy'⁶³ – which it certainly was later for Peter and the others when they saw the Risen Lord.⁶⁴

This is the first time that Peter has mentioned the trials of his readers.⁶⁵ He is careful, that is, to hold back any reference to the believer's trials and troubles until he has first spoken of the believer's hope and eternal inheritance. For only then can the hardships and troubles of life be seen in proper proportion ... a point firmly registered by Paul in Romans 8, 'the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us'.⁶⁶

Verses 6 and 7 are largely concerned with trials which the scattered believers then faced. And to me, Peter's comments about their trials can be summed up under four words: (i) Variety; (ii) Brevity; (iii) Necessity; and (iv) Utility.

First, the variety of their trials ... 'you have been grieved', he says, 'by *various* trials'. It is clear from several passages in this letter that hostility and suspicion were mounting against Christians, not only in Rome itself, but throughout the empire. Already they were not only being reviled and abused for their faith and their distinctive lifestyle, but some of them at least were suffering physically.⁶⁷ And what is more, Peter – and they – could see the storm clouds gathering – that it was, as he said in chapter 4, 'time for judgement to begin at the house (or 'household') of God'.⁶⁸ Oh yes, the trials facing his readers came in all shapes and sizes!

And I note that the word translated 'various' (or 'manifold') here occurs again in chapter 4, verse 10 – where Peter speaks of the 'varied (or 'manifold') grace of God'. Although it is certainly not a point being made by Peter, I think it fair to say, in the light of these two texts, that God is well able to match these 'multi-coloured' trials with His 'multi-coloured' grace. In Annie Johnson Flint's well-known words ...

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labours increase;
To added affliction He addeth His mercy;
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

Although, with my eye on the apostle's expression in chapter 4, I suspect he would probably have preferred that last line to read, 'To multiplied trials, His multiplied *grace*'!

Second, having acknowledged the variety of his readers' trials, Peter points them to the brevity of those trials.

'Though now *for a little while* ... you have been grieved by various trials' ... 'for a little while' stressing that, against the backdrop of an unfading inheritance, the hardships of this present life don't last that long. It has been well said that, 'As difficult as some pages of our life may be, nothing that occurs to us on earth falls into the category of "the final chapter"'⁶⁹ – a chapter which, as we know, goes on for ever, and where every page is better than the one before.⁷⁰ As the apostle Paul once expressed it, 'our light affliction, which is but *for a moment*, works for us an *eternal* weight of glory beyond all comparison'.⁷¹

Thirdly, Peter assures his readers that their trials are not only relatively short-lived, but they are 'necessary'.

'Though now for a little while, *if necessary* ('if need be', as the King James Version renders the expression), you have been grieved by various trials' ... judged necessary, that is, of course, by God. And it is, I suggest, a witness to our Father's great love for us that, when our trials can't be avoided, because He perceives them to be 'necessary' for our good ('for our profit', as the writer to the Hebrews would say⁷²), He (our Father) is willing Himself to bear the pain of inflicting them.

And then, having acknowledged the variety of his readers' trials, and having directed his readers to both the brevity and the necessity of those trials, he explains to them the utility (the usefulness) of their trials – that, far from their trials being meaningless, they serve a most beneficial purpose ... 'that the proving of your faith (referring probably to a proven faith ... to the genuine element of your faith ... that which has been tried and tested)', being 'much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is proved by fire -- may be found to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ'.

True faith, Peter implies, is tested and proved by trials, much as gold is tested and proved by fire.

As we know, Job passed through many painful trials, and we recall his great statement of faith, 'When He (God) has tried me, I shall come out as gold'.⁷³

I guess that Job would have gladly subscribed to the sentiments expressed in the fourth verse of the great 18th century hymn, 'How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord' ...

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.⁷⁴

You might just remember that I once had occasion to quote here Warren Wiersbe's statement that 'When God puts His children into the furnace, He keeps His hand on the thermostat and His eye on the thermometer'.⁷⁵ How slow we are to learn that ... God knows how long and He knows how much.

And a faith which is tried and tested is, Peter insists, of infinitely greater value than any amount of gold – even after that gold has been purified in the refiner's fire. Small wonder then that the apostle was not at all disturbed when he had to tell the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate of Jerusalem, 'silver and gold have I none'.⁷⁶

And such proven faith, Peter says, will 'be found to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ – obtaining perhaps a word of praise,⁷⁷ a crown of glory,⁷⁸ and a place of honour.⁷⁹

In verses 8 and 9, the apostle turns our attention from the proving of our faith to the object of our faith ... to the person of our Lord Jesus⁸⁰ ... and to the end – to the outcome – of our faith ... to the blessing of our salvation ... 'Whom (Jesus Christ, whose revelation – whose unveiling – we await), not having seen, you love, and, though now you do not see Him, you *believe* in Him and rejoice with joy inexpressible and filled with glory, receiving the end (the end-product, the final result) of your *faith*, the salvation of your souls.

And, although it is not our subject for this evening, according to verses 10 to 12 this salvation really *is* something to write home about.

In these verses, Peter stresses the magnificence and grandeur of our salvation by assuring us that it is the subject (i) of prophetic enquiry; (ii) of evangelical testimony; and (iii) of angelic curiosity.

When prophets scanned the horizon to learn more about their Spirit-inspired messages, they learned that the benefits of these messages were reserved for a future age – for ours! And in the power of the same Spirit, but having now been sent from heaven (on the Day of Pentecost, as Peter had personally witnessed) ... in the power of the same Spirit, the preachers of the gospel had proclaimed that same salvation. But higher intelligences than either prophets or evangelists are, Peter says, deeply interested in our salvation. So, if prophets scratched their heads to fix its timing, and if evangelists preached their hearts out to make it known, angels craned their necks to peer into its details, while ever remaining, of course, no more than fascinated spectators.

What a truly great salvation⁸¹ we enjoy! 'Hope for the hopeless', 'Home for the homeless' and 'Joy for the joyless'.

Small wonder that the apostle began his long and brim-full sentence with the great outburst of praise of verse 3 ... 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...'

Footnotes

¹ Compare, 'Help for the helpless'

² 'Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth', James 1. 18.

³ 1 John 3. 1.

⁴ Eph. 2. 4-5.

⁵ 1 Pet. 1. 3, 13, 21; 3. 15.

⁶ 2 Thess. 2. 16.

⁷ Tit. 2. 13.

⁸ Matt. 16. 16.

⁹ 1 Pet. 1. 23.

¹⁰ 1 Pet. 2. 4.

¹¹ 1 Pet. 2. 5.

¹² Eph. 2. 12.

¹³ The full text of the letter reads, 'Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good comfort. I am as sorry and weep over the departed one as I wept for Didymas. And all things whatsoever were fitting, I have done, and all mine, Epaphroditus and Thermouthion and Philion and Apollonius and Plantas. But, nevertheless, against such things one can do nothing. Therefore comfort one another. Fare well. 28 October'. Translation : Adolf Diesmann, 'Light from the Ancient East', page 176. Papyrus number P.CtYBR inv. 32 (Also known as P.Oxy [Oxyrhynchus]. 115.) in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Papyrus Collection, Yale University.

¹⁴ 'to Taonnophris'.

¹⁵ See, for example, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/thomascarl118220.html>

¹⁶ Written to Ralph Waldo Emerson on 27 January 1867, from Menton, on the French Riviera. See ...

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=TWzKfw76IRUC&pg=PT464&lpg=PT464&dq=%22A+gloomily+serious,+silen+t+and+sad+old+man%22&source=bl&ots=sE8Cz62h5P&sig=tEgroYfaV6R73LsDNSC6NGggE3w&hl=en&sa=X&ei=gatrUrWBMZOYhQe32oCAAw&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22A%20gloomily%20serious%2C%20silent%20and%20sad%20old%20man%22&f=false>

¹⁷ 1 Pet. 5. 12.

¹⁸ Warren Wiersbe, 'Be Hopeful', page 7.

¹⁹ Phil. 2. 27; cf. John 11. 33-35.

²⁰ 'Far better', Phil. 1. 23.

²¹ 1 Thess. 4. 13.

²² Acts 2. 32; 3. 15; 5. 32; 10. 41; cf. Acts 4. 33.

²³ Rom. 1. 4.

²⁴ Matt. 12. 38-40; John 2. 18-19.

²⁵ Acts 17. 31.

²⁶ Rom. 8. 11; 2 Cor. 4. 14.

²⁷ Job 18. 14.

²⁸ Rom. 6. 9.

²⁹ 1 Cor. 15. 57.

³⁰ Jer. 3. 19.

³¹ Rom. 8. 16-17

³² We read of the patriarch Abraham that he 'sojourned'. 'By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned (synonym of 1 Pet.) in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise', Heb. 11. 8-9. See Gen. 17. 8. Hence Abraham 'sojourned in Gerar', Gen. 20. 1, and in the land of the Philistines, Gen. 21. 34. He confessed himself to be 'a stranger and a sojourner' with Heth, Gen. 23. 4. The Lord said "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: when they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and sojourners in it", Ps. 105. 116 RV.

³³ 1 Pet. 2. 11.

³⁴ Published 1946 ... http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=DeRLL3lbp-cC&pg=PT44&lpg=PT44&dq=This+world+is+not+my+home,+I'm+just+a+passing'+through+date+written&source=bl&ots=PWTU5TsPj8&sig=IQvNkh-j6nW8F3IXVg01NlBjH_4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=GT9sUsSrDI-U0QWAwYCQCg&ved=0CEMQ6AEwBDgK#v=onepage&q=This%20world%20is%20not%20my%20home%2C%20I'm%20just%20a%20passing'%20through%20date%20written&f=false.

³⁵ 'It gives a brief but spirited and effective summary of the grounds on which the Christians had abandoned Paganism and Judaism: this is followed by a description of the leading features in the character and personal conduct of the Christians of that period; and then all that is peculiar in their character and conduct is traced to the influence of the doctrines which they had been led upon God's authority to believe'.

<http://www.ecclesia.org/truth/diognetus.html>

³⁶ Compare 'The church of God that sojourns at Rome to the church of God which sojourns at Corinth', *The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, and 'Polycarp and the elders with him to the church of God which sojourns at Philippi', *The Epistle of Polycarp*.

³⁷ Deut. 4. 21; 15. 4; 19. 10; 21. 23; 24. 4; 25. 19; 26. 1; cf. Num. 34. 2; Deut. 4. 38.

³⁸ 1 Kings 8. 36.

³⁹ See Luke 12. 4. A poem was distributed at the memorial service of a Christian who died of cancer. The poem was entitled 'Cancer is so limited' and it ran :

It cannot cripple love,
It cannot shatter hope,
It cannot corrode faith,
It cannot eat away peace,
It cannot destroy confidence,
It cannot kill friendship,
It cannot shut out memories,
It cannot silence courage,
It cannot invade the soul,
It cannot reduce eternal life,
It cannot quench the Spirit,

It cannot lessen the power of the resurrection.

⁴⁰ 1 Pet. 5. 8.

⁴¹ Rev. 2. 7.

⁴² Compare Gen. 2. 8-10 (where the Septuagint uses the word 'paradise' for 'garden') with Rev. 22. 4

⁴³ 2 Pet. 2. 4.

⁴⁴ 2 Pet. 2. 9.

⁴⁵ 2 Pet. 2. 17; cf. v. 1.

⁴⁶ 2 Pet. 3. 7.

⁴⁷ 1 Chron. 20. 1.

⁴⁸ 'The earth shall be completely laid waste, and the earth shall be utterly spoiled ... the earth mourns, and the inhabited world is laid waste', Isa. 24. 3-4 LXX.

⁴⁹ Lev. 18. 24-27

⁵⁰ Lev. 18. 26-28; Num. 35. 33-34; Deut. 21. 23.

⁵¹ Jer. 2. 7. Compare, 'They poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was defiled with blood', Psalms 106. 38; 'You have defiled the land with your vile prostitution'. Jer. 3. 2; 'Because she took her prostitution lightly, she defiled the land, committing adultery with stone and tree', Jer. 3. 9; 'Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds ... so I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it', Ezek. 36. 17-18.

⁵² Jer. 16. 18.

⁵³ The verb form of the word that Peter uses (without its prefix) is found in the LXX of Job 15. 30 and 24. 24 to describe the withering of flowers and herbs. Compare James 1. 11, where the verb form is used of the rich man, in parallel to the fading grass and its flower.

⁵⁴ 'Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? ... Because they have forsaken my law', Jer. 9. 12; 'How long will the land mourn and the grass of every field wither? For the evil of those who dwell in it', Jer. 12. 4; 'The land is full of adulterers; because of the curse the land mourns, and the pastures of the wilderness are dried up', Jer. 23. 10.

⁵⁵ 2 Cor. 11. 32.

⁵⁶ Cf. Heb. 9. 28. 1 Thess. 5. 8.

⁵⁷ Rom. 13. 11.

⁵⁸ 1 Pet. 1. 6, 8.

⁵⁹ 1 Pet. 4. 12.

⁶⁰ Cf. James 1. 2.

⁶¹ Or perhaps 'gladness for sadness'.

⁶² It cannot refer to 'salvation', which is feminine, but 'wherein' is either masculine or neuter.

⁶³ John 16. 20.

⁶⁴ 'He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord', John 20. 20.

⁶⁵ Although these were no doubt at the forefront of *their* minds.

⁶⁶ Rom. 8. 18.

⁶⁷ 1 Pet. 2. 19-20; 3. 14, 17; 4. 15, 19; 5. 9.

⁶⁸ 1 Pet. 4. 17.

⁶⁹ Chuck Swindoll, 'Hope Again', page 14.

⁷⁰ I am indebted to Aslan's words in chapter 16 of 'The Last Battle', the last book in the Narnia Chronicles ... "There was a real railway accident," said Aslan softly. "Your father and mother and all of you are -- as you used to call it in the Shadow-Lands -- dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning. And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they

were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read: *which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before*’.

⁷¹ 2 Cor. 4. 17.

⁷² Heb. 12. 10.

⁷³ Job 23. 10.

⁷⁴ See <http://www.historichymns.com/Devotionals/BensonDevotion4.aspx>

⁷⁵ 'Be Encouraged', page 16.

⁷⁶ Acts 3. 6.

⁷⁷ 1 Cor. 4. 5.

⁷⁸ 1 Pet. 5. 4.

⁷⁹ John 12. 26.

⁸⁰ “To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2. 4, 5). It is around ***the person of a living Christ*** then, that God’s assembly is gathered. It is not round a doctrine, however true; nor round an ordinance, however important; but round a living, divine Person. This is a great cardinal and vital point which must be distinctly seized, tenaciously held, and faithfully and constantly avowed and carried out. “To whom coming.” It is not said “To which coming.” We do not come to a thing, but to a Person. ‘The Assembly of God’, Miscellaneous Writings of C. H. Mackintosh, volume III.

⁸¹ Heb. 2. 3.