

The successive generations of men are days in this man's life: The discoveries and inventions which characterize the different epochs of the world's history are his works. The creeds and doctrines, the opinions and principles of the successive ages, are his thoughts. The state of society, at different times, are his manners. He grows in knowledge, in self-control, in visible size, just as we do, and his education is in the same way, and for the same reason, precisely similar to ours."

However plausible this supposed analogy may at first appear, yet, when brought to the test of facts and experience, it will be found to be quite erroneous, and merely fanciful; both as regards continuous intellectual advancement and knowledge, and progressive religious and moral improvement. The truth is, that in the real history of our race there have been, in all these particulars, many and varied alterations of light and of darkness, or of progress and retrogression. In reference to secular knowledge, there have been several periods during which many descriptions of such knowledge have experienced a decline more or less extensive, in the most civilized and intellectual nations. As one instance of the kind, may be mentioned the very great decline of nearly all such knowledge throughout the world during the very long period of nearly 800 years—from about the *seventh* to the *fifteenth* Christian century. This period has, by almost universal consent, been emphatically denominated the Dark Ages; and we know, as well from common as ecclesiastical history, that they have justly borne that name, both as to science and learning generally, and as to true religion and morals. Here, therefore, was, comparatively, rather a large portion of the age of the colossal man, during which, if the expression may be used, he fell into a deep and protracted consumption, and became more and more reduced in size and character—was rather growing downward than upward as to