

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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The loss, by fire, of all the manuscripts of this work, together with the corrected proof-sheets, explains the delay of its publication so long after the date announced by advertisement and prospectus. On December 30, 1902, the entire plant and buildings of the printing establishment having the work in hand, were totally destroyed on the eve of completing the proofs, together with my work of years.

It became necessary therefore to prepare the matter again from partial copy, and notes in hand. The verification of the large number of references and quotations, a second time, entailed a great amount of labor, but the author hopes and believes that the work has not suffered in point of accuracy.

The preparation of this work from the beginning, has been attended with a full share of author's troubles, the particulars of which, however, are not of general interest.

No thought of publication was in mind when the study of the subject was entered upon twelve years ago. Certain platform utterances and magazine articles, as to the so-called "absence of religion in Shakspeare," attracted the author's attention and he found that there existed a rather general thought of the great dramatist as irreligious, or at least that his works indicate indifference to the subject of the Christian religion.

These statements and opinions awakened an interest in the study as a matter of personal interest but the evidence against them was found to be so abundant and conclusive that it amounts to a revelation. Moreover it did not appear that the subjects embraced in "The Bible in Shakspeare" were before the public, in any way available to the ordinary student or reader.

The author is not vain enough to regard this work as the best that can be said or done upon the subject. It is quite likely that other minds may be turned in the same direction who will present further and more profound study.

Already we have, in Denton J. Snider's Commentaries, a valuable contribution to the study of the moral questions involved in the great Shakspeare, and while we write these prefatory words another volume