

Ryan M. McGraw (ed.)

Charles Hodge

American Reformed Orthodox
Theologian



Reformed Historical Theology

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Ryan M. McGraw
Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary 2022

Introduction

Charles Hodge (1797–1878) was one of the most important American Reformed theologians of the nineteenth-century, representing a benchmark in the “Old Princeton” theological tradition. He lived during a time of seismic change, affecting cultural, social, and scientific ideas, through a period including the American Civil War and its aftermath. As professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Seminary, he influenced an inter-denominational group of ministers and missionaries, extending his influence far beyond the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Studying Hodge’s life and theology provides a snapshot of a pivotal period of development in American history and culture. He also identified himself both as an American and as a Reformed theologian.

The primary thesis of this volume is that Charles Hodge was an American theologian who self-consciously sought to defend and transmit Reformed orthodoxy into an American context, reflecting the persistence and change of ideas. This is important because most studies of Hodge, and other Princeton theologians, highlight their American context at length while neglecting how tightly they wove Reformed orthodox ideas into their thought. Hodge’s theology is marked by the persistence of Reformed orthodoxy as well as by changes resulting from issues that arose within nineteenth-century America. Hodge was aware of some of these American influences on his theology, but other issues affected him of which he was unaware, or at least less aware. Following a historical introduction by Paul Gujhar, the areas chosen for this study include Hodge’s use of philosophy (Aza Goudriaan) his definition of theology as a science (Ryan McGraw), his doctrine of God (Scott Cook), his use of personhood language in relation to the Trinity (Cook and McGraw) his treatment of the imputation of Adam’s sin (C. N. Willborn), his delineation of church offices (Alan Strange), the controversy in which he debated the validity of Roman Catholic baptism (Mark Herzer), and his conception of Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper (Stefan Lindholm).

Each of these areas illustrate a clear point of continuity with Reformed orthodox teaching as well as a distinctively American twist in Hodge’s ideas. The first two chapters establish Hodge’s historical and philosophical contexts, stressing both his Reformed orthodoxy and his engagement with a wide range of early modern and modern philosophers. Remaining chapters treat targeted areas of Hodge’s theology that illustrate persistence with Reformed orthodoxy and change in nineteenth century America. His definition and method of theology drew from medieval and early Reformed authors, while adjusting his evaluation of theology as a science in light of post-enlightenment definitions of science and scientific progress. His

explanation of the divine attributes both built upon and altered historic Reformed orthodox ideas at key points. Hodge's treatment of the Trinity broadly retained the catholic Christian doctrine, while reflecting shifting definitions of personhood in the nineteenth century, and using "subordination" language that was relatively unusual in earlier church history. Retaining the imputation of Adam's sin as grounded in high Reformed orthodox views of the covenant of works, he redefined the nature of imputation in light of American controversies, especially related to New England theology and fears of pantheism. While Hodge's church polity had historic precedent in Presbyterianism, American debates over the nature and number of church offices, and the grounds on which he defended the validity of Roman Catholic baptism reflected some new avenues of thought. Lastly, both picking up and rejecting strands of earlier Reformed thought and melding them with the Westminster Standards, his description of Christ presence in the Lord's Supper and his debates with John Williamson Nevin were colored by his concerns with modern pantheistic theologies.

The purpose of each chapter is primarily historical rather than dogmatic, aiming to understand Hodge's ideas in context. Spanning between Reformed orthodoxy and nineteenth century America broadens this context, attempting to build large-scale trajectories in Reformed thought and helping to fill a relative vacuum in this area of studies. Believing that historians can seek to be objective without claiming to be neutral, we have adopted the method of trying to "see things their way" by stressing historical contexts and explanations more than contemporary uses and categories. Most of the authors here are connected to the Reformed tradition in some way, and many disagree with each other at points regarding the degree of continuity and discontinuity between Hodge and his Reformed predecessors. Many more of us would have even more disagreements over whether we regard Hodge's ideas on each point treated good or bad. All of us have sought to understand and explain Hodge's ideas better with an eye to nineteenth century American and the early modern sources on which he relied so heavily. Regardless of what opinions readers hold currently about Hodge, they should approach this material with open minds as they wade through the difficult philosophical, scientific, political, and religious issues that contributed to who Hodge was, what he did, and why. Due to the complexity of topics treated, some of these chapters are better able to illustrate the fact that things were different in nineteenth century America than why they were so.

Every scholar invited to contribute to this volume either has expertise in Reformed orthodoxy, nineteenth-century America, or some combination of the two. Seeking to press authors to wed these two fields, the editor has provided contributors with a set of issues and questions necessary to bridge the gap between Reformed orthodox and American theological studies in relation to Hodge's self-identification with both. The goal is to provide a comparison between Hodge's views and earlier Reformed thought to explain the transmission and transformation of ideas more

clearly. All authors were required to contextualize their subjects in order to furnish readers with the widest context possible, both for Hodge, and for the ideas that he built upon or modified. As such, this project both drew from the expertise of each author and pressed them beyond it either into later or earlier centuries.

Hoping to break fresh ground by connecting two rarely intersecting fields of historical Reformed theology, the editor hopes to shed light on broader developments and trajectories in the history of ideas. Only by recovering the Reformed orthodox background from which Hodge drew can we truly appreciate how his post-Enlightenment American context affected his thought. This broad approach to investigating American Reformed theology indicates the importance of a constructing a more complex and far-reaching context for Hodge's thought than many have attempted up to this point. Expanding this context will better help readers understand how older ideas both carried over and shifted in nineteenth century America. The field for further research along these lines is currently wide open, and we hope that this volume will serve as a starting point in the conversation. Beginning with this volume, the emerging picture is that Charles Hodge was both an American and a Reformed orthodox theologian.

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Editor

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Paul C. Gutjahr

1. Reflections on the Life and Thought of Charles Hodge

1.1 Foundations

Theologians and their theologies do not spring from a vacuum. They are born of a complex mixture of cultural, historical and personal factors. Such is the case of Charles Hodge, perhaps America's most important nineteenth-century Reformed theologian. This chapter seeks to tease out some of the dialogical interplay between Hodge the man and the times in which he lived, in order to better understand his pivotal role in helping to craft a highly influential, and often uniquely American, brand of Reformed theology.

The Hodges of Philadelphia were a distinguished and affluent family for much of the eighteenth century. Immigrating to the American colonies from Ireland in the 1730s, three Hodge brothers had quickly established themselves as successful sea merchants in one of the colonies' busiest port cities.¹ Andrew, the most successful of the brothers, bought a number of ships, began a provisioning business for sea-going vessels, built a large warehouse, established a prosperous store, and controlled his own dock on the Philadelphia waterfront. In the years leading up to the American Revolution, he became one of the city's wealthiest and most important citizens, and many of his sons rose to become influential businessmen and sea captains tied to Philadelphia's maritime economy.²

Charles Hodge was the son of Hugh Hodge, the eighth child of Andrew Hodge. By the time Charles was born on December 27, 1797, the once influential and aristocratic Hodge family of Philadelphia was in decline. The diminished state of the Hodge family's merchant trade due to the war for independence from Britain was at least partly responsible for Hugh Hodge's decision to move away from the well-worn commercial paths of his family.³ Hugh leaned into his keen interest in science to pursue the profession of medicine. It was a career choice that would lead to his death in 1798. While treating patients during a series of devastating Yellow Fever outbreaks that ravaged Philadelphia, Hugh ultimately succumbed to the disease. Charles was barely six months old when his father died.

1 A. A. Hodge, *Life of Charles Hodge* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880), 1.

2 Frank Willing Leach, "The Philadelphia of our Ancestors," *North American*, Sunday, June 14, 1908, 1.

3 Hugh L. Hodge, *Memoranda of Family History Dictated by Hugh L. Hodge* (n. p.: 1903), 20–21.

Thus, Hodge spent his earliest years cared for by his mother, Mary, and a circle of Philadelphia family and friends. Descended from French Huguenot stock, Mary was renowned for her Christian piety and unusually keen intellect.⁴ Hodge's lifelong commitment to education can be traced, at least in part, to his mother's own immense intellectual giftedness and lifelong love of learning. Throughout his life, Hodge recounted vivid memories of his mother's penchant to recite lines from Dryden and Pope, and she took a profound interest in every phase of her sons' educations. Mary made significant sacrifices to see that her sons were educated. In order to pay for their primary and secondary schooling, she took boarders into her home and undertook small paying jobs.⁵ At one point, due to a series of financial stresses culminating in the government embargos enacted during the War of 1812 and their effect on the last remnants of her family holdings tied to the once great Hodge sea trade, Mary had to sell her family home and commence a pattern of frequent moves within and around Philadelphia in order to continue to care for, and educate, Hodge and his elder brother, Hugh.

In Hodge's ancestry and formative years, one finds key pillars of his lifelong character and inclinations. The devout Protestant nature of his mother and the deep Presbyterian roots of the Hodge family would be a continual guide in his ecclesiastical and theological thinking. Hodge not only joined the Presbyterian Church upon his conversion in 1815, but spent the remainder of his life developing into one of its most important leaders. One wonders if the peripatetic existence that Mary and her sons in Hodge's earliest years found its answer in Hodge's later contentment in residing for almost his entire life in the small town of Princeton, New Jersey. The economic vicissitudes that so battered his family in his youth made him keenly aware of property rights and markers of social standing, sensitivities that would have great bearing on his own thinking when it came to his Federalist-leaning political views and issues such as slavery. His attachment to the forms and doctrines of Presbyterianism and his highly structured, largely unchanging, theological hermeneutic raise the distinct possibility that Hodge found in such a structured religious tradition a means of stabilizing his world when that world had started off with such vast gulfs of vulnerability and uncertainty.

1.2 Education

Hodge became an undergraduate at Princeton College in 1812. By the time he entered the College, its curriculum had been deeply influenced by the teaching and

4 Hodge, *Life of Charles Hodge*, 8.

5 Hodge, *Memoranda of Family History Dictated by Hugh L. Hodge*, 24–25.

intellectual commitments of John Witherspoon. When Witherspoon took over the presidency of Princeton College in 1768, he ushered in a new era in the school's history. He put a pronounced emphasis on preparing men not only for the ministry, but also for professions in the realms of law, politics, education, medicine, and business. He also brought a new philosophical orientation to the College, a thorough commitment to Scottish Common Sense Realism. This philosophical commitment would become the dominant intellectual school of thought in American higher education up through the Civil War, and it also became an absolute bulwark in Hodge's own theological thinking.⁶

Founded on the writings of Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, and Dugald Stewart, Scottish Common Sense Philosophy highlighted the serious Enlightenment engagement with science without losing science and philosophy's connection to religious belief.⁷ At its core, this school of philosophical thought held out two central truths. First, it taught that some basic truths were self-evident. Being a careful and patient observer made truth accessible to anyone through one's ordinary "common" sense, and thus the sense could be trusted to provide a sound basis for all scientific, philosophical, and theological endeavors. For those who believed in Common Sense Realism, all of God's manifold work and his very presence in the world was a fact available and verifiable to all thoughtful observers. This notion of the observable nature of truth was refined and popularized for Common Sense Realists by the seventeenth-century scientist and natural philosopher, Francis Bacon, who pursued such observable truth through developing structured methods of inductively investigating natural and intellectual phenomena so as to be able to separate truth from fallacy.⁸ Second, Scottish Realism contained a pronounced ethical dimension; it taught that all people in addition to their five senses had a common moral sense that allowed them to distinguish between good and evil. It was the Common Sense belief in self-evident truth, and the mind's ability to systematically and thoroughly investigate that truth, which would come to define Hodge's own theological thinking.

By the time Hodge entered Princeton College, Witherspoon had been dead for nearly two decades, and the archly conservative Ashbel Green held the College's presidency. Green's tenure was marked by a clear emphasis on training young

6 Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience 1783–1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 27.

7 A helpful overview of Scottish Common Sense philosophy in America is found in Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1985): 220–225.

8 The importance of Bacon in Scottish Common Sense and Presbyterian thought finds its fullest treatment in Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1977).

men for the ministry. He instituted a reactionary curriculum for the time, moving away from Witherspoon's practical and commerce-friendly course of study in areas touching on science, modern languages, and mathematics. Instead, Green placed renewed emphasis on the classical languages and the study of the Bible. Hodge entered Princeton College as Green turned back the school's curriculum to content that had been popular in higher education a century earlier. Such a religious focus was further accented by the fact that Princeton Theological Seminary was founded during Green's presidency, and many of the College's students went on to do their ministerial training at the College's neighboring seminary. Thus, Hodge's undergraduate experience was marked by Green's return to traditional, eighteenth-century Presbyterian notions of higher education, which along with classical language work and biblical studies once again foregrounded Witherspoon's lectures on moral philosophy, a curriculum that had withered in the years after Witherspoon's death, as well as the mandatory reading of William Paley's writings on natural philosophy.⁹

Amid Green's focus on raising up the country's next generation of clergy, Hodge spent the majority of his undergraduate years doing everything he could to be prepared for pursuing a career in medicine. Hodge not only followed his father in his career aspirations, but also in enjoying a deep and abiding interest in all things scientific.¹⁰ Throughout his life, Hodge never tired of reading about the newest scientific developments, and he proved unfailing in willingness to converse with faculty and students both at Princeton College and Princeton Theological Seminary about how science buttressed Christian belief. His interest in science and scientific methodologies would constantly inflect his theological writings in the decades to come.¹¹

Green's emphasis on the making religion a prominent part of life at Princeton College bore its most notable fruit in a revival that swept through the institution in the winter of 1815. This revival brought forty of the College's 105 students to

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- 9 Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768–1822* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 275. Darrel Guder, "History of Belles Lettres at Princeton" (Ph.D. diss., University of Hamburg, 1964): 227; 234. The most comprehensive treatment of the use of Paley's works in American colleges is Wilson Smith, "William Paley's Theological Utilitarianism in America," *WMQ* 11:2 (Apr. 1954): 402–424.
- 10 Ronald L. Numbers, "Charles Hodge and the Beauties and Deformities of Science," in *Charles Hodge Revisited: A Critical Appraisal of His Life and Work*, eds. John W. Stewart and James H. Moorhead (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 77. This essay provides a good overview of Hodge's lifelong interest in the connections between theology and science.
- 11 E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 379–381. Walter H. Conser, Jr. *God and the Natural World: Religion and Science in Antebellum America* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 65–74. Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, 154–159.

a profession of faith. Hodge was one such convert, and his profession of faith prompted him to decide near the end of his senior year to swerve away from an intended medical career to pursue the ministry instead. As a result, at the age of eighteen Hodge began his studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, putting himself under the tutelage and care of the Seminary's two founding faculty members: Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller. Hodge would become particularly close to Alexander, who would take on a father role for the fatherless Hodge.

The training of Alexander and Miller at the Seminary highlighted a brand of Reformed, Calvinist theology that placed a premium on exalting God's glory through stressing his omnipotence and absolute sovereignty.¹² Central to their thinking was the conviction that it was God who orchestrated every aspect of his creation and that he was the pivotal catalyst in human salvation. Such a stress on God's absolute control over all aspects of humanity would become the hallmark attribute of the theology that would be taught at the Seminary throughout the nineteenth century and would later come to be called more colloquially "The Princeton Theology."¹³

Alexander and Miller shaped the Seminary's curriculum primarily around the Westminster Confession (1646), but they also incorporated thinking found in the confessional statements of the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) and the Canons of Dort (1619). Although bearing some differences, each of these confessions clearly upheld firm doctrinal statements on the sovereignty of God and the totally depraved nature of humanity. To knit together the strands running through all three of these confessional statements, they turned most notably to the apologetic work of Swiss Reformed Theologian Francis Turretin and the emphasis on systematic, inductive reasoning and notions of self-evident truth found in Witherspoon's brand of Scottish Common Sense philosophy.¹⁴ Other important religious thinkers in Alexander and Miller's seminary curriculum included the English politician and writer Soame Jenyns, the natural philosopher and English clergyman William Paley, and English Presbyterian Puritan John Flavel.¹⁵ At Princeton Seminary, students were taught an unwavering view of God's sovereignty and a firm conviction that God's sovereignty was self-evident both in the natural truths found in God's creation and the revealed truths found in the Holy Scriptures.¹⁶

Such confessional statements, along with Turretin's three-volume *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (1679–1685), formed the basis for Hodge's own systematic ap-

12 Holifield, *Theology in America*, 11.

13 David F. Wells, ed., *The Princeton Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 17–24.

14 Mark A. Noll, ed., *The Princeton Theology, 1812–1921* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 13; 27–33.

15 Lefferts A. Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 17–26. Holifield, *Theology in America*, 379–380.

16 Holifield, *Theology in America*, 378–387.

proach to Christian doctrine in the years to come. Hodge was so thoroughly tied to Turretin in his own teaching that he had the Swiss theologian's *Institutes* translated from Latin into English, with the purpose of widening Turretin's influence among American Christians.¹⁷ When it later came time for Hodge to compose his own course of lectures on systematic theology at the Seminary that eventuated in his magisterial *Systematic Theology*, many points of the work's organization can be seen to largely, if not entirely, echo Turretin's *Institutes* in his commitment to addressing the central topics found in the Westminster Confession.

1.3 Influence

Hodge had originally intended to go into the Presbyterian pastorate, but a year after his graduation he was offered a one-year lectureship position in biblical languages at the Seminary. His natural linguistic ability made him a good fit for this position, and his decision to accept this lectureship led to joining the Seminary's faculty for the remainder of his life. At first, Hodge struggled with the idea of staying at the Seminary, fearing that he might be missing more exciting and consequential frontline ministry opportunities either pastoring his own church or taking a post on a mission field. In the end, however, he accepted the lectureship because he believed it to be the place where he might be able to exercise the most influence. In pastoring a congregation, he would touch the lives of that single congregation. In teaching ministers, he had the opportunity to touch the lives of countless congregations.

This issue of influence would be a central theme throughout Hodge's life. He was a man driven by the need to make the most of his gifts and the most of his time. Forever echoing in his mind was a biblical refrain often repeated by his mother: "To whom much is given, much will be required."¹⁸ In the years that followed, Hodge would pursue his quest for influence in three basic ways: through his teaching at the Seminary, through his publishing the premier Presbyterian journal of his day along with writing several books, and finally through his leadership in different associations such as the Presbyterian General Assembly and its numerous committees, various mission boards, and the Board of Trustees at Princeton College.

His long tenure as a professor of the seminary is perhaps his most recognized avenue of influence. During his fifty-six-year career, he taught over three thousand seminarians. No American professor of the era would teach a greater number of

17 J. Mark Beach, "Francis Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, eds. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 291–292.

18 Mary Hodge to Hugh and Charles Hodge, January 13, 1810, Charles Hodge Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Box 7, Folder 4.

graduate students. His students would make their own marks as pastors, publishers, missionaries, educators, politicians, and seminary and college professors.

Another widely recognized avenue of influence for Hodge was the vast reach of his various publishing endeavors. Hodge was immensely savvy in recognizing early the power of print in the United States, a country which enjoyed the world's highest literacy rates in the early nineteenth century.¹⁹ Such literacy rates led to an antebellum culture that one print historian has aptly characterized as one where “reading became a necessity of life.”²⁰ Beginning in the 1820s, America's burgeoning print culture was unrivaled around the world for its volume and reach. America as a young democracy had come to hold an almost sacred belief in the power of print.²¹ Print and the truth it could convey was one of the surest paths to an informed citizenry, and an informed citizenry was one of the surest paths to the kind of virtue needed to sustain a democratic form of government.²²

Antebellum Christians fully embraced the promise offered through publishing, exhibiting an almost messianic faith in the power of the press. Whereas spreading God's word had once primarily been the realm of preachers, an unprecedented increase in the production and consumption of printed material in the opening decades of the nineteenth century led countless Protestants to believe that publishing's unrivaled reach would usher in a new age of mass conversions to Christ. Such Protestants were jubilant in their conviction that “types of lead and sheets of paper may be the light of the World.”²³ Such optimism was fueled by the rise of several powerful Christian publishing enterprises, including the American Bible Society (1816), the American Sunday School Union (1824), and the American Tract Society (1825).²⁴ By the middle of the century, the output of these three societies accounted for approximately sixteen percent of all books produced in the United States.²⁵

19 Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 196–201. Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens, *The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Analysis to 1870* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 53, 56, 155–176, 189.

20 William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in New England, 1780–1835* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), xxi.

21 Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1–2.

22 Derek H. Davis, *Religion and the Continental Congress, 1774–1789: Contributions to Original Intent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 196.

23 Quoted in Joan Brumberg, *Mission for Life: The Judson Family and American Evangelical Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 67.

24 The best overview of religious publishing in this period can be found in David P. Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

25 Brown, *The Word in the World*, 51.

Hodge was an early adopter of this move toward religiously didactic publishing as can be seen in his founding of the *Biblical Repertory* (later the *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*) in 1825, a quarterly theological journal he directed for nearly five decades. By editing over one hundred and twenty issues and contributing more than two hundred articles to its pages, Hodge established himself as a major voice in nearly every important religious controversy of his day. In addition to his articles for the *Repertory*, Hodge wrote several longer book-length works: Commentaries on four New Testament books (1835, 1856, 1857, 1859), a major history of the American Presbyterian Church (1839–40), the immensely popular devotional *The Way of Life* (1841), a landmark critique of Darwinism (1874), and his magnum opus, his *Systematic Theology* (1872–73). These writings gave Hodge's influence an international scope as he became one of the best known and most widely respected American theologians in Europe.

Hodge was also involved in a wide range of associations and governing bodies throughout his life. Through his leadership in these organizations, he was able to exercise great influence over the bodies they governed. Three groupings of governance bodies were particularly important to Hodge. The first of these was found in area of missionary activity. In the earliest years of Hodge's time on the Seminary faculty, he spent two years studying in Europe to better his understanding of German Higher biblical criticism and work on his ancient languages. Both endeavors were tied to his own desire to accurately interpret the Bible and teach methods of accurate biblical interpretation. While in Europe, Hodge gained a global view of Protestantism, and through that view he had become convinced of the vital importance of the United States in the efforts of world evangelization.

While in Europe, Hodge formulated a theory that vital Christian belief underwent certain cycles: "During one age, there are many revivals of religion, and a general prevalence of evangelical spirit and exertion; to this succeeds a period of coldness and declension; and to this either a period of revival or of open departure from the faith."²⁶ In contrast to the lack of religious fervor he witnessed in France and Germany, Hodge saw the massive and ubiquitous revivals happening in America as a sign that the United States was near the apex of its religious cycle. Such cresting religious fervor gave America an unrivaled ability at the time to spread the message of God grace throughout the world. Hodge never wavered in his desire to take advantage of America enjoying its high-water mark in terms of religious influence. Throughout his life, he never doubted that American missionary activity would be the means of converting innumerable unbelievers to the Christian faith.²⁷ He

26 Charles Hodge, "Lecture Addressed to the Students of the Theological Seminary," *Biblical Repertory: A Journal of Biblical Literature and Theological Review* 1, no. 1 (January 1829): 93.

27 Hodge had a particular bond with missionary activity in France. The best single account of this bond can be found in Richard Gardiner, "Princeton and Paris: An Early Nineteenth Century Bond

showed this conviction as he served from the mid-1840s to 1870 on both the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions and the Presbyterian Board of Domestic Missions. He even served for two years as the president of the Board of Foreign Missions (1868–1870).²⁸

The second governing body where he sought to extend his influence was the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Beginning in 1842, Hodge became a regular delegate to the General Assembly, representing the Seminary's needs and accomplishments to his Presbyterian brethren. He stretched the breadth of his influence in national Presbyterianism by remaining active in a number of national committees and boards sponsored by the General Assembly. In 1846, he was elected to the post of General Assembly's moderator. While his time as moderator was not particularly troubled, he did have to help the Assembly navigate two potentially divisive issues: the abolition of slavery and the establishment of Presbyterian parochial schools. For the former, he helped the Assembly take the middle ground of hoping the regrettable practice of slavery might eventually be abolished but not advocating any stance that held it unscriptural and thereby worthy of immediate elimination. When it came to Presbyterian parochial schools, Hodge favored establishing such a common school system sponsored by the denomination, wishing to establish such schools next to every Presbyterian Church in the nation. The initiative never gained the widespread support it needed to come into existence, but it was a cause Hodge spent his life supporting.²⁹

Finally, Hodge exercised influence through helping to guide Princeton College as one of its trustees. Throughout his life, Hodge was a devoted alumnus of his *alma mater*, and in 1850 he was invited to take a seat on the College's board of trustees. He quickly established himself as one of its most respected members. He played a particularly important role when he was called upon to help the College choose a new president. Hodge's college classmate, John Maclean Jr., who had joined the College faculty at the age of twenty-three as a chemistry professor and had spent the next thirty-five years in the service of the College was being considered for the position when several trustees thought him too ordinary for the august position. Hodge played a pivotal role in changing their minds. John Maclean Jr. became Princeton's tenth president in 1854.

Perhaps Hodge's greatest contribution to the College while trustee, however, came in his unwavering commitment to "the religious character of the College," which he

of Mission" (senior thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1994). His missionary commitment within Presbyterianism is recounted in David Calhoun, "Last Command: Princeton Theological Seminary and Missions (1812–1862)," (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983), 208.

28 Hodge, *Life of Charles Hodge*, 384.

29 Charles Hodge, "General Assembly, 1846," *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 18, no. 3 (July 1846): 435.