

## Mandatory, or Not.

A short time ago we heard some statements which seemed somewhat remarkable to us; they were made from a pulpit, to a large congregation, in which there were a number of preachers.

The said statements were substantially as follows:

1. There is no "shall" or "must" in the Gospel.

2. That to be born again was not mandatory no more than a literal birth was, and that neither the one nor the other was commanded.

3. That neither faith, repentance, nor baptism were commands, that they were not mandatory or imperative in a positive or absolute sense.

Now, before we call in question the correctness of the above statements, we will give a few primary definitions of the terms used.

"Command" is to order with authority, to lay injunction upon, to direct, to bid.

"Mandatory" is containing a command, preceptive, directive.

"Imperative" is expressive of a command, containing positive command, authoritatively or absolutely, directive.

"Positive" is having a real position, existence or energy, real, actual, opposed to negative.

"Absolute" is completed or regarded as complete, finished, perfect total.

"Shall" means primarily, to owe, to be under obligation for.

"Must" is, to be obliged, to be necessitated, expressing both physical and moral necessity.

The above definitions are in harmony with all standard lexicons. The Scriptures assume and teach that God is a universal governor, and that he does govern the universe of both matter and mind. The Scriptures most clearly teach that God administers a moral government over the universe of moral agents. A moral government is a government based upon a distinction between right and wrong. The Scriptures always assume that there is a distinction between right and wrong, hence the distinction between right and wrong is antecedent to moral government. Law is based upon right, not right upon law, in the order of antecedent and sequence, law springs from right, not right from law. Laws are enacted to secure what is already right, and to prevent what is already wrong, not to create right and wrong which did not before exist. The Scriptures assume and teach that man is a subject of God's moral government, and that God is his rightful moral governor. God's right to administer a moral government over man, implies that man is his rightful moral subjects. If we admit God's right to govern man, then we must admit man's obligation to obey. And if we admit God's relation to the universe as creator and preserver, this will involve his right to govern by implication, and man's relation to God as created and upheld by him, brings him within the divine jurisdiction. Man possesses those elements essential to moral obligation and responsibility, this fact makes him a subject of the moral law of God, the principles of which are immutable and eternal, while mere positive enactments and statu forms may have been done away, hence, the terms "shall" and "must" apply to man now, with all the moral force and necessity that they ever did, for the Gospel dispensation does not supercede or abate one iota of the divine claims upon man, nor of man's responsibility and accountability to God. And as to the substance of the divine claims upon man, they are immutable, and have been, and will be, under all dispensations. It is true that the ministration of death written upon tables of stone, as a statute form, or code, was done away. But this fact does not prove that man was thereby absolved from moral obligation to

God, nor that the introduction and establishment of the ministration of the Spirit which remaineth, has created an abatement of the divine claims upon humanity. The great founder of the Gospel dispensation said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." Here, Christ expresses a moral necessity, and as he drew his figure from nature there must be a corresponding physical necessity in a literal birth. For in a literal birth, if extraneous causes combine to prevent it, death supervenes as a consequence. And if a literal birth transpires according to physical law, and is essential to physical life, we must conclude that to be born in a Gospel sense transpires according to the law of the spirit of life, and is essential to spiritual life. Now the force of this cannot be set aside by any amount of metaphysical subtlety or generalization about "grace," "mercy," etc.

If the new birth is prevented by willful disobedience, spiritual death is the consequence. Hence the language of Christ in Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." This "shall" is mandatory and imperative.

Our belief on Jesus Christ is mandatory. 1 John iii. 23: "And this is his command that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandments."

Repentance is commanded. Acts xvii. 30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

Baptism is a command. Acts ii. 37, 38: "What shall we do? Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Acts x. 48: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In the conversion of Saul, Acts ix. 6: "And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Now be it remembered that Saul was commanded to do something, and whatever he may have suffered at Damascus, and whatever gracious experiences he may have received there, is one thing, while what he was commanded to do was another thing. For in recounting his Christian conversion and experience in Acts xxii. 16, Ananias said to him in a commanding way, "And now why tardest thou, arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Our teachers have preached these things as commands for the last half century. And now to set up the claim, and aver, that such teaching savors of Judaism is to insist upon a complete revolution in our teaching which is entirely without Scriptural warrant or authority.

The fact that God has given us certain commands to obey is one thing, and the reason why he has done so is another thing. There is abundant evidence in the New Testament to show that we are commanded to do certain things to be saved, and there is evidence to show why we are thus commanded to do them.

It is plain to our mind that the ascertained will of God, as revealed to us in the New Testament, is our absolute rule of duty. And we are not required to go behind the record of God's commands to settle the question of our obligation to obey him. Not but what there are reasons why God has commanded what he has. And when ascertained, those reasons will be found to be, that the things commanded are a moral good, are right, and fit in themselves. The commands of God are right; but they do not constitute the right. The commands of God may declare or reveal what is right, but what is right was such before it was commanded. If the com-

mand of God created the right of the thing commanded there could be nothing right until the command was issued, and no moral obligation beyond a knowledge of the command.

There was no written law or revelation from God, from the creation, to the time of Moses, a period of almost 2,500 years, yet God left not the people without the means of instruction, nor without a sense of moral obligation. Cain had this sense of moral obligation, for God told him that if he did right he should be accepted, and if not, sin lieth at the door. Sin is a transgression of law, and God's moral law respects the conduct and character of responsible persons. We as rational responsible creatures, living under the ministration of the spirit, are not compelled to go back to the ministration of condemnation and death which was written on tables of stone, for our sense of moral obligation, nor for the ground of our moral obligation. For that law of sin and death, with all its surrounding glory and its every mandate was long ago done away. It will not be a sufficient answer to say that those acts of obedience enjoined in the Gospel are not mandatory because we are under the mild dispensation of grace, and that the penal sanctions of the Mosaic law are no longer in force. For he that despised the law of Moses was stoned to death. And Paul asks, "How much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" Now if he were stoned to death it would be just the same. But the penalty is greater, as a spiritual death transcends a literal one.

## PROCESS VERBAL PRO MEMORIA.

## To the Glory of God.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. x. 31.

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your rational service. And be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may discern what is the will of God, the good, and well pleasing, and perfect." Rom. xii. 1, 2.

"Give unto the Lord the glory due his name." Ps. xxii. 2.

"Yield yourselves to God, as being alive from the dead, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness." Rom. vi. 13.

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom ye have from God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

The Lord God created man and placed him in a beautiful world where was everything calculated to make him happy. And it would seem that his delight would be to praise, honor and serve his Creator. But no, he turned away to live in sin rather than holiness. Then, after other means had failed to draw man's heart back to him, our Heavenly Father gave his only, his well beloved Son, to suffer and die for the sin of the world. No sacrifice was too great for him to make to redeem us from sin. He has done all that he can do to save us till we accept of that. And now he has a perfect right to demand us and all that we have in return for his gift to us. But that is not what he wants. It is the free service of love, joined with holy fear alone that is acceptable with him. If all he has done for us cannot touch and win our hearts there we are lost indeed.

But many of us who have heard that story of love have accepted Jesus as our Savior, and professed to take up our cross and follow him. Now, have we, in deed and truth turned our backs to the world and set our faces Zionward? Have we truly left all to

follow him? Then

"Be all our hearts and all our days  
Devoted to our Savior's praise;  
And let our glad obedience prove  
How much we owe—how much we love."

Let us "crucify our flesh with the lusts thereof," and "present our bodies, a living sacrifice to God."

Are we ready to say and act thereon?

"The dearest idol I have known  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only thee?"

You have now promised to do all you can to "give unto the Lord the glory due his name." Now you are not your own. "You are bought with a price." Therefore glorify God in your bodies." Not but what you were bought just the same before you acknowledge it, but now that you have acknowledged it, see to it that you "walk worthy of the calling with which ye were called."

Now to what are we called? We are "called to peace;" we are "called to be saints." God hath "called us unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Yes we are called to be children of the Most High God. Be careful now to bring not shame on that glorious calling, but instead glory. How shall you do that? The Lord hath answered, "Yield yourselves to God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness."

The Lord has given you a mind. Now how can you use that to his glory? Paul tells you in the fourth chapter of Phil. eighth verse: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Give your mind to the good, the true, the beautiful, the ennobling and holy things. This is using your mind to the glory of God. O, what a glorious band of Christians we would be if we would only consecrate our thoughts to God's glory! and, think, brother, sister, this is but our reasonable service.

Now what is the work of that "little member" the tongue? which has been so quick to speak evil things; which has spoken so many foolish, vain and wicked words. How can we use it as an "instrument of righteousness?" "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Jesus said. Get your hearts filled with the love of God and you need never study long how to use your tongue to his glory. Words of praise to God and love for man, sympathetic, hopeful, helpful, cheering, earnest, soulful words will fall almost involuntarily from that tongue which has tasted of the riches of the Father's love.

And those feet that have been "swift to shed blood" (Do not start and cry "No, I never shed man's blood" for so long as you refused to become a disciple of Jesus, you "crucified the Lord again,") shall they not now become the "beautiful feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring the glad tidings of good things?" How often have they carried your body about until tired and sore, in the service of Satan. Let them "run and not grow weary" now in the loving service of God.

And your hands—how are they to become "instruments of righteousness?" How can you use them to the glory of God? O, think, think a moment for yourselves how many and varied are the ways in which those hands can work for God. These are but a few hints to set you thinking. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." The "fruit of the spirit" which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Now, my brother, my sister, would you live to the glory of God? Then

feed on the "bread of life" and drink from the "fountain of life" freely. Of temporal food we must eat temperately and thankfully, but there is no cloying on this heavenly food.

Then when you have feasted and drank till your souls are satisfied, for a little time, remember that "freely ye have received, freely give." Let your feet carry you on errands of love and mercy to the homes of widow and orphan, the sick and afflicted; and let your hands clasp, with warm love, those of the poor, friendless and alone, ministering tenderly to their wants, while your tongue is cheering their hearts with words from your own, which is overflowing with love.

At home let your minds be busy studying how to help mother and father, sister and brother, while your swift and willing hands "bear their burdens," and your quick feet lighten their work, while you speak none but loving helpful words.

Wherever you are, at home or abroad, at school or in the store, in the kitchen or shop, with the pen, plow or needle, let all your work be done with an eye single to the glory of God. Thus yielding ourselves vessels "for the Master's use made meet," discerning "the will of God, the good and well-pleasing, and perfect," and walking therein, we will grow up "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Then when he comes to "make up his jewels" you will be among that blessed throng who inhabit the "new earth wherein dwells righteousness," where all is joy, and praise and giving of glory to God forever and ever.

LIZZIE ELY.

## The Power of Enjoyment.

Comparatively few people possess uniformly cheerful dispositions. Most of us have our sad hours and moods. But whatever his disposition, a man is bound by the law of his own being, and by those of his social relations, to cultivate the virtue of cheerfulness assiduously and constantly. He has no more right to injure his neighbor's happiness than to interfere with his pecuniary property, and he can not indulge in venting ill-humor or spleen, with gloomy forebodings or complaints, or even carrying a sad, sour, frowning visage without sensibly diminishing the enjoyment or comfort of others, and thus infringing on their rights. Any individual who has tried to do so can win himself from despondency and surliness. The power of enjoyment is in itself a faculty capable of improvement, and as practice always embraces power, it is a good thing to form the habit of enjoyment. It is not true that the sources of pleasure are few and rare, but it is sadly true that we pass them unnoticed. We crave the excitement of politics or fashionable life, and forget the world of innocent enjoyment that we trample under foot. Nature and art offer their treasures in vain, the loveliness of childhood, the attractions of home, the real satisfaction of honest labor, the simple pleasure of little things, all plead for utterance, but we repress them. How can we possess a cheerful spirit and a glad heart when we scornfully despise our simple pleasures? Every innocent means of happiness should be welcomed, and gloomy thoughts persistently banished.—E.C.

## Consumption Cured.

An old physician retired from practice having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure for consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full directions for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Sherar, 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.