riſe and progreſs of the American provinces, now be­come independent ſtates, will ſhow the folly and injuſtice of thoſe complaints,

The Engliſh colonies in North America were in the laſt century formed and firſt proposed by religious men ; who, made uneaſy at home by their intolerant brethren, left the *old world* to enjoy in peace that firſt and chief prerogative of man, *the free worſhip of God according to his own confidence.* At one time Puritans were driven acroſs the Atlantic by the epiſcopal church ; at another, Churchmen were forced away by the preſbyterians juſt as the revolutions of ſtate threw the civil power into the hands of the one or the other party ; and not a few members of the church of Rome were chased to the wilds of America by the united exertions of both. It has been often obſerved, that people perſecuted for their religion become for the moſt part enthuſiaſtically at­tached to it ; and the conduct of thoſe coloniſts was in perfect harmony with this obſervation. Their zeal, in­flamed by their violent removal to the other hemiſphere, kept religion alive and active among themſelves ; but their poverty diſabled them from ſupplying fuel to the flame, by making proviſion for a miniſtry to inſtruct their offspring. The conſequence was, that the new Chriſtian commonwealth, without the kindly aſſiſtance of its mother-country, would have been, in the words of the Roman hiſtorian, *Res unius aetatis.* Againſt this danger a timely aid was to be provided by the ſociety ; which, as it conſiſted not of fanatical members, would not intruſt the important buſineſs of the miſſion to fanatical preachers, who, though always ready for ſuch ſpiritual enterpriſes, are never qualified to carry them on with ſucceſs.

It was therefore thought fit to aſſign a decent main­tenance for clergymen of the church of England, who might preach the goſpel to their brethren in America : and though thoſe miſſionaries in general carefully avoid­ed the conduct of thoſe of Rome, whoſe principal aim is to reduce all churches under ſubmiſſion to the papal tyranny ; yet ſo lately as 1765, did ſome of the colo­nies, in which the puritanic ſpirit of the laſt century characteriſed the church eſtabliſhed by law, raiſe a hi­deous outcry againſt the ſociety for sending a miſſion into their quarters, though only for the ſervice of the diſperſed members of the Epiſcopal church reſiding among them, and for the converſion of thoſe men whom their rigid fanaticiſm had prejudiced againſt Chriſtianity itſelf.

Indeed the commodity called freethinking, as Biſhop Warburton expreſſes it, was at an early period imported by the opulent and faſhionable coloniſts. @@The celebrated Berkeley, who had reſided ſome years in Rhode Iſland, and at his return was called upon to preach the anniversary ſermon before the ſociety, in­forms us, that the iſland where he lived was inhabited by an Engliſh colony, conſiſting chiefly of sectaries of many different denominations ; that ſeveral of the better sort of the inhabitants of towns were accuſtomed to affemble themſelves regularly on the Lord’s day for the performance of divine worſhip ; but that moſt of thoſe who were diſperſed through the colony rivalled ſome well bred people of other countries, in a thorough indifference for all that is ſacred, being equally careleſs of outward worſhip and of inward principles. He adds, that the miſſionaries had done, and were continuing **to** do, good ſervice in bringing thoſe planters to a ſenous ſenſe of religion. “ I ſpeak it knowingly (ſays he), that the miniſters of the goſpel, in thoſe provinces which go by the name of New England, ſent and ſupported at the expence of the ſociety, have, by their fobriety of manners, diſcreet behaviour, and a competent degree of uſeful knowledge, ſhown themſelves worthy of the choice of thoſe who ſent them.” We have the honour to be acquainted with ſome of the miſſionaries ſent at a later period, and have reaſon to believe that, down to the era of the American revolution, they had the ſame vir­tues, and were doing the ſame good ſervices, which pro­cured to their predeceſſors this honourable teſtimony from one of the greateſt and the beſt of men. Surely ſuch a miſſion deſerved not to be evil ſpoken of by ſectariſts of any denomination who believe in Chriſt ; eſ­pecially as the very charter of incorporation aſſigns as a reaſon for miſſionaries being ſent to the colonies, “ that by reaſon of their poverty thoſe colonies were deſtitute and unprovided of a maintenance for mini­ſters and the public worſhip of God.”

The ſociety, however, was incorporated for other purpoſes than this. It was obliged by its charter to attempt the converſion of the native Americans and the negro ſlaves ; and we have reason to believe, that, as ſoon as the ſpiritual wants of the coloniſts were decent­ly ſupplied, it was not inattentive to theſe glorious ob­jects. Its success indeed in either purſuit has not been ſo great as could be wiſhed ; but it would be raſh and unfair to attribute this failure to the preſident, vice- preſident, or other officers of the corporation at home. An erroneous notion, that the being baptized is inconſiſtent with a ſtate of ſlavery, rendered the ſelfiſh colo­niſts for a long time averſe from the converſion of their negroes, and made them throw every obſtacle in the way of all who made the attempt ; while the difficul­ties of the Indian miſſion are ſuch as hardly any clergy­man educated in a Proteſtant country can be ſuppoſed able to ſurmount.

He who hopes ſucceſsfully to preach the goſpel among a tribe of ſavage wanderers, muſt have an ardent zeal and unwearied diligence ; appetites ſubdued to all the diſtreſſes of want ; and a mind ſuperior to all the terrors of mortality. Theſe qualities and habits may be acquired in the church of Rome by him who from infancy has been trained up in the ſeverities of ſome of the monaſtic orders, and afterwards ſent to the college *de propaganda fide* to be instructed in the languages, and inured to the manners and cuſtoms of the barbarous na­tions whoſe converſion he is deſtined to attempt. But in the reformed churches of Britain there are no mo­naſtic orders, nor any college *de propaganda fide ;* and, yet without the regular preparation, which is to be looked for in ſuch inſtitutions alone, it is not in na­ture, whatever grace may effect, for any man cheerfully, and at the ſame time soberly, to undergo all the accu­mulated diſtreſſes ever ready to overtake a faithful miſſionary among savage idolaters. A fanatic zealot will indeed undertake it, though he is totally unqualified for every sober and important work ; and a man of ruined fortunes may be preſſed into the ſervice, though the imρotency of his mind has ſhown him unable to bear either poverty or riches. The failure of the ſo­ciety therefore in its attempts to convert the American Indians may be attributed, we think, in the firſt in-

@@@[m] See his sermon, Vol II. of his Works, vol 4to.