

it to surmount opposition, and to appear with a lustre and dignity, worthy of itself, and calculated to command attention and esteem. But the principal excellence of religious union, consists in its connection with the promise of Christ; a promise, which gives effect to means, and a result glorious to the Church. Even where two or three are assembled in His name, they enjoy His presence, and His blessing attends them.

But, upon this point, it is not necessary to recur to ancient examples. Passing events enable us to trace the connection between Christian unity and the progress of religion; we can observe existing societies and mark their effects. Permit me, then to point out to you a few of those circumstances, which indicate the success of religion in these times of trouble.

In the present state of the world, a great deal remains to be done for the diffusion of Christian doctrine; and this work, under the direction of Christ, is entrusted to the care of His friends. Every person who has felt the power of religion, has also undertaken the charge of this sacred deposit; and is strongly obligated to lend his aid, that the gospel may illuminate the whole family of man. Observing, then, the present state of religion in the Church, you will find an encreasing zeal for the performance of this important part of practical Christianity. Growing multitudes are administering to the world those means, by which all men may see, and know, and rejoice together in the goodness of God: And, certainly, this is itself an evident proof of the progress of religion in troublous times.

But farther, an attentive view of the operation of this duty, will show you a number of circumstances arising out of it, which tend to promote the interests of religion. It will be always found that whatever flows from a religious principle, adds to its energy. The benevolent operations of the mind re-act upon itself; so that those persons who do good, are themselves the gainers: sowing the seeds of religion in the world, they participate the fruits and joys of the harvest. Such a result, then, may be expected among the members of those societies who are exerting themselves to promote this important purpose. Indeed, the very nature of their pursuit, encourages congenial sentiments and conduct. Their union, also, introduces Christian conversation, acquaintance, and affection; and these are invigorating means for promoting ani-