Amberlee got up from her knees, wiping tears from her eyes. She hugged her Bible close to her heart and, looking heavenward, she thanked the Lord for her newfound, heartfelt experience of being born again. Until five days ago she hadn't known there was anything so wonderful and gloriously real and so soul satisfying. How could she ever thank Mrs. Hanks enough for telling her about Jesus and His power to save from sin and to set one free in
Christ! And the astonishing and amazing thing was that, until five days ago, in the clothing store where she worked, she hadn't known that such a person like Mrs. Hanks even existed. This in itself was a miracle.

That God had sent Mrs. Hanks to where she worked, Amberlee hadn't any doubt. She was feeling especially low that day; her parents had just had another of their many fights and she had left early for work to get away from hearing anymore. And then Mrs. Hanks stepped through the doorway. From the minute she laid eyes upon the woman, Amberlee liked her. She saw she was different. Her countenance gave testimony to the fact that she was happy and at perfect peace with herself and everybody around her.

Amberlee waited upon her, wanting to be near her for the happiness and cheerfulness she exuded and transmitted. How she wished she could sense and feel the same spirit when with her parents. But that was idle thinking, she realized, tossing the thought aside and concentrating upon the pretty but modest woman before her.

"You look very happy today," she ventured cautiously. "Oh, I am!" came the immediate response. "Every day with Jesus is a happy day, dearie. Do you know Jesus?" the smiling faced woman asked quickly.

"I never heard of Jesus. Who is He?"

For a moment, tears clouded the otherwise clear, blue-gray eyes. Then in a flash, she smiled again and reached out to touch Amberlee's small hands. "Then you have missed out on life's most important of all things -- meeting Jesus Christ and knowing Him in saving grace and sanctifying power, my dear. Let me tell you about Him, may I please?"

"Oh, yes, do, by all means."

And tell her the kind woman did! From start to finish, she presented Jesus for Who He was and why He had come to earth from Heaven's glory and splendor.

Never in her entire life had Amberlee been so moved. She wept unashamedly, and before the smiling messenger had left, Amberlee was converted. Changed radically and completely. So much so that her coworkers thought she was losing her mind. She didn't care what they
thought; for the first time in her life she had peace and real joy in her soul. She had found Christ, the Fountainhead of joy.

She hurried home immediately after work, wanting to share her great peace and joy with her father and mother and older brother. They made fun of her and laughed at her. Brokenhearted and sad, she went into her bedroom and there, on her knees, she had her first ever prayer meeting. Strengthened greatly by the Lord's presence, she realized that she would have to allow Christ to shine in and through her and to do His work in the lives of those she loved.

And then, while reading her newly-purchased Bible the day following her great heart transformation, Amberlee came across something that stirred like a gentle breeze in her soul.

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20).

She read the beautiful verse again and again. Bought with a price -- the blood of Jesus! Oh, how she did love Him! How she wanted to please Him!

Reading on, she wept as she read, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

". . . For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,

"And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:14, 16-18).
Amberlee gave a glad cry of surprise; it was as though God had turned His Light on inside her being and was showing her what He desired for her to do.

"Oh, thank You, dear Jesus!" she cried happily. "I didn't know that was wrong. But I know now. I'll obey You. Oh, I love You so much! Thank You."

Getting to her feet, she hurried to the clothes closet and took the beautiful lace gown from the thickly padded, rose-scented hanger. "I won't be needing you," she said as she folded the elegant and expensive gown carefully before placing it inside the tissue-lined box.

"You mean . . . " her mother began, when Amberlee told her what she must do with the prom gown. "You mean you . . . you're taking it back to the store?" Her mother was incredulous. Then anger flashed in her dark eyes. "You'll do no such thing!" she exclaimed, almost screaming with rage. "What will Maureen think, and say? You know we buy most of our clothing there. Now stop this foolishness and hang that dress back inside the closet. You're going to the prom, and this is a command."

"I can't, Mother. No, I can't; I'm changed. It will be a sin for me to go. And I have no desire to go. None whatever. My heart is satisfied with Jesus."

"You're losing your mind, Amberlee! You're going crazy over religion and I'm not one bit happy about it. Take that gown back to your room. You will wear it."

"I'm not meaning to be disrespectful nor disobedient, Mother, but I can't wear this gown. Never. I'm changed! I'm made new in Christ. I would grieve Him if I wore it. And, besides, I'm not going to the prom. Jesus wouldn't go to such a place and neither will I. Again, I really don't mean to be disrespectful nor disobedient, but I must return the gown. Since I bought it with money from my part-time job at Wurstbergers Clothing Store, I feel I must return it and get my money back."

Amberlee prayed as she left the house. She had always obeyed her parents. But she knew what she must do, and it was either put Christ first in her life or disobey His holy Word and grieve Him away.
"No, Lord! No!" she cried aloud. "I love You. I will obey Your Word no matter what it may cost me."

It was Maureen Wurstberger herself who waited on Amberlee.

"Don't you like the gown?" she asked. "It was our prettiest and best."

"Oh, it's beautiful, Mrs. Wurstberger. The color is my favorite. But I won't be going to the prom as I had planned."

"But you must, Amberlee. I hear you're pretty much the choice to be queen."

"I'm changed, Mrs. Wurstberger: I asked Jesus to come into my heart and to forgive my sins, and He did it. I have a peace and joy like I never had before."

"Religion, huh?"

"Salvation, through Christ. And I am so very happy."

"But you wouldn't spoil a whole evening for your friends just because you're too religious to dance, would you? The least you could do would be to go, even if you don't put a foot on the dance floor. And this is a once in a lifetime sort of thing, Amberlee. You're still so very young and vibrant to be getting so serious about religion."

"This is more than religion, Mrs. Wurstberger. Like I said, I have Christ living in my heart. This is far greater and deeper than religion. Jesus is really real to me, and I want only to please Him. He died for me -- for my sins. I owe Him everything. My all."

Mrs. Wurstberger removed the gown from the box. Going to the cash register, she gave Amberlee the money in accordance with the receipt. Then she turned and faced the pretty teen. "I can see you are serious," she stated, "and I'm not a mean woman. I guess I was just testing you to see how genuine you are. I was brought up to believe that dancing is wrong and evil. My mother, God bless her memory, felt dancing led to the sensual and the baser things in life. She forbade us to dance. Someday, when I am not busy waiting on customers, I want to hear more about what has happened to you;
what has brought about this change in your heart. To most young people these days, a prom means everything."

"And it did to me, too, until Jesus came into my heart, Mrs. Wurstberger. Now, though, my heart is satisfied in Him. He changed my desires. I'll be happy to tell you about Him."

"I want to hear," Mrs. Wurstberger declared, giving Amberlee's hand a tight little squeeze before going to wait on a customer.

Amberlee's feet felt like they were walking on a cloud as she hurried homeward. She would meet with others -- her peers and counterparts -- who would not understand why she could not go to the school prom, she knew; but it would be the opening for her to tell her classmates what had happened and how the Lord Jesus Christ had changed her heart and life and made it new in Him. Then there was Mrs. Wurstberger -- Maureen, her mother's close friend; God had given her an ally in the woman!

Tears of joy trickled down her cheeks. There would be other choices to make in life -- many of them; but Amberlee knew that she had made her safest, greatest, biggest and most wonderful of all choices by choosing to take God's way and to go with Him.