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WESTMINSTER SEMINARY TODAY

HAS Westminster Theological Seminary ceased firing upon Modernism to turn its guns against Fundamentalism? This charge, which is reported in our news columns, has been aired in the public press in connection with the resignations of one professor and two or three trustees. Our answer is that the charge is preposterous. It is an allegation that is completely unsupported by facts. And we are confident that no evidence can be produced to support the charge.

MODERNISM

Modernism in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. clearly was the immediate occasion of the formation of the seminary in 1929. And in the battle that has continued since that year against modern unbelief, whether within the church or outside of it, Westminster Seminary has stood in the front ranks. Dr. Machen set the pace in this struggle, both by his scholarly defense of Christianity, as teacher and as author, and by his uncompromising stand in the ecclesiastical councils of our time. Those who remain have joined in this struggle in a less prominent manner, but not with less realization of the deadly character of Modernism nor with less zeal for the battle.

The Auburn Affirmation represents a typical expression of Modernism in its attack upon the Bible and in its indifference to belief in the virgin birth, the miracles, and the resurrection of Christ, and in His substitutionary atonement. Against the unbelief represented by this notorious manifesto there has been a reaffirmation of the great verities of our historic Christian faith. To all of these subjects Westminster Theological Seminary gives careful attention, and scores of students have gone forth from its halls with the testimony that they had

been confirmed in their faith and were able to give a more effective witness to their faith in the Bible and to the Christ whom the Bible presents to faith.

Modernism represents far more, however, than an attack upon isolated doctrines and facts of Christianity—it is a comprehensive philosophy, a view of the world and of life, which is opposed to Christianity as a comprehensive view of the world and of life. And at Westminster the attack upon Modernism goes beyond a refutation of its isolated elements; the instruction shows that it is a false system which, in its entirety as in its details, is at variance with Christianity.

THE REAL ANTIDOTE

Westminster is not merely defensive in its attitude. It is positive in its exposition and proclamation of the truth. It is not content with denying the truth of Modernism. As the only satisfactory answer to Modernism it presents, not any compromising or elementary theology, but the Reformed Faith as the system of doctrine which is found in the Bible. Christianity is more than a few isolated doctrines and the Bible more than a collection of isolated texts. Christianity and the Bible present a grand, unified system of truth, and the Reformed Faith is simply consistent Christianity as that is presented in the Word of God. It alone is a sufficient answer to Modernism.

From the beginning of its existence the seminary has been committed wholeheartedly to the Reformed Faith. By the most solemn vows the professors pledge themselves to the system of doctrine which is contained in the Confession of Faith, one of the greatest creedal expressions of the Reformed Faith. The professors also “solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate anything which shall appear . . . to contra-

faculty and board of trustees. The sole basis for the selection of faculty members, however, is scholarship which gives promise of contributing to the training of men utterly loyal to the Bible, the infallible Word of God, as set forth in the Westminster Standards. I trust that this basis of selection will never be changed.

"The Seminary recognizes to the full the tremendous evils of intemperance. Its only concern is to proclaim

the teaching of the Bible on this, as on all other, questions. The Biblical teaching against intemperance is very emphatic but the Bible does not permit of a teaching which would make our Lord's example sinful.

"The Seminary stands in the great tradition of Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, Robert Dick Wilson and J. Gresham Machen. Nothing will be allowed to move it from its loyalty to the Word of God."

Prayer in Times of Apostasy

By the REV. JOHN C. BLACKBURN

This article is a summary of an address delivered at the annual Day of Prayer at Westminster Theological Seminary last March. Mr. Blackburn is a minister of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5: 16-18).

THIS text on prayer is chosen as appropriate to a day of prayer. It is evidently the intention of the Holy Spirit to teach more than one truth about prayer in this passage. But it shall be our purpose, today, to draw from it instruction as to what is our duty and encouragement in prayer in the present evil hour. The inspired writer sets before us Elijah, the well-known prophet of the Old Testament, "a righteous man," whose prayers of imprecation and intercession are cited with approval as an illustration of the kind of prayer which "availeth much"—in an evil day. If we are to profit by the implicit truth of this text we will have to develop it in the light of its historical background.

The Times of Elijah

No historical era can be viewed as an age apart from the times that precede it. The evil days of Ahab were such as they were largely through predetermining causes. His reign was a sequence of a varied series of sins that reached an inevitable climax of wickedness in his reign.

To Solomon must be charged the policy that opened the door in Israel

to alien evils. His "outlandish" wives influenced him into the adoption of an "inclusive policy" through which the worship of false gods was tolerated along with the worship of Jehovah. This liberal attitude brought from Jehovah the charge: "They have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of Ammon."

Jeroboam the First inaugurated a policy of the boldest expediency. His program called for an alteration of the Mosaic constitution. He changed the spiritual leadership of his kingdom. "He made priests from among all the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." "He ordained a feast for the children of Israel." "He made houses of high places." "All of which he had devised." Moreover he re-introduced into Israel, as an amicable gesture to the neighboring kingdom of Egypt, the idolatrous worship of the golden calf—the Heliopolitan deity, Mnevis.

Through five regencies—Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri and Omri—the conventional, court-sponsored religion of the Northern Kingdom flowed with increasing corruption. Against each of these kings, without exception, can be found the condemning words of the sacred chronicler of Israel: "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin."

But it is in the reign of Ahab, the son of Omri, the seventh king of Israel, that the departure from Jehovah's law reaches a fullness of iniquity that insures judgment, for

"there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord."

It will be enlightening to examine the nature of the sins of that administration which provoked the righteous indignation of Elijah and brought forth the call for the rod of Jehovah's displeasure upon His people and His land.

One sin of Ahab was sacrificing his own spiritual interests and that of his kingdom for lust. The law of Jehovah forbade matrimony with the heathen as an unholy alliance. Ahab showed his lack of principle and disregard of the commandments of the Lord by marrying Jezebel, a daughter of Ethbaal, high priest of Astarte, a cousin of Dido of Virgil's *Aeneid*. This "lust match" quickly eventuated in the apotheosis of lust throughout the Northern Kingdom. The worship of Ashtoreth became court religion, the libidinous orgies of Tyre and Sidon were celebrated in Israel, and the morals of the populace degenerated and dissipated under the seductive influence of these lascivious rites.

Another sin of Ahab's was his practice of tolerance in religion—a kind of broad-churchism, without a limit. The innovations and vanities of Jeroboam and his successors were accepted and practiced on the grounds of antiquity, tradition, and custom, while the ancient law of Sinai was made of none effect through local and temporal expediency. To please the Zidonians, Tyrians and Baal-serving apostates in his kingdom, he built a temple for Baal in his capital, Samaria. For the survivors of the

old Canaanitish race, "he did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did." Thus he conciliated all men with his liberal and inclusive policy, and affronted Jehovah with his contempt of His holy commandments.

The crowning sin of Ahab was his effort to silence godly protest and warning of judgment by Jehovah's prophets, and his attempt to exterminate by martyrdom the witnesses for truth. The price of protest was high in those days. The little minority that refused to be broad "wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; . . . they wandered in deserts, and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth."

Such were the days of Elijah, days that try the souls of the righteous and force them to fervent prayer: Unscrupulous despots enthroned in power, the patrons of false religion; the masses subserviently acquiescent in the betrayal and abandonment of the true faith; truth spurned, trodden underfoot, and the righteous being persecuted from the face of the earth.

Elijah's Imprecation

Jehovah will not leave Himself without witness. Abruptly, unannounced, there appears a prophet of Jehovah, Elijah the Tishbite, of the sojourners of Gilead, with the disturbing announcement to Ahab: "As the Lord, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." And he disappears as mysteriously as he appears. There, in hiding at Chereth, "he prayed earnestly that it might not rain."

Was it right so to pray—in a land where rain and life are synonymous—where drought means famine, starvation, death? Evidently Elijah, a righteous man, thought so, for he prayed earnestly to that end. Evidently Jehovah sanctioned it for it was answered in kind. Is it right so to pray? James, under the guidance of the Spirit, is citing this instance of Elijah's imprecation, not only as an illustration of the prophet's prevalence in prayer, but as an inspiration for New Testament saints so to pray. And thus the Reformed Church has taught, prayed, and sung in Psalm. We cannot deny the righteousness of such a prayer, under the New

Covenant, without falling into the error of a dual morality, under the Old and the New Covenant. God's honor may be thus vindicated, His purposes furthered. Israel's spiritual and material interests could be thus promoted. The virulency of sin warranted such drastic measures and the obduracy of sin merited such severity. The ends justified the means.

But why did the prophet make this particular prayer for the stopping of the rain from heaven? Because it would prove to Israel that God's hand was in this judgment, that "He sealest up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work." Because such a judgment would be the fulfilling of the prophecies of the Law, of drought as punishment for apostasy. Because the withholding of rain would convert that which they worshipped as a symbol of Baal—the sun—into an intolerable curse. Therefore Elijah, Jehovah's lonely witness in his generation, "a man subject to like passions as we are," with zeal for Jehovah's sovereignty, with righteous indignation against wickedness, with a longing for the salvation of Israel, "prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."

From the very day of the prophet's prediction the drought began. As the fields began to wither, anxious eyes scanned the western sky for signs of rain. The summer passed and the harvest was shriveled and meagre. The early and the latter rain had failed. The sowing of the spring that followed sprouted only to die away for lack of moisture. The trees on the high ridges shed their seared leaves. The burned and blighted fruit of the orchards was prematurely dropped. There were no sheaves in the garner, no wine in the vat, no oil from the press. The third summer came upon a land parched and powdered. The fountains had ceased to flow. The deep wells were dry. The cisterns were empty. Gaunt famine stalked through the land taking its toll of scrawny-handed children, sunken-eyed women, and hollow-cheeked men. Overhead the sky was brazen to the incantations of the priests of Baal. Israel was perishing from off the face of their land.

And Elijah prayed on. Such is the perverseness of depraved human na-

ture, such the hardness of the natural heart, such the obduracy of willful sinners, that they must be brought to the very gates of death before they can be turned about. God's opportunity comes in extremity. At the moment of national ruin Jehovah's spokesman stepped into the scene again. Out from his hiding at Chereth, out from his biding at Zerephath, came the prophet.

Elijah's Intercession

"And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" was the astonished and indignant salutation of Ahab. "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house," is Elijah's resentful rejoinder. Out of the variance came a challenge to battle: "Send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred which eat at Jezebel's table." Forth rode the couriers with the royal summons. The issue was: live, or die.

Beautiful, suitable in location, was Carmel, a median ground between Jehovah's land and Baal's strand. Northward rose the forest-clad slopes of Lebanon. Westward lay the blue waters of the Great Sea, dotted with the purple-sailed argosies of a maritime people. Beneath the mountain and beside the sea nestled the teeming marts of Tyre and Sidon. This was Baal's land. Eastward and southward stretched the plain of Jezreel, walled about with rolling mountains, Gilboa, Tabor, Ebal and Gerizim. On this plain, in the shadow of those mountains, the heroes of the faith had turned back the armies of the aliens, not by many but by few. This was Jehovah's land.

From a vantage point of Carmel Elijah saw the assembling of Israel. From near and far, from mountain and plain, from village and town, o'er highway and byway, converged a motley multitude of pilgrims, gathering to the battle of the gods.

At the early hour of dawn, Elijah stands before the throng and opens the controversy. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." It was an urge for decision, a call for division, on an ancient fundamental: "Jehovah thy God is a jealous God," and, "Thou

shalt have no other gods before me." Jehovah's prophet was forcing an issue; he was fighting the most dangerous enemy of pure religion: half-heartedness, two-facedness, dual allegiance. "And the people answered him not a word." Shameful silence! Some were convicted, some were abashed, some afraid, some defiant. None answered. Craven dumbness! How disgraceful is muteness when right and wrong join strife.

"Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the god that answereth by fire let him be God." The minority party stands face to face with the majority. The odds are four hundred to one. No, four hundred to Two! Four hundred priests without God against a prophet and his God. And the ordeal is by fire. The advantage is Baal's, for he is the fire-god, and the sun is his flame. Let not man, but Heaven decide.

Up from the purple hills of Bashan rose the auriflamme of day. It filled the valleys with a crimson flood, and drenched the plain of Magiddo into a prophetic Alceidama. Down bowed the votaries of Baal. Then rising up, they circled their altar with rhythmic dance. Higher and higher climbed the sun, faster and faster the priests did prance. Louder and louder rang their cries. Immovable and silent remained the skies. "Oh, Baal, hear us!" They leaped upon the altar. They cut themselves with knives. Leaping, sweating, bleeding, screaming, they fell exhausted. "There was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." Their efforts were futile, their prayers unanswered, their heaven silent, their god was impotent! False!!

It came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice—blessed hour!—that Elijah said unto all the people, "Come near unto me." Gracious invitation of a God of grace! And Elijah built an altar, of twelve stones in the name of Jehovah. He put the wood in order, placed the sacrifice, drenched the offering, altar,

ground, with water. Then he came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

Then the fire fell, hissing, crackling, blinding. It burned the burnt-offering, the wood, the stone, the dust, the water. Down fell the people on their faces. A mighty shout shook the mountain wall—Jehovah he is God! Jehovah he is God!!

Jehovah acclaimed: sin must be

judged. Red ran the brook Kishon with the blood of Baal's priests that day.

Sin removed, the blessing comes. While the king went up to eat and drink, the prophet went up to pray. Seven times he interceded before a cloud appeared. Faith's ear had caught the sound of rain, now the eye of faith beholds the showers. "Haste!" said the prophet to the king, "that the rain stop thee not." In the meanwhile the heavens were black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain—and the earth brought forth her fruit. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

A Survey of International Religious News

Germany

A FIGHT to the finish between the Nazi regime and the Roman Catholic Church occupies the central position in the German religious situation. An average of one in every thirteen members of monastic orders is to be brought before the courts and charged with gross immorality. That the entire move is the result of the Vatican's Easter Encyclical is patent. The real goal and strategic purpose is admittedly the deconfessionalizing of the Roman Catholic youth organizations. It is desired to bring Roman Catholic youth completely under the sway of the Nazi movement, which would then wholly dominate the coming generation.

Of more immediate concern to Protestants is the postponement of the church elections, first decreed for early April, until autumn. At the moment this looks very much like a tactical, but temporary, gain for the church. It is reasonable to assume that the postponement has been forced by the evidence of deep unrest among church people during the past few months. That the interval between now and autumn will be used to "educate" people into the view of church matters which the state favors may be taken for granted.

The state is not willing to risk a real "religious war." By reverting to the tactics hitherto employed it hopes

to divide, deceive and conquer—even while preserving the outward semblance of a free election for a new church government which will express that enthusiastic unity of which the party has been boasting for four years.

Russia

WHILE fifty thousand of Moscow's confessed "believers" jammed the few surviving churches in anticipation of the Easter services held May 2nd, young people were being mobilized by teachers in every big school in Moscow for cleverly planned meetings under the auspices of the Young Communist League, at which there was entertainment, including free food and beverages, salted with anti-religious lectures. Their motive obviously was to keep the young people away from the churches. Yet at midnight in the churches, when the priests announced that Christ had risen and the mournful music became a triumphant hymn, there were tears in many youthful eyes.

Of Moscow's 454 churches before the revolution about 25 are still functioning as houses of religion, the rest having been torn down or turned into warehouses, theatres or anti-religious museums. Their number is utterly inadequate for the worshippers on important religious holidays.