"Are you ready, Brit.?" Bethany called to her twin. "Church will soon be starting and you know how badly I hate going in late."

"I'm not sure I'm going," Brittain replied in a sad-sounding tone of voice.
"Not going!" Bethany exclaimed. "Why ever not?" she asked quickly, as she hurried from the living room into the kitchen where her brother sat on a kitchen chair and was turning the cup of once-hot chocolate, now cold, around and around in his cupped hands.

Brittain raised his dark brown eyes to meet those of his sister. He felt devastated. Embarrassed. Cheated, almost.

Bethany stood near the table, her face displaying and revealing the shock which her heart felt because of her brother's words. "Why wouldn't you go?" she asked quickly, again.

Brittain let out a long, heavy sigh. "How can we?" he asked, almost fiercely. "Doesn't it bother you, Beth; what your father did? I . . . I'm so hurt and . . . and embarrassed and . . . sick at heart that I feel numb. How could he do it, Bethany. How? Doesn't he ever stop to think what he's doing to . . . to us? And Mother's almost as bad, I hate to admit."

"But this is all the more reason why we need the church services, Brittain. We dare not miss. Now, more than ever, we need the Bible messages and the fellowship of the Christians. True, our parents have disgraced us, but they're still our parents. And I love them very much."

Brittain sighed again. Tears stung his eyes. "I'm ashamed," he admitted candidly. "What will our friends say? And . . . and what do the church people think? Of us, I mean?"

Bethany squared her dainty and petite shoulders. "It doesn't matter what they think -- or don't think," she told her twin. "We are to please God, not man, Brittain. And I'm sure the church people feel every bit as badly as we do over what our father did. They're praying for Dad and Mother, remember?"

"How could Dad have made such a fool of himself as to have the entire police force out after him?" Brittain asked, still turning the cup around in his hands.

"Alcohol makes people do stupid and violent things, Brit. You know this. They don't know what they're doing, in many cases. And as for our father and
mother, we must pray more. Fasting's in order, too. They need deliverance. Only God can do this."

"That's true, Beth; but meanwhile what will happen to us; to our relationship with our friends? After all, who wants to get too friendly with alcoholics' offspring?"

"This will show us how genuine and true-blue our friends are," Bethany replied.

"But there's a stigma that goes along with having parents such as ours," Brittain contended. "And now, with Dad sitting in jail for trying to break into the department store downtown, well, it's worse than ever, Bethany."

"This is all the more reason why we should go on a fast, Brittain. Some things can only be changed by 'prayer and fasting,' the Bible states. At heart, and when he's not drinking, our dad is a sweet and kind man. So is Mother. But God's power is far greater than any drink problems. Look what He did for Mel Trotter and Jerry McAuley. . . ."

"I know, Sis. I have really enjoyed reading those two stories in the book of Transformed Lives which the pastor gave us to read. It seems so much more different when it's your own parents, though."

"But it isn't," Bethany attested softly but firmly. "God's power is just as great today as it was when He delivered those two men. It is up to us to activate and unleash His power through prayer and fasting, and not letting go until He does answer and deliver. You're concerned over Sally, aren't you, Brittain? Worried that she'll drop you now, right?"

"I couldn't blame her if she did, Bethany. People associate children with their parents, and rightly so. Only, in our case, you and I are as different from our parents as daylight is from darkness. But will people believe this?"

"Sally will, yes. She knows what the Lord has done for you and me. So do a lot of other people. Now let's go, so we won't be late. And please stop worrying about what people will say and think. We are dead to self and to people's opinions, but we are alive unto Christ. You know you're sanctified, don't you, Brittain? Or aren't you?" Bethany asked with concern on her face.
"I am, yes. And you are right; with God's help I'm not going to dwell on what people will say or think at all anymore. Let's go."

All the way to church, Bethany was praying. Her heart ached for her father and mother. She longed to reach them with the gospel. But each time she or Brittain mentioned anything about God they were cut off and told to stop talking. Her parents felt disgraced because Brittain and she had been converted and were sanctified wholly and were going the way of Holiness.

Sally was the one whom the Lord had used to bring her to Christ. She was a shining witness and beautiful example of what the new life in Christ was able to do for one. Sally lived what she professed to have found in Christ. It was so genuinely real and radiantly beautiful until she, Bethany, had felt she must be saved or she would die and go straight to the lake of fire, to burn forever and ever.

Sally had prayed with her then until she prayed clear through and through clear. Her wonderful experience of heart cleansing had followed shortly after her glorious conversion. It was all so wonderful and blessed that she felt and thought the whole world was new and different. That was less than a year ago.

When she told her twin what had happened to her and what had taken place in her heart, he had merely shrugged his shoulders and told her it would soon "wear off."

But he was wrong, Bethany knew. And a few weeks later, during a special meeting at the church, she had asked her brother to go with her to the services. Out of curiosity, Brittain went. That very night, under Holy Ghost conviction, he ran to the altar and was gloriously and radically transformed; Brittain was converted.

During that same time of special services, he had died out to sin and self and to people's opinions and was sanctified wholly. Bethany remembered thinking how wonderful it was that now, instead of just one from her family being converted and cleansed from inbred sin, there were two of them. That meant a double amount of prayerful intercession going heavenward for their parents!
"You're in deep thought," Brittain said as they hurried toward the church. "What were you thinking about, may I ask?"

"About the time when I got converted and when I was filled with the Holy Spirit. And then how God got ahold of you and changed you, Brit. It's been a wonderful way, hasn't it?" she asked quickly.

"Nothing can compare to the joy and peace I've found in Christ!" Brittain exclaimed. "I am fully satisfied in the Lord. And I'm ashamed to think I was concerned about what people may think about us, now that Dad's in jail. It really doesn't matter what anyone thinks so long as our hearts are perfect and right before God. Jesus had a lot of wrong thoughts directed toward Him, too, I just remembered. But these thoughts never once harmed nor bothered Him: He kept right on doing His Father's business. I mean to do the same, God willing."

A chorus of voices rang out as the two neared the church and more than a dozen young people hurried down the street to meet Brittain and Bethany.

"Don't give up!" Sally exclaimed meaningfully, looking anxiously into Brittain's and Bethany's faces. "We saw the headlines in yesterday's paper but this isn't the end of the world for either of you. In fact, it may just be the beginning of a bright new day for your father."

"Yes, indeed," Mark Tweed declared. "Your dad may be willing and ready to listen, now that he has no place to go and can't get out to his old haunts."

"We're planning a service at the jail for this coming week," Leo Ryan told the twins. "Brother Throne thinks it's a wonderful idea. He's going with us, the Lord willing. He's making all the necessary arrangements."

"We're for you," several others said simultaneously.

"And we're having special prayer meetings for your father and mother," Sally added brightly. "I just know God is moving and working. Your parents are going to be saved, I believe. God works so differently from us. Sometimes it looks like nothing's going right--according to our preconceived
ideas, I mean. But all the time God is moving things in the right direction, for the answer to our prayers.

"Oh thank you, Sally! And thanks to all of you!" Brittain cried joyously. "You'll never know how much I appreciate each of you, nor what your encouraging words mean to me. You are true friends; loyal friends."

"The Bible says, 'A friend loveth at all times,' " Mark quoted. "Christians are true friends."

"They are real friends," Bethany added with a smile, thinking of the wonderful difference between these beautiful Christian young people and those in the high school where Brittain and she were getting their education. They would be shunned and snubbed by some, she knew; jeered at and derided by others. These latter were children of the world, she thought silently, and Jesus would have prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Like Him, she would do likewise. God's grace would be all sufficient for Brittain and for her, she knew: He had given them this blessed assurance in His Holy Word. She would draw on Heaven's rich resources. Besides, Brittain and she were not alone as they walked the narrow road to Heaven; they had friends who cared; friends who prayed -- for them. Real friends. True friends. Christian friends.

"Coming, Bethany?" Sally asked, grabbing Bethany's hand and giving it a tight little squeeze that seemed to say, "I care about you and Brittain and I'm praying for you."

"Coming, dear friend," Bethany answered, as the group of young people escorted Brittain and her into the church.