

PRAYER ANSWERED BY CROSSES

I ask'd the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favour'd hour
At once He'd answer my request,
And by His love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with His own hand He seem'd
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Cross'd all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourd, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this? I trembling cried,
Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?
'Tis in this way,' the Lord replied,
'I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy
That thou may'st seek thy all in Me.'

JOHN NEWTON.