

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

If we, like clay, are malleable in the hands of the Lord, we will find happiness.



Heber C. Kimball was born on June 14, 1801, in Sheldon, Vermont. He was ordained an Apostle on February 14, 1835, and later sustained as first counselor to President Brigham Young on December 27, 1847. President Kimball died on June 22, 1868, in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the age of 67. President Kimball was a potter by trade, and he frequently referred to the Saints as “clay in the hands of the potter.” He delivered this discourse on April 2, 1854.

By President Heber C. Kimball (1801–1868)

First Counselor in the First Presidency

Ask you, brethren and sisters, if you expect to go into heaven, if you do not do His will on earth as it is done in heaven? Can those persons who pursue a course of carelessness, neglect of duty, and disobedience, when they depart from this life, expect that their spirits will associate with the spirits of the righteous in the spirit world? I do not expect it, and when you depart from this state of existence, you will find it out for yourselves. . . .

That man or woman who will not learn the principle of subjection, and become like clay in the hands of the potter, will be led astray. . . .

The Saints are receiving their endowment, and preparing for that which is in the future; to dwell in the heavens, and sit upon thrones, and reign over kingdoms and dominions, principalities and powers; and as this work progresses, the works of Satan will increase, and he will continue to present one thing after another, following up the work of God, and increasing means of deception, to lead astray such men and women,

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and take them captive. As the work of God increases in power and extent upon the earth, so will the works of Satan increase. I expect that tribulation will be upon the wicked, and continue from this time until they are swept off from the earth. I just as much expect these things as I do to see the sun rise and set tomorrow.

I would like to see all this people do right, and keep the commandments of God. I would like to see them fulfil their covenants, and live up to their vows and promises, and fulfil their obligations, for they have obligated themselves before God, and before angels, and before earthly witnesses, that they would do this. . . .

Comparing us to clay that is in the hands of the potter, if that clay is passive, I have power as a potter to mold it and make it into a vessel unto honor. Who is to mold these vessels? Is it God Himself in person, or is it His servants, His potters, or journeymen, in company with those He has placed to oversee the work? The Great Master Potter dictates His servants, and it is for them to carry out His purposes, and make vessels according to His designs; and when they have done the work, they deliver it up to the Master for His acceptance; and if their works are not



good, He does not accept them; the only works He accepts, are those that are prepared according to the design He gave. God will not be trifled with; neither will His servants; their words have got to be fulfilled, and they are the men that are to mold you, and tell you what shape to move in. . . .

Now suppose I subject myself enough, in the hands of the potter, to be shaped according as he was dictated by the Great Master potter, that rules over all things in heaven and on earth, He would make me into a vessel of honor.

There are many vessels that are destroyed after they have been molded and shaped. Why? Because they are not contented

with the shape the potter has given them, but straightway put themselves into a shape to please themselves; therefore they are beyond understanding what God designs, and they destroy themselves by the power of their own agency, for this is given to every man and woman, to do just as they please. . . .

If we are united, and the Priesthood is united, and the families of this Church, with their husbands at their head, are united, we stand, and all hell, with the devil at their head, have nothing to do with us; they cannot move us. But if we are divided we fall.

What do you say to our being one, and clinging together? . . . Would we not

be a happy company? It is that alone that will make you truly happy; and to be perfectly limber in the hands of the potter like clay. What makes the clay snap? Because it wants its own way; and you cannot be happy unless you submit to the law of God, and to the principles of His government.

When a person is miserable, wretched, and unhappy in himself, put him in what circumstances you please, and he is wretched still. If a person is poor, and composes his mind, and calmly submits to the providences of God, he will feel cheerful and happy in all circumstances, if he continues to keep the commandments of God. ■

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