

EDITORIAL REMARKS

In This Issue

It is with pleasure that we open this issue with Dr. J. Durban Odhner's address delivered before the Scandinavian Swedenborg Society at the House of Nobles, Stockholm. It must have been for him a grand experience to make a presentation in the very place frequented by Emanuel Swedenborg.

The Rev. Erik E. Sandstrom's article represents the further development of his valued studies in the re-interpretation of history, and follows his earlier paper titled "Towards a Universal Chronology" published in this journal in 1983.

Any New Church interpretation of history (I include here all the time span of human existence on earth) will depart distinctly from that of others, largely because of the New Church insistence that man is essentially a spiritual being merely clothed in a material body for the sake of a temporary existence on this earth. And in addition, the essential history of mankind is his *spiritual* history which is inextricably tied into the history of the successive "churches," those associations of men which preserve the vital links between God and His creatures.

Contrast this with a secular interpretation reflected, for example, in this quotation from Frank Durham's and Robert D. Purrington's *Frame of the Universe* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1983), where, in a discussion of the possible origins of ancient myths, we read on page 11:

Are our myths somehow a product of innate structures of our nervous systems, which govern our behavior, as suggested by sociobiology? Or is there yet another explanation, akin to these, but originating in man's common experience of the heavens?

Oddly enough, if we do not take "heavens" literally and substitute the idea of the spiritual world, then the suggestion above regarding myths agrees with the New Church recognition that early men did have the common experience of communication with the spiritual world.

Complementing Erik Sandstrom's paper we have some reflections from Mr. Michael Costello in "Notes and Comments." He draws our attention to problems that exist in our attempt to understand church history, particularly of pre-Christian time.

The Rev. Walter E. Orthwein's third installment of his treatise on order brings us to contemplate our own being and the relationship we have with nature from the perspective of the Word. This provides a very refreshing contrast to the prevailing scientific humanism of our western culture.

A New Assistant to the SSA

The Association is fortunate to have the service of Mr. Edward Gyllenhaal (a graduate student in Egyptology at the University of Pennsylvania) as an assistant. His responsibilities include maintaining the Association's file of members and subscribers to the journal-keeping records of the Association's publications for sale; and serving as ISBN secretary. He recently assigned numbers to all our publications, so that these will appear in subsequent issues of *Books in Print* published annually by Bowker Co. of New York. He keeps all these records on computer file, thereby facilitating these aspects of the Association's work.

A New Book in Press

The Association is pleased to advise our readers that the Rev. Daniel W. Goodenough's new book titled *Providence and Free Will in Human Actions* will shortly be available. It is being printed on high quality paper, will be sewn in binding, and its plastic-coated paper cover will feature an attractive design by Martha Gyllenhaal, in three colors. Watch for this work in the fall.

E.J.B.