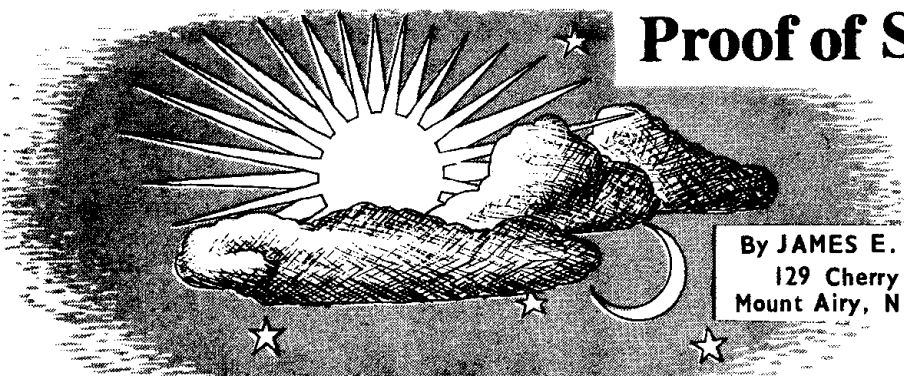


The **Sword** AND **Staff**

"Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2)

"Feed the Flock." (I Peter 5:2)

Are Visions, Dreams, and Religious Experiences Proof of Salvation?



By JAMES E. GIBBONS
129 Cherry Street
Mount Airy, N. C. 27030

IT IS COMMONLY BELIEVED by a sizeable segment of the religious community that conversion to Christ has not been accomplished unless preceded by prolonged agony and finally climaxed by a bizarre, but traumatic, religious experience. This sensational experience is subjectively sought usually by "praying through" (associated with an "altar"); seeking a sign, a vision—seeing a light; or hearing a voice, etc. When finally "attained," to some it means their sins were thereby forgiven. To others, God has assuredly let them know that they are among His predestined elect. The truth is that not all professing religious people have experienced these things (although they may love the Lord dearly). As a matter of fact, not all who have sought these experiences (real or imagined) have been able to have them—although they were deadly in earnest, and although they were told they must have them before they could be saved.

Obviously something is strangely amiss somewhere because God wants all to be saved (II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:4-6). Let us look carefully into the Bible, and examine the New Testament in particular, on this matter.

The book of Acts in the New Testament has been called the "book of conversions." In this short history of the early church we see how men were converted—how they became Christians. At least two of these records of conversion were accompanied by unusual and miraculous circumstances, but did this have anything to do with salvation? We shall see.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS

The tenth and eleventh chapters of Acts give the account of the conversion of the household of Cornelius,



the first Gentiles to come into the church. To start with, Cornelius saw a vision of an angel in his house, who actually talked to him (Acts 10:1-8; 11:13,14; etc.). Many today would declare that such a glorious vision definitely would be evidence of salvation, but was that true of Cornelius? Did he think he was saved? The angel told him to send for the apostle Peter "who would tell words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). The parallel words to this in Acts 10:6 read, "...he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." The messengers of Cornelius told Peter of the vision and how he was waiting to "hear words of thee" (Acts 10:22). Upon the arrival of the apostle, Cornelius again told of the vision, and then said, "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33). After the rapidly ensuing events, we read of what happened to these believing Gentiles. "And he com-

(Continued on Page 4)

THE SWORD AND STAFF

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PROVERBS of TODAY

It takes strong preaching to make strong Christians.

"The godly man never indulges a desire which he cannot form into a prayer to God."

Nothing succeeds like success, and nothing fails like failure.

"The brook would lose its song if all the rough places were removed."

More than you realize, you are what you think.

"If you live only for yourself, you are always in immediate danger of being bored to death."

Daily have a time for religious devotions, and then devote that time to religion.

"Life is too valuable and fleeting to waste it on low and trifling pursuits."

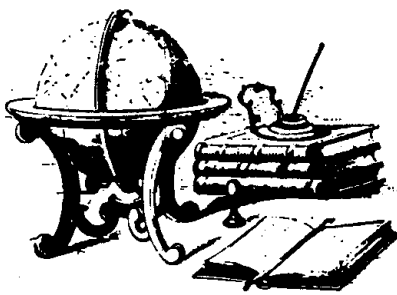
It is an impossibility for two people to understand the Bible differently—one or both may misunderstand it, but only one understanding is possible; all else is misunderstanding.

"You may be on the right track, but if you just sit there you'll be run over."

The day is lost wherein no good thing is done nor no new thing is learned.

"Small Christians obey the great commandments, but only the large are careful about the least."

In reference to restoring the church of the New Testament, we need either to PUT UP or SHUT UP.



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

ARE YOU SANCTIFIED?

WITH THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR it is a good time to talk about sanctification. Are you sanctified? Are you making an effort to be sanctified? Many turn over a "new leaf" and make resolutions for the new year.

The basic idea in the word SANCTIFY is to separate, to set apart, or set aside. In the original language of the N. T. Scriptures the stem of this word is found in a whole family of related words variously translated, i. e., sanctify, sanctification, saints; hallow, holiness, holy; purify, purification, purity; pure, chaste, clear; etc.

Sanctification, as far as the Christian is concerned, is something that takes place (1) initially, and (2) progressively.

Forgiveness of sins and conversion to Christ constitute the initial sanctification. Scriptures attest that we are sanctified by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:29; 13:12). We are taught that our sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5). The Scriptures also certify that as we give ourselves to Jesus we are chosen "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13). In I Peter 1:2, "sanctification of the Spirit" and the blood are linked together in the same verse. Specifically, how does this joint sanctification by the blood and Spirit occur? Paul reminded the Corinthians, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11). Acts 2:38 and Ephesians 5:26 are parallel verses to this. The initial sanctification takes place when a believing sinner repents and is baptized. He is thereby sanctified by the blood and the Spirit in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has been cleansed and set apart from this world.

However, in another sense now the new Christian's sanctification must be continued. It is a progressive process. He is a babe; he is immature and has much growing to do. Paul writes to people who had already been sanctified (I Cor. 1:2) in II Corinthians 6:17-7:1, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness (sanctification) in the fear of God." Paul prayed for the Thessalonians that God would "sanctify you wholly"—"your whole spirit and soul and body" (I Thess. 5:23). Paul mentions in a measure this sanctification to Timothy (II Tim. 2:21). How we need to press on! How we need to weed out of our lives all things that should not be there (lack of spirituality, bad habits, etc.)! We need to be truly separated from this contaminated world, set aside for the Master's use.

(We are aware that certain denominations take this word SANCTIFICATION and build upon it a doctrine which cannot be found in the Bible. The impression we get of their belief is that we in some sense inherit the sin of Adam. As sinners, we turn to Jesus and are saved from the sins which we personally have committed. Then at a

(Continued on Page 8)

SYSTEMATIC

Scriptural Studies

MAKING A STUDY OF THE BIBLE

Introduction:

1. The Bible is the key to salvation and man's spiritual well-being (II Timothy 3:15-17).
2. One should desire to study the Bible like he desires to eat (I Peter 2:1-3; Matthew 5:6).
3. We should study to show ourselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).
4. The Bible is a storehouse of treasure wherein are things new and old (Matthew 13:52).
5. Let us consider making a study of this most wonderful, exciting, and interesting book.

I. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

A. What does the word BIBLE mean?

1. The name BIBLE has been given to the Word of God.
2. The word literally means "book."
3. It is THE Book.

B. What does the word SCRIPTURES mean?

1. The word means "writings."
2. They are HOLY writings. (II Timothy 3:15, 16).
 - (1) Holy, sacred—distinguished from all other writings in an extra special sense.
 - (2) They are inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16).
 - (3) Notice II Peter 1:20, 21 (John 14:26; 16:13).
 - (4) We believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, but God let each man use his own writing style and express his own personality.

C. Therefore the Bible is the Word of God.

1. It is the very Word of God, and we should stand in deep respect and reverence before it—we should humbly study and leaf through its pages.
2. Various men (about 40) over a period of around 1600 years were engaged in writing it.
3. For the most part they did not know one another; their backgrounds were different; etc.
4. But when the 66 books (a library of books) was brought together it constituted one flowing story—**THE BIBLE ITSELF IS A GREAT MIRACLE.**
5. Two uniting threads or themes bind this Book together as one continuous story.
 - (1) The coming Christ and Saviour.
 - (2) The story of the nation of Israel through which he came.
6. The Bible will endure for ever.
 - (1) I Peter 1:24, 25.
 - (2) Matthew 24:35 (John 12:48).
 - (3) Revelation 20:12.

II. CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?

A. It is called a REVELATION.

1. Romans 16:25, 26.
2. Definition—"an uncovering; prop. a laying bare, making naked."
3. A revelation is that which has been revealed.

B. Various Scriptures.

1. Notice the prophecy of Isaiah 35:8.
2. More than once Paul said, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren" (I Cor. 10:1; I Thess. 4:13).
3. I Timothy 2:4 (II Timothy 3:15).

C. Understanding the Bible.

1. Certain negative barriers must be laid aside.
 - (1) James 1:21.
 - (2) I Peter 2:1-3.
 - (3) Become as a little child (Matthew 18:3, 4).
2. Positive pre-requisites to understanding the Bible.
 - (1) The eye must be single (Matthew 6:22, 23).
 - (2) We must love the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12; John 8:31, 32).
 - (3) We must will (John 7:17).
 - (4) We must desire (I Peter 2:1-3).
 - (5) Examine Matthew 5:3, 6.

III. WHY IS THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE SO IMPORTANT?

A. Our eternal destiny is involved.

1. The Scriptures make us wise unto salvation (II Tim. 3:15).
2. The Word of God produces faith (John 20:30, 31; Romans 10:17).
3. I Corinthians 1:18, 21.

B. The edification of our souls is involved.

1. Acts 20:32 (II Peter 1:3, 5-11).
2. I Peter 2:1-3 (II Timothy 3:16, 17).
3. We challenge you to read your Bible conscientiously and consistently every day and notice the change in your life.

C. Victory over sin is involved.

1. Examine Ephesians 6:11-17 (Notice verse 17).
2. Facing temptation, Jesus repeatedly said, "It is written" (Luke 4:4, 8, 12).
3. Notice Psalms 1:1-3 (119:11).
4. By keeping our minds renewed we can know the will of the Lord (right and wrong) (Romans 12:2; Hebrews 5:11-14).

IV. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH (II Tim. 2:15).

A. Some Scriptural Observations.

1. Is it Old Testament or New Testament?
2. To whom is the writer originally speaking?
3. What is the over-all theme of the particular book?
4. What is the situation and immediate context?
5. Etc.

B. Some personal suggestions.

1. Don't be afraid to spend a little money to get a usable Bible, a good Bible Dictionary, or other helps (if they are the right kind).
2. Don't be afraid to ask questions (Acts 8:30, 31, 34).
3. Don't be afraid to mark your Bible.
4. Don't be afraid to use your own mind; try to think matters through and come to a logical conclusion as to the meaning.
5. Don't be afraid to say that some religious position or doctrine is false when you find the opposite taught in the Bible.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Every admission that 'time flies' is an argument for accepting Christ without delay, working for Christ diligently, and being ever so sure of your own salvation."

—SELECTED—

ARE VISIONS, DREAMS, AND RELIGIOUS . . . (Continued from Page 1)

manded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). This same apostle had preached on the day of Pentecost, "*Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*" (Acts 2:38, 39). Who were the ones mentioned as being "afar off"? In Ephesians 2:11-17 (notice especially verse 17) we learn this expression refers to the GENTILES. In other words, the apostle preached to the household of Cornelius the same thing he had preached on Pentecost—Repent and be baptized; you will be forgiven and receive God's Spirit. This promise is for everyone who will do this, including Gentiles. Everyone who is scripturally converted is converted in this way. Visions and dreams have nothing to do with it. And, again, this same Peter wrote in I Peter 1:22, 23—"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Furthermore, he said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..." (I Peter 3:20, 21).

This apostle Peter, reviewing before the Jerusalem church and the other apostles what actually happened when he went into this Gentile's house, said, "And as I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15)—also consider verse 14 again. Peter had not fully told them what to do in reference to being saved when this extraordinary demonstration of the Holy Spirit occurred as "at the beginning." This plainly implies that this special outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not a common experience in the early church. Why say "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Pentecost; about ten years before) if it happened with every conversion? This outpouring of the Spirit had nothing to do with saving them. Peter would tell them what they must "DO" (Acts 10:6, 33, 48) to be "saved" (Acts 11:14). The special outpouring of the Holy Spirit was to prove that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, should have the gospel preached to them—it was not for salvation (Acts 11:17, 18). It happened before they were told what to "DO."

THE CASE OF SAUL OF TARSUS

Saul of Tarsus, leading a great persecution against the early church, was on his way to Damascus for that very purpose. As he approached the city suddenly he saw a great light, he heard a voice, and he actually saw Jesus in this heavenly vision (Acts 9:1-6). Many contend that Saul was therewith saved. But is this the truth? Did this heavenly vision save him?

No. Three days later when Ananias came unto him, he still had his sins. In the record of Acts 22 Paul gives the details of Ananias coming to him. It was at this time Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Why say such things to a poor, repentant sinner if he is already saved? This is no time

for empty words. Now, remember what the Lord said in answer to Saul's question on the Damascus road. "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" (Acts 9:6). This was part of what he "must do."

Then, for those who put great faith in "PRAYING THROUGH," please notice this about Saul (later called Paul). He fasted and prayed for three days (Acts 9:9, 11) and still had not "prayed through." The truth of the matter is a person cannot "pray through"—one must repent, and be baptized for the remission of his sins to get "through." Therefore, Ananias urged Paul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

What was the purpose of the vision if it was not to save Paul? Jesus said, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16). Paul further said, "...I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19). He later wrote, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (I Cor. 9:1). The purpose of the heavenly vision was not for salvation, but to qualify Paul to be an apostle of Christ, although arriving belatedly on the scene (I Cor. 15:7-9). Apostles were the "official" eyewitnesses of Christ.

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

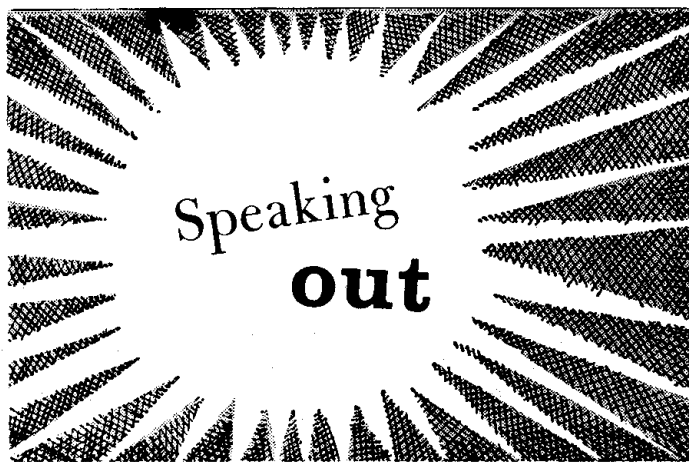
Now examine the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch. This sincere man was riding along in a chariot when God directed the evangelist Philip to join him. The Ethiopian was reading from the Old Testament Scriptures and invited Philip to comment on it. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:35-39).

You see the direction this religious discussion takes as these two men ride along in the chariot. You see the simple sequence. When the Ethiopian said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" what was the answer? "You must see a vision first"—no. "You must 'pray through' first"—no. "The church must vote on you first"—no. Rather, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." He confessed his faith and was straightway baptized. It is that simple.

THE OTHER CONVERSIONS

Upon analyzing the different accounts of the Great Commission given by our Lord, we come to the conclusion that faith, repentance, and baptism are essential to becoming saved; then continuing in what has been

(Continued on Page 7)



THE FOLLOWING LETTER came as a response to the article, "A Study in Depth of the Greek Word 'Eis,'" by brother Edward Werner which appeared on this page last month. Our reply follows.

"If your BAPTISM is essential for Salvation or remission of Sins, then the man who performs the Baptism is just as essential in God's Plan of Salvation as Jesus Christ. Since a person can't baptize themselves, having to depend on another to do it for them or to them, the one performing the rite is co-equal with Jesus Christ, meaning that the Bible is not true and Romans 5:9 should have said, Justified by His blood and water Baptism; Eph. 1:7—Redemption through His blood and water Baptism; Eph. 2:14 should have said, We are made nigh by the blood of Christ and water Baptism; Colossians 1:14 should have read, Redemption through His blood and water Baptism. Hebrews 9:22 should read, Without shedding of blood and water Baptism is no remission of sins. I Peter 1:19 should have read, With the precious blood of Christ and water Baptism. Rev. 7:14 should have said, And have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb and water baptism. Rev. 12:11 should have read, And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and water baptism (HOGWASH).

"Mr. Gibbons, What you need is to get saved by Grace through faith, and that not of yourself, but the gift of God, Not of Works (baptism, etc.). Do me a favor and take our name off your mailing list. I'll stand on God's Word."

Rev. Lee O. Meadows
Midway Baptist Church
819 N. Franklin Road
Mount Airy, N. C. 27030

Dear Mr. Meadows:

It will not be necessary for me to remove your name from our mailing list. It was never added. What you received was a sample copy as it was so marked.

In reference to your "letter," in all honesty, sincerity, and humility, I believe your reasoning has jumped the track somewhere. You have rather pointedly expressed your position (and I get the impression, with contempt). If you will take the time to read this, in all kindness I wish to express my humble understanding. We need a little less heat and a little more light. Trying to defend unscriptural denominational positions usually produces a lot of heat (controversy) but not much light.

I gathered from your writing three things that stand out in your opposition to the idea that baptism is for the remission of sins. (1) If baptism is essential, that involves another person in a man's salvation (you said that would make him equal with Christ). (2) If baptism is essential, that means the various N. T. writers should have said so every time they mentioned the blood (justified by the blood and baptism, etc.). (3) You negate Acts 2:38 and say that baptism could not be essential because it is a work. If you will be kind enough to read it, I will now comment on these things.

(1) You implied that baptism could not be for the remission of sins because it would involve someone else in another's salvation (someone to baptize him), thus making him equal to Christ. Now Mr. Meadows, do you really believe that? Paul said (and you did say you would stand on God's Word), "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). Do you get the picture? It ties a lot of knots in your argument. God has ordained to save the world by the "foolishness of preaching." Who does the preaching? MAN, of course. That involves another person in a man's salvation. Paul further said, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Cor. 4:7).

(2) You said Romans 5:9 should have said, "Justified by His blood and water baptism" (as well as the other references) if baptism is for the remission of sins. Now Mr. Meadows, are you ready for the conclusion of your "logic"? The New Testament mentions many things as saving us (having to do with our salvation) I herewith list a few. We are saved by GRACE (Eph. 2:5), JESUS (Matt. 1:21), BLOOD (Rom. 5:9), THE NAME OF CHRIST (Acts 4:12), GOSPEL (I Cor. 15:1-4), LOVE OF THE TRUTH (II Thess. 2:10), SAVE YOURSELVES (Acts 2:40), FAITH (Acts 16:31), REPENTANCE (Acts 17:30), CONFESSION (Rom. 10:9, 10), BAPTISM (I Peter 3:21), CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD (Rom. 10:13), LIFE OF CHRIST (Rom. 5:10), THE WORD (Jas. 1:21), WORKS (James 2:14, 17, 20, 24, 26), DOCTRINE (I Tim. 4:16), HOPE (Rom. 8:24), and ENDURING TO THE END (Matt. 24:13). Just because we don't find everyone of these things mentioned in a single verse does not mean the ones omitted are excluded from being essential to salvation. All Scripture must be taken if we are really going to stand on God's Word, and the Bible must be understood in the light of itself. Your kind of argument would contend that if faith were essential, Romans 5:9 would have to read, "Justified by His blood and faith." We are not ready for such an illogical conclusion are we?

We are saved by the grace of God (unmerited favor), but I believe we must accept Christ before we can be saved, don't you? Otherwise, it would be a matter of universalism (everyone would be saved as they are) or predestination. I believe that man is a responsible, free-moral agent before God, don't you? I don't believe that man is a machine or robot.

Having truly trusted and genuinely repented of our sins, we must be baptized for the remission of sins—to get our sins washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Romans 6 teaches that we are baptized into the death of Christ. Revelation 1:5 states, "Unto him that loved us, and wash-

(Continued Next Page)

SPEAKING OUT. . .

ed us from our sins in his own blood." If we are baptized to get our sins washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16), and the blood of Christ is the only thing that washes sins away, then the blood of Christ, spiritually speaking, is applied in the obedience of baptism. We are baptized into his death to get the benefits of his death. Then Paul says in Romans 6:5, "For IF we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

Mr. Meadows, have you been baptized for the remission of your sins?

(3) Finally, you relegate baptism to a position of human works (not me), thus discarding it as part of the plan of salvation. Evidently you have Eph. 2:8, 9 in mind. I am enclosing a booklet *Objections to the Necessity of Baptism Answered* which deals with this under one point. Please read pages 4 and 5. I trust that you will.

QUOTATION FROM BOOKLET

Others quote Ephesians 2:8, 9, trying to sidetrack baptism by calling it a work, and salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast." Here is the full quotation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast."

Here we see the two "sides" of salvation—"For by grace are ye saved through faith." The word *grace* means unmerited favor; here especially on the part of God toward man. We don't deserve salvation but God has offered it to us. So, everything associated with God may be summed up under *grace*. Then, there is man's side—"through faith." Man's whole relationship to God is based on faith. Faith is the mainspring of every action. The inspired writer didn't say "faith only," but he did say faith. This correctly sums up man's side of his dealings with God.

Now the "rub" supposedly comes when it says, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." This is applied by those who deny baptism as they pinpoint it as a work.

Well, what is the answer to this objection to baptism?

The answer is rather simple, as truth is many times. There are two kinds of works mentioned in the New Testament Scriptures, (1) Works of human merit and (2) Works of faith. Works of human merit greatly characterized the Law of Moses. By this no man had really been justified, according to Paul (Galatians 2:16). The Law of Moses was very much like a firing squad: The wages of sin is death; all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; and the soul that sinneth, it shall die. There was no escape. Man's goodness could not counteract his bad side to tip the scales in his favor. Death awaited. But the kind of works taught in the New Testament are works of faith. We are justified by faith as the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins, but it must be an obedient faith. The New Testament knows nothing of the common denominational doctrine of "faith only." James in chapter 2 of his very practical epistle, having reference to works of faith, says that faith without works is dead. The only time the expression "faith only" is found in the New Testament is to deny the doctrine of *faith only*. Listen to James 2:24. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and *not by faith only*."

Good works of human merit can never take away sin or undo the past. It is conceivable that a person could reform and live a good moral life above reproach, approaching above sin, then die and go to hell. His heretofore unforgiven sins would still be upon him. Good works of human merit cannot take away your past sins.

Only the blood of Christ can do this, "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

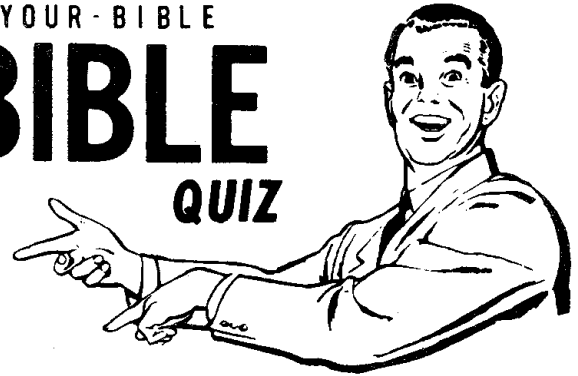
Now, how in the world can people who object to baptism apply the "works" argument against it? Baptism is not a work of human merit or righteousness, it is a work of faith. We believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Then we identify our belief in this truth by a personal death to sin, a burial and a resurrection in baptism. Listen to Colossians 2:12. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the *faith of the operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead." And, what about Titus 3:5? "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done*, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38 is a parallel Scripture to this. He tells us that baptism is not a work of righteousness.

In fact baptism is anything but a work of human righteousness, lest any man should boast. According to Acts 2:38 (22:16; Colossians 2:11, 12), we are baptized for the remission of sins—to get our sins washed away. Does human works do that? No, only the blood of Jesus. So, baptism is not a work of man, but it is God at work as the merits of the blood of Christ are spiritually applied for the sinner then. (*End of quotation*).

You concluded your letter, signing your name "Rev. Lee O. Meadows" (after saying, "I'll stand on God's

KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE

BIBLE QUIZ



1. What man twice "passed off" his wife as his sister (who really was his half sister)?
2. What was the name of the wife Abraham took in his old age?
3. What did Jacob call the place where he was when he dreamed of angels ascending and descending from heaven?
4. What was the name of the Babylonian king who finally took Jerusalem and carried the remaining tribe of Judah into captivity?
5. What prophet did Malachi say that God would send before the day of the Lord (and John the Baptist was asked if he were that prophet)?
6. When a believing and repentant sinner is baptized, what two things take place?
7. In what two N. T. books do we find the qualifications of an elder listed?
8. What did Paul say was laid up for him inasmuch as he had fought a good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith?
9. Of the seven churches in Asia (in the book of Revelation), to how many did the Lord say, "I know thy works"?
10. With what words are each of the letters to the seven churches ended?

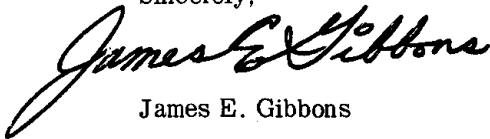
(Answers found elsewhere in this issue)

Word") Without being unduly critical, where is God's Word for this pretentious title, "REVEREND"? The apostles never once used it. In fact, in Paul's letters he calls himself a "bondservant." Jesus warned the scribes and Pharisees about such vainglorious titles (Matt. 23:6-12). Holy and reverend is God's name—not man's (Psalms 111:9).

And where is God's Word for the name "Baptist" church? (I speak in humility). The New Testament says that in "all things" Christ is to have the pre-eminence. (Col. 1:18). Party names are condemned as sinful along with the party spirit (denominationalism) (I Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-5). Who purchased the church with his own blood? (Acts 20:28). Is he not worthy of all the glory?

Mr. Meadows, much of the content of your "letter" was once my convictions, but a deeper study of God's Word changed them. It is altogether possible that you have not thought about some of these things. Regardless what one may say these Scriptures are still in the Bible—we will face them in the Judgment. We had better believe and preach them now.

Sincerely,



James E. Gibbons

ARE VISIONS, DREAMS, AND RELIGIOUS...
(Continued from Page 4)

commanded, to remaining saved (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47). The conversions in the book of Acts correspond faithfully to this simple arrangement. Men preached the gospel; sinners believed it, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38-41; 3:19; 6:7; 8:12, 35-39; 10:48; 16:14, 15, 30-34; 18:8; etc.). Paul asserted in II Corinthians 4:7 that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." Paul also says that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). Nowhere is it recorded that God directly spoke from heaven to tell sinners what to do to be saved. Nowhere do we find angels doing this. The seeing of visions, angels, or heavenly lights (whether real or imagined) does not save nor is it a proof of salvation. God has ordained that through the "foolishness of preaching" to save the world. This treasure is carried in the earthen vessel of man. God uses man to tell other men what to do to be saved.

FACT, FAITH, AND FEELING

The mind of man with its intricate emotional makeup many times is tricky. It is not altogether reliable—especially when all of the facts are not in hand. In the Bible we read of Joseph with his coat of many colors. His father had showed partiality in giving him this special gift which only served to make his neglected brothers more jealous. We know the story how these brothers sold Joseph into slavery because of their bitterness toward him. Dipping his coat of many colors in the blood of a goat, they brought it to their father. The heart of poor Jacob was broken as he was overcome by grief. As far as he knew and was concerned, his favored son was dead—a wild beast had killed and torn his body to pieces.

He actually felt, acted, and reacted as though it were so. Many years ago when word came that Joseph was alive down in the land of Egypt, he refused to believe it. He was so fully convinced that his son was dead.

And experiences in religion within themselves prove nothing. One's feelings are not a safe guide. A thing can be taught a person so strongly, and he believe it so assuredly, that he reacts as though it were the truth (although it may not be—everyone cannot be right religiously for there are too many conflicting beliefs). Fact, faith, and feeling must be in that order. Without the fact of God's Word producing the feeling and backing it our feelings are merely delusion. We are going to be judged by God's Word—not what we may feel about it.

Then, many times people seek after a tangible feeling or experience because they have little faith. But Paul says, "We walk by faith and not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). We have seen faith become alive in these people—then they stopped talking about feeling. When one truly believes, repents and is baptized into Christ, like the Ethiopian, he will go on "his way rejoicing." But his personal makeup, disposition, and circumstance will determine the degree of it. He has done the right thing and is pleased about it. His sins have been taken away. His religious experience comes as a by-product of his faith and not his faith as a by-product of his religious experience.

Would you put your faith in Christ and His Word and stop worrying about your feelings? Do what God commands, and He will take care of the rest.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). □

LOST HIS RELIGION

A PREACHER MET a member on Monday morning. "I haven't seen you in services for some time," said the preacher. "No, I've lost my religion," said the backslider. "Well, I surely hope no one finds it," was the preacher's prompt reply. —Selected—

THE STRANGE WAYS OF GOD

*Some things my Father sends me,
I cannot understand;
Some things that He allows me,
Seem strange as from His hand.
The frequent wounds and bruises,
That bring me inward pain,
Seem naught to me but losses
Without a trace of gain.
No gain? Ah, I'd forgotten
My Father's faithful Word,
That all things work for blessings
To them that love the Lord.
So now I take the "strange things"
That He is pleased to send,
As blessings, shaped and tempered
By His own loving hand.*

By L. W. BECKLEY

GOD

If the word "GOD" were written upon every blowing leaf, embossed on every passing cloud, engraved on every granite rock, the inductive evidence that God is in the world would be no stronger than it is. When the human intellect thinks in terms of finality with the world as its premise, the "therefore" of every syllogism will be "God." The universe is a big advertising poster spelling "God."

-Selected

OBJECTIONS TO THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM ANSWERED

This helpful 8-page tract-booklet is now in use throughout the U.S., and many testimonies of its usefulness have reached us. It fully answers common denominational objections, i.e. "thief on the cross," "baptism is a work," and just "believe and be saved." Order a supply in any number at 6¢ a copy. Ask for a free sample before ordering if you prefer.

IN TOO MANY "CHURCHES" TODAY

- *CULTURE* has taken the place of *CHRIST*.
- *PSYCHOLOGY* has taken the place of the *HOLY SPIRIT*.
- *GREED* has taken the place of *GOD*.
- *CONVENIENCE* has taken the place of *CONVICTION*.
- *PLAYING* has taken the place of *PRAYING*.
- *ORGANIZING* has taken the place of *AGONIZING*.
- *CONTESTS* have taken the place of *CONQUESTS*.
- *GOSSIP* has taken the place of the *GOSEL*.

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MULTITUDES HAVE BEEN DRAWN BY THIS MAGNET



EDITORIAL COMMENTS . . . (Continued from Page 2)

later date, usually after much time, prayer and agony, we receive the "second work of grace," which is thought to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit and is called *SANCTIFICATION*. It is said that we are therewith sanctified from the inherited sin of Adam, and it is believed by many that we will thereafter live above sin.

But is this the truth? The Scriptures that we have brought out earlier in this article show otherwise. Becoming a Christian and being sanctified are one and the same thing. The Corinthians were sanctified people (I Cor. 1:2; 6:11), but did they live above sin? Any one who has read the I Corinthian letter know that the church at Corinth was plagued with sin. They had to repent and regain their salvation (II Cor. 7:8-11). Then, the apostle John, writing to Christians, had this to say: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"—I John 1:8,9.). ☐

Tragedy

Tragedy tests us. It can show us the fine stuff of which we are made. The worthiness of the ship is not determined while it rides at ease in the sheltered harbor. Let us know the smash of the waves in a storm on the open sea, and then it can be assured of its sea-worthiness. It is so with our characters. In meeting up to tragedy we begin to know how strong and resourceful we really are. And in the knowing there is confidence.

ANSWERS TO "KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE" BIBLE QUIZ

1. Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 2. Genesis 25:1; 3. Genesis 28:12, 16-19; 4. Nebuchadnezzar; 5. Malachi 4:5, 6; 6. Acts 2:38; 7. I Timothy 3 and Titus 1; 8. II Timothy 4:6-8; 9. All of them; 10. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

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