

People's Unseen Spiritual Associates

(based on the scripts of four talks)

After Swedenborg's exhaustive philosophical investigations he was at last led by God to see that the origins of the mind and the source of all our thoughts, desires, ambitions and feelings lay in the spiritual world. The good inhabitants of the spiritual world, called angels, inspire affections and thoughts of love towards others and towards God, and the evil inhabitants, called devils, inspire all that is selfish and self regarding. Even though a person on earth appears to be a self contained and independent unit, this is far from so. Just as the spiritual world is constantly acting upon the natural world, so spirits and angels are unceasingly breathing their influences into the lives of people on earth. Swedenborg had been very conscious of the way the mind acts upon the body and he had laboured to understand what acts upon the mind. At last the whole mechanism of influx, of the way in which the inhabitants of the spiritual realm transmit good and evil influences, was revealed to him.

Because of the great practical importance of the teaching Swedenborg brings us on the subject of influx I have chosen to take it up in greater detail. Knowledge about it is in fact prerequisite for understanding so many other things. As has already been said, people's ideas, thoughts, impulses and desires, all have their origin in the spiritual world. So also our moods have their origin in the spiritual world. And then there is the question of our spiritual freedom, the significance, importance and reality of which is brought home to us when we understand the operation of these influences from the spiritual world into us. Most importantly, and connected with this, the teaching brings us face to face with our individual responsibility in determining, by the choices we make of the influences which come to us, the kind of character we ultimately become.

In this regard it is important for us to understand this basic premise first of all. Life is not inherent in a man or a woman. Life is from God Himself, and it is mediated or conveyed to a person on earth through the spiritual world and by the spirits and angels who live there. Even though the appearance seems to suggest otherwise, a person's thoughts and ideas, their feelings and desires, flow into them from the spiritual realm.

There are with every person on earth both angelic and evil spirits, usually two of each, one angelic and one evil spirit operating into their will, and one angelic and one evil spirit operating into their understanding. Even though a person does not sensibly feel the presence of these spirits, yet the often uninvited thoughts, the ideas that spring to mind as it were out of nowhere, the desires that well up within, all speak of their influence operating into the innermost regions of their mind. It is a challenging thought that a person cannot think anything or will anything apart from the operation of these associate spirits who act as invisible agents conveying good and evil influences to them. They are their link with the spiritual world, and it is through the spiritual world that a person is linked, ultimately, to God Himself.

The spirits who are present with a person enter into all things of their memory, so close and intimate is their association with them. They enter into the concepts, experiences, thoughts, and inclinations which they find there and activate them, making them come alive and causing them to enter his or her conscious thinking processes. Evil spirits operate into our fallen inclinations and suggest the perversity of thought and twisted ways of looking at things with which we are all too familiar. Good spirits seek out in our minds and memories concepts of service to others and feelings of love, perhaps instilled in our very early childhood, and activate these. And the important thing to realise is that it is we who decide which of the two we will respond to.

A person is a free agent, and their freedom or equilibrium arises from this. The influences reaching them via good and evil spirits from the heavens on the one hand and the hells on the other, come at them in equal measure. The impact of one is counter balanced by the impact of the other. The person is able to select which of the two influences they favour; which of the two they wish to make permanent in their life; which of the two is going to be woven into their nature. A person becomes what they choose for themselves. At the end of their life on earth it can be said that the person is what they chose to become. Because the person enjoys freedom and the issue has not been forced either way, in the final analysis they alone are responsible. Each person makes the decisions, invites one or other of these influences into their life, chooses which they will take to themselves and act upon.

It is the object of evil spirits to bring a person, at least as to thought and intention if not in action, into the life of hell. Angelic spirits try to lead the person away from this,

by appealing to their conscience and suggesting opposite courses and different ways of looking at things. And the conflict which then ensues, the person feeling themselves torn in two directions and yet in the end having to decide one way or the other, is what is otherwise referred to as temptation. Associate spirits are constantly seeking to find a lodging place in our lives and as adults, and in temptation, it is we who invite them to stay or cause them to withdraw from us. By concentrating on an evil, for example, we invite the presence of evil spirits who feed and nurture our feelings, and if it has been a case of hurt or disappointment, exaggerate and distort it. By resolving, however, not to let such thoughts take a hold on us, or such a sphere envelop us, we cause those spirits to withdraw and their influence is removed from our lives. By overcoming in temptation we not only overcome a thought, a feeling or a desire which has come to us; we overcome the spirits who first infused it, and cause them to depart from us.

As the result of the presence of spirits with us, good and evil thoughts are continually coming to us. Yet we are not responsible for them. No merit accrues to us if they are good thoughts and no responsibility attaches to us if they are evil. In the case of evil we become responsible for it, not at the point of it being suggested to us, when it first comes to mind, but when we accept it into our lives; when from being a matter of the understanding only, it becomes also a matter of the will. And if it does become a matter of the will; something which, if given the opportunity, we would love to do, it can only subsequently be removed by the arduous road of self-examination and repentance. Thought about an evil, horrible and degrading though that be, does not condemn us. As the Lord said, "Not that which enters the mouth defiles a person". (*Matthew* 15:11) It is that which entered by the mouth and then proceeds further from the heart that defiles or condemns us.

It is not permitted associate spirits to enter into and influence a person beyond their thoughts and affections. They can inspire, suggest, awaken, and stir a person at this level, but not beyond. They are not allowed to determine the person's actions or take control of their movements, though possession of this kind did take place at the time of the Lord's Coming on earth of which, of course, there are many examples spoken of in the Gospels. Evil spirits, or devils, actually entered into people and took control of them. They were able to do this because of the breakdown of the mechanism of influx which existed at that time and which the Lord corrected and put right again.

It is critically important that we realise that all our thoughts and affections, our impulses, emotions and moods, are the result of the presence of spirits with us. Self-pity, egotism, despondency, amongst a host of other things, are fed into our minds, and it is possible for us to shun them and by degrees be withdrawn from them. One cannot emphasise too much how great our individual responsibility is in choosing and determining the type of influences and the kind of spiritual associates who come to find a permanent home with us. By our choices we inevitably align ourselves with a particular type in the spiritual world into whose company we shall come when in time we ourselves enter there.

Above I spoke in general and, in some ways, introductory terms of the way in which our lives are acted upon and influenced from the spiritual world and, in particular, by the angels and spirits who are in constant association with us. A person, as we noted, does not live from themselves. Life is from God, and the inhabitants of the spiritual realm act as unseen agents in conveying the impulses of life to people. For a person to live, to be able to think and will, desire and imagine, they must be in communication with the spiritual world and through the spiritual world with God Himself. Hence, as I called it, the whole 'mechanism of influx' by means of which life is conveyed to us.

Briefly, and by way of a summary, we saw that there are with every person on earth two angels and two evil spirits. The evil spirits inflow into and try to activate our fallen and disorderly inclinations and the angels counter-balance this by their operation into our conscience. The impact of the one is offset by the impact of the other, and it is because of this that we are in equilibrium and are able to choose between the two. Our great responsibility lies in the fact that it is we who determine which of these two influences reaching us from the spiritual world we are going to respond to. And our character, and the type of person we are and become, is formed accordingly.

The appearance is that the two worlds, the natural and the spiritual, are quite separate and independent of each other, and the lives of the inhabitants of both worlds are also separate and independent. But the reality is inter-dependence and the most intimate association between the two. Nevertheless, the appearance is necessary. If we were consciously aware of the way in which angels and spirits inflow into our lives we would feel ourselves being directed and lose our all-important sense of freedom. We do not, it is true, live from ourselves, and yet it must seem as if we do.

Above, I also mentioned the breakdown of the mechanism of influx, and spirit possession, at the time of the Lord's Coming on earth. Evil spirits were beginning then to dominate the thinking and aspirations of people everywhere. Impulses from hell had gradually become stronger than impulses from heaven, to the extent that a person on earth stood in danger of losing their freedom.

And it was this situation which the Lord came to correct. People speak of the Lord coming on earth to save the human race. What in fact He came to do was to re-open the possibilities of salvation. And He did this by restoring the equilibrium between good and evil influences reaching people from the spiritual world.

The angels and spirits who convey these influences to people are not forever the same. They change as the person advances both as to age and state. The angelic guardians attendant on a tiny baby, for example, are different from those who are later with the child at school. We commonly talk of the loss of innocence with an infant, and rightly so, but the root cause behind it, little known, is the withdrawing of a particular type of angelic associates and their replacement by others. Each age a person passes through - infancy, childhood, youth, manhood and old age - attracts a different type of angelic guardian and infernal attendant. Added to which, and as has been said "there are hosts of other spirits, good and evil, who make temporary use of the shifting ideas of a person's memory and arouse in them passing delights and tentative affections, without so fully identifying themselves with the person... Every moment there passes a swift flow of such spiritual associates - like specific radio currents to which our mind is tuned in - to inspire, maintain and enrich the colourful procession of our thoughts, evoking old memories, suggesting new connections of one idea with another, inducing new moods of courage or dismay, and kindling flashes of new perceptions." (Hugo Odhner, *Spirits and Men* page 53)

Spirits are continually seeking for that which in men's minds corresponds with the state they are in; something to which they can attach themselves and which pleases them. Especially is this the case with evil spirits who try to fix a person's thoughts on some object, some experience, something they have seen, words which have been spoken to them; and they sometimes succeed in doing so. Indeed their hold can become such that it is difficult to break, and a change of environment, switching for a while to another task, or the recollection of familiar passages from the Scriptures, may be required to do this. As far as it helps us to understand what is involved it is

worth noting how in his own experience Swedenborg broke the hold of evil spirits upon his mind by fixing his gaze upon a piece of wood from which his thought was led to the wood of the cross and then to the thought of the Lord.

It is this ability of spirits to fix our minds and attention on things, which gives rise to many of our moods. A bad mood is caused not by something which is said to us or some disappointment we have had, but by our dwelling upon it and by our allowing the influence of certain spirits to get a hold on us. People are led into states of depression in the same way, by allowing spirits to focus their attention on some experience of the past, some personal deficiency or inadequacy, or whatever it may be, so that at last it becomes a fixation - something around which the whole of life is caused to revolve.

Thankfully, bodily possession of unhealthy individuals such as occurred at the time the Lord was on earth does not happen now. Yet a person can become obsessed interiorly, their mind utterly taken up with, and their thoughts wholly fixed upon, certain evils in which they unashamedly delight in. This is the kind of obsession which takes place today.

Because of the harm and confusion which would result if it were otherwise, the angels and spirits attendant on a person are not normally permitted to use, or to think from, their external memories, or the memory they have of their life and experiences in this world. The fact that on occasions they have done so is what has given rise to the notion of reincarnation. People have recollected events and experiences which they have concluded must have occurred in a previous existence here. In fact what has happened is that the external memory of an associate spirit has been temporarily activated, and it has made its impression on the awareness of those individuals here on earth.

Both angels and evil spirits are attracted to the mind of a person by what they find there and are able to exercise their influence accordingly. It is important therefore to check and to control as far as possible the images and experiences which are introduced into the mind. A scene of violence or depravity, for example, once imprinted on the mind, will always be there for evil spirits to operate into and torment us with. Conversely, good experiences and memories are always there for angels to operate into and inspire us with. We owe it to ourselves therefore to regulate the

input into our minds, creating and seeking opportunities for the introduction of happy and uplifting experiences and avoiding where we can, the kinds of images and experiences which evil spirits will only play upon.

The teaching is as old as the Christian Church itself that all good is from God and that all evil is of the devil. The Bible itself speaks of guardian angels and of temptations to think and commit evil as being from the devil. But these very general concepts are infilled with infinite particulars in the theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg which show that of himself and cut off from influx from the spiritual world "a person cannot lift hand or foot or think the least idea from their own will or understanding". In truth, and as it is written, a person can do nothing except it be given them from heaven (*John 3:27*), and the vast implications which this teaching carries are now explained and made known to us.

One important question which invariably arises in any discussion on associate spirits and angels is the possibility, or otherwise, of open communication with them. Many people have claimed to have been in touch with spirits; are looked upon as "mediums"; have, they say, brought back messages from the dead, and often written books about their experiences. Mediums are frequently sought out for the comfort it is hoped they can bring, and people turn to them as a source of re-assurance that the spiritual world does exist and that, as is often the subject of their enquiry, a loved one continues to live there. What is also important for us to note is that in spiritualist circles, or at least in some, Swedenborg is himself looked upon as being in his time one of their number.

Certainly there are many factors in the situation which suggest the ease with which communication with inhabitants in the spiritual world could take place. As we have mentioned before, there are most closely associated with every person on earth, angels and spirits. Unconscious though a person is of their presence with them yet as to their mind or spirit a person is unceasingly in the midst of them and receiving impulses and influences from them. On top of this, the person possesses all the faculties for real experience of the spiritual world; faculties which are normally dormant during life in this world but which begin to be used when the death of the physical body has occurred.

Every person is in fact equipped for 'other-world' experiences, and when some real purpose has been served they have been granted to people. Some of the best known are spoken of and described in the Bible. John the Apostle, for example, wrote of himself as being 'in the spirit on the Lord's day' when in exile on the isle of Patmos, and during the course of his intromission into the spiritual world he saw some most extraordinary things all of which are now described for us in the *Book of Revelation*. And he is by no means alone. Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah, all outstanding figures, also had similar experiences. And what of Elisha's servant, the lad who was with him, when a contingent of the Syrian army came to capture him? Sensing his despair Elisha - and I'm quoting - "prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (*2 Kings* 6:17) The spiritual eyes of the boy were opened and he was given to see the forces and influences which were on hand for the protection of Elisha. More recently, and again with a very real purpose to be served by it, Swedenborg was permitted to enter into the spiritual world and for some twenty-seven years, until he died, talked with angels and spirits and was wholly conscious of the world in which they lived.

But this has been the exception rather than the rule. Equipped as every person may be for these kinds of experiences yet comparatively few have actually enjoyed them. Indeed whereas one can point to a time, ages past, when people on earth had open communication with the angels of heaven, this is not so now. And except where it comes uninvited, as it can do in certain circumstances (see *Heaven and Hell*, para. 250) it is attended with danger. "Conversation with spirits" wrote Swedenborg, "is possible" (see *The Divine Providence* 135), yet at the same time he warned that when it is solicited it is dangerous. "Many people" he wrote "believe that they can be taught by the Lord by means of spirits speaking with them. But those who believe this, and desire to do so, are not aware that it is associated with danger to their soul." (*The Apocalypse Explained* para. 1182)

Naturally, we want to know why it is dangerous, and Swedenborg goes into considerable detail here. For one thing, and as a general rule, only evil spirits bent on mischief respond to the overtures of people on earth, and they will impersonate people, invent information, and generally distort the reality of the situation. "When evil spirits begin to speak with a person" wrote Swedenborg "they ought to take heed lest they should believe anything whatever from them; for they say almost anything!

They fabricate things and lie... If they were permitted to describe what heaven is they would tell so many lies and this with solemn affirmations that a person would be amazed." (*The Spiritual Diary* 1622) Here again, "when a spirit speaks they are in the same principles (or persuasions) as the person with whom they speak, whether these be true or false." (*The Apocalypse Explained* 1182) They thus confirm what the person wants to believe, or is inclined to believe, anyway. In this, as is obvious, there lies the potential for great harm.

But there is occasional communication from the spiritual world which comes unsolicited, of which Swedenborg wrote in several places. "Conversation with spirits" he said "though rarely with angels of heaven, is allowed and has been granted to many for ages back. When it is granted, the spirits speak with a person in their native tongue, but only a few words. Those, however, who speak by permission of the Lord say nothing whatever that takes away the freedom of the reason nor do they teach." (*The Divine Providence* 135). There is, then, a vast difference between communication which is sought and which at the same time is fraught with danger, and that which comes unexpectedly, momentarily, and, as I've said, unsolicited.

There is no doubt that both in the Old and in the New Testaments people are warned against trying "to pry open the gates" of the spiritual world by seeking communication with the angels and spirits there. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them" is the teaching found in the *Book of Leviticus*. And then in Deuteronomy: "There shall not be found among you any one... that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits." (Chapter 18:9-14) And in one of His parables the Lord cites Abraham as refusing to send Lazarus back into the world to warn the surviving brothers of the rich man, saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (*Luke* 16:31) If, in other words, a person is unconvinced by the teaching of Scripture and Revelation about the reality of the spiritual world he certainly won't be lastingly convinced by some spiritistic experience of it.

Once, there was open communication between heaven and earth and people then "talked with the angels of heaven as their friends, and angels of heaven on their part talked with them as their friends" and instructed them. (*Heaven and Hell* 252). But once people fell away and turned increasingly to the love of self and of the world,

separating themselves from heaven and from the sphere of heaven, this communication was no longer possible and a new means of instruction - the Word of God - was given in its place. It is through the Word, or Bible, and by means of doctrine and teaching based on, and from, the Word, that God now leads and teaches people. And people must learn to trust and have confidence in its promises. There is always the temptation to seek proof of things - of the existence of God, of the reality of the spiritual world, and of the certainty of survival after death. But out of consideration of our own best interests proof is withheld because proof compels belief, and a belief which is compelled is a belief which is not our own. People must come to their own rational convictions about these matters without the aid which they sometimes suppose proof - such as spiritism or spiritistic experience - might offer them.

And, truly, there is no lack of teaching which enables them to do so. There is, for one thing, the teaching of the Scriptures themselves - in particular, the statements which the Lord made and the hopes which He held out. "Let not your heart be troubled" He said "believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (*John* 14:1-2). "God" as He elsewhere said "is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (*Matthew* 22:32) Again, in *John*, chapter 11: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." And reinforcing and infilling all of this is the revelation of the nature of the after-life given through Emanuel Swedenborg whose own intromission into the spiritual world and experiences there were expressly permitted by the Lord to the end that "ignorance might be enlightened and unbelief dispelled". (Preface, *Heaven and Hell*)

So far, I have spoken of the way in which our lives are constantly influenced from the spiritual world and, in particular, by angels and spirits who are at all times in association with us. I repeat the point, for it is important, that people do not live from themselves. Life is from God, and the inhabitants of the spiritual world, are the unseen agents who convey the impulses of life to us. For people to live, and that means to be able to think and will, to desire and to imagine, they must be in communication with the spiritual world and through the spiritual world with God Himself. And though he is not openly aware of it yet, as Swedenborg wrote, "Without communication with heaven and hell (through angels and spirits), he could not live even a moment." (*Arcana Caelestia* 5849) Our thoughts and desires all come to us as

a result of the unseen presence of angels and evil spirits with us. We may see an object or a person, but thought and reflection about it, or thought about them, is stimulated by our spiritual associates. Our desires and longings are all awakened and introduced into our conscious thinking processes in the same way. Startling as in some ways the implications of the teaching are, yet, and as has been said, "no emotion or consciousness is possible with a person except from the presence of spirits." (*Spirits and Men* by Hugo Odhner, page 150)

As I indicated earlier, one cannot attempt to trace in detail the significance such teaching has for us. So many areas of human life, of human experience and of human activity, are involved. But there is one in particular I would like to speak about and that is the experience of dreaming. As with all our conscious activity so also our dreams have their origin in the spiritual world and they are caused by angels and spirits. Some outside factor may well trigger the dream and in some cases undoubtedly does, but the procession of images in the dream, the often weird (and sometimes beautiful) scenes, and the unusual contents of it, are all the result of the presence of spiritual associates at that time. And this is so with all dreams, for there are some, of course, for which there is no traceable external starting point.

In his theological Writings it was given Swedenborg to write of the great importance of sleep to a person and to describe the special care which is exercised over a person at that time. "Were it not" he wrote "that a person could sleep in safety the human race would perish." (*Arcana Caelestia* 959). And this is so not because of the physical harm which would result, but because of the harm to a person spiritually. Special influences are able to be brought to bear on a person while he sleeps. At that time heaven draws closer than at any other time during the day. It is, as we all know, a time when a softening of attitudes and feelings takes place. Our thoughts are clarified and re-ordered. So often we wake up with an entirely new perspective on things, all because the angels of heaven have been able to be active and have had the opportunity (which in our waking moments they do not usually get) of imparting their influences to us. In sleep, it is said, "The Lord watches over all, even His enemies, and does them good." (*The Spiritual Diary* 3231). And bearing in mind what has been said we can see how this is so.

The angelic and evil spirits attendant on a person during their waking hours sleep when they do, and other angels are appointed to watch over the person while they

sleep. These are those, and I quote, "who desire with all earnestness and love to make the lives of others pleasant, and it is their responsibility to offer protection (which a person at that time otherwise does not have) against evil spirits who would otherwise do them harm." (*Arcana Caelestia* 1977) Nevertheless they do not prevent the approach of spirits who stimulate and awaken thoughts, ideas and memories in the mind of the sleeping person when there is no harm in it. Indeed, as we shall see in a moment, it may in fact do a considerable amount of good.

Swedenborg wrote of dreams as having a variety of sources, all in the spiritual world. There are certain dreams which come from the Lord Himself, and such, it is said "were the prophetic dreams that are treated of in the Word" (*Arcana Caelestia* 1976). Joseph, like his father Jacob before him, had prophetic dreams; dreams which are described for us in the *Book of Genesis*. So also did Pharaoh after him, and so also did Nebuchadnezzar of whose dream we read in the *Book of Daniel*. These, however, have been infrequent and for a specific purpose.

There are other dreams, however, which have their origin with those angelic guardians who watch over a person while he sleeps and who "love to affect a person who is asleep and thus receptive, with the enjoyable and delightful things which they see in their affections and general make-up". That is how beautiful and tranquil dreams come to us. In actual fact they originate in the conversation of the angels on spiritual subjects. What happens is that a sphere radiates forth from angels close at hand to a person while he or she sleeps, as they talk on lofty and exalted subjects and this sphere affects the person, bringing to their consciousness, in dreams, beautiful images, happy memories, peaceful scenery, and so on. "I dreamed a dream" wrote Swedenborg "but a common one. When I awoke, I related it all from beginning to end. The angels said that it coincided exactly with what they had spoken of together; not that the things seen in the dream were the same, for they were wholly different, being things into which the thoughts of their conversation were turned, but in such a way that they were representative or correspondent." (*Arcana Caelestia* 1981)

Yet another type of dream is caused by spirits who, if only fleetingly, approach near a person while he sleeps and stimulate, often in no particularly connected way, memories and images they find there. These are the dreams with which we are probably most familiar. Dreams which make no real sense; dreams in which absurdities occur and in which we see ourselves seeing or doing unusual and

extraordinary things. And perhaps at this point it is worth mentioning that the contents of such dreams, however incredible the dream may be, are all from the memory of the person concerned. Nothing new and from outside the previous experience of a person is introduced in a dream. There are dreams, of course, where we feel we come across something entirely new to ourselves. But in reality something has been recalled which once touched our consciousness but which had since been completely forgotten. Long forgotten memories and images which have been impressed on our memories are drawn forth in a dream and often are slotted together in a most fantastic manner.

Frequently, also, we see and hear people in a dream and do things with them. What in fact happens is that some associate spirit enters into our memory of that person and activates it. They play the part of that person in our dream, utilizing what we know and remember about them.

Only briefly does Swedenborg mention those dreams which we commonly call nightmares, dreams which, it would seem, 'are not characteristic of the true sleeping state'. In states of delirium, high stress, fear, worry or anxiety, states such that the brain cannot find its proper rest, "there are" as has been said "countless opportunities on the part of hordes of wandering spirits... to seek a temporary lodgment in the mind of a person." (*Spirits and Men* by Hugo Odhner, page 151) And this they do, exaggerating and distorting the images, memories and experiences that in the past have been received by us.

Most people at one time or another have been disturbed by their dreams and, in particular, by what they have dreamt about themselves. They have done things in a dream which they would not in their waking hours dare to think of doing. It is important here to note that no blame afterwards attaches to a person for things done in a dream and there is no cause whatever for guilt feelings about it or for unnecessarily – or neurotically - dwelling upon it. (see *The Spiritual Diary* 498) To that extent therefore the dream should not worry us. However such dreams can confront us with aspects of our nature, with longings of which perhaps we have not otherwise been aware, or only dimly so, which we do well to ponder over. "In dreams" as, again, it was once said "more than in anything else, we may realize and learn, as Swedenborg did, the ultimate nature of evil in itself into which we are all born; and, from thus seeing it in its true colours, we may be all the stronger in fighting against it." (*New Church Life*, October 1948, page 452)

This has been a talk on our unseen spiritual associates, and on the way in which they affect our lives here on earth.

In connection with it we recommend the reading of the book *Spirits and Men* which can be found online at http://www.swedenborgstudy.com/books/H.Lj.Odhner_Spirits-Men/index.htm

If you would like to read further you are welcome to phone (02) 9888 1066 and ask to borrow the book, *Spirits and Men* from the library of *The Swedenborg Centre*, situated at 1 Avon Road, North Ryde, NSW. Please feel free to call in and browse around, after an appointment has been made.

Another book recommended is '*The Presence of Other Worlds*' by Dr Wilson van Dusen. Go to <http://www.swedenborg.com.au/the-presence-of-other-worlds> for further details.

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