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OCT 29 1899
PERIODICAL DIV.

Age of Reason.

LET exiled Reason be restored,
Just education bear her sway;
Let nature's empire be explored,
And truth her volume wide display.
Let science 'luminate the mind,
Inquiry free her banner wave;
Humble the tyrant, raise the slave,
And virtue teach to all mankind.
Then will the joyous song
Of happiness resound,
And man shall sing to wisdom's praise,
Where love and peace are found.

Prophetic voices now resound;
Far, far and wide they strike the ear;
And o'er this favored clime they sound—
Proclaim the Age of Reason near.
Her glorious light doth now appear,
And superstition, frightened, flies,
For truth her mighty weapon plies,
And truth will triumph, nothing fear.
Then let us join in praise
To truth and virtue's name,
To love and wisdom's purest rays,
In nature's wide domain.
—[Secular Songs.]

The Bible and Progress.

BY R. C. CAVE.

IHAVE read that an African prince once asked Queen Victoria to tell him the secret of England's power and glory. The Queen did not tell him of far-sighted English statesmanship; did not tell him of English history, energy and love of freedom; did not remind him of the high courage, the tenacious purpose and the indomitable spirit characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race; but, handing him a beautifully bound copy of the Bible, said: "This is the secret of England's greatness." The story, which is probably the invention of some pious preacher, who thought the end justified the means, was given to illustrate and enforce the claim that the Bible has been the great enlightening, uplifting and civilizing force of the world.

From the pulpit and through the religious press this claim is constantly being made. It is said that we are indebted to the Bible for all that is true and noble and good in our civilization; that "we have not a humane law which does not owe its truth and gentleness to the Bible, and not a wise and healthful custom which can not be traced to the gospel." The church points to the superior enlightenment, the greater material prosperity and the social and political advantages of Christian countries; tells us that all these are due to the Bible as a divine revelation of truth and duty, and asks us to "judge the tree by its fruit." * * * But the claim that we are indebted to it for all the blessings of our civilization is without the slightest foundation in fact.

In the nature of the case, an authoritative revelation of truth and duty, such as the Bible has been held to be, must hinder, instead of furthering, human progress; for, as it has been truthfully said, "such a revelation must necessarily be intolerant of contradiction; must admit of no improvement in itself, and view with disdain that arising from the progressive intellectual development of man. * * * It discourages as needless, indeed, as presumptuous, all new discovery." Hence, history reveals a ceaseless conflict between those who have sought to perpetuate the teaching of the Bible as authoritative and those who have attempted to adjust human thought and conduct to the demands of growing intelligence. Every effort of the human mind to free itself from the fetters of tradition, throw off the burdens of old errors and bring itself into accord with the larger light of a more advanced age, has been denounced as an impious attack on things sacred and divine; and all the greatest advances in the realm of science, and all the greatest social and political reforms, have been effected in spite of priests armed with Bible texts.

The truth of this statement is attested by indisputable facts. From the time of the Emperor Constantine, when the church gained the support of the state and became, to a large extent, a political hierarchy instead of a promoter of piety and a conservator of morals—from that time on, to a comparatively recent date, the Bible was made a stumbling block in the path of enlightenment. Holding it to be the measure and standard of all truth and declaring everything inconsistent with its teachings to be necessarily false, the clergy, with the civil power to enforce their decisions, waged a relentless war against "profane learning." As Prof. Draper states it, "The Christian party asserted that all knowledge is to be found in the Scriptures and in the traditions of the church; that in the written revelation God had not only given a criterion of truth, but had furnished us all that he intended us to know. * * * The clergy, with the Emperor at their back, would endure no intellectual competition." Inquisitors of Faith were instituted, and all who did not agree with the bishops of Rome and Alexandria in their belief were condemned to banishment and loss of civil rights. Schools of philosophy were closed,

and teachers of philosophy were bitterly persecuted. Hypatia, seized by monks, stripped naked in the street, dragged into a church and brutally clubbed to death for lecturing on the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, Pelagius and his disciples, condemned to exile and forfeiture of goods for teaching that death did not come into the world because of Adam's sin; Nestor, banished to an Egyptian oasis for protesting against the worship of Mary as the mother of God, and declaring that the Eternal God cannot have a mother; Galileo, imprisoned, treated with the utmost severity, and denied burial in consecrated ground for teaching that the earth moves around the sun; these and many other like cases that might be mentioned show how the Bible, held to be a divine revelation, crushed freedom of thought and hindered the intellectual progress of the race. All through the centuries the discoverers of new truth have met with the same spirit of persecution that murdered Hypatia and imprisoned Galileo. Holding the Bible to be a divinely given and authoritative revelation, the church has said to every searcher for truth: You shall not find anything in the heavens, on the earth or under the earth, that does not agree with what is written in this revelation. Had her efforts succeeded, our schools would now be teaching that the earth is flat, and the presidents of colleges and universities would now be saying with the illiterate negro preacher, "the sun do move." We would be ignorant of all the wonderful discoveries of science which have broadened the thoughts of men and given them higher and nobler conceptions of the grandeur and glory of God and his universe. Not to the Bible as a final and authoritative revelation of truth, but to those who have been persecuted for teaching contrary to the Bible, the world is indebted for its progress in philosophy and science.

Equally true is it that Christendom is not indebted to the Bible for its social progress. That has been effected, not by holding to the Scriptures as the measure and standard of social right and wrong, but by disregarding scripture teaching on social questions and following the demands of growing enlightenment. Take, for example, the elevation of woman to her rightful place and influence which has made her a most powerful agent in moulding modern society.

This has been effected in spite of what the Bible declares to be woman's sphere and duty. Even the teaching of the New Testament, to say nothing of the Old, gives to woman a place but little higher than that of a slave whose only business is to learn and do the will of man, her master. It declares that woman must not be permitted to speak in public; that she must not be suffered to teach; that she must learn in silence with all subjection; that she must submit to her husband as unto the Lord; that, even as the church is subject to Christ, she must be subject to her husband in everything. John Milton truly stated woman's sphere and duty, in the light of Bible teaching, when he represented Eve as saying to Adam:

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst,
Unargued, I obey; so God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

And it is not surprising that a large-hearted man, rendered indignant by the contemplation of the injustice and wrong done to womankind through such teaching, was led to say:

"If I were a woman . . .
I'd curse alike a man-made God,
His book, his laws, his priests and all."

Only as such a man-made God, with his book, and laws, and priests, has ceased to govern the world—only as the authority of the Bible as a rule of faith and practice has been denied and rejected, has woman ceased to be man's slave and become his friend, companion and true co-worker. If today she has her rightful influence in the home, fashioning it after her own highest ideals, and making her understanding of life and duty its guiding star; if today her influence is strong to uplift, refine and ennoble society; if today, instead of living in slavish subjection to man, she can walk through the world by his side, "yoked in all exercise of noble end"; if today she is permitted to

— make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood,"

she owes it all to those who have denied the authority of the Scriptures and braved the wrath of the church in defense of her cause. And so all great social reforms have come. The men who wrote the Bible enjoined obedience to the social laws of their own age and enlightenment; and, hence, all great social improvements have

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