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A Letter of A. C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps

A. C. Van Raalte

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June 3, 1870

No. 68

A letter of A. C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps, about William Gilmore's classical examination and the obtaining of a teacher for teacher training.

Original in the Archives of Hope College.

Holland Mich

June 3 / 70

Rev'd Dr F Phelps

Dear brother.

We had an idea that after Gilmore examination before his Classis, needed a classical call or mission to be ordained, and classis intended to open the way. - Now I hear Illinois claims the examination: - If his appointment by the Board opens the way for ordination, then Gilmore must be examined I think in the Classis of Holland. I cannot divine what Gilmore intention is.

Prof Crispell thought about a teacher in the Grammar School as you think: that it was best to get one, who belongs to our church: it is reasonable therefore I thought it to be useless to write to the School, Superintendent of Michigan. Prof Crispell however intended to write to the State Normal School in Albany, to some friend in New Brunswick and Mr. Schimmerhorn in New York etc: expecting in the same time that you would look around.

Mrs Van Raalte had again a severe spell of sickness is bettering however now again.

Your friend and Brother

A C Van Raalte

Gilman
62.
Holland Mich
June 3/70
Rev. D. P. Phelps.

Dear Brother,

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A C Van Raalte

70-06-03 [GS68]

Holland Mich
June 3/70

Revd Dr P Phelps.

Dear Brother.

We had an idea that after Gilmore[‘s]¹ examination before his Classis, needed a classical call² or mission to be ordained, and the classis intended to open the way. -- Now I hear [that the] [Classis of] Illinois claims the examination: - If his appointment by the Board [of Education of the RCA] opens the way for ordination, then Gilmore must be examined I think in the Classis of Holland.³ - I can not divine what Gilmore[‘s] intention is.

Prof: Crispel[I] thought about a teacher in the Grammar School as you think: that it was best to get one, Who belongs to our Church:⁴ it is reasonable[,] therefore I thought it to be useless to write to the School Superintendent of Michigan. Prof Crispel[I] however intended to write to the State Normal School in Albany, to some friend in New Brunswick and Mr. Schimmerhorn⁵ in New Brunswick etc: expecting in the same time that would look around.

Mrs Van Raalte had again a severe spel[I] of sickness [but she] is bettering however now again.

Your friend & Brother

A C Van Raalte

¹ William Brokaw Gilmore who married the daughter of the Van Raalte’s, Christina, the summer before in Amelia where they were now living. William was teaching in the Amelia Institute at this time. Corwin’s *Manual....*, 4th ed., (1902), 488. Van Raalte was never bashful in promoting the careers of his relatives. He was able to get Rev. Pieter J. Oggel to leave his congregation in Pella, Iowa, and come to teach at Hope until his death in 1869.

² That is, Gilmore need a call to serve a congregation in the Reformed Church in America. Candidates for the ministry needed to have official calls before they could be ordained. Gilmore became a candidate for ministry upon finishing his theological education at Hope College in 1869.

³ Gilmore would have to be examined by the Classis of Illinois in order to receive his professorial certificate qualifying him for ordination but a person to be ordained would be ordained in the classis in which he would be serving.

⁴ It would be assumed that if a teacher were a member of the denomination that would guarantee the hiring of a Christian rather than a non-Christian since Hope College was a Christian and denominationally affiliated institution.

⁵ With the contacts that Prof. Cornelius Crispell had in the East he might readily contact people he knew there who could recommend qualified Christian teachers. With Van Raalte’s usual penchant to misspell names, this Schimmerhorn may well be Rev. Harvey R. Schermerhorn who was then serving as Principal of the Hudson Academy, Hudson, New York. He served there from 1869 to 1874. Corwin’s *Manual....*, 4th ed. (1902), 700.