

An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. 1 Pet. 1: 4

Yes, it is an inheritance. It is a free gift, and yet we have a right to it. We do not ask for it--we were born into its blessed privilege. The child that lies in yonder cradle, over which the coronet is emblazoned, may claim his broad ancestral estates simply by right of birth: and it is on that tenure that the saints hold heaven. By God's great mercy we have been begotten again.

Oh, blessed heritage! Incorruptible! The gnawing tooth of decay cannot injure it. Moth and rust cannot consume, nor thieves break through to steal. No spendthrift hand can scatter or over-spend its treasures. Undefiled! Not a stain in its pure robes; not a freckle on its leaves; not a taint of miasma on its atmosphere. Into the city entereth nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. That fadeth not away! To use the Greek word, it is amaranthine. Some of the fairest hopes that ever blessed human vision; the most delightful friendships; the most perfect dreams of delight, have faded and withered before our eyes. That never can.

IT IS KEPT FOR US, and we are kept for it. It is reserved in heaven for you.

*I have a heritage of joy,
That yet I must not see;
The hand that bled to make it mine,
Is keeping it for me.*

WHO BY THE POWER OF GOD ARE GUARDED THROUGH FAITH. The idea is that we are being brought through an enemy's country under a strong escort--as the women and children from Lucknow, between the double line of English soldiers, till they were safe from the onset of the Sepoys. We are not in heaven yet; but we are as safe as if we were.

不能朽壞、不能玷污、不能衰殘、為你們存留在天上的基業。 彼前一4

是的，這是一份基業。一份白白的禮物，我們有權利擁有這基業。我們生來就有這蒙福的特權，我們沒有要求這特權。這個孩子躺在那邊搖籃裡，搖籃上面有小王冠作裝飾，他可以憑著出生的權利，要求他祖先遼闊的地業：根據這權利，聖徒擁有天上的基業。靠神的大憐憫，我們已經重生了。

啊，有福的基業！**不能朽壞**！「腐敗」無法啃噬這基業。蟲子和鏽不能消耗這基業，賊也不能挖窟窿來偷(太六20)。沒有揮金如土的人能揮霍或散盡這基業的財寶。**不能玷污**！這基業純潔的衣袍上沒有一點污跡；這基業的葉子上沒有一個斑點；四周的環境沒有一絲瘴氣。「凡不潔淨的，並那行可憎與虛謊之事的，總不得進那城」。(啟廿一27) **不能衰殘**！用一個希臘詞來說，就是永不凋殘的。某些最美麗的希望曾使人有幸福的遠景、最令人愉悅的友情、最令人喜悅完美的夢想，都在我們眼前漸漸褪色枯萎。但這份產業永不衰殘。

這基業為我們存留，我們也為這基業而存活。這基業在天上為你保留著。

我有一喜樂的基業，
我還不能看見它；
那流血的手使這基業成為我的，
祂為我保管這基業。

因信蒙神能力保守的人(5節)。我們被強大的衛隊護衛穿過敵人領土的概念，好像來自勒克瑙地區[印度北方城市，北方邦首府。]的婦女和兒童，被夾在英國士兵雙列的隊伍中，直到他們安全離開印度士兵的攻擊。我們還沒有到天上，但我們在地上好像從前那樣安全。

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. 1 Pet. 2: 24

HE CAME INTO THE SINNER'S WORLD. Himself sinless, He took our nature. Accustomed to the pure atmosphere of his own bright home, He allowed his ears and eyes to be assailed by sounds and sights beneath which they must have smarted. His blessed feet trod among the dust of death, the mounds of graves, and the traps that men laid to catch Him. And all for love of us.

HE LIVED THE SINNER'S LIFE. Not a sinner's life, but the ordinary life of men. He wrought in the carpenter's shed; attended wedding festivals, and heartrending funerals; ate, and drank, and slept. He sailed in the boat with his fisher-friends; sat wearied at the well-head; and was hungry with the sharp morning air.

HE SYMPATHIZED WITH THE SINNER'S GRIEFS. In their affliction He was afflicted. He often groaned, and sighed, and wept. When leprosy with its sores, bereavement with its heartrending loneliness, dumbness and deafness, and devil-possession, came beneath his notice, they elicited the profoundest response from his sympathetic heart.

HE DIED THE SINNER'S DEATH. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was treated as the scapegoat, the leper, the sin-offering of the human family. The iniquities of us all met in Him, as the dark waters of the streets pour into one whirling pool. He stood as our substitute, sacrifice, and satisfaction: the guilt, and curse, and penalty of a broken law borne and exhausted in his suffering nature.

HE IS PREPARING THE SINNER'S HOME. "I go to prepare a place for you"; and no mother was ever more intent on preparing his bedroom for her sailor-boy on his return, than Jesus on preparing heaven.

他被掛在木頭上，親身擔當了我們的罪。 彼前二24

祂來到罪人的世界。祂雖然沒有罪，卻取了我們的性情。祂雖然習慣光明天家純淨的氣氛，卻容許祂耳朵所聽到的聲音和眼睛所看見的場景，使祂傷痛受攪擾。祂尊貴的腳在死亡的塵土墳堆，以及世人為捉捕祂而設下的網羅中間行走。祂所做的一切，全是為愛我們。

祂度過罪人的一生。不是罪人的生涯，而是平凡人的生涯。祂在木匠的小屋裡工作；參加婚禮宴會，和令人心碎的葬禮；祂吃飯、喝水、睡覺。祂與漁夫朋友們一起乘船航行；走路困乏，坐在井旁休息(約四6)；在早晨寒冷的空氣中覺得飢餓(太廿一18)。

祂同情罪人的悲傷。祂感受罪人的痛苦。祂常常呻吟、嘆息、流淚。當痲瘋病人的疼痛，喪失親友的人心碎孤獨，聾啞的人，污鬼附身的人，來到祂面前的時候，這些痛苦從祂憐憫的心腸引出最深的回應。

祂經歷罪人的死亡。祂為我們的過犯受害(賽五十三5)。祂被當作替罪的羔羊，被世人摒棄，為整個人類作贖罪祭。我們的罪孽都歸到祂身上，如同街道的污水都匯入一個旋轉的水池。祂是我們的代替、犧牲與賠償：罪疚、詛咒、以及因違背律法應受的刑罰，都被祂的受死所承擔並清償了。

祂正為罪人預備地方。「我去原是為你們預備地方去。(約十四2)」；沒有一位母親，為她出海即將歸來的兒子預備臥室的專心一意，能比擬耶穌為屬祂之人預備天上住處的用心。

Fear not their fear, neither be troubled. 1 Pet. 3:14 (R.V.)

It was a time of very real and fiery trial when Peter wrote these words. Persecution was already beginning with the House of God. The first mutterings of the awful storm which was to break in Nero's terrible atrocities were making themselves heard throughout the Roman world. The intention of this Epistle, therefore, was to encourage these scattered saints, that they might not be overwhelmed. Some who read these words may need similar comfort.

Remember, beloved fellow-believers, that Jesus has suffered; your Lord and Master has trodden these thorns before you. See, they are flecked with his blood. Would you not desire to be fellow-partaker with Him in his sorrow, that you may share his glory? It is only in suffering that we can properly identify ourselves with the great anguish of the world, or learn to comfort or pray for others. And, probably, none know the innermost tenderness and companionship of Jesus like those who daily fill up that which is behind of his sufferings. Besides, their fear is much worse in anticipation than in actual experience. Probably God entirely delivers his martyrs from those physical tortures which to onlookers might seem unbearable.

This has been the perpetual testimony of the Armenian refugees. Miss Codrington's story of her experiences in China, and Dr. Baedeker's statement of what he has learnt in his wide experience amid the refugees and imprisoned saints in all parts of Europe support and confirm the same conclusion. Sanctify Jesus Christ in your heart as Lord and King. Maintain a good conscience; do not be turned aside for fear of man; and when you come to suffer, you will find the fire has lost its sting.

不要怕人的威嚇，也不要驚慌。 彼前三14

彼得寫這些話語時，正是試煉非常真實且熾熱的時候。逼迫已經在神的家開始。引發尼祿皇帝殘酷暴行之風暴最初低沉風聲，已傳遍羅馬帝國。所以這卷書信的用意，乃在鼓勵這些分散的聖徒，使他們不至被嚇倒。讀到這話語的某些人，可能正需要同樣的安慰。

親愛的信徒們，切記耶穌已經受過苦；在你們面前的荊棘，你們的主已經踩過。看啊，荊棘上還沾著祂的血跡。難道你不願意有分於祂的憂傷，使你可以同享祂的榮耀嗎？只有在受苦中，我們才能完全認同世人至深的苦楚，並學習去安慰他人，為他人禱告。也許沒有人能夠像那些每日充滿耶穌受苦背後之心情的人那樣，明白耶穌內心深處的溫柔和友誼。此外，在等待時的恐懼，比實際經歷迫害更可怕。神也許全然拯救殉道者脫離身體上的折磨，這些折磨在那些旁觀者看來，是無法忍受的。

這曾經是阿美尼亞難民永久的見證。克君頓小姐在中國經歷的故事，巴德克醫生在歐洲各地，廣泛與難民和被囚禁的聖徒相處的描述，都支持並證實同樣的結論。你要心中尊耶穌基督為聖，以祂為主為王。存著無虧的良心(15-16節)；不要因對人的懼怕而偏離正道；當你受苦時，你將發現烈火已失去它的殺傷力。

Arm yourselves with the same mind. 1 Pet. 4: 1

The Church was redeemed in a baptism of pain: for her members to suffer, and by suffering to overcome the world, is to fulfil the forecast which Jesus gave when He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Arm yourselves with this mind; put on this thought, this resolution, this purpose; determine that suffering at least shall never daunt you.

THE REASON FOR DONNING THIS ARMOUR. Here we have no continuing city. In the death of Jesus we suffered in the flesh, and ceased from our connection with the world which cast Him out: and, as suffering is meted out to us, we become increasingly convinced that we can have no fellowship with its sins. The pain which the world allots to the followers of Jesus widens the chasm between them and it, pulls down the old nests in which their affections once built, and makes them more determined than ever to follow their Lord.

THE CHOICE WHICH THIS ARMOUR INVOLVES. No more the lusts of men, but the will of God. Never again to work the desire of the Gentiles, but to live according to God. Not henceforth to bow before the bondage of evil habit, but with erect and upright gaze to behold the face of Christ--such is the choice. Will you not now make it at this solemn moment, as you stand on this watershed between the two continents--here of the morning, there of the midnight? Follow the King, cost what it may.

THE NATURE OF THE ARMOUR. It is the armour of Light: in which Christ's nature was encased, and on which all the shafts of man and devil broke into splinters. No weapon that was ever manufactured can prevail against its heavenly temper.

你們也當用這樣的心思武裝自己。 彼前四1(直譯)

教會在「痛苦」的考驗(baptism)中被救贖：教會的肢體受苦，並藉著受苦勝過世界，這要應驗耶穌所預告的：「在世上你們有苦難。但你們可以放心，我已經勝了世界。(約十六33)」你們當用這樣的心思武裝自己；穿上這樣的思想、決心、與目標；你決定，至少不讓苦難嚇倒你。

穿上這盔甲的原因。我們在這裡本沒有常存的城(來十三14)。我們在耶穌的死裡受肉身的苦，並終止了我們與這世界的連結；當受苦的事臨到我們身上時，我們更加確信，我們不能與這個世界的罪有任何相交。這世界所加給跟隨耶穌之人的痛苦，更使兩者之間的鴻溝加寬，拆掉信徒在這世界用情感所建的舊巢窩，並使信徒比先前更堅定地跟隨他們的主。

盔甲包括這個抉擇。不再從人的情慾，只從神的旨意(2節)。不再隨從外邦人的心意(3節)，而是照著神生活。從今以後絕不屈服於惡習的捆綁，卻要端正仰望基督的面容 — 就是這一個抉擇。當你站在兩塊大陸的分水嶺上 — 這邊屬乎早晨，那邊屬乎黑夜，你難道不要現在就作出這莊重的抉擇嗎？跟隨萬王之王吧！不管代價如何。

這盔甲的性質。這是光明的盔甲(羅十三12)：基督的本性包含在其中。任何世人或魔鬼的箭矛都在其上折斷成碎片。沒有任何製造出來的武器，可以勝過這盔甲屬天的堅韌。

After that ye have suffered a little while. 1 Pet. 5:10 (R.V.).

Such a little while! In the Epistle to the Hebrews (10: 37, R.V.) it is called a very little while. The late Dr. Gordon loved to read it, Yet a little while, how little, how little! Which is the literal rendering of the Greek. A little while! compared with the eternal years; with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; with the compensations which await us in the Home of God. Though our life were one long agony, it would seem but as yesterday when it is past; a dream, or a sleepless watch in the night, when the morning breaks.

There is a limitation to our suffering. It is only for a little while; but every moment has been fixed by the immutable purpose and love of God. The hour of darkness is timed with an exact measurement. You shall not suffer one moment more than is absolutely necessary for your perfecting of God's glory; and for every moment there is an ample supply of grace.

But remember also that in Christ God has called you to his Eternal Glory. You heard that call years ago, and have been following it through days of evil and nights of pain. But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and He is waiting to fulfil his eternal purpose. What a banquet that will be when God will satisfy the expectations of those whom He has called to partake of it!

And the suffering is being used in ways you little understand to perfect, stablish, and strengthen you. It is from sick chambers and torture-rooms that God brings forth his veteran hosts in the day of battle. Think not so much of affliction as of the love of Christ, and the blessedness of being like Him and with Him for ever.

等你們暫受苦難之後。 彼前五10

這樣的「暫時」，在希伯來書稱之為「一點點時候」（來十37）。已故的哥頓醫生[註]很喜歡讀這個詞，一點點時候，多麼短暫，多麼短暫！這就是希臘文字面的意思。比起永恆的年月；比起遠遠超過且是永恆之榮耀的份量；比起在天家等待我們的報償，這只是一點點時候！儘管我們的生命是一段長時間的煎熬，但當人生過去之後，就彷彿只是昨日一樣；當清晨破曉時，人生就像是一個夢，或是夜裡無眠的一更。

我們的受苦是有限度的。僅僅是一點點時候；且每一分鐘都被神的愛和祂那不變的旨意定好了。黑暗的時刻已經被精準計算過。你的受苦，絕不會比你被成全配得神榮耀所需的時間多一刻；而且每刻都有豐富的恩典供應。

然而也要記住，神已經在基督裡呼召你，得享祂永遠的榮耀。你在多年前聽見這個呼召，且已跟隨這呼召經過許多邪惡的日子和痛苦的黑夜。但神的恩賜和呼召是沒有後悔的（羅十一29）。祂在等待著完成祂永恆的旨意。當神所召來同享榮耀的人，達到祂所要的數目時，將會有多麼盛大的筵席啊！

苦難是神用你所不明白的方式來成全你，堅固你，賜力量給你（10節）。在爭戰的日子，神從病房和酷刑室帶出祂老練的大軍。你要少思想苦難，多思想基督的愛，多思想「改變像祂」，以及「與祂永遠同在」的福分。

[註] 哥頓醫生 Dr. William Gordon (Physician), 1801-1849, 英國人，資質聰穎，一生好學，是仁心的良醫，有「窮人之友」（the poor man's friend）的美譽。