



**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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Ephesians 1

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A Discourse  
of Thank-  
fulness

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An  
Unregenerate  
Man's  
Guiltiness  
before God,  
in Respect of  
Sin and  
Punishment

**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.	81
1. More sinfull discouragements, as,	<i>ibid.</i>
1 From slothfulnesse in praying.	83
2 Looking at prayer as a duty onely, and not as a meanes to obtaine.	84
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FINIS.

THE



## THE RETVRNE OF PRAYERS.

PSAL. 85. 8.

*I will heare what God the Lord will speake : for He wil  
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



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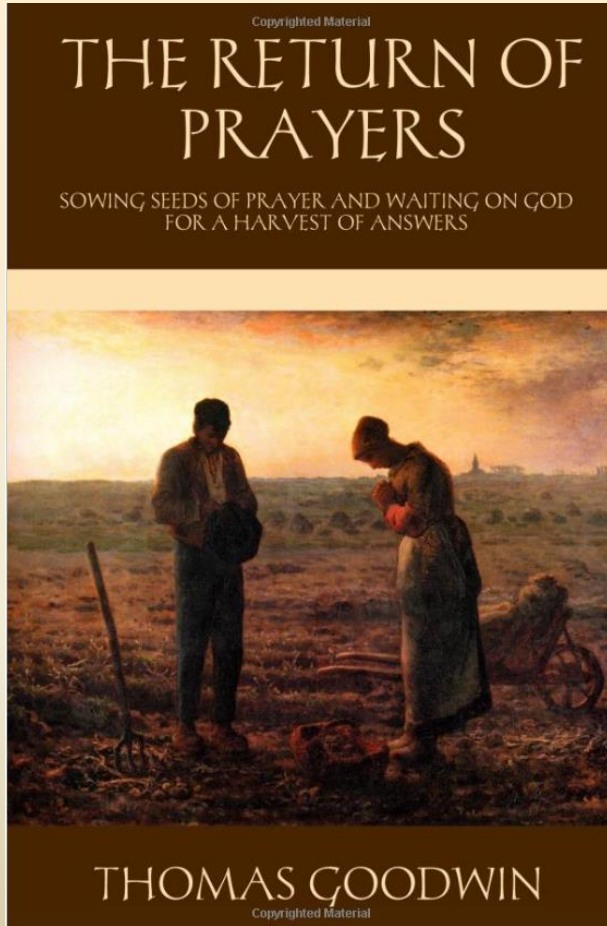
# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

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



THOMAS GOODWIN

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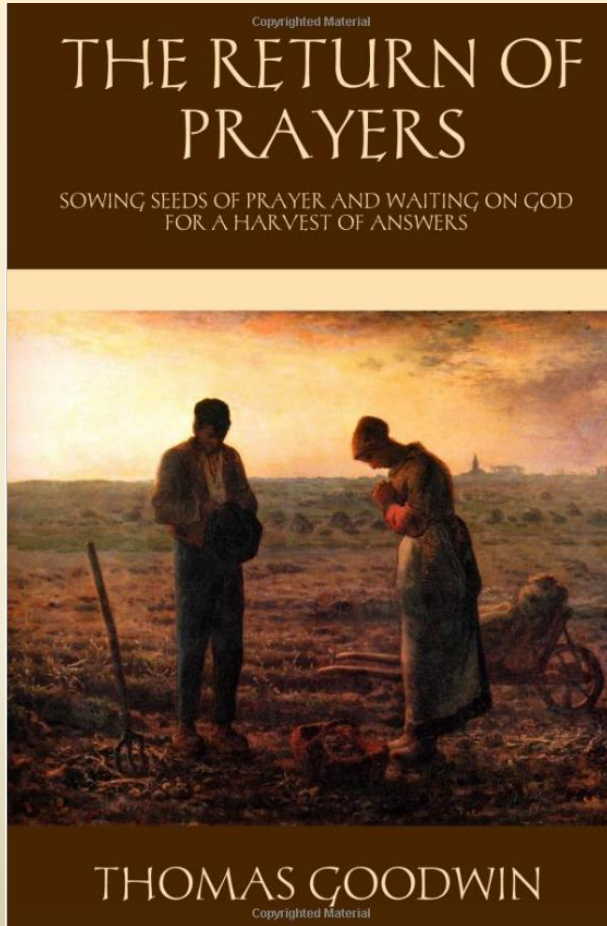


## Psalm 85:8

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

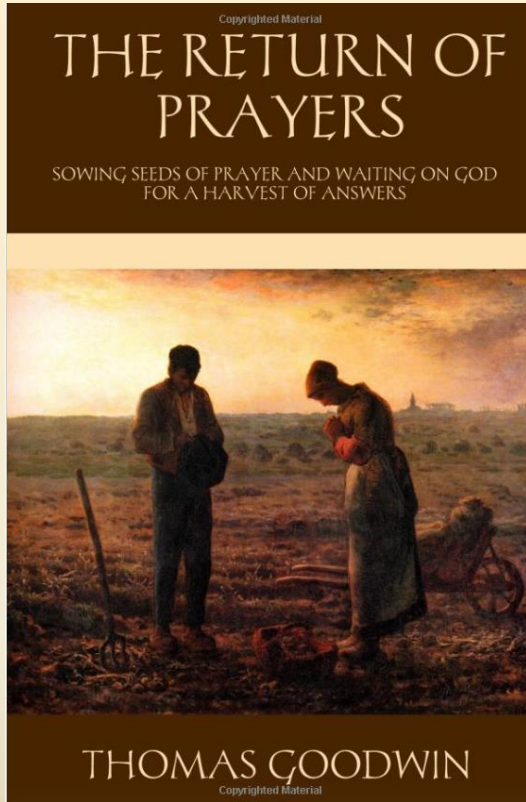


*His prayer being finished,  
and he having spoke, he  
now stands and listens, as  
you do when you expect an  
echo. . .*



***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.*

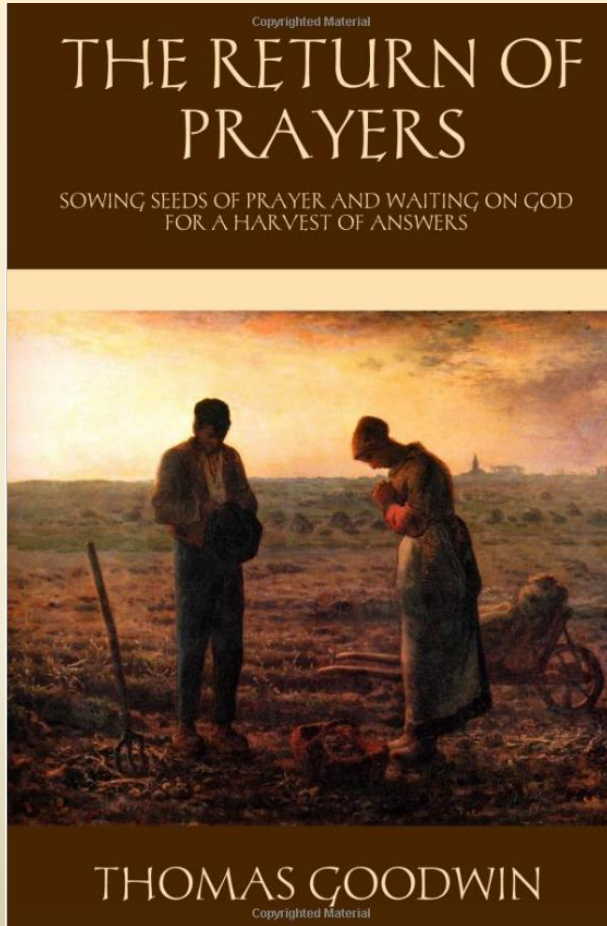
Psalm 66:19

**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

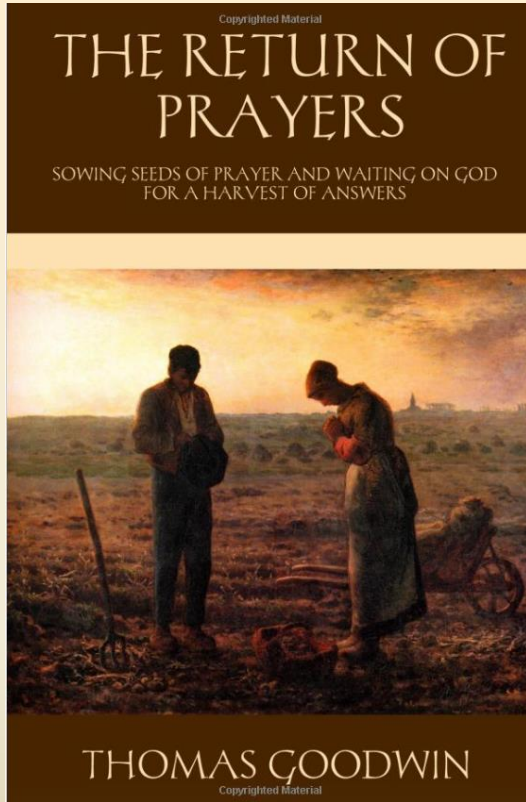
**But as for me, I will  
watch expectantly for  
the LORD; I will wait  
for the God of my  
salvation. My God will  
hear me.**





*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.**



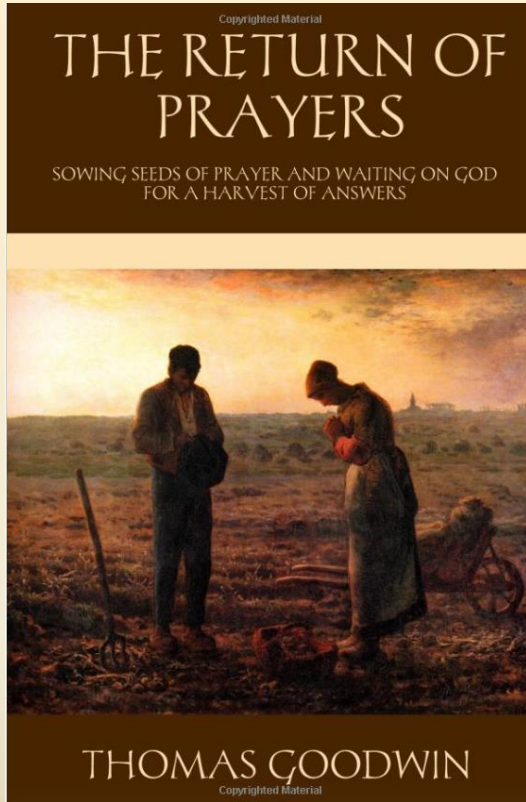
*By neglecting to look for answers, we make an idol god of Him, as if He has ears but hears not or eyes but sees not. In this way we rob Him of one of his royal titles, “a God that heareth prayers.” Ps. 65:2*



*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**





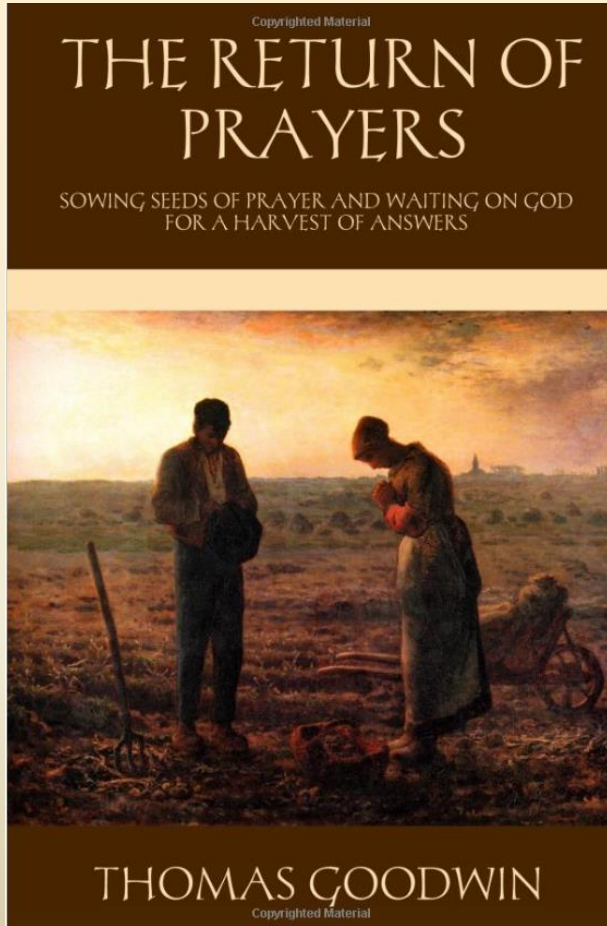
**(3) So that God's  
answers will not be  
sent in vain.**



*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**



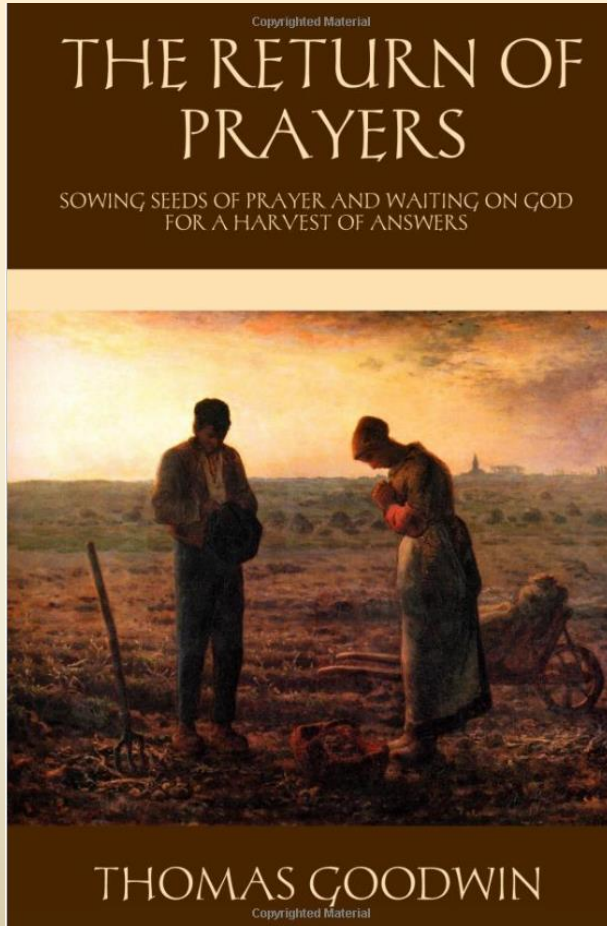
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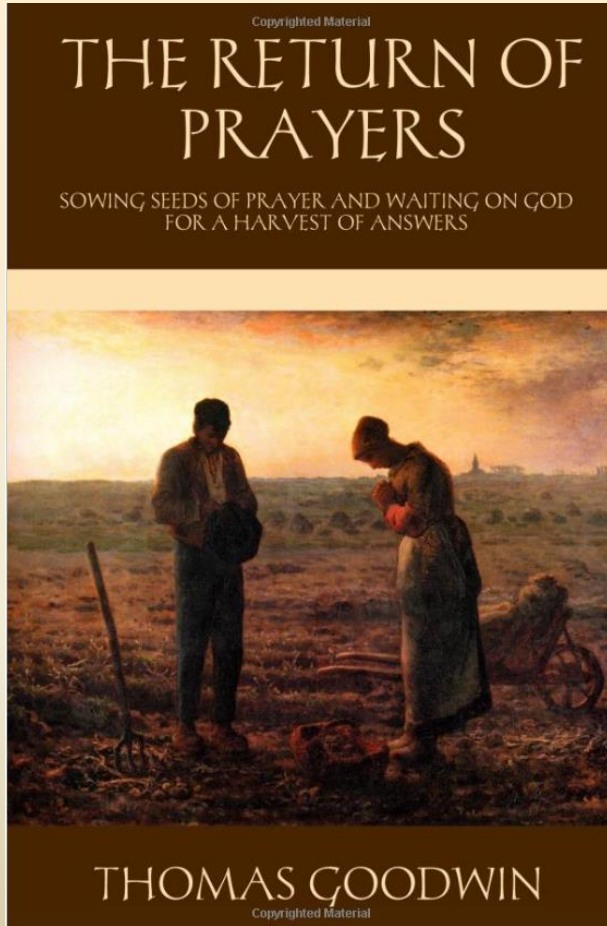
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**A parallel to keeping one's  
eyes upon Jesus Christ  
intentionally and  
habitually.**

**--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**

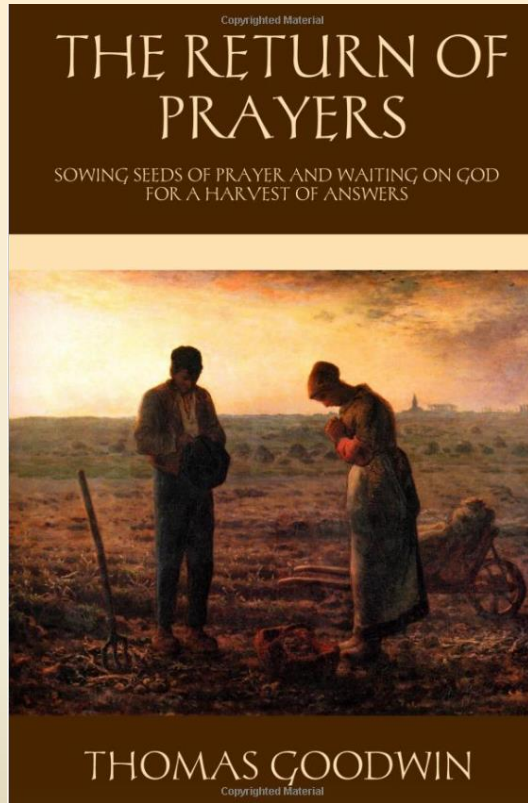
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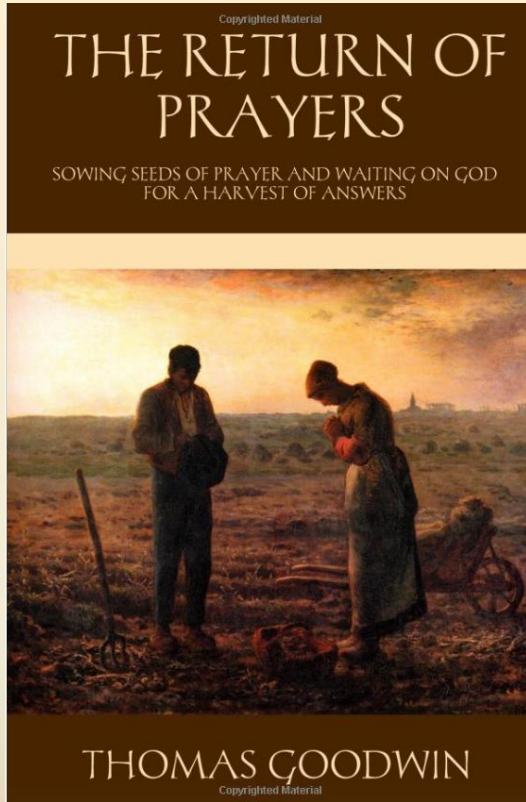
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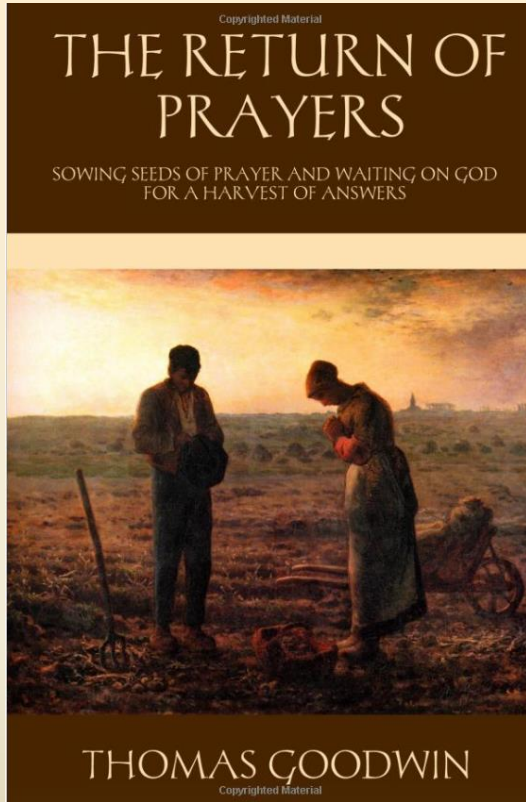
- (1) So that we do not take God's ordinance in vain.**
- (2) So that we do not take God's attributes in vain.**
- (3) So that God's answers will not be sent in vain.**



**(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.**



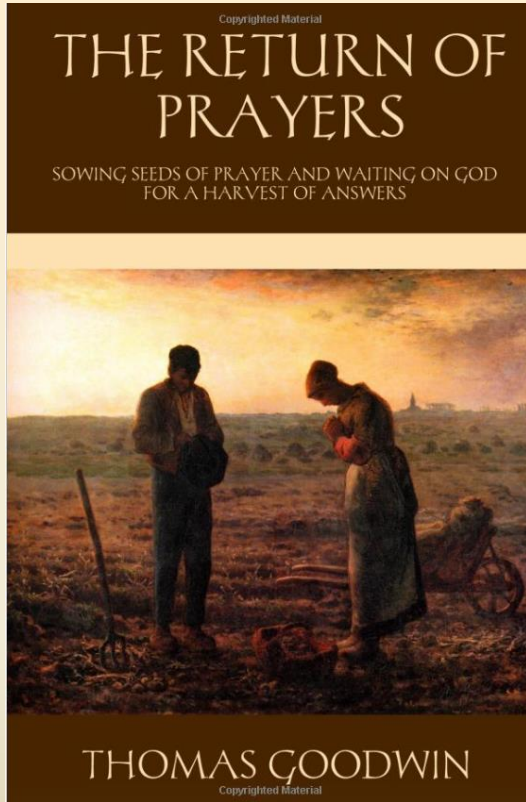
**(5) So that we will  
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**Psalm 116:1**

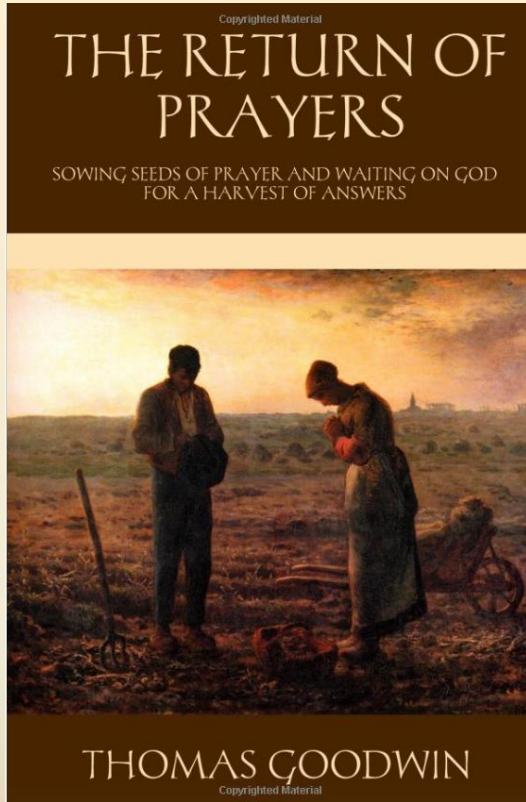




*The reason you pray so much, and give thanks so little is that you observe not God's answers; you do not study them.*



**(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.**



# **Psalms 66:16-20**

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

# **Psalm 66:17-20**

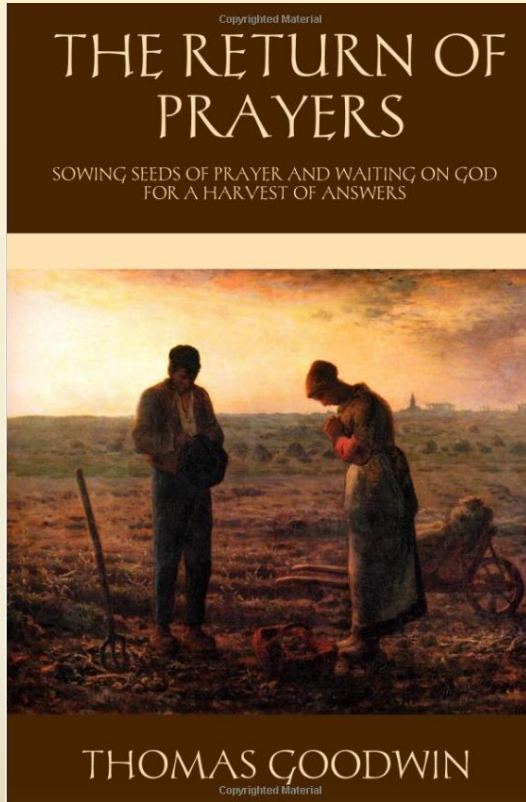
**. . . that we are not regarding iniquity  
in our hearts.**

**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.*

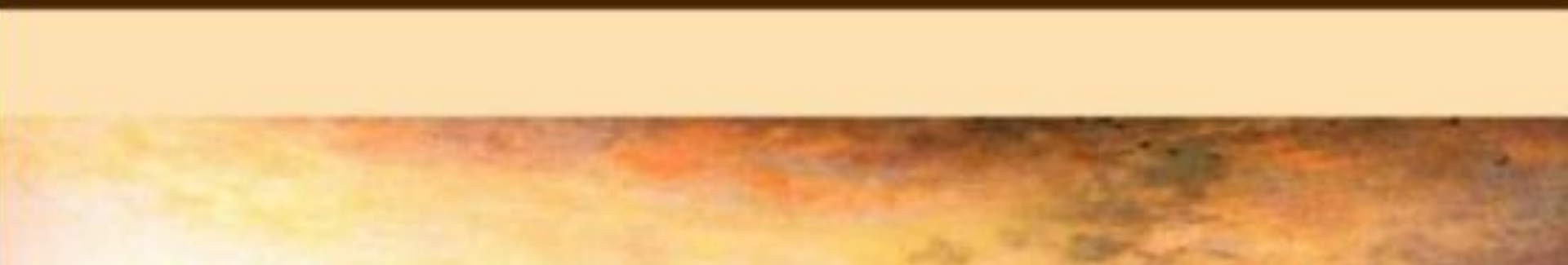
# THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

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



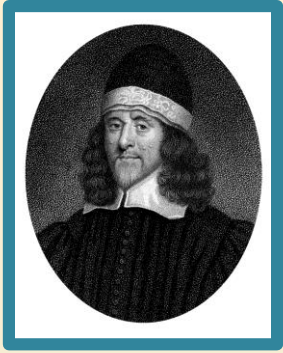












*The reason that we pray so much and give thanks so little is that we do not observe God's answers when they come. We do not study them.*

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

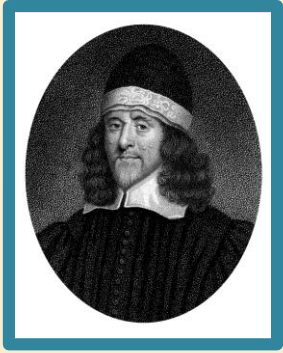
*David recalled an experience of having his prayers answered and cited it as a reason to continue calling on the Lord, “Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live” (Psalm 116:2).*



*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.*



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- |     |   |
|-----|---|
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**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 Motion.

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.

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- 1 § **BEFORE :** when God prepares the heart.  
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- 1 Giving a quietnesse by prayer about the thing desired for.

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Obtaining what we formerly prayed for,	80
Answered by foure things.	81
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