REMEMBER THE SABBATH
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Toby slid behind the wheel of his old but shiny-clean Thunderbird and turned the key in the ignition then raced away from his home at breakneck speed. He had wanted to be gone before his parents got home from church and he had now accomplished his "wanted to" desire.
He eased up on the accelerator when he reached the edge of town and cruised along the highway at a more sensible rate of speed, knowing he was safe from encountering them. He didn't want to be told what he could or could not do: he wanted to be like his friends -- free to think for himself and do what he wanted to do. He was sick and tired of the monotony of his life, Sundays especially.

He felt a bit daring when he thought of the "stunt" he had pulled only a few hours ago -- going to church long enough so his folks could see he was there and be counted in on the total attendance, then slipping out shortly afterwards. And now he was free. Free. Heading to Melanie's house and the party.

Ordinarily he'd have left a note of explanation -- where he'd gone, when he'd return, that sort of thing. But not today. Today he was going to assert himself and his rights of freedom from the home base where, all his life, he'd had to obey and be under subjection to his parents' authority. He was no longer a mere child; he was a young man nearly six feet tall with shoulders as broad as any football star, he was sure, and with a mind of his own, too.

It was a beautiful day; a rare day, and Toby felt all the more light and carefree and, yes, daring, because of the cloudlessly clear morning and its attendant sunshine and balmy-warm breeze. He felt great. He had a good after-school job, nice clothes and a really nice car, even if it was old. He'd bought it from a man whose son had wanted it when the T-Birds first came on the scene and then, years later, after much ill use and abuse to the car because of reckless driving, the boy had left home in a fit of anger and never returned.

The car was a wreck, literally, when he asked the man would he sell it. It took the man less than a minute to decide and reply: "I've been waiting to get that piece of junk out of here for years," he told Toby. "I know Thunderbirds are kinda' valuable anymore, but if you want it, it's yours. I have nothing but bad memories associated with that car. Our son was a rebellious, headstrong and determined young man. His mother and I have a head full of bad memories linked to that car. I'd give anything if I'd never bought it for him. The car was a status symbol, we learned, after many heartaches and tears.

"He got to traveling with the wrong crowd and wouldn't listen to us anymore. I told him he'd have to either change and abide by our rules or find
another place to live. He chose the latter. So, yes, you may have the car. You'll have a lot of fixing up to do if you buy it, though. He wrecked it three times. It was pretty when it was new. But it's little more than a pile of junk now."

The man named the price and Toby almost gasped in disbelief at the low, low price. He snatched it up immediately.

True, he had had a lot of work to do to restore the poor old wrecked and banged-up thing. He had searched for parts and pieces in every junkyard for miles around and, little by little, and oh, so slowly, he had built up and restored his prized possession to its present state. Doing most of the work himself required months and months of hard work and dirty and heavy labor. But the finished product gave credibility to its worth and once again the Thunderbird could wear its name with dignity and pride.

Toby ran his hand across the dashboard and smiled with satisfaction. The average person, or onlooker, would never realize or know that his car was truly a worked over, re-made and restored one. Knowing how much hard work he’d done and how many long hours had been invested in the car by himself made him appreciate it even more than if he’d had a new car. There was something about doing a job well that rewarded one with extremely deep and rich satisfaction. And for all his many faults and his resistance to the home rules, he had at least one good thing in his favor -- no one could ever say he was lazy and say it truthfully. He enjoyed working; this to his credit.

He breezed along at a faster speed again, being careful to stay within the speed limit and a safe distance away from the eighteen-wheeler in front of him.

A quick glance at the clock in the car let him know that, already, he was over an hour late for the beginning of Melanie's party. She'd wonder where he was and why he was late, he knew. Melanie was a girl he'd met only recently and she, of course, didn't know he was still expected to go to Sunday school and church, like some little kid. And he wasn't about to tell her. No way!

But what would he tell her? he suddenly wondered. He'd have to tell her why he was late, unless he fabricated some kind of story. And he knew that fabricated stories fell into the category of lying, and all liars would have
their part in the lake of fire, the Bible stated, where the fire is not quenched and their worm dieth not. That thought frightened him.

A stone, spinning from a wheel of the big, heavily loaded truck, hit the windshield of the Thunderbird with a bang that sounded like the shot of a gun, startling Toby out of wondering what to tell Melanie. A single glance at the windshield revealed the fact that he'd have to have a new one put in. That irked him. But the windshield would have to be replaced whether it irked him or not.

He pulled off the road and watched the trucker as he sped along down the highway. He felt a fist rise up inside his heart. He'd never been allowed to make a fist at anyone, although, in his heart, he'd often made one when he was angry. And this morning, standing in front of the broken windshield in his car, he gave vent to the anger he felt and, instead of the invisible fist inside his heart -- (invisible to man, that is) -- he raised his arm upward after the fastly-disappearing trucker and waved his fisted hand in open anger. Then he got back into the car and started the motor and drove away. But the "spider-webby" looking shatters in the windshield made driving dangerous and hazardous. He kept cocking his head this way, then that, trying to find the clearest see-through spot, but all his exhaustive effort proved futile: he could scarcely see to drive. Defeated, he knew what he'd have to do. For sure, he couldn't go farther. He'd have to go back.

He craned his neck, trying to find a turn-off where he could turn around and head back towards home. It was hard driving when visibility was almost nil, he thought, as he pulled off the road and idled the motor while he got out of the car and looked for a place to turn around. Not seeing anything, he made a hasty decision: he would make a U-turn.

Inside the car again, and looking out of his side window, he crossed over the road and started homeward. His body was tense; his legs felt like they were tied in knots. He wished he knew how far he'd traveled so he'd know how many miles he had to go back. But he didn't. Melanie's folks had moved into their present house only weeks ago and he hadn't thought to ask her how far it was from where he lived. Nor had he checked his car's mileage before he left. He was sure he'd traveled at least twenty-five or thirty miles, though.
The thought of having to drive back made him feel sick. Not only could he scarcely see -- this was dreadful! -- but the thought that what he'd planned had failed, utterly, was like a whip lashing him. If not on his back, in his conscience.

The red light flashing relentlessly behind him caught his eye and his attention in the rearview mirror.

"Oh, no!" he groaned aloud, as he pulled off the road and stopped the car.

"Your driver's license, please," the state highway patrolman said, standing tall and straight beside Toby's car.

Toby fished in his pocket for his billfold. Flipping it open, he took out the license.

"Young man," the officer said sternly, "you violated one of the rules of driving; you made a U-turn. You know this is forbidden, I'm sure. You broke the law. You're aware of this, I'm sure."

"Yes, Sir, I am."

"Then why did you do it?" The question was asked with sharpness and a cutting edge to it. The officer's eyes seemed to bore a hole through Toby.

"Toby tried to explain why he did it but the officer cut him off with, "A shattered windshield doesn't give you the right to violate a law! Don't you realize you could have caused an accident by what you did? Here," he said, passing the slip of paper with the fine written on it through the open window to Toby. "And the next time I'll double it, if I ever catch you again. Be careful as you go home."

He handed Toby's license back to him then went to the patrol car and wrote up his report. Toby started his car and eased it out on the highway, muttering under his breath. He couldn't believe what he'd seen on the paper. It was ridiculous. Incredulous. But a quick look revealed the cold, hard truth -- he was fined one hundred fifty dollars!
He felt sweat form on his forehead. A broken windshield plus a hundred fifty dollar fine! Whew! He brushed his hand over his eyes. And then, as clearly as though his parents were saying it, he heard, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Three times it was repeated to him. And the voice that spoke the Commandment fell on his heart like a hammer. It was the voice of Authority -- God's Voice.

Toby shook and trembled. Fear took hold of him. Was God going to punish him? He deserved it, he knew. And then, suddenly, he realized that the smashed windshield and the fine were God's way of trying to get his attention. Fear gripped him.

"All right, Lord," he cried out loud, "You win. I'm ready to do a total turnaround. I need You; need Your help, too. You can change me and this wicked person I am."

Toby craned his neck, trying to see the road through the smashed windshield. His fast-falling tears didn't help matters any. But that was all right: he was steering not only his car, but his life, too, on a highway, and this new highway was the highway of conversion and holiness of heart and life and it led to Heaven.