

HEAVEN-GATE;

OR,

THE PASSAGE TO PARADISE.

‘And may enter in through the gates into the city.’—REV. XXII. 14.

If we supply these words with the first word of the verse, ‘blessed,’ we shall make a perfect sentence of perfect comfort. ‘Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’

In the whole there be premises, and promises.

The premises qualify us; we must be such as are blessed; and who are they? *Qui præstant mandata*, ‘that do his commandments.’ The promises crown us, and these are two: First, that ‘we ‘may have right to the tree of life,’ even that which ‘is in the midst of the paradise of God,’ Rev. ii. 7. From whence the angel, with a flaming sword, shall keep all the reprobate; secondly, *Et per portas ingrediantur civitatem*, ‘and may enter in through the gates into the city;’ when without shall be dogs and scorners, &c.; whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

To the last words of the verse I have bound and bounded my discourse; wherein I find three points readily offering themselves to be considered, viz., 1. *Motus*, motion, ‘enter in;’ 2. *Modus*, manner, ‘through the gates;’ 3. *Terminus*, place, ‘into the city.

So there is a threefold circumstance.

1. *Quid*, What? an entrance.
2. *Quà*, How? through the gates.
3. *Quò*, Whither? into the city.

1. The motion. ‘Enter in.’—They are blessed that enter in; perseverance only makes happy. Our labours must not cease till we can (with Stephen) see these gates open, and our Saviour offering to take us by the hand, and welcome our entrance. We know who hath taught us, that only ‘continuers to the end shall be saved.’ It is observable, that in the Holy Spirit’s letters sent to those seven churches, in the second and third chapter of this book, all the promises run to perseverers; *vincenti dabitur*, to him that overcomes it shall be given. *Nec paranti ad prælium, nec pugnanti ad sanguinem, multo minus tergiversanti ad peccatum, sed vincenti ad victoriam*. Nor to him that prepares to fight, nor to him that resists to blood, much less to him that shews his back in cowardice, but to him that overcomes to conquest. Demas, seeing this war, ran away; fell back to the security of

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the world. Saul made himself ready to this battle, but he durst not fight—glory and lusts carried him away. Judas stood a bout or two, but the high priest's money made him give over, and the devil took him captive. But Paul fought out this combat even to victory, though 'he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus,' Gal. vi. 17. 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; therefore now there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

This is a good life, saith Bernard. *Mala pati, et bona facere; et sic usque ad mortem perseverare*, to suffer evil, to do good, and so to continue to the end. Some came into the vineyard in the morning, some at noon, others later; none received the penny but they that stayed till night. Augustine affirms this to be almost all the contents of the Lord's prayer: Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.* Wherein we desire that his name may always be sanctified, his kingdom always propagated, his will always obeyed.

Indeed this grace perfects all graces. We believe in vain, if our faith hold not out to the end; we love in vain, if our charity grow cold at last; we pray in vain, if our zeal grows faint; we strive in vain at the strait gate, if not till we enter. *Venire ad religionem est vera devotio; sed non religiose vivere vera damnatio*; to come to the truth of religion is true devotion; not to live religiously is true damnation. Man is naturally like a horse that loveth short journeys, and there are few that hold out. Whence it comes that the last are often first, and the first last. 'Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize?' 1 Cor. ix. 24. He that hath a good horse can go faster up a hill than down a hill. He that hath a good faith doth as quickly ascend the Mount Zion, as the wicked descend to the valley of Hinnom. If men would as strongly erect themselves upwards, as they direct their courses downwards, they might go to heaven with less trouble than they do go to hell.

But he that at every step looks at every stop, and numbers his perils with his paces, either turns aside faintly, or turns back cowardly. They that go wandering and wondering on their journey, are at the gates of Samaria when they should enter the gates of Jerusalem. God saith, 'I will not leave you,' Heb. xiii. 5. Will you, then, leave God? One told Socrates that he would fain go to Olympus, but he distrusted his sufficiency for the length of the journey. Socrates told him—Thou walkest every day little or much; continue this walk forward thy way, and a few days shall bring thee to Olympus. Every day every man takes some pains. Let him bestow that measure of pains in travelling to heaven; and the further he goes the more heart he gets, till at last he enter through the gates into the city.

Bernard calls perseverance the only daughter of the highest King, the perfection of virtues, the store-house of good works; a virtue without which no man shall see God.† There is a last enemy to be destroyed—death. We must hold out to the conquest even of this last adversary, which, if it conquer us by the sting of our sin, shall send us to the doors of hell; if we conquer it by our faith, it shall send us to the gates of this city—heaven. *Lauda navigantem cum pervenerit ad portum*. All the voyage is lost through the perilous sea of this world, if we suffer shipwreck in the

* Aug. de bono Perseverantiae, cap. 2.

† Perseverantia est unica summi Regis filia, virtutum consummatio, totius boni repositorium, virtus sine qua nemo videbit Deum.

haven, and lose our reward there, where we should land to receive it. What get we, if we keep Satan short of ruling us with his force many hours, when at our last hour he shall snatch our bliss from us? The runner speeds all the way; but when he comes at the race's end to the goal, he stretcheth forth his hand to catch the prize. Be sure of thy last step, to put forth the hand of faith then most strongly: *Ne perdatur præmium tantis laboribus quæsitum*; lest the reward be lost, which thou with much labour hast aimed at.

It is not enough, *Quærere cælum, sed acquirere; non Christum sequi, sed consequi*: to seek heaven, but to find it; not to follow Christ, but to overtake him; not to be brought to the gates, but to enter in. 'Many will say to Christ in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?' Matt. vii. 22. But the 'Master of the house is first risen, and hath shut to the door,' Luke xiii. 25. Either they come too soon, before they have gotten faith and a good conscience; or too late, as those foolish virgins, when the gate was shut. If, then, we have begun, let us continue to entrance.* *Cujusque casus tantò majoris est criminis, quantò priusquam caderet, majoris erat virtutis.*† Every man's fault hath so much the more discredit of scandal, as he, before he fell, had credit of virtue. Let us beware that we do not slide; if slide, that we do not fall; if fall, that we fall forward, not backward. 'The just man' often slips, and sometime 'falls,' Prov. xxiv. 16. And this is dangerous; for if a man, while he stands on his legs, can hardly grapple with the devil, how shall he do when he is fallen down under his feet? But if they do fall, they fall forward, as Ezekiel, Ezek. i. 28; not backward, as Eli at the loss of the ark, 1 Sam. iv. 18; or they that came to surprise Christ. 'They went backward and fell to the ground,' John xviii. 6.

Cease not, then, thy godly endeavours, until *Contingas portum, quo tibi cursus erat*. Say we not like the woman to Esdras, whether in a vision or otherwise, when he bade her go into the city—'That will I not do; I will not go into the city, but here I will die,' 2 Esd. x. 18. It is a wretched sin, saith Augustine, after tears for sin, not to preserve innocence. Such a man is washed, but is not clean. *Quia commissæ flere desinit, et iterum flenda committit.* He leaves weeping for faults done, and renews faults worthy of weeping. Think not thyself safe, till thou art got within the gates of the city. Behold thy Saviour calling, thy Father blessing, the Spirit assisting, the angels comforting, the word directing, the glory inviting, good men associating. Go cheerfully, till thou 'enter in through the gates into the city.'

2. The manner. 'Through the gates.'—Not singularly a gate, but gates. For the city is said to have 'twelve gates. On the east three gates, on the north three, on the south three, and on the west three,' Rev. xxi. 12; to declare that men shall come from all the corners of the world, 'from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God,' Luke xiii. 29. These gates are not literally to be understood, but mystically: *Pro modo intrandi*, for the manner of entrance. The gates are those passages, whereby we must enter this city.

Heaven is often said to have a gate. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' saith Christ, Matt. vii. 13. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,' saith the Psalmist, Ps. xxiv. 7. 'This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven,' saith

* That is, 'As far as entrance.'—ED.

† Isidor.

Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 17. There must be gates to a city: they that admit us hither are the gates of grace. So the analogy of the words infer; doing the commandments is the way to have right in the tree of life; obedience and sanctification is the gate to this city of salvation. In a word, the gate is grace; the city is glory.

The temple had a gate called Beautiful, Acts iii. 2; but of poor beauty in regard of this gate. Of the gates of the sanctuary spake David, in divers psalms, with love and joy. 'Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise,' Ps. c. 4. This was God's delight. 'The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob,' Ps. lxxxvii. 2. This was David's election, to be a porter or keeper of the gates of God's house, 'rather than dwell in the tents of wickedness,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10. This his resolution: 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem,' Ps. cxxii. 2. Solomon made two doors for the entering of the oracle. They were made of 'olive trees, and wrought upon with the carvings of cherubins,' 1 Kings vi. 32. The olives promising fatness and plenty of blessings, the cherubins holiness and eternity. These are holy gates. Let every one pray with that royal prophet, 'Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter,' Ps. cxviii. 19, 20.

In brief, we may distinguish the gates leading to this city into two: adoption and sanctification. Both these meet in Christ, who is the only gate or door whereby we enter heaven. 'I am the door,' saith our Saviour, *janua vitæ*, the gate of life; 'by me if any enter in, he shall be saved,' John x. 9.

(1.) Adoption is the first gate. 'We have received the spirit of adoption,' Rom. viii. 15. Without this passage no getting into heaven. The inheritance of glory cannot be given to the children of disobedience; they must first be converted, and adopted heirs in Christ. The grace of God is twofold. There is *gratia gratis agens*, and *gratia gratum faciens*. This second grace, which is of adoption, is never in a reprobate; not by an absolute impossibility, but by an indisposition in him to receive it. A spark of fire falling upon water, ice, snow, goes out; on wood, flax, or such apt matter, kindles. Baptism is the sacrament of admission into the congregation—of insition* and initiation, whereby we are matriculated and received into the motherhood of the church. Therefore the sacred font is placed at the church door, to insinuate and signify our entrance. So adoption is the first door or gate whereby we pass to the city of glory.

This is our new creation, whereat the angels of heaven rejoice, Luke xv. 10. At the creation of dukes or earls there is great joy among men; but at our new creation angels and seraphins rejoice in the presence of God. Our generation was *à non esse, ad esse*—from not being, to be. But our regeneration is *à malè esse, ad bonè esse*—from a being evil, to be well, and that for ever. Through this gate we must pass to enter the city; without this, death shall send us to another place. No man ends this life well, except he be born again before he ends it. †

Now, if you would be sure that you are gone through this gate, call to mind what hath been your repentance. The first sign of regeneration is throbs and throes. You cannot be adopted to Christ without sensible pain, and compunction of heart for your sins. The Christian hath two births, and they are two gates. He can pass through none of them but with

* That is, grafting.—Ed.

† Aug.

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anguish. Both our first and second birth begin with crying. Our first birth is a gate into this world; our second is a gate into the world to come. There is some pain in both. For this world, but little joy after the pain; for the other, after short sorrow, eternal glory.

(2.) Sanctification is the second gate. 'Make your calling and election sure,' saith Peter, by a holy life: 'For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2 Pet. i. 11. But 'there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie,' Rev. xxi. 27. Therefore Paul prays the 'God of peace to sanctify us wholly,' 1 Thess. v. 23. Holiness is the way to happiness; grace the gate of glory. But some may object from that of Paul, that this sanctification must be total and perfect; but who can come so furnished to the gate? therefore, who can enter the city? I answer: There is required only *sanctificatio viæ, non patriæ*: such a sanctity as the gate can afford, though far short of that within the city. The school distinguisheth well. It must be *communiter in toto, et universaliter in singulis partibus*; but not *totaliter et perfecte*. This sanctification must be communicated to the whole man, and universally propagated to every part, though it have in no place of man a total perfection. Indeed, *nullum peccatum retinendum est spe remissionis*. No sin is to be cherished in hope of mercy. But we must strive for every grace we have not, and for the increase of every grace we have. *Quærendum quod deest bonum, indulgendum quod adest*. Let us make much of that we possess, and still seek for more, 'striving to the mark,' Phil. iii. 14. And yet when all is done, *perfectio hæc, non perfectio est*; we have made a good step forward, but are not come to our full home. But still, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' and 'enter not into judgment with us.'

Now, since this gate stands in our own heart, give me leave to describe it, and that briefly, by its properties and its parts. Its properties are two. It is low and little.

[1.] Low.—Heaven is well called a 'building not made with hands,' 2 Cor. v. 1; for it differs both in matter and form from earthly edifices. For matter, it is eternal, not momentary; for manner, fabricked without hands. Great manors on earth have large answerable porches. Heaven must needs be spacious, when a little star, fixed in a far lower orb, exceeds the earth in quantity; yet hath it a low gate, not a lofty coming in.

They must stoop, then, that will enter here. 'He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away,' Luke i. 53. The rich in their own conceits, and proud of their own worth, shall be sent empty from this gate. Zaccheus climbs up into a sycamore tree to behold Jesus; but when Jesus beheld him got up so high, he said, 'Come down, Zaccheus; make haste, and come down,' Luke xix. 5. Whosoever will entertain Jesus, must come down. The haughty Nebuchadnezzar, that thinks with his head to knock out the stars in heaven, must stoop at this gate, or he cannot enter. Be you never so lofty, you must bend. God's honour must be preferred before your honour. It is no discredit to your worship to worship God.

[2.] Little.—Christ calls it a 'narrow gate,' Luke xiii. 24. They must be little that enter; little in their own eyes, slender in the opinion of themselves. 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein,' Mark x. 15. Samuel to Saul; 'When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?' 1 Sam. xv. 17. When Jesse had made all his sons pass before

Samuel, he asked him if none remained yet. Jesse answers, Yes, a little one tending the flocks. 'Fetch that little one,' saith Samuel, 'for we will not sit down till he come,' 1 Sam. xvi. 11. That little one was he. Says the angel to Esdras, 'A city is built, and set upon a broad field, full of all good things, yet the entrance thereof is narrow,' 2 Esd. vii. 6. This is *spatiosa et speciosa civitas*; A city beautiful and roomy; yet it hath but a narrow wicket, a little gate.

Alas! how will the surfeited epicure do to enter, whose gluttonous body is so deformed, that it moves like a great tun upon two pots? What hope hath an impropiator, with four or five churches on his back, to pass this little gate? The bribing officer hath a swollen hand, it will not enter; and the gouty usurer cannot thrust in his foot. The factious schismatic hath too big a head; the swearer such forked blasphemies in his mouth, that here is no entrance. Pride hath no more hope to get into the gates of that city above, than there is hope to cast it out the gates of this city below. Much good do it with earthly courts, for it must not come into the courts of heaven.

Think, O sinner; you cannot go with these oppressions, with these oaths, frands, bribes, usuries, with these wickednesses, into the gates of this city. You must shift them off, or they will shut you out.

You hear the properties; the parts are now to be considered, and these are four: The foundation, the two sides, and the roof. The foundation is *Faith*; one of the sides, *Patience*; the other, *Innocence*; the roof, *Charity*.

[1.] Faith is the foundation. 'Be ye grounded and settled in the faith,' Col. i. 28. *Credendo fundatur*, saith Augustine. It is grounded in faith. All other graces are (as it were) built on this foundation. *Credimus quod speramus: quod credimus et speramus, diligimus: quod credimus, speramus, et diligimus, operamur*. What we hope, we believe; what we believe and hope, we love; what we believe, hope, and love, we endeavour to attain. So all is built on faith.

Hope on faith. *Nulla spes incraliti*: it is impossible to hope for that we believe not to be. Charity on faith: why should a man give all to the poor, unless he believed an abundant recompence? Repentance on faith: why else suffer we contrition for sin, if we believed not remission of sin? Temperance on faith: why forbear we the pleasing vanities of the world, but that we believe the transcendent joys of eternity, whereof these harlots would rob us? Patience on faith: why would we endure such calamities with willing quietness and subjection, if we believed not an everlasting peace and rest to come? All obedience on faith, that God would accept it in Jesus Christ. If all be built on faith, I may call it the basis and foundation of this gate. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,' Heb. xi. 6. Faith is the passage-way to God; not one of that holy ensuing legend entered the city of life without this. He that hath faith shall enter: yea, he is entered. 'He hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life,' John v. 24.

[2.] Patience is one of the pillars. 'Ye have need of patience; that, when you have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise,' Heb. x. 36. That when you have suffered before the gates, ye may enter the city. There be three enemies that assault the soul before she enter the gates—a lion, a leopard, and a fox. The lion is the devil, who roareth with hideous cries and bloody jaws, 1 Pet. v. 8. The leopard is the world,

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which hath a gay spotted hide ; but if it take us within its clutches, it devours us. The fox is our concupiscence, bred in us, which craftily spoils our grapes, our young vines, our tender graces, Cant. ii. 15. Patience hath therefore an armed soldier with her, called Christian fortitude, to give repulse to all these encounters. And what he cannot *ferendo*, by smiting, she conquers *ferendo*, by suffering. *Vincit etiam dum patitur*. She overcomes, even while she suffers. Patience meekly bears wrongs done to our own person ; fortitude encounters courageously wrongs done to the person of Christ. She will not yield to sin, though she die. She hath the spirit of Esther, to withstand things that dishonour God. 'If I perish, I perish,' Esth. iv. 6.

[8.] ~~Innocence is the other pillar.~~ As patience teacheth us to bear wrongs, so innocence to do none. Patience gives us a shield, but innocence denies us a sword. Ourselves we may defend, others we must not offend. Innocence is such a virtue, *Quæ cum aliis non nocet, nec sibi nocet*.* Which as it wrongs not others, so nor itself. He that hurts himself, is not innocent. The prodigal is no man's foe but his own, saith the proverb ; but because he is his own foe, he is not innocent. *Triumphus innocentie est non peccare ubi potest*.† It is the triumph of innocence not to offend where it may.

No testimony is more sweet to the conscience than this : 'Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart,' Isa. xxxviii. 8. So Job, 'My heart shall not condemn me for my days.' Blessed soul thus comforted. It smiles at the frowns of earth, and dares stand the thunder. Though there be no innocency but rejoiceth to stand in the sight of mercy ; yet thus in the midst of injuries it cheers itself, 'O Lord, thou knowest my innocence.' The wicked 'cover themselves with violence as with a garment,' Ps. lxxiii. 6 ; therefore confusion shall cover them as a cloak. But 'blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,' Matt. v. 5. That part of the earth they live in shall afford them quiet ; and their part in heaven hath no disquiet in it. *Si amoveantur, admoventur in locum, à quo non removeantur in æternum*. If they be moved, they are moved to a place from whence they shall never be removed. 'I will wash mine hands in innocency : so will I compass thine altar, O Lord,' Ps. xxvi. 6. If innocence must lead us to the altar on earth, sure that must be our gate to the glory of heaven.

[4.] Charity is the roof, *diligendo perficitur* ; § love makes up the building. 'Now abideth faith, hope, and charity ; but the greatest of these is charity,' 1 Cor. xiii. 13. It is a grace of the loveliest countenance, and longest continuance ; for countenance, it is amiable ; all love it. The poor respect not thy faith so much as thy charity. For continuance, faith and hope take their leave of us in death ; but charity brings us to heaven-door, and ushers us into glory. I know not what to say more in thy praise, O charity, than *ut Deum de cælo traheres, et hominem ad cælum elevaras* ; || than that thou didst bring down God from heaven to earth, and dost lift up man from earth to heaven. Great is thy virtue, that by thee God should be humbled to man, by thee man should be exalted to God.

You have the gates described. Let us draw a short conclusion from these two former circumstances, and then enter the city.

* Augustine.

† Seneca.

‡ A different rendering of chap. xxvii. 6 ; nearly the same with the marginal reading in the authorised version.—Ed.

§ Augustine.

|| Hugo de laude Charitatis.

THE SUM.—There is no entrance to the city but by the gates ; no passage to glory but by grace. The wall of this city is said to be great and high, Rev. xxi. 12. High, no climbing over ; great, no breaking through. So Christ saith, 'No thief can break through and steal,' Matt. vi. 20. Therefore through the gates, or no way. 'Corruption doth not inherit in corruption,' 1 Cor. xv. 50. This corrupted man must be regenerate that he may be saved ; must be sanctified that he may be glorified. Babel-builders may offer fair for heaven, but not come near it. The giants of our time, I mean the monstrous sinners, may, *imponere Pelion Ossa*, lay rebellion upon presumption, treason upon rebellion, blasphemy upon all, as if they would sink heaven with their loud and lewd ordnance, and pluck God out of his throne ; but hell gapes in expectation of them. This gate is kept, as the gate of paradise, with a flaming sword of justice, to keep out 'idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners,' 1 Cor. vi. 9 ; and other 'dogs' of the same litter, 'from the kingdom of God,' Rev. xxii. 15.

Some trust to open these gates with golden keys ; but bribery is rather a key to unlock the gates of hell. Let Rome sell what she list, and warrant it, like the seller in the Proverbs, 'It is good, it is good.' Yet it is naught ; but were it good, God never promised to stand to the pope's bargains. Others have dreamed of no other gate but their own righteousness. Poor souls, they cannot find the gate, because they stand in their own light. Others think to pass through the gates of other men's merits ; as well one bird may fly with another bird's wings. For all those hot promises of the works of saints for their ready money, they may blow their nails in hell.

Only grace is the gate. *Per portam ecclesia intramus ad portam Paradisi.** We must be true members of the church, or the door of life will be shut against us. Heaven is a glorious place, therefore reserved for gracious men. *Admittuntur ad spiritus justorum, non nisi justi.* To those 'spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23, must be admitted none save they that are justified. Kings are there the company ; none of base and ignoble lives can be accepted. Heaven is the great Whitehall, the court of the high King ; none are entertained but *Albi*, such as are washed white in the blood of Christ, and keep white their own innocence. Ungacious offenders look for no dwelling in this glory. You that have so little love to the gates, are not worthy the city. If you will not pass through the gates of holiness in this life, you must not enter the city of happiness in the life to come. Thus we have passed the gates, and are now come to

3. The City.—Now if I had been, with Paul, rapt up to the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2, or had the 'angel's reed wherewith he measured the wall,' Rev. xxi. 17, I might say something to the description of this city. But how can darkness speak of that light ? or the base country of earth describe the glorious court of heaven ? 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God,' Ps. lxxxvii. 8. Glorious cities have been, and are in the world. Rome was eminently famous ; all her citizens like so many kings ; yet was it observed, *illic homines mori*, that men did die there. But in this city there is no dying. *Mors non erit ultra.* 'There shall be no more death,' Rev. xxi. 4. I will narrow up my discourse, to consider in this city only three things ; (1.) its situation ; (2.) its society ; (3.) its glory.

(1.) Its Situation.—It is placed above ; 'Jerusalem which is above is free, the mother of us all,' Gal. iv. 26. Heaven is in *excelsis*. 'His foundation is in the holy mountains,' Ps. lxxxvii. 1. So was Jerusalem

* Aug. Sermon. 186 de Temp.

seated on earth to figure this city ; built of the 'quarry of heaven,' Dan. ii. ; 'on sapphires, emeralds, and chrysolites,' Rev. xxi. There is a heaven now over our heads, but it shall 'wax old as a garment,' Heb. i. 11. It is corruptible, and so combustible. This city is eternal ; Mount Sion, never to be moved ; a kingdom never to be shaken. We are now under this lower heaven, then this shall be under us. That which is our canopy shall be our pavement.

(2.) Its Society.—The king that rules there, is one Almighty God, in three distinct persons. He made this city for himself. 'In his presence is the fulness of joy, and pleasures at his right hand for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. If he gave such a house as this world is to his enemies, what, may we think, hath he provided for himself and his friends ? But will God dwell there alone ? He is never alone ; himself is to himself the best and most excellent company. Nevertheless, he vouchsafes a dwelling here to some citizens, and these are either created so, assumed, or assigned.

[1.] Created citizens are the blessed angels ; who, from their first creation, have enjoyed the freedom of this city. They stand always in the presence of God ; they can never lose their happiness.

[2.] Assumed ; those whose spirits are already in heaven. There 'are the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. They are already in soul taken up, and made free denizens of this city.

[3.] Assigned ; the elect that live in the militant church, waiting for the day of their bodies' redemption ; crying still, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ! These are *conscripti*, 'written in the Lamb's book of life,' Rev. xxi. 27. Now, though we are not already in full possession, because our apprenticeship of this life is not out ; yet we are already citizens. 'Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. ii. 19 ; and we have three happy privileges of citizens.

First, Libertas ; freedom from the law ; not from obedience to it, but from the curse of it. *Præstemus quod possumus : quod non possumus, non damnabit.* Let us keep so much of it as we can ; what we cannot keep shall not condemn us. Liberty in the use of these earthly things ; heaven, earth, air, sea, with all their creatures, do us service. 'Whether things present, or things to come, all are yours ; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 22.

Secondly, Tutela imperii ; the king's protection, *Angelis mandavit.* 'He hath given his angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways,' Ps. xci. 11. Is this all ? No. 'He covers us with his feathers, and under his wings do we trust ; his truth is our shield and our buckler,' ver. 4. Our dangers are many in some places, and some in all places ; we have God's own guard royal to keep us. They 'are sent from God to minister for their sakes, which shall be heirs of salvation,' Heb. i. 14. I need not determine whether any particular person hath his particular angel. St Augustine hath well answered, '*Quando hoc nesciatur sine crimine, non opus est ut definiatur cum discrimine.*'* Since our ignorance is no fault, let us not trouble ourselves with curious discussion. Bernard directs us to a good use of it : '*Quantum debet hoc tibi inferre reverentiam, afferre devotionem, conferre fiduciam.*' The consideration of the guard of angels about us, should put into our minds reverence, into our hearts devotion, into our souls confidence.

Thirdly, Defensio Legis ; the defensive protection of the law. Christ is

* Enchirid. cap. 59.

our advocate. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth,' Rom. viii. 33. We are impleaded; Paul appeals to Cæsar, we to Christ. The devil accuseth us, we are far remote: behold our Counsellor is in heaven, that will not let our cause fall, or be overthrown. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,' 1 John ii. 1.

Thus are we citizens in present, shall be more perfectly at last. We have now-right to the city; we shall then have right in the city. We have now a purchase of the possession, shall then have a possession of the purchase. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given,' John xvii. 24. This is our Saviour's will and testament, and shall not be broken.

The company then adds to the glory of this city. We are loath to leave this world for love of a few friends, subject to mutual dislikes; but what then is the delight in the society of saints; where thy glorified self shall meet with thy glorified friends, and your love shall be as everlasting as your glory. There be those angels that protected thee; those patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that by doctrine and example taught thee; yea, there is that blessed Saviour that redeemed thee. Often here with groans and tears thou seekest him, 'whom thy soul loveth;' lo, there he shall never be out of thy sight.

(3.) Its Glory.—*Non mihi si centum lingua.* If I had a hundred tongues, I was not able to discourse thoroughly the least dram of that 'inestimable weight of glory.' The eye hath seen much, the ear hath heard more, and the heart hath conceived most of all. But 'no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart apprehended the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. Augustine, after a stand, *Deus habet quod exhibeat.** God hath something to bestow on you. If I say we shall be satiate, you will think of loathing; if we shall not be satiate, you will think of hunger. But *ibi nec fames, nec fastidium*: there is neither hunger nor loathing. *Sed Deus habet quod exhibeat.* No sooner is the soul within those gates but she is glorious. *Similem sibi reddit ingredientem.* Heaven shall make them that enter it, like itself, glorious: as the air by the sun's brightness is transformed bright. *Quanta felicitas, ubi nullum erit malum, nullum deerit bonum!* How great is that blessedness, where shall be no evil present, no good absent! This is a blessed city.

Men are ambitious here, and seek to be free of great cities, and not seldom buy it dearer than the captain bought his burgess-ship.† But no such honour as to be denizens of this city; whereof once made free, how contemptibly they will look at the vain endeavours of worldly men! Think, beloved, yea, know; how sweet soever the gains of this lower city be, it is yet far short of the gains of heaven. And you will one day say, There is no city to the city of God, where 'shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain,' Rev. xxi. 4. Death, with all his apparitors, that cites the whole world to his court, sorrow, crying, pain, shall be no more. 'They shall persecute you from city to city,' saith Christ, Matt. x. 23, till at last we come to this city, and then out of their reach.

O that this clay of ours could come to such honour! Well may we suffer it to endure the world's tyranny, and to be afflicted by the citizens thereof; alas, we are but apprentices, and they will use us hardly till our years be out. When that day comes, we shall be free possessors of this city.

* In Joh. Hom. 8.

† Acts xxii. 28.—Ed.

You hear now the gate and the city, what should you do but enter? Pass through the gate of grace, a holy and sanctified life, and you shall not fail of the city of glory; whither once entered, you shall sing as it is in the psalm, *Sicut audivimus, ita et vidimus*: As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God. We see that now which was preached to us; yea, and ten thousand times more than ever could be uttered. You shall say to Christ, as the Queen of Sheba to Solomon: 'I heard much of thy glory; but, behold, the one half was not told me,' 1 Kings x. 7. You saw Jerusalem before in a map, now you shall walk through its streets, and observe its towers and bulwarks, fully complete its glory. But my discourse shall give way to your meditation. The joys are boundless, endless: the Lord make us free of this city! Amen.