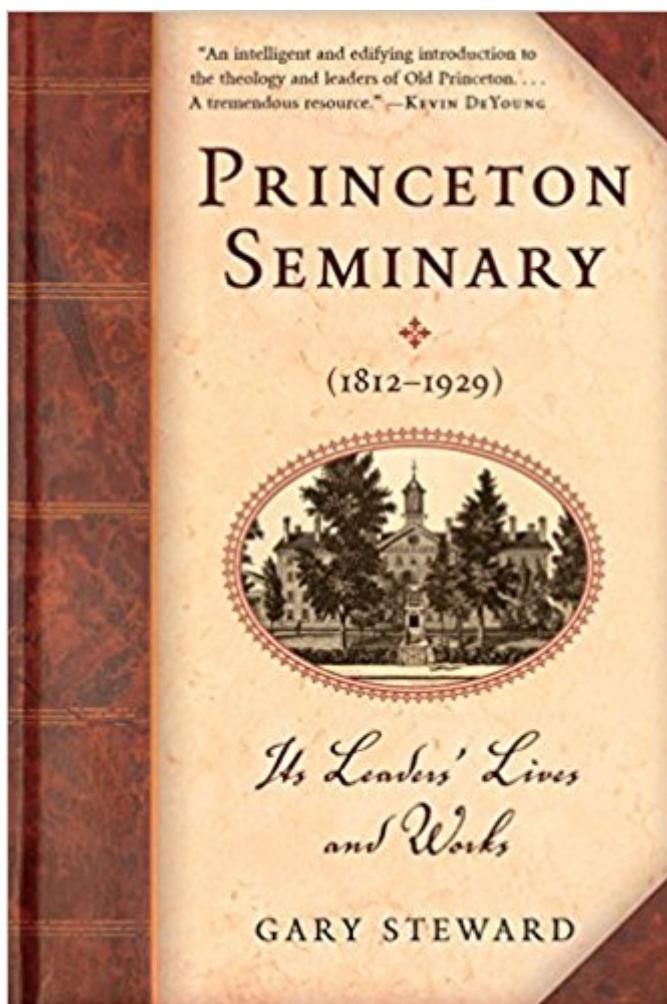


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Princeton Seminary (1812-1929): Its Leaders' Lives And Works



Synopsis

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. Steward provides biographical overviews of the widely known figures Charles Hodge and Archibald Alexander and lesser-known figures Samuel Miller, James Waddel Alexander, Joseph Addison Alexander, and Archibald Alexander Hodge, and he also reviews selected writings from these great men. Not only does he provide a sweeping introduction to Old Princeton, but this book invites further exploration by providing bibliographical material for additional reading and research. The book's numerous lists and timelines further help make it a useful reference volume.

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Customer Reviews

"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, Crossway Books"An entrÃ©e 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, Gordon-Conwell 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, Regent College "Gary Steward is to be commended for providing an intelligent and edifying introduction to the theology and leaders of Old Princeton. ...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, University Reformed Church (RCA) "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, Reformed Baptist Church of Franconia "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 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 "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

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Dr. Steward's account covers Princeton Seminary during its era of consistent adherence to a form of classic Presbyterianism, 1812-1929. His account ends at the point where the denomination intervened to alter the theological position of the seminary. Steward has clearly mastered a massive amount of material produced by this very productive school. Actually, the title of the work is not fully accurate. He actually ends with A.A. Hodge -- who died 1887! So the correct title should be 1812-1887 -- the last 42 years of Old Princeton get zero coverage. In one sense, it is very similar to the wonderful two volume history of Princeton Seminary produced by David Calhoun in the 1990s. And it shares with Dr. Calhoun's work a devotional tone, clearly very sympathetic to its subject. The difference lie chiefly in Steward's work being more concise (about 1/4 as many pages), much less expensive, and taking a more biographical approach. Steward focuses on the major figures of the seminary, rather than a chronological account. I thoroughly enjoyed this volume. In addition to simply celebrating the massive learning, rich piety, and incredible achievements of Princeton Seminary for its first 120 years, this book also provides a solid overview of 19th and early 20th century American religious culture and thought. Princeton interacted with nearly every important trend, figure and event, and many of these get covered here. Steward rarely wastes any words, and does an excellent job of clearly explaining the key issues involved in each controversy. The largest weakness in this volume, in my mind, is something that really was beyond its intention anyway. Having read a few books cases full of work on Old Princeton over the past twenty-five years, I was hoping for more critical engagement. This book was not the place for that. Perhaps even less so than another very sympathetic work like Calhoun's, Steward never really allows Old Princeton critics to offer any objections. So, for example, among even the most conservative and appreciative voices for Old Princeton today, most view the school as too beholden to Scottish Common Sense Realism. But little of this critique is voiced. To me the most obvious was Hodge's uncharacteristically weak arguments against Nevin. Certainly most Reformed folks find serious flaws in Nevin's pronouncements on the Church and on the Sacraments. For one thing, he seems clearly too taken with Idealism. However, Hodge's historical judgments in his 1848 response to Nevin's Mystical Presence are worthy of more critique than we find here. In the sacraments, Hodge argues 1. that Calvin's views have been overemphasized in the Reformed tradition at the expense of Zwingli. 2. That Calvin's sacramental pronouncements were not really his full views, but reflect his ecumenical

compromises to keep unity with the Lutherans; 3. That the Reformed view of "Real Spiritual Presence" in the meal involve merely the intellectual or mental presence of the spirit (basically a Memorialist, Zwinglian view).I think most historical theologians would fault Hodge's historical judgments in #2 and #3. In any case, we don't hear much about the weaknesses of Hodge's response to Nevin.Further, Nevin was responding to what he saw as the marginalizing of the Church in American revivalism - a very legitimate concern. Hodge was horrified by Nevin and (like the Oxford Movement) classified Nevin as dangerously close to Romanism. I know I'm asking something beyond the intention of this book, but personally I would have liked more back and forth. (In my opinion Nevin goes too far but Hodge doesn't take enough of Nevin's critique of post-Revivalist American individualism seriously).Anyway, as long as you don't are not looking for a critical engage, and just want to celebrate Old Princeton and learn from its outstanding insights, this is a great place to go. Less of a commitment in time (and money) than Calhoun's work, and to an extent it covers some different territory. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and a few weeks after my first purchase bought a second copy.

Someone got expelled from a school.This seems rather insignificant on the surface. Many people have been expelled from a school for one reason or another over the course of history of schools. So why is this someone so special as to begin the story with? Because it was someone who had been made an example to others at Yale University, being expelled initially for an off-hand comment made in private to friends, but ultimately it was about this person's sympathies towards a new revival that the then-rector of Yale was opposed to. That person was David Brainerd. As this riveting history book states, "He would have graduated at the top of his class. But instead, he didn't graduate at all." Well, this caught the attention of one of his close friends, Jonathan Dickinson, who is said to be second only to Jonathan Edwards as one of the best theological minds America has ever produced. This man lobbied for Mr. Brainerd's reinstatement, but failed and this set off a chain of events that ultimately lead to the founding of a seminary that turned out the likes of Arhibald Alexander, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Charles and A.A. Hodge and J. Gresham Machen (one of the founders of Westminster Theological Seminary).So a man got expelled from university and the religious and academic climate of American Presbyterianism would never be the same.I could not stop turning the pages of this riveting account of how Old School Princeton was originally founded. I was enthralled by the stories of every person whose name was mentioned as one of the building blocks of this once-glorious theological seminary, which was a beacon of true biblical and orthodox Christianity. The history is rich and Gary Steward tells it in captivating narrative style. He

begins with the seemingly insignificant detail of what one could surmise was the result of academic failure of someone no one really knows and then unpacks the way in which this event was truly important. One of my favorite parts was about Samuel Miller, who I was only recently introduced to through a seminary textbook (Doctrinal Integrity). His story is also captivating and then you learn that one of the logs from a small college that once stood on the ground that Princeton now occupies, was used to fashion a walking stick that was presented to him as one of the seminary's prominent figures. Most people usually hear about Alexander, Warfield, the Hodges and Machen, but Samuel Miller was a theological stud in his own right. I cannot recommend this book enough. If you like good story telling that lays out truly interesting history about one of this nation's foremost seminaries, do not miss this book. There are so many history books out there that skimp on story and read like a dry textbook. This is NOT that book. The author has truly done his homework and delivered the material in compelling style. You will thoroughly enjoy this book! DISCLAIMER: I received a copy of this book from the publisher in return for a fair and honest review. I was not obligated to provide a positive review.

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