

testimony. I humbly do this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzio

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

In moving toward this pulpit to assume this awesome responsibility, it is strengthening to feel a meaningful squeeze of the hand by a prophet of God: "Marvin, I love you. Marvin, I sustain you." How do I know President Kimball's feelings? Because he takes the time to tell me. When was the last time, you might ask? Only yesterday.

Rated "A"

One of life's more common experiences is to be rated or graded. Youngsters learn quickly whether or not their actions are acceptable to parents. Rewards or punishments can be quickly administered in the home, and such grading or rating by parents has a lot to do with the formation of ideals in living.

Those who enter school embark on a long struggle to achieve the kinds of grades that will make them acceptable to those among whom they must live and work. Those who become involved in military activities are soon caught up in a myriad of inspections and ratings.

When we accept employment we quickly realize that we are graded by the responsibilities given and the wages paid. Superior work is rewarded with higher pay and greater opportunities.

Those who manufacture goods or merchandise or produce food are rated by a variety of consumer organizations.

Busche, and Yoshihiko Kikuchi, new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, have just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

"Grade A" products bring higher prices.

As part of a free government, we see the grading of leaders at each election.

In the media, subscriptions to newspapers and magazines provide an immediate public rating of their effectiveness. Television is particularly vulnerable to the ratings and gradings of professional organizations. Programs with poor ratings are usually doomed.

And so it goes on and on in almost everything we do in life. We have a tendency to rate or grade others, and they do the same to us. If our perspective is proper, we use these ratings or gradings to motivate us to reach high levels of achievement and self-discipline. The whole concept of ratings enables us to set high goals and provides the challenge to us to achieve them.

In spite of this inborn desire to achieve, there remains an area where the attainment of high or good ratings seems to be ignored. I speak of the growing numbers of movies, books, magazines, theatrical productions, and television programs where efforts to glorify immorality or violence have become predominant. "Rated R" or "Rated X" has replaced the idealism of being "Rated A."

I know that free expression is a vital part of the eternal principle of free agency and must be preserved and

protected. I also know how certain forces use the freedom of speech to degrade or debase, and this constitutes perversion and enslavement. Because I recognize that there will always be opposition in all things, I suspect that we will not soon see the day when obscenity in its various forms will be entirely eliminated. But I have faith that it can be fully eliminated in the lives of quality individuals. I firmly believe that most thinking people can be inspired to strive for the *A* rating by choosing wholesome, worthwhile literature, art, and habits.

As each of us uses our free agency to choose the material that enters our lives, we ought to recognize that the battle between "Rated A" and "Rated X" is part of the war that began in heaven and is still being fought today. The enemy seeks any strategic or tactical foothold he can gain, and any bridgehead he attains becomes the launching point for the next encounter. The number of victories we allow him can seriously affect the final outcome of the struggle.

Effects of pornography

How does the adversary wage this battle? What are his tactics? Those who are fighting pornography and obscenity have helped us recognize some of his battle plans. They tell us that a person who becomes involved in obscenity soon acquires distorted views of personal conduct. He becomes unable to relate to others in a normal, healthy way. Like most other habits, an addictive effect begins to take hold of him. A diet of violence or pornography dulls the senses, and future exposures need to be rougher and more extreme. Soon the person is desensitized and is unable to react in a sensitive, caring, responsible manner, especially to those in his own home and family. Good people can become infested with this material and it

can have terrifying, destructive consequences.

One such young man who became a casualty of this conflict was a respected husband and community member. Someone with whom he worked brought lurid bits of pornography and passed them around the office. At first it was treated as a joke, and those who viewed them kidded each other about such things of the world. This young man, however, mainly out of curiosity, thought he should study them carefully in case he might have occasion to help others combat such evils of the world. As he looked at the items more and more frequently, he was overcome by a spirit of the adversary that he did not recognize. Soon he sought more pornographic materials from his fellow employee, and the two of them began to spend more time discussing these evil things.

Still thinking he was becoming enlightened as to the ways of the world so that he could be a stronger influence for good among his friends, this young man became trapped by his own ignorance of the enemy's ways. His associate convinced him that he should experiment with the actions portrayed in the materials he was viewing. With his spiritual sensitivity dulled, he agreed, and he approached his wife with the idea. She was surprised and shocked by his suggestions, and when he continued his insensitive pleas, she finally refused to have anything to do with him. In his distorted condition he sought gratification elsewhere, and in the end he lost her, his family, and his self-respect.

Satan's tactics

The scriptures help us understand the strategy and tactics of the enemy. Nephi in the Book of Mormon saw the conflict of our day and tells us plainly:

"For behold, at that day shall he

rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security. . . .

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance." (2 Ne. 28:20-22.)

The great prophet Mormon, viewing his own fallen people, wrote his son Moroni a very telling indictment when he said that because of wickedness his people were "past feeling." (See Moro. 9:20.) How tragic to reach the point where the Spirit must withdraw, and we become unable to sense or feel right from wrong.

If we continue to lose skirmishes in the battle with Satan, the ultimate chains with which he grasps us will be as awful as the scriptures indicate. How awful this state is might be indicated by the words a dictionary uses to describe the word *obscenity*. Obscenity, it indicates, defiles, nauseates, offends, perverts, impairs, corrupts, distorts, infects, misleads, poisons, warps, weakens, and spoils. When I think of these words and then remember that the Prophet Joseph Smith admonished us to seek for things that are "virtuous, lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy" (Article of Faith 13), I shudder at the blindness of so many.

In olden times the call to battle was the sure sound of a trumpet. The call to battle that I sound is a call to find so much that is wholesome or "Rated A" that there is no time or inclination for the carnal. It is a call to strive for a rating that can be remembered with joy forever.

Parents and grandparents show concern

First I challenge parents to be

concerned about what your children read or view. Good reading begins at the bedside of your little ones. Never be too busy to read wholesome bedtime stories at the close of the day. Select from the classics of children's literature uplifting stories that can build noble ideals in your youngsters. I shall never forget the impact of a simple child's story about a little engine that thought he could, and then he did. How often I have said to myself, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can," and then found growing within myself the personal power to do something good. Consider the difference in children who are cuddled and snuggled by parents at bedtime as they listen to stories from good books, and then kneel at their bedside in prayer, as compared to those who go to bed after having viewed a violent television program.

Next, I challenge grandparents to foster reading programs with your grandchildren. If you are close enough to be with them, read the books to them that will help develop character and ideals. If you're a distance away, send them books, old or new, with a personal invitation to read them and report how they like them.

Youth cooperate with parents

Next, I challenge youth to cooperate with parents who are concerned about your reading and your viewing. Be concerned yourself about what you take into your mind. Young people, you would never eat a meal of spoiled or contaminated food if you could help it, would you? Select your reading and your viewing carefully and in good taste.

Next, I challenge families to foster movie viewing that is wholesome. Parents should know the movies their children attend, and children should attend only the movies they have parental permission to view. If movie viewing is an important part of your family life, and good ones are not available in com-

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mercial movie houses, wise parents will rent full-length movies that entertain and edify.

Develop knowledge of scriptures

Next, I challenge every Latter-day Saint to come to a knowledge and an understanding of the scriptures. These sacred books are our bulwark of defense against a cunning adversary. Each person should own and use his personal copies of the scriptures. Take them to meetings and classes. Read them in leisure moments. Develop a careful plan of study and meditation. Take them on trips as well.

A friend of mine told me recently of his family vacation this past summer. A long distance was being driven, and the children, who ranged from preschoolers to high school age, grew restless. The parents had wisely taken along the scriptures, and when these restless times came, family members read chapters and then everyone talked about what had been read. The teenagers who did most of the reading quit teasing the little ones, and the little ones seemed very interested in what the older ones had to say. This family read a sizable part of the New Testament while traveling on their vacation.

We can win the battle

The battle to be "Rated A" is a battle we can win. We do so many things in life that bring success that it seems incredible how easily we let the adversary weaken us by impure materials read or viewed.

My plea is that we will strive to be "Rated A" in all we do in life. We want good grades in school. We want to eat the best food we can get. I hope we will also strive to feed our minds with things that are lovely, wholesome, and praiseworthy.

The desire to achieve has been

placed in us by a loving Creator who honors our free agency but nonetheless beckons to us to do well. He it is who will grade our eternal report card. The adversary would weaken and dull our senses so we lose sight of the final time of rating or judging. We are in a battle with evil powers who are cunning and crafty. They can lull us and pacify us through carnal things if we are not careful. But if we take the offense in the contest and seek those things which are praiseworthy, we can build an armor that will not be pierced.

So now, in the midst of this battle, let us sound our trumpets for that which is "Rated A": *A* for pure actions, *A* for achievement, and *A* for approbation, even that approbation from Him whose voice can say to you: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25:21.)

For this I humbly pray in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Before hearing President Kimball's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this General Conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the members of the Tabernacle Choir for again giving so generously of their time to bring us the beautiful and inspiring music heard at this conference. We are grateful for the lovely music performed by the Young Women's Choir at the Saturday Afternoon Session and the Men's Choir from the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus at the Priesthood Session. We are thankful to their conductors and organists.

We thank all who have contributed in various ways to the success and inspiration of this conference, especially the General Authorities who have given

PRESIDENT SPENCER W. KIMBALL

such appropriate and inspiring messages.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives, and by representatives of radio and television in reporting the sessions of this conference.

We thank our City officials for the cooperation given this conference; the City traffic officers for courteously and efficiently handling the increased traffic; the Fire Department and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference.

We are grateful to the Tabernacle ushers for seating the great audiences of these conference sessions in such a courteous manner.

We again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations who have

given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in the United States, Mexico, Central America, and Canada; by satellite transmission to Australia, the Philippines, and South America; and by shortwave to Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

We thank the interpreters who have provided translation for the sessions of the conference.

Our beloved Prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, will be our concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Brother Jerold Otley will sing, "Abide With Me, 'Tis Eventide."

The Benediction will then be offered by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Europe Area, following which this conference will stand adjourned for six months.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Jesus the Christ

Beloved brothers and sisters, we come to the close of this great conference. We have been much benefited and blessed. You have heard thirty or more speakers bear testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and I should like to say it was He, Jesus Christ, who came forth from the tomb a resurrected being, and He, who "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-9.)

It was this same Jesus Christ who gave revelations to his prophets and revealed to them also through John the Revelator: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . .

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1:11, 18.)

It was He, Jesus Christ, in his glorified state who came to the ancestors of the Indians, who is variously known by them as the Great White Spirit, the Fair God and numerous other names.

It was He, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who was introduced to surprised listeners at Jordan (see Matt. 3:13-17), at the holy Mount of Transfiguration (see Matt. 17:1-9), at the temple of the Nephites (see 3 Ne. 11-26), and in the grove at Palmyra, New York (see Joseph Smith 2:17-25); and the introducing person was none other than his actual Father, the holy Elohim, in whose image he was and whose will he carried out.