

**KREIJKES, JAN WILLEM. 1889-1905.**

**A RIJSSEN EMIGRANT**

**OR**

**KREIJKES - JAN WILLEM TO AMERICA**

Hundreds of fellow-countrymen crossed the ocean in 1846 and also in the later years of the 19th century to settle in the United States of America. In the beginning there were groups of seceders who braved the voyage under the leadership of the Revs. Van Raalte, Scholte, Van der Meulen, Bolks, and others. This organized emigration was the result of the difficulties encountered by the seceders.

There was a scarcity of employment, and then if anyone dared to join the "orthodox," discharge would soon follow. Read about this in "Landverhuizers" (Emigrants) and "Vrijheid en Brood" (Freedom and Bread by P.J. Riseeuw. The first groups reached their goal after a difficult period of pioneering and disappointments in the wide America. And then good reports were also heard, and the unsympathetic attitude toward the seceders was somewhat tempered. It was only the severe poverty which prevailed which caused many people to decide to cross the ocean.

In the former article about Gerrit Jan Raidt I wrote that 72 individuals, most of them from Gelderland left in 1856. Rev. J.H. Brillman had also planned to do so in 1869 but he was not granted a release by the church so he had to abandon his plans. A good many emigrants nevertheless left later, Rijssen emigrants were never great in numbers. There were a scattered few. Those known to us are: a Nieuwenhuis family around 1855, somewhat later the family of Van Den Berg, in 1881 the brothers J.H. and J.

Kreijkes, while in 1889 the rest of the J.W. Kreijkes family followed. It is my plan to allow you to hear more about the latter, better known as Kreijkes - Jan Willem.

Who was Kreijkes - Jan Wilm?

Jan Willem Kreijkes was born on October 3, 1828, a son of Jan Hendrik Kreijkes and Janna Bordewijk. Those bearing the Kreijkes name have multiplied in Rijssen since that time, while the mother's name of Bordewijk has become less common. At the present moment I know of only one person in our place called Bordewijk, an old grey-headed man.

I have received the impression from various sources of information that the parents of Jan Willem have lived in Kreejkeskaamp. Older people know better than I do where this place was. I have been told that it was located on the Banisweg, near the Koninginneweg, so from Dieks Van Boersjan to 't Baasje. The farm-house must have been almost across from "Saul."

"I get tired of writing," sighs Jan Willem after he had been in the new world only a few months. He sent three letters to his sister Janna and brother-in-law Jan Albert Brinks, three to his Brother Gerrit Jan, three to Hendrikus Kreijkes at the Akkerdijk but he has received no sign of life from any of them. At first he thought it was the fault of the post office but when he requested Spanjers-Iesrel - and Manzes - Bram to deliver the letters for him, he was no more successful. Again it was a matter of: "no news and now I do not know what else to do."

Only Manzes Bram and daughter Janna, Kanniens, J.H. Kreijkes and J.W. Danneberg did not fail him. It was then, just as it is now: Rijsseners on the whole do not like to write letters. The postage may also have been the

reason, and indeed people did hear what happened in the case of Jan Willem and his family. When letters were received they went from hand to hand and besides his family other friends also received letters later among others Seifieget, Schutemakers-Mans. But he complained about that also, because they did not write back, and in the end love can not be shown from one side only.

On June 2, 1889 he wrote the following letter to his daughter: "Dear daughter and friends: We wish to inform you that we have received your letter in good health and saw that your friends were all still well. We were pleased about that but at the same time sad to hear that you, dear daughter were not doing well. It broke our heart to hear that because blood creeps where it can not walk, especially in times of difficulty. What can we do about it, dear child? The Lord deals with the Hosts of heaven according to His good pleasure. And who is to say, "What doest Thou?" May it bring us all to the feet of Jesus to ask Him for mercy while we are still in the land of the living, and may we have no rest before we are prepared for eternity. That is of prime importance. We wish that for you and also for ourselves. May the Lord grant us that grace, my child, children, and all of my friends. That is my wish and prayer for all of you and for us.

Now my child Janna, may the Lord grant you improved health, May He bless the means used to that end, or it will all be of no avail. You all know that don't you?

We are all doing well at present. My wife and children and I were enjoying everything but are now sad about you, my child. May he Lord be

pleased to make all things well for time and especially for eternity, I wish that with all my heart, dear daughter.

Yes, friends, I hardly know what to write. I am heartbroken about our Janna, and her mother, my wife is worried about her. Up to that time my wife was happy, she likes it here, and my children are all glad they are here. They look well and are in good health and for the rest we must wait to see what our future will bring. (The rest of the letter follows.)

We can imagine that the news regarding your illness saddened the Kreijkes family in Hospers.

We will learn from what follows that Janna did not recover. Before the beginning of spring of the next year (1890) a grave was dug for her and the children were left as orphans.

In spite of the fact that people had known Jan Willem in Rijssen as a man who liked to crack a joke, and also as a person who had taken part in all kinds of sinful activities, in this letter he also shows that he dares to give good advice. He is not silent in regard to the one thing necessary upon which everything depends. And he does not limit himself to these words, to the contrary, it is evident from later letters that he has often prayed for his daughter.

In the second part of the letter Jan Willem tells about his everyday life, and quotes some market-prices. But again the deeper meaning of life predominates. Material matters do peek around the corner at times, but he recognizes their relative importance.

The continuation of the letter is as follows:

"We are living with our Jan Hendrik. We are well satisfied here. My wife milks five cows every day, and the rest of the time she plays with the child a great deal. It is beginning to walk. Its name is Janna. My daily job is feeding the pigs and cleaning the horse-stables. I have a good life here, the food is also good here. We have never been so well off physically.

We have a total of 7 adult hogs and 20 piglets. Jan Hendrik recently brought 6 to the city to sell for pork, about 300 pounds apiece for ten Dutch cents a pound live weight (?). They pay only nine now, 8 cents for the best beef also live (?) We have eight cattle in all, and four horses, for large work-horses and one colt. Our Jannes has two large grey horses.

It is warm at present, occasional storms, but no accidents so far. Thank the Lord for sparing us, for we read in the newspaper that about 900 miles east of us thousands of people have drowned, cities and villages washed away by the water, by floods they say. A punishment for sins which might have struck us - what do we deserve above those people, we have done no better even though we have been spared. There are warnings for us if we will only take note, because God rules here below as well as above. May the warnings bring us to the feet of Jesus in repentance, then we will be fortunate, otherwise they will testify against us in the day of days, whether they be blessings or judgments. May God bless it to the hearts of all of us, that is my hearty wish for you, dear friends, and also for all of us.

The crops look fairly favorable at present. They suffered earlier this spring from drought and later by the night frosts, but now everything looks better again. May the Lord spare them further.

Now, dear friends I must stop. If you wish to know more about America, feel free to ask, I will tell you if I can, if I have not yet written about it. Now, dear daughter, brother-in-law, Mrs. Jenken and children, and Mensek, H. and Alberd, receive our hearty greetings and in particular from my wife Hendrieka. I hope this letter may reach you in good health. That is my sincere wish. The writer is your father and friend and brother.

J.W. Kreijkes

In the Post Script many families and friends were sent greetings, among them: the Smalbruggs, the Scherphofs. Jans Kreijkes and Mrs. Ootn Jenken Voortman. J.W. Danneberg, and the dear children of De Schutte. By these children were meant those still living, being Willem Danneberg (Scheerbaas) and his brother Jan Mannes Timmerman, wife and children, Saeks Jan and Saeks Arend Jan (J. and A.J. Danneberg). Finally a greeting to brother A. Scherphof (The old Schutte who was formerly an elder in the Dutch Reformed Church) with the report: "just say Kreijkes is still alive that I can not deny." From the above we notice the real ecumenism described in Ps. 119:3 "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep the commandments." So an ecumenistic movement is nothing new,  
Footnote: At the request of a few readers the letters are placed as they were written literally by Kreijkes. This is done not to belittle him because of his writing - and grammatical errors, but in order to indicate more clearly how people expressed themselves 90 years ago. People went to school for only a few years and during the winter months, so we can not expect too much after such a limited education.

Today a letter read by others and intended for us would be received with feeling of misgiving. That was not the case formerly. On occasion a person would give letters to someone else for delivery, but it has happened to me at different times that letters intended for different individuals were sent in one envelope with a request to take care of their delivery.

Jan Willem did this. He wrote a letter to Peter Ligtenberg in the Zunase and enclosed one for his daughter, Janna. Ligtenberg was then requested:

"Peter please send this letter to our Janna and see to it that it is safely delivered. I do not trust everyone, - after the . Ligtenberg did not betray the trust, and so Janna received the following: Dear daughter Jann Kreijkes - I must still write you a letter and the friends with you - to tell you we are all well except our Jannes who became very sick - he developed a pain in his right side - he was in great pain - the doctor came twice a day to see Jannes - things do not look very favorable - the doctor says he has a spot on his lung - God is powerful but things do not look favorable for Jannes - May God be merciful to him - that is my wish and prayer for him - I will write to you again, for better or for worse -- Now dear daughter greet all of the friends for us and in particular, and , Jan Willem Danneberg, and especially Jenken Voordman and Jannes Kreijkes and children - just tell them we are well and happy - greet Israel Spanjer and Kwikkeloo and the notary - and to H. Stokkers

just say that we are satisfied in America - if the Lord will be with us all will be well - Otherwise things would not be well anywhere - but I am

agreeably surprised here - I have met some of God's children - I was glad that there were still some here.

Janna also give greetings to Ter Hors and his family - Now I must close for this time with the pen but never with the heart you my be sure.

We have been out six times with the carriage visiting with my wife and Jenken - Kreijkes comes to see us every day. I still find friends and acquaintances who I can enjoy being with.

The minister from Hospers has also called on us to visit Jannes - I had also heard him in the church - I enjoyed him - he speaks good Dutch and is also reformed - he has asked us to come to visit him - we have not been there yet - because of Jannes' condition - Now hoping that you may receive this letter in good health, which is my wish and prayer - your friend and father

J.W. Kreijkes

From this letter it appears that Jan Willem was no exception to the general rule, namely, if you are with relatives for a short time whom you have not met for a long time, things seem be fine and new. Later the tide changes. This Kreijkes and his people undoubtedly also experienced later. The "visits" seem to have become less frequent and later to have ceased entirely. Then the every-day life began.

As he writes his letters Jan Willem is constantly thinking about the society from which he has been separated. Everything occurs to him. Notary Van Der Vlugt took care of the sale of all of his property, and he must have talked to him about his travel plans. Stokkers and Kwikkeloo are also good acquaintances. He had to pay them his regular community taxes. The local



officials were formerly in closer touch with the ordinary folk than they are now.

Fortunately for Jan Willem, Hospers had a good "reformed" minister. But later he complained. Then the carriage had to serve to take him to a small village where a minister was serving who preached a good "Rijssener" sermon.

The sheep-herder had in a few months written more letters than he had during the 60 years he had spent in Rijssen. Contacts were kept alive. There would be one quite regularly at the Pelmolen (???). He must have done little other work beside cleaning stables, so it was a pleasant pastime for him to write letters to his daughter Janna and other relatives. Then he too would hear some news from the old Rijssen.

The following letter is an evidence that he is often thinking of what is of utmost importance to a person. Read it yourself.

Hospers, August 20, 1889

Dear daughter and dear children, Greetings -

I am sitting down to write you a few lines - and inform you that we received your letter in good health and have noted that you write that your situation is still the same - that you are still working and that you have a good appetite. That is good - we had hoped that you would be feeling better - but what can we do - God's will will be done - he deals with the hosts of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth according to His good pleasure - He could have made an end of us - isn't that true dear child? who could stay His hand and say "What doest Thou?" - oh, may the Lord grant you grace - then you will have no trouble - externals will take care of themselves -

it will not all be equally pleasant but that is not important - isn't that true child? - may the Lord bind it upon your heart to remember the promises for the future - to approach God's throne to pray for grace, and not cease until the Lord has saved your poor soul. That I wish for you and you dear children and for myself - I dare not deny that this is my daily prayer for you - in the hope that the Lord will make all things well body as to the soul as well as for the body - and that we may be privileged to hear and especially now - how the Lord has saved my soul - I would be so happy - may the Lord so grant, that is my wish, my dear daughter - I can not write much news - if the distance was not so great I would like to talk to you sometime, but that is impossible - at least not for the time being - when I talk about going to Holland Johan and Arewnd Jan say, "Absolutely not, father" - and that is no wonder - it would be over the wide ocean - that does not appeal to a person - then the waves rise mountain high - at times dashing over the ship - that happened when we were aboard, our Jenken just happened to be on deck - the child came down soaking wet, and when she came down she was still smiling - but the sea is no pleasant sight.

Now, daughter in the hope that the Lord may spare you in length of days - with your dear children and other friends, and that the Lord may be merciful to you, that is my hearty wish, - if you can write back - in the hope that you may receive this letter in good health - farewell. Give hearty greetings to H. Mensink, and to J. Scharphof wife and dear children and to brother Gr. Meneink and if you get there to Abram Koedijk and his family - and also to J.W. Danneberg and the children of our Fenne and to Jans

Kreijkes and Jenken Voordman and children - and to all friends and acquaintances - just say that we are doing well - your friend and father.

J.W. Kreijkes

Greetings to Ter Hore and his wife.

He was concerned about the physical and spiritual welfare of his daughter. In a simple manner he calls attention to what is of the greatest importance. In this way he proves himself to be a good father for that reason his letters are worth reading.

He is attached by Rijssen, Holland, but his sons brushed his plans aside. That must not be and besides the ocean did not appeal to Jan Willem either. There was nothing left for him to do but to write to his daughter expressing his warm affection and to greet his friends for the how-manyeth time in the customary manner.

More than a month has passed. Once again Kreijkes takes his pen in hand, because he had received good news from his daughter. However, it is only one answer he has received to the many letters he has sent to Rijssen. Almost all of them are allowed to go unanswered or the post-office was very unfaithful. Be that as it may, the letter-crop was not plentiful from Rijssen for the emigrant as the following letter will indicate.

Hospers, September 28, 1889

Dear daughter:

We can inform you that we have received your letter in good health, and noted that you were better which pleased us - you can imagine that - because I think about you every day, and also especially about our Jandjan and our Willemken - and about all of the others - and although I know very well that

they are with good people and have a good life - I am still concerned about them - may God be merciful to them - that is my prayer also for you - I have noticed that Jan (Szcharphof) can already read - that is good - then he will soon be able to write to us -

You are drinking cod-liver oil - that is good if God blesses it - now daughter we hope so. - We are all well except that Jenken does not have a good appetite - he has a little stomach trouble - he is taking some medicine prescribed by the doctor - in hopes that it will improve - We have seen that De Kalvijn has died - yes, yes.

You wrote that my brothers and sister do not get letters - I can not understand that - I have already sent them three and do not get an answer - I am sorry - I can not help it - it must be they are not delivered - and also those to Abram Koedijk and Safieget (H. Nijkamp) and Klitsen Berend Eshuis and Schuitemakersmans and Jan Smalbrugge and Grades Smalbrugge and Kanniens Jan Hendrik - no answer from anyone - that discourages me from writing - I have already sent more than 20 to Rijssen and about as many throughout America - there is almost no end to my writing.

If you have a chance sometime ask people whether they have received a letter - also the German Hendriekes - and Peter Ligtenberg. You must not go there just for that but if you go by there sometime ask them if they have received any letters - I received one from Kanniens Jan Hendrik - two in return already - no answer - I do not know why that is - I have received one from our people - and have already sent two in return - no answer - and that is the way it is with many people - what can I do about it - I can not help

it - I have also sent one to Otten-Jenken or Jane Kreijkes - also one to Seksjan or

I can not tell you much news, everything is well externally - which is a privilege - if we would only acknowledge it more.

Now, dear daughter, I hope the Lord will soon grant you recovery - as you may for the sake of the children for length of days - and as a token of God's grace to your children, that is my prayer for you and for us - I hope we will be able to see one another face to face before we die, otherwise I hope we may meet each other in heaven hereafter, that is my heart-felt hope, dear child - just believe that.

Dear child, if it is the Lord's will and I live a few more years, I hope to visit you again and all of our friends - but the Lord knows whether this will come about - then end can come so soon - that is the way it was with De Kalvijn too, isn't that true - my we learn to count our days in order that we may be wise in heart - my the Lord grant us grace now and in the future - then all will be well - now, child, in the hope that you may receive this letter in good health - that is my hearty wish. Give hearty greetings to all the friends from us, you know to whom - too many to mention - and if you can write sometime - and also whether the money matters have been satisfactorily concluded with the notary.

Now receive hearty greetings from all of us - your friend and loving father

J.W. Kreijkes

Greetings to Koedijk Abram

Jandjen and Willemken, the little orphans of daughter Fenne have been taken over by the Beltman family in the Schrapert (Derkjaantje) and there they will be well off. Jan Willem is convinced of this. He will still have to give them a great deal of attention. Later he was convinced of this. He will still have to give them a great deal of attention. Later he was able to have these boys with him for a few years and in his old age he was greatly appreciated by them.

Since the previous letter several things have happened. Jenken is better. She does no longer have to take the doctor's medicine. But our letter-writer himself has been very sick in the meantime. He was at the point of death. Living in spiritual darkness Jan Willem experienced some anxious days but finally the light broke through. In the place of suffering God granted him reasons for joy and rejoicing. Meanwhile the Rijssenens did not leave themselves without witness. After he had regained his health he had many letters to answer and then Kreijkes complained that he could not answer all of them. Regardless of the amount of other writing to be done he did not forget his daughter and wrote to her as follows:

Dear daughter Janna: We wish to inform you that we have received your letter and learned that all was well with you - we were happy about that - and we read all about what happened - amen.

Then our Jenken was all better again - she looks well and healthy once more - but I have been deathly sick - for about a month - the doctor said I had pneumonia - I was afraid of dying at first - but not later - the Lord removed the wall of partition - so that I was no longer afraid of dying - I sang for joy - I was released - God had been good to me - you can imagine

that I was happy - because it is something to die unconverted - would that we would make more work of it every day - to pray to God for mercy before it is too late forever, and not cease before we have sought and found peace with God - may the Lord grant mercy to that and now or in continuance - that is my wish and prayer for you and all of our loved ones here or elsewhere.

We are all satisfied about our external existence - You asked what our Jannes is doing. I will tell you - our Jannes has rented land - he is raising everything on it - he plows it with two large horses - two horses belonging to him and one horse belonging to the man who owns the land - and he is at home with us with his horses - and pays board to our Jan Hendrik - two dollars per week - He is doing well - this fall he made \$233 threshing for other people - now he is working for himself again picking corn every day - people here are busy doing that here now - when that is finished work has been completed until spring. Then there will be only the feeding of horses and cattle and hogs. Our Jan Hendrik has 5 horses and 8 cows, and 32 hogs and a hundred chickens.

You wrote about coming back - I never wrote about that to anyone - there is no thought about that - we are well satisfied here. But I have said that if the Lord should spare us for some years, and it is His will and good pleasure - than I have not given up the idea of coming back some time - let us see what the will of the Lord is - He says in His word His counselor will stand and I will do His will - and a person considers his ways but God directs his paths - in the end His will will be done.

Well, I can not write much news except that all is well - I had to write 7 letters in one week - to all the places from which I had received

letters in the past 14 days - there is almost no end to all of the answering - when I am all better mother and I will go to visit H. Ligtenberg for a week - to Peter's brother, and a full week to G. Nijkamp, or rather to Hadtog - they will come to get us with the buggy - that is 16 miles from here - that is about six hours - and if someone can not come to get us we ride over with our Jannes' horses - he has two beautiful greys - and they can make it very well - our Jannes can get more than 650 gulden for them in Dutch money but he does not wish to sell - he is crazy about his horses - and he does not have to either - enough of that.

Now I must close for this time with the pen but never with the heart - if you wish to know more than I have written you had better ask - if I know I will write to you about it.

Hearty greetings from all of us - at present we are all well - I hope you may receive this letter in good health - that is my hearty wish - Give greetings to Gr. Mensink - also to Ter Hore and to all friends and acquaintances too numerous to mention. Also to J. Scherphof, wife and children - and J.H. Scherphof wife and children - and if you go by there also to Mannes Timmerman, wife and children - Farewell.

Your friend and father J.W. Kreijkes

Jan Willem has not yet given up the idea of making a trip to Holland some time. However he wishes to submit to God's landing. I get the impression that he wrote this seriously and that it was a favorably leading. On his sick-bed, and that the effect of his memories were such that he dared to entrust himself further to the good leading of his God.



Who G. Nijkamp or "rather Hadtog" was I can not say. Probably someone among our readers can enlighten us ??

In the following letter Kreijkes tells about the birth of his fourth grandchild which first saw daylight on American soil. He then had a total of eight, four in Rijssen and four in his family circle. It is the last letter to his daughter which follows:

Hospers, January 6, 1890

Dear daughter this is for you:

I am sitting down to write you a few lines - that I by God's grace may enjoy the privilege of good health - and we have learned the same from you in your letter - for which we are glad - how good the Lord is - is this not true child? - May we thank the Lord and praise Him for the undeserved blessings which we may enjoy above our deserts - may the God give us grace to do so - I wish that for you and also for myself now we inform you that Jan Hendrik's wife gave birth to a well-formed child - a boy - his name is Derk - their child was born on January 27 - the young woman is doing very well - it is true the Lord is good - now they already have four children, two boys and two girls - all growing well - the oldest is named Jan Willem - the second is named Johanna - she is about four years old - the third is Janna - she is now two years old - and the fourth is a boy - all four well and fat - we do hear of many sick people in America - not may it be a means by which we are turned to God - then we would be happy for time and for eternity, is that not true child?

We have also noticed that our Jantjen has been sick and that he is better - I hope that is true - I think about it every day - our Jenken say,

"I wish our Jantjen and our Willem were here, then I would be happy - Jenken talked about it constantly - and I think about it every day, and I well know that they are well off with Uncle Juan Scherphjof and Aunt Johanna - I hope the Lord will grant them all mercy, you and your children - and the children of Danneberg.

Well, child, I can not write much news this time - except that our Arend has been slightly ill - but is now fortunately better again - now everyone is well - we hope everything may be well with you too - and that you may receive this letter in good health which is my wish and prayer.

If it is convenient write back sometime. Give hearty greetings to J. Scherpohof, wife and children - and to H. Mensink - and to the people with you, and to Gr. Mensink's brother - Mannes Mensink, also from our Jannes - and also to Uncle Jan Smalbrugge and his wife Janna - and Miena, and to all of your and our friends you know of, too numerous to mention. If you can, send greetings to sister Veldermans, Ziena and her family, and tell her that by grace I am still alive - greetings to all of the Kreijkes and Smalbrugge - if you visit our people tell them I have written two letters since November 22 - also my sister Janna - have them ask the carrier why the letters do not reach the Brinks and Kreijkes, G.J. I can not help it if the letters are not received, I'm sorry.

Kreijkes is mistaken about the date in the letter. The birth of Derk took place on January 24, and the letter was after that. Presumably he took up the pen on February 6. Shortly after that Kreijkes received the news that his daughter Jan was seriously ill. He was informed by others and this

news drove Jan Willem to pray. We will hear more about this later when he reports his experiences to Abram Koedijk and Hendrik Mensink.

What the last correspondence between Jan Willem and his daughter was like we have not been able to determine. Presumably the last letter has been lost. We must get along with what we have in hand, so now we present the following letter from which it appears that Janna has died in the meantime. Her body has already been entrusted to the ground.

Kreijkes writes to Abram Koedijk as follows:

Hospers, March 14, 1890

Dear Brother and family:

We are all well - we have learned from your letter that you too, and your entire family may share in the treasure of good health, for which we are glad. Yes, brother, health is a blessing when a person is thoughtless in regard to it, oh, what a pitiable creature he is, isn't that true? - may that weigh upon our hearts more and more - to be healthy and to possess grace beside is a double blessing with Jacob, isn't it.

Yes, brother I received a letter - that our Janna was unconverted - I called upon God in heaven for her - that if she might still be in the land of the living that the Lord might grant her mercy still - if she should still be unconverted - on Saturday I received a letter - and on Monday I began to write - looking upward in prayer. While writing I heard these words, that she was in an elated state, not with such a grand feeling - or clarity - as I have at times experienced - but I could not come to any other conclusion but that the Lord had granted her mercy - I left the room and said to my wife, "I hope for the best - she has received grace or she is

already in heaven" - I said this with a broken heart - my wife wept - and so did my daughter-in-law - we soon received two letters in one day, one from your brother and one from the oilmill - that she had fallen asleep in her Lord on February 20 - oh, brother, I can never tell you how that affected me - I was filled with joy - I sang, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits bestowed upon me?" -

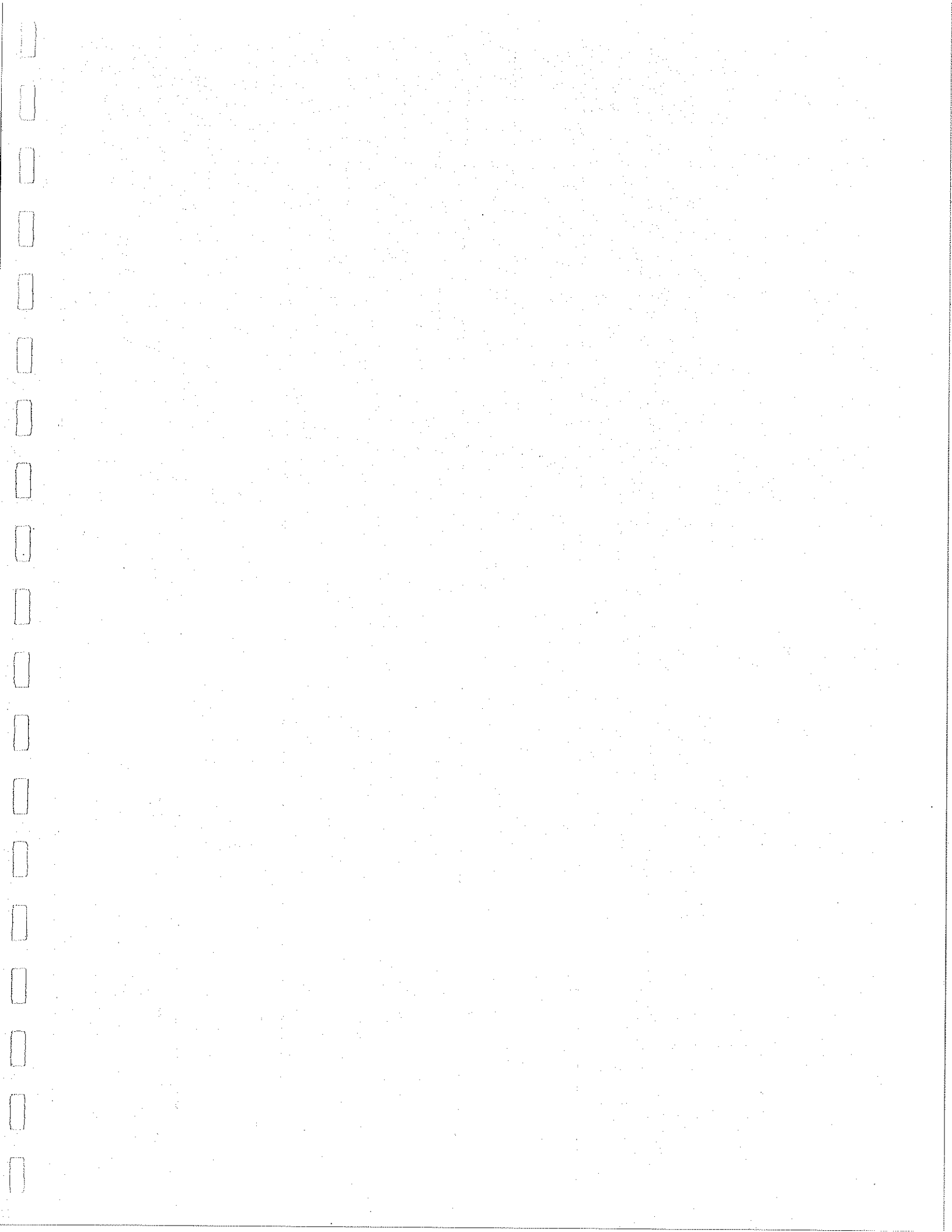
I was sorry I could not adequately acknowledge and thank the Lord - I had formerly remembered her in prayer before the throne of grace with her children - I believe what the poet says, "and the Lord is merciful to those who pray" - oh, when the Lord himself lays the prayer upon the heart there is hope for an answer - everyone knows that - experience teaches that -

I am still pleased that you on several occasions - with a few brethren went to visit her - that you have been so faithful and did not neglect to do your duty - I thank all of you.

The ending of this letter is missing. So Abram Koedijk reported the death of his daughter, which corresponds with the experiences of Kreijkes.

A wonderful fact comes to light in this letter namely, that faith, even in times of sorrow, brings joy, a proof that faith has a super-natural character. This is evident again in the following letter. Kreijkes now has four grandchildren in Rijssen, who had been left behind by their father and mother

Kreijkes' friend - Manzes Bram - has written to him about his experiences at the time of his sick-visits to his daughter. Jan Willem was comforted thereby - therefore he felt free to write to his brother-in-law



Mensink-Hinne a week later, and the letter was received at their little farm in Zuna.

Hospers March 21, 1890

Yes brother, I became frightened when I received the letter stating that our Janna was very sick, and that you had to stay up with her - I called upon God to be merciful to her - and amid my sighing I heard these words - she is in an exalted state - I was in the living-room and with joy went into the kitchen and said to my wife that I believed that the Lord had shown her mercy - or that she might already be in heaven - my wife wept - and I did too with joy - a day or two later we received a letter stating that she had fallen asleep in her Saviour Jesus Christ - then I was still more pleased that my words had proven to be true - You know, brother, that a person always wants to expect the best, but when the Lord later confirmed it I was filled with joy, you may well believe, brother - because it is wonderful to be a child of God - then a person is rich for time and eternity - isn't that true, brother? - Oh, yes, I sang, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits bestowed upon me?" I said: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" - yest I was confirmed in the belief that the Lord is a hearer of prayer - I was privileged to pray for her continually after we had left for America, for her and for her children, before the throne of grace, because the proverb says, "blood creeps where it can not walk" - and it is also true that at such a distance the tie becomes stronger. And when the Lord himself places the prayer in the heart - the poet says, "he has never turned prayer aside" - experience has often taught me that lesson - and the Lord teaches that to all people in distress by His grace.

Yes, it is wonderfull for parents to see their children depart that way - or children their parents - since they are then relieved from sin and everything that burdens them - there God will wipe all tears from their eyes - there will be no more weeping, but peace alone will reign - I thought if we could only go that way with them - oh, my heart still breaks as I write - May the death of our Janna be for all those living at and around the mill, and also for us, a means of drawing us closer to God - to conversion - that is my hearty wish and prayer.

Your brother,

J.W. Kreijkes

I have before me a letter containing six pages. The contents are a witness to the principle of wisdom to be found in the fear of the Lord. Between the lines we notice that he thinks very little of himself and considers others to be much more important. Besides he speaks of God as a hearer of prayer. Many characteristics and matters which are pointed out to us in the Bible as being part of spiritual life, he praises in faulty language. He writes as follows to his friend A. Koedijk:

Hospers, June 21

Dear Koedijk friends:

We can inform you that we are all well and healthy in the far northwestern America - Thank the Lord for undeserved mercy - we have forfeited everything because of our sins, isn't that true, brother Koedijk - every child of God must make that confession - may we be more inclined to do so by grace - recognize God, to praise and to thank Him, but oh, brother I must confess that I am often not in the right place - Lord might well ask:

"Elijah, what doest thou here?" Yes, brother, that occurred to me when H.D. Ligtenberg had left for a French community - then the Lord called him to heaven - Now he has been released from all difficulties - forever free and forever happy - now he can sing about God's mercies - oh that is wonderful.

I have noted all that you wrote about church matters - I do not believe that the unity of our congregation is a result of a conviction as to the truth - but rather because of circumstances and grievances - that is not good - rather let the congregation sing Ps. 62:4 & 5 - may the Lord grant grace to do that, that is my hearty wish, and may He graciously forgive the sins we have committed together - The situation in America in regard to ecclesiastical affairs is sad - one proclaims "here is the Christ" and another "there is the Christ" - those days have arrived - may the Lord open the eyes of His children in order that they may not become confused by the frivolous spirits. calling the believers - sometimes I must talk myself hoarse against ministers and consistory members - and then they are silent, and behind my back they say, Kreijkes is too old-fashioned" - you just have to take it - things are regarded much less seriously than formerly - I say it is and remains a time-worn truth which God has delivered to the saints. Cursed be anyone who proclaims a doctrine which differs from that of the apostle.

In the last article mention was made of the unity of our congregations. Kreijkes seemingly does not favor it. He remembers too well the difficulties and the sins committed at the time which for reconciliation. His advice to Koedijk is negative.



The union referred to involved several independent congregations, among them those of Delft, Enkhuizen, the Hague, Woorden, Kampen, etc. Rev. Abraham Verheij, from Delft, Rev. G. Maliepaard and Rev. A. Makkenze from Enkhuizen, aimed to bring this about. From the correspondence of Rev. A. Verheij and Rev. A. Makkenze with A. Koedijk I have found that the latter, and another delegate from Rijssen consistory had been invited. I do not know whether Rijssen's "little church" joined or not. The ministers mentioned did from time to time serve the congregations on Sunday. From a letter written by Rev. Verheij I gather that shortly after Easter in 1889 he was asked to serve communion in Rijssen.

Returning to the letter from Kreijkes, it reads as follows: "There are still three consistory members I can talk to freely about Rijssen - they are very eager to have me in the consistory but I have refused - I have never joined a congregation regardless of how much they desired me to do so - I do not feel that I can freely join any of them - then they would ask me to catechize and teach Sunday School, but I have declined all of that - I tell them that is a man's job - then they tell me they will risk it with me, but I have not been able to do that work to equal Voordman (s Goit) and Saifieket (Sefieget or Hendrikus Nijkamp) - you know that very well brother Koedijk - nor to equal you - yes, that is true - the Lord deals with everyone according to His good pleasure - my we be very childlike and humble, clothed with modesty, brought to His feet to pray for mercy - and may we be privileged to enjoy that blessed peace - as I hear concerning Grades Altink - give him my hearty greetings from him who calls himself his brother in the Lord, J.W. Kreijkes.

Oh, brother Koedijk - I was so happy when I was able to hear about Grades - I was able to believe this concerning him - even better than concerning others who make so much noise - you know that very well brother - if we could only hear this praise from many mouths - oh, that is still a sign that the Lord has not forsaken us - now brother I wish that blessed peace for you and all of your family and for us and ours both now and in the future - amen. Thus far this part of the letter.

The Rijssen "catachizers" are highly rated by him. It seems he has Americanized the name Sefieget. J.R. Mulder or "Tandjan-Reint" received catechetical instruction from Sefieget, and tells how Sefieget sometimes told the facts incorrectly to test the students' knowledge.

Grades Altink (Lutgers-Graads) was permitted to enjoy that peace which surpasses all understanding. Jan Willem truly rejoices in this "good news" and hopes to hear still more.

The 6-page letter from Koedijk reads further as follows: "I have heard about an accident from Rijssen - the death of G. Borghuis - oh, it may be called an accident - oh, what is man if the Lord does not grant him mercy and keep him - how that should weigh upon his heart - he can not be certain about one moment of his life - and can not exist a moment without God's protection - can not take a step - can not take a single breath if it is not the will of the Lord - may everyone sense that more and more - that would move him to live more conscientiously and more carefully - isn't that true brother? - Yes, it is my wish that the Lord may bless this.

Write back sometime whether there is still some life among the people, or whether it is barren and lifeless - I hope the people may be active -

that prayers may still be raised to God in heaven for a blessed result, and that the Lord himself may place the prayers in the hearts of His children - then the prayers will rise as a sweet odor into the nostrils of a holy God - then He is near to the soul which approaches Him with sighs - then He comforts the heart which flees to him with weeping - which approaches Him with sighs - which in sincerity in the midst of trouble continues to present his prayers at the throne of grace - He grants the desires of all those who fear Him - He has never turned their prayers aside - I was able to experience this - Wednesday on prayer day in the church at Hospers - the minister said, "Elijah prayed for rain and the heavens gave rain" - prayers must be offered the minister said - then it will come.

Then I thought, the Lord is free - He can justly withdraw - but when the Lord dwells with in then all the prayers of the Elijahs arise - otherwise it is fruitless - every child of God learns that - may the Lord cause us to understand this properly - and give us light - we are ignorant.

I hope that all is well and that you may receive this letter in good health.

If you pass that way, give my greetings to my sister and my Kreijkes brothers - Tell them I have written to them - also to brother-in-law Jan Baan - and to your hired man if he is still with you, and his family - and to the Polberends - also to the ship Jannes - and to Klitsen Geesken sister and her family - also to Jan Hadders and his wife - Arend Kippers and his family - and to all who are interested in us. Give warm greetings to the entire consistory with all of their families - tell them that we are doing