

REPORT.

The year 1866 has now drawn to a close. To those who observe the character of events as they transpire, it will be seen to have been a year pregnant with results.

At present, the attitude of the world is that of expectation. The short summer's campaign in the heart of Germany has produced great and unexpected changes. The position of the Germanic powers is essentially changed. Austria, the great supporter of the Roman system in its entirety, is placed on its defensive, by a powerful league of surrounding kingdoms against her. Her very place among the nations is threatened. Spain is too much embroiled in internal revolutions, to lend a helping hand abroad.

Meanwhile, France has fulfilled the terms of her convention, and withdrawn the last of her soldiers from Rome; and the Pope maintains his position as sovereign of the States of the Church, only by the sufferance of the Italians.

This state of things cannot long continue. The subjects of the Pope have too plainly and repeatedly expressed their determination to terminate the bad government under which they have long laboured, as soon as they were left to themselves. The terrible degree of perfection to which offensive arms have been brought, and the reorganizing and large increase of the armies of Europe, all point to a renewal of strife.

In this state of things, the "sure word of prophecy" affords us direction. Men like Newton, Fleming, Meade, and Elliott, have long fixed upon the period at which we have arrived, as the era for the downfall of existing systems. The 1260 years of the temporal power of the Pope, and of the existence of the Mahometan power in Europe, in their opinion, converge to a point at this date.

The state of Turkey indicates the speedy termination of the latter. A proposal announced from the court of St. Petersburg, for a convention to consider the condition of that kingdom, and the revolt—thus far successful—of a portion of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, are the latest symptoms of her decline and fall; whilst the condition of Italy, already remarked, points to the former event as being not far off. Authentic information tells us of 3000 priests in Italy, secretly working for a reformation, and their efforts are being aided by leading men in the Church of England at home.

We should do wrong were we to neglect these signs of the times. Amidst many causes for sorrow and discouragement, in prevailing deadness and the uprearing of old heresies in highly favoured lands, we derive encouragement from these indications of the speedy fulfilment of prophecy. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." "Be patient, therefore, brethren, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." This is the language addressed to us; and the Committee would, therefore, invite the friends of this work to go forth again to the responsibilities of another year, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.