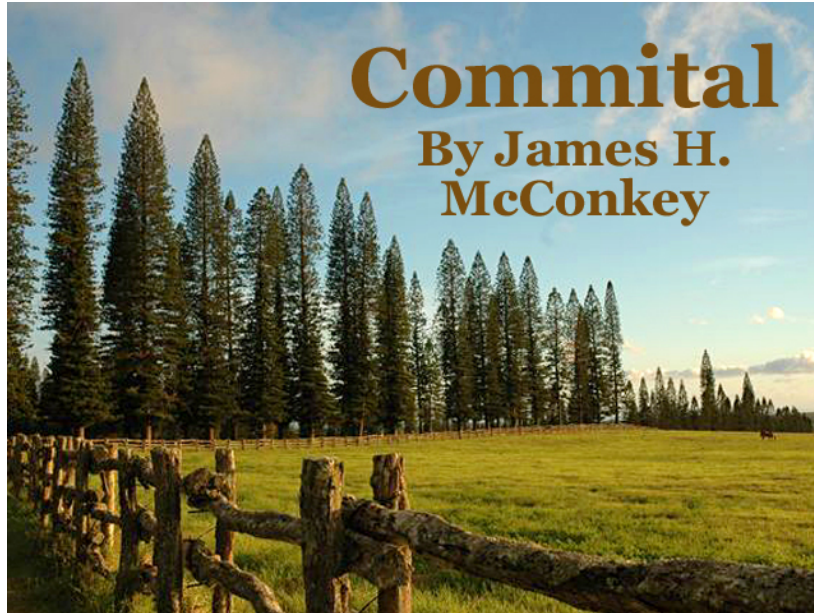


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COMMITTAL

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SCRIPTURE AND INTRODUCTION

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." -- Ps. 37: 5

We have seen that the gist of the truth concerning surrender is found in Paul's terse sentence, "Yield yourselves unto God." This single word "yourselves" sweeps in the whole scope of our lives, from horizon to horizon. It is the descriptive word of a quit-claim deed which transfers forever to God all we are and all we have. Let us, reflecting upon its all-inclusiveness, notice that it beseeches us to yield unto God:--

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01 -- OUR ALL IN COMMITTAL

God would not only have us yield all that we are to His service, but all that we have to His keeping. He would have His yielded children to be at perfect rest and peace concerning all the varied interests of their lives. He would have them "anxious in nothing;" "casting all their care upon Him;" "kept in perfect peace" because they trust in Him. Essential to this is the great lesson of committal. For perfect peace has its human condition in a perfect committal. This would He have us fulfill that He may show His perfect power to keep.

Suppose, by way of illustration, you own a rare and precious diamond. It has newly come into your possession as an heirloom from a departed loved one. By and by, as you come to realize the priceless worth of the gem, you begin to be burdened with anxious care in the keeping of it. Every noise at night startles you: every daily narrative of theft or burglary fills your heart with fear: every passing week but increases the burden of your care and disquietude concerning this treasure. But at last a sympathetic friend who knows your sad plight approaches you some day with this timely suggestion: "Friend," says he, "your heart is burdened with care in the matter of this jewel because you yourself are keeping it. And that heart will continue to be burdened so long as you continue to keep it. Do you not know that at a certain site in your town stands a strong trust building to which you may commit the keeping of your gem and be at perfect rest concerning it?"

Impelled by these words you go down town to the spot named. You walk around the great building, noting its massive walls, strong doors, and barred and bolted windows. You go inside and scrutinize closely the great vault: the time lock

with its marvelous mechanism: the complicated lock-boxes for the keeping of treasures. Perfectly satisfied, you commit your diamond to the cashier, see him deposit it, and close the steel doors, locking and double-locking them against all intruders. And now something has happened to the jewel. You have committed it to a place which is able to keep it against all intrusion.

But something has happened to you, too. For you find yourself at perfect peace about your treasure. The thief may prowl about your mansion, break your bolts and bars, yea, even enter your home. But he cannot disturb your peace concerning the now committed jewel. Whenever you think of the diamond you think of the strong trust-building which now securely keeps it, and straightway you are at rest. At rest indeed concerning your diamond. But there is still another lesson for you to learn. For you own a valuable, watch which is yet in your keeping. Concerning this you still bear this same strain of anxious care until your friend comes again and, telling you that they also keep watches in the same trust-building, advises you to commit yours to its secure keeping. This you do and peace comes concerning the committed watch. And now as you continue to worry over your stocks, and bonds, and other valuables, your friend comes at the last and tells you that you need have no care at all concerning anything. "For," says he, "they keep in that trust-building not only diamonds and watches, but stocks, bonds, mortgages, securities, leases and deeds; in short, all the personal valuables you own. Now if you will just make a complete committal, you will have complete peace."

Whereupon you gather up everything you possess and sweepingly commit the whole of it to that trust-building which has already won your confidence by its safe-keeping of your first and rarest treasure, and then you come into perfect rest because of your perfect committal to a perfect trustee.

Children of God, is not the truth very plain here? And does it not convict our hearts? There was a time in your life when you were sorely burdened in the effort to keep the rarest jewel in existence -- that of your own soul. After years of self-effort, self-righteousness, and agonizing struggle you gave up the effort and simply and trustfully threw yourself upon Jesus Christ, looking to Him in helpless trust to keep that which you had committed to Him. Therefore, for years you have been at rest concerning the keeping of this priceless jewel of your own soul, for you know whom you have believed and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him.

Yet though at peace concerning your soul's salvation, your life is burdened with anxious care about a host of other things. You are anxious about your business, your health, your loved ones, your future, your friends, your service and ministry for Him, and your numberless other interests. Has it never dawned upon you that just as you committed your soul to Jesus Christ so He would have you commit everything else to Him? Have you never learned that only a perfect committal will give you a perfect peace? Have you never seen that the blessed Lord

is lovingly and tenderly interested in every detail of your life, and would have you commit all to Him, even as you committed the keeping of your soul?

For care is linked with keeping. He who keeps the treasure bears the care. Thus if we try to keep our lives we bear the care. But if we commit them and all their interests to God He bears it. Yet how can God keep that which we do not commit? "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep" -- what? That which I keep myself? That which I insist upon carrying, managing, and worrying over? Nay "that which I have committed unto Him." "Casting all your care upon Him" is as true for us as "for He careth for you" is true of Him.

Therefore, beloved, is there anything in your life that has long been a haunting shadow of care, a burden of anxiety, a barrier between you and perfect peace? If so, then search your heart and see if this be not the explanation of it. Take it, and definitely, finally, and irrevocably commit it to God. How else can He possibly keep it? Is this not the secret of your failure? There is nothing wrong with the trust-building! You are sure of that. "He ABIDETH faithful." It must be in your failure to commit, for He has never since the world began failed to KEEP that which has been committed to Him. Therefore, if there be lack of perfect peace in your life hasten to make that perfect committal which will permit a perfect Christ to prove His perfect keeping.

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02 -- OUR WILLS IN SUBMITTAL

Not only are we to commit our life to God, but also to let Him have His way with it. With the committal of all things should go submission in all things. When we yield our lives we yield our plans concerning those lives, and accept God's dealings with them. Not only "commit your way unto the Lord," but "trust also in Him." Not only take your hands off but let Him put His hands on just as He may see fit. Many of us err here. We commit the clay into the potter's hand, but we will not stay under that hand. We commit the marble to the divine sculptor, but we do not relish His use of the chisel. We commit our ship to the broad ocean of His will and purpose, but we do not like His grasp upon the helm.

Therefore, when the potter begins to mold with pressure that is painful to us: the sculptor to smite and chisel until it hurts: or the helmsman to steer into the teeth of storm, gloom, and tempest that chill our hearts with fear, we would fain shrink from the pressure, the blow, the unknown path which we had not included in our plan for life.

But this we may not do. For God alone knows the very best for the life that has been placed in His hands. He alone sees the preparation it needs for an eternal existence hereafter. We know but a brief share of its present. He knows its end "from the beginning." He alone knows how to shape it to His perfect purpose. He

knows what will best work out its eternal weight of glory in the ages to come. But to do this, He needs a submitted will. He cannot work the wish of His Father-heart for us if we shrink, waver, and rebel under our new and unexpected treatment. The "Commit" that puts all into His hands needs the "Trust also" that keeps all things under His hand.

Therefore let us not only sweepingly commit to God's keeping, but trustfully submit to God's chastening. Let us not only give ourselves into His hand, but also stay under His hand as He deals out to us that which is best from His standpoint, however grievous it may be from ours. As we deliberately and irrevocably commit all unto His keeping, let us say to Him: "Lord, this life which I now yield to Thee, I know not what is best for it, but Thou dost. While I carried out my own will concerning it, I found naught but failure, mistake, fruitlessness, disappointment. Now, yielding it to Thee, I submit also to Thy will concerning it. As Thou mayest see fit, send prosperity or adversity: rest or toil: service or suffering: abasement or exaltation: crucifixion or glorification: the starlit night of faith or the meridian blaze of Thy conscious fullness. Stay not Thine hand: spare not the chastening fires: cool not the furnace or crucible until Thou hast had Thy perfect way with me. By Thy grace I will walk with Thee, though the path be not of my choosing. I will trust Thee when I cannot see Thee. I will submit to Thee when I cannot understand Thee. Yea, I yield myself wholly, absolutely, irrevocably, in humble, trustful submission, to Thy blessed will."

It will help us much in so coming into a place of perfect submissiveness to God's will if we ponder carefully a few self-evident truths. They are these. Our God is a God of tender, compassionate, unchangeable, and limitless LOVE. AND THE GOD OF LIMITLESS LOVE IS WORTHY OF LIMITLESS TRUST. If these be not truths then there is no truth in the universe! If the Man who died for us does not perfectly love us, and is not worthy of unconditional, boundless trust, then is the gospel of the grace of God a fable, and the faith of His redeemed ones but the flimsy fabric of a dream. And if the God of limitless love is worthy of limitless trust shall we not accord it to Him, or else stand condemned in our own hearts?

Let us be honest. Which is the troubler of our soul? Do we doubt God's perfect love and consequent perfect trustworthiness? If so let us confess that with secret shame. Do we believe in God's perfect love and perfect faithfulness? Then let us yield Him that perfect trust and submissiveness which such belief has a right to claim.

Moreover if God is Love His will is the most perfect thing in the universe for us, His children. The Holy Ghost says it is a "perfect will." (Rom. 12:2.) He does not say that we always see it to be perfect, but that it is perfect. Therefore it is as perfect when we cannot understand it as when we can; as perfect when it seems unjust and grievous to us, as when it seems just and acceptable; as perfect when the way is rough, toilsome, and shrouded in thick darkness, as when it is smooth, easy of ascent, and flooded with noon-day light.

The question that comes to us should be: -- Is, or is not the will of God, who is Incarnate Love, the best thing in the world for us? If it is, then let us either yield to it, or confess that we do not care to so do. And yielding ourselves because it is good and perfect, do not let us draw back when it seems to be otherwise. So to do, is to dethrone Faith and enthrone our poor judgment in her stead.

Finally, the God who is Love is also supreme. Therefore everything which comes into our lives is either sent by Him or permitted by Him. Reason grows dizzy and staggers at this, but faith calmly and trustfully accepts it as an eternal truth. For God Himself declares it. "All things work together for good to them that love Him." Not that all things are, good in themselves: for evil is not good. But all things WORK TOGETHER for good to them that love Him.

In some way, God will make even the wrath of man to praise Him. In some way, the God who rules in righteousness will overrule all unrighteousness. In some way, even the evil that assails His children is, by the time it reaches them, in His permissive will for them. This is inscrutable to us now. But faith bows under His hand and joyfully accepts His assurance: "What I do thou knowest not now but thou shalt know hereafter!"

"Ye thought evil... but God meant it unto good," said the sobbing Joseph to his awe-stricken brethren. The blackest crime of human history was the crucifixion of Him Who was Joseph's great anti-type. It seemed the master-stroke of Hell: the final extinguishment of the light of the world: the utter defeat of the God of the universe. Yet out of it flowed the blessings of a redemption which shall glorify God through all the ages of eternity.

"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Beloved, that God is love -- that as such He is worthy of absolute trust -- that His will must be the best thing in existence for us -- and that all which comes to us is either sent or suffered to come, by Him -- these are great foundation stones of "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus." Have we forever settled down upon them? In the full light of them an absolute submission to the will of the Christ of love is not only intelligent and reasonable, but will bring us into a place where His eternal peace can keep our hearts beyond all our fondest dreams.

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03 -- A REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE ATTESTING TO THESE TRUTHS

In attestation of these truths is recalled here the remarkable experience of a child of God, narrated to the writer from her own lips. Earnestly longing and seeking for years to know the truth of the fullness of life in Christ, she came one day into a Bible class in an interior city of this state. There as she sat eagerly drinking in the

truth, God sent to her hungry heart the message it had long needed. She learned that the Spirit whom she had been beseeching for years to enter had already come in to abide forever. She saw that what God wanted was not long and agonizing waiting and petition for His incoming, but an absolute submission of the will in all things and for all time to Him who was already indwelling. And so one bright Sabbath day, rejoicing in the faith of His indwelling, she yielded herself a living sacrifice unto God, in complete and trustful submission to His will, whatever it might be.

No great manifestation of power followed: no rapturous uplift: no wonderful vision of things of which it was unlawful to speak. But her hitherto restless soul was flooded with peace, the unspeakable peace of the God of peace Himself, filling her soul with His conscious presence in response to the utter yielding of the being to Him. The passing months found that peace still abiding. Through that absolute yielding of herself to His will, God had anchored her soul in a haven of rest by moorings so secure that no storm seemed able to rend them. She was established in Christ Jesus. And now came a test that proved to her forever what God could do with a submitted will and a trustful heart.

"I had a son," said she, "a youth about eighteen years of age. He was a bright, joyous boy: a Christian, but not living as close to God as my heart yearned to see him. But him, too, as well as all else that I possessed, I had definitely committed to God when I made my surrender. When the adversary tried to break my peace, tempting me to doubt concerning my boy, I simply lifted up my heart and said, 'Lord, I have committed him to Thee; Thy will be done in his life.'

"One summer night, after he had retired to his room, attracted by the sound of music in a near-by square, he went out, unknown to me, to enjoy it. Strolling up the street in company with another lad, these two exchanged some words of boyish badinage [banter] with a man standing by, and then passed on. As they passed the corner of an alley farther on, this man stepped out from its shadow and shot my boy dead on the spot. At midnight my doorbell rang, and the policeman, to whom I opened, said: 'Madam, your son is seriously hurt and you are wanted immediately.'

"I quickly called my husband and other son and hastened up the street, not knowing what was coming. All I remember now of that midnight journey was that as I sped along the silent street I found myself lifting up my heart to God and repeating again and again: 'Lord, I have committed him to Thee: Lord, Thy will be done: Thy will be done.'

"When I reached the spot I kneeled by the prostrate form of my boy, touched his face, grasped his hands, and lifted his head, only to find him weltering in a pool of blood, already dead!

"When the awful fact dawned upon us, my husband fainted, and my other son was well-nigh overcome with grief. But there, in the dead of night, in the awfulest

hour of a mother's life, I came to know what God could do with a submissive will and a trustful heart. I would never have thought it possible for God to keep a weak, trembling, stricken soul as He kept me in that dreadful hour. As I knelt by my murdered boy the fountains of grief seemed stayed. Underneath me were unseen, everlasting arms. A flood-tide of unutterable peace swept into my soul, and brooded over my stilled heart with an eternal calm that nothing in the universe, it seemed, could ever disturb.

"When the day dawned, men and women flocked into my house and cried, 'What kind of a woman are you? What do you mean? How do you explain this strange calm that seems to possess you?' and I could only answer, 'It is not I, but Christ, CHRIST!'"

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04 -- IN CONCLUSION

Troubled one, is the way gloomy, and does God seem harsh and unloving in the inscrutable trials and afflictions that He has permitted to come into your life, even though He Himself has not directly sent them? Does the burden seem more than you can bear? The trial so peculiar that the darkness can never be dispelled? The grief too agonizing ever to be soothed? The wound too deep ever to be healed? Then remember this: only through perfect submissiveness and perfect trustfulness can God have His perfect way in our lives. Do we want Him to have that way and carry out His highest purpose for us? Then no affliction is too grievous, no furnace too hot, no price too costly in comparison with the infinite blessedness which comes with entire submission, and unconditional trust in Him.

Since this is the sole condition by which God can perfectly work through us, it must be the supreme one He would have wrought in us. Well is it for us that He will not even stop short of suffering in order to accomplish it. Here it is that divine fatherhood overtops human. For human parents through sympathy may spare us suffering. But in the light of eternity the highest exhibit of God's Father love will be seen in His refusal to spare us our deepest suffering because in so doing we would have missed our highest good.

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THE END