

to this, especially combined with the features already mentioned, was owing the fact, that he became "more honorable than his brethren."

The subject suggests many practical reflections. We shall however, in conclusion give only some thoughts on the death of an aged minister, extracted from a sermon by the Rev. J. Kerr of Glasgow, on the death of his colleague, Dr Kidston.

"The world we live in, is one of ceaseless mutation. Every setting sun brings its changes whether we perceive them or not. Day by day, "our age is departed and removed from us like a shepherd's tent." We pitch our tabernacle every night nearer death, nearer judgement. The departure of each friend who enters the world of spirits is intended to give us this admonition—Leaving, they leave this lesson, "Thou also shalt become weak as we; then shalt become like unto us." The death of a Christian minister comes with a wider circumference and deeper significance of warning than almost any other. It visits every house in a large community with its note of change, and knocks loudly at every heart. The pulpit speaks in death, as in life, to all who gather round it. The absence of its wonted occupant is the last and most solemn of his admonitions—the silent eloquence of that preacher. Death—who more impressively than the wise man, writes "vanity of vanities," on all this sublunary life. The departure of an aged minister gives an emphasis to this lesson even more profound. For sixty years, change invaded every seat in the house of God, but it spared the central one. The teachers place seemed to have made a covenant with death, a stranger might have visited this congregation at the interval of half a century to find the same face there, and in the ceaseless revolutions around it, one fixed place appeared to have been found, as in the firmament of stars, moveless amid surrounding mutability. But now that fancy is dissolved, the ancient landmark is removed which these fathers had set for us. Now we have been brought to the heartfelt acknowledgement, "We are strangers before thee and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." This one change calls to mind many; it stirs up the dead for us; it leads the eyes to wander from seat to seat, and ask the question, "Our fathers, where are they." There are high places of weeping in the path of life that summon us to look back, and none more sacred and touching, than those that lead us to meditate on the waste that death has caused in a religious community. The overthrow of empires and fall of ancient dynasties are impressive; and yet frequently they roll over head like the thunder peal, and leave the homes of men unharmed, that the sun may smile on them when the storm is past. But a change in a Christian congregation reminds us of the quenching of domestic fires, of the dispersions of family circles, of coldness and desolation in homes and hearts." * * *

"While we cast our eyes further back, how few survive of those that saw him who has just departed enter on his ministry! The names of them that are asleep are more by far than of them who are alive and remain. 'Tis long since the congregation of the dead has had the majority. Men of faith and prayer and active zeal, who carried many a year the ark of God, are numbered with a generation past. Families once numerous, have left not a name; or some solitary mourner with Rizpah-like grief lives to guard their memory. Voices that sung God's praises are hushed in silence. Those who walked to the house of God in company are resting together in the narrow house; and fathers and brethren and fellow partners in the journey, whom we have loved as our own soul, "have been led captive of him who opens not the house of his prisoners." What hearts have been rent in these partings that bleed afresh as memory touches the wound, and that shall never be fully healed, till the great day when the grave shall hear the word *Restore!* As the saviour stood before the sepulchre of Lazarus, it is said with touching simplicity, "Jesus wept," and wherefore? It was not, as John Howe has observed, over that one grave; "For he knew his own purpose and foresaw the certain and glorious case of this dark