

**Commit Thou All Thy Grievs***Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676); tr. John Wesley (1703–1791)*

Commit thou all thy grievs  
 And ways into His hands,  
 To His sure trust and tender care,  
 Who earth and heav'n commands;  
 Who points the clouds their course,  
 Whom winds and seas obey,  
 He shall direct thy wand'ring feet,  
 He shall prepare thy way.

Thou on the Lord rely,  
 So safe shalt thou go on;  
 Fix on His work thy stedfast eye,  
 So shall thy work be done:  
 No profit canst thou gain  
 By self-consuming care,  
 To Him commend thy cause, His ear  
 Attends the softest pray'r.

Thine everlasting truth,  
 Father, thy ceaseless love,  
 Sees all thy children's wants, and knows  
 What best for each will prove;  
 And whatse'er Thou will'st  
 Thou dost, O King of kings;  
 What Thine unerring wisdom chose,  
 Thy pow'r to being brings.

Thou ev'ry where hast sway,  
 And all things serve Thy might,  
 Thy ev'ry act pure blessing is,  
 Thy path unsully'd light:  
 When Thou arisest, Lord,  
 What shall Thy work withstand?  
 When all Thy children want, thou giv'st,  
 Who, who shall stay Thine hand?

**ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ***In the Nick of Time***It's Time To Live It***Kevin T. Bauder*

Among the books that I was reading last week was Peter Sammons's volume on *Reprobation and God's Sovereignty*. Perhaps I should say that if reprobation is understood as symmetrical with election—i.e., that God elects and then creates some individuals simply to condemn them forever—then I do not judge it to be true. Nevertheless, I found benefit in reading Sammons. One particularly challenging point is that we cannot accept the benefits of Providence when it brings obvious blessing into our lives while complaining about our circumstances when things seem to go wrong (Job 2:10). Directly or indirectly, even the evil that happens in the world is ordained by God for good ends. If we really believe Romans 8:28, then we must see God's hand in the worst of calamities.

The week I spent reading the book was rather arduous in other ways. It was finals week at the seminary, a time for grading papers, administering exams, closing out courses, preparing for board meetings, and of course observing commencement. The week was made more difficult than usual because our administration had to lop a day out of the schedule (no fault of theirs). Instead of graduating our students on Saturday morning as we always have, we graduated them on Friday night.

Further complications came from the pastoral side of my life. Our deacons had to meet after church on Wednesday night to address a family emergency. Another member of our fellowship had a mother who was dying, and she passed away on Friday morning. Combined with the seminary's schedule, these and other factors resulted in a pressured week of late nights, early mornings, and little sleep. I was looking forward to resting on Saturday.

Both Debbie and I had responsibilities after the commencement ceremony. She was responsible to check in the rented and borrowed caps, hoods, and gowns. Consequently, we didn't pull in the driveway until around 10:00 PM. Given the tension of the week, I lay awake for a long time on Friday night.

Saturday had the potential to be a much more relaxed day, though the situations from church were still pressing. Debbie was preparing a late breakfast



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at around 8:00 when she glanced out the window at the driveway. “Where’s the car?” she asked.

I looked out the window then, and sure enough, there was no car. I hadn’t even dressed for the day, but I pulled on jeans and a tee-shirt and walked out to investigate. Where the car had been parked was a pile of shattered glass. The obvious conclusion was that our car had been stolen. I was a bit surprised because I put a locking bar on the steering wheel. Nevertheless, there was the driveway, empty except for the heap of broken glass.

The obvious first step was to call the police. Ten minutes later an officer arrived. He took our information and viewed the pile of glass. He told us that earlier in the morning a stolen car had been recovered in front of our house, where it had been abandoned by thieves. The thieves had apparently just changed cars. “Probably juveniles,” he said, “Ages ten to fourteen. That’s typical. You can hope that they’ll joyride with your car and abandon it where it will be found.” He also told us about occasions when he had arrested the same juveniles three times in stolen cars. They were always put back on the street. “It’s not the police,” he said. “We try to enforce the law. It’s the county that won’t prosecute.”

Well.

After the officer left, I took up the matter with my insurance company. On Saturday morning their regular offices weren’t open, but I was able to call a weekend number to file a claim. The person I spoke with was as helpful as she might have been, but at that stage there was little that she could do except to write up the report.

Next came a quick call to the seminary’s business manager. Fourth Baptist owns a car that it lends out for ministry purposes, and I asked whether I might use it. Instead, the business manager offered to lend me his wife’s car. It helps, I suppose, that the business manager is married to one of my sisters.

Debbie and I still had to travel to the town where I pastor. It was now well past noon, and we hadn’t eaten lunch yet. We stopped to grab something along the way, and we finally reached our ministry home late in the afternoon. We completed several necessary chores, ate a quick supper, and then drove another fifteen miles to visit our bereaved church member.

That may have been the most encouraging part of the day. What we heard from our friend was his complete acceptance of God’s workings in his life. He blessed his mother’s memory. He told us about moments he had relished with her during her final week. He expressed his hope that God would use the situation to reach unsaved members of his family. We had gone to offer him comfort and encouragement, but we received far more than we gave.

That night the police called to tell me that my car had been recovered. The window had been shattered (we knew that). The steering column was torn up. The car had been ransacked and the inside was badly messed around. And it was being taken to an impound lot.

Never had I guessed the Byzantine machinations and labyrinthine procedures that would be necessary to recover a car from impound. These entailed multiple phone calls and multiple stops. Once I had cleared those hurdles, the car was released. Since it is undrivable, however, it will have to be towed to a shop. All those matters are now in the hands of the insurers.

Most people would consider this week to be a bad one, and there is no use denying that the circumstance is a minor calamity. Naturally, Debbie and I comfort ourselves by telling each other how much worse it might have been, and that is a real consideration. We will suffer a financial loss (insurance doesn’t cover everything), but our home is intact and we were not harmed in our persons.

The greatest comfort, however, is this. These calamitous circumstances were ordained by an all-wise and loving God. They were ordained for His glory. They were ordained for our good. God knows what He is doing, even if we do not. He still deserves our adoration, our praise, and particularly our gratitude. God could have protected us from the evil, but He chose not to. We can only trust Him, that what He is doing will be better, and that it will produce greater glory and greater good. So we humble ourselves before Him and accept His dispensation as if He were visibly before us directing events. We have thanked Him in the past when events seemed good to us. Now it is time to thank Him when events seem bad. To Him alone be glory.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

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