

My worry, then, is that one would be forgiven for coming away from the *Handbook* thinking that literary criticism and theory had very little to contribute to Edwards studies. Misapprehension about what the field is and does also manifests organizationally; the one chapter on literature appears in Part 4, alongside accounts of Edwards's reception in North America, Britain and Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, and Latin America—as though literary study of Edwards were its own continent. Disappointing as this placement is, it is also deserved, since Sandra M. Gustafson's straightforward survey of nineteenth- to twenty-first-century American authors' invocation of Edwards moves in the direction of national. A respectable approach, to be sure, but I would have appreciated analysis.

Need it be said, these disciplinary qualifications do not and cannot override the mastery that the book evinces, the seriousness with which its chapters plumb Edwards, in all his dimensions, and the stunning provision it makes for the continuance of his study. We are indebted to them all.

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***Smitten: Sex, Gender, and the Contest for Souls in the Second Great Awakening.* By Rodney Hessinger. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022. 212 pp. \$34.95, hardcover.**

Rodney Hessinger's new book on sex and gender during the Second Great Awakening takes a new perspective on some familiar territory. The book rightly starts with the "volatile" early republic, when the "displacement of Americans created ripe conditions for religious competition" (1). Disestablishment and the frontier created a religious marketplace in which entrepreneurial preachers offered their brands of truth to eager but impressionable consumers, destroying traditional notions of religious authority in the process and replacing them with personal charisma alone. Hessinger's contribution to this "well known" phenomenon is "how sex and gender were at the center of debates over religion in the early republic" (7). In particular, the author explores how religious salesmen—both in reality and in critics' imagination—could easily morph into religious seducers, leaving audiences less enlightened and more "smitten" by their stories and their charm.

This religio-cultural environment was inherently unstable. The enthusiasm of a camp meeting could easily lead "to sex in the woods," while charges "of seduction and gender trouble ignited fights within, among, and against churches" (8). These gender-based church conflicts are the subjects of Hessinger's five chapters on, respectively, Mormonism, Catholicism, Shakerism, evangelicalism, and Perfectionism. Fatigued by these scandals, Hessinger argues, "many northern Americans lost their passion for religious enthusiasm," leading to a "subsequent domestication of religion" in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is one claim that I will contest in greater detail below.

My problem with this claim touches on a broader critique: a lack of chronological clarity in some of the most important chapters. The chapter on Mormonism, for instance, focuses on an episode in March 1832 when a mob successfully tarred and feathered Joseph Smith and unsuccessfully tried to castrate him. Attempted genital mutilation clearly fits within Hessinger's focus on sex and gender: castration was the mob's way of emasculating someone who had first emasculated them by "seducing" their women into a new church. But this attack took place a full decade before polygamy was exposed by an apostate in 1842 and two decades before the Church publicly announced its commitment to plural marriage in 1852. Most importantly, this episode took place before Smith had even married his first plural wife, sometime in early 1833.

There is a similar issue in the chapter on John Humphrey Noyes' Perfectionists. Hessinger frames this chapter with the 1849 critique, *Noyesism Unveiled*, which was intended to expose the group's unorthodox practice of "complex marriage," or communal spouse sharing. Hessinger argues that in response to the published attack, "Noyes publicly foreswore any attempts to convert people to his creed," a surrender that "managed to contain, if not fully extinguish, the fire of perfectionism" (123). This interpretation puts entirely too much weight on this 1849 conflict. Hessinger's narrative of Perfectionism's development from the mid-1830s up to 1849 is excellent, but neither this conflict nor a more threatening one in 1852 stopped Noyes from boldly seeking converts through his publications from the 1850s to the 1880s.

When it comes to the Shakers, Hessinger's argument is accurate and impressively concise. In the 1810s, the Shakers were humiliated when two mothers sued for custody of their children. In these instances, it was the husbands who had been "smitten" by a family-destroying sect and taken the children to a Shaker village against their wives' wishes. The mothers fought for years to reclaim them, damaging the image of the Shakers as fanatics who hated the "natural affection" between mother and child. In response, Shakers "needed to shore up the maternity of Ann Lee" (82), the group's long-deceased founder, with an image makeover. No longer the "severe judge of sinners" (89), Shaker writings in the 1820s "reimagined Mother Ann Lee as gentle and nurturing" (82) instead. These custody cases were indeed a gender-driven turning point in the overall history of the sect.

Hessinger makes a similarly strong argument in the chapter on Catholicism. Framing it around an 1822 courtroom drama in which a young priest stood trial for assault and attempted rape of a domestic servant, the larger story is the conflict between definitions of religious authority. On one side was the authoritarian Bishop Henry Conwell, and on the other was the charismatic priest, William Hogan. A "democratic preacher in both style and substance" (50), Hogan had "won an especially strong following with his female parishioners" (46) in 1820 and 1821. Bishop Conwell and other more "Old World" (45) members of the hierarchy used this as a way to discredit him in the 1822 trial. Hogan was ultimately exonerated, but the scandal was indeed "an observable turning point in Catholic history," as Hessinger claims; "The door to a more democratic church was then shut" (67).

The book's most emblematic chapter is on "the reverend rake" (92) who could manipulate women into sexual indiscretion. While exaggerated for literary effect, "the reverend rake" sadly had a basis in reality. Hessinger is right to inform readers about the sexual harassment that regularly occurred at camp meetings, but—as with the chapter on Noyes—he overreaches interpretively when he claims that the "repeated sting of sexual scandal would play a key role in the collapse of the Second Great Awakening in the 1840s in the North" (106). The story of the Awakening's demise is more complex

than “sexual scandal alone,” Hessinger admits in a footnote, but “its role,” he continues, “has been underappreciated” (181n52).

Hessinger’s work itself should be appreciated for bringing these scandals to light. Unscrupulous preachers in early America were indeed “willing to break apart families if it meant gaining more followers” (151); while on the other side, “bourgeois ideas about . . . sexual behavior, romance, and companionate marriage were constructed in reaction to religious tests” (155). This middle-class reaction to perceived sex and gender disorder was real and culturally powerful. I would merely shift the chronology of this reaction from “the middle of the nineteenth century” (11), as Hessinger argues—presumably meaning the 1840s and 1850s—to the 1870s, and especially the 1880s instead.

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***Charles Hodge: American Reformed Orthodox Theologian.* Ed. Ryan M. McGraw. Reformed Historical Theology. Ed. Herman J. Selderhuis. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 2023. Hardcover. 339 pp. \$161.00.**

This collection of nine essays examines aspects of the life and work of the major “Old Princeton” theologian, Charles Hodge (1797–1878). The book casts light on Hodge and on the key period in American history and culture in which Hodge maintained and promoted his interpretations of Reformed theology. The “primary thesis” of the volume, says McGraw, is that Hodge “self-consciously sought to defend and transmit Reformed orthodoxy into an American context, reflecting the persistence and change of ideas” (11). This means Reformed Orthodoxy was tightly woven into Hodge’s thought, as well as are “changes resulting from issues that arose within nineteenth-century America.” (11).

This is an important examination. The pieces show Hodge’s stalwart adherence to the seventeenth-century Reformed Orthodoxy developed after the death of John Calvin. Hodge’s appropriation and advocacy for a robust Reformed scholastic theology are shown in these pieces as are also “a distinctively American twist in Hodge’s ideas” (11). Overall, this produces a more nuanced view of Hodge than may typically be found in treatments of this premier Princeton Seminary theologian, best known for his three-volume *Systematic Theology* (1871–1873).

The areas explored here, after an historical introduction to Hodge, are Hodge’s use of philosophy, his definition of theology as a science, his doctrine of God, his use of personhood language in relation to the Trinity, his treatment of the imputation of Adam’s sin, his explanation of offices in the church, along with his controversial defense of Roman Catholic baptism, and his viewpoint the presence of Jesus Christ in the Lord’s Supper. These technical discussions help locate Hodge within Reformed Orthodoxy as a whole. They also show how he distinctively responds to contemporary theologians and issues in the contexts of his American setting and thus how he managed to transmit and transform important theological ideas. The editor wishes to open doors to further conversations, hoping this volume’s broad approach will help in constructing “a more