

The Good News

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THE CHURCH OF GOD

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What Is Paganism?

Who were the first pagans? Would you recognize a pagan if you saw one?

by L. E. Torrance

YOU do not fear to call "pagan" the ignorant, uncivilized naked pygmies of the dark African jungles, the head hunters of Borneo, or the Australian aborigines.

But have you ever realized that many of your best-dressed, well-educated worldly friends and neighbors are also pagans?

Impossible? Don't be too sure! Perhaps you don't know what a pagan really is.

What Is a Pagan?

Webster's Dictionary defines a pagan or heathen as, "An unconverted member of a people or nation that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible."

But what does it mean to "acknowledge the God of the Bible"? Here is the answer from your Bible. "He that saith, I know him"—that is, I acknowledge Him—"and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4).

Anyone who does not keep God's Commandments does not really "acknowledge the God of the Bible." He—or she—is a pagan. He may say, "Lord, Lord." But Christ will answer, "Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.)

And again: "They profess that they know (acknowledge) God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

The "Christian world," which pro-

fesses Christ and pays "lip service" to His name, is pagan. The people blindly follow the old pagan customs of Christmas and Easter, and the pagan doctrine of the "immortality of the soul." The "no works" doctrine falsely teaches we are saved by grace alone and there is nothing we are to do except believe.

Then there is the pagan doctrine of the trinity. It has blinded them to the glorious truth that God is offering man the opportunity to be born into His Family—if only man will learn to obey and trust Him.

Most of your unconverted friends have never even heard the marvelous truth that man can be born into the Family of God—to share with Him His power, His joy of being a Creator.

They have been deceived by a worldwide conspiracy that has been masquerading as God's truth for the past 4,000 years.

When Conspiracy Really Began

In the very beginning God revealed to His angelic creation part of His Plan. The angels—but not all of them—were overjoyed to know God's great purpose—that they were to have a special part in bringing more members into the God Family (Luke 15:7; 1 Peter 1:12; Job 38:4-7).

God placed a cherub named *Helel* in the Hebrew—*Lucifer* in Latin—in a position over this entire earth, and gave him the opportunity to help carry out this great Plan of creating new mem-

bers of the God Family. His name meant "Light Bringer." He was chosen to bring the knowledge of this Plan of God to man. But Lucifer said in his heart, "I'm not content to be just an angel. I, too, want to become God." He further stated, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:14).

Lucifer knew he could never be born a son of God, for he was created for the purpose of being a *servant* to the God Family. When he understood that mere men were one day going to be exalted above *him* as members of the God Family, that men were one day going to be **HIS GOD**, he rebelled. His pride could not swallow this. He became determined to try to overthrow God's Plan. He wanted to be God, not the servant of the God Family. That is why he rebelled!

As a result of this rebellion, Lucifer's name was changed to Satan—the Adversary. Instead of acknowledging God by obeying Him, Satan opposed his Creator.

He declared war on the God Family and, with one-third of the angels, tried to take over God's throne (Rev. 12:4). These fallen angels became **DEMONS** (Rev. 12:4). Their minds became spiritually and mentally perverted.

The First Pagans

Although Satan had failed to conquer the Kingdom of God by a sudden, direct attack, he still hoped to thwart God's
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Letters to the Editor

Prayer Answered

"Thank God, Mr. Armstrong, for your coming back on the air in the New York area. I was completely lost, not hearing you, and everything went wrong. I prayed so very much nightly and it seemed my prayers would never be answered, but oh, how very thankful I am; I now hear it nightly."

Lady from New York

Envoy Inspires Plans

"Our son is really interested and saving his money so that he can go to Ambassador College. The Envoy has made him have an even stronger desire to attend Ambassador."

Member from North Carolina

● Will this young man be one of those who has to be turned away for lack of facilities? That answer will be decided by the way we, as God's people, get behind the plans for expansion. Do we really carefully analyze our finances and give every cent that isn't needed for real necessities or the actual operation of our businesses?

It is good to have a reasonable amount of security, but money needlessly held in savings accounts will become worthless before the end of this age.

Ex-TV Slave

"Your radio broadcasts not only help me to meditate on God every day, but they also help me to be a better house-keeper. Before I started listening to you I was parked in front of the television at 6:30 every night, and hardly ever went back to the kitchen to do the dishes. Now since I listen to you, it's become a habit to do the dishes while I listen. After you go off, I'm so interested in the Bible that the television programs seem dull, so I read the Bible instead."

Listener from Arkansas

● This is an example showing how we all can have a part in God's work, although we do nothing more than pray and tithe faithfully.

God Was Not There

"When I take my little grandson to church on the Sabbath, I always say: 'Now you must sit very quietly and never talk out loud because it is God's house.' Not too long ago he attended church with me on the Sabbath, then went to spend the night with his other grandparents. His uncle took him to Sunday school the next morning, then

brought him back to our house. As soon as he came in, he explained, 'I've been to Sunday school, but *God wasn't there*; He doesn't belong to that church. There is a teacher and she just says: "All little children be quiet and color or play in the sandbox"'—out of the mouths of babes!"

Member from California

Not a Gambler

"I once attended a healing service for the purpose of being prayed for. When it came my time to receive prayer the preacher said he did not feel led to pray for me. You can imagine the dashed hopes and shaken faith which resulted. The preacher was afraid of his own failure in my behalf."

Man from Texas

Procrastination

"Will you please send a copy of your PLAIN TRUTH magazine to my address, also the Key to the Book of Revelation? I have been a listener to your program for approximately 20 years."

Listener from Arkansas

Result of Bulletin

"Our current check was ready for mailing when we received your latest Co-Worker letter written from Ambassador College near London, England. Please take note that we are adding another \$100 to our donation after reading the letter and taking note of your increased costs."

Co-Worker from Michigan

Partnership

"I had to take a day and a half of leave without pay from my work in order to have enough time off to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. When I returned home I expected to receive that much less pay; however, instead of receiving less pay, I got paid for this time, and the very night that I returned home a pay INCREASE became effective, and in 12 months I am scheduled to receive another one. It really makes a difference having God as my partner."

Member from Alabama

Rather Read Than Eat

"We enjoy The PLAIN TRUTH and go without meals in order to read it from cover to cover in one sitting, then return to it over and over, and look up the scripture references. It is a must in our family. It makes the day-to-day

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and new address. IMPORTANT!

Paganism?

(Continued from page 1)

Plan. Creation week followed. Man was created. The first step in Satan's clever conspiracy was to subtly appeal to the human nature of Adam and Eve.

Satan deceived Eve into thinking that she could disobey God and still become a member of His Family. "Ye shall not surely die," lied Satan (Gen. 3:4). Thus Satan deceived Eve into believing that she could follow the way that seemed right to her (Gen. 3:4, 5) and still become like God.

Adam unthinkingly accepted his wife's reasoning. They both disobeyed God and followed the false lying way which Satan had taught them. Adam and Eve were the first *pagans*. Why? A pagan is "an unconverted member of a people or nation that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible." Adam and Eve acknowledged and obeyed Satan instead of God, as all pagans have done ever since.

Even though Adam and Eve had walked and talked with their Creator, and they knew their God personally—they still did not acknowledge Him. They did not obey His every word.

They acknowledged Satan by becoming his servants. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Rom. 6:16).

Almost all of Adam and Eve's descendants continued to acknowledge Satan by following his pagan doctrines, until mankind became so wicked that God destroyed all these pagans but righteous Noah and his family by the great Flood (Gen. 6, 7, 8).

Paganism's Rebirth After the Flood

Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives were the only persons who lived through the Flood. They were commanded to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1).

While Noah's descendants were still few in number, Satan began searching for a vain, ambitious individual he could use. Satan soon found in the grandson of Ham, Nimrod, a man full of ambition and lust for power, a man who wanted to rule the whole world—a man who could and would teach his followers Satan's ideas (Gen. 10:9).

Nimrod taught men to worship Satan as the great Emancipator the great "Light Bringer."

Through Nimrod and his wife, Semi-

ramis, Satan founded a world-ruling false pagan religion, 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

This pagan religion appealed to the physical senses—touch, taste, and smell. It replaced God's Plan of Salvation, which requires repentance and a complete change of heart, with a system of physical rites, idols, myths, fables, and superstition—all masquerading as truth.

Shem, the son of Noah, opposed Nimrod's apostasy and executed him. Shem chopped up Nimrod's body into pieces and sent it to the various families of earth as a warning from God that following Satan's false pagan religion leads to death.

The pagans, out of fear, no longer dared worship Satan *openly*. They went underground as did the Nazis after World War II.

These pagans soon found that Semiramis, Nimrod's wife, would carry on the false, pagan religion of her dead husband, for she was a vain, greedy, ambitious woman, eager to assume leadership over all paganism.

The record of history shows that Semiramis, called the "Queen of heaven," was strikingly beautiful, and that she used her beauty to ensnare the kings of the earth, just as the Great Whore of Revelation 17:1—the great false church—does today.

She told these kings—who this soon after the Flood were still only the heads of families and small cities—that they could commit adultery with her if only they would accept and teach their families her religion. She was so beautiful that these carnal-minded men readily submitted to her seductions (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pages 63, 68, 74; and Dr. C. P. Meredith's *Satan's Great Deception*, page 34).

Semiramis deceived mankind by pretending that one of her illegitimate sons was the resurrected Nimrod, the promised Savior of the world.

Because Semiramis feared that Shem might also punish her—as he had punished Nimrod for teaching an apostate religion—she did not teach her pagan religion openly, but secretly. Semiramis taught her followers to use MYSTERIOUS symbols—the Christmas tree, the Easter egg, the hot-cross bun, the rosary. Only those who were initiated into her secret religious society knew what the symbols really represented. To these she added the counterfeit pagan holidays, Christmas, Easter, Hallowe'en—days which celebrate the birthday and the supposed resurrection of Nimrod.

Satan's pagan mystery religion, centered at Babylon, continued to deceive

the entire world down to the time of Jesus Christ.

Paganism Steals the Name of Christ

After the death of Jesus Christ and the apostles, Satan inspired the agents of this mystery religion to secretly mingle with God's Church so they could claim Christian names on their pagan deceptions.

These pagan priests then left the church, but gave the illegitimate son of Semiramis Christ's name and called their pagan god the true Messiah!

This paganized counterfeit religion of Satan placed respectable Christian names upon all the pagan rites, the pagan doctrines, and the pagan myths of ancient Nimrod and Semiramis—and called it all "Christian."

Jesus Christ said of this great false church of which Semiramis was a type, "I will shew unto thee...the great whore...with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Rev. 17:1-2).

This false church—a pagan church—is not, and never was, the true Church of God. It had already COMPLETELY counterfeited the beliefs and practices of the Bible over 2,000 years before the birth of Christ. It was the Babylonian Mystery revived!

Who Are the Modern Pagans?

Do the modern-day preachers who claim to be ministers of righteousness acknowledge the words of Jesus Christ? They claim that Christ came to nullify the Law—when Christ very plainly warned, "THINK NOT that I am come to destroy the law" (Matt. 5:17).

When these modern ministers refuse to accept the plain teachings of Jesus Christ, they condemn themselves as pagan.

The churches of this world do not "acknowledge the God of the Bible." They do not believe and obey His every word. They are by definition heathen—real pagans. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. "From such turn away," so commands your God (II Tim. 3:5).

We have proven in past articles of *The PLAIN TRUTH* and the *Good News* that the many Protestant sects and all the other pagan deceptions such as "modernism," "German rationalism," "atheism," and "evolution" have come out of this great pagan mystery religion.

Those who follow this modern-day paganism are just as pagan as those who followed the very same lies in the days of ancient Nimrod and Semiramis.

We Must Not Be Pagan

God called us out of this world—out of this paganism. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:4).

God's Church has come out of this world. It has God's truth. God's Church believes, teaches, and diligently strives to obey His every word (Matt. 4:4). But have all its members been doing the same?

God commands us not to allow ourselves to be lured back into this system of paganism, not even to have one foot in it! (Jer. 10:2.)

God warns those who long to go back into paganism, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (II Peter 2:20).

This need never happen to one of God's begotten sons.

The Almighty Creator promises that Christ "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

You have your responsibility in it, too. "In *all* thy ways *acknowledge* him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6).

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 2)

world events so plain in the light of scripture. May God continue to richly bless you and your world-wide work. Thank you also for the booklets."

Man from New York

Blessings in Australia

"We had a very good trip home from the Feast, and God had certainly rewarded our faith by protecting our crops. There had been terrible storms in our district while we were away and most of the wheat crops were knocked to the ground, but ours is beautiful. The rain we received from the storm really helped it. We expect the best harvest in six years. Before the rain most of our neighbors were hand-feeding their stock. Others had their stock on the roads, while our stock had hundreds of acres of green feed. We didn't even run short. We know that God has surely blessed us."

Member from New South Wales

Discovers God's Day

"I no longer know what church to attend. I have been attending a church

which I thought was a gospel-preaching church, but I no longer feel right going there knowing full well that I'm going on the wrong day."

Doctor from Missouri

Sinus Infection Healed

"Thank you for your prayers and the handkerchief you sent. With it the Lord has healed a postnasal drip and sinus infection which I have had for as long as I can remember."

Woman from Florida

Arthritis Healed

"Before Christmas I wrote to you for prayer for the healing of arthritis and accompanying effects of the disease. I wrote you some months later saying God had not seen fit to grant the petition. Since then I have been ever so much better—practically free of pain. I can now lift canisters of sugar and flour from a shelf above my head, something I have not been able to do for years. I can move about freely, even on the coldest and wettest days this winter. Last winter it was torture to move, and my husband sometimes had to carry me from room to room. My fingers are practically straight and my elbows much better. You see our prayers are being answered in God's good time, as He sees fit. I am very thankful."

Listener from Western Australia

● For best results leave the sugar and flour on the shelf!

Attended Early Meetings

"I remember some predictions that you made way back in the 30's when you first went to Los Angeles. I was in your meetings when you were at the Embassy Auditorium at 9th and Grand Avenue in Los Angeles. I also attended your meetings in other places. Brother Armstrong, more power to you! Get on more radio stations and tell more people."

Lady from California

Found Answers

"I have gone to most churches, and for a reason. I have searched and prayed and asked God to lead me to His True Church. One day some weeks ago, I was visiting my brother and I told him my sad story. He went into his bedroom and brought out a packet of magazines. He told me that I could take them, but be sure and return them, for they were priceless. Need I say more? Please put me on your mailing list for The PLAIN TRUTH magazines. Also would you please send me your Bible Study Course. Also, please advise me as to how or to

whom I can make out a check for my tithes. I have been saving them lately and God isn't getting any good from them in my pocket."

From California

God Lives

"My little girl was sick with a real bad cold and sore throat last Sabbath. So I had her anointed and Mr. Prince prayed for her. By Monday she was well and back in school, never having to miss any. When you experience these things it makes you realize *there is a living God that loves you and cares.*"

Member from Texas

Turning to the Real Healer

"My brother tells me that if I request you and the elders to pray for my healing, you will do it through the mail. The doctor tells me I have weak lungs. I have had a cold and flu for years now. I have had as many as three shots a day, and box after box of pills. When I take them I feel better, but when I stop, my cold or flu is back again. But I am through with that now; if God intends me to go through life with weak lungs, Amen; if not, He will heal me."

Man from California

About Correspondence Course

"I am writing to you in regard to the correspondence course you offered on Radio Station WFBM. My pastor has recommended this to me as he feels I will receive a great inspiration from it. He is now receiving the PLAIN TRUTH and states that it is a very good magazine."

A listener from Indiana

"May I obtain the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course? I am a struggling young minister and feel very deeply the need of help."

Minister from Kentucky

● This is a tragic example of this world's ministry!

True Church Revealed

"I had been searching for this Work for over a year and didn't know where it was. I knew from the Bible that God has only one true Church, but finding it was the problem. A few months ago I tuned to The World Tomorrow program by accident and have been listening ever since. The truth about the Sabbath was one of the first things that convinced me that this is God's Work. Thanks to your work, my husband, a former atheist, now admits he believes in a Creator God."

Lady from Utah

Rejoice in God's Sabbath!

*You need to know HOW to keep the Sabbath as God intended!
Here are the ANSWERS to vital questions about the Sabbath that
many of you have recently asked.*

by Roderick C. Meredith

YOU MAY be missing out on some of the greatest blessings of life through *ignorance!*

In this chaotic, hell-bent age in which we live, man NEEDS a right understanding of the laws of *peace* and *joy* that Almighty God has set in motion. Many lack the enthusiasm—the zest for life—that would make their lives really full and complete. "Every day is the same old thing!" you hear so many people say.

But God has given us one blessing which doesn't make every day alike, which—when rightly used—will make our lives more *joyful* and *abundant*, and give us a *zest* for life we otherwise lack. This is the Sabbath day.

Once you fully understand and appreciate the *blessings* and *opportunities* afforded by this day, you will literally REJOICE in keeping it. Far too many converted people look on the Sabbath as a day when they "can't" do this or that.

But *IF* you really *want* to draw closer to God and do His will, then begin to look on the Sabbath as the day when you CAN take time for needed prayer, study, meditation, spiritual fellowship and rest. When viewed in this light the Sabbath is a *tremendous* BLESSING!

Sabbath Made to Serve Man

Christ said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). He didn't say it was made for the Jew, but for MAN—for *all mankind* in other words. And it was made for him a blessing.

Keep this principle in mind. It was made for you, to help you, to enable you to live a happier and more godly life.

God's true Sabbath is one of the greatest blessings that has ever been bestowed upon mankind. It *signifies* that the Creator is our God and we are His children.

Our Creator knew that we would need a period of rest every seventh day, and this is one of many opportunities the Sabbath affords. Each of us tends to become overly absorbed in our daily cares during the week, but God foresaw this, and set aside the Sabbath as a time when we can completely forget our routine work and *get closer to God* in study, meditation, and prayer.

The wonderful part of it all is that we can keep this period of rest and

spiritual revival with complete confidence that God will *bless* and *prosper* us because we have done this! If we would quit working every few days and take a needed rest, we might naturally expect to get behind in our finances and material pursuits. *But* God has said just the opposite! So if we keep His Holy Day, we can rest assured that it will be *gain* instead of loss, even looking at it materially.

Do you realize what this amounts to? God is *giving* us a *paid vacation* every seventh day!

Human reasoning might not grasp this right at first. But God has *promised* this, and the *experiences* of hundreds of people have shown that God meant what he said. You may not be prospered *immediately* if you begin keeping God's commandments and paying your tithes faithfully as He has commanded. But in His way and time, God will begin to bless and prosper you in ways that you may never have expected.

In Isaiah 58:13-14, God inspired Isaiah to write that *if* we kept the Sabbath and delighted in it, we would remember Him and He would cause us to have life in abundance, spiritually and materially. Notice that we are not to *seek our own pleasure* on the Sabbath. *Yet*, we are to *delight* in it. This means that we should be *so busy* doing good to others, and getting closer to God in prayer and study, that we will not even desire to seek any earthly amusements. We will be HAPPY because we are able to rest, to worship God with peace of mind, and because we have a special time to do good.

This same passage says we are *not* to *speak our own words* on the Sabbath. What does this mean? It shows that we should not spend the Sabbath in idle talk, but should be reading, discussing and meditating upon God's word. Then we will be drinking in the ideas of God instead of mere human notions. What a privilege it is to have a whole day in which we can read and discuss the *way of life* that is revealed to us in the Bible!

In order that we may have our minds free from last-minute duties on the Sabbath, God has commanded that we prepare for it the day before. Exodus 16:22-25 shows that we should do any baking or time-consuming boiling before the Sabbath. Long hours of cooking

and stewing should *never* clutter up God's day.

So do all your "sprucing up" and any heavy cooking on Friday, the preparation day. Then at sunset Friday evening, when the Sabbath begins, you will have put all worldly cares aside and will be able to enter the Sabbath in a spirit of rejoicing and worship toward God.

Duties on Sabbath

Your time should never "drag" on God's Sabbath! Some people experience this when they first begin to keep the sabbath, but it certainly isn't the way God intended. When we understand it properly, the Sabbath will be filled with *interest* and *joy*.

The true Sabbath is *not* a *negative* thing!

Christ set us an example of how to keep it. In Mark 2:23 to 3:5, Jesus showed that it was all right to procure food on the sabbath *if* it is necessary. He told the Pharisees that He was Lord of the Sabbath—not Sunday! Then Christ healed an infirm man on the Sabbath, and showed that it is lawful to *do good* on that day.

What *kind* of *good* should we do on the Sabbath day?

God commanded in Exodus 20:10, that we should *not work* on the Sabbath. So the kind of good that we do on that day is not the kind of hard physical labor which we might do on other days. "Doing good" is not to be used as an *EXCUSE* for performing those material duties, however helpful to others, which can just as well be done some other day. There is one exception to this prohibition. That is in the case of an "ox in the ditch" (Luke 14:5). This refers to a *genuine emergency*, not some material duty you "put off" until the Sabbath.

The principal example of doing good on the sabbath that Christ gave us was that of healing the sick or infirm *that came to Him* (Matt. 12:9-13). He did NOT go abroad seeking them. Also, we find that He was constantly meeting with others and teaching them God's ways on this day.

We can all use the Sabbath as a time to comfort and minister to those who are sick and infirm on this day. But this does not mean that we should burden ourselves with purely material serv-

ices. Jesus didn't when he helped the sick according to their faith. Remember what he told Martha: "Thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41, 42). We should especially try to help those who are interested in the true teachings of the Bible, because in this way we can minister to them both spiritually and physically.

A Wonderful Opportunity

STUDY the word of God (II Tim. 2:15)! This should usually be your first duty on the Sabbath. *Then* you will be ready to answer the questions of those you are trying to help (I Peter 3:15).

Many of you brethren desperately NEED to spend *much more time* in earnest, prayerful Bible study. And most of you *want* to do it, but say that you "just don't find the time."

Well, learn to TAKE time on the Sabbath. In this day you have a wonderful opportunity to study *intensively*, to *pray* and not feel "rushed" or that you ought to be doing something else. USE this opportunity! Be THANKFUL for it!

The Sabbath is the day when you *can* and SHOULD study the Bible, study the Correspondence Course, and review the back issues of The PLAIN TRUTH and The GOOD NEWS. On this day you can discuss points of truth and Christian living with your wife or husband, and you can have a Bible study session with your *children*.

Yes, the Sabbath is the day on which you CAN do all these things that most of you *want* and *need* to do anyway—but *simply can't find enough time for during the week!*

Remember that the principal command is to *rest* from our usual routine on the Sabbath, and to *worship* God and remember him as Creator. The Bible reveals that "doing good" on the Sabbath is serving others in a way that shows the *power of God* in our lives. Christ didn't *labor* for several hours to heal the sick on the Sabbath. Instead, He invoked the very power of the Creator to release others from the bonds of sickness. So we should NOT spend most of the Sabbath caring for the physical needs of other people. By drawing closer to God on this day, we will then be able to help others in a LASTING way through the power of God's Spirit.

"Sewing for charity" and other physical services may be worthy at the proper time, but such routine labor should not fill up God's Sabbath day.

Physical things will "perish with the using." So use the Sabbath primarily to learn *God's ways* and make them a part of your *character*—and help others to

do the same. The Spirit of God in you will last *forever!*

Rejoice in the Sabbath as a wonderful OPPORTUNITY for the physical *rest*, and for the *study, prayer* and spiritual *fellowship* you need!

A Commanded Assembly

In Luke 4:16, we find that Christ customarily met with others on the Sabbath and read from God's word. Lev. 23:1-3 tells us that the Sabbath is to be a *holy convocation* for God's people. A convocation is a *commanded assembly*. God commands you to convoke or meet with other true believers *whenever this is possible* on the Sabbath.

However, this does *not* mean that you are to meet on that day or any other day with those who are blinded to God's truth and refuse to keep *all* His commandments. Paul commanded Christians in II Cor. 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: *for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness* and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Christian fellowship should be with other people ONLY through God and his Spirit. God gives the Holy Spirit to them that *obey* Him (Acts 5:32). So remember that you *cannot* have true fellowship through Satan, or his ministers, or his churches who refuse to obey God's commandments.

When it was impossible to meet with others in a church on the Sabbath day, the apostle Paul and his helpers "went out of the city by a river side, where *prayer* was wont to be made" (Acts 16:13). This is an admirable example for many of us, because getting closer to the natural handiwork of the Creator brings one closer to God. The hand of God is seen in everything good and beautiful. Notice that instead of going to the river to fish, as so many do on the "day of the Sun," Paul went to a river to help others seek God in prayer.

How to Be a Light to the World

Christ told his followers, "Ye are the *light* of the world" (Matt. 5:14). How much the world needs people who will fearlessly show it the way out of this spiritual darkness!

But can you be a "light" to other people while continuing in the same man-made doctrines and practices they do?

NO you can't! You must live by God's word to show forth the true light that will eventually turn people from darkness. You must be DIFFERENT from other people by obeying God—by having his SIGN. Most people won't like you for doing this. Christ said in John 3:19. "And this is the condemnation, that *light* is come into the world, and

men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Men were so *steeped* in their own customs, then as now, that the true light of the gospel offended them.

So you can see that real Christianity is not the way to be popular with men!

But doesn't this show what an important "light" your keeping of the Sabbath can be to others? It is a SIGN that sets you apart from those following the broad way that leads to destruction.

Your Special Problems?

It is easy to use the latitude and privileges of the Sabbath as a means to *abuse* it. You should *not* be overly strict or self-righteous like the Pharisees. On the other hand, humans are usually inclined to "stretch" the freedom God gives us and begin doing our own work or pleasure on the Sabbath.

Taking a walk on the Sabbath is fine so long as it doesn't turn into a "hike." Some people ask about the mention of "a sabbath day's journey" in Acts 1:12. There is no special command *anywhere* in the Bible limiting travel on the Sabbath. This "sabbath day's journey" was a custom of the Jews and is not a biblical command. However, you certainly shouldn't walk or drive so far on the Sabbath as to tire yourself unduly or to interfere with your worship of God.

After sitting in church or studying for some time, a leisurely walk is very refreshing and beneficial. Also, a lengthy drive is sometimes necessary to enable you to meet with other true worshippers on the Sabbath. Within reason, this is not wrong. It serves to strengthen you spiritually and therefore glorifies God.

Here is another problem. Should you kindle a fire on the Sabbath day?

The command in Exodus 35:3 was inserted in connection with instructions regarding work on the tabernacle. It was chiefly intended to forbid the kindling of a fire to melt metals or sharpen tools. However, it certainly can refer to unnecessary work done in preparing food which could be prepared on the day before.

So it would *not* be breaking the spirit of the law to light a fire for heat in wintry weather or to warm up a previously prepared food.

Feeding and watering stock is necessary on the Sabbath and permissible (Luke 13:15). *But* if you are raising so many cattle or chickens that your "chores" add up to three or four hours' hard work, then you had better cut down on the number of your livestock or else change occupations. Our age of "specialization," when a few farmers become virtual slaves to provide food for hundreds of city dwellers, is *not* God's way.

(Please continue on page 14)

What Does It Mean---

"BRING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO CHRIST"?

Here's how you can rule over the thoughts of your mind!

by Lynn E. Torrance

ARE you plagued by thoughts you know are wrong—by thoughts you desperately want to stop thinking?

Do you find yourself unable to master—to resist—the bad thoughts of your mind?

Why are some of you always having to fight wrong thoughts, but yet, somehow are never quite able to overcome them?

We Must Overcome

Does God command us to do the impossible? No! For with God's help "all things are possible." You can learn to cast every wrong thought out of your mind.

God commands you to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

Does that mean every thought? Yes! Here is how God makes it possible. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to command, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Jesus Christ did not sin. His mind was perfect. All His thoughts were pure.

To rule over the thoughts of your mind, you must have the mind, the attitude, the determination, the character Jesus had. You can have that same mind—that same power—through the Holy Spirit. But you must also exercise your will to resist fleeting evil thoughts.

Christ commands us to become perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

You CAN do as Christ commands!

Learn to Recognize Wrong Thoughts

Some of you are thinking wrong thoughts without even realizing that you are allowing your mind to become enslaved (Rom. 6:16). You must learn to detect wrong thoughts immediately so you can cast these thoughts from you before they become so firmly implanted in your mind that you are unable to drive them out.

There is one sure way you can learn to recognize what a wrong thought is. Open your Bible to see if your thoughts

are producing the fruits of God's Spirit.

Are your thoughts producing "love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance"? (Gal. 5:22-23.)

Any thought that does not produce joy, love and peace is a wrong thought. The thoughts that are in captivity to Christ produce the fruits of the Spirit.

Any thought contrary to God's law, any thought of criticism, accusation, lust, hatred, doubt, discouragement, adultery, fornication, envy, jealousy, is a wrong thought.

Jesus Christ warned that entertaining, harboring, dwelling upon evil thoughts breaks God's law. He said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (mind)" (Matt. 5:28). Those who think such thoughts shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21).

You Must Want to Overcome

When you allow evil thoughts to remain in your mind—when you allow them to conceive—the result is that you are sinning "...when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin..." (James 1:14-15). You must repent—you must stop thinking these thoughts.

Many of you realize that you frequently entertain evil thoughts, but you do not always know how to repent, how to cast them out of your mind.

Some of you are sorry when you think wrong thoughts. But merely being sorry does not stop you from sinning—being sorry is not repentance unless there is also the will, the action to bring about a permanent change.

Repentance means change. It means STOP sinning. Yet, we must realize the carnal mind doesn't really want to repent. You must earnestly ask God to give you the God-given desire to repent, to STOP sinning.

The strong desire to stop sinning is a gift which we receive from God only when we ask for it with strong supplications.

When God gives us the gift of repentance, we must then use it. We must STOP sinning.

Resist Wrong Thoughts Immediately

The key to overcoming a wrong thought is to resist it immediately.

The very split second a wrong thought comes into your mind, PRAY INSTANTLY—DO NOT DELAY. If you are in public, pray silently. Ask God for the power to cast this wrong thought out of your mind, ask to be cleansed of this evil thought.

Don't make the often-fatal mistake of letting evil thoughts dwell in your mind. You must cast them out immediately. The longer you allow evil thoughts to fester in your mind the harder it becomes to cast them out—for all carnal human nature loves to sin.

The carnal mind does not have the power to resist evil—to instantly pray to God whenever a wrong thought strikes. That power comes from God through the gift of His Holy Spirit. You have to ask for this power, the power which God is more willing to give you than you are to ask for.

Ask, God will give you the power to pray instantly when a wrong thought attacks your mind. Jesus Christ promises, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7).

The Holy Spirit inspired David to say, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments" (Ps. 119:60).

How to Replace Bad Thoughts with Good Thoughts

Casting an evil thought out of your mind is only the beginning.

Realize that you cannot leave your mind a blank or it will be overcome by still more evil thoughts.

You must not only ask God to give you the power to cast wrong thoughts out of your mind, but you must also immediately ask for the power to fill your mind with good thoughts—thoughts which produce the fruits of the Spirit.

REMEMBER that you must always maintain a close contact with God.

(Please continue on page 10)

Hidden Treasure in Your Own Home?

BRETHREN, are you overlooking a great treasure that is in your very own home? Nearly every one of us in God's Church has within his own home this truly priceless treasure, yet, ironically, nearly all of us fail to appreciate or realize the true value of what we have! We have done nothing to develop the potential it holds for us. Our unused treasure ought to be enriching our lives. Instead it possibly sits neglected, gathering dust on the shelves of thousands of homes. Once appreciated and looked at, it has now been set aside on the shelf—retired to inactivity while it cries to be used and when it should be playing a vital daily role in the life of each of us in God's Work. Next to the Bible, this treasure can become the most valued and highly regarded of all our possessions.

Your Neglected Treasure

This universally neglected, yet priceless treasure is your ENVOY! Next to the Bible itself, the ENVOY can be one of the most important books on the face of the earth to God's people! Some of you, perhaps, have looked at the ENVOY as being just another college yearbook and have treated it as such—an object of interest, something we purchased out of loyalty to God's Work and from a sense of duty. But we haven't looked at it as being of any practical value. This attitude is wrong, brethren! It is robbing many of you of the help you need to further serve God..

The ENVOY Is a Record of Church and College

The ENVOY is so much more than a colorful "picture book." It is a contemporary living record of God's Church in action! For many it is an answer to prayer.

Brethren write us from every corner of the globe telling of the depressing problem they have in keeping a close feeling with God's Work. It is difficult for many who live apart to feel they are a literal part of the very body of Jesus Christ. They feel out of touch. Others express themselves this way, "It just seems I can't pray for an hour a day." "I start to pray, but after a few minutes I run out of things to pray about or I forget what I wanted to pray about," write others. Or, "I don't feel close to God's work out here away from everything." We often receive the heart-

rending request, "I feel so all alone, what can I do?"

We all want to feel that we are a very real, direct part of God's great, end-time work. We want to know we are active, growing members of the body of Christ. We know that where our prayers are, there our hearts will be as well—and we do want to pray more for God's Work. Yet, being separated, many of us somehow don't seem able to make that Work the first thing in our lives, to pray for it as we ought. **WE NEED HELP—URGENTLY!**

How The ENVOY Helps You

Your ENVOY can supply that help! It can be an answer to your prayers as it has been to many of your brethren who had the same problems. Many who have remained separated from daily or weekly fellowship for years know this is so. They have found the answer to their needs in the pages of the ENVOY. They are putting it to work and *it has paid big dividends* in their lives! Here's how.

Each ENVOY is planned to make every one of you a vital part of God's work, a tight-knit member of the "headquarters team." The ENVOY is a bridge through which God's people around the world are brought to the scene of the thrilling, exciting, dynamic headquarters work itself. Through its pages, every reader is taken personally directly deep within the very nerve centers of this ever more powerful world-wide work. You have become a Co-Worker sharing this end-time mission not only with those here at headquarters in Pasadena, California, but also with those at the farthest outposts in the world wherever God's servants are working. You are brought to the scene and made a part of God's Work in all its phases. You are put in contact with hundreds of the very ones now actively engaged in the most important, thrilling mission man has ever been given!

Each ENVOY a Prayer Outline

Each ENVOY is designed to be used as an aid in prayer. Some take it to their closet and use it as a guide to help them recall all the people and functions in God's Work they need to pray about. If you are praying diligently, supporting God's Work with your prayers, you are serving Him in as important a capacity

as many doing a material service here at Headquarters.

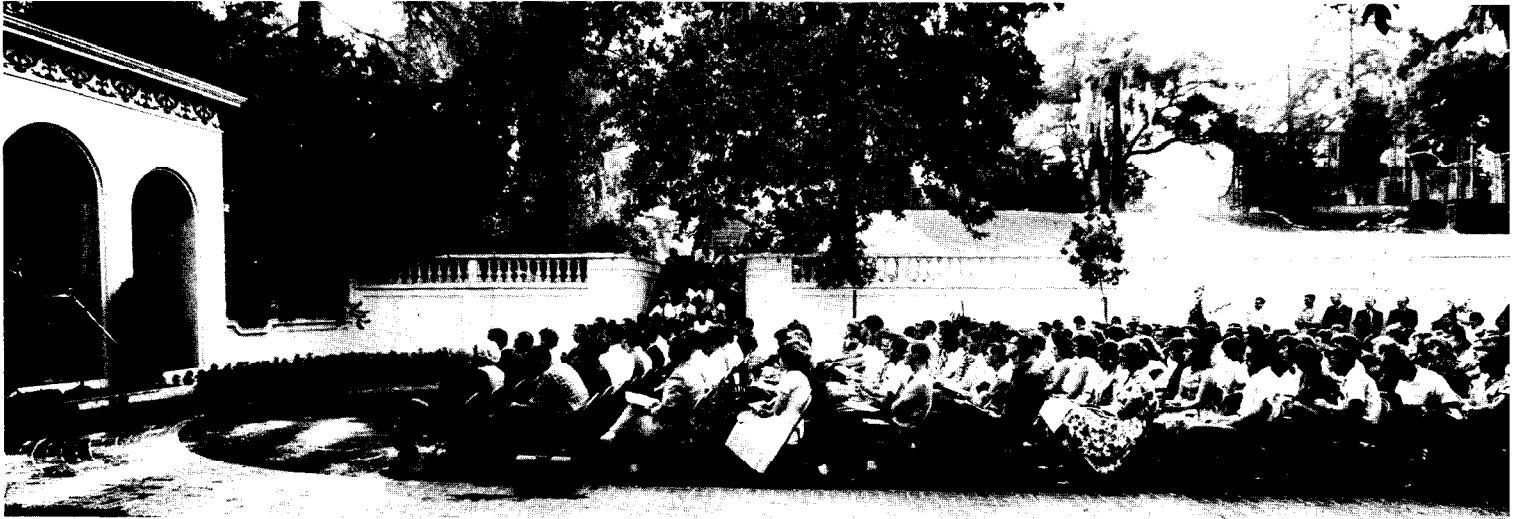
What about making God's ministers the subject of many of your prayers? They are listed and pictured each year in The ENVOY. Here, under one cover, you can become acquainted with and pray for each one individually. There are currently sixty-seven ordained elders of the living God working around the world at this time. Many of the pastoral assistants are listed and pictured in The ENVOY. Do you, through prayer, ride the roads, sail the ships and fly in the planes with these men visiting, baptizing, counselling? The Bible tells us we should! You have a part with each one carrying out his work, sharing the responsibility, if you will—and what a work to share in! You can't seem to pray for an hour a day? How long does it take to pray for a hundred men and their wives individually?

Those of you who are lonesome, who have no families, have you ever considered that through your ENVOY you can acquire a family of over four hundred young people from just the Ambassador College campuses alone? Take these dedicated young people into your hearts, make them a part of your family. Be concerned for them and pray about their needs, see if God doesn't end your loneliness and fill your days with joy! Do as others have done and pencil in vital information under the pictures of each student, minister or employee. This will increase your ability to pray in earnest for a brother in Christ.

Pick up any recent ENVOY you may have. Open it and leaf through casually. You have found literally hours upon hours of prayer material. If you will use your ENVOYS, prayer time will easily stretch out past the allotted hour. Your problem won't be what can I pray about but, how can I find more time for prayer and include everything and every one? Frankly, brethren, that is a problem more of us should have.

Headquarters Described

In The ENVOY you will find the beautiful Ambassador Colleges fully pictured reminding you to pray for God's colleges. You will come across the administrative officers, who certainly need the guidance and wisdom of God in the multitude of decisions that they are pressed for daily. The faculty must have



This sweeping view of a weekly Assembly of the student body brings home the reality of Ambassador College's potential for service to you. Over four hundred students are gathered here to absorb, weigh and profit by the experiences and admonitions of the speaker for the day.

The late afternoon California sunshine of this photo taken in early fall gave way to cold and darkness as winter approached. Light showers arrived the first day in December when this meeting was transferred to temporary indoor quarters a block from the campus.

your prayers that God will be with them in shaping and moulding the lives of future leaders in His Work. Radio Studio "layouts" will be a reminder of our commission to preach the gospel; the press department "spread" will call to mind that it is to be published as well. For many of you The ENVOY is the only introduction you may ever have to those faithfully serving you in the Letter Answering Department. Are your fervent, heartfelt prayers with these divisions of God's Work? They will be if you are one of His.

Ambassadors Abroad and FESTIVAL TIME

Are you in constant remembrance of those in the lonely outposts? You should be. Do you even know who is serving around the world, where they are serving and in what capacity? You can be with each one, sharing effectively in his portion of God's Work if you will use your ENVOY as a prayer guide to call all these to mind.

How about the Feasts? Are the fond memories of God's Festivals and of those you met there growing dim already? Turn to your ENVOY, let its pictures remind you of these, and of the stirring messages that moved and inspired you at the time. Muse over the Feast Section, recalling once again the love you had for the brethren, the close kinship you felt and the thrill that filled you as God's plan of salvation was revealed and you could glimpse the Glory of the Kingdom that awaits you.

(Please continue on next page)

Order Your 1963 ENVOY Now!

Two Hundred and Twenty-four pages of vital information about Ambassador College, Headquarters in Pasadena and our Ambassadors around the World!

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In America, where production costs and wages are both considerably higher, subscribers are able to carry the higher

cost of producing those "first copies." They are willing to share this 224-page pictorial volume with you at a price close to that of producing "an extra copy."

The added 64 pages produced by your Staff are greatly appreciated by all our subscribers and we have been able to continue this low price for you in Britain and Europe, knowing that many more of you can now share with us in the treasure of owning an ENVOY.

Mail your request direct to Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, Herts.

Order your 1963 ENVOY now!

Hidden Treasure in Your Home?

(Continued from page 9)

Treasure Your ENVOY

This is but a little of what is within the pages of your ENVOY, the ENVOY that has gathered dust while you wrestled with the problems of prayer, of loneliness, of feeling left out. There is much more, but this should be enough to help you re-evaluate the importance

of your ENVOY to your life. Open your ENVOY and see how much more can be brought to mind to pray over as you search its pages. Take it to your prayer room at your first opportunity and make it the treasure it ought to be. Use it faithfully as a tool of prayer and it will grow in value to you daily.

"Every Thought Into Captivity"

(Continued from page 7)

Then you can ask for and receive His power instantly, split-second quick, when you need it.

How to Become More Converted

Have you continually called out to God for help to overcome a wrong thought, only to find out that God seemingly failed to give you the power you needed in order to overcome?

Did God fail to keep His promise that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)?

NO! "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). "God... cannot lie" (Titus 1:2).

If you believe the Scripture is true, then you must acknowledge that you somewhere failed your part.

Why have you failed? Why couldn't you bring your thoughts under control?

The surprising answer is: the carnal mind sins because it wants to.

If your carnal mind still has the upper hand to such an extent that you cannot stop thinking wrong thoughts, you have not learned to abhor evil. The thoroughly converted mind is one that *utterly abhors evil!*

You need to go to a private place, and fall on your knees and pour out your heart to God until you really know that you are converted by God's Holy Spirit, until you know God has given you the power to overcome.

You may even have to spend hours in FASTING and PRAYER—earnest, determined, persevering supplication—until you know that God has heard you.

Persevere in Bible study and prayer until the mind of Christ living in you has changed your outlook on life from a worldly, fleshly, materialistic viewpoint to an obedient, spiritual one—until you have, as the Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to command, "Set your

affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

When you become deeply converted by the mind of Christ living in you, you will hate evil as God hates evil. You will abhor thinking evil thoughts. You will become more like God. You will stop sinning because your desire to obey God will become stronger than the carnal human desire to sin. You will stop sinning because you will stop wanting to sin.

The key to success is that you will be putting Christ's words, His thoughts into your mind. The more you let the words of your Bible imbue your mind, the less room there will be for any evil thought to cross your mind. You cannot replace evil thoughts by keeping your mind empty or by always thinking about that evil thought. You must place your mind, concentrate your mind on the word of God, on doing God's will.

The Almighty God, who is faithful, promises, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

Keep in Contact

Once you become thoroughly converted, you must always maintain such a close contact with God that you will be able to instantly ask for and receive the GREAT POWER you need in order to resist the evil and replace it with the good.

How do you maintain this close contact?

You maintain this close contact by submissive obedience to God's will and by spending as much time in Bible study and prayer as is necessary for you to have Christ's mind ruling in you. Then you will be instantly able to ask for and receive the POWER to overcome.

Eternal Life is worth the effort! You must never fail! Be vigilant!

REMEMBER that to keep from yielding to sin—even JESUS CHRIST had to offer up prayers to God with strong crying and tears (Heb. 5:7).

Be Vigilant

After God has given you the victory—DO NOT LET DOWN. The key to continued overcoming is to BE VIGILANT. Be on your guard! Be awake! Be prepared!

That is where many of us stumble. There is something you must do.

The Apostle Paul told us how to remain steadfast overcomers. He said, "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done (overcome) all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13).

Then the Apostle Paul told us how to acquire this armour of God. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

Notice this important point, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; PRAYING ALWAYS with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:13-18).

God does not do it all for us. Unless we put forth DILIGENT effort, we cannot be called OVERCOMERS.

But on the other hand, if we had the power to do it all, we should not need to ask God that Jesus Christ help us overcome our wrong thoughts.

Jesus Christ commands us to be persistent in asking for God's strength. He commands us "always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

Pray for Others

Don't fail to show God how much you appreciate the power of His Holy Spirit, the power to overcome.

Rejoice, for Jesus Christ, who cannot lie, has promised, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame" (Rev. 3:21).

Diligently pray that God give ALL of us whom He is calling in this end time the Spirit-led power, not only to cast evil thoughts from our minds, but also the power to fill our minds with thoughts that are pleasing to the Almighty Creator God who has called us to become members of His Family.

Variety Yeast Breads

ADD to your family's mealtime enjoyment by including a *variety* of yeast breads in the meals you prepare. There are a multitude of possibilities awaiting your efforts in baking with yeast. The time spent is well worth it! Even lagging appetites are perked up by the delightful aroma which is given off during the baking of such bread products as yeast biscuits, griddle cakes, waffles and cinnamon rolls. In addition to these taste-appealing items, add to your family's pleasure and nutrition—as well as aid the food budget—by making your own English muffins and *baked* doughnuts.

Recipes will follow for the types of special yeast breads just mentioned. For more information regarding the basic principles of yeast bread cookery refer to the article on "How to Make Your Own Bread" in the November 1962 "Good News."

Griddle Cakes

Buckwheat pancakes are frequently thought of when yeast griddle cakes are mentioned. A light, bread-type product can be made from the recipe which will follow. Note: the whole-wheat flour used in this recipe and the ones that follow is hard wheat flour.

For those who prefer a whole-wheat griddle cake, a more moist product can be made from the recipe which will be included below.

Cornmeal griddle cakes offer a desirable change in texture and flavor and can be used as the bread course of the meal.

Buckwheat Pancakes

- 3 cups lukewarm water
- 1 package or cake of yeast (1 tablespoon)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar or honey
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 cups sifted buckwheat flour
- 1 cup sifted whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup instant dry milk

Sprinkle or crumble yeast onto lukewarm water. While yeast dissolves, combine sugar, oil, egg *yolks* and salt in a separate bowl. Add to dissolved yeast. Blend well. Add sifted buckwheat flour. Stir till smooth.

Sift dry milk with sifted whole-wheat flour and add to batter. Beat until smooth. Cover and let rise in warm place until double.

When double, stir well. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Bake on hot, ungreased griddle or skillet until light brown. Turn and bake until the other side is browned lightly.

Makes 2 dozen medium-sized pancakes.

Note: If you desire to use whole milk instead of powdered milk in the above recipe, use 2 cups of water instead of three.

Scald one cup of milk and after it has cooled, add it to the dough that was made with the other ingredients, not including the egg whites.

If you prefer to bake the buckwheat cakes on a lightly greased griddle, you can leave out the oil in the recipe. When an iron griddle is used, the griddle does not need to be greased between each batch of cakes. Two or three batches can be baked on such a griddle before greasing is necessary. For greasing griddles and other baking pans, margarine (not oleomargarine) is satisfactory.

Since powdered milk is less expensive than whole milk, the following recipes all use it plus water. Those who have fluid

milk on hand can easily use it instead of the powdered milk by making the following adjustments:

1. Use ¼ cup warm water for each package or cake of yeast which the recipe calls for. In this water dissolve the yeast.
2. Subtract the amount of water being used to dissolve the yeast from the total amount of water which the recipe calls for. The remaining figure is the amount of fluid milk that may be used. Be sure to scald and cool fluid milk before using in yeast breads.

Whole-Wheat Pancakes

- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar or honey
- 1 package or cake of yeast
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs, separated
- 2 cups sifted whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup instant dry milk

Add sugar to the lukewarm water. Sprinkle or crumble yeast over water and sugar mixture. Let stand till yeast is dissolved.

In separate small bowl combine oil, salt and egg *yolks*. Add this to dissolved yeast mixture and stir.

Sift dry milk with sifted whole-wheat flour. Add to batter. Beat until smooth. Cover. Allow to rise until double in bulk.

When doubled, stir down and fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Bake on hot, ungreased griddle or skillet until light brown. Turn and bake the other side to light brown.

Makes 12 medium-sized pancakes.

Cornmeal Pancakes

- ¾ cup lukewarm water
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar or honey
- 1 package or cake of yeast
- 2 tablespoons oil
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg, separated
- ½ cup sifted whole-wheat flour
- ¼ cup instant dry milk
- ½ cup cornmeal

Add sugar to lukewarm water. Sprinkle or crumble yeast over water and sugar mixture. Let stand till yeast is dissolved.

In separate small bowl combine oil, salt and egg *yolk*. Add this to dissolved yeast mixture and stir.

Sift dry milk with sifted whole-wheat flour. Combine with yeast mixture and stir well. Pour in cornmeal and beat until smooth. Cover. Allow to rise until double in bulk.

When doubled, stir down and fold in stiffly beaten egg white. Bake on hot, ungreased griddle or skillet until light brown. Turn and bake until the other side is browned lightly.

Makes 6 to 8 medium-sized pancakes.

Waffles

Yeast waffles offer a number of flavorful ways to be used at mealtime. For variety the basic yeast waffle recipe can be altered by using wheat germ, cornmeal, cooked rice, dried fruit, ground meat or nuts in the batter. Some toppings which go well with waffles (or griddle cakes) are fresh, frozen or cooked fruits, honey, syrups, molasses, yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese and creamed fowl or fish.

Yeast Waffles

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups lukewarm water
- 1 package or cake of yeast
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar or honey
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs, separated
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup oil
- 2 cups sifted whole-wheat flour
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup instant dry milk

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey or brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 eggs
- 5 to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sifted whole-wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup instant dry milk
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup seedless raisins

Sprinkle or crumble yeast onto lukewarm water. Let stand until yeast is dissolved. During this time sift flour and measure, then re-sift with dry milk. Add sugar, salt and egg yolks to the yeast mixture and blend well. Add oil and mix. Add flour and beat until the batter is smooth. Cover and let rise until double in bulk.

When doubled, stir down. Fold stiffly beaten egg whites into the batter before baking. Bake on hot waffle iron.

Some ideas for variation (using the basic recipe given) are as follows:

1. Instead of 1 cup of the whole-wheat flour, use 1 cup of cornmeal.
2. $\frac{1}{2}$ cup wheat germ may be substituted for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the whole-wheat flour.
3. After stirring down the batter and just *before* folding in the egg whites 1 cup cooked brown rice may be added to the batter.
4. Just before folding in the egg whites *one* of the following may be added to the waffle batter: $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped nuts, $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup finely chopped dried dates, raisins or figs *or* 1 cup cooked ground meat.

Raised Biscuits

The following recipe tells how to make yeast biscuits without kneading. They need to rise only once—after they are cut out and placed on the pan for baking.

- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 1 package or cake of yeast
- 2 tablespoons honey or brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- 4 to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sifted whole-wheat flour
- 2 tablespoons melted butter

Sprinkle or crumble yeast over warm water and let stand until dissolved. Add honey and salt and mix. Add 2 cups of flour and beat until smooth. Add oil and blend. Add rest of the flour gradually, beating until smooth after each addition, until the dough is sticky and is of consistency to leave the sides of the bowl.

Pour dough out on lightly floured board or pastry cloth. Flatten out dough with closed fist. Roll dough $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and brush with melted butter. Cut in rounds with 2 inch cutter. Place biscuits on greased baking sheet, putting biscuits in pairs—one biscuit on top of the other.

Let rise until double in bulk. Bake in hot oven, 425° F., 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes about 29 two-layer biscuits.

Cinnamon rolls have a great appeal to all age groups. Tasty, flavorful ones can be made at home. The following recipe can be used for cinnamon rolls or cinnamon twists.

Cinnamon Rolls

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups lukewarm water
- 2 packages or cakes of yeast

Sprinkle or crumble yeast over lukewarm water; let stand until dissolved. Sift and measure flour. Re-sift 2 cups of flour with cloves and dry milk and keep separate from other flour to be used.

Stir dissolved yeast. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of honey and mix. Add 2 cups of flour sifted with dry milk and cloves and beat until mixture is smooth.

Add salt, eggs, oil and rest of honey— $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Stir until well blended. Stir in raisins. Gradually add (about 1 cup at a time) the remainder of the flour, beating well after each addition. The resulting dough should be soft and almost sticky, but of consistency to knead with the hands. The softer dough helps to make a more desirable end product.

Pour out on lightly floured board or pastry cloth to knead. Knead until smooth and elastic—about 5 minutes.

Place kneaded dough in greased bowl. Turn ball of dough so greased side will be up. Let rise until doubled in bulk.

When doubled, punch dough down and turn onto lightly floured board. Divide dough into 2 pieces. Cover balls of dough and let rest 10 minutes.

While the dough rests, prepare the following filling:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup brown or raw sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

Blend sugar and cinnamon. Melt butter over hot water.

Before rolling out each piece of dough, flatten out with closed fist, pressing out air bubbles as you do this. Roll dough into oblong piece $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick.

Spread 2 tablespoons melted butter over first piece of dough. Sprinkle with one-half of sugar-cinnamon mixture.

Beginning at wide side, roll up tightly in jelly-roll fashion. Pinch outside edge of dough to the rest of the roll to seal. (If the outside edge is slightly moistened with lukewarm water it will seal more easily.)

Cut roll of dough into 1-inch slices. For an easy, clean style of cutting use an 8-inch piece of thin, clean, white string. Place the string around the roll of dough as if going to tie the string around the dough. Hold an end of the string in each hand and pull in opposite directions to cut through the dough.

Place each slice cut side down on a greased baking sheet. Place about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart. Brush tops lightly with melted butter or a glaze made from mixing together 1 egg yolk and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water.

Repeat the same process for the other ball of dough.

Let rise until doubled in bulk.

When rolls are double in size bake in moderate oven, 375° F., 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned.

When done, remove from oven and loosen rolls from edges of pan with a table knife or spatula. Turn pan of rolls upside down on rack or clean cloth as soon as loosened and still hot.

If desired the cooked rolls may be brushed with melted butter before removing from pan.

A light frosting may be made for the rolls and spread over them while they are warm. The recipe which follows is less sweet than the usual frosting found on bakery rolls.

Confectioner's Sugar — Dry Milk Frosting

- 2 tablespoons soft (not melted) butter
- ½ cup confectioner's sugar
- 2 tablespoons top milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla flavoring
- ½ cup instant dry milk

Cream butter and confectioner's sugar. Add top milk and flavoring and blend. Add dry milk and mix until smooth. Spread over warm rolls or doughnuts or cinnamon twists.

For a variation of the cinnamon roll dough make cinnamon twists.

Omit raisins in cinnamon roll recipe and proceed with the roll dough as follows:

Divide dough into 2 pieces as directed for rolls. Let rest 10 minutes.

Make filling as directed for cinnamon rolls.

Press out bubbles from each piece of dough before rolling it.

Roll first piece of dough into oblong piece about 18 inches wide and ¼ inch thick. Spread with 2 tablespoons melted butter. Sprinkle with one-half of the sugar-cinnamon mixture.

Beginning on the narrower side of the dough, fold it over in thirds. Cut the folded dough into strips about ½ inch wide.

Hold each strip of dough at both ends and twist it in opposite directions. Place twists about 2 inches apart on greased baking sheet. Brush with melted butter.

Repeat the same process for the other ball of dough.

Let rise until double in bulk.

When twists are double in size bake in moderate oven, 375° F., 15 to 20 minutes.

When done, remove from pan to cool on rack or clean cloth.

If desired, glaze while still warm with frosting of confectioner's sugar and dry milk.

For those who enjoy English muffins try making your own. They are simple to make if instructions are followed carefully—avoid getting the griddle or skillet too hot.

English Muffins

- 2 cups lukewarm water
- ½ cup instant milk
- 2 tablespoons brown or raw sugar
- 1 package or cake of yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 egg
- 4 to 4½ cups sifted whole-wheat flour
- ¼ cup cornmeal

Sprinkle dry milk over lukewarm water and blend. Add sugar. Sprinkle or crumble yeast into lukewarm mixture. Allow yeast to dissolve. When yeast is dissolved stir mixture until well blended. Add 2 cups sifted flour and beat until smooth.

Add salt, oil and egg and blend well.

Add more flour to make a soft dough.

Turn dough out on a lightly floured board or pastry cloth. Knead until smooth and elastic—about 5 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl. Turn ball of dough so greased side will be up. Cover and let rise until double in bulk.

When doubled punch down.

Sprinkle board lightly with cornmeal. Pour dough onto board and roll out to ½ inch thickness. Cut into rounds with a 3-inch cutter. (A cookie cutter can be used, or the open part of the grounds container for a metal coffee pot works quite well for cutting the dough into circles.)

Let muffins rest on the board until double in bulk.

When doubled, carefully place on ungreased griddle or heavy skillet. Use medium to low heat so muffins will brown slowly. Allow 8 to 10 minutes on each side.

To serve, split and toast lightly.

Following is a recipe for *baked* doughnuts. By following this recipe you can make a cake-like raised doughnut that is a tasty change from fried doughnuts—and less expensive.

Baked Raised Doughnuts

- 1¼ cups lukewarm water
- 2 packages or cakes yeast
- 1 cup honey or brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup oil
- 4½ to 5 cups sifted whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup instant dry milk
- ¾ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Sprinkle yeast over lukewarm water and let dissolve.

Sift and measure whole-wheat flour, then re-sift ½ cups of flour with dry milk and spices and keep separate from rest of flour.

Add 2 tablespoons honey to dissolved yeast mixture and stir. Add 1½ cups flour sifted with dry milk and spices. Beat batter until smooth. Cover and let rise in warm place ½ hour.

During this time measure salt, eggs, oil and blend in small bowl. Add rest of honey (2 tablespoons of the cup were used earlier) and stir to blend well.

Stir down risen batter. Add rest of liquid ingredients and mix.

Add rest of flour gradually (½ cup at a time) and beat batter until smooth after each addition. Dough will be soft and sticky. Use spoon to round up dough in bowl (scrape dough from sides of bowl).

Brush with oil and cover. Allow to rise till double in bulk.

When dough has doubled, push down.

Turn dough out on lightly-floured board. Roll out ½ inch thick. Cut with doughnut cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet. Brush with glaze mixture of 1 egg yolk and ⅓ cup water if desired.

Let rise till double in bulk.

When doughnuts are double in size bake in moderate oven, 375° F., 15 to 20 minutes or till light brown in color.

When done remove from oven and brush with melted butter while hot. Shake immediately in clean paper bag containing brown or raw sugar to coat (best results are obtained if no more than 4 at a time are coated). Place sugared doughnuts on plate to finish cooling.

An icing-type glaze may be made (from the icing recipe already given) and spread over the warm doughnuts instead of sugaring them if that is desired.

In the article "How to Bake Your Own Bread" (*Good News*, November 1962) no mention was made of how long to knead the dough after it has rested on the floured board. The usual time required is about 10 minutes.

Powdered milk can also be used in the whole-wheat bread recipe in place of liquid milk. Instead of the 1½ cups of milk that could be used, substitute a slightly rounded ⅓ cup of instant powdered milk and 1½ cups of water.

A suggestion that may be of help to those in the eastern and southern United States who often have difficulty making good bread of the flours available is to add some gluten flour

to the dough. This is a special flour containing a very high percentage of the proteins which form gluten. Many larger grocery stores carry it or one can easily order it. Since only a small amount is needed in each baking, a few pounds will last a long time. A good average amount to use would be 2

tablespoons of sifted gluten flour in place of that much of each cup of sifted whole-wheat flour which the recipe calls for.

For example, if a recipe calls for 8 cups of sifted flour, use 7 cups of sifted whole-wheat flour and 1 cup of sifted gluten flour.

The SABBATH

(Continued from page 6)

No man should be "tied down" to his occupation as so many are today.

DON'T try to justify breaking the Sabbath by saying that "your occupation requires it"! Remember that this worldly, competitive system is called "Babylon" in the Bible and you are commanded to "come out of her" (Rev. 18:1-4).

How to Instruct Children

God inspired Solomon to write "train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Pro. 22:6). This command would certainly apply to teaching your child to keep the Sabbath. However, you should remember that even sweet little children are by no means converted. They are basically selfish, and usually lack the understanding and will power to keep God's law as an adult.

But they should be taught to rest from their routine work or play on the Sabbath as much as possible. They should be instructed in a kindly and straightforward manner that the seventh day is holy to their Heavenly Father, and that they can show their love for Him by refraining from their usual play on that day and by thinking and learning about God, instead.

Your children should be taught these things gradually and only as their age makes it possible for them to understand. If trained properly from infancy, a ten or twelve year old child should have enough respect for God's Sabbath that he does not spend his time reading "funny books" or listening to radio serials on that day.

Love and chastening must go hand in hand in this training. But a child so trained in God's ways would have a priceless advantage in his knowledge of life and its real meaning in relation to the Creator.

It Is HOLY Time

In Exodus 20:8, we find the original command, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it HOLY." Never forget that God has made the seventh day *holy time!* You and I are commanded to *keep* it that way.

We have already found in God's word that we are not to do our own work, pleasure, think our own thoughts, or

speak our own words on God's Sabbath day. To keep the Sabbath day *holy*:

You can't spend a lot of time in worldly visiting or "shooting the breeze," or even courting your girl.

You can't be running down town for a cup of coffee or an ice-cream soda. That kind of procuring food is *entirely UNNECESSARY*.

You can't spend several hours listening to worthless radio programs or reading the "funnies."

You can't wait until after sunset on Friday evening to begin your cleaning up and preparing for the Sabbath, unless, of course, a *genuine* emergency has interfered.

I could go on, but I think you should get the point and grasp the principle involved.

Let's NOT "kid" ourselves!

When God said to put the Sabbath day to a HOLY use, He means *exactly* what He said. But we should learn to be so happily employed in doing the good things prescribed for that day, that

we will have no time or inclination to violate the prohibitions anyway

So let's keep the Sabbath in a POSITIVE way! Use the Sabbath as a day to rest from worldly labor, to get closer to God in *prayer* and *study*. Take time to *do good* to others, to care for the sick, to visit the afflicted. Assemble with other *true believers* on the Sabbath if this is possible. Then you will truly be a "light" to those around you.

The Sabbath SEPARATES true Christians from this world's churches with their pagan holidays and "day of the sun." And it gives the true children of the Living God an opportunity for *rest, study, prayer* and *worship*—for DIRECT and SUSTAINED contact with their Creator which they would otherwise not enjoy.

So KEEP HOLY the day God made holy! REJOICE in the *blessings* and *opportunities* that the Sabbath affords, and remember that it is an identifying SIGN of *direct relationship* between you and your Creator.

Question Box

Your questions answered in these columns! Your opportunity to have discussed those problems pertaining directly to members of God's Church.

"Is it wrong to spend time with such diversions as crossword puzzles, card games, and the like?"

God has placed us here to learn to *make RIGHT decisions* and to carry them out.

To keep our bodies and minds at peak efficiency, we should occasionally relax and enjoy a diversion from our daily routines. Not all diversions are the same. They do not all have the same stimulating effect.

For example, an occasional session with a crossword puzzle is all right as a *mental* challenge. It may sharpen the mind and develop one's ability to use words more effectively. Some other common diversions can also be useful forms of relaxation when used *in moderation*.

On the other hand, many people who

enjoy diversions sit around for hours *completely engrossed* in them. They *waste valuable time* that could be more profitably used in prayer, study, in physical work or something else that the average person really *needs*.

In determining whether or not it is wrong to occasionally relax with one of the various mind sharpeners that fit in between these two extremes, we must consider the *result* of such participation. How does it affect *you* as an individual?

Is it a relaxation, or an obsession?

If you can take it or leave it alone, an occasional session might be all right. But if it grips, holds you, to the extent that it tears down your will power to resist or wastes your time, it is coming between you and God. It is an idol you should forsake. It is wrong to succumb to the power of entertainment in the way we should submit only to God.

Should You VOW?

*A few members, out of mistaken zeal, have taken foolish vows.
This article explains what every member needs to know about vows.*

by Herman L. Hoeh

OVER the past months it has come to our attention that a few well-meaning members have been vowing foolishly. This must stop!

God does not require any of us to vow. But—and *if*—you do freely vow, God will hold you to it in the judgment!

It is time we reconsidered the question of taking vows. When are vows binding? Which vows, taken before conversion, are binding?

Is the individual free to determine for himself if his vow is binding?

What Is a Vow?

First let us understand what a vow is.

Webster defines a vow as: "1. A solemn promise or pledge; especially one made to God . . . dedicating oneself to an act, service, or way of life. . . . 2. a promise of love and fidelity: as, marriage *vows*."

Now notice the Bible basis of vowing. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, *defer not to pay it*; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Eccles. 5:4-5).

Too many individuals make rash vows and wake up too late to realize they should never have made such a solemn promise. Many individuals are *not SPIRITUALLY MATURE* enough even to know the difference between a foolish vow and a wise vow.

Now notice Deuteronomy 23:21-23, from the Jewish Translation: "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it will be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; *according as thou hast vowed freely unto the Lord thy God, even that which thou hast promised with thy mouth.*"

According to the original Hebrew text, *a vow must be FREELY taken* before God if it is to be binding. This verse in the King James Version is not properly rendered. The verse is not talking about "free will offerings," but about vows *freely* taken.

These verses make it clear that every vow *which God binds* on an individual

must be kept. But not all vows are bound by God.

When NOT Responsible for a Vow

So important in God's sight is the matter of taking a vow that one entire chapter in the Bible is devoted to this very question! Turn to Numbers 30. Beginning with the last part of verse 1: "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded." Here is a command of God. Notice what it says:

"If a man vow a vow unto the Lord . . . he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. If a woman also vow a vow to the Lord, and bind herself by a bond being in her father's house in her youth; and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her; *then all her vows shall stand . . .*" (Verses 3 and 4). Here we have the case of a young woman who is still residing with her parents. If she has taken a vow and her father does not disapprove, then her vows are to stand. She is bound to keep her vows.

But now consider verse 5. "If her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."

Here we have the case of *a young girl who is not mature enough* to be responsible for taking a vow. If her father—at the time when he hears about his daughter's vow—regards it a foolish vow, he has the power and the authority to disannul it. In that case the young girl is not responsible for that vow. God forgives her for having taken such a rash vow. God does not require her to perform it. Here we have the Biblical example of a mature human being who has the power to annul the vow of a person not old enough or spiritually mature enough to be responsible for taking a vow.

Now notice verse 6. "And if she had at all an husband when she vowed or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it; then her vow shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand." In this case a wife has taken a vow. If her

husband, upon hearing of the vow, does not regard it as a foolish vow then she is bound to keep her vow.

But *now* notice verse 8: "But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the Lord shall forgive her."

This is a very important verse. Notice what it means!

The Husband's Responsibility

If a wife takes a rash vow and her husband—when he first hears of it—disapproves of it, she is not bound to her vow. The husband is the head of the wife. God makes the man responsible for the vows of his wife!

Notice that in the case of the wife or the daughter, mentioned here in Numbers 30, a vow may be annulled **AT THE TIME THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY HEARS OF IT**. A vow does not have to be annulled at the time it is taken, but *at the time when it is heard* by the responsible party whose right is to make the decision whether that vow is binding.

Now continue with verses 9 and 10. "But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; and her husband heard it and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceedeth out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, *shall not stand*: HER HUSBAND HATH MADE THEM VOID; and the Lord shall forgive her.

Now notice verse 13 especially. "Every vow . . . HER HUSBAND MAY ESTABLISH IT, OR HER HUSBAND MAY MAKE IT VOID." Notice! In God's sight it is the man's responsibility to establish or to rescind his wife's vow.

It is also the father's responsibility to establish or to rescind his daughter's vow. *Since the question of taking a vow involves the matter of responsibility, and since God is no respecter of per-*

sons, it is also the responsibility of the father to disannul or to approve HIS SON'S VOWS as well as those of his daughter. Only when a boy reaches maturity does he become solely responsible for his own vows.

In the last portion of verse 14 God again makes it the man's responsibility to confirm his wife's vow. Many husbands, of course, do not recognize their responsibility. They have never been taught their responsibility in the matter of vows. Let us suppose, for example, that a husband who knew nothing about God's command in Numbers 30 regarded his wife's vow, at the time she made it, a foolish vow. He disapproved of it even though he did not know that he could rescind it. Later the knowledge of the truth comes to him. God opens his mind to see that it was his responsibility to rescind his wife's vow at the time she took it. Can he, at this later time, rescind it?

The answer is YES! Since it was his conviction that his wife's vow was foolish but he did not know he could annul it, then he may at that later date annul it once the knowledge of the truth is come. He actually did so in PRINCIPLE when he first heard it. He is now merely FORMALIZING it! But if he approved of his wife's vow at first HE CANNOT LATER CHANGE HIS MIND! His wife's vow is binding.

Ministers' Responsibility

Jesus gave His ministers the power to bind and to loose. This power includes the matter of deciding whether marriage vows are binding. Notice Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:18, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Not only has God made it a responsibility of a husband or a father to make binding decisions in matters of vows, but God also makes it a ministerial responsibility. God's ministers are Elders. They are called Elders because they are *spiritually mature*. Most people are not spiritually mature. They are babes—not spiritually qualified to decide whether vows are binding. In many cases they cannot even discern if their vow is foolish or wise. God, then, makes it a ministerial responsibility to determine for those who are spiritually immature whether or not their vows are binding.

Even in the Old Testament the responsibility to make binding decisions was vested in the Elders and leaders of the community. Turn to Deuteronomy 17:8-11, "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment . . . be-

ing matters of controversy, within thy gates; then thou shalt arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment: and thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they informed thee: according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, or to the left."

God determines right from wrong. God reveals to his ministers, through examples in the Bible, when vows—or any matter of controversy—are binding. God, who is in heaven, has made it the responsibility of His ministers to make decisions for the people according to His law and the examples of Scripture.

Notice verse 11 especially. It is the responsibility of the leaders, the ministers, to act as God's servants and agents in determining whether vows are binding. If the ministers have determined that a vow is *not binding*, God then holds them—the ministers—responsible for having made that decision. The people are free from that responsibility. In like manner God holds the husband responsible for determining his wife's vow. His wife is free of responsibility when once the husband has rendered a decision. It is the husband whom God holds responsible. Or in the case of children, it is the father whom God holds responsible. The children are free from responsibility once the parent has exercised his responsibility.

The reason God makes certain people responsible for others in matters of vows is due to this important fact: most people are not spiritually mature enough to know when to vow and when not to vow. It is to safeguard them that God made parents responsible for children, husbands responsible for wives and the ministers responsible for God's Church. God makes it the responsibility of those who are spiritually more mature to judge matters for those who are spiritually less mature.

Some of you may have taken vows. Are those vows binding? Here are some examples which show how God judges the taking of vows.

Specific Examples

A young man finds that the fellows with whom he has kept company drink

beer to excess. After becoming interested in religion he decides he will never again touch beer. He makes a vow to that effect. Is such a vow binding? If the young fellow is away from home, earning his own living and is responsible directly to himself, that vow is binding. Of course, if he were a young fellow at home and his father was responsible for the family, then it could become his father's decision to rescind the vow. But if the father did not disapprove when hearing of it, that vow would become binding.

Here is another common example. With more zeal than wisdom, some men and women vow never to cut their hair. Let us take the case of a woman who vows never again to cut her hair. Is such a vow binding? Let us suppose this woman is married to a *converted* man. If her husband does not disapprove of her vow, that vow is binding. If her husband disapproves, it is not binding. But it happens in many cases that women are married to *unconverted* husbands. If her unconverted husband when he hears of the vow doesn't disapprove, it becomes binding. Now suppose the woman were living alone. According to Numbers 30 she is held responsible for her vow. The vow is binding. There is no commandment in the Bible which *requires* a woman to cut her hair. God's ministers then have no authority to rescind her vow.

But suppose a man vows never to cut his hair and beard. Is such a vow binding? Notice the example that Paul gives us in the New Testament. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Cor. 11:14-15).

It is the responsibility of God's ministers to enforce the practice that no man wear long hair in God's Church because it is a shame to do so. It therefore is the responsibility of God's ministers who are spiritually mature to rescind the vow of any man who has vowed never to cut his hair and beard. This man's vow is not binding in God's sight.

Yes, it's high time we understood the matter of vowing. God does not require us to take a vow. It is far better not to vow than to vow and not perform. Most people make rash vows. They are not mature enough to know what kind of vow is a wise vow. Since God does not require a vow, God's ministers today can never recommend that you take a vow. But if you have taken a vow and your vow is binding, *you must perform it!*