

V.R. Documents.

Van Raalte, the man.

Born October 17, 1811 at Wanneperveen, little village near Zwartsluis (Overijssel).

His father, Albertus van Raalte was a minister there of the Hervormde Staatskerk.
~~Sather~~

His mother was Christina Caterina Harkings, of wealthy Frisian offspring.

There is no record of van R's childhood. The v.R's Sr. had 17 children; only 5 reached mature age; two brothers died when they were students (very suddenly), a third, Peter, a physician, died during the cholera period of 1832.

One statement of v.R's youth is known to the different authors; van R. says there himself:

"Looking back at my youth life I must confess that it was aim-less, and only directed by the respect I had for my father and the desire to please him be a joy to him. Aim and seriousness were only found untill after the first cholera period. (1832---first cholera period in Holland)."

In that year Van Raalte was a Junior at Leyden University and changed his course in medicine into a course of theology. His father was minister at ~~Etten~~ Fijnaart, Nrd.Brab. then, and recommended him to Prof. Clarisse, a friend of his who taught at the Seminary.

Decision to change courses first important one in v.R.'s life!

He himself wrote about it "no worldly ambition but the ministry of the Word which in former days seemed to me to be the least fitting for my personality, became from then on (1832) my prayerful goal".

Academy of Leyden.

Oldest one of the three "hogescholen"; most renown one too. Famous profs such as van Hengel, van der Palm, Kist, Clarisse, Borger, Suringar; fine personalities, but in their teachings "rationalistic and supranaturalistic". There were 5 young students that formed their own group: C.D.L. Baehler, A.Brummelkamp, G.F.Gezele Meerburg, H.P.Scholte, en S.van Velzen. Serious in their studies not only but also leading Godly lives.

v.Raalte was somewhat hesitant to join them; he would be earmarked then. But in final analysis he agreed with their basic views. Gradually he came within the group.

Van Raalte Documents.

The Church struggles:

Among the documents we find a note of van Raalte's concerning the "strijd" in the Ref.Ch.

Apparently this has been written in the United States since we read at the end of it:

" standing at a distance we can consider this more honestly". The document runs as follows:

(direct transl. from the Dutch)

"I found the ~~Ref.~~ ^{Hervormde Staatskerk} ~~church~~ government to be without any sign of the mind of Christ, tyrannical, engendered with a terrible hatred towards the "little resistance", an enmity which at the ~~same~~ same time makes clear its "mala fide", its treacherous undermining of the rights (rechten). A righteous man is brave like ~~xxx~~ a young lion and is at the same time bold.

The conduct was base, a Chr. people unworthy; in anger and bold self sufficiency one despised the "naughty boys" and one wanted to crush them: those "naughty boys" should not have a conscience to bother with and should n't have freedoms of conscience! Common sense was lost sight of completely because of this being angry, if not so, one would not have done such shameful things as persecute religious gatherings and punish them by means of fines or quartering (?) of soldiers; the arresting of ministers of the Word without cause and to give them over to a murder-menacing-mob as a prey unto them. Then I was convinced that many laws could not be obeyed where one found oneself amid such a "modderpoel" where one despises souls! I could not obey ecclesiastical rulers who want to bind my hands by means of their rules and regulations and who only promulgate rule and order to thwart God's aim which He has in mind ~~xxx~~ with His Church and statutes on earth, namely to save souls.

I realized that I had a conscience. a conscience which did prevail and thanks be to God for it! The matter was too simple for me: I had to choose from on the one hand neglecting my religious convictions, an unconditioned surrender to human authority or to give up everything. Some voices urged me to sit down idly, but in my study in Leyden I found blessedness as a gift of Christ and my thankfulness was so great that first of all, yea immediately, before all other things, I prayed for a long life and that kind of grace which would enable me to tell my co-sinners that Christ existed in reality! That desire directed my course of life; where I was asked to labor after the pulpits of the Ref.Ch. were closed to me, there I preached and often with such an inner force that I despised the persecution and with such a force that I became convinced that no human powers could ~~xxxx~~ stop my mouth from speaking the truth. I thank and I praise God for this! I lost many friends but God has rendered me back doubly.

After so many years--although I deplore "scheuringen", separations in the church and although I know the sect-spirit to be a plague-spirit, still this question stays before me whether one should "surrender" to such a church government which from top to bottom lowers the church and makes a mixture of it of Christ, His atoning death and some Spirit-denying divergences. Where one makes the Church of God a "human machinery" where only human authority is being maintained. And this at the cost of a free Chr. movement which is intended to bring the erring ones (back to) the Truth!

I am amazed how men who knew God could ever tolerate such practices!

(Van Raalte's own words)
(no date, no title given)