

of his own guilt and condemnation, he might never have gone to Christ, and thus could not have known the true abiding peace. As he looks back over the dark valley of sorrow through which the divine hand has wondrously led him, and sees that no other way would so surely bring him to the Cross, he feels a renewed assurance that no true prayer is ever lost; he now knows that he that asketh aright will always receive, and he that seeketh will surely find. His experience is worth all it cost him.

3. Once more let us remark that the petitions of believers are often answered according to their *intention*, and not according to the strict letter of the request. The utterer of the prayer sought only the glory of God, but in his ignorance asked for wrong things. God hears and answers him; but the blessing granted is something very different from what the believer expected. The case of Paul is a beautiful illustration of this. He is sorely afflicted by a "thorn in the flesh." What the precise nature of the affliction was, we know not. Perhaps it was a severe malady; perhaps a besetting sin; perhaps a mortifying deformity of body or of character.—He beseeches God in three earnest petitions that this "thorn" might depart from him. His prayers are heard. They are answered. But instead of the removal of the thorn comes the cheering assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Lord does not take away the trial, but gives him all that is needed to make it endurable; thus the divine glory and Paul's spiritual well-being were more certainly advanced than if the prayer had been answered strictly according to its letter.

The prayer was not lost. That God hears every sincere prayer, who can doubt? The skeptic must seal his vision, lest, coming to the light, he shall be persuaded against himself. He must mutilate or destroy the shining record of God's providential dealings with the children of faith. He must erase from the Bible the animating narrative of Jacob's midnight struggles, the thrilling scenes of Elijah's wrestlings at Carmel and at Zarephath, the "evening oblations" of Daniel, and the angelic deliverance of Peter from the prison-cell.—He must destroy many a leaf from the Christian's diary, on which devout grati-

tude has written, "This day I learned anew that my heavenly Father hears and answers prayer." He must give the lie to Omniscient Love, which has uttered in the ear of all the needy, sorrowing, guilty household of humanity, "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you."—"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

AN OLD HYMN.

[In the life of Rev. Andrew Fuller, the following hymn is referred to as being a favourite of that eminent man during the latter penitive years of his life, and especially as being often repeated while pacing his room in the agonies of his last illness.]

I sojourn in a vale of tears,
Alas ! how can I sing?
My harp doth on the willows hang,
Distuned in every string.
My music is a captive's chain;
Harsh sounds my ears do fill;
How shall I sing sweet Zion's song,
On this side Zion's hill ?

Come, then, my ever dearest Lord,
My sweetest, surest friend,
Come, for I loathe these Kedar tents,
Thy fiery chariot send.
What have I here ? my thoughts and joys
Are all before me gone;
My eager soul would follow them,
To thine eternal throne.

What have I in this barren land?
My Jesus is not here ;
Mine eyes will ne'er be blest until
My Jesus doth appear.
My Jesus is gone up to heaven,
To gain a place for me;
For 'tis His will that where He is,
There shall His servant be.

Canaan I view from Pisgah's top,
Its grapes are my repast;
My Lord who sends unto me here,
Will send for me at last.
I have a God that changeth not,
Why should I be perplexed?
My God that owns me in this world
Will own me in the next.