

Austin Farrer on Rational Argument and Belief

Key Scripture Moroni 10:3–5

Explanation Elder Neal A. Maxwell once quoted philosopher Austin Farrer, who stated that although rational argument—that is, reasoning based on careful study of relevant evidence—does not necessarily create belief, it fosters an atmosphere conducive to it. Research in scientific, archaeological, and linguistic fields often elucidates ancient texts, the Book of Mormon included. Scholars who argue in favor of the ancient origins and character of the Book of Mormon maintain a climate in which people may take that book seriously as a historical record, helping them to embrace and receive it.

Sources Quoted by Neal A. Maxwell in “Discipleship and Scholarship,” *BYU Studies* 32/3 (1992): 5. The statement also appears in Austin Farrer, “The Christian Apologist,” in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965).



Though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.

— *Austin Farrer, 1965*