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# The Cities of the Seven Churches.

## SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS.

By the Rev. M. LINTON SMITH, M.A.

### III. Laodicea and Ephesus.

THE route from Philadelphia to Laodicea must remain undescribed because unvisited on the journey during which these impressions were gained, and we may take our stand at once upon the site of Laodicea. Behind the sharply defined mound on which the city stood Salbacus rises steeply, with patches of snow marking the crags of its summit even under the heat of a July sun. Away to the west stretches the long cleft of the Mæander valley; but the upper reaches of that river break from the hills to the north, and the line of its middle course is continued eastward at our feet by the valley of another stream, the Lycus, of which the gradually rising glen shows as clear an avenue to the interior as does the descending valley of the Mæander to the coast. At the point where the two rivers unite, their valleys widen out into a little triangular plain, at the south-east corner of which Laodicea is situated, dominating the road which ran west from the Cilician gates to the harbours of Miletus and Ephesus. The position is a strong one, on an isolated hill, sloping steeply on three sides, and more gently on the south to the saddle which connects it with the range behind. Its one weakness lies in the fact that there is no supply of water within the limits of the walls; streams run on the east and west at a little distance, and one of the most striking ruins of the site is the great fountain at the east end of the stadium by which the water brought by an aqueduct from the southern hills was distributed; but all these sources could be controlled by a besieging force, and Laodicea never seems to have been a place of military importance. In trade, on the other hand, it excelled, and it was wealthier than any other city of our circuit save those on the coast. This wealth, which is clearly reflected in the warning words of Christ to the Church of the place, is plainly

attested by the splendour of its remains: two theatres, each capable of seating 6,000 spectators, are scooped out of the steep northern slope of the hill; a gully running eastward through the site has been deepened into a magnificent stadium; above the stadium rise the well-built arches of the gymnasium, which earthquakes, though they have distorted, have not been able to overthrow; the arches of bazaars, the columns of temples and churches, rise on every hand; the triple Ephesian gate still stands on the west, and the streams on either side were spanned by stone bridges; but the bridges have fallen into the streams, and only their piers remain; the gate is covered up to the spring of its arches by silt, which buries deep the ancient road beneath. The ruins rise from one vast field of scanty barley stubble; women beat out their corn on the seats of the stadium, and foxes play across the stages of the theatres; and one ragged tent of the nomad is the only human habitation of the whole site. Such is the desolation of the city which proudly refused the help of imperial Rome towards rebuilding after its destruction by an earthquake, and boasted that it had "need of nothing." One point is more obvious at Laodicea than is the case with any other of the Seven—viz., that one reason which guided the Apostle in choosing the objects of his address was the central position of each city with regard to a group of less important towns. No one who stands upon the site of Laodicea and looks north across the Lycus valley can fail to notice four patches which glisten white in the sun on the flank of the opposite hills; they are the silicious deposits of the hot springs of Hierapolis, and the traveller who makes his way across to the terrace from which they flow will find himself amidst the remains of a city almost as extensive as, and far more perfect than Laodicea itself. But turn your eyes eastward without leaving the spot on which you stand, and follow the line of rails along the southern side of the valley; if your sight be good you will see that five miles away it turns at right angles northward, and sharp across the valley, and if a train be passing the point in question you will see that as it crosses the valley it is making a

steady ascent up the face of a terrace which lifts the whole floor of the glen, to continue at a higher level above. Just where the railway turns north it crosses the Lycus, which has broken down in a series of rapids from the higher level through a rocky ravine, at the head of which stands another city, Colossæ, the buildings of which must have been plainly visible from Laodicea. This grouping of the cities is expressly recognized by St. Paul in his letter to the Church at Colossæ (iv. 13), and is a good example of the natural facilities for distribution which seem to have guided St. John in his choice.

The railway from Laodicea to Ephesus follows closely enough the line of the ancient road down the Mæander valley, keeping on the north bank of the river, for no tributaries of importance enter on that side; but the wall of hills rises steep and unbroken, and a storm of rain means heavy freshets which work havoc below; one station was buried up to the sills of the windows, and a temporary line had to be carried over the deposit, for close to the station the metals had been covered to a depth of eight feet: through a village a path one hundred yards wide had been swept clean of houses by the rush of the torrent, and in many places the gardens were buried in silt deep enough to hide the trunks of the fig-trees, leaving only the branches showing, a sight which helps to explain the great changes in coast-line and levels at Ephesus and elsewhere. Not far from the site of Magnesia the line trends towards the north, and begins to climb the hills: fig groves clothe the lower slopes; beyond them come terraces for vines; while the upper reaches of the ravine, and the summits above, are covered with pines and arbutus and ilex, green even under the blaze of the midsummer sun, while oleanders fringe the bed of the stream beneath. The summit tunnel passed, there is a sharp descent; a fine Roman aqueduct, with its double row of arches, crosses the glen below us, and soon there appears, on the far side of the plain beneath, the Turkish castle of Ayasoluk; then the village itself, with its ruinous but striking minarets of Seljuk workmanship, comes into sight, and the train runs into the station through

the broken arches of Justinian's aqueduct, which brought water from the eastern hills.

At first sight there seems little sign of antiquity beyond this one monument, but this very absence of remains calls attention to one of the most remarkable features of the place; there are really two sites, the sacred and the secular, the Asiatic and the Greek; it was ignorance of this fact which caused so many years' vain search before the temple of Artemis was discovered; it was the discovery of the temple which made the fact plain to all; the modern village stands on the pre-Hellenic, sacred site, the consideration of which may be left for a while; the other is about a mile distant. Look at Mount Coressus, the southern boundary of the plain of the Cayster, and you will see running out towards you a low spur; on that spur and beyond it, in the angle which it forms with the main mass, lie the remains of the secular, Hellenic city, the city of the early Athenian colonists, the city of Lysimachus and the Roman proconsuls, the city of St. Paul and St. John; if you look closely you will see the wall of Lysimachus climbing the main ridge of Mount Coressus, on the summit of which lay the citadel; and ruins are visible, too, on Prion, as the low spur is named.

The path from the village runs through cornfields, the gift of the river which has in long ages silted up the gulf on the shores of which the temple originally stood, and skirts the north side of Prion. Presently a ruined gate is passed, and above, on the left, appear the great arches of the sub-structure of one end of the stadium, most of which is hollowed out of the hill itself. West from the stadium, across the pavement of an ancient road, lies a rocky hillock, the top of which has been levelled, and cut into a great altar, work of early date, which, it has been suggested, may be commemorative of the conclusion of peace between the natives and the Greek colonists of the first settlement. Beyond and below is the chief Christian monument of the place, the great double church, in all probability the scene of the Œcumenical Council of A.D. 431; the scene, too, of that disgrace to the Faith, the "Latrocinium," or Robber-Council of

449; the deeds of violence which took place within its walls are sad proof of the neglect by the whole Church of that warning, specially addressed to its branch in this place, of the danger of allowing zeal for orthodoxy to take the place of true love. On slightly rising ground to the south stand the ruins of the gymnasium; the view westwards is worth a pause; at our feet is a field of waving reeds with clearly marked limits; beyond it on the left an outlying spur of Coressus is crowned by a tower which dominates the whole view; beyond that, again, seven miles away, a long ridge which comes down from the northern hills on our right forms the horizon; the field of reeds is the harbour of the city at the Christian era; the tower commonly known as "St. Paul's prison," was part of the fortifications commanding its mouth; but the coast-line now lies by those far-distant hills beyond; that view reveals the cause of the city's downfall, the silting up of the harbour, with its consequent loss of trade, which fell to its rival, Smyrna.

Turning eastward once more from the gymnasium, the path leads through a complex of courts and buildings, the ground plan of which has been made clear by careful excavation, and joins the colonnaded street which ran from the harbour to the Great Theatre, hollowed in the western slopes of Prion. Here we may for a moment take St. Luke (in his longer recension) for our companion; it was into this street that the guild of silversmiths, inflamed by the speech of their leader, Demetrius, poured from their guildhall, and, gathering with them the crowd of idlers who loafed under the shadow of its colonnades, swept into the theatre at its head; for two hours they shouted, with vain repetition, to the praises of their tutelary goddess, till hunger made them ready to listen to reason, and the town clerk seized the opportunity to send them quietly away. The stage and orchestra of the theatre have been carefully excavated, and the fragments of the proscenium and stage replaced as far as possible in their original position, and it is not difficult to reconstruct the scene in imagination; for from the upper seats of the theatre its setting lies before us, and there is no sound to

disturb our dream save the plaintive notes of a shepherd's pipe on Coressus, no human being in sight save the guard who protects these remains from the depredations of the Western tourist.

Leaving the theatre, we may follow the Magnesian Way, recently excavated by the Austrians, which climbs the saddle connecting Coressus with Prion ; it was the Sacred Way of the city by which the civic processions passed to the shrine of Artemis outside the walls, and the remains of the buildings which flanked it bear eloquent testimony to the taste, skill, and wealth of their builders ; libraries, temples, and an Odeum, in white marble, and an elaborate and well-preserved gymnasium are among the principal structures ; but we pass down to the Magnesian gate, and follow the left-hand road across the plain, back towards the village. The Turkish castle stands out upon the hill ; the mosque of Isa Bey, with its marble façade, stolen from the temple, gleams in the sunshine at its foot, but of the temple of Artemis itself, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, there is no sign ; suddenly the path ends on the edge of a great pit, some twenty feet deep and over one hundred yards square ; water covers the bottom, and fragments of masonry and one or two drums of fluted columns rise above the surface. Before us lie the site and remains of the Artemisium, the shrine of that goddess "whom all Asia and the civilized world worshippeth." Sacked by the Goths in the third century, it fell into decay, and its ruins were buried by the river floods till its position was so utterly lost that it was only discovered by the English architect, Mr. Wood, after many years' patient search. Another Englishman, Mr. Hogarth, has recently carried back the world-wide fame of the shrine to a remoter antiquity than had been suspected : draining the pond, and digging beneath the spot on which stood the statue of the goddess, he has found the pedestal of an earlier temple, and, built into it, the votive offerings of the pre-Hellenic age ; among these were Babylonian ivories from the East, and Mycenean jewellery from the West—proof of the extensive traffic

of the city, and the widespread repute of her goddess at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. But these recent discoveries only emphasize that feature of the Anatolian mind which Professor Sir W. Ramsay has noted, its clinging through all changes to the old religious sites. Cities may perish, faiths may change, but something always seems to remain to mark the primitive religious centres; and nowhere is this more emphasized than at Ephesus. The Greek city has been buried by the silt of the river, and thrice the inhabitants have changed their faith, from Paganism to Christianity and from Christianity to Islam. But each faith has built its chief shrine in the same locality; the Mosque of Isa Bey has been already mentioned; the Christian fane remains yet to be pointed out. On the southern slope of the castle hill, a little whitewashed chapel stands conspicuous, and by its side are piled huge masses of a rather clumsy masonry, the ruins of Justinian's great basilica of St. John. From this the modern village takes its name; the exact transliteration of the Turkish letters is Ayathologh, the relation of which to Hagios Theologos (the holy Divine) is obvious, and the fact is surely suggestive. Can we take leave of our survey of these cities, with their changed and changing conditions, and yet their permanent interest for ourselves, with any better thought than that which Ephesus impresses on all those who have a mind to receive it—the thought that among all the varied interests and changing relations of humanity the most permanent and abiding is its interest in, and its relation with, the Divine?

## The Selection of Hymns.

By the Rev. S. C. LOWRY, M.A.

ONE of the most famous sermons by the late Canon Liddon, preached at the time of the "Lux Mundi" controversy, had for its title "The Inspiration of Selection," and its subject was the supernatural discernment granted to the