



Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

Volume 29 | Number 6

Article 4

January 2009

Latest Issue of the FARMS Review

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Recommended Citation

(2009) "Latest Issue of the FARMS Review," *Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship*: Vol. 29: No. 6, Article 4.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/insights/vol29/iss6/4>

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Latest Issue of the *FARMS Review*

The latest issue of the *FARMS Review* (vol. 21, no. 2) opens with an editor's introduction by Lou Midgley that probes a dilemma facing evangelicals: much of their belief system is traceable to Augustine's efforts to infuse Christianity with concepts drawn from classical (pagan) philosophy. Midgley discusses how this alien admixture does not square with the evangelical belief in biblical sufficiency, or "Bible alone." He also calls attention to how the noted evangelical scholar N. T. Wright has recently put evangelicals on the defensive by challenging the entrenched but (in Wright's view) misguided notion of "justification by faith alone."

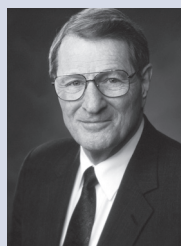
The *Review* editors are pleased to publish Richard L. Anderson's revised version of his recent Neal A. Maxwell Lecture on the reliability of the various sources documenting the ministries of Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith. With warmth and candor, Anderson shares illuminating perspectives and evidences for authenticity gained through the decades of his study and reflection.

A timely holiday treat is John W. Welch's review of Margaret Barker's book *Christmas: The Original Story*. Barker, a British biblical scholar, mined various ancient sources and traditions to flesh out the Christmas story and place it in its original cultural and literary context. Welch calls attention to the book's many charms, which include intriguing temple connections like the account, in the apocryphal Infancy Gospel of James, of Mary being pledged to the temple at age three and reared there by the high priest.

Enjoyable in a much different way are William Hamblin's highly informative and engaging critique

of Christopher Hitchens's book *god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* and Blair Hodges's review of Shawn McCraney's *I Was a Born-Again Mormon: Moving Toward Christian Authenticity*. Hitchens is a brash and outspoken atheist whose clever arguments aimed at badmouthing religion can, as Hamblin points out, often be shown to be superficially glib or even deliberately misleading. McCraney, a former Latter-day Saint and now a countercult minister, is intent on pointing out how the Saints are not "authentic" Christians. Hodges makes clear why he finds the book flawed and confused.

Three reviews deal with new material on the Book of Mormon—two reader's editions, a book on proposed Mesoamerican connections, and a book on Lehi's trail through Arabia. An independent essay refutes the Spalding theory with evidence suggesting that there was only one Spalding manuscript all along, rather than a hypothetical second manuscript, as proponents of the Spalding theory continue to claim. Other offerings await the eager reader. ♦



From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

On the straight, narrow path, which leads to our little Calvarys, one does not hear a serious traveler exclaiming,

"Look, no hands!" (*Ensign*, May 1990, 34), as quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 313)

INSIGHTS

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A Publication of the

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Primary research interests at the Maxwell Institute include the history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to ancient scripture. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of scripture, solid research and academic perspectives can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about scripture.

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