

King Benjamin and the Yeoman Farmer

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I

According to republican purists of the Revolutionary generation, the values of commerce, which “fostered a love of gain, ostentatious living, and a desire for luxuries,” could be contrasted with those of agriculture, which encouraged frugality, industry, and a desire for competence.¹ The contrast was largely a fiction, of course, and de Crèvecoeur’s recognition that self-interest was what held farming communities together should warn us against a naive reading of Jeffersonian texts.² Nevertheless, as the income of most small farmers in North America in the late eighteenth century did not allow for conspicuous consumption, and rural neighbors were bound together by interlacing social obligations and debts,³ the farmer of the Revolutionary generation could legitimately be given iconic status as the antithesis of aggressive commercial individualism. But what if agriculture were itself to become (even more) commercialized? What if obligations to others were reduced to the honoring of debts, and benevolence was thought to lie, not in traditional acts of charity such as helping the needy, but rather in helping the bottom line—in inducing men “to pursue with increased energy, that business, or that course of conduct, to which their true interest directs them”?⁴

These were not idle questions for those living in upstate New York in the 1820s. Agriculture was changing in the state’s western counties in the years before Jackson’s presidency, as improved transportation routes (including most notably the completed Erie Canal) dramatically multiplied the opportunities for shipping farm products. Clarence Danhof notes that 20 percent of northern farm goods were sold in urban markets at the beginning of the decade, a percentage that would rise.⁵ From west

of Albany, historians have traced the movement of beef, pork, salt, flour, and potash to Quebec, wheat and flour to Schenectady (for reshipment to New York and the West Indies), grain, lumber and whisky to Baltimore, and cattle to Baltimore and Philadelphia.⁶ As one might expect, these new opportunities led some to advocate a market-driven agriculture that would maximize yields and profits; and no less predictably, not everyone agreed that these changes were for the good. Although the recognition that in a commercial society an entrepreneur “deals with [others] as he does with his cattle and his soil, for the sake of the profits they bring” was an eighteenth-century commonplace,⁷ the unapologetic equation of this philosophy with virtue *was* new—and some protested both this new definition and the changes that it brought to the social meanings embedded in market exchanges.⁸ It is one such protest that concerns me here. Among those who felt that a move to surplus-market agriculture was retrograde was Joseph Smith Jr. who, living ten miles from the booming canal town of Palmyra,⁹ would in 1830 present to the world in the Book of Mormon an alternative vision of how rural America should be.

Some might question this attribution. Smith claimed that the Book of Mormon was an inspired translation of works authored in ancient America and then edited for those who would read them in the latter days; for those who accept this account of the work’s origin, any similarities between the practices and values of Book of Mormon peoples and those of its first readers would presumably be explained as a providential coincidence—indeed, as providing the justification for the book’s coming forth when it did. That possibility is not addressed in what follows, for my concern here is not with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon but with the ways in which—whatever its origins—the work engages the concerns of its first readers. The question of the historicity of the Book of Mormon can hardly be dismissed, of course;¹⁰ but however we account for the work, it is surely helpful to remember the words of J. R. R. Tolkien, as he rather sardonically surveyed the state of *Beowulf* criticism some seventy years ago: “At last then, after inquiring so long whence the material came, and what its original or aboriginal nature was (questions that cannot ever be decisively answered), we might now and again inquire what the poet did with it.” Substituting “prophet” for *poet* (and bracketing the question of who the prophet was), I believe that we might usefully do the same.¹¹

II

For those unwilling to bracket questions of origins, it might seem logical to appeal to Smith's biography and assume that his thinking on the dynamics of an agricultural society was influenced by his family's experience of economic failure. They were still smarting from the loss of their farm when he dictated the Book of Mormon text.¹² However, the Smith family story was far from unique and the issues addressed in the work were generally relevant to the situation of small landowners, tenant farmers, and hired hands in upstate New York. After all, those who prospered from the canal boom were large landowners—farmers able to operate on a commercial scale—and tradesmen. Small farmers were squeezed, indeed often squeezed out, by the canal's arrival and the consequent changes in land prices;¹³ and Eric Hobsbawm's observation that, for those who responded to Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* (1795), "poverty was . . . a collective fact, to be solved and not merely escaped" also applies to those who responded to Smith's work a generation later.¹⁴ The Smiths, that is to say, were not alone in discovering that, although the capitalism of the day offered, as James Fenimore Cooper had written, a lure of "competence and happiness,"¹⁵ the reality could be quite other. There was an audience ready to respond to the "profound social protest" that the Book of Mormon articulated.¹⁶

The depth of this protest can hardly be exaggerated. Rather than advocating the pursuit of market opportunities, the Book of Mormon counseled temperance, condemned the display of wealth, and elaborated an economic system based on a labor theory of value. Distrusting the pursuit of profit, as prosperity could lead to pride, and pride could lead to contempt for and "oppression to" the poor,¹⁷ it urged the limitation of consumption, and proclaimed an egalitarian message. In a just society, the argument went, there would be "no respect to persons" on economic grounds; rather all would be "rich like unto [each other]."¹⁸ The message could hardly be clearer: While having "respect to persons" follows from the acceptance of class divisions, having "no respect to persons" implied an egalitarian vision of community life.¹⁹ Significantly, in the Book of Mormon the development of a class structure was a sign of spiritual decline (4 Ne. 1:28 [1:25]).

We might seem in all of this to be revisiting Charles Sellers's *Kulturkampf*, the struggle between, on the one hand, a morality sanctioning "competitive individualism and the market's rewards of wealth and

status" and, on the other, a morality drawing its strength from a revivalism that "recharged America's communal egalitarianism."²⁰ And to some extent, we are. Smith did look for an egalitarian society, his message would challenge those with wealth and status to use their surplus for the good of the community, and the theology of the Book of Mormon was revivalistic. However, we cannot stop here. A coloring of revivalism is hardly a distinguishing feature, given that for most Americans the first decades of the nineteenth century were, in Perry Miller's words, "a continuing, even though intermittent, revival"²¹ and given that, in other respects, the message of early Mormonism was more complex than Sellers suggests.

Smith was not communalistic. Although, as we shall see, Smith's translation describes a society that owned land communally and restricted market exchanges, Smith did not think that this system necessitated a communal system of production. New England ministers had seen the good life in terms of individual property-holding, drawing on Micah 4:4 to flesh out their descriptions. This dream, part of the political rhetoric of Ontario County in Smith's day, was implicit in the Book of Mormon.²² The prophet presumed that there were individual allocations of land ("inheritances," 3 Ne. 3:4 [6:3]), and that, although the community would come under the judgment of history as a collective, such collectiveness did not do away with personal accountability for stewardship.²³

Further, Smith's vision did not presume absolute, synchronous equality. Linking economic and moral stewardship and drawing on the covenant theology of the Old Testament, Smith assumed that righteousness would inevitably lead to communal prosperity;²⁴ but he also recognized that, luck apart, it was hard work and entrepreneurial flair that would lead to individual success.²⁵ What disturbed him was not that some would become wealthy but that they would not use their wealth to help those in need.²⁶

That said, the Book of Mormon does signal a clash of cultures, even if not precisely the one Sellers describes. Adam Smith had noted that, with the division of labor and the consequent impossibility of every man providing everything for himself, it was necessary to divide's one's stock into assets necessarily held in reserve for immediate consumption and capital which could be used (or invested) to meet these needs in the future. When one "possesses stock sufficient to maintain him for months or years," he explained, "he naturally endeavours to derive a revenue from the greater part of it; reserving only so much for his immediate con-

sumption as may maintain him until this revenue begins to come in."²⁷ This use of capital goes unquestioned in the Book of Mormon. What is questioned, however, and what set the Prophet down a different road from that followed by his contemporaries is the question of what one should do when one's revenue exceeds one's needs for immediate consumption and reinvestment, in short, when one possesses what I refer to in the following discussion as "surplus." For contemporaries, it went without saying that such surplus should be put to use. "A man must be perfectly crazy," Adam Smith had reflected, "... who does not employ all the stock which he commands" either to improve his standard of living or secure future profits.²⁸ Joseph Smith disagreed. Self-aggrandizement, he would tell a follower, "may be indulged upon only one rule or plan—and that is to elevate, benefit and bless others first." Riches, a Book of Mormon prophet affirmed (meaning, by the term, surplus), should only be sought "for the intent to do good."²⁹

In exploring Smith's vision, we must, of course, remember that the Book of Mormon is not an economic treatise but a series of narratives describing migrations, wars, church-plantings, and apostasies in pre-Columbian America. As a result we have to determine for ourselves a starting point that can be used in tracing the book's argument, and I find it in King Benjamin's words before resigning the throne to his son, Mosiah (Mosiah 1–3 [1–5]). According to the Book of Mormon, Benjamin's people were the Nephites, descendants of a group called out of Jerusalem in the reign of Zedekiah (around 600 B.C.E.) and led to a promised land in the New World.³⁰ For the most part, they are farmers. Although, as LDS economist Garth L. Mangum notes, there seems to have been no period in Nephite history characterized by isolated farmsteads, there being an "almost immediate establishment of cities" following the group's arrival in the Americas,³¹ the Nephite economy is nevertheless limited to agriculture, mining, and handicraft. In 1830, that would not have been thought surprising.³² Although it was popularly supposed that farming was unknown to the Nephites' descendants, the Native Americans of Smith's own day,³³ it was a staple of missionary discourse that Smith and his contemporaries never thought to question that the Native American would turn to farming following conversion to Christianity.³⁴ Since the Book of Mormon represented the Nephites as Christian, it would have seemed logical that, if Christianity could lead to a settled Indian agriculture in the nineteenth century, it could have done the same thing some

two thousand years earlier. Similarly, given the conviction that the abandonment of settled agriculture was evidence of spiritual decline and a reversion to a savage state,³⁵ it would have been thought unremarkable that in the Book of Mormon those who abandoned the gospel increasingly relied on hunting and raiding settlements.

Readers would also have found it logical that Nephite agriculture would—like that of upstate New York³⁶—be based on flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle,³⁷ food crops such as barley, corn, and wheat,³⁸ orchard produce,³⁹ and (implicitly) flax.⁴⁰ Nor would they have caviled at a conventional European-American division of labor, with men tilling the ground and raising crops, and women spinning “and work[ing] all manner of fine linen; yea, . . . cloth of every kind.”⁴¹ Given the presumption that Nephite civilization had ended in the fratricidal struggle that had climaxed at the Hill Cumorah near Palmyra,⁴² readers would not have expected an exotic agriculture or a radically different social system.⁴³

What would have been surprising, however (because by 1830 it would have seemed old-fashioned), would have been Benjamin’s commitment to the yeoman dream, in which economic independence and a modest standard of living defined one’s ambition. This dream was fundamental to Nephite society, and three mechanisms allowed for its realization. First, there was communal ownership of unoccupied land, with the assignment of family inheritances determined by need. The most notable example comes when imprisoned members of group who had lived by raiding the Nephites and exacting tribute are set at liberty and given an inheritance. This arrangement is seen as a civil obligation; although converted Lamanites are also given enough land to support their families, these ex-prisoners—former members of the Gadianton band—do not convert. They merely repent of former sins and covenant to keep the peace.⁴⁴

Second, there is group control of prices, with a fixed price for “every kind” of grain, irrespective of the kind or the quality of the harvest.⁴⁵ “Some known commodity, as measured grain, is better, and more intelligible and unalterable than any money whatever,” John Witherspoon had argued in his discussion of commercial exchange, drawing on Adam Smith’s labor theory of value.⁴⁶ King Benjamin’s successor-son Mosiah, who introduced the Nephite system of measures, thought the same—apparently going beyond the market-based idea of a just price (traditionally defined as the price uncoerced buyers would pay for goods) in favor of a system of ex-

change where grain could maintain a constant value. Third, although trade and traffic are seen as normal functions of the economy, providing a mechanism of exchange,⁴⁷ they are not seen as the means to laying up a store of personal wealth. Inevitably some members of society would fail to prosper. That being so, there was a communal responsibility to provide a safety net to avert disaster (3 Ne. 3:4 [6:3]; Mosiah 2:40 [4:24]).

Benjamin summarizes what this concern for others might mean when he urges his hearers not to injure one another (they should avoid violence and respect property rights) (Mosiah 1:44, 2:44, 26 [2:23, 4:13-14]), not to take advantage of the other,⁴⁸ and more positively—and radically—“to render to each his due.” A person’s due was what was necessary for a life of dignity; and when individual effort failed to provide this “due,” the community had a responsibility to help.⁴⁹ This was the case no matter who was in need and no matter what the cause of the poverty, with no distinction being made on grounds of faith, birth, or “worthiness.” Just as God’s love embraces all that come unto him, “black and white, bond and free, male and female,”⁵⁰ so the charity of the Saints should have no limits. Those who had prospered were to “administer of [their] substance to him that stands in need” without hesitation. No matter what circumstances led to a person’s poverty, the beggar should not be “put out” to perish.⁵¹

III

Needless to say, such concern for others was not characteristic of life in 1820s Palmyra or, indeed, elsewhere in America at the time. Smith knew this well. The contemporary generation was “not far” from the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, he declared in March 1829⁵²—and the reference pointed not just to the scope of the destruction that he expected to be poured out on America⁵³ but also to the cause of God’s anger: “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth,” Smith had read in James 5:4⁵⁴—and he would not have missed the echo of the Sodom story in James’s continuation: “The cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.”⁵⁵ This warning of impending destruction as punishment for neglecting the poor was repeated in the Book of Mormon with reference both to the Nephites and the latter-day readers of their history: “If ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance if ye have, to those who stand in

need," one of the leaders of the Book of Mormon church explained, "... ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth,) and is trodden under foot of men."⁵⁶ This would also be the fate of America in the latter days if its people did not repent, a later prophecy made clear.⁵⁷

The call to repentance found in the Book of Mormon was, of course, one that America had heard before. Indeed, even the Nephite covenant to witness their commitment to God by "bear[ing] one another's burdens, that they may be light; . . . mourn[ing] with those that mourn . . . and comfort[ing] those that stand in need of comfort," would have seemed familiar to the work's first readers.⁵⁸ "We should bear one another's burdens; mourn with them that mourn, and rejoice with them that rejoice," Joseph Bellamy had explained in 1750, as he sought to ground the lessons of the Great Awakening in reformed thought.⁵⁹ "Love will dispose men to all acts of mercy toward their neighbors when they are under any affliction or calamity. . . ," Jonathan Edwards had already noted. "It will dispose men to give to the poor, to bear one another's burdens, and to weep with those that weep, as well as to rejoice with those that do rejoice."⁶⁰ Or as Smith's contemporary Nathanael Emmons explained, "True benevolence always disposes those who possess it, to enter into the feelings of their fellow men under all circumstances, to rejoice with them that rejoice, to mourn with them that mourn, to weep with them that weep, and suffer with them that suffer."⁶¹

However, such pieties had not created a society characterized by justice.⁶² Instead, Christian duty was becoming increasingly seen as the duty to succeed economically.⁶³ As we have seen, by the time that the Book of Mormon came from the press, an Ontario County landowner like Samuel Chipman (quoted above) could confidently argue that benevolence should be seen to inhere not in acts of charity but in inducing others "to pursue with increased energy, that business or that course of conduct, to which their true interest directs them."⁶⁴

Such a stance followed in part from the failure of Bellamy and Edwards, and subsequent New Light preachers, to focus on physical rather than spiritual needs. For them it had gone without saying that charity to the souls of others was the highest form of benevolence and that it was therefore legitimate to disregard physical needs to focus on spiritual ones.⁶⁵ Although those who distributed Bibles and tracts or who preached up revivals were hardly blind to the poverty around them, they found the number of the poor less troubling than the number of the un-

churched. "I wish I was poor," reflects Lucy Lee in a tract published a generation after the Book of Mormon, but reflective of earlier attitudes. "Then Christians would talk to me about [religion]; they always do talk [about it] to poor people."⁶⁶

However, two additional factors contributed to the new focus that we find in Chipman. The first was the way in which true religion was thought to be manifested in evangelical faith, not works of charity. As the Rev. Alonzo Clark explained, preaching in Palmyra on September 14, 1828, it was impossible to please God with good deeds for even the best were "spotted with sin and stained with guilt." He took as his text Malachi 1:8: "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" Clark ignored the acceptable offering of Malachi 3 and its association with social justice.⁶⁷

The second factor was the way in which changes in the economy of upstate New York were making the use of surplus for charity increasingly difficult. In de Crèvecoeur's sketch "The American Belisarius," those facing "extreme indigence" can turn to the "princely farmer" S. K., who "opens to them his granary . . . lends them hay . . . [and] assists them in whatever they want."⁶⁸ We need not suppose that there were ever many like S. K. to accept that such figures had existed. Neither need we look too closely at their motives. As John Locke had argued that large possessions could be legitimated by the absence of waste, they might well have thought that to give away in charity what would otherwise perish would have been prudential as well benevolent.⁶⁹ But whatever the mix of motives driving his generosity, we might well suppose that S. K.'s granary would have been full because all his grain had not been sold—and this was as much because he lacked opportunity as because of a conscious decision to hold some of his harvest back to meet communal needs. By 1830, however, few New York farmers lacked opportunities to sell their produce, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to follow S. K.'s example. With improved transportation, more and more of one's grain was carried to market, and surplus was ceasing to be something stored in granaries and barns.

Chipman's insistence that a farmer's first concern should be to determine which crops would "afford the greatest net profit"—"what kind of crops are most profitable," "what crop will produce the greatest clear profit"⁷⁰—was, in short, a response to new possibilities. Earlier addresses to the Ontario Agricultural Society had defined success differently. "Our work is well done," Thomas D. Burrall had reflected in 1822, "when our

lands are cultivated in a way to give the greatest amount of produce at the least expense of farming capital."⁷¹ But Burrall's concern for yield rather than profit was, however, looking old-fashioned by the time Smith was at work on his translation.⁷² Surplus could be sold, and the resulting profit could be used to improve one's life with goods originating outside of the local economy. (A traveler reported in 1822 that the log huts of settlers west of Canandaigua were being replaced "with new and often stately mansion[s]."⁷³) Or it could be reinvested to increase revenue. Not surprisingly, recognizing the opportunities that existed, farmers went into debt for more land or machinery, or to purchase bank stock.⁷⁴ "Once the financial sector expanded its reach into the hinterlands, as it did after 1820 or so," Howard Bodenhorn has noted, "financial instruments became an outlet for rural savings." Increasingly, "farmers faced a choice between physical and financial capital"; and by the 1830s a farmer who prospered was much less likely to maintain his wealth in land and agricultural products than he would have done even twenty years before.⁷⁵

Nothing in the Book of Mormon suggests hostility to banks as such. Although the Nephite use of gold and silver measures might seem to reflect Jeffersonian suspicions of paper money, there is no reason to suppose that Smith was blind to the advantages of increased liquidity.⁷⁶ However, inevitably, the increasing importance of cash over barter was transforming society by reducing the interdependence of neighbors. This interdependence had traditionally manifested itself in an exchange of services whereby, for example, well-digging could be credited for the cost of coffin-making;⁷⁷ and though such services had a book value, debts could be carried for years with a tolerance that the new economy would not allow. For example, Elisha Fish of Farmington (less than fifteen miles from Palmyra) recorded debits and credits against Martin Power for nine years (1817–26), at the end of which Power owed \$5.32. They resumed the exchange of services in 1828, and by 1832 Power had 32 cents credit.⁷⁸ As another example, Nicholas Howland of Manchester noted the first of a series of gifts of farm produce to James Monroe on April 6, 1826; by October, Monroe had reduced his debt to \$2.30 by working on Howland's land and agreeing to a settlement of \$2.85. Two years later, Howland notes without any particular concern that this settlement was still due.⁷⁹

Such willingness to carry accounts forward made the exchange of commodities and services work; and inasmuch as this exchange had bound communities together, it is hardly surprising that, from a Book of

Mormon perspective, the most regrettable aspect of a breakdown in property rights is that people no longer borrow or lend (Eth. 6:36 [14:2]).⁸⁰ Committed to a vision of communal interdependence that did not seem likely to survive economic change, we might suppose that, in April 1829, Smith heard the news that there were plans for a Wayne County Bank, whose "operations of discount and deposit [were to] be carried on in the village of Palmyra, and not elsewhere," with mixed emotions.⁸¹

IV

Given the way America was changing, the report that Nephi's people "lived after the manner of happiness" would have seemed both reassuring and challenging to the work's first readers. On the one hand, it would have reassured them that happiness was attainable. On the other, it would have challenged them with its assumption that pursuit was inescapably linked to the pursuit of virtue—that the twin goals of de Crèvecoeur's American farmer, seeking to be "happy and . . . good," were inseparable.⁸² Unavoidably, the story of the Book of Mormon peoples was a call for reformation. The virtues of the Nephites were familiar from Christian tradition: indeed, they were doubly familiar as they were conventionally attributed to Native Americans. "No people can live more happy than the Indians did in times of peace," Mary Jemison had reported of the eighteenth-century Seneca in terms that inevitably bring the Book of Mormon to mind. "They were temperate in their desires, moderate in their passions, and candid and honorable in the expression of their sentiments."⁸³ But for all their familiarity, these virtues had the power to challenge a reader's complacency.

Consider, for example, the question of "temperate . . . desires." Although the Nephite concern for simple clothing was arguably little different from what Jemison reported of the Seneca—or, for that matter, what would be professed by most Americans in Smith's world⁸⁴—the thinking of Book of Mormon authors was anything but traditional. If the Nephites prefer linen and homespun and avoid more expensive cloths (Hel. 5:38 [13:28]), it is not just because of the intrinsic merits of temperate habits or the questionable morality of using fabrics such as silk.⁸⁵ It is also because eschewing luxury goods preserved one's surplus and therefore one's capacity to meet the needs of others.⁸⁶ Although Benjamin cautions those with wealth not to impoverish themselves, he expects those who accept the gospel to give to the needy in proportion to what they themselves own

and condemns any attempt on their part to hold on to more than is necessary for a competence and to become “lifted up one above another.”⁸⁷ A person’s extravagance (in clothing or otherwise) was purchased at the expense of someone else’s unmet need. This was a radical concern for others in the face of massive societal change.

Others, no less troubled by the way society was changing, had responded to the changes by focusing on inner rewards rather than profit. Robert Bellah and his colleagues have traced to the Prophet’s generation the rise of what they call “expressive individualism,” or the elevation of emotional self-fulfillment as the highest human good—something that they have seen as a reaction to the increasing “utilitarian” individualism of the market.⁸⁸ However, this pursuit of inner satisfaction was not an option for Smith: Prioritizing self-fulfillment in this way would be, from a Book of Mormon perspective, just as misguided as pursuing wealth, for it was but another form of selfishness—and selfishness was to be met with self-denial. After all, you could be contented, as the Canandaigua *Farmer’s Diary* had advised two years after Smith’s family had moved to Palmyra, “if you have a small farm or trade, that will support your family, and add a hundred dollars a year to your capital.”⁸⁹ (One needed to add to capital to provide inheritances for one’s children.) Indeed, Smith urged, one *should* be content with a competence.⁹⁰ Although, inevitably, some would prosper more than others, any surplus gained could be used to benefit others. For those who prospered *not* to “clothe the naked, . . . feed the hungry, . . . liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” when confronted with suffering was to surrender to covetousness—was to be guilty of sin.⁹¹

In 1829, Smith’s answer to the sin of covetousness is not yet a program. He makes no attempt in the Book of Mormon to define in detail the mechanisms of exchange and regulation that should prevail in society. Even the well-known account of people having “all things common” (3 Ne. 12:11 [26:19], 4 Ne. 1:4, 28 [1:3, 25]) should probably not be taken as implying a particular economic order. The same had been reported of the Jerusalem church (Acts 2:44, 4:32), and biblical commentators usually did not presume communal ownership of goods in their exegesis. “One wanted not what another had, for he might have it for the asking,” Matthew Henry had explained in 1722,⁹² and it was that level of giving that the Book of Mormon sought to provoke, not a new economic order.⁹³ That should not be thought to diminish the work’s im-

portance. At a time characterized by a demoralizing of the theory of trade and consumption and an "all pervasive, all-engrossing anxiety to grow rich,"⁹⁴ Smith set his face against the trend, and that in itself merits attention.

Notes

1. James L. Huston, *Securing the Fruits of Labor: The American Concept of Wealth Distribution, 1765-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 11-12; Daniel Vickers, "Competence and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser. 47 (1990): 3-29.

2. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America*, edited by Albert E. Stone (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 70; Timothy Sweet, *American Georgics: Economy and Environment in American Literature, 1580-1864* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 120. While de Crèvecoeur's *Letters* were first published in 1782, *Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America* is the modern title for pieces only discovered and published in the twentieth century. Unless indicated otherwise, this article references the *Letters*.

3. Barry Alan Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), xvi.

4. Samuel Chipman, *Address, Delivered to the Ontario Agricultural Society on its Fifth Annual Meeting, October 26, 1824* (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis [1824]), 3.

5. *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 2.

6. Percy Wells Bidwell, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 171; Joyce Appleby, "Commercial Farming and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early Republic," *Journal of American History* 68 (1982): 842.

7. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), edited by Fania Oz-Salzburger (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24.

8. Such meanings are discussed in Hal S. Barron, "Old Wine in New Bottles? The Perspective of Rural History," in *Outstanding in His Field: Perspectives on American Agriculture in Honor of Wayne D. Rasmussen*, edited by Frederick D. Castenden, Morton Rothstein, and Joseph A. Swanson (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993), 52. See also Peter L. Bernstein, *Wedding of the*

Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation (New York: Norton, 2005), 336–37.

9. In 1824, Horatio Gates Spafford noted, Palmyra “was increasing rapidly” because of the Erie Canal’s advent two years before. The township population had increased by 70 percent since 1813 (from 2,187 to 3,724), and the number of electors had grown from 290 to 841. *A Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Albany, N.Y.: B. D. Packard, 1824), 400–401, and *A Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Albany, N.Y.: H. C. Southwick, 1813), 271.

10. As one Evangelical scholar has argued, without “text-transcending referents to historical and trans-historical reality,” we have no grounds for preferring scripture to other literature. Andreas Köstenberger, “Aesthetic Theology—Blessing or Curse? An Assessment of Narrative Hermeneutics,” *Faith & Mission* 15, no. 2 (1998): 27–44, and if we agree it would be natural to be concerned to locate the Book of Mormon in a pre-Columbian North American context. Although one can, I believe, meet Köstenberger’s challenge without presuming the historicity of the Book of Mormon, my point here is that attempts to read it against its purported background are only to be expected.

11. J. R. R. Tolkien, “The Monsters and the Critics” (1936), in *The Monsters and the Critics, and Other Essays*, edited by Christopher Tolkien (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 9; see also Michael J. Fuller, “To Edify the People of God: A New (Old) Method of Reading Medieval Hagiography,” *Chicago Studies* 44 (2005): 285; Mark D. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 1–2.

12. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 67–68.

13. Curtis D. Johnston, *Islands of Holiness: Rural Religion in Upstate New York, 1790–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 214. For changes in land prices, see Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), 141; Alan Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 148.

14. Eric Hobsbawm, *Uncommon People: Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz* (London: Abacus, 1998), 4. For a balanced interpretation of contemporary accounts of general prosperity which masked the number of the poor, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1991), 348.

15. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers; or, The Sources of the Susquehanna: A Descriptive Tale* (1823), edited by James D. Wallace (New York:

Oxford University Press, 1991), 216; Geoffrey Rans, *Cooper's Leatherstocking Novels: A Secular Reading* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 81–87.

16. The phrase is that of Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 113, 120–21. See also Daniel Walker Howe, "Charles Sellers, the Market Revolution and the Shaping of Identity in Whig-Jacksonian America," in *God and Mammon: Protestants, Money and the Market, 1790–1860*, edited by Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 60; Marvin S. Hill, "Counter-Revolution: The Mormon Reaction to the Coming of American Democracy," *Sunstone*, Issue 71 (June 1989): 27; Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: An American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 16, 25–26; Richard F. Palmer and Karl D. Butler, *Brigham Young: The New York Years* (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, 1992), 27; Charles D. Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 218–19; Mark Stoll, *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Nature in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 109.

17. Authorized version (Independence, Mo.: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1908), Hel. 2:45. This version follows the chapter division of the first edition, but conveniently adds versification. From 2001, it has been published under the imprint of the Community of Christ, the new name of the Reorganized Church. References to the editions published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City), which use a different chapter and verse division, are given in brackets. In the present case the reference is to Helaman 4:12.

18. Alma 1:46 [1:30], Jacob 2:22 [2:17]; see also the imagery of Jacob's parable of the vineyard: "they became like unto one body; and the fruit were equal" (3:144 [5:74]).

19. See James 2:1, 9, in Smith's *Holy Scriptures, Containing the Old and New Testaments: An Inspired Revision of the Authorized Version*, New Corrected Edition (Independence, Mo.: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1944) for a later expression of this idea.

20. Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 31.

21. Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, 1965), 7.

22. William B. Scott, *In Pursuit of Happiness: American Conceptions of Property from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 2; Gideon Granger, *Address, Delivered before the On-*

tario Agricultural Society, at its Second Annual Meeting, October 3, 1820 (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis, [1820], 17–18.

23. Mosiah 13:55 [29:38]; see also *Holy Scriptures*, Mark 9:44.

24. 1 Ne. 3:54 [2:20]; for covenant theology, see Ernest W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1986); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 93–131.

25. Hel. 2:127 [6:8]; Alma 30:6 [63:5]. For the implications of Hagoth's being a "curious" man, see Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828; San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1967), s.v. curious, def. 1: "Strongly desirous to see what is novel, or to discover what is unknown; solicitous to see or to know; inquisitive." Wesley's observation that religion "must necessarily produce both industry and frugality; and these cannot but produce riches" might also be counted as a source of such thinking. John Wesley, "Thoughts upon Methodism," *The Works of John Wesley*, edited by T. Jackson, 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872), 13:260. Smith attended Methodist class meetings in 1828. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 25.

26. Morm. 4:54 [8:39], Mosiah 9:62 [18:28]. Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 62, discusses Smith's naivete in expecting concern for others to be more important than contractual obligation and profit; but see Granger, *Address*, 8, and for an acceptance of the market, tempered by a concern for how profits were used, see Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2002), 29.

27. Adam Smith, *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), edited by Edwin Canan as *The Wealth of Nations* (1994; New York: Modern Library, 2000), 302.

28. *Ibid.*, 308.

29. Oliver B. Huntington, quoted in Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus, comps., *They Knew the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), 61; Jac. 2:24 [2:19]; cf. H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 208. This too might be thought to have been derived from Wesley's thinking. See Manfred Marquardt, *John Wesley's Social Ethics: Praxis and Principles*, translated by John E. Steely and W. Stephen Gunter (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1992), 36–37; John A. Newton, "Methodism and the Articulation of Faith: 'No Ho-

liness but Social," *Methodist History* 42, no. 1 (2003): 52–54, but social holiness was not central to American Methodism.

30. The Book of Mormon contrasts the Nephites with the Lamanites, who were originally members of the same Lehi family group, but who had an economy based on hunting and raiding Nephite towns. The two groups intermarried, and the Lamanites who destroyed the Nephites in the fifth century C.E. were a politically and religiously defined group with no necessary lineage connection to the original group of that name. In the Book of Mormon, the Book of Ether describes the history of a third group, the Jaredites, who reportedly reached the New World as part of the dispersion from the Tower of Babel. Jaredite civilization was destroyed in a civil war in the second century B.C.E. G. St. John Stott, "Amerindian Identity, the Book of Mormon, and the American Dream," *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* 9 (2004): 21–33.

31. Garth L. Mangum, "The Economics of the Book of Mormon: Joseph Smith as Translator or Commentator," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 83, 81.

32. For artisans, see Jarom 1:19 [1:8], cf. Eth. 4:50 [10:17]. Though there is urban development (Alma 6:8 [8:7]), the economy's agricultural base is shown by the linkage of its system of exchange to grain (Alma 8:58 [11:7]).

33. Although most of those who called themselves Nephites died in the war that ends Book of Mormon history, so much intermarriage had occurred between the original Nephites and Lamanites that we can assume Lamanite descent from the Nephites of Benjamin's day.

34. George Ryerson, March 23, 1831, speaking at a meeting of the New York Female Missionary Society, *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*, April 8, 1831, 122; John Heckewelder, *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians* (1820), edited by William Elsey Connelly (Cleveland, Ohio: Burrows Brothers, 1907), 334. Heckewelder's *Narrative* is #199 in a list of works in a library that Joseph Smith may have known. Robert Paul, "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Public Library," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (1982): 333–56. The Smith farm was about seven miles from Manchester. For Smith's arguing thus in 1843, see Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (1902–32; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978 printing), 5:480.

35. Samuel Stanhope Smith, *An Essay upon the Causes of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species; To Which Are Added Strictures on Lord Kames's Discourse on the Original Diversity of Mankind* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1788), 206–12; de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, 72.

36. For typical diets of the period, see Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: American Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 209.

37. 1 Ne. 5:126 [18:25]; Enos 1:34 [1:21]; Alma 1:44 [1:29]. The Jaredite diet also included swine: Eth. 4:20 [9:18]. Frontier diets, like that of the Jaredites, included fresh game: Eth. 4:69 [10:21].

38. Mosiah 5:35, 6:12, 17 [7:22, 9:9, 14]; Alma 8:58, 61 [11:7, 15], Enos 1:34 [1:21]. There are also references to unidentified cereals: "neas" and "sheum" (Mosiah 6:12 [9:9]). It is not clear whether barley is used as an animal feed, to produce malt, or for human consumption. Although beer is not mentioned, grapevines and wine are (Mosiah 7:21 [11:15], Alma 25:35 [55:8]).

39. An allegory in Jacob 3 [4–5] describes grafting in olive culture; see Rom. 11:17–24. Jacob assumes this knowledge on the part of his audience, so we may suppose it part of Nephite agricultural science. This knowledge would not have seemed esoteric to Smith's readers. S[olomon] Southwick, *State of New-York Agricultural Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1822* (Albany, N.Y.: Daniel Steele and Son, 1821), F4r-G1r, discussed the "Manuring, Planting, Grafting, and Pruning of Trees" in terms that parallel Jacob's.

40. Flax is not named but can be inferred from references to linen: Mosiah 6:32 [10:15], Hel. 2:133 [6:13], Eth. 4:19 [11:16]. The phrase "fine-twined linen" that is conventionally used in the Book of Mormon was no doubt adopted from Exodus 39:3, Authorized Version (King James Version).

41. Mosiah 6:31–32 [10:4–5], cf. Granger, *Address*, 17–18. As this information does not fit with what is known of Native American farming before European contact, apologists for the Book of Mormon have suggested that the words refer to North American equivalents of European plants and animals, not to the named plants and animals themselves. See, for example, John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1985), 232. However, for the work's first readers, *linen* would have implied flax, not maguey, *wheat* would have meant wheat (not amaranth), and so on, and that is the reading offered here.

42. Reading John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (1841) would lead some of Smith's followers to assume a Central American geography for the Book of Mormon. "Zarahemla," *Times and Seasons* 3 (October 1, 1842): 927. However, Smith found Native American remains in the Mississippi Valley "proof of [the] divine authenticity" of the

Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith, Letter to Emma Smith, June 4, 1834, in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002), 346; *History of the Church*, 2:79–80; cf. “The Far West,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1 (October 1832): 37. The earliest Mormon newspaper argued for a setting in the north-eastern states. “The Book of Ether,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1 (August 1832): 37. In writing an 1835 account of the translation of the Book of Mormon, Smith’s scribe Oliver Cowdery reflected the early belief that “between these hills [in the neighborhood of Manchester, New York], the entire power and national strength of both the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed.” Oliver Cowdery, “Letter VII,” *LDS Messenger and Advocate* 1 (July 1835): 158.

43. The importance of mining might have been surprising, as it was not of major importance to New York farming communities, but Smith perhaps thought it a natural part of the rural economy because he had himself used seer stones in attempts “to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, etc.”: Abram W. Benton, quoted in D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 56.

44. 3 Ne. 2:86–87, 3:4 [5:4, 6:3]; Alma 15:23 [27:22]; see also Alma 16:249–50, 254, 257 [35:9, 13–14]. If Smith had known James E. Seaver’s *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1824), he could hardly have missed the Indians’ grant of land to a prisoner of war called Joseph Smith. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, ed., *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 162. In any case, the idea of public land grants would have been familiar to him from the federal government’s awarding of land as a military bounty. Seaver’s work is #192 in Paul’s list.

45. Alma 8:53, 56, 58 [11:4–5, 7]. The equivalence in these verses of gold and silver units (the senine and the senum) was perhaps derived from the dual measures of Ezekiel 45:11. Given these price controls, I think Susan Curtis was mistaken in arguing for the modernity of the market system in the Book of Mormon. Curtis, “Early Nineteenth Century and the Book of Mormon,” in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 87–88. Here I agree with Mangum, “The Economics of the Book of Mormon,” 88–89.

46. John Witherspoon, *Essay on Money, as a Medium of Commerce; with Remarks, on the Advantages of Paper Admitted into General Circulation* (Philadelphia: York, Stewart & M’Culloch 1786), 4; Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 33.

47. 4 Ne. 1:54–55 [1:46]; Eth. 4:70 [10:22]. Note that in the 1828 Web-

ster's Dictionary, s.v. "traffick," can mean commerce "by barter" as well as "by buying and selling."

48. Note the instructions not to enslave each other (Mosiah 1:44 [2:13]). Slavery had been abolished in New York State as recently as 1827. Edgar J. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1966), 174–75, 178. Perhaps we should understand Benjamin's prohibition in the light of this law. However, a form of indentured servanthood reportedly existed among the Lamanites (Mosiah 5:21–22 [7:15], Alma 15:9 [27:8], 3 Ne. 2:8 [3:7]). It is possibly this practice, rather than the concept of lifetime servitude, that lay behind Benjamin's words. For indentured servants, see Barry O'Connell, ed., *A Son of the Forest and Other Writings by William Ames, a Pequot* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 15.

49. Mosiah 2:24 [4:13]. Webster's *Dictionary* defines the transitive verb form of to render as: "to afford; to give for use or benefit." Definition 7.

50. 2 Ne. 11:114 [26:33]. The phrase is formulaic (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

51. Mosiah 2:28, 30–31 [4:16–18]. Smith no doubt relished this part of the Book of Mormon message. Joseph Smith Sr. had been warned out in Norwich, Vermont. Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003) 1: 666–68.

52. Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, 27.

53. G. St. John Stott, "New Jerusalem Abandoned: The Failure to Carry Mormonism to the Delaware," *Journal of American Studies* 21 (1987): 75–76.

54. James 5:4 (1–8), AV; cf. Hel. 2:45 [4:12]. For Smith's early familiarity with James, see *History of the Church*, 1:4. The Smiths, reduced to the status of tenant farmers, felt that they had lost their land by fraud. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 67–68. They had not been treated with the "spirit of forbearance" that they would have felt entitled to. For debt forbearance, see Granger, *Address*, 8; cf. Orasmus Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, and Morris' Reserve* (Rochester, N.Y.: William Alling, 1851), 383.

55. Gen. 18:20, AV. Smith would come to see sexual excess as part of Sodom's sin. *Holy Scriptures*, Gen. 19:11–12. But in his early thought, the driver of sin—including sexual sin—is greed. G. St. John Stott, "The Economics of Sin: Sexual Morality in an Ethos of Civic Republicanism," *John Whitmer Historical Society Journal* 24 (2004): 60–64; cf. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah*, 156–59.

56. Alma 16:223–25 [24:28–29], drawing on Matthew 5:13 and Ezekiel 22:19–21; 3 Ne. 7:41 [16:15].

57. 3 Ne. 7:40–41 [16:15], dictated no more than two months following the oracle cited in note 52. Oliver Cowdery reported that a vision of John the Baptist on May 15, 1829, was precipitated by the translation of 3 Ne. 5:1–13:24 [11:1–28:12]: “the account given of the Savior’s ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent.” Cowdery, “Letter I,” *LDS Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 15.

58. Mosiah 9:39–40 [18:8–9]; the phrase draws on Sirach 7:34 and Galatians 6:2.

59. Joseph Bellamy, *True Religion Delineated and Distinguished from All Counterfeits* (1750; rpt. Ames, Iowa, 1997), 124.

60. Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits; or, Christian Love as Manifested in the Heart and Life* (1852), edited by Tryon Edwards (New York: Robert Carter Brothers, 1854), 12; cf. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1758), edited by Mary Catherine Moran (Indianapolis, Ind., Liberty Fund, 2005), 16.

61. Nathanael Emmons, “Disinterested Benevolence,” *The Works of Nathanael Emmons* (1842), edited by Bruce Kucklich, 6 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 3:205.

62. Nor had such an effect been produced by familiarity with Jesus’s definition of discipleship as ministry to the poor and outcast (Matt. 25:31–46, cf. Alma 1:45 [1:30]), popularized in John Logan’s boast that no white man ever “entered Logan’s cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat . . . [ever] came cold and naked, and he cloathed him not.” Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, edited by William Peden, Institute of Early American History and Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 63. See Alma 1:45 [1:30] for this ethic, and Mormon 4:54 [8:39] for an explicit reference to the situation in the latter days.

63. Alfred Habegger, *Gender, Fantasy, and Realism in American Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 220; David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 74.

64. Chipman, *Address*, 3.

65. Robert H. Bremmer, *American Philanthropy*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), 12.

66. E. M. Sheldon, *I Wish I Was Poor* (Boston, Mass.: American Tract Society, [1864?]), 3. For attitudes to the poor, see Leo P. Hirrell, *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Ante-Bellum Reform* (Lexington: University

Press of Kentucky, 1998), 160; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 109. Louis W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence and Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," *Journal of American History* 60 (1973): 23–41, notes that evangelicals anticipated that social change would come with the millennium, and that evangelism was the priority before then; however, he exaggerates the novelty of this approach. Cf. Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756–1800* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 101.

67. Rev. John Alonzo Clark, Sermons, Special Collections, University of Delaware, 15: "God will not accept of a poor or partial offering." See also p. 17. Note in contrast the incorporation in the Book of Mormon text of Malachi's rebuke of those who "oppress the hireling" (Mal. 3:5, AV; 3 Ne. 11:8 [24:5]). Smith would not have heard Clark's sermon—he was in Harmony, Pennsylvania, at the time—but it can nevertheless represent the kind of thinking the Book of Mormon stands up against.

68. de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, 410–11. This text was not published until the twentieth century. Cf. the practice of Smith's uncle, Jason Mack. Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy's Book* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 287.

69. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), edited by Peter Laslett (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2§46.

70. Chipman, *Address*, 4, 7.

71. Thomas D. Burrall, *Address, Delivered before the Ontario Agricultural Society, at Its Fourth Annual Meeting, October 22, 1822* (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis, 1822), 10.

72. Vickers, "Competency and Competition," 27–28; Southwick, *State of New-York Agricultural Almanack . . . 1824*, 44. For agriculture as a business, see Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, and Two Essays on America*, trans. Gerald E. Bevan (London: Penguin, 2003), 644; Johnston, *Islands of Holiness*, 36; Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 16. De Tocqueville's *De la démocratie en Amérique* was originally published in two volumes, 1835–40.

73. [Ruth Rosenberg-Naparstec, ed.], "Diary of a Young Girl: The Erie Canal in 1822," *Rochester History* 62, no. 3 (2000): 19; cf. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 322.

74. George Dixon, Will, March 19, 1839, Ontario County Records and Archives Service, Canandaigua, N.Y.

75. Howard Bodenhorn, *A History of Banking in Antebellum America: Financial Markets and Economic Development in an Era of Nation-Building* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7, 21; Robert E. Wright,

Origins of Commercial Banking in America, 1750–1800 (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 135; Bray Hammond, *Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), 27; *Prairie Farmer* 21 (1865): 17.

76. Liquidity had been a problem in western New York for years. John Nichols, *Address, Delivered before the Ontario Agricultural Society, at its First Annual Meeting, October 13, 1819* (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis, [1819]), 6. In Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836 after trying unsuccessfully to charter a church bank, Smith would establish the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. Marvin S. Hill, Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, *The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1977).

77. Elisha Fish, Account Book 1809–29, Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua, N.Y.

78. Ibid. For mutual help, see Robert A. Gross, "Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy," in *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History*, edited by Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29; Vickers, "Competence and Competition," 26, 28; Kristin Van Tassel, "Nineteenth-Century American Ante-Bellum Literature: The Yeoman Becomes a Country Bumpkin," *American Studies* 43 (2002): 73 note 58. For discussions of reciprocity of exchange, see James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser. 35 (1980): 15; Clark, *Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 27, 33.

79. Nicholas Howland, Account Book, 1816–49, Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua, N.Y.

80. Benjamin encouraged his people to return what they have borrowed, in part because of the hardship that borrowing can create for the lender (Mosiah 2:46–47 [4:28]). Cf. George L. Kittredge, *The Old Farmer and His Almanack: Observations on Life and Manners in New England a Hundred Years Ago, Suggested by Mr. Robert B. Thomas's Farmer's Almanack* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920), 99–100; A Reformed Borrower, "Borrowing," *Palmyra Freeman*, June 10, 1828, 1. Benjamin does not, however, take Polonius's position and counsel against all borrowing.

81. Act to Incorporate the President, Directors and Company of the Wayne County Bank (Albany, N.Y.: Edwin Croswell, 1829).

82. 2 Ne. 4:43 [5:27]; de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, 52–53.

83. Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Captivity Narratives*, 160. For praise of the "civilized tribes" for their generosity and how they provided for their poor,

see James Adair, *The History of the American Indians, Particularly Those Nations Adjoining to the Mississippi [sic], East and West Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Virginia* (1775), edited by Samuel Cole Williams (Johnson City, Tenn.: Watauga Press, 1930), 18; William Bartram, *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws* (1791), excerpted in Gregory A. Waselkov and Kathryn E. Holland Braund, eds., *William Bartram on the Southeastern Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 47; Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews; or, The Tribes of Israel in America* (Poultney, Vt.: Smith and Shute, 1825), 104; Elias Boudinot, *A Star in the West; or, A Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, Preparatory to Their Return to their Beloved City, Jerusalem* (Trenton, N.J.: D. Fenton, S. Hutchinson, and J. Dunham, 1815), vii–viii; Jonathan Carver, *Three Years' Travels through the Interior Parts of North-America for More than Five Thousand Miles* (Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank, 1789), 126; Seaver, *A Narrative*, 145, 146, 152. See also William Robertson, *The History of the Discovery and Settlement of America* (1777; rpt. New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), 333–34, for the admiring report that the Incas distributed land according to need and organized a common storehouse to meet the needs of the poor.

84. Russel B. Nye, *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776–1830* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 106–9, 133–37; Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790–1840* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 182–91; Michael Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies: From Homespun to Ready-Made,” *American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 1,558; William H. Adams, *Address, Delivered before the Ontario Agricultural Society, at Its Fifth Annual Meeting, October 28, 1823* (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis, [1823]), 7. We should also allow for male reactions to “trumpery,” something that was still troubling Palmyra menfolk twenty years later. Donald H. Parkerson, *The Agricultural Transition in New York State: Markets and Migration in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995), 11; cf. Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 6.

85. “The fabrics of silk are very numerous and almost all are devoted to the purposes of show and luxury,” the author of *The Cabinet of Useful Arts and Manufactures Designed for the Perusal of Young Persons* reported (New York: James Bloomfield, 1826), 30, while Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 320, would associate silk with “idle people who produce nothing.” The suspicions such passages would have created would have been compounded by contem-

porary attempts to turn sericulture into a get-rich-quick scheme. Jared Van Wagenen Jr., *The Golden Age of Homespun* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1953), 182; *Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, Transmitting the Information Required by a Resolution of the House of Representatives, May 11, 1826, in Relation to the Growth and Manufacture of Silk, Adapted to the Different Parts of the Union* (Washington, D.C.: Neff and Green, 1828), 26. For the advocacy of sericulture in Ontario County see Z. Barron Stout, *Address, Delivered before the Ontario Agricultural Society, at the Town House, in Canandaigua, October 2, 1827* (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis, 1827), 8.

86. Alma 5:39 [7:23]; Stott, "Economics of Sin," 71.

87. Mosiah 2:32, 40–41, 9:60–62 [4:19, 24–25, 18:27–28], Alma 1:46, 16:223 [1:30, 24:38]; Hel. 2:140 [6:17]. Prosperity is counted as a blessing by Book of Mormon authors (Mosiah 11:58 [24:11], Eth. 3:34 [6:28]), but it can lead to a spiritually fatal pride (Hel. 4:49–51 [12:2]).

88. Robert Neelly Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 32–35.

89. *The Farmer's Diary; or Beers' Ontario Almanack, for the Year of Our Lord 1819* (Canandaigua, N.Y.: J. D. Bemis, 1818), D3v; cf. Southwick, *State of New-York Agricultural Almanack . . . 1823*, H1r.

90. Smith's ambition was for a general competence, not opportunities for exceptional wealth; and as a result, he did not question the subtext of Whig appeals for farmers to limit their ambition.

91. Stott, "Economics of Sin," 71; Mosiah 2:41, 43, 11:154 [4:25–26, 27:4]; cf. Jacob 2:16–24 [2:13–19], Alma 1:40, 16:100 [1:27, 31:24]. For selfishness as the disposition "to seek [one's] own private, separate interest, in opposition to the glory of God and the good of the universe," see Emmons, "Love Is the Essence of Obedience," *Works*, 3:180. See Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, 52, for coveting one's own property (albeit in a different context), as well as Mormon 4:50 [10:6–7], which denounces loving one's own possessions "more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted."

92. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* ([Peabody, Mass.]: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 2,071.

93. That said, Lyndon W. Cook is too literalistic when he sees Smith's "first serious interest in an economic law for the church" as following from his meeting with Sidney Rigdon in December 1830. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1985), 5. There is a direct link between Book of Mormon aspirations and the Church law requiring a

member's "consecration of the overplus, after reserving [sufficient] for himself and family, and to carry on his business." John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis: John Corrill, 1839), 45-46.

94. E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, no. 50 (February 1971): 89-90; de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 623.