

R.

THE
UNAUTHORIZED USE
OF
CONSECRATED OIL

BY JOHN R. HALDEMAN.

TRACT NO. TWO.

1901

INDEPENDENCE, Mo.

CHURCH OF CHRIST PUB. HOUSE.

PRICE TEN CENTS.

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF CONSECRATED OIL.

During a long while, it has been the practice for some believers in the restored gospel, to keep in their houses a supply of consecrated oil, for administration to the sick. When any of the household were ailing a portion of the oil would be given the sufferer by any one present.

It has been the conviction of the writer for some time that administration of oil to the sick, by any other persons than those named by the Scriptures, is a mistake, contrary to the commandments of God, and, should therefore cease.

WARRANT FOR ITS USE.

Warrant for the use of oil for the sick is to be found in James 5; 14, wherein it is stated:—

“Is any sick among you; let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord.”

Those who may administer the oil are here unmistakably indicated, and the fact that the Lord has designated officers to act, should deter others from attempting to perform an ordinance, reserved by special enactment of God, for the “elders of the church.”

AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

When James had penned this command-

ment of God, it became one of the ordinances of the house of the Lord in as complete degree as are the ordinances of baptism, laying on of hands, or the Lord's supper. and yet many, holding no priesthood, who do not hesitate to give oil to the sick, would not dream of acting in any of the other ordinances named, notwithstanding the New Testament is perfectly plain regarding who shall administer oil, while it does not read so plainly concerning the administration of the other ordinances.

USE OF OIL, BUT PART OF ORDINANCE.

There is a phase to the administration of oil to the sick that is frequently overlooked by those who are so ready for the use of it, in the absence of the elders. "Anointing with oil," does not constitute the entire ordinance for the healing of the sick. It is but ONE of the several things named in the law as composing the ordinance, and therefore only a single part of it; hence it is unreasonable to suppose that the sick will be healed, when only a partial compliance with God's commands is performed, even tho' the performance be by one scripturally designated to do the act.

Elders who administer to the sick deem it necessary to "pray over them," "anointing them with oil, in the name of the Lord," concluding with the laying on of hands, before they hope to see the desired results of the administration viz, the healing of the sick. If it requires compliance with ALL these things at the hands of those designated by the Scriptures to secure the desired blessing, wherein is it reasonable to suppose that others acting without warrant will be able to accomplish like results, employing, as they do, only a part of the elements God has required to be used be-

fore he promised to give his aid and seal the ordinance, by "raising him up."

UNWARRANTABLE CONCLUSIONS.

One of the probable causes that has led some to deem that the simple administration of oil, under their own hands would produce the same results as would a full compliance at the hands of the elders, has been that undue qualities and virtues have been ascribed to consecrated oil; some supposing that it contains wonderful curative properties. Facts do not justify such conclusions. It will be readily admitted that the ordinary olive oil of commerce, usually purchased when oil is to be consecrated, possesses some medicinal qualities; that these medicinal qualities are increased by consecration we are not prepared to admit: for, were it a fact that their medicinal qualities were increased by consecration, then the curative effects of consecrated oil would be the same in each case where it might be employed, on believer or unbeliever; a wide range of experience, proves that all administrations are not effective nor alike; in fact some instances might be recalled where no discernible benefit followed; this would be impossible did the consecrated oil possess the qualities some ascribe to it, for its supposedly great medicinal qualities would assert themselves independent of the operation of the principles of faith governing the administration.

The mind should, therefore, be disabused of the idea that it is some wonderful virtue dwelling in the oil, imparted by consecration, and connected with the personal powers possessed by the officiating elders that brings healing to the afflicted.

THE REAL SOURCE OF POWER.

The real source of the healing power is disclosed in the verse following the scriptural command to call the elders to pray over and anoint the afflicted one. We quote both verses that all may observe the connection and discern that it is the Lord who raises them up.

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up.

Thus it appears that the elders must pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord previous to the LORD'S raising him up. Those who administer oil to the sick in the absence of the elders, do not pretend to comply with all the requirements here enumerated by the Almighty as necessary prerequisites to the display of his power, and still seem to expect the sick to obtain relief when they plainly violate the instructions under which relief is promised. To those who may think us over-particular in our insistence for an exact compliance with the provisions of the ordinance we would reply that if hap-hazard methods, or a partial performance of the ordinance would answer the purpose and prove effectual in moving God "to raise him up", then the Lord would not have taken the pains to reveal the exact methods to be employed; and further, the fact that God has revealed the methods to be employed and indicated the course to be pursued, is ample evidence that he IS PARTICULAR and desires the ordinance performed in a certain manner.

PERSONS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE ADMINISTRATION OF ORDINANCE.

It has been the observation of the writer, that in most cases where oil is administered in the absence of the elders it is to persons suffering with only slight afflictions. According to New Testament teachings persons who are **AFFLICTED** should **PRAY** while those who are sick, (suffering from some disease) should send for the elders. It is this latter class who are to receive the anointing with oil: those who are "afflicted" have no instructions whatever to receive the ministrations of the elders. The Books says "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray" [James 5: 13.]

Therefore we conclude that the administration of oil, by the hands of whomsoever, to the simply "afflicted" is unwarranted by law and necessarily presumptuous.

The question has been asked. "If consecrated oil were in my house, would it be wise in me, though I am not an elder, to fail to use it, and thereby allow a member of my family to suffer and perhaps die before an elder could be summoned to perform the ordinance?"

We would answer thus:—As we must depend upon the **OBSERVANCE** of God's commandments to bring the blessing, and must look to him to perform the relief for the sick, it seems folly to think that the course you propose, in itself a transgression, will produce the result that depends wholly upon an observance for its happening. Should God heal the sick by any other plan than the one he has given to govern the ordinance, it would indicate a change upon his part, thus revealing him as possessing the attribute of changeableness,—a thing he declares he does not possess.

To heal the sick in the manner indicated in the question would show a change in the plan.

The expressed fear that the sufferer "might die" before an elder could reach the bedside speaks but poorly for the faith of the one who relies upon the allseeing God to act when the elder finally does arrive. Are the eyes of our Lord so dim and his hearing so faint that he must wait the arrival of the elder, before his attention can be directed to the urgencies of the case? Is not the avenue of prayer still open to those surrounding the bedside, and has not God declared that the prayers of the righteous availéth much; and in the very chapter containing the ordinance for the healing of the sick, is found the assurance that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." If it should be that the sufferer's time has come, nothing on earth would avert the final dissolution as "there is a time appointed unto all men to die." If it should be that the sufferer is at the door of death, under no circumstances should an unauthorized person attempt to act, as the administration, under those conditions is fraught with too great consequences to the departing one, to risk any error in the performance of the ordinance. James in his 5th chap. and 15th verse holds out the assurance that following the administration, "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

With the possibility of passing into the great beyond, forgiven of one's sins, if properly administered to, the situation becomes too grave and important to resort to questionable method to accomplish the desired result, and it seems almost criminal to risk the employment of means which are but make-shifts to say the most for them.

When the final time has come to die, those attending the sufferer might fail to realize the crisis, and thinking the ailment of a minor character, would resort to the usual practice of administering oil in the absence of the elders. When they did discover their error and that the sufferer was at death's door it might be everlastingly too late to get the proper official present and the sick one would pass from life, denied the grand blessing belonging to those willing to submit themselves to the ordinance of healing. This would not occur if unauthorized attempts to administer oil are discontinued.

If possible, the administration of the healing ordinance should always be surrounded by the best possible conditions, and attended with as great degree of faith as can be mustered. Elders are supposed, and generally do have a greater degree of faith than lay members, and such being the case, administrations under their hands are more likely to be attended with success.

Every failure of the healing ordinance is weakening to the faith, and on that account, even tho no other existed, every possible help and means should be employed to assist in a successful demonstration of the ordinance.

If consecrated oil were indiscriminately distributed and promiscuously used it stands a great chance of falling into the hand of unwise and often unworthy persons, who through lack of understanding might attempt the use of oil upon occasions and in places which would only serve to bring themselves and the faith into disrepute and derision, instead of adding glory to the kingdom of God.