

THE RISE AND FALL OF HARVARD (1636–1805)

by
David Beale*

The purpose of this study is to trace the spiritual, doctrinal, and moral rise and demise of Harvard College,¹ the Puritans' first school of higher learning in America. While New England's earliest permanent, nonconformist Puritan settlement was Salem (1628), Boston, with its fine harbor, soon became the hub of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Deeply concerned for the education of their youth, the Puritans acquired a charter from the English Crown in 1636 to found a college in Cambridge, just across the Charles River from Boston. Their express purpose was to train successors for their churches. The plaque on the brick wall just outside the Johnston Gate at Harvard Yard captures their own words:

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

*Dr. Beale is Professor of Church History at Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC.

¹Histories of Harvard include Samuel F. Batchelder, *Bits of Harvard History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924); Samuel Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); Samuel Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936); Samuel Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard 1636–1936* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964). See also Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War: With Particular Reference to the Religious Influences Bearing Upon the College Movement* (New York: Columbia University, 1932).

shall lie in the dust.²

The founders named the college for John Harvard (1607–1638), who, having no children, willed half of his estate and all of his library to the school. This amounted to some four hundred books and between £700 and £850.³ The school opened its doors in 1637 with Nathaniel Eaton as “Head Master.” By 1639 he was unsuccessfully defending himself against bitter charges of failing to feed the students properly and of being a tyrant. The school quickly ousted him and the church excommunicated him. Eaton and his wife escaped to Virginia while the college closed temporarily to recover from its failed beginnings.

In 1640 Henry Dunster,⁴ a Cambridge graduate, became Harvard’s first president and real founder, serving until 1654. Dunster arguably was the best president ever to serve Harvard. He not only set the academic, moral, and spiritual standards which prevailed for generations, he also established the basic permanent administrative and financial base for the institution:

Dunster found Harvard College deserted by students, devoid of buildings, wanting income or endowment, and unprovided with government or statutes. He left it a flourishing university college of the arts, provided with several buildings and a settled though insufficient income, governed under the Charter of 1650 by a body of fellows and officers whose duties were regulated by statute. The Harvard College created under his presidency and largely through his efforts endured in all essential features until the nineteenth century, and in some respects has persisted in the great university of today.⁵

Equally important, Dunster set respectable academic standards, not unlike the colleges of Scotland, Ireland, England, and the continent. Entrance requirements included first, the ability to read basic classical Latin and to make practical use of it. Second, the applicant had to know the basic vocabulary and declensions of New Testament Greek. Most

²*New England’s First Fruits* (London: Overton, 1643). The entire text of this Puritan pamphlet appears in Samuel E. Morison’s *Founding of Harvard College*, Appendix D; for selections, see Shelton H. Smith, et al., eds., *American Christianity: An Interpretation with Representative Documents*, 2 vols. (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1960), 1:123–26.

³The best biography of John Harvard is Henry C. Shelley, *John Harvard and His Times* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1907).

⁴There are two biographies of Henry Dunster: Samuel Dunster, *Henry Dunster and His Descendants* (Central Falls, RI: E. L. Freeman & Co., Steam Book and Job Printers, 1876); and Jeremiah Chaplin, *Life of Henry Dunster, First President of Harvard College* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1872).

⁵Morison, *Founding of Harvard College*, p. 246.

importantly, however, the young scholar, once enrolled, could never escape the constant reminders of the primary purpose of life, the primary purpose of his Harvard training, and the only source of all wisdom. The statement is as follows:

1. When any Scholar is able to understand Tully, or such like classical Latin author extempore, and make and speak true Latin in verse and prose, *suo ut aiunt Marte*; And decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbs in the Greek tongue: Let him then and not before be capable of admission into the College.
2. Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, *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. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of him. Prov. 2, 3.⁶

Dunster never separated godliness from scholarship. He believed that the only reason for education was the cultivation of spirituality for God's glory. Spiritual and intellectual discipline were at the forefront of his curriculum, as Batchelder unsympathetically notes:

The spiritual life of the undergraduates—the only thing that really mattered in this vale of tears—was pried into, dissected, and stimulated with relentless vigor. The scholars read the Scriptures twice a day;...they had to repeat or epitomize the sermons preached on Sunday, and were frequently examined as to their own religious state.... (At first, the sole requirement for the degree of A.B. was the ability “to read the original of the Old and New Testament into the Latin tongue, and to resolve them logically.”) Morning prayers were held at an hour that would have made an anchorite blush.⁷

After fourteen years of faithful service, however, Henry Dunster became a problem to Harvard's General Court of Overseers. Dunster had become a Baptist, refusing to present his newborn fourth child, Jonathan, to the church for baptism. Dunster had come to reject infant baptism and he could not remain silent about this conviction, which he considered to be Bible-based. After public debates with notable Puritans such as John Norton and Richard Mather, Dunster would not budge on his conviction that infant baptism was unknown in the primitive church until well into the third century:

⁶*New England's First Fruits* (London: Overton, 1643).

⁷Samuel F. Batchelder, *Bits of Harvard History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), p. 4.

[Dunster] not only believed infant baptism to be unscriptural; he meant to testify against it upon every proper opportunity. Incidentally, Dunster was right. Infant baptism was unknown in the Christian Church until more than two centuries after the death of Christ.⁸

As a Baptist, however, Dunster had an ethical obligation to resign his position.⁹ Infant baptism was essential to the covenant theology of the legally-established, tax-supported ecclesiastical “Standing Order” of this Puritan colony. Knowing, however, that even his family’s security would soon be in jeopardy outside the establishment, he felt compelled to enunciate his convictions while he still had a platform. The Court ousted Dunster; then they persuaded Charles Chauncy to accept the call to the presidency. Dunster had contributed to the college a hundred acres of land, on which he had built the president’s home with his own hands. In this home, Dunster had operated the first printing press in America since 1640, turning out the first printed works in this country. Dunster, with his friend and assistant, Richard Lyon, had revised the venerable *Bay Psalm Book*. This revision, the *Dunster-Lyon Psalm Book*, first published in 1650, had become so popular by the time of Dunster’s dismissal that the churches used it for more than a century after his death.¹⁰ Now, with a sick family and winter approaching, he received an order to vacate this home of pleasant memories. Dunster pleaded in behalf of his beloved family, but received little sympathy:

Apparently the Overseers were more eager to get the new president installed than to make the old president comfortable; for we find Dunster again addressing the General Court on November 16. It was a moving and pathetic appeal to their humane sentiments. Winter was coming on; he and his young family had no knowledge of the place whither they were destined; their goods and cattle could be moved at that season only with great loss; Mrs. Dunster was ill and the baby too “extreamly sick” for a long

⁸Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 1:308.

⁹Isaac Backus, *Church History of New England, from 1620 to 1804* (Philadelphia: Baptist Tract Depository, 1839), p. 83. This work, containing numerous references to the Baptists’ plight in New England, first appeared as *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*, published in three volumes between 1777 and 1796.

¹⁰The title page of the Dunster-Lyon Psalm Book reads: *The Psalmes Hymns And Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testament, faithfully translated into English metre, For the use, edification, and comfort, of the Saints, in publick, and private, especially in New-England*. It was reprinted for New England churches until Thomas Prince, minister of Boston’s Old South Church, produced a new metrical translation in 1758; see Morison, *Founding of Harvard College*, p. 349. It was used in some English and Scottish churches until well into the eighteen century; see Chaplin, *Life of Henry Dunster, First President of Harvard College*, p. 98.

journey.¹¹

Although the General Court of Overseers allowed Dunster to remain in the house until March, they constantly hounded him with new proceedings over his objections to infant baptism. This continued until 1655, long after the family had moved. The Court constantly deprived the Dunster family of peace and quiet.

Dunster assisted in the establishment of the First Baptist Church in Boston, then moved to Scituate, in Plymouth Colony, where he ministered until his death in 1659. In his will he left legacies to the persons who had forced his resignation. He directed that his body be interred in Cambridge, near the school and the people which he had served.

Harvard did not in any way “fall” with Dunster’s dismissal in 1654. Indeed, the school would not show signs of decline until the late 1600s. Following Dunster, five presidents served to 1701: Charles Chauncy,¹² Leonard Hoar,¹³ Urian Oakes,¹⁴ John Rogers,¹⁵ and Increase Mather. Each of these continued to be an example of strong character, scholarship, and spiritual depth. The school began to show signs of subtle change during Increase Mather’s administration, not because of Increase Mather’s presence, but because of his frequent absence, and in spite of his strong Puritan character and preaching. The new changes, which tutors and administrators instigated and promoted behind Mather’s back, seemed practical in nature; but they were indicators that a new generation was tired of some of the old Puritan convictions and practices.

Increase Mather was the last strong Puritan president, serving from

¹¹Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 1:313.

¹²Charles Chauncy, a Cambridge graduate, served as Harvard’s president from 1654 to 1672. Although inconsistent with Puritan practice, Chauncy thought that baptism should be by immersion, both for adults and infants. However, he was willing, unlike Dunster, to silence such a view in order to satisfy the expected qualifications for the presidency. His scholarship was considered profound, even in the field of medicine. He was up at four in the morning in all seasons. All six of his sons became Harvard graduates.

¹³Leonard Hoar, a Harvard graduate, was awarded also an honorary degree from Cambridge University after taking a course there. Like Chauncy, he studied medicine. His presidency was only three years—1672 to 1675.

¹⁴Urian Oakes served as president from 1675 to 1681. He was a Harvard graduate and was noted for his proficiency in astronomy.

¹⁵John Rogers served as president from 1682 to 1684. He was a Harvard graduate and a descendent of John Rogers, the martyr who was burned at Smithfield, England, during the reign of Bloody Mary.

1685 to 1701. He was the youngest of Richard Mather's six sons, graduating from Harvard in 1656 and taking a second degree at Trinity college, Dublin. Later he became pastor of Boston's Second Church. He married Maria, the daughter of John Cotton, and ten children were born into their home. Increase Mather was one of the last of the old-line Puritans. He wrote 136 volumes and his son Cotton wrote his life's story, which indeed is full of sadness. He witnessed the fall of the beloved Puritanism which his parents had taught him. He stood opposed to the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692-93, which only hastened Puritanism's decline and caricatured it in the popular mind. Other prominent Puritans likewise stood opposed to the trials; this, however, did not stop public condemnation of a movement which was fast becoming a thing of the past.

Mather could no more change the new generation's mindset and direction than he could change the course of the winds blowing across the Charles River. Increasingly, his young colleagues regarded him as too conservative, or unmovable, out of touch with their generation. Indeed, he was more of a pastor than a college administrator. Moreover, his attention was often drawn away from the immediate affairs of the college by the problems with the English Crown over the school's charter and the Bay Colony's charter. Mather made several trips to England, attempting to secure charters which would be satisfactory on both sides of the Atlantic. During his trips abroad, some were promoting a new spirit of innovation on the campus. The main instigators of this "broad and catholic spirit"¹⁶ were Thomas and William Brattle and John Leverett. In 1699 the wealthy Brattles established the "Brattle Street Church" in Boston to propagate their new methods. Mather referred to them as "liberals," though not in any doctrinal sense. The innovators, persuaded that Mather's presence was an obstacle, found a sympathizer and supporter in Samuel Willard, pastor of Boston's Old South Church.¹⁷ Willard became the vice president of Harvard in 1700. Mather's friends frequently informed him of the increasing campus talk of "some plan" for Willard to replace him as president. Mather's first love was just across the Charles River at Boston's Second Church, and it was no secret to anyone that he would never move away from his parsonage there. In 1701 the General Court set into motion a practical-sounding scheme for accomplishing his removal. It was not complicated. The Court simply passed a law stating that "no man should act as president who did not

¹⁶The innovators themselves were using the word "catholic" in the sense of "universal," attempting to make their churches oriented to more people.

¹⁷Old South Church had started much earlier as the Puritans' "Third Church" of Boston.

reside in Cambridge.” Mather resigned, and Willard became “acting” president. As Puritanism as a movement was now history, the Harvard of every president from Dunster to Mather would never be the same. Preparation for some real change was now in place. In an almost unforgettable message on new evangelicalism, delivered at Bob Jones University during the 1960s, Dr. Charles Woodbridge alliterated four words which presently come to mind as being also an accurate depiction of Harvard’s demise—“mood, methods, morals, and message.”

Samuel Willard, performing the duties of college president from 1701 to 1707, represents a clear change in the college’s *mood*. Willard was determined to allow the “broad and catholic” spirit to find expression on the campus. The school’s mindset now became one of great toleration to change. Although Willard continued as pastor of Boston’s Old South Church and never moved out of his Boston parsonage, he served the office of college president, in direct violation of the residency law which had successfully driven Increase Mather to a forced resignation. Although Willard was never inaugurated and never officially owned the title “president,” he was the acknowledged president, and the histories of the college consistently refer to him as “the seventh president.”

John Leverett, Harvard’s eighth president from 1708 to 1724, represents not only the change in mood but primarily a change in *methods* of “doing church.” Leverett helped to initiate new methods which were rapidly becoming the popular practices of an increasing number of churches. These new methods find their clearest expression in the famous Brattle Street Manifesto¹⁸ and represent the downgrade from old Puritanism. There were primarily three new methods. First, there was a shift in emphasis from preaching to ritual. Second, there was an extreme emphasis on covenant theology, as seen in their insistence in practicing the Half-Way Covenant¹⁹ and Stoddardism.²⁰ The third innovation

¹⁸This is the Brattle Street Church’s published Manifesto of 1699.

¹⁹The first generation of Puritans had taught that the necessary prerequisites to the Lord’s Supper and full membership in the local church were baptism and public profession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. The second generation had been baptized as infants, but most had never made public professions of faith. A serious question naturally arose. Can these baptized but unregenerate parents present their own children for baptism? The leaders addressed this question in 1662 and presented their decisions in a document known as the Half-Way Covenant. The Covenant stated that as long as the parents were not living in some open sin in the community they could present their children for baptism. Thus, the churches of New England continued to be filled with half-way members who eventually became full members by virtue of their increasing majority status.

²⁰Solomon Stoddard, Congregationalist pastor in Northampton, MA, insisted on admitting moral unregenerates to the Lord’s Supper. The basis for his argument was that the Old Testament instructs all Israel to partake of the Passover. The church, he insisted,

was the gradual abolishing of the required personal, public profession of faith. The old Puritans called it the "Conversion Narrative,"²¹ and they considered it foundational to the churches. Now, the "broad and catholic" were encouraging churches to replace this personal testimony with a churchwide communal chant. This would not only keep the unregenerate members in the churches, it would keep them feeling good about themselves. Soon, in many churches, the congregational chant, called "owning the covenant," replaced the individual public profession of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. This spared the ministers the embarrassment of having so few in the churches who could make a personal public profession.

The seeds of Puritanism's destruction were in its own theology from the beginning. Covenant theology caused most to believe that since God is in covenant with New England, the next generation would turn out well. Now, however, most of the churches were full of unregenerates. The majority of the leaders who were departing from old Puritanism were not theological liberals. If they had been liberals, they could have been detected. These individuals had no intention of promoting an ultimate apostasy. A wrong hermeneutical principle (extreme covenant theology) had filled their churches with lost people, and the matter was out of hand. Everything they suggested sounded reasonable to many people at first sight. Their "church marketing" techniques focused on the need to instill life in churches where people had "simply lost interest." Preaching was no longer popular and could no longer hold the focus of the church service.

The old Puritans, reacting to Anglican ceremonialism, had insisted that when ministers read the Bible in public, they should expound it. Simple reading, without comment, they regarded as "dumb reading." Those old Puritans knew that even in their day some ministers had not only lost their bite, they had lost their bark. Preachers, they insisted, are supposed to have a call and a passion to communicate God's Word to a lost and dying people. The second generation lost the convictions; the third generation lost the churches. These innovators were not "liberals" in the modern sense. In their very departure from New Testament practices, they appealed to the Bible as their infallible authority. Morison notes the acts of departure from old-line Puritanism and senses something of Mather's frustration with people of the covenant who seemed so willing to abandon the New England Way:

is Israel and the Lord's Supper is the Passover. The rules and qualifications did not change with the cross. Such belief we call "Stoddardism." His grandson and successor, Jonathan Edwards, did not follow him in these matters.

²¹See the helpful definition in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, s.v. "Conversion Narratives," by K. P. Minkema, p. 317.

The innovations adopted by this Brattle Street or “Manifesto” Church were all in matters of ecclesiastical polity; there was no dissent from the orthodox puritan theology professed by the New England churches. The practice of public confession of religious experiences before admission to the Lord’s Supper was abandoned; the Lord’s Prayer was used; the Bible was read without comment; all children of professing Christians, whether communicants or not, were admitted to baptism. These changes in “Gospel order,” trivial and innocent enough as they seem to us, were really a significant challenge to the New England Way. The Mathers...could understand wolves trying to break down the puritan “hedge,” but they had no patience with sheep trying to eat their way out.²²

It was during this time (1721), that a trusting and godly English Baptist, Thomas Hollis, endowed the college with a divinity professorship, with the stipulation that this chair must always be occupied by one who maintained the original intentions of the colleges’ founders and who believed the Bible without reservation. The school’s departure, however, had already begun. Only a few of those who were closest to the institution could see the process taking place. In subtle ways, the spiritual mood had changed; ecclesiastical methods of worship had changed. While some of those changes were not wrong in themselves, they reflected that attitude of tolerance, irenicism, and a lack of spiritual perception. It should be no surprise to see the school’s morals changing as well.

Benjamin Wadsworth, serving as president from 1725 to 1737, reflects the change in mood and methods, but also in *morals*. Restraint had become unpopular and liberty was now the byword on a campus whose students insisted on more freedom of expression. From the school’s records, Morison describes the scene:

It was an era of internal turbulence: for Wadsworth was no disciplinarian, and the young men resented a puritan restraint that was fast becoming obsolete. The faculty records, which begin with Wadsworth’s administration, are full of “drinking frolicks,” poultry-stealing, profane cursing and swearing, card-playing, live snakes in tutors’ chambers, bringing “Rhum” into college rooms, and “shamefull and scandalous Routs and Noises for sundry nights in the College Yard.”²³

Edward Holyoke’s presidency (1737–69) represents not only a change in mood, methods, and morals, but now a change in the *message*, or doctrinal content, which was now tolerated on Harvard’s campus. These were the years of the Great Awakening, and Harvard would reject

²²*Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 2:545.

²³Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard 1636–1936*, p. 78.

the revival in favor of academic freedom. When George Whitefield visited Harvard, he noted in his diary the careless attitudes prevalent on this campus. He complained of the lack of doctrinal content in the popular books. In 1739, three M.A. candidates gave the negative answer to the question as to “whether three Persons in the Godhead are revealed by the Old Testament.” This is the first hint of a weak view of the Trinity at Harvard. The question was not whether the Trinity is explicitly taught in the Old Testament but whether three distinct Persons of the Godhead are revealed. The candidates not only received their degrees, but enjoyed the protection of the Overseers. Morison presents the scene:

Harvard College and the Congregational Church were broadening down from primitive Calvinism to eighteenth-century theism or Unitarianism. This peaceful process was rudely interrupted by an evangelical revival known as the Great Awakening. The preliminary rumblings of that movement in the Connecticut Valley did not disturb Cambridge; but in September, 1740, the whirlwind revivalist George Whitefield arrived in Boston, addressed fifteen thousand people on Boston Common, and on the twenty-fourth preached to students and townspeople in Cambridge meetinghouse. Harvard men were divided in opinion as to the wisdom and value of this first of modern revivals.... Conservatives who deplored the liberal tendencies of the age were delighted at the straight hell-and-damnation Calvinism that Whitefield preached.... Whitefield was entertained by President Holyoke, and listened to with eager attention by the students; but he found little to praise at Harvard, where...the state of “piety and true godliness” was not much better than at Oxford and Cambridge. “Tutors neglect to pray with, and examine the hearts of, their pupils,” who read “bad books” such as the works of Tillotson and Clarke. Whitefield observed that “Many Scholars appeared to be in great concern as to their souls.”²⁴

Samuel Locke’s presidency (1770–73) reflects the change in mood, methods, and message, but especially morals. He made his house maid pregnant and was forced to resign the presidency. The true reason for his resignation did not come to light until the twentieth century. Morison explains:

On the first of December, 1773, it was announced to an astonished public that Mr. Locke had resigned his exalted position. No Harvard President had done such a thing for almost a century. No reason was given, and the Corporation, with a discretion quite unusual in that body, kept it a close secret. Not until the present century did it come to light, in the published Diary of President Ezra Stiles of Yale. A maidservant in the house of President Locke was great with child. Mr. Locke took the blame, retired to the country, and was promptly forgotten. His successor, the Reverend Samuel

²⁴Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard 1636–1936*, pp. 84–85.

Langdon (A.B., 1740) of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a man little qualified for the presidency either in learning or sense of government, happened to be a class-mate of Samuel Adams, a friend of John Hancock, and an ardent patriot, which were considered more important qualifications for the presidency at that juncture of affairs than character or literary reputation.²⁵

Samuel Langdon, president from 1774 to 1780, represents an attempt to rescue Harvard from apostasy. In the heat of the war, his fervent patriotism won popular support. Following the war, however, he lost popularity, especially because of his intense spirituality and hard, expository preaching. The students themselves humiliated him with a hateful personal letter which prompted his resignation. This was the spirit of the age, and Harvard had passed the point of no return. Morison notes that when the students lost interest in the trumpet call to war, they rejected the preacher's voice:

In the summer of 1780 the students drafted a petition to the Corporation for his removal. A committee of them had the boldness to inform the President what they proposed to do, and the insolence to address him in these words: "As a man of genius and knowledge we respect you; as a man of piety and virtue we venerate you; as a President we despise you." [Langdon's prompt resignation was accepted.] The students were so sorry for the poor man that they sped his departure with a complimentary address and a subscription of money.²⁶

Joseph Willard, president from 1781 to 1804, represents the last-ditch effort to rescue the school from apostasy. He once remarked that he "would sooner cut off his hand than lift it up for an Arminian Professor." In the eighteenth century, the word "Arminian" was often used synonymously with "liberal." Actually, "liberals" were pseudo Arminians, as "New Divinity" men were pseudo Calvinists. Willard, along with David Tappan, was an "Old Divinity Calvinist," a man who stood militantly and consistently against all doctrinal deviation. Tappan, the last orthodox Hollis Professor of Divinity, died in 1803, and Willard himself died the following year. The old guard had now passed off the scene. Eliphalet Pearson (acting president, 1804 to 1806) tried to continue Willard's efforts to salvage the school. However, since the Board made all faculty appointments, Pearson could do nothing. When a liberal Board appointed Henry Ware,²⁷ a Unitarian, to the Hollis Chair of Di-

²⁵Ibid., p. 100.

²⁶Ibid., p. 162. The school changed its name to Harvard "University" in 1780, during Langdon's presidency.

²⁷Cf. C. C. Wright, "The Election of Henry Ware: Two Contemporary Accounts

vinity to replace Tappan in 1805, Pearson immediately resigned from the presidency. The battle was over; Harvard was lost to Unitarianism. Samuel Webber immediately became the first Unitarian president (1806–10). Conservatives then established Andover Theological Seminary (1808) as the answer to apostasy and the place to train missionaries.

Under John T. Kirkland, president from 1810 to 1828, Harvard added a Unitarian Divinity School (seminary) in 1812, while Yale was experiencing great revival in the Second Great Awakening. Yale had embraced the First Great Awakening; Harvard had rejected it. While no one has demonstrated that Yale's founding in 1701 was directly due to the circumstances at Harvard, Increased Mather, by letter, encouraged Yale's founders.²⁸

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Spiritual decline does not necessarily result from a school's rapid or large growth. The downgrade narrated above occurred on a small college campus which was being constantly watched by its loving sons. Harvard College, founded in 1636, saw no graduating class numbering even ten until 1659. No graduating class numbered twenty until 1690 and 1695,²⁹ the same decade which saw the beginning of the *mood* change! By 1701, when the school was sixty-five years old, the *method* began to change; by 1725, when the school was eighty-nine, the *morals* began to change; and by 1740, when the institution was just past a century old, the *message* began to change. The college was over eighty years old before it graduated a class numbering forty or more, and that happened only twice down to 1762. The fall was complete with Unitarian Henry Ware's appointment to the Hollis Chair of Divinity in 1805, when the school was one hundred and sixty-nine years old. Until then (turn of the nineteenth century), there were usually only three professors (called tutors). One taught Divinity; one taught Hebrew and other oriental languages; and one taught mathematics and natural philosophy. When the medical school was established in 1782, the administration added a fourth faculty member, to teach anatomy and surgery. During the 1870s

Edited with Commentary," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 17 (July 1969): 245–78.

²⁸Most of the histories of Yale mention Harvard in passing: Roland H. Bainton, *Yale and the Ministry* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957); Kelly B. Mather, *Yale: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); James Reynolds, et al., eds. *Two Centuries of Christian Activity at Yale* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901); and Richard Warch, *School of the Prophets: Yale College, 1701–1740* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

²⁹There were twenty-two graduates in 1690 and in 1695.

and 80s, President Charles William Eliot³⁰ adopted the current “elective system,” broadening the curriculum. Today, the school’s library is surpassed only by the Library of Congress. Its apostasy is surpassed by none! From the new mood to the new message, more than a century passed. Few saw it happen!

What is Harvard like today? Don Feder, in the *Conservative Chronicle*, reacts to an article in the student newspaper, *The Nave*, 18–25 March 1994:

Instead of singing hymns, they’re sitting in the lotus position, chanting “omm” at America’s oldest school of theology. *The Nave*’s calendar reminds students that March 20 is Spring Ohigon, “a special time to listen to the Buddha and meditate on the perfection of enlightenment.” Wouldn’t miss it for the world. The next day is the Zoroastrian holiday of Naw Ruz.... There’s no mention of Palm Sunday or Passover, reflecting their insignificance at an institution where all is venerated, save Western religion. These poison-ivy covered walls harbor a deep-seated contempt for Christianity. In *The Nave*’s “community forum,” a third-year student sniffs: “Christianity—the whole of it—is a sect. With its baptism and Eucharist borrowed from the Greek mystery religions; its cross a transformed Egyptian ankh,...its clergy modeled on Roman bureaucracy,” and so on. The author speaks affectionately of Native American religion possessing “none-too-primitive beliefs regarding human immortality and inter-dependence of humanity and nature.” Get thee to a shaman’s teepee! Then again, why bother. The shamen, gurus, witch doctors and mahatmas have all come to Harvard. “Here,” says my friend, “all religions are equal except Christianity, which is very bad, and Judaism, which loses points where it intersects with Christianity.” Its graduates will go on to propagate their Mork from Ork theology in churches where cobwebs outnumber congregants. They will assume leadership of ecclesiastical bodies with dwindling rosters that no one, especially their members, takes seriously. “God is killing mainline Protestantism in America,” observes a Methodist theologian at Duke University, “and we...well deserve it.” Why go to church when you can get the same message in the pages of *Ms* magazine or the collected writings of Kim II Sung? What’s up at the Harvard Divinity School? Mystic crystal emanations and the soul’s annihilation. Will the last graduating Christian please collect the Bibles and turn out the lights?³¹

³⁰See also Charles Eliot, *Harvard Memories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923).

³¹Cf. “An Evangelical Chair at Harvard? Why Does Harvard Want an Evangelical Connection?” *Christianity Today*, 4 February 1983, pp. 14–20.