

any progress. Egypt had far advanced in the arts ere Israel had yet become a nation, or even the great progenitor of that race was called; and the sciences flourished in Egypt, Phœnicia, and Chaldea, before the first Colonizers of Greece had founded Argos and Attica. The invention of letters is ascribed to the Phœnicians, while the priests of Sais locked up in hieroglyphies the knowledge which they meant to keep from the people. It was in Greece that the struggle of mind took place, and that science and art reached their crowning height. Phœnicia gave Cadmus to Bœotia; Egypt gave Cærops to Attica; and all the greater men who led the mind of Greece were indebted to these countries, and to Chaldea, for much of that wisdom which made Greece what it was called—the eye of the world. Chaldea, at a very early period, devoted herself to the observation of the stars; but this not so much for the purposes of true science as for those of divination, or foretelling the future from certain conjunctions of the heavenly bodies; so that Astrology, rather than Astronomy, was the science of the Magi. To Egypt and Chaldea the sages and philosophers of Greece resorted, to acquire all that could be learned from these more ancient, and early renowned countries. Thales, and Pythagoras, and Plato, all travelled thither, and, it is thought, were not without help from the Hebrew Scriptures, which they saw or studied for themselves, or whose contents were in some degree communicated to them by those who had seen them. Plato makes Socrates say to his disciples—that for the higher doctrines of theology, they must go to the Barbarians. Judea was a singular exception to the rest of the world, in possessing a divinely revealed system of truth—forming a marvellous contrast to the absurdities that prevailed all around, and even to the best systems which enlightened Greece could boast. To this land were committed the oracles of God, as well as pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. The Jews possessed no literature or philosophy distinct from their sacred writings. Was this a disadvantage?—or what was the explanation of this? Are learning and philosophy useless? Was it not intended that the people of God should possess either the one or the other? Did God thus put his stamp of disapproval upon all human learning and philosophy?—This could not be. Other nations, indeed, than the Jews wrought out the results of human thought; and we have seen that Chaldea and Egypt led the van in this grand progress, in this early march of intellect.—Greece followed, and it was her sages and philosophers particularly that carried forward the great progress of human ideas. It was for another purpose that the Jews were selected as a people, and it was a dif-