ANNOTATIONS

LESSONS IN TRUTH (CADY)

Lesson 10

FINDING THE SECRET PLACE

UNITY

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY

LEE'S SUMMIT, MISSOURI
QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED
for
LESSONS IN TRUTH (CADY)
Lesson 10
"FINDING THE SECRET PLACE"

1. Explain why "finding the secret place" may be instantaneous but the full development of the Christ consciousness cannot be hurried.

2. How close is God to us? Should we approach Him direct?

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5. How do we center our mind on the Eternal (God)?

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8. What are some of the changes that true prayer brings into our life?

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10. Where must our expectation of good be placed?
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Lesson 10

FINDING THE SECRET PLACE

1. Explain why "finding the secret place" may be instantaneous but the full development of the Christ consciousness cannot be hurried.

1. "Finding the secret place" may be instantaneous when we turn in consciousness to God. The poet puts it simply this way, "In a moment, in the turning of a thought, I am where God is" (Walter Rauschenbusch). On page 92, paragraph 6, of the text, the "secret place" is described as

"A place of meeting between the Christ at the center of your being, and your consciousness—a hidden place into which no outside person can either induct you or enter himself."

However, if there are obstructions in our consciousness (thinking and feeling) in the form of negative beliefs that prevent our turning completely to the Christ within, it becomes necessary that we do definite denial work to remove these obstacles. There are in reality no barriers between us and our loving Father except those set up in our own mind.

"If one can turn quickly enough to God, refusing entrance to the mind of the error, refusing recognition of it, and can keep the mind full of prayer and affirmation of the good, the error will be as effectually wiped out as is the impurity of a pool when a stream of pure water is allowed to pass through it continuously" (page 27, Effectual Prayer).

The full development of the Christ consciousness cannot be hurried. Hurry is related to fear; we fear that if we do not put forth intense effort toward gaining a consciousness of the Christ we shall not attain it. Perhaps we become impatient at what we feel is delay and begin to strive after the Truth in which we "live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The law of divine order operates just as efficiently in the development of the Christ consciousness as it does in the growth of a seed. The soil must be prepared and right conditions maintained before the life principle in the seed may begin the process of growth. Likewise our soul must be prepared with right conditions before the seed of God, the Christ in us, (the life principle at the center of our being), may begin to express through our developing consciousness.

Each divine idea that makes up the Christ nature must "grow" in our mind until it becomes a conscious part of us. In one person the love idea may unfold quickly, while in another it may be the
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life idea or the faith idea or the substance idea. All of us will unfold at the level of our own soul development as we wait on God in the "secret place" (which we may "enter" in an instant) for His revelations. Then our intellect, or thinking faculty, will be so quickened that we can accept the divine ideas that are our heritage. The more receptive and obedient we are to God's guidance, the more orderly and sure will be our development of the Christ consciousness, which is the awareness of our own divinity and our relation to God as His son.

2. How close is God to us? Should we approach Him direct?

2. God is as close to us as our own breath, for God is our life, our breath, all that we are in Truth. The poet Tennyson puts it very clearly in these words,

"Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Can anyone say how close the beauty and perfume of the rose are to the rose? Or can we say how close the song is to the singer? Just as close to us is God. Our Scripture tells us,

"He is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27, 28).

Also we are told,

"We are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (II Cor. 6:16).

Annotation 9 of Lesson 2 brought out that God is both impersonal principle of all creation, and the loving Father-Mother of each of us. His presence dwelling within us is referred to by many names, such as the Christ, the I AM, the Father. It is in His immanent presence that we find our oneness with Him.

Yes, we must approach God direct. Any attempt to try to contact God through another person or place is doomed to failure because of His indwelling presence in each individual. It is true that other persons as well as books may help us to find the road that leads to conscious contact with our Father, but only we ourselves may actually walk this particular "road." Prayer is our direct approach, for through the highest phase of prayer, which is "the Silence," we become acquainted with God's own nature of Absolute Good comprising all of the ideas (qualities) of life, love, power, strength, faith, substance, intelligence, and so forth.

When we know intellectually that God is as close to us as our own heartbeat, is in fact the power that causes the beating, then we see why we must make a direct approach to God. Jesus pointed this out in referring to Peter's revelation, when He said,

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17).
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When intellectual understanding gives way to spiritual understanding, we approach God through the drawing power of His love. We know, then, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that no one else can take us into God's presence.

3. How are the qualities of life and love consciously incorporated into our soul, body, and affairs?

3. The qualities of life and love, and as a matter of fact all of the divine ideas that make up our spiritual inheritance, are incorporated into our soul, body, and affairs by the conscious acceptance of them by our mind or soul through our thinking and feeling.

In our true nature, our spiritual self, the Christ in us, we already have life and love and all the other divine ideas, but it is only as we consciously accept them by our thinking and feeling that they become active in our own consciousness. These qualities are then worked out in body and affairs as actual experiences. A person may have a talent for music, for mathematics, for any type of work, but this talent has to be developed. We are ready to begin the developing of the divine ideas of life and love when we recognize God as their source, and ourselves as heir to them. Then we commence to think about them, learn their nature and value, feel them, and finally use them in our daily living.

After all misconceptions concerning life and love have been cleared from the mind, we need to affirm that these qualities are active in our soul, body, and affairs. It is for this reason that our Truth study emphasizes the value of prayer. Prayer helps us to focus our mind on the idea or quality we want to manifest. It is through prayer that we are quickened to the truth of the idea and thus begin to feel it. When feeling is added to thinking about God ideas as living realities, it becomes automatic to speak and act these truths. Prayer takes us into the "secret place of the Most High" where God reveals through spiritual understanding the true meaning and value of His ideas. Through our conscious thinking we may have achieved an intellectual perception of the ideas of life and love and other divine ideas. This then would represent the "letter" while our going beyond the intellect into the "secret place" would bring us to the place of receiving the "spirit that giveth life." Only then can we truly say that life, love, and all the other divine qualities (ideas) are incorporated into all phases of our being.

God has in reality chosen every man to become His channel of expression, but the truly "chosen ones" are those who know that God has created them for this high purpose. We will consciously choose to work for the attainment of this goal by incorporating the God qualities of life, love, power, intelligence, and so forth into soul (mind), body, and affairs. We will "feel" after Him, "and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27).

4. What is "the Silence"? Give steps that lead to entering "the Silence."
4. The Silence is the term used to describe our conscious contact with God in the "secret place of the Most High," when we feel perfect oneness with God, when we absorb the "inspiration of the Almighty" (Job 32:8 A. V.).

We need to keep in mind that when we use the term "the Silence" we should think of it in its two-fold nature: it is the process that brings us into "the secret place of the Most High" and it is the actual state of consciousness we have attained when we are in the "secret place."

When in the Silence itself we no longer merely think about God and His ideas, nor even about our relationship to Him, for this is all done in the step we term "meditation" which we shall consider later in this annotation. The Silence itself is not even the time when we talk to God and ask for things, but it is that period when we listen as God "speaks" to us, giving us the ideas that will, through the law of mind action, produce the things we desire.

"The fundamental purpose of the silence is to establish a means of conscious communion between God and man. It is literally seeking first 'his kingdom, and his righteousness,' knowing that in the discovery of the kingdom itself the lesser objectives are attained" (pages 9, 10, The Silence).

This special form of prayer that we term "the Silence" is preceded by a period of time when we still the thinking and feeling activities of our mind and then direct our whole attention to God so that we may be a ready channel to receive His inspiration (divine ideas). It is not that we do not think at all in the Silence, but the thinking and feeling activities of the mind are no longer drawn outward, but turned consciously inward to Spirit.

"The silence is a state of open-mindedness toward God, the one and only presence and power in the universe" (page 35, The Silence).

In the Silence our mind, or consciousness, is open and receptive to divine ideas. It is alert, but the activity is the working of Divine Mind moving its ideas on a receptive mind and heart.

"The purpose of the silence is to still the activity of the individual thought so that the still small voice of God may be heard. For in the silence Spirit speaks Truth to us and just the Truth of which we stand in need" (page 17, Teach Us To Pray).

God "speaks" to us in the Silence in various ways to suit our needs at the time. Sometimes His "speaking" may be an inner harmonious feeling or a direct inner knowing; it may come as an idea or a definite statement or affirmation; perhaps the words of a beloved hymn or poem or Bible verse suffice to present His answer. There are times when we just have a sense of peace, of well-being. At the core of all these ways is some divine idea that God is revealing to us.
"God answers our prayers in ideas, thoughts, words; these are translated into the outer realms, in time and condition" (page 78, Christian Healing).

The general term "the Silence" covers the entire process that brings us into conscious contact with the Presence of God. It is the state of mind into which we enter to make the acquaintance of this Presence. The Silence is perhaps the most vital phase of prayer, for it is the ultimate in our search, bringing us consciously into the divine Presence.

Because "Order is heaven's first law" (Alexander Pope) there is an orderly technique to be observed in steps that lead to the Silence. There are times when one step seems to fit so closely into another that we are not conscious of its being a separate activity. The steps presented here are to help the student as he aspires to enter "the Silence."

RELAXATION

All efforts to get into "the Silence" will be unavailing unless both mind and body are relaxed. Relaxation is not inertia, but is rather a state of freedom and responsiveness on the part of both mind and body. When the mind is calm it is easier for the body to relax; when the body is relaxed it is easier for the mind to respond to the revelations of God in "the Silence."

"Much can be accomplished in the way of bodily relaxation by quietly telling the body to relax, to let go, to cease from its struggle ... True relaxation ... is a complete surrender to the presence and power of Spirit ... one should be physically comfortable, free from strain, so that the body itself is not a disturbing factor or a distracting influence" (pages 16, 31, The Silence).

MEDITATION

Webster's dictionary puts emphasis on the word thought in considering the word meditation and one definition of the latter is "to dwell in thought." Meditation is the act of contemplating; keeping the mind or attention fixed on a definite subject; musing on or pondering. During meditation we think about God and His ideas; we think about our relation to God as His son. In meditation we contemplate ideas and begin to deny reality to whatever wrong concepts we may have held, and we affirm the Truth.

"True meditation consists in allowing the mind to make unlimited flights of speculation regarding the nature of the Mind of God ... until man becomes conscious of the presence of God ... Meditation is a process of association with the divine Presence, a method of forming an acquaintance with it" (pages 23, 24, The Silence).

For example, if we are meditating on the idea of life, we may find it necessary to deny reality to many misconceptions we have allowed to take lodgment in our mind. We then begin to affirm the
truth that God is life; that He is the Source of all life, and we are heirs to His life, which is eternal. Many other related thoughts may come to us during this meditation period; some we will probably discard, but others we will undoubtedly accept as we ponder their meanings.

CONCENTRATION

Webster's dictionary defines the word concentration as meaning "to bring all one's powers, faculties, or activities to bear upon one course of action or thought or one object; to fix exclusive attention."

"Concentration is singleness of mind or purpose... that sort of interest in which all the forces of your being are intent upon a given objective, or unified in a given purpose... This concentration of the silence is best attained by continually turning the attention to the infinite nature of God, in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being'" (page 25, The Silence).

If in meditation we have done our thinking about the life idea, we begin in this third step to focus our entire attention on the pure nature of the life idea as God created it. We hold ourselves in "singleness of mind or purpose" without interference by mixed thinking. It is like holding up an empty cup so that God may fill it with His inspiration.

REALIZATION or INSPIRATION

Realization of the presence of God is actually the Silence itself. It is the time when we

"Are still, and we no longer entertain
Our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions,
But God alone speaks in us, and we wait
In singleness of heart, that we may know
His will... "(Longfellow).

With mind and body wholly relaxed, the meditation period has cleared the way for concentration on God as the one presence and one power. We are now directing our attention Godward so that when we reach the point of "the Silence" we shall know that we are in "the secret place of the Most High," in the very presence of God. In eagerness "we wait in singleness of heart" for the revelation, inspiration, or illumination from the Father. When God "speaks" it is the movement of Divine Mind on our mind expressing divine ideas that are absorbed by our waiting consciousness. We have now come to the place where we know!

Thanksgiving, covered by Annotation 7 of this lesson, is very vital to every step that brings us into the Silence itself and it reaches its ultimate when the point of true realization is reached. Then the soul can say exultantly:
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I know!
I am light!
I am intelligence!
I am substance!
I am life!
I am love!
I am joy!
I am peace!

The whole being is lifted up in thanksgiving to God, the Giver of all-good!

5. How do we center our mind on the Eternal (God)?

5. The word Eternal is another name for God, therefore we center our mind on the Eternal by thinking on the ideas, qualities, or attributes that make up God's nature of Absolute Good. As we think about these God ideas, we learn their nature and value and seek to use them in our daily living.

The more we think about a thing, the more are we able to understand its nature. The same thing applies to God ideas. Lesson 5 on "Affirmations" emphasized that we are not to confine ourselves to set forms. Nevertheless, in order to center our attention on God, the Eternal, or any of His ideas, we often find it helpful to use Scripture, the Lord's Prayer, or any uplifting statement, whether in poem, song, or hymn, that presents the ideas we seek to incorporate in our consciousness.

In our communications, one with another, what we say or what we write, is for the purpose of imparting ideas. In the endeavor to center our mind on the Eternal (God), we use words as vehicles only to bring us into close acquaintanceship with God ideas. Throughout these lessons Truth statements have been presented that can be used to center our attention on the Eternal (God) and His good. When we truly feel this Presence, we shall be able to discontinue the use of actual words at that time because the ideas will have become deeply impressed in our consciousness and are ready to bear fruit.

There is nothing mysterious about centering our mind on the Eternal (God), for every step we have taken in these lessons has been part of this process. True prayer is centering our mind on God, the Eternal; affirmations of Truth also help to center our mind on the Eternal. Every step taken to reach what we call "the Silence" brings us to the place in consciousness where we are centered in God.

6. Why is it necessary to be mentally and physically relaxed when entering "the Silence" or "the secret place"?

6. It is only as we become mentally and physically relaxed that we can actually enter "the Silence" that takes us into "the secret place" and there receive the spiritual sustenance that is necessary for our well-being.
Webster's dictionary includes among other definitions of the word relax "to lessen the tension, to release, to slacken." This means that in order to relax ourselves mentally, we are to release our mind from thinking of the things we need to do in our everyday living, and especially to release the mind from the tension of confused or disturbed thinking. Sometimes we let ourselves become tense through an ardent desire to contact God, but this defeats our purpose. Relaxation takes place in the body as we release muscles and nerves from tension.

The quieting of mind and body is done so that there will be no interference with our conscious "waiting upon God" (text, page 105). In no other way can we become a receptive channel for the working of Spirit. We have to feel that Spirit is working in us, and this feeling cannot come to us if we are tense in either mind or body. While our body is relaxed, it is alive and ready to carry out any command. While our mind is quiet, it is alert and ready to hear the "still small voice" of God.

The musician who does not relax mind and body before his performance cannot give a true rendition of the composition, for the principle of music must have a responsive vehicle through which to express. God, as Principle, must also find responsiveness in us in order for Him to do His perfect work.

If the body is tense, too much attention is given to it by the mind, and the latter cannot reach the point of either meditation or concentration. Perhaps none of us will follow exactly the same method of becoming relaxed in mind and body, but we must find the way that is right for us at any given time. Sometimes music can help to bring the desired quietness of mind and body; at other times just speaking affirmations of relaxation can gently bring both mind and body into the needed relaxation.

If we remain tense or strained in spite of all our efforts to relax, a change to some active work may help to remove the tension. There are times when work in the outdoors, such as gardening, can bring release from tension. If it seems wise to do some active thing, we may even find ourselves "entering the Silence" without effort while our hands are busy. Or perhaps we shall be able to return to our silence period after the outer work is done.

Certainly where regular periods for entering the Silence are possible, one needs to assume the position that is best for him. We do need to know, however, that with practice the Silence can be entered instantly, and is not dependent on outer circumstances.

"It is not the position of the body so much as it is the attitude of mind and heart that expresses true devotion" (page 136, You Can Be Healed).

By being constant and regular in our silence periods, we soon learn to commune easily with God at any time, in any place, under any circumstances. When it is not possible to be in an environment that is conducive to "entering the Silence" such as quiet surroundings
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and a comfortable chair, we still may be able to go instantly into the presence of God by turning our attention within, with full cooperation of mind and body.

"When we are truly relaxed, we are as unconscious of the body as we are of well-fitting clothes. The body is the clothing of the soul and the soul is the clothing of the Spirit, and a body so cramped that it cannot let go and relax is closed to the beauty and life that Spirit seeks to express in it through the soul" (page 40, Effectual Prayer).

7. How does the attitude of thankfulness bring the fulfillment of our righteous desires?

7. The attitude of thankfulness opens the way for the fulfillment of our righteous desires, for thankfulness is the action of both faith and love—the faith that perceives that good is awaiting our claim, and the love that unifies us with the good we long to manifest in mind, body, and affairs.

"Metaphysicians find that words that express thanks, gratitude, and praise release latent energies of mind and spirit; and the effects of their use follow so quickly that they can almost be identified with the originating words" (pages 91, 92 Teach Us to Pray).

Probably nothing works more quickly to make the mind receptive and responsive to God ideas than gratitude and thanksgiving, for these attitudes of mind fill us with expectancy of the "added things" promised by Jesus (Matt. 6:33).

"True thanksgiving is the soul's recognition of its relation to God, and there is no limit to its capacity" (page 108, A More Wonderful You).

We find that two things occur when thankfulness fills the mind: first, there is increased growth or expansion in our consciousness, for we have come to the place of acknowledging God as the source of good and ourselves as His heirs; second, there is a consequent increase in manifestation of this good in body or in affairs. Our recognition of good has prompted our "attitude of gratitude" and this in turn has opened the way for the manifestation of our desire.

"True thanksgiving may be likened to rain falling upon ready soil, refreshing it and increasing its productiveness" (page 105, Prosperity).

That thankfulness is vital in the fulfillment of our desire is not a new teaching. Charles Fillmore reminds us of this in his book Jesus Christ Heals, page 139, when he says:

"The prophets of old knew the power of increase inherent in thanksgiving. 'Praise ye Jehovah' is repeated again and again in the Psalms, because the Psalmist knew that praise and thanksgiving divinely directed tap the mighty reservoirs of infinite Mind."
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To sum up: true thanksgiving is knowing the good, seeking the good, speaking only good, expecting only good, and the result of these attitudes is to bring the fulfillment of our righteous desires.

8. What are some of the changes that true prayer brings into our life?

8. The changes that true prayer brings into our life will be in various forms of good manifested in our mind, body, and affairs, as explained more fully later in this Annotation.

True prayer is conscious communion with God in the "secret place" within ourselves. It is our way of raising our consciousness to a full awareness of God's presence, thus preparing our mind to accept the ideas (attributes) of God that are ours by divine birthright. Therefore, when we pray aright our soul is being "fed" by spiritual patterns in the form of divine ideas that will manifest as the needed things in our life. The influx of these ideas (patterns) will show forth in a completely new way, for as our text says on page 112,

"You will have a strange new consciousness of serenity and quiet, a feeling that something has been done, that some new power to overcome has come to you."

Then, from this contact with our Father, other good and practical results will follow. We will begin to face courageously the things that have to be met in the world about us, for our whole attitude toward them has changed.

This lesson has already emphasized the fact that our spiritual growth cannot be hurried, thus all the changes that take place will be in divine order. Sometimes, without fully realizing it, our intellect (thinking phase of the mind) is keener, more alert, more efficient, for now it is accepting the guidance of intuition (the "still small voice"). Our heart, or feeling nature, is gradually becoming more tolerant, understanding, compassionate; our body reaps the benefit of a mind more serene, for it is able to express its innate perfection, and our health "shall spring forth speedily" (Isa. 58:8). The effect of "waiting upon God" goes still deeper, for our relations with other persons broaden into more harmony and happiness for we become easier to live with and to work with!

All that we do, after moments spent with God in the "secret place," is tinged with a glory that we never have known before. By touching God's presence in "the Silence" we have become richly blessed with faith and love.

"On the 'mountain top' we receive new illumination, inspiration, and insight into the providing law. Then we have a work to do away from the mountaintop, lifting all our thoughts to the Truth standard. We should carry the light, joy, peace, and strength we receive on the spiritual heights of consciousness down into our everyday life for the purpose of redeeming the human part of us" (page 41, Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters).
9. How do we keep the blessings of Spirit flowing into our life?

We keep the blessings (ideas) of Spirit flowing into our life through waiting on God in "the Silence." Then we give out through thoughts, words, and deeds the inspiration we have received through our abiding in "the secret place." This receiving and giving is the practical application of Truth.

"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

When we ourselves become aware of God’s love, we are able to love our dear ones, our friends, our neighbors, in a more spiritual way, allowing this same love to embrace all mankind. When our mind is filled with a new sense of divine life, we can pass on this blessing to our physical body so that it may manifest the perfect health that God intended. If in the Silence the revelation comes that God is our inexhaustible source of supply, then we keep this blessing flowing by speaking the word that brings the manifestation of prosperity to our affairs. If in the "secret place" we feel the harmony and peace of God, then we radiate these qualities to all around us, and they will continue to flow into our consciousness.

"Remember that blessings cannot remain static. To enjoy a blessing we must pass it along or share it with others. Our blessings circulate between us and God as they pass through the lives of other persons" (Lowell Fillmore, Weekly Unity, April 12, 1953).

Giving and receiving represent one law that operates on all levels of life. If we receive blessings from God during our periods of prayer, then it is only logical that in order to keep this law operating we must give forth in our daily living the vital inspirations that come to us. Jesus emphasized this point in saying,

"Give, and it shall be given unto you . . . for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

The blessings of God are the powers of His nature that come to us in the form of the ideas that make up our divine inheritance. Therefore, it is only through the practice of "the Silence" in the "secret place of the Most High" that we can become aware of these powers or blessings of God. In Lesson 6 on "Faith" we learned that "Use is the law of increase." We are able to increase the inflow of God ideas by our practical use of them, rather than trying to hold them as something apart from our daily activities. The poet tells us,

"Love that is hoarded, molds at last
Until we find some day
The only thing we ever have
Is what we give away."

--Louis Ginsberg.

10. Where must our expectation of good be placed?
10. Our expectation of good must be placed in the Lord of our own being, the Christ, as brought out in paragraph 41 on page 115 of the text. Paul speaks of "the mystery which hath been hid for ages ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26, 27).

There is only one source to which we may look for fulfillment of our expectation of good and that is Divine Mind, which expresses in us as "my Lord." Our text brings out that the whole business of "your Lord" is to "manifest Himself to you and through you" (page 115) as health, wisdom, and power. If we look outside ourselves expecting to find fulfillment of these blessings we will be disappointed and frustrated. The inharmony and confusion in which so many persons find themselves is caused by their searching for spiritual and material fulfillment in other persons, in places or in things. The hunger of the soul cannot be satisfied with that which gratifies the senses only. Our need is for a true fulfillment for "he hath set eternity in their heart" (Eccles. 3:11). Only spiritual realities, or divine ideas, will bring true contentment. These are the indwelling gifts of the Lord of our being.

"Waiting upon God" (page 113 of the text) and placing our expectation in Him are given as the two indispensable conditions to finding the "secret place" and abiding in it.

I thank Thee, Father, for the way
Thy hand has guided me today.
I woke at morning's dawn afraid
To face my problems. But I prayed,
And one by one each need was met;
For Thou has never failed me yet.
Dear God, henceforth my prayer shall be