

Departed Leaders.

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The apostles had no successors. Both Paul and Peter alike, in the prospect of their own departure, commended the saints — the former to God, and the word of His grace (Acts 20: 32); the latter to the written Word. (2 Peter 1: 15.) It has been the same in principle with the vessels of testimony of every age. They have lived and served, and have departed to be with Christ. We are left; and what, we ask, is the light in which they should now be regarded? The word of God supplies the answer. (See Heb. 13: 7.) We are, in the first place, to remember those who have been our leaders, and who have spoken unto us the word of God; and, secondly, "considering the end of their conversation," we are to "imitate their faith." When bereft therefore of any to whom God had especially committed His testimony in a dark and evil day, the Holy Spirit would lead out our affections in divine channels. And it is a consolation, a divine solace, to be directed to remember such eminent servants of the Lord, and to recall their faith, both as an incentive and an example. To do so in this spirit will obviate the danger of human idolatry, and enable us to glorify God in the energy, the courage, the consecration and zeal, which they displayed.

In this connection, moreover, we are told — and it may be as comprising the faith of these departed teachers — that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." They may disappear from the scene, but He abides, and abides as our unchanging and unchangeable resource. Amid all our vicissitudes, and even amid all our failures and unfaithfulness, if our hearts are but stayed on this blessed truth, we need never be discouraged or disheartened. Christ remains, and here we can rest. He is ever the same, and He will never cease to care for His Church. What comfort to us in our conscious weakness! and what an antidote to our apprehensions, and to our craving after visible helps! Nor let us forget that His truth is bound up with His immutable character. We must not therefore be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. When standard-bearers fall, it is but a summons to us to hold fast all the more tenaciously the testimony they proclaimed. "Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3: 11.) E. D.