

TO THE PATRONS OF THE PEOPLE'S ALMANACK.

“Tell us what shall be the Sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?”
“Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places.”
“All these are the beginning of sorrows.”
“And there shall be Signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity.”—“Men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth.”—Matthew, chap. xxiv., Luke, chap. xxi.

The approach of another year, has called me again to assume my onerous labours in the issue of my Annual. From a vast catalogue of materials bearing on religious liberty, and thrown up to the surface by the times, I have collected some great facts and presented some important principles which are worthy of the serious and practical consideration of every member of society.

The year 1848 will be memorable in the history of the world. One of the vials of God’s wrath appears to have been poured upon the earth. It was developed, in Italy, the Seat of the Man of Sin, by a circumstance apparently trivial. The people, groaning under Austrian despotism, gave up the use of Tobacco and mightily embarrassed the revenue; the Despot furnished the troops with cigars and bade them smoke every where in the streets of Milan: the people and troops quarrelled, and the flame of revolution was thus at once lighted, and ran over the whole continent. The pent up elements of strife, confined for ages, burst forth like a volcano:—all Europe saw it. France, in Feb’y last, rose then in its fury, and in a few hours swept its faithless monarch from the throne. The whole earth was moved by the intelligence. Europe, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Northern Ocean, quivered under the impulse. Every throne trembled—the people were moved. In June an attempt at a counter-revolution in France was put down at a fearful sacrifice of life. Liberty, crushed and broken for ages, lifted up her head and wept that by reason of the ignorance and demoralization around her she could not yet arise in her strength and dignity to bless all nations. She asked from an armed Despotism for an unshackled Press—for freedom of thought—for the freedom of conscience. These, under fear, were in many cases granted to her, and the world is now to be engaged in the strife of mind, yet, it is to be feared, with garments rolled in blood. The christian sits calm amidst the storm which has begun to rage:—he knows his “Father is at the helm.”

Rome, the focus of spiritual darkness, took the lead, under Pius IX, in following political light. Amidst its brightness and glory, she saw not that it led to the emancipation of the human mind—to the extinction of her power. The people had tasted of the sweets of freedom, under the auspices of the Pope, and like a mighty torrent moved onwards to the goal. They demanded the expulsion of the Jesuits and a Constitution. Pius consented—expelled the Jesuits from Rome, and gave a Constitution—all its members being composed of Cardinals and others, *chosen by himself!* This would not satisfy. The people demanded representative freedom—responsible government. The Pope demurred:—he had awoke to his position. At this time Austria came down in his strength to set his iron heel on the rising liberty of Italy: the enthusiasm of the people to repel the Tyrant knew no bounds. Pius the IX was asked to proclaim war against him. He refused: the people put his Cardinals under confinement—seized their correspondence: and compelled the Pope himself to flee for safety to the Fort of St. Angelo! On this occasion the POPE VIRTUALLY RESIGNED THE CIVIL POWER into the hands of the people. The *Piedmontese Gazette* of May 5th, 1848, says:

“The Pope has yielded to the persuasions of the patriot Mauriani, who announced to the people that the Ministers remained, except Cardinal Antonelli, who was replaced by him, Mauriani. The Ministers possess full power over temporal affairs, comprising the question of War. All the private correspondence of the Cardinals, which had been seized, were read to the public on the capitol by a Senator. Mauriani, after haranguing the people made the following declaration:—

“1st. No priest shall be appointed to fill any public employment.

“2d. War shall be formally declared.

“4th. A daily Bulletin shall be published of the War.