

prepared them for the discipline of law and religion.

But a more promising field is opened to our hopes, in the populous provinces of our own colonies. The rapid increase of their numbers on every side, in a country where the means of subsistence are easy and open, together with the perpetual accession of inhabitants from Europe, are continually forming new congregations. Now knowledge of all kinds will probably be rare amongst men who are entering into the first rudiments of society; and while their attention is bent on procuring the necessaries of life, it is not to be expected that they should be either diligent or successful in the improvement of religious knowledge. Here therefore the instructions that are conveyed to them by the liberality of this Society, may be of essential and durable service. This is sowing the good seed in a fruitful soil; and what is so planted may produce returns of a hundred fold, and afford fruit and nourishment to future generations. Allow me to indulge a little the pleasure of contemplating in prospect the good that may result in after times from this our labour of love.

Perhaps

Perhaps the annals of history have never afforded a more grateful spectacle to a benevolent and philosophick mind, than the growth and progress of the British colonies in North America. We see a number of scattered settlements, formed at first for the purposes of trade, or from a spirit of enterprize; to procure a maintenance, or to enjoy the exercise of their religion, which in those unhappy days was refused them at home, growing by degrees, under the protection of their mother-country, who treated them with the indulgence due to their weakness and infancy, into little separate common-wealths. Placed in a climate, that soon became fruitful and healthy by their industry; possessing that liberty which was the natural growth of their own country, and secured by her power against foreign enemies, they seem to have been intended, as a solitary experiment, to instruct the world to what improvements and happiness mankind will naturally attain, when they are suffered to use their own prudence, in search of their own interest. I must repeat it again as an observation not unworthy of this audience and this occasion, that there is no instance in the records of time, where infant colonies have been treated with such a just and liberal indulgence.

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