

From the Editor



This issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly* proudly leads off with the 2015 Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty Lecture by political science professor David Magleby. I am confident that all current readers will enjoy and benefit from the timely insights that this speech offers regarding the persistent pressures on political parties to justify their existence and to seek opportunities for mutually beneficial accommodations and compromises.

Magleby's Maeser Lecture stands in an illustrious tradition now reaching back over half a century at Brigham Young University. Fifty years ago, the second Maeser Lecture was given by Professor Hugh W. Nibley on March 17, 1965, when I was a freshman at BYU. Like many of these annual faculty lectures, Nibley's was promptly published in *BYU Studies*, entitled "The Expanding Gospel." Its opening lines read, "The expression 'expanding Gospel' is not a contradiction of terms." While "no *man* may add to the scriptures, . . . that imposes no restriction on God." "Where has God imposed any limits on His own prerogative of imparting His word to man?" (vol. 7, no. 1, p. 3; emphasis in original). For twenty-five pages, Nibley then goes on to show how the revealed details in the plan of salvation known distinctively to Latter-day Saints can be found by careful analysis of dozens of ancient sources that "follow along familiar grooves to the end and then continue onward into new territory" (4). Although these ancient sources are often only "shattered remnants of a forgotten structure," behind them stands "a solid reality" (26–27). In many ways, Nibley's quest for further light and knowledge

has been the guiding hermeneutic of BYU Studies, in search of those solid realities, as this current issue attests.

Political applications of gospel principles such as unity, love, humility, shared objectives, reconciliation, unselfishness, and community well-being are boldly brought forward and expanded in David Magleby's wise advice on politics and compromise.

Second, as Nibley also laid out, in dealing with historical writings and gospel texts, "our first obligation is to inform ourselves" about what they actually teach (4). In this regard, the groundbreaking decipherment and analysis by LaJean Purcell Carruth and Gerrit Dirkmaat of shorthand transcriptions of early addresses by General Authorities that were eventually published in the *Journal of Discourses* expands our knowledge of the unfolding of Latter-day Saint doctrines and practices.

The picture above shows me seated on a bench with a statue of William Tyndale in Bristol, England, which memorializes the importance of translating scripture clearly and correctly. In this spirit of understanding scripture, linguistic research by Brent Schmidt into the ancient meanings of the Greek and Hebrew words that stand behind the vital gospel term *grace* expands the familiar understandings of that biblical term, showing that the authors who contributed to the Book of Mormon likely understood the original, but now usually overlooked, covenantal and relational dimensions of grace.

And finally, the detailed examination by Jeffrey Chadwick of the chronology of the death of Jesus expands our understanding of that key event in the Father's eternal plan. Using scriptural, historical, astronomical, and archaeological evidence, Chadwick arrives at what he feels is a definite date for the crucifixion. In the process, he proposes a different interpretation of the timing of events in Jesus's final week, an interpretation that seeks to harmonize seeming discrepancies between the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John.

In Nibley's words, "Israel escaped both pessimism and fatalism by being constantly reminded by the prophets of the great pre-existent plan that lies behind everything that happens. This we believe to be the most significant element in the expanding Gospel" (27). That Good News continues today to expand in ways that God has chosen to impart his knowledge and reassurance to all who will listen to and learn of him.