Mrs. Ashbrook met her teenage son at the door of the neat bungalow. "Looks like we'll be moving again, Paul," she said. "Your father just received a high promotion with the oil company."
"That's wonderful news, Mom." Paul set his heavy load of books down on the kitchen table. "I really mean it; that's wonderful! I'm so happy for Daddy and you," and his smile showed two rows of beautiful, well-kept teeth.

"But, Paul," and a cloud hung over Mother's ordinarily sunny face, "that means you'll have to be changing schools again -right at mid-term. I. . . ."

"Don't worry about me, Mother. The Lord helped me every other time and I know He'll do it again."

"But the adjustment; you know how hard Mr. Jackson made it for you before we moved here!"

"Did you forget, dear Mother? Don't you remember how the Lord helped me?" Paul asked, confident of his Savior, his handsome features displaying a holy life and one clean from pollutions of sin.

"How could I ever forget?" and Mrs. Ashbrook's eyes became suddenly moist with tears as she remembered how Paul had stood sweetly but firmly for his convictions.

"Well," Paul said softly, "if He brought me through the last time, He can do it again -- and again," and he placed a hasty kiss on his pretty mother's tiny pug nose as he added, "This looks like an answer to Dad's prayer. Only last week I heard him ask the Lord to show him where he could be more conservative so he'd have more to give to God's cause -- especially so since Mr. Carson displayed the awful nature within him and is withholding his tithe."

"But Daddy's being transferred out -- away from Miggsdale."

"I know," Paul laughed, "but I know Daddy; he'll send his tithes and offerings back to our church here regularly -- until we can get a church going wherever we're moving to."

"Oh, Paul! Your father and I love you dearly and thank God every day for you. You're so . . . so . . . understanding," and she took a freshly baked chocolate cake from the oven and set it on the cooling rack.

"The Lord controls the affairs of a true Christian's life," the boy continued, "and I am fully resigned to any of His plans."
Thus it had come about that the Ashbrook family was transferred to the rapidly growing town of Bayberry.

It had been a mere spot along the road for years and, until quite recently when oil was discovered, it was threatening rapidly of becoming another ghost town. But with the finding of oil and the company's main plant being located in the town, it had suddenly mushroomed to nearly sixty thousand in population.

The new citizens of Bayberry were determined this should not become like so many other cities and towns in which they had lived. Therefore, they planned wisely, beautifully, and conveniently -- beauty being their theme. The wide streets were kept clean and attractive, and trees and shrubs ornamented and graced every main entrance and thoroughfare between the sidewalks and street curbs.

The houses, for the greater part, were constructed by a reputable contractor -- not built with light, thin, hollow sounding walls in which so many had previously lived. They were built of durable materials, attractively and beautifully so.

As Paul neared the newly constructed high school, he took in the neat, lovely surroundings. The school, a mammoth L-shaped affair, was constructed of sturdy yellow-white brick and set off beautifully with flowering shrubs, spreading pfitzer and creeping juniper, pyramid Arbor Vitae and golden Biota with a half dozen blue spruce trees planted tastefully here and there on the lawn. Nestled cozily and snugly at the foot of the towering mountain, it looked more like some builder's dream than the real thing, and Paul stood for a long while surveying the thing of beauty.

Many of the students passed him as he stood there. Some smiled, others hurried by, making loud conversation.

Once inside, he paused and tried to get his bearings. He had been in many a school building but never any so modern nor more well planned than this. Since he had always felt building engineering would be his source of livelihood and his particular vocation, he surveyed and scrutinized every part of the beautiful building. Then, too, he had to find the principal's office and make himself known.
"Pardon me," and he interrupted a young, fine-built, well-dressed, sandy-haired boy. "Where is the principal's room? I'm Paul Ashbrook new in Bayberry and. . . ."

"And I'm Ted Mekkens," the sandy-haired boy replied, extending his hand to Paul. "Come with me, I'll show you to Mr. Packer's office. You say you're new?."

"Yes, sir. Just arrived yesterday afternoon from Miggsdale, about seven hundred miles from here."

"Ashbrook, did you say?" Ted asked, looking Paul over carefully.

"Yes, sir," Paul answered. "Dad's with the oil company."

"He wouldn't be president of this branch?" Ted asked brightly.

Paul blushed, then nodded as he said modestly, "Yes, sir." He had no intention of revealing the fact, for his parents were humble and modest people.

"I just thought so," Ted said. "You see, Dad told me he'd be working under a Mr. Ashbrook. This is great, truly great! Here I am, getting to show Dad's boss' son where the principal's room is. I'm real glad to have had this privilege, Paul. I mean it! I've heard all about you and your folks from Dad's other boss and, well, I must say, we all admire you and your family if you're anything like Mr. Stratton said you were. You see, we don't smoke nor drink either."

"You . . . you're a . . . Christian?" Paul asked, thrilled at the young man's confession.

"Well, no; not exactly -- but good moral living people," and Ted laughed nervously.

"Go to church?" Paul asked hopefully.

"No. Dad's never found any like Grandmother believed."
"And what was her belief?." Paul questioned.

"Oh, she believed in being born again and then becoming sanctified wholly, and to tell you the truth, Paul, there's not one church like that in a city this size."

"Would your folks attend if there were one here?" Paul asked eagerly.

"Oh, to be sure, they would. Since Grandma died Dad's more serious minded than ever, and he said he wished he'd have gotten saved before death took his godly mother. But wait, here's Mr. Packer's office. I must hurry to my homeroom as the last bell just sounded."

"Thanks a lot, Ted," Paul called, "and, say, meet me after dinner where you met me this morning. We can get better acquainted then."

"It's a deal," and Ted hurried down the hallway to his homeroom.

Paul stood in the open doorway and waited for an invitation before he entered the principal's spacious office. After he was settled in one of the thick overstuffed chairs, Mr. Packer's scrutinizing eyes made him feel suddenly uncomfortable.

"You say you're new in Bayberry?"

"Yes, sir," Paul said politely.

"Did you bring any papers with you?"

"From Miggsdale High School? Is that what you mean?"

"That's what I mean," Mr. Packer answered. Paul reached inside his coat pocket and brought the papers out that his mother had tucked in his breast pocket. "I have these," he said, handing them to his new principal.

Mr. Packer studied the papers carefully. "Um! A senior, I notice."

"That's right, sir."
"Good grades, I see. An honor student. I suppose you're quite an athlete?"

"I have not taken gym, Mr. Packer. I enjoy playing a game of ball with the neighborhood boys but I don't go in for sports. And while we're on the subject, I should like to be excused from any of the gym sessions, as well as sports, if you please, sir."

"And why would a healthy, fine-looking young man like you make such a request? Do you have a doctor's written excuse?"

Mr. Packer sat on the edge of his chair.

"No sir. I have no known physical disabilities but this is a matter of personal conviction. If you notice by my report cards, I did not take gym previously."

For a long while Mr. Packer studied the papers and report cards from Miggsdale High. Slowly he said, "Personal convictions, you say?" and his eyes searched Paul's honest face.

"That's right, Mr. Packer. I feel I cannot conscientiously unclothe myself the way the boys are required to do in gym sessions -- in their shorts and tee shirts and then shower en masse. This is my personal conviction since I have become a Christian. I shall be happy to spend the time studying or making book reports that are decent and have a moral behind them or whatever you may wish me to do that is in all decency."

"Since you have made such excellent grades and are nearly graduated, I shall grant you your request. Come with me, and I will show you to your homeroom," and Paul thanked the principal graciously as he followed him down the long hallway.

"Miss Lux," he said as he entered the pleasant classroom far down the hallway to the left, "meet Paul Ashbrook, a new student from Miggsdale. Paul, this will be your homeroom. Good luck to you, my boy," and he slapped Paul heartily on his broad shoulders, then disappeared.

Going to the desk assigned to him, Paul heard someone whisper, "Hi, there," and he looked into Ted's clean looking face. The boys exchanged a
pleasant smile and Paul found himself only two seats behind his new-made friend.

As days went by, Paul became the object of female admirers.

"He's downright handsome," the girls said as they noticed his naturally wavy blond hair and his mannish features. "Looks more like a college man than a high school senior."

"He's handsome, all right," Robin said angrily, her hair over-bleached and stringy looking, "but he never even notices us. He's stuck up -- untouchable -- and . . . ."

"I wouldn't say that," another said, her lips a glaring red-orange.

"We're not his type."

"Now you've said it!" Karol exclaimed boisterously. "He talks more with Annabelle Doddridge and Judy Grayling than any other girls."

"Oh! You can't mean that, Karol. Not those two plain Janes. Why, they don't believe in make-up, short sleeves, cutting the hair, and. . . ."

"That's right," Karol cut in. "They think it's wrong to even trim the hair."

Robin pulled mockingly at her bleached, shortly cropped strands, saying as she did so, "Paul Ashbrook and Ted Mekkens are still just 'untouchables'! And we may as well mark them off our list of eligibles."

"Looks to me like some snobs still come to school to learn!" and Karol's sarcasm was all too evident.

"You'll have to admit we all admire those two 'untouchables,'" Robin laughed nervously, "and maybe, secretly, we wish we were like they are."

"Now who's being soft?" and Karol looked at her friend.

"Not soft, Karol, just frankly honest like some of you wish you were, too."
"But what would any boy see in girls as plain and old-fashioned as Annabelle and Judy? Ugh! You can't even have fun while they're around. They make you feel downright uncomfortable and . . . and . . . wicked," and Karol looked disgustedly at her friends.

"The girls are pretty," Robin admitted honestly, "and really quite attractive in spite of their plainness."

"There you go again," Karol said, irritated by her friend's frankness. "Why don't you join that plain club?"

"I may surprise you someday," Robin said seriously. "Mother would be a lot happier if I'd change. I wasn't like this until I met you, Karol. With you, nothing's really wrong. I was taught differently than the way I'm living. That Paul Ashbrook has something I wish I had."

"Ugh!" and Karol left, saying, "You disgust me."

"Did you mean what you just said?" and Annabelle laid a soft, gentle hand on Robin's shoulders.

Robin, too embarrassed to speak, merely nodded her assent. Where had Annabelle come from? she wondered.

"I can help you, Robin, if you really want to change. Jesus loves you and He'll forgive you if you truly repent. The Ashbrooks are beginning prayer meetings at their house tomorrow night. Go with me. I know Mother and Dad would be happy to stop and pick you up, and I know Paul would really be happy to see you out to their first prayer meeting. We don't have a preacher yet, but as soon as we can, we'll be calling a pastor. Already we have five Christian families who will be attending regularly, the Lord willing."

"My mother will be wanting to come regularly," Robin confided. "She's a devout Christian and . . . and . . . I'm ashamed of myself."

Annabelle, Paul, Judy, and Ted met in the hallway at noon and talked over the bright prospects that were ahead. Paul suddenly knew why God had transferred them to Bayberry. Already Ted had prayed through and found the Lord and now Annabelle was burdened for Robin. Yes, he knew! His happy heart kept singing:
"Then you bring the one next to you, and I'll bring the one next to me. In no time at all, we'll have them all, so win them, one by one."