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***FARMS Review* Takes Up Doctrinal Issues, Restoration Accounts, Science vs. Religion**

As editor of the *FARMS Review*, Daniel C. Peterson is well acquainted with critics' opinions about it, FARMS in general, and, by extension, the Maxwell Institute. In his introduction to the latest *FARMS Review* (vol. 18, no. 2, 2006), Peterson responds to the critics by exploring the meaning of the term *apologetics* ("arguing . . . for or against any position") and demonstrating at length how the term applies to the Maxwell Institute and its publications. He cautions that the term is relevant only to a portion of the Maxwell Institute's work. "The garden of faith, like most gardens, requires both weeding and watering," Peterson writes. "While the *FARMS Review* does most of the weeding for the organization, FARMS as a whole expends considerably more effort on nourishing." He goes on to candidly address 11 recurring questions centering on the editorial philosophy of the *FARMS Review*, its peer-review process, and the academic merit of its content.

David L. Paulsen and Cory G. Walker evaluate Douglas J. Davies's *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace and Glory*. They note that while this book (written by a highly qualified non-Mormon scholar with special interest in the academic study of Mormonism) provides a "deeper understanding of the Mormon culture of salvation" and "makes a substantial contribution to Mormon studies," it falls short on three significant topics: the relationships of temple work to worship, of grace to works, and of Christ's suffering both in Gethsemane and on Calvary to the atonement.

For example, as a corrective to Davies's view that Latter-day Saint "temple work" values work over worship, the reviewers draw on the Bible and the Book of Mormon to show that work can be a form of worship and that selfless service in the temple on behalf of the dead is "worship of the highest order." They go on to clarify the roles of grace and works in salvation and to refute the idea that Mormon emphasis on Christ's suffering in Gethsemane (accurately characterized as Christ's

proactive role in redeeming mankind) eclipses the importance of his death on the cross (his passive role, according to Davies). "Gethsemane and the cross are both necessary phases of the process of atonement," the reviewers emphasize.

Although Davies's analysis is shown to be at odds with Latter-day Saint self-understanding on certain points of belief and practice, it is generally "marked with clarity and insight." Paulsen and Walker "look forward to future works penned by Davies and the spur they will provide to clarify and deepen our own understanding of our faith."

The *FARMS Review* also includes Kevin L. Barney's appraisal of *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, edited by John W. Welch and Erick B. Carlson. The volume compiles dozens of primary documents relating to the First Vision, the Book of Mormon translation, the restoration of the priesthood and of temple keys, succession in the presidency, and other foundational events of the Restoration, with each genre introduced by an interpretive essay. "These are not matters of minor historical detail," writes Barney. "They go rather to the very heart of the truth claims made by the Church and therefore to its reason for being."


Barney views such comprehensive collections as a boon to researchers who wish to undertake a detailed examination of primary sources in order to reach conclusions of their own. He notes that several of the genres were pioneered by *BYU Studies* but have been updated and expanded in ways that mark the bulk of the collection "either new or essentially new." Dean C. Jessee's chapter on the earliest documented accounts of the First Vision is a prime example. An expansion of Jessee's seminal 1969 article, it adds subsequently discovered documents that make that section "the most complete resource for the early First Vision account." Barney notes many other highlights and concludes, "Everyone with an interest in the origins of Mormonism, whether as a matter of faith or simply as an academic interest, should read this book."

Another essay in the *FARMS Review* is "Orders of Submission," Louis Midgley's take on the Southern Baptist Convention's attitude toward Mormons. Having examined the 2005 issue of the *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*,

which was devoted to articles on Mormons and their beliefs, Midgley concludes that since the SBC event in Salt Lake City in 1998, Southern Baptist leaders have only slightly moderated their anti-Mormon views. Analyzing the 1998 convention itself, Midgley describes some of the vicious anti-Mormon literature prepared especially for the event. He compares the Southern Baptist leaders' statements during the convention with the articles in the 2005 *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* and observes that although some countercultist publishers have been marginalized in the Protestant community, Baptist leadership continues to encourage the promulgation of falsehoods about Latter-day Saint beliefs. And worse, they do it under the guise of love. Daniel C. Peterson notes in his introduction that Midgley's conclusions "raise questions about the efficacy of continued conversations with those whose primary interest is in securing the submission of the Saints."

Also in this number of the *FARMS Review*, Egyptologist Kerry Muhlestein sizes up *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant*, a 2005 FARMS publication edited by John Gee and Brian M.

Hauglid. In addition, physical chemist Robert R. Bennett and philosopher Richard Sherlock, in separate essays, ably grapple with imagined tensions and incompatibilities between Mormonism and science. In responding to the hasty conclusions drawn by one disaffected Latter-day Saint, Bennett offers reasoned, faithful perspectives on why it is folly "to presume to limit God by virtue of man's current understanding of the physical universe." In similar fashion, Sherlock enters the controversy of intelligent design—the idea that the complexities of living beings point to an intelligent creator and cannot be explained solely on the basis of randomness and natural selection. He explains pertinent terms and concepts, addresses the charge that the theory shortcuts science, and lays out a case for why Latter-day Saints and serious Christians "generally should be sympathetic to and supportive of intelligent design" and accepting of "God's intervention in nature."

To view the *FARMS Review* online or to purchase a copy, please visit the Maxwell Institute Web site (maxwellinstitute.byu.edu). 

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that her son was filled with the Holy Ghost from birth implies that Elisabeth was a person of holy ways and habits, Brown said.

Brown then sketched what family life in rural Nazareth may have been like, and he described Jewish traditions of betrothal and marriage that probably affected Mary, Joseph, and Elisabeth. Though from different tribes, Elisabeth (of Levi) and Mary (of Judah) were emotionally close enough for Mary to journey 100 miles for an extended stay with her cousin. Brown observed that the cousins must have had a common relative who married outside the tribe and that, though rare, such marriages did take place in ancient Israel. Their homes were settings where Mary and Elisabeth underwent some of their most sacred experiences, including John's birth, Elisabeth's prophecy of the Savior,

Zacharias's recovery of his speech, and the angel Gabriel's annunciation to Mary.

According to Brown, Luke 1 and 2 are stories of beginnings: the beginning of fulfilled prayers for Zacharias and Elisabeth, the beginning of Mary's experiences as the mother of the Savior, and the beginning of the miracles that heralded the Messiah's birth. Though little is known of their lives, Mary and Elisabeth influenced not only the spiritual development of their sons but also, through them, the lives of all who would follow Jesus Christ.

The lectures will continue on Wednesday nights through April 11, with most speakers drawn from BYU's Religious Education faculty. Upcoming *Insights* reports will cover the presentations by two Maxwell Institute scholars: John W. Welch ("The Five Faces of the Savior in the Sermon on the Mount," January 17) and Andrew C. Skinner ("Crucifixion and Resurrection," March 21). 