

rect by God, to publish good news, did not require to be taught in the schools of Greece, in order to communicate the will of Heaven to fallen man; neither was it necessary that those who were privileged to sit at the feet of inspired teachers, should be instructed in Phinecian or Grecian Literature, in order to understand and follow the truth.

But when a full and complete revelation of the will of Heaven was given to man, it became, as in these times, necessary that every son and daughter of Adam should be able to read and understand the Scriptures.

In descending the stream of time, we find that with the exception of the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, which was illuminated by the rays of Gospel light which were shed upon mankind in Apostolic times, that darkness again brooded over the moral elements of the world, and the true knowledge which had been freely bestowed, was almost again extinguished.

The teachings of the Apostles began to be lost sight of; the Roman empire abandoned every legitimate means of educating and cultivating the minds of her vast population: the literature which she had translated from Greece began to decline; conquest became her motto; until the division, and ultimate subdivision of that once powerful empire took place; when she was over-run by hordes of Northern barbarians, who in their madness of conquest, extinguished even the few gleams of intellectual light that had been permitted to shine, though dimly.

The institutions of a country once laid prostrate by war, and the kindred evils connected therewith, overshadowing the land, it requires centuries of peace, and social, moral, and intellectual development, before it can arise out of barbarism and ignorance, into a state of moral and intellectual refinement. The human mind does not pass at once from a high degree of intellectual eminence, like that to

which it had attained during the best days of Grecian and Roman History, to an abject state of mental captivity, like that to which it was reduced during the Middle Ages.

We find literature taking its rise in Judea, introduced from thence into Chaldea, where it was cultivated for a time; this nation was overpowered by the Babylonians, the Babylonians by the Assyrians, the Assyrians and Egyptians by the Persians, the Persians by the Greeks, the Greeks by the Romans, and the Romans by the Northern Barbarians. During the best days of these several empires, literature made considerable progress but only for a time; every change in the state introduced a change in the state of literature; during peace knowledge increased, but only to be destroyed by war. We have now arrived at the period of the decline in literature, which was gradual though rapid. The causes by which this revolution in literature was effected, were numerous. The destruction of the Alexandrian library, where were deposited the intellectual treasures of centuries; the disorganized state of society; the rise of Mahomet, who destroyed all the works of the ancients within his grasp, for fear that they would disagree with the Khoran; the prejudices entertained by many of the fathers of the Christian Church against heathen literature; the progress of superstition; the ignorance and vices of a large portion of the clergy; the seiling up of the remaining works of the ancients from the mass of society in monastic institutions, where they were forgotten; the general decline of manners, and the exclusion of the laity, however exalted their station, from the advantages of education, and means of intellectual improvement. There were many other collateral causes for this decline in useful knowledge, but the above will suffice to lead the reader to see the state of society at this period of our history.

Still in the midst of all this decay,