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Review of: Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon: Northern Christians and Market Capitalism, 1815-1860

Joseph A. Conforti

University of Southern Maine, conforti@maine.edu

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identified in contemporary sermons as significant threats: urbanization and industrialization, the rise of a secular state, and the decline of Protestantism. Unsurprisingly, personal salvation rather than social reform was seen as the answer to the threats to religion and morality posed by the first two categories, while the reduction in Protestant power, perceived to be inherent in several decades of legislation dealing with education, politics, and religious establishments, was increasingly met with militant anti-Catholic rhetoric. Teasing out some of the paradoxes and inconsistencies of the evangelical mindset, Dickson concludes that “there lay behind this religion of confidence deep insecurities, brought to the fore by the challenge of new forces in society that tested the capability of evangelicalism to adapt and survive” (181).

The penultimate chapter, focusing on the impact of this religious discourse on its listeners, while potentially the most interesting and significant, is also clearly the most difficult and inconclusive. The author rightly refuses to reduce his analysis to neat certainties, pointing to the subjective nature and complex dynamics of speaking and listening, the diverse motivations and expectations of preacher and audience, and the deficiency of helpful source material in this regard. He considers instead the “speculative soil” of, for example, social gatherings and the status conferred on preachers, and makes use of the concept of the sermon as an important mode of communication, influencing other public discourse and playing a significant part in shaping public opinion about important aspects of everyday life.

Overall, while this reader found the second half of the book most interesting and informative, the work as a whole makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the pervasive influence of evangelicalism on life in the northeast of Ireland. Comprehensive in its coverage, and written in an accessible and engaging style, the author has succeeded in persuading this reader at least that his study of the unlikely topic of the evangelical sermon is a worthy and productive scholarly endeavor, and one that could be usefully adapted to other regions.

Myrtle Hill
Queen’s University, Belfast

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Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon: Northern Christians and Market Capitalism, 1815–1860. By Stewart Davenport. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. x + 269 pp. \$45.00 cloth.

This significant, informative study focuses on a question that historians of antebellum American religion have not examined systematically: “What did

Christians in America think about capitalism when capitalism was first something to think about"? (1). Stewart Davenport is well aware that an eighteenth-century market revolution raised questions about how commerce, consumption, and luxury threatened to corrupt virtue in a Christian republic. But his starting point is the influential argument of Charles Sellars that America's modern capitalist revolution became institutionalized during the three decades after 1815. New economic structures, such as "a more sophisticated banking system" (2) and a transportation revolution, broadened markets of exchange that knit the northern states into a thoroughly capitalist order with an expanding class of middlemen, including merchants, bankers, lawyers, and managers. At the same time, the Second Great Awakening and America's competitive religious free market fostered a growing denominational-sectarian order that defined the new republic as a thoroughly Protestant nation. Davenport is not interested in the socioeconomic intersection of antebellum America's religious and capitalist transformations. Rather, his traditional history of ideas offers an account of selective northern Protestant reactions to capitalism's ascendancy. He identifies three distinct intellectual responses to the market revolution that cohered around small cross-denominational groups composed mostly of ministers, whom he identifies as clerical economists, contrarians, and pastoral moralists.

The strongest and longest part of Davenport's book (nearly half the historical analysis) is devoted to the clerical economists. This group includes Baptist Francis Wayland, Episcopalian John McVickar, and Unitarian Francis Bowen, among a handful of others. They pioneered the study of political economy in America, held academic appointments, and exerted their influence on a generation of students. The clerics' principal intellectual challenge was to reconcile the secular political economy of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) with their American Protestant faith. To do so they drew on natural theology—the belief that the world operated according to divinely constituted laws that could be verified through common sense. Where Smith saw an "invisible hand" promoting the greatest good for the greatest number, the clerical economists saw the hand of God. In their political economy, capitalism was a divine mechanism. Among other things, it linked nations with varied natural resources and different stages of economic development, and it offered the prospect of civilized progress for America and the world. The clerical economists dealt with the market revolution and Protestantism on the macro level. They were Whiggish and millennialist in their outlook. They also espoused American exceptionalism. The continental nation's available land and an expanding frontier meant that America would avoid the kind of entrenched poverty that critics of capitalism saw in England. Moreover, because the new republic was not a tradition-bound nation, it had the opportunity to leap across the stages of

economic development that Smith described and become a "commercially civilized nation right from the start" (56).

The contrarians, self-styled outsiders, were far more pessimistic about the market revolution, which they viewed from its impact on the individual rather than as part of a divinely ordained system that brought, or promised to deliver, the greatest good to the greatest number. The contrarians focused on poverty, something the clerical economists ignored. Davenport's discussion of the contrarians is the shortest and least satisfying part of the book. He examines the ideas of only two men: Stephen Colwell and Orestes Brownson. Colwell, a successful industrialist and practicing philanthropist, was an Old School Presbyterian layman. He turned to the New Testament and Christian ethics to criticize the moral shortcomings of the new economic order. He fumed at the clerical economists for their preoccupation with God-given laws that presumably benefited humankind as a whole, but these capitalist apologists overlooked poverty and the plight of individuals. Brownson too focused on poverty to lambaste the optimism and providentialism of the clerical economists. But Brownson made an about-face after 1840, disillusioned in part with the defeat of the Democratic Party in the presidential election. The former Universalist and Unitarian minister converted to Catholicism, lost his reformist zeal, and came to believe in the importance of order and authority. In the process, he moved from the contrarian camp closer to positions held by the clerical economists.

The pastoral moralists were neither academics nor outsiders but rather individuals ministering to congregants engaged in the market economy. They occupied a middle moral ground between the clerical political economists and the contrarians. They agreed with the academics on the utilitarian beneficence of antebellum capitalism. But the pastoral moralists also raised long-standing republican concerns about financial speculation, unbridled self-interest or selfishness, and luxury. They warned against the market's potential to corrupt the character of Christians. The pastoral moralists articulated general principles of Christianity, such as the golden rule, as a way of drawing boundaries around activity in the marketplace. For ministers like Unitarian Orville Dewey and Congregationalist Leonard Bacon, the market posed a test of character where individuals needed to balance a capitalist ethos and Christian ethics through the practice of "prudential self-interest" (189).

Davenport concedes that some of his pastoral moralists published little, sometimes only a single sermon, and did so decades apart. His discussion of their limited work is enlightening but, as with the contrarians, it raises questions about the coherence of his groupings. Francis Wayland even resurfaces as a pastoral moralist. Perhaps we need more of an understanding of how antebellum northern Protestants' discourses about religion and the

marketplace overlapped and interpenetrated rather than fell fairly neatly into three distinct categories. Still, this is an important book that enlarges our knowledge of antebellum Protestantism.

Joseph Conforti
University of Southern Maine

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Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East. By Ussama Makdisi. The United States in the World. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008. xiv + 265 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

In the spring of 1826, a young Arab began a long imprisonment in the mountains of present-day Lebanon. It marked a stark end to his promising beginnings: birth into a prominent family; grooming for the priesthood in the Maronite Church; stints in the service of the Maronite bishop of Beirut, a Muslim emir, and a Druze notable; and authorship of books of poetry and a treatise on the relationship between kinship and marriage. With that past as prologue, no one could have predicted that As'ad Shidyaq would end his life in a remote monastery sometime in 1830, weakened by torture, wasted with illness, and denounced as "Lord of Hell" by the Maronite patriarch, Yusuf Habaysh. But Shidyaq's life had veered sharply from its appointed course when he encountered American Protestant missionaries, embraced their evangelical principles, and determined to preach among his fellow Maronites.

By the reckoning of Ussama Makdisi, professor of history at Rice University, the differing accounts of As'ad Shidyaq's career that emerged over the nineteenth century constitute a "foundational encounter" (1) between a distinctive group of Arabs, the Maronite Christians, and a particular group of Americans, the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Drawing on both missionary archives and Arabic documents—including Shidyaq's testimony to his evangelical faith and a prison diary—Makdisi recovers both sides of this encounter, crafting a deft narrative of the "rich history of confrontation and collaboration across cultures" (6).

What sets his story in motion is the arrival of the first American missionaries in the Levant in 1819. They came filled with hopes of redeeming America from the Puritans' failed efforts to evangelize the Indians and overflowing with millennial fantasies about the waning power of Islam and the imminent conversion of the Jews. Those notions decisively shaped the missionaries'