And that was it! Doreen thought, wiping tears from her eyes and off her cheeks with a soft kleenex. She was at the end of her years of schooling, she was sure.

She looked around the familiar but crowded room which she had shared with her best and closest friend, Kathy, and again a fresh flow of tears surged forth from inside. "O Mother! Mother!" she sobbed into another kleenex. "It can't be! It can't! "
The door flew open and in came Kathy. Flinging her arms around her friend's neck, she cried, "O Dorrie, I just heard the news! I'm so sorry! When are you leaving?"

Between sobs, Doreen said, "As soon as I can get all of my things together. My flight leaves after four this afternoon. Oh, Kathy. Kathy! My father! I . . . I can't believe it! It seems as if I'm having a horrible nightmare. And I know I'll never be back here to Bible school again. I know I won't!"

Kathy reached for the kleenex box. "You mustn't say that," she cautioned in her customary, steady way. "God's ways are truly past finding out. Even yet, He can make good come out of this. And who knows, He may work a real miracle for your dad and you may be back here for opening semester again!"

"It will have to be a miracle, Kath! I can read between lines, where Mother is concerned, and she certainly hasn't told me everything. I feel it inside of me."

"Perhaps you're 'reading' too much between those lines, dear Dorrie."

"I hope I am. O, I hope I am! And Kathy, suddenly . . . yes, very suddenly . . . I wish I'd have been more diligent here, and not have wasted so much time. I . . . I realize this. Not only where my father's life is concerned and involved, but my schooling years, too. What have I accomplished this year and a half here? Oh, I've made fairly good grades, to be sure. But I've leaned too heavily on the fun side of school, loving those corn-popping get-togethers with the girls next door and down the hall better by far than studying seriously and industriously -- the way you have always done."

"Hey, don't castigate yourself. I have faults, too, Doreen."

"No, you don't. I haven't seen a single inconsistent thing about you. I have always just sort of toyed with my studies, and even my work, both here and at home, until some fun thing would come along or pop up. Then I found it easy to excuse myself by saying I'd study or work afterwards. And, of course, you've witnessed my 'afterwards' studying. I'm not disciplined, Kathy. Oh, I feel awful about it. I am the 'fun girl' . . . my nickname here; the girl who just couldn't resist or ignore the slightest excuse for a fun gab session or a popcorn feed and a Pepsi."
"Oh, Dorrie . . ."

"But it's the truth. I've wasted my father's hard-earned money for one entire year and a half. And, Kathy, Kathy, I . . . I feel guilty. Like a criminal."

"But you're not a criminal." Kathy grabbed Doreen by the shoulders and wept softly as she made the positive exclamation.

"I know. I know," came the quick reply. "But still, I . . . I feel guilty. I've been here having a great time, no real objective or final goal in mind other than to say I've gone to Bible school and, possibly, to find a good, Christian husband."

"Well, so that's not a goal? no objective? The Bible states, 'He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord.' In order for a man to find a wife, he must meet her! Right? You're here. Who but God knows what He has in the future for you! Maybe it's His plan for you to be a preacher's wife; or maybe a good Christian layman's wife. Not everybody is called to preach or sing, et cetera. God needs sanctified lay people to labor at home . . . in 'Jerusalem.' To whom would the preachers preach if there were no lay people? Now, stop berating yourself and let's pray together; then I'll help you to pack."

"But . . . what about your classes, Kathy? You'll miss all your morning classes . . ."

"Brother Smith sent me here. He felt you needed support in this trying time, this time of shock."

"Oh, Kathy, I'm so glad you're here! I feel weak and trembly all over since Mother called me. I don't know what I'll do if anything happens to Daddy. He was such an excellent father, always doing something above and beyond what was asked for or required where God and spiritual things were concerned. And believe me, Kath, if ever I do have the privilege to come back here to school again, I'll be back with different motives and objectives. By God's grace, I'll come to learn."
As they prayed together, Doreen unburdened her soul to the Lord, making vows and confessing her dilatoriness and imploring Him to help her to change from being a not-so diligent student to a disciplined individual.

Kathy was the first to get up from her knees. "The Lord heard us," she said softly. "And He's going to help you, Dorrie. But the best and quickest way to get action on that last request is for you to begin to discipline yourself. God always helps us when and where, or if, we can't help ourself. But where we can do for ourself, well . . ." Her sentence trailed meaningfully over Doreen's head.

"I know. And that's the truth, too. Mother and Dad have told me this for so long as I can remember." Doreen sighed. "How I wish now that I would have put that into practice when I was a little girl. Practice makes doing a thing so very easy. You pray for me, Kathy. Promise?"

"Silly! Of course, I will. I love you like my own sister. Now, what shall I pack?"

Doreen broke down and cried. "Everything, Kath. Just everything. This seems so . . . so . . . final. I feel as though I'll never again be back here to study . . ."

"Well, then accept it as God's will for you. You'll be in God's school. For awhile at least, I believe. It can take months and even years for one to recover from a heart attack."

And some never recover," Doreen added sadly. "Oh, Kathy, I have this fear . . . this . . . feeling . . ."

"Remember what David said in the Psalms? 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.' Cast your fears upon the Lord, Dorrie. He'll sustain you."

"I'm trying to. But I'm so scared."

They worked in silence for a while. When everything was packed and Doreen was dressed and ready to leave, the girls from the dorm converged upon her room and had a prayer meeting.
"It's going to be dull around here without you," one of the girls said tearfully.

"We'll really miss you, Doreen," another said. "But we'll be praying for you. Whatever happens, trust God. His way is best. Always . . ."

The ride to the airport was saddest of all for Doreen. It was almost like a chapter of her life was being closed behind her, a chapter which she had failed to develop and probe to its depths. Opportunities lost could never be regained or recaptured, she realized suddenly with illumination.

Once airborne, she leaned her head against the cool window pane and wept. What could God have done for her had she been diligent about her studies? she wondered with remorse. After all, it was "the diligent soul" that was to "be made fat," and it was the "hand of the diligent that [should] bear rule," and the "thoughts of the diligent [which] tend to plenty." Also, it was the man who was diligent in his business who would, ultimately, stand before kings and not stand before mean men.

She closed her eyes, not wanting to think about what might be awaiting her when she arrived home at the airport. "Please, Lord," she cried, "help me to lean upon You. And God, make me an able, willing, and patient, learner-student in Your school. I have a feeling that I'll be coming through some pretty hard lessons, Lord. Just stay with me . . ."

She must have dozed, for when she opened her eyes, the plane was coming in for a landing in one of the cities along the route to her destination. Doreen watched the passengers leave and others file in, and only when they were airborne once more did she dose her eyes. This time, she slept, and when she opened her eyes, it was to the sound of the Captain's voice. They were circling her hometown for landing.

She buckled herself in. She sat and waited expectantly, anxious to see her mother but fearful at the report. "Please," she cried upward, "stand by me, precious Lord. I need Your support, Your help."

With the prayer uttered, a sweet, deep peace and inner calm filled her soul. She knew the worst. In that moment, she knew. He had whispered so sweetly to her soul, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Blessed are
the dead which die in the Lord . . ." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye believe in God, believe also in me . . ."

"Amen," was all she could whisper through her tears. "You'll have to be patient with me, dear Father," she cried. "I'm not the most disciplined student, but I'm going to be. By your help, I will be. Teach me Thy ways, my God, and make me an able learner"

She spotted her mother almost immediately upon deplaning. She looked as lovely as ever. Yes, even with the tiredness and the stress and anxiety, her mother's lovely face had the serene, calm, peaceful look of the saint that she was. And she even managed a smile to welcome her daughter.

"Oh, Doreen," she cried, as mother and daughter hugged. Then her voice broke and she sobbed. "Dorrie, he . . . he's . . ."

"I know, Mother. He's gone. But we're not alone; we're not forsaken. The Lord gave me such wonderful promises on the plane. We'll lean, Mother dear, upon our wonderful Lord."

And suddenly, Doreen felt the supportive, undergirding arms of her Heavenly Father. She was now in God's school. The lessons may be painful and hard sometimes, like this with her beloved father, but she knew that her Teacher would be there beside her to temper the storms and keep a jealous watch over the fire while His scholar was being refined and growing spiritually as she learned His lessons.