

mercy, which are seldom exemplified amidst the tumults of war. While one part records the victories of fleets and armies ; another exhibits the formation and progressive execution of plans of universal goodness ; to emancipate men from the servitude of sin, to establish the reign of religion, and to communicate its peaceful consolations even to their foes. An earnest desire to promote these excellent purposes, has pervaded every order in society, and every denomination of Christians. These, united in affection and design, are displaying a beneficence, honourable to themselves and to the Christian name. Their plans, also, are conducted upon principles which are well calculated to produce desirable and permanent effects. Connecting the wisdom with the benevolence of religion, they have concentrated their labours ; and every city and almost every village has its social unions, according with the spirit of the gospel, and tending to promote its important designs.

I cannot pretend to specify at present, the particular nature and uses of these numerous societies. They embrace a variety of objects, and exhibit a diversity of operation ; but, in the reformation and happiness of mankind, they have one common centre : in this great and good work, they all unite and co-operate. Some of these societies are reclaiming the outcasts of the world, and smoothing their return into the paths of virtue. Others are tending the education of those, who, without the means of instruction, were exposed to the ravages of vice and infamy : And others again, by useful publications and a variety of other means, are calling the attention of men to the duties of life, and the important concerns of the eternal state. There are, you know, societies in Britain, zealous for the dissemination of the knowledge of Christ ; and the benevolent activity of these, embraces the whole family of man : Christians and heathen, Jews and Gentiles, are all the objects of their affectionate regard. None of you are ignorant of those societies, whose sole object is the publication of the oracles of truth. This mode of extending the knowledge of religion in purity, is beginning to attract a degree of attention, proportioned to its importance ; those who befriend it, are rapidly encreasing ; and their exertions are giving to the word of life, a publicity unequalled in the annals of the Church. The Lord gave the word, and great is the company of them who publish it.

Whatever be the result of the labours of these societies, the de-