

fully as much as the priests who drink wine and give it to others and pretend that it is the blood of their god. And when it comes to the question of which has done the most injury, the saloon system or priestcraft, we must confess that our studies have convinced us that the latter has been the greater enemy to our race.

"Give strong drink unto him who is ready to perish and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more," says the holy word of an all-wise(?) god, and many who, in spite of this advice, would have made a success of life have been driven to despair by feeling themselves outcasts because their reason could not accept the other absurd doctrines of the great "I am." And many whose honesty has prevented them from playing the hypocrite have swung to the other side of this evil pendulum.

What shall we do to be saved from drink and superstition? Look to Jesus? No. Look to science, the only true guide for civilized man.

For the Torch of Reason.

#### Divine Assistants.

BY G. W. MOREHOUSE.

Those who attempt to influence divine providence should, in the interest of the safety of the community, be careful to think twice before they speak. On occasions calculated to arouse patriotic fervor, more than ordinary caution should be used. In the principal addresses there is generally little to condemn and much to praise, although to the humanitarian, with the whole world his field, the sentiment, "My country, right or wrong," evokes a shudder and a painful regret. This doctrine, which has caused no little bloodletting in its day, and it is still on the stage, is less pernicious than its spectre comrade: "My religion, right or wrong." The two have generally been partners in plundering. "Be sure you are right, then go ahead."

The individual who starts out led only by the desire for personal aggrandisement, justifying his acts to himself whether right or wrong, generally runs amuck, and his life ends in tragedy, perhaps at the end of a rope. Do not the same principles apply to the collected mass of individuals known as a nation? Let us have patriotism, to be sure, but let it be just, reasonable and peace-loving, with no scheme or priest behind the patriot.

National action, serious and far-reaching, should be, as far as possible, under the guidance of the best individual consciences. In such case the means of enlightenment would doubtless be found in

the arts of peace, through scientific instruction, commerce, friendship and example; assisting natural evolution, and finding partial extermination or resort to physical force seldom necessary. Spare the rod, and save both parent and child, and thereby diffuse a higher sense of equal rights throughout the state, with mutual benefit to family and nation. Rod and scepter fall together. Here is an opportunity for divine advisers to secure an amendment to revelation in the interest of the weak and defenseless.

Many of those who claim to be divine servants think otherwise about this, and seem willing to justify the ready use of carnal weapons, especially if they think it can be made to "help our church" or give renewed life to the collections for the missionary cause.

One regrets to learn that there is selfishness in the methods of the church of his fathers, and, worse yet, of his mothers, and that there is so little difference between a saintly conference and a wordly convention.

When a "reverend brother" rises in a patriotic gathering to carry out the program of exercises by offering prayer, it is encouraging to note the unanimity of careless indifference throughout the intelligent audiences, much the same as is observed among the membership of scientific associations.

Listening to the prayer, we are surprised to learn that an all-wise and unchangeable deity has charge of the Philippine unpleasantness and all our affairs, and the "brother" goes on to suggest and advise and pray for such continuance or modifications of divine plans as to help our arms to succeed, to defeat other of "his creatures" and to establish our brand of civilization. The prayer exhales a militant atmosphere, such as must have pervaded our late Military Advisory Board at Washington. Visions of bloodshed, victory and glory are wafted upward. Everything is going our way. An hour passes and this fervent petition, unless it secures immediate attention, is neutralized by an adverse appeal from a "brother" of another denomination to pronounce the "benediction." He asks for peace and ventures to call attention to the peace convention at The Hague and pray for its success. He pleads that right may prevail against might.

The relieved audience feels that in all probability the whole matter will be left just about the same as it was before a word had been said, and that things would again resume their accustomed channels. Again was the march resumed of the unending evolutionary procession, projecting into the misty future and fraternally embracing

Continued on 6th page.

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