

221. Thy Will be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven.

He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ. *Phil. 1, 6.*

Luther says: "The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also." God's will should be done among us too. In heaven His will is done; on earth His will is often not done. Therefore Christ teaches us to pray: "Thy will be done."

What "is this good and gracious will of God ? We read John 6, 40: "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life." God's good and gracious will is that we should be saved through faith in Christ Jesus. How does God do this? "When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and preserves us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will." According to these words of our Catechism there is a triple alliance opposing God's will. The three conspirers are the devil, the world, and our flesh. These three are always in opposition to God's will.

Therefore we must daily pray: "Thy will be done." Break, O Lord, the plans and schemes of that alliance. "Thy will be done," that is to say, it behooves us to do Thy will. When our sinful will would cross God's holy will, God is asked to change our will, so that it will accord with His will. "Thy will be done"; thereby we pledge ourselves to learn the will of God and not to mistake our own whims and notions for God's will. "Thy will be done" — or the devil's. This is a terrible alternative, but there is no other. If we refuse to do God's will, we are doing Satan's will. We should do God's will as it is done by the angels in heaven, day and night, gladly, cheerfully, and as best we can.

Prayer.

Almighty and ever-living God, who makest us both to will and to do those things which are good and acceptable unto Thy divine majesty, let Thy fatherly hand, we beseech Thee, ever be over us, let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with us, and so lead us in the knowledge and obedience of Thy Word that in the end we may obtain everlasting life. Make us perfect in every good work to do Thy will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in Thy sight, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Commit whatever grieves thee
At heart, and all thy ways,
To Him who never leaves thee,
On whom creation stays;
Who freest courses maketh
For clouds and air and wind,
And who care ever taketh
A path for thee to find.

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