

once taken from the class of positive Bible commands of universal application.

But may it not have the force of a command at one time, although not at another? Granted this, then how is one to decide when he is sufficiently sick to make this command binding upon his conscience, and with a penalty connected with disobedience? Who will decide concerning the infinite variety of aches and pains as to which come under this command and which not? Then we would naturally look for some rule, either in the immediate context or elsewhere, whereby it may be known when the command is operative and when not. But no such supplemental directions are given, hence every one becomes of necessity a law unto himself in this matter, and no one has authority to regulate for another as to when it is an obligation, and when not, to call upon the elders in time of sickness.

The inference from all this plainly is, that the words of James, so often quoted as a command, are purely recommendatory, even as in a previous verse one who is merry is recommended to sing psalms.

If a recommendation, then it is a privilege, and as such should be regarded. The clear apprehension of this will prevent a tendency to condemn one another when there is hesitancy on the part of the sick to use their undoubted privilege as indicated in this passage.

A minute following of the Apostle's words would seem to restrict the invalid to the *elders*, that is, to certain officials of the church. But simple recommendations are not to be treated after such a literal, exacting method. We presume that the principle involved in the passage is met when any of the followers of Christ who know how to use the prayer of faith are called. So, too, the use of anointing oil can be looked upon as essential or not, according to circumstances. To make any one part of the directions essential, to be consistent, it is necessary to make all of equal importance; for who has authority to change the text, or interpret it for others? If the use of oil is an essential part of the recommendation, then the presence of elders is, and *vice versa*.

Therefore, we infer that the passage, as a whole and in its several parts, is a recommendation, a kind of spiritual prescription for the Christian who has been stricken down by disease, and is especially to be used when the prayer of the patient alone fails to secure needed help.

AN INQUIRY.

We received the following inquiry by card in the end of November last, but continued absence from home has prevented us attending to it. If the post office address had been given, we would have communicated by letter with the writer, but as this could not be done, we deem it right to reply, according to his request, through the EXPOSITOR.

"November 30th, 1885.

"DEAR SIR,—Please, for the sake of an anxious soul, tell, through the EXPOSITOR, where you find Scripture for the doctrine that is held by the EXPOSITOR that a converted soul is not holy from the first of its existence in Christ, or that a convert has not a clean heart from the first. Do not ignore this card as from a critic; I am a band worker. With zeal for Christ and charity for all.
T. R. M.

Will the brother be surprised if we say that the EXPOSITOR has not intentionally taken the ground "that a converted soul is not holy from the first of its existence in Christ, or that a convert has not a clean heart from the first?" We are fully aware that the great majority of those who write on the subject of holiness take this ground, and our numerous selections from writers who hold this view strongly may seem to imply that we fully endorse it. But we have never yet fully discussed the subject, nor do we deem it necessary now. Our method of dealing with the subject is entirely practical. Permit us to illustrate, using yourself as an example. We assume from your card that you are clearly converted to God, and are existing in Christ. Now, here is the command of God, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Are *you* obeying this command continually? Is your obedience constant, and satisfactory to yourself, and have you the witness of