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### There Was a Full Report of a Sermon That Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte Had Preached on I Samuel 14:1-15 Published in De Grondwet

A. C. Van Raalte

Michael Douma

Nella Kennedy

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12 August 1863

Holland, Michigan

1323

There was a full report of a sermon that Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte had preached on I Samuel 14:1-15. It is assumed that the sermon was preached in the First Reformed Church or Pillar Church of which he was pastor. The victory at Gettysburg was a cause for great thanksgiving. He noted the surrender of Vicksburg. Van Raalte spent some time on the issue of slavery and showed how slavery in Old Testament times was quite different than slavery in America. Slavery was a "godless, cursed institution."

In Dutch: transcription and translation by Michael Douma, 2005.

Corrections made by Nella Kennedy, 2012.

Original in the archives of the Holland Museum.

De Grondwet 12 August 1863  
Translation, Michael Douma, 2005

*In the*  
This morning the Reverend Dr. A.C. Van Raalte held an especially serious, powerful, and according to the circumstances, fitting sermon on 1 Samuel XIV: 1-15, wherein it was pointed out that the hand of God is in all circumstances, in defeats as well as victories.

*In the*  
This afternoon the Rev. handled the remaining portion of his dissertation, and showed most of all the reasons which the nation, and in particular, ourselves, must be compelled to thankfulness and prayer. Reasons for thankfulness were named as: the glorious victory at Gettysburg, where the rebel invasion was stopped and the north remained saved from immeasurable suffering and terror; - the surrender, without the loss of blood, of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, by which the Mississippi, the great aorta of the West is returned to us; the victory and progress of Rosencranz; the capture of the guerilla-chief John Morgan, and God's wonderful protection of our loved ones, who with about 200 men drove back and knocked down 2,000 to 4,000 rebel pirates; the demoralization of the rebel army of Bragg and Johnston; - the complete frustration of the cunning and well thought out rebel plans; - the <sup>deliverance</sup> ~~aversion~~ of the unthinkable and uncountable pain and suffering, which threatened during the last weeks; - the particular rest, peace, and well-being, which we, in contrast to many others, enjoy, - and finally the increased trust and the grounded hope for the restoration of the Union, with the countless prayers and benefit attached to that. Like the Reverend remarked, it is fitting for us, in particular, to be thankful for the wonderful sparing of our loved ones.

As reasons for serious and <sup>ardent</sup> fiery prayer, the Reverence named: the desperate and reckless attempts of the rebel leaders, who, while they themselves are sinking, will risk everything, and who if they were to succeed in their plan, shall cause scenes about which angels and men shall cover their faces; - the light, inflammable fuel, spread everywhere through the land, and mostly in the large cities, fired by <sup>unprincipled</sup> ~~property-less~~ demagogues, cause spectacles there which cause the blood to stand still: (New York gives us an example, where the populace ~~of millions~~ <sup>of millions</sup> has lost property, and the city <sup>burdened</sup> ~~burdened~~ with a blemish which can not be obliterated in a half century;) - the terrible lack of principles, selfishness, lust for money and thousands of other <sup>matters</sup> ~~cases~~, each of which is enough for the country to sink and not be retrieved. *without deliverance*.

The Reverend also stood still for a few moments on the slavery issue, and gave a short and <sup>cautious</sup> ~~circumspective~~ <sup>reflection</sup> dissertation about this point. The slavery issue, said the Reverend, was often used by the political parties as a lever for reaching their plans and for desire for money and honor. People had, <sup>even so</sup> ~~just as well~~, made this question into a religious issue, and <sup>as such</sup> ~~so~~ doing, the Reverend had to, as servant of the gospel, communicate his view. In connection to this question there were two extremities which both erred. Some <sup>appeal to</sup> ~~appeal to~~ the Bible, because people assert that this book stands for and approves slavery, and were, in their fanaticism, in favor of philanthropy that <sup>have toward people</sup> ~~was~~ unpractical and unobtainable; others attempted to show that the Bible protected slavery. Both were wrong. The Reverend showed clearly the difference between the Biblical, Old-Testament slavery and our American slavery. The Old-Testament slavery was through God, and allowed in the

*permitted by God*

*reject (SWK)*

present state of sin, and restricted, <sup>modified</sup> ~~guided~~ and softened through his mercyfulness. It differs completely in origin, laws and definition and extent from the present American slavery, which was grounded upon <sup>teaching people</sup> breeding men and was therefore *absolutely* forbidden in the Bible. The two systems had nothing in common with each other, and the Biblical slavery allowed none of the atrocities that are characteristic of our slavery. The Reverend hoped that never shall he, nor one of his descendents, <sup>would</sup> ever help support an institution like our present slavery, and that no one will be found who should misuse God's word in defense of such a godless, cursed institution. Never before did we hear the difference between the two systems of slavery better reasoned and explained more accurately.

Both sermons testified <sup>of</sup> the deep, serious loyalty and love of the Union, and the many-sided political knowledge of the loved teacher, and were given in <sup>lively</sup> living and <sup>fascinating</sup> exciting manner. All true patriots, loyal citizens and lovers of Union and freedom were especially edified, encouraged, and inspired with new seriousness, to once again pick up the weapons and set forth on the "unsuppressable fight."  
<sup>continue</sup>

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present state of sin, and restricted, guided and softened through his mercifulness. It differs completely in origin, laws and definition and extent from the present American slavery, which was grounded upon breeding men and was therefore *absolutely* forbidden in the Bible. The two systems had nothing in common with each other, and the Biblical slavery allowed none of the atrocities that are characteristic of our slavery. The Reverend hoped that never shall he, nor one of his descendents, ever help support an institution like our present slavery, and that no one will be found who should misuse God's word in defense of such a godless, cursed institution. Never before did we hear the difference between the two systems of slavery better reasoned and explained more accurately.

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Transcription by Michael Douma, 2005

De Grondwet, 12 August 1863

Des morgens hield de Weleerw. Dr. A.C. Van Raalte eene bijzonder ernstige, krachtige en op de omstandigheden des tijds toepasselijke leerrede over 1 Samuel: XIV: 1-15, waarin bijzonder aangewezen werd: de hand Gods in alle omstandigheden, zoowel in nederlagen als in overwinningen.

Des namiddags behandelde Zew, het overgebleven gedeelte zijner beschouwing, en toonde voornamelijk de redenen aan, welke de natie, en in het bijzonder ook *ons*, moeten nopen tot dankbaarheid en gebed. Als redenen van dankbaarheid werden opgenoemd: de glorierijke overwinning bij Gettysburg, waardoor de rebel inval gestuit en het noorden van onafzienbare ellenden en schrikkelikheden bewaard bleef; - de overgave, zonder bloedstorting, van Vicksburg en Port Hudson, waardoor de Mississippi, de groote hartade van het Westen, onhergeven is; de overwinningen en vorderingen van Rosecards; de gevangenneming van den guerilla-chef John Morgan, en de wonderlijke bescherming Gods onzer dierbaren, die met ongeveer 200 man, 2,000 a 4,000 rebel roovers teruggedreven en versloegen; de demoralisatie der rebel legers van Bragg en Johnston; - de geheele verrijdeling der sluwe en wel bedacht rebel plannen; - de uitredding van ondenkvare en onberekenbare wee- en ellenden, die gedurende de laatste weken, dreigden; - de bijzondere rust, vrede en welvaart, die wij, in onderscheiding van zoovele anderen, genoten, - en eindelijk het vermeerderd vertrouwen en de gegronde hoop op het herstel der Unie, met de talloze zegeningen en wldaden daaraan verbonden. Gelijk Zew. Opmerkte, paste, het *ons* bijzonder om te danken voor de wonderlijk sparing onzer dierbare.

Als redenen tot ernstig en vurig gebed noemde Zew. Op: de wanhopige en roekeloze pogingen der rebel leiders, die, terwijl zij zelf zinken, er alles aan wagen zullen, en die, als zijn in hun plan mogten slagen, tooneelen aanrigten zullen, waarover engelen en menschen het aangezigt zullen bedekken; - de ligt ontvlambare brandstoffen, overal door het land, en voornamelijk in groote steden verspreid, die, do<sup>or</sup> beginsellooze volksmenners aangevuurd, schouwspelen kunnen daarstellen, die het bloed doen stil staan; (New York geeft ons een voorbeeld, waar het gepeupel millioenen van eigendom verwoest, en de stad met een' blaam beladen heeft, welke in geene halve eeuw kan uitgewischt worden;) - de schrikkelijke beginselloosheid, stoute zelfzucht, jagende geldzucht en duizend andere zaken, van welke elk een genoegzaam is, om het land reddeloos te doen zinken.

Zew. stond ook eenige oogenblikken stil bij de slavernij-kwestie, en gaf eene zeer korte en omzigtige beschouwing over dit punt. De slavernij-vraag, zeide Zew., werd door de politieke partijen vaak als een hefboom gebruikt, ter bereiking hunner plannen en voor geld - en eerezucht. Men had, evenwel, van deze vraag eene godsdiens-kwestie gemaakt, en, als zoodanig, moest Zew., als evangelie bedienaar, zijne beschouwing mededeelen. Er waren twee uitersten, die <sup>beide</sup> dwaalden, in verband tot deze vraag. Sommigen verwierpen den Bijbel, omdat *men beweerde* dat dit boek slavernij voorstond en goedkeurde, en waren, in hunnen dweeperij, ten gunste eener menschenliefde die

onuitvoerbaar en ondelmatig was; anderen poogden den Bijdel aan te <sup>?</sup>wrijven dat hij slavernij verdedigde. Beiden waren mis. Zew. toonde duidelijk het onderscheid aan tusschen de Bijbelsche, Oud-Testamentische slavernij en onze Amerikaansche. De Oud-Testamentische slavernij was dooe God, in den tegenwoordighe zondestaat, *toegelaten*, en door zijne barmhartigheid beperkt, gewijzigd en verzacht. Zij verschelde in oorsprong, wetten en bepalingen, en strekking geheel en al van de tegenwoordighe Amerikaansche slavernij, die gegrond was op menschenstelen en dus *absoluut* in den Bijbel verboden werd. De twee stelsels hadden niets met elkander gemeen, en de Bijbelsche slavernij liet geene der gruwelen toe, welke hier onze slavernij kenmerken. Zew. hoopte dat nimmer hij, noch iemand van zijn geslacht, ooit zulke eene instelling, als onze tegenwoordighe slavernij, zou helpen ondersteunen, en dat er niemand zou gevonden worden, die God Woord misbruiken zou, ter verdediging van zulke eene goddelooze, gevloekte instelling. Nimmer te voren horden wij het onderscheid tussen de beide stelsels van slavernij grondiger en naawkeuriger uiteenzetten.

Beiden leerredenen getuigden van de diepe, ernstige loyaliteit en Unieliefde, en de veelzijdige staatkundige kenni des beminden leeraars, en werden op levendige en boeiende manier voortgedragen. Alle ware vaderlanders, loyal vurger en Unie- en vrijheid lievenden wreden bijzonder gesticht, bemoedidigd, en met nieuwen ernst beziel, om de wapenen weder op te vatten en den "on onderdrukbaren stijd" door te zetten.





Elton Bruins <bruins@hope.edu>

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## Van Raalte Sermon Concerning Support of the War, August 12, 1863

2 messages

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Geoffrey Reynolds <reynoldsg@hope.edu>  
To: Elton Bruins <bruins@hope.edu>

Wed, Nov 2, 2011 at 2:07 PM

Elton,

Attached is the Van Raalte Sermon Concerning Support of the War, August 12, 1863 that Michael Douma mentioned during the questions portion of his talk on Van Raalte, in response to Gene Heideman's comment about Van Raalte's sermons.

Enjoy!

Geoffrey Reynolds  
Director  
Joint Archives of Holland  
Hope College  
P.O. Box 9000  
Holland, MI 49422-9000  
616-395-7798  
[reynoldsg@hope.edu](mailto:reynoldsg@hope.edu)

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 **Van Raalte Sermon about Civil War 08-12-1863.pdf**  
441K

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Elton Bruins <bruins@hope.edu>  
To: Geoffrey Reynolds <reynoldsg@hope.edu>

Thu, Nov 10, 2011 at 9:47 AM

Thanks, Geoff, for forwarding the Civil War letter of Van Raalte to me. Cheers, Elton

[Quoted text hidden]

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Translation, Michael Douma, 2005

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