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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton  
on Sunday morning 16 December, 1928

Text: Ephesians 6 verse 13

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye  
may be able to withstand in the evil day, and  
having done all, to stand"

The life of God's people, according to scripture, is a warfare; they have enemies. Christ did not deceive, and never will, any child of His and He says "In the world ye shall have tribulation". The promise is - "Shoes of iron and brass". The defence is - "The Lord is round about them that fear Him as the mountains are round about Jerusalem." The dangers are many; they can be gathered up into three, the world, the flesh and the devil, and the man who professes religion and is destitute of the armour of God must be defeated. But if a sinner, weakness in himself, extremely fearful, yet blessed with prayer, has this wonderful panoply, this perfect armour, he shall stand and resist and overcome. It becomes every true minister of Christ to warn. A watchman is set on the walls to watch and if he sees evil coming, an enemy, he is to give warning. A minister is to preach the word, and happy the people among whom the word is preached, has free course, has authority, life giving authority and power and blessing.

Now this armour is very wonderful, must be, because in the first place it is called the armour of God. Not a man's armour, provided by himself, for himself, but God's armour provided for His people. It must be wonderful being the provision of God and wonderful in its suitableness, leaving no part of the child of God exposed to a fatal dart, a fiery dart. Wonderful in the use of it as every child of God, blessed with wisdom to take the armour, finds. It is eminently useful, it is absolutely needful, and if the Lord will help me I shall, in the first place, attempt to set before you this armour in the particulars of it as they are given in this chapter, for it were quite an

easy thing to be crying out - the armour, the armour, and to be talking of danger, but people, hearing such cries, might go away and say, well but we are no wiser for all the crying. The scriptures are particular. May we be so. The scriptures are definite. May we be definite. The scriptures have application to people, to individuals. May God grant such application to us. This armour. In the verse following the text we have this, first of all - "Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth". That is the first particular. In the east, at the time when the scripture was written, the soldier, in common with others, had a long flowing robe unsuited for warfare, and therefore he must have a girdle wherewith he may gather up this flowing robe and gird and make tight, so to speak, his loins - looseness here is dreadful - and the girdle is truth. Let us look at that - the girdle is truth. What truth? Whose truth? God's. The gospel, the word of truth. This is likened to a girdle for the strengthening effect of it. This, bound round a soul by faith, strengthens and makes the person firm. Now notice that. We profess the truth. Do we know it? We profess the gospel. Is it powerful, has it ever been powerful in our hearts? Has it ever strengthened us against any enemy, any sin, any lust, any pleasure of a carnal nature? O beware of thinking you know the gospel if you are simply acquainted with the letter of it. There must be, according to Holy Scripture, a personal, living acquaintance with the truth and to look and keep close to this, the girdle. It will tell us that the person to whom the gospel is brought and given, by the Holy Ghost, is to make a gracious use of it, that it is not to abide only in his brain, not float about in his mind, not to be a general, more or less, loose profession, but a living influence, life and power, so as to just strengthen him, to stand. That is this part of the armour. "Having your loins girt about with truth" that is, tight. O what a difference between what the Apostle speaks to Timothy in the chapter I read - "A form of godliness" and this - "The power of it" as a girdle around your loins. You will understand it again and again as the gospel, in any blessed part of it, is in your hearts. It will strengthen you against the fears and the difficulties and the enemies that resist your course. "Take unto you" says Paul "this armour". O professor, you will never stand, never withstand any

enemy, any lust, any heresy of doctrine, any error of false experience or wrong practice, unless this heavenly girdle, this God provided girdle, is bound round about you to strengthen your heart in the fear of God, and enable you to resist the devil.

And the second item in this armour is "having on the breastplate of righteousness". What righteousness is this? Well, the text answers the question, the whole armour of God. This righteousness is a part of the armour, and it can be nothing else than the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Will any other righteousness protect your heart? Will any other righteousness, I ask, protect your heart against the devil and sin in any form or shape? How vulnerable to all attacks of the enemy is an unprotected heart. But how invulnerable to all enemies and attacks, is the heart that has before it this breast-plate. Nothing that the enemy can shoot, nothing that he can suggest, nothing that he can hurl against a child of God will ever enter his heart if this protection is before it - the breast-plate of righteousness. "Righteousness", sings Hart "within thee rooted"

May appear to take thy part  
But let righteousness imputed  
Be the breast-plate of thy heart

You will never be bold, either before God or man in a right way, if you have not this breast-plate. You will never be proof against the artillery of the enemy, if you lack this breast-plate. "How weak is thine heart" said God to some of old and how weak is my heart, how weak are our hearts, dear friends, and how exposed, without this breast-plate. Is Christ's righteousness yours? Have we been able to say honestly, spiritually and approvingly, to God "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength". Did this righteousness of Jesus Christ ever cover us so as that we have felt nothing could daunt us for the moment? For the moment, have felt a quietness and a confidence in God in the face of all dangers and afflictions and troubles. What an armour this is, a breast-plate completely covering the heart. O sinner, do not expect to get away from the enemy and do not look for victory over him apart from this breast-plate, righteousness.

Righteousness to full perfection,  
Must be brought  
Lacking nought,  
Fearless of rejection

O if we have a righteousness that God is pleased with, what enemy can overcome us? I say, a righteousness that God is pleased with, and the Apostle Paul tells us of this. He says of the gospel that in it is revealed the righteousness of God, revealed from faith to faith. That is, every time it is opened up to faith, faith takes hold of it, and puts it as a breast-plate to his heart. The sinner says - This is my defence, this is my hope, this is my strength. Here I am invulnerable to the enemy. This righteousness, justification - O what a doctrine. Justification, dear friends, why it is the sinner's title to heaven, it is the sinner's acceptance with God, it is the sinner's covering in the day of evil. It is the sinner's argument against all wrong. It is the sinner's boldness in the face of the law. Rigtheousness - O put it to your heart poor believer, it will help you to banish fear; it will help you to stand up in the day of evil. This blessed breast-plate, see if you know it.

And the third thing in this armour is "and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." "Stand" said Paul. This preparation means stand, and that on which you will stand is the gospel. That which will cover your feet and protect you is the peace of the gospel. This peace beautifully in scripture follows justification. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Every glimpse of God's well pleased face, every smile God lets fall on your heart will fill you with peace, and this peace is called "passing all understanding" You cannot understand it yourself, how a holy God can be at peace with you and make you understand that you are at peace with Him. How that He has no quarrel, no fault to find, no single thing between the love of God and your soul. This peace passeth all understanding and the scripture tells us that it is a power, a defence. The peace of God shall keep your heart and mind by Jesus Christ as in a garrison. It shuts the sinner up to

God and with God. It makes a sinner feel that he has an undisturbed rest in trouble. It may not last long at any given time, but it is a real thing. Some of us know it. There has been trouble and we have been peaceful. We have had affliction, and have been at rest, rest in God and rest with God and it enables a sinner to stand. He is firm. The enemy may say, though I must not anticipate too much, the enemy may say - O but look at this affliction. The peace of God in your conscience will enable you to stand against that wile of the devil. Your conscience, being at peace, your circumstances are easy, though painful. If the heart, if the conscience, be right, O what a standing there is. Stand fast and withstand. This is a blessed part of the whole armour of God. It is wonderful and some of you know it, how a child of God can, at times, does stand with this peace in his soul, and say to the enemy - "Rejoice not against me O mine enemy, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me". That is standing with your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Happy man who knows it, and there are some men here who are happy men. You have known it and I have known it, nothing disturbing the mind, a calm, a heavenly calm in the spirit.

Thrice comfortable hope  
That calms my troubled breast  
My Father's hand prepares the cup  
And what He wills is best

There is peace in it. Affliction? Well you can bear it. Contradiction of sinners against you, you can bear it. Affliction laid on your loins, you have strength to bear it, for this peace holds you up, keeps you standing. Stand in this blessed peace. Nothing to be compared with this peace. It is peace in trouble, peace in war, peace in the prospect of victory, peace in humble, holy confidence in God. Peace with the stones and the beasts of the field, everything right for the moment when this holy peace is with you, in you. It is compared to shoes because we have an enemy and rough places, difficult places. Stand here dear brethren - the gospel, O it will bear you. The gospel, it will comfort you. The gospel, it will make you

strong and bold, and you will be enabled to withstand the devil, resist all his wiles. "And above all taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. The shield of faith. The shield at that time covered the whole body. An oblong shield, from head to foot, covering the soldier. And, says the Spirit, by Paul, take this shield of faith. My friends, our eyes, our ears, our spirits, are all open avenues and the devil will try first this and then that, and if we have not this shield at the moment, wherewith to quench his darts, we shall be injured, though not fatally injured if we belong to the Lord. "Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts", darts tipped with fire and shot into the city, that would catch the houses and burn them. Fiery darts of fierce temptation will be hurled at you, at me, and what shall we do if we have not a shield. Think of it. You say you will stand; you say we are protestants; you say we hate popery and hate the various evils that are open. Well that may very easily be and you be lost. It is not crying out against sin loudly; it is having the shield of faith to cover your spirit, to cover your conscience, to cover your soul, to cover your head. It is having this shield, to oppose this shield against all assaults. Think not to escape the assaults. O think not to escape the attacks of the enemy. Look round you and see the myriads who are overcome. What better are we? Are we stronger? Are we wiser? No. How then can we hope to resist and overcome, to keep these fiery darts, tipped with the fire of hell, how can we hope to keep them out of our bodies, our souls, if we have not this shield - the shield of faith? Faith is a confidence in God; faith is a confidence in the Person of the Redeemer; faith is a confidence in the blood of Christ; faith is a confidence in the intercession of Christ, in the power of Christ, in the love of Christ, in the mercy and the compassion of Christ. And this shield thus, so to speak, occupied with Christ, and deriving its strength and its invulnerability from Christ, this alone will keep us. This alone will keep us. The heresies of the day, the temptations of the devil, the seductions of the enemy, the evils of sin, who can resist them without this shield of faith? You will never know the difference between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error without this shield. There is a spirit of

truth and there is a spirit of error. How can you hope to overcome the world if you have not faith? "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ" " This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." "Above all", as if he should say, now with respect to your standing, and your courage, and your hope and your victory, see to this above all the rest - that you have got this blessed faith. This relates to experience indeed. Happy the man who has got a little faith. It is spoken of in other parts of the scriptures differently as a seed, a small seed, and as little faith. But here it is a defence, it is a defence. Well, dear brethren, look if you have got it, see if you have got this great defence, this wonderful thing. Have you faith in God, in the Redeemer, in the Holy Ghost, in the scriptures, in the wisdom of God? "Hast thou faith?" "Above all taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked" This tells us, as many of us as have life and wisdom, that we must not expect safety, not expect to escape injury, not expect to escape wants, unless we have, to object to all darts of the wicked, this shield.

"And take the helmet of salvation". Take the helmet of salvation. Salvation is expressed beautifully and gloriously in those last words of the dear Saviour on the cross - "It is finished". O, if you have got that on your head as a helmet, O, I say, if we have that helmet, no blows at our heads by the enemy will ever hurt us. The helmet of salvation. Salvation, O the joyful sound. Salvation from hell, richly deserved; from sin, from which we never could escape of ourselves; from every deception of the enemy. Salvation. O sinner, think of it. Salvation here. Salvation from despair; salvation from the devil, from all his wiles; salvation from affliction and all the pain of it; salvation in an hour of death, salvation that will land a saved sinner in heaven with God. This, this is the helmet; this is the defence. It will defend your judgment against error; it will defend your mind against evil; it will defend your heart against evil. O what a defence. What a tongue, what wisdom one needs to express this properly. Adequately, it never can be expressed; it may be spoken

properly when God gives grace and wisdom.

Here is a defenceless head and here is the devil above him, the god of this world, against him, ever watching for any moment when his head may be exposed, to deal some deadly blow. And now, says the Holy Spirit - sinner, here is a helmet for you; sinner, here is a complete covering. There is no blow that hell itself could deal you that would touch your head with this helmet on. No sin can ruin you with this helmet on.

It is very wonderful - the whole armour, and this is part of it, salvation. What did Christ come for, but to save? Why was the Son, the Eternal Son of God, incarnate, but to save? Why did He come, but to save the lost? God made Him to be sin that He might be made the righteousness of God to His people. And it is this salvation we have here as a helmet, a complete covering. The plague of the head wont destroy you if you have this helmet, as the plague of the heart will not destroy him who has the breastplate of righteousness. My brethren, God has provided this armour.

There is yet another word - "the sword of the Spirit" There are always two things before the soldier, engaged in war, the defeat of his enemy, and the enrichment, in some way, of himself. Now this warfare, in which some of us are engaged, needs this that completes the armour - the sword of the Spirit, the sword with two edges, the Word of God. O what an injury men would do us if they could, by taking away from us the inspiration of the Word of God. Dear friends, you may, by God's mercy, as you get older, more and more value the inspired scriptures, this blessed Book. Take it in two ways in respect of the sword. First, take it generally, take the whole of the Bible, begin with Genesis, the beginning of the world, the creation of man and end with Revelation. What a Bible, a perfect Book, so perfect, that if men add to it, God will add plagues to them. So perfect, that nothing can be dispensed with, thus, if any man take from God's word he shall have his name, even as a professor in the church, taken out of the Book. This Book. O when you are assailed may you follow your dear Redeemer and may I do the same, by the Spirit, object the Word of God. Does the devil tempt you to



worldliness - "it is written". Does he ask you to worship him - "it is written". The Word of God was in the hand and in the mouth of the Saviour and may it be in your hand and in your mouth and in mine. We need it. Generally speaking, that is, we need the whole of God's Word; every part of it in some way belongs to the people of God. All the histories of it are for our instruction; the judgments of God related in it are for our instruction; the carcasses that are in the wilderness, they are for our instruction and admonition. The whole of this blessed Book is likened to a sword. But take it particularly for cases, special, particular, cases. And now what have we? Well, I can say to some of you, and some of you can say to me perhaps, now you have God's Word in your heart, He has given you certain scriptures; He has spoken passages to us, relieving us from fear, comforting us against sorrow, sustaining us under burdens, guiding us through difficulties and promising victory and heaven at the end. I am speaking the truth as some of you know. God has not been silent to you, has He? So dear friends, say it to His honour, as well as you can. He has not been silent has He? He has taken a passage here and dropped it into your heart, fulfilling that scripture "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and My speech shall distil as the dew". O what a word has God spoken to some, making out that beautiful scripture "A word in season, how good is it. It is like apples of gold in pictures of silver". So has God's Word been good. And again, to speak familiarly, "Do not My words do good to them that walk uprightly?" Is not the Word of God like a medicine? Has it not been a life, a light, an influence, a voice, a distinct voice, speaking to you, speaking to me? And this is the sword of the Spirit. And when the enemy may come and say - you do not know anything about God; you do not know His blessed Word, then may you be enabled to say - but He did give this to me; He gave me that. Yes, this sword. "Resist the devil" is another word "and he will flee from you". Resist the temptation by this sword of the Spirit. Thrust hard at the enemy by this sword of the Spirit and you will find the armour of God. "Take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of

righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." And then this follows - "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

One of the most wonderful experiences that God gives to His people here is the spirit of grace and of supplications, and gives them occasionally power over the angel and they prevail. Hezekiah turned him to the wall and poured him out a prayer that brought the recanting prophet back and turned the mind of God. Did we ever get that nearness, that boldness, that encouragement by the Spirit in prayer that enabled us, emboldened us, to say to God "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me". You could not let Him alone, if I may speak so familiarly, you could not let Him alone. His mercy drew; His kindness drew; His word helped you and the Holy Spirit as it were put petition after petition into the mind and opened the mouth of faith so that it was like laying hold of God. Here one has to say it is a very sacred thing, almost too sacred to speak about when you and God get together by His infinite kindness and He, as it were, says "Ask what you will and it shall be given you to the half of the kingdom." When He says "Make known your requests unto God" "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it" "Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me." And it has been as if He yielded Himself to you. Many years ago I had constant correspondence with a Dutch person who was wonderfully favoured of God; called by grace from high society and blessed, singularly blessed, and I was struck in one of her letters, she said to me - God, as it were, gave Himself to be her prisoner, quoting that in the Canticles "I held Him and would not let Him go". It is very sacred, very singular. It is just in the spirit as it was when Joseph would make himself known to his brethren. All Egyptians had to get out of the house, and all enemies have to get out. For the time being, the sinner and God are together. If you get once or twice of this experience in your life, you will say - I had then the weapon of all prayer.

Then I prevailed; then God smiled on me; then I held fast, would not let Him go; then I got what I requested. It is written of Jabez - "And God granted him his request". And you will find, when you get this sacred, secret, awful, blessed time with God, that there are no enemies, no Canaanites, no Egyptians, in the land. I wish it were a more frequent experience with us, but we are living in a day when this seems to be very much withheld and for the most part we pray very desultory prayer, and therefore there are no returns. But now look dear friends at the case here. We have got enemies. Upon this part of the matter I cannot enter this morning beyond just reading to you what the Apostle says "Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ah, says a worm, I can never stand. No, God does not say you must be strong, but He says, now take this armour, put this armour on. You will never be other than you are in yourself, a weak worm. But, says God "Fear not worm Jacob" here is the armour, put it on, take it, that you may be able to withstand anything and everything that may come in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Now I shall leave the matter here for the moment, and just conclude with this, an exhortation. The scripture gives ministers the word to exhort. An exhortation, namely, look as narrowly into the matter as you can and see if you have reason to hope that God has given you this complete panoply, this perfect armour, here set out in particulars.

AMEN.