



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

(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.



Copyrighted Material

# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

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



THOMAS GOODWIN

Copyrighted Material

Copyrighted Material

# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

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



THOMAS GOODWIN

Copyrighted Material

## Psalm 85:8

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

# Help in Watching for Answers

# **Help in Watching for Answers**

## **1. Prayers for the Church.**

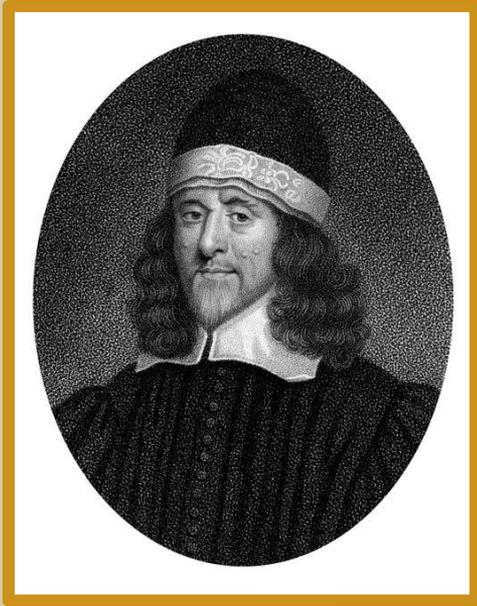
# Help in Watching for Answers

1. Prayers for the Church.
2. **Prayers for others.**

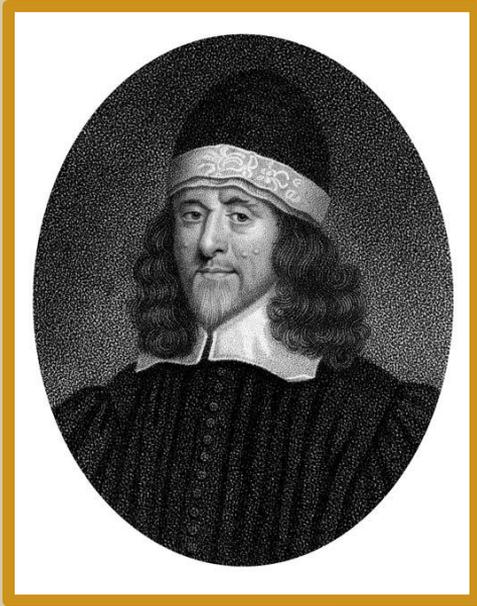


**Thomas Goodwin**  
**(1600-1679)**

***Good swimmers seek  
out deep waters.***



**First: God often grants such prayers.**



**First: God often grants such prayers.**

***Why else are any such promises made?***

## To heal brothers/sisters who are sick

**James 5:15** *And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. . .*

## To forgive a brother's/sister's sins

**James 5:15** *And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.*



**Second: God sometimes does not grant such prayers.**

## To heal. . . to forgive

**James 5:15** *And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.*

**James 5:16** *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.*

**There is a condition which only that  
brother or sister can meet.**

**James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins  
to one another, and pray for one another,  
so that you may be healed.***

## Abraham for Abimelech (Gen. 20:7)

***Now therefore restore the man's wife,  
for he is a prophet, and he will pray for  
you and you will live.***

## Abraham for Abimelech (Gen. 20:7)

***Now therefore restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you will surely die, you and all who are yours.***

**1 There is a condition which only that brother or sister can meet.**

**2 This kind of a promise cannot be universal.**

**1 There is a condition which only that brother or sister can meet.**

**2 This kind of a promise cannot be universal. For then, sick men would never die.**

**1 There is a condition which only that brother or sister can meet.**

**2 This kind of a promise cannot be universal. For then, sick men would never die. Yet *it is appointed unto men once to die* (Heb. 9:27).**

*His promise to hear and accept the prayer is general and universal, yet the promise to hear it, by granting the very thing itself prayed for, is but an indefinite promise, such as he makes to other means of doing good. . .*

**As He promises**

**--to give long life to those who honor  
their parents (Eph. 6:3).**

## **As He promises**

**--to give long life to those who honor their parents (Eph. 6:3).**

**--to give riches and honor to those who find wisdom (Prov. 3:16).**

*God doth require it as a duty on our parts, because it is an outward means ordained by God, by which sometimes he useth to bring to pass; but yet not as such a certain and infallible means, as he hath tied himself universally to, to bring the thing to pass on his part.*



**Whatever the mercy, He wishes to dispense it in answer to promises.**

**Whatever the mercy, He wishes to dispense it in answer to promises.**

**So that an answerable act of faith is required;**

Whatever the mercy, He wishes to dispense it in answer to promises.

So that an answerable act of faith is required; **a faith suitable to the nature of the promise.**

**If the promise is absolute and universal. . .**

**Rom. 10:11-13**

**Jam. 1:5-6**

If the promise is absolute and universal. . .

**Rom. 10:11-13**

*For the Scripture says, **WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.** For there is no distinction.*

. . .

**Jam. 1:5-6**

**If the promise is absolute and universal. . .**

**Rom. 10:11-13**

**Jam. 1:5-6**

***But if any of you lacks wisdom,  
let him ask of God, Who gives . . .***

**If the promise is absolute and universal. . .**

**Rom. 10:11-13**

**Jam. 1:5-6**

**Then the faith that answers to the promise  
should be without wavering (Jam. 1:6).**

**If the promise is indefinite, non-universal,  
or conditional (on something in the other  
person). . .**

**II Tim. 2:25-26**

**If the promise is indefinite, non-universal,  
or conditional (on something in the other  
person). . .**

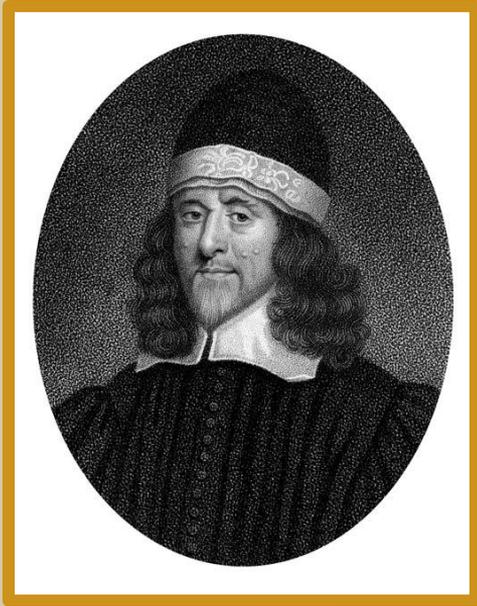
**II Tim. 2:25-26**

***If God peradventure will give him  
repentance to the acknowledging . . .***

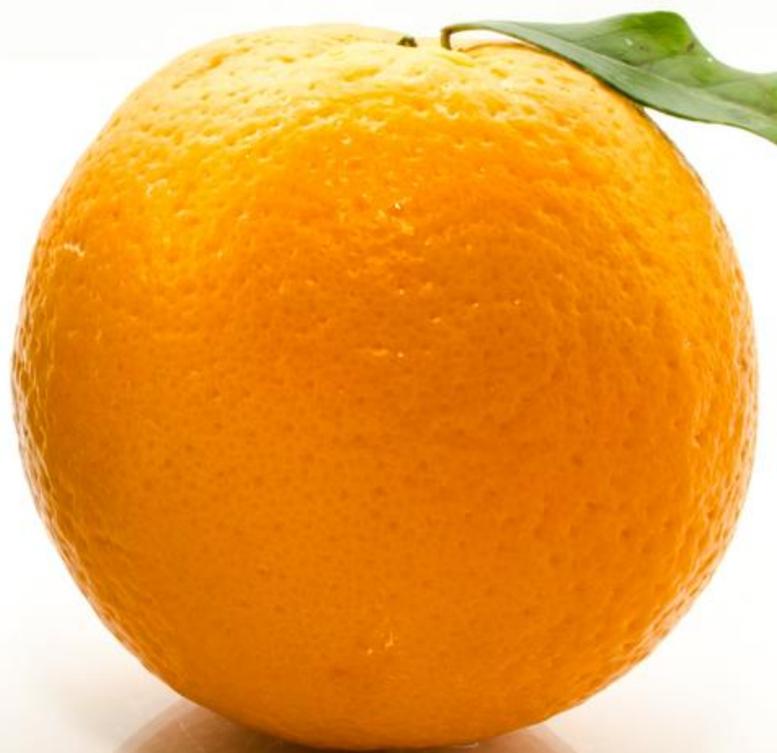
**If the promise is indefinite, non-universal,  
or conditional (on something in the other  
person). . .**

**II Tim. 2:25-26**

**Then the faith that answers to the promise  
should be of the same nature.**

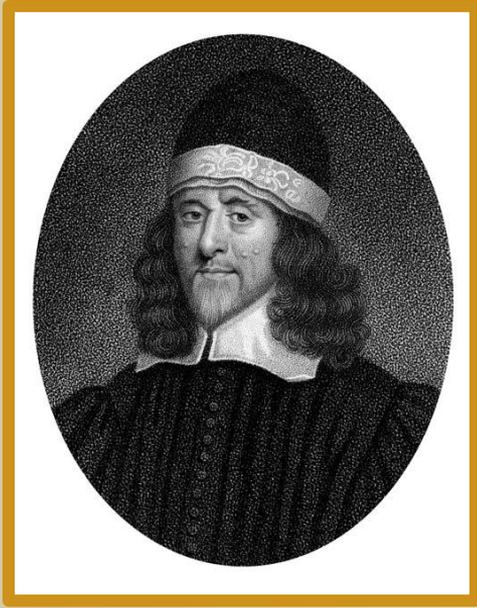


**Third: When we pray for those for whom God does not intend a certain mercy, He sometimes makes return *into our own bosoms*, to our advantage.**





*God stirreth up this praying disposition. . . because He means to draw forth, and so have an occasion to reward, those holy dispositions which are the noblest parts of His image in them. . . and it is taken as if they had prayed for themselves all the while.*



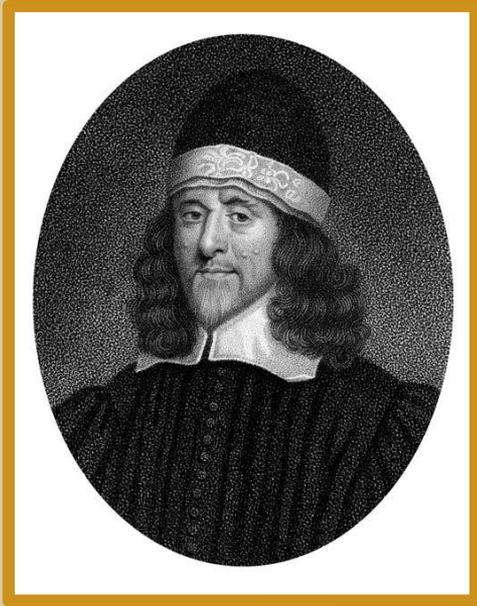
**Fourth: If God does not intend to extend mercy to someone for whom we have long prayed, He will in the end take our hearts off from praying for them.**

**He did this by a revelation from heaven to some prophets.**

***How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel (I Sam. 16:1)?***

***As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me, for I do not hear you (Jer. 7:16).***

**He does this for us by a more undiscerned work; by withdrawing assistance to pray.**



**Fifth: God will sometimes hear those prayers we pray for someone, by answering them through the life of someone else.**

***O let Ishmael live in thy sight (Gen. 17:18).***

*O let Ishmael live in thy sight (Gen. 17:18).*

*No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac (v 19).*

***Go and anoint one of the sons of Jesse***  
**(I Sam. 16:1).**

# **Ruth 4:13-17**

**First: God often grants such prayers.**

**First: God often grants such prayers.**

**Second: God sometimes does not grant  
such prayers.**

**First: God often grants such prayers.**

**Second: God sometimes does not grant such prayers.**

**Third: When we pray for those for whom God does not intend a certain mercy, He sometimes makes return *into our own bosoms*, to our advantage.**

**Fourth: If God does not intend to extend mercy to someone for whom we have long prayed, He will in the end take our hearts off from praying for them.**

**Fourth: If God does not intend to extend mercy to someone for whom we have long prayed, He will in the end take our hearts off from praying for them.**

**Fifth: God will sometimes hear those prayers we pray for someone, by answering them through the life of someone else.**



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

Andrew Bonar