

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

Christian Scientists lately have acquired some unenviable notoriety on account of their failure in numerous cases of sickness to give the relief expected from their peculiar mode of treatment. A dispatch from Los Angeles the other day told of a woman, who in her critical condition was denied medical aid by her husband, a Christian Scientist, and who died notwithstanding the faith exercised in her behalf. This case and several others brought to the attention of the public is likely to result in prosecution in the criminal courts.

The peculiar tenets of the sect have of late years obtained numerous followers and have been much discussed in certain circles in this city and Territory as well as in other parts of the world. This is easily explained from the fact that the Christian religion as generally advocated utterly fails to deal efficiently with the present needs of mankind. Basing its claims on the events of the dim past, it contents itself with holding out promises for a still more obscure future, applying no remedies to the present with its sufferings, sickness, poverty, contentions, death. Christian Science, as it is called, professes to offer some relief at least immediately applicable to soul and body, claiming that the power of an omnipotent Creator is as available today as it was anciently for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of His children. No wonder, then, that many who know of no better way should listen to its teachings eagerly and try to believe even when occasionally met with disappointment.

Christian scientists have grasped the great principle of truth that religion is defective unless applicable to the present conditions of man, and productive of some relief from the consequences of sin, but in the application of this principle, it seems, they fail most signally, because they proceed on the presumption that the exercise of faith in itself, without regard to the foundation on which it rests, is sufficient to counteract all evil influences. There are many instances, and doubtless will be many more, where the sick and afflicted are healed purely through the exercise of their own faith and that of anxious friends. This result is attained on true principle, through the medium of communication between man and his Maker, which cannot be disturbed by a third party, but which, because of men's actions, is not generally available to them. In this respect, as in all others, "the prayer of the righteous availeth much." But for any organization to exercise the healing gift as a power to reach all cases, it must be by authorization of that supreme Being who controls the operations of the healing art by spiritual forces. To this class belong wholly the healings and other miracles recorded in the Scriptures; for this exercise of the miraculous power includes not only healing by faith and authority but the controlling of evil spirits, the quelling of the storm, and the rais-

ing of the dead when in the providence of the Almighty occasion requires.

Clearly, faith, in order to be such a power, must rest in Divine authority delegated to him who exercises it. What does faith avail without such authority? All genuine miracles may be said to be manifestations of Divine power through the agency of man acting in obedience to a higher command. The Red sea parted because the Lord told Israel to advance; the walls of Jericho fell because the people obeyed; sick people were healed and dead were raised, in the instances recorded in the Bible, but the primary cause was not human, although the Divine power delegated to men placing implicit faith in God and consequently acting as directed by Him. The Apostles of our Lord received Divine authority to perform miracles. The power was given to others who believed and these works of faith continued as long as the Church remained faithful to Divine commands. The Church in this age again was commissioned to perform mighty works, but when and where did Christian Scientists receive a commission from Almighty God to heal the sick by prayer and faith? They may, perhaps, point to some cases where sick have recovered, apparently as a result of their methods, but even if that is admitted, the truth of their "science" is not thereby established; for such instances clearly come under the rule which has been stated here—and even the Egyptian magicians imitated Moses in numerous instances. In fact anti-Christian "miracles" are recorded in every age, when the true Church has been on the earth for the benefit of mankind.

A correspondent of a morning paper, advocating the unreality of disease, according to the doctrine of the new "science" asks what arguments may be advanced, taking the Bible as a guide, for the reality of sickness. If the writer is familiar with the texts of the Scriptures bearing on this subject, he is aware of the fact that the Bible authors with the sublime simplicity characteristic of their conceptions ascribe all evil and particularly diseases to the influence of evil spirits or "demons," in the same way as they acknowledge God to be the source of all that is good. To them evil is just as real as its opposite. There is a "prince of darkness" as well as a "king" and a "kingdom of heaven." One is not merely a negation of the other, but they are two opposing forces. This Scripture view seems to be in perfect accord with all authentic scientific discoveries, since these have undoubtedly established the fact that many diseases are due to the presence in the human system of destructive, living forms just as real as any known in the animal kingdom. Could science penetrate still further and trace the operations of the spirit forces beyond the boundary where matter and spirit meet, the probability is that the truth would stand forth plain as day, that the primary cause of disease is found in the spiritual world and in demoniacal

influences. If this fact may be taken for granted, two conclusions are inevitable: First, that any "science" that treats disease as something unreal, a misdirected imagination, is no science but a delusion; secondly, that to neglect the use of proper remedies, including that faith which rests on Divine authority, is most decidedly wrong. It attempts to operate with mind alone, wholly ignoring the equally important part of matter, or material existence.

To illustrate: If one community through some evil intention on the part of the inhabitants of another should be overrun by wild beasts let loose on them to devastate and destroy all in their path, it would be poor "science" to teach the attacked parties to sit still and exercise their "faith" without works. Common sense would suggest to seize the arms for defense and the destruction of the pests. But to make defensive operations most effective it would also be necessary for the rulers of the wronged community to exercise their authority and the authority of the supreme power of the land in order to check the doings of enmity of those who had caused the calamity. The simile is of course imperfect; but it shows to some extent the parts that Christian faith and medical science may play in the combat against disease. There are weapons to be used against the hosts invading the human system and causing fevers and other disturbances; those must be used. There is also the Divine authority and power to be applied by faith, rebuking and subduing the evil spirits that, in the Biblical view of the matter, often are responsible for the attacks of the diseases. But to attempt to use this authority without really having it is insanity, and dangerous too. Once it was tried with the result that the pretenders were overcome by the demons and had to flee naked and wounded. (Acts xix, 16.)

It would be well for the advocates of Christian Science to remember that even the individual faith which heals does not exclude the use in cases of sickness of remedies known to be beneficial. Thus Paul, as is well known, does not hesitate to advise Timotheus to use a mild stimulant on account of a certain infirmity. To denounce the use of well tried remedies is not an evidence of faith, but of fanaticism. As long as this is confined within reasonable boundaries where it can do no material harm, its existence can be tolerated, but if it be carried so far as to result in the loss of life and the wrecking of families, it is properly denounced as dangerous. Many of the Christian Scientists are honest in their belief and worthy of the respect of their fellow-men; these should re-examine the grounds on which their belief is based and seek to obtain more light on a subject that is admitted to be of great importance in practical religion.

THE CUBAN REBELLION.

Spain at last reluctantly confesses that there is a rebellion in Cuba, but says it is confined to negroes and one province. This may be taken as a promising indication that the remaining claims of the insurgents, that the revolution extends over four of the five provinces and includes many