

difference of opinion about Shakespeare's plays, or Plato's Republic or Euclid's Geometry? It is quite true that when we open a volume of Shakespeare or Plato, we do not find, "Thus saith the Lord" or "Hear ye the word of the Lord;" but we do find something of far more importance. We find facts; we find representations true to nature; we find indications that the men who wrote those books were endowed with that valuable mental commodity known as common sense.

Shakespeare was in many ways the most wonderful man the world has ever seen. His heart and brain seem to have contained all there is of love and hate, of joy and sorrow, of pleasure and pain; and a knowledge of human nature as broad as the whole race of man. His mammoth mind soared to all heights and descended to all depths; and with an almost infinite perception he searched out and described the hidden motives of the human heart, in a manner that justly entitles him to be ranked among the highest, if not as *the* highest, of the sons of men.

Had it not been for Plato, Christ would still be a man, and not the third part of an incomprehensible god. The writer of the Gospel according to St. John (whoever he was) has stolen the thought of that great philosopher, and this stolen property has become the corner-stone of your religion. The less you say about Plato the better will it be for you. "All the writers of the Bible rolled into one" could not have produced Plato's dialogue which bears the name of "Lysis," or the most inferior of Shakespeare's plays; and there are tons of literature published in our own day which for beauty, purity and moral tone is as much superior to the Bible as Jesus was to the rabble that crucified him.

You say: "The Bible must be judged by a standard different from all other books." May I ask this simple question, Why? If your lecture gave any reason, or even a rag of a reason, I would pass on; but when I remember that, "Hear ye the word of the Lord," "The word of the Lord came unto me," etc., are alike common (either expressed or implied) to the Koran, the Dhammapada, the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta and the Bible, I am at a loss to understand why the Bible, on that account, must be "inspired," and the other sacred books of