

of the Apostles and Evangelists. The Gospel, then, having for more than seventeen centuries undergone every sort of trial, flourishes in this country, in union with Liberty and Learning, with improved science and the study of nature. And as the sacred Book is open to all (inviting every one to search, and scrutinize its contents) while established Toleration gives free course to the controversial spirit, should any new light be struck out by the collision of opposing minds, it is not lost as formerly, or shut up in the corner of a convent, but being communicated to innumerable copies, mounts, like the spark on fuel, and spreads into a wide illumination. This potent auxiliary of knowledge, the Art of Printing, is in one respect peculiar to our own country: here only it is under no restraint, save that which ought to regulate every instrument of human agency, the religious and moral principle. Taking this view of our circumstances, we cannot but be conscious, and convinced, that on our nation is bestowed a manifest superiority in point of religious knowledge; and in this place, and before this audience, it surely cannot be necessary for me to mark the pre-eminence which we bear in point of
extended