



New Church Canadian

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of General Church in Canada

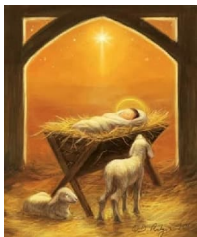
Issue 225

THE LORD'S PRAYER AT CHRISTMAS

By Rev. Lou Synnestvedt

How lovely is the Advent Season! There are so many wonderful prophecies. The story of the Lord's birth has different and amazing aspects revealing the truth and love of our Savior born to dwell among us! Even the Lord's prayer helps us see and understand who the infant Jesus is and what He does for us.

Our Father,



We picture Jesus as the tiny infant in swaddling clothes. Yet He was and is destined to be even more! Think of Him as the Divine Love in Human form. When Isaiah the Prophet speaks of the coming of the Messiah, he is called the "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father."

Who art in the heavens,

David, in the Psalms, declared that "He bowed the heavens and came down" (18:9). The heavens are His throne and the earth His footstool. Jesus said of Himself, even when on earth, that He is the "Son of Man who is in heaven"! (John 3:13).

Hallowed be Thy name.

When the angel announced to Mary that she would be mother of the Lord, the angel said: "That Holy One who is to be born" of her. Later, when meeting with her cousin Elisabeth, Mary spoke these

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prescient words: “He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name” (Luke 1:35, 49).



Thy kingdom come.

The Prophet Zechariah said of Jesus: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!” “Your King is coming to you!” (Zechariah 9:9). And of course we remember when the Wise Men, seeking Jesus asked: “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him” (Matthew 2:2).

Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth.

Jesus set the example: “I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30). Mary’s own willingness also inspires the rest of us at the time of the Annunciation: “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

Give us this day our daily bread.

Jesus was indeed the “Bread of God” which came down from heaven “to give life to the world” (John 6:33). We also see that Jesus was born in Bethlehem which means the “house of bread.”

And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.

Forgiveness is a Divine Blessing we all need! Consider how Jesus fulfills this longing for each of us: “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins - He said to the man who was paralyzed, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house” (Luke 5:24).

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



When the angel spoke to Joseph when his betrothed Mary was with child, he was told: “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:28). The Lord was born to deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom,

In fact, He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! (Revelation 17:14).

And the power,

The Prophet Zephaniah said of Jesus: “The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness” (Zephaniah 3:17).

And the glory,

And what do we see around the Shepherds on that special night? “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
goodwill toward men! (Luke 2:13, 14).



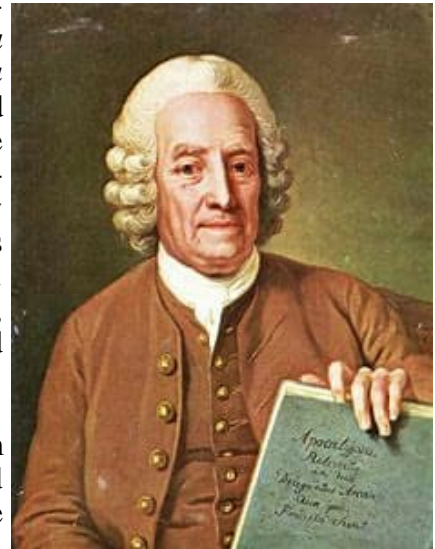
FOREVER. AMEN!

THE SECOND STATE OF THE WORLD OF SPIRITS, OR THE STATE OF INTERIORS

Part 2 of 3

By Rev. James Cooper

The Lord taught his disciples and followers about the difference between heaven and hell when He said, ***“Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us”*** (Luke 16:26). The Lord wanted people to know that there was a life after death where the good would be rewarded and the evil suffer. While the Old Testament is essentially silent on the subject of the life to come, the New Testament has many parables about heaven. The Lord told stories using situations familiar to the farmers and shepherds of that time. Simple, comforting ideas for simple times and people. In so doing, He prepared the way to reveal more truths about the spiritual world through the experiences of Emanuel Swedenborg.



This article is the second in a series of three where we learn from Swedenborg's personal testimony how spirits from the world find their way to their eternal home in heaven or hell, and how their true spiritual qualities are revealed and finally allowed to express themselves freely.

We need to define several terms that are not used in ways universally understood. The "spiritual world" means the whole spiritual universe, including heaven, hell, and the world of spirits. The "world of spirits" is a much more specific term. It always refers to that part of the spiritual world which lies between heaven and hell and is the place where all people go first when their natural bodies die. In character and appearance, it is very much like this world.

The word "spirit" means anyone living anywhere in the spiritual world, although it is most frequently used to refer to someone who is still living in the world of spirits and has not yet found their home in heaven or hell. Finally, an "angel" is a particular kind of spirit, specifically a spirit who has been through all the states of introduction and has chosen heaven. An angel is a person who, with their married partner, has been completely accepted into a heavenly society which will be their home to eternity.

In the previous article it was explained that when a person's body dies and the spirit awakens in the world of spirits, the first state, or state of exteriors, is one of introduction and welcome. It is provided so that each person who enters the spiritual world will have a chance to get their bearings, and become accustomed to the fact of the death of their natural body and the reality of eternal life. They are kept in surroundings that are as familiar as possible, and encouraged to explore and learn all that they desire for as long as they need to. But eventually every spirit becomes ready to move on, and they feel a desire to find their true spiritual home. When this happens, the spirit is ready to enter into the second state, the state of interiors.

Since their spiritual home will be a reflection of their inmost spiritual character, that character must first be revealed in such a way that the spirits themselves see and acknowledge their own ruling love. When

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the external trappings of intelligence and honour are laid aside, each spirit passes through their own individual "last judgement" where they are weighed in the balance, and the true nature of their heart and mind are for the first time revealed.

While we are in the natural world, each of us is, to some degree, a hypocrite. We have to be. In order to live in civil harmony we sometimes have to hide our true feelings and try to treat all people with courtesy if not kindness. This difference between what we may feel like doing and what we actually do when we remember that others will be watching and judging us, is an illustration of the false front that we create to hide our true feelings.

While we are in the world, it's not all a bad thing. From birth, we are all inclined to evils of every kind, but we do not act on them because we fear punishment or shame. So, we learn to create an external shell of orderliness while we deal with all the different desires and ideas that roil around in our minds like a boiling pot of soup. Throughout our adult lives the rational mind gradually makes sense of all these thoughts and feelings as we make choices about the course of our life and how we treat other people. If we are making the effort to prepare for the life of heaven, the Lord works in partnership with us to bring order to the mind and in the process of time less and less needs to be hidden. The external shell and the internal character gradually become one.

On the other hand, if one is being led by the loves and self of the world, those loves are not removed but fester within like a disease. Over the course of time the external shell develops to effectively hide what lurks within from others. The shell and the internal character gradually become more and more different.



The angels' freedom comes from the fact that the things that they want to do are all good. They don't need to hide any of their desires. The devil's frustration comes from the fact that nothing that they really want to do is permitted, so in order to get along they have to hide everything they really want to do. While in the world, we hover between these two conditions. And where we end up is decided on the sum total of our choices.

The second state begins when spirits are let into the state of their interiors, or into the state of their interior will and the thought that comes from it. These interior thoughts are really nothing more than the kinds of things we think about when left to ourselves, that is, they are really our daydreams, our fantasies, our secret desires which we hide behind that external shell mentioned above, our inhibitions.

Now here's the scary part. As we move into the second state, the Lord gradually removes those inhibitions, the layers of that protective shell, so that spirits gradually stop caring what other people think about what they are doing and so begin to openly and proudly do exactly what they really want to do – thus revealing their true internal state, their ruling loves. After years of hiding these things there is a lot of habitual resistance at first. The spirits are still guarded about what they say and do because they fear ridicule and punishment. But, over time, all is revealed (See HH 502, 503).

Those people who, while in the world, have actually made spiritual progress, who have come to love the Lord naturally and easily begin to act towards other spirits in a charitable way. Now that they are in the spiritual world they can take delight because limitations of the body and the natural world have been removed. In freedom and joy they begin to act rationally and wisely — even more wisely than in the world.

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Those who lived evil lives from their will while in the world begin to act foolishly and insanely—even more insanely than in the world—because they are free no longer care at all what anyone thinks. For while they were in the world they made themselves to appear to be rational, but when the external restraints and fear of punishment are removed, the insanities are revealed. (HH 505)

All people who have lived a good life in the world and have acted from conscience, who have acknowledged the Divine and loved Divine truths, and especially those who have applied those truths to life, seem to themselves, when let into the state of their interiors, like those aroused from sleep into full wakefulness.... Heaven flows into their thoughts and affections with an interior blessedness and delight which they had no knowledge of previously. They then acknowledge the Lord and worship Him from their very life.

When those who have not acknowledged the Lord come into the state of their interiors, they appear foolish; for from their evil lusts they burst forth into all sorts of abominations, into contempt of others, ridicule and blasphemy, hatred and revenge; they plot intrigues, some with a cunning and malice that can scarcely be believed to be possible in any man. All the wisdom that they seemed to have has been only in the exteriors of their mind, and while this allowed them to seem wise in the world, when the exteriors are left behind with the natural body, they also leave behind all their apparent wisdom and act from their inner insanity.... (HH 506)

Through this process, spirits become visibly just what they had been interiorly during their life in the world. Things that they had once done and said in secret or in their own imagination now become visibly obvious to all because external things no longer restrain them. They speak openly about whatever they think, and attempt to do whatever they wish, as they are no longer afraid of damaging their reputation. All inhibitions are lost, and angel guards are needed to restrain them from committing acts of actual violence against other spirits. They can no longer restrain themselves from doing exactly what they want to do, when they want to do it, without any regard to the consequences.

Everyone can judge for themselves how they would act if they were left free to do whatever they wanted with no fear of the law and no fear in regard to life, and with no outward restraints, such as fear of injury to one's reputation or of loss of honour and gain and consequent pleasures. This is how the Lord, in His infinite Wisdom, allows each of us to find our own home. From time to time it is useful, and sobering, to think of how we are going to react when our turn comes. Those things that we don't want to be revealed to all in the world of spirits must be shed and left in this world by the process of self examination, repentance, reformation, and regeneration.



It is very important to understand that no one is ever punished in the spiritual world for deeds done during life in the world. Death wipes the slate clean. Evil deeds done from a youthful lack of judgement and that have been seen and rejected by the adult will not come back to haunt them. Spirits are only punished on account of the evils done after they enter the world of spirits. Everyone after death returns to his own life and thus into like evils. Those who are evil at heart continue to express their hatreds and it is these things that are punished and restrained. Good spirits are never punished no matter what they may have done during their life in the world, because their evils do not return because they are not longer a part of their interior (or true) character.

By revealing genuine internals and shedding external appearances, a spirit is led home. Some evil spirits enter and leave hell several times until they are finally ready. By the end of the second state the good and

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the evil are separated from one another, for the evil at heart have fled from the presence of the angels, while the good at heart seek them out for guidance and instruction.

In summary, we can see that the first state, or the state of exteriors, is a time of familiarization, where people newly from the world can get used to the idea of their eternal life and become comfortable. The second state is where everyone's true spiritual nature is revealed. Layer by layer all the external habits and defences are peeled away until nothing remains but the spirit's ruling loves.

The evil spirit no longer cares what anyone thinks of him, and does exactly as he pleases, as if he were living in a dream. He rejoices as he finds his fantasy world becoming real. He is no longer anxious about the law. He no longer fears being found out. And in his freedom he strikes out at others. But when he is prevented from actually harming anyone, or stealing anything, he becomes enraged, insane, and eventually throws himself into hell to be with others of like loves. For the evil, the second state is the last. Once evil has taken over the heart and mind, there can be no further instruction or preparation.

However, the good rejoice in that they are no longer limited by worldly restraints. Their good intentions now instantly become acts of kindness. Money, busy schedules, household duties, and physical tiredness no longer stand in the way of doing the good and kind things they've always wanted to do. As they find themselves able to do more, they become more and more interested in understanding what is happening to them. The evils that do not agree with their ruling love drop away, sometimes with some effort and pain.

When loves that do not belong to the ruling love are removed, it is called a vastation, and it is a necessary preparation for entering heaven, for the angelic mind cannot contain what is evil or false, nor can the devil's mind contain what is good and true. The conflict between good and evil, the true and the false would destroy the mind and thus eternal life, so such a mixture and confusion is not permitted in either heaven or hell.

As the falsities of life in the world are taken away, new truths are given to take their place, and the heaven-bound spirit enters into the state of preparation, the state where he is led from the world of spirits to his eternal, spiritual home.

Next time, the third state where those headed for heaven are instructed and prepared for eternal life.



Celebrate the Light by Helen Grace Lescheid



The second World War raged in Europe during Christmas Eve in 1944.

Mother, with four small children, had fled our native Ukraine with the retreating German army. Father had been reported missing in action.

Now we were refugees living in a two-room shack in Dieterwald, Poland. But again the fighting front was only about fifty kilometres away. Frequent air raids sent us scurrying for cover. Explosions rattled the windows. Army trucks brought in the wounded and the dead. Hay wagons filled with refugees rumbled west; bombers droned overhead and army tanks rolled east. Partisans (underground resistance) attacked innocent women and children at night.

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Nobody in his right mind went out into the dark winter night.

And yet, it was Christmas Eve. Two women had prepared a Christmas party in a neighbouring village and invited us. Mother, wanting to give us children joy, accepted.

She instructed my sister and me to dress warmly against the winter's cold. "Tonight we're going to a party," she said. Being only eight-years old, I sensed no danger - only wondrous excitement.

Hurriedly my sister, two years younger, and I dressed. If only Mother would hurry! A simple wick flickered in a saucer of oil - our only light. We could barely see her shadowy form as she bustled about getting my four-year-old brother, Fred, and almost two-year-old sister, Katie, ready. Finally Mother was putting on her heavy winter coat, kerchief, and warm felt boots.

With one small breath, she blew out the oil lamp. It was pitch dark now.

"Open the door, Lena," she called to me.

We stepped onto the crisp snow covering the farmyard. A moon crescent hung above a large house across the yard where the estate owners lived - kind people who treated us refugees well. It, too, was shrouded in darkness.

Mother lifted Katie and shuffled her to her back: she'd carry her piggyback for the five kilometres.

"Hang tight onto my coat collar," she coaxed. Then, turning towards us girls, she said, "You take Fred's hands." My younger sister and I complied. We had often taken care of our little brother while mother had culled potatoes in the big barns or had done other chores for the landowners.

At the road, we stopped. Although I knew it well from my treks to school, I could barely make out the houses on either side of the street. No streetlights were allowed now. Windows heavily draped permitted no light to seep out of the houses.

My mother hesitated for a brief moment. Then she said, "Come, we'll take the shortcut across the fields."

The snow crunched as four pairs of feet punched holes in the white expanse of open fields. Stars spangled the vault of sky above us. A blood-red glow smeared the eastern sky. At times an explosion sent flames shooting into the sky.

"Girls, recite your poems to me." Mother's voice sounded a bit shaky. Her arms aching, she put Katie down on the snowy ground. Our recitations of Christmas poems made white puffs in the cold night air.

When we finished, Mother said, "Speak up loud and clear when your turn comes. No mumbling." She lifted Katie once more onto her back, and we began to walk again. On and on we walked. But we were far too excited to be tired.



Finally we arrived at our friends house. The door opened and we stepped inside. I felt I had stepped into heaven itself. Lights! A whole room-full of lights!

Candlelight flickered from a small Christmas tree and bounced out of happy children's eyes. Heavily draped windows kept the light inside - for us to revel in. Red paper chains decked the tree; delicate paper cherubs smiled down upon us.

We squeezed in amongst women and children sitting on the floor. Soon the room filled with singing: "**Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht.**" (**Silent Night, Holy Night**) Some mothers sang alto, the rest of us, soprano.

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We sang with gusto and from memory, songs that lifted our hearts above the terrors of war and inspired new hope for the days ahead!

I can't remember our long trek home that night, but I do remember the wonderful gifts I received; my right pocket bulged with the most beautiful ball I'd ever seen. A very colourful ball it was. Much later, I learned it had been made out of scrunched up rags wrapped in rainbow coloured yarn probably gleaned from unraveling old sweaters. The other pocket held three cookies!

Soon after that wonderful Christmas party, we were evacuated. Icy winds blew snow into our faces as we covered on an uncovered hay wagon pulled by two scrawny horses. With the front so close behind, we traveled day and night. Once it was safe to stop, we slept in drafty barns. We ate hunks of frozen bread and drank the occasional cup of milk supplied by a Red Cross jeep.

But the warm memory of that Christmas celebration shone like a small candle in the darkness.

Even years later, when my own life's circumstances seemed too bleak to celebrate Christmas, I remembered the truth of Christmas born in my heart that night:

"Jesus, the light of the world came to us at Christmas time and no amount of darkness can put out that light." (John 1: 4,5)

(From www.thoughts-about-god.com)



New Church

Dear General Church Corporation Members,

On October 28, The Academy Board of Trustees affirmed the nomination of **Sean Connelly** as the next President of Bryn Athyn College of the New Church.

Sean is a product of New Church education from the Academy Secondary Schools through Bryn Athyn College. He is an entrepreneurial business leader with acumen in finance and strategic planning. The search committee was impressed with his collaborative approach, clear understanding of the current state of the College, his approach to presidential leadership, and his mission-based vision.

Sean is a member of the Academy Corporation and the Finance Committee, serves on the Board of Governors of Cairnwood Estate, and served for nine years on the Bryn Athyn Church Board and Finance Committee. Sean is currently working as President-elect alongside Eric Carswell during this transition. A Town Hall meeting with Sean is being planned in the near future.

Please join me in wishing well to Sean as he takes on this important role, and to the College in general as it continues its heritage of excellent New Church education.

Sincerely,

Bishop Peter Buss Jr.



NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL PASTOR

by Rev. James Cooper

SCHEDULED SERVICES

Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie

December 8	Rev. Michael Cowley
December 15 (Tableaux)	Rev. Michael Cowley
January 5	Rev. Michael Cowley
January 19	Rev. Michael Cowley



Rev. James Cooper

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SAVE THE DATES!



New Church Camp for Teens

**Held at the Ecology Retreat Centre in
Mono, Ontario**

We look forward to welcoming campers

July 5 – July 11, 2025!



11th Annual Living Waters Family Camp

The camp is located near Paisley, Ontario on the Saugeen River and is called Hidden Valley Christian Camp, you can explore it on the web at hvccamp.ca.



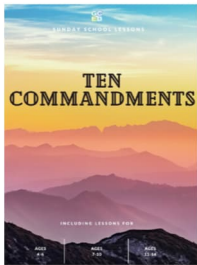
Thursday, July 13 – Sunday, July 20, 2025



Newchurchbooks.com now offers improved ways to search for books that help you and your family feel closer to the Lord.

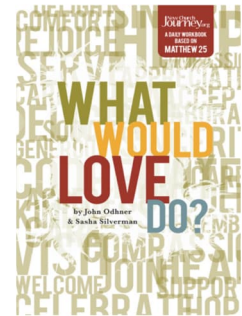
The new site adds educational materials and spiritual growth programs to our inventory of the Heavenly Doctrine and related New Church books.

Featured titles on newchurchbooks.com:

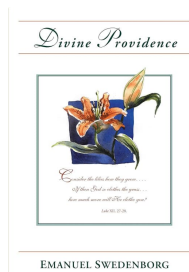


Eleven lessons for ages 3-14. The first lesson focuses on the events at Mount Sinai. Each commandment is taught through a story in the Old or New Testaments. Illustrated, scripted lessons are great for Sunday School and more, and include teacher background, questions, activities for different ages, and coloring pages.

What Would Love Do? is a seven-week program that explores Matthew 25, when Jesus urges us to help the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned. Practice serving the neighbor on both a physical and spiritual level in these six ways.



Included are a doctrinal study by John Odhner, comprehensive list of charities and service ideas, suggestions for small group involvement or individual study, additional multi-media resources, and weekly task cards.

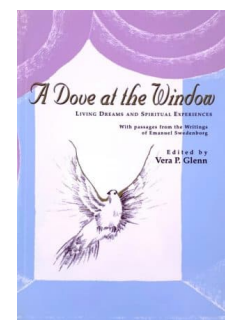


What governs the world we live in and the outcome of our lives?

This book explains that all the forces operating in creation are contained within, and ultimately serve, an over-arching Divine Providence. God is love itself, and therefore the primary goal of Divine providence is our eternal happiness.

In this book are true stories from real people who have been dealing with the death of loved ones. In His mercy, the Lord permits brief but powerful communication between the natural and spiritual worlds -- confirmations that life and love continue after death.

The book also contains many precious quotations from Emanuel Swedenborg about life after death and the connection between heaven and earth.





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General Church in Canada Worship Services

Carmel New Church
Kitchener, ON



11:00am
In Person
and
Online

Dawson Creek New Church
Dawson Creek, BC



Olivet New Church
Etobicoke, ON

10:30am
In Person and Online




Editorial Deadline for the
JANUARY - FEBRUARY ISSUE is DECEMBER 31, 2024
We always welcome your comments, letters and articles!
Please send submissions to **Sandy Kuhl, Editor NCC**
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“For there is born to you this
day in the city of David...

