

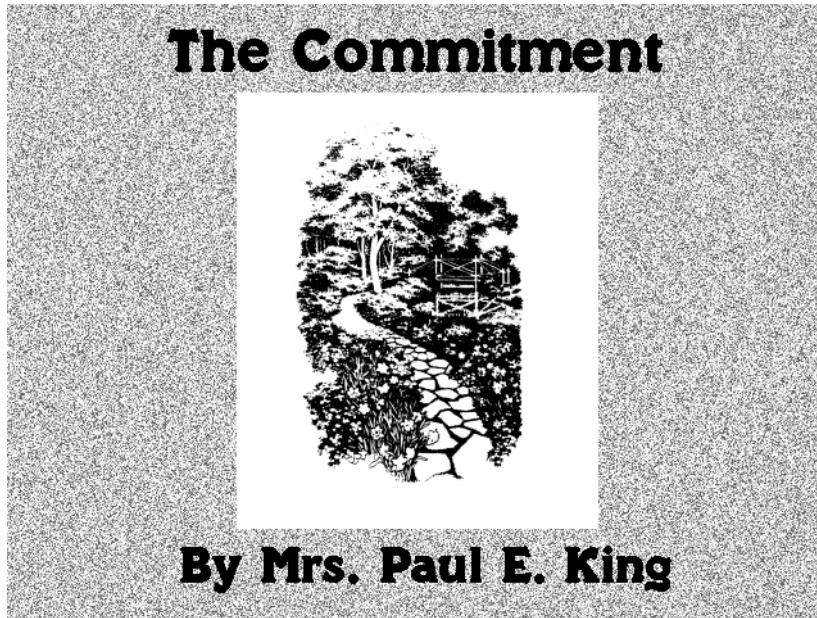
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**THE COMMITMENT**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

Daniel Scott looked at his very old but very trusty timepiece for the sixth time -- or more -- wondering how he could possibly finish the job at hand before the day ended and still get over to the Pancost place and look into the problem there. When she had called his home two days ago, Mrs. Pancost had said she didn't think it would take him long to fix the leak beneath her kitchen sink; but until he could see for himself, he didn't know.

He prayed a silent prayer now as he worked. He had told Mrs. Pancost he'd be over this very day, sometime after three, when he felt he should be through the big job he'd been working on most of the week. And now it was almost three, and still there was much work needing done before he'd leave.

He worked and prayed, torn between the work at hand and his commitment to Mrs. Pancost. Just out of school and apprenticeship under the sharp scrutiny of old Mr. Jagers, Daniel knew what Mr. Jagers would insist that he do -- stick to the work at hand.

He felt sweat form on his brow. The big job he was working on was indeed most profitable, money wise. In fact, it was the biggest job he'd had since going out on his own. He knew the Lord had sent it to him in answer to his prayers for work business work. And the young couple in whose house he was working wanted to get moved in as quickly as possible. He knew this.

He had thought he'd be able to finish everything before the end of the day. But things hadn't worked out this way: There were extra things needing done in both the upstairs and downstairs bathrooms as well as extras in the kitchen, since the young couple had made a considerable amount of changes from the original plans, and that only two days ago. He hoped the present plans would be the final plans. Still, if they weren't, he would do whatever was necessary and what was required of him in his line of work. This was all a part of his job -- the putting in and the tearing out, when minds changed.

A smile pulled at the corners of his mouth. He thought of Rebekah then. Sweet, gentle, and easy-to-please Rebekah. He could just see her look of disbelief, if she could have seen the changeover the young couple decided upon after he had everything well underway by the first, original plans.

He had heard that it was not an uncommon thing for some women to do what had so recently happened to him, in making a radical change; but the astounding thing to Daniel was that it wasn't the young woman's idea at all, but her husband's, in this case. Still, she had seemed every bit as much for it as her husband.

Again Daniel smiled. Life with Rebekah would never be hard nor tedious, he was sure: Rebekah was a devout Christian. She loved the Lord deeply and greatly. She would make him a wonderful wife, when that day

arrived. For the present, however, he felt duty bound to show himself an able provider. He felt this was a scriptural injunction for a husband. And he didn't want Rebekah to have to go to work.

He glanced quickly at the time piece again then put his tools of trade away, some in the big tool box he carried with him inside the truck and the others in a compartment which he'd built inside the truck, then he headed toward the Pancost residence, feeling compelled and duty bound to fulfill his previously arranged commitment. He was a Christian and, as such, he had an obligation to God and to his fellowman. A commitment was meant to be fulfilled, was it not? In the sight of God, he knew this was of prime importance. A promise made should be a promise kept, if at all possible.

Fifteen minutes later, Daniel pulled up in front of the house. He noticed that he was in a neighborhood where all the houses were large and expensive looking. He wondered what Mrs. Pancost was like. She had sounded pleasant enough on the phone but he knew that sometime pleasant voices could be anything but pleasant when one was trying to get the necessary work done.

He recalled one home to which he was called and, now, he hoped it would be a long, long time -- if ever! -- before he'd ever get into another like it. The woman of the house had stood over him like some great guard dog, "barking" out orders to him how to do the work. She had even picked up several of his wrenches and almost ordered him to use them instead of the ones he was using, and which fit the pipes upon which he was working.

Nothing he did seemed to please her, and when he finished the job and was ready to leave, she threatened to sue him if the work was not satisfactory. He had felt drained of his manly strength and all the way home he prayed for the unsmiling, sour-looking, crotchety woman. The following day he mailed her a Gospel tract explaining the way of salvation, and from that work day on, he had prayed daily for her soul.

He parked his truck now and hurried up the beautiful cobblestone sidewalk to the door. It opened immediately to reveal a smiling and very petite older woman who said most pleasantly, "Oh, you've come. And right on time! I'm so thankful. The leak's in the kitchen, Sir. Come with me."

"Thank you, Mrs. Pancost; but I'll need my tools first," and Daniel hurried back to the truck after one of his smaller tool boxes.

Mrs. Pancost stood on the porch, smiling as he came up to her.

"It's wholesome and uplifting to me to find someone who still keeps his word," she said. "And, especially, in one so young as you, young man." Then, sadly, she added, "It's almost impossible to find anyone who takes a commitment or a promise seriously these days. In my day, one's word was as good as gold: you could count on and depend upon a promise made as a promise being fulfilled."

"To one who is a Christian -- a child of God -- that's the way it still is, Mrs. Pancost," Daniel said with a smile.

A smile crossed the woman's face and a tear slipped down her cheek. "You . . . you are a Christian then?"

"That's right. I gave my heart to the Lord nine years ago and I've never been the same since."

"Tell me about it, please," Mrs. Pancost said, leading Daniel into a spacious, very beautiful and cheerful kitchen. "The leak is beneath my double sink," she stated, opening the cabinet doors beneath the sink.

As Daniel worked on the few minor repairs that were necessary and needed, he said, "I was born and raised in a Christian home. But that didn't make me a Christian: I had to repent of my sins, confess and forsake them, and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive me and to come into my heart, which I did. And that wonderful night, kneeling beside my bed, I was converted. It was glorious."

"I had a beloved grandmother who, when I was just a little girl, told me about being converted," Mrs. Pancost admitted brokenly. "She died when I was still just a very little thing, but I have never forgotten the precious things she used to tell me. Many times I have longed to talk with someone who could show me how to become a Christian. God sent you to me, young man."

"Were your parents not Christians?" Daniel asked.

"No. How I wish they had been! My mother made light of her mother's faith, and her old-fashioned ways and beliefs. This was the grandmother who told me how wonderful it was to be converted and to serve Jesus. After her death, I heard nothing about this again; not ever. My parents never went to church except for a wedding, or some such ceremony.

"My father was a wealthy merchant man and my mother was as proud of him as if he were a king. They had a wonderful life together and loved each other very deeply. But I've often wondered where their souls are. I know where my grandmother is: Before she died, she took my little hand in hers and, smiling into my face, she said, 'Mary, my dear, dear little girl, meet me in Heaven. Give your heart to Jesus, and join me someday in Heaven. I'm going to live with Jesus and the shining angels, Mary. Meet me There.' And she died, still holding on to my hands. Young man, God sent you here. I have longed for years to find the peace and joy and inner soul rest which was ever-present in my grandmother's life. What must I do to become a Christian and get converted?"

"Repent, and ask God for Christ's sake to forgive you of your sins. It's not His will that any should perish, or be lost, Mrs. Pancost; but that all should come to know Him. He's waited a long time for you to come."

"I'm ready now. I want to meet my dear grandmother in Heaven. Please pray for me."

Placing his wrenches on the sink floor and wiping his hands on one of his clean-up cloths, Daniel began to pray for the soul of the petite woman.

In a little while she exclaimed joyously and with a radiant face, "He's come! He's come! I'm converted! Now I know why grandmother was always joyful and sweet and happy. My soul's been washed -- in Jesus' precious Blood! Oh blessed, blissful rest! Soul rest! Thank you, young man, for coming."

All the way home, Daniel felt like he was floating on a cloud. It had been a wonderful day. And he was thankful indeed that he had kept his commitment promise to be at the Pancost house some time after three, for Mrs. Pancost had told him before leaving that it was easy, and a delight, for her to listen to him and believe all he had told her about his conversion and

heart change, since he was a young man who kept his promise and was as good as his word.

"Lord," he said softly as he raised his eyes heavenward, "help me to keep my word -- my commitments and my promises -- always. Amen."