

Memoirs of Ds. Dirk van Velden of Ladismith [Ladismith]

Translated by R. J.N. van den berg – 1 October 1993. [Translated from Dutch Hoog Hollands]

To my beloved children – Anno 1872.

The sole purpose I have in mind with these lines, is to leave you, after my departure from here, some record of your ancestral country of origin and your genealogy as well as about my own life, and primarily encounters I have had on my way from the cradle to the grave, or at least until that time when you were advanced enough in years to be able to personally take note of things.

{Translators note: The author refers to himself in the third person in the original – e.g.: “from his cradle to his grave” – which for the sake of clarity I have changed into the first person}.

“And you, my children, know that God of your father, and serve Him with your whole heart and willing soul, because the Eternal examines all hearts and He understands all the thoughts that you think: if you seek Him you will find Him: but if you leave Him, He will banish you for all eternity.”

[1 Cron. 28:29 amended]

Know then that your father comes from upper class, wealthy Dutch ancestors, reputedly descended from one of the most important statesmen, who was, furthermore, an excellent and pious Christian and a member of the German nobility (Mr Groen van Prinsterer). The teaching of the Loevenstein faction, i.e. [Arminianism](#), resulted in our fatherland falling to the impious [French in 1795](#).

Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, (1801-1876)

Dutch politician and historian was born at Voorburg, near The Hague, on the 21st of August 1801. He studied at Leiden University, and graduated in 1823 both as Doctor of Literature and LL.D. From 1829 to 1833 he acted as secretary to King William I of Holland, afterwards took a prominent part in Dutch home politics, and gradually became the leader of the so-called Anti-Revolutionary Party, both in the Second Chamber, of which he was for many years a member, and outside.

<https://www.allofliferedeemed.co.uk/groenvanprinsterer.htm>

From the history of France, as you will find it in my book collection (from 1784 – 1800), it is apparent that people who have proclaimed themselves to be God, i.e. to be all-powerful with their motto, “[Vox populi, Vox Dei](#)”, [‘the voice of the people is the voice of God’] a people who cursed and banished kingship, a people comprising of scum, without God and without conscience, to them the most horrible you can think of is holy. It is self-evident that from such a people you can expect nothing but infernal practitioners of horror.

Enough, France has just like in most of the Netherlands, or anywhere where it had a chance to do so, robbed and stolen from your ancestors as much as possible, so that your ancestors fell from being rich to being middle-class.

I was born in [Hoorn](#) (in North Holland) on 11th April 1813. My father was called Willem (one of twelve brothers) and you, my eldest son, bear his name. My mother’s name was Jelletjie Ponnenboeijer [pontoon buoy] (Frisian), and it is her name Julia that you, my eldest daughter, have.

Your grandparents, my father and mother, were both God-fearing people. My mother so greatly. She was a woman of deep penetrating spirituality and firm unwavering piousness. She therefore reflected much and spoke little, to wit, she had a quiet, introverted, absentminded character, whilst her conversations were usually about all that was Godly and eternal, revealing her deep insight into the Holy Scriptures and her serious resolve.

She was called home in 1854, or if you want to call it so, she died. This happened so that, gradually declining, she went to bed healthy one evening and her lifeless (soul-less) remains were found the next morning. She was 69 years old. During her sojourn here on earth she had walked with God and she was now at home.

The earthly existence of my parents was anything but expansive. It was, to put it better, full of cares. My father, by trade a grutter, [*Tr: a person who hauls and mills barley and oats*] which is an activity unknown to South Africa, was never able to acquire a grits mill (a milling factory costing thousands of guilders) and therefore had to make a living from a grocer's shop. Even to acquire that he had to, during his married life to my mother, take out a loan for the whole amount required, and bear the consequent payments of interest. So, my parents had a difficult existence making their way, as honest people, in the world. Besides the fact that at that time, to sue for bankruptcy or leaving debts unpaid was not a Dutch custom and was indeed deemed to be crookery and treated as such, so it was further quite above the Dutch mentality to reconcile piety with the non-payment of debt. For whichever reason, however, my parents would not be party to such an abomination. So it was that by hard work and strict budgeting they strove to support the family, as well as to render to each whatever it was they owed. So it has never, to my knowledge, come about that any of our family has left even the smallest debt unpaid.

My father however, being by nature active in the best sense, found the mere tending to a shop much too quiet. He tried, besides, to find ways of reducing his debt and thus making some progress. He conceived, gradually, the idea of making some profit by doing the work he had learned as a child and with which he had grown up. So he built, gradually, and on a small scale a barley and oats mill [gritting mill], which, instead of being driven by horses, used human power. This, however, was exceptionally heavy work which was in fact more than a human being could bear. My father undermined, or rather, ruined his physical powers once and for all, working night and day to make a modest, very lean subsistence. There you have the circumstances in which I, your father, was born and raised.

I was the third child from my parents' marriage and came into the world on the 11th April 1813. At a very early age (being less than a year old) I contracted the so called [English disease](#), [*Tr: probably "Rachitis" or "Rickets"*] and suffered from it for more than three years. The traces and effects (inner fever and weakness) have not subsequently left me for my entire life. My temperament and character, by nature already quiet and introverted, as a result became even more subdued, and I always retained a lingering waning or melancholy.

So it was that from my earliest youth I abhorred play and other children could get on no better with me than I with them. I was serious and studious by nature. I wanted to learn and found my world in books. [*Tr.: literally, my all*]. So I cannot recall how it came about that I learnt to read, or whether it was with anyone's help. All that I do know about it is that at the age of six I could read my mother

tongue perfectly, not only in print but also the most flowing handwriting, as in my father's business letters.

So my parents took me to school when I was six and set me to write and do sums. At the age of nine I had twice calculated my way through three maths books by [Adam van Lintz](#) (the third of which, and sundry others, you are still likely to find amongst my books). From then onwards until the age of ten, my teacher, in whose school there were 130 children used me as a monitor or assistant teacher for a class of 30 children. My teacher counselled my father a year later, however, to place me elsewhere as he was of the opinion that my active and searching mind could not find sufficient sustenance in the curriculum presented at his school. It became then a question with no easy answer for my parents, what to do with me. It was their unshakable principle (as it was and is mine) to look for God's guidance in all things and not force anyone into a career they neither wanted nor had any aptitude for. To ask me what I wanted to become, was at that time superfluous.

From my sixth year onward, and perhaps even before that, I had answered that question, whenever my mother posed it, by saying "I want to become a minister." This answer of mine remained unalterably the same. The precarious state my parents were in, caused my mother to always frighten me off, by saying, "yes, child, but then you will have to study Latin". That little word "but" was enough to frighten me, since I was in any case, as I mentioned, very melancholy by nature and always fearful that I might not be doing well enough in my studies. The fear, however, subsided eventually. I recall amongst other things, that my father once asked, "But why do you want to become a minister?" he put it to me then, that if honour or status or worldly advantages were my aim, I had better put it out of my head, since a proper minister could count on the opposite response from the world. The reason I put forward then was that the work of a minister had everlasting value, whereas all other things wrought here on earth, went with one into one's coffin. Enough! My father resolved to place me in any other school where my thirst for knowledge might be satisfied and came home one day, saying "I have enrolled you for the Latin school, but if you have no desire to go there, you must say so, that I may cancel it." This was unexpected. I, melancholy as I was, nearly died of fright, because I had so often heard my mother say "but....". I had no other idea about Latin except that it was impossible to learn. My pride, or sense of honour, or whatever anyone may call it, made me express satisfaction with what my father had done, and I went to Latin school. I wasn't there for long, before my mother's "but" had lost its power to frighten me. From the very start I made great progress so that after six months I was ahead of those who had been there a whole year. Despite this I suffered from terrible heartache at seeing how my parents struggled, despite inordinate labours and the greatest possible thrift and care, to barely provide for everything, i.e., to pay for everything and to modestly maintain themselves.

Four years went by like that, and, although I suffered much from soul-searching and financial cares, and dared not buy more books than strictly necessary. I remained first in my classes and was regarded highly by my teachers. Especially in Latin and Greek grammar I had so sure a touch that I very seldom erred.

Then, from overwork my father fell seriously ill. So seriously that they feared for his life. I was then fourteen and the thought, "What will happen to my mother, to me, and to my two sisters, if Father dies?" left me no peace and broke my courage once and for all. Whilst I was so plunged in despair, my father's illness took a turn for the better. That nearly incomparably diligent provider then went back to work ere he had recovered half his strength. As a result, he soon suffered a relapse that

shackled him to his sickbed. “What now?” was the question. The question became even more serious to me when the doctor assured him, when he first recovered again, that if he resumed his unthinkably heavy work, it would be tantamount to committing suicide. My father was then forty years of age. I thus became so anxious and concerned that I forced myself to suppress my desire for learning, and I left school to help my father.

It so happened that my father recovered, and, because I alleviated his task, he was able to resume work, whilst I became proficient in everything. A few years later, nevertheless, he had to give up work altogether and from then on everything depended on me. I should add, before going on, that my leaving Latin school had not been to the liking of my teachers, the principal, and the vice-principal. They repeatedly called at my parents house to persuade them to let me continue my studies. They offered all tuition gratis. What more could one want? Even so and despite the fact that the principal (Swaan) assured my parents that failing to become a minister would probably cause grave psychological injury. [*Tr: literally: endanger me, seriously, to injuring my mental powers*].

Despite that, I could not bring myself to abandon my parents and my family. I locked away my study books in a cupboard in the attic, so as never to see them again. How I suffered in my soul I will not try to describe, for few would understand it anyway. My books and I had been as if married.

As mentioned, I acted as head of the family from my sixteenth year, since my father could no longer do anything but light chores. Small of build and very weak, (as a result of the exceptionally severe [English disease](#) I had in my early youth), the strenuous work of my father’s, usually from four in the morning until nine at night, interrupted only by three meals, seriously undermined me physically; the more so since meals were not measured by how much was needed, but by how much we could afford. I should really say that I never had more than half of what I needed. In addition, there was all the mental suffering from all the cares on the one hand and on the other the struggle against the desire to study. I still remember how I once, as if by accident, lay eyes on my books, but felt as if shattered as a result. So seven years of my life, from my fourteenth until my twenty-first, were spent in excessively strenuous labour, getting but half of the nourishment required by such labour, as well as being tortured by longing.

Upon entering my nineteenth year, I became liable for military duty but I was far below par regarding height. The following year also, although taller, I did not meet the grade. The third year (1834), however, became the year of my salvation as I then measured up to the height requirement. I call it the year of my salvation since I had by then reached such a pass that I nearly preferred to die rather than to live through sheer hopelessness.

I now had to leave the family to its fate and was conscripted to the Second Infantry regiment whose depot was in [Alkmaar](#) (four hours from [Hoorn](#) on horseback). Thus I found myself to be in the hubbub of barracks life and those who are familiar with that, will easily understand what I thought of it. At home I was used to a life of domestic prayer, but here I encountered uninterrupted brawling laced with curses and blasphemy. This caused me to become withdrawn, even more than I had by nature been since childhood. So all my thoughts became a continuous prayer, as if I was walking with God. More and more they discovered too that, no matter how healthy, I was not strong enough for military service and they kept me at the depot.

After some months (three or four) during the course of which I had become better known, I was appointed supervisor of the gun store, to ensure that the soldiers who daily cleaned thousands of rifles and other weapons there, did not cause damage or steal something. So it was that I actually found more peace in regular work as well as being excused from all strenuous exercise and guard duty. Further, and this meant a lot to me, I had the whole of Sundays off. In the meantime, I had to some extent become known to the people of [Alkmaar](#) and had the regards of the Christians there. I still remember how once, in church, I saw a well-dressed gentleman enter, whom I recalled seeing at my parents' house when I had been about four. I had heard him being called [Schrieke](#). This Schrieke had been in military service at the time with the garrison at Hoorn. Being the excellent Christian that he was, he had become acquainted with my parents and had been a highly regarded family friend, until, after the battle of [Waterloo](#) in 1815, and his discharge a year later, he had settled in Alkmaar. He had been blessed to become a very prominent citizen there. I had in fact the urge, when I recognized our old friend, to enquire after him and look him up. But then I first feared that I might be mistaken, since I found it almost inexplicable that I should recognize someone I had seen when I was four. I therefore kept myself back. Because I had, however never known or sought contact other than with those who feared the Lord and loved His word, it came about that one of my friends, Mr. Abbring, whom I had come to know through coincidence, spoke about me to Schrieke, who enquired who I was and where I came from, and asked to meet me.

He soon became convinced that he had seen me as a child, and, remembering my parents' house etc., soon took such an interest in me that he, in an attempt to cure me of my reserve, abruptly told me to choose one of two things, either to stay away for good, or to regard myself as their eldest son and not to pay visits, but to come home. He led me to a neatly furnished upper room and placed it at my complete disposal. From then onwards I had even more freedom and could usefully spend my spare time away from my duties in the rifle store. It then came about that, as I still spent the nights in the barracks, I was roused at one o'clock one night by a soldier who asked me to put in a request for him to obtain six months leave. I took pity on him, for he was the son of a poor widow and wanted to earn something for his mother and small brothers and sisters.

Although it was during January and the winter was very severe, I ignored the cold and soon completed the necessary paperwork. The soldier concerned himself posted it to the Director-General of War in the Hague, the next morning, who returned it to the Colonel at the depot, granting him authority to act as he saw fit. My written request then circulated around the Colonel's office and, although in itself thought well of, raised the question as to how the writer could have been so ignorant as to send such a request directly to the Director-general without first submitting it to the officers of the depot for scrutiny and a recommendation as well as their signatures. You find proof here of my stupidity regarding military administration. One of the Colonel's clerks who, being a most proper young man, I had befriended, gave out information regarding my person and character, etc., ostensibly derived from examining the handwriting. I had the satisfaction of seeing the soldier for whom I had gotten up during the night, go off on his six months leave to earn something for his mother and her children. When he came to say good-bye, he asked what he owed me for my trouble, to which I replied by wishing him God's blessing, silently adding a prayer for the poor widow and her children. I thanked God that I could bring them some joy. To which purpose did this all serve? Well, listen.

A few months later a Corporal, sent by the Colonel, quite unexpectedly came looking for me in the rifle store with an order to go to the Captain-Quartermaster at once, as I had been appointed as a writer at General Command. I was so stunned, as if struck by lightning, that I could only exclaim – “Me?” – “Yes you” was the reply, “and you should hurry.” It happened that the weapons-officer, in whose charge I was, stood there. He shouted and cursed at me, “Who taught you to go to the Captain-Quartermaster for a posting there. It will be for fourteen days only, for I won’t let you go.” The one thing on top of the other left me beside myself with astonishment. Enough. I had to obey the order and went.

Arriving at the office and seeing the officers and petty officers at their desks, I would rather have been sent back, for, although I had been involved with books and linguistic studies, I knew nothing of office matters. I expected nothing other than that I would be sent back after a few weeks for being useless. That would be a disgrace I did not want. Since they had become convinced that I could write, [*Tr: Literally and jokingly he writes “could move a pen”*] I was expected straight away to stand in for a petty officer who had worked there for years. All the books and paraphernalia were shown to me, and it was explained in detail what I had to do. Understanding as little of it all as of the Chinese language, I made a hash of things and torrents of abuse fell on my ears. The more they cursed me, the more I learnt to pray whilst working and to work whilst praying. So I struggled for the first three months, expecting, during the first three weeks, that every day would be the last there, believing they would send me away as being incompetent.

I was relieved of that fear one morning when my former superior, the Weapons-Officer, whilst being in the office, pointed at me and enquired of the Captain-Quartermaster, “Are you keeping that chap?” to which the reply was, “Yes, surely, if he doesn’t become bored here, that is.” At that the former berated the Colonel most terribly for taking me from him, since I had been the only one, he said, on whom he had been able to depend as if he were himself at work, etc., etc. The captain advised him to be glad for having had my services for a few months, adding that if he had known me upon my arrival, he would at once have taken me into his service.

I then felt re-assured and realised that I probably had made better progress than I had thought. So the first term of the three months went by and at the start of the second term I had familiarized myself with and acquired a grasp of the running of the administration. At the end of the second term my Captain gave me the best payment I received in all my years there. Since I now received ordinary military pay as well, I had a well-filled purse, and never had anything like it again, also because I was staying with Mr. Schrieke and his wife who had, as mentioned above, adopted me as their eldest son.

From then on I could from time to time help out my parents somewhat. But it also dawned on me that I could, through being employed at the office from nine until two only, and being absolved of all other military duties, utilize all that spare time. So I wrote my parents, requesting them to send all my study books. Upon receiving these, I resumed on my own where I had left off several years ago. I worked at it from five in the morning till eight, and from three in the afternoon until nine o’clock at night. When I grew tired of studying language, I refreshed myself by pouring over the scriptures and reading theological books or I visited God-fearing friends who were friends of Schrieke as well. In that way my military service passed, until July 1839 (the war with Belgium having ended) I was discharged.

My officers in general, and the Captain-Quartermaster in particular, strongly urged me to join up voluntarily. I was promised that if I did so, I would be made a petty officer within three months and would serve in an administrative capacity exclusively, with the prospect of promotion. My virtually inborn desire and tendency towards religious service stood in the way here, as I could not see God's call in following that career. I stuck to my resolve but, as I still stayed with Schrieke in Alkmaar, I went to the office everyday for a few weeks (I seem to remember three) because the Captain-Quartermaster had asked me to do so, whilst awaiting another writer, commandeered from a field battalion, whom he hoped to have instructed by me. That writer did arrive and for my three weeks of voluntary service I received three full months' pay. I took my leave with heartfelt farewells and the blessings of my superiors.

So I was now a completely free citizen and the question naturally posed itself: "What should I do now?" After all, I had to have some fixed purpose. Should I return to my parents and resume my father's trade? But then my father's business had, since my departure five years before, deteriorated gradually, although he did as much as his remaining strength allowed. For me, much weighed against it, I had already so overtaxed myself in my early years that I still suffered the ill-effects, and now, at an advanced age, even more so. So I stayed with my friends, the Schrieke's, as they urged me to do, whilst my father a little later found a good buyer for his business, so that he could not only redeem all his debts, but even had something left over. Mr Schrieke then had the whole family come to Alkmaar and found my father something to occupy him, fitting his strength and earning him enough to live decently. Besides that I was then asked: "Would I like to become a missionary?"

I, for my part, wanted to do evangelism in general somewhere, be it as a minister or whatever. So on the advice of my friends, I applied in writing and, after some correspondence I was informed that they expected me at the mission house in Rotterdam on 1st May 1840. Thus, I went there at the specified time and became one of the pupils.

I, however, never received any classes there except for two hours of English per week. All other classes had come to a standstill because of the fuss and red-tape connected with the impending departure of three missionaries. It now came about that amongst all the jumble of baggage I noticed a book containing house rules and regulations to which all pupils had to agree, with a signature, prior to formal induction. To me this was quite new and the other pupils were amazed that the agreement had been omitted, or failed, to read them to me or obtain my signature before taking me on. I, for my part did not, however agree with the regulations at all. They were too much in contradiction to my principals and code of conduct since youth, namely the words of [Prov. 3:6](#). I had for all my life looked for God's guidance and instructions. First amongst these was the deep-rooted urge towards evangelism, which had made me turn down the offers of rank and prominence of a military career. Further, I knew that the Lord would guide and lead me in His ways and that I was in all things answerable to Him only. All things outside and beneath Him, even regulations that were against His word, I would not follow or carry out.

So I quietly carried on until I was summoned unexpectedly, at the end of September, to appear before a meeting of the management. Upon arriving there, I was read the above-mentioned regulations, after which, in the same breath, the Chairman followed with, "I take it, brother, that you will have no objection to signing this." There were, beside me, two other young men who had arrived a few weeks ago, but because I had been addressed first, I had to reply. I said that before signing what I saw as a sworn statement, I should like to reread them for a day or so. The other two

followed me by expressing the same desire. This was agreed to and the next day I received a copy. The more I read and reread them, the more I found them to clash with my convictions. My two companions also had reservations, but when we had to reappear a fortnight later to give our decisions, I was the only one to state objections and they terminated my position there.

I had however kept two copies of the said regulations, to be able to use them as my justification with my Christian friends. It had after all caused a considerable stir amongst serious and conscientious Christians, both in Alkmaar and Amsterdam, when it became known that I was going to the mission house in Rotterdam, since the mission society was suspect with them regarding doctrinal purity. So I returned from Rotterdam to Alkmaar and everywhere, my friends were surprised to see me. I used a copy of the regulations to good effect to explain the break between the mission society and myself. In Rotterdam itself this had already become known, but now it also came to the attention of Messrs. Da Costa, Pierson, and others, who had not known about it at all. This later contributed to causing the "Mission Association" to be founded under the leadership of Gerritsen, Lagerweij, Luijks, and others. See their periodical! Thus, I moved in again with my friends the Schrieke's and resumed my studies, looking and waiting for some opportunity. In Alkmaar matters had not improved regarding the public religious services. This had previously already been along very rationalistic lines and amounted to sermons without Christ. Now it more and more became sermons against Christ. We spent Sundays either in observance at home or sometimes attending church with one of the four ministers, from whom we hoped to hear something proper. Mostly we returned home disappointed, if not annoyed. Sunday evenings were much more pleasant. About thirty Christians, men and women, gathered then at the Schrieke's. The meetings started at six with free communal discussions and turned at seven, into a regular religious exercise I always led in song and prayer and read and edifying sermon by one or other right-thinking minister. Never did I presume to explain the scriptures myself, or as it was called, to practice. *[Tr: The last word is a literal translation which loses its meaning in English. He says that he did not himself act as a preacher. Afr. Amp Beoeffen]*

I was too much for rule and order than that I wanted to assume the appearance of a minister before I had been legally examined and ordained. Those simple meetings, however, were manifestly blessed by the Lord. They became, for instance, the way to true faith and conversion of a woman who had led a most promiscuous life before her marriage. Married now, she had one surviving daughter (out of two or three children from before her marriage), at home with her whom her husband had taken in along with her. The husband lived a God-fearing life but was very plain, that is, of humble intellect. She, the wife, on the other hand was quick witted, lively, and clever. The husband often spoke to her about eternal life and mentioned how pleasant our Sunday meetings at the Schrieke's were. He had however a stilted and unpleasantly slow manner of speech, added to the fact that he was Reformed and his wife a Roman Catholic.

So it came about that their home life degenerated more and more into such scenes of daily quarrelling that passers-by would gather at their door to listen. The poor woman, blaspheming uncomprehendingly, swore in a fit of rage and curses to her husband "There will come an end to your sanctimony. Next Sunday I will go with you and tell that fine bunch a thing or two," etc. She kept her promise and accompanied him, being received in the most courteous and friendly manner.

She took her place amongst those present and listened intently to the discussions I had with the others. I took no notice of her as she was not seated near me. At seven o'clock I started the usual religious worship, and as I was about to start reading a sermon, it occurred to me suddenly to propose to the friends that we do something different that evening, for example "To ask riddles". Folks looked at me as if bewitched and the thought might have occurred to them that from a Christian I might have turned into a mocker. No one said a word.

I took into consideration that there sat amongst us a woman who had no other concept of religion other than that it was a stifling of all pleasure and joy, as if being in a graveyard. The reason, alas, was that pious people (excepting Schrieke and his family) in those days generally created that impression: particularly so in Alkmaar. I then wanted to breach that slanted impression. Hence, I put the following riddle to them: "Which word is there in our language that is stolen by the majority of people; which, when they use it, is like a thief?" More dumbfoundedness! I therefore had to solve my own riddle by giving the answer to my own riddle. I saw it as the word: Peace. Also joy and words with similar meanings. As my reason I showed that according to scripture, only believers and Christians had cause or justification for using those words, contrasting with the misery and dismal poverty of unbelievers. This took up all the time I would have needed for doing anything else, so as usual, I closed with a prayer. We sang a few hymns, and the friends went home at nine. As regards being told a thing or two, nothing happened.

A few days afterwards I heard that she (the shrew-like wife) had said to her husband on the way home, "Well now, I am glad that I went there for I could understand what I heard there. You, and those like you call yourself believers, Christians. Yet you always look miserable and sit around moaning and groaning. Truly, I want now to become a faithful Christian if that is the way to happiness." I came to hear that through others, but during the course of the week she called at the Schrieke's, asking whether she "could come again next Sunday?" I need not tell you what my reply was. The result of all this was that she, and through her, her pre-daughter, both became excellent Christians.

The last-mentioned died a year later, singing hymns of joy for going home. The mother received, at her request, regular instruction in the H.S. [*Tr: Short for Holy Scriptures*] from me, and she left the Roman Church. [*Tr: It used to be common practise amongst Protestants in Holland to refer to the Roman Catholic church as the Roman church – that had a vaguely negative connotation as well*]. At her request also, I went to Dr, Prins, at that time staying in Alkmaar, who was a person that valued truth and piety, and told him everything. He went to see her, and upon confirming her as a member declared, "Seldom have I confirmed someone with such a sound knowledge and understanding of the H.S." Since then, her home became a seminary for heaven and she and her daughter most certainly belong to those that I long to see again.

At approximately the same time discussions were held about the Evangelical School in Rijssel ([Lille](#)), France, as well as about the school of the Evangelical Belgian Company. The first mentioned had been founded by the Very Rev. Theophilus Marzials, then minister of the Hervormde Church at Lille. He was a man full of lively energy for the Lord and His cause, possessed of fearless courage and exceptional gifts as a preacher. He had no other reason for the founding of the school than to provide for the Christian education of the youth, both of France and of the Netherlands, from where the upper classes sent their sons to France to improve their French.

The Belgian evangelical Society had, similarly been founded by the English Christians who were concerned about the fate of a people that still wore slave-chains of Popish deceit and superstition. It was the opinion of Messrs, Pierson, Da Costa and other Christians in Amsterdam, that I could be of much use in Belgium. But then one can do nothing there without knowing French, and of that language I could not understand a single syllable. So then they sent me to Rijssel ([Lille](#)) in October 1841 where I found myself in a completely French environment, unable to understand a single word, except when dealing with other young people from the Netherlands. I did not understand a word, in fact, until three full months had passed. Despite that, I worked nearly day and night, from four in the morning, not letting up till after midnight (except for half an hour for breakfast and half an hour for lunch). In the evenings I did not eat at all, so as not to become sleepy or slothful. I need not add that here as well, my labours were prayerful labours. That has been my habit since my youth and you will not find me referring to it again.

During the next three months I became so fluent in French that I thought in that language by day and night, and that on the insistence of the very reverend Marzials I sometimes led prayer meetings or exercises on his behalf in the suburbs of Rijssel. Then having been there for nine months and just as there was talk of sending me to the Academy at [Montauban](#) for a few years, I unexpectedly received a request from the Evangelical Belgian Company to assume evangelical duties at [Louvain](#). The reason was that a certain Van Maasdijk, formerly so employed, who had been a priest, had returned to the Roman Catholic Church.

What was I to do about this request? If I supported myself whilst studying, I would surely have carried on for who knows how many years. But I no longer in all conscience wanted to be a burden to others for longer than was strictly necessary. On the other hand, I did not want to accept such a post before I had been examined by an accredited body and duly ordained. It happened that at this time the Provincial Synod had to convene in the north of France to examine the Rev. L Anet, who had completed his studies at the Theological Seminary in Genève. On the advice of the Very Rev. Marzials who also registered for the examination, we travelled together to Arras. Since none of the examiners, other than the Very Rev. Marzials knew me, my examination lasted from five in the afternoon until eleven at night. I was then given a text on which I had to write a sermon, to be delivered at ten o' clock the next morning. Thereupon I received my Certificate of Ordainment to full Evangelical Service and was declared eligible for any Congregation of the Reformed Church in France. The Very rev. Marzials conducted the ordination of the Rev. Anet and myself in the Church at Arras, and we took the oath of loyalty with our hands on [Ezekiel 3 :17,18,19](#).

I then went to Lovain, long since the focal point of Papal anger against the Reformation, and the place where once Luther had burnt the Papal Edict. A deputation from Evangelical Company installed me there and I assumed my duties. That was at the end of July 1842. Approximately three months later, on the 4th of November 1842, I married your excellent mother, Elizabeth Overgaauw. Our time in Lovain had, like all things mundane, its light and shadow sides.

From the side of the populace, incited by the Roman priests, we more than once had to endure molestation at home and in the streets, both by day and night. Yet we were protected by law, which guaranteed full freedom of religion. The Protestants there, being remnants of Dutch rule prior to 1830, were few in number and largely did the cause of the Gospel more harm than good. Some were virtual pagans for who knows how long, pagans through lack of religious exercise, and spend their Sundays at home in idleness, or had become so assimilated within their Roman milieu and so fearful

of being branded Protestant or heretic, that they preferred to lie low and others were, through marriage or the marriages of their children, as well as for the sake of neighbours and friends (male and female) and equally through lack of genuine concern for their eternal salvation, already too much a part of the masses, that they could have much interest in the things that concerned the Kingdom of God and their eternal interests. Only a few of them thus to any extent practiced regular public worship. On the other hand, though, this emptiness was filled by interested people from a Roman background who became acquainted with the message of the Gospel and learned to appreciate it and eventually become the core of regular attendance.

Added to that it came about that although a fair number of upper-class English families living in Louvain had their own minister who was however very definitely a Puseyist [an English ecclesiastical movement of [Edward Pusey](#)] and more like a Roman priest than anything else, this English congregation decided unanimously to turn to me so as to come under my care. As they all without exception, understood French just as well as their own language, I accepted this gladly.

Out of the Roman populace at Louvain some confessing believers from other creeds gradually joined the Dutch congregation and these were steadfast confessors of the truth, who remained faithful in the face of the underhanded persecution.

A few years later the reading of the Holy Scriptures was shown to bear fruit at [Sint. Joris Weert](#), a village about two hours out of town. The passing away of a former wife of the mayor of that community, and which wife in her last moments absolutely refused to have anything to do with the Roman Catholic priest and his last rites, whilst after bearing very strong witness concerning the One name to Salvation, she expired full of joy in her Redeemer, this became the way towards the establishment of a congregation there. The priest refused absolutely to conduct the funeral, but in this he made a miscalculation. He had thought that the husband and the children, all having reached mature years, would award a large sum of money (for the husband was wealthy) to have many masses conducted to enable his wife, their mother, who had died a heretic, to be saved from purgatory. But here he deceived himself. The whole family was very pleased that he refused [to give any money to the priest.] the husband came to me with the request to conduct the funeral ceremony, which I then performed. From then on, I went to preach there every Sunday after the Dutch and French services.

The congregation then numbered 17 members and about 20 young people attended catechism. I was thus busy without interruption every Sunday from nine in the morning until I came home at ten o' clock at night. I went there and back on foot, although I did feel that I would not last for many years. [Although I did feel that I would not be able to keep that up for many years translator]. However, my income did not afford me to ride. Quite unexpectedly then, just as we were about to sit down for the midday meal, a letter arrived from Dr. N. Beets, at that time still a minister at Heemstede, from where he later went to Utrecht. The contents of this missive concerned the following: would I care to accept a call to one of the Ned. Herv. congregations in South Africa to the north of the Orange river (now called the Freestate). Apparently the Synodal Commission there had, at the insistence of the Governor at the time, Sir Harry Smith, written to the Netherlands for two ministers of right minded persuasion and acknowledged piety and ability. When Dr. Beets had been consulted about this, he had indicated me and thus his letter to me. [Proverbs 3:6](#) since my youth, and now still, having been my guideline, so that I was convinced that I would never have true rest and peace, but in the awareness, " I am following the way of the Lord", and so I neither could nor

would in this say yes or no, but wrote to Dr. Beets that I left it all in the hands of the Lord, and that he should only introduce me to the gentlemen who had been officially charged to comply with the invitation of the Cape Synod.

Shortly thereafter I had to travel to Holland on behalf of the Evangelical Belgian Company, and since I had at about that time received a letter from Professor Roijards of Utrecht, I took along my certificate of ordination in order that the said professor might peruse it when I called upon him. The most reverend gentleman was completely satisfied with that and wrote a very strong recommendation about me to the Synodal Actuary, the Very Rev. A. Faure. He thereupon arranged for a letter of call that I received at the beginning of 1849. It then became clear to me that the Lord was calling me, for they had recommended me strongly despite knowing that I had not attended an academy and was, apart from a literary education, a complete autodidact, that is, everything acquired through self-study. So then we left Lovain in 1849.

Our family then consisted of seven members. Mina was considered as much part of the family as you four eldest children. She had looked after all of you since childhood. We travelled first to Holland to take our leave of family and friends as well as to make preparations for the voyage. Your grandparents were then still alive. On the 11th October we set sail from [Hellevoetsluis](#) and after a most favourable voyage we anchored in Table Bay on the 14th of December [1849].

After an hour the first boats arrived with friends to welcome us. Amongst them were two still unforgettable friends, Stephanus Hofmeyer and Mr. C.W.M. van der Velde, whose valuable work on Syria and Palestine you will find amongst my books. The next day we disembarked, since the Very Rev. A. Faure (mentioned above) had brought his carriage to the quay to fetch us. In that house we found as if another parental family and we remained under that, still unforgettable roof for two months.

In no way did we lack for gestures of esteem or love, not only from the Christians in Cape Town, but also from mainly Wynberg, Paarl, Stellenbosch and Hottentots Holland (Somerset West). Two Ministers, Spijker and Heyns, unwittingly led the way to my becoming better known in the last-mentioned congregations. This came about when, after I had given a sermon on behalf of the Rev. A. Faure, they lodged a protest against my preaching in the Groote Kerk in Cape Town. They brought on themselves, by this malicious, childish and foolish behaviour, the scorn and ridicule of many well-meaning people, in particular those that feared the Lord. The brochure entitled "The case of the Rev van Velden" to which I myself contributed the closing passage, was conceived as a result thereof. Their pretext was that I had not become what I was in the usual way, but in another manner, as I recorded above. The absolute principle I see as residing therein, however, that I had been preceded by reports of my unwavering adherence to the main Truths of our Creed. I must add here, however, that Mr. Spijker had been the ringleader in this whereas the Rev. Heyns, under obligation to him, had gone along. Further, I was not at a loss for being occupied on Sundays, as I most welcome in the above-mentioned congregations, and it being nearest, I preached in Wynberg on most of those rest days, where many church councillors and members from Cape Town were amongst my audience.

At the end of February 1850, we once more embarked aboard ship for Natal. The Governor Sir Harry Smith had shown me a great deal of regard. The voyage from Europe had cost 65 pounds more than the amount initially awarded. That amount he made up to me and he calculated my salary to commence from the day I set foot ashore. His Excellency had requested me not to travel overland to

Winburg, where I had to go, but to go by sea and then through Natal, in order that I should spend some months in Pietermaritzburg, from where I could later cross the Drakensburg to [Winburg](#). I naturally complied with that request, as I could not form any judgement about the differences between the said routes and had too great an obligation towards the Governor.

So then we set out under sail in the hope of arriving in Natal some ten or twelve days later, as was usual but in this a bitter disappointment awaited us. We had to wander about at sea for 38 days, despite our vessel being a brand-new English brig, which had to be pumped every two hours from the start, in order not to sink, and being under the command of a Godless ruffian of a captain. And that was not yet all. When we anchored late in the afternoon on Wednesday, the sea deep down was in such turmoil that the first anchor which went down broke into pieces. Now the second had to go down and it held, but the ship dragged right through the night. Thursday morning a storm broke loose which turned into a raging hurricane and at one in the afternoon the anchor-chain parted, whereupon we tore out to sea, flying almost before wind and current. At seven in the evening the first officer came below to fetch tools for striking the mast and rigging, which was not done, however, because there were signs a few hours later which gave hope that the weather would ease. That hope became certainty, so that on Friday morning at eight, they were able to turn back to land. At dusk on that day a little sail was set [*Tr: literally, a small piece of cloth of sail*] to which more was gradually added, until at four on Sunday afternoon we had returned whence we had been swept away.

Like three days before, the bar had only two feet of water over it, and we had to tack back and forth until Monday morning. Your mother's condition was then however such that I thought it prudent to send a signal for the lifeboat which arrived at one in the afternoon, took us aboard and landed us at seven p.m. As soon as we were ashore and save from the perils of the sea, Mr. Masham of Durban received us most cordially and took us to his home. The very next day already, a few deacons from the Pietermaritzburg congregation, after two days on horseback, were there to welcome us and take us along. Wednesday afternoon we left, and then on Saturday afternoon still some hours away from Pietermaritzburg, a whole welcoming party of friends came out on horseback. Mr. Stoffel Boshof with his horse and carriage as well as some other wagons came to take us into town ahead of our ox wagon.

That evening at about eight, we entered the rectory. Here, because of the indescribably generous and festive reception, we soon forgot all the miseries we had been through. As our baggage was still on board, we only had some smaller luggage. But then they had furnished the entire rectory for us and fully provided for all household needs. A minister might perhaps be received equally well elsewhere, but it is impossible to be received better than we were.

Three weeks after our arrival there, Grietje was born on the 14th April. It then became apparent that the regards and affection shown to us were not merely of a transient nature. A message arrived that the ship had crossed the bar and was in the bay. At once they made preparations to fetch our baggage. Everything was received in good order, except for some baskets which contained valuable linen and tableware besides some other items we had used on board.

As we did not know what lay ahead and also not only that, instead of leaving the ship with our baggage, we had to save life and limb and thus left everything behind, so it became about that there was no address on the two baskets. The captain whom we had come to know as an extremely mean person, who knew quite well to whom those baskets belonged, had seen fit to take advantage of the fact that there were no addresses by making said baskets, which contained goods to the value of seventy-eight pounds go missing.

All our enquiries about this seemed to be in vain. "I don't know anything about it" was the reply we got that meant the same to us as "I stole it". That was for us a great loss, but it did not impoverish us for the Lord our God is rich and showed us he could make up for that loss. Besides, God's saving us from the hurricane at sea was gratefully remembered by us and constituted a good counterweight against all temptations towards dissatisfaction or complaints. The blessings of the Lord upon us were manifold and multitudinous. The Lord kept us in health and held us together, gave us wisdom and the gift of reason required for the proper conduct of our affair, and let us experience the wholehearted esteem and love emanating from the congregation, and blessed also exceedingly my pastoral service there.

I had found the congregation there to be divided into four or more parties, although very few amongst them had a clear concept about the reason why they differed from one another. After I arrived on Saturday, all parties were at church the next day and I never afterwards heard of any party sentiment. God's word, the H.S. had from the first moment brought that to an end through the Holy Spirit. The church building, although not large, remained on Sundays the point of assembly for all parties, so that during my stay in Pietermaritzburg, I could count on a good audience, in the evening as well as in the morning every Sunday and Wednesday evenings I had about eighty. The church council there, in fact the whole congregation wanted to keep me there by hook or by crook. That was also what some people who did not even belong to the church wanted. Such as Scots and Germans who could understand our language, amongst who was Lieutenant-Governor Pine, who absolutely did not want to hear of my departure. Hence all the efforts and strong persuasion from the government, and even more so from the congregation, that I should stay in Pietermaritzburg. But that I could not do. I had been called from Europe and had been appointed to the parish of Winburg. To go there was for me the legally correct option and the only thing I could in all good conscious do.

It is true that had I stayed in Pietermaritzburg my salary would have been a hundred pounds more, but a clear conscience before God and the people was my uppermost concern. In October 1850 they came with wagons from Winburg to fetch us, and from that time also all our troubles and problems started.

Those that came to fetch us had replied in the affirmative to my question; "whether the rectory had been completed?" I had in fact written to them more than once that they should not come to fetch me unless the rectory was ready. When we arrived there however, the walls of the building had reached a height of one foot. So it came about that for eight months we had to get by in a shed at the rear of the temporary church where when it rained, the water on the floor stood at least three inches deep. Your mother as a result contracted a serious illness, but the Lord mercifully made her well again. Further a serious kaffir-war broke out and related to that, a very angry [*Tr: literally – raging*] partisan mentality dividing the pro and anti-English people. At that time people had neither time nor inclination nor energy to think of anything else. Nor would they speak of anything but that.

They condemned, cursed, and persecuted one another, and fire and revenge erupted between them daily. As a result, I declined to hold “nachtsmaal” [*Tr: This word meaning communion is so well known and typically Dutch Reformed that I have let it stand*] during my first year of my stay there.

Our only pleasure there derived from a few friends who feared God, such as the elderly Louw Badenhorst, the deacon P. Naude, G. Vergottini and a few others. The kaffir-war dragged on during the course of the year 1853. The English government made the decision to wash their hands of the area across the Orange River. In October of that year (1853) I quite unexpectedly received a call from the [Ladismith] congregation which I accepted.

The very first time that I gave notice of having received that call, announcing also when I would accept or decline, not a soul breathed a word about it after the service. Naturally I remained silent as well. All that one now heard about it, either from this or that person was, “We shall never permit our minister to leave,” etc. At the time that I had previously indicated, I announced that I had notified the church secretary of the Ladismith congregation of the acceptance of the call. But now there was an outcry. There were floods of letters and petitions against my departure, and to my comment that, “You are too late now” for I will not go back on my word to the congregation at Ladismith, just as three years ago I did not go back on my word to you.” They relied “We thought that you had just tried to scare us by pretending to have received a call.”

Then I began to understand how these people had earlier been able to send wagons to fetch me with a lie, “The rectory is finished.” For it shows that, “Zoo de waard is, vertrouwt hy sijn gasten”. [*Tr: Dutch idiom literally translated: - Just as the host is himself, so he suspects his guests to be - meaning that – If you cannot be trusted, you do not trust others either.*]

We left in the middle of February 1854. Anthonie was a year old then. After a journey that was most difficult and dangerous for your mother, we arrived here safe and sound on 23 March, and had to move into the house next to the church, where Mr. Kretzen had previously stayed. I still remember that the first words which came to mind from Scriptures when I arrived here were “Dit is de plaatse mijner ruste, hier zal ik wonen”. [*This is the place of my rest; I will stay here*]. As far as the latter staying is concerned, it has proved to be so, concerning the former, the rest, that I was not granted.

I had already heard from those who came to fetch me during the journey from Winburg that there was a split in the congregation. I could not however determine what it was about. Being here now, my eyes were opened. There most certainly was division between the people staying on this side at the foot of the Langeberg, and the other part of the congregation. That division had originated at an earlier meeting of the Ring. [*Tr: probably Regional Council*]. The Langeberg had then been taken to be the dividing line between Riversdale and Ladismith. When the people now under the Langeberg were dissatisfied about belonging to Ladismith, since they understood that a new household has needs requiring money, such as a rectory, a church building, part of the minister’s salary, etc. Because they were then (with very few exceptions) as you know yourself, rather uncivilized, very uninformed people, whose religion amounted to no more than the baptism of their children, being further as unconcerned as pagans. So they demanded of the Council that they should remain in the borough of Riversdale. But then the border had already been determined, namely that the Langeberg was the line. That the Council could not change, but that most honourable body now found a way out, by way of crookery, to give in to the wishes of those troublemakers and thus

placed the Most Honourable church seal of approval upon the spirit of revolt against all orderly church conduct. The Council determined "that all places on this side of the Langeberg, would belong to Ladismith, but the people staying there would belong to Riversdale". Indeed, a masterpiece of stupid bungling, not to call it something worse. I would rather not make mention of further acts of the Council, as they have subsequently been called to order and observance of the rules.

Now the rebels were satisfied, since they were not required to share the burden imposed on Ladismith and the Church Council at Riversdale continued to receive income of baptism and confirmation fees, which they did unlawfully so acquired from November 1851 until February 1854. Through which the congregation here were cheated out of an estimated 150 pounds. Enough, that split existed, but it was subdued from my first visit to the Langeberg, where they first discovered that they were dealing with someone who made no bones about tolerating only law and order. Who viewed the revolt in the severest way and who opposed the lawlessness of the Council and of members of the congregation with equal tenacity. Although those from the Langeberg now realised that they had no choice but to respect the border that had been determined at the founding of the congregation. This remained an enforced subjugation, the more so since the three years from 1854 until 1857, the Council (Ring) of Swellendam, led and ruled by the minister of that congregation, W. Robertson, did everything they possibly could to morally destroy the congregation at Ladismith.

For those of you that are still young, and cannot therefore know exactly what happened, I furnish the following information. We had only just arrived here when missionary Kretzen, who prior to our arrival had for a few years led the catechism classes, became involved in a terrible argument with the elder Jan Kloppers, (at that time a deacon), over some wood which he wanted to expropriate from the latter. He also wanted to assume authority over a stable, which I needing the stable myself, had to contest. Since Kretzen at last had to concede and behaved towards me and the church Council in an abominable fashion, I saw fit to report the matter to the Ring. They convened in Caledon that year and it emerged then that the rev. Robertson of Swellendam was disappointed in me. He being a man of very sly, insinuating and domineering character was used to being flattered by the stupid masses, and those that depended on his influence which he obtained through bootlicking. Those seeking his favour treated him like a demigod, but he soon discovered in me that he had met his match and that I considered myself in no way dependant on him. That did not please him, and from then onwards all his actions were directed towards crushing me, if that were possible, and towards destroying the congregation here.

At the Council meeting in 1835 he thought he saw his opportunity. It had been necessary to report a certain P.A. Breijdenand as a result of his unseemly behaviour. Breijdenand found support in Ziervogel, the famed Eijsei and F. Brank. Armed thus, he indicted the minister and the church Council with the Ring. This pleased Robertson mightily, although he knew very well that Breijdenand's three advocates were of dishonourable and extremely immoral character. The [Amalekite](#) was really out to get at the Jew who did not respectfully bow before him. In view of the fact that the entire indictment, in form and also regarding deadlines of time, was contrary to at least 15 articles of the church regulations, I took no notice of it. When it was tabled I commented that everything about it was out of order and against the Rules, after which I left the meeting. When I heard that the matter had been concluded, I returned to my seat and was informed by the Chairman that the Council was of the opinion that the censure that had been imposed should be lifted. To which I replied with, "Well, Well!" But nothing like that happened.

Breijdenand remained under censure. At the Council during the following year something along the same lines happened with the well-known P.C. du Toit. He had also been placed under censure. The notorious Ziervogel, Eijssel and Brink were also his protective angles. I behaved in the same manner as the previous year. Also du Toit had to be released. The same old answer, P.C. du Toit remained under censure.

In 1857 the Synod had to convene, and I then submitted a comprehensively worked out indictment:

A: - Against the Swellendam Council [Ring].

B: - Against the Scriba [Secretary] of the Council and

C: - Against the minister at Swellendam.

To save myself all the irritation, I then also left the meeting. There and then the entire Council, Robertson in particular, were dragged through the mud and denigrated so much by the since then deceased Ds. Van der Lingen and others, that Robertson was thoroughly scared off afterwards.

The result was that a few months later the censured parties showed signs of having learnt to acknowledge the Church Council here. They promised to behave themselves more seemingly in the future. Your mother however, being very sensitive concerning your father's honour and character, which had been violated most terribly by the abovementioned villainous scum in the Zuid Afrikaan and the Volksblad, and had previously in 1855 and 1856 already been slandered, had suffered very much from it all, being herself very sensitive and inclined to take things to heart.

When after the birth of your youngest sister, she fell into a deep nervous prolapse that took her to the edge of her grave. She more than once called out in the presence of witnesses, "I owe this terrible illness to that arch-hypocrite Robertson!" This further brought about that very last vestige of respect for that man (if I had any left) was erased in me.

The following years have convinced me that neither I nor your mother were wrong in our estimation of his abdominal base character. For instance, at the Council meeting in Swellendam (I think it was in 1868) he dared publicly distort my words to lend to them a meaning to his own liking. Fortunately, the church was filled with members of his congregation, and I showed him up so severely then that the entire congregational meeting laughed at him in ridicule. In 1869 at Robertson he did not fare much better, since he revealed there like Judas his treacherous ways, betraying the church to the world. This must be concluded from his attempt to reject Her Majesty's ordinance, to favour his friends, the sworn enemies of Christ and the Dutch Reformed Church. Then too he did not come off lightly but that did not concern him greatly, since he is vain and without honour, and shameless. This was confirmed in 1870 when he again maliciously distorted what I had said the previous day, in order to achieve his dishonourable aims.

Since I feel more shame for him than he does for himself, I acted mildly with Absalom then, ascribing the distortion of my words to his ignorance of the Dutch language, offering him tutoring in the latter. It happened at that same meeting that in his usual verbose manner and majestic airs, he championed the cause of the French plebiscite, which latter amounts to the forsaking of the Eternal and His Anointed. So it seemed that he wanted to be a little Napoleon in the church, but he was defeated roundly by Dr. Heÿns, myself and others.

I mention these things to you so that you may understand that the words uttered by your pious mother, during her suffering in 1856, were well-founded as became even more apparent later on. Further, that you may through all your life remember that people differ in character. Always bear that in mind. It is important because:

A:- Firstly, abhorring a trait you should learn, without caution and in prayer and in fear of God, to be on your guard against it. "The character of Robertson I can view in no other light than being like that of Caiaphas."

B:- You should through the power of God, refrain from exercising the urge for revenge, no matter how perfect an opportunity occurs. Let us in the words of [Romans 12:19](#) [Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."] be before you always. After my death the opportunity might present itself to you, either against Robertson himself or against his children. Remember then that the Lord prayed for murderers. More than once I have reminded you that revenge belongs to the Lord only, and you should never forget that. I myself have never chosen to pursue [*"vervolgen"*] Robertson directly or indirectly, although I had it in my power to do so. Regard for him I have none and I avoid him if possible. I warn everyone, when appropriate, against a character like his.

Your very youngest sister was born on the 1st of June 1858 but lived for only one month exactly as you know. Your mother followed her on 17th July thereafter, having suffered indescribably painfully for six weeks. The next day (18th July) I had to administer "nachtmaal" and could do so with gladness preaching about Revelation 14:13. [Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them."] The joy about the glad and blessed release of your mother, outweighed my grief at losing her. In number 16 of the Kerkbode (of 1858) you will find her obituary as well as the revelation in prayer that I found written by her. Dearest children, read and re-read (I pray this for the sake of your immortal souls) that prayer that your mother offered for you, and observe it carefully. Oh, may the God of your parents keep you, that the prayers of such a mother may never be testimony against you on the day the Redeemer is revealed. May our God answer, mercifully, these prayers for you through the powerful revelation of His Spirit in your hearts. Amen.

-----Anno – 1872-----

Translator: After this appropriate moving end, I feel a little as at saying goodbye to Ds. Van Velden, who I think, I came to know quite well whilst searching for the right words to faithfully translate his text. He undoubtedly was a memorable character. His final sentences brought to mind something Freud's widow once wrote:

"How good that you knew him when he was in the prime of his life, for in the end he suffered terribly, so that even those that would most like to keep him forever had to which for his release. And yet how terribly difficult it is to have to do without him. To continue to live without so much kindness and wisdom beside one....."

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