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Evidences for the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: Widtsoe writes that growing evidence has confirmed the Book of Mormon. He praises J. M. Sjodahl's *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, and quotes Sjodahl's testimony of the Book of Mormon.

EVIDENCES FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

THE BOOK OF MORMON was first published in 1830. Since then it has been subjected to constant and severe scrutiny by friend and foe. Out of such studies the validity of the Book has become more firmly established.

Objections to it raised by early unfriendly critics have not been sustained; instead, its power to help humanity has been demonstrated.

The events connected with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon have resulted in a large and prosperous people who are serving the world well, and in a philosophy of life unequalled for comprehensiveness and usefulness. Honest searchers, who can not believe its divine origin, admit frankly that they stand before the Book in perplexity, for it cannot be explained in ordinary human terms. Those who believe it to be a divine record have found that it possesses power to exalt the human soul and to enrich human existence.

Evidences for the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon are increasing. The most important come from the Book itself. The study of the Book brings the conviction that the inspiration of God must have moved upon those who wrote it. But, external evidences have also accumulated, until one needs but to dip into the knowledge of the day to find proof that the Book of Mormon is a true history of peoples who at one time lived upon the American Continent.

Elder J. M. Sjodahl, well-known to the British Saints as a former Associate Editor of the *Millennial Star*, a man of profound scholarship and deep devotion to the cause of truth, has just published a volume entitled *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, in which he has brought together and analyzed, with keen and cogent reasoning, many of the evidences for the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. This book presents many new points of view, for Elder Sjodahl, learned in many fields, has been able to enter departments of knowledge closed to the ordinary student. He has drawn upon history, linguistics, archæology, prophecy and doctrine, to marshal a host of witnesses for the divinity of the Book of Mormon, which becomes overwhelming as the argument develops. It is quite impossible to summarize in a few words the contents of this extraordinarily well-written volume. It is thought-provoking and testimony-strengthening.

At the end of the volume the author bears his own testimony in the following words:

The Book of Mormon Needed: A radical change has come to the religious world during the last century, affecting both doctrine and practice. The idea of the authority of God, as set forth by revelation, has been laid aside as obsolete. The Bible, as an infallible source of truth, has been

discarded, and thereby the entire foundation of the Reformation has been blown up, as by dynamite. The defenders of the Bible were, in their timidity, first driven to the position that the Bible was unreliable when dealing with subjects belonging to geology, biology, ethnology, astronomy and history, but infallible on matters relating to ethics and religion. But criticism did not confine itself to that which pertains to the sciences. It soon attacked the moral precepts of the Bible as impossible, or impractical. Then the defenders retreated and suggested that the Bible is not Christianity, and that whatever may be said against the Bible, does not concern Christianity. And this Christianity without revelation and divine authority, without the word of God as the final arbiter between truth and error, is now being lauded to the skies by many modern theologians, and their followers who do not know what their leaders are talking about.

But far above the din of modern Babel, the effulgence of celestial glory broke through the clouds and illuminated the earth, and in the light a heavenly messenger appeared who proclaimed the everlasting Gospel, which neither the criticism nor the skepticism nor the atheism of apostate ages can touch, because the Lord has had it in safe keeping specially for this age. Now, it is needed for the salvation of man, just as the New Testament was needed at the close of the Mosaic dispensation. And this glorious, everlasting Gospel was ushered in by the angel who, in pursuance of his divine commission, gave the Prophet Joseph Smith charge of the venerable record, for publication to the world. And the substance of this message is: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water."

We congratulate Elder Sjodahl and the Church upon the production of this most valuable contribution to the literature of the Book of Mormon, and express the hope that it may be widely read by the members of the Church, both at home and abroad.—W.

THANK GOD FOR THE MIGHT OF IT!

AS I WRITE, seated before me are more than a score of men, the youngest of whom has barely reached his majority, the oldest of whom is grey-haired and well past the half century mark. By previous inquiry I learned that they or their parents or grandparents came from more than half the countries of Northern Europe.

Judged by some standards, it would be difficult to find a more widely differing group of individuals gathered together. There are young men and old; married men and single; they have come from varied pursuits of life. Among their number are farmers, mechanics, business men, college students, engineers, stock-raisers and professional men. From four to thirty months ago they were engaged in those occupations.