

Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy, by Paul C. Gutjahr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. xl + 477 pp. \$39.95.

Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton, by W. Andrew Hoffercker. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011. 460 pp. \$19.99.

In the year 1880, Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823–1886) published the first biography of Charles Hodge (1797–1878), and for over one hundred years, his account of his father's life remained the only biography of the great Presbyterian theologian and statesman available. In 2011 all that changed as the evangelical community welcomed not one, but two full-length treatments of Charles Hodge's life and thought. The publication of these books should rekindle interest in a figure who was instrumental in shaping American Presbyterianism and the early theological direction of Princeton Seminary.

In many ways, the study of Charles Hodge is a study in the dynamic development Christianity has undergone in its American context. Through Hodge we encounter some of the great theological and social issues with which American Christianity has interacted, such as revivalism, Arminianism, Calvinism, the relationship between Christians and government, slavery, the rise of liberal theology, and evolution. A short list of his contemporaries, many of whom Hodge knew personally, illustrates the diverse theological landscape of the 19th century, both in America and abroad. For example, Hodge had personal interactions with the likes of Archibald Alexander (1772–1851), Ashbel Green (1762–1848), Albert Barnes (1798–1870), Edwards Amasa Park (1808–1900), Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Moses Stuart (1780–1852), Nathaniel Taylor (1786–1852), and B. B. Warfield (1851–1921). During his lifetime Hodge was forced to cope with the revivalism of Charles Finney (1792–1875), the German Idealism of the Mercersburg theologians, Roman Catholicism, the Oxford Movement in England, and the evolution of Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Following Gutjahr and Hoffercker through Hodge's interactions and responses to these various challenges will force the reader to evaluate his own approach and thinking on these topics, many of which have re-manifested themselves in contemporary settings or have never totally gone away. In some instances, Hodge's response might surprise those who have a basic familiarity with Hodge's theology. For instance, Hodge defended the validity of Roman Catholic baptism on the grounds that it was consistent with the underlying spirit and practice of biblical baptism and that a belief in the contrary meant that Reformers like Luther and Calvin were never baptized. Also surprising is Hodge's belief that Friedrich Schleiermacher was a genuine Christian. In the social realm Hodge opposed both the temperance movement and the radical abolition movement in his denomination. In both cases Hodge urged moderation rather than complete abandonment. While these examples may provide some surprises, the

main theme that runs through Hodge's life is his never-wavering commitment to the standards of the Westminster Confession. Through his books, articles, teaching, and denominational involvement, Hodge clearly articulated and defended the doctrinal position of this great Reformed confession.

This brief picture of Hodge's life is skillfully captured in one way or another by both Gutjahr and Hoffecker, albeit with much more detail. Naturally, two books on the same subject will have a lot in common, and the student of Hodge will receive an excellent introduction to Hodge's life and thought should he read just one of the two biographies. That said, these books do demonstrate differences in style and emphasis that the prospective reader should take into account when considering these works. From a biographical standpoint, Gutjahr's book seems to be a bit more effective in portraying Hodge as a total person. Not only is the personal side of Hodge enhanced with pictures of Hodge's family, friends, and homestead, Gutjahr's practice of having more chapters of shorter length (than those found in Hoffecker's book) allows him to move back and forth between the home and denomination more often, giving the reader a more rounded picture of Hodge's life. Gutjahr injects a number of chapters on Hodge's home life that present Hodge as a tender husband, a loving father, and a careful farmer. In the political realm, Gutjahr paints Hodge as a staunch Federalist, one who believed that those with the most education and cultural refinement should be the leaders of both country and church (96). In this way, Gutjahr seems to do a better job in setting Hodge's theological endeavors in the larger context of his life. Naturally, Hodge's opposition to more democratic ways of doing ministry, such as voluntary missions societies, are explained as the logical outgrowth of Hodge's social and political presuppositions. The need for a highly educated Presbyterian clergy should also be seen in light of Hodge's Federalist viewpoint. Such examples demonstrate Gutjahr's skill in telling the *story* of Hodge's life. This is not to say that Hoffecker does not communicate Hodge's personal side at all. In chapter 9, Hoffecker effectively conveys the tender relationship Hodge had with his wife through excerpts from their personal correspondence. However, in the main, Hoffecker is more concerned with Hodge's theological and denominational pursuits than he is with his domestic and political affairs. As a result, there are times in Hoffecker's book that the reader loses sight of where he is in the larger context of Hodge's life as the details of theological controversies are recounted. On the other hand, the strength of Hoffecker's book is his heavy inclusion of primary source material in communicating the details of Hodge's theological debates. Hoffecker, far more than Gutjahr, lets the participants make their own cases in their own words. Such an approach exposes the reader to some of Hodge's lesser known works and provides some of the finer points of the discussions that are not present in Gutjahr's treatments of the same subjects. Hoffecker also places more emphasis on Hodge's interaction with European scholarship and its impact on Hodge's educational development. To illustrate the difference one need only see that Gutjahr's

treatment of Hodge's trip to Europe consists of three chapters, whereas Hoffecker dedicates the entirety of Part 2 of his book to the same event. Those readers more concerned with theological matters might find Hoffecker's extended treatment of doctrinal subjects more to their liking than Gutjahr's more cursory, though well-informed, exposition.

While the above comments expose the reader to some of the differences the respective authors reflect in their stories of Hodge's life, it should be noted that the books have more in common than not. Both authors are careful to show Hodge as a theologian who coupled strong doctrinal confessionalism with warm evangelical piety (this is in fact Hoffecker's stated thesis, 32). Both are concerned to trace the development of Hodge's educational philosophy and its impact on the curriculum at Princeton Seminary. Both try to highlight the spiritual, educational, doctrinal legacy Hodge left to Princeton Seminary and Presbyterianism as a whole. Both works also share a minor point of irritation that at least deserves mention, especially as it pertains to Hoffecker's book. As has become somewhat commonplace in recent biographies, both works use endnotes rather than footnotes as the means of citation. This fact would probably not have been mentioned in this review if both authors had followed Gutjahr's practice of limiting the amount of content in the endnotes themselves. However, in Hoffecker's case, the extensive use of content endnotes results in an additional 67 pages of text! The endnotes in Hoffecker's book contain so much excellent information, one wishes that at least some of this information had been incorporated into the main text. This minor irritation should not distract us, however, from the great service both Gutjahr and Hoffecker have rendered us through the publication of their books. The reader of this review might still be wondering which of these books I would recommend he read. Without hesitation, my answer would be simply: "Both."

Timothy Scott

Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction, by John Fea. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. xxvii + 287 pp. \$30.00.

With the recent national election, many Christian conservatives were hoping for a rightward shift in the political landscape. Some argued that America had badly strayed from its historical roots, that America was once a Christian nation, founded and built on biblical principles, but had, in the twenty-first century, drifted far from its original moorings. It was the hope of many that a more conservative, even overtly Christian statesman would lead America back toward its founding sensibilities. This was driven by the firm commitment that America was originally founded as a Christian nation. But was the United States *really*