

SERMON.

EPHESIANS II. 19.—“Fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

UNDER two aspects, that of a city and that of a home or household, the Church of God is here brought before us, and our privileges in it are set forth. We are fellow-citizens with the saints, that is we are subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, and though here we have no continuing city, yet seeking one to come, our citizenship is even now in heaven, the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, whose builder and maker is God. And in this kingdom, this city of the great King, of which the visible church on earth is as it were a suburb, the saints are our fellow-citizens,—not only those who by their Baptism have been “called to be saints” and who are still fighting the battle of life as we are, but also those who have departed in the faith and fear of God, and are now at rest in Paradise after their labors and their sorrows. But the unspeakable comfort of this blessed thought comes more closely to our hearts when we regard it from the second aspect and take in the fulness of the truth that we are of the same household, the same family of God with all the saints, the least as well as the greatest, those living still, and those no longer dwelling in the flesh. Is there a human heart to which the thought of home does not appeal? And the earthly home is one part of the household of God. If it be a truly christian home, it has a sanctity so great that we may rightly regard it as one of the many mansions of our Father's House. His consecrated House of Prayer is assuredly another of those many mansions. When we have humbly tried to do our duty in these earthly portions of the household, God in His own good time calls us to a higher mansion, His Paradise of rest,—and there we wait the final summons to the highest mansion, the eternal Home, where with reunited souls and bodies we shall enjoy forever the perfect consummation of our bliss. Let us try then to realize, dear brethren, how close is the connection, how intimate and how full of comfort, the relation between these several mansions of our Father's House, Home, God's House, Paradise and Heaven. There is never a time when this consolation is not needed,—never a congregation gathered in which there are not lonely, sorrowful, desolate hearts for whom there is a message of hope and comfort in the words, “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” “Of the household of God.” Yes even we, imperfect and unworthy as we are,—even we who fall so far short either of realizing or of living up to our true dignity as children of God and heirs of Heaven,—even we are indeed members of that divine family and household, fellow-members in it with all those who, in whatever