

(Power from on High) 27. THE SPIRIT

by A.B. Simpson

Transcript

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. 3: 22. The seven letters of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches of Asia contain the last message of the Holy Ghost to the Churches of the Christian age. These messages were not addressed to the Apostolic Church; for all the apostles except John were already in heaven, and the first two generations of Christians had passed away. In a very peculiar sense these epistles represent the message of the risen Savior and the Holy Ghost to the Churches of the last days and our own times. While they are the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, they are also represented, in that perfect unity which the Scriptures constantly recognize between the Spirit and the Son, as the words which the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

A short circuit through the western part of Asia Minor would take one in the order of these epistles from Ephesus to Smyrna, and thence to Pergamos, Thyatira, and the other cities mentioned. It has been supposed by many thoughtful interpreters, that these Churches represent in chronological order the successive conditions of Christianity from the time of John to the end of the age. This is doubtless true to a certain extent.

Ephesus, strong in its orthodoxy, zeal and Christian work, represented the Church immediately after the apostolic age. Smyrna, persecuted and suffering, represented the next epoch of persecution and martyrdom. Then came the reaction of Pergamos, the prosperous and worldly Church with its greater perils and temptations representing the period of Constantine, when Christianity was the established religion of the State, and the world had ceased to oppose and exchanged her persecuting frown for the fawning smile of seductive pleasure.

The Church at Thyatira represents the next stage, the rise of spiritual corruption, and especially of the Romish apostasy. This is naturally followed by Sardis, a condition of entire spiritual death, which well represents the darkness and death of the middle ages.

Philadelphia follows, feeble, but true, loyal to Christ\

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