in 1844, not as this book suggests in 1884) and the low Anglican Wycliffe College in the success of University College and thus the University of Toronto as a non-denominational university is overlooked. The parallels with the later description of the founding of the University of Saskatchewan, which similar to the University of Toronto was also 'not chartered for theological education' (p. 75) but had a relationship with theological colleges, is thus missed. It is also worth noting that many of the students who would have filled the classes of James McCurdy as he taught higher criticism at University College would have been from the two theological colleges, Knox and Wycliffe. If it was acceptable to study higher criticism in the late nineteenth century, why did this seemingly become a crisis later? It is also unclear how the creation of the United Church of Canada (which happened in 1925, not 1924) eased 'more traditional denominational lines' (p. 97) or how this creation was the catalyst for the acceptance of higher criticism. The author may be correct. But this needs to be further explored and explained. As Hughes outlines, in Canada religious studies moved from the theological seminaries to independent religious studies departments and organisations. How this happened was different from in the United States. But, there are some details in this journey that need to be reconsidered and corrected.

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Augustus Hopkins Strong and the struggle to reconcile Christian theology with modern thought. By John Aloisi. (Sustainable History Monograph Pilot.) Pp. x + 170. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2021. £25 (paper). 978 1 64825 022 4

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In his work on the understudied Augustus Hopkins Strong, John Aloisi argues (as the title suggests) that Strong struggled to reconcile Christian theology with modern thought. No biographer has covered Strong's life or theology in any great detail. Therefore, Aloisi offers a valuable contribution to understanding Strong and the evolving tensions in American Christianity prior to the fundamentalist and modernist controversy. According to Aloisi, the key to understanding Strong's theology is his emphasis on ethical monism. Even though Strong himself claimed ethical monism to be the centrepiece of his thought, most authors overlook this significance – an oversight Aloisi has remedied. Ethical monism was the outcome of Strong's commitment to orthodoxy wedded to his embrace of philosophical idealism. Aloisi defines Strong's ethical monism as 'an ontological monism coupled with a personal pluralism' (p. 3). Ultimately, orthodox and liberal theologians rejected Strong's creative harmonisation of God's transcendence and immanence.

Aloisi's introduction sketches the need to dive more deeply into Strong's theology. Other scholars have noted the importance of Strong as an influential figure in the Northern Baptist Convention, but research has been divided on Strong's role as liberal or conservative. Aloisi argues that the better approach is to recognise Strong as a man of contradictions held together by his articulation of ethical monism. In his early life, Strong began to realise 'the awfulness of guilt and the unchanging holiness of God' (p. 9). He matriculated at Yale

College in 1853 and had his religious awakening after his junior year. Committing himself to ministry, Strong attended Rochester Seminary and entered the pastorate before returning as president and professor at Rochester when he was only thirty-five years old. Aloisi notes that philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic were already shaping Strong's understanding of divine immanence.

Aloisi continues his study of Strong by introducing the main intellectual influences on his theology. While demonstrating that direct philosophical influence is notoriously tricky, Aloisi substantiates the influence of various idealists on Strong's thought by examining the references in successive editions of Strong's *Systematic theology*. Strong's ethical monism, therefore, is a distinctive element to theology and 'a new shade that Strong added to the philosophical idealist's palette' (p. 45). The concept of monism was not entirely new, but Strong's ethical monism is the result of his critique of certain idealist arguments and the incorporation of other theological ideas. This innovation was 'the sort of Copernican revolution that needed to be embraced by the Christian community' (p. 57). Strong faced plenty of opposition when he published his new ideas. But he believed he was reconciling the modern findings of science and philosophy with the orthodox truths of original sin and God as the grounding existence of all reality – with Christ as the first cause. A popular criticism of Strong's ethical monism was the implication that it eliminated all distinction between God and humans and led to moral indifference. Strong accused his critics of understanding his position as pantheistic monism rather than ethical monism.

A common theme that Aloisi recognises in Strong's life is the reciprocal nature of his development of ethical monism and other aspects of theology. Aloisi documents the changes in Strong's writings on Scripture, experience, evolution, miracles and atonement. To Strong, the gaps left in these questions were resolved if reality was understood according to his ethical monism. Contemporary liberals and conservatives disagreed. Aloisi points out that both aisles noticed incongruity in Strong's theology. Liberal theologians believed Strong had 'taken a few steps in the right direction but needed to throw off the traces of orthodoxy that lingered in his theology', while conservatives hoped that Strong would return to a 'more consistent form of orthodoxy' (p. 109). Aloisi concludes that both sides were correct and that Strong's ethical monism did not blend with Evangelical theology. Strong's thought, while 'both creative and ambitious', failed (p. 113).

The greatest strength of Aloisi's illuminating work is his refusal to categorise Strong into a preconceived box as a liberal or conservative. Strong believed himself to be a 'pillar of orthodoxy', but Aloisi guides the reader through Strong's own theological development and contemporary controversies to show that he was a man of contradictions. Aloisi bolsters his overall thesis that Strong was a man who failed to harmonise modern thought with orthodoxy through his innovative ethical monism. This examination of Strong's life – which places ethical monism as the centre of his thought – helps us to understand how contemporaries, and Strong himself, understood his life and influence. Before scholars draw any conclusions about Strong as a conservative or liberal, or assume that Strong's ideas are secondary to understanding his life, they should consult Aloisi.

While the argument of this book is easy to follow, Aloisi occasionally stumbles in explaining what exactly ethical monism was and how it relates to the specific areas

of doctrine. While the influence is no doubt the key to understanding Strong's theology, defining it is more difficult and readers may leave the work knowing ethical monism's significance, but left confused on what exactly it is. However, that could be due to the complexity of German idealism in general. Overall, Aloisi has broadened our understanding of the nuance of American Christianity's crisis between orthodoxy and modern thought.

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Neville Figgis, CR. His life, thought and significance. Edited by Paul Avis. (Anglican-Episcopal Theology and History, 7.) Pp. xviii + 260. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2022. €55 (paper). 978 90 04 50311 3; 2405 7576

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John Neville Figgis (1866–1919) was a prominent scholar-clergyman of the early twentieth century, a pioneer of the history of political ideas and a leading figure in the 'pluralist' turn in British political thought before the outbreak of the First World War. While his training as an historian had been influenced at Cambridge by three leading historians of the Church and State – Acton, Creighton and Maitland – he followed an idiosyncratic route of his own. His wide historical canvasses were drawn across the medieval, early modern and modern periods, searching for a past that could assist his contemporaries in understanding the distinctiveness of their own era and the forces that had shaped it. One contributor, Robert Ingram, cites Figgis's arresting conception of the past as an 'unending transformation scene', the active threads of which the historian has somehow to master with incomplete evidence (p. 98). At the same time, Figgis was a Christian apologist, developing a theology of the incarnation and an ecclesiology centred on both the Word and the sacraments, reflecting the catholic Church's essence as the living body of Christ (p. 141). He did so through sermons and lectures, most of which were collected and published by Macmillan during his lifetime.

This volume of essays on Figgis marks the centenary of his death in 1919, and is the first full-length study of Figgis's life and thought since the biography by Maurice Tucker in 1950. Together, they bring out the breadth of his interests, both intellectual and spiritual, and draw on the range of his publications, some of which have not been used before. The latter is particularly apparent in Ingram's essay, which skilfully pieces together Figgis's 'English story' in the transition from the early modern to the modern world using writings from across the different categories of his *oeuvre* (p. 95). For Figgis, this period represented a struggle for authority between Church and State, from which the state – in its modern guise as a unitary, territorial sovereign – emerged strengthened rather than weakened through pursuing a policy of toleration (p. 119).

As James Alexander emphasises in another trenchant essay, Figgis's historical predisposition was anti-Whig, rejecting suggestions that the present exists in a relationship of seamless continuity with the past, a past that has been read from standpoints infused with political partisanship. Alexander coins the suggestive term