

## REFLECTIONS AMONG THE NEWLY ERECTED MONUMENTS TO THE MEMORY OF DECEASED MINISTERS.

The "Congregational Year Book," for 1865, published by the "Congregational Union of England and Wales," contains a most suggestive tabular record, accompanied by interesting biographical sketches of the revered ministers of our denomination throughout the British dominions and missions who have been removed by death within twelve months preceding 1st December, 1864. There are on this roll of the deceased *no less than sixty-one names*. Probably this is the heaviest bill of ministerial mortality yet placed on this annual register. This, however, may be accounted for by the nearer approximation to completeness in this year's returns. When it is borne in mind that the ranks of survivors from whose midst these 61 have been called, number *two thousand six hundred and fifty-three*, the mortality will not be considered excessive.

It is gratifying to observe how large an aggregate amount of ministerial labour these departed servants of Christ were permitted to render. Not including years of temporary intermission, or of final retirement from ministerial service, it appears that *fifty-seven* have accomplished *sixteen hundred and sixty-three years' labour*; an average term of rather more than twenty-nine years each. Four are omitted because the length of their ministerial service is not stated. Without accessible data for comparison with other denominations, this affords ample cause for thanksgiving to "Him who holdeth the stars in His right hand," for thus prolonging the precious gifts of pastoral and evangelistic ministry among our churches.

A very large proportion of these deceased men of God had attained the full measure of 'breescore years and ten. *Forty-one of the sixty-one lives averaged seventy*, whose average length of ministry was nearly thirty-seven years and a half! It must again be noted that the compiler of this table has taken account only of years of actual ministerial labour.

A striking contrast may be drawn between the venerable fathers and the comparatively few young men on this list. For instance the ten seniors attained the average of nearly eighty-three years, their aggregate ages amounting to 828 years; while the ten juniors lived only on an average thirty-two years, their aggregate lives giving the sum of 321 years—a difference of more than five hundred years. Their terms of service present a still more impressive contrast. While the ten first-named fulfilled on an average nearly forty-five years' ministry, their aggregate years of service amounting to 449, the latter ten laboured on an average only four years and nine months each, or in the aggregate 48 years—a difference of more than four hundred years in the measure of their respective terms of ministry! In other words the former were entrusted with ten talents, while the latter had but one, so far as length of days determine their comparative gifts. But this one talent was so improved by some of the departed, that their fellow-labourers might be tempted selfishly to envy them their brief hour's work, crowned with such glory and honour.

"That life is long, which answers life's great end,  
The time that bears no fruit deserves no name."

For instance, 'observe the beautiful tribute to the brief career of the Rev. Robert Alsebrook, who within one short year was ordained and died! His