

**Do you not know that we shall judge angels?**

I Corinthians 6:3

## Judging Angels

Excerpted from Pastor Murphy's Sermon<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning was God, triune and self-sufficient in his mutual love. That's the earliest beginning we can handle. I grant you it's a lot to start with. You may find it terribly rich for a beginning, but I maintain that it's as far back as human thought can go and return with anything satisfactory. So it's a practical place to begin. If we accept it as a gift, we will find that to get from there to everything will be relatively easy, using the currency it provides and applying everyday metaphors well-suited to human thinking. We don't have to be mathematicians or cosmogonist or atheists. All we have to do is spend what we are given and steer clear of pitfalls. (I'll explain about pitfalls later.)

By definition, God created the cosmos we know—including its chronology. When he chooses to give us a glimpse of how and why he did it, that's delightful. But where he is silent—I don't think he minds if we use our imaginations. We can amuse ourselves by guessing what fills in gaps as long as we respect the principles established by what he has told us.

Being the originator of everything means .... Well, how can I put it? It means he had a plan; there was a potential—yes, obviously he knew what he wanted to do. But that's not getting near the height

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1. The following essay explaining the war in heaven is intended to fit with common Christian doctrine; however, it must be understood as a poetic interpolation and not be taken too literally.

and breadth and depth and width and length of things. I'm not sure how to express it. There was a potential in him that goes so far beyond my understanding that .... Well, in the beginning God was pregnant with creative, loving potential. How's that? That's about as good as I can do. No, let me take it a step further: he being the source of who we understand ourselves to be—creative beings able to choose to relate to him in love—we must allow that his creative potential was a potential for potentials: self-actualizing potentials approaching divinity in themselves. In other words, God's essential love works out to be a desire to share something extremely appealing: something of himself and something fundamentally interesting to himself. He would create not simply life; it would be life-changing life with the potential to change even *his* life! And so it did, starting in times and places we know nothing about, even before the creation of our universe insofar as it appears to us.

Now it's easy to see that this high order of creation called for Wisdom,<sup>2</sup> for it carried within itself wide-ranging possibilities—even destructive possibilities. The offspring of this primordial Wisdom was a keen and ever-present fear of the Lord—a reminder to maintain dependence on him in case there should come a time when a reminder would be needed. For, you see, the free life of creative beings was pregnant with its own potential, which included the potential to create self-satisfying centers of love. Wisdom knew there would be needed at those particular points a regulation planted in the form of a visible reminder; it had to be spelled out as a commandment: devotion to the Lord must never be compromised

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2. "The Lord fathered me [Wisdom] before the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the very first, before the beginning of the earth." See Proverbs 8:22-31.

by devotion to anyone or anything else, not even the creature's own self.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,  
and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

The corollary to this is mandatory obedience: maintaining and guarding one's desire to follow specific instructions.

God knew that the need for a reminder of this Law would become acute at certain times and places, so he wrote down several example applications for the benefit of those who would explore the far reaches of their freedom. The relationship of the creature to the Law is what we call moral awareness: recognition of the Law in all of its applications. Volitional beings are created moral beings subject to observing the Law. In the language of morality, violation of the Law is sin. And when it would get down to that, the Law would have to be enforceable; there had to be an effective penalty. Nothing had been overlooked: there was an intrinsic penalty, and it was recorded in literal form as a warning for use on all occasions.

In the day that thou [insert specific disobedience]  
thou shalt surely die.

It may seem harsh, and it is. But it simply reflects the reality that modifying with one's proper orbit about the Lord quickly makes it a trajectory leading to separation from the essential sustainment of life. Like creation itself, disobedience cannot be undone, and it carries forth its own destructive potentials. Sin is inherently destructive to the sinner—and loss to the Creator.

It has been discovered by scientists that anything lacking what we call physical mass is timeless. Physical mass is a property of the

matter our physical bodies are made of. But we are complex beings—composite beings—even sharing a bit of divine potential ourselves. Our physical bodies are manifestations in matter of a grand design that is not limited to physical expression: in our essence we are not merely physical matter; the usual term is *spirit*. Spirit, being massless, cannot die in the sense of ceasing to exist in time, for its existence is rooted outside of what we call time and space. Therefore, this death penalty would be a death in terms of another form of separation. The Lord provided for this "eventuality," making a place for the exile of spirits who not only disobey but consequently come to prefer living independently of him. We call it a "place" metaphorically; in reality it is unimaginable. Apparently it is not a place of comfort, for by various metaphors we are led to picture hell as outer darkness where regret burns like never ending fire. Its significance must not be minimized; for notwithstanding its mysterious nature, hell was intended to stand as a prominent pole of reference on the moral landscape.

With all this infrastructure in place and the loving potential of the Creator unfolding, there must have been epochs and dramas unknown to us. One can well imagine heavenly harmony after the Lord established his throne, ruling over all, his angels and mighty ones obeying the voice of his word; all of his hosts, his ministers, doing his will in all places of his dominion.<sup>3</sup> The time frame of this would not necessarily be in accord with ours; nevertheless, we can imagine heaven's activities by analogy.

One of the splendid angels, the first of the created beings per-

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3. cf Psalm 103:19-22.

haps,<sup>4</sup> a mighty one called Satan, made his mark by transgressing the Law. Presumably he was the first to do so. As he appears on the pages of Scripture, he exhibits an extraordinarily ambitious and independent outlook, even questioning the wisdom of the Lord who made him.<sup>5</sup> Satan evidently took issue with the legitimacy of the Law: there was no doubting the fact that he had transgressed;<sup>6</sup> that was not in question. Therefore, the issue must have concerned the Law itself.<sup>7</sup>

The most fundamental question would be this: is it possible for a creature endowed with freedom to be perfectly devoted to another? Satan said, "no": a free agent will need to be primarily concerned with his own affairs and will choose a path in life suiting his unique abilities. Exhibit A was a crowd of nervous angels who had followed his lead in that direction.<sup>8</sup>

Now, Satan was incredibly beautiful and powerful,<sup>9</sup> which naturally incited admiration on the part of others; there was no avoiding that. Quite properly, the primary element of that admiration was directed toward the Lord who had made them. One day Satan stole a little taste of it for himself and discovered what heady stuff it was. It intoxicated him with illicit self esteem, which led him to reinterpret the Law in order to allow himself a regular sip out of the forbidden fountain of praise. But he took increasingly greater drafts and finally drank deeply. Not only had he stolen influence

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4. Called "Son of dawn" and "light bearer" (or Lucifer) in Isaiah 14:12.

5. See Job 1:9-11 and Isaiah 14:13,14.

6. See Ezekiel 28:15.

7. Any similarities between this interpolation and Ellen G. White's *The Great Controversy between Christ and his Angels and Satan and his Angels* are coincidental.

8. See Revelation 12:7-9.

9. See Ezekiel 28:17.

by accepting praise belonging to his Master, he came to believe that such was rightfully his and began to act in such a way that he attracted dedicated followers and established a cult religion with himself at the center. He became god to those admiring angels.

Satan challenged the Law that forbade what he had done on the basis of it being impossible for a free-willed being to obey it perfectly; hence it was unjust. It might well have seemed so to him. Regardless, his campaign to strike down the Law was his bid for survival. Becoming a criminal at heart had corrupted his judgment: he became confident of winning his case.

Evidently, Satan's Maker had no evidence to prove that Satan was wrong, for he was not immediately arrested. Instead, the Lord somehow barred the remaining unfallen angels from falling under Satan's sway. Or perhaps the faithful angels were of a different kind, not created with quite the same propensity for independence. The Lord did retain a loyal army of angelic beings who apparently were steadfast in their devotion to him. But they must not have possessed the order of volition (or been exposed to the circumstances of temptation) necessary to prove that perfect obedience to the Law would have been possible for one such as Satan; otherwise, there would have been no contest. In short, the court of heaven was left without evidence that perfect conformity to the Law was possible—that is for a free-willed being with such potential as Satan had.

In an attempt to mask his addiction, Satan devised a method for entrapping his followers and at the same time avoiding the appearance of owning their devotion—unlike the direct method of his Maker, which he was calling a mistake. Satan's system distanced him from being their object of adoration by supporting the individ-

ual's right to his own sovereignty. "Know thyself" was the creed he taught them, and they pursued wisdom within and proudly paraded that banner far and wide.

The outcome of Satan's dispute with the Almighty would forever change heaven and earth. If he proved his case, the Law would have to be declared unjust and therefore null and void, which would leave devils at large, free to act in their own interest—even to challenge God for supremacy in other arenas. If he lost the argument, he would have to be separated from the rest of creation—along with his fallen followers—and be confined to perdition where his harm would be curtailed.

Even more importantly, the contest would prove (or disprove) the possibility of there being sinless moral agents who are truly free. The importance of this is easy to see when you consider that if such free and holy beings were to exist, they would attain to the possibility of rising to a level above even the faithful angels: if their obedience were motivated by love, not simply fear or limitation, they would be compatible with the trinity of Love who is God himself. On such an elevated plane, conceivably they could be adopted as the extended family of the Godhead. I believe this was his purpose from the beginning.

In response to the irreverent assertion that strict obedience to the Law was an impossibility, the Lord set out to demonstrate that Satan was wrong and in the process to produce the obedient, loving family he desired. But it took some time, and during that interval Satan became a dreadful devil and used every means at his disposal to derail the demonstration.

The Author of Creation proceeded with his plan by designing our

material world as a virtual universe for Satan and his angels.<sup>10</sup> I suspect that they messed around and did nothing but complain about how hard it was to make a planet until the Spirit stepped in with the Son and following the Father's six-day design showed the angels how it was done. It did not seem fitting, no matter how well everything turned out, that the Creator would make creatures in his own image, male and female, using the dust of planet Earth. But so he did, and the animation he achieved when the breath of the Spirit entered the first Adam would have been something to see. This composite being was a new thing to be reckoned with. Nevertheless, due to Satan's meddling, the first couple fell into sin and became his exhibit B, giving him a great company of witnesses should the race become fruitful and multiply. However, surely he knew that since he had become the father of fallen humanity,<sup>11</sup> exhibit B would add but little to his testimony in the court of justice.

Perhaps Satan felt this was too easy and suspected that his old Master had something up his sleeve. At any rate, he continued to run his temptation business, seeking to counteract the Lord's every move—especially when obedience was blessed with offspring, for he thought the plan was to gradually evolve a sinless human being.

"Have you noticed my servant Job?" the Lord asked Satan one day. "He is a blameless and upright man."

As the story goes, Satan got permission to afflict Job just short of taking his life. Superficially this was a test to prove to Satan that Job would not turn against his Maker even under such a trial.<sup>12</sup> But Job

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10. See Revelation 12:9.

11. See John 8:44.

12. Job's perseverance apparently surprised Satan.



was not a sinless human being by the strict definition of the Law, so Satan understood that no claim was being made that Job's behavior would settle the argument. The purpose of this episode was to inform suffering humanity that it was not the target of every calamity: there was a larger conflict going on, and mankind was caught in the middle. God was sending a message, telling us that he is compassionate and there would be a rewarding outcome in spite of appearances.

I imagine that Satan was taken aback when the Holy Spirit got cozy with some of the wayward humans and whispered to them in dreams and spoke to them in visions of a time when a Deliverer would make peace and prosperity on earth—a time when people would naturally recognize and worship their God in truth. They certainly needed that encouragement. But to Satan it must have been unnerving that the Lord's prediction had sin-sodden humanity rising to that level. In his reckless, devilish manner he spread the word that the prophecies were not to be taken literally. Nevertheless, the Hebrew prophets and scribes were faithful to record the Spirit's words, the history of God's dealings with them, and the ruin brought about by the deceiver when he drew their worship to himself. Those Scriptures stand as testimony to the folly of ignoring the Law.

Then the Lord made his second astonishing move: he himself took the form of a human. Through a virgin Jewish mother he appeared as Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Son of God the Father; and he announced that he himself was the Messiah, the promised Deliverer. Now the right arm of the Lord had been revealed, and the reason he had made humans in his own image became clear: it made this incarnation possible. The purpose in his long, patient work with

the Chosen People also became clear when he picked this particular girl, choosing to join with her genes and inhabit her womb. The rules about diet and cleanliness and marriage had a high purpose.

But Satan saw the weakness of it, and furthermore it presented him with an opportunity he never expected. Here was his rival, hobbled in the form of frail human flesh, subject to hunger, thirst and all manner of pain, dwelling among sinners in devil's territory, and vulnerable to every temptation. Surely he could tempt Jesus and make him take his eyes off his heavenly Father. He had done it with angels in the holy halls of heaven. In the wilderness of Sinai it would be a piece of cake. The unexpected bonus was due to the other side of Jesus' nature, and the boon was almost beyond belief: if he succeeded in getting him to break the Law, God himself would have failed to keep his own commandment, and the case would be closed immediately in Satan's favor without any possibility of it ever being reopened.

For the one born of the virgin was none other than the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation by whom and for whom all things were created—visible and invisible, physical and spiritual, powers temporal and heavenly; nothing was created that was not made by him. In him the fullness of God is pleased to dwell, and by him all things hold together.<sup>13</sup>

Satan should have known (and would have known had he not been enthralled by his prospects) that the Son would withstand the temptations. Even so, the court would not be convinced by a relatively short life, no matter how perfect; there would still be many chances for misstep on the Messiah's part.

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13. cf Colossians 1:15-19.

But then Jesus began to speak of his own death. Apparently, he was not going to carry through with his promise to be the Savior of the world and the anointed King of Israel. Here was a paradox: the environment into which he had submitted himself would not allow him to fulfill his promise. The corruption of the religious leaders was such that it would be unlikely that Jesus would live long enough to carry out his purposed deliverance of Israel. There must be some other reason for what he was doing: it was not in the character of Jesus to be defeated in that manner. Nevertheless, Satan could only see it as a boon to his cause—Jesus of Nazareth would be imperfect, having failed to carry out the promise and so be disqualified.

So Satan eagerly lined up his agents to perform the execution of the failed Messiah. Only after this had been set in motion did he recall the rest of the prophecy: Isaiah had been told that it was the Father's will that he should die. Jesus would be obeying his Father in this ultimate test. This was the crux of the matter. He had turned the tables on Satan; this was actually a necessary step in perfecting the evidence against him. When Jesus willingly went through with the painful death of crucifixion, it proved his perfect obedience and demonstrated that obedience to the Law was possible. The Law would stand, and the end of the war would be at hand—but only if Jesus somehow could go on to fulfill the Messianic promise. It still looked like Satan would win.

At the same time, Jesus did something else that turned out to be the greatest wonder of all. Being the God-man forged as both creator and creature, he disbursed his sinless life in the flesh: he gave it away to unfaithful mankind, making them sinless and making himself responsible, effectively making himself the sinner—paying the

ransom with his own blood, as it were, for human sinners. Thus another purpose came to light. The death penalty came into force, joining the Father's will as the reason for the crucifixion. He died in obedience, and he died for the sins of those he saved from death.

But death is death and hell is hell, and Jesus' career as the Messiah was cut short. Not only that, the Godhead had suffered a loss for which the redeemed of mankind were a poor substitute. In fact, the redeemed could not survive: what good is a body without a head? Jesus carried deadly baggage: the sins of the world. That meant he must join Satan in hell by the Law that he had just defended. Jesus had won the victory in order to secure peace in heaven, but at what cost? Could it be a colossal mistake on the part of the Father?

Some of the people on the scene were perplexed as well. They remembered Jesus' shocking words equating himself with the Father; they had felt the earthquake and seen the darkness after the crucifixion. Had God in the flesh been defeated by his enemies? No, that would be a contradiction. The only rational explanation was that Jesus was mistaken about whom he was.

But Satan and the angels knew better. While people on earth mourned or rejoiced, angels held their breath. Undoubtedly they would have been in shock had it not been for the Scriptures—which heaven knew to be true even when earth doubted. There were prophecies about victory and even that Messiah would defeat death. Jesus had predicted it—in the hearing of his disciples who hardly knew what he was talking about.

On Sunday, the first day of the next week, his tomb was found empty by women who were close to him. Later Jesus appeared and walked among his followers exactly as he had predicted. The Head

of the ransomed body was alive and well; the groom had substituted his own blood where the unfaithful bride had none, saving her from execution. The blood of the God-man was potent and precious; his resurrection proved it to be life-giving blood, and it became the very currency of salvation, imputing new and eternal life to each ransomed soul. Thus began the full revelation of what we call the grace of God. The glory of it overshadowed the fact that the Messianic fulfillment had again become a possibility. At this point Satan knew he had lost,<sup>14</sup> and out of spite he whispered to the saints that fulfillment of the prophecy was no longer required.

There was something unique about Christ that was closely tied to his self-existence. We say, "death couldn't hold him." We must not take this too lightly; it was real, not a trick: he died spiritually, not just physically. His escape from hell was not a jailbreak: there was no escape; escape from hell is impossible. It was an act of regeneration, a new creation in freedom. We were born anew in him and he in us: the old passed away; all became new.<sup>15</sup> Here is the only release from our sentence to hell: regeneration to new life, not reformation of the old. This is the kernel of true religion, and any religion that does not lead to regeneration, but teaches instead that sin can be reversed or balanced or indulged by penance will end in disappointment.

He bought souls from the captivity of death by his own death and took them captive to life by his own regeneration. This immediately transferred a great number from Satan's company into God's own—souls whom Satan had expected to master in hell should he lose the

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14. See Ephesians 3:10.

15. cf Second Corinthians 5:17.

contest and be forced to take up his residence there. It also began an extension of God's own family, thus fulfilling his original purpose in creation: free moral beings joined to him in love to be enjoyed forever—and faithful servants for the government of the Kingdom to come. Everything had been turned inside out: the means turned out to be the end that had been planned from the beginning.

There is another strand in the story. Like all of the strands it seems to be of utmost importance when you consider it carefully. I'm referring to his Chosen People, the descendants of Jacob called Israel. They have a unique place in the heart of God. After all, Jesus was born a Jew. Jesus is indeed their Messiah, their anointed deliverer in every sense. Their story has a final chapter, which the Scriptures speak of in great volume and detail: the fulfillment of that ancient and abused prophecy, a chapter Satan hates as much as any for in it he meets his doom. But I'll not get into that now.

Ever since Jesus bought our salvation, a body of believers has been coming together under the cross. It is referred to in Scripture as the body of Christ; also the bride of Christ. We commonly refer to it as the church. It is made up of all believers who have been called out of sin and have come to God on the basis of the blood that was shed for them. There is no distinction in the church between Jew and Gentile. This is a most blessed body, and we may be among the last to be joined to.

The church was a surprise to Satan as it was to everyone. Satan is jealous of her not only because she was born out of his defeat but also because she occupies a place in heaven more elevated than the place he once held. It's no surprise that Satan began a new and more intense phase of the war, aimed at the church. No longer is he out to

strike down the Law. Now he is at war with God's elect, trying to deceive us and defeat the very election in order to swell his company in hell, for he is blind to this deep mystery of our salvation against which he is impotent. From companion of God to meddling devil to toothless lion, Satan fell to ruin while facilitating God's purposes.

And so we find ourselves in the midst of a war, in a world littered with devils' devices and populated by Satan's willing and unwitting agents and hapless captives.

For the eternal record, to prove to Satan—and everyone else—that God is just and that his judgments are correct, there will be formal hearings in which every transgressor—everyone who is unholy or impure—will stand before God to give an account of his deeds and to be reminded of his violations.

God's plan of salvation has been widely published, even written in stars, and a sense of right and wrong is present in human nature. Any violation of this Law—any blemish, any imperfection, any dark intention (all are marks of sin)—will be revealed. If you're found to still be a sinner at that point ... well, your story has already ended insofar as the living world is concerned, so it's too late to do anything about it.

Who is not a sinner? God says no one, for again,  
All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The devil's trap was sprung long ago, and the net enclosed us all, for we are a product of our ancestors. Satan's spoil shares his guilt. None of us, it would seem, could escape the permanent sentence to prison; the penalty is eternal.

But wait! What about that ransom that Jesus paid? Who is it for?

If it is for you, obviously you will be agreeing with God about your sin debt, and you will have pleaded with him to include you in the company of the ransomed. You will know when you are accepted in the Beloved, for Jesus will become supremely important to you, and you will look forward to his coming.<sup>16</sup>

Be patient and wait on him. Be confident in his promise. Know that he loves you. If you think his power and majesty—as demonstrated in creation—is great, it is nothing compared to this. We speak glibly about the love of God. But there is only one way to begin to fathom the love of God:

He gave his only begotten Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish  
but have everlasting life.

The Lord God—the Father, Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit—poured divine love into the fallen human race that Satan despised and ruined. That out-of-this-world *agape* love made a way of escape, not merely back to Eden but on to Glory!

All sinners must die. That's the Law. Jesus Christ, holy and pure, transferred my sin debt to himself—all of it, past, present and future—and died to pay for it. The sacrifice covered the crime, and there is no penalty left unpaid. I am free! Under the Law that condemns sinners I am legally sinless! Has the irreversible been reversed? No! There has been a spiritual rebirth; I am a new creature reborn in the incorruptible Savior. Though sin still lurks within the flesh of my soul, and base flesh perishes for it, the Holy Spirit deftly administers the word of God to divide the perishing from the eternal. He takes on the job of purging my soul's corruption, and he is equal to the

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16. See Second Timothy 4:8.



task! It's a transforming process called sanctification; it's an offshoot of regeneration, a telling development of the new life. And there is even more yet to come: someday I will stand before God not only clean and sinless but also sharing his glory! Will you?

If Jesus were merely a man, he could not have done all this. He would not have had the authority to assume our sin debt nor the capacity to absorb it nor the love to compel him to do it. Only as *infinite* God could he die the millions of deaths of millions of sinners yet live. Only our Creator God would have that ability under his Law. And that's exactly who the Lord Jesus is.

God won the argument, and Satan lost his bet. A gratefully ransomed throng, creatures possessed of free will and yet steadfastly obedient to their Maker, standing together with their Savior—we are all in God's exhibit A, closing the case and ensuring the verdict of Satan's doom.

Did he know when he created the first Adam that he himself would become the last Adam, undoing the fall of the first in order to make saints of sinners? He *did* know, for as God he would know. And he went ahead anyway. That's the unfathomable love of God complementing his holiness and righteousness.

But there was a cost. While lifting humanity to Glory, he himself was wounded. Contemplating the cost before the cross, our magnificent Lord sweated divine blood. But he went ahead and did it, taking on our debt and dying the sinner's death.

**He was wounded for our transgressions.**

He willingly bled to heal us. He gave himself for us—permanently. Forever he shares humanity; forever he bears the scars of those wounds that were ours.

From our earthly point of view there was another cost too: not all men and women will be saved. In fact, so many have not taken the Savior's gift, that most appear to be doomed along with Satan. The primeval rebellion had a dreadful consequence: humanity became the stubborn opponent of Sovereignty, and as such it must be swept away. Had there been no rebellion, ... I'm afraid we would not be here at all.

Salvation is not and could not simply be a legal transaction. Satan would not be impressed by that and neither would anyone else. Wicked human nature must be dealt with.

The heart is exceedingly deceitful and desperately wicked;  
who can know it?

If you don't mind being a little wicked, beware! You may stay that way! If you cringe when told you must be holy and pure, beware! He doesn't force everyone to go through with it.

Therefore, let him who thinks that he stands take heed  
lest he fall.<sup>17</sup>

If you hate being a sinner, you will thank him for your salvation with your obedience, and it will seem to you that your selfless progress in sanctification is a miraculous gift.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness,  
for they shall be filled.<sup>18</sup>

But if you don't mind too much being a sinner, then you will think the price of sanctification is exorbitant: you will be concerned about what you give up and don't give up and in so doing you will be substituting your own miserable methods and refusing the very gift

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17. First Corinthians 10:12

18. Matthew 5:6

of the ransom. Then the only argument you will have at the judgment is your own perfection, and I wish you luck with that.

Listen to the apostle John:

Beloved, though we are God's children now, we are not yet what we shall be. This we know: when he appears, we shall be like him because we will be able to see him as he is. Even now, everyone who looks forward to his appearing is himself being purified as Christ is pure.<sup>19</sup>

If you prefer to adopt one of the standard purification methods that allows you a little discretion and accepts your contribution of good work and personal sacrifice, you can do that too. But in doing so you will have mistrusted the Savior's sufficiency and fallen for a very old Satanic deception; your reward is to be numbered among the casualties of the war. You may be a church member; you may be a hard-working church leader and still find yourself among the multitudes baptized into religion and participating in sacraments that turn out to be counterfeits and ineffective substitutes for the true work of the Spirit.

Do you agree with God that disobedience is disgusting? Will you be glad to be rid of the pride in your life? If so, it is a mark of the new life within you, and you will soon enjoy the fullness of it in heaven. How can you be sure? By clinging to the promises of Jesus Christ, your only Savior and Lord: you are permanently marked with his blood, your ransom price, and he lives in you, guaranteeing you will never be lost. Jesus said,

All that the Father gives me shall come to me;  
and they that come to me I will certainly not cast out.<sup>20</sup>

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19. From First John 3:2-3.

20. John 6:37

Is he our joy and delight? We have seen nothing yet! Here is a mystery: he suffered on the cross for us, and we are *his* reward! Will he be disappointed? No! It may seem like it now, but in a little while we will be awe-struck when we discover the makeovers that our Creator will have performed on us.

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