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SUGGESTIONS

DESIGNED TO PROMOTE

THE REVIVAL AND EXTENSION

OF

RELIGION,

FOUNDED ON OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING
A JOURNEY IN

The United States of America,

IN

THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1835.

BY THE REV. F. A. COX, D.D. & L.L.D.

"O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years."—HAB. iii. 2.

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SUGGESTIONS.

FREQUENT inquiries have been made respecting the practical result of recent deputations to the churches of America. Apart from the general purpose of promoting union between Christians in both hemispheres, it has been asked, whether any measures can be adopted which, under a divine blessing, may tend to a more vigorous state of religion in our own country? What is doing abroad, and what may be done at home? The few following pages are intended as a brief answer to these questions.

Every unprejudiced observer will admit that there is much in the transatlantic churches, both in the spirit they manifest and in the measures they adopt, that merits the serious consideration of British Christians. The circumstances attending their origin and early history, peculiarly favoured the production of energy in religion. Planted by men who, in the spirit of martyrdom, abandoned their country to seek, amidst the wildernesses of the new world, liberty of conscience and a sanctuary for truth; they laid the basis of a pure and prosperous church in the sufficiency of the Scriptures, as the only rule of doctrine and worship, and the faith of believers as the sacred bond of union; and though a considerable degree of intolerance

and ecclesiastical corruption prevailed, yet the advancement of religion has been far less impeded there than in any other land. They have from time to time experienced the power of grace and the spirit of effectual prayer, so that effusions of divine influence have frequently descended in copious showers of blessing.

American piety is in accordance with the national character, which the nature and freedom of religious institutions have contributed to form. It is energetic and progressive. If churches relapse into a low state, they are not satisfied long to continue so; but they begin to inquire into the cause of this declension, and the means by which it may be remedied. They entertain confidence in the success of suitable means, and are often at once sagacious in the discovery and prompt in the application of them to the condition of particular congregations. Should plans be suggested which have for their object to awaken professors from a state of slumber, and arouse the unconverted from their sleep of death, objections are not urged against them because they are *new*; they do not restrain zeal, lest it should produce innovation; and are more afraid of incurring the guilt of lukewarmness, than of being charged with the extravagance of enthusiasm. In this spirit most of those efforts have been conceived, to which I shall now refer. Let me only premise that some of them have been partially adopted among ourselves, while others are peculiar to America. The reader is desired to keep in view, that it is not intended merely to indicate the points in which American Christians advantageously differ from ourselves, and are worthy of imitation, but also to offer suggestions, and enforce them by references to the plans in operation in that favoured land.

1. I may refer to *individual efforts for the conversion of sinners*. Private Christians, in many parts of America, appear to feel deeply their personal responsibility to win all to Christ who are within the sphere of their possible exertion; their own households, their relatives, friends, neighbours, and fellow citizens. They are not content to see them moral in their conduct and regular in their attendance on the house of God, but aim by conversation, by letters, and other means, to bring them to immediate decision in religion. I have witnessed in the United States the assiduity of women of sound sense and deep Christian sentiment in cherishing the infant piety of persons of their own sex. They will take the young convert, foster the salutary impression, and give a wise and holy direction to the new-born affections. Appeals of this kind from friend to friend, neighbour to neighbour, and elder to younger, are most important auxiliaries to the public ministry, by enlisting the social feelings and the kindest sympathies of the heart in the cause of Christ. As the truths of the gospel take effect upon the conscience only in their application to individuals, so in labouring for the souls of men, success must depend in a great degree, under God, upon the personal character of the efforts. In New York, the attention of Christians has been particularly called to this subject in connexion with the City Tract Society, and some hundreds of zealous Christians have personally engaged in directing the truth to *individual minds*; and the result has been eminently gratifying. An impression has been produced of the paramount importance of religion, and the necessity of immediate self-dedication to God.

The members of churches keep a very vigilant eye upon general or casual visitors to the house of God. When such persons begin to manifest attention to pulpit instruc-

tions, or even though they are merely observed to be present at the services of religion for a few times, they are spoken with and encouraged. This friendly notice renewed at short intervals, whenever an opportunity offers, has often been the means of introducing a stranger into the fellowship of the church.

2. Another means of usefulness consists in *private associations for prayer among the members of churches*. These are usually resorted to with signal success, in anticipation of a general effort for the revival of religion; but whether expressly devised for this purpose or otherwise, I would earnestly recommend their adoption. In America, these associations are of two kinds; namely, the meeting of small companies of Christians at each others' houses, or the agreement to *meet in spirit* at appointed times in their respective retirements, to pray for some specific object, such as the revival of religion in their own hearts, their congregation, or town; or the conversion of particular individuals—a friend, a relative, a child, a neighbour, whose infidelity, aversion, or insensibility to religion, appears to demand a special effort.

It is not uncommon to see an immediate result, in the conversion of worldly men, notorious profligates, or systematic infidels. Nor ought this to be deemed improbable, for it is strictly philosophical to expect that a strong and useful excitement should be produced upon minds, however insusceptible, or averse from religious influence, by the mere knowledge of the fact, which is likely to be betrayed by parental, or fraternal solicitude, that the lamented wanderer from truth and duty is an object of distinct, earnest, affectionate, and combined prayer. But it is more than philosophical, it is scriptural, to anticipate such happy results. The exhortations to prayer upon the

ground of a promised answer, and the recorded examples of eminent success, are numerous in the volume of inspiration, while in reference to this very point, the language of our Saviour himself is peculiarly explicit and encouraging. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

American Christians, certainly, exhibit much of that spirit which has been characteristic of an exalted piety in every age of the church; faith, unction, energy, and perseverance in prayer. They ask believingly, wait confidently, and receive copiously. I have heard them besiege the heavenly throne with a fervour which seemed to say, "We will not let thee go, except thou bless us." In private meetings it is not uncommon to continue long on the bended knee, while individuals successively engage, and even follow each other without particular appointment or invitation. Our American friends have paid great attention to the means of rendering devotional services useful and animating, and their suggestions must commend themselves to our judgment. They justly think that prayers should be brief and numerous; and that, on all special occasions, *each one who engages in the duty should direct his supplications chiefly to some one object which may at the time peculiarly interest his own mind, or be the more immediate design of the meeting.* The advantage of this plan is obvious; for when a topic is brought forward in all its aspects, other minds will be led to feel its importance more deeply, and the current of thought and feeling, when flowing in one channel, would not suffer disadvantage, as

it often has done, by being suddenly diverted into another. In private, as well as in public, if particular subjects were especially regarded on each occasion of approaching the mercy seat, our devotions would become more interesting to ourselves, and create a more enlarged and universal sympathy with all the objects which at present engage the attention of Christians. I cannot better terminate these remarks, than by introducing a paper, supplied by a valued friend of another denomination, with a view to guide the devout in their private supplications; and which by a rather remarkable coincidence, was placed in my hands just after the preceding observations were written. I could wish that its adoption might produce a universal private *concert of prayer*.

DAILY TOPICS FOR A CONCERT OF PRAYER.

SUNDAY.—The Church of Christ—its unity, spirituality, and increase. The ministers of the Gospel, and all who are preparing to become such. Sabbath schools, and the better observance of the Lord's-day. 2 Thess. iii. 1.

MONDAY.—Conversion of the world. Foreign missions. The destruction of antichrist. The downfall of idolatry, and all false religion, and the universal prevalence of peace, freedom, knowledge, and salvation. Ps. ii. 8.

TUESDAY.—The rising generation. Universities, colleges, and schools of every description. The prevalence of Christian education in all lands. The children of the church—the children of the ungodly—and orphan children. Isa. xlv. 3.

WEDNESDAY.—Family and social religion, embracing the different members of our household, relatives, and friends. Job i. 5.

THURSDAY.—Our country, our king, and all who are in authority; all ranks and conditions of men; our civil, commercial, and religious prosperity; our colonial possessions and Ireland; forgiveness of

national sins—deliverance from infidelity, intemperance, profanity, and licentiousness. Jer. xxix. 7.

FRIDAY.—Our various benevolent and Christian associations, Bible societies, tract societies, in Britain and elsewhere. Universal abolition of slavery, the cause of seamen, the degraded condition of females in heathen lands. Isa. lxii. 1.

SATURDAY.—The churches of Christ in different parts of the world. The conversion of the Jews, the revival of religion in our own souls and amongst its professors everywhere. For those who sustain difficult and responsible situations in the church and the world. The afflicted. Ps. cxxii. 6.

3. *Inquiry meetings* have been eminently useful in America. They are invariably connected with revivals, but are by no means restricted to those periods. Their purpose is to elicit, by free conversation, the feelings of those who have received powerful impressions of religion; or to instruct those who have been recently converted. With these investigations and tuition are connected devout prayers and praises. Undoubtedly the state of society there differs from our own, and republican ideas and habits, by leading to an amalgamation of the different classes, facilitates the access of the pastor to all; and by an intercourse with each other, which is unchecked by artificial distinctions or the pride of rank, furnishes opportunity for awakening a more general sympathy among the people of a congregation or neighbourhood; but it is obvious that inquiry meetings are adapted to our own country, because they are suitable to the incipient state of religion every where and in every heart; only they require in the management a judicious adaptation to the condition of social life. A few of our ministers, indeed, have long held such meetings and with great benefit to their churches and congregations; but their importance has

not been sufficiently appreciated, and consequently they have not been generally and systematically adopted.

4. A remarkable feature in American churches, which the writer would commend to the consideration of his Christian brethren, is that of *juvenile piety and communion*. Notwithstanding the exertions which have been recently made in our own country to advance the spiritual welfare of the young, we have not yet gone far and deep enough. Parental or ministerial attentions have not, it is apprehended, been sufficiently employed with the view of bringing children and youth into fellowship with the church. However important it has been thought to win the heart to religion, by appeals from the pulpit, or tuition in the parlour, the *direct* and *immediate* object has perhaps seldom been to lead to early profession. The chief reason, probably, that juvenile piety has not been sufficiently regarded in this country is, that a sufficient expectation not being excited, an adequate effort has not been made. Though the "seed of the kingdom" has been widely scattered by Sunday Schools, we have scarcely ventured to hope for a speedy harvest; and because the maturity of Christian character must bear some proportion to the development of the faculties, we have been almost incredulous respecting the early implantation of religion in the heart. Our efforts consequently have either been languid, or they have not been accompanied by the prayer of *faith* and *full expectation*. We have been conscious of a certain shrinking from the manifestations of religion at a very immature age, as if it could scarcely be genuine or permanent. This is, however, a practical question of great moment, in two respects; first, as to the duty of profession, whether it is not required in every case where the *reality* of religion exists,

whatever may be its *degree*, or the *age* of the believer; secondly, as to the result in *future life* of such early decision. My observations in America would lead to this conclusion, that *those who had professed the earliest, had persevered the longest.*

An intimate friend of mine, an eminent minister in the United States, informed me, that about five years ago he had received four children into the church; the eldest being about *eleven*, and the youngest *eight* years of age. When they first disclosed their feelings, they all came together to his house, and requested a private interview. Their experience appeared to him to be strongly marked with gospel truth, and showed clearly the work of the Spirit. He had been very sceptical on the subject of such early impressions, and received their testimony with extreme caution. His deacons also participated in his sentiments; affording an illustration of the reluctance on this point which is so prevalent in our own country. He spoke to them of their immature years, and the necessity of further and frequent inquiry and examination,—advising them to pray over the subject afresh. But he was astonished, and irresistibly affected by their narratives; feeling persuaded that he had before him remarkable displays of divine compassion and grace. He appointed a time when they might repeat their visit, and without apprising them, requested the presence of his deacons. They were overwhelmed, and wept with unutterable joy. The children were introduced at length into the church. One of them is since dead, and died triumphantly. The youthful saint invited the attendance of her young friends at her bedside, and addressed them in the most touching and powerful manner: her views of truth were clear; her hope perfect. The rest of

this little band are at this time adorning their profession, and devotedly engaged in Sunday school instruction.

5. In close connexion with the preceding topic, is the plan of *Maternal Associations*, which is, I believe, entirely of American origin, and has, doubtless, contributed there in no slight degree to the prevalence of early piety. They were begun by the late excellent Mrs. Payson, wife of Dr. Payson, in the year 1820. This lady and a pious friend had often lamented that in social prayer meetings children were so much neglected, and they were in the habit of uniting occasionally to spend an hour together for mutual supplication for their beloved offspring. After the death of this endeared friend, which occurred soon after, Mrs. Payson continued to be deeply interested in the subject, and at length the plan of Maternal Associations presented itself to her mind. These simple institutions, so consonant with the deep and pious solicitude of a mother's heart for the best interests of her children, were rapidly multiplied: so that in the course of one year they were established in every parish through the state of Maine, and the most cheering results were apparent. One mother writes, "In the Association of which I have been a member for nine years past, many children from the age of five years and upwards have been brought as we hope into the fold of the great Shepherd." "In this Association," observes another lady, "in the course of a single year we had reason to hope that twenty of our little ones were born again." Another Association records in its first report, "one of our little ones has died since the Association was formed, leaving delightful evidence that its heart was renewed." Another says, "Three children have been taken from the Association, all of whom gave pleasing hope that their parents' loss was

to them unspeakable gain." After reporting these and many similar facts as the fruit of these Societies, in an Address to Christian Parents, by the Committee of Convention of the Churches of Vermont, they add, "Let every Christian husband and father encourage his wife to enlist in this object. Let all ministers and Christian parents feel that this is 'laying the foundation of many generations.' Let every child's mind be informed and brought to be interested in this subject, and made to feel that many hearts and minds are devising, labouring, and praying for his good, and his preparation to serve Christ Jesus the Lord." Another result also has been noticed, in the happy impulse given to family devotion, by this effort for the especial benefit of its youthful members. This association of mothers is held once a month for mutual conference and devotion in reference to their important duties; improved methods of intellectual, moral, and above all, religious culture are discussed, a deepened sense of responsibility is produced, mutual prayer called forth, and a blessing from on high has followed. Such institutions exist in a few of our own churches, where their beneficial tendency has been apparent; there is reason to hope that by the influence of the Metropolitan Society recently formed, they will be speedily established in very many of our churches. I subjoin the Rules :*

* I. That this Society be called the LONDON MATERNAL ASSOCIATION, and that one of its objects be to promote the establishment of similar institutions throughout the kingdom.

II. The officers of this Association shall be a Directress and two Secretaries, to be appointed annually.

III. It shall be the duty of the Directress to take a general supervision of the concerns of the Society. At each meeting she may appoint some one present to conduct the succeeding one, and the person

Once every quarter the children attend with their mothers, who offer fervent prayers and employ affectionate entreaties to bring the lambs of the flock to be enfolded in the arms of the great Shepherd. In the use of such means

so appointed will be expected to make selections for reading, and to introduce such topics for conversation as shall best exemplify the duties of the Christian mother.

IV. It shall be the duty of the Secretaries to conduct the correspondence, to register the names of the Members and their children, and to supply each of the mothers with a list of the same, together with a copy of the Regulations. She shall likewise keep a record of the proceedings of each meeting, and, as far as may be convenient of the topic discussed. This record shall be read at the commencement of the next meeting.

V. This Association shall meet on the Friday previous to the first Sabbath of every month, at 57, Aldersgate Street, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon. The time for each meeting not to exceed one hour and a half, which shall be exclusively devoted to the object of the Association. Each meeting shall be opened by prayer, and reading a portion of Scripture. All business relating to other Associations to be transacted from half-past ten to eleven, at which time all Members who can make it convenient are invited to attend.

VI. It shall be the duty of every Member to qualify herself by reading, prayer, and self-discipline, for the faithful discharge of the arduous duties of a Christian mother; and she shall be invited to give with freedom such hints upon the various subjects brought before the Association, as her own observation and experience may suggest.

VII. It shall be the duty of each member to pray *for* her children daily, and *with* them as often as circumstances may permit, and conscientiously to restrain them from such courses as would naturally lead to vanity, pride, and worldly-mindedness.

VIII. Once in three months, *viz.* March, June, September, and December, the Members shall be allowed to bring their children to the place of Meeting, and with this view the assistance of suitable Ministers shall be occasionally invited, who shall be considered Mem-

it is scarcely possible to doubt that extensive good must be accomplished. May God send showers of spiritual blessing upon these young plantations, and may they luxuriate in all the forms of genuine religion both in England and America!

6. *Efforts for the establishment of places of worship in necessitous districts* are frequent and liberal in America. It would not be difficult, indeed, to adduce distinguished examples of similar benevolence in England, but perhaps they are less common and less systematic. In America, large sums are devoted to this noble enterprise by individuals who are not in the first rank of opulence, though commercially prosperous; and I could name places of worship reared by the hand of individual benevolence, or by the united efforts of a very few, simply to provide a comparatively poor people with ample accommodation, without debt or incumbrance. The object of this remark is by no means to institute invidious comparisons, but to inspire exertion, and to bring into more distinct and

bers of the Association. The exercises at these Quarterly Meetings shall be such as may seem best calculated to instruct the minds, and interest the feelings of the children.

IX. When any Mother is removed by death, it shall be the duty of the Association, to regard with peculiar interest the spiritual welfare of her children, and to evince this interest by a continued remembrance of them in their prayers, and by such tokens of sympathy and kindness as their circumstances may require.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. That the Mothers in this Association observe the Birthday of each of their Children, in such a manner as to keep their spiritual interests especially in view.

2. That domestics in their respective families, be affectionately remembered in the prayers of the Association.

3. That Ladies from the country be at liberty to attend the meetings of the Association.

sympathising consideration the waste places of our land. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing," but disinterestedness in the application of effort appears to be the perfection of Christian virtue, and a direct imitation of Deity. Can time be better employed? Can influence be better exerted? Can property be better consecrated?

7. *A friendly separation in churches* is very characteristic of America, and worthy of our imitation. Is there not reason to apprehend that the language of Paul might be found too applicable to the conduct of many of our churches at home? Might it not be extensively applicable, even for a long period of our religious history? "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions—are ye not carnal and walk as men? for while one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" There is much reason for devout gratitude that many of the separations which have occurred in our churches have been overruled for lasting and eminent good. From the evil spirit and unsanctified passions of men have originated several large and respectable churches, which have often flourished in defiance of the unhallowed temper which gave them birth; and with whatever complacency we may regard the result, and with whatever thankfulness we may adore the God of all grace, who has made "the wrath of man to praise him," it is deeply to be regretted that our ecclesiastical records can furnish very few examples of a truly Christian and well-managed separation. In America it is remarkably otherwise. Instances of friendly division, for the purpose of extending the Redeemer's cause in populous cities or increasing neighbourhoods, are of almost daily occur-

rence. When a church has attained to a certain magnitude and importance, the pastor and the people willingly dismiss a portion of their number to take possession of another field of labour. They then present the charming prospect of a people divided, but not disunited; diverse in operation, but one in spirit. Their location may be very near, and they run the race of a holy rivalry. Each rejoices in the welfare of the other, as the original church renews its strength by fresh accessions, and the new one rises into importance by frequent additions; at length others spring up in quick and welcome succession around, and the joyful issue of a series of pure and concurrent efforts for the diffusion of the gospel, is seen in the very terms of first, second, third, and fourth church, by which they are frequently designated. Experience has shown that a church, acting on this exalted principle of faith and love, has been like some of the noble plants of nature, which multiply their shoots and acquire strength by frequent cuttings; and how lovely is the sight, and how prosperous the state of religion, when the primary church, like a patriarch in advancing years, can look round upon a growing family of its offspring churches, settled near, as the props of its age, and the participators of its happiness.

It may indeed be said, that the rapid increase of population in almost every part of America, being peculiarly favourable to the multiplication of Christian communities, diminishes the apprehension which might naturally enough be entertained in other circumstances of permanent injury to a church by the withdrawal of a considerable number of its members. The vacancies being on this account likely to be soon supplied, the measure of friendly

separation is more readily and more boldly adopted, and a minister then enjoys the double satisfaction of seeing his own reduced congregation replenished, and becoming instrumental to the establishment of another society. But after all, whatever infirmities of human nature, and whatever impurity of motive may be supposed likely to exist, it is unquestionable that these movements are generally dictated by enlarged conceptions of the design and real concern for the extension of Christianity.

There is moreover another view of this subject, which is not unimportant. While good may be prevented, and evils have often been incurred by the neglect of providential indications; it is not improbable, and has frequently happened, that what has been gained by superficial enlargement, has been lost in consolidation and efficiency. A church may be too numerous for the mental and physical powers of an individual,—the character of a ministry becomes deteriorated, dissatisfaction ensues, and the result has been painful.

8. *Journeys undertaken for the express and sole purpose of promoting religion*, have been, in America, productive of much spiritual benefit. Such excursions on the part of ministers are generally undertaken to promote revivals, and have been very conducive to the religious improvement of the country. I am aware that occasional itineracies have been attempted here by one or two zealous ministers, and the result has proved their utility; but they have neither been sufficiently frequent, nor sufficiently countenanced. Our ministers are continually going forth to solicit contributions for the principal societies in connexion with home or foreign exertions for the spread of the gospel. But why should the visits of Christian minis-

ters be always the signals for public collections? Why is money to be always the burden of the song, or at least a necessary appendix to the sermon? Why should we always in these excursions be preaching for this or that institution? Let us have some journeys exclusively for the revival and diffusion of religion—to encourage our Christian brethren and refresh our own souls by holy intercourse, and to bring apostate men to Christ. Think of this, dear brethren, and ye influential guides of the church! Would not such a method be likely to come in powerful aid of the itineracies already in operation? and might not the visit for such a purpose to destitute places, by persons of character and eminence in the church, be likely to awaken an attention not otherwise easily excited? and would not churches be acting on the principle of that enlarged charity which Christianity inculcates and inspires, by giving up their pastors for a time for a purpose so beneficial and important?

9. I would advert, lastly, to the practice of holding what are termed *protracted meetings*. Though their character has in some instances been depreciated from the injudicious manner in which they have been conducted, yet after having given every attention in my power to the subject, and viewed it impartially in all the aspects under which it was presented to me during my visit, I must avow my conviction, that when judiciously managed, they constitute a very high order of Christian instrumentality; and it appears to me that, with some slight modifications, they are well adapted to usefulness in this country. There is, generally, in the United States a preparation of prayer for some time, among a few individuals, or in the church generally, when it is intended to hold a protracted meet-

ing; and this protracted meeting consists in an association of ministers invited for the purpose, to pray, preach, and hold Christian conference together, in a specified town or district, for three, four, or more successive days, regulating the length of time by the thermometer of awakened feeling. I am aware that an objection might be urged, on the ground of interference with business, especially in large towns and cities. But allowing for many absences on the plea of occupation and necessity, is there not a numerous class of persons, especially of females, who might assemble at almost any time? Are there not many who have no very urgent calls of business? Are there not seasons when all might, by a slight sacrifice for a great object, meet for devotion and worship? Would it not be in harmony with all moral and spiritual purposes, for a body of Christian ministers to unite in holy confederacy to promote in any place the revival or enlargement of religious influence? Is it not probable that their own spirits would be improved, and that the sacred unction poured forth would qualify each for more abundant and more effective labours in his peculiar sphere? Consecrating two or three days to preaching and a series of devotional services, is no uncommon circumstance among our own churches. The annual meetings of county associations often continue through this space of time; and the beneficial results in the congregation and town where they assemble have been so apparent, that the low state of religion in any particular vicinity has often been made a plea why the Association should meet there. The annual meetings of the various religious institutions in the metropolis and elsewhere, are in fact the *revival meetings* of these societies, awakening attention, exciting sympathy, and quickening zeal; while these in-

stitutions themselves are a combination of new and extraordinary efforts, such as were imperatively called for by the state of the world and the church, in order to stimulate exertion, and extend the Redeemer's kingdom. Now, though the new measure of American revival meetings has been viewed with some suspicion, if not prejudice, in England, yet I conceive that an impartial consideration of their nature and tendency, will show that they are in accordance with the constitution of the human mind, with the results of experience, as well as with scripture principles and facts. If we desire to awaken the insensible, and produce a strong impression, we must adopt some new measures; we must avail ourselves of the power of sympathy; we must make fervent and reiterated appeals to the understanding and the heart; until by stroke upon stroke, we can produce attention, conviction, and emotion. If men are indifferent to any great moral or political object, these are the means which the wisdom of this world employs, and they are never employed in vain. The conversion of sinners, indeed, is not to be accomplished by human wisdom; but the Divine Being, in the supernatural operations of his Spirit, uses means adapted to the nature of man, and renders all his faculties, feelings, and passions subservient to the process of regenerating the heart. This is evidently the case in the regular ministry of the gospel, and all other appointed means of grace; means which would doubtless be fully adequate to the end in view, if they were diligently employed by the church and the world. But as a considerable part of our population is not brought under the influence of an effective ministry, as conversions in our congregations are yet comparatively few, as the vigour of faith, zeal and prayer, is not yet fully

put forth, are we not imperatively called upon to adopt such powerful combinations of ordinary means, or such new applications of them, as reason, experience, and scripture sanction? If we review the history of the church of Christ from its first commencement until now, we shall find that extraordinary measures have always been resorted to, in effecting a revival or reformation; and the abundant effusions of the Holy Spirit, without which Zion can never arise and shine, have always been bestowed in answer to fervent and united prayer, in which the dependence of the church is acknowledged, and the glorious attribute of God manifested, as the hearer and answerer of prayer. In the primitive church, there were surely extraordinary meetings, when the disciples “continuing *daily* with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” And were not those fervent and protracted prayer meetings, when “they all continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren,” previous to the day of Pentecost, at which time also, “they were all with one accord in one place,” waiting, and supplicating, the fulfilment of the promised Spirit. And now that larger measures of divine influence are so needed and desired by the church, should we not follow primitive example, and thus unite, and thus entreat, with the “importunity” which the Divine Head of the church assures us shall be heard, for the bestowment of this exalted blessing? Was not that a protracted prayer meeting for a specific object, when Peter was kept in prison, and “prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him?” who, when he was delivered at

night, found many "gathered together praying." Let not Christians, then, be deterred by the fear of being charged with "excitement" and "enthusiasm," from the use of measures which have the highest sanction.

But while attempting to rouse to activity, let me not be supposed to be the apologist of extravagance. Let but Christians admit the principles laid down as sound and effective, and then adopt the measures; but let those measures be well arranged and well combined, uniting discretion with vigour, and knowledge with zeal. If we light a fire it need not be to kindle a conflagration; it may be for warmth and not destruction. There is, however, in general much more danger from excess of frigidity, than from excess of fervour; and while we would condemn fanaticism, we must not allow torpidity. Let zeal burn; but let it be sacred zeal, a coal from the *altar*, the light and the love of *heaven*. If because something of human imperfection mixes with and mars all our efforts, we reject means of eminent usefulness, we shall assuredly manifest far more of the pride of fastidiousness, and the hesitancy of lukewarmness than of the true wisdom of zeal and love.

In concluding this brief statement of plans in operation in America, which I have thus recommended to the consideration and imitation of my fellow Christians at home, I would observe, that I trust the intercourse so happily commenced will be productive of *mutual* benefit, and tend to the mutual cultivation and imitation of all those things we behold in each other which are "pure and lovely and of good report;" that we may contemplate each other's excellencies with a desire to copy them, and each other's prejudices and errors with the charity that endeavours to remove

them. Neither the churches nor the Christians of either land are yet made perfect: but if we cannot aspire in all things to be models, we may excite one another to love and to good works; and contemplating more carefully, and adopting more fully, the supreme and perfect standard of New Testament Christianity, we shall gradually assimilate as we approach more closely our exalted Head; until amidst the final glory of the latter day, whose dawning radiance seems to have risen upon us, we shall attain to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

*** Preparing a volume of the Travels of Drs. Cox & Hony in the United States, which it is expected will be ready for publication on the first of May.

Also, recently published by Dr. Cox, price 4s., The Life of the Rev. W. H. ANGAS.