

were admitted and allowed on both sides. For the basis on which prayer, according to my idea, acts is a natural basis. Prayer used for healing purposes is to give us the full possession of all resources within our reach. I should never advise any one to try and get by prayer what they could get without. I should give the magnetizers full swing in my hospital ; I should have them trained and tested. I should wish the doctors to exert their best faculties, whilst placing themselves willingly at the disposal of any institutions which might seem to reach them through prayer ; they would even then have to use their common sense in deciding how far such seeming intuitions were really helpful and reliable. I should get my patients to pray for themselves, that they might become receptive, and make it easy for the assumed influences to reach them. Whilst fully admitting that some diseases were beyond the reach of such influences, I should not in our present state of ignorance assume that any were—I should try. Under these influences I should hope for very remarkable results. But, in the present state of religious and scientific opinion, I fear my view of the way in which prayer might be used as a real healing agent will find no favour with either section, for the religious would call it profane, and the profane would call it chimerical. But I should like to see whether we have—in prayer as applied to disease—a power, not something by which we can compel divine influence to do what is contrary to divine order, but something which places us within the reach of healing magnetic influences at present little used or recognized.

The prayer test, however, is likely to outlast many experiments, good, bad, and indifferent. At any rate, it is a test which is constantly being made, and will doubtless continue to be made by individuals, and with the rather startling result that belief in the efficacy of prayer in quite the common acceptance of the term is so far from dying out, that it is, if anything, a little more rampant than ever, and that not only amongst the clergy, the women, and the peasants, as it is commonly said, but amongst thoughtful and clever people. That many really religious persons have given it up in the above direct sense I am aware, nor have I any special interest in supporting a belief in immediate or direct answers in connection with temporal

things. I think I should be content to hold that all prayers should be the willing self-render of the heart, should rest entirely on spiritual ground, should be used for strength in trial, comfort in sorrow, hope and faith in the love of God and immortality ; and I still hold that the best and highest prayer is ' Thy will be done.' But suppose the reach of prayer does really extend to what we call temporal things, and suppose that this continues to be believed in spite of good arguments and excellent opinions to the contrary, simply because so many people continually get what they pray for ; why, then, in the interest of alleged facts, I would simply ask, is there anything irrational or absurd in trying to understand whether this thing is, and how this thing can be.

217. As regards the hospital test, then, suppose that by prayer you do set in motion a sympathetic, spiritual machinery. I do not see that a scientific test under fit conditions would be impossible. I think it would be difficult to devise in detail, because we really do not know all the conditions for such an experiment, but perhaps sufficient are approximately known. There are personal conditions as regards those who pray and those who are prayed for ; there is the force of prayer and character, and the time of prayer and general circumstances, which would differ in each case, and would have to be particularly dealt with, and not wholesale. At the same, I think that could such a test be applied for as good a purpose and as reverently as similar tests are said to have been applied in the Old and New Testaments, perhaps a result different from that so confidently anticipated by the scientific world might be obtained.

218. Again, remember that no demand is being made upon miraculous powers in prayer ; merely through prayer, powers that exist are liberated and placed at our disposal. That is the *rationale* of prayer. Cases not to be healed by magnetism, natural or spiritual, or beyond the reach of curative processes here or elsewhere, will not be healed by prayer, or as far as we have reason to believe, by any sort of divine *fiat*. Our respect for divine *fiats* would not be increased if they were. As far as I can see, there are no divine *fiats*, in the sense of things happening without adequate causes. From a close observation of the world about