Dan Lonsderry maneuvered his shiny-clean sports car through the flow of heavy work-hour traffic, making sure he remained in the extreme right lane of the three-lane highway going east. A quick glance at the west bound three lanes revealed a flow of traffic equally as heavy as those going east. No lane hopping whatever, he thought with an air of satisfaction as he recalled the
horrible pile up of cars less than a week earlier, caused by a chance-taking lane hopper.

At thought of the accident, a wave of nausea washed over him: twelve cars were seriously involved, piled up upon each other, with numerous others banged but showing less damage. Seven lives were taken, one of them a little girl with long curls the color of fall-blooming goldenrod. She looked like an angel as he lifted her in his arms and carried her to the side of the busy freeway and laid her gently on the grass.

He squeezed his eyes shut tightly for a brief moment now, trying to erase the memory of the golden haired cherub but his effort was futile: the memory remained. It was as though it had been engraved deeply and indelibly upon his mind and in his heart. He had thought her dead; beyond the reach of communication. He had turned to leave her to help yet another mangled, broken body out of the shattered, broken glass and the blood and the bits and pieces of steel and metal, away from the screams, the moans and the groans, when her small but extremely clear voice called to him: "Mister, do you know Jesus? Oh, surely you must; you have been so kind to help me. That's what Jesus did -- helped people. Not just good people, but bad, wicked people too. Come here," she beckoned him.

He knew she was dying. He tried not to hear but her voice drew him back to her. "Please come close, Mister, I want to tell you something." He had stooped down to hear. Then he found himself kneeling beside her. And then he was crying. He cradled her gently in his strong arms.

A smile parted the little lips. "Oh, Mister, you do love Jesus, don't you?" she questioned him again. "If you don't, promise me that you will, for I love Jesus with all of my heart and soon I shall be with Him. He's here; do you see Him? He's come to take me to Heaven. Oh, His arms are so gentle as He lifts me up. Please Mister, tell me you love Jesus and that you'll meet me in Heaven."

How could he answer? He had continued weeping. "I'm going to Heaven now, Mister," she had said when he failed to answer. "You're kneeling--oh, that makes me so happy! Now stay right there on your knees and tell Jesus you're sorry for your sins and then ask Him to save you and to come into your heart and He'll do it. I'll look for you in Heaven, kind man. . . ."
And with that, her lips never again moved. She was gone. He knew it. And he continued to kneel.

"That your little girl?" a policeman asked, standing over him and bringing him rudely back to the highway of death.

"No, sir," he had replied, getting to his feet as he explained that he had only carried her away from the carnage.

A quick glance at the little girl and the officer remarked brusquely, "Nothing more you can do for her; we need help over here," and he motioned Dan through the mass of debris and wreckage back to where the screams were piercing the air.

And he had helped; willingly so. And he had seen death in its ugliest form as a man and woman died, screaming for someone to pray for them; someone to help them prepare their souls for the great beyond.

A young man, not much older than himself, Dan was sure, had tried to get to the cars of the screaming people, but his efforts were in vain: death came to both before the young man could reach either vehicle.

Dan watched as he turned away, weeping brokenly and unashamedly, with a look of such pain and sorrow on his face as to make the hardest heart soft and tender. He felt something inside his own heart happen then; like ice cracking or melting. Again he felt the sting of tears in his eyes.

"Hey, you!" the policeman called, motioning for him. "Help us here. You look strong and capable and well able to cope with what you're seeing. This woman. . . ."

Dan shivered as he recalled stepping over to the side of the police officer to help -- just in time to see the woman lunge forward and scream out, "I'm lost. Lost! Oh, my poor soul. Lo-st! I waited . . . too . . . long. . . ."

With a stare of horror and another blood-curdling scream, she lunged forward against the fastened seat belt and breathed her last breath. Her head slumped upon her breast. He tried to get away but his efforts were futile.

"Here, young man," the officer snapped, "this man. . . ."
For what seemed like forever, Dan worked wherever he could and wherever he was needed and when, after a long, long time, traffic was able to resume, he felt weak and limp and completely drained of all physical and emotional energy as he drove to Iris parents' home in the country.

"You look ill," his mother stated when he came through the kitchen doorway and dropped into the nearest chair. "What happened, Daniel?" she had asked. "And why are you so late? I'll have supper ready in a little while. When you didn't come, your father and I went ahead and ate."

She had stood in front of him then and placed her gentle hands on his broad shoulders, saying softly, "Oh, I do wish you were a Christian, Daniel, and ready to meet the Lord. I'm always concerned that something dreadful has happened to you when you're not home on time. If only you were saved. . . ."

He had stood to his feet then and, brushing her hands off his shoulders, he said, "Don't bother with supper for me; I doubt I can eat anything. Turn the radio on; you'll learn about the reason for my lateness. It was horrible. Horrible! I wish I could forget it all; put it out of my mind forever." And with that, he had gone to his bedroom and thrown himself across the bed.

He must have fallen asleep, he recalled vividly now with a slight shiver of fear as he kept his eyes glued to the road and the heavy flow of traffic, for he saw a little girl with long, golden hair running toward him, shouting joyously, "Oh, kind man, come. Come. It's beautiful up here. And there's no sickness or pain and no cars to crush little girls and boys. See the shining angels, Mister? And look at this beautiful white robe I'm wearing. Isn't it beautiful, and the whitest, brightest thing you ever did see!"

Then with a look of keen disappointment in her voice, she asked, "Where is your shiny-white robe, kind man? You don't have it on, and up here you must have one. It is the garment of righteousness of the saints. Oh Mister, I thought you were getting yours on as you knelt beside me along earth's road. Why did you not do what I told you to do? Get your robe on. . . . Get your robe on. . . ."

Her sweet angel voice had begun to fade and he had awakened with a start and sat up in bed, wet with sweat.
The sound of screeching brakes and of metal on metal brought Dan quickly out of his reverie. Just in time, he was able to pull off the crowded highway onto the berm and avoid being one of those being hit.

Weak with fright and shock and having a full replay of the less-than-a-week-old accident haunting him torturously and mercilessly, he slumped over the steering wheel and closed his eyes, not daring to look at what was happening and what had happened. As he did so, the form of the bright little being seemed to have entered the car and to sit down beside him. Her eyes seemed to look through him. Again she pleaded with him, urging him to get right with God and to get his robe of righteousness on.

It was as real as when she lay dying in his arms and suddenly he found himself sobbing and calling on God for mercy and pardon for his backslidden condition and his lost soul. Twice he had been delivered out of the very jaws of death and yes, out of being cast into a devil's hell, where "the fire is not quenched and their worm dieth not." He dare not resist longer; tomorrow may be too late. Death stalked the highways, it seemed: he could well be one of its next victims.

Totally oblivious of his surroundings now, he prayed for mercy and forgiveness and in a short while his soul found its rest. The transformation was gloriously real and wonderful. He was beside himself with joy and peace.

He opened his eyes, expecting to see the radiant, shining face of the little child and the golden curls, but the car was empty except for himself. He sensed, however, the presence of the Divine, and He was smiling.

Lifting holy hands upward, he cried joyously, "Thank You, kind Father. 'And a little child shall lead them.'"