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Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl

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REYNOLDS, GEORGE AND JANNE M. SJODAHL. *Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price*, Compiler, Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City, 1965. 391 pp.

According to Harold Lundstrom, music editor of the *Deseret News*, this commentary is the result of "combining the heretofore unpublished testimonies, observations, research and sound doctrine observations" of George Reynolds, who was the father of the compiler, Philip C. Reynolds, and Janne M. Sjodahl, father-in-law of the compiler. Reynolds and Sjodahl are well-known in Mormon circles for their previous commentaries on the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. In this work their independent notes are seemingly combined (no individual authority is established) to give a verse by verse commentary on the Book of Moses and the first four chapters of the Book of Abraham. Unfortunately no commentary is given on Abraham 5, other than a reference back to the commentary on Moses, Chapter 3, nor is a commentary provided for Matthew chapter 24 (Joseph Smith I), Joseph Smith's Story (Joseph Smith II) or the Articles of Faith.

The compiler has also included a rather lengthy introductory essay of seventy-four pages entitled "Is Continuous Revelation Necessary or Was Joseph Smith a Prophet of God?" This introduction, while interesting, and in the view of the reviewer, basic as an approach to the Pearl of Great Price, might have been somewhat shortened and still have answered the two questions propounded in the title. Appended to the commentary on the Book of Abraham (pp. 322-367) is a reprint of George Reynolds' "The Seed of Abraham or Are We of Israel?" which was first published in the pamphlet form in 1879 and an article on "The Symbolism of the Great Pyramid," which is now out of date. A nine-page index concludes the volume.

The main value of this work is the verse-by-verse commentary on the eight chapters of the Book of Moses and the first four chapters of the Book of Abraham. No previous verse-by-verse commentary on the Pearl of Great Price has been published. The commentary seems to draw heavily on Sjodahl's acquaintance with the standard Bible commentaries of his time, his access to Hebrew as a source of insight into disputed passages, and on the ready acquaintance of both authors with the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants from their previous works.

The commentary will be valuable for suggested insights into many verses in the Pearl of Great Price which normally come up for discussion in classes and study groups on the Pearl of Great Price. Reynolds and Sjodahl have some interesting insights into such problems as the identity of the giants mentioned in Moses 7:15; the meaning of Moses 6:55 ("children are conceived in sin"); the Cain and Abel story—Moses 5, especially Moses 5:23 ("thou shalt rule over him"); and many others. A refreshing feature of the Commentary to the reviewer was the authors' insights, because of their familiarity with the meaning of Hebrew texts that form the backdrop for the Pearl of Great Price.

James R. Clark