



New Church Canadian

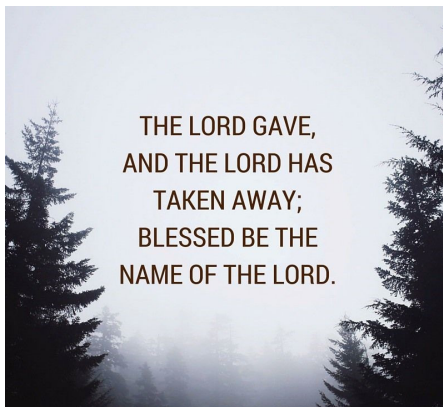
A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

Issue 204

DOES THE LORD TAKE THINGS AWAY?

By Rev. Jared Buss

In the Bible we're told that "the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away." Christians have sometimes leaned on this statement when it comes to explaining why life goes the way it goes. The point of the statement is that it's not up to us, it's up to God. It doesn't go our way, it goes God's way. The Lord gives and we have to accept what He gives. He takes, and we have to accept what He takes.



But how true is this idea? It is from the Bible—but it isn't from one of the books considered canonical within the New Church. The statement comes from the book of *Job*, and according to the Heavenly Doctrines of the New

Church, *Job* is an ancient book that contains an internal sense — but not consistently (AC §9942.5; White Horse §16). So there are deep spiritual truths taught within the book of *Job*, but it isn't part of the Word of the Lord. Not everything it says is true.

So what about the statement that "the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away"? The part about the Lord giving is easy — of course that's true. From start to finish the Word is filled with testaments to the gifts that the Lord gives His people. But what about the taking away part? That's the more striking half of the statement, and it's the focus of the statement too, at least in its original context. These words come from the first chapter of *Job*, in which we're introduced to a man, named Job, who is both exceedingly devout and exceedingly wealthy. At the beginning of Job's story Satan says to the Lord:

"Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has

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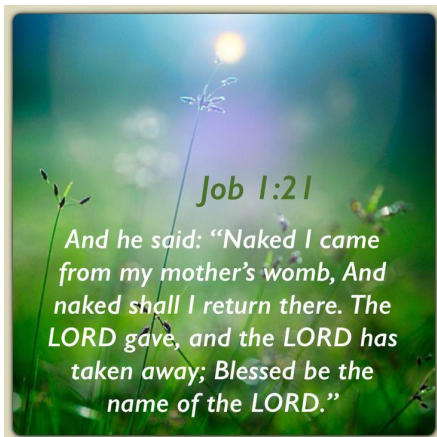


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on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" (1:9-11)

Essentially, Satan suggests to the Lord that perhaps Job is devout simply because it's always been easy for him to be devout — he's been given every reason to be grateful to God. And Satan challenges the Lord to take away Job's wealth, and see if he remains faithful. In the story, the Lord permits this. Then disaster befalls Job — thieves, fires, windstorms — and all his wealth disappears in a day. But when he hears about these disasters, Job's response is:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (vv. 21)



Evidently, Job remains faithful.

There's no question that this reaction to disaster is powerful. And something about it rings true. Certainly it's true that all of Job's worldly wealth was going to be lost sooner or later — lost to him, at any rate. All of us are "naked" when we leave this life, in the sense that we carry none of our material possessions with us. So what do they matter? If the Lord gives them to us, well, He knows best. And if He takes them away... well, He knows best.

That philosophy works well enough when the giving and the taking away involve material things. This idea is even echoed in the Heavenly Doctrines, where we're told that those who are innocent "live contented with what they have, whether it be little or much, because they know that they receive just as

much as is good for them—those receiving little for whom little is useful, and those receiving much for whom much is useful" (HH §278). To think that it might be "useful" for us to have less can be challenging, for sure. If we were to suddenly lose our wealth, like Job did, it would probably be very difficult for us to respond with the sort of faith that he demonstrated — to simply acknowledge that all that wealth was the Lord's to give and to take anyhow. But presumably we can all at least recognize that to be so unattached to our material possessions would be good, if we could get there.

It's a different story when the things "taken away" are not material. What if we lose something that really does matter? What if someone we love dies? What if an opportunity to be useful is torn away from us? A particularly strong and striking example is the loss of an unborn child. Children are so clearly a gift from the Lord, but when they're lost before they're even born, they feel so simply gone — because we never even got to know them. Are we supposed to simply tell ourselves that that gift is the Lord's to give, and the Lord's to take away?

The problem with this idea is its implication that the Lord *chose* to take away whatever it is that we've lost — its implication that He judged that it would be best for us to lose what we lost, and that He therefore *wanted* to take what He took. That's simply not so. He is not happy to carry on with His plan at our expense. He is never indifferent to our grief. When we grieve, He grieves. That was one of the things He showed us when He was born on earth:

God Himself wept for His people's pain (Luke 19:41; John 11:35).



So are the things that we lose "taken away" from us by God? No. When we say that the Lord has taken something from us, our minds cannot escape the notion that that's what He wanted. But the loss of a good thing is never what He wants. He does not take good things away.

What is the truth, then? What Job got right was his faith in the Lord's power — He believed that the Lord was still in charge, even though his own life

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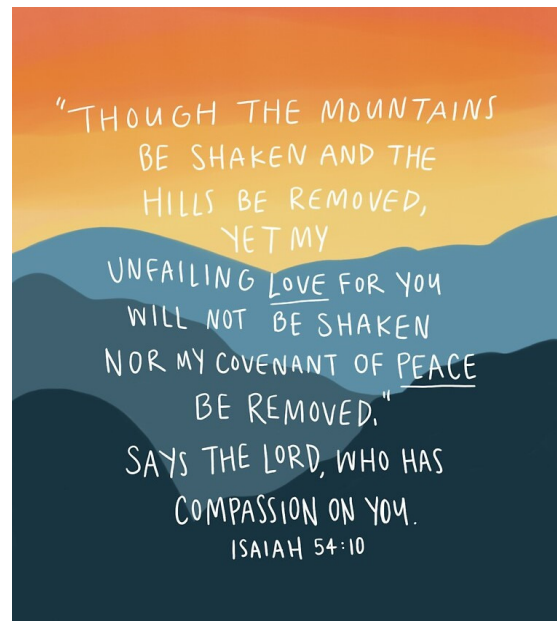
was full of disaster. In a moment of chaos, He put himself in the Lord's hands. That was the right thing to do. All things are in the Lord's hands. It's a strange, strange balance to try to hold, but the truth is that our grief is not what the Lord wills, our loss is not what He wills... and yet, the Lord has everything in His hands. Our lives are in His hands, more surely than we can really understand, until the veils of this world are taken away.

For now, here is what the Lord Himself has to say:

"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6, 7)

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Even they may forget, but I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands." (Isaiah 49:15, 16)

"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, But My mercy shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)



SEEKING STUDENTS WITH INQUIRING MINDS

The Washington New Church School is pleased to announce our young and growing new high school – **The White Horse Academy**. Our vision is to serve students near and far who would like to have an individualized, New Church, high school education. We are harnessing the power of the internet to connect our students with both live and recorded classes and, as important, with each other.

When accepted to the program, students and parents meet with their education coach to formulate their individualized plan of study which will include the necessary courses to earn a high school diploma, as well as a plan for experiential learning and the development of a portfolio showcasing the student's skills, knowledge and service to community.

If you are or have a rising high schooler please contact us. We would love to share more details about our program with you.

We are excited to build a network around our vision of individualized, New Church education for our students. If you are someone who loves creative education and raising children in the New Church we would be thrilled to be in touch with you, even if your high school years are long behind you. If you have a talent that you love sharing with others and are familiar with tools such as Zoom or Office 365, or are willing to learn new skills, contact us. We want to make you part of our team. Call or email us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Education Coach, Jana.Sprinkle@washnewchurch.org ; 410-220-9003

Principal, Brian.Smith@washnewchurch.org ; 301-850-3029

FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR FOR CANADA by Rev. James Cooper

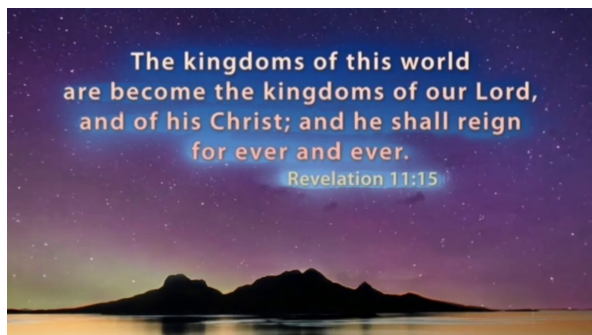
As I said in the last issue, we're not back to "normal" yet, but the news about the pandemic seems to be getting ever more positive – at least in Ontario. I don't make predictions, but I will continue to pay close attention to the recommendations of the various local health officials and take counsel from the people in our groups and circles and will start making visits again as soon as it can be done safely. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy the various on-line services that are being produced by many of our congregations. And the Canadian pastors are always just a phone call away.

Happily, instead of just talking about what we're NOT doing, there are two things coming up in June that we will be doing.

New Church Day, 19th of June

First of all, we celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the New Church on June 19th because of the following statement found at the end of the work *True Christian Religion*.

791. NOTE. - After this work was finished the Lord called together His twelve disciples who followed Him in the world; and the next day He sent them all forth throughout the whole spiritual world to preach the Gospel that THE LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages, according to the prediction in Daniel (7:13, 14), and in Revelation (11:15). Also that blessed are those that come to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).



This took place on the nineteenth day of June, 1770. This is what is meant by these words of the Lord:

He shall send His angels and they shall gather together His elect, from the end of the heavens to the end thereof (Matt. 24:31).

Since we are not yet able to gather in person, the Canadian ministers would like to celebrate New Church Day with you on Saturday, June 19, at 8:00 PM EDT (Toronto time). The late start is to accommodate people in western Canada.

Instead of a traditional banquet, once again we are going to use Zoom. From 8:00 - 8:30 we'll use a feature of Zoom called 'rooms' to divide the group into smaller, conversational groups, sort of like finding a seat at a table. The social portion will start at 8:00 PM EDT, but depending on the time where you are, you might prefer to just share a cup of coffee or glass of wine with your friends.

At about 8:30 PM the Zoom rooms will be closed and there will be a brief program about New Church Day presented by the Rev. Michael Cowley, pastor of Olivet Church in Toronto.

If you would like to be involved you can find the Zoom link to the online banquet at www.newchurch.ca, and on the Facebook pages for the Dawson Creek Society, Carmel Church, and Olivet Church.

Moonshine Lake Provincial Park

The other event is planned for Sunday, June 27.

Rev. Michael Cowley hopes to be able to travel to western Canada again this year. He plans to be at Moonshine Lake Provincial Park on that Sunday and will provide a service of worship, similar to what he did last June.



For details, please contact Rev. Cowley at
pastor@olivetnewchurch.or

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A Closing Thought

Like all of you, I've been reflecting on the mental and spiritual effects of the pandemic. As if the inconvenience of closed shops and businesses wasn't enough, there is the sense of isolation, loneliness, and anxiety about whether things will ever get back to what we used to think of as normal.

We know that what we're supposed to be doing with our spiritual life is figuring out ways to do a better job of putting the truth that we know from the Word into action in our relationships with others, in other words, to conjoin good with truth. But we learn from the Word that the way to do that is through temptations. We may know that we should do something, but we are naturally inclined to be lazy or do something else instead. So, we are tempted to do the easy thing instead of the right thing, and when we compel ourselves to do what we know to be right, we're making spiritual progress.



Temptations come to us in many forms. The evil spirits encourage us to be lazy and mean, the good spirits encourage us to do what we know to be right from the Word. The evil spirits want us to see doom and gloom everywhere and focus on all the little inconveniences of the pandemic. The good spirits with us are trying to help us to see these things from the perspective of eternal life. The choices that we make are what make the difference in what kind of eternal spiritual character we build for ourselves.

But even more than that, the Lord promises that when we make that effort to overcome in temptation, when we make the effort to do what we know is right even when we don't want to, when we trust in the Lord's leading rather than focus on all the things that aren't going the way we think they

should, He will provide both comfort and hope that will sustain us in those battles going forward.

We are beginning to see the results of so many people coming together to try to solve the pandemic. We've all done our part by staying home. It's a big trial, or temptation. And as we are making headway, the Lord will provide comfort, and hope.

Arcana Coelestia 4572:2, 2338

Be it known in general that all the conjunction of good with truth is effected by means of temptations, the reason of which is that evils and falsities offer resistance and as it were rebel, and strive in every possible way to prevent the conjunction of good with truth and of truth with good. This combat takes place between the spirits who are with the man, namely, between the spirits who are in evils and falsities, and those who are in goods and truths, and is perceived by the man as a temptation within himself. When therefore the spirits who are in evils and falsities are conquered by the spirits who are in goods and truths, and are compelled to depart, the latter have joy through heaven from the Lord, and this joy is perceived by the man as consolation, and as in himself. But the joy and consolation are not on account of victory, but on account of the conjunction of good and truth; for all conjunction of good and truth has joy within itself, because this conjunction is the heavenly marriage within which is the Divine.



The evil spirits who are then with the man and induce the temptation strongly inspire negation, but the good spirits and angels from the Lord in every possible way dispel this state of doubt, and keep the man in a state of hope, and confirm in him what is affirmative. The result is that a man who is in temptation hangs between what is negative and what is affirmative. One who yields in temptation remains in a state of doubt, and falls into what is negative; but one who overcomes is indeed in doubt, but still, if he suffers himself to be cheered by hope, he stands fast in what is affirmative.

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(Jay) Herb James got the gift of hearing 64 years ago. He's been paying it forward ever since.

By Jesse Johnston · CBC News



Herb James sits in front of a newspaper clipping from the 1970s that featured his charity, the International Sound Foundation. (Jesse Johnston/CBC)

Herb James' life changed 64 years ago on an operating table in Sweden. He was almost completely deaf. And then he wasn't.

"I heard a kind of click and then a flood of noise came up," he said. "I was nearly crying."

The surgery to repair James' ears was groundbreaking at the time. It was also expensive and James couldn't cover the entire cost. The doctor — renowned specialist Dr. Lennart Holmgren — told him to pay what he could and pay it forward.

Early Years

James grew up in Vernon, B.C. and in his early teens, his hearing began to fail. He wore hearing aids to high school and traveled to Vancouver for appointments with an ear specialist. Doctors determined that three tiny bones in both of James' middle ears had become calcified and weren't functioning correctly.

At 19, James discovered doctors in Stockholm had developed a procedure that might be able to restore his hearing, which had deteriorated to about 20 per cent in both ears.

"I hopped on a train, got on a ship and went to Stockholm," he said. "Pretty exciting."

When James bumped into his old friend, Terry Hurst, at a museum in Sweden, he took it as a good omen. She did, too. "I didn't even know he was in Europe," she laughed. "It was one of those amazing coinci-

dences." *(Editor's Note: It was during his stay in Sweden that he discovered Emmanuel Swedenborg, through his Swedish friends, especially at the University in Upsalla, Sweden. "Uses" were explained to him, along with the life, history and philosophy of Swedenborg. He was baptized into the New Church by Rev. Mike Gladish many years ago, in Vancouver, BC.)*

Gift of Hearing

A week after James' first surgery, he returned to the hospital to have the same procedure on his other ear, which was also successful. Holmgren told him he'd been given a rare gift and should consider passing along his good fortune to someone else.

James didn't think much of it until five years later when he needed a follow-up procedure, which was performed at renowned specialist Dr. Howard House's clinic in California. House told him the same thing. James decided that since he'd been given the gift of hearing, it was time for him to listen.

"I was reading a story in Reader's Digest about an audio testing machine — a portable device — to check the hearing of preschool children." "I bought one for \$500 and I loaned it out to preschool and kindergarten schools locally."

International Sound Foundation

James let schools use his device until the province bought some equipment of its own, which meant his machine was no longer needed. "It was just collecting dust," he said. He forgot about the machine until he ran into a group of people from Fiji and their conversation gravitated toward hearing tests. Before long, James was on a flight to Fiji and the International Sound Foundation was born.



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Paying it Forward

James is a heck of a salesman, which served him well, recruiting local doctors to volunteer to perform hearing tests and minor procedures in foreign countries. His friend, Colin Leech-Porter, says James was also an expert at convincing foreign governments, companies and others to help cover lodging and travel costs.

"He set up in a number of different countries to try to bring in an expert for the local people to deal with," Leech-Porter said. "His big thing was the sales."

Eventually, the Canadian International Development Agency lent its support and the International Sound Foundation was helping initiatives in Kenya, Costa Rica, Nepal and other countries.

By his count, the ISF helped provide free hearing tests to thousands of children all over the world and James was honoured for his service with the Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002.

"Thank goodness for the blessing of my deafness," he said. "Without it, none of this would have happened."

Bryn Athyn College of the New Church NEW 3-COURSE GRADUATE CERTIFICATES IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES



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For more information, please see our website: <https://brynathyn.edu/mars>
contact program director Thane Glenn: thane.glenn@brynathyn.edu
or phone: 267.502.4844

PUBLISHINGS

Denis Kuhl



Periodically the New Church Canadian receives samples of published material that may be of interest to Swedenborgians and the New Church in general.

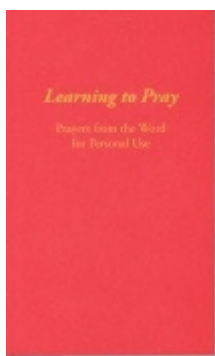
The Swedenborg Society of London, England, has produced a beautifully boxed set of four small books titled **“the Four Doctrines”**. Of manageable size and easily readable, the format is interesting...and fun? The left hand page contains the Latin as penned by Swedenborg, while the facing page displays the English translation. Here’s your chance to brush up on your Latin!

Also from the Swedenborg Society is a small book **“Introducing Swedenborg: Correspondences”** by Gary Lachman. This is an interesting and informative discussion of the topic. There are extensive end notes, a chronology of events throughout Swedenborg’s life, and a list of his works, including the years of publication.



For more information, contact:

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London, England
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<https://www.swedenborg.org.uk>
info@swedenborg.org.uk



From the General Church Book Center in Bryn Athyn, PA, comes a handy pocket book, **“Learning to Pray”**, compiled by Rev. Kurt H. Asplundh. It contains direct quotes from the Word, arranged in groupings to meet specific needs and interests. There are helpful hints as to how, when, where and why to pray, and room to write a personal prayer. Easy to carry and easy to read, it is a delightful tool for our spiritual journey.

For more information, contact:

New Church Books

www.newchurchbooks.com

Email: bookstore@bacathedral.org

Phone: 215-947-0266 ext. 4922



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General Church in Canada Worship Services

Carmel New Church
Kitchener, ON



11:00am
Online
Only
Until
further
notice

Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC



See
Regional
Pastor's
Notes
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Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON

10:30am Online Only until further notice



Editorial Deadline for the July / August 2021 Issue:
July 7, 2021

We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!

Please send submissions to Sandy Kuhl, Editor NCC
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Phone: 519-696-2070 Email: sandy.c.kuhl@gmail.com



COME WALK WITH ME

by Denis Kuhl

Come walk with Me. Come hold My hand
As we explore this wonderland,
Discovering the highs and lows
Along the path that life bestows.



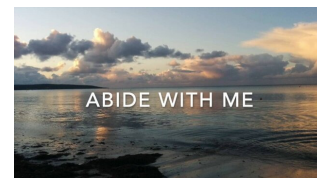
Come laugh with Me. Relax awhile.
Relief from stress is in a smile.
But if, by chance, you shed a tear,
Remember I am always near.



Come sing with Me. Come raise your voice
In heartfelt praise, with song rejoice.
Prayer is strong when it is given
As a hymn rising to heaven.

This voyage has been heaven-sent
To help you grow with good intent.
And yet, the journey never ends,
For as you grow it just extends.

So live with Me, with Me abide.
In your heavenly home reside.
Experience with warm delight
Great peace and joy, like bright sunlight.



Know that My desire is to bless
You with eternal happiness.

I am Your God!