

But perhaps few if any of those who so glibly connect the names of the two precious volumes, have any idea how much of his inspiration was drawn by Avon's bard from Sacred Writ. The remarkable resemblance of some of Shakspeare's finest passages with the words of the inspired writers has not, as far as I am aware, been remarked by any English writers.

It is then with the hope of presenting some considerations not made heretofore by commentators that the Abbé Daniel, evidently a thoughtful student of the greatest of our poets, speaks in a literary *causerie* in the Paris *Univers* of the striking similarity which exists between certain portions of the works of Shakspeare and texts of Scripture.

It is quite evident to even the most superficial reader of his plays that Shakspeare was a Christian. But it would seem that he was not vaguely so, as are now so many who bear the name. Some have contended, and brought a mass of evidence to prove that he was a Catholic, and of this we may say more at the end of the article. M. Daniel shows conclusively, at least, that he must have been an earnest and reverent student of the Holy Scriptures.

Let us begin our series of comparisons by citing the passage from Act 2, Scene 2 of *All's Well that Ends Well*, where Helena addressing the King says :

"He that of greatest works is finisher,  
Oft does them by the weakest minister :  
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,  
Where judges have been babes ; great floods have  
flowed  
From simple sources ; and great seas have dried  
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.

In 1st Corinthians, i. 27, St. Paul says : "But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the wise ; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the strong." And in St. Matthew xxi. 16, we read : "Out of the mouths of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise." "When judges have been babes," recalls the story of Heli, and "great streams have dried" evidently refers to the passage of the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and his court denied the miracle.

Cardinal Wolsey's soliloquy in *Henry VIII.* is full of Scriptural phraseology and imagery, and the moral of "fling away ambition : by that sin fell the angels ;" is worthy of Holy Writ.

The numerous prohibitions of our Lord against rash judgments have been reproduced in many of the pages of Shakspeare. Let us take an extract from *Measure for Measure* where Isabella addresses Angelo as follows :

"Go to your bosom ;  
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth  
know  
That's like my brother's fault ; if it confess  
A natural guiltiness such as is his,  
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue  
Against my brother's life."

Is not this but a paraphrase of "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone !"

"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just" finds its similitude in Proverbs xxviii. 1. "The just, bold as a lion, shall be without dread."

The 146th Sonnet, a very beautiful one, a veritable pearl *de stercore Envi* was surely inspired by the Epistles of St Paul.

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,  
Fooled by those rebel powers that thee array,  
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer death,  
Painting thy outward walls so 'costly gay!'"

We have not space to follow further the learned Abbé in his interesting parallel ; but perhaps the proofs of the thesis are already sufficient.

Now, as to Shakspeare's religion. His reverence for the inspired writings has been made evident. But it must also be noticed that amidst the vast variety of character descriptions found in his works, there is not even one sneer at Catholicity, at its adherents or observances. When we consider that the dramatist lived at a period immediately subsequent to the Reformation, when ridicule and abuse was heaped upon everything pertaining to the ancient faith we have a strong negative proof that Shakspeare was not a Protestant. Was he a Catholic ?

Theological questions are treated by him only incidentally, but from a Catholic rather than a Protestant point of view ; and passages in the *Merchant of Venice*,