

Afflictions, Though They Seem Severe

John Newton, 1779.

Jeremiah Clark, 1707.

Afflictions, though they seem severe;
In mercy oft are sent;
They stopped the prodigal's career,
And forced him to repent.

Although he no relents felt
Till he had spent his store;
His stubborn heart began to melt
When famine pinched him sore.

What have I gained by sin, he said,
But hunger, shame, and fear;
My father's house abounds with bread,
While I am starving here.

"I'll go, and tell him all I've done,
And fall before his face
Unworthy to be called his son,
I'll seek a servant's place."

His father saw him coming back,
He saw, and ran, and smiled;
And threw his arms around the neck
Of his rebellious child.

"Father, I've sinned but O forgive!"
"I've heard enough," he said,
Rejoice my house, my son's alive,
For whom I mourned as dead.

"Now let the fatted calf be slain,
And spread the news around;
My son was dead, but lives again,
Was lost, but now is found."

'Tis thus the Lord His love reveals,
To call poor sinners home;
More than a father's love He feels,
And welcomes all that come.