

to admit the general principle that in the physical as well as in the moral sphere prayer may achieve results which transcend ordinary experience. Even when the Christian cannot see how his prayer can be answered in the track of ordinary experience, he is warranted in carrying his petition in humble submissive faith to God, who holds himself free to work without, above, or against means at his pleasure. It is one of the great advantages of prayer that it gives us access to infinite strength as well as infinite goodness. But how will the principle stated apply to cures of disease? If the sick man has sought medical skill, used ordinary means, and like the poor woman who "had suffered many things of many physicians," has been "nothing bettered," are his friends not warranted in carrying his case directly to the Great Physician with some probability that it may be consistent with his will to interpose his omnipotent arm and raise the sick to health, though in the ordinary course of nature there was no hope. Doubtless instances will occur to many where persons who were considered hopeless by eminent physicians and for whom believing prayer has been offered, have been restored to full health. We admit that the rationalist will find no difficulty in explaining these cases without recourse to the efficiency of prayer, but the reverent Christian will be slow to deny an extraordinary interposition of Providence working above, or perhaps against the means used. If this be admitted we have a faith-cure. We have faith reaching results otherwise apparently impossible. To this it is replied that we have no experience of persons in the last stages of consumption having been cured, and it is argued that if prayer is effective it ought to be as effective in con-

sumption as in low fevers or inflammations. This is favourite reasoning against faith-cures. It seems to me whatever force it has bears equally against the apostolic injunction found in James v. 14. The elders were to pray for the sick no matter what the disease was. Consumptives were no exception. And the promise is that the sick man shall be raised up. But I question whether consumptives in the last stage were raised up to health by the prayers of those early elders any more than at present. The promise "He shall be raised up" is not to be understood absolutely, but as limited by God's wise and loving purpose toward his children. What that purpose is, we should think, is pretty clear concerning a man in the last stages of consumption. Besides it does not follow that the prayer of faith which may be effective at one stage of a disease will be effective at another. That is contrary to analogy of prayer in the spiritual world. We have great encouragement to pray for the conversion of the godless, but the Bible reveals the fact that there is a stage of moral disease incurable. There is a moral condition into which if a man pass his friends have no encouragement to pray for him. But no one thinks of bringing this as an argument against the efficiency of prayer in the moral sphere, nor should it prevent us from praying for our friends; for who can tell when that condition of hopelessness is reached? It seems, therefore, from the nature of prayer that humble faith may take hold upon Divine power to effect the cure of disease, and we are commanded to do so, but whether it is consistent with his will to manifest this power in the instantaneous cure of disease at the touch of a modern elder's finger dipped in oil is not so clear.