

themselves, but a temporary interspace in the interval between two eternities, and earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its efforts to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning the payment for their work?"

Canon Farrar says: "After all these thousands of years of the world's existence, after all the splendors of literature in all nations and in all ages, there is no book that can supersede it as an instrument for the education of the young. Alone of all books it is circulated in hundreds of millions of copies in every tongue. Its eclipse would be the return of chaos; its extinction the epitaph of history."—*Selected.*

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

VIII.—THE LAST MESSAGE.

"And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write."—*Revelation iii. 14.*



T. PAUL, in his Epistle to the Colossians, refers more than once to "the brethren that are in Laodicea," and towards the end of it he says, "When this epistle is read among you, cause it to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

From this it is evident that there were Christians in Laodicea, in whom St. Paul had confidence; but the Saviour, in sending His message to them, does not regard them in a favorable light. As in the case of Sardis, He can see little or nothing in them to praise. He had nothing good to say of them. God help us when the Saviour has nothing good to say of us!

To the Laodiceans He is the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." "Amen" is a wonderful word. It seems to gather together into one word the full expression of the truth. All pretence, deception, or acting, in a word, all *hypocrisy*, is excluded from it. And such was the Saviour. In His own person He was the full expression of the truth. He was the "Amen, the faithful and true witness." He had been with the Father and knew all about Him, and has told us all that it was right for us to know about Him. He stands between God and us as a mediator. He is Himself to be our judge. In that judgment He will make no mistake. He will show clearly who are His and who are not. He is the "faithful and true witness."

But He is also "the beginning of the creation of God." Was it to Him that the Creator spoke when He said, "Let us make man in our image"? If so; it was the image of Christ, as well as of God, that was stamped upon us. Man approaches through Him, the nature of

God. He welded two natures together. It only remains for us now to conform to the nature of Christ, and we shall be, as we were made, the image of God. So it is that when a man gives himself up to Christ, when he gives up his old sins and walks hand in hand with the Son of God, he is born again. He is made new. He is made over again. It is a new creation. So, in forcible words, St. Paul expresses it: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," II. Cor. v. 17.

So much for what Christ was to the Laodiceans. And now for the message. It was that they were neither cold nor hot. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

These words bear heavily upon many a so-called Christian. It is the bane of our existence that there are so many Christians that have no enthusiasm for their religion. It is delightful to see an enthusiastic Christian. He is a Christian because he loves Christ. Christ is his Creator. Christ made him what he is. He feels this; his soul is filled with it. He may be engaged in the commerce of the world; but no commercial pursuit can drive Christ from his soul. He does not feel driven to attend services or devotional meetings. His inclination draws him there. It is not with him, "Well, I suppose I ought to go there, people will expect to see me there"; but it is "I love to go there, my heart is there, no one can keep me from it." Oh! for congregations like this—warm, live, enthusiastic Christians who have caught the spirit of Christ, and who love Him.

Opposed to good people like these—and, indeed, they are scarce—are two classes: (1) Those that are cold; (2) those that are lukewarm.

By the "cold" are meant, no doubt, those who do not believe in Jesus at all. They don't think that there is such a thing as religion. They live only for what they see. They have invested their life in their business, and they worship it. To them the Bible is just the same as any other book. It must stand on its own merits. Indeed they know less about it, perhaps, than many another book. If they are steady in their lives, it is for no higher purpose than that they consider it wisest for self-preservation; they live longer, and they are better able to attend to the work in which their lives have been invested. To them churchgoing and prayers are but acts of superstition. In short, their motto is "Let us eat and drink: for to-morrow, we die." They are often people of an honest mind. Indeed, it is often that feeling of honesty which keeps them where they are. They think it is better to be a living dog than a dead lion. They think it is better to be an