

## Chapter 1

### The Family

Spring had come to South Dakota. Bird songs filled the air, and they were as welcome as the bright, warm spring sunshine. On the Kiehlbauch farm spring was always a time of great activity. The children enjoyed getting outside to romp and play after the long months of winter when many times they were confined to the house for days.

It was time to plant the garden and prepare the fields for crops. Father Kiehlbauch called his eldest son, Henry, and his younger brother to go with him to the field. Mother Kiehlbauch and Helen, one of the younger children, started to plant seeds in the freshly plowed garden plot near the house.

Someone had to look after the baby in the family, and that job, along with the housework, had been given to Mary, the eldest daughter. Katie, older than Helen but younger than Mary, was responsible that day for herding the cows.

The Kiehlbauchs were an industrious family. They went about their chores with singing. They sang together in harmony and they sang alone. One could hear Henry's clear voice that spring morning as he went with Father and brother Leonhard to the field. Father's deep voice joined in; and Leonhard, whose voice still held that soprano range, blended with the other two.

While Mother and Helen worked, they laughed and talked together. Being quite young at the time, Helen puzzled about

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the planting and then the growth of the seeds. After a thoughtful moment she asked, "What makes the seeds grow into plants, Mother?"

"The seeds must die first, dear, in order to make them grow," Mother answered.

"The seeds must die in order to grow?" Helen shook her head in dismay. That statement was too profound for her to grasp.

While pondering about seeds dying so that they might grow, she looked up to see a stranger at the gate. When she greeted him he told her he was selling Christian books. Helen thought he had the kindest look of anyone she had ever seen. She wanted to stay close by so she could hear whatever he had to say. Surely he was a very good man.

The man told Mother all about the books he had to sell.

One book in particular fascinated Helen. It was called Daniel and the Revelation. The pictures in the book made an indelible impression on Helen's young mind. She hoped Mother would order the book; but Mother would not agree until Father saw it and gave his consent.

"Come back and have lunch with us at noon," Mother invited. "My husband will be here then and you can show him the book."

"Surely Father would consent to buy the book," Helen thought, "a book that explains things in the Bible." Father and Mother Kiehlbauch both believed in God and the Bible. Family worship was a part of the family's daily life. Father would be eager to have such a helpful book.

When Father, Henry, and Leonhard came from the field at noon, the bookseller returned and had lunch with the

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family. He was a colporteur, he explained as he showed Father and the rest of the family his books after the noonday meal. The children stood around spellbound as he turned the pages and as pictures of strange beasts were revealed to them. They almost shouted for joy when Father ordered the book.

But that book, Father discovered soon after it arrived, declared that the seventh day is the Sabbath of God.

Father slammed the book shut. "This is misleading," he said. "This is a deceptive book. I do not want it around." He hid the book away, and no one knew where Father hid it.

But the Bible says, "My word... shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it."

Not long after Father denounced the contents of the book and hid it away, the baby in the family, a boy, took sick and died. The family was grief stricken. Many times after the baby had been laid to rest the children would stand by the cradle where baby had lain. Tears would flow freely as they remembered their little brother who had been with them for such a short time. Mother Kiehlbauch, finding her children weeping, would try to comfort them by explaining that baby brother had gone to heaven and was now an angel. "At night when the stars come out in the sky," the parents told the children, "the stars are windows in heaven through which the angels can look and watch us."

These things puzzled Helen.

Fourteen children in all were born to Mother and Father Kiehlbauch. Only the one child died in infancy. But this sad event caused Helen, the fourth child, to question a great deal about why the little one had been taken from them. What had

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really happened to him? She knew they had placed him in a casket in the ground, but folks said he had gone to heaven to be with God. Why then had they placed him in the ground? She could not reconcile these thoughts. The minister who taught her the catechism did not answer the questions satisfactorily for her.

One day the older children found the book that Father had hidden away. They found it in the attic. Surreptitiously they spent time looking at the pictures and reading the message in the book.

It was Helen who removed the book from the attic hiding place. She slipped it under her sweater and took it to the haystack where she hid it away. When it was her turn to herd the cattle, Helen got the book from her hiding place in the haystack and took it with her for the day. Her young heart was touched by the message of truth in the book.

But the years went on. Somehow once more the book was laid aside and its message all but forgotten.

One day, upon his return from town, Father Kiehlbauch remarked about a large tent that was being erected. He told the family that a series of evangelistic meetings was to be held in the tent. "If you want to work hard and get done early, we can attend the meetings," he said.

For three weeks the family attended each of the meetings in the tent in the town of Tripp, South Dakota. At first Father seemed very anxious to attend, but soon he began to find fault with the evangelist's presentation. Helen felt impressed that here at the meetings she was hearing the "truth." It was making an impression upon her heart and a

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change in her way of life—a life that had become very careless and carefree.

Still being troubled about death and the state of the body of the dead one, Helen determined to ask the evangelist to explain it to her. He answered her questions clearly but simply. It all seemed so plain after his explanation and proof from the Bible.

The sermons about the prophecies were especially interesting. Helen and the others remembered the book that had shown the pictures and explained the prophecies.

Then Father found out that the evangelist was a Seventh-day Adventist. That ended Father's interest. He made it known to the family that he would never accept the seventh day as the Sabbath. The preacher was all wrong. He would not attend another meeting. "All these people have the same idea as that man who sold us that big book years ago," he said. "They are the people the Scriptures describe as wolves in sheep's clothing. They trample God's holy day underfoot and keep the old Jewish Sabbath. We have attended the last meeting in Tripp," Father announced.

Henry, Mary, Katie, Helen, and Leonhard decided to keep on attending the meetings, even though Father disapproved. As they drove home in the farm wagon one evening, they talked over what they had heard. Helen felt compelled to take a stand for the message as presented. She knew she would meet many trials. Her father would despise her; the neighbors would ridicule her. But she felt she must take a stand.

Henry too was touched with the message. He too had read the book that had been hidden in the attic. The seed had

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been sown. Now the rays of light penetrated and touched his heart. But Henry feared to confront his father with a decision to accept the message as taught by the evangelist. He did not take his stand at that time. The seed lay dormant a while longer in his heart.

In the early part of the twentieth century the government opened new land for settlement not far from the town of Tripp-at Wall, South Dakota. Here one could obtain land from the government by simply filing for it. Many enterprising young people eagerly grasped the opportunity to insure their future by filing for land.

Henry Kiehlbauch decided to file for a quarter section of rich farmland. He moved from home onto his claim. During the winter months he had plenty of time to think of the truths he had heard at the evangelistic meetings and the things he had read in that book that had been hidden away in the attic. He could not erase these things from his mind.

After having proved up on his claim, he decided to sell. Father Kiehlbauch needed his help on the big threshing rig which he took from neighbor to neighbor to help with threshing.

That summer Father Kiehlbauch began to talk a great deal about moving to Canada. "It is a new land, a land of vast expanses, and unlimited opportunity," he said. "We've done well here," he would add, "but Canada is a new country. We can get good land cheap. Everything will be much as it is here, only we'll have more room."

Henry soon learned that Father had another reason for wanting to leave South Dakota and go to Canada. A number of people had followed the teachings of the evangelist and

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had become Seventh-day Adventists. Father wanted to get away from these people and from hearing about the seventh-day Sabbath.

In 1911 the Kiehlbauch family moved. They settled in the parklands of Alberta, about forty miles from Edmonton, not far from the town of Chipman. Father Kiehlbauch felt sure no Adventists lived near them. But much to his amazement, not long after he settled there an Adventist minister called at their home. Soon after, other Adventists visited the Kiehlbauchs. They told them about an Adventist school at Lacombe, a small town between Calgary and Edmonton.

Through the years Henry had tried to quell the still small voice that often spoke to him and reminded him of the truths he had heard, but somehow he put off his decision. Then he decided to attend the Adventist school at Lacombe. It had only recently been given junior college status, having been known before as the Lacombe Industrial Academy. Now it was called Canadian Junior College. It was while attending the school at Lacombe that two very important things happened in Henry's life. He gave his heart to the Lord, and he met Hattie who became his wife and helped him found a solid Christian home.

Henry and Hattie were happy when they learned a child would soon grace their home. When the baby (a little girl) arrived, they named her Lucy. Since they had no other children of their own, Henry and Hattie decided to adopt a little boy, Ronnie. Ronnie grew up to become a contractor. Lucy became a church-school teacher; however, she felt a longing to help those who were ill and later she served as a nurse's aide at a hospital.

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Henry had become a successful well driller. He seemed to have an uncanny knowledge of where underground streams could be tapped. He remained a faithful believer and a witness for the truth as long as he lived. The seed sown many years ago had borne fruit. Henry has gone to his rest now, but the influence of his godly life continues to bless his family.

But what about the other children of the Kiehlbauch family?

Mary, the second child, had always been Mother's helper as she grew up. After Father hid the book in the attic, Mary had shared in its discovery. With Henry, her younger brother, and two sisters, she had attended the tent meetings held in Tripp. One evening while they were riding home in the farm wagon from one of the meetings, Helen spoke up, "Mary, we have known about this truth for some time-in fact, ever since Father bought the book and hid it in the attic. Now we are almost grown up. Let's take our stand together."

Mary tried to arrange the blankets -into a more comfortable seat. She paused for quite a while before answering. Then she spoke hesitatingly, "Yes, I have known. I did read that book too, though not as many times as you, but-but-still I haven't decided."

There was an urgency in Helen's voice as she replied, her voice a little husky. "I know that I have to obey the Lord, Mary. I must go all the way with Jesus no matter what it costs." She caught hold of her sister's hand. "It will be so much easier for us both if the two of us go forward together."



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Then came a longer pause. "I do know that these people are teaching God's truth and I want to obey the Lord," Mary spoke slowly. "But-but-I-I want to wait a little longer. You know about that new land the government is opening for homesteaders near Wall. I'm old enough to file a claim. Henry is going to, you know--"

Helen felt a darkness press against her heart, but she interrupted her sister, "Oh, you are putting off what God wants you to do now."

Mary spoke again, but in a lowered voice. "Helen, you know how Father opposes our having anything to do with this new religion. If I wait until I'm away from home, he can't forbid me, and then I will do what I know is right."

Helen knew how much Mary wanted that quarter section of rich farmland. It would provide her with land of her own and security for the future. She also knew how much gentle Mary feared her father's anger. Helen loved her father, too, just as much as did Mary; nevertheless, the fire that burned in Helen's heart could not be quenched or denied. She must "obey God rather than men" even though the man was her own beloved father.

Mary and brother Henry took up claims on the new government land eight miles west of Wall, South Dakota. They moved into small cabins on their land.

Other young people filed for claims too, among them Cris Klein, who knew the Kiehlbauch girls. He had attended some of the meetings in the tent at Tripp. He had not gone inside, but had hung around outside, listening to snatches of the sermons that he could hear from a distance. Being a strict

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Lutheran, he closed his ears to the solemn words from the tent.

Now he and Mary found themselves neighbors on their claims. They became good friends and more-they decided to marry and join their new land borders into a fine farm which would furnish them a good living and provide for a future family. So they married and settled into the serious business of running a half-section farm. Cris hadn't a lazy bone in his body. He worked with all his strength, and soon his fertile acres began to produce abundantly. He and Mary could look forward to a prosperous future. Then God gave them a son whom they named Edward. Mary's joy was complete. How she loved little Edward!

But what of her resolve to obey the Lord after she left home, when opposition would be lighter? What of the still small voice that even now would plead with her from time to time? Mary had not been married long when she realized that her husband had no sympathy for her religious beliefs and spiritual aspirations.

Her sister Helen had accepted the message of the book and of the evangelist. Because of that she had had to leave home, driven out by her father's anger over her accepting the Sabbath truth. Helen went to Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. While there she became acquainted with many young people of like faith. One in particular who sparked her special interest was a young man, Emil Oswald.

One summer Helen received and accepted a call from the South Dakota Conference to help in a series of evangelistic meetings to be held in a large tent. Much to her joy, she found the young tent master to be Emil Oswald. Their

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friendship developed, and soon Helen and Emil Oswald decided to join their lives in marriage and in work together for their Master. Emil Oswald became a strong and courageous worker in God's cause, and through the years Helen stood by his side with love and support.

Helen had a deep desire to see her brothers and sisters all members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She had a special burden for Mary, who had put off yielding to the wooing of the Spirit.

Helen kept in close contact with Mary and her husband, Cris. She felt sure that in her sister's heart a seed of heavenly life had been planted, and every day she prayed that God would bring that seed to fruitfulness. Many times the two sisters talked of their faith in God and recounted His blessings, but not until Mary's son, Edward, had reached the age of twelve did Mary make up her mind to be baptized and join the Adventist Church. Because Mary's husband opposed her baptism, Emil Oswald, by then an ordained minister, baptized her without Cris's consent. At last Mary had given herself to Jesus in genuine surrender. Nothing her husband could say or do altered her decision to hold fast that truth she had really loved and believed for so long. God's word certainly had not returned unto Him void!

Edward, from early childhood, had been taught the things his mother had learned from the book and from the evangelistic meetings. Mary knew he had given his heart to the Lord although he had not been baptized as yet. She hoped that in due time Edward might be baptized openly and thus influence his father to accept the message of God.

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Some years younger than Edward, and very opposite in disposition, was Ray. He resembled his father in both looks and actions, and he followed him in all his ways.

The Kleins had a large herd of cattle. One day Edward's father sent him to start the pump which filled the watering tank with water for the herd. The heavy pump at times produced a strong kickback, and this time Edward, a slender lad, was thrown against the well curbing when the pump's motor gave a strong recoil.

Edward screamed. One toe from his right foot had been severed and two others were severely injured. The boy fell to the ground in pain and shock.

Cris came running at the sound of his son's scream. He gathered the boy into his arms and carried him to the car.

"It's not a grave injury," he assured Mary. "I'll be back in an hour or so. I'll get him to the doctor who will fix him up."

The doctor decided to give Edward some medication to relieve him of the pain and make it easier to treat and dress the injured toes. But Edward proved to be allergic to the medication. In a short time the boy lay dead on the doctor's treatment table.

Cris drove home within the time he had promised Mary. But he drove home with his son's lifeless body in the back seat of the car.

Only those who have suffered similar grief can understand Mary's sorrow. Cris blamed himself. "I should never have sent such a young lad to handle that heavy pump, especially when I knew it sometimes would kick back. I should never have sent the lad," he repeated over and over.

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Mary felt comfort in the fact that she had been baptized and that her son would have followed in her steps had he lived. He had made that decision. Now the loving heavenly Father gave her assurance that she would have her beloved Edward on the resurrection day.

Years passed swiftly. Cris was laid to rest. He never accepted the message of the book. Mary, now growing quite feeble, has lived almost a century. Her son, Ray, and his wife have also grown old. Ray became a contractor. He and his wife watch over Mary, who lives in a nursing home. Each day they visit her and take her whatever little comforts will please her. She enjoys her grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and the blessed truth, the hope of Jesus' coming, sustains her day by day.