
INTERNAL SENSE OF “WORLDS IN SPACE” OR “EARTHS IN THE UNIVERSE”

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Note: Swedenborg works are referred to here using the following abbreviations. Numbers refer to Swedenborg’s paragraph numbers, not page number. A number without letters implies AC.

Abbreviation	Work
AC (default)	Secrets of Heaven (Arcana Celestia)
EU	Earth in the Universe (Worlds in Space)
HH	Heaven and Hell
SD	Spiritual Diary



Swedenborg's short work, *The Worlds In Space*, is an impediment to appreciating his other writings, especially since we have sent men to the moon and probes into space and have not found the life he spoke of there. At this point it appears virtually impossible for there to be any kind of life on the moon, and it is very unlikely on Mercury and other planets in our solar system. Yet Swedenborg seemed to say there was life there; he spoke to spirits from those places.

Defenders of Swedenborg have sought several ways out. Perhaps there was life on the moon eons ago and Swedenborg spoke to these spirits. The physical evidence is that life *never* existed on the moon. Perhaps the moon is hollow and the people are inside.²The mass of the moon is known and strongly militates against this. Perhaps the spirits simply got

the names of the planets wrong.³Etc. Almost everyone believes that *The Worlds In Space* is primarily describing men from other planets. A few have speculated that it may have some other meaning, but apparently no one has presented what that meaning could be.

I recently published an article elaborating an apparent inner sense in *The Worlds In Space*⁴ [also called *Earth In The Universe*, therefore the book is for the remainder of this article referred to as "EU"]. In the course of revising the article for this publication, I went back to all the sources of EU and found to my immense surprise and delight, ample confirmation of an inner sense. This revision of the prior article will show the new insights and trace them to their sources.

First, it should be known that Swedenborg's general contention that there are numerous planets in the universe with life on them, is generally upheld by science today. Indeed, the probable number of planets with life on them is in the order of several millions in our galaxy alone,⁵ whereas the inhabitants of Mercury estimated 600,000 planets (SD 3264). There are millions of galaxies so the probability is several millions times millions. The probability of life out there, much life, is very great, especially since science has figured out how a mixture of water and gases can generate the chemical beginnings of life. The statistical probability is that our level of life is only average, in terms of the whole range of life in the universe. This means that it is likely some half of the life-bearing planets may have developments superior to ours. One of Swedenborg's missions was to convey the idea that we are not alone, that there is much life out there (HH 417). This thesis is now generally

accepted by science. Though we have yet to find it in the near neighborhood of our solar system, it is likely to be abundant in the remote reaches of space.

Though we can support Swedenborg's general thesis, there is still the problem of men on the moon. In my recent book,⁶ I said Swedenborg was probably simply mistaken, taken in by enthusiastic spirits. I now believe I was wrong. I am indebted to Philip Odhner for suggesting the general direction for a solution. Odhner said that the *Arcana Coelestia* is primarily a spiritual document in which Swedenborg would not be concerned to conduct a solar system travelogue. Moreover, he pointed out that the sections of EU probably bear some internal connection with the *Arcana* chapters they appear in. With this in mind, I carefully examined EU again. Several things are clear. In EU Swedenborg was talking to spirits who were reported to be from given planets in and out of our solar system. He is obviously dealing with spiritual realms, not a material one. The sun is representative of the Lord; it isn't the sun of this world. The arrangement of planets is stationary and not as they appear in our solar system (EU 42). In fact, we see the same kind of symbolic changes and correspondences as occur in *Heaven and Hell*, i.e. "*Their speech... was conveyed towards my left eye... the reason was, because the left eye corresponds to the knowledges of things abstracted from what is material... whereas the right eye corresponds to such things as appertain to wisdom*" (EU 22). In fact, those who are accustomed to Swedenborg's use of memorable relations as spiritual experiences illustrating the topic at hand, had best think of EU as a series of memorable relations. *Swedenborg is not doing*

anything different in EU than he has done countless times before, using spiritual experiences as another, dramatic way of illustrating points at hand. The format is the same as it is with the memorable relations: experiences in the spiritual world are given to illustrate spiritual matters. The spiritual correspondences of those experiences is partly given so that the reader may not miss the lesson given. Because two centuries of scholars and readers have generally taken *The Worlds In Space* to be describing beings on other planets, it may well be that Swedenborg didn't provide enough of the correspondences, or that readers weren't sufficiently alert to the fact that the theological writings are said to deal *only* with spiritual matters.

A key to the meaning of EU lies in its publishing history. The experience of things heard and seen that was to be the EU material first started coming Jan. 23, 1748, and is recorded in the *Spiritual Diary* with the last reference appearing at number 5513 about 1757. Swedenborg was aware of an inner sense to these experiences and elaborated it more fully in the *Spiritual Diary* than in any later work. Thereafter he excerpted much of this material and included it at the ends of chapters on Exodus in the *Arcana Coelestia*. I am almost certain that the inner sense of this EU material illustrates the inner sense in the *Arcana* chapters, but this is difficult to demonstrate because here we are comparing an inner to an inner. There are just too many parallels though. It may be that Swedenborg, the master of inner symbolism by the time of the *Arcana*, simply didn't reckon with how much his readers would miss the inner meanings and think he is talking just of people from other planets. Yet there is a passage in the *Spiritual Diary* which, though not crystal clear,

seems to say that he expects many readers, who can barely get beyond the senses of the body, may make the mistake of thinking he is talking about the men of other planets. Note that when he describes the error people will make he says, "*that their inhabitants are of such a nature... since men judge from the external sense.*"

Spiritual ideas... can make it known that the men of this earth will judge variously concerning these matters, namely, that there are such planets... and that their inhabitants are of such a nature, and especially that it could be possible for men to converse with them; since men judge from the external sense and from each one's phantasy and love. But this is of no consequence, for these things have been seen and heard as sensibly as in human society, therefore I care nothing for their judgments. I am persuaded that when they become spirits, and still more in the case of those who become angels, they will clearly see the truth, as perhaps also will some of the human race, if it is well pleasing to the Lord.... It is the fallacies of the senses which mislead the inhabitants of this earth, who are of the corporeal sense, and who extend their ideas scarcely beyond the senses of the body. SD 1532

He is clearly saying he has heard and seen these things in the spiritual world, and such experiences may be granted to others. But he is also saying people will take this variously, many hardly able to get beyond the senses of the body. Those caught within the senses of the body will judge just that there are such planets and such men! The implication is that there are also deeper meanings contained here.

There is a similar passage in the *Arcana*. Note carefully how he says this: "But let those things which have thus far been shown concerning heaven and hell, and the life after death, be for the benefit of those few who are in the faith. That the rest, however, may be brought to some kind of an acknowledgment, it was granted to me to relate such things as delight and stimulate the man who is desirous of acquiring knowledge: of this character are the things which are about to be related of the *The Worlds In Space*" (AC 9439, emphasis mine, similar is EU 124). What is said is for the few in faith, that is the few who read the inner sense. Otherwise it is still useful because it delights and stimulates the others and leads them to some kind of acknowledgment of the spiritual.

I believe this apparent account of life on the planets was meant to attract the interest of people. That is why EU was published as a small, cheap work. But, he added footnotes which pointed back to the spiritual matters of the *Arcana*. I believe that all three accounts, in the *Spiritual Diary*, the *Arcana*, and EU, are accurate records of his experiences in the spiritual world. The successive trimming of the subtle and complex inner sense would be appropriate especially in EU as a work meant to intrigue general readers. Yet there is enough of it left there that the inner sense can be seen even there by knowledgeable readers who search for it. EU was a more external work, for more external readers. For our purposes the richest account of these spiritual matters is clearly in the *Spiritual Diary*, the next richest is in the *Arcana*, and the most limited is in EU. The best reading would include all three

accounts, for sometimes the later account has details missing in earlier ones. For instance, I have yet to find the Second, Third and Fourth Earth in the Starry Heaven in the *Spiritual Diary*. It will be easiest to demonstrate the inner sense in the *Spiritual Diary* so that we might get beyond a concern with men on other planets to see what is really being revealed.

The general dictum that the theological writings deal only with spiritual matters is upheld in what follows. Indeed, once the internal sense is seen it is hoped many will wonder how they could have missed it. In the earlier article I described the internal sense of four planets directly from EU and many still thought an internal sense was speculative. In what follows I will describe the internal sense taken directly in paraphrasings of the writings. Every statement will have a reference. All are to the *Spiritual Diary* unless the *Arcana Coelestia* (AC) or *The Worlds In Space* (EU) is referred to. Each of these is a statement of *the sense of the letter* of the writings; where there is an interpretation of a symbol, it is given in brackets. For each planet I begin with its general meaning, followed by excerpts from the writings. This study is far from exhaustive. It captures just the most obvious references to the inner sense. It will be seen that the greatest elaboration of the inner sense occurs for the earlier planets, with much to be inferred for the later planets. Each planet deals with an area of the inner or spiritual life. Often it is described both positively, for what it can do, and negatively for the error possible. The planets are given in the order in which they appear in the *Arcana*.

MERCURY

General meaning: The life of memory knowledge.

Excerpts from the writings:

Internal sense and in a certain respect memory 1415. It does not attend to the corporeal 1417. They are called cognitions or internal senses 1418, 1425. They are the memory of things from which comes speculation on the purer imagination 1418. They are knowledges 1558 and operate from precepts that distort things 1423. They constitute the internal sense in the Grand Man 1426, 1457. They are eager to know but not to instruct 1427. They are dressed in dark blue [somber, intellectual] by which is represented their mind 1432. They do not comprehend things interior or inmost 1442. Interior sensation 1448, 1454. External senses and memory of material ideas obscures their senses 1454. They are thoughts but not judgments 1455. They do not draw conclusions regarding uses or ends 1455. They act as one and are of one sentiment and mind 1455. But they cannot be brought to faith, for this requires judgments 1458. Their internal sense is such that it delights only in the knowledges of things and nothing beyond . . . since there are interiors pertaining to uses and ends and they don't care for these. They are proud and despise others in comparison with themselves 3339. They represent the internal sense, as it is in the memory of particulars. This pertains to imaginations derived from images of worldly things, laws, knowledge of laws, the things of faith. This part of memory more nearly respects thought, because it gives

thought subjects of deep thinking which becomes speculation
3258.

This list does not exhaust all that is said of Mercury. If you doubt that the above passages are so explicit, please consult them. It should begin to be apparent that Swedenborg is describing a particular area of thought in its positive and negative potentialities. When described in one word he calls them cognitions or knowledge. See if it doesn't become apparent why such persons

- a) turn away from the material and earthly, to what is real for them, abstract facts;
- b) like to gather as much memory-knowledge as possible, and wander far in search of this;
- c) remember and recall well what interests them and have exquisite perception in this area;
- d) distort the real perceived world into abstractions that agree with them;
- e) are poor in making judgments and deductions because they are rich in memory-knowledge rather than wisdom, and are also poor in applying this to uses;
- f) do not know what innocence is, being in pride in their knowledge, suspecting they know it all and are superior to others;
- g) are neither hot nor cold, i.e., uninvolved;
- h) would be aptly symbolized by crystalline globes, beautiful but lifeless.

We can all recognize this type of person from Mercury; we have each known one. This mercurial type appears handsome [impressive with that

memory] but thin [i.e., not a full-bodied participant in life]. The men's clothes are dark blue [somber, proper] without any fold or protuberance [nothing careless, hanging out, very neat, precise, not quite human] EU 44. We can still recognize these experts of memory-knowledge. Their role in the Grand Man, of course, has to do with a particular aspect of memory AC 6808. In religious life these people know and profess the faith very well, but they are a little defective in living it. Swedenborg has some humorous comments on these memory experts- that any child could do a dance which they could not begin to explain, how this muscle contracted, how that, etc. EU 38. No dancer could ever learn to dance from their explanation. So much for their presumed greatness. And this much begins to be clear: Swedenborg is illustrating from actual encounters in the spiritual world a type of spiritual life and error. That is why I say his method is the same as the memorable relations, except that so much of the correspondences is missing from most accounts that almost everyone thought he was speaking of men from Mercury!

VENUS

General meaning: This is the life of those between the internal and the external. Externally they are sensation which loves cognition. They seem evil, avaricious, taking from others. But internally they are simple and love the Lord Who is in their midst.

Excerpts:

They do not understand things interior, still less inmost such as innocence, but rather the cognition of things 1442. On one side beasts and the other side good 1443. They are representations of many 1444. The internal senses help the communication of the more internal and the external 1445. They are interior sensations which love bare cognitions 1446, 1448. Externally they feel they are evil and are in despair, yet they are not evil but simple and will be saved 1449. They are involved in natural things and are in spiritual darkness 1450. They know not of sheep [followers] but of goats [rebellious] 1451. Their physical situation merely signifies their mind 1452. The other [inner] side are worshippers of the Lord, and the Lord is among them though they are also simple 1453. Venus and our earth represent corporeal things and the appetencies connected with them, also worldly things and those who rule external senses 1558. The external enjoy taking from others [sense dependency] but do not kill [they perceive but do not destroy] 3346-7.

You may begin to see a kind of continuity developing from memory knowledge, to more and more inward aspects of mind, which is further deepened in Mars.

MARS

General meaning: The dynamics of thought from affection. In the highest sense it is affectionately intuitional and in easy conjunction with

others. But when it falls into pride it becomes divorced from affection and this thought without affection is obscure and hidden. The succession of states from the celestial affection of knowing, to the spiritual, to mere intelligence and knowledge of self. The transmutation of the life of affections and thought into almost no life, and thereby the obstruction of internals and concealment.

Excerpts:

They are holy 1539. They intuit others and are in easy conjunction with them 1540. They have internal perception 1541, 1544. They are angels that correspond to thought and bear a resemblance to the most ancient church 1543, 1558. Their face is in heaven and their body on earth 1549. Those in sinister thoughts dissociate from others 1548. Their thought is not so much intellectual as it is of the will, out of fear of the Lord 1550. This is thought that looks alive and is pretty but becomes lifeless 3246-52. They are humble before the Lord 3331, with worship that is profound, full of amazement, pleasant and overpowering 3352. In integrity they are the affection of faith, but when they decline from this they are mere knowledge of doctrine [the bird of pearl] 3874-6, 3879-89. Their thought is then removed from affections and its forms, and becomes obscure and hidden 3879-85, 3888-9. Such can be proud of obscurity and are removed from heaven 3888-9. They are the mediate between the intellectual and the voluntary faculties, thought from affection, and the best of them the affection of thought EU 88.

It should begin to be apparent that Swedenborg is describing areas of the inner life. The symbolism of the bird [living faith] which becomes transformed to pearl is particularly beautiful.

JUPITER

General meaning: The interior rational ideas, a ground for things inmost to be sown.

Excerpts:

Their understanding is informed by the Lord; they think more than they speak and are in the order of their lives 527. They are in the rich association of imagination and thought in contrast to thought from memory 539. They are interior idea 540 and fill the brain with a gentle and general aspiration 542, 584. They fear and shun the sciences of particulars and the senses 560 and whatever pertains to the body 1672. Content with what is given them 708, they are tranquil and joyful 742. They are celestial 1113, 1123 and are in the general of thought 1123. They deal in continuous ideas 1649-56 and are in the cognitive celestial of thought 3046.

There is more on Jupiter than on any other planet. Again, we've taken just the most obvious statements of the inner sense.

SATURN

General meaning: The life of internal reason, which is innocent and simple and grows in spiritual knowledge and experiences heaven and the Lord. It can be led astray by faith alone but not by the exterior senses, to which it is averse.

Excerpts:

They relate to internal sense or reason 1516 and would rather die than be withdrawn from uprightness and humility 1517. Some are led astray by nocturnal light [faith] 1518. They are internal sense or reason which can ascend to heaven 1527 and are not concerned with the body 1530. They correspond to interior sense or reason 1558. This is interior man who is reason 3328. Those of the exterior senses are antagonistic to this 3328-9, are in fantasies and do not know the spiritual 3330. This is the quality of the middle sense between the spiritual and natural man which recedes from the natural and accedes to the spiritual EU 102.

MOON

General meaning: The life of a great show of faith.

Excerpts:

These are inflated and suppose themselves to be great 3242. They make great noise AC 9232 but don't amount to much AC 9233.

They relate to the xiphoid cartilage (the front of the chest, where one can make one's self appear bigger) AC 9236.

There is little overt clue to the meaning of the moon. Let us look at the EU account to see how this general meaning is portrayed.

The moon is the only named planet or sphere which Swedenborg has talked about extensively elsewhere. The moon signifies faith which gives some light to the mind even in the darkness of ignorance AC 337. The men of the moon, somewhat humorously, illustrate the life of those who make a great show of their faith.

EU - Moon	Inner Meaning
Certain spirits, above the head,	This spiritual aspect seems to be a higher one,
who thundered like a multitude.	which makes thunderous pronouncements.
Simple spirits laughed for they knew	The simple easily see through such nonsense.
they were few, small as boys seven years old.	This aspect is much less than it seems.
One carried another on his back.	From one doctrine comes several.
Long faces,	They have a somber, impressive aspect,
but bodies like dwarfs.	yet they don't amount to much.
One applied himself to my elbow.	Their nature is truth from unclear good (left AE 6006) and they can be ferocious, cruel and concerned with self honor (left elbow AC 5393e).
They say they thunder to keep away evil	They say their way protects from evil.

and remain secure.	
The thundering sound is made from the abdomen like an eructation [i.e. belching].	Their apparent power comes from within their own understanding, rather than real understanding in relation to the world (i.e., respiration).
The moon has no atmosphere.	Their world is a barren, empty sphere.
They relate to the xiphoid cartilage in the Grand Man.	They are of the proprium, vaunted up [exulted excessively] in self intelligence (from the high point where the chest sticks out).
Where there is an earth, there are men.	Where there is the inferior aspect of man, there is Man AC 2162.
The human race is the end of creation that there might be a heaven.	The divine is the saving value of all that is of man (hence even those in this thunderous faith have what is of worth in them).

Again, in the inner sense there is nothing out of place, nothing strange in the account. Yet in its outward sense, it seems strange. Even the speaking by belching makes sense: it is an image of a man inflated by the importance of his ideas, belching them forth like thunder.

FIRST EARTH IN THE STARRY HEAVENS

General meaning: This is instruction for those who can think from the sensual of their spirit withdrawn from the body, to reach the beginning of heavenly experiences in which there is a separation of the profane and holy and the beginning awareness of angels acting through one.

Excerpts:

These worship an angel 4663 and relate to the spleen [filters the blood and saves what is good, blood equals divine truth] 4663, 1005. Those of the spleen are of the purification of good and truth HH 96. This is for those who can think of the sensual of their spirit withdrawn from the body [i.e., in trance] and those who suffer themselves to be instructed AC 9581. They have to pass through the fiery smoke which is the falsity of evils of lust AC 9583.

There are few direct interpretations of the inner sense here. It probably is not chance that the first earth outside our solar system [beyond what we are familiar with] leads us directly into spiritual experiences. The planets in our solar system relate to areas of everyone's experience. The planets beyond this lead to deeper spiritual experiences. I caution that this cannot be intellectually mastered (that is the error of Mercury). The account is describing the beginning of spiritual *experience*. Those with this experience can cross the chasm and follow. Others cannot. Let us look directly at the EU account to follow something of the drama that is unfolded.

EU - First Earth	Inner Meaning
I was led by the Lord,	This experience can only be given by the Lord,
to look into the earth itself.	to look at inferior things that correspond to higher things AC 2162.
The people from an earth remain near the earth after death.	In the spiritual world we tend to remain as we were before.
I could make this journey by variations of	We must allow ourselves to be moved,

the interiors.	varied, to make this trip.
People in the senses can't follow, but those who think from the sense of their spirit removed from body, can.	(same meaning)
I went with some from this world.	He is trying to lead some from this world.
I was led to the right for two hours.	The trip is towards truth in good (right and two).
A vast gulf separated us.	We are to cross a gulf if we can.
There were guards that prevented some from passing without leave.	Only those in the spirit have leave to go.
Some were stopped by the gulf and	Some will not be able to follow further.
I crossed and met spirits overhead.	When we cross we are met by what is spiritually higher.
I asked what God they worshipped.	The first and central concern is one's relationship to the Divine.
They worship an angel that guides them and shows a yellow flame (Swedenborg himself saw such a flame many times as reported in The Word Explained).	We meet a lower, representative level of the divine, with a small guiding warmth of feeling.
These are modest and simple people.	This experience is given to the modest and simple,
These people have reference to the spleen in the Grand Man.	who experience a renewing and improving of the affections.
Their sun appears to us as a tiny star.	From our outer experiences this new world looks small and distant.
The people appeared like peasants of Europe.	This state is simple, earthy.
The women have a graceful carriage but the men a pompous gait.	In the affections there is gracefulness, but the intellect gets somewhat proud of its new insight.
The woman has a garment pulled up to	The affections modestly shield their real

cover her breast and the man used the same for his back.	tenderness, but the intellectual finds the same experience shields its inferior understanding.
Everything is present according to similarity of state (this is stressed).	You too can journey if you come into a similar state!
Some spirits have seen our earth through my eyes.	In this state you may feel other lives participating through you.
But I couldn't tell people this, for they would think me mad.	Keep this a secret, for others may well not understand.
Thus does heaven communicate through man, which at first seems a surprise, but later you become accustomed to it.	(same meaning)
But spirits with other men cannot see the world but only see their thoughts and affections.	But when spirits come to others, they think it is only their own thoughts and affections.
This is the way to heaven.	(same meaning)
I told them of our sciences and printing that preserves the Word.	By sciences and printing this word is preserved as a revelation.
Lastly I was shown and was horrified by their hell.	But hell also may be experienced by this means.

SECOND EARTH

General meaning: These are not far from the celestial. They act from the law inscribed on the heart, take a wide view of things and see the Lord in the human. The error they tend to is idolatry, i.e., to look for the Lord separate from the human and life.

Excerpts:

This is more distant AC 9967; they are on high and have a wide view AC 9968. They are keenest of vision AC 3901, 9969. They worship a visible and invisible God AC 9971. Their idolaters worship a stone man but the best worship the invisible God in the form of a man AC 9972, EU 142. They are not under external forces but are subject to themselves AC 10160 and act from the law inscribed on the heart AC 10160. Their sun [what is looked up to] is no larger than a man's head and not far from the celestial AC 10162.

THIRD EARTH

General meaning: The conjunction of the natural and celestial things in the affection of good.

Excerpts:

They correspond to the conjunction of natural and celestial things AC 10379, and are directly instructed by angels AC 10380. Those who profane holy things are threatened by a lion's jaw [the good of celestial things] AC 10383. They are simple and humble AC 10515 and experience interior joys AC 10516. They have wooden temples made of living trees and multicolored [are in natural good more than truth] 10517.

FOURTH EARTH

General meaning: Similar to Mars, this relates to the succession of states from the celestial affection of knowing to mere intelligence. This is interior thought and faith.

Excerpts:

This is similar to Mars AC 10586. They correspond to affections and derivative thoughts AC 10586 and converse by an internal way AC 10587. They speak not by sounds but by ideas and general affections AC 10708. They deal in degrees of use abstracted from the thing itself AC 10709. They are interior thought and faith [rocks] AC 10712.

FIFTH EARTH

General meaning: The unifying experience of the Divine as human.

Excerpts:

There are no simple, clear references to the inner meaning. Note that the fifth earth in AC is the fourth in EU and is described in 4832, 4844-7 in the *Spiritual Diary*. This section is both on a spiritual and a celestial level; hence the people are clothed and naked. On a spiritual level it is clarifying doctrine, while on the celestial level it is describing the actual experience of the Divine. This is not immediately apparent from the words which appear to deal with fairly obvious matters of doctrine only. But just as the prior earths

had spiritual matters represented by details of the inhabitants and their earth, this earth has similar matters represented by doctrine. The key to understanding this earth lies in the repeated emphasis on unity, immediacy and humanness.

SIXTH EARTH

General meaning: Those of celestial experience.

Excerpts:

All are referenced to SD 5513a. They have enlightenment from the Lord, have open interiors, are of the celestial kingdom, have revelations, are naked [celestial], have a perpetual summer and are instructed by the Lord Himself. The rule of love is among them and they are beyond mere intellectual faith.

There is a nice illustration in this planet of those beyond faith and directly in the experience of the celestial:

...they are ignorant of what faith is... since they perceive in themselves that a thing is so, or so... it is not necessary to tell those who are in illustration that they should believe, or have faith, since this would be like as if a man, who with his own eyes, sees gardens, trees, fields and the like, should be told that he must believe that the gardens, the trees and the fields exist – since he sees them... SD 5513a³

In the inner sense the twelve planets are arranged in a clear progression. The planets in our solar system [near to home] are inner states all have experienced from the more external memory-knowledge to faith itself. The earths in the starry heavens are in a progression of spiritual experiences from the first developments of spiritual experience to the celestial itself. In the inner sense the book is quite powerful and illuminating whereas outwardly, in the sense of the letter, it is a little odd, curious and somewhat dull. Because the book has been viewed for so long as principally describing beings on other planets I assume some will persist in thinking this, and judge that the above is simply my own construction. For those who would persist in such a belief I would like to ask what does the following section of the *Spiritual Diary* mean?

HOW IT IS THAT THE MINDS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THIS WORLD ARE IN COMMUNION

This being in communion results from what has been revealed respecting the inhabitants of the earths of this system, namely that those of the planet **Venus** and of our earth⁷ are such as constitute or represent **corporeal things** and the appetencies [longing, desire] connected with them, thus also terrestrial and lower worldly things; consequently they are those who rule the external senses.

In like manner the spirits of the 'earth' Jupiter represent rational ideas, for they live free from care, as it concerned those things that pertain to the bodily senses. They are, so to speak, a sort of ground in which things

interior and inmost are sown, for without an interior rational idea those things which are still more interior and intimate are not inseminated. It is also a characteristic of ideas originating in the outward senses, that they prompt to vocal utterance.

The spirits of **Saturn** correspond to **interior sense or reason**;

The spirits of **Mercury** to **knowledges**;

The spirits of the 'earth' **Mars** to **thought**. SD 1558

Some will persist and say that just as this earth is representative of the outer senses and yet men on this earth exist, similarly EU is saying people really exist on these other planets. I believe EU is a collection of Swedenborg's actual experiences, and moreover that, as he says, others can have these same experiences. But I also believe that the spiritual matters illustrated are the primary subject matter of this book, and this is primarily what should concern the students of this book. The book is dealing with representative spiritual spheres. I don't know whether it also intended to say that these spirits actually come from these planets since

- (1) that is the error we are inclined to, that he referred to (SD 1532, AC 9439) and
- (2) it is now demonstrated as impossible for some of these planets, i.e., our moon.

I believe the book's lessons are primarily spiritual and that this is what should concern us; the other issues are for physical scientists.

As I came to describe the meanings of the earths in the starry heavens I found myself more and more reluctant to describe all the meanings apparent here. I wonder if this might not be a clue as to why Swedenborg became less explicit about the inner sense. It was as though affective, sacred religious experience was being elaborated. I didn't want to reduce it to a simple formula so that the error of Mercury could be committed. I too left out much of what is apparent in these planets. Swedenborg, writing two centuries ago in an age much less practiced in describing any inner states, may have felt the same reluctance for all the planets, but especially for the later ones. In any event I've omitted much on the earths in the starry heavens, which in their inner sense are powerful and beautiful descriptions of the spiritual. But I warn, just as he did with the first earth in the starry heaven, that these are matters to be entered into, experienced, and not simply for cognition. The fear of inadvertently helping others to make the error of Mercury and the Moon led me to only imply what is in the later books. And this may be a real clue as to why Swedenborg became less and less explicit about what was being revealed. If I were to weigh the alternatives of encouraging a false and sacrilegious grasp, or leaving things arcane and cloudy, I too would choose the latter. Moreover, in the selection of material from the *Spiritual Diary* to the *Arcana* to EU we see an apparently deliberate choosing to leave out much that pointed to the inner sense. If this was his real purpose, I for one would respect it. But I also think that we are now in an age where there is a more general understanding of inner states and that we can safely be somewhat more explicit.

One of the inner points of EU is that there are *all* the kinds of The Worlds In Space and men on these to make up the entire Grand Man (SD 3250). This I think can be accepted on faith without sampling all aspects of the Grand Man and all kinds of humans in the universe. In many places it is said that the innermost heaven is the unity of immense variety. Behind that variety are all the kinds of life and earths to make it up. EU is telling of this too. But, insofar as it speaks of men from our moon, this moon is representative of spiritual matters that we can recognize. I believe we need to make the spiritual journeys described, and having done so, the issue of which spirits come from which planet will fall into lesser importance.

Some will question why the planets are presented in this order. Below are the order of planets from the sun outward in our solar system, as they were shown to Swedenborg in the *Spiritual Diary* and in the two later works.

In Solar System	SD	AC	EU
Mercury	Jupiter	Mercury	Mercury
Venus	Mercury	Venus	Jupiter
Earth and its Moon	Venus	Mars	Mars
Mars	Saturn	Jupiter	Saturn
Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus
Saturn	Moon	Moon	Moon

In these various orders several things are apparent. Swedenborg was shown the planets out of their order in the solar system, though many

overlap in the *Spiritual Diary*. The order in the *Arcana* is close to that in our solar system except for earth's moon. Internally, the moon fits in this order with the chapters of Exodus. Why Swedenborg should change the order from the *Arcana* to EU escapes me. The section on the fourth earth in the starry heavens in AC was dropped from EU, possibly because it was short and contributed little. Swedenborg describes the static picture of the planets as seen in the spiritual world (EU 42). This description is given several times and is a little puzzling until you visualize all the planets on one plane in their orbits around the sun. This static picture of the planets' arrangements appears to have no connection with the orders above but it could reflect some rough date or time that has some symbolic meaning, for the planets would only be in these positions at some date in time.

But why is EU just appended to Exodus in the *Arcana Coelestia*? The central issue of Exodus is man's liberation from Egypt [slavery to memory-knowledge, Mercury, the natural]. This is also the most repeated spiritual meaning in EU. All of the planets we visit live a life higher than the natural. Each chapter in the *Arcana* is preceded by a section on charity or faith, the Exodus chapter, and then a section on The Worlds In Space. I believe these are three different ways of understanding the same thing. The inner connections are sometimes subtle, and other times more apparent. Those of us with a limited understanding find it a strain to follow three parallel dramas at the same time, but that is part of the richness of the *Arcana*. Essentially EU is in the same style as his memorable relations. In view of the considerable misunderstanding around this work and his use of memorable relations

in general, Swedenborg risked a great deal. He could have cut all that out and looked saner and more respectable. He cannot have been greatly concerned with his reputation. Besides the Lord said to leave these in, providing a rich revelation, almost too rich. In general he seems to use memorable relations to illustrate matters at hand, and to get us accustomed to the quality of the spiritual world.

Spiritually, earth is man or a church in least form (AC 566, 1086). Earth or ground is where there is no church or a regenerate man. The earths in our solar system are states less than regeneration near ours. The over-intellectual memory-knowledge "man of Mercury" should be recognizable in oneself or friends. The earths beyond our solar system, those "in the starry heavens," represent higher states. These describe spiritual states more distant from those we are familiar with. No student of the writings of Swedenborg should have to be told that the theological works deal only with spiritual matters.

I long ago wondered why Swedenborg, the master of inner states, didn't leave more direct information on them. Those who emphasize that Swedenborg was a unique person instructed by the Lord would not wonder at this. My own position is that he was unique, but he knew much and tried much *and* was instructed by the Lord. Those who try much are more likely to be instructed. It isn't simply a matter of a perfect passive vessel waiting for influx. But why then did he not tell us more how to enter experience? *The instruction is here, in EU*, and especially in the first earth in the starry heavens. Another implication of this is that Swedenborg did not make all crystal clear. At times one has

to scratch, search, ponder to find all that was meant. This is not to say that all his theological writing contains an inner sense; but some does. The fact that we've missed this one for two centuries suggests there may be more that we have missed. For one I would guess that his description of national groups in the spiritual world is also probably representative of types of error. Another suspicion is that the celestial sense is another level of meaning within the writings, a level that is not so much a deeper cognitive but more an experiential one. I would not advocate a wholesale loose search for an inner sense into which we could project all our fantasies, Yet, by a careful considering and correlating of one part to another, I suspect that there is more of an internal sense in these writings than we have found thus far. I know countless individuals have felt they found threads of it, but my hope is for a community of understanding that might be approached between most persons who respect these writings.

I believe this work (EU) has both a natural and a spiritual meaning but is much more full, accurate and useful in its spiritual meaning. Let us hope that from now on *The Worlds In Space* will be seen as primarily a document on spiritual states. As Swedenborg said, some from this earth won't be able to cross the gulf and will choke on the smoky flames. But he tells, over and over again, how to make the trip. Let your spirit be open and become like these distant spheres. Likeness overcomes distance. Love is closeness in the spiritual world. Love leads the understanding.

It has long seemed to me that Swedenborg's theological writings were not meant to be simply grasped as doctrinal truths. Rather he was speaking from Life to our life, to actuality, to experience. Offhand I can't think of how this is better illustrated than in the earths in the starry heavens. Here he is talking about how to make the trip, about our own doubts (the negative spirits from our earth) and the understandings which lead to the experience of the celestial itself, where the spirits do not know what faith is. It is senseless to tell me to have faith that there are trees and houses when I have lived with them my whole life. The real challenge of *The Worlds In Space* is not that we should figure out what is being said, but that we should journey to these spheres ourselves. It is hoped that this brief reference to the inner sense will help others to make the journey in spiritual experience. And if you are from Mercury, ask heaven to protect you from the limitations of mere intellectual grasp. It isn't surprising that the spirits of our earth relate to the external senses in the Grand Man. That has been the problem, hasn't it, of grasping this work too externally as talking about creatures of other planets? For me, it is a great pleasure to see this otherwise strange little work turn out to be a very wise, well-conceived, and fitting accompaniment to the great *Arcana Coelestia*.

NOTES

¹ This article first appeared in print in the periodical *Studia Swedenborgiana*, Vol. 2, No. 1 of January 1976.

A scanned edition of that print article can be found online at <http://www.baysidechurch.org/studia/default.asp?ArticleID=68&VolumeID=5&AuthorID=47&detail=1> The scanned online copy lacked some formatting and spelling corrections, so these have been amended in this present version to preserve accuracy and readability.

In the article, Dr Wilson Van Dusen revisits and elaborates his earlier initial response to Swedenborg's most controversial book of 1758. It was translated from Latin to English in 1913 by Rev John Whitehead as *Earths in the Universe* ("EU") as part of a collection of several short Swedenborg works collectively issued as *Miscellaneous Theological Works* by the Swedenborg Foundation (USA). Published in 1928 and again in 1970, it formed part of the *Standard Edition* of Swedenborg's translated works. The translation which Van Dusen's article originally referred to was the 1970 Standard Edition. Swedenborg's title was republished by the Swedenborg Foundation (USA) in 2009 as an online Adobe PDF, compiled and edited by William Ross Woofenden which is downloadable from http://www.swedenborg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/swedenborg_foundation_earths_in_the_universe.pdf

A popular 1997 translation by the Swedenborg Society (UK) was called *The Worlds in Space*, translated by Cambridge scholar John Chadwick. This is available to read online at the New Christian Bible Study website at <http://newchristianbiblestudy.org/fr/exposition/translation/earths-in-the-universe-chadwick/contents/10>

Chadwick's translation was co-published in print in 2006 and reprinted in 2012 with a good introduction by Dr. Raymond Moody on how modern science is validating some of Swedenborg's assertions.

This present version of Van Dusen's article has been edited to refer to the earlier UK title because the article is presently being offered as an accompaniment to the Chadwick translation.

² John Hotson, *The New Revelation and the Astronauts*, Bulletin of the Sons of the Academy, Vol. 50, No. 3, 1974, pp. 24-27.

³ Kurt Nemitz, *The Names of the Planets Whose Spirits Swedenborg Met*, New Church Magazine, Vol. 94, No. 673, 1975, pp. 82-93.

⁴ Wilson Van Dusen, *Solving the Mystery of The Worlds In Space*, New Church Magazine, Vol. 94, No. 673, 1975, pp. 73-82. In that earlier article Dr Wilson Van Dusen added:

“... it might help to clarify the publishing history of Earths in the Universe. The EU material first appears scattered in the Spiritual Diary. Then it is copied and somewhat elaborated in the Arcana Caelestia, where it appears at the end of each chapter on Exodus. Shortly after the Arcana was published he issued the EU

material as a small book complete with his footnote references to the Arcana. This last separate edition has missing the fourth earth in the starry heaven that appears in AC with a renumbering of the remaining planets. We can easily imagine how many people bought EU as a small, inexpensive work, thinking to glimpse people on other planets, especially in the two centuries past. By its extensive references to AC some of these people were probably induced to read Swedenborg further. As will be shown later, this was probably why Swedenborg issued EU as a separate work. Others probably concluded from the weird events in EU that the author was deluded."

... and ...

"Let me summarize arguments for and against the solution suggested here, some of which arguments have not been dealt with above.

FOR

(1) EU is a work of inner meanings which illustrates types of men/ Churches (earths) and types of spiritual experiences.

(2) It is reasonable to assume that he is doing what he always did in the memorable relations-illustrating spiritual matters at hand by spiritual experiences, which themselves have correspondences in them.

(3) He said countless times that we should think of things spiritually, and he says it many times more in EU. He is clearly dealing with a spiritual realm in this work.

(4) It is reasonable to assume after eight volumes of the Arcana Coelestia that Swedenborg expects us to have some sense of inner meanings.

(5) The placement with Exodus suggests some relationship between the spiritual content of both works. We have a cloudy sense of the relationship.

(6) I don't believe this work is only to be understood intellectually, that is the mistake of the first planet, Mercury. It is to be appreciated affectively, spiritually.

(7) Only our Earth is described as a material-sense world (EU 89). All the other planets are higher than the natural world. That is the reason why only our Earth could have a printed Word (a Bible on paper) (EU 113, 120). This is probably why the Lord chose our Earth in which to become incarnate (EU 113-122).

(8) Some may say that the EU material comes out of the Spiritual Diary, and the Diary seems to indicate that Swedenborg believed he was dealing with people of these planets. The Spiritual Diary was Swedenborg's notes. He didn't always bother to interpret their inner sense, even if he knew it. The heavens and hells depicted in the Spiritual Diary are less than the flowering of meaning in the work Heaven and Hell, for instance.

(9) With this in mind, the account which otherwise is quite strange, questionable, and unfitting is both quite fitting and meaningful. This places it on the same level as the rest of Swedenborg's theological Writings.

AGAINST

(1) He repeatedly refers to the physical facts of these planets, and infers that these spirits are from them."

⁵ Carl Sagan and Jerome Abel, *The Cosmic Connection*, New York, Dell, 1975.

⁶ Wilson Van Dusen, *The Presence of Other Worlds*, New York, Harper & Row, 1974, p. 225.

⁷ Etymologies of the meaning of 'earth' and 'world' from Online Etymological Dictionary at www.etymonline.com :

'earth' (n.): Old English *eorþe* "ground, soil, dirt, dry land; country, district," also used (along with *middangeard*) for "the (material) world, the abode of man" (as opposed to the heavens or the underworld), from Proto-Germanic **ertho* (source also of Old Frisian *erthe* "earth," Old Saxon *ertha*, Old Norse *jörð*, Middle Dutch *eerde*, Dutch *aarde*, Old High German *erda*, German *Erde*, Gothic *airþa*), from extended form of PIE root **er-* (2) "earth, ground" (source also of Middle Irish *-ert* "earth"). The earth considered as a planet was so called from c. 1400. Use in old chemistry is from 1728. *Earth-mover* "large digging machine" is from 1940.

'world' (n.): Old English *woruld, worold* "human existence, the affairs of life," also "a long period of time," also "the human race, mankind, humanity," a word peculiar to Germanic languages (cognates: Old Saxon *werold*, Old Frisian *warld*, Dutch *wereld*, Old Norse *verold*, Old High German *weralt*, German *Welt*), with a literal sense of "age of man," from Proto-Germanic **wer* "man" (Old English *wer*, still in *werewolf*; see **virile**) + **ald* "age" (see **old**). Originally "life on earth, this world (as opposed to the afterlife)," sense extended to "the known world," then to "the physical world in the broadest sense, the universe" (c. 1200). In Old English gospels, the commonest word for "the physical world," was *Middangeard* (Old Norse *Midgard*), literally "the middle enclosure" (see *yard* (n.1)), which is rooted in Germanic cosmology.

Greek *kosmos* in its ecclesiastical sense of "world of people" sometimes was rendered in Gothic as *manaseþs*, literally "seed of man." The usual Old Norse word was *heimr*, literally "abode" (see *home*). Words for "world" in some other Indo-European languages derive from the root for "bottom, foundation" (such as Irish *domun*, Old Church Slavonic *duno*, related to English *deep*); the Lithuanian word is *pasaulis*, from *pa-* "under" + *saule* "sun."

Original sense in *world without end*, translating Latin *saecula saeculorum*, and in **wordly**. Latin *saeculum* can mean both "age" and "world," as can Greek *aion*.