

We come this evening to the fourth of six pieces of Christian armor—having seen the belt, breastplate, and shoes, we come next to the shield—now, it seems these six pieces of armor are categorized into two groups of three—having put on our belt, breastplate, and shoes, we are then to take up our shield, helmet, and sword—the first three (belt, breastplate, shoes), were all strapped to the body, the latter three (shield, helmet, sword), were then taken up...

- I. The Priority of Faith
- II. The Need for Faith
- III. The Work of Faith

#### I. The Priority of Faith

1. The centrality or priority of faith is found in the phrase "above all"—literally the phrase is—"in all" or "in all circumstances..."
2. V16—"Above all (or in every circumstances), taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench ALL the fiery darts of the evil one..."
3. Faith, rightly understood, serves as a shield that quenches ALL the fiery darts"—it's to be taken up in all circumstances...
4. The Greek word for "shield" refers to a large slab of wood which usually stood four feet high from top to bottom...
5. Its purpose of this shield was to protect the whole man from arrows and other objects launched or thrown by the enemy...
6. Roman soldiers had access to two shields—the first was small and circular and was used in hand to hand combat...
7. The other was large and was intended to protect the soldier from arrows shot from the enemy from a distance...
8. This is the shield referred to here—it was large enough for the Roman soldier to hind his entire body behind...
9. It was made of several slabs of wood, covered with a thick piece of leather, that was treated to be fire resistant...
10. This is a very large shield that protects the whole man—it protects our thinking, feeling, and willing—the whole soul...
11. Ps.5:12—"For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield..."
12. Thus—it's important to notice, there is a sense in which faith is armor for our armor, it protects all the rest...
13. CHS—"Different kinds of shields were used by the ancients, but there is a special reference in our text to the large shield which was sometimes employed. I believe the word which is translated 'shield,' sometimes signifies a door, because their shields were as large as a door. They covered the man entirely..."
14. Now—in light of faith's importance and centrality, I want to briefly provide a definition and clarification of faith...
15. [1] A definition of faith—here, I want to remind you that historically, we suggest three ingredients to faith...
16. [a] Knowledge—the first ingredient to true faith is knowledge—at the foundation of faith is a real understanding...
17. Faith is NOT a blind trust—it's NOT believing things without understanding them—this doesn't mean faith perfectly understands everything...
18. [b] Assent—by this is meant, faith believes what it understands as TRUE—it agrees or assents with the TRUTH...
19. [c] Trust—that is—it not only understands and agrees with, but it RESTS or RELIES on and in that TRUTH...

20. Shorter Catechism—"What is faith in Jesus Christ? Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the gospel..."
21. [2] A clarification about faith—here I simply want to clarify technically speaking faith in itself, isn't our shield...
22. Faith, in and of itself, is no more able to protect us than it's able to save us—technically faith doesn't save us, and technically it doesn't protect us...
23. Faith, by definition, is an empty grace that of necessity needs an object—it derives it's virtue by the object it looks to...
24. Gen.15:1—"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward" Ps.3:3—"But You, O LORD, are a shield for me..."
25. Now—this is very good news for those whose faith grows dim—weak faith still lays hold of a sturdy protector...
26. Ultimately, and fundamentally, faith is NOT our shield, but it merely takes us to God in Christ, who is our shield...
27. The GENERAL object of faith is the whole word of God, the SPECIFIC object of faith is the person and work of Christ, and the ULTIMATE object of faith is God the Father reconciled to us through and in Christ...
28. Thus—there are two important truths that must ever be wed together—faith is important and yet it's empty in itself (man in desert, servant of rich man revives with water and leads to master—don't bow to servant but master, and yet without servant the man perishes)...

## II. The Need for Faith

1. V16—"above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one..."
2. Faith is necessary to protect us from the "fiery darts of the wicked one"—the flaming and fiery arrows of Satan...
3. [1] The SOURCE of these arrows—"the fiery darts or the wicked one"—that is, these arrows come from Satan...
4. Jn.10:10—"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" 1Pet.5:8—"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour..."
5. We must be very clear on this point—every fiery arrow of the enemy is intended to eternally destroy our souls...
6. Satan seeks to steal, kill, and destroy—he seeks to destroy lives, destroy our testimony, destroy our very souls...
7. Now, before I go further, let me remind you that the precise manner in which Satan interacts with us in mysterious...
8. He does this through the aid of his many demons, who govern and control this fallen and evil world system...
9. Though Satan can not possess and enslave a Christian, through demons and this world system, he shoots fiery arrows at them...
10. There's are two extremes that need avoiding—[a] we blame everything on Satan, [b] we fail to take Satan seriously...
11. Rom.7:21—"evil is present in me"—that is, in my soul—he's referring to the flesh, the remaining principle of evil...
12. This evil principle remains in every Christian—and all that Satan does, the flesh does also—it tempts and entices...
13. This makes knowing the precise source of our temptations difficult—there's the evil one and then there's evil within...
14. Thus—all that Satan can do is tempt us to tempt ourselves—he has a spy or a traitor within every Christian...
15. [2] The NATURE of these arrows—"fiery darts"—that is, short little arrows, with pointed tips dipped in tar...

16. These would be launched at your enemy in hopes of hitting him directly, or else catching his surroundings on fire...
17. Thus—here I want to suggest two major arrows that the wicked one, launches or shoots at the Christian soldier...
18. [a] Evil suggestions—that is, he suggests evil and even blasphemous thoughts about God to our mind and soul...
19. My friends, have you ever bowed your head to pray and some filthy, vile, and evil thought darts through your mind...
20. It comes quickly and without previous promptings—it passes across our minds like a falling or shooting star...
21. We can know these come from Satan because they are quick, disconnected to what we are thinking, and blasphemous...
22. MLJ—"We wake up in the morning to find that before we have had time to do any thinking, thoughts come to us, evil thoughts, perhaps even blasphemous thoughts? You were not thinking, you were doing nothing, you had just awakened; but suddenly the darts reach you..."
23. Richard Steele—"Satan's suggestions in religious duties are usually more violent and hasty, more dreadful and wicked, than those which are of our own breeding; called therefore darts, and fiery darts of that wicked one. Though he lay these suggestions of his at your door, yet they will be counted in the number of his sins and of your afflictions..."
24. Charles Hodge—"Satan showers arrows of fire on the soul of the believer, who, if unprotected by the shield of faith, would soon perish. It is a common experience of the people of God, that at times horrible thoughts, unholy, blasphemous, disbelieving, evil, crowd upon the mind, which cannot be accounted for on any ordinary law of mental action, and which cannot be dislodged. They stick like burning arrows, and fill the soul with agony..."
25. Now—we have to be cautious at this point, because, as we've seen, there's an evil principle that remains in us...
26. Thus—it's very possible that our own flesh is the originator of all sorts of evil and wicked thoughts and suggestions...
27. But—here I'm referring to those quick, brief suggestions, too evil to mention, that originate from the evil one...
28. These might include—evil and hard thoughts about God, doubts and disbelief in God's existence and goodness...
29. Have you ever bowed your head to pray, and a thought comes from nowhere—Why are you praying there's no God...
30. Why are you praying, God doesn't love you and doesn't hear you—Why do you read His word, for it's all lies...
31. This of course can be illustrated with his attack or assault upon our first parents—"Has God indeed said" (Gen.3:1)...
32. [b] Evil temptations—to tempt is to entice to sin—these fiery arrows are intended to inflame remaining lust...
33. Let me illustrate—before we become Christians, our entire hearts are burning with wicked and profane lusts...
34. In conversion, God, by His grace, pours water upon our hearts—He, in a sense, puts these RAGING fires out...
35. And yet, though these fires are largely and radically put out in conversion—there's a part that remains to smoulder...
36. Thus—Satan shoots these flaming darts of enticement in hopes to inflame our flesh, that remaining principle of evil...
37. 1Cor.7:5—"Stop depriving one another...lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control" 1Thess.3:5—"I...sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain..."
38. Charles Hodge—"Evil and wicked thoughts are not the only kind of fiery darts, nor are they the most dangerous. There are others which enkindle passion, inflame ambition, excite cupidity, pride, discontent, or vanity – producing a flame which our deceitful heart is not so prompt to extinguish, and which is often

allowed to burn until it produces great injury and even destruction. Against these most dangerous weapons of the evil one, the only protection is faith..."

39. [c] Evil distractions—by distractions I mean, the things of this life—things that may not be evil in themselves...
40. If Satan is unable to tempt us to sin, then he attempts to draw our attention off what's important, to other things...

### III. The Work of Faith

1. V16—"above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one..."
2. The purpose of the shield was to protect and to "quench" the fiery darts—to keep them from killing or seriously injuring...
3. Faith quenches the fiery darts of the evil one—it protects the soul from a direct hit, and keeps them from inflaming the soul...
4. [1] Faith works in conjunction with the word—the general and broad object of faith is the whole word of God...
5. This is evident in that the NT actually refers to the content of Holy Scripture as "the faith"—that which is believed...
6. Thus, when the fiery darts of the evil one fall upon us, we must lift up THE faith, or the Holy Word of God...
7. Prov.30:5-6—"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar..."
8. Notice, v5 has three main parts—[a] the pure word of God, [b] God as a shield, and [c] faith or trust in Him...
9. Matt.4:3—"Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread..."
10. Satan tempted our Savior three times, each time He responded with a quotation from the word of God—"It is written (Deut.8:3)" V7—"It is written (Deut.6:16)" V10—"It is written (Deut.6:13)..."
11. Before I suggest a few things about this passage, let me remind you that foremostly we here have the Last Adam...
12. The primary point of this passage is to portray our Savior as the obedient Last Adam, who restores what the first Adam lost...
13. But, in the second place, it serves as an example, on how the shield of faith puts out the fiery darts of Satan...
14. [a] He memorized Scripture—notice He repeated each text word for word—He had these Scriptures memorized...
15. [b] He used specific Scripture—that is—He chose specific Scriptures that quenched specific flaming temptations...
16. [c] He believed Scripture to be true—that is—He didn't merely quote the verse, but He believed it to be true...
17. This is how faith serves as our shield—it believes the Word of God as true—it believes the Word for itself...
18. [2] Faith brings distant things near to the soul—faith gives spiritual truths a present and powerful force in the soul...
19. Heb.11:1—"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"—notice two things...
20. [a] Faith is the substance of things hoped for—that is, it makes distant things to have a present reality in the soul...
21. [b] The evidence of things not seen—that is, it enables us to see, with our spiritual eyes things as they really are )Gen.39:7-9; Heb.11:24-27
22. [3] Faith unites to Christ the source of strength—this is the grand work of faith—to unite the soul to Jesus Christ (1Jn.5:4-5)...