

Spiritual Warfare.
Women's' League Day 2011
Part 1. The Battle that Rages.

It is not often that we consider the topic of Spiritual Warfare in the Free Reformed Churches. Spiritual Warfare is not normally associated with biblical, Reformed doctrine, but with a movement that is associated more with Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. I have a lot of concerns with the charismatic Spiritual Warfare movement, and this morning I plan to explain to you what those concerns are. But in itself, the concept of Spiritual Warfare is very biblical as well as *Reformed*. In the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 52 asks,

“What is the sixth petition?

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

That is: In ourselves we are so weak that we cannot stand even for a moment. Moreover, our sworn enemies – the devil, the world, and our own flesh – do not cease to attack us. Will You, therefore, uphold and strengthen us by the power of Your Holy Spirit, so that *in this spiritual war* we may not go down to defeat, but always firmly resist our enemies, until we finally obtain the complete victory.”

Did you hear that phrase? “In this spiritual war.” There is a war going on, and we are in the middle of it!

And the Catechism in the Old Book of Praise of 1972 (the Catechism that anybody my age and older learned) actually said in Lord's Day 52, “that we may not succumb *in this spiritual warfare*.”

The Belgic Confession describes this spiritual war in article 12:

“The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and of all that is good. With all their might, they lie in wait like murderers to ruin the church and all its members and to destroy everything by their wicked devices.”

And so the idea that a spiritual war is going on should not be strange to Reformed ears. In as much as it *is* strange, it means that we are not paying enough attention to the spiritual realm and the fiery darts of the evil one. And that is dangerous. So let us spend some time today reflecting on the spiritual war that we are engaged in.

Spiritual Warfare Exposed.

C.S. Lewis, the man who wrote the Chronicles of Narnia, wrote:

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”

For many years, the error that Western Christians fell into was to effectively disbelieve the existence of demons. Such talk was felt by some to belong to the superstitious times of the middle ages, the times when the devil was drawn in many pictures as having horns and a pitchfork, the times when there was a morbid fascination with hell, and when witches were burned at the Stake. Today our culture follows a modernistic worldview that leaves no room for a spirit world. Today many people think that reality is what you see and what you hear and what you touch. The idea that there is an invisible dimension to life, a dimension that

involves thousands of angels and demons, is either rejected or ignored. And so for many years, although the church has prayed, “and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” there has been very little thought as to who the evil one might be, and how God might deliver us from temptation.

Today that is changing. The world at large is becoming increasingly “spiritual”. We see this in the growing interest in Aboriginal Dreamtime stories, in new age and Asian religions. Witchcraft and magic has been rediscovered in the books of Harry Potter, and many movies and computer games delve into the “supernatural” and the spirit world.

Now this renewed interest in devils and spirits can also be noticed in the Christian church. There are some Christians today who seem to find a demon in every house, in every heart and behind every tree. They tend to believe that these demons are responsible for all the sin and the trouble in this world, and that unless they are directly attacked, these demons control people and cities and countries to the extent that the Holy Spirit is unable to work unless these demons are first dealt with. And that is what I will call the Charismatic Spiritual Warfare Movement.

The Charismatic Spiritual Warfare movement.

The Charismatic Spiritual Warfare movement became popular in western churches in the 1980s, at the time that the author Frank Peretti wrote the books “This Present Darkness” and “Piercing the Darkness”. Frank Peretti belonged to the Assemblies of God, a very large Pentecostal church, and in his books he developed and promoted an explanation of how demons work and how they are

to be fought. Since then, more books have been written that develop the charismatic teachings about spiritual warfare. Allow me to give you a summary of what this is all about:

In the first place, it is noticed that the Gospel is not being received by everyone in the whole world. In fact, there are some people and some countries that seem especially resistant to the gospel, and there are very few Christians there. The question we must answer, they say, is why that is so, and what we can do about it. And the answer given is that people do not believe the gospel because Satan, the god of this age, has blinded their minds. 2 Corinthians 4:3,4 says,

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe . . .”

So, the god of this age, Satan, has bound people in his grip so that they are not able to spiritually discern the light of the gospel.

From here the next question is, “how does Satan bind people in his grip? How does he exercise control over this world?” And then the answer to this question is: through territorial spirits. *Through territorial spirits.*

Now although the Heidelberg Catechism speaks about “this spiritual war” it does not explain what territorial spirits are. Nor does the Belgic Confession. So allow me to explain what people like Frank Peretti mean by territorial spirits.

The demons, they say, are controlled by Satan, who is the prince of demons. (I think we can agree with that.) Now the devil, they say, has assigned different demonic spirits to different territories or regions. These different demons go to different countries to keep cities and nations and individuals in spiritual darkness.

So there would be a demon assigned to the country of Australia, who in turn is responsible for a demon responsible for Western Australia, who in turn is responsible for a demon in control of other demons in Rockingham, in Armadale, in Albany and so forth. But not only is there a demon over Australia; there is also an angel sent by God. And that angel is responsible for the angel over Western Australia, who is responsible for the angel responsible for Rockingham, for Armadale, for Albany etc. And under these angels are many more angels. Those angels, it is taught, are hard at war with the demons, each trying to gain control of our country, our towns and cities and, ultimately, of our souls. And so we have this spiritual war going on between God's angels and Satan's demons.

And while this is all going on, God is effectively sitting on the sidelines, watching His angels fight it out with the territorial spirits who, under Satan, control hearts and cities and countries. And that is how things are, UNLESS we as God's children join in with that spiritual warfare that is going on. Yes, you heard that right: it is taught that God *needs* us to join this spiritual battle, for He can only work when we work. God needs us to do our bit if He is ever going to win the war against Satan.

And then this is what we need to do: we need to get involved in what a man named C. Peter Wagner called "Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare". And this is how you do it:

1. First, we need to know who the enemy is, and to find out as much as possible about the specific territorial spirits or demons that are working in a particular place. By observing the common sins and practices of the people in an area, we might learn what sort of a demon is at work and how this demon is binding the people. And, by talking directly to those demons,

or in other ways, we might we might even learn their names. Then, as we put all of this information together in an exercise called “spiritual mapping”, we get to understand the Enemy better, and are in a better position to fight.

2. Second, we then need to engage the enemy through prayer. God needs us to pray, they say, so that He is able to use His power to help His angels win the fight against the territorial spirits. Some powerfully strategic ways to pray, they say, is to pray for 24 or 40 hours, or some other set time. Or, it is good to walk around the object that you believe is under the influence of these demons, whether that be a house, a church, or a town. And as you walk, you pray that God might bind the evil forces that are working there.
3. Third, we need to engage the enemy directly, by speaking to the territorial spirits, and binding or casting out demons. It is best if we know the exact name of the demon, as then we can speak to it directly. But even if we don’t, when we move into a new house, or we want to use a new building for spiritual purposes, or we want to “win our city for Christ” we first need to bind or cast out the demons that are there, in the name of Jesus.

So that is a brief explanation of what is being promoted by many people as spiritual warfare today. And that is why I personally struggle a little with the term “spiritual warfare” because this view of spiritual warfare is not biblical. Even more, it strips God of His glory and is extremely dangerous. Here are some of the problems I have with this teaching about spiritual warfare:

1. It does not have a solid biblical base. Although people in the Charismatic Spiritual Warfare movement begin with a few Bible texts, their teachings

are not based on the Bible. The Bible does not teach us about territorial spirits, nor are we told to discover who these spirits are.

2. It has a wrong view about the world. Although there is a spiritual struggle going on, God always has had, and always will have, ultimate control over the world, including complete control over Satan and his demons. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, "All authority *has* been given to Me in heaven and on earth." And Colossians 2:15 says, "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." In Christ God has already achieved victory over Satan. At least in principle, that battle has already been won.
3. It has a wrong view about sin. We can not blame all of our sin and hardness of heart on the devil. Lord's Day 52 speaks of three sworn enemies: the devil, the world and our own flesh. Further, because of the fall into sin, man became totally depraved, bringing upon himself "blindness, horrible darkness, futility, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; wickedness, rebelliousness, and stubbornness in his will and heart; and impurity in all his affections." (Canons of Dort III/IV art.1) And so we should not look exclusively or even first to demons as an explanation for man's depravity, but to understand this to be the consequence of the fall into sin.
4. It has the wrong view about prayer. Although God commands us to pray and He does hear our prayers, He is *not* dependent on our prayers in order to work. In our prayers we express our thankfulness to God and our dependence on Him, but we do not empower Him to do anything. Such an idea is blasphemy!

5. It has the wrong view about God. We need to understand that God is sovereign, He is in full control. The unbiblical charismatic spiritual warfare movement does not see God in full control; they see God as standing on the sidelines, almost desperate for us to pray the right kind of prayer so that He can then work. That makes us big, and God small. And to do that, is serious sin.

Biblical Spiritual Warfare

Much of the Charismatic teachings about spiritual warfare is not biblical. But make no mistake: the Bible does teach us that we are engaged in a spiritual war. The declaration of that war was given already in Genesis 3:15 –

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

With these words, the LORD declared war on Satan, declaring that there would be enmity or hostility between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And with these words, the LORD began to reveal to us who the enemy is, how the war against the enemy will be fought, and what the outcome of this spiritual war will be.

Who is the enemy? The enemy is the devil, or Satan. The Bible calls Satan the accuser, the adversary, the enemy, the evil one, the father of lies, the murderer, the prince of the power of the air, the tempter, Beelzebub, and a number of other names also. Through these names, Satan is seen to stand in opposition to God, to Christ, and to the church. He is our sworn enemy, as Revelation 12 makes clear,

the one who was cast down to earth along with his fallen angels, the one who deceives the whole world, and who has made war with the church. (Rev. 12:9-17)

But Satan is not God. Satan is not all-powerful, he is not all-knowing, and He is not present in all places at all times. And so, although 1 Peter 5:8 warns that our enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour, Satan regularly uses the fallen angels, or demons, who are beneath him, to do his work. So it is not just Satan who is at work in this world, but Satan and his hosts. As Martin Luther wrote in “A Mighty Fortress”, this world is filled with many devils or demons. How these demons are organized, we don’t really know. The Bible does not describe this in any detail, and the Bible certainly does not instruct us to identify a territorial spirit by name. But these demons are working under Satan, and they are at war with Christ’s church.

But is it not just the devil with his demons who is at war with us. It is also “the seed of the serpent”, that is, the world. In John 8:44 Jesus made the rather shocking declaration that the Pharisees were of the seed of the Serpent:

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.”

In John 8 Jesus declared that all those who were not “for” Him were “against” Him, and that since they were against Him, they were of the devil. Satan is the leader of all those who remain in bondage to him, and Satan will use these people, as much as he is able, to carry out his evil plans. Through the world and the philosophies

of the world, and the so-called pleasures of the world, Satan tries to lead God's people astray, making them captive to his lies.

And we can say that both Satan as well as the world is our enemy in this spiritual war. But there is one more enemy: our own flesh. In this world, even we who are made alive in Christ, still have sin lurking inside us. We want to do what is right, but the lust of the flesh remains strong. Galatians 5:17 says,

“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

So who is our enemy in this spiritual war? As Lord's Day 52 of the Heidelberg Catechism confesses, our sworn enemies who do not cease to attack us are “the devil, the world, and our own flesh.”

How the War is Won.

Genesis 3:15 also begins to explain *how the war against the enemy will be fought*. God declared that *He* would put enmity between the Serpent and the Woman, and that He would provide the Seed of the Woman who would crush the head of the serpent. From this we can see that far from God sitting on the sidelines as He watches this spiritual war take place, He was the One who declared the war, and He was the One who determined how it would be fought. He is not relying on us, but we rely on Him!

That the LORD is the One in control of this Spiritual warfare, and who Himself is at war with the Serpent, is made clear already in the Old Testament. Have a look at Exodus 15:1-3.

“Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: “I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! 2 The LORD *is* my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He *is* my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him. 3 The LORD *is* a man of war; The LORD *is* His name.”

Notice what is says in verse 3: “The LORD is a man of war!” God’s people were completely unable to deliver themselves, but the LORD became their salvation. Indeed – and this is how we need to understand the stories about various wars, and the psalms that speak of destroying the enemy – indeed the Battle belongs to the LORD. He is a man of war, who will ensure that head of the serpent would be crushed.

And the war was won with the sending of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). He came to bind the Strong Man (Matthew 12:24-29). He came so that He might redeem us out of the world, so that we might no longer be held under the sway of the wicked one (1 John 5:19).

It is therefore not our job to bind Satan: Christ has done that for us. He has already disarmed the principalities and powers. He made a public spectacle of them and triumphed over them. (Col. 2:15) Satan has been thrown out of heaven, and the

fallen angels are not free to do what they want, but are themselves in the chains of bondage (Jude vs6).

And finally, the war is won in our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes the victory of Christ over sin and Satan and He imparts it to us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God upholds and strengthens us so that in this spiritual war we will not go down in defeat, but will firmly resist our enemies, until we finally obtain the complete victory. (Lord's Day 52)

In the hearts of each one of us, there is a battle going on. A battle we do well to call spiritual warfare. We must engage in it, and we are called to take up our arms. But remember: the war was declared by God the Father, the victory has been sealed by God the Son, and the battle is now fought through the power of the Holy Spirit. And if we fight in the strength of the Lord then in this spiritual warfare we will be more than conquerors. Then we will find that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created things, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:37-39). For we will have the victory.

Women's League 2011
Spiritual Warfare Part 2
Engaging the Enemy.

In the first part of this speech, I concluded by saying that there is a battle going on in the hearts of each one of us, a battle we do well to call spiritual warfare. We must engage in this battle, but with the understanding that this war was declared by God the Father, the victory was sealed by God the Son and the battle is now fought through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us now consider *how* we are to engage in this spiritual war, and we will do so by turning to the book of Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:10,11 says,

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

But what is the armor of God that we are told to put on?

Some commentators suggest that putting on the armour of God is the same as living a holy life. The belt of truth, then, is being truthful, the breastplate of righteousness is living a holy life, the shield of faith is the practice of saying ‘No’ to temptation and looking to Christ in faith, and the helmet of salvation is that act of accepting the gift of salvation.

However, what I would like to suggest to you this morning is that the armour of God is not something that we *do* but something that we *receive* to put on. This is

an important distinction, as it helps us to understand how and in Whose strength we are to engage in this spiritual war. And to explain this to you, I would like to explain the concept of the Armour of God in the context of the rest of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

The Letter to the Ephesians.

The letter to the Ephesians can be divided into two parts: Chapters 1-3 spells out the blessings we have received in Christ, and chapters 4-6 teaches us how we are to live now that we have received those blessings. So let's have a look at this together, starting with Ephesians 1.

After his words of greeting, the apostle Paul began his letter in verse 3 of chapter 1 by saying,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing."

And then Paul began to list those blessings, beginning with the miracle of our election. Out of sheer love, before we were even born, even before the foundation of the world, God predestined us, He chose to call us out of a world of darkness and enmity and disunity to be adopted to be His children and heirs of eternal life. But our election is just the beginning of a whole list of blessings that we have in Christ. And so Paul also writes that we have been adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, made wise, we've received eternal life and have become citizens of heaven. In other words, every spiritual blessing that you can think of has been given to you.

And the reason why these blessings have been poured out on us is because Jesus Christ has obtained them for us in His death and resurrection. He has defeated Satan and therefore He is now Lord over heaven and earth. Ephesians 1:20,21 says that God

“... raised Him [Christ] from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”

And because He has all power and authority, Christ is both willing and able to give us every spiritual blessing. And in that context we can understand Ephesians 4:8,

“Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.”

“He led captivity captive”, He bound Satan. The principalities and the powers, all might and dominion, that is the entire spirit world, have been placed under the authority of Jesus Christ, and therefore He is both able and willing to deliver us from the kingdom of Satan and provide us with every spiritual blessing.

And this is all explained further in Ephesians 2:1-10.

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the

exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Allow me to point out a few things in these verses:

1. Verse 2. Before we were made alive, we were dead in our trespasses and sins, and walked “according to the prince of the power of the air.” That is, we once walked in the way of Satan – and those who are not redeemed in Christ *still are* under bondage to Satan; they are called “sons of disobedience”.
2. Verse 3. We “were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” So, if you didn’t get that the first time around, Paul wants to understand it now: Before God rescued us, we were in spiritual bondage to Satan just like everybody else.
3. Verse 5. “By grace you have been saved.” When we were dead in our sins and trespasses, God saved us. It is His work from beginning to end, and salvation is His gracious gift to us.
4. Verse 5,6. “God made us alive *together* with Christ.” And, “and raised us up *together*, and made us sit *together* in the heavenly places.” The word *together* is an important one. It means that whatever we have, we have *in* Christ Jesus. (cf. vs7) and we enjoy it because we are joined together *with* Christ.
5. Verse 6. “and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” In this verse Paul shows us what a massive change has occurred in our lives. Not only have we been delivered from bondage to Satan, but we’ve been given the full rights of sonship. Already now we are called to sit with Christ in the heavenly places. Our new life in Him has already begun.

Let’s now turn to Ephesians 4,5 and 6 (and here I am going to be brief). Chapters 4-6

teach us how to live in the blessings that Christ has obtained for us, and that were described in chapters 1-3. We are to be united together in Christ, putting off the old nature and putting on the new nature, so that we might reflect the God who has saved and adopted us. We are to walk in love, walk in the Light, walk in wisdom. And this walking is not something theoretical; it involves the manner in which wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands are to love their wives. It involves how children are to obey their parents and parents are to instruct them in the way of the Lord. It involves how slaves, and indeed all employees, are to work not for man but for God, and how masters, and all employers, are to reflect their master in heaven. You see, what we *are* in Christ, must affect how we *live* in Christ. What we have *received* in Christ must affect how we *walk* in Christ.

And then comes Ephesians 6:10ff.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

If you look at these verses in the context of what Paul had written earlier to the Ephesians, then you will understand something very important about the topic of spiritual warfare: You are not being told to put on the armour of God and to fight the devil because God needs your help. You are not being told to put on the armour of God because the victory is in doubt. You are not being told to put on the armour of God because Jesus brought you halfway to heaven and now you have to do the rest yourself. But what we are being told in Ephesians 6 is that for us to enjoy the victory that Christ has *already* obtained, we need to be completely united to Him and find our strength in Him. We need to be strong in the Lord. We need to walk in the power of His might.

We need to live in practice what we are in principle.

The armour of God.

So what then is the armour of God that we are told to put on?

If we read the call to put on the armour of God in Ephesians 6 in the context of the whole letter to the Ephesians, especially chapters 1 – 3, then I think that it becomes clear that we are *not* being told to arm ourselves by our own actions, by living a life of truth and righteousness and so forth. Rather, we are called to look *outside* of ourselves, to the One who supplies us with every spiritual blessing. We are called to look to God, the One who provides us with the armour needed to fight in this spiritual war. That's what Ephesians 6:10 tells us:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong *in the Lord* and in the power of *His might*.”

If the armour refers to *our* truthfulness and *our* righteousness, then we would never know if this armour was good enough. But the armour points to *God's* truthfulness and *His* righteousness. He supplies us with this armour needed for spiritual warfare.

And that is why verse 14,15 says,

“Stand therefore, *having* girded your waist with truth, *having* put on the breastplate of righteousness, and *having* shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

We can stand firm, because we have *already* got these things! God has already put this armour in place; all we need to do is use it! We are able to stand before the attacks of Satan because of what God has already done, not because we are confident that we are able to do what God requires. We are then protected by

*God's truth, by God's righteousness and with the gospel of peace, with the faith, the salvation and with the Spirit that are from Him.*¹

Putting on the whole armour of Christ is therefore receiving by faith the things that Christ has obtained for you. It means that when you go out to battle, and Satan throws His arrows at you, and you are faced with great temptations and are almost ready to give in, to surrender to the wiles of the devil, that you stop, and in line with Ephesians 6 you say, "Stand firm! Do not retreat! Don't give up an inch of your ground! Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Forget the strength you thought that you could provide. For you are not wrestling against flesh and blood; you are wrestling against the spiritual hosts of wickedness – your strength would never be enough! But fear not: for Christ has overcome the spiritual hosts of wickedness and in Him God has given you the armour to do the same! The truth of the gospel is yours, around your waist. You have on a breastplate of righteousness, feet that are ready to step out proclaiming the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation. And above all you have the ultimate weapon, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. That's how God has clothed you, has prepared you for this battle. So lift up those feeble hands and strengthen those drooping knees. Don't even think about giving in to the devil with your tail between your legs. For in Christ you are more than conquerors. In Christ you will have victory over the prince of the air, over the rulers of darkness, over the legions of demons who seek to devour you.

Pray!

¹ Bryan Chapell "Reformed Expository Commentary" p340f.

And then, finally, we must pray. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”

Why do we need to pray? Because although there is nothing wrong with our armour, and although the enemy is not too strong (he’s been defeated) there is something wrong with us. In ourselves we are too weak even to stand for a moment². In ourselves, we don’t have the will to do what is right. And therefore we have to pray. Pray for a greater zeal for God. Pray that you might stand firm when the enemy approaches. Pray that you might be watchful and persevere. Pray that you might put on the armour of God that has been provided for you. Pray that you might make use of that armour

Conclusion.

Make no mistake: In this life we are engaged in spiritual warfare. But it is not a matter of God being powerless unless we engage in this warfare. It is not a matter of God depending on us. Rather, it is a matter of us being powerless unless God clothes us with the armour that we urgently need. It is a matter of us depending on God. But thanks be to God: In Jesus Christ we have received the full armour of God. Therefore pray to the Lord that you will use that armour so that you are able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

² Lord’s Day 52.