



**Thomas Goodwin**  
**(1600-1679)**

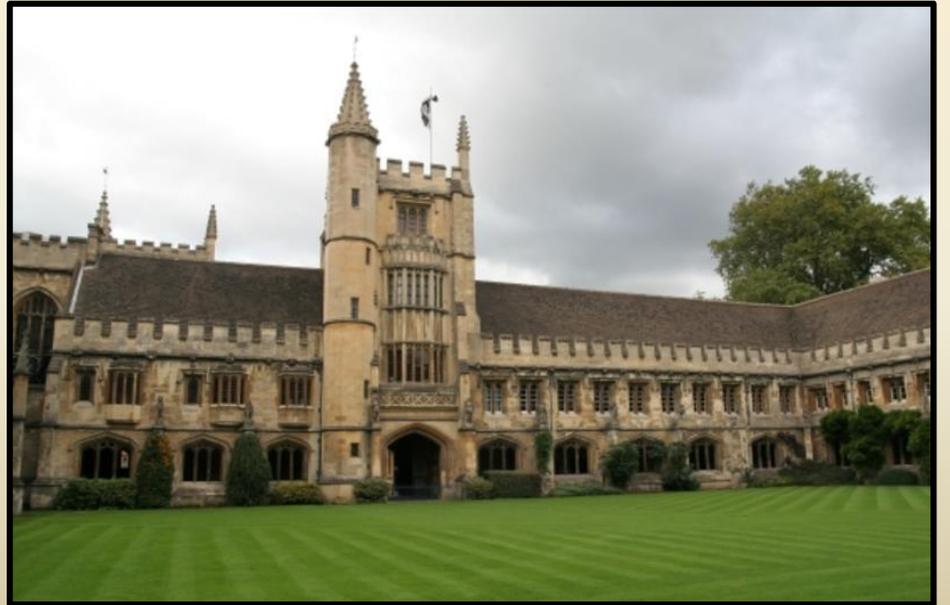
*“The greatest pulpit exegete of Paul that has ever lived.”*

--J. I. Packer



# Westminster Assembly







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THOMAS  
GOODWIN

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Man's  
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before God,  
in Respect of  
Sin and  
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**And I will here say with simple truth that his works have never been out of my hands down to this day. In those far-off years I read my Goodwin every Sabbath morning and every Sabbath night. Goodwin was my every Sabbath-day meat and my every Sabbath-day drink.**

**And during my succeeding years as a student, and as a young minister, I carried about a volume of Goodwin wherever I went. I read him in railway carriages and on steamboats. I read him at home and abroad. I read him on my holidays among the Scottish Grampians and among the Swiss Alps.**

**I carried his volumes about with me till they fell out of their original cloth binding, and till I got my book-binder to put them into his best morocco. I have read no other author so much and so often. And I continue to read him till this day as if I had never read him before.**

Alexander Whyte

***They are five invaluable volumes.***

Andrew Bonar



(14)  
THE  
RETURNE  
OF  
PRAYERS.

A Treatise,  
VVHEREIN THIS CASE

[How to discern Gods Answers to our Prayers]  
is briefly resolved:

WITH  
Other Observations upon *Psalm 85.8.*  
concerning Gods speaking Peace, &c.

By THO: GOODWIN, B.D.

HAB. 2. 1.

*I will watch to see what he will say to me.*

L O N D O N,  
Printed by M. F. for R. Dawlman. 1643.





*Yet many who are true investors in prayer neglect to watch for the return of answers. When the voyage of their prayers proves long, they grow discouraged, as though their ships were lost at sea.*

Obtaining what we formerly prayed for,	80
Answered by foure things.	80
1. More sinfull discouragements, as,	81
1 From slothfulnesse in praying.	<i>ibid.</i>
2 Looking at prayer as a duty onely, and not as a meanes to obtaine.	83
3 Falling into sinne after prayers.	84
<i>Six Observations more out of the Text.</i>	
1. <i>Observ.</i> That God doth sometimes not speake peace to his own people.	88
2. <i>Observ.</i> The cause thereof some folly.	89
3. <i>Observ.</i> God onely can speake peace.	92
4. <i>Observ.</i> God easily can give peace.	95
5. <i>Observ.</i> God will certainly speake to his people.	99
6. <i>Observ.</i> After peace spoken his people should returne no more to folly.	100
The sin and folly of relapsing shewn by seven reasons.	103
Temptations from relapse into the same sinne after peace spoken, answered	
By Scriptures,	116
By three Examples.	118
By foure Reasons,	121
Five Cautions.	128

FINIS.

THE



## THE RETVRNE OF PRAYERS.

PSAL. 85. 8.

*I will heare what God the Lord will speake : for He will  
speake peace unto His people, and to his Saints : but let  
them not turne againe to folly.*

*The Coherence of the words.*



His PSALME was penned, in  
the name and for the comfort of  
the whole Church of the Jews,  
both as a Prophecy of, and a  
Prayer for their returne out of  
the Babylonish Captivity, and  
the flowing in againe of that  
ancient glory, peace, administra-  
tion of Justice, liberty of Gods Ordinances, plenty  
and increase, which formerly they enjoyed, but had  
lost by many years continuance.

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# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

SOWING SEEDS OF PRAYER AND WAITING ON GOD  
FOR A HARVEST OF ANSWERS



THOMAS GOODWIN

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# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

SOWING SEEDS OF PRAYER AND WAITING ON GOD  
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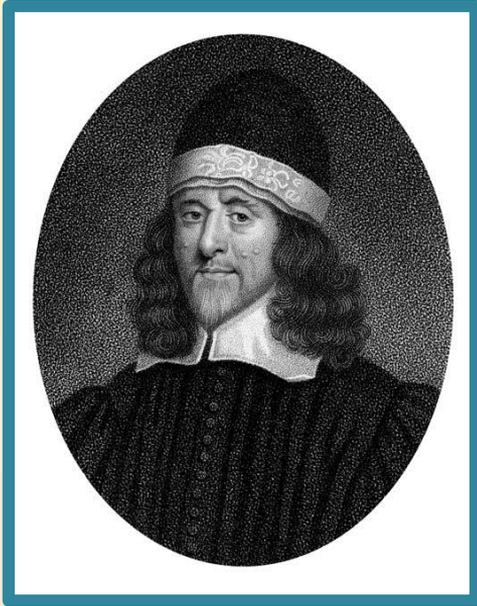


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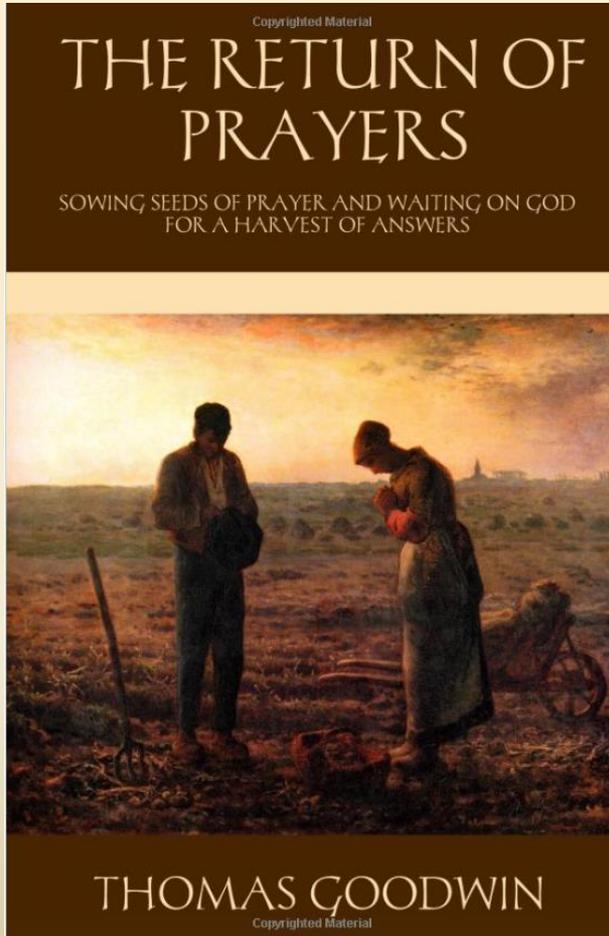
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## Psalm 85:8

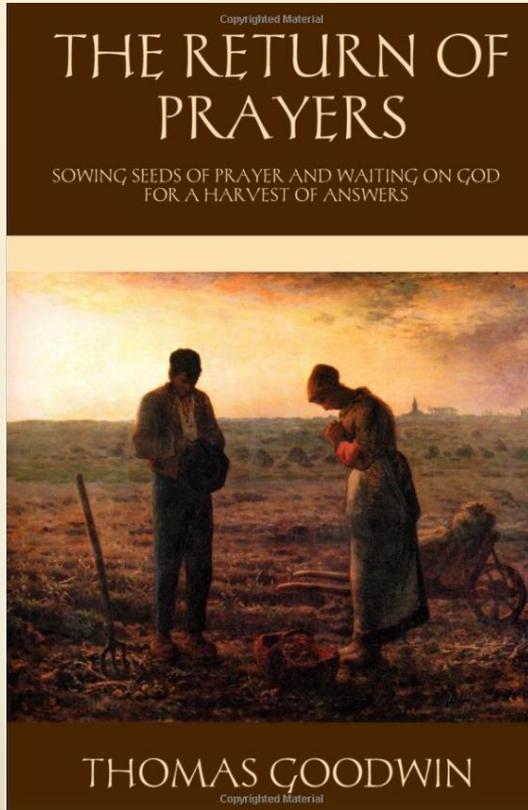
I will hear what  
God the LORD will  
say. . .



*His prayer being finished,  
and he having spoke, he  
now stands and listens, as  
you do when you expect an  
echo. . .*



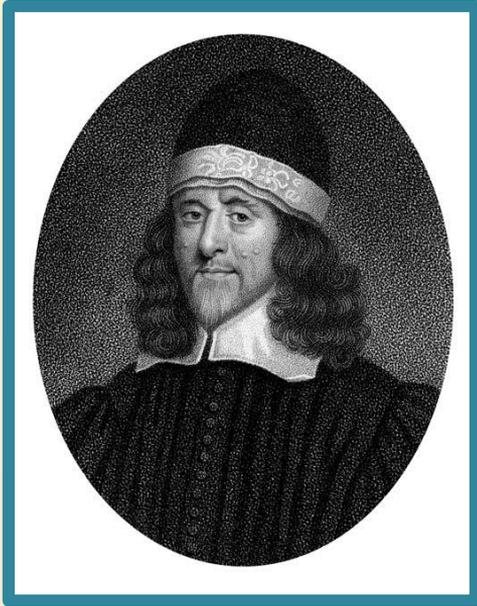
***The main observation and subject of this discourse . . . That God's people are diligently to observe the answers to their prayers.***



**(1) So that we do not  
take God's ordinance  
in vain.**



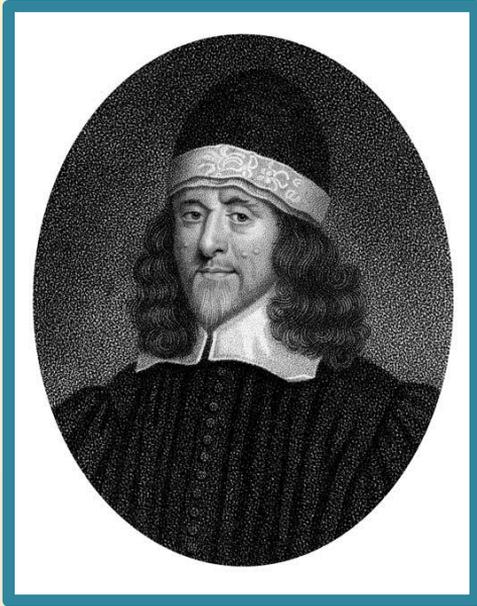
*If we use any means, and expect not the end, it is a sign we think the means vain to accomplish the end.*



*If we use any means, and expect not the end, it is a sign we think the means vain to accomplish the end.*

*What profit have we if we pray?*

**Job 21:15**



*At the beginning of your  
supplications the  
command was issued, and  
I have come to tell you. . .*

**Daniel 9:23**



*This is the confidence  
which we have before Him,  
that, if we ask anything  
according to His will, He  
hears us.*

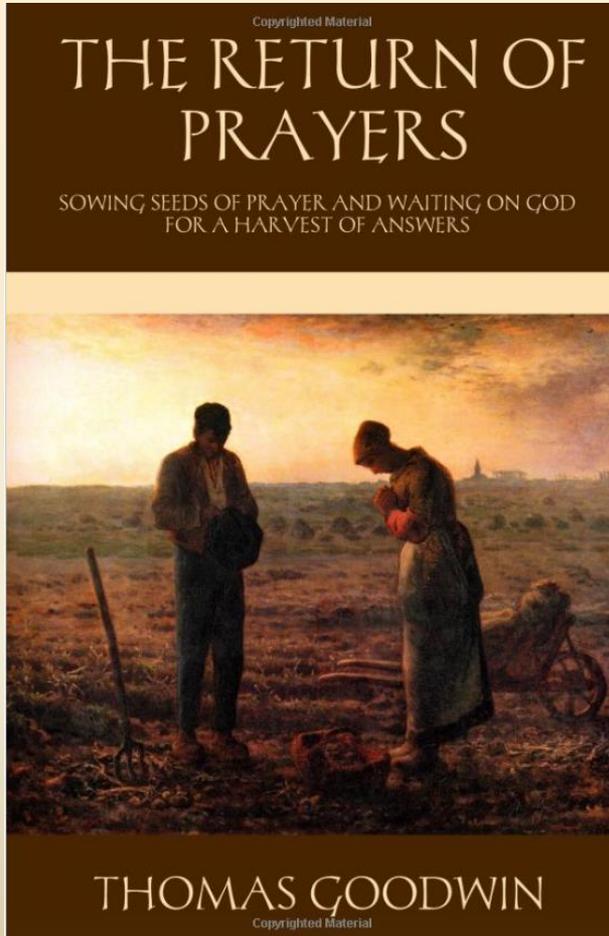
Psalm 66:19

**But certainly God has heard;**

Psalm 66:19

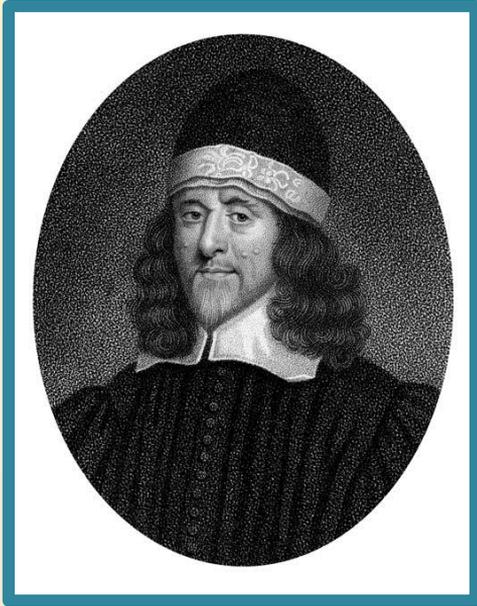
**But certainly God has heard;**

**He has given heed to the voice of  
my prayer.**



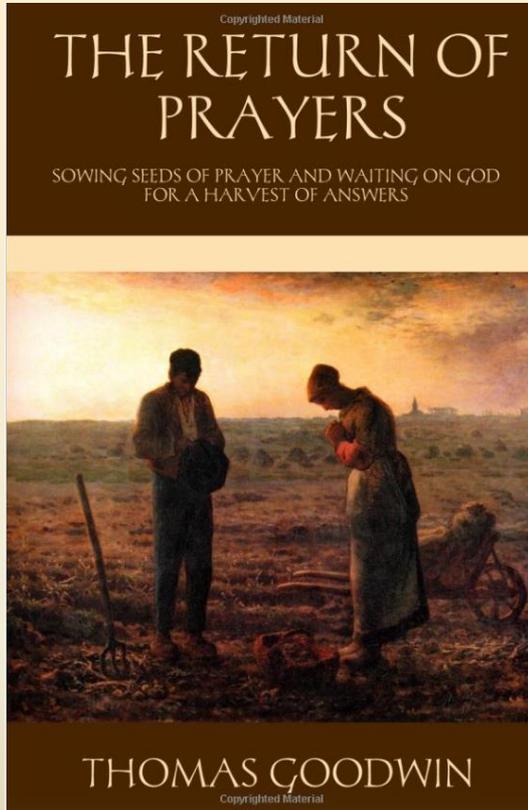
## Micah 7:8

**But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.**

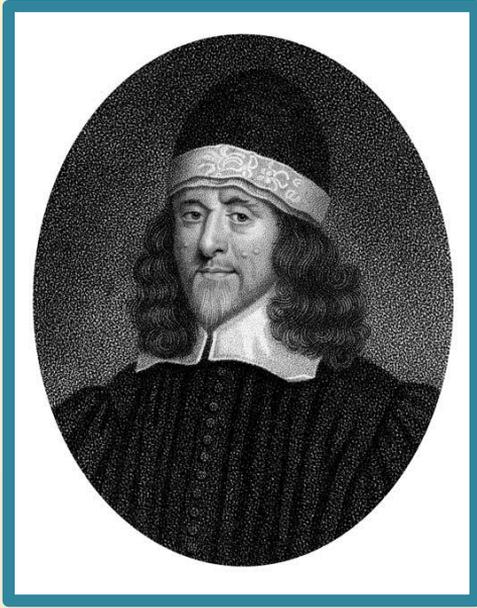


*And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*

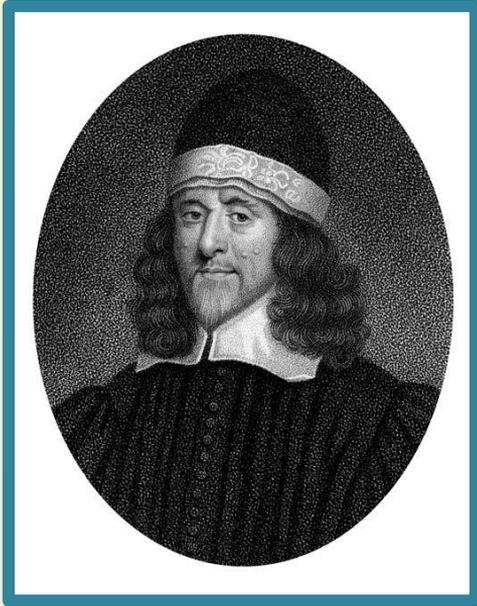
**I John 5:14-15**



**(2) So that we do not  
take God's attributes  
in vain.**

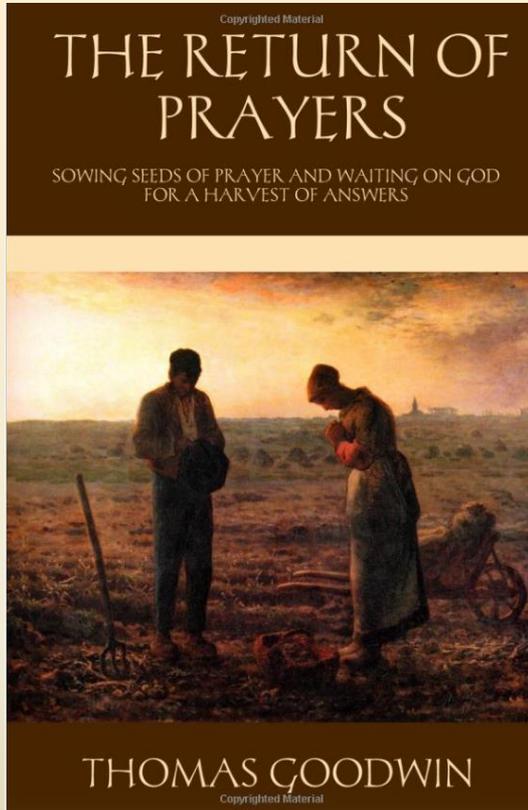


*By neglecting to look for answers, we make an idol god of Him, as if He has ears but hears not or eyes but sees not. In this way we rob Him of one of his royal titles, “a God that heareth prayers.” Ps. 65:2*

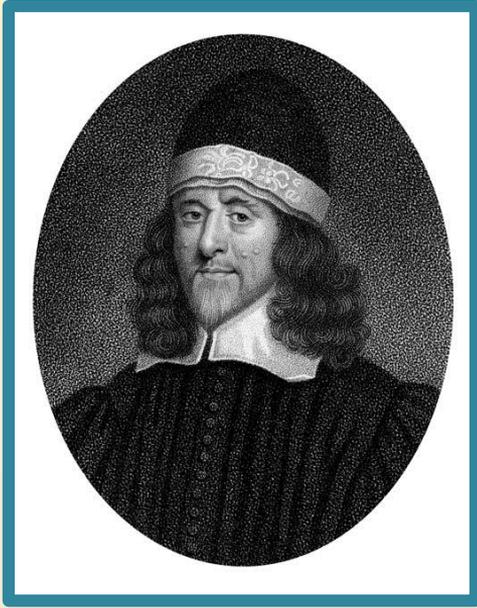


*And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night. . .*

**I Kings 8:59**



**(3) So that God's answers will not be sent in vain.**



*Not a word of His answers should be allowed to fall to the ground by our failing to catch them when they come. Solomon could say, “There hath not failed one word of all his good promise.”*

**I Kings 8:56**

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# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

SOWING SEEDS OF PRAYER AND WAITING ON GOD  
FOR A HARVEST OF ANSWERS



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## Psalm 85:8

I will hear what  
God the LORD will  
say. . .



**Thomas Goodwin**  
**(1600-1679)**

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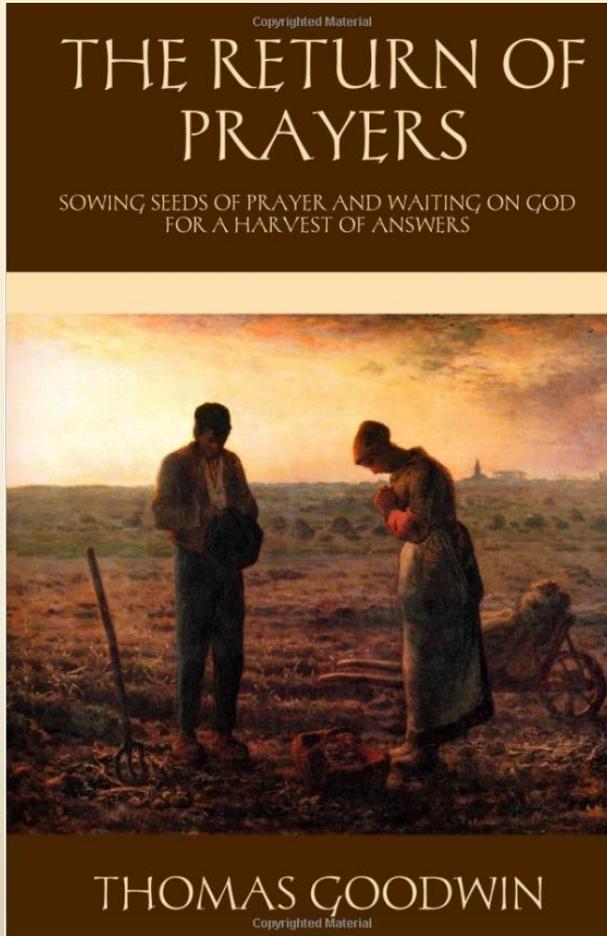


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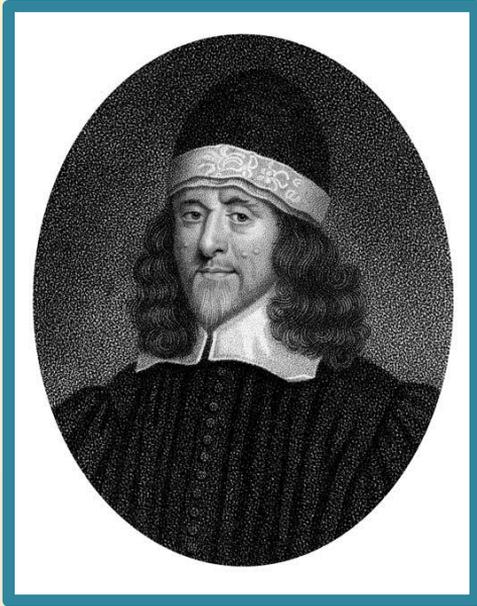
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## Psalm 85:8

**I will hear what  
God the LORD will  
say. . .**



***The main observation and subject of this discourse . . . That God's people are diligently to observe the answers to their prayers.***



**A parallel to keeping one's  
eyes upon Jesus Christ  
intentionally and  
habitually.**

**--from *An Exposition of . . . Ephesians*  
(on 3:16-21)**

***I have set the LORD continually  
before me.***

**--Psalm 16:8**

**I will hear. . .**

**Let me hear. . . (*ESV*)**

**I will hear. . .**

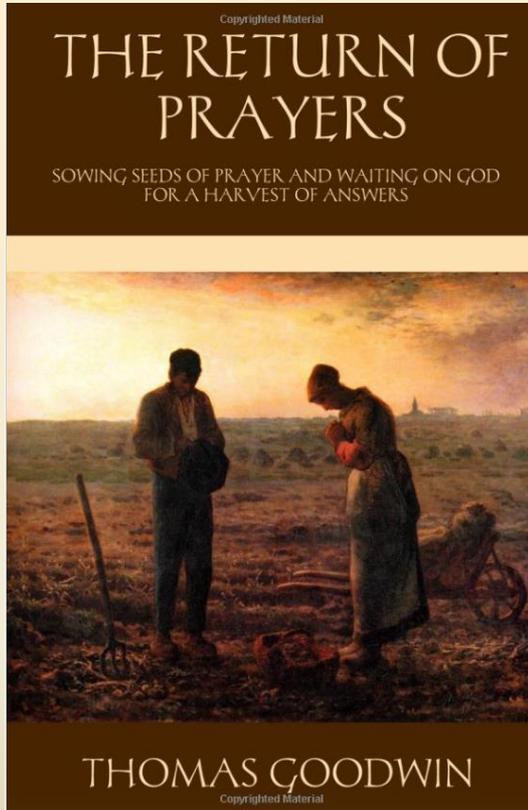
**Let me hear. . . (*ESV*)**

**“Cohortative” verb**

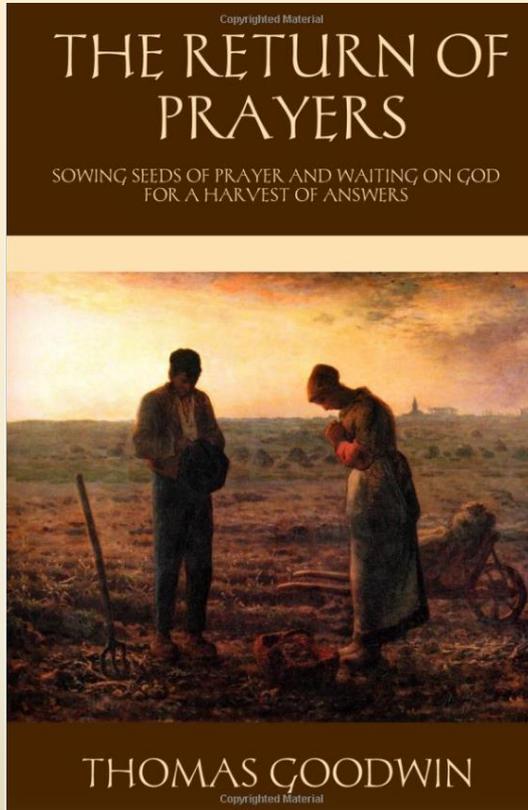
**(1) So that we do not take God's ordinance in vain.**

- (1) So that we do not take God's ordinance in vain.**
- (2) So that we do not take God's attributes in vain.**

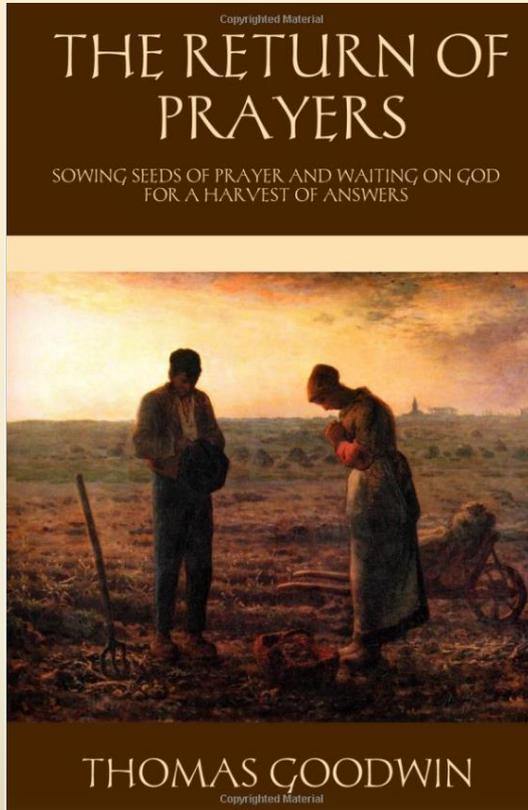
- (1) So that we do not take God's ordinance in vain.**
- (2) So that we do not take God's attributes in vain.**
- (3) So that God's answers will not be sent in vain.**



**(4) So that God will continue to respond to our praying.**

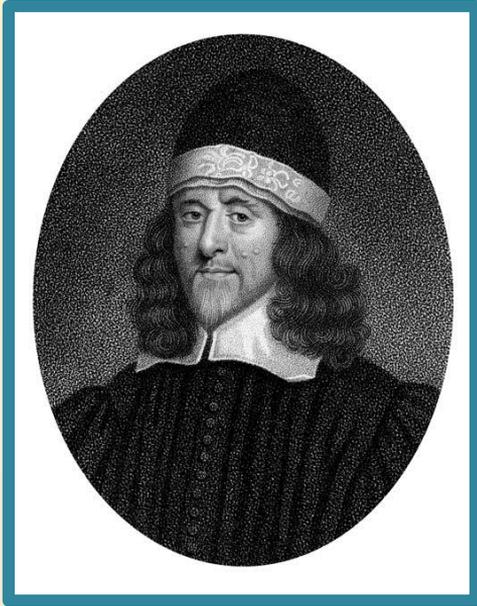


**(5) So that we will  
have reasons to bless  
God and to return  
thanksgiving to Him.**

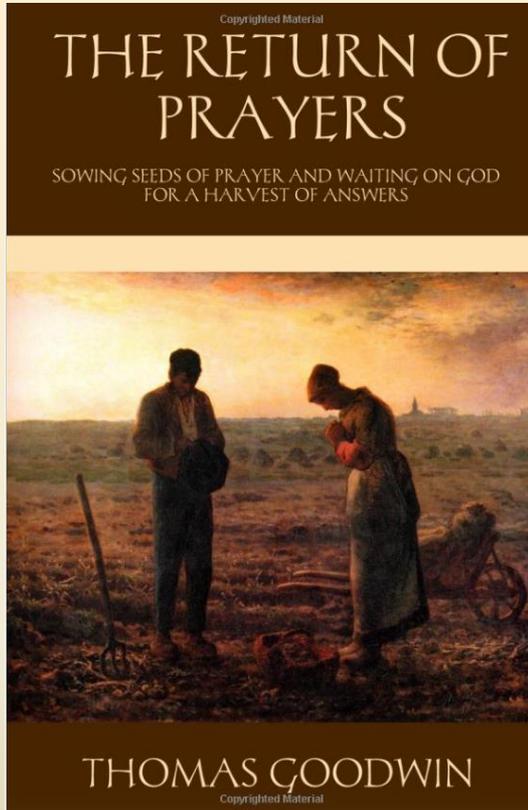


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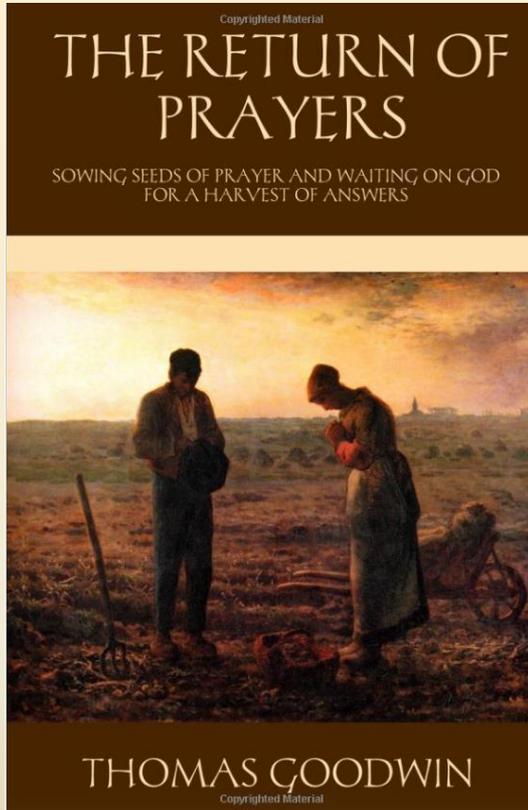
**Psalm 116:1**



*The reason you pray so much, and give thanks so little is that you observe not God's answers; you do not study them.*



**(6) Otherwise you lose certain experiences.**



**(6) Otherwise you lose certain experiences.**

**Psalm 116:2**

**(6) Otherwise you lose certain exper.**

**i. Of God, which would cause you to  
hope in Him again.**

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**i. Of God, which would cause you to hope in Him again.**

**ii. Of God's ways with you, by which you would gain insight into yourself.**

# **Psalm 66:16-20**

**If our prayers are answered  
(vv 16-17, 19-20). . .**

# **Psalm 66:17-20**

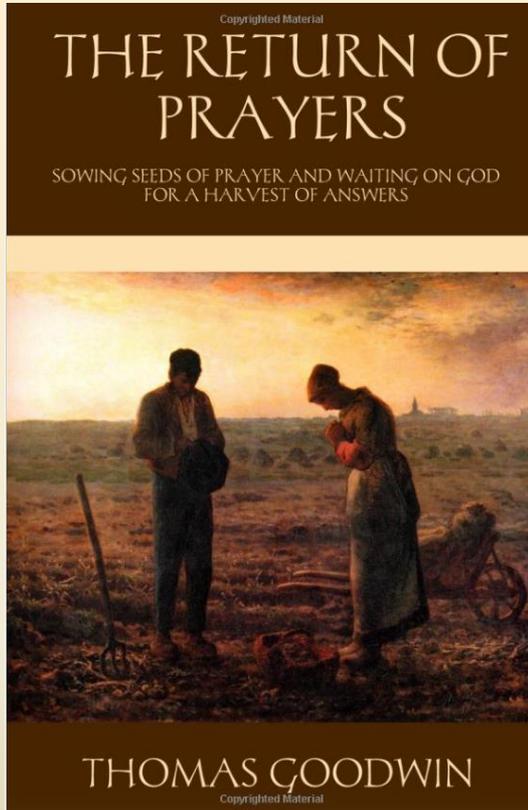
**. . . that we are not regarding iniquity  
in our hearts.**

**James 4:3**

**If our prayers are  
unanswered. . .**

# James 4:3

. . . that we may be asking amiss.



**(7) So that you do not  
lose much of your  
comfort.**

# John 16:24

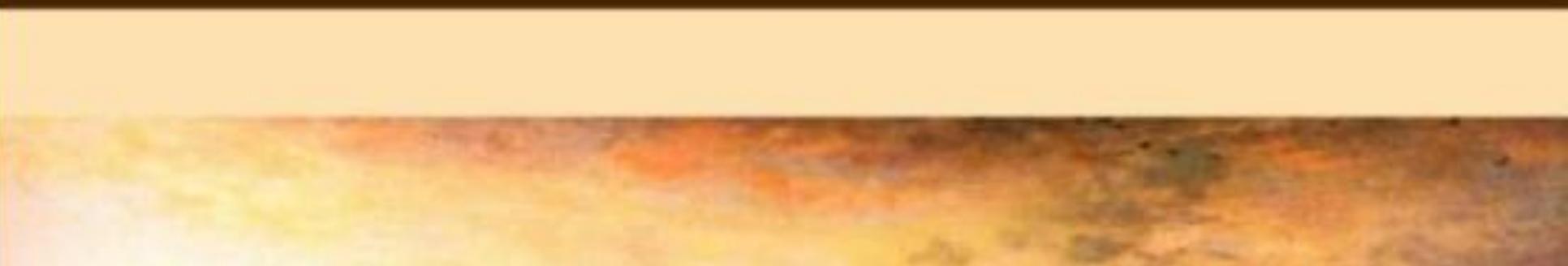
*Ask, and you shall receive, that  
your joy may be full.*

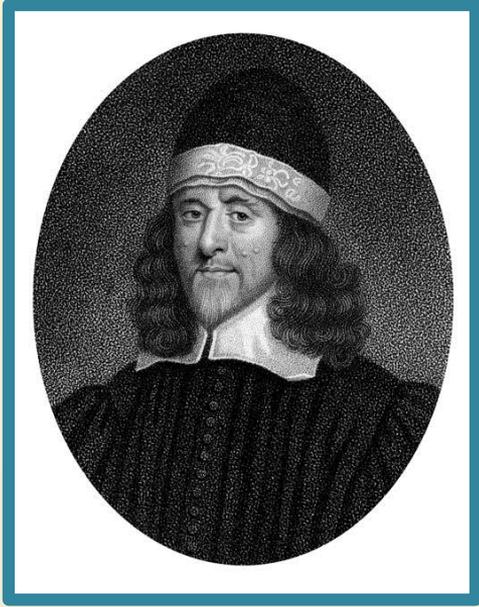
# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

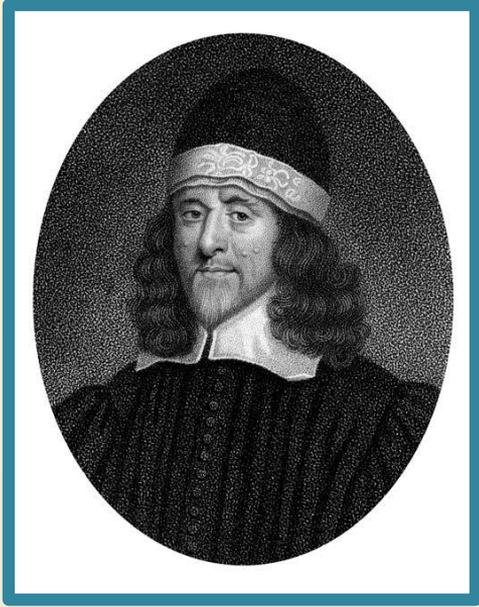
SOWING SEEDS OF PRAYER AND WAITING ON GOD  
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# THE RETURN OF **MY** PRAYERS

SOWING SEEDS OF PRAYER AND WAITING ON GOD  
FOR A HARVEST OF ANSWERS

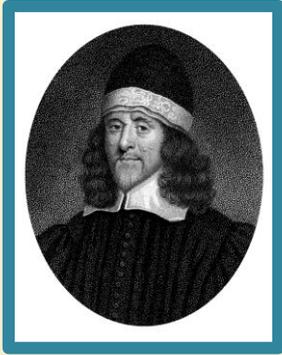












*The reason that we pray so much and give thanks so little is that we do not observe God's answers when they come. We do not study them.*

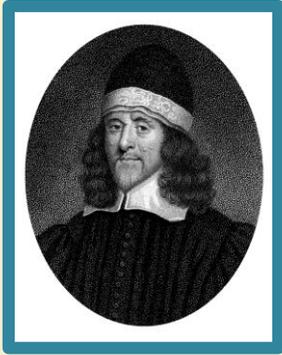
**(6) So that we do not miss certain experiences**

*David recalled an experience of having his prayers answered and cited it as a reason to continue calling on the Lord, “Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:2).*

*Such as the experience of new insight into our own hearts and ways. If God does not grant your prayers, it will cause you to seek the reason He does not answer. David discovered, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18).*

**(7) So that we do not lose our comfort**

*You are to “ask, and . . . receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24). By this means, even the smallest things which we enjoy or use become sources of comfort if they were obtained by prayer.*



*When we hear even a line or two from a close friend about even a small matter it cheers our hearts. So when we hear anything, be it ever so small, from God in answer to our prayers. But this joy we will forfeit if we do not observe the answers.*



# THE TABLE.

**C**HAP. I. *The maine observation : That Gods people are diligently to observe the answers of their prayers.* pag. 2

The sinfulness of the neglect hereof demonstrated by seven reasons.

- 1. Reas. An ordinance of God taken in vaine. *ibid.* p. 3
- 2. Reas. Gods attributes taken in vaine. 5
- 3. Reas. God in answering made to speak in vaine. 6
- 4. Reas. God provoked not to answer. 8
- 5. Reas. We shall not returne thanks. *ibid.*
- 6. Reas. We shall lose much experience. 9
  - 1. Of Gods faithfulness. *ibid.*
  - 2. Of our own wayes towards him. *ibid.*
- 7. Reas. We shall lose much comfort. 10

**Chap. 2.** *Three Cases : The first concerning prayers for such promises as may be accomplisht in ages to come.* 12

- 1 § Such prayers the Church to come doth reape. *ibid.*
- 2 § Yet we at present may have answer about them. 14
- 3 § In Heaven. and at the last day. we shall reioyce

- 3 §
- 4 § God in the end casts some out of our prayers.
- 5 § Those prayers answered in some others.

**Chap. 4.** *Third case : How the influence of our own prayer others pray also for the same thing with us, may be discerned.*

- 1 § If our hearts are affected with the same holy affection. Vnbeknown each to other.
- 2 § By some speciall endeavour : as,
  - 1 Some notable circumstance.
  - 2 By joy in the accomplishment.
  - 3 By thankfulness for the accomplishment.
 This lesse to be doubted when the thing prayed us doth concerne our own particular.

**Chap. 5.** *Common directions helpfull in all cases, and taken first from observations from Before and In prayer.*

- 1 § **B E F O R E :** when God prepares the heart. Difference betweene Satans motions to prayer Gods.
- 2 § **I N** prayer : Gods *speaking*s in prayer are evi of hearing : and discerned by four things.
  - 1 Giving a quietnesse by prayer about the thing ed for.
  - 3 § 2 By revealing his love, in & upon such petiti

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