AN EXAMINATION OF THE DECLINE AND DEMISE OF
EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM IN AMERICA'S INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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Summary Statement:

This study is comprised of four chapters and an Epilogue. Chapter 1 treats, by way of historical description, the founding of America’s institutions of higher learning as defacto centers of evangelical Protestant indoctrination and ethos. Chapter 2 is a record of the rejection of evangelical Protestantism in the interest of making the colleges and universities nonsectarian. This was accomplished first by a gradual “broadening” of the curricula. Later, the schools became altogether secularist in disposition. Chapter 3 recounts the factors leading to the changes in the institutions. Chapter 4 is an evaluation of competing truth claims in the aftermath of the demise of Protestantism and a review of the gains and losses that came with the change. Finally, the Epilogue is a case study of one institution that reversed the trend.

Key terms:

Colleges, Universities, Theological Schools, Theology, evangelicalism, Protestantism, epistemology, philosophy, culture, sectarianism, non-sectarianism, and secularism
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Preface

The seals or mottoes of Harvard College not only defined the educational vision of that institution but that of the other colleges in the American colonies as well. The earliest seal of the college was simply one word, Veritas (Truth, 1643). The background of that seal was a display of three open books, two facing up and one down, suggesting “the dynamic relationship between reason and revelation” The other seals were In Christi Gloriam (To the Glory of Christ 1650), and Christo et Ecclesiae (For Christ and the Church, 1692). These seals established the place that Christian faith and theology held at Harvard for the first 100 years of its existence (Monroe 1996: 14).

Like Harvard, the original colleges of America, both private and public, were de facto extensions of Christianity into higher education. As an example of the pervasive influence of evangelical Protestantism on the early academy one need only consider Harvard’s College Laws of 1642:

Let every student . . . consider well the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, John 17:3, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, everyone shall seriously by prayer, in secret, seek wisdom of Him (Monroe 1996: 14).

But the times have changed. The sacred on the college campuses has given way to the secular and the repudiation of the traditional religious orientation of the colleges is so significant that many are now asking how this could have come to pass. It is the purpose of this study to answer that question and include others such as the following: What was the original setting for education in institutions of higher learning in America? Why is theology of only marginal interest in the modern
university? What factors in the culture and in higher education have contributed to that change? What is left, if anything, of the founders’ original vision for education in America’s colleges and universities? Finally, what exceptions, if any, are there to the secularist direction the institutions have taken?

Given the limitations of space for this study I shall not attempt to go further than such questions warrant and no attempt will be made to study every church related school or university. Nor shall I go much beyond the issue of theology in the schools and culture except where it is necessary to explain why theological issues are in retreat.

My interest in the demise of Christian principles in higher education is primarily a theological one though this study, by its very nature, will require that I utilize the perspectives of history and sociology as well. My plan, however, is to use those disciplines insofar as they contribute to an understanding of the radical shift that has occurred in the academy’s move from a Christian foundation for education to one that is completely secular. Because of the fundamental shift in the ideological commitment of the institutions it is a serious claim of this work that the consequence is a diminished place in American education for evangelical Protestant truth claims that has impoverished both the academy and the church.

In reference to my primary sources for this study I have provided a somewhat extensive and varied bibliography. However, I am indebted to one work, that of George M. Marsden’s *The Soul of the American University* more than any other. For that reason I have made reference to it rather frequently in this work. This is because Marden’s book supplies what I have so far been unable to discover in any of the works available in libraries or bookstores to which I have access, that is, a comprehensive treatment of the particularity of my subject. Marsden’s subtitle of his book to which
I have already referred suggests its relevancy to my research: *From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*. I should point out also that my search for pertinent works that relate to this thesis has included access to some of the leading libraries of the nation through the Internet.

The scarcity of books on the particular idea of the decline and demise of evangelical Protestantism in the nation’s institutions of higher learning does not apply, however, to the availability of the historical collections of colleges and universities. There are many of these which include works that relate to the philosophy and theory of education. Probably none has been more helpful than John Henry Newman’s classic on *The Idea of a University* but at the time of its original publication (1852) the American schools were apparently still under the influence of evangelical Protestantism having not made their complete turn to secularism. Other than the seminal works of Marsden and Newman, however, I have not found a profusion of resources on the subject on which I am writing thus justifying, in some small way I hope, my own efforts to supply an original study on the subject.
Introduction

In the early days of American higher education the colleges of renown were Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), Yale (1701), and Princeton (1746). From the settlement of the first colony in Jamestown, Virginia (1606) until the Revolutionary War those institutions virtually dominated the whole of higher education in the colonies. Except for William and Mary, which was of Anglican Church affiliation, the others were founded by Puritans who were deeply committed to the theological and cultural principles of Protestantism as expressed through Calvinism. Not only were the official boards and corporations of those institutions composed of Calvinists but their presidents and faculties as well were chosen from the ranks of clergymen and laymen of like faith. It is obvious, therefore, that for higher education in the early American colonies the academy was an extension of evangelical Protestantism's doctrinal and missionary ethos (Marsden 1994: 4, 33, 52, 60).

Nevertheless, by the beginning of the twentieth century not one of the antebellum colleges was to be identified with Calvinism or any of its evangelical Protestant fraternity. Each had become something altogether different from that which their founders had envisioned having become secular in spirit and in purpose (Marsden 1994: 4). Moreover, it has since come to pass that almost all the other institutions of higher learning that were once noted for their theological orthodoxy have moved from fidelity to the Christian faith to that agnosticism which is so much a part of the legacy of secular education. Indeed, so complete has been this transition that one is struck, not only by the shift of ideological allegiance in those schools, but by the radical nature of that shift. Whereas once there had been an extension of the church's mission into the academy, the latter reflecting however obscurely the former's doctrine and devotion, now the influence has been in the opposite direction.
The academy has become an extension of secularism into the church with the effect on the latter's mission being not only not supportive but in many ways contrary.

Perhaps it was inevitable that in some ways the academy would take on the character of secularism for even at the early time when Harvard was founded scientific and technological advancements were beginning to develop. These were destined to generate a proliferation of industrial and technological devices that would eventually change university training at its very center (Heslam 1998: 192-193). Until that turning point in history there had been a very long period in the West in which university training had remained the same in its offerings of academic curricula.

Whereas during the seven preceding centuries, higher education had simply meant expertise in classics, law, and medicine, the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the development of new, specialized disciplines, stimulated by the demands of an emerging industrialized and technological society. As governments saw the value of technological research and development for the advancement of a modern economy, they gradually became the chief sponsors of much of the new science and thus were able in increasing measure to set its [secular NLM] agenda (Heslam 1998: 193).

While the technological advances required some kind of a response from the university for specialized training there was nothing inherent in either the university or science that demanded the exclusion of Christian theology or influence. Nevertheless, theology which had once reigned in the academy as the “queen of the sciences” was eventually exiled into oblivion. It was this exile that brought about the impoverishment of the academy resulting in a greater loss for the academy than may be comprehended or appreciated by the secularists (Marsden 1994: 371-375).

John Henry Newman’s book, *The Idea of a University*, served as a kind of Magna Carta for the
rights of universal education in the nineteenth century. If Newman (1801-1890) were to return to this era he would not be surprised at the academy's rejection of a place for theology though he would probably be insistent on its reinstatement. He would do so, however, not because he desired to turn the university into a theological seminary but because he knew that theology is needed for its contribution to the larger idea of a university. He would therefore insist that theology be included with the other academic disciplines for "university knowledge must involve the interrelations of what humans know" (Marsden in Newman 1996: 305, italics added). Turner, the editor of a republication of Newman's book concurs.

For his own part Newman held out one clear mission for his university: to establish theology as a science of sciences. . . Since Newman wrote, the role of religion and theology in colleges and universities has sharply diminished, first within secular institutions, not informed by religious values to begin with, and then later in colleges and universities formed by religious denominations (Newman 1996: 259-260).

Searles' ideas are also in agreement with Turner's assessment of Newman's mission and his thought adds another dimension to the discussion. "A university whether it be a state or a private institution, in order to fulfill its function as a university, should have as its aim as far as possible, the study of all branches of human knowledge and culture." Searles goes on to emphasize the importance of the interdependence of all academic disciplines with one another. "It would be impossible to understand the civilizations of the past apart from their religion" (Starbuck 1925: 54, italics added). The secularism that has resulted in the ouster of the evangelical Protestant worldview from the academy has produced a conflict so forceful that it grants no concessions to either side. The two factions of that conflict can be seen in the representative positions of its antagonists. For
example, Newman may be brought forward to represent the older Christian position and Daniel Gilman of the University of California to represent the more recent secular position. "Newman had argued that the idea of a university as the embodiment of all knowledge implied the inclusion of theology . . . Gilman, typical of the broad Protestantism emerging at the time, [which was so broad that it was tantamount to secularism NLM] saw science and morality explicitly without theology as the only true hope of universality" (Marsden 1994: 143).

George Buttrick contends that Gilman was wrong. In his lectures on the challenge that secularism presents to biblical thought Buttrick insists that the university needs the perspective of Christian theology. Why? Because, when rightly understood, it provides "a biblical frame for education" which serves as a damper on human pride and thus an aid against the worship of man and the universal pursuit of idolatry (1960: 21-23).

But there is no "damper on human pride" for the viewpoint of secularism has replaced the Christian perspective in the modern university. In that which follows I shall attempt to show that the foundation of higher education in America was laid by Christian leaders who saw no conflict between biblical truth and an educated citizenry. While evangelical Christians today still hold that position something has happened which has produced a remarkable change in academic institutions. Now the free exercise of Christianity in America's colleges and universities is limited to a few smaller institutions, enclaves of extra-curricula fellowships and some theological schools. Secularism reigns where Christianity once prevailed. Establishing what happened to produce that shift in allegiance and why it occurred is the objective of this study.
Rarely in the history of a nation are intellectual movements or theological truth claims monolithic. Yet in the United States the origin of higher education, indeed all education for that matter, was just that. So much so that historian George M. Marsden in his book, *The Soul Of The American University*, deemed it “the Protestant establishment” (1994: 4).

However, lest a false impression be left, it is necessary to qualify what is meant by the term *monolithic*. There are at least two misunderstandings about the influence of Protestantism upon early higher education in America that continue to the present day. First, many believe that only “private” higher education was under the hegemony of Protestantism. The truth is that Protestantism influenced *all* education in early America for in the beginning all education was private. Later, when “state” universities were chartered by state governments they also were “Christian” in vision and spiritual environment. For example, The University of Georgia is the oldest state university in America, established in 1785. Yet it had a college chapel which would seem to indicate more than just an incidental influence of Christianity upon the school’s development (Binns 1961: 23). The University of North Carolina, the first land grant public institution in America, also required “instruction in morals and *religion*” (Paschal 1935: 48, italics added). Second, it is generally thought that early American colleges and universities were “theological schools,” that is, nothing less than schools of divinity. This was not the case. “Harvard College had been founded because the thought of an illiterate ministry was abhorrent to the Puritans... Nevertheless its educational goals were those
of liberal (arts) education, rather than vocational training, and there were no formal courses in theology for advanced students preparing for the ministry as a career” (Wright in Williams 1954: 22). Divinity schools were a later development of some colleges, among the earliest being Harvard Divinity school and Princeton Theological Seminary. The early colleges, while Christian in essence, were from the beginning designated as institutions of “liberal education.” Binns reminds us that the idea of a liberal education has long been the goal of western civilization. “The term ‘liberal education’ had its origin in the Roman Empire when there were two types of education, one for slaves and one for freemen. Slaves did the work of the world . . . They were trained in the skills and crafts that enabled them to earn a living for themselves and their masters. . . Liberal arts education meant education suited to free ‘liberal’ men” (1961: 20-21).

Yet, these institutions in early America were established on Christian principles. From the very beginning the primary motivation for founding educational institutions was sectarian. This was because “(c)hurches recognized the value of higher education long before the states did so. Most of the early colleges and universities of our country were affiliated with or supported by churches. Of the nine colleges in the United States at the close of the colonial period, only one was not under direct church control” (Caldwell in Binns 1961: 43). “Direct church control” is what is meant in this work as sectarianism. Sectarianism is defined as “of or relating to, or characteristic of, a sect.” It is, therefore, “adhering to or confined to the dogmatic limits of a denomination . . .” (American Heritage Dictionary: 1994). Furthermore, a sect “is a group of people having a common leadership, set of opinions, philosophical doctrine” (Webster’s Dictionary 1983).

Since the churches were involved from the beginning it is not surprising that theirs was the vision for the educational enterprise. The famous Puritan explanation for the creation of Harvard
College captures the sense of vision and zeal of the sectarian vision and demonstrates what to some is a curious combination of piety and education. Excerpted from a publication known as *New England’s First Fruits*, it is the earliest account of the beginning of Harvard in New England.

After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God’s worship, and settled the civil government: One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust (Gomes 1992: 10, italics added).

Harvard College was indeed “in Increase Mather’s memorable phrase . . . ‘a nursery of piety’” (Gomes 1992: 10). The pious theological vision of the founders of Harvard, however, was not unique nor was it original to the American scene. It was entirely consistent with the situation in Europe as well for the church from the beginning had been influential in the establishment of the academy. “The college is preeminently a child of the Church; it began in the monastic and cathedral schools, as far back as the sixth century” (Ahlstrom in Williams 1954: 86, italics added).

With the founding of Harvard in 1636, only 30 years after the establishment of the first American settlement, the pattern was set. During the period from 1606 to 1776 other educational institutions would follow Congregational Harvard and Yale, and Anglican William and Mary, the first three such institutions in the new colonies. These colleges also were Christian in origin and faculty. Among them are several listed by Marsden: The College of New Jersey (1746), Brown (1764), Queen’s College (1766, Dutch Reformed, later to become Rutgers), Dartmouth (1769), King’s College (1754, later to become Columbia), College of Philadelphia (1755, later to become the University of Pennsylvania). These were all begun by ‘New Light’ presbyterians and the Scotch-Irish built William Tennent’s ‘Log College’ out of which grew the College of New Jersey which later
became Princeton College. After 1727 at least "sixty five other academies were founded by Presbyterian minister-teachers, largely in new settlements of the West and South" (1994: 56-59).

This evangelical Protestantism carried over into the next two centuries. The hegemony of Protestantism was pervasive throughout the period even while its influence had begun to wane at Harvard. Though universities were a later development in the nineteenth century the evangelical vision for education continued to dominate everywhere. "In the nineteenth century, when American universities took their shape, the Protestantism of the major northern denominations acted as a virtual religious and cultural establishment. This establishment outlook was manifested in American universities, which were constructed not, as is sometimes supposed, as strictly secular institutions but as integral parts of a religious-cultural vision" (Marsden 1994:3).

With the influence of such a religious-cultural vision also came the spirit of revival which was felt throughout the colonies. Private and state schools knew nothing of the separation of church and state which is so characteristic of our own time. "Nowhere was this cultural aggressiveness more successful than in their gaining control over virtually all the influential colleges in the country, including state schools" (Marsden 1994:4). Campuses, like churches, were led by clergymen.

The American university system was built on a foundation of evangelical Protestant colleges. Most of the major universities evolved directly from such colleges. As late as 1870 the vast majority of these were remarkably evangelical. Most of them had clergymen-presidents who taught courses defending biblicist Christianity and who encouraged periodic campus revivals. . . (Marsden 1994:4).

If there are those who would question the "evangelical" ambience of the Protestant character of the schools one must only remember that the schools were, as Marsden points out, led by
clergymen. But these were not just clergymen they were in the main evangelical clergymen in theology and spirit. With their evangelicalism came concern for the spiritual condition of their students. Given the evangelical spirit of the American colonies and the recurring national awakenings it is not surprising that these early clergymen presidents encouraged, indeed even instigated, revivals of religion on college campuses across America. An example of the spirit of revival which is so characteristic of the evangelicalism of the Protestant establishment on the campuses in those days may be noted in the origin of Wake Forest Institute in the county of Wake in North Carolina. This institute began in 1834 and later became Wake Forest College.

Dr. Samuel Wait, a clergyman, was the founding president of Wake Forest (1834-1845). He was a highly revered and respected Christian gentleman. From the beginning he was determined that his students would be indoctrinated with biblical truth and immersed in Christian piety. Twice each day Wait assembled the students for prayer (Paschal 1935: 73-74).

The original intention for the founding of Wake Forest Institute/College is expressed well by Paschall. “The first thought was only for the education of young preachers and this was never lost sight of” (1935: 77). It is impossible to overstate the evangelical spirit of the early days of the college. That revival spirit which Marsden indicated was so vital a part of the Protestant establishment in education and which was so much a part of Baptist life in those days permeated the small campus and student body. The institute was founded within 7 months of “the revival of 1834.” It started with mostly un-evangelized youth but in a manner of weeks these young men were converted to faith in Christ through the influence of the godly Samuel Wait and the campus revivals which were recurrent through the opening years of the institute (Paschal 1935: 159-165). The revivals sometimes continued for weeks. “Nearly every person present was converted.” Wait said
that “the Spirit of the Lord came upon the assembled students like a mighty rushing wind... There was an all absorbing religious interest that embraced practically every student” (Paschal 1935: 160-161).

It may seem strange to the ears of modern man to hear of such “goings on” in an academic setting but this was the norm in the early days of higher education in the colonies all up and down the eastern Seaboard of the land. The Wake Forest evangelical spirit was typical and was a significant factor in all of America’s first educational institutions. Such fervent evangelicalism is well summarized by Pascal:

[At the original Wake Forest College were the characteristics of] a truly evangelical view of religion, with the acceptance of a belief in the necessity of conversion, or regeneration, as the entrance to the Christian life. . . A further characteristic of the religious life at Wake Forest has been the attention given to public worship. Like all other colleges of the day, this institution required students to attend religious services twice a day and also on Sunday. Among the students, also, the religious life was fostered in societies of their own, such as Bible classes, and missionary societies (1935: 467).

Of course, when one thinks of the original vision of America’s colleges with its Christian substructure one thinks of Harvard College. Though, as we have seen, Harvard was not a divinity school it is nonetheless true that it was in the beginning a pious churchly institution. For the greater part of the seventeenth century it remained true to its evangelical roots. This religious heritage is encapsulated in its seals. An early seal was that of In Christi Gloriam of 1650. Earlier still, there was the “so-called Overseers’ Seal of 1643 which had been “imperfectly projected with the simple legend Veritas.” The seal of Increase Mather was Christo et Ecclesiae which became known as the “Common Seale” of 1692 (Williams 1954: 233). In another era President Charles Eliot pointed out
that "the Matherian seal (Christo et Ecclesiae) 'implies the great truth that the education we aim to impart, like all modern civilization, is founded on Christianity.' Eliot went on to insist that it was 'the ultimate object of our Institution to train up educated young men to be worthy members of that body and worthy disciples of its Head' (Williams 1954: 237). Later, even a president who was Unitarian in faith, confessed the importance of the seals as an indicator of early Harvard's alignment with evangelical Protestantism. "On September 4, 1855, President James Walker on the controversy of the seals said: 'Harvard College was dedicated, as its corporate seal testifies, to Christ and the Church'” (Williams 1954: 238).

So for Harvard College those early days in American education were dedicated to Christ and His church. Thus there was no dichotomy between "indoctrination" and "education" as is the situation prevailing with modern universities. For in that day that institution, and others like it, established an alliance between those who were of clerical robe and academic gown. Though no admirer of that allegiance, a modern professor in the Divinity School of Harvard admits that "Instruction in divinity was from the beginning a central element in the curriculum of Harvard College, and the clerical presence in all aspects of the life of the institution was pronounced" (Gomes 1992: 12).

But that alliance did not last at Harvard. It ended insofar as its evangelical spirit is concerned in 1701. Therefore the years 1636-1701 constitute that interval when Puritanism reigned at Harvard College but it ceased with the end of the presidency of Increase Mather (1685-1701). "With the election of his (Mather’s) successor, John Leverett, the dominance of strict Puritanism had passed . . ." Instead Unitarianism became dominant at Harvard for Leverett was Unitarian in his allegiance (Williams 1954: 7).
The demise of Harvard's evangelicalism, however, did not occur in a vacuum. There was a cultural dimension involved in the eradication of orthodoxy at Harvard because Unitarianism was a New England phenomenon. Since, at the time there had developed little difference between the culture and religion, Unitarian churches quickly became the dominant religious influence in that region of the country. Over a period of time Unitarianism arose out of the Congregational Churches of New England in the eighteenth century (though its wider origins are within Socinianism). Unitarianism rejected the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and paved the way for the liberalizing of the evangelical faith which had long characterized Harvard (Wright 1955:3).

The Unitarians, according to Gordon, did not begin their own churches or colleges as a rule but took over for Unitarianism some that already existed with the claim that Unitarianism was the "true faith." He does not name them except for Harvard and the "Old South Church, Boston." Gordon mentions Dr. Crothers, an Unitarian, in reference to their strategy for taking over "traditional" churches and institutions in New England. 'Our task is very largely a task of transplanting the religion which has grown up on traditionalism, transplanting it into the new soil...prepared for it by true thinking.' In referring to the tactics of the early leaders of the Unitarian religion in New England, Gordon also indicates that Dr. Slaten, another Unitarian, asserted that 'In some of the churches at least, the very principle of freedom on which the denomination is based guarantees him (the crypto-Unitarian) his right to remain. It is strategic to remain and work from the inside. Many others are doing it successfully and the gradual permeation of the orthodox denominations with liberal ideas disseminated by trusted leaders of their own appears to them the best procedure' (1926: 95-98, italics added). These tactics also worked with reference to the take over of Harvard College for the cause of Unitarianism.
However, though Unitarians are clearly recognized as theologically unorthodox by evangelical Protestant standards, they still made significant contributions to Christianity particularly in the period of 1805 to 1861. Their major contribution to the educational establishment of the time was their development of the “moral philosophy” curriculum particularly at Harvard.

[Moral Philosophy NLM] was a certain frame of mind that prevailed at Harvard . . . among many Unitarian clergymen trained there, for the first two thirds of the nineteenth century. . . Today, ‘moral philosophy’ is a synonym for ‘ethics,’ and it is taught as a specialized branch of philosophy. But in those simpler times before the academic profession had become so fragmented, the term ‘moral philosophy’ was used in a much lesser sense, and the subject was treated in a broad and general fashion. At the typical American college of the early national period, moral philosophy occupied a large and important place in the curriculum. It was a humanistic study; indeed (were it not for the great attention bestowed on the classics), one might almost call moral philosophy the humanistic discipline of the antebellum college, for it encompassed the whole study of human nature. All the twentieth century social sciences - psychology, sociology, political science, economics - are daughters of the old moral philosophy” (Howe 1970: 1-2).

But the contributions of the unitarians to the educational process did not end with moral philosophy. Modern principles of educational theory can be traced back to the tenure of Unitarianism at Harvard especially the influence of President James Walker and his idea of the role of education. Walker spoke for all unitarians in stating that . . . ‘It is not among the proper or legitimate objects of education, either in religion or anything else, to inculcate an implicit or blind faith, to bind down or enslave the soul to a fixed creed, or to dictate, either directly or indirectly, what the mind shall think, feel, or believe’ (Howe 1970: 258). In commenting upon the educational
philosophy of Walker, Howe makes the point that it was his Unitarian faith that gave him the sense of freedom necessary to propagate what is widely accepted in our time as the norm for educational objectives. Walker “claimed not to shape his students, so much as to help them grow, for ‘education . . . does not consist in putting things into the mind, but, as the name implies, in bringing things out’” (1970: 258).

While it is generally thought that John Dewey of the University of Michigan was the father of “progressive education” in America it was actually President Walker of Harvard who first developed the idea of progressivism in educational theory. He believed that “all real education was fundamentally self-education; the proper role of the teacher was limited to providing a helpful environment” (Howe 1970: 258, italics added). The reason for his emphasis on the importance of the student is not hard to find when one examines the tenets of Unitarianism. “The focal point of the Unitarian creed was . . . its doctrine of human nature rather than its doctrine of God. Without denying man’s proneness to do evil, Unitarians stressed his almost infinite capacity for good, and categorically rejected the Calvinist notion that there is a class of sinners whose striving toward a good life must forever be fruitless” (Hutchinson 1959: 6, italics added).

This Unitarian emphasis upon the freedom of humanity is so much a part of their essence that it is constantly reiterated among themselves and likewise communicated to the public. They “recognize no creed, covenant or union of any kind, that interferes with individual liberty and independence” (Hutchinson 1959: 112). At bottom their confidence in human nature is part of the larger movement that characterized much of liberal Protestantism in the nineteenth century. No group of Christians maintained their positive attitude toward humanity more than did the Unitarians. Their attitude in this regard is well summed up by Hutchinson:
Optimism about human nature formed the substructure for a ramifying set of beliefs about individual and social progress. Since men are endowed by God with reason and with innate capacities for good, and have been enabled through the revelation in Christ to know the way of salvation, they can defeat the evil that is within and around them by leading blameless lives and by prevailing upon others to do the same (1959: 6).

With the fall of Harvard to Unitarianism in 1701 many in the Congregational Churches of New England and across America felt the need for another institution to replace what was lost of the influence of evangelical Protestantism on that campus. It is therefore noteworthy that the same year that the Unitarian Leverette was elected to the presidency at Harvard also marks the beginning of Yale College. Yale was founded in order to insure that a school would remain that would carry forward the earlier mandate from which Harvard had by then deviated. “When Connecticut clergy founded Yale in 1701 it was in the context of, even though not explicitly a response to, a perceived decline in theological orthodoxy at Harvard. This was the year that Increase Mather was ousted from his post at Harvard, and for Increase and his son Cotton, at least, the change in the Harvard presidency signaled the demise of Massachusetts orthodoxy” (Marsden 1994:52).

Commitment to orthodoxy as a vital part of the educational process continued long at Yale. Begun in reaction to the perceived liberalism at Harvard, Yale held fast to the congregational Trinitarian faith. Indeed Yale retained its original vision for education from a Protestant evangelical perspective longer than any other academic institution. “Concern for orthodoxy, however, was set as part of the early Yale’s identity . . . Yale was set on a path of sectarianism that would characterize it until the American Revolution . . . In the mid 1800’s, Yale ‘was the flagship evangelical college’” (Marsden 1994: 53, 120).
Yale became known as a congenial environment for both God and man although in the twentieth century William F. Buckley would challenge that notion in his book, God And Man At Yale. Since the intention for Yale in those days was, however, to repeat Marden's words, to be the "flagship evangelical college," its charter in the preface reads as follows:

Whereas several well-disposed and public spirited persons of their sincere regard to and zeal for the upholding and propagating of the Christian Protestant Religion by a succession of learned and orthodox men, have expressed by petition their earnest desire that full liberty and privilege be granted unto certain undertakers, for the founding and suitably endowing and ordering a collegiate school within this his Majesty's Colony of Connecticut, wherein youth may be instructed in the arts of sciences who, through the blessings of Almighty God, may be fitted for public employment both in Church and civil state (Searles in Starbuck 1925: 29).

Yale was serious about remaining orthodox. In order to insure that objective they instituted religious tests of orthodoxy for the faculty and even the members of the Yale Corporation. In 1753 and thereafter President Clapp "insisted that everyone having to do with the new corporation be subjected to tests of orthodoxy" (Marsden 1994: 56). Even as late as 1937 this passion for orthodoxy was evident at least in some who remained at Yale. In a statement of the college's original purpose the president made this appeal: 'I call on all members of the faculty, as members of a thinking body, freely to recognize the tremendous validity and power of the teachings of Christ in our life-and-death struggle against the forces of selfish materialism. If we lose that struggle, judging from present events abroad, scholarship as well as religion will disappear.' [President Charles Seymour, Inaugural Address, October 16, 1937] (Buckley 1986: 3).

The dominance of Harvard and Yale in early America was so prominent that from 1650 to
1750 they were "all there was of American education" (Marsden 1994: 48). Yet our survey of the establishment of evangelical Protestantism would not be complete without some reference to Princeton College, the last of the "big three" in early America. While alike with Harvard and Yale in espousing the dogma of the Reformation, Princeton deserves at least a cursory look for its role in establishing the foundations of early American higher education.

Princeton College grew out of the College of New Jersey which in turn had its humble beginnings in the Log College founded by evangelist William Tennent of Neshaminy, Pennsylvania. The Log College "trained men for the Presbyterian ministry during the 1730s and 1740s" (Calhoun 1994: 4). Princeton received its charter as the College Of New Jersey on October 22, 1746. It was "the fourth to be founded in America — after Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary — and the first in the middle colonies" (Calhoun 1994: 4).

The purpose of Princeton as stated in the charter "was not only to educate ministers of the gospel but also to raise up 'men that will be useful in other learned professions — ornaments of the State as well as the Church'" (Calhoun 1994: 4). This tradition was continued in the years that followed with the election in 1757 of the learned and able theologian, Jonathan Edwards, followed by the election of "common sense realist" John Witherspoon of Scotland in 1768 (Calhoun 1994: 4). The caliber of such men enhanced the viewpoint of many that Princeton was committed to its charter and fully intended to be known as a school of orthodoxy. It should be noted, however, that these men and the other early leaders of Princeton were not strict Calvinists. They adhered to the Westminster Confession of Faith which was produced between 1643 and 1649 causing some people to believe that the purpose for the founding of the college "was to educate young men for the Presbyterian ministry in a more liberal spirit than prevailed at Harvard and Yale colleges" at that time.
(Seldon 1992: 6-7). But the "liberal" spirit they wanted would not answer to the liberal spirit of our day. They were "new light" presbyterians who wanted a school to reflect that pious persuasion (Seldon 1992: 10).

Early American education, like that of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, had a place then for both God and man. Based on theological dogma, its appeal to authority was not to the authority of the Church as in the case of papal infallibility but to that of Scripture. The leading educators of the day did not think such a position on biblical authority to be irrational or unsophisticated. "Typical of the position of conservatives like Patton (of Princeton) was their insistence that their biblicism rested on science and reason and not on any blind appeal to authority . . ." (Marsden 1994: 210, italics added). They believed strongly that their confidence in the authority of biblical dogma was shared by all truly educated people. "This emphasis on dogma was appropriate since dominant New England opinion was that their theological tradition embodied universal truth . . . In higher education theological exclusivism was firmly entrenched institutionally throughout the Western world" (Marsden 1994: 49, italics added).

One more example, that of Andover Divinity School, should suffice to indicate the pervasiveness of the Protestant establishment's hold upon America's institutions of higher learning. While there are many others they do not differ in character from those already discussed. Andover was born in a somewhat delayed reaction to the flourishing of Unitarianism at Harvard and its divinity school. Founded by Massachusetts Calvinists, the divinity school opened September 28, 1808. Here was a school whose leaders seemed determined to keep as orthodox possible in doctrine and practice. "The founders of Andover did everything humanly possible to guarantee that it should stand for what was, from their viewpoint, orthodox Christianity . . . Conservatism and dogmatic
Calvinism were written into the very structure of the new institution; for its founders believed they were defending the truth of God against evil and error” (Williams 1941: 1-2, 7).

To indicate their resolve in keeping Andover Divinity School a Calvinist institution for perpetuity its directors drew up a rather strong and prohibitive creed that was designed to “prevent heresy from creeping into the institution.” Williams goes on to point out that “(t)he long creed which has been described was proposed by them as something to remain eternally unalterable. Every article of it should remain ‘entirely and identically the same’” (1941: 13). This important statement provides evidence that no creed can ultimately prevent the erosion of an original founding vision. A partial copy is included herewith to demonstrate that it used the strongest possible language in an attempt to accomplish its goal of safeguarding orthodoxy. The Associate Founders of Andover, after some opening words, went on to carefully spell out what would be expected of each professor. Each must affirm the following:

Article 2. I believe that the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only perfect rule of faith and practice.

Article 4. That in the Godhead are three persons, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Article 12. That the only Redeemer of the elect is the eternal Son of God who for this purpose became man and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

Article 13. That Christ as our Redeemer executeth the office of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Article 14. That agreeably to the covenant of redemption the Son of God and He alone
by His suffering and death has made atonement for the sins of all men.

Article 16. That the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of a sinner’s justification, that this righteousness is received through faith and that this faith is the gift of God so that our salvation is wholly of grace.

Article 32. And furthermore I do solemnly promise that I will open and explain the Scriptures to my pupils with integrity and faithfulness.

Article 33. That I will maintain and inculcate the Christian faith as expressed in the creed by me now repeated together with all the other doctrines and duties of our holy religion so far as may appertain to my office according to the best light God shall give me and in opposition not only to atheists and infidels but to Jews, Papists, Socinians, Sabellians, Unitarians and Universalists and to all heresies and errors, ancient and modern, which may be opposed to the Gospel of Christ (Gordon 1926: 140-141).

According to Gordon in his book, *The Leaven Of The Sadducees*, The Associate Founders of Andover drew up the famous Associates Creed “with an almost incredible degree of caution to prevent the institution or any professor deriving his salary from the Associate Foundation from teaching opinions regarded as unsound. Every professor was obliged to subscribe publicly every five years to this declaration of his faith and purpose as a teacher . . .” (1926: 140).

In agreement that the creed was legally sound and of sufficient merit to accomplish its goal the state Court supported the effort of Andover Divinity School to insure its perennial orthodoxy. “The State of Massachusetts formally ratified these arrangements (that is, the Creed, the Board of Visitors to supervise adherence to it and the substance of instruction). When in 1889 the seminary
applied for 'right to hold an increased amount of property' this was allowed (by the state) 'provided the income of said estate shall always be applied to the objects and purposes of the said institution and agreeably to the will of the donors'” (Gordon 1926: 142).

But the “creed of Andover” did not keep that institution orthodox. It is well known today that Andover/Newton is an institution committed to theological liberalism. Levering Reynolds explains how the beginning of the end of orthodoxy came to Andover:

After the retirement of Edwards Amasa Park, Abbot Professor of Theology in Andover and the last of the ‘consistent’ Calvinists to hold that chair, it became increasingly difficult for men chosen to professorships in Andover to subscribe to the Creed. Inasmuch as both the Trustees and the Visitors recognized this difficulty, the Visitors permitted the omission of the public subscription at the inauguration of Charles Cutler Torrey in 1899, having first satisfied themselves that his theological beliefs were 'in accord with the Creed.' Thereafter this same procedure was followed with all the men elected to professorships in Andover (Williams 1954: 194, italics added).

Those who remain committed to an educational vision such as that which characterized the earlier Harvard or Yale can learn much from Andover's attempt to use a creed as a means of assuring continued orthodoxy. Simply put, it did not work. It was later overturned by the courts of Massachusetts once it became apparent that administrators and trustees no longer desired it. It is apparently not possible, given the history of Andover, to write into the founding documents of an institution sufficient mandates as would insure that a particular institution shall remain true to its vision. Moreover, what institutional trustees mandate in one era they can and do rescind in another.

Accordingly, almost none of the original vision is now left to the bellwether institutions of
America's grand colonial experiment with Protestant controlled higher learning. Those institutions, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and a host of others that were once noted examples of the evangelical Protestant establishment have long since rejected that alignment and embraced secularism instead. But before the complete loss of the Protestant establishment in higher education there was first a gradual decline.

1.2. The Decline Of Evangelical Protestantism

The decline of the original evangelical ethos in the institutions was not precipitous but gradual and due to a variety of factors. Some of these are treated in greater detail in the third chapter of this work which concentrates on the reasons for the demise of traditional Christianity in the institutions. It is necessary first, however, to deal with several of the indications of decline since the vision faded before it was altogether lost.

It has been generally conceded by observers of the modern educational scene that America's colleges and universities are secular in nature. One cannot but be struck with the realization that such a secular spirit is very far from the vision of the founders of the colleges. From the conviction of the old Protestant establishment that universal knowledge is possible (an idea inherited from the Enlightenment) to the postmodern rejection of such a proposal on modern campuses is quite a stretch. But the secularization of the college campus is not a recent phenomenon. "The awakeners (Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, Gilbert Tennent) were claiming that New England's colleges were already hopelessly secularized" (Marsden 1994: 55).

Further elaboration on this point is well served by a definition of secularization particularly as that term is applied to the shift in thinking on the campuses. "Secularization" describes "a transfer from ecclesiastical or religious use to lay use or ownership." It means "to draw away from religious
orientation; (to) make worldly" (American Heritage Dictionary 1992). “Secularism,” furthermore, is described as a “secular spirit, views or the like; especially, a system of doctrines and practices that rejects any form of religious faith and worship” (Webster’s Dictionary 1983). This second definition may well underscore the point documented by Allen Bloom in The Closing Of The American Mind that the modern university has merely exchanged the compulsion of a former religious persuasion for a secular rendition of it (1987: 26-28).

This fading of the original evangelical vision through the process of secularization did not go unchallenged. American colleges early resisted efforts by some to break down their sectarian commitment. They continued to evangelize students, conduct chapel services, dormitory Bible studies, morning and evening prayers, and retain other evidences of sectarian doctrine and practice. “Pressures to drop such distinctive practices in favor of a broad Christian moralism were not as immediate or as sweeping as in common schools and counter-efforts were more apparent” (Marsden 1994: 90).

But the break down did occur. The unitarians did their part. Unitarian Theodore Parker was confident that “the special dogmas of Christianity were not permanent but transient” (Ahlstrom in Willliams 1954: 80). Ironically, it is the work of Parker that has proven transient while the special dogmas of Christianity continue to be viable in churches throughout the world. Parker’s confidence was misplaced for it was not based on careful observation but rather depended on “ideas that had their origin in Germany” (Ahlstrom in Willliams 1954: 79).

The trend away from orthodoxy persisted but gently. Even with unitarians in the places of leadership of higher education in New England the change was not apparent. This was because the unitarians in charge in the early days were themselves “conservative.” For one thing they held
a somewhat traditional view of Christology. The old unitarians “believed that Christ’s atoning work was central to the Christian message. Moreover those men did not deny original sin. From this and similar doctrines to which they subscribed we see that the old unitarians like Ware and James Walker were not that far removed from the Congregational Calvinism which had shaped Harvard from the beginning” (Ahlstrom in Williams 1954: 123-125). They were also, in the main, pious in their religious profession, as pious in their own way as had been the Calvinists of the seventeenth century. Saintly men such as Walker of Harvard, who was also a dynamic preacher, led the way. He and his colleague, Professor Norton, sought to live out the implications of their faith as men of character. Walker recounted that Norton often told his students to live ‘not as one in the act of seeking after the truth, but as one who had found it’ (Conrad Wright in Williams 1954: 51).

The bond that had held the old unitarians together had been their “common faith in the Christ of the Scriptures.” Therefore when Professor Frederick H. Hedge (1805-1890), one of their own, gave a controversial address to the Divinity School graduating class of the Harvard Divinity School in 1864 the effect was pronounced. “... (W)hen he attacked ‘anti-supernaturalism in the pulpit’ most unitarians were as disturbed as the orthodox” (Ahlstrom in Williams 1954: 143). Unitarian theology in the beginning was not that much unlike orthodoxy except in the matter of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. But Hedge was signaling a changing of the guard in Unitarianism. Ahlstrom reports an excerpt from his message that confirms this assessment. “‘The early Unitarianism looked chiefly God-ward – they had looked up to God through Christ. The ‘new’ Unitarians looked in to God through their own natures’” (Williams 1954: 143-44, italics added).

Consequently, the “old” unitarianism of Walker’s representation did not endure. This is not surprising since the seeds of its destruction already resided in its promotion of a heretical
theological position clearly in opposition to the age old Chalcedonian defense of the deity of Christ. This rejection of orthodox christology gave the old unitarians a strange bent. They continued to love Christ, as Alstrom has pointed out, for they had a "somewhat traditional" Christology. But for them he was not the Christ of evangelical biblical faith and in time even this love for Christ faded and was replaced by a "new" Christ. How institutions, when led by such men, gradually lose their distinguishing Christian doctrines may never be fully known but the emotional impact of it can be felt. For example, one hears a lament such as that of Mrs. J. E. Marshall as she comments on the loss of The Young Men’s Christian Association to the unitarians, "Can you imagine yourself sitting with a board of directors planning a distinctively Christian program with those who deny Christ's divinity? We dare not expect God’s blessing" (Gordon 1926: 91).

Gradually then, the old unitarian doctrinal views gave way to the new. Who were these "new" unitarians and how did they come to be? An example of the new unitarian was Ralph Waldo Emerson of Transcendentalism literary fame. Emerson declared that the fault of historical Christianity was that 'it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus.' For Emerson, Christ was the model for faith. By following him all humans could be Christ, that is, divine. His views soon became the "new" orthodoxy at Harvard Divinity School" (Wright in Williams 1954: 74-75, 77, italics added). Another example of the new unitarians was Theodore Parker. He was their most outspoken champion and in 1841 he shocked Boston ministers with his famous address on 'The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity.' In a later message "he denied the sinless perfection of Christ. At first he was resisted by some but eventually Unitarianism came to accept his ideas raising the question of whether Unitarianism inevitably leads to doctrinal infidelity and apostasy" (Sydney E. Ahlstrom in Williams 1954:78-79).
From the inception of the founding of Harvard Divinity School (about 1811) the "new" unitarians were in control. As an indication of this The Christian Register, an official organ of the Unitarian Church, declared: "The church is truly awakening when it is possible for a teacher of church history to declare against the old doctrine of the atonement" (Gordon 1926).

But the picture of theological declension in the academies and in the nation is much larger than the effects of unitarian doctrine. Like much of the West by the end of the eighteenth century and even before that period "religious dogmatism was coming to be widely questioned in sophisticated circles" (Marsden 1994: 51). In place of the confidence which the founders of education had placed in the holy Scriptures the new confidence was in "universal reason." Such human reason, it was felt, "offered to provide a new rock solid foundation of authority on which a consensus of enlightened humanity might at last be built. Such principles, so it seemed, would only undergird true Christianity" (Marsden 1994: 51, italics added).

That which begins in the universities in one generation is likely to become the prevailing public thinking in the next generation. This was true of America as she entered the nineteenth century. Harvard and the other colleges had begun to change and the changes were not altogether indigenous to American soil.

Harvard was the first American school to feel the impact of the ideal presented by the rising eminence of the German universities . . . [There was NLM] a flood of American gentlemen scholars studying in Germany. What the Harvard contingent, like their other American counterparts, brought back from Germany were not exact German models so much as admiration for German scholarship and increasing openness to idealist and romantic modes of thought (Marsden 1994: 183).

As we have already noted it was Kant who served as the catalyst for the idealism that was
taking hold in Western intellectual life. “Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century had shifted the paradigm of human intellectual activity from a model of discovery of the fixed principles [which had been the model of the sectarians] to a model of the intellect as an active agent imposing its own categories on reality” (Marsden 1994: 183, italics added).

Thus sectarianism became a stigma to the leadership of the old line Christian colleges insuring a further slide along the slippery slope of a weakened theological commitment. While still holding to the religious heritage of the old commitment the educational leaders moved into the broad stream of non-sectarianism. During the presidency of Charles Eliot in the late nineteenth century Harvard “became effectively undenominational.” The reason for such a move was the desire by school administrators to “broaden” the appeal of the school in order to reach a higher level of enrollment and intellectual diversity. This in turn would broaden the attractiveness of the school to potential donors thus strengthening the financial base. Therefore, “(r)eligion, in the broad sense, was acceptable; dogma was not” (Williams 1954: 8).

This was true of the state schools as well for they too had been sectarian from the beginning in allegiance. Study of legislation in the several states reveals this development especially after 1925. The legislation focused on prohibitions against sectarianism in teaching but oddly not against the teachings of religious dogma or religion in general. This is because religion was considered a broader term than sectarianism (Searles in Starbuck 1925: 41-43).

The breadth of the lessening of a passionate belief in the importance of education from a Christian perspective can be seen in the radical shift from cultural piety at the beginning of the American experiment to the secular rendition of education in modern times. The difference is like night and day. Marsden sums up the matter for us:

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In many of the American colonies all the citizens were taxed for the support of the established religious group, regardless of the citizen's religious affiliations. In the nineteenth century the Protestant establishment became informal and declared itself nonsectarian. Today nonsectarianism has come to mean the exclusion of all religious concerns. In effect only purely naturalistic viewpoints are allowed a serious academic hearing (Marsden 1994: 440).

Once the schools had become non-sectarian the stage was set for a revised vision of the purpose of higher education in America's institutions of higher learning. This would become obvious in the modern era as theology became a marginal concern of the leaders of higher education. As Marsden so well put it the schools would move from "Protestant establishment to established disbelief" (Marsden 1994: 440, italics added).
Chapter 2

Evangelical Protestantism Rejected

2.1. From Sectarianism To Secularism

Men will not long accommodate notions that do not line up with their presuppositions. The evangelical Protestant presuppositions of an earlier time in the colleges of America began to yield to some of the new ideas of the major thinkers of Europe especially those of Germany. It was those ideas that affected the nineteenth century American scholars who traveled to Germany and studied under the leading philosophers and theologians of that country (Marsden 1994: 124). Consequently, America's Protestant Christian educators were finding it increasingly difficult to retain their orthodox presuppositions. The whole world was infected by the new ideas emanating from Germany especially those of the philosopher Emmanuel Kant. "The critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant dealt a severe blow to traditional orthodoxy, particularly to the extent that it depended on reason and evidence from nature rather than revelation alone" (Brown 1984: 409).

For a while in the colleges of the nineteenth century one might not have noticed the change. Orthodoxy still prevailed in the curricula in use at that time especially in evangelical strongholds like Yale. But the thinkers of the day had already changed their views. "During the nineteenth century, the formal structure of Protestantism remained orthodox, but its intellectuals and scholars largely repudiated orthodoxy . . . a kind of generalized Protestantism was considered the national religion until the second half of the nineteenth century" (Brown 1984: 417, italics added).

By the beginning of the twentieth century higher education in America had ended its indebtedness to the premises of the former Protestant consensus and entered the new era that Marsden and others have called "the secularization of the academy" (Marsden in Marsden and
Longfield 1992: 5). With secularization came a repudiation of sectarianism because the modern leaders of education saw in it a spirit of provincialism that in their view had no place in the modern intellectual world. Sectarianism simply had become an embarrassment to the leaders of the academy. From time to time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries verbal battles would break out between those who favored the traditional vision of sectarianism and those who favored the new secularist vision (Marsden 1994: 220-223). So diametrically opposed were the two systems that there could be no compromise; it was a "winner take all" assault that was almost always won by the secularists. No wonder then that one of the chroniclers of the collegiate internecine warfare, Charles Harvey Arnold, titled his history of the University of Chicago Divinity School: Near The Edge of Battle.

The expulsion of evangelical Protestantism and ultimately, Protestantism of any stripe, from the classrooms of America's institutions of higher learning did not occur suddenly. Rather, the process was one of gradual change that was incremental in scope. Various forces were at work. I will identify some of those later in this work. But the major factor in the turn from sectarianism to secularism at the beginning was theological liberalism. The process was one that moved from theological orthodoxy to liberalism to almost no religion of any kind except in the divinity schools.

Liberal Protestantism was promoted by its adherents as a "Protestant universalism" (Marsden 1994: 5). This universalism or catholicity was advanced as a way to help the colleges move into the broader stream of modern culture and thus salvage for religion the respect educational leaders felt was needed as a factor in modern education. It did not turn out that way. A rude shock came to liberal theologians and church men. In what Marsden calls an "irony" the tables were turned on liberalism. "Many of the same forces set in motion by liberal Protestantism, which rooted out
traditional evangelicalism from university education, were eventually turned *against* the liberal Protestant establishment itself. Now, while it is the spirit of liberal Protestantism that arguably survives, normative religious teaching of any sort has been nearly eliminated from standard university education" (1994: 4-5, italics added). In a summary statement Marsden draws his conclusion and pronounces the demise of Protestantism as a force in higher education:

Ironically, therefore, Protestant universalism (catholicity, if you will) was one of the forces that eventually contributed to the virtual exclusion of religious perspectives from the most influential centers of American intellectual life. . . Almost from the outset of the rise of American universities, such universality was attained by defining the intellectual aspects of the enterprise as excluding all *but liberal Protestant* or 'nonsectarian' perspectives. For a time liberal Protestantism also was still allowed to play a priestly role, signaled by the building of chapels, blessing such academic arrangements. Eventually, however, the logic of the nonsectarian ideals which the Protestant establishment had successfully promoted in public life dictated that liberal Protestantism itself should be moved to the periphery to which other religious perspectives had been relegated for some time. The result was an 'inclusive' higher education that resolved the problems of pluralism by virtually excluding *all religious perspectives* from the nation's highest academic life" (1994: 5, italics added).

This pattern of movement from orthodoxy to liberalism to humanistic secularism occurred in almost all colleges and universities including Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. But nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than in The University of Chicago Divinity School. Its acquaintance with orthodoxy seems to have been only as brief as was necessary to receive funding from the Baptists who founded the school. Its movement from liberalism to secularism is best understood when viewed
through the prism of the rapid development of the university especially in the selection and
development of the faculty of the divinity school. Because Chicago recapitulates what occurred in
Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and the like, though at a more rapid pace, it is therefore serviceable
as an example of the rejection of evangelical Protestantism in higher education and the subsequent
empowerment of humanistic secularism.

2.2. Secularism And The University-of Chicago: A Case Study

The University Of Chicago was to be “a great Christian university” (Gordon 1926: 171-172). At least, that seems to have been the original intention. But instead, to borrow a term from Marsden, it became “the flagship” secularist university. Founded in 1892 with John D. Rockefeller money, and funds gathered from baptist churches throughout the mid-west, the University of Chicago was endowed with ostentatious facilities and plentiful resources. Allan Bloom, in describing his first impression of the University of Chicago, gives us an indication of the university’s allure. ‘I had never before seen, or at least had not noticed, buildings that were evidently dedicated to a higher purpose, not merely to shelter or manufacture or trade, but to something that might have been an end in itself’ (1987: 243). The same campus impressed another observer with its overwhelming emphasis on materialism. “Materialism early soaked into every nook and corner of the university” (Gordon 1926: 171-172). However, its first president, the renown and widely popular W. R. Harper, was far more concerned with the problem of the low commitment to the life of religion he observed in the faculty and student body as he contemplated the future of his university. ‘It would be curious and something very sad,’ he wrote, ‘if the institutions founded by our fathers as training schools for Christian service should come to be centers of influence destructive to that same Christianity’ (Gordon 1926: 173). But in fact that was already happening as the colleges founded by
men of faith gave way to the leadership of men who were guided by the spirit of secularism.

Perhaps no group of scholars in America so well represented the new ideas of secularism as did those of the University of Chicago. From the beginning of their educational enterprise they were determined to be free of the traditional doctrines of orthodox Protestant theology. However, this does not mean that they rejected Christianity or its ethical system. In fact, "Harper was more outspoken in his statements of Christian purpose than were most other university leaders and he was a pioneer in giving the Bible a place in the curriculum" (Marsden 1994: 265). Yet, though major donor Rockefeller and the founding Baptists who gave sacrificially to build the school would not have expected it, it was a liberal Christianity that Harper and his colleagues installed in the founding of the institution. Marsden sees Chicago as liberal Christianity's finest hour in the university business. "Harper's Chicago represents the high water mark of liberal Protestant university building in which Christianity played an explicit role. . . .[and in order to establish distance between themselves and the earlier founders of sectarian education these Chicago men saw to it NLM] . . . that intellectual life must follow the dictates of value free scientific inquiry" (1994: 265 italics added). But "value free" scientific inquiry is the antithesis of evangelical Protestantism which has values that are dictated by Christian dogma. It was therefore a Church affiliated school, the University of Chicago, rather than any state university, that enlarged the power of secularism over higher education in modern America. State universities at least did nothing to disparage religion (Marsden 1994: 337).

The Chicago experiment in higher education made them pacesetters for secularism in the modern university. That experiment was given unfettered display in the Chicago Divinity School. It involved the perpetration of three major ideas that eventually came to be shared by most of
2.2.1. The Idea Of Authority

The idea of authority in the former educational establishment of the sectarians was informed by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It was an authority that was grounded in biblical revelation, a settled once-for-all foundation that presupposed an infallible Bible. But this proved to be an embarrassment to the men of Chicago and also, in general, for modern educators as well. The first president of the University of Chicago wanted the Bible as a part of education but not as its authority. Unlike Harvard, Yale, et al, which had used the Bible to attack paganism, Harper and the secularists used the Bible instead to attack Christian beliefs many of which by then they had come to consider "superstitious." Harper considered the Bible teaching of his day a major embarrassment because it was not founded upon the scientific method and therefore, in his view, had a faulty hermeneutic. "The friends of the Bible," he wrote, "have been its worst enemies. A faith in the Bible constructed upon a scientific basis will be acceptable to everyone who will take the pains to look at it" (Marsden 1994: 242, italics added).

Some of the faculty members at the Chicago Divinity School were even bolder in their disdain for any who accepted the Bible truth statements as authoritative. "Professor Soares of the University of Chicago," wrote Gordon, "thinks of revelation as self-deception" (1926: 179). Gordon also refers to Divinity School faculty member George B. Foster's book, *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, as an example of the heretical works of the faculty. "(It) can be considered as a sort of official pronouncement of the theology of this divinity school since it was issued in commemoration of the first decade of the university's existence. It is a book that would have warmed the bloodless
heart of Voltaire" (1926: 179). According to Gordon, Foster takes an unkindly shot at any who hold the traditional view of confidence in the record of the Bible. Foster's key statement reveals his confidence in science if not in Scripture: 'An intelligent man who now affirms his faith in miracle can hardly know what intellectual honesty means'" (1926: 179).

The Chicago men had rejected the Bible's authority but they did so because they honestly believed that the new ideas from Germany, especially the scholarship of Germany as well as the tenets of Kantian philosophy had simply made the idea of a "settled" authority such as that of biblical revelation untenable for modern people. "In Germany, Enlightenment thinking completely took over university education. The result was that conservative religious thinkers withdrew from the academy and retreated to the 'parishes, or foreign missions, and various types of social work'" (Brown 1984: 404). An example of this is "the University of Halle [which NLM dramatically shifted from being a bastion of Pietistic conservatism to being a center of radical criticism of the foundations of Pietism as well as of orthodoxy" (Brown 1984: 405). [Also see Bloom 1987: 147-150]. What was needed was a dynamic idea of authority that they thought they had found in a research methodology based on the German scholastic model. The first method of research they developed was the sociohistorical method which was itself an extension of the scientific model of free enquiry. "The distinctive unifying factor in the early Chicago Divinity School was the Socio-Historical methodology of its members... [This method NLM is a pragmatic, critical, experimental, functional approach to knowledge of any kind, whether religious or other... It was anti-metaphysical or at least un-metaphysical, and in some ways it was applied by philosophers to understand metaphysics" (Arnold 1966: 34-35, italics added).

Professor Eugene William Lyman of Union Theological Seminary in New York called this
modern method of the Chicago school that of 'the clinic' as over against the old method of the Protestant establishment which he called the 'cloister.' The cloister, of course, was a method more in keeping with the concept of a settled doctrinal foundation that had characterized the original vision of America's colleges. This, however, the Chicago men considered a closed system of thought not becoming a modern institution. Lyman used the analogy of the clinic as a means of acknowledging what was so attractive to modern educators about the socio-critical method. Whereas the cloister suggested the religious way of thinking, a frame of mind to which they no longer conformed, the clinic suggested the scientific framework for education with which by then the Chicago men had become so comfortable (Arnold 1966: 35).

The clinical approach of the new method, therefore, was more in keeping with the spirit of the modern age. The old authority had been the infallibility of the Scriptures which had produced the orthodoxy that in turn had served as the ideological foundation for the colleges of the Protestant establishment. Such a cloistered method, however, would never do for the educators of the new era for they sought to be relevant to the scientific empiricism of the day. Chicago Divinity School Dean Shailer Mathews put it this way: 'The substitution of scientific method for reliance on authority is characteristic of our modern religious thought' (Arnold 1966: 35).

Arnold, who was a student and later a professor of the University of Chicago Divinity School, gives a succinct yet revealing summary of the shift in thinking of the cloistered method of the old Protestant establishment and the new clinical method in use at the Divinity School. He appropriately identified the problem as one of authority:

Christian orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Protestant appeals to authority – an ultimately infallible revelation, in the Bible or through the Pope; but it can only convince and hold
the loyalty of those who accept its premises. The modern man must seek authority elsewhere. And where else? The impact of the scientific revolution over three centuries had now perfected a method of inquiry into knowledge and truth — the empirical, socio-historical method — that is the only satisfying approach to our human problems. Christianity must adapt to this world-view and its attendant method of investigation, else the churches will be fighting a rear-guard battle all the way . . . The main task, then of theology in systematic form is the development of the critical method. Beliefs in God, Christ, salvation, the church, the last things, will all be subjected to inquiry; there are no 'sacred precincts apart' (1966: 44-45).

But the socio-theological method was too optimistic and flourished best in the unbridled confidence of late nineteenth century progressivism. Once that optimism faded because of the harsh realities of a world war the Chicago divinity school turned to other methods. The philosophico-theological method became the dominant one after World War I replacing the optimism of the old scientific method with one that was existentialist in perspective. It was a method that questioned the significance of both God and man in the context of the modern post-world war world. It therefore blended philosophical ultimate questions with theological despair (Arnold 1966: 60-61).

The constructive theology method emerged after World War II. It was a time for rebuilding war torn Europe but also for the reconstruction of an exhausted theological and metaphysical enquiry which produced no solid answers for man's predicament. It was a time as well for a new mood on campus for the students were older, wiser and more experienced. They were "fascinated by the possibilities of a new apologetic for the Christian faith." A fresh voice from Europe, Karl Barth, along with other "crisis" theologians of the neo-orthodox persuasion were providing answers that caught the attention of many of those students. The Constructive Method made for a more congenial
atmosphere on campus for theology for it had come back into favor and was no longer considered merely an augment of modern philosophy (Arnold 1966: 85-95).

The authority of methodology in university circles is very important but also quite transitory. Arnold’s chronicle ended in 1966. By then the three methods he surveyed eventually gave way to other dominant “schools of thought” ultimately ending with some form of “neo-naturalism” or a “theology of naturalism” (Arnold 1966: 27-113).

Arnold’s perceptive analysis reveals how academia had entered its “brave new world” of free thinking devoid of the restraints of doctrinal conformity. The academy has yet to return to the settled religious authority of that simpler day when Protestantism ruled the college campuses of America nor does it seem likely to do so.

2.2.2. The Idea Of Religion

Marsden calls the idea of religion advocated by Chicago “low church” Christianity. By that term Marsden does not mean religion in its devotional or pietistic use. Rather he means that “low church Christianity” is pragmatic religion. It is “what works” with an emphasis upon improving culture, the nation as well as the church. What works means one must look at Protestant religion as an organizing efficiency. “So at the same time that we can correctly see Chicago as an early prototype of what eventually became the bureaucratic multiversity, we should also understand it as a quintessential Protestant institution. Not only was it Protestant, but more particularly it was low-church Protestant” (1994: 239). According to Marsden this low church identification of the University is significant for all of America’s institutions of higher learning and “is a most revealing clue for understanding the shape of American universities” (1994: 239).

With low-church Protestant Christianity the University of Chicago had an effective and
of God” (Marsden 1994: 242).

2.2.3. The Idea Of Relevancy

This third idea of the University of Chicago, its divinity school, and their colleagues in universities throughout the nation is one of the most important. An educated person in the modern sense would almost rather be anything than irrelevant to his culture. This is why around the time of the beginning of the University of Chicago the academic world had already embraced a number of new scholarly disciplines. Among them were psychology, sociology, and the philosophy of religion. These and other developments of the modern universities’ panoply of studies moved them away from the time warp of archaic theology and into the intoxicating new world of modern relevance. After pointing out that democracy has been corrupted by “alien views and tastes,” Bloom recalls:

I got my first look at this scene at the midpoint of its development, when American life was being revolutionized by German thought which was still the preserve of earnest intellectuals. When I came to the University of Chicago in the mid-forties, just after the war, terms like ‘value judgment’ were fresh, confined to an elite and promising special insight. There were great expectations in the social sciences that a new era was beginning in which man and society would be understood better than they had ever been understood before. The academic character of the philosophy departments, with their tired and tiresome methodology and positivism, had caused people interested in the perennial and live questions about man to migrate to the social sciences (1987: 148, italics added).

The social sciences did give modern universities a way to answer the “perennial and live” questions of man. From psychology students would learn how to deal with their emotions or feelings
and not just with their intellectual interests. Of course, that fit well with modern theology for had not “the father of liberalism” Schleiermacher, led the way with his religion of the heart, of experience and feelings? From the philosophy of religion they could easily move into the syncretistic world of comparative religion and thus distance themselves from the sometimes, at least for them, embarrassing and politically incorrect exclusive claims of Christian dogma.

An example of the relevancy idea can be seen in the way that Chicago and other “church related” educational institutions managed what they perceived as the antiquated biblical doctrine of the sovereignty of God. From the perspective of the relatively new field of sociology there was no way that modern man could be expected to accept that outmoded idea. The modern ideal of democracy was simply incompatible with it. Had not the democratic culture of the West so shaped the character of our colleges that they cannot remain true to their orthodox charters? “Professor Ross thinks that we must ‘secularize god’” (Gordon 1926: 165). Gordon also refers to President McGiffert of the University of Chicago who stated: “‘Democratic demands a God with whom men may coop, not to whom they must submit” (1926: 165). Chicago, led by such men as professor Smith, made it clear therefore that there was no place for the sovereignty of God in a democratic society (Gordon 1926: 178). Walter Rauschenbusch was a professor at Rochester Seminary. According to Gordon he said, “We must democratize the conception of God . . . The worst thing that could happen to God would be [for Him] to remain an autocrat while the world is moving toward democracy. He would be dethroned with the rest” (1926: 193).

Since modern man could not relate to a “sovereign” God then God must simply become democratic for this is what the new theologians of secularism required. How else could they be relevant to the culture? God would simply have to change. Of course, it is here that the crisis
theologians such as Karl Barth would passionately protest. He and the others objected to the way that liberalism had so easily adapted their religious views to the conventions of culture. However, the Chicago men simply dismissed their objection and some of them even called Barth a "fundamentalist" (Arnold 1966: 87).

I cannot leave the story of the University of Chicago and its divinity school without expressing some general conclusions that seem warranted by my study. Arnold's book is pivotal because it provides insight into the swiftness of the secularist process in one of America's leading institutions of higher learning. As one who writes from within the "clinic" atmosphere of the Chicago Divinity School, Arnold describes the school as a place of shifting ideologies led by dominant and fascinating personalities. With stylistic verve he boldly describes the intention of the "Chicago men" to abandon traditional Christianity but he does so empathetically because he himself was part of the movement. The work of the Chicago school parallels the work of the secularists of Harvard, Yale, and the like, because they too have rejected the tenets of traditional Christianity. However, the speed of the journey from faith in God to faith in the sufficiency of man at Chicago is nothing short of breathtaking. That which took centuries to accomplish at Harvard took mere years at Chicago. Moreover, to this day, Harvard seems not to have reached the level of Cartesian cynicism in the things of the Christian faith which the representative faculty members of Chicago have reached.

Our study reveals that the men of the divinity school at Chicago seem to have extended the limits of the cosmic theological boundaries of thought. Unlike the superficiality of much evangelical thought in our time the Chicago faculty have gone boldly ahead breaking new ground in theological inquiry. Harper, Mathews, Case, Ames, and Wieman, among others, used methods which allowed
them to cast off the perceived restraints of supernatural revelation and theological dogma. They are therefore in the vanguard of those who would give the world a truly cosmopolitan as opposed to a provincial Christianity. But the work of these “men of Chicago,” as Arnold portrays them, also has a downside.

The downside of the theological work of the men of Chicago is best understood in the light of the sharp antithesis that exists between their work and the theology of the antebellum schools. The representative schools of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton with which we began this study were established on the bedrock of Calvinist theology. The God they followed was the God of the Scriptures, holy, sovereign, and transcendent (Isaiah 6:1-8). But the God of the men of Chicago is a different kind of deity. Through a process of value free inquiry they have embraced the God of immanence that is so much a part of modern theology. That the God of the Bible is also a God of immanence is not arguable. He came near us in Jesus Christ. But Chicago was in the quest for an understanding of God that would fit the times and in this pursuit they were generally not open to the biblical idea of a supernatural sovereign God. The God they promoted was one who fit their democratic idea of deity. They were not alone in such thinking. Other modern universities had come to that conclusion also but Chicago had set the pace for them. This is not a judgment of one who opposes the liberalism of the Chicago school. It comes from one of their own. “All of them either naturalized or humanized the supernatural, or did a combination of both. This was their most ‘radical’ break with the older theology, and even with a great deal of liberal theology” (Arnold 1966: 57-58).

Of course, there must always be a place for open research and maturation in theological schools. But modern theology accentuates the difference between the old traditional theology that once prevailed on the campus and the “new theology” shaped by the canons of secularism. In
secularism there is no place for miracle. Therefore, the Chicago Divinity School developed a theology void of the supernatural. Like the German scholars whom they emulated "they believed that the New Testament did not produce Christianity. On the contrary, Christianity produced the New Testament" (Arnold 1966: 49). They contended that back of the New Testament documents were individuals and groups of persons with their social experiences; thus the social origins of Christianity. The 'living interests' of such individuals and groups molded the development of the early church and left for posterity a literary deposit "that in time became canonized as Sacred Scripture" (Arnold 1966: 49). Put another way, sociology, rather than revelation, was the motivating force behind the production of the New Testament. So it is not surprising that with the loss of commitment to evangelical principles, such as supernatural revelation, the University "no longer sustains any significant ties to Baptists" (McBeth 1990: 274).

With these secular ideas in control of education at Chicago and throughout America, indeed throughout the world, it is easy to understand why the religious truth claims of the earlier sectarian vision of America's colleges are now on the periphery of modern life. They have no standing in modern academic life with the exception of the smaller church related colleges.

2.3. The Establishment Of Secularism

Once the secularization of the campuses was complete, as it was by the beginning of the twentieth century, there was left a rather large ideological cavity that needed to be filled. What could adequately be substituted for the coherency of the former Protestant theological perspective? While this difficulty did not create panic in the secularists it did cause them concern. They needed a vision to replace the one that was lost and they thought they had found one. They would pursue a secularist vision of education, a vision that was based on scientific reasoning rather than biblical
revelation. In chapter 4 we survey some of the elements of that new vision. Here we will focus on the phenomenon itself.

Protestantism had given education a unified field of knowledge. Knowledge formed a “seamless whole” because, under the influence of Protestant hegemony, it centered on a divine creation. But with such a unified field of knowledge being undermined by secularism education gave way to a process of fragmentation. “The emerging universities moved fastest. Many smaller colleges kept their old curriculum, or at least its religious framework, well into the twentieth century. Yet by 1900, at the institutions recognized even then as leading the change, any claim to an integrated curriculum—much less unified knowledge—appeared dubious, if not downright fraudulent” (Turner in Marsden and Longfield 1992: 77).

It is not within the purview of this work to explore how the secularists attempted to solve their problem of incoherence or even whether in fact they have. We will mention only a few of their attempted solutions in passing. After 1900, a number of attempts were made to fill the void once occupied by courses in Moral Philosophy. One of them, an effort to increase the number of courses having to do with the professional side of life such as architecture, engineering, pedagogy, pharmacy and the like, of course, met the legitimate needs of modern culture. Within the field of the humanities, attempts were made to fill the void with course innovations such as the following: “Columbia’s Contemporary Civilization course in 1919; Robert Maynard Hutchinson’s reorganization of the Chicago curriculum around the ‘Great Books’ in the 1930s; the General Education program outlined in Harvard’s ‘Redbook’ in 1945; [and NLM] the Great Awakening in core curricula that began around 1980 (Turner in Marsden and Longfield 1992: 77).

Turner goes on to point out that while the curricula met the needs of the academy it was in
the main a frustrating endeavor. "... (T)he intellectual history of the modern American university could be written as the Quest of Coherence. But this search to replace the senior course in Moral Philosophy [which was the legacy of Unitarianism NLM] goes on in a secularized academy that cannot admit the God who made the Moral Philosophy course work" (Marsden and Longfield 1992: 78-88). Perhaps it is for this reason, along with the loss of the evangelical Protestant consensus, that the intellectual community continues to vacillate between competing educational visions.

While such curricula as that mentioned above were highly respected at the time they were in use that did not solve the coherency problem. Bloom, Dinesh D’Souza and others have documented a major shift in the vision of higher education away from the heritage of the cultural achievements of western civilization to a more ethnic-conscious curricula sometimes attended with disdain for the achievements of what some consider the “oppressive” heritage of the West. For them, the “Great Books” are no longer a desirable option on America’s elite campuses because they represent White Anglo Saxon Protestant interests and ignore the new realities of pluralism on the campuses, particularly the interests of African-Americans and Asian-Americans (Bloom 1987: 354-356). For D’Souza’s treatment of the problem see (1992: 246-249).

Whatever the vision of the modern university it seems to have no place for the truth claims of evangelical Protestantism. Instead there is a general agreement among modern academics that faith or religion is detrimental to the learning process. Have the secularists concluded that the truly learned can not embrace so primitive an idea as that of faith in the supernatural? Even as early as 1916 James Leuba, a professor of psychology in formerly evangelical Bryn Mawr College concluded that such was the case. His book, The Belief In God and Immortality; A Psychological Anthropological And Statistical Study, published in 1916, promoted the thesis that “as intelligence and education
increase traditional religious beliefs will inevitably decrease” (Marsden 1994: 292). This may, of course, reflect the acknowledged fact that many young people enter college with uncritical dogmatic beliefs based on a literalistic approach to biblical interpretation and that some of these ideas, at least, are certain to yield to reasoned refutations. But there seems to be more to it than that. Secularism has mounted an assault on faith because secularism’s presuppositions are shaped by their interpretation and application of scientific data rather than biblical revelation. This aggressiveness of secularism in destroying faith assumptions is what Leuba’s thesis reveals. Marsden calls it the “routing” of the “vestiges of orthodoxy . . . in most leading schools” (1994: 292). Leuba thought that his conclusion was warranted because his investigation of professors provided “incontrovertible evidence of a decrease of belief corresponding to an increase of general mental ability and, perhaps, of knowledge” (1994: 295, italics added).

What then is the current state of Christian Protestant education in today’s colleges and universities? Even in small Christian colleges there is a tendency to go with the secularist vision rather than one inspired by the Christian faith. Except in divinity schools or theological seminaries the Christian faith does not get a respectful hearing. “The phenomenon is that huge numbers of Protestants in the United States support almost no distinctively Christian program in higher education . . . From the point of view of the churches, it is especially puzzling that both the Protestant leadership and its constituencies have become so little interested in Christian higher education” (Marsden in Marsden and Longfield 1992: 10-11).

That many universities are now antagonistic to the Christian faith is obvious to researchers. However, this is even more evident in graduate programs including those in the theological schools. Clayton Sullivan, a graduate student, who enrolled at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in
Louisville, Kentucky, wrote of his odyssey in that institution in the late 1970s. His book, *Called To Preach*, documents his loss of faith in miracles and supernaturalism as he worked on his doctoral degree in that institution. Nonetheless, he continued to work as a pastor among Southern Baptists. Therefore the subtitle of his book is *Condemned To Survive*. But it is difficult to preach when one does so with an “uncertain sound” (1 Corinthians 14:6-7).

Jaroslav Jan Pelikan gives his personal observation on this matter but tempers it with an upside to the issue. “Over the past twenty years I have known some graduate students - and not merely members of snake handling cults - who have lost their religious faith completely and (so it seems) permanently in the course of their research in religious studies. [However, N.L.M.] I have known others who through such research have discovered the vitality of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which they had given up for dead, and who thus found their way back to the faith of their fathers.” Then Pelikan adds a much needed word of spiritual encouragement. “(T)he issue of such struggle lies with the grace of One who is not the captive of our research” (Gerstein Lectures 1964: 18-19).

Has secularism won the day in modern universities? The answer is affirmative but not without modification. A growing number of critics who work within the structure of modern higher education think that they have found it woefully lacking in providing adequate training for the student. Among them, Bloom thinks that students in the modern university are deprived of what he deems genuine learning because of secularism’s reign. He writes of his grandparents “who were ignorant people by our standards.” Yet they were learned because of their immersion in Bible stories which taught them ethics, and they read deeply into the great literary classics of another era. They were deep in their learning because they had “a single body of belief.” Bloom offers an interesting commentary on the loss of “a single body of belief” as he contrasts the “respect of real learning”
which his grandparents had with the loss of it by the students of his generation:

I do not believe that my generation, my cousins who have been educated in the American way, all of whom are M.D.s or PH.D.s, have any comparable learning. When they talk about heaven and earth, the human condition, I hear nothing but cliches, superficialities, the material of satire. I am not saying anything so trite as that life is fuller when people have myths to live by. I mean rather that a life based on the Book is closer to the truth, that it provides the material for deeper research in and access to the real nature of things. Without the great revelations, epics and philosophies as part of our natural vision, there is nothing to see out there, and eventually little left inside. The Bible is not the only means to furnish a mind, but without a book of similar gravity, read with the gravity of the potential believer, it will remain unfurnished (1987: 60, italics added).

The conclusions of Bloom, a professor at the University of Chicago, are not those that bring comfort to the secularists. Unlike others who hold that the schools are motivated by some grand and noble vision he finds the opposite. The coherence problem in modern education is, according to him, the problem of a want of vision. "In short there is no vision, nor is there a set of competing visions, of what an educated human being is. The question has disappeared, for to pose it would be a threat to the peace. There is no organization of the sciences, no tree of knowledge" (Bloom 1987: 337).

Our study began with Harvard College. Harvard today is a stronghold of secularist education. While the college reached university status long ago, and though it still supports a divinity school, it bears almost no resemblance to its former status as a Puritan congregational institution. Secularism reigns with such force that at least one commentator professes futility in his "search for God at Harvard." Ari L. Goldman, a journalist, is the religion correspondent for The New York Times. The
Times sent him on assignment for a year to the campus of Harvard to investigate whether one could find God at work on that campus. He enrolled as a student in order to get a first hand look at the situation rather than a superficial observation. It is clear from his work that he found religion there, like some elaborate mosaic, diverse in all its forms. However, he saw little of God at work in any tangible way. Of all the students in the divinity classes only one, Diane, “is a minister in a church” (1991: 276). Many of the students he came to know hardly qualify as spiritual leaders but are themselves spiritual wrecks (1991: 276-281). What a difference there is (and here one speaks of spiritual commitment rather than academic prowess) between the students of Goldman’s day and those of the early days of the founding of Harvard College.

But there is another side to the story of the way things are on those institutions formerly committed to the theological ideas of orthodoxy. It is the same upside that Pelikan found in some graduate students for whom the challenge of secularism was a stimulus to faith. Kelly Monroe has served as a chaplain to graduate students at Harvard for seven years. She began the Harvard Veritas Forum to bring people together for exploring issues of intellectual and spiritual interest. Her book is composed of testimonials of people who have found God, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ, on the modern campuses of Harvard University and Harvard Divinity School. The stories are very inspiring and filled with Christian hope. There is the conversion of Lamin Sanneh, a devout Muslim, to the Christian faith who, in his words, simply couldn’t run from the question: “Who died on the Cross?” (1996: 192-197). Another story of great inspiration is that of Krister Sairsingh who was a leader of the Hindu faith but who converted to Christ through the witness of a Harvard student. Later he introduced his entire extended family to faith in Christ back in India. The result was a near riot in their Hindu community in India (1996: 180-189).
It must be pointed out, however, that the search for and discovery of God were not directed by the faculty or administration. One writer reports that, as a student, he became “deeply disturbed by many of his classes.” He described it as “(a) mental world that never asks metaphysical questions” (Porteus in Monroe: 1996: 32). Nevertheless, students did find Christ on the campus because of the presence of dynamic Christians who bore their witness in a secularist environment. The issues discussed on campus, though saturated with secularist ideology, only seemed to whet the spiritual appetite of many (Loury in Monroe: 1996: 68-76).

Monroe, however, puts the issue for radical change at Harvard in perspective by describing the situation that now prevails on that campus:

Today’s popular Veritas shield no longer includes Christ and the church. The book facing down is turned up, possibly to suggest that it is only a matter of time before we know and control all things by our own wisdom. Harvard, like many modern institutions, seeks to ignore the possibility of any transcendent truth worth pursuing (1996: 15).

Why did Harvard so radically change? Why did The University of Chicago so enthusiastically embrace secularism? Why did almost all modern institutions of higher learning in America likewise follow their example? Those are the questions to which we next turn our attention.
Chapter 3

Factors In The Demise Of Evangelical Protestantism

3.1. Ideological Factors

Ideology is a conspicuous factor in the demise of evangelical Protestantism in higher education. Such is what one would expect since ideas are the stock-in-trade of the intellectual world. The ideological factors of the changes that occurred in the colleges and universities of America preceded the theological reformulation that was itself an adjustment to the new ideas of the academy. For instance, in theology, the academy’s capitulation to the ideas of German critical scholarship contributed early to the disestablishment of evangelical Protestantism in schools such as Harvard College and Andover Theological Seminary. By the mid-nineteenth century these institutions and others were following the German model (Marsden 1994: 104).

It was German scholarship that first produced a shift in the thinking of the West in regard to the old verities of Christian orthodoxy. The old thinking of evangelical Protestantism had gone something like this: If Christianity originated because God had invaded history in the person and miraculous works of Jesus Christ then it was established on the firm foundation of revelatory truth. Even the early Unitarians at Harvard and Andover had assumed this premise. But Harnach and some other German scholars had a different view of history, one that allowed no place for divine intervention or supernatural revelation. The traditional idea that the biblical revelation was a fixed once-for-all truth delivered to mankind was unacceptable to them. Thus everything was subject to reexamination in the new scholarship, including theology. Gone were the days of doctrinal stability and in its place stood a new hermeneutic for arriving at truth. “To the German scholar a dogma was a ‘theological proposition’, and is not an outcome of religious faith but of a philosophical
interpretation of Christianity” (Williams 1941: 96).

The same was true for theological education in the seminaries and the divinity schools of the nation. Those schools, by virtue of their Christian origins, desired to serve the churches that founded them yet they were pulled in another direction. “Sometimes the faculty, sometimes the students are attracted to new ideas, new currents of thought; tension grows between the ideal of serving what seems to be the new truth. Such tension is apparent even in the most conservative seminaries” (Reynolds in Williams 1954: 187).

It is difficult to determine exactly what role philosophy has had on the demise of Christianity’s establishment in institutions of higher learning. Some, like Marsden, ascribe it a major role (1994: 130-131). Others perceive that its influence is incidental because it responds to cultural changes and rarely, if ever, initiates them. An exponent of this view is Paul Lakeland who sees the culture as the initiator of change and philosophy as its ideological imitation.

It would be a great mistake, though one to which academics are especially susceptible, to imagine that the temper of our post-modern times is best explained philosophically. Philosophy does not dictate or direct culture; it mirrors it. Thus, philosophical shifts can be useful indicators in getting a grip on what is happening in the world, but they do not cause to happen whatever it is that we decide is happening. Culture is best not explained philosophically; but philosophy can explain what is happening in the culture (1997: 36).

Lakeland’s assessment of the relationship between philosophy and culture in effecting change is certainly interesting. However, whether philosophy mirrors culture or directs it in affecting change, both are important components in the shift that has occurred in history with the loss of the
change, both are important components in the shift that has occurred in history with the loss of the Protestant establishment in higher education. We shall leave the question of which component is most important for others to decide but it is clear that both culture and philosophy are sources for the ideological change which has affected the critical thinking of college and university leaders. Kant may have mirrored culture with his philosophical Idealism but there is no question that his ideas are a major factor in the ideological shift from sectarianism to secularism in higher education. Therefore, once the academy accepted the notion of Kant that religion could not function in the arena of "pure reason," it became necessary, in view of the Enlightenment's emphasis on universal reason, to banish it from the classroom. It was, quite simply, a question of relevancy (Marsden 1994: 212-215).

Thus, by now it is a generally accepted assumption that religion has lost its authority for modern man because it has lost its claim to objectivity. With this loss, however, the university has unfortunately managed to impoverish itself because it has lost something that only true religion can adequately provide, that is, the ability to provide meaning or a sense of purpose for life. Therefore, in the interplay of ideas which occurs in the academy Christian truth claims are excluded and both culture and philosophy concur that such cannot but be "reasonable." If Christianity has a place in the modern university at all it is a token acceptance for the sake of "practical reason," that is, that which is represented by the disciplines of ethics and esthetics. Kant's philosophy, therefore, is a major factor in the universities of the movement toward "a scientific study of religious phenomena . . . religion is therefore relegated to feelings [as in Schleiermacher NLM]" (Searles in Starbuck 1925: 18).

Another philosopher of major influence in removing the influence of Christianity from the college classroom, at least in the nineteenth century, was Herbert Spencer. He was one of the first
to apply the principles of Darwinism to sociology. "It was largely through Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), that evolution reached the man on the street. Spencer saw the struggle for existence in every sphere of life" (Brown 1968: 149). His ideas, which were materialistic at the core, became popular in the colleges among faculty members as well as students. He inveighed against any concept of the absolute which, of course, rendered Christian dogma irrelevant (Marsden 1994: 130-131). The influence of Spencer is especially evident in the fall of Yale from the Protestant establishment in education.

Though Yale College withdrew from the ranks of the Protestant establishment, as we have already pointed out, it stayed with orthodoxy longer than any other antebellum school. In the end, however, Yale yielded to the new establishment of secularism primarily because of the influence of Spencer. It happened during the administration of Noah Porter in the 1860s. A crisis developed over a disagreement between him and professor William Graham Sumner as to the direction of the school. Porter desired, at least minimally, to retain Yale’s identity as a sectarian institution. But Sumner was a social Darwinist who used Spencer’s *The Study Of Sociology* in his well attended classes at Yale. Porter saw Spencer’s philosophy as something detrimental to the School’s commitment to Christianity and attempted to stop Sumner. The encounter was the defining moment of his presidency. Sumner won; orthodoxy lost. “In practical terms it meant that the rules that had prevailed among clergy, where boundaries were set on the basis of doctrinal orthodoxy, would no longer apply. Science would be the new orthodoxy” (Marsden 1994: 129).

While German critical scholarship and idealistic philosophy were major ideological factors in the demise of the Protestant establishment in academia they were not the only forces at work in the new environment on the campuses. No ideas were more fundamentally important than those of
science and the technological revolution. Of course, science was not a major factor in the colleges of colonial America because the scientific revolution was only beginning to make its impact on the institutions of the West. However, once the scientific enterprise made possible the industrial age, which in turn made possible the advances of our modern era, the academic world welcomed it. In a classic *faux pas* orthodoxy, as we shall see, likewise embraced the empiricism of science as an ally in the common search for truth. The Protestant clergymen, who were the leaders of the academy at that time, were confident that faith could withstand any scientific inquiry (Marsden 1994: 109).

Thus, the Protestant establishment enthusiastically promoted Baconian empiricism as a way of giving continued validity to the truth claims of the Christian faith. But, in time the naturalism of Darwinism took over in the universities and, since educational leaders considered it incompatible with the supernaturalism of revelation, the classical orthodoxy of Protestantism was deemed academically disqualified. The dynamics of such a disqualification are understood best when one understands what science can and cannot do.

"Science cannot tell us what to think, but it does tell us what we may *not* think" (Lakeland 1997: 37, italics added). With this rather "bald" statement, to use his term, Lakeland illuminates why science has prevailed over religion in the classrooms of academia. We may not think — that is, we cannot *rationally* consider — whatever science forbids us to think. Since religion is built on faith rather than "facts," religion is put at a distinct disadvantage in such an environment. An example of the powerful influence of science in changing cultural and religious perceptions may be seen in the conflict that existed between the scientific work of Copernicus and the dogmatic religious authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Prior to Copernicus, the church explained to the academy that the sun revolved around the earth each day as the terms "sunrise" and "sunset" suggest. The Ptolemaic
cosmology of that day taught that the earth was therefore the center of God’s activity in the universe. But that belief was shattered by the work of Copernicus. Man could no longer justifiably believe what the facts of science had clearly proven to be false. Since the time of Copernicus science has made it difficult to believe other ideas that have long been a part of theological exposition. For example, can modern man believe in angels, demons, or other supernatural phenomena if there is no scientific evidence to support their existence? The secularists hold that modern man cannot rationally embrace such ideas. For many, therefore, belief in such things is seen as just a phase in an outdated cosmology.

The above is known as “scientific positivism” (Lakeland 1997: 37). Whether science should have had such power in the nineteenth century is questionable. We have since learned something of its serious limitations especially as relates to the ethical considerations of using weapons of mass destruction, genetic engineering, and biological cloning. Nevertheless, while science has been unchastened and unrestricted by its glaring failure to restrain its destructive demons, it has been given “an important role in defining [the NLM] boundaries with which interpretation can legitimately occur” (Lakeland 1997: 37).

The result of all this has been a change in thinking in the academic centers of the western world. Christian Dogma is no longer acceptable in the intellectual realm. It was exchanged, as Kantian philosophy insisted, “for a permanent essence of pure religion and pure morality . . . which underlay all particular dogma” (Marsden 1994: 114). Thus Kantian ideology has become the norm for the academy for it is now assumed that science is completely objective in its judgments while religion, which of course includes Christianity, is inherently laden with biased subjectivism.

But is science “completely objective” and unbiased? It is no more so than any of the other
ideas of history. George Buttrick, whose perspective is in general agreement with the secular approach to education, nevertheless contributes a much needed postmodern assessment of the vaunted objectivity of all modern education. "Men [of the University NLM] who constantly plead 'objectivity' live in a house that would have no foundation if men of faith had not 'dug deep' in the rock. There is, there can be, no strictly objective history, for every historian [and scientist NLM] deals with only a handful of the facts and then marshalls this small group around a faith in 'what is important'" (Buttrick 1960: 8-9).

When we consider science as a factor in the demise of the influence of Christianity in higher education, however, we are primarily concerned with Darwinism. Evolutionary thought was already a part of the nineteenth century through the work of Lyell and others but Charles Darwin's book, *On The Origin Of The Species By Means Of Natural Selection*, published in 1859, altered the course of history as well as the development of higher education. Although resisted at first, Darwinism, especially through the advocacy of the Huxleys, gradually became scientific orthodoxy and has remained so throughout most of the twentieth century. Darwin once studied for the Christian ministry but his naturalistic conclusions about the struggle for biological life have served to strengthen the hand of secularists in overcoming the hegemony of Protestantism in academia, especially in America. It was impossible for evangelicalism to ignore Darwin. Orthodox teachings about God and man became "problematic for evangelicalism" (Williams 1941: 47).

The effect that the idea of Darwinian evolution had on the theological establishment in the colleges is that it altered the way educators viewed the doctrines of the faith. Previously, the clerics who were the leaders of the institutions had perceived of doctrine as a settled, fixed body of beliefs. However, with evolutionary thought taking hold, theologians, such as those at Andover, came to be
very uneasy about that concept (Williams 1941: 48).

At first, the new ideas of evolution were used by Christian leaders as an adjustment of orthodoxy not its elimination. This approach became known as “progressive orthodoxy” but eventually, orthodoxy was reduced to the vanishing point and progressivism was all that remained. Almost everything in theology seemed to lose its solid foundation. Theologians began speaking of “the evolving faith of an ancient primitive people.” Basic doctrines, such as those of damnation, angels, and the old Calvinist conception of regeneration, were relegated to the distant past and considered outmoded primitive thinking. Christianity had moved beyond them to more “progressive” and enlightened ideas (Williams 1941: 48. See also Marsden 1994: 174).

The influence of Darwinism was strong at the “new” Andover Seminary. It led, gradually, to the rejection of the idea of conversion, a basic tenet of evangelicalism. Conversion was a prominent part of the earlier Protestant establishment in colleges. We saw the importance of the doctrine in the founding of Wake Forest College. There, and throughout early America, religious conversion was a major part of the influence of campus revivals. Soon, at Andover, the doctrine of conversion was eliminated because, since it was a crisis experience, it did not fit with the “developmental” idea of religion that was becoming so prominent in the minds of theologians (Williams 1941: 74).

For Charles Hodge of the “old school” Presbyterians at Princeton Seminary the answer to Darwinism was simple and direct. ‘It is atheism.’ This was because, in Hodge’s opinion, Darwin “recognized, presupposed a universe of blind natural causes in which randomness, given enough time, could produce intelligence out of non-intelligence. Whatever lip service Darwin might give to deity, his theory was indeed built on nontheistic assumptions” (Marsden 1994: 203).
However, Buttrick believed that this ideological tension between science and religion, or reason and faith, was beneficial to the university. In his opinion secularism, with its presuppositions of naturalism and scientific rationalism, had given the church a great gift. “Perhaps the best gain for faith at the hands of secular education has been the University’s insistence on truth and fact” (1960: 54). But there is also a gift from the church to the secularist university which allows academics to discover that there is no way to avoid faith. In postmodern thought since everyone’s interpretation is of equal value, and no interpretation has the status of absolute truth, there must be allowed a place for non-empirical, metaphysical truth claims. Even science is much more a matter of faith than some have been willing to admit. “All science rests on biblical faith [This, however, may be a questionable proposition to some, less so if one drops the qualifying word, “biblical.” NLM]. . . the destructive heresies of our time are heresies against biblical thought. So the church, or God’s purpose through the church, has already given to higher education the ground-of-faith on which it lives and moves—and which it often forgets” (Buttrick 1960: 56-57).

3.2. Theological Factors

Modern higher education gives little credibility or value to the perspective of historic Protestant Christianity. At best, evangelical Protestantism is “kept in its place” by being assigned to the periphery of academic endeavor. At worst, it is completely ignored. If pressed as to why this is so, many academics respond with one of two reasons: The perspective of Christianity has no place in American higher education because its inclusion is a violation of the doctrine of the separation of church and state or it is merely dismissed as a “private” matter not suited for the public square (Newhaus 1984: 28-29, 139).

A sharp contrast exists between the evangelical Protestantism of the original vision of higher
education and its present counterpart, secularism. Protestant theology, especially as informed by Calvinism, was at the core of the academic endeavor in the early days. The first trustee boards, presidents, and most faculty members were committed evangelical believers. Evangelical Protestantism ruled on all the campuses including those that were founded by the various states. Now secularism, what some have called "humanistic" secularism, reigns both on the campus and in the culture.

The secularism of modern education is an excessive alteration of the evangelical Protestantism that once pervaded all education in America. From the beginning the United States was pluralistic but only in a formal way. Historically, "its cultural centers had never seen a time when Protestantism was not dominant" (Marsden 1994: 3). Yet, in the modern culture Christians, liberal as well as orthodox in persuasion, are now on the outside looking in. Once the colleges of America were "integral parts of a religious-cultural vision" (Marsden 1994: 3). But such is no longer the case. Why is this so? Previously, we explored what happened to produce this startling change using the special case study of the University of Chicago to highlight the major changes. But the oldest colleges, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were founded specifically to equip the ministers of the gospel. Why did those institutions, and others like them, that were founded to educate the clergy and equip students with a liberal arts education based on biblical principles of truth and ethics, become something else, in most cases something radically different from that original vision?

That radical difference did not appear all at once. Unlike the situation at the University of Chicago, which from its beginning was a liberal institution, the older colleges like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton experienced conflict between the supporters of traditional evangelical theology and those who rejected it. The change was gradual. The change was from evangelical to evangelical-
liberal to liberal. Too rapid a change, it was felt, would have raised alarm in the churches and perhaps even among the students. Marsden describes the process.

In strictly ecclesiastical settings the changes came more slowly than in other areas of public life and were more often successfully contested. After about 1880 the new views of Scripture became matters for intense public debate in major Protestant denominations and in theological seminaries. Among the Congregationalists, for example, Andover Theological Seminary, which had been designed to stand forever as a conservative alternative to Harvard, in the early 1880's was suddenly taken over by 'progressive orthodoxy' (1994: 208).

The progressive orthodoxy to which Marsden refers is the same as that which was also responsive to the naturalistic conclusions of science. It differed from traditional orthodoxy in that it accepted historical criticism as a valid tool of biblical interpretation while the traditionalists resisted it (Marsden 1994: 208-209). In the main, it is still true that orthodoxy resists the methodology of historical criticism. Andover, which had begun with Congregational orthodoxy, and had sought to insure it forever with a rather rigid creed, gradually loosened its commitment to evangelicalism. Like Harvard Divinity School, Andover had begun to accept Unitarian scholars and other less than evangelical scholars on their faculty. This change could be noted in the editorial stance of the Andover Review, the official journal of the Seminary. While acknowledging that their theology had become more modern the editors were not ready to give up orthodoxy altogether. In editorials they indicated their desire that orthodoxy, especially as expressed in evangelicalism, not be abandoned entirely for there is, they contended, a process of salvation. "They insisted upon the radical nature of the change from the non-Christian to the Christian life, through radical conversion"
or through gradual education” (Williams 1941: 79, italics added). One can only imagine the old theological masters of Andover simply shaking their heads at the thought of conversion through “gradual education.”

When change in institutions is as revolutionary as that which occurred in America’s colleges it cannot but be clear that something unusual was happening. Yet, many who might not have noticed the revolution must have wondered at the strange new ideas coming from the pages of America’s premiere religious news journal, The Christian Century, especially in an article that appeared July 29, 1926. Marsden cites that article as an example of the changed attitude on college campuses by that time. A careful look at the content of an excerpt from the article clearly reveals the revolution in thinking that had already occurred among some Christians by the 1920s.

Everybody knows that an interpretation of conduct obtains in college class rooms from which the fixed absolutes of a generation ago have been eliminated. Is there any better word to say than that we are going from an old world to a new and that we may trust human nature — in our girls as well as in our boys and grown-ups — to right itself upon its own keel? We can trust it, if, with our trust, we lend them the support which sympathy and understanding and faith can give and which distrust and dark suspicions cannot give (1994: 348, italics added).

The statement, “. . . we may trust human nature” is indicative of how radically different was the theology advocated by those who wrote for The Christian Century from that of the early founders of the colleges in America. Those Puritan men profoundly did not trust human nature. They understood that they were under the authority of the Scriptures and that the Bible was very clear.
in teaching that human nature was fallen because of sin. They believed the Bible taught that human depravity was endemic to the human race and a radical departure from God's original plan (Romans 3: 10, 18; Ephesians 2:2). Yet, by 1926, The Christian Century had shown that those colleges of America that had most espoused theological orthodoxy had changed their emphasis from faith in God to faith in man. Here was an unsurpassed confidence in human nature and expectancy that increased freedom would always lead to the good. In the words of Marsden, “Human progress was assured” (1994: 349).

With its emphasis on “human progress,” progressive orthodoxy soon evolved into a kind of liberalism that retained some of the old religious fervor of the bygone era of evangelicalism. This new fervent liberalism became known as evangelical liberalism and is descriptive also of the earlier Unitarians at Harvard College, Harvard Divinity School and the later Andover Theological Seminary. Williams distinguishes an era at Andover when that school was dominated by evangelical liberals. He points out these men were distinguished from the orthodox by their view of salvation. For them salvation came to mean moral transformation. For evangelical liberals, “Moral transformation is the essence of regeneration, not simply its fruit. Christ’s atoning work must be given a corresponding re-interpretation. His death is significant... not because it removes obstacles to God’s forgiving man, but because it helps man to repent. There is no room for a ‘substitutionary atonement’” (1941: 68-70).

After a while, evangelical liberalism gave way to full blown theological liberalism in the schools. Theological liberalism makes little of specific Christian doctrine and much of general religious experience, especially the experience of religious feeling. Because liberals are prone to equate Christianity and religious experience they believe that no harm has been done, but rather that
much has been gained, when the universities make room for the experience of religion while rejecting the dogma of Christianity. As validation of this point we turn to the work of a special study committee established at Yale to look into the William F. Buckley controversy of the 1950s. It was chaired by liberal clergyman Henry Sloane Coffin. Buckley had published a book challenging Yale's claim to being an evangelical university. Marsden, in referring to “the furor created by Buckley's book,” God and Man at Yale, presents the concluding summary of the work of the Coffin committee. It is noteworthy that “the committee did not mention Christianity. [Rather NLM] it affirmed that ‘there is, today, more than ever, widespread realization that religion alone can give meaning and purpose to modern life’ . . . In fact, said the committee, ‘religious life at Yale is deeper and richer than it has been in many years’” (Marsden 1994: 15).

Until recently many colleges and universities conducted annual “Religious Emphasis Days” in an endeavor to acknowledge the importance of religion for human development. Some might conclude that such emphases are a recognition by the university of the importance of the Christian faith. However, religion and Christianity are not the same and the attempt to equate them in terms of equal significance seems to have pleased no one. It is the loss of Christianity in the institutions of higher learning that is problematic for many not the loss of religion. Buttrick explains why equating them only creates confusion on this issue.

Biblical thought we have taken to mean simply the faith set forth in the Bible.

We chose that term rather than the vague term religion, because religion in our western world is dominantly Biblical and because Biblical faith stands in sharp contrast to the 'world religions.' It could be argued that Biblical faith is the death of 'religion' for by 'religion' we usually mean man's attempt to
reach God. By mystic withdrawal, by some ethical and physical regimen, or by obedience to some ‘law’; whereas Biblical faith centrally affirms that God is God and man is man and that, therefore the finite creature cannot reach God or even know much about Him unless God chooses to reveal Himself. Thus ‘religion’ is an impossible upward movement from man to God, while Biblical faith tells of a downward movement from God to man – ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us’ (Buttrick 1960: 49-50).

But, even for those who accepted Buttrick’s perspective on religion and Biblical faith it was clear that educators could not long promote a Christianity defined by doctrinal standards. Instead, joining with those who reacted to the Enlightenment by embracing Romanticism, liberal theologians began constructing a Christianity that they felt would be more acceptable to academia and the culture it served. Thus, by the 1880s, the religion of feeling replaced the Christianity of dogma. “One stage in the development of liberalism is here clearly marked out. Religious experience is more important than doctrine. Jesus becomes the revealer of human possibilities, the leader of a cause, and his humanity is as fully emphasized as his divinity” (Williams 1941: 12, italics added).

Unitarianism was a significant theological factor in the decline of evangelical Protestantism in some educational institutions, especially at Harvard, Andover and some of the other New England colleges. However, Unitarianism had little effect on most of the other colleges and universities and would not be included in any general list of the theological factors leading to the demise of Protestantism in those institutions. This is so for three reasons. First, Unitarianism was a fairly localized phenomenon in the history of Christian higher education. It was confined mainly to the
state of Massachusetts and the New England region of the country. This is not to say that it was unimportant, but rather that it did not become a major factor in most of the colleges that began with the Protestant vision (Marsden 1994: 181). Second, Unitarianism did not arise out of the theologically indigenous situation of particular institutions as was the case with professors moving from orthodox to evangelical liberal to liberal theological positions. Most professors did not become unitarian; they were replaced by Unitarians (Gordon 1926: 93, 138, 153-154). Such was the case with Leverette whose Unitarian administration succeeded Increase Mather’s Puritan administration. Third, in the main, unitarians were brought onto the faculties of the particular institutions more as a result of administrative motives than theological ones. The respective presidents and boards of the institutions pursued this as a means of generally broadening the appeal of the institutions to the cultural constituencies of their regions. When that was no longer a viable option as in the case with Harvard they quickly moved to divest the interests of the unitarians. (Marsden 1994: 184-185).

With the loss of specificity in Christian doctrine in the schools that were once noted for doctrinal fidelity only “religion” was left. In time the institutions rejected religion also in favor of undiluted secularism. However, there were other factors in the change of the institutions. One of them was the administration of the institutions.

3.3. Administrative Factors

Adequate funding for an institution, especially at its inception and in its developmental stages, is of vital importance to its continued viability. Whether a school shall be orthodox or liberal in theological orientation is often determined by the availability of funds as was the case with the founding of Andover Theological Seminary. Denominational affiliation is also a factor in funding as was demonstrated by the affiliation of The University of Chicago as Baptist and Vanderbilt
University as Methodist in their respective beginnings. Funding can even determine the location of a college as the example of Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, North Carolina indicates. A very large financial grant from the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company induced the administration of that institution to move the institution from its original site in the small town of Wake Forest, North Carolina, to Winston Salem, the location of the tobacco company, in 1956. The point is that administration decisions are greatly influenced by the availability of money and this can even affect whether schools remain sectarian or become secularist (Marsden 1994: 448). To put it another way, “the heart of an institution can be located by looking at its budget . .” (Marsden 1994: 339).

Contingent with the concern for financial backing in the institutions is the desire of administrators and trustee boards for expansion though, in the course of time, expansion becomes a non-issue as the endowment funds of an institution grow. For example, Harvard’s endowment of hundreds of millions of dollars is the envy of many institutions. With the influx of endowment funds the pressure for expansion of the student body declines. Harvard, Duke, Yale, and almost all the elite schools now reject more applications for matriculation than they approve. Expansion then is a short term, not a long term goal.

Therefore, it is mostly in the developing days of some institutions that efforts are made to remove barriers to the enrolment of larger numbers of students. Such was the case with America’s earlier Protestant controlled institutions once they determined that they must broaden their appeal to the culture. They had to raise money, a great deal of it, if the schools were to survive and prosper. If a school was perceived to be too narrow in its educational philosophy it was understood that its development was hindered and steps were then taken to address the problem. Accordingly, it was better, the administrators thought, to play down narrow issues (Marsden 1994: 208).
Vanderbilt University of Nashville, Tennessee, is an example of how the allure of money in the developing years of an institution can exert great pressure on the administration. Vanderbilt was established as a Methodist university and its trustees were elected by the Methodist Conference of Tennessee. Though initially funded by a million dollar grant from the Vanderbilt family the school, like others, struggled financially in the early years before an endowment fund could be established with sufficient funds to relieve the pressure. Chancellor Kirkland had every intention of retaining Vanderbilt's Methodist affiliation but money got in the way. Thus it happened, in 1905, that the Carnegie Foundation established an attractive retirement program for faculty members of colleges and universities but "only if the institutions were nonsectarian." Kirkland, wanting to receive the Carnegie funds and yet hold on to some semblance of Methodist identity, made the following statement:

I say to you candidly, as I have said before, I have never found a man, be he Methodist or non-Methodist, willing to contribute to our work here who has not endorsed a liberal Christian policy in the administration of affairs . . . I have never denied our Methodist allegiance, I have never denied our Methodist history, but I have maintained that, greater than Methodism was the cause of Christ and that the call for service in His name was greater than the call to the service of the church (Marsden 1994: 279).

But the Chancellor could not move the Directors of the Carnegie Fund. They wanted every vestige of denominational control removed before granting the faculty retirement funds to Vanderbilt. Kirkland, seeing that he could not budge the Carnegie board, began a campaign to sever ties with the Methodist Conference. A battle ensued and eventually the courts of Tennessee
sided with the trustees in declaring Vanderbilt nonsectarian. Not until Vanderbilt elected all their own trustees, thereby breaking away from the control of the Methodist denomination, were they deemed eligible for the Carnegie funds. "Vanderbilt was declared entirely separate from the denomination" (Marsden 1994: 279). Thus Vanderbilt University today, like so many others, bears little resemblance to its former sectarian identity.

The earlier push for removing "the narrowness issue" was to remove any lingering remnants of sectarianism from college campuses. Because sectarianism was perceived as a barrier to academic development, the move to get rid of it was characteristic of nearly all American universities. Both private and state schools were involved in this for, as we have already noted, both were part of the Protestant establishment. Because this issue seemed to affect the development of universities it was a priority for almost every university president and administration in the nation. Gradually, as a result of the forces at work in breaking down the former denominational loyalties of the institutions, nonsectarianism acquired favored status at the university level in America (Williams 1954: 10).

But some educators perceived that nonsectarianism provided even greater benefits for graduate schools. While undergraduate scholarship might be allowed some sectarian influence, the graduate school, it was felt, must be free to pursue truth wherever it might lead. Harvard early saw the need for such academic freedom. An example was Harvard's divinity school. President Eliot (in 1877-1878) made the case for the nondenominational graduate divinity school, arguing that Harvard and the country needed such a place. "'Let at least one University School of Theology be suitably supported, where the young men may study theology and the kindred subjects with the same freedom of spirit with which they study law or medicine in a medical school, and with as little intention
or opportunity of committing themselves prematurely to any particular set of opinions or practices” (Gomes 1992: 16-17, italics added).

Marsden’s comment on this effort by the universities to get rid of sectarianism is insightful. He sees it as part of an overall strategy to broaden the school’s appeal but also as the death knell for Protestantism’s influence in higher education. “The simple fact was that once a college expanded its vision to become a university and to serve a broad middle-class constituency, the days were numbered when any substantive denominational tradition could survive . . . in time the use of the ‘Christian’ for the college or university was an increasingly ceremonial function” (1994: 287).

Another reason for the declining importance of Protestantism in institutional life was the removal of compulsory chapel services. Actually, this was perceived by some educators at the time to be an advance for genuine faith rather than a loss for their Protestant heritage. College administrators argued that voluntary chapel would enhance the appeal of Christianity to the students. In 1886, President Eliot of Harvard and Phillips Brooks, the famous Boston preacher, were instrumental in assuring that Harvard College “became the first collegiate institution to adopt a system of voluntary religious exercises in place of compulsory chapel” (Reynolds in Williams 1954: 169).

At the University of Michigan, President Angell shifted the emphasis from required to voluntary chapel. He “also moved to broaden the university’s religious base” by appointing a catholic to the faculty. “Angel saw these moves to disestablish Protestantism as of a piece with his efforts to build Christianity at the university on a healthier voluntary basis” (Marsden 1994: 172). Such did not turn out to be true. Attendance at chapel markedly declined at the University of Michigan and at most of the other academic institutions in the nation.
3.4. Cultural Factors

Culture, it seems, has always had the power to be either a positive or negative force in the educational enterprise. For example, the culture of the colonial days in America was a positive force in providing support to Protestantism for forming the original vision of education in this country. In that time it was generally accepted that the truth claims of evangelical Protestantism were not only valid but desirable as the foundation for building educational institutions. It was deemed appropriate that the culture become an ally in the endeavor to have a literate people grounded in the principles of the Christian faith. “Harvard College was founded to train ministers and magistrates of a godly Commonwealth” (Williams 1954: 3, italics added).

Princeton College, the fourth college founded after Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary, began as the College of New Jersey during a religiously inspired cultural phenomenon in the mid-eighteenth century known as the Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards, William Tennent, and other revivalists gave the school its evangelical ambiance and Calvinistic doctrine (Calhoun 1994: 3-8). Therefore, it was the culture, shaped in large part by the Great Awakening, that determined the kind of school Princeton was to become. The same was true for the founding of the other colleges and universities. For instance, William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia was an Anglican college. It was not a surprise then that when the Revolutionary War broke out with Britain, some of the faculty and students were loyal to the Crown and not to the struggling colonies. After the Revolutionary War this changed as the church was nationalized (Marsden 1994: 54, 64).

The early settlers in the American colonies were what the sociologists now call “WASP,” in ancestry, that is, White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. It would have been a great wonder if the colleges they founded in those early days were anything other than a reflection of their own values. Thus the
values of western civilization were inculcated in the minds of the youth of the colonies throughout the educational systems of that time. This, of course, was not unique to America but is what happens in institutions all over the world. Accordingly, changes in such institutions usually occurred in the culture first. Marsden points out that these changes have been "going on since at least the Reformation and accelerating since the time of science, technology, and Enlightenment thought in the early modern era... Americans did not invent universities, even if they reshaped them in their own image" (1994: 7).

For a very long time the cultural changes were not radical. This was because higher education valued Western civilization with its significant heritage of literature and intellectual achievements. In time this led to the emphasis on "The Great Books" curriculum in the universities led by Harvard (Marsden 1994: 389). But the increase in pluralism in recent decades in America, with a concomitant rise in immigration, has accelerated the pace of change. Change, therefore, much of it radical in nature, is initiated by the new realities of modern culture. At the University of Michigan, for example, there was an apologetic for change that for some, at least, took on the ethos of evangelical fervor. "For these men, Dewey and others like him at Michigan, it was culture that defined faith. Their Christianity was a cultural icon" (Marsden 1994: 175, italics added).

Each phase of cultural development has brought about significant changes in the educational institutions. For example, Harvard, since it is the oldest college in America, has had the opportunity to experience more changes than the others. An instance of this is Charles Eliot's Harvard where the emphasis on change as a way of reflecting the new conditions of culture was pronounced. "Complementing and compensating for professionalized, scientific, technological culture was a higher realm of ideals that included a new humanistic religion of humanity and high culture"
From the time of Harvard's beginning in 1636, and extending throughout the era of The Enlightenment, the national culture embraced the concept of a unified field of knowledge. Even up until the latter part of the nineteenth century it was assumed that theology was the "queen of the sciences" and the progenitor of truth. Therefore, everywhere in America, it was granted that "theological tradition embodied universal truth" (Marsden 1994:49). At first it was also generally acknowledged that there was no conflict between faith and science, although it was conceded that each discipline had its own approach to truth. It could not be otherwise given the consensus that truth was universal. The terms of the discussion, however, were still determined by theological dogma (Marsden 1994: 50).

Nevertheless, to use Marsden's term, the schools gradually "broadened" their sectarianism in order to make it, in their estimation, more appealing to those they sought to attract as students. With the Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason, there developed a new moral philosophy in the schools, "a broader moral philosophy that could be taught without distinguishing between true and nominal Christians" (1994: 61). Moral philosophy put the emphasis, not on the dogma of Christianity, but on the ethics of Jesus. Broad intellectualism of this sort gives wide latitude to differing perspectives that are not necessarily rooted in the narrow furrows of Protestant dogmatism. Moreover, such broadness or liberality of thought, once it was allowed a toehold in intellectual circles, provided no way back to the academic provincialism of the earlier dogmatism. Instead, it produced a plethora of scholarly options. The scientific method had arrived (Marsden 1994: 56-63). What was left of the legacy of Christianity in intellectual centers was the "essential" Christianity of morality and esthetics.

It was the cultural commitment to democracy that gave school administrators the incentive to
broaden the Christianity of Protestantism in the institutions. Democracy requires at least some submission on the part of the culture to a principle of unification. The majority rules in decisions made by the body politic but the minority has rights as well. In the democratic environment of America, Protestantism was gradually losing its majority status in the schools which it had founded. Once its minority status was a fait accompli, however, Protestantism retained few of its former powers to control the educational establishment.

The colleges and universities wanted to expand and grow. To accomplish this they needed a wider appeal to a plurality of socio-political constituencies. Thus, there was great pressure on the college administrations to broaden or mitigate the moral and spiritual demands of Christianity. As we can see, all this created a set of dynamics which greatly contributed to the loss of Protestant hegemony in the educational institutions. The democratization of the culture "softened the exclusivistic claims" of Calvinistic orthodoxy (Marsden 1994: 79).

Marsden's study of the influence of democracy in determining the university's decision to broaden the appeal of education for the masses is thorough. He claims that by softening the exclusive claims of Christianity, college administrators insured the loss of Protestantism's place in American education. What really brought on the demise of Protestantism in the universities was the decision by administrators to give up the truth claims of Christianity in favor of what they considered to be loftier goals.

The fatal weakness in conceiving of the university as a broadly Christian institution was its higher commitments to scientific and professional ideals to the demands for a unified public life. In the light of such commitments academic expressions of Christianity seemed at best superfluous and at worse unscientific and
unprofessional. Most of those associated with higher education were still Christian, but in academic life, as in so many other parts of modern life, religion would increasingly be confined to private spheres (Marsden 1994: 265).

Harvard, eventually, found a way of justifying its rejection of historic Christianity’s claim to be the center of a college education. They turned instead to a distillation of the insights to be gleaned from the “Great Books” of western civilization. At first those great books included religious texts for they did not want to “exclude the religious ideal.” A Harvard study committee promulgated the idea that a canon of great books could be “looked at as a continuation of the spirit of Protestantism” (Marsden 1994: 389). Marsden appropriately deduced from that proposition that the committee was in effect “recommending a liberal Protestantism with the explicit Christianity removed” (1994: 389).

Later, in the development of modern universities, all adherence to any kind of Protestant religion in education seems to have vanished. Neuhaus sees the problem, in agreement with H. Edward Rowe, as one of stark alignments, of two movements in history, God’s and man’s. God’s movement, he proposed, is revealed through the Bible. Man’s movement, to the contrary, is humanism and it is rooted in culture. Neuhaus observes a consolidation of God’s movement in history with man’s movement in culture for the purposes of education. He identifies that alliance as “the WASP consensus.” He continues:

Today, needless to say, the proposal that public education should inculcate such an understanding of ‘God’s movement’ would be deemed an egregious violation of the constitutional stricture against the ‘establishment’ of religion. Those who today express puzzlement at the fury of the religious new right sometimes suggest that the
instead, that Christian education confront the culture and transform it.

This analysis [that of Paul Tillich NLM] was very helpful for me to understand the conflict today that is tearing apart Christians and denominations right across the spectrum of Protestantism. One side thinks they have all the answers by being the great preservers of the faith. The other side think [sic NLM] they have the answers by being the great adapters and relevant makers. Both are actually missing the mark. We need to recover a Biblical theology that transforms culture and converts individuals. Compromising the Christian faith, by either adaption or preservation will doom Christian higher education to either irrelevancy or extinction (Lotz 1998: 3, 7).

We come now to a decisive juncture in our study of why academia has made such a radical turn from the Protestant establishment in education. Stephen Carter has pointed out that modern culture has gone too far in denying the truth claims of Christianity by negating the value of the principle of exclusivity. In our desire to be tolerant of all views we have devalued the worth of any objective standard of truth. This does not argue for the removal of tolerance from civilized culture; it does suggest that “exclusive” truth claims such as those practiced by evangelical Protestantism are not invalidated, in Carter’s words, by “the culture of disbelief.”

A claim of exclusivity is not a moral evil. If one genuinely believes that he or she has found the only route to salvation through the one true faith, one obviously has no choice but to proclaim that other religions are wrong. However, the one doing the proclaiming should make clear what is going on: it is the nature of that individual’s faith, not the nature of religion itself, that dictates the exclusivity. So Christians who insist that Jews (or Muslims or Buddhists or anyone else) cannot find salvation without accepting Jesus Christ as savior should not insist that they are making only the argument that every religion demands . . . That is not, by
itself, a reason not to make the argument, and if they are convinced that they are right they should not hesitate. Still, it is useful to strip away the veil. Christian exclusivity turns out at best to be a tenet of faith rather than an argument that follows from the nature of religion. Conceding the sincerity of those who insist on Christian exclusivity, one can still wonder if some, at least, have been wrong-footed by the assumption that religions by nature make exclusive and universal claims. Those who profess exclusivity should be careful to assure themselves that they are correctly reading their beliefs, not incorrectly reading the nature of religion itself (1993: 92).

But though his proposal is an advance over what modern culture now allows for truth claims, Carter shows himself, in my estimation, as much the child of post-modernism as anyone else. It is, the postmodernist insists, a matter of interpretation. Carter’s contention still rests on the truth claims of individuals and either assumes that there is no such thing as inherent, absolute truth or that if it exists, it cannot be validated by any kind of acceptable evidence. Another way to put it is that, according to our culture, all truth claims have equal value. This modern supposition tells us why, in this country, the early evangelical Protestantism in our institutions of higher learning is defunct. Such an equation of truth claims democratizes truth, making it a matter of individual rights and thus eviscerating it as a meaningful concept for determining universal standards. Suppose, for the sake of illustration, that every person on the Earth were to assent to the truth claims of Christianity, would those claims by virtue of their unanimity be valid? Certainly, in such an unlikely case, there would be no necessity for tolerance for no other viewpoint would exist on that subject. But, in fact, there is wide diversity of opinion on all subjects. In the final analysis, then, each individual has his own personal truth claim. The best that can be expected in such an environment are individual interpretations, that is, personal testimonies which, again to quote Carter, “their reading of
Christianity demands" (1993: 92). There is no canon or standard for truth. In the world of measurements it would be the equivalent of everyone carrying his own self-determined yardstick. Can there be truth that is inherently valid regardless of whether anyone believes it? This matter is at the crux of why evangelical Protestantism is no more an official option on the college campus. In the next chapter we shall examine what is left of the truth claims of Christianity that once controlled higher education.
Chapter 4

Aftermath Of The Demise

4.1. Truth Without Ultimate Authority

It has been observed that the product of the academy is knowledge. Educated people, therefore, are those who have both acquired knowledge and become proficient in the use of it in their respective fields of study. But can there be knowledge without truth? Or, to put it in Cartesian terms, can one be sure that one knows anything given the absence of a standard of truth? The Protestant model of education adhered to a standard of truth informed by biblical revelation. However, the secular model of education lacks any standard, any benchmark for determining truth. This is especially so for postmodernism which seems to be the dominant perspective in modern education. Postmodernists are notably skeptical about any notion of absolute truth. "There is no purely objective knowledge, [in the postmodern world NLM] no truth of correspondence" (Sire 1997: 181). Keith Windschuttle, an Australian historian agrees.

In the academic environment of today, however, the pursuit of truth and the accumulation of knowledge have become highly questionable endeavors. One of the reasons that the nihilism of French radical theory has been able to gain such a grip on the study of human affairs is because there is now widespread scepticism about the concepts of truth and knowledge. Many academics believe that neither the social sciences nor even the natural sciences can provide us with any kind of certitude. The fashionable and some say the now-dominant view, is that knowledge can never be absolute and there can be no universal truths (1996: 186).

The loss of the truth claims of evangelical Protestant Christianity, or to put it another way, the loss of the orthodox theological viewpoint in America's institutions of higher learning, cannot be
adequately understood without some perspective on the different kinds of truth claims that have been espoused in the modern era. Since the Enlightenment there has not been a single approach to truth but several. The principle approaches to truth can be identified as those of correspondence, coherence, and pragmatism.

The process for arriving at truth that has been dominant in world history is usually called the "correspondence" approach. The method of correspondence is that truth coincides with the phenomenon of whatever is actually there. Most people refer to "what is there" as a fact. Therefore, the correspondence theory of truth means that truth is objectively verifiable in that it is subject to confirmation by an examination of the relevant facts. This understanding of truth explains why evangelical theologians embraced Baconian empiricism. They were confident that Christian dogma was consistent with the facts of objective truth and that, therefore, they had nothing to fear from empirical investigation. Correspondence is also a common sense view of truth for it is the viewpoint of the common man. For this reason ideas that correspond with the facts are considered true, including the theological facts of divine revelation. "The dominant theory of truth [throughout history NLM] . . . has been the correspondence theory of truth" (White 1994: 5).

The principle of coherence is another path to truth. This is the approach of the philosophical idealists. They believed that it is the systematically coherent ideas that are closest to what constitutes truth. "If a system of thought does not contradict itself, then it is a mark of truth" (White 1994:5). Therefore any system of thought that contradicts itself may be considered untrue. A weakness of this approach to truth is "...that there can be two coherent systems that are in direct contradiction with each other" (White 1994: 5). The coherence theory of truth was used by the academy during its development from the Protestant heritage of settled dogma to the later era of scientific
The "clinic" method of the modern period as opposed to the "cloister" method in use in the pre-modern period (Arnold 1966: 35). The methodological approach of the clinic came to full fruition during the scientific revolution. It is the fundamental method of the scientist and it works in this manner: The findings of a scientific experiment are validated insofar as they are not contradicted by further tests, that is, when one conducts the same experiment one will get the same result in perpetuity; if not, the findings are considered invalid. Newton's experiments with gravity or Einstein's experiments with relativity would be examples of this approach.

The third method for ascertaining truth, pragmatism, is a widely accepted approach in American education. Basically, what pragmatism means is that whatever works is true. As a movement it "originated in North America in the second half of the nineteenth century..." (Brown 1968: 145). Pragmatism, especially as interpreted by the American philosopher William James (1842-1910), is one of the principle ways that truth is approached on the nation's campuses. By Pragmatism, James "meant that people have rough and ready ways of finding for themselves what is good enough, true enough, or beautiful enough, a way that James might have summarized under the motto, 'it works for them'" (McClendon and Smith 1994: 41). Here was an idea that suited the democratic, empirical, "can do" attitude of university administrators. "This perspective offers a functional attraction for effectiveness that is highly valued in the modern world" (White 1994:5). Indeed, since modern education has effectively given up the search for truth as it is understood in the traditional sense, pragmatism is a method of choice for many educators because that is what works in today's competitive social, political, and scientific environment.

Pragmatism, then, fits well with the educational goals of the academy and constitutes the best
way of dealing with religion as well. The transition of the university has not just been away from evangelical Protestant faith but toward a religion that is “practical.” Accordingly, by the mid-twentieth century, the University of Chicago had led the nation’s universities to embrace some concept of “natural” religion, that is, religion which confines itself to empirical phenomenology shunning the metaphysical or supernatural. Here was religion that needed neither popes or Bibles, “far less philosophical proofs and arguments” (McClendon and Smith 1994: 39).

Pragmatism also worked on the campuses in providing a way to deal with the truth claims of religion, including Christianity. Such claims were best understood in terms of religious experience rather than claims of absolute truth. In an article on the approaches to religious language McClendon and Smith set forth the impact that pragmatism has had on religion.

Religion for them [the Pragmatists NLM] had to be a matter of experience, preferably everybody’s experience equally. They recalled James’ doctrine of the ‘More’ [a vague, indistinct concept of the God that is in the human soul NLM] that he said was found in the subconscious margins of (some) human experience. For James, that subliminal awareness had been only a set of data that might lead a philosopher to form a hypothesis about God. . . . How, then, did the language of religion appear to these latter-day admirers of William James? . . . Not only language, but conceptual thought itself, is fallible, errant, inherently insufficient to describe or express the deep prehension of ‘More’ believed to lie in the borderlands of human awareness (1994: 39-40, italics added).

It was James who made this approach to truth appealing to the intellectual world. As a philosopher and psychologist, he had a remarkable variety of talents. Most notably, he was a leader in the movement known as Pragmatism, which stresses that the value of any idea or policy is based entirely on its usefulness and effectiveness. James believed that one only knows the true meaning of
an idea when one sees what the effects are. Out of his philosophy came slogans that are still part of the American culture: "'Truth is what works,' 'The true is the expedient,' and 'Faith in a fact helps create the fact.'" (Brown 1968:145). As I have already indicated in chapter three, pragmatism was a strong factor in the development of education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as university administrations found a place in the academy for "whatever works" even if it did not fit the earlier principles of the institution's founding.

Of course, there are elements of validity in all three approaches to truth. My purpose here, however, is to indicate that different approaches to truth is one of the outcomes of the aftermath of the demise of evangelicalism in higher education. As we have seen, all three of the basic approaches to truth have been utilized by university educators. At first, however, in the era when Protestantism was dominant the basic approach to truth was the correspondence one. Scottish common sense realism was prominent and the correspondence theory was a perfect fit. Such a view of truth supported the idea that church dogma was objective and absolute. The truth claims supported by biblical revelation answered to a sense of reality that things were as they appeared to be. There was no doubt that God was real and that man was his special creation. For such a time, to paraphrase the English poet, Robert Browning (1812-1889), "God was in his heaven and all was right with the world" (Untermeyer 1942: 861).

But in the modern world, without a standard of truth, there can be no ultimate authority for what is taught. The result of all this is that the academy's growing uncertainty over what constitutes truth has given the world a fragmented knowledge which, while its pieces may have validity in what they affirm, is not what one would expect in a university. "Fragments" of knowledge are plentiful in the world of education but there is no integrated connection of those fragments with a universal
norm, either of reason or truth. Accordingly, it seems evident that there is a divided field of knowledge in higher education. A divided field of knowledge, in its simplest description, means that there is a lack of coherence in the product of knowledge. Again, the primary reason for this, I maintain, is that modern educators have no commonly accepted criterion for what constitutes truth. For example, in the intellectual world, postmodernists are claiming that "truth" is no more than the play of language games, that is, the constructing of premises or postulates that have no authority save for those who form them. Thus the dilemma of modern education, in the aftermath of the demise of the evangelical Protestant establishment, is whether, without a universally accepted standard of what constitutes truth, educators can have any confidence that they have a solid epistemological foundation for imparting knowledge to their students. Therefore, since there is a fragmented or divided field of knowledge in education, academic coherence has become a major casualty of the loss of the evangelical Protestant vision for education (Sire 1996: 174).

Moreover, the fragmentation of knowledge in modern education points to a multiplicity of "truths" rather than to the singularity of universal truth. For that reason, if no other, the term "university" may now actually be misappropriated by the academy since the modern university has become a multi-versity rather than a university. The following evaluation of the current situation in the academy has become typical of many observers:

Even apart from the question of theology's place, this fragmentation of knowledge undermines the possibility of a coherent ideal for a university. 'The idea of a multiversity' seems a contradiction in terms. Universities today have no central point of reference, no overarching philosophy. Rather, they are clearing houses for numerous special interests in the production of information and opinion. Students become educated in parcels of specialized
knowledge, but they are poorly equipped to evaluate the inter-relationships of these parcels or to weigh their relative importance (Marsden in Newman 1996: 304).

One way of bringing divergent views on what constitutes truth into sharper focus is the use of the method of contrast. For example, it is helpful to contrast the modern position on truth with that of John Henry Newman (1801-1890). Newman's book, The Idea Of A University, represents the use of the traditional concept of truth as being that which corresponds to the facts for Newman, like many of his Christian peers, assumed that the Enlightenment premise of universal reason confirmed the biblical framework of universal truth claims. This assumption further posited that there is a sum total of knowledge and that it is the purpose of educators to pursue it vigorously. Newman published his classic work in 1852, a time when there was an unified field of knowledge attended by optimism that man was fully capable of discovering its objective reality. "I am only putting on it its popular, its recognized sense, when I say that a University should teach universal knowledge" (1996: 25).

Part of that which makes for a divided field of knowledge is the exclusion of theological truth claims from the modern university. Even in Newman's time this rejection of theology had already begun.

It is the fashion just now, as you know very well, to erect so-called universities, without making any provision in them at all for theological chairs. Institutions of this kind exist both here and in England. Such a procedure . . . seems to me an intellectual absurdity. . . . A University, I should lay down, by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge: how then is it possible for it to profess all branches of knowledge, and yet to exclude from the subjects of its teaching one which, to say the least, is as important and as large as any other? I do not see that either premise of this argument is open to exception. . . . Is it, then, logically consistent in a seat of learning to call itself a university, and to exclude theology from
the number of its studies? . . . I say then, that if a University be, from the nature of the case, a place of instruction, where universal knowledge is professed, and if in a certain University, so called, the subject of Religion is excluded, one of two conclusions is inevitable, — either, on the one hand, that the province of Religion is very barren of real knowledge, or on the other hand, that in such a University one special and important branch of knowledge is omitted. I say, the advocate of such an institution must say this or he must say that; he must own, either that little or nothing is known about the Supreme Being, or that his seat of learning calls itself what it is not" (Newman 1996: 25-26, italics the author’s).

What are we to make of Newman’s argument in the light of today’s realities of divided thought? Has modern man outgrown such antiquarian ideas? The editor of the recent re-publication of The Idea Of A University which we are using responds:

In Newman’s mind, theology is a realm of knowledge and religious truth which undergirds and informs all other truth. One can dismiss this religious conviction as a nineteenth-century phenomenon that need no longer be of concern now that most universities as well as colleges — even including those founded under religious auspices — are largely secularized. But to do so would be to ignore important groups in and around the contemporary academy who still accept much of Newman’s argument, even if they do not necessarily share all his premises or conclusions” (Turner in Newman 1996: 287).

Add to Newman’s contribution for a traditional view of truth another voice from the past, one that further accentuates the contrast in the thinking on truth, the equally prestigious name of William Blackstone (1723-1780). Blackstone’s contributions are in the field of law. His Commentaries on The Laws Of England, published in 1852, are classics from an earlier era in education. Blackstone’s commentaries are considered the very backbone of jurisprudence for both the courts of England and
America, indeed for much of the West. Further, his commentaries assume an unified field of knowledge which all the educated men of his time would acknowledge as a first principle. The Introduction of his book lays down the foundational principles for the rest of his work and it begins with the biblical teaching of creation.

Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being. A being independent of any other, has no rule to pursue, but such as he prescribes to himself; but a state of dependence will inevitably oblige the inferior to take the will of him on whom he depends as the rule of his conduct; not indeed, in every particular, but in all those points wherein his dependence consists. This principle, therefore, has more or less extent and effect, in proportion as the superiority of the one and the dependence of the other is greater or less, absolute or limited. And consequently, as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should, in all points, conform to his Maker's will (Blackstone 1898: 3-4).

But unlike the eras of Newman and Blackstone, there exists for educators today, as I have indicated, no general agreement as to what constitutes truth. In the late modern period and certainly in the post-Christian world of modern education there are “truths” but not truth. By that it is meant, particularly by post-modernists, that truths are mere social constructs, subjectively tailored to fit well with the mentality of subgroups of contemporary mankind. Another way to put this is as follows: It (whatever the subject) may be true for him but it is not true for me, or they (a particular subgroup) have their “truth” and we have ours. In the modern world “...(A)ll biblical truth-claims are functionally relative. ‘However convinced we are about a faith-claim, it has to be given as a claim of faith and not as truth in the absolute sense’” (Phillips in Dockery 1995: 260-262). As late as 1936, some of the university men continued to hold to some semblance of absolute
truth also understood as "fixed truth." Such a one was Professor Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, though his fixed truth did not include revelation or eternal truth. John Dewey, a contemporary of Hutchins, found it incredible that anyone in the modern era would hold to fixed truth. Hutchins, he pointed out, believed in fixed truth that was "the same at any time and place" (Marsden 1994: 379).

The reason that Hutchins sought to hold onto "fixed" truth is that such an understanding is the long time tradition of all education. It is only in recent times that the fluid idea of truth has taken hold, a difference that has become critical for our understanding of what constitutes truth. The biblical framework is well established that truth is that which was "once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Modern thinkers, however, following the dialectical philosophy of Hegel, see truth as in flux, as that which is developing, thus "new" truth replaces "old" truth (Marsden 1994: 210, 212-213). Such an elastic understanding of truth explains why schools, once traditional in their view of truth, eventually evolve into something radically different from their original vision. Andover, for example, gave up the truth claims of traditional Christian theology but retained the ethics of Jesus, using such to stake their claim to being Christian. Eventually, they gave up the ethics of Jesus, however, and opted instead for something more nebulous that they called "a sense of the presence of God" (Williams 1941: 104-105).

Once truth is given up as having a fixed status the next step seems to be the unstable one of proceeding down a slippery slope of compromised truth claims. Indeed, without a fixed point of reference for truth can there be any way to avoid such a loss of epistemological balance? For example, one of the early bulwarks of Christian orthodoxy in education was Princeton College. But Princeton, as we have noted, surrendered its evangelical Protestant heritage and became secularist
One wonders how Princeton could employ such a professor given its rich heritage as an evangelical institution. Veith ventures the following: "There was a time when Christians and non-Christians alike could agree that certain moral truths are 'self-evident,' that human beings have been 'endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.' Today, with the very concept of a Creator jettisoned by the intellectual establishment, these truths are not self-evident at all, but in fact are coming under harsh attack" (1998: 22-23).

Truth, however, understood in the traditional way, as already noted, is that which corresponds to the facts or things as they actually are. This is the way it is perceived by men of common sense. As White points out, "when one says that it is raining that is true only if it is actually raining." Truth, therefore, at least as viewed from the biblical perspective, is objective in nature, authoritative and absolute (1994: 5, 77-78, 126). This understanding of truth is often cast in propositions (White 1994: 119-120) which are diametrical in their form rather than dialectical, that is, propositions that are polemical rather than synthetic (Phillips in Dockery 1995:261). Thus, this understanding of truth is biblical in character not Hegelian (White 1994: 176). Such a conception of truth distinguished the academy in the pre-modern world. In the aftermath of the demise of the Protestant establishment in education, however, there has developed an understanding of truth that has been largely shaped by cultural change. The evolution of this understanding of truth in the academic world is a historical phenomenon which is readily confirmed by a wide reading of the pertinent source material. In this historical context it has become apparent that the truth issue is at bottom a matter of ultimate authority. The very word, *truth*, suggests ultimate authority. It is a word that denotes finality, something that settles all arguments. However, in the post-modern intellectual world the idea of truth has lost that sense of finality which it had enjoyed in the pre-modern age and which it has
retained even for most of the modern age. Truth now has become ambiguous and lacking in authority save for whatever authority may be posited arbitrarily in individuals or sub groups. Certainly, ours is a different world from that which distinguished the origins of education. It is thus that Western culture has moved from an understanding of the authority of universal truth to a divided understanding and with it a divided field of knowledge. I have devised the following graph as an indication of the flow of the change in authority that has characterized the western world and its universities:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Religious Viewpoint</th>
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<td>Scripture</td>
<td>Pre-Modern</td>
<td>Protestantism&gt;</td>
<td>The Evangelical Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Reason</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>The Enlightenment&gt;</td>
<td>Theological Liberalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Interpretation</td>
<td>Post-Modern</td>
<td>Cultural Pluralism&gt;</td>
<td>Theological Syncretism</td>
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In the pre-modern period when higher education began in America there was general consensus among the academics of that era that the viewpoint represented by Christianity was valid and worthy of reinforcement in the culture. There was little debate on the issue because theological truth claims prevailed not only on the campus but in the culture as well. However, the loss of the Protestant establishment in higher education has resulted in a setback for the truth claims of Protestantism and what remains bears little resemblance to the biblical frame of reference that characterized early academia. Instead, the secularist world view of modern education has a view of truth that is basically pragmatic. It is an education which centers on “whatever works” to enhance the democratic ideal or to advance national goals (Marsden 1994: 239).
When one asks *why* we have these truth claims that differ from that of the Protestant establishment the biblical answer is that ours is a fallen world and therefore there must always be times of struggle with opposing forces including those of differing world views (Carson 1996: 462). In a fallen world one's perspective of truth cannot be pristine or undistorted. Yet, and this is part of the problem, not even Christians can agree as to the full meaning of man's fall into sin especially as it relates to the use of reason. For instance, Thomas Aquinas's viewpoint on reason was not the same as that of the Reformers Luther and Calvin (Strathern 1998: 47, 57). Nor do Christians today agree as to the question of how, or even whether human reason has been impaired by the fall of man into sinfulness. Aside from all of that, however, the declension and demise of the evangelical viewpoint is nothing new in world history. Christianity began in an age that rejected its world view. Paul's encounter with the Athenians at Mars Hill demonstrates that the intellectually sophisticated of his day had nothing but scorn for Christian truth claims (Acts 17: 16-32).

As to *how* the academy shifted from its position of the biblical world view to one that was secularist in nature one can hope to find no satisfying answer except through an analysis of the context within which Protestant truth claims came into disrepute. The demise of evangelical Protestantism in higher education occurred within the framework of what some have called the Enlightenment project (Lakeland 1997: 13). That project was one of abandoning divine revelation or church dogmatics as the bulwark of truth and finding it, instead, in the autonomy of human reason. In brief, reason replaced faith in determining the nature of truth. "The Enlightenment project of modernity was and remains the triumph of reason and the mastery of the human mind over the external world... The authority of both religion and metaphysics is replaced by the *individual* exercise of critical reason" (Lakeland 1997: 13-14, italics added). Of course, the
postmodern period has taken this autonomous individualism to another level by rejecting any claim to a standard of universal truth. But the issue of truth is of more than academic interest because it relates to the ultimate question of moral authority. In the modern university that issue is decided in favor of temporal solutions based on whatever is deemed “politically correct.” There is no universal standard of what is right or wrong because that standard was removed with the abandonment of divine revelation by the Enlightenment. The result is a very unsettled condition in society where issues of right and wrong are decided on the basis of a very subjective private interpretation rather than some universal standard.

The dissolution of metaphysics and religion in the Enlightenment as foundations of a settled universe led not only to the demise of premodern subjectivity and the appearance of the transcendental subject of modernity, but also to the disappearance of moral authority based on religious and metaphysical values, and their replacement by a finite subject imposing its own moral vision upon the world (Lakeland 1997: 24-25).

All this places an enormous burden on the individual. Shorn of his dependence upon a caring and personal God by his acceptance of the Enlightenment project he must find his authority for ethics and meaning for life inside himself. Without universally applicable categories of what is right and wrong he must decide for himself what his ethical system should be. In the days of Protestant hegemony individuals and the society as a whole were guided by divine revelation as to what was right or wrong. Lakeland, in the context of Kantian ethics, thinks that this “places an enormous burden upon the practitioner of pure practical reason. . . . the finite subject is being asked to shoulder an infinite task” (1997: 25). It is obvious, of course, that finite man cannot perform an infinite task. Yet, it seems that the academy would prefer to attempt to carry this “enormous burden,” in
Lakeland's words, than to concede the need for a universal standard for determining right and wrong. This is one of the major losses of the demise of evangelical Protestantism in the academy.

The Enlightenment project was one of coopting the truth claims of divine revelation in favor of a radical empiricism. It follows, therefore, that there would necessarily be a response by Christian thinkers to that project. Luke Timothy Johnson of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University suggests that there are actually four Christian responses to the challenge of what he calls modernity, a word many use as a synonym for the Enlightenment.

The diverse responses of Christians to the challenge posed by modernity can be placed (too simply) within four basic patterns: active/accommodating, passive/accommodating, active/resistant, and passive/resistant. The easiest options to describe are the two extreme poles. The passive/resistant simply proceeds as though the Enlightenment had never happened. This response broadly characterizes Orthodox Christianity, whose "Holy Tradition" has functioned as a prophylaxis against a genuine encounter with the Enlightenment challenge. The active/accommodating response, in turn, is perhaps best represented by Universalist Unitarianism; the framework of modernity is taken as normative, and Christianity must fit itself as best it can into that framework (1996: 60-61).

Johnson also defines the active/resistant response as characteristic of fundamentalists and other evangelicals. Fundamentalists and evangelicals dig in their heels against modernity because they see "the challenge of modernity (and therefore of historical inquiry) as a threat not only to specific biblical passages or particular tenets, but to the entire perception of the world given by faith" (1996: 61).

The passive/accommodating response, on the other hand, Johnson takes to be "the most ambiguous" because it is an attempt to hold on to the benefits of the Enlightenment as well as
attempting to "hold on to the traditions of faith even as it embraces a world that finds them unintelligible." This response he attributes to the mainline Protestant traditions (1996: 61).

What makes the passive/accommodating response to the Enlightenment project so ambiguous, some would even say tentative, is that while the reality of modern man has changed forever with the discoveries of modern science the problem remains one of a too facile acceptance by some of the idea of scientific objectivity. Accordingly, many in the mainline church seem to assume that science has the last word on epistemological issues. They forget that today's scientific orthodoxy can sometimes become yesterday's heresy. An example of that is the widely held position, in vogue only a few decades ago, that biological life and the cosmos have come into being through the effects of blind chance. In more recent times there is a growing body of evidence for purpose and design in the universe which, of course, supports the traditional Christian view of creation (Denton 1998: xi-xix). However, the central problem with the mainline Christian tradition's response to all this is that "this position has no clear and consistent norm for distinguishing between what is positive and beneficent in modernity [including the hegemony of scientism NLM] and what is dangerous and destructive" (Johnson 1996: 61)

The challenge of finding truth, therefore, is more than just contending with diverse ideologies for the advances of scientific technology have forced modern man to live in a world that is vastly different than that of biblical times. Lakeland explains:

The peculiar difficulty of contemporary religion's task is made all the more complicated by the fact that where postmodernity must now venture, modernity has already trod. The Enlightenment valorization of the subject and the emergence of an autonomous secular realm, while it was to a degree a product of the Reformation, represented an enormous
challenge to Christianity. If Christianity was to survive, it could no longer live quite so unreflectively within the myth. The universe was now so much bigger than the human world, the world so much bigger and more varied than earlier ages had imagined, and the Christian religion one among many. More importantly, God became a postulate of practical reason in the subject’s drive to order reality, rather than the bedrock of the medieval life-world. The intellectual challenge for modern theology was to reconcile a theocentric faith with an anthropocentric worldview (1997: 40).

In responding to Lakeland’s review of modern theology’s challenge, however, one should first ask whether some constituencies in the academic community find it even desirable to reconcile competing truth claims. Here I combine the insights of Lakeland and Johnson and suggest a fifth category of responses by Christians to the challenge of modernity, the active/challenging response. The active/challengers make the headlines of the newspapers because they refuse to accept the judgment of others that the Enlightenment project has completely eradicated the academic influence of evangelical Protestantism. The effect on the academy of this challenge is such that it almost annually occupies the attention of the various academic accrediting agencies in the nation such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools (Hefley 1989: 159-161).

The active/challenger response, as I have labeled it, therefore, is ongoing. Furthermore, it is Johnson’s position that the recent battles within the constituencies of Missouri Synod Lutherans, Roman Catholicism, and Southern Baptists underscore their respective responses to the challenge of modernity. “It should be no surprise that key battlegrounds for such clashes are denominational seminaries. Adherence to the correct ‘cultural creed’ (whether conservative or liberal) is increasingly a litmus test for faculty within seminaries and divinity schools” (1996: 61). Of course not all would
agree with Johnson’s perspective but, if he is right, the loss of Protestantism’s hegemony in the academic world cannot be viewed as of little consequence to the future of American denominations. The “battle for the Bible,” which it has been called, continues to heat up in isolated places throughout the nation.

The conservative administrators seeking to purge ‘liberals’ from seminary faculties are not necessarily pigheaded and anti-intellectual. However inarticulately and clumsily, they recognize that the shaping of future ministers’ minds is of critical importance for the future identity of a denomination [that is, its sectarian character], and that the shaping of those minds within the framework of modernity (again, symbolized by ‘historical criticism’) is not neutral. It may have fundamental importance for the ability of an alternative construal of the world to survive. Indeed, it might be argued that the Jerry Falwells and Cardinal Ratzingers of this age have a sharper intellectual grasp of the cultural consequences of such seminary training than do the their liberal counterparts who appeal simply to the ideal of academic freedom (Johnson 1996: 60-61).

How fare then the truth claims of evangelicalism in today’s theological schools and universities? It depends on where one looks. In the Epilogue of this study I provide an example of a Southern Baptist theological school that has returned to many of the traditional evangelical truth claims of the antebellum schools. Nevertheless, the case study I present is a reversal of the prevailing hegemony of secularism in modern education. Why this is so goes to the heart of the Christian faith and that commitment to the truth of revelation which marks all evangelical institutions. “(F)aith knows that its claim to truth and that the claim of the study of the faith is scientific in character find no recognition outside the community of believers” (Berkhof 1979: 36). Berkhof locates the problem in mankind’s fallen nature as sinful and in the fact that he is creature not Creator. According to him
we cannot look at the reality of truth through "unfiltered lenses." What we Christians believe "cannot be proven [but NLM] should be able to stand examination, not only ethically in its practice, but also scientifically by its consistency and obviousness" (1979: 36-37). Berkhof points out that our problem for apprehending truth, is really the problem of comprehending Him who is Truth. This problem is due to a human limitation that is just as applicable to Christians as it is to non-Christians.

The limitation [of apprehending truth NLM] lies herein that we are creatures. Our object is the God who created us. We cannot comprehend him. On the contrary, he comprehends us. The object of theology is the relationship to him who is pre-eminently Subject. Scientifically this makes for an almost unbearable situation, one which becomes bearable only because, according to the Christian faith, the subject so completely enters into our reality that, while remaining Subject, he makes himself therein object for us as well (1979: 36-37).

Perhaps Berkhof's assertion of the human limitation in comprehending the God who is truth best explains why the academy has yet to arrive at an understanding of truth that has ultimate authority. I turn now to the results of the demise of evangelical Protestantism in the academy, both positive and negative.

4.2. Gains And Losses

The aftermath of the demise of evangelical Protestantism in America's academic institutions has had a profound effect on the nation and on western civilization effecting almost every social institution. There have been gains and losses for both education and the culture it serves. While it does not serve the interest of this study to be exhaustive in detailing such it is helpful to list several of them because it shows clearly that some ideas have significant consequences.

Unlikely is it that a discussion of gains and losses would do anything other than reveal the
biases of the those who do the evaluating. Nevertheless, there are some gains and losses that are so obvious as to elicit general agreement from even casual observers. It is these that shall occupy our concern in this part of the work.

The very title of this work implies that the demise of evangelical Protestant hegemony is a loss for both education and American culture. That it is such for Christian education is not far from the truth but that it is an unmitigated loss is also not the case. Marsden thinks that we must not use the process of secularization "naively as equivalent to decline" (Marsden and Longfield: 3). He continues: "(I)n some respects the secularization of the academy has been a gain. So describing the processes by which that secularization took place does not imply a jeremiad. The Christian higher education of the era preceding our study had a great many faults that deserve to be corrected" (Marsden and Longfield: 5). Nevertheless, Marsden and others do see the change in the role of religion in modern higher education "as in some ways a loss" (Marsden and Longfield: 5).

4.2.1. Gains

One of the gains from the secularist approach to education has been a less restrictive approach to matters that require a search for truth (Johnson 1996: 70). At late eighteenth century Harvard and especially at the nineteenth century University of Chicago educators began to speak of "value free" inquiry. This idea was based on the secularist axiom of "neutrality" in the pursuit of truth. In the era when evangelical Protestantism reigned such a search was likely not to ensue since truth was considered to be a settled matter. With secularism, however, nothing is considered settled and, since there is no sacred thing apart that is considered off limits, all things are therefore open for research. Though nineteenth century Christian educators had embraced the empirical method because they felt it would only confirm biblical truth this did not mean that they were willing to
suspend judgment on the validity of faith propositions while investigation was underway. Fixity of doctrine does not lend itself to negotiation on the validity of ideas already settled in the minds of the dogmaticians. Few would be willing to go back to the pre-modern era in which education was born in this country even if that were possible, which it is not. "The unraveling of the institutional fabric that bore the weight of Protestant efforts . . . now makes it impossible for any of us to turn the clock back to some alleged Golden Era" (Lynn in Marsden and Longfield: 191). It is generally conceded that modern man is better off, at least in materialistic ways, than his forbears because of the advances of modern technology and freedom of inquiry. Of course this is a mixed benefit because such an open attitude to free scientific research sometimes results in monstrous things such as nuclear destruction and genetic cloning. Yet, open research on issues, in the main, should continue to be beneficial to mankind. Leslie Dewart gives a succinct explanation as to why "the autonomy of secularism," as she terms it, has resulted in greater latitude in research.

The root of the trouble, I suggest, can be traced to this common concern for the truth of faith. The specific difficulty is that some conceive the nature of knowledge, and therefore the nature of truth and of error, in a manner which requires them in good logic to fear for the safety of the truths of faith unless certain restrictive measures are taken, whereas others conceive truth and the intellect in a different way, from which it follows that academic or other intellectual restrictions are not merely unnecessary but even prejudicial to the cultivation of truth. For the latter, concern for the truth is not only compatible with utmost academic freedom but actually demanding it. In short, whether permissive or restrictive, all views on academic freedom imply a certain concept of knowledge, truth, and error. Different moral conclusions stem from differences of the epistemic order (Proceedings of the College Theology Society 1968: 178).
Out of such an attitude toward research has also come a plea by educators for greater latitude in all matters including those that may impinge upon somebody's faith. Thus, there is an intransigent spirit in educators against anything that is perceived as a threat to academic freedom or an endorsement of censorship (Johnson 1996: 70). This has been a benefit to all insuring the free circulation of ideas although it cannot be adequately demonstrated that attacks on academic freedom or censorship were features of the earlier Protestant establishment in America.

Another gain of secularism in education, some would even consider it the major contribution, is the scientific method of study. Such a method has made possible the industrial age with its concomitant modern conveniences such as electricity, communication, and the automobile. The method has also contributed to the study of literature, history, and biblical scholarship. In biblical scholarship this scientific method is expressed through the discipline known as historical criticism. As we have already noted in chapter two, historical criticism was imported to America from Germany in the eighteenth century. As a methodology it is now widely used in education even among some conservative scholars. This is not surprising since some form of historical criticism is a legacy of the Protestant Reformation, especially because of the influence of Luther (Johnson 1996: 69).

But in its more radical form, historical criticism has given us the demythologizing approach of Rudolph Bultmann and the various historical searches for the "historical" Jesus. In America, this has culminated, insofar as its radical element is concerned, with the Jesus Seminar, a colloquia of left wing liberal scholars and laymen who have sought, by their own admission, to thoroughly debunk the New Testament. They have done this by seeking, in a Cartesian spirit, to disqualify as authentic whatever they consider doubtful of the teachings and deeds of the biblical Christ (Johnson 1996: 4). Since the methodology of historical criticism is also used by some conservative scholars, however,
perhaps the problem is not so much with the method but how it is used (Johnson 1996: 70-71). It has been used, at least at first, as a tool by all scholars to arrive at an understanding of archaic materials such as the Scriptures. Johnson explains. “For over a hundred years, the battle generated by historical critical scholarship continued within the context of the church and of an academy that was in greater or lesser degree supported by or responsible to the church” (1996: 71). Johnson demonstrates that the historical critical method was a legacy of the Reformation because it was used by Luther against the tradition of Roman Catholicism. Luther established three tests for any method that seeks to arrive at valid biblical scholarship. The method must be apostolic, must be christologically centered, and must not replace faith by works. We see Luther’s method at work in his evaluation of James as “the straw epistle.” He felt that the epistle of James failed on all three points. Luther utilized a method of ‘content criticism’ which he called sachkritic (1996: 69).

While historical criticism is generally considered a gain in the intellectual world, however, there are limitations to the historical critical method. For one thing there can be no such thing as “neutrality” or “value free” inquiry. Many are aware that the biblical doctrine of fallen human nature limits the objectivity of human reason.

The many critics of the resulting moral incoherence, particularly those following in the wake of Allan Bloom’s book The Closing of the American Mind, have recognized the problem but have not offered realistic solutions. . . In fact, the critics have shown that the old Western liberalism, with its twin ideals of value free scientific inquiry and the promotion of individual freedom, was based on a myth. In other words, the very principles that provided the moral rationale for shaping modern education have proved untenable. Inquiry is generally not value free, and there is no reason to continue to insist on supposedly value-free scientific methods as the model for all inquiry (Marsden in Marsden and Longfield: 6).
We must add that post-modernists, for different reasons, have come to the same conclusion for it is commonly assumed in the university that secularism equals objectivity and that objectivity equals truth. Buttrick, a critic of both Protestant and secular education, also doubts that it is possible to arrive at value free judgments which are objectively based. "Secularism — the word comes presumably from saecular: of the age — is itself an assumption, namely that man is only of time and space. But who can know? . . . So higher education should resist indoctrination but might remember that, if there is no ‘live option’ to secularism, secularism itself may become a dogmatism" (1960: 4, 6-7).

As for neutrality in value judgments which some like to think that they have achieved, such is a new kind of indoctrination in the academy. It is tantamount to an indoctrination of students in neutrality, an impossible notion. It is not possible for they cannot “view life without being involved in it” (Buttrick 1960: 19).

4.2.2. Losses

Observers of the modern university scene in America may feel that little, if anything, has been lost with the demise of evangelical Protestantism. They are mistaken. The modern university is de-centered, that is, it has lost its core ideals with the loss of evangelical Protestantism. Thus far, the university has found nothing to replace that deficiency and the result is a loss of meaning. Graduates, in the main, are well equipped for the business and industrial world. But they are not equipped at all to deal with issues of character, purpose, and the nobler pursuits of life. Because of this, Marsden, who is perhaps the keenest observer and critic of university historical development, notes that the modern university is “searching for a soul” (1994: 369-384).

Has the university, in breaking free from evangelical Protestantism’s hold on academia, lost its
soul in the process? There is much evidence to suggest that this is indeed the case. What this means is that the university has lost its central values, its spiritual ideals. In place of such values the university has so embraced empiricism, especially scientific pragmatism, that it effectively mirrors the industrial machine of the nation which is the source of almost all of its funding. Its critics have averred that the university must represent the world of ideals but since the 1930s it has ceased to do so in any meaningful way. Evangelical Protestantism had centered the college/university on such ideals but that has been lost. Such ideals have to do with values such as beauty, the arts, and the development of individual character (Marsden 1994: 370-371). Marsden gives a thumbnail sketch to indicate how this loss of ideals, this loss of the soul of the university came to pass.

The most troubling question of the day, however, was whether the ‘realities’ of modern science were even compatible with the higher ideals that were supposed to complement them. Mainline Protestant theologians, university administrators, and most humanists affirmed that the naturalistic science and high ideals were compatible, but not all observers agreed. Literary figures such as Ezra Pound, the early T.S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and Ernest Hemingway, instead of fostering lofty ideals, were exploring the implications of living in a morally empty universe. Joseph Wood Krutch, a journalist, expressed the underlying point well in his widely read The Modern Temper (1929). If one took seriously the pure naturalism of modern science, then the only honest view, said Krutch, was that ‘nature, in her blind thirst for life, has filled every possible cranny of the rotting earth with some sort of fantastic creature, and among them man is but one.’ It followed that all the high ideals of human religion, philosophy, or literature, including the belief that there were real distinctions between right and wrong, were illusions" (1994: 371).

If such things are illusions, however, what is left? Not much. “Scholars on the cutting edge of
the sciences and of related academic disciplines, as much as literary figures, were dynamiting the foundations of Victorian idealism and morality" (Marsden 1994: 371). It is the loss of such foundations that underscores the problem for the modern university. Whatever else the evangelical Protestant establishment had given the original colleges of America it had given foundations, foundations for morality, ethics, and meaning, and yes, even learning.

There is little room in the modern university for what Marsden and others have called “Christian scholarship.” “(T)heology had once served that purpose [that of a metaphysical perspective] but could no longer” (Marsden 1994: 378-379). To demonstrate the finality with which modern educators had closed the chapter on that era one need only look to the formerly Baptist University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins was inaugurated as its fifth president of in 1929. Later, he wrote: “‘We are a faithless generation and take no stock in revelation. Theology implies orthodoxy and an orthodox church. We have neither. To look to theology to unify the modern university is futile and vain’” (Marsden 1994: 379).

For all the vaunted emphasis on “free inquiry,” “academic freedom,” and acceptance of pluralism, the modern university has not welcomed the perspective of Christian theology. It is understood by most that such practices by academic leaders are desirable because they keep the institutions from being defined by any particular ideology. But pluralism currently is simply too narrowly circumscribed when it excludes the perspective of theological truth. The idea of pluralism suggests an equanimity that somehow has never actually been fulfilled in the academy. This is likely due to the sinful and flawed nature of mankind, an insight which, of course, is the legacy of orthodox Christianity. Some scholars are beginning to take a fresh look at the promise of pluralism especially as seen in a revised rendition of the “idea of a university.”
Where an official ideology is said to define the university, be it Marxist, or Muslim, or Christian, pluralism will go underground; it will not disappear, but each contending position will strive to define itself somewhere within the spectrum [of acceptable ideologies NL] and to prove that it belongs there. The future of the university will not depend, as the secularist ideology of the Enlightenment so fondly expected, on the obliteration of all ideologies and of all presuppositions, especially religious presuppositions, but it will depend on the universities' acknowledgment of the fact of pluralism both between and within ideological positions” (Pelikan 1992: 60).

Has the university currently acknowledged such? They have not but Pelikan calls on universities to be both “free and responsible.” They are free but are they responsible to the whole spectrum of pluralism both “between and within ideological positions?”

The truth of Christian theology deserves as much a hearing as any other ideology if the practice of academic freedom is to gain the respect of all participants in today’s educational process. Of course, here one must insist that Christian theology be represented by more than just its liberal left wing. For example, the issue of social relations as perceived within the ideology of Christian theology should be balanced in the modern university. In his book, The Uneasy Conscience of An Evangelical, Carl F. H. Henry tells of his struggle in reconciling evangelical theology with the biblical emphasis on caring for the poor. His perspective on social issues as an evangelical gives balance to the extreme left wing views of liberal Christianity of an institution such as Andover which once took the position that the modern trade union movement was better able to bring in the kingdom of God than the church (Williams 1941: 153-154).

The development of character in students was a pedagogical goal of the early colleges of America. But when the educational institutions later turned from the Christian ideals which had so
characterized their origins that objective was lost. While character development is not an exclusive possession of Christianity it has always been one of the chief benefits of the Christian mission in the culture. The Puritanism of early Harvard and Yale produced citizens with a great emphasis on personal dignity, honor, and right living. It was the mission of the church to disciple persons with the qualities of the Christ-like life and this mission was clearly a part of early college life.

One of the losses, then, of American Christianity’s stake in higher education was the esteemed place that missions and evangelism had once enjoyed. An example of this was Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Today, that institution is a stronghold for left wing radical Christianity. It was not so in the beginning. Its original vision was to evangelize a nation and reach the world through the spread of Christian missions. This is now lost. “The men who founded Union Theological Seminary were Puritans as were the founders of Andover... Union, as Andover, trained a splendid contingent of missionaries. Its theologians were among the great figures of the Christian life in America” (Gordon 1926: 159).

Evangelical theology was all but coterminous with missionary zeal and evangelistic effort. Evangelical colleges and universities were and yet remain fertile ground for growing mission consciousness and endeavor. While Andover/Newton is now known as theologically liberal in its practice of Christianity it was once a veritable missions lighthouse for the northeastern United States. Andover once supplied the Congregational Churches with most of its missionaries. “For the first ten years [of the life of the institution NLM] all the missionaries sent out by the American Board except one were Andover men. In 38 years one hundred missionaries went out” (Williams 1941: 9). Therefore, one might conclude that there is a corresponding decline in mission zeal and endeavor with an increase in theological liberalism or to put it another way, when secularism rises Christian
missionary efforts fall.

Another loss for the academy is the loss of a place for Christian perspectives in all scholarship. Recognizing this, Carl F. H. Henry, who may be the premier intellectual conservative scholar in America, has formed an organization that serves as a kind of shadow academic institution, the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies or IFACS. It is located in Madison, Wisconsin and is constituted of evangelical scholars across America. The very creation of this organization is itself a commentary on the loss of representative Christian scholarship in America’s secular educational institutions. IFACS has just published its first periodical entitled Christians & Scholarship. The debut issue includes an editorial by Dr. Henry which explains its purpose.

The evangelical churches had inherited the entire burden of evangelism and missions, and largely neglected cognitive and apologetic tasks. The goal of IFACS was to enlist evangelical scholars on secular university campuses in dialogue and in writing books which reflected the Christian worldview and life view, a task neglected by the evangelical colleges. Christian scholars serving on evangelical college faculties were more concerned about sheltering Christian students from the impact of the secular alternatives than with elaborating a persuasive biblical alternative. IFACS aimed to transcend that situation (1998: 1, 4).

As Henry points out, the motive for forming IFACS was to be proactive not passive on the campuses of today. It remains to be seen what kind of impact this organization might have on securing a place for Christian scholarship in modern education.

After the publication of Marsden’s book The Soul Of The American University and especially his “unscientific postscript” on the need for Christian scholarship there was a significant reaction by the scholarly community (1997: Preface). Many deemed the idea of such scholarship repulsive and even
"looney." In his book entitled: *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship,* Marsden makes the case for a return of the presence of Christianity as a viable alternative to secularism on today's campuses (1997: 83-100). Marsden is not pleading for a return of Protestant hegemony. He thinks that neither possible nor desirable. He is pleading for a place at the table for serious Christian scholarship as part of the pluralistic mix on contemporary campuses. Marsden thinks that the university is impoverished without that place at the table (1994: 439; 1997: 83-100).

That the university is impoverished by the loss of a place for the perspective of evangelical Protestantism was also the judgment of the renowned Dutch Reformed theologian, Abraham Kuyper. His famous Stone lectures to Princeton University in 1898 made much of the contributions of Calvinism not only to the academy but to the nations of the West, including America. In 1898 Princeton was still committed to much of its Puritan heritage and Kuyper believed that he had found in that institution a receptive audience for his strong apologetic for Calvinism. To Kuyper Calvinism was much more comprehensive than people realized and for him its contributions encompassed not only theology but politics as well. Kuyper's studies had led him to believe that the foundational principles of the young nation of America had been derived from Dutch Reformed Calvinism not from English Protestantism. His speech therefore ended with two other important elements in his idea of America: that the American constitution was founded on Calvinistic principles, and that it was the Calvinistic Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century which served as a model for the American state, more so than the British model (Heslam 1998: 68).

The importance of Calvinism will only be fully appreciated, according to Kuyper, when it is understood that it cannot be confined to the Reformed faith. "Calvinism is not limited to theology, but unfurled its banner on the whole field of human life, more especially on politics, and in your
country as well as mine the political liberties we are so freely enjoying are due to the valiant spirit
instilled by Calvin in the heart of our beggars and of your pilgrim fathers” (Heslam 1998: 64).

For Kuyper, the Calvinism of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and the like contributed far more to American life and its educational system than is generally appreciated. If he is right, this gives credibility to the idea that the academy has lost more than just religion in the loss of evangelical Protestantism. It has also lost much of the inheritance of the political ethos of America. Heslam explains more fully what Kuyper meant by his broad definition of Calvinism.

Though Kuyper’s Calvinism was thus rooted in a specific type of religious consciousness, it was principally a broad tendency in Western culture. This was clearly designed to counter the idea that Calvinism was merely a particular type of theology, and one that had little relevance to practical life in the modern world. For the same reason he often made a distinction between ‘Calvinistic’ and ‘Reformed’ (Gereformeerd). Whereas the latter was chiefly relevant to matters of church and doctrine, the former applied to the whole range of social spheres. Thus he referred to his political program, for example, as ‘Calvinistic,’ insisting that ‘Calvinistic’ is not [just NLM] a theological but a political name (1998: 86-87).

If Kuyper and others (Bavinck and Warfield among them) were right, America, in losing the distinctively Christian contributions of Calvinism in its schools has also lost much of its political heritage. In any case, attendant with the loss of Calvinism and evangelical Protestantism at large, America and much of western culture has lost another very important dimension of cultural life, the loss of Christian virtue.

At first consideration the loss of the influence of virtue as defined by biblical revelation may seem unrelated to the academy. However, virtue rests on that authoritative, absolute basis for truth claims that was such a vital part of the biblical faith that nourished the early institutions of learning
in the United States including primary schools (Marsden 1994: 50-51). It was the principal source of the attempt by the academy to build character into the student population. Along with the moral philosophy of another era in university life, it served as an important Judeo-Christian asset for the establishment of Western civilization. Within the biblical framework it represents moral excellence and righteousness.

The Seven Cardinal Virtues, as they were known in ancient and medieval literature and art, were those of faith, hope, charity, prudence, temperance, chastity, and fortitude. Of course, these are all prominent in biblical revelation. However, they are not to be confused or confounded with the system of “values” of which so much is made in the modern era (Pelikan 1992: 48). It may be argued then, that with the loss of God in modern life goes also the loss of commitment to biblical virtue. Therefore, virtue is more than simply the elevation of right and the denigration of wrong; it is the backbone of character building in Western culture, a sorely missed dimension of modern education. Virtue was a conspicuous part of the contribution that the Calvinism of evangelical Protestantism made to the academy in the early history of America (Marsden 1994: 101-102).

The modern university, on the other hand, makes little of virtue and much of values or “value systems.” Values, however, are subjective in nature and even transitory because they are rooted in that individualism that is such a significant part of the legacy of the Enlightenment. If, as we maintain, individual values have replaced universal virtue it is yet another consequence of the loss of evangelical Protestantism in higher education and the reason that many lament its passing. Pelikan calls this loss of virtue the opposite of what a university should produce. He appropriately finds the source for his idea of the need for virtue in the biblical book of Revelation.

There are just Four Horsemen in the Apocalypse, but if there were a fifth it should...
be ignorance. As Newman's *Idea of a University* observed on its very first page (I.pr.) and as this book will also have occasion to observe more than once, knowledge and virtue are not identical, and the expulsion of ignorance by knowledge will not be enough to deal with the spiritual realities and moral challenges of the future (1992: 21).

It is the "spiritual realities and moral challenges of the future" that concern those who contemplate the full import of what it means to lose the influence of evangelical Protestantism in America's institutions of higher learning. Perhaps with Pelikan the time has come to reexamine the idea of the university "both within and beyond...national boundaries" (1992: 21).

The loss of the influence of evangelical Protestantism in higher education may be greater than imagined by those who control the academic agenda today. Christian theology, when permitted a hearing, brings to the epistemological table of academia a sorely missed dimension which if accepted would only enrich academic discussion. Why is this perspective not granted the hearing it deserves? Marsden suggests that those who oppose Christian ideology in education seem to do so because they believe that the "knowledge gained by empirical observation is the only knowledge there is" (1997: 74). Of course, it should be granted that empirical observation is one mode of knowledge and may even be complete at its own level. However, there are other modes of knowledge that are not contained within the realm of empirical observation. It seems nothing short of intellectual arrogance to rule out of order epistemic issues simply because they do not fit the mold of secularism. "The larger issue is reductionism. Once we have a convincing explanation at the level of empirically researched connections we are inclined to think that we have a complete explanation" (Marsden 1997: 74).
An example of the epistemic contribution that Christian theology can make to the academic discussion on what we can know is the doctrine of creation. Marsden invites secularists to consider the doctrine of creation since it goes to the heart of questions of ‘how we know’ which are fundamental to all academic disciplines.

Here traditional Christians have reason to agree with the postmodern relativists; modern scholars are up a creek without an epistemic paddle. That is just where biblical and Christian tradition says pure naturalism will lead. Human perceptions are notoriously limited and, with God excluded from consideration, it is difficult to find a point of reference for establishing any certainty in what we claim to know. Christian scholars, on the other hand, begin with God’s creation as an organizing premise for understanding what they observe . . .

Taking seriously the doctrine of creation gives Christians a place to stand in recent debates about postmodern epistemologies (1997: 88-89).

It is that place to stand that closes this study. We have discovered that modern colleges and universities have overwhelmingly chosen secularism over the evangelical Protestantism that once defined their mandate to educate the nation. The only exceptions are few, with schools like Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and Bob Jones University leading the way. Incidentally, it is not without design that Bob Jones University calls itself “the world’s most unusual university.”

As already noted in this study, there is an active/challenger response to modernity which is still viable. In the Epilogue I present an example of that response. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary was an institution that was theologically liberal in its founding but has returned to the historic faith that once characterized the antebellum institutions of higher learning in America.
Epilogue

Reversing The Trend: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Is the process of secularization in church related schools inexorable? Put another way, must those colleges and universities intended as they were by their founders to represent a vibrant evangelicalism, become something completely and even militantly opposed to that identity? Marsden thinks not. "There is nothing that makes the long drift from the religious to the secular in higher education inevitable" (1997: 110). Not only is the drift not inevitable, however, there is evidence that even the direction can be changed. As an indication that the process of drift from orthodoxy to liberalism can be reversed one need only go to the campus of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. That campus has experienced a dramatic turnaround in its theological orientation in the last decade. Located on the original site of Wake Forest College, the seminary is experiencing phenomenal growth and has already achieved record enrollment gains since becoming a theologically conservative institution.

As I indicated in Chapter 1, spiritual revivals were a prominent highlight of the early Wake Forest College and such awakenings are once again a part of the ethos of that same campus among those who are now part of the seminary community. President Paige Patterson leads the evangelistic efforts of the revivals much as did the pious Samuel Wait in the old Wake Forest Institute days. Moreover, Patterson fashions them on the pattern of the old “Sandy Creek revival” phenomenon that was the impetus for the beginning of Baptist work in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia (Weeks 1997: 7).

My acquaintance with much of what I am about to describe is that which comes with being an insider. I was a student at Southeastern Seminary in the years of 1960-1963. Even then the school
was widely noted for its theological liberalism and secularist spirit. My affiliation with the seminary has continued with my role as a trustee.

The old Southeastern Seminary was part of that capitulation to secularism that was characteristic of almost all the church related institutions of higher learning in America. Having made this point, however, it is more fitting, since my case study is of a seminary rather than a university, to use the term “theological liberalism” in place of the term “secularism.” I do so because I am aware that the two terms are not synonymous. Secularism is a broader term that encompasses theological liberalism. It is quite possible to be liberal without being secular although as indicated in Chapter 2, liberalism was a phase in the antebellum schools that was a transition between evangelical Protestantism and full blown secularism.

In his book, Servant Songs: Reflections on Southeastern Seminary, Thomas A. Bland, Sr., a professor of Ethics in the moderate/liberal period of that institution from 1956 to 1987, recounts the early days of the seminary. Bland acknowledges that the New Testament department was “troubled” by the addition to the faculty of certain professors who were committed to the theological views of Rudolph Bultmann (1994: 25). Yet, in fairness to those who would otherwise protest, this is not to suggest that the faculty was completely dominated by theological liberals. For example, Professor Leo Green, an Old Testament scholar and devout preacher, was a notable exception. Nevertheless, in the early 1960s, three New Testament professors, in a faculty of only four, were followers of the radical existentialist theology of Rudolph Bultmann. James Hefley concurs with Bland’s account of the trouble but, unlike Bland, holds that the school was much more liberal than the faculty would admit. He points out, however, that “(t)he trustees ‘warned and instructed’ the three New Testament professors ‘to re-examine their teaching methods and theological pre-suppositions, in

One of the early indications of the liberal environment of the Southeastern Seminary campus in its first decades was the theological proclivity of the student body. The majority were moderate to liberal in theology or became so after only a semester or two of study. Though there were also a significant number of conservatives on campus they formed no conservative organization of like-minded students during those years. That was to come later in the 1980s.

(In) October, 1985: The small Southeastern student Conservative Evangelical Fellowship (CEF) published a student paper claiming that conservative views were not fairly represented in the official student newspaper, The Inquiry, and in classrooms by some Southeastern professors. The CEF also cited seminary unfairness to conservatives in consistently inviting moderate to liberal guest chapel speakers, including liberal theologian Harvey Cox, ‘radical feminists’ Rosemary Reuther and Letty Russell, and a Nicaraguan professor who praised the Marxist Sandinistas. Only 50 students and two professors, the CEF said, had turned out to hear conservative theologian Carl F. H. Henry, whom the CEF brought to the campus (Hefley 1989: 146).

By 1987 a revolution had occurred. But the revolution did not occur from within the seminary constituency itself. It was not self reformation; rather it was something imposed from without by the sponsoring denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention. Of course, to some this may seem improper or even non-democratic. But that which is often overlooked in studies that concern the demise and decline of evangelicalism in institutions of higher learning is that the institutions were originally church related. That is, the institutions were accountable to the churches that had created them. In the case of Southeastern Seminary, indeed for all six seminaries owned by the Southern Baptist Convention, that accountability was to mean, as history
now reveals, a day of reckoning (Ammerman 1990: 9-11).

Southern Baptists began determining in their annual meetings during the 1970s and 1980s, that the time had come to reclaim their institutions from their secularist drift and rededicate them to the cause of evangelical Christianity. These annual meetings, known as “conventions,” are democratic, that is, all decisions are the result of debate, amendment, and the will of the majority. Beginning in 1979, and continuing without exception, the annual conventions made it clear by majority votes that they desired their agencies and institutions, including seminaries, to be both cleansed of theological liberalism and established as evangelical institutions (Hefley 1990: 32, 39, 53).

Though not the original intention in its formation, the catalyst for this policy of restoration turned out to be the so-called “Peace Committee” that was formed by the convention that met in Dallas, Texas in 1985. The Committee was specifically assigned the task of studying the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention. It focused primarily on the alleged theological liberalism in Southern Baptist institutions, especially the liberalism that was declared to have existed in the seminaries. They were also to recommend a plan of action which included, so far as was possible, reconciliation between the opposing sides in the controversy (Shurden 1993: 291).

Any action approved by the convention was to effect all six seminaries affiliated with Southern Baptists. They own and control the following: Southern, Southwestern, Golden Gate, Midwestern, New Orleans, and Southeastern. These seminaries, in the academic year 1985-1986, had a combined enrollment of 13,020 (Hefley 1987: 105). I know of no other Protestant denomination in the world that can boast such high seminary enrolments. Southwestern Seminary alone, located in Fort Worth, Texas is the largest seminary in the world with an average annual enrollment of more than 4,000 (Southern Baptist Annual 1996: 269-285). These high enrollments give some indication
of what was at stake in the Peace Committee's report to the St. Louis convention.

The Peace Committee found that theological liberalism existed to some degree in all the Convention's seminaries but that it was most prominently entrenched at Southeastern Seminary (Hefley 1987: 108-117; 1988: 71-71). The Committee's recommended plan of action was that the institutions' doctrinal positions should be brought into compliance with the orthodoxy of a confession of faith known as The Baptist Faith And Message (Shurden 1993: 299). That confession was first drafted and approved by the convention that met in 1925. In 1963, as a response to the liberalism of Ralph Elliot, a professor at Midwestern Seminary, the convention strengthened the confession and asked its agencies and seminaries to use it as a guide in hiring. The confession is evangelical to the core. After the Peace Committee made its report to the 1987 convention that met in St. Louis, Missouri, the trustees of Southeastern Seminary, in their semi-annual meeting of October, 1987, began the process of rebuilding the faculty along the lines of an evangelical scholarship consistent with the doctrinal positions of their Abstract of Principles and The Baptist Faith And Message (Hefley 1986: 149-151; 1989: 162-163). What Southeastern has done has been repeated in the other five seminaries as well. All have followed the same track in the procurement of conservative, evangelical presidents and scholars (Hefley 1988: 145-148).

The process is now complete at Southeastern Seminary. The seminary of the 1990s is completely different from the one that began on the campus of Wake Forest College in 1951 (Bland: 1994: vii-x). Most of the former administrators and faculty of the old Southeastern Seminary refer to it as "fundamentalist" or "ultraconservative." Others simply believe that the seminary is now an evangelical institution which reflects the theology that has characterized the Southern Baptist Convention since its beginning in 1845. There is general agreement among
observers that the Convention, at least as represented in its churches, has always been an evangelical denomination (Hefley 1987: 62).

Lewis A. Drummond, who served as the first president of Southeastern after the change in 1987 believes that the seminary has been returned by the denomination to its evangelical heritage. “I’d like to see this seminary function and have the ethos that Boyce [founding president of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky NLM] created at Southern Seminary.” That school was characterized by “(s)olid commitment to the Scriptures, to ministry, to world evangelization, and the great historic dynamic that produced men like Boyce, Broadus, A. T. Robertson, and over in Britain, men like Charles Spurgeon” (Hefley 1989: 165).

Many believe that what Drummond longed for has come to pass, principally under the leadership of Paige Patterson, the current president. He is considered by many to be the architect of the changes that have occurred not only at the seminary but in the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole. He became president of the seminary in 1993. Patterson has led the seminary to employ professors who have high academic credentials but who are also pro-active in evangelism and missions (Garlarza 1997: 13). Every student is expected to sign up for mission trips and to actively share his faith with others (Galarza 1997: 1, 14). In addition, Patterson has, in cooperation with the International Mission Board of Southern Baptists, developed a 4-year M.Div. degree for mission volunteers which involves two years of study at the seminary campus and two years on the mission field of their appointment. These and other mission projects, such as the establishing of 50 churches in the next 10 years in the state of New Hampshire, are indicative of the affinity that exists between orthodox Christian theology and missions which, as I have already indicated, were features of the early Andover seminary and the early Union Theological Seminary of New York.
City (Williams 1941: 9; Gordon 1926: 159).

The importance of the changes at Southeastern Seminary cannot be overestimated. For example, educators at that institution now have an opportunity to create a new paradigm for theological education not just a recasting of the old mold of the early Andover or Princeton seminaries. One example of how this might be accomplished is the creation of a different approach to the use of the historical critical method in biblical study. The historical critical method is employed by virtually all the theological schools in America, and indeed, throughout the world. However, a new methodology now seems to warranted, if for no other reason than because the old one, according to the testimony of many, has trained many clergymen who are more convinced of what they do not believe of the biblical testimony than what they do believe (Gerstein Lectures 1964: 18-19). A personal example of this condition is Clayton Sullivan to whom I have already made reference in Chapter 2.

It can be argued, therefore, that the wrong use of the historical critical method at the theological schools has eventually resulted in a shift in theological vision and identity in those institutions. It can be further argued that this is primarily because the critical method was uncritically utilized for seminary education. Luke Timothy Johnson of the Candler School of Theology is one who makes this argument. Like most of his peers, he is a proponent of the historical critical method but he contends for a more comprehensive model for today’s theological environment. Johnson is hardly a fundamentalist. He is a Roman Catholic, formerly a Benedictine monk and priest before becoming a biblical scholar. “One of the remarkable features of the academy is that scholars, who analyze everything else, with such ease, so seldom and so poorly analyze their own procedures” (1996: 171). Johnson challenges scholars to be critical of the
historical critical method, recognize its limitations, and seek other more comprehensive models which enhance seminary education rather than demean it (1996: 171). It is the seeking of the “more comprehensive model” that could motivate theological educators such as those at the new Southeastern Seminary to develop a fresh paradigm for biblical studies.

What has happened, then, at Southeastern Seminary not only makes it possible for its faculty to create that new paradigm but also to model it for other like-minded theological schools. That there is a need can be well defended. The need is for a paradigm that allows for a revolution in method and practice for those who lead the nation’s divinity schools and seminaries, most of which, by their nature, are church related. There is, many have noted, an almost surreal discontinuity between the theological schools and the churches they were created to serve. This was true of the old Southeastern Seminary as well. Johnson calls for a return to authentic biblical scholarship in the divinity schools and seminaries. “Biblical scholarship in America increasingly found its home to be secular universities and schools of theology related to such universities (e.g., Chicago, Harvard, Yale), where the fundamental commitment was to the intellectual life, rather than denominational seminaries that were committed primarily to the formation of clergy for the church” (1996: 72). That which Johnson describes may be happening all over again in the southern United States. Moderate/liberal dissidents who left the Southern Baptist Convention in the late 1980s because they considered it too conservative in theology are no longer interested in Southern Baptist theological education. Instead, they have begun their own divinity schools through institutions such as the University of Richmond, Wake Forest University, and Baylor University. It is therefore quite likely that these schools will continue to use the historical critical method in the uncritical way that nearly all theological schools do (Ammermann 1990: 270, 278).
Johnson indicates why the methodology of historical criticism has become problematic for schools of theology. It is because history is considered by many academics to be objectively scientific in nature and conclusive in its hermeneutic. In the earlier years of the use of the historical method this was called "the assured results of higher criticism." The actual fruits of historical study, however, are far more modest than that. "History is a limited mode of human learning" (1996: 167, italics added). Because this is so, Johnson, among a small but growing number of scholars, believes the problem to be one of the uncritical use of the historical critical method. By this he means not so much the use of the method but the underlying assumption by academics that the student has already been engaged with the biblical text before he arrives on campus. Indeed, the historical critical method, by its nature, requires critical reflection. But this is just what he thinks the typical seminarian is unprepared to do. The average student, upon his arrival on the seminary campus is immediately plunged into an environment of predominantly negative biblical criticism before he has acquired the means by which to critically evaluate what he is being taught. Johnson offers this explanation:

The paradigm [of passage through the historical critical method NLM] required students who already had a thorough but 'uncritical' knowledge of the Scripture. Increasingly, however, it has become obvious that the breakdown of tradition, especially in mainline Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, has produced several generations of students who have no knowledge of the Bible at all. The pressing need of such students is to have the tradition transmitted in the first place, as a pre-requisite to critical reflection on it (1996: 73-74, italics added).

Johnson believes that the wrong use of the historical critical method has been a loss for Christianity and the culture it seeks to engage in witness. "Several generations of scholars and
theologians have been disabled from direct and responsible engagement with the texts of the tradition in their religious dimension. . . . The place where this modest change of heart must take place is where the double-mindedness [faith and un-faith in theological propositions NLM] is most obvious, namely, in seminaries, divinity schools, and schools of theology" (1996: 169).

Johnson's idea of a new approach to historical criticism in the seminaries and theological schools is not the only one that may be considered but it does set forth a challenge for change. This is important because the negative cast of much of the biblical studies in divinity schools such as Chicago, Andover, and Union Seminary in New York is being rejected in the Southern Baptist schools. The question for them is certainly a valid one. It is whether a theological school can be a place that is far more positive about biblical studies than negative, a place where the biblical text is assumed genuine unless clearly proven flawed. The new leaders at Southeastern Seminary and the other five seminaries of the SBC have an opportunity to remodel their schools to correspond with this ideal. This does not require them, however, to ignore historical criticism. Mark Noll has made an excellent case for engaging in critical studies in his book, *Between Christ and Criticism*. The point is that it is also necessary to be critical of biblical criticism.

The issue is whether other seminaries and divinity schools pick up this challenge. Since all six Southern Baptist seminaries are under the control of evangelicals with a conservative theological orientation one might expect that they would. They have an opportunity to build institutions which, while fully conversant with and efficient in the latest tools of biblical scholarship, fulfill the mandate of the churches to equip scholars and provide clergy who are biblical in faith and practice. Whether they do so remains to be seen but if this were to happen the effect just might be, at least for those schools that are involved, a reversal of the demise and decline of evangelical Protestantism.
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