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The Diary
of
Dina Van Bergh

translated
by
Rev. Gerard Van Dyke
with
an introduction and notes
by
Rev. J. David Muyskens

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Preface

When the First Reformed Church in New Brunswick, New Jersey, celebrated its 240th anniversary in 1943, two large marble commemorative plaques were installed in the rear wall of the sanctuary. One was in memory of the first pastor of the church, Dominie Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen. An evangelical preacher with an emphasis on spiritual experience, Frelinghuysen had contributed to the religious revival in the colonies known as the Great Awakening. The other inscription recalled a woman named Dina Van Bergh:

in memory of
DINAH VAN BERGH
wife of the
Reverend John Frelinghuysen
and after his death of the
Reverend Jacob Rutsen Hardenbergh
Minister of this church and first
President of Queen's College, 1786-1790
elect lady—gifted in mind and spirit
of rare piety and zeal for the faith
counselor of ministers—teacher of
youth—serving well her
day and generation
1725-1807

The congregation wanted to remember this gifted lady. Her “rare piety and zeal” had inspired them. Dramatic stories from her life have been retold at historic celebrations and are constantly remembered at the Old Dutch Parsonage in Somerville which was once her home. Lectures have been given about her. Inspired by her faith, Eleanor Samuelson, a member of First Reformed Church in New Brunswick, wrote a play about Dina that was presented at the church. Eleanor was so enthused about Dina that she urged the translation and printing of Dina’s diary. Her interest inspired this publication. And the Women’s Guild for Christian Service in First Reformed Church decided to underwrite the initial expenses of publishing this book containing a translation of her diary.

Who was this woman who was so highly respected in her generation and is still remembered with such interest two hundred years later?

Dina was first of all a woman of faith. The presence of God, which was so profoundly real to her, gave her a warmth of concern for people and a hopeful attitude that generated enthusiasm in others. Her trust in God was transparent. She

had experienced the grace of God since she was young and her faith had stood the test of adversity and sorrow over the years. Out of the desire that others would experience the same peace and hope that she had been given, Dina was eager to share her experiences and insights. Her desire to serve her Lord was contagious. Her keen mind commanded respect. Her humility elicited the affection of those who knew her.

We don't know very much about her physical appearance. Her wedding dress is preserved in the special collections at the Alexander Library of Rutgers University. William H.S. Demarest recorded a description of Dina given to him by a Mrs. Hageman who remembered Dina from personal acquaintance: She was "of medium stature, in complexion rather dark, with dark hair and eyes, as very neat and plain in her dress, and attractive in manner, and that no one could avoid loving her, so kind and gentle in disposition as not to have trouble with anyone, as endearing in intercourse."¹

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Introduction to Dina's Diary

Dina Van Bergh's early life in Amsterdam

Dina was born February 10, 1725, and grew up in Amsterdam. Her father, Louis Van Bergh, was a wealthy merchant engaged in trade with the East Indies.² Her parents sought to provide her with educational and cultural opportunities. To their dismay, however, Dina became more interested in going to church than taking the dancing lessons they had arranged for her. She came to have a deep faith in God. She came into contact with people who were part of a movement now known as Reformed Pietism. The movement emphasized spiritual experience and Christian living.

As a teenager Dina expressed concern that her family practice moral behavior. At age fourteen she confronted her father about the card-playing for money which he was doing in their home. It is said that she entered the room where he sat with his friends playing cards and asked him to stop playing. One of the men ordered her out of the room. But on another day, when there was another game going on, Dina again entered the room. This time she said nothing to the men but offered a prayer to God. The result was that the games were discontinued.³

Certain dates stood out as milestones in Dina's spiritual life. February 1, 1742, as Dina was nearly seventeen, was one such date. Years later it still stood out in her memory. February 1, 1747, she was to write in her diary, "It was five years since my soul was set free." And in 1750 she asked her fiance to join her in making February 2 a day of commemoration because eight years before "the Lord broke my bonds, and set me at liberty, and saved me from the deep darkness I was in." Another special date was September 18, 1744, when Dina experienced healing by the grace of God. On September 18, 1746, she wrote, "It was two years ago that by a miracle God had saved me." She remembered "how sincerely and with an oath my soul committed itself to the Lord," and pledged herself to use all her talents in his service. September 18, 1747, at another time when she was ill, she noted in her diary that it was the anniversary of "my former, wonderful recovery."

Dina found a group of friends from whom she drew support in her faith. They met every Tuesday as a prayer circle called a conventicle. Dina listened intently to the sermons she heard, studied the scriptures herself, and daily engaged in

private meditation and prayer. She enjoyed reading sacred poetry. She especially appreciated the writings of Jadocus van Lodenstein, a 17th Century pietistic poet and preacher.

In 1746 and 1747, when Dina was twenty-one and twenty-two years old, she kept a journal of her spiritual reflections and prayers. They tell of her spiritual struggles and times of refreshment and direction. Her writings tell how she was nurtured by word and sacrament in the church. In her diary she wrote of her experiences of worship in Reformed churches in Amsterdam and other places which she visited. She recorded the insight and inspiration she received from the preaching she heard. She wrote of the encouragement she received from her prayer group. She expressed her concerns for her family and her country. She prayed that purely formal Christianity might give way to the experience of the power of God. For her friends and her family her hope was that they would experience the converting power of Christ and come under the influence of the Spirit of God. She spent much time in intercessory prayer as her country was under the threat of war.

In the seventeenth century Dutch economic power declined. By the end of the century the Netherlands had lost its preeminent position in Europe ceding first place to Great Britain and second to France. As Dina was writing her diary the French were asserting their power. In April, 1747, they invaded Dutch Flanders. This prompted all the provinces to elect Willem IV of Orange Stadholder. He had been Stadholder of Friesland, Gronigen and Gelderland. He was ineffective as a general. He enlisted British military and financial support for the Netherlands and obliged the British, who had wanted to continue the war, to sign the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748.

Reformed Pietism

Dina's favorite minister was the Rev. Johannes Temmink (1701-1768) who had come to Amsterdam in 1740. He received his training at Leiden. Another minister of the Reformed Churches in Amsterdam at the time was Rev. Rutger Schutte (1708-1784). He had studied at Utrecht and came to Amsterdam in 1745. He was influential in his writings and as a preacher. Schutte was a follower of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669) who had taught a Bible-centered Federal theology with stress of the covenant of grace.

Dina's diary is a testimony of her spiritual experience. It illuminates the remarkable story of the rest of her life. It is of special interest because of who Dina was. But it is also of interest as an example of the Pietism of the mid-eighteenth century, continuing the emphasis on spiritual experience taught by the Pietists of the previous century. She, more than others, but among many others, brought this emphasis into the life of the church in America.

The Puritans of the seventeenth century and Methodists of the eighteenth century were not the only ones who brought Pietism to America. There were those

who brought Pietism directly from the Netherlands and Germany where the movement had grown in Calvinist soil. In the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany, the Reformation had led some theologians to a scholastic theology and formal church life. Yet Zwingli and Calvin had taught a strong doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Integral to Reformed theology was the inner experience of faith and a practical expression of Christian living. So it was only natural that Reformed theologians and pastors should also stress the necessity of the experience of salvation.

The Reformation in the early sixteenth century brought reform of church doctrine and polity. The pietistic movement beginning in the late sixteenth century brought reform to Christian living. It stressed repentance and devotion for the appropriation of the grace of God in the life of the individual. It was biblically based, which saved it from subjectivism. It was concerned with the welfare of the poor and the lost which led to the Protestant missionary movement.

F. Ernest Stoeffler has documented the significant contribution that Pietism made to the development of Christianity in Europe, England and America. James Tanis, in a book edited by Stoeffler, has written about the influence of Reformed Pietism in colonial America. About Dina's diary Tanis said, "No document better details the ruminations of the Pietist spirit."⁴

Pietism is sometimes thought to be only individualistic. The diary of Dina Van Bergh expresses a religious experience which is broader than that. It expresses personal experience to be sure. But it also bears witness to the value of the sacramental ministry of the church. And it expresses deep concern over events happening in the world. Rather than seeking to escape from those events it makes them a matter of prayer. And the result is a firm commitment of oneself to God's service.

The Diary of Dina Van Bergh

1746 - 1747

Note: The portion of the diary written in 1746 was translated from Dutch into English for the first time by Dr. Gerard Van Dyk in 1986 for this book. The portion written in 1747 was translated into English by Rev. William Demarest in 1869. Dr. Van Dyk used Demarest's work in this translation done in 1987 and, in places, quoted it verbatim.

“In the palms of his hands”

The Lord has been limitlessly good to me, although I was disloyal and could not deny myself, yet, disloyal worm, I have still not detected any noticeable obstacles between the Lord and my soul, instead the Lord protected me. Here my soul became actively engaged and this made me exclaim in deep astonishment, “The knowledge of the ways of the Lord is too high for me, it’s too inscrutable, I cannot attain it.” I also felt deeply ashamed before the Lord because of the lack of conformity in my life, for not measuring up, my blindness in not noticing the ways of the Lord, my non-active life, my lack of progress in the way of grace. I felt like crying, “What did I do for the Lord?” Oh, how differently I should behave after his great expense on my behalf. My soul ought to sink down in humility and shame. But inwardly I felt like wanting to be more closely united to the Lord and to live more tenderly before him. My soul got engaged in tender encounters with the Lord Jesus. Now I could give myself anew to him, and in him to the Father and the Holy Spirit as my Triune God of the covenant and surrender soul and body to the Lord. Without reservations I gave myself unconditionally to his blessed ways and holy leading for ever, and I could call the Lord as witness over my soul again that I wanted to be at peace in his free dispensation for me. It was my desire to live all the more tenderly before the Lord, in and through the power of my beloved King Jesus, together with all his members on earth. It was my deep desire to be emptied more of myself and to find myself, soul and will, under the will and direction of Christ, so that I might live to the honor of Christ through grace. Here I surrendered myself again blindly. But I perceived it as a privilege, knowing that the Lord wants to lead the blind, and I desired henceforth to put my life in the service of the Lord. My blessed God of the covenant also assured me that he would advise me, that his eye would be on me, that he would follow me and hide me under his wings. As a woman would not forget her infant and would not forget to show pity for the son of her womb, so the Lord would not forget me, for my name was engraved in the palms of his hands. My gracious Saviour showed me that all that was his is mine.

The Lord showed his affection towards me again at the weekly gathering and prayer meeting as he was exceptionally good in that I received much light in past experiences and events. The Lord appeared so experientially to my soul and kissed me with the kiss of his mouth. His love was his banner over me.

February 1, 1746 - Strength through public worship

In spite of the fact that my body was very weak and almost collapsed, this was again a day filled with strength for my soul, this being February 1, 1746. I again wrote, committing myself to be the Lord's and promised to be the Lord's servant forever.

This week was indeed a blessing for my soul. I attended worship where his Reverence took Micah 6:3,4,5 and spoke about how the Lord also brought us out of our Babylonian Egypt and Spain's house of bondage. And also how he had sent Moses and Aarons before us who did not withhold anything dear to them for our freedom, but instead risked everything. Also how the Lord negated all of Balak's schemes for us. His Reverence elaborated much and intimately on the theme and observed how much there was amiss with us in observing the justice and righteousness of the Lord. As a result his Reverence pointed out, although with shame, that therefore the Lord also asked of the Netherlands, "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!" My soul became much ashamed and amazed and wondered about the great mercy of God who does not have to answer for his deeds but who nevertheless was willing to humble himself to reason with a sinful and disloyal people. Yes, who indeed invited them to argue against him if they could find reasons for their discontent. I got so involved with the Lord concerning "from Shittim to Gilgal" and us and the high cost paid for our freedom and religion and how it pressed in upon my soul too little, but that properly it was a sin for me and my people that also in this we did not recognize the righteousness of the Lord and that so the Lord did not receive his honor for all the wonders done to us. It deeply grieved my heart, and with shame I would confess it before the Lord while I wished it to be imprinted on my heart and serve as an incentive to give honor to the Lord. But besides that it also came to me how by the miracle of grace I myself was brought from the bondage of sin and all that the Lord had done for me "from Shittim to Gilgal." Again it deeply grieved my heart that the highest love of my heart and the widest kind of righteousness of my soul, which belong to the Lord, were so little used by me, and that because of it my gracious and blessed God of the covenant did not receive the honor due to him. On the one hand I was reminded how great were my obligations in general and in particular. But on the other hand I was deeply amazed, and my soul became very cheerful on account of all the benefits to our land, church and to me. Afterwards it also still proved to be good for my soul.

The next day I attended the conventicle (prayer circle). The subject matter was Psalm 71:7: "I have been as a portent to many; but thou art my strong refuge." This

was much discussed and my soul was again made cheerful. I got much caught up in amazement about the grace made manifest to me so that in amazement and humility I was made to exclaim, "What shall I repay to the Lord?" I was much stimulated to let my light shine more before the people and as one favored by the Lord to walk more dearly before him.

Daily communion with God

The next day was still good. The Lord kept feeding me on the way. I was alerted to be attentive concerning my heart. Inwardly I was in a state of well-being.

The next day was good to me. My Comforter was with me in a dry desert and I was allowed to commune in familiarity with the Lord. But these words came to me, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." The words stayed with me, but I did not watch my steps well enough because I did not see any danger at the time. Yet in the afternoon things happened that awakened a bad and sinful temper. Although things went their way, I felt I had not reacted correctly. What shamed my soul afterward was the way I incorrectly handled a matter concerning a person in my care. I began to notice an absence of the Lord's intimacy, and my soul hardly any longer drew close to the Lord. How deeply I sank into this guilt that to other people than myself may have appeared to be negligible. How I learned that the Lord is a holy God who cannot condone the sin of his people. It pained me deeply and it was unbearable for me having to do without the blessed moments of intimacy with the Lord. My soul desired to hallow the Lord although he wanted to hide himself, for my soul is dearly attracted to his spotless holiness. I was quite a bit depressed by my guilt this afternoon. It especially hurt me that I had become such a disgrace to the Lord, and that I had not imitated the meekness of the Lord Jesus, and that in spite of assurances of God's covenant grace, my sinful being was unbearable to me.

Towards the evening my soul greatly humbled itself under my guilt and my merciful God opened a way for me to his beloved and divine righteousness, and showed that even as a guilty and corrupt sinner I was allowed to turn to the Lord and present myself to the Lord Jesus for help so that my newly acquired guilt might be reconciled by him and I be cleansed of my sin. How I saw again this beloved rightness in his all-encompassing righteousness, and my soul refused to take leave before the Lord had blessed me. My divine Mediator appeared to me and showed me that even though I was unfaithful, he would be faithful as he was unable to deny himself. I again was allowed to find peace in him and my merciful Lord called to me, "Daughter, be of good cheer, for also these, your sins, have been taken away from you." The righteousness of my Guarantor and Redeemer was again freely given to me and my soul again became dearly intimate with the Lord. I was able to surrender myself again freely to the Lord and found myself connected to him in the bond of love.

The next day the Lord was good to me. I experienced what it means that his

affection is inclined toward me. I was extraordinarily careful not to let sinful and careless behavior on my part disturb the sweet communion with Christ. I also had a good time in conversation with the Lord's people about the ways and means of my God with me.

The morning next the Lord was again very good to me. I found much courage to freely empty my heart before my Father and I found a desire to be set apart by the Lord and to become like his image and I desired to receive more sanctifying grace to surrender myself the more to the Lord in intimate relation.

That evening I desired to go to attend worship under my dearly beloved teacher, Reverend Boscoop. My soul was much desirous to receive a blessing and I particularly wished that this would be a way to strengthen my spiritual well-being. His Reverence had taken I Peter 2:24: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." His Reverence was of much help and my soul found much to praise and thank God for being saved from the tyranny of sin through the Son who was the image of the Father, the eternal and unsearchable God.

The day of the Lord

The next day, being the day of the Lord, I was glad to have the opportunity again to set apart a day for the Lord as we refrained from all labor. I had the extra pleasure to attend the evening service under Rev. van Schelluijne. His Reverence preached from Lord's Day 10 in the Catechism, that deals with Providence. The Lord was a presence and help to his Reverence. It made me very attentive, but it also shamed me that sometimes I felt an unbelieving thought and ran ahead of the Lord whereas I had such a wise and good Father who has all things in his hands and who will make all things work together for good. At that time it was my desire to entrust everything again to the Lord and to turn my way to the Lord. It appeared to me that I again was strengthened.

This next week my gracious Lord Jesus, my Leader and Head has provided constant help on my way. My soul received much believer's strength so that I could entrust my way and being to the Lord who will bring all things to a good conclusion for me. My soul found much pleasure in following behind the Lord.

Redemptive suffering

On Friday I was privileged to attend a special service under the servant of Christ, Rev. Temmink. He preached about the passion narratives and his Reverence's subject was a continuation of the Gospel of Luke 22:61,62: "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today,

you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.” His Reverence used for an introduction how a smart and cautious physician sometimes would allow some painful cause to be unremoved; not to worsen the suffering, but to be able eventually to effect all the more a better cure, so that a worse malady may be removed to cleanse the body, even if it be necessary to weaken the sufferer. That suffering was not the end could be seen in this, that as soon as the physician reached his goal, he would rush to the aid of the sufferer. In this way his Reverence showed how the Lord dealt with his people in healing spiritual and mental maladies. It was not that the Lord took pleasure in seeing the sin of his people or leaving them in their sin. It was that the Lord through his wise and merciful ways used this to prevent a worse evil, or to bring the sinner to himself as he showed his pity and, as in the case of Peter, to save him from the greatest sin, pride, and to teach him to wake and pray. For it was Peter who boasted that he was ready to follow his Master unto death and said that even if all would be offended, he would not. All this was a blessed remedy for me that cautioned me to be awake and pray. But it especially showed that all this was not intended to bring Peter down, for when all seemed to be lost, the Lord turned around and cast his eye on his unfaithful servant with a look of tender love. Or, as his Reverence said, what shown through in all this suffering was a glorious sign of Jesus’ divinity. I was invited to humble myself before the Lord over and again as I keep finding so many different sins in me.

The following day I found myself in a fairly composed demeanor, but the temptations came in from aside.

June 6, 1746 - A day of rest

On June 6, this being the day of rest, I attended services under an out-of-town teacher, Rev. Smit van Arkel. His Reverence’s subject matter was Romans 12:12: “Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” This was a dear help to me. I could give thanks for the fact that by grace God had taught me these things by way of the high road. Now I was strengthened anew and I could rejoice in the hope in God through Christ together with all covenantal promises. Again I was encouraged to trust the Lord in all things.

Also the next day I received much strength from Sunday’s service and was especially encouraged for my home, my church and my country to persist in the prayers and to hope in the promises. I found a continued freedom to return to the throne. And although it sometimes got dark, I nevertheless was encouraged by the Lord to continue to hope in the promises, and he also strengthened me with these words, “I am the Lord, and I am who I am.” I was reminded of former promises done to me and again I was much impressed by God’s merciful imprints and my soul was extremely encouraged.

The next day as I woke up I was reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” In that light I saw my deep poverty and I

could believe that that truth was fully applicable to me and I was allowed to turn my empty soul to the Lord Jesus in faith to look for grace in order to be equipped for the Lord's work in which my soul rejoiced. Also this day I received much experiential help in all kinds of encounters and I learned that my Lord Christ still accomplishes his strength in my weakness.

That evening my weekly conventicle was meeting. The Lord was present with his grace and there was much opening. I proposed that we sing Psalm 33:9,10,11(rhymed). We sang it with our hearts and our souls were alive.

All this week my Redeemer was good to me and I was allowed to live before the Lord in a happy mood with much help in all regards. But I also learned to know my own deep impotence before the Lord, and that with the least that crossed my path I had to go to the Lord Jesus for advice, light and wisdom. I also learned experientially to know myself as a wretch and saw myself, even in my best things, as impure so that daily and continually I was in need of the divine cleansing blood and the righteousness of Christ so that my unholiness may be made holy. This too gladdened me, that the Lord Jesus is my Sanctifier and that I have a High Priest in heaven who can sympathize with me in all my weaknesses.

Fed in spirit on the Lord's Day

The following Lord's Day, as I was closeted, things were especially good to me. The Lord led me into blessed encounters with him as a Triune God and gave much light. He showed me the relations he maintained with all his virtues and how I found my sure safety with the Lord, as a strong hiding place in the eternal rock. My soul dared to step forward again as it freely chose and followed the Lord's way.

In the afternoon I went to church by Rev. Phijzers. His Reverence had chosen to preach about the 29th Lord's Day of the Heidelberg Catechism. We are fed and nourished in all regards from the Lord, even in mind and other powers of the soul. I was happy to be able to see it and I desired to continue in this state of utter dependence.

Also the next day the Lord was still kind to his disloyal child. I knew myself surrounded by the Lord and experienced much help and in all encounters and happenings my soul was able to count on his grace, light, wisdom and the leading of the Spirit, and I knew myself not alone. Also while closeted I found much openness, and I could bring everything before the Lord.

The next morning the Lord again was good to my soul and he allowed me to behave very childlike. I found much inclination to subject myself to the Lord and not to run ahead of him while I persistently received the intimation that the Lord would bring me into a certain way or ways. So, I desired to follow the Lord closely. But the enemy engaged my depraved nature and brought my soul out of its peaceful rest into a path that ran ahead of the Lord. That led me from one thing into the other. In a way I was aware of what was going on but my power failed me

against my enemy. Towards the evening, however, I received more faith to bring to death my enemy before the feet of my King with intense abominations and aversions of my soul. Also, power went out from Christ and my soul found rest in a quiet way of subjection to the Lord and his sovereign way over me. Again I was allowed to surrender myself to the Lord for safekeeping and I desired from the Lord that he would make me to be awake and praying. Without my beloved Lord Jesus I cannot do anything. I am such a needy worm whose life so entirely depends on grace.

“My heart was warm” - the preaching of Rev. Temmink

The next day the Lord was exceptionally good to me and I was greatly concerned not to be disloyal to my God. I saw the danger around me of enemies that wanted to disturb the peace of my soul. This caused me to beg before the throne and I desired greatly that the teaching, praying and directing Spirit would watch over my heart and keep me close to the Lord. My soul was very receptive.

That evening I attended services by my beloved Rev. Temmink. His Reverence took the subject matter from Isaiah 26 which chapter he had begun the Lord's Day before. Now his Reverence took the second verse, “Open the gates that the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in.” This was a dear instrument for me as my heart was warm. I also was touched by shame, especially when the minister explained “the righteous nation which keeps faith.” Here I saw my deep debt before the Lord in all regards. But on the other hand I could acknowledge that so far I was saved for the Lord and his way and again my soul found much desire to walk before the Lord with a committed heart as a sort of confirmed subject of the Lord Jesus. Again I was allowed to surrender myself to the Lord and his ways with a soul's choice to be found loyal to his work and way. And I experienced a strong desire that my immortal soul should be made useful. My heart was very warm under all this.

The next day the Lord led me in his way and gave me light so it was made clear to me. His Spirit has been fruitful in me. This made me properly humble before the Lord and made me say, “O how I wish that his grace would bear fruit within me and that the Lord himself would glorify himself to my soul in free grace and make his grace fruitful. My soul was happily inclined to it and gladly persisted in it.

The next days of this same week still were pleasant to me and I found myself ready to submit myself trustingly to the Lord.

Isaiah 26:3, 9

I much looked forward to the day of rest because I had been looking

out, well over a year, for this subject to be preached on by a devout teacher, which our teacher, Rev. Temmink, now had chosen: Isaiah 26. I especially had my eye on verses 3 and 9. It so happened that the minister had chosen these. But on the morning of the day of rest the weather was so rough and the rain so heavy that I could not go to church. This made me very depressed and it would not let me go because already for so long I had desired to hear about that subject and not being able to hear it now made me very depressed and even affected my body all through the morning. Scarcely into the afternoon I had to rest my head. That's what it did to me. When I lay down I received these words, "Why is your countenance down, O daughter of the King?" These words struck me as very awesome, that the Lord would even ask me why my face was sad, and also the reference to a king's daughter. And the reference not to a king of this lowly earth, no, but the Lord of hosts who cuts off the kings of the earth like grapes and to whom we may be so close in Christ that we may call him "Father." This is how I could speak to my Lord, as Father, and tell him my woes. And these are the words I received, "Rejoice in the Lord. Again I say unto you, rejoice." These words quieted me greatly. The Lord also showed me the reason I had to rejoice: because I was privileged to be so closely related to God in the Lord and to all his benefits and that he was my eternal rock. This made me quiet and ashamed before the Lord about my depression, and my heart woke up to a lively and cheerful state and I was able to rejoice greatly in the Lord.

But the Lord also showed that he wanted to use the occasion to teach me something, namely this: Because all week long I had concentrated so strongly on the biblical material, my eye was somewhat turned away from the Lord. Even before my beloved father Temmink had preached on it I already had decided in my heart what the minister should say of it. And because of him I was totally fixed on it. I was made to realize this with shame and the Lord showed and taught me to have my eye fixed on him only. I thanked the Lord for this, but I also asked him to save me from further downfalls, for I was convinced that I would spoil the situation as soon as the occasion presented itself. This made me greatly concerned and I longed to be saved from it.

The next day it still worked through in my heart and it greatly encouraged my soul so that it was a day of strength for my soul. I was in good spirits while closeted and received a deep insight into free grace and the love towards my soul and I was particularly led to these words: "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, yes who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us." The Lord already knew from eternity how weak I was. But already then the Lord had chosen to love me, elected me and put his seal on me. And it was God himself who in Christ had justified me, declared with an oath to my soul no longer to show his wrath towards me. Since God was holy and just, he could not deny himself. Damnation no longer could take place for it was Christ who died and so had paid for it all, and had affected an eternal righteousness for my soul. This is how the covenant in his blood was sealed. Indeed, he also was raised from the dead as a proof that all was finished and could apply the grace he earned for us to me.

To have such a divine head at the right hand of the Father who continually looks after one's well-being in all one's ways and who prays without ceasing like, "Father I want this and that for her," even in spite of all my foolish acts. It is difficult to express how much these words meant to me. But they strengthened my soul and encouraged me again to abandon myself to the Lord without any concern.

It was the day of my conventicle and the Lord was present among us.

All this week I was privileged to live close to the Lord and I was especially desirous to sit with the Lord at his table, and these were the words that continually were with me, where the Saviour says, "It is my desire to eat the Passover with you. My soul remembered the adorable love that accompanied me on my ways since the last Lord's Supper I enjoyed in all its help and blessed supports granted to me on my way. My soul was often moved to adore God's merciful leadings and his promptings. Therefore it grieved me all the more to remember the disloyalty of my ways. It especially grieved me that my thoughts tended to drift away and my sinful habit is to run ahead of the Lord. I had occasion to present this to the Lord once again as my main weakness. I asked that it be brought under his breaking and healing grace. I now could see the heart of this sin in all its clarity and asked the Lord to take its cause from me.

The Lord's Supper

On Saturday I was at the Preparation with Rev. Temmink. The subject matter was from Jeremiah 3:22: "Return, O faithless sons. I will heal your faithlessness." I was blessed by its message. And although there was no noticeable break between God and my soul, my daily and persistent turning away from the Lord bothered me greatly and I wanted to confess it to him so that I may be healed.

In the evening it was well with me and through devotional exercises I was all the closer in the Lord's presence where I showed the sore spots of my soul to my divine High Priest, Christ, in order to be helped by his divine power as I believed and confessed before God that I was unable to break one sinful thought within me. As a helpless sinner I looked for help with the eye of faith.

On the Day of Rest I woke up early. My soul was much turned inward and I was happy it was the day of the Lord's Supper. I desired to find what I needed most, so I went to the service of Rev. Temmink. The material was the continuation of verse 22 from Jeremiah 3: "Behold, we come to thee; for thou art the Lord our God." This was an exceptional occasion for me as I could understand so well the explanation of the words experientially. My soul was again made aware of the truth: "I may come to you as I am." And my soul was again assured that he would be my God, that I could trust the Lord for that and serve him, be loyal to him and commit myself to him with everything I had. When the minister arrived at "thou art the Lord our God," the Lord introduced me deeply to what it means that the Lord is my God, especially God's virtues and perfections. And I could call it mine

in faith, seeing that all those virtues were for the perfection of my salvation as I was related to all those virtues of God through Christ. O, how I was allowed to see with adoration into the endless depth of God's love and made aware that I was but dust and disloyal ashes. I yet was allowed to say, "My Lord and My God." My soul was pressed to say, "What shall I say to these things?"—to have an eternally perfect God for my eternal good and to have for my God him who will for always satisfy my need. I melted in amazement and my body weakened. That's how deep the Lord led me into a relationship with him. I could not find words for it and I could not encompass it all. But it was clear that again and without worries I could entrust the tremendous weight of my salvation with my God, and could commit my way to the Lord. Now it appeared as if the Lord asked, "While now you are so intimately related to all that is mine and are glorified through my virtues, would you be willing to glorify me if I may have some work for you to do on earth?" To this my soul had to answer, "Well God, you really don't need me, as if I could be of use to you." But if it would concern my salvation that I glorify my Lord on earth, then my soul would ask this from the Lord. I saw that at the end of my road stood the Lord himself, and could I do something for the Lord while on earth, it would be a great honor to me.

As I approached the communion table I saw my beloved Lord Jesus as my crucified love who not only had earned everything for me, but who wanted to come to me anew to be to me as the dew and that his eye would be upon me. And I found that my soul was in his eyes as one who found peace. As my body was much touched by the intimate workings of my soul and the love of my God, I almost fainted as I sat at the Lord's table, for I was allowed to believe that the Lord did not look upon me as I was, but as in the Lord Jesus. The great good that is stored up for us, the Lord freely gives to his child. "You always will be mine for all that's mine is yours," he says. "You will daily eat bread at my table." O could I rest in him and trust my all to the Lord! This day I had a special and deep insight into my great and all-sufficient good and my soul was pressed to worship in amazement and had to exclaim, "My Good, O my Good, you are sufficient for all eternity and outside of you I desire nothing."

In the afternoon I had some pious moments and the Lord was present. I also had a fever and fairly high so that my body was weak and weary.

The next morning as I was closeted, the Lord was very good to me. Again I was allowed to be led into the blessed relationship of my God as my eternal and all-sufficient good, so that no anxiety or worries remained with me, nor how things would go with me for the future. I was ashamed ever to have entertained even one misbehaving thought; especially my unbelieving ways of behaving toward God grieved me, because they so darkened the worshipful virtues of God. Again I was allowed to entrust myself entirely to my God and also to receive the grace that enables and qualifies a person to act for his God when God gives it to him from his hand. I also was very desirous to do something on earth for the Lord. After many endeavors in committing myself to the Lord in order to become his clay, formed by him, desiring to be enabled by him in order to be allowed to do something for his worthwhile cause, these words were given to me: "You will not remain without child, for I am your God and the God of your seed into eternity.

And you will multiply on your right and on your left.” This greatly humbled me and I had to say, “Oh Lord, what more shall this maiden say to you? Could it be that I am allowed to win a spiritual seed for God? That would be great.”

I experienced much help this day in these encounters, but my body was very weak. Even all of the next week I was weak, and there were days that my head was so light that I could not speak to people, but the Lord was near and by the grace of a sealed covenant I was allowed to work continually for the Lord. My soul received much strength from faith and my body was helped along. With what wisdom my heavenly Father taught me, I learned the first things concerning my salvation here, while saving the fulness of these things for heaven. Many a time he made me to see that my weakness would have to be revived in his power if I were to be ready to be with the Lord for eternity.

July 3, 1747

The following day of rest being July 3rd, I attended the house of prayer in the afternoon in the service of Rev. Boscoop. His Reverence taught concerning Lord’s Day 27 and discoursed in a friendly way so that my soul was warmed by it, especially since ever after my first interests in these things I had many questions concerning my baptism as a sign and seal, and that God was ahead of me in wanting to put this on me, making me his while I yet knew of nothing. It renewed my strength.

The next day was filled with encounters with the Lord and my soul rejoiced in committing itself again to him. In the afternoon I was together with some friends. The Lord was with and amongst us. I needed this much. It made me pray for direction through the Spirit.

I received much help all through the week and the Lord kept me while the enemy, both inside and on the outside, was subdued and kept in check by his grace.

“Wake and pray”

Next Monday I woke with these words: “Wake and pray that you may not enter into temptation and fall.” I also got to see how necessary it was to be awake and pray with all my power as it was the enemy, inside and out, against whom I had to be on my guard and so my weak and sinful body was constantly being tempted to lead astray my soul. They were blessed words that safely guided me though the day and kept me close to the Lord.

The next day was a blessed day for me, both within as well as in public. In the evening I attended a house-service by a brother in Christ, Mr. Van Lis. The subject was from Isaiah 46:3,4,5. It was a good and special service for me and God’s benediction blessed my heart. The Lord often had encouraged me by these words, but they still blessed me again. I felt like telling all of God’s people, “Turn your

burdens onto the Lord and he will direct your way.” All my worries seemed to vanish as I was assured that the Lord would see me through. The Lord directed the good brother in such a way that it was as if he opened all of my ways, to which I often had to say, “Amen.”

The next day, too, the Lord was still good to me while by myself, and I readily could commit my ways unto the Lord. In the evening I was in the service of the Rev. de Gruyn. For his subject matter his Reverence had chosen Psalm 110 and he took the first verse that shows what the Lord will do. I rejoiced that my Lord Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father to reign over his and my enemies. It enabled me to believe that once I would reign with Christ over all my enemies. Indeed, it enabled me to believe that the enemies within, that sometimes managed to make me overly anxious, also are subject to the rule of Christ and no longer would reign over me.

All through the week I was encouraged by it. My Redeemer was good to me and I continued to be close to the Lord.

Guidance from scripture

But also, and especially on the Lord’s Day, I again received guidance on my way as during that morning I was in the service of Rev. Temmink. The Reverend’s subject was from Isaiah 26:7: “The path of the righteous is altogether level; thou dost make smooth the path of the righteous.” The minister showed that the reason why the path of the righteous is level is because a Triune God already, from eternity, had outlined the path step by step. And the Lord weighed the going of the righteous to add as much grace as was necessary to every step on his way. So the Lord did on every way and already had guaranteed this in eternity. It was with a feeling of shame that I realized that continually I tried to run ahead of my Lord while the God of the covenant had outlined my way from step to step. But it also affected a worshipful mood in me and it was my sincere desire to follow behind the Lord.

That same evening I was in the company of God’s people where a brother led us to seek the Lord. The Lord directed him so as to have part in him in God’s blessed company, and it was exceptionally good. It deeply touched my heart and I was brought so close to God that I only came back to myself when the prayers had ended and we sang Psalm 73:12,13 (corresponds to Ps. 73:21-26). Only then I quieted down.

As I thought of the Lord’s enduring love and trust in me, all I could do that evening was worship him. ’Til twelve midnight I continued to express my gratitude in song while my heart was astonished with delight.

The next day my body was very weak, but my Redeemer was with me and I had much communion with God inwardly.

All through that week my enemies sometimes watched me from aside, but the Lord covered me with his hand.

The covenant of grace

As I had many visitors lately and through other circumstances, I was prevented from making my notations. But I want to praise and mention the enduring and free covenant of grace through which the Lord has helped me to walk steadily without stumbling. Also my way was continually open before God's throne concerning Zion and our country.

Furthermore, my prayers were answered in bringing a soul into the communion of God. And also a teacher who was powerfully converted by God within seven days and for whom my heart had prayed as well. I was very glad and I greatly rejoiced concerning what God had done by the work of his arm. I also received a promise for that teacher as I had wanted to exhort him.

For about five days or so I was out in the country with devout friends where the Lord was with us in a special way. O those ways of the Lord, full of love and care, towards his faithless maidservant! All his ways are peace.

Every day the Lord put me more into his debt. What shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits towards me, his unfaithful servant? Repeatedly it now came to me that the Lord would lead me in a way unknown to me and on a path on which I never had set my foot. But it came with the assurance of God's help and it led me to be awake and pray.

Communion with Christ

It was about the time to celebrate the Lord's Supper and in that I rejoiced, for I longed to be more closely united with God in order to have God's seal put on me so that I might walk before the Lord in a life truly subjected to him by the strength of faith. That Saturday I attended the Preparatory Service with Rev. Temmink. His Reverence's subject matter was John 10:9. The Saviour says there, "I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." This was an encouraging help to me. It afforded me light as I had entered through Christ as the door. And also that I was allowed to believe that the scriptures were fulfilled in my soul and that I could go in and out and find pasture. And now the Lord Jehovah was my shepherd and I had become his sheep and nothing would fail me. It was wonderful to see that the Lord Jesus, as my good shepherd, had given his life for me, and had taken it upon himself to guard and save and direct me. All around I felt safe and strongly believed that indeed I could go in and out and find pasture. And my soul was inclined to call out to all of God's people, "Rejoice, rejoice at all times that this may be our eternal heritage and comfort, that in life and death we may belong to heaven's Son."

In the afternoon I was together with some friends, and the Lord was present in a special way.

In the evening I could go to sleep in peace and when I woke in the morning my heart was still with the Lord. Being emptied of self, I opened myself to receive grace as I desired to have a staff for my path and to trust his word as he had given his oath.

I went to church with the words that my Redeemer would direct me. Repeatedly I had to confess, "Here I am, a faithless soul who always spoils everything, but who counts on your promise nevertheless. On this my soul rests its case because thou art my portion and thou changeth not." The desire grew within me to get to know Christ closer in his beauty. To know him so would be blessedness to me. I so desired to be closer united with him, intimately and sweet. That would be like honey to my soul.

I attended the service under Rev. Boscoop. The subject matter was Isaiah 61:3: "To grant to those who mourn in Zion; to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit." His Reverence preached warmly and the Lord was good to my soul. There was good reason for my tears as he emphasized the promise of God that through the Lord Jesus he would exchange all misery for good things and make me worthy of it, as he drew my soul nearer to him, my soul longed to have more of Christ's beauty transferred to me and to be able to show it outwardly. The Lord, after all, had done that for me. I was ready again to present myself as clay and renew that covenant of my soul to stay closer to the Lord, to receive more strength against the hosts of the flesh and to be led in the paths of his commandments. Now I again could show my weak soul, so utterly helpless without Christ, to my Head in order to receive grace upon grace as my heart was greatly strengthened by his grace. I was allowed to come very close and could experientially believe that the Triune God had my welfare at heart and that all that is his is mine. Especially did I look to the divine Christ as my Head, Guarantor, Mediator and Shepherd. And while deciding to get up and go to the table, (In Holland a special communion table is set. People get up from their pews to take their seats around the table.) I came to believe again that I would be led in one way or another. These were the words that came to me as I got up, "Rise my daughter, my sister and bride, rise and eat for the road will be long for you." My soul could say, "Amen," to this and chose and confessed with Asaph, Psalm 73: "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou dost hold my right hand. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterward thou wilt receive me to glory." With this intimate assurance of my soul I stood up, believing that the Lord would send his peace my way. During the preparation at the table my eyes were entirely fixed on the bread of my covenant, and I was allowed to entrust myself entirely with all my worries to him, and I greatly desired to follow him. I was happy to be able to declare myself in public with and for the Lord, and to have myself sealed as his servant as with many devout people I went up to the last table (the communion table seated a limited number and seatings had to be repeated several times). I received the element from the hand of the minister as he gave it to me in Christ's name. But it was as if I received it from the hand of Christ. Through these symbols I was allowed to look on Christ himself and was allowed to believe that he himself was present (Note the high Calvinist notion of

the Presentia Realis.) and my soul could confess: “Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee.” (Ps. 73) As the elements passed it was said, “Take, eat, for the road may possibly be too much for you,” but also immediately his Reverence said with Asaph (Ps. 73): “Nevertheless I am continually with thee, for thou dost hold my right hand and thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterward thou wilt receive me in glory.” My soul said, “Amen, the Lord make it so.” My soul was greatly strengthened and ready to entrust itself to the Lord.

In the evening I returned for the service of Christ’s worthy servant, Rev. Temmink. The subject was Isaiah 26:12: “O Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, thou hast wrought for us all our works.” Again I was greatly encouraged. The Lord gave much help to the minister. He showed the cause why the church could say, “Thou wilt ordain peace for us.” It was because the Lord had willed it so. The minister brought it all under three headings. The Lord Jesus had bought his church and made it his. He unites his church with God and his will for it. The church is to work out its salvation in fear and trembling. The minister showed how hope was justified by looking back on past experiences, and how this allowed us to entrust ourselves to the Lord who with himself would surely give us all things, and so lead us into peace. The Lord would surely do this for his name was Jehovah, the faithful one and the Amen. The Lord himself had irrevocably pledged himself to this. All during this my soul was much ashamed about my constant doubts concerning the Lord, but yet, I also was comforted and encouraged to entrust all to the Lord and believe that his peace would also be mine because he himself had ordered it so.

The next day, the Lord, my Redeemer, was still good to me. The Lord kept me close to him and I received from him all necessary grace for the work that was given to me.

The day following the Lord still surrounded me with his goodness. In spite of my overall weakness I was allowed to look to him and draw from his strength, which he gave for all I needed. That afternoon was my weekly conventicle meeting and the Lord aided us in remembrance of Zion and its needs.

The faithfulness of God

The day after I received a deep insight into the unending faithfulness and mercy of God which he had shown to me so far so that my soul timidly had to exclaim, “How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits unto me?”

In the afternoon I went to visit a girl friend and received these words on the way, “God is our God and he will forever remain so.” My faith was strengthened and I became joyful and exclaimed, “Indeed, God is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?” Not because my heart was totally emptied of fear; no, fear stayed with me, but so did God and I had his assurance that he would stay with me into eternity. Now also this verse from Lodensteyn came to mind:

The heavens are ours,
So is the earth.
What also would we desire?

(Jodocus van Lodenstein was a 17th Cent. pietistic poet, preacher and writer.)

I continued on my way with amazement about my blessed part in God. It was a good meeting with my friends and I was led to sing with them the last stanza of Psalm 31 (Corresponds with English Bible Ps. 31:23,24).

The fire of the Spirit

The next morning my Redeemer Lord Jesus was gracious to me. I was much aware of his love for my soul and with all my soul I believed in his love for me. I was deeply ashamed of the coldness of my soul and asked for the fire of the Spirit to help me love my God. My soul did indeed get warmer and I could say again that I would thank my God in song.

In the afternoon I was together with some friends. The Lord was with and among us with his grace. We found an open heart and mouth to speak to each other about what God had done. God's free grace touched our souls and together we desired to place the crown on the blessed head of Christ. It also was given to me to praise and recommend my dear Lord Jesus to such as were present and did not know him. It softened her and it caused us to pray, to give thanks and to sing to the glory and praise of the steadfast love of our God and King.

The next day I was much troubled before the Lord as it was persistently brought home to me that I would be led into a certain way or ways. It was not so much my concern that I would have to go into a certain way, but the possibility troubled me that I should be there all alone, away from the Lord and possibly fall so that the Lord would be dishonored by me. It also came to me that the Lord would not bring his devout people in certain ways and then leave them as I was allowed to believe that the Lord is good. Troubles would come from my sinful habit of running ahead of the Lord. I also viewed my concern as from the Lord; if for nothing else but to keep me working and praying. I also want to note that I found an open door to bring it all to the Lord. Consistently I received promises and exhortations, yet, my soul remained somewhat troubled.

September 4, 1746 - Strength on the way

The next day I received much grace to bring my requests to the Lord, and it was given me to believe that the Lord would feed me at his table and give me strength on the way.

On the morning of the day of rest I woke early with this verse on my mind:
You prophets, priests and kings,
Whose crowns and dwellings come from Israel's Lord,

Wait further for his favor.

Wait further for his benefits,

For his goodness is endless and limitless.

Immediately my faith in the Lord returned and I felt free to present him with my request. I went up to the Lord's Supper with a soul thirsting for Christ.

That evening was blessed as Rev. Tijken broke the word. His Reverence's subject matter was from Psalm 31:25(RSV Ps. 31:24): "Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord." This was a special word for me. I viewed the grounds for my strength. The first one was, "I the Lord am yours." And I understood that that held every promise for my soul. And also, "I am that I am." It was as if the whole Bible with all the promises of the covenant opened up, which in Christ are "yes and amen" to God's glory. My soul was much inclined to say, "Let it be to me according to your word." When I asked the Lord to leave me not alone on my way and to prevent me from dishonoring his name, I received these words, "Sooner would I forget my right hand than I would forget you." I got to see that the right hand of God stood for such things as divine strength and power and honor and I got to understand that it would be altogether impossible that God would forget that. I also received these words, "I will save your foot from falling and from stumbling for I am your shield." And so one promise followed another so that I no longer could withhold my tears of amazement. Not one request was uttered by me or I received a merciful answer. I had to say, "Who am I, Lord, that you look upon me so?" My soul's covenant relation with God was lovingly renewed, and I was brought to say that I hoped the Lord would put it in my heart to do something for him on earth. I must say, however, that I could not detect a great desire within my soul. But I committed my powerless soul to the Lord and asked that he take it to do something for him on earth so that his strength might be accomplished in my weakness. It was as if the Triune God told and showed me that he would keep faith with me in eternity. My soul desired much to walk tenderly and humbly before God, wishing not to dishonor God by my unbelief. Indeed, my soul asked for strength to fight against the least sign of unbelief. Again I had to say that my soul was much satisfied with the Spirit's leading and the way in which God desired to direct me. This was on September 4th, 1746, that, heart and all, I was allowed to give myself to the Lord with heartfelt longing to be entirely his. As his chosen maidservant, I expressly state that this is so.

All the next week my faith was strong and I remained close to the Lord as I was turned away from the body of sin and had a heartfelt desire to give my all to the Lord and to use all the talents of body and soul for the Lord. Often it caused me to sing, "Higher good there can be none, than to serve my dearest Lord. When to him only I belong, that's my treasure and my all." I lived in sweet union with my dearest Lord Jesus and received from the fulness of his grace.

The following day of rest I was sick and ran a fever, but my Redeemer was so kind that in the morning I was able to attend the service of Rev. Tijken. His subject matter was Revelation 1:17,18: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am the living one; I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore.'" This was a special

message for me. It was given to his Reverence to present Christ rightly to my soul which refreshed me greatly. My soul was glad to hear that Christ was the first and the last and that as he would bring all to completion, he also would finish his work of grace in my soul. With heartfelt zeal I sang the second part of the 10th stanza of Psalm 33 (corresponds to Ps. 33:18,19).

The following week my soul had much to confess before the Lord. Many a time I was brought into the ways of my God and the King's holy of holies as his humble maidservant. My soul was pressed to say at times, "Thy way was through the sea, thy path through the great waters." My soul was constantly humbled as I had to say, "How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" I shall forever be in the Lord's debt.

September 18, 1746 - Remember the wonders of God

The next Lord's Day, being September 18th, it was two years ago that by a miracle God had saved me. When I got up that morning I had to say, "O my soul, forget not to remember the wonders of your God towards you." And also, "How sincerely and with an oath my soul committed itself to the Lord, pledging yourself to use up all your talents in his service." It was with amazement that my soul brought into remembrance all the wonders of his faithfulness towards me since that time. It caused me to ask why the Lord still saved and protected me and all? Why was Christendom not failing and falling and why did the Lord not take offense with the world, yes, even with his people? It's grace, grace, pure and free, God's never-ending faithfulness. It was like Ebenezer and my soul said, "So far the Lord has helped me and saved me by his wonders." Words failed me. Instead my soul sang to express my gratitude and praise for the Lord. So often I exclaim, "What more can you say to your maidservant, Lord? Your wonders and remembrances are many." My soul was deeply ashamed about my faithlessness and neglect of the Lord. Shame should cover me entirely. But the Lord allowed me to renew again the bond of the covenant between him and my soul in order to remain closer and more intimately with the Lord so that I would be known as his chosen one and also show this in a more committed life by giving my all for him.

In the morning I was in the service of the Rev. Dominie. His Reverence's subject matter was Psalm 89:29-34. It was very good to me. Already when coming into church my soul was renewed. Then we sang Psalm 100. Later we sang Psalm 126. The minister's message was that the Lord both chastises and heals, he wounds and he binds up. His Reverence had so many illustrations that applied to me that I had to say that the words from his mouth were from the Lord. All this deeply touched my soul. This service again illumined me to see the unending faithfulness of God in Christ as promised to me. It all brought me to life again and strengthened me inwardly to entrust all of my ways to the Lord. I felt I could entirely trust him not to renege from his oath.

When I returned home I found my soul greatly revived. I felt the urge to closet

myself so I could give honor to the God of the covenant for all his steadfast love towards me, and once more to bind myself closer to my Lord. My prayer was to make us, and particularly me, ready to praise and honor his name, and to raise us from the dust and to prepare us for gratitude.

In the afternoon we were together with about thirty people, most of them pious souls who saw the need for something extra before they could celebrate the mercies and wonders of the Lord towards us. The Lord was among us and gave us his aid to work and pray and in the singing of Psalms. My heart was with the Lord and I continually committed myself to the Lord so I could give him my all and be used in his service.

It was late when we parted and my soul was still refreshed when I finally entered my room. I had much reason for gratitude for renewed benefits. But there also was reason for shame about my imperfections and bits of apathy. But I knew that I could bring these to Christ my Redeemer and that his righteousness and holiness were sufficient to cover my imperfect endeavors. How blessed to know that I was allowed to hide in his shadow and to refresh my soul with him. My soul made witness that I was at peace with the way into which God wanted to lead me and this to his glory. But I also committed myself closer to the people, to remain closer to them, to love them dearly, and to help bear their burdens. My soul did say, "It is a blessing to help bear Christ's encumbrances." My soul was ready to leave all my worries with my Redeemer.

I rested and was refreshed. Also when I woke the next morning I realized that I still was with the Lord. This word came to me, "Then will your God and Lord grow old?" My soul emphatically exclaimed, "No." I wished that all angels' tongues, all creatures and all that had breath would praise and glorify God, Christ and the divine Spirit. I enjoyed many an encouragement for my heart and much help that day.

September 20, 1746 - Trip to Loenen

The next day, the 20th, I was supposed to go to Loenen with a certain Mrs. and some of her friends to visit a country home. (Many rich merchants in Amsterdam had country homes outside the city; usually south along the Vecht River.) My heart was very anxious already when I parted from my friends. It was as if I could not detach myself and I did not know what to make of it. All during the trip I had been much agitated while my heart stayed close to the Lord. It might, perhaps, not be his will and he had put something in the way. That might perhaps explain the pressure on my heart. When we arrived at the place of destination we all began to be more talkative. Then also my heart felt freer and could again thank the Lord for his fatherly care to bring us safely here and that nothing had happened. So all things did work together for good.

During the evening, when I had retired, I dearly enticed the Lord to make his presence known in this place for the benefit of my soul. I could not help but trust

that the Lord would shine his face upon me and that this would be a Bethel for me. After I got into bed it was brought home to me that the blessed Lord Jesus made atonement in my stead during the night as, just as the disciples, I slept in sin. And that he did that to renew my soul. The Son of Man had no rest; had nothing on which he could lay down his head, while I had a soft bed to rest in. O the love of Christ. It caused my soul to answer his love in return. Even in the night I was being taught and allowed to meditate on the Lord.

In the morning I woke early with these words, "O God, I have no God but thee." My soul exclaimed, "If only I have thee, I need nothing else." The Lord was enough for me for all eternity.

When I got up I saw the sun rise and I lifted up my soul to Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, to let the quickening rays of his grace warm my soul and illumine it. So my soul was activated with thoughts of God and I prayed to be kept close to the Lord and that it be given me to do something for the Lord. Even though outwardly all my needs were satisfied, I had to confess to my merciful Father that without him my soul could find no rest in anything.

Things were good to me this day while I was closeted. But also with the others, I still had cause to recommend Christ to these worldly people. And even when I saw that their hearts rebelled against me, yet was I greatly happy that I had the opportunity to recommend my dear King. I was much at peace in my soul. Christ is worth more to me than derision and some bitter words. I count it my privilege to stand up for his cause.

"Walls of Salvation"

The next day I woke up early with these words, "I will be the eyes to the blind." This promise was both relevant and valued by me. Since it was my soul's conviction that without Christ I could do nothing, I placed my empty soul, thirsting for grace, before the fulness of my Saviour, as I surrendered my heart to the Lord for safekeeping. It was the dear desire of my soul to see everything with the eyes of Christ.

In the morning I sang my favorite Psalm 31:13,14,19 (Corresponds to RSV Ps. 31:15-18,23,24) and Psalm 38:15,21,22 (Corresponds to RSV Ps. 38:9-10,17-22).

It was my privilege to receive much instruction from the Spirit this day as in all things my soul was allowed to see the Lord. We went out for a ride and while seeing a strong castle these words came to me, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe." (Prov. 18:10) This was the way it went with everything I saw. Men and cattle and angels alike, everything had to work together for good and the uplifting of my soul. I also saw an entrenchment in the making in Nieuwersluys and this made me to pray that the Lord might erect walls of salvation before the entrenchments. When we returned home my heart acknowledged gratitude concerning our safekeeping.

All through this week I was allowed to experience the merciful goodness of the Lord as my heart was kept close to him, and I received many encouragements from the world outside that helped my soul to turn to God. I enjoyed seeing God's creatures and creation and received much refreshment, both of spirit and body.

Worship at Vreelandt and Schravelandt

On the day of rest I awoke with the words, "This is the day the Lord has made." It was proper that we should refrain from work and spend the day before God in spirit. It came to me that the Lord would bless me in his house of prayer.

In the morning I went to Vreelandt. It was my wish to hear Jesus preached and to find him in his teaching. The minister's subject matter was from John 5:1-4. My soul settled down and for myself I could empathize with the sermon. During the break in the sermon, while we sang Psalm 115, my heart was quickened. But I still looked for the Lord to bless me.

In the afternoon we went to Schravelandt as the Rev. van Loo from Naarden would preach there. His Reverence's subject matter was from Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." His Reverence's introduction concerned the close relationship between the Lord Jesus and his people, as it could be said from Jesus on, "I in you and you in me." But not only was it a close relationship, it also was a holy relationship of those who walk by the spirit and not by the flesh. And also it is a blessed relationship as there now is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. This sermon was most dearly appreciated by my soul. God strongly aided his servant as my soul was much enlightened in these things and went from amazement to amazement about my close relationship in Christ. My soul was so greatly encouraged that I was ready to commit my way to the Lord again. Clearly I saw anew that no damning judgment could any longer take place because I was in Christ Jesus. I touched here upon the unchangeableness of God's eternal oath and faithfulness and it led me to renew my part with the prayer to remain in Christ and to be nearer and more closely united with him and so to walk in him as I had accepted him. It was the dearest desire of my soul not to walk in the flesh but after the spirit. My Redeemer was good to me here and I left encouraged with my friends as we returned to Loenen. We did nothing but sing in the carriage, but my body was very tired from the exertion.

It was with an alert soul that I went to rest. When I woke I still knew myself to be with the Lord. Then this verse came to me:

The heavens work the way he wants,
As he makes his eternal decisions.
His creatures keep silence, as he
Holds their wisdom in derision.

My heart remained still to God and I received a free and cordial entrance to

God so that my soul was refreshed with the Lord. It was my special joy to be taught of the Spirit.

The fountain of the water of life

That morning after my private devotions I sang with my friends Psalm 73:12,13,14 (Corresponds to RSV Ps. 73:21-28) with much animation.

That same day we went to see a nearby place that had much to please the eye, but my soul became engaged with the Lord and I saw all the rights I had in Christ. Especially while seeing a spouting fountain, words came to mind about the fountain of life. My soul observed so much fulness in the Lord Jesus and remedies for all my need, shortcomings and other things my soul was in want of that I was forced to say that there seemed no beginning nor end. Wherever my soul turned, its benefits in Christ were endless. The fountain had finally stopped spouting water, but not so with the blessed fulness of Christ, that fountain continued to flow, washing all sin and unrighteousness, going on into eternity. By looking upon all these lovely things, I was allowed to gaze upon the divine beauty of the dear friend of my soul, Jesus, and it quickened my soul dearly. O, how my soul appreciated Jesus. I sang this song from Lodenstein:

Lift up your soul, lift up your soul on high,
It's only there that heart and soul are nigh
And find their blessedness together in the Lord.

That evening as I had retired, the enemy was close in tempting me to walk ahead of my Lord, and I had no strength against him. That made me to exclaim, "Wretched man that I am."

The next day I did receive strength to resist and my soul enjoyed rest and quiet and my heart was continually attentive to the Lord for grace. My heart acknowledged that without the Lord I would not be able to do anything.

The grace of God

The morning following I woke up with these words, "My goodness does not concern you." This morning my soul was especially impressed with the freedom of God's grace and the steadfastness of God's eternal love. I saw that nothing in me had moved the Lord to love me, and that with a lasting love. It was not my goodness that moved him. The Lord loved me freely. And I could actually believe that, although I was quite loveless in my relation with the Lord, the Lord would nevertheless love me to the end. This morning I was allowed to renew my commitment to the Lord with a tender desire to know him and to be inwardly like him. I saw that the fulness of Christ was my treasure and riches, and that all I had to do was to let him pour the fulness of his grace into my

empty soul.

This whole day I was allowed to consciously live in the presence of God, which made my soul rejoice, while I also yet had communion with the Lord's people. Although they were absent from me, my soul nevertheless longed for the members of my family and wished that through them I would yet be allowed to serve the Lord. I also was much concerned for our country and hoped that the Spirit of the Lord would raise the banners over Zion and purify her from guilt and sin, and that the Lord would reach his goal through merciful chastisement.

This evening I also entertained a real desire to do something, that God would be glorified through me and Christ's crown would flower on his head. So says my soul, "I am but only for the Lord and my salvation is in his honor. I am the maidservant of the Lord."

The next day my heart was refreshingly revived and our hearts were set to speak with each other about the ways and means of God in his holy of holies.

But that evening, through something that happened, I sinned. Immediately I felt a heaviness on my heart. I saw that what I had done was not right and my soul pursued the Lord with its guilt. That evening, while retired and during my devotions, it was given to me to bring everything in the open. My soul could bear it no longer and I was brought to the cross and the blood of my dear Savior satisfied my soul. I could not leave the throne before my guilt had vanished. The Lord God is holy indeed. That is what attracts my soul so, and that is what makes me hate my sin. The least of sins hides the face of the Lord, and that is why my soul desires to walk in fear and trembling.

The next morning I was allowed to renew my soul tenderly with the Lord and to ask for protecting grace to remain close to the Lord and to receive strength to fight this sinful body.

September 30, 1746 - "The Lord is my salvation"

The morning following I woke with this word, "In Jesus is our salvation." This encouraged me much and it was a source of happiness for me that I woke up with a proper word like that. Indeed, the Lord is my salvation and the strength of my life as I experienced. It was September 30th and two years ago that I was allowed to return to church after that blessed illness. My soul was brought to remember God's steadfast faithfulness and it made me to exclaim, "The God of Israel is God." The experience of all this faithfulness of God towards me encouraged me to have hope to commit my all to the Lord from here on. It was a blessed day for my soul as I so experienced God's help.

I also still was allowed to speak with the others of the Lord's people about the blessed guidance of God in his holy of holies from the warmth of our hearts. I believe that the Lord was among us, and it was refreshing to know that the Lord was with us in our dwelling and made us a high place. To be able to exercise the

communion of holiness quickened my soul. "How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity." (Ps. 133:1)

Also when closeted the Lord was still good to me. As the next day would be Saturday my heart was much desiring for the day of rest to come.

The next day the maidservant of the Lord was given much help as well while the Lord was with us.

In the evening I was with my friends in the service of Rev. van Deventer. His Reverence preached from Job about these words: "...despise not the chastening of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he binds up; he smites, but his hand heals." (Job 5:17,18) The theme was that all things had to work together for good for those who love God. His Reverence showed that for the world this was strange that oppression, wounds, anxiety and bondage would work for good for the believer. Indeed, his Reverence said that it sometimes appears to be strange to God's people as well when these things happen. But afterwards they could clearly see that it was so. His Reverence gave clear proof of why it all had to work together for good; which was very understandable to my soul. I received a blessing from it and was convicted of my guilt because of my rejection of and the refusal to accept the time of salvation of the Almighty through the judgments these times were putting on us. It dearly humbled my soul and I desired to accept the discipline and to be more alert to the judgment and the signs of the Lord as he both wounds and builds up, etc.

That evening too it was a blessing to be together, everyone opened up as the Lord helped us in our being together.

December 4, 1746 - Led into the truth

It was my intent to return home that Saturday but my friend insisted that I stay with her and the Lord convinced me to give in to this.

On the morning of the day of rest I awoke feeling very calm with strong longings for the Lord, with the conviction that it was in the Lord's eternal plan that I should be here on this day and that the Lord would meet me here. I was much intent to receive the Father's blessing, and I could not let go of the Lord and his blessing. I also was very insistent that the teacher of the word would lead me into the truth by way of the Spirit. I left hungering and looking forward to the service, and the Lord was experientially at that place for me. The servant of the word was Rev. van Weena. His Reverence's subject matter was Ephesians 2:3: "Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." The introduction was from Galatians 3, the first part of verse 22, "But the scripture consigned all things to sin." It was a blessed service for me. It was given to the minister to explain clearly the depths of perversion, and I could easily make the connection with my natural state, how I, too, in all these things was a child of wrath

and how God had included me rightly under guilt and sin and the punishment that went with it. I clearly saw my image according to my nature and how it would be just if forever I would have had to labor under my guilt like all the others. But here I was introduced to the free and eternal grace of God who also had quickened me as I was dead in trespasses and sin. This was too much for my soul so that in awe and praise I had to say, "O depth of riches." My soul was only ready to bear all this when the free and never ending grace of God engulfed me and I saw from what great death I was saved. O, the depth of God's unending love. My body could hardly bear it and I believe that I tested something of the exaltation of heaven. The Rev. also called forth, "People of God, what if you would not be carried and protected by the free grace of God, would you be able to suffer this?" My soul said, "O, no, only in heaven shall I be able to do that." I was so happy to have eternity where I would throw the crown at the feet of the lamb.

When church let out I could hardly wait 'til we got home to seclude myself so that my soul could praise the never ending steadfast love of God. I could not help but exclaim, "How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" It was as if I would succumb because of the amazement I felt, but I was allowed to refresh my soul at the Lord and commit myself to his blessed service. If I would have had a thousand souls and bodies, I gladly would have given them to the Lord for eternity. My soul was so filled with the merciful goodness of the Lord who had saved me from certain death and brought me back to life, that I fully trusted him to safely direct me on my way. There still was some fear and trembling in me, hoping that the remnants of my depravity would be covered by the divine grace of the Holy Spirit. For my soul this was God's approval over my journey as the Lord had reserved a covenant's blessing for me. My soul will forever remember this and give honor to my God. This was on December 4, 1746, that the Lord has again shown me that he is the God of mercy, while my soul again confessed to belong to the Lord. (Signed) D. Bergh.

The maidservant of the Lord

That afternoon I heard the Rev. van Deventer about the things of the kingdom of heaven from Lord's Day 31. This was a blessing for me and I became thoroughly involved as I understood that through the gospel the way to Christ was opened for me and I had become a citizen of that kingdom of grace so that now I had free entrance to the King. Even if through my sin I would close that road, the Lord would still present me with the gospel of peace through which I would be allowed to embrace all of Christ's promises through which he would offer me his redemption. This I heard from the catechism and it strengthened me.

Also that evening I heard the believers go over this subject matter, which warmed my heart. So I again experienced this day that a day in the court of the Lord is better than a thousand elsewhere. Indeed, with the man of God, "I would rather

be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (Ps. 84:10) That evening in our devotions the Lord also was our help.

The next day when I awoke the Lord was still with me, so my heart was with the Lord. I felt a decided desire to be able to do something for Christ, my divine Master and my God, and to commit myself into his hands, and from his promises to request the right means of grace I would need for my work.

To the honor of his merciful grace I must acknowledge that I was not left alone. On the contrary, the Lord was a help to me in everything. God will indeed be faithful to everyone who calls upon his name, and he will not lack in anything.

There also was occasion for us this day to speak together about the ways and means of our God which he has with us in his holy of holies. And there was room for us to praise and sing to the Lord with psalms and spiritual songs. Indeed we knelt before the Lord that evening, or better, that night, because it was well past one o’clock before we parted.

All that is good is from the Lord. And it had been good to me as the Lord had brought his law so gloriously alive among us. I brought it all before the Lord before going to sleep.

The day following the Lord was among us as well. Again I had occasion to present myself as the maidservant of the Lord willing to work for the Lord. I did not know under what circumstances this would be. But as long as the Lord wanted it, that was enough for me. I felt that I could entrust myself to him. My prayer was for strength against my selfish desires that so easily creep in all my doings. It was my wish to keep the Lord in the foreground in all things. The Lord answered with the strength of his grace. My soul was experientially blessed that day.

That evening I heard the Rev. van Weena catechize concerning the subject matter from Sunday morning about Ephesians 2:3. It renewed my blessing as I received new insight into these things. The Lord continued his presence with me from day to day. It was a blessing to be together.

January 1, 1747 - “That the image of the Lord might take form in me”

At the very beginning of the year 1747, immediately after midnight, I was in persistent prayer before the throne, and in renewed dedication I committed myself to the Lord and his ways, his service and his people. It was my inmost desire to receive more renewing grace from the Holy Spirit, so that my old nature might be brought down, and the precious image of the Lord might more fully take form in me, so that all in me might be made new. To that end I was allowed to submit myself gladly and dearly to the Spirit, so that his grace would enable me to lead a more yielded and sanctified life before the Lord.

It was my desire to come before our merciful God with prayerful requests for all the people of Zion; in my own town of Amsterdam as elsewhere, to implore

God's mercy and his steadfast and merciful loving kindness. It also was my desire for them to have a more lively faith. It was my soul's sincere desire that the Lord would send a greater and more abundant outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon Zion's people. Also, that many of his people might be lifted out of their depths, that the mere form of Christianity would pass away and that the power of true godliness might prevail. I experienced divine help as I addressed the throne, for searching souls in general, as well as for particular ones of my interest. I hoped and prayed that this would be for them the acceptable year of the Lord in that the Lord would loosen their bonds and set them in a large place.

As for the servants of the Lord, my heart desired experiential help in the performance of their weighty work, and to give them grace to personify his truth before the people, especially by the example of a godly life lived among them. The last verses of Psalm 90 expressed my heartfelt longings for them: "Let thy work be manifest to thy servants, and thy glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

For my immediate relatives and members of my household I prayed that God, through his compassion, would freely offer them his grace and love for sinners, so that they might be brought under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and experience conversion.

As for those who are concerned about their spiritual state, but in whom things as yet seem to be at a standstill, I was impelled to bear up their plight before the Lord in a very special manner. I mightily implored the effectual grace of God for them, wishing for them that their light might come like the daybreak and their health may spring forth speedily.

It was laid upon me to call unto the Lord for the people, that they might be saved from hardening their hearts. As at the opening of the former New Year I was privileged to beseech the Lord with heart and soul that all might be spared that year. And in so far as the Lord had granted this request, so also now I was encouraged to humbly and with childlike confidence pray to God to abide with us. My soul persistently clung to him in my humble requests that He stay with us and not give us over into the hands of our enemies. If suffering be called for, may it be that we fall into the hands of God.

I was given an open door for my supplications, as I offered my heartfelt prayers faithfully in the name of Christ, counting on his divine and never failing intercessions, as I rested assuredly in the knowledge of a gracious hearing. My soul was greatly comforted and quickened.

Already it was quite late and I readied myself to go to bed. But my malicious foes did not leave me alone; they raised up in me the most terrible thoughts and horrible images. From experience I know how opposed my adversary is to any exercise of faith, and I implored my Redeemer for help and deliverance. I forcefully refrained from reasoning with my adversary, for it is my experience that that is his way to gain power. The Lord gave me his aid as I asked for it. To all his temptations I said, "Do not think that I will answer you. However much it is true that with God's permission you will be able to do harm to me, I shall wait upon

the Lord, and the Lord will enable me to face my enemy and his assaults. Even though I am powerless, Christ is my rock and my fortress against whom you cannot prevail." I said, "Indeed, my enemy, He has conquered you and the Lord has you under restraint" (literally: "by the leash"). I remained steadfast in my confidence and my adversary was rebuked while the Lord assisted me. Then I was allowed to rest and wake up peacefully.

"I drew near to the fulness of my Saviour"

Although I had slept but little, I nevertheless was much invigorated. I arose to attend the Lord's Supper, which was to be observed by us for the second time. Already on the last day of rest of the year now past I had beheld the Lord in his sanctuary. So also on this first day of the year my soul desired to meet him again and to solemnly recommit myself to him.

I was led to fix my thoughts upon the fact that this was the day that people were in the habit to exchange good wishes; also those in humble circumstances as they greeted their superiors, especially man servants and maid servants to their masters and mistresses. Everyone gave according to ability to these lesser endowed. To my mind came the words, "My benefactors will bless me."

I perceived that there was nothing I could give to the Lord who in himself is eternally perfect. But I thought that the Lord would take pleasure in the defective attempts his poor saints would put forth in Christ to manifest their gratitude for the many tokens of his faithfulness. My faith in believing that I was a handmaid of the living God was strengthened. Although poor and needy, I yet had a rich and gracious Lord who was favorably disposed to fill the empty chambers of my soul with his treasures. In my own emptiness I drew near to the fulness of my Saviour, as I displayed my lack and need. My soul desired to draw near to Christ and have communion with my Lord and Saviour. My heart was warmed and inflamed with love for the blessed Lord Jesus in return for his love to me.

As I was leaving my house, someone met me and wished me a blessed New Year. It was a person in the blind and natural state, yet it was the Father's Providence to use this saying for my benefit. The Holy Spirit impressed these words upon my mind with great power: "I am your salvation" and "fear not." O, what a view was afforded for my soul's encouragement in this relationship of the eternal and perfect God toward an insignificant, low and empty speck of dust in Christ, while it is written, "I am your salvation." It is wonderful to know that he indeed was this to me in all his gracious attributes. As he was my God, therefore I need not fear. My soul responded, that though the earth were removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea, I would not fear, for the Lord is my salvation and of whom should I be afraid? All the way to the church my heart remained exercised with this as I went in under the service of the Rev. Mr. Bunnings.

His subject matter was from Matthew 26:29, "And I say unto you, I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew with you, in my Father's kingdom." This was a source of blessing and encouragement to me, as my dear Saviour enabled me to experience much of his tender love. The preacher was much helped and inspired as he tried to explain the profound interest of God in the spiritual welfare of his people, by the tender familiarity of the Lord Jesus in saying, "I will drink it with you." Again I obtained some experiential acquaintance from this, which took me up into his precious fulness, filling all my emptiness and deficiency and swallowing up all my wants. I was encouraged to commit and fully entrust myself anew to the Saviour, and desired that I may be allowed to belong to him only. I was so earnestly desirous to mortify my earthly members more and more with Christ's strength. I also was again enabled to present myself for his purpose if it would please the Lord and if I could find grace with him. I was entirely ready to be used of the Lord, without any condition on my part. I only wished to follow the Lamb wherever he went. My soul was completely satisfied in Christ, so that I was constrained to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." I was fully prepared to cast all my cares upon my Saviour. No anxieties remained with me any longer. As I approached the table, the covenant of grace was newly opened to me in all its fulness. And I was assured to believe that none of the promises of the covenant in Christ would fail. The Lord will indeed be faithful. As I now approached, having fully surrendered myself, while relying only on my all-sufficient Head, and in most intimate communion with his dear person, I heard the preacher say, "O soul, that drawest near in Jesus, and only looks to Christ, it is the will of the Saviour that you should be assured anew of his love and faithfulness." My heart said, "Amen!" Then I received the signs of my Saviour's abiding love to me. This reassured me of the Lord's bond between me, his people and the church in the Netherlands. I was constrained to confess to the Lord that I would not and could not let him go. My soul now was strengthened and enlarged in all respects and I was ready to commit all to the Lord. The burdens of my heart were lifted. The Lord was the fulness of my cup and I fully entrusted my lot to him. My soul was profoundly satisfied in communion with my Lord.

In the afternoon I heard the Rev. Schutte on the first Lord's Day of the Catechism. Also here the Lord was present and granted his favor to me. How securely was I introduced to the blessedness of belonging to Christ, both in life and in death. It was granted to me to realize to my delight, that no longer I belonged to myself, but to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. All during this means of grace I continually was constrained to utter "Amen," as the Amen of God filled my heart. I was greatly impressed with the insights our teacher opened to me, and I was overwhelmed with the benefits given to me. My pen is inadequate to express what the Lord allowed me to experience. I could do no else but to freely and tenderly commit myself again to the Lord, and to declare with solemn intent that I rest myself confidently in the Lord forever as I found my salvation in him.

It was on this, the first of January, 1747, when by renewal I again pledged myself to the Lord and to his service, as I trusted him to care for me, according to

his promise, that he will be to me as the dew. This I testify to, desire and fervently pray of the Lord, his for always committed and willing servant, (signed) the unworthy Dina van Bergh.

The strength of the Lord

The following day my soul enjoyed much peace and strength. Much help was given me with all the things I was called to do. But on Tuesday night my body was attacked with severe pains; so much so that I feared that my house of clay would be crushed. But the Lord was my helper. However hard, I yet felt confident that it came to me from my Father's love and for my good. Throughout this week my body was exceedingly feeble. But the Lord was not a barren wilderness to me. Daily I received his nourishment as a child's portion. I perceived that by this blow I was preserved from a fall. My Father is wise and good.

On the Sabbath I had the privilege to enter the Lord's house of prayer once again in the afternoon under the service of the Rev. Boscoop. He preached on the second Lord's day of the Catechism: the knowledge of our misery through the law. Here too I was blessed, as it was shown to me how God had pursued his course with respect to me in disclosing my misery to me. I also got to see the greatness of my misery from which I had been delivered and how, in spite of myself, I was helped while I continued with others in my miserable state. It also was clear to me, that although Christ had delivered me from my misery, I still was in constant need of the blood and righteousness of Christ for my reconciliation and purification. I also saw the need to walk before the Lord in fear and humility. It was my soul's desire to have a more evangelical understanding of these things.

The next day my head was faint and weak, unable to pursue a train of religious thought. But I found my confidence and strength in quietness.

Tuesday was the season for prayer with my esteemed female friends. It was the first time we met in the year, insofar as my severe bodily pain had prevented our coming together the previous week. Now it was my turn to pray. I was greatly aware of my helplessness, but I very much wanted to perform my duty in the strength of the Lord. He indeed did help and granted guidance. We could not part from his throne, so numerous were the requests we were to present, for ourselves, for the church and for the country. I again found occasion to acknowledge the faithfulness of God on my behalf, while I was yet so unworthy. That encouraged me to put my hope in the Lord and trust in his mercy.

For about two weeks in a row I was so weak in my head, that if I did any concentrated work, I weakened right away. Yet, there were many occasions that called me out to work. But I must give honor to my King as it was he who helped and strengthened me. How often didn't he rescue me from unforeseen circumstances. My soul had to learn and acknowledge many things as yet in matters of grace as I discovered my helplessness and dependence more fully. There still was much selfishness to be broken in me. The Lord is wise in finding ways to deliver

me from myself. If these are his ways, I freely admit that there is no greater blessing than to be made humble and small by his grace.

National security

I also was much occupied with my country during this time as I earnestly made supplication and called on the spirit of judgment and might as often I had the impression of God's hand smiting us, especially in the recognition of disease among the cattle. Now and then, however, I found a listening ear with the Lord, as in the case of one or another being born in Zion. Concerning the enemy of our country (France) I continued to believe that the Lord would not give us over into her hand. But at this same time the water covered over with ice as it froze so severely, that it could serve the enemy as a bridge to attack us. My soul continued to look in confidence to God. But my spiritual adversary sometimes assaulted me severely as I thought how justly a righteous God might allow us to be visited with these afflictions.

On a certain Sunday the cold became so severe that I was compelled to acknowledge that, unless the Lord would be merciful, who would be able to stand? On the Monday following I continued to call on God with childlike faith asking that there might be a change in the weather for good. And praised be his goodness, on Tuesday morning there was as strong and delightful a thaw as was ever seen. O how humble and grateful this made me before my merciful God who had not rejected my prayers, but who taught me anew to entrust myself to the Lord. Especially as our enemies had boasted that they would undertake something that would resound through all of Europe. Yet now I could say, "the daughter of Zion laughs thee to scorn, O enemy, and shakes her head over thee, for the Lord has made strong the bars of our gates."

It strengthened my faith in the Lord anew, and my mind was again confirmed in the knowledge that the Lord could be trusted and would remain with us, as he would not forsake the cry of those in need.

February 1, 1747 - The Lord's merciful faithfulness

It now was Wednesday, the first of February, and it was five years since my soul was set free. I was blessed with an occupied mind, and enjoyed close communion with the Lord that day. I was greatly assisted as I reflected upon the Lord's merciful faithfulness granted to me so far. I was constrained to acknowledge that the God of Israel is God who indeed had helped me 'til now. His grace was the only reason that I am who I am. But my soul felt greatly ashamed of my abject state as I so lacked in conformity to God and my unreadiness in self-denial in all things concerning the service of the Lord. This grieved my heart all the more, since I had a lively sense of the benefits of God

towards me. I was aware that I should have progressed considerably more at this time. But my faith was directed toward my Redeemer, who by his actual obedience had completely done for me where I failed, and so had made everything right with God. Therein my soul was permitted to rest. Yet, I desired to live a life more consecrated to the Lord. Again I was allowed to rest my confidence with Christ as I solemnly engaged myself to God with my heart's desire to be a lively stone, built upon the foundation of Christ, all the more deeply grounded in him. It was my soul's desire to spend my strength in the service of my Lord, and to follow the Lamb, wherever he would go. Again I was allowed to choose for the Lord and his ways, and to entrust all my cares to my Divine Head, Christ, believing that he would bring it to pass. I continually found myself singing the 10th and 11th stanzas of Psalm 33 and the 12th and 13th stanzas of Psalm 73 (rhymed).

In the evening I had a good time in the company of some pious friends, as the Lord was in our midst. Now I frequently thought of those wishes which I desired during the first time of my freedom in Christ, that my earthly tabernacle might be dissolved. But it also came to mind that, had I had my wish, I now would not have had so deep a sense of the sovereign love and grace of God in Christ. God would then not have been so greatly glorified, and I would not have had so much cause for praise throughout eternity. I had to acknowledge my blindness before the Lord and confess that only his will is right and good. I now was ready and willing to serve the Lord's ways and remain here so long as he wanted to use me.

The following days my soul was much strengthened in the Lord as my heart was greatly enriched in the Lord's ways while on Saturday I went to visit a dying brother in Christ, Mr. J. Stokker. The visit greatly strengthened me. The truth of the following words was evident, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." I also was led to contemplate the Saviour's words, "Where I am, there my servant shall be also." I thought the brother to be close to glory, while I thought of myself as having to be at home in the body as yet for a short while. But it would be an exceedingly light affliction, as nothing would be able to separate me from the love of Christ.

"A blessed means of grace"

Now, on the morning of the Day of Rest I heard the Rev. Temmink, my beloved father in the Lord, preach on II Corinthians 8:23,24. This was to me a blessed means of grace, as my heart was all the more drawn forth in earnest desire that I might be enabled to live more to Christ's honor. His Reverence showed that anyone endowed with grace receives this grace from God and so is the glory of Christ, but that even such a person may stumble and fall and dishonor Christ. My soul had to acknowledge that so far I had been saved from falling through the grace of the Lord.

This day the Lord was exceedingly good to me as I quietly retired, because the frequent trouble in my head prevented me to go again to the house of my God. But God is truly good to Israel, and will be so forever.

This week I was allowed to experience many of the Lord's mercies and was much helped by his grace.

On Tuesday, in the hour of prayer, the Lord allowed much help and an impressive view of the ways into which we might be brought and what we may be asked to undergo yet both for church and country. But also that we are nevertheless encouraged to hold on to the Lord in prayer. He will not refuse us but regards our sighs.

On Thursday I was much quickened by the reading of these words from a poem from "Collected Sacred Songs:"

Godt aller deelen, Deel ons Lodt,
 Ons eeuwig deel is Jehova-Godt.
 Lord of all portions, You are ours,
 Our eternal inheritance is Jehova-God.

My soul admits that this is too high for me. It is too wonderful and I cannot understand it. Indeed, my soul will never understand this, not even in eternity, but we can at least worship and praise him for this. The Lord is indeed my portion and my inheritance and he sees me to my end. This to my eternal amazement and praise.

February 10, 1747 - Twenty-second birthday

Friday, being the tenth of February I was twenty-two years old. In the morning these words occupied my mind, "I was cast upon thee from the womb. Thou art my God from my mother's body." My mind was fixed upon the mysteries of my formation, and they were too wonderful for me. I was forced to exclaim, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them." Before I came forth from my mother's womb I, who was yet without consciousness, but under condemnation through inherited guilt, was accepted by God in baptism. Even then the Lord knew me by name and already, as if in anticipation, set his seal upon me and said, "Thou art mine." I was constrained to think of God's preserving care over me, even as he delivered me from dangers, indeed from deadly perils and snares. O what wonderful mercies I discovered to be acknowledged before the Lord. They went beyond my ability to recount. And also the fatherly ways in which the Lord behaved towards me as concerning blessings in outward things. How all this humbled me in gratitude before him. Even though they be of a temporal and worldly nature, for me they represented a different dimension than what they did to the world. For me they were covenant blessings, for the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, and all things are mine, because I belong to Christ. What was even greater than all that were the wonders of divine grace displayed to me. Even in the midst of my youth I was taken from the midst of an evil world while so marvelously and graciously

led by God. The holy astonishment I felt in my soul was too great for me to show it aright. I again felt all the more desirous to consecrate my first and best energies to the Lord as I was constrained to bind myself to the Lord in his ways and to his direction. The Lord was good to my soul and afforded me the assurance that he would be my God and keep me as the apple of his eye.

On the following day of rest I was in the house of prayer under the service of the Rev. Temmink. His Reverence began the season of the Lord's Sufferings, and took his text from Matthew 26:3,4,5, the assembly of the chief priests and elders of the people, plotting together how they stealthily might take Jesus and kill him, but not upon the feast day, lest there should be an uproar. The divine Lord Jesus, who himself voluntarily had become God's guarantor for his people, had determined otherwise, as appears from the foregoing second verse. There the Redeemer had said, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." This was for me a blessed occasion. Rev. Temmink showed that it was necessary that the Saviour should suffer from the hypocrisy and craftiness of the Jews, in order to make reconciliation for the hypocrisy and deceit naturally found in his people. My soul was now deeply impressed with a profound sense of the love of Christ.

The throne of grace

The following week I had to struggle with much bodily weakness, but at the same time I received abundant tokens of the Lord's fatherly help and his preventing worse. I experienced the truth of the words, "My grace is sufficient for you; my strength is made perfect in your weakness." It was my inmost and constant desire to become thus more and more mortified to self and sin.

But on the following Lord's Day I was blessed to receive a special token of Christ's love toward me. That morning in my quiet time I found a ready access to the throne of grace and communed and conversed with the Lord as his child. The abundant supplications flowed from my soul in the name of my compassionate Redeemer. That evening I went up under the service of the Rev. Temmink. As I was on my way to church, I was enabled to present my soul's desires to the Lord. It was my heart's profoundest longing to comprehend the love of Christ in all its height, depth, length and breadth. As I entered the church they were singing the concluding hymn of the foregoing service. I did not know what they sang but my thoughts were strongly drawn to the beginning of Psalm 66:

Sing all ye nations to the Lord,
Sing with a joyful noise.
With melodies of sound record
His honors and your joys.

I said, "Indeed Lord, through your grace I delight in glorifying you, but so far I only have imperfectly learned the new song." Then it came to me that the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders united in saying, "Amen." I was

glad that the redeemed before the throne above glorified God and I know that I once would be associated with them. I wished, however, to wait for the Lord's time and serve his will as I remained here below, while conversing more and more with those in heaven. The Rev. Temmink's subject at this time was the ongoing record of the Saviour's sufferings in Luke 22:42,43 where it speaks of the sufferings of his soul while an angel appeared from heaven to strengthen him and his sweat, like great drops of blood, fell on the ground. What a blessed means of grace this was for me. I was made to realize so deeply the weight of the Saviour's sufferings and their aggravating circumstances that I could scarcely endure it. I only could endure it when I was transported with wonder and much affected by the divine love which the Lord Jesus had from eternity entertained for a wretch like me, and which made him to sustain this burden on my behalf. The preacher was greatly helped with penetrating insight into the aggravating circumstances of the Saviour's sufferings of his soul because that divine and all-worthy person was subjected to the hiding of his Father's face and the absence of his favor. No, even that his love were changed into anger, as it were, and that his wrath and displeasure were directed toward his Son. To this was added the power of darkness, directed against our Redeemer; for it was the hour of the inward assaults of the adversary. Even more: the world was in uproar against my divine Mediator. O, the profound sense of my Saviour's love to me that I experienced, as I was deeply aware that in reality I could have justly been called to undergo forever all that the Son of God here bore for me. "O precious Lord Jesus," I exclaimed, "at what tremendous cost have you bought me! And I am the reward of your labors, the seed you should see for your soul's travail? My divine love," I was compelled to cry continually, "that I was so borne upon your heart, O divine and blessed Mediator. O endless compassion of Christ! Who ever has comprehended it?" Throughout the sermon I melted in tears of love and wonder. Here I saw my soul's friend with his head covered not with dew but with drops of blood. How pure and ruddy was my love, the foremost among ten thousand and my soul was entirely filled with love to my Redeemer and Guarantor that I was forced to cry, "O how I am sick with love." My pen can only poorly describe what I saw in him. I was so affected that I feared my bodily strength would fail. No longer could I sit up straight. When after the service we were going home it was necessary that I be supported in the sleigh.

All that night I was able to do nothing but indulge myself in admiration of the incomprehensible love of Christ. Also the following day I continued in very intimate fellowship with the blessed Lord Jesus as the visions of his love continued to affect me. Yet, even though I was weak in body, I did receive the necessary help in my work for the Lord.

Tuesday was the set time of prayer with my female friends. Also then my compassionate Saviour was good to me. While my enemy sought to disturb my rest, piercing me with his fiery darts. I was however blessed again to find that, although the enemy greatly distresses me at times, my help is nevertheless in the Lord. It also worked for my good, as it taught me that in moments of fear I must seek my help in Christ, and not in myself. When in the evening we were together the Lord was present. It was my duty to lead in prayer. I requested that we sing

Psalm 18:1, 9, 10, 14, 15 (rhymed). The Lord provided me, his unworthy worm, with such an abundance of things to pray about that time and everything else were forgotten. I had such a close access to the throne of grace, that I could not come to a close. No time remained for other things and we concluded with the singing of the Lord's prayer in meter. And again my soul was impressed with a new sense of duty to the Lord.

This week I had to struggle with a feeble body. But it was accompanied with a deep sense of the love of Christ, as I was permitted to live from his grace while confidently trusting in his fatherly care. My enemies are continually busy as they seek to disturb my communion with Christ; but my King is the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in battle. He is with me and for me. Therefore, my enemies cannot obtain their end.

“The blessed sacrament”

The following Lord's Day was time for the Lord's Supper, and my soul panted after the blessed sacrament. There were many things that had disquieted me this week. Wherefore it occurred to me whether I should not forego this time. But experience has sometimes taught me that this may be a snare of the adversary, and that by waiting and heeding such a suggestion we may find the way shut up altogether. I even said to my soul, “O soul, this is not the place of your rest. You will not be quieted here, this is a field of conflict.” But the Lord Jesus rose up before my imagination, calling, as on the great day of the feast, “Whoever is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.” I was so much aware of my soul's desire and the need of the strengthening of my faith, knowing that all I could bring was an empty soul, that I could not withdraw myself from the presence of my King. On Saturday I had much freedom of access and was enabled to cry out of my depths and to make known my ways to my compassionate God. I received assurance that the Lord would be with me in the observance. On the Lord's Day I woke early with the following words on my mind, “Arise my love and come.” I arose immediately and said, “My soul's dearest friend, here is your needy servant, for what purpose shall I come?” I was aware that it was said to me, “I will cause you to know my surpassing love.” Surprising kindness filled my heart again and my soul could see again. My affections were now drawn out after God, and I was enabled to engage myself to the Lord in the tenderest manner and yield myself to his sovereign guidance. I heartily protested against the power of soul-corrupting self-love, saying before God with a certain godly poet:

Could I but find Thee by myself
 And pierce the veil unaided,
 O could I pierce my heart and discover all my sin,
 O Jesus give me power in light and darkest night
 To dethrone all selfish might and mortify my sin.

My sinful self-love weighed so heavy and was so intolerable to me. Yet, I felt

myself so deeply sunk in it, both in spirit and life, that my soul was full of anguish. I sought strength against the enemy from the head of the covenant, Jesus Christ. From my innermost soul I cried, "that I no longer live, but Christ who is my life may fully live in me, and that what now I live may be through the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me! I wish to be wholly consecrated to Jesus, and in the fullest measure be yielded and grounded in him." I went up under the service of Rev. Tyken. His subject was the prosecution in the story of the Saviour's sufferings in John 18:19-24. I was indeed blessed through this service. Again it was impressed upon me how Jesus suffered for me as my Guarantor, as this divine and glorious Lord was smitten in the face by a creature, no, by an ungodly man, and so was treated as the lowest of persons. Thereby freeing me from the blows of the Father's displeasure, and saving me from the buffetings of Satan which otherwise would have been my portion. In what high esteem was I led to hold the love of Jesus again. It grieved me that so many unconverted people did eat and drink a judgment to themselves, counting the blood of the Lord Jesus an unholy thing, devouring that which is holy like dogs. I had the same feeling about this during the singing of Psalm 23:

Praise to my God who feeds me like a shepherd,
Nothing will I want in his presence.

I was able to sing this with much confidence of faith and could heartily say, "Amen." "But," I thought, "how many unhappy ones are there, who join in the singing, yet have no sense of their need in Christ." What made me different from them? Everlasting and sovereign grace, nothing else. Again my soul was filled with holy dismay as I was constrained to say, "Lord, You have magnified your benefits and your faithfulness toward me." As I now was getting up to go to the table, I was privileged to look upon Jesus with the eye of faith. I dwelt on the fact that my divine High Priest was at the right hand of the Father for my benefit, from there to administer the redemption he had procured. O what rest for my soul, that I could entrust my lot and whatever might happen in my life to Christ, and leave all my cares with him, believing that the Lord would not leave me and withhold his grace and help, but be to me my all in all! I was allowed to indulge in sweet fellowship with the Lord's people and I asked the help of the Spirit in properly observing this day of prayer, not only one day, but every day. I was able to bring many requests forward with the believing assurance that they may be fulfilled. As I partook of the elements, I was filled with such a deep awareness of the love of Christ, that I barely bore up under it. My Saviour then spoke to me and said, "Peace be to you," and "Fear not, for in whatever you lack, there is a supply with me. Indeed, my peace I give to you, and my peace I leave with you." I received a sweet embrace with the kiss of peace, of reconciling love and fellowship from my soul's friend. I had to exclaim, "I am my Beloved's and his desire is towards me." After that I was totally exhausted.

In seclusion at home, the Lord again showed himself good to me in an experiential way, and I was again refreshed in so far that in the evening I was able to attend services under the Rev. Temmink. His Reverence's subject matter was the continuation of the Lord's sufferings from Matthew 26:63,64: "But Jesus was

silent. And the high priest said to him, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.'" Again I was permitted to see my precious Redeemer and Deliverer being treated as a lying person, and being under the pressure of all the solemnities of an oath, in order to utter the truth. Here the true God was sworn by a false and ungodly man. How deep a humiliation for so holy and divine a person, to be so unreasonably and wickedly adjured! But the Saviour, ready to give testimony of his godhead, was not silent as before, but immediately said, "It is so, you have said it." Indeed, he must be the true God, so he could be eternal life for his people. O the surpassing love of Christ, as the Saviour was willing to yield up his life, as he had voluntarily assumed the work of Mediator. I was impressed with a sense of the Saviour's spontaneous love. On this day I again formally bound myself to the Lord, as I sign, "I am the Lord's." February 26, 1747. The Lord's handmaid. D.V.B.

February 27, 1747 - "The gathering of the Lord's people"

The following day was a blessed one for my soul and much help was experienced during the gathering of the Lord's people. Again we were enabled to lift up our hearts to God and his ways. We found our souls warmed together. At the same time my enemies tried their utmost to draw me away from the Lord. The more I try to serve God and his cause, the more I discover that my enemy sets himself against me. But this makes me believe all the more that I am worthily engaged in the Lord's work. Their cunning and evil ways were not altogether unknown to me. I also discovered how every moment I am in need of Christ's preserving grace, so that I may not be overcome by the evil one. But it was made possible for me to yield and entrust myself constantly to Jesus' watchful care. My soul attentively contemplated the Lord's petition in John 17:15 where my Lord pointed out to me, "I pray not that thou would take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil one." How much was I strengthened by this prayer of the Lord Jesus! I understood that this was both a prayer and a demand. It forcefully stayed with me, as the Father would not and could not reject it. This was my quiet confidence and trust.

This week I experienced the continual and preserving care of Christ anew. I was enabled to live before him in holy trembling as my soul was kept in childlike fear. From moment to moment I lifted up my eyes to him for help. My soul rejoiced that in all Jesus is the mighty God. Therefore my courage will not fail. Every day a deep sense of danger did not leave me, but I also had a sense of the fulness of the love of Christ, and so I was given to the praise of sovereign mercy—"By grace I am what I am."

The following Day of Rest I was in a happy mood in unison with the Spirit. I also was blessed as the Spirit of grace directed my soul to active meditation upon

the Lord's ways and his dealings with me. I found much occasion for grateful acknowledgement. An overpowering sense of his mercies made me exclaim, "What shall I render to the Lord!"

In the evening I was in the house of God, under the service of my much beloved pastor and teacher, the Rev. Temmink. The text was the continued account of the Saviour's sufferings in John 18:28-33, where it says, "And they went not into the Judgment Hall lest they should be defiled, but might eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered him, 'If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over.' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.' The Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.' This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die." During the preliminary remarks (the exordium remotum preceding the prayer before the sermon) I received a real sense of the love of Jesus. The Rev. showed in a warm and effective way that, because the Son of God was treated as an evil doer and contemptible person, therefore the people of God now had peace through reconciliation with God. Under all the evil treatment and contempt they ever may be called to endure, the evil which the Lord Jesus experienced at the hands of his enemies, now was the ground on which all prevenient grace was bestowed, and the cause of all God's favor and love to me. How important it is that as believers we learn to trace every blessing received by us back to the atonement of Jesus Christ. Without that interest, it is impossible that one either would have received the renewing grace of God, or experienced his pardoning mercy. The introduction impressed me as well. It was taken from Leviticus 9 where it is required that the rulers of the people should lay their hands on the head of the bull calf, which was to be offered up, so that, as it were, their sins would pass over to the animal and it be made sin for them. I was much impressed with the striking semblance that Rev. pointed out, between what was required of the rulers of old and the act of the present rulers of the people in delivering Jesus to death. Indeed, the testimony borne to the atoning nature of the Savior's sufferings by Caiaphas, in saying that it was profitable that one man should die that not all the people might perish, I was led to reflect sweetly upon the blessed communion I enjoyed with the Saviour through faith. It was good to experience this means of grace. I was directed to hold the exalted love of Jesus Christ the divine Saviour in high esteem, who chose, although innocent, to suffer and be treated as an evil doer, because I stood guilty and condemned before God. Again the Saviour became most precious to my soul. I greatly desired to extol his goodness, his love and compassion, in order to give a good testimony on behalf of my Lord. I was made to acknowledge that the Lord did nothing but good to me. So deep a sense I had of Jesus as my loving Guarantor in his suffering for me, that my heart was set aflame with love in return for this most worthy one, my precious Boaz and Deliverer, my blood-relative and near of kin.

The judgment of God

The following day I received much help from God. I found rest for my spirit while performing my household duties. At first I was restless, but then my thoughts were fixed upon the great love my heavenly Father has for me, so that I was constrained to acknowledge with shame my blindness and say, "O Father, truly, thy way is good. If not so, you would lead me into another way." I also was privileged to experience my childlike relationship with God, as I was aware of his fatherly guidance. My heart was also touched by the condition of our country especially by the dreadful floods of lands and villages most recently. This deeply affected my feelings, and it seemed to me that this again may call for a solemn day of prayer. It seemed that the Lord was against us in judgment. I was led to humble myself sincerely before my compassionate Redeemer. I was much aware of my own guilt, and felt that every blessing had been forfeited. I even was forced to think God justified, though he would sweep all away with a stroke, ignoring the sighs and prayers of his people. In the midst of all this I had to think of the prayers which, on another occasion, had been offered by myself and the pious, asking that we might be preserved from our enemies. How unreservedly had we then given ourselves over to the Lord, as we desired that we might fall into his hand. Then he had heard our prayers and preserved us from our enemies. But now he himself was laying his rod upon us. My soul was then led into a frame of adoration and submission in which I was directed to pray for favor with our compassionate Judge and Father in Christ. The fervent language of my soul was that the Spirit might come like a flood, wash away the impurities of his people and so attain his end in a general humiliation and reformation.

On Tuesday the Lord was again present as we met. We were made aware of offenses in our homes and country, as well as of offenses in Israel as we were pleading for healing and restoration for a long time.

On Wednesday I empathized much with the people who had been brought into distress on account of the water. I became aware of what it meant to bear one another's burdens. Yet, at the same time, my heart remained convinced of the Lord's fatherly love and compassion. As we continued to be of such a favorable mind, it was hoped that things would again be restored. During my sighs for my distressed friends, these words were strongly brought to mind, "I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him." Then I was led to entertain a comfortable assurance, that the Lord would be with us and help us.

On Thursday I was led to approach the Lord in a holy way, while I did not cease to insist that he abide with us as I earnestly wrestled with the Spirit of grace and supplication both for myself and for all the people. My heart remained impressed with the Lord's kindness. Looking trustingly to him, I was aware that he could cause health to spring forth speedily for Zion. O that this might be the time of purging and the removal of offenses out of Israel. I was directed to bring my attention to the following facts, which led one to believe that the Lord would not yet depart. First, that the Lord still was accessible to his people in seclusion,

especially to those who lived close to him and to whom he imparted his Spirit in large measure, giving them the Spirit of prayer for country and church. Indeed, it was noticed that at times they had the opportunity to make known their desires, as they were inspired to pray with much freedom for country and church. Furthermore while they remained quiet in spirit, they were much encouraged to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Second, that to this and that one the Lord gave a gracious answer. For when the Lord is about to take his leave, he says, "Pray not for this people." But I had not met any of the pious with whom this had been the case. The Lord also supplies his ministering servants with special help as they faithfully stand before the Lord, serving his cause, his truth and his people. They know when they have received a commandment from the Lord to cry out and spare not. After all, the Lord does nothing in vain. I received assurance that he still had work to do among us. I was, indeed, directed to this and that one, on whose hearts God was working, and to another who was given to break through his difficulties, obtaining light, and so was added to the number of those who pray. I could not deny that the Spirit still accompanied the administration of the Word. Now and then the people of God experienced this. Also the people of God have been blessed in a special way by the administration of the Lord's Supper for some time. Power had gone out from Jesus to impart strength. I dared not deny this as a matter of personal experience. Indeed, I would gratefully acknowledge it. And also, the Lord still continued to give to his people freedom to plead the glory of his great name. To this the people of God can still cling, that even though they feel strongly that they have to constrain the Lord, they can still say, "For thy name's sake, O Lord, preserve us." This strengthened me, and I could believe that the Lord would not yet go away. I still could cleave to him as well, as I had to protest to the Lord our God, "I cannot let you go."

On Friday my soul had a blessed time. Everything not relating to God seemed insignificant. I found myself close to the Lord and experienced his presence much. Then I prayed and gave thanks, then again I sang and praised, over and again I had to sing Psalm 73:13(rhymed), "If I have thee for my God, how can another be my God?" I felt great inward delight in the Lord and found much freedom in presenting before him our general need.

On Saturday my heart was in a humble state, and I was fully aware of my guilt before the Lord as I confessed my sins to him and heartily embraced the Lord Jesus as I appropriated his righteousness and holiness, as well as his reconciliation and the cleansing of my guilt. For all this, my compassionate Redeemer imparted to me a strong sense of the atoning power of his blood.

On the Day of Rest the Lord was good to me in my seclusion, as well as in the public service. In the afternoon I attended services under the worthy servant of Christ, the Rev. de Bruyn. The sermon was concerning the eleventh Lord's Day, with the important emphasis on the name of Jesus and our faith in it. It was good for me to be there, as I was blessed with a lively insight into my glorious redemption and my deliverance from sin. Also, how in the blessed covenant I could find everything necessary for my salvation. The Rev. also showed that the prayers of the people of God must be founded on the power of that name, and that,

if the day of prayer now at hand should have desirable results, that it would have to come from the intercession of Christ. My mind was much impressed by this, and I desired to receive further instruction in this. Under, as well as after this, my heart was much encouraged, while it was clear from what a depth of misery and guilt my faithful Saviour had raised me.

“Lord, teach us to pray”

On Monday morning I awoke with these words on my mind, “Lord, teach us to pray.” I was led to consider how ready the Lord Jesus was to instruct us, as immediately upon the request of his disciples he taught them to pray. I became conscious of the great weight of the work to which the Lord was calling me and his people, asking us to pray; not only on the approaching day of public humility. That would not please the Lord, or my own or the people’s sense. We should continue to pray and intercede for such an ungodly and hardened people as that of the Netherlands, who rejected the chastenings of the Almighty, and by their deeds say, as it were, to the Lord, “We will not listen, we shall walk in the imagination of our own hearts.” Again I was directed to make these words my prayer, “Lord, teach me to pray.” Throughout that day my heart continued to follow God in the teaching and instruction of the Spirit which Jesus had acquired for me, singing the promise as I went, that if I could not pray the Spirit should teach me. All the while I had the joy of my heart continually being in a praying state. I was enabled to present my requests to the Lord, believing very much in the intercession of Christ. The Lord was still good to me as I continued to cherish the assurance that he would give help to his people.

On Tuesday morning when I again awoke, the Lord forcibly impressed these words upon my heart, “Remember, O people, what I have done unto thee, from Shittim until Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.” Step by step I was led to contemplate the cleansing love, deliverance and help which the Lord had granted me, to his people in general and to this and that one in particular, to the members of our own household, and what particularly impressed me, to Zion and our country. What wonders of deliverance, escape and preservation had the Lord wrought for us, and that against all hope and expectation. When and on what occasion did I find an awareness of the righteousness of the Lord, of those righteous deeds, of that divine forbearance, long suffering and faithfulness, which had been shone to us, but which so long since had been forfeited. I thought on this as my heart inclined to give thanks to God, extolling his loving kindness and forbearance. How incomprehensible God is to me in his essence! But he is this as well in his perfections as he exhibits them. I was continually driven to exclaim, “How great is your loving kindness, O God.” But through my meditations I was driven to humility as well, as I thought of the unfaithfulness, unthankfulness and fruitlessness with which we had answered the Lord’s kindness. How deeply did I feel my guilt! Indeed, I solemnly had to confess that I was the most unfaithful!

My guilt alone has forfeited all. The sins of the pious as well, and those of particular pious persons, humbled me exceedingly. I saw so many offenses in Israel, while Judah should at least be faithful with her God. There is all too little quiet communion with God and rectitude of life found with the people of God. What depth of carelessness and what absence of self-denial is there to be found in Zion! What a heartless and unholy state of life, a life lived as the world lives. What conformity to its sinful practices isn't there found in the children of God, who really should be the stay of the land. Indeed, I was aware of the little love and the divisions in the spiritual and mystical body of Christ. How little of the real communion of saints was there! All this greatly humbled me before the Lord and made me to confess, "How righteous would you be, O Lord, even if you would set yourself as an adversary against us, on account of Judah's abominations!" But I was cheered by the Lord's reply as well, for it was as if he said to me, "Remember my people, what I have done to you, that your spirits may be cheered. How often when all seemed hopeless, have I helped and delivered you, indeed, even now, in these terrible floods by which the country would have suffered devastation, if the winds had continued northerly or thereabouts." But also here the Lord has willed to spare us and lessen the calamity by sending us an east wind for days on end, and such delightful weather. The Lord seemed to say to me, "My hand is not shortened, that it could not deliver you, however dark the future." Indeed, the Lord seemed to say to me that previous experience of his faithfulness should produce hope in us, for with him is abundant deliverance. It was made easier for me to bring my own sins into my prayers, as well as those of Zion. If there may be hope of restoration, it is necessary that the Lord do something about it. Therefore I earnestly pleaded, foregoing personal mercy, and threw myself for refuge on the compassion of God the Father, through the blood of the covenant. I was then enabled to wrestle for reconciliation on account of my own sins and for those of the Lord's people, as I pleaded with the Lord, who commands the residue of the Spirit, for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, that the people of God again may be restored to their proper work and brought again into the hollow of his hand, so that they may be raised out of their sinful depths and healed. How it was made possible for me to beseech God earnestly to have offenses put away in Israel by his almighty grace. Many times I was constrained to say, "When he speaks, it comes to pass. Is it not the Lord?"

During the evening prayers the Lord was exceptionally good. It was again possible to unite ourselves with the Lord, and we presented our corrupt hearts to him, asking him that their depravity might be broken by the power of his grace. We also continued to urge him with our solicitations that he give us the Spirit, so that we might be more and more turned to him. It was our earnest plea, that our Day of Prayer might become a day of power, and that for us and the people of God it might be a day of the covenant in which our closeness to God might be manifested, he with us and with the Netherlands at large. As for those who were seeking the Lord, it was our fervent petition that for them it might be a day of entrance into the covenant, so that they may be brought into the fold. And that it may be that God would convince this or that unconverted person of his sin, by his

Spirit of righteousness and judgment. That the Lord may put his seal of approbation on our services on the Day of Prayer. We also found much to ask of the Lord for his ministering servants. O that his glorious arm might be with them and the Lord help them. Many were the requests which we found it in our hearts to present in the name of Christ, and in the awareness of our dependence on his intercession. We were afforded holy assistance to urge the Lord to spare and heal us, and to abide with us for his name sake. We did not let him go.

National Day of Prayer

On the morning of the Day of Prayer I was greatly moved to be thankful. I saw myself blessed on all sides, also my house, Zion and our country, so that continually I was compelled to exclaim, "What shall I render to the Lord?" I found myself as overwhelmed with privileges which forced me to give thanks. So far Zion had been preserved through the many privileges she had enjoyed indicating that the Spirit had not yet entirely departed. Thus far we have been preserved in the possession of the pure truth and the joyful sound of the gospel. The word of reconciliation was still being heard among us, and the liberating power of the truth was still experienced to an extent. I was led to feel the forfeiture of all these privileges very deeply. I was overpowered with a sense of God's boundless longsuffering and mercy toward our Zion. I could not find words enough to express my desire to acknowledge the divine benefits. I could no longer remain upon my knees, but fell with my face upon the earth. For a long time I remained in this grateful position, while singing with much feeling the 44th Psalm until the pause, and then also the 5th and the 14th verses (rhymed). My heart was greatly humbled while I did this and I was led to say, "What more can we desire from the Lord to do for Netherland's vineyard?" So far we had all privileges, while the Lord was patient to be gracious to us, showing us his compassion even though we had forfeited it. If I were to begin with myself and my house, I must altogether praise God even though he would cast us off. To me it seemed that God's longsuffering had reached its peak and that he had no choice but to take vengeance on a people such as we, who had sinned so greatly against the gospel, as we rejected the Son of God. My heart was touched by my own acts of unfaithfulness and evil, which stood as Dagon's in my heart. I was led heartily to lament them and bring them as foes with accusations against them before the Lord, surrendering myself anew to the Saviour, committing myself to live as near to the Lord as it is possible to do on this earth. The body of sin was an inexpressibly grievous burden to me, and again I could protest most earnestly against the sins of my heart, asking strength of Christ to die more unto sin. I also was enabled to mourn sincerely over the sins of our own household, and to bring all its offenses before our mighty Redeemer for him to remove soliciting his divine and mighty arm in doing wonders of grace. O, that I and my house may be brought to serve the Lord. How heavily did the sins of Zion's people weigh upon my heart for these

were also my sins. We are the members of one body. My eyes were opened to many offenses and I was stirred to wrestle for sanctifying grace and for a sign of the Lord's favor for his people. My soul received strength to continue in prayer because the Lord Jehovah our God was faithful and changed not however dark things appeared and however deep the degeneracy. God still remained the God of the covenant. He changed not. I was also helped to pray for the Spirit of conviction and conversion in behalf of so many unhappy persons who nevertheless bore the name of Christ, who thought they were alive, but who in reality were dead. While I continued in my supplications I found comfort in these words, "I have seen your tears, and your prayers have come before me; I will build up, and not cast down." O how much more did so compassionate an assurance stir me up to pray. I had to acknowledge that I was not worthy to come before the Lord with my request, but asked that it not seem evil to the Lord, that his unworthy handmaiden desired to do so. My heart was drawn to the words of Jer. 14:7-9, 19, 20-22. These served as the grounds for my pleas. I was encouraged to continue in prayer and was assured that the Lord would not cast us off. I remained so engaged until eleven thirty midday. Then my body was greatly exhausted and I was led to say, "Not by might, nor by power, but by your Spirit shall it come to pass." I nevertheless felt a desire to prepare and go up to the house of the Lord and present myself before him, together with his people and servants.

I went up under the service of the Rev. de Bruyn. His text was Jer. 5:19-22. It was an extraordinarily appropriate word and help for me. I was strengthened and confirmed in my devotions. God's servant was directed to speak to the condition of my heart, and to that of all the pious, so as to meet our situation.

Later, in the privacy of home, I again found the way opened, so that I was enabled to continue in supplication. In the evening I could trustingly commit the church and our country to the Lord, as I brought all our sighing to the all-prevailing intercession in dependence on our great Saviour, Jesus. Then I was blessed with sweet peace of soul and a sure belief that the Lord would bring it to pass.

"Disquieting circumstances"

After the Day of Prayer I was given a tranquil and confident state of mind and continued to have access to the throne of grace. As I retired that Day of Rest, my heart overflowed in asking for saving mercy and grace. After I finished praying, these were the words that came to mind, "It shall be a day of clouds and darkness, but out of the depths will I bring forth light."

From then on I was convinced that our condition would be a trying one.

For some time now I had to attend to my household chores among very disquieting circumstances, so I did not have the opportunity to record the Lord's loving dealings. I enjoyed much experience of the love of God, even to the extent at times, when my bodily strength failed me, that I was compelled to cry out, "Stay

me with flagons and comfort me with apples, for I am sick with love." At other times the world seemed so unimportant that I cried out, "O Eternal One, come quickly! O that I were with you! I pant for you with unquenchable desire." At the same time I was aware that the beginning of heaven is to serve God.

My attendance at public worship services in the house of God brought me great blessings, as the Lord was in his temple. The servants of the Lord also helped me in my joy. No religious service I took part in went without it being a blessing to me. The servants of the Lord, Rev. Temmink, de Bruyn, Schutte and du Marchie were also instrumental in directing, guiding and building me up. I experienced as many blessings of the covenant under their services as my finite soul was able to receive. But the thousand pieces of silver are due to the true Solomon, the divine Saviour, and the two hundred are for the keepers of my Lord's vineyard.

At the same time, however, I lived under the sense of a body of sin and death. I continually found a law at work in my members, contending against the law of my mind, bringing me, as it were, in captivity to sin. This caused me to live in a holy fear, while continually fleeing to Christ as my only helper against sin. But my gracious Redeemer helped me to do battle. Through him I trust that once I shall overcome and will not fail while being engaged in the conflict here. The Lord Jesus, the Prince of the Lord's hosts, upon whom is written "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" is with me and for me. His promise is, "I will be with you to the end of the world." Upon that I dare venture my all. The Lord will do even so.

April 9, 1747 - Our security in Christ

On the 9th of April my dear and divine Redeemer was good to me. It was the Lord's day. In the morning I was under the preaching of Christ's servant, Rev. Boscoop. His subject was from Rev. 14:1, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads." Right from the beginning the service brought a blessing to my soul. Before the prayer the preacher began his remarks with these precious words of the covenant, "Mountains may depart, and hills be removed, but my loving kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the peace of my covenant be removed, says the Lord, who has mercy on you." He explained that, however firm mountains and hills may be, when violent storms arise and the ocean tosses up its waves, there may be a loosening and moving, but that it was altogether different with respect to the love of the Lord's covenant. That will remain to eternity. With that there is not even the shadow of turning. In prayer, too, the preacher was blessed with an especially impressive view of the steadfastness of the blessed state of God's children in relation to him. The preacher said, "This is to our salvation. Our security is not to be found in our condition. It is not found in our experience, but has for its basis the divine, eternal, all-sufficient and continually effective righteousness and certainty of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, and his prevailing

intercession.” My heart said, “Amen, this is my salvation,” and my soul felt strengthened. My heart was warmed during the whole sermon, and I had a vision of the blessed state of privilege, in that I, too, stood with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, being the church militant on earth, and that his Father’s name was written on my forehead. I was inwardly moved as I considered this precious and privileged state.

After I returned home the Lord was close to me and I retired. Again I was blessed as I communed in Spirit with the blessed Saviour. I also was led again to surrender and commit myself entirely to be his. I prayed for more of this Spirit, so that I may be enabled to better conduct myself as one of his special and consecrated people.

Inadequacy and fear

All during the week I labored under a deep sense of the body of sin, and had a clear vision of my heart’s abominations, so that I was led to despise myself and say, “It only is by grace that I am what I am. There is not one sin of which the roots are not in my heart.” I found, however, that through this infinite grace I share in the first fruits of the Spirit, through an inward groaning, in expectation of the fulfillment of God’s promise, that the corruptible shall put on the incorruptible (I Cor. 15::53-58).

My mind was also much occupied with the desires of Zion, and also much affected by threatening evils, especially from the danger of our enemies, who now were so near. Inwardly I could approve, as I felt God justified if he should give us over to destruction, and bring in upon our land that boar out of the woods, I mean France, the enemy of God’s heritage. Yet, God would be righteous! The people and I had forfeited all right to be exempt from evil. Yet, at the same time, I found it in my heart to plead with the Lord to spare us still for his blessed name’s sake, and not to give us over into their hands. The Lord heard my groanings and did not reject my petitions. But I still continued to be distressed at the thought that the Lord might allow the enemy to enter our Land.

The following Lord’s Day my body was so indisposed that I could not go up to the house of my God. My heart was quietly preserved. I looked for the Lord to be pleased to visit me with his prevenient mercy in my quiet retirement. I was blessed as my condition was quickened and devoutly enabled to dwell upon the way in which the Lord had led me. My heart was moved to give abundant thanks for all the wonders of faithfulness shown to me. I was constrained to say, “Truly, God is good to Israel indeed.”

“Mijn Godt voedt mij als mijn herder, gepressen.

en laat mij geenes dings behoefvelijk weezen.”

(old Dutch from Ps. 23 rhymed)

“The Lord, as a shepherd feeds me, praised be he.

I on his faithfulness rely, as all my wants he will supply.”

The experience of so many displays of the divine faithfulness stirred hope in me. Again I was moved to yield myself unreservedly to the Lord, to his guidance and control. But while I was happily engaged in this manner, the following thought came to mind. Suppose that I should be placed somewhere else, away from my family and friends, by the Lord, who would, of course, be with me and lead me. It came to me with such force that I could not disregard it. But I felt greatly disinclined, and my heart was much against it. Then it was called to my attention that I just had renewed my commitment, which so often I had made, to follow the Lamb wherever he would lead. The question came up whether I had retreated and would not do this for the Lord. All I could say was, "Oh no, I have entirely given myself to the Lord without reservations." Then I became ashamed and there was a sudden change of heart as ever had been. I now was collected and submissive. I also could say again, "Father, your way is good and I want no other. Deal with me according to your counsel, your covenant and holy will. If I resent following you, incline my will, and make me like a child who holds its peace. Judge me not by my sinful inclinations, but by your good pleasure." My heart was brought into such a happy mood, being so entirely united with the Lord in such a state of filial trust, that I was permitted to confide and yield myself completely to my Father's sovereign dispensations. Now I could say with truly childlike trust, "Do what you will, but I say 'Amen.' What more do I desire than becoming your child and creature." I was saved from running ahead of providence and said to God, "I am unable to take charge. I will not search your ways but hereafter it will be clear to me. Nor do I ask for light regarding the way in which it shall come to pass. This is not the moment and the time in which this is to be made manifest. I will not tempt you. Indeed, it is my salvation to be permitted to wait upon you. But, Father, your helpless child asks for grace from you to be kept near you. And when in your providence you will point out ways, I ask that I then may be blessed to follow you." Even though God's ways might be dark and deep, I would willingly walk in them. I now was in the mood to thank the Lord for this happy state. I also believed that this was to prepare me for the future, already given to me because of the intercessions of my divine High Priest, Christ.

This day my heart was directed in peaceful contemplation to God, while I remained alive and much absorbed in reflection. I sang and prayed off and on and poured out my soul in thanksgiving. I received the precious promises of the covenant and was much allowed to plead for our land, which future seemed to be getting darker day by day, as the enemy began more clearly to show that they were plotting against us. My heart continued in earnest prayer to the Lord. They were now laying siege to Sluys in Flanders and making incursion into Cadsandt. When I heard this, it affected me much. I could justify the Lord in his dealings only as I realized my guilt, but it also stirred me to pray for Zion. O, that the Lord would turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness and be a source of fire to his poor church. I was preserved in the faith that the Lord would not entirely forsake us, as I had a deep sense of the sufferings of the Lord's people and servants in that part of the church where the enemies now were, since we know from experience that the mercies of the wicked are cruel. I felt deeply, that our authorities now needed

a double measure of wisdom and courage in order to remain faithful to church and country. My heart was stirred to pray earnestly for them, in particular that they might put aside all personal interests, and uprightly and unitedly aim after the promotion of the public good. It upset me exceedingly that so much was said against them. I continually had to say, "Lord, it is my fault as well that you deprive them of wisdom, if all they say of them is true, because I prayed so little for them, for it is only through you alone that kings rule and princes administer justice.

Spiritual conflict

On Saturday it was my intent to attend the services of the Rev. de Bruyn on the following Lord's Day, but I slept too long and so was prevented from going. I was sorry, however, as I would have liked much to be there. Yet, afterward I could see that it was the Lord's purpose to bless me in private. So, when I went before the Lord, I could not first pray for myself, as the needs of the church and country lay so heavily upon my heart. But while I tried to present those needs to the Lord, my hands weakened because the enemy of those who pray wrought so powerfully upon me, and God dishonors unbelief. I had to admit that the sins of the country and the forfeiture of all sparing mercy rose up before me, and I was compelled to say that nothing remains, but that God is a refuge in the day of trouble. But unbelief said, "No, there is no appearance of any divine interposition; all is beyond hope; all your mourning and prayer is for nothing, it will lead to nothing." Faith and unbelief fought together. I had to acknowledge that I had forfeited the privilege of praying and that it would be right if the Lord should not regard my sighs. Indeed, I felt that my sinning against holy things would justify God in giving us over. I could however, not give up the conflict. I wanted to fall at the feet of my Judge and beg for grace. I cried out against unbelief and said, "O, no, enemy, it is not beyond hope; the Lord lives and is always found to be our strength in the day of distress. At the same time I called upon God to confirm my faith. Then the Lord helped me. I obtained an open way to present myself to him, and out of the depths I cried to the Lord to be gracious to us and manifest his mercy to us. The Lord, who is good to those who wait upon him, brought back to my mind the promises which I had previously received of our Lord. Then I was enabled to continue my pleading and, as it were, bind the Lord to his own promises. My heart was much moved by these words, "Have you not known, have you not heard that the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary." There is no searching of his understanding.

Through these words my faithful Saviour seemed to say to me, "Do you not know? Is the experience of my faithfulness so strange a thing to you? Have you not had frequent signs of it? Have I ever been found unfaithful to my word? Has one word returned void or fallen to the ground, to give you reason for distrust? You surely know that I am he?"

My soul said, "Yes, my gracious Redeemer, I am persuaded that you are he who you will be. My experience of it has been repeated over and again on my

pilgrimage, both in body and soul.”

“Furthermore, have you not heard from all my people! Must not all of my children testify that I am not ‘yes and no’ but ‘yes and amen?’ What confirmations of this does not each one of them have on his way?”

I was constrained to say, “It is so Lord, I have often heard from your people that you are full of grace and truth.”

Then the Lord said to me, “You know that I am the Creator of the ends of the earth who neither faints nor am weary.”

By this I was taught that he was neither powerless nor without any means to accomplish the words and promises of his covenant.

“But you will say that my providence seems to contradict my promises,” said the Lord, “but there is no searching of my understanding. Afterwards I will make my wisdom manifest in what I do. However dark things may seem, yet, wait upon the Lord. Be strong. He will strengthen your heart; yes, wait upon the Lord.”

My faith was much strengthened, and I was stirred in my endeavors in behalf of church and country. I was constrained to say, “Faith needs no support of appearances. It is my privilege to wait upon you, and on your assurance I dare rest my all; you will bring it to pass.”

My faith did not loosen its grip on the Lord, and I did not cease my wrestling for country and church. I was now encouraged to believe that the Lord would not disregard the sighs of the needy, as these words were continually upon my mind, “There shall be a great deliverance in Israel.”

The new song

Today I was helped much while praying. In the evening I attended services under Rev. Boscoop. While going to church my heart was tender and sensitive to the fact of my privilege in going up in peace to the house of the Lord as the gates of the sanctuary still were open and that the shouts of soldiers were not in our streets while the pious in other places were groaning because of their enemies. My heart was broken under the kind and saving mercy of the Lord. My soul cried to God for grace, for my brothers and sisters who were denied the privilege I enjoyed.

The text of Rev. Boscoop this time was Rev. 14:2,3. I was blessed by this ministration, and my faith was strengthened from insight into the new song. I was filled with holy awe at my blessed condition of being redeemed from the earth, and so was enabled to learn the new song. In my thoughts I was drawn to the everlasting state, where, with complete commitment, I was enabled to sing and understand the new song. But I also earnestly desired that I may the better glorify God in body and spirit, since both were purchased at the precious price of the blood of the spotless Lamb.

On Monday I had a good day for my soul. The presence of God so impressed me that I decreased into total insignificance, because of my vision of his greatness. The Lord was good to me, his wretched one, as he caused me experientially to be

aware of his presence. I freely approached the throne of grace for country and church and was encouraged in constant expectation that God would make it well with Zion.

The Lord's presence in the conventicle

On Tuesday, my regular day for fasting and prayer, my heart was strongly drawn to the Lord. Our dangers weighed heavily upon my heart, although I could only say, "The Lord is my rock and righteousness, infinitely just in all his ways."

While going to the house of my female friend in the afternoon, where our meeting was scheduled, I was much affected by the hard-heartedness of our people, and I was forced to say, "Even if the Lord should make us like Sodom, all we could say is that we would have deserved it." Then I willingly confessed that his ways would even then be goodness and truth. Yet, I continued to sigh and cry, "O, our God, for your name's sake, give us not over into the hand of the enemy of your heritage." Also these words were impressed upon my mind, "You are the salt of the earth; pray then, for the peace of Jerusalem for they who love you shall prosper." I was greatly quickened in making supplication to my judge. Though I was much aware of my profound guilt, I was not inclined to hide my own unrighteousness, but wished to have the deepest recesses of my heart exposed to view, as I realized my guilt.

The Lord was present with us in our gathering. We had an awareness of the condition of Zion and the country. My female friend enjoyed much help while leading in prayer and had a good insight into the general and particular need. She obviously was under the visible influence of the Spirit of grace and supplication.

After our prayers, we continued to be with each other in a blessed way, as each member served as a means of inspiration and encouragement for the others. We were each other's eyes. Our friend who was to pray next was unable to do so because of bodily indisposition. When asked, I dared not decline, but assumed the privilege in the strength of Christ to place myself and my female friends on the road of blessing. I called for the 12th Psalm. While we sang it my spirit was tenderly touched and I received a trusting assurance that the Lord would give his agreement. My precious Redeemer was compassionately kind to me, the least of all saints, who is so unfaithful and so removed from what she should be. This filled my mouth with reasons on behalf of distressed Zion, and also enabled me to protest against our enemy France with all its Ahithophel counsels. I was greatly astonished at this.

We all committed ourselves to continue in prayer for country and church, as we sought to be supplied with grace and encouraged to persevere in the days of distress. We heartily renewed our choice to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, and persevere in our supplications to our blessed King. I was fully persuaded that the help we experienced was the fruit of the Saviour's effectual

intercession, and that our petition would not be rejected.

News of defeat in battle

As we went home we heard it announced in the streets that Sluys in Flanders had been taken by the French. My friend and I were greatly startled, but the Lord kept me from unbelief and discouragement, and my thoughts were drawn to the words, "There is no searching for his understanding; therefore, wait upon the Lord and be strong." I also tried to encourage my friend to remain strong in trusting the Lord, in whose help we hope.

On Wednesday, the Lord was especially kind to me, as he upheld my body of sin and death and I enjoyed much comfort concerning Zion and our distressed fatherland, while I continued to look in quiet expectation to God for help in our distress.

The following day I deeply sensed the afflictions of Zion in the places where now the enemy was. Their afflictions were my afflictions. I was full of anguish as I read in the Courier of the barbarous and vile treatment at the hands of the French. It stirred me all the more to protest against them at the throne, and to beg for righteous vengeance on that Assyrian and oppressor. A word of encouragement from Psalm 12:5 came to me, "Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord. "I will place him in the safety for which he longs." This cheered me greatly.

The Prince of Orange chosen as leader

During the afternoon I visited a female friend in Christ. We had a blessed conversation, and were stirred to reflect upon the wonders of the divine faithfulness towards us. While I was there, we received the unexpected news that the province of Zeeland had on the previous Tuesday, being April 25th, (1747) chosen his Highness the Prince of Orange, Stadtholder, Admiral, and Captain General. This news was an occasion for joy to me. Although this was of great satisfaction to me, I was, at the same time, conscious of the desire to be preserved from placing our dependence in man instead of in God. Yet, immediately the prayer arose in my mind, that the Lord would employ this Prince as a deliverer of the so greatly distressed Netherlands, just as he formerly had done with his fathers. I was aware of the wholehearted love I had for His Highness, ever since and in particular when I had become a subject of Christ. With great fervor did my prayer arise anew to God for His Highness, as I asked that this last branch of the blessed stem of the House of Orange, the shield of the earth, be the Lord's.

On the days following, we heard that it was the general desire through the whole of Holland as well, to request the authorities to elect the illustrious Prince

of Orange to the same honorable position. I desired fervently that the Lord would preserve us from internal upheaval, and incline the authorities to this desirable choice. How wise and lovely did God's way appear to me, in leading the general mind to a counselor and solicitor for the accomplishment of his eternal, wise counsel and good appointment. I was deeply led to experience that "there is no searching of his understanding" in that so many, being aware of the dangerous situation of our land, had their thoughts turned to raising from the dust this blessed, but in many respects, depressed shoot of the House of Orange, even while also many were at the same time disinclined to this course and even openly opposed to it. God was showing that now was the time to execute his holy purposes and turn the hearts of the opposers, like rivers of water, to do what was pleasing to him. Daily more cities were heard from who had proclaimed His Highness to this task and the joy of the people as described in the public pamphlets could not be read but with moistened eyes. My soul, too, was deeply affected, as I felt the profoundest satisfaction in this long-hoped-for choice. I continually prayed that the Lord would further bend the hearts of our rulers to acquiesce.

Confidence through communion

I greatly rejoiced that the administration of the Lord's Supper was to take place on the next Lord's Day. All through the week I looked forward to its observance. On Saturday I attended the preparatory service under Rev. Mr. Boscoop. His subject matter was Rev. 14, part of verse 4: "It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes." His introduction was from Gen. 2:24: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." It was a beneficial sermon for me. Mr. Boscoop showed that, as it is with marriage, so it is also with Christ and his church. Christ, the bridegroom of his church, also speaks to his bride and says, "Listen, O daughter, forget your people and your father's house, The King greatly desires your beauty. He is your Lord. Worship him." The true bride of Christ is also willing to follow the Lamb wherever he goes. It humbled me to hear him explain what it is to follow the Lamb. It was undeniable that, through grace, these things were in my heart, but it was lamentable as well that in reality I had as yet attained to them in so small measure. I felt an ardent desire to be more entirely the Lord's, and to follow the Lamb, wheresoever he went. I truly experienced these things at times, but I wished them to be more abiding. I desired to say so to God, and as Christ was my Lord, to worship him, aiming for higher degrees of sanctifying grace and in the spirit of a true virgin to love Christ more tenderly and unreservedly as the husband of his church. This was the resolve of my heart after that exalted service. I wished for the aid of the Spirit to enable me to mortify my members in the flesh.

Sabbath morning I awoke with a deep sense of being divinely blessed. I tried anew and without reserve, to surrender myself to Christ, as I again committed all

the faculties of my heart and soul to my dear friend and Saviour Jesus. Trustfully I turned to his blood with all my unfaithfulness and sin, since I last observed the Lord's Supper. As I cast myself wholly on him, I appreciated his righteousness as the only garment in which I could find acceptance before God. As I was dressing, I desired to be like a chaste virgin, most pleasing to Christ the husband. In my expectations I was directed to the fulness of the covenant's grace, as without Christ I felt that I could do nothing.

Then I attended the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Schelluynen. I was deeply impressed with the loving kindness of God, as he allowed me to live in this goodly land, affording me the opportunity of going up to his sanctuary, even though these blessings had been altogether forfeited. As I entered the church and the table caught my eyes, my soul exclaimed, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; no, in the very sight of the foe."

The preacher was enabled to adapt his speech to my feelings. His remarks before prayer were on the words, "It is in our hearts that we make a covenant with the God of our fathers." My soul said, "Yes, I will heartily do so," as anew I formally pledged myself to the Lord. The subject matter of the sermon was as much in accordance with my feelings. It concerned Psalm 25:3: "Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame." The introduction emphasized, that of all the names borne of God, none is more specific than that of a rock. The Lord was present under this means of grace. His servant exhibited much zeal in his work, and my faith was so strengthened that all my difficulties vanished. I unreservedly desired to entrust all things to my compassionate Redeemer and so let the whole weight of my salvation, my destiny and all the circumstances of my life, rest and remain with him and the everlasting covenant with all things, so well ordered and sure. In this is all my salvation and desire. I firmly believed that never should I be made ashamed in my hope.

When the preacher left the pulpit he announced Psalm 130:3,4 (rhymed) which stanzas I sang with much animation, as I again was heartily enabled to commit myself to the Lord and his service as I experienced a tender, filial desire to be enabled to be faithful.

I also had a strong and childlike desire for the good of Zion and our country. I longed for a sensible token for the good of both. So I expressed my desire to God in the company of the people to bind him in covenant to us through this exalted observance. As my dear and faithful Redeemer permitted me, this worthless clay, to present many requests to him for Zion and the land, while I continued to look for some encouraging word, these were impressed upon my mind, "You are my witnesses that I am God." My dear Redeemer asked me if that were not enough to venture all things upon. This filled me with shame, and I had to exclaim, "O, how great a condescension to make such unfaithful dust to witness that the Lord is God." Such was the acknowledgement I was obliged to make. And the Lord said, "Since I am God, you may build upon the promise of my covenant. Though all be darkness, I still am God almighty."

It is beyond my power to express with what confidence of faith and enlargement of soul I was blessed as I partook of the elements. As I now fully trusted my

Redeemer's faithfulness, I cast myself upon the Lord and had intimate fellowship with my divine head, together with all members on earth as well as with those glorified above. I fully believed that the Lord would not depart from our country and entertained the assurance that he would open a way to deliver us, may it be ever so deep. At that moment the preacher announced in conclusion the last verse of the Lord's prayer:

Amen, that's the Saviour's name! He is the faithful, true Amen.

I was enabled to sing this with much feeling.

Afterwards, as I retired, the Lord was still near me. My spirit was so enriched that I felt pressed to sing and give thanks. I sang Psalms 31:19; 33:10, 11; 36:1, 2, 3 (rhymed), and the second stanza of the ten commandments in meter. I had a blessed time.

In the evening, I had again the privilege of going up to the house of God. The Rev. Mr. Boscoop preached. He now concluded his discourse on Revelation 14, taking for his text the latter part of the 4th, together with the 5th verse: "These have been redeemed from mankind as the first fruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless." The introduction was from the Song of Solomon 6:8,9. Here the Lord waited again on me with his grace and he disclosed to me my unmerited privilege and blessedness. At times I had much to do to restrain my feelings, so clear and impressive was the view I had of my blessed relation to God, as I thought of his exalted purchase. The preacher was much assisted in the service and exhibited much animation. My body tired. O, how finite I am; how little able to comprehend the covenant love of God! There is a rest waiting for the people of God.

God's unsearchable ways in the national election

On Monday too I experienced the goodness of God. I felt continually strengthened for every duty and was allowed to look to God in faith for church and country, especially under the present circumstances, as concerning the election of His Highness, the Prince of Orange. My heart went out to God in prayer, that he may incline our authorities to yield their assent, in order that the Confederation might be preserved. I also felt some assurance that the Lord would incline them to this desirable course.

In the meantime we kept hearing from many places which had declared for His Highness, and in our Amsterdam the general consensus was for him as well.

In the evening I engaged in prayer with some pious people.

On Tuesday morning we heard to our surprise that His Highness would be proclaimed as Stadtholder, Admiral and Captain-General from the State House. It seemed like a dream to me, because I was aware how much some were opposed to it. I adored God, who showed the truth of his words, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do my pleasure." His ways are unsearchable. Besides my astonishment and delight, that His Highness was to be proclaimed, I also perceived it as a

blessing granted by God to me and his church in distress. Words could not express the warmth and affection I felt for His Highness. The Lord bound me in attachment to the Prince, as it were, and inclined me most fervently to pray for him. O, that God would make him like Zerubbabel, as a seal on his right hand, and pour out upon him the most precious blessings of his grace. I could not cease praying for him.

Throughout the day I was filled with wonder at God's unsearchable and exalted ways, and was prompted to say continually, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in my eyes." Yes, from whatever point of view I looked at it, it continued to appear wonderful. I felt much cause for rejoicing in heart in what the Lord had done, and I exalted in the work of his hands. In the course of eight days, the whole of the seven provinces unanimously declared for his Highness, Zeeland having done so first on April 25, while Amsterdam (North Holland) did so on May 3. O, adorable counsel displaying nothing but divine wisdom! The joy of the people was generally so great that no pen can describe it.

Mid-day was my time for prayer with my female friends, who shared in my surprise and joy as well. We expressed the exultation of our feelings at what God had done and proceeded to sing Psalm 100 (rhymed). The Lord assisted us much in prayer as we presented him with our thanks for the surprising change in the public mind, and asked our compassionate God for further approval. We also asked for all necessary grace for His Highness, for wisdom, light and guidance in his responsible position, and further committed him to the preserving care of God's protection against the snares of his enemies. We concluded by singing Psalm 66:1,2,4 and 10 (rhymed.)

The word of God on a day of rejoicing

On Wednesday I received a blessed time for my soul, as I enjoyed much peace. Much of my time was spent in thoughts for Zion and our land. I found much freedom in prayer for His Highness, our greatly beloved Stadtholder.

In the evening I was privileged to go up to the House of the Lord for prayer, under the ministry of my tenderly loved father in Christ, Rev. Mr. Temmink. My heart went out to God for him, because I knew how much he was in need of assistance. He remarked that on account of the sudden and unexpected nature of this wonderful occurrence, it had not been in his power to adapt his subject to the circumstances. So far he had been engaged in exposition. For his text of the moment he had chosen Luke 7:44-47. As soon as he appeared in the pulpit, he began exhorting the people of God to recognize this laudable event. He also felt constrained to say that it was wonderful in his eyes. In the prayer before the sermon he made fervent supplication for His Highness, begging God to endow him with all needful grace; to be with him as he had been with his father, and make him a second Gideon to deliver the people out of the hands of the Midianites. My soul

responded to say, "Amen," and united with him in prayer in tenderness of spirit. The preacher entered into the spirit of his text, although he treated it briefly in order to reserve time for remarks suitable to circumstances at the end. He especially made an impression in showing from verse 47 that love is a consequence of the forgiveness of sins. His remarks were also aimed to shame the people of God for leaving their first love, reminding them that not only were they first forgiven, but were as yet daily forgiven so much. I felt deeply ashamed of my own lack of love. My heart's language was, "O, that the love of Christ might more forcefully constrain me to love him in return. The preacher's remarks in conclusion concerning the circumstances were surprising and excellent. He showed his heartfelt satisfaction with what had transpired, and strongly urged the people of God to continue with their supplications for the Lord's presence with His Highness.

After the service the streets were so crowded that it was difficult to pass through them. The people's rejoicing was great. It reminded me of the crowning of Solomon, when it was said, "The noise in the city was such that the earth rent." So it was here. I, too, rejoiced greatly with all the pious and I prayed for His Highness while I continued homeward.

For several days in succession my soul had a blessed season. I was enabled to have a filial confidence in God; I enjoyed much of the divine presence in secret, and labored much in prayer for our beloved Stadtholder. Indeed, by day and night my heart was drawn to God in prayer for His Highness. Several times as I woke, I felt impelled to pray for the Prince, and with such help, that I was unable to cease. I also had a deep impression of the need of that beloved Prince in so evil a day as this. But I was cheered by these words, "God who has called him is faithful." This gave me the motive to persevered in my prayers for His Highness.

The reign of God and the arrival of the Prince

This Sabbath was a blessed day for me. In the evening I communed much in secret with the Lord Jesus and felt sweetly assured that I belonged to my Beloved and that his desire was for me.

In the afternoon I waited on the ministry of Christ's worthy servant, Rev. Mr. Temmink. As I went to church, my mind was exercised as I saw the orange cockades and ribbons that people wore as a token of their regard for our Prince. I felt both jealous and ashamed as I saw the readiness with which the people assumed a badge as token of their respect for an earthly Prince, while I made so light an exhibition of my regard for Christ. It caused me to pray earnestly for the sanctifying grace of the Spirit.

Mr. Temmink's discourse on the Catechism at this time was on the 19th Lord's Day, 50, 51, 52, 99. This was a great means of blessed grace for me, and the preacher was a great source of my joy. I was so strengthened and my hope in God was so confirmed, that I could overlook all difficulties of toil, dangers, the

might of foes and all sorrows with uplifted head, because my precious Lord was at the right hand of the Father, and that for my benefit. This glorious state was meant to accomplish the purposes on my behalf, as his coming to the judgment seat could only be for my comfort and support, as I expected the very same person to be my judge from heaven, who earlier had presented himself before the tribunal of God on my behalf. How compassionate then must that judgment be! My soul said, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and my eyes shall behold him and not another. My veins are consumed with longing within me."

For several days I earnestly desired to converse in heaven. This poor earth only seemed to me to be but the earth, and I wished my heart to be where my treasure was. I much shared the spirit of prayer as I had easy access in behalf of Zion while I was closeted, especially in behalf of the pious under the foe's power. For the country, too, I took much freedom to pray. I continually felt the force of the exhortation that says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." In a special way did I continue to pray in behalf of His Highness our Stadtholder who was expected to be with us any day now.

It was now Thursday, May 11th and Ascension Day. News came that His Highness would arrive that morning. My heart sang and sighed to God Psalm 24 (rhymed).

That morning I continued in supplication for His Highness while at about 11:30 the frequent discharge of ordnance was heard and the bells began to ring. My heart stirred within me, and my very body was affected. I thanked the Lord for the happy arrival of our Prince, and that he had been safely brought to us over the mighty waters. My heart said, "Thy help be in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth, who keeps truth forever; and the Lord be the sword of thy help and the shield of thy excellency." I was prompted to invoke the choicest and dearest blessings of grace upon His Highness.

In the afternoon I went to church and attended services under Rev. Temmink. The streets were crowded with people on their way to see the Prince. We met many of his carriages and retainers. It affected me so, that I had to step aside and praise the ways of God. My soul said, "O Lord, my compassionate God, all this preparation is for the purpose of providing a sure refuge as our leader who is willing to consecrate his all to the promotion of the interest of country and church. For it was a remarkable proof of the praise-worthy interposition of God, that on the very day that His Highness was chosen Stadtholder in Zeeland, he had been led to address a letter to the Estates of Zeeland, in which he proffered his person and substance for the promotion of the interest of freedom and religion. The letter was dated on the very day, namely April 25, at Leeuwarden, on which day he was proclaimed a special token of the Lord's hand in the matter. My heart was deeply affected by God's loving care for Zion and our sinful country.

Rev. Temmink's subject was the usual one for the time of the year from Acts 1:10,11. Preacher and Spirit were much at one, and my soul was greatly stirred. The preacher interceded greatly for His Highness in his prayers.

In the evening the whole city was illuminated and the joy was indescribable.

The worldly mirth saddened me as I found my joy in the Lord. But the hand of God was also and especially to be recognized in the fact that, in spite of the extraordinary nature of the demonstrations, not an accident occurred, nor were there any marked improprieties.

Anguish of spirit

For the rest of the week I experienced an exceedingly good time. I enjoyed sensible fellowship with my dear Saviour, and was continually stirred to pray, even to proffer myself to the Lord to continue upon the earth that I might continue to pray for country and church.

But I also experienced the continual assaults of the adversary, so that my retirement, which indeed was a blessing to me, was also a place of conflict, during which I was attacked by the fiery darts of the evil one, as I was afflicted with suggestions of atheism, which caused me to say to the enemy, "You come as a devil and I protest against your suggestions. My faith desires to adore that which you dispute with the low and carnal conceptions of God which you seek to plant within my breast so as to hinder me in prayer." I had to make a great effort not to dwell upon the subject, and was forcefully led to say to myself, that to know God aright, is the result of grace.

I was in much anguish of spirit as I retired. But this confirmed me in my conviction that I could regard myself, not as a child, but an enemy of the devil. I also received special help from Christ against his devices.

Then the adversary began to work powerfully on my body of sin, so that when alone, my foes within me bestirred themselves, so that I had to ask, "From where do these things come? And what abominations are these within my heart? They are legion; they are many." But in spite of all, the enemy did not get his way, as by his assaults I was driven to my divine helper Christ and experienced such reasonable assistance that I had to say, "Hell and devil worked for good to me." It also rendered me more prayerful, and brought me love and mercy through the experience of the Lord's compassionate covenant.

As I awoke on the morning of the following Lord's Day, I was exceedingly humbled as I thought of my brothers and sisters in Christ who now were in bonds and in the power of our enemies, while I awoke in peace upon my couch, and in a land where Zion's ways were not mourned because none came to her solemn feast. For me the gates of the sanctuary were open, and I was free to enter them. I opened my heart to the Spirit's teachings and was enabled to put myself in readiness for whatever might be ahead of me. I left to attend the ministry of Christ's worthy servant, Rev. Mr. Boscoop.

As I took my seat, I felt an earnest desire to listen, knowing by experience that this is of the Lord. But I especially longed to hear the Father's word as the subject was from Hebrews 9:27,28: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

This was a great blessing to me from beginning to end. It was a source of high rejoicing in the Spirit for me, that it was appointed to me once to die and after that to undergo the judgment, because Christ having been offered for me, had taken away all my sins and completely robbed death of its stings. So I should see him the second time without sin, as through grace I was numbered among those who looked to their Redeemer for salvation. How greatly was my soul affected by the Saviour's preeminent love in freeing me from the power of death and sin and from the law's condemnation which is the power of sin. I had to exclaim, "O, how great the blessedness of living in the sure and joyful expectation of once seeing Christ without sin, while yet I have to cope with a body of sin and death. 'Wretched man that I am!' But how short of conflict; how light the affliction." It seemed that this vehicle of grace enabled and inclined me once more, courageously and with joy to pursue anew my Christian journey. I could surmount all difficulties. My soul said, "O, the way is growing shorter. My blessedness is to rejoice in what worldlings dread, when I die. I shall behold my Redeemer without sin. What a rare sight that will be! Here my soul sees as through a glass darkly, yet even now often sweet, but then it will be a discerning from close by without sin. The end will make up for all inconveniences along the way. But even now, God is not a barren wilderness to me; and therefore, I shall wait upon him." The preacher said, "Be not too anxious for dissolution, for there is work for you to be done here, while it is appointed unto you once to die." There is no doubt about that. My soul said, "Indeed, I would fain still do something for my Lord upon the earth. May it be so that I live expectantly and with the heart of a stranger and sojourner while having my conversation in heaven as I look for my Saviour. I was greatly strengthened during this service, as the preacher was led to speak in special adaptation to my case. It came as a message from my Father's house, and I learned of the greatness of the goodness that was laid up for me. And also about what would happen hereafter. I said, "The journey will come to an end." And I sought to encourage the pious to commit their way to the Lord.

Then I spent profitable time while closeted, and I was enabled to give myself to the Lord and his guidance and to be wholly his.

In the evening I had the pleasure of going to the house of God and attending the ministrations of Rev. Mr. de Bruyn. He took all of Psalm 21, and his discourse greatly animated the Lord's people as he encouraged them to entrust themselves wholly to their King, and assured them that he would provide for them and destroy their enemies, turning them back as he will make ready his arrows against them. The preacher applied the whole Psalm to the Lord Jesus, the great King of his church, to the exclusion of David. He made precious remarks which served greatly to encourage and cheer my mind regarding the Lord.

Perseverance in prayer

On Monday, I still had a very profitable time. My mind was

occupied with prayer for myself, our household and for God's Zion, as well as for our afflicted country. My spirit was especially occupied with prayer for his Highness, our Stadtholder, my heart's beloved, who about on that day was to take the oath of office in the Hague. How heartily I entreated God for all the necessary and appropriate grace and help that were required for the very important position to which he now solemnly pledged himself. I was deeply impressed with the recorded words of Psalm 29:21-27 and hoped that they might become true in him. Amidst all my busy occupations, my heart was still with our Prince. I enjoyed much assistance in every duty and was permitted to be a witness for Christ. My mind was in a truly happy frame. Mr. Boscoop's discourse was a great support to me as I found my adversary continually lurking about. But the Lord was on my side so that his attempts against me were of no avail.

In my privacy that evening I was enabled to raise a feeble sigh of thanksgiving to my gracious God for the fact that my condition was so agreeable and for that I was so compassionately dealt with and so showered with benefits. The public prayer meeting that was to begin on the coming Wednesday was much on my heart, and my soul fervently desired grace and readiness for our ministers and for all the pious.

On Tuesday I awoke with these words on my mind, "Thou hast kept mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." My soul said, "Indeed, my gracious Redeemer, so far you have helped me, and it is by your grace that I am what I am, and the experience of your fatherly care encouraged me still to trust in you and to commit myself to your cause, as I am being assured that you will not suffer me to be moved."

As we meditated upon the way the Lord had dealt with us, the Lord was present in a special way during prayers. We remembered his gracious answers in peculiar emergencies both of the country and of the church, both here and also in Scotland. This led us to pledge ourselves anew to persevere in prayer. We much experienced the assistance of the Spirit in our devotions, and formally renewed our covenant responsibilities regarding the supplications for a double measure of the Spirit, suited to the double work to which we are called. We earnestly sought of God his abiding presence and manifest tokens in the outpouring of his Spirit. We were encouraged to continue in our prayers, and enabled to believe that the Lord would give ear to the sighs of his servants and people. We sang, among others, some stanzas from Psalm 31 (rhymed).

On Wednesday the Lord was good to me in a special way. I was strengthened to renew my covenant engagements, and to yield myself up to be entirely the Lord's, as I desired the inward renewing grace of the Spirit, so that, more and more, I might be made ready before the Lord for the important work of prayer which now occupied us. I sought strength against the onslaught of sin, and with God's servant David, I prayed, "Cleanse me from secret faults."

All through the day my state was one of faith and reflection and I received assurance that the Lord would not be displeased with his people's prayers. My mind dwelt much on certain stanzas from a poem by the late Lodensteyn, that

connoted the woeful cries of the church of Jesus Christ in faithful prayers to its Lord, especially with the 27th and following stanzas with their recurring and believing refrain: "We will not let thee go." This also I could faithfully repeat.

As also was the case with the Lord's servant publicly. Namely, I went to hear the Rev. Mr. Schulte. He took for the subject of his discourse the words of Psalm 50:14,15. The Lord was in his house of prayer, and his servant was greatly helped, both as he introduced the subject, and in his prayers. Many of my private exercises were confirmed. I, too, experienced the presence of the Lord, while the speaker went on at length. I was especially encouraged as I considered that the first prayer meeting was so clearly approved of by God. After the exercises I enjoyed much freedom in supplicating God, who owns the residue of the Spirit.

Also the following day the Lord was very close to me, as to me, his undeserving one, he freely imparted the Spirit of prayer. I was particularly impressed with the great outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which we were to celebrate on the next Sabbath.

Pentecost, 1747 - and the Prince's safe arrival in Zeeland

On that Lord's Day, I was enabled to pray with great earnestness for the sending of the Spirit, with a more abundantly manifest outpouring. I was enabled to persevere in my supplications without being rejected.

Our Prince was at sea at this time, and on his way to Zeeland. I had followed him with my prayers, but now the adversary distressed me as continually he made me fear that he would be intercepted by the enemy, and that so we would be disappointed in our expectations. I began to cry to the Lord. I was ignorant of the fact that I had placed my all on the Prince. But now my expectations continued to be from the Lord and was looking to him only for help. I could not believe that so wonderful and divine a procedure, as that regarding our Prince, should be for naught. I was led further to thank God for his preserving care for His Highness. In the midst of my cries, these words were powerfully brought to my mind, and restored my composure, "My hand shall ever abide with him, my arm also shall strengthen him." (Psalm 89:21.) I said, "It is enough Father; I entrust him to your care. You will protect him from all evil." All concern regarding the subject vanished from my mind.

The events accurately corresponded with my expectations, for on Tuesday we received tidings of his safe arrival in Zeeland. On that day we were much blessed in our hour of prayer, as we experienced much assistance.

So we also did on Wednesday in the public prayer meeting. The services were conducted by Rev. Mr. Kulenkamp. He took as the subject of his discourse Job 11:13, 14, "If you set your heart aright, etc...." My heart was warm, and I was ready to accompany those who led in prayer.

This week my mind was composed and I was greatly helped in prayer.

A preview of heaven

And the following Lord's Day was a precious one to me. As I retired during the morning I was experientially and believingly led to a view of the love and goodness of God and of his infinite compassion. At the same time I was ashamed for having such a low conception of God, and of the little knowledge I had of his perfections. I panted after a closer and clearer acquaintance, and received a deep impression of the state of glory, where it would be granted to me to behold the Lord, close at hand, so that I might contemplate his perfections in the face of Jesus Christ. O, how encouraging and supporting it was to me. Then I said with a certain poet:

To see thy face, to praise thy name,
Shall be my long employ. (Translation)

It was good for me to draw near to God. Then I heard what was a special blessing to me from my beloved spiritual father, Rev. Mr. Temmink. It was a discourse on the 22nd Lord's Day of the Catechism, 57,58, the resurrection of the body and eternal life. The Lord was present, and I would fail, should I attempt to give any description of this precious discourse. It was permitted to the preacher to ascend to Pisgah's top, and take a view of the goodly land, and so I was blessed with such a view of heaven, and what was laid up for me there, that I was scarcely able to endure the sight. I felt powerfully drawn towards the heavenly state, while at the same time I joyfully desired to serve the purposes of God here below. With an eye fixed upon my gracious expectations, I was encouraged anew to venture everything upon God. His mercy endureth forever.

The prayers of the righteous

The week following I received much help on my Christian journey, as in all respects I was kindly guided by my heavenly Father. As I was closeted, I received much of the Spirit of intercession for Zion and our country and an uncommon measure for our Stadtholder, who was, as it were, firmly fixed in my heart. God's presence was manifest, both in the public and private prayer meetings.

On Wednesday I sat under the preaching of Rev. Mr. Phyfers. The subject of his discourse was James 5, the last part of verse 16, "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." Here, too, I was not left without a blessing. I felt the desire to be all the more taught of the Spirit, and so qualify as a righteous person, as I am through the infinite and sovereign grace of Jesus Christ, so as to offer effectual prayer. However, my mind was affected by the irreverence of the people, and amid all the commotion my heart arose in prayer to God, asking that he would come to work with power among the vast multitudes, who knew not their

right hand from their left, that the excellency of God might affect their hearts, and they receive a salutary impression of his presence. As the exercises proceeded, my composure was restored, so that I could engage in them in a devout manner, and believingly plead the promises of God, that he would abide with us and arise to help his church and turn to foolishness the counsels of the enemy. I especially experienced help in prayer.

But as I was favored this week with pre-eminent tokens of my heavenly Father's compassion, neither my inward nor outward foes were quiet. I found many sinful feelings stirring within to thwart me. I was in severe conflict, but through the grace of my loving Guide and King, I was not overcome. I even saw that my enemies did not attain their end, for the Lord made it work for my good, as he subdued my spirit of self-dependence, teaching me to live in holy fear, enabling me to sympathize with others, and teaching me to esteem highly and acknowledge the grace of God, through which I am, what I am.

Also on the following Sabbath I was not left without a blessing in my Father's temple. In the afternoon I attended service by Rev. Mr. Boscoop. His subject was the 23rd Lord's Day, 59, 60, 61. My spirit was blessedly quickened under this precious means of grace, as the preacher was impressively enabled to exhibit that weighty doctrine in a heartfelt manner, which is the pillar of our Christian faith. Throughout he did this with uncommon ability to my heart's experience. I received a clear view of my blessed condition and privilege as one who was righteous in Christ before God, and heir of eternal life through the imputed satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of the Lord Jesus, which I had been enabled to embrace by faith, and which were so imputed to me as if I never had or committed sin, even as if I had performed the obedience which Christ had performed for me, without any merit of mine, out of mere sovereign and infinite grace. How deeply was I affected with joy and astonishment. Constantly I had to acknowledge my blessed security in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus who was the only and eternal foundation and pillar of my salvation. In my own estimation I dwindled into nothing as I contemplated my blessed state because my transgressions were forgiven and my guilt washed away by atoning blood. It was my heart's desire to walk softly before the Lord.

After the service I was in the company of some pious friends. A blessing accompanied us. We talked about the ways and dealings of God with us and with our Zion. We sang songs with animated soul with a sense of being in God's presence. One of our worthy ministers, tenderly loved by me, led us in prayer before we separated. He was favored with great assistance in pleading for Zion and the country.

That evening, as I returned home, my heart was exceedingly affected by the frivolity of our people and the public profanation of the Sabbath. I could not but groan in view of the abominations of the land. I felt that, unless the Lord interposed for his great name's sake, and for the remnant of the righteous, we could not be saved from destruction.

News of victory by the English navy

The following day I received a deep sense of the dangerous situation of our church and country. At the same time I received much freedom to pray for them, and continued in earnest in my supplications for assistance against our enemies.

On that same day, the thrilling news was received that God had employed the English fleet, under Admiral De Anson, to turn the counsels of our proud foes to foolishness. The English gained a complete victory over a powerful and richly laden fleet of the French, which had set out on a secret expedition. That proved a great deliverance to us. I was greatly humbled under a sense of the Lord's unmerited favors to us, and I was encouraged to continue to pray that the right hand of the Lord might do wonderful things, so our enemies might know that the Lord was God.

On Tuesday, my regular day for fasting and prayer with my beloved female friends, the Lord was good to me as I retired and as we met with each other. We pleaded for Zion and our country. And we could not let the Lord go without blessing us, as we had faith that the Lord would help us in our distress.

Concern for the Dutch army

On Wednesday the Lord was very near to me. I was blessed as I had close fellowship with him, while I pleaded for myself, for our church and for our country. I was especially enabled to plead for our army, which, as we heard, was now possibly engaged with the enemy. Our defeat would be such a dreadful blow to the church and the country. My heart was in a very prayerful mood. I exclaimed, "I would that the Lord would make bare his glorious arm and be our soldiers' helper and the wisdom of our officers." I could not stop crying to God.

In the evening I attended a public prayer meeting, conducted by Rev. Mr. Kulenkamp. When I went my heart was filled with prayer for the servants and people of the Lord. I was much affected during the meeting. The preacher took for the subject of his remarks Exodus 15:11: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods, etc...." He received much help in the brief exhibition of his subject. There was evidence of the divine presence during prayer, and a remarkable stillness came over the assembly. I could heartily agree with what was said, and also desired to be better enabled by the Spirit to help the people in their prayers.

Also the next day my heart was in a very calm and trusting frame. During the afternoon I was in the company of some pious friends and was exceedingly refreshed as we were together with one accord, speaking, singing, praying and giving thanks.

Singing Psalms on a trip to Haarlem

On Friday morning I went with some pious and much beloved friends to visit a gentleman of my acquaintance beyond Haarlem. I started out with a strong desire to see and to acknowledge God in everything. My kind and compassionate Redeemer granted my requests in abundance. My soul had a blessed day, and I experienced my Lord's care and goodness in great measure. I found the Lord in everything and as a child of God in Christ had a very lively sense of my right to the fullness of the earth, and so was enabled to delight myself sincerely in the Lord. We were all prompted to sing Psalms as we were going and coming back. The people of this world freely sing their vile songs on all occasions; why should we not sing Psalms to our God, and do it so that the people of the world might hear us. It seemed to me a precious privilege to be permitted to sing Psalms on the way, just as well as in other parts of the church, as the enemy beset the roads and the shouts of soldiers were heard. It also affected me deeply to see such numerous flocks grazing in the fields. This humbled me greatly and made my heart tender as I contemplated the goodness of God to our sinful country.

Revival of spirit on the Lord's Day

On the following Lord's Day morning, as I awoke, my body was exceedingly exhausted. I thought of it as indolence and prayed that I might not yield to so evil a disposition, while I was favored so much over others, like my friends in other parts of the church, as I had the privilege of going up in peace to the sanctuary. I arose and proceeded trying to dress myself. I was blessed with the strength to do so, and went to the house of God, where I attended the ministry of Christ's worthy servant, Rev. Mr. de Bruyn. The preacher's subject was taken from Ezekial 36:28. The discourse blessed me in reviving my spirit. The preacher showed that the promise was founded upon the three previous verses, viz, 25, 26, 27 and that only on the conditions stated there would the Lord continue to dwell with the people as their God, and acknowledge them as his people. It was in this manner that I, too, desired to retain the Lord. Those were the same things I longed for and sought of God in secret. I was newly encouraged to plead those precious promises, which, at the same time, served as a means of assurance to me personally: that the Lord would be my God and show himself to me in all things and in all his perfections, and that I forever should belong to him. This would for ever by my all, in all circumstances and in every event, that he would bring it to pass.

I was greatly strengthened, and had again the privilege of attending services in the afternoon, by Christ's servant, Rev. Mr. Schutte. He preached on Lord's Day 24; 62, 63, 64, and fervently engaged himself with the subject. I especially experienced a blessing under the exposition of the last question, and I was led to

experience the glorious nature of that union in which I am bound to my dear Saviour, as my olive tree, my vine and living root, which are the source of my spiritual life and growth. I attended this service with a warm heart and later had many people at my house, as I felt a great desire that we might be a source of edification to each other, and my desire was not left ungratified. But I was exceedingly exhausted.

Illness unto death

On Monday, the 12th of June, as I woke up in the morning, I was so violently attacked with sickness, that I was forced to lie down in the afternoon.

On Tuesday the illness increased and took such a force, that by midday it affected me so that I had such heavy fainting spells, making every one think that I might not live. It also gave me pause to wonder whether this might not be the way in which I should find my rest. There were two passages, however, that caused me to doubt this. The one I received during this severe sickness, and that was, "With long life will I satisfy you and show my salvation." Also the Lord had said to me twice at the table of his covenant-love, "Arise and eat, for the journey shall be great for you." My soul was quiet before God. I was in such an acquiescent state, that I could say, "It is equally pleasing to me to go, or to remain." When I thought of my departing, I was filled with wonderment, that so suddenly and unexpectedly I should enter into rest. But it remained unclear to me. I could only say, "Father, thy will be done. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It was enough for me to be permitted to follow and obey.

Towards evening I could sense that the pious were engaged in prayer. My fainting spells began to diminish.

For a day or two more I continued to be deadly sick. The fever continued uninterrupted for twenty-four hours, and I suffered much from thirst. But the Lord was good to my soul as I was enabled to faithfully meditate on the thirst of my precious Saviour, by which he delivered me from the eternal thirst of my soul, so as not to lose God as my portion, and obtained for me a title to all blessings. This was the doing of my Father's hand, and it could not but work for good to me.

After a few days there was a change. The Lord heard his people, and it was evident that again the Lord had designed to permit me to go on living. My heart now was in such intimate fellowship with the Lord, even by way of all kinds of privileges relating to outward things like creature comforts and by the love of the pious. All of that helped to draw me to the love of God. Indeed, the eternal love through which all things were granted me, brought my soul into a state of profound humility and constant holy astonishment at the compassion of the Lord. I was constrained to exclaim, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies and truth. What shall I render to the Lord?" But my compassionate Redeemer showed me that he desired nothing from me, but that he would exercise his mercy towards me

in all things, and that all the Lord required of me is but to walk humbly before his face. "Teach me, Lord Jesus, to be meek and lowly in heart, according to thy good word." I was continually enabled to cast myself upon the Lord Jesus, and my inmost desire was thus to become all the more cleansed and purified, and to be made more single in my aims, and so to be delivered from the power of my sinful self. My soul did frequently echo the sentiment of the pious Lodensteyn in one of his poems:

Thy boastful self, let go.

Let go, let go, thy boastful self...etc.

Now the Lord showed me that he still would add years to my days, and my mind was filled with compliance in the will of God. I desired to serve his counsel and to be permitted to witness that the Lord is God, and assist the pious in their prayers in behalf of the country and the church. This was my only and strong reason for wishing to remain. Our army, which now seemed to be contemplating an attack upon the foe, also lay very near my heart. That was not out of my mind for a moment. I wrestled with it in my prayer to God. "O," I prayed, "that the Lord might arise and shine, and that his enemies might flee before him." I wished that he would be the protector of our soldiery and so be glorified in the eyes of our enemies, that they might be led to acknowledge that the Lord is God. I felt a comfortable assurance that the Lord would not disregard the cry of the needy, but arise and help us for his own name's sake. I also noticed that this was the general experience of the pious, and so this led me to look and wait believingly for the salvation of the Lord.

I also heard that the presence of God was also much experienced in the public prayer meetings. My heart was much with the people during those times. I also experienced the precious love of my compassionate Saviour very much, and I was blessed with the tokens of his all-sufficient grace, that I scarcely could contain or endure. The Lord surrounded me with his covenant mercies. I daily sang while in bed, and I suggested hymns to the pious to sing for me. How precious were the Lord's thoughts of love and faithfulness towards me. My strength, which had been greatly reduced, gently and gradually returned. As I recovered my energy, I felt disposed to dedicate and engage proportionally all my powers of soul and body to the Lord.

Intimate communion

The next Sabbath the Lord's Supper was to be celebrated and my soul desired to partake by faith. I was blessed with intimate fellowship with the Saviour as again I was enabled to desire all grace on the ground of the covenant's fullness, and I could again freely declare all my soul's sentiments to the Lord. The Lord graciously manifested his grace to me, and again promised his unchanging faithfulness, to be with me in all my ways and to keep me as the apple of his eye and to free me from anxious cares, and to receive grace

upon grace. I was encouraged to exercise much confidence, and was strengthened in the Lord so that I freely dared to entrust all to him. I enjoyed intimate communion with all the people of God as well, and ardently desired that all necessary grace might be bestowed upon them, especially that their faith might not diminish, so that they may continue in supplication for our country and church under the present circumstances. I cried, that the Lord would bind our army upon the hearts of his people, and grant them a spirit of prayer in its behalf. O, that the sanctifying and refining grace of the Spirit might be poured out upon the people of God, and a spirit of judgment and conversion be imparted. I wished that God would come and work in country and church to make his name glorious, and abide in the midst of us. I felt confident, that the Lord would continue to dwell and work among us. On this day my hope in the Lord was strengthened.

Prayer for the Netherlands

And on the following days my heart continued to go out to him, especially in behalf of our army. I could not get it out of my mind. It seemed to be present everywhere.

Wednesday, June 28, was the time for public prayer meeting. All through the day I was earnestly engaged in supplication to God for help. But especially about the time the public exercises were to begin, numerous promises were powerfully brought to my mind, and I was generously furnished with pleas as I persevered in supplication. And at the time when I supposed that the servants and people of God were beginning their religious services, I experienced a strong desire to unite with them, and my mind was drawn into powerful exercise by these words of Jeremiah (3:22): "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." At this moment I said, "O Lord, all thy people in our Netherlands are coming unto thee as one man. Here we are, confessing our sins, acknowledging our forfeiture of thy saving mercy and help. We acknowledge your justice. It would be altogether just if thou shouldst make a wilderness of us and deliver us into the hands of the enemy. We could but put our mouths in the dust. But we also come to seek thy mercy towards our people and its country. We cry, O God, spare thy heritage and give not thy people to reproach. And as we come to thee, our God, we come not as to man, who would reject so rebellious a people. But thou art merciful, gracious and abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity and sin. And we come as thy covenant people, for thou art the Lord our God, our Jehovah and faithful Saviour, who shall be what thou shalt be, and all thy covenant is for the sake of thy people." My confidence was strengthened, and I was led to say, "Wilt thou reject all thy people that cry to thee? No, thou never requirest prayer without intending to afford help." I remained in a humble and believing state, and was blessed with joyful assurances. Among other passages, I was much impressed with Isaiah 49:26, where the Lord says, "I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know, that

I am the Lord, your Saviour, and your Redeemer, thy Mighty One of Jacob.” I do not know that I ever before read these words with particular attention but I cannot express in how believing a manner I could say, “Amen,” and trust that the Lord would bring it to pass.

From day to day my mind continued deeply engaged, and I sometimes obtained immediate access for country and church, and for the army, which lay so near my heart, as I formally presented myself to God as an intercessor for these objects of my affection.

Fighting the adversary

This week I had to struggle hard with my sinful body, which the adversary attacked with great power. I can perceive that he does this to hinder me in my prayers. There were days when I was led so deeply into the recesses of my evil heart, that I had to call out, “O, there is a legion within, and they are many.” But the Lord caused me to see that this was necessary for me. On the one hand he kept me low and little in my own eyes, and on the other, to enable me to sympathize with others, caused me to appreciate the grace of God, through which I have thus far been preserved from being misled and thereby dishonoring God. Therefore I was led to say, “Only so prepare me, that I may be more employed for thee, and adorn me with the glory of Christ.”

After having for some days cherished many prayerful expectations regarding Zion and our country, while I had been in unceasing supplication, it pleased God to subject us to a trial of our faith. On Tuesday morning tidings were received, that on the previous Lord’s Day, a heavy engagement had occurred at Bilsen between our left wing and the French army, in which we suffered defeat. It pierced my heart. But I remained composed, and told the gentleman who mentioned this to me, “I so wish to sanctify God in my heart. The Lord is good and just, and I will still wait upon him, hoping against hope.” “The Lord preserve me from unbelief,” I exclaimed, “that I may not dishonor him. In spite of this, the Lord will not be ‘yea’ and ‘nay’ in his promises, but ‘yea’ and ‘amen’.” My soul was exceedingly humbled, and I felt very solemn, thinking that so many souls of ours had passed again into eternity. But it is wonderful to say that my soul was kept steadfast in faith. When the person who brought the intelligence had gone away, I opened the Bible, and my eyes fell upon II Samuel 10:12: “Be of good courage and let us play the man, for our people and for our cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth good to him.” I said, “These words, O Lord, thou bringest to my mind. Teach me to be strong in faith, for our people and for thy cities, our God. Enable me to continue in prayer, and keep my hands from dropping down to my knees, from becoming feeble, and then shall my soul still say, ‘the Lord do that which seemeth good. Thou art Jehovah, the God of truth; thou shall render it manifest in thine own time and I will wait upon thee.’”

A visit from the circle of friends

This afternoon was the first time since my sickness that I had my female friends with me to engage in prayer. We began by singing Psalm 86:1, 2, 3 (rhymed) and, although I was very weak, I could not refrain from leading in prayer. The Lord granted much assistance, and we were enabled to perseveringly and believingly plead the promises of God, especially in behalf of our army, that the Lord would not further give it over to desolation, but arise to the help of Zion. We were enabled to conclude our prayers. But during prayer, the adversary pierced and distressed me with atheistic darts, so that I had to cry out, "O, no, God is true. He is not like man, that he should lie; nor like one of the sons of man that he should repent. That which he hath spoken, he will do and confirm. And although God deprived us of all means of defence, and slew our whole army (although this I could not believe) I will notwithstanding hope in him and believe that he will arise to our help." I was so greatly assisted in prayer, that I continued 'til my strength failed me. We continued to be together with a blessing, and finally sang Psalm 69:11,12 (rhymed). My female friend who prayed last also remained firm in her confidence.

That night I could not sleep. My mind was in a very prayerful state, and I indulged in holy complaints and cries to the Lord for help. My prayer to God was that this afflictive dispensation might serve to render the people more earnest in prayer, and might make a general impression on the public mind and humble the Netherlands.

False news

As I awoke on Wednesday morning, this stanza came to my mind with force:

Righteous is God, in all his ways,
 In all his works he ever remains good.
 His people's cause he never will forsake,
 Who call on him in truth for evermore.

My soul said, "Yes, this indeed is so," upon which I earnestly went into meditation.

All during the morning I continued much in prayer. My soul was distressed regarding Zion. I was especially pained at the thought that the Babylonian horde should reproach the Lord and his people and say, "Where is their God?" I had to say continually, "O Lord, behold the reproach of thy people," and, "Let thy glorious arm be stretched out in our behalf." The Lord encouraged me continually, as he was saying to me, "If he tarry, wait for him. He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry; and now the Lord shall be glorified in the sight of the heathen."

My soul stood fast in the faith, and I was led to quote for the benefit of those with whom I conversed, this couplet:

Then in the Lord let Israel trust,
 Let Israel seek his face;
 The Lord is good as well as just,
 And plenteous in his grace.
 (according to translation of Watts)

It was very encouraging to me, to see that the pious were of this mind.

On this day, immediately after dinner, a report was received, saying that the French had received a total defeat. The news reached me very soon and so affected me, that it riveted me to my chair as I said to myself, "If this be so, I must exclaim with astonishment, 'Who is a God like unto the Lord, infinite in compassion.'" The event seemed to be of such importance to me, that I felt disposed to wait for confirmation of the tidings. But everyone affirmed it to be a fact, and I said, "If it be so, the God of Israel must have the praise." We desired to end with God.

At midday I earnestly continued in prayer that it might be so, and that it may be the means of binding the people of the Netherlands more closely to the Lord, drawing them with the cords of love. But I was greatly affected thinking of those who were killed, both on the side of the enemy and among our own people; the wounded, too, how they weighed upon my heart!

I was so affected that my strength failed. I heard that much help was experienced in the public prayer meetings. I also had found this to be true in private myself. But my physical energy was exhausted.

That evening word came that the stirring news of the morning was not true, but that, on the contrary, our army had been totally beaten. I remained, however, in a state of composure. "The first report may not be true," I said, "but that our whole army is beaten, that I do not believe. No, the Lord will not give them entirely over into the hands of the enemy."

That night I could not sleep, but persevered in prayer instead, and continually presented myself before the Lord in behalf of the country. I could solemnly affirm, even if it would consume all my strength. I would consider it a privilege to be permitted to pray for the country.

The day following we received reports that neither the French nor our people were beaten, but that the news confirmed the defeat of our left wing. Although it was true that the French held the field, our troops had withdrawn in good order, and there were fully as many killed on the side of the French as on ours. It was a wonder that all of our left wing had not been destroyed, in view of the greater numbers of the enemy and...

(Some pages of manuscript have been lost.)

(The existing manuscript continues with remarks on a discourse Dina had heard:)

"The poor committeth himself to thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless." That was a good and cheering message from the Lord. My soul was much

enlivened and strengthened in the faith. I was enabled to identify with all of Zion as one, poor and forsaken, relying on the arm of the God. I could not withhold from the pious, that I had received a sustaining and gracious message from my heavenly Father. I first determined to spend the rest of that day in private, devotional exercises, but I was solicited by the pious to unite with them, and so I did. I saw anew that, while man devises his ways, the Lord nevertheless directs his steps.

That evening the Lord was among us as we were together before him with one accord.

Also the following day I was especially helped and directed in all things, as I prayed much for country and church.

August 15, 1747 - News of battle

The following day, that being my weekly prayer meeting, I was greatly encouraged to pray. The Count of Lowendahl had said that on this day, being August 15, he would deliver the city of Bergen-op-Zoom to the King of France. My soul looked to God, asking to put to shame this proud and arrogant foe. I wished that God would arise to our help and show himself the friend of Zion. I felt assured that the Lord would again confound the designs of the enemy this time. In our united prayers we experienced real help of the Spirit and were encouraged to cherish the sweet assurance, that the Lord would hear our cries.

That evening we received the good tidings that the enemy had been driven back with great losses, and that all was well with Bergen-op-Zoom.

Indecision about going to Utrecht

That same night the Lord was especially good to unworthy me. I could not sleep, as now so often happened. Yet, sometimes I have found it of no small blessing to lie sleepless, but not unoccupied. The same was true this night as the beleaguered city weighed heavily upon my heart. I had a free entrance to God for it, and strongly believed that the Lord would destroy his enemies, and cause those that hated him to flee before him. I was able to leave the city in the hands of God and resign myself to him. But I was much perplexed in regard to the journey I proposed to make to Utrecht the following day. Things remained clouded to me. The pious and my parents were against my going, and I felt disinclined as well.

In the morning I presented myself before the Lord and sought light and direction from him, but my way did not become clear. I decided to write, saying that I would not come. But as I sat down, I made no progress. Every letter I formed was like a stone upon my heart and distressed me greatly. Upon having written the letter, while my mind was so oppressed, and being about to seal it, I became so

confused and perplexed, that I could not look up to God. I concluded finally not to send it, but to wait for a day or two, in the hope that the Lord would shed light upon my path. I wrote a brief letter to one of my bosom friends, expressing my state of mind, and asked her to assist me with her prayers. As I wrote this short letter, it seemed to me that the Lord said to me, "Did you waver? Did you not unconditionally surrender yourself to my guidance and control?" I could not but say, "Father, it is my happiness to follow in the way, if I may but know what it is." At that moment all my difficulties vanished and I again became inclined to yield myself to the Lord, as clay in the hands of the potter. I could sincerely say, "Thy will be done; only incline me to thy way." In the midst of these exercises of mind my path became clear. I found access to the throne and inquired what the Lord wanted from me. Should I remain, or should I go? I obtained these words: "Think of the former days and the wonders of old." My thoughts were taken back to that most blessed journey, which I had made to Utrecht and Tienhoven, and I inquired of the Lord whether I must again venture on his faithfulness and go there. I prayed that he would bring me to a settled and confident state. Then came the former words to me with renewed force. They satisfied me that I should go and follow the lead of the Lord.

I now went to the public prayer meeting with the hope that by some means, whether through the Lord's servant or by the singing or reading of the Scriptures, I might become more fully assured. My desire was fulfilled. The chorister read Psalm 71. When he came to verse 16: "I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, and of thine only," the Lord said, "There is a word for you; go in this strength, I will be with you." Then I yielded again to the Lord and longed to stay in his house forever.

My parents also became willing, and agreed that I should go, thinking that it would be my duty. Then I wrote with some relief to my friends that, if such were the will of the Lord, I would come to them on September the 8th.

"Drawing us with cords of love"

On the following Lord's Day morning, I attended service by the Rev. Mr. du Marchie. He preached on Hosea 11:4-7. The preacher received much assistance and it became a precious and appropriate instrumentality for me. By the account, given of God's gracious dealings with Israel, I was led to consider how the Lord had dealt with the Netherlands, drawing us with cords of love by means of blessings so numerous bestowed upon us, and by frequently taking the yoke from our jaws, and by giving us meat again, but also justly exhorting us, just as Israel in that passage. This on account of the evil of our ways, our departing from the Lord, turning to Baal, as Israel was there told, so that they would not return to Egypt, the staff on which they were disposed to lean. God said, "No, the Assyrian shall be their King because they refused to turn and the sword shall abide in their cities to destroy and consume their strongholds, because

they sought strange gods, and forgot and forsook the Lord.” The Lord indeed called to them by the prophets, but not one of them exalted God in their hearts. The preacher’s discourse was exceedingly illuminating and was calculated to fill the hearers with holy shame. I sat with broken heart, considering that, how by our sins, we had deserved that France should become our King, and our fortresses be destroyed. But I was also encouraged to appeal by the former proofs, to the Lord’s willingness to show mercy. O that he would draw us with cords of love, and to former experiences of his mercy; that he would communicate his grace, so that we might return to the Lord, the rock of our salvation. The exercises of this Sabbath came to me as a great blessing.

During the week following, my precious Saviour was a special refuge and defence to me against my inward foes. I felt myself encompassed by sins, especially while in private. The more I was enabled to pray for Zion and the country, the more they bestirred themselves and continued to cause me distress. But through the kind guidance and help of my faithful and supreme Leader, they did not destroy me, though they did wound me. They taught me to act in dependence upon divine strength, and to acknowledge Christ as the source of blessing and help. I continued to have freedom of access for Bergen-op-Zoom, where the enemy made little progress and lost many men. The people of God were much engaged concerning this. This inspired me with hope that it might please the Lord to put the enemy to shame for his own name’s sake.

August 27, 1747 - Sustained by word and sacrament

The following day was the day for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper for us. I was happy indeed that the great day of the feast was so near at hand. I was powerfully drawn by the exalted ordinance, and I desired to have a day of sweet covenant transactions for my soul. I was encouraged with some light and comfort in tracing the Lord’s dealings of faithfulness and love with me, since my last occasion. I had to bow down and acknowledge that mercy and trust were his ways toward me, my compassionate Redeemer. But I also was humbly struck by the insensibility and heartlessness of my walk before God. It grieved me that I was so unproductive and live so unworthily and so was to such small extent an honor to Christ. I wished all the more firmly to engage myself to him and in my emptiness to resort as well, together with the people of God, to bring our country into covenant with God, and to engage him to remain with us. My beloved pastor, Rev. Mr. Temmink, officiated on this occasion. His subject was Hosea 2:20: “I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.” The introduction was from I John 4:19 where it is said, “We love him, because he first loved us.” How graciously was I met and sustained by this good word. My worthy teacher enjoyed unusual help, and had much insight into his subject. He pointed out the parallel between marriage and the blessed union between Christ his church. At the same time he

showed that there was an infinite difference and inequality between them. The preacher was enabled to set the bridegroom of our soul before the eye of faith in all his beauty and everlasting love. He so clearly exhibited the original and eternal love of God, and so impressively showed the benefits of this spiritual marriage, that everyone who beheld it in its true nature, could not but have his heart drawn forth in love to Christ. My own soul was especially affected by God's divine love in choosing so miserable a slave of sin as myself to be his bride and wife, and notwithstanding all opposition betrothing me to him in faithfulness. Such were my feelings under the representations of the love and beauty of Christ, that I could scarcely contain them. I could not but be astonished at the happiness of having the lines fallen to me in such pleasant places and at my having so glorious a heritage. How frequently did I have to choose for Christ anew, and how profound was my grief, that my divine Husband did not fully possess my heart, and that my love was still so much divided. But though I was still much inclined to turn aside, his love was still abiding. He had betrothed me to him forever; this was my salvation. It could not be broken off. All words of earthly love were severed by death. This love, on the contrary, was but begun here, and was completed in eternity. It could not change, for God said, "I will betroth thee," and his purposes do not change.

I was filled with hearty desire to love Christ more ardently, the Guide of my youth. O, how often didn't I declare, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." Since he was my Lord, I would worship him. Anew I resigned the full dominion over myself to Christ, as I protested against all improper objects of attachment and sought help against them from my lawful Husband, to whom I was engaged for eternity. I also entrusted all my concerns to him, and lay myself, his untrue yet betrothed bride, on his loving heart. I lamented and was ashamed of my leaving my first love, and felt a sincere desire to be enabled to do my first works. I yielded myself up anew to my divine Husband, and my heart was filled with desires for the church of Christ in general, and for particular persons. I lay the church in the Netherlands upon his heart as his love, his betrothed, whose Husband and Bridegroom he was, which the Lord had betrothed to himself forever, though its beauty was impaired. I held on to him and would not let him go. My faith increased as I prayed, and I had intimate fellowship with his afflicted church, and with those who were now in the power of the foe. I felt a sweet confidence, that the Lord would not forsake his church in the Netherlands. These words came powerfully to my mind, "I will turn again the captivity of Jacob." And, "On them that sit in darkness, shall a great light shine." I also experienced the spirit of prayer for our much loved Prince and Staatholder, and I was enabled to ask of God for him all necessary help and light, indeed, special measures of grace, that he might still be an instrument in the hands of God, for the good of Zion.

Now I approached the table with the eye of faith firmly fixed on Jesus, and as permitted, to behold the pledges of his love by which he swore his faithfulness. I received such a blessing at the table as I could scarce contain. I beheld my beloved as white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. I was his, my beloved, and his desire was toward me. As I partook of the elements, I enjoyed endearing fellowship with my near kinsman and bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, and

with the Father and the Spirit in him, and so also with the members of the body of Christ, indeed, with the glorified above. My heart was lifted above the earth where Christ is, and I received so many tokens of his tender inclination and love toward me, that my pen is unable to express them.

I had an expressive experience of the blessed consummation of the marriage union, and felt profound desire to be with the Lord. But at the same time I was inclined to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." I was more greatly strengthened in faith, and cast all my cares upon Christ. My earnest longing was to be enabled to bring forth fruit for him. It was August 27, when I again decided to choose for my Lord, who sweetly embraced my soul and said, "I am thy salvation. Fear not, Dina van Berg."

September 1, 1747 - Birthday of the Prince of Orange and more news of war

There was much to be acknowledged as I received abundantly from the Lord during the coming week. I was kept in an enlarged frame of spirit and was blessed with much freedom of intercession for our church and country. My thoughts were also much occupied with respect to my prospective journey to Utrecht. When I thought of it, it was as if it were said to me, "I will be with you!" At the same time I felt as if the Lord would subject me to trials there, but I wished to give it all over to him.

Bergen-op-Zoom was now much upon my mind. The enemy still remained before it and lost many men. But I was distressed by the arrogance of language our own people began to employ, as well as by the assaults of our enemy upon the place. The courage and conduct of the garrison were immoderately extolled. The city was pronounced impregnable.

It now happened that on the anniversary of the birth of our worthy Prince of Orange, this being the first of September and he being thirty-six years old, I was disposed to set apart some time with female friends at my house to pray for our Prince. On that day I had been intently meditating upon the wonderful dealings of God with our Prince; how his father was suddenly taken out of this life by drowning. I was led to adore God because of his inscrutable workings, for shortly after this, and in answer to the prayers of his people, the Lord blessed us with the birth of this Prince. Also, how clearly had he preserved him from the cradle against the evil designs of his foes, and after seasons of sickness had restored him to health from many afflictions and had raised him up in his adorable providence at a time of darkness when we seemed to be delivered into the hands of our foes. Notwithstanding all the opposition made to him, he was set at the head of the people and exalted above those who hated him, so that even they had to submit themselves. I was encouraged to contemplate with satisfaction the divine wonders that exhibited themselves in this, and found ground for hope and belief, that the Lord was about to do great things for us through him.

After my female friends had arrived, each gave out a stanza to be sung, applicable to our Prince, while I, poor one, proceeded to pray. To the praise of God, I acknowledged that his presence was among us, and we had special access for our beloved Prince, and were unable to cease praying for him.

While we were so engaged, there suddenly was a very great commotion in the house. I was so discomposed that I was compelled to stop, so as to see what was the matter. We opened the door, and a person came in to say that Bergen-op-Zoom was relieved, and that the report was reliable. At first I would not believe it, but messenger after messenger came to affirm it with such confidence that I finally had to accept it. But it did not affect me to acknowledge the news with gratitude and holy awe as I thought I should, by tidings of such importance. By now so many pious friends had arrived bringing the news, that the room was full. I suggested to my friends that we should sing. They requested Psalm 138, which was sung with much emotion. I was entirely stirred up, and proposed that we should a second time draw near to God with prayer and thanksgiving. I think I never enjoyed the presence of God more than at that time, as we formally engaged ourselves to the Lord. I am not aware that ever before I had more particular dealings with God in private, than at that time in the company of my friends before the Lord. We were witnesses to one another that we were the Lord's. On the supposition that the tidings were correct, I felt an ardent desire that the Lord would add his Spirit as a means of drawing the people of the Netherlands to himself. But the inquiry continually arose in my mind, can it be true? Is it really so? But God enabled me to leave it to him. In the meanwhile I was happy with the blessed time I had been permitted to have with my friends.

I had to retire now, as I was fatigued. That night I was attacked with colic. When I awoke in the morning I heard the report was false. Immediately I feared that the opposite was true, that the city was taken. But I did not regret the thanksgiving we had offered to God for the relief of the city. I said, "O Lord, thou knowest that we did it in uprightness of heart; we desired to end in thee." At the same time I became aware of the importance of not lightly giving credence to statements.

"Christ the host and the food of the soul"

On the following Sabbath the Lord's Supper was to be administered again, and I desired to partake again, as I saw how much I needed to have my faith strengthened and to be kept near the Lord. While I prepared for it, I found free access. I frequently renewed my choice for the Lord as my portion, and of his service as my employment.

On the morning of the day of its celebration, my soul was much enlivened. I had a clear and impressive insight into the eternal and incomprehensible love of the triune God toward me, and of all those proofs of his compassion which had their foundation in that eternal love. Also of the loving faithfulness of which new

proof was about to be furnished this day by the Saviour's pledges, which would be exhibited on his covenant table in the form of bread and wine. My heart longed to partake of Christ experientially. I had to exclaim, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

As I went to church, these words occupied my mind. "Let, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly O beloved." I thought how greatly I would esteem the honor of one of the kings of the earth, if dealt thus familiarly with me, giving me not one, but repeated invitations to his table, saying, "Be not timid; the more freely you partake, the more you gratify me." But here the most high God himself set me intimately among his children, inviting me repeatedly to feast on the royal dainties of the flesh and blood of the Son of God, which are to be partaken of with the elements through faith. How impressive to me was the thought that Christ was both the host and the food of the soul. O incomprehensible mystery, to be received by faith alone. As I passed along, I shed tears of love and astonishment, and attended on the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Schelluynen.

His words were, "He shall be for a sanctuary." After dwelling upon the sanctuary among the children of Israel, alluded to in the text, with what was contained in it, he finally made us notice the true sanctuary. I was enabled to realize Christ as my sanctuary in which I could familiarly go about and find everything I needed for my empty soul. Again I was enabled to commit myself sincerely to the Lord and adopt his way as my course of action, and, with supreme desire, ask his gracious guidance.

As I approached the table, I had a clear impression of the love of Christ, as he gave himself in death for me. I frequently had to utter, "O my crucified love, what didst thou not do for me, so wretched a one? What did my redemption not cost thee? Thou gavest thy soul a ransom to procure my everlasting righteousness. That righteousness now is mine through believing fellowship with thy dear person." How precious was that righteousness again to me. I was again encouraged to embrace my Redeemer, both for renewed reconciliation and increased sanctification. Everything in him was lovely to my soul.

As I drew near to the table, it was with these words, "Thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed." I was encouraged to eat sacramentally to the satisfaction of my soul. O, with what confidence could I entrust my ways to my faithful Redeemer. I believed that he would perfect that which concerned me. I kept the feast, and I am not aware that I ever partook with more joy.

After leaving the table I gladly would have returned to partake for a second time, but my thoughts were drawn to the marriage supper of the lamb, where there would be fulness of joy forevermore. Here I constantly would hunger again, but there the treasure chambers of my soul would be filled. My soul panted after undisturbed rest, but the struggle was not yet at an end.

During the following days I received much help as I was kept close to the Lord.

Trip to Utrecht

In taking leave with my friend (for the journey to Utrecht), I remained composed, but I sometimes melted under the benedictions and good wishes of the Lord's people. I continually looked to the Lord for confirmation of their words. On Friday, September 8, I took the barge to Utrecht, after a tender parting with my parents and sister. I told them not to think it strange if the Lord would try me in some way or other, but that he would be with me in this. As we left land, it occurred to me that now I was no longer in my parent's eyes, but not out of their hearts, while the eye of my heavenly Father was upon me, and with me. "The bowels of his compassion were moved for me." I realized as well that his ministering spirits, his angels, were given a charge to keep me. I felt myself, and my female friend secure on every hand. The atmosphere was quiet. The Lord held the wind in his hands. We set out on our way, and left the place of our embarking. We could freely look to the north, to the east, to the south and to the west. We could look upon all as ours, because we were Christ's.

As we sailed, the two of us conversed, and so we approached the place of our destination. The nearer we came to Utrecht, the firmer was the conviction that there was some trial waiting me. Upon arriving, we were received with affection by our friends, who took us by carriage from the barge to their house. Having arrived at the house, and having tenderly embraced each other, and being about to take some refreshments, we first presented ourselves before the Lord. My soul was filled with astonishment regarding the Lord's loving care over one so insignificant as I. Everything here was at my service and ready to help me.

That evening we had profitable fellowship and I was exceedingly fatigued and needed rest. After we had united in prayer, I went to bed.

First day in Utrecht

I had a very refreshing sleep, and upon awakening, my heart was with God. I had a deep and experiential awareness of the need for grace from my Lord where I was now. I realized how unfit I was to do anything for God, but I commended myself to him, to perfect his strength in my weakness. He had called me, and I knew him to be faithful.

That day I received much comfort in my retirement, and also with domestic duties, in singing and in meeting with friends. The Lord was with me. My heart and tongue were loosed, and I was enabled to lift up my heart in the ways of my God with friends who were with us that afternoon. There was no lack, either of subject or disposition for profitable conversation. We also sought the Lord together and sang Psalms to the honor of our God. In the evening I was overwhelmed with loving kindness and faithfulness and I hardly could find words to express the thankfulness of my soul.

“The pure doctrine of the word of God”

The following day being a Sabbath, I had a burning desire to meet the Lord in his temple. My heart went out after him, and in the morning I attended on the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. de Beveeren. I was quickened and instructed. In the afternoon, however, I experienced something more than the usual. I attended the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. de Groot. His subject was the Ninth Lord’s Day; what it is to believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. The preacher treated the truth in opposition to adversaries, with peculiar skill and excellence. I was delighted that it was our privilege to have the pure doctrine of the word of God thus expounded among us. The preacher dwelt upon the acts and ground of faith. Every word was appropriate to my case. I was delightfully led to meditate upon the fact, and could confidently believe that the everlasting Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was my God and Father and would provide me with all things inward and outward, that were necessary for me, and direct all things for my good, being as almighty God, able, and as a faithful Father, willing to do so. As I traced the Lord’s dealings with me, I could perceive that such had been my case. “Contemplate the dealings of God with you,” said the preacher to God’s people. “Has not the Lord so regulated his afflictive dealings, that they have not been too painful for you? Reflect upon the cross, upon sanctified sick beds; would you now wish that it had been otherwise? What is there that has not worked for good with you?” I had to say, “Amen,” in my heart. The preacher showed how unbecoming it was, not to trust all things to the Lord confidently, though there do come trials, losses, crosses, miseries, sickness. “The Lord shall as almighty God and as a faithful Father order it for good, for he, your Father, appoints it for you. Ah, be not averse to it.” And it was continually as if it were said to me, “Take these words with you.” And so I was enabled to entrust all my ways to the Lord, believingly, freely, unreservedly and filially. I was so enlivened and quickened, that I could only with difficulty contain it. My very body was weakened by it.

After church, there was a meeting at the house, and the Lord was there.

On Monday I again had a blessed day. The service of Rev. Mr. de Groot was a staff to me, as it were, in my journey. In private, as well as in public, there were signs of the Lord’s loving presence with me.

“The Lord is my Shepherd”

On the morning of the following day I had an especially deep insight into the sinful selfishness of my nature. I saw how great a measure of grace I needed to keep God and his glory ever in view. I

began to cry to God, and the following words came with force to my mind. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." How good this word of my King was to me. Jehovah was my shepherd. I had been brought to follow him and his sheep; and I should not want. Especially that day I felt that there were trials at hand for me. But I was allowed to believe that I should not want. All of that day I spent in comfort and in the spirit of prayer.

That evening I was seized with a violent fever. I thought that this was to be my trial. I prayed for a submissive mind, and a readiness to follow where the Lord should lead.

From that time on the fever stayed with me; but on the next day it was much increased. I was comfortable in the thought that I had followed the Lord.

In the evening I was much comforted by grace. I had much freedom of access for church and country, but I was greatly distressed regarding Bergen-op-Zoom, and I did not feel such enlargement of heart as I had before in prayer.

On Saturday, September 16, I was very much distressed. I was indeed sick in body, but I also felt an anguish of spirit I could not conceal, and said, "Could it be that it was all over with Bergen-op-Zoom?" I could not pray for it.

The following Sabbath I was strengthened in holy meditation. My experience of the past gave me hope for the future.

September 18, 1747 - Anniversary of healing at a time of illness

On Monday, September 18, being the anniversary of my former, wonderful recovery (it being now exactly three years since it occurred), I was in great distress with exceedingly high fever. Professor Osterdijk was called and prescribed for me. As soon as I had taken the medicine my disease took a change and I became much worse, so that the professor was called again. He was astonished and said he had never had so feeble a patient. I committed myself into the hands of the Lord. That day the professor came by three times. He and everyone else thought that I should die. He also expressed much concern that my parents were not with me and proposed that they should be written to immediately. I said, "My dear Sir, there could be no more joyful news to me than that I should die, for I am reconciled to God; I step with Jesus into eternity." I thought, "Can it be that I shall go so unexpectedly home?" I was willing to be released from the body of sin. Toward the end of the day I thought of nothing else but that I should enter into rest. My breathing became very short. But about twelve o'clock at night I began to ponder the question whether this would be my Father's way with me. Then these words came to me, "You shall still enter through much tribulation. Your work is not done." I also became willing to follow my Lord and resigned myself anew to him. I felt a desire to live for him and of being spent in his service.

Now I said to my friends that I would not die of this sickness. Also on that day I had heard that Bergen-op-Zoom had been taken. If ever I was disposed to be

silent, it was then. I had to explore and adore his ways and felt that I had merited it by my own guilt. But even though Bergen-op-Zoom was taken, I still desired to look to God, and was led to think of these words, "The horse is a vain thing for safety, and a mighty man is not delivered by much strength, therefore, will I arise, saith the Lord." This served as the ground of a plea to me, and I said, "O that the taking of this city, on which the dependence of the whole of the Netherlands was placed, might be the means of leading it to cease from man, and of its humbling itself before God." But alas, this will not be without the extra help of the Spirit. I also felt much solicitude for our beloved Prince, and prayed that he may not become discouraged, but that the Lord would sustain him under this event.

Severe illness and divine healing

From that time my sickness was severe. There was no letting up of the fever. It greatly affected my head, so that I was delirious and had no control over my thoughts. All that was done to relieve me was of no avail, and everyone thought that I would not retain the use of my reason. At first I rebelled against this. But the Lord seemed to say to me, "Am I not the God of your mind, as well as your body? Did you make any exception when you engaged to be mine?" I was constrained to say, "Our Father, I am as clay in thy hands. I esteem it my privilege to be under thy control." I resigned myself again wholly into the Lord's hands, and this stanza from Lodensteyn was constantly with me:

"I lie passively in thy hands." (translation)

I now became entirely acquiescent to the will of God. I was not disposed to inquire why I had become sick here. I knew that my Father had his own reasons to attain his ends with me. It was enough for me that the Lord did it. The end would be well, and for my good.

I also thought it of no consequence that my parents were not with me, and my not being taken care of by my dear mother. O no, I was in my Father's country, and my Father's children waited on me. And that with such tender affection, that I, insignificant one, had to be ashamed before God. Every good thing of which I partook, was my Father's gift. O, how much was I refreshed by these thoughts. Although I was now unable to pray, I believed that the divine Saviour prayed for me. Indeed, that he demanded all merited favors for me, on the ground of his mediatorial right. I was also borne up by the intercessions of so many of the pious in the Netherlands. I greatly felt the blessedness of lying as a child in its father's arms. All I desired was to come forth from my affliction, approved and purified.

I continued to lie in this condition for about half a week. The fever could not be broken, and profuse perspiration debilitated me so, that I could only be changed by being transferred to a lounge, set directly against the bed.

After that time, the Lord rebuked my disease, and the fever began to be less. Then I realized for the first time how weak I was, and I thought, as did everyone else, that it would be a long time before I would recover my former strength. But

it was the purpose of the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel and mighty in working, to show that he is God. On the morning of Friday, September 19th, Professor Jaffer said, "It will be a great while before you recover; you will have to be brought up again as a child." I said that I believed so too. Indeed, I thought, "Who knows but I shall have to remain in Utrecht all winter." But God's ways were not my ways. Those words were constantly present in my mind, "Jesus make it all well." I thought, "The Lord will cause me to be healed in his own time." But I would never had dared to pray or think of what God was about to do for me that day. My heart was very full that day and I was deeply impressed with the perfections of God and his infinite worthiness, so that I had to cry out with a sense of wonder. I continually suggested to the friends in the house to sing verses for me, since I was too weak to sing myself. My song, however was directed to God in Zion, in the quiet of my spirit.

After midday I was going to be changed. I was extremely exhausted by the lying and through profuse perspiration, and I felt scarcely able to lie any longer. A large, easy chair was brought and I wanted to be place in it, hoping I would be more comfortable. This was done, but at considerable hazard.

As I was sitting, or rather lying in the chair, a female friend came in to see me. So far I had seen no one, as I was not in a condition to converse with anybody. I had desired to see this friend, but Mrs. (the name cannot be read as the manuscript here has been damaged) would not allow it, for fear of my being injured. On condition, however, that I would not speak, so as not to fatigue myself, she now was permitted to come in. Afterwards, more friends came. But it was said to me, "We cannot let them see you, you are too weak and you do not consider the state of your body." But I said that I was not aware of any fatigue because of seeing my dear friends who came in. Also my heart and tongue were loosed, and I desired to have all of God's people called upon to praise the Lord. When the bed was ready for me, the friends thought that I should be anxious to lie down. But I said that I was not tired. They were astonished for my remaining so long in the chair, and of talking so much. They all said, "Be silent, please. You will be sorry for this." I myself did not understand what was going on. There seemed to be a change taking place within me. But I did not realize, nor did I suspect, that the Lord was restoring me to entire health. Every moment I felt stronger, and I began to move in the chair. I said, "Lord, what is going on? What is it thou art doing to me, poor dust?" I felt my strength increasing, but I dared not say anything about it.

After the friends had gone away, the lady of the house said to me, "Sissie dear, I do not know what the matter is, but there is a change in the color of your face, and there is a peculiar brilliancy about your eyes." I answered, "The Lord has done something to me, and I have not known it. But I must get up and walk." But they did not know what this all meant, though they allowed me to get up, and I found that the Lord had restored me. I could walk without difficulty. That caused amazement in the house, and everyone uttered a comment. I was totally astonished at the wonders of the Lord's love and faithfulness toward me. I failed to find

words to express my feelings. Then I said to the friends, "Let us approach God in prayer." So much transpired! All the friends in the house were witnesses to the Lord and myself. I most solemnly committed myself to him to be wholly his and could not pull away from his throne. After we had prayed together, we sang some stanzas from Psalm 118 (rhymed). I stayed up until eleven o'clock in the evening, remaining very animated in mind, and had a salad with my friends at the table.

I could not sleep that night, so filled was I with wonder at God's dealings with me, poor one, as he made me for the second time a wonder in Israel. I constantly had to say, "What shall I render to the Lord, and what shall thy handmaiden say? Thou knowest me, O Lord God."

The next day the Professor came. He was much frightened at seeing me up. Then I told him how the Lord had restored me. He replied, "We must say, 'What is impossible with man, is possible with God.'" I was happy that he was led to give the honor to God.

Then I was visited by some pious friends, and the Lord rendered himself glorious among us. I was not aware of any fatigue.

September 31, 1747 - Thanksgiving in the house of God

On the following Lord's Day, I desired to go up to the house of God to praise God with his congregation. That morning the Lord was secretly with me. I had a sweet sense of his love toward me, and could not but commit myself anew to his service. I attended on the ministrations of that worthy teacher, Rev. Mr. de Groot.

As I went to church, I was overwhelmed with a sense of the Lord's astonishing and loving dealings with me; the very fact of my being here was a sign and wonder of the Lord. I said, "What shall I render to the Lord?" I saw my inability to answer his faithfulness and benefits, and so I wished to rest all my expectations upon his grace.

Everything was most suitable. We sang Psalm 116, which was fitting to my condition. The minister's subject was the precious matter in Ezekial 34:31: "You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God." The introduction was from Genesis 17:1, these words, "I am almighty God." The minister showed that in the original this word "almighty" was the equivalent of "all-sufficient." How precious a help this was to me. My compassionate Redeemer told me, "I know that you are human, miserable and helpless, but let this be enough, I am your God, your all-sufficient one. I, myself, say it to you, I address myself to you." What enjoyment I had under this service! The preacher was wonderfully led into the heart of the subject, and was greatly assisted in setting it forth. For me, he was a messenger of God and a helper to my joy. I had great difficulty to contain it. All my emptiness and want were swallowed up by the all-sufficiency of my covenant Lord and Saviour, whose sheep I had become through grace. In prayer and thanksgiving after the sermon, the preacher was led to think of me, as he publicly acknowledged God's work and asked for grace appropriate

to my circumstances. My heart was greatly strengthened under this religious service, and my very body benefited.

After church some pious persons were at the house, and the Lord was with and among us, according to his promise. O, how often did I renew my commitment to the Lord this day. This was on September 31, 1747, the very day that three years before, after being wonderfully restored by God, I went to church; that all the wonderful displays of the love and fidelity of God to thee, O my soul, might confirm thy faith in him, and cause thee to stand upon his word and promises.

The week following I enjoyed the continual presence of God. Every day I was encompassed by divine mercies and faithfulness. In every religious meeting we received much help of the Spirit. I also was wonderfully sustained in body, although I continued to suffer from a sense of weakness in my head, so that I could not observe my regular seasons of devotion as I wished. My compassionate Master designed to make this subservient to my benefit. I had a constant sense of my insufficiency. "O Father," I said, "Here is thy poor worm, entirely dependent within and without; without thee, I cannot, and without thee, I will not do anything." My heart continually went forth in prayer to God for grace, and right seasonably I received grace upon grace.

The covenant people in Utrecht

The following Sabbath was the time for the Lord's Supper at that place. I desired to observe the sacrament also with my Utrecht friends, to take the cup of salvation, and anew show forth the Lord's death with thankfulness.

During the preparatory service I had a comforting view of the unchanging faithfulness of God and of his tender love to the people of his covenant, even though unfaithful. I was especially made aware of the force of what is said by God, that it would be a name and a praise to him to do good to his people. My desires for the welfare of the church in general were strong, and I was greatly helped by the Spirit to pray for the abiding presence of God in the church in the Netherlands.

Renewal of commitment to the Lord

On the day of the Lord's Supper I attended on the ministry of Christ's worthy servant, the Rev. Mr. de Beveeren. His subject was Psalm 111:5: "He provides food for those that fear him." But the preacher was led so long and far into the first part of the text, so as to leave the second for another Lord's day. The Lord was there, and I was greatly blessed.

Frequently I had to say, "Amen," to what the preacher was enabled to say about his subject. I had to exclaim, "The Lord is my banner." All I needed was to be found in my divine head. How dear the blessed one was to my soul again. It was my inmost desire to be more and more conformed to him. Then I yielded myself up to the Spirit again. I engaged myself to the Lord and his people and to the church militant until he would bestow the blessing. I obtained the assurance that the Lord would not take away his word and Spirit.

As I approached the table, I received the bread, handed me by the servant of Christ. As he handed the bread, he said, "With the giving of the element the Lord assures you to be your God. What more do you want?" he said, "It includes all things. All God is, he is for you." My heart said, "Amen, his grace is sufficient in and for all things." The Lord imparted to me a renewed sense of his love. I could heartily say, "I am the Lord's, let him do with me as seems to be good in his sight." All I desired, and at this place as well, was to be permitted to be a witness for God and to be kept near to him. My heart was greatly enlarged and I rejoiced on account of my oath made to him. The Lord is my witness. I choose to follow him, even in darkness and affliction. The Lord's way is precious and good to me. It was on the first of October, 1747, that I formally and by renewal engaged myself to the Lord's service, his cause and people, and to the church militant upon earth. I sought the good of Zion with the pious, and wished that it might be well with them. Such is the testimony of the Lord's handmaiden, D. van Berg.

Friends in Utrecht

After that I still remained for a full three weeks in Utrecht, where I received many tokens of the Lord's compassionate and fatherly love to me. I was overwhelmed with benefits and in constant meeting and fellowship with kind friends, experienced as much as I was well able to sustain. My composure was uniform, and I was kept from marked departures from my God. My heart remained weak, however, but my Father, who is good and wise, knows how proud and self-loving a worm I am. I saw how God preserved me by the manner in which he dealt with me and taught me to live with a sense of dependence upon him, and kept me from running before, instead of carefully following. I dared no day to proceed any further than I felt myself able in the midst of my helplessness, both inwardly and outwardly. How blessed it is to be permitted to live under divine guidance. All things must work for good. I received a manifest token of this in the servants of the Lord, who were of great benefit to me, especially that worthy minister, whom I acknowledged as a father, Rev. Mr. de Groot, a helper of my joy.

In the providence of God I was permitted to hear him on the 12th Lord's Day, regarding John 3:6, and also on the 14th Lord's Day. Each one of these occasions was the source of a special blessing, giving guidance and edification. I hardly can acknowledge the loving kindness of the Lord toward me with sufficient thankful-

ness, for that minister; not only in public, but also in private and in social and religious meetings in which God manifested himself, sometimes in a remarkable manner. This so attached my heart to Utrecht that I deferred my departure from day to day, until after repeatedly bringing the matter before the Lord in secret, I felt free to fix a time to return again to my parents and home. This I did on October ___ (date unclear).

Many were the blessings invoked upon me and the good wishes uttered in my behalf, by my friends. I said to them, "Ebenezer; hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Our taking leave of one another was naturally emotional. I also felt a tender love for the church I left behind.

Back to Amsterdam

On the barge I had the privilege of testifying for Christ. The Lord was with me, kindly preserved me, and brought me home in peace, where I was received with much love on the part of my parents and friends in the Lord.

That same evening, however, I had fever and was very weak, especially in my head, so that for several days I was not in a condition to converse with any one. But my good and faithful Saviour kept my heart near to him, as also the Lord's dealing with me at Utrecht were a stay and staff for me. It was my desire, through these experiences, to be more and more purified and refined from my dross. So much I perceived within me that needed to be broken down and built up. I knew how good and loving a Father I had in Christ, and so I could believe that not one stroke was inflicted by the Lord, which he did not design to be for my benefit and the promotion of his glory. I lived under the deep impression of God's loving kindness. By a sense of his love I was continually prompted with Lodenstein to say, "I'll praise my Maker with my breath..."

It was several weeks before I was able again to go to the house of my God, where I then heard my beloved father in the Lord, Rev. Mr. Temmink. And the word of the Lord's servant was right and suitable to me. His subject was Hebrews 12:3,4, where it says, "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." This was a wonderful means of grace to me. I was greatly cheered by it. The preacher showed that "consider" was equivalent to "compare," or "to carefully contemplate" your own sufferings and those of your Master. But it was not so much the sufferings, as the suffering person, that must be made the object of our attention. Then consider this one, that divine and all-worthy person, the eternal and incomprehensible God himself. He endured such hostility of sinners against himself. Against his Godhead and Messiahship it was that they directed their assaults. The preacher said, "Every page of the evangelist testifies what opposition the divine Saviour had to endure from the proud among men." When therefore they considered that the Saviour had suffered as their Mediator, and had

taken away all witnesses out of their cup of sorrow, they must not be wearied nor faint in their minds under their afflictions, as they had not yet resisted to the point of shedding their blood. Said the preacher, "So far it only can come with divine permission, "to shedding blood," that is to death. That is the farthest and severest it can go. So they were engaged in lawful conflict, in striving against sin, and had a well-founded hope of overcoming. It was given the preacher to be of help to the people, to prepare them for sufferings and anticipated sorrows, and to encourage them to follow and remain with Jesus. My soul was greatly strengthened by this precious discourse. The way of the cross was anew made dear to me, and my Saviour precious as my example in suffering. I could in the most hearty manner acquiesce in God's dealings with me, and was enabled to lay my own particular afflictions and crosses, and also those of the church in general, upon Christ. In the tenderest of manners, I renewed my covenant engagements with God and yielded myself with all my interests into the hands of Jesus, to follow him whithersoever he was disposed to lead me. I confided in my faithful and true God, and I was assured that he would subject me to no trial that I was unable to bear. Through grace, I desired to be faithful unto the end, to follow my Master, who through sufferings had entered into rest. I received a new and cheering impulse on my Christian journey, and, in approval of the Lord's ways with me, I could say with the departed Lodenstein:

I'll choose my heavenly Father's ways
 Nor take his road amiss.
 Enough for me if I may tread
 The narrow way to bliss. (translation)

I desired to resume and renew the conflict in the strength of Christ.

After this service I continually had fever again. I was very weak, but the Lord was with me. I was also greatly exercised about the church and found much freedom in prayer for her, the country and our beloved Prince. Together with the pious I earnestly prayed that we might not have a severe winter, lest that might serve as an open door for the enemy. So far we were not refused, for to this time the Lord had dealt wonderfully with us, acting as a wall of fire to us to defend us against our enemies. But with special earnestness did I cry to the Spirit. I had to acknowledge that the Spirit was grieved and departed because of our sin. I had a deep awareness of having myself grieved the Spirit. But I was ready to acknowledge my guilt and turn to him, confessing the blood of reconciliation, as I was aware of the experience of its power for cleansing and purification. I was enabled to entertain an abiding sense of our having forfeited all blessings, and besought God to return and work graciously as before in our Netherlands.

A hurricane

On the 11th or 12th of the month we had a fearful hurricane, accompanied by a noise as loud as thunder. Scarcely a house escaped. Chimneys were thrown down. I was sustained in the midst of

it, by considering that the God that walks upon the wings of the wind was my God. How glorious and adorable a truth this did seem to me. I was even disposed to sing, but on account of the distress of the members of our family, who only urged me to pray, I was obliged to refrain. I was aware of how righteous God would be in overthrowing the Netherlands. He needed no enemy; he only had to command the winds. But I continued to pray that he would spare the nation and my native land. I could, indeed, perceive that he was able to make it turn to the disadvantage of the enemy, as he had done frequently before. I was filled with the spirit of the most earnest prayer. But in a particular manner I had my attention drawn to the words of the Saviour in John 3:8, "The wind blows where it wills," and I heartily cried to God to send the wind of his Spirit. I could not break off. I had much freedom of access, and a believing confidence with respect to a gracious hearing.

We had great reason to acknowledge God's gracious hand in that wind, as our ships, for which we entertained great fears, were remarkably preserved. The Lord had not despised the cries of his miserable offenders.

During this month there was a public announcement of an expected heir to the royal house of Orange. In this there was an answer to my own supplications and those of the Lord's people. It was our prayer that a second Samuel might be given us; that the Orange branch might flourish and the Netherlands abide under the shadow of it.

This is all we have of Dina's journal. But she took up her pen again to write about the spiritual struggles she went through in deciding to marry Johannes Frelinghuysen.

Decision to Marry Johannes Frelinghuysen

When she was in Utrecht Dina met Johannes Frelinghuysen, a theological student from America. Johannes was one of five sons of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, Pastor of the Reformed Churches in the Raritan Valley of New Jersey. Johannes shared the pietistic persuasions of his father. He had studied under the tutelage of Peter Henry Dorsius, Reformed Pastor in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He came to the Netherlands to be examined for ordination to the ministry of the gospel. He studied at the University of Utrecht. While there the news came that his father had

died. Johannes was called to succeed his father as Pastor of several of the congregations his father had been serving.

The consistories of Raritan, Millstone and North Branch (Readington) issued a call to Johannes dated May 18, 1749. He was promised “an annual salary of one hundred and twenty-five pounds, current money, at eight shillings an ounce; the half of which, collected by the elders and deacons, shall be paid each half year; and a suitable dwelling with thirty acres of land.”

Johannes proposed to Dina that they be married and she go with him to America. Dina was strongly attracted to Johannes and felt deeply that God was calling her into Christian service. Yet it was a most difficult decision for her because it would mean leaving her family and all that was familiar to her. America was a strange and distant land. The trip across the ocean was long and dangerous. Dina’s parents did not want her to go. It would be likely that they would never see each other again if she went.

Dina wrote about the difficulty of the decision for her and how she received God’s direction in it:

Some few notes on how my heart through hidden instructions, was prepared and afterwards bent by the Lord towards marital relations with the Rev. Mr. Johannes Frielinghuysen, minister at Raritan in New Netherland:

Intimations from the Lord

The way of my God with me in these matters is an elevated one because it involves my being torn away from my parents, sister and dear friends with whom the greatest possible bond of tender affection connects me. Concerning the person in question, it all came to me quite unexpectedly. In my relation with him I never had expected anything of that nature. About two years ago I learned to know his Reverence in Utrecht through a providential direction of the Lord. But when his Reverence came to my house afterwards to see me, our conversation concerned the state of our hearts and God’s ways with us. Besides, there always were others around. Always when his Reverence came I thought it was for the last time. Even that morning when his Reverence made his proposal I thought that his Reverence came to bid farewell, and I asked him so. It all came so unexpectedly that I was completely unprepared. Yet, over the course of some six years I have been receiving intimations from the Lord to prepare myself for this. But often my body was weakened by fainting spells and I despaired. Yet I also expected help from the Lord, trusting that he would strengthen my body in his good time so that I could do what he demanded as I desired to be guided according to his will. Sometimes it was difficult for me to follow, as I often had an overwhelming desire for the eternal rest with the Lord. Yet, there also stirred within me a sweet desire to be allowed to do something on

earth for the Lord. Even to be allowed to do the smallest part for the extension of Christ's kingdom was blessedness to me. This was a time when I could commit myself tenderly to the Lord, and entrust myself entirely in his service.

It was while going about my work that, as it seemed to me, the Lord said to me, "I will bring you to a people whose language you know not, to a strange people. And I have work for you to do." It occurred to me that it would be by way of marriage. It upset me so that I had to drink some to quiet down. Then I committed myself unconditionally to the Lord and his directions. I told my mother that after I would have recovered I would take these things to heart. Even so I sometimes wondered where all this would bring me, but I yet would follow the Lord faithfully, who saved me from running ahead of him.

It is more than four years now that while I was in Thienhooven and went in seclusion on the day before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, I was exceptionally close to the Lord. So I could rightly trace all the wonderful ways in which the Lord so far had led me. And all I could do was worship in amazement and often exclaim, "I am not worthy of all those benefits." Also I could anew entrust my destiny to the Lord, free of care and commit myself to my Father's leadings in a renewed covenant. It was to me as if I were asked of the Lord, "If I call you to leave your father's house and people, would you be willing to offer up this sacrifice for me?" I said, "O Lord, I set no conditions, to follow you is all the blessing I want. But deliver and save me from the power of the evil one." Then immediately the thought came, "Is this the condition you want to put upon following me?" But my answer was, "No, Father, I simply want to follow you, look upon your maidservant." At that time I committed myself to the Lord in secret, upon which I enjoyed special close encounters.

Many a time I wanted to speak about these things with father Schuylenborg but was repeatedly advised not to. Now I very much wondered whether his Reverence had something to impart to me during the celebration. The Lord answered my sighing for as his Reverence gave me the bread so he said to me, "The Lord will be your hope. He will save your foot from being snared. He will turn your darkness into light and he will give you the manifold desires of your heart." To which my soul said, "Amen." And I believed the Lord would make everything come to pass. The Lord was exceptionally gracious to me at this Lord's Supper and it has been my strength and stay on my way.

September, 1749 - Renewed commitment to God

It is over two years now that on the morning of a Sabbath, while it was my intent to go to church, I was prevented to do so by faintness in my head. Instead I had to seclude myself. Yet, the Lord was not a barren desert to me. I enjoyed much inward teaching and illumination. The Lord was tenderly at work and drew me close. After it began to weigh heavy on me that I would have to leave mine and my father's house, the Lord made it known to me that he would be with me.

It was at that time that I happened to become very obstinate and unwilling to bend. I had no desire to follow. Yet, it was as if constantly the Lord asked me whether I would not be willing to do as he wished, and whether I ever had lacked anything. I had to answer, "No." But I could not bring myself into agreement with the Lord at that time. I cannot imagine to have ever been more unreasonable and uncooperative in my heart than on that morning when with power I was bent to surrender myself to God's way and rule, 'til my answer had to be, "Do as you will, Lord, my answer is, 'Amen.' What is more appropriate for your creature and child?" Also in another notebook have I written something concerning this morning.

After this time I have received more of such similar admonitions from the Lord. I once mentioned this to my girlfriends and wondered what the Lord still had in store for me in the desert of this life. But I was saved from running ahead in these things. I never was able to draw any clear picture of what lay ahead from all this. It seems the Lord kept it sealed. Now, in the month of September, these things were repeatedly brought home to me by the Lord, although they still were veiled in darkness. But I believed that I was being prepared for one or another mission. What I had heard all summer was beginning to point into a direction, and the Lord had been good to me, even though my physical strength at times gave way.

So it also was to me on my birthday, September 1, that many a direction came to me from the Lord. And it was as if the Lord intimated that he still had much to say. By renewal I had to commit myself unconditionally to the Lord, and the Lord strengthened me with his grace. He also encouraged me with many a good word, several of which heartened me, Is. 46:3,4. That day I enjoyed tender appearances and could from here on surrender myself to the Lord unconditionally, trusting that in everything the Lord would make things well for me. After that time it was wonderfully well with me and there was a strong desire to do the will of my Father. Indeed, it was my food. I found myself totally surrendered to the Lord. And wherever I was, it was brought home to me, "Hear, O daughter, depart from your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. While he is your Lord, so bow down before him." And also these words, "I will bring you to a people whose language you don't know, to a foreign people." It very much took hold of my being, and it did not leave me, for the Lord tenderly encompassed me. It made me very attentive and cautious and my soul closely followed the Lord for about eight days before I understood where the Lord was leading me. It got such a hold of my being that the only way for me to bear it was to share it with one of my most intimate friends. I also asked her to pray with me and for me, as I believed that the Lord was to call me on one or another new endeavor. My soul was much afraid to drift away from the Lord. Yet, I can't ever remember having had such direct contact with the Lord as during those days. It was his constant calling to me that saved me.

The proposal

Yet, what happened still came unexpected at the end of September when on that same morning the minister came and proposed these things to me. That morning was a blessed one for me as I had secluded myself. I don't know that I ever have committed myself to the Lord more intimately and more directly as when I could say, "I am yours, do with me according to your will."

Not yet fifteen minutes had passed then his Reverence arrived, while just before I sang the second stanza of Psalm 25 (In the Psalms sung in Dutch stanza 2 corresponds with Ps. 25:4,5.) and some other stanzas. Then the Rev. came, whom I thought had come to say good bye. We entered into an animated conversation and I told his Reverence what blessings my soul had received that morning, and my reactions to it. His Reverence also told me how he found the time. After speaking for an hour about the ways of God with our hearts, His Reverence began from afar and finally came to propose his affections for me, and told me how he had wrestled with it before the Lord. Often it had looked impossible, for he himself had realized the difficulty involved because of the long distance I would have to travel from home. But he no longer could keep quiet. After speaking of many things in which he saw the hand of God, His Reverence asked me to bring these things before the Lord and see it in his light.

I find it difficult to give expression to the inner stirrings of my soul, but the following words rose forcefully from my heart, "Beware that you don't dismiss him who speaks." But what went entirely against my heart and nature was that the proposal came so unexpectedly. I never would have expected this from his Reverence and it upset me greatly. I told his Reverence that this seemed to me to be impossible, and I felt my heart beginning to rebel against his Reverence. If the Lord would not have prevented it, I would have dealt with him angrily. I held myself back, but was inwardly much depressed.

His Reverence took leave and I went before the Lord. That day I secluded myself in prayer. I wanted to pray away the road that was opening up for me, but I couldn't. With whatever excuses I came before the Lord, his answer was clear. It was to me as if the Lord said, "I do not tell you anything new. I have told you long ago. Repeatedly I have tried to teach you."

Rebellion against God's will

What at first was dark to me, because it was strange to my eyes, now began to be clear to me. During that time I have learned what it really means to commit oneself unconditionally to the Lord and then to follow him. I found out how much my heart rebelled against God's will and way. I even refused to ask the Lord straightway about these things, for fear that I might receive light and see God's hand in it. I did not want to go that way. At that

time I was not inclined towards marriage at all, and the sweet security I had I treasured much. It was my desire to please the Lord without the attachment of marriage. Besides, it would mean that I had to go far away from my immediate relatives and friends. That was unthinkable for me. And also, having to cross over such an astonishingly large sea on which I never even had sailed. That too I found hard to accept.

But however much I used this to be excused, it was to no avail for me before the Lord. His answer to me was, "Fear not, for I am with you." And however many the anxieties were I brought up, the answer was, "Leave all your anxieties with me, I will take care of you." Whenever I was alone with the Lord, I could not but agree and subject myself. But as soon as I returned from that situation my speech and reason were against the Lord.

Opposition from parents and sister

My parents and my younger sister, too, with all their might, were against this turn of events. So much so that when the minister came the next day to discuss this affair with my parents, my father said that he would never permit this, and to His Reverence said that he rather saw me die before his eyes than to send me off to such a far-away country. My younger sister was so highly affected by it all that even her powers of reasoning were diminished and she appeared totally benumbed.

I thought that possibly this could be a way for the Lord to try me but also save me from the bonds of marriage through the strong protest of my parents whom I had to obey, yet it would be against the clear light that I had received. I was much shaken by it all and it came repeatedly to mind, "Is to argue with the Almighty perhaps a way of being taught?" But when all my arguments broke down and I could not hide anywhere anymore, the only defense I had left was that I had to honor my parents and to do what would be my duty and joy. The minister also said that he would not do anything against my parents wishes, and to bend their hearts, that he could not do and had given it in the hands of God.

The minister left again, while I retreated behind closed doors to be alone with the Lord, but I found no approval for my ways. Instead it became clear that I was working against the Lord, and also that I did not want to bend under his will. I began to avoid being alone with the Lord because he instructed me against my desires.

The minister came once more, and in spite of all the divine instruction I received, I again turned down his proposals and I even used rather harsh language against His Reverence.

Seemingly there wasn't anything more left to to be done in this case for His Reverence and His Reverence thought that it was time to begin immediate preparations for his journey. But as he left, he said that in spite of all the darkness there still remained in him a measure of hope against hope, as his hope was in God.

I said that later it would be clear whether his doings were from God.

His Reverence left and I hoped that this would be the end of it. But whenever I came before the Lord, I became depressed and felt that something was not right. When I was alone with the Lord I saw clearly that I had tried to save myself, but that this was not the will of the Lord.

That next week, now and then, there were moments in which I found joy in doing my Father's will. But whenever I seriously thought of the implications, I did not want to go that way, and I sighed that the Lord would make the minister to forget me in his heart. Yet, at this point there came obstruction in my way and I could not possibly pray any further. All I could hope for is that all this was merely the Lord's way of testing me.

Prayer with the circle of friends

The next week on Tuesday I was assigned to do the praying at my circle. It so happened that at that time I had a loving and blessed vision that touched my heart and brought me to the Lord. And again, and now in the presence of my friends, I was compelled to bring my innermost thoughts and ways of late before the Lord. And a strange desire came over me to surrender my will and desire to the Lord and to do the will of God on earth. Again I united myself with the Lord, just as I was, and with my friends as witnesses that I would not return to my ways, but that to do the will of God would be my salvation. It was a lovely evening for me.

When I was on the way to my home, it came to me, "But if the calling would come again, how would you then respond to it?" I thought, "This is the enemy, for to make a decision about something hypothetical is not safe." Then it came to me, "If you withhold yourself from me, my soul does not look with favor upon you." I said, "The evil one may not entrap me." But I could not get rid of it. Then, when I arrived home, they told me that there was a letter from the minister. That shook me considerably and I refused to read the letter before I had talked with the Lord. When finally I read the letter it undid me some more and in my body as well. It was forcefully brought home to me that this was from God.

My soul was extremely oppressed, the more so since that same evening I had committed myself to unconditionally subject myself to the will of my God. How I learned again, however, how our flesh and blood run counter to that. My heart remained much unsettled. As soon as I thought of it all it upset me very much. I spent the bigger part of that night in prayer. I thought I had all kinds of good reason to pray to be excused. But the Lord encountered me and made his will very clear to me.

Counsel from the minister

The greatest difficulty at this time was with my parents; they had not changed their attitude. Especially my mother was filled with anxiety, as she knew that the Lord had prepared me for this.

The time had come to answer the letter. I was so shaken that I no longer could carry it alone. I already had shared all this with my friends of the circle, but they were as much against it as I was. I was led to seek advice from the Reverend teacher whom I may call my father in the Lord. After much praying I finally went to His Reverence. When I had told him everything, His Reverence said to me that he would prefer not to answer this immediately: "When I look at the circumstances it would be difficult to judge, but when I consider the teachings of God to your soul, one clearly can observe God's doings in it. It seems to me that this may well be your way to go." This disturbed me much. I said that I wanted to write it off. His Reverence said to be careful; too much depends upon it. I suggested that it could be a way of testing and that I could not but write it off. Then His Reverence said not to use too harsh expressions as they won't be able to change things for you anyway. For if this is from God, it will have to be so at any rate. And as His Reverence said further, "Do not avoid this way without the Lord or I may well foresee difficulties for you" After much talking with his Reverence he practically gave me the words that I should write the minister. And I did so, almost word for word, according to the advice of His Reverence. That same evening I sent the letter in which I wrote everything off again. After I had sent the letter away I closeted myself and prayed that the letter would work its end, namely to free me from going that way. These were the words that came to me with force, "Be still my daughter, until you will see how these things work out. The Lord will not rest until everything goes his way." There I stood and could not move one way or another. I came under the merciful impressions of the Lord and I believed that my Father would make everything well for me and would make all things work for good. At that time I too could sing, "My duty is to praise the Lord."

For two days I remained in a good mood before the Lord and wanted him to have his way, but also praying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

Depression

The next Saturday I was quite wretched again in so far as I tried to pray away what seemed to have become God's way for me. Indeed, my heart began to quarrel with the Lord and I accused him of being heavy-handed toward me.

After that all light and boldness to approach the Lord left me and all doors were closed. On the day of rest it even became worse. I did go to church under the servant of Christ, Perisonius. The subject matter was from Psalm 25:5. I could follow His Reverence from earlier experiences, but I have to confess that my heart rebelled. For more than seven years I had never felt so depressed than on that day.

I assumed the form of Asaph while quarreling within, and was a beast before God. Nothing moved me, nor could I approach God, not even behind closed doors. Several times it came to me, "What is this you have done, that you have been disobedient to the Lord your God?"

On Monday morning I was brought to see my misbehaving with great humility. I was amazed how the Lord could put up with me. I would have understood had the Lord taken his hands off me and not turned to me in mercy. I was ready to confess, "For thou art holy," and from the depths I called upon the Lord, for I could not bear the thought of not being able to see my Father's face. Then the Lord turned his face to listen to a deeply guilty sinner and I was led to Jesus and newly atoned. Peace entered my soul. I became very humble and became like a child. That day I was saved from the worst.

More visits by Johannes

That same evening the minister came again, and however much I was convinced that I went against the Lord, I nevertheless tried hard to work against his plan. But I became very anxious. Even my anger brought me nowhere, and when everything else failed I hid behind my parents, for my father stayed with what he had said before.

After the minister had left and I had begun to do some work, I received many convincing thoughts concerning God's will. And the Lord told me that whoever wants to be his disciple must deny himself. "And whoever loves father or mother and friend more than me is not worthy of me." There now was no way out for me anymore, but I could not get myself to let go and obey.

The next morning the minister talked with my father again. But before the minister arrived my father had said again, "I'd rather see you die than to agree to this." I thought, "This will save me and all this will prove only to have been a way to test me." But when the minister brought up the matter with my father again my father said, "I do not agree to it. But if all this is from God I will not be able to stop the unseen hand of the Lord in the pursuit of his heart." This touched me deeply. I said, "Father, do not act this way, but see if it cannot be postponed." Father said, "My child, I cannot do that." There was much going on that morning, and after much going back and forth, Father passed it on to Mother who also felt very anxious. She said she was convinced of the will of God in this, but could not let go of me. I did everything to escape it all and to prevent any claim on me, for the minister was about to leave and wanted to be assured of something that would give him reason to come again. The date and time would then be decided by my parents. That day the Lord pressed me so far that, in my depression, I said for the minister to go and to ask and examine carefully whether His Reverence's heart would not let go of me. I promised to see or speak with no one about these things before His Reverence would have written that he was free from me. All this was merely to circumvent the matter.

October 15, 1749 - Visits by the minister

The next morning, while I had closeted myself, I felt much depressed and my only hope was that all this was but a way to test me. Then it struck me that, even if this were a way of testing me, I still would have to let go of my ways and go the Lord's way. For when Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, when God tested him, it had to come so far that the knife had to be put on Isaac's throat. Only then the Lord saved him. This depressed me much, for I could not let go. Even before I returned from being closeted there came the reverend teacher with whom I had talked about this. I had talked much with His Reverence who showed me clearly that the only thing I missed was willingness. When finally I could not escape the issue anymore, I said to His Reverence that perhaps it merely was a way of testing me. "But," said His Reverence, "even though it were a way of testing you, you still would have to let go and say, 'I will follow and go.' For the knife went as far as Isaac's throat." This was the very same thought that had come to me when I was closeted. That touched me deeply. After His Reverence had spoken much with me and my mother he left, while I again closeted myself. I felt very anxious, for the Lord convinced me powerfully of his will and, at the same time, that his promises to me that he would be with me were many. A way out for me was closed, but I still could not make myself let go.

That afternoon, not quite fifteen minutes before the minister came again, I got into a tender mood and by renewal I was able to surrender myself completely to the Lord. This brought over me a tender feeling of God's father-love and providence over me. I could acknowledge his sovereign rule for me, saying, "Whether I must go or stay, your will be done." I was in the mood to sing, "You are the potter, I am the clay." My will was being powerfully bent so that no longer could I continue to be contrary to the Lord. But it was with many a turn that I managed to let go of myself before the Lord and could say, "Lord, you are too strong for me and you have conquered. I am thine, and if it is thy will, I will go. Here I am, thy will be done. To obey thee is my salvation." This was followed by special promises such as, "Do not be afraid, I am your shield and your reward will be exceedingly great." All scruples were solved. Even the mighty ocean appeared to me as a ditch. For the Lord called to me, "I am the ruler of sea and wind; both alike obey me. The Lord of hosts is with you. Indeed," said the Lord, "I will go before you, believe and you will see the glory of the Lord." The only thing that was possibly left for me to do was to subject myself to the Lord.

That same afternoon the minister came again, and after much talk, back and forth, my mother, to whom my father had delegated the affair, was turned and bent by the Lord in such a way that she could let go of me. But then it struck me again and I was flooded with unwillingness. And if I possibly could have escaped it all I would have done so. But I was powerfully turned away from this and I no longer could hold out against the Lord. I was greatly troubled and I had to say that it was

not because of any natural inclination that I was willing to go, but only because I was ready to do the will of my Father. But what a big change in feeling came over me! Where at first I felt as though moving between rows of stone, I now was like a new person.

Assurance from van Lodenstein and a Psalm

Yet I continued to have much inner turmoil. After the minister had gone I closeted myself. Then the Lord waited on me with his grace and was merciful to me, and how pure and open was the way I approached the throne, and how tenderly and unconditionally I was able to surrender myself to the Lord in all of this affair. With a sincere heart I could say, “Father, here I am.” In my soul I most tenderly felt united with the will of God and his sovereign plan for me in these things. I now could agree and approve. And I could say,

Everything belongs to heaven,
What I am and what I do;
What is mine or ever will be,
What I love and do desire;
All the longings of my heart,
All things from which I must depart.

(from Jodocus van Lodenstein, 17th Century pietistic poet, preacher and writer.)

I now surrendered myself tenderly to the Lord for safekeeping. I greatly wished that the peace of God in Christ Jesus would be part of my heart and mind. I was most sincerely afraid that some creature would endeavor to come between my soul and the Lord and disturb me in my tender and intimate relationship with God. I said with Lodenstein:

My dearest Jesus, possess my heart and keep
that Kingdom ever more as thine,
Where love is love without the pain, and
Jesus’ pure love holds its reign.
(Jodocus van Lodenstein)

Also, I received many loving promises that the Lord would keep me safe as the apple of his eye. I could in any respect give myself over and surrender to the Lord. At first I found it difficult to accept the judgment of others over me in this matter and could not get over that. But the Lord said to me, “Be not anxious in anything, for I am with you. And be not surprised, for I help you.” And what also strengthened me was Psalm 37:3. (Rhymed and set to music in Dutch, corresponding to Ps. 37:5,6,7 in the English Bible.) It was a time when I dearly longed to be

closeted, and I enjoyed many evidences of grace.

All this was on October 15 of the year 1749 that, by way of persuasion, I was captured by the will of God and committed to it. And as I have written before, that I want to be the Lord's, so also now my desire is to be the Lord's in this affair.

Wedding plans

What afterwards proved to be the way of my God in this matter was astonishing, and often I found myself saying, "How amazing to me are thy thoughts; how high is the sum of them." I stood dumbfounded by the way in which God executed his plan. I never could have thought of it nor imagined that this would be the way for me to go. It amazed me, over and again, and I found that I had to be silent with Aaron because God's ways were higher than mine and his thoughts different from mine.

It continued to be good to me to confess, "I am thine; do with me according to thy will." How lovely it was to me, to place myself under God, and that it was not I but the Lord who was in command of my life.

At first the solemnization of this affair was to be after three years. Later it was to be in two years. In about that time His Reverence would come back again. At that moment all was ready for his departure and he expected to have to go any day. But as it seemed, the Lord prevented His Reverence to leave. One day it was because of the wrong winds. Then again because of other hindrances. His Reverence thought that the Lord did not want him to leave before this matter was solemnized. But this I strongly opposed and I absolutely insisted that His Reverence should first go and then come again.

Secretly the thought was in my heart that if now His Reverence would go, it all still might turn out to be merely a testing of me as the Lord possibly might change things. But this I did not dare suggest to the Lord in prayer. Yet that is how my flesh reasoned. It also humbled me, and it welled up in my heart, "Do the will of God joyfully." I clearly saw that still something was amiss. There was the secret wish to escape the matter. For flesh and blood many a thing seems hard to change. So I took recourse in prayer. I asked that if it were the will of the Lord that I should accompany His Reverence, that the Lord would bend my will. The Lord convinced me that I should by two times hiding his face from me in a most frightening way. It was only then that I fully agreed with the Lord. There always was still something left of my own will, and my subjection to the Lord was more because I had to than because I wanted to. But now I could say, "It is my pleasure, O God, to do thy will. I have no will, my will has been swallowed up by God's will."

Inner assurance

After that I enjoyed lovely times and received much approval concerning this affair. If ever something tenderly bound me to the Lord, it was this. It also gives me much to pray about because I am aware how necessary it is for me to watch my steps because so many eyes will follow me, and I am well aware of my own weakness. But the Lord knows what kind of creature I am. And he remembers that I am dust, and this strengthens me. It is my privilege that in all of this the Lord is my guarantee. The end and goal is clear to me. I have chosen this road because it is the will of my Father, and it is my overriding desire to be allowed to contribute something to the extension of Christ's kingdom.

It sometimes humbles me that so often the Lord tells me, "I have work for you on earth, and you will not be childless. You will increase on the left and on the right." And there were more promises to which my soul says, "Amen," and together with Mary, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy word."

But who am I, the least of his saints, that I should be used by the Lord, I who am so useless and miserable. But the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient unto you, for my power will be shown in weakness."

It was because of grace that I chose this road, and I will count it my salvation and privilege, for the short time of my journey through this wilderness, not to live for myself or to seek things for myself. No, it remains my goal and desire to seek the honor of my Father. May the same mind which was in Christ, be also in me; who emptied himself, etc. That love invites me to sacrifice all in his service, while all other interests be pushed aside. I freely dare say that I know of no higher good than to serve this Lord. To know him, that is my treasure and desire. The burdens and the difficulties along the road will make the plowing laborious, and sorrow will be part of it. Yet it is all to satisfy the Lord's will. This, after all, is not yet eternity with its perfect rest. Why then would I shun difficulties, while my Father cares for me and while my times are in his hands. My steps are measured by him. "Trust the Lord, O my soul, and you won't be disappointed. His mercies lead your faith in his promises, and he will not leave you. From so many proofs in your life you know that he is not a man who would lie nor a child of man that he would regret anything. Be filled with shame about your low esteem of God. Teach me to know thee closer, O Lord. Make me more familiar with thee. And make my eye to see thee clearer. For those who know thee by name will trust in thee."

"Now Lord, also strengthen my faith and protect thy honor on my way. In thee I trust, thou art my shield and my guarantor, from moment to moment. Accomplish thy goal through me. I leave the ordering of my ways in me to thee. Thou only hast authority over me. May grace rule in and over me to break down my own will, inclination and desire. How can I ever have pursued my salvation so thoughtlessly in selfish goals, whereas in righteousness and truth it is taught that my salvation is in God's honor and in his ways, even for me, the least deserving. Even when

he lets me go down, I still will sing his praises, for what he does is good. My Father taught me to see how useless it is to worry so, as all things go according to his will at any rate. Assure me that thine eye will be forever on me. Tell me that in all things Jesus is my Advocate and that he pleads with thee on my behalf. As I hope in thy word, O Lord, affirm thy promises in which thy maidservant trusts.”

Come, O Lord, and dwell with me,
 And graciously turn to me and help me.
 Hasten to deliver me,
 Who art my salvation.
 As sung and known in Psalm 38:22.

Letters and Commentary

After her parents consented, Dina and Johannes were engaged. During their engagement Dina wrote this letter to Johannes:⁵

Reverend Sir, through the good and mighty hand of my God my betrothed and beloved friend:

The Lord be thy help and thy shield, cover thee with His hand and grant thee grace and peace at all times and in all manner.

Have well received yours of the third inst. and found myself moved (though very much limited in time) to drop you a few lines. After your Reverence left on Thursday I received on the following Friday a note from Rev. Schuylenborg. When I first read it, I was very much agitated and astounded, and if anything had been able to shake me, that note certainly was of that nature. But my merciful Redeemer rather wanted to use it to teach me to pray. My wily enemies very much tried to make me waver, but if ever I found strength to look down upon my disturbers it was then. I was encouraged by many good words, and even after that time have had much strength of faith and independence of mind, but have found myself impelled immediately to take up the pen and to answer His Reverence's assertions. I sent the answer by skipper Veenman, because it was not possible for me to mail it on Thursday. How great it is to have God with you, what a blessing it is to do his will. Would it were given to me to always joyfully follow it, without any contradiction. The Lord may now try me, whether (even against the promptings of the world and the flesh) I am willing to follow him, and to be faithful to him. I need grace, but he who calls is faithful and all powerful, and my constant guide

will certainly help me through. My strength is in him.

I shall not reply to your Reverence's letter owing to lack of time. Only to that (clause) where your Reverence says to hope that I, as is proper, shall be faithful to my engagement, however much to your sorrow, it may be opposed. The Lord, who is witness between you and me, will keep me from acting faithlessly against him and you. The Lord is my witness that I have chosen this road pursuant to his will. I have not chosen it because I thought that others would approve of it, on the contrary. The approval of God is more than that of man. And here I stand in the liberty wherewith I have been made free by Christ, and will not become a slave to any man. I am the Lord's and because I have received insight in the Lord's good and holy will, therefore I am also yours, and death only can make a separation between you and me. I believe that, in case I should be unfaithful to you the Lord would come against me on my way, and therefore my dear Dominie do not let this trouble your mind.

It should impel us, as you rightly say, to ardently and continuously seek the Lord's countenance. And as to your heart's desire to set apart a day, the same has also long been in my heart. And because next Monday, February 2, is for me a day of commemoration, it then being eight years ago that the Lord broke my bonds, and set me at liberty, and saved me from the deep darkness I was in, I therefore thought, if your Reverence be able, that you would also set apart that day or a portion of it for the purpose (even if separated in space) of supplicating together concerning one affair. May the Lord grant us assistance and light. And in case there are unknown and unrepented sins in our way, may the Lord impart the light of the Spirit and lead us to see them, and open up a road for us to take them up, and to seek and find redemption. O, would this were a day of strength for us and that we might be in the Lord's eyes as those finding peace, and again receive his approval on our way, and be filled with confidence to further entrust our case into his keeping, and to stick to the Lord with a sincere heart. O, let us pray together that the Lord for his name's sake, will guard our foot from falling and our step from stumbling. Now, our God is a God of mercy: He has up to now, given visible signs of his assistance and he shall neither give us up, nor abandon us.

His promise be our consolation in misery. I was happy to see at the close of your letter that you can somewhat lift your head out of the depths. Have but a good opinion of the Lord, he is so worthy to trust in and to depend upon. His word just now, secretly affords me great happiness. It is a blessed solitude, that of being intimate with God. How much strength it imparts to be permitted to complain in the Father's lap like a child.

It sometimes seems to me like a "Peniel," and the more my enemies agree with flesh and blood to make me afraid the more strength I receive through grace. And therefore let us put our trust in the Lord, and wait for his salvation.

I sometimes sing with Van Houten:

My Jesus may do things as he pleases,
He cannot do anything else but work for his glory.

If only for a little while my trials are ended
 Then I find joy in the respite.
 When the time of my struggle is past
 Then the crown, out of free grace, becomes my reward.
 Rise up my soul, rise up, end your wailings.
 The Lord's joy will give you strength
 And he himself will be your fortress,
 His arm will certainly keep back the enemy.
 Therefore I freely and gladly wade through the prickly
 Thorns as well as the sweet scented roses
 To meet the rest of heaven.

Now my friend, the disposal of our case has been entrusted into God's hands.
 O, how glad I am that it is out of my hand.

Our Father takes care of us and will cause everything to rebound to our good.
 Let us hearken more to what the Lord speaks, and try to get ourselves used to his
 ways, and we shall find peace on our way. May the Lord help us. Remember me
 in prayer. It remains my privilege to remember you, and to struggle for you in
 prayer.

May the Lord assist you in your labors and support you by his hand. May he
 continue to use your Reverence to be a messenger of glad tidings and a bright light.

A rich blessing on the work also tomorrow. I heartily sigh, and pray that the
 Lord will then also be silently present with you, and that you may gain for him new
 converts. Now, the grace of the Lord Jesus, which is sufficient to you, be with you.

I must cut short. Receive the love of my parents and little sister, also of the
 friends, Boddens and others, and of myself, who remains,

Rev. Sir,
 Your betrothed and loving friend,
 Dina Van Bergh

Amsterdam, January 31, 1750

P.S: Was very glad to learn that our brother Sappius has succeeded this time.
 I have still found grace to remember His Reverence. May the Lord hereafter show
 his approbation, by making use of His Reverence for the benefit of his church.

Give my regards to all friends, which your Reverence may meet, and who
 know me, or to whom your Reverence sees fit to remember me.

Farewell.

The workings of Providence

Johannes was ordained by the Classis of Amsterdam. It had been decided that Johannes would go to America to begin his work and later return to marry Dina. But, as contrary winds prevented his sailing, Johannes proposed that they be married immediately and she go with him. Seeing the storms as providential, this is what they did. Dina and Johannes were married February 17, 1750.⁶

It was a long and difficult voyage to America. An incident that was reputed to have happened and was repeated by Theodore W. Welles in a book written in 1893 is that as Johannes and Dina crossed the ocean a terrible storm arose threatening to capsize the ship. As the boat was tossed about by the waves, it sprung a leak. The pumps on board the vessel were unable to pump the water out fast enough to save the ship. The captain informed the passengers and the crew that there was no hope of saving the vessel. But Dina calmly sat in a chair tied to one of the masts and prayed for their safety. As she prayed the water stopped rushing into the hold. The pumps were able to empty the ship of the water that had come in. The ship was saved. Later it was found that a sword fish was wedged in the open seam of the hull, effectively stopping the leak. The chair Dina used was called the “Ebenezer chair” and she used it throughout her life.⁷

Ministry in Raritan

Johannes and Dina reached Raritan by mid-1750. The home promised to them by their congregations was built in 1751. The cornerstone says June 7, 1751. According to tradition Dina’s family had sent furniture, bricks and money for the house. Consistory minutes of the churches indicate that each of the three congregations was to pay one third of the cost of building. May 16, 1753, it was reported that the total cost was 570 pds, 7 sh., 4 d., with Millstone still owing the better part of their share.⁸ (The house is now a state museum along with the Wallace House in Somerville, N.J.)

In his home Johannes offered instruction to young men who desired to go into the ministry. Johannes’ father had advocated the training of clergy in America. Johannes’ teacher, Dominie Dorsius, had gone back to the Netherlands in 1748. So Johannes took up the task. It was a hazardous journey to the Netherlands for training and ordination. Two of John’s brothers, Jacobus and Ferdinandus, died of smallpox on the return trip from the Netherlands where they had been studying and had been ordained as ministers of the gospel. The tragic loss reinforced the importance of providing theological education in America.

Two children were born to Johannes and Dina. Frederick was born April 13, 1753, and Eva was born September 5, 1754.

Dina energetically and enthusiastically shared in the ministry with her husband. She was respectfully and affectionately called “the Juffrouw.” She

entertained women of the congregation in her home. They were not only hospitably entertained, but were spiritually uplifted by her conversation with them. Dina was eager to share her experience of God's grace and power and her understanding of the Christian life.

Johannes was a gifted and intelligent young man. He gave himself unstintingly to his work of ministry. Unfortunately his health failed him. On his way to a Coetus (association of churches) meeting on Long Island he became fatally ill. There he died of pneumonia, September 15, 1754.⁹

A time of mourning

Dina returned to Raritan with the coffin containing the body of her husband. From Long Island the ship would sail across the New York Bay into the Raritan Bay and up the Raritan River. It was a heart-rending trip. The boat was small, with no accommodations for such special cargo as a coffin. When it pulled up to the dock it was not able to get close enough. Dina ordered the coffin placed across the gap so that the passengers could step across it to reach the shore. When one of the crew objected, Dina replied, "'tis only a shell, his spirit is gone, cast it across."¹⁰

Bereft of her husband, in a land she had known only four years, Dina decided to return to Holland. Johannes' younger brother, Hendricus, was planning to go to the Netherlands as a candidate for the ministry. She made plans to go with him. She wrote Hendricus responding to a letter from him which had been delivered by one of Johannes' students, Jacob Hardenbergh:¹¹

Dearly beloved Brother:

Your letter sent by Hardenberg came to hand, but the preceding letter which he said you had written I did not receive. Hardenberg said that you had been made a candidate and that you had received permission from the church to go to Holland; in so far the Lord has opened the way for me and will henceforth remove all difficulties. I am glad also, dear brother, that you have been thrust out into the harvest; may you, as a voluntary Amaziah, surrender yourself to the Lord and commence the work at the expense of the Lord Jesus. It is true, as you write, that your shoulders are too frail for the work, but through Christ one can do everything; make the most of his hidden teachings and let your highest aim be to preach Christ; all other knowledge, however useful, must be subordinate. Do not seek the favor of men. O, that your feet may be preserved from being caught, my brother; watch, there are so many snares! Try to be true to your Light. May the Lord make things clear to yourself; do your work in truth and force yourself to understand the truth which is in Jesus and which sets free. You are our Benjamin; may you fulfill God's holy word (Deuteronomy 33:12). O, that a portion of the spirit of your late blessed brother, my dear husband, might rest upon you and that you may begin the work

in full faith in the powers of the Lord and sustain yourself by faith. Now, my brother, may the Lord hallow and fit you for the work and cause you yet to be a blessing to the church. To remember you in my prayers to God remains my privilege.

As far as I am concerned, I have been much distressed since you left here. My body began to give way under the sorrow, but my merciful Father has somewhat lightened the burden. I have more strength to trust in the Lord. He is my rock. I am in God's way. He will sustain me to the end. Should I not drink, then, this bitter cup which the Father has put into my hands? It is a holy bitter draft which he has prepared for me. The Lord will attain his glory and therein lies my salvation. I say with Lodenstein:

If I am lonely, it is my joy,
That the Lord rejoices in his row of Cherubims.
What if the world makes me drink gall,
The bitterness will seem sweet to me;
Drink, oh drink, the heavenly draft!

Meanwhile, the loss remains heavy for me and the church; my life has been taken away. We are longing greatly for news from our brother at Albany. May the Lord through the medium of His Reverence still heal the breach to some extent.

As to what you write about the books, I have already done this by selling now and then some to good friends. I have little to do with the matter which will doubtless be arranged. It troubles me that there are so many voices here that seem to say, "Stay with us, the Lord will lead in his way." I shall try to arrange everything so that I may go to Holland with you. May the Lord direct our steps. As to the blacks, they are submissive to me, but I should like to be rid of them. I am waiting for an answer from brother Theodorus. If you find an opportunity, please write me again.

The Lord is often good to me among the faithful. I receive much kindness from the friends and the children are well and grow rapidly. May the Lord fulfill the longing that is in them. They are a comfort to me in my sorrow. Miss Nelson sends greetings to you; so do Lysbeth Hoogland and Hardenberg, Jacobus, uncle Jeronimus and also nephew Jannie, who only just now has returned. Now, my brother, the Lord be with you and bless the work of your hands. Remember me to those who inquire about me.

I remain, dearly beloved brother,
Your loving sister,
Dina Frielinghuysen

Raritan, 29 November 1754.

Plans of return to Holland

Hendricus never did go to the Netherlands. Because of the loss of two of his brothers at sea the Classis of Amsterdam was petitioned to allow him to be licensed in New Jersey. In June Dina still had not left for Holland but had hopes that she could go with her older brother-in-law, Theodorus. Dina wrote Hendricus:¹²

Addressed to The Reverend Sir Mr. Henricus Frielinghuijsen at Mormertown in Esopus

Dearly beloved Brother:

I have received the letter you sent with brother Theodorus and immediately sent your crate. But I did not enclose a letter because I did not have time for it. Our brother from Albany arrived here Tuesday evening and left already again the following Monday. His Reverence administered the Lord's Supper on the day of rest in Raritan. We did not have to wait for a blessing in vain. Especially I was blessed. My Redeemer waited on me to bestow his grace on me. My cup was overflowing. I was allowed to eat and drink, and get drunk from the plenty of God's house. Who is it that says that God gives us strength in time? And how great it is to be allowed to live under the Lord of truth. He is Jehovah, the I am that I am. Again my soul was joined to the Lord. By renewal I again chose the way of the Lord unconditionally. And so I could turn all my worries over to the Lord, believing that he would direct my ways. It was a day of renewed strength for me. His love was the banner over me. My body could hardly bear it. I was sick with love. Since then I was allowed to walk on my way with joy, in the joy of the Lord, my strength. In the light of the King's watchful eye all our lives develop as planned, my dear brother. So my heart was strengthened by grace. Otherwise it would have been too difficult for me when the brother from Albany went on his way again so soon on the day before the auction was to be held. His Reverence has done nothing for me and my business. But I could bear it then.

On the day of the auction there were very few people and no preachers except two English ones. So we postponed the auction and sold some books out of hand. A little over eleven pounds was received. I now will continue to sell out of hand until the Lord opens for me my way to the fatherland.

I suppose that your Reverence will know that brother Theodorus does not think he will go this summer. His Reverence talks about leaving late in the fall if the war does not erupt. Our brother said he would not go to sea with me for too long if that was the state of the war. The Lord's time will be the best and I desire to follow that. Yet, I very much long for the house of my father and that for many reasons. But if there is some errand to be done here for the Lord, I am his maidservant.

Brother, the books you spoke about can be had for 30 pounds (Yorks). If only

you write me they will be sent to you. If you would like to have some books delivered to Esopus and you wanted to sell them, just write me and they can be sent to you at once. And if you want to know what that man would charge I will gladly let you know. I think that you could ask eighty pounds (York) for them. But I would let them go for seventy. Please write me about it.

Dear brother, since you left you have been much in my thoughts. This is hoping that the Lord may use you to his honor in his house, that he may give you light and plant your foot on the only and eternal rock of salvation, Christ!

Dear brother, be watchful against the sin of youth and remember that the eyes of all the people are on you. The Lord wants to be hallowed in those who approach him. May a Christian style and elegance be seen in your life. And may your life confirm what you preach. Words arouse, but examples make one follow. The all-wise God make your feet to walk securely on the path of righteousness and save you from false steps and irritation.

Whenever possible give my regards to Mr. Hoornbeek. I worry over him. May things work within him and may Christ become his life and treasure.

Symen Van Aarsdaalen sends you his greetings, also the students. I also add my good wishes to theirs and remain with loving heart and esteem,

Your loving sister,
D.V.B. Widow Frielinghuijsen

June 20, 1755

PS: Eva has a fever. I called for another Doctor and hope the medicine will be blessed. Fredrick is very well.

The hand of Providence

As time went on Dina completed the arrangements for her to sail for Holland. Meanwhile, a young man of eighteen, Jacob Rutsen Hardenbergh, had his own ideas about what Dina should do. Jacob was the son of Colonel Johannes Hardenbergh and Maria DuBois of Rosendale, New York. He was a graduate of Kingston Academy. He had been one of Johannes' students at their home in Raritan. When Jacob got up enough courage to make his proposal he found Dina and her two little children at her favorite place of prayer. It was a meadow between their home and the Raritan River. There she and Johannes had prayed together. She was making a last visit to the quiet spot of meditation to gather her thoughts and to pray. Apologizing for the intrusion, Jacob told Dina of his affection for her and proposed that they be married. Dina's reaction was, "My child, what are you thinking about?" She went ahead with her preparations to leave. Her departure was all arranged. But at the time she was to leave her home, a severe storm prevented her departure. She could not get to the ship and it sailed without her. Another ship would not sail for some time. Once again a storm had caused Dina to re-evaluate her plans. And in it she found God's

leading.¹³

Further evidence of God's grace came in the form of an act of kindness. Because she had expected to leave she had no food in the house. A wagon pulled up at her door with a supply of food for her and her children sent by a thoughtful and generous member of the church.

Dina saw the hand of Providence at work again. She recognized that God's plans for her were different than her own and she listened with new seriousness to Jacob Hardenbergh's proposal. Jacob possessed extraordinary abilities. He was a member of a prominent family in the colony of New York. His convictions were akin to Dina's. He was preparing to become a minister and marriage to him would provide Dina with opportunities to fulfill her desire to be engaged in Christian service.

Marriage to Jacob Hardenbergh

Two years after Johannes' death Jacob and Dina were married at Raritan, March 18, 1756. He was twenty, she was thirty-one.

As Jacob continued his studies, they lived at his home in Rosendale, New York. In 1758 Jacob was licensed to preach by the Coetus of the Dutch Reformed Church in America and called to the parish which Johannes had served. Five congregations joined in calling him: Raritan, Bedminster, North Branch (now Readington), Neshanic and Millstone (now Harlingen). Dina and Jacob moved into the home in Raritan which had been built for her and Johannes in 1751.

Dina was of inestimable help to Jacob. She was familiar with the parish and its people. She knew its history of conflict between pietists and traditionalists. She had gained the love and respect of the people for whom Jacob had been called to be Pastor. She became affectionately and respectfully known to them as "Juffrouw Hardenbergh." Her deep faith and sense of the presence of God was an inspiration to them. She was well-read and a good conversationalist. During the time between worship services on Sunday she would be engaged in conversation that reinforced the teachings of her husband from the pulpit.

A daily walk with God

Dina saw the hand of God at work in the common occurrences of everyday. These daily experiences were the occasion for prayer. And in conversation Dina would share how she believed God to be at work.

Prayer was two-way conversation for Dina. Convictions that were given to her as she sought the guidance of God were considered by her to be revelations of the Holy Spirit.

Like the good Dutch woman she was, Dina saw the handiwork of God in the beauty of nature. Theodore W. Welles wrote about Dina: “In the fields, every tree and shrub and flower afforded an emblem of some gospel truth. In the spring, the first flowers were hailed with delight, and in the summer, she seldom sat down with her needle without having first gathered and placed before her a vase of flowers, and then she would gaze upon them, drink in their fragrance, spiritualize their beauties, and seem to be filled with an endless and boundless admiration of their forms, their tints and their aroma.”¹⁴

Because of her close walk with God in daily living and her strong faith in the midst of adversity, Dina was sought out as a counselor. Over the years many came to her for direction and advice.

Early in their years at Raritan the sad news came of the deaths of Dina’s two living brothers-in-law. Hendricus Frelinghuysen died of small pox in 1757. He had just been ordained, three years after licensure, and was serving as minister at Warwarsing, Rochester, and Marbletown, New York. Theodorus Frelinghuysen drowned on the return journey from Holland, where he had been appealing for support for a college in America. This occurred as his boat was lying off Sandy Hook in 1759. It was also probably around this time that news came of the death of Dina’s father.

Joy came to Jacob and Dina as twin daughters were born to them July 25, 1757. The twins were named Maria and Laura. April 2, 1759, their son, Johannes, was born. And December 17, 1760, another daughter, Mary Nela, was born.¹⁵

In 1760 Dina suffered an accident in which her arm was broken. She wrote her parents-in-law:¹⁶

Addressed to Colonel Johannes Hardenbergh, Roosendale in Esopus

Dear and Much Honored Parents:

The fact that Mr. Kroes would be going your way encouraged me to write and to let you know how we are doing. The Dominie and the rest of the family is, thanks to the Lord’s protecting hand over us, reasonably well. I am also quite well. My arm has been healing rapidly so that I can do everything for my family again, except heavy lifting. For that I don’t have the power. The hand seems to be crooked, but that won’t be any real disadvantage or loss. O, how fatherly everything was foreseen and how merciful this set-back proved to be after all. The Lord does not burden us above our capacity. It also allowed me to see God’s horizons and I received grace to freely choose his ways. Often it made me sing:

The ways of the Lord are goodness and truth,
 lifted up on high.
 Offering praise upon praise is what I must do
 ’til I die.

My dear parents, how blessed it is to receive a set-back from the loving

Father's hands, only to find that it brings God closer, and to learn that according to his promises all things must work together for good. That is how it went with me in these things. Never have I received more merciful impressions from the Lord as when my arm was broken. Strangely enough I was carefree concerning the results. All my difficulties were like nothing. I believed that the Lord would make all things well. And that is how it went, above all that could be hoped.

I would like to write more and further, but the writing still bothers me. Dominie and sister Catharina send their loving well-wishes. So also we send greetings to our dear sister Ragel, whom we expect to be with us this fall, together with Father. Give our best to our brothers, grandmother and other relatives. Also the neighbors and friends who may ask for us.

How I would enjoy it to hear good news from you and all the friends, but especially from those in Zion. My heart is often there.

Well, dear parents, the Lord remember you in his goodness and satisfy all your needs to his glory. I embrace you with my heart and remain sincerely yours,

Your loving daughter,
Dina Hardenbergh born Van Bergh

Raritan, August 7, 1760

PS: All our children are well. Eva and Fredrik send you their greetings. Since you were here we received correspondence from Holland five times. They all were well and they enclosed heartfelt greetings for you. Piroo is healthy and well.

In 1761 Jacob made a trip to Holland. On his return he brought with him Dina's mother. Mrs. Van Bergh came to live with Dina and Jacob. The parish had grown, so when Jacob returned he assumed charge of three congregations, Raritan, Bedminster, and North Branch (Readington). The Neshanic and Harlingen Churches called Dominie J. M. Van Harlingen to be their Pastor.

Dina and Jacob's next two children were their namesakes. Daughter, Dina, was born September 7, 1762. Son, Jacob Rutsen, was born April 27, 1763. Sadly, he died in infancy on July 17, 1764.

Three more children were born into the family. A daughter, Rachel, born November 29, 1765; a son, Jacob Rutsen, born June 19, 1768 (It was common practice to use the same name for another child if the first given the name died in infancy.); and their youngest son, Lewis, was born May 14, 1771.¹⁷

Independence for church and nation

Although Jacob was subject to respiratory illness, he was completely committed to his ministry. He gave himself to it with an

indomitable spirit. No doubt Dina was of much encouragement to him. Jacob became a leader of the church beyond his local parish. He was among those who worked for the independence of the Dutch Reformed Churches in America from the Classis of Amsterdam, advocating this both in the colonies and in the Netherlands during his visit there. Jacob also gave leadership to the effort to form a college for the training of ministers. He was among those who secured a charter for Queens College in 1766 and again in 1770. Princeton College recognized Jacob's abilities and scholarship with an honorary Master's degree in 1770 and a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1771. On four different occasions, he was elected the President of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (1775, 1780, 1783, and 1786).

It was a critical time in American history. Jacob gave his efforts and leadership abilities to the cause of the colonies. He was a member of the Provincial Congress of New Jersey when it ratified the Declaration of Independence and adopted a Constitution for the State. Later he served for several sessions as a member of the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey.

The war years were trying years for the Hardenbergh family. Because of his advocacy of independence the British threatened Jacob's life, offering a reward of a hundred pounds for his capture. He slept with a loaded musket by the bed. The British caused him considerable grief when they burned down his church at Raritan.

Frederick, Dina's son by Johannes Frelinghuysen, was an officer in the army and saw action at the battles of Trenton and Monmouth. At his step-father's urging, Frederick studied theology. But then he went to law school and entered politics. He was a member of the Provincial Congress in 1775 and 1776 and later represented New Jersey in Congress and eventually became a United States Senator. When Washington was President he appointed Frederick a Major General.

During the war a friendship developed between the Washingtons and the Hardenberghs. General George and Martha Washington spent two winters in the Wallace house in Raritan and so were neighbors of Dina and Jacob. Visiting each other they became warm friends.

In 1781, Jacob accepted a call to become the pastor of the Marbletown, Rochester, and Warwarsing congregations in Ulster County, New York. This was Jacob's home territory. Jacob and Dina went to live with Jacob's father at Rosendale, in the old family home. The place, which in Dutch means "valley of roses", is said to have been enhanced with the rose bushes Dina planted. Dina's daughter Eva was living in Ulster County having married Casper Van Nostrand.

Martha Washington's friendship with Dina continued with a visit by Martha to Rosendale in 1783. General Washington had headquarters at Newburgh at the time. Mrs. Washington's secretary wrote to Jacob:

Kingston
June 29, 1783

Dear Sir,

Mrs. Washington is at this place accompanied by his excellency the Gov. and Mrs. Clinton, and purposes to get out tomorrow morning so early as to reach Headquarters by evening. She is desirous of paying the Dominie and Mrs. Hardenbergh a visit on her way down and will therefore do herself the pleasure of waiting on your family at breakfast, at which time I shall do myself the honor to attend her.

In the mean time I am very respectfully

Your Obedt. Servt.
Richard Varick¹⁸

College and church in New Brunswick

In 1785, Jacob was asked to become the Pastor of the First Reformed Church in New Brunswick and President of Queens College. The church was located on Neilson Street and the college classes were held in a building three blocks away at Neilson and Albany Streets. Jacob and Dina gave their attention to building the small college and serving the church. Dinah's son General Frederick Frelinghuysen was the first instructor of the college. Their son John was living at Raritan. Jacob Rutsen, Jr., graduated from the college and was married in New Brunswick, October 26, 1789, to Mary Margaret Low, daughter of Cornelius Low. He later founded the first bank in New Brunswick on Neilson Street.

When they moved to New Brunswick Dina was sixty-one years of age and Jacob fifty. Dina assisted in the pastoral ministry. She visited the sick, cared for the poor, and went to the homes of those who were experiencing crisis. She continued her custom of joining in conversation between worship services on Sunday, frequently discussing a point of faith or a scripture passage.

The five years that Jacob was to be in New Brunswick was a time of revival for the church. Seventy members were added to the congregation. The church responded to his eloquent preaching. But his health failed him. He died of consumption, November 2, 1790. After Jacob's death, Dina went to live with her son Lewis who had inherited the estate at Rosendale. After a short time, she went to live with John in Raritan and then returned to New Brunswick to reside with Jacob Rutsen, Jr., at 14 Water Street. (John died in 1798.)

The college suffered greatly from the loss of their leader. Another minister was sought to take the dual position of Pastor and President of the college. Dr. John Henry Livingston was the first choice but he declined. Dr. Dirck Romeyn and others also declined. The college struggled to continue but closed down in 1795. It was not reopened until the next pastor of the church, Dr. Ira Condict, as college Vice-President, managed to garner the support needed to revive the

institution.

Dina's concern for the college is expressed in the letter she sent to Dr. Livingston trying to persuade him to come to New Brunswick and lead the college. Though he did not come at the time, perhaps her intercession helped to influence his decision later to become President of the college as well as teach theology at New Brunswick. Her letter was as follows:¹⁹

Most Reverend Sir,

And worthy Brother in our blessed and all worthy Lord Jesus, Zion's King:

Constrained by a sense of duty and by love of our Dutch Zion, I take the liberty to send your Reverence a few lines and once more to commend to you our College and Church. You have no doubt learned of the answer that we have received from Dr. Romeyn: he had returned the call as I expected.

Worthy brother since you were here to see me I have thought much of you and had my fears that you were perhaps not obedient to the voice of the Lord as sounding forth in the voice of the people. I know that there are many difficulties in your way, but read, I pray you, Zac. 4:6, 7, 8, 9. Zerubbabel was encouraged to lay the foundation of the house of the Lord in distressing times. God was with him and helped him. O no one shuts the doors of his house for nought; if we can only see our duty the consequences may be safely left with the Lord. The city of New York is such a weight upon your mind; but is there not more hope that that breach would be healed than the one among us? The Lord would provide, but where is there a man for us? Our Dutch ministers are young men of little experience and have no publicity in the church, how ever much otherwise esteemed and loved by us. Does your Reverence know one whom you would freely recommend for the position? My dear Sir: I have heard your Reverence say to my now departed husband, that you regarded the College as the fountain of our church: why then be engaged with the streams and let the fountain dry up? The Holy Ghost has made you overseer over that part of his house. O that like another Zerubbabel you might be encouraged. Please also read Hag. 1:14. The people of God would address you and say to you as in Hag. 2:14, "O that the Lord would open for us a door in the valley of Achor." Many are for renewing the call upon you. The heart of the people is still with you. Others speak of trying one of the Presbyterians. Does your Reverence think this would be safe for our church? What shall we do? Worthy brother, I would not lay a snare for your conscience, O no. Where the Lord of the house has work for your Reverence to do, there may he keep or bring you although you should be compelled to follow your Master in the field and lodge in the village. Large cities are often very dangerous. You certainly have a desire to be a follower of Christ and to do the will of your Father from the heart; to labor for

God is certainly your delight and happiness. The Lord enable you to discover what is his holy will and if you can do nothing more, O, pray for us, and by your counsel and cooperation be to us instead of eyes. I have not been influenced by self-interest or any desire to promote my own advantage in writing to your Reverence, but by love of our Zion. It proceeds from the abundance of my heart; my heart accompanies my letter by prayer. O that I who am the least might be permitted to do a little good; I have a desire to be permitted to add one more stone to the wall. I durst not refrain from writing; be not displeased at me for my freedom. I now leave it with the Lord; let him do what he will.

Worthy brother, your Reverence thought that the post was too arduous; my dear husband willingly did many things which would not be required of your Reverence. Speedily let me know whether you have perfect peace in your mind in relation to your remaining in New York and have free access to the throne of grace and find the Lord with you in your work. If so we must acquiesce and say the will of the Lord be done. Be pleased to indulge me in this particular; and O that light might arise for us in the midst of the darkness and our health spring forth speedily.

Shall not at this time say much of my spiritual state. To the praise of my gracious Redeemer, I must observe that the Lord maintains my lot. He is my comfort in sorrow; my company in retirement, yea, my all in all. He has borne and carried me. I have twice had the privilege of showing forth my Lord's death, once at Raritan, and, on the last Sabbath in Brunswick. The Lord waited to be gracious to me; I was enabled believingly to renew the covenant and to realize that it is ordered in wisdom and love. O how full and suitable did the Savior again appear! How believingly could I cast myself upon him with all my burdens and troubles, and how wonderful was his love in my eyes. Soul and body redeemed by so great a price; O how did that love constrain me to love in return. Nothing too precious to offer up for the Lord Jesus. How did I long after uninterrupted communion and how did I rejoice that the Lamb was in the midst of the throne. Yes, the precious Lord Jesus will be our joy in heaven. O the blessedness of being permitted forever to cast our crowns before him, and to know him ever as we are known. We are now saved in hope. Our time is rapidly passing away. The Lord is at hand. How wonderful that a poor helpless and sinful worm should be permitted to live for the honor of so rich, full and suitable a Lord Jesus. O that he may increase and I decrease. Free grace shall forever have the praise of our salvation. I must break off of the present. Give my hearty love to Mrs. Livingston. The Lord sustain her ladyship under her infirmities, and provide her with conscious proof that his rich grace is sufficient for her, and his strength made perfect in weakness. Give my greetings to all Christian friends your Reverence thinks proper. Now my worthy Sir and brother, the Lord be with you and make your Reverence more and more serviceable in his house and work, and cause his work to prosper in your hands. Think about me when it is well with you. I remain with hearty greetings Most Reverend Sir,

Your Reverence's handmaid and loving friend in our Lord Jesus Christ,
Dina Hardenbergh by birth Van Bergh

New Brunswick July 2, 1791

PS: No one knows of this letter but one female friend. It is between the Lord and us. For weighty reasons please do not defer your answer long.

Dina participated in the worship of First Reformed Church. She continued to be a trusted spiritual counselor for many.

The Pastor of First Reformed Church, Dominie Condict, looked to Dina for advice and encouragement. Sometimes, when he felt inadequate to the task of preaching, he would talk to Dina. She always had a word of encouragement for him. Once, in a despondent mood, Condict stopped by to see Dina on the way to church. "Gaat heen" (go your way) she said to him in Dutch, "and preach. Tell the children of Israel that they go forward," recalling God's command to Moses when mountains were on either side and enemies before them. She repeated the words of the prophet: "I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight; these things will I do unto them and not forsake them." (Isaiah 42:16) Dr. Condict's faith was strengthened and he went on to preach to his congregation with confidence.²⁰

One minister who was known for his boisterous manner, came to Dina to benefit from her counsel. She did not hesitate to give him some admonishment. Before he left he suggested they pray together. To this Dina agreed. The minister led in a loud voice. When he was finished she said to him: "Your God, Sir, must be different from mine for mine can hear even though no words be uttered, but yours, it seems can not unless addressed in the loudest of tones."²¹

Dina shared her testimony and her prayers through correspondence. She wrote to her daughter Rachel:²²

(First part of the letter missing.)

Since then I was allowed to walk this way courageously as I chose the way of the cross. I prefer to live day by day as a guest and stranger and as waiting for the coming of the Lord. I know that according to the promise all things must work together for good. As far as my body is concerned, I'm a bit stronger now. It seems, however, that my struggle isn't finished as yet. But my Redeemer directs and he will bring to me whatever he has predestined. O goodness and truth, praised be the ways of the Lord.

All your friends are well at present. Only Jacob's Pollie is not too hearty. Your sister Nela and her's are well. I must tell you some good news: Maria Frielinghuysen, with much concern and worry about her soul, has sought pious company and visits their gatherings while she has broken with her former company. May it be that the Lord will work his way and she may become a vessel of honor to the glory of his free grace. John is also not at ease. I am so happy that the Lord entered under that

roof. When the Lord speaks it happens. I still hope in my God. His word will not return empty, not even when our faith is tempted.

I must quit now, but only after sending heartfelt greetings for all my Christian friends. Also give my special greetings to your mother, Mrs. Wijnkoop and Ennie Braetheijt. I recommend you and yours to the mercy of the God of the covenant. Also greetings to you and your husband, I remain,

Your loving mother,
Dina Hardenbergh born Van Bergh

New Brunswick,
May 22, 1796

Dina found a friend with whom she shared her spiritual journey in Mrs. Van Deursen of New Brunswick. They prayed together and gave each other encouragement.

In 1799 Dina assisted two women of First Reformed Church, Sarah Van Doren and Mrs. Condict, in the formation of a Sunday School at the church. This was one of the first Sunday Schools to be organized in the United States as the movement came to America from England where Robert Raikes founded the first Sunday School in 1780.

“When we arrive at the safe harbor”

In 1803 Dina wrote to Rachel. At the time she was in Raritan. John Schureman Vredenburgh, from New Brunswick, was the minister there.²³

Dear Daughter of my heart,

This morning I have before me your welcome letter of May 30, which I received from the hand of Jacob R. Hardenberg. I was happy to see that all of you are well. I am not sure that I received a letter from you last fall. It's true, I haven't written for a long time either. Sometimes it was because of bodily weakness, and often because the opportunity was not there. Sometimes you think that you are being forgotten. But rather does my right hand forget itself, before I will be able to forget you. Our daily prayer for you is being brought to the throne of grace. I shall not give up you folks as long as we still live in the day of grace. Every so often I am encouraged to hope.

O my dear child, my soul's concern for you is that Christ may take form in you and that you may be found in him. I so hope that you don't live careless and prayerless; those who seek are promised that they will find, those who knock will have it opened. O could it be that the free grace of the Almighty would work

miracles. It is beyond my powers to bring my children to the Lord. But the Lord who lives also brings the dead to life, makes the blind to see, and has promised that the seed would serve him and would be a joyful name and praise. May the Lord make it so. Amen.

I'm sure you want to hear how things have gone with me. I had a weak winter; attacks from my old disorder. Yet, to the praise of my faithful Redeemer, the comforts of the Holy Spirit were not few. Often I was given cause to boast in the midst of oppression. So the scriptures were fulfilled to my soul. I have no reason to complain. Instead I should praise the Lord and be amazed that he remembered this poor worm with foretastes of heaven's glory and of a rest that finally remains, where pain and sorrow will be no more. And where we will be given eternal joy in the presence of God. O how great is God's grace through the redemption of Christ. I live purely by grace, grounded in an eternal and unchangeable covenant, of which my dear Emmanuel is the cornerstone. So I sing with David, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." O how blessed things will be when finally after all the pain and sorrow we will arrive in the safe harbor. Yet, not my will, but the will of my heavenly Father be done.

I have good hope that the Lord is touching some of the hearts in our family: Mrs. Frielinghuijsen, your brother John's widow and John Frielinghuijsen's wife Luci. These three have registered themselves with the church and so are enlisted under Christ's banner of the cross. Your brother Jacob's wife, Pollie, has for quite a while been under conviction of the heart. She also has registered her name on the roll. O that faith's labor would turn her soul with power, and would that it would take refuge under the wings of Jesus. There is room for you, especially now. The Lord seems to establish his banner in so many places. It seems that the fields are white for harvest. In our congregation there also seems to be movement among the dry bones, especially among the young folk. There are many quiet tears during the preaching. Our young minister, Mr. Vreedenburg, is encouraged. I wish I would be allowed to see my King in victory. He shall reign from sea to sea, to the ends of the earth and to the going down of the sun. To my joy I heard at Pollie's brother's, who is licensed to preach, that a faithful minister has arrived at Mombakkus, Mr. Westervelde. May the Lord indeed return among those people. I was encouraged with cousin Hardenbergh and hope that he will be a useful man in the house of the Lord. He said that he was so refreshed that soon he would like to come again. O my dear child, how I long to see you and Eva once more. Look for an opportunity, please. I have not seen you in five years. The first snow we had your sister Nela together with Mr. and Mrs. Howel took off for you but before they were in Pompton the snow was gone and they had to return. I often find it hard to be robbed of my children, especially of their comfort when the time of death comes. I hear nothing from Eva. I must make an end now. Greetings to Mrs. Wijnkoop. Tell her that I often think of her. Also greet all my Christian friends and tell them that the Lord is no debtor to me, but is good to me above all I pray and hope for. If I could perhaps receive a little letter from some, I would like that very much. Also greet our family's friends, also your husband and children. Give the dear children a kiss for me. And you, my dear child, I have to commit you to the

merciful God, where so often I have left you in prayer. Now I embrace you with my heart and remain,

Your tender loving Mother,
Dina Hardenbergh born Van Bergh

Raritan—Somerville June 6, 1803

PS: Everyone in the family sends greetings.

Dina died at her son Jacob's home in New Brunswick, March 26, 1807. When it appeared that she was dying, her friend, Mrs. Van Deursen, was called to be with her. When Mrs. Van Deursen told Dina that her death seemed to be at hand, she responded, "O! How glad I am."

The stone at her grave in the church yard of First Reformed Church in New Brunswick says:

This monument is erected to the memory of
Dinah Hardenbergh, relict of the Rev.
J. R. Hardenbergh, D.D., S.T.P.
Of high attainments here in grace,
now resting in glory, died the 26th day
of March, 1807, aged 81 years.
Tell how she climbed the everlasting hills,
Surveying all the realms above;
Borne on a strong-winged faith, and on
The fiery wheels of an immortal love.

The following poems, in Dina's hand, and probably composed by her, have survived and are in the Special Collections at the Alexander Library of Rutgers University. They are translated by Gerard Van Dyk. In the original Dutch the lines end with rhyming words.

O, how lovely and kindly
is Jesus, the lover of my soul.
Salvation fully is with him,
He is the Father's Son.
In him he is well-pleased
and calls from heaven high,
"This is my beloved Son."
May the things of this world
no more tempt me;
and that he who gains

heaven for me may have
my full attention.
That always I may be reminded
that there, on high, lives my Redeemer.

O, lovely Jesus, Sun of my life,
Thou art the only source of my life,
my divine Head and King,
my only soul's Shepherd and Keeper,
who always will be on my side,
my dwelling from on high.

O Cornerstone of my heart,
who never failed or forsook me
in his love for me.
No, the friend of my soul is faithful.
He is Yes and Amen and does not regret
the love he sent to my soul.

My dearest Jesus, who braces my soul,
on whom I safely can lean,
my Redeemer, Lord and King:
For time and also for eternity,
Thou art my rock and dwelling,
my faithful Jesus, Friend and Brother,
my dearest Pledge and soul's Keeper,
my Salvation, my Guarantor and my Bridegroom.
My dearest Jesus, why, O why, didst thou
give thyself for my eternal life?
Even when I did not ask for thee,
gave thou me life from thy death.

My soul sinks low, eternal wonder,
that thou wouldst be salvation's fountain
which eternally would satisfy.
For me, a sinful worm, thou
wouldst benignly look for me, a sinner
with thy free grace, even though I grieved thee.
Thou gavest thyself for me
when all was lost for me.
And so brought grace to me
from eternity's covenant of peace.

Appendix

Dina Van Bergh would be a significant person if for no other reason than that she was the mother of two prominent New Jersey families. Her son, Frederick, was the ancestor of all the Frelinghuysens in America. His sons John, Frederick and Theodore, were distinguished lawyers. Theodore became a Senator of the United States and was a candidate for the office of Vice President of the United States running with Henry Clay for President. He was Chancellor of New York University and President of Rutgers College from 1850-1863. In later generations, Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen was a United States Senator and Secretary of State with President Arthur. His son Frederick was a life insurance executive. Joseph Sherman Frelinghuysen was also an insurance executive and was a Senator of the United States. To the present day members of the family have distinguished themselves in public service.

After the death of her first husband, Dina married Jacob Hardenbergh and became the mother of a branch of the Hardenbergh family which also has an impressive record of achievement. Their son, Johannes who was later known as John, was active in building a new church at Raritan, was Sheriff of Somerset County and a Trustee of Queens College. Jacob Rutsen, Jr., became a judge and founded the first bank in New Brunswick, the third bank to be organized in the State of New Jersey.

His son, Cornelius Low, was a Trustee of Queens College, bank president, Mayor of New Brunswick and a New Jersey Assemblyman. His youngest son, Theodore Frelinghuysen, became a physician and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Queen's College. In the next generation, James Richmond (1814-1885), was Mayor of Sacramento, Surveyor General of California and Superintendent of the United States Mint at San Francisco. Jacob Rutsen (1824-1892), was a member of the state Constitutional Convention and the Senate of the State of New York. Among those of later generations were Augustus A., a bank president, president of a railroad company, and a member of Congress and Henry J., architect of Kirkpatrick Chapel at Rutgers, Suydam Hall at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and of several significant buildings in New York City. And many other family members could be listed who have made exceptional contributions to society.

But Dina Van Bergh is noteworthy in her own right. She was an outstanding woman for her time. She had many friends and it is clear that her indomitable faith and dynamic spirit had a profound effect upon them. She was acquainted with important people of her time, including George and Martha Washington. She was close to people who played a vital part in the struggle for independence, her husband and her oldest son among them. She was an ardent supporter of the

college, first called Queens and later Rutgers. She was personally acquainted with the founders and early leaders of the school. Through correspondence, she kept in contact with a wide circle of people. Both through her writing and personal contact, she was an unusually influential person.

Furthermore, Dina Van Bergh is of special interest because she represents a significant movement in the religious life of America. Pietism was one of the major contributing streams to the spiritual revivals and the missionary efforts of Protestantism. And it was of far reaching effect upon American life. Pietism received a bad name because of the excesses of some. But in the example of Dina Van Bergh, it can be seen that a vital personal faith became the dynamic which gave her the character and influence she had. Far from being merely privatistic it gave her a social consciousness. Dina's experience of God's presence and power led her into a life of service.

Endnotes

1. "Dinah Van Bergh", Paper Read Before the Ulster County Historical Society, by William Henry Steele Demarest, Manuscript in the Gardner Sage Library, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, June 5, 1939, p. 25.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
3. *Sketch and a Translation from the Dutch of the Diary of Dinah Van Bergh*, by William Demarest, Suffern, New York, March 16, 1869, p. 5.
4. *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, F. Ernest Stoeffler, Ed., Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976, p. 59.
5. Translated letter given to Gardner Sage Library, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, by Rev. Charles H. Newing.
6. Recorded in the *Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst* Amsterdam.
7. *Hardenbergh, Leaves Out of Ancestral Tablets*, by Theo. W. Welles, Paterson, N.J., 1893, p. 129-130.
8. "Historical Quarterly", Somerset County Historical Society, Volume II, No. 13, July, 1913, p. 173.
9. *Manual of the Reformed Church in America*, by Edward T. Corwin, Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, New York, 1902, p. 470.
10. "Historical Quarterly", Somerset County, Vol. III, A Van Doren Honeyman, ed., "The Pious Dinah Van Bergh", by Andrew D. Mellick, Jr., Somerset County Historical Society, Somerville, New Jersey, 1914, pp. 274-278. The story was also told to James Tanis by Emily Brewster Frelinghuysen and is found in his book, *Dutch Calvinistic Pietism in the Middle Colonies, A Study on the Life and Theology of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen*, Martinus Nijhoff, 's Gravenhage, 1967, p. 92.
11. Translated letter in the Gardner Sage Library, New Brunswick Theological Seminary.
12. Original letter in the Special Collections at the Alexander Library, Rutgers University. Translated by Gerard Van Dyk.
13. *Hardenbergh, Leaves Out of Ancestral Tablets*, p. 131.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *The Hardenbergh Family*, by Miller p. 94.

16. Original letter in the Special Collections, Alexander Library, Rutgers University. Translated by Gerard Van Dyk.
17. *The Hardenbergh Family*, p. 94.
18. *Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen*, by Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen, Jr., The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New Jersey, Princeton, 1938, p. 82.
19. Translated letter in the Gardner Sage Library, New Brunswick Theological Seminary.
20. *Sketch, and a Translation from the Dutch, of the Diary of Dinah Van Bergh*, William Demarest, Suffern, N.Y., 1869, p. 58.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
22. Part of the original letter in the Special Collections at Alexander Library, Rutgers University. Translated by Gerard Van Dyk.
23. Original letter in the Special Collections at Alexander Library, Rutgers University. Translated by Gerard Van Dyk.

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