

His exact words, which I make no apology for quoting, are as follows: "The writings of the Dark Ages are, if I may use the expression, *made of the scriptures*. . . . I mean that they thought and spoke and wrote the thoughts and words and phrases of the Bible; and that they did this constantly and habitually as the natural mode of expressing themselves . . . in histories, biographies, familiar letters, legal instruments, and documents of every description. . . . Their ideas," he continues, "seem to have fallen so naturally into the words of Scripture, that they were constantly referring to them in a way of passing allusion, which is now very puzzling to those who are unacquainted with the phraseology of the Vulgate. . . . It is a difficulty," he adds, "only to be overcome by the help of a concordance of the Vulgate." Once more, I venture to commend this magnificent vindication of the Ages of Faith to your most careful and appreciative study.

If, then, you will bear in mind that the Catholicism of the Middle Ages in England, as throughout Latin Christendom, was, in the most literal sense, a Biblical religion, and that the literature of the Middle Ages "was made of the Scriptures," you will see the peculiar force, the special bearing on our subject, of the quotations I am about to make. You will also, I trust, allow this vital and essential fact that the English people have, from the earliest times, been a Bible-loving people, its due weight in considering the inference I have been bold enough to draw from it and to submit to you, as I shall presently do.

The Middle Ages, we may say, end, for all practical purposes, with the beginning of the sixteenth century, roughly speaking, with the Tudor, or Elizabethan era. My next witness, then, shall be Carlyle, whom none will suspect of bias in favour of the Catholic Church. "In some sense," he writes in his *Hero as Poet*, "it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan era, with its Shakespeare as the outcome and flowerage of all that had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. . . . And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle Age Catholicism was abolished, as far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakespeare, the noblest product of it"—note the words, of a XIX. century, bitter hater of Popery! — (the noblest product of Middle Age Catholicism!) appeared. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature, at her own time, with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth, taking small thought of Acts of Parliament."

But if Shakespeare, on such indisputable evidence as this,