AUBURN AFFIRMATIONISTS LAUNCH ORGAN

Under the title of “The Presbyterian Tribune” a group of Auburn Affirmationists has launched a bi-weekly paper. Both in appearance and content its first issue (October 4th) is quite similar to that of the defunct Presbyterian Advance of which it is professedly a continuation. Its publication office is located at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

In referring to this new paper as an organ of the Auburn Affirmationists we do not mean to assert that it makes this claim for itself. However, the ‘Christian Century’—misnamed if we mistake not—which “extends good wishes in unlimited measure,” has stated that “building on the support of the group which signed the ‘Auburn Affirmation,’ the promoters of the Tribune hope to prove that there is sufficient liberalism within the Presbyterian denomination to keep a periodical going” (Oct. 3, p. 1229). That this representation is amply warranted is indicated not only by the fact that its editor is an Auburn Affirmationist but by the fact that fifteen of the twenty-two ministers on its “Editorial Council” and among its “Special Contributors” are also Auburn Affirmationists. What is more, the other seven include outstanding Presbyterian liberals. How thorough-going this paper expects to be in its liberalism is indicated by the fact that it “aspires to be a denominational rather than an interdenominational magazine because the latter field is “already ably and brilliantly covered by the Christian Century.” Its close sympathy with the Christian Century is further indicated by the fact that its editor is and expects to remain on the staff of the Christian Century.

We are told that “this new paper is not being launched to carry on theological controversy” but rather “to apply the spirit and ethic of Jesus Christ to the baffling problems of this day.” Such statements, however, should be taken with several grains of salt. A paper whose theological assumptions and presuppositions are those of Modernism is necessarily engaged in theological propaganda even if it contains little formal theological discussion. Moreover it should be remembered that the ethic of Christianity is tied up with its doctrines. It is self-deception to suppose that the ideals and attitudes of Christianity will long...
Westminster Seminary Begins Sixth Year

WESTMINSTER Seminary opened for its sixth year with exercises held in Witherspoon Auditorium, Philadelphia, on the afternoon of September 26th before a large audience. Chief speaker was President Joseph Dupuy Eggleston, President of Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, who delivered an outstanding address on "Our search for truth: To what is it leading?" This address will be published in a later issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

Presiding was the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt., D., chairman of the Faculty. The invocation was offered by the Rev. Arthur R. Porter, D.D., of Drexel Hill, Pa. The Scripture was read by the Rev. Howard C. Cooper, of the East Park Church, Phila., Pa. Prayer was offered by Herbert W. Biecher, D.D., of Bala-Cynwyd, Pa., and the Rev. H. H. Kurtz, of Brandwyne Manor, Pa. The hymns were "O God, the Rock of Ages"; "Who is on the Lord's Side?"; "Awake my soul stretch every nerve." The Benediction was pronounced by the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D.

The enrollment of students for this year is ninety, the largest since the founding of the seminary.

Dr. Machen's Address To New Students

Dr. Machen, in welcoming the new students touched upon the great doctrinal issue concerning authority, now being raised in the Church. Afterward a spectator, not connected in any way with the Seminary, remarked: "It was one of the bravest things he ever said." He spoke with an earnestness which made all present feel the solemnity of the occasion, as follows:

"Westminster Theological Seminary today begins its sixth year. All indications are that it will have the largest enrollment in its history. Apparently the attacks that have been made upon it have not prevented men from entering its walls. Even the letter sent by the Moderator of the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., in the name of the Administrative Committee of the General Council, to all the ministers and sessions in the Church, in which letter the Seminary is attacked as being part of a divisive movement, has apparently not made men afraid to be identified with such an unpopular institution.

"What is the Seminary endeavoring to do? What is it asking that its students shall learn?

"That question can be answered very simply. The curriculum of the Seminary is indeed rather broad. It embraces, for example, a survey of the whole history of the Church in the past nineteen hundred years.

It includes some account of the problems dealt with by philosophy—the problem of knowledge, the problem of the existence of the world. But at the heart and core of its curriculum, giving life and movement to all the rest, is found the study of a Book. That Book is the Bible, the Word of God.

"The authority of the Bible has been assailed in many ways during the past nineteen hundred years. It has been assailed of course by those who deny definitely and clearly that the Bible is true. But it has also been assailed in subtler and more dangerous ways. Especially has it been attacked by those who claim the right to interpret it authoritatively, by those who seek thus to put some living human authority between it and the plain man's reading of its words. "In that way it is attacked by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church does not deny the truth of the Bible. No, it defends the truth of the Bible. Noble service has been rendered, and is just now being rendered, by Roman Catholic scholars in the defense of the truth of the Word of God. We rejoice in the labors of such scholars and we have deep sympathy with the great Church that they represent. But we are opposed to the Roman Catholic position. Why are we opposed to it? For one great central reason— because it holds that there is a living human authority that has a right to give an authoritative interpretation of the Bible. We are opposed to it because it holds that the seat of authority in religion is not just the Bible, but the Bible interpreted authoritatively by the Church. That, we hold, is a deadly error indeed: it puts fallible men in a place of authority that belongs only to the Word of God.

"In that way it is attacked by the Roman Catholic Church. It has ample funds to be used in the defamation of those who dare to defend the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church and to defend the high liberty which is guaranteed to every Christian man by the Word of God. It has the power, through subservient presbyteries, to close the door of opportunity in the way of those men who will not promise as a condition of ordination that they will support some human authority instead of obeying the injunctions of the Word of God. It has the whole world on its side. The whole spirit of the present age is contrary to liberty and in favor of just such actions as the action of this last General Assembly.

"Yet we make bold to think that the General Assembly ultimately will be the loser in this battle. Many times have bodies of men tried to hinder the preaching of the gospel, ever since those disciples said to the Lord Jesus about one who was casting out demons in the name of Christ but was not in their little company: 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us.' Many times has ecclesiastical authority thought that they could prevent the preaching of the cross of Christ at home and abroad. Yet all such efforts have been vain. Again and again and again has the teaching of Scripture been found to be true that 'the Word of God is not bound.' So we do not fear the attack which the General Assembly has made upon the Bible. The Bible will triumph in the end.

"We welcome you, therefore, at Westminster Seminary, to the study of this Book. It is a dangerous book to study. The study of it may lead you to sacrifice the favor of men and to suffer for the sake of Christ. Yet we bid you study it all the same. It may cost you the favor of men, but if you study it aright it will gain for you the favor of God."