



# Session 5: The Rise of Progressivism

# The Principle Approach

Definition: America's historic Christian method of Biblical reasoning which makes the Truths of God's Word the basis of every subject in the school curriculum.

# Review of American Christian Education

“Education” as defined by Webster: “comprehends all that series of instruction which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations.” Noah Webster, 1828.

- Approach—Biblical
- Foundation—Biblical principles
- Key doctrine—Love of God and Neighbor
- Character—Christ Centered

# Education in Colonial America

- One Example: Connecticut legislature: if a child cannot read, he cannot read the Word of God.
- Connecticut passed a law requiring parents to teach their children to read so that they could read the Bible. If parents weren't compliant, they could be fined. They sent inspectors to homes to ensure compliance.

# The Ole Deluder Satan Act

- In 1647, the very first education law written in America was passed.
- “It being one chief project of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures...and to the end that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers...”

# The Northwest Ordinance of 1787

- NW Ordinance—education law was drafted by the same people who drafted the first amendment.
- “Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to the education of mankind, schools and education shall forever be encouraged.”
  - Why religion before morality? Because religion informs morality.

# Washington's Farewell Address

- “Of all the habits and dispositions which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. Let it be cautiously maintained that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both prohibit us to expect that national morality will prevail in exclusion of moral principle.

# Colleges and Universities

- In 1860, 262 of the 288 college presidents were ministers of the gospel, and over 1/3 of the faculty were ministers of the gospel.
- By 1884, 370 universities in America...83% of them were tied to some denomination.

# Colleges and Universities

- Harvard University purpose statement: “Let every student be plainly instructed and consider the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus, which is eternal life (John 17:3), and therefore to lay Christ at the bottom as the only foundation of sound knowledge and learning.”
  - “Everyone shall so exercise himself as to read the Scriptures twice a day that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein.”
  - Harvard’s two mottos: “For Christ and the Church” and “For the glory of Christ.”
  - Harvard produced founders: John Adams, John Hancock, Sam Adams, William Ellery, William Cooper, Robert Treat Paine, William Williams, Elbridge Gerry, William Samuel Johnson, Rufus King, Fisher Ames, William Cushing, Timothy Pickering, Dr. Joseph Warren.

# Colleges and Universities

- Yale—“Above all, have an eye to the great end of all your studies, which is to obtain the clearest conceptions of Divine things and to lead you to a saving knowledge of God in his son, Jesus Christ.”
- “All the scholars are required to live a religious and blameless life according to God’s word, diligently reading the holy scriptures and constantly attending all the duties of religion.”
  - Started by Congregationalists.
  - Signers of the Declaration Lyman Hall, Philip Livingston, Lewis Morris, Oliver Wolcott...signers of the Constitution such as Abraham Baldwin, Jared Ingersoll, William Livingston. Other notables: Noah Webster, Zephaniah Swift, first legal text, James Kent—father of American Jurisprudence.

# Colleges and Universities

- Princeton—“Every student shall attend worship in the college hall morning and evening and shall attend public worship on the sabbath.”
- “There shall be assigned for each class, certain exercises for their religious instruction and no student...shall neglect them.”
- “He is the best friend to American liberty who is most sincere and active to promoting true and undefiled religion and to bear down on profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I hesitate to not call him an enemy of his country.
  - Richard Stockton, Benjamin Rush, Gunning Bedford, Jonathan Dayton, James Madison, William Patterson. Oliver Ellsworth, Henry Lee, William Bradford (descendant). John Witherspoon (minister) was their president.

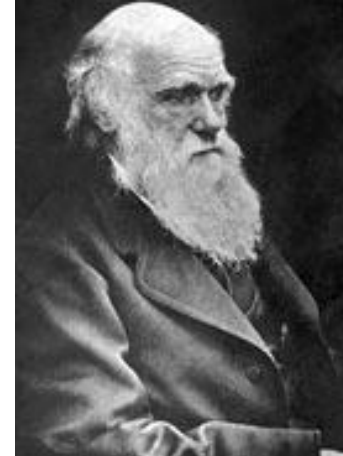
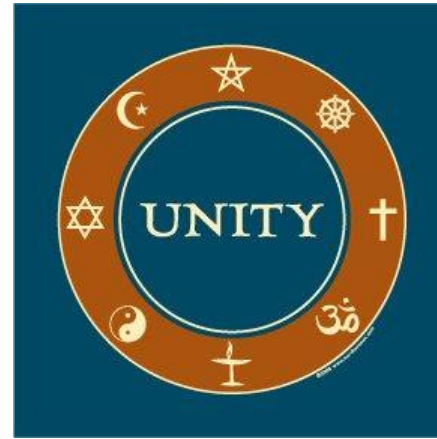
# Grade-Schools

- New England Primer
- Webster's Blue-backed Speller
- Quality of the founding generation of thinkers:
  - Charles Carroll entered college at 10
  - Fisher Ames attended Harvard at 12
  - Benjamin Rush graduated Princeton at 14
  - John Trumbull—read through Bible at 4, Greek contest winner at 6, and at 7.5 years old he passed the entrance exam to Yale
  - John Quincy Adams

# **The Gilded Age leads to** **the Progressive Era**

## – Two Premises

- The combination of Universalism (all religions are equal and lead to universal restoration between man and the divine) and Unitarianism (God is one person, therefore Jesus was not fully God) into the UUC
- Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species*



Charles Darwin

- US became an urban 

# Society

 nation

- By 1900, 40% of Americans lived in cities, and it looked like it would continue to grow
- This included ex-slaves, who were moving to the cities to escape the poverty of reconstruction south



- US became a nation of immigrants (“old” & “new”)
  - Between 1860-1890, nearly 10 million from Western Europe
  - From 1891-1920, over 40 million from Eastern and Southern Europe



- Most new immigrants flocked to cities where they could get labor-related jobs and cheap living
  - » They were escaping poverty, discrimination, genocide, etc.
  - » Majority stayed in cities, lived in tenement housing, worked in industry in dangerous jobs, for long hours, for low wages (many children working too)



# Politics

- Spoils system and Political Machines
- *Laissez Faire*
- Populist Party's Omaha Platform (Election of 1892)
  - Free and unlimited coinage of silver
  - A graduated income-tax (redistribute wealth)
  - Gov't ownership of the telephone and telegraph, and railroads.
  - initiative, referendum and recall
  - limiting gov't land grants to settlers rather than railroads
  - direct election of senators
  - 8-hour work day





# Economy

- *Laissez-Faire* policies—“let them do”, or “let them be”—lack of government regulation allows for the growth of big business (tariffs, pooling and price fixing)
- Hard money vs. soft—battle over the currency
- Industrialism



# Religion

- From 1860-1900, major protestant groups tripled their membership (Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterians, Congregationalist)
- Challenges faced when Robert Ingersoll published skeptical works and Charles Darwin published *Origin of Species*. Christians didn't know how to respond to the challenges posed to the validity of the first few chapters of Genesis
- This crisis occurred simultaneously with the crisis for Protestantism; namely, that the majority of new immigrants were Catholic
  - Towns with English-speaking protestants vs. cities with foreign Catholics
  - Catholics did not keep Sabbath, they danced, drank, were poor, regarded as a threat to stability and moral health of the nation
  - The “Nativist” movement grew—discrimination against blacks and immigrants
- Successful people were less likely to value religion—self-reliant

# The Crisis in Religion—Liberalism and Modernism

- Background—Secularization of American Culture
  - Prior to Civil War, most colleges had clergymen as presidents (effects on courses such as Moral Science, Politics, Economics, etc.). Growth of professionalism would change this
  - Science was previously dominated by Christians, but no longer. People began to accept belief that Bible was inadequate for science
  - Colleges became universities where each discipline was its own profession and its standards were no longer influenced by the Bible
  - Within a generation, most Americans wouldn't use the Bible as the credible source for their sciences

## – A movement to “save” Protestantism

- Darwinism and higher criticism were challenging authority of the Bible
- New historical, sociological, and Freudian-psychological ways of thinking were revolutionizing thought at almost all levels
- Rapid secularization of colleges, churches, and society

## – People who had been raised to accept unquestioningly the complete authority of the Bible and truths of evangelical teaching were now intellectually incapable of defending truth.

- When faced with the liberalism of the universities, they were faced with a choice—hang on to evangelicalism and lose all credibility, or go for respectability and abandon beliefs
- 3<sup>rd</sup> option—“Aha”, modify Christianity

- Liberating Christianity for the modern world
  - Freedom from tradition (Liberalism) and adjustment to the modern world (Modernism)
  - Darwinism had attacked Christianity in two ways
    - Questioned accuracy of the Bible
    - Reversed perceptions of relation of science to Christian faith

# – Three phases of “Liberating” Christianity to meet the “Modern” world

- Deifying historical process (as in “Deism”)
  - The Bible is an ancient model for human experience
  - Need not be proven historically or scientifically accurate to be regarded as beneficial
- Stress the ethical
  - Make the key test of Christianity life, not doctrine
  - Heart of Jesus’ teaching was relational rather than judicial
  - (Sheldon’s *In His Steps* written during this time [WWJD?])
  - Sunday school movement stressed primacy of Christian education in the way of moral lessons
- Centrality of Religious Feelings
  - If you focus on your personal experience with Christ, then dogma, doctrine, or literal interpretation of Scripture doesn’t matter

## – Prominent Pastors and their beliefs

- Henry Ward Beecher, son of Lyman Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe
  - Christianity progressed with the modern age
  - No need to worry about the literal interpretation of Scripture
  - Christianity had evolved into the highest ethical principles
- Phillips Brooks
  - “Believe in yourself, and reverence your own human nature; it is the only salvation from brutal vice and every false belief”
  - “The ultimate fact of human life is goodness and not sin”
  - Used Darwinism to promote “self-help”
- Josiah Strong
  - Saw Christianity and being American as one and the same
  - Believed that we must Christianize the immigrants to make them American, but that view was rooted in the theory of Anglo-Saxon Supremacy
    - » Spanish-American War 1898



## – “Inerrancy” of Scripture

- In the face of people like Professor Charles Briggs and his statement that “the Bible contained numerous incidental errors not central to its teaching” ...
- Of those evangelicals who fought most fiercely for Christianity, the most articulate were Presbyterian theology professors at Princeton
- Made the Inerrancy of Scripture the central doctrine of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Evangelical Christianity—almost a litmus test for true fundamental evangelicalism

## – Darwin’s ideas in demographics

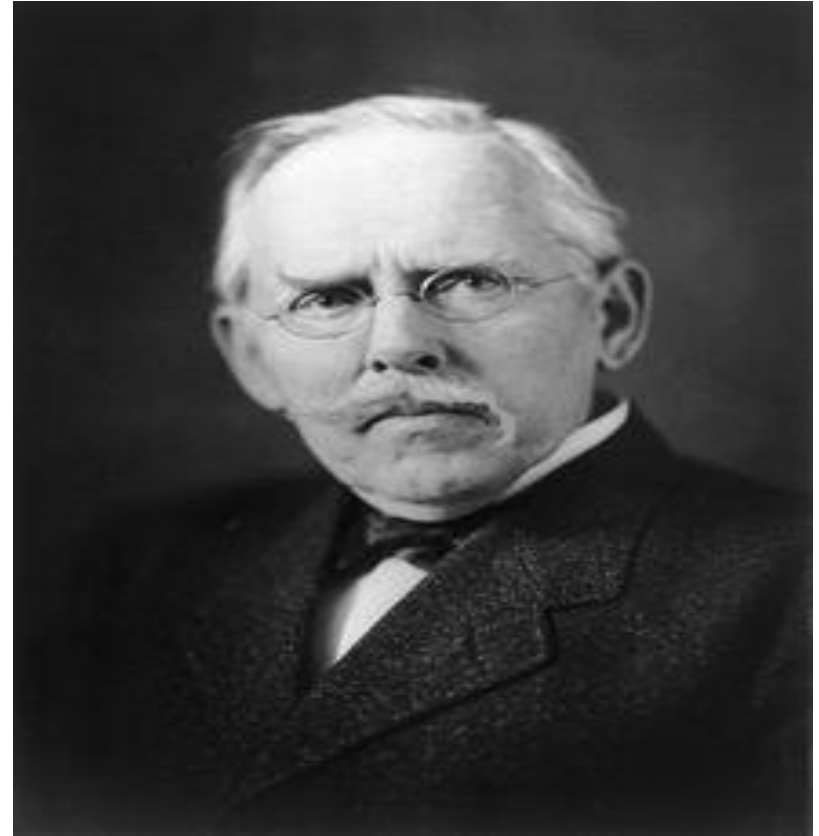
- Northerners
  - His ideas found acceptance where Christian pastors and scientists endorsed Theistic Evolutionary ideas
    - » “Evolution is God’s way of doing things.” John Fiske
- Southerners
  - That stubbornness that led to the Civil War paid dividends in this battle, and the “Old South” remained fundamental

# Conservatives vs. Liberals

## In Theology AND Social Issues

### – Social Involvement

- Thanks to reformers like Jacob Riis, the realities of the urban poor were brought to light, and initially, protestant Christians led the way in evangelizing and caring for their needs
  - Quickly realized the perceived need of supplementing evangelism with charity
- Agencies such as Salvation Army and other Holiness Movement organizations founded rescue missions









- Politically, changes began to occur as the people began to think of the government as an institution to help bring about change
  - Reasoning was that the government had helped create the conditions by supporting unbridled capitalism, therefore it had a responsibility to lead the way in reform
  - This became the mantra of the Progressives
  - (every presidential candidate from 1900-1916 considered himself to be a “progressive”)



- Association of these Progressive political ideas and liberal theological ideas split American Protestants into two major parties
  - Conservatives in theology were also Conservatives in politics
  - Liberals in theology became the Progressives in politics
    - This is **The Great Reversal**—up until this time, evangelicals were at the forefront of social reform. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to conflicts over political and religious ideas, evangelicals will withdraw from progressive reforms, leaving it to the liberals
    - Conflict between those whose focus was soul-saving and those who elevated social services (both accused the other of offering one to the detriment of the other)

# Conservative Crusades

- D.L. Moody
  - Three R's, Ruin by Sin, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost
  - A true preacher of the gospel, he was a premillennialist (The earth will not get better until Jesus returns), but believed God had called him to "save all you can"
  - Staunch believer in Bible-training and missions-work



- Moody disliked denominations and rather wanted all Christians to work together
- Championed para-church organizations
- Missions—1890-1914 was the Golden Age of missions for the Protestant Church
- Sunday School movement was born to reach city-children



- Rescue mission movement
- Churches moved into the cities to assist the poor (Eerdman, 315-316)
- CMA's 4 Pillars (alliance of hundreds of missions-oriented groups in US and Canada)
  - Evangelism
  - Sanctification
  - Divine Healing
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus
- Many of these organization (missions, Salvation Army, CMA, etc.) united and were widely acclaimed



## – Social involvement

- Battling poverty (Jacob Riis, Jane Addams, Salvation Army, YMCA, Children's Aid Society, Pacific Garden Mission, CMA)
  - Towards the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, many believed that the government's duty to protect the innocent included a duty to provide for people's basic needs



## – Liberals and The Social Gospel

- 10% of the nation had 90% of the wealth which was interpreted as greed brought on by unregulated capitalism
- Again, government had helped create the industrial system and all its ills, therefore it should take active part in alleviating the harshest effects of an unrestrained free enterprise system
- Based in liberal theology:
  - Immanence of God
  - Evolutionary progress of civilization
  - Historical conditioning of Bible
  - Centrality of Jesus' ethical precepts (rather than miracle working)



Walter Rauschenbusch

- Called for:
  - Abolition of child labor
  - Reduction of 12-hour workday
  - Six-day workweek
  - believed government needed to protect the innocent from the abuses of the “Robber Barons”
- Insisted that through moral effort, the institutions could become moral (contrast with conservative view of the individual)
- **Taught God’s love without teaching God’s holiness, therefore offered charity without any challenge**
- Some advocated a complete restructuring of society to resemble the economic socialism found in Acts



- Thought that traditional evangelism had become too otherworldly and individualistic. Cons and Libs fought over each others' emphasis on evangelism vs. charity. (pg. 314)
- Had at its **roots the assumption of the goodness of man** and his upward mobility
- Differed from Cons (ex. Salvation Army—which emphasized holiness first) in that they emphasized structural reform—changes in law, govt. policy, societal institutions, etc.
- People are not internally evil, they are victims of the ills of society

# Results

- Politics and Economics—
  - Government was seen as regulator of business, yet through political kickbacks, partnerships with labor unions and special interest groups, avarice and corruption have abounded
  - Instead of Christian economics prevailing, greed (lack of self-government) led to restriction (government regulation)
  - Federal Reserve System
  - SCOTUS Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote that law is evolutionary—should change with the demands of society (*The Common Law*, 1881)
- Education—
  - John Dewey—education is...a process of living, not a preparation for future living
  - Group education—produce an educated populace for an industrial era

- “I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid, fundamentalist preachers for they will be ministers of another sort utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit, to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level: pre-school, daycare, or large state universities.”

# Results (continued)

- Religion—
  - The church ceded its mandate for education
  - The church ceded its mandate for care for the poor/needy
- Social Issues—
  - Eugenics, immigration restriction, racism
- Family—
  - Margaret Sanger and the American Birth Control League (later renamed Planned Parenthood)
  - Freudian ideas on human sexuality

# A Need for Restoration

- What Biblical Principles were violated?
  - Christian Economics
  - Christian Charity
  - Inerrancy of Scripture
  - Etc.

# Progressivism's Direct Effect on Education

## 1. Uprooting Christian Education

- Progressives make school mandatory
  - Horace Mann–Father of American Education
    - Organized school districts
    - Implemented common curriculum
    - Called for teacher colleges to train teachers professionally

- Nationalistic purpose of schools.
- Even when states began adopting compulsory education laws (Mass. in 1852, Mississippi was the last one in 1918), the common curriculum was still the Bible and Christian values
- **Some benefits**
  - i. more kids were in school, getting training, getting biblical education.
  - ii. Created a national unity—strong identification with public education
- **Detriments**
  - i. Started the slide of the state being in charge of education

# Progressivism's Direct Effect on Education

## 2. Christians Splintering into Groups

- See previous section

# Progressivism's Direct Effect on Education

## 3. Replacement of Western Christian Paideia with a Progressive one

- a. Many view the decades prior to the 1960s as an era of unity and broadly shared Christian values. It had begun eroding long before 1960.
- b. The real change started in the late 1800s.
- c. Replaced Christian values with patriotism and a value for democracy (Bellamy's pledge)

### 3. Replacement of Western Christian Paideia with a Progressive one

- a. Replaced WCP with vocational training
  - i. John Dewey advocated for vocational training rather than a focus on the liberal arts. “It is our present education which is highly specialized, one sided and narrow.
  - ii. Most students do not need a liberal education. That can be left to the elites.
- b. Replace WCP with “Democracy” education.
  - i. Plasticity of the child.
  - ii. The community has ends to achieve and the education of the child is the key to those ends.

# Progressivism's Direct Effect on Education

4. Making education nothing more than job-training.
  - a. *The New Republic* called for the overhaul and replacement of the classical school model in some way.
  - b. Progressives like Woodrow Wilson believed that most people just need vocational education. They have no need for a classical education.
  - c. Children should be taught to operate according to certain assumptions (rote memorization of facts, figures, dates, events, etc.) rather than teaching them to examine those assumptions.

# Some other Notes

1. Progressives tried to prohibit public funds for religious schools. The Blaine Amendment was an attempted bill that was narrowly defeated by the US Senate in 1875, but it was passed by 36 state legislatures. In 1920, they tried to close all private schools, but a Supreme Court case (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*) kept that from happening.
2. Some Christians embraced progressivism

# Some other Notes

1. By the 1920s-1930s, government-based accreditation was formed to validate school diplomas and control high school to college transitions. Teachers certified by states through education colleges that were designed by progressive disciples of Dewey. Graduation requirements and diplomas were authorized by states. Textbook authors made up of the class of professionally trained teachers.

- What now?
  - Fight the good fight
  - Seek the welfare of the city...
  - Occupy until He returns
  - Be the remnant

# Next Week

- From Progressivism to Critical Theory



Questions?