Kirk Randall shoved his heavy briefcase under his arm and, steadying himself against the steel bar that separated him from the burly bus driver, he fumbled in his pocket for change.

"Get a move on, Mister!" the irate driver shouted loudly. "Can't wait forever on you. Drop the coins in and get moving."
Kirk grabbed quickly at the sliding briefcase and set it on the floor at his feet, counting the few coins he'd managed to retrieve from his pants' pocket.

"Hurry! Hurry! There's more than you to get on this bus!" the man exclaimed angrily, giving Kirk a scathing, withering look.

"Sorry, Sir, but I need change," he replied, extracting a ten dollar bill from his wallet and handing it to the driver. "That the smallest bill you have?"

"I'm afraid so. Sorry."

With an impatient gesture and another scathing stare, the driver took the proffered bill and, slapping the money into Kirk's waiting hand, he said, "Okay, now drop the fare in and move, Mister!"

Grabbing the briefcase from the dirty floor Kirk hurried down the aisle of the bus and slid into a seat. The man seemed beastly, he thought, sighing tiredly. Beastly, rude, and unkind. He certainly knew nothing of the meaning of I Corinthians 13. Or if he did, he didn't practice it.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind"; he quoted silently, searching his own heart to make sure that the events of the early morning were not of his making, nor because of any unkindness or uncharitableness he had displayed or manifested, ever, toward his wife of six months.

At thought of Glenda, Kirk closed his eyes, still not able to believe that his ears had heard her rightly before he left for the office that morning. Would the house be empty when he got home? he wondered with aching, breaking heart. She had said she was leaving.

"O God, help me! Help me!" he moaned softly aloud. "And help Glenda. Show her the awful nature within her heart. Please, dear Lord!"

The upsetting events of the morning unfolded again before him with terrifying clarity and force. He had gotten ready for work and gone to the kitchen for breakfast, but no breakfast awaited him. "You sick, dear?" he asked tenderly, trying to embrace his wife who shrugged her shoulders haughtily and walked into the living room declaring defiantly, "I'm fine -- just
fed up with having to do all the work around here. And I'm sick and tired of being alone all day, too."

With mouth open wide, Kirk remembered having stood in shocked disbelief. "But . . . but Glenda honey . . . I'm a working man; I must work, dear, to support us. I merely work an 8-hour day like every other employee."

"Well, you can forget about supporting me. I'm going home to Mother and Dad; marriage just isn't for me. . . ."

Like one in a daze, he had exclaimed firmly but kindly, "Marriage is for keeps, Honey -- till death do us part. You belong to me, and I love you. Let's pray together, Glenda -- pray until this bitterness, or whatever it is, is cleansed and purged from your heart. Do you still know that you're born again?"

He was even more shocked with her answer. "What a silly question! I merely went forward to please you, Kirk Randall. And as for this thing called holiness of heart . . . well . . ." and Glenda had gestured mockingly.

"But it's real, Dear, and it works wondrously well when one obtains the sanctifying, purifying power and grace. I thank God for leading me into this way. I want you to walk it with me, Glenda. Please, let's travel it together."

"Look, Kirk, I told you I'm leaving and I meant it. I'm not giving up everything for you. I didn't get home for Christmas and. . . ."

"But, Glenda, I thought this was all cleared up before we were married -- Thanksgiving at your folks' house one year and Christmas at mine, with the schedule reversed the following year. Remember? And it was you who insisted that we go to your parents for Thanksgiving Day this year," he had reminded her softly.

"Forget it, Kirk! I'm going home and I'm staying home!"

The bitterness of her voice and the sharpness of her words and tongue came back to haunt him now, adding to his fatigue. It had been a trying day at the office, with petty problems surfacing constantly, it seemed, and the crisis of the early morning hours at home had served only to make the office situation appear worse than it actually was.
Kirk squeezed his eyes shut more tightly, trying to shut out forever the events of the morning. Try as he would to placate her or get her to understand, Glenda had remained stubbornly adamant, setting her jaw and refusing his customary good-bye kiss and embrace. With a broken heart, he had left for work.

A sudden surge of tears sprang to his eyes now. Taking his handkerchief, he wiped them away quickly. With the simple gesture, he was brought rudely back to his present surroundings as the bus driver shouted loudly, "What, you too!"

Kirk opened his eyes quickly and looked toward the front of the bus where the driver was castigating another passenger.

"Why can't you fellows have proper change?" the driver exploded as the stranger extracted a bill and waited patiently for his change.

"Sorry, Sir," came the soft reply. "I'm sure you have many trying moments. It was thoughtless of me not to have gotten this changed before boarding your bus."

Taken back by the man's gentle manner and tone of voice, the driver exclaimed quickly in a more subdued way, "Have your change ready the next time, please Sir."

Watching and hearing, Kirk's mind went quickly to the Scripture: "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

The stranger smiled understandingly into the face of the driver and, pressing one of the bills into the palm of his hands, he said softly, "Use this to help care for your ailing wife."


"I know many things," the stranger replied gently. "And from this day on, your wife will mend," he added, turning and hurrying down the aisle.
Seeing the man search for a seat, Kirk moved toward the window and the stranger sat down by his side.

"Too bad people can't be a bit more civil," he commented when finally the man was settled beside him.

"Was he not civil?" the stranger asked quickly, kindly, seeming totally unaware of the driver's brusque mannerism and of his outburst of anger.

"He has very little thought for another's feelings, or so it appears to me," Kirk replied as the bus moved away from the curb and started down the busy boulevard.

"Personally, I liked the man. He does a noble job of driving in these traffic jams. And I should have been more considerate and made sure that I had the exact change before boarding the bus. It was quite thoughtless of me," the man said quietly, gently.

Kirk looked quickly at his seat companion. His every feature bespoke of kindness, gentleness and goodness, and his eyes seemed to be liquid pools of sympathy and compassion. Suddenly, he felt rebuked that he had thought the driver beastly.

"There are so many heartaches and heartbreaks in this world," the stranger said, breaking into Kirk's thoughts. "Take yours, for instance. . . ."

Kirk gasped. How did the man know? Who had told him? They were perfect strangers. Or were they? Turning, he scrutinized his seat companion more carefully. "Who . . . who are you?" he asked quickly, almost impetuously, feeling an overwhelming desire and urge to unburden all of his heart's woes and problems to this kind, soft-spoken man whose tender eyes seemed to penetrate his inmost soul.

Ignoring the question, the stranger said, "You are a praying man; continue steadfast in prayer. Have no fear; your prayers are heard and being answered."

Kirk was too choked up to speak. A lump came in his throat and, simultaneously, a strangely-beautiful warmthness washed over his heart with a
soothing, healing balm, dispelling the obnoxious lump and filling his entire being with songs of praise to the King Eternal, Invincible and All-powerful.

Feeling overcome with heavenly joy, he leaned his head against the window and closed his eyes, weeping unashamedly. When he finally opened them again and turned to thank his seat companion for his words of comfort and consolation, the stranger was gone.

Kirk stood quickly to his feet. Where was the man? He must thank him. He must. Furthermore, he wanted to talk to him; tell him about the events of the morning. He looked to the rear of the bus and to the front, searching, searching. But the man was nowhere to be seen.

Strange, Kirk thought, sitting down quickly; the bus hadn't made a single stop since leaving the curb at 5th Ave. and Halstead, yet his gentle-mannered kindly seat companion was gone.

He brushed his trembling hand over the empty seat. As he did so, his fingers touched a bit of paper. Picking it up quickly he held it before his eyes. "Fear thou not"; he read, "for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. . . .

"For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."

A heavenly warmness enfolded Kirk and his soul was filled with waves of Divine glory and delight as the truth unfolded itself to his heart: He was not alone; he had had a Heavenly Visitor. The Scripture portion was taken from Isaiah 41:10 and 13, he knew, and it was meant for him specifically this night! Glory! Glory!

The ordinarily long ride home was made in record time, Kirk thought, as he spoke a kindly word of appreciation to the driver upon alighting from the bus and hurrying down the street to his home.

Lights burned brightly in the house as he approached the sidewalk. Before he could open the door, Glenda ran to meet him with arms open wide and a shine and radiance on her face like he had never seen before.
"I'm saved, Kirk!" she shouted joyously. "Saved! Bless the Lord! Oh, forgive me!" she begged. "Forgive me for being so selfish and stubborn and hateful and mean. I'm saved! Really and truly saved!"

Overcome with joy, Kirk's arms went 'round his wife. Shouting, weeping and praising the Lord, his tears wet her beautiful long hair.

"How . . . how did it happen?" he asked suddenly, remembering the words spoken to him on the bus: "Have no fear; your prayers are heard and being answered."

"A stranger, Kirk! A perfect stranger! I don't know how to begin; it's all so wonderful! I never saw him before and I had no idea where he came from nor how he got into the house. I locked the door after you left. But when I entered the living room -- after carrying my threat through and packing my luggage -- there he stood, inside the door, waiting for me, blocking my way out.

"I looked at him and he looked at me. Strange, now that I think of it: I wasn't afraid of the man. But those eyes of his! They pierced my heart. And my conscience, too! I felt wretched, miserable, wicked and unclean in his presence.

"He spoke few words, but what he said was weighty and powerful, shooting an arrow into my guilty soul: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: And he is the savior of the body.

"'Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.'

"Those are his exact words. He stamped them forever on my mind and in my heart, Kirk! Trembling from head to foot, I fell at his feet, crying for mercy. Suddenly and instantaneously I felt the saving, transforming power of God in my heart and life. I laughed and cried and shouted for pure joy, and when I lifted my head and my eyes to thank my friend for coming, he was gone!

"Stooping, I kissed the floor where he stood. And while bowed thus, low in humility, a hand brushed my hair and a Voice said softly, tenderly, 'Go in
peace: Thy sins, which were many, are forgiven thee.' It was wonderful, Kirk! Wonderful and glorious!"

Overcome with joy, Kirk led the way to the door, praising as he walked. He had so much to tell Glenda. Yes, so very much -- about the Stranger on the bus. The Beloved Heavenly Stranger! But for now, he would praise and praise and praise: His heart was too full, too amazed, to talk.

"My Lord and my God!" he exclaimed upward, softly aloud. "Did not my heart burn within me."