



# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## *Our Hope is in the Lord*

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Just look at our society these days... Who would have thought we would ever come to this?" These words were uttered and repeated by several of the speakers at the recent Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary conference held in Grand Rapids. Such sentiments were accompanied by a mixture of discouragement and incredulity. On the surface, it is hard to argue with an overall pessimistic view of western civilization.



When I decided to attend this conference (for my encouragement, btw), I realized that I might encounter such pessimism. Realizing that the faculty, the speakers, and many attendees would be amillennialists, I knew what to expect.

These amil brethren are not of the more optimistic type, as articulated by Dr. Cornel Venema of MARS. These are old-school amils, who historically tend to be more pessimistic in their outlook. This in-house difference of perspective within amillennialism is focused mainly on the question, "What are the prospects for the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth in history – leading up to the second coming of Christ?" The old school answer is pessimistic about the advancement of the gospel, citing the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13:24-30.

In response, the more optimistic amils and their postmillennial cousins

emphasize the hopefulness of the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, in Matthew 13:31-33. They anticipate that the kingdom of Christ will steadily advance on earth within history, as the church labors to make

the nations into disciples of Jesus Christ, obeying whatsoever He has commanded. Though not without setbacks, the expectation is for growth and progress over time.

Thus the first half of the conference was fairly pessimistic and pretty disappointing to my soul. The exasperation over "how bad things now have become" cast a gray cloud over the gathering. I am happy to report that the skies cleared and the sun came out again for the second half of the conference – particularly when Dr. Beeke spoke, and then during a talk on "The Final Victory" by the Rev. David Strain.

All of this left me pondering the question, "Where is our hope found?" The answer to that question is simple: Our hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrected, glorified, exalted, ascended, and triumphant King of kings and Lord of lords.

If I had to choose one verse that sums up our hope, it would be 1 Corinthians 15:25 *For He must reign until He has put all His*

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### Mnemonics...

- *Pitch-in-supper, September 7th*
- *Presbytery meeting, September 14th*
- *Meadowview Manor, September 16th*
- *Worldview movie night, September 28th*

# What is Sanctification?

BY: NATHAN W. BINGHAM



According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (Q. 35), sanctification is “the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

The basic meaning of “sanctify” is to set apart to God, for His use. But God works in those whom He claims as His own to conform them “to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). This moral renovation, in which we are increasingly changed from what we once were, flows from the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:11, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22–24; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 13:20, 21). God calls His children to holiness, and graciously gives what He commands (1 Thess. 4:4; 5:23).

Regeneration is birth; sanctification is growth. In regeneration, God implants desires that were not there before: desire for God, for holiness, and for glorifying God’s name in the world; desire to pray and worship; desire to love and bring benefit to others. In sanctification, the Holy Spirit “works in you, both to will and to work” according to God’s purpose, enabling His people to fulfill their new, godly desires (Phil. 2:12, 13). Christians become increasingly Christlike, as the moral profile of Jesus (the “fruit of the Spirit”) is progressively formed in them (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; 5:22–25).

Regeneration is a momentary act, bringing a person from spiritual death to life. It is exclusively God’s work. Sanctification is an ongoing process, dependent on God’s continuing action in the believer, and consisting of the believer’s continuous struggle against sin. God’s method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), but human effort dependent on God (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10–14; Heb. 12:14). Knowing that without Christ’s enabling we cannot do good works, but also that He is ready to strengthen us for all we have to do (Phil. 4:13), we “abide” in Christ, asking for His help constantly—and we receive it (Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:1).

The standard to which God’s work of sanctifying His saints is directed is His own revealed moral law, expounded and modeled by Christ Himself. Christ’s love, humility, and patience are a supreme standard for Christians (Rom. 13:10; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5–11; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Believers find within themselves contrary urgings. The Spirit sustains their regenerate desires and purposes, but their fallen instincts (the “flesh”) obstruct their path and drag them back. The conflict of these two is sharp. Paul says he is unable to do what is right, and unable to restrain himself from doing what is wrong (Rom. 7:14–25). This conflict and frustration will be with Christians as long as they are in the body. Yet by watching and praying against temptation, and cultivating opposite virtues, they may through the Spirit’s help “put to death” particular bad habits (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). They will experience many particular deliverances and victories in their battle with sin, while not being exposed to temptations that are impossible to resist (1 Cor. 10:13).

# Facing the Unexpected on Short-Term Missions Trips

By Ben Hopp



People travel on short-term mission trips for all kinds of reasons. Some want to experience the mission field. Others desire to help and serve missionary families and the local people. Others desire to see new and exotic locations, wondering whether God might be calling them to a life of service in missions. Over the 11 years we have been hosting short-term teams in Haiti, we can safely say all our teams have had a good experience. We are thankful for the ways they have helped us and the ministry to the people of Haiti. They have loved the saints here and have certainly been able to experience new things. Short-term team members have been an important part of the work of the OPC Haiti Mission.

However, for short-term teams traveling to underdeveloped countries, your trip might end up being expressed this way, “It was an incredible experience, BUT...” That “BUT” may take many forms. In places like Haiti, events can quickly take a turn toward the unexpected. Your well-planned trip might not turn out exactly as you anticipated. Uncertainty can create a level of stress and anxiety that far exceeds that of mere culture shock.

## **SICKNESS**

The first “BUT” or uncertainty that you may experience on a trip is sickness. Tropical countries in the Caribbean and in Africa are home to many insect- and water-borne diseases such as malaria and hepatitis. You are required to prepare for the trip by getting the proper inoculations before you leave, and by bringing appropriate medications with you to prevent these serious illnesses.

The real danger may actually be much more mundane - untreated water and ice. Missionaries endeavor to ensure what you are eating and drinking is safe, but intestinal issues can still hit you. You want to travel out with the team but you’re stuck back at team housing because you need to be close to a restroom. Being laid aside for a day or two may not be what you envisioned for your trip, but it does happen. Most mild illnesses can be treated without a doctor’s visit. But if something more serious were to arise on a trip, there is often limited access to medical care. A 60-minute drive to the hospital is not unrealistic. We are grateful that the Lord has provided the proper care required when isolated medical emergencies have occurred. Accidents do happen, so team members need to understand how limited hospital access may be.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The second “BUT” is transportation. Countries like Haiti have very little infrastructure. “Roads” may be nothing more than a cattle path. As much as your back (or bottom) is sore after riding on the rough “roads” of La Gonâve, imagine the punishment the vehicle takes on every trip. This means breakdowns are inevitable. It might be a flat tire requiring a quick 20 minute tire change. Or it might be something more serious like the Kawasaki Mule overheating 40 minutes from home, which occurred during this year’s Team Haiti trip. While we do perform comprehensive preventive maintenance on our vehicles, the unexpected can happen and change our plans. Praise the Lord that he always provides those who are more than willing to help figure out the issue and get us home safely.

## **SECURITY**

The third, and perhaps most important “BUT,” is the issue of security. You come from a home country where the rule of law and personal security are maintained at a very high level. This is not the case in many of the countries where short-term teams travel. And this has been our experience over the years in Haiti. Your missionaries take the security of the team very seriously. We evaluate the situation on the ground and use information coming from places like the local embassies before you even get on the plane. If things are uncertain, we reschedule or cancel the trip.

Our priority while you are on the ground is to make sure you have a safe experience. An important resource in maintaining your security is the wisdom of the missionaries who live full-time on the mission field. As a team member, you may be completely oblivious to any security risks happening around you

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## Short Term Missions Continued...

because your missionaries on the field have shielded you from them. But when insecurity does arise while a team is in country, the missionaries put plan A and then plan B into action. If those plans are not viable, they prayerfully work on a plan C. It is their goal to ensure the team's safety until they arrive home safely and securely by an alternate method.

On the day Team Haiti 2018 was due to depart, roadblocks and demonstrations began popping up all over Haiti. The team was due to travel out of Port-au-Prince on an early morning flight. Plan A was for the team to head to the airport with our Haitian transportation company. Unfortunately, that didn't materialize because their mini-bus was blocked by a demonstration an hour away. Plan B was for Ben and the team to squeeze into our truck and head to the airport. But, as they soon found out, the only road leading to the airport was blocked and impassable. It was safer to return to the Kaliko Mission compound and make new plans. After evaluating the situation based on embassy intel, Haitian newsfeeds, and other missionary updates, it was determined that it was unsafe to try to make it to Port-au-Prince by road that day. The missionaries knew from years of experience that these situations do not often blow over in 24 hours. So the team canceled their early morning flight and had their tickets credited toward future travel. When it was discovered that enough seats were available on a late afternoon flight, it was decided the best course of action would be to try to get the team out that same day. Plan C was put in action. The team was transported by air from a local helipad straight to the international airport. In God's mercy, they made the flight and did arrive safely in Fort Lauderdale later that evening.

While you prepare for a short-term mission trip, keep these three "BUT"s in mind. Prayerfully ask the Lord to guide the team safely on their trip. Pray for wisdom for the missionaries on the field to accurately evaluate the security climate in the country. Pray for team members to prepare medically for the trip based on what the missionaries and the Center for Disease Control require for that country. Pray for grace and strength to be flexible and trust God when the unexpected does happen. Enjoy yourself and may these and other "BUT"s be non-existent on your missions trip.

Visit [www.opcstm.org](http://www.opcstm.org) to learn more about short-term missions in the OPC!



## Report from Elijah and Greta

As the second year of Seminary draws quickly near, Greta and I would like to send greetings to our family in Christ at Grace Church, and give you a brief update of our year so far!

The 2017-18 semesters came and went with many sleepless nights, but overall the school year was a very positive and beneficial experience! On campus they have between 3-7 hours of class each day, and there are daily chapel messages, weekly prayer groups, and bi-weekly discipleship meetings. During my first two semesters of seminary, I grew both in spiritual maturity and theological knowledge, and also in my relationship with Christ.

Then, starting in May, I started a three month internship at New Covenant, OPC in Joliet, IL that included teaching Sunday School, preparing and delivering six sermons, leading parts of worship services, and also leading an evangelism hour at a homeless mission in Joliet. I also met regularly with Pastor Bruce Hollister.

At the beginning of June, I took a 3 week break for our wedding and honeymoon. Marrying Greta is a development that dramatically changed my life for the better!!! Greta and I have been attending New Covenant since our marriage, but not a week goes by without us fondly remembering our friends at Grace!

We would like to thank you so much for all the support and encouragement you have shown us, and all the prayer that you have lifted up in our behalf! You are truly a blessing to us, and we cannot wait to come and worship with you again soon!

In Christ,

Elijah and Greta DeJong



*2018 Women's Presbyterial*  
***Through love,  
serve one another***  
***Speaker: David p. nakhla***  
*opc short term missions*  
& Disaster response coordinator

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**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2018**

**9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

**WESTMINSTER OPC**

**6871 JOLIET ROAD, INDIAN HEAD PARK, IL**

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Continental breakfast and Lunch will be served.  
Accommodations and nursery available.

A collection will be taken for a donation to Ministry to Refugees in Clarkston, GA and to cover travel expenses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: PAULA FRY [4FRYZMOM@GMAIL.COM](mailto:4FRYZMOM@GMAIL.COM)

# John Ploughman

## Chapter 23: Monuments

Every man should leave a monument behind in the recollection of his life by his neighbors. There's something very much amiss about a man who is not missed when he dies. A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots are withered; Carve your name on hearts and not on marble. So live towards others that they will keep your memory green when the grass grows on your grave. Let us hope there will be something better to be said about us than of the man whose epitaph is:

"Here lies a man who did no good,  
And if he'd lived he never would;  
Where he's gone, and how he fares,  
Nobody knows and nobody cares."

May our friends never remember us as; great gormandizers of meat and drink, like this glutton over whose grave is written:

"Gentle reader, gentle reader,  
Look on the spot where I do lie,  
I always a very good feeder,  
But now the worms do feed on I."

As much as that might be said of a prize; pig or a fat bullock if it died of disease. Some men are nothing better than walking bee barrels while they live; when death staves in the cask, they deserve to rot out of notice.

However, a plain-speaking tombstone better than downright lying. To put flattery a grave is like pouring melted butter down a stone sink. What queer tastes those must have; who puff up the departed as if they wanted to blow the trumpet of the dead before the last angel makes his appearance! Here's an apple out of their basket:

"Here lies the body of Martha Gwyn,  
Who was so very pure within;  
She cracked the outer shell of sin,  
And hatched herself a cherubim."

Where do they bury the bad people? Everywhere in our churchyard, they seem all to have been the best of folks, a regular nest of saints. Some of them were so precious good, it is no wonder they died: they were too fine to live in such a wicked world as this. Better give bread to the poor than stones to the dead. Better kind words to the living than fine speeches over the grave. Some of the lavish stuff on monuments is enough to make a dead man blush.

What heaps of marble are stuck over many people's tombs, half enough to build a house with! What a lift they will have at the resurrection! It makes me feel as if I could not get my breath to think of all those stones being: heaped on my bones—not that there's any fear of it. Let the earth which I have tilled over so often lie light upon my corpse when it is turned over me. Let John Ploughman be buried somewhere under the boughs of a spreading beech with a green grass mound above him, out of which primroses and daisies peep in their season—a quiet shady spot where the leaves fall, and the robins play, and the dewdrops gleam in the sunshine. Let the wind blow fresh and free over my grave, and if there must be a line about me, let it be:

HERE LIES THE BODY OF JOHN PLOUGHMAN  
WAITING FOR THE APPEARING OF

*Continued on next page...*

## Ploughman Continued....

## HIS LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

I've often heard tell of patience on a monument, but I have never seen it sitting there when I have gone through churchyards. I have a good many times seen stupidity on a monument, and I have wondered why the parson, or the churchwarden, or the deacon, or whoever else has the ruling of things let people cut such rubbish on the stones. Why, a londershire man told me that at Dymock graveyard there's a writing like this:

"Two sweeter babes you ne'er did see—  
Than God's grace gave to we;  
But they were taken with ague fits,  
And here they lie as dead as nits."

I've read pretty near enough silly things myself in our Surrey burying grounds to fill a book. Better leave the grave alone than set up a monument to your own ignorance.

Of all places for jokes and fun, the strangest are tombstones. Yet many a time grave stones have had such oddities carved upon them that one is led to surmise that the nearer the church, the further from common decency. This is a cruel verse, but I dare say a true one:

"Here lies, returned to clay,  
Miss Arabella Young,  
Who on the first day of May—  
Began to hold her tongue."

This is not much better:

"Upjohn Adams lies here, of the parish of Southwell,  
A carrier who carried his can to his mouth well;  
He carried so much, and he carried so fast,  
He could carry no more, so was carried at last;  
For the liquor he drunk was too much for the one,  
He could not carry off, so he's now carrion."

Why could not these people poke their fun somewhere else? A man's wit must be nearly dead when he can find no place for it but the grave. The body of the most ragged beggar is too sacred a thing to crack jokes upon. What a odd fish must Roger Martin have been, who lived in Walworth, and put on his wife's tomb:

"Here lies the wife of Roger Martin,  
She was a good wife to Roger—that's sartin."

And whoever was the foolish creature at Ockham, one of the prettiest spots in these; parts, who wrote these outrageous lines?

"The Lord saw good,  
I was topping off wood,  
And down fell from the tree;  
I met with a check,  
And I broke my blessed neck,  
And so death topped off me."

There, that's enough, and quite as good as a feast. Here's proof positive that some fools are left alive

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## Ploughman Continued....

to write on the monuments of those who are buried. Well may there be ghosts about. No wonder the sleepers get out of bed when they are so badly tucked in. I say let us have a law to let nobody put nonsense over the dead unless he likes to take out a certificate to be an ass, just like the license to shoot partridges and pheasants. At the same time, let all puffery be saved for dressmakers' shops quack doctors, and none be allowed at grave. I say as our minister does:

"Let no proud stone with sculptured virtues rise,  
To mark the spot wherein a sinner lies,  
Or if some boast must deck the sinner's grave,  
Boast of His love who died lost man to save."

One more Surrey rhyme, and John Ploughman leaves the churchyard to go about work and turn up other sods. It is ill Saviours, Southwark, and is, I think a rare good one.

"Like to the damask rose you see,  
Or like the blossom on the tree,  
Or like the dainty flower of May,  
Or like the sun of the day,  
Or like the sun, or like the shade,  
Or like the gourd which Jonah had;  
Even so is man, Whose thread is spun,  
Draw out, and cut, and so is done:  
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,  
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,  
The sun sets, the shadow flies,  
The gourd consumes, and man he dies."

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## Pine Haven Autumn Festival



Join the Women's Auxiliary  
on [September 8](#) from 1:30 - 6pm at  
our annual Autumn Festival -  
featuring a brat fry, baked goods,  
crafts and music from the Big Cedar  
Bluegrass Band, held at Pine Haven's  
new Haven Drive campus  
community center.



# September Birthdays

Howard Voskuil	7th
Mark Berenschot	12th
Elizabeth TenPas	16th
Kristen Berenschot	22nd
Virginia Berenschot	22nd
Stephanie Friberg	22nd
Joshua Arndt	25th



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## *September Anniversaries*

Carl & Phyllis Nyhof  
~September 3rd, 52 years~

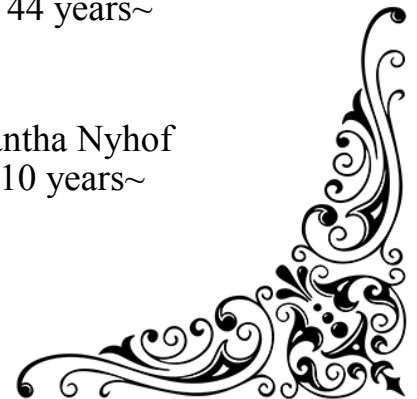
Jonny and Alyssa Arndt  
~September 24th, 2 years~

Harlan & Nancy Harmelink  
~September 4th~

Paul & Linda Damkot  
~September 28th, 44 years~

Roger & Deborah Arndt  
~September 23rd, 35 years~

Rodney and Samantha Nyhof  
~September 6th, 10 years~





*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*

# September 2018

Grace OPC



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 Prayer meeting	6	7 Pitch-in-supper, 6:30pm	8
9	10	11 Session meeting	12 Prayer meeting	13	14 Presbytery Meeting	15
16 Meadowview Manor	17	18	19 Prayer meeting	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Prayer meeting	27	28 Worldview Movie Night, 7pm	29
30						

# Toffee Caramel Ice Cream Pie

## Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 cups chocolate graham cracker crumbs (about 8 whole crackers)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 egg white, beaten
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 4 cups fat-free vanilla frozen yogurt, softened
- 2 English toffee candy bars (1.4 ounces each), coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup caramel ice cream topping



## Directions

In a small bowl, combine cracker crumbs and sugar; stir in egg white and butter. Press onto the bottom and up the sides of a 9-in. pie plate coated with cooking spray. Bake at 375° for 6-8 minutes or until set. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Spread 2-2/3 cups frozen yogurt into the crust. Sprinkle with half of toffee bits; drizzle with half of caramel. Repeat with the remaining yogurt, toffee and caramel. Cover and freeze for 8 hours or overnight. Remove from the freezer 15 minutes before serving.

*“For He  
has satisfied  
the thirsty soul,  
and the  
hungry soul  
He has filled  
with what  
is good.”*

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## Pitch-in-Supper



On Friday night at the annual Church campout, we will have our pitch-in supper. The meal will be served at 6:30 pm. If the weather is good, it will be at campsite 215 in the new section. In the event of rain, check with Pastor Brian or DeLou.



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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## Spurgeon Corner

*“Except ye see signs and wonders,  
ye will not believe.”*

*John 4:48*

A craving after marvels was a symptom of the sickly state of men’s minds in our Lord’s day; they refused solid nourishment, and pined after mere wonder. The gospel which they so greatly needed they would not have; the miracles which Jesus did not always choose to give they eagerly demanded. Many nowadays must see signs and wonders, or they will not believe. Some have said in their heart, “I must feel deep horror of soul, or I never will believe in Jesus.” But what if you never should feel it, as probably you never may? Will you go to hell out of spite against God, because he will not treat you like another? One has said to himself, “If I had a dream, or if I could feel a sudden shock of I know not what,

then I would believe.” Thus you undeserving mortals dream that my Lord is to be dictated to by you! You are beggars at his gate, asking for mercy, and you must needs draw up rules and regulations as to how he shall give that mercy. Think you that he will submit to this? My Master is of a generous spirit, but he has a right royal heart, he spurns all dictation, and maintains his sovereignty of action. Why, dear reader, if such be your case, do you crave for signs and wonders? Is not the gospel its own sign and wonder? Is not this a miracle of miracles, that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish”? Surely that precious word, “Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely” and that solemn promise, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” are better than signs and wonders! A truthful Saviour ought to be believed. He is truth itself. Why will you ask proof of the veracity of One who cannot lie? The devils themselves declared him to be the Son of God; will you mistrust him?

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**SERMONAUDIO.COM/  
GRACESHEBOYGAN**

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

**GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM**



Evening, September 2nd, C.H. Spurgeon

## Front Page Concluded...

*enemies under His feet.*

That verse recognizes an indisputable fact that is equally appreciated by amils and postmils – that Jesus Christ is currently reigning as King on the throne of heaven. His kingdom began during his earthly life and ministry and it continues through today. It will persist until the end of the world, when he returns to deal with the final enemy – death itself.

So between his inauguration some 2000 years ago, and his second coming at the close of history, what is He doing? What is His program? How does He occupy His time? Simply put, He is reigning over His glorious kingdom, and that includes subduing all of His and our enemies. He is actively and progressively putting His enemies under His feet.

So to the pessimistic refrain, “Look at how bad things are in society today...” I can reply, “My hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ, who knows His enemies and is actively subduing them.”

Isn’t this exactly what we pray for in the Lord’s prayer when we say, “Thy kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...” Don’t our hearts long to see every knee bow and to hear every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father?

So resting in the promises of God’s word concerning the glorious victory of the Son of God, I have hope. No matter how bad things are in our world, Jesus is still on His throne, and He carries out His purposes, and He subdues His enemies!