

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

MORMONISM IN THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO

DR. BRIAN BIRCH

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 366R

BY

JAMES MATT GARDNER

OREM, UTAH

AUGUST 9, 2013

MORMONISM IN THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Joseph Smith's mystical methodologies strenuously tested the underpinnings of American religious tolerance. I will first write about early America in hopes to better explain Joseph Smith's day. This approach is intended to reveal that Joseph Smith was wedged between two different cultural religious paradigms that sparked much religious intolerance. Second, I will explain how these religious paradigms caused some unusual paradoxes regarding Joseph Smith's seemingly unorthodox methods of divining rods, seer stones, and visions.

America, from the beginning, was inundated with similar forms of the religious creedal beliefs of the European past. The first group of Europeans to arrive on American soil was the Church of England, which established itself in 1607 in Virginia. Second to arrive on the shores of Massachusetts were the Puritans during the 1620's and 1630's. The third party to join were the Catholics that migrated to Maryland beginning in 1632. These churches rapidly jockeyed for geographical positioning whereby each sought to proclaim their own Christian practices.

The Virginia Company in 1607 quickly set out to convert the Indian population. They believed that Christianity would emancipate Indians who, "yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of true knowledge and worship of God."¹ This mindset planted the seeds of future conflicts for coming generations throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. During the years of 1645, 1654, 1676, and 1689, there "arose major outbreaks of anti-Catholic violence by non-Catholics settlers...in one episode, anti-Catholic rioters threw prayer books out of a barn while yelling, "Burn those Papists Devils."²

The beginning of America wasn't exactly the, "City of God... Knit together in the works as one man... [To] delight in each other, make[ing] others' conditions our own, rejoic[ing]

¹ Jon Butler, *Religion in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 53.

² *Ibid.*, 71.

together, mourn[ing] together, labor[ing] and suffer[ing] together.”³ These words given by Puritan Governor John Winthrop were indeed lofty aspirations of what America was going to be for mankind, including his timeless proclamation, “a city on hill that cannot be hid,” or, “a model of Christian Charity.”⁴

Winthrop’s vision for impending generations was easy to theorize, but proved much more difficult to accomplish in reality. To highlight this one can simply look at the statement of Winthrop’s declaration, “making others’ conditions are own.”⁵ This sounds all inclusive, but with careful examination, one begins to see the seemingly incongruities of Winthrop’s words when juxtaposed with the town’s laws and oaths. For example, Puritan citizens were required to take a pledge of:

Fear and reverence of our Almighty God...profess and practice one truth according to the most perfect rule, the foundation whereof is everlasting love...receive only such unto us as may be probably for one heart with us. (Butler 2007, 56-57)

Obviously Puritan oaths affirm a mindset that their religious liberties were not going to be censored again by some other king or religious creed. Nevertheless, the above words stating “our,” “one,” and “only” ironically denote a double standard. While these oaths assure protection from outsiders, they repel the very democratization of religious tolerance for others. John M. Lund points out that these oaths, “created a cultural identity based upon privileging oaths as a sacred form of discipline and this preoccupation with oaths played a major role in generating their reputation for dishonesty and hypocrisy.”⁶ In fact, these self-prescribed outlooks not only created negative effects among non-members but also among members. “In New England, the

³ Ibid., 52.

⁴ Ibid., 52.

⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁶ John M. Lund, “Fear of an oath: Piety, hypocrisy, and the dilemma of Puritan identity,” *Electronic Doctoral Dissertations for UMass Amherst*, January 1, 2001.

Puritans disagreed with each other, ignored new settlers, and lost their own religious intensity while becoming increasingly intolerant.”⁷

Within a decade the Puritans found themselves incriminating and charging their own members with heresy. In 1637, Puritan Ann Hutchinson was found disobeying the town laws and was kicked out of the state of Massachusetts for proclaiming she could receive, “immediate revelation...by the voice of God’s own spirit.”⁸ Revelation was contrary to the Puritan belief system. Puritans also objected to the practices of both Anglican and Catholic ceremonial rites (including the Catholic and Lutheran practices of music), and one particular feature that was rather unique to the Puritans was their gritty preaching style that became known as “Jeremiad.”

This name was taken after the Old Testament Prophet Jeramiah who implored ancient Israel to repent or be destroyed. Hence, the Jeremiad style was known for calling down the wrath of God to those who were in need of repentance, and can be seen throughout American history, such as when, “President Abraham Lincoln invoked the jeremiad style of sermonizing to shame Americans in to greater resolve and purpose in pursuing the Civil War.”⁹ However, these types of practices and oaths are generally accepted to be the reason behind their religious intolerance and declining Puritan membership numbers, “that had been as high as 70 to 80 percent in the 1630s and 1640s plummeted to half those rates by the 1670s.”¹⁰

During this time, New England saw the establishment of new religions - specifically the Quakers, Presbyterians, and Methodists. While seemingly harsh practices seem to have contributed to declining membership, another reason for the decline throughout these religious establishments can be linked to Christian magic, meaning Christians began to practice the art of

⁷ Jon Butler, *Religion in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

magic such as curing diseases, reading horoscopes, and practicing witchcraft. The leadership at the time felt that these mystical practices were inherently dark and devilish, although it is clear that they were quietly being practiced. “Cotton Mather acknowledged that disturbing numbers of New Englanders were employing magical practices to cure diseases, even though they knew, or should have known, that in doing so they were invoking the aid of the devil.”¹¹ Thus, in 1692 the infamous Salem Witchcraft trials ordered the deaths of 20 people and arrested 150 others. Furthermore, historian John Butler says these trials were done in part to explain away their declining numbers in membership.¹²

Upper New England was falling from its original religious practices and was becoming more inundated with magic. It is not certain as to how many were engaging in the practices of magic but it is fair to say that it was increasing. Moreover, down the Atlantic coast:

Magic came to the Chesapeake as it had to New England... Virginians nailed horseshoes over their doors to protect themselves from alleged witches... Thomas Teackle owned books about the occult arts. These works described magic, alchemy sometimes to cure diseases. One of the Books in Teackle’s library employed astrology chiromancy (palm reading, and metoposcopy (forehead reading) to analyze human passions. (Butler 2007, 73)

These forms of Christian mystical magic were there to stay within the landscape of American Society. Christian folk practices were considered by the main stream religions as low-brow Christianity, and even devilish to some who believed that it needed to be rooted out at all costs, which was followed by a further drop in religious tolerance. However, despite the intolerance, these mystical exercises were still practiced through the following decades, popping up periodically until Joseph Smith came along and created religious chaos in upstate New York.

¹¹ Ibid., 65.

¹² Ibid., 65.

Prior to the birth of Joseph Smith Jr., his grandfather was found condemning the practice of magic.

Several generations of the Smith family had been influenced by the magic world view before the 1800s. During the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692 the “deposition of Samuell Smith [great grandfather of Joseph Smith Jr.] of Boxford about 25 ye[a]rs [of age]” accused Mary Easty of committing acts of witchcraft at Topsfield five years earlier, and the deposition of “John Gould [Samuel Smith’s father in-law] aged about 56 yeares of theire about” accused Sarah Wilds of acts of witchcraft fifteen years before the trial. (Quinn 1998, 28)

Ironically, while the Salem Witchcraft trials were happening, the rise of a Second Great Awakening began to sprout throughout America. The Salem Witchcraft trials were one of the last major attempts to squelch magic and witchcraft. Meanwhile, this Second Awakening sparked a more Christian liberal approach that championed a magical or inner-personal belief which allowed for dreams and visions. Thus one begins to see a demarcation of religious institutional practices, as explained by Nathan O. Hatch when he wrote:

American Protestantism has been skewed away from central ecclesiastical institutions and high culture; it has been pushed and pulled into its present shape by a democratic or populous orientation...America exalted religious leaders short on social graces, family connections, and literary education. These religious activists pitched their messages to the unschooled and unsophisticated. (Hatch 1991, 5)

This may point as to why an unlearned kid (Joseph Smith) from upstate New York could eventually create an entirely revolutionary approach to Christianity, and actually have it gain traction and support. Furthermore, Hatch also points out that, “an unprecedented wave of religious leaders in the last quarter of the eighteenth century expressed their openness to a variety of signs and wonders, in short, an admission of increased supernatural involvement in everyday life.... (And) indicted a ready acceptance to consider dreams and visions as inspired by God.”¹³

¹³ Ibid., 10.

This awakening of religious worship spread primarily from the years of 1790-1840, which falls squarely within the time period of Joseph Smith. However, even with this new acceptance of dreams and visions there was still predominant kickback by the established churches of Europe emphasizing rational Christianity over superstitious magic, including those who adhered to a more enlightenment or intellectual approach that uses reason over faith. A quote taken from the New York medical journal in 1812 highlights this stating, “irrational and preposterous opinions are still found to predominate over the minds of a numerous class of honest but credulous and unlettered citizens.”¹⁴ Furthermore, some religious institutions were still claiming that those who practiced Christian magic were being tricked by the adversary. In the early 1800’s, New York Lutheran Clergyman scoffed at such practices saying:

Great numbers... even to many professed Christians...love darkness more than light... What must we think, when we see, that many thousands suffer themselves to be led away and bewildered by visionary and extravagant notions, contrary to the dictates of sound reason and revealed truth? (Quinn 1998, 26)

While Christian magic practices were increasing, they were still not acknowledged as acceptable Christian religious observances by mainstream America. In fact, American mainstream Christianity felt that magic constituted anything but normal Christian practice. It is interesting, however, to note that this all may have been a matter of point of view, rather than strict definition. Professor Sarah Iles Johnston explains the difference between magic and religion by stating that “Magic almost always referred to someone else’s religious practices; it was a term that distances those practices from the norm—that is, from one’s own practices, which constituted religion.”¹⁵

¹⁴ D. M. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 25.

¹⁵ Sarah I. Johnston, *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 140.

This definition certainly explains how such things as revelations, divining rods, and seer stones could be seen as non-Christian, magical, devilish, and evil (or just plain foolish). The Christian world was divided as to what really constituted Christian practice. Not only were Americans at odds with magical folk practices – even the family of Joseph Smith Sr. was at odds with one another regarding the practice of Christian folk magic. For example, Joseph Smith Sr. was a firm believer in God but withheld from organized religion and historical documents point to his alleged use of divining rods. This appears to have created irritation on behalf of his brother, Jesse Smith, a practicing Protestant who wrote a rebuking letter to one of the sons of Joseph Sr., Hyrum Smith. Jesse wrote about how magic is synonymous with a golden calf, and that Hyrum’s father, “has a wand or rod like Jannes & Jambres who withstood Moses in Egypt—that he can tell the distance of India to Ethiopia & another fool story, many other things alike ridiculous.”¹⁶

Some historians speculate as to whether or not both Joseph Smith Sr. and William Cowdery (father of Oliver Cowdery who later helped in transcribing the Book of Mormon) were members of a rods fraternity in Vermont led by Nathaniel Wood. Wood categorized the fraternity as, “descendants of the ancient Jews and lawful inheritors of the whole county.”¹⁷ Professor Michael Quinn also points out that this fraternity believed in alchemy and believed that these rods could receive answers, “by a nod of assent...from the rods.”¹⁸ Furthermore, a man named Barnes Frisbie who lived in the Middletown said:

I have been told that Joe Smith’s father resided in Poultmey at the time of the Wood movement here, and that he was in it, and one of the leading rods-men....I have heard before said that Oliver Cowdery’s father was in the Wood Scrape.
(Quinn 1998, 31)

¹⁶ D. M. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 28.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

This may explain the reason why Joseph Smith Jr. was reportedly permitted to practice the art of divining rods at such an early age, as evidenced by local neighbors in Palmyra who reported to have seen Joseph Smith Jr. engaging in divining rods at the age of thirteen years old.

¹⁹ The purpose of a divining rod appears to be used for different reasons depending on what the person was trying to accomplish, however, divining rods appear to have been used to gain information or knowledge. In response towards Jesse Smith being upset with his brother Joseph Sr. for using divining rods, Professor Richard L. Anderson wrote that the rebuke was not because a divining rod, “leads to treasure, but because it leads to information.”²⁰

Divining rods became connected to magic and they allegedly had the potential of revealing anything from economics (like buried treasure) to lost property and even revelation with the Divine.

Money digging was epidemic in upstate New York...buried treasure and lost mines were detected through dreams, divining rods, or stones...buried treasure was tied into great stock of practices extending in the back woods...ordinary people apparently had no difficulty blending Christianity with magic. (Bushman 2005, 50)

Reportedly Benjamin Franklin spoke on the topic of the growing practice of money digging when he said “you can hardly walk half a Mile out of Town on any Side without observing several Pits dug with that Design, and perhaps some lately opened. Men otherwise of very good Senses, have been drawn in this Practice.”²¹ Moreover, two years prior to the Smiths moving to Palmyra, New York, a former resident known as Commodore, a veteran fisherman from Maine, used divining rods. Commodore is found saying, “swear the rod...and looking

¹⁹ Ibid., 36.

²⁰ Ibid., 30.

²¹ Ronald W. Walker, “The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting.” *BYU Studies* 24, no. 4 (1984): 429-459, 437-438.

reverently upwards administered in a solemn tone the usual form of an oath; directing to tell him the truth to such questions as he should ask.”²²

In addition to using divining rods, the first account of Joseph Smith Jr. unearthing any kind of seer stone which also would be classified as magic was in the year 1819 when Joseph Jr., with the help and aid of Willard Chase, dug a well to find the stone. Brigham Young is quoted as having heard Joseph Smith saying he had to dig twenty five feet down to discover the seer stone.²³ Interestingly, Joseph’s acquaintance Willard Chase was described as a Methodist preacher and a devout treasure seeker who had a sister named Sally who engaged in the practice of using seer stones.

W.D. Purple, a local town citizen, wrote about Joseph Smith’s court testimonial regarding disorderly conduct for treasure digging in 1826 stating:

When [Joseph] was a lad, he heard of a neighboring girl [Sally Chase] some three miles from him, who could look into a glass and see anything however hidden from others; that he was seized with a strong desire to see her glass; that after much effort he induced his parents to let him visit her. He did so, and was permitted to look in the glass, which was placed in a hat to exclude light. He was greatly surprised to see but one thing, which was a small stone, a great way off. It soon became luminous, and dazzled his eyes, and after a short time it became as intense as the mid-day sun. He said the stone was under the roots of a tree or shrub as large as his arm...He borrowed an old ax...with some labor and exertion he found the stone. (Kenney 1983, 39)

This particular stone was used throughout the rest of Joseph’s lifetime. Emma Smith, the wife of Joseph Smith Jr., described the stone as, “a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather dark.”²⁴ Joseph’s early episodes with the stone revolved around helping neighbors relocate lost property. For instance, a man named Vanderhoof paid for Joseph to look into his stone to locate

²² D. M. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 30.

²³ Scott G. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal: 1833-1898 Typescript* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1983), 382-383.

²⁴ Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 49.

his missing horse. Joseph responded by telling the man where to locate his mustang, but Vanderhoof evidently thought Joseph was lying and stated that anybody could have told him that.²⁵

These magical seer stones were similar to the diving rods in that they primarily dispensed information and knowledge. The word “seer” had connections to magic, as evidenced by a book entitled *History of Black Art* by Daniel Defoe that states, “in Biblical times they used to say when they wanted to enquire God, that is to enquire about anything difficult, come and let us go to the Seer, that is to say the Magician, the wise Man, the Prophet, or what else you please to call him.”²⁶

Surprisingly, Quinn links English Folk magic and seer stones to ancient biblical patriarchs of the Bible, namely Adam and Abraham.²⁷ Other writings reveal that perhaps these mystical practices using seer stones could be traced back to Gnosticism. In fact, Harold Bloom wrote, “Mormonism is purely American Gnosis.”²⁸ It should be noted that today scholars still debate over the origins and practice of Gnosticism, and therefore it is little wonder that when Joseph Smith began tapping into Gnostic or Hermetic practices, mainstream Christianity is baffled and puzzled over such things as seer stones, golden plates, divining rods, and angels, and people thereby looked at Joseph with disdain and caution. Professor Hugh Nibley writes, “Hermetic Knowledge is the same as gnosis-knowledge of everything concerning man’s condition of the universe, knowledge, handed down from the beginning in carefully kept secrecy.”²⁹ Hermetic roots are found in Egyptian, Jewish, and Early Christian societies. Even

²⁵ D. M. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁸ Lance S. Owens, “Joseph Smith: America’s Hermetic Prophet,” *Gnosis: A Journal of Western Inner Traditions*, Spring 1995, 1.

²⁹ Hugh Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes, *One Eternal Round* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2010), 477.

more, Hermetic practices used such tools as tablets or stones that contained secret or hidden knowledge, namely the Tabula Smaragdina, a transparent stone or tablet found in Egypt during the Middle Ages which alchemists looked at as their “basic document...on which they said all their knowledge rested.”³⁰

Some link Joseph’s involvement in Gnosticism to Emma Smith’s distant cousin named Dr. Luman Walter. Walter was known to be engaged in alchemy, medicine, and Hermeticism. Others point that Joseph Smith’s practices resemble a young man named Christian Rosencreutz who lived in the 17th century and translated a mystical book named *the Book of M* that included the use of a seer stone or a philosopher’s stone.³¹

All this while Joseph was living in a time where the state of New York had a law prohibiting anyone from engaging in the craft of magic or treasure digging, and Joseph was found in contempt of the law and arrested. Joseph’s familial associate Peter Bridgeman turned Joseph in for treasure seeking. Ironically, Peter was the nephew to Josiah Stowell, a Presbyterian who hired them both alongside other locals in helping to trace an ancient Spanish silver mine. Joseph Smith’s trial highlights how his mystical practices ran counter to the New York state law and its citizens’ notions of true religion.

Interestingly, this particular treasure mission appears not to be the will of Joseph Smith but rather Joseph’s father who convinced Joseph to be a part of the treasure hunt.³² Midway through the dig Joseph convinced Josiah to end the mission. By doing so, others in the group, like Bridgman, grew suspicious of Joseph’s motives, and thus turned Joseph over to the state of New York. Joseph is found stating in the 1826 trial that while he did engage in such practices,

³⁰ Cottie A. Burland, *The Arts of the Alchemists* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 2.

³¹ Lance S. Owens, “Joseph Smith: America’s Hermetic Prophet,” *Gnosis: A Journal of Western Inner Traditions*, Spring 1995, 1.

³² Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 52.

“he had always rather declined having anything to do with the business”³³ Meanwhile, Joseph had already purported to have been visited by an Angel which was highly magical in nature. The angel named Moroni appeared earlier to Joseph in 1823, warning him and telling Joseph that, “Satan would try to tempt [him] to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich”³⁴ Professor Richard Bushman accounts that this visit from the angel removed Joseph from treasure seeking as the Angel Moroni instructed him that, “he must quit the company of the money-diggers.”³⁵

Joseph Sr. stated in the 1826 trial that:

Both he and his son were mortified that this wonderful power which God had so miraculously given him should be used only in search of filthy lucre...His constant prayer to his Heavenly Father was to manifest his will concerning this marvelous power. (Bushman 2005, 52)

The following year the angel is reported to have directed Joseph in obtaining the golden plates underneath a hill called Cumorah. Joseph’s local associates set out immediately to track Smith’s new golden bible. The group, led by Joseph’s old acquaintance Willard Chase, hired a fortune teller to locate the plates, and Willard’s sister Sally Chase also later used her green stone to try to locate the plates. She directed the group to Joseph’s parents’ woodshop where Joseph purposely hid an empty box that once contained the golden plates. The group is reported as having located the box but not the golden plates, as apparently Joseph had hidden the plates in the loft above the shop. Prior to this episode, a man named Alva Beamean was ordered to use his divining rods to locate the plates, which were used in Joseph’s parents’ home, but it proved fruitless.³⁶ This group of men “claimed that they had as much right to the plates as Joseph had.”

³³ Ibid., 52.

³⁴ Ibid., 45.

³⁵ Ibid., 51.

³⁶ Ibid., 60-61.

³⁷ These episodes including his trial are intended to reveal that the magical practices of seer stones, divining rods and buried treasure were rather common in Joseph's area and that these mystical practices severely tested the New York state law and mainstream Christian practices.

To highlight further, during the translation of the golden plates, which are purported to be translated primarily by the use of a seer stone, the community began a campaign to protest the book. Many in the county strategically planned to boycott the book. Newspapers throughout the state began publishing negative remarks regarding the book even before its release. For example, a Rochester editor called the book, "the greatest piece of superstition that has come within our knowledge. It partakes largely of Salem Witchcraft-ism and Jemima Wilkinson-ism."³⁸ The Palmyra Reflector wrote a precursor of the Book of Mormon stating:

By way of introduction, and illustration, we shall introduce brief notices and sketches of superstitions of the ancients-the pretended science of alchemy...of Mahomet and other ancient impostures...the Morristown Ghost, Rogers, Walters, Joanna Southcote, etc. (Bushman 2005, 89)

Evidently Joseph Smith was cast into a group of religious vagabonds that understood religion differently from the cultural norms. Furthermore, Joseph Smith's mother Lucy was taken to church court over her son's involvement with the golden plates whereby Presbyterian Deacon George Beckwith suspended her and her sons "Hyrum and Samuel from communion and censured them for their contumacy."³⁹ Once the translated text hit the local stands, Joseph was arrested twice for, "setting the country in an uproar by preaching the Book of Mormon."⁴⁰ It wasn't until Joseph was reported as having received a revelation to relocate to Ohio that Joseph Smith found a period of rest. However, the following years for Joseph Smith were subsequently

³⁷ Ibid., 61.

³⁸ Ibid., 82.

³⁹ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 117.

met with the same kind of intolerance. It became common for Joseph to be run out by mobs throughout the states of Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois.

Joseph's seemingly unusual magical practices revealed the ugliness of American intolerance towards certain religious practices. The combined experiences of America's earliest settlers, including that of Joseph Smith, illustrate that America had a long way to go in not, "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," as stated in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Moreover, these combined experiences serve as a reminder that American religious liberty wasn't cheap. The examples reveal that America was in a constant flux regarding what constituted appropriate religious practice, and Joseph Smith's religious mystical practices were indeed shocking to mainstream Christianity, even though Joseph's types of magical practices were being practiced throughout America. And although Smith's mystical practices from today's perspective sound like they came right out of a Harry Potter book, Joseph Smith's mystical practices of seer stones and divining rods instead appear to have similar ties to the secretive practices of Gnosticism and Hermeticism. Hence, many came to see Smith's practices as fanatic, magical, and evil, which aided in empowering the mobs that eventually murdered Joseph Smith Jr. in 1844, and thus revealed another gaping hole within American religious tolerance.

These holes are part of the American experience and are best served as a guide in hopes to not continue to reduce religious figures and practices as magical or Christian, Godly or un-Godly, righteous or unrighteous, genius or lunatic. This type of approach does not allow us to grapple with opposing religious practices and teachings that are set forth from the likes of a Joseph Smith. Rather, we all must check ourselves of our own prejudices towards others who happen to practice a different religion or belief. We are cautioned by John Calvin regarding this

topic when he stated, “not to be carried away with headlong anger or be seized with hatred.”⁴¹ If we follow this model, we can avoid what G.K Chesterton described when he wrote, “idolatry is committed not merely by setting up false gods, but also by setting up false devils.”⁴² This perspective can prove to be helpful to us as a nation when we are unsure of someone else’s teachings and practices, such as a Joseph Smith, and can aid in avoiding future religious conflicts and acts of religious intolerance.

⁴¹ Richard Mouw, *Joseph Smith, Jr.: Reappraisals After Two Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 198.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 198.

Bibliography

- Burland, Cottie A. *The Arts of the Alchemists*. New York: Macmillan, 1968.
- Bushman, Richard L. *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.
- Butler, Jon. *Religion in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Hatch, Nathan O. *Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Johnston, Sarah I. *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Kenney, Scott G. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833-1898 Typescript*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1983.
- Lund, John M. "Fear of an oath: Piety, hypocrisy, and the dilemma of Puritan identity." *Electronic Doctoral Dissertations for UMass Amherst*, January 1, 2001.
- Mouw, Richard. *Joseph Smith, Jr.: Reappraisals After Two Centuries*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Nibley, Hugh and Michael D. Rhodes. *One Eternal Round*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2010.
- Owens, Lance S. "Joseph Smith: America's Hermetic Prophet." *Gnosis: A Journal of Western Inner Traditions*, Spring 1995, 1.
- Quinn, D. M. *Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998.
- Walker, Ronald W. "The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting." *BYU Studies* 24, no. 4 (1984): 429-459.