

the union and communion of the 'spirits of the just made perfect,' with the bright intelligences of the eternal world ; of the militant on earth with the glorified in heaven ! When we miss from amongst us those with whom we had 'taken sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends,' we are taught to regard them *not* as having left us for ever, but as having only gone before us to join the *heavenly* branch of that 'family' to which true believers on the name of Jesus all belong. This, surely, is a contemplation calculated above all others to restrain the mourner's tears, and chasten his grief for the departed. Through the infirmity of the flesh he might, without such a consolation, sink into a 'sorrow without hope.' The sundered ties of earth may be grieved for ; but, though parted, they are to be united again. The parent or child, the husband or wife, may mourn for the absent one, and the deprivation may throw a gloomier shadow over the sadness of this vale of tears ; yet how much must the contemplation of the united family of the Lord in earth and heaven, dispel the sorrow, and scatter sunshine and hope upon the prospect. That 'family' is still unbroken. A portion has been carried away, to be nearer the glorious Head in heaven ; and the remnant who are left on earth, are but waiting till *their* change come, to join those from whom they have been parted for a season. Could we but still the upbraidings of a carnal, selfish heart, we should rejoice rather than grieve, when the Lord is pleased to gather early unto the heavenly branch of His family the more tender members of the earthly branch ; much more, when *they* have left us, who, full of years, have run their earthly course.