

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

LIGHTS FROM PROPHECY.

In these days when the so-called eastern question again is agitating the diplomats of Europe and the affairs of the Ottoman empire have assumed an aspect somewhat similar to that preceding the Crimean war, it may be interesting to students of the prophetic writings of the Scriptures to recall the fact that some commentators of high standing hold that the history of the Turkish rule in Christian Europe and Asia is well outlined by ancient seers. It is certainly but natural that this should be the case, because the wars and victories of the Turks have had a bearing on the fate of the Christian world as those of no other non-Christian nation of the world, and prophecy would evidently be incomplete if without reference to the effect and the final outcome of that Asiatic invasion that drenched European soil in blood. Ancient seers, however, are supposed to point out the causes of that calamity, intimate the time of its duration and foreshadow its termination.

One of the prophecies thought to refer to this subject is found in Daniel 11:40-45, where Turkish dominion is supposed to be referred to by the term "the king of the north." It seems that the ancient seer predicted of this "king" that at some time, after the "covenant" had been broken and "marvellous things" spoken against the Most High, that is after a long period of apostasy, he should come like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen and ships and enter many countries, "overflow and pass over." He should enter the "glorious land" (Palestine) and lay his hands on Egypt, although unable to subdue Edom, Moab and Ammon. This, so far, corresponds perfectly to the exploits of the Ottoman Turks, and in view of that fact the concluding sentences of the Prophet are very remarkable:

But tidings out of the east and the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain [in Jerusalem]; and yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Newton in his Dissertations expressed the opinion that some political alliance, perhaps between Russia and Persia, ("the north and the east") would eventually stir the Turks up to proclaim a "holy war" for the purpose of asserting their power by exterminating the Christian subjects. They would then be driven away from Constantinople and make Jerusalem the new capital, a move that, we believe, was at one time contemplated by the Mohammedans. After that the end of the empire would come, the allies of the sultan having forsaken him.

To appreciate the importance of the events in the orient now apparently nearing their culmination, the following chapter of Daniel should be carefully read, for if the interpretation above referred to be cor-

rect, the winding up of Turkish dominion over Christian subjects is but a prelude to the grand finale of the present dispensation.

Another prophetic declaration supposed to refer to the Turks is found in the Apocalypse, chapter 9, 13-20. Here four mighty warriors are represented as coming from the regions of the Euphrates, followed by an immense host. Their national colors, red, blue and yellow, are alluded to and also their cavalry and cannon issuing "fire, smoke and brimstone." The duration of their dominion is given in a prophetic figure, supposed to equal about 400 years, and the invasion is said to be a punishment for apostasy. Yet the nations so afflicted did not repent; hence (ch. 10) the sending of a mighty angel, or messenger, with the proclamation that there should be no more "time," or delay, but everything was ready for the completion of the mystery of the Almighty as previously announced by holy prophets. He who is wise will heed the signs of the times and obey the voice of inspiration.

INFIDELITY CHALLENGED.

The most unique contest on record has been entered into by a Christian woman and two infidels, as told in the dispatches. Mr. John R. Charlesworth delivered a lecture in Dallas, Texas, stating that if the Deity exists, there is no proof of it. At the close of the lecture, Mrs. Sweeney, secretary of the Dallas W. C. T. U., proposed to put the question raised to a practical test. She asked permission to pray for the infidel. This challenge was accepted by the lecturer and one of his friends, the agreement being that if, in the course of three months, these two men have not experienced some spiritual influence in their hearts, prompting them publicly to acknowledge their mistake, the lady would admit the futility of praying to a Supreme Being. It is safe to say that for the next three months petitions in behalf of the Christian faith will be offered up by the thousands, for wherever the news of this agreement is spread, Christians will join in appeals to the Almighty for vindication of the cause of religion against agnosticism. The outcome will be watched with interest from both sides, for if either of those infidels is convinced of his error, one of the most common arguments in favor of unbelief is shattered to fragments.

Mrs. Sweeney's course may, or may not, be a wise one. That depends on the circumstances and the motives by which she was actuated. The ancient champion of the religion of Israel did well when he challenged the false priests of the court of Ahab to test the power of Jehovah against that of Baal, by praying for fire from above on Mount Carmel. He acted under inspiration and his cause was vindicated. The difference, however, between that incident and the present contest is this, that while the Almighty rules supreme in nature and

through His agents controls the physical forces at will, the domain of the intellect of man is left, in the main, to his own agency, and it is not in accordance with the divine plan to use what may be called coercion in matters of faith. Still, one of the most notable conversions in the Christian church, that of Saul, is related in the New Testament apparently as an answer to the prayer recorded in the fourth chapter of the Acts. Whatever the result may be, the Christian heroism of the lady, who stakes her own faith on it, will be admitted to be as genuine as it is practical.

A LESSON IN SELF-HELP.

We have a friend in this city who is daily setting an example which we think might be profitably followed by a great many others. He is a rich man and a busy one—two particulars in which no doubt many would be glad to be his imitators; but it was not of the example in these respects that we speak, though they both are consequences in considerable degree of the typical trait we desired to refer to.

Our friend is the owner of a good-sized lot—probably one of the old-fashioned sort, an acre and a quarter, on which his residence stands in one of the most populous wards of the city. It is not all suitable for lawn or flowers, but it will raise good vegetables and fruits if well watered and cultivated. Every evening after down-town business is over, and no doubt every morning before office hours begin, he may be found with hoe, rake or fork in hand, attending to that garden. The result is that he raises all that his family can consume in the line of spring vegetables with plenty to give with his compliments to his neighbors, besides nearly enough potatoes to last him through the winter. He needs to spend no money on nearly California vegetables and has that much more on hand to do good in other directions and devote to other deserving enterprises.

This is the example which we think ought to be more generally followed by occupants of land in this city and its surroundings. There is hardly a resident who does not have control of land enough to produce all the vegetables his family can use. There is hardly one that does not give to Chinese gardeners each season or to the greengrocers for export to California, money enough to clothe his children for a whole year. These are men too, in most instances, who have no money to spare; and one cause is, as we have pointed out, their shiftlessness and lack of management. Too many of them, if they are day-laborers, imagine that when the six o'clock whistle blows, there is nothing more for them to do. An hour's work in the garden would prove not only highly remunerative, but a healthful relaxation; but they never think of it; their wives or children overlook it, too, and means which they might just as well have saved is sent away to buy some little green stuff or delicacy for the table.

This paper has in the past suggested that unemployed but industrious men could find work in cultivating vacant lots and gardens belonging to other