

13. I know thy works and where thou dwellest even where Satan's seat is ; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14. But I have a few things against thee because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.

15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (which thing I hate).

16. Repent : or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches : To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

It is of course difficult to do justice to such a message as this in the limits assigned to me, and it would be well to study these seven messages to the churches in Asia as a whole, in order to understand fully any one of them. If, however, we have time to deal with one only, any one of the series will give us ample food for thought and material for instruction ; and coming as they do through the Holy Spirit's power so directly from the ascended Saviour, they reveal to us much of the mind of Christ both for the special church mentioned and for us in any part of our Lord's vineyard and in any age.

We first notice the general structure of these messages or brief epistles to the Seven Churches.

They are like gems of the same class, or crystals of the same structure, differing in size and colour, but of the same order, and their facets reflect to us much beautiful light from their Divine Author.

Their structure is five-fold :—

I. The address of the Epistle or Letter : To the angel of the individual church :—Pergamos.

II. The message is prefaced by the mention of some attribute of our Ascended Lord, from whom the letter or message comes ; here it is : " He that hath the sharp sword with two edges."

III. The special message to the individual church, containing in various proportions praise or blame, exhortation or warning, and conveying in all cases the unerring knowledge which our Lord possesses of our state as churches or as individuals.

IV. A general exhortation to attention in the familiar words : " He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. Of these words we may say that they contain the very words so often used by our Lord himself, when upon earth, at the conclusion of His parables or emphatic sayings, thus illustrating by this familiar mark an identity in