

George MacDonald on Laodicea

You must note that in this last message to the Laodiceans, he has not a word of praise for them—not a word of praise. Almost all the rest have some praise given them, but there is not a word of praise for these halfhearted Laodiceans. They want to go comfortably on, and not to be troubled much, and they will get into heaven as they please, in some sleepy way or other. They won't find themselves comfortable there. It is not the halfhearted, simmering kind of hearts that the kingdom of God and His Christ is for. Had God been halfhearted you would never have had a chance of life eternal. It is because God is true-hearted, unselfish, out and out devoted to His creatures that there is any world at all.

And He won't have you as you are! If you correspond at all to this description of those that made up the church of the Laodiceans, God won't have you—you won't do! What a word of indignation this is!

Oh! you are quite wrong if you have the fancy that Jesus Christ is one who is always speaking soft words. He is indignant sometimes, He is angry sometimes, but there is not one atom in that indignation, in that anger that is not love. But His love will not make His blow lighter, and you are afraid of that kind of love because it demands so much. It demands that you shall be fit to come into His very arms, to His very heart, and less than that will not do. It cannot be that He shall embrace evil things; He will have us free, cost what it may; if it takes an eternity to clean us, we must be clean.

Neither cold nor hot: What a word almost of contempt! Only there is no contempt in Him. Using our language it sounds like it, but I call it "indignation," and the strong effort of His heart of love to make them feel what a low condition they are in. "Neither cold nor hot—I won't have you; I will spew you out of my mouth." That Christ should speak like that to us and we deserve it—who will endure it? But, oh! it is of the mercy of God that He speaks to us like that.

He speaks very plainly what He thinks of them, and He shows very clearly how His thought about them ran counter altogether to their own judgment of themselves. "Oh, we are all right! We accept this and that doctrine; we believe so-and-so; we are all right." Or, on the other hand: "We have broken free from the traditions of the elders; we have got a better way, and so we are all right." Are you doing the things that Jesus Christ tells you? If not, you are all wrong. Your ideas, your opinions, your systems, let them be as correct as astronomy, and you are no better, but probably much the worse for them.

Does the Lord say this for the sake of abuse? No; He wants to rouse us—"I counsel thee"—He wants to rouse us up, to open our treasure houses that He may fill them, to open doors and windows that the breath of God may blow through our souls. That is why He says the hard words, but hard words in the right places are the kindest thing.