

temporal power—and on the other hand the increasing urgency of the Italians in claiming Rome as their capital, indicate that the struggle is at hand, in which the last remnant of his political power will sink amid storm and commotion. The address of PASSAGLIA signed by 9000 Italian priests, in favor of the Pope's surrendering the temporal power, shows how the minds even of his own subjects are prepared for such a result. Most of our readers are aware, that the best interpreters of prophecy fix the date of the downfall of the Papacy as a political authority between the years 1864 and 1868, many precisely in the year 1866, and we need not say how the progress of events seems to indicate, that their conclusions will be verified by the results. It should be understood, however, that this by no means infers that Popery as a system of religion will then become extinct. On the contrary we may presume that it will continue to linger, it may be for a length of time. But its chief support will then be taken away—the chief hindrance to the progress of the truth will then be removed, and through the influence of the word, its adherents will gradually be brought to the knowledge of the truth.

In connexion with these views, a statement which we have seen in the public prints within the last few weeks, may be of far more importance than has been generally believed. We have seen it stated that much alarm had been excited in the neighbourhood of Rome by indications that a volcano was about to break out a few miles from the city. The announcement has not excited much attention. But the student of prophecy will read it with the deepest interest. The 18th chapter of Revelation describes the total destruction of Rome, and in doing so employs very prominently the image of a burning by fire. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and *she shall be utterly burned with fire.*" "And the kings of the earth shall bewail her and lament for her, when they *shall see the smoke of her burning.*" "And every ship master and all the company in ships, and sailors and as many as trade by sea stood afar off, and

cried when they saw *the smoke of her burning*, saying what city is like unto this great city." All sound interpreters agree in understanding this chapter, as describing the complete and final overturning of the anti-christian system, but many consider that these words also predict a literal destruction by fire, of the seven killed city, as we know that other prophecies had their literal as well as their spiritual fulfilment.

The structure of the whole of central Italy has long since been noted as likely to render it the scene of such a conflagration. It is not Etna, the Lipari volcanic islands, and Vesuvius, that alone offer visible indications of the physical adaptedness of Italy for such a catastrophe. The great Appennine mountain chain is mainly volcanic in its character, and the country of Rome more especially is as strikingly so, almost as that of Sodom itself." "I beheld," says another writer, who passed through the country in the year 1850, "every where—in Rome—near Rome, and through the whole region from Rome to Naples—most astounding proof, not merely of the possibility, but the probability, that the whole region of central Italy will one day be destroyed by such a catastrophe (by earthquake or volcanoes.) The soil of Rome is *tufa*, with a volcanic subterranean action going on. At Naples the boiling sulphur is to be seen bubbling near the surface of the earth. When I drew a stick along the ground, the sulphureous smoke followed the indentation; and it would never surprise me to hear of the utter destruction of the Southern Peninsula of Italy. The entire country and district is volcanic. It is saturated with beds of sulphur and the substrata of destruction. It seems as certainly prepared for the flames as the wood and coal on the hearth are prepared for the taper, which shall kindle the fire to consume them. The divine hand alone seems to me to hold the elements of fire in check, by a miracle as great as that which protected the cities of the plain, till the righteous Lot made his escape to the mountains."* With such facts, and the predictions of God's word be—

* Townshend's Tour in Italy.