



LAODICEA.

honest unbeliever than a dead-and-alive Christian. And in this are they wrong? Did not the Saviour rather commend it when He said, "I would that thou wert either cold or hot"? He clearly wanted nothing "lukewarm."

But in this matter we must make a distinction. If a man has once been cold and is "warming up" a little, drawing by degrees, each day and each hour, a little more closely to God, he is better, surely, than when he was away from God altogether. Water may be lukewarm from one of two causes. It may be water that was once hot and is getting cold, or it may be cold water that is getting warm. The lukewarm water that the Saviour refers to is that which was once hot and is getting cold. The people of Laodicea were once warm-hearted Christians. That warmth they were losing. Indeed, their love for Jesus had gone; but still from the force of habit, or from early training, or from an idea that they must do something to quiet conscience, they went on with the outward duties of Christianity. They played the Christian and nothing more. They

were insincere; and what can be worse than insincerity?

It was this that the Saviour disliked. It caused a revulsion of feeling like unto sickness: "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

How careful, then, should all people bearing the name of Christian be, lest they should put themselves in a false position before God. The religion of some is quiescent. It never progresses. Beware of it. Unless it progresses it is apt to fail. If it is lukewarm, it is apt to be getting cold. How carefully should every one examine his position before God. Is his religion in advance of what it was ten or five years ago? Such is the warning that comes from Laodicea. The people there thought they were all right. They even boasted of their position. "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Such was their opinion regarding themselves. But what did the Saviour think of them? "I tell thee that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." How terrible is the difference of opinion here! Who are-