

Atheists Organize to War on All Religions

THE SPORADIC and spasmodic outbursts of atheism which the world that bends its knee before the shrine of a God Creator, has known in the past, will be more militant in the future, if the intentions that are back of the atheist organization which was incorporated in New York early this month are carried out. The program of the incorporation may be briefly called a declaration of war on every form of religion. This is probably the first time in history that an atheistic organization looking forward to the destruction of religion has been recognized and granted a charter by the civil authorities of the state.

The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism is avowedly an agency set up for the purpose of combative action against all forms of worship. Such is the ambitious program of this novel organization, which at the outset has issued a call for funds and members to help in carrying out its work in every state of the American union.

In an interview with a New York paper, Mr. Charles Smith, president of the organization, is giving the public the following close-up of the atheists' plan:

One measure which the officers have set their hearts upon, and which is to be carried out as soon as feasible, is the erection of radio stations for the broadcasting of debates and lectures. There are in this country millions of atheists whom agitation will precipitate into militancy and who when united can overthrow the religious terrorism that today frustrates their pursuit of happiness.

Our association will endeavor to stop religion in the public schools, prevent the issuance of religious proclamations by government officials, remove the church flag from above the national flag on a warship carrying a chaplain and erase the inscriptions on coins.

Inasmuch as there is considerable difference in public opinion on the advisability of introducing scripture reading and religious teachings in the public schools of America (some states having passed laws on this subject) there is a possibility that the atheists have seen an opportunity to interest those in atheistic teachings who are emphatically opposed to making the Bible a textbook in the public schoolroom. Perhaps America is in a position to defend its spiritual ground, when it comes to a show-down, but the intolerant and hostile attitude that has become an outstanding characteristic of some religious factions, in their regard for other religious denominations, augurs fair for the atheistic movement. Perhaps it is presumptuous to say that the spiritual aspect of religion, in many of the religious denominations in America, is of small concern, but the cautious observer, with a religious training, gets that impression as he observes the development of the social side of the church organization which, in some instances, has grown to such proportions that it has actually rendered these denominations void of spiritual inspiration and forfeited for them the right to be seriously regarded as religious bodies, except in name.

Question the average church member on his denominational creed. Question him on Bible history. Question him on his confession of faith, why and wherefore, and if you have had a fairly good religious training you will, to your amazement, find that his religious intelligence is exceedingly limited, that his Bible knowledge is almost nil, that his confession of faith is intangible,

and the only thing of which he is positively and sufficiently informed is the name of the denomination of which he is a member.

The man who has joined the church because he found the social spirit within to his liking, is the man who contributes most to the lowering of the spiritual standard of the church. He is like the "card"-member of the fraternity, who is of no value to the organization except for the dues he pays and whose personal conduct invariably contributes to place the organization in an unfavorable light.

Nearly always the atheist is a student. He has read the Bible as directed. He has studied the atheist scholar's every attack upon religion, and the church member who is without Bible knowledge and a religious training and therefore incapable of defending his church on the basis of information, belief and convictions, is going to be an easy prey for the atheist whose mouthings will go a long way with him as irrefutable logic.

That the churchman presently is going to be challenged by the atheists may be seen from the following rough outline of the organization's purpose, as offered by its president:

Our main purpose, of course, will be to wage war on religion itself. The worshipping of a verbal idol must end. Christianity must give way to a humanism which, as d'Annunzio put it, "will exalt above all things the beauty and power of man, the conqueror."

Our methods will be in keeping with our principles. No concessions will be made. Let people name us what they will,

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