

# The Diary of a Christian Mother

*By Thekla E. C. F. Ludwig*

Note: These entries were written during the summer of 1941 at the request of radio station KFUD, a Lutheran station broadcasting from St. Louis, Missouri. The entries are based on the author's recollections of her life with her husband and children from the birth of her first child in 1926 to the current situation in 1941.

These diary entries were organized into sixteen "chapters." Each chapter became the script for a weekly 15-minute radio program called "The Diary of a Christian Mother." The scripts were read "live" by an employee of KFUD, and the author's name was never mentioned.

The diary entries use the real names of the author's husband (Rev. Paul W. Ludwig Sr.) and her first eight children (Paul Jr., Eunice, Robert, Richard, Philip, John, Theodore, and David). The names of the author's sisters were altered slightly to disguise their identities, because some people in the St. Louis area would have recognized their names: Agnes became Ann, Eleanor became Ellen, Bertha became Beth, and Ruth became Rachel.

**RADIO STATION KFUD** (830 KILOCYCLES—1000 WATTS)  
**ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

"We preach Christ  
Crucified"—1 Cor. 1, 23

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One of these bronze souvenir pins will be given to every person who contributes a dollar or more toward the \$100,000 Greater Gospel Voice Radio Fund.

April 4, 1941

Mrs. P. Ludwig  
Route 1  
Oxford, Nebraska

Dear Mrs. Ludwig:

Since January our broadcasting day is again lengthening from month to month. Our longest broadcasting day will be in June and July, when our sign-off time will be 8:30. We go on the air at 7:00 o'clock every weekday and at 8:30 on Sundays and remain on the air continuously without any silent periods. You will readily understand that this means the building of many new programs.

Could you prepare a weekly fifteen-minute feature to be known as "The Diary of a Christian Mother." She can get an idea of what I have in mind from a book "Mary Ellen's Diary" which I am sending you under separate cover. I am sure you are qualified to write these scripts and would have a vast experience to draw on, different, of course, than Mary Ellen's.

Your remuneration would be \$1.00 for every script. Your name, as author of the feature, would not be mentioned. You would not necessarily have to present this material in person, for we could get someone to present your scripts.

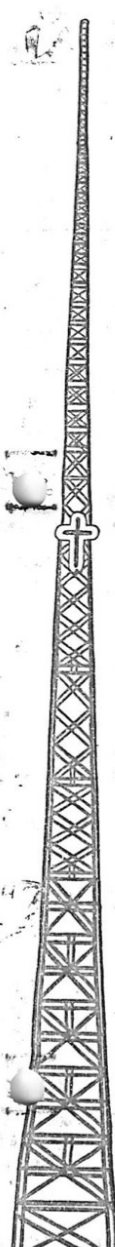
I have not yet chosen the month, day and hour for this new feature, but I would appreciate it if you could begin to send me the weekly manuscripts with May.

Awaiting an early and favorable reply, I am

Very truly yours,

*A. H. Achenstein*  
Director of Radio Station KFUD

HHH:AF



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## **Preface**

Diaries often play an important part in the lives of notable men and women. Just think of Eleanor Roosevelt's famous column "My Day," or Admiral Byrd's graphic account of his explorations. Or, think of the diaries of notorious persons, which pop up so accusingly at divorce or murder trials!

But this is altogether different. This is nothing outstanding or sensational, nor is it an interesting account of adventures. My object in writing this was merely to jot down occasionally the foremost happenings in our home, for future reference as a relaxation for frayed nerves, but mainly so that I would realize how much I had to be thankful for: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." And also that I might, from such realization, draw new courage and the sure confidence that God is ever with me, whose promise is: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

## Chapter One

**March 11, 1926**

The birth of a baby! What a miracle, what a revelation of God's omnipotence and mercy! Just a month ago today, our precious son was born—and what a wee, tiny son he is! Our hearts are wrapped up in him, in his every movement, in his every breath—we can't thank God enough for blessing us with such a wonderful gift! Each time I look into his beautiful big eyes filled with wonder, love, and trust, my heart overflows with praise and thanksgiving. Who am I that the Lord entrusted me with one of His blood-bought lambs? Oh, God, give me the right understanding, love, patience, and wisdom to bring him up in the fear of the Lord!

The past weeks have been troubled and full of anxiety. Before I was permitted to leave my bed, my dear Paul became seriously ill with the flu, and the doctor feared pneumonia was setting in. How terrible not to be able to see him—the doctor was afraid that the baby and I would contract it—or speak to him! If my dear, good Mother had not come the 700 long miles to be with me, I fear I would have broken under the strain. However, God heard our prayers, and now, after weeks of grey clouds, the sun is once again shining for us. We are all well and happy and exceedingly grateful.

My dear Mother left yesterday, and now I have the baby's care on my inexperienced shoulders. I must admit that, although it's lots of fun, and he is too cute for words, I am a bit frightened. What if I should drop him, or have the bathwater too hot, or if he should take cold? Since I am so far from home and Mother, and eight miles from the doctor, I feel the responsibility keenly. But Mother's parting words were: "Remember to trust in Jesus, and He will help you in all your troubles." So I feel confident that I shall soon handle my little "Bit of Heaven" like a grandmother.

What a warm, glowing feeling of satisfaction it is to know that my dear, wee son was baptized when he was but 2½ days old! We named him "Paul Junior." My dear Father surely reminded us frequently, before the baby's birth, that we should not neglect this sacred duty, but bring our child to Jesus just as soon as possible. (How much it means to both Paul and me that we were brought up in Christian homes by devout, Christian parents. If only we can be as faithful and loving to our children!) And on the blessed baptismal day our prayer was:

Wash it, Jesus, in Thy blood,  
From the sin-stain of its nature;  
Let it rise from out this flood  
Clothed in Thee, a new-born creature.  
Write the name we now have given;  
Write it in the Book of Heaven.

And both of us had tears in our eyes.

What a flood of cards, letters, telegrams, and gifts descended on us, when it became known that a bud had burst forth on our family tree! The letters from the grandparents are treasures worth cherishing a lifetime. Of course, all our young friends tease us, even though we know they're green with envy. And this poem, dedicated to us by a dear friend of the family, is a veritable gem:

So this is motherhood!  
To know the ecstasy of love,  
To feel its glorious promise given from above,  
To mark the throb of life beneath the heart,  
To play in God's great plan a humble part:  
That's motherhood.

So this is motherhood!  
To bring love's burden to the light,  
To pass through days of terror, hours of mortal fright,  
To press the tiny bundle to the breast,  
With ecstasy to feed the welcome guest:  
That's motherhood.

So this is motherhood!  
To bring the new-born baby to the Lord,  
That in Baptism He may richest gifts accord,  
To turn in joyful praise to Him alone  
Whose death did e'en for little babes atone:  
That's motherhood.

O glorious motherhood!  
To bear the flame of life from age to age,  
To write the story of mankind on living page,  
To have a part in God's creative plan,  
To be a wife, a mother be, to man:

That's motherhood.

Now that our home life is settling down to normal again, I'll have to write to all of these dear relatives and friends. Won't they be surprised to hear that the baby can smile and play so delightfully with his own tiny fingers!

What an eventful, never-to-be-forgotten month! I hope hereafter, every now and then, to add a page or two to this rambling account of my emotions and experiences. How bright and rosy the future looks tonight! With two to love and live for, life really is beautiful.

### **May 6, 1926**

My good resolution about jotting down the recent happenings hasn't been carried out so far. The baby surely requires lots of time and energy, but I love to do it, and I often wish I had nothing else to do but care for him and cuddle him to my heart's content. He is so bright-eyed and full of eager curiosity that I enjoy watching his little mind develop. How can anyone doubt the existence of Almighty God when he sees the unfolding of a little intellect?

Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully, wondrously made thee;  
Who from the heavens the streams of his mercy doth send thee.

This is our first wedding anniversary, and for us that means a day of praise and rejoicing. We have been unspeakably happy together, and the troubles, worries and vexations, as well as the joys and delights, have brought us still closer. The following little poem by Carleton Knox keeps running through my mind.

Whither thou goest, I will go,  
All of life's journey through.  
Shoulder to shoulder, and palm pressed to palm,  
Whether the pathway be stormy or calm,  
I shall be happy with you.

When thou rejoicest I will rejoice,  
All of life's journey through.  
Sorrow I'll share when it touches thy heart,

Joy be my portion when joyful thou art,  
I shall be happy with you.

And that's exactly the way Paul and I feel about each other. We've felt that way a long time, perhaps ever since the day we met, when he was a seminary student and I a high-school Junior. And that feeling grew and deepened, until we were united for life. Sweet and tender memories! Paul surely was faithful in writing to me, and such dear and exquisite letters, full of devotion and longing! Dad always enjoyed my interest in the U.S. Mail, and frequently asked if I had a letter from my "tin god." Well, we were engaged a whole long winter, while Paul was 700 miles away, in charge of a parish and also teaching school. And when a girl and her fiancé are planning their wedding and a new home, it takes a lot of letters to discuss matters. Not that ours were only business letters—they were anything but that!

At any rate, it was a dream come true, when finally, after a tearful farewell to Dad, Mother, and home, and an enchanting honeymoon, we reached our own home on the prairies of the Midwest. In spite of all the jokes and cartoons to the contrary, there is something sacred and holy in a bride's first attempt at housekeeping, in those first meals, those first days together.

I must admit I felt like a fish out of water at first. All my life I lived near trees and beautiful gardens, and now I was transported to a desert (so it seemed to me), with the nearest tree several miles away, and a lawn a thing unheard of. If I hadn't been so dreadfully in love with my adoring husband, I'm afraid I should have succumbed to homesickness. But after a year, I have become accustomed to brown, parched acres, hot, strong winds, dust and grit, and have almost felt nostalgia for a green tree or a flower garden in bloom.

I shed many a tear (was it partly in self-pity?) while Paul attended the summer institute for teachers, so that he would be up-to-the minute in his school next fall, and I was alone with only the chickens and goat for company. However, the every-Sunday-afternoon trips to the distant mission station helped me feel less antagonistic toward this barren land, and I've tried my best so see some form of beauty in it. Didn't that professor friend of ours in St. Louis insist these prairies are magnificent and awe-inspiring in their vastness and solitude? Well, try as I might, I can't find it. I'm sure God created them for some distinct purpose, but I can't help wondering whether he intended human beings or animals to make

them their habitat.

The people here are hard-working, intent on eking a living out of the soil, and seemingly content. Most of them have lived here all their lives, their ancestors having homesteaded the land. They tell us that about once every seven or eight years they raise a bumper crop, and then they really have a bankroll to be proud of. I wish that would happen while we're here! I'm sure it won't be this year, because the winter has been dry and windy, and the spring has been windy and dusty. There is an old saying that "everyone must swallow at least a peck of dirt in his lifetime," and I felt as though I've taken my peck this past year. My wee son, too, must have a good start on his peck.

Last week we drove the 200 miles east to see Paul's father and mother. We had to show them the new heir—the first grandson to carry on the family name. Of course, they thought he was adorable and cute, and Grandpa said he looked wise enough to be a professor someday. He doesn't realize what air-castles a fond mother builds around her offspring.

Soon we will go still farther east and see my people. Joyful anticipation! Won't it be grand to see Dad, Mother, the old home, and old friends again! Now it's time to tuck my wee son into his little nest for the night. I've rattled on, and the pen fairly flew over the pages. But duty calls! Won't it be lovely when our tiny son can say his own little prayers!



## Chapter Two

**June 13, 1926**

There's a lilt to the song in my heart this morning. After our Sunday service we'll snatch a bite, and then it's off for home—700 long miles away! I've been a bit apprehensive, since several of the people expressed their surprise at my undertaking such an exhausting trip with a tiny baby. "Surely you don't think you'll bring him back alive!" one of them remarked. 'Tis true, we have only a Ford runabout and, of course, little protection against wind and weather. But the doctor assured me we were not taking a risk and urged us to go. Ever since Paul had that bout with the flu, his system has not been up to par, and the doctor advises a tonsillectomy. Since the nearest hospital is 60 miles away (how we miss good medical care here!) we've decided to have it done while we're in a large city. And, after all, my God is able to protect my baby in a car and on a journey just as well as at home. He will send His guardian angels to be our companions and to see that no harm befalls us.

Won't it be satisfying to unburden my heart to Mother! There's no one like a good, Christian mother to lean on! I have found some lovable, kind people out here. It's strange, but true, that those who are so overwhelmingly sweet to a newcomer, usually turn out to be doubtful and two-faced like Janus, while the quiet, reserved ones are loyal and true. Yet a pastor's wife is never free to become intimate with the parishioners. And frequently it is necessary to swallow indignities and keep a poker face. For instance, after I'd been here only a few weeks, one of the older men said: "Mrs. Preacher, you're pretty young, ain't you? I can tell by looking at your teeth." And he proceeded to do so. That, I understand, is the way a cattleman judges the age of his stock. Well, Paul was highly indignant when I told him about it, and said he didn't bring me out here to be insulted by a boor.

But it isn't always irritations and annoyances. The other night we really had an amusing experience. We were invited by a family who live in a dug-out (Paul said they must feel like gophers!), and when supper was served, the menu consisted of bread and soup and coffee, and the table service was flat dinner plates, knives, and forks. Since the custom here is that no one dare eat until the pastor does so, Paul was in quite a quandary; but he was ingenious enough to break off a chunk

of bread and dip it into the soup and thus sop it up. All of them did likewise. And I learned later on, while I was helping do the dishes, that that is the approved way of enjoying soup, and also soft-boiled eggs! Somehow, I couldn't help thinking of Judas Iscariot eating the sop offered him by Jesus.

Several of our families live in sod-houses, and I was surprised how cozy and home-like the interior is. A number of our school children come from such homes. As I taught the first three grades of our parish school last fall, and also have been teaching the smaller children in Sunday school ever since I came, I have had occasion to become acquainted with their home environment. Everything is simple, but serviceable, and the rooms are small and crowded.

But, after all, it's a home, and the people are satisfied. Most of our members have nice, comfortable homes (a few even have the Delco light system), but the parsonage is nothing to be particularly proud of. We have six rooms, but the arrangement is poor, and things are crying for repairs and paint. No doubt, I'll appreciate all the conveniences and luxuries of city life lots more when I get back to them again. Before this I took them for granted and counted them among life's necessities.

### **August 8, 1926**

My thoughts are ever winging their way home these days. It's scarcely a month since we returned from our glorious trek to the East. A wonderful, care-free vacation! Naturally, it wasn't pleasant while Paul was in the hospital, nor while he was recuperating from his tonsil operation. But fortunately, he was well again when the out-of-town folks began arriving for Ellen's wedding. What a lively, jolly houseful we were! It's ever so nice to be a member of a big family, in more ways than one. We spent many happy hours nestled in the cozy, intimate family circle: exchanging views, having friendly arguments, and reminiscing merrily over childhood escapades and adventures. How we laughed in recalling, for instance, the time when our amateur inventor (!) more than a dozen years ago constructed an airplane out of lathes and shingles. It was a marvel, and the pride and awe of the neighborhood.

On the day of testing the airplane, a sizable crowd gathered in our back yard. The older boys hauled the prized possession up onto the barn roof, and, when the proud pilot gave the command, gave a mighty push. For a breath-taking instant,

we thought it really would fly! But being neither fish nor fowl—no motor or glider apparatus adorned it—it smacked flat on the ground. And the result: a bruised and much disappointed pilot, whose crumbled air castles were derided and flouted with a vicious “Aw, heck!” by the heartless onlookers.

Well, Dad and Mother enjoyed these recollections hugely, and even added some of the pranks they played as children. Mother told of the time when Dad glued walnut shells to a cat’s paws, so that she really clumped, clumped, clumped across the floor—a case for the Humane Society!

Soon, too soon, the wedding day dawned bright and clear. With so many willing hands to help, all preparations and arrangements soon were completed, and after many a loving pat here, or pull there, our charming and lovely bride was ready. We were all sharing her happiness, and yet—why would those tears continue to well up and nigh overflow? Surely, we didn’t want to mar her perfect hour with selfish sentimentality. Like faithful and dauntless Lochinvar, the young pastor claimed his sweet bride, and after the festivities, took her to be the “first lady” of his parish in the enchanting lake region of the North. What a void her going left in our circle and in our hearts! Oh, God, do bless them with Thy richest blessings and let true love for each other ever fill their lives!

During the days following the wedding, Mother and I were practically inseparable, and long, full, and unforgettable were the talks we had together. That alone was worth the trip! I’ll keep and cherish her words forever in my heart. The Baby stayed exceptionally well, and was, naturally, the center of attraction, since babies are rare treasures in our family at present. I couldn’t help but show how proud of him I was. And he gained lots in weight and understanding.

Our whole trip was splendid. I knew we’d exult in the gorgeous parks and luxuriant countryside. It seemed like fairyland. And the cultural diversions, such as the St. Louis municipal opera, the band and orchestra concerts, the dramatic presentations, as well as the pleasure of window-shopping and exploring the large stores (what woman doesn’t relish that!), acted as a stimulant to our stagnant “gray matter”. We felt like ancient history: after only a year’s absence, time had marched on, and we were not with it. It was good, ah, it was simply sheer ecstasy, and I am ever so grateful for such a glorious respite from life’s monotony.

But what Mother says is true: "After one is married, there's no place like your own home." And so it was with a sigh of satisfaction (although the tears of parting with loved ones mingled with it) that we came back here. Duty calls, and here we are again, going full blast. "Do your duty as is best, Leave unto the Lord the rest." He granted us a safe and pleasant journey, a joyful reunion with all the dear ones, and a happy homecoming. And He will continue to bless us and our home. The words of Lillie Simpson so aptly express our heart-felt prayer:

God bless our home, we ask it  
In Jesus' name divine.  
We want our home, dear Father,  
To be a type of Thine.

Let love for one another  
Be ruling passion here,  
Just as it is in heaven;  
For each to us is dear.

May home be like a haven,  
A refuge from life's storm,  
Where we renew our courage  
And hopes again are born.

When we here no longer dwell,  
May we united be  
In that dear home in glory  
Prepared for us by Thee.

### **August 18, 1926**

Instead of finishing the little suit I'm sewing for my "Chick-a-biddy", I'll ease the lump in my throat and ache in my heart by giving vent to my emotions. (It helps, this putting it in black on white.) Today is a great day in the annals of the family, Dear Beth, Ellen's twin-sister, is today vowing:

The holiest vow that man can make,  
The golden thread in life,  
The bond that none may dare to break,  
That bindeth man and wife.

Would I love to be present! The twins and I were like triplets, or rather, like peas

in a pod. We were usually no more than a few steps apart. But—well, it's simply impossible. Since circumstances were such that the twins couldn't have a double wedding, we aren't able to attend this one.

However, missing the wedding is doubly hard because our precious Beth and her young husband will soon sail to foreign mission fields, and when, oh when, will we see them again! It was hard to part from them when our vacation was over, but we know they are eager and glad to heed the Lord's call. I'm sure they will be fully engaged in their work, heart and soul. Just so the longing for home doesn't grip them too hard! All day my heart and lips have besought my Lord to bless them, to give them happiness, good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over. I know He will strengthen them and their dear parents when the final hour of departure comes. I can scarcely see to write, and I'll just have to indulge in a good cry.

### **September 12, 1926**

How my household has grown in a few weeks! Instead of three, we now are six. With the opening of the new term of school, the District officials have offered to help bear the expense of a teacher, so that Paul would have more time to devote to the distant mission station (55 miles from here). We have encouraging growth in the Sunday School there. I teach the smaller children while one of the kind ladies cares for my Tiny One, and Paul has the older children. Our "church" is simply a country schoolhouse, 10 miles out of town. The attendance and interest is good. Some of the families come 20 miles and they are regular attenders.

Well, that's how we happen to be boarding the teacher. The other two members of our household are Paul's dear parents. His mother's health has been failing, so we invited them to come to us, and we are so glad they decided to do that. They intend to stay until she can manage her own house again. Paul and his father (who, by the way, was my own father's classmate in their seminary days) have mutual interests, since he, too, was in the holy ministry until his resignation, for reasons of health, several years ago. My daily duties have multiplied, but Mother helps lots, especially with my wee son. Soon I can't call him "wee" any longer. He has graduated from his bassinet to the highchair, and now supervises all my activities. An ordinary clothespin keeps him occupied for hours. But when his interest in it wanes, he loves to drop it on the floor, and then smiles in lordly condescension when I pick it up, wah, and return it. And—plop! there it goes

again! His vocabulary has increased from the soft coo “un-goo” to a sweet “da-da” or a coaxing “ma-ma.” And that’s music to my soul!

I have, quite naturally, not helped in the school this fall. Paul teaches all the religious periods and has his classes in German, while Miss Johnson instructs in all the other subjects. However, we are still busy in the Sunday School, both here and at the mission station. We did quite a lot of canvassing for new pupils in both the Day School and Sunday School, and were gratified to see some response. The families are so scattered that it is hard to have them cooperate fully—why, the parish here is fifty miles long and twenty miles wide!

The language question, too, is of paramount importance in our congregation. The younger people are clamoring for more English, and the oldest generation enforces the rule of mostly German. Paul tries to use all the diplomacy at his command to keep harmony. But I’m sure the transition is bound to come soon. (Already, in the mission congregation we have no German at all.) How little constructive work a pastor can do, when the members pull in opposite directions! For instance, our school building serves as the church building on Sunday. But on Monday morning, Paul and the children have to push the home-made, back-breaking church benches together in the rear, and haul the school desks out of the coal shed and drag them into the church. On Friday afternoon the process is reversed. In such drafty, inadequate housing, how can anything really excellent and worthwhile be accomplished! Yes, and that’s why a number of members, although living nearby, absolutely refuse to send their children to our parish school. But, the old-timers repeat the refrain: “It was good enough for father, and it’s good enough for me”—not taking into consideration that time and circumstances change, and buildings deteriorate.

## Chapter Three

### **October 24, 1926**

Yesterday our congregation sponsored a Young People's Rally, inviting guests from as far as 65 miles away. (Our nearest neighboring church is 40 miles distance.) It was an ideal day, and the youth of our church participated almost "en masse," so that they surely are to be commended on their achievement. The highlight of the afternoon program was to be a "pep talk" by an official of the Walther League (that wonderful international organization of Lutheran young people). He happened to be visiting in the congregation, but he failed to appear, and we can't imagine what detained him. Consequently, at the last minute, Paul hastily concocted a short address on "The Walther League, Its History, and Its Purpose." Paul has ever been an ardent enthusiast for this cause. While doing supply work in Minnesota and Canada, he was a leader in young people's work, and out here on the prairies has blazed the trail for these rallies. Our Young People's Society joined the Walther League last year (the first in our whole Circuit to do so), but some of the pastors simply can't see any good coming out of it, and so they first will have to be persuaded otherwise.

Today Paul feels a glow of satisfaction and a warmth around the cockles of his heart because of yesterday's successful meeting. The only building large enough to accommodate the gathering was the new barn of a member, two miles from church. So, after the inspirational service at the church in the forenoon (over half of the people were outside), we moved over to the barn. Our ladies furnished a bountiful picnic dinner, spread out on long planks in the empty hayloft (which was even with the ground at the front), and the program, consisting of a number of songs, a play, and Paul's talk, was given in the lower part of the barn (which was even with the ground at the rear), where we had erected a small platform. Games and contests were then held in the haymow, and ballgames and races took place out in the pasture. "Where there's a will, there's a way"—even if our facilities were inadequate, everyone had a gorgeous time. And all the young people begged for a "repeat." Isn't it a feeling of gratification to see some fruit of one's labors? Especially when those labors are for a good cause! Take, for instance, the magnificent Sanitarium our Walther League is maintaining at Wheat Ridge.

Shortly after we were married, we went out to see one of Paul's sisters who was ill in a Denver hospital, and took the opportunity to inspect that Monument of Gratitude. It's really beautiful—so modern and well equipped, and up to the minute in every detail. Pastor Reiertag and the Walther League are in deed and truth doing the part of Good Samaritans, laboring in a glorious and splendid work there.

We had the unexpected pleasure of entertaining Paul's sister with her family for several days. It was fun having them here, and I was delighted to meet her. It's the first time I saw her, since her home is far away, up in one of the irrigation districts of the Northwest. It must be a veritable paradise out there—everything grows so abundantly! The work, though, is strenuous and exacting, but, at least, they don't have the discouragement of crop failures and dust storms. Their chief worry lies in the prevailing low marketing prices. The grandparents, of course, were delighted to have the dear visitors with us, and told many an interesting tale of their childhood days beyond the seas.

Grandpa related how he walked to college, carrying his books and baggage through the forests and over the hills (in southern Germany), and at the close of the term walked back again. And Grandmother told of the time she, as a toddling baby, pulled a teapot off the table, scalding herself seriously. Her mother rushed to the garden and meadow, gathered certain specific herbs, steeped them, mixed them with goose-grease, making an ointment which she applied generously, and then bandaged the wounds. Faithful application of this gradually healed the burns, although Grandmother still carries many scars from the incident.

It must have been a busy, happy time when the seamstress came each spring and fall, and stayed a week, sewing, sewing, sewing. And the cobbler came and mended shoes or made new ones, staying for days, telling stories, bringing the news of the world, and being treated as one of the family. And how strange it seemed that they washed only six times a year, having a big washhouse in the middle of the village, and paid washer women to do the work. Each family had a turn at using the laundry. And however did they manage to keep bread for weeks at a time! The baker would bake them innumerable loaves which they stored in stone jars and used up to the last crumb. Grandmother asserts they tasted the best the older they were. Their method of preserving fruits and vegetables, too, seems odd, as does their ingenious way of keeping perishable food from spoiling.

Grandpa took up the tale by relating how he worked as a railroad mail clerk to



earn money for his schooling, and how his father employed scores of people in his weaving and dyeing industry. He painted such vivid pictures that we wished we might have seen the fascinating storybook land of his childhood. How different from our plains and prairies, and our sparsely populated Midwest.

How we laughed when Grandmother told how Paul, when he was barely of school age, would coax the smaller children in the family to be his audience while he preached and led the singing. She claims he even sat up in the trees and preached to the birds. When the wind swayed the branches, he could pretend he was chaplain on a great ocean liner.

Well, I certainly missed Paul's sister and family after they left. She always milked the cow (which we had borrowed over the winter) and our nanny goat, because Paul had contracted some form of skin disease which bothers him a lot. The doctor claims it came from some weeds and is a certain kind of eczema. I surely hope it soon clears up. During his sister's stay, when he returned from a pastoral conference and I tended to his bandages, Paul just fainted away in his chair. I wonder if it's contagious—I'd hate to see our Baby Bunting get it! He creeps all over the floor, quick as a wink.

And now that he has his "walker," he whizzes from room to room, amusing himself by pulling dishes off the tables, and books out of Daddy's bookcase. He does love to have me cuddle him close and sing him the nonsensical little lullaby: "Bye-oh, baby bunting, Daddy's gone a-hunting; Go find a little rabbit skin, To wrap my baby bunting in" or, "Rock-a-bye, baby, in the tree top, When the wind blows, the cradle will rock; When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall: Down will come baby, bough, cradle, and all." And I do love to sing to my precious Baby.

### **January 1, 1927**

Happy New Year! How often I've heard and read that today. Will it be a happy one for us? God grant it! The past year gave us our precious Son, and joys innumerable. We know that God holds all things in the hollow of his hand, and so we trust in His mercy and grace.

With grateful hearts the past we own: The future, all to us unknown,  
We to Thy guardian care commit, And, peaceful, leave before Thy feet!

Christmas was a time of rejoicing and happiness. Paul Jr. and all of us were showered with gifts from devoted relatives and friends, and it was like rubbing Aladdin's lamp to unpack the boxes and admire all the lovely and useful things. Our "Wee Willie," as we occasionally call him, loved the Christmas tree with its twinkling candles and gleaming baubles. His dear little eyes sparkled and beamed with excitement and pleasure. We're going to let the tree stand until Epiphany and have a short song service in the candlelight frequently. We had a children's service here on Christmas Eve, and at the mission place on the evening of Christmas Day. A lot of thought, time and headache went into those preparations! But the children and their parents were delighted and enjoyed every minute of the services. So we feel well repaid for the effort—especially since it was all to the glory of our God-sent Savior, and the songs and recitations were effectively and capably rendered.

I quite lost my bearings tonight and felt as though I was sinking into the quicksand of black despair. A quiet hour alone with my Savior restored my equilibrium and banished by foolish fears. My dear husband left this evening, to see a skin specialist in my hometown. The eczema on his hands gradually got worse until all but two of his fingers were raw and bleeding. He had to preach, here of late, with practically all of his fingers bandaged up, individually. The pain was intense. Our doctor thought it might indicate some impurity in the blood, and so he emptied one big brown bottle after the other down Paul's throat. That resulted in impaired digestion and consequent loss of pep, so that we felt something drastic should be done. Why, for weeks I've had to be his *amanuensis*, since his hands were altogether useless. Worry and anxiety will well up in my heart, and my soul cries out in anguish, "Oh, my God, if it be Thy will, let him find relief and a permanent cure."

### **March 18, 1927**

"When troubles come, they come not single style, but in battalions."

We've experienced the truth of that. But we've also learned to believe more fully that God answers prayers and helps most miraculously when His time comes.

Paul stayed with Dad and Mother for two weeks, seeing the skin specialist daily, who gave him a healing salve, and had him wear soft gloves over the ointment

and keep away from water as much as possible. The Lord heard our prayers, and laid His blessing on the doctor's work, so that Paul's hands soon began to heal, and after a few weeks at home the skin disease was completely cured. What a relief to all of us! While Paul was gone, I had to learn to milk the nervous, high-strung goat, and the huge Holstein cow. It really was a stupendous undertaking. I didn't dare sit down while milking the "nanny" because she continually danced a jig. But I had to sit down while milking that enormous cow, because it took me so long. Once she tired of my awkward squeezes and walked off, leaving me traipsing behind her with stool and pail. Usually I finished in an hour or so. I also attempted to conduct the young people's meeting and Bible class while Paul was gone, since I had some experience in that line as President of our Walther League back home. One of the young boys here said to me after a meeting, "I like to have you lead the Bible class. You make it short and snappy." I told him that was not a compliment: It merely showed that I was not as well versed in my Bible as Paul is.

After Paul was back, Grandmother took sick and needed lots of attention. When she was barely able to be up, I fell and hurt my side. That meant a week in bed for me. Mother wrote, "God simply called a halt, and expects you to heed the warning." It was hard for Grandmother, having me in bed when she was still weak. But, thank God! We both recovered and are feeling well again, of course, my spirits occasionally sink to a low ebb, especially when the dust blows, and the days and nights are thick as pea soup. Besides, our family doctor one night boarded the train for parts unknown, deserting his wife and three children. And now we're forced to consult a combination doctor-and-veterinarian. How can we have confidence in his judgment?

Oh, how glad we are that our little boy is well and contented, and not in need of a baby specialist! He's such a precious little midget, walking since before his first birthday (which great event we celebrated with much merry-making, and one big candle on his cake). He delights in watching Daddy milk and tend the chickens. The playful "Nanny" butted him very gently yesterday, and he sat down quite unceremoniously against his will. But I couldn't blame her a bit: he tried to pull the whiskers she's so proud of! Speaking of "Miss Toggenburg" (meaning the old goat) reminds me of a side-splitting incident. Back in February we had a terrific blizzard (some real moisture for a change): Not much snow, but sharp, strong winds, so that the snow was piled high in places. Just for the fun of it, Paul made a tunnel through the drift that covered the gate which led to the barnyard, and our little boy never tired of going through there. It wasn't very long until Miss

Toggenburg, who liked to come near the house and beg for snacks, followed suit. She lowered her horns and, with mincing steps, daintily picked her way through.

## Chapter Four

**April 17, 1927**

I know that my Redeemer lives.  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, He lives, who once was dead.  
He lives, my ever-living head.

This is Easter. How our hearts rejoice and our lips sing happily each time we're privileged to celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord! Today's service was most inspiring and uplifting. We have no vested choir, no beautiful pipe organ, no stately, regal lilies adorning the altar. The solemnity and sacred hush of the large cathedral was missing. Nevertheless, our farmers, their wives, tousle-topped boys and pig-tailed girls sang out of the fulness of their hearts, to the praise of the risen Savior, and listened with rapt attention to Paul's expounding the comforting message of Easter.

Sometimes I'm sure there's less sham and lip service in our western folks than in some large city congregations, surfeited and pampered with all the non-essential externals. Then again, the feeling comes over me that these people out here on the plains are simply indifferent and careless in matters pertaining to the church: how much beauty, solemnity, and dignity they are missing! Am I, perhaps, inclined to place too much emphasis on "pomp and show"? I do think the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is worthy of all the reverence and esteem we poor mortals are capable of showing.

Even though it's Easter, the dust blew again. We had our Easter Egg hunt in the house this morning, and Sonny Boy enjoyed it immensely. He laughed with pleasure each time he discovered an egg or a chocolate rabbit, or a mother hen with her little chicks. What little effort it takes to make a child happy!

The dust surely doesn't bother our little boy like it does us. Last Sunday, as we were returning from the mission station, the dust was so thick that we simply couldn't see a foot ahead, even with the car lights on. It was purely God's great mercy that kept us from an accident. Once we slipped briefly into the ditch, once we barely missed a parked car, and several times failed to see a curve. We

scarcely crept along, snail-like, hoping against hope that the dust would lift. But it kept on all night, making us choke and gasp. Were we ever thankful to reach home! It took us almost three times as long as usual.

We're not the only ones who hate the blowing topsoil. Recently a civet cat found its way through a hole in our foundation (we have no basement), up between the walls, and into the attic space. For several nights we heard a rattling, rumbling noise as though someone were playing tenpins, but we couldn't ascertain the cause. One day I went into the attic, and there, in a barrel of ancient wallpaper rolls, sat a civet cat. My only thought was retreat—and retreat I did! Luckily the neighbor boy succeeded in trapping it for us.

### **June 10, 1927**

I've just come back home after spending several weeks with Dad and Mother. Last year we looked forward to the trip, and Paul, the baby, and I were really refreshed and pepped up from our vacation. This year my little Boy and I went alone. And the reason was a sad one.

My dear oldest sister died quite suddenly, and since Paul couldn't leave his work on the spur of the moment, I took the train. All the family, except our dear missionaries, were present. It touched me to the quick to see my dear sister so white and still. But, Oh! how we thanked God for relieving her from all suffering and pain. And what an example she set the rest of us! For years she had been ailing, and she spent the last year in a hospital. Her Christian fortitude and submission to God's holy will were amazing. It was hard for me to see why God laid such a heavy cross of sickness on her, until, shortly after her burial, I awoke in the night and heard my dear Mother whispering in the dark:

Oh, my God, I thank thee for ending all her pain, misery, and anxiety. It is hard, dear God, to give up my beloved daughter, but Thou knowest best, I thank Thee for granting her grace to be such a power for good among those in the hospital with her. The nurses and doctors say that she was ever anxious to lead poor, wandering souls to Thee, ever grasping the opportunity to let the light of her faith shine for the good of others.

Then I understood that God had used her sickness for a purification of her heart and spirit, and also as a means of winning other souls for Jesus.

My side still gave me considerable trouble, and so I consulted our family physician, and followed his advice. I stayed there until he said I was in good health once more. Of course, Mother and I and sister Rachel (the only one still at home) spent many happy hours just talking—and we sewed while we talked.

Mother and sister certainly were amused at my telling about how the patterns of my dresses were copied. Paul had a wedding last spring, and I was stunned to see, when the bridal party entered the church, that the bridesmaids' dresses were identical to the lavender silk broadcloth Mother and I made for my trousseau! Why, they even had the three-colored braided ribbon belt, and the rosette on the left shoulder. And then, at the next Ladies' Aid meeting, that same young bride wore a dress that was exactly like my own blue and white linen dress. I couldn't help but remark about the coincidence. Then she told me that the woman who did the washing while I was ill in the winter had cut patterns of my dresses. "I knew you wouldn't care," she added. I had no idea my clothes were so attractive. A pastor's wife exerts more influence and is copied in more ways than she imagines, I guess. Just so my influence and pattern will always be of the right kind, especially in more important matters!

While we were still with my parents, Paul Jr. and I had the privilege of attending Rachel's graduation from high school. Dad and Mother are so proud of their fledgling, particularly, since she's considerably younger than the rest of us. She has always been such a dear, lovable little sister to me, that I can't imagine her as a university freshman. I feel there are great things in store for her—she's an exceptionally brilliant student. I just wish we weren't so far apart. As we grow older, we become more than ever attached to each other.

### **August 19, 1927**

How small our family is, and how we miss Baby's dear grandparents! Paul's mother regained so much of her strength and vitality that they've decided to return to their own home. They feel that, as long as they are able, they want to be independent and not burden anyone.

We can't blame them for feeling that way, but we did love having them here. It felt like one big happy family. It seems terribly empty and lonesome without them. Even though they are no longer with us, we know they'll continually pray for us, and the prayer of a devout Christian availeth much.

I'm sure they're tired of the drought and heat of this timber-less region. Now they're back amid trees and flowers. It really is hot today! And I can't even cool off by thinking of last winter's subzero weather, when, returning from our distant mission station, the Baby and I sat on the highway in our open car, while Paul battled the fierce north wind for miles, trying to find a house and someone in it who would help fix the engine trouble which had stalled our old Lizzy. It's a wonder we didn't freeze stiff! How we'd like to have a bit of that icy weather scrambled with today's 108-degree heat!

In spite of the long, hot summer, our mission congregation has been flourishing so well that the District officials called a young pastor to reside in their midst and serve other stations from there. Consequently, we had to bid farewell to our good people, and really, it was hard to do. We had grown fond of them, and they always treated us royally. Now Paul is in charge of a group in a town 40 miles from here. At first, he canvassed the whole countryside (our little Midget and I went along), which took up the greater part of several weeks. Then he became acquainted with the editor of the town newspaper and arranged for publicity. The following Sunday he had the first service in a movie theatre: a handful of people in a dark, musty dungeon that seemed miles long! At least that was my impression of it. Paul says it reminded him of the early Christians worshipping secretly in the catacombs. But with much prayer for divine help, and persistent personal calls, Paul succeeded in gaining first this family, then that one, until now we rent the Christian Church building each Sunday afternoon. The building is neat and attractive, and as a result our attendance, under God's blessing, is continually increasing. We've started a Sunday School and now have 15 pupils. May God continue to shower His blessing on this new missionary endeavor!

How different mission fields are, and how varied the results! Here we are on the vast stretches of wide-open prairie, where families living five or six miles apart are considered neighbors. In contrast, my dear Father, as a young pastor, zealously preached the Gospel in the heart of a large city in the South, where five or six families sometimes lived in one house, and the streetcar rumbled right past his door. He often related tales of how poor some of his people were, how he would frequently send some of the children to Mother so she'd wash them and comb their hair, because they were unspeakably filthy. But, of course, he had some good, respectable members, too. They took him and Mother up in the mountains, above the clouds, so they could watch a storm below them. Although that's been forty years ago, Dad and Mother still correspond with those



members. Dad loves to tell of the time when, before he was married, a big husky man entered his bedroom one night (the window opened onto an alley) and grabbed him by the leg. When Dad awoke and turned on his flashlight, the man dashed out of the window and disappeared. The next morning, Dad heard that the man had escaped from an insane asylum, and the chief of police claimed he had intended to grab Dad's throat. While serving the soldiers' encampment near that city during the Spanish-American War, Dad became well acquainted with some of the officers. He invited them to dinner at home, and one of them, good-natured and pudgy, ate Mother's cooking with great gusto. When he simply couldn't finish his fourth big potato dumpling, he whispered regretfully to the dumpling: "If I had known I'd be so full, I would have eaten you first."

### **December 6, 1927**

A change is about to come into our lives. Paul has received and accepted a call to a parish in another District, about 150 miles northeast from here. When he first got the call, Paul was very undecided what to do. The salary is the same and the work practically the same, since there will be two congregations under his care, the churches standing 15 miles apart. We discussed it back and forth. Paul asked fellow pastors for advice and took the matter to the Lord in prayer. On Sunday, the congregation unanimously voted to release Paul, since he felt it was a divine call and the mission opportunities were far greater than here. I tried not to influence Paul in his decision. Mother repeatedly warned me, before I was married, that in matters pertaining to the holy ministry I must not interfere. And that advice has served me well. I thought of the saying, "Beyond the fence the pasture is greener," and feared perhaps that's what I thought in this instance.

It seems queer, this tearing ourselves up by the roots. This was our first home, our kingdom. It harbored our first wee little Bundle of Sweetness, and in it we experienced joy and sorrow, success and failure. In a day or two we'll be head over heels in the work of packing and moving. (It will be anything but pleasure in this bitter cold!) Then will come the last hand clasps and goodbyes. Parting always makes one feel sad. But we know we are doing God's will. In our Wedding Sermon Dad said:

"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." (John 2:5). If you desire the Lord Jesus to abide with you with His grace, His almighty help, His comfort, His blessing, then you must do, not what you wish and want, but what He tells you in His Holy Word. Then, and only then, will your cup of happiness be full, in spite of the

devil, the world, and your own evil flesh.

Thus, dear Lord, help us ever to bear in mind, to heed, and to follow!

## Chapter Five

### January 15, 1928

The first chapter in our married life has ended, and now we are well embarked on the second. We have been here at our new place for a little over a month and feel very much at home.

The last days at our former parish were a mad scramble to finish packing. The icy weather made the work very disagreeable, and we were honestly glad when we were through. The people were very kind and helped us wherever possible. When our furniture and other belongings were hauled to the station to be packed into a freight car, a strong gust of wind whipped a number of things from a truck, sending them crashing to the frozen ground, among them one of our most highly prized possessions: a large comfortable rocking chair, which our young people had given us for a wedding present. The last night we stayed with a neighbor, an elder of the church, and were deeply touched the next morning when he, during family devotion, of his own accord offered up a prayer for us, asking God to protect us on our journey and bless us in our new home. We little suspected him capable of such noble expressions. A diamond in the rough!

In below-zero weather we traveled into the unknown, the "Land of Tomorrow," our new home! Who can describe the eager curiosity and expectant wonder, as well as the feeling of uncertainty and doubt which takes hold of a person leaving familiar scenes for new and strange surroundings? Suffice it to say, that, after a pleasant trip and several days' stay at the home of one of the members (because our household goods were slow in coming), we joyfully and with great hopes for the future moved into our "dove nest," our own little nest! How really inappropriate that phrase is. Because the congregation is only a few years old, it has no parsonage. So we're living in a huge, box-like one-room farmhouse, a considerable distance from the church and also quite a way off the road. But, nevertheless, it's the best place on earth to us. Here we are kings, rulers: We can do as we please. "Oh, God, abide with us, and make our home Thy abode!"

Paul serves the mission station every Sunday (since it's only 15 miles away), besides having the full Sunday schedule here. The Christmas season, with its special weekday and evening services, was naturally a very busy time for Paul. But the choir and the Sunday school teaching staff here gave wonderful

assistance in the carrying through of the children's service on Christmas Eve.

New Year's Eve was a bitterly cold night. After the service that night, someone in the neighborhood, who evidently knew "the lay of the land", played a very mean prank on the congregation: three of the four gas lamps which hung in the church building were stolen, and haven't been recovered so far.

The country here is rolling and more fertile than our last territory, but it's still in the plains and, consequently, can't boast of any too much vegetation. But we like it here. The people have been just lovely to us. Before Christmas, they had a "pantry shower" and housewarming for us, inviting the neighboring pastors also. (It seems too good to be true that the nearest fellow pastor is but 12 miles away!) And frequently one or the other member drops in see how we are. Since the farms are smaller and the people live closer together, it's easy to spend more time socially.

Our Tiny One has adjusted himself nicely to the change of environment. He loves to go outside with Daddy, tending to the goat and chickens, even though Jack Frost nips his nose and toes. His vocabulary is rapidly increasing, and his little mouth will soon boast a complete set of pearls—such perfect little teeth! Soon our Darling will be two years old. For two years he has been a constant source of pleasure and delight to us: he has never been really sick, nor had any serious accident. Thanks be to God! Wonderful protection for wee folks—the guardian angels!

### **March 30, 1928**

Such an adorable, cuddly little "Bit of Heaven" came to gladden our hearts just 15 days ago. Oh, we're so happy and proud of our precious little Daughter! Since we're 15 miles from the doctor, and the roads were simply bottomless at the time, our sweet little Miss was already an hour old when the doctor came to welcome her. I can't fathom the boundless mercy, the all-embracing love of my God and Lord—it fairly overwhelms me, and humbles me to a low degree, to ponder on the mystery and miracle of our Baby's arrival! Truly, "The Lord hath done great things for me, and graciously hath helped me." During the period of anxious, fearful waiting for medical help and relief, I found much comfort and sustenance in the beautiful meditations, prayers, and Bible gems of Stark's "Motherhood Prayers." It proved a fountain of strength and courage for me!

The Baby and I are both in fine health and excellent spirits. We laid our little Princess in the arms of Jesus in Holy Baptism when she was but three days old, and named her Eunice Lois. It didn't strike us until later that we had given her the name of Timothy's mother and grandmother. Our small son surely adores his baby sister. He loves to have her hold tight to his little finger with her chubby, little hand, and never tires of watching her, especially at bath or feeding time. Both of our babies had a wealth of black hair and big, dark blue eyes! Paul always smiles at my saying that the nape of a baby's neck is most adorable and kissable—it's so soft and smooth and tender! And how our Wee Tiny one loves to be cuddled and kissed! It's a wonderful feeling to know she's mine, and I can fondle her to my heart's content! I get more genuine pleasure out of caring for her than I did when Sonny was a wee baby, because I don't have that fear of doing the wrong thing. I really experimented on Paul Jr., and Eunice derives the benefit. My dear grandmother wrote us a sweet letter, congratulating us on our precious Treasure, and saying her prayer was that Eunice would grow up to be the pride and joy of her Savior, her parents, and all faithful Christians. Dear, kind Grandma! She'll soon be 90 years old! Truly, she has seen the fulfillment of God's promise: "Even to old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you." (Isaiah 46:4)

### **June 12, 1928**

With two tiny tots to care for, I have found it impossible to go with Paul to the mission station. When the weather was cold, he went every Sunday evening, and of course, I wouldn't think of exposing Eunice unnecessarily. Now that it's warm, he preaches there early Sunday morning and the rushes back for the eleven o'clock service here. Such an arrangement is far from ideal—Paul doesn't like to miss the Sunday School there as well as here, and besides, I always have to ask one of the members to take me to church, since it's too far to walk with two little people. But we're glad to overlook the inconvenience, since Paul has had such gratifying results in his work. Last Sunday he confirmed a class of 14, which he had been instructing three times a week since January. How impressive and beautiful the service was! Many in the large assembly had tear-filled eyes when the solemn rite was finished, and many a heart prayed for these young soldiers of the cross. May they ever be followers of the Savior they confessed today.

We were forced to part with our faithful friend, the goat. Some time ago she presented us with a pair of twins, and ever since, there's been mischief afoot. The

two little rascals and their mother chewed the bark off the few little trees gracing this yard, wrecked the fences, and nibbled on anything in sight. But the cleverest trick of all—and how we did laugh—was when the two little kids clambered on the running board of the car, then on the fender, the top, and finally leaped up on the garage roof. When they tired of nibbling shingles, they jumped back on the car, and proceeded down. Paul and Sonny both hated to part with such a cunning family, but we knew they were playing too much havoc with the landlord's property. So now we have a cow instead. She behaves and stays in the pasture. No more rollicking antics to watch!

Yesterday we drove to the nearest large town so that Paul could have his glasses refitted. While we were in one of the large stores, Eunice was the cynosure of all eyes. Paul was carrying her, and ever so many people stopped and admired her, remarking what a little "cherub" she is. Was I bursting with pride! There's no doubt about it, all the world loves a baby. The only drawback is that not everyone wants the trouble and expense involved. Recently a woman said to me: "You have lovely children—but I'm glad they are yours!" Well, so am I. Paul and I feel we have the best investment in the world and count our two wee darlings more precious than gold.

As an Easter gift, Paul gave me the book "Eunice" by Dr. C M. Zorn. I've read and re-read it and intend to keep it always as a reference. I am especially impressed with Chapter Six, where he speaks of the love of a mother toward her child. He certainly doesn't mince his words, but states pointed truths—as for instance, letting a child have his way is merely a mother's way of telling the world that her child is right in everything, and needs no punishment, or else the mother doesn't want to be bothered: she loves her leisure and herself more than her children. Do I have the right love toward my children? God help me to be an unselfish, untiring, Christian mother!

### **February 28, 1929**

Life, peaceful and contented, has been flowing smoothly along for us. Only occasional ripples and squalls have upset the quiet tranquility of our days. The children have been our sunshine and delight. Between Christmas and New Year, all of us were victims of the flu—Paul continuing his pastoral work in spite of chills and fever, but the children being so ill that we summoned the doctor on New Year's Day. That was our first experience with a seriously ill child, and it

frightened us beyond measure. But the doctor assured us it was nothing to worry about, and in a few days we would see our little ones well again. Thanks be to God! The children recovered rapidly, and soon had their old pep back. I believe there is nothing which draws a mother nearer to God than having her darlings ill. Whenever I watch my little ones sleeping so sweetly and trustingly, perhaps even smiling a bit in their sleep, I feel that God is near. But when my darlings were restless, tossing to and fro with high temperatures, in my anxiety and worry I could almost feel the hand of my Lord in blessing on my bowed head: "Fear not; I am with thee." Then it is that we learn to say in submission: "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

We have a dear, kind, sympathetic neighbor, who mothers us all. Since she reared a large family, she realizes that a mother is on 24-hour duty, and appreciates a little help. She certainly has a way of attracting children, and shows them that she loves them. Very often she holds Eunice during the church service or amuses her while I quilt at the Ladies' Aid meeting. I count her among the blessings God gives me: "good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like."

Paul Jr. is now three years old, and Eunice will soon have her first candle-lit birthday cake. She has already mastered the art of walking, much to her big brother's delight. He laughed and clapped his hands for joy when she courageously broke away from his helping hands and walked unaided. Daddy and I were just as thrilled and happy. It surely is a charming sight to see such a tiny person on uncertain little legs, teeter-totter across the room—like a little bird trying out its fluttery, unsteady wings. And it is the Lord who guides the baby's first eager, uncertain steps, and who strengthens the feeble wings of a little bird. Isn't it a mystery how a baby knows when it is ready to walk? No matter how much it is coaxed and cajoled, it simply will not take a step until it feels the urge. Won't it be sweet when Eunice can play out of doors!

## Chapter Six

**May 26, 1929**

Oh, what a joy to clamber there,  
Oh, what a place for play.

That's the way Eunice and Paul Jr. feel here at Grandmother's home. The house is so large, with many nooks and crannies to hide in. Instead of being the "happy hills of hay" at our own home, here the place for play which they especially like is the wide, high stone stairway in front of the church. Paul Jr. pretends he is a mountaineer and Eunice, who is like his shadow, follows suit. When it looked as though Eunice would topple headfirst down the steps, and Grandmother wanted to help her, Eunice imperiously ordered her, "No, no." She was remembering the fact that, that very morning when she continually opened Grandmother's icebox door, Grandmother said: "No, no. The ice will melt." Now Eunice tried dictating to Grandma. It sounded clever and cute, of course, but I took my little girl aside and explained to her that God doesn't want small folks to be disrespectful and "bossy," and she must be very nice to her dear, kind Grandmother. Although she is but a few months past her first birthday, she evidently understood, for she has never repeated the scene. She does love to unpack the pots and pans, and ransack the sewing box, and neither Grandmother nor Aunt Rachel make any protest. How sweet of them!

Isn't it strange: Here I am with my dear parents and sister, being pampered and spoiled, and having my babies admired and cared for—and yet there is something missing! Dad and Mother just simply go the limit in doing everything possible for me. But my dear husband isn't here.

How the moments drag,  
How the hours stay,  
When the one you love  
Is far, far, far away.

Since he was teaching summer school and could not take a vacation, he insisted on my going on the train to see my loved ones. I've enjoyed every minute of my stay, and the children have fairly captured the hearts of everyone, but if only Paul



were here, life would be perfect. I know he's lonesome away out there. I wonder if he takes time to eat. Perhaps, if the pangs of hunger become too urgent, he'll manage to fry an egg and brew a cup of tea. How these "lords of creation" detest housework! Paul is so considerate, and helps me lots, but whenever I'm gone (which isn't very often!), he'd rather live on bread and milk than stop to do a bit of cooking. The precious old dear!

I'm surely glad his school will be out this week, and then between Sundays he'll drive down after us. Paul Jr. prays each evening: "Dear God, please take care of our dear Daddy" and Eunice adds a hearty "Amen." She is such an affectionate, demonstrative little cuddly kitten, and Paul Jr. is just the opposite: quiet, reserved, but observant and keen-witted, too. He is small and fine featured, so that Dad and Mother continually worry that he's not eating enough, or that he's not well. Just to please them, I took him to the family doctor for a checkup. To my delight and their satisfaction, the doctor pronounced him "as sound as a silver dollar."

I do wish I could be just a bit closer so I could see my parents and siblings more often. But I'm thankful I'm privileged to see them occasionally. Poor dear Beth, away out beyond the ocean blue, must content herself with letters. She won't be home for many a long year.

### **September 1, 1929**

We're all feeling lost and "at sea" tonight. It will take us several days to adjust ourselves to being alone again. Dear sister Ellen, with her two sweet little girls, was out here for several weeks. Now that she's gone, it's ever so lonesome. Her husband couldn't come along, and so she didn't care to stay too long a time. I don't blame her for that! This is the first time a sister had an opportunity to visit me since before Paul Jr. was born. At that time dear Ann came out to help me prepare for the great event, but her husband contracted a throat infection and she was called back to him. How good it seemed now to have a dear, loving sister with me! Her children are darlings, and ideal playmates for my own two tots. Of course they have disagreements, pull each other's hair, scream for dear life, or whack each other a good one, as all children will. I know that my children are not angels by any means. They have tempers, as well as the desire to be selfish and egotistical—much to my sorrow—and Ellen said she knew the same was true of her children. Consequently, we adhered to the policy that we would interfere

only when necessary. The result was that they got along famously most of the time. This morning Paul Jr. and his little cousin quarreled over an old flashlight, each insisting it was his property. Since they could come to no peaceful solution, my only recourse was to take it and put it out of sight. Then they were supposed to make amends by saying, "I'm sorry." What an inward struggle that caused! How hard to humble oneself and utter those two little words! But finally, Paul Jr. hung his head in shame and admitted he was sorry. The little cousin soon followed suit, and the storm was over.

### **December 25, 1929**

Let us all with gladsome voice,  
Praise the God of heaven,  
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice,  
His own Son has given.

Christmas has taken on a new meaning in our home. What fun it is to see the little sparkling eyes, the little eager people, and hear the clear little voices raised in jubilant song! They quiver with delight at the mysterious packages, the odor of Christmas goodies and of pine trees, and the secrets behind the locked door. I fairly bubble over with excitement myself, just watching them.

Yes, indeed, we have special cause for rejoicing this Christmas. Our very own new little boy is already more than a month old, just old enough to gaze wonder-eyed at the twinkling candles. How we welcomed him with open arms, proud and happy to have another precious Lamb to love and cherish for the Savior. We named him Robert Frederic, but in a few days he was Bobby, since Eunice could manage only "Bobber" instead of Robert.

He is our first bald head; Paul Jr, and Eunice each had a wealth of black hair. And his eyes are a dark blue, as friendly and jolly as can be. The children fairly adore him, just like Daddy and Mother do. Eunice loves to play "little mother" with him, rocking and patting him, even though she's just a tiny parson herself. Of course, I watch that she doesn't feed him her bread and butter or let him play with her doll (he'd let it bump him right on the head).

He likes having her around, and she never tires of amusing him. Paul Jr., of

course, doesn't so openly show his affection, but if any visitor suggests taking the baby along (it seems almost everyone mentions that), then Sonny comes to me and whispers, "Don't let them take Bobby along."

A dear old grandmother at the mission station gave us a lovely blue blanket for the baby and remarked, "The more children, the more times you will pray the Lord's Prayer." I'm sure that's true! How difficult it is to find the right procedure in dealing with a child's whims and tantrums, as well as to teach him at all times what is right and wrong. Or how easily a mother worries if all is not well with her children. The one sure source of help and comfort is prayer.

With might of ours  
Can naught be done!

Just before Christmas we had a few hours of fright. We drove into town to see the doctor for a routine visit, and just happened to get there while the merchants were staging a holiday show, with Santa Claus treating all the children to candy and oranges. The children, of course, were intrigued. After they had been treated, and Daddy was talking to an acquaintance, Paul Jr. walked up closer to get a better view of Santa. When Daddy noticed he was missing, he came to the car, thinking he had come to me. The icy hand of fear clutched our hearts as we frantically searched for him. Finally, someone said a small boy was standing right beside Santa's sleigh (we couldn't see him because of the crowd), and to our great relief it proved to be our precious son. He was gazing in wonder and amazement at the foolishness and comedy which the Santa Claus was staging! A country bumpkin come to town; a little hayseed surprised at the world's queer sense of humor. I couldn't help my eyes brimming with tears when I saw my son again. And only a mother of small children can fathom the depth of gratitude and thankfulness I felt, and realize why I held my little ones especially close and kissed them again and again when I tucked them up for the night, and heard the two older ones lisp their evening prayers. My heart answered:

My loved ones rest securely,  
From every evil surely  
Our God will guard your heads.  
May He sweet slumber send you,  
And bid His hosts attend you,  
And golden-armed, watch o'er your beds.

**July 5, 1930**

We've had some gorgeous, magnificent days. Dad and Mother were with us for a glorious two weeks. What a rare privilege, having them here! Dad thoroughly enjoyed Paul's splendid garden (we have a good windmill, and so Paul irrigates day and night) and spent long hours helping Paul. Mother and I were kept busy with the little people, especially since they were so happy to have Grandma here that they fairly spent the day on her lap. She is a real mother, loving little ones and never tiring of talking with them. Oh, how hard it was to see them go! I'm sure they are the most sympathetic, understanding, generous parents the wide world over. God keep them well and strong for many more years to come.

On the way home from taking Dad and Mother to the train, we picked up some hitchhikers (a man, his wife, and an 8-month-old baby) who proved to be absolutely destitute. For the baby's sake, we took them along home and kept them until, after much driving here and there, Paul finally located a job for the man. We kept the woman and baby for two weeks—she really was a help to me—until the man had earned a few dollars and bought a small car. Then they putt, putt, putted away to parts unknown. He evidently is shiftless and restless, and so they drift around, as aimless as a child's boat on a pond. I suppose our paths will never cross again. The odd part of it is that neither one of them ever said a word of appreciation. They seemed to think: "The world owes us a living."

I really was provoked today. We were visiting one of our members, and their daughter, who is ten years old, was told by her mother to take Paul and Eunice outside and amuse them. Either she was peeved because she had to play with them, or else she intended having sport with them. At any rate, she told them a "bogey man" was coming down the road and would "get them." Since they had never heard of such a thing, they were dreadfully frightened and came screaming into the house. When we discovered the cause, the mother roundly reprimanded her daughter, but the mischief was done. Ever since, we've been having trouble quieting the children. Before this, they considered the moon a friend, but tonight they wanted the shades pulled. Eunice especially sustained a shock to her nervous system. This evening, after we were home, she suddenly drew up her legs and began to scream. I was worried for fear she was developing infantile paralysis or some dreadful joint disease, but Paul investigated and found she was merely afraid of her own shadow. How quickly and thoughtlessly a little helpless child can be filled with terror. I do hope she will soon forget all about it, and not grow up to be a "fraidy cat." I think Paul Jr. is old enough to understand and

believe that the girl was just teasing them. And I'm sure he won't like the girl very well after this.

The landlord is busy harvesting on the land around our house, much to the delight of the children. Paul Jr. was permitted to ride with him on the binder, and did he feel like a king! He hopes it will happen again. The horses really are interesting to watch, and even Bobby gleefully claps his hands and laughs when they prance by. Eunice is a bit afraid of them. She says their teeth are so big. Perhaps she thinks of the treacherous wolf in the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

## Chapter Seven

**May 10, 1931**

“Spring, beautiful spring is here.” What a glorious sense of freedom from bondage these balmy spring days bring us. We feel as though the prison doors of winter have been flung wide open, and we’re free, free, free! The children love the idea of playing outside without coats, and when I permitted them to shed their shoes and socks, they shouted and hugged me gleefully. “Oh, for the joy of a barefoot boy”! It takes but a few days for their feet to become hardened and tough; then they don’t even notice cinders and rough places on the ground.

The winter passed uneventfully for us. My time was taken up spooning out cod-liver oil, measuring orange juice, straining cereal, wiping little sniffly noses, cuddling round, plump little bodies, kissing rosy little cheeks, brushing soft, curly hair, and telling stories, stories, and more stories—a satisfying, blessed way of employing the time allotted me. The children never tire of hearing about the great people of the Bible. Now that Paul Jr. is enrolled in the primary department of our Sunday School (he has been a member since Easter), he supplements my stories with details I forgot to mention. His Sunday School lessons impress him profoundly; the other afternoon while he was playing with his train, he chanted “Born of the Virgin Mary” continuously. The most beloved stories are Jesus blessing little children and Christ stilling the storm. Their hearts respond to Jesus’ benign caressing of His little Lambs, and they thrill to His majesty and power which even winds and waves obey.

On long wintry afternoons, I regaled them with stories of “Cuffy Bear,” “Bobby Coon,” “Peter Rabbit,” “The Little White Bed that Ran Away,” and others. And each evening, be it fair weather or foul, they beg for just one story when I tuck them in their little beds—three little beds in a row. We have a regular ritual: first, prayers. (Each one prays separately, of course, and each one has his own particular individual way). Then comes the goodnight kiss, repeated at least twice with an emphatic hug. Then follows the story, chosen by common consent. The favorite story is one that evolved through the years. It had its origin when Paul Jr., restless because of teething, wouldn’t sleep. To quiet him I began, “Once upon a time,” and, not knowing how to proceed, I thought of his interest in our Nanny Goat, and deftly used her as star performer. “Once upon a time when Daddy,

Mother, and their little boy were eating supper, they heard a car rattle past the window. Daddy looked out, and who do you suppose was driving our car? The naughty GOAT! Yes, indeed, the naughty goat was driving away in our car. Daddy and Mother and Sonny rushed outside and called: 'Where are you going?' 'Baa, baa,' the goat said, 'I'm going to town to get myself an ice cream cone.'" The next evening while I was finishing the supper dishes, Paul took his little son and embellished the tale greatly, until now it's a full-length story:

Yes, indeed, old Whiskers was running off with our car. When Spot saw it, he barked, "Bow-wow. Can I go, too?" Then the cat came running with her kittens: "Miaow, miaow. Can we go too?" Old Whiskers bleated, "Baa, baa. Sure. Jump in." So in they jumped and off they went. Soon the chickens fluttered their wings and squawked, "Gock-a-rock-a-rock. Please let us go along." When the goat snickered, "Baa, baa. Come on," they flew and ran and ran until they caught up with the car, and flew right in the windows. When they passed the neighbor's barn, fat old Mrs. Pig with her raft of round little porkers was lolling in the sun, but when she spied the car full of jolly animals, she grunted, "Oink, oink. Where are you going, and can we go too?" Frisky old Mrs. Whiskers said, "Baa, baa. If you want some ice cream, come along." So with a mighty effort and many a grunt, old Twisty-tail and her little curly queues hoisted themselves into the car. Pussy Purr Mew, with her nimble claws, helped the goat turn the wheel at the corners, and when they wanted to pass a car, Spot barked his loudest while the chickens stuck their heads out of the window, waved their wings and squawked, "Shove over." Such fun the naughty animals had! When they reached town, they forced the surprised clerk to hand over strawberry ice cream cones, which they munched greedily. Without paying or saying thank you, they hustled off in the car. Before Old Whiskers could stop the car, all the animals jumped out and ran away; only poor Twisty-tail and Whiskers were left. They opened the car door and came out slowly, hanging their heads, and in a low, sad voice pleaded: "Please forgive us. We won't do it again." All right. But don't let it happen again!

Now, of course, the cow plays the role of driver, and I must mention each of the children by name. If I dare omit some detail, or change the wording a bit, they are quick to correct me.

With three such husky, rosy-cheeked midgets to love and care for, I've had to, quite naturally, curtail my outside activities, and scarcely ever have an opportunity to go with Paul to the mission station. Ever since we've been married, we've made it a point to visit each family in the parish at least once, and if possible twice, each year. We are still adhering to that, although at times it's a real sacrifice on my part to do so. (Does that sound like self-righteousness?) After

a long, hard day's work, I long to relax and be comfortable, but instead I must dress three little sleepy people, and see that they're presentable. Paul Jr. is already quite a helper, especially in dressing and caring for Bobby (how he loves to see the little shoes in a row, all polished and shined), and feels as though he must share my responsibility.

One Friday evening, while Paul was conducting Lenten Service in the church, and I was lying on the bed with a severe headache, Paul Jr. helped Eunice and Bobby get ready for bed. After they had finished praying, Paul Jr. said: "Dear God, please make our mother better real soon." And the two little ones united in a hearty "Amen." That little scene touched me to the quick, so that I simply had to hug each one tight.

How soon little ones learn what it means to pray. Some time ago, Bobby, for some reason, refused to pray, and stubbornly ignored my reprimand. Then Eunice piped up: "God wants you to talk to him. He doesn't like little boys who won't pray." At once Bobby folded his hands and said: "Abba, Jesus, Amen."

### **June 24, 1931**

"Sleep, my heart's Treasure, my blessing art thou." I'm crooning it to a wee small mite of humanity, to an armful of lovable, adorable sweetness. Today I'm sitting up for the first time, holding, admiring, loving my precious new tiny son. He is my fourth baby, and yet I gaze in awe and wonder at the perfect token of God's real love, which He so graciously bestows on us. Our little Richard Charles is just as great a delight and marvel to us as Paul Jr. was. What is sweeter and more desirable than a baby! Paul has been asked repeatedly by callers whether or not he's disappointed in having another boy, and each time he joyously replied: "Disappointed? I should say not! We're more than proud of our healthy little son." He arrived most unexpectedly in the wee, small hours of a Sunday morning, while our doctor was off on a fishing trip, and only our kind neighbor lady helped Paul and me welcome the tiny guest. "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice" (Psalm 130:1). "Turn Thou unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; Oh, bring Thou me out of my distresses" (Psalm 25:16-17). How my heart cried out in fear and anguish during those terrifying moments, and what a great comfort it was to have Paul so understanding and helpful. The answer to our prayers was: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10), and the great and



precious gift of a husky, healthy son. "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Ps. 34:3–4).

The children simply gazed wide-eyed and awed at the little brother sleeping so sweetly in his little basket. For once, Eunice's rose-bud of a mouth was quiet. Paul Jr. just stands and admires him, but Bobby reiterates, "Pitty, pitty." It's simply grand that both the baby and I are so well. When Dicky (the children promptly nicknamed him that) was but eight days old, Paul's brother-in-law lost his life in an accident, and Paul had to rush to the funeral. It took a great deal of willpower for me to stay calm and collected, for the baby's sake. While Paul was gone, our housemaid suddenly decided to work elsewhere, and left me "high and dry." Our dear neighbor stayed with me until we located another girl. Paul really was surprised when he came home today to find me sitting up, and a strange girl in the kitchen. My little people save me many a step, especially in getting the baby's clothing and bath supplies, and so on.

#### **August 4, 1931**

This has been a disjointed summer. The heat and drouth have been intense, and the nights, like the days, have been simply miserable. Perhaps I just notice it more this year. Nerves, no doubt. Last week we attended the funeral of Paul's dear Father, and we feel the loss keenly. Never to see him again in this world; what a heart-rending thought! We had always planned to have Paul's parents come to us to spend the evening of their lives, but so quickly did he take sick and rapidly grew worse that we soon realized he was going home instead. We look forward to meeting him again in our Father's house on high!

It was impossible to take all the little ones along to the funeral, and so we left Eunice and Bobby with the neighbors. How proud they were of their traveling bag! They carried it around all morning before we left. Of course they had no idea what it meant to stay away from home, and they were young enough to enjoy it. It was hard for me, though, to leave them behind, and my thoughts were with them all the while. On the way Paul Jr. asked: "Is Uncle John (who recently died) an angel?" I said he was. "Is he the angel that came down and carried Granddaddy's soul to heaven?" Paul then explained to him that God had created certain angels for the express purpose of serving Him and us humans, and it was one of these angels that carried the soul back to its Maker. What profound and

deep thoughts trouble a little brain!

### **January 28, 1932**

The long, dry, hot summer left its imprint on our congregation. The members harvested practically nothing, and conditions are depressing. All the past year the church treasury was similar to Mother Hubbard's cupboard, and last month our salary amounted to exactly seventy-five cents. That sounds like a joke, but it's distressingly true. Naturally we've been paring down expenses to next to nil, depending on the mail carrier for our supplies and groceries, with Paul hitchhiking, as it were, to the mission station. It takes courage and, above all, faith and trust in Him who has loved us with an everlasting love, to carry on these days. Thank God we're all in good health! That's half the battle won.

### **June 10, 1932**

We've come to an oasis in the desert! Paul will be delegate to the Synodical Convention this month, and the children and I will drive along and have a glorious visit with Dad and Mother. We've just been through a siege of bronchitis—not one of us was spared—and so we're eagerly looking forward to our vacation. It's another summer so hot and dry that the farmers despair of a crop. Won't it be wonderful to forget about all of that for a delightful two weeks!

### **September 5, 1932**

A red-letter day! A great day for all of us. Today our precious first born enrolled as a first grader in the district school. Paul took him up this morning, and wasn't Paul Jr. proud and happy and eager to go to school! Since he has two miles to walk each way, he'll have to take his lunch. His new red lunch pail pleases him greatly. I couldn't refrain from shedding a few tears of sorrow to see my little boy grow up, although I thanked God from the bottom of my heart that he's well and strong. How we longed to send him to a Christian Day School, where the little lambs are daily led to Jesus, but as yet our congregation cannot see its way clear to opening and maintaining a school. We hope before many more years to have a flourishing one here. May God lay His blessing on the schooling of our dear boy!

## Chapter Eight

**October 29, 1932**

“Tempus fugit,” the old Romans said. And as time flies, it brings balm to our wounded hearts and healing to our crushed spirits. Thus the Lord God in His omniscience provided rest and comfort for our nervous systems. We have just passed through fierce and fiery anguish, but now we are composed once more, and realize that fretting and worrying cannot help matters, but rather that “our cross and trials do but press the heavier for our bitterness.”

Our home now is a small, dilapidated house, a mile from the church. For more than two years it was used as a grain bin, but with the help of the members we have managed to make it livable. The ladies put fresh wallpaper on some of the walls, and the men repaired the most necessary plaster and flooring. This morning when I opened the only closet we have (which happens to be in the dining room) half a dozen mice were waltzing on Paul’s pulpit gown until they scampered off at my surprised shriek. How I loathe those pesky vermin! Well, so far we haven’t been visited by rats, although I’m sure there are some up in the roof space above the kitchen.

How grateful, how humbly, devoutly thankful we are to our Lord and Savior for His gracious protection and sustenance! I can scarcely bring myself to think of that awful morning (the day after Paul Jr. started to school) when the landlord’s barn went up in flames! How that conflagration changed the course of events! Eunice came running to the house, carrying little Dicky and screaming, “The barn is burning”! I gave one glance out of the window and shouted for Paul. My first thought was of the children, since the landlord had given them permission to play in the barn. Eunice and Dicky were safe, but where was Bobby? Paul dashed to the phone, gave a “line ring” and called for help. I was frantically darting here and there, searching for Bobby, in spite of the fact that Eunice continually assured me Bobby was in the playhouse (which Paul made for the children last summer, and which even has a stairway and an upstairs). Why is a person’s mind so contrary? I felt sure my little boy was in the midst of that terrifying blaze and couldn’t comprehend anything else. As soon as Paul came out of the house, Eunice told him where Bobby was, and sure enough, there he sat, upstairs in the playhouse, busy with some little cars and trucks! Oh joy! Oh blessed relief!

The blood could course through my veins normally again, and my heart could resume its beating. O God! How wonderfully Thou hast protected our children! Therefore I'll praise Thee, all my life long!

The neighbors responded promptly, but because we had no water pressure, they were helpless. Soon what was once an impressive barn was nothing but a heap of ashes. Eunice related that, when she saw the flames licking on the boards, she grabbed Dicky and ran for the house. I can't help but marvel at her quick wittedness and foresight. She is only four years old! No doubt the new hay the landlord put up in the mow caused spontaneous combustion, and that's why the building burned to the ground so quickly. Well, the landlord certainly is minus a lot of grain, hay, and some expensive implements, and it didn't make him feel any too jolly. He intends to rebuild the barn and then rent out the farm. Our congregation neglected to pay the house rent for so long (because of the years of drouth and crop failures) that he asked them to meet their obligation now. When they said they simply could not, he gave us two weeks' time to find another house. Really, he and his wife have been wonderful to us. They assure us they know it is not our fault that the rent was not paid, and even offered to help us move.

The children, of course, suffered nervous upsets throughout these hectic weeks, so that they cry out in their sleep, and, during the day, live in terror lest something awful will happen. Now that we're settled here in this different house, away from the remnants of the barn, they are again their sweet trusting, childish selves. Paul Jr. missed out on the excitement, but the day we moved he had to come home to a strange house, and then he felt lost and lonesome, wishing we could go back "home." But "be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." We certainly have found out the truth of that song. In spite of the harsher living environment, we're all together and happy as larks.

Though destruction walk around us,  
Though the arrows past us fly,  
Angel guards from Thee surround us,  
We are safe if Thou art nigh.

As the weeks rolled into eternity, the shock gradually wore off, and I regained my composure, believing that "All things work together for good to them that love God," and asking God, as we prayed in our devotion this morning,

In all our trials and disappointments, sustain our courage and make us patient. When Thou sendest trouble, comfort us with thoughts of Thy Love. Draw us nearer and nearer to Thee, so that we may cast our Burden on Thee, never trusting to our own strength, but in Thy mercies, which are infinite.

### **December 31, 1938**

“Ring out the old, ring in the new.” That's the keynote of my thoughts tonight. Usually New Year's Eve reflections are tinged with melancholy and somberness, but I'm feeling exactly the opposite tonight. “My heart for very joy doth leap, my lips no more can silent keep,” as Martin Luther so joyously sang. I'm happy, Happy, HAPPY! I am resting secure in the love of Jesus and in His everlasting arms. What harm can befall me, what evil hurt me, when my Savior is nigh? Paul Jr.'s little Sunday school verse aptly expresses it:

Need I ever know a fear?  
Night and day my Father's near.  
God sees. God sees.

For Christmas, Paul and I received a very special gift from our King and Savior. Just two days before the great festival, our little Philip James entered our family circle and took our hearts by storm. Was there ever such a darling baby? No king ever felt half as rich and important as we proud parents do. Our wee, tiny son is perfection personified, from the tip of his delicately molded head, full of lustrous black hair, to the soles of his dainty little feet. Eunice says she received a “live doll” for Christmas! Each new baby in our home is a source of unbounded delight and a precious gem, a priceless treasure! How we worried and worried about our little midget at first. The two weeks before his arrival, the family was bedfast with the flu, even Paul's sister Helen, who had come to be with us for the “blessed event.” I was the only one that escaped, and both Paul and I feel that was a manifestation of God's great mercy—a real miracle. It was up to me to nurse and cook and everything connected with it! I was on 24-hour duty, busy with pills and medicines, concocting delicacies to tempt jaded appetites, cooling hot little cheeks, soothing twitching nerves and aching heads. The morning the baby was born, Dicky was still very sick, and I was afraid the tiny little body soon would be easy prey for the germs. But:

Tis Jesus loves the little ones,  
And calls them as his own.

He's always with the little ones;  
They're never left alone.

And so God's love encompassed our baby, just as it did the three men in the fiery furnace. Darling Philip remained well and strong.

I'm propped up in bed today, joy and thanksgiving coursing through my veins, and making me feel well and full of courage. How much, indescribably much, I have to be thankful for! The past months have been much like a nightmare, and I'm glad they are over. Tomorrow we open the first page of a new calendar—a new year of God's love and grace. And I know it will be a year filled to the brim with blessings from on high.

The baby and I are getting excellent care. Dear Helen just works herself to a frazzle doing everything possible for our comfort and well-being. She's as sweet as can be, and it's oh, so restful and comforting having her here. Of course, our dear neighbor lady comes in each morning to bathe the baby. We simply couldn't get along without her. The children love having "Aunt Happy" (as Dicky calls her) take care of them. Last night I couldn't help being greatly amused at Dicky. He clambered up on my bed (he's just 1½ years old) to see the baby, and then commenced to imitate the older children by counting: "One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go". Of course, he said it in baby parlance, and then proceeded to flop back on the bed. When Helen came into the room he said: "Aunt Happy comin'," and then lay down at my side as quiet as a saint. When Paul, on Christmas Day, read "Unto us a Son is born, unto us a child is given," Eunice thought he was referring to Philip, who was baptized during the service. The winsome little lass thought all the world rejoiced because our baby had come!

Dearest Dad and Mother sent us everything our hearts could desire, and things we hadn't even thought of. They know this house is a shell, and they're afraid the baby and I might take a cold and suffer serious consequences, so they provided us with bath robes, sheepskin slippers, and so on. How much they do love me and mine! The older I get, and the more children I have, the more I appreciate my self-sacrificing, loving parents. God bless and keep them all their days! May theirs be a happy new year in deed and truth.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Ghost,  
be with us all. Amen.

### **March 30, 1933**

And so, once again it's goodbye! The time has come to bid farewell to our members and move on to a new home. The Lord has called, and we are ready. This time it's but a hop and a jump, but a matter of a few hours' drive to our new destination. Paul has preached there for various occasions, and so we're acquainted with the town and the church property. The congregation is considerably larger, and Paul's duties will be many. To me it seems a dream come true, the answer to a prayer, God's help in time of need. A land of golden opportunity is stretching before us, and, with God's help, we will make the most of it.

We have some dear and valued friends whom we'll miss exceedingly, I know. Tonight we're spending the last hours in our little home, which looks much like a cyclone swept through it. and tomorrow night we'll stay with the dear, kind neighbors, those loyal, kind souls who stood by us in sunshine or showers. The children love this packing, this tearing things to pieces. They try their best to help. Just in the thick of it, Bobby was bitten on the cheek by a stray dog, and I'm sure he will always carry the scar. Fortunately, he escaped getting an infection. And I had the misfortune of breaking a glass and cutting my finger, badly. It is very painful, but I'm hoping it will soon heal.

Speaking of accidents reminds me of one we had about a month ago. Because we have no facilities for doing the family washings, we are forced to do them in the kitchen. We had the baby in his buggy in the kitchen, and Paul and I were busy, when suddenly a big piece of plaster came off the ceiling and fell with a mighty splash into the machine full of white clothes. We were so thankful it didn't strike Philip, because I'm sure it would have injured him seriously. But cleaning up the mess was anything but pleasant. After that we washed out in the open, regardless how cold it was. Paul had constructed a small, enclosed porch on the rear of the house, to keep the sharp north wind from whistling right through the flimsy door frame, but it was too small to use as washroom. He is quite a handy man, a born carpenter. Shortly after we moved here, he built a snug, firm chicken house, of which we're both proud. Too bad we can't take it along when we move!

Paul Jr. has been progressing right along in school, although we have not as yet

reconciled ourselves to no Christian Day School. The only objection we can find to our new field of endeavor is that there, too, our children will not have a congregational school. But Paul consoles me with the hope that sooner or later there will be one established there. With five little lambs of Jesus entrusted to our care, we want the best possible education and training for them, and where else can we obtain that but in a school where the teachers and children are Christians, and where daily God's Word is taught systematically and thoroughly. That is the one thing needful, the most important thing in life.

As I tucked my little flock of "chick-a-biddies" up for the night, I breathed a prayer that God would bless our venture into the unknown, that He would keep us all well and happy together, and give me the wisdom and strength to take care of my children, physically as well as spiritually. How satisfying and beautiful it is to see them, rosy-cheeked and dewy-eyed, content and happy, kneel in prayer to the Father in heaven! My eyes grew misty, and my throat contracted with love and thanksgiving.



## Chapter Nine

**April 30, 1933**

Ahhh! How glorious this feeling of relaxation, this comfortable ease! With a sigh of satisfaction that the day's work is done and all is well, I'm reclining in the easy chair, grateful in the knowledge that my little ones are sweetly sleeping. O Lord, how gracious Thou hast been to me and mine.

It was anything but an easy matter to get settled in our new, lovely home. After almost a month, we're still busy at it. The children are forever ready and anxious to help us, and in so doing, they knock over a stack of books, break a dish or two, or snag a curtain. But they have the best of good intentions, and I can't find it in my heart to become impatient with them. Paul and I do the greater part of the arranging after the wee ones have "sailed off in a wooden shoe, sailed on a river of crystal light, into a sea of dew." (How they love to hear about Wynken, Blynken and Nod!)

We have nine large rooms, a big basement, and, glorious truth, a spacious lawn with towering shade trees. The members renovated the house until it seems like new, and it has been lots of fun to move in. We've been experiencing the same buoyancy of spirit and the same verve we knew when we were fixing up our first home on the prairies, only this time I don't have to cope with those wretched waves of homesickness. It seems quite natural to push a button and have light, turn the faucet for water, or dash to the store for a forgotten item. We're next door to church, and on the edge of town, so that we have the conveniences and advantages, and yet enjoy some privacy.

In short, we like it here very much, and can't help noticing the contrast between this house and our last one. No one, I'm sure, can blame us for enjoying the comforts we now have.

Paul Jr. has a long walk to school: almost a mile each way. But he has sidewalks all the way, and best of all, the noon recess is long enough for him to come home for a warm meal. At first, he felt lost and ill at ease, since in the country school there were but 14 pupils, and here there are 32 in the first grade. He missed the friendly intimacy of the small group, but he soon discovered the teacher was just as companionable and the children just as likable in town as in the country. The

first day Paul took him back and forth, but the second day he was detained, and Paul Jr. started home with some other little fellows. None of them knew where we lived, and so, when Paul Jr. saw a goat tied in a back yard along the way, he stopped and asked the men if he knew where the Lutheran church was. We were amused to think that the memory of our old "Nanny" helped our son find home.

'Tis true, none of us feel the slightest longing for our former home, and yet we do miss our good friends dreadfully. Scarcely a Sunday morning passes without my wishing my dear neighbor was here to help me with the children in the service. Paul and Eunice, of course, enrolled in the Sunday school and sit with the other children, but I have three little ones with me, and on a warm morning they simply must fidget around in the pew. The day Paul preached his initial sermon, Dicky swallowed a penny, which some other child had dropped. He slid off the bench, picked it up, and put it in his mouth, all in the twinkling of an eye. When I told him to give it to me, he tried to take it out of his mouth, but being not yet two years old, he was awkward about it, and pushed it down his throat instead. I was undecided whether to take him out of church or ignore it, but since I had the baby on my lap, and 3-year-old Bobby beside me, I stayed in the service, so as not to disturb the congregation. No doubt I wished to make a good impression on our people, too, which is only human.

In the afternoon Paul and I agreed to let nature take its course, and let it go at that. However, by Wednesday we felt perhaps we'd better consult a doctor, and, to our dismay, the X-ray revealed the penny still lodged in the esophagus. However did little Dicky manage to swallow any food all those days? And the odd part is that he acted perfectly normal, and never once complained of pain. Well, after several doses of medicine, days of waiting, and several more X-rays, the penny finally appeared. (The friendly nurse jokingly accused Dicky of hoarding money!) But the medicine, strong enough to dilate the opening into the stomach, really played havoc with the little digestive system. We are constantly doctoring with our little son, but we hope he'll soon be normal again.

How thankful we are that we have an efficient, kind doctor and nurse, and even a small hospital here! All are blessings from on high, and we expect to make good use of them. After all, our bodies are not our own, but God's, and when He tells us, "Thou shalt not kill," He means that we are also to take care of our bodies and our health.

### **June 15, 1933**

Our big house is full to overflowing. Paul has opened a summer school, which, together with the Saturday School and Sunday School is to serve as temporary substitute for a Christian Day School. Since some of our members live a great distance, some 15 to 18 miles away, we have decided to keep six of these children for the five weeks of school. All we ask of them is to help with the housework and occasionally remember to bring along a few eggs, a pat of butter, or whatever they can spare at home. Perhaps it is not the wisest thing for us to do. I've had some doubts in the matter, since several of the older members claim the people will take unfair advantage of our hospitality. But our sole thought was that the children would receive Christian instruction, and the entire congregation would benefit. In the not too distant future, these children will be the ones on whom the welfare of the congregation rests, and if they have insufficient education, how can they be expected to carry on the work of the congregation? Well, having the children here is a worry and an expense, not to mention the extra work. Besides, my little ones are less obedient with such an audience to giggle and egg them on to show off. But the "silver lining" to this affair is that the enrollment in school is gratifyingly large, and the interest active.

Yesterday our dear little Dicky was two years old. He has outgrown the tendency to bow-leggedness, and is a husky, strong, lovable little boy. The only shadow to his bright little life is that he hasn't as yet overcome the mischief caused by the strong medicine he took after swallowing the penny. The baby, too, has grown and developed so well that we can't help being very proud of the dear little fellow with his big blue eyes and disarming smile, which would melt a heart of stone. How Eunice loves to mother him, and how she loves to carry him. She surely is getting her share of tending wee little mites, but she never seems to tire of it.

### **September 19, 1933**

I have just a minute's breathing spell, but I simply must record that dear, good, kind-hearted Dad surprised us with a visit. We are delighted and can't do anything but chat with him. He gave us a substantial, grand swing for our front porch, and all of us think it's splendid and thoughtful of him. Tomorrow he is going to please us with a lecture, telling the congregation of his visit to the Far East, in the interest of missions. I do hope the weather is favorable so that the

attendance will be good.

Our baby has finally recovered from his stomach upset. It certainly was a long drawn-out affair. A mother of one four summer school boarders brought in a freezer full of ice cream, which was rich and delicious, but she insisted on feeding my baby all he could eat, and I, well, I suffered because of it. The baby became very ill, and I lost much sleep and worried a lot about him. I'm glad the school lasted only five weeks.

The prediction came true: the people accepted our hospitable gesture, but the recompense amounted to nil. Just a single one of them remembered to express their appreciation; the others took it for granted. It's quite a bitter pill to swallow to discover human nature dotes on getting things for nothing. But the Word of God holds true: "My Word shall not return void," and the hours spent in instruction will be of lasting value to the children.

### **July 11, 1934**

We are in the throes of whooping cough. Can anyone imagine anything more nerve-wracking? For three weeks, Paul and I have scarcely dared to take even the tiniest nap, because with five young children whooping for dear life, we are continually on the jump. Bobby was the first to come down with it, and where he contracted it is a mystery to us. He'll soon be over the worst. But our precious wee Philly, scarcely 18 months old, has a severe and terrifying case. Many a time we hold him by the heels so he can relieve the spasm of choking. We are taking all of the children to the doctor every other day, in the hope that the injections will shorten the period of coughing. The strain is terrible, and, to make matters worse, the heat and drouth is intense, so that we feel like wilted lettuce leaves. Oh God, give me the necessary strength to carry on!

### **October 12, 1934**

Sunshine follows on the storm.

After the showers come sunshine and flowers.

Though we sow in tears of sorrow,  
We shall reap in heav'nly joy.  
And the fears that now annoy

Shall be laughter on the morrow.

How true these words are! Our months of anxiety have passed, the whooping cough has subsided, and—JOY beyond measure—We have a new little “Bit of Heaven,” a tiny little son, now almost a month old. How grateful we are that the period of contagion was over when our little John Edward arrived, or else he might have taken the dread disease also. Truly, God is good! Day and night, I marvel at His grace and mercy, at His undying love toward us. Our new son is adorably perfect, as cute as a picture, and as bright-eyed as the wisest scholar. Recently a lady remarked to me that my children were all so wide awake and intelligent looking. I puffed up like a peacock over that remark! But I know that John is a lovable, cuddly, precious little midget, dearer to me than all the treasures in the world. Now we have six “olive plants round about our table.”

It is interesting to see how the children love their new baby brother, how they plan to take him here and there when he’s older, and how they must show him everything that interests them. Eunice, who started her school years this fall as a first grader, daily regales the teacher with stories of John’s sweetness, and Philip’s clever remarks. She’s quite a little magpie!

The last weeks of the dreadful summer passed more pleasantly. Our dear Beth and her husband were at home on furlough and spent several weeks with us. The Lord has not blessed them with children, and consequently they enjoy our little flock immensely. They felt sorry for our children, quarantined so long with the whooping cough, and exerted themselves to the limit to bring happiness to all of us. It really was quite a joke: they brought the little ones some ice-cold pop as an especial treat, but as soon as it had gone down the little throats, the coughing began, and before long, up comes the pop!

Best of all, my darling Mother and sister Rachel came out to cheer us up and shorten the long dreary days. Oh, how blessed and comforting my dear Mother’s presence was for me! In word, deed, and caress she encouraged and strengthened me, and her prayers for me were many and heartfelt. The prayers of a Christian mother enfold her children and keep them close to God. Dear, good Rachel! She took the care of the children and the household tasks upon her shoulders so that Mother and I could spend long, cozy hours together. It was a blessed relief to Paul and me having all those dear ones here. Without them we would have been ready to despair and give up hope. Our members evidently are

afraid of whooping cough (who can blame them?) because none of them offered to help us out. When John arrived, we asked a number of girls if they could help our hired girl occasionally, but one had this, the other that flimsy excuse. More than ever I missed my good former neighbor!

Somehow I'm not regaining my strength as rapidly as I expected, due, no doubt, to by being worn out from the strain of the children's sickness. But now that Paul's dear Mother came yesterday, I'll be able to rest more often, since she'll supervise the activities of the hired girl and children. I'm glad the weather is still warm and pleasant, so the little ones can play out of doors. Since Paul is now conducting Bible class at a CCC camp 20 miles away, he's gone considerably more, and I do miss my little Eunice now that she's in school. She can tend the little ones excellently. How quickly happy, eager, little children can drive away gloom and worry from a mother's heart!

## Chapter Ten

### **December 19, 1934**

Hope on, thou heart grief-ridden.  
Hope, and courageous be.

In the midst of happy children joyfully caroling Christmas cheer, and eagerly awaiting the glad festival, my heart is heavy and sad and fearful. My dear, dear Mother is critically ill! What a world of sorrow and grief a that sentence holds! My thoughts and prayers are ever with her. Oh, God, ease her suffering and pain, and, if it be Thy will, restore her again to good health!

### **January 10, 1935**

The steady rhythm of the huge train wheels has lulled my Wee One to slumber land, and, to while the long hours away, I'll do a bit of reminiscing. Paul urged me to drop everything and rush home to Mother when the holiday season was over. We engaged a hired girl to take charge of the house, and I took the baby along. Paul Jr. and Eunice didn't relish the idea of my leaving. It's the first time I ever went without them. I so longed to take my little Philip, just two years old, with me, but I realized a little, lively fellow might not be the best visitor Mother could have. John is still such a tiny tot that he sleeps the greater part of the time.

I found Mother still seriously ill, but before I left the doctor found her improved, and encouraged us with the hope that she will get well again. How happy she was to see me, and how she loved my little son. He smiled at her so lovingly, and she always wanted him near. All of her children came to Mother's bedside, some of them a long way, and her mother heart rejoiced and blessed them for it. It was a good tonic, a wonderful stimulant for Mother to have all her loved ones with her.

But while I was with Mother, my little flock back home fell prey to chickenpox. Paul didn't mention it in his letter, since he felt I would worry needlessly, and the children were not very sick. But Paul Jr. and Eunice wrote me all about it. They counted the "pox" on each of the children and then wrote me the result. Eunice, sweet little near, wrote most touchingly: "I've got a big lump in my throat, and it won't go up or down. I want you to come home so bad." Paul Jr. helped her write

it, and between them they produced quite a masterpiece. Well, in half a day I'll be with them again. God keep us all well and safe!

How often I thought of them all and prayed for them. I had visions of little Philip falling down the stairs (how vividly I can still picture him toppling head over heels down the 14 steps from upstairs and escaping without a scratch or bruise!). And of 3-year-old Dicky becoming violently ill, since as yet he has not overcome the effects of swallowing that penny. Or of our dear 5-year-old Bob, the deft left hander, using my shears instead of his own blunt ones (the cutting edge is on the wrong side for his left hand) and gashing himself horribly. How foolish my fears and worries: God takes care of them whether I'm there or not. They are safe beneath His sheltering love. "He who life and being gave me, He shall ever guard and save me." If only I could firmly and unwaveringly believe that, I would have enjoyed my visit and not been haunted by those nagging, anxious fancies.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry,  
Everything to God in prayer.

### **March 20, 1935**

Dust, dust, dust, and more dust. It started swirling and blowing on Eunice's birthday, and has not mitigated in the least. Housekeeping is nothing short of drudgery—in fact, it's impossible to keep house. We feel as though we've been wallowing in the mire, only that we're dry—too dry and parched—instead of being moist. There's grit between our teeth, in our eyes, in our hair, and we cough and gag like whooping cough addicts.

The dust sifts and seeps through every crevice, so that the dishes and food, clothes and bedding, floors and furniture are full of it. Many a time I've had to put damp cloths over the baby's nostrils to guard against dust pneumonia. School has been dismissed frequently, because the teachers feel the children are safer at home. It's alarming and terrifying. Will it never cease? The Lord God certainly is scourging our territory! We look to Him for surcease and respite. It is He who controls and directs the elements.

Paul's dear mother has been with us for several months, but the dust is gradually getting the best of her. She longs for fresh air and sunshine, green and living surroundings. I can't blame her. Life is a drab existence in the midst of this



everlasting dust. Paul, too, is feeling the effects of the abnormally dirty air. Doing his outside work, making sick calls and so on, he inhales so many black, greasy particles that he says he feels like there's a stone on his chest. Oh God, have mercy!

### **May 6, 1935**

Our 10th anniversary! How the years have hurried along; and how happy Paul and I have been together! He's still the same dear, adorable, lovable husband he was ten years ago, more dear to me now than ever.

All the joys and ecstasies I've experienced were made sweeter by his rejoicing with me, and the sorrows and disappointments lightened by his sympathetically sharing them. With keen anticipation and confident trust, I look forward to many more years of happiness with Paul. Thank God for a "pious and faithful spouse," as Luther expresses it. To celebrate our festal day, we had a family picture taken this afternoon. When we're old and gray, that picture will be a sweet and tender treasure. Paul is feeling better, in spite of continued dust storms, After the Easter season, with its manifold duties and demands, Paul took his mother out of this dust area to his sister in the far northwest. Two weeks of inhaling the pure, fresh mountain air refreshed him so that he is ready to battle more black, baneful, "topsoil" clouds.

We miss our dear, kind Grandmother a lot. I wished she had stayed just a few weeks longer. It was a queer, unpleasant coincidence that Paul Jr. broke out with the measles just two days after Paul and Grandma were gone. We had had Eunice's tonsils removed the week before, since she had severe throat trouble all winter, and before her throat was completely healed, she, too, contracted the measles. Even tiny John fell victim to the disease. But Dicky was sickest of them all. He lay a whole week with a high fever before the blotches appeared. For days I kept the shades drawn to guard all the little eyes, and had all I could do to keep the never-ending dust from irritating the little throats still more,

Thank God the epidemic passed over without leaving any ill aftereffects, and soon our temporary hospital could again be converted into a home. We were especially happy that, soon after the measles had disappeared, the doctor told us our little Dicky was ready to graduate from the medicine chest at last. Two years ago he swallowed a penny, and the strong medicine used to dilate the opening

into his stomach wrecked the little intestinal tract. Now, after two years, he has finally outgrown the mischief done. Sometimes the Lord is slow to answer our call for help. We so wanted Dicky to overcome that defect quickly, but God let the healing process be gradual and slow, in spite of our impatience and chafing at the delay. "Patience is a pleasant virtue," if only we could learn to be patient and bide the Lord's time.

### **August 10, 1935**

Paul Jr. and Eunice had a delightful, thrilling experience. They went along home with two of the summer school children who drive the six miles daily with a two-wheeled cart and a decrepit old "nag." It was grand sport. They had much to tell about the assortment of animals and all the feathered folk on the farm.

Just recently we took a hurried dash to Ellen's home to bid goodbye to dear Beth and her husband, since they will soon sail for their distant home. It's not an easy matter to leave home for any length of time with six children, but we didn't stay long, and consequently we enjoyed every minute of our stay. While we were there, Baby John suddenly stood and surprised us all by walking across the room. He was only ten months old. Until then he had convulsed all the relatives by walking on all fours, like a puppy. No doubt that was his way of testing the strength and ability of his legs.

Dear, sweet, loving Rachel gave up her very lucrative position to go home and care for our dear invalid Mother. What a sacrifice she is bringing. We all love and admire her for it, and I know Dad and Mother certainly are pleased, "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother." How well sister Rachel is doing that, and God will bless her for her unselfish devotion to her aging parents.

### **November 25, 1935**

Today our precious Bob is six years old. He is such a dear loving little fellow, with a passion for birds and flowers. Many a time he brought happiness to Grandmother, Daddy, or Mother by gathering a bouquet of pretty wildflowers (there's but few in this drouth-ridden country), and, with sparkling eyes and a disarming smile, presenting them to one or the other of us. He is an apt first grader, only his left-handedness bothers him in his cutting with the kindergarten

scissors.

We've had quite a harrowing experience lately, which, thank God, was not as hopeless as at first it seemed. Little Phil, curious as only a child can be, wanted to see what was on top of the chiffonier, and, using the drawers as a ladder, climbed up to see. Naturally his weight caused the thing to overbalance, and down it crashed, pinning him underneath. Both Paul and I rushed to his assistance, extricated him, and found his left ear practically severed. Paul kept applying cold, wet clothes to the wound, while I called the doctor.

It took seven stitches to fasten the ear, and a daily trip to the doctor's office for two weeks to guard against infection. The poor little dear was forced to wear a heavy bandage around his head and wondered why I couldn't remove it. How I worried and fretted and reproached myself for negligence and goodness knows what, thinking I might have avoided the accident.

But Paul consoled me by saying I was not omnipresent, and in doing my work I could not always be with each one of the children. Another incident where I trusted in my own strength and wisdom to avert accidents! Now that the doctor pronounced the ear healed, and all's well, I am ashamed and humbly contrite. Our Heavenly Father has given success to the efforts of the doctor, and our dear little boy scarcely bears a scar. How infinitely kind and merciful my Lord has been to me, who deserve nothing but punishment for lack of trust in my God.

### **April 12, 1936**

I am in the depths of down-heartedness. I am having a case of "indigo blues." In other words, I can't find the sunshine because of the clouds. My world is dark and dreary, because my darling mother again lies dangerously ill. Just before Easter, I rushed to her bedside, leaving Paul alone with all the children. I stayed but a few days, just long enough to embrace my dearest Mother often, and tell her how much she meant to me. But she is not rallying, and the outlook is serious. Dear God, if it be Thy will, lessen her pain and suffering! It seems I can't concentrate on any work; my thoughts are always with my Mother.

My drooping spirits are not uplifted any by the series of dust storms we are again experiencing. It really turns the skin into leather, the hair into broom straw, and the temperament into a nasty, ill-tempered shrew. The farmers have no hopes of

a crop again this year, and consequently there is a spirit of hopelessness and defeatism among our members. One hears nothing but complaints and self-pity. Have I, too, become permeated with that spirit? Where is that joyful faith and trust in God, which I thought I possessed? How about believing that comforting verse (Romans 8:38–39):

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Well, I still have another grievance to recount: our dear little Philip, because of the dreadful accident he had last fall, now stutters. Our doctor says it is because of the shock to his nervous system at the time. We have taken him to the speech clinic at the State University, and they tell us that, since he developed it after an accident, he has a good chance of overcoming it by persistent, patient trying. How sorry we are that this had to happen. But, on the other hand, how grateful we are that nothing more serious or terrible resulted. We are certainly going to do all in our power to help Phil master his speech defect. He is not a bit self-conscious because of it, but rather laughs after he's stuttered. He thinks it sounds funny

I'll have to do a "right about face" and count my blessings, so that I'll appreciate what God has given me, instead of brooding over the vexations, disappointments, and griefs this world contains for me. My little ones sing:

Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me,  
He is always, always near.  
If I do but trust and love Him,  
There is naught that I need fear.

How true!

## Chapter Eleven

### November 4, 1936

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday! Happy birthday, dear Mother, to you!

A chorus of sweet children's voices thus greeted me when I awoke this morning, for this is my festal day. Oh, my heavenly Father, how wonderfully, how graciously Thou hast led and guided me, and brought me safely to the beginning of another year of my life! O Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies; but I pray Thee, for Jesus' sake forgive all my sins, and give me strength and wisdom to lead a life pleasing to Thee. May I ever remember Thy love and grace!

Birthdays are real celebrations in our home. The whole family joins in making the day a happy one. On the birthday morning, the cake with the correct number of candles adorns the child's place at the breakfast table, surrounded by the gifts. No one is allowed to enter the room until Daddy has lit the candles; then the procession files in, headed by the birthday child. What a thrill, what fun for all! The gifts are few and inexpensive, but they fill the little heart with joy!

"One penny for each year" is our slogan, and so the exact amount of pennies dare not be missing. These are put into the Sunday School offering by the child the next Sunday. The birthday cake, of course, must be duly admired, for the children (excepting the birthday child) always decorate it after I've frosted it, and usually they produce a fearful and wonderful work of art. It's truly beautiful in their eyes. When Daddy or Mother has a birthday, the little ones fairly bubble over with delight and secrecy. Each one does his share to show how much they love us. Today they presented me with dear little gifts from the "Five and Ten," each one expressive of the giver. And my heart overflowed with love toward my own little flock! I couldn't help being amused at the card of safety pins which our very tiniest One gave me. Eunice chose it and explained that she knew he needed lots of them. And he does!

Just five weeks ago this Wee Bit of Sweetness came to cheer our hearts, bringing much happiness into our home. Did I say: "Wee Bit of Sweetness"? I should have said: "Big Bit," because our little Theodore Mark weighed a good 11½ pounds! He certainly has a good start in life! Paul Jr. was but a handful compared to my big baby boy; Paul Jr. tipped the scale at only 6½ pounds. Well, our Teddy Boy is so

easy to handle, because he is so husky, and I find no end of pleasure and happiness caring for him. The children fairly adore him, and love to sit by his little bed and watch his every move. And Paul is as proud as though this were his first son. Now we can boast of six stalwart sons and one darling daughter. Truly, the Lord has blessed us richly, and has permitted us to see all of our children well and strong. With my baby in my arms, and the other little ones gathered around me, I am happier than a king on his throne.

We were fortunate in obtaining the services of a competent woman, who took excellent care of me and the baby, as well as of the house, so that I rapidly regained my strength, and am again able to care for my family. And how grateful I am for that. Paul certainly helps me a great deal. He is an expert at tending the baby when Eunice is in school. Well, we've had to suffer many an indignity, and swallow many an insult since our darling Teddy came. Remarks like these cut deep: "In hard times like these, you ought to stop having children," or "You can't provide for the ones you have, and now you've got another."

But worst of all was the story told Paul by a sick member he visited. This woman told him that two pastors argued about birth control. The one, who had ten children, claimed God gave the command: "Be fruitful and multiply." The other pastor had but one child, and he countered: "Yes, but God also says, 'Dwell with your wife according to knowledge.'" How can a parishioner speak thus to a pastor? It fairly bowled me over. And the queer part of the story is, that when our baby was but a day old, this woman, who had recovered from her recent illness, came to see the baby, kissed me fervently, and said: "I just love a baby. There's nothing like having a big family." I felt as though she was a hypocrite, but Paul cautioned me to put the best construction on everything, since she evidently regretted having hurt us just a week previous.

Well, no matter what anyone says, we believe that "Children are an heritage of the Lord . . . Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." We will joyfully, eagerly welcome as many as the Lord grants us.

### **February 8, 1937**

What a cold, blustery, unfriendly winter morning. Oh, I do wish the weeks would hurry by and lovely spring would come! Our darling baby has been dangerously ill and is not yet recovering; the days and nights for weeks have been anxious, restless, and sleepless. When he was but three months old, he suddenly without warning developed a middle ear infection. He was so peevish and droopy that we called the doctor, and when I explained the symptoms to him, he came at once. In a few minutes our dining room table was transformed into an operating table, and our precious Teddy had to have both ear drums lanced. How my heart bled and ached to see my little boy so ill. And both Philip and John were lying in bed with high fever and very sore throats.

I felt as though my world were about to crash around me. Teddy's little ears drained for a long while, causing him much uneasiness and restlessness, so that I sat night after night, holding him close to me, to keep the warmth of my body near the poor, aching ears. It is only five o'clock now, but I've been up two hours with Teddy. He's asleep now, but I'm too unstrung to attempt napping. I do hope and pray he will soon recover. Our neighboring pastor lost their tiny baby with the same middle-ear infection last month, but God spared our wee son. And He will continue to protect him and bless him and let him grow well and strong, if it is His holy will.

### **Maundy Thursday, 1937**

What a winter this has been! Sickness, sickness, sickness, is all we have thought, dreamed, and talked. And now, when we are eagerly awaiting the balmy days of spring, our little flock has fallen victim the mumps. At present all but Johnny have them, and I'm sure by morning he'll boast balloon jaws. But, thank God, now only one is very sick. Teddy was fairly well over his ear infection, and just beginning to sleep less fitfully, when this occurred. I'm afraid our Easter Day will be a sorrowful and gloomy one, since the children won't feel like enjoying it. But perhaps I'm mistaken. Little people really recuperate in a hurry, and I'm sure the Easter colors and pleasures will cheer them immensely. At least I hope so!

### **June 1, 1937**

Our baby is walking! How that surprised us. He is just nine months old, and since

he is so heavy, and was sick so much the past winter, we were sure he would be slow in getting around. But he needed no encouragement or coaxing; he simply got up and walked. It looks so adorably cute to see him trotting along with John, feeling important and big. I'm glad he no longer needs the "walker," since I'm just a bit suspicious of it. Several weeks ago someone left the basement door open, and quick as a wink Teddy raced for it in his walker and tumbled the whole length of the long stairway, landing on the cement floor. How he escaped unhurt is nothing short of a miracle, but he merely cried for a bit, and then was ready to go off exploring something else. That night little Philip, after finishing his evening prayer, added: "Dear God, thanks for watching so Teddy didn't get hurt." How sweet of him to think of that!

We're enjoying these lovely evenings, sitting out on the front lawn, telling stories, singing songs, and making plans. The children never tire hearing Paul or me tell of our childhood and youth, and ask innumerable questions about this or that. After listening wide-eyed for some time, John said: "When I get big, you'll get little, and then I'll take care of you." He has the idea that people revert back to helpless childhood, and in a sense he is right: when we reach our allotted three score years and ten we are, more or less, dependent on our children's care and love. I remember a lovely poem my father had in his study: "Lead thy mother tenderly down life's steep decline; first her arm was thy support, and now she leans on thine."

Last week we had the rare pleasure of having beloved relatives here for a brief visit. My dear oldest brother and his wife stopped off for a few days, and what a treat that was! We did hate to see them leave, since their visit was delightful and stimulating. Here's hoping they come soon again.

### **July 4, 1937**

The Glorious Fourth! What fun and good times that brings to our children. The little ones, of course, have no idea what it's all about, but the four older ones know that we're celebrating our country's Independence Day. Paul Jr. painstakingly explained it as best he could to the others, and they thought it was simply "swell," as Bob put it, to be an American. When Dicky observed his birthday last month on Flag Day, and all the business houses displayed flags, he felt so flattered, thinking it was in his honor. But the others soon punctured his pride by telling him it was Flag Day. Well, he consoled himself by saying it was a



good day for a birthday anyway, and says he'll repeat the "salute to the Flag" each year on that day.

Paul is celebrating with the children by popping firecrackers and torpedoes. I'm not so interested in that sport and am always glad when the day has passed without a mishap. Of course, we never permit the children to have fireworks unless Paul or I am with them. And the little ones, naturally, must be content to be mere spectators. Their joy is the homemade ice cream, red lemonade, and cake which always accompany the observance of the Fourth.

Last week we took a few days off from the humdrum of everyday life and drove to the capital city of our state. We stayed in a tourist camp, and during the day showed the children the capital building (which interested Paul Jr. and Eunice greatly), the parks, the university campus, etc. It was an educational trip as well as recreation. The only disturbing feature was the fact that wherever we went, the people stared and looked, and turned to look some more. Some of them remarked, "What a large family!" and a few of them commented: "What lovely children you have." More than ever, I realize that children are considered a drag and a nuisance these days. Nobody wants to bother with them.

On the way home we changed our route so as to spend several days with Paul's dear brother and family. They have two little girls and live on a farm; that was quite a change for our little people, and they surely made the most of it. They roamed the broad acres, investigated every nook and corner, played hide and seek in the cornfield (too bad the roasting ears are not ready to eat!) and with consuming interest watched their uncle feed the various animals, milk the cows, gather the eggs, etc. How happy they were when they were permitted to ride an old grey mare who could scarcely stagger along, but who nevertheless, docilely and cheerfully, carried two or three of the children at a time. Bobby wanted to know why we couldn't tie her behind our car and take her along home. She'd be so much fun, and they could ride her downtown to get the mail and groceries. Too bad he had to be disappointed.

Paul hasn't been feeling any too well; not that he's sick, but it's just a borderline case: he's not well and yet he's not sick. Our doctor diagnosed it as simply a rundown condition, due to the everlasting, irritating refrain of our members: "Hard times, no money, salary can't be paid." So it's up to us to struggle along on a mere pittance, run up bills for food and clothing, mortgage all our household goods and all we own—and then fret and wonder and worry what to do next. On

top of it all, instead of understanding and comprehending that a large family simply can't exist on half-a-dozen hundred dollars a year, even some of the pastors make remarks to the effect that we're simply poor managers: if we'd economize, we'd get along all right on the salary, etc. At times I'm tempted to feel that a pastor and his family are nothing short of beggars and objects of charity. The feeling seems to predominate: "Oh, the poor preacher needs our help. Let's give him a dollar or two."

How, far, dreadfully far, our modern age has deviated from the course mapped out by our Saxon founding fathers. They respected and honored the ministry; today there is indifference and sometimes even contempt for the pastor. Well, the Lord God has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, and He has given us our dear children, so we are confident that He will provide what is needful for us and ours. "If we have food and raiment, let us be therewith content." We have much to be thankful for, and these dark and troublesome days soon will over. My dear parents spent all their married life in the parsonage, saw trouble, sorrow, and worry, and yet are filled with praise and thanksgiving toward God. After all, the Holy Ministry is the most blessed profession on earth, even though the temporal returns are paltry and few. My dear parents will soon celebrate their 50th anniversary, with Mother still in poor health.

## Chapter Twelve

### **August 4, 1937**

Hence, loathed melancholy,  
Of Cerberus and deepest midnight born,  
In Stygian caves forlorn. (John Milton, *L'Allegro*)

How heavy my heart is tonight; how full of foreboding, anxiety, fear and loneliness! Paul left for a distant hospital tonight, for a thorough check up, since he can't seem to overcome that pepless condition. Our doctor assures us that he will be home again in ten days or less, but somehow a queer prickly sensation taunts me, and a tight, contracted ache around my heart bodes no good. Am I perhaps a fatalist, defeatist, or pessimist? O God, bless the work of the doctors and bring my Paul back to me well and strong.

### **September 4, 1937**

Just a month ago today Paul left. I took the baby and went out to see him last week. The doctors haven't found anything but a seriously run-down condition, which requires rest and freedom from worry. How happy he was to see us, and how proud he was of his curly headed, merry-hearted little boy! I could stay but two days, because of the children here at home. Paul Jr. was quite ill recently, and consequently I wished to take care that he really recuperated before school started.

Today our chubby little Richard began his school career. I was glad to see that he readily adapted himself to the schoolroom and to the teacher. May God help him ever to do his best in his studies. I'm sure he will be a good and interested pupil. But how I longed to send him to a Christian Day School. Paul's persistent efforts have failed to bring results, because our people feel the public school has too many advantages to offer. It stirs up my righteous indignation when my children come home, big-eyed, and tell me that horses used to be no bigger than fox terriers, but through the years gradually grew bigger and broader. Many a tale of that nature has come to me, from Grade 1 on up to Grade 6. Will my skepticism about the evolution theory carry weight against the words of an idolized teacher? I can't help but tremble lest it doesn't.

This morning, just in time, a package came from Aunt Rachel, with a new, swell pencil box for each of the school children. Dicky especially felt proud as a peacock and rich as a king. Dear, good Rachel! She always finds the right way to a child's heart, and she never tires of sending gifts and pleasures.

How we do miss our dear, dear Daddy! The children fairly swamp God with petitions and intercessions for Daddy, and they never doubt in the least that God will answer their prayers. Why can't I do likewise? O Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief.

### **September 6, 1937**

Our precious Little John fell and broke his leg today. I simply could not or would not, believe that it was broken until, after several hours, he continued to crawl instead of walking. To my dismay, the doctor's X-ray showed a fracture just above the ankle. Now the poor little leg is in a cast, and I'm to try my best to keep him from using it. It will seem like prison to my active, eager little Johnny. Just so it heals without complications. "When Thou sendest trouble, comfort us with thoughts of Thy love." At bedtime the children all asked God to make John's leg better, and John prayed the little verse he learned in Sunday School:

Tender Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look on me, a little child.  
Help me, if it be Thy will,  
To recover from my ill.

### **September 13, 1937**

Oh God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? My Savior, I lie prostrate at Thy feet, imploring Thy mercy. Give me strength, give me courage, give me confident hope and faith in Thy love! This morning a telegram shocked me with the news of my dear mother's death. She had been an invalid for a long time, but had surprised us the past months by feeling fairly well. Now, very suddenly and unexpectedly, God called her home. Just a few days ago she phoned the doctor asking him if she could come out and comfort me, since I needed her. And now she is gone! Her last days she spent thinking only of her children, their welfare and happiness. How like a true, Christian mother. How I will miss her prayers in

my behalf. Oh, if only my Paul were here to comfort and console me. Never, never, have I felt so alone, so forsaken, so desolate. For the children's sake, I have tried to bear up throughout this lone, dreary, rainy Monday, especially since Philip and John are both sick and feverish.

"When counsel I would know, good counsel let me find." What shall I do? I would love to attend mother's burial, and yet, with the children sick, John's leg broken, and Paul in a hospital bed, shall I go? I walked over to one of the members during the noon hour, while the older children were at home, and they advise me not to go. However, the doctor tells me by all means to go. He thinks the children have a slight stomach disorder which is prevalent in town at present, and which usually passes over in a day or two. All I can do is ask God to direct me and show me the right path.

### **Midnight September 13, 1937**

An hour or so ago, two of the elders and their wives came, and urged me to go, and so, in a few minutes I'll take the baby and board the train. It is nigh impossible for me to leave all my little ones asleep, not knowing Mother is leaving, and I can scarcely keep back the tears. But I must. Oh, I must. If I dare let myself go, I'm afraid I will not be able to stop crying. Perhaps on the train I can indulge in a good cry, and ease the weight on my chest. Will the sun never shine again?

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by many a foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of poverty or woe.

Thou knowest my lot in life, Lord, for Thou didst ordain it. Help me ever to cast my burden on Thee, trusting only in Thy grace. Protect my little ones and my dear husband, Lord, and let us soon be reunited.

### **September 18, 1937**

I can't settle down to doing anything. Ever since Mother, my own dear good Mother passed away, I have been unstrung and upset. But oh, I am so thankful

that I went to her funeral, since it meant much to dear, kind Dad to have all of his children, but dear Beth, who is across the seas, with him in his hour of grief. Is Mother really gone? I can scarcely believe it. My wounded, bleeding heart flees for refuge and comfort to my Savior. These days of anxiety and grief are difficult ones for the children too. While I was gone, they stayed in the country and had to miss school. Paul Jr. confided to me that he was afraid Daddy would die, and I might be killed in a train crash. Poor, poor little boy. He certainly felt as though he had all the responsibility on his young shoulders.

I am ashamed to confess that I am irritable and unreasonable toward the children. and often I see tears well up in the little eyes, when I have spoken sharply and without thinking. How odd that I should run across this poem, by an anonymous writer, just now:

God grant that I may never wreak  
The day's frustrations on my child;  
Unnerved and worn, still let me speak  
In accents disciplined and mild.

God grant me patience to restrain the  
Thoughtless, angry reprimand  
Which clouds clear questioning eyes with pain,  
And sears on quivering minds a brand.

God grant me tolerance so wide  
My child, in doubt, need seek no other;  
Give me the right to be his guide;  
Grant wisdom, God, to me—a mother.

### **November 12, 1937**

Just as we were positive our dear Daddy would soon be home, the doctors discovered what seemed to be serious trouble. Consequently, his coming home was delayed indefinitely. I simply couldn't bear the suspense any longer, so I hurriedly dashed out to see him, after finally locating a woman to care for the children. (It is terribly difficult to find someone to help when one has a large family).

In my impatience and longing for my husband, doubts assailed me: Did God really

love me? The answer came prompt and clear to my troubled heart: “Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth,” and “All things work together for good to them that love God.” And, when I arrived there and spoke to the doctors, I found their fears had proved in vain: Paul was on the road to good health, and would soon be released. The rest and care had done wonders for him, although the excitement and grief through which we had passed retarded his progress. Then too, the worry about his work, about the flock over which he is the shepherd, didn’t help matters at all. The neighboring pastors have been very kind and helpful, and ever ready to be of service. But yet there is no specific one in charge, and occasionally affairs become quite confused and tangled—as for instance, the Sunday afternoon when three pastors came, each thinking he was to preach here. Or, the time when a German service had been announced, and a young pastor who could not speak a word of German came to conduct the service. It caused no end of annoyance, and I fretted a good deal over it. But each week we felt sure he would be released in a few days. And now the original ten days have stretched into three months. I dare not let myself think of that.

Paul Jr. and I have turned into regular “cowhands.” We are milking our own cow, and to increase the income a bit, we have borrowed a cow. Now she presented us with a calf, and ever since we’ve really been absorbed in our chores. Neither one of us knows the first thing about it, but we were told the proper method to try and wean a calf is to stick two fingers in its mouth, and teach it to drink from a bucket.

How ludicrous it must look when Paul Jr. straddles the thing, and I timidly poke my fingers in its sucking mouth. The bucket is heavy, the calf is strong and “bucky.” and it gives me the fidgets to feel that suckling on my fingers. Consequently, more than once we take a “pause that refreshes” and wonder perplexed how we can ever finish the job. Well, since the calf is growing, I s’pose we’re not starving it. It caused us much merriment when, the morning after we had taken it away from its mother, we couldn’t locate the calf. After searching high and low, and about to give up in disgust, we noticed the cow stayed close to the outside manger. When she softly “moosed,” we heard a faint “maaa” in answer, and soon we discovered the little calf hidden under the hay in the manger. Evidently the old cow had nudged open the door and let her baby out, and then hid it in the manger. The children chuckled over the incident for days, and I’m sure each one wrote about it to Daddy dear.

### **November 30, 1937**

What a red-letter day! What rejoicing and happiness in our home! God heard and answered our prayers, and brought our dear, dear Daddy home last night! It seems too good to be true, and often I think I'm dreaming it. But he's here, oh, he's here, and we're all together once again. How much we have to tell each other (in four months we saw each other only twice) and how eager the children are to hear all about the hospital. The weight of woe slid off my shoulders as soon as my dear Paul stepped in the door, looking so well and as eager and happy as his little ones.

How we needed him the past months, how I longed for him to help me in matters of discipline, as when two of the little boys accompanied Eunice downtown, and while she was busy buying something, they helped themselves to some candy, and hid it until they were at home. I discovered it quite by chance, and felt sick at heart to think that my precious little sons would do that. Was I too careful and worried about the future that I neglected their training, or was I so miserly that I failed to give them an occasional treat of goodies? I took it to the Lord in prayer, and then tried my best to show them their wrong.

When I found that the children had robbed a bird's nest and confiscated the pretty eggs, and was chagrined and upset by their cruelty, I longed for a father to guide them, since he understands a boy's nature better than a mother does. I have become accustomed to digging an assortment of everything imaginable out of pants pockets, and I've even overcome the shuddering at touching such treasures as angle worms, toads, katydids, etc. (although I still gasp with horror when I run across a chicken eye, which they love to remove from the head of a chicken we have butchered), but a boy needs a Daddy, and now, Daddy is here.

This is the Thanksgiving season, and we certainly have much to be thankful for. The trials and griefs of the past months are over and past, and, with our faces to the sun, we look forward to happier times ahead. God grant it.



## Chapter Thirteen

**March 15, 1938**

I scarcely realized just how much I depended on Paul, until he was forced to be gone for four long months. Now that he is home again, life with its sorrows, life with its joys, is delightfully sweet, since I can share it with him. Together we fondly watch our children grow and progress, pleased at their healthy, sturdy bodies and keen, fresh intellect. And together we reprimand them, or if need be, punish them, so that they may grow up to be upright, respectable Christians.

Dear Lord, help us ever to bear in mind  
that they are Thy children as well as ours,  
so that we may always first give heed  
unto their soul's welfare.

Two weeks ago, our little John had the misfortune of falling down the basement steps at the neighboring pastor's home, and oh, he fractured his right arm. How it grieved me to see the poor little fellow suffer so. Of course, I was the recipient of much "Job's comfort": This person said she never permitted her children to play on the stairway; that person said she didn't go "gadding around" while her children were small; and a number of people assured me we were not providing proper food for our children, since no doubt John's bones were soft and in need of calcium. However, when I expressed my fears to our good, reliable family doctor, he comforted me by saying our children were in excellent health, and John just happened to fall unfortunately. God grant that it heals without complications.

Today our little girl is ten years old. She asked a few of her classmates to come over and help her celebrate, and so the house was overrun with jolly, giggly girls. The boys were quite disgusted and wondered why the girls have to act so silly, but I told them they were merely having a glorious good time, and I was glad Eunice could enjoy herself so innocently. In a few years, I'm afraid, these same classmates will crave altogether different amusements and pastimes. How much an organized young people's group can do to keep young people from following the allurements and seductions of the world.

### **September 30, 1938**

Tears and laughter—sorrow and sunshine; how closely they follow each other. A year ago, I was crushed by the loss of my dearest mother. Now, on the very anniversary of her death my heart is filled with rapture and thanksgiving, for my Lord has given me the most precious of all treasures: a wee baby. We have baptized him David Jerome, and I feel confident that I am the happiest mother in the world. How easy it is to care for him, what a joy to cuddle him. He weighed a solid twelve pounds at birth and is simply a perfect specimen of lovable babyhood. We've been told repeatedly that he was a real football player, or that we'd soon have enough children for a baseball team. Why is it that some evil, wagging tongues must spoil one's pleasure and happiness? Frequently we must hear remarks about the size of our family. One woman recently told me that Paul was a wonderful pastor, and the only objection the congregation has to him is the size of his family. Did that make me feel good? I felt like having a good cry when that visitor left. Perhaps I should have been bold enough to ask her which one of the children we should not have had. But to us our babies are dear.

Needless to say, with a new baby to care for, and seven other children depending on me, my days and nights are full. Paul so wishes he had the means to hire at least a part-time helper, so I needn't slave away all week, but I know it's out of the question, and so I heed the advice Mother gave me years ago: "Stop at night, and start in again in the morning". Sometimes I am so dead tired that I can scarcely drag myself along; at such times I think of man's greatest treasures as rest and relaxation. How good it would feel to have some kind woman of the congregation come in and relieve me for an hour or two. But evidently no one realizes I'm not made of iron. For two long years we had no car, and no way of getting away from home at all. Whoever needed the pastor came and got him. And during those two long years only two of our families remembered to invite us out for the day. I wonder, am I too much devoted to my home and children? Am I growing into a "cattish," critical, hard-to-get-along-with sort of person? Perhaps I need to exert myself and be more amiable and more sugary to the members.

Philip is now a first grader. That means we have five in school, and three at home. Little Philly has not as yet overcome his stuttering, but I hope and pray it will not hamper his schoolwork. Just so the other children don't take pleasure in mocking him. Paul Jr. has progressed nicely with his piano lessons and can cheer us with many a sweet melody. I'm sure he'll never be a great musician, but we do want all of our children to learn to appreciate and love good music.

We had quite a scare recently. Daddy told the children they could go with him, and since he didn't come at once the little boys decided to hurry matters along by pushing the car out of the garage (This has been strictly forbidden). The two older ones pushed from the front, and tiny Teddy pushed from the back. As the car began to roll down the small incline, it knocked Teddy over, and he promptly screamed for dear life. Paul and I rushed out, and when we saw the car and our little boy near it on the ground, we feared he was crushed or badly hurt. Paul hurriedly rushed him up to the hospital, and the doctor promptly X-rayed him. What a miracle that he was not hurt. He merely had the marks of the tire on his right leg and hip, but the doctor said it was only skin deep, and in a few days they had disappeared. The older boys were fishing at the river at the time of the accident. If they had been at home, the little ones would not have tried such a trick. Many a heart-felt prayer of thanks rose to the Throne Above that evening; without God's protection Teddy would have been horribly mangled.

### **January 25, 1939**

My big, adorable, precious baby is very, very ill with bronchitis. How I fear that god will take him home to heaven. I am so worried over him; for two weeks he has been desperately ill, and I am almost at the end of my strength. O God, if it be Thy will, let me keep my baby. Bless the work of the doctor and of the medicine. We love our little David so much.

### **February 1, 1939**

How much brighter the sun shines, and how warm it is around the cockles of my heart. Our baby is well again. God has heard our prayers, and we are once again filled with joy. Oh, how cozy and sweet it is to gather all of my children around me while Daddy reads Bible stories, and a prayer, and we all join in saying the Lord's Prayer and singing a hymn which the children know. Recently the wife of the Baptist minister (they have no children) remarked that we were so rich, and she envied us our large and lovely family. Poor, childless woman! I certainly feel sorry for her. God's blessing has been poured out abundantly on our unworthy home.

### **Palm Sunday 1940**

How solemn, how impressive, how touching this morning's service was. Our dear first born, Paul Jr., was confirmed today, together with a class of nine. Both Paul and I were greatly moved—moved almost to tears. We were ever so happy and proud to see our stalwart son so confident, so full of faith and hope, so eager and quick to answer the questions put to him. But the thought would come: "Will he remain faithful unto death?" It was hard for Paul to control his voice, to

keep the tears from welling. up in his eyes, and his hands from trembling. Our hearts sighed fervently: "O God, be gracious unto him; keep him safe and secure within Thy fold; lead him anyway Thou choosest, just so he reaches heaven at last". He is still but a child, unaware of the dangers and temptations which will beset him in this life. Oh, if only he is firmly grounded in his faith, so that he will cling to Jesus in time and in eternity.

I missed my dear ones today: there was no one to help us celebrate this momentous occasion. All of them sent telegrams, letters, and gifts (even dear Beth, far across the seas, timed it so that her congratulations and gift arrived today), but none could be present. On days like this I wish we were not quite so far from all the relatives.

The past week really was a hectic one. Dick had the queer experience of getting a toothbrush bristle lodged in his tonsil and had to have it removed by the doctor. John, while enjoying a sucker his teacher gave him, fell and rammed the stick through his upper palate, so that we had to take him to the doctor. Bob, while playing at school, wrenched his back, and had to have it wrapped by the doctor. But worst of all, Paul somehow got a bit of dry thorny weed into his eye, and had three days of excruciating pains, and swollen inflamed eyes. It required several trips a day to the doctor for treatment, and on the morning of confirmation he was just barely able to open the sore eye. I wonder how he will look on the class photograph. Well, I do hope it won't cause lasting irritation or eye trouble.

### **August 1, 1940**

Am I happy? Well, I guess. My dear, dear father, sister Rachel, sister Ellen and her family are here for a few days of wonderful, glorious visiting. We really will make the most of it. The children are almost unmanageable in their delight, and I'm afraid I'm acting much like a giggly schoolgirl myself. These will be red-letter days

for all of us.

### **September 12, 1940**

Do they miss me at home, do they miss me,  
At morning, at noon, or night?  
Or lingers one gloomy shade round them  
Which only my presence can light?  
Are joys less invitingly welcome,  
And pleasures less hale than before,  
Because one is missed from the circle,  
Because I am with them no more?

I wonder if Paul Jr. is singing that now. Perhaps the lump in his throat is as big as mine. I can't seem to get rid of it. Daddy took Paul Jr. off to college last week. He wishes to follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, and prepare himself for that most blessed most glorious, but also most self-sacrificing of all professions: the holy ministry. We did not urge him or force him to go. After all, a minister must love his work with all his being, and the urge to become a minister must come from within the boy's heart. However, if he later decides to continue his studies, we certainly will be happy. May God bless his endeavors and help him choose the right path.

Oh, how we do miss the dear boy. Can I bear not to see him until Christmas? Often, I feel as though he MUST come into the room and tell me about his schoolwork. A mother's heart is so wrapped up in her child that parting hurts worse than the surgeon's knife. But I won't be selfish and sentimental. My only thought is for the welfare of my dear son. Oh, God, did we do right by sending him off so young to college? Thou, and Thou alone canst keep him pure and unsullied. I know Thou wilt ever be with him and bless him. I am counting the days until all of our dear children will be with us again.

## Chapter Fourteen

### September 20, 1940

Today we celebrated our annual mission festival. We're always happy when that day comes. It has never lost its thrill, and the stirring appeals for missions, made by the various speakers of the day, should move a heart of stone. On this day of all days I'd love to have a real thank offering to bring my Lord for all His Kindness to me, all his love and great mercy which He showered on me all my life long. To be able to give and really give, so that many blood-bought souls might be won for Christ, what pleasure and satisfaction that must be! The "mission treasury" is the best and safest savings account, and it pays the richest dividends.

A few weeks ago, we journeyed back to our first mission station, which Paul served thirteen years ago. The kind people requested Paul to come and preach for their mission festival, and invited all of us. Since it's quite a distance, we left here on Saturday and thus had time to visit with our old friends that evening and the next day. It was grand to see them all again, and they certainly treated us royally. The little folks I had in my Sunday School class—and I did enjoy teaching them—have all grown up and left the old home. It made us sad to see that, although the little congregation has moved into a town church and no longer uses the old country schoolhouse, the attendance has not grown any, and the interest and zeal of the members has changed into lethargy and luke-warm commitment. How differently we found it at the second mission station, which Paul served at the time we left that part of the country. Those people, too, invited him to preach at their mission festival last year. However, they have ever been on the alert, have progressed and flourished, so that now they boast a neat, attractive little church, an increase in members, a flourishing Sunday School, and a resident pastor. That really warmed the cockles of Paul's heart to see his little "acorn" grow into such a sturdy "oak." He finds joy and pride in the fact that his efforts have not been in vain, but, with the blessing of God, have brought fruit.

And speaking of mission festivals, we also drove back to our first parish this spring, at the congregation's invitation, so that Paul could be guest speaker at their mission day. We certainly were happy to have the opportunity, since we had not been back in all the 12 years since we moved away. The children were greatly interested in our first home and church (Paul Jr. especially, since he was born there) and we were eager to see the new, modern school the congregation had erected. The people fairly wore themselves out to make our visit pleasant, and

even those who were critical and fault-finding while we lived among them, now embraced us as long-lost friends. In this instance the words of Shakespeare didn't ring true: "The evil that men do, lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones"; they evidently forgot the mistakes and wrongs we did there, and remembered only that we tried our best.

It's strange, but true that each time we went back to a former parish, something marred the occasion. When Paul went back to the second mission place, our baby was only two weeks old, and consequently I missed out on it. When we went to the first place, Paul Jr. developed such a serious case of poison ivy that his whole body was swollen and inflamed. And when we drove to our first home, our David took sick, and ran an alarmingly high temperature. Naturally, I am first of all a mother, and so my thoughts were with my children, and I spent most of my time doctoring them and being concerned about them. However, since the congregation had installed a loud-speaker system to accommodate the overflow crowd, I managed to hear Paul's sermon while sitting in the car with my fretful little son.

Well, chatting with all the old friends and acquaintances was a good tonic for me. I learned that they too had their joys and sorrows, their trials and disappointments, their problems and cares. Most of them have large families, with the subsequent work and worry involved. How differently the situation here in our present parish. The families are small, mostly one, rarely more than two children.

### **October 20, 1940**

"Schooldays, schooldays, dear old golden rule days." That old refrain was once again pictured to me today, when I visited the school where five of our children are enrolled. Paul Jr. graduated from the 8th grade last June, but John is a beginner this year. I spent half an hour or so in each grade (that is, in the grade rooms where one of our children was in class) and then spoke to the teachers at the close of school. It was great pleasure for me to see that little Johnny has adapted himself so well to the new environment, and especially was I happy to learn that all of the children were good students, in the upper half of their class. One of the teachers told me she is always glad when one of our children is in her class, because it is a joy to work with them: they are so dependable, friendly and obedient. Our teaching them that God wants us to respect and obey our parents

has taken root in their hearts. May they ever remember it.

The dear Lord has endowed each of our children with a keen, bright mind, and has graciously spared us the anguish of having a dull-witted, scatter-brained, poor little one. His Name be praised forevermore. My heart goes out in sympathy to the poor, sorrowing mothers who have such unfortunate children. I have tried to impress it on my children to be thankful to God for their sound bodies and minds, and not to deride or ridicule such as have not been blessed so abundantly, but rather sympathetically and kindheartedly to help them wherever possible. How soon, how quickly God can through sickness or accident rob us of our good bodies and healthy minds. I do hope they never will be guilty of abusing one of life's cripples.

Paul Jr. is proving an apt, eager, interested college student, so that his president praised him warmly. It was desperately hard for me to see him go, especially since innumerable people very frankly told us we were not doing right. He was just in the impressionable years where he needed parental guidance and influence. Then, too, the money angle worried me, and I fretted lest Paul would be unduly burdened with extra expenses. Perhaps I would have wavered and in the end not sent him, if Paul had not determinedly pushed all obstacles aside, borrowed the necessary money, and made all arrangements. I miss my beloved son, but Oh I am so very thankful that he has the opportunity of attending a Christian school, and I am confident that the same Lord and Savior who was with him at home, is also with him now. He will protect him from harm and danger, will shield him from evil company and private sins, and will bless his studies.

### **December 15, 1940**

Just a few more days and Paul Jr. will be home for the holidays. We certainly are happy that he can come, and won't we have lots to discuss. The children all remember him nightly in their prayers: "Dear God, please take care of Paul, and bring him safely home for Christmas." And whenever we have something especially good for a meal, they all wish Paul Jr. could have some too. That's family loyalty for you!

Recently I had an interesting letter from the dear, good people who took me in when I went out to visit Paul in the hospital. They certainly have remained good friends of ours and write faithfully. It's rare indeed to find perfect strangers who



open their home to one stranded far from friends; and I had a baby with me, too. They took care of my baby so that I could have an undisturbed visit in the hospital with Paul and treated me as one of the family. I certainly was thankful and happy to find such thoughtful, unselfish people in this indifferent, selfish world. How differently I was made to feel last spring, when the ladies of the congregation spoke of varnishing and painting the interior of our house. In the meeting, one woman said she was not in favor of fixing up the parsonage as long as such a big family of boys lived in it, because they just wrecked it anyway, I was simply stunned speechless. Never have I been so publicly embarrassed. It took me months to forget the sting of that remark, and I have never since been able to enjoy meeting that woman. Paul says she is a thorn in the flesh; that's not the first time she has spoken out of turn.

I've been more than busy baking Christmas cookies, and doing a bit of extra cleaning for the great festival. My two little boys are ever ready to help me with the cookies in all forms and shapes. Of course, they have to help cut the cookies, and afterward, when all the children are home, they all help frost and decorate them. What fun and what sport! And to look at the finished product, one would be tempted to think they looked smeary and odd, but to the little eyes they are simply beautiful.

Little Teddy is thrilled at the prospect of being in the Sunday School Christmas program. He feels very important. Well, it's splendid that the Sunday School has a program. Our young people won't take part, and neither will the choir. Because of so many years of crop failures, all of our young people have been forced to find employment elsewhere, and consequently we no longer have a choir or young people's society. It's very disheartening to say the least. And the spirit of the people is one of pessimism, indifference, and "What's the use." It surely makes it difficult for Paul to work under such circumstances. I often wonder how he can so cheerfully confidently and boldly preach Sunday after Sunday. I'm sure I would feel mournful and fearful.

No matter what subject one discusses, it invariably leads to complaining about no crops and hard times. One woman recently said to me, "Doesn't God know we get tired of working so hard and never raising anything?" And another said: "I know God has forgotten us; if He loved us, He would let it rain." I'm afraid my faith is no longer the living, sure faith of my confirmation day; I'm afraid I too, like Peter, when he thought he was sinking, must need cry out; "Lord, save me." If only I could trust confidently and completely in my Lord, these days of financial

worry would draw me still closer to Him.

### **December 22, 1930**

Isn't it true: every time I am in the depths of despair, and there seems no possible solution to my problem, like a flash of lightning out of the clear sky, something happens to cause me to rejoice and my spirits soar to new heights of gladness. This morning I received a letter from a dear cousin of mine, telling me that she and her husband were celebrating their silver wedding anniversary, and to show their thanks to God, were giving a gift to someone whom they thought in need. Well, here was a check for fifty dollars. How surprised and dumbfounded we were. Why, neither Paul nor I could believe our eyes, nor could we explain how those cousins happened to single us out for their deed of kindness. Believe me, it was surely splendid of them, and we are deeply grateful. How wonderful that it should come just at Christmas time, when parents love to give their little ones some pleasure and joy. Truly, it was an answer to a prayer.

Then too, we have a very special reason for being happy and thankful today. A telegram brought us the good news that dear Beth and her husband have returned safely from their home in the distant mission field. For fourteen years they labored over there, and now have come back on their second furlough. We were greatly concerned about them, traveling so far across dangerous waters, and daily asked God to guard and protect them, and bring them safely home. Now our prayers have been answered and dear Beth is again with loved ones. How our dear old Father rejoiced to see his dear daughter once more, and how her twin sister bubbled over with happiness. Dear Beth does miss Mother so much; now that she's here she feels the full significance of the fact that Mother was buried three years ago. What is home without a Mother? I will never cease longing for her.

Tomorrow little Philip will be eight years old. The birthday cake is safely hidden from his curious little eyes, and the other children delight in whispering to each other about his gifts. He really feels important. He has grown so husky and tall, so vigorous and full of pep, that we're as proud as peacocks over him. Oh God, do keep him always well and strong, and help him master his stuttering, so that it will not be a handicap to him. But most of all, dear God, keep him in that childlike trust and faith in Thee, so that he will be on of Thy children and heir of heaven.

## Chapter Fifteen

### **February 22, 1941**

This is the birthday of the Father of our country, good old George Washington. Just to please the children I baked some cherry pies, and Eunice made some cardboard hatchets, coloring them red, white and blue, as table decorations. The family really enjoyed it; and everyone chanted: "I did it, oh I did it. I cannot tell a lie," the refrain from the poem telling about Washington chopping down his father's cherry tree. I hope my children grow up to be loyal, true Americans, and not fanatics or superficial, indifferent citizens. As Christians, they have learned that our country needs our prayers and our unwavering support and interest.

We just had quite an unpleasant and disagreeable experience. No, it wasn't a repetition of George and the hatchet. Yesterday as Dick and Phil were coming home from school with a number of boys, several of them began throwing rocks, and unfortunately one of the guilty ones was hit on the head sustaining a nasty gash. Naturally he let out a yell and screamed for dear life. The town policeman happened to hear it, and promptly came and hauled all the boys in sight up to the school superintendent. For more than an hour they were all quizzed and harassed, while the poor wounded head went untreated. The superintendent lectured them on good behavior and threatened all sort of punishment if it ever happened again.

This afternoon all the boys were again rounded up out of their classes and were again put through the third degree. It certainly frightened our boys terribly, and poor little Philly, who is only in the second grade, is just a bundle of nerves. Every time he hears a noise, he thinks it's the sheriff coming after him. Well, it seems queer to handle a case in such a way, but I know order must be preserved. I'm just thankful my boys were not actually guilty—not that I think they are saints by any means. We've had enough evidence to the contrary. Not long ago one of the boys was persuaded to help let the air out of the neighbor's tires. He kept perfectly quiet about it, until that evening when the neighbor came to tell us about it, he admitted he was guilty. Of course, he and the other culprits had to go and pump up all the tires with a hand pump. And that was a big job. Of course, Paul and I were mortified that our boy pulled such a trick, and we did not lay all the blame on the boy that got the idea, but we thanked God that he was truthful

and did not attempt to deny his guilt.

Isn't it queer what notions children do get? When Eunice was in the first grade, she gave her new pencil box to one of the boys, after she had had it but a few days. When I discovered it, I reprimanded her, and she said, "He didn't have any, and he liked mine so well that I thought it would make him happy to have it". And Bob, when he started to school, took the pennies out of his little bank and gave them to a boy who had to wear ragged shoes. Their little hearts sympathized with the less fortunate, but I tried to impress upon them that one can't give all one's possessions away. Being a member of a big family helps, no doubt, to keep the children from becoming too selfish and self-centered.

We have all, thank God, been well and busy as bees this winter. No one had anything more serious than the sniffles, and Paul Jr., away off at college, also has been well. We certainly are devoutly thankful to God for that. Soon it will again be spring, beautiful spring, and we'll be glad to bid farewell to grim winter.

### **March 18, 1941**

How fast the children do grow up. Last month Paul Jr. was fifteen, and now Eunice has celebrated her thirteenth birthday. It seems but recently that we rejoiced at their arrivals, and I cuddled them close to my heart. Now they soon will be grown up. I'm not lamenting the fact that they are no longer babies; I feel that a Christian mother finds cause for rejoicing and thankfulness in every stage of her child's development and growth. How proud we are of our splendid, normal, healthy children. May God ever keep them thus, pure in heart and strong in body.

At present we have a wee little girl with us. She and David are the same age, and really have much in common. The little girl's mother was operated in our hospital, and since her father is pastor out in the country, we are caring for the little girl so her father can teach

his school. It's been a long time since I dressed a little mademoiselle, and usually I forget some important part of her wardrobe. And that amuses my family a great deal. The poor little thing often cries for home and mother, especially if she happens to awaken in the night, but we manage to get along, and do all we can for her. She is a sweet, affectionate little thing, and we hope and pray her mother will soon be restored to health again.

The boys have been having an acute heartache. Our beloved, mischievous little Toy terrier went off on a jaunt, and came home badly battered up. It seems some bigger dog won out in the fight. The boys dressed the wounds, with Daddy's help, and made their pet as comfortable as possible. He certainly gets enough attention. I hope he learned a lesson and won't be so aggressive when other dogs are around. We've had him three years, and the whole family is greatly attached to the loyal little animal. Every morning, as soon as I open the door, he greets me joyously, and then dashes up the stairs and makes the rounds

of the beds, waking the little people, and then with short, eager barks, and much tail wagging, awaits the time when all the family is dressed and ready to come downstairs. At first after Paul Jr. had gone, Trix simply couldn't understand why that bed was always empty. Again and again he'd sniff at it and walk around it. When Paul Jr. came home at Christmas, the little dog fairly wagged his tail off in profuse and happy welcome—a trusting, loyal, lovable little friend.

Eunice isn't feeling at all well. She has so many headaches and complains so much of dizziness that I am a bit uneasy about her. If it doesn't clear up soon, I'll have to ask the doctor about her. She is very busy taking part in the local spelling contest, and consequently studies a great deal. I told her that her health comes first, and if need be, she'd better drop the contest. After all, God expects us to use common sense, and not put honor and academic distinction above our health and physical well-being.

It is nice, and it's a good advertisement for our beloved church, when one of our members is an outstanding student in the local school; and we have always made it a point to teach our children that they are expected to use the talents God gave them, to the honor and glory of God, and to the benefit of others. For instance, if a child has a pleasing voice, it would be false modesty for parents to refuse to let the child sing in public, for fear others would think they were "showing off" their child. In reality, it affords others much pleasure to hear the unaffected, sincere, sweet singing of children. Just recently Bob said his music teacher had remarked that he had a very nice voice. I told him then he'd be a great help to the church choir later on.

#### **April 1, 1941**

Have I been fooled today! The little ones have had no end of fun trying to "catch"

me on statements like this: "Mama, there's a hole in your stocking" or "The doorbell rang," etc., and the school children delighted in saying, "I got all F's today," etc., and then of course, they gleefully shouted: "April Fool". The poor schoolteachers surely must have been deluged with pranks today. Well, just so the pranks stay within the limits of harmless fun.

Eunice finally had to give in and go to bed with the flu. She missed school several days last week, then went back, and now she is in bed once more. She really feels miserable and looks it too. I sincerely hope and pray she'll recover without complications. John

has a light case of it now, but the doctor said he could go back to school in a day or two. I dread to think of all of us falling victim to the tricky disease. It seems very often some serious consequence follows. But I'll not fret and worry. God will take care of us and will not let us be tempted above that what we are able.

The spring weather has been ideal so far, and it seems as though perhaps our people will at last raise some sort of a crop. That will be the first time in all the eight years we have been here that they had even feed for the cattle. Well, we'll continue to hope and pray. This everlasting series of crop failures and drouth has certainly taken its toll of our energy. The members can't bring up the salary, and we can't meet our bills. As it is, we've been leading a hand-to-mouth existence, never knowing when the next salary will be paid. It usually comes in spasms: five dollars now, ten dollars then, and no one knows when the next will appear.

Such a haphazard way of dealing with congregational finances. No system of any kind, no matter how much Paul has tried to persuade the members that our God is a God of order and wants his people to be orderly. They have the idea that giving to the church is the same thing as giving to charity: if you have a dollar to spare, give it, and if you can't spare it, don't give it. I feel that much of that attitude is a remnant of the practice they were accustomed to, in the Germany of long ago, when the people paid taxes, and the government paid the pastors out of that tax money. One family especially likes to complain that it's so hard to pay taxes and also pay toward the church: how nice it was in Germany when all they had to do was pay taxes. Well, this family pays precious little toward the support of the church! They have no cause for complaint.

Yesterday I received a box of clothing from an old friend of Paul's mother. She lives far down south, but as she has no family, she sends us her out of date or

outgrown dresses and so on. And we so appreciate it. Her shipments always are like treasure chests, or like Aladdin's lamp. It's a great treat when her things arrive. We thank God for such a kind, loving, thoughtful friend, who remembers us and doesn't shrink from the trouble and expense of mailing such a large package. The children call her their fairy godmother, since she never fails to send them gifts at Christmas and Easter. Well, now I'll be kept busy remodeling and making over all the nice things we received yesterday.

### **May 15, 1941**

How happy we are that spring is here in all its beauty. It really brings with it a buoyancy of spirit and a revival of hope and cheerfulness. Eunice finally overcame her lingering siege of the flu and, despite my fears and worries, the family was spared; only John had a light case which robbed him of his pep for a few days, but he staged a quick comeback and before long was as active as ever. So often our foolish fears and anxieties prove unnecessary and uncalled for.

In a few days school will close for the summer, and then Paul will begin his summer school; this year there will be five attending. It really is surprising how much the little ones learn, and how they ponder what they have learned. When I was teaching John the story of Abraham and Lot parting, I mentioned that Lot chose unwisely, since he settled near the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. A few days later we were studying the story of God's telling Abraham that all the land he could see was to be Abraham's children's property, John remarked that that wasn't so good, because then they would also get those wicked cities. I was surprised he thought of that.

Last night we had a severe electrical storm: the lightning flashed continuously, and the thunder rolled and crashed deafeningly. I thought perhaps some of the children would be frightened, so I went into the various rooms to see. Several of them were still sound asleep, and those that were awake stoutly declared they were not a bit afraid. Little Teddy said he knew Jesus could make the storm stop, and Jesus was taking care of us, no matter how much the wind blew. What good advice to remember in the battle of life.

## Chapter Sixteen

### June 5, 1941

Our hearts are filled with happiness and thanksgiving; the whole family is jubilant and exultant; the dog if a fairly beside himself for joy. Paul Jr. came home this evening, after being gone nine months attending college. Oh, how good it is to have him back in the fold, to see his eager, interested eyes and face, hear his dear voice, notice his young healthy, well-developed form; how gratifying to caress him and shower him with affection. But, being a young man in his own eyes, he makes no show of his emotions. Only women and babies are demonstrative, he thinks. Daddy and I exchange amused glances, because our fledgling feels his wings growing stronger.

Last fall my mother-heart fairly broke when he left. Oh, how many times during that last night he was at home I crept to his bed, looked long and tearfully at his dear face, calm and relaxed in sleep. How many a sigh and fervent prayer I breathed to my Savior, asking him to make me strong and of good courage, and to bless my dear, dear boy in soul and body. Tonight, I can steal to look often and long at my sleeping boy, my eyes brimming with tears of joy and thanksgiving, and on my lips the self-same prayers for him. The summer will be a happy one for us, since we're all together.

Paul really had quite an experience getting Paul Jr. home from college. After the summer school session, he with Eunice and Bob left in the car. When they had gone 25 miles, the car suddenly went on a sit-down strike, and refused to be coaxed back into moving. Paul had to walk three miles to the nearest house and call a garage. After a wait of an hour and a half, and much telephoning, finally a wrecker came and towed them back to town. The mechanics fiddled aimlessly with the thing for several hours, and then the verdict was that it was irreparable, and consequently Paul had to call a local garage and be pulled back home. Was I surprised to see them about nine o'clock, when I imagined them a good halfway to their destination. What disappointed children Eunice and Bob were! Here they had packed an overnight bag and I had prepared a tasty meal of fried chicken, cake, and so on, for their supper, and then they are forced to come home again. Well, the next morning Paul borrowed a late model car, and off the three went once more. The next evening at supper time they were home with Paul Jr. What a



relief! All day I couldn't help but wonder if they were having car trouble, or if Paul was a bit jittery about manipulating the big car. But God graciously averted all harm and granted them a safe and pleasant journey.

The garage man tells us that because of the defense program with its demands, it will be six months or more until he can hope to have the necessary repairs for our car. What will we do in the meantime? The only alternative is to trade in our faithful "Lizzy", which is far too small to accommodate the ten of us, for a different car. At any rate, we'll have to give the matter a good "think" as the children say, and then do what we consider best. I do hope we can get one that is large enough for all the family to go on outings and the like; it's not pleasant when only half of us can go this time, and the other half next time.

### **July 1, 1941**

What a curious mixture life seems to be! The bitter and the sweet are carefully measured by God into the cup we must drain. not according to our idea or recipe, but according to His all wise, gracious dispensation. It's easy to relish and enjoy the pleasing, agreeable ingredients of life, but oh how very, very hard it is to swallow the unpleasant, disagreeable, bitter. How that hurts our pride, ruffles our egoism, stings our eyes with salty tears of self-pity.

Well, we've just been promoted (is it a promotion?) into the school of "hard knocks", and of pride swallowing. Extreme financial stringency has forced Paul to take a job as clerk and delivery man in one of our local grocery stores. He works six days a week, from 7 until 7, and on Saturdays he has to work until midnight. That means that he has to drop his Saturday school, do all of his visiting late at night, prepare and study his sermon after that. On Saturdays he has been going to bed around 2 o'clock, and on Sundays getting up at six, since he is also the janitor and must open the church. He has been at it for almost two weeks. The congregation resolved to drop the "double headers", two services on Sunday mornings, so at least Paul is relieved of that extra work.

Was it ever hard for me to adjust myself to this change of circumstances! Any normal human being knows that the ministry is a full-time, all-absorbing undertaking, which deserves the best a pastor can give, And now Paul must use up his best energy waiting on querulous, hard-to-please, perverse customers, sweeping the store, delivering groceries, and dancing to the whistle of good,

steady, valuable buyers. What of that Bible passage: "They that preach the Gospel should live of the gospel"? Or this one: "The laborer is worthy of his reward." Sleepless nights, anxious, worried, uneasy, irritable days have been mine because of this queer arrangement. Naturally, my pride suffered a severe "set back", but that's the least of it. I'm dreadfully worried about Paul's health. However will he bear up under the strain of "serving two masters"? But he says it's not as hard on his nervous system as it is to do his pastoral work and see the family in actual need, with the bills piling up rapidly. Well, I'm not questioning whether or not the congregation can support a pastor, neither am I judging the members: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged". God still reigns supreme and majestic in the heavens; He will never leave us nor forsake us, and we know that "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth". So, I am trying to regard this as a means of strengthening our faith and trust in the Most High. When His time comes, He will relieve Paul of this extra burden, and amply provide us with the necessities of life. Will I learn to be patient, and await God's time?

The glorious summer we had anticipated, with occasional picnic suppers in our local park, or perhaps a longer vacation trip to dear ones, has turned out to be a failure. "Man proposes, God disposes". Well, just so we're all well, and all together, then life is beautiful.

After much discussing, hesitating, and indecision, we have finally decided the best thing to do is to trade in our old car and get a better and larger one. Of course it means those everlasting monthly payments hanging over our heads, but yet we simply can't get along without a car. We tried it for two years, and found that Paul simply could not accomplish his pastoral duties, not to mention that, with half a dozen small children, we needed often to visit the doctor, and could scarcely carry a sick child in our arms over a mile in zero-degree weather. Consequently, we always had to beg someone to take us. And oh, in those two years, how I longed to take a little drive and get away from my four walls occasionally. Well, now we have a nice car, even if it is antiquated, and one large enough for all of us. On Sunday afternoons we intend to continue our custom of visiting the members.

Because Paul Jr. is not sixteen, he cannot find steady employment, since it is against the law for one under sixteen to work regularly. The only job he has found, is candling eggs in a grocery store from noon until midnight on Saturdays. And for that he gets just a dollar. That seems meager pay for such long hours. On Sunday mornings he just is too tired to get the full benefit of the church service.

Too bad he can't find better hours to work.

### **August 12, 1941**

Such joys we will long remember, such days of good times, such hours of tranquil, calm, e: restful being together, such a heart-felt longing fulfilled that sums up our short, hurried, gorgeous vacation trip. All spring and summer my dear ones have urged and invited us to come and visit them, and offered to furnish all expenses involved. But we couldn't see our way clear to accepting their wonderful offer, since Paul is obligated to be at the store every day but Sunday. Now, however, the congregation gave him two Sundays of freedom, and he was bold enough to ask his employer for a week's vacation. And so it was that the children and I made all preparations, packed the bags, washed the car and so on, preparatory to leaving Sunday morning. We loaded all of our baggage, made sure the electricity was off, all fires were out, and then, when we were settled in the car, Paul prayed for God's guidance and protection on the long journey, and we all joined in the Lord's Prayer. After an hour's drive, we stopped and attended service in one of our sister congregations, and then were off on a glorious eight days of carefree, happy, joyous vacation.

I can't begin to describe the warm, glowing, ecstatic feeling of love and happiness which surged through my being when we reached our destination, and I saw my own beloved people again. We had had an uneventful, enjoyable trip, stopping only to see the historic cave of John Brown where he aided runaway slaves in Civil War days (this was highly interesting to the older children, and they begged for a snapshot of it) and then spending the night in a clean, neat, even though unpretentious cabin camp. As I expected, the nervous strain of being sure everything was in order and taken care of before we left home, caused me to suffer an annoying headache, so that I was grateful to feel the fresh softness of a bed.

As though they were entertaining royalty itself my, dear, dear father and sisters expended every energy they possessed to make ours a pleasant, never to be forgotten vacation. And they succeeded admirably. Never have we spent such a delightful week, free from worry and care, from household duties and from daily chores. Dear, good hearted Rachel! It was she who dug deep into her pocket to make our vacation possible, and who made plans for each day of our stay, so that we could be together almost constantly. The children, with Daddy, enjoyed an

enchro1ting excursion on the broad old Mississippi, while my sisters and I spent a delightful day with our precious Father, shopping in the huge department stores. And what fun we all had watching the animal shows at the big zoo, inspecting the various museums, flower gardens, lagoons, and so on. The wiener roast and watermelon feast—what a treat that was for the children, and all of us. And, that last day—what a cozy, chatty, time we had in the intimacy of the family circles.

It was with deep longing and sadness, mingled with a sigh or thankfulness to God for relieving her of all her suffering, that I stood at the graves of my beloved mother and sister, who sleep together in the cemetery of my childhood church. How I miss Mother! Four years have elapsed since God called her home, and yet my heart longs and yearns for her. God grant that I and all of my dear ones will be reunited in our Father's house on high. Oh, parting from all those loved ones was hard, especially from my dear Father, who will soon be eighty years old. Will I see him again in this world? God only knows! Oh God, grant him health of body and mind so that the evening of his life may be pleasant and free from pain.

On the homeward trip we stopped at the little country "God's Acre," where Paul's father lies buried. Many were the memories that flocked to our minds as we gazed lovingly at his last resting place. How dear he was to us, and how we missed him! But he too had much suffering to endure, and God graciously ended his pain. We took snapshots of both my father's and Paul's father's graves, so that the children will have some idea of where they are buried.

And now we are safe home again, thanking God for a safe journey and a glorious vacation. Sweet memories will cheer us for many a day, and the children will be discussing the trip in all the details with gusto. We found everything in order when we reached home. "Brownie," the pet pigeon, fluttered her wings and cooed a welcome. The chickens stood still and gawked, wondering where we had been. The two dogs (sister Ellen made Bob a present of another Toy Terrier, so now we have two) bounded out of the car and raced around the house in glee and the little boys immediately squatted down in their sand pile and became absorbed in constructing bridges and the like. The rest of us merely stretched and yawned, and wished from the bottoms of our hearts we could see our dear folks more often.

And now the summer is almost over. It brings to mind the words of the Psalmist: "We spend our years as a tale that is told." Soon, too soon, our dear son will be leaving for his second year at college, the others will be trotting off to school, and

before long winter will come in all its fury. What will it bring us? Oh God, let it bring surcease from double duty for Paul. Little John, in his evening prayer tonight, most fervently asked God: "Dear God, please don't let Daddy have to work so hard anymore." Tomorrow he will be back in the store, and have his pastoral work to do in the evening. But God is almighty, and He will give Paul the necessary work to carry on and provide for his family, since it is He who gave us the family.

And so He, who has carried and sustained us throughout the more than sixteen years of married life, will also be with us in the future with His grace, His help, His protection and His love. May He ever abide with us!

Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,  
Our Balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;  
Then when Thy voice shall bid our conflicts cease,  
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

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August 19, 1941

Mrs. Paul Ludwig  
Route 1  
Oxford, Nebraska

Dear Mrs. Ludwig:

Thank you very much for your memo of August 15, I regret to read that you intend to bring the diary to a close. Could you not continue it for a while? I would appreciate this very much.

I personally am well pleased with the feature; we have never had such a program on the air before, therefore, I am sure our listeners would like to hear more installments. What do you say?

Awaiting an early reply, I am

Very truly yours,

*H. A. Heurstein*  
Director of Radio Station KFUP

HHH:AF

