For a reason both unknown and unexplainable to him, Philip Hardy felt compelled to walk to school that particular morning. He had pushed the suggestion aside when it again presented itself as he showered and shaved. It seemed like such a silly and stupid thing to do since he owned his own car, old though it was but in excellent condition and good running order.
He thought little about the urge while he emptied cereal into a bowl and added a banana and milk. But as he slipped into the tweed sport jacket and checked his tie to make sure the knot was tied right and that it was straight, he felt the same gentle urge and prodding that he had felt earlier in the morning. Come to think of it, he now recalled, it was while he was praying that the urge had first come to him. It was like the gentle prodding of a father.

He slid his arms into the all-weather coat, picked up the books which he had stacked the night before in readiness for school, then slipped noiselessly from the room to the outside. It was early. But he knew that, were he to walk, he must leave in plenty of time or he'd be late for his first class.

A mist of gentle rain was falling as he headed in the direction of the school. The sky was overcast in gray, almost like it wore a shroud and had gone into mourning. He was getting accustomed to this type of weather, however, since it seemed rather the norm to mist frequently. Back home where he lived and came from, there was very little mist. Oh, they had it occasionally but not in proportion to what he was encountering here. But he liked what the college stood for and what it offered, so he had decided to come after much prayer and waiting upon God for the right choice and direction.

Philip marveled at the timing and the providence of God. Almost immediately after he had committed himself to the college, a friend of his called to inform him that he could board in a private home, if he so desired. A Christian home! He was overjoyed; God's leading and His guidance was, indeed, perfect and faultless. Not that he hadn't already known the fact; he did. But it was still yet another proof of the right choice of the college for him as well as an acknowledgement to him that his Heavenly Father was going before him and opening the right doors. Didn't He know all about his limited finances? Of course He did. And He had opened a home in which he could get both room and board for a mere fraction of what on campus living would have been.

Tears trickled down Philip's ruddy cheeks. Tears of pure joy and delight over God's wondrous care and concern for His children. The aged couple with whom he was staying were almost like second parents to him. Their home was his home away from home. His monthly payment for room and board was a financial blessing to them and they, in turn, were a blessing to him in a deeply spiritual manner.
The mist was falling heavier now. Philip was thankful for the all-weather coat which he had found in a thrift store close to campus. Here again, God had just what he needed and at a price which he could afford. Furthermore, the coat was a perfect fit and it was flawlessly neat and clean; a real God-send to him.

He prayed as he walked. Making contact with God was easy. It seemed that God, too, walked the road with him. At any rate, Philip knew he was not alone; One was walking along with him. O blessed thought! O wondrous know-so! He had One who walked not only beside him but lived in him, as well. This was the promise Jesus made to the disciples before His crucifixion and subsequent resurrection when He told them that, after His departure back to Heaven, He would send them "Another Comforter," who "shall be in you." And now he, Philip, was experiencing this blessed truth and could attest to its verity personally.

His thoughts seemed suddenly to be centered upon Dale Howard, one of the young men who attended the church where he himself was attending since coming to college. Dale was not a consistent attender, but was, rather, extremely sporadic and infrequent. Each of the few times he had seen him, he had tried to get close to Dale to let him know that he, like several other young men in the church, was his friend and would assist him whenever and wherever possible should he need help or prayer. But Dale seemed to live in his own little world, totally independent of any of his fellow-travelers on the road of life.

Philip prayed specifically and earnestly for Dale now. He realized that he had never really carried a burden, as such, for the young man. This morning, however, his heart felt heavy and weighed down for Dale. He was moved to tears. He wept unashamedly, his tears mingling and falling with the misty rain.

He saw the river bridge ahead and felt the deeper, more penetrating cold of the wind currents sweeping across the swollen waters, made thus by recent torrential downpours. He tugged at the all-weather coat's lapels and drew them upward toward his neck to ward off some of the wind's chill; then he started out across the bridge, praying all the while. Midway across, he saw a man on the bridge. He looked like a statue, so still and rigid was he. He was staring . . . into the murky, churning, rolling, boiling water. He
seemed mesmerized. Philip passed by him, tossing a friendly "Good morning" his way as he passed. Then, in sudden recognition, he turned on his heel and spun around, calling, "Dale!

Dale! What are you doing? What's the matter with you?"

There was no response. None whatever. Nothing, except the transfixed stare into the river.

"Dale," Philip said, more softly now. He knew he dare not excite the young man. It could be catastrophic. "Dale, it's Philip. What's your problem?" And he placed a hand on the other's shoulder and very gently shook it.

Like one awakening from sleep or coming out of a trance, Dale shook himself, then he lashed out at Philip with anger. "Why can't you mind your own business and just leave me alone?"

"What would you say if I told you that God sent me here, Dale?"

"G . . . od! What do you . . . mean?"

"Just what I said, Dale: God sent me to you. I'm as convinced of this as I am that my name is Philip Hardy. Now tell me what's troubling you. And if you were planning to do what I think you were, you should be on your knees thanking God for sending me here at this precise moment. Had you gone through with it, Dale, your soul would be in hell. There's no escape from the burning-hot place."

Dale's face turned ash-white. He trembled and shook, then took hold of the steel railing that ran the entire length of the bridge's walkway, holding on to it fiercely. When, finally, he raised his eyes to look at Philip, tears swam in their depth. Stuttering, he said, "God sent you; you're right. I was just ready to cross over the railing and . . . and. . . ."

"But why?" Philip asked quickly. Softly. "You're going at things in the wrong way, Dale."

"Everything I do is wrong, it seems," came the plaintive and painfully-sad reply. "I've tried everything, Hardy, and nothing satisfies or fulfills my inner needs. So-o, what is there to live for? Life is so complex and such a rat
race. Think of it this way; I go to bed at night . . . or early, early morning . . . feeling restless and nervous and totally unhappy; I get up in the morning, shower and shave and rush off to work, completely bored and restless and unhappy. See what I mean? The same old thing over and over again and again. And always, I am unfulfilled and unhappy and so miserable. It's like the tread mill: Going, going, going but getting nowhere. Like I said a while ago, I tried everything. Everything! Nothing satisfies."

"That's because you have gone to the wrong source for your satisfaction, my friend," Philip said kindly. "Dale, I promise you peace, of both heart and mind, if you will follow the Biblical injunction to confess, repent, and forsake your sins and come to Christ for forgiveness and newness of life. You will never be satisfied or find peace and rest for your soul until you come to Him. He is the sinner's friend. And the sinner's only source of peace and satisfaction."

The brisk river air sent shivers through Philip. He was sure that Dale, too, felt its biting briskness. His heart pained him for the young man, so fine looking with his set of thick auburn hair, his dark brown eyes and finely chiseled face. He looked strong and healthy physically and had a good paying job, this much Philip knew. Yet here he was, on the verge of destroying the fine body which God had given to him. But his soul would never be destroyed: it would live on forever! Eons and eons after the body had gone back to the dust from which it had come, his soul would still be alive. Eternity! The word had a profoundly sobering effect upon one.

This thought of spending an eternity in hell, and without God or any hope of ever coming to Him, intensified Philip's burden for Dale. With compassion and sincere Christian love, he said softly, "Turn around, Dale, from sin and its deadly evils to newness in Christ. The Savior is waiting; open your heart's door and let Him come in. Please, I beg you, respond to His pleading. Do it now. You said you tried everything. But you haven't; you left out the most important of all things: salvation through Christ. I want to pray with you. Will you grant me this privilege, please?"

"It's not going to do any good; I'm exceeding wicked and sinful. I've drunk the cup of sin to its fullest. I'm too far gone for God to want me or care anything about me."
"That's where you are wrong, my friend," Philip remarked kindly, as tears washed his chilled cheeks. "Jesus came, not to call the righteous to repentance, but the sinner. Sinners are the only people whom Jesus saves. The righteous are righteous only because, like you, they once were sinners but they came to Jesus for forgiveness of their many sins and, through the shed blood of Christ, they were washed and made righteous."

With pathos in his voice and a longing in his heart, Dale cried, "If you're sure He'll take me and not turn me away, pray for me, Philip."

The mist came down upon their heads like a gentle benediction and when they parted a short time later, one to go to his class, the other to his home, Dale was made new in Christ; he was truly born again.

Philip knew he would be late for his first class. But some things took top priority, and winning a soul to Christ was one of them. Yes, indeed.

Hurrying across the bridge now, he marveled at the strangely wonderful ways of God. He was thankful that he had obeyed the urge to walk and that he had had a part in winning a soul to the seeking Shepherd's fold.

"... He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death ..." (James 5:20).