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## **OBEDIENCE TO A HEAVENLY VISION.\***

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### **The Story of a Recent Case of Obedience.**

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BY J. B. GAMBRELL, D.D.

It was characteristic of Paul, when he saw the heavenly vision on the Damascus road to obey it without any hesitation or questioning. Paul was a great man before he was a Christian, and one of the most important marks of any great man is fidelity to the truth, as he sees it.

It comes to me more and more how good it is that all the principles set out in the Scriptures may work just as well today in our lives as they worked in the lives of the ancient worthies. That is one thing that attests the Scriptures divine. You may try any part of the Bible and it will work.

#### **A TOUCHING STORY**

The Acts of the Apostles would better be called the Acts of the Spirit, and the same Spirit who worked mightily in Peter, Paul, and Lydia, and the rest of them in that day, will work just as well today. I have seen things as striking as anything you read of in the Scriptures. Let me give an imperfect

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sketch of one scene in a far Western camp-meeting. There came into the meeting one day a couple who had been married only a few months. The man was as fine a specimen of physical manhood as you would ever wish to see, and withal a manly fellow, though he did not believe there was any truth at all in what we preached. In fact, infidelity was very strong in that part of the country, and this young fellow had fallen in with the current and had plenty of company. His wife was a small woman with a sweet face, in which you would not see any strong line of courage.

I sat on the platform, and Pastor Truett was preaching. I saw the effect in the young wife's face, when an arrow from the preacher's bow inflicted a deadly wound. Her husband saw it, too, and began to whisper to her. I did not know what he was saying, but I saw that the young woman was dissenting from him. As he whispered she shook her head, and gave to the preacher undivided attention. I afterwards learned what he said and what she said. He said: "Wife, I do not want you to be influenced by this meeting; there is nothing in it; it is a kind of hysterics, and we are getting along just as happily as any two people could. I do not want you to be troubled; let us go." But she shook her head and she stayed, and he stayed. When the meeting was over, they walked together, and he, being much taller, was stooping and speaking to her, and still she shook her head. He said to her, as they went away: "Now, we will not come back here any more, if you are going to be all wrought up and have a lot of trouble and give me trouble; there's no good in it."

They had reached home, and she faced him. It was a decisive hour. Eternity hung on it. After hearing him for a moment, the scale

would be turned. It depended on her word. What did she say? . Here is what she said: "Husband, God hath spoken to my heart to-day, and I know it, and I must hear him. I am going back to the meeting."

The husband was a gentleman, and he came with her. Shortly after, she was radiantly and gloriously converted and testified. Even more than her words did her face testify, for it had a superhuman halo over it. The husband, stout of heart, said to her: "Now, wife, the preacher said if you are converted and saved you will be saved always, and baptism is not going to save you, and joining the church won't save you. I do not want you to join the church. If you do, you will be in, and I will be out; we will be separated as long as we live, for I will never be a Christian. I don't believe in it." There was another decisive moment.

The wife looked him in the face and said: "Husband, I know my duty. I know baptism is not going to save me. I am already saved, but I have promised Jesus to obey him and follow him. I know my duty, and I am going to follow Jesus and join the church today." And she did.

The next scene was at the baptizing. There was a long line of people to be baptized in a beautiful place—a mountain stream. They were all going down in the water at once, the little wife with another woman in front. They had gone but a few steps in the water, when the wife whispered to her companion, then came back, reached forth her hands to her husband's shoulder, who stood there with a shawl to throw over his wife when she came out of the water. She looked in his face and said: "It nearly kills me to leave you, but I must follow my Saviour." The great, stalwart man fell on the sand like one shot, and we left him there praying.

It was a whole year before we went back. When we got on the camp-ground a year later, the wife was there, and the husband, and she was talking to him. He was under conviction, and had been for a whole year. Two or three days passed, and he was converted and baptized. They were walking by where I stood under a tree just coming up from the place of baptizing. I spoke to them and said: "May I give you young people a word of advice? Commence right now to have family worship." The husband by this time had seen the heavenly vision and was not disobedient to it. He said: "We have already begun that. We had family prayers last night." What did it? Decision, whole-hearted devotion to duty as duty was revealed.

The sequel of all of it was that this husband's whole family was won to the faith. The little wife won the battle because she lived up to the light shown her.

The weakness of the churches today lies in the fact that even the leadership in many of them is half-hearted. We will come to a glorious day everywhere when every man turns his face toward the light and looks for the vision, and when he sees it, is not disobedient to it.—*Baptist Chronicle*.