

red persons ; and it was always reckoned that, when more than ordinarily crowded, it would hold two thousand. On that day it was crowded to excess ; and I believe there must have been two thousand persons present. I look round me *now*, and I see only six or eight of these ; and in regard to the rest, I am led to put the question, 'your fathers, where are they?' I have endeavoured to obtain an answer to this interesting interrogatory. I have read over the communion roll of your predecessors, and other documents, which bring to my remembrance the persons who composed that numerous assembly. I have made inquiry among my venerable brethren of the eldership, who were present at that day's service, some of whom are now confined to the habitations of sickness and sorrow ; and I have endeavoured in this way to come to a conclusion ; and this conclusion is, that of the two thousand persons then present, about twenty are now alive ;—ninety-nine out of the hundred have descended into the grave, and are gone to eternity,—either to the dungeon of the prisonhouse, or to the city of God and the house of rest, to walk for ever with their Saviour in glory. I have reason to believe, that at that time there were about a hundred and forty ministers of the gospel within the bounds of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, including those of every denomination ; and if the question be now put in reference to these, 'the prophets, do they live for ever?' I have to answer, that of the whole hundred and forty ministers who were with me running the course of life fifty years ago, not one remains upon the earth *save myself*.\* I have no occasion, and shall not attempt to say more, but earnestly to entreat, that you will carry home these things to your closets, and be excited to pray to God for a right improvement of the question, 'your fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?'

We know it appears a hard saying to young persons to tell them that life is short. They are young in years, and they have the confidence of strength, and it seems to them as if their foundation should never be moved. Old age appears so far off, that they scarce think of it. The hea-

vens over their heads are without a cloud, and their sun is always shining. They anticipate no night to interrupt their joy. All is mirth and delight. But, alas ! childhood and youth are vanity. The gay worldling, when steering his course over the sea of life, never dreams of a tempest. The shore is indeed strewed with wrecks every where around him, but he imagines he is a privileged man, and no sea of trouble shall ever beset his goodly vessel. Alas ! this is only a dream of his foolish heart. It has no reality. Follow him for a little, while he glides down the current of life. There he is, all unconscious of the deceitful element on which he sails. But, lo ! in a moment the sun is clouded, and the tempest of death beats upon him, and he sinks to rise no more. So true are the words of scripture,—“Is there not an appointed time for man on earth? Are not his days like the days of an hireling?” There are very many images which the scriptures use to describe the shortness of life. A shadow will be allowed to be a fleeting object. You see it now, but when you look again it is away.—Now man's life is compared to this fleeting thing,—“Our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.” A post hastens on his way, never turning to the right hand or to the left, but hurrying to the appointed place, to give in the deposit committed to his charge.—The ships also are swift. The winds sweep them with great speed through the waters, and they are quickly at the port which the steersman desired. The eagle flies through the air with great swiftness, but there is a time when his flight is peculiarly rapid, for when he darts upon his prey, it is with the fleetness of an arrow. But the post hastening on his journey,—the ship running in her course, and the fleet eagle darting on his prey, are emblems to us that man's life hastens to an end. “Our days are swifter than a post, they fly away. They are passed away as the swift ships, and as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.”

But it may be said, these are only figures of speech, and overstate the matter. Well, then, we have plainer testimony than these afford to the vanity of life. Wisdom belongeth to the aged. Ask them and they will tell you that life is short. What was the answer Jacob made to King Pharaoh when he asked him,—“How old art thou?” We are informed he made this answer. “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years.

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\* Since the publication of the first edition it is found that the Rev. C. Findlater was *then*, and is *still* alive, —he was minister of Newlands in the year 1778.