

Mr. Holmes stepped out with the spiritual nucleus of the church and established a new Congregational church in the area. (See Gordon, Leaven of the Sadducees, pp. 9-11).

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the Unitarian movement had grown so large in the former Puritan churches that, when it finally came to a clean break, the Unitarians took Harvard University, one of the two great universities that the movement had founded. They also took most of the wealthy churches of the denomination, and a very large part of its educated people. The claim was made that within a few years the Congregational Church would have completely disappeared. Yet in the course of the next fifty years the Congregational Church, which was one of the slowest growing churches in the United States, grew to be several times as large as the Unitarian church which came out of it and which had taken most of its wealth and most of its intelligentsia. Later on, unbelievers succeeded in gaining control of many of the Congregational pulpits, so that today there is very little difference between the average Congregational church and the average Unitarian church.

This movement of unbelief within the church took a great step forward in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and this was due to a large extent to two movements: the so-called Higher Criticism of the Bible, and the rise of the Darwinian evolution.

The Higher Criticism of the Old Testament began as part of an extensive movement which originally was not related to the Bible so much as to the classics. About the year 1800 there arose a very sceptical group of scholars in Germany