

President Spencer W. Kimball

I remember vividly my first view of an iceberg. In 1937 Sister Kimball and I made our first crossing of the Atlantic by steamer from Montreal, out through the St. Lawrence River and into the North Atlantic.

Iceberg sighted

One day when we were well out into the ocean, there was excitement on the ship. An iceberg had been sighted. Most of the passengers rushed to the deck to see this sight. We could see it in the distance—a great white object against the dark sea and the azure of the sky.

There it floated quietly in the water like a sharp peak of a high mountain range, a thing of beauty to behold. All my life I had heard about them, and now, for the first time, it was there before my eyes—a sharp mountain peak of ice.

This recalled to our minds the tragic sinking of the *Titanic*, steamship of the White Star Line, on its maiden trip across the ocean. The huge iceberg collided with this large, new ship late in the evening, April 14, 1912. Fifteen hundred and three persons, many of them eminent in Britain and in the United States, were drowned as the ship sank and only 703 were saved.

Then four years ago, flying from England to the United States, we passed over Greenland and saw them again. Much of our trip we had traveled above the blanket of clouds, but as we flew over Greenland, the sky was clear and free of clouds. The sun shone brightly. Seldom does the human eye ever see such beauty and grandeur. Stretching out in the distance was the mile-thick blanket of ice over the great, domed island. We saw the thick glaciers creeping slowly down the valleys to the sea, where they break off and become icebergs. The fjords were full of floating mountains of ice drifting on their way

to the ocean. Here was the birthplace of countless such icebergs as we had seen 33 years earlier.

Labrador Current

The icebergs spawned by the Greenland ice sheet followed a highly predictable course. As the silent Labrador Current ceaselessly moves to the south through Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, it takes with it these mountainous icebergs, even against the force of the winds and the waves and the tides. Currents have much more power to control its course than the surface winds.

And we compared this conflict of the earth's powers with the results in our own lives when the current of our life, as defined and developed in the lives of a family by the righteous teaching of parents, will often control the direction children will go, in spite of the waves and winds of numerous adverse influences of the world of error.

Out of our view, under the ocean waves, there are forces of tremendous power with which we must reckon, and there are such powerful forces in our own lives.

The Gulf Stream

The mighty Mississippi River is a rivulet in comparison with the great ocean streams. One of the most spectacular of all is said to be the Labrador Current. The second most powerful is the Gulf Stream, which carries warm water from the eastern portion of the Gulf of Mexico parallel to the eastern coast of the United States and across the Atlantic to warm the shores of Europe. The Gulf Stream carries as much water as a thousand Mississippi Rivers combined. Though of lesser magnitude, the Labrador Current year after year carries thousands of icebergs down from their birthplace in Greenland, faithfully, steadily, until they disin-

tegrate or melt in the warmer waters of the Gulf Stream. It is at this point, where the Labrador Current meets the Gulf Stream, that the *Titanic* met her fate.

Currents of life

It is true of us, as of icebergs, that our course is, in important measure, determined by forces we only partly perceive. It is true also, however, that we are more like ships than icebergs. We have our own motive power, and if we are aware of the currents, we can take advantage of them.

Accordingly, if we can create in our families a strong, steady current flowing toward our goal of righteous life, we and our children may be carried forward in spite of the contrary winds of hardship, disappointment, temptations, and fashion.

Youth and adults are subjected to so many swirling winds that we sometimes wonder if they can survive. The winds of fashion push those about who are insecure and who require the feeling that they are in step with the crowd. The winds of sexual temptation drive some to destroy their marriage or to dash bright prospects or to degrade themselves. Bad companions, addicting drugs, the arrogance of profanity, the slough of pornography—all these and more act as influences pushing us, if we are not being carried forward by a strong, steady current toward the righteous life. The current of our lives should be determined and made strong by our parental and family life.

In each of us is the potentiality to become a God—pure, holy, true, influential, powerful, independent of earthly forces. We learn from the scriptures that we each have eternal existence, that we were in the beginning with God. (See Abr. 3:22.) That understanding gives to us a unique sense of man's dignity.

Faith of parents

I have sometimes seen children of good families rebel, resist, stray, sin, and even actually fight God. In this they bring sorrow to their parents, who have done their best to set in movement a current and to teach and live as examples. But I have repeatedly seen many of these same children, after years of wandering, mellow, realize what they have been missing, repent, and make great contribution to the spiritual life of their community. The reason I believe this can take place is that, despite all the adverse winds to which these people have been subjected, they have been influenced still more, and much more than they realized, by the current of life in the homes in which they were reared. When, in later years, they feel a longing to recreate in their own families the same atmosphere they enjoyed as children, they are likely to turn to the faith that gave meaning to their parents' lives.

There is no guarantee, of course, that righteous parents will succeed always in holding their children, and certainly they may lose them if they do not do all in their power. The children have their free agency.

But if we as parents fail to influence our families and set them on the "strait and narrow way," then certainly the waves, the winds of temptation and evil will carry the posterity away from the path.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6.) What we do know is that righteous parents who strive to develop wholesome influences for their children will be held blameless at the last day, and that they will succeed in saving most of their children, if not all.

The natural man

The competition for our souls is described in Mosiah.

"For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ . . . and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father." (Mosiah 3:19.)

The "natural man" is the "earthy man" who has allowed rude animal passions to overshadow his spiritual inclinations.

Home training

Some years ago when we visited overseas, where the children are exposed in the public school to a constant barrage of propaganda against religion, I asked leaders of the Church how they were able to hold their children to the Church and keep them in the faith. They said, "We scrupulously train our children in our homes, so they know truth from error, and that when they go to school, the godless philosophies to which they are exposed simply run off without penetrating. Our children love and trust us and remain true to the faith." God bless such selfless, faithful parents.

A secure marriage

A beginning is a secure marriage, where there is a commitment to make the personal adjustments to live together forever. With that sound base our children have a feeling of peace.

Analysts of our modern time point out that in a fast-changing world, people suffer a kind of shock from losing a sense of continuity. The very mobility of our society means that our children are often moved from place to place and lose close contact with the extended family of grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and longtime neighbors. It is important for us also to

cultivate in our own family a sense that we belong together eternally, that whatever changes outside our home, there are fundamental aspects of our relationship which will never change. We ought to encourage our children to know their relatives. We need to talk of them, make effort to correspond with them, visit them, join family organizations, etc.

Family unity

How long has it been since you took your children, whatever their size, in your arms and told them that you love them and are glad that they can be yours forever? How long has it been since you husbands or wives purchased an inexpensive gift as a surprise for your spouse for no other reason than just to please? How long has it been since you brought home a rose or baked a pie with a heart carved in the crust or did some other thing to make life more aglow with warmth and affection?

If there is to be a contribution to the building fund or the Red Cross or a Saturday morning spent helping the elders quorum paint a widow's house, make sure the children are aware of it, and if it is feasible, let them have a share in the decision-making and in the implementation of the decision. All the family could attend the baptism, confirmation, and ordination of a member of the family. All of the family could root for a son who is on the ball team. All meet regularly in home evenings, at mealtime, at prayer time. Perhaps all of the family could pay tithing together, and each learns by precept and example the beautiful principle.

Reliance on the Lord

The home should be a place where reliance on the Lord is a matter of common experience, not reserved for special occasions. One way of establishing that is by regular, earnest prayer. It is not enough just to pray. It is essential that we really speak to the Lord, having

faith that he will reveal to us as parents what we need to know and do for the welfare of our families. It has been said of some men that when they prayed, a child was likely to open his eyes to see if the Lord were really there, so personal and direct was the petition.

A child leaving to go away to school or on a mission, a wife suffering stress, a family member being married or desiring guidance in making an important decision—all these are situations in which the father, in exercise of his patriarchal responsibility, can bless his family.

And we should not overlook the fact that, particularly in the absence of the father, a mother may pray with her children and call down the Lord's blessings upon them. She does not act by virtue of priesthood conferred upon her, but by virtue of her God-given responsibility to govern her household in righteousness.

Awareness of currents

There is one important way in which we are different from icebergs. We have motive power and are therefore able, the same as with ships, to move ourselves as we want to go. If we are aware of the currents, we can take advantage of them. Many large oil tankers and ore carriers traveling from South America to harbors on the Atlantic seaboard are said to ride the Gulf Stream much as airliners ride the jetstream high above the earth.

Or, if we wish to fight the current, we may be able to do so; yet the current will inevitably have its effect. It is said that when Admiral Peary was traveling toward the North Pole, he found himself on a great ice floe as large as an island, and that as he moved northward toward the pole with his dogs, the floe was bearing him southward even faster by the current.

My brothers and sisters, the home is our peculiarity—the home, the family, is our base. And this we've heard much about through this conference—

that is, family life, home life, children and parents loving each other and dependent upon each other. That's the way the Lord has planned for us to live.

Inspiration of conference

Now in conclusion of this great conference, which has spread through three days and has brought us many thoughts, we bless these brethren who have contributed, all of them who have spoken, who have brought treasures of knowledge and much information and great inspiration to us here.

As we return to our homes, brothers and sisters, I hope we will not close the door on the conference. Take it with us. Take it home with us. Tell our families about it, perhaps some to report in sacrament meetings of it. But take it to your families and give them the benefit of any inspiration that might have come to you, any determinations to change your lives and make them more acceptable to your Heavenly Father.

As this conference concludes, we bless you, and we bring to you the blessings of the Lord of heaven. Brethren and sisters, I know that this is the work of the Lord. You haven't come these long distances for nothing. It is to feed your souls.

Knowledge of the Lord

I know that the Lord lives—that God who was with Adam, that God who came to the banks of the Jordan River to say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), to introduce his Son to a world that was to depend so completely on him. I know that was the God that we worship, who came on the Mount of Transfiguration and said again to those servants, Peter, James, and John, who were to carry on the work of the Lord even in their imperfections: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5), the same God—we know he lives and exists—who came

in the state of New York and said those same things that he had already said to the Nephites—and now said to a world that had been traveling in darkness for a long, long time—“This is My Beloved Son. Hear him!” (Joseph Smith 2:17.)

I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I know that. I know that the gospel which we teach is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the church to which we belong is the church of Jesus Christ; it teaches his doctrines and his policies and his programs. I know that if all of us will live the program as he has given it and will

continue to give it, that all the blessings promised will be ours. Now God bless you, and we leave his blessings with you with our affection, our appreciation for you, in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the song, “God So Loved the World.”

The benediction was offered by Elder Marvin R. Curtis, regional representative of the Twelve.

The conference was adjourned for six months.

Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir and Organ Broadcast

9:30 to 10:00 a.m., Sunday, October 6, 1974

The following broadcast, written and announced by J. Spencer Kinard, and originating with Station KSL, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, October 6, 1974, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

(Organ begins playing “As the Dew” on signal at 9:28. At 9:30 on signal Organ and Choir break into “Gently Raise” singing words to end of second line, and humming to end of verse for announcer's background)

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jay Welch conducting the choir, Alexander Schreiner, Tabernacle

Organist, and the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

(Pause)

Announcer: With a hymn setting for the 23rd Psalm by Thomas Koschat, the choir is heard singing: “The Lord is my Shepherd; no want shall I know. . . .”

(Choir: “The Lord Is My Shepherd”—Koschat)

Announcer: From a reassuring New Testament text, the Tabernacle Choir sings of the Savior's silencing of the winds and the waves, recalled from a setting by Cyril Jenkins: “Fierce, . . . raged the tempest O'er the deep, Watch did Thine anxious servants keep, But thou wast wrapped in guileless sleep, Calm and still: ‘Save, Lord, we perish,’ was their cry, ‘O save us in our agony!’ Thy word above the storm rose high, ‘Peace, be still, . . .’”

(Choir: “Fierce raged the tempest”—Jenkins)

Announcer: Next, Alexander Schreiner from the Tabernacle Organ