It was hot in the store. Roy Jenkins wiped perspiration from his brow. The door opened and a tall, dark, broad-shouldered business man stepped inside.

Smiling, Roy met him midway in the store. "Good afternoon, may I help you?" he asked with a smile on his face.

Roy sized the man up, recalling the words of his employer when he had hired him years ago: "You are here to please the customer -- to help the customer. Put him first. Think of what he wants and what he needs -- of what will best serve him. Ask your customer what colors, fabric, and styles he likes. Find out the occasions for which the garment will be worn. Ask what price is right for him . . .

"Think. Is the customer stout? If so, present something slimming to him . . . Every good salesman puts his customer first. I don't ask my salespeople to sell and make money. I just ask them to help the people who come in to get what they want for their money, to get the most service and value possible."

"Is it for office wear?" Roy probed in his soft voice.

"Business and church. A combination of the two."

Thank you, Lord, for opening the door for me to speak, Roy prayed silently. "You go to church, huh! That's good. Where do you attend? I'm a church-going man myself."

"I'm a Roman Catholic," the man said as he followed Roy to where suits hung upon rack after rack. "But something's not the same anymore . . ." His sentence trailed poignantly.

"How's that?" Roy asked softly, showing the man to his size and finding the top line of their better, conservative suits.

The handsome man sighed. He looked Roy full in the face. "I take it you're not of the Catholic faith . . ."

Roy moved his head in a negative motion.

"You couldn't know then. But I feel I can talk to you, an unbiased, total stranger. It's like this . . ." Again, he expelled a heavy sigh. Tears were shining in his dark eyes. "I was taught from infancy that certain things . . ."
certain beliefs . . . never changed. You follow me?" His eyes searched Roy's kindly face.

"I think I do. I believe I can relate with you on that point; I, too, was taught the same. And from my infancy, also: 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.' My parents instilled this within us. It's deeply ingrained in our hearts."

The man gestured with his hands. "You . . . Yours has not changed: what you were taught, how you were schooled. Mine has. And there are times I feel I'll go insane over the inner conflict . . . were we taught wrongly when I was growing up, or is this new concept and teacher-training right? I'm so confused and mixed up until I've become disgusted with it all. Either they were right back there and are wrong now, or we were wrong and these newer 'loosenings' of the tenets of our faith, as to things being forbidden, et cetera, are all right. When things, which were not permitted for us in the church, are changed by one whom we considered infallible and are declared to be different now, well, it's frustrating. Very frankly and truthfully, I'm afraid I've lost faith in everyone."

"Would I offend you if I were to invite you to my church to hear what my preacher has to say of the Word of God? Not man's words; God's."

"No. No, you wouldn't offend me. I've gone to numerous services in churches other than my own."

"Then I shall be waiting for you on the steps of our church this Sunday morning, God willing," Roy promised, as he extracted a card from his coat pocket with the pastor's name, address and phone number on it. There was also a sharp, clear picture of the church with its location and a comforting verse from St. Matthew 11:28 printed beneath.

They exchanged names, addresses and phone numbers, and when Joseph Peter Macon left The Man's Store with one of their better, finer suits in a box beneath his arm, Roy had a strong conviction that the fine-looking man was searching for truth. A burden settled heavily upon him.

The burden and concern deepened as the afternoon progressed and wore on. Roy could scarcely wait to close shop and get home to give vent to his burden in agonizing prayer. His wife would share in the burden, also, he
knew. They had prayed so very many things through together. The long, intercessory seasons of travailing prayer had only added to the Heavenly "cement" of their already-beautiful marriage.

Patricia would consider it a God-given privilege to pray for Joseph Macon's salvation. "I'm named after two of our patron saints," Joseph had said when Roy complimented him on his first two names. And now within his heart Roy felt that God wanted to transform the man's heart and make a saint out of the man himself.

Between the time of the store visit and the Sunday morning service, long hours of praying ascended to the Heavenly throne to the Son of God, whose parting words were "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." He would intercede to His Father for Joseph's salvation.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, golden with sunshine and redolent with the fragrance of the blooming honey-suckle, roses, jasmine and gardenias. The sun made dappled shades of diffused light through the leaves and the bushes, making the area surrounding the church look tranquil, worshipful and picturesque. Roy was thankful that he was part of the body of believers who took as great pride in keeping their church neat and clean and attractive as they did in their homes.

He saw Joseph Macon drive into the parking lot and hastened to greet and welcome him, thankful that he himself had come a bit earlier than usual. He had told Patricia that Joseph, being a first-time newcomer, would, no doubt, be early. And he had been right in his thinking. He had tried to put himself in Joseph's place, had he been the one to have been invited instead; he knew that he would have arrived early enough to locate the church and its parking facilities and also to have been seated inside the main sanctuary before the great influx of people arrived. Yes, he would have done all this. Joseph must have felt the same way about it, he reasoned, as he said warmly, "Welcome, Mr. Macon. It's sure good to see you again. I've been thinking about you a lot since we met. I see you're wearing the new suit. Like it?"

Mr. Macon's mouth widened into a broad smile. "Like it! Why, I've never had a finer suit. It feels like something I've worn for months! Fits to perfection. My wife thinks it's one of the nicest suits I've ever owned. Someday I'd like for her to meet you, Mr. Jenkins."
"Well, now, I'd like that. Yes, I would. Too bad you didn't bring her with you this morning."

"A new baby. She's had a few complications . . ."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Mr. Macon. Is there anything we can do? Any way my wife can help your wife?"

"Thank you. That's kind of you. But Helen's mother is here right now. Helen's my wife, by the way. Her mother is keeping house while Helen recuperates."

"If we can ever assist you, let us know. That's what friends are for."

"Again, thanks. Much. And I really feel you are a friend. Strange, too, I've never felt like this before."

"I am your friend, Mr. Macon, and everything I've said is from my heart. Now come, I want you to meet our pastor-minister . . ."

During the Sunday school hour, Roy noticed his friend drinking every bit of expounded Scripture in hungrily. He was again thankful to be a part of this body of believers. Their Sunday school teacher was skillful in the Word, expounding the lesson in a simple and simply beautiful, easy-to-understand way.

It was during the preaching service that Roy saw the Holy Spirit dealing with his friend. He prayed silently but fervently. When the service was dismissed, Joseph Macon said to Roy, "Would you have time to talk to me, please? There are so many things I don't understand . . ."

"I'd be happy to, Mr. Macon. Yes. I'd be delighted."

Patricia caught a ride home with friends and Roy remained behind to talk to the business man.

"I heard great things this morning," Joseph began. "New things. When I came here today as your guest, I knew no absolutes; everything was relative. The Bible is completely alien to me," he said.
"All that I know, or learned came from the lips of the one who instructs us in our church. Here, you and everybody, it seems, use your own Bible. You follow the minister's scriptural references by checking them out in your own Bible. The minister's message on 'Walking In Christ' was an eye-opener to me. To my heart, actually. And I'm thankful for a place that believes in restraints and in an absolute authority -- God's Word. Mr. Jenkins, I see that I have been deceived. Deluded. I certainly don't understand this way; but something inside me told me this morning, sitting in that pew up there, that this is the right way. My heart has been strangely moved. Now, if you will only tell me what I must do to become a possessor of the joy and peace I saw demonstrated on the faces of the people in these pews this morning, I'll do it. Shall I confess to you?"

Tears shimmered in Roy's eyes. Opening his Bible to 1 John 1:9, he said, "Read what this says, Joseph. My eyes are too clouded by tears to see. I know it by memory, but I want you to see and read it for yourself. In fact, I'd like for you to read the entire chapter. And on into that next chapter, too -- the first two verses in Chapter 2."

Roy wiped his eyes while Joseph read. When he had finished, he turned and faced Roy. "I've been a fool!" he exclaimed. "All my life, I've confessed to a man. Yet this Book, God's Authority, says we must confess to God. Roy Jenkins, I'm beginning to see the light . . . God's light. Do what you can to help me. I'm like a baby learning its first steps. Show me the way; I'll follow."

It was a plea coming from the lips of a sincere heart. Gently, Roy said, "Let's go down to the altar and pray, Joseph. There is pardon and forgiveness with God. This same wonderful Book tells us that, '. . . there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). The blessed Jesus is the only One who can forgive sins."

In a simple, child-like way, Joseph prayed after Roy. No mere cold-phrased sentences were these. Ah, no! They came from the inner heart of the man himself. Soon the tears were flowing freely and copiously. And, joy of joys, he was praying on his own, confessing . . . to God . . . the way he so often had confessed to his confessor.
Then he was on his feet shouting, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Thank you, dear Saviour!" At the top of his voice, the inflation point of his lungs. He was laughing, crying and shouting at the same time.

It was beautiful to behold, wonderful to hear, divine to feel. Roy felt the breath of Heaven so strongly, so transformingly wonderful in the man's heart that he felt like he had just gotten saved all over again.

For well over an hour, Joseph revel ed in God's peace -- in His saving, forgiving power. Finally he said that he must get home to share what he had found with Helen, but that he would be back that night.

Roy had no doubts that Joseph would be back, not only for the night service, but for each and every other service, too. Yes, he knew he would; he had had a radically beautiful transformation and, quite naturally, he would come to where his soul could be fed. With a confident smile, he slid behind the steering wheel of his car and turned the key in the ignition. Winning souls to Jesus was his chief delight -- his main business.