



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.



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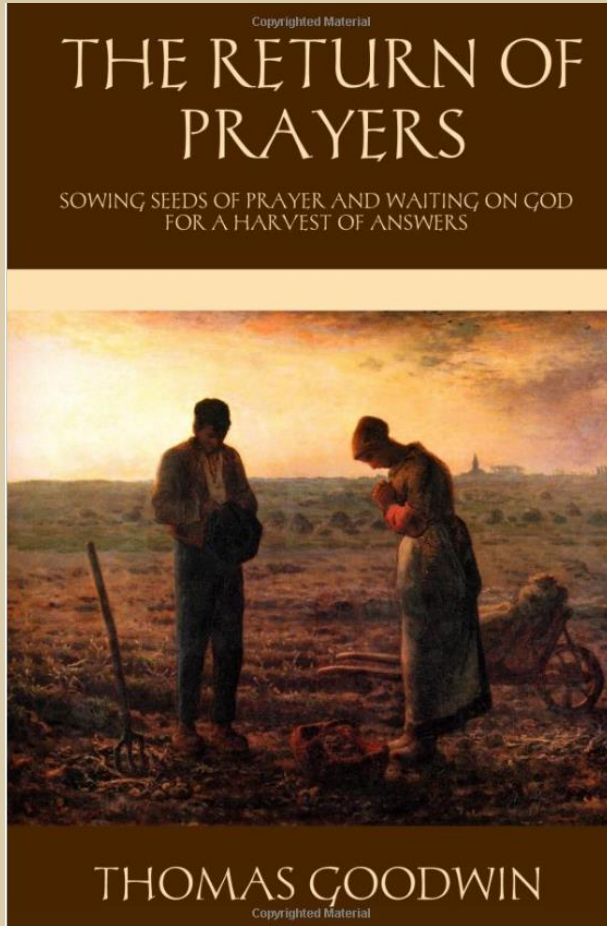
THE RETURN OF PRAYERS

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. . .**

Help in Watching for Answers

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1. Prayers for the Church.

Help in Watching for Answers

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2. **Prayers for others.**



Thomas Goodwin
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*Good swimmers seek
out deep waters.*



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



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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.

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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.**

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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).

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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

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Second: God sometimes does not grant such prayers.

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Second: God sometimes does not grant such prayers.

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They are five invaluable volumes.

Andrew Bonar