



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

Volume 28 | Number 3

Article 3

January 2008

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Recommended Citation

(2008) "New Nibley Volume Features Temples, Biographies, Reviews," *Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship*: Vol. 28: No. 3, Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/insights/vol28/iss3/3>

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New Nibley Volume Features Temples, Biographies, Reviews

Fans of Hugh Nibley's writings will welcome volume 17 in the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, copublished by Deseret Book and FARMS.

Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple is a compilation of materials, many of which have been published previously outside the Collected Works.

The book opens with two autobiographical sketches penned before 1978. Of "An Intellectual Autobiography," Stephen D. Ricks, editor of the volume, notes in the foreword:

"Hugh Nibley was a man of profound learning. Nibley's brief (and slightly impersonal) sketch of his academic career that appears in this volume does not take note of the spectacular intellectual abilities that he demonstrated early in his life; his passionate attachment to, and capacity for, focused library work; and his astonishing ability to concentrate on a topic to the exclusion of everything else."

One of the stunning aspects of Nibley's genius was his persistent sense of wonder, which induced him to range widely, yet competently, through very disparate subjects of study—all covered in this volume: the ancient Egyptians, the temple, life sciences, world literature, ancient Judaism, and Joseph Smith and the restoration.

Additional parts of *Eloquent Witness* consist of book reviews, forewords, and various interviews: a previously unpublished interview with Louis Midgley from a BYU forum, an interview in a student journal, and interviews first appearing in *Dialogue*, *BYU Today*, the *Deseret News*, and the *Sunstone Review*.

In a personal section, Nibley's thoughts on the "Christmas quest" are followed by a letter to a BYU graduate student in which he expresses his "reluctance to assist people in getting PhD degrees in religion or anything else here at the BYU" and advises against getting a "quick degree." In a widely circulated letter to Sterling McMurrin (a University of Utah history professor and influential

Mormon intellectual), Nibley decries the possibility that blind chance could be the driving force that "set this stage, put the characters on it, and set the plot in motion" for mortal existence. The transcript of *The Faith of an Observer: Conversations with Hugh Nibley*, a film produced in honor of Nibley's 75th birthday, features Nibley's thoughts on such topics as his childhood, wealth, the environment and man's dominion, education, faith and testimony, war and politics, and salvation and the temple. Nibley once more bears testimony in "Not to Worry," an essay that, among other themes, once again addresses the importance of the Terrible Question—what happens after death? In an unusual format

(for Nibley), the essay on "the Last Days, Then and Now" written for a Festschrift in honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson includes no footnotes. In what originated as Sunday School lessons, Nibley covers the Word of Wisdom, the Gospel of Matthew, and the priesthood. This personal section concludes with memorial tributes to Krešimir Ćosić and Joel Erik Myres, in which Nibley reminds us of the covenants we make for eternity and expresses his conviction that we will be engaged in a higher work after this life.

The last, but certainly not the least significant, portion of the book brings together Nibley's important remaining essays on the temple that did not appear in his *Temple and Cosmos* volume, including "The Greatness of Egypt," which is published here for the first time. In these articles, Nibley shares insights that resonate with those who love and appreciate the temple.

Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple is available at the BYU Bookstore. 

