

# *In the Hand of the Potter*

William Mealand (1873-1957)

*"I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make" (Jeremiah 18:3-4).*

**T**he prophet sees a vessel marred in the hand of the potter. Yet, as he gazes, it is made again *"another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make."* Now, in this pictured incident we see that all throughout the vessel is in the hand of the potter. He is the determining and deciding factor.

So is God, as witness His word to Jeremiah.

*"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel" (18:6).*

What sovereignty breathes in these words! God is sovereign. Therefore of Israel He could say:

*"This people have I formed for Myself. They shall shew forth My praise" (Isaiah 43:21).*

Again in the same chapter:

*"I have created him for My glory. I have formed him. Yea, I have made him." (Isaiah 43:7).*

Truly, the hand of the Potter is here – I have created, formed, made – and, for My glory. Marred? Yes, but still in the hand of the Potter, to be eventually for His glory.

Marvelous to relate, that very marring is the occasion for a new and wonderful fashion, the formation of an instrument that is also to be for His glory. Here we are immediately concerned. As participants of the grace glorious we are His achievement. We are in His hand. He is

making us, and all the while there is the closeness of Maker and made. How blessed is the consciousness of the Molder's far-seeing wisdom, which again and again amazes the mind!

How blessed also is the waiting, and sometimes the withholding of His touch! It is then we perceive the marvels of His ordaining, the wisdom of His disposing, and that in His fashioning all is together-acting-into-good for those who love Him.

But Thou art making me, I thank Thee, Sire.  
What Thou hast done and do'st, Thou knowest well;  
And I will help Thee: gently in Thy fire  
I will lie burning; on Thy potter's wheel  
I will whirl patient, tho' my head should reel.

Thy grace shall be enough my grief to quell,  
And growing beauty shine thro' suffering dire.  
Too tense I must not be to understand,  
How should the work the Master goes about  
Fit the vague sketch my compasses have planned?

I am His house, where He goes in and out;  
He builds me now, and if I cannot see  
At any time what He still does with me  
'Tis that He makes the house for me too grand.

God would build for us a character far exceeding our earthbound comprehension. He would wean us from the things which too easily engross our attention, lifting us to a closer attachment to Himself.

Yet always, even hourly, we are in His hand. Of that we may be sure; but are we conscious of the great affinity – the closeness of Maker and made? A tower of strength lies in the thought, an utter rare content.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,  
And spirit with spirit may meet;  
Closer is He than breathing,  
And nearer than hands and feet.

What tho' Thy work in me transcends my sense,  
Too fine, too high, for me to understand.  
I trust entirely. On, Lord, with Thy labor grand!

I have not knowledge, wisdom, insight, thought,  
Nor understanding, fit to justify  
Thee in Thy work. 'tis all of sovereign grace.

How great a thing it is to realize ourselves as in His Hand! What equipoise and calm! For then, should wayward circumstance, or mood's despair come near, it is to find us still within that

hand. As our “*faithful Creator*” His word is confirmed to our hearts in all its fine gradations: “I have made, and I will bear. Even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

As in creation He is our Potter, so in redemption. He makes and He remakes. Thus even as He took pleasure in His ancient people, a pleasure He will show yet again, so in those of a later day, whom He designates beforehand, He calls and justifies, and glorifies.

From out of the intrusive chaos God is seeing all that He makes – “it is very good.” He takes pleasure in His own work. Its far-reaching issues are to constitute the delight of God’s will, and its excellency will be celestially apparent above all earthly showing. The highest intelligences will, through these media, be satisfyingly instructed in the wealth of God’s grace, as shown in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For such display are we set. Yet what of our present sense of its dignity? The spirit may rise in exultation at the thought of such glory, but are there not hands, feet and lips for action even now? The spirit of God has something to do with these members of the body.

Hands may not have the cunning of a Bezaleel, but they can be gentle, ministering hands. Our feet, too, may be treading the obscure ruts, yet willing feet for His revealed requests. Our lips – someone once prayed, “Lord, take my lips, and speak through them. Take my mind and think through it. Take my heart and set it on fire.”

If only thus we live and pray, what channels we could be! Vessels of honor for and in the Potter’s hand – made not only by Him, but for Him.

Made for Thyself, O God!

Made for Thy love, Thy service, Thy delight;

Made to show forth Thy Wisdom, grace, and might;

Made for Thy praise, Whom veiled archangels laud.

Oh, strange and glorious thought, that we may be

A joy to Thee!

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