

Princeton and the Laos Mission: A Case Study of Princeton Theological Seminary's Influence in the Nineteenth Century

by Herbert R. Swanson



Historians have claimed that Princeton Theological Seminary had an important influence on nineteenth-century American Presbyterianism and on American Protestantism more generally. On closer examination, however, that claim has not been established and the evidence provided seems meager. A case study of nine pioneer members of the Presbyterian Church's Laos Mission, located in northern Siam (Thailand), further demonstrates the difficulties in separating the specific influences of Princeton Seminary from the main currents of its nineteenth-century religious and cultural context. The limits of the historical record and the failure of these Old School Presbyterian missionaries to document the sources of their thinking make it impossible to establish the nature or the degree of Princeton's purported influence on them. The importance of Princeton Seminary to modern historiography, in sum, is the degree to which its history and literature deepen our understanding of its larger Old School, Presbyterian, and American evangelical contexts.

Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Princeton Theological Seminary became well known in the United States for being a center for theological education and the home of a succession of famous Presbyterian theologians, including Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and Benjamin B. Warfield. These men and a number of colleagues, former students, and compatriots articulated what has become known as the "Princeton Theology," a uniquely American blend of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy, Reformed confessional theology, and American evangel-

ical piety. Recent scholarship has claimed for Princeton Seminary and its theology a wide influence on nineteenth-century American religious thought and history that extended well beyond the confines of the Presbyterian Church. In most instances, however, the scholars making this claim simply assert Princeton's influence without providing much evidence to support the assertion. Lefferts A. Loetscher, a typical example, contends that Princeton was the Presbyterian Church's most influential theological seminary. He notes as evidence that Princeton Seminary graduates taught at other Presbyterian

seminaries and that, later in the nineteenth century, several of those seminaries used Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology* as one of their standard texts. In this and most other instances, the difficult issues of what constitutes "influence," whether simple attendance at Princeton demonstrates such influence, and how to actually measure it are passed over, leaving the impression that the surprisingly ill-defined and unsubstantiated assertion of the seminary's influence is a well-established fact.¹

The question of whether Princeton Seminary actually exerted the influence claimed by

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scholars has important implications for the historical study of the relationship of nineteenth-century American evangelical thought to American evangelicals themselves. First, is the historical record available to scholars? Can historians use that record to make a compelling case for the influence of one or another of the various institutions disseminating evangelical thought? Second, how did the influence of institutions such as Princeton Seminary relate to intellectual and theological currents abroad in the nineteenth century? Can its influence be distinguished from those currents? If not, what does it mean to claim influence for particular evangelical institutions and agencies? Third, was there sufficient cognitive diversity among various evangelical populations, such as the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., to be able to attribute substantial influence to one particular educational institution? The assertions of Princeton Seminary's influence represent something more than a curious scholarly quirk; they raise key issues in the history of nineteenth-century American theology and its relationship to American culture.

I

In his introduction to *The Princeton Theology*, Mark A. Noll provides a detailed consideration of Princeton Seminary's influence, but his evidence underscores the issues involved in defining and substantiating the claim. He observes that Princeton's influence rested on four pillars. First, Princeton represented "the largest and most influential center of training for the Presbyterian ministry," and its succession of key theologians taught over 5,500 students, many of whom went on to become important church leaders in several denominations. Second, Princeton University allied itself to Princeton Seminary for most of the nineteenth century, adding still more to the numbers who came under the Princeton influence. Third, the *Princeton Review*, the seminary's flagship publication, was "read with enthusiasm in Old School manses and seminaries throughout the country." Contemporaries praised it as highly influential. Finally, the seminary was an important agency of the Old School Presbyterian Church: Charles Hodge's annual report on the General Assembly was widely read and the seminary was a key center for training Presbyterian missionaries.² Noll concludes of the Princeton Seminary professors: "their influence was primarily intellectual. The students they taught

and the ideas they propounded were not the sole shaping influences on Presbyterians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they were among the most powerful."³ Noll does not describe what he meant by intellectual influence and focuses more on the seminary's statistical significance than on any other facet of its role inside or outside the Presbyterian Church.

Noll and Peter Wallace, more recently, flesh out Princeton Seminary's statistical significance by presenting a set of eleven tables profiling students who attended the seminary between 1812 and 1929. They argue for Princeton's influence on the basis of these tables, but again they fail to define the term. Most of the tables reveal nothing about the seminary's influence on its students or of its students on the Presbyterian Church and larger world. Figure 7 is perhaps the most suggestive as it describes the primary occupations of seminary graduates, showing that just over 71 percent became pastors, nearly 11 percent worked as educators, and nearly 6 percent became foreign missionaries.⁴

In the course of their arguments, Noll and Wallace point out some of the problems facing those who would study Princeton's influence. They acknowledge that such "anecdotal testimony" is inconclusive, showing only that Princeton had a strong influence on some graduates and little or no influence on others. They also note that the seminary's influence is difficult to measure, stating that "It would also need a detailed study of the graduates themselves, for simple attendance at an institution by no means guarantees that the student came to embrace the views of the institution's teachers."⁵ This observation casts considerable doubt on the tendency of scholars to cite the large number of Princeton Seminary graduates as proof of its influence, especially in the absence of the detailed studies proposed by Noll and Wallace. The authors, however, still claim for Princeton an "obvious" general and broad influence, in spite of the problems in detailing such an influence. They cite the number of Princeton graduates who taught at other seminaries and colleges and the number of graduates who became moderators of the general assemblies of various denominations. Yet they admit that the numbers of professors and moderators who graduated from Princeton Seminary "do not constitute normative judgments about a seminary's quality," nor, presumably, about its influence. Noll and Wallace argue rather that historians have to give attention to the activities of the seminary's

graduates played in Presbyterian and American Protestant church history.

On the one hand, Noll and Wallace propose that Princeton's influence can be measured by studying the roles its graduates later played in the Presbyterian Church and other denominations. On the other hand, they remind us that mere attendance at Princeton does not constitute proof of the seminary's influence. Without disputing that many Princeton Seminary graduates went on to play important roles in the church and nation, Noll and Wallace raise serious doubts as to whether or not those students mediated the influence of the seminary. We might also note that while they have not defined the term "influence," the authors seem to be arguing that the seminary's primary influence was ecclesiastical and political rather than intellectual. In sum, in spite of the general scholarly consensus that Princeton Seminary was highly influential in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the nature, magnitude, and reality of that influence has not been established.

Other considerations reinforce the sense that historians do not know if Princeton was as influential as claimed. In terms of historiographical method, Noll and Wallace are correct in their observation that Princeton's influence cannot be adequately measured merely by counting the number of students who sat in its lecture halls. The historiographical problem of Princeton's influence is further compounded by the seminary's intimate relationship to major currents in earlier nineteenth-century American theological and philosophical thought. Princeton Seminary stood in the conservative wing of the mainstream of American evangelicalism, more skeptical than many perhaps regarding radical piety and the antics of frontier revivalists, but still in the mainstream. The seminary particularly shared with the vast majority of Americans a commitment to Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, Baconian science, and a Newtonian world view. Sydney E. Ahlstrom notes that Common Sense Philosophy in America comprised "a vast subterranean influence, a sort of water-table nourishing dogmatics in an age of increasing doubt."⁷ Princeton also shared other key elements of its theological thinking with other American evangelicals, including most notably a common view of scripture.⁸ Those who would insist on Princeton Seminary's influence face the serious dif-

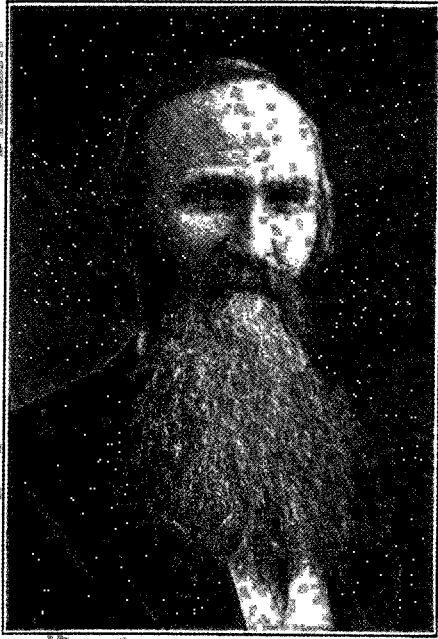
ferences and the specific influences of the seminary itself. Even where we find Princeton Seminary graduates articulating a theology clearly similar to that of their mentors, it is not enough to claim that former students who thought like Princeton did so because of Princeton's influence, unless causal links of one type or another can be made between that person's thinking and the seminary.

One approach that provides some important insights into the relationship of Princeton to its nineteenth-century context is to look at particular case studies of selected groups of Old School Presbyterians. If Princeton exerted an important influence anywhere, surely it would be among its core constituents, the members of Old School churches. Within the Old School, we would expect that Princeton would hold particular sway over Presbyterian missionaries sent out by the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) during the nineteenth century, not least of all because of the seminary's leading role in producing missionaries.⁹ The nine members of the Presbyterian BFM's mission in northern Siam, the Laos Mission, appointed between 1867 and 1880 represent one such group. These five women and four men came from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations. They included three married couples, two single women, and one single man. At the time of their appointments to the Laos Mission, they ranged in age from 21 to 39 years old, the oldest born in 1828 and the youngest in 1858. Their number included two ordained clergymen, both members of Princeton Seminary's Class of 1856.¹⁰

Is there evidence that Princeton Seminary influenced the thinking of these nine missionaries? Is there a clear, evidential link between Princeton's theology and world view and that of these missionaries? What follows is a look for historiographical proof of such a link, focusing on Princeton's influence on the missionaries' thinking as being easier to prove than its influence on their behavior.

II

The Laos Mission was founded in April 1867 when the Reverend Daniel McGilvary (1828–1911), Sophia Bradley McGilvary (1839–1923), and their two children arrived in the city of Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai was the largest of the five north-



Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary, 1881, from Daniel McGilvary, *A Half Century Among the Siamese and the Lao: An Autobiography* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1912), 239.

ern dependencies of Siam (historical Thailand), a city that from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries was the capital of the Lan Na Kingdom. The Reverend Jonathan Wilson (1830–1911) and Kate Wilson (1833–1885) joined the McGilvays in February 1868. The mission established the First Presbyterian Church of Chiang Mai that same year, even before the missionaries gained any converts. After a brief period of evangelistic success during which the mission gained seven converts, the Chiang Mai authorities initiated a brutal suppression of the new religion in September 1869, which resulted in the death of two northern Thai Christians and the scattering of the rest. The mission did not begin to recover from this persecution until 1876, and in 1880 it founded three new congregations, thus marking the end of its pioneer era. In addition to the McGilvays and Wilsons, five other missionaries worked under the Laos Mission during that pioneer era: Dr. Charles Vrooman (1841–1882), Dr. Marion Cheek (1852–1895), Sarah Bradley Cheek (1850–1933), Edna Cole (1855–1950), and Mary Campbell (1858–1881).

Daniel McGilvary graduated from Princeton Seminary in 1856 with impressive Old School credentials. He was raised in a pious family in a North Carolina hotbed of conservative Old School Scottish immigrant Presbyterianism, where he was a member of a solid congregation, the Buffalo Church. As a child his days were filled with the exercises of Presbyterian piety and the lessons of a Presbyterian education; by the age of ten he had

memorized all 107 questions and answers of the Shorter Catechism. His tiny home library contained religious books and periodicals mostly published in Philadelphia. Year after year he witnessed the impressive sacred rites and social camaraderie of the “Buffalo Communion,” a carryover from Scotland of an intensely evangelical Presbyterian communion ritual.

Before becoming a missionary, McGilvary served as a local church elder, attended Princeton Seminary, and after graduation briefly served two Old School North Carolina congregations as a pastor.¹¹

McGilvary is the only one of the pioneer members of the Laos Mission to make direct reference to the Princeton theologians in his letters and papers. Soon after his arrival in Chiang Mai, for example, he forwarded a brief article entitled “Brethren, Pray for Us” to the *Foreign Missionary*. In that article, he quotes his former professor J. Addison Alexander to the effect that Paul’s injunction to the Thessalonian Christians to pray for him (I Thessalonians 5:25) almost amounts to a commandment.¹² In 1874, McGilvary visited the Orthodox Congregational Theological Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, and commented favorably on the fact that its professors were “all Orthodox men to the handle.” He singled out one of them for special comment, writing that “Dr. Childs is a Princeton man, and interprets and teaches the Bible and the Shorter Catechism just as Drs. Hodge, [Robert Lewis] Dabney or [William S.] Plummer would.” While he observed that the rest of the faculty all came “square up” to the accepted measures of Calvinist orthodoxy, it is notable that he singled out for special attention the one man from Princeton—and that he equated Hodge with other Presbyterian theologians who were not directly linked to Princeton.¹³ In an 1872 letter to the BFM, moreover, McGilvary responded to the news that the *Princeton Review* might not continue to be sent to the mis-

sion with the statement that he "would not like to forfeit the pleasure of its perusal."¹⁴ These and a few other passing references to the Princeton circle of theologians indicate an easy familiarity with their thoughts and writings, which in turn suggests the possibility of their influence on McGilvary.¹⁵

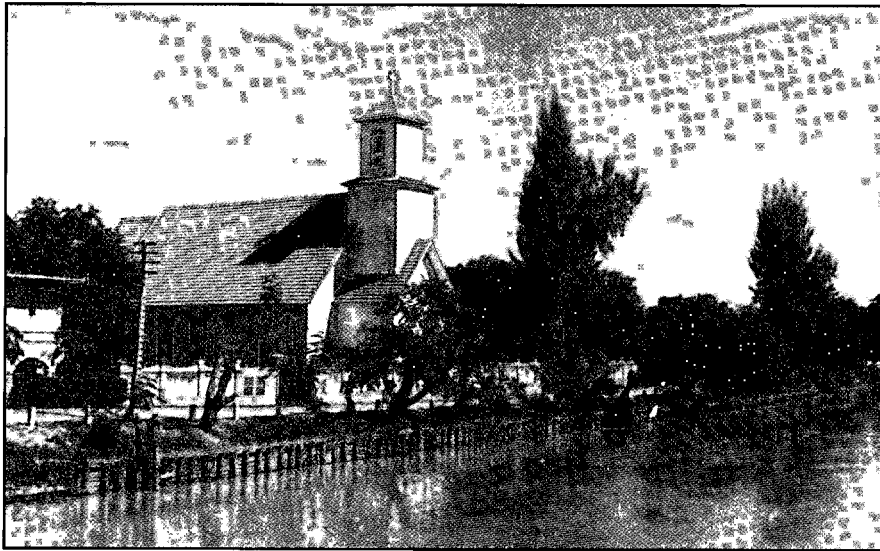
One might look at these references to Princeton Seminary in a number of ways and draw from them differing conclusions. They surely demonstrate some degree of Princeton's influence on McGilvary; he knew the Princeton circle and its writings. At the same time, he makes no such allusions to theologies or seminaries other than Princeton: Yet these passing references do not reveal the degree, extent, or direction of Princeton's influence on McGilvary. On their basis alone, the historian cannot state unequivocally that Princeton had a serious influence on his thinking, particularly when we take into account the small number of such references in an admittedly large body of letters and papers.

The most impressive evidence for Princeton's influence on McGilvary is the way in which his own theology parallels that of the Princeton theologians. Three examples will suffice. First, McGilvary shared Princeton's restrained views on revivalism. In the last days of his pastorate in two rural North Carolina Presbyterian churches in 1858, he invited a guest preacher to preach at a communion service and at an evening service prior to the Sunday celebration of the sacrament. This preacher made a strong impression on the congregation, and McGilvary later reported that at the evening service there was a "deep seriousness throughout the congregation" that led to a desire to hold further services, which subsequently led to a series of evening meetings and a period of revival.¹⁶ In his comments at the time, McGilvary emphasized the solemn nature of the evening prayer meetings; there was no excitement, no shouting, and seldom any sighing or calling aloud. Only the speakers' voices broke the silence. McGilvary insisted that a "spirit of prayer" prevailed throughout the revival, most clearly seen in the congregation's quiet, intense attention during the services. He felt that this profoundly quiet spirit confirmed that the revival was truly God's work and not contrived by any human agency.¹⁷ McGilvary's observations call to mind Archibald Alexander's warning that emotional revivalism only stirred up "feelings which belong almost entirely to our animal nature" and

did not lead to a true "sincerity of love" or the true "character of God" at all. Alexander felt that such revivalism could end up being merely "an idol of our own imagination."¹⁸

Second, McGilvary shared Princeton's understanding of the role of science, frequently termed "Baconianism," which was rooted in the Common Sense Philosophy of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) and a number of other eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. The Scottish school took strong exception to David Hume's (1711–1776) radical attack on the certainty of human knowledge, both of the physical world and of God. It argued that God created an orderly, ascertainable world and gave humanity the senses necessary to understand it. Most importantly, God planted within humanity a universal, timeless "common sense" that gives the whole human race assurance that the physical world is real. Common Sense Philosophy (or Common Sense Realism) was first transported to the United States in the last half of the eighteenth century and eventually exerted a profound influence on American thought, not least among Old School Presbyterians.¹⁹ Historians of Princeton generally agree that Common Sense Philosophy had a particularly important influence on its theology, although they do not always agree as to precisely what that influence was.²⁰

In a series of articles published in the *North Carolina Presbyterian* from June through August 1869 under the collective title "Medical Missions and Missionary Physicians," McGilvary presents his rationale for the employment of missionary medicine as a key element in the practice of foreign missions. These articles demonstrate McGilvary's commitment to Common Sense Philosophy and Baconianism and represent a remarkable exercise in the inductive method of Enlightened common sense reasoning. In the first three articles of the series, he establishes the biblical principle that missionary work is "the great work of the church," commanded by Jesus and then, in Baconian fashion, surveys an impressive array of material from missionary sources, minutely demonstrating his thesis concerning the significance of medical work for foreign missions. In sum, the line of argument in these first three articles adheres strictly to a Baconian inductive approach in which McGilvary begins with biblical principles, presents a mass of detailed data, engages in a minute examination of the facts, and establishes the truth and meaning of the general principle proven by those facts.²¹ The



First Church Chiang Mai (Gallery 3, PHS, Philadelphia).

Princetonians advocated this process of reasoning and Hodge considered it God's way of leading humanity "along the paths of knowledge."²²

In the fourth article in the series, McGilvary extends his argument to include the common sense of all of humanity. He asks "What is thus supported by Scriptural illustrations and divine example and the acknowledged influence that the healing art and medical missions have exerted in all countries where the experiment has been made, is found in accord with the common ideas of most nations."²³ He thus claims that "there is a natural congruity between the two professions" of doctor and priest and asserts that these two professions carry out analogous roles, one ministering to the body and the other to the soul. McGilvary goes on to observe that no missionary agency is as likely to touch the human heart as missionary medicine, for medical missions reach out to help people at their hour of greatest suffering. People find it hard to resist the kindness shown them at such times of need. Citing the example of Jesus, McGilvary concludes that

The great characteristics of human nature are the same the world over. And the means that were seen adapted to reach the heart of the Jews of our Saviour's time will be equally available wherever the sons and daughters of suffering and sorrow are found. And these are the inevitable concomitants of man, as man, in his present state.²⁴

Princeton-like ideas of Scottish Common Sense Philosophy abound in this brief statement as well as throughout the article: Human nature is one.

It shares a set of commonsensical ideas. What worked in the past will work just as well today. Human nature is necessarily what it is. It can be nothing else.

Finally, McGilvary also thought about the seat of and the remedy for sin, as did his mentors at Princeton. In his analysis of the nature and place of human sin, Charles Hodge argued that the human soul is a single entity comprised of heart and mind and that sin resides in the heart. Sin, he felt, is an evil corruption of the heart. Hodge held that regeneration of the heart and the whole soul requires knowledge of the truth—a knowledge both objective and biblical—and it also requires the work of the Holy Spirit to make the truth effectual. Knowledge alone, without the Holy Spirit, cannot reach or change the heart. Those who learn the truth, acknowledge the wickedness of their heart, and feel the presence of the Spirit thereby experience regeneration and conversion, by which they obtain spiritual discernment and illumination. Their hearts are changed and their souls renewed.²⁵ According to Hodge, the process of conversion, at its simplest, involves the Holy Spirit energizing objective theological information aimed at reaching and changing the human heart.

McGilvary knew this process well. While he does not state his views as systematically and fully as Hodge, his correspondence emphasizes the wickedness of the human heart, and he evidently felt that the conditions of "heathenism" in Siam made it even more difficult for the northern Thai people to submit to the "humbling doctrines of the Gospel." Regeneration, according to McGilvary, involves a process of enlightenment by which truth works through the mind to affect a clear change of heart.²⁶ He summarizes the whole process as follows:

God by His external providence may throw a man within reach of instruction but neither that providence nor that instruction will reach the heart unless the Holy Spirit attend it. It is not the force of logic, the power of arguments nor the

eloquence of appeal, which leads men to the Saviour—God who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness must shine into the heart to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.²⁷

Whether according to McGilvary or Hodge, the steps of regeneration are precisely the same: objective knowledge (instruction), the energizing attendance of the Spirit, and a changed heart.

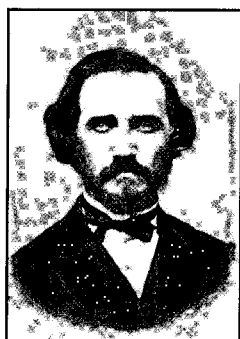
In light of these and other important theological parallels between McGilvary and Princeton, it does seem probable that the Princeton Theology exercised a direct influence on Daniel McGilvary's thinking. The problem we face, however, is how to measure the degree of that influence or even to state with assurance that it existed. In terms of the evidence, McGilvary's letters and papers contain no statement where he attributes his thinking even indirectly to the Princeton circle of professors and fellow travelers. The evidence for such influence is circumstantial.

Furthermore, we might well account for elements of McGilvary's thinking without recourse to Princeton, or at least Princeton alone. As a pious Old School southerner, McGilvary likely came under the influence of southern Reformed theology—a branch of Old School thinking that had many affinities with Princeton but developed beyond direct Princeton influence. Morton Smith goes so far as to suggest that Virginia gave birth both to the southern tradition and to Princeton; the theology they shared, that is, originated in the South and not in Princeton.²⁸ McGilvary himself alludes to the southern school in a letter written in 1874 on the occasion of his visit to the Orthodox Congregational Theological Seminary. He observed that the Hartford professors were "all Orthodox men to the handle" and lumped together the theologies of Hodge, Dabney, and Plummer.²⁹ The fact that McGilvary equated two southern theologians (Dabney and Plummer) with one Princetonian (Hodge) suggests that McGilvary drew his own theology partly from Princeton and partly from the South. In one sense, this speculation is purely conjectural, built on the one passing reference to Dabney and Plummer. In another sense, it is difficult to believe that McGilvary's intimate exposure to southern Old School Presbyterianism during the first twenty-five years of his life did not leave a mark on him, one that cannot be clearly attributed to Princeton Seminary.

The point is that church historians have no way to dissect McGilvary's thinking with any precision. One has to wonder if he could have carved his theology into neat chunks labeled "influenced by Hodge" or "influenced by Dabney." While an argument can be made that McGilvary thought like the Princetonians, it can also be posited that he thought like the southerners.³⁰

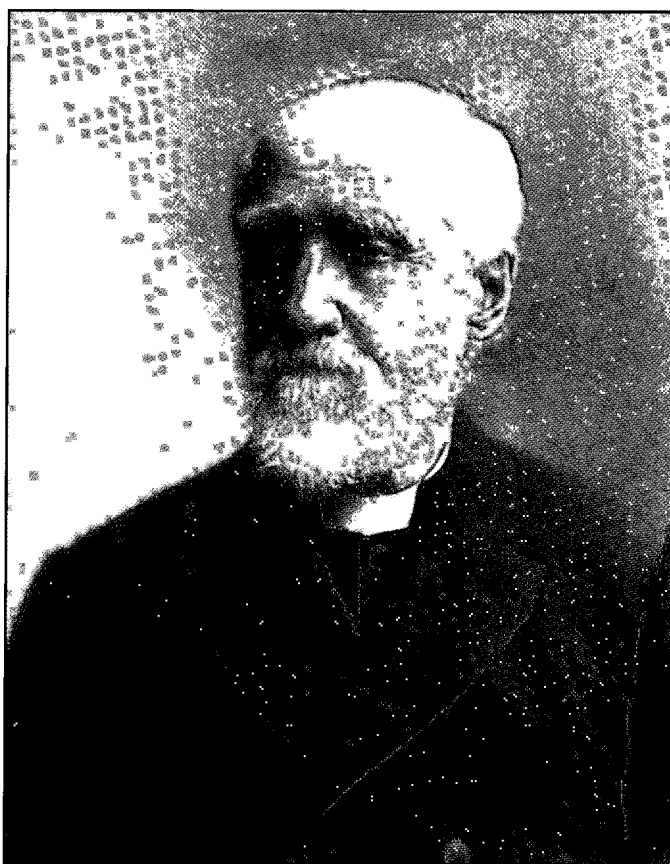
Historians may also account for McGilvary's theological views on such important subjects as revivalism and Baconianism apart from Princeton. In terms of Baconian science and Common Sense Philosophy, historians of nineteenth-century America generally acknowledge that both had a wide-ranging and profound influence on American thought that included not only Old School Presbyterians of all varieties, southern as well as northern, but also such apparently disparate groups as the Harvard Unitarians.³¹ Michael Gauvreau makes it clear that the United States was virtually unique among English-speaking nations in the extent to which it accepted Common Sense as its semi-official philosophy.³² Given the significance of the Scottish philosophy for his time and culture, it must be concluded that McGilvary experienced the influence of Common Sense thinking long before he entered Princeton Seminary. And while Hodge and his colleagues at the seminary may have helped McGilvary express his philosophy more articulately, one cannot credit his clear commitment to Common Sense thought to Princeton alone, even indirectly. In the same manner, his moderate attitudes concerning revivalism were generally held throughout the Old School, not least of all by the southern churches where he grew up.³³ Parallels to the thinking of Princeton are undeniable in both cases, but it is not clear how significant they may be, which is precisely the problem we face in trying to gauge the influence Princeton had on McGilvary's thinking. Even though he has left us a relatively large collection of letters and papers, including an autobiography, this material contains no footnotes documenting the sources of his thought. It contains only sufficient hints to safely conclude that McGilvary thought like a Princetonian—but also like a southerner of the southern tradition, like an Old School Presbyterian more generally, and like the great majority of evangelical Americans of his day. Given the nature of the sources, it is not possible to separate Princeton from the South from America.

Jonathan Wilson, n.d. (RG 360, PHS, Philadelphia)



Tracing the possible influence of the Princeton Theology on Jonathan Wilson, the other Princeton graduate who worked in Chiang Mai prior to 1880, is even more difficult. Wilson was a far less prolific writer than McGilvary and, unlike his colleague, left to posterity neither an autobiography nor any substantial articles of a theological or reflective nature. His letters and papers, amounting largely to his correspondence with the BFM and a few published letters in the Presbyterian press, suggest a man of conventional piety and theology whose thinking fell well within the boundaries of what Princeton taught. Wilson was born in western Pennsylvania, one of the strongest centers of Presbyterianism. Pennsylvania Presbyterians knew Princeton well, a relationship illustrated by the fact that seven other Pennsylvanians entered Princeton Seminary with him in 1853. The eight Pennsylvanians made up nearly one-fourth of Wilson and McGilvary's class, which numbered 31. Some 29 students from Pennsylvania, furthermore, enrolled in the seminary for the 1853–1854 school year, out of a total student body of 108.³⁴ After spending some time studying in the homes of two Presbyterian ministers, Wilson attended a church-related academy and then entered Jefferson College in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. Upon graduating from Jefferson in 1851, he taught at Blair Hall, Faggs Manor, Pennsylvania, for two years. The Synod of Virginia founded Jefferson College in 1802, and for a time the school served frontier Presbyterian churches as an important agency for training clergy. Blair Hall shared a similar history, with many of its graduates going into teaching or the ordained ministry.³⁵ Wilson graduated from Princeton Seminary in 1856, and then worked for a year as a Presbyterian missionary to the Choctaw Indians in Oklahoma, teaching at the Spencer Academy.³⁶

Wilson's letters and papers also contain clear parallels with Princeton. He, for example, shared in its love of science, and one of his colleagues remembered that "Father Wilson was a poet and his name will always suggest to us the songs of Zion; but in theology and in natural science also he was a deep thinker. His Schaff-



Jonathan Wilson later in life, n.d. (RG 360, PHS, Philadelphia).

Herzog Cyclopaedia was studied and marked page by page showing no superficial reading."³⁷ Wilson himself proposed the use of both science and medicine as ways to undermine northern Thai confidence in "the muttering of charms and the incantations of the spirit-doctor."³⁸ In 1894 he commented on biblical inerrancy, an issue that in 1893 had exploded on the floor of the Presbyterian General Assembly during the famous Briggs heresy trial. Wilson voiced full support of the orthodox views championed by Princeton Seminary and admonished the BFM to send to northern Siam only missionaries who rejected higher criticism.³⁹ Although we can speak with less certainty about his other theological views, they do seem similar to Princeton's; his views on heart and mind, for example, were not discernibly different from those of Hodge and McGilvary.⁴⁰ Wilson's correspondence, however, lacks even the scattered allusions to Princeton found in McGilvary's; without knowledge of Wilson's Old School background it would be difficult to discern the sources of his thought. He writes much like any other pious American evangelical of his day.



(above) Mrs. Daniel McGilvary on the steps of her home, Chiang Mai, 1914 (RG 401, PHS, Philadelphia).

(right) Mrs. Sarah Bradley Cheek, from McFarland, *Historical Sketch*, 129.



Without doubting that the Princeton Theology must have had some influence on his thinking, there is simply no way to ascertain the nature or the degree of that influence.

Wilson possessed a romantic-like inclination that appears to have cut a deeper channel than was usual for Princetonians.⁴¹ Raleigh Don Scovel characterizes the Princeton theologians as bland, conventional pious men who lived happily settled middle class lives. They were not prepared, he argues, to struggle with deeper tensions and anxieties, and he characterizes them as having limited religious experience and insists that the word "conventional" is an apt summary of their religious mentality and spirituality.⁴² While perhaps overstated, Scovel's description does point to the tendency of Princeton to be more subdued in its evangelicalism than a great many American evangelicals. Wilson seems to have been less moderate than his mentors. In his case, death had been a constant companion over the years, taking from him two wives and three children during his missionary career. These deaths touched an emotional core in him that flowed through his life in a mixture of sorrow, joy, anger, and faith that eventually found expression in the lyrics of the hundreds of hymns he translated into northern Thai, including some he wrote himself. Hints of his romantic inclinations are also found in the flowery language of his tearful, emotional letters to the BFM as his loved-ones died.⁴³ It was in his hymns, however, that his colleagues most clearly saw the more poetic, semi-romantic side of his nature. Just after his death one wrote "Dr. Jonathan Wilson was born with a poetic nature, but it was only after more than a life time of

service had been given to other lines of missionary work that he began to put into permanent form the songs that had for years been thrilling his soul."⁴⁴ This is not to say that individuals under Princeton's influence could not be emotional. However, in Wilson's case his flowery piety and romanticism seemed unusual for his connections to Princeton. They seem to place him closer to the evangelical American mainstream than Princeton.

McGilvary and Wilson were Princeton Seminary graduates. Their theologies fell well within the boundaries of Princeton. There is no conclusive evidence, nonetheless, directly linking their thinking to the writings or instruction of their mentors at Princeton. The more closely one examines that thinking, the more it melds into the grand backdrop of conservative American commonsensical evangelicalism. It may well be that either or both were deeply influenced by the capable teachers at Princeton Seminary. It seems logical that they would be. The problem remains that one has no unequivocal proof. In these two cases, at least, macro-certainties regarding Princeton's purported influence fade into the micro-uncertainties inherent in the historical record.



Mary Margaretta Campbell and Edna Cole, n.d. (RG 360, PHS, Philadelphia).

III

As just shown, Wilson and McGilvary fell into the category of those Old School Presbyterians who seemed to have been influenced by Princeton Seminary, even though that influence cannot be clearly demonstrated. The other seven pioneer members of the Laos Mission were even less clearly influenced by Princeton, if at all. The most important in terms of length of service and contribution to the work of the mission were the two senior married women, Sophia McGilvary and Kate Wilson. Sarah Cheek, Sophia's step-sister, also had some limited influence over the work of the mission prior to 1880, as did her husband, Dr. Marion Cheek.

Sophia Bradley McGilvary and Sarah Bradley Cheek present a particular problem for those wishing to discover the influence of the Princeton Theology on the Laos Mission. Their father was Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, perhaps the most important Protestant missionary ever to have served in Siam. Bradley grew up in the heart of the "burned-over district" of western New York, one of the key centers of the radical frontier revivalism of the Second Great Awakening.⁴⁵ He underwent a conversion experience in the white heat of those revivals and later adopted Charles Finney's views on sinless perfection, which held that it is possible for humans to live free of sin, if they live the way Jesus did. The majority of orthodox evangelicals considered Finney's views outlandish and heretical, and Bradley had to withdraw from the ecumenical board on which he served in Siam, the American



Mary Margaretta Campbell, n.d. (RG 360, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia).

Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. His biographer notes that even his former mentor in New York City, Dr. Gardiner Spring, a Presbyterian minister with a revivalist background, rejected Bradley for having gone over to "Finneyism." Sophia and Sarah thus came from a New School Finneyite background unacceptable to the Old School.⁴⁶ Princeton's brand of theology is likely thus to have played little role in their upbringing, a fact that McGilvary obliquely acknowledged when he wrote to the BFM explaining why he was marrying the daughter of a Finneyite. He stated of Sophia's family and father,

Their doctrinal views differed once considerably from our Old School standards—but one whose heart is so near right & who loves the Saviour & his cause so much as Dr. Bradley could not help from coming right. He possibly might not yet assent to some of our statements of doctrine but I've found him quite an orthodox Calvinist.⁴⁷

None of this sounds like Princeton. It is difficult to say much more because only a few letters from Sophia exist and virtually no records from Sarah that give any clues as to their theological views. Those views likely were compatible with Old School Presbyterianism, but it is apparent that they almost certainly did not originate with Princeton. The fact is that we have no way of knowing the actual sources of their thought.

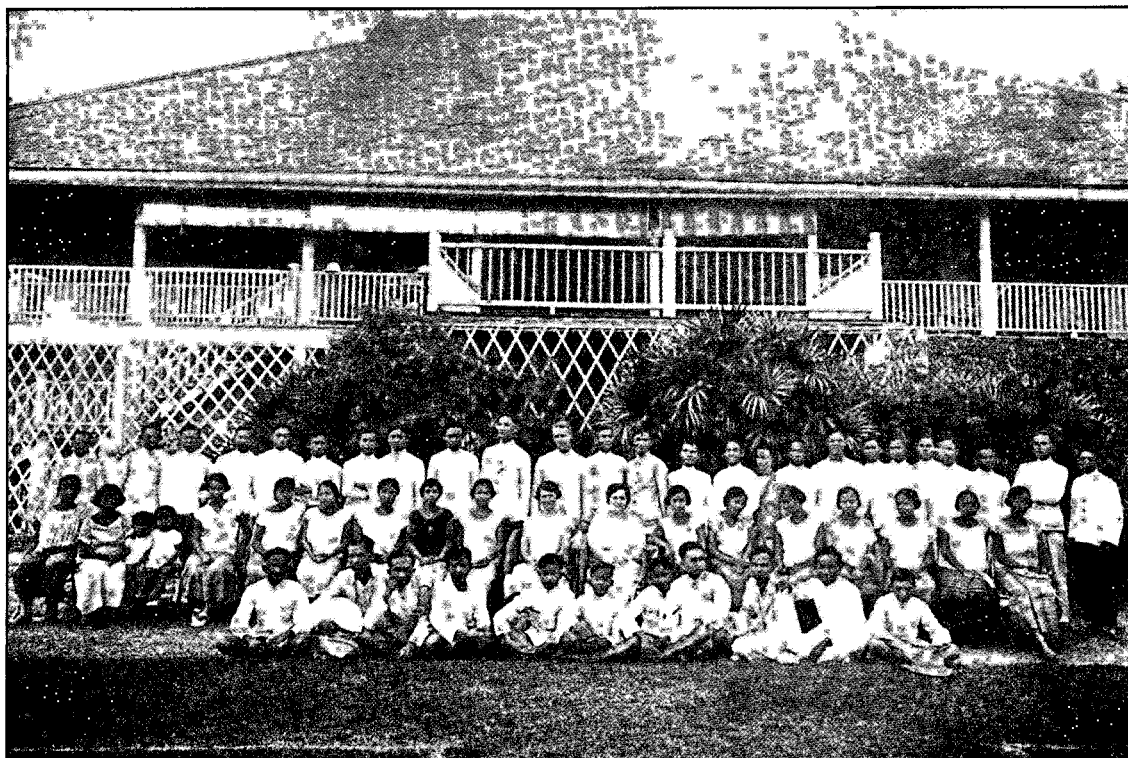
As in the case of Sophia McGilvary and Sarah Cheek, we also have little information concerning the theology of Kate Wilson. We can infer, however, something of her religious experience and theological orientation from the fact that when she left Chiang Mai permanently in 1876 because of illness, she moved to Oxford, Ohio, where she maintained a close association with the Western Female Seminary. When she was too ill to care for herself, she stayed at the seminary, and her children went to school there in what she called a "Christian environment."⁴⁸ Founded in 1853, the school grew out of a New England-based movement in women's education that went back to the 1820s and endeavored to promote Christian home life through training girls in a Christian environment. Helen Peabody, Western's founder, studied and taught at Mt. Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts, one of the most influential institutions in early women's education. Western emphasized domestic training, academic study, and Christian piety. Students, as a rule, boarded at the school. The school also prided itself on the fact that between 1853 and 1880, forty-one of its graduates became missionaries. During the winter months of 1878, the school experienced a period of intense revival.⁴⁹ We can infer from Wilson's long and close relationship with Western Female Seminary that she felt comfortable with the New England heritage of the school, a heritage that does not have any obvious connections with Princeton. Otherwise, Wilson has left very few letters or papers, and what there is of them reveal a rather ordinary piety—again, without any discernable links to Princeton, or even to Old School thinking as such.

The last two women to serve in the Laos Mission up to 1880, Edna Cole and Mary Campbell were classmates and fellow graduates of Western Female Seminary. During their last year, the school underwent its revival of 1878, which encouraged each of them to respond positively to a request from the Laos Mission for missionary teachers. They both had Presbyterian connections, especially

Campbell. She came from Lexington, Kentucky, where her father served as a Presbyterian minister. Her father had attended Jefferson College, where he formed a close friendship with Jonathan Wilson.

Edna Cole came from St. Louis and belonged to the Second Presbyterian Church there.⁵⁰ Cole and Campbell's correspondence suggests the kind of enthusiastic, pious orthodoxy that one might expect of missionaries who studied at Western, one marked by an abiding sense of trust in God's calling and a feeling of personal closeness to Jesus.⁵¹ While as single missionaries both left a somewhat more prolific historical record than the married women, there is yet again nothing that makes direct reference to Princeton or even contains indirect allusions. At the same time, their warm-hearted piety conformed to what would have been acceptable to the Princeton theologians.

Cole and Campbell's almost generic evangelicalism also suggests the possibility that their ages may have influenced their theology. They were both born in the 1850s, as was Sarah Cheek, nearly a full generation after the senior members of the mission and at a time when the apparently hard boundaries between the Old School, New School, and even the more radical evangelicalism of the Methodists and Baptists were softening. Nathan Hatch notes that during the course of the antebellum era there was a gradual blending and convergence of the radical and more conservative wings of evangelicalism, so that by 1850 the conservatives had taken over many of the radicals' revivalist techniques and put them to use in ways acceptable to the middle class. The radicals, meanwhile, had become more concerned about such things as a learned clergy, education, decorous worship, theological complexities, grand edifices, and propriety in behavior and dress. If Whitney Cross is correct, the more extreme tendencies of the radical party to engage in a misguided, judgmental, and irresponsible "ultraism" contained the seeds of its own destruction and could not be sustained over the long run.⁵² The same process of theological amalgamation was at work among Presbyterians, quietly mending the massive rift between the Old and New Schools symbolized most clearly in the Old School's successful excising of four New School Synods in 1837. By the 1860s, the theological differences no longer seemed as great between the two as they once had, and in 1869 the Old School and New School denominations reunited. In reality their theological differences were never



A Bible class at the Campbell residence in Chiang Mai, from McFarland, *Historical Sketch*, 225.

as great as radicals on both sides imagined.⁵³ It is in these larger theological and ecclesiastical currents that one is likely to discover the main influences on the theological thinking of Cole and Campbell, especially considering their schooling at Western.

These brief theological biographies of the five women who worked under the Laos Mission up to 1880 suggest that there are particular problems and issues involved in ascertaining the influence of Princeton on Presbyterian women missionaries. The married women tended to stand in the shadows of their husbands and leave most of the correspondence in their husbands' hands, which severely limits access to their thinking as well as to their role in missionary work. Nineteenth-century Presbyterian women, including missionary women, generally did not have access to a formal theological education, which suggests they received much less direct exposure to the systematic theology taught at Princeton. That is to say, the general theological currents abroad in the latter antebellum era most likely had much greater impact on Presbyterian women than did any particular school of theology or theological institution.

The relationship of Dr. Marion Cheek, the second physician to serve in Chiang Mai, to Princeton Seminary is the most perplexing of any of the nine missionaries. Cheek arrived in Chiang Mai

in March 1875 and for a time in the 1880s exerted some influence on the life of the mission, but for the period under study here he was still a young and inexperienced missionary doctor. He also made several trips down river to Bangkok, each of which took him away from Chiang Mai for months at a time.⁵⁴ In a letter written some months after Cheek arrived in Chiang Mai, McGilvary described him as loving the Bible and Hodge's theology.⁵⁵ Cheek, however, was not theologically trained, and his correspondence, whether before or after 1880, contains nothing identifiable with Princeton or even the Old School. He, unlike most of his colleagues, tended to write matter-of-fact letters that contained little theological or pious expression at all. He did, however, write an article for a book published by the BFM, which indicates that he shared the Old School's interest in science and Baconian induction. In that article he contrasts northern Thai superstition and speculation to the western medical methods of patient observation and intelligent experimentation.⁵⁶ What evidence exists, however, suggests that the Princeton Theology influenced Cheek only to a limited degree, if at all. McGilvary later complained to the BFM that Cheek eliminated evangelism from his practice of medicine, something neither McGilvary nor his professors at Princeton could condone.⁵⁷

The relationship of the five women members and Cheek to the Princeton Theology, in sum, points to the difficulties in asserting that Princeton significantly influenced Old School Presbyterian thinking. They represent two-thirds of this admittedly limited sample. Two of the six, Sophia McGilvary and Sarah Cheek, appear to have had deeper roots in New School piety and thinking than in the Old School generally or Princeton in particular. The matter is unclear, but certainly there is no reason to claim any influence for Princeton on the basis of the historical record. Three others, Kate Wilson, Edna Cole, and Mary Campbell, had Presbyterian roots but also seem to have had connections with a brand of New England revivalistic piety that grew out of a theological tradition different from Princeton's. Again, the records give no evidence for any direct influence by Princeton on any of them. In Cheek's case, there is only McGilvary's word that he "loved Hodge's theology," an observation that seems in light of later events to reveal more about McGilvary's theological orientation than Cheek's.

It may be argued that these observations are unfair and even an exercise in futility. After all, the historical record is not sufficiently clear to discern whether Princeton exercised any clear influence over the thinking of these six individuals. The point is well taken, but it works against claims of Princetonian influence as much as it does against denial of such influence. Of the eight missionaries discussed thus far, only Daniel McGilvary has left a large enough body of letters and papers to claim a reasonable knowledge of his theology. That theology is admittedly very much like Princeton's and almost surely reflects some degree of influence by the Princeton theologians, but that is not unreservedly clear. The evidence, even in this best case scenario, is circumstantial. For McGilvary's colleagues, there is no way of discerning the degree of Princeton's influence, and the circumstantial evidence is mixed. It was possibly significant in Jonathan Wilson's case. It was probably insignificant or nonexistent in Sophia McGilvary and Sarah Cheek's case. Princeton may have had some limited influence on Kate Wilson, Edna Cole, and Mary Campbell, although the matter is doubtful at best.

The last of the pioneer members of the Laos Mission was Dr. Charles Vrooman, the only one of the nine who failed to pass theological muster with McGilvary. Vrooman, a Canadian trained at the Medical Department of the University of

Michigan, arrived in Chiang Mai in April 1872. He stayed only for a short period, during which time he suffered health problems and may also have experienced some interpersonal tensions with other members of the mission. He left Chiang Mai permanently in June 1873. In the same letter to the BFM in which McGilvary praised Cheek for his love of Hodge's theology, he wrote that Vrooman had been a failure as a missionary because he lacked a strong foundation in religious orthodoxy.⁵⁸ McGilvary did not make clear the precise nature of Vrooman's theological failings, but in a letter to the BFM, Dr. Samuel R. House of the Siam Mission (Laos Mission's sister mission in central Siam) complained of Vrooman that "his doctrinal and denominational sympathies are all with the Wesleyan Church in which he was born and brought up."⁵⁹ It can be inferred from McGilvary and House's comments that Vrooman showed evidence of a Methodist Arminian piety, which would be unacceptable to these committed Old School missionaries.

Vrooman's case is instructive in a particular sense. In his autobiography, McGilvary remembers that Vrooman had attended "Dr. Cuyler's church in Brooklyn,"⁶⁰ referring to Dr. Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, who graduated from Princeton College in 1841, Princeton Seminary in 1846, and eventually became pastor of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, in 1860. Under his leadership, the Lafayette Avenue Church became one of the largest churches in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.⁶¹ Vrooman's association with Cuyler's church serves as a reminder that proximity to Princeton graduates does not necessarily imply influence. In this particular case, the influence of a "Princeton pulpit" did not transform a Wesleyan into a Calvinist, which is to say that simply counting up the number of Princeton graduates between two given dates and describing how many took up which of a variety of ecclesiastical positions does not "prove" Princeton's influence on the thinking of their parishioners.

IV

Michael Coleman's study of nineteenth-century Presbyterian missionary attitudes toward Native Americans deals with records of the same type as those of the Laos Mission and alludes to the same problem of how to establish links between Princeton Seminary and Presbyterian



Dr. and Mrs. McGilvary 50 years after their marriage, from McGilvary, *Half Century*, 428.

missionary thought on the field. Coleman attributes Presbyterian missionary attitudes toward Native Americans to the "Princeton Theology," but he points out that the theology he finds in their records is a "stripped-down" or a "simplified" version of the Princeton system, which the missionaries alluded to haphazardly and infrequently. Those records, he contends, do not contain the full, carefully thought out dogmatic theology of the Princeton circle of theologians.⁶² Although he is certain that Princeton influenced missionary thought and behavior, Coleman must be added to the long list of scholars who fail to show any evidence that such was the case. Indeed, his frustration with the sketchy theological content of those missionaries' records indicates the uncertainty of his assumption of Princeton's influence.

The case of the nine pioneer members of the Laos Mission throws even greater doubt on the "fact" of Princeton's influence, the point being not so much that the seminary did not exercise influence over the thinking of Old School Presbyterians and others but that modern historians do not actually know if it did. There is some reason, most historians of Princeton agree, to assume that Princeton Seminary did exercise an important measure of influence, but the reasons turn out to be flimsy and uncertain on examination. McGilvary, thus, would seem to be a prime example of Princeton's influence. Instead, he becomes a key example of precisely the opposite argument, namely of how difficult it is to establish the historical reality of Princeton's influence. He never claimed to have been influenced by Princeton. His theological writings contain no footnotes to establish their cognitive pedigree. Several passing references to the Princeton circle demonstrate that he remembered his professors but not that he



Daniel McGilvary and Jonathan Wilson, n.d. (RG 401, PHS, Philadelphia).

thought as he did because of them. Parallels in his thinking to Princeton might just as well be attributed, in the main, to his being a southern Presbyterian as to his having studied at Princeton. Historians, in his particular case, are left with that frustrating, age-old historiographical problem that what seems almost certainly to have been true cannot be proven to have been so. Princeton must have been an important source of McGilvary's thinking, but it is impossible to resolve the major intellectual and theological currents of his day into specific strands of influence. When Jonathan Wilson, another Princeton Seminary graduate, is considered, the problem of relying on limited evidence to prove that Princeton significantly influenced its students, its church, and the larger world of nineteenth century American religious thinking becomes even more perplexing. On the basis of these two examples, indeed, one can only wonder whether Noll and Wallace's call for case studies to ascertain the real influence of Princeton study is at all practical. Given the nature of the historical record, it seems impossible to establish a clear evidential chain of influence from Princeton to pulpit to indigenous population.

The cases of the remaining seven members of the early Laos Mission drive home the difficulties involved in proving Princeton's influence on the people in the churches. Those seven missionaries

had no theological training, and the sketchy biographical hints point toward the New School, New England, or even Methodism as much as or more than they do toward the Old School and Princeton. While their scattered, largely passing theological expressions fall within the general parameters of Princeton, the records that survive from these seven Presbyterian missionaries contain nothing that is attributable to Princeton Seminary's influence. The inherent difficulties in defining and describing Princeton Seminary's supposed influence on nineteenth-century Presbyterian and American religious history serve thus as a reminder that such institutional influences cannot be separated from the central cultural currents of their day.

This is not to say that Princeton Seminary's rich history contains nothing of significance to the study of nineteenth-century religious thought. But based on the records of the Laos Mission, that importance has to be measured in a different way than that implied by contemporary scholarship. Specific evidence of Princeton is spotty in those records. What abounds is evidence of Scottish Common Sense Realism, Baconian scientific thinking, Old School Presbyterian theology, and moderate American evangelicalism. This "package" of ideas was, of course, taught by the Princeton theologians, but they did not create it; it existed outside the confines of Princeton, and Princeton was its product as much as its producer. Perhaps, then, the importance of nineteenth-century Princeton lies not so much in its demonstrable influence on others but rather in the fact that it offers a better understanding of the views of a sizable number of people who thought the same way as the Princetonians—whatever the sources of that thought.

The records of the nine pioneer members of the Laos Mission support this more restrained impression of Princeton Seminary's influence. The seminary is present in those records, but

only as an indistinct shadow and only in the presence of a number of other cultural agencies, including the Buffalo Church in North Carolina, the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, southern Reformed theology, Jefferson College, Blair Hall, the Spencer Academy, the Bradley family, Western Female Seminary, Second Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, and Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn—to name only some of the numerous institutions and groups that impinged on these nine lives. Princeton's influence on the Presbyterian Church and on American Protestantism, in sum, has to be seen as taking place within a much larger context and in conjunction with many other institutions, all of which reinforced each other in mediating the truly influential cultural and intellectual currents of nineteenth-century America.

This study of the letters and papers of these nine mid-nineteenth-century Presbyterians rotates the question of Princeton Seminary's influence precisely 180 degrees by highlighting that Princeton and the Presbyterian Church stood within a larger American evangelical context and shared many important characteristics with that context. A person, thus, might have an 1840s Finneyite for a father and still marry into the Laos Mission. She could find a home in a New England-style women's college after serving in an Old School Presbyterian mission for some years. One could be young, romantic, and yet easily conform to the piety of and be acceptable to senior missionaries committed to Old School Calvinism. These conclusions should prompt another look at the usual assumption that the Princeton Theology stood out against its milieu in a particularly influential way. Perhaps it did, but the lives of the pioneer members of the Laos Mission suggest another conclusion: Princeton was the product of a widespread religious and intellectual culture as much or more than it was its creator. **P**

Notes

¹Lefferts A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church Since 1869* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), 21. For passing assertions of Princeton Seminary's influence see also Lefferts A. Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment: Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton Theological Seminary* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), ix-x; Earl William Kennedy, "From Pessimism to Optimism:

Francis Turretin and Charles Hodge on "The Last Things," in *Servant Gladly: Essays in Honor of John W. Beardslee III*, ed. Jack D. Klunder and Russell L. Gasero (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989), 102; Earl William Kennedy, "An Historical Analysis of Charles Hodge's Doctrines of Sin and Particular Grace" (Th.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1968), 81; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, ed.

James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), 262–63; John W. Hart, “Princeton Theological Seminary: The Reorganization of 1929,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 58 (Summer 1980): 124–41; Ernest R. Sandeen, “The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism,” *Church History* 31 (September 1962): 308; W. Andrew Hoffecker, “Benjamin B. Warfield,” in *The Princeton Theology*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989), 65; and Mark A. Noll, “The Princeton Review,” *Westminster Journal of Theology* 50 (Fall 1988): 289.

²Mark A. Noll, “Introduction,” *The Princeton Theology 1812–1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield*, ed. Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), 19–24.

³Ibid., 24.

⁴Peter Wallace and Mark Noll, “The Students of Princeton Seminary, 1812–1929: A Research Note,” *American Presbyterians* 72 (Fall 1994): 210.

⁵Ibid., 203, 213.

⁶Ibid., 214.

⁷Sydney E. Ahlstrom, “The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology,” *Church History* 24 (1955): 268. See also George M. Marsden, “Every One’s Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America,” in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 81ff.

⁸Randall H. Balmer, “The Princetonians and Scripture: A Reconsideration,” *Westminster Journal of Theology* 44 (Fall 1982): 355.

⁹Noll, “Introduction,” 24.

¹⁰The term “Laos” (pronounced Lao) does not here refer to the modern nation state of Laos, but to the historical northern dependencies of Siam. For studies of the history of the Laos Mission see Daniel McGilvary, *A Half Century Among the Siamese and the Lao: An Autobiography* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912); Herbert R. Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua: A Study of Northern Thai Church History* (Bangkok: Chuan Press, 1984); and Philip J. Hughes, *Proclamation and Response: A Study of the History of the Christian Faith in Northern Thailand* (Chiang Mai: Manuscript Division, Payap College, 1982). See also the relevant chapters in, George Bradley McFarland, ed. *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828–1928* (Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1928); Kenneth E. Wells, *History of Protestant Work in Thailand 1828–1958* (Bangkok: Church of Christ in Thailand, 1958); and Alex G. Smith, *Siamese Gold: A History of Church Growth in Thailand* (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan, 1982).

¹¹McGilvary, *Half Century*, 20–23. For comments on Old School Presbyterianism in North Carolina, see Guion Griffis

Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1937), 36–41, 353. For a description of McGilvary’s Highlander cultural and ecclesiastical heritage in North Carolina, see Cornelia Hudson, “Life of Daniel McGilvary, unpublished typescript, n.d., 1–7. For a history of his home church, see W. L. Lacy, “Buffalo Church: Centennial Address 1897,” typescript copy, n.d. For the history of one of the congregations he served as pastor, see John K. Roberts, *History of Union Presbyterian Church* (Carthage, N.C.: Kelly Printing Co., 1910), esp. 16–17. And for a helpful description of the origins and importance of Scottish communion celebrations in the United States, see Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), esp. 55ff, 65–66.

¹²McGilvary, undated letter, *Foreign Missionary* 28 (September 1869): 8. For a similar reference to J. A. Alexander, see McGilvary, *Half Century*, 179.

¹³McGilvary, letter dated July 13, 1874, *North Carolina Presbyterian New Series* 7, 344 (August 12, 1874): 2. “Dr. Childs” was the Reverend Dr. Thomas S. Childs, a New England Presbyterian who graduated from Princeton Seminary in 1850 and subsequently served as a pastor and seminary and college instructor in Connecticut and Ohio. He published at least two articles in the *Princeton Review*. See *Encyclopedia of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, ed. Alfred Nevin (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Encyclopedia Publishing Co., 1884), s.v. “Childs, Thomas S., D.D.”

¹⁴McGilvary to Irving, September 27, 1872, vol. 3, Records of the Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Microfilm copy at the Payap University Archives, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Hereafter cited as “BFM.”

¹⁵For other passing references, see also McGilvary, *Half Century*, 21–22, 33, and McGilvary to Lowrie, November 8, 1875, vol. 3, BFM.

¹⁶McGilvary, *Half Century*, 41.

¹⁷Daniel McGilvary, “Revival in Moore County,” *North Carolina Presbyterian* 1 (January 8, 1858): 1.

¹⁸Archibald Alexander, *Practical Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1850), 238, cf. 242. See also Charles Hodge, *Conference Papers* (New York: Scribner’s, 1879), 338–39.

¹⁹For Common Sense Philosophy, see S. A. Grave, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960) and Keith Lehrer, *Thomas Reid* (1989; reprint, London: Routledge, 1999). For American Baconianism, see Herbert Hovenkamp, *Science and Religion in America, 1800–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978) and Walter H. Conser, Jr., *God and the Natural World: Religion and Science in Antebellum America* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993). See also Elizabeth Flower and

Murray G. Murphey, *A History of Philosophy in America* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1977).

²⁰John C. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology* (Marlton, N.J.: Mack, 1978), 287; John William Stewart, "The Tethered Theology: Biblical Criticism, Common Sense Philosophy, and the Princeton Theologians, 1812–1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990), 252–55, 267–69; and Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment*, 161–62.

²¹Daniel McGilvary, "Medical Missions and Missionary Physicians—No. I," *North Carolina Presbyterian* New Series 2, 77 (June 23, 1869): 1; Daniel McGilvary, "Medical Missions and Missionary Physicians—No. II," *North Carolina Presbyterian* New Series 2, 78 (June 30, 1869): 1; and Daniel McGilvary, "Medical Missions and Missionary Physicians—No. III," *North Carolina Presbyterian* New Series 2, 79 (July 7, 1869): 1.

²²Mark A. Noll, ed., *Charles Hodge: Way of Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 97.

²³Daniel McGilvary, "Medical Missions and Missionary Physicians—No. IV," *North Carolina Presbyterian* New Series 2, 80 (July 14, 1869): 1.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Charles Hodge, *Essays and Reviews* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1857), 557ff, 567, 607–8; and Noll, ed., *Hodge: Way of Life*, 53, 88–91, 105ff, 156–57, 207ff. Hodge does not always use the terms "heart" and "soul" consistently. As seen here, he sometimes makes a distinction between the two. At other times he argues that they are different terms for the same thing—the soul itself—which includes the intellect as well as emotions. See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. III (New York: Charles Scribner and Company, 1872), 15–16.

²⁶McGilvary to Lowrie, September 29, 1858, vol. 2, BFM; Daniel McGilvary to Orange Presbytery, March 5, 1859, *North Carolina Presbyterian* 2, 29 (July 16, 1859): 1; Daniel McGilvary to the church & congregation of Carthage & Union, September 1, 1859, *North Carolina Presbyterian* 2, 51 (December 17, 1859): 1; and Daniel McGilvary, "For the Family," *North Carolina Presbyterian* New Series 9, 427 (March 17, 1876): 4.

²⁷Daniel McGilvary, letter dated May 31, 1858, *North Carolina Presbyterian* 1, 35 (August 28, 1858): 1.

²⁸Morton Smith, "The Southern Tradition," in *Reformed Theology in America*, ed. David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1997), 193.

²⁹McGilvary, letter dated July 13, 1874, *North Carolina Presbyterian* New Series 7, 344 (August 12, 1874): 2.

³⁰See Douglas Floyd Kelly, "Robert Lewis Dabney," in Wells, ed., *Reformed Theology in America*, 211–34, which suggests a number of parallels between Dabney's theology and that of McGilvary. For insights into the similarities between

Hodge and Dabney, see E. Brooks Holifield, "Mercersburg, Princeton, and the South: The Sacramental Controversy in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 (Summer 1976): 238–58.

³¹See E. Brooks Holifield, *Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795–1860* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1978), 119; Theodore D. Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 21–23; Daniel Walker Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805–1861* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 27.

³²Michael Gauvreau, "The Empire of Evangelicalism: Varieties of Common Sense in Scotland, Canada, and the United States," in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700–1900*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 219–52.

³³See Smith, "The Southern Tradition," 193–98.

³⁴*Catalogue of the Officers & Students of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, Princeton, New Jersey, 1853–54* (New York: John F. Trow, 1853), 11, 13.

³⁵Jonathan Wilson, "Necrological Report [Princeton Seminary Bulletin] (1912): 143–44; J. P. Wickersham, *A History of Education in Pennsylvania* (1886; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 110–11, 400–3; Howard Miller, *The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education 1707–1837* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 126–28, 187–88, 250; and Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier* (1939; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1971), 377–78.

³⁶Daniel McGilvary, "Rev. Jonathan Wilson, D.D., An Appreciation," *Laos News* 8, 3 (July 1911): 78–81; and *Necrological Report*, 144.

³⁷W. A. Briggs, "Father Wilson," *Laos News* 8, 3 (July 1911): 83.

³⁸Jonathan Wilson, undated letter, *Foreign Missionary* 31, 10 (March 1873): 307.

³⁹Wilson to Speer, June 12, 1894, vol. 11, BFM; concerning the Briggs case, see Loetscher, *The Broadening Church*, 48ff; and Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 11ff.

⁴⁰See Wilson to Lowrie, January 21, 1860, vol. 2, BFM; Jonathan Wilson, letter dated February 7, 1861, entitled "'Tokens of Encouragement' in Siam," *Foreign Missionary* 20, 2 (July 1861): 44; and Wilson to Rankin, April 8, 1862, vol. 2, BFM. See also Wilson, undated letter, *Foreign Missionary* 27, 10 (March 1869): 241.

⁴¹Given Koster's description of the romantic spirit in nineteenth-century America, it is clear that no true son of Princeton, Wilson included, can be considered a romantic

in the formal sense of the term. The Princetonians would not have assigned primacy to nature over scripture, for example, or emotion over reason. Still, that description suggests that the Princetonians could have shared some traits or inclinations with romanticism, particularly in the love of nature and the valuation of emotion, without being romantics as such. Wilson is a case in point. See Donald N. Koster, *Transcendentalism in America* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 8.

⁴²Raleigh Don Scovel, "Orthodoxy in Princeton: A Social and Intellectual History of Princeton Theological Seminary, 1812-1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1970), 1-4.

⁴³See, for example, Wilson to Lowrie, June 7, 1860, vol. 2, BFM; and Wilson to Lowrie, February 7, 1861, vol. 2, BFM.

⁴⁴James W. McKean, "Dr. Wilson's Laos Hymnal and its Value to the Laos Church," *Laos News* 8, 3 (July 1911): 82.

⁴⁵The classic study of the Second Great Awakening in western New York State is Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950). See also Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); and Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁴⁶Donald Lord, *Mo Bradley and Thailand* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1969), 116-27, 129. On Finney and later American Revivalism, see William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959). The Princeton theologians, as would be expected, had a generally negative view of Finney and his theology. See Scovel, "Orthodoxy," 184-86.

⁴⁷McGilvary to Lowrie, October 17, 1860, vol. 2, BFM.

⁴⁸K. M. Wilson to Lowrie, August 24, 1880, vol. 4, BFM, "Chiang Mai, Northern Siam," *Women's Work for Women* (hereafter cited as *WWW*) 9 (April 1879): 136-38; and McGilvary, "Rev. Jonathan Wilson," 78-81.

⁴⁹*Annual Report of the Principal of the Western Female Seminary, 1871* (Oxford, Ohio: W.A. Powell, 1871); Olive Flower, *The History of Oxford College for Women 1830-1928* (Oxford, Ohio: Miami University Alumni Association, 1949), 51; *Memorial: Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Western Female Seminary* (Indianapolis: Carlon & Hollenbeck, 1881), 3-11, 222-23; and Helen Peabody, *Mary Margaretta Campbell: A Brief Record of a Youthful Life* (Cincinnati: Silvius and

Smith, 1881), 9-10. See also Leonard I. Sweet, "The Female Seminary Movement and Women's Mission in Antebellum America," *Church History* 54 (March 1985): 41-55.

⁵⁰Peabody, *Mary Margaretta Campbell*, 12-13, 15. Cole went on to a distinguished, highly influential career as the principal of a missionary girls' school, Wattana Wittiya Academy, in Bangkok. Mary Campbell's life came to a tragic end when she drowned in the Chao Phraya River on February 8, 1881.

⁵¹See Peabody, *Mary Margaretta Campbell*, 17ff.

⁵²Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 193ff; and Cross, *The Burned-Over District*, 355-56.

⁵³Lewis G. Vander Velde, *The Presbyterian Churches and the Federal Union 1861-1869* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 479ff; and George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 235-36.

⁵⁴In the early 1880s, Cheek began to conduct private business affairs, and by 1886 he ceased all but nominal involvement in the mission to become a full-time businessman and teak trader. See W. S. Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam* (London: Chaoot & Windus, 1976), 69-71.

⁵⁵McGilvary to Lowrie, November 8, 1875, vol. 3, BFM.

⁵⁶Marion Cheek, "Treatment of the Sick," *Siam and Laos as Seen by Our American Missionaries*, ed. Mary Backus (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884), 511-24.

⁵⁷McGilvary to Mitchell, March 12, 1886, vol. 5, BFM.

⁵⁸McGilvary to Lowrie, November 8, 1875, vol. 3, BFM.

⁵⁹House to Irving, August 12, 1873, vol. 3, BFM. For a description of tensions between American Calvinists and Methodists in this period see Gary Scott Smith, *The Seeds of Secularization: Calvinism, Culture, and Pluralism in America, 1870-1915* (St. Paul: Christian University Press, 1985), 26-28.

⁶⁰McGilvary, *Half Century*, 149.

⁶¹See *Encyclopedia of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, s.v. "Culyer, Theodore Ledyard, D.D."

⁶²Michael Coleman, *Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes toward American Indians, 1837-1893* (Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1985), 34-37, 45, 120. See also John Crosby Brown Webster, "The Christian Community and Change in North India: A History of the Punjab and North India Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. 1834-1914" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1971), esp. 46ff.