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11-14-1854

Letter from Albertus C. to Ben Van Raalte

A. C. Van Raalte

Nella Kennedy

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[November 14, 1854]

New York City

In a letter from Albertus C. Van Raalte to his son, Ben, Father Van Raalte referred to Ben as “my child.” Ben was sixteen years old when the letter was written. Ben’s father pleaded with him to “Turn, my child, to your God and seek His fellowship.”

The letter is not dated but is given this date and also 18 November.

In Dutch; translator unknown. Retranslation by Nella Kennedy, January, 2004.

Calvin College Archives, ACVR collection, Box 9, fldr 23.

transcr. + revised
translation

...A few more words, my child, for my letter was full. Although it was my intention to allow Albertus to work by himself and to manage his business separately in order to promote resilience and peace, that nevertheless does not decrease your calling to work and to live together as brothers, and especially to work jointly in these times, for maintaining the whole.

Another matter, my child: that you labor diligently, and make the most of your time is fine, but you bring the curse of God upon all your actions if, at the same time, you neglect your God, your soul, and the means of grace. My child, the existence of God and our dependence upon Him and His dealings with us is no illusion or figment of the imagination. I beg of you, by everything that is precious to you, do not continue to oppose your Maker, and do not scorn or neglect Him any

[2]

longer. Will you be able to exist in hostility to God? Oh, my child, how awful, how terrible that is - to incur a curse upon yourself in everything. And truly, that is what you do as long as you neglect God. I predict that God will contend and struggle with you. I do not know how long, but as long as He does not forsake you, your path will be one filled with bitterness and obstacles. And I will rejoice in it in the hope that you may humble yourself before your God. But woe to you, my child, if you, with your hardened heart, will begin to feel right at home here. For then I will see you becoming ripe for damnation, and then you will probably be mowed down suddenly. Oh Benjamin, you are not prepared to die, to meet your God, for you will have nothing to do with God. You harden your heart and surrender only to the world, which will betray, deceive and destroy

[3]

you. My child, how wretched you are if no spark ignites in your bosom causing you to long for God and His approval. But if you desire peace [and] reconciliation, be assured that you will be welcome because of the blood of Jesus.

Oh, dear child, will your bosom always remain closed to the love of God? Turn, my child, to your God and seek His fellowship. Please do write me.

Greetings to all. I hope to write to mother tomorrow.

In great haste

Your father and best friend
A. C. Van Raalte

[revised translation: Nella Kennedy
January 2004]

[Nov. 18, 1854]

no Calvin archive

Voegen paar woorden mijn kind,
want mijn brief was vol: - of schoon
mijn voornemen albertus op zich zelve,
te laten werken en afgeronderd teyne
Zaken te Stellen: om verkrachten
Vrede te bevorderen: noytemis vermindert
dat uwe roeping niet om als Broeders
te werken en te leven, en vooral in dese
tijd te Samen te werken ter opvoeding
van't geheel.

Noy iets mijn kind: dat gij ijverig werkt en
woekert met een tijd is wel, doch gij haalt
Gods vloek over al en doet zoo gij er door
Uw God uw Ziel en de genade middelen,
Verduint: mijn kind Gods bestaan
en onze afhankelijkheid van Hem en
Zyne bemoeijenissen met ons is geen
drombeeld of herschen schijn: - Ik
bid u bij al wat u dierbaar is, kant
u toch niet langer tegen U Schepper
en versmaad en verwaarloosd Hem niet

langer: Zult gij tegen God kunnen
bestaan: O mijn kind hoe akelig
hoe schrikkelyk is het: in alles een vloek
over u te heelen: en waartylk dat doet
gij zoolang gij om God verwaart lood:
Ik wroospel u: God zal met u turken
en worstelen: hollang weet ik niet: doch
zoolang wij u niet overgeeft zal u
grad met bitterheer en tegenheer
verduld zyn: en ik zal er blyde over zyn
in de hope dat gij u voor uw God
moogt vernedren: doch wee u mijn
kind, zoo gij met een verhard harte
het hier neer in dien krijgt: want
dan zie ik de ryp worden voor de ver-
doemenis: - en dan zult gij waarschijn-
lyk eendklops worden weggemaaid:
O Benjamin! gij zyt niet bereid om
te sterven, om uw God te ontmoeten,
want gij wilt niet met God te doen
hebben: gij verhardt uw hart en
geeft u slechts over aan de wereld,
die u verlaeten bedreegen en ver-

woesten zal: mijn kind hoe
tampstelig zyt gij: Zoo er geen vrank
in een boezem ontbrand welke naar
God en zyn genest verlanget: doch
begeert gij sreed verzoening: was
dan versterd gij zyt welkom
om Jerus bloed wille. -
O lieve kind zal uw boezem leuning
gesloten blyven voor de liefde Gods!
keer mijn kind tot uw God en
zoek zyne gemeenscheeps.
Schryf my toets eens.
groet allen: Moede hoop ik op
morgen te schryven
Uw vader en beste vriend
ingooten heeft. - A Van Kaele