

Watchwords for the Warfare of Life, Part 1 Words for the Battle-Field, IV. The Armies of Heaven



Continued from [III. The Weapons of Our Warfare.](#)

The Church.

“As it stands in the third article of our faith, one holy catholic—that is universal—Church, the communion of saints.”

The Church is an assembly of people that depends on things which do not appear, nor can be apprehended by the senses; namely, on the Word alone. This people believes what the Word says, and gives God the glory of trusting that what He promises us therein is true.

THE Church is never in a more perilous state than when she has quiet and peace.

GOD has set His Church and Christian community in the midst of the world, amid infinite external action, manifold occupations, callings and standings, to the end that Christians should not be monks, nor fly into cloisters or wildernesses, but should live amongst people and be sociable, that their works of faith may be open and manifest.

To live in society and friendship with each other, as Aristotle the heathen says, is not indeed the end of man, whereunto he is created, but only a means to the end.

The most excellent end for which we are created is that one should teach

another about God, what He is in His being, what His will is, how He is minded towards us.

Therefore let us in the Church, with the Church, pray for the Church. For there are three things which preserve the Church, and essentially belong to the Church: firstly, to teach faithfully; secondly, to pray diligently; thirdly, to suffer really (*mit Ernst*).- (German meaning, "with seriousness")

THE labor and travail of the Church lasts a long time; but one day her day and hour will come, that she shall be redeemed, and joyful indeed will be her aspect then.

THE outward form and aspect of the Church is without form or comeliness, sad and troubled; but in truth she is triumphing and gaining the victory with Christ. "He has set us in the heavenly places together with Christ." As a bride is *Domina* (from Latin, Mrs.) and lady of her husband's possessions, so is a believer lord of all the possessions of the Bridegroom; for he is quickened with Christ, and set in heavenly places with Him.

God looks not on the evil in His Church, but only on Christ, His dear Son, whom He holds so dearly beloved, that for that love's sake He sees no evil in His Bride, for "He has cleansed her through the washing of water, by the Word."

Why the Church on Earth is in Tribulation.

FIRSTLY, that we should be reminded and warned that we are exiled servants, cast out of Paradise on account of Adam's fall in Paradise.

Secondly, that we may think of the sufferings of the Son of God, who for our sake became man, took our flesh and blood on Him, yet without sin, has walked through this valley of sorrows, has suffered and died for us, and has risen again from the dead, and has thus restored us to our Fatherland from which we were exiled.

Thirdly, that such tribulation might teach and remind us that our citizenship is not of this world, but that we here on earth are only pilgrims, and that another life, the life eternal, remains to us.

Amaranth a Type of the Church.

AMARANTH grows in August, and is more a stalk than a flower, is easily broken off, yet grows fair and flourishing after being broken. And when all the flowers are over, if this stalk is sprinkled with water and made moist it becomes fair again and green, so that in winter wreaths and garlands can be twined of it.

For this reason it is called amaranth, because it neither fades nor withers.

I know not that anything can be more like the Church than this amaranth, which we call a thousandfold fair (*Tausendschon*). For although the church washes her robes in the blood of the Lamb (as it is written in Genesis and in the Apocalypse), and is stained crimson, yet she is fairer than any state or

community on earth. And she alone it is whom the Son of God loves as His Bride, in whom He has joy and rest.

Moreover, the Church suffers herself easily to be broken and crushed; that is, she is willing and contented to be obedient to God under the Cross, is patient therein, and springs up again fair and flourishing, and grows and spreads, yea, gains her best fruits and uses thence, for thereby she learns truly to apprehend God, freely to confess His doctrine, and brings forth far more beautiful and heavenly virtues.

Finally, the body and stock of this true Amaranth remain entire, and cannot be uprooted, however great may be the rage and assaults against particular branches, so as to rend them away. For as the amaranth, thousandfold fair, cannot fade nor decay, so nevermore can the Church fade nor decay, be destroyed or rooted up. But what is more wonderful than the amaranth? If it is sprinkled with water and laid therein, it becomes green and fresh again, as if awakened from the dead.

So, we can have no doubt that the Church will be awakened by God from the grave, and will come forth living, eternally to praise, glorify, and bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His son our Redeemer and Lord, with the Holy Ghost.

For although other empires, kingdoms, principalities, and dominions have their changes, and soon fade and fall away like flowers, this Kingdom, on the contrary, has roots so firm and deep, that by no force nor might can it be torn up or laid waste, but abides for ever.

None Suffer Alone.

WE are not alone. Many here and there in the world suffer with us, whom we know not.

THE saints are but as dewdrops on the locks of the Bridegroom.

HIS Christendom is Lady and Empress in heaven and on earth; for she is called the Bride of God.

The Holy Angels.

IT would not be fit that we should know how earnestly the dear, holy angels contend for us with the devil; what a hard and severe strife and warfare it is. For if we saw it, we should be dismayed.

“THEY are ministering spirits,” and herein is set before all good Christians a great and heart-cheering truth, and a mirror of humility, that such pure and glorious creatures minister to us impure, poor, insignificant human beings, in the home, in the state, in religion.

Our faithful servants are they, rendering us service which we poor beggars

and human creatures are ashamed to render another.

Thus should it be taught simply, and in choice order, concerning the dear angels.

THE good angels are wiser and can do more than the evil angels. The reason is, they have a mirror wherein they look and learn: "the face of the Father."

THEY are far nobler than we men; firstly, in nature and essence; also because they are without sin. But they are without pride; they despise not us human creatures for our misery. Our dying, sinning, and suffering are to them a sorrow of heart.

THE nature of the good angels is a humble, loving, and kindly nature. An angel's is a fine, tender, kind heart. As if we could find a man who had a heart sweet all through, and a gentle will; without subtlety, yet of sound reason; at once wise and simple. He who has seen such a heart, has colors wherewith he may picture to himself what an angel is.

THEY guard us from evil. This they do earnestly and with joy. The angels see nothing more gladly than when people delight in the Word of God. There they delight to dwell. Therefore seek them not yonder in heaven, but here below on earth, with thy neighbor, thy father and mother, thy child and thy friend. If thou dost to these as God commands thee, the angels will not be far from thee.

HE was once asked what an angel was. He said, "An angel is a spiritual creature, created without a body, by God, to minister to Christendom, especially in the offices of the Church. True and godly preachers should preach and teach concerning them in an orderly, Christian way."

THEIR antitypes are the evil spirits, which were not created evil by God, but fell, from a hatred which they conceived against God.

DOCTOR MARTIN once said of the angels: "This is what I picture to myself, and I stand on it as on sure ground, that the angels are already getting ready for the field, drawing on their armor, girding on their sword and spear; for the Last Day is already beginning to dawn, and the angels are arming themselves for the combat.

IF we praise God that He has created for us the sun, the moon, wine, and bread, we should surely also praise Him that He has created the dear angels. My God, I thank Thee that Thou hast given Thy good angels, and hast set a guard of Thy heavenly princes round about us!

THE nature and character of the good angels is a humble, loving, friendly nature, which does not deem itself too high to serve poor sinful creatures, both men and women. For they are full of light, of the knowledge of God, and of the wisdom of the divine goodness. Therefore, all that God commands they understand to be perfect, and very good, because it pleases God.

LET us follow the virtues of the holy angels, and their works of love, and be very friendly, loving, and helpful to each other. No man is so kind, and so

ready, and disposed to all kinds of services and good works as the angels are.

WE must learn that our best and most steadfast friends are invisible, namely, the dear angels, who with faithfulness and love, moreover with all helpfulness and true friendship, far surpass all the friends we have whom we can see. Thus in many ways we enjoy the fellowship of the heavenly spirits.

ANGELS are creatures who shine and burn with thoughts and desires how God can be praised, peace be on earth, and all men be of a good heart and mind.

His Belief about the Guardian Angel.

FROM early childhood I would accustom a child, and say to it: "Dear child, thou hast an angel of thine own. When thou prayest, morning and evening, the same angel will be with thee, and sit beside thy little bed, clothed in a white robe; will take care of thee, lull thee to sleep, and guard over thee that the evil one, the devil, may not come near thee. So, also, when thou gladly sayest the '*Benedicite*' and '*Gratias*,' at thy meals, thine angel will be with thee, at table, will serve thee, and guard thee." If we pictured this to children from their earliest years, that angels are with them, this would not only make the dear children trust to the guardianship of the dear angels, but it would make them gentle and good, for they would think, "If our parents are not here, the angels are here, and the evil one must not tempt us to do wrong."

AT the last, when we die, we have the dear angels for our escort on the way. They who can grasp the whole world in their hands, can surely also guard our souls, that they make that last journey safely.



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