He was the brainest guy in our town. He had the highest levels and averages and he was on his way to the university. He had never failed an exam in his life. He never let people forget it either! He was forever going on about the many awards he had won, the various scholarships he had been awarded and what prize the school had given him this year. Talk about someone knowing he had brains, ugh; that was Carl Simons!
A lot of the fellows shunned him. But, then, it does become rather
tedious and tiring hearing the same braggadocio over and over again and
again. Knowing he needed a friend, I tried to make up to him for all the
insulting remarks the other fellows hurled at him. Going out of my way to be
nice, I talked to him {although, truthfully, it was more like a one-way
conversation, with him doing the talking!). I told him of my personal and
heart-changing encounter with Jesus Christ and how, since I had been
entirely sanctified after my glorious conversion experience, that all the carnal
ego was eradicated and extirpated. Slain, entirely and completely.

"How dumb can you be, Ron!" he stormed, giving me that I-know-it-all
look. "Don't you know God doesn't even exist? All this talk about hell and
judgment is just intended to scare people."

"How can you say that?" I asked pointedly.

"How can I say it? Why, it's simple: brains, Ron, brains. I thought about
it; that's how. Sorted everything out for myself. I'm just not one who believes
everything I hear. Use your brains, Ron. Of course, not everybody is blest
with as much intelligence as some," he added, giving his head a meaningful
toss.

I burst out laughing. I shouldn't have done it, but I did. I couldn't help it.

"And what do you find so funny... so laughable... about my speech?"
he asked indignantly.

"Forgive me, Carl. But I couldn't help it. Honest, I couldn't. It struck me
as funny that you should have to remind me of your great intelligence when
I've heard about it for the last four years as we have gone to school together."

"It isn't funny, not one bit, and I don't appreciate you laughing at me.
You know it's the truth."

"We all know you're an excellent student," I admitted complimentarily.
"But the Bible says we are to let another man praise us and not we
ourselves. Then, too, Carl, you could be as ignorant and as dense as a
moron or an imbecile had God not endowed you with a keen mind and
intellect."
"God had nothing to do with it, I tell you," he replied vehemently, highly indignant at my mention of God.

"Without sounding argumentative, let me quote again from the Book of all books, the Bible, 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' But the day is coming, my friend, when 'every knee shall bow, and tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' Your little diatribe has not altered, nor ever will alter, the fact that, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'"

A deep crimson flushed Carl's cheeks. Spitting contemptuously on the ground near my feet, he said, "I guess I know what I have thought through and reasoned out for myself. It's the 'weak-minded' ones who believe the things you have just quoted to me. You're stupid! You have no gray matter at all. None!" With that, he slid behind the wheel of his car and, revving up the motor, he raced down the street.

I watched and, even before he hit the other car, I saw what was happening. My heart seemed to pop up into my throat. The sound of metal crashing against metal has frightened me ever since one of my best friends was killed in a car accident.

Rushing down the street as fast as my long legs would take me, I arrived at the intersection just as a police cruiser pulled over to the curb. Already, a crowd had gathered to see what had happened.

"Carl. Carl!" I called, looking into the wrecked car where my friend sat like one in shock. "You all right?" I asked, almost shouting the question in my anxiety and concern.

Carl's eyes stared straight ahead, like he had never heard me.

"You know him?" the police asked, coming over to my side.

"Yes, I do, officer. In fact, he just left my house."

"You saw what happened?"

"Yes. Why, yes, I did."
"He ran a red light," the police declared. "I saw him. I wasn't far behind the car he hit. I'll need you as a witness, young man. Stick around. The old man in the other car needs medical attention. Looks like your friend does, too."

I gulped. Carl did run the light. I saw it plainly. But what would he think of me and of my testimony if I had to testify as a witness against him? Perspiration broke out on my forehead. I felt like running. But my heart told me that was not the Christian thing to do. Furthermore, didn't the Bible say that the law was for the lawless? Carl should have been abiding by the laws of the land.

I stood beside the car door, what was left of it, watching my friend as the aged man was lifted out of the wreckage of his car and placed into an ambulance and taken to the hospital. A second ambulance eased over along the curb, its siren screaming and wailing and its red lights flashing. Quickly, the men came over to Carl's car and carried him on a stretcher into the ambulance, disappearing as quickly as they had come.

The police officer asked my name and took down my home address, asking me myriad questions and saying, "We'll need you to testify."

Again I gulped, dreading the ordeal and wishing I wouldn't have seen what happened. But I did, and I had.

"You'll be hearing from us, Ron," the officer said, looking serious and troubled. "Your friend wasn't drinking, was he?"

"Oh, no! I don't believe Carl drinks at all. At least, I've never heard that he does. You see, I don't actually pal around with him; I have the fellows from our church. But since he has so few friends, I try to be nice to him."

The officer studied me for a while. Then he said, "I see," and turning, he began making his report of the accident. I turned and headed down the street for home.

A few days later, Carl came to our house. He looked a bit pale, but that was all.
"I'm sure glad you didn't get all banged up," I told him. "And I'm even more thankful that you weren't killed. Just think where your soul would be!" I exclaimed with a shudder.

"Ron," Carl's voice sounded different than I had ever heard it. "Ron," he said again, "something happened to me. In the car. When I hit, I mean. I... I can't seem to think right anymore."

"Maybe you're still in a state of shock," I told him. "After all, you really hit that other car."

His eyes became deep pools of fear and of fright. "You... you saw it, Ron?"

"And how! I was scared. Scared! Afraid you were killed and your soul lost in hell."

"You... won't testify against me, Ron?"

I swallowed. "I saw it all," I admitted, "and I can't lie. I'm a Christian, Carl..."

"But you could say..., you could say that... that you thought the light was still on yellow..."

"But that would be a lie, Carl; I saw the red light. And even before you slammed into the other car, I knew you were going to do it. You couldn't have stopped if you'd wanted to. Not at the speed you were going. Is the old gentleman hurt badly; did you hear?"

"I'm afraid so. Looks like there's going to be a law suit. If only there was some way I could prove the old man was negligent."

"But he wasn't," I said in all honesty.

Carl didn't answer me; so I knew my words had hit a mark. After a period of silence, he said, "Just think of it, Ron, if the old man dies, I'll wind up behind bars. And... and, worse than that even, I... I can't think. Believe me when I tell you, I can't think! My mind seems like one great big hollow, empty
cavern. What happened to me? My mind's a blank. A vacuum! It's frightening.

"I don't know what happened to you," I said frankly. "But I do know that God had to knock a man to the ground one day to get his attention. Talk about a scholar and an intellectual, he was! He was taught by one of the most renowned teachers of his day. He was brilliant. Zealous, too."

"Who was he? What happened to him? I mean, did he recover?"

"Here," I said, opening the Bible to Acts chapter 9. "Read it for yourself. It's quite exciting and marvelous."

Carl just looked at me, sort of stunned, I thought. Then, rather reluctantly, he reached out and took the Bible. "Maybe you're right after all," he said, looking down at the Book in his hands. "Maybe... this is... God's way of showing me just how big a fool I've been. Yes, maybe that's it. I hope you'll pray for me," he added, turning and heading out the door. "I'll need it, Ron."

Pray for him! Indeed, I would. Hadn't Morn and Dad and all of us been doing this for years. And, since God had His way in the storm, as Nahum 1:3 declared He did, who was I to say that He didn't have His way in the accident Carl had had! He knew how to bring a haughty, intelligent Saul to his knees and make him a soul-winning Paul. And who knew but what He had much the same in mind for Carl!

Turning, I headed to my room to pray, confident that the humbling and the turning process had already begun in Carl's life.