

# BEACON LIGHTS

PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH

March 1969

**L S D**

CALVIN REITSMA

**Shining Lights**

JEANNE GRITTERS

**Listen!**

DAVE LANTING



# BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XXIX

MARCH 1969

NUMBER 1

Published monthly, except June and August by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

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All material for publication should be addressed to CALVIN REITSMA, 3287 S. Canal, Grandville, Mich. 49418. Grand Rapids subscribers please forward subscription dues to PAT KAMPS, 14395 - 48th Ave., Coopersville, Mich. 49404. Subscribers outside of the Grand Rapids area please forward subscription dues to MISS JANE BRUMMEL, 1917 Kalamazoo Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507.

All undeliverable material (Forms 3579) should be returned to Miss Jane Brummel, 1917 Kalamazoo Ave. Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507.

Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan  
 Subscription price \$3.00

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## L S D

The big thing with the "in" crowd today is psychedelic drugs. Young adults and teenagers particularly are using an increasing amount of these drugs, such as: Psilocybin (obtained from Mexican mushrooms), mescaline (obtained from the peyote cactus and used by American Indians in their religious rites), and d-lysergic acid diethylamide (also called LSD, and obtained from ergot fungus).

The urge for mind expanding drugs is old. We read already in Genesis 9:20-21: "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent."

Now this was no mere accident that befell Noah. He did not just happen to drink some old grape juice. Rather, in his sin, he wanted to "get away from it all," to relieve physical, spiritual, or mental tensions and pain.

Man has long felt the pain of his existence. The relief of this spiritual, psychological pain has long been a dream of man; and he has been trying to relieve it by endeavoring to change his mood, expand his vision, alter his inner existence, or stupefy his awareness with such drugs as alcohol, opium, or LSD.

The last one, LSD, has received by far the most publicity in the past few months. The usual effects of this drug are: Constriction of the peripheral arterioles, elevation of the systolic blood pressure, dilation of the pupils, and a change in religious feeling. Note this last characteristic: *A change in religious feeling.* Drug consumption has even become an intimate part, if not a basic component of many religious sects. Drugs have been substituted for God and Christ. How foolish is man? How can he ever hope to relieve himself of the hopelessness and pain of sinful flesh in the evil world apart from Christ and His saving love?

It is natural for evil man to feel a hopelessness and despair. Man has always clung

to something, some god, in order to survive. It is true that this god chosen by sinful man is not the God of Heaven, but something earthly, whether it be gods of wood or stone, or money, or drugs. He seeks not the true God, and for this reason he cannot find true peace of mind and soul.

The Christian also feels a desperate need to clutch at Something to keep him from the hopelessness, despair, pain and fear that characterizes the terrible existence of sinful, unregenerate man. We, by the grace of God, have been regenerated and know the saving grace of Christ by the work of the Spirit. But even our minds must be expanded. This expanding cannot be brought about by any mind-expanding drug; but can only be accomplished by another kind of LSD: Love, Study, and Devotion.

Love the Lord thy God, and Love the truth He has given to us in His Holy Word. Show this Love in all that you do. Attend church in Love, study catechism in Love, and care for one another in Love. But above all Study God in His revelation in Love.

As God Himself has said:

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Prov. 2:3-5

Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom and with all thy getting get understanding. Prov. 4:5-7

How can we know God? Only by searching for true knowledge, searching as if our life depended on our finding the object of our search, searching spiritually and mentally as we would want physically to search for hidden riches. Only by searching in the Word of God can we find this true knowledge: The knowledge of our sin, our damnation, our salvation in Christ. With such a knowledge we will be able to understand

the history and future of the Church, the history of the world and the tensions and troubles of the world today. This knowledge, this inner security, will enable us to overcome the inner tensions, both physical and mental, brought upon us by our sinful flesh. But this knowledge cannot be obtained by just reading the Word of God. Rather, we must learn and STUDY our catechism, listen carefully in church, read the religious papers and magazines. Essentially, we must DEVOTE ourselves to the unlocking of God's revelation.

This devotion, however, must not stop with studying God's revelation. It must bear fruit exemplified by devotion to the well-being of the church, devotion to one

another's spiritual and physical well-being, devotion to our schools, and devotion to the proclamation of God's Word.

Dear Christian young people, we live in a very troubled world and the outlook for the future is not any too bright. Furthermore, the workings of the Devil and his dominion of the damned are increasingly subtle. We may well be tempted into trying drugs in order to relieve our tensions. The Devil will try to trick us into giving up our God and accepting some worldly substitute. Beware young people that ye be not overcome. Love the Lord thy God; Study His Word; and Devote your lives to His Kingdom, for this is the manifestation of the heaven-bound Church. C.R.

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## FEATURE

# SURVEY OF SURVEYS

RON VAN OVERLOOP

There is one thing which I do not think I will ever forget no matter how old I get. That one thing is a part of my youth and something which is a vital part of every Protestant Reformed young person. That something is the place at which I met many young people I never knew existed and was then able to make friends with many of them. A year later, at that same occasion I could re-meet these same people, a year older, and changed a bit, and then had the opportunity to increase the ties of our friendship. That something was also the occasion of many, many enjoyable times. At these occasions I, along with all the other young people attending, could participate in a wide variety of activities, ranging from swimming to discussing and from banqueting to debating. Yes, I KNOW I will never forget these occasions nor will any of those who had the privilege of enjoying them with me.

Many of you have probably already guessed of what I am speaking. Yes, that something goes by the name of "The Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention."

As I now have the great privilege of doing a little part in the planning for our

next convention to be held, D.V., in Redlands, California, August 13-20, I did a little recollecting about the past conventions. I am looking forward to this coming convention in eager anticipation and from the plans already made by the host society I believe that my anticipation will not be let down. To aid me in my recollecting and to get some ideas from the past conventions I decided that it might be a good idea to look up a few of the surveys of past conventions in the *Beacon Lights*. As I read those surveys dealing with the conventions which I had attended, I re-hashed them over in my mind. What a lot of fun and good enjoyment they were.

After I read these surveys I started thinking, "What is the purpose of the Young People's Convention? What is their true reason for existence?" At first I could not put my finger on what it was. I tried to recall the agenda of these conventions as given in the surveys in the *Beacon Lights* to see if I could draw the purpose from these agenda. Let me see, first there were 3 large paragraphs dealing with the trip, registration and the activities of the following day. Next, there was a small two-

sentence paragraph dealing with the speech at the mass meeting. Following this, there were four mere large paragraphs dealing with the outing. Oh yes, there was a sentence in the second paragraph dealing with the second speech of the convention given at the outing. Then came a four-sentence paragraph dealing with the activities of Sunday. Next came three more good-sized paragraphs pertaining to the East-West softball game, the election of officers on the Board, and the banquet held that night. This time there were two whole, complete sentences stating briefly the contents of the last speech of the convention. Closing the article came a short paragraph saying what fun the convention had been.

Well, according to the surveys it appears to me that the purpose of the conventions was to have fun. But now is that really the true purpose of a Y.P. convention: to have fun? I rather doubt it. I do not think that year after year Y. P. conventions were sponsored and much money spent just for the purpose of having fun. Rather, I believe that the purpose is, very simply, Christian fellowship and spiritual edification. Now, do not get me wrong, I am not putting a ban on "fun" at conventions. "Fun" is a vital part, I will guarantee that, but I also think that it should not be on the foreground, nor do I think it ever was. Yes, I know that the picture I painted above in my synopsis of the convention surveys was in very dark colors but it is not true. It was tinted in such a way to prove a point, for I believe that slowly but surely the conventions are losing their real purpose.

I can just imagine the question popping into your heads: "How can we have fun at conventions when their purpose is Christian fellowship and spiritual edification? To that I can simply answer, "Brother, they go hand in hand." Now do not fall off your rocker in unbelief. It is true. I believe, and I know this only from my own experience, that you and I just have not tried to mix the two together enough. We will find a different kind of fun; one which we will enjoy much more, and one which is not so dangerously close to the "fun" of the world.

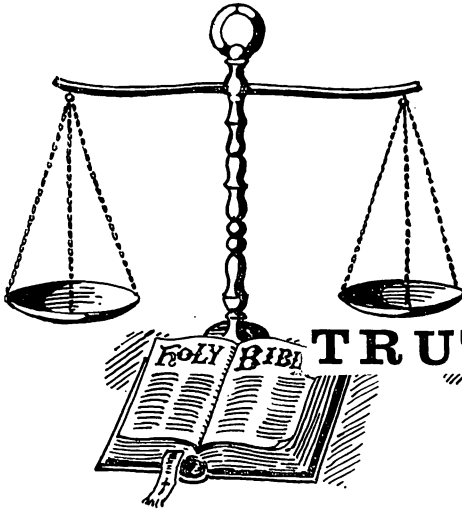
I know for a fact that there is a better kind of fun, so to speak, and there are about

50 other young people who will agree with me. We 50 had the privilege of attending the first retreat the Federation Board sponsored approximately a year ago this spring. At this retreat a variety of topics were discussed, most of which dealt with the theme of the antithesis between the Church and the world in the areas of entertainment, education, etc. These discussions went on one entire day among small groups of young people. Later a survey revealed that we who had attended had experienced a new and different kind of fun, which is hard to describe. I guess it could best be called "spiritual edification," in the true sense of the word.

Why do I tell you about this retreat? Because I think that our conventions should be run more along this line. The argument that too many discussions or debates will ruin the whole convention is invalid. This argument has now been proven false by the fact that the retreat was such a success.

The Lord willing, the next convention will be held in Redlands, California. The fact that the convention is planning to be held in California does not mean that the young people will not be spiritually edified. I know that just the word "California" carries connotations with it for many people and that they think that the young people are going there just to have fun. Let me erase that idea from your mind immediately. This convention, as all conventions, will attempt to mix spiritual fellowship and physical fun and I am sure it will succeed.





# TRUTH vs. ERROR

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

## HAGAR AND THE PROMISE OF A SON (III)

“As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly . . .” (Gen. 17:20). We proceed with the question of Hagar and Ishmael on the basis and thesis that when God says “blessed” He means “blessed” and when He says “loved” He means “loved.” This implies, of course, that neither God’s blessings nor His love can ever ultimately be denied, frustrated or fail. To go on, then, in Genesis 16, there is a note of interest in connection with the Angel of the Lord promising Hagar the birth of a son and prescribing his name. “And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, ‘Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael . . .’” (v. 11). This is kindly speech which the Lord directs to Hagar, continuing with assurance of more than the mere providential gift of many descendants, but also proceeding to predict the birth and prescribe the name of the son. There are at least four other real parallels of this predicting the birth and prescribing the name of a son in Scripture, as in the instances of Isaac (17:19), Solomon (I Chron. 22:9), John (Luke 1:13) and Jesus (Matt. 1:21). Cf. also Josiah (I K. 13:2). (Cyrus, mentioned in Isa. 44:28; 45:1, 3, 4, 5, 13, is not a case in point, since there is no foretelling of his birth, and, although there is a predicting, there is no prescribing of his name). The point we would make here is that Scripture does not reveal the Lord fore-

telling to parent(s) the birth of and prescribing the name to be given to a reprobate. Invariably such instances are only in reference to the elect. Then, too, we know that names in Scripture have spiritual meaning. The name *Ishmael* has significance spiritually, and for good, in connection with his mother, his father and himself. The name, “God-shall-hear,” indicates answered prayer, first the answer to his mother’s prayer. For Ishmael became a living symbol that the Lord had heard and would continue to hear her affliction. Then there was the answer of his father’s prayer, “As for Ishmael (“God-shall-hear”), I have heard thee.” Finally, God heard the lad himself (21:17).

Then we have the reason for those comforting words to Hagar. “. . . because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.” Here is given fuller implication of the name Ishmael, “God hath heard thy affliction.” Affliction is the experience of the elect; punishment that of the reprobate. Take your Bible concordance (preferably an “exhaustive”) and trace the word “affliction.” See in Ex. 2:23-25 how “the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried (it doesn’t say ‘they prayed,’ — RCH), and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And *God heard* their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.” “And the Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction

of My people, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry" (3:7). In II Sam. 22:26-28 we read, "With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful, and with the upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright. With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself unsavory. And *the afflicted people Thou wilt save*. . . ." Elihu reminded Job that wicked men "cause the cry of the poor to come unto Him, and *He heareth the cry of the afflicted*" (Job 34:28). David says, "For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid his face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard" (Ps. 22:24). But God does despise the workers of iniquity (cf. Ps. 5:5 with 53:4, 5) and abhors (5:6; 10:3) them. When "*they call upon Me,*" the Lord says, "I will *not* answer" (Prov. 1:28)! There is no specific mention that Hagar prayed and called upon the Lord, but that the Lord heard her *affliction*, her cry and groaning.

Where we read the Angel of the Lord's description of Ishmael's life, v. 12, in the words "He will be a wild ass of a man" (Heb.), it is not necessary to understand the words in a derogatory sense. They simply indicate he would have a desert-man nature, be characterized by love of great out-door freedom (Job 39:5, 6-8) and desire to live away from civilization (Dan. 5:21). It was his determination to be "alone by himself" (Hos. 8:9). That is why we read, "his hand against all, and hand of all against him." He was like a man who always has his hand out at arm's length as though to say to everyone, "Stay away from me; I want to be alone, and left alone." It is with difficulty that any one, or any people, may live an isolated life in the midst of this world, especially "in the visible presence of" his fellow men. To the rest of the world, they seem strange who prefer to dwell by themselves away from the settlements of society. The curious, stereotyped citizenry does not seem to be able to tolerate the intellect, the temperament or the manner of life of those different from them.

When we read that "before the faces of all his brethren he shall dwell," it is unnecessary to interpret this to mean or to imply that he chose absolute independence of the covenant family, in this way rejecting the covenant. For we find throughout the

Old Testament dispensation remnants of God's people who, here and there, lived outside the established, instituted body of Israel. There were Melchizedek, Lot, the Ninevites who repented at the preaching of Jonah, the elect Egyptians (Isa. 19:19-25), the Ethiopian eunuch and the saints in Caesar's household. These all dwelt *before* their brethren, but not *among* the greater body of them.

"And she called upon the name of the Lord who spoke unto her, 'Thou God seest me'" (vv. 13, 14). From the heart Hagar could not say, Thou *God* seest *me*, without *her* seeing *God*. Here revealed is her knowledge of God, that she saw Him as omnipresent, omniscient, the God of providence and mercy. Hagar was one of the many servants of Abram (he having at least 318) who were *trained*, i.e., *dedicated* to the Lord (14:14), or *instructed* in the knowledge of God. For it was Abram's policy to command his entire "household after him" to "keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (18:19). These servants worshiped the Lord (24:48), knew how to pray (v. 12), and how to use God's name without taking it in vain (v. 9). Hagar, numbered among this sanctified company, must have given evidence of regeneration and conversion, or Sarai would never have thought to make her the mother of the promised seed; nor would Abram have consciously taken a mere heathen (Egyptian) woman with a view to producing covenant seed. This expression of hers is evidence that Hagar rejoiced in the promise of a son just given her, and proves that grace was shown her. Rev. Geo. M. Ophoff says the Lord "knew her down-sitting and her uprising, understood her thoughts afar off, compassed her path and her lying down, was acquainted with all her ways . . . her wandering, put her tears in His bottle, and kept them in His book. This she knew now. "Thou God seest me." (The Standard Bearer, VI, 370).

"For she said, 'Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me!'" Here is Hagar's wonder that she should have been favored with a vision of God, which contains the latent idea that the sight of God brings deliverance (cf. the serpent of brass, Nu. 21:8, 9; Isa. 45:22). "Have I?" I, so unworthy! a mere run-away slave! a sinner! "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my

house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" (II Sam. 7:18). "Have I *here* . . .?" i.e., (lit.) "in this place?" (as though tapping with the foot to indicate a spot); have I *here* seen Him? here in this wild desert, far from the center of God's people, and out of my real calling? "Have I *here* looked after Him?" No, I was careless and unmindful of Him. But He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. He saw me in my sin, in my contempt for my mistress, in my unheeding flight; He saw me by the well, He saw me in the wilderness, saw all things about me! Then Hagar saw *Him* as the living God as is evident in her naming the well, "the well of Him that liveth and seeth me." Here is an early instance of "I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not" (Isa. 65:1). Then we read, "And Hagar bare Abram a son, and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael." Abram in this manner confirmed the truth of Hagar's vision of God. The fulfilment of the promised birth reveals that she was saved in child-bearing (I Tim. 2:15), and that not merely by providence, but by promise.

Now let us consider Abraham's touching prayer for Ishmael as found at Gen. 17:18. "And Abraham said unto God, 'O that Ishmael might live before Thee!'" These words do not imply that Abraham was content enough with Ishmael, wanting the son he already had to be the child of promise. For this would imply not only doubt in the promise of Isaac, but also a mental rejection

of Isaac in the burning wish that he would never be born. This would mean that Abraham not only *did* stagger over the promises, but that he flew in the face of them! The meaning rather is that Ishmael, who is not destined to be the means of transmitting the blessings of the covenant to its future generations, nevertheless, may be in the covenant and *share* its blessings. The reiteration of v. 19, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed" does not imply by emphasis on "indeed" that Abraham suffered a doubt as to whether Sarah should bear, but is rather God's taking note of the fact that Abraham believes she *would* bear, and yet this would not cause his beloved son Ishmael to be excluded from the blessing. So, while Abraham is praying and talking with God about one of his children, he hastens to include the other in his petitions, and would have the Lord remember him. Parents must show a spiritual concern for all their children. How this prayer for Ishmael, the deep expression of his soul, is to be understood is that Ishmael personally be granted life. The words must be understood in the full force of the term "live," which means life in the largest sense of the term — eternal life; and understood in connection with "before Thee," which means "before Thy face," *coram Deo*, in the beatific presence of God. See Hosea 6:2, "We shall live *in His sight*." Abraham desired nothing less than eternal salvation for his son Ishmael.

(To be continued, D.V.)

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE:

The column "Current Events and Comments" will not appear in this issue due to the fact that copy was not received.



# CRITIQUE

JEANNE GRITTERS

## SHINING LIGHTS

Have you ever spoken to anyone about Christ, and told them how much He means to you? Have you ever let someone who doesn't know Jesus see how wonderful it is to be a Christian? This witnessing to others and confessing Him to the world should be a vital part of our Christian life. But I'm afraid many of us would have to answer "no" to these questions.

What is Christian witnessing? It is showing to others the faith that you have in Jesus Christ, and the joy that you possess because you believe in Him. This joy comes from knowing that your sins are forgiven in Christ, and that you have the promise of eternal life. If you truly believe, God will fill your heart with this gladness, so that you will want to sing and shout and praise Him all the time, and tell everyone about Him. Just as a witness in a trial must tell what he has seen and heard, so must we as witnesses for Christ tell what we have seen, heard, and felt about Him. This is why witnessing is a very personal matter. You must confess Christ in your heart before you can confess Him on your lips to others.

Don't get the idea that witnessing is just for "the other person," because it's not; nor is it just the work of ministers and missionaries, whom God calls to go into all nations, teaching and preaching the Gospel. Witnessing is the job of each and every Christian. We, too, are called by God in our own special way to tell others about Christ. It may be just a few words to a passer-by, or a friendly gesture to someone, but Christ does have a purpose for all of us. Remember—"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead." James 2:17. You can have all the faith in the world in you, but if you don't use this faith to the glory of God, you are a dead Christian.

You may ask, why should we witness?

This is an important question, but for me an easy one to answer. It comes naturally to a sincere, regenerated believer. Because Christ fills us with the Holy Spirit when we are born again, we want everyone we meet to have this joy, also.

Christ tells us to be His witnesses in many instances in the Bible. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." Isa. 43:10. God is speaking to His elect Israel whom He used as His chosen people to let others see His power and might. In Rom. 10:8-9 we read, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Obviously it is the calling of each Christian to confess God before men.

Many of us now know what witnessing is, and that we should do it, yet we really don't know how to go about it. There is always the direct method of approaching a person on the street or someone you see at school. But often this does not work, for the simple reason that people, including you and me, do not like to be told how bad they are, and that their beliefs are wrong. You must know just what to say, so as not to put the person immediately on the defensive. But if you ever get the chance, such as at your job or at school, you shouldn't be afraid to speak out and say even just a few words to state your position.

You can also witness in many indirect ways. These ways are often more important than we think. By being a good example in your daily walk, you are witnessing your Christian life to those around you.

First, by going to church on Sunday, and

going to places like catechism and Young People's Society, you are a witness to the ones there that you are interested in learning more about your religion. Second, you can make sure that the places you go are ones where you think God would want you to go, and that the friends you have are ones that walk in God's light. You are known by the friends you keep. Being in bad company can be a great hindrance to you in your witnessing. Can you imagine trying to speak to an unbeliever about Christ, and having this person say, "Why don't you practice what you preach? I've seen the kind of kids you go around with." How would you feel?

Another important aspect of personal witnessing is watching your language. People get a pretty good idea of what kind of person you are by the words you speak. A Christian does not take God's name in vain! You may hear some of your friends using bad language, and if you hear it long enough, you'll be saying it, too.

Christ has told us that we are the light of the world, shining forth His glory in this

dark earth. We can't shine if we sit back and be lukewarm Christians. We've got to become alive in Christ, not just in our thoughts, but in our actions, too. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16. Just remember that these good works are not ours but are Christ's works in and through us.

Do we as Christian witnesses have a reward? We do, but not here on this earth. Our reward is eternal life with God in heaven – not because we were such good Christians, but because God saw fit to send His Spirit to work in us, that we might tell all we have seen and heard about Him. God is really rewarding His own work, because our witnessing is His grace in us. In Rev. 20:4 we read that those who were Christ's workers on earth are now living and reigning with Him forever. And Matt. 10:32 says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." What a wonderful reward!

---

## **Listen!**

by

DAVE LANTING

*Open the shadowed portals fling  
And as the morning dewdrops cling,  
Listen! The mourning robins sing  
To their eternal Master.*

*Listen! The screams tear through the night,  
As in somnambulistic fright,  
The horrible Angel of Death in white  
Tells of disaster.*

*But listen! The joyful church bells ring,  
And yet the people seem to sing,  
And still the morning robins sing  
To their eternal Master.*



# FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

## "HOLY ANGER AGAINST SIN"

*"Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil." Ephesians 4:26, 27*

Yes, we may be angry at times! In fact, we should be very, very angry as a living member of the Church of Jesus Christ. For anger is not necessarily evil. It may be very just and righteous. It is not really normal not to become angry with anything. The fact is, that where our treasure is our heart will be also; and where our heart is will become manifest in our anger. This anger will become evident in our entire being, in the manifestation of our words.

In view of this all, we may well pray with the Psalmist: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14. For what lies on top of our heart comes out first. We sometimes say things and then gloss it over with: I did not mean it that way. Well, we were right the first time. The second time we merely tried to patch it up.

So, if you are righteously angry, do not apologize for it!

We said that anger is not necessarily evil. The reason is: God too is angry. In God it is ever the assertion of His holiness. God's anger is His purity; He is too pure of eyes to behold evil. And, therefore, His anger reveals itself as wrath from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Even the Son of God, the Christ, is said to be angry. In Psalm 2:12 we read, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry . . ." Here the word in the Hebrew means: to snort. Some animals when they are angry, such as the horse, literally snort when they are angry. And the Psalmist pleads with the Lord: "Wilt thou be angry forever?" Psalm 85:5. And Moses tells Israel that the Lord was angry with him for their sakes. This was when Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Moses was not angry here

