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The Newsletter of
the Foundation for
Ancient Research &
Mormon Studies

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

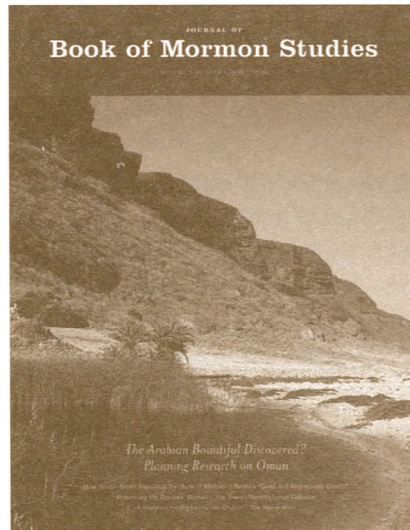
December 1998

"by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118)

Journal of Book of Mormon Studies Redesigned to Serve the Needs of a Broader Audience

When the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* was launched in the fall of 1992, the aim of its editor, Stephen D. Ricks, was to produce "a journal dedicated solely to the serious and faithful study of the Book of Mormon in its historical, linguistic, cultural, and theological context."

In the six years since its inception, the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* has featured groundbreaking studies on such varied topics as the legal ramifications of the slaying of Laban, the tree of life,



the Book of Mormon wars, Nephite chronology, wordprint analysis, tomb god statues from Mesoamerica, and Hebrew linguistics. In spring 1995, FARMS published a special issue of the *Journal* that featured the hard-to-find writings of Sidney B. Sperry on the Book of Mormon, making the teachings of this great scholar available to a wider audience.

As FARMS has grown in reputation and membership, the needs of that membership have

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Review Surveys Mixed Bag of Publications

The newest issue of the *FARMS Review of Books* (volume 10, number 2) surveys a diverse crop of recent publications, some inviting high praise, others substantial refutation, and some a mixture of both.

This issue begins with Melvin J. Thorne's review of John E. Enslin's *The Bible and the Book of Mormon: Connecting Links* and William N. Partridge's *Book of Mormon Insights: Points to Ponder*. After noting that certain readers will find both books instructive and inspirational despite their limited scholarly value, Thorne examines the role of amateurs in Book of Mormon scholarship. He concludes that, unlike the more important personal study of the scriptures, scholarly research is typically done better by those who have qualified themselves through training and experience.

John Gee reviews Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon*. Describing the book as "the definitive work on the Christology of the Book of Mormon," Gee recommends Elder Holland's work because of its many insightful comments on what each Book of Mormon prophet contributed to our understanding of Christ's gospel, especially the atonement.

In his review of John W. Welch and Doris R. Dant's *The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert*, Edgar C. Snow praises the artist's skill and the authors' insightful commentary. He comments on examples of Teichert's "different vision of the world of the Nephites and Lamanites" to show

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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
and Mormon Studies

FARMS UPDATE

A Report on Research in Progress

Number 121

The Laws of Eshnunna and Nephite Economics

In order for ancient economies to work effectively, kings spelled out the value of various commodities and established exchange ratios, especially between consumable goods and precious metals. For example, the Laws of Eshnunna, promulgated in Babylonia probably during the reign of Dadusha in the early eighteenth century B.C., instituted a system of weights and measures.

The following initial provisions stand at the head of this ancient law code:

1 kor of barley [*she'um*] is (priced) at [*ana*] 1 shekel of silver;

3 *qa* of "best oil" are (priced) at 1 shekel of silver;

1 seah (and) 2 *qa* of sesame oil are (priced) at 1 shekel of silver [and so on].

The hire for a wagon together with its oxen and its driver is 1 pan (and) 4 seah of barley. If it is (paid in) silver, the hire is one third of a shekel. He shall drive it the whole day.¹

These laws in the kingdom of Eshnunna allowed people to deal confidently with barley, silver, oil, lard, wool, salt, bitumen, and refined and unrefined copper—an immense step forward from the former bartering system.

Several parallels exist between these foundational parts of the law code of Eshnunna and

King Mosiah's economic system found in Alma 11:3–19. First, their basic forms are comparable. For example, the standard phrasing "One kor of barley is (priced) at one shekel of silver" resembles "A senum of silver was equal to a senine of gold" (Alma 11:7).

Second, the primary conversion in Babylonia was between barley and silver. Nine other provisions convert various additional commodities into silver values, followed by three more provisions that convert others into measures of barley. Thus, precious metal and grain measures were convertible into each other. The law of Mosiah featured the same conversion capability: the basic measure for either gold or silver was equated with "a measure of barley" (Alma 11:7).

Third, in Babylonia the basic commodity valuation system allowed traders to deal in a variety of commodities, all convertible into silver or barley. Similarly, Mosiah's system allowed traders to expand from silver, gold, or barley into "a measure of every kind of grain" (Alma 11:7).

Fourth, both economic systems were instituted by kings for similar announced reasons. The Laws of Eshnunna began with a royal superscription that probably proclaimed this standardization as instrumental in establishing justice, eliminating

enmity, and protecting the weak. Likewise, King Mosiah enacted his laws expressly to establish peace and equality in the land (see Mosiah 29:38, 40).

Fifth, the ideal, practical motivation behind the Laws of Eshnunna seems to have been to undergird the rental market and to standardize values on daily wages and the computation of various damages and penalties. Similarly, a motivation for the economic part of King Mosiah's reforms was to provide a standard system under the new reign of judges for the payment of judges on a daily basis: "a senine of gold for a day, or a senum of silver" (Alma 11:3).

In enacting his law, King Mosiah "did not reckon after the manner of the Jews who were at Jerusalem" (Alma 11:4), but he still utilized a system that drew on elements known in the ancient Near East. Such similarities between the Laws of Eshnunna (discovered and translated in the mid-twentieth century) and Mosiah's economic system show yet another way in which the Book of Mormon presents a truly complex civilization with roots in ancient society.

NOTE

1. James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (1969), 161.

Based on research by John W. Welch

Housekeeping

FARMS Improves Benefits for Its Members

As a result of changes in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* and of findings from an in-depth membership survey that FARMS conducted earlier this year, FARMS members will now see a change in their benefits package. Formerly, for a \$12 annual fee, members received six issues of the *INSIGHTS* newsletter. Starting with this issue, members will receive twelve issues (double the number), plus a subscription to the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. The *Journal* (see related article on page 1) has been newly redesigned and will be published twice a year. The new annual membership fee is now \$25 (\$20 for students). If priced separately, *INSIGHTS* and the *Journal* would cost \$42, so the \$25 fee effectively saves members over 40 percent.

Making the *Journal* part of the basic FARMS membership is important to the mission of the Foundation, helping to make reports about Book of Mormon and other ancient research available to as many people as possible. "The *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* has always reported the latest research," explains Daniel Oswald, executive director of FARMS, "and incorporating it into the benefits of FARMS membership allows us to meet the members' needs by making available to them such reports in the most effective vehicle. The *Journal* becomes an essential part of FARMS membership." A complimentary copy of the first issue of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* in its new format is enclosed in this mail-

ing so that current members can see for themselves the value of this new approach.

The *Journal* is designed and written to provide easy access to the most recent research for the broadest audience possible. In this way, FARMS hopes to make reliable, faithful research information about the Book of Mormon and other ancient scriptures available to more Latter-day Saints and friends of other faiths than ever before.

Publishing the *INSIGHTS* newsletter monthly will also make it possible for FARMS to improve its communication with its members by providing more timely notices of scripture-related events and other news and keep its members more up to date on the progress of research. And it will allow the Foundation to feature discounts on even more publications about the scriptures, both from FARMS and from other publishers.

"Our survey indicated that our members have always felt good that a part of their membership fee went to support Book of Mormon research," says Oswald. "Now those membership fees will also make it possible for the Foundation to share the results of that research with even more people. Thus, more than ever before, a major benefit of your FARMS membership is knowing that you are contributing to the support and dissemination of faithful Latter-day Saint research on the scriptures."

All new memberships and renewals will be at the new annual membership rate of \$25 (or \$20 for

students). Current memberships will be honored until their time of renewal and will include the new benefits. However, FARMS will welcome any contributions that offset the \$13 difference.

It is the hope of everyone at FARMS that the new benefits package will serve FARMS members with better and more frequent access to significant and insightful new research on the Book of Mormon and other ancient scriptures and that this, in turn, will strengthen their testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

On the Web

Ancient Games on the Internet

FARMS subscribers can enjoy electronic versions of games played by the ancients, located on the Internet at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/psneeley>. This site features ancient Maya, Egyptian, and Sumerian games, among others.

Research fellowships

Applications are being accepted by the Smith Institute at BYU for six summer fellowships involving research on the cultural context of the restoration during Joseph Smith's lifetime. For applications (due February 12) or information, contact the Smith Institute (127 KMB, BYU, Provo, UT 84602; 801-378-4023; e-mail: jfsi@byu.edu).

Scripture insight

What Do We Know about the Wise Men?

Among the more intriguing figures in the scriptures are the Wise Men who visited the infant Jesus. The story of their journey to Bethlehem is found in the Gospel of Matthew, where we learn that they came "from the east" when Jesus was apparently two years old (see Matthew 2:1–2, 7, 16). By that time, Mary and Joseph were living in a house (see verse 11).

A common assumption is that the Wise Men followed a star from the east to Bethlehem. However, Matthew does not say they followed a star at that point in their journey, only that they had "seen his star in the east" and "came . . . from the east to Jerusalem" (verses 1, 2). Seeking him who was "born King of the Jews" (verse 2), the Wise Men inquired at King Herod's palace (where one might expect a prince to be born) and were directed to Bethlehem, a few miles south of Jerusalem (see verse 8). It was at this point that "the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was" (verse 9).

Though the wording in verse 9 suggests that the Wise Men understood the two stars to be the same star, that may not have been the case. Because the star heralding Christ's birth was also seen in the New World and was not reported as moving from its fixed position (see Helaman 14:5; 3 Nephi 1:21), this star may not have been the unusual, roaming star that "went before" the Wise Men and "stood over where the young child was." What, then, did the Wise Men follow from Jerusalem to Bethlehem? We cannot know for certain, but it is interesting that an early Christian document indicates that it was an angel in the guise of a star (see *1 Infancy Gospel* 3:3).

Perhaps because so little is told to us in the scriptures about these men, numerous traditions have arisen about them, and some of these traditions are quite speculative (a good source of information on these traditions and of commentary on the scriptural text is Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*). That later Christians would go to great lengths to try to understand these mysterious men indicates how significant their visit was regarded. Some early traditions indicate there were twelve Wise Men. The most prevalent tradition says they were three kings, their number derived from

the three gifts they brought: gold, frankincense, and myrrh (see Matthew 2:11). Psalm 72:10–15 is cited as evidence that these three "kings" were from Tarshish, Sheba, and Seba. Medieval Christians identified those places with Spain, Ethiopia, and Arabia and thus believed the Wise Men to be a European, an African, and a Semite. Other Old Testament passages sometimes used to support the kingship of the Wise Men are Isaiah 49:7 and 60:3–7.

The Greek term behind the words *wise men* in Matthew 2 is *magoi* (the origin of our word *magic*), sometimes rendered "Magi" in English. Because this word is Persian in origin, some traditions identify the Wise Men as Persian. In the Greek form of the book of Daniel, however, *magoi* occurs in Daniel's description of the Babylonian court; for this and other reasons, Babylon is considered a possibility for the origin of the Magi. On the basis of Isaiah 60:6 and Psalm 72:15, the gold and frankincense they bring as gifts are associated with Arabia, marking that as a possible source for the Wise Men (see the discussion in Brown, 167–70).

The thirteenth-century traveler Marco Polo reported that the three Magi had set out from Saba in Persia, where their tombs were still visited in his day and where local tradition since the eighth century named three kings: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Those same names are used in Christian tradition today, though they are associated with non-Persian wise men. Chapter 9 of the Armenian *Gospel of the Infancy* names the Magi as Melkon of Persia, Gaspar of India, and Balthazar of Arabia. The names, however, appear to be Akkadian, the language used in ancient Babylon, from where such names spread through other parts of the Persian Empire from the fifth century B.C.

There are even traditions that the gifts the Magi gave came originally from Adam. Several early Christian pseudepigraphic books indicate that the presents the Wise Men gave to the infant Jesus had been brought by Adam from the Garden of Eden. Noah subsequently took them aboard the ark, Shem concealed them after the flood, and the Wise Men later uncovered them. In some accounts the Wise Men also found the *Testament of Adam* buried with the relics and read Adam's prophecy of the coming of Christ. —Contributed by John A. Tvedtnes

FARMS publications

Two Nibley Books Explore New Testament Themes and Early Christianity

For years the Collected Works of Hugh Nibley series has delighted those who relish Nibley's startling insights, pithy comments, and consummate scholarship. Two volumes from this series, *The World and the Prophets* and *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (both available on the enclosed order form), shed light on a number of topics related to the New Testament.

The World and the Prophets, volume three in the Collected Works, compiles a series of radio lectures that Nibley delivered in 1954 under the title "Time Vindicates the Prophets." The lectures were given in answer to those who were challenging the right of Latter-day Saints to call themselves Christians.

Just as the church's beliefs and practices were under attack when these lectures were first given, critics continue to challenge the Latter-day Saints' concept of God, their belief in the Prophet Joseph Smith and continual revelation, their acceptance of the Book of Mormon as a true record, and their insistence that the LDS Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ. Nibley's penetrating remarks are as valid and timely today as they were in 1954.

"We make no attempt to argue out the position of the Church," Nibley writes. "Here we are simply indicating briefly that for better or for worse, the Mormons consistently find themselves in the company of ancient saints and, accordingly, far removed from the ways of conventional Christians. . . . It is an historical, not a theological or philosophical, vindication of our prophets."

But Nibley does far more than identify doctrines, practices, and institutions that were shared by Latter-day Saint Christians and early Christians in the first centuries A.D. He describes with convincing clarity how the early Christian church changed from an organization with inspired prophets into a thoroughly different and alien institution built on the learning of men. He shows how prophecy was replaced with self-induced experience and how the magical wonder-making of the pagans was substituted for the gifts of the Spirit.

In these lectures about prophets, Nibley incorporates numerous scriptural teachings from the New Testament. He discusses Peter's teachings on

how Christ was a true prophet, Christ's teachings on committed discipleship and the nature of miracles, and Paul's teachings on testimony.

Drawing on evidence from the New Testament and elsewhere, Nibley ably demonstrates that the whole philosophical-theological enterprise, however well intended, is incompatible with the existence of continuing revelation. He concludes that there will always be an unbridgeable gap between the world and the prophets.

Volume four of the Collected Works series, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, can also enhance readers' understanding of the New Testament. Concentrating on primitive Christianity and its close parallels to LDS belief and practice, the essays in the book cover such subjects as early accounts of Jesus' childhood, the Savior's forty-day ministry after his resurrection, baptism for the dead in ancient times, the passing of the primitive church, Christian envy of the temple, and the early Christian prayer circle.

Concerning Jesus' childhood, Nibley writes, "All sources, early and late, Christian and anti-Christian, agree that Jesus' family was often in trouble and moved about a good deal. The early anti-Christian writers made much of this: a family of improvident ne'er-do-wells, tramping about the country looking for odd jobs; . . . Jesus, the ambitious boy who picked up a bag of magic tricks in Egypt . . . and who gathered about him a band of vagabonds and desperadoes with whom he ranged the countryside, picking up a living by questionable means. . . . The Latter-day Saint reader cannot but note striking parallels between the early anti-Christian scandal stories and the Palmyra tales about the Joseph Smith family."

Nibley also demonstrates that the earliest Christians had strong ties to the temple and that their rituals did not survive in subsequent Christianity. For example, Nibley discusses the 1895 discovery of a Coptic papyrus containing Christ's teachings on "the way of eternal progress for the living and the dead according to a pattern first followed by Adam." He explains that "for Latter-day

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Only in the service

Rare Religious Documents Given to FARMS

Two sets of authentic religious documents were recently donated to FARMS. BYU alumni Orin and Rita Parker donated a sixteenth-century abridgment of the Hadith, a compilation of the Islamic prophet Muhammad's official statements on Islamic beliefs and practices. The rare book, copied by hand in 1549 in exquisite Arabic script, reads from back to front and from right to left. After working in Iraq for five years, Orin received the book at a farewell party held in the deputy foreign minister's house in Baghdad.

According to Islamicist Daniel C. Peterson, director of the FARMS Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART), the book is a focus of Islamic intellectual activity and has served as a legal precedent for Islamic belief. "Modern Muslim scholars and theologians quote as much from the Hadith as they do from the Koran," Peterson says.

The other donation consists of three well-preserved Tibetan scriptural texts, called *sutras*, that are between 150 and 300 years old. They were donated by Malan Jackson, director of the Center of International Studies at Utah Valley State College. One of the sutras, which escaped destruction during a Soviet attack on a Buddhist monastery in the 1930s, has Tibetan characters arranged in vertical lines of different colors against a black or black-and-white background. Jackson points out that this sutra, marked by the smell of centuries of incense, is the kind that monks used in monasteries on a daily basis. Another sutra, printed from inked wooden blocks, is called the "Book of the Thousand Prostrations" and contains, among other doctrines, the Tibetan Buddhists' ways of repentance.

The Foundation is grateful for the donors' generosity and is pleased to have these rare and beautiful documents added to its collection.

Journal Redesigned (continued from page 1)

developed apace. Membership has grown from a solid base of fairly experienced students of the scriptures to encompass a much larger audience of readers who love the scriptures but have relatively less experience with scripture scholarship. Recently the FARMS Board of Trustees decided that one way to help fill the needs of these new readers is to present the *Journal* in a new and exciting way—with its scholarly content edited to be accessible to the mainstream of the church and with full-color illustrations to support and supplement that content.

The editors hope the *Journal's* visual appeal will draw readers into articles that will reward them with eminently readable information on all aspects of Book of Mormon studies.

The new editor, John L. Sorenson, is well-known for his contributions to Book of Mormon geography and Mesoamerican studies. His recent book, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life*, with its striking, visually rich illustrations and solid yet readable scholarship, epitomizes his approach to the *Journal*. With assistance from associate editors M. Gerald Bradford and S. Kent Brown,

Sorenson will seek to publish original scholarly articles—and a few notable reprints—that will inform and appeal to scholars and novices alike.

The *Journal* will keep readers up to date on research projects at FARMS and at other institutions. Newsworthy items will be highlighted, and a section will be devoted to providing answers to common questions about the Book of Mormon. A department on Book of Mormon names will explain their origins and possible meanings. A regular feature will invite guest columnists to offer advice on what books they think should be part of a personal library of studies on the Book of Mormon.

The original purpose of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*—to shed fresh light on the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ by encouraging and publishing studies of high scholarly quality—has not changed. What has changed is the medium selected to fulfill that purpose. The editors believe that when readers see the new *Journal* (included free in this mailing), they will agree that FARMS has entered an exciting new era of scholarly publishing.

Review Surveys Mixed Bag (continued from page 1)

that Teichert's gentler renderings "rise above the level of illustration and are enduring works of art."

Included also is a review by S. Kent Brown of Donald W. Parry and Dana M. Pike's *LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Brown notes the significance of the chapter by world-renowned scholar Florentino García Martínez on messianic allusions in the scrolls. Brown finds other chapters to be similarly engaging and useful, such as David R. Seely's chapter on worship practices at Qumran and Scott R. Woodward's chapter on DNA analysis of the scrolls, though he was less impressed with the brief chapter on the Dead Sea Scrolls Database. Brown concludes that, despite some deficiencies, the book is an important contribution to Latter-day Saint understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

John A. Tvedtnes examines two articles by Luke Wilson that appeared in *Heart and Mind*, an anti-Mormon quarterly. In an adroit, detailed response, Tvedtnes shows that both articles—"Does the Bible Teach Salvation for the Dead? A Survey of the Evidence" and "Did Jesus Establish Baptism for the Dead?"—are seriously flawed and biased and that, contrary to Wilson's claims, the LDS principle of salvation for the dead is supported by the Bible and a large number of early Christian documents.

Two extensive reviews, one by Danel W. Bachman and another by Richard L. Anderson and Scott H. Faulring, examine Todd Compton's *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith*. All three reviewers reject Compton's claim that plural marriage "simply did not work" and point out that some of Compton's assumptions are questionable, undocumented, and even misleading. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the reviewers conclude that the massive book makes good use of selected materials, represents a prodigious research effort, and is highly informative.

In response to Carol Lynn Pearson's *Sunstone* article "Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?" Kevin and Shauna Christensen propose that Pearson's case regarding the Nephites' excessive militarism and their marginalization and neglect of women is seriously marred by her subjective evaluations and ignorance of cultural context. The Christensens assert that Pearson's charges, taken at face value, can "unjustly diminish our appreciation of the Book of Mormon." This review addresses

Pearson's claims and treats the issue of women in the Book of Mormon from a much broader and more balanced perspective.

John Gee's review of Stan Larson's *Quest for the Golden Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search of the Book of Mormon* exposes the book as a hagiography (idealizing biography) of a man who the author claims only outwardly presented himself as a believer in the Book of Mormon. Gee notes that Larson suppresses the full biographical portrait of Ferguson in order to offer tedious, flawed commentary aimed at discrediting the Book of Mormon and the book of Abraham.

The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times, by eminent Jewish scholar Raphael Patai, is reviewed by John A. Tvedtnes. Published by a major university press, *The Children of Noah* places the Book of Mormon account of Lehi's journey to the New World in the context of the Jewish seafaring tradition. Tvedtnes finds that Patai's favorable comments about the Book of Mormon are a strong voice against anti-Mormon critics.

Lindon J. Robison reviews James W. Lucas and Warner P. Woodworth's *Working toward Zion: Principles of the United Order for the Modern World*. Robison commends the authors' thoughtful analysis and wide-ranging interpretations of United Order principles such as private ownership, voluntary membership, and equality. Robison applauds the authors for their "honest effort to focus our attention on the . . . path to Zion."

The *Review* also includes two articles by Gregory Taggart that will interest web surfers—an update of his earlier survey of LDS Internet sites and a review of Lauramaery Gold's *Mormons on the Internet*.

We hope you enjoy your complimentary copy of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, redesigned and refocused to be more readable than ever before.

Forthcoming publications

Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis, reprint, edited by John W. Welch. First published in 1981, this volume of essays continues to be a significant book in its field. Various experts devote more than three hundred pages to identifying and analyzing chiasmus, the literary technique of inverted parallelism, in ancient texts. Available early in 1999.

Chiasmus Bibliography, compiled by John W. Welch and Daniel B. McKinlay. The working draft of this book (1987) has been significantly expanded to nearly 900 entries citing articles and books that discuss chiasmus in scripture and other literature. This unique resource spells out the configuration of the main chiasms under discussion and includes a scripture index to facilitate study and comparison. Available early in 1999.

Scripture Study: Tools and Suggestions, by James E. Faulconer. This study aid offers pointers and strategies that will help students of the scriptures improve the overall effectiveness of their study. Faulconer discusses outlining, an in-depth method of cross-referencing, the benefits of using dictionaries and concordances, rhetoric, and using the valuable reference tools in the LDS edition of the scriptures. Available early in 1999.

The Sermon at the Temple: The Sermon on the Mount as a Temple Text in 3 Nephi 11–18, by John W. Welch. Originally published in 1990, this revised, paperback edition updates and clarifies Welch's stimulating analysis of Jesus' famous sermon. Drawing on crucial information supplied by the Book of Mormon, Welch offers insights into this sacred text beyond what conventional New Testament scholarship has been able to provide. Available early in 1999.

The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: New Texts, Reformulated Issues, and Technological Innovations, edited by Donald W. Parry and Eugene C. Ulrich. This volume reports the proceedings of a Dead Sea Scrolls conference held in Provo in July 1996 and jointly sponsored by FARMS and BYU. A host of international scholars share their latest discoveries and research findings in forty-five articles. Available early in 1999.

Nibley Books (continued from page 5)

Saints . . . the new findings should be thrice welcome, proving as they do the keen interest among the Saints of the primitive church in the subject of work for the dead."

Mormonism and Early Christianity will deepen readers' understanding of the Christian church in apostolic times as well as in the troubled centuries immediately following the New Testament era.

INSIGHTS AN ANCIENT WINDOW

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The Purpose of FARMS

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ and other ancient scriptures. It also works to preserve ancient religious documents.

FARMS is a nonprofit educational foundation affiliated with Brigham Young University. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to the scriptures. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about the scriptures.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. These publications are peer reviewed to ensure scholarly standards are met. The proceeds from the sale of these publications, including most royalties, are used to support further research and publications on the scriptures. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed in both scholarly and popular formats.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to "come unto Christ" (Jacob 1:7) and to understand and take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.