

# The Dedicated Life

by James H. McConkey

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"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God* that ye *present your bodies* a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1).

"By the mercies of God." What does that mean? It is like this: One evening you are walking quietly home from your place of business. Suddenly the fire alarm rings out; your heart leaps with fear as the thought of home and loved ones flashes upon you. As you near home your worst fears are realized; your house is in flames. You rush thither and find that your wife and the children have been saved, except one little one who is in the building. The next instant a brave fireman hurries past and dashing into the burning house, finds his way to the little one, carries her out through the flames and smoke, and puts her in your arms—safe. Weeks go by, and then one day this same brave man comes to you and showing his hands, says, "Behold my love and mercies to you. See these burned and blistered hands; see this scarred face, and these scorched

feet. I am in need. I want help. I beseech you, by the mercies to your child that you help me." There is nothing in the world you would not give to that man, even unto the half of your kingdom.

Even so, Jesus Christ, our loving Lord, stands here tonight. He stretches forth His hands, pierced with cruel nails for you and me. He points to the wound in His side, made by the blood-thirsty spear. He shows you the scars on His forehead, made by the crown of thorns. He says, "My child, behold My mercies to you. I saved you from the guilt of sin; I brought you from death unto life; I gave you the Spirit of God. Some day I will glorify your body and will make you to sit down with Me on My throne. My child, by My mercies, I beseech you." You say, "Lord, what do you want from me?" He answers, "I want yourself. I want you for My kingdom and My service. I beseech you, by My mercies to you, give your life to Me." First:—

*Give your life to God, and God will FILL your life.*

I was standing on the wall of a great lock. Outside was a huge lake vessel about to enter. At my feet lay the empty lock—waiting. For what? Waiting to be filled. Away beyond lay great Lake Superior with its limitless abundance of supply, also waiting. Waiting for what? Waiting for something to be done at the lock ere the great lake could pour in its fullness. In a moment it was done. The lock-keeper

reached out his hand and touched a steel lever. A little wicket gate sprang open under the magic touch. At once the water in the lock began to boil, and seethe. As it seethed I saw it rapidly creeping up the walls of the lock. In a few moments the lock was full. The great gates swung open and the huge ship floated into the lock now filled to the brim with the fullness in-poured from the waiting lake without.

Is not this a picture of a great truth about the Holy Spirit? Here are God's children, like that empty lock, waiting to be filled. And, as that great inland sea outside the lock was willing and waiting to pour its abundance into the lock, so here is God willing to pour His fullness of life into the lives of His children. But He is *waiting*. For what? Waiting, as the lake waited, *for something to be done by us*. Waiting for us to reach forth and touch that tiny wicket gate of consecration through which His abundant life shall flow and fill. Is it hard to move? Does the rust of worldliness corrode it? Do the weeds and ivy-vines of selfishness cling about and choke it? Is the will stubborn, and slow to yield? Yet God is waiting for it. And once it is done, He reveals Himself in fullness of life even as He has promised; even as He has been all the time willing and ready to do. For all the barriers and hindrances have been upon our side; not upon His. They are the barriers not of His unwillingness, but of our unyieldedness. And do you say you got all of Christ when you were saved? Doubtless you did, but the point in issue here is not whether you got all of

Christ, but *did Christ get all of you?*

Again:—

*Give your life to God and God will GIVE IT BACK.*

Men seem to think when God asks for the life, He wants to rob it; to separate it from the objects of its love; to make it a hard, austere, joyless life. There never was a greater mistake. God wants your life to fill, enrich, anoint and hand back to you as a sacred trust, to be lived for His kingdom and His glory. Give your life to God, and God will give you back your life to be henceforth such a life as you never knew before.

Let me illustrate by a leaf from a business-man's diary: In my early life I entered into a partnership with a friend in the wholesale ice business. Both of us were young men and we embarked all we had, and considerably more in the business. As time passed on we met with disappointments. For two seasons in succession our ice was swept away by winter freshets. Things had come to a serious pass. It seemed very necessary that we should have ice in the winter of which I now speak. The weather became very cold. The ice formed and grew thicker and thicker, until it was fit to gather. I remember the joy that came into our hearts one afternoon when there came an order for thousands of tons of ice which would lift us entirely out from our financial stress. Not long before God had let me see the truth of committal. He showed me that it was His will

that I should commit my business to Him and trust Him with it absolutely. As best I knew how I had done so. I never dreamed what testing was coming. And so I lay down that Saturday night in quietness. But, at midnight there came an ominous sound—that of rain. By morning it was pouring in torrents. I looked out upon the river from my home upon the village hillside. Yellow streaks of water were creeping over the ice. I knew what that meant. The water was at flood stage. That condition had swept away our ice twice before. By noon the storm was raging in all its violence. By afternoon I had come into a great spiritual crisis in my life.

That might seem strange—to come into a spiritual crisis over a seemingly trivial matter. But I have learned this: A matter may be seemingly trivial, but the crisis that turns upon a small matter may be a profound and far-reaching one in our lives. And so it was with me. For by mid-afternoon that day I had come face to face with the tremendous fact that down deep in my heart was a spirit of rebellion against God. And that rebelliousness seemed to develop in a suggestion to my heart like this:

“You gave all to God. You say you are going to trust God with your business. This is the way He requites you. Your business will be swept away, and tomorrow you will come into a place of desperate financial stress.” And I found my heart growing bitter at the thought that God should take away my business when I only

wanted it for legitimate purposes. Then another voice seemed to speak: "My child, did you mean it when you said you would trust me? Can you not trust me in the dark as well as in the light? Would I do anything, or suffer anything to come into your life which will not work out good for you?" And then came that other voice:

"But it is hard. *Why* should not God spare your ice? *Why* should He take your business when it is clean and honest and you want to use it aright?" It was a very plausible sort of a voice, and for the moment I did not detect the serpent hiss that was in it—in that word, "why."

Still back and forth, with ever increasing intensity, waged one of the greatest spiritual battles of my life. At the end of two hours, by the grace of God, I was able to cry out, "Take the business; take the ice; take everything; only give me the supreme blessing of an absolutely submitted will to Thee." And then came peace.

The storm was still beating upon the earth and upon my ice. But it did not seem to make any difference whether it rained or ceased. Then and there I discovered that the secret of anxious care was not in surroundings, but in the failure of allowing life and will to be wholly given up to Him amid all circumstances and surroundings.

That night I lay down to rest in perfect peace, but with the rain pouring torrents upon my field of ice, and with every prospect that my



business would lie in wreck the next morning. But it did not. By midnight there came another sound, that of wind. By morning the bitterest blizzard of the year was upon us. By evening the mercury had fallen to the zero point. And in a few days we were harvesting the finest ice we ever had. God did not want my ice. But He did want my yielded will, and my absolute trust in Him, and when that was settled, He gave back the ice; He blessed the business; and He led me on and out, until He guided me from it entirely, into the place He had for me from the beginning—that of a teacher of His Word." Give your life to God, and God will wreck your life; rob your life; despoil your life? Nay, God will give you back your life, enriched and glorified—a life in trust for Jesus Christ as never before.

Again:—

*Give your life to God, and God will USE  
your life.*

Do you remember that wondrous word in Rom. 6:13, where the Spirit exhorts us to yield our members to God as instruments? Do you remember the marginal meaning of that word "instruments?" It is "weapons." A striking figure, that, to yield yourself to God as a *weapon*. God wants you to be a spear He can fit to His hand and hurl into the heart of the enemies' country. God wants you to be a keen, glittering blade with which He may cut His way through the very hosts of sin. God wants

you to be a mighty battering ram that He may break down the battlements of sin. God wants us to be *weapons*. Do you recall what Moses did with the rod in his hand? He did three things. First, he brought forth water from the rock; second, he opened a pathway through the sea; third, he smote the kingdom of Satan as represented by Pharaoh. Give your life to God, and he will make to flow out from it streams of refreshing as from that smitten rock. Give your life to God and He will cause that life to be a path-opener to other men and women. Give your life to God and He will make it strong to crush the power of Satan's kingdom.

Do you remember that beautiful story in the Idylls of the King, that touching one of The Passing of Arthur? Do you remember how he came down to the lake shore, leaning upon the arm of his last faithful knight, Sir Bedivere, how he took his sword, Excalibur, and handed it to the knight saying to him, "Take it down to the lake shore; cast it into the water; watch what happens, and come back and tell me the result." And Sir Bedivere took the blade, went down to the shore of the sea, and hid it in the rushes, for he had not the heart to cast it away. And then he came back to the king with a falsehood. Straightway the king bade him go again, and do his last behest. And thereupon, again, he went down to the shore. He scanned the marvelous sword, with its keen edge, tempered blade, and hilt bedecked with precious stones of unspeakable value, and he had not the heart to cast away the precious

weapon. So he hid it again, and came back to the king with the same lie upon his lips. And then the dying king, in hot indignation, warned him that, unless he hastened immediately to do his bidding, he would rise and put him to death with his own hands. Upon that the knight ran with hasty steps, picked up the blade, lifted it in the air, and hurling it out over the sea, waited to see it sink. But it sank not. Instead there rose up from the bosom of the mere, a wondrous hand,

“Clothing in white samite, mystic, wonderful,”

which laid hold of the marvelous sword, brandished it three times in the air, and then drew it down into the quiet waters beneath. The precious blade had not been cast away. It had only been taken back by him who first bestowed it upon the king.

Oh, friend, as you sit here tonight, the life which God is beseeching of you lies before you in all its splendor, like that blazing sword beside the faltering knight. How precious it is! How strong! How pregnant with possibilities for the future! To give it to God seems like casting it away, like hurling it to a place of absolute loss. But, oh, you are mistaken! For when you cast it forth, it falls—not into an engulfing sea where it is lost, but into the sea of God’s love and God’s will for your life.” And there reaches up a hand, not “clothed with white samite,” but a blood-stained hand; a pierced hand; the hand that holds you and me

tonight; and it takes your life and draws it down into the sea of God's great plan and purpose, and makes it a *weapon* in God's hands for the glory of His kingdom. Oh, give your life to God, and however humble, however obscure, however insignificant it may seem to you, *God will surely use it for His glory.*

*Give your life to God as BEST YOU KNOW.*

From the lips of a veteran missionary came this story: "A trying mishap had come to us in our work. A fire had broken out in the mission home. Before it could be quenched the roof was entirely consumed. The finances of the work were at low ebb. Every dollar was needed for the necessary work of the mission. The blow was a heavy one. That evening, as wife and I sat and talked over the situation, it seemed as depressing as possible. By and by as we talked we heard the patter of little feet on the stairway. The stair door opened, in came four white-robed figures—our own little ones. The oldest of the four walked up to us with a knotted handkerchief in her hand. Untying it, she emptied the contents into my hands. There lay all their little store of earthly wealth—pennies, half-pennies, and smaller fractional coins. "Papa and Momma," said she, "we do not have very much, but all we have we want to give to help put the roof on the mission house."

A tear stole down the missionary's cheek as he told the story and with faltering voice he

said, "It was not much they gave, my brother, but it was all they had. And, oh, it was *so acceptable!*"

Ah, friend, our Father above is not a taskmaster, hard and exacting. He knows how little at best, we have to give compared with what He has given us. Neither is He grieved that we know so little of what consecration means in all the sweep and fullness of it. All He asks is that we give ourselves to Him *as best we know*. And however stumbling, faltering and feeble our consecration may seem to us, yet if it comes from an honest, earnest, loving heart it is to Him "a living sacrifice, holy, *acceptable,*" oh, *how acceptable!* Lastly:—

### *Give your life to God* WITHOUT FEAR

I went one night to a nearby city to hear an address on consecration. No special message came to me from it. But as the speaker kneeled to pray, he dropped this sentence, "O Lord, Thou knowest we can trust the Man that died for us." And that was my message. I rose and walked down street to take the train. As I walked, I pondered deeply all that consecration might mean to my life, and—I was afraid. And then, above the noise and clatter of the street traffic came to me the message, "You can trust the Man that died for you." I got into the train to ride homeward. As I rode I thought of the changes, the sacrifices, the disappointments which consecration might mean to me, and—I was afraid. And then again, above the

roar of the train and the hubbub of voices came the message, "You can trust the Man that died for you." I reached home and sought my room. There upon my knees I saw my past life. I had been a Christian, an officer in the church, and a Sunday School Superintendent for years, but had never definitely yielded my life to God. Yet as I thought of the darling plans which might be baffled, of the cherished hopes to be surrendered and the chosen profession which I might be called upon to abandon—I *was afraid*. I did not see the better things God had for me. So my soul was shrinking back. And then, for the last time, with a swift rush of convicting power, came again to my innermost heart that searching message: "My child, my child, *you can trust the Man that died for you. If you cannot trust Him, whom can you trust?*" And that settled it for me. For in a flash I saw that the Man who so loved me as to die for me could be absolutely trusted with all the concerns of the life He had saved.

Friend, you can trust the Man that died for you. You can trust Him to lead you in the path which is the very best in this world for you. You can trust Him to baffle no plan which is not best to be foiled, and to carry out every one which is for God's glory and your highest good. You can trust Him to ask no obedience which will not end in highest blessing both for your life and the kingdom of God. You can trust Him to rob you of naught which is not for your highest good, and to bestow in fullness upon you the riches of His grace and love.

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