Courtney sighed and cast one last lingering look around the office to make sure she had collected all of her things, then she made a swift and speedy exit through the door while tears ran down her cheeks. It seemed unreal. Positively and absolutely unreal. She was now without a job. And just when her father had needed all the extra money he could get, too! "Today will
be your last day to work here," Mr. Liddle had told all the girls in the office, Courtney included. "We're closing shop. For good."

"Closing shop!" Anetta had exclaimed, looking up from her typewriter to Mr. Liddle. "What do you mean?" she ventured bravely. "I've got to work; my mother is an invalid and a widow. I am her sole support."

"I know. I know," Mr. Liddle had replied in his gentle, soft-spoken way. "It's not my doing, girls," he added, with tears in his eyes. "The big boss gave me orders; I must comply. The company's going out of business."

There was a gasp all across the room. Everybody was shocked. Stunned. To utter silence.

"If I had the money, I'd buy the business myself and keep it going," Mr. Liddle said sympathetically and kindly. "But I don't have the kind of money the Princetonian brothers are asking for this. So, since there is no buyer, and since they've made their wealth, the business is closing. I'll be without employment also." He ended his speech and his announcement on the sad note and a sob.

Emotions ran high. Some were angry; all were sad; some wept and others just sat like they were in a stupor or a trance. Anetta was devastated and distraught. "I don't know what we'll do!" she had exclaimed to Courtney. "I must have work! Oh, Courtney, you often told me how God had answered prayers for you; will you please pray about this, for Mother and me?"

"You know I will," Courtney had promised. "I'm sure God will open something up for you, Annetta. It may even be a better paying job. Now don't you worry. . . ."

Courtney all but ran down the hallway to the elevator, wondering how she could have sounded so optimistic to Anetta when her own mind was in a turmoil over the loss of her job. Oh, how she would miss the office and the girls who worked with her! she thought brokenly.

She took the elevator down to the lobby then stepped out into a brisk November wind. Leaves went rattling past her feet and the city lights blinked cheerfully, as usual, but the tears in her eyes and the hurt in her heart seemed to have blinded her to the little things which once had been so
appealing and beautiful to her. The paper boy on the corner smiled at her as usual but she almost passed him by until his loud, clear call of "Paper Paper. Get your paper here," cut into her morbid thoughts like a cool breeze on a scorching hot summer day.

"Sorry, Andy," she apologized, smiling in spite of the tears in her eyes. "I'll take a paper. Keep the change," she said as she pressed a bill into his thin hand.

"Thank you, Miss Courtney. Thank you much. But tell me, why are you crying?"

Courtney looked into the intent, concerned eyes before her. Then she said, "Oh, Andy, I don't want to burden you with my problems; you'll have enough of your own, once you are grown up."

"But I am your friend; I want to know."

Courtney broke out into a sob. "I lost my job, Andy. All of us did. The company's going out of business. It's for good!"

Andy swallowed hard, trying to keep the shock from sounding in his voice. "My mother's quite a praying woman," he said encouragingly. "I'll have her talk to God about that for you, Courtney. And then you better get busy looking at the Help Wanted ads in the paper; for, sure as I'm living, I believe in my mother's prayers I'm sure God's going to send you another job," he added emphatically.

"Thanks, Andy. You've brightened the day for me and helped to chase the gloom and despair away. Please have your mother to pray for a girl named Anetta, too. She'll have to find another job, too. It's urgent for her. God knows all about it. . . ."

It was dark in the house when Courtney walked into the kitchen. She turned the light on. The usual note was left on her plate at the table. "Dear Courtney," it read, "Kit and I have gone again to see your mother in the hospital. Supper's waiting for you in the oven, thanks to Kit. See you when we return Love, Dad."
She removed her coat and gloves, hung the coat on a hanger, then sat down and opened the paper to the Help Wanted section. She scanned the ads quickly; then her eyes fell upon a secretarial vacancy needing filled. All it gave was a post office box number to write to, however. "Wonderful opportunity," the ad read, "working for Managing Editor. Must have knowledge of languages. If interested, submit resume to P. O. Box 1131."

It sounded good. Even exciting. And interesting, too. She would write in, she decided, as she spooned macaroni and cheese onto her plate and filled a salad bowl with Kit's delicious tossed Chef's Salad. Kit was a superb cook. Courtney mused silently as she tasted of the creamy macaroni, filled with three or four different kinds and varieties of cheese. And Kit was only sixteen, too! What a beloved sister God had given her, Courtney thought silently but thankfully. And even though there was five years of age between them they were as closely knitted as two sisters could possibly be.

From the day of Kit's birth it had been this way, so their parents had always said.

Courtney's mind was a computer of information as she ate then washed and dried the supper dishes: secretarial knowledge and expertise, clerical know-how, et cetera. She loved it all. It had never been tedious nor laborious for her. Always, it had been nothing but delightsome; and as she worked, the information of how to be the best possible secretary, what to do and what not to do, was stored indelibly upon her mind.

She took a hot shower then sat down to the typewriter, asking God's blessings and His wisdom upon everything she typed. Was this job not God's will for her, then she didn't want it. However, if it was His will... . . .

She sealed the envelope with the type-written resume inside. Then, once more praying for only God's will concerning the position, she hurried to the nearest mailbox and dropped the letter into the slot.

"It's not the end of the world for you," her father sympathized when she told him that she was now jobless.

Courtney sighed. "I know, Father," she said. "But the hospital bill! I was planning on helping you with those bills, God willing."
"Which just goes to prove how uncertain our plans can sometimes be," came the soft reply. "But God has never failed us. Not once, Courtney. And what is a debt, or a bill, compared to having one's loved one well, and healed! God has been so good to us. Your mother is coming along wondrously well, the doctor says, and she is looking rosy-cheeked again. This means more to me than anything, my dear. And as to another place of employment for you, why that's no problem with God. None at all. He's always full of surprises for His children. He actually delights in keeping them happy and joyful in Him. Just like He's doing for all of us by touching your mother so she'll be coming home for Thanksgiving"

Courtney went to bed with a lighter heart than when she had left the office uptown. Her father's understanding and his carefully voiced words of faith and encouragement had increased what faith she had and filled her with hope. She went to sleep quoting, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." She had learned, at her parents' knees, to be thankful and praise-ful in each and every circumstance and situation.

Two days later, the reply came. Courtney was both joyful and shocked. She was to come for an interview to J. P. and L's. Why, that's where she had worked part time (as a temporary secretary) while she was still in school. And that's where Hilda Staupper had gotten angry with her because she wouldn't cheat nor lie regarding certain things in the office. Hilda was the senior clerk in the personnel section, or division, of J. P. and L's. And Hilda was smart. Worldly-wise smart.

"But Courtney," she had insisted, "It's hardly anything The company will never know, and it would give you that much extra pay each week. You could use it, I'm sure. Several other girls and I have been doing it for months"

"But that's stealing and cheating, Hilda!" she had replied, shocked beyond anything she had ever seen. "I won't do it, I belong to the Lord Jesus, body, soul, mind and spirit. That's sin, and sinful. Count me out."

From then on, until her temporary job had ended, Hilda and her colleagues had avoided Courtney as much as possible and tried to make life miserable for her. And now. . . .
She read the letter again. Yes, she was right; she was to come to J. P. and L's for an interview on the eighteenth. And Hilda Staupper herself would be doing the interviewing!

Courtney closed her eyes, trying to think what to do. Surely, Hilda would never hire her. She had considered her too religious and overly conscientious when she filled in as a temporary secretary; what would she think of her now? Could it be that she was going to interview her for the opening just so she would have an opportunity to humiliate and embarrass her? Courtney wondered.

She looked at the letter again, feeling the hopelessness of an interview with Hilda Staupper. It would be a waste of time, she thought. Still, what could she lose? If she didn't get the job, she would only still be jobless. But if she did. . . .

Weighing the pros and cons of the matter carefully in her mind, she decided that she must go, if for no other reason than that of courtesy. Hilda had done her the service of answering her letter; she, in turn, could do no less than to go for that interview, humiliation or no humiliation. One thing was certain; it had been placed in God's hands. Every bit of it; from the reading about it in the Help Wanted section, to the marled resume, to the present hour. His will would be her delight; His Word, her command, His leading, her joy. She felt her tension ooze away in the knowledge that it was, indeed, in God's hands. Every bit of it.

The morning of the interview it was biting-cold outside with snowflakes dancing from the sky and the slategray clouds threatening to unleash the powdery white stuff in earnest upon the earth. Courtney parked her old but still good-functioning car in the familiar parking lot then went into the building. She was ushered into the Personnel Manager's office without delay and saw that she was correct in her thinking . . . Hilda Staupper sat behind the desk. She motioned Courtney to a chair.

But Courtney noticed that there was a change in Hilda. She seemed less frivolous and not as carefree as those former days when she had worked that brief, temporary secretarial job there at J. P. and L's.
"Courtney Meredith, I believe," Hilda said, from her chair behind the enormous solid cherry desk. "We have met previously, as I remember. Correct?"

Courtney nodded. "That is right," she answered, marveling at the change in this now neat, trim woman in a chair across the desk from her. Hilda was now quiet and well-composed. Her humble but confident manner belied her former cheekiness and brashness.

As if noticing Courtney's surprise, Hilda glanced up from the application form which she held in her hands, and which she had been studying. She smiled. "You haven't changed much, Courtney," she said. "But I can see that you think I have."

"Oh, forgive me, I didn't mean to stare. But you have changed. At least, I see a difference. . . ." Courtney hesitated.

Hilda put the application sheet on her desk. Again she smiled. "I'm glad you noticed the change," she said. "I owe a lot of it to you. . . ." Her sentence trailed.

Courtney was shocked. "To me? she asked, incredulous.

"Yes, you, Courtney." Hilda's eyes studied her hands. "I was on the skids downward at a rapid pace. We both know what kind of office person I was. I had stifled and seared my conscience until I felt very little pricking from it when I did wrong. Until you came along."

Courtney could scarcely believe what she was hearing. It seemed almost like a dream, or some such thing. But then, why should it seem unreal when God's power was constantly at work in the hearts of men and women!

"Something you said about stealing and lying and cheating got to me," Hilda confessed. "It gripped me and just would not let go of me. It actually haunted me. I had hoped that once you were gone . . . when the temporary job was completed . . . that I could forget about what you said. But it didn't work that way. Truth of the matter is that it haunted me worse than ever. I was miserable, and fearful of being caught in my crookedness, too. My cheating and stealing and lying, I mean."
"What did you do?" Courtney asked softly, amazed at the changed attitude in Hilda.

"I did the only thing there was to do; I went to my boss and confessed everything to him, telling him that I'd pay back every penny which I had taken wrongfully from him."

"He . . . he . . . didn't . . . ."

"Didn't fire me? No, Courtney. He told me that since I had come to him of my own volition and will, he would forgive me and keep me on in the same department. I was so relieved and happy that I cried. And then that night in my bedroom, I made contact with God. I was freely forgiven of all my sins and became a new creature in Christ. I have never known what real joy was until I became converted. Now I have unending joy. I paid back all that I had taken wrongfully, plus interest, and God gave me this promotion. As an added bonus, I sometimes think."

Courtney's happiness was revealed in the tears falling from her eyes. "It . . . it's wonderful!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, it is, indeed. I'm thankful for one young person who had the courage to say no to sin: you. You stood for what was right, and that very stand condemned me of my sin and wickedness. And now we must get down to business matters," Hilda said quickly. "I've studied your application in detail, together with our Managing Director, and we both feel you are the right person for the position. We must have someone with honesty and someone who is reliable and dependable. I knew you possessed all of these qualities. Also, from our past experience in the office, I recalled how excellent you were in shorthand. Mr. Holliday is waiting to meet you now. He'll ask you some questions, and he may give you a brief test on office work, but you have nothing to fear. Come," she said, getting to her feet and leading the way into an inner suite of offices.

Less than thirty-minutes later Courtney walked out into the November cold and the now fastly-falling snow her heart feeling warm and sunny. She was to begin work the Monday after Thanksgiving, and the pay was quite a bit more than it had been where she was working previously. Oh, the Lord was good. So good! His ways and His workings were indeed past finding out. It was going to be a truly wonderful Thanksgiving: Her mother would be
home, God willing, and already she had the promise of a job. It was time to give thanks..., in all things and for all things. She would learn, from this time on, to have a year-long Thanksgiving in her heart and her lips would "offer . . . the sacrifice of thanksgiving," and she would "declare his works with rejoicing."

With praise on her lips, Courtney started the car. She would see what Hilda and Mr. Holliday could do for Anetta, she decided as she headed homeward.