

INTRODUCTION.

ONE of the striking peculiarities of Romanism, is the relation of the Holy Bible to it, and its relation to the Holy Bible. This must be obvious to every one, on a moment's reflection. The rise, progress, power, and fearful results of Popery, are clearly indicated in the holy epistles of Paul and visions of Daniel, and the beloved John.

The Bible, also, gives a detail of certain peculiarities of this enemy of God and man. It was to be the grand "apostacy" from the christian faith : it was to "give heed to seducing spirits," false prophets, and *saintly* impostors, laying claims to miracles : it was to revive Demon-worship, in the worship of "saints ;" it would "utter lies in hypocrisy," by palming a new religion on the world, in the name of God : it was "to forbid marriage, and prohibit the use of meats," at certain seasons.

Such is the striking relation which the Holy Scriptures bear to the Roman Apostacy.—A Roman Catholic once said in my hearing :—the

Bible cannot be true without Holy Mother of Rome. He meant to say that the Pope gives it all its evidence and authority. "Very true!" said a protestant: "for as the Holy Bible has predicted the rise, power, and calamities of Popery—if these predictions had not been fully manifested in the actual existence and tremendous evils of Popery, the Bible would have wanted the fulfilment of its prophecies, and therefore, would not have been true!"

The relation of Romanism to the Holy Bible, is no less remarkable.—In apostolical and primitive times, the reading of the Holy Scriptures occupied a most important part of the services in the house of God. This was in obedience to Christ, who said, "Search the Scriptures;" and who also said by the mouth of his servant Paul,— "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren," "and, when this epistle," to the Colossians, "is read unto you, cause it also to be read in the church of the Laodiceans." Hence the appeal was constantly made to the BIBLE in all matters. It was paramount to all things. It was the beginning, the middle, and the end of all the pastoral instructions in those times. All traditions, and all doctrines, and all oral teachings were regulated, absolutely,

by the HOLY BIBLE. It was avouched to be the *only*, and perfect rule of faith on *all* points.

But alas! just in proportion as the church of Rome receded from pure and primitive christianity, in her awful apostacy, did she recede farther and farther, from the love and obedience of the Holy Scriptures. She swung loose from the only safe anchorage. She was given up "to believe a lie." Hence she invented new offices, new and unheard of sacraments, rites, new doctrines, new habitations for departed souls! And as she could not find these novel fictions in the Holy Bible, she withdrew the Holy Bible from the high elevation and throne of its supremacy; and thence elevated "Traditions," and the vagrant opinions and doctrines of men, called "Fathers," into the lofty place! And, in order to silence the voice of the Holy Bible, where men still happened to possess copies of it, she put forth the arrogant claim, on the part of her newly invented head, the pope, that he had the exclusive right, not only to convey to the Scriptures all the authority which they possessed; but also to determine, and declare *the only true sense* of the doctrines of the Bible. And as the sense of the Bible is the Bible; therefore by this

fatal step, God's eternal word of truth was subjected to the authority of the Roman primate!

That followed which all good men anticipated. In the Dark Ages, the Holy Scriptures disappeared, and became unknown to the people of the nations of Europe; and, also, to the great body of the priests, and even bishops of Rome. The enemy of the Bible succeeded in this measure, by pursuing these *two* courses, first, the Bible sunk into "desuetude," and, in course of time, was thrown away among the dust and rubbish of cloisters, where "fat contented ignorance" dozed in the dreariness of mental sleep, and, second, the few copies, in the hands of scholars, were still locked up from the people; being retained in the Latin, which to them, was a dead language.

As the final results of these measures, the nations of Europe, under the influence of popery, fast receded into barbarism. Hence the Dark Ages! for no fact is more clearly established than this, that when the Bible is abstracted from the people, and they are left to the *oral* teaching of self-styled priests, they are necessarily thrown back into the original state in which they were, before the Holy Bible, and the ministry are given to them by Jesus Christ.