

## “Commit Thou All My Griefs” ~ Paul Gerhardt

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1650) was mainly waged between the Roman and the Reformed Church, and, as is always the case in religious wars, there was fearful suffering and persecution. But times of suffering often bring out men's best spiritual feelings, and certainly the hymns composed at this period were very fine. The star of the German hymn-writers, Paul Gerhardt,, lived at this time. He was pastor of St. Nicholas, a large church in Berlin, where he worked very hard, and was a very favorite preacher. Then the elector published an edict, with which Gerhardt could not comply, and for this reason was deprived of his living. Three of his children had died during their infancy, and now he lost one of his two remaining boys. On his death he wrote a most touching hymn—

*“Thou’rt mine, yes, still thou art mine own.”*

But his greatest trouble was his dear wife's sickness. She fell into a decline, and during this time he wrote many of his most beautiful hymns, which speak of the sorrow and the crosses he had to bear, yet how he rose above them to earnest trust in God.

A story is told about one of the most famous of Gerhardt's hymns, made known to English people by John Wesley's translation. Paul had been banished from Berlin, and was wandering about with his wife and children not knowing where to go. One day he turned with his family into a small wayside inn. His wife was very low and depressed, and to comfort her he repeated Psalm 37:5, *Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.*" Then they went out into the garden together, and sat under an apple-tree, and there he composed the hymn.

*Commit thou all thy griefs  
And ways into His hands;  
To His sure truth and tender care,  
Who heaven and earth commands.*

The story goes on to relate how, that very evening, messengers arrived to offer Gerhardt a post of distinction under the Duke of Merseburg.

The motto on Gerhardt's portrait at Lübben read “Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus” (a theologian sifted in a sieve).

A beautiful custom was kept up in some of the high schools of Germany that when pupils left, their companions went with them to the gates of the town, singing this hymn, and thus committing them to the sure protection of their Heavenly father.

-----Hymns and Their Stories, Gibson, 1894

Commit thou all thy griefs  
And ways into His hands,  
To His sure truth and tender care,  
Who heaven and earth commands.

Who points the clouds their course,  
Whom winds and seas obey,  
He shall direct thy wandering feet,  
He shall prepare thy way.

Thou on the Lord rely,  
So safe shalt thou go on;  
Fix on His work thy steadfast 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 prayer.

Thy everlasting truth,  
Father, Thy ceaseless love,  
Sees all Thy children's wants, and knows  
What best for each will prove.

Thou everywhere hast sway,  
And all things serve Thy might;  
Thy every act pure blessing is,  
Thy path unsullied light.

When Thou arisest, Lord,  
What shall Thy work withstand?  
Whate'er Thy children want, Thou giv'st;  
And who shall stay Thy hand?