

An  
*HUMBLE ATTEMPT*  
to Promote

Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of  
*GOD'S PEOPLE,*

in

*EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER,*  
for the Revival of Religion and

*ADVANCEMENT*  
of  
*CHRIST'S KINGDOM*

on

*EARTH.*



*Jonathan Edwards*



## PREFACE

In the present imperfect state, we may reasonably expect a diversity of sentiments upon religious matters. Each ought to think for himself; and every one has a right, on proper occasions, to show his opinion. Yet all should remember, that there are but two parties in the world, each engaged in opposite causes; the cause of God and of Satan; of holiness and sin; of heaven and hell. The advancement of the one, and the downfall of the other, must appear exceedingly desirable to every real friend of God and man.

If such in some respects entertain different sentiments, and practise distinguishing modes of worship, surely they may unite in the above business. O for thousands upon thousands, divided into small bands in their respective cities, towns, villages, and neighbourhood, all met at the same time, and in pursuit of one end, offering up their united prayers, like so many ascending clouds of incense before the Most High!— May he shower down blessings on all the scattered tribes of Zion!

Grace, great grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! Amen!

*Olney, May 4th, 1789.*

JOHN SUTCLIFF.

## AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT, &C.

*“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.”*

### SECT. I.

#### *Explanatory Introduction.*

In this chapter we have a prophecy of a future glorious advancement of the church of God; wherein it is evident, that something further is intended than ever was fulfilled to the Jewish nation under the Old Testament. For here are plain prophecies of such things as never were fulfilled before the coming of the Messiah; particularly, what is said in the two last verses in the chapter, of many people and strong nations worshipping and seeking the true God; and of so great an accession of Gentile nations to the church of God, that by far the greater part of the visible worshippers should consist of this new accession, so that they should be to the other as ten to one.—A certain number for an uncertain. There never happened any thing, from the time of the prophet Zechariah to the coming of Christ, to answer this prophecy: and it can have no fulfilment, but either, in the calling of the Gentiles, in and after the days of the apostles; or, in the future glorious enlargement of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, so often foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the prophet Zechariah in particular, in the latter part of his prophecy. It is most probable, that what the Spirit of God has chiefly respect to, is that last and greatest enlargement and

most glorious advancement of the church of God on earth; in the benefits of which especially the Jewish nation were to have a share, a very eminent and distinguished share.

There is a great agreement between what is here said, and other prophecies that must manifestly have respect to the church's latter-day glory: As *Isa.* 60:2-4. "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee: and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee." That whole chapter, beyond all dispute, has respect to the most glorious state of the church of God on earth. So *chap.* 66:8. "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?" *ver.* 10. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her." *ver.* 12. "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." — *Micah* 4:1, &c. "But in the last day it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. — And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." See also *Isa.* 2. at the beginning.—There has been nothing yet brought to pass, in any measure, to answer these prophecies. And as the prophecy in my text, and the following verse, agrees with them, so there is reason to think it has a respect to the same times. And indeed there is a remarkable agreement in the description given throughout the chapter, with the representations made of those times elsewhere in the prophets.

So that however the prophet, in some parts of this chapter, may have respect to future smiles of heaven on the Jewish nation, lately returned from the Babylonish captivity, and resettled in the land of Canaan, in a great increase of their numbers and wealth, and the return of more captives from Chaldea and other countries, &c. yet the Spirit of God has doubtless respect to things far greater than these, and of which these were but faint resemblances. We find it common in the prophecies of the Old Testament, that when the prophets are speaking of divine favours and blessings on the Jews, attending or following their return from the Babylonish captivity, the Spirit of God takes occasion from thence to speak of the incomparably greater blessings on the church, that shall attend and follow her deliverance from the spiritual or mystical Babylon, of which those were a type; and then speaks almost wholly of these latter and vastly greater things, so as to seem to forget the former

And whereas the prophet, in this chapter, speaks of God bringing his people again from the east and west to Jerusalem, (*ver. 7, 8.*) and multitudes of all nations taking hold of the skirts of the Jews; so far as this means literally that nation of the posterity of Jacob, it cannot chiefly respect any return of the Jews from Babylon and other countries, in those ancient times before Christ; for no such things attended any such return. It must therefore have respect to the great calling and gathering of the Jews into the fold of Christ, and their being received to the blessings of his kingdom, after the fall of antichrist, or the destruction of mystical Babylon.

## SECT. II

### *Observations on the text.*

In the text we have an account how this future glorious advancement of the church of God should be introduced; viz. By great multitudes in different towns and countries taking up a joint resolution, and coming into an express and visible agreement, that they will, by united and extraordinary prayer, seek to God, that he would come and manifest himself, and grant the tokens and fruits of his gracious presence.— Particularly we may observe,

1. The duty, with the attendance on which the glorious event foretold shall be brought on; viz. The duty of prayer.— Prayer, some suppose, is here to be taken synechdochically for the whole of divine worship; prayer being a principal part of worship in the days of the gospel, when sacrifices are abolished. If so, this is to be understood only as a prophecy of a great revival of religion, and of the true worship of God among his visible people, the accession of others to the church, and turning of multitudes from idolatry to the worship of the true God. But it appears to me reasonable to suppose, that something more special is intended, with regard to the duty of prayer; considering that prayer is here EXPRESSLY and REPEATEDLY mentioned; and also considering how parallel this place is with many other prophecies, that speak of an extraordinary spirit of prayer, as preceding and introducing that glorious day of religious revival, and advancement of the church's peace and prosperity, so often foretold. Add to this, the agreeableness of what is here said, with what is said afterwards by the same prophet, of the pouring out of a spirit of grace and supplication, as that with which this great revival of religion shall begin. (*Chap. 12:10.*)

2. The good, that shall be sought by prayer; which is God himself. It is said once and again, "They shall go to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts." This is the good they ask for, and seek by prayer, **The Lord of hosts himself**. To seek God, as the expression may perhaps be sometimes used in Scripture, may signify no more than seeking the favour or mercy of God. And if it be taken so here, praying before the Lord, and seeking the Lord of hosts, must be synonymous expressions. And it must be confessed to be a common thing in Scripture, to signify the same thing repeatedly, by various expressions of the same import, for the greater emphasis.

But certainly that expression of seeking the Lord, is very commonly used to signify something more; it implies that **God himself** is the great good desired and sought after; that the blessings pursued are **God's gracious presence**, the blessed manifestations of him, union and intercourse with him; or, in short, God's manifestations and communications of himself by his Holy Spirit. Thus the psalmist desired God, thirsted after him, and sought him. (*Psal.* 63:1, 2, 8.) "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee. My flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. My soul followeth hard after thee." (*Psal.* 73:25.) "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The psalmist earnestly pursued after GOD, his soul thirsted after him, he stretched forth his hands unto him, &c. (*Psal.* 143:6.) And therefore it is in Scripture the peculiar character of the saints, that they are those who seek God. (*Psal.* 24:6.) "This is the generation of them that seek him." (*Psal.* 69:32.) "Your heart shall live that seek God." If the expression in the text be understood agreeably to this sense, then by seeking the Lord of hosts, we must understand a seeking, that God who had withdrawn, or as it were hid himself for a long time, would return to his church, and grant the tokens and fruits of

his gracious presence, and those blessed communications of his Spirit to his people, and to mankind on earth, which he had often promised, and which his church had long waited for.

And it seems reasonable to understand the phrase, seeking the Lord of hosts, in this sense here; and not as merely signifying the same thing with praying to God: not only because the expression is repeatedly added to praying before the Lord, in the text; but also because the phrase, taken in this sense, is exactly agreeable to other parallel prophetic representations. Thus God's people seeking, by earnest prayer, the promised restoration of the church of God, after the Babylonish captivity, and the great apostacy that occasioned it, is' called their seeking God, and searching for him; and God's granting this promised revival and restoration is called his being found of them. *Jer. 29:10, 14.* "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye go and call upon me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart; and I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity." And the prophets, from time to time, represent God, in a low and afflicted state of his church, as being withdrawn, and hiding himself. *Isa. 45:15.* "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." (*Chap. 57:17.*) "I hid me, and was wroth." And they represent God's people, while his church is in such a state, before God delivers and restores the same, as seeking him, looking for him, searching and waiting for him, and calling after him. (*Hos. 5:15.*) "I will go and return unto my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him."

And when God, in answer to their prayers and succeeding their endeavours, delivers, restores, and advances his church, according to his promise, then he is said to answer, and come, and say, Here am I, and to show himself; and they are said to find him, and see him plainly. (*Isa. 58:9.*) "Then shall thou cry, and he shall say, Here I am" (*Isa. 45:19.*) "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." *Chap. 25:8, 9.*) "The Lord will wipe away the tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off the earth. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." Together with the next chap." *ver. 8, 9.* we have waited for thee; "the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." *Isa. 52:6-8.* "Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

3. We may observe who they are, that shall be united in thus seeking the Lord of hosts: the inhabitants of many cities, and of many countries, yea, many people, and strong nations, great multitudes in different parts of the world shall conspire in this business. From the representation made in the prophecy, it appears rational to suppose, that it will be fulfilled something after this manner: There shall be given much of a spirit of prayer to God's people, in many places, disposing them to come into an express agreement, unitedly to pray to God in

an extraordinary manner, that he would appear for the help of his church, and in mercy to mankind, and pour out his Spirit, revive his work, and advance his spiritual kingdom in the world, as he has promised. This disposition to prayer, and union in it, will **gradually spread more and more**, and increase to greater degrees; with which at length will gradually be introduced a revival of religion, and a disposition to greater engagedness in the worship and service of God, amongst his professing people. This being observed, will be the means of AWAKENING OTHERS, making them sensible of the wants of their souls, and exciting in them a great concern for their spiritual and everlasting good, and putting them upon earnestly crying to God for spiritual mercies, and disposing them to join in that extraordinary seeking and serving of God.

In this manner religion shall be propagated, till the awakening reaches those that are in the highest stations, and till whole nations be awakened, and there be at length an accession of many of the chief nations of the world to the church of God. Thus after the inhabitants of many cities of Israel, or of God's professing people, have taken up and pursued a joint resolution, to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts, others shall be drawn to worship and serve him with them; till at length many people and strong nations shall join themselves to them; and there shall, in process of time, be a vast accession to the church, so that it shall be ten times as large as it was before; yea, at length, all nations shall be converted unto God. Thus (*Zech. 8:23.*) "ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, of the skirt of him that is a Jew," (in the sense of the apostle, *Rom. 2:28, 29.*) "saying, We will go with you; for we have heard, that God is with you." And thus shall be fulfilled, *Psal. 65:2.* "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

4. We may observe, the mode of their union in this duty. It is a visible union, an union by explicit agreement, a joint resolution declared by one to another, being first proposed by some, and readily and expressly followed by others. The inhabitants of one city shall apply themselves to the inhabitants of another, saying, Let us go, &c. Those to whom the motion is made, shall comply with it, the proposal shall take with many, it shall be a prevailing, SPREADING THING; *one shall follow another's example*, one and another shall say, I will go also. Some suppose, that those words, I will go also, are to be taken as the words of him that makes the proposal; as much as to say, I do not propose that to you, which I am not willing to do myself. I desire you to go, and am ready to go with you. But this is to suppose no more to be expressed in these latter words, than was expressed before in the proposal itself; for these words, let us go, signify as much. It seems to me much more natural, to understand these latter words as importing the consent of those to whom the proposal is made, or the reply of one and another that falls in with it. This is much more agreeable to the plain design of the text, which is to represent the concurrence of great numbers in this affair; and more agreeable to the representation made in the next verse, of one following another, many taking hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew.

And though, if the words be thus understood, we must suppose an ellipsis in the text, something understood that is not expressed, as if it had been said, those of other cities shall say, I will go also; yet, this is not difficult to be supposed, for such ellipses are very common in Scripture. We have one exactly parallel with it in *Jer. 3:22*. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God," i. e. the backsliding children shall say, "Behold, we come unto thee," &c. And in *Song of Solomon 4:16. and v. 1*. "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse,"

i. e. her beloved shall say, "I am come into my garden." We have the like throughout that song. So *Psal* 50:6, 7. "The heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak," i. e. the Judge shall say, "Hear, O my people," &c. So *Psal*. 82:1, 2. The psalms and prophets abound with such figures of speech.

5. We may observe the manner of prayer agreed on, or the manner in which they agree, to engage in and perform the duty. Let us go **SPEEDILY** to pray; or as it is in the margin, Let us go **continually**. The words literally translated are, Let us go in going. Such an ingemination, or doubling of words, is very common in the Hebrew language, when it is intended that a thing shall be very strongly expressed. It generally implies the superlative degree of a thing; as the holy of holies signifies the most holy. But it commonly denotes, not only the utmost degree of a thing, but also the utmost certainty; as when God said to Abraham, "In multiplying, I will multiply thy seed," (*Gen*. 22:17.) it implies both that God would certainly multiply his seed, and also multiply it exceedingly. So when God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, in dying thou shall die," (as the words are in the original,) it implies, both that he should surely die, and also that he should die most terribly, should utterly perish, and be destroyed to the utmost degree.

In short, as the ingemination of words in the Hebrew, generally denotes the **strength of expression**, so it is used to signify almost all those things that are wont to be signified by the various forms of strong speech in other languages. It signifies not only the utmost degree of a thing, and its great certainty; but also the peremptoriness and terribleness of a threatening, the greatness and positiveness of a promise, the strictness of a command, and the earnestness of a request. When God says to Adam, "Dying thou shall die," it is equivalent to such strong expressions in English, as, Thou shalt die surely, or indeed; or, Thou shalt die with a witness. So when

it is said in the text, "Let us go in going, and pray before the Lord," the strength of the expression represents the earnestness of those that make the proposal, their great engagedness in the affair. And with respect to the duty proposed, it may be understood to signify that they should be speedy, fervent, and constant in it; or, in one word, that it should be thoroughly performed.

6. We may learn from the tenor of this prophecy, together with the context, that this union in such prayer is foretold as a becoming and happy thing, what would be acceptable to God, and attended with glorious success.

**\*\* From the whole we may infer, that it is a very suitable thing, and well-pleasing to God, for many people, in different parts of the world, by express agreement, to come into a visible union in extraordinary, speedy, fervent, and constant prayer, for those great effusions of the Holy Spirit, which shall bring on that advancement of Christ's church and kingdom, that God has so often promised shall be in the latter ages of the world. \*\***

And so from hence I would infer the duty of God's people, with regard to the Memorial lately sent over into America from Scotland, by a number of ministers there, proposing a method for such an union as has been spoken of, in extraordinary prayer, for this great mercy.

And it being the special design of this discourse, to persuade such as are friends to the interests of Christ's kingdom, to a compliance with the proposal and request made in that Memorial, I shall give a short historical account of the affair to which it relates, from letters, papers, and pamphlets, that have come over from Scotland.

### SECT. III.

*An historical account of the concert to which the Memorial relates.*

In October, A. D. 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, taking into consideration the state of God's church, and of the world of mankind, judged that the providence of God, at such a day, did loudly call upon such as were concerned for the welfare of Zion, to united extraordinary applications to the God of all grace, suitably acknowledging him as the fountain of all the spiritual benefits and blessings of his church, and earnestly praying to him, that he would appear in His glory, and favour Zion, and manifest his compassion to the world of mankind, by an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit on all the churches, and the whole habitable earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver all nations from their great and manifold spiritual calamities and miseries, and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the kingdom of our glorious Redeemer, and fill the whole earth, with his glory. Consulting one another on the subject, they looked upon themselves, for their own part, obliged to engage in this duty; and, as far as in them lay, to persuade others to the same: and to endeavour to find out and fix on some method, that should most effectually tend to promote and uphold such extraordinary application to heaven among God's people.

After seeking to God by prayer for direction, they determined on the following method, as what they would conform to in their own practice, and propose to be practised by others, for the two years next following, viz. To set apart some time on Saturday evening, and sabbath morning, every week, for the purpose aforesaid, as other duties would allow to every one respectively; and more solemnly, the first Tuesday of each quarter, (beginning with the first Tuesday of November, then next ensuing,) either the whole day, or part of the day, as persons find themselves disposed, or think their circumstances

will allow: the time to be spent either in private praying societies, or in public meetings, or alone in secret, as shall be found most practicable, or judged most convenient, by such as are willing, in some way or other, to join in this affair. Not that any should make promises, or be looked upon as under strict bonds in any respect, constantly and without fail to observe every one of these days, whatever their circumstances should be, or however other duties and necessary affairs might interfere; or that persons should look upon themselves bound with regard to these days in any wise as though the time were holy, or the setting of them apart for religious purposes were established by sacred authority. But yet, as a **proper guard** against negligence and unsteadiness, and a prudent preservative from yielding to a disposition to which persons might be liable, through the prevalence of **indolence** and **listlessness** to excuse themselves on trivial occasions, it was proposed, that those who united in this affair should resolve with themselves, that if, by urgent business, or otherwise, they were hindered from joining with others on the very day agreed on, yet they would not wholly neglect bearing their part in the duty proposed, but would take the first convenient day following for that purpose.

The reason why Saturday evening and Lord's-day morning were indeed most convenient for the weekly seasons, was, that these times being so near the time of dispensing gospel ordinances through the Christian world, which are the great means, in the use of which God is wont to grant his Spirit to mankind, and the principal means that the Spirit of God makes use of to carry on his work of grace, it may be well supposed that the minds of Christians in general will at these seasons be especially disengaged from secular affairs, and disposed to pious meditations and the duties of devotion, and more naturally led to seek the communications of the Holy Spirit, and success of the means of grace. And as to the quarterly times, it was thought helpful to memory, that they should be

on one or other of the first days of each quarter: Tuesday was preferred to Monday, because in some places people might have public prayers and a sermon on the stated day, which might not be so convenient on Monday, as on some day at a greater distance from the sabbath.

It was reckoned a chief use of such an agreement and method as this, that it would be a good expedient for maintaining and keeping up, amongst the people of God, the great Christian duty of prayerfulness for the coming of Christ's kingdom. Those things to which we are too little inclined, through SLOTT, carnality, or a fulness of our own worldly and private concerns and which are to be attended to at some seasons or other, but have no special seasons stated for them are **apt to be forgotten**, or put off from time to time, and as it were adjourned without a day. But when we fix on certain seasons, which we RESOLVE, unless extraordinarily hindered, to devote to the duty, it tends to **prevent forgetfulness**, and a settled negligence of it. The certain returns of the season will naturally REFRESH THE MEMORY; will tend to put us in mind of the precept of Christ, and the obligations that lie on all his followers, to abound in such a duty, and renewedly engage us to the consideration of the importance, necessity, and unspeakable value of the mercy sought; and so, by frequent renovation, to keep alive the consideration and sense of these things at all times.

Thus the first promoters of this agreement judged, that it would be subservient to more abundant prayerfulness for effusions of the Holy Spirit at all times through the year, both in secret and social worship; particularly as to this last, in congregations, families, and other praying societies. And they also judged, that such an AGREED UNION would tend to animate and ENCOURAGE God's people in the duty proposed; and that particular persons and societies, knowing that great multitudes of their fellow-Christians, in so many

distant places, were at the same time (as a token of the union of their hearts with them in this affair) by agreement engaged in the same holy exercise, would **naturally be enlivened** in the duty by such a consideration.

It was not thought best to propose, at first, a longer time for the continuance of this precise method, than two years: it being considered, that it is not possible, before any trial, so well to judge of the expedience of a particular method, and certain circumstances of managing such an affair, as after some time of experience. And it was not known, but that after long consideration, and some trial, it might be thought best to alter some circumstances; or whether others, that had not yet been consulted, might not propose a better method. The time first agreed on, though but short, was thought sufficient to give opportunity for judgment and experience, and for such as were disposed to unite in an affair of such a nature, in distant places, mutually to communicate their sentiments on the subject.

The way which those who first projected, and came into this agreement, thought best for giving notice of it, and proposing it to others, was not by the press, but by **personal conversation** with such as they could conveniently have immediate access to, and by **private correspondence** with others at a distance. At first it was intended, that some formal paper, proposing the matter, should be sent about for proper amendments and improvements, and then concurrence: but on more mature deliberation, it was considered how this might give a handle to objections; (which they thought it best, to the utmost, to avoid in the infancy of the affair;) and how practicable it was, without any such formality, to spread the substance of the proposal by private letters, together with a request to their correspondents mutually to communicate their thoughts. Therefore this was fixed on, as the preferable method at the beginning. Accordingly, they proposed, and endeavoured to promote the affair, in this way; and with such success,

that great numbers in Scotland and England fell in with the proposal, and some in North America. As to Scotland, it was complied with by numbers in, the four chief towns, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee, and many country towns and congregations in various parts of the land. One of the ministers who was primarily concerned in this affair, in a letter to one of his correspondents, speaks of an explicit declaration of the concurrence of the praying societies in Edinburgh, which they had made in a letter. The number of the praying societies in that city is very considerable. Mr. Kobe, of Kilsyth, (in a letter to Mr. Prince, of Boston, dated Nov. 3, 1743,) says, there were then above thirty societies of young people there newly erected, some of which consisted of upwards of thirty members. As to Glasgow, this union was unanimously agreed to by about forty-five praying societies there; as an eminent minister in that city informs in a letter.

The two years first agreed on ended last November. A little before this time expired, a number of ministers in Scotland agreed on a Memorial **to be printed**, and sent abroad to their brethren in various parts, proposing to them, and requesting of them, to join in the continuance of this method of **united prayer**, and **endeavouring to promote it**. Copies of which Memorial have lately been sent over to New England, (to the number of near 500,) directed to be distributed in almost every country in this province of the Massachusetts Bay, and also in several parts of Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina, and Georgia. Most of these, I suppose, were sent to one of the congregational ministers in Boston, with a letter subscribed by twelve ministers in Scotland, about the affair: many of them to another of the said ministers of Boston; and some to a minister in Connecticut. It being short, I shall here insert a copy of it at length.

## SECT. IV.

*A memorial from several ministers in Scotland, to their brethren in different places, for continuing a Concert for Prayer, first entered into in the year 1744.*

Whereas it was the chief scope of this concert to promote more abundant application to a duty that is perpetually binding, **prayer that our Lord's kingdom may come**, joined with praises: and it contained some circumstantial expedients, apprehended to be very subservient to that design, relating to stated times for such exercises, so far as this would not interfere with other duties; particularly a part of Saturday evening and sabbath morning, every week; and more solemnly of some one of the first days of each of the four great divisions of the year, that is, of each quarter; as the first Tuesday, or first convenient day after; 316 and the concert, as to this circumstance, was extended only to two years; it being intended, that before these expired, persons engaged in the concert should reciprocally communicate their sentiments and inclinations, as to the prolonging of the time, with or without alteration, as to the circumstance mentioned: and it was intended by the first promoters, that others at a distance should propose such circumstantial amendments or improvements, as they should find proper: it is hereby earnestly entreated, that such would communicate their sentiments accordingly, now that the time first proposed is near expiring.

II. To induce those already engaged to adhere, and others to accede to this concert; it seems of importance to observe, that declarations of concurrence, the communicating and spreading of which are so evidently useful, are to be understood in such a latitude, as to keep at the greatest distance from entangling men's minds: not as binding men to set apart any stated days from secular affairs, or even to fix on any part of such and such precise days, whether it be convenient or not:

not as **absolute promises** in any respect; but as **friendly, harmonious resolutions**, with liberty to alter circumstances as shall be found expedient. On account of all which latitude, and that the circumstantial part extends only to a few years, it is apprehended, the concert cannot be liable to the objections against periodical religious times of human appointment.

III. It is also humbly offered to the consideration of ministers, and others furnished with gifts for the most public instructions, whether it might not be of great use, by the blessing of God, if short and nervous scriptural persuasives and directions to the duty in view, were composed and published, (either by particular authors, or several joining together; which last way might sometimes have peculiar advantages,) and that from time to time, without too great intervals; the better to keep alive on men's minds a just sense of the obligations to a duty so important in itself, and in which many may be in danger to faint and turn remiss, without such repeated incitements: and whether it would not also be of great use, if ministers would be pleased to preach frequently on the *importance and necessity of prayer* for the coming of our Lord's kingdom; particularly near the quarterly days, or on these days themselves, where there is public worship at that time.

IV. They who have found it incumbent on them to publish this Memorial at this time, having peculiar advantages for spreading it, do entreat that the desire of concurrence and assistance contained in it, may by no means be understood as restricted to any particular denomination or party, or to those who are of such or such opinions about any former instances of remarkable religious concern; but to be extended to all, who shall vouchsafe any attention to this paper, and have at heart the **interest of vital Christianity**, and the power of godliness; and who, however differing about other things, are convinced of the **importance of fervent prayer**, to promote that common interest, and of scripture persuasives to promote such prayer.

V. As the first printed account of this concert was not a proposal of it, as a thing then to begin, but a narration of it, as a design already set on foot, which had been brought about with much harmony, by means of private letters; so the farther continuance, and, it is hoped, the farther spreading of it, seems in a promising way of being promoted by the same means; as importunate desires of renewing the concert have been transmitted already from a very distant corner abroad, where the regard to it has of late increased: but notwithstanding what may be done by private letters, it is humbly expected, that a memorial spread in this manner, may, by God's blessing, further promote the good ends in view; as it may be usefully referred to in letters, and may reach where they will not.

VI. Whereas in a valuable letter, from the corner just now mentioned, as a place where a regard to the concert has lately increased, it is proposed, that it should be continued for seven years, or at least for a much longer time than what was specified in the first agreement; those concerned in this Memorial, who would wish rather to receive and spread directions and proposals on this head, than to be the first authors of any, apprehend no inconvenience, for their part, in agreeing to the seven years, with the latitude above described, which reserves liberty to make such circumstantial alterations, as may be hereafter found expedient: on the contrary it seems of importance, that the labour of spreading a concert, which has already extended to so distant parts, and may, it is hoped, extend further, may not need to be renewed sooner, at least much sooner; as it is uncertain but that may endanger the dropping of it; and it seems probable, there will be less zeal in spreading it, if the time proposed for its continuance be too inconsiderable. Meantime, declarations of concurrence for a less number of years may greatly promote the good ends in view; though it seems very expedient, that it should exceed what was first agreed on; seeing it is found on trial, that that time, instead of being too long, was much too short.

VII. If any person who formerly agreed to this concert, should now discontinue it; would it not look too like that fainting in prayer, against which we are so expressly warned in Scripture? And would not this be the more unsuitable at this time, in any within the British dominions, when they have the united calls of such public chastisements and deliverances, 317 to more concern than ever about public reformation, and consequently about that which is the source of all thorough reformation, the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Almighty Spirit of God: August 26, 1746.

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