

battlefield, and, what is even more valuable, men who can endure the long gray months of waiting. My heart bleeds at what you are sowing. This theology sounds grand enough, but in the fearful storms of life it bends and breaks. May God give us all a wise heart and one truly open for Him. From an officer no longer young.

Rationalism may be interesting for purely speculative purposes, but when it comes to actual needs in life, in sorrow, suffering and death, only the "old" Gospel will give peace and power.

The Potter and the Clay

By MISS C. M. MAYNARD.

"As the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."—Jer. 18:6.

The primary meaning of the prophet in this well-known passage is the solemn, grand, and glorious certainty of God's sovereignty. In all the tragic events that are happening at the present time God is commenting on these words, and "He doeth according to His will." Come with me to Cornwall and see there as I have seen all the processes that the clay goes through as it is dealt with in the pottery, until it emerges in glory and beauty fit for use.

At first there are only the ugly, unsightly, defiling lumps of clay, helpless and useless. A picture of what we are by nature, sin-stained, weak, and powerless to raise ourselves. But deft fingers take up the shapeless mass of clay and work it into wonderful and various shapes and sizes. So God shapes us. We are His workmanship, and He makes of us what He will. It is a comforting thought, for we always have a tender regard for what we ourselves have made, and God Who has made us is very tender with us. David founded his prayer on that "Forsake not the work of Thine own hands." When we have made a thing ourselves, we know all its weak places, and the Lord knows all our weak places. "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape."

The human body, which is such a wonderful organism, speaks for itself in the skill that must have caused its creation, but we do not read of any anguish or any tears in the work of creation; it was the work of redemption that cost so much in suffering. The creation of man is a marvel of unutterable skill, but redemption is a work of love past all knowledge; it cost Calvary and untold agony.

How different we all are! God has to train each one of us separately, and perhaps sometimes we are tempted to think that other Christians are not called upon to endure half so much discipline as we are. We do not know what other people's experiences may be, but the discipline God gives us is just what He sees we need. He has to prepare us for service, possibly here, and certainly hereafter. A friend once said to another whose child was a great deal of trouble and very wayward: "I wouldn't take all that trouble about my little boy; let him have his own way." But the mother said: "No, I cannot do that; I have his whole future to consider. Some day he will bless and thank me for all the suffering he has to undergo now." So let us remember that all our discipline and training are in the loving hands of God, and that He only gives us just what is necessary for our welfare.

The next process exposed the clay to the action of an immense magnet. The clay was full of black particles, and it was necessary to bring all these to the surface so that they might be removed. Sometimes we find that people come into our lives, or our circumstances are so changed that it seems to bring out all the worst in us. We find feelings and thoughts in our hearts that we had never suspected could be there. That is God using the magnet. These things in us must come to the surface so that we may let God remove them in order that they may not hinder our usefulness.

When we read that John Mark left the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, and went home to his mother because he was afraid of the necessities and hardships of the missionary life, we know that these things were used by God to show him how much he was lacking in grit and perseverance and true devotion. But we are glad to read that later on St. Paul could say of him, "Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." St. Mark had learnt his lesson. The Lord will show us by our circumstances what needs to be removed in us.

Then the clay was placed in the indispensable furnace. Without it the vessels would hold nothing, and be of no use at all. So there must be a trial of our faith; it will never grow without exercise. "The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold, which perisheth, though it be tried with fire."

A friend was once about to preach in Hyde Park, but was interrupted by a crowd of atheists, who jeered at and denied the existence of God and the efficacy of prayer. He asked at length if anyone there had been a Christian for six months, and if so whether they could say that God had failed them. A lady got up and asked permission to speak. She said that five years ago she had been deserted by her husband and left entirely without money, with five little children. She committed herself to her Heavenly Father, and did not worry about the future, and the next day help was forthcoming, and ever since she had been wonderfully cared for. My friend looked at the chief opponent of the meeting and asked, "Have you anything to say in reply?" but he was silent.

In the West of England I knew of a clergyman who had been seeking a curate for some months. At length he found one suited to his requirements, but before he had been a week in the place the curate was taken ill, and died, leaving a wife and nine children with only £30 a year to depend upon. What a strain on one's faith, and what a call to trust in God! If any of us are in the furnace, take heart, for there is One beside you Who knows the effect of every blast and will temper the heat according to your capacity.

After being taken out of the furnace the vessel is taken into the decorating-room, and here what loveliness of colour, what exquisite beauty of design. The Psalmist says, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be on us." A Christian ought to be characterized by love, gentleness, patience, absence of resentment, unselfishness. A forgiving spirit seems to appeal to the world almost more than anything else. It was a very humble Christian whose life was so fragrant that another dark, ignorant woman was compelled to kneel down by her scullery sink and pray, "O God, if that is being a Christian, make me one."

A young Hindoo, who was the strictest keeper of caste and hated all Christians, went to college in order to learn English, and while there the beautiful life of a low-caste man was the means of his becoming a Christian, and although his mother besought him on her

knees with tears to give it up, and his family repudiated him, he remained faithful.

After being decorated the vessel is placed in the furnace again. This is necessary or the colours would never last. So many find that after having received a definite blessing they have to endure a heavy trial. This is to make the blessing last and to make it part of the Christian's character. But let there be no discouragement; we leave it all in our loving Father's hands. If He sends us trial, He always sends with it compensations of love and mercy. David said, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." We need have no fear if we trust God with ourselves and our future.

A gentleman was being shown some of the beautiful vases in the showroom, some worth forty guineas, some sixty guineas, and on asking the price of one beautiful piece was told it was only worth one shilling. It had a hidden flaw which the workman had not discovered, but which the master's eye had detected at once, and it was perfectly useless.

It should be the desire of our hearts that God should come in and show us what is wrong within. We need to have our wills absolutely in harmony with His. I have a Belgian guest, a little child of five, who is an absolute model of docility; she does everything she is told without even a gesture of dislike or disapprobation, and I am increasingly reminded of Our Lord's words: "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

What were all these efforts and preparation of the clay for? 1. The glory of the maker. God says: "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise," Is. 43:21. He has made us so that He only may be seen in our lives. 2. Much of it was made for royal use. A Christian ought to be a vessel "meet for the Master's use." He may use us in any way to win others. A party of missionaries sang the Doxology at Paddington Station some years ago on their starting for Plymouth, and this was the means of bringing back to God a man who had been a grievous backslider. God can use the simplest thing, if only we are fit for Him to use us. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

OUR DEAD

Where are our Dead? We ask the wise,
But Science owns defeat
She baffled stands, with tired eyes
Where light and darkness meet.
Not all the wisdom of the years
That crowns her hoary head
Can help to stay our falling tears
Or tell us of our Dead.

Methought I saw th' Archangel stand
Upon the hills of Time,
The scroll of fate was in his hand,
His countenance sublime:
"There shall be no more Sea," he cried—
"No sorrow and no pain!"
Exultant echoes multiplied
The glorious refrain.

"Give up the Dead, O Sea!" and then
A weird, dread sound I heard
Like noise of many waters when
The ocean-depths are stirred,
And back the mighty waves, subdued,
Were driven, resistlessly—
And lo! a countless multitude
Rose from the conquered Sea.

Alpha and Omega, our Light!
The keys of Death are Thine,
They who are hidden from our sight
Pass to Thy care divine.

Our darkness merges in the Dawn,
Faith hears a Coming Tread:
With faces turned to Greet the Morn—
We wait to clasp our Dead!

Ottawa.

E. S. GODFREY.