

News, Notes, and Comments

Received for review: A new book from The Swedenborg Society, London, is now available.

The Five Ages: Swedenborg's View of Spiritual History, © 2008 The Swedenborg Society. 259p. £14.95. ISBN-13: 978-0-85448-154-5. Available at Swedenborg.org.uk and at the New Church Bookstore at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral. Email: bookstore@newchurch.org; phone: 267 502 4922

This handsome case-bound book with subtitle *Extracts from Emanuel Swedenborg with commentary by P L Johnson*, dust jacket design and Frontispiece by G.R. Smith featuring Nebuchadnezzar's statue, and design by Stephen McNeilly, includes thirty illustrations consisting of line drawings, maps, and tables by the author. The back matter includes: Endnotes to the eight chapters; Appendix: World Age Patterns (which includes a World Ages Chart with comments); Index of Quotations from the Works of Swedenborg; and an extensive General Index.

Following his Introduction, Patrick Johnson has two chapters: 1. The Five Ages; 2. The Nature of the Church. Then follow six chapters on the churches as defined by Swedenborg. These are titled: 3. The Most Ancient Church; 4. The Ancient Churches; 5. The Second Ancient Church; 6. The Israelite and Jewish Churches; 7. The Christian Church; and 8. The New Church. Within these, the author draws in appropriate information from other cultures relevant to the age in question.

The layout of the text is very appealing; not only is it open, but by having quotations from Swedenborg (which lead into the following commentary) not only indented, but also set in larger type and in bold, makes for easy, comfortable reading. Then the illustrations of various kinds add variety to the page layout. The book's 9"x7.25" size and with wide margins is a plus in terms of reader comfort also.

In addition to being a valuable addition to anyone's library, I think that this book could serve well in supporting high school and college classes in church and cultural history.