



OUR DAILY BREAD  
Resources for Spiritual Questers

# *Tipping the Balance Point Toward the Good* *-Rev. Kit Billings*



*July 2022*



## *Readings*

### *Deuteronomy 30:11-20*

“Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’ No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God[a] that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

### *John 15:16*

You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.<sup>1</sup>

### *Secrets of Heaven §7996*

“In general the banquets within the Church in ancient times, both midday meals and suppers, were held in order that people might be brought into association with one another and joined together in love, and in order that they might inform one another about matters of love and faith, and so about the things of heaven. . . . People’s minds were thereby nourished, and also their bodies in a parallel and corresponding way. As a result they enjoyed good health and long life, they received intelligence and wisdom, and they were also brought into communication with Heaven, some into open communication with angels. But as in course of time all internal things disappear and give way to external ones, so it is with the ends to which banquets and feasts are held. At the present day these are held not to draw people together into any spiritual fellowship but to create worldly connections. That is to say, they are held for the sake of material gain, the quest for high office, and mere pleasures. They provide nourishment for the body, but none for the mind.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

<sup>2</sup> Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia*. Translated by John Potts. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1998.



Why are you a Swedenborgian or New Church Christian? Or, if you are relatively new to this wonderful religious tradition, what if I were to ask you, why are you perhaps thinking about joining this aspiring group of Christian-Universal spiritual seekers? On this Annual Meeting Sunday, I am inspired to ask you, what are one or two things about the Lord's New Christian Church on Earth that not only caught your innermost attention as a spiritual human being, but what is it about this church, it's people and it's beliefs that calls you back for more?

I'm going to share with you today about one of my top three reasons why I love this church and all of you as well, and, why it is my joy to be able to serve the Lord, our church and all of you as your minister. But before I do so let me say that it is my contention (and has been for years now) that is it profoundly important for every one of us to stay in touch with the Lord and within ourselves and one another about what our deepest and most ardent reasons are for loving this amazingly good and challenging spiritual growth tradition, which has been inspiring people like you and me for over 250 years to live by every day.

In addition to what the New Christianity teaches about the constantly loving and wise nature and ways about how God loves and cares for every person on Earth and in Heaven and Hell after death, another of my most favorite beliefs we hold dear is the belief that out of the Lord's infinite Love and Wisdom, He is always....every second....every millisecond of our lives....keeping us in balance spiritually speaking. Our theology talks about this as one of God's highest spiritual laws: the law of spiritual equilibrium. Said in down-to-earth terms, your inner, your ability in spiritual freedom to be able to choose every moment of your life between what is good and evil and what is true and false, is something deeply provided for and protected by the Lord. And God promises you to always keep your will and your mind balanced inside, relative to your unique ancestry and inherited tendencies.

In one of my favorite books written by Swedenborg, *Divine Providence*, there is a chapter heading titled, "It Is a Law of Divine Providence That We Should Act in Freedom and in Accord with Reason." In this part of this book we read, "I mention this at the outset so that the reader may know that 'acting from freedom and in accord with reason' means thinking and intending freely, and then freely saying and doing what is in accord with reason." (DP 71) He goes on to say that "...divine providence is constantly leading us to think and intend what is good and true, [yet] we have a freedom to consider what is evil and false as well...." (ibid. 72)





We then read these eight suppositions:

1. *We have a capacity for disciplined thought and a certain latitude, or rationality and freedom, and these two abilities are in us as gifts from the Lord.*
2. *Whatever we do from our freedom, whether we have thought it through rationally or not, seems to be ours as long as it is in accord with our reason.*
3. *Whatever we have done from our freedom in accord with our thinking becomes a permanent part of us.*
4. *It is by means of these two abilities that the Lord reforms and regenerates us; without them we could not be reformed and regenerated.*
5. *We can be reformed and regenerated by means of these two abilities to the extent that we are brought to a realization that anything good and true that we think and do comes from the Lord and not from us.*
6. *The Lord's union with us and our responsive union with the Lord comes about by means of these two abilities.*
7. *Through the whole course of his divine providence, the Lord protects these two abilities untouched within us, as though they were sacred.*
8. *This is why it is integral to divine providence that we act from freedom, and in accord with reason. (ibid.)*

So, we can count on our God to constantly preserve with pure perfection our inner freedom to think and intend and desire whatever we want. You are guaranteed this most precious and incredible gift from the Lord, with every breath you take. But God also gives this gift to you with accountability, and He asks you to decide, every morning you wake up and yes at the start of each New Year, which way are you going to tip the balance points of your will, your mind, the words you choose and the actions you will take? Are you going to tip those balanced rocks in the picture before you toward what is good and true? Or, will you freely choose to tip them the other way, toward what is evil, selfish, hard-hearted and stick-necked and false?

We are free to read, meditate upon and use the goodness and truths of God's Word to tip the balance points of our lives towards Heaven now. We are free to volunteer in many ways to help our church to grow and thrive and become a beehive of spiritual inspiration. We are free to support justice and peace in our land, and we are free to try as best we can with prudence to create times of being together, opening up and really connecting with each other; sharing meals together (in safe ways), and enjoy growing together in God's grace. And, we can choose if we desire, to join this blessed church and thereby be able to vote at our meetings (annual or otherwise) and continue the great legacy of spiritual growth and outreach that our ancestors have given to us.