

# THE INSTRUCTOR,

FOR NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, AND PRINCE  
EDWARD ISLAND.

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## Literature and Elementary Instruction in the Middle Ages.—No. 2.

In a former article under this caption, we attempted to show the state of society with reference to literature, during the first four thousand years of the world. We now propose to trace the state of literature and elementary instruction during the first sixteen centuries of the Christian era.

If our object was to detail the wars, bloodshed and devastation, that the pages of ancient History present, our task would be comparatively easy; but to trace the character and extent of useful knowledge, is a herculean task. We have seen that the world, Jewish and heathen, had sunk deep into the depths of darkness. The schools of Greece and Rome, though few in number, and limited in their operations, compared to the wants of the people, were now dwindling into insignificance; the teachings of the Jewish Doctors and Rabbis, were mixed and interwoven with the teachings and customs of the heathen nations; the "schools of the prophets," were not succeeded by schools for the people; in a word, all things truly moral and

intellectual lay prostrate at the feet of ignorance and heathenism.

But a new era was about to dawn—the old, with its long train of types, shadows, symbols, gorgeous appearances, and external forms—mixed as they ultimately were with those of the heathen nations, were about to pass away; and the day-star now began to rise in the midst of a morally and intellectually backward world. The fiat, predicted by a long train of prophets, was now about to be executed; new teachings, new light, in a word, a new dispensation was ushered in.

The New Testament Scriptures, like that of the Old, is generally silent on the subject of Education; the principle adopted by our Saviour and his Apostles, in communicating knowledge, appears to have been by oral teaching. In truth, this appears to have been the general mode of communicating knowledge, until a very late period of the present era. The teachers, under the Jewish, and at the introduction of the Christian Dispensation, having been commissioned dedi-