

When first my soul enlisted  
Saul's Armor  
John Newton, 1779,  
from Olney Hymns, vol. 1, hymn 28

When first my soul enlisted  
My Saviour's foes to fight;  
Mistaken friends insisted  
I was not armed aright:  
So Saul advised David  
He certainly would fail;  
Nor could his life be saved  
Without a coat of mail.

2. But David, though he yielded  
To put the armor on,  
Soon found he could not wield it,  
And ventured forth with none.  
With only sling and pebble  
He fought the fight of faith;  
The weapons seemed but feeble,  
Yet proved Goliath's death.

3. Had I by him been guided,  
And quickly thrown away  
The armor men provided,  
I might have gained the day;  
But armed as they advised me,  
My expectations failed;  
My enemy surprised me,  
And had almost prevailed.

4. Furnished with books and notions,  
And arguments and pride  
I practised all my motions,  
And Satan's pow'r defied  
But soon perceived with trouble,  
That these would do no good;  
Iron to him is stubble,  
And brass like rotten wood.

5. I triumphed at a distance  
While he was out of sight;  
But faint was my resistance  
When forced to join in fight:  
He broke my sword in shivers,  
And pierced my boasted shield;  
Laughed at my vain endeavors,  
And drove me from the field.

6. Satan will not be braved  
By such a worm as I;  
Then let me learn with David,  
To trust in the Most High;  
To plead the name of Jesus,  
And use the sling of prayer;  
Thus armed, when Satan sees us  
He'll tremble and despair.