

**"MARRED: SO HE MADE IT AGAIN"****F.B. Meyer:**

Once Paganini, standing before a great audience, broke string after string in his violin, until only one was left. He held up his violin, and said: "One string and Paganini."

Now we want one man and God, God working through a man so that the man is the channel, But before God can work by a man, he must be right, and I have to speak now on how God can make a man right, fit for service. In the preceding address we came to despair. We stood upon the brink of the precipice and looked down into the dark, fearing that we might be castaways. Now I take for my text the words:

"He made it again." Jer\_18:4.

What did he make again? Jeremiah was a disappointed man. He thought he could do no more to stay the people from destruction. His heart was breaking. God told him to go down to the potter's house, and there he saw the potter take a piece of clay and place it on a wheel. As he stood there to watch, the potter shaped it: it rose beneath his hand into a fair and lovely shape. But just as it was complete, and it seemed as though nothing more was needed, it crumbled beneath his hand. Some part of it fell upon the wheel, some part upon the ground. Jeremiah thought that the potter would take another piece of clay and make that clay fulfil his plan, but instead he stooped and gathered the broken clay with his hand, picked it from the ground, and kneading it with his hand he placed it once more upon the wheel and began to make that clay again; and presently a vessel as fair as possible stood complete, ready to be taken to the kiln to be baked and made permanent.

Away back in your life God took you and placed you upon the wheel, and for these many years God has sought to make you fair. But I know not why, I cannot tell,--God knows,--you know,--there has come a flaw and break, and you are a piece of broken pottery. Your life is a marred life, your ideal a broken ideal, and all around there lie the littered pieces of the man or the woman that you might have been.

But now what shall you do? God put you in that place for a high purpose, but you have missed your mark. Shall God take another man and give him your wealth, another woman and give her your position? Shall God take another student and put him in your church? Shall God call another body to perform the work your church should do? Not yet, not yet. He might take another piece of clay and make that a vessel, but instead He comes again to seek you. His hand is passing through this audience to find you, that the broken pieces of your life, your marred and spoiled ideal, may be made over again. Clergyman, merchant, lady of fashion, Christian worker, student, singer, God's hand is feeling for you now. The hand of God is, so to speak, laying hold upon the broken pieces of your marred and spoiled life, and if you will let Him, He will now begin to complete your nature by making it to be what He meant it to be years ago when you were cradled at the foot of the cross.

Why have you failed? Because your life is a failure. You hide it by going to church, by observing the outward routine, by a hearty laugh, by a light, gay air. You live your life amongst your brethren or sisters, but no one knows that deep down in your soul you are certain that you are a failure, that you are spoiled, that you want things you do not obtain, that you long for a goodness you never realize, that you reach out for a sweetness and purity and strength that never comes. You know that your life has fallen beneath God's plan. You are ready to confess it. Why is it so? Is it because God has failed?

See that mother bending over the cradle where her firstborn babe lies. See how a smile lights up her face as she thinks she catches the plaudits which are to welcome his success in coming years. But no woman ever cherished for her babe visions half so fair as your God has for you. He hates nothing that He has made, and with an equal love He wants to do What then is the cause? Is it that He has made a mistake in your life? You think so. If instead of being a poor man you had been rich, if instead of being a lone woman you had had one to call you wife, and little children to clutch your dress and call you mother, if instead of being tied to the office-stool you had been a minister or missionary, you think that you would have been a better, a sweeter character. But I want you to understand that God chose for you your lot in life out of myriads that were open to Him, because just where you are you might realize your noblest possibilities. Otherwise God would have made you different from what you are. But your soul, born into His kingdom, was a matter of care and thought to Him, how best He might nurture you; and He chose your lot with its irritations, its trials, its difficulties, all the agony that eats out your nature. Though men and women do not guess it, He chose it just as it is, because in it, if you will let Him, He can realize the fairest life within your reach.

Where is the failure? Look. I think I have the wheel before me. My foot is working the treadle. It is revolving rapidly, horizontally as you know. I have placed it on the clay. I begin to manipulate it. It rises beneath my hand till I come to one certain point where, either through some flaw in the clay, a bubble or a fault, it resists me. Leaving that point, I put my hand around again, and in some other direction endeavor to secure my purpose, and then come back to that one point, but again I meet that obstruction that thwarts me. The genius of my brain as an artist is complete; the power of my hand to manipulate is unrivaled; it is the clay that thwarts me, until presently, because I have been frustrated again and again, the work is a marred, spoiled thing. Now is not that true of you?

The one trouble of my life, years ago, was just this about which I am speaking now. God was dealing with me. I suppose He wanted to make me a vessel fit for His use. But there was one point in my life where I fought God

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as the clay fights the hand of the potter. I fought God, I will not say for how long. God help me! The only benefit that I can get now out of those years the canker worm has eaten, is to discover the secret in other lives while they too are standing still, and then to take them to the Christ to whom I went myself, and to encourage them to hope that He who years ago took up a spoiled and marred life and made a little of it, will take other men and women and will find out where they have thwarted Him; and finding it out, will touch them there, and as they yield to Him they will be made again.

Now what is the point in your life where you obstruct God? Allow me to search you.