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Abstract Review of *Die Mormonen: Sekte oder neue Kirche Jesu Christi?* (1995), by Rüdiger Hauth.

Rüdiger Hauth. *Die Mormonen: Sekte oder neue Kirche Jesu Christi?* Freiburg: Herder, 1995. 189 pp. DM 15.80.

Reviewed by Daniel C. Peterson

Skin Deep

For Christians, it is hardly possible to work up a positive attitude toward a system that presents itself in its public propaganda as “Christian” but in reality bases itself on unbiblical and unchristian elements, and on wild, rank human fantasy. (p. 188)

I have now been editing this *FARMS Review of Books* for the better part of a decade. At intervals over that time, I have examined a few of the books that emerge each year out of the ever-seething cauldron in which professional despisers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints seem to dwell.

It is, I will confess, an increasingly wearisome chore. I have joked about the film that my colleague William Hamblin and I want to produce: *Bill and Dan's Excellent Adventure in Anti-Mormon Zombie Hell*. Like others who occasionally feel called upon to survey the dreary precincts of the fundamentalist anti-Mormon demimonde, we are growing tired of the tendency—very widespread among these crusading ministries and publications—endlessly to repeat arguments that have been answered years ago, to ignore counterevidence and opposing interpretations, to proceed in blissful and sometimes even defiant ignorance of crucial data. It is truly difficult, for one who, like me, enjoyed spending

I wish to thank Dr. William J. Hamblin for his helpful comments on an early draft of this review, and Deborah D. Peterson, Dr. Stephen D. Ricks, and the incomparable Michael Lyon for helping me to track down several references. Professors Luther Giddings, Mark J. Johnson, Hans-Wilhelm Kelling, and Madison Sowell usefully responded to last-minute questions. All translations contained herein are mine unless otherwise indicated.

an adolescent hour or two watching old horror films, not to think of those black-and-white Grade B monster movies, with their advancing hordes of mindless zombies whom no number of direct hits could ever quite stop. A new book has now appeared, for instance, that (incredible as it may seem and surely is) resurrects the Spaulding theory of Book of Mormon origins and reprints in toto the propaganda on the book of Abraham produced by the late but still disgraced charlatan Dee Jay Nelson.¹ Is there no conservation group that can stop this? How many trees will continue to be slaughtered merely to print—and then, again and again, to re-print—such materials?

Evidence-twisting, neglect of relevant scholarship, astonishing bouts of illogic, double standards, and absurd exaggerations amuse for a while. Then they begin to pall. Consider Sandra Tanner, one of the most prominent representatives of the (relatively) “respectable” wing of the anti-Mormon movement. “Mormonism,” she declared recently in a video produced by and for the Southern Baptist Convention,

is truly a different religion. It isn't just a brand of Christianity. Its theology is so radically different that it is . . . Its theology is as close to Christianity as Hinduism. It's a totally different view of man and God and creation. Everything about it is different. They just use the same terms.²

¹ Leon Cornforth, *Meeting the Mormon Challenge with Love: The Book for Mormons* (n.pl.: by the author, 1997). For a hilarious and utterly devastating exposé of “Prof.”/“Dr.” Dee Jay Nelson that I once naively thought had put an end to his pretensions (and should in fact have done so), see Robert L. Brown and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive: A Study of Anti-Mormon Deception* (Mesa: Brownsworth, 1981). The definitive word on Solomon Spaulding's purported authorship of the Book of Mormon is probably Lester E. Bush Jr., “The Spaulding Theory Then and Now,” *Dialogue* 10/4 (1977): 40–69. However, compare Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1975), 68, 143, 442–56, where a hostile critic of the Prophet also recognizes that the Spaulding theory is dead.

² *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints* (Alpharetta, Ga.: North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 1997). According to Jerald and Sandra Tanner's newsletter, the *Salt*

Now, really. Is a person who can utter such nonsense—especially in a video designed for the official curriculum of a major Protestant denomination—to be taken seriously? How much credibility can such a person claim as an observer of the faith of the Latter-day Saints? One would very much like to pose a few questions to Ms. Tanner: What, for example, is the role of the Vedas or of the Upanishads in Latter-day Saint devotions? How central is the concept of *karma* to Mormon theology? What have the leaders of the church had to say about reincarnation, or the transmigration of souls? Is there any passage in Mormon scripture that advocates a rigid and complex caste system? Has an atheistic form of Mormonism, analogous to the Hindu atheist movements, been a fruitful element in Latter-day Saint intellectual history? Which is closer to Hindu monistic teaching, the Mormon concept of the Godhead or classical post-Nicene trinitarianism? Can Ms. Tanner name any Latter-day Saint hymn devoted to Vishnu? Would she care to comment on the rising *bhakti* movement among the followers of Joseph Smith? On the chanting of saffron-robed Mormon missionaries at American airports? (*Hare Joseph!*) How much can she possibly know about Hinduism, that she makes such silly remarks?

Ms. Tanner is, of course, and as one surely might expect, somewhat more familiar with Mormonism. But, even here, the work she and her husband have produced over the several decades of their peculiar careers in professional anti-Mormon propaganda is far, very far, from reliable. In the periodicals published by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) alone, the following substantial critiques of their writings have appeared—and have gone, for the most part, without serious response from the Tanners (much less from any of their dependents):

- L. Ara Norwood, review of *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 158–69.

Lake City Messenger 93 (November 1997): 1, the Interfaith Witness Division of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Missions Board plans to distribute 40,000 copies of the video to local Baptist pastors and to translate it into six or eight foreign languages.

- Matthew Roper, review of *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 170–87.
- John A. Tvedtnes, review of *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 188–230.
- Matthew Roper, review of *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 4 (1992): 169–215.
- William J. Hamblin, review of *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 5 (1993): 250–72.
- Tom Nibley, review of *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 5 (1993): 273–89.
- Matthew Roper, “Comments on the Book of Mormon Witnesses: A Response to Jerald and Sandra Tanner,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 164–93.
- Matthew Roper, review of *Answering Mormon Scholars: A Response to Criticism of the Book “Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon,”* by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 156–203.
- John A. Tvedtnes, review of *Answering Mormon Scholars: A Response to Criticism of the Book “Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon,”* by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 204–49.
- John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper, review of “Joseph Smith’s Use of the Apocrypha,” by Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *FARMS Review of Books* 8/2 (1996): 326–72.
- Matthew Roper, review of *Answering Mormon Scholars: A Response to Criticism Raised by Mormon Defenders*, Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *FARMS Review of Books* 9/1 (1997): 87–145.

Remember that Sandra Tanner represents comparatively *responsible* fundamentalist anti-Mormonism. I have not so much as mentioned zany madcaps like Ed Decker and his associates, whom

Ms. Tanner herself quite properly holds in disdain.³ But her loony arraignment of the Latter-day Saints as more Hindu than Christian is exactly the kind of charge that Ed Decker would make. Indeed, he *has* made it. Repeatedly.⁴ So the question forcibly asserts itself: Is there any Protestant critic of the church out there who actually merits serious attention?

When first I heard that a German scholar by the name of Rüdiger Hauth had published an examination of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints entitled *Tempelkult und Totentaufe* ("Temple Ritual and Baptism for the Dead"), I was intrigued. Confident, of course, that the book would be skeptical, even negative or hostile, as the great Eduard Meyer's *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* had been, I nonetheless looked forward to a stimulating encounter between Mormonism and the solid erudition of Teutonic *Wissenschaft*. It would have been a refreshing change. One does finally grow weary of raking through trash.

I have still not seen *Tempelkult und Totentaufe*. My enthusiasm for it has nonetheless waned considerably. Following a recent

³ For those willing to wade through such materials, specimens of Jerald and Sandra Tanner's low opinion of Ed Decker's work are available in the Tanners' newsletter, the *Salt Lake City Messenger* 67 (April 1988); as well as in Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *The Lucifer-God Doctrine: A Critical Look at Charges of Luciferian Worship in the Mormon Temple, with a Response to the Decker-Schnoebelen Rebuttal*, enl. and rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1988); Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Serious Charges against the Tanners: Are the Tanners Demonized Agents of the Mormon Church?* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1991); Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Problems in The Godmakers II* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1993). Another vocal anti-Mormon paints an amusing and astonishing portrait of Mr. Decker in Wally Tope, "Poisoned" at Pizzaland: *The Revealing Case of Ed Decker's "Arsenic Poisoning"* (La Canada Flintridge, Calif.: Frontline Ministries, 1991). I myself have summarized some of Decker's allegations and antics—many volumes would be required to chronicle them in their breathtaking fullness—in Daniel C. Peterson, "P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 38–105.

⁴ For references to the charge as it is made by Decker and his associate Dave Hunt, see Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992), 13 n. 40; cf. 96–8. Dave Hunt, incidentally, is an *ecumenical* bigot. A recent report has him claiming—surprise!—that Catholicism is not Christian. See *First Things* 77 (November 1997): 81.

lecture in Salzburg, Austria, a non-Mormon scholar from the neighboring city of Innsbruck engaged me and a pair of colleagues in a good-natured discussion about the restoration. In the course of our chat, he showed us a copy of Rüdiger Hauth's *Die Mormonen: Geheimreligion oder christliche Kirche?* ("The Mormons: Secret Religion or Christian Church?") that he was working through in preparation for a symposium on "American religions" to be held a few weeks later in Braunau, near Austria's border with Germany. My curiosity was piqued, and I bought my own copy as soon as I could do so. (Inexplicably, though, the subtitle *Geheimreligion oder christliche Kirche?* survives only on the title page of my edition. On its cover, the subtitle now reads *Sekte oder neue Kirche Jesu Christi?* ("Sect or New Church of Jesus Christ?").⁵ I also managed to pick up another book by Hauth, a more general one, entitled *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* (roughly, "Little Catechism of Cults"), to which I will occasionally have reference in the course of this review.⁶

Rüdiger Hauth earned a doctorate in the study of religion in Denmark, at the University of Århus. Since 1971, he has served as the officially designated authority on "Cults and Questions of Worldview" (*Beauftragter für Sekten und Weltanschauungsfragen*) for the established Protestant church of the German state of Westphalia. As I mentioned previously, in 1985 he published a book about the Mormons (possibly based on his Århus doctoral dissertation) entitled *Tempelkult und Totentaufe*. Impressive credentials, it would seem. My eagerness to read *Die Mormonen* nonetheless turned very soon to intense disappointment. A nineteenth-century wag once said of Richard Wagner that his music isn't really as bad as it sounds. Maybe, maybe not. But *Die Mormonen* and the *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* offer nothing to

⁵ The German word *Sekte* has, however, a stronger connotation than English *sect*—approximating in its force the more obviously negative *cult*. It has been said that a *cult* is simply a religion without political power. In German-speaking Europe, for the so-called *Sekten*, that may be literally true. Of course, it would also have been true for pre-Constantinian Christianity. For a discussion of the pejorative word *cult*, see Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 193–212.

⁶ Rüdiger Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1982).

suggest that Rüdiger Hauth's scholarship is any better than it reads.

Die Mormonen is a very shallow book. While not generally marked by the overt nastiness that characterizes so much anti-Mormon writing, it is an unashamedly hostile assault on the faith of the Latter-day Saints. (I should have been warned by the fact that it appears in a series on "Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen" (i.e., "Cults, Fringe Groups, and Worldviews") that includes a volume entitled *Satanismus*.) Like many anti-Mormons, Rüdiger Hauth complains that the basic missionary lessons omit peculiarly Latter-day Saint teachings on such subjects as temple worship, baptism for the dead, the doctrine of eternal progression, and the plurality of gods (p. 10). It is his self-assigned mission, one presumes, to remedy the Mormons' oversight. Still, he scarcely discusses the latter two topics and, as we shall have occasion to note below, gives the former two only the most dogmatically superficial of glances.

Shallow, yes. But Hauth is hardly subtle. "Is the critical observer not forced to the conclusion," he rhetorically demands on page 125, "that . . . false prophets in a false religion constantly spread false teachings?" Sometimes Hauth's antagonism is evident in his choice of language, as in his use of the term "fantasies" (*Phantasien*) to describe the teachings of Mormon leaders (p. 58), his assignment of the Book of Mormon to the category of "fantasy literature" (p. 172), and, on page 124, his description of an element of Latter-day Saint temple worship as a "most curious gag" (*kuriösester Gag*).⁷ These are not mere passing lapses in taste and tact. The same disrespectful language marks Hauth's earlier *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* as well: "Just as confused and fairy-tale-like (*märchenhaft*) as the story of the coming-forth of this 'American Bible,' to be sure, is its content." The Book of Mormon, Hauth writes, is nothing more than "a fanciful adventure novel" (*phantasievoller Abenteuerroman*), and the story it relates "freely invented."⁸ Hauth cannot be bothered,

⁷ He is fond of the word *Phantasie*, using it also at Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 45, to denigrate the faith of the Latter-day Saints, and using the English words *Science-fiction/Fantasy* to describe Mormon doctrine, at Hauth, *Die Mormonen*, 187.

⁸ Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 48-9.

though, to tell us exactly just what it is in the Book of Mormon that he finds so ineffably ludicrous. Why, precisely, the Book of Mormon's account of Christ's visit among the Nephites is "downright fanciful" (*recht phantasievolle*) (p. 82), while the New Testament narrative of Christ's virgin birth, many miracles, and resurrection is not, *Die Mormonen* does not even try to explain. This will not be the last time that we shall encounter Rüdiger Hauth's manifest double standard.

Hauth's hostility is betrayed even in the way he describes the shameful and historically undeniable persecutions of the Saints in the nineteenth century. Or, perhaps better, in the way he glosses over them. Thus, for example, he reports the mob-driven movement of the Mormons toward the ever more distant frontier without any mention—much less any condemnation—of the mobs: "From early 1831 on, the activities of the Mormons moved in several stages farther to the West" (p. 25). Instead, he rather gently explains that the Latter-day Saints' bizarre beliefs and practices made it impossible for surrounding Christians to accept them, which led to "constant unrest" and "hostile encounters with non-Mormons and government officials," all of which he blames firmly on the members of the church. Indeed, his only criticism in this regard is reserved for the Latter-day Saints, who have declined to acknowledge their guilt for their own violent history (pp. 25–6). The Mormons' beliefs, he complains on page 161, deviate "completely from Christian 'common sense.' This discrepancy was and is, again and again, perceived by Christians as extremely provoking [*höchst provozierend*]." So it is the Mormons' fault. Their beliefs are irritating. Their very existence is an offense to their neighbors, and they evidently deserve everything they get.

Hauth plainly does not wish interreligious dialogue to become any more pleasant than it already has, and he defends his own aggressive polemical style against those who would prefer a little more charity. In his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, for example, he praises a certain Rev. Günther Siedenschnur, evidently a predecessor of his in the profession of assaulting minority religions: "He is to be thanked for having insisted on the concept of 'Sekte' [= approximately, English *cult*] as a means of differentiating in the confrontation between clearly sectarian [i.e., 'cultic'] groups and the Christian community, even when various sides urged

[him] to give up this 'defamatory' term and to 'overcome' it."⁹ (An observer of the American anti-Mormon scene can hardly fail to be reminded of people like Kurt Van Gorden, Ed Decker, and Robert Morey, and their very similar praise of the late "Dr." Walter Martin.)

The main theme of his book, Hauth says, is to investigate whether or not Mormonism is a Christian church or a secret religion. I won't keep you in suspense as to his ultimate answer:

Mormonism is a syncretistic, non-Christian religion [*nicht-christliche Mischreligion*] that arose in America, at the core of which is a secret cult performed in temples. (p. 186)

Offering essentially no other support or substantiation beyond his own authority, such as it is, Hauth describes Mormonism as an eclectic and chaotic stew of "patriotic American traits," new revelations, ancient Judaism, gnosticism, "Science-fiction/Fantasy" (he gives these terms in English), esotericism, Freemasonry, occultism, and magic (pp. 186-7). ("Christianity" is notable among these "elements" only for its absence from Hauth's list. It was apparently not even a minor contributing factor in the creation of Mormonism.) Although it is technically true that Hauth does not actually use the word *syncretistic*, alleged Mormon syncretism is clearly the sense and intent of his comments, and is the best translation—and perhaps the only idiomatic one available, since "mix-religion" scarcely seems English—of the term he does choose to employ (*Mischreligion*). (Gerhard Wahrig's authoritative *Deutsches Wörterbuch* defines *Synkretismus* as a "Verschmelzung mehrerer Religionen, verschiedener Auffassungen, Standpunkte, usw" ["an amalgamation of several religions, various conceptions, points of view, etc."]).¹⁰ In this regard, a comment from the illustrious French orientalist Henry Corbin seems apropos: "Nothing," wrote Corbin, "justifies the use of the facile term 'syncretism', a term only too often employed either in order to discredit a doctrine or else to disguise the maladroitness

⁹ Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 6.

¹⁰ Gerhard Wahrig, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon-Verlag, 1974), s.v. "Synkretismus."

of an unacknowledged dogmatism.”¹¹ If Corbin had not died in 1978, one might have imagined him to be addressing Rüdiger Hauth personally. “Joseph Smith,” Hauth says, “appears to have soaked up like a dry sponge everything that seemed interesting and useful to him for the construction of his new belief system” (p. 188). Therefore, Hauth decrees, the Latter-day Saints’ self-identification as Christians must be “energetically contradicted, from a biblical and Christian point of view” (p. 186).

In order to justify his hostility, and to encourage others to feel a similar emotion, Hauth furnishes a fair amount of supposed evidence against the Latter-day Saints. Unfortunately, though, his evidence is far too often purely rhetorical, distorted, or even fabricated.

For example, Hauth uses quotation marks liberally. Thus, in his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, he declares that a common characteristic of “cults” (*Sekten*) is their prohibition of criticism (*Kritikverbot*):

One can scarcely name a cult that allows its adherents the possibility of making any criticism of its doctrine, organization, or leaders. In accord with its self-understanding as the “true, salvific community,” criticism can logically be regarded only in a negative light. The Mormons, for instance, describe critics within their own ranks as “trees with decaying spots that will someday become entirely rotten and fall off, if they do not give up their criticism.” Membership in a cult must, therefore, for the most part, be purchased at the cost of intellectual submission—i.e., the surrender of individual freedom of thought.¹²

It is a damning point, of course, and one with which many opponents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would enthusiastically agree. Even evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants have taken, in recent years, to echoing the claims of secularizing critics of Mormonism that Latter-day Saints lack intellec-

¹¹ Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Liadain Sherrard and Philip Sherrard (London: Kegan Paul, 1993), 154.

¹² Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 14.

tual freedom. It is difficult to imagine, however, that their own seminaries and colleges, with, say, their common insistence on the inerrancy of the Bible, would be any more palatable to the secularists. I rather doubt that a preacher who denied the deity of Christ, or praised homosexuality, or rejected the four gospels as an accurate record of the ministry of Jesus, or disputed belief in a life after death and a final judgment, would last long at the pulpit of any church of the Southern Baptist Convention. Nor, of course, *should* he. Churches have a right, and indeed a duty, to watch over such matters.

I will not go into the issue here, except to say that, based on my own rather extensive experience with the church on four continents, including years of teaching at the church's university, the claim of Mormon mind-control seems to me wholly misleading, if not utterly false. I myself find the message of the restoration intellectually exhilarating.¹³ Besides, Hauth's condemnation of the Latter-day Saints and other targets simply echoes the charge routinely made against religious faith in general by people who style themselves "freethinkers" (*Freidenker*). It was a charge made anciently against the early Christians.¹⁴ Thus there is rich irony in Hauth's accusation, coming as it does from an official spokesman for one of the German state churches. But notice furthermore that, in condemning all the "cults," Hauth cites evidence regarding only the Latter-day Saints. And just where does he get his revealing Latter-day Saint quotation? (It is a saying that I, for one, have never encountered in my life.) Who knows? No footnote is given for anything in the paragraph. Not a single source is mentioned. Which is to say that not one piece of real supporting evidence is cited for his negative portrayal of the Latter-day Saints on this matter, let alone for his sweeping verdict on the widely disparate collection of religious and ideological movements that he artificially groups together under the speciously objective classification of *Sekten*.

¹³ With others, I discuss this matter in Susan Easton Black, ed., *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1996).

¹⁴ See R. Joseph Hoffmann, trans., *Celsus: On the True Doctrine, A Discourse against the Christians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 27–8.

Moreover, is it really plausible to label the Latter-day Saints mindless automatons, when so many of them have distinguished themselves as business leaders, diplomats, high-ranking government officials, educators, physicians, scientists, and scholars?¹⁵ Latter-day Saint prominence in the marketplace is well-known. In education, Mormons have presided over major institutions such as the University of California, Ohio State University, the Harvard Business School, and the United States Department of Education, to name just a few. Several have served at the cabinet level in the U.S. federal government, as judges and legislators, and as governors, and some have held equivalent positions elsewhere. Is Hauth's not-so-implicit portrayal of Mormons as mind-controlled robots believable? Doesn't so serious and insulting a charge as this require evidence? At least a little bit? The world's ten million Latter-day Saints are distributed across every continent and can be found at literally every social, economic, and educational level. They interact constantly with non-Mormons in every kind of social transaction. Are they really, as Hauth implies, sociologically indistinguishable from a fifty-person apocalyptic commune hiding out in some remote mountain compound?

Hauth abuses quotation marks again when, in the title of a section of his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, he refers to the "'Almighty' Mormon Priesthood."¹⁶ It is undeniably true, of course, that Latter-day Saints believe the priesthood loaned to them on earth to be akin to the power by which God himself framed the worlds. And they do, indeed, frequently refer to "almighty God." But what Latter-day Saint writer has referred to the priesthood itself as "almighty"? And what did he or she in-

¹⁵ Kenneth R. Hardy, "Social Origins of American Scientists and Scholars," *Science* (9 August 1974): 497-506, documents the Mormon cultural region's disproportionately high production of scientists. (As I write, a graduate of the church's Brigham Young University has just won the 1997 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.) Erich R. Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) offers a good overview of certain interactions between Mormons, Mormon doctrine, and science. Had he read it, Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 308-35, would have cautioned Hauth against his disparaging generalization.

¹⁶ Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 52.

tend by it? There is no way of knowing, since, once again, Hauth cites no reference.

Generally, though, Hauth seems to use his quotation marks as the typographical equivalent of a wink, a sneer, or a disparaging snort, rather than in an effort to manufacture pseudo-evidence. Thus he consistently refers to the Urim and Thummim under the rather pejorative term *Prophetenbrille* (roughly, “prophet spectacles”), which, although it is used by no Latter-day Saint sources of which I am aware, he places within quotation marks.¹⁷ On pages 54 and 108 of *Die Mormonen*, Hauth places the term “temple Mormons” (*Tempelmormonen*) within quotation marks, as if it were a common term among the Latter-day Saints.¹⁸ So far as I can tell, however, it is an invention of anti-Mormon propagandists; Latter-day Saints do not use it.

On page 65, Hauth explains that the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles are referred to by Mormons as, collectively, “The Big Fifteen.” He not only places the phrase within quotation marks but gives it in its presumably authentic original English. I would like to see one source for it. If Latter-day Saints commonly use the phrase, Hauth ought to be able to name at least one specific Latter-day Saint who does so—and, preferably, refer us to a published source. (This is scientific fieldwork at its best. The back cover of his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* reports that Hauth has actually visited the United States, among other exotic places, in the course of his research. I can only hope that the practical joker who supplied this laughable expression to the gullible Dr. Hauth will get to see it in print.)

Throughout *Die Mormonen*, over and over and over again, Latter-day Saints worship not God but “God.” They don’t have theologians, but “theologians.” Their sacred rituals are not holy, but only “holy.” Similarly, they believe in the “Holy Ghost,” in “translation,” “revelation,” “prophets,” “apostles,” “bishops,” “sealings,” and a sort of “gospel”; they have “apologists”; and they practice mere “baptism,” which grants them admission to what turns out to be not a genuine church but only a “church”—from all of which the simple fools nonetheless expect to receive

¹⁷ So, too, in his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 37.

¹⁸ Compare page 183; also Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 42.

“blessings.” The effect of this punctuation style is to distance Hauth from putatively absurd Mormon claims, but it is also demeaning and, in the long run, rather like the Chinese water torture—wearisome and extremely irritating.¹⁹ (Unlike Chinese water torture, however, it probably does no long-term damage to the victim.)

Perhaps the most outrageous example of his use of quotation marks comes, however, when Hauth discusses the former church policy of denying priesthood ordination to men of black African descent. He cites page 527 of the 1966 edition of Bruce R. McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine* as saying, according to his own translation, “Die Evangeliumsbotschaft von der Erlösung gilt ihnen nicht” (p. 42). What does this mean? Literally rendered back into its purportedly original English, it means “The gospel message of salvation does not apply to them [i.e., to blacks].” In other words, Elder McConkie seems to be announcing, blacks are fated to be damned; God, he seems to assert, doesn’t care about them, and they have no hope of salvation. But what does the passage really say? If one examines the actual text of the 1966 edition, the supposed source of Hauth’s quotation, one finds something rather different: “The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them,” reads the corresponding English phrase. There is no claim here that, somehow, the gospel and the atonement have no saving power for blacks; there is only the quite accurate statement that, at that time, in 1966, missionaries of the church were not actively and deliberately targeting people of black African descent for conversion. Hauth’s misrendering of the passage transmogrifies it from what it really was, a simple description of then-contemporary policy, into a chilling theological prescription (or proscription). One cannot, however, excuse Hauth’s error as merely the result of incompetent translation. He has also yanked the statement quite violently out of its full

¹⁹ His reference to Latter-day Saint belief in “resurrection” (p. 53) is baffling; the Mormon concept of resurrection is essentially identical to that held by large sectors of orthodox Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. (The urge to sneer may simply have a momentum of its own, carrying our author further than he consciously intends.) Perhaps, of course, he rejects the concept. But, by traditional standards of orthodoxy, that would put *him* on the heretical fringes, not the Mormons.

context. In the original edition of *Mormon Doctrine*, which *Die Mormonen* claims to be citing, the full passage reads as follows:

The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them (Moses 7:8, 12, 22), although sometimes negroes search out the truth, join the church, and become by righteous living heirs of the celestial kingdom of heaven. President Brigham Young and others have taught that in the future eternity worthy and qualified negroes will receive the priesthood and every gospel blessing available to any man.²⁰

Small but significant distortions of Mormon teaching repeatedly make the restoration an easier target for Hauth's criticisms.²¹ Thus, for instance, his claim that Latter-day Saint doctrine Americanizes the "salvation history" of the world is, at best, a serious oversimplification (pp. 81, 186–7). It must be admitted, of course, that better scholars than Rüdiger Hauth have seen the origins and appeal of Mormonism in an alleged American desire to provide a sacred history for their continent. It is also true that they have failed thereby to explain or even to notice the remarkable appeal the restoration had for nineteenth-century Europeans. (At one time, there were very likely more Latter-day Saints in Britain than in Utah.) One is reminded of the equally reductionist theory, once quite fashionable, that sought to explain Islamic monotheism as a

²⁰ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 527, emphasis added.

²¹ This is the case with his discussion of temple clothing (p. 98), into which I will not enter. Sometimes, it is true, the errors have no evident motive. On pages 22, 58, and 187, for example, Hauth informs his readers that, according to the book of Abraham, God lives on a planet named Kolob. (Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 51.) But Abraham 3:9 says that "Kolob is set *nigh* unto the throne of God." Perhaps the misrepresentation heightens the perceived ridiculousness of Mormon theology. But twice giving the title of the president of the church as "Seer, Prophet, and Revelator" (pp. 25, 143), when it is actually "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," and "Diego de Lada" for "Diego de Landa" (p. 85), and "Wilford Woddruff" for "Wilford Woodruff" (p. 139) seem merely sloppy. On page 174, Hauth appears to insert the sword of Laban into the story of Coriantumr's beheading of Shiz, which serves no purpose other than, perhaps, to confirm that Hauth's knowledge of the Book of Mormon is severely limited. And where, precisely, in *Doctrine and Covenants* 132, does Hauth find a limit of ten plural wives? (See Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 40.)

product of Muḥammad's simple bedouin mind, hatched while he contemplated the simplicity of the desert sun as it beat down upon the vast, blank Arabian desert. Unfortunately for the theory, (1) Muḥammad was not a bedouin, (2) the real bedouins were, in fact, notoriously resistant to accepting Islam, (3) the Qur'ān was revealed in what was, by ancient Arabian standards, an urbanized environment, and (4) rather than using imagery derived from the desert sun and the vast emptiness that so enthralled romantic northern European orientalists, the Qur'ān is replete with commercial imagery and vocabulary. Scholars of Islam have long since abandoned the notion. One wonders how long it will take people like Rüdiger Hauth to see the folly of their equally reductionist theory. I'm not holding my breath.

Hauth also attempts to refashion Latter-day Saint teaching with his assertion that, "In contrast to the Mormons, Paul was . . . of the opinion that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God" (p. 56). For his invented contrast to be valid, one must necessarily presuppose that Mormons expect flesh and blood to do just that. But, of course, Latter-day Saints are fully familiar with I Corinthians 15:20, and have never taught anything to the contrary. Hauth is refuting a straw man. Again, his account of one element in Latter-day Saint belief concerning the second coming of Christ and the onset of the millennium (p. 82) would have been less alienating to his readers—and, obviously, less useful to Hauth's agenda—if he had bothered to mention its obvious roots in the Old Testament book of Daniel. And his contrived opposition between the Christian belief that one can be saved only through Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and Mormon insistence that the ordinances of the temple, on the other, are divinely instituted and divinely required (on p. 96) quite misleadingly suggests that Latter-day Saints imagine the ordinances of the temple to have value apart from Christ and his atonement. This is a grievous misrepresentation.

His summary on page 60 of "what Mormons think about Christ" grossly distorts actual Latter-day Saint teachings and emphasizes by downplaying their reliance on the four New Testament gospels, and focusing intently on concepts peculiar to Mormon doctrine, which, by displaying them out of their actual context, he hopes to make seem as odd as possible. He does much the same

thing in his discussion of the sacrament, or communion (pp. 72–3). Thus he effectively shrinks the broad area of common ground that Latter-day Saints share with other Christians and simultaneously greatly expands the relative importance of the areas in which we differ. (This is perhaps the most beloved, and certainly one of the most practical, of all the polemical techniques routinely used by anti-Mormon propagandists.)

Hauth's logic is often specious. His simple opposition of Mormonism and "Christianity" (as on pp. 49, 125–8, 134, 142, 148, 150, 160, 185), for instance, is a staple of anti-Mormon writing.²² But he is incorrect in thinking that, if something is not "a 'variant' of an element of Christian faith that is recognized in an ecumenical context," it must therefore be dismissed as "unchristian" (p. 148), or that everything that is distinct from "ecumenical Christendom" is, by that fact alone, "nonchristian" (p. 160).²³ He needs to argue for this proposition; it is not self-evident. For these are not the only two options. They do not exhaust the field, unless one wants to ascribe infallibility to modern-day ecumenical Christianity—a move that has no basis in either scripture, tradition, or reason.

Hauth attempts to rebut the Latter-day Saint claim of an apostasy from the primitive church by denying that there ever was a primitive church to be corrupted. His argument on this score is instructive:

From early Christian preaching . . . there is not a shred of evidence that Jesus expressly wanted, much

²² Hauth knows Stephen Robinson's book *Are Mormons Christians?* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991) in its 1993 German translation, but he seems not to grasp its arguments. Indeed, on page 166, Hauth rather haughtily dismisses Robinson, saying, "With his explanations, Robinson has made it clear that he understands nothing of either the Reformation or the doctrinal development of the historic church." I will leave it to the reader to decide whether Rüdiger Hauth is competent to make such a judgment. But I note that Professor Robinson earned his doctorate in biblical studies at a leading American university, that he has taught religion at Presbyterian-related Hampden-Sydney College and at Methodist-related Duke University and Lycoming College (where he chaired the department of religion) as well as at Brigham Young University, and that he has published widely in prestigious scholarly venues. It seems highly unlikely to me, on the face of things, that Hauth could be correct.

²³ Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 56.

less founded, a “church” in the modern sense. The unique ecclesiological utterance of Matthew 16:18f cannot, in the opinion of many New Testament scholars, be attributed with absolute confidence to Jesus himself, because, as a preacher of the dawning kingdom of God, he would hardly have thought of an organized “church.” One can first speak of such a thing much later, after various congregational structures and offices had evolved. (p. 164)

This is a fascinating specimen of reasoning. Notice that Hauth himself offers no evidence, merely the supposition of “many” modern (and obviously liberal Protestant) scholars of what was and was not possible for Jesus to think. Indeed, his position obliges him to suppress or eliminate one clearly troubling piece of evidence that seems to invalidate his claim, and so he attempts to remove Matthew 16:18 from consideration. (He is also implicitly forced to acknowledge, by the way, that his own career as a church official, and indeed the existence of that church, do not accord with Jesus’ views—which must, it would seem, have been wrong.) But, although his position manifestly rests on a tissue of suppositions and presuppositions, and although the most he can really say is that the evidence that is lethal to his argument cannot, “in the opinion of many [undefined] New Testament scholars,” be accepted “with absolute confidence,” he proceeds to dismiss the contrary Latter-day Saint position as if he had attained utter certainty: “If there was no ‘primitive church’ founded by Jesus, as the Mormons claim, it cannot, logically, have been ‘restored’ by Joseph Smith” (p. 164).

I hope Hauth’s other readers are precisely as impressed as I have been by such rigorous thinking. On the rather rare occasions when he actually cites scholarly authority, as in the instance above, he does it unconvincingly. Let us be ridiculously generous and assume for purposes of argument that ninety percent of New Testament scholars are ninety percent certain that Matthew 16:18 does not go back to Jesus. By applying some elementary mathematics to these absurdly inflated figures, we still arrive at only an 81% certain scholarly consensus on the matter. There is plenty of room for doubt. And why should we care, anyway, about any particular purported “scholarly consensus,” in the absence of argu-

ment or evidence? This is the worst kind of appeal to authority. Yet Hauth makes such appeals in several places. For example, he dismisses the Mormon concept of revelation as incorrect largely because it seems to conflict with the view of revelation taught by the late Swiss theologian Karl Barth and by certain contemporary Protestant thinkers (pp. 166–9).²⁴ But even for someone who both loves Switzerland and respects the brilliance of Karl Barth, the obvious question is, “So what?” Similarly, in his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, Hauth attempts to refute Mormon teaching on *theosis* or human deification by pure assertion—albeit by pure assertion grounded, first, in a passage from Karl Barth, and, second, in what is essentially a rejection of 2 Peter 1:4 as “Hellenistic.”²⁵ Again, one wishes for real argument and analysis, instead of sheer dogmatic pronouncement.

Hauth more or less correctly summarizes the teaching of the New Testament, that there is neither marrying (*Heiraten*) nor giving in marriage (*Verheiratetwerden*) following the resurrection (p. 154). But he improperly concludes that this implies that there is no “being married” (*Verheiratetsein*) in the life to come. His conclusion does not follow from his evidence, for the same reason that one cannot conclude that a building in which no weddings are performed (say, a physics laboratory or an auto assembly plant) is necessarily a building from which married people are banned.

Very commonly, Hauth offers no argument at all—not even a poor one. Indeed, his preferred method of attack seems to be by naked authorial fiat. Thus his description of the biblical concept of God as “solitary, eternal, and spiritual” (p. 58), although it reflects standard mainstream Christian notions, needs argument and evidence, not mere dogmatic declaration, as does his rather

²⁴ Pure assertion is also what one finds on this matter at Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 44–5.

²⁵ Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 55–6. At Hauth, *Die Mormonen*, 179, he attempts—in my view, quite incoherently—to evade Stephen Robinson’s patristic argument for the authentically Christian character of a doctrine of *theosis*. For the argument of an internationally prominent philosopher that approximates, at many points, to the Latter-day Saint position on eternal progression and the plurality of divine or divinized persons, see John H. Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980). (Professor Hick and I had occasion to discuss the similarities during breaks in a small symposium at the beginning of 1994 in Jerusalem.)

complacent allusion to “the Christian doctrine of the Trinity” (p. 63).²⁶ So, too, when Hauth claims that Mormons absorbed central elements of their beliefs from the “British Israel” movement (p. 85), it would be nice to see some supporting documentation, and at least a little bit of analysis. Moreover, Hauth’s confident allusion to creation from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) as an essential biblical doctrine is, to say the very least of it, highly debatable. The best contemporary scholarship—much of it in Hauth’s own native German—assigns the origin of the doctrine of *ex nihilo* creation to the period following the close of the New Testament canon.²⁷ Likewise, in his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, when he asserts that, “For Christians, there cannot and dare not be any scriptures besides the Bible,” the critical reader craves demonstration, not mere pontification.²⁸ Or are we to assume that the post-Reformation Protestant exaltation of the Bible as “the exclusive standard of faith (*sola scriptura*).”²⁹ is some sort of self-evident Kantian a priori, written in brilliant letters on the sky for Rüdiger Hauth but strangely invisible to Mormons?

Hauth repeatedly asserts, without analysis or argumentation, that this or that Latter-day Saint belief or practice must be classed

²⁶ On the very page (p. 63) where he equates Christianity with ontological trinitarianism, Hauth himself cites a passage from Latter-day Saint author Bill Forrest that, unanswered, represents a major threat to so naïve an assumption. But he doesn’t respond at all, and seems, indeed, not to have perceived his own danger. (At Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 104–5, he correctly admits that the New Testament does not clearly teach a developed doctrine of the trinity.) On anthropomorphism, Hauth should at least have noticed the positive appreciations of the Latter-day Saint position published by the non-Mormon scholars Edmond LaB. Cherbonnier (“In Defense of Anthropomorphism”) and Ernst W. Benz (“Imago Dei: Man in the Image of God”) in *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978), 155–73, 201–21. His argument against anthropomorphism on pages 179–81 (as at Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 51) consists largely of theologically motivated assertion and rhetoric, not analysis and evidence.

²⁷ See the discussion and references given at Daniel C. Peterson, “Does the Qur’an Teach Creation Ex Nihilo?” in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 1:584–610; also Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 95–6.

²⁸ Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 49; compare 71, 128.

²⁹ The phrase is from Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 16.

as “non-Christian” (e.g., at pp. 120, 186), although he has not expended the slightest effort to define *Christianity*, much less to explain on what basis or with what authority he presumes to do so. (To simply say, as he does on page 121, that Latter-day Saint teachings or ordinances have no basis in “general Christian practice” (*allgemeine christliche Praxis*)—a proposition to which Mormon scholarship would enthusiastically agree—does not by any means logically entail that such teachings or ordinances are not Christian, any more than saying that the birth of twins is not typical of general human births—an obviously true statement—would prove that twins are not human.)

Hauth is also given to the kind of exaggeration that characterizes polemicists, and separates them unmistakably from genuine scholars. “It must be clear to every Christian,” comments Hauth, “that the ‘God’ propagated by the Mormons, even if Smith gave him a biblical designation, has nothing to do with the true God of the Bible” (p. 124). Nothing? Does the God of the Latter-day Saints not share the same biblical story as the God of German Protestants? Did he not create the heavens and the earth, place Adam and Eve in the garden, send the flood, call Noah and Abraham, Moses and Isaiah, chastise, punish, and restore Israel, and send his Son as the Savior of humankind? Is the God in whom the Latter-day Saints believe not merciful, just, and loving? Does he not listen to and answer prayers? Has he not promised to raise us from the grave and offered us the opportunity to live forever in his presence? With such a remark Rüdiger Hauth truly does sink to the level of Sandra Tanner, or, even, of Robert McKay.

I have already mentioned Hauth’s flagrant double standard. It is on revealing display in his account of young Joseph and his family—which, to put it mildly, is not designed to build reader confidence in the Prophet’s claims.³⁰ Echoing an old anti-Mormon insult, for example, he suggests that Joseph inherited his alleged “tendency to irrationality” from his mother, Lucy Mack

³⁰ By and large, throughout his brief and superficial discussion of the Latter-day Saint story, he emphasizes the historically negative, to the point of exaggeration. Thus, for example, his passing reference to “struggles for succession” (*Nachfolgekämpfen*) following the death of Joseph Smith (p. 27; compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 39) is, in my view, too strong, and so rather misleading without additional explanation.

Smith (p. 11).³¹ We are, it seems, supposed to conclude from the fact that the Smith family claimed occasional divine communications, including significant dreams, that they were superstitious. Hauth, a Protestant theologian, gives no indication about what he makes of *Jesus'* family, all of whom—Joseph and Mary and Zechariah and Elizabeth, to say nothing of his cousin John—could easily be dismissed in the same way. And how many visions and revelations did the apostle Paul have? Was he “superstitious” and “irrational”? What of the distinctly weird visions of John the Revelator? What does Hauth think of Martin Luther, who held bedtime dialogues with the devil and imagined Satan to be pelting the ceiling with nuts and rolling wooden casks down the stairs of Wartburg Castle?³² If we are to use the spiritual life of the typical contemporary academic theologian as the measuring rod that determines what is and what is not religiously acceptable, what portion of the Bible—or, for that matter, of Christian history—will survive?

Hauth's double standard is again on view at page 124, where he faults an element of the Mormon temple ceremony for allegedly teaching that God is ignorant—precisely the objection made by ancient gnostics against the obviously parallel case of Genesis 3:9–13.³³

Another point in Hauth's book that betrays both his double standard and his uncritical assumptions is the notion that what is secret cannot be Christian, and that what is Christian cannot be secret. Hauth scarcely argues for this idea; for the most part, he simply assumes the disjunction as self-evident.³⁴ Hence the other subtitle for *Die Mormonen*, “Secret Religion or Christian Church?” Yet it is by no means obvious that a Christian church cannot have doctrines or practices that are not made fully public.

³¹ Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 36.

³² See Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1950), 193, 362.

³³ See *Hypostasis of the Archons* 90:19–29. On the same page, he criticizes Joseph Smith's adoption of the common English form of the divine name *Jehovah* as if it were somehow a mistake, rather than simply a use of accepted contemporary language (analogous to saying *Solomon* instead of the more accurate but rather unaesthetic *Shlomo*).

³⁴ The closest he comes to a serious argument on the subject is to be found on pages 184–5.

Many strands of early Christianity claimed secret teachings.³⁵ What does Hauth make of Paul's "boasting," in 2 Corinthians 12:1–4, about "a man in Christ"—most commentators think that it was Paul himself—"caught up to the third heaven," where he "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter"? Was Paul a Christian? If Rüdiger Hauth is willing to grant that Paul, despite his evident acceptance of religious secrecy, was a Christian, then Rüdiger Hauth cannot, consistently, expel the Latter-day Saints from Christendom for having ritual practices about which they prefer not to speak openly.

Hauth's failure to offer evidence of his own is paralleled by his refusal to acknowledge the evidence and arguments of the Latter-day Saints. Mormon temple worship, for example, is a major focus of *Die Mormonen*. (This portion of the book, I would judge, is every bit as dependent upon promise-breakers and upon the violation of solemn oaths and covenants as is the modern American culture of adultery, divorce, and serial monogamy.) Hauth uncritically offers up criticisms and contrasts with the ancient temple at Jerusalem without taking the slightest notice of the voluminous literature that Latter-day Saint scholars have produced on precisely the kinds of questions he raises.³⁶ For a person whose claim to scholarship rests largely upon his alleged expertise

³⁵ For a discussion of this question, with abundant references, see Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 110–7; also 36, 108.

³⁶ Hauth does recognize some "outward" similarities between modern and ancient temple practices on page 90. But *Die Mormonen* knows nothing of Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975); Hugh Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987); William J. Hamblin, "Aspects of an Early Christian Initiation Ritual," in *By Study and Also by Faith*, 1:202–21; Bruce H. Porter and Stephen D. Ricks, "Names in Antiquity: Old, New, and Hidden," in *By Study and Also by Faith*, 1:501–22; Todd M. Compton, "The Handclasp and Embrace as Tokens of Recognition," in *By Study and Also by Faith*, 1:611–42; Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992); Donald W. Parry, *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994). Nor can any trace be discerned of Truman G. Madsen, ed., *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984), in which both Mormon and very prominent non-Mormon scholars address the theme. Other important discussions could easily be listed here, but space and patience demand a halt.

on Mormon temple ordinances, this is a stunning omission. Latter-day Saint scholars have been extraordinarily active in the study of ancient temples, and their contributions have been recognized well beyond the boundaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, if not by Rüdiger Hauth.³⁷

It will not do simply to assert, as Hauth does on page 91, that the splitting of the veil of the Jerusalem temple at the time of the crucifixion of Christ rendered the temple meaningless for Christians. Other views are both possible and anciently attested. Why, otherwise, did Paul and other early Christians continue to worship in the temple? (See, for example, Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46; 21:26; and many other passages.) Nor is it sufficient to declare that early Christians built no temples, as if that fact, by itself, refuted Latter-day Saint beliefs. The earliest Christians built little or nothing of any kind.³⁸ (Similarly, when no temple was available, early Latter-day Saints not infrequently performed their rituals in other places; the room above Joseph Smith's store in Nauvoo, and Ensign Peak in Utah, come instantly to mind.)

To explain the Book of Mormon, Hauth invokes Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and Solomon Spaulding's *Manuscript Found* (pp. 17–18), betraying no awareness of the weakness of such explanations, which has regularly been pointed out by Latter-day Saint and other scholars.³⁹ Moreover, he chooses a handful "of the numerous inanities [*Ungereimtheiten*], errors, and

³⁷ Note, for example, Donald W. Parry, Stephen D. Ricks, and John W. Welch, eds., *A Bibliography on Temples of the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 1991); John M. Lundquist, *The Temple: Meeting Place of Heaven and Earth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993). A Latter-day Saint classicist examines temple-related motifs in Todd M. Compton, "The Whole Token: Mystery Symbolism in Classical Recognition Drama," *Epoché* 13 (1985): 1–81.

³⁸ See Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (n.pl.: Mercer University Press, 1985), 67. See also Hugh Nibley's essay, "The Passing of the Primitive Church: Forty Variations on an Unpopular Theme," in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 168–208, for a highly plausible explanation of the earliest Christian failure to construct temples and other houses of worship. This essay was first published in the non-Mormon scholarly journal *Church History* 30 (June 1961): 131–54.

³⁹ Manifestly unthreatened by Smith's and Spaulding's works, the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University has recently republished both of them. See also n. 1.

absurdities found in the Book of Mormon” for the amusement and edification of his readers (p. 173).⁴⁰ But each of his examples has been dealt with, again and again, by Latter-day Saint scholars over the past many decades.⁴¹ As is common with fundamentalist critics of the Book of Mormon (although somewhat unexpected from someone so willing to jettison verses of the Bible when they seem to lend support to Mormonism), Hauth overstates the archaeological support for the Old and New Testaments and ignores the work that has been done in support of Mormon scripture.⁴² “In contrast to the Bible,” writes Hauth, “whose historical, geographical, and cultural accounts have been confirmed by extrabiblical documents or the results of archaeological excavations, nothing of the sort can be said about the Book of Mormon” (p. 172).⁴³ It hardly needs to be pointed out that, on page 83, when he criticizes the Book of Mormon’s account of a sermon much like the Sermon on the Mount as it is recorded in Matthew, Hauth seems unaware of John W. Welch’s *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*, which has been available for years.⁴⁴

On page 172, Hauth compares the Book of Mormon to three indisputably modern apocryphal gospels, implicitly telling his readers that it is really no better than they are and no different from them. But it is *significantly* different. Over ten million living people of the most varied backgrounds and languages and nations

⁴⁰ Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), s.v. “Absurdity, *n.* A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one’s own opinion.”

⁴¹ Weariness, fear of boring my readers, and an overwhelming sense of *déjà vu* prevent me from listing Hauth’s accusations and even a few of the many cogent responses to them that have been published. Interested readers should contact the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) to learn about Book of Mormon scholarship and its answers to common criticisms.

⁴² On this point, see William J. Hamblin, “Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/1 (1993): 161–97. For examples of Hauth’s tendency to take a relatively low view of the Bible, or to demythologize its content, when such maneuvers suit his polemical purposes, see Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 56, 86; Hauth, *Die Mormonen*, 144–5.

⁴³ Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 49.

⁴⁴ John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990).

believe it to be the word of God. It has given rise to a large and rapidly growing religious movement of historical and political importance. It has, albeit unnoticed by Rüdiger Hauth, stimulated the creation of a considerable body of scholarship. And much, much more could be said. Can anything comparable be fairly observed of Edmond Székely's "Essene Gospel of Peace"? Of Gideon Ouseley's "Gospel of Perfect Life"? Of Mr. Levi H. Dowling's "Aquarian Gospel"?

In similar fashion, Hauth brushes the book of Abraham off in approximately two pages (pp. 23–5), without referring to the voluminous literature written in support of that document's authenticity.⁴⁵ Indeed, attempting to paint the situation as utterly bleak for the benighted Latter-day Saints, he cites Hugh Nibley from the 1 December 1967 issue of the *Daily Universe*, the student newspaper at Brigham Young University. (This is, so far as I can see, Professor Nibley's only appearance in *Die Mormonen*. Again, a striking omission, for a book focused to the extent that this one is on Latter-day Saint temple worship, where Dr. Nibley is universally acknowledged as a preeminent authority.) "This discovery is an unpleasant surprise [*eine böse Überraschung*] for Mormon scholars," says Hauth's Nibley (p. 25), reacting to Aziz Atiya's unexpected papyrus find at the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.

Hauth's Nibley virtually confirms the impression that *Die Mormonen* hopes its readers will take away from this episode: The Mormons were and are devastated by the recovery of the papyri, which prove both Joseph Smith and his book of Abraham to be frauds. But, this time, Hauth has given us the original English, and, as could perhaps have been predicted, it reads quite differently from his German reinvention of it: "LDS scholars are caught flat-footed by this discovery," exclaimed Professor Nibley, more than a little excitedly and in somewhat idiomatic American English. To be "caught flatfooted," of course, means to be taken by surprise, to be found unprepared. (The image is probably that of someone who is not poised and ready to run, but is simply standing still.) It

⁴⁵ An easily accessible introduction to some of the data is Daniel C. Peterson, "News from Antiquity ['Evidence supporting the book of Abraham continues to turn up in a wide variety of sources']," *Ensign* (January 1994): 16–21.

carries no necessarily negative connotations. Dr. Nibley was merely alluding to the relative lack of Egyptological expertise among the Mormons at the time and indicating that a great deal of work and study would be required before we could properly use and learn from the new materials that had just, without any warning, been dropped into our laps. And, in fact, Dr. Nibley's published work of the last three decades, which has focused largely on the book of Abraham and its context in Egypt and elsewhere, illustrates vividly the enthusiasm with which he has devoted himself to his task.⁴⁶ There is not a trace in it of the darkness and despair that Hauth's mistranslation would suggest to the German readers of *Die Mormonen*. (The burning question: Is it mere chance that Hauth's mistranslations invariably make the Mormons look bad?)

Readers should not, by the way, get the impression that Hauth's research had him combing the archives of the BYU student newspaper. He almost certainly obtained this quotation from his readings in anti-Mormon polemical literature, which serves him as an important source.⁴⁷ Thus a cursory survey of *Die Mormonen* yields references to such indispensable scholarly contributions by Jerald and Sandra Tanner as *Secret Writings of William Clayton* (on p. 29), *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality* (pp. 32, 173), and *The Bible and Mormon Doctrine* (p. 61). Einar Anderson (or Andersen; Hauth's spelling oscillates between the two), a prominent anti-Mormon propagandist of an earlier generation, is another vital resource for Hauth's scholarship (pp. 34, 139).⁴⁸ William Whalen's fairly hostile *The Latter-day Saints in the Modern Day World* makes its appearance on page 31.⁴⁹ Hauth is un-

⁴⁶ See, for example, Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), and Hugh W. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981).

⁴⁷ It would be an instructive exercise to try to reconstruct Hauth's reading in anti-Mormon literature. We could perhaps call his source "Q," representing the German word *Quatsch*.

⁴⁸ Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 57.

⁴⁹ Sometimes, however, Hauth gives inaccurate summaries of Mormon doctrine (as in his explanation of the former policy on blacks and the priesthood, on p. 42, where blacks are falsely equated with the one-third of the host of heaven who sided with Lucifer in the antemortal existence, or, less seriously, his questionable account of Latter-day Saint eschatology on p. 81) without troubling to cite any source at all.

acquainted with legitimate scholarship on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, so, undistracted by such writing, he has gone directly to the critics.

Hauth describes the founding narratives of the restoration as "a marvelous story," but he does not intend this description in a positive sense, for, although he himself seems to accept such biblical notions as the claim that God came down to earth as a mortal baby and then rose from the dead after crucifixion, he proceeds to dismiss the story of Joseph Smith as one that, "to a great degree, has the character of a fairy tale, and is therefore not to be evaluated according to the standards of normal historical writing" (p. 11). Unfortunately, his book affords no evidence that Hauth is aware of the large and impressive body of work on early Latter-day Saint history that has appeared from very reputable Mormon scholars in recent decades—scholars professionally trained in the art of "normal historical writing." So it is difficult to see on what basis he makes his judgment.

Nor does Hauth seem to understand the dynamics of American history in general. Or, if he does, he is unwilling to offer any explanation that would mitigate his depiction of the Latter-day Saints as evil and contemptible. Accordingly, when, in order to imply instability on their part, he points to Joseph Smith Sr.'s lack of a steady profession and to the Smith family's frequent moves (p. 11), he neglects to mention that, quite unlike the case in Europe, such things were the rule rather than the exception on the fluid American frontier.⁵⁰ In similar fashion, while treating the issue of priesthood and blacks (on pp. 42–3), Hauth invariably puts the term *Neger* ("negro") in quotation marks. I can only assume that he does so to highlight the supposed racism implied by the use of this now-out-of-fashion term by Bruce R. McConkie, Brigham Young, and others. He could have explained, but does not, that the word was generally acceptable in 1966, and

⁵⁰ In the world of Germanic academia from which Rüdiger Hauth has emerged—which is, on the whole, rather more class-conscious than its American counterpart—I suspect the reference to Brigham Young as a "former carpenter" (p. 27) may well also serve to emphasize the undistinguished origins of Mormonism and its leaders. One should, of course, not forget the New Testament's Joseph.

certainly in the nineteenth century—even, so far as I can tell, among the majority of American blacks.

There is no hint in *Die Mormonen* of the writings on the formative events of the restoration of Prof. Richard L. Anderson (J.D., Harvard; Ph.D., California [Berkeley])⁵¹ or Prof. Milton V. Backman, Jr. (Ph.D., Pennsylvania),⁵² or Prof. Richard L. Bushman (Ph.D., Harvard),⁵³ let alone of the broad range of work by such professional historians as Thomas G. Alexander (Ph.D., California [Berkeley]), James B. Allen (Ph.D., Southern California), Leonard J. Arrington (Ph.D., North Carolina), Davis Bitton (Ph.D., Princeton), Stanley B. Kimball (Ph.D., Columbia), Grant Underwood (Ph.D., California [Los Angeles]), and a number of others. Although the Mormon History Association has established an enviable reputation for professionalism, as far as Rüdiger Hauth is concerned the MHA might as well not exist.

It is, no doubt, easier to write in an information vacuum. To take just one illustration from among the many that could be chosen from *Die Mormonen*, Hauth cites the famous 1826 Bainbridge trial to establish Joseph Smith Jr.'s dishonesty (p. 11).⁵⁴ The Prophet's alleged lack of integrity is simply assumed thereafter—as both an established fact and an extremely useful weapon to be wielded against the Latter-day Saints.⁵⁵ But Hauth's claim that

⁵¹ Among many other contributions, Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981).

⁵² For example, Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980); Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986).

⁵³ Notably, Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

⁵⁴ Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 37.

⁵⁵ As in Hauth's retelling of the story of the revelation on plural marriage, on pages 28–9, and his casual equation of the teachings of the Book of Mormon with Joseph Smith's personal opinions on pages 29, 35, 41, 56. (Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 39, simply declares the Prophet's plural marriages to be "extramarital relations," thus, to at least his own satisfaction, settling the question of the validity of Joseph Smith's claim to revelation by cheap and easy definition.) On page 41, Hauth blithely and without supporting argument describes how the Prophet "used" the instrument of ongoing revelation to further his plans (compare p. 57). But, of course, it is not only Joseph Smith who cynically cloaks his machinations with falsified divine authority. All

Joseph was convicted by the Bainbridge court appears to be untrue, and materials casting strong doubt on his assertion have been easily available since 1990.⁵⁶ And when, on page 164, he sweepingly dismisses Latter-day Saint arguments for an apostasy of the primitive church as “lacking any evidentiary power [*jegliche Beweiskraft*],” he does so, apparently, without having read any Mormon scholarship on the subject.⁵⁷

One of the most disturbing elements of *Die Mormonen* is its use of undefined terms to paint the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as alien, evil, and stupid. He refers to the Urim and Thummim on page 54 as a “magic stone” (*Zauberstein*); on page 14, he uses the term *Wunderbrille* (“magic spectacles”). He speaks knowingly of Mormon “amulets” (pp. 97, 187). Repeatedly, Hauth describes the Latter-day Saints as descending—particularly through their temple worship—into the dark realms of

Mormon leaders do it, according to Hauth. Thus, and for reasons that are not at all compelling, he gives considerable attention (on pp. 43–4) to Douglas Wallace’s unauthorized 1976 ordination of a black man to the priesthood. Wallace was promptly excommunicated, but Hauth wants his readers to believe that the incident was a major catalyst to what he terms a “new revelation”—note the skeptical quotation marks—two years later. In Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 36, the existence of varying accounts of the Prophet’s first vision is offered without analysis—and without any apparent awareness of Latter-day Saint analysis—as evidence of Joseph Smith’s lack of integrity. Backman, *Joseph Smith’s First Vision*, with its bibliography, is probably the best place to go for a first look at this matter.

⁵⁶ See Gordon A. Madsen, “Joseph Smith’s 1826 Trial: The Legal Setting,” *BYU Studies* 30/2 (Spring 1990): 91–108. One might pardon Hauth’s ignorance in the earlier *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* (1982), but *Die Mormonen* was published in 1995. Actually, though, it is somewhat difficult to know precisely when Hauth wrote *Die Mormonen*. On pages 9 and 64, for example, he refers to the eighteen-month service of Latter-day Saint missionaries, which, for the vast majority of such missionaries, accurately describes the period only from April 1982 to late November 1984. When, on pages 44–5, Hauth cites the “Official Declaration” extending the priesthood to all worthy males, he identifies it as existing in the “archive of the author.” This is a bit puzzling, however, since the document has been published in the Doctrine and Covenants since 1981. On pages 64, 66, and 89, he cites membership and temple statistics from 1994.

⁵⁷ For starters, he should have read Hugh W. Nibley, *The World and the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), and several of the essays in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*.

magic (*Magie*) and superstition (*Aberglaube*) (as at pp. 100, 122, 126, 135, 150, 187).⁵⁸ He is fond of using words like *occult* and *heathen* to characterize Mormonism (as at pp. 122, 124, 135, 187).⁵⁹ But he never explains what he means by these terms, and they are extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to define. I spent two months in a seminar at Princeton University in the summer of 1994, meeting regularly with about a dozen scholars of the classics, sociology, Hinduism, the New Testament, anthropology, and literature, trying, among other things, to work out a definition of the word *magic* that would include what we thought it ought to include, and exclude what we thought it ought to omit.⁶⁰ We could not do it.

Hauth doesn't even make the attempt. Rather than using them as tools for understanding or explanation, which would require care and precision, Hauth brandishes these words as weapons. Of course, he has numerous precedents to support him in this; terms like *magic*, *superstition*, *occult*, and *heathen* have almost *always* been used as weapons. (What *you* do is magic; what *I* do is religion.) That seems to be their chief utility for polemicists, though it makes them virtually unusable for serious scholarship. Is Hauth unaware that early Christians themselves were frequently attacked as gullible and superstitious by their disapproving neighbors? Tacitus and Pliny, the first Roman authors to mention Christianity, describe the new religion as *exitiabilis superstitio*, *prava et immodica superstitio*, and *inflexibilis obstinatio*—phrases which hardly need translation.⁶¹

Not only has Hauth failed to notice, let alone to master, Latter-day Saint scholarly literature, but, on his major theme of

⁵⁸ Compare Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 56; also, in the context of a discussion of the Watchtower Society, 11.

⁵⁹ Also at Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 52, 56.

⁶⁰ Discussions of the problematic nature of the term *magic* can be found in many places, including Stephen D. Ricks and Daniel C. Peterson, "Joseph Smith and 'Magic': Methodological Reflections on the Use of a Term," in *To Be Learned Is Good If . . .*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 129–47; John Gee, "Abracadabra, Isaac and Jacob," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 46–71.

⁶¹ See Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 98–100; Hoffmann, *Celsus: On the True Doctrine*, 24–6, for representative comments.

"magic," he has apparently never even heard of the major critical works. *Die Mormonen* betrays not the slightest awareness of such books as D. Michael Quinn's *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* or John L. Brooke's *The Refiner's Fire*.⁶² These volumes would have given him at least some (seriously flawed) basis for throwing around loose accusations of "occultism," had he taken the time and effort to look at them.⁶³ Nor is the simple-minded opposition of "magic" to "Christianity" something in which contemporary scholarship would likely agree with Hauth. Early Christians, and even Jesus Christ himself, were routinely described as magicians by those around them. Furthermore, at least a few modern scholars see little reason to disagree.⁶⁴ And ancient Christians beyond the formative period were quite frequently involved with what might plausibly be termed "magical" practices.⁶⁵

⁶² D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987); John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁶³ For a critical review of Quinn's book, see Stephen D. Ricks and Daniel C. Peterson, "The Mormon as Magus," *Sunstone* 12 (January 1988): 38-9. Brooke's book receives a thorough analysis from William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, "Mormon in the Fiery Furnace or, Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/2 (1994): 3-58, of which a shorter version appears in *BYU Studies* 34/4 (1994-95): 167-81.

⁶⁴ Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 98-100. Among the many references that could be given for modern scholarly views, see Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), and Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), which as the latter title implies, wish to connect Jesus himself with the practice of magic.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1994). Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Magic* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), offers various perspectives on one important Christian magical tradition. Arguably Christian magical texts are included in Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and John G. Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Neoplatonic philosophy as the common language of Muslim and Christian magical theory is discussed in William J. Hamblin and Daniel C. Peterson, "Neoplatonism and the Medieval Mediterranean

Clearly, Rüdiger Hauth has not bothered to acquaint himself with, much less to master, the considerable body of writings available on such subjects as “magic,” Mesoamerican archaeology, and Latter-day Saint history. And perhaps a clergyman shouldn’t be expected to know much about such things. (Though, of course, one would hope that he would then stop writing books about them.) Surely, however, Hauth should know something about the Bible. This, at least, is where we can expect him to do well. But it isn’t so. For example, Hauth says that even a “superficial examination” (p. 55) of 1 Corinthians 15:40–2 demonstrates that the Latter-day Saint interpretation of the passage is incorrect. Unfortunately, though, a “superficial examination” is all he gives it, and his case is, at the very best, unconvincing.

Likewise, his claim that all New Testament scholars are agreed on the proper interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19, and that this proper interpretation rules out Latter-day Saint notions of the gospel being preached by the Savior and his disciples to the dead (pp. 143–6), seems a serious exaggeration of the facts. Even the alleged scholarly consensus, as he presents it, appears to rest upon a rather high-handed rejection of the relevant biblical passages, and of the corroborating apocryphal and pseudepigraphical data, as being merely dispensable quasi-pagan mythology, which he then follows with an eminently disputable exercise in Bultmann-style demythologizing. Again, his claims are far, far, from convincing. One is reminded, rather, of a definition of the term *clergyman* that has been attributed to George Bernard Shaw: A clergyman, said Shaw, is an interpreter of religion who does not believe that the Bible means what it says; on the contrary, he is always convinced that it says what he means.

In this matter, it is Rüdiger Hauth, and not the Latter-day Saints, who clearly stands apart from the long-established teaching of the Christian tradition. It is not only 1 Peter 3:19–22 and 4:6 that seem to refer to Christ’s visit to the spirit world.⁶⁶ The

Magical Traditions,” *Incognita: International Journal for Cognitive Studies in the Humanities* 2 (1991): 217–40.

⁶⁶ Matthew 12:40, Luke 23:42–3, and Ephesians 4:8–10 may also refer to the event. Leslie Ross, *Medieval Art: A Topical Dictionary* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1996), 10, also cites, in this regard, Matthew 12:40; Acts 2:24, 27, 31. Jennifer Speake, *The Dent Dictionary of Symbols in Christian Art* (London:

Descensus, Christ's "Harrowing of Hell,"—a motif clearly connected with the subject of Joseph F. Smith's 1918 "Vision of the Redemption of the Dead" (D&C 138)—was a standard theme of Christian writing and Christian art for many centuries. "This topic was also identified as the Descent into Limbo (literally the 'lip' of Hell, understood as the place where the souls of unbaptized children and the righteous born before Jesus rested)."⁶⁷ The Apostles' Creed, in the *Forma Recepta* as well as in the versions given by Rufinus (ca. A.D. 390) and by Fortunatus (ca. A.D. 570), mentions Christ's spiritual descent into hell while his body rested in the sepulchre. So does the Athanasian Creed.⁶⁸ In the Cathedral of San Marco at Venice, there are two carved alabaster columns—dating to the fifth century—that seem to be part of the booty brought to the city after the sack of Constantinople at the end of the Fourth Crusade. One of them features Christ in the spirit world, where he is shown taking an unidentified patriarch by the right hand while Hades, unable to prevent the rescue, bites his fingers in frustrated anger (see fig. 1).⁶⁹ From the fifth- or sixth-century *Gospel of Nicodemus*, as Jacques Le Goff summarizes it, "we learn that Christ went down to Hell and retrieved from its clutches righteous souls who had not been baptized because they were born prior to his coming."⁷⁰ Notions of the triumphant and saving visit of the spirit of Christ to the realm of the dead while his body lay in the tomb were, says K. M. Openshaw, "a theme dear

Dent, 1994), 70, adds that Matthew 27:52 and Psalm 24:7 were frequently adduced by medieval Christians in support of the concept.

⁶⁷ Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 104.

⁶⁸ For the Latin texts of these creeds, see Philip Schaff and David S. Schaff, eds., *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1983), 2:45, 49, 69.

⁶⁹ Walter Lowrie, *Art in the Early Church* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1947), 184, 187, and pl. 100a. Compare the similar scene from the altar frontal in Salerno reproduced at plate 124b. Ross, *Medieval Art*, 11, sees Byzantine roots for the artistic imagery that tends to accompany the theme throughout Europe.

⁷⁰ Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 44. A good English translation of the relevant materials may be found in J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 185–204.

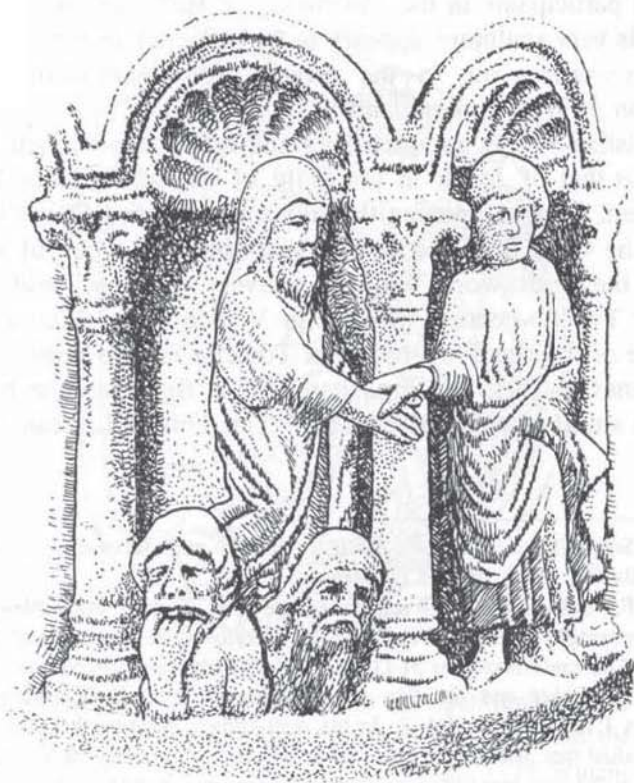


Figure 1. Christ, here portrayed as young and beardless, reaches from within a Roman arch for the hand of one of the righteous dead, probably Adam, to lead him out of the underworld. 450–500 A.D., San Marco, Venice

to the heart of the Anglo-Saxons.” This is elegantly illustrated, for example, in the miniatures of the so-called Tiberius Psalter, which probably originated in the mid-eleventh century.⁷¹ But it was not only the Anglo-Saxons who found the story fascinating. So did their conquerors. A colorful scene of Christ’s invasion of the spirit world can be found in the illustrations to the twelfth-

⁷¹ K. M. Openshaw, “The Battle between Christ and Satan in the Tiberius Psalter,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52 (1989): 14–33. The quotation is from page 19.

century Winchester Bible (see fig. 2).⁷² All three members of the Trinity are represented on a Norman baptismal font in Herefordshire as participants in the Harrowing of Hell (see fig. 3). Moreover, this very sculpture appears to be reflected in the account of the *Descensus* given in the famous fourteenth-century *Piers Plowman* of William Langland.⁷³

Christian writers and preachers and artists saw in such biblical stories as that of Jonah in the belly of the whale, Daniel in the lions' den, Samson opening the lion's mouth, and David's rescuing of the lamb from the bear, prefigurings or types of Christ's visit to the spirit world and his delivery of those held captive there.⁷⁴ Twelfth-century mosaics in Venice's San Marco and in the nave of the nearby cathedral at Torcello feature virtually identical scenes of Christ leading Adam by the right hand as he tramples the smashed gates of Hades.⁷⁵ The Fourth Lateran Council

⁷² See Gilbert Thurlow, *Biblical Myths and Mysteries* (New York: Octopus Books, 1974), 56 and frontispiece.

⁷³ For a discussion, with references, see R. E. Kaske, "Piers Plowman and Local Iconography: The Font at Eardisley, Herefordshire," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 51 (1988): 184–6. Strikingly, the Norman sculptor depicted the Father and the Son as identical. Compare 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1–3. In his well-known Wentworth Letter, Joseph Smith recalled that, when they appeared to him in the spring of 1820, the Father and the Son "exactly resembled each other in features, and likeness" (Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 169).

⁷⁴ Apostolos-Cappadona, *Dictionary of Christian Art*, 104.

⁷⁵ These images are reproduced at, respectively, C. R. Morey, *Christian Art* (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1935), 86, and Sartell Prentice, *The Voices of the Cathedral: Tales in Stone and Legends in Glass* (New York: Morrow, 1938), 194. Critics of the restoration frequently argue that the promise given in Matthew 16:18–19, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" the kingdom, proves that, contrary to Mormon teaching, there can have been no general apostasy of the church. This is incorrect. They are the gates of *Hades*, i.e., of death or the spirit world. They bear no connotation of evil, as such, but open to receive *all* the dead, whether wicked or not. The Redeemer's promise to Peter is that the saving power of the priesthood keys he will receive extends even beyond the gates of the spirit world. The stories and representations of Christ's smashing the gates illustrate this in dramatic fashion. (Perhaps significantly, in the second-century pagan *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* of Apuleius [XI.21], devoted to Isis, "Both the gates of death and the guardianship



Figure 2. Christ drives his cross-staff into the open jaws of hell, while he grasps Adam, with Eve at his side. The devil lies bound on the shattered gates under Christ's feet. 1150–1175, Winchester Bible



Figure 3. God the Father, holding a book, is approaching Christ, who has the dove of the Holy Spirit on his shoulder. Christ holds Adam by the wrist and strides over the shattered gates of hell. c. 1150, Eardisley, Herefordshire

proclaimed the *Descensus* official Christian dogma in 1215. The dramatic event is also mentioned in the *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, composed by the Dominican Hugh of Strasbourg in or about A.D. 1268.⁷⁶ It was reaffirmed as received Christian dogma at the Council of Lyon in 1274. The illustrious fourteenth-century Italian poet Dante alludes to it, when he has the Roman poet Virgil, who had died in 19 B.C., explain:

I was new-entered on this state
when I beheld a Great Lord enter here;
the crown he wore, a sign of victory.
He carried off the shade of our first father,
of his son Abel, and the shade of Noah,
of Moses, the obedient legislator,
of father Abraham, David the king,
of Israel, his father, and his sons,
and Rachel, she for whom he worked so long,
and many others—and He made them blessed;
and I should have you know that, before them,
there were no human souls that had been saved.⁷⁷

The Harrowing of Hell was a very popular subject in medieval English mystery drama, and is featured, as well, in *La Passion du Palatinus*, which, dating from the early fourteenth century, is the earliest of the extant French passion plays.⁷⁸ Also during the early fourteenth century, the *Descensus* found depiction in one of the

of life were in the goddess's hands." So the passage is rendered in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, trans. J. Arthur Hanson [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989], 2:333. By contrast, Apuleius, the *Golden Ass*, trans. P. G. Walsh [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 232, renders the Latin *inferum claustra et salutis tutelam* as "the gates of hell and the guarantee of salvation." Strikingly, in the sentence immediately following, Apuleius describes a secret Isis temple ritual symbolically expressing that fact.)

⁷⁶ Quoted in Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 264–5.

⁷⁷ Dante, *Inferno*, IV.52–63 (XXI.106–14 may also be connected with the Harrowing of Hell). I use the English version of Allen Mandelbaum, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980), 32.

⁷⁸ A play from the York cycle on this theme (York 37) is easily accessible in its original Middle English at Peter Happé, ed., *English Mystery Plays: A Selection* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), 552–66. Happé correctly explains, on page 552, that the *Descensus* "is an article of the Creed," but oddly remarks that it "has no Scriptural basis."

marvelous Byzantine frescos of the church of the Chora (the Kariye Camii) in Constantinople.⁷⁹ In the first part of the sixteenth century, the great Albrecht Dürer treated "Christ in Limbo" as the subject of a number of engravings bearing that title (see fig. 4).⁸⁰ "As Christ died for us, and was buried," says the third of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England (1563), "so also is it to be believed that he went down into Hell."⁸¹

There seems little point in further multiplying references. "Most Christian theologians," says *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* of the so-called *Descensus*, "believe that it refers to the visit of the Lord after His death to the realm of existence, which is neither heaven nor hell in the ultimate sense, but a place or state where the souls of pre-Christian people waited for the message of the Gospel, and whither the penitent thief passed after his death on the cross (Lk. 23.43)."⁸²

Similarly, when on pages 140–2 Hauth turns his attention to 1 Corinthians 15:29, there is little depth or historical awareness in

⁷⁹ Thurlow, *Biblical Myths*, 63.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Wolfgang Stechow, *Dürer and America* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1971), 142, 177, 187 (with illustrations 53, 130, 182).

⁸¹ I quote from the 1801 American revision. For this text, as well as for the 1563 Latin original and its 1571 English translation, see Schaff and Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3:488.

⁸² F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 395. Compare the extensive treatments given in Josef Kroll, *Gott und Hölle: Der Mythos vom Descensuskampfe* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1932) and J. A. MacCulloch, *The Harrowing of Hell: A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1930), which unfortunately cannot be summarized here. Zbigniew Izydorczyk, "The Legend of the Harrowing of Hell in Middle English Literature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1985), was unavailable to me. I might mention here that Elizabeth Livingstone, the surviving editor of the *Oxford Dictionary*, showed a commendable willingness to correct errors regarding Mormonism when I pointed them out to her in correspondence some years ago. (Compare the entry on "Mormons" in this second edition with its error-ridden counterpart in the first edition. My letter earned me the never-fading glory of inclusion in the lengthy list of people thanked on p. viii.) Of course, the *Oxford Dictionary* was compiled by scholars, not debaters, and is designed to inform, not to defame. Time will reveal Rüdiger Hauth's central intent.



Figure 4. In this 1510 version of Christ in limbo, Albrecht Dürer shows Christ kneeling to extend his hand to those who sat in darkness. Adam, holding the cross, and Eve stand next to the shattered doors of hell.

his exegesis. He admits that the verse is a difficult one, “not at all simple . . . to interpret correctly”—in his *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, he concedes it to be “one of the ‘darkest’ verses in the New Testament”⁸³—and even acknowledges that “there were certainly a few in the congregation at Corinth who practiced baptism for the dead,” but, undaunted, asserts immediately thereafter that we can surely know at least one thing about the passage: The Mormon view of it is invalid. “One thing,” declares Hauth,

can be said with certainty: The ritual of baptism for the dead was never an element in Christian teaching and therefore never found its way into Christian thought and practice. Quite the contrary: At the Council of Carthage in 397, this unchristian practice was officially condemned.

One might wonder, of course, why a Christian council at the end of the fourth century would have to deal with a practice that was never, ever, an issue for Christians. And one might wonder, too, why an alleged expert on Latter-day Saint temple worship seems to know nothing of Hugh Nibley’s important scholarly article on “Baptism for the Dead in Ancient Times.”⁸⁴

In view of the shallow, unreflective, and uncritical character of *Die Mormonen*, it is deeply ironic to see Rüdiger Hauth lamenting “the one-dimensional, uncritical thought patterns of Mormonism” (p. 134). Of course, as Abraham Lincoln once said in quite another context, for those who like this kind of book, this is very much the kind of book they will like. Propaganda is the kind of

⁸³ Hauth, *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus*, 57. His discussion of the subject on pages 57–8 of the *Kleiner Sekten-Katechismus* is characteristically shallow and without supporting argumentation. Indeed, it is inferior even to the discussion in David A. Reed and John R. Farkas, *Mormons Answered Verse by Verse* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992), 85–7, which is bad enough.

⁸⁴ Reprinted in Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 100–67. See also the references given in Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 108–10. The Protestant philosopher Stephen Davis, in his *Risen Indeed: Making Sense of the Resurrection* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 159–65, suggests a position on salvation for the dead rather like that of the Latter-day Saints—to the point, even, of using 1 Corinthians 15:29 and the familiar passages from 1 Peter. Prof. Davis’s book is to be recommended for many reasons, of which this aspect is only one.

inaccuracy that often deceives your friends, while seldom deceiving your enemies.

But it would be wrong to ignore Rüdiger Hauth simply because he isn't much of a scholar. I am confident that it is not in the rarefied world of German academia that Hauth hopes to make his lasting mark. (Although, even here, he appears to have had an impact: Hauth-like references to Joseph Smith's "prophet spectacles" (*Prophetenbrille*) and to the Book of Mormon as an "adventure story" (*Abenteuer-Story*) appear in the article on the "Mormonen" in at least one major German reference work on the history of Christianity.)⁸⁵ We will probably understand him better if we see him as an activist, rather than merely as a failed thinker. For his animosity toward the faith of the Latter-day Saints has a practical side. He is no mere paper warrior. And anti-Mormon activism has real consequences in the real world.⁸⁶ Still, Hauth probably cannot really compete, at least yet, with a situation of which I have recently been told: A Delaware-based anti-Mormon named Richard Stout is currently engaged in a national effort to drive a certain small business into bankruptcy, simply because its young owner and the developer of its products are

⁸⁵ Hans-Diether Reimer, "Mormonen," in Volker Drehsen, Hermann Häring, Karl-Josef Kuschel, and Helge Siemers, eds., *Wörterbuch des Christentums* (Munich: Orbis, 1995), 836–7. Reimer cites Hauth in the article's bibliography, from which it would also appear, indeed, that he has elsewhere served as Hauth's editor for a piece on the Mormons. Incidentally, the Tübingen theologian Hans-Josef Kuschel, one of the coeditors of the *Wörterbuch*, participated in the same 1994 Jerusalem conference during which I spoke with John Hick (n. 25, above). One day of our meetings took place at Brigham Young University's Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. My hunch, from conversations with him and from having interacted with him a year earlier at a similar conference in Austria, was that Prof. Kuschel was impressed with the facility and disposed to take the Mormons at least slightly more seriously than he had before. Surely little in the Hauth/Reimer view of Mormonism—the *Wörterbuch's* first edition appeared in 1988—would incline *anybody* to take the Latter-day Saints seriously, except perhaps as a clinical problem.

⁸⁶ During debate in the United States Senate about a proposed hate crimes bill, Jesse Helms of North Carolina attacked it harshly. Orrin Hatch, the powerful chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who supported the bill, "responded by recounting his own experiences with religious bigotry as a Mormon." See David Brock, "The Real Orrin Hatch," *The American Spectator* 30 (November 1997): 40; see 36–41.

Latter-day Saints. And he will probably succeed. (The little company has designed its language-learning products for home schoolers, among whom evangelical Christians—who seem, unfortunately, to be susceptible to this kind of demagoguery—constitute a large share of the market.) Real Christians, you see, should neither trade with, nor patronize, nor hire Latter-day Saints. For, as Mr. Stout says of the product developer, a noted expert on linguistics and second-language acquisition, “at least 10% of whatever royalty he receives from a Christian’s purchase of [the product] goes into the LDS Church coffers [as tithing]”—which is an absolutely perfect argument for segregation, for a “Christian” crusade to exile *all* Latter-day Saints, however innocent or secular their businesses, whether they are physicians, accountants, or paperboys, into an economic ghetto.⁸⁷ (Welcome to the Balkans!) This is, sadly, not the first such case that has been brought to my attention. And I am forcefully reminded of the fate of Jewish businesses in 1930s Germany.

On his own level, nonetheless, and on his own native turf of ecclesiastical politics, Rüdiger Hauth too is a man of action. It is not unlikely, for instance, although he passes over it with commendable modesty, that Hauth himself deserves much of the credit for the decision made in 1989 by the German Protestant state church (and described on p. 72) to reject baptisms performed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as inauthentically Christian. In *Die Mormonen*—“for,” as he says, “theological, pastoral, and also legal reasons”—he counsels the German Protestant churches to deny Latter-day Saints the privilege of micro-filming parish genealogical records (p. 150). And it would seem that he has indeed, or will have, had some success in his efforts to thwart Latter-day Saint genealogical filming. On pages 149–50, he reports that, between 1947 and 1980, eleven of the eighteen states of pre-unification West Germany refused the Mormons permission to microfilm their records. Three permitted the filming, while the remaining four initially gave their permission and then, after “theological deliberations”—perhaps assisted in their meditating by Hauth himself—withdraw it. (The majority of the

⁸⁷ Memorandum from Richard Stout, dated 17 October 1997, to “Fellow Christians Providing Supplies or Advice to Homeschoolers and Those Involved in Planning Curriculum Fairs or Conventions.”

Catholic dioceses of Germany had already allowed genealogical microfilming during the 1950s.) Hauth's apparent actions place him once more in the august company of such people as "Dr." Walter Martin and Ed Decker.⁸⁸

The problem is that shallow, poor thinking often results in inefficient or misdirected action: In this case, for example, and for all his talk of Mormon "magic," it seems to be Rüdiger Hauth, not the Mormons, who, if we use one common definition of the term, takes a "magical" view of Latter-day Saint temple and genealogical work. (That common definition, which I suspect Hauth himself might accept, holds that an action or object is "magical" if its power is thought to be inherent and automatic, and that it only becomes "religious" if the object or action's effectuality is dependent upon the will of a supplicated being. This definition has serious problems,⁸⁹ but will serve to make my point here.) For Hauth warns his readers that Christian churches should not assist the Mormon project of making "the names of people who lived and died as Christians and devoted members of their churches into objects of the magical rituals for the dead of a foreign religion" (p. 150). But, surely, if God does not authorize nor even recognize Mormon temple work, vicarious baptisms can have no intrinsic power to do anything at all to the dead, much less to their "names." Such ritual actions would then be purely a waste of the Latter-day Saints' time. Intriguingly, Hauth's alarm could almost be taken to imply that he fears them to be more than that.⁹⁰ (Perhaps the Catholics, especially in preconiliar days, were less insecure.)

I've just about had it with this sort of writing. I think I can speak for many Latter-day Saints who occupy themselves with it from time to time, when I say that we are tired of religious bigots

⁸⁸ "Dr." Martin's and Decker's political lobbying against the Latter-day Saints is fleetingly sketched in Peterson, "P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*," 63-6.

⁸⁹ Robin L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 117: Ancient texts "show how hard it is to draw a line between 'magic' and 'religion' in terms of magic's techniques of compulsion. Religion used them openly too, a point which weakens the study of magic as a new type of irrationality."

⁹⁰ And just what does Hauth mean, incidentally, by saying that Mormonism is a "foreign religion" (*eine fremde Religion*)? Does he imagine that Christianity is Aryan?

demeaning and caricaturing our most sacred beliefs. We are tired of the smug assumption that, if somebody has demonstrated that belief X differs from the opinions of mainstream Christianity (let alone merely of that small sector of Christendom going under the title of “evangelical” or “fundamentalist”), it has thereby been proven that belief X is wrong. We are weary of the notion that, if something is obvious to a critic, merely asserting it, without so much as a nod in the direction of evidence and analysis, is all that is required to carry the day. We are unimpressed with the use of unexplained terms to define us out of Christendom or, by arbitrary lexical assertion, to prove us wrong. We want it demonstrated that these definitions are reasonable and sound, or we want them dropped.

We are especially, and heartily, tired of critics who seem to *write* more books about Mormonism than they have *read* on the subject. One might, of course, respond that, since Rüdiger Hauth lives in Europe, he cannot reasonably be held to high standards. That is fatuous. People who write on a given subject have a duty to do the work and to learn whatever is necessary to make what they write of acceptable quality. Otherwise, they should not write. (Silence can serve, in many cases, as a perfectly appropriate substitute for knowledge.) Even if a writer about Mormonism is based in Europe, he can still get it right. The Catholic scholar Massimo Introvigne lives in Turin, Italy, for example, but he writes with remarkable knowledge and understanding about Mormonism, anti-Mormonism, and many related subjects. His recent *BYU Studies* article on “Fundamentalist Anti-Mormonism,” for example, in the course of which he examines Ed Decker and Decker’s amazing crony Bill Schnoebelen, among others, is both erudite and fascinating.⁹¹

The anti-Mormons cannot go on like this. They cannot continue to boast of their triumphs over Mormonism while running from the evidence and logic that would defeat them. (Among the *cognoscenti*, since his sixty-laugh-a-minute 1992 correspondence with William Hamblin, this hilarious exercise is known as the “Robert McKay Maneuver.”) They cannot continue to pretend

⁹¹ Massimo Introvigne, “Old Wine in New Bottles: The Story behind Fundamentalist Anti-Mormonism,” *BYU Studies* 35/3 (1995–96): 45–73.

that Mormon arguments do not exist. They surely cannot persist in composing books and articles that leave us embarrassed on their behalf.

No. On second thought, they can, and they almost certainly will.

Postscript

After sending this review off for what I hoped was the last time, a colleague brought to my attention the latest issue of *Dialogue*, a journal of allegedly Mormon thought. It contains at least two pieces demonstrating all too clearly that it is not merely fundamentalist Protestants who "continue to pretend that Mormon arguments do not exist."

In the first item, a certain Brigham D. Madsen, of Salt Lake City, writes an article against the historicity of the Book of Mormon. His entire essay rests on the assumption that B. H. Roberts, a General Authority and one of the greatest thinkers in the history of Mormonism, died in 1933 as an unbeliever in the book.⁹² Mr. Madsen seems to think that everyone shares his assumption. He is wrong. And just a little bit of reading would have corrected his misunderstanding. The following are among the discussions of this topic that Mr. Madsen failed to cite or notice:

Truman G. Madsen, "B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (1982; reprint, Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1996), 7–31.

John W. Welch, "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts' Questions" (Provo: FARMS, 1985).

Truman G. Madsen and John W. Welch, "Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?" (Provo: FARMS, 1985).

Truman G. Madsen, ed., "B. H. Robert's Final Decade: Statements about the Book of Mormon (1921–33)" (Provo: FARMS, n.d.).

⁹² Brigham D. Madsen, "Reflections on LDS Disbelief in the Book of Mormon as History," *Dialogue* 30/3 (1997): 87–97.

- John W. Welch, "B. H. Roberts: Seeker after Truth," *Ensign* (March 1986): 56–82; reprinted in *A Sure Foundation*, 60–74.
- John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 88–92.
- John W. Welch, "Introduction," in B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo: BYU Studies, 1994), xxiii–xxviii.
- D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, in association with Smith Research Associates, 1997), 688.
- Daniel C. Peterson, "Yet More Abuse of B. H. Roberts," *FARMS Review of Books* 9/1 (1997): 69–86.
- Matthew Roper, "Unanswered Mormon Scholars," *FARMS Review of Books* 9/1 (1997): 98–110.

Furthermore, Mr. Madsen uses a volume edited by Brent Lee Metcalfe, also of Salt Lake City, as evidence against the claims of the Book of Mormon. He seems to be ignorant of the lengthy and detailed responses to Mr. Metcalfe's book published by FARMS.⁹³ In fact, he apparently does not know that there *is* such a thing as the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, which naturally makes it easier for him to casually men-

⁹³ See, for example, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6/1 (1994). Entirely devoted to examining Mr. Metcalfe's anthology, it runs to nearly 600 pages. Thus pretending that it does not exist must have required a truly heroic effort on the part of Mr. Madsen and his editors at *Dialogue*. For later views of the Metcalfe volume or of individual essays within it, see Ross David Baron, "Melodie Moench Charles and the Humanist Worldview," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 91–119; Alan Goff, "Uncritical Theory and Thin Description: The Resistance to History," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/1 (1995): 170–207; Martin S. Tanner, review of "Book of Mormon Christology," by Melodie Moench Charles, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 6–37; Kevin Christensen, "Paradigms Crossed," *review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7/2 (1995): 144–218; William J. Hamblin, "The Latest Straw Man," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 82–92; John Wm. Maddox, "A Listing of Points and Counterpoints," *FARMS Review of Books* 8/1 (1996): 1–26; Alan Goff, "Historical Narrative, Literary Narrative—Expelling Poetics from the Republic of History," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/1 (1996): 50–102; and Massimo Introvigne, "The Book of Mormon Wars: A Non-Mormon Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5/2 (1996): 1–25.

tion "the overwhelming proofs of [the Book of Mormon's] fictional character."⁹⁴ If nobody exists to question them, and especially if one is palpably eager to accept them, even the most flimsy of supposed proofs must indeed seem "overwhelming."

Similarly, a second article, by Ronald V. Huggins, attacks the antiquity of the sermon presented in 3 Nephi 12–14.⁹⁵ Its first footnote offers a bibliography of previous materials that have some relevance to the matter—while conspicuously failing to mention the only book-length treatment of the subject ever published, John W. Welch's *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*.⁹⁶ This is shameful. And it becomes doubly or trebly so when Mr. Huggins says of one of his sources, an article by Stan Larson in a Protestant theological journal, that, "Given the thoroughness of Larson's treatment, there is no reason to dwell on questions relating to the textual criticism of the [Sermon on the Mount] here."⁹⁷ This is disgraceful, because a large portion of John Welch's book is devoted, precisely, to a substantial critique of Stan Larson's article. One reviewer of Welch's book, armed with a doctorate in ancient Greek, summarized the relevant portion of it by observing that "Larson's somewhat weak work critiquing 3 Nephi's text is solidly countered. One sees how Larson, aside from committing methodological missteps, has over-emphasized the importance of some supposed problems and [note this!] has ignored textual issues that did not support his thesis."⁹⁸

Clearly *Dialogue* needs to do better. Its editors are free, of course, to continue their apparent campaign against orthodox Latter-day Saint belief. But they have an obligation, not only to their fledgling writers, but also to their readers, to see that authors have done their homework and that their articles fairly represent the actual state of the argument on the matters they discuss.

⁹⁴ Madsen, "Reflections on LDS Disbelief," 96.

⁹⁵ Ronald V. Huggins, "Did the Author of 3 Nephi Know the Gospel of Matthew?" *Dialogue* 30/3 (1997): 137–48.

⁹⁶ John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990).

⁹⁷ Huggins, "Did the Author of 3 Nephi Know the Gospel of Matthew?" 145.

⁹⁸ Todd Compton, review of *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount*, by John W. Welch, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 321.