

To the Patrons of the People's Almanack.

THE usual season for publication having again arrived, I present my little annual to the patronage and support of the friends of Civil and Religious Liberty. The very generous reception of the two editions of last year give me reason to hope that the present one will obtain a large and wide circulation, all the art and power of the enemy to the contrary notwithstanding. The object aimed at by the publication is, to promote a spirit of inquiry among the people, and particularly to lead them to compare the Ecclesiastical systems and opinions of the age with the unerring standard given us from heaven—THE BIBLE. Admitting, as we do, the Scriptures to be divine—this standard and rule to be infallible and perfect—it becomes most evidently an axiom that human happiness—individual, social, and political—depends upon an intelligent and honest submission to its dictates. The history of the world proclaims, indeed, the truth of this axiom, and shows that civilization and happiness invariably follow the influence of its light. A thinking and Bible-reading people cannot long remain enslaved to ecclesiastical or political tyrants: a people religiously intelligent must be a free, prosperous, and happy people. Under this conviction, and believing that religious frauds of the most extraordinary kind pass current in our day for the requirements of the Gospel, I have endeavoured to expose some of them, however humbly and imperfectly, and to lead away the mind from reliance upon the mere dogmas of Priests, to repose its confidence upon the sure testimony of God. In the prosecution of such a design, the most unscrupulous resistance from the Scribes and Pharisees of the day will always be anticipated, and the shout of the Craftsmen, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," may, we doubt not, for a time drown the still small voice of Truth,—yet, in the end, it will assuredly prevail. "If I might give a short hint to an impartial writer," said De Foe, "it would be to tell him his fate. If he resolve to enter upon the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truths, let him proclaim war with mankind—neither to give nor take quarter." A greater than he—one who "spake as never man spake"—the Prince of Peace—said, "I am not come to send peace on earth but a sword"—the sword of Truth; and although he was the very personification of moral excellence, yet the learned and mighty among the Ecclesiastical Rabbis of his day said, "*He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye him?*" This fact forms a ground for encouragement to the humble labourer in the same cause, while exposed to the calumny and reproaches of the advocates of error. We desire to labour only in the cause of Truth, and to seek for the conscientious rewards which arise from its free advocacy and more extended diffusion. We seek especially to promote THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE, with its countless blessings, to the world—a religion which is reasonable, individual, and self-sacrificing, in opposition to "THE RELIGION OF THE PRIEST," which an eminent writer (Dr. Wardlaw) justly remarks is "*the religion of mystery—of proxy—and of pay.*"

ANDREW MARVEL.