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Letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to His Children

Albertus C. Van Raalte

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25 May 1857

Holland, Michigan

Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte wrote to his children about some money matters. In much of the letter, however, VR is urging his children to give their heart to Jesus Christ. He closes his letter by saying "Your father who loves you with all his heart." This day is Monday. On Friday he is leaving for Ithaca, New York, to attend the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. The 1857 minutes of the RPDC note that VR was a representative of the Synod of Chicago.

In Dutch; translator unknown.

Original in the Van Raalte papers, Calvin College archives, box 9, fldr. 24.

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THE ALBERTUS C. VAN RAALTE PAPERS
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A. C. Van Raalte To His Children

May 25, 1857

Dear Children,

I thought that Pennsylvania money was good, it being an eastern State. Now I'm sending \$10 Connecticut money, and \$5 New York paper (money) from the Oswego Bank. I would send more, but you don't realize, children, how difficult it is to get money, because the west is the most expensive place and there the scarcity of money is prevalent. Now, my children, fear God and hold his commandments before you; make the most of your time; and work with all your might. Do this prayerfully. Nothing can be accomplished here without earnest effort. Repetition followed by repetition for the purpose of knowing well what you know is the secret of success. In this way you not merely will know your lessons, but you will desire to gain knowledge and to advance knowledge. This is the way you should live. Pray God to become useful people. But to achieve that, you must in the first place fear God.

This place was shocked terribly by the sudden death^{bed} of Teuntje Doesburg. Thursday she still did the ironing. She came down with a fever, and then, no one could hold a coherent conversation with her. The spasmodic tightening of the nerves in her throat also hindered her swallowing. This is something terrible for her parents who now, (if they could), would purchase time in exchange for gold in order to be able to work with her soul. May this loud-speaking voice of God produce a seriousness in the hearts of the youth with the result that they are converted. May this also bring you to the conviction that you this day must give your heart to the Savior, and that you must not put it off by deluding yourself that there is the hope of a better opportunity in the future. Have faith in, and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as the God-given Savior for you, who is able and willing to save and preserve those who come to him. This is the will of God. So do it without delay. Do it yet this day, for death may also strike you as it did Teuntje. Therefore, children, do not postpone this choice.

It is now Monday. Friday morning, I hope to travel to Ithaca. In an earlier letter, I wrote you about how you should write to me. Greet your teacher and pray for her; also for each other, for your parents, and for your brothers and sisters.

May 25, 1857. Holland

Your Father who loves you with all his heart,

A. C. Van Raalte

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FILE #120

Lieve Kinderen. -

Ik dacht dat Pennsylvania money goed was zijnde een oostersche staat: Nu zend ik \$10 Connecticut money & \$5 New York papier van de Oswego Bank. Ik zou meer sturen doch gij weet niet Kinderen hoe moeilijk het is om aan geld te komen, daar is het westen algemeene duurste en geldschaarste heersend. - Nu mijne Kinderen vreest God en houdt zijn gebod voor oogen: en woeker met uw tijd en zet U met alle magt op uw werk, doe het biddende: niets kan hier zonder een sterke uitspanning worden verrigt. repetitie repetitie ten einde wat gij weet goed te weten is het geheim van succes: niet bloot om de les te kennen maar om het te willen weten en te willen vorderen moet gij leeven: Bidt God om nuttige menschen te worden: maar daar toe moet men in de eerste plaats God vrezen. - De plaats hier is zeer geschokt, door op het sterven liggen van Teuntje Doesburg: Donderdag streek zij nog de was. Zij krijgt de koorts en men heeft niet meer met haar een gezond gesprek kunnen houden: de krampagtige zamentrekking der keel belet ook haar het slikken: Er komt wat te zien voor die ouders die nu met goud wel tijd willen koopen om nog aan hare ziele te kunnen arbeiden: mogt deze luidsprekende stem van God wat baren in de harten der jeugdigen ter bekeering: mogt het ook ulieden brengen tot de overtuiging dat gijlieden uw hart moet geven aan den Heiland en dat gij niet moet uitstellen, en U moet vleijen met de hoop op betere gelegenheid. - Geloof in den Heere Jezus vertrouwdt U aan Hem toe als de U van God geschonken zaligmaker, die magtig en willig is te zaligen en te behouden die tot Hem komen: dit is de wille Gods: doe het dan zonder verwijl doet het nog dezen dag: want gij mogt ook overvallen worden door den dood als Teuntje, daarom kinderen vertoef niet. - Nu is het Maandag: Vrijdag morgen hoop ik op reis te gaan naar Ithaca. en in mijne vorige (brief) heb ik U geschreven hoe gij mij schrijven moet. - Groet uwe Leermeesteressen en bid voor haar, ook voor elkaar, voor uwe ouders en voor uwe Broeders en Zusters. -

Mei 25, 1857 Holland -

Ulleder hartelijklieffebenden Vader

A. C. Van Raalte