

## **Straight Talk #23 – Joseph Smith and the Occult**

**by William Schnoebelen - ©2011**

Today, many people in conservative and Christian circles are up in arms about the Harry Potter phenomenon. However, before there was Harry and his pals at Hogwarts, before there was Sabrina the teenaged witch... even before there was Samantha Stevens on *Bewitched* and Mickey Mouse and his “Sorcerer’s Apprentice” hat, there was an even more renowned teenage sorcerer.

This young wizard (as an adult) could truth be said to have changed the course of American history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He had an influence on a presidential election and changed the landscape of the American West, even after his death. How is that for powerful “magic?”

As you may have guessed from the title of this booklet, this mysterious and powerful adolescent was none other than Joseph Smith, Jr., the founder of the LDS (Mormon) church - the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was also the person who produced the Book of Mormon, star of so many TV commercials.

This magical side to Smith might surprise some readers (especially Mormons). For most, the only exposure to Smith’s history is from clean-scrubbed missionaries in living rooms and visitors’ centers; and the version they present is highly “sanitized.” Indeed, Smith’s involvement in sorcery and the occult is one of the better-kept secrets of 19<sup>th</sup> century US religious history.

Like Harry Potter, Smith’s parents were involved in sorcery, by their own admission. Of course, unlike Harry, Smith’s folks were not killed when he was a child, nor was he marked with a lightning bolt on his forehead.

By the time Joseph Smith was barely older than Harry Potter’s fictitious character, he was already challenging the established churches with “some new thing.” (**Acts 17:21**) By 1830, he claimed to be the prophet, seer and revelator of the only true Christian church on earth. He further claimed that all other churches, Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox, were “abominations in the sight of God.”

By the 1840’s he was claiming to lead men to godhood by secret occult rituals. He had declared all marriages abrogate and instituted a “new and everlasting covenant of marriage” which allowed him (and other Mormons) to marry multiple wives, including those already married to other men.

In one speech, he declared that, “no man knows my history” and implied on occasion that he was either God or Jesus in the flesh. He also declared himself king of the United States and ran for president of this nation. Before the election took place, he

was shot by a mob while in jail in Carthage, Illinois. He was in jail because he had incited a riot that had caused a printing press to be destroyed. That press had dared to print the truth about his many wives.

The LDS church that he created ended up being a strange mélange of occultism, Freemasonry, Christianity and Gnosticism. Though today Mormons try to portray their faith as mainstream, its roots are sunk deep in the mire of occultism and sorcery.

## Digging Up the Truth

For more than a century, Christian apologists (defenders of the faith) have been researching the shadow side of Joseph Smith, Jr. They uncovered some very damning material. However, it remained for a renowned *LDS* historian of impeccable credentials to actually nail the wizard label firmly to Smith's forehead. This man was Dr. D. Michael Quinn.

Quinn's *EARLY MORMONISM AND THE MAGIC WORLD VIEW* (published 1987) was the book in which he documented the hundreds of incriminating bits of evidence for Smith being deep into the occult. Since the vast majority of citations of text in this article are from that book, we are just inserting them into the text with page numbers between parentheses to avoid having the endnotes be too lengthy.

In the past, scholars from outside Mormonism like Wesley Walters and the Tanners have exposed evidence about occultism in the LDS church. In recent years, even Mormons like Reed Durham have exposed correlations between early Mormonism and Masonry. But Quinn's book was the first major effort by an LDS scholar to deal with the magical roots of his faith. He was a history professor at BYU and was voted Outstanding Teacher for 1986. He is also a devout Mormon.

Quinn did his homework! The book's chief handicap is that it is so carefully researched that few will want to wade through it. Its beginning would disturb both thinking Mormons and Christians, for Quinn attempts to support "Christian occultism." Many would lay the book aside, for its assertions do violence to both the commonly held notions of LDS faith and also Christian orthodoxy. This is sad, because beyond the first chapters, Quinn unfolds a bizarre tapestry of occult activities on the part of Joseph Smith's family, and of Smith himself.

Like a detective, he builds his case on means, method, motive and opportunity—showing that Smith had the means, method and opportunity to be a magician. The question of motive remains controversial.

It is therefore the purpose of this booklet to attempt to summarize *first* of all the historical facts and inferences Dr. Quinn presents concerning early Mormonism's roots in the occult; and second, to respond to his assertion that occult practice in no way destroys the credibility of either Mormonism or its early "prophets."

## The “MAGIC WORLD VIEW”

The word “world view” (from the German, *weltanschauung*) is tossed about by social scientists; and Quinn talks their language. He defines the “magic world view” (MWV) thus:

1. There is no distinction between living and non-living things. *Everything is alive.*
2. No symbols as “symbols,” everything has an intrinsic power all its own.
3. No coincidence or “random chance,” but everything happens with an unseen purpose.(Quinn, p.xii)

Clearly this worldview is *not* that shared by most modern people in western society. Aside from witches and occultists, few would subscribe to these beliefs. Quinn’s point, which he belabors, is that in the 18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> century environment of America, many more people—perhaps even a majority, did hold to such views. This point is, as we shall see later, irrelevant.

Quinn then proceeds to prove that the Joseph Smith family possessed and used “magical artifacts.”(p. xvi)

To establish his case, Quinn builds upon the work of LDS apologist Hugh Nibley, who used parallel evidence to “prove” the Book of Mormon and other LDS exotica.(p. xvii) Quinn asserts that if parallels can be found in occult history, environment and literature to the magical practices that the Smith family engaged in, this would be a strong indication that the Smiths did indeed believe in and practice magic.

Quinn then goes mystical on us by saying that there may be parallels that exist without any apparent connection between the individuals involved. For example, he discusses the resemblance between Smith’s supposedly finding the Book of Mormon plates and a 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Egyptian story in which a fellow does the same things. (p. 133) There is no way that Smith could have known about this story, yet his story closely parallels the ancient myth.

To explain this, Quinn draws upon the theories of occult psychiatrist Carl Jung, who theorized “archetypal parallels”: patterns of thought within consciousness on a subterranean level. Jung called this level the “*collective unconscious*,” and used it to account for coincidence. Thus, Quinn notes that the MANY parallels between magic practice and the behavior of the Smiths cannot be explained as “*mere*” coincidence.

To an occultist, there is no such thing as coincidence. He then asks the key question: *When do coincidences in the evidence exceed the probability of coincidence and move toward circumstantial proof?* His contention is that the evidence he gives is well in the

realm of the circumstantial. In spite of this, Quinn incredibly “bears his testimony” about the truth of the Church:

“I also believe that no historical documents presently available or locked away or as yet unknown will alter these truths [of Mormonism]; and I believe that persons of faith have no reason to avoid historical inquiry into their religion or to discourage others from such investigation.”(p. xx)

He is certainly entitled to believe that. However, this is known as the “Bury your head in the sand!” school of history.

## **Sorcery in the Bible**

Quinn spends the beginning of his book building a case for the Creator’s approval of magic. He claims YHWH “seems to sanction” some sorts of magic. (p.1) Briefly, he cites Moses’ seeking the true name (YHWH), Joseph’s divining cup, the use of healing objects, and of course “Jesus as magician.”

Quinn then muddies the water by blurring the distinction between magic and religion. He grants the classical distinction of religion as supplicative and magic as coercive. In other words, religion pleads and prays for things while the magician believes he can FORCE the universe to obey him.

The mystic communicates with beings, while the magician manipulates them. (p.xiii-xiv) He contends that such a distinction is honored more in theory than in practice; and cites many examples of Judeo-Christians who seem to have done magic.

He does admit that the practice of magic and sorcery was stalled considerably by the Reformation,(p.7) but makes it sound as if this was more because of the rise of the rationalist-scientific world view than because of the Reformers. Throughout this section, he insists on using the words “*Christian occultism*,” which is a semantic leap Christians should not tolerate.

The first historical ground that Quinn breaks is the fact that there was a sizeable number of magical books in circulation at the time of Joseph Smith, Jr. Two crucial books available near Smith’s home were Francis Barrett’s classic, THE MAGUS, a textbook on magic; and the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg, an occultist who claimed a vision of God almost identical to Joseph Smith’s First Vision. Additionally, there seemed to be no lack of magical tutors. According to Quinn, there was a wealth of little magical sects in the vicinity—one of which would be Nathaniel Wood’s group in Vermont.

According to contemporary evidence, there existed a magic cult near the Joseph Smith, Sr. home and the home of Oliver Cowdery’s father, William, in Vermont around 1800. (p. 31ff) This group was called the “*Wood Scrape*” after its founder, Nathaniel Wood.

Wood taught his followers (among whom may have been the elder Smith) peculiar doctrines. They believed they were the true descendants of the ancient Jews and lawful inheritors of the whole country; practiced the occult science of alchemy and used cleft rods to find treasure and to receive revelation. They also felt compelled to build a temple

Many of these beliefs later became part of LDS theology. Especially of interest is the fact that Oliver Cowdery, who grew up 6 miles from the Wood Scrape, was later mentioned in the 1835 D&C 6 as receiving the “*gift of Aaron*.” In the 1833 edition, this was the “*rod of Aaron*” and the “*rod of nature*”; “terms used in the Wood Scrape and in magic for divining rods.(p.33)

Like many LDS “revelations,” this 1833 version was later censored to remove the occult language. Quinn exults over this revelation. He claims that it validated as “the work of God” an instrument of folk magic that Cowdery had already been using, giving divine sanction to a form of witchcraft! (p.35) Quinn also cites evidence that Smith himself used the divining rod.

## Joseph Smith as “Seer”

Most Mormons agree that Smith used seer stones, both before and after the Book of Mormon’s emergence. Seer stones are a form of the occult practice of gazing into a crystal ball or “scrying” and Smith was hiring himself out to find buried treasure. Quinn claims that Smith’s use of seer stones was “*not inconsistent with the honorable life of a young man who had a prophetic calling*.” (p. 41) A modern Mormon philosopher is quoted as saying,

“Joseph Smith could have been president of the Palmyra fraternal association of money-diggers and still have been a prophet. There is simply no logical inconsistency in being both.”(Ibid.)

These kinds of statements are typical of the new “liberal” Mormonism, and show an utter lack of understanding of the holiness of God. One might as well say that Joseph Smith could have been a pimp and still have been a prophet of God!

The resemblance between Smith’s scrying activities and those of the famed sorcerer, John Dee are cited. (p.37) Dee, court astrologer to Elizabeth I, built much of the foundation upon which modern Satanism rests, the so-called “Enochian System” of Keys or Calls. Like Dee, Smith used a seer stone to translate an unknown language letter by letter and get information about ancient cultures. Smith did his own scrying, while Dee had a seer (Edward Kelly) look in the stone for him.

Today, these Calls that Dee brought through, are part of the darkest pits of black magic. They make up about one-third of the SATANIC BIBLE, and are used by Satanists and followers of the black magician, Aleister Crowley (See note 1).

Whether Smith knew of Dee is unknown, but he seemed obsessed with “*Enoch*,” the name of the demon who taught Dee the Calls. Smith got a lot of mileage out of

Enoch, and used the name as his *nom du plume* in Doctrine and Covenants.

He consciously or unconsciously carried out the role of Enoch from the Masonic legends of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> degree of the Scottish rite. (See note 2) One would think that such a resemblance between an entire system of magic and the Book of Mormon's emergence would make devout Mormons uneasy!

## The Bainbridge Trial

For years, LDS arch-apologist Dr. Hugh Nibley claimed that legal proof of Joseph Smith digging would be “the most devastating blow to Smith ever delivered.” (p.45) The proof emerged in the early '70's due to the research of Wesley Walters. (See note 3)

Now Quinn, armed with the wolf bane and crucifix of his “MWV” hopes to drive off the “demon” with a sideways attack. Doing a complete turn-about from the earlier LDS scholars, Quinn states,

“If accurate, the alleged court records of 1826 portray Smith in a positive light, unless of course one denies the legitimacy of folk religion. Unfortunately, LDS apologists have in the past accepted rationalist categories of superstition and fraud rather than Smith's and his supporters' affirmations of supernatural powers from the perspective of folk magic.” (p.46)

This is typical of Quinn's tactic throughout the book. He says, “Shame on us!” for viewing Smith's activities through the eyes of 20<sup>th</sup> century rationalism. He wants us to get our fingernails dirty with the grime of 19<sup>th</sup> century witchcraft so we can see Smith's point of view. Of course, we should look at history through the eyes of those who experienced it, but regarding a real “prophet of God,” I think we also need to look at Smith's activities through **the eyes of the Creator**.

Another tactic is seen in Quinn's quotation from author Jan Shipps who claimed that Smith's early experience as a treasure seeker was “*an important indication of his early and continued interest in extra-rational phenomena, and that it played an important role in his spiritual development.*” (p.51) This is academic doubletalk. Translated: “Smith's insanity helped him grow as a prophet.”

Quinn cites other writers who feel that Smith's occultism was divinely inspired. They are saying, in effect: “You want to grow closer to the Almighty? Break a few of his commandments.” It is Biblical nonsense!

Steaming right along, though, Quinn notes that the Smith family has provided ample evidence of its occult practices. This evidence includes statements from family members, magic tools possessed by family members who “either imply or affirm that Joseph Smith and his family believed in and used ritual magic, astrology, talismans and magic parchments.

## The “FACULTIE OF ABRAC”

First of all, there is the well-known statement by Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph’s mother, that her family -

“...went at trying to win the facultie of Abrac, drawing magic circles and sooth saying to the neglect of all kinds of business. We never during our lives suffered one important interest to swallow up *every* other obligation..”(p.53)

That statement alone is damning enough. Abrac is an abbreviation of “Abracadabra” and has been used for centuries in magic for seeking visions and apparitions—something Joseph excelled in. These activities are **denounced** in the Bible. They also drew magic circles and practiced divination. Quinn later mentions that “Mother Smith” was a palm reader! Sounds almost like a gypsy camp, doesn’t it?

Obviously Mother Smith felt that occult and magical activities were an “important interest.” It seems to have been a central preoccupation of the entire family. The drawing of magic circles by the Smith family was also reported by neighbors. Abrac may well have come from the ancient Gnostic demon-god “*Abraxas*,” usually depicted as a rooster with two serpents for legs. Freemasons of the time were also associated with trying to win the “faculty of Abrac.” (p.55)

Joseph’s brother Hyrum owned a “Masonic dagger,” which had little to do with Masonry, as Quinn reveals. It has no Masonic markings on it, but rather is set up as a weapon in ceremonial magic! (p.57) It is engraved with the occult seals of Mars. Quinn speculates why Mars was used; and muses that Hyrum’s father, who may have been the original owner of the dagger, had Mars ruling his birth year, 1771. He may have overlooked the most obvious reason of all for a magician. The dagger or sword are tools sacred to Mars. and should be engraved with those emblems! (See note 4) They are used to cast protective circles and Mars is a protective, defensive planet.

The dagger is also a vital witch tool called an “*athame*.” “ It is found in the KEY OF SOLOMON from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and you cannot be a witch without one. The athame and also cords are the two things a neophyte witch is required to bring to their first initiation, and the athame IS the primary working tool in witchcraft, as well as in ceremonial magick.

## Astrology and the Smiths

According to Quinn, the Smith family was in possession of magic parchments filled with astrological symbols; a Jupiter talisman; and an apparent easy access to books on astrology from nearby libraries (p.58ff)

However, Quinn plunges on and finds amazing correlations between Smith’s behavior and astrology — the sort of proof that would indicate that he took the stars quite

seriously. We are not talking about just looking at your horoscope in a newspaper. History shows that **Smith planned virtually every important event in his adult life as if he had a sorcerer's absolute respect for astrology.**

1. Quinn's investigation moves along two lines, and we will open a third:
2. Did Smith act in accord with astrology in order to obtain results?
3. Did circumstances of Smith's life over which he had no control seem to fit astrology?

In examining Smith's natal chart, does it fit in ways that would indicate he took it to heart?

He notes that to an astrologer, coincidence does not disprove astrology, but rather proves its power. A major preoccupation of astrologers is marriage. Many occultists plan their marriages to fit with favorable stellar conditions. As a witch, I did this with my wedding.

Quinn shows that in Smith's marriages (he had more than his share!) of those 18 for which we have precise dates, every single wedding corresponds to an appropriate astrological aspect! (p.59ff) His father's marriage seems to have been picked for astrological reasons; and all 3 of the marriages Joseph Smith, jr. did for Brigham Young were astrologically correct. Of the other Smith children, who were not much into the occult; out of 8 of their marriages, only two have any astrological significance.

## **Joseph Smith's "Nativity"**

Without wanting in any way to encourage astrology, I felt it would be helpful to see if Smith's natal astrology chart (nativity) would have encouraged him to behave as he did. Since Quinn shows that many of Smith's activities confirm how committed he was to astrology; it would be intriguing to see how his natal chart would influence him.

As a former practicing astrologer (before I learned that such practices were sin), I did hundreds of natal charts. Here are some quick thoughts about Smith's nativity:

1. His obsession with Jupiter (the talisman, etc.) may have come from the fact that this planet is in Sagittarius. where it is highly favored.
2. His Venus was in Aquarius, sextiling Jupiter which would lead him into strange sexual relationships, group marriages; and would make him extremely compelling to women.
3. His Moon was in Aquarius, which would make him think himself skillful in second sight, and sorcery; as would his Jupiter sextiling Uranus, the planet of sorcery.

4. His Saturn conjuncts Uranus, which would lead him to think that his exotic activities would be a continual source of danger to himself.

Quinn says that Smith's leg problems are related to Capricorn (his sun sign) as is his treasure seeking and religious leadership.(p.63)

This does not mean that astrology is true; but it does mean that, like any magic, it can have incredible power over your life if you believe in it. YHWH does not want us bound by such beliefs, and so forbids them—which prohibition Smith ignored, to his everlasting peril.

## **The Jupiter Talisman**

Not only did the Smiths take astrology to heart, but the patrimony of the family which has come down to us includes a wide assortment of magical tools which would only be in the hands of serious sorcerers. There is the Jupiter talisman, first made famous by Mormon Reed Durham. (See note 5) This magical amulet was found on Smith after his death. It is engraved to correspond to Barrett's occult treatise, *THE MAGUS*, with one slight difference. According to Quinn, the inscriptions on the talisman indicated its use in ceremonies of Spirit Conjunction, and the classic grimoire or magical work text, the *KEY OF SOLOMON* defined its use strictly for high ceremonial magic (p.69)

Thus, it would not be likely that Smith would wear such a device unless he was a ceremonial magician! The *KEY OF SOLOMON* is not just a book for dabblers, but a ponderous and exacting manual of complex ceremonies for the most potent and dangerous sort of ceremonial magic!

There are several other magical artifacts associated with Joseph Smith. Key ones would be:

1. **THE SERPENT CANE:** a serpent headed cane carved with initials "JS" complete with an astrological symbol which Quinn notes could symbolically imply that "Jupiter rules over Joseph Smith." The serpent, of course, is associated with Saturn, Jupiter and with Satan.(p.72)
2. **THE DOVE MEDALLION:** although the dove is a Christian symbol, Quinn does not seem satisfied with that and notes that it is also a "sexual emblem sacred to love and mother goddesses" such as the goddess of witchcraft. It is also one of the forms of "Familiar Shapes of the spirits of Venus," and Venus was strong in Smith's chart. His interest in the ladies is evident. (p.73-74)
3. **THE POUCH OF PARCHMENTS AND LAMENS:** (See note 6) Hyrum's dagger was accompanied by magical parchments including a lamen of ceremonial magic, a talisman for personal protection, and a lamen which served as a house charm.

Quinn says the presence of God-names and pious sounding phrases on these talismans makes them examples of “Christian occultism,” but such assertions don’t stand **up** to scriptural examination. (p.79)

## **Magic Invocation and the Book of Mormon**

One of the most devastating revelations in the Quinn book is his meticulous account of how the coming forth of the Book of Mormon can be reduced to a series of magic invocations of spirits designed to reveal hidden treasure.

He shows, in detail too lengthy to go into in this article, how the times, dates and even astrological configurations show that the initial meeting with “Moroni” was the, “*dramatically successful result of ritual magic, specifically NECROMANCY...*” (Communication with the dead forbidden by the Bible)(p.118) As others before him have observed, (See note 7) Smith’s tryst with Moroni occurred once the moon had reached its fullness, just before the Autumnal Equinox; the major witchcraft festival of Harvest Home! (See note 8) Everything that night coincided exactly with magical instructions for the invocation of spirits. (p.122)

The tale of that equinox has been “*cleaned up*” by the Church, but according to Quinn, the earliest available version reveals four things later concealed:

1. There were three unsuccessful attempts made at the rite;
2. Something he found made Smith afraid;
3. Smith’s failure to keep certain commandments;
4. His desire to get rich by visiting the Hill Cumorah.(p.123)

He reveals that Smith, when he opened the box with the plates, saw a toad in it that assumed the appearance of a man and struck him on the side of the head. (p. 124) This is *not* the fake “Salamander Letter” which we are discussing here, but an independent and contemporary account which forger Mark Hoffman may well have used as an inspiration to construct his infamous letter.

As Quinn rightly observes, the toad has always been associated “*with Satanism, black magic, sorcery and witchcraft.*” (p.128) If anything changed from a toad to a person, that creature was either an evil spirit, a witch, or a bewitched person. Therefore, if a spirit was guarding the plates, it would necessarily be a **devil in the shape of a gigantic toad!**

Quinn muses that it is unlikely that either Joseph Smith or his father would use satanic imagery to describe a messenger they regarded as divine. I would suggest that perhaps they, like many sorcerers, regarded the devil as a divine being, perhaps on an equal

footing as co-ruler with God.

In any event, the difficulty here is overwhelming. We have the central kernel of the LDS faith—the appearance of the Book of Mormon; being sullied by the fact that “Moroni,” the custodian of the plates is **actually a satanic toad!** How could a holy book come from such a diabolical source—especially since it attacks orthodox Christianity so uncompromisingly?

## **Will the Real “Moroni” Please Stand Up?**

Unfortunately, Quinn does not leave our friend Moroni there; he digs up more unsavory facts about the name itself. Although he lists too many items to adequately deal with, one is of interest. He reports that the actual name, “Moroni” can refer to a man *“with dark or swarthy complexion which suggests a connection with folk magic.”* (p.131-2) The priest of a witch coven in post-1600’s Britain was known as **“The Dark Man”** or the **“Devil”** (meaning “little god” or representative of the horned god, Cernunnos or Lucifer) and was invariably described as a man with a “dark, swarthy complexion.” The name is also associated with Egyptian magic, conjuring magic in the KEY OF SOLOMON, venomous salamanders and Native American poison!

Smith was also required to wear black clothing and ride a black horse to his spectral rendezvous—black being long associated with witchcraft. He also continued to use his seer stone in much the same way as he had in treasure digging after the Book of Mormon came out and he became a “respectable” church leader.(p. 145) It is interesting that even to this day, LDS leaders all wear black suits, and even the missionaries are not allowed to dress in anything but very dark suits normally.

Smith’s colleagues saw no inconsistency in God using the same instrument and methods to translate the Book of Mormon as was used for treasure. This says more about their lack of spiritual discernment than it does about Smith’s holiness!

Quinn cites a comprehensive study of the magic arts from the 1700’s and notes that all three distinctive forms of ritual magic are represented in the account of Smith and the gold plates: Necromancy, Transformation or shape-shifting, and Theurgy or divine communication! (p.133) In short, Smith’s encounter upon Hill Cumorah **is a classic textbook case of sorcery!**

## **Magic within the Book of Mormon**

We are next treated to a review of the LDS scriptures in the light of the MWV, and again, Quinn notes that they are full of magical correspondences. To list the highlights:

- 1.) The use of the “familiar spirit” of the Book of Mormon and Isaiah 29, when the word has a profoundly occult context. Though LDS authorities and the Book of Mormon itself testify that the book has a familiar spirit, the term itself indicates a demon in the Bible, and every Bible commentary, even LDS apostle McConkie’s MORMON DOCTRINE

identifies the term with spiritualism and evil. (See note 9)(p. 152)

Centuries before Smith, the term “familiar spirit” referred to NECROMANCY; and of course every self-respecting witch has a familiar spirit, which frequently embodied as a TOAD or a cat!

2.) The Book of Mormon reflects magic folklore about buried treasure moving. (Helaman 13:35, Mormon 1:18)(p.154)

3.) Many Book of Mormon names have correspondences in the world of sorcery:(p.154-8)

- **Mormon (Mormo):** spirit or specter that frightens children, a bugbear or false terror.
- **Alma:** a name used in magic to conjure a treasure spirit.
- **Lehi:** similar to LEHON, a name used to invoke spirits
- **Nephi:** a Gnostic god, Nephiomoth; also like Nephesh. (Hebrew for the soul which is invoked by necromancers).
- **Laman:** or Lamem, a magical tool or parchment breastplate.

4.) The “learning of the Jews”—a common way of referring to the magic Qabalah. The “language of the Egyptians” referred to the supposedly Egyptian magic hieroglyphics of Hermes Trismegistes (See note 10) (1 Nephi 1:1).(p.158)

5.) LDS revelation teaches pagan animism—that non-living objects were also rational spirit beings. (p.170) The earth itself lived and breathed and had been born from other “parent earths.” This is pure witchcraft, both ancient and modern! (See note 11)

## **LDS Revelation and the Pseudepigrapha**

The Pseudepigrapha or “false writings” are books that have been rejected as spurious by Judeo-Christian scholars. Quinn shows resemblances between these writings and LDS scriptures,

“Smith’s version of Genesis [the Book of Moses] may have presented new and disturbing extra-biblical doctrines...but it fit comfortably within various occult traditions.”(p. 169)

Other elements of pseudepigraphic dogma that showed up in Mormonism included the fact that matter and spirit are the same, occult Qabalism, and God being “bound” or forced by human actions.

The views of the afterlife taught by Smith such as his “multiple heavens” were

“completely compatible with widely published occult views.”(p. 172) Echoes of occultist Emmanuel Swedenborg and the **Gnostic heretic** Basilius Valentius are found in Smith’s dogmas. To this day, LDS apologists frequently try to claim that the resemblance between Mormonism and Gnosticism proves that the church is truly restored primitive Christianity. Since Gnosticism is a heresy, of course, it does no such thing.

## Quinn Enters “Mormonism’s Temple of Doom”

Quinn writes that the 1832 priesthood revelation recalled “a traditional view of magic rather than Judeo-Christian theology.”(p. 177) The idea of a patriarchal priesthood passed down through the ages was common in the occult and in witchcraft, but has no *basis* in the Bible, other than the Levitical priesthood, which has nothing to do with Smith’s Melchizedek priesthood.

The LDS theology of the priesthood is virtually identical to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ephrata commune of nearby Pennsylvania that combined Rosicrucianism, alchemy, astrology and ceremonial magic. They claimed to confer the “ancient order of Melchizedek” by the laying on of hands.(p.180). This same occult fraternity also taught another LDS doctrine, baptism for the dead!

As Quinn discusses the LDS temple, he is reluctant to say much. Understandably, he takes his covenants very seriously and still believes in the temple’s holiness. As little as he says, he says more than enough!

“Although there may be superficial similarities between Masonic rituals and the Mormon endowment, I believe that the underlying philosophy and purpose of the two were fundamentally different. Mormon revelation proclaimed that the endowment restored what Masonry acknowledged it only derived from—THE OCCULT MYSTERIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD.”(p. 184)

He notes that magic reached its zenith in the “mystery” schools of paganism. Smith promised a restoration of “secret” mysteries, which in those days could only mean “occultism!” Quinn points out,

“No Mason defined the central purpose of Masonic rites to be an ascent into *heaven*.’(See note 12) Although the absence of heavenly ascent in Freemasonry represents a chasm between it and the Mormon endowment, such an ascent was essential to the occult mysteries of the ancient world.”(p. 185)

Quinn believes that it is possible to see how even by simply using material on the temple from authorized LDS sources, it can be established that the endowment “reflected the ancient and occult mysteries far closer than Freemasonry.”(p. 186)

Drawing from Warburton’s DIVINE LEGATION OF MOSES, an extensive description of the ancient mysteries available in Smith’s day, Quinn notes nine precise resemblances between the ancient pagan cults and the LDS endowment; including;

1. Washings, anointings, receiving a new name and a sacred garment;
2. Vows of non-disclosure;
3. Lesser and greater rituals;
4. Mortals attaining godhood;
5. Secrets revealed by God but distorted through apostasy.

He says that the ancient occult mysteries and the LDS endowment manifest **both philosophical and structural kinship!** Our research has documented at least 15 precise corollaries between modern witchcraft and the temple rite.’(See note 13) Though space does not permit me to go into his section on magic in the Church after 1830, he definitively establishes its presence, and notes that **at least two-thirds of Mormonism’s first apostles may have had beliefs in folk magic!**(p. 195)

He notes the link between Joseph Smith’s teachings as a mature church founder with magic traditions extending back to the ancient world (p.226) and says that this does not diminish Mormonism’s validity as a Christian religion, and finally compares Mormonism to “pre-exilic Judaism” and “primitive Christianity.” (p.227) He states that these magic techniques facilitated the religious quest of those contemporaries of Joseph Smith who perceived reality from the MWV.

## END NOTES

- 1.) Anton LaVey, THE SATANIC BIBLE, Avon, 1969, p.155- 272; also Aleister Crowley’s THE VISION AND THE VOICE.
- 2.) Reed C. Durham, jr., IS THERE NO HELP FOR THE WIDOW’S SON, Martin Publishing, Nauvoo, IL. 1980, p.25-26.
- 3.) Wesley P. Walters, sworn affidavit, October 28, 1971.
- 4.) Aleister Crowley, 777, in THE QABALAH OF ALEISTER CROWLEY, Weiser, New York, 1978.
- 5.) Durham, p.22ff.
- 6.) A lamen is a parchment or metal seal designed to be worn upon the breast as a talisman of protection, especially during spirit invocation; and are engraved with the sigils and names of power of a planetary demon and often the corresponding magic square.
- 7.) James R. Spencer, “Through the Maze” #15, 1986, “The Occult Roots of Mormonism”, p.4.
- 8.) Janet & Stewart Farrar, EIGHT SABBATS FOR WITCHES, Robert Hale, London, 1981, p.26, 116.
- 9.) Bruce R. McConkie’s MORMON DOCTRINE, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, 1979—under the entry “familiar spirit” he says “See SPIRITUALISM.”
- 10.) Hermes Trismegistes is a mythic figure of Egypt associated with the god Thoth. *He* is felt by many to be the founder of magic. His Maxim: “As above, so below,” is a foundational doctrine of both occultism

and Mormonism.

11.) See Margot Adler's DRAWING DOWN THE MOON, Beacon Press, Boston, rev. edition, 1986, p. 299-303 for an illustration of how witches view the earth and the similarity with LDS teaching.

12.) William J. Schnobelen and James R. Spencer, MORMONISM'S TEMPLE OF DOOM, Triple J Publications, Idaho Falls, 1987, esp. p.43.

13.) J. Edward Decker's THE QUESTION OF FREEMASONRY, p.18-27. Actually, there is a soteriological element in Freemasonry. The Mason hopes to achieve immortality and attain the "Celestial Lodge" above upon death; and some writers have made it clear that the Mason can indeed achieve godhood.

## PART II: A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Although a line-by-line response to this large book would be a book itself, some fundamental concepts within Quinn's work must be critiqued from the position of historic Christian orthodoxy. Two basic problems with Quinn's attempt to forge a link between Christianity and occultism are that first, this business of "world views" may sound respectably academic, but it does not stand under the light of Biblical scrutiny.

Second, although he may well be right in saying that often the distinctions between magic and religion become blurry; he fails to understand that Christianity is a vital, intimate relationship with Yah'shua (Hebrew way of saying Jesus) the Messiah. ***It is not and can never be a religion!***

### Three "World Views"

Anthropologists frequently discuss "world views," but in reality, in terms of spirituality there are only three possible broad worldviews, and they are mutually exclusive.

There is **Naturalism**, which holds an essentially atheistic view that the universe is all there is and that there is no spiritual reality out there at all.

Then there is **Pantheism**, which says that God is in all things, that all matter, animate and inanimate has a god-principle or life-principle in it; and that God does not exist apart from His creation. This is essentially the so-called "magic world view."

Finally, there is **Monotheism**, which posits a Creator apart from the universe Who made it and Who controls it but yet He is also immanently within it: the belief in one Deity alone. This is the Biblical "world view."

Now even within the constructs of a Monotheism/Pantheism dialog, it is easy to see that you cannot rationally hold both positions at once. The pantheist would be like the person who would say that the totality of Dr. Quinn was in his book—that there was no more of Dr. Quinn than was contained in his writing. The monotheist would say that although Dr. Quinn's heart and mind can be perceived in his book, that there is much

more to him than can be found in the book. The pantheist believes that he is just as much a part of God as anything else, and it is upon this foundation that magic is built. The God of the Bible is *wholly Other* (**Is.55:9, Rom.11:33**), but accessible to us through revelation; and through the definitive Revelation: Yah'shua the Messiah. (Heb. 1:1-2)

To continue our metaphor, a pantheist would believe that if you cut up a page of Dr. Quinn's book he would be cutting him up. Similarly, the MWV believes that by actions done to parts of the world, the gods can be influenced. This is the Hermetic maxim mentioned above: "**As above, so below**"—**and** it is utterly foreign to the Bible.

The religionist believes that there are things he can do to bring himself into harmony with God. These may include actions, rituals or prayers. The Bible says this is folly. There is **nothing** man can do to restore himself to fellowship with YHWH (**Eph.2:8-9**) except simply receive the gift of eternal life (**Rom.6:23, 10:13**). Even this impulse to reach out for this gift can be imparted only by God's grace (**John 3:27, 1:13, Titus 3:5**).

Thus, the distinction Quinn makes between magic being coercive and religion being supplicative applies a *hundredfold* to Christianity. The God of the Bible is utterly sovereign and unchangeable, His will cannot be changed by magic rites. (**Mal.3:6, Ps. 102:27, Heb.1:12, Jas.1:17**) This nullifies the basis of the MWV since the YHWH is unmoved by such nonsense. Therefore, any results that appear are almost certainly from the demonic. YHWH in the Bible condemns magic dozens of times. (See note 1) How Quinn's "God" can denounce magic and yet reward people like Smith and Cowdery for doing it is irrational.

## **“Everybody's Doing It!”**

Quinn's justification for Smith practicing magic is that: a) instances can be found of Judeo-Christian believers historically practicing forms of magic; and b) in the time of Smith most everyone was practicing folk magic. It was a part of their cultural milieu. This is one of the oldest and most common ethical fantasies, familiar to any parent. It's okay to do this because "*Aw, Mom, everybody's doing it.*" Any astute historian could tell you that the only time that either Israel or the church got involved with magic and superstition was in times of backsliding.

You cannot justify bad behavior by other bad behavior.

It is significant that Quinn himself compares the Mormon Church to pre-exilic Israel, for Bible study will reveal that before the exile, that **Israel was an apostate wreck—full of idolatry!** Similarly, although there were times in Christian history when the church was full of rituals and superstitions; those were also times of spiritual darkness (hence, the "Dark Ages") but as Quinn himself admits, such practices dwindled as the Reformation restored scriptural light to the West.

The bottom line is that even if every Christian in history practiced “folk magic,” that does not make it any less of a sin in God’s eyes—any more than the fact that millions of babies a year are aborted in this land makes abortion any less of a sin. You cannot be a “Christian occultist” any more than you can be a “Christian murderer!” It is a contradiction in terms!

If Joseph Smith were a real prophet, he would have stood athwart the flow of history and cried, “REPENT!” He would not have succumbed to the cultural milieu, he would have denounced it. Prophets in the Bible existed in times of apostasy just like Quinn portrays, and yet you do not see the Old Testament prophets worshipping Asherah poles!

Even if Smith had been raised in a sinful household (as he seems to have *been*), a true Biblical calling would have forced him to leave his past behind, just as Abraham left his behind. The Almighty will not wink at sin in anyone’s life—especially in those who are supposedly His prophets. **Smith’s magic is a scandal that even outweighs his adultery!**

True Biblical faith is measured by what YHWH commands in His Word, not by how far men have, upon occasion, fallen short of those commandments. Therefore the fact that some believers practiced magic is utterly irrelevant to the discussion.

## **Magic in the Bible**

The inferential verses Quinn cites in no way indicate God approved of magic. We must remember that YHWH cannot contradict Himself (**Mal. 3:6**). Therefore, in the face of the Bible’s frequent and unrelenting condemnation of magic; we must assume that YHWH did not approve of these practices. Superficial resemblances with magic do not make something magical—any more than Yah’shua’s sacrifice on Calvary can be compared to an Aztec human sacrifice! The theological context is utterly different!

Quinn’s rationale is that if a “man of God” in the Bible like Joseph or Jacob did something that resembled magic, and YHWH did not correct them in the text; then that implies that He approved—in spite of the fact that YHWH repeatedly thunders against magic and sorcery.

Let’s apply this to a different problem. Moses was undoubtedly one of the greatest “men of God” in the Bible. Yet he committed murder (**Ex. 2:12**). YHWH says nothing. By Quinn’s logic, murder would be permitted, even though in many other places YHWH condemns murder. You cannot take isolated *events* of ambiguous quality and build a theology of “Biblical magic” out of them!

To say that Yah’shua did magical acts is to assume that He would violate His Father’s express commandments—*an impossibility!* The resemblance between Yah’shua’s actions and magical practice is a real reach, and not acknowledged by any serious

evangelical scholar!

The Holy Bible shows that good intentions (“white magic”) do not make sorcery permitted. **Acts 16:16** makes it clear that the use of magic even to proclaim the gospel is forbidden! True Christian prayer is utter submission to the will of the Father through Yah’shua, and leaves no place for magical manipulation of the Almighty!

Can the practice of folk magic somehow prepare a man for being a true prophet as Quinn suggests? Is it possible that YHWH would ratify magical practices through revelation as in D&C 6? I believe the Biblical answer to both is an unqualified **“NO!”**

YHWH wouldn’t prepare a man for a vital calling by having him violate His laws. Sin eats away at character, it does not fortify it. It would be as if Smith prepared himself for ministry by child molesting! The idea is blasphemous! YHWH would not “inspire” someone to act in ways that He condemns many times as sin!

YHWH cannot contradict Himself, therefore it is impossible for Him to give a revelation ratifying folk magic anymore than He would ratify murder! It is inconsistent with YHWH’s holy character; and the sort of god *required* by this sort of analysis is either a demented psychopath or a cruel hoaxer!

Sin is sin. I’m certain Dr. Quinn would never try to find cute anthropological excuses for murder; but he fails to see that magic is spiritual adultery!

## **LDS REVELATION & ANCIENT OCCULTISM**

To draw comparisons between ancient magical and Gnostic texts or medieval occult literature and Mormonism hardly supports LDS “truth!” Contrary to occult and New Age beliefs, there is good reason why the Gnostic and pseudepigraphic “scriptures” are not in the Biblical canon. They are NOT divinely inspired.

Many have historical errors; unbiblical doctrines; and few claim apostolic origin. Those claiming it are recognized by serious scholars as patent forgeries, and when the rigorous criteria that are applied to the Bible are used on these texts, they fall far short. History has regarded these texts as false for over 1700 years!

Something that Quinn cannot seem to grasp is that to use heretical or phony texts to support Smith’s practices does not enhance his reputation. No amount of wrestling can make Gnosticism or Mormonism orthodox; and what Quinn has done is to build a great case for Mormonism being a Gnostic-occult heresy!

The growing mountain of evidence for witchcraft and occultism is only bolstered by his research. We have: pentagrams, talismans, familiar spirits, ceremonial daggers, toads, necromancy, astrology, animism, seer stones, Enochian magic and Qabalism. It sounds like a shopping list for a coven of witches!

## THE MAGICAL ROOTS OF THE TEMPLE

Quinn masterfully proves an occult pedigree for the temple endowment, something our research has also affirmed – but the conclusions he reaches from his evidence are radically different than ours. If, as he says, pagan cults represent the “full development” of magic, then they must; in a Biblical view represent a full development of sin. For him to link the Endowment to ancient cults is to effectively shatter any claim that Mormonism makes to be Christian! Christians are warned to shun anything pagan; (**Jn. 15:19; 1 Cor. 5:11; 10:14-22; 2 Cor.6:14; Eph. 5:11**) to avoid even the appearance of evil! (**1 Thess.5:22**)

Scholars agree that the lynchpin of the pagan mysteries is sexual reproduction—both of vegetation and of human beings; and that sex or even temple prostitution frequently accompanied such rites. Therefore, the resurrection taught in paganism was linked with sex, reincarnation or bodies rotting and being “reborn” as grain growing out of the ground!

This pagan view of the gods is all-too-human; and those gods do things a *mink breeder wouldn't tolerate!* The slain and risen god of paganism is dependent upon sexual potency and a goddess to give him life. (See note 2)

All of these ideas are utterly hateful to YHWH, who is not a sexual being who creates through reproductive plumbing! The one, true Creator demands covenant faithfulness among His people and He hates infidelity! Thus, sex may be at the heart of paganism or Mormonism (See note 3); but it is not at the heart of the gospel!

Quinn says, there is both “philosophical and structural kinship” between the LDS temple and ancient paganism. If ancient paganism is condemned by YHWH—what does that tell the Mormon about his temple the very heart of his faith?

## CONCLUSION

The evidence linking formational Mormonism and its founders (especially Joseph Smith) to the occult is now overwhelming. The only question remaining is the *spiritual* conclusion we can draw from that fact. It is Biblically impossible for a “mature church founder” to be steeped in magic and sorcery—any more than he could be a murderer or an adulterer (See note 4)). A holy God would not tolerate it!

A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and you will search high and low in the Bible for someone who *continued in the* many sins Joseph Smith did and who was blessed and honored by God. You won't find him. Certainly, men of God in the Bible are seen to be committing sin (Moses, Abraham, David, etc.), but none of them *continued to sin repeatedly, over and over.*

Smith did. Sin cannot facilitate the religious quest of anyone. God condemns magic as certainly as he condemns prostitution, murder or theft!

The Biblical “world view,” which is the only one Christians are permitted to have, cannot buy into Quinn’s implicit concept that there are many realities out there; and that truth is somehow relative. Such teaching is humanistic and occult to the core, and is incompatible with the Bible message of one, sovereign God presiding over His creation and calling it to fellowship with Him through Christ.

Mormons like Dr. Quinn need to realize the spiritual implications of these facts and stop playing intellectual games with God’s Word. They need to realize that the Biblical message is clear and unmistakable—there is one God, and He condemns any form of magic as sin. The Bible condemns all unrepentant sorcerers to the lake of fire. (**Rev. 21:8**) It is our earnest prayer that they will heed the warning of God about Mormonism and “... *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*”— *Rev.18:4*

## ENDNOTES

1.) These scriptures, among others, specifically condemn magic and sorcery: **Ex.22:18, Lev.19:26-31; 20:6, Deut. 18:9-12, 1 Sam. 15:23, 28:7-11; 2 Kings 9:22, 17:17, 21:6, 23:24, Is.8:19, 29:4, 47:8-12, 57:3-5, Jer. 27:9, Mic.5:12, Zech. 10:2, Ma1.3:5, Acts 8:11, 13:6,16:16-18,-Ga1.5:20, Rev. 18:23, 21:8.**

2.) For more on this see WICCA: SATAN’S LITTLE WHITE LIE, by the author (Chick Publications, 1990) pp.169-172.

3.) See Thelma “Granny” Geer’s tract, “***Mormonism: Salvation by Grace or by Sex?***”; also an LDS pamphlet by Mark E. Petersen entitled “Chastity”, p.29 where he *says* that “sex is so sacred that there is no exaltation in the celestial kingdom without it.”

4.) There is ample evidence that Smith was also an adulterer, with his many additional wives

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