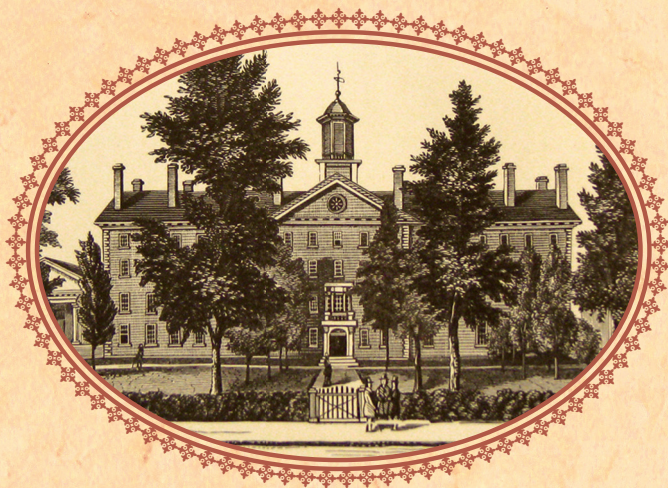


"An intelligent and edifying introduction to
the theology and leaders of Old Princeton. . . .
A tremendous resource." —KEVIN DEYOUNG

PRINCETON SEMINARY



(1812–1929)



*Its Leaders' Lives
and Works*

GARY STEWARD

“I know of no other book that so brilliantly resurrects the theologians of Old Princeton for today’s layman. Certainly, Steward’s engaging, accessible, and eloquent work is the new go-to book for the reader unacquainted with the giants of Old Princeton.”

—**Matthew Barrett**, Associate Professor of Christian Studies,
California Baptist University

“Many have found in Old Princeton Seminary an example of biblical faithfulness, sound theology, and missionary vision. Gary Steward has written an excellent introduction to Old Princeton, telling the story of its major teachers from Alexander to Machen and describing some of their most important writings. Read this book. You will be informed and blessed, and you will want to learn more about Old Princeton.”

—**David Calhoun**, Professor Emeritus of Church History,
Covenant Theological Seminary

“Old Princeton justly haunts the conscience of contemporary Reformed and evangelical Christianity. Gary Steward has given us a clear, helpful introduction to its history, figures, and piety. This book will encourage those new to the Princeton tradition to get to know the theology and piety of the Alexanders, the Hodges, Warfield, and Machen.”

—**R. Scott Clark**, Professor of Church History and Historical
Theology, Westminster Seminary California

“Gary Steward is to be commended for providing an intelligent and edifying introduction to the theology and leaders of Old Princeton. Part biography and part doctrinal exploration, this volume can be profitably used both by those familiar with the Alexanders and Hodges and by those meeting them for the first time. The tone is warm and balanced, the content rich and accessible, the historical work careful and illuminating. I hope pastors, students, and anyone else interested in good theology and heartfelt piety will ‘take a few classes’ at Old Princeton. This book is a tremendous resource toward that end.”

—**Kevin DeYoung**, Senior Pastor, University Reformed Church
(RCA), East Lansing, Michigan

“I warmly recommend this spiritually edifying book by Gary Steward. This is no dry, historical work about a seminary and its professors in which the author looks back nostalgically on a bygone age of theological giants. On the contrary, here is a book to challenge and encourage every believer—especially ministerial students and their teachers. The book is a pleasure to read: its subject matter is informative and witnesses to Gary’s grasp of the issues raised; its style is fresh and readable; and its aim is to show the importance of scholarly, theologically orthodox ministerial training wedded to a piety that is biblical, experiential, practical, and pastorally sensitive.”

—**Philip H. Eveson**, Former Principal, London Theological Seminary; Former Director, John Owen Centre for Theological Study, London Theological Seminary

“While publications on the history, theology, and model of ministerial instruction propagated at Old Princeton Seminary continue to flourish, until now readers interested in learning about the spiritual convictions and theological commitments of its leading faculty during its first century of operation have had to rely on specialized studies on these topics. Gary Steward’s new work fills the publishing lacunae with an outstanding introductory study on the men and theology that shaped the institutional identity of the school from its founding in 1812 through the early decades of the twentieth century. Marked by the same interest in piety and learning that characterized the faculty of whom Steward has written, his volume is an exceptional combination of biographical, historical, and theological analysis well suited to serve as a gateway text to the rich spiritual history and literary legacy that Old Princeton Seminary has bequeathed to the church today.”

—**James M. Garretson**, Ministry Director, Christian Union at Harvard Law School

“Gary Steward’s warmhearted and sure-footed guide to the warriors and writings of Old Princeton Seminary is a delight, and the best short introduction to their story for those setting out to discover this often-unappreciated treasure trove. I will certainly be setting it as essential reading for my students. May it help to continue the renaiss-

sance of interest in these influential figures of Christian history and the gospel they served.”

—**Lee Gatiss**, Adjunct Lecturer in Church History, Wales Evangelical School of Theology

“It is well known that one of the soundest schools of Christian theology in the nineteenth century was what has come to be called Old Princeton; as one author has put it, the school was a veritable ‘Gibraltar’ of the faith. Regrettably, the opinion has also gained credence, especially among evangelicals, that this was the sum and substance of the Princeton school and that the institution was especially deficient when it came to a robust piety. But nothing could be further from the truth, as this new overview by Gary Steward helpfully demonstrates. I am also thrilled by this book because it delineates a vital strand of the spiritual roots of my school, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, for it was at Princeton that James Petigru Boyce and Basil Manly Jr., two of the founders of Southern, learned a Christian faith that was both solid in divinity and red-hot in spirituality.”

—**Michael A. G. Haykin**, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality and Director, The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

“Gary Steward’s *Princeton Seminary (1812–1929): Its Leaders’ Lives and Works* contributes significantly to the renaissance of interest in Old Princeton. The sustained combination of scholarship and piety for over a century serves as Steward’s leitmotif. What emerges is the Princetonians’ breadth of vision that explored not only biblical and theological studies but all of life. Whether probing Archibald Alexander as the quintessential pastor, Charles Hodge’s editorship of the *Princeton Review* as ‘the true voice of the seminary,’ James Alexander’s call for a ‘*Novum Organum* of Christian philanthropy,’ or A. A. Hodge’s incisive wit and power of illustration, Steward’s lucid portrayal will incite readers to explore more of Old Princeton.”

—**W. Andrew Hofferker**, Emeritus Professor of Church History, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi

“Whereas David Calhoun’s magisterial history of Princeton Seminary awakened this generation to its doctrinal and experiential treasures, and while many recent works on Old Princeton have exhilarated us with their account of its inspiring ministerial and ecclesiastical example, Gary Steward’s guided tour of Old Princeton fills the gap for a much-needed compact, yet thorough spiritual guide to this glorious era. May every student and minister begin the study of Old Princeton right here!”

—**Jerry Marcellino**, Pastor, Audubon Drive Bible Church, Laurel, Mississippi; cofounder, FIRE (The Fellowship of Independent Reformed Evangelicals)

“Gary Steward has highlighted elements of the Old Princeton theological tradition that should be of paramount concern to present-day evangelicals in general and Southern Baptists in particular. Seeing that both Basil Manly Jr. and J. P. Boyce studied with this group of theologians, we can detect in our own heritage of theological education, as well as recent efforts to recover this vision, the very values to which Steward gives such clear and forceful exposition. Doctrine, preaching, piety, and defense of the faith once delivered to the saints were central to their understanding of the calling to be ministers of the gospel. This book will put a new resolution into all of us to be faithful to that deposit of truth that is committed to us.”

—**Thomas J. Nettles**, Professor of Historical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“The quality and achievement of Princeton Seminary’s leaders for its first hundred years was outstanding, and Steward tells their story well. Reading this book does the heart good.”

—**J. I. Packer**, Board of Governors’ Professor of Theology, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia

“Gary Steward has produced a wonderfully clear and instructive volume on Old Princeton, from its beginnings with William Tennent’s Log Cabin through to B. B. Warfield. The thought, aims, achievements, and Christian piety of its leaders—Archibald Alexander, Samuel Miller, Charles Hodge, and their successors—are

expounded with sympathy and learning. This book will benefit anyone interested in ministerial training or in the venerable history of Old Princeton.”

—**Robert Strivens**, Principal, London Theological Seminary

“Gary Steward is a careful and trustworthy historian. He excels at retrieving wisdom from the past for the edification of God’s people today. In this accessible introduction, Steward writes as an unashamed admirer of the Old Princeton theologians, commending the way in which they holistically integrated what so many tend to separate. This is a wise and winsome entry point for study of a neglected but important chapter in church history.”

—**Justin Taylor**, Senior Vice President and Publisher for Books, Crossway Books

“This latest addition to the Guided Tour series is a fine study of the men who made Princeton Theological Seminary such a significant force within the world of confessional Presbyterianism and beyond. Setting the stories of the institution and its great early faculty within the larger context of American Presbyterian and Christian history, Gary Steward introduces the reader not only to the great personalities of Princeton but also to key texts from their pens. He opens up not only the history but also the thinking of these men as they sought to articulate a passionate, heartfelt orthodoxy.”

—**Carl R. Trueman**, Paul Woolley Professor of Church History, Westminster Theological Seminary

“An entrée to the major figures of Old Princeton. It is an entrée, therefore, into the greatest tradition of Reformed theology in America, one that was deep, true, vital, and rigorous. This study is a gift to the church. It is informative, careful, and engagingly written.”

—**David F. Wells**, Distinguished Research Professor, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

“Whether you need an introduction to or a refresher on Old Princeton, this is the book. Steward has provided an evenhanded and informative treatment of the leading names associated with nineteenth-century

Princeton Seminary. Alternating between biographical and topical treatments, Steward has skillfully utilized primary source material to craft a fluid narrative that leaves one wanting to know more of Old Princeton. Timelines, bibliographies, and photographs make this a wonderful addition to Princeton history for the church and beyond. Regardless of your ecclesiastical affiliation, this volume will edify your mind and soul.”

—**C. N. Willborn**, Pastor-Teacher, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Adjunct Professor of Church History, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

“Steward provides a most helpful introduction to one of the most significant and interesting institutions in American Christianity. Princeton powerfully shaped American Christianity, bolstering especially its enduring conservatism. This is an excellent resource for students, pastors, and all others who want to understand the course and character of Christianity in America.”

—**Gregory A. Wills**, Dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Church History, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“I’m engaged from the start—and it’s hard to stop reading. Gary Steward tells the Old Princeton story as if an eyewitness. His thesis is that Old Princeton’s dual emphasis on academic erudition and lively spiritual devotion yielded for Christ’s church generations of theologically trained and spiritually devout pastors. Each chapter engages with another Old Princeton giant, and Steward amply and convincingly demonstrates the veracity of his thesis. Without delivering it in preachy terms, the inescapable message of the book is that theological seminaries should likewise stand ‘like a bulwark for biblical fidelity, revival piety, evangelical activism, and the confessional Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646).’”

—**John Wilson**, Assembly Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Australia; Adjunct Lecturer in Church History and Practical Theology, Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

“The giants of Old Princeton, marked by that marvelous combination of learning and piety, have left an impact for the gospel of Christ that only eternity will be able to measure. Their story is one that deserves to be retold, and we are indebted to Gary Steward for capturing its essence and telling it so well. For anyone interested in Old Princeton, this is a must-read.”

—**Fred G. Zaspel**, Pastor, Reformed Baptist Church of Franconia,
Pennsylvania

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PRINCETON
SEMINARY

(1812–1929)

*Its Leaders' Lives
and Works*

GARY STEWARD



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To Iain Murray & David Calhoun,
who first introduced me to Old Princeton

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FOREWORD

A number of years ago, I was invited to deliver a lecture at a conference celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812. As I rose to deliver the remarks I had prepared for that evening, I was overcome with emotion and unable to speak. Those in attendance had just finished singing a hymn that had been sung at my father's funeral a handful of years before, and as I was standing to deliver my address, my mind was flooded with wonderful memories of my father, as well as with gratitude for the theologians at Old Princeton Seminary. While I suspect that some might think it strange that recalling the death of my father would generate gratitude for the Old Princetonians, it makes perfect sense to me, especially in that context. I did not grow up in a household that was committed to the Reformed faith, and neither did my father, yet the Lord in his kind providence used the Old Princetonians and a number of their more faithful interpreters to draw me, and eventually my father and most of the rest of my family, into the broader Reformed camp. I was overcome with emotion that evening because in a very real sense I was both remembering and celebrating the impact that the Old Princetonians had had in my life and in the lives of those I love. The Lord used their works to draw us closer to himself, and for that mercy I remain grateful to this day.

I first encountered the theology and theologians of Old Princeton Seminary when I was working on my doctorate at a Roman Catholic university in the Midwest. I was taking a course in American church history and had the opportunity to read J. Gresham Machen's modern classic, *Christianity and Liberalism*. Machen's work turned my world upside down and introduced me to a theological perspective that was

not just revolutionary to me, but instantly compelling. Here was theology that was not only substantive and relevant to the theological issues that I was encountering in my studies, but also faithful to the teaching of Scripture, devotional in the best sense of the word, and beautifully written. The more I read the works of Machen and his colleagues at Old Princeton, the more I came to appreciate their ability to unpack the revelation of God in a way that drove me to worship. They helped me to see the dangers of a kind of dead orthodoxy on the one hand and a kind of unbridled religious enthusiasm on the other, and they persuaded me that because theology is an organic enterprise involving the totality of the whole soul, it is done most faithfully when there is—by God’s grace—a symbiotic relationship between the regenerated head and heart. Among other things, they taught me the essential lesson that, as Charles Hodge put it, “the knowledge of Christ . . . is not the apprehension of what he is, simply by the intellect, but also a due apprehension of his glory as a divine person arrayed in our nature, and involves not as its consequence merely, but as one of its elements, the corresponding feeling of adoration, delight, desire and complacency.”*

As I continue to immerse myself in the literature by and about the Old Princetonians, I am often reminded that relatively few contemporary interpreters share my enthusiasm for both the form and the content of their theology. Many scholars are convinced that the authenticity of the Princetonians’ Reformed commitments was compromised by their accommodation of one aspect of the Enlightenment or another, and even more insist that their commitment to the objective nature of religious truth was grounded in a form of naive rationalism rather than in faithfulness to the assumptions of the larger Reformed tradition. Thankfully, something of a renaissance is taking place in the academic study of Old Princeton that is challenging this consensus by returning to the primary sources of the Princetonians themselves. Following the lead of historians such as David Calhoun, W. Andrew Hoffercker, and John Woodbridge, a number of scholars are arguing not only that the Princetonians stood squarely and eloquently in the mainstream of the Reformed tradition, but that their

* Charles Hodge, “The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus Our Lord,” in *Conference Papers* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1879), 214.

works remain particularly relevant in our current context for precisely that reason. The latest addition to this growing body of corrective scholarship is Gary Steward's impressive survey of the theology and theologians of Princeton Seminary from the time of its founding in 1812 to its reorganization in 1929. Steward's survey is judicious and informed by painstaking analysis of the primary and secondary literature. It is sympathetic, yet not fawning; well written and accessible, yet not lacking in substance; and sensitive to those issues that are of enduring interest to scholars, yet always mindful of the pastoral relevance of the Princetonians' labors. Steward has an admirable grasp of the Princeton mind, and for that reason it is an honor for me to commend his analysis to you. May the Lord bless his efforts.

Paul Kjoss Helseth

Professor of Christian Thought, University of Northwestern,
St. Paul; Author of *"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind: An
Unorthodox Proposal*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous individuals deserve thanks for helping me write this book. Special gratitude is due to Steve Nichols, who asked me to write it in the first place. Steve has been a wonderful teacher, editor, and friend, and I am thankful for his help in getting this book into print. I am also thankful for the friendship and encouragement of Iain Murray, Andy Hoffercker, Paul Helseth, David Smith, and Jim Garretson, along with many others who have provided wonderful encouragement in things related to Old Princeton. The staff of the Special Collections division at Princeton Theological Seminary, especially Ken Henke, have been most helpful in dealing with their vast archival collections and in providing many of the images that appear in this book. Adam Winters, archivist at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is also to be thanked for providing free access to relevant materials from their collections. Editorial input was graciously provided by John Wind, Derek Butler, Sally Michael, and Amy Steward, for which I am grateful. Personal words of thanks are due to my parents, who nurtured me in the faith and have encouraged me in my studies and writing in countless ways. Without their generous and prayerful support, this book could not have been written. Finally, a special word of thanks is due to my wife, Amy, whose constant help and encouragement freed me to devote so much time to this project. I am deeply thankful to God for bringing her into my life and for making her the joyful mother of our children, Anna, Katie, and Joshua.

PREFACE

When we are in our younger years we need to dig deep, we need to know our position doctrinally so that our reading is focused within that. And if anyone was to ask me as a younger man here today what other authors could be used as benchmarks I would urge the consideration of the Princeton men, you know, Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield, these are great benchmarks. Three books, you know, Alexander's Religious Experience, A. A. Hodge's Outlines of Theology, Warfield's Biblical Doctrines, those three books—if a young man gets hold of those books and they get hold of him, I believe that he's got something, for life. And in case anyone thinks that Princeton is a little too Presbyterian, let me give you another quote from Spurgeon. Spurgeon says: "We have had, of later years, no abler theologians than the Hodges. We fear it will be many a day before we see their like. Finer minds than those of the Princeton tutors have seldom dwelt among the sons of men. No better textbook of theology for colleges and private use is now extant than Hodge's Outlines. O for more Princeton theology, for it is the Word of God!"

—Iain Murray, 1996 Bethlehem Conference
for Pastors (January 29, 1996)

I was in my late teens when I heard a recording of Iain Murray speaking the words above. To my knowledge, I had never heard of "the Princeton men" before. A few years later I came across David Calhoun's masterful two-volume history of Princeton Seminary. Calhoun's soul-stirring history of "Old Princeton" opened up a whole new world of men and books that I have come to deeply appreciate. I have come to admire the Princeton theologians for a number of reasons—for their robust defense of the authority and

inerrancy of Scripture, their rich biblical expositions and theological articulation rooted in the very best of Protestant tradition, their emphasis on warmhearted spirituality, their concern for genuine conversion, their love for the church, their zeal for missions, and their social and political concerns for the poor and for the nation. In addition, their vision and priorities in theological education provide a model that is needed for theological education today.

Sadly the theologians of Old Princeton are not as widely appreciated as they once were. While a recent renewal of interest in Jonathan Edwards has occurred, no similar renaissance has yet taken place regarding the Princeton theologians. Things may be changing, however. The year 2012 not only marked the bicentennial of Princeton Seminary's founding, it also brought forth the reprinting of many shorter writings of the Princeton theologians under the editorship of Jim Garretson. The previous year saw the release of two substantial biographies of Charles Hodge—the first produced since the nineteenth century. An Old Princeton Study Group under the auspices of the Evangelical Theological Society Old Princeton Study Group took shape as well in 2011 and has invited evangelical scholars to consider further studies of the Princeton theologians afresh. The year before that saw the publication of Paul Helseth's *"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind*, which called for a reassessment of the philosophical concerns surrounding Old Princeton. Perhaps a small renaissance is indeed under way. My hope is that this book will contribute to such a renaissance and spark further interest in the Princeton theologians and their writings.

I am all too aware of the many important individuals and books I have had to leave out. Hopefully the readers of this book will not be content with the small sampling provided here and will make deeper explorations on their own. Since I have not sought to engage in an overly critical analysis of the Princeton theologians, some may view this book as a piece of sugar-coated hagiography. I admit that the Princeton theologians had their faults—some of them significant—but I have not attempted to stand above them in a posture of dispassionate critical analysis and point these things out. I love the Princeton theologians, and I have written out of the conviction that we in the church need heroes and models like them from whom we can learn and by whom we can be inspired. Part of the historian's task is to

faithfully hold up the true and the good and the beautiful and to proclaim it to be such—to be a moral philosopher in the best sense of the word. That which is truly noble and heroic should be valued and declared as such, even when faults and inconsistencies are acknowledged (see Hebrews 11).

If this is your first introduction to Princeton theologians, I am honored to guide you into their world. Nothing would delight me more than for you to quickly leave this book behind and exchange it for reading the Princeton theologians themselves. A rich feast awaits you if you do.

THE FOUNDING OF PRINCETON SEMINARY

Few institutions have probably been more useful, in any land or in any age, than the Theological Seminary at Princeton.

—Cortlandt Van Rensselaer (c. 1844)

The agency of the Log College in the establishing of our Presbytery, and indeed of the Church, has never been properly appreciated.

—Thomas Murphy (1889)

In the winter of 1742, in the midst of the Great Awakening, David Brainerd was expelled from Yale. This personal setback for Brainerd formed part of a chain of events which eventually brought Princeton Seminary into being. While “The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America at Princeton, New Jersey”—or Princeton Theological Seminary as it is now known—was not established until 1812, the events that brought it about were set in motion many years before, with godly men like Brainerd from both sides of the Atlantic having a part in its eventual formation. Once established, “Old Princeton” (the seminary as it existed from its beginning in 1812 to its reorganization in 1929) became a vibrant center for

theological education and spiritual cultivation. It operated within the historic, confessional stream of Protestantism and Reformed orthodoxy, and it supplied thousands of churches in America with theologically trained and spiritually devout pastors. As the religious landscape in America fragmented into differing denominations and sects in the nineteenth century, Old Princeton stood like a bulwark for biblical fidelity, revival piety, evangelical activism, and the confessional Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646).

Being established and run by great men, Old Princeton produced great men. James Petigru Boyce, a Baptist, studied at Princeton Seminary for two years before becoming the founding professor of theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1859, first in Greenville, South Carolina, and later in Louisville, Kentucky. Basil Manly Jr., another prominent Baptist leader, graduated from the seminary in 1847. Charles Colcock Jones, the famous slave evangelist of Georgia, studied at Princeton from 1829 to 1830 before embarking on his tireless work of evangelism among Southern slaves. John Bailey Adger graduated from the seminary in 1833 and went on to become a missionary to Armenia and one of the leading figures in the Southern Presbyterian Church. The prolific pastor-theologian William Swan Plumer attended Princeton, as did biographer extraordinaire William Buel Sprague. Ashbel Green Simonton graduated from Princeton in 1859 before enjoying great success as a pioneer Protestant missionary in Brazil. Before becoming a chaplain at West Point and a respected Episcopal bishop, Charles P. McIlvaine graduated from Princeton in 1820, as did Samuel Simon Schmucker, later a renowned Lutheran theologian and educator in antebellum America. In addition to these, Cortlandt Van Rensselaar noted in 1844 that “some of the most useful ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church received their instructions at Princeton [Seminary],” listing Samuel Blanchard How, Thomas Edward Vermilye, George Washington Bethune, and others as examples. In countless ways such as these, Old Princeton shaped the development of both American and global Christianity far beyond the bounds of its espoused Presbyterianism.

At the seminary's centennial celebration in 1912, E. Y. Mullins noted the widespread impact Princeton Seminary had made on other centers of theological learning in its first one hundred years by stating:

As Mt. Blanc enriches the valleys so Princeton Seminary has stood like Mt. Blanc among the seminaries of this country. In a thousand ways, you have not known, she has sent down her largess of blessing into the valleys, and we rejoice in what she has done. And the reason Mt. Blanc can thus bless the valleys is because she lifts her head to the very skies where, from the inexhaustible heavens themselves, she draws her supply, and so Princeton has drawn her supplies from the eternal sources.

It is hard to overstate the impact of Old Princeton on the development of Christianity in America. While some have continued to draw theological guidance and spiritual encouragement from Old Princeton, the men of Old Princeton and their writings are not as widely known as they should be. How this seminary came to be is a worthy story in and of itself—one which has its roots in the Great Awakening and in the humble beginnings of Presbyterian higher education in colonial America.

William Tennent and the Log College

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was almost universally expected that clergymen would be credentialed by an institution of higher learning. Given this need, the founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony wasted no time in starting a university for the training of its clergymen. In 1636 they established Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, just sixteen years after the *Mayflower* landed at Plymouth. This was the first institution of higher learning in America. Harvard very quickly departed from its original Puritan and Calvinistic roots, and in 1701 a more conservative group of Congregationalists started Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. The Anglicans had started the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1693, but this was not an attractive option for dissenting (non-Anglican) Protestants. For non-Anglicans in colonial America wanting to become clergymen before 1746, there

were only three main options for receiving the expected education: Harvard, Yale, or Europe.

Many clergymen came to the colonies from Europe having already received their education. One such individual was William Tennent. Tennent, who was born in 1673, served as a chaplain in northern Ireland before immigrating to the American colonies. He arrived in Pennsylvania with his wife and five children and was admitted into the Presbyterian Church in 1718. At the time of Tennent's arrival, the Presbyterian Church in America had only recently been established. The first presbytery in America, made up almost entirely of Scottish or Irish immigrants, was formed in Philadelphia in 1706—just twelve years before Tennent became a part of it. While formally orthodox in their theology and thoroughly committed to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Presbyterians of the early 1700s had lapsed into a spiritually cold and lifeless state, not unlike other Protestant groups at that time in the English-speaking world. Spiritual vitality was at a low ebb, and a complaisant coldness had replaced the fervent spirit which had defined the Presbyterians and Congregationalists for much of the seventeenth century.

William Tennent stood out from his contemporaries as a man of great spiritual zeal. Although highly-educated, perfectly fluent in Latin, and well-read in theology, Tennent believed that fervent piety was as important a ministerial qualification as a good education. In 1726, adjacent to his manse in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, not far from the Neshaminy Creek, Tennent built a simple building made of logs to serve as an informal school and seminary for his four boys and others. Located some twenty miles north of Philadelphia, this structure became known derisively as “the College” or “the Log College.” While other clergymen looked down upon his school, Tennent labored away at it faithfully all the while engaged in his normal pastoral ministry, giving his students a general and theological education infused with his own emphasis on fervent piety and genuine religious experience.

Tennent's concern for authentic spirituality and genuine conversion united him with others in his day who were zealously proclaiming the need for conversion, especially George Whitefield. Tennent had heard of the young evangelist before Whitefield arrived in Philadelphia

in 1739, and he rode close to thirty miles on horseback to meet Whitefield in person. Almost two weeks after their first meeting, Whitefield accompanied the elder Tennent to his home, where Whitefield preached to a crowd of roughly three thousand people. Whitefield also saw Tennent's humble seminary firsthand, and recorded his impressions of "the College" in his famed *Journal*, stating:

The place wherein the young men study now is, in contempt, called *the College*. It is a log-house, about twenty feet long, and near as many broad; and to me it seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets, for their habitations were mean. . . . From this despised place, seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have lately been sent forth; more are almost ready to be sent, and the foundation is now laying for the instruction of many others. The devil will certainly rage against them; but the work, I am persuaded, is of God, and will not come to nought. Carnal ministers oppose them strongly; and, because people, when awakened by Mr. Tennent, or his brethren, see through them, and therefore leave their ministry, the poor gentlemen are loaded with contempt, and looked upon as persons who turn the world upside-down.

Even though they had just met, Whitefield quickly recognized how out of step Tennent's ministry was with the prevailing religious climate. While the Log College was nothing impressive to look at, Whitefield realized that Tennent shared the same evangelical spirit as those leading the trans-Atlantic awakening. Whitefield noted of Tennent that:

He is a great friend of Mr. [Ebenezer] Erskine, of Scotland; and as far as I can learn, both he and his sons are secretly despised by the generality of the Synod, as Mr. Erskine and his friends are hated by the judicatories of Edinburgh, and as the Methodist preachers (as they are called) are by their brethren in England.

It was not long before the animosity sensed by Whitefield came out into the open. Within a few short years, the four to five "Log College men" that made up the Presbytery of New Brunswick (New Jersey) came into open conflict with the body of fifty or so clergymen that

made up the Presbyterian Synod. The immediate cause of the conflict was the licensure of John Rowland, a student of the Log College, but the central issues that divided the two sides were much deeper. At issue was the adequacy of a “Log College” type of education for ordained ministry, along with the appropriateness of the preaching itinerancies of Log College revival preachers like Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair. The success of Whitefield’s 1739–40 preaching tour through the Middle Colonies crystallized the differences between the two sides, with the “Old Side” Presbyterians viewing the itinerant preaching of Whitefield as a serious assault on Presbyterian propriety, and the “New Side” Presbyterians welcoming it as a divine blessing. The two sides separated in 1741, with the larger presbyteries of New York and New Castle (Delaware) joining with the Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1745 to form the Synod of New York, a rival to the Old Side Synod of Philadelphia.

Although the spiritual coldness of some Old Side Presbyterians was certainly deplorable, Tennent and his sons were somewhat at fault for unduly provoking the separation between the two sides. In their zeal to promote the new birth and genuine piety among Presbyterian churches, they were guilty of giving undue offense to those who were sincerely evangelical but simply took a more cautious approach to the Awakening. After accompanying Whitefield on his initial tour through the middle colonies, Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent’s oldest son, began an itinerant ministry of his own that generated a fair amount of controversy in and of itself. Going far outside the bounds of his New Brunswick Presbytery, Tennent preached a number of sermons denouncing the local Presbyterian clergymen and calling congregants to leave the churches whose clergy did not exhibit the kind of fervent piety that the Log College men felt was essential. The lack of charity in Gilbert Tennent’s fiery sermon entitled “The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry” was singled out by Charles Hodge as being “one of the principle causes” of the division between the Old Side and New Side. Archibald Alexander would also fault the New Side for showing “harshness, censoriousness, and bitterness” toward those on the Old Side.

The Old Side Presbyterians eventually reunited with the New Side Presbyterians in 1758, but only after the New Side had significantly

outgrown its Old Side counterpart. In the terms of reunion, the New Side's approval of the Great Awakening and revival spirituality was affirmed. This reunion came about, however, only after a new tone of conciliation was adopted by the New Side, and by Gilbert Tennent in particular.

William Tennent died in 1746, but his and the New Side's perspective on the importance of religious experience eventually shaped the course of the whole Presbyterian denomination. While only twenty or so individuals were trained at Tennent's Log College, almost all of these became significant preachers and leaders in the next generation of the Presbyterian Church. According to Archibald Alexander, by these men "a new spirit was infused into the Presbyterian body" and the denomination's "evangelical views" were established.

With its emphasis on spiritual experience and intellectual cultivation, the Log College would serve as a model for ministerial education at Old Princeton. It was kept in hallowed memory by many of the first faculty members of Princeton Seminary. When the logs of the Log College had all but rotted away, a local Presbyterian minister rescued a piece of wood sufficient to make into a walking stick, which he presented to Samuel Miller, Princeton Seminary's second professor. Archibald Alexander, the first professor at Princeton, was an ardent admirer of the men who were trained at the Log College and stated of them:

One advantage which they possessed who were educated in the Log College was, that the spirit of piety seems to have been nourished in that institution with assiduous care. All those, as far as we can learn, who proceeded from this school were men of sound orthodoxy, evangelical spirit, glowing zeal and in labors very abundant. They had the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and, without the advantages which many others enjoyed, they became burning and shining lights. . . . I cannot express how much the Presbyterian Church in these United States is indebted to the labors of this very corps, who studied successfully the sacred oracles in the Log College, or, more probably, under the beautiful groves which shaded the banks of the Neshaminy. There they studied, and there they prayed, and there they were taught of God.

When the General Assembly was debating in 1811 where the new Presbyterian seminary should be located, there were not a few who

argued that it should be built in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on the very spot of Tennent's Log College.

Jonathan Dickinson and the College of New Jersey

After the aging William Tennent ceased to run his Log College in the early 1740s, New Side Presbyterians were left without an educational institution to rally around. Some of Tennent's students had formed academies modeled after the Log College, including the Fagg's Manor academy in Pennsylvania (founded by Samuel Blair) and the Nottingham academy in Virginia (founded by Samuel Finley). One of Samuel Blair's students, Robert Smith, established another academy in Pequea, Pennsylvania. All of these academies carried forward the dual New Side emphasis on education and piety, but they did not give their students educational credentials that were universally recognized. Many New Side Presbyterians in the New York and New Castle presbyteries continued to view Yale University as a suitable place for ministerial education, but this all changed in 1742, when David Brainerd was expelled from Yale.

As a student at Yale in his early twenties, David Brainerd's life had been touched by a spiritual awakening which spread across the campus in 1740. As the revival lingered, many of those genuinely affected become over-zealous and proud. Even young Brainerd slipped into an episode of indiscretion, one which would have significant consequences. During his third year at college, Brainerd was conversing privately with a handful of friends about spiritual matters. When asked by one of his friends what he thought of a Mr. Whittelsey, one of his tutors, Brainerd replied: "He has not more grace than this chair." As Brainerd uttered this reply, another student happened to pass by outside the room and overheard his remark. Brainerd's words were gossiped around town, and his friends were eventually made to confess of Brainerd's statement. Further gossip ensued, and the authorities at Yale attempted to force Brainerd to give a public apology. Feeling publicly wronged already for an offhand comment made in private, Brainerd refused. For not complying, he was expelled.

Even though disgraced in this manner, Brainerd was soon appointed by a Presbyterian Mission Society as a missionary to Native Americans. Numerous high profile ministers and alumni of Yale—including

Jonathan Edwards and Aaron Burr Sr.—appealed to Yale on Brainerd’s behalf, but the rector, Thomas Clap, remained unmoved. Clap was actively trying to suppress the spread of pro-revival fervor, and Brainerd’s punishment was allowed to stand no doubt as an example to others. Brainerd would likely have graduated at the top of his class, but instead, he never graduated at all.

FIG. 1.1

Events Leading Up to the Founding of Princeton Seminary

1726	William Tennent established the “Log College” in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania.
1730s–40s	The Great Awakening.
1739–40	George Whitefield first toured New England and the Middle Colonies, welcomed by William Tennent, Gilbert Tennent, Jonathan Dickinson, Jonathan Edwards, and others.
1741	American Presbyterians split into New Side and Old Side factions.
1742	David Brainerd expelled from Yale.
1746	Jonathan Dickinson established the College of New Jersey in Elizabethtown, New Jersey.
1747	The College of New Jersey moved to Newark, New Jersey, and was placed under the leadership of Aaron Burr Sr.
1756	The College of New Jersey (renamed Princeton University in 1896) relocated to Princeton, New Jersey.
1758	Old Side and New Side Presbyterians reunited.
1776–83	The American Revolution.
1810	Presbyterian General Assembly acted to establish a seminary.
1811	Presbyterian General Assembly ratified Ashbel Green’s “Plan of a Theological Seminary.”
1812	The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America at Princeton, New Jersey (i.e., Princeton Theological Seminary) was established.

Another close friend of Brainerd who interceded on his behalf was Jonathan Dickinson. Dickinson, himself a Yale graduate, had been an intellectual force in the Presbyterian church since 1717. A theological stalwart in colonial America, perhaps second only to Jonathan Edwards, Dickinson was a New Side Presbyterian who supported the Great Awakening with critical discernment and a keen mind. With many of his revival writings predating those of Edwards, Dickinson defended the supernatural origin of the revival while criticizing the fanaticism and divisiveness spawned by its excesses. Dickinson's suitability for such writings grew out of his own personal dealings with individual souls during what would become an almost forty-year pastorate in Elizabethtown, New Jersey.

Brainerd's expulsion from Yale impressed upon Dickinson and other New Side Presbyterians how unsuitable Yale had become for pro-revival candidates for the ministry. Given the state of Yale, Dickinson was encouraged to start a new institution of higher learning in the state of New Jersey, one which would carry forward the New Side emphases on religious experience and revival spirituality. This school, now Princeton University, would be known for many years as the College of New Jersey. The first of its kind between Connecticut and Virginia, it would likely never have been started had Yale looked more favorably on the Great Awakening and less sternly on David Brainerd. Aaron Burr Sr. of Newark, the college's second president, was certainly of this opinion, stating: "If it had not been for the treatment received by Mr. Brainerd at Yale, New Jersey college would never have been erected."

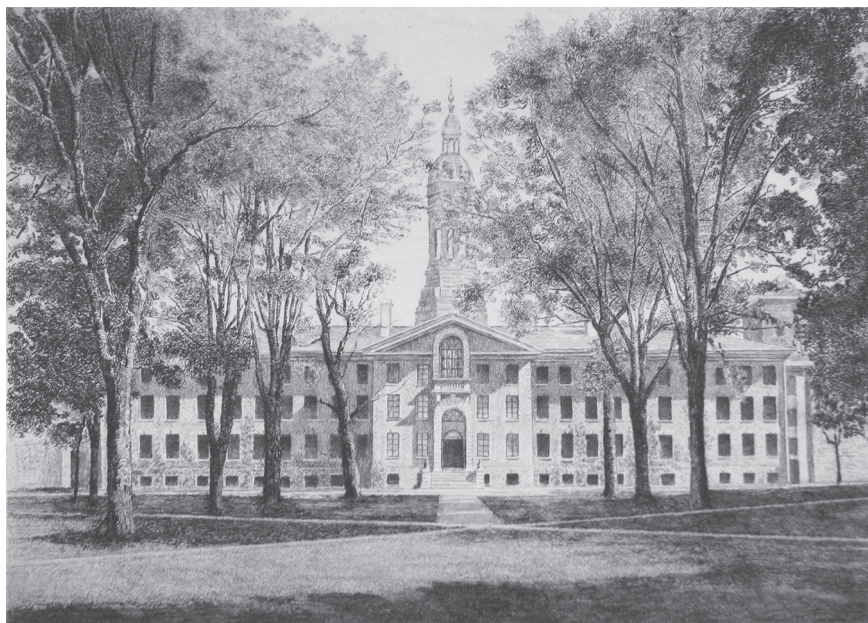
Working independently of a synod or presbytery, Dickinson, Burr, and other New Side clergymen and laymen successfully obtained a charter for the establishment of the College of New Jersey in 1746. This charter was renewed and expanded in 1748 under the evangelical governor of New Jersey, Jonathan Belcher. Belcher was a lover of learning, a friend and patron of Whitefield, and a man of fervent piety. While most of the seven men named on the original charter were New Side Presbyterians who had graduated from Yale, the five additional trustees added shortly thereafter were all men who were closely connected with the Log College: Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent Jr., Samuel Blair, Samuel Finely, and Richard Treat. Given

this connection, Archibald Alexander, for one, was of the opinion that the Log College was “the germ from which proceeded the College of New Jersey.” Writing in his laudatory *Biographical Sketches of the Founder and Principal Alumni of the Log College*, Alexander stated:

Besides Dickinson and Burr, who were graduates of Yale College, the active friends and founders of Nassau Hall [i.e., the College of New Jersey] were the Tennents, Blairs, Finley, [Robert] Smith, [John] Rogers, [Samuel] Davies, and others who had received their education in the Log College, or in schools instituted by those who had been instructed there.

Given the numerous Log College men who were involved with the fledgling college from its very beginning, the College of New Jersey was established to carry forward the vision for theological education and piety that had flourished previously at Tennent’s Log College.

The trustees of the College of New Jersey appointed Dickinson to be its first president, and the first class of students began their studies in Dickinson’s home in Elizabethtown in 1747. Dickinson’s tenure as



1.2 Nassau Hall. Built in 1756 as the first building in Princeton for the College of New Jersey.

president was short-lived, as he died only a few months after classes formally began. The students under Dickinson were moved to the home of Aaron Burr, and Burr was appointed the next president of the college as well. Burr had been a friend of Whitefield, Dickinson, and the Tennents, and he tirelessly labored as president to carry forward the original vision for the school, namely that “religion and learning should be unitedly cultivated.” In 1756, some nine years later, Burr relocated the new college and its seventy students from Newark to what would become known as Nassau Hall, the first building constructed for the college’s permanent location in Princeton, New Jersey.

Aaron Burr died only a few months after the move to Princeton. His death, like Dickinson’s, would leave the fledgling college bereft of a president at a crucial time. While Burr’s young son, Aaron Burr Jr., would go on to become the third vice president of the United States, he would not carry his father’s evangelical ideals and piety into public life. The trustees of the college secured someone who could carry forward Burr and Dickinson’s vision for the college when they looked outside their Presbyterian circles to another member of Burr’s family: Burr’s father-in-law, Jonathan Edwards.

Edwards and the Decade After

While not inclined to leave his writing projects and pastorate in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Jonathan Edwards bowed to what he felt was his duty and accepted the call of the trustees to be the College of New Jersey’s next president. Though a Congregationalist, Edwards had great affinity for the New Side Presbyterians in America and many Presbyterians in Scotland as well. He very quickly found delight in accepting what he had first embraced out of duty. Edwards’s time as president was cut off unexpectedly, though, when he died in 1758, less than three months after relocating to Princeton. Edwards would be buried in the college president’s plot of the Princeton Cemetery next to Burr, in the same cemetery where the Alexanders, Hodges, Miller, and Warfield would later be buried as well. It is fitting that Edwards the Congregationalist is buried beside the great Presbyterians of Old Princeton, with whom he held so many things in common.

In the same year of Edwards's death, the Old Side and New Side Presbyterians joined together. For the next ten years the presidencies of the College of New Jersey fell to those who had been prominent New Side Presbyterians, many of whom had been personally connected with Tennent's Log College.

Jacob Green was selected to serve as an interim president immediately after Edwards's death. Green was the son-in-law of John Pierson, one of Jonathan Dickinson's closest friends. Both Green and Pierson were original trustees of the College of New Jersey, and both had been close friends of Aaron Burr as well. The revival preaching of Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent had left a deep impact on Green, and he served as acting president of the college while concurrently serving what would be a forty-five year pastorate in Hanover, New Jersey. Green's interim presidency, while short-lived, provided stability and continuity with the past while the trustees searched for a more permanent successor to Edwards.

Samuel Davies was welcomed by the trustees as president in 1759. Davies was a popular and powerful preacher; in fact, Martyn Lloyd-Jones once referred to Davies as "the most eloquent preacher America has ever produced." Davies had been educated at Samuel Blair's academy in Fagg's Manor, Pennsylvania, a school which Blair modeled after his own *alma mater*, the Log College. Through his evangelistic and pastoral work in Virginia, he had also established his reputation as one of the founding fathers of Southern Presbyterianism. Davies had been an enthusiastic supporter of the college since its beginning, and in 1753 had accompanied Gilbert Tennent on a successful fundraising trip to Great Britain and Ireland on behalf of the college. Although Davies's arrival at Princeton looked promising for the school, he too died shortly after moving to Princeton, presiding as president for only eighteen months.

Samuel Finley was elected president next in 1761. A graduate of the Log College and one of the original trustees of the College of New Jersey, Finley was noted by one as being "a very accurate scholar and a very great and good man." While serving as a pastor for seventeen years in Nottingham, Maryland, Finley ran an academy out of his home, and many of Finley's students were some of the best and brightest scholars of their day. In 1763 Finley was

awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Glasgow, making him one of the first Americans to receive this distinction from abroad. After serving the school as president through five years of expansive growth, Finley died in 1766 and was buried next to his friend Gilbert Tennent in Philadelphia.

For a brief period after Finley's death, John Blair served as acting president of the college. Like his brother Samuel, John was a graduate of Tennent's Log College. Before his appointment at Princeton, he had for ten years advanced the pastoral and educational work of his brother at Fagg's Manor. Blair had also served briefly as a professor of divinity at the college prior to taking over as acting president.

FIG. 1.3

**Early Presidents (and Interim Presidents) of the College of New Jersey
(Princeton University)**

Jonathan Dickinson	1747
Aaron Burr Sr.	1748–57
Jonathan Edwards	1758
(Jacob Green)	1758–59
Samuel Davies	1759–61
Samuel Finley	1761–66
(John Blair)	1767–68
John Witherspoon	1768–94
Samuel Stanhope Smith	1795–1812
Ashbel Green	1812–22
(Philip Lindsley)	1822–23
James Carnahan	1823–54
John Maclean Jr.	1854–68
James McCosh	1868–88
Francis L. Patton	1888–1902
Woodrow Wilson	1902–10

In the decade after Jonathan Edwards's death, all of these men carried forward the New Side Presbyterian emphasis on fervent piety and religious experience. Each one who served as president was intimately connected with the Tennents and the Log College. Heads and hearts were nurtured together at the College of New Jersey in these years, with classical instruction coming from accomplished pastors who were first of all devout men of God.

The Witherspoon Revolution

In 1767, the trustees of the College of New Jersey called upon Samuel Finley's nephew and former student, Benjamin Rush, to help persuade John Witherspoon of Paisley, Scotland, to become the college's next president. Witherspoon's writings and reputation as an evangelical leader in the Church of Scotland made him the chief candidate on their list, and it was hoped that Witherspoon might help unite the newly rejoined branches of the Presbyterian church. Rush, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, was at that time studying medicine in Edinburgh. After many months of personal lobbying from both Rush and Richard Stockton, an alumnus and influential trustee of the college, Witherspoon accepted the offer and relocated to Princeton in 1768.

Without anyone realizing it at the time, Witherspoon's immigration to New Jersey would prove significant beyond the affairs of the church and college. Witherspoon, Rush, and Stockton would all go on to become signers of the Declaration of Independence, as would Joseph Hewes, another graduate of the college. Although Jacob Green had been an early and earnest proponent of American independence, it was John Witherspoon who most significantly connected the College of New Jersey to American political life and the cause of American independence. Witherspoon's impact on the emerging nation was immense. James Madison, the fourth president of the United States and "Father of the Constitution," studied under Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey from 1769 to 1771. Many other American statesmen were similarly influenced by Witherspoon. While Elias Boudinot, an influential trustee of the college from 1772 to 1821, questioned whether or not a minister such as Witherspoon should be

so involved in political matters, Boudinot himself would follow suit, serving briefly as president of the Continental Congress and signing the Treaty of Paris, which brought the Revolutionary War to an end.

Immediately upon his arrival at Princeton, Witherspoon started a revolution of his very own right at the college, raising its academic standards and greatly expanding the scope of the college's curriculum. According to Samuel Miller,

He produced an important revolution in the system of education. . . . He extended the study of mathematical science, and introduced into the course of instruction on natural philosophy, many improvements. . . . He placed the plan of instruction in moral philosophy on a new and improved basis, and was, it is believed, the first man who taught in America the substance of those doctrines of the philosophy of the human mind. . . . Under his presidency more attention began to be paid than before to the principles of taste and composition, and to the study of elegant literature.

Witherspoon was the first president of the college who was not personally connected with the New Side Presbyterianism, and with Witherspoon the college moved away from the original priorities of the New Side. His new emphasis on political, moral, and natural philosophy left a deep mark on the college. Witherspoon was to serve a full twenty-six years as president of the college—longer than all of the previous presidents combined, and his impact upon the school was immense. In the words of Mark Noll, "Witherspoon altered the course of the college and defined its direction for at least the next century."

This new educational trajectory set by Witherspoon, with its emphasis on the sciences and secular branches of learning, was carried forward by his son-in-law, Samuel Stanhope Smith. Smith, an accomplished scholar in his own right, had graduated from Princeton in 1769. In 1775 he became the founder and first president of the Hampden-Sydney College in Prince Edward County, Virginia. After a successful four years in Virginia, Smith was called back to Princeton to assist Witherspoon, who was deeply involved in the political affairs of the emerging nation. Smith was named vice president of the college in 1786 and became president upon Witherspoon's death in 1794.

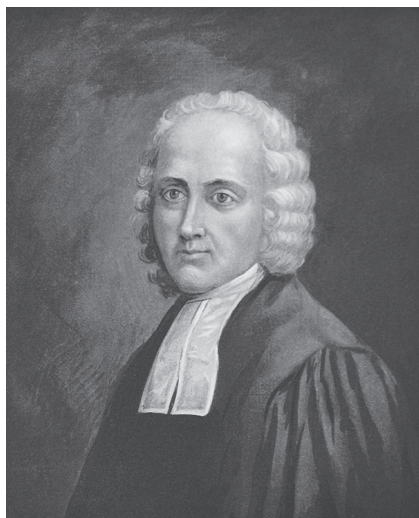
Smith, even more than Witherspoon, emphasized the emerging sciences and was privately more enthralled with philosophical pursuits than with his inherited tradition of evangelical orthodoxy.

Samuel Stanhope Smith's presidency at the College of New Jersey was a tumultuous one. Although Smith communicated an air of gentility and propriety, the moral climate of the school declined rapidly under his leadership, with persistent student uprisings beginning around the turn of the century. An apparent act of arson devastated and gutted Nassau Hall in 1802. In 1807 the student uprisings culminated in a full-blown student revolt. Gradually, the trustees began to grow more and more nervous about Smith's theology and ability to lead the school in the right direction. With the trustees stepping in to take more direct oversight over the college, Smith resigned in 1812. The curricular revolution started by Witherspoon and carried out by Smith had left the college far afield from its original purpose of training ministers and cultivating piety alongside of a traditional education.

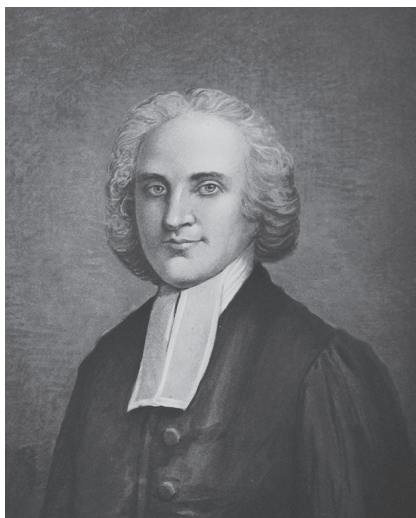
Almost immediately after Smith's resignation, Ashbel Green was unanimously elected as president of the College of New Jersey. Green had been an active trustee of the college since 1790. He had also studied at Princeton under John Witherspoon, and had been the valedictorian of the class of 1783. From 1787 to 1812, Green was the foremost preacher in Philadelphia. He also served in Philadelphia as chaplain to Congress from 1792 to 1800, and in this role frequently dined with President Washington. The son of Jacob Green, Ashbel Green was known for his fervent and earnest piety. Even though he was a highly educated member of the American Philosophical Society and the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, Green believed that a renewed emphasis on piety and religious devotion was what was needed to rescue education at Princeton from what it had become under Smith. He would write, "It is not the understanding, but the heart, which needs to be addressed. . . . It is not argument, but piety which is requisite to exterminate [errant views]."

While Smith had sought to carry forward Witherspoon's appreciation for philosophy and the sciences, Green sought more to carry forward Witherspoon's Calvinistic orthodoxy and evangelical piety.

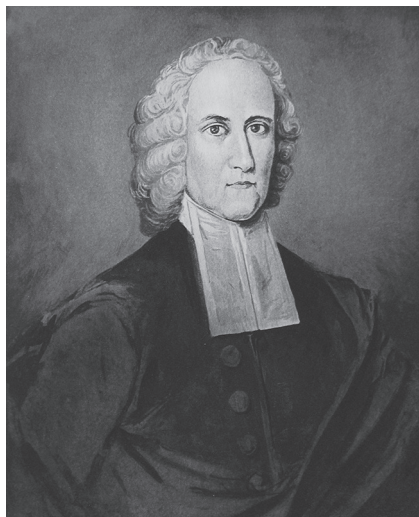
EARLY PRESIDENTS OF



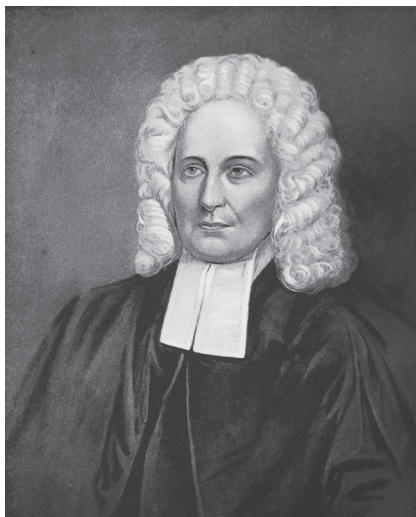
1.4 Jonathan Dickinson (1688–1747).



1.5 Aaron Burr (1716–57).

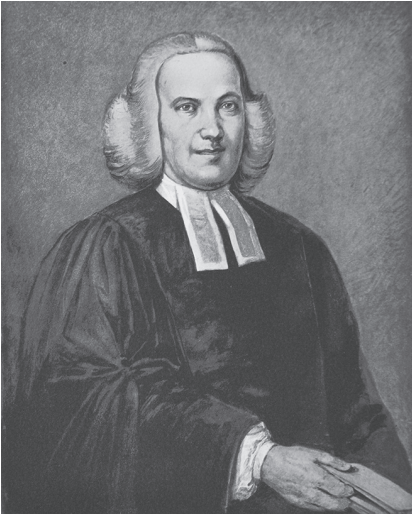


1.6 Jonathan Edwards (1703–58).

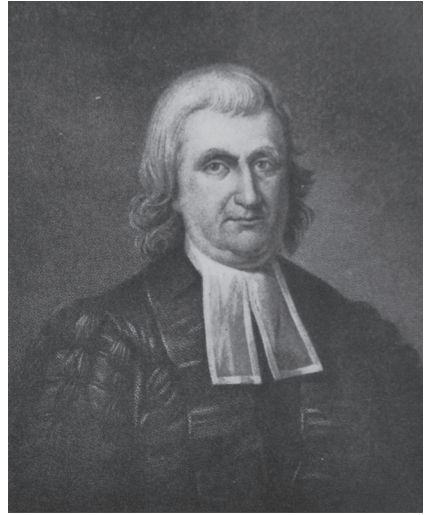


1.7 Samuel Davies (1723–61).

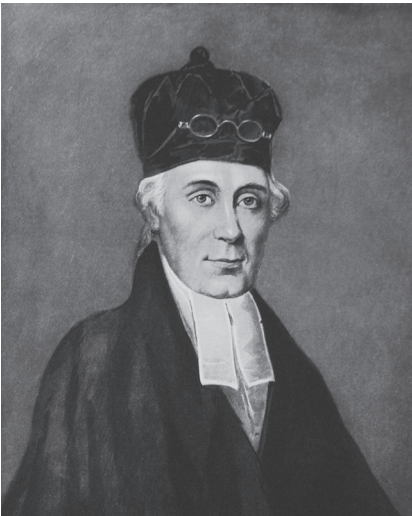
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



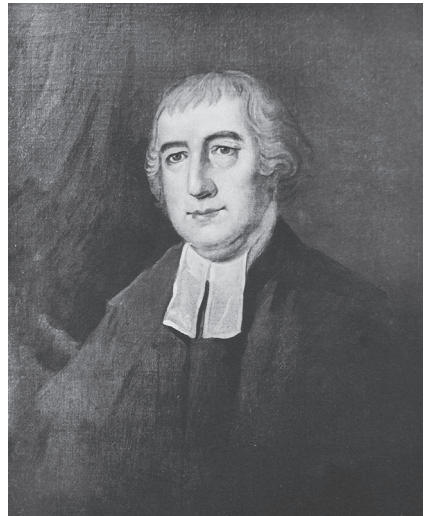
1.8 Samuel Finley (1715–66).



1.9 John Witherspoon (1723–94).



1.10 Samuel Stanhope Smith (1751–1819).



1.11 Ashbel Green (1762–1848).

Whereas Smith looked optimistically to new developments in philosophy and science, Green stressed traditional evangelical thought and conservative religious orthodoxy. In the person of Ashbel Green, the College of New Jersey, at least temporarily, found someone who could bring the college closer to its original ideals.

The Founding of Princeton Seminary

A few years into Samuel Stanhope Smith's presidency, it became increasingly clear to many trustees of the College of New Jersey, especially Ashbel Green, that the college was failing to carry out its original vision—a vision that “religion and learning should be unitedly cultivated.” From its earliest days, a central purpose of the college had been to provide competent ministers for the churches, as Jonathan Dickinson stated in 1747: “Our aim in the undertaking [of establishing a college] is to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom; and to raise up qualified persons for the sacred service to supply . . . qualified candidates for the ministry.” Around half of the college's graduates in its first twenty years did in fact become ministers, but in the years just after the American Revolution (1784 to 1812), fewer than 15 percent of those who graduated from the college entered the ministry. This meager output contributed to what became a severe shortage of ministers. In 1810 the Presbyterian General Assembly would report “near four hundred vacant congregations within our bounds.”

For trustees like Green, a reformation of the college, albeit desirable, was not the most promising way to meet the needs of the Presbyterian churches. While continuing to work at changing the direction Smith had set for the college, Ashbel Green came to view the intellectual and spiritual climate of the school as too injurious to train pious and orthodox men for the ministry. In the early 1800s, he began contemplating the creation of a separate Presbyterian seminary, all the while serving as a trustee of the college. Green was encouraged along these lines by Samuel Miller, a fellow trustee who shared his concern. Miller implored Green with these words in an offhand letter written in 1805:

We have, if I do not mistake, a melancholy prospect, indeed, with respect to a supply of ministers to our churches. Cannot the General Assembly,

at their next sessions, commence some plan of operation for supplying this deficiency? . . . It appears to me, that we ought, forthwith, either to establish a new theological school, in some central part of our bounds; or direct more of our attention to extend the plan and increase the energy of the Princeton establishment. On the latter part of the alternative many doubts occur to me; and, with respect to the former, I know difficulties of the most formidable kind will arise. I can think of no person in the United States, who has so good information of the state of the Presbyterian Church as yourself, or who is so capable of devising and putting in motion the plan best adapted to our situation. I hope, therefore, you will devote your leisure time . . . to the consideration of the subject, and the preparation of some plan to be acted upon by them.

Green responded to Miller and in 1805 formally urged the Presbyterian General Assembly to focus its attention on the urgent need to train up more ministers. In the following years, Green continued to correspond with Miller, Edward Dorr Griffin, and others about potential plans for a Presbyterian seminary.

In 1808, the idea of a seminary received fresh impetus from a rousing speech made by Archibald Alexander at the General Assembly. In this speech Alexander stated:

The deficiency of preachers is great. Our vacancies are numerous, and often continue for years unsupplied. . . . This state of affairs calls loudly for your attention. . . . In my opinion, we shall not have a regular and sufficient supply of well-qualified ministers of the Gospel, until every Presbytery, or at least every Synod, shall have under its direction a seminary established for the single purpose of educating youth for the ministry, in which the course of education from its commencement shall be directed to this object; for it is much to be doubted whether the system of education pursued in our colleges and universities is the best adapted to prepare a young man for the work of the ministry. The great extension of the physical sciences, and the taste and fashion of the age, have given such a shape and direction to the academical course, that I confess, it appears to me to be little adapted to introduce a youth to the study of the sacred Scriptures.

Encouraged by Alexander's remarks, Ashbel Green led the Presbytery of Philadelphia to formally propose the establishment of a

seminary at the 1809 General Assembly. Some debate ensued as to whether or not there should be one seminary, a separate seminary for each of the Northern and Southern regions, or a seminary for each of the four Synods, but Samuel Miller was able to convince the 1810 General Assembly that the option of establishing a single, unifying seminary was the best option and the one that the majority preferred. The 1810 General Assembly also made its hopes for the new seminary clear by adopting this statement:

That, as filling the Church with a learned and able ministry without a corresponding portion of real piety, would be a curse to the world and an offence to God and his people, so the General Assembly think it their duty to state, that in establishing a seminary for training

FIG. 1.12

From Ashbel Green's *Plan of the Theological Seminary* (1811)

It ought to be considered as an object of primary importance by every student in the Seminary, to be careful and vigilant not to lose that inward sense of the power of godliness which he may have attained; but, on the contrary, to grow continually in a spirit of enlightened devotion and fervent piety; deeply impressed with the recollection that without this, all his other acquisitions will be comparatively of little worth, either to himself, or to the Church of which he is to be a minister. . . .

It is expected that every student in the Theological Seminary will spend a portion of time every morning and evening in devout meditation, and self-recollection and examination; in reading the holy Scriptures, solely with a view to a personal and practical application of the passage read, to his own heart, character, and circumstances; and in humble fervant prayer and praise to God in secret.

The whole of every Lord's Day is to be devoted to devotional exercises, either of a social or secret kind. Intellectual pursuits, not immediately connected with devotion or the religion of the heart, are on that day to be forborne. The books to be read are to be of a practical nature. The conversations had with each other are to be chiefly on religious subjects. Associations for prayer and praise, and for religious conference, calculated to promote a growth in grace, are also proper for this day; subject to such regulations as the professors and directors may see proper to pre-

up ministers, it is their earnest desire to guard as far as possible against so great an evil. And they do hereby solemnly pledge themselves to the churches under their care, that in forming and carrying into execution the plan of the proposed seminary, it will be their endeavour to make it, under the blessing of God, a nursery of vital piety as well as of sound theological learning, and to train up persons for the ministry who shall be lovers as well as defenders of the truth as it is in Jesus, friends of revivals of religion, and a blessing to the Church of God.

In addition to approving the establishment of a seminary to be “a nursery of vital piety as well as of sound theological learning,” the 1810 General Assembly selected a committee to draft the plan for this new seminary, with Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller, Archibald Alexander,

scribe. It is wished and recommended, that each student should ordinarily set apart one day in a month for special prayer and self-examination in secret, and also that he should, on suitable occasions, attend to the duty of fasting. . . .

If any student shall exhibit, in his general deportment, a levity or indifference in regard to practical religion, though it do not amount to any overt act of irreligion or immorality, it shall be the duty of the professor who may observe it, to admonish him tenderly and faithfully in private, and endeavour to engage him to a more holy temper, and a more exemplary deportment. . . . If a student, after due admonition, persist in a system of conduct not exemplary in regard to religion, he shall be dismissed from the Seminary. . . .

The professors are particularly charged, by all the proper means in their power, to encourage, cherish, and promote devotion and personal piety among their pupils, by warning and guarding them, on the one hand, against formality and indifference, and on the other, against ostentation and enthusiasm; by inculcating practical religion in their lectures and recitations; by taking suitable occasions to converse with their pupils privately on this interesting subject; and by all other means incapable of being minutely specified, by which they may foster true experimental religion, and unreserved devotedness to God.

and a few others chosen for this task. Green, who chaired this committee, drafted the plan for the seminary on his own. It was eventually adopted in 1811 with no substantial changes made by other committee members or by the General Assembly, and the plan to establish a Presbyterian seminary was settled.

Whereas the College of New Jersey had been chartered as an independent institution, Princeton Seminary was placed under the control of the Presbyterian General Assembly acting through a board of its choosing. It was decided in 1812 to place the seminary in Princeton, next to the college. Even though the two institutions were formally independent of each other, they would enjoy a close partnership in the seminary's early years, given the number of individuals who were involved with both. This harmonious relationship was established when Green was elected to succeed Smith as the college's president in 1812, the same year he was made the president of the new seminary's board of directors. While only serving ten years as president of the College of New Jersey, Green would serve in his official capacity with the seminary board until his death in 1848.

According to Green's plan for the seminary, students were to become accomplished scholars of the Bible, "well skilled in the original languages of the Holy Scriptures." They were to be trained as theologians in accordance with the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, able to apply their theology practically to ethical questions, as well as to defend their theology directly from Scripture. They were also to have "a considerable acquaintance with general history and chronology, and a particular acquaintance with the history of the Christian Church." In a special way, they were to be prepared to meet objections raised against the Christian faith by "the deistical controversy." The students were also to be schooled in the Presbyterian form of church government, as well as in sermon composition and delivery and pastoral care. In keeping with Green's concern for religious experience, students "must have read a considerable number of the best practical writers on the subject of religion," and a whole section of Green's *Plan of the Theological Seminary* was devoted to the cultivation of "devotion" and the "improvement of practical piety."

The 1812 General Assembly chose Archibald Alexander to serve as the seminary's first and, for the first year, only professor. Their choice could not have been better suited to carry out Green's vision for the seminary. A pastor as well as a scholar, Alexander was as concerned with promoting true spirituality in the heart as with developing orthodox thinking in the mind. On August 12, 1812, the vision for theological education shared by Tennent, Dickinson, and Green came to fruition when Princeton Seminary formally opened, and it would go on to flourish there for more than a hundred years.

Conclusion

When the College of New Jersey failed to fulfill the hopes of its founders, Princeton Seminary emerged to educate and train spiritually minded ministers of the gospel. Ashbel Green's vision for Princeton Seminary, embraced by the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1811, was in many ways a renewal of the vision embodied previously in William Tennent's Log College—a vision which stressed both learning and piety. The cultivation of true religious experience, as well as education in orthodoxy, was central to Princeton Seminary's original purpose. Through the work of Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller, and Archibald Alexander, the emphasis on spiritual experience that flourished during the Great Awakening found a renewed expression at Princeton, where it was fused to evangelical orthodoxy for over a century.

MANY OF THE KEY IDEAS of the modern era, and Christian responses to them, were formulated at the time of “Old Princeton.” Gary Steward introduces us to the great men of Princeton Theological Seminary from its founding to the early twentieth century, together with some of their most important writings. While commemorating the legacy of Old Princeton, this book also places the seminary in its historical and theological contexts.

“Brilliantly resurrects the theologians of Old Princeton for today’s layman. Certainly, Steward’s engaging, accessible, and eloquent work is the new go-to book for the reader unacquainted with the giants of Old Princeton.”

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—KEVIN DEYOUNG, *Senior Pastor, University Reformed Church (PCA), East Lansing, Michigan*

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