Janne Mattson Sjodahl: Baptist Minister, Convert to Mormonism, Editor, Author and Missionary

Bernt G. Lundgren
Brigham Young University - Provo
JANNE MATTSON SJODAHL--BAPTIST MINISTER, CONVERT TO MORMONISM, EDITOR, AUTHOR AND MISSIONARY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Church History and Doctrine
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Bernt G. Lundgren
August 1971
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer, who is indebted to many, gratefully and sincerely acknowledges the most helpful assistance rendered by Dr. James R. Harris as committee chairman. His scholarly insight and timely suggestions were most helpful; also, to Dr. Leon R. Hartshorn for his suggestions as a member of the committee;

To A. William Lund and the staff at the Church Historian's Office for their most willing and able service, and for their many kindnesses;

To many officials of the Baptist Church in Sweden and Norway particularly to: Gunnar Solberg, Carl-Einar Hedeback and Helge Almér, without whose kind assistance this thesis could not have been written;

To Albert Manell, Henny Manell, Gunilla White and George Lundgren for willing assistance in locating records and individuals in Sweden;

To C. Fritz Johansson, Carl-Erik Johansson and Georg Nilsson for their help in providing background information on the Swedish community in Salt Lake City;

To Edith Kinghorn whose skillful and eager assistance has been an invaluable help;

To Sue Stockwell, for so willingly and ably typing the thesis. And finally to Mildred, my wife and companion, whose unselfish devotion and encouragement made the completion of this thesis a reality.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

More than thirty years have now passed since the death of Janne Mattson Sjodahl. A new generation of Latter-day Saints has come on the scene; of these few will recognize the name, Sjodahl. It is the purpose of this study to preserve on the pages of history some of the accomplishments of this man. Thousands of Latter-day Saints trace their genealogy back to some humble Swedish immigrant who gave up all his belongings to come to Zion. Knowing about Sjodahl's accomplishments will prove very satisfying to many of these people.

During the early years of the history of the Mormon Church, thousands came from most European nations to make their homes in some Utah valley. Most of these immigrants settled down to the business of wrestling a living from the arid soil of the area, which to them was the promised land, the Zion spoken of by the prophets Isaiah and Micah.

Only a few of the first generation rose to fame and prominence. Each national group proudly expressed their affiliation with such individuals; it was a boost to their national ego.

This feeling and desire among the immigrants is still to be found today. One often hears the Germans express in delight that Karl G. Maeser was a German. The Norwegians had John A. Widtsoe, and the Danes, Christian Fjeldstead, Anthon Lund and Andrew Jensen. Among the Swedish Latter-day Saints, the name "Sjodahl" was one with which all were familiar. He was a contemporary and a close associate to the
above named individuals, a man who spent his entire time working for
the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As Sjodahl was a prolific writer, his name is frequently found
in the pages of Latter-day Saint literature. His numerous articles and
books have earned him a niche in the history of his church.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is two-fold:

First, to record the events of his life for the benefit and
enjoyment of a new generation of Latter-day Saints and take the mystery
out of the name "Sjodahl." Like this writer, prior to the present study,
others know he was Swedish and that his name has an aura of importance
about it, but that is all. My desire is to present the real Janne M.
Sjodahl.

Secondly, to sample his more important literary contributions
to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**Delimitations**

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive study of all Sjodahl's
writings. However, as it is unlikely that any other attempt will be
made to evaluate his life and work, an honest effort will be made to
sample his literary contributions.

**Sources**

The major part of the data will be collected from the following
sources:

Sjodahl's publications; both books and articles.

His file, found in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake
City, Utah.
Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, located in the Church Historian's Office.

British, Scandinavian, and Turkish mission histories, also located in the Church Historian's Office.

Correspondence with officials of the Baptist Church in Sweden, England, and Norway.

Publications of the Baptists in Scandinavia.

Personal interviews with selected individuals who are familiar with some of the events of Sjodahl's life.

Definition of Terms

There are some terms, used in this writing which are peculiar to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These terms are as follows:

**Bishop**--the presiding officer of a ward. He serves with two counselors; the three men constitute a bishopric.

**Brethren**--When someone refers to "the Brethren," the reference is to the General Authorities as a group.

**Branch**--an ecclesiastical territory, smaller than a ward, presided over by a branch president.

**Endowment**--a temple ceremony.

**First Presidency**--the presiding quorum in the Church. It consists of the President and two counselors chosen by him.

**General Authorities**--the presiding officers of the Church consisting of the following groups: First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, Presiding Patriarch, Assistants to the Twelve, First Council of Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

**High Council**--twelve high priests serving in a stake under the
direction of the stake president.

Mormon--member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mormon was an historical figure who lived 400 A.D., after whom the Book of Mormon was named.

President--presiding officer, such as: President of the Church, president of a stake, mission, branch, quorum, etc.

Prophet--generally, the President of the Church. The Twelve Apostles and the Patriarch to the Church are sustained as prophets but are not addressed as such.

Quorum of the Twelve--the Twelve Apostles, organized into a quorum.

Stake--an ecclesiastical territory, governed by a stake president and consisting of a number of wards and sometimes, one or more branches. Its population usually ranges from two to five thousand members.

Standard Works--The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts, in addition to the Bible, the following books as scriptures: Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These four works, jointly, are called the Standard Works.

Temple--building constructed for the purpose of performing sacred ordinances, such as: eternal marriage, baptism for the dead, etc. Admittance to a temple is gained only after the Bishop, through the means of an interview, is satisfied that the applicant, a church member, is worthy.

Ward--an ecclesiastical territory smaller than a stake, presided over by a Bishop. Its population usually ranges from two to seven hundred members.
Zion--America is considered Zion; however, the term more often refers to the intermountain area of western United States, where the center of the Church is located.
Chapter 2

SJODAHIL'S BIRTH AND YOUTH IN KARLSHAMN, SWEDEN

The Beginning

It was November 29, 1853, probably a typically dreary and blustery November day in Karlshamn, Sweden. However, on that particular day it is not likely that Petronella Mattson, the wife of Johan Mattson, a well to do sea captain, paid much attention to the weather. This was the day her son Janne was born.

As she rocked her new son, her wildest dreams could not imagine what life had in store for this little boy. Her forefathers had eked a living from the stony Blekinge soil. Would this also be the lot of this her new son? Or would he follow in the footsteps of his father and go out to sea?¹

His Hometown

Karlshamn is located in Blekinge, one of the southern counties of Sweden. It was founded by Karl Gustav the 10th, King of Sweden, in the year 1658; thus the name Karlshamn, meaning Karl's harbor.²

By 1853 Karlshamn had developed into a substantial little city, built by the thrift and hard work of its inhabitants. Everyone worked

¹Survey of Blekinge County, Sweden, 1851-1855, Asien p. 425. Film No. 26713 pt. 47. The Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

from sunrise to sunset and for a meager wage. For example, a man employed at the wharf earned approximately ten cents per day with half a barrel of rye thrown in every three months.\(^3\)

Only on Sunday, the day of rest and church attendance, did the people experience a change of pace. Each woman worked very hard to make her home the cleanest and sweetest smelling on the whole street. On Saturday she and the younger children brought home fine white sand from the beach and fresh pine boughs from the forest. The pine needles were chopped and mixed with the sand and scattered in front of their home. Following the church services the young people had about four hours to themselves to do what young people generally like to do. This was the only time during the week that they could call their own. By seven o'clock p.m., everyone had to be home to prepare for Monday's labor.\(^4\)

**Early Education**

Although Janne's early schooling is lost in the past, we are able to piece together a very probable picture. In 1842, eleven years before Janne's birth, the Swedish government passed a law that all children must attend school. These early public schools, called "fattig skolor" or schools of the poor, were not particularly suited for learning, it having been said about them that the only educational materials provided the teachers were leather straps used to "tan" the bottoms of unruly students.\(^5\)

It is indicated that Sjodahl received "a good common school

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 41-44.  \(^4\)Ibid.  \(^5\)Ibid., p. 60.
education." Considering that statement and the fact that his parents were of the middle class, it is very likely that he attended one of the eleven private schools that operated in Karlshamn during the 1850's and 60's.

His Search for Religious Truth

By the time Sjodahl was sixteen years old, he had obviously decided that neither the soil nor the sea had a future for him; rather, he struck out on a new course. His brilliant intellect and his intense religious convictions led him in a direction different from any of his forefathers. As a teenager he began to feel that the doctrines taught in the State Church (Lutheran) were not relevant. His quest for truth in religion finally led him to the small, unpopular Baptist congregation in Karlshamn. Here he found what he felt that he had been looking for, and on August 11, 1869 he joined the Baptist Church and was baptized by immersion. This was a major decision of his life. Being a Baptist meant that he would have to put up with a certain amount of ridicule and persecution from the townspeople who generally belonged to the Lutheran Church. An interesting example of this follows:

In 1847 an incident occurred that ought to be preserved for posterity as it clearly indicates the relationship then existing between the State Church and the free churches. A schoolteacher had performed as a soloist in the Baptist Church; her principal warned her and finally forbade this activity, but to no avail. The principal then proceeded to report the incident to the school

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7 Jonsson, op. cit., p. 60.

board. The item was discussed by the Board, and it was decided that the teacher must be called in. At the interview the teacher confessed that not only had she been singing, but she had been instructing in the Sunday School of the Baptist Church. She further stated that she could not see that she had done anything wrong, and that she could not submit to this limitation of her freedom. After some deliberation the Board decided that the teacher would be fired at the end of the semester, April 22, 1874. 

Chapter 3

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

Betelseminariet

In September 1870, only a year following his baptism, Sjodahl entered Betelseminariet in Stockholm on a scholarship. Attending the second and third classes, he completed his studies in June 1872. He was one of the earliest students in the Seminary, his student number being twenty-six.¹

Betelseminariet, founded in 1865, is a Baptist seminary where they educate pastors and missionaries. It has never been a particularly large school, averaging only thirty students per year. For one hundred years, 1866-1966, the Seminary was located on Engelbrektsgatan in an older section of the city. As part of the Centennial celebrations, the school was moved into new quarters in Bromma, Sweden.²

Eskilstuna

In 1872 Sjodahl, not yet nineteen, moved to Eskilstuna, Sweden, where he accepted his first assignment as a Baptist Minister. He stayed in Eskilstuna only one year.³


³Erik Ruden, Mission president, Baptist Church, Stockholm, personal letter in possession of Bernt G. Lundgren.
Just prior to Sjodahl's arrival there had been a troublesome period in the Eskilstuna Baptist congregation. It began in July 1869 when Leonard Pettersson was welcomed as the new minister. Pettersson entertained some ideas about predestination that were not acceptable to many of the members and due to this a serious split developed in the congregation. At the end of 1871 Pettersson resigned. He and some of his followers separated themselves from the main body of the Church with the intention of starting their own congregation. At this time there were other disturbances: the Mormons in Eskilstuna had been very active and some of the Baptists had joined them.

It was into such difficult circumstances that Janne Sjodahl stepped as he accepted his first assignment as a minister. It was recorded that he was a richly endowed preacher, but not sufficiently mature to keep the contending factions of the congregation together. During this year in Eskilstuna, he attempted to promote better cooperation between his Church and the Lutherans in the city. This attempt however, was rudely repulsed by the Lutheran group.4

Kristina Brodd tells of her encounter with Sjodahl in Eskilstuna, where she, together with her mother, attended the Baptist Sunday School. On this particular Sunday, while Sjodahl was talking about the atonement of Christ, he so moved Kristina that she tells of weeping throughout the sermon. At the end of the meeting, she asked her mother, "Would it cost more than fifty cents to become a Baptist? You see, I want to become brother Sjodahl's sister." When the mother told Sjodahl what her little

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girl had just said, he reached down, took Kristina by the hand and asked her, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" Her answer came without hesitation, "Yes, I do." He answered, "You are my sister, and I will always be your friend." In 1885, twelve years later, Kristina Brodd became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Eskilstuna, Sweden. This experience was so vital that Sister Brodd spoke of it throughout her life, and her children are still referring to it today. A year after Kristina's baptism in Eskilstuna, Sjodahl was baptized into the same church in Manti, Utah.

Västervik

In 1873, Sjodahl accepted an appointment as a minister in Västervik, Sweden. This assignment was probably of great satisfaction to him as Västervik is located in close proximity to Karlshamn, his home town.

The minutes of some of the Baptist meetings in Västervik during 1873-1874 give some interesting information on Sjodahl's activities and ability:

Brother Lind was followed by J. M. Sjodahl who came from Eskilstuna to be our minister. This was the beginning of better times for our congregation, among other things we could complete our previously started church house.

With the 1870's came the upswing. J. M. Sjodahl was a young strong man with unusual gift of preaching. He could really move the people. He drew large crowds to the prayer hours, soon there were no seats for those wanting to attend. The small chap:

\[\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\] Georg Nilsson, 241 Floral St., Salt Lake City, Utah. Personal interview, August 7, 1970.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\] Andrew Jensen, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, Vol. 3 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew Jensen History Co., 1920), pp. 714-715.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{7}}\] Ruden, loc. cit.
Östra Kyrkogatan could not hold the crowds. Long before the prescribed time long lines were forming by people who wanted to secure a seat. Sjodahl had great leadership ability, both young and old eagerly followed his direction. It was sad that he could not stay in Västervik longer. He left in 1874. 8

A further note indicates that Sjodahl was a good singer and that during his leadership the local Baptists had a very accomplished choir that often put on concerts. His years in Västervik seem to have been years of conflict with other denominations; for example, it was reported in the publication celebrating fifty years of activity among the Methodists in Västervik that their membership dropped to eight, a large number of those that left in 1873-1874 joining the Baptists. 9

England

As Sjodahl left Västervik, he went to England for further theological studies, attending Spurgeon's College in London. 10 In London he also became involved in the study of ancient languages, specializing in Hebrew and Greek. Although his English left much to be desired, during these years at Spurgeon's he mastered what was to become his adopted mother tongue. As Sjodahl's academic record is viewed, it becomes clear that he was a man of great linguistic ability. In addition to Swedish, Norwegian, Hebrew, Greek and German, 11 he is known


9 Ibid.


to have done some translations from Icelandic\textsuperscript{12} as well as learning the Arabian language while a missionary in Palestine.\textsuperscript{13}

Sjodahl received his Divinity degree from Spurgeon's College in 1876, at which time he was sent to Norway by the English Baptists.\textsuperscript{14}

**Trondheim**

Janne Sjodahl settled in the old town of Trondheim in central Norway and worked for three years as an evangelist in the Trondheim area. He was regarded as a gifted preacher, endowed with great power to convert people to Christ. When he arrived, the congregation in Trondheim was only four years old and struggling for its survival. The records indicate that after Sjodahl's arrival, they experienced a revival and many of the converts gave Sjodahl credit for their conversions. During the ten years that Sjodahl stayed in Trondheim, the congregation grew by 255 converts.\textsuperscript{15}

**Secretary of the Norwegian Baptist Union**

In 1879, the Norwegian Baptists held a national conference in Trondheim. At this conference the Norwegian Baptist Union was founded, and Sjodahl was elected its first General Secretary, which position he held until 1886.\textsuperscript{16}

By the age of twenty-six, he had risen to one of the most exalted offices within his Church in Norway. In spite of his youth, he was a seasoned worker for the Baptist cause, having already served three years

\textsuperscript{12}Janne M. Sjodahl, manuscript file, Church Historians Office, Salt Lake City, Utah

\textsuperscript{13}Deseret Evening News (Salt Lake City), July 5, 1890.

\textsuperscript{14}Solberg, loc. cit. \textsuperscript{15}Ibid. \textsuperscript{16}Ibid.
as a Baptist pastor in Sweden, gained his Divinity degree in England, and been an evangelist in Trondheim for another three years. Indeed, he had been well prepared for his new calling.

**Marriage and Tragedy**

In Trondheim, Sjodahl met, fell in love with, and courted his first wife, Ane Marie Johnson. They were married August 28, 1879.¹⁷ Their first child, Janne Dominicus Bartimai Sjodahl, was born September 11, 1881, and a daughter, Nanna Marie Sjodahl followed in July, 1883. This second birth was a very difficult one, and his young wife never recovered, but passed away on August 16, 1883.¹⁸

These were extremely difficult times for Sjodahl with two small children to care for, and without the assistance of his wife. Another tragedy soon followed when, in September of 1884 his daughter also died at the age of fourteen months. The difficulty of these experiences cannot easily be understood by persons who have not lost their loved ones under similar circumstances.

Sjodahl's mood of 1884 matched the long dark Trondheim winter when it seemed as if his only comfort came from Janne, jr., his three year old son.¹⁹

**Further Storm Clouds**

Another view on this period comes from the records of the Trondheim

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¹⁷Ibid.


¹⁹Ibid.
Baptist Church:

As I have already mentioned, Sjodahl was held in high esteem. Everytime he returned after a journey, the congregation celebrated the event with a "feat of charity," (Jude 12), or fellowship meal. But even he did not avoid rumours. The first time this is mentioned in the minutes is in March 1879. Some women in the congregation had spread gossip about him and his fiancee, Miss Anne Marie Johnson. Those women were among the oldest in the church. In an internal meeting they were forced to recall and ask for forgiveness. All gossip was declared to be a great sin, which ought to be punished as such. On the 28 Aug, 1879, Sjodahl was married to Miss Johnsen, born 1858. She died 4 years later, in Aug 1883, only 25 years old. In 1884 their daughter Nanna Marie died 14 months old. I know they had a son, too, but I don't know how old he was.

Then in 1883, during Mrs. Sjodahl's illness, someone spread gossip about the relationship between Sjodahl and Mrs. Sophi Gulbrandsen. He was said to have taken hold of her hair and then walked together with her one evening. But this was not all. Mrs. Gulbrandsen was accused of having produced an abortion by means of medicin sic. This time, too, the matter was settled by the gossipers asking for forgiveness for their sins.20

After this difficult experience, everything seems to have gone well for some years; in fact, Sjodahl continued his work until 1886. The congregation was preparing a celebration in honor of Sjodahl as he returned from a "private journey in May-June of 1886."21 But let us look at the record:

When suddenly, at an internal meeting on June 8., Sjodahl was excommunicated on charges that were well known in the congregation and therefore not recorded in the minutes. But as a woman, Miss Hansine Sorensen, was excommunicated in the same meeting, we can induce that he was again accused of adultery sic. A month later another woman, Miss Hanne Devold, was excommunicated because of her relationship to Sjodahl.22

Even though such records are very convincing and have the sound of truth, there is an additional element that should be considered.

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20 Solberg, loc. cit. 21 Ibid. 22 Ibid.
During the year 1886, probably while on the private journey mentioned just prior to his excommunication, Sjodahl met his first Mormon, Elder Ferdinand Friis Hintze, a Danish-born Mormon missionary.23

The 1880's were significant as the last stormy years of polygamy in Utah, the period when all the powers of the Federal and Territorial Governments were engaged in the attempt to destroy the Mormon Church. Most Christians the world over were up in arms about the Mormons and particularly about the practice of polygamy; on this the records speak for themselves. In few if any places did a Mormon receive a fair hearing. Lies, slander and blackmail were the accepted weapons in the all out campaign against Mormonism.24

The Scandinavian Baptists were used to their share of bitter persecution handed out by the dominant Church in Scandinavia.25 However, during the Mormon persecution of the 1880's many Baptists sided with the persecutors.

Although there were some events in Sjodahl's later life that indicate that the accusations that caused his excommunication may have been true, one must consider the effect Sjodahl's conversion to Mormonism would have had on his judges. He was the General Secretary of the Norwegian Baptist Union, an important personality among Norwegian Baptists. One may imagine the reaction to Sjodahl's studying Mormonism

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23 Turkish Mission History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, December 20, 1888, located in Church Historians Office, hereafter referred to as Turkish Mission History.


under Elder Hintze, a known polygamist, who only weeks before had been deported from Denmark because of his church affiliation.26

Utah

Whatever the reason, Sjodahl decided to travel to Utah to investigate the Mormons first hand.27

In August 1886, Sjodahl and Janne, Jr. booked passage for the United States. Little did they realize that tragedy was again stalking just around the corner, as it were. Little Janne became ill at sea, his illness diagnosed as measles. Whatever it was, he did not recover; rather, he grew worse and finally passed away on August 28, 1886. He was buried at sea.28 It was with a heavy heart that Sjodahl stepped on shore in New York. He immediately went to Utah, mingling with the Scandinavians in Sanpete County, an ideally suited area for recent arrivals from the Scandinavian Mission since a large percentage of the settlers there were Scandinavians.29

After only a few short weeks, Sjodahl became a member of the Latter-day Saint Church, being baptized in Manti, Utah on October 7, 1886, by Hans Westenskow, one of the Danish settlers.30

26Scandinavian Mission Manuscript History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, July 4, 1885, located in Church Historians Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

27Saunders, loc. cit. 28Ibid.

29History of Sanpete and Emery Counties (Salt Lake City: Press of the Tribune Job Printing Co., 1898), pp. 95-200.

30Jensen, loc. cit.
Chapter 4

MANTI--A NEW LAND, A NEW RELIGION

Editor of Manti Sentinel, 1886-1888

What would a professional clergy man do in Utah? What means of livelihood could be found in a western frontier community for a man whose entire training had been for the ministry? Not only was he unprepared for the rigors of a frontier town, but in his entire life Sjodahl had never lived further than minutes away from the sea; and with the exception of the time spent in Vastervik and Karlshamm, the large city had been his home. One cannot help but wonder what his thoughts were when he stood in Manti and looked at the barren land and mountains. What did he think when he surveyed his own slight appearance, his soft white hands, unfamiliar with the toil of those wrestling a living from the soil?

It seems to be too late to find any answers to those questions, as there is no one living in Manti who remembers Sjodahl. In my search for someone who remembers him from those early years in Manti, I have found only one individual who seems to remember him. She is ninety-three years old and, because of handicaps due to her age, was very difficult to interview; but this is what she said: "Oh, yes. I knew Sjodahl. He was a wonderful man, a good man; he always took care of his priesthoods. He was a great singer and he often had me play for him."¹

¹Margaret B. Mathie, 639 S. 700 E., Salt Lake City, Utah. Personal interview, June 26, 1970.
Sjodahl soon found that his lack of experience with the western frontier was not entirely a handicap. Shortly after his arrival in Manti, he was asked to become the editor of the Manti Sentinel, thus beginning his distinguished newspaper career. He remained the editor of this paper until 1888 when he was called on a mission.\(^2\)

The Translation of the Doctrine and Covenants into Swedish

Sjodahl's first contribution to the church which he had recently joined was the translation of the Doctrine and Covenants into the Swedish language. A letter that he wrote at this time gives us some insight as to how this was accomplished:

To Apostle Erastus Snow
Salt Lake City

Manti, November 10, 1887

Dear Brother:

After the conference we had concerning the translation of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants into the Swedish language, I have been thinking that it would be well to send you a specimen of work for perusal of any brother or brethren, whom the First Presidency may think proper to appoint for that purpose, in order that I might from the first start obtain an understanding as to whether the rules I propose to adhere to in my translation are approved or not.

These rules are in brief as follows:
1. To be as literal as is compatible with a true rendering of the sense of the text.
2. To use as elegant and dignified language as a true rendering of the text allows.

How far I have succeeded will of course, be for the appointed judges to decide.

I need only say, that it is my intention to avail myself of every help I can get, and to study the subject in hand as closely as I possibly can in order to give satisfaction. I hope to have this manuscript returned as soon as perused, and I shall be thankful for proposed change of words or expressions, that will better my effort.

At our conference nothing definite was said about publishing

\(^2\)Journal History, November 28, 1933, p. 3. LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City.
of the work. Perhaps I may be allowed to make a suggestion. I have thought that it would be practicable to raise the necessary funds by subscription among our Scandinavian friends in the territory, asking them to pay half of the subscription as soon as the printing announces and the other half on the delivery of the book. Thus the printing could be accomplished without any considerable advance of money from private or public funds. And we could also after having canvassed the territory, judge of the size of the edition. I suppose I could in this way raise the necessary funds, and devote my time to it, on the condition that I am allowed to cover the expenses for printing, writing, proof-reading, binding and canvassing, out of the sale of the first thousand copies, then leaving the manuscript and all following editions to the Church as their property. It will be seen that a sale of a thousand copies at something like $2.00 a copy would just cover the named expenses and leave a small margin perhaps. And it will also be seen that the work in this way would cover its own expenses, and then whatever future benefit could be derived from it would belong to the Church.

Though this idea has suggested itself to me, I am perfectly willing to work on any plan you may suggest as the proper one, hoping to hear from you shortly.

I am your servant
J. M. Sjodahl

Considering his foreign background, it is noteworthy that Sjodahl's English is almost flawless, indicating his aptitude for languages.

According to Carl-Erik Johansson of the Church Translating Department, Sjodahl's translation is excellent, "the language is beautiful and descriptive and the meaning clear."4

The work proceeded quickly and by March 10, 1888, less than four months after beginning his translation, the work was completed. This edition also included the Lectures on Faith by Joseph Smith as well as an introduction by Sjodahl himself, with the notation that its content was approved by President Wilford Woodruff.5 This introduction was

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3 Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Erastus Snow, November 10, 1887, Sjodahl's letter file, LDS Church Historians Office, Salt Lake City.

4 Interview with Carl-Erik Johansson, Salt Lake City, July 7, 1970.

5 Lärdomens och Förbundets Bok (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1888), p. iii.
written in beautiful style, carrying the conviction of the writer; and in the spirit of testimony, it was an appeal to the reader to consider this new volume of scripture. This foreward in its original Swedish as well as an English translation is included in the appendix of this thesis for the enjoyment of the reader. It is hoped that it may be an aid to the reader in catching the spirit of this recent convert.

A New Sjodahl

With the translation of the *Doctrine and Covenants* came a big change in Sjodahl; the student of his life cannot help but notice the difference. The Sjodahl that was a Baptist was in the mold of a revivalist, a great preacher, a warm, convincing persuading individual whose followers traveled long distances to hear him. The records from Eskilstuna, Vastervik, and finally Trondheim all tell that same story. On the contrary, we find that the Sjodahl known to the Latter-day Saints (1886-1939) was quite a different person. He was never depicted as a great preacher, nor as a great missionary; rather he gained the image of the intellectual, the writer, the editor, etc. The reasons for this change are undoubtedly many, and some of them are considered below.

In Europe, he was always the center of attention, always one of the dignitaries. In Utah, he seemed insignificant beside such giants as Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith; in fact, he looked unimportant beside many of the great LDS missionaries of his own generation, men forgotten long ago but who spent their whole lives serving the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Ferdinand F. Hintze, the man who first introduced Sjodahl to Mormonism, is an example of this type of man.
It is probable that he felt this inadequacy many times. Consider his response to his mission call. "I must state, however, that I have not very much confidence in my own ability as a missionary proper; my line is more, perhaps, in the literary field." This humility may indicate that he was fully converted and fully sensed that his education and training did not qualify him for the ministry and that he was not sure whether he had acquired the power and authority of the priesthood (which are the true credentials), or perhaps it was a case of his realizing that he did not measure very tall beside some of his contemporaries.

For the rest of his life, Sjodahl remained in the literary field. His ecclesiastical positions were few and comparatively unimportant; for example, he was an alternate High Councilor in the Ensign Stake, and for ten years he presided over the Scandinavian branch of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City, as well as being the teacher for a Bible study class.

Marriage

While working on the Swedish translation of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Sjodahl met Christina Christofferson, who assisted him in the work, particularly in gathering the information for the index. Christina was very young and very beautiful and eagerly accepted the marriage proposal of the learned Swede.

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8 *Journal History*, May 20, 1897.

9 *Lärdomens och Förbundets Bok*, p. vii.
On May 30, 1888, Sjodahl took his eighteen-year-old bride to the Manti Temple, which had just been dedicated, and the Sjodahls had the honor of being the first couple married in the temple. The ceremony was performed by Francis M. Lyman of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles; Anthon H. Lund also one of the apostles served as one of the witnesses.  
Sjodahl himself was also the first person to receive his endowment in the Manti Temple.

A New Testament Commentary

In 1888 after the Swedish Doctrine and Covenants was completed, Sjodahl seems to have been contemplating writing a commentary on the New Testament, which probably makes him the first Latter-day Saint who seriously entertained such an idea. He wrote President Wilford Woodruff and proposed this venture:

Your kindness towards me in part encourages me to lay before you a question, which has been on my mind for some time, and I sincerely trust that you will be able to find time to consider it thoroughly and to communicate your thoughts to me in a few lines.

The question is whether a commentary on the New Testament would be an acceptable work to our Church, and in that case, if you would give me the privilege of commencing such a work, when the printing of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants in Swedish shall have been completed?

I would propose to follow the plan here briefly outlined:

1. Introduction to the New Testament, showing what evidence we have for the age and genuineness of the book. I think a very interesting chapter could be written on this subject, and one that would give additional force to our position as believers in new and continuous revelation.

2. Introduction to the various books of the New Testament, giving the history of the authors, as far as known, and the evident scope of their writings.

3. A revised translation of the Greek text into English, following probably the so called Texters Receptus with due regard to suggested

\[10\] Book A, Sealings for the Living. Manti Temple Archive, Manti, Utah.

\[11\] Book A, Endowments for the Living. Manti Temple Archive, Manti, Utah.
variations of modern critics. Such a translation I believe is highly needed, and I also firmly believe that a close scrutiny of the original text would disclose many passages in direct support of our teachings, passages which are now unclear, because they were translated by men who very imperfectly, if at all, understood the truths inbedded in the words they translated.

4. I would also give under each verse such philological, archeological, geographical, historical and biographical notes, as might be required as the translation proceeded.

5. I would place under each chapter selections from our own writers, illustrating or otherwise having reference to the chapters under which they would be placed.¹²

Since there is no evidence of any further work or planning, it is apparent the idea of a New Testament commentary never got off the ground. Reflecting on such a commentary, it would have been very interesting to see what kind of work Sjodahl could have produced. One might have been better able to judge of his Greek and Hebrew scholarship. However, the General Authorities were probably not very excited about having a lay member of the church try his hand at interpretation of scripture, at least not until he had further proven his ability.

Chapter 5

MISSIONARY TO PALESTINE

Mission Call from President Woodruff

Instead of receiving approval for his New Testament commentary, Sjodahl received a call directly from President Woodruff to go on a mission to Turkey. It may have been felt that the recently converted Baptist needed some more exposure to different aspects of Mormonism. Sjodahl's replay was as follows:

In answer to your kind communication of yesterday, allow me today, that I feel perfectly willing to do whatever the Lord requires me to do; I have no higher desire than to be in His hands and perform His work.

A mission to Turkey would indeed be a granting of a secret desire of my heart, long cherished, because that mission would make it possible for me to see Palestine (I hope). To visit some of the sacred spots, of which I have read so much, and I believe, if it were left to my own choice, I would have gone to that part of the mission field sooner than to any other. Brother Hintze is a personal friend of mine, a brother who preached the gospel to me in Norway, and one whom I much love.

I must state however, that I have not very much confidence in my own ability as a missionary proper. My line is more, perhaps in the literary field. But then called to do a thing, I always try to do it, to the best of my ability.

My wife is perfectly willing for me to go, although we have been married only for three months, and she will feel the parting as a great sacrifice. She can also be provided for, I think. Her parents are well off and good Saints.

But as to myself, I have practically nothing to meet the expenses of so long a journey. This is my only objection. If this can be overcome I am perfectly willing to go.1

It is noteworthy that he and his wife consented without much

hesitation, even though they had been married for less than four months. Although he wavered some in his conviction about his own ability to accomplish the work of a Mormon missionary, he did make the necessary arrangements; and on November 14, 1888, he left for Turkey, leaving his young wife expecting their first child. If any question remained, he was strengthened in his determination to serve the Lord by his ordination to the office of a Seventy under the hands of Moses Thatcher, one of the General Authorities.²

Sjodahl's willingness to accept the call is impressive when one remembers the tragic circumstances surrounding the passing of his first wife and children.

He was the first Mormon Elder to labor in Palestine for the entire period of his mission.

**Journey to Palestine**

Sjodahl's mission took place at a different age than our own when travel was more difficult and consequently he was enroute to his destination for almost ten weeks, arriving off the coast of Jaffa, Palestine, January 23, 1889.³

Elder Sjodahl traveled in company with Elder Charles U. Locander.⁴ They sailed from New York on board the Alaska, a ship that, according to Sjodahl, left much to be desired. He complained that the passengers were treated as a necessary evil and that the comfort of the

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³*Journal History*, January 30, 1889.

⁴*Turkish Mission History*, December 20, 1888.
crew seemed the most important. The following is a sampling of the complaints:

I remember one day I asked a gentleman on the Alaska what was the bill of fare for the day, and he said: "Adobe, sole leather and conglomerated paste!" In common English this is translated: "Bread, roast beef and pudding;" but I confess that I hardly know which of these two versions of the bill of fare was the most appropriate. To substantiate what I here say against the Alaska, I will mention only one item out of many that have not left my memory. We were served with liver several times. Now, the liver is a very useful member of the body, but its functions when alive ought to entitle it to a quiet rest when dead. It is not very fit for food under any condition; but this particular liver, so I was informed, had been bought in Liverpool, carried across the Atlantic once, and was still served to us, on nearing Liverpool again! From this can be judged the kind of food in general on the Alaska, and, besides, when thrown at the passengers as if they were a set of hungry dogs instead of a company of tourists, I think it is too much for human patience to endure.\(^5\)

After landing in Liverpool, they enjoyed a pleasant journey across England, France, and to Switzerland,\(^6\) where they stayed for Christmas. While in Bern, they attended a Christmas party in the Bern branch of the Church. Sjodahl wrote that the Christmas celebrations were "doubly appreciated by one who knows not when another similar opportunity may present itself."\(^7\) It sounds as if he were in a pensive mood, contemplating living among the Mohammedans where Christmas was not celebrated. On New Year's Eve, they continued on to Genoa, Italy. The years of polish and of education shows through as Sjodahl articulates upon arrival in Genoa:

It was about twelve o'clock at night when I arrived in Genoa. I rose early next morning to view the city, and it was with peculiar feelings I reflected on the fact that I had actually reached

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5. *Journal History*, January 12, 1889.
6. *Deseret Evening News (Salt Lake City)*, July 5, 1890.
Italy. Land of the classics, of the beautiful arts! Land of papacy and of bigotry, but also of Garibaldi and liberty! Land with the azure blue sky, and with women in whose eyes the beauty of heaven is reflected. Land whose wonderfully varying history is lost in the depths of antiquity!

The following quotation carries a lot of feeling. Is it praising his young wife at home? Is it an expression of sorrow for thoughts, actions, and troubles remembered from earlier years? Or is it an expressed determination to honor and sustain the virtues of pure womanhood?

One little incident, although trivial in itself, but, I am sorry to say, an everyday occurrence, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of recording here. As I perambulated the streets of Genoa one evening I noticed a drunken fellow who seemed very anxious to get himself into a bad scrape by starting a quarrel with a policeman. He would no doubt have succeeded very well, or rather very badly, had it not been for three young ladies of the genuine Italian type who stepped in and saved him at the very last moment. In my own mind I put the ladies down as his wife and sister-in-law. I shall not easily forget their eager pleadings and anxious supplications, and how they finally threw their arms around the young fellow and drew him away by gentle force; nor the inexpressible joy that beamed upon their countenances when they finally succeeded in saving the wretch from trouble. Woman, faithful woman! Who else can cling to a wretch of a man as if he were an angel, and find satisfaction in the mere consciousness of having done a good deed! No wonder that a double curse is the lot of those who crush hearts where such divine qualities dwell.

Port Said, Egypt

Leaving Genoa for Port Said, they traveled aboard the German ship Hohenstaufen and have nothing but praise for the captain, ship, weather, etc.

The Hohenstaufen is not exactly a large vessel as compared with the transatlantic lines; but strange to say, it has much better accommodation for passengers. The second cabin is very elegant. A room which on board the Alaska, for instance, is considered large enough for six persons is here calculated to hold only three, and the spare room is filled out with an elegant sofa and two washstands.

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8Ibid. 9Ibid.
It is very seldom that three persons are berthed together; for so long as there is room enough, each passenger gets his own little apartment. 10

As Sjodahl describes his journey, traveling cabin class and enjoying comparative luxury, the thoughts go to other missionaries who worked for passage to distant mission fields. In fact, as the records of his mission are surveyed, one gets a distinct feeling that he is unduly concerned about his own comforts and lacks the typical Mormon missionary fervor, the spirit of sacrifice, the idea that all must be placed on the altar of service, etc. President Woodruff may have seen the lack of such qualities in this talented convert, and thus the mission call.

From somewhere on the Mediterranean comes the first report of an attempt to teach someone the gospel. Interestingly enough these people were Baptists.

I also became acquainted with a family from Liverpool, of the Baptist persuasion. The gentleman was very well informed, and of liberal views. We had several interesting conversations. I tried to show him that no one ought to preach unless he could prove that he has authority from heaven to do so; that the reason why there are so many divisions in the Christian world today is to be found in the fact that this authority is lacking, and this also has rendered Christianity at present almost powerless in the struggle against infidelity. I pointed out that it might be very interesting to hear the opinions of a learned minister, but that after all, this is not what we really require. We need a true and powerful declaration: "Thus sayeth the Lord!" not an "I think," or, "I believe." I further led him to meditate upon the existence of man before the foundations of the world were laid, our mission on this globe, and the promise of eternal salvation in worlds to come. In these subjects he exhibited much interest, and when we parted, he promised to write to me as soon as possible. 11

Upon arrival at Port Said, Egypt it is interesting to hear Sjodahl's impressions of the people he had been sent to teach:

The city is not large. The streets, being very narrow as compared to those of the western cities of America, 20,000 people are crowded together within a very small compass. The principal street runs from the harbor by the "Hotel Continental." On both sides this street has European stores, where articles can be had at high prices. Fifteen minutes walk will take you to the Arabian part of the city, where a number of huts are irregularly thrown about around a Mosque--a Turkish temple. If you evince any desire to enter this building, you will in an astonishingly short space of time find yourself surrounded by half-a-dozen brown skinned fellows, who explain to you that you must take your shoes off your feet before entering. Having complied with this modest request you may enter and view the interior, which, however, at this place, is hardly worth the removal of the shoes. More interest have the human dwelling-places. In dirty hovells on lairs of straw you will find men, women and children sleeping, eating, smoking, playing, chatting, or what else happens to be their particular business at the time.

Beggars meet you at every step you take; naked little children hold out their hands and ask for bachschisch. Boys take hold of your feet and want to "shine" your shoes, no matter how clean they are. Old men, crumpled up in a little straw, ask you for bachschisch, and even the European store keepers seemed to have been seized with the general spirit of begging, for they run out of their stores on both sides and ask you to come in and buy this or that of them. It has been recommended by travelers to kick all this host of beggars away like dogs. But I have found that no unkindness is necessary. I can chat with them, or go as if I heard them not, or give a penny, just as I feel, and everybody seems to be pleased. They smile when they meet me and call me "landsman," as if they had known me for a long time.12

As an additional note he described the European colony in Port Said:

The only doctrine people here seem to have in common is the Mammon religion. The consequence is that drinking, gambling and swearing are the order of the day. Here is no such thing as Sunday. Stores and places of amusement are more frequented on that day than on any other. And I fear that the civilization which the Europeans here carry to the natives is of a very low kind. It has certainly taught the natives to swear horribly, if nothing else. And they swear in English and in French and in Italian, their own language being almost destitute of any terms fit for that purpose. It seems to me that the "Christians" here ought to blush like crimson when they hear their respective languages used by the natives for that purpose. But they do not. All the more pity!13

Finally, Sjodahl gave his opinion about future missionary work

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12 *Journal History*, January 16, 1889.  
13 Ibid.
here and suggested the possibility of establishing a church school.

This is an interesting concept in view of the present policy of the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regarding education of
church members from under-privileged nations through the means of estab-
lishing church schools.

It occurs to me that Port Said would be a splendid missionary
station, and that a young man who would spend some years here and
had some means to his disposal could do a good work. The place is,
as already stated, a meeting place for a multitude of nations, who
have very much need of some religious influence brought to bear upon
their daily life. Besides those who live here permanently, numerous
travelers pass by every day. The statistics for 1887 show that 3137
ships passed through the canal. Of these 2331 were English, 185
French, 159 German, 138 Italian, 123 Dutch, 82 Austrian, and the
rest of other nationalities. These carried not less than 178,791
passengers. And these passengers always spend some hours on shore,
so that a missionary would always have a chance by conversations and
by distributing tracts to do a work which would in time yield good
fruits. But he would probably have to have some means at his dis-
posal to commence with. He might also erect a school for native
children, where education, of course, had to be given free. Thus
much good could be accomplished.

That the native element would prove no barren soil to sow good
seed into, I think, is proved by the fact that they all seem to
have a wonderful ability for learning languages. It is no uncommon
thing to hear little dark skinned, bare-footed, dirty urchins in
the streets address you in French, English and Italian. Without
any schooling, with no knowledge of the complicated rules of gram-
mar, which it takes you years to learn and years to forget before
you can speak a foreign tongue properly, they have picked up a word
here and a word there in the streets, until they are able to commun-
icate many of their ideas to individuals of three or four different
nations. Surely where such abilities exist much good could be done
by proper training. And should not the Latter-day Saints with their
means and their abilities to hasten on the great work of bringing
the world under submission to Christ? 14

While waiting for passage to the Holy Land, Sjodahl absorbed the
spirit and feeling of the Mohammedans. He walked daily through their
quarters, visiting their Mosques and holy places, speaking with all who
would take the time to talk with him. The following excerpt is interest-
ing and shows how he began to defend the Arabs and their peculiar ways.

14 Ibid.
His description of the sincere old Arab and the proud haughty Christian is well taken:

I witnessed the devotional exercises of a praying old Arab. It was on the pier in the harbor. The sun shone brightly and poured down a flood of light and heat from a cloudless sky. The noise from the hundreds of coal carriers working on board the vessels, the playing of children, the shrieking toothachelike sounds from the grindorgans all were blending together in one confusion. But the old man who evidently was tired wanted to rest a little. So he betook himself to a place behind a boat that had been hauled up to dry. And here he selected a place for a quiet nap. Before lying down however, he said his prayers. He first took off the square piece of cloth serving as overcoat and spread it on the ground. Next he very slowly pulled out his pocket-handkerchief and spread that on one corner of the overcoat. After that he knelt down and pulled out a comb and a bit of looking glass preparatory to combing his hair very carefully as if going to visit his best girl. This performance over, he was ready for his prayer. With hands sometimes folded, sometimes lifted towards the sky, and with his eyes always fixed on the pocket-handkerchief, he recited his prayers whatever they were, with an earnestness and fervency edifying to behold. The ceremony lasted some twenty minutes, after which the pocket-handkerchief was folded up and the old man rolled himself under his cloak and went to sleep on the hard ground. To a superficial spectator the whole ceremony must have appeared ridiculous. I cannot say that there was anything ridiculous in it to me. I admired the man who would not take a midday nap in the open street without first having communicated with God in prayer. And his prayer was evidently not a prayer to an abstract being beyond the blue sky, but to some being close at hand. I have no doubt that to his phantasy the heavenly being whom he invoked was present, standing perhaps on the pocket-handkerchief, the best carpet he could procure for the moment, and thus this old man had a mental conversation, so to speak, face to face with his deity. It seems to me even "Christians" could learn something from this ignorant Arab. . . .

A little party of tourists went to see the Mosque at Port Said, and we were, as all are, requested to take off our shoes. The lady referred to, highly indignant and offended, exclaimed, "Should I take my shoes off to enter that den?" I believe the lady was a Methodist of the purest blood. I asked her if she thought that appellation proper when applied to a Mohammedan sanctuary. "Sanctuary!" she again exclaimed, "those heathens! They are nothing but heathens!" "Heathens? Why?" I asked. "Because they want us to pull off our shoes." "Then," I replied, "God must have been a heathen, too, because he required Moses at a certain time to pull off his shoes." "Well I do not know, but that He was," sniffed the lady, to my great astonishment. "Pardon me," I said, "did I understand you to admit that perhaps God was a heathen?" "God? No, Moses." She was evidently so excited that she did not know what she said, and finally excused her confusion by asserting that God
was not in that Mohammedan Mosque. "Then," I rejoined, "the Mohammedans must be a mighty race if they are able to shut your God out of their houses—a God of whom you always say that he is omnipresent." This proud "Christian" went away, I hope with a wholesome lesson.  

**Holy Land**

At 6:00 a.m. on January 23, Sjodahl caught his first glimpse of the Holy Land as the Austrian steamer Austria dropped anchor in Jaffa, "the ancient Joppa." He described Jaffa as a very beautiful city, built on a hill with well kept gardens everywhere.  

The next day, January 24, 1889, Sjodahl landed in Haifa, where he was met by Ferdinand F. Hintze, the mission president. It was a joyful reunion between the two men, who had last met in Norway back in 1886.  

The following day, "Friday, January 25, 1889, a council meeting was held at Haifa, Palestine, at which Elder Johan Grau was called to labor as a missionary in Palestine, to travel as circumstances would allow him, in conjunction with Elder Janne M. Sjodahl."  

After this business was attended to, President Hintze took Elders Grau and Sjodahl on a tour of Palestine, "visiting the principal places: Nazareth, Tiberius, NABulus, Jerusalem, Jericho, Jaffa, everywhere striving to interest the people."  

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15 *Journal History*, January 20, 1889.  
16 *Journal History*, January 30, 1889.  
17 *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, Utah), July 5, 1890.  
18 *Turkish Mission History*, December 20, 1888.  
19 *Turkish Mission History*, January 23, 1889.  
20 *Deseret News*, loc. cit.
They also visited the ancient Mt. Carmel where Elijah the prophet contended with the priests of Baal.\textsuperscript{21}

In Haifa, he met an old friend that he had known years earlier in Copenhagen, Denmark. His report on the state of Protestant missionary activities is enlightening:

I cannot help thinking of a friend of mine, an earnest man, and one very well educated. He had spent some five years in this country, laboring as a missionary at somebody else's expense. I met him some years ago in Copenhagen. "Well," I said, "how many years have you been laboring in Palestine?" "Five years," he said. "Did you make any converts while there?" "Oh, no, but I thank God the Arabs did not convert me."\textsuperscript{22}

French Germans in Palestine

Soon after arriving in Haifa, Sjodahl reported on the German colony there, which consisted of about four hundred people. They were industrious and hard working people who feared God and desired to serve Him. The little community was spotless. Drunkenness, gambling, swearing, or immorality were never heard of. As one entered their homes, bible verses were conspicuously displayed on the walls. The people dressed plainly "with no regard for the ever changing fashions."

These people were engaged in agriculture, basically the growing of grapes, and they also had an excellent soap factory that exported high quality products to as far away as the "American continent."

One gets the feeling that Sjodahl may have been rebuffed in his attempts to teach them about Mormonism, as his report on the colony ends in this manner:

All this is good and commendable. Were there more intelligence, more spiritual life, more understanding of the Word of God, the Servian colony in Haifa would be an admirable place, not often

\textsuperscript{21} Journal History, January 30, 1889. \textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
found on this sinful globe of ours. 23

A few days later he sent another report on these German people, who seemed to fascinate him; and he then stated that they were ready for his message.

The Europeans who live here are, as you already know, mostly Germans. They have come here prompted by a desire to prepare Palestine for the gathering of the Jews and the coming of Christ. The movement commenced, I understand, in 1836 in Germany, and after some years of agitation there were enough members gathered to form a kind of organization, known as Templars. They have now founded colonies in Jerusalem, where their headquarters have been since the year 1878, and in Jaffa, Haifa and one or two other places. I have tried hard to find out what their real object was in founding these colonies; but it is not easy to obtain an intelligent answer. "We have come here," they say, "prompted by the prophecies which foretell the gathering of Israel and the second coming of Christ." "Well, and what are you going to do here?" Of this they do not seem to have any clear idea. In their doctrines they stand very near Count Zinzendorff's followers; but the modern views of the uselessness of baptism seem to have got a hold of not a few members. And so has also Waldenstrom's doctrine of the atonement. Divisions have followed as a consequence, accompanied by spiritual sleepiness and coldness, and it is more than likely that this will in the course of time lead many to see that they were too hasty in their efforts of fulfilling prophecy.

In the meantime it is wonderful to see how there seems to be a longing for truth among these Templars; and in many respects they appear to be driven by the Spirit to see what is the real remedy against error in our present time. A hunger and a thirst for an inspired word from God is not foreign among them. In their paper, "Die Warte des Temples," of January 17th, the following piece appears, of which I give a translation:

The people of Israel had prophets. These were no separate caste. They were men of the people, from shepherds and upwards. . . . They founded their words and existence, their whole being, on the Lord Sabaoth: Thus Sayeth the Lord. What they said was clear admitting of no doubt. . . . A prophet is consequently a man who can find his words on revelation from God. Do we need such men? . . . Although no University can produce them, yet the Templars have entered a road which will lead to the prophetic office. We need not be ashamed of this office, nor must we retreat, as if this perhaps would be kept for others, or as if everything would arrange itself. Prophets were formerly as we have seen in Israel, useful and necessary. This they still are, and will always be.

I have quoted this passage in order to show how the Templars at

23 Ibid.
present acknowledge the necessity of guidance through inspired men, even if they themselves hardly understand their own position, at least clearly. And the conclusion would be near at hand that a people with such understanding would be prepared to receive the Gospel of Christ, when preached to them, a Gospel which offers them exactly what they say they need. But this is another question altogether. Time alone can show; and I hope that all who take an interest in the establishment of the Kingdom of God will remember that right here in the Holy Land and in the adjacent countries is a vast field for missionary labor which rightly cultivated, will yield an abundant harvest.  

In spite of his optimism and expressed feelings that they surely must be prepared for the Gospel, his original evaluation must have been the more correct one, as there are no records from his entire mission indicating any conversions among these people.

Reverend I. C. Iliff

A few weeks later he stumbled on to one of the reasons the Germans were so unresponsive to his message. He gained possession of a tract entitled "The Mormon", written by the reverend I. C. Iliff, a prominent Methodist minister from Utah. When Sjodahl had assimilated its contents, he exploded in righteous anger. Imagine a so called friend of the Mormons spreading such filth and falsehoods to the four corners of the earth!

As he sat down to write a response to the tract, we see in him a real fighter, a side of his character that he had not really shown earlier. He not only responded to the local Germans, but he sent his article to the Deseret Evening News in Salt Lake City to be published there.

A tract entitled "The Mormon," quite extensively circulated among the Germans, has fallen into my hands lately. It appears that Rev. I. C. Iliff, the prominent Methodist priest of Utah, visited

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24 Journal History, February 1, 1889.
Berlin in 1881, and on May 29th in that year delivered a lecture on "Mormonism," The tract professed to be the substance of that lecture, and it will, no doubt, be interesting to residents of Utah to learn how the reverend gentleman abroad represents the people who have been so courteous towards him. On the first page of that tract we learn that "Joe Smith" was a dishonest and "unbridled" character, and that Brigham Young himself testifies to this effect concerning the people.

That this accusation is a palpable falsehood is easily demonstrated. The very first persons who accepted Joseph as a Prophet were those who knew him best in his private life. This is a sure proof of the purity of his character.

It is a moral impossibility for any man to exercise influence over his fellow men unless he is pure. As soon as it is known that a man is fallen his influence is gone. Let Mr. Iliff try the experiment, and he will soon find that from the moment he becomes known as an "unbridled" character his influence is gone.

Mr. Iliff further says, on page 3, that the "Mormon's were driven to Ohio and finally to Utah on account of the "godless, corrupt life of Joseph Smith and his followers." Another palpable falsehood! When were men ever driven away from a place on account of their ungodliness? Such a thing has never been heard of before in the whole history of America. There are thousands upon thousands of godless persons in America, and the Methodist churches, who pay Mr. Iliff, have a considerable share of godless persons in their holy establishments. But they are never driven away. Satan never makes war upon himself. No; swearers, and drunkards, and liars, and thieves, and adulterers, and murderers live peaceably everywhere. Such are not driven anywhere as long as they can keep out of the clutches of the law. Only Saints are driven away.

Further on page 5, we learn that Joseph Smith, according to the theology of the "Mormons," is the fifth person in the Godhead. Mr. Iliff a professed preacher of the Gospel, has the impudence to coin the following falsehood: "According to Parly P. Pratt's 'Key to Theology,' the Mormons teach that the Deity consists of several beings. Elohim is the first, Jehovah the second, Adam the third, Jesus Christ the fourth, and Joseph Smith, the god of this generation, the fifth."

If it were possible for a priest to have any good feelings in his breast, a priest whose whole position as such is nothing but one continuous falsehood from the beginning to the end, then the rev. gentleman would feel ashamed of himself when reflecting on the fact that he has circulated the above lie. But, alas! a priest is a priest.

We are further told, page 7, that the religion of the Saints sanctions murder, and that in Utah a secret organization "the Danites" exists, which is a bloody inquisition and has to put out of the way everyone who appears to be "suspicious." What next? How can men dare to speak such falsehoods against their fellowmen? Is there no judgment to come, and shall liars not be "cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone?" Danites? Would Mr. Iliff have dared to appear among the "Mormons" if he had thought for one
moment that such a "bloody inquisition" existed among them? I think not; for a man who can bear such false testimony against his neighbor, when abroad and then come back all smiling and sunshine is a coward. The Rev. Judas Iscariot was just as afraid of Danites among the Twelve as the Rev. Iliff is among the Saints.

"Emigrants," we are further told, "have been murdered in multitudes"(sharewise) page 8. "Brigham Young not only commanded the Mountain Meadow massacre but sanctioned it, and rewarded those who took part in it, because they had done their duty." (Pages 8 and 9)

Finally comes a long jeremiade concerning the fearful fate of the women of Utah. They are slaves! Their hearts are broken! and so on. And this is Mr. Iliff--a gentleman who has received much courtesy in Utah. He has preached in our meeting houses, and numbers, I believe, several prominent "Mormons" among his personal friends. It is time that these friends and the people in general should know the quality of that friendship. . . .

Few Converts

Following the initial contact with the Templars and the tour of the important places in Palestine, Sjodahl settled down to learn the Arabian language. As his ability improved, he was able to contact an increasing number of people. He found, however, that it was easy to make friends. People who enjoyed his company were to be found everywhere; converts to Mormonism on the other hand were few and far between. 26

On May 14, 1889, he was able to witness the first baptism since he had arrived in Palestine. The candidate for baptism was a native Austrian whose name was not even mentioned:

Yesterday it was my privilege to witness a baptism, the first since my arrival in the Holy Land. The candidate was a native of Austria. From his early childhood he had been in contact with the light bearers of the Catholic Church in his native country, and what he has seen and experienced, what he has suffered from fanaticism and bigotry, and what he has been offered as religion, he says, had driven him to the verge of doubting even the existence


26 Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Wilford Woodruff, June 23, 1889, Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
of God. A strong desire drove him to leave his country and visit Palestine; and although he could not explain the reason why, or produce any particular plan, yet he followed this desire, and came after a long journey overland here.

Hearing the Gospel, after diligent search he was led to accept it and can now see why the spirit should drive him from his own country, where as yet, the sound of the gospel messengers has not been heard. It was beautiful last evening. As we wound our way down to the shore the moon was hidden behind a thick cloud; but gradually her silver rays broke through. The waves of the Mediterranean, sometimes very unruly here, were quiet and calm; and as the candidate was immersed in the watery grace, in the name of God, the dark, cloudy veil was broken and a flood of rays from the light-bearer in the sky was poured out upon the very spot and all around, making the impression upon those present not easily forgotten.27

On writing President Woodruff, Sjodahl commented that he was "well and happy in the discharge of his duties, although they are widely different from what I formerly was accustomed to as a clergyman of the world."28 The difference was that, as a Baptist minister, he preached to a captive audience, people who came specifically to hear him; now no one came, and he had to go out and seek out each contact individually.

Sjodahl finally ends his letter to President Woodruff:

With respect to those Arabs who have asked to be baptized, I have thought best to go slowly. I have formed a bible class and they come every day. And we read the word of God and talk it over. If they prove faithful, they will be baptized. They are men of high intellects but no information.29

In the latter part of September came the reward of his labors. The following account is found in the records:

By private letter from Janne M. Sjodahl, we learn of a very interesting incident that occurred at Jaffa, Palestine on the 22nd day of September last. On that day two Arabian gentlemen were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At

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29 Ibid.
the request of Elder Sjodahl this holy ordinance was administered by Elder C. U. Locander. Both these recent additions to the Church are young men. They had been asking for baptism for three months, but brother Sjodahl doubtless deferred it until their preparation should be placed beyond all question. When they came up out of the water their joy was great. We extract the following from the letter: 

"After the baptism we proceeded to our little room in the kahn and had a very good meeting. The two newly baptized members were confirmed, and we partook of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Brother Smart confirmed Salim and I confirmed Farez. The Lord's supper was administered by brother Locander and borther Simmons. These are the first Arabs baptized in Palestine. Others are expected to follow soon, but we are cautious."30

As the year proceeds, there is less and less information about Sjodahl's activities. The Mission history has this one line entry:

"Sjodahl reports one baptism."31 Still another is recorded in October:

Elder Janne M. Sjodahl baptized Mrs. Louise Khayat at Haifa at her own house, and in the presence of Elder Charles U. Locander and a servant girl. Mrs. Khayat was a refined Arabian lady and well educated. She died faithful to the Gospel at Jaffa in September 1891.32

Another interesting incident occurred in the summer of 1889, showing the spirit that existed among the Christians in Palestine. The United States had a vice-consul in Jaffa as well as in some of the other more important cities in Palestine. This particular person was an interesting individual in that he labored as a Christian missionary in his spare time.

During the month of August, a Latter-day Saint was admitted to the German hospital in Jaffa. It soon became apparent that the illness would terminate in death. This information was picked up by the vice-consul, and he visited the dying man in the hospital.

30 Journal History, September 22, 1889, p. 4.
31 Turkish Mission History, August 1, 1889.
32 Turkish Mission History, October 11, 1889.
At the bedside of the sick man, he went into a bitter denunciation of the Mormon Church. He suggested that if the dying man would only deny his faith before it was too late, he would in all probability be healed and could enjoy many more years on this good earth of ours. If that could not be, a denial would surely save him from Hell as he passed on to the other side. When he finally had had his say, the dying man raised his hand towards heaven and, emphasizing every word, said: I acknowledge Mormonism as the eternal truth."

Thus the Consul missionary, instead of getting the credit of having turned a righteous man from God—as was his purpose—obtained a testimony, the rejection of which will in the eternities cause him bitter sorrow.33

The mission of Sjodahl was now quickly drawing to a close. On December 20, 1889, just eleven days before leaving Palestine, he penned these thoughts on the gathering of the Jews:

It has been very pleasing to me to note on my trips through the Holy Land the progress everywhere going on. Land is being cultivated, old vineyards are being cleared and planted, water cisterns and roads built. No wonder that the present movement in Palestine is causing universal attention.

The world fails to comprehend the movement that is going on. They see that this is a strange one, an event unlooked for. The believer has been looking out for it, and knows what it signifies. One thought has struck me forcibly during my stay among the Jews in Jerusalem, Hebron, and other places. The Jews themselves need to be enlightened upon the subject of gathering. They come from almost all quarters of the globe. They are attracted to this land as to the land of the cradle of their nation, and many of them feel happy if they can drag their old tabernacles over continents and oceans and come and die here. But, in general, there seems to be no particular enlightenment on the subject of gathering. A mission to the Jews, therefore, the objective of which would be to enlighten the scattered nation upon the subject of gathering, as foretold by their ancient prophets, would be a work of vast importance just at this time. But no "Christian" denomination need spend money on it. The quibbles of the Christians and their silk-lined priest are too thin. Their day is past with the superstitious ages that originated

33 Journal History, August 31, 1889.
them. The Jews need messengers sent from the Lord; and they will have them; for the time is at hand.34

On January 1, 1890, Sjodahl left Palestine, having been requested to go to Bern, Switzerland, "to superintend the printing of a tune-book to be used for the German and Swiss Saints."35 That mission successfully completed, Elder Sjodahl returned to Utah, arriving on July 4, 1890. He had been absent from home for twenty months. One year of that time he spent in Palestine, the rest in the Swiss mission and traveling to and from his field of labor.

As the final note on the story of his mission, the dangers of missionary work in far corners of the earth during this period ought to be pointed out. Noting the passing of Elder Edgar D. Simmons, one of Sjodahl's companions, on February 6, 1890, in Aintab, Turkey, serves as an example. Elder Simmons died shortly after having contracted small pox.36

34 Journal History, December 20, 1889.
35 Deseret News (Salt Lake City), July 5, 1890.
36 Turkish Mission History, February 6, 1890.
Chapter 6

THE 1890-1914 PERIOD

A Difficult Decision

Ten days after his return home, Sjodahl was faced with one of the major decisions of his life. He had been offered a position with the Deseret News in Salt Lake City and also a teaching position at a proposed Church Academy in Manti. As he stood at the crossroad, contemplating the future, he wrote President Wilford Woodruff explaining his situation and asking for his advice.\(^1\) President Woodruff's reply was not available; but whatever it may have been, Sjodahl decided to go to Salt Lake City and the Deseret News.

Thus began a distinguished twenty-four year career with this newspaper, the last eight of these as editor-in-chief.\(^2\) As a matter of fact, as early as 1898, in the interim between editors, Sjodahl occupied the seat of the editor on a temporary basis.\(^3\)

During these twenty-four years, he was found at his desk at the "News" each day. These were the years for raising a family. Leilah, the oldest daughter, had been born during the mission; in 1891,

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\(^1\) Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Wilford Woodruff, July 14, 1890, Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

\(^2\) Andrew Jensen, LDS Biographical Encyclopedia (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew Jensen History Co., 1920), Vol. 3, pp. 714-715.

\(^3\) Journal History, November 2, 1898.
Vera, the second daughter, blessed the Sjodahl home.\footnote{LDS Church Historian's Office, Membership card files.}

It is interesting to contemplate what may have happened had Sjodahl chosen to stay in Manti to teach school. Very likely his name would have been unknown today and the writing of his life story may never have been undertaken. There is not really anything in his life prior to 1890 that indicates any particular aptitude for teaching children. It is probable that he would have become a teacher, destined to be forgotten along with the Manti Academy.

Shortly after arriving in Salt Lake City in 1890, Sjodahl was called to preside over the Scandinavian branch in that city.\footnote{Jensen, loc. cit.} During many of the years that followed, he also taught a regularly scheduled study class, called the Scandinavian Theological class, the membership of which usually hovered around forty persons.\footnote{Journal History, May 20, 1897.} Although the records of the Scandinavian branch in Salt Lake City have not been preserved, it can safely be presumed that its activities were the same as during later periods--namely, to allow the Scandinavian saints an opportunity to worship in their native tongue while they struggled to learn English. Some of the older people remained members throughout their lives, but the younger generation usually transferred to the local English speaking wards as they began to feel comfortable with the new language and culture.\footnote{Interview with C. Fritz Johansson, President of the Swedish Branch, Granite Stake, July 17, 1970.}

Throughout all the years Sjodahl spent in Utah, he had almost daily contact with the General Authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints. He was known by all of them, freely conversing and corresponding with them on a great variety of subjects. This was undoubtedly a great psychological boost for the Swedish Latter-day Saints, who often felt that their particular nationality never had been very well represented among the Church leadership.  

The highlight of the 1890-1914 period came in 1897, when Sjodahl was selected to represent the First Presidency and the Swedes and Norwegians living in Utah to the Court of Oscar II, King of Sweden and Norway during the latter's twenty-five year jubilee. As the jubilee was announced in Stockholm, Sweden, the Scandinavians in Utah felt they wanted to send their congratulations and an appropriate gift to his Majesty. The following account tells the story:

This evening's eastbound train will carry as a passenger J. M. Sjodahl of this city as a special representative of the Scandinavians in Utah, enroute to the big Northern Exposition now being held at Stockholm, Sweden, in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession to the throne of King Oscar the II.

Elder Sjodahl will extend to the distinguished sovereign greetings and good wishes from his former subjects who are now citizens of Utah and of the United States, and as a gift from them present his Majesty and Queen with an elegantly bound Book of Mormon. It is on the best paper and in the clearest type. The binding is of the finest white calf, embellished with guilt and silver lettering. On the outside front cover appears the following scriptural verse, so familiar to Book of Mormon students: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

On the exterior of the reverse cover are the letters in gold: I. H. S. (Jesus the Savior of men).

The box in which the beautiful gift will be born to the royal palace and presented to the king is of Utah onyx, polished and carved with exquisite taste by Olaf Nilson. The smooth slab that forms the base is 17 x 14 inches while the compartment in which the book is encased measures 13 x 9 inches. An ornamental frieze mount supported at each corner by a finely carved lion's head furnishes a rest for the heavy lid. On the front panel or face of the box

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8 Ibid.
within a wreath is an elegant gold facsimile of the Salt Lake Temple and immediately below it appears the following inscription also in letters of gold: Presented to their Majesties King Oscar II and Queen Sofia of Sweden and Norway, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their accession to the throne, by the Scandinavians of Utah, U.S.A.

A peep into the interior discloses a pretty picture in the form of a silk cushion upon which the book rests. It is the Swedish and Norwegian symbol of union and is in the national colors of those countries. The handiwork is very fine and was done by Miss Charlotte Nilson of Walker Bros. art department. Above and about the symbol in pleasing contrast to its strong colors is a beautifully tinted silk lining covering the walls of the box in such a manner as to give an appearance of extreme richness. 9

Sjodahl arrived in Stockholm with his gift on September 8, 1897. He immediately proceeded to the American Embassy, where Mr. Fergusen, the Ambassador greeted him very courteously. Letters of introduction from Governor Wells of Utah and from U. S. Congressman King were presented, and Mr. Fergusen promised to inquire whether the King would accept the gift and grant an audience. After several calls to the embassy, Sjodahl was told that no reply had been received and that nothing further could be done. It was good that Sjodahl was a resourceful man, not easily discouraged and determined to accomplish his assigned mission. The embassy was now by-passed, and the King's chancellor, Count von Essen, was contacted. Obviously this was the correct procedure, for within the hour Sjodahl was notified to return the following morning at 11:30, in dress appropriate for an interview with his Majesty, King Oscar II. The following day he was escorted through the King's palace to the appointed meeting place. 10 Let us read Sjodahl's own account of the visit:

Now a page announced that the King was waiting for me. "No long speech, you know," sounded a friendly whisper in my ear. That was

9 Deseret News (Salt Lake City), August 14, 1897.
10 Journal History, September 22, 1897.
Count von Essen again. I had barely time to say: "Never fear your excellency," and then I was ushered into the august presence of the King.

We were in a rather small room. That is all I know about the room in which the audience took place. The next moment the King's hand was extended towards me and I reverently grasped it. I said: "Your Majesty! I have come from Utah, from one of the western states of the North American Union, to express to you, on behalf of the Swedes and the Norwegians there, our most respectful homage and congratulations. We too in the far west pray to the Almighty to grant to your majesty a long life for the benefit of the brother nations."

The King's handsome face beamed as he listened to this little bit of oratorical effort. "Have the Norwegians there also sent you?" he said. "Yes, your Majesty." "Are you a Swede or a Norwegian?" was the next question. "I am a Swede by birth, your Majesty."

"How long have you been in America?" "A little over eleven years."

"Well, well! Please tell my country-men, Swedes and Norwegians, in your state, in Utah, that I sincerely thank them for the handsome present they have given me. I wish them success in their far away home." The audience was over.11

The following letter accompanied the gift:

Elder J. M. Sjodahl, the bearer of this letter, is a gentleman of education and distinction, a Swede by birth, who has traveled extensively in the Orient as well as in Europe and America. His present residence is Salt Lake City, Utah, where he is well and favorably known and highly esteemed by all that know him.

Elder Sjodahl has been selected by his fellow countrymen, natives of Sweden and Norway, a large body of whom reside in and are citizens of the State of Utah, to proceed to the court of their majesties King Oscar II and Queen Sophia, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of their accession to the throne, for the purpose of presenting, in their name and behalf, to their majesties a casket made of Utah onyx, containing a copy of the Book of Mormon, as an expression of the high esteem, affection and love which the Scandinavians of this inter-mountain region entertain for their majesties, with the hope and earnest desire that their majesties will live to witness many happy returns of this most auspicious event.

And we ourselves though not of the Scandinavian race, do most heartily join our Scandinavian friends and fellow-citizens in desiring long life, peace, prosperity and happiness for their majesties, King Oscar II and Queen Sophia of Sweden and Norway.

Wilford Woodruff
Geo. Q. Cannon
Joseph F. Smith12

Ten weeks later, Sjodahl was back at his desk in the Deseret

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11Ibid.
12Ibid.
News Building, his important mission successfully completed.

A year later, to the delight of the Sjodahl family, a package from the King of Sweden arrived at their residence. The King had remembered his visitor from Utah; the package contained a book.

It is in a form of a large volume of the proceeding and the festivities of the great jubilee, consisting of more than six hundred pages, profusely and beautifully illustrated, and presenting a perfect accomplishment of the printers art. It is interesting to note that Mr. Sjodahl's message, and the address of the First Presidency are published verbatim, in English, together with a complete description of the gift from Utah. Accompanying the handsome volume, that came to Mr. Sjodahl last evening is the following greeting from the King: "By most gracious command the chief of his Majesty's, the King's court has the honor to forward a copy of the account of the 25th anniversary of the accession to the throne of H. H., the king.

Stockholm, September 17, 1898."13

On February 24, 1898, Sjodahl was given the editorship of Bikuben, a church owned Danish language newspaper, published in Salt Lake City. This was in addition to his duties at the Deseret News. This assignment got Sjodahl in trouble with Andrew Jensen who acted as a mediator between the First Presidency and the editor of Bikuben. In this situation, Sjodahl received at least the inferred displeasure of the First Presidency. Andrew Jensen's reference to this is found in his diary:

During the day I had a conversation at the News Office with Bro. J. M. Sjodahl who was very angry because I had dismissed him as editor of Bikuben and appointed Oluf J. Anderson in his stead. He made use of such language as conveyed the idea to me that the man is not a genuine Latter-day Saint; and if he don't repent soon, he will show the cloven foot, and leave the Church. I was obliged to make the change, as neither he nor S. F. Johnson, the former manager of Bikuben were true to me in my endeavor to save the paper, besides I was carrying out the instructions of the Presidency.

Further:

I again assited the boys at the Bikuben Office and also had an interview with the First Presidency in regard to the paper. Brother

13 Journal History, September 17, 1898.
Sjodahl had complained to them about being discharged from the editorship. I made full explanation which was satisfactory and I was sustained in all I had done, what an experience! After laboring as I have done for the salvation of the paper, to be maligned for simply doing my duty and carrying out the wishes of the Presidency. Brother Sjodahl had better be careful, or he will find himself treading on dangerous ground.\textsuperscript{14}

By the latter part of April, Sjodahl penned the following letter to President George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency:

Dear brother, with great hesitancy I pen these lines, but there is an impression on my mind that recent developments connected with the Bikuben, the Danish paper published here, require a personal statement.

When brother Andrew Jensen some time ago was appointed to look after the affairs of that publication, he agreed, as an experiment, to allow the brethren working in the office to run it on the cooperative plan suggested in a letter to the First Presidency. In a communication to me dated February 24th he appointed me editor, which I accepted in good faith. The paper now was issued with renewed vigor; ... the result of our joint efforts, for I believe seven weeks, was that the paper paid all its expenses and had \$200 balance on the right side.

Then suddenly without a moments warning Br. Andrew Jensen, in a polite way, ousted me from the office, not even according me the common journalistic courtesy of allowing me to say a word of farewell to the readers of the Bikuben. And he claims as I understand it, to be acting in accordance with instructions from the First Presidency.

His course of proceeding is in my judgment, so unusual as to leave room for no other supposition on my part than that, either through misrepresentation or misunderstanding, I have been placed under a cloud. Is it too much to ask for some hearing, in order that I may obtain some understanding of brother Jensen's proceedings against me in this matter?\textsuperscript{15}

Brother Jensen's action was sustained by the Church leaders, thus leaving Sjodahl outside the inner circle, so to speak.

On February 23, 1901, Sjodahl wrote the presidency of the Salt Lake Stake, under which jurisdiction the Scandinavian branch operated,

\textsuperscript{14}Andrew Jensen, unpublished diary 1898-1900, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 31-32.

\textsuperscript{15}Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to George Q. Cannon, April 25, 1898. Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
and requested his release as President. This is another of these little things that Sjodahl regularly does which marks him as a little different. Usually a Latter-day Saint does not resign from an ecclesiastical position but serves faithfully until released.

Between 1901 and 1908, Sjodahl's activities were mostly associated with his employment at the Deseret News. There are no indications of church assignments above the local ward level during these years. On July 27, 1908, he was ordained a high priest by President William McLachlan and set apart as an alternate member of the Pioneer Stake High Council, serving in that capacity until 1911 when he moved to the Ensign Stake. As far as can be ascertained, this was the highest ecclesiastical office held by Janne M. Sjodahl.

Editor-in-Chief

In 1906, Charles W. Penrose, the editor-in-chief of the Deseret News, was called to go to Liverpool, England to preside over the European Mission of the Church. At this time, Sjodahl was promoted to the top job at the "News." After two years in the editor's chair, Sjodahl, being elated about the success of the paper, wrote to Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church, and in glowing terms tells of how traditional enemies of the Church had praised the editorial policies of the paper. At the bottom of the letter was penned the following note by President Smith: "Beware of the Greeks when they come bearing gifts. May I not say:


17 Jensen, loc. cit.

18 Ibid.
Beware of the Deseret News when the Devil gives it praise."  

Again Sjodahl, unknowingly, had "ruffled the feathers" of the presiding brethren. President Smith is obviously concerned about the operation of the Church's newspaper.

On November 8, 1910, Mrs. Sjodahl awoke with a severe headache; however, neither she nor her family were duly concerned as she had been plagued with intense headaches for years. Everyone felt confident that with proper rest she would again recover. Towards the evening, the family, seeing that she was worse than she had ever been, called the family doctor; but his services were of no avail, and she died from a hemorrhage on the brain.

For the second time, Sjodahl had to face the tragedy of losing his wife. It was a severe blow. The prominence of the Sjodahls became evident when, at the funeral services, Presidents Anthon H. Lund and John Henry Smith, both of the First Presidency, as well as Charles W. Penrose, one of the Apostles, spoke. Mrs. Sjodahl died just a few days prior to her 40th birthday.

The Reign of Antichrist

It was during these years just following his wife's passing that Sjodahl wrote and published his first book, The Reign of Antichrist or The Great "Falling Away", A Study in Ecclesiastical History.

The book was published in 1913 and was the first effort of

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19 Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Joseph F. Smith, May 18, 1908, Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
20 Deseret News (Salt Lake City), November 8, 1910.
21 Deseret News (Salt Lake City), November 12, 1910.
Sjodahl to publish anything larger than a pamphlet or magazine article. Although his literary ability had matured and ripened over a period of twenty-five years, still he was basically the devoted researcher, who was at his best writing short, specialized articles. The Reign of Antichrist was a condensed and tightly packed little work dedicated to show from the historical viewpoint that the Roman Catholic Church was the Antichrist and the cause of the great apostasy. In the foreword he states:

The sole aim of the writer of these pages has been to present the unimpeachable testimony of history to the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the great "falling away;" not as an attack upon anybody, but, first, as an explanation and defense of the attitude of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints among other churches; and, secondly, as a means of calling attention to the victory of our Lord over all the forces of the adversary, manifested in the re-establishment of the Church in our age, as preliminary to the ushering in of His kingdom in all the world.

It might have been shown how Roman paganism was overthrown by the followers of the Lamb, by their patience and endurance during the successive persecutions; how the so called Christian Roman empire was broken up by the invasions of Goths, Vandals and Huns, making it possible for the antichrist to establish his throne in the City of the Seven Hills; . . . 22

Further, he purported to pinpoint the completion of the great apostasy in 607 A.D., showing that St. John predicted the restoration of the Divine Church in 1830 A.D.

But let him speak for himself:

Gregory I. became bishop of Rome in the year 590 A.D. He was a man of great learning and unusual genius, and indomitable energy. He succeeded in saving the city of Rome from invasion by the Lombards, and brought about amicable relations between the people of that city and the strangers. He maintained an ambassador at the court of Constantinople, and when the Emperor and his family were cruelly murdered by Phocas, he hastened to send congratulations to the usurper. Gregory died in the year 604, and three years later

the question of supremacy of Rome was submitted to the Emperor Phocas, who decided in favor of Rome. Boniface III, who was pope for only ten months in the year 607, was the first to whom the title of Universal Bishop of Christendom was conceded by the Greek Emperor (Phocas)--(The New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, page 278). By this imperial decree papacy was finally recognized as an established constitution. It was the finishing touch of centuries of effort to revolutionize the government of the Church of Jesus Christ. By this decree the apostasy was completed.

Particular attention is called to the date of this imperial decree. It was, as we have seen, issued in the year 607 A.D. That date, then, marks the completion of the apostasy. From that date we must count the flight of the "Woman" into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6). Her child had long ago ascended to the throne of God. That is, the Priesthood had been taken away; now the Church itself went into exile.

John the Revelator expressly states that this exile of the Church should last 1260 days, or years. But these are lunar years. And 1260 lunar years of 354 days each are equal to 1222.5 of our solar years. . . . 1222.5 of our years (that is, 1260 prophetic lunar years) counting from the decree of Phocas (607 A.D.) sending the Church into the wilderness, take us to the year 1830 A.D., when the Church was re-established, through the Prophet Joseph Smith.23

The little book was an interesting contribution to the LDS literature on the apostasy, gathering under one cover much historical information to complement the great works on the apostasy by such men as Parley P. Pratt, B. H. Roberts and James E. Talmage.24

Resignation From the Deseret News

Although Sjodahl was still the top man at the "News," these were lonely, difficult years, and, with the passing of time, he found himself in some compromising situations. As we shall see, these "situations" eventually led to his resignation as editor of the Deseret News.

Sjodahl owned property in down town Salt Lake City, which he rented to some undesirable groups. Utah Korrespondenten, a Swedish

23 Ibid., pp. 67-68, 70-71. 24 Ibid., p. 8.
language newspaper published in Salt Lake City, made reference to the incident on August 6, 1914 and again on September 18th of the same year. The earlier account reported Sjodahl's resignation as of July 29, 1914, and made an assumption that he was forced to resign after it was disclosed that he had been renting some property to a Negro house of ill repute.  

The same paper reported on September 18, that Sjodahl had been called to England on a mission, and again referred to his resignation from the Deseret News as follows: "Sjodahl resigned as editor shortly following the little scandal dealing with him being the landlord and a member of an infamous negro club."  

Utah Posten, the other Swedish language newspaper handles the incident as follows:

Elder J. M. Sjodahl who for twenty years has been associated with the Deseret News, more recently as its editor-in-chief has left for England to accept a position as editor of the Millennial Star, a Church publication in England.  

Brother Sjodahl greeted this opportunity with satisfaction, as he had felt need for a change for some time.  

Some time ago it was claimed that a negro club that was not considered respectable rented property that supposedly belonged to Sjodahl, immediately some people charged Sjodahl with a defective character, when as a matter of fact the property in question was managed by Sjodahl in behalf of relatives, and further more one cannot expect a landlord to keep police watch over property situated in a part of the city far removed from his own residence.  

When it was shown that the club was a nuisance in the neighborhood he took legal steps to expell them.  

Is it not strange that when someone wants to hurt another he can make quite an issue of unrespectable renters.  

At this point it is proper to insert the explanation that the Utah Korrespondenten was an anti-Church publication. Its editor was a

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25 Utah Korrespondenten (Salt Lake City), August 6, 1914.  
26 Ibid., September 18, 1914.  
27 Utah Posten (Salt Lake City), September 23, 1914.
Mr. Rydman, an old associate of Sjodahl who by now had apostatized from the Church. His reporting of Sjodahl's dilemma in connection with his mission call is not so much to hurt his old friend as it is a "slap" at the Mormon Church.

Rydman was associated with Sjodahl in the proof reading of the Swedish translation of the *Doctrine and Covenants* back in 1888.28

Chapter 7

BACK TO ENGLAND

War

During the summer of 1914, the political situation in Europe had been very uneasy. Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28th, after which it took only hours for Germany to get involved; it almost seemed as if she had been looking for the opportunity. On August 1, Germany declared war on Russia, and on August 4, on Belgium. It was the brutal attack on small, defenseless Belgium that aroused the English. England declared war on Germany August 5, the day following the Kaiser's attack on Belgium. By August 8, France was involved, and Germany had, in just a few days, started a holocaust that involved, in addition to herself, Russia, Belgium, France and England.

Thus in September of 1914, the outlook for Europe seemed very dim indeed; however, few envisioned the horrors that the world would pass through before this war would be ended. By 1918, twenty-eight nations were involved, and they had thirty million men under arms.¹

Sjodahl Finds His Niche

This was the England that greeted Sjodahl as he stepped ashore at Liverpool on September 22, 1914.² Anxiety and tension were seen and


²Millennial Star (Liverpool, England), October 1, 1914, p. 638.
felt everywhere. England in the midst of war preparations was very different from the England Sjodahl knew as a young theology student forty years earlier.

Immediately upon arrival, Sjodahl was appointed associate editor of the *Millennial Star*, the official publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England. The need for professional help at the "Star" was immediate, as Thomas W. Brockbank, the former editor, had been released just a week earlier to return to Utah.³

**Atonement**

Without hesitation, Sjodahl immersed himself in the duties at hand. There were at least no expressed feelings of disappointment due to the change that saw him moved from the editor's chair at the *Deseret News* to the menial tasks involved in the editing of a small Church periodical.

We have already discussed some of the events that led to his resignation from the editorship of the *Deseret News*. In this we see a man who, though caught up in a difficult and very compromising situation, at the "moment of truth" did not offer excuses, but rather involved himself in the work at hand. He seemed determined to show the officials of the Church that he was sorry and that he meant to make amends by hard, dedicated work at any assigned task, no matter how menial. As the story of his years in England unfold, we find that this was exactly what he was called to do. As the months proceeded, the war efforts became more intense; England was soon involved in a total mobilization effort. As a result of this, the great majority of the missionaries

³Ibid., pp. 654-655.
were called back to the United States. Soon Sjodahl found that he was one of the very few still left in England. This meant an ever increasing work load, and it was not long until he was not only the editor but the typesetter as well. As conditions worsened, he braced himself and accepted an ever increasing amount of work. As the months turned into years, thousands of grateful readers gained strength and courage from the flow of editorials and articles coming from Sjodahl's pen. When the end of the war finally came, he had spent nearly five years at his post, enduring many difficult situations. During this time, he had written hundreds of editorials and articles for the "Star," as well as having produced what was to become his best known book, *Commentary to the Doctrine and Covenants.*

**J. M. S. Becomes His Trademark**

In the October 15, (1914) issue of the *Millennial Star*, the initials J. M. S. appear for the first time. They were to become an integral part of the "Star" for the next five years. His first entry was appropriate for the time, an editorial entitled "A Message of Peace." Here he reiterated the stand of the Church regarding war, given just two months earlier by President Joseph F. Smith in Cardston, Canada:

> It is the duty of all Latter-day Saints to be loyal to the country in which they reside, and if exigencies should arise in Canada, as they have arisen in England, our blessed motherland, the Latter-day Saints are prepared to do their part. If you are called to the defense of your country we want you to be loyal. Ours is a blessed country, and we will defend it with our lives.

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5Ibid.  
6*Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), March 20, 1920.
if necessary. We do not want war and bloodshed; but if they come, and your services are required, by loyal and help to defend your country.

Sjodahl ends this first editorial with the following message of hope and encouragement:

But wars will cease. The time will come when the nations, recognizing the limitations of human government, will turn to "the mountain of the Lord," to "the house of the God of Jacob," to learn his ways. Then the Lord will be the judge, the arbitrator, among nations; and, as a consequence, they shall "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks." That is to say, they shall turn their implements of war into agricultural and horticultural tools. They shall spend the money and energy now paid for armies, navies, forts and military schools, on the production of food and other necessaries of life, and there will be such an abundance that "they shall sit every man under his vine and fig tree." Everybody shall be the owner of his own little home, and "none shall make them afraid" (compare Isaiah 2:4-5, and Micah 4: 1-7).

This is the time to which we look forward as the result of the proclamation of the gospel of peace throughout the world. There is no other means by which this higher civilization can be reached. But it will come. In the hands of Providence even this present war, with all its heartrending horrors, will serve to hasten the coming of the day of millennial peace of which the prophets of old spoke and which the Saints of God today proclaim.7

In this same issue we find two other entries by Sjodahl; one is a small article defending the Book of Mormon, the other an editorial containing recent instructions from Ida Smith, mission Relief Society President, about the proper conduct of the Relief Society meetings and what was considered a proper involvement in England's war effort.8 From this, his very first issue, we find Sjodahl totally involved, and his pace never slowed down throughout his term as editor.

As his writings in the Millennial Star are surveyed, certain preferences appear. First, he is an avid defender of the Prophet Joseph

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7Millennial Star (Liverpool, England), 1914, p. 665.
8Ibid., pp. 666-668.
Smith and of the Restoration. Shortly after arriving in England, his testimony about the divine calling of Joseph Smith sounded loud and clear:

There is one infallible rule laid down by the Almighty Himself, for the guidance of his people, by which they can know whether a prophet is sent from God. The Lord made it a capital offense to pretend falsely to have a divine commission, and he added to this law the following for the guidance of His children: "If thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously." (Deut. 18:21, 22)

Apply this divine rule to the prophecies delivered by the Prophet Joseph Smith; test every one of them, as they are recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Joseph Smith prophesied that the Church would flourish in the mountains, and those remarkable predictions were delivered at a time when nothing was more improbable (Doc. and Cov. 49:25); in fact the western mountain region was very little known at that time. Has that prophecy come true? Let history answer.

Joseph Smith predicted the American Civil War on December 25th, 1832, about thirty years before it broke out, and said that it would begin in South Carolina, and "probably because of the slave question" (Doc. and Cov. 87:1; 130:12,13). Has this prophecy been fulfilled? Let history answer. He also said that after the Civil conflict "war will be poured out on all nations" (Sec. 87:2), and so general would the strife be, according to the predictions of the prophet Joseph, "that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor, must needs flee unto Zion for safety" (Doc. and Cov. 45:68). Has this come to pass? There are very few nations which have not had war since the civil conflict in the United States, and at present as everybody knows, there is war on every continent of the globe, and warships are scouring every ocean for prey. People are literally fleeing to the land of Zion—the United States. 9

The above quote seems to represent what was a typical Sjodahl approach, i.e., an appeal to reason and common sense. He seemed to be asking, "How can you study the evidence and not come to the understanding that it is true?"

Just three days prior to the seventy-first anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, he wrote, comparing Joseph with another martyr,

9Ibid., pp. 761-762.
John Huss, the great Bohemian reformer. In the final paragraph, Sjodahl testifies that the world will learn the truth:

The time will come though, when the work of the Prophet and those associated with him will be recognized, for history places all things in their true perspective. Joseph Smith, like Huss, and others, was far ahead of his time. He was not only Biblical in his teachings, but prophetic, and the world did not grasp the meaning of his mission. It is just beginning to understand him, for many of the truths that he taught are now accepted; but full recognition has not yet been accorded to his work. In time the world will know that revelation from God has been restored; that the spiritual gifts follow faith; that God is our Father and His Son the ruler of the world; that a universal brotherhood of man will take the place of contending, warring, murderous governments; and when that era comes there will be monuments to the great martyrs who were called to proclaim these truths in this age and who gave their lives in this service of humanity. In the meantime they need no other monument than the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Let her light go forth to the uttermost parts of the earth, and wherever it comes, men and women, on their bended knees and with hearts filled with unspeakable gratitude will thank God for the life and death of Joseph, the Prophet. 10

As a final example, let us look at Sjodahl's farewell editorial:

In bidding you all farewell, I desire to say once more, on these pages, that my testimony to all the world is that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that he was raised up for the purpose of proclaiming the second advent of our Lord. No one can reject this testimony of the Elders of the Church, except at his or her own peril. 11

As Europe was reeling as a drunken man from the impact of the terrible war which raged across the Continent, Sjodahl quoted Christian leaders who expressed thoughts about the validity of Christianity; had it failed? One eminent English divine said, "I do not see how I can ever preach again." 12 Another said: "If you ask me if I believe that conventional Christianity has failed, I say, yes, openly and frankly." 13

Then at the end of the report comes the testimony of the editor:

10 Ibid., p. 394. 11 Ibid., 1919, p. 248.
12 Ibid., 1915, p. 42. 13 Ibid., p. 43.
But the elders of the Church do not only testify of the error into which the world has fallen through the vain philosophy of its wise men; they also point out the road to truth, which, narrow and steep though it may be, leads to life everlasting and eternal exaltation. That is their mission, their calling. If they point out error, they do so in order to prepare the way for truth; if they destroy the old structure, it is to make room for one more glorious. 14

Second, Sjodahl often wrote of the first principles of the Gospel namely, faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism by immersion for forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Near the end of an article on faith, Sjodahl made the following statement:

Faith, then, we may say, is the disposition of man to place a firm confidence in God and his promises, and the channel through which we receive revelation from God of things not seen or perceived through the outward senses. 15

The idea that faith was the channel through which God revealed his will to men was a great one and Sjodahl sounded like someone with great faith speaking out of personal experience.

Finally, he suggests that one of the supreme examples of faith in the annals of history was that faith portrayed by Polycarp:

The last hours of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, furnishes another illustration of that faith that is fidelity. When before the Proconsul, this official asked the aged Bishop to cry: "Away with the Atheists!" He did so. Then he was urged to renounce Christ. He answered: "Eighty and six have I served him, and he hath never wronged me: and how can I blaspheme my God and King who hath saved me?"

"I have wild beasts," said the Proconsul, "and I will expose you to them unless you repent."

"Call them," answered Polycarp.

"I will tame your spirit with fire," hissed the enraged officer. "You threaten me," calmly replied the martyr, "with the fire which burns only for a moment, but are yourself ignorant of the fire of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly."

14 Ibid., p. 44.  
15 Ibid., p. 34.
So he was given over to the flames; but while the fire consumed him, he blessed God that he was counted worthy to receive his portion in the number of martyrs.\(^\text{16}\)

One of Sjodahl's earliest editorials outlined the Gospel of Jesus Christ in appealing style.

More particularly it teaches us that we are, by nature, sinners—yes, sinners, not only because of the acts of sin we may have committed, but because of the sinful condition in which we, through the fall, find ourselves, and which makes us love, naturally, darkness more than light, and which makes it, naturally, more difficult for us to practice righteousness than unrighteousness. On account of this condition—so the Gospel tells us—we need a Savior, and our Father has given us a Savior—His Son, who came to save that which was lost. It tells us how to place ourselves in a position of acceptance of His work: by repentance, which means, originally, a change of mind, so radical, so complete as to cause us to lead a new life, different from the life we used to lead before we repented; by faith, which accepts the vicarious work of our Savior as ours, and therefore justifies us in the eyes of our Father in Heaven, as we read of Abraham, that he believed God and that was counted him to righteousness; by baptism for the remission of sins, through which we accept Jesus, and confess before the world that we have so accepted Him; and by the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost who will be in us a new power for life, for enlightenment, and for holiness. All this and more is comprised in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a message to the world, showing it how to be saved from sin and all its consequences, and how we can be placed in a position where we can gain eternal exaltation.\(^\text{17}\)

The above paragraph is compact, concise, and complete, including all the major Gospel elements: the fall, the atonement, faith, repentance, baptism, and the reception of the Holy Ghost, which brings freedom from sin and eternal life. The message of repentance taught by those who had never experienced this divine principle, often had the sound of "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." (1 Cor. 13:1.) Not so with Sjodahl's writings on these subjects; they had a sound of authority about them. Another Sjodahl quotation on the subject of repentance and forgiveness of sins follows:

\(^{16}\text{Ibid., p. 36.}\)
\(^{17}\text{Ibid., 1914, pp. 673-674.}\)
When the repentant sinner has been baptized and forgiven, he is in the condition to receive the Holy Ghost and all the gifts and graces that come from Him, as Peter says: "Repent and be baptized ... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in man, which begins from the moment he is cleansed and purified, is the source of a new spiritual life, which increases in strength until he is transformed into the image of Christ; until he is one with the Father and the Son in his aims and plans, his desires and yearnings, his thoughts and sentiments, his views and opinions. ... It is the office of the Spirit to "enlighten the eyes of the understanding" (Eph. 1:18), that we may know the things which God has revealed (1 Cor. 2:12), or "the things of the spirit of God." It is His office to give revelations, for "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations" (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 6, page 58). It is His office to impart gifts of healing, of prophecy, and all other necessary gifts for the building up of the believer in the faith, and the growth of the Church. It is His special office to be a witness in the heart of man and testify to the truth. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16-17). He gives us the assurance that our sins are blotted out, and enables us to turn to God with a good conscience. 18

It would be very difficult to find explanations of these principles that are more clear or meaningful.

During February and March of 1915, Sjodahl published a series of articles about baptism that were masterpieces. After discussing in great detail the opinions of different Christian churches, his conclusion was: "the mixture of truth and error regarding this ordinance among all the creeds is so complete that the mixture is rendered useless." 19 Continuing, he states:

We can only set it aside and turn to the word of God, as given through ancient and modern revelations, for unpolluted truth and enlightenment.

Orson Pratt defines baptism as "an ordinance whereby a believing, penitent sinner obtains a forgiveness of all past sins." He adds: "By being buried in the watery grave, the old man, as Paul says, is put off with all of his deeds; by rising from the Liquid element, we put on the new man, become new creatures, and should henceforth walk in newness of life" (The Kingdom of God, page 5). That is

18 Ibid., 1915, p. 81. 19 Ibid., p. 99.
baptism. It is a divinely instituted ordinance in which man is "born again"—whereby he enters the kingdom of heaven, just as by natural birth he entered the physical world. 20

He then proceeded to discuss the following topics with great skill and conviction: "What is the mode of baptism? Who are the subjects of baptism? Who has authority to administer it? What is the proper formula? What are the effects? Is baptism necessary? Can baptism be performed vicariously for the dead by the living?" 21

Third, he wrote much about the Millennium and the second coming of Christ. His way of matching current events and happenings with specific prophecies and predictions from the scriptures is very interesting, his mind always seems to be very bright and alert; very little seems to have slipped by his attention.

In writing about the Millennium, he states:

If there is any promise more frequently made in the scriptures, than any other, concerning the future of the human family, it is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth and establish a universal rule of peace. This is the first and the last note of the prophetic word, its alpha and omega, and it is the bright star which shines most brilliantly during the long, dark ages since the fall, directing the children of men to look forward to the day on which there shall be on earth a paradise restored. 22

Discussing some of the reasons for the great war that was ravaging Europe, Sjodahl concluded:

The Lord is preparing the world for the establishment of the reign of peace and righteousness which, according to the prophetic word, is to come upon the earth as a result of the work of redemption which the Son of God accomplished. We can see even in the present commotion an indication that the Millennial day is about to dawn. For among the signs preceding that dispensation are wars and bloodshed, the overthrow of governments and the breaking up of empires, . . . Injustice to nations must be atoned for. Nations in bondage must be set free. Their boundaries must be re-established

20 Ibid. 21 Ibid., p. 100. 22 Ibid., p. 817.
in accordance with the demands of affinity, race, language, and historical connections. Full justice must be done even to the smallest nations. Then the brotherhood of man will be possible, for there will be no lingering bitterness in the hearts of men against men of other nationalities, or races. There will be no war, for there will be nothing to quarrel about. There will be the federation of man, governed by a world parliament with a world judiciary and a world executive, all under the divine guidance and inspiration, for, "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

But this readjustment cannot take place without armed conflicts. Destruction must precede construction. For that reason we see in the present struggle an indication that the morning of the Millennial day is near. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments" (Rev. 16:15).23

There were indications that nearly thirty years earlier, while Sjodahl was still in Norway, he entertained strong feelings about what kind of governments were acceptable to Christians. He, as it were, attempted to throw off the "yoke" of monarchy even then. Considering his preoccupation with this subject down through the years, he must have felt deeply about it. From Norway came this report:

A few words about his political view. The 1880s were an unstable period in Norway as far as politics are concerned. The two political parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, fought each other on several questions, which I see no use in mentioning here. Sjodahl declared himself a republican and a liberal, and he could not understand that monarchy was just. The idea, he said, that the legislative, judicial and executive power should belong to the people, and that the civil servants were the people's servants, was reasonable and not against the Christian faith.24

In one of his excellent treatises on the second coming of Christ, he exclaimed that the Latter-day Saints know that Christ's return is a literal event that will take place in the future:

The Latter-day Saints know, through the word of revelation received in this dispensation, that the Lord will reveal himself

23 I bid., 1914, pp. 715-716.

"from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years" (Doc. and Cov. 29:11). They know that he will come upon the earth in judgment," and that His people shall be redeemed and reign with Him on earth" (Doc. and Cov. 43:29). They know, furthermore, that the Prophet Joseph Smith was raised up as a herald to proclaim the second coming of our Lord, just as John the Baptist was sent to announce His first advent, and that the Church was again established as a necessary preparation for, and a beginning of, the Millennium.

There is in the Millennial Star, Vol. XXI., pp. 581-6 an article by President Charles W. Penrose, on this important subject, from which we quote the following as of peculiar interest at this time:

"Through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, as revealed through Joseph Smith--namely, faith, repentance, baptism for remission of sins, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, etc., many among all nations will be led to forsake the traditions of their fathers and become numbered with the people of God. These will gather to one place to prepare themselves for the appearance of the Savior, by learning through his inspired servants the things which are pleasing to Him, and purifying themselves from all things which he hates. They will build unto him a holy Temple. Of necessity some form of government must be set up among them, as they will exist in a national as well as an ecclesiastical capacity. This government will be a theocracy, or, in other words, the kingdom of God. The laws, ordinances, regulations, etc., will be under the direction of God's Priesthood, and the people will progress in arts, sciences, and everything that will produce happiness, promote union, and establish them in strength, righteousness, and everlasting peace.

"On the other hand, through the rejection of this gospel, which 'shall be preached to all the world as a witness' of the coming of Christ, the world will increase in confusion, doubt, and horrible strife. As the upright in heart, the meek of the earth, withdraw from their midst, so will the spirit of God also be withdrawn from them. The darkness upon their minds in relation to eternal things will become blacker, nations will engage in frightful and bloody warfare, the crimes which are now becoming so frequent will be of continual occurrence, the ties that bind together families and kindred will be disregarded and violated, the passions of human nature will be put to the vilest uses, the very elements around will seem to be affected by the national and social convulsions that will agitate the world, and storms earthquakes, and apalling disasters by sea and land, will cause terror and dismay among the people; new diseases will silently eat their ghastly way through the ranks of the wicked; the earth, soaked with gore and defiled with the filthiness of her inhabitants, will begin to withhold her fruits in their season; the waves of the sea will heave themselves beyond their bounds, and all things will be in commotion; and in the midst of all these calamities, the master-minds among nations will be taken away, and fear, will take hold of the hearts of all men.

"The Jews, still in unbelief that Jesus was the Christ, will separate themselves from among the Gentiles and gather to their fatherland. Events will be so controlled by the God of Israel, that they shall possess the land again and build the Temple in its former
place; they will increase and multiply in numbers and in riches, and practice the rites of the Mosaic law, looking for the coming of the Messiah to reign over them as king. The bankrupt nations, envying the wealth of the sons of Judah, will seek a pretext to make war upon them, and will invade the 'holy land' to 'take a prey and a spoil.'

"We may consider the inhabitants of the earth at the time immediately preceding the coming of Christ, under three general divisions:

"First, the saints of God gathered to one place on the western continent, called Zion, busily preparing for His appearance in their midst as their Redeemer, who has shed His blood for their salvation, now coming to reign over them and to reward them for their labors in establishing His government:

"Second, the Jews gathered to Jerusalem and also expecting the Messiah, but not believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, and being in danger of destruction from their Gentile enemies:

"Third, the corrupt nations and kingdoms of men, who, rejecting the light of the gospel, are unprepared for the Lord's advent and are almost ripe for destruction.

"Among the first mentioned of these three classes of men, the Lord will make His appearance first; and that appearance will be unknown to the rest of mankind. He will come to the Temple prepared for him, and his faithful people will behold His face, hear His voice, and gaze upon His glory. From His own lips they will receive further instructions for the development and beautifying of Zion and the extension and sure stability of His kingdom.

"His next appearance will be among the distressed and nearly vanquished sons of Judah. At the crisis of their fate, when the hostile troops of several nations are ravaging the city and all the horrors of war are overwhelming the people of Jerusalem, He will set His feet upon the Mount of Olives, which will cleave and part asunder at His touch. Attended by a host from heaven, He will overthrow and destroy the combined armies of the Gentiles, and appear to the worshiping Jews as the mighty Deliverer and Conqueror so long expected by their race; and while love, gratitude, awe, and admiration swell their bosoms, the Deliverer will show them the tokens of His crucifixion and disclose Himself as Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had reviled and whom their fathers put to death. Then will unbelief depart from their souls and 'the blindness in part which has happened unto Israel' be removed. 'A fountain for sin and uncleanness shall be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,' and 'a nation will be born' unto God 'in a day.' They will be baptized for the remission of their sins, and will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the government of God as established in Zion will be set up among them, no more to be thrown down forever.

"The great and crowning advent of the Lord will be subsequent to these two appearances; but who can describe it in the language of mortals? The tongue of man falters, and the pen drops from the hand of the writer, as the mind is rapt in contemplation of the sublime and awful majesty of His coming to take vengeance on the ungodly, and to reign as King of the whole earth.

"He comes! The earth shakes, and the tall mountains tremble;
the mighty deep roles back to the north as in fear, and the rent skies
glow like molten brass. He comes! The dead saints burst forth from
their tombs, and 'those who are alive and remain' are 'caught up'
with them to meet Him. The ungodly rush to hide themselves from His
presence, and call upon the quivering rocks to cover them. He comes!
with all the hosts of the righteous glorified. The breath of His
lips strikes death to the wicked. His glory is a consuming fire.
The proud and rebellious are as stubble; they are burned and 'left
neither root nor branch.' He sweeps the earth 'as with a besom of
destruction.' He deluges the earth with the fiery floods of His
wrath, and the filthiness and abominations of the world are consumed.
Satan and his dark hosts are taken and bound—the prince of the power
of the air has lost his dominion, for He whose right it is to reign
has come, and 'the kingdoms of this world have become the kindgoms
of our Lord and of his Christ.'

Oh, how Sjodahl had waited for that Millennial day, and thus, in
the horrors of the great war raging all around him, he saw the fulfill-
ment of prophecy. As he read the inspired words of the great apostle
Charles W. Penrose, he felt that the fulfillment was imminent. This is
how he concluded the above editorial:

The Lord is at hand! This is our message to the world today.
To the sufferers of the tribulations that have fallen upon the world,
we say, be of good cheer, for the day of deliverance is at hand. To
the sleepy and indifferent we say, wake up, for the midnight cry will
soon be heard. To the rebellious we say, fear and tremble, for the
hour of the coming of the King is near. Let us not lose a moment in
sensual pleasure, in vain ambition for worldly power, honor, and
wealth, or in strife and contention over trifles. The Lord is at
hand; and even now through the scenes of confusion presented to our
view in the world, we can discern the signs of His coming, and above
the roar of cannon and the groans of dying; above the clash of arms
and the confused din of battlefields we can hear the cry, "Behold
the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

In November 1914, Sjodahl observed that Turkey's entering into
the war was a fulfillment of prophecy; he stated that as long as that
nation ruled in the Holy Land, as well as in large parts of Europe, the
work of the Lord could not continue, and the Jews could not be gathered
back to Palestine. He predicted that Turkey, by entering the war, would

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lose her influence and would no longer be a hindrance to the fulfillment of ancient prophecies. 27

He stated that another of the signs of the times was the notable changes in the world's climate; such as changes in the temperature and in available moisture. The earth has been ravaged by wars and other man made destructions, but as men will live in peace they will find the resources to restore the waste places in the earth. One of the great examples of how this can take place was to watch what had been accomplished in Utah since the arrival of the Mormons. 28

Fourth, he regularly wrote about the problems of the war. As the homes of the Latter-day Saints in England began to feel, with increasing frequency, the loss of loved ones at the fronts; he appropriately wrote about life after death. He was able to take much of the mystery out of death and about the world of spirits by quoting Brigham Young:

"We have a short period of duration allotted to us, and we call it time. We exist here, we have life within us; let that life be taken away and the lungs will cease to heave, and the body will become lifeless. Is that life extinct? No, it continues to exist as much as it did when the lungs would heave, when the mortal body was invigorated with air, food, and the elements in which it lived; it has only left the body. The life the animating principles are still in existence, as much as they were yesterday when the body was in good health. Here the inquiry will naturally arise, when our spirits leave our bodies, where do they go to?"

"I will tell you . . . They do not pass out of the organization of this earth on which we live. You read in the Bible that when the spirit leaves the body it goes to God who gave it. . . . Let me render this scripture a little plainer; when the spirits leave the bodies they are in the presence of our Father and God; they are prepared, then, to see, hear, and understand spiritual things. But where is the spirit world? It is incorporated within

27 Ibid., pp. 136-138; also 1914, pp. 744-746.
28 Ibid., 1915, pp. 584-586.
this celestial system. Can you see it with your natural eyes? No. Can you see spirits in this room? No. Suppose the Lord should touch your eyes that you might see, could you then see the spirits? Yes, as plainly as you now see bodies... 29

Fifth, he dealt considerably with the problems of the home, with parent-child relationships, etc.

On New Year's Eve, 1914, Sjodahl had some thoughts about new year's resolutions. It seems that the present generation looks to the past for examples of virtuous living. Sjodahl was not different in this; he, too, stated: "there was a time when fathers gathered their families morning and night for prayers and scripture reading." 30 Wistfully, he desired that same solidarity for the homes of his own generation. The families of the Church were encouraged to pray and study the scriptures together, as nothing would bring love and harmony into the home quicker than such practices. 31

Parents of all generations can learn much from the following instructions regarding parent-child relationships:

Parental authority is delegated from God Himself. The parents are the representatives of God in the family, and they are responsible for the children until these can assume responsibility for themselves. Obedience to parents is, therefore, obedience to God; disobedience is rebellion against the Almighty, from whom parental authority is derived. This is the reason that children are required to honor their parents, and why the Lord Himself has given the commandment prominence in the divine law... 32

God has indeed given to parents great authority, but they must not abuse it. They must rule by the power of love, and not as arbitrary tyrants. The apostle Paul cautions parents against the improper use of their authority, when he says: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To provoke children to wrath is to expose them to temptation to disobedience. Parental authority is conferred upon those who hold it for the good of the children, and for no other purpose. It is given them in order that they may take care of their children... even if the children go astray it is the

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29 Ibid., 1914, p. 794. 30 Ibid., p. 840. 31 Ibid.
duty of the parent to seek them out and offer them a helping hand, just as the Savior went for th to save that which was lost. In this respect some parents fail. They are tyrants and not parents . . . .

We have heard of other parents who have turned against their children because these have joined a church not approved by them. Our Lord predicted that this would be the case, for He said, "Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends" (Luke 21:16). But, what an awful responsibility parents take when they, in virtue of their parental authority, place stumbling blocks in the way of their children whose desire it is to serve the Lord and worship Him!32

Sixth, Sjodahl did a considerable amount of writing regarding the Book of Mormon. At the time of his death, it was said of him: "As a student of the Book of Mormon he had few equals and probably no superiors."33 Not until this period, while he was with the Millennial Star, do we get much of an indication of serious Book of Mormon studies.

During the years in Liverpool, we see a number of articles appearing on the pages of the "Star" dealing with this volume of scripture. In fact, some of these appear to be the foundation for one of his future books, An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon. In these articles, we recognize the typical Sjodahl approach to the Book of Mormon, that of utilizing historical and archeological evidence, as well as evidence from ancient stories and legends to show the plausibility of the Book of Mormon claims. This was fascinating and exciting information to many Latter-day Saints who had been ridiculed for so long because of their belief in the book. Although they themselves knew the book to be the word of God, because God had revealed that to them, that kind of information was hard to pass on to the hecklers who did not understand the workings of God's Spirit. Now they were given concrete,

32Ibid., pp. 712-713.
33Janne M. Sjodahl, manuscript file, Church Historian's Office.
tangible suggestions that they could use in their dealings with such people. One individual stated that as a young person he loved the writings of Sjodahl, that they had introduced him to the Book of Mormon early in life. An introduction that may have been delayed many years without that inspiration was thus provided him.

Two days before Christmas in 1915, Sjodahl recorded a truly beautiful Christmas story in the form of an experience of two Mormon elders:

It was Christmas eve.

A storm raged. The sleet fell with blinding force, as the north wind violently shook his snow-covered wings. Drifts formed wherever a tree, a fence, a house interposed an obstruction. It was seasonable weather, but the evening was one of those on which a cozy home, with a cheerful fire in the grate, fill the human heart with sweet gratitude and happiness.

The home of John Miller, however, was not the abode of happiness on this Christmas eve. To be sure, there was a fire in the grate, but somehow it did not look cheerful. There were things good to eat on the table, but they had been left untouched. Mrs. Miller, a handsome, middle-aged woman, had buried her face in her hands and was sobbing convulsively. Her husband was seated carelessly in an arm-chair, staring into the fire, without, apparently, seeing anything. There was a vacant expression in his eyes. His thoughts stood still. He seemed to be paralyzed. There was on the floor an opened letter, which had fallen from his hands. Once in a while he heaved a deep sigh, as if he were making an effort to throw off a load which rested upon his chest, as a nightmare; but he could do no more than cry out, "O God!" concentrating in that exclamation all the pain he felt, all his despair.

John Miller's oldest boy, Tom, a promising lad of nineteen, had gone to the front. He had felt it his duty to respond to the call of his king and country. His fond parents would not, at first, give their consent. He was too young. There were plenty of others. He would not be needed. The war would soon be over. But Tom would not be persuaded. He was a loving, dutiful son. But it seemed as if an irresistible force impelled him towards the army. He could not shake off that feeling. "Why," he asked himself, "should I see so many friends face danger and death for our empire and for me, without giving them my poor aid?" That was the unanswerable question before which a father's fond devotion, and a mother's all-embracing love had been silenced. And so Tom had enlisted.

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The day of farewell had been sad. But the Millers were God-fearing people, according to their light and understanding; therefore, when the matter had been settled finally, they had gathered in their family circle, and the head of the house had read from the Bible, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Ps. 46:7); "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at they right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (Ps. 91:7), and many other passages. A feeling of indescribable peace and bliss had filled their souls, as they had read such words of comfort. And then they had kneeled down together, and John Miller had prayed, as he never prayed before, for strength to put himself and his loved ones into the hands of Omnipotence, and for that perfect trust that brings rest and peace. "Not my will," he had concluded, "but Thine be done:" to which an earnest, Amen! had come from those who had kneeled beside him. The next day Tom had gone.

There was an empty place in that home. John Miller was more silent than usual. Life did not seem the same to him. The sun did not shine as it used to do. The food did not taste the same. So true is it that even in this world our outward surroundings reflect the conditions of our minds. Mrs. Miller went about her housework with heavy steps, and now and then, when she was reminded of her absent boy—her sweet boy to whom she had given of her own life—reminded by the things he had worn, the books he had read, the photographs he had collected, the trinkets he had been so fond of, a silent tear stole down her cheek.

For some time Tom had written as frequently as circumstances would permit. His letters were cheerful and patriotic. He had avoided subjects the mention of which would have caused undue anxiety and pain. In one letter he said that the boys had become used to the enemy's shells. "They do not worry us any more; we laugh at them; but we duck when we get under rifle fire." In another letter he described an engagement. "The advance," he wrote, "was preceded by a heavy bombardment. When the time came, we rushed rapidly up the hill. The enemy attacked our left with some success, but we held our position. All day and all night the carnage went on. In the morning the enemy charged our position with great fury, but soon our artillery got to work. The unsuspecting attackers were caught in a trap, and were swept away by the hundreds in a terrific storm of explosives. As the shells exploded, huge chunks of soil were thrown into the air, mingled with human bodies, and parts of bodies. It was a ghastly sight. Few of the attacking enemy were left to tell the tale. At nightfall the fighting gradually died down, both sides being exhausted." In other letters he described the daily routine, the hospitals, how the wounded were taken care of etc. He never tired praising the work of the nurses. At one time he wrote, "When many of us were gassed, and nearly done for one of the nurses stood to her guns amid the awful sights and did her best! She carried a wounded friend of mine to the ambulance; she worked like a Trojan; one poor chap actually died in her arms. For weeks she has been going backwards and forwards, day and night, through awful areas of 'gas,' and one time she never closed an eye for thirty-six hours! Her hands were bruised and bleeding. Her name, and where she comes
from? I don't know! We chaps here just call her 'The Angel.'"
Such were his letters.

Then suddenly, no more messages came. And finally, after an
anxious wait, which seemed interminable, the blow fell. Word was
received that Private Tom Miller was no more. He had given his life
for his country.

A comrade, had considerately, furnished some details. They had
spent the night together in the trenches. In the morning a shell
had severed the telephone wires. Without a moment's hesitation Tom
had leaped over the parapet, uncoiling a new wire. "Like a streak
of lightning," to quote from the letter, he had run through a rain
of bullets to the point where the line was broken, and repaired it,
and then gone to another spot where repair was needed. All the time
some of the enemies' rifle fire had been concentrated upon him, and
at last he fell, pierced by six bullets.

Such was the simple story.

It had just reached the parents, and pierced their hearts. It
was sad news--doubly sad at Christmas time, when all the world should
join in the angelic chorus, "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

* * *

In their humble, but comfortable lodge two "Mormon" elders,
Nephi Trueman and Charles Long, had just finished their frugal meal.
In their masculine, awkward way, they were clearing the table, and,
while doing so, were entertaining each other with reminiscences of
their Christmas dinners at their homes in the far West. They could
not help contrasting their present fare of bread and jam with the
feasts prepared by loving hands under the parental roof, which they
could remember as far back as the earliest days of childhood. And
yet, they were thankful for an opportunity to bear their testimony
to their fellowmen.

The few dishes put away, the two made themselves comfortable
by the fire.

Then they talked about their homes. Familiar photographs were
examined with new interest. Letters were re-read for the twentieth
time, perhaps. Confidences were exchanged. They counted the months
and the weeks since they left their respective homes, and the days
that yet remained until they could expect to be released. They ad-
mitted that the time had gone rapidly, and deplored the fact that
they had accomplished so little. They discussed the war and its
effects upon missionary work. They wandered from one subject to
another and, finally, exchanged experiences while tracting. Elder
Trueman was relating this story: Only the other day he had met a
lady who, when offered a tract, abused him and accused him of every
crime in the Decalogue. He listened patiently for some time, and
then insisting on her meeting him in court the following day, either
to prove her accusations, or answer to a charge of libel, whereupon
she calmed down and admitted that she had no proof, but was only
repeating what others had said. She now listened to the elder, and
the outcome was that she invited him to come and meet her husband
and talk to him, which invitation was gladly accepted.

At this stage of the story, Elder Trueman happened to notice
that his companion was occupied with thoughts of his own. "What
is the matter, Charlie," he asked. "I hardly know," was the reply.
"Something prompts me to go visiting." "What, in this weather?"
"That's just it. If it were a fine evening with soft, caressing moonlight, I might mistake the impulse for a whim; but under the circumstances, I am convinced that it is the Spirit of the Lord whispering in my heart."

There was a long silence.

Elder Tureman was the first to speak. "I'll tell you what, Charlie," he said. "There is a revelation which says that, 'if you behold a spirit manifested that you cannot understand ... ye shall ask the Father in the name of Jesus, and if He give not unto you that spirit, then you may know that it is not of God.' Let us put it to the test of prayer."

This was agreed upon, and the two asked their heavenly Father for guidance and light. The prayer was heard. The light came. The last word of the prayer had hardly been uttered when Charlie rose and, with firm determination, said, "I am going."

"If you go, I go," was the reply of his companion.

Comfortably wrapped up they set out together, they knew not where.

Charlie took the lead.

The storm raged. But they were strong young men, not weakened by tobacco, or any kind of stimulants, and they were used to physical exertion. They felt that they were in the service of the Master at that moment, and they did not mind the fury of the elements. They struggled on bravely, each busy with his own thoughts, until, after perhaps an hour's walk. They found themselves in a street they had recently tracted. They had stopped, quite accidentally they thought, at a door from which they had been turned with invectives as bitter as gall. Was that the place to which the Spirit had led them?

They hardly knew what to think. It was a strange experience, and they were, for a moment, undecided what to do.

* * *

John Miller, as stated at the beginning of this story, had sunk into an armchair, before the fire, in utter despair. But the sensation of numbness that had come over him was but a calm before the storm. Presently he rose and paced the floor. And then his pent up feelings burst forth as a mountain torrent over a broken dam. "Is there a God?" he asked. "If so where was He when my poor boy was pierced by the cruel bullets?"

His wife rose, terrified at his words. Gently she put her arms around his neck and tried to calm him. At this moment she was the stronger of the two.

But he was not in a mood to listen. Rudely he pushed her away, and was about to say something, when--

There was a timid knock at the door.

"Hark, dear!" Mrs. Miller said. But nobody went to open.

Nobody moved. Superstitious fear had, perhaps, seized John Miller. Had he not been about to blaspheme? And on Christmas eve? Does not conscience make cowards of us all?

Again the knock came louder and more insistant.

Finally, he went to the door, and there stood the "Mormon" elders, dripping wet.
"You!"

It was the only exclamation John Miller could think of. His astonishment obscured his vocabulary. He well remembered the day when he in a mad rage had driven them away.

"Yes, sir!" Elder Long answered, as calmly as if he had been the servant of the King, "and we would be indebted to you, if you could possibly extend to us for a few moments the hospitality of your fireside. We have a message for you."

"A message?"

"Yes, sir."

"For me?"

"Yes, sir. And for your wife."

John Miller, by an impatient gesture, indicated that he was about to break out as he had done before; but his wife interposed.

"John," she said, "we need somebody to talk to us tonight, if ever. Let them come in, for my sake. Let us listen."

Mr. Miller did not relish the idea; but he was, at heart, a good man, and, like all good men, he yielded to the gentle influence of his wife. He had learned that her intuition frequently was a safer guide than his reason.

Presently the elders were seated by the fire, surrounded by the family. Elder Long related the manner in which the Spirit had guided them to their house that evening, and as he unfolded the remarkable story, the hearts of the listeners melted. The Spirit moved upon the chaos that prevailed in their souls. It became clear that the Lord had sent these two messengers to them, as He sent Peter to Cornelius, Philip to the Ethiopian, or Ananias to Saul, and they were filled with wonder, mingled with joy. They drank in, eagerly, every word the elders spoke.

For the first time in their lives they heard the Bible doctrine about faith, repentance, baptism, the reception of the Holy Ghost, divine authority, the necessity of obedience to the laws of God, and the condition of the departed ones on the other side of the veil. This in particular arrested their attention. They could not hear enough. And as the elders dwelt upon the glorious truth that, through the gospel, husband and wife will belong to each other for ever; that, in the hereafter, they will be reunited with their children, and, with them, progress throughout all eternity, they seemed to behold the heavens opened to their view.

The time passed rapidly. It was midnight when the elders rose to depart. But before they separated John Miller and his wife applied for baptism.

Never before had they had such a joyful Christmas.

Never before had those two faithful elders felt happier in their labor. They agreed that that evening was worth all the time they had spent in the mission field, and every sacrifice made to enable them to go abroad as ambassadors of the kingdom of heaven.

Mrs. Miller, after the elders had left, tenderly embraced her husband, and he closed around her his strong arms.

"John, dear," she said, "I am thinking . . ."

She hesitated.

"Yes, dear?"

"I am thinking that God had to take him from us, in order to
make us accept the gospel."

"I am sure of it," John answered. "I have seen the Shepherd, when he wants the sheep to come into a new enclosure, take lambs and put them there first. Then the sheep follow. The Good Shepherd has taken one of our lambs, to make us willing to follow Him."

And before they retired, they read together the matchless story of the birth of the Redeemer.

Then Miller, his heart too full for silence, said to his wife, "What a fool I have been! I have refused to receive the message of the Master. I have abused His messengers and treated them with contempt. I have listened to His enemies. I have turned away from the voice of the Shepherd and followed, as if fascinated, the howl of wolves. But the Lord has found me at last!"

And thus Miller and his wife celebrated their Christmas.

The star of Bethlehem shone brilliantly upon them, and in its light they sang, . . . 35

The above story was quoted at length because of the insight it gives into Sjodahl's feelings. This man almost never wrote about himself, about his ambitions, his feelings, his fears, and joys. It was commonly expressed that Swedish people in their reserved and exact manners must have ice in their veins. This, in a way, describes the distant manners of Sjodahl. A small entry in his journal, stating that Dominicus, the son who died at sea in 1886, appeared to him in a dream, 36 was about all that he ever wrote about either of his wives or any of his children.

The setting of John Miller's Christmas was surely not in England; it sounded like Scandinavia or possibly Utah. How familiar he had been with the emotion of losing loved ones in death! His son never grew up--Tom Miller was the kind of son he would have wanted. Then came the message: through prayer I have gained strength to accept my lot in life. As the elders were talking in their apartment, his gratitude for his missionary experiences comes through. Somehow, those sweet feelings

36 Janne M. Sjodahl, private journal, October 4, 1920, LDS Church Historian's Office.
were balm on his wounds. In the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Miller, he expressed the longing for the wife and home that he never again in this life was able to satisfy. Finally, by putting the words in Miller's mouth, he exclaimed, "What a fool I have been! But the Lord has found me at last!" 37

Intermingled throughout all this was a steady stream of short articles dealing with every imaginable subject, such as: "Do Plants Think?", "Evolution," "Chronologies of the War," "Use of Music in the Russian Army," "Brigham Young's Advice to Soldiers," "A Zeppelin Attack on London," etc.

In 1916 we see a new innovation at the "Star." A conference report, about the general conferences held in Utah, with excerpts from the speakers, was given. This became a regular feature of the magazine from this time forth. 38

At this time we also note a decline in Sjodahl's entries in the Millennial Star. As the war proceeded, the demand for manpower in the armed forces as well as in defense industries steadily increased, leaving Sjodahl many extra duties to perform. 39 As this developed, he began to turn some of the editorial space over to articles by General Authorities. 40 He seemed to be satisfied to handle the small items, the current events, etc., leaving the doctrinal essays to others.

Doctrine and Covenants Commentary

In May or June of 1916, Sjodahl approached President Hyrum M.

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38 Ibid., 1916, p. 321.
39 Ibid., 1919, p. 291.
40 Ibid., 1917, p. 529.
Smith about the feasibility of writing a commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants. 41

President Smith gave his permission, and later the two men agreed to work on the project together. This was their agreement:

When I first spoke to President Hyrum M. Smith about writing the book, in June 1916, I made the proposition that if he thought enough of it to revise it and give his name to it, and then to see to the business management of it, I would do the writing and see the work to the press. I further proposed that whatever profit might accrue from it should be divided into three parts--one for the Church, one for him, and one for me.42

Between May and September 1, 1916, Sjodahl had written "666 folios," which were brought to Salt Lake City by Hyrum Smith who at that time was returning home. Then on January 8, 1917, Sjodahl received a cable from Smith saying that the manuscript had been approved by the Church. Later President George F. Richards, new mission president, received a cable from President Joseph F. Smith, followed by a letter with instructions concerning the publication.43

In the preface to this book, Hyrum M. Smith outlines the importance of the Doctrine and Covenants to the Latter-day Saints and expresses hope that this new work will be found useful:

While engaged in studying the Standard Works of the Church, I have been deeply impressed with the thought--which I believe to be the fact also--that the Revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants are pre-eminently the Scriptures of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. Every phrase, sentence, and paragraph is so instructive and enlightening; so pregnant with wisdom and purpose, and throws such a flood of light upon the gospel, as to bear convincing witness of their Divine Source, and proclaim them to be the very Word of God. . . .

In view of this, and the fact that the Lord has commanded His

41 Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Ida B. Smith, February 16, 1918, Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
42 Ibid. 43 Millennial Star (Liverpool, England), 1919, p. 290.
people to, "Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled," it has been felt that the Priesthood, and members of the Church, in all departments, and in every place, should diligently study the Doctrine and Covenants; . . .

To this end the historical and explanatory notes relating to the coming forth, context, and import of each of these Revelations have been prepared.\(^4^4\)

As the first edition was published in Liverpool in 1919, Hyrum M. Smith was noted as the sole author of the work. The only mention of J. M. Sjodahl was in the following paragraph of the preface:

To Elder J. M. Sjodahl, our fellow-laborer and companion in the service, is chief credit due, for his faithful and untiring efforts in searching out the references from the sermons of the Presidents, Apostles, and leading Elders of the Church, as well as from historical and other sources available, and for his other valuable labors in connection with this work.\(^4^5\)

The death of Hyrum M. Smith on January 23, 1918,\(^4^6\) caused some confusion as to the ownership of the book. However, this information may shed some light on that subject:

Before President Smith left Liverpool, he expressed the hope that the Church might be willing to acquire the entire financial interest, and I said: I, too, hoped that the work would be considered important enough for the Church to do that. It was, therefore, his intention to offer the work to the Church, as soon as in his judgment, the time for doing so should come.

In my letters to President Hyrum M. Smith, dated, May 29th and June 9th 1917, respectively, which you may perhaps find in his papers, I took the liberty of asking him to lay the matter before the First Presidency as soon as convenient and to explain the basis on which a calculation as to the value of a third interest might be made. I put it something like this: There are at least 80,000 families in the Church, and it should be possible by reasonably good business management to sell a copy to each of 25,000 of these families, in a few years. But not to make the figure too high, say 15,000 copies. The net profit on each copy ought to be $1.00. This

\(^4^4\)Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Doctrine and Covenants Commentary (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950), pp. v-vi.

\(^4^5\)Ibid., p. vii.

divided into three parts would give $5,000 to each, and the entire profit on every copy sold above the 15,000 copies to the Church, in addition to the $5,000 of the first sale. In my letter of the 9th of June 1917, I said, however, that I would be willing, to take as my share, a third of a profit on 10,000 copies, or, in fact, anything the Brethren would consider right, and that offer still holds good, but I am fully convinced that, even from a financial point of view, the Church would be benefited by taking over this book entirely, on a basis of $15,000, for it is one that will gradually find its way into the homes of the Saints and friends, and it will be found to be an indispensable companion to our missionaries.

I have been prompted to write this to you, because I do not know what, or how much of the financial end of this undertaking your dear husband may have explained to you, and the thought struck me that if now, when he has been called away, this addition to your financial resources is not entirely unwelcome, you might feel like speaking to President Joseph F. Smith about it and see what the Church might be willing to do in way of securing the entire ownership of the work. It would be a great help to me and perhaps it would be of some help to you in securing an education for the children. Pardon me for writing this, but I have been through your experience, and I know something of the loss death brings to a home.47

To further complicate Sjodahl's attempts to untangle the financial arrangements associated with the publishing of the book, Sister Ida B. Smith, to whom he had been writing, died on September 24, 1918, after having given birth to a son.48 At this turn of events, he addressed himself to the President of the Church as follows:

In my previous letter to you, I enclosed one to the First Presidency, in which I offered my third interest in the work to the Church. I trust this matter has been taken up, and that I may have reply by return of mail, if possible. It is now almost a year since I first wrote about it. In my letter to you I took the liberty of giving some figures which appear reasonable to me. But at the same time, I left the matter entirely with the First Presidency and shall be perfectly satisfied with what they decide on. Only I would be thankful for the first payment before Christmas if possible.49

47 Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Ida B. Smith, loc. cit.

48 Jensen, op. cit., p. 780.

49 Janne M. Sjodahl, letter to Joseph F. Smith, November 11, 1918, Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah
Eight days after Sjodahl had penned the above letter, and before it ever arrived in Salt Lake City, President Joseph F. Smith passed away.\(^50\) It seems that Providence was trying Sjodahl's patience! In a ten month period, the three key individuals with whom he had been dealing regarding the publishing of his book had died.

As word of the President's death arrived in England, Sjodahl wrote two letters to Joseph Fielding Smith trying to solve the issues of finances and ownership of his book.\(^51\) However, no action was taken until after Sjodahl's return to Utah. The _Deseret News_ indicates that Sjodahl is the owner of the book:

The volume entitled, "A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants," just now being circulated in this country, is something new in "Mormon" literature. It was compiled in England by the late Elder Hyrum M. Smith, one of the Twelve Apostles, while presiding over the European mission, and Elder J. M. Sjodahl, then assistant editor of the Millennial Star, who is the present owner of the book. It contains a complete analysis of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, with historical data that relate the circumstances under which they were given, and explanatory comments on each section and paragraph, which are as interesting as they are illuminating, and to students of that wonderful epitome of the word of God in the latter days the Commentary is invaluable. The book is worthy of the closest perusal of experienced readers and propounders of the sacred Scriptures, as well as by those who are not familiar with the text they contain. The volume evinces patient and scholarly research and remarkable diligence, showing long and persistent literary labor and great ability. It may be confidently recommended to the priesthood and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to all persons interested in divine revelation setting forth saving and eternal truth.\(^52\)

\(^{50}\) Jensen, op. cit., p.

\(^{51}\) Janne M. Sjodahl, letters to Joseph Fielding Smith, November 23, 1918, and December 18, 1918, Sjodahl's letter file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

\(^{52}\) _Deseret News_ (Salt Lake City), March 20, 1920.
In later editions, Smith and Sjodahl are listed as co-authors:

While laboring in the European Missions, Elder Hyrum M. Smith, of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and Elder Janne M. Sjodahl, were impressed very fervently with the desire to prepare a commentary dealing with the revelations given by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In their odd moments, when not otherwise engaged, during the years 1913-1916, these brethren carried on a careful research and study and prepared this volume which has met with popular favor.

For a number of years the commentary has been out of circulation, and because of the increasing demand for it, the First Presidency instructed the Publication Committee to take the matter in hand and revise the volume ready for a re-printing. This the committee has done and after many months of labor has fulfilled the assignment given.

Since the first publication many world-wide events of the greatest importance have occurred many of which have a bearing of the fulfillment of the prophecies found in the Doctrine and Covenants; these have been noted. The Doctrine and Covenants is a sacred volume of Scripture, and in the revision and preparation of this book, the members of the committee have felt their weakness in commenting on these sacred commandments and revelations coming from the Lord.

THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Joseph Fielding Smith
Harold B. Lee 53
Marrion G. Romney

The information in the Millennial Star and in Sjodahl's letters during this period, also the fact that Sjodahl did not arrive in England until September 22, 1914, all point to the fact that the suggestion that they worked on the book jointly between the years 1913-1916 must be incorrect. It should also be noted that the most recent edition of the book is still very much the same as the original 1919 edition. The changes and revisions have been very minor.

This commentary today is owned and published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a distinction that has been attained by few other works. James E. Talmage's books Jesus the Christ and the

53 Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, op. cit., p. viii.
Articles of Faith are examples of other books with this distinction.

The fact that the book was revised in conformance with the First Presidency and the names of the Publication Committee gives dignity and authority to the work.

One who views Sjodahl's handwritten manuscript of the entire commentary can appreciate the endless hours that went into preparation of this book. 54

This book was the first attempt by anyone to make a commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants. Still today, it is the only work of its kind in the Church. Roy Doxey's four volume work, The Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants, is the only one even similar; and it, of course, draws exclusively from the comments of the General Authorities, while Sjodahl's commentary draws on a great variety of sources.

54 Janne M. Sjodahl, manuscript file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Chapter 8

ANOTHER TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

When Sjodahl returned home in the spring of 1919, he faced new challenges and difficulties. He was sixty-six years old, a widower whose children were married and gone from home. The possibilities of a lonely retirement undoubtedly stared him in the face; however, Heber J. Grant, the new President of the Church, came to the rescue as he requested that Sjodahl assist Elder Edward Anderson, the editor of the Improvement Era. This offer was gratefully accepted, and it helped to open up another very productive twenty year period of his life.

During the next few years, Sjodahl wrote fifty-four articles for the Improvement Era, a great many of them dealing with evidences for the Book of Mormon; this interest seems to have been awakened in England. Evidence that he delved deeper into such studies after he returned to Salt Lake City is found on the pages of the "Era." Some of his subjects were: "America--Good Old Indian Word;" "America--Is It a Book of Mormon Name?"; "H vitra-Manna-Land and Lamoni;" "Worship Among the Hopi Indians;" "Tut-Ankh-Amen and Sun Worship;" "Archeology and the Book of Mormon," and many more.

During 1920 and 1921, he left some very brief entries in his journal at the Church Historian's Office. These entries indicate that

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he spent many long hours doing special assignments for the General Authorities.\(^2\)

On May 10, 1920, Sjodahl met with George F. Richards and James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve to discuss some work on a new edition of the Book of Mormon. He was then given the assignment to revise the footnotes.\(^3\) This assignment was completed and report given to Elder George F. Richards on June 11, 1920.\(^4\) Simultaneously with the work on the footnotes, he was working on a revision of the Danish edition of The Reign of Antichrist.\(^5\) On July 21, 1920, he was appointed to assist Melvin J. Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve, and William A. Lund, assistant Church Historian, in comparing a recent edition of the Book of Mormon with the plate edition of 1879. This assignment was completed on August 30, 1920.\(^6\) On October 2, 1920, the new edition was ready for proof reading, which was done by William A. Lund and Sjodahl during October. In addition to this, Sjodahl was also revising the index to the new edition.\(^7\) By the end of November, the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon was ready for the press. The plates for this edition are still being used for the current printings of the Book of Mormon.

It is fascinating to contemplate Janne Sjodahl's capacity for work. The above assignments were in a way side lines! In 1919, he had accepted the editor's chair at the Associated Newspapers in Salt Lake

\(^2\)Janne M. Sjodahl, private journal in Church Historian's Office, hereinafter cited as Journal.  
\(^3\)Journal, May 19, 1920.  
\(^4\)Ibid., June 11, 1920.  
\(^5\)Ibid., July 1, 1920.  
\(^6\)Ibid., July 21 and August 30, 1920.  
\(^7\)Ibid., October 2 and November 10, 1920.
City. These were the four foreign language papers published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Bikuben, Utah-Posten, Salt Lake City Beobachter, and De Utah Nederlander. He stayed with the newspapers until they stopped publication on October 1, 1935. At this time, Sjodahl was eighty-one years old. From the last issue we read:

I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to bear humble testimony of the truth, to thousands in many parts of the world through the pages of these newspapers.

I have been privileged to defend the Church and its leaders whenever necessary; to promote unity and loyalty among the Saints.

... And now if I may leave a word for my young friends: Stand fast in the Gospel!

In 1921, he was also employed at the Church Historian's Office. His journal records the incident as follows:

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith met me on the stairs in the Church Office building and notified me that I would have the opportunity of joining the force engaged in the Historian's Office, October 1st. He did not explain my new duties, but he gave me to understand that I might continue to assist Edward H. Anderson of the "Era." It is remarkable that a man who wrote so prolifically as Sjodahl left his daily journal at the Historian's Office a virtual blank. However, that was true of his entire life; most of the information gathered about him came from other sources than himself. What a pity that he did not keep a daily journal like so many of his contemporaries. The few quotations on the previous pages constitute the sum total of his journal entries.

During 1923 and 1924, Sjodahl was asked to assist Elder James

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8 Janne M. Sjodahl, biography folder, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

9 Utah-Posten (Salt Lake City), October 1, 1935.

10 Journal, September 24, 1921.
E. Talmage in his revision of the *Articles of Faith*. In the preface, we read:

The author expresses appreciation of the efficient assistance of several associates in checking references, verifying citations, and in other related details. He gratefully acknowledges valuable cooperation throughout the revision of the book by Elder J. M. Sjodahl, of the Church Historian's Office.¹¹

In reading Sjodahl's manuscript from this revision, we see that he was doing research basically on people, organizations, creeds, historical events, etc. Elder Talmage apparently used this information as background material for his revision.¹²

*An Introduction to the Study of The Book of Mormon*

Following the revision of the Articles of Faith in 1924, Sjodahl began gathering articles and information to be used in a proposed book on the Book of Mormon. We read:

This little volume owes its existence chiefly to the desire of the author to add his testimony, at this time, to that of numerous others, bearing the holy Priesthood, of the truths revealed in the Book of Mormon for the salvation of man.

But the responsibility is not entirely the Author's. Some of the contents of the book has appeared in the Improvement Era and other Church publications during the last ten years, and friends have been good enough to say, repeatedly, that they would be glad to have those contributions in some form more convenient for reference. Acting on their suggestion, I have collected some papers previously published and others that now appear for the first time, and respectfully submit them in this form to the public. In doing so, it is my sincere prayer that the testimony here offered may be of benefit to the reader, and especially to honest seekers after truth.¹³

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¹² Janne M. Sjodahl, manuscript file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

In 1927, this book was published and, according to Dr. Robert J. Matthews, it was a widely read volume in the 1930's. 14

I have earlier stated that the Sjodahl approach to the Book of Mormon was peculiar. His style and approach interested the young and those who had not done much personal reading in the Book of Mormon. 15 Writing almost exclusively in the area of evidence for the book, he rarely entered into doctrinal interpretations.

He was widely read in ancient history and archeology. His manuscript file in the Church Historian's Office contains hundreds of items and articles dealing with such matters. There are letters from such renowned gospel scholars as James E. Talmage, asking Sjodahl for information regarding some facet of the Book of Mormon. 16

It is interesting to examine some of his chapters to get a better insight into his work. In his first chapter, we immediately sense a peculiarity. This chapter deals with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, but only the first five lines are written in a way that might be expected in such a chapter:

On September 22, 1827, the original plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated were delivered to Joseph Smith, by the Angel Moroni, the resurrected being whom God had given charge of that marvelous literary production. 17

There was nothing there about Joseph Smith's visions, the restoration of the gospel, etc. Then follows description of the gold plates,


15 Ibid.

16 Janne M. Sjodahl, manuscript file, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah

the breastplate, the Urim and Thummim, the hill Cumorah, the hill Ramah, etc. Oliver Cowdery was quoted on Cumorah:

By turning to the 529th and 530th pages of the Book of Mormon, you will read Mormon's account of the last great struggle of his people, as they were encamped round this hill Cumorah. In this valley fell the remaining strength and pride of a once powerful people, the Nephites—once so highly favored of the Lord, but at that time in darkness, doomed to suffer extermination by the hand of their barbarious and uncivilized brethren. From the top of this hill, Mormon with a few others, after the battle, gazed with horror upon the mangled remains of those who, the day before, were filled with anxiety, hope, and doubt. A few had fled south, who were hunted down by the victorious party, and all who would not deny the Savior and his religion, were put to death. Mormon, himself, according to the record of his son Moroni, was also slain.

As evidence of the fierce battles fought around the hill, anciently, he quoted Susa Young Gates:

In 1901, Elder Claude Taylor and myself visited the Hill Cumorah and had an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Samson who then owned the Hill and the farm adjoining. Mr. Samson was the brother of Admiral Samson, but he was very prejudiced against the Mormon people. However, we spent some time talking with him.

Outside the farm house Elder Taylor and myself noted several bushel baskets filled with arrowheads, and I asked Mrs. Samson what they were. She said they had just begun to plow up the hill Cumorah and around the hill, to plant some crops, and they turned up these arrowheads by the basket full. I asked her what she did with them. She replied that she sold them to tourists who passed by. I inquired the price of them, and she replied twenty-five cents. I purchased two and when I returned home I gave one to President Joseph F. Smith. The other one I have kept and it is still in my possession.

This seems good evidence of the wars which have been fought around this historical hill.

Sjodahl then covered in great detail the Martin Harris-Professor Anthon incident and brought in ideas and information not usually considered. He then discussed Egyptian and other ancient languages, their peculiarities, etc. All together, it was an interesting beginning to a fascinating book.

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18 Ibid., pp. 6-7.  
19 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
In chapter nine, "Notes on Striking Passages in the Book of Mormon," Sjodahl was at his best. May I give a couple of examples:

And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire. --Mosiah 17:20.

Abinadi was consigned to the flames for his testimony of Jesus, among the people of Lehi-Nephi, under the reign of the wicked King Noah. King Noah, himself, suffered a similar fate, when he fell into the hands of his enemies. (Mos. 19:20.) Later on many of the Lamanites were put to death by fire. (25:5.) Some of the disciples of our Lord were cast into furnaces of fire, although they were miraculously rescued, as were the three Hebrew children in Babylon. (4 Ne. 32.) From all of which it appears that the people in this western world, at the time covered by the Book of Mormon history, were in the habit of consigning captives to the flames.

Burning of prisoners were extensively practiced by natives at the time of the arrival in this country by the Spaniards. The Apaches used to put prisoners to death by fire. In Tezcuco, the punishment for certain unnatural crimes was torture and burning at the stake. At the festival in honor of Xiuhtecutli, the god of fire, the people raised a "May pole," elaborately decorated. At the appointed time, the officiating priests hurled a number of prisoners, stripped of clothing and bound hand and foot, upon a great heap of smoldering coals, where they suffered untold agony, until raked out and slaughtered on the altar, whereupon the people enjoyed themselves singing and dancing around the pole. At the termination of an age--a cycle of 52 years was so called--the sacred fires were permitted to go out, and a new fire was kindled by friction of sticks placed on the wounded breast of a captive provided for that purpose. The flame was soon communicated to a funeral pyre on which the victim was consumed. Is there no historical connection between the flames of persecution of which we read in the Book of Mormon and the cruelties practiced, sometimes in behalf of "justice" and sometimes as religion, by the later occupants of American soil?

That the Jews in Palestine burned human victims in honor of Moloch is clear from Isaiah 30:33 and Exek. 20-26, and other passages.20

Another:

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. --3 Ne. 11:10.

The portion of the Book of Mormon from which this text is taken contains the account of the appearance of the resurrected Savior in the land of Bountiful, and his teachings and instructions. See 3 Nephi 11-26.

Is there, outside the Book of Mormon, any evidence whatever of.

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20Ibid., pp. 234-235.
the truth of this wonderful story?

Perhaps this question is best answered by a brief statement of what Father Remesel relates in his history. He affirms that when Bishop B. Las Casas came to his bishopric in 1545, he instructed an ecclesiastic in Campeche, whose name was Francisco Hernandez, to visit the Indians and inform them of the principal doctrines of the faith of the Spaniards. Some time afterwards this ecclesiastic informed Las Casas that he had met a chief who had explained the religious beliefs of the Indians to him. The Indians, he said, believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They called the Father, Yezona; the Son, Bahab; and the Holy Spirit, Ec-Ruach. The Son was born of a virgin called, Chiribrias, whose mother was Yxchel. The Son, they said, was crowned with thorns and put to death by being placed on a beam of wood. On the third day he rose, and immediately afterwards the Holy Spirit came and filled the earth with whatsoever it stood in need of. Being questioned about how the Indians had obtained this information, he answered that the lords had instructed their sons, and that these instructions had come down from generation to generation.

I am of course aware of the existing disposition to discredit the early historians, whenever they relate something for which modern research can, as yet, offer no acceptable explanation.

I can understand that the early explorers and missionaries might sometimes have been misled, and that they read into the stories related to them a meaning which was not there. But, after every reasonable allowance for misunderstandings, the fact remains that there must have been some solid, tangible basis for a report like that of Father Hernandez to Las Casas, and many similar accounts.

Whence, then, did the Indians get that basis on which their marvelous tradition rested? Whence came to them the fundamental principles of their religion, so nearly like those proclaimed by our Lord, that many held, as some yet claim, that gospel had been preached here by one of the first Apostles of our Lord?

Is there any satisfactory answer to that question except that given in the Book of Mormon?21

Finally, a look at chapter seventeen, "A Suggested Key to Book of Mormon Geography," in which he elaborated on a number of the theories regarding Book of Mormon geography. Following that introduction, he stated:

In view of the many differing opinions concerning this subject, an endeavor to find the correct one might be thought fruitless. But it should not be, since the divine promise, "Seek, and ye shall find," never fails. But in the search for truth, it often happens that pre-conceived ideas must be given up. We may have to sell all we have

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21 Ibid., pp. 245-247.
in order to obtain one pearl of great price.

In trying to form a consistent theory on Book of Mormon geography, we have as material, in the first place, the statements in the Book, itself. These are the foundation and the substance. Nothing that contradicts any of them can be admitted.

Then we have certain statements concerning the subject, which can be traced back to some of the first leaders of the Church, who were the associates of the Prophet Joseph himself, and these cannot be set aside lightly, even if they are regarded as mere individual opinions; for even an opinion on a Book of Mormon question, expressed by one who, undoubtedly, had it from the Prophet himself, must be of more weight than, for instance, my opinion, if it differs from theirs. This is, I suppose, a self-evident proposition.

I refer now especially to the positive statements by Frederick G. Williams, and Orson Pratt concerning the landing of Lehi south of the Isthmus of Darien, and the just as positive assertion in the Times and Seasons, which was edited by the Prophet Joseph, to the effect that the city of Zarahemla stood in Central America, where also the boundary line between Bountiful and Desolation was drawn. (Times and Seasons, Oct. 1, 1842.) Such statements, it seems to me, cannot consistently be set aside for the sake of any theory.

In the third place, we have now a great amount of archaeological and ethnological material concerning the American Indians, most of whom, if not all, are the descendants of the Jaredites, the Nephites, the Lamanites and the Mulekites. Much of this material is yet only theory, but some of it must be accepted as fact, and our theories concerning the geography of the Book of Mormon must have room for such facts. For truth is truth, wherever found, and, while it is true that the Book of Mormon furnishes the solution of many problems that puzzle archaeologists, it is equally true that archaeology helps us to understand some obscure passages in the Book of Mormon.

If this is admitted, the question arises: Is it possible to form a theory in which all this material can be united?

I believe it is.22

Sjodahl's theory was an interesting one, and it has been included in the appendix of this thesis.

His final chapter "Some of the Fundamental Doctrines of the Book of Mormon" does not really contain any doctrinal expositions, rather it is a list of doctrines and quotations which Sjodahl felt were paramount in the Book of Mormon.

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22Ibid., pp. 418-419.
His Swedish Translation of the
Pearl of Great Price

Nineteen twenty-seven was also the year he translated the Pearl of Great Price into Swedish. This edition was printed in Salt Lake City on the press of the Associated Newspapers, of which Sjodahl was the editor-in-chief. This edition served the Swedish mission for twenty-eight years. His translation was adequate in telling the story, but the whole book gave the feeling of being a rush job. The language was a little stiff and uncomfortable, and it lacked the easy flow of the more recent translations. It had been forty-one years since Sjodahl came to the United States from Sweden and his Swedish seems to have suffered some during that duration. Further, he left out the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham as well as footnotes and index.23

His Swedish Translation of the
Book of Mormon

Together with Hugo D. E. Peterson, he translated the third edition of the Book of Mormon into Swedish in 1934 and 1935.24 Their work seems to be of much better quality than the earlier Pearl of Great Price translation. Still, in comparison with the 1950 edition, one realizes that the language is still rather stiff and difficult in places. In particular, the translation of the words "repent" and "plates" into "ängren" and "taylor," respectively, is awkward; and they were used throughout the entire book. Additionally, the word "ängren" does not

23 Den Kostliga Pärlan (Salt Lake City, Utah: De Associerade Tidningarnas Tryckeri, 1927).

24 Mormons Bok (Stockholm, Sweden: Jesu Kristi Kyrka av Sista Dagars Heliga, 1935).
seem to carry the complete message of the English word "repent." Later translators have used the word "omvänden" in its place. Further, it is interesting to note that the translator of the first Swedish edition (1878) also used the word "omvänden."

This was the last major translation of Sjodahl who was now eighty-one years old. Still far from finished with his life's labor, he came almost daily to his desk in the Church Historian's Office right up to the time of his death.25

The End

During the last four years of his life, Sjodahl was writing a comprehensive Book of Mormon commentary, which at his death was approximately half completed.26

Philip C. Reynolds, Sjodahl's son-in-law used this material, in connection with some materials from George Reynolds, and published, under the names Reynolds and Sjodahl, the seven volume Commentary on the Book of Mormon in 1955. In 1965, Philip C. Reynolds published under the same names the Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price.27

On June 23, 1939, his long life of service came to a peaceful end.28 It is fitting to record here the tributes written in the Deseret News and the Salt Lake Tribune at the time of his passing:


26 Janne M. Sjodahl, biography folder, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

27 Grant Hardy, 929 Fairview Ave., Salt Lake City, Utah, personal interview, July 2, 1970.

28 Deseret News (Salt Lake City, Utah), June 24, 1939.
Friends and associates will gather tomorrow noon in funeral services to pay a well-earned tribute to a great and good man—a man who has devoted many years of a long life in missionary service and literary endeavor in behalf of the Church that he loved.

Janne Mattson Sjodahl, who lived 85 years of full, rich life, will be accorded appropriate tribute for the work he has done. It is likely, however, that only a few who were closely associated with this quiet, unassuming scholar and nobleman, will have a full appreciation of his real accomplishments. His work will live long after him as a monument to his memory. Not only was his pen prolific but his keen, active mind delved far into the doctrines and philosophy of Mormonism and for many years he was a recognized authority on religious subjects. Few men in Church history have been as well acquainted with the Book of Mormon as was Elder Sjodahl.

His achievement extended also into the field of languages. He translated the Church works into other languages as he had profound knowledge of Hebrew, German and the Scandinavian Languages. Unselfishly devoting himself to furthering the work of the Church, Elder Sjodahl spent his years in the search for knowledge and in his endeavor to spread the truth of the Latter-day Gospel both by spoken and the written word.

The analytical mind of this scholar and diligent searcher for the truth will be missed in the Church today as keenly as will his friendly personality. The Deseret News, to which he devoted some years of his life as an editor and contributor, joins with his many friends and associates in the expression of sympathy and condolences to his kindred.

J. M. Sjodahl has enjoyed a full, rich, happy life—a life of service and devotion to high ideals. He goes to a well-earned reward.29

Physically frail but mentally energetic; of serious manner, studious volition and sedentary habit; Janne Mattson Sjodahl lived simply and labored faithfully beyond the eighty-fifth anniversary of his birth. A Native of Sweden, he was educated in Stockholm and London, becoming identified in early manhood with the Scandinavian Baptist Union having headquarters in Trondhjem, Norway.

At the age of 33 he came to the United States and was converted to Mormonism after his arrival in Utah over a half century ago. His ability as a writer, his faculty for research, his skill as a translator brought him instant recognition and a lifetime of labor.

As a writer and an editor he had been connected with the Deseret News, The Improvement Era, the Millennial Star and various foreign language publications once circulated by his Church. He served on various missions to Palestine, Switzerland, England and Sweden. In the latter country he presented a special edition of the Book of Mormon to the King who received the Utah delegation at the royal palace.

Mr. Sjodahl was the author of many ecclesiastical works and a

29 Deseret News (Salt Lake City), June 26, 1939.
prolific writer of pamphlets and special articles relating to the organization of which he was a distinguished member. He devoted his whole time, energy, ability and thought to religious issues and inquiries. Absorbed in meditation almost to a point of asceticism, subjecting his vigor and vitality to constant exertion, he lived many years longer than his acquaintances believed possible for a tireless soul that occupied a frame so fragile.  

30 The Salt Lake Tribune (Salt Lake City), June 25, 1939.
Chapter 9

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Janne Mattson Sjodahl was the son of a sea captain in Karlshamn, Sweden. He was born in 1853 and received a good education in his home town.

As a teenager, he became dissatisfied with the Lutheran religion and went in search of religious truth, finally joining the Baptist Church in Karlshamn.

In 1870, a year following his conversion, he was able to get a scholarship to Betelseminariet, a school for prospective Baptist ministers in Stockholm, Sweden. After having attended for two years he accepted his first assignment, in Eskilstuna. Here he found a difficult situation, the congregation having developed a serious rift due to some differences on some doctrinal concepts. Sjodahl, not yet nineteen, lacked the maturity to handle this situation and by the end of the year moved on to Vastervik, a somewhat less challenging position. Here he was very successful, and the congregation felt a great loss as he decided to leave and go to England to further his studies in 1874.

In England, he studied ancient languages and religion at Spurgeon's College, receiving his degree there in 1876.

In 1876, he was employed by the English Baptists and sent to Norway in order to help strengthen the church there. He rose quickly within the Norwegian Baptist Church, and by 1879 had become the General
Secretary of that organization.

He was married to Ane Marie Johnson in 1879, and they had two children: one son, Dominicus, and one daughter, Nanna. By 1886, he had lost his wife and both children in death. During those years, he was also accused of sexual immorality on a number of occasions. Finally in 1886, he and two women were excommunicated. He, at least, had been charged with adultery.

This was the year when Sjodahl was introduced to Mormonism. He eventually traveled to Utah and was baptized in Manti on October 7, 1886.

After he arrived in Manti, he became the editor of the Manti Sentinel and was also given the assignment to translate the Doctrine and Covenants into the Swedish language. It was soon found that Sjodahl had an exceptional talent for translation, his work being praised as very good. During the period of translation, he fell in love with and married one of his assistants, Christina Christoffersen.

Shortly after his marriage, he was called to go on a mission to Palestine. He served one year in the Holy Land as well as some months in Switzerland superintending the compilation and printing of a German hymnbook.

After his arrival back in Utah, he moved to Salt Lake City and accepted employment at the Deseret News. Here he rose to the very top, becoming the editor-in-chief in 1906.

In 1897, he was chosen to represent the Swedes and the Norwegians in Utah at the court of King Oscar II of Sweden and Norway. He presented the king with a beautifully bound Book of Mormon, enclosed in a chest made of Utah onyx.
Sjodahl's wife died in 1910, leaving him a widower for the second time.

For the four years following her passing, he remained at the Deseret News. During these difficult and frustrating years, he became involved in some questionable activities that finally led to his resignation from the editorship of the Deseret News. It seemed as if change was the very thing that he needed, since his resignation, rather than being an unfortunate turn of events, turned out to be a great blessing. He was assigned to be the editor of the Millennial Star in Liverpool, England. The new job, the new country and different people, plus a great amount of work was the medicine that he needed. The Lord in His wisdom had provided a situation that saved the man, as it were. Sjodahl spent four and a half years in England, 1914-1919, the very years when the first World War raged across Europe. During this entire period, his pace never slackened. He wrote feverishly for the "Star" as well as performed a great amount of work at the presses. In addition to this, he was called to travel to conferences with the mission leaders.

In 1916, he commenced his work on the Doctrine and Covenants Commentary, the book that was destined to keep his name in front of future generations of Latter-day Saints. This period of his life was happy and constructive. His spirit seems to have soared, and he accomplished some of his most inspired writings during these years. This period in England seems to have been a turning point in his life, for he seemed to have mastered himself and was able to head his life in the proper direction.

As he returned home in 1919, he was sixty-six years old, and he probably never dreamed that he would continue his service to the Church
for another twenty years. As the last twenty years are surveyed, one is impressed with the fact that the pace he had maintained in England never really slowed down until that June day in 1939, when he passed on to the great beyond.

These years contained a great variety of assignments, many of them going on simultaneously. Some of his more permanent assignments were editor of the Associated Newspapers, an employee of the Church Historian's Office, an assistant to Edward Anderson, the editor of the Improvement Era. In addition to that, he translated the Pearl of Great Price and the Book of Mormon into Swedish and assisted in the preparation of the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon, the footnotes and the index being products of his pen. He also wrote fifty-four articles for the Improvement Era, published the book Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon, and was about half done with a comprehensive commentary on the Book of Mormon when he died in 1939, eighty-five years old.

Conclusions

In evaluating Janne M. Sjodahl's life and contributions, one stands before the amazing record of sixty-seven years of labor. Sjodahl was actively engaged in the work of bringing joy and happiness to his fellowmen through the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for that many years!

He studied, thought, and meditated, finally producing what seemed a never ending flow of articles and information designed to strengthen the faith and edify the souls of his fellowmen.

Some have questioned his integrity, suggesting that he was not everything he seemed to be. Comments are still heard about his interest
in women, and the record seems to justify the suspicion. However, it is clear that these problems were at least understandable, as one considers the weaknesses of human flesh. His life was filled with frustrations as he seemed unable to retain the loving companionship he needed. He was married twice, but both of his wives died young, leaving him to face many years of loneliness. Problems occurred during the periods of his life when he had just experienced the loss of his wives.

In the opinion of this writer, Sjodahl may have stumbled on occasions; but his life indicates that he struggled and fought against his weaknesses, and that he came out victorious. The time spent in England during the Great War is a good example of this. The principle of repentance is a divine gift from God; certainly no one can analyze Sjodahl's contributions and remain hostile. Great credit is due to the man who fought under the banner of Christ and His Church for more than fifty years. Each time he was wounded, as it were, he returned to the battle with renewed vigor.
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APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST SWEDISH EDITION

OF THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST SWEDISH EDITION
OF THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

Foretal Till Svenska Upplagan. (Godkandt: Wilford Woodruff.)

Ett halft sekel har snart på tidens snabba strömfåra bortförts emot evighetens ocean, sedan den röst, hvarigenom dessa uppenbarelsers meddelades, förstummades i döden. Vittnena fullt såsom trogna sanningsvittnen; de sjönko i martyrdödens iskalla fämn, och deras själar intogo det åt dem bestämda rummet under altaret i Guds heliga tempels förgårdar.


Det evangelium, som profeten, siaren och uppenbarare Joseph Smith med en röst, välig såsom en erke-engels, förkunnade för det nittonde seklets menneskoslägte, består icke af "klokt uttänkta sagor" (2 Pet. 1:16), utan det är ett klart och bestämt tillkännagivande om, att Gud snart skall bringa "hedningarnes tid" till ända, insamla "hedningarnes fullhet" (Rom. 11:25) och upprätta på jorden det fridens rike, hvaram han talat genom sina heliga profeters mun ända från verldens begynnelse.

Och detta tillkännagivande stadfästes genom upprepade uppenbarelsar af det sändliga Majestätets i höjden strålande Härlighet och genom talrika tecken och under samt profetior, likasom det ock beseglades med deras blod, hvilka voro kallade till att vara budbärarne mellan Gud och verlen.


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Det arbete, som härmed i översättning framlägges för svenska allmänheten, utgör grundstenen till Guds verk, upprättad i dessa de yttersta dagarne såsom förberedelsen till Jesu ankomst och regering på jorden. Det gör derföre anspråk på hvarje upprigtig, sanningsökande själs uppmärksamhet. Att anamna det med ödmjukt hjerta är liv; att förkasta det är dom och död.


Introduction To The Swedish Edition

A half a century has quickly gone down the stream of time towards the ocean of eternity since the voice, through which these revelations, came was silenced in death.

The witnesses died faithful to the truth; they sank into the cold embrace of martyrdom, and their souls went to accept their inheritance in God's holy kingdom.

During all this time, the world has hoped in vain that the work begun by the martyrs would dwindle and die like a plant without nourishment. Their hope has been disappointed. The work did not die, but rather it has grown to such dimensions that one of the mightiest nations of the world finds itself continually troubled by this "problem."
Likewise in the religious circles of the world its influence has been felt, and nothing seems to have been able to counteract it. The work was not of mortal man, but of the living God.

Joseph Smith, the prophet, Seer, and revelator, proclaimed the Gospel to the people of the nineteenth century with a voice, mighty like an archangel; and it was not "cunningly devised fables" (2 Pet. 1:16), but a clear and distinct proclamation that God shall soon bring to an end the times of the gentiles (Rom. 11:25) and establish the Kingdom of Peace in the earth, which he has spoken of through the mouths of his holy prophets since the world began.

This proclamation is supported by many revelations, signs and prophecies received from almighty God; and it is also sealed with the blood of those who were called to be God's messengers to the world.

Those with minds responsive to truth, who will study the history of religion from the beginning of the world, must surely receive a conviction that the God who spoke to Noah, Moses, the ancient prophets, the apostles, and to the Son, now has spoken through the prophet Joseph. His mission was to establish Christ's Church in the last days in literal fulfillment of ancient prophecies. Many of the visions enjoyed by Ezekiel, Daniel, and John were merely reflections of this glorious work. Its brilliance enlarged their understanding, and they gloried in the knowledge of a millennium of peace which they saw would follow the establishment of this work. Without this great work of the last dispensation, an important part of the plan of salvation would be sought in vain.

This work, now presented to the Swedish people, is the cornerstone of God's Kingdom, established in these last days as a preparation for the second coming of Christ and for His peaceful reign on the earth.
Thus it demands the attention of every honorable soul. To accept it with a humble heart is life eternal, to reject it brings judgment and death.

They who, without prejudice, will study this work will find that, down to the finest detail, it agrees with the revelations anciently given by God. The power, holiness, and love of God meet us on every page. The fall of man (Sec. 20:20; 38:11), salvation through Jesus the advocate (Sec. 18:23; 32:3; 38:4), necessity of repentance (Sec. 18:42; 19:4; 29:49), of faith (Sec. 10:52), of prayer (Sec. 31:12), obedience, and all Christian virtues are taught with great clearness. The gospel is the rock whereupon the Church is built (Sec. 1:24). The subjects for sermons should be: repentance, faith in the Savior, baptism in water for remission of sins, and in the Holy Ghost, as it were anciently. Of whom is the Church made up (Sec. 19:67), how to gain membership in the congregation (Sec. 20:37, 69). This is all explained in full agreement with the word of God. That Christ is the King is explained as in no other Church (Sec. 38:21-22). The rules on how God's children should treat one another, and on how the Church should be governed show the mark of Divine origin. Finally the book contains prophecies that have been literally fulfilled, thus proving that they came from God. See for example section 87, where it is stated that the American Civil War will begin in South Carolina. This is, of course, exactly what happened.

They who, in spite of all this, feel they must reject the teachings contained herein, should in order to be uniform, reject all revelation.¹

¹Lärdomens Och Förbundets Bok (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1888), pp. iii-vi.
APPENDIX B

A SUGGESTED KEY TO BOOK OF MORMON GEOGRAPHY

by J. M. Sjodahl
A SUGGESTED KEY TO BOOK OF MORMON GEOGRAPHY

The passage, which may be called the key word to the whole subject is as follows:

"And it came to pass that the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land, amongst all his people who were in all his land, who were in all the regions round about, which was bordering even to the sea, on the east and on the west, and which was divided from the land of Zarahemla by a narrow strip of wilderness, which ran from the sea east even to the sea west, and round about on the borders of the seashore, and the borders of the wilderness which was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the borders of Manti by the head of the river Sidon, running from the east towards the west—and thus were the Lamanites and the Nephites divided.

"Now, the more idle part of the Lamanites lived in the wilderness, and dwelt in tents; and they were spread through the wilderness on the west, in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla, in the borders by the seashore, and on the west in the land of Nephi, in the place of their father's first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the seashore.

"And also there were many Lamanites on the east by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them. And thus the Nephites were nearly surrounded by the Lamanites; nevertheless the Nephites had taken possession of all the northern parts of the land bordering on the wilderness, at the head of the river Sidon, from the east to the west, round about on the wilderness side, on the north, even until they came to the land which they called Bountiful.

"And it bordered upon the land which they called Desolation, it being so far northward that it came into the land which had been peopled and been destroyed, of whose bones we have spoken, which was discovered by the people of Zarahemla, it being the place of their first landing.

"And they came from there up into the south wilderness. Thus the land on the northward was called Desolation, and the land on the southward was called Bountiful, it being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals of every kind, a part of which had come from the land northward for food.

"And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water, there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward.

"And it came to pass, that the Nephites had inhabited the land Bountiful, even from the east unto the west sea, and thus the Nephites in their wisdom, with their guards and their armies, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south, that thereby they should have no more possession on the north, that they might not overrun the land northward.

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"Therefore the Lamanites could have no more possessions in the land of Nephi, and the wilderness round about. Now this was wisdom in the Nephites--as the Lamanites were an enemy to them, they would not suffer their afflictions on every hand, and also that they might have a country whither they might flee, according to their desires."

This is, as has already been admitted, very difficult to read understandably, and yet, it is less puzzling than the place in Genesis where the inspired writer evidently gives the location of the garden of Eden, by mentioning the four rivers, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates. This may have been clear when it was first written, but the rivers can no longer be located.

The following are some of the outstanding features of Alma 22: 27-34:

The Land of Nephi. There are two lands of Nephi. Both are mentioned in verse 28. One is "in the place of their father's first inheritance." This is also called Lehi-Nephi (Mosiah 7:1), or, as we should say, Nephi in the land of Lehi. The other is Nephi in the land of Bountiful, which might be termed the Bountiful-Nephi; which the Nephites had colonized (v. 33) even "from the east"--the eastern boundary--"unto the West Sea," and which, on that account was called the land of Nephi, on the same principle that parts of America have been called "New England," "New Spain," "Nova Scotia," etc. The Nephites were anxious to retain in remembrance the name of their great ancestor (2 Ne. 5:8), and to them, therefore, wherever Nephites settled was "the Land of Nephi."

Concerning the Land of Nephi, in Lehi, we read (v. 27):

(1) It was bordering "even to the sea, on the east and on the west." It must have had a coast line on both the Atlantic and the Pacific side, possibly on the Gulf of Darien on the east and the Gulf of Panama on the west.

(2) It was divided from the land of Zarahemla by a "narrow strip of wilderness," (v. 27.) The "wilderness" was the Land Bountiful, as we learn in v. 31. This important discovery is not conjecture. The text says clearly: "It (Bountiful) being the wilderness which is filled with all manner of wild animals." The land of Nephi, then, in Lehi, was separated from Zarahemla, not by the entire country Bountiful, but, by a "narrow strip" of it. Now we read on:

(3) This narrow strip "ran from the sea east even to the sea west and round about on the borders of the sea shore, and the borders of the wilderness Bountiful which was on the north by the land of Zarahemla, through the borders of Manti, by the head of the river Sidon, running from the east towards the west."

That is to say, as I read it, the "wilderness," or the narrow strip of wilderness, began on the border line of Lehi-Nephi (which country occupied an area from the sea east even to the sea west) and then ran round about the sea shore (on the narrow strip), and then continued clear up to the borders of the wilderness which was north by the land of Zarahemla, through Manti, by the head of the river Sidon. "And thus," the inspired author says, "were the Lamanites and Nephites divided," referring to Nephites who had come to Zarahemla, and adjacent countries, and others who had colonized.
the southern parts of Bountiful (v. 33). They were literally separated, by the narrow isthmus that connects South America with Central America, from the body of the Lamanites in South America.

This is perfectly intelligible, if we understand that the land Bountiful was Central America, between the Isthmus of Darien and Tehuantepec, as the article in the Times and Seasons seems to imply.

Bountiful. We have already seen that this country was called "the wilderness" (Alma 22:31; comp. Alma 2: 36, 37). Its eastern extremity was the "narrow strip of wilderness," which adjoined the land of Lehi-Nephi. On the opposite extremity--

(1) It "bordered upon the land which they called Desolation," the land on the northward, and was, therefore, in reference to the land Desolation, the land on the southward. (v. 31)

(2) The boundary line between the two countries, Desolation and Bountiful, was drawn from some point east to the West Sea and is said to have been "only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite."

Just how long this distance in modern measurement was we have no means of knowing. The Peruvians, and also the Mexicans, had trained couriers. Those of Peru, it is claimed, were able to convey messages from Cuzco to Lima, a distance of nearly four hundred miles, in three days, or two hundred miles in a day and a half. But that result was obtained by relay runners. Each chasqui, or courier, ran a league and a half and then passed the message on to one who was waiting. It is not impossible that the Nephites had some such institution, and that a day's journey was the regular distance covered by such messengers. Be this as it may, the probability is that the Isthmus Tehuantepec is indicated as the point where the boundary line between Desolation and Bountiful was drawn.

That isthmus, from the bay of Campeche to Tehuantepec, is only about 125 miles in width, I believe. The distance could easily be covered by couriers in the time mentioned.

If, on the other hand, the Nephites measured distances in "hours" as some modern peoples do, and if about three and a half miles was an "hour," then 36 hours would represent 126 miles.

(3) The land Bountiful, or, as it is also called, the "Land of Nephi and the Land of Zarahemla," lying side by side, Nephi on the Pacific and Zarahemla on the Atlantic (Alma 50:7, 8), was "nearly surrounded by water;" Tehuantepec being at one extremity and "a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward" on the other. (v. 32.) The context seems to require this interpretation, since the intention of the author is to show that the two countries, Zarahemla and Nephi, exclusive of Desolation in the north and Lehi-Nephi in the south, formed, very nearly, an island.

Curiously enough, the Indians, at the time of the advent of Columbus, still called the Isthmus of Darien the "narrow place." As he was proceeding southward along the Mosquito coast, he heard of the Pacific ocean, and was told by Indians that if he continued his course, he would soon come to a "narrow place" between the two seas. They were not ignorant of the geography of their country.

(4) The geographical configuration of the American continents explains what follows in the Book of Alma. The Nephites, we are
told, had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south, to prevent them from overrunning the land northward, Desolation, or to cut off the natural retreat of the Nephites, if defeated, into that country. (v. 33, 34.)

The Narrow Pass. A ridge of hills, rising to a height of 730 feet, bends in a semi-circle around the bay of Tehuantepec, in places approaching the coast to within 15 or 20 miles. On the northern side of these hills there are plains containing rich alluvial soil, well watered. On the southern side there is a narrow belt of lowlands traversed by a few small rivers. The ridge is broken by the Chivela pass, which leads from the north to the south or vice versa. If my conclusions are correct, the "narrow pass" where the people of Morianton were intercepted in their northward trek (Alma 50:34) must be looked for in this region. Here also Teancum, by order of Moroni, constructed fortifications against the Lamanites (Alma 52:9). Here, again, Moroniah, when the Lamanites had taken possession of Zarahemla, raised a line of fortifications the length of which was "a day's journey for a Nephite." Here, about 350 A.D., the boundary line between Nephites and Lamanites was drawn by mutual agreement (Mormon 2:28, 29), and here the Nephites began preparations for the final struggle (Mormon 3:5). It was here that Hagoth built his ships (Alma 63:5), possibly at the mouth of the Tehuantepec river, about 55, B.C.

Zarahemla. Concerning this country, which occupies one of the most prominent positions in Book of Mormon history, the following information is given:

(1) It was situated "southward" in relation to the lands of the Jaredites. (Ether 9:31.)

(2) It was colonized by the Mulekites, who came from Jerusalem (Omni. 15; Hel. 6:10; 8:21) and landed in the country called Desolation (Alma 22:30), and Mulek (Hel. 6:10), whence they proceeded "up into the south wilderness," known as Bountiful. (Alma 22:31.)

(3) It was divided from the land of Nephi in Lehi by a narrow strip of wilderness (Panama?), but, together with the land of Nephi in Bountiful it formed almost an island. (Alma 22:32.)

(4) It was also separated from the land of Nephi in Bountiful by a strip of wilderness running "west and north beyond the borders of the land." (Alma 2:36, 37; 22:27.)

(5) It was discovered by Mosiah (Omni 12, 13), and his advent in Zarahemla marks an epoch in Book of Mormon history, for from that time the main scenes of the great drama are laid in, as I believe, Central and North America, instead of the southern continent.

(6) It was north of the colonies founded by the Lamanites in the land of Nephi in Bountiful, for Moroni drove them out of the eastern part of the land of Nephi into their own lands, south of Zarahemla, and this land of Nephi "did run in a straight course from the east sea to the west." (Alma 50:7, 8.)

(7) He then fortified the line between Lamanites and Nephites, the former occupying the land of Nephi and the latter Zarahemla, building forts all the way from the West Sea (Alma 50:11), possibly as far as the lakes Managua and Nicaragua, which, with the San Juan
river would form a natural obstacle to the progress of invading hordes. (8) In the year 17 A.D., the northern extremity of Zarahemla and Bountiful, near the boundary line of Desolation, was appointed, by Lachoneus, to be a gathering place for a determined defense against the Lamanites, who were constantly crowding the Nephites northward. For many years the opposing forces fought with varying success, until the year 26 A.D., when peace was established and the Nephites returned to their own lands. (3 Ne. 6:1-3.)

"The Country of the King" Surrounded by Water. Finally, it should be added, for what it is worth, that in the Troano manuscript there is a remarkable glyph, which Dr. Augustus Le Plongeon says, if read phonetically, means "The Country of the King, Surrounded by Water." The upper circle, he informs us, stands for Ahau, "king," and the lower, for Luumil, a country in the water; while the feather, the symbol of royalty, indicates that that is the name of the country. And this "Country of the King, Surrounded by Water" is, he tells us, the old Maya domain in Central America. But, from the Book of Mormon we know that Zarahemla was inhabited by followers of Mulek, the scion of the house of Judah. It was, therefore, pre-eminently "the country of the king." It was also, as we have seen, "nearly surrounded by water." It appears, then, that we have, in the Book of Mormon a geographical name identical with one in the Troano manuscript, and the inference is natural that both stand for the same portion of Central America.

From some passages in the Book of Mormon we gather that Nephi, in Lehi, was separated from Zarahemla by a considerable distance. Limhi's expedition was "lost in the wilderness" and missed the country entirely (Mosiah 21:25), which could hardly have happened on a short distance. The expedition of Mosiah, consisting of sixteen strong men, wandered forty days in the wilderness, after they had left the land of Zarahemla and then they reached Shilom, in Lehi-Nephi (Mosiah 7:4; comp. Alma 17:9).

Just how long distance sixteen strong men would cover in forty days is a matter of conjecture. The following from a sermon by Brigham Young may be of interest in this connection:

"The longest journey on foot I ever took at one time was in the year 1834, when a company of the brethren went up to Missouri. ** ** We performed a journey of 2,000 miles on foot. We started on the 5th of May and accomplished that journey inside of three months, carrying our guns on our shoulders, doing our own cooking, etc. ** ** Much of the way we had to drag our baggage wagons through mud holes and bad sections of the road. Twenty to thirty men would take hold and draw a wagon up a hill, or through a mud hole, and it was seldom that I laid myself down to rest until 11 or 12 o'clock at night. ** ** If we laid by a day or half a day, we generally calculated to make the travel average twenty miles a day. We spent considerable time in waiting upon the sick; and some days and nights the brethren who were able, were standing over the sick and dying, and burying the dead; we buried eighteen of the company. Notwithstanding all this, inside of three months we walked about two thousand miles." --Jour. of Dis., Vol. 4, pp. 92 and 102.
At that rate the expedition of Mosiah should have covered a
distance of about 888 miles in forty days.

Sidon. (1) The river Sidon ran by the land of Zarahemla
(Alma 2:15), an expression which seems to indicate that its course
was near a border rather than in the center of the country. The
valley of Gideon was on the east bank and the city of Zarahemla was
on the west. (Alma 6:7; 2:26; 27.) The land of Manti was south of
Gideon. (Alma 16:6; 22:27.) Through the borders of Manti ran the
narrow strip of wilderness or barren hills that separated Zarahemla
from the land of Nephi along the entire length of the two countries,
from east to west. The land of Minon was above the land of Zarahemla,
"in the course of the land of Nephi" (Alma 2:24); that is to say, in
the mountains to the south of Zarahemla.

(2) A tremendous battle was fought on the banks of Sidon, about
75 B. C., between Nephites under Moroni, and Lamanites under
Zerahemnah. (Alma 43:16-34.)

(3) Three years later, Moroni cut off all the strongholds of
the Lamanites in the west wilderness by a line of fortifications
between Zarahemla and the land of Nephi (in Bountiful), "from the
west sea, running by the head of the river Sidon." (Alma 50:11.)

(4) Here, in the year 322, A. D., the final struggle between
Nephites and Lamanites began. (Mormon 1:10.)

From all this it appears to me that we must identify Zarahemla
with the ancient Maya "empire" of which Mr. Bancroft says:

"Throughout several centuries preceding the Christian era, and
perhaps one or two centuries following, there flourished in Central
America the great Maya empire of the Chanes, Culhua, or Serpents,
known to its foes as Xibaiba, with its center in Chiapas at or near
Palenque, and with several allied capitals in the surrounding region."

If this conclusion is correct, the land of Zarahemla occupied
the Atlantic slope of Central America, from the Gulf of Mexico to
the Mosquito coast on the Caribbean Gulf. The city of Zarahemla
may have been about where the ruins of Palenque are found, and the
immediate region around the city was also known as Zarahemla. The
river Sidon may then be identified with the Usumacinta river.

The immense distances are no obstacle to the acceptance of this
view, for it is known as a fact that the so-called Maya "empire" at
one time "extended over the greater part of Central America."

The domain of the Incas, Nadaillac estimates at 3,000 miles by
400, with a population of eight million souls. And of the mound
builders of North America he says, to prove that they had widely
extended commerce: "Beneath the same mounds we find the copper of
Lake Superior, the mica of the Alleghanies, the obsidian of Mexico,
and the pearls and shells of the Gulf."

The entire distance between Tehuantepec and South America is
about 1500 miles. If travelers could make almost 900 miles in forty
days, they could certainly make an occasional trip across the narrow
strip that separated their country from the land of Nephi, in Lehi.

Nephites, Lamanites, Jaredites. The suggestions here offered
assume that Lehi landed in South America some distance south of the
Isthmus and that he proceeded to the Titicaca basin in Bolivia and
the valley of Cuzco, in Peru, where he died.
Shortly afterwards, Nephi and his faithful followers separated themselves from their brethren and, after having journeyed "in the wilderness for the space of many days," established themselves first in Ecuador, and then colonized the lofty table lands of Columbia, in what they called the Land of Nephi. (2 Ne. 5:2-9.)

For some time they lived in peace here, but as the years passed, both they and the Lamanites multiplied and were scattered "upon much of the face of the land," (Jarom 5:8), and wherever the two factions came in contact with each other conflicts arose. At first the Nephites defended themselves successfully, but the outcome was that many of them perished. (Omni. 5.)

Some time between the years 279 and 130, B.C., Mosiah, with a considerable following, emigrated from the Land of Nephi, in Lehi; and, after a long journey through the wilderness—the Isthmus of Panama—reached the land of Zarahemla. (Omni. 13-15.)

Other Nephites followed a somewhat different route and founded settlements on the Pacific side of Central America. This part of the promised land was known as Bountiful (Alma 22:33), and when the Nephites settled there they called their settlements in it the Land of Nephi, as they had named their portion of the land of their father's first inheritance in South America. (Alma 22:28.)

A number of Lamanites also went into Central America. They were "the more idle part" of them. These led a nomadic life, probably pitching their tents in the mountain valleys (Alma 22:28, 29.) As soon as the Lamanites in Central America were strong enough, numerically, the old struggle began again, and the Nephites were gradually driven northward.

Many Lamanites and Nephites must have remained in South America and Central America while the struggle was continued in the northern continent. Concerning their history, no record is preserved in the Book of Mormon. And then, after the massacre around Cumorah, many of the conquerors and survivors, without doubt, gradually worked their way southward towards the lands of their fathers. Nothing is said in the Book of Mormon of their exploits, except that they continued to war among themselves (Mormon 8:6-10) until the whole face of the land was one continual round of murder and bloodshed, causing a state of savagery, ignorance, and error. But in the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that among the now existing Indians are not only Lamanites, but also Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lemuelites and Ishmaelites, to whom the Book of Mormon is a message of salvation. (Sec. 3:16-19; 10:48.) The Book of Mormon record closes in the year 421 A. D., or thereabouts. The history of the vast multitudes not directly included in the Book of Mormon record, although contemporary with the compilers, of that volume, as well as the history of the millions who lived on the American continents after the close of the Book of Mormon record until the Spanish conquest, must be read in the mounds and cliff dwellings, the ruined pueblos, temples, and forts, and other remains of past civilizations that are found all over the American continents, and in the traditions that have been preserved.  

Janne M. Sjodahl as a young minister in Norway.
Janne M. Sjocahl in about 1914.
Christina Christofferson Sjodahl