



The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844

John L. Brooke

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Mormon religious belief has long been a mystery to outsiders, either dismissed as anomalous to the American religious tradition or extolled as the most genuine creation of the American imagination. The Refiner's Fire presents a new and comprehensive understanding of the roots of Mormon religion, whose theology promises the faithful that they will become "gods" through the restoration of ancient mysteries and regain the divine powers of Adam lost in the fall from Paradise. Professor Brooke contends that the origins of Mormonism lie in the fusion of radical religion with occult ideas, and organizes his book around the two problems of demonstrating the survival of these ideas into the nineteenth century and explaining how they were manifested in Mormon doctrine. In the concluding chapter, the author provides an outline of how Mormonism since the 1850s gradually moved toward traditional Protestant Christianity. As well as religion, the book explores magic, witchcraft, alchemy, Freemasonry, counterfeiting, and state-formation. John L. Brooke is professor of history at Tufts University and the acclaimed author of *The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1713-1861* (CUP, 1989), which has won, among other prizes, the Organization of American Historians' Merle Curti Award for Intellectual History and the National Historical Society Book Prize for American History.

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