Daniel looked through the thick, plate glass windows to the highway beyond. Nothing moved along the ordinarily-busy road. An occasional car had been all he had seen the entire day so far. He wondered why Mr. Diggs had kept the neat but small quick-foods restaurant open. Unless business picked up fast, the owner's wallet would be the thinner for having remained open for the special day. "You never know, Daniel," Mr. Diggs had said when
he decided to keep the place open for Thanksgiving Day, "When someone may have no other place to go to get something to eat. Maybe milk for a baby, even. Business will go on as usual here. And since you are my best steak griller, I'd like for you to be here. In fact, I'm putting you in charge of Diggs' Place. I know I can trust you and you are dependable. Sue will be in to keep the tables clean and replenish whatever needs replenishing on the salad bar."

Daniel picked up a celery stick and nibbled on it as he waited for someone to come into the eating place. But no one came. It seemed as though everybody had gone home, or some place else, for Thanksgiving, Sue concluded. She had called him almost as soon as he had unlocked the doors of Diggs' Place and said she wouldn't be in, that Thanksgiving and Christmas were days when everybody should be with his or her family. She hung up before he had had time to reply.

He watched the road, his thoughts with his parents and his three brothers and two sisters. Right now, this very hour, they were seated around the big, oak table with aunts and uncles and cousins at Grandpa and Grandma Ossans house on the farm. He longed to be there, too. Oh, how he longed! But this year, for him at least, the every-year tradition was broken: he was employed. Duty and an obligation had broken the tradition for him, a thing he had looked forward to from one Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day to the next.

He went to the salad bar and picked up another celery stick and several thin, carrot strips, then went back to the chair near the window, knowing full well that by this time, the turkey was carved by Grandpa and every one at the farmhouse had had a helping of his favorite kind of meat, white or dark, of Grandpa's largest and juiciest turkeys, taken from the large flock which Grandpa raised year after year.

Daniel heaved a sigh. He could almost smell the delicious aroma of that turkey! Grandma had a knack, or whatever, for making her turkeys especially delicious and juicy. And they were always golden-brown, too. Never too dark nor too light; always, a tempting golden-brown.

He smacked his lips. He was hungry. He got to his feet, deciding to grill himself a juicy burger. Then he changed his mind. Grandma would have turkey and all the trimmings waiting for him as soon as he got off work and
could make it out to their farm. He would still get to see his cousins and aunts and uncles, but the afternoon's activities would be forever past. And for the very first time of his natural life, he had had no part whatever in the creation of the snow sculptures, each one a giant in sculpture of some of Grandpa's animals and what have you.

Each Thanksgiving Day all who wanted to helped in this yearly feat. The snow sculptures decorated the lawn in front of his grandparents' house for weeks thereafter. In fact the artistically-created farm creatures became a yearly news item. Newsmen for miles around came out, snapped close-up pictures and carried a news item about the family. This year, he had hoped to snow sculpt one of his grandfather's turkeys. But that was before he got the job at Mr. Diggs' eating place.

He looked at the plants hanging from the ceiling by hooks and in macrame hangers. The atmosphere was both cheerful and pleasant, Daniel admitted silently. And everything was clean, too. Mrs. Diggs was clean almost to a fault. But he was thankful for this; he would not have wanted to work there if it had been dirty. No indeed. His own mother . . . and grandmothers, too . . . believed in cleanliness through and through their being. His mother had insisted on a neat appearance, a clean body, clean clothes and shined shoes before he ever left the house to go calling on sinners and backsliders in the community for his church.

"None of this sloppy, shirt-tail flapping, shirt-unbuttoned, long-haired taint of revolution and rebellion allowed in this house either!" his father had said. Not that any of the household members had desired to go that route; ah no! But his father's orders gave firmer conviction to his growing children that what their parents were teaching them was God's way -- the right way, and the only way for God's heaven-bound children.

Daniel walked to the salad bar and smiled. He hadn't known that he could be so artistic. But necessity prompted the calling forth of many a latent and hidden talent, didn't it? When Sue called, and then hung up before he had time to ask her what to do on that salad bar, he felt panicky inside himself. What was he to do? He had never done anything with the salad bar except to eat what was put there. But the Lord had helped him. Yes, it was the Lord. The vegetables, mixed salads, and sliced fresh fruits and canned ones, were placed in such a way as to complement each other color-wise. Eye appeal; he supposed that was what the gourmet cooks would call his
tastefully-arranged, strategically-placed salads and fruits and raw vegetables. Again, he smiled. He had had fun and pleasure in arranging and slicing and cutting the various items making the kaleidoscope of colors before him.

He didn't hear the door open, and only when he turned from the salad bar to go into the kitchen area did he see a young woman standing in front of the ordering line.

"Good afternoon. May I help you?" Daniel asked, becoming instantly the chef.

The eyes that met his were uncertain, much like a frightened child's, Daniel thought with a tug at his heart.

"Do... do you have anything for... for fifty cents?" she asked in a tremulous voice, her enormous, brown eyes looking like a floodtide of tears was about to break through the barrier of her long, heavy lashes.

Daniel's heart pounded. Thanksgiving Day! A day of plenty... and too much... for a multitude of people, and here, standing before him, was a lone figure, hungry-looking and equally destitute-looking also, wanting to know what her fifty cents would buy!

Tears came into Daniel's eyes. Turning quickly, he brushed them away. With a cheerful smile, he said, "This is Thanksgiving Day. No fifty-cent anything. You shall have the best steak... or would you rather have chicken?" he asked quickly.

"Please!" she pleaded. "I... I... just give me a few crackers and... and maybe this would buy a glass of milk?" And she pushed the fifty-cent piece across the counter toward Daniel.

"Put that back into your purse," Daniel said softly-quiet, feeling like he was going to weep. "Today, the meal is on me. Now, which shall it be: steak or chicken? Or maybe fish, even? Order anything you see on that board up there and the bill's on me."

She began to protest. "But I... I can't... pa... y..." Immediately, upon the confession, the dam broke. Tears gushed from her eyes.
"Please, Miss . . ."

"I'm Ginger . . ."

"All right, now that I know your name, we'll proceed. Ginger, I'm Daniel and I work for Mr. Diggs. He owns this place. Since this is Thanksgiving Day, and since I want to do this, please, in the name of Jesus, my blessed Lord and wonderful Saviour, accept my offer of a delicious and satisfying meal today. Right now! It is what I feel I must do."

"You . . . you really mean it, don't you? You're . . . sure your boss . . . won't mind?"

Reaching into his hip pocket, Daniel pulled out his wallet. "See this money?" he asked, pulling out a five and three ones. "Whatever you order, Ginger, that amount will go into the cash register the same as if you paid it. See?"

The dark eyes looked shyly away. "I'll have the chicken," Ginger said softly. "And . . . and thank you! You are . . . kind. So very kind."

"You thank God, Ginger. OK? And now, here's your plate for the salad bar. Remember, everything out there is yours to enjoy. It comes with our meals. How do you want your potatoes; french-fried, baked or hash browns? Any way. The choice is yours."

"Baked."

"Sour cream or butter, or both?"

"What goes with it?"

"Either. Or Both. At no extra cost," Daniel answered, reading the girl's mind about cost.

"Both, please. Oh, are you sure?"

"Sure of what, Ginger?"

"That it won't cost you more money?"
"I'm positive. Christians don't say things that aren't so. I guess I haven't had time to prove myself," Daniel said lightly, smiling down into the shy eyes.

"Oh, but I believe you. I do! I just wanted to make . . . sure."

"Okay, now that we trust each other and understand one another somewhat better, I want you to make a 'dent' in that salad bar. It's about time someone enjoyed my artistry. Never did a salad bar before in my life till necessity demanded it today. Had fun doing it though," Daniel added, pushing a tall glass of milk before Ginger. "Enjoy your meal," he said with a happy smile as he took chicken from the refrigerator and dropped it into the hot oil.

As he worked, he prayed. His heart alerted him that he was to be the messenger of the glad, good tidings of salvation to "one of the least." A girl in need. Desperate need. A covert glance to the table where she sat eating told him all he had suspected: she was hungry -- nearly famished.

It cut into his heart -- the thought of someone not having a sufficient amount of proper food to eat. He had always had enough. And more than enough.

Getting the big, baked potato out of the microwave oven, he laced its split-open body with an abundance of butter and sour cream. Then he placed the golden-brown, well-drained chicken pieces beside it on the platter, garnishing and brightening the overall effect with beautiful dark-green parsley sprigs and three orange slices, cut in halves and twisted slightly for decorative purposes. He could add eye appeal even to his dinners, he decided, figuring up the total cost of everything and ringing it up on the cash register and depositing his money inside.

Her eyes lit up brightly when she saw the chicken and potato. "Oh, how delicious it smells! " Then, again, "You are so kind, Daniel!"

"Wasn't Jesus kind, Ginger? The Bible tells us that He went about doing good. Are His children to do less?"

"I . . . I don't know. I really don't know. The only times I can ever remember hearing the name of Jesus was when my parents got to fighting . . .
. which seemed to be all the time. Then they'd holler and scream the name of Jesus at each other. I never could figure that out. Who was He? What did they have against Him? I never met the Man. Never! Yet here they were, screaming their heads off and using His name in a terrible way."

"Would you really like to know who Jesus is, Ginger?"

"I would. Honestly and truly, I would. Have you known Him, Daniel? You mentioned something about me accepting this meal 'in the name of Jesus,' your Lord, and something else."

"Saviour, Ginger. I love Him. Oh, how I love Him! And you will, too, once you come to know Him." And, beginning at the birth of Christ, Daniel told the young lady all about the Lord, leaving nothing out. When he came to the betrayal, the death and resurrection of Christ, Ginger's eyes were spilling tears.

"Know why He bled and suffered so horribly, Ginger? Do you want to know why He allowed those cruel and wicked men to nail His sinless body to that cross?"

"I . . . I think I already know, Daniel; wasn't it because He loved? Yes. Yes, that must have been the reason. He loved so . . . so much. Do you suppose that love may have included me in its circle?"

"No supposing, Ginger; I know. It did! You, too, can become a child of God by confessing, repenting and forsaking your sins. Not just part of them, but all of them."

Ginger's slender shoulders shook with sobs. "Please, will you pray while I confess to God?" she cried. "I was ready to commit suicide. I planned on doing it sometime this evening . . . either jumping out in front of a speeding car or train or some other way, which I hadn't fully decided upon yet.

"I ran away from home, Daniel. I had to! I couldn't get on, taking the beatings and abusiveness of my father. One of my girlfriends was going to a friend's house for Thanksgiving; so she drove me two hundred miles away with her, dropping me off along a country road a week ago, telling me she wished me well. She gave me ten dollars, hoping I could find work
somewhere and would be able to rent an apartment and feed and clothe myself. So far, I haven't succeeded. And I'm destitute. I feel I've reached the end of my rope," she cried in desperation.

"And the blessed Lord Jesus has seen your plight and He sent you into this place to rescue you, Ginger! It's not the will of God that anyone should perish, but that all should come to the saving knowledge of His grace. He . . . God . . . planned things this day for you. Me, too. He planned this Thanksgiving appointment. He's waiting to save your soul -- to forgive your sins and to make you a new creature in Christ Jesus."

"Pray for me, Daniel. I want to change; I want Him . . ."

* * * *

They sat talking for a long while, after Ginger knew she was saved. And just as Daniel felt he had reached an impasse as to how to help Ginger with the work problem, up drove Mr. Diggs.

"Any business?" he asked, swinging through the heavy glass doorway.

"Customer number one! Period!" Daniel laughed.

"That's why Mrs. Diggs sent me here; she felt this was a poor day to keep the place open. Where's Sue? Not here again?"

"She called this morning -- said she wouldn't be coming in."

"That's what my wife suspected Young lady," Mr. Diggs said, addressing Ginger, "how would you like to work for Mrs. Diggs and me? We treat our help fairly. If in doubt, talk to this trustworthy fellow; Daniel will verify my statement. How about it; could you begin tomorrow. I'll need a replacement for Sue. This is the last time she'll do this to me . . ."

"Oh, Mr. Diggs! Why yes, yes, I . . . I'd love to work. I . . . I'm so grateful."

"Good! That makes two of us happy. Three, including Mrs. Diggs. Be here an hour before opening time. My wife will show you what to do and how. And say, Daniel, I may have to switch you to the salad bar! That's a
showpiece in eye-appeal artistry and arranging. Now, home for you, Dan my boy. Home to the turkey, leftovers and your family. I'll lock up and take care of the salad bar. See you in the morning er . . . Miss . . . er . . . I'm sorry, I didn't even ask your name."

"Ginger Jennings, Mr. Diggs. I'm new to your town."

Glad to meet you, Ginger. See you in the morning at 8. We open by 9."

While the two were talking, Daniel made a quick call to his pastor. Yes, Ginger could stay in the guest room until she could rent an apartment or room of her own. And yes, he and Mrs. Claypool would do everything within their power to feed, lead, instruct and help this new lamb . . . new babe in Christ . . . whom God had sent to Daniel by way of a Thanksgiving appointment.

Daniel whistled as he and Ginger helped Mr. Diggs clear the salad bar, and when he saw Ginger drive away with his pastor and wife, tears rolled down his cheeks. God had used him to win her to Christ! What a thrill! Yes, what a Thanksgiving Day!