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A Speech by E[gbert] Winter, Entitled, "Rev. Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte D.D.," Given at the 50th Anniversary of the Holland Colony, 19 Pages of Typescript, Which Was Re-Typed by Barbara Lampen, March, 1980

Egbert Winter

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August 19, 1897

A speech by E[gbert] Winter, entitled, "Rev. Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte D.D.," given at the 50th anniversary of the Holland Colony, 19 pages of typescript, which was re-typed by Barbara Lampen, March, 1980.

Holland Historical Trust, Van Schelven collection, box 8, fldr 25.

E. Winter, Aug. 19, 1897, Holland, Mich.

There are occasions which bring some characters prominently before the public mind. They then demand more than ordinary notice.

Man has often been described as a creature of circumstances. That circumstances often serve to call out and develop latent forces of mind and heart, few will be disposed to question. But for the peculiar opportunities and demands of the peculiar circumstances of their respective times, William of Orange, Washington, Grant and others might have remained unknown to history. Those circumstances furnished facilities for the unfolding of those qualities, which have rendered their names illustrious..

But it is equally true that some men in a certain sense create and control circumstances. Somehow they so gain the mastery thereof as to convert defeat into victory, and untoward events into blessings.

The Divine Government over the world is not the reign of Fatalism. He (God) respects national human agency. As such, it leaves a proper sphere for human activity - personal liberty of action, for the assertion of national powers and endowments. Hence as a natural result, men often become significant and potent factors in directing the cause of events and in determining human conditions and destiny on a scale far beyond their own times, and immediate surroundings. It was thus with the men, whose names were mentioned. And it was thus, too, in an important sense, with the Father and Founder of the Holland colony, which in 1847 planted itself in the forests of Western Michigan.

Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte, although worthily favored therewith, needed neither official nor honorary title to render his name distinguished. Among the early colonists and their sons and daughters, at least, it is, and should remain, Clarune et venerabile nomen. There was a charming simplicity and modesty in his obituary notice, prepared by himself. It told in briefest terms, that Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte had departed.

However, without proper and special notice of him, his work and influence, our Semi-Centennial Celebration would be glaringly deficient. As this task has been entrusted to us, we desire and shall endeavor affectionately, gratefully and faithfully to hold up on this

*Van Raalte's
Copy of
Call*

gladsome occasion, to this colony and to all the Hollanders in this, our adopted country, the name of that man who deserves a prominent place in their memory and affections.

It is usually a delicate and difficult task to describe human character, work and influence. Ordinarily there are differences of opinion, and room for differences is seldom lacking. These are prejudices to encounter (which one will encounter). The biographer himself is liable to be practical - apt to be swayed by circumstances and emotions, so as to vary his judgment. Besides, in delineating human character, work and influence, there is danger of overlooking the Divine hand and grace, which formed that character, and inspired that work and influence. Against that danger we would guard, while we shall endeavor to portray the character and work of the Father of this Colony so far as occasion may permit, and seem to demand. For detailed biographical description, we have no room. The life, written by my colleague, Rev. H. D. Dosker, D. D., will answer that purpose. As more opportune on this occasion, we shall aim at such a portraiture of the man, the preacher, and leader, as shall awaken and strengthen gratitude to God.

If this colonization had not been blessed with such a leader, there would not now be as much as there is to inspire devout thanksgiving. As we call to mind the almost unbroken forests of early colonial days, and then look around at our growing city with her multiplying industries, at our churches and educational institutions, at surrounding villages and cultivated fields, we feel constrained to exclaim, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

In the laying of foundations, in the initiation of movements, in guiding united effort, and in promoting the general welfare, Van Raalte was unquestionably the leader, the most influential person in the whole colony. There were other good men, fitted to exert blessed influence - leaders in surrounding villages and churches. But by common consent, Van Raalte was facile princeps among them. This superior power and leadership were never disputed.

To waste no time in mere general remarks, we shall so assuage our thoughts that we may present those peculiar features of the man, the Christian, the preacher and leader, which were calculated to make him a power for good.

HIS VARIOUS ENDOWMENTS

These were natural, intellectual and spiritual.

Among his natural endowments we count at once Decision.

After Divine grace has renewed the heart, it is not always easy to distinguish qualities which are simply natural. Usually it may be done with sufficient clearness. Among the various characteristics by which some men are distinguished, decision is one of the noblest. Of this some are sadly destitute. It seems difficult for them to arrive at any positive conviction - to form a definite purpose. They are wavering, vacillating, unsteady mortals, more to be pitied than blamed or excused. Such men have no real character. They are neutral. Their deaths entail no loss upon the world.

Others are characteristically decided (decisive). There is something positive in their moral and intellectual make-up and tendency. They can come to a conclusion - to a decision. They can determine upon a course of action, and put their whole soul into it. They decide upon their path and steadily press on towards the goal.

Now within proper limitations, and under proper direction, in a worthy cause, such decision of character is highly desirable. It is a great desideratum in any vocation in life; but most of all for a leader of men in important enterprises, for the leader of a colony in a strange country, surrounded by a people of strange language and customs. Such a leader has a gigantic task - a trying work, before him. For this, decision of character is indispensable - absolutely essential to success.

Now with that indispensable quality Van Raalte was endued even by nature. He possessed it in an unusual degree. It tended to render him, as indeed he was in all his activities, a whole-souled man, who could and did bend all his powers to the cause he served, and the object he had in view.

Intimately related to this we further notice as natural to him
UNUSUAL EARNESTNESS.

It is hardly necessary to show the essential connection between this and decision. An earnest man cannot be vacillating; a decided man can be neither cold nor lukewarm. But however, closely related, and proportioned to each other, decision and earnestness are not synonymous. If they were identical, there could be no thought of their relation to each other. But that relation is so intimate, that neither can live without the other. They cannot be divorced. Now

as some men lack decision, they must also lack earnestness. They are trivial, lighthearted and variable. They may be sentimental, but cannot be steady. They may be bright, but will be superficial. They glide over the surface, are bound up in external, are essentially external in their whole being and life. They can scarcely be aroused and made thoroughly alive to any noble cause. Pity that ever in this world such characters should be invested with important office, and placed in responsible positions.

Happily, there are others, of a very different spirit. There are earnest men - men of serious and contemplative and practical bent of mind. They are predisposed to view matters and things in their relations, in their bearings, in their tendencies to definite results - results which for the greater part may lie far beyond the present moment, and may be wrapt up in the law of eternity. Such men can become zealous for a noble cause. Like Cato, they even leap into the Forum and plunge into the yawning chasm.

When such characters are brought under the sway of spiritual devotion, their natural seriousness will prove of great advantage, not merely for their own welfare, but also for that of others - for the cause of Christ at large. When such men are placed in important and responsible positions, in circumstances which demand zeal and devotion, their natural earnestness of character will be found to be of great value. Hence, the difference between earnest and easy-going men.

Now, if ever there walked on earth an earnest man, that man was Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte. Nor was this all. He was also distinguished for great energy of soul.

It goes without saying that lighthearted, vacillating characters are necessarily devoid of energy, and, on the other hand, that decided and earnest men never can be indolent. Decision and earnestness give birth to energy, and hold it under parental care. They arouse all the forces of mind and heart into activity. They allow no power to remain idle, nor any waste of time or resources, or neglect of opportunities for good. They are wide awake. They render men emphatic, enthusiastic, and intense in their whole being, and in all their activities.

All who knew Van Raalte will admit that he was a man of prodigious energy, a man of unusual intensity of character. Those who could dream during the process of day, and slumber while precious

opportunities were passing, he could scarcely endure. Never could he sleep while there was opportunity to labor or plead for a noble cause. His mind and heart were always active, busy to devise measures for the promotion of a worthy cause, especially that, which became the great concern of his soul. We admit that grace gave controlling tendency to his life and did very much to intensify his soul. But he was naturally energetic. This characteristic was sanctified and intensified by grace, and thus enlisted in the service of God.

And besides he had a naturally strong will. In this he was modelled after a Jacksonian pattern. True, he never winked at that theological heresy, which dreams of an unbiased will - a natural freedom and power for spiritual activity. But none the less, he did prove himself possessed of a strong will. When any course or project was determined upon, his decision, earnestness, energy and force of will united to attain the object of the goal. Obstacles might present themselves; but these he would struggle to batter down and remove. Triumph he would, when a worthy cause had enlisted his heart and soul - succeed he must, if possible. Such men will at times clash with others, who are disturbed in their slumbers, or crossed in their purposes.

Nor would we forget, that the best of mortals are imperfect. At times - the projects of Van Raalte seemed bold - and their originator somewhat pragmatic, as though he had donned the livery of a Dictator. It might seem (to be so) but was not so (like this). The simple truth was that he was in earnest, that he would enlist all his powers for the accomplishment of purposes and plans which he deemed necessary. The qualities already considered made him intense - and his intensity of character projected itself into, and set its stamp upon, all his plans and work. Now such a man was evidently built for a special purpose, calculated to accomplish something in life, naturally fitted to become a leader of men in important movements.

These natural characteristics, however, were not of themselves sufficient. They would prove of great advantage, if properly complimented by others - intellectual and spiritual. That they were thus complimented, we shall endeavor to show.

HIS INTELLECTUAL EQUIPMENT

This was such as to make him a man of power, Favored by Providence by being born into the family of a godly minister, he received, beside his religious training at home, a liberal education, the best that the Netherlands offered, a full University course at Leyden, blessed at that time with men of worth and piety,

This complete and thorough education he knew well how to improve. The Lord had endowed him with a receptive mind, with a depth of mental grasp, which made him as thorough a scholar, as time and circumstances permitted. His mind was naturally inquisitive. This was evident to the close of his life. His library furnished mental aliment. He was always inquiring, always held his perceptive faculties on the alert to gather information. For simply speculative inquiry, it is true, his earnest soul had no sympathy. But useful information he sought eagerly and untiringly. And of that too he had quite a store. In certain departments specialists would, of course, count him below the mark - as they count every one, save the specialist, a simple ignoramus. In Theological and Biblical learning, Dr. Van Raalte had no mean attainments (possessed a good background). In these he was at home. Nor would it have been found an easy task to introduce a subject within the cycle of useful knowledge, as related to the religious sphere, with which Dr. Van Raalte had not a respectable acquaintance. We do not claim, that he stood on a level with men, who never have their attention diverted from the pursuit of learning. His was a sphere of practical service, of great demands upon time and strength. And yet we do claim, that Van Raalte was enriched with so goodly a store of various knowledge, that he is not unworthy to be ranked with men of erudition.

Now such resources, in connection with those natural characteristics, already noted, were eminently calculated to prove of great advantage in the service of Christ, particularly in the capacity of leader of a colony. There was now only needed the guarding and directing power of spiritual life to render them serviceable to the welfare of men and the glory of God.

That such safeguard and control were not wanting will become evident when his spiritual character is properly analyzed. He was a thoroughly devoted and humble Christian. This devotion to the Lord was marked by his decision, earnestness, energy and force of will, and was enhanced by his intellectual endowments. It was the work of God in his soul - the effect of almighty grace in the heart of a man, who, but for this transforming power, might have been a dangerous man, a character not easy to get along with. But Divine grace can work wonders of transformation. It did so in the heart of young Van Raalte. Thereby his whole soul was enlisted for the cause and service of the Lord. It made him tactable (?) docile and humble.

There was in him an almost total absence of pride. He was a servant, who had no will but that of his Master - a child, whose heart breathed confidence and love. For his Master's cause and honor he was all ablaze. None that knew him could question his godliness. The more intimately he became known, the more evident this would be. This was owing in part to the fact that he took more pains to conceal than to display his piety. The last sermon we heard him preach was on Psalm 192:6 (obviously an error, because there are only 150 psalms), "I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." That discourse was all alive with deep spirituality. That passage and discourse may well be considered as a correct description of his heart, and index of his life. He was a man of God, familiar with his Saviour, at home before the throne of grace. No wonder that grace wrought wonders in his soul and life. As his natural temperament was in some respects unfavorable, the triumph of grace was all the more conspicuous. That made him what he was, a veritable child in tenderness and a man in strength, a man with deepest and tenderest emotions, and yet a man of steel, an affectionate disciple of Jesus Christ, and at the same time a hero, who never flinched or wavered in battle.

The type and bent of his religious character and life was thoroughly practical. He was practical as contra-distinguished from the merely speculative. This arose from those characteristics, which Divine grace sanctified. That practical bent of mind is not to be deemed identical with sentimentality, or the result of superficiality. Neither the one nor the other found favor with Van Raalte. He was practical because he was deep, practical instead of speculative or dogmatically passive. His earnest soul did not allow him to be otherwise. He saw too clearly, and felt too deeply the needs of souls, and the cause entrusted to him, to dream or live in abstract regions, keeping selfish holiday in a world of speculation, out of touch with human misery and need. He fed on solid doctrine himself, and made it render practical service. This superficial view of truth - sentimental or speculative treatment - will never do. Sound views, solid truth alone will yield practical service.

And here we find occasion to observe, that in his faith he was at once orthodox and evangelical.

This was a combination not always found. But where it is found, the best practical results will usually follow. The strength of orthodoxy and the spirit of the Gospel are alike needed for faithful service. The closer the union, the better the service. Those who separate the two, and infuse more orthodoxy than Gospel into their service, will become apathetic, one-sided, passive; while those, who would retain the Gospel, and proscribe orthodoxy, will betray undue exaltation of humanagency, and sentimentality.

Van Raalte was too orthodox, and too evangelical to fall into either extreme. Those who suspected him of a lack of orthodoxy betrayed a sad lack of the evangelical spirit. Of this, hyper-calvinistic narrowmindedness alone was capable. Van Raalte admired and commended Erskine.

But while soundly orthodox, he was full of Gospel. He had such broad and enlightened conceptions of the abundant grace of God in Christ, that he could not endure any preaching, which, in the interest of any other phase of truth, could rob the message of its evangelical tone and spirit. He admired Baxter, as well as Erskine. Without following either in all particulars, he appreciated both. In a word, he was a mild Calvinist, modelled after the same pattern as the Heidelberg Catechism. He had a deep insight into the truth, and loved it ardently. Although his knowledge might not be as extensive as that of a Clarisse or a Kuyper - both prodigies of learning - Van Raalte had few superiors in regard to intensiveness of spiritual knowledge. (Sentence considerably edited) His soul had deep hold upon the truth. It inspired and moulded him, imparting its own potency to his thoughts and words and deeds. As such he had a firm purpose to serve the cause with which he stood identified as minister of the Gospel and leader of a colony. That purpose he ever held in view. To it he made everything subservient. In this respect, he was a man of one idea. To be sure, he would betray weakness and imperfections. ✓ Errase est humanum. To this law, Van Raalte was no exception. But through the grace of God his imperfections and errors were combatted most vigorously by himself. They were never allowed to have control. He lived and toiled for the holy cause, the cause of Christ, the cause of the people entrusted to his grace and care and guidance.

To show this, we shall now consider-----

Van Raalte, thus endowed, as religious teacher and preacher,

He was a thorough believer in religious instruction. Family worship and catechatical instruction received his fervent advocacy. He considered and treated them as a sine qua non in religious life and development. Through his appeals family worship was introduced into many homes, which had never known more than perfunctory silent prayer at meals. The intellectual and spiritual development of the people under his influence he considered paramount. Well do we remember those catechatical exercises on Sunday afternoon in the old log church. They took the place of the regular sermon on the Catechism. They were highly interesting and instructive. The whole congregation availed itself thereof. After they were discontinued, the regular preaching on the Catechism was substituted. To this the Doctor was very partial. The Heidelberg Catechism he loved for the blending of an evangelical and practical tone with sound doctrinal statement. Most warmly did he commend "dat boekske." He treated it very elaborately, touching every department and phase of life with it. On the Fifth Commandment, "Honor thy father and mother," etc., on one round in the old log church, he preached in one hearing five elaborate discourses. He applied it to individual, family, church and society.

No wonder his people were well informed, and developed in depth and breadth of doctrinal knowledge. This resulted in practical devotion to all the various phases of Christian life, and consecrated effort. People learned that there was something for them to do. Under his ministrations, narrow minded, hyper-calvinistic, passive and pernicious souls had no pastime. And from his pulpit, as from the center, proceeded an influence which affected the whole Colony. It inspired the churches with christian liberality and self denial, which have distinguished the Hollanders in Michigan.

Another feature, characteristic of Van Raalte's pulpit ministrations, was his treatment of the Bible. We do not have in view his faith in, and reverence for, the Holy Book. These were very marked. But we refer more especially to his manner of treating it in his preaching. He treated it as an organic whole, not as a collection of texts or mottoes, or spiritual maxims, which whim or fancy or sentimentality might accommodate to almost any conceivable purpose or aim, but as a volume of inspired truth, as one living organism, which gives definite purpose and sense to every fact thereof. He did not treat

it as an armory simply whither to repair for weapons; nor as a dispensary, whence to draw remedies; nor yet as a storehouse for treasure and supplies; but as a living organism in which every part is related to every other part, and all is vitally connected with the heart and soul - "The Testimony of Jesus," which "is the Spirit of Prophecy."

Never did he cut any text clean out of its context. The context he always respected. He remembered the delicate views (I think this should be veins _ B.L.) and arteries, which bind text to context. These and the true sense of any passage under discussion, he labored to unfold and impress.

That unfolding was not always in the way of simple verbal exegesis. This he seldom made most prominent. His method was rather, after a brief explanation of terms and connections, to bring out the central thought, to develop it in its deeper sense, and thus to draw out the more hidden glories of Divine teaching. He never lingered on the outskirts or on the surface. He went down into the very heart of the truth - into the deep mines of Scripture, to show the rich veins of spiritual treasure, and then come forth, himself and his appreciative hearers, enriched with priceless treasure for mind and heart and life.

No, Van Raalte could not be found on the surface. He was after living truth. Of that he was usually brimfull. The whole man was often completely under the power of eternal truth - all aglow with it. It swayed, inspired and moved him on. It made him elequent. When in the pulpit, he seemed often like a mighty electric battery. The lightning flashed. The thunder roared. Himself ablaze, he set his audience on fire. His utterances burned their way into human souls. Thus we have witnessed and felt.

He preached with a definite aim. Few were the arrows he shot at a venture. He always had a distinct and definite object before his mind. (Because he was) Always meditating on the best means and ways to advance the spiritual condition of the people, wrapt up in the kingdom of Christ, bearing on his heart the needs of the people, he sought to fill mind and heart with eternal truth. He was not a pulpit warrior who made his sermons bristle with polemics; but a dispenser of positive truth, which, he well knew, was the best preventive and eradicator of error.

Much less was he a preacher who brandished his weapons in display, or a pulpiteer, who dealt in cheap rhetoric. He had always something to say, and delivered his message without the faintest tinge of affectation. He impressed his audience as a man in earnest for their sould, and the glory of the Master, as one who marshalled all his powers into service to lodge his message in human hearts. Saint and sinner were both remembered. To each he gave in every discourse a word in season. Such powerful appeals, such burning sentences, such white-hot earnestness to weld truth and heart together, we never found with any other preacher. Gifted with an exceptionally clear, penetrating and powerful voice, solemn in manner, graceful often in movement, it is none too much to pronounce him an Orator, an elequent preacher, who spurned the tricks and affectations of artificial oratory, but displayed the qualities of a genuine pulpit orator.

That such a preacher had genuine power, none will doubt. From the opening sentence to closing word, his hearers ordinarily sat spell-bound. We felt the power. It seemed as if he brought God and Heaven near. Well do we remember one sentence which fell from his lips in the old log church. Raising his arm, and pointing heavenward with his finger, casting his eyes calmly on high, while a tear trickled down his cheek, he exclaimed, "O hoe goed om daar een plaats te hebben."

We also remember one communion Sabbath, when he was so deeply moved, both morning and afternoon, that utterance failed him several times. When after a manly effort to control his emotions, he managed again to proceed, there came from his lips such a burst of impassioned spiritual eloquence, as but few have at command. Those who heard him in his own church Sunday after Sunday, when in his strength and glory, will bear us out in the claim, that as as a preacher Van Raalte never had an equal among our Western men. His style was not always fluent or easy of comprehension. Nor were his discourses always homiletical models. He was not built according to rule, not chiselled off according to plumblineline and square. It was quite difficult to take his measure. Architecturally considered, his sermons would at times at least deviate from measure and rule. Perchance he concerned himself too little about rules. He could not bind himself thereto. But inspite of all this, he enchained (?) attention. Ordinarily, his sentences were short, his words expressive. Few preachers labored more untiringly, or were more successful in elevating the people to a higher plane of development and consecration. ~~There~~, there were, and are, more elequent orators than

True,

he. But it may safely be claimed, that he was an unusually forcible, inspiring and elequent pulpit orator. In these days, which count sentimentality and flashy rhetoric true elequence, his preaching would no doubt by many be considered heavy - uninteresting. It would at least be quite in contrast with much that is called fine preaching. But experience and observation constrain us to give the preference to the preaching of the founder of this colony. O, for more such preachers as he, who sleeps in yonder cemetery, hard by the site of the old log church in which he pled so forcibly for Christ.

Thank God it was our privilege, when most we needed it, to listen to him from week to week.

Now that such a preacher would exert great influence upon church and community, few will be disposed to doubt. His preaching was preeminently the kind most needed in the trying times through which the early settlers had to pass. It gave them nerve and backbone, courage and inspiration. It strengthened their heart for trial, and their hand for toil. As such, it had influence beyond the limits of his own Church. It touched the heart of the whole Colony.

And here we find an easy transition to present Van Raalte more particularly -

AS THE LEADER OF THE COLONY

which was planted here in 1847. He was by very force of circumstances and eminent fitness leader of the movement, which led the greater portion of the emigrants who landed in 1847 to settle in Western Michigan. All willingly acknowledged him as such. He was the right man at the right time. God had fitted him for such leadership. His responsibility he felt. With noble affection for the people, he shrunk from no toil or self-denial in their behalf. He labored for their development and welfare in every legitimate direction.

The people were somewhat heterogeneous in their spirit and tastes, very diverse in their religious character. Although many of them were true Christian people, as coming from different Provinces, they had been under different influences. Some were broader, others were narrower. To mould so diverse and heterogeneous a mass into a unity was indeed no easy task. It required enlightened and wise leadership. Nor could it be accomplished to entire satisfaction. The process of unification could not fail to elicit opposing sentiments. There was naturally some clashing. But when the circumstances are considered, there is reason to mention with gratitude the degree of harmony which prevailed in all important movements.

There were other noble men, leaders in the surrounding villages and churches, foremost among whom was Dominie Van der Meulen. All these stood by Van Raalte for the general cause. Thus supported, Van Raalte gave himself for that cause. There was in his life such an exemplary abandonment of self, of selfinterest, comfort, convenience and possessions, as is but rarely seen. (Comment - he owned half of Holland; I don't think he was this selfless! B. L., 1980) "Ons volk," as he would affectionately say, claimed his entire being. For them he labored and prayed and lived. He was preacher, physician, leader - a factotum in noble sense.

It is worthy of notice that his eye was ever on the heart of things; never on mere circumstantials, always on essentials. The main consent, not the side-streams which lose themselves in bogs, engaged his attention. With that he identified himself. The question which decided any course, was what would be in harmony with Christian duty - and what would promise the best results? This principle entered into the life of the whole Colony to such (an) extent, that there was often little regard shown for mere points of ecclesiastical form and constitutionality.

One of the earliest and most important movements was the bringing about of a union with the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. This we notice only to bring to view Van Raalte's standpoint. He had a heart broad enough to embrace and recognize all who love the Lord; but he so loved the essential Reformed Faith, that he felt himself at home only in the Reformed Church, and felt himself drawn to those who held the Reformed symbols. In the Old World, he had proved that he would not sacrifice principle, nor enslave his soul to ecclesiastical tyranny in order to become a minister in the Established Church of the Netherlands. On American soil he found the dear old Church under circumstances essentially different from those in the Netherlands since 1816, and particularly in 1834. These the (This American) Church had not removed any of the old doctrinal safeguards. Under these circumstances, he could not hesitate to advocate a union. It would be and was a union with that same Church, historically considered, from which he and others in 1834 had not separated. True, therefore, to the principles enunciated in 1834, for which he had suffered persecution - imprisonment and other wrongs, in the land he had once hastened to defend against foreign foes, he could not but favor a union with the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in the land of his adoption for whose

defense in later years he gave his sons. Any other course would have been inconsistent - out of harmony with the very spirit and terms of the fundamental documents of the Secession in 1834 in the Netherlands.

In other ways and by other means, Van Raalte labored for the welfare of the people. No legitimate interest in vain appealed to his heart. (Any legitimate interest appealed to his heart) But all was made tributary to spiritual welfare and the cause of Christ. There was no local favoritism in his plans and efforts. Very naturally he first reached his own congregation and immediate surroundings. But he had further aims. The whole Colony, in fact, all the Hollanders in America, came, in an important sense, under his loving care. He sought to benefit all, and enlist all in a common cause. Those who suspected that selfishness lay concealed in those plans - the motive to benefit Holland - made a great mistake and perpetrated a greater wrong. His far reaching plans proved him (to be) far in advance of the people in general. He looked far ahead, to the needs and interests of coming generations.

Those who could not see what he saw at times suspected him of chasing shadows, creations of his own fancy. He was considered visionary. (Because he was) Always pushing on to liberality and selfdenial for the cause of higher education (so dear to his heart as a genuine student of (from) Leyden, and above all, as an enlightened and warm-hearted disciple of Christ, he was not seldom (often) regarded (as) arbitrary, unreasonable and exacting. He seemed altogether too fast and inconsiderate. Some opposed (him) occasionally from sheer shortsightedness. Others were sceptical as to the wisdom of his measures, and doubted the results. Still others considered his plans altogether out of proposition (proportion?) with the ability to carry them out. It required too much selfdenial, clearsightedness and faith for some at once to fall in line. It took time to educate some into harmony and cooperation. But all undaunted, conscious of pure motives, utterly devoid of selfishness, and assured in (his) heart that his plans and projects were for the general welfare, Van Raalte, as a true and heroic leader pressed steadily onward. And usually he conquered. Dominie Van der Meulen once remarked to us, "I go along with him because I know his motives are pure."

The general welfare of all the Holland people was dear to his heart. He could not endure the thought that the Hollanders in America should remain in a secondary condition, a colony of foreign workmen,

mere "hout-hakkers en waterputters" - "de staarte," of the body politic. But he had far higher ideals than mere temporal welfare. This he always held subordinate to intellectual and spiritual elevation. For this reason the "higher education" engaged his earnest attention. None ever understood the need thereof better than he; nor was any ever more in love therewith. And few have toiled and prayed and denied themselves for this cause more than he. Much of his struggles in this behalf is familiar to some of us. Much of his devotion thereto is known only in Heaven and his yearnings therefor. Well do we remember how sorely man of us were troubled, when he received a call from the first Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa. Possibilities for a higher education made him consider the call. It was there the people were urged on to great endeavor. Foundation was laid for the desired higher education for both male and female. That the gentle sex should be excluded therefrom, he could not endure. In a weekly lecture in regular course on a Wednesday evening, in the store of Mr. Plugger, he discovered on the creation of Eve. (?) He stood behind an extemporized desk. He had been unusually calm. Not a gesture had as yet been made, when he reached the closing part. Then he raised his arm, brought his hand down with a clatter, and then burst out in these identical words, which tell their own story, "Nu ken ik het ook nooit vergeven, dat het vrouwelij ke geslacht niet beter gekweekt wordt."

In his educational schemes, he advocated a complete and thorough course from Academy to Theological Seminary. Although there was no thought of limiting the higher training to candidates for the ministry, the pulpit was always uppermost in aim. Intellectual development was to subserve the spiritual interests of the people. Theological training for the ministry was therefore the objective point in all his aims and labors for a higher education. He held that Western young men should be trained in the West for Western fields and needs. Not as though other fields and needs were forgotten. For the cause of Foreign Missions his heart was thoroughly aroused. It was his fond hope, already beginning to be realized, that from our own Institutions many would go forth to the ends of the earth. Such were the aims of our leader, and such was the design of our Institutions. The Academy was from the very start regarded as a germ, which would develop into an Institution that would embrace theological instruction, on the basis of a University. The mind of the Church was unfavorable to the University scheme, and hence it failed. But the main object was realized in the establishment of a theological seminary

alongside of Hope College. There can be no question but (that) the main object before the mind of the leader and his associates was adequate provision therefore could be made in any other way. To import men from across the waters might do in individual instances, but, without reflection on the church or her Institutions in the Netherlands, such a course would prove injurious, if not utterly impossible. This was well understood. The Eastern history of dependence on the Church in the Netherlands was an instructive warning.

We would not be understood as intending any slight upon the men who, since 1847, came across the waters to our pulpits. There were some noble men among them who fell well into line with our American needs and aims. The Rev. Pieter Oggel proved a valuable supporter. He was a noble and accomplished man, a good scholar, a popular preacher. His endowments recommended him to (Because of his intellectual endowments, he was recommended to) become Professor of Biblical Languages and Exegesis to which (position) he was elected. He did noble service. It was highly appreciated. But the Lord called him home in comparatively early life.

Afterward (Later) one of his classmates accepted an invitation (to come to America). We refer to the Rev. N. H. Dosker. His ministerial labors were highly appreciated and richly blessed. He was in fullest harmony with our American needs and aims. He proved a valuable supporter of our Institutions - a man whose name lives. Some years later another (Dutch professor) arrived. He was so ripe a scholar, and so fully equipped for a theological Professorship, that the Church honored him with an election thereto. We refer to the Rev. N. M. Steffens D.D. ✓ who rendered valuable service in our Seminary. His was the first endowed chair, and he the first incumbent thereof in the Western Theological Seminary.

There were other good men who came from the Old World to our pulpits, but while such men were and are highly appreciated, it remains undeniable that our churches can be properly provided for only by men trained in our own Institutions. Coming years will prove this most conclusively. There is no danger that they will be deficient in Americanizing tendencies. The fact is, there is no little danger that many young men will Americanize themselves away from our Holland speaking churches, and render themselves incapable of leadership over them; or else, that they will fail to render themselves capable of such leadership, and thus leave our strongest Western churches to be cared for some other way.

With remarkable foresight Van Raalte suspected this. For that

reason, he and others in full harmony on this point bestirred themselves to secure a complete course of instruction right here. He favored Americanization. But he was afraid that in the process noble Holland christian principles and characteristics might suffer, or even be altogether lost.

It is wise to own that there was some reason for such anxiety. The danger is by no means imaginary, but real. A gradual, natural process of transition Van Raalte favored. That is always the safest (procedure). It requires wisdom to direct it. If accelerated unduly, there is inevitably a loss of what should remain. If retarded, there is injury wronged in many ways, which in time, at first opportunity, is likely to avenge itself in an opposite direction. Old Trinity Church in New York tells its warning story. In full view of such dangers, Van Raalte believed, and we fully endorse the principle that, as a general rule, the soundest process of Americanization is secured by a gradual transition in the churches, in exceptional cases only by colonization out of the Dutch speaking churches. Here Van Raalte showed his wisdom. Sound, evangelical Church life and spiritual development, he deemed of chief importance - customs and speech only of secondary moment. To the attainment of so noble an ideal, in connection with an inevitable and desirable transition, he labored and prayed for such Institutions as could subserve (?) the cause.

A true Hollander, he became a genuine Holland-American. Never for a moment did he harbor the idea of perpetuating on American soil a little foreign community, either socially or ecclesiastically. He labored to promote the growth of the people into a healthy union with the American nation. Never did he favor the adoption of all that is called American; nor yet the retention of all that is deemed Hollandish, and the refusal and rejection of what is American. He wanted to retain whatever was worthy of retention, and adopt whatever was entitled to adoption. In church and religious life, he sought to educate the people to such a course. He sought to realize the object in a great measure through the influence of education; through a ministry trained in full in our own institutions. trained here, in College and Seminary in fullest harmony with, and adaptation to, our peculiar Western needs. He was too staunch in adherence to truth to approve of any other course or aim and too broad-minded and far-seeing not to advocate such a course and aim with all his powers in every way.

(Though he was) Himself by choice a Holland American, he wanted

the people to become Holland Americans. But at every stage in the process of transition, he wanted to make adequate provision for all needs. In all this, as in every other relation and work, he proved himself a wise leader. Circumstances were often trying. The test was severe. But in and through all, Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte came out as a genuine leader, whose name this colony should long hold in honored and grateful remembrance.

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN, 1897

We close with some suggested and suggesting remarks.....

Undoubtedly this man was raised up for the great work he accomplished. This colony and other Holland communities under God owe more to him, his work and influence, than to any other. As the men, who knew him well, are rapidly passing away, it is opportune to hold up his name. The grateful tribute it was our privilege to pay thereto, we fondly hope, may intensify and quicken reverence and affection for his name, and incite to devout gratitude to Him, who equipped him for his work, and gave him to this colony. In keeping with the prayers and toils of him, and his co-laborers, the sons and daughters of the colony of 1847 should prize the legacy they left. None are offered to become indifferent thereto, or turn their back upon any of our Institutions, the foundations of which were so wisely and devoutly laid. God forbid that any should ever so outgrow the history of this colony, and become so ungrateful, as to venture upon such a course.

Since he fell asleep, much has transpired. Seed has begun to blossom and bear fruit. There has been noble development in certain directions. All that has occurred, we are sorry to say, is not in harmony with the noble principles of our early history. There are tares among the wheat. There is a growth and development in certain directions, which bears no relationship to the seed sown in the virgin soil of colonial life. Against some of the manifestations of the present day, were he still alive, he would thunder out with his mighty voice. Never could he have witnessed, without sorrow and alarm, so many conveniences and temptations to help soul and body to ruin.

Nor would he have remained an indifferent spectator, when the question of allowing cars (interurban?) to run through our streets on Sunday was before the public. He would have destined himself to reach such decision as would have been in harmony with the Law of the Lord, and the spirit of those early days, when the sacred notes of Psalm were born

on the evening breeze through the streets of Holland.

But he sleeps and Holland was hardly awake. Nor would we disturb his rest. We can only wish and pray that his influence may long continue to inspire. Even at the risk of being suspected of sentimentalism, we take the liberty to propose, that before this celebration closes, a procession to his tomb be managed, and some symbolic wreath be there dropped, and fervent thanks be then and there offered for the blessings bestowed upon this colony through him and his work. And in the near future we hope some suitable monument will be erected to his memory.

"The name of the wicked shall not" but "the memory of the
just is blessed."

Retyped, March, 1980. Barbara Lampen

This was not a translation, but the actual typed copy. It is very badly written at times, and I did a little editing. However, I hesitated to write sections over. I did try for clarification. It is typical of the "overwriting" which is so characteristic of the period, and I think it glorifies Van Raalte perhaps more than he deserved. He was a human being just like everyone else.

What mentioned
SEVR for

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no mention

SEVR as

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tion of Nietzsche's observation: "Every doer loves his deed much more than it deserves to be loved; and the best deeds are born out of such an excess of love that they could not be worthy of it, even though their worth be very great." (*Kritik und Zukunft der Kultur*, Ch. IV, Par. 13). The various vitalities of human history are moreover not only in conflict with Zeus but in conflict with each other. There is no simple resolution of the conflict between the state and the family, usually symbolized as a conflict between man and woman, the latter representing the community of blood and family in contrast to the political community (as in *Iphigenia at Aulis* and in *Antigone*). The conflict in Greek tragedy is, in short, between Gods, between Zeus and Dionysus; and not between God and the devil, nor between spirit and matter. The spirit of man expresses itself in his vital energies as well as in the harmonizing force of mind; and while the latter, as the rational principle of order, is the more ultimate (here the dramatists remain typically Greek) there can be creativity in human affairs only at the price of disturbing this order.

Thus life is at war with itself, according to Greek tragedy. There is no solution, or only a tragic solution for the conflict between the vitalities of life and the principle of measure. Zeus remains God. But one is prompted to both admiration and pity toward those who defy him. It is significant that this profound problem, posed by Greek tragedy, was never sensed by the moderns who revived classicism and ostensibly built their view of man upon Greek thought. They may have understood or misunderstood Plato and Aristotle: but the message of Æschylus and Sophocles was neither understood nor misunderstood. It was simply neglected, except as the minor romantic note in modern culture appreciated and partly misunderstood it.

The Christian View of Man

. . . As the classical view is determined by Greek metaphysical presuppositions, so the Christian view is determined by the ultimate presuppositions of Christian faith. The Christian faith in God as Creator of the world transcends the canons and antinomies of rationality, particularly the antinomy between mind and matter, between consciousness and extension. God is not merely mind who forms a previously given formless stuff. God is both vitality and form and the source of all existence. He creates the world. This world is not God; but it is not evil because it is not God. Being God's creation, it is good.

The consequence of this conception of the world upon the view of human nature in Christian thought is to allow an appreciation of the unity of body and soul in human personality which idealists and naturalists have sought in vain. Furthermore it prevents the idealistic error of