

"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" It is rather an interesting question whether these words refer primarily to the personal wealth of individual Laodicean Christians, or whether it is the affairs of the Church in Laodicea which S. John had in view, considered as a society. Of course the prosperity of a society and the prosperity of its individual members always depend more or less upon each other, although not according to any fixed and invariable rule. Possibly the "angel of the church" had been sending S. John a report of the extremely satisfactory condition of affairs in Laodicea coupled with what seemed to him a little pardonable pride in the comparison which it made with the state of things elsewhere. Accounts balancing on the right side, things running smoothly, the church well furnished, they had need of nothing. They were not poor as the church in Smyrna was, or persecuted as the church in Pergamos had been; they were disturbed by no conflict with the "synagogue of satan," as was the case in Philadelphia, and, best of all, there was no "woman Jezebel" to trouble them as at Thyatira. But the watchful loving eye of the apostle discerned at once the presence of that fatal self-satisfied temper which had done more than anything else to keep the Pharisees away from our Lord. "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot." The fervour of the devotion of these Laodiceans has been ebbing away whilst they have been congratulating themselves on the smoothness with which everything was running. Abp. Trench calls attention to the fact that according to the correct reading ("would that") is followed here by the indicative and not by the optative as in the *Textus Receptus*. The clause although in form a wish, is in reality a regret. It is not that the apostle is setting coldness before the disciples as an alternative ideal after which they may be allowed to strive; but he is regretting that the life of Christianity as it comes in contact with them does not find them in some definite frame of mind so that it may know how to deal with them. S. John is not denying the possibility of growth in holiness, or depreciating the value of beginnings in the Christian life, but probing that fatal spirit of self-satisfaction with a certain modicum of goodness which is the most fatal hindrance in the way of attaining to any higher goodness. As a matter of fact it would seem that there are to-day in the main two classes of people who really profit by the Church's ministrations. On the one hand there are the few truly earnest and devout souls who appreciate their