

# Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

**JUNE 2023**

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Stones, or more specifically, pebbles, have always attracted me. Our children have spent their holidays at the beach, with me, their dad, wandering away to look at a pile of scattered stones further along the beach, and then from there, to the next alluring set further on still. One of the many joys of retirement is to live at the coast and be spoiled by so many available abundant pebbles. There are 67 sitting on my desk within arm's reach, each beautifully rounded, flecked with colours and circled with narrow lines and bands, each one a coveted treasure. The wonder of their making in the ocean depths.

The whole process is like a spiritual description. Before I launch into that, I'll just describe the basic physical way in

## **Next Issue –September 2023**

I hope you enjoy this edition, which gives us a lot to think about. Our next issue will be in September, please send any articles to me by August 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Email to [ruth@duckworth.me](mailto:ruth@duckworth.me)** or post to the registered office.

*Ruth*



which jagged stone becomes perfect pebble. Let's start out with a flaw in some deep fathom rock face under the ocean. The flaw may be a crack or a breaking point or where two deposited rock layers uncomfortably even incompatibly meet. Maybe even the whole ocean bed shifts and the water swirls never-endingly.

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Please note: the views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the S.A.A. or its committee.



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\* \* *continued from page 1* \* \*

So, this fist-sized piece finally falls away from its mother rock and gains its independence. It is at the mercy of everything around it: the water, the seabed, the sand, other reckless rock-teenagers out on the loose. Mainly, its worst enemy is itself, corners, points, sharp edges, totally unbalanced and endlessly bruised against whatever it meets. It has no idea of its top or bottom, front or back, left or right, only that it turns, and as it does, it begins to lose bits of itself, a few drastically, but most imperceptibly.

All its points and corners wear away and this endless rolling in the surge gradually brings on a curvaceousness which is aqua-dynamic, like the aero-dynamic nose of a jet plane. It now presents no resistance but allows currents to come and go with ease and complete acceptance. They created it and now it knows its place and is at peace with its world. And a few of these find themselves thrust up and out to adorn a beach.

I imagine that through this geology, you would have related to an in-built spiritual

parallel to our own personal processes. They're fairly obvious but they are incredibly real as we meet life from early years to maturity and hopefully, the discovery of our place in the "ocean of life". Some experiences are brutal, and some are gently eroding, smoothing corrugations until we are 'right' and in spiritual symmetry or balance. One day, take a pebble and balance it on your index finger. It's remarkably easy. Balance is surely a spiritual requirement for us. A wholesome spirit in a healthy body which can then carry out the spirit's wishes. Everything is given to us, but it feels to be our very own. Do what is good and move on.

Perhaps appropriately, this: "To see a world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour." (William Blake 'Auguries of Innocence' 1805)

The classic Biblical story of David and Goliath involves David taking - so it says - five smooth stones from the brook, the first of which will embed itself in Goliath's forehead from the fast swung sling, killing the giant stone-dead. These smooth stones, smoothed in the way we saw earlier, but spiritually smoothed by the flow of life in us, these are the rounded truths which speak to us and work in our life with great power and authenticity.

The hardness of rock and its durability but also its aeons-long re-sculpturing makes it the ideal correspondence of lasting sure and penetrating truth, showing us the whole loving purpose of God and the eternal potential for ourselves.

Enjoy every  
discovery,

*Julian*



Oh, the symmetry!



## The necessary foundations of Swedenborgian Spirituality

By Bede

### “Thou Wilt Show Me the Path of Life” Ps xvi, 11

When the **LIFE** that is God is born in us **AS** our life, we are transformed as individuals. This new life is not a reaction to present events but rather a way of being which opens up **FROM** above. This new life becomes tangibly evident in our lives as a clear and unpreoccupied mind and an undisturbed heart.

This is the Life and Light that is God actively present in us as **Goodness, Truth and Usefulness**. When we are **LIVING** God’s LIFE as our life, God’s life and our life are said to be conjoined.



The Love of God by Sabrina J Squires

In Swedenborg’s vision, this conjoining and **ONLY** this conjoining is what saves us from a life separate and apart from God. It is **ONLY** when the **Life** that **IS** God is born in us **as a new life**, are we truly transformed as individuals. Nothing short of this will do the trick.

It must be noted that what we are talking about has no reference to what we nowadays call self-improvement or self-realisation. This is because the “self-life” we take ourselves to be must undergo a

death in order for this new life to be born in us.

To confuse these two notions of self-improvement and self-realisation with **the life of God being born in us as our life** is a profound spiritual error. This is in no way denigrating the necessity to improve our functional skills. But it must be understood from the get-go that the improvement of functional skills is not the same as the Goodness and Truth that is God actively present **IN THE WORLD** as a useful or beneficial way of being. One is a natural transformation and the other is a spiritual transformation.

We can improve our ways of thinking so that we see things in a more realistic fashion. We can improve our conduct so that we can live in more helpful ways. But this is not the same as awakening to the presence of God in our life; though because of such an awakening our conduct will improve and we will live in more non-harmful and helpful ways. When we talk about **KNOWING** God, we need to know what we mean by **KNOWING**.

We can all give our assent to the theoretical proposition that God exists. But this mental assent or agreement is not the “knowing God” that **IS** life eternal. So again, we are confronted with the issue of what it means to “know God” in such a way that the very knowing is “life eternal”. Normally when we use the word knowing we mean **I know that**. The word **that** is always referring to an object away from us. However, Swedenborg says:

**“...spiritual and celestial things cannot be seen with the eyes, or conceived by the imagination”. AC129**





This means that knowledge of God is not the "I know that" kind of knowledge. For natural or external man God is an object away from us that we can think about. For the inner man on the other hand, knowledge of God is **IN** and **AS** the very act of living itself.

In other words, we will be showing how **Swedenborgian spirituality comes alive in us as a non-dual knowledge that is lived as a beneficial way of being in the world.** I was introduced to the nature of knowing God non-dualistically by my teacher in India, for which I will always be grateful.

However, my Hindu brothers and sisters tend to be Monists which is the vision that there is only One reality and spirituality is the merging into this one reality. For example, like we are a drop of water and we merge back into the ocean.



Whereas Swedenborg, on the other hand, unfolds a non-dual knowledge of God that does not involve the annihilation of the individual but rather its ultimate fulfilment.

Now this non-dualist stuff might sound a bit obtuse but as we move forward it will all be very clear. If we approach this issue in the right way, the simplicity of Swedenborg spirituality (the spiritual transformation of the individual) will become evident.

In this study we need to start things off on the right footing. We don't start with the reality of the individual. Rather we start with the Reality of God because without this, we can't really understand the individual.

So, we have to start with some understanding of **WHAT** God is. This as we will see, is going to be our foundation because **EVERYTHING** depends on it.

So, when we talk about God **what** are we talking about? We are talking about a foundational understanding of God without which the spiritual transformation of the individual is not possible. Without being clear on the end, a means can't possibility open up for us. I wish to give a quote from a book called "The Kingdom of Heaven" by John Howard Spalding, which is the best overview of Swedenborgian metaphysics that I have come across.

**"To think of God as a Divine Man is to think of Him as BEING infinite Love and Wisdom, active and manifested in USE".**

This means that it is **ONLY** when we are **BEING the Goodness of God intelligently** (love is always intelligent) **expressed**, is our life and God's life **CO-JOINED**. In this co-joining there is no place where my life ends and God's life begins. As Meister Eckhart so elegantly put it "... for where God is, there the soul is and where the soul is, there God is".

Swedenborg said a very beautiful and clarifying thing that goes to the heart of **WHAT** spiritual transformation of ourselves as individuals is and **HOW** it is brought about:

**All religion is a matter of life; and the life of religion is doing good. (Life 1)**



So what this means is that when the **Good that is God** comes alive and active in us **AS** our very life and this goodness is being intelligently expressed, we have Religion in the real sense. Nothing other than this **LIVING THE GOOD** is religion.

So, what does it mean to live the Good? Does it mean having religious ideals of being loving and caring and trying to live by these ideals? No. The presence of God coming alive in us is not an idea. It is rather a living movement that opens up in us as:

### Living the Good in the form of right CONDUCT

### Living the Good in the form of right UNDERSTANDING

### Living the Good in the form of a right way of BEING

**DO WHAT IS RIGHT, NOT WHAT IS EASY.**



Julian Duckworth expresses this in a pithy form - Do right, Think right and Be right.

As has been said, God comes alive in us as a new life. He is not an object away from us. God is constantly offering to us the Goodness and Wisdom He is and we can choose to **LIVE** this life **AS** our life if we want to.

We are **ONLY** choosing to live God's life as our own when we are actually **LIVING** it. It is not like we choose and **THEN** do it. No, the very act of choosing to live the Good of God is the active living of it. If we are not living our choice we have not chosen. So too, when we are living the life of Hell (love of self

and love of the world) we are actively choosing to do so. It doesn't happen accidentally but always involves our consent.



We can see that our spiritual journey is learning to live the good that is God. So how do we learn to **live the Good that is God**? Simple. We learn to live the Good that is God by **LIVING** it. There is no other way to learn this. The end we are seeking is the means we employ.

Our life separate and apart from God consists of sensory experiences and our psychological reactions to these experiences. The nature of our psychological reactions are the lawful and necessary outcome of what we love. When we are enclosed in our thinking and our feelings, we are living in **OUR WORLD**. When we are rooted in the Life that is God, we are living in **GOD'S WORLD**. In God's world we cease to "be" a life separate and apart from God.

Our whole spiritual organisation is ordered around receiving the Life and Light which is God. We are continually being offered this Life to live **AS** our own.

So, we are always confronted each moment with the choice of **LIVING** "our life" or the Life God is continually giving



us. When we, at any one moment, are **LIVING God's LIFE**, we are in Swedenborg's terms "Doing Good". This is what religion really is.

I would like to add a couple of quotes from Spalding which express very clearly this wonderful idea of what religion really is.

**"Man, therefore, is Man because he is capable of being animated by unselfish LOVE and guided by WISDOM to a life of practical USEFULNESS. In other words, he is man because he is capable of becoming LOVE, WISDOM and USE".**

**"...man is man in the degree that he loves unselfishly, knows how to express this love in truly beneficent action and lives accordingly".**

This reminds me of the saying by St Anselm "The glory of God is a man fully alive." Notice how this has nothing to do with "self-esteem" or "positive thinking". This is because there is a decided absence of self-involvement.

In this present culture there is an obsession about "feeling good about ourselves". It is also believed that feeling good about ourselves is happiness. It is not. Rather it is ego inflation which of course is a very delicious feeling but it is not happiness (heavenly blessedness).



There is **ONLY** one understanding of ourselves that is true and it is a spiritual understanding. It is not based on any experiences of ourselves in the material world

This understanding comes from above and when we are in fact **SEEING**

ourselves at any one moment in this way, we are released from **ALL** our "self-notions" positive and negative. Another way of saying this is that we are released from ego deflation (self-hatred) as well as ego inflation (grandiose notions); When this wisdom comes alive in us as a new way of seeing, our "self-Life" is set aside without any effort on our part.

So, what is this wisdom (a way of seeing that comes from above and comes alive in us as our way of seeing) that answers the question of what we really are and saves us from all our delusional self-notions?

It is this –

**WE ARE A RECIPIENT OF THE LIFE AND LIGHT THAT IS GOD.**

At any one moment, this is an understanding we can live because it is a truth which is abidingly present. Everything else is shifting and changing. But this truth about ourselves is something we can always rely on.

When we **SEE** that we are acting wrongly, this is the light of wisdom (which is the presence of God) pointing out and indicating our wrong conduct and offering us a different way to live in terms of conduct. This is being a recipient.

When we **SEE** we are looking at another human being with unkind eyes, this is the light of wisdom pointing out and indicating that we are **SEEING** in the wrong way and offering us another way to **SEE**. This is being a recipient.

When we **SEE** we are enclosed in a way of being which cuts us off from the Life and Light that is God, this is the light of wisdom pointing out and indicating we are living in the wrong way and offering us a New Life that we can live as our way of being. This is being a recipient.

It is only when we receive the Good of God into our life can we **LIVE** it. Living







although one lived in Europe and the other in India."



Swedenborg even gives a description of London in heaven, mentioning it is broadly similar in layout but that the houses are not like those of 'our' London. There are actually two Londons, the one above being more heavenly and the London beneath being quite hellish. And Londoners who die are very pleased to still be living in London. And Holborn, Wapping and Islington all get mentioned, being there as well as here. (Last Judgment Posthumous 268)

The other connection is that alongside the named nations in the spiritual world, Swedenborg often writes about the various religions as they are in the spiritual world - The Jews, the Quakers, the Papists, the Mahometans (Islam), the Africans and Gentiles. (And for sure, Swedenborg happily or unhappily writes about those individual religious leaders and theologians as they were seen by him or spoken with. Luther, Calvin and such. One of the great reassurances about all of this spiritual world of nations, cities, religions and theologians, all known to us, is that this spiritual world isn't going to be based on a disembodied thought hanging on a puff of air (which some believe is all you've got left when you've no longer got your body!) This - Swedenborg's - spiritual world is intensely **r-e-a-l**.

Let me share a personal experience here. When we were in Mauritius, that heaven of the Indian Ocean, I gave a series

of public talks, well-attended, and offered several follow-up sessions to anyone who'd like to come. We had a dozen at our first of these, and two of them were Moslem, a father and son. Paul, the father, invited Ruth and me for dinner at their house and said that he was delighted to hear about Moslems being in heaven according to Swedenborg. He'd met the very opposite idea in Christian churches in Mauritius. So I lent him a couple of books where Swedenborg talks about this, for him to have a read. The next week he came back and said, "Interesting stuff this, but I wasn't happy with Swedenborg saying that all Moslems in heaven reek of camel dung!"

Now, to show you where the various nations here and in the spiritual world are discussed in Swedenborg's writings, here is probably an incomplete list, but a good start. I wouldn't suggest reading them all, but a dip-in could well be rewarding and also thought-provoking.



The numbers are Potts Concordance enumerations.

*Note that the first reference to a book is in full followed by an abbreviation, and thereafter only the abbreviation is given.*

**Generally:** Last Judgment (J) 48 about the arrangement of all nations in the spiritual world.

**The English:** Continuation of the Last Judgment (CJ) 39-46; Spiritual Diary (SD) 5357 through 5369 and 5629, then 5951 through 5970, 6000-6098 and 6103; Last Judgment (Posth) (JP) 213-227 and 327.





**The French:** Divine Providence (DP) 257; Apocalypse Revealed 740.

**The Dutch:** Arcana 5573 - Character of the Dutch fully described; CJ 48-53; SD 3498-3527; 5629 (Dutch compared with English); JP 19-20.



**The Germans:** J 48; CJ 20; CL 109; True Christian Religion (TCR) 813-815; SD 5358, and 5395-5396

**The Swedes:** J 48; SD 5034-5053 and 5396; same 5461-5464.

**The Russians:** SD 5043 and then 5452-5456; same 5949 and 5963

**The Italians:** CL 106; SD 3598 then 5043, 5097 5629, 5630, 5648, 5847

**The Arabians:** Many references to the representation of Arabia in the Bible but also Arcana 102523.6; Sacred Scripture (SS) 21 and 102; Apocalypse Revealed 707.2; TCR 241; Apocalypse Explained (AE) 405.15 and 422.20; Coronis 41



**The Africans:** Heaven and Hell 514 end; J 51; CJ 73-76; SS 105 end; TCR 837-840; SD 453, 480, 4774 end; 4777; 4783.2; 5515-5518; 5809; 5946; JP 115-124



I could have asterisked some of the most interesting or startling or spiritual passages (and there are some amazing statements by Swedenborg here) but in the end I decided to put in virtually every number. As I said earlier, perhaps a dip-in.

If you do not have the writings of Swedenborg, then the New Christian Bible Study has all the theological books of Swedenborg online and accessible on their home page, on the left, in blue and alphabetically listed. Go to book whatever and put in the number I've given into the top left small blue box where a 0 or a 1 appears and then hit 'go' or 'enter'.

So ... after all this focus on what Swedenborg says in his (note) **theological** writings about the various nations here and also in the spiritual world (do read Last Judgment number 48) what might we derive for us spiritually in his international descriptions and positions?

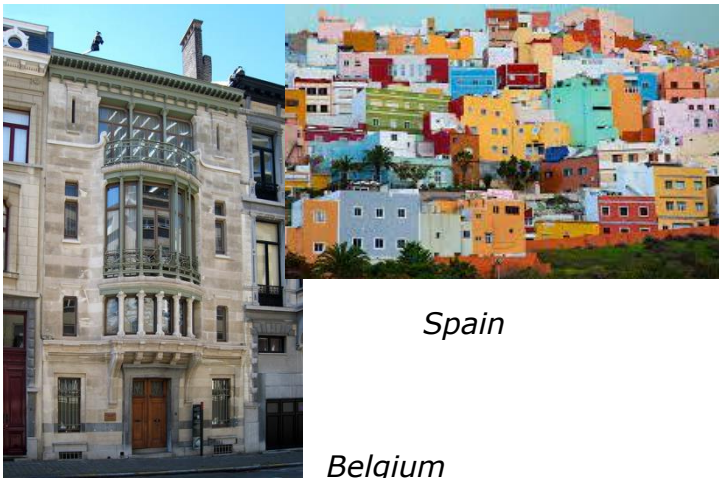
One thing which might very well help here is that Swedenborg, three times over, lists a similar kind of broad brief about the spirits he met or saw from the various planets in our solar system - Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Moon, and also from "Other Earths in the Starry Heavens." The parallel is quite strong, not in the description but in the obvious presentation of much variety and diversity.

Maybe Swedenborg received or felt that the very nature of the Divine in creating beings to be in heaven would clearly require great breadth and difference. Heaven and Hell 56 says that heaven is made more perfect by continually receiving ever richer variety.

From this idea it is not a big jump for us to appreciate that Swedenborg's whole spiritual teaching - which is primarily about our personal, individual, spiritual relationship in being recipients of the good and truth of God - is highly inclusive and never exclusive. All can belong.



Just envisaging the map of Europe brings great divergences and complements, of, for example, the colder north and the warmer Mediterranean south; of the Latin, Teutonic and Slavic groupings of countries, with others too of course; of the nature of an architectural landscape which I once read as being 'grey masculine' there in Britain, The Netherlands and Germany, while France, Spain and Italy present a colourful feminine' vista. And of course, there are culture and lifestyle and histories.



Spain

Belgium

But I suspect that the most important thing with all this is to relate it to ourselves. We may have done our Ancestry and found we are a mix of German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Maori ... who knows? But we have our own nationalities in our spirit, mind and heart which range across sacredness, love, intellect, reason, use, action and defence. We are a whole world within each of us, which is something truly wonderful.

To end with, here is Last Judgment 48 where the positions of nations in the spiritual world is given. Food for thought...

48. The original locations in the spiritual world of all the religions and peoples on whom the judgment was carried out looked like this. The people called Protestants appeared gathered in the central area. They were subdivided according to their native countries: the Germans in the spiritual world were toward the north, the Swedes toward the west, the

Danes in the west, the Dutch toward the east and the south, and the British in the middle. Surrounding this whole central area where the Protestants were, there appeared the people from the Catholic religion, the majority of whom were in the western region, although some were in the south.

Beyond them were the Muslims, again subdivided by nationality. They all appeared in the southern part of the west. Beyond them people of other religions were gathered in great abundance. They constituted an outer ring; and beyond them there appeared an ocean, which formed the farthest boundary.

**The arrangement of these peoples in these regions was based on each group's receptivity to divine truths.** Because this is the basis, in the spiritual world everyone is known by the general region and the particular place within it where he or she lives; and in a community of many, the individuals are known by which quarter of the community they are staying in (on this subject see [Heaven and Hell 148-149](#)).

It is much the same when people are traveling from place to place. In every case, the route they take goes **through particular regions according to the successive states of the thoughts that arise from the emotions at the core of their lives.** As we will see below, that is how they are brought to the place that is



their own. In short, the paths that people follow in the spiritual world are a reflection of the thoughts in their minds. This is why in the spiritual sense of the

Word "paths" and "walking" and such-like mean the direction and movement of our spiritual life.



## Where is my book offer for this quarter?

On this page of Candela, we would normally advertise our book offers for the quarter to our readers at a discount. But to be honest, I have looked through our booklist and see that we've advertised just about most of the popular and available titles over the years. I would guess that most of you either already have all the books we have been offering, or you don't want the remaining books we keep promoting (which is fine, it's a free world). Also, we no longer have huge stocks left of any one particular item anymore, since the online access to book publishers has become much more available over the last few decades, and our former discounts for printed works has dwindled (not to mention changes in postal costs).

Some people these days are more often resorting to digital book formats and editions rather than obtaining printed material. Of course, there are those who prefer a hardcopy in their hand, or maybe you have a foot (or hand) in both camps? Anyhow, I thought I might pause the book advertising for a month, and ask if any of you might wish to offer a review either of a book we have advertised or sold to you or any other book we may not even be aware of. Or maybe you would like to mention or review a YouTube or video clip or a spiritual film worthy of note. Perhaps you wish to comment on some older books (I know that several of you really enjoy some of the older authors, like John Clowes or John Howard Spalding who was quoted by Bede earlier in this issue). Feel free to send your reviews to Ruth our editor (see email address on the front page).



Do come to visit the Centre to see what titles we have in our shop or library. But here are some book supplier, libraries and study websites where you can read, download or purchase Swedenborg-related books:

- [swedenborg.com](http://swedenborg.com) (Swedenborg Foundation, based in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, USA, who offer many free digital books by and about Swedenborg)
- [swedenborg.org.uk](http://swedenborg.org.uk) (Swedenborg Society in London, UK)
- [newchurchbooks.com](http://newchurchbooks.com) (also based in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, USA)
- [archive.org](http://archive.org) (e.g., search for "Swedenborg" for many free digital books)
- [swedenborgdigitallibrary.org](http://swedenborgdigitallibrary.org) (mostly online material, very good collection of books about Swedenborg's works)
- [swedenborgstudy.com](http://swedenborgstudy.com) (also mostly online material, another collection of books about Swedenborg and his work)
- [newchristianbiblestudy.org](http://newchristianbiblestudy.org) (menu item "Theology" lets you read and study most of Swedenborg's works in many translations and languages, including Latin!)
- And of course, there is our SAA website, full of resources: [swedenborg.com.au](http://swedenborg.com.au)

Finally, a very warm welcome to Wayne Fredrickson from South Australia who joined the SAA, and Robert Bryce (once SAA President!), back after a 7 year break. Happy reading to you all (and have fun writing those reviews)!

Joe





## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

To become a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia, check the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) and click "Contact" in the top menu, which has details on benefits of **membership** and an application form listing current membership rates.

Also check the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) for details of **group events** which are held online, but you can also be physically at various locations around Australia. Follow the "about → contact" menu items on the website for a list of locations and contact info of your nearest group convenor, and see the "events" menu item for Zoom links so you can join online events.

Our new website is continually being updated with new study material and latest news and information.

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## Spiritual Spheres

**Heaven and Hell 17:** All my experience in heaven bears witness to the fact that the divine nature that comes from the Lord, affects angels, and constitutes heaven, is love. In fact, all the people there are forms of love and thoughtfulness. They look indescribably beautiful. Love radiates from their faces, from their speech, from every detail of their behaviour.

Further, there are surrounding auras of spiritual life that emanate from every angel and from every spirit and envelop them. By means of these auras one can recognize even from a distance the quality of the affections of their loves, since these auras flow out from the life of their affection and consequent thought—that is, from the life of their love and consequent faith. The auras that emanate from angels are so full of love that they touch the deepest reaches of life of the people they meet. I have been aware of them a number of times, and they have moved me deeply.



I have been able to see that love was the source of angels' life because all the people in the other life turn in a direction determined by their own love. People engaged in a love for the Lord and a love for their neighbour are constantly turning toward the Lord, while people who are engaged in self-love are constantly turning their backs to the Lord. This holds true no matter which way they turn, since in the other life spatial relationships are determined by people's inner natures. These also determine geographical regions, whose boundaries are not drawn the way they are in the physical world but depend on which way people are facing. Actually, it is not angels who turn to the Lord but the Lord who turns toward himself the people who love to do whatever has its source in him.

**Divine Love and Wisdom 292:** I have fairly often been allowed to perceive that there is this kind of aura around an angel or spirit and that there is a general aura around groups in community. I have also been allowed to see this aura in various guises, sometimes in heaven looking like a faint flame and in hell like a harsh flame, sometimes in heaven looking like a delicate and bright cloud and in hell like a dense black cloud. I have also been allowed to sense these auras as different kinds of aroma and stench. This has convinced me that everyone in heaven and everyone in hell is surrounded by an aura made up of substances distilled and separated from his or her body.