

ancient time. Let the Word of God penetrate, and all this changes. Why not before? Because paganism or heathenism, as we may term it alternatively, had no teaching or doctrine tending to elevate and purify the masses. Their loftiest teachings were at best dim graspings after truth. Men were feebly groping after the light, and only feebly and ineffectually, because the Sun of Righteousness had not yet risen on them with healing in His wings. The Word of God, came and lo! as the result of its circulation these foul impurities fled and disappeared just as the snow melts away before the genial shining of the sun. Mr. Chairman, there is only one other point that I will refer to before I take my seat, and that is something in the Bible that lies deeper than its uniformity, deeper far than the secret of the wonderful results that have flowed from its circulation. To be a message from God to sinful man that message must be able to say that it satisfies the most urgent wants of man's nature; that it does not merely silence the cry that the heart is continually uttering, but that it satisfies them and stills them perfectly; and the Word of God does that as no other book has ever done. What are the deepest wants of human nature? They are two-fold—sin and sorrow; sorrow crying for comfort, sin clamoring for forgiveness; and the Word of God, the message contained in it, provides for both, and human nature has responded to the Word of God; therefore, wherever it has gone, all conditions of men, from the highest to the lowest, have willingly bowed down before it sooner or later and done it homage, rich and poor, learned and ignorant alike. Now, William Shakespeare—our own William Shakespeare—is not commonly supposed to have been a very devout man or a religiously disposed man. I suppose people reach that estimation of Shakespeare from the fact that his writings would not exactly indicate it, but they forget altogether to take into account the age in which he wrote; and let me assure you, as you can be assured still better if you will look at Knight's Life of Shakespeare, that Shakespeare was a much better man and a more religious man than you will at all suppose by reading some of his plays. How do I know it? Knight gives us in his history a paragraph from the last will and testament of Shakespeare, and how does it run? "I humbly commit my soul to my Heavenly Father, assuredly hoping and believing that I shall be made a partaker of eternal life through the merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour." Was the poet's trust a myth or a delusion? Some would tell us—and very wise men, alas—it was. Take another case. An eminent American, a man of lofty intellectual power, conversing with a friend on religious subjects, said to that friend one day, "The truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes to me day by day more and more of a profound verity. It enters more and more deeply into my inner conscience." And a short time afterwards, when he was giving instruction to the sculptor whom he had enjoined to prepare a piece of marble that was to mark his last resting place, he instructed him to carve on it these words, "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief"—a creed and a prayer in one. Take the case of the Chinese student sitting in the study with good missionary Bishop Boone wrestling with the intricacies of the English tongue, trying to convert it into Chinese. He was sitting at the desk with a New Testament before him, and he suddenly arose from his seat with the book in his hand open at the story of the Crucifixion, and cried out with all the excitement of a man who felt he had made a wonderful discovery that concerned